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Experiential Landscape Place: exploring experiential potential in neighbourhood settings

Dr.Kevin Thwaites and Ian Simkins

Department of Landscape

University of Sheffield

3rd Floor, Arts Tower

Western Bank

Sheffield S10 2TN

e: k.thwaites@sheffield.ac.uk

p: 0114 2220620

f: 0114 2754176

Abstract

Experiential landscape place research is concerned with developing an open space design vocabulary to inform processes of urban place making in residential settings. It contributes to contemporary urban design and landscape architectural practice by emphasising quality of place, rather than mere provision for dwelling, in making residential settings that can sustain a good quality of life for their inhabitants. A conceptual framework has been developed to show how a range of human experience can be conceptualised spatially as four components called centre, direction, transition and area (Thwaites,2001). The paper will build from this intellectual foundation to describe the development and application of methodology to map and analyse experiential potential in residential settings. This can reveal, for example, the potential of the site to encourage different types of place attachment in people, its capability to aid and facilitate orientation, and enhance or stimulate a sense of neighbourhood. This contributes to longer-term research objectives by accumulating data that are being used to hypothesise typical spatial and physical properties and characteristics for centre, direction, transition and area. Work done to date has focussed on types of centre (subjectively significant locations) associated with restorative benefits.

Key words: spatial experience, place attachment, orientation, neighbourhood awareness.

Introduction

Experiential landscape place (ELP) is the working title for an exploratory research project concerned with the spatial expression of experience in urban open spaces and residential settings. It aims to contribute to contemporary urban design and landscape architectural practice by emphasising quality of place, rather than mere provision for dwelling, in making neighbourhood settings that can sustain a good quality of life for their inhabitants. The project's central hypothesis is that features of experiential potential in neighbourhood and community settings can be read from their spatial characteristics. In this respect it builds from theories of place arguing that aspects of human experience have particular spatial implications important to achieving and sustaining fulfilled lives (Norberg-Schulz,1971; Canter,1977; Hillier and Hanson,1984; Gehl,2001; Alexander,2001). This mind-set has become consolidated in elements of environmental psychology research but has yet to penetrate sufficiently into the ethos of environmental design practice. Experiential landscape place aims to develop from this by emphasising the spatial expression of experiences that contribute to quality of life in the design of neighbourhood settings. Particular emphasis is given to spatial experiences that, collectively: encourage different types of place attachment in people; strengthen capability to aid and facilitate orientation; and enhance or stimulate a sense of neighbourhood.

The paper will outline the components of a conceptual model showing how space and experience can be integrated in terms of a vocabulary of four components (centre, direction, transition and area). Then, it will explain how this conceptual scheme can be operationalised in practice using a method to map and analyse experiential potential in neighbourhood settings. Particular reference will be made in this respect

to pilot study field-work carried out at the settlement of Poundbury in Dorset. The application of these mapping techniques in field trials is contributing to longer term research objectives by accumulating data that are being used to hypothesise typical spatial and physical characteristics for centre, direction, transition and area. The paper will conclude by focussing on types of centre (subjectively significant locations) associated with restorative benefits by referring to a range of characteristics, provisionally identified, which can optimise the potential for locations to be valued as significant for their association with restorative experiences.

Part of the ELP project's origin lies in elements of an inquiry contributing to PhD research into the conceptual and intellectual foundations of landscape architecture (Thwaites,2000). This argued for an approach to landscape architecture that gives primacy to a more integrated conception of the human-environment relationship than that evident in much of contemporary landscape architectural theory and practice. The conception of the human-environment relationship developed in the thesis draws from a range of philosophical and theoretical material to argue that a notion of order, relevant to the design of open spaces, can be conceived to include human experiential functioning as well as spatial and physical elements (Merleau-Ponty,1962; Canter,1977;Alexander,1979; Tuan,1980; Walter,1988). This holistic conception was found to share elements of common ground with aspects of place theory and socially responsive approaches to architecture and urban design, particularly those emphasising the objective of design to be the creation of places as entities integrating physical space and human functioning (Alexander,1977; Bentley et al,1985; Kaplan et al, 1998; Tibbalds,1992). To some extent these have been influential and a general attitude promoting the primacy of place over space can now be detected in the socio-

political frameworks of urban regeneration (Urban Task Force,1999; Llewelyn-Daves,2000; DTLR,2001). It is therefore timely to strengthen these with new contributions to the field. The ELP project aspires to do this for neighbourhood and community settings specifically in response to current UK Government policy to marry an increase in housing stock over the next twenty years with urban regeneration by stressing the design of quality places. The question that the ELP project seeks to address then, is how can we understand place quality in this context and translate this into an open space design vocabulary that is relevant to the residential setting?

The Experiential Landscape Place Concept

A conceptual framework has been developed in response that identifies three fundamental categories of experience relevant to the residential setting and conceptualises these in terms of spatial components (table.1). This asserts that important aspects of the human experiential dimension can be understood in terms of three categories relating to: how people attach significance to certain locations; how they orientate themselves; and how they develop an awareness of neighbourhood. Each category has further dimensions of detail to reflect that people develop place attachments for different reasons. For example, meaning and value can be attributed to places by individuals or groups because they hold particular social significance, perhaps as places where regular recreation takes place, or for ceremonial occasions, such as births, marriages and deaths. Such places become imageable in the lives of people because of these associations and this can be strengthened by the presence of prominent physical features that come to symbolise them, or represent them in physical form: the particularly recognisable form of a church and its surroundings, for example. Other ways in which value can be attached to places may be because of

their capacity to deliver restful, or restorative experiences. This might be stimulated by the presence of natural elements and vegetation and research has established that water, in various forms in public spaces, can induce particularly strong sensations of tranquillity (Carr et al,1992). Other valued places may be those that are associated with, or can stimulate, social interactions and territorial expressions. These do not necessarily have to be prominently designed public squares and plazas for example, although a lively and active public realm is likely to be conducive to this kind of place attachment. Routinely used public transport stops, a favourite street café, or the simple orientation of front garden gates so that neighbours occasionally meet there can also become powerful locations, significant in the lives of individuals and contributing to overall life quality. Similarly, orientation is achieved through the experiences of movement, view and change, and neighbourhood awareness through developing a sense of private and public realms and by the presence of thematic continuity.

These experiential categories have been interpreted in spatial terms by developing Norberg-Schulz's ideas about existential space (Norberg-Schulz,1971). Following the philosophy of phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962), Norberg-Schulz attempted to interpret an understanding of space as a dimension of human existence in a structured way relevant to architectural practice. He defined existential space as consisting of three constituent elements assumed to exist at different levels of scale: "*centres* or places (proximity), *directions* or paths (continuity), *areas* or domains (enclosure)" (Norberg-Schulz,1971,p.18).

Centres have primacy in this structure reflecting that human spatial perception is subjectively centred, meaning that people possess innate tendency to externalise locations, or centres, in the environment as points of reference from which to locate themselves in relation to their surroundings. Centre in this sense relates, then, to the physical and psychological sensations that enable people to become aware that they are *here*. Being aware of *here* is followed in Norberg-Schulz thinking by the related sensation of *there* as the awareness of continuity, or direction, connecting the centred sense of location with what lies beyond. The concept of direction is also assumed to contain the perceptions and events that happen along the way. So, whereas centre represents a largely static experience, direction is dynamic characterised by experiences of progression and connection. For Norberg-Schulz, centres and directions are spatial entities distinguishable against a more generalised, and relatively unstructured, background called area, or domain. Areas are perceived as contained in the sense that they represent a general sense of overall coherence within which personally significant centres and directions can be discerned. Norberg-Schulz also describes the property of transition, not as a discrete spatial element of existential space, but as a property that binds centres, directions and areas together.

Norberg-Schulz's concept offers an abstract image of people's relationship to space that, when related to resonant elements in the wider literature in environmental psychology and socially responsive planning and design, may be interpreted in terms of place and neighbourhood. It suggests a collective conception of place as consisting of simultaneous, but not necessarily equal, awareness of here (centre), there (direction) and where change occurs (transition). Such places have distinguishable characteristics given partly by their particular physical and geometrical properties and

also by their subjective significance to people. They exist in overlapping and enfolded form at different scales within a larger coherent region (area) that can be equated with the sense of neighbourhood. This overall concept enables the experiential anatomy of a neighbourhood setting to be understood in terms of four spatial components called centre, direction, transition and area (Thwaites,2001).

Operationalising the Concept: Mapping Experiential Landscape Places

Operationalising the experiential landscape place concept has involved the development of a method of mapping experiential potential. The mapping method uses simple graphical symbols to record where centres, directions, transitions and areas are perceived to exist in response to studying geometric and physical characteristics. Analysis of these maps can highlight a range of experiential properties in the layout and spatial organisation of the site. This can reveal, for example, the potential of the site to encourage different types of place attachment in people, its capability to aid and facilitate orientation, and enhance or stimulate a sense of neighbourhood. These maps offer the potential to augment conventional survey and analysis techniques by helping to provide some insight into a site's experiential dimensions and can assist with design decision making. Computer aided methods of data handling, primarily through the use of GIS software, provide a means by which to 'read' the experiential potential of existing residential settings. In essence this involves generating a sequence of information layers on a map of the site involving graphical symbols, photographs and text records.

The mapping method developed has theoretical origins in three key areas of discourse related in their contribution to a social appreciation of space and environmental

structure. The first of these is Christian Norberg-Schulz's (1971) existential space schemata described above. Developed from this is the fundamental spatial structure that enables an understanding of the spatial dimension of experience collectively in terms of centre, direction, transition and area. The essential message of Norberg-Schulz: that the structure of space has social implications, is taken forward in Hillier and Hanson's (1984) work on the social logic of space. Hillier and Hanson have pioneered a method of analysing the kinds of spatial patterns produced by buildings and towns and related this to their social significance. Their work presents a way of describing space that makes aspects of its social origins and consequences integral to that description. In addition to sharing elements of this conceptual aspiration, the value of Hillier and Hanson's work to ELP research is in the way they express this graphically. They have developed a way to reveal the spatial structure of settlements as networks of cells determined by identifying the range of convex, or containing, spaces evident in a plan of a settlement. In the language of ELP each of these cells could be taken to represent the potential experience of centre (subjectively significant awareness of location or proximity). They are potential centres in the sense that the experience of centre as defined in ELP requires more than simply the presence of physical containment. But this technique is invaluable in highlighting spatial localities that might be experienced as centres if other qualifying criteria can be met.

A further significant contributor to the theoretical underpinning of ELP is architect and planner Christopher Alexander. In his most recent work *The Nature of Order: Book One, The Phenomenon of Life* (Alexander, 2001), Alexander acknowledges the similarity of Hillier and Hanson's work to his own thinking about the structure of environmental form (ibid p.416-417). Alexander specifically uses the term centre and

centering in the development of his ideas about environmental structure in relation to his principal preoccupation, throughout forty years as an architectural thinker and practitioner, with what generates wholeness in the environment. His work has led him to assert that the process that generates wholeness is called centering. Centering is, in essence, an elaboration of the idea of differentiating space, directly analogous with cell division, developed as part of his pattern language as the means by which different patterns are connected together to make more complex spatial wholes. For Alexander the term centre defines a visual entity with certain geometric properties. "As a first approximation, a "center" may be defined as a psychological entity which is perceived as a whole, and which creates the feeling of a center, in the visual field." (Alexander,1993,p.32). There is a set of procedures for creating a structure called a field of centres and creating a field of centres is, according to Alexander, the ultimate goal of 'good' design. Good here being understood in the special humanistic sense of a fit of form and context which is the hallmark of Alexander's thinking. Alexander's centres are not simply abstract principles but are intended to be a fundamental part of a deeper and more complex attempt to unify geometry, human experience, and spatial form and function. To this extent Alexander's conception appears far more ambitious than Hillier and Hanson probably had in mind, and is certainly so in the case of ELP research aspirations. Nevertheless, Alexander provides here further reason to consider a conception of environmental structure rooted in human psychological functioning with a spatial expression consisting of identifiable units (centres) which enfold and overlap to form larger scale structures. These conceptual and methodological tools formed the foundations upon which the ELP mapping method was constructed for piloting in the field.

Experiential Landscape Place Mapping: A Summary

The procedure conceived to explore experiential potential in neighbourhood settings is summarised briefly in this section. It is provisional, pilot experiments carried out thus far have revealed the need for significant improvements in operational efficiency. It nevertheless has the potential to provide an experiential dimension to survey and analysis and design decision making processes. There are four main stages involving desk and field based tasks that aim to first, analyse the geometric organisation of the open space structure of the study site to reveal the site's potential in terms of centre, direction, transition and area. The resulting plans then form the basis for field evaluation against a set of provisional criteria for each of the four components to determine a) the physical characteristics that may contribute to the experiences associated with each, and b) the potential intensity of that experience. Site records are made in text and photographic form in ways amenable to their analysis via GIS arcview computer software.

1. Geometric Analysis of the Site Plan

Map 1 Open space structure. This makes the space between buildings and other physical features explicit.

Map 2 Geometric spatial centres. This establishes the range of locations that have discrete spatial containment.

Map 3 Visual corridors. This establishes the principal lines of view and locations of potential visual significance.

Map 4 Movement corridors. This establishes the degree of pedestrian linkage between spaces identified on map 2.

Map 5 Transitional spaces. This establishes the spatial centres that have the potential to engender a sensation of change.

Map 6 Areas. These are combinations of spatial centres that aggregate to form a sense of thematic continuity.

This set of plans constitutes only an analysis of certain geometric features evident in the open space arrangement of a plan of the study site. As an expression of experiential potential, however, it is obviously limited by being a response to a two-dimensional diagrammatic representation of the site. The principal function of this stage is to focus attention on particular parts of the site that may, upon scrutiny of the physical and spatial characteristics present there, reveal the extent to which those characteristics might contribute to the realisation of the experience they are associated with. Recently undertaken field has revealed a number of significant limitations with this approach. Research students undertook pilot work on sites in the North of England during 2003 and discovered that, in certain situations, the identification of geometric spatial centres was both difficult to achieve satisfactorily from analysis of the site plan and sometimes presented misleading expectations of the physical arrangement of the actual site. This seemed to be especially acute with sites that had

strong topographical features, for example, the riverside setting in Knaresborough, North Yorkshire. In this case, the steeply sloping cliff edges affected perceptions of spatial containment and control of view to such an extent that the desk work undertaken beforehand was rendered virtually useless. A photographic survey of the site has subsequently proved to be helpful to some extent in this respect. The next stage of the process involves the evaluation of the features present at that location on site against a set of criteria.

2. Audit of Experiential Characteristics

Figure 1 shows the transitional spaces evident on a plan of Poundbury, Dorset. These locations are the geometric spatial centres, or groups of geometric spatial centres, that look as though they might exhibit some degree of transitional property because they are located where there appears to be a change in the spatial circumstances. In other words, where they seem to be like gaps, or tunnels, or corridors in comparison to other geometric centres. There is however, a wide range of other factors, impossible to access simply from the graphics of a site plan, which are relevant to the actual sensation of transition, or change, on the real site. In this respect findings from our conceptual and field based research have contributed to a provisional list of features associated with transitional experience that have potential as criteria against which to evaluate the transitional potential of the locations identified. Similar lists corresponding with centre, direction and area have also been made (Table.2). Our work here is yet at a very formative stage but trials using a working model for evaluating experiential potential in this way are beginning to show promising results (Worthington,2003; Dobson,2002).

The evaluation criteria facilitate the opportunity to audit each of the locations identified on the plan as potential centres, directions, transitions and areas to reveal their particular characteristics and also the potential strength of the experience. For example, in the case of the transition considered here (Figure.2), we are able to conclude that it is 'tunnel' type of transitional space in that it is a narrow route between two larger spaces. The features present that potentially contribute to the transitional experience include: changes to surfacing materials; the framing afforded by the containing building surfaces; the availability of choice of route out; change of form and shape from small enclosure to larger public square. It is also found to have features that may limit the sensation of change for the pedestrian. For example: a general uniformity of colour and tone which ties in with the surrounding area; a sense of progression and continuity, rather than abrupt entry and exit; and an absence of significant change in direction or level. In quantitative terms, five out of the nine possible transitional indicators are present and this allows us the reach the tentative conclusion that the potential of this particular location to yield a transitional sensation for the pedestrian is moderate.[1] This audit process must be regarded as provisional since our pilot work reveals that further refinement is necessary to both content and method. But as a working model it represents at least the possibility of comparing locations in neighbourhood and community settings on the basis of their experiential potential

3. Mapping the Experiential Potential

The auditing process, then, although as yet a working approximation, adds an empirical dimension to the more abstract analysis of the geometrical organisation of

[1] As opposed to weak (fewer indicators present) or strong (more indicators present).

the site plan. It enables us to distinguish different types of spatial experience and to record their characteristic features. This information collectively contributes to the production of four final maps to record and analyse the distribution and characteristics for centre, direction, transition and area. Experiments currently taking place explore how this process can be made amenable to analysis using GIS computer software so that the audit table and a photographic record for each symbol on the plan can be retrieved at a mouse click (Figure.3).

4. Analysis and Recommendations

Collectively, this analytical framework offers the potential to identify strengths and weaknesses in the experiential potential of residential settings and can thus form the basis for specifically targeted design interventions capable of enhancing strength and overcoming weakness. For example, pilot field studies have been carried out at Poundbury in Dorchester (figure 4), The Piggeries in Frome, and Friary Court in Beverley (Figure 5) [2] and aspects of the experiential profile for each can be discerned. Because of the exploratory and experimental nature of the ELP project thus far, the conclusions drawn must be regarded cautiously. They reflect more the provisional nature of the ELP mapping method rather than the actuality of experience on the sites themselves. However, through use of the mapping method developed, we have been able to make comparisons between them. Specifically in terms of their potential to offer inhabitants opportunities to attach personal significance to locations, to orientate, and to develop a sense of their homeground, from analysis of the distribution and characteristics of their centres, directions, transitions and areas.

[2] The colour of symbols on the plans is significant to their analysis although they can only be reproduced in monochrome here (see www.elpredu.com).

What this tentatively reveals is that both Poundbury and Friary Court have strong potential when it comes to the opportunities available for inhabitants to establish a sense of place attachment. This is because both have numerous strongly defined centres distributed more or less evenly throughout the site. There are differences in character, though, that may mean people attach significance to locations for different reasons. For example, the people of Poundbury may be motivated to attach significance to certain locations because of strong visual imageability and social encounters, whereas at Friary Court this is more likely to be because the stronger centres offer opportunities for restorative benefit. Very few of Poundbury's numerous centres can be characterised as restorative and this may in part be due to the relative paucity and immaturity of vegetation. The Piggeries development has relatively few strong centres by comparison and leads us to speculate that its inhabitants may not find as many opportunities to attach value or significance to locations that are beyond their private territory. One thing they all have in common, although again characterised in different ways, is a strong network of transitional experiences encouraging exploration by signalling thresholds between different spaces. Often these are very strongly defined, either by architectural form or ornamental detail, so adding to the range of other landmark features which strengthen the sensation of direction by injecting sequence and continuity. Orientation is therefore made easier and the experience of moving around more psychologically stimulating.

Experiential Landscape Place as Design Vocabulary

This work is contributing to longer-term objectives of the research project by accumulating data that are being used to hypothesise typical spatial and physical properties and characteristics for centre, direction, transition and area. Ultimately this will form the basis for an experiential neighbourhood open space design vocabulary that will identify what particular characteristics optimise the potential of a development in terms of place attachment (centre), orientation (direction and transition) and neighbourhood awareness (area). Work done to date in this respect has focussed on types of centre (subjectively significant locations) associated with restorative benefits.[3] In particular an exploratory study by Beth Helleur (2001) at Leeds Metropolitan University has applied a comprehensive review of the literature in this field to the analysis of a wide range of public places in Europe and America. This, along with findings from field studies, contributes towards identifying some properties and characteristics associated with restorative benefit that are relevant to a design vocabulary for generating the sensation of centre. Helleur asserts that this hinges on the development of spatial networks that must give consideration to issues of density, size and location. The individual spaces forming the network are consequently understood as the unique and distinguishable parts of a larger whole. Each of the parts must be designed to offer: separation from distraction; accessibility and comfort; opportunities for contact with nature and for people to interact with the environment. They should also be designed to be sustainable and enduring. A range of properties and characteristics can now be provisionally identified that can optimise

[3] The concept of experiential landscape place identifies three distinguishable types of centre: those that relate to experiences associated with social imageability; those that relate to experiences associated with restorative benefit; and those that relate to experiences associated with territoriality and social interaction (Thwaites,2001,p.254).

the potential for certain locations and networks of locations to be valued as significant by inhabitants for their association with experiences that are restorative.
Table 3 summarises a developing design vocabulary that begins to elaborate and add detail to the ELP conceptual framework.

This example shows how the ELP concept can begin to be expanded and elaborated so that the four fundamental elements of the concept become the cornerstones for a developing design vocabulary incorporating properties and characteristics that are important to the generation of, in this instance, a particular type of centre. Further desk and field based work will aim to contribute similar levels of detail for the other types of centre and for direction, transition, and area.

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Table no.1 The Concept of Experiential Landscape Place

Spatial Dimension	Experiential Dimension
Centre Subjectively significant location engendering a sense of here-ness and proximity	**Attachment of significance** *Social imageability:* functional use, goals and motivations, physical features, social meanings. *Restorative benefit*: being away, extent, fascination and compatibility. *Social interaction and territoriality:* communication, primary, secondary and public territory.
Direction Subjectively significant continuity engendering a sense of there-ness and future possibility	**Orientation** *Movement:* choice, imagination, attention. *View*: landmarks, views and vistas, sequence
Transition Subjectively significant point, or area, of change engendering a sense of transformation in mood, atmosphere, or function	*Change:* direction and level; entrances, exits and gateways; atmosphere and function.
Area Subjectively significant realm engendering a sense of coherence and containment	**Neighbourhood awareness** *Public and private awareness:* private; semi-private; semi-public; public *Thematic continuity*: rhythm, pattern, co-ordination in texture, space, form, detail, symbol, building type, use, activity, degree of maintenance, topography

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Table no.2: Provisional Indicators of Experiential Potential

CENTRE	DIRECTION	TRANSITION	AREA
General Spatial Qualities • Mainly convex in shape • Comprised of other centres • Have strong transitional features • Have good sense of enclosure • Have view to larger area • Be on a route that encourages passers by **Social Imageability (memorable locations)** • Presence of facilities (shops, post-box etc) • Pronounced	• Deflective facades • Choice of forward movement • Rhythm of boundary treatment • Linearity of floorscape • Sense of perspective • Sequentially connected spaces • Views and focal points	**Type** • Tunnel (narrow route between spaces) • Segment (break in linearity) • Threshold (boundary between spaces) **Qualities** • Change in material • Change in colour • Change in form/shape • Change in direction • Change in level • Offers choice • Framing elements (see beyond) • Framing	**Thematic continuity – rhythm, pattern, co-ordination in:** • Texture • Space • Form • Detail and Symbol • Function **Spatial hierarchy** • Mainly public • Mainly semi-public • Mainly semi-private

physical features (monuments, trees etc) • Social meaning (ceremony, work, play) **Restorative Places (psychological retreat)** • Separation from distraction • Inner calm and harmony • Shelter • Provision for rest • Presence of nature (trees, water, natural materials) • Stimulating features (psychological engagement) **Social Interaction (meeting)**		elements (view hidden) • Distinct sense of place (centre)	

• Significant convergence of routes • Presence of features for waiting • Presence of features encouraging comment • Revealingness (low garden boundaries etc) • Places of arrival/departure			

Table 3 Some Physical and Spatial Properties of Centres Significant for their Restorative Benefit

THE NETWORK

Density: restorative centres need to be evenly located throughout the urban fabric so they are within easy reach of potential users (max. 5 mins walk away = min. density of 5 per square kilometre).

Size: small pockets of human scale to facilitate creating a network of spaces (min 250 square metres, max. 5000 square metres)

Location: connected to main pedestrian routes; adjacent to busy public squares; accessible from shops, work places, public buildings, dwellings.

THE INDIVIDUAL CENTRES

Separation From Distraction: removal of feelings of vulnerability and perceived danger; removal of attention grabbing urban elements (eg. Signs, street furniture, shop displays, street vendors, crowds, beggars, traffic, relentless activity)

- **the provision of enclosure:** create a sense of physical enclosure and containment
- **free from distraction:** create legibility, coherence and absence of contradiction and confusion in the space

Provision of Access: each centre should be physically and visually available to all and be connected to main paths of circulation; one needs to be able to find the space, and know that it is there

Provision for Comfort: satisfaction of the need for physical comfort

- **suitable microclimate:** easy availability of shelter as appropriate from sun, rain, wind; sunny places; arrangement of maximise sunlight in winter and relief from sun in summer
- **provision for rest:** choice of rest features, seats, grass, walls, steps, things to lean against, sit on, lie on

Opportunities for Contact with Nature: inclusion of natural elements to add 'natural' background sound, and for sensory and psychological engagement

- **the inclusion of trees:** deciduous trees provide shade in summer and allow light through in winter; encourage fauna; provide movement; provide connection with seasonal change; soften hard urban form
- **the inclusion of water:** provides reflection, 'white' noise to screen out urban sounds, focal point, conversational topic, induces deeper levels of relaxation
- **the inclusion of natural materials:** stone, timber, etc. especially from local area introduces regional meaning and encourages local significance

Opportunities for Interaction with the Environment: encouragement to use regularly, feel a sense of personal connection with the space

- **environmental stimulation:** features that attract and hold interest, stimulate the senses, induce a sense of fascination
- **personalisation, claim, ownership:** eg. moveable chairs allow people to adapt public spaces to suit their needs
- **meaning:** opportunities for individuals to make strong connections between the place, their personal lives, the larger world

Original material from Beth Helleur *Restorative Public Urban Landscape.* MA thesis Leeds Metropolitan University, 2001

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