

**Intentional Aging:
A Contemplative Community-Based Approach to Urban Dwelling**

by

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For my mother, Nan Newhall.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between intentional communities, dwelling, and the process of aging as a sociodemographic phenomenon within urban environments through the non-theistic spiritual tradition of Shambhala. Shambhala principles and approaches to household dwelling and contemplative space will be used to explore the design of a collective urban dwelling intended for an aging community. A new approach to 'aging in place' which explores the community's unique relationship with the natural, social and cultural urban landscape of Halifax, Nova Scotia will be proposed. The investigation re-examines the current social, spiritual and architectural framework for aging, and suggests a Shambhalian approach to design as a means of revealing authentic, balanced dwelling environments within the community.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Canada's increasing life expectancy, improved health, and decreasing birthrates are contributing to an unbalanced population where seniors are quickly becoming the largest demographic group (see Figure 1). The needs of this group are changing rapidly as we see a mass migration towards cities, particularly in the Maritime provinces (Shiner 2011, 12).

Current models for the dwelling of aging populations in urban environments are quickly becoming inappropriate solutions. The models are largely based on the medical model of care and ignore a more holistic view of body, mind, living, and social environments. This has left the elderly as ignored, stigmatized, and under-valued members of society (Schwarz 1999, xv). More and more groups of aging individuals are beginning to form and develop intentionally alternative approaches to aging that are more community-oriented and that contribute in unique ways to society.

Shambhala is a global community of people inspired by the principle that every human being has a fundamental nature of basic goodness. In Shambhala culture, it is the belief that this nature (our innate wisdom), can be developed so that it not only benefits our own lives, but also helps meet the many challenges facing the world (Shambhala Halifax 2016). Although the Shambhala lineage of teachings has roots in Tibetan Buddhism, the heart of Shambhala culture can be seen as universal (non-secular), and is expressed in diverse ways in communities through various principles.

The Shambhala community in Halifax, Nova Scotia is an example of an aging group that is facing a dwelling crisis in old age. Very little has been done in the community to realize supportive and communal housing projects. Shambhala Buddhists (or Shambhalians), came to Nova Scotia with the intention of creating an "enlightened society," suggesting an alternative contemplative approach to dwelling that involves working on the mind (through meditation practice) in order to contribute to society. As such, the community remains

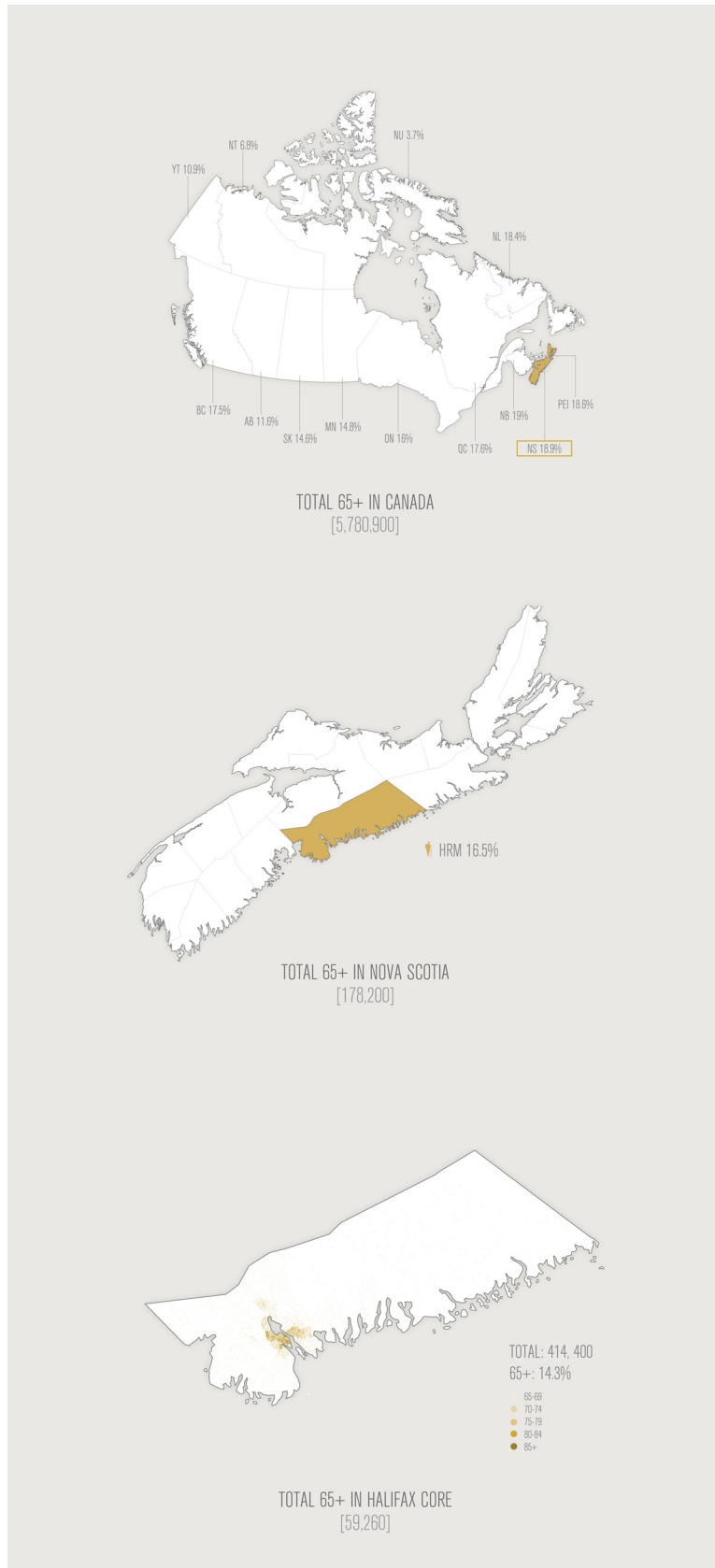


Figure 1. Diagrams depicting aging populations in Nova Scotia (Statistics Canada 2015)

hopeful at the prospect of a model for the design of a dwelling suitable for all phases of aging inspired by Shambhala principles. For the purpose of this thesis, the Shambhala principles of the four dignities, drala, and the mandala provide an appropriate social and design framework for such an investigation.

The study will take place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the international administrative headquarters of Shambhala. The intention for this thesis is to test Shambhala principles through design on a particular site within the urban core of Halifax, while understanding that the strategies used could also be applied to a more suburban or rural site.

THESIS QUESTION

How can a non-theistic contemplative approach to urban community dwelling based on Shambhala principles create opportunities to age holistically in Halifax, Nova Scotia?

KEY WORDS

dwelling, aging, intentional, community, Shambhala, Halifax

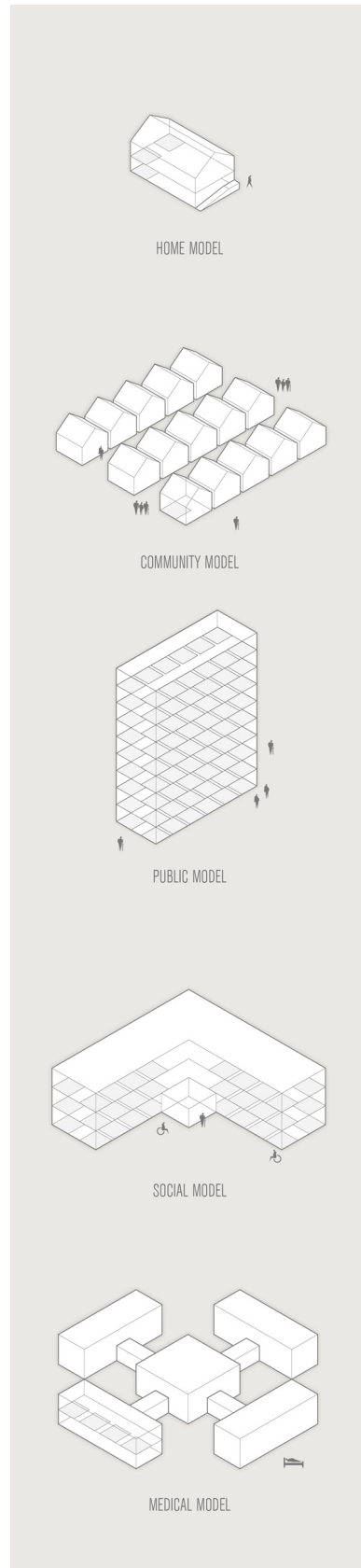


Figure 2. Diagrams of typical building forms for the five models of aging

CHAPTER 2: AGING THEORY AND MODELS

HISTORICAL CARE OF THE ELDERLY

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century elderly care in more developed regions was predominantly union, church, or charity run and funded. Community organizations took on the responsibility of care for their elderly members (Oosterman 2011, 2). The social security act of 1933 would mark, for many, the official shift in senior care responsibility from the family and charitable institutions to the welfare state. The increased role of the state in delivering institutional settings has promoted a medicalized system of care for the elderly (Oosterman 2011, 3). In more recent years, the costs and inefficiencies of these institutional and semi-institutional living arrangements has created the need for differentiated and increasingly privatized dwellings. These processes, over time, have contributed to the current models of care.

MODELS OF CARE

Currently, there are three general approaches to housing the elderly, each catering towards a different level of frailty and impairment: independent living (home care, in-home personal care), assisted living (retirement homes, senior homes and senior communities), and skilled nursing facilities (long term care, nursing homes, memory care - dementia and Alzheimer's) (Kinzelbach 2011, 12). According to Schwarz in *Aging, Autonomy, and Architecture* (1999), these models of care are known as the home model (aging in place), the social model (assisted living), and the medical model (nursing home). Another model that has been receiving attention in recent years is the community model, where groups of seniors come together and develop villages of informal support through cohabitation (Durrett 2005, 6). Additionally, due to the over privatization of elderly care, the public model of care has emerged as a form of housing the elderly that is often overlooked in aging research. The home model, the community model, the public model, the social model and the medical model serve as the most common current dwelling options for seniors in North America (see Figure 2).

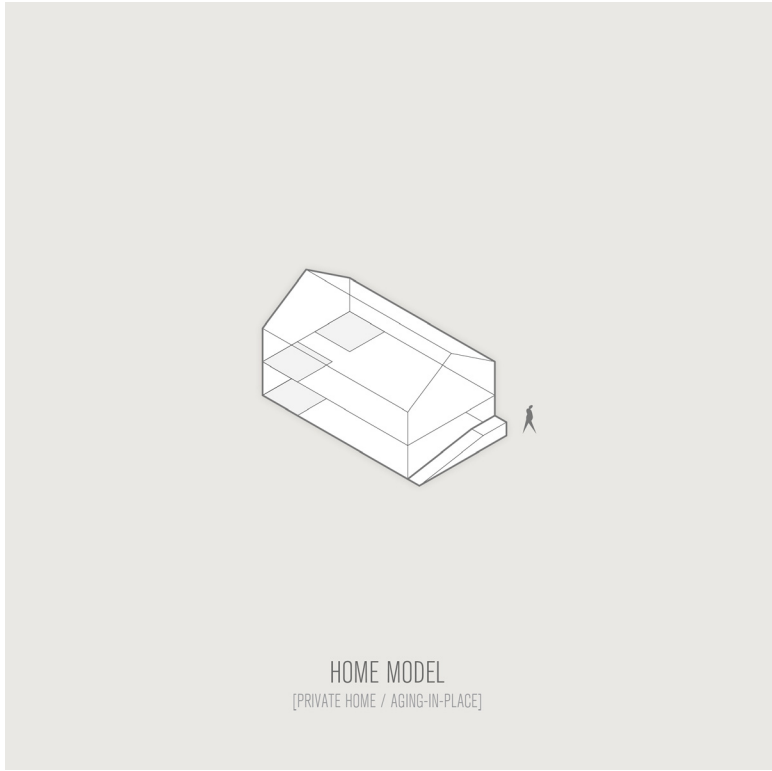


Figure 3. Diagram of the typical form of the home model - a private home with upgraded accessibility options

Home Model

The home model, or aging in place, is a model that allows elderly couples or individuals to remain in their own homes into old age (see Figure 3). Organizational and economic advances in outpatient care, incorporating the delivery of healthcare and additional services to the private home have enabled the elderly to live independently in their own homes for longer periods of time than ever before (Höpflinger 2008, 32). Aging in place has become the dominant and preferred housing situation for aging individuals due to its ability to provide environmental continuity and social integration. The home environment enables the creation of meaning through daily routines, memories, and life experiences. In their article, "Aging, Place, and Meaning in the Face of Changing Circumstances," American geographers Graham D. Rowles and Hege Ravidal have linked the expanding importance of aging in place to "societal recognition of the role of ownership and attachment to place, and to the presumed need for the familiar, as adaptive features of aging" (quoted in Weiss and Bass 2002, 90).

The desire of retirees to stay in their own homes in the same place for longer highlights the importance of place in lifelong biographies, suggesting that the home environment is a spatial structure and a geographical context around which a life experience can be organized (Weiss and Bass 2002, 92). The role of surrounding communities in fostering this sense of continuity and social connectedness for older people in their localities is extremely important. In order to avoid institutionalization, an individual or couple aging in place typically relies on a combination of informal support through family, neighbours and friends, and formal support through external caregivers.

Although the home model is presented as both the default and ideal housing option, it does not come without inherent challenges. The feasibility of remaining at home is often reduced in the case of the death of a spouse, loss of income, or decline in health. Loneliness, lack of social support, and disconnection from society are also contributing factors in the decision to find alternative housing solutions.

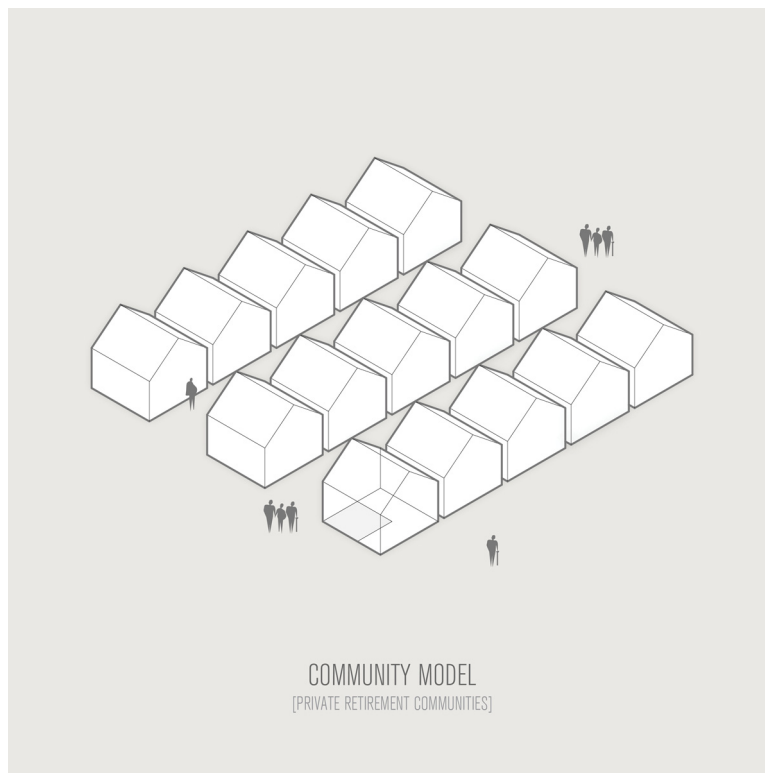


Figure 4. Diagram of the typical form of the community model - a private retirement community with separate homes arranged in close proximity to one another

Community Model

The community model of care includes any type of co-operative housing or cohousing arrangement consisting of informally organized collectives or “villages” of older people living together (see Figure 4). The concept began in Denmark with intergenerational housing, but as the communities aged, their needs inevitably changed and thus seniors cohousing was born. This form of elderly dwelling has found renewed interest in recent years, especially in Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark and the US (Durrett 2005, 4). Adult day-care centers, continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs), elderly co-housing and intergenerational projects are inspiring new forms of elderly living (Abbott et al, 2009).

Drawing from the ideals of co-operative living, groups of unrelated families live together, however, in the cohousing model each individual or family has a separate dwelling enabling them to choose how much they want to participate in community activities (Durrett 2005, 4). These communities are unique in their extensive use of common facilities, encouraging engagement among residents. The sharing of meals, community chores and collective hobbies creates social relationships that are built on solving practical needs together.

These models aim to extend the stay in both independent and assisted living scenarios, and also in part, to substitute the skilled nursing facility. Although the cohousing community approach is an excellent model in terms of its potential to reduce isolation and encourage social activity (Durrett 2005, 196), there are intrinsic issues built into this type of model. Disputes over chores and responsibilities, as well as informal-care obligations for ailing residents may become a burden particularly as residents reach advanced years.

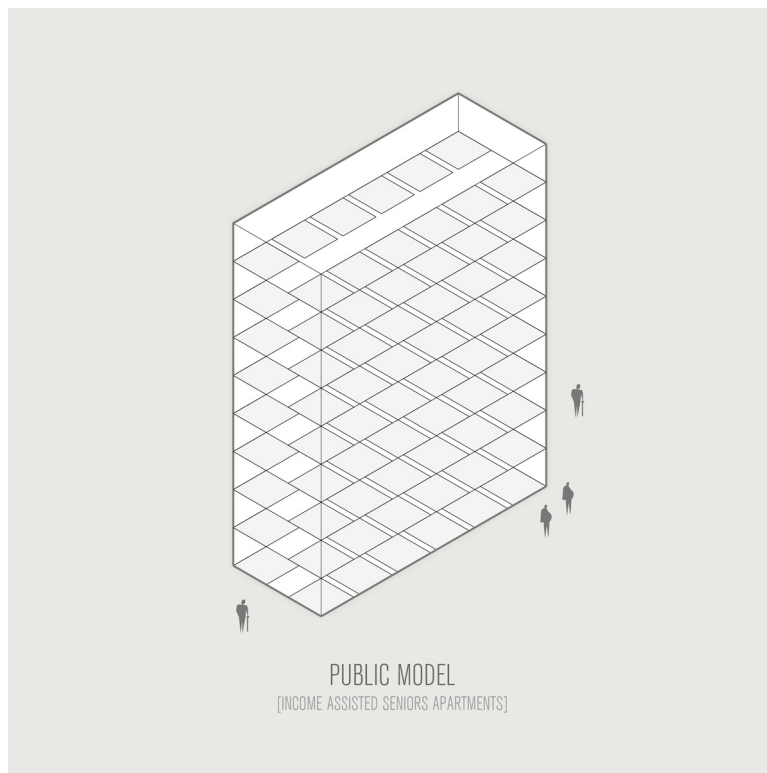


Figure 5. Diagram of the typical form of the public model - a low-income, rent-subsidized seniors apartment

Public Model

The public model of care generally places responsibility on the province or city to supply affordable income-assisted housing for low income seniors, or seniors who rely on disability pensions and social assistance. Rent is often determined by the annual income of each individual (Housing Nova Scotia 2016). Although the vast majority of seniors in Canada are financially secure (Statistics Canada 2015), many low-income elderly depend on this type of housing arrangement. Canada's ten provinces and three territories are largely responsible for direct service delivery to Canada's low-income seniors. Many senior-related services, advocacy and educational activities are provided by the non-governmental and private sectors.

In Canada, income-assisted seniors housing facilities generally take the form of larger scale multi-unit buildings (see Figure 5). The buildings are typically maintained by the city, but are often in disrepair. Although federal infrastructure funds are assigned for this type of public housing, there aren't nearly enough apartments to meet demand, and the improvements and upgrades to the existing buildings are slow and insufficient (Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance 2010, 45).

These dwellings typically provide some space for social activities in the form of a large communal room or lounge. However, the elderly in these buildings are typically living independently without assistance in their own individual apartments (Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance 2010, 49). As health declines and more assistance is required, it can be very difficult for low-income seniors to gain entry into assisted living or nursing homes due to long wait lists and strict entry requirements.

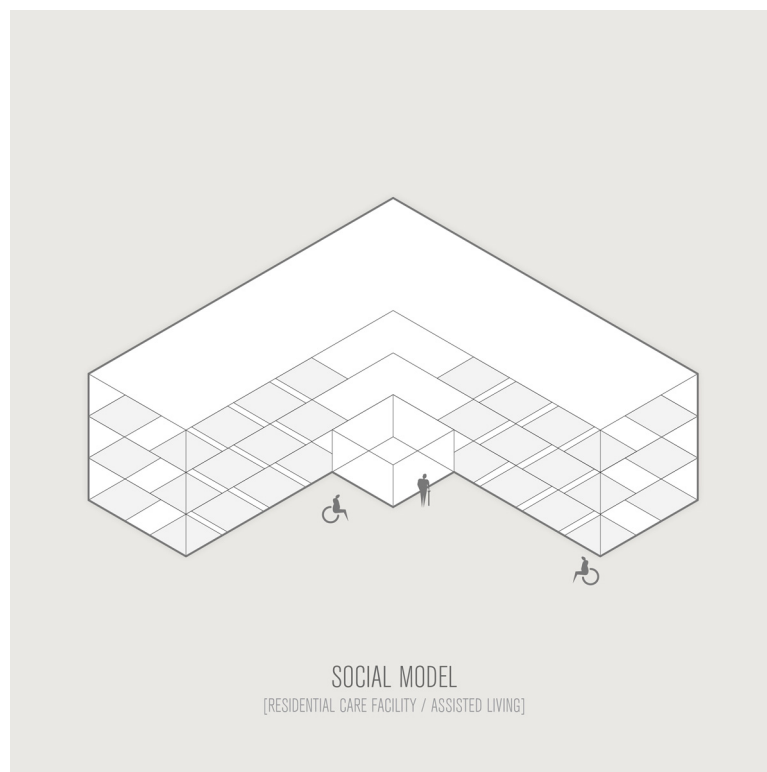


Figure 6. Diagram of the typical form of the social model - a residential care facility, rest home or assisted living facility

Social Model

The social model provides an increased level of care and service, catering to those individuals who would not be able to live at home independently. Assisted living facilities attempt to provide a home-like atmosphere by providing individual apartments where residents are able to live amongst their personal possessions and retain some sense of home and identity (see Figure 6). Seniors are meant to feel safe and secure in these types of living environments, knowing that their physical well-being and security is looked after by a team of physicians, nurses, therapists and staff (Schwarz and Brent 1999, 48).

The social model of care attempts to address a wider range of issues than just the physical health of the resident. Assisted living facilities consider the social, mental, and emotional aspects of a resident's well-being to be just as important as physical care. According to Schwarz and Brent, assisted living facilities are successful when they are able to distance the nursing and medical services from the main activity and residential areas of the facility in order to emphasize the living component (1999, 45). Personalized care is provided to residents in order to support flexible schedules and routines, and give residents a sense of autonomy and personal freedom (Schwarz and Brent 1999, 46). Residents benefit from this less-structured environment through informal interactions with others and the sense of community that is generated.

Assisted facilities, when compared with nursing homes, are much more considerate of a wider range of needs for the aging individual. However, the transition and displacement of an individual from their own home into this type of facility means that they are forced to leave their own previously established comforts and social networks, creating stress and anxiety. Additionally, there is considerable evidence suggesting that the idea of age-segregation within a living environment creates very strong negative connotations amongst residents (Schwarz and Brent 1999, 33).

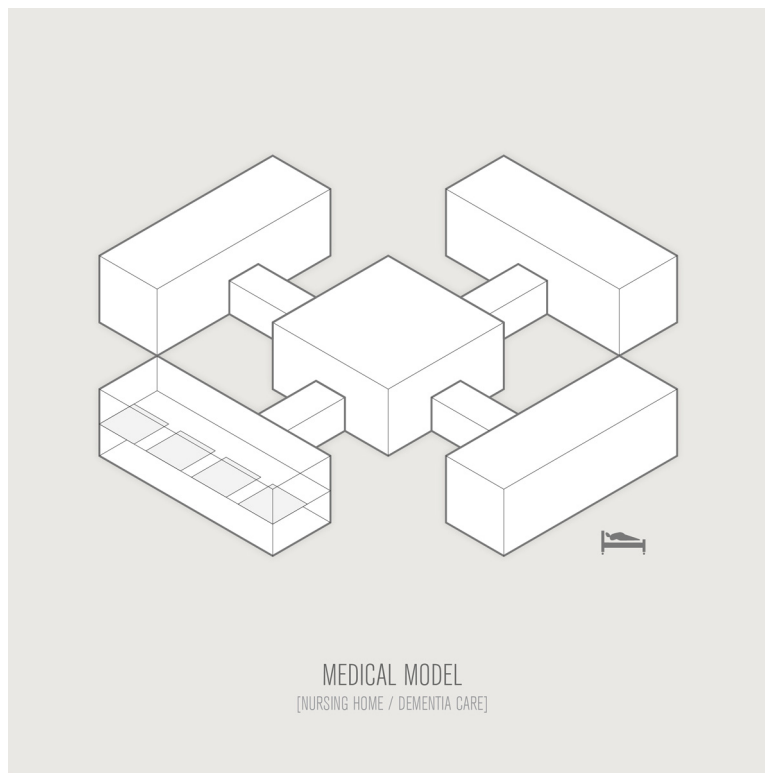


Figure 7. Diagram of the typical form of the medical model - a long term care facility, nursing home, or dementia care residence shown with a centralized zone and wings radiating from the center (based on hospital design)

Medical Model

The medical model of care, or nursing home, is meant to accommodate individuals who are physically and mentally unable to look after themselves, and who require full-time care (see Figure 7). Based on the hospital model both in architectural form and function, the medical model is a tightly regulated and efficient system of management for frail populations with complex healthcare needs (Schwarz and Brent 1999, 45).

Admission into a nursing home signifies the last stop on the care journey for many, and can be a difficult and stressful transition. Environmental change in the form of institutionalization may warn the older individual, through subtle changes, that the future holds a significant amount of loss and decline (Rowles and Ohta 1984). The sense of competence and control over one's living environment is dramatically decreased at this stage, requiring emotionally demanding adaptations in lifestyle and surroundings.

Physical health typically remains a priority over the social well-being of the resident in a nursing home. Many individuals require highly specialized care at this stage (ex. Alzheimer's or dementia care), and have no other choice but to rely on the specific healthcare services provided by these facilities.

In the medical model, facilities seem to concentrate on keeping the patient alive and managing behavior as expediently as possible. Within this model, elderly residents are typically viewed as a homogeneous group - "the patients" - sharing similar losses in competency, such as visual acuity, dexterity, and cognitive capacity. The care environment reflects this view, focusing on the distribution of uniform services, with each room and each floor identical. (Schwarz and Brent 1999, 91).

The lack of meaningful activities, cognitive challenges and stimulation create sedentary lifestyles, accelerating the effects of mental and physical aging in the medical model environment. The medical model does not approach care with a holistic assessment of the individual (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual), but rather treats the individual based on their physical and biological condition only.



Figure 8. Diagram of the eight domains of an age-friendly city (World Health Organization 2007)

CHAPTER 3: CRITIQUES

AGING AND DWELLING

The institutionalization of elderly care has isolated, segregated, and stigmatized the aging to the point where they remain one of the most marginalized groups within urban environments (Simpson 2015, 15). The social, economic, political, cultural and technological transformations contributing to the massive quantitative increase in the number and proportion of the aged has not yet been fully met by expanded dwelling and lifestyle models. A shift in attitudes toward social and living arrangements for the elderly is required, perhaps the most significant of which is the development of an entirely new set of urban formats and methodologies based on a more holistic understanding of the changing needs and desires of this demographic (see Figure 8). The areas in which these changes will have the largest impact include the home, work, spiritual and social environments of the aging.

The Home Environment

The increasing dominance of the elderly as a sociodemographic group (and corresponding lack of appropriate dwelling options), has seen a shift in preference of the dominant household type for those 65 years and older (Simpson 2015, 50). There is a movement away from the assisted living or traditional multi-generational family households toward smaller, single-generational household units consisting of either married couples or individuals living alone. More and more, seniors are expressing tastes for various independent living options, due in part to rising income, lack of kin availability, and changing cultural values that have transformed traditional family norms and attitudes (see Figure 9). The break-up of the family unit in modern society has severed home ties and family solidarity within the dwelling environment in North America (Pastalan 1989, 5). Instead, seniors are preferring the idea of “intimacy at a distance,” and seeking housing arrangements that suit their particular phase of aging.

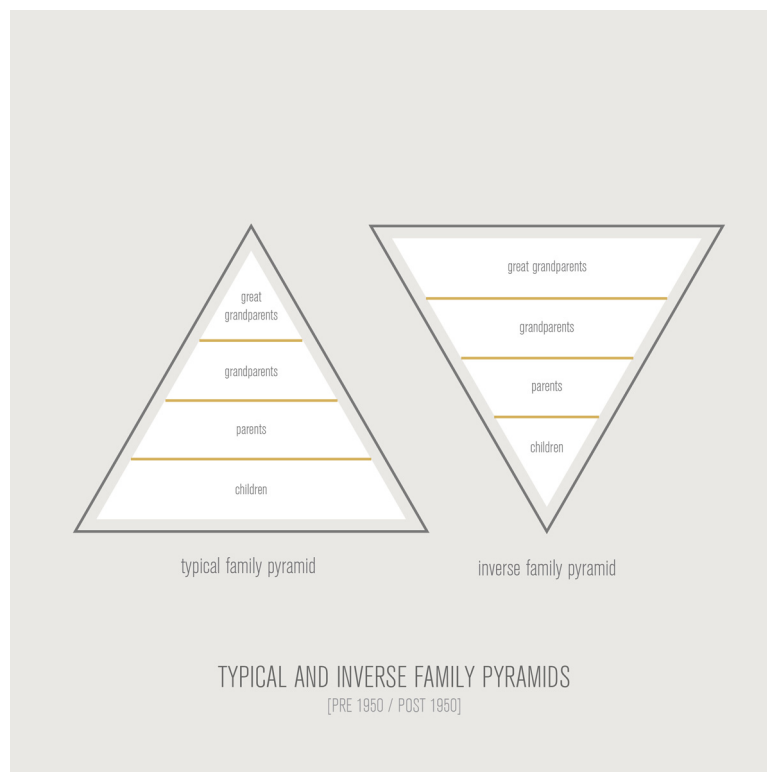


Figure 9. Diagram of typical and inverse family pyramids depicting the changing nature of family dynamics in North America (World Health Organization 2007)

The Work Environment

There has been an unprecedented transformation in human longevity during the last one and a half centuries known as the “secular shift in aging” or the “longevity revolution.” Within this period, life expectancies in developed countries have almost doubled, and for demographers, this achievement represents one of humanity’s greatest triumphs - the victory over premature mortality (Simpson 2011, 5). This shift is largely due to advances in medical care, and has allowed for the expansion of our understanding of the phases of “old age” (see Figure 10). Increased numbers of healthy, active seniors are seen in the workforce for longer periods than ever before - and many who have recently “retired” are interested in continuing to work in new and creative ways. According to a study done by RIBA, 30% of 46-65 year olds in North America want to continue to be involved in work, but on their own terms (2013, 24). This changing attitude towards new opportunities for work and collaboration is one way of increasing societal meaning and purpose for the aging.

The Spiritual Environment

The spiritual environment is an often overlooked, but incredibly important dimension of dwelling and aging. Individual connection with spirituality can influence the experience of aging dramatically. Spiritual experiences occur through a variety of avenues, such as our senses, consciousness/awareness, or through daily practices such as prayer or meditation. Spiritual practices allow us to celebrate and appreciate our experiences and presence, transcend the personal self, and connect directly with the sacred (Atchley 2009, 15). Considerable evidence has suggested that spiritual experience and development become increasingly important for many people in later life, although often overlooked in models for aging. Social gerontologist Robert Atchley suggests that as age increases, so does the proportion of people who are “consciously involved in an inner exploration of the meaning of their existence and their relation to the universe” (2009, 20).

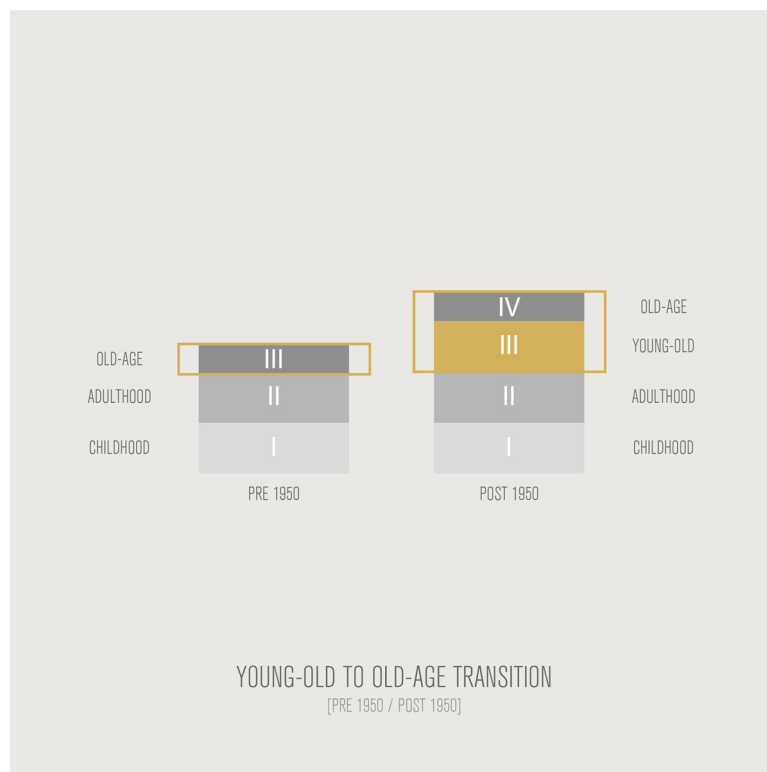


Figure 10. Diagram of expanded old-age phase to include 'young-old' (Simpson 2015)

The Social Environment

At some point along the aging phase timeline, the transition of social interactions and social networks outside of the household tend to shift from predominantly compulsory, work-focused interactions to more leisure-centered voluntary activities. This shift in activity has led to the aging being stigmatized as less productive members of society. However, according to Laslett, this shift represents a key opportunity of the third age, "The diminution of compulsion in social and individual life may yet free those in the years of personal achievement to create forms of social collaboration previously unknown" (1989, 58). Existing forms of this type of social collaboration include interest-based clubs, volunteer associations, courses or hobbies. Possibilities for new collective social spheres of interaction are emerging as the aging begin to engage more actively in their communities. According to Hopflinger, social activities that were previously considered the preserve of young adults are increasingly defined as the prerequisites to aging successfully (2008, 40).

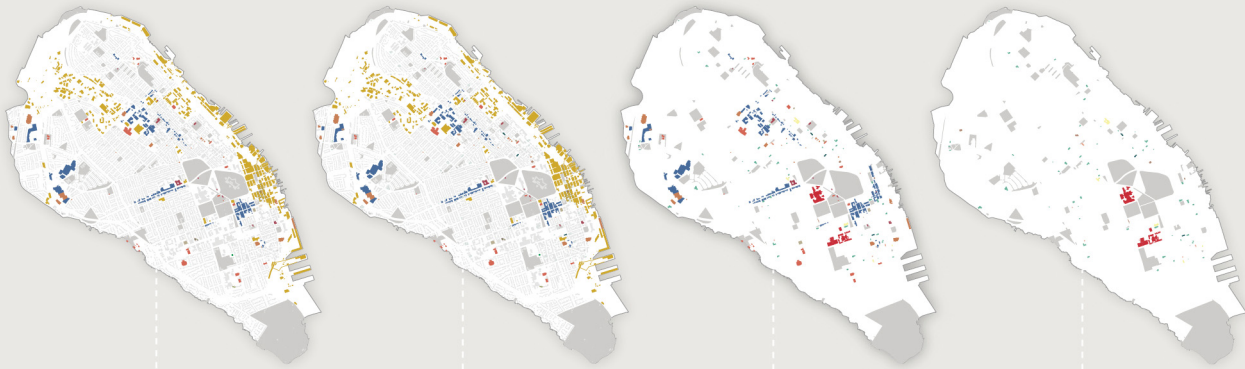
Balance: A Paradigm Shift

As discussed previously, the idea of "retirement" from the world is quickly becoming a concept and a view that seniors are uncomfortable with. The traditional life phase model of learning, working and retiring in modern society must be replaced by a more continuous and inclusive model: a reconnection of the older population with production (where possible) and reintegration in society at large (Oosterman 2011, 3). This paradigm shift towards a holistic and increasingly balanced approach to aging will provide new opportunities to design flexible and appropriate housing, capture wisdom and life experience through the extension of workforce participation, celebrate spirituality, and provide creative space for new forms of social collaboration (see Figure 11).

One method of testing these opportunities is to study them through the lens of an existing population of aging individuals. For the purpose of this thesis, the Shambhala community in Halifax will serve as one such example.



Figure 11. Timeline showing mapping of the phases of life (birth-death) in Halifax according to which services and amenities are valued at each stage (base map from Halifax Open Data 2016)



DEATH

ADULT

WORK / HOME / SOCIAL / CULTURE

- PARKS
- HOUSING
- WORK
- GROCERY STORES / MARKETS
- COMMUNITY CENTRES
- RECREATION CENTRES
- SHOPPING
- THEATRES
- ART GALLERIES

YOUNG-OLD

WORK / HOME / SOCIAL / CULTURE / LEISURE

- PARKS
- SENIORS HOUSING
- SENIOR CARE SERVICES
- WORK
- PLACES OF WORSHIP
- GROCERY STORES / MARKETS
- COMMUNITY CENTRES
- RECREATION CENTRES
- SHOPPING
- THEATRES
- ART GALLERIES

OLD

SOCIAL / LEISURE / HEALTH / SPIRITUALITY

- PARKS
- SENIORS APARTMENTS
- NURSING HOMES
- RETIREMENT HOMES
- SENIOR CARE SERVICES
- PLACES OF WORSHIP
- HOSPITALS
- GROCERY STORES / MARKETS
- COMMUNITY CENTRES
- LIBRARIES
- SHOPPING

OLD-OLD

HEALTH / SPIRITUALITY / MEMORY

- PARKS
- SENIORS APARTMENTS
- NURSING HOMES
- RETIREMENT HOMES
- SENIOR CARE SERVICES
- PLACES OF WORSHIP
- HOSPITALS

INDEPENDENT
HIGH-FUNCTIONING

TRANSITIONING
MID-FUNCTIONING

TRANSITIONING +
MID-FUNCTIONING

ASSISTANCE

ASSISTANCE +
END-OF-LIFE LOW-FUNCTIONING



Figure 12. Photograph of the Shambhala centre in Halifax (Shambhala Halifax 2016)

CHAPTER 4: SHAMBHALA VISION

The premise of Shambhala vision is that, in order to establish an enlightened society for others, we need to discover what inherently we have to offer the world. So, to begin with, we should make an effort to examine our own experience, in order to see what it contains that is of value in helping ourselves and others to uplift their existence. (Trungpa 2007, 11)

INTRODUCTION TO SHAMBHALA

Shambhala is the name of a legendary kingdom nestled high in the Himalayas of Tibet. According to the stories, it was a place of peace and prosperity, governed by fair and just rulers, a model society. Buddhism played an important role in how this society developed, mostly through the practice of meditation and the principles of loving kindness and concern for all beings. The Dorje Dradul, the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, was a highly revered Tibetan teacher who brought the teachings and lineage of Shambhala Buddhism to the West (see Figure 13).

The basic principle behind Shambhala wisdom is an unwavering conviction in the basic goodness of humanity as a secular practice for achieving enlightened society. Trungpa Rinpoche was a pioneer in translating and delivering these ancient Buddhist teachings to the contemporary North American audience. Many of his disciples emigrated from the United States to Nova Scotia with him in the 1980's, establishing Halifax as a significant Shambhala Buddhist community, and the international headquarters of the organization (see Figure 13).

Shambhala is considered to be the source of the Kalachakra, which is the highest and most esoteric branch of Tibetan Buddhism. The practice of Shambhala Buddhism is "not seen as a means to an end, but as the expression of awakened mind in everyday life" (Tenzin 1982, 67). As such, the "path" of Shambhala is to uncover awakened mind.

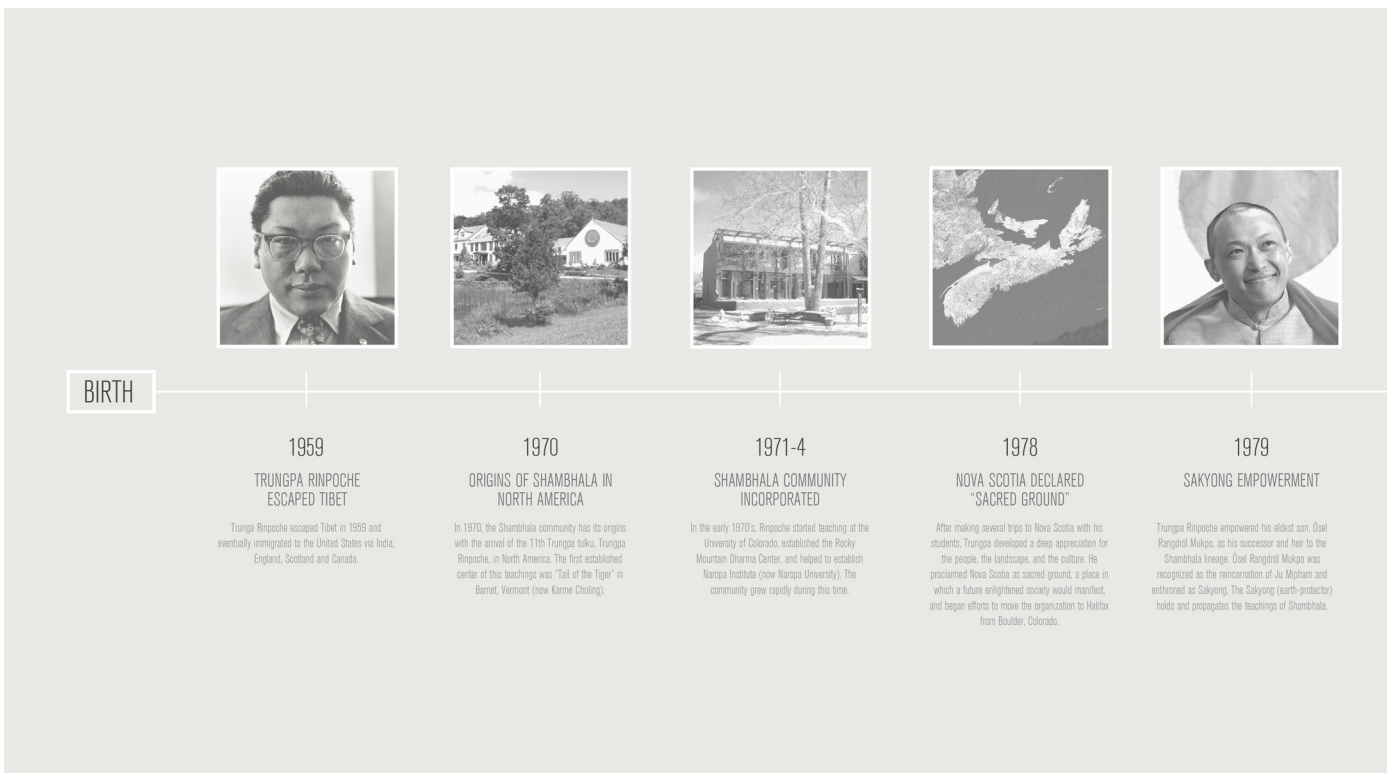


Figure 13. Timeline depicting the history of the Shambhala community from its origins in North America to the present (Shambhala Halifax 2016)



1986

MOVE TO HALIFAX

In 1986, Trungpa moved the international headquarters of Vajradhatu to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he died the following year. A large number of his disciples emigrated from the United States to Nova Scotia along with him.



1987

TRUNGPA RINPOCHE PASSES AWAY

Shortly after Trungpa Rinpoche moves to Nova Scotia he passes away in 1987.



2000

"SHAMBHALA BUDDHISM" NAMED

The term Shambhala buddhism was introduced in 2000 to describe his presentation of the Shambhala teachings originally conceived by Chogyam Trungpa as secular practices for achieving enlightened society.



2007

SAKYONG IS MARRIED TO KHANDRO TSEYANG PALMO

In August 2007, the Sakyong married Khadro Tseyang Palmo with a ceremony conducted by Drukpa Wang Rinpoche during the Kalapa Festival in Halifax. Khadro Tseyang Palmo is currently the Sakyong Wangmo, a title held previously by Lady Diana Mukpo, now he Druk Sakyong Wangmo.



2015

SHAMBHALA IS AGING

Today, there are over two hundred Shambhala Meditation Centers, Groups and Residential Retreat Centers around the world. The largest communities are Halifax, Nova Scotia; Boulder, Colorado; northern Vermont; and New York City. The majority of Shambhala community members are now 60+.

PRESENT

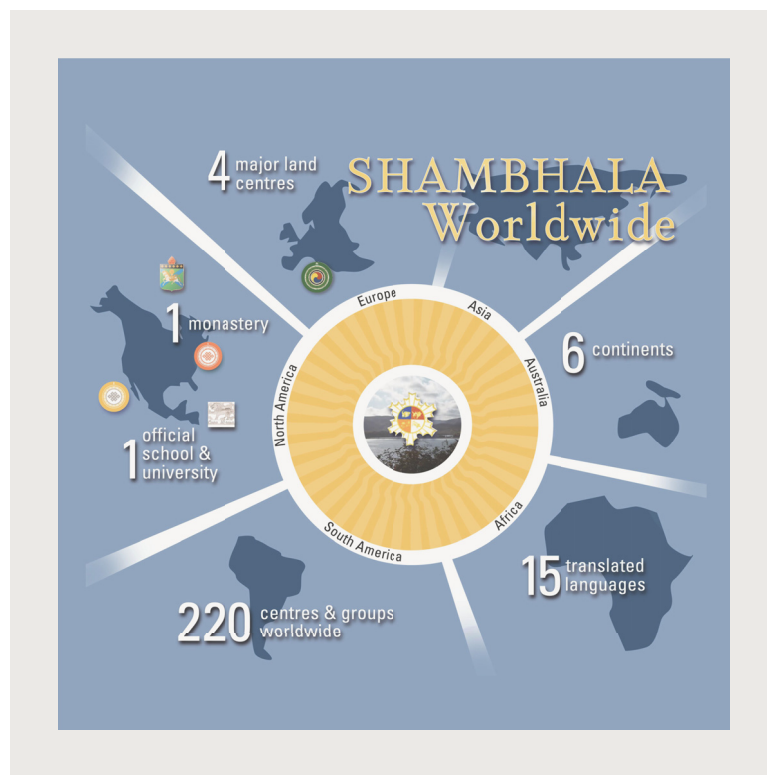


Figure 14. Diagram of the global community network of Shambhala meditation centers, monasteries and schools around the world (Shambhala Halifax 2016)

DWELLING AND SHAMBHALA

In Shambhala culture, the household dwelling signifies the foundation of the Shambhala vision: to build enlightened society. It represents the starting point for our frame of reference and the source of our culture, values, and ethics. According to Shambhala household theory, the home is “where we practice and manifest our most meaningful principles,” and the “expeditor of our intentions - whether positive or negative” (Mipham 2015, 4).

The home serves as the expression of our intentions to create enlightened society and be of benefit to others. When the home is properly managed and maintained, it allows us to live with dignity and share the values and culture manifested at home with society. When the home is neglected, it can be a place to retract and hide from the world, or a burden that is to be avoided. Regardless of how we treat our living environment, the values practiced within it form our initial understanding of greater society.

According to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, the house and the householder have a unique relationship, “the home can be likened to the body, and its occupant can be likened to the mind. By relating to the home, we unify mind and body - or in this case, house and householder - which enhances our chances for living a long life and being of benefit. Sickness, misfortune, and obstacles are greatly reduced” (2015, 5). This relationship is developed through the path of the Shambhala teachings, which are often called the Kalapayana. *Kalapa* is the notion of household and *Yana* means “path” or “the way” (Mipham 2015, 3).

The Shambhala household path is rooted in the principles of tiger, lion, garuda and dragon; the four dignities (Mipham 2015, 5). The four dignities represent sacred qualities developed on the path to enlightenment for the individual, but can also be used as a framework for balance within the home and work environments.



Figure 15. Image of the mythical four dignities: tiger, lion, garuda and dragon (Shambhala Halifax 2015)

PRINCIPLES OF SHAMBHALA

An analysis of the principles within the Shambhala tradition must begin with an understanding of most essential Shambhala principle; the notion that humanity and society are basically good (Mipham 2013, x). This principle is not especially religious or secular - it is simply the unwavering belief that the core of humanity is complete, good, and worthy. For the purpose of this thesis, this underlying principle serves as the starting point to further investigate the Shambhala principles of the four dignities, the concept of drala, and the mandala principle as they pertain to spatial and programmatic design decisions for elderly dwelling.

The Four Dignities

The path of the four dignities represents the journey towards complete enlightenment that is associated with egolessness and manifesting authentic presence. According to Trungpa Rinpoche, "On the one hand, authentic presence is the result of a gradual, developmental process of letting go of ego fixation. On the other hand, it is also the result of an instantaneous, magical process of letting go of fixed mind" (Trungpa 2007, 185). In general, the dignities of meek (tiger) and perky (lion) are connected to the body, while the dignities of outrageous (garuda) and inscrutable (dragon) are connected to the mind (see Figure 15). Through balancing the dignities, the mind and body are a constant support for one another, allowing individuals (warriors) to incorporate more and more space into their lives, so that ultimately they can "achieve the realization of the universal monarch" (Trungpa 2007, 186). Trungpa explained that as our worlds become more and more open, our patterns of self-centeredness and egotistical existence disappear.

Although the path of the four dignities represents an advanced stage in the Shambhala path, we all experience the four dignities in some form. As such, the four dignities can represent a programmatic framework for exploring the design of a balanced, authentic space for intentional dwelling communities.

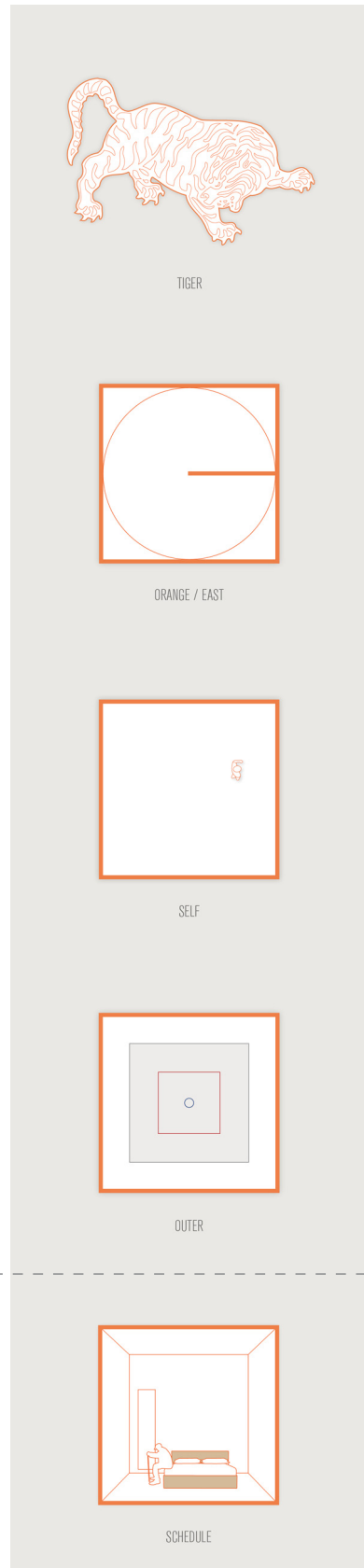


Figure 16. Diagrams translating qualities of the dignity of meek [tiger]

Meek [Tiger]

Meekness is the first dignity. Meek here does not mean being feeble; it just means resting in a state of simplicity, being uncomplicated and, at the same time, approachable. Whether others are hostile or friendly, the warrior of meek extends a sense of kindness to himself and mercy to others. (Trungpa 2007, 188)

Meekness represents a humble and gentle state of being at the beginning stage of a warrior's journey. Meek is symbolized by the tiger, a confident creature that walks slowly and mindfully through the jungle (Trungpa 2007, 189). The dignity of meek is associated with the colour orange, the eastern direction, and the body (see Figure 16). Meekness is first and foremost concerned with modesty, genuine nature, and being self-contained. The second stage of the tiger is concerned with unconditional confidence, a natural state of awareness and mindfulness in the way that one conducts affairs. Once the tiger develops confidence, a vast mind appears from seeing the greatness in their own abilities.

In relation to the home, the tiger is concerned with the notion of self and the meticulous details of inhabitation; location, size, budget, and environmental surroundings (Mipham 2015, 6). The dignity of meek uses his confidence to manage the home properly, including considerations for schedule, cleaning, and organizing. Following a natural schedule gives purpose and a sense of meaning and fulfillment to the warrior of meek. Measuring the passage of time with a schedule allows us to determine how we are living. This involves being acutely aware of even the most basic schedules including the seasons, day, and night (Mipham 2015, 11).

The dignity of meek represents the most basic and humble beginnings on a warrior's journey. In this way, the programmatic interpretation of the dignity of meek in the context of dwelling could be private individual homes.

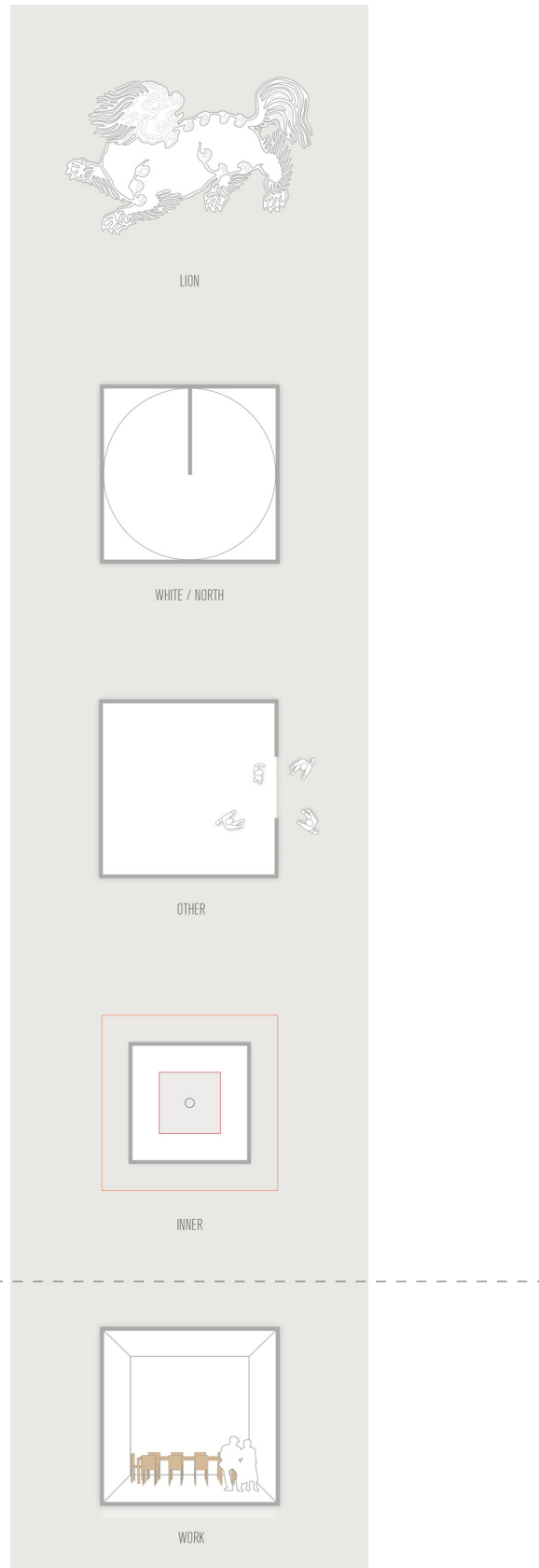


Figure 17. Diagrams translating qualities of the dignity of perky [lion]

Perky [Lion]

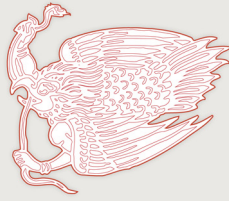
Perky does not mean that one is perked up by temporary situations, but it refers to unconditional cheerfulness, which comes from ongoing discipline. Just as the snow lion enjoys the refreshing air, the warrior of perky is constantly disciplined and continuously enjoys discipline. For him, discipline is not a demand but a pleasure. (Trungpa 2007, 192)

The dignity of perky is symbolized by the snow lion, a energetic and vibrant creature who roams the mountains (Trungpa 2007, 191). The dignity of perky is associated with the colour white, the northern direction, the body and is the second dignity on the warrior's path (see Figure 17). The snow lion represents the quality of cheerfulness and the notion of physical enjoyment. The lion is connected with the body and uplifted and youthful energy allowing room for the body to be a healthy host for the mind.

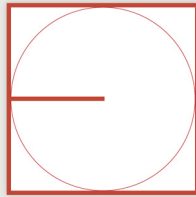
Within the household context, the lion "relates with hosting and entertaining others - how we use the home to accommodate and properly engage family and friends. This is rooted in kindness." (Mipham 2015, 7). The dignity of perky enjoys engaging in conversation, idea exchange, and enjoys the company of others.

The lion uses work as the demonstration of good confidence and as a means of connecting and benefitting others. Through work, the lion is able to maintain the discipline of the tiger, giving him a sense of accomplishment and purpose (Mipham 2015, 12).

The dignity of perky moves beyond the meekness and gentleness of the tiger through connecting with those directly around him. Thus the programmatic interpretation for the dignity of perky could be a semi-private communal work space. This is a place where neighbours, co-workers or peers are able to gather and share in working together.



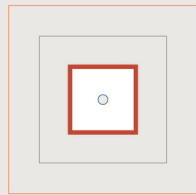
GARUDA



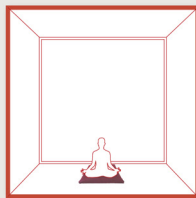
RED / WEST



SACRED



SECRET



SPACE

Figure 18. Diagrams translating qualities of the dignity of outrageous [garuda]

Outrageous [Garuda]

Outrageousness does not mean being unreasonable or, for that matter, wild. Outrageousness here refers to possessing the strength and power of warriorship. Outrageousness is based on the achievement of fearlessness, which means going completely beyond fear. In order to overcome fear, it is also necessary to overcome hope. (Trungpa 2007, 194)

The dignity of outrageous is represented by the garuda, a mythical Tibetan bird that hatches full grown and stretches its wings into outer space, beyond any limits (Trungpa 2007, 194). The dignity of outrageous is associated with the colour red, the western direction, and the mind (see Figure 18). It is the second to last dignity on the warriors path. The garuda is able to be daring and enter situations without hope and fear, not trapped by any kind of societal norm or boundary. The absence of hope and fear creates an increased amount of space, of which the warrior has no need or desire to measure. He is free, and thus able to maintain a vast mind.

According to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, the garuda is concerned with the sacred aspect of dwelling - the inner meditative journey of connecting to a higher and deeper principle (Mipham 2015, 7). This could mean any individual practicing sacredness, relating to drala and connecting with the spiritual and inspirational element of living.

The increased amount of space experienced by the dignity of outrageous can be understood in both the physical sense as well as in terms of a schedule. Space within our daily routines allows us to absorb and reflect on our experiences and what we have accomplished. Often times physical space, or the feeling of spaciousness can help us with this.

The dignity of outrageous is able to experience a sense of space and freedom from hope and fear based on their previous training in meek and perky. Therefore the programmatic interpretation of a space for the dignity of outrageous could be a semi-public contemplative, sacred space. This programmatic element should increase one's feeling of vastness and freedom.

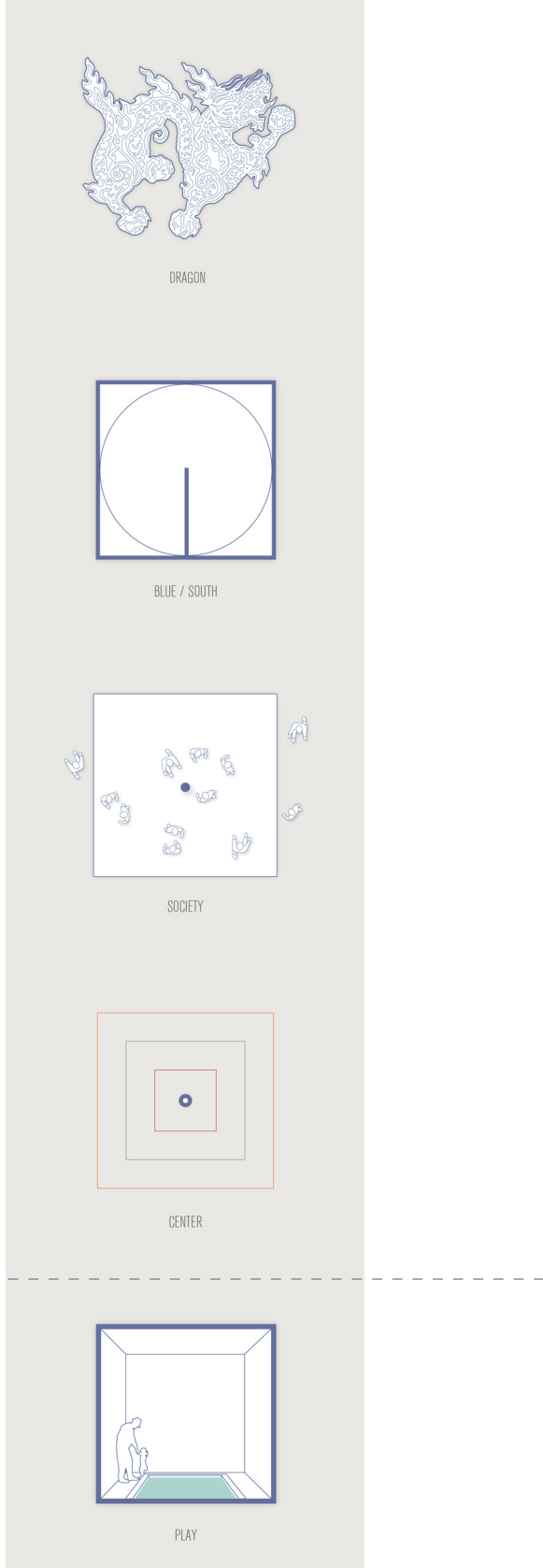


Figure 19. Diagrams translating qualities of the dignity of inscrutable [dragon]

Inscrutable [Dragon]

Inscrutability falls into two categories. First there is the state of inscrutability, and second the expression of inscrutability. The state of inscrutability is based on fearlessness. This is unlike the conventional concept of inscrutability, which is deviousness or a blank wall. For the warrior of inscrutable, fearlessness has been achieved, particularly from the previous experience of outrageousness. From that fearlessness, you develop gentleness and sympathy, which allow you to be non-committal, but with a sense of humor. (Trungpa 2007, 196)

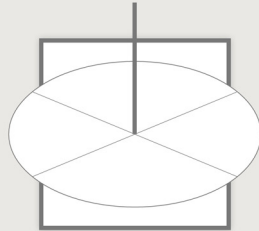
The dignity of inscrutable is represented by the dragon, an energetic, powerful, and unwavering force. It is associated with the colour blue, the southern direction, and the mind (see Figure 19). The dignity of inscrutable represents the culmination of the warrior's path and in essence, a complete sense of dwelling. The home environment in this sense is used to better society - rather than viewing it as a retreat, it becomes the generator of good moral values that can benefit society (Mipham 2015, 13).

According to Shambhala household theory, the dignity of inscrutable is most concerned with creating enlightened society. At the end of the warrior's path, one is able to let go through enjoyment and see the humor and joy in our everyday lives. For this reason, the dignity of inscrutable is seen as being concerned with playfulness, and the need for enjoyment (Mipham 2015, 13). The warrior has experienced the path, thus increasing their ability to deal with difficulty and ultimately allowing them to see the inseparability of life and death.

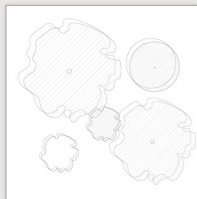
Training in the dignities of meek, perky and outrageous have prepared the warrior for the state of wholesomeness needed to connect with greater society in a light, and joyful way. A programmatic interpretation of this stage could therefore be a large public community space where people can gather and play.



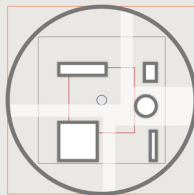
DRALA



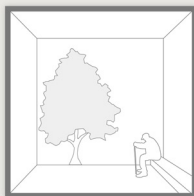
CONNECTING HEAVEN + EARTH



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



CONNECTION / PATH



CONNECT

Figure 20. Diagrams translating the given and interpreted qualities of drala

Drala

Dra means “enemy” or “opponent,” and *la* means “above.” So *drala* literally means “above the enemy,” “beyond the enemy.” Drala is the unconditioned wisdom and power of the world that are beyond any dualism; therefore, drala is above any enemy or conflict. It is wisdom beyond aggression. (Trungpa 2007, 108)

Within the Shambhala tradition, drala is the principle used to describe atmospheric qualities and connections to the environment experienced through our sense perceptions. Through exploring the depth of perception, one is able to engage in the elemental and magical strength inherent in the world. The principle of drala refers to the sacred energy and power that exist when we step beyond aggression and connect via our sense perceptions to the elemental presence of the world. Each of the senses is considered to be an unlimited field of perception (see Figure 20).

Some religious traditions view sense perceptions as problematic due to their ability to arouse worldly desires (Trungpa 2007, 107). However, in the Shambhala view, our ability as humans to experience the phenomenal; to see sights, to hear sounds, to taste food and touch textures is seen as a natural, sacred gift.

The dralas are the elements of reality - water of water, fire of fire, earth of earth - anything that connects you with the elemental quality of reality, anything that reminds you of the depth of perception. (Trungpa 2007, 107)

The magic of drala ties us to particular places through our own unique experiences. The Shambhala principle of drala can thus be interpreted architecturally through programmatic spaces that allows us to connect with the natural environment in a particular place through via our sense perceptions. This principle inherently suggests human connection to light, air, water, earth and sky.

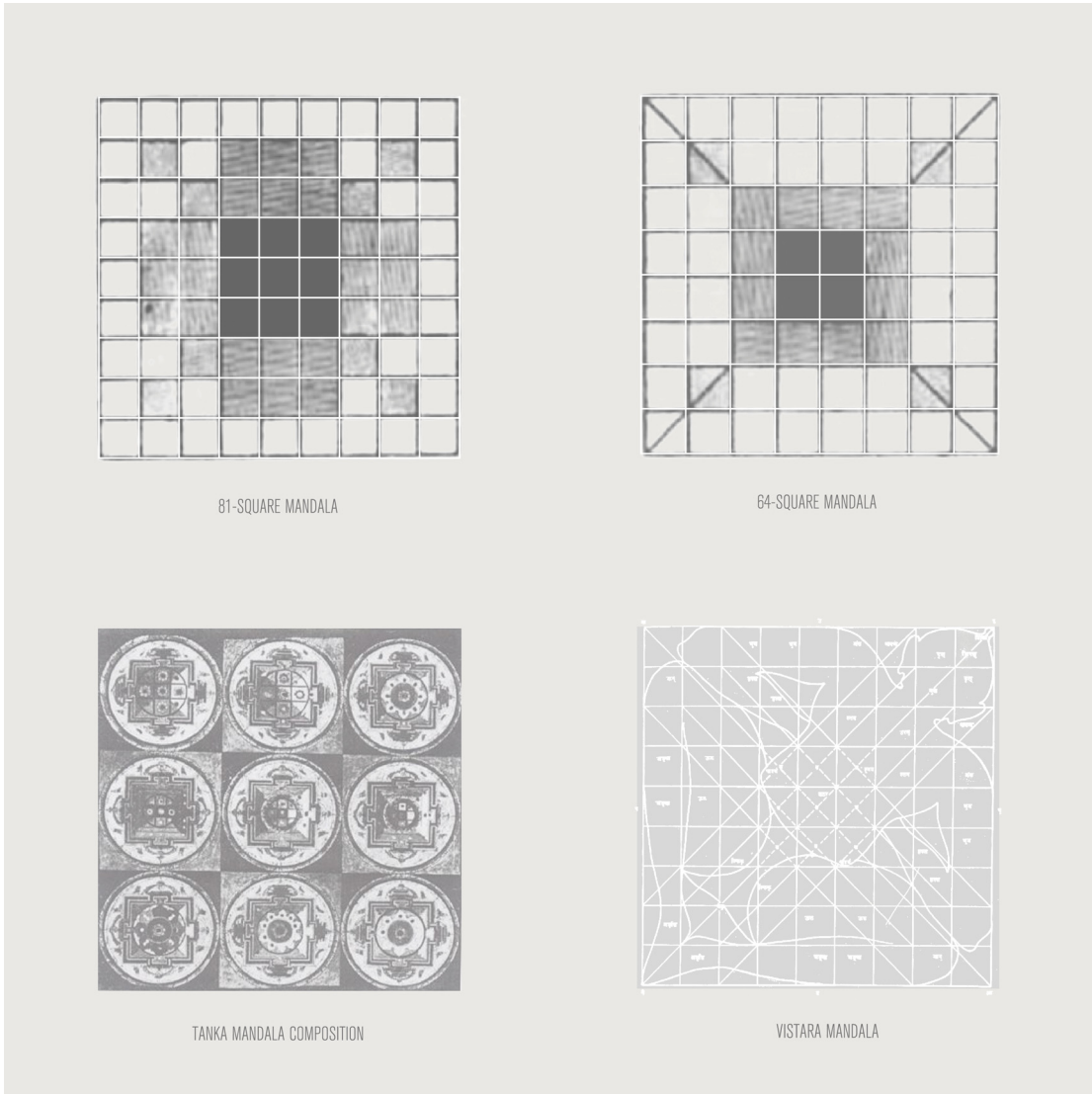


Figure 21. Various representations of mandalas showing composition, relation to human figure and size differences (Schirra 2015)

Mandala Principle

The origin of the mandala has roots in several continents and within many cultures. Cretan labyrinths and Indian cave mazes portrayed winding paths with dead ends rather than a plotted path toward the center. Maze maps depicting the pilgrimage route from Europe to Jerusalem placed the holy city in the map's center as targeted destination (Walcott 2006, 74). In the Hindu tradition from which Buddhism sprung, yantras or mandalas (geometric diagrams or objects) were composed and used as aids to meditation. The yantra form could be seen constructed in buildings such as the Javanese Hindu temple in Barabudur, a four-sided structure whose stacked square tiers culminate in three concentric circles topped by a round peak in the middle (Eliade 1986). It is also seen in two-dimensional square platforms that include motifs such as a central deity surrounded by geometric figures, or an enclosure with a central T-shaped opening at the cardinal points. Yantras are visually projected in three-dimensional space as residences for a deity (see Figure 21). According to Meister, yantras unearthed at ancient historical building sites were used as devices used "to attract Divine Energy of a Deity into a sacred space" (Meister 2003, 258). Mandalas are distinctive features of religious art throughout the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist world serving as symbols that embody important aspects of their ancient cultures. The Tibetan understanding, construction and use of mandalas constitutes the most widely utilized contemporary form of traditional mandala.

An archetypal mandala form features a large circle with the circumference touching, or close to, a surrounding square and several square boxes or triangles inside the circle (see Figure 22). They are geometrical and flat projections that try to synthesize the complexity of the cosmos into a singular diagram. A two-dimensional drawing that progressively dissects and articulates this complexity by reiterating figures within figures, almost like that of a game of Chinese boxes. It is extreme rationality, represented by the basic shapes of the square or circle, integrated with the free flow of thoughts or chaos (Trungpa 1991, 3).

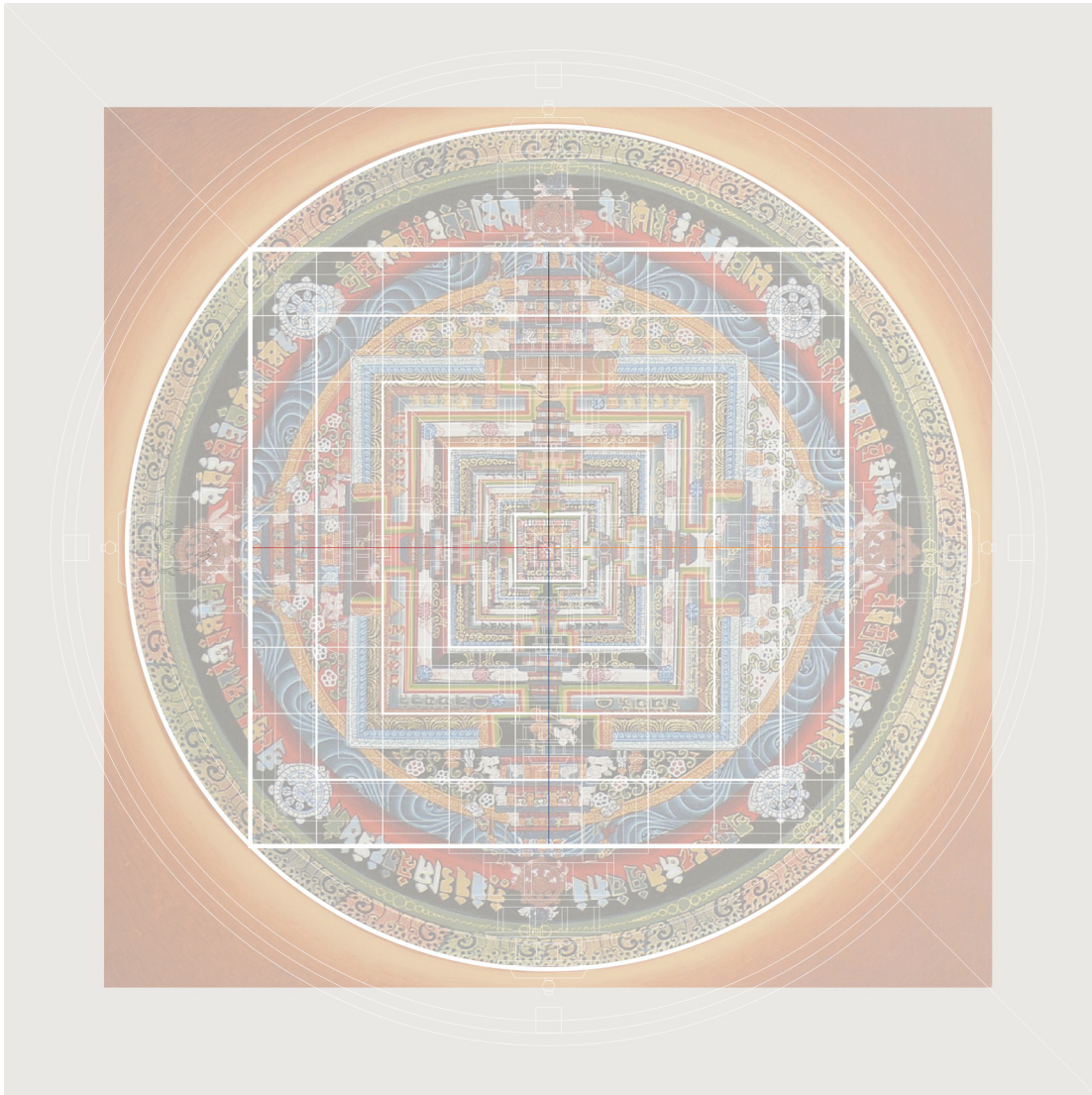


Figure 22. Diagram and image of the Kalachakra mandala (base map from Mandalas Para Todos 2014)

These combinations are produced by mathematical reasoning. They are based upon cold calculation; they are reducible to patterns of the utmost aridity. But deep within them, a sort of fever seems to goad on and to multiply the shapes; some mysterious genius of complication interlocks, enfolds, disorganizes, and reorganizes the entire labyrinth. Their very immobility sparkles with metamorphoses. Whether they be read as voids or solids, as vertical axes or as diagonals, each one of them both withholds the secret and exposes the reality of an immense number of possibilities. (Schirra 2015, 25)

Aspects of the use of Tibetan mandalas have been incorporated into the Shambhala tradition. According to the mandala principle, all phenomena are part of one reality - everything is interrelated and reflects a single totality, regardless if it is positive or negative. As Chögyam Trungpa explains in his work, from the perspective of the mandala principle, existence is orderly chaos. There is chaos and confusion because everything happens by itself, without any external ordering principle. At the same time, whatever happens expresses order and intelligence, wakeful energy and precision (Trungpa 1991, 3). Through meditative practices associated with the mandala principle, the opposites of experience – confusion and enlightenment, chaos and order, pain and pleasure – are revealed as inseparable parts of a total vision of reality (Trungpa 1991, 4). Mandala symbolism can be seen in many of the texts and imagery that surround the community (see Figure 23).

Using the mandala as the geometric basis for contemporary building design allows for a completely new way of structuring spatial sequences. The mandala acts as a spatial device to experiment with design and program, extracted from the principles of Buddhist and Hindu culture. According to Indian architect Charles Correa, the mandala serves as a geometric device and mindset, creating order and disposition, that can be understood through three basic themes, the 'void', the 'interlock' and the theme of 'worlds of worlds' (Schirra 2015, 27).

The "void" itself is the fundamental organizing force behind the mandala. Usually a significant void assumes a central position in the composition. It is a common place for sharing and exchange and the fulcrum around which complementary spaces of the building are organized (Schirra 2015, 27).

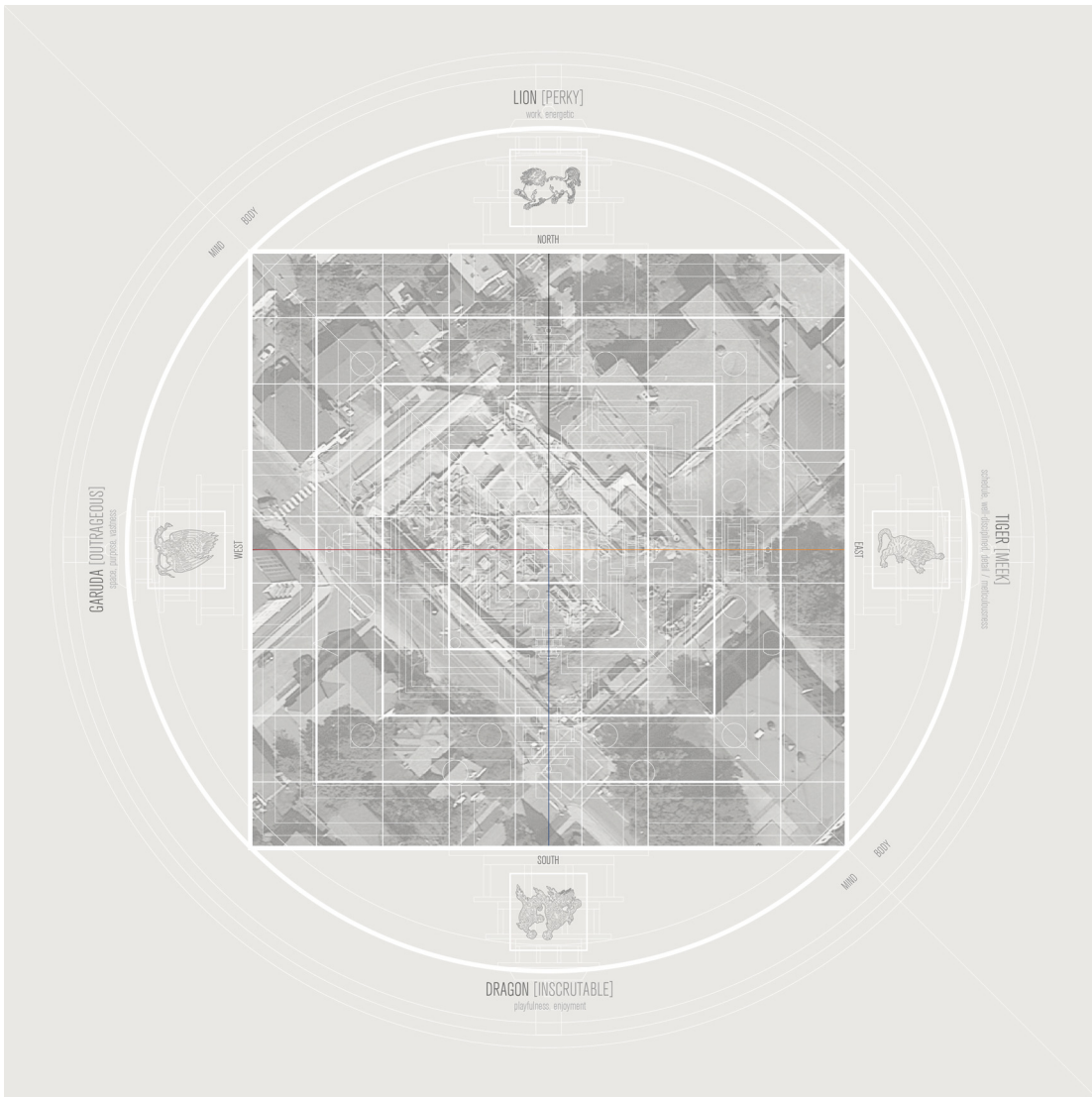


Figure 23. Diagram of the Kalachakra mandala superimposed with Shambhala principles and the thesis site in Halifax (base image from Google Maps)

The “interlock” is the way in which the mandala assumes definition. It is a method of compulsive complexity, a result of the oriental mindset conditions of coexistence and ambiguity, guaranteeing that everything is in place and everything has a role, all co-existing in an easy and natural pluralism.

The ‘worlds of worlds’ suggests a the layering effect of grids of grids, boxes of boxes, folds of folds, rooms of rooms. In the mandala even the void is not a unique volume, but subject to different degrees and scales, creating a fractal or nested effect: void, super-void, great void and the absolute void. The ‘worlds of worlds’ leads us in a continuous and sprawling series of leaps in scale. In this way, any single detail is a world and is, in turn, the container of other worlds.

Thus the architectural work is just one of the pieces of a larger world or community. It is a work on a human scale, and at the same time, at the scale of an entire city. It is a system through which different, and progressive, degrees of intimacy are defined and articulated, where the various rooms communicate with each other by means of a continuity, regulated by careful openings on bounding surfaces, effective thresholds that are regulators of light, air and privacy.



Figure 24. A meeting of the Halifax sangha (Shambhala Halifax 2016)

SHAMBHALA AGING MANIFESTO

The process of aging brings with it the perceived stigma that elderly become less and less useful members of society over time. Aging eventually may further lead to debilitating disease, dementia and frailty, eroding confidence and creating isolation. The question becomes: how, considering the physical and emotional suffering induced by the natural process of aging, do we stay connected with our human dignity, and the everyday-life contentment, joy, fearlessness and wisdom represented by the principles of the Shambhala path? The following statement was issued by the Shambhala working group on aging with the intention of providing guidance towards creating appropriate responses to this question.

1. The inherent nature of mind, basic goodness, being unconditional, does not change with age. No matter how old or infirm we may become, basic goodness remains fully intact.
2. Rather than viewing aging as leading to the fixation of long standing habitual patterns, with mind training (meditation practice), as we grow older there is the opportunity for mind to become more open and less fixed.
3. Physical and mental capacities inevitably change with increasing age.
4. In Shambhala we can simultaneously recognize both the opportunity to be more openly engaged with the world as we grow older, and the inevitable decline in physical and mental capacities, culminating in death.
5. In this context, 'conventional' retirement is a misguided myth. The idea that as we age we can 'retire' from the world and become less engaged is not consistent with Shambhala vision. Quite to the contrary, as our responsibilities and time commitment for family and livelihood decrease we can devote more time and energy to building enlightened society, as well as to our personal practices. This is 'enlightened' retirement.
6. As we age many of us will, at some point, experience physical ailments that will make it difficult, or perhaps impossible, for us to care for ourselves. At those times, other members of Shambhala society need to be positioned to come forward to be sure that what we are unable to do for ourselves is done.

(Shambhala Halifax 2016)

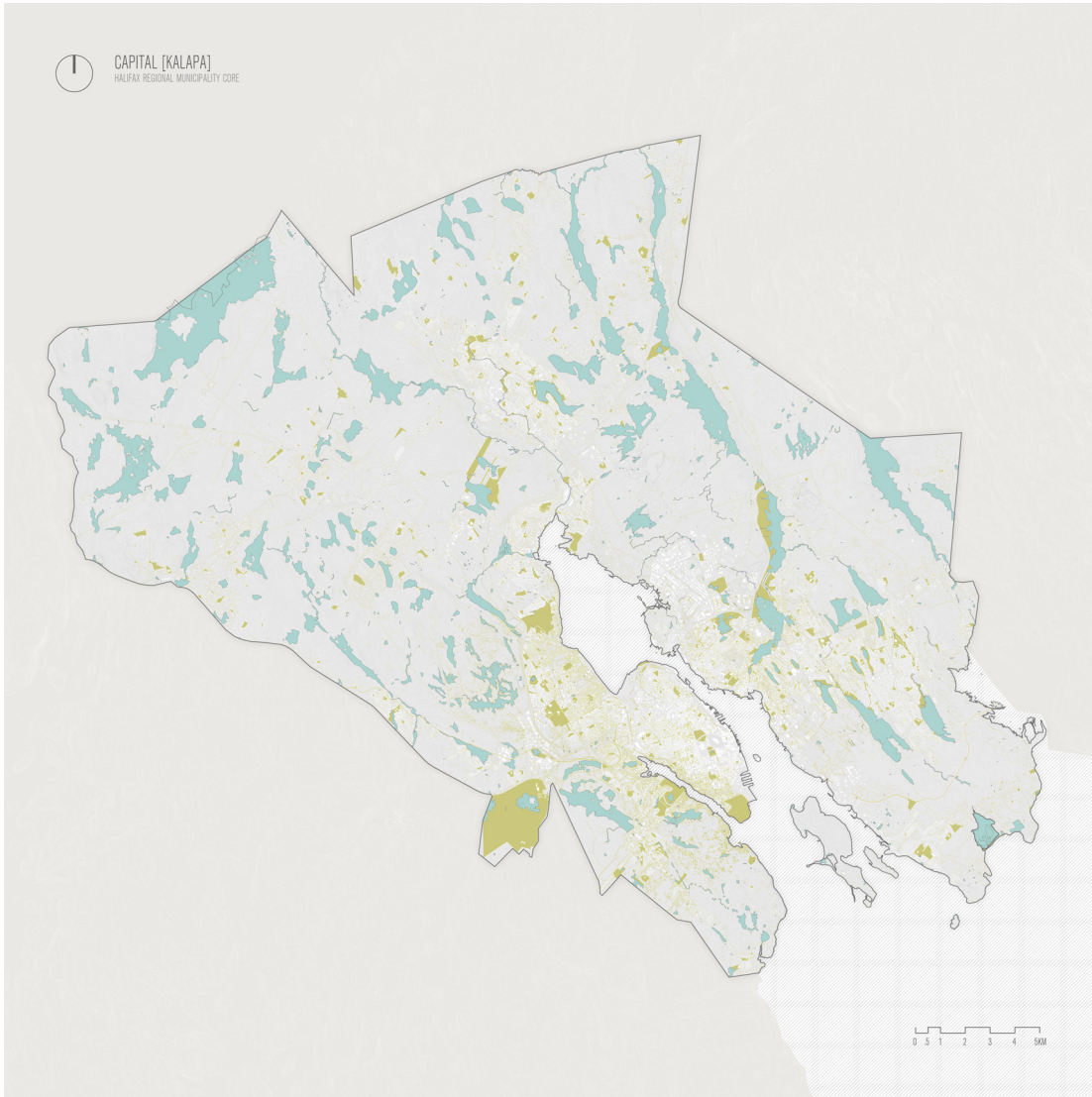


Figure 25. Map of the Halifax Regional Municipality core, the international headquarters of the global Shambhala community (base map from Halifax Open Data 2016)

CHAPTER 5: SITE

SITE STRATEGIES

Determining an appropriate test site for this thesis required an understanding of the geographic and organizational principles of the Shambhala community. The principles of mandala, Kalapa, sangha, and delek were used in order to focus in on a site that could hold meaning at multiple different scales. Additionally, prominent features within the natural urban landscape, as well as a varied dwelling arrangement within the surrounding context were considered in the choice of site.

Global Organization [Mandala]

The global Shambhala community is organized around the principle of a classical *mandala*, an energetic pattern of relationships radiating out from a central organizing principle (Shambhala 2014). In Shambhala, the central organizing principle is the Shambhala lineage and teachings as presented by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (Shambhala Halifax 2016). There are more than 200 Shambhala centres and groups located in major cities, towns and rural settings in over 50 countries (Shambhala Halifax 2016). The entire global community of practitioners is often referred to as the “Shambhala mandala.”

Capital [Kalapa]

In the late 1970's, Trungpa Rinpoche made several trips to Nova Scotia with his students and quickly developed a special connection to the landscape, culture and people. He believed that Nova Scotia could serve as an excellent place to practice the Shambhala vision and build enlightened society. Efforts to move the organization to Halifax from Boulder, Colorado soon followed. Although Halifax currently serves as the international headquarters of Shambhala, the sacred capital of Shambhala, or *Kalapa*, is situated within the Ingonish river valley in Cape Breton. Trungpa Rinpoche found a deep connection to Kalapa Valley after travelling the province extensively.

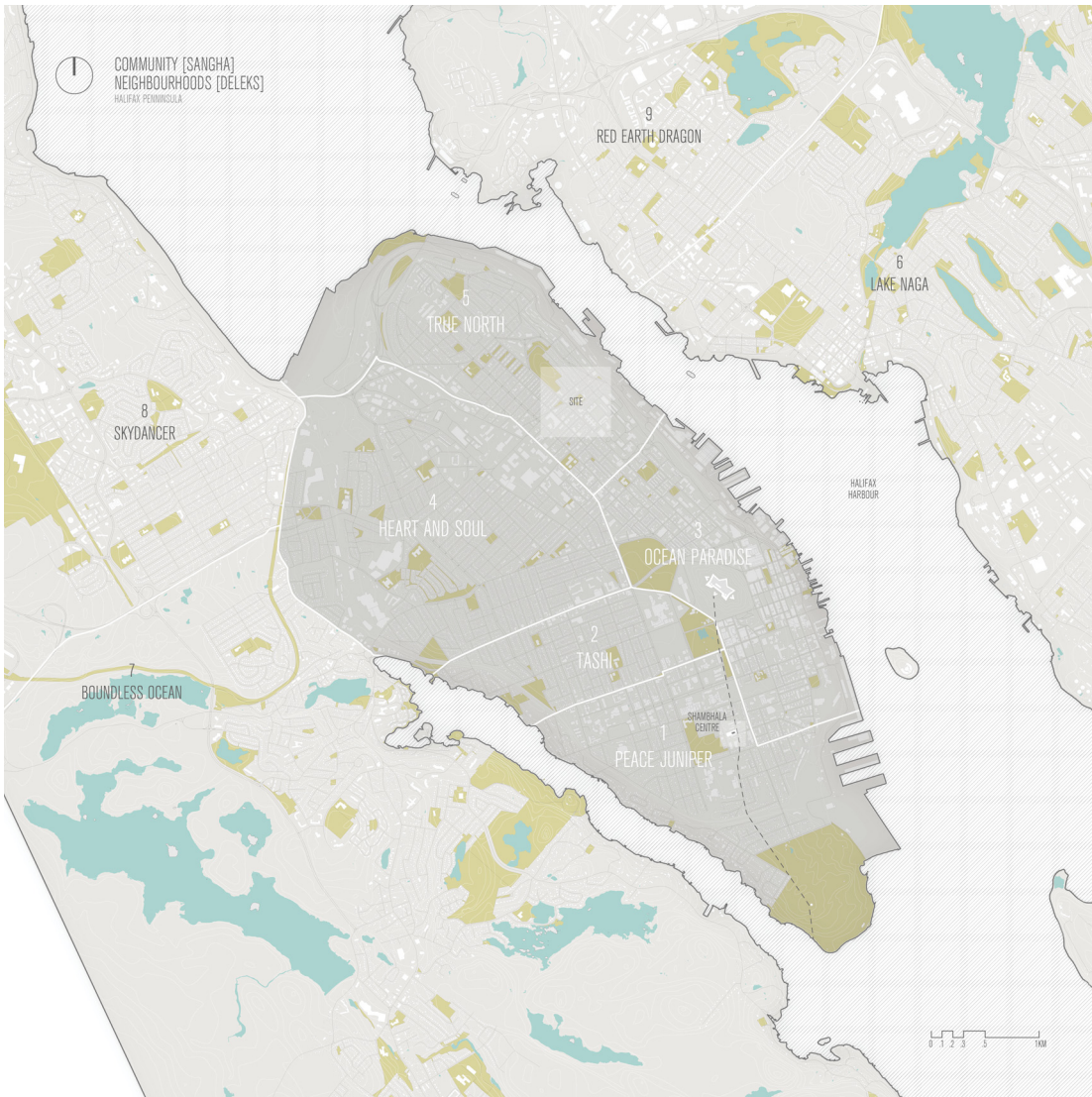


Figure 26. Map of the Halifax peninsula showing the Shambhala Centre and delek divisions (base map from Halifax Open Data 2016)

Community [Sangha]

A large number of Trungpa Rinpoche's disciples emigrated from the United States to Nova Scotia along with him, creating the Halifax Shambhala sangha. In the Shambhala tradition, the term *sangha* is used to mean community (Shambhala Halifax 2016). The Sanskrit word literally means “community of practitioners”, one of the three jewels of Buddhism which refers to the larger group of practitioners that reside within a province or city. The Halifax sangha is a diverse group of people with a genuine connection to contemplative practice and the aspiration to realize a more wakeful, sane society. Since settling in Halifax, the sangha has actively integrated themselves into the mainstream community through opening businesses, creating economic opportunities, and through their commitment to public social engagement. The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) core serves as the centre of the urban Shambhala community in Nova Scotia (see Figure 26).

Neighbourhood [Delek]

As the organization of Shambhala developed, as did the need for the development of more localized, neighbourhood-based systems of engagement within the various communities of the sangha. Around 1981, Trungpa Rinpoche initiated what he called the delek system in Boulder, Colorado. The term *delek* is a Tibetan word that roughly translates as “excellent bliss” (Shambhala Vancouver 2012). The view or the mission of the delek was to foster the development of Shambhala vision within the neighborhood context (Shambhala Halifax 2016). Deleks would evolve to meet the needs of each neighborhood and interactions could include looking out for one another, dining and studying together, or engaging in local service-based activities. Trungpa Rinpoche tapped into the silent desire for individuals to expand interaction beyond the confines of family to include neighbours. Traditionally, deleks have been named after the landscape element most present in that area (see Figure 26).

Landscape

Traditionally, Buddhist, Hindu, and Shamanic traditions of Tibet all pay special homage to places that are deemed spiritually powerful by virtue of their unique geographical qualities. Such places often have physical characteristics that transform the landscape into particularly auspicious sites: a summit where the sky meets the land in a kind of axis mundi connecting heaven and earth; the confluence of two or more rivers; a cave; hot springs where fire meets water; or the upwelling source of a river (Shambhala Times 2014). In the case of the Kalapa Valley in the Cape Breton, many of these characteristics occur. In Halifax, notable landscape characteristics include the harbour to the east of the city, as well as the presence of multiple drumlins across the peninsula. These elevated landforms can be considered spiritually significant in the Shambhala tradition. For example, when Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche wed Tseyang Palmo in Halifax the wedding ceremony took place at Halifax's historic Citadel, the highest point in the city (Armstrong 2006). In an urban setting, these landforms also create physical boundaries that separate various neighbourhoods. Fort Needham is another example of a significant glacial drumlin located in the heart of the North end of Halifax.

Siting

Utilizing the Shambhala concepts of mandala, Kalapa, sangha, and delek, it became clear that an appropriate test site for this thesis could be within the urban centre of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The location chosen is the former site of the St. Joseph's Church on Gottingen Street between Russell and Kaye Streets east of St. Joseph's-A MacKay School, adjacent to the Shambhala School, and across from St. Mark's Church (see Figure 27). The site sits at the southeast corner of the Hydrostone Market, a popular historical shopping area in Halifax. The property, vacant since the church's demolition in 2009, is currently undergoing development for a mixed-use commercial and residential building. However, since the site (prior to private development) was zoned as park and institutional space, it seemed like an excellent example of an urban landscape suitable for multiple modes of dwelling.

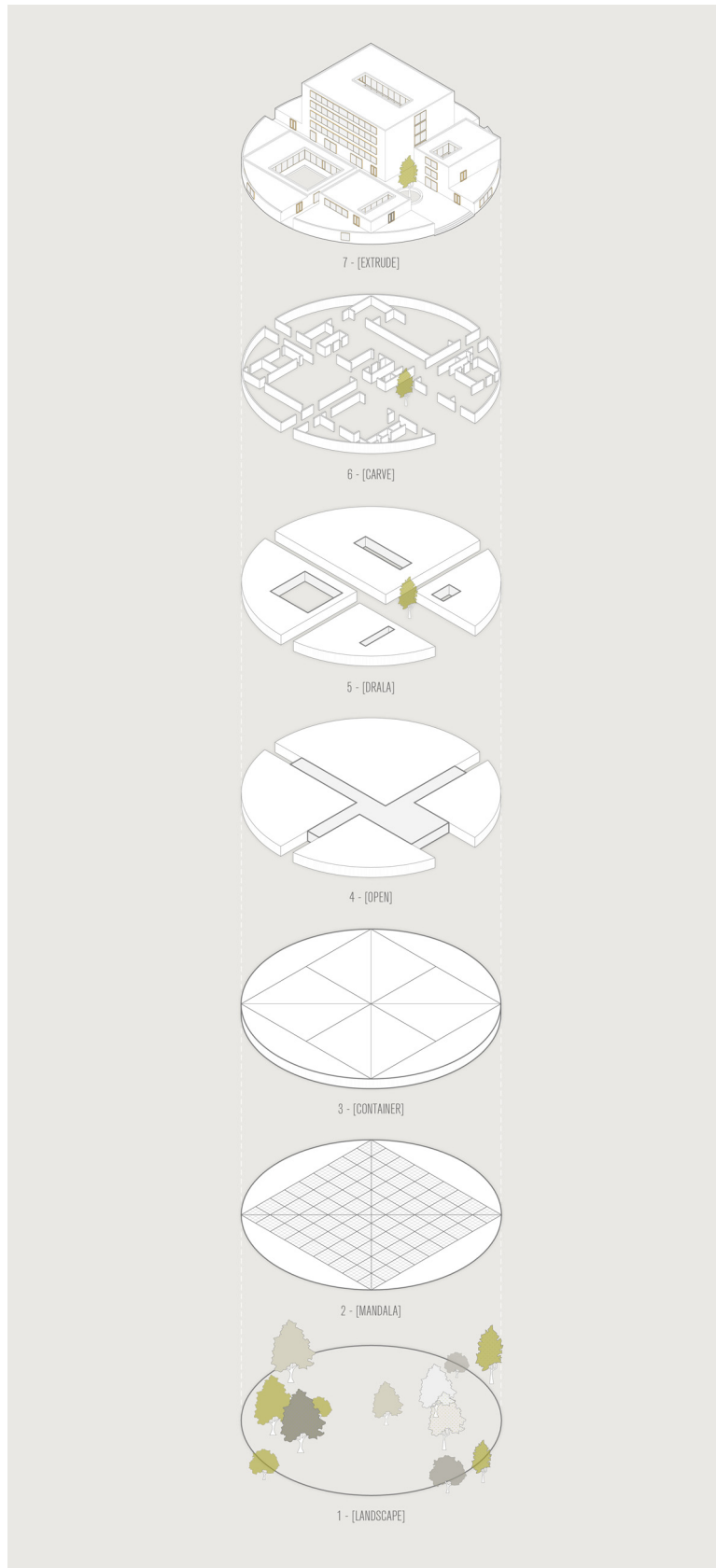


Figure 28. Axo showing design development through various scales

CHAPTER 6: DESIGN

OVERVIEW

Rather than follow the traditional approach to aging and dwelling in North America (which primarily utilizes the medical model of care), this thesis proposes a principle-based approach to aging and dwelling in the spiritual and cultural tradition of Shambhala. The design goal of this thesis is to provide an alternative method for the design of a holistic dwelling environment (appropriate for aging) that challenges traditional architectural retirement home models within an urban setting.

The primary intent is not to suggest that only those who identify with Shambhala culture can use or appreciate this research - but rather to explore how this particular group's set of cultural and spiritual values can be translated into an alternative methodology for design. The goal is to explore and interpret the Shambhala household approach through balancing program, connecting with the landscape, and celebrating culturally significant symbolism (see Figure 28). The project is intended to be understood as a synthesis of individual Shambhala principles interpreted through design at the urban scale, the building scale, and the dwelling scale.

ARCHITECTURAL STRATEGIES

Three main Shambhala principles are used as architectural strategies at each scale including; the four dignities, the concept of drala, and the mandala principle. The principle of the four dignities serves as a tool for programmatic organization, the concept of drala as the natural space around which the program is organized and connected, and the mandala principle as the underlying symbolism and geometric configuration for the dwelling. Additionally, within each strategy an understanding of basic accessibility requirements, additional age-specific programming, and attention to age-friendly design is understood and incorporated.

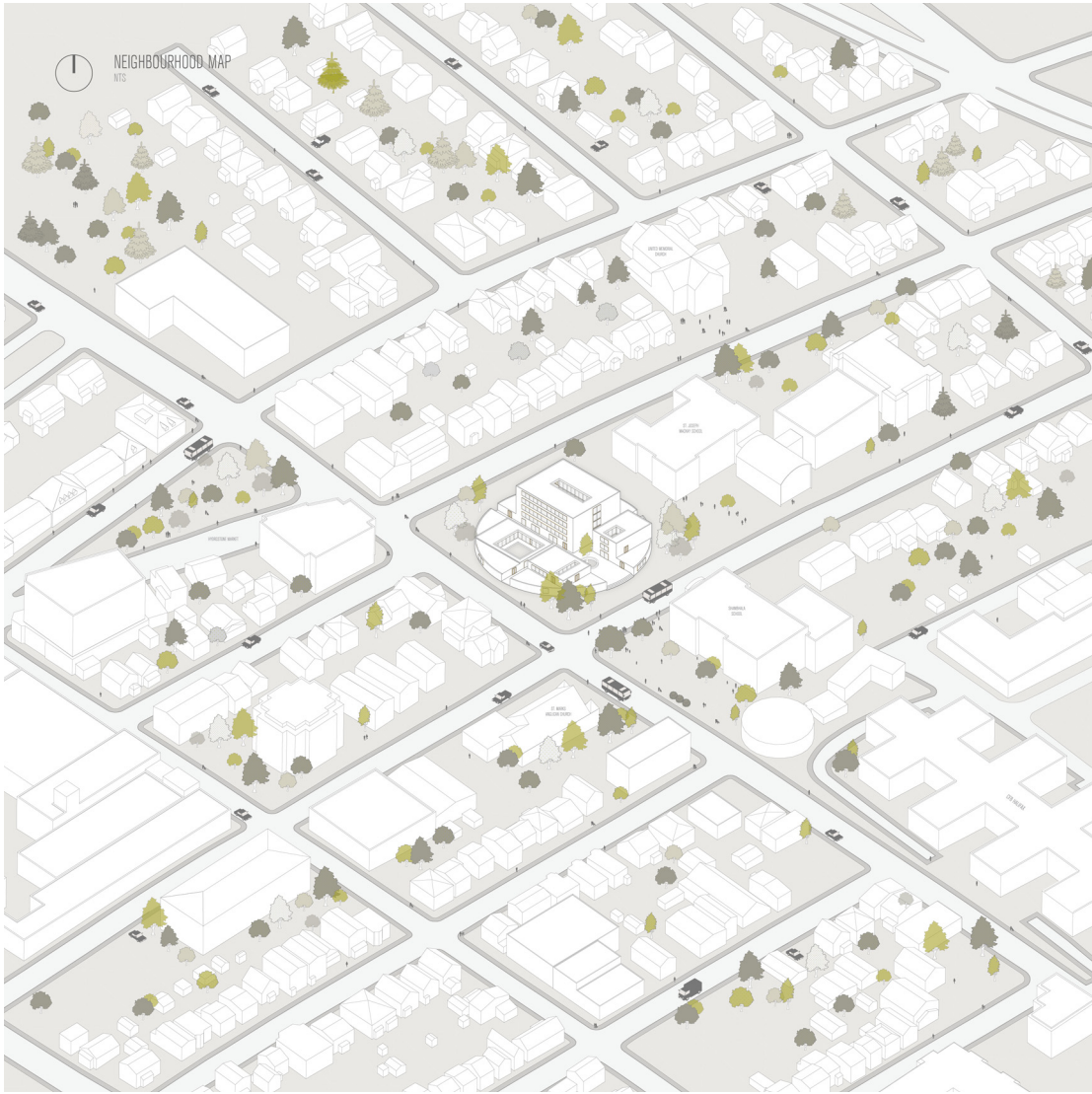


Figure 29. Building complex within the neighbourhood context at the urban scale

Urban Scale

Human life is always related to centers where actions of primary importance take place. Centers are found on all environmental levels; the settlement thus forms a center of arrival in the landscape, the square a center of meeting within the settlement, the institution a center of explanation in the built fabric, and the house a center of personal life. (Norberg-Schulz 1985, 20)

The overall strategy for orientation at the urban scale was based on the idea of the dwelling acting as a center or hub of activity within the community. A place where one could dwell both in both the private and public realm, but nonetheless a building of and for the community (see Figure 29).

Siting was first and foremost determined based on the aforementioned Shambhala concepts of mandala, Kalapa, sangha and delek. Additionally, the types of amenities, social services, demographics, and varied dwellings within the context of the neighbourhood were major factors in the choice. The site is surrounded by schools, community centres, places of worship, commercial areas, and bound by prominent landscape features such as the Fort Needham drumlin to the North and the Halifax Harbour to the east.

Based on the mandala principle, a reading of the cardinal directions was important and shown through the gesture of four open-air pathways, or “gates” that lead the individual in, out and through the building. It is at this scale where the reading of drala, or void, begins to form the connection to the urban landscape. The enclosing circular form defines the physical boundary of the site and creates a “container” implying protection.

The gates act as the public and private entrance points, and correspond to each program. The north gate on Kaye street gestures to the residential community and serves as the main entrance into the housing building. The east gate facing St. Joseph’s school gestures to the educational community through the main entrance into the communal kitchen building. The south gate facing Russell street is the widest entrance and gestures to the Shambhala school with the main entrance into the meditation space. The west gate facing Gottingen street allows the public entrance into the community gym (see Figure 30).



Figure 30. Physical site model aerial view - 1:500



Figure 31. Physical site model showing the building in context - 1:500

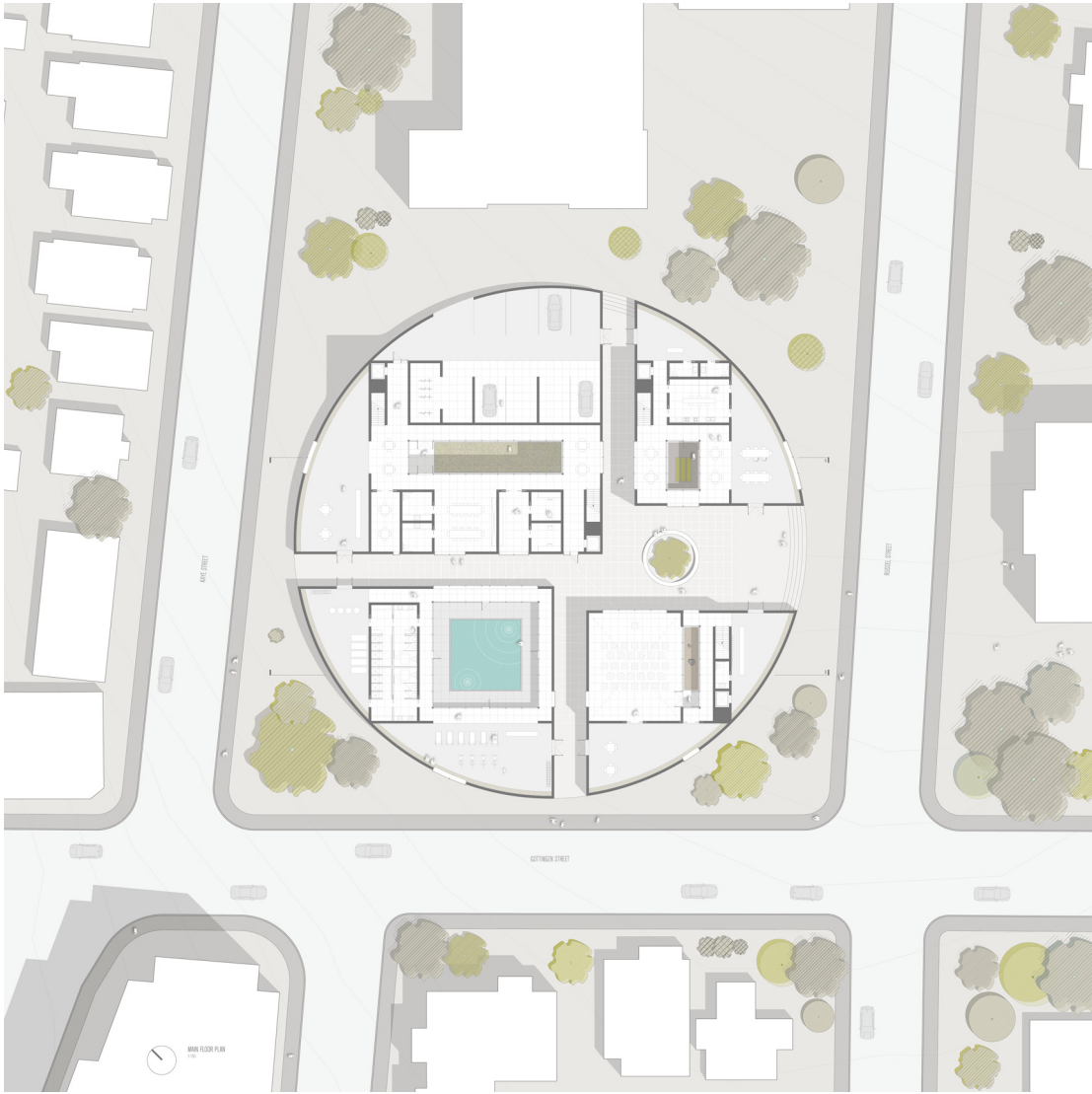


Figure 32. Main floor plan of all four buildings within the complex

Building Scale

The *path* or axis is a necessary compliment to the center, since the later implies an outside and an inside, or, in other words, the actions of arrival and departure. (Norberg-Schulz 1985, 23)

The design of the building environment began with an interpretation of potential programmatic correlations to the path of the four dignities. The intention of the thesis was to increase balance and support various needs for different phases within the aging process, and as such, the four dignities provided a framework for incorporating four major programmatic distinctions (see Figure 32). The dignity of meek (tiger) is interpreted as housing, perky (lion) a communal kitchen, outrageous (garuda) a meditation space and inscrutable (dragon) a community gym. At the building scale, these programmatic elements provide individuals with varying levels of privacy and engagement in order to allow individuals connect at all levels of dwelling through meaningful interactions.

The evidence of drala as the main element of the composition and the space composer around which the four different dwellings aggregate becomes apparent at this scale. Each dwelling is organized around a courtyard programmed to the corresponding dwelling. The housing courtyard sits at the center of the apartment units and is an open-air lawn. The community kitchen courtyard sits at the center of the shared eating space and is an open-air productive garden. The meditation space courtyard sits to the side of the meditation hall and is an open-air rock garden. The gym courtyard sits in the center of the space and is a sky-lit pool (see Figures 37-40).

It is at this scale where the mandala grid begins to show as the underlying geometric organizer of space. The 1 meter grid is chosen due to its proportional relationship to the human body, and helps to delineate public from private space. Outdoor paths are 4 meters wide, whereas more private indoor paths are 2 meters (see Figure 32). This relationship can be viewed in plan as well as section, where each floor is 3 meters high and the height of each volume corresponds to programmatic need (see Figures 35 and 36).



Figure 33. Physical model aerial view - 1:200



Figure 34. Physical model main floor plan - 1:200

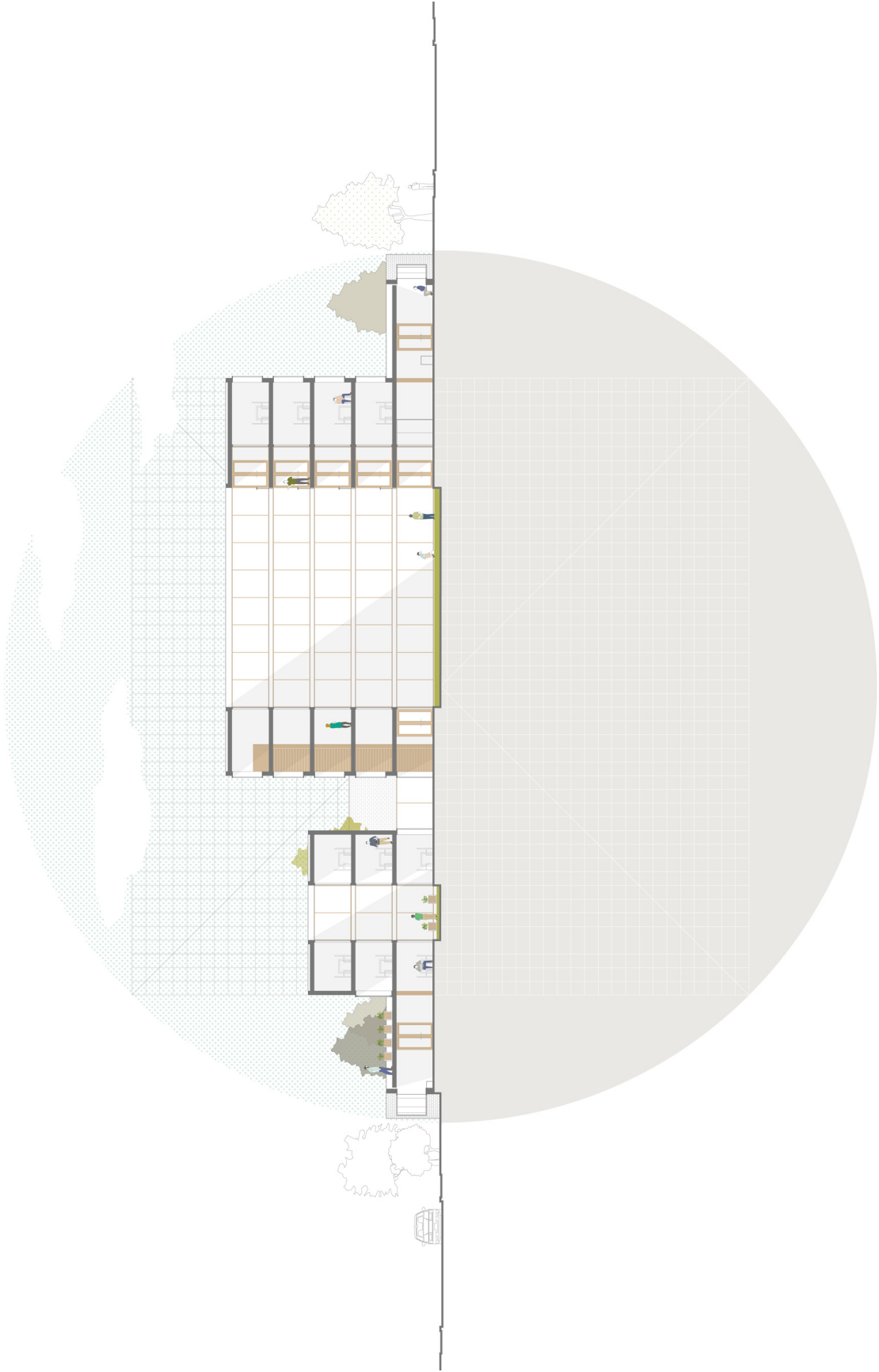


Figure 35. Section A - Spatial sequence through communal kitchen and housing

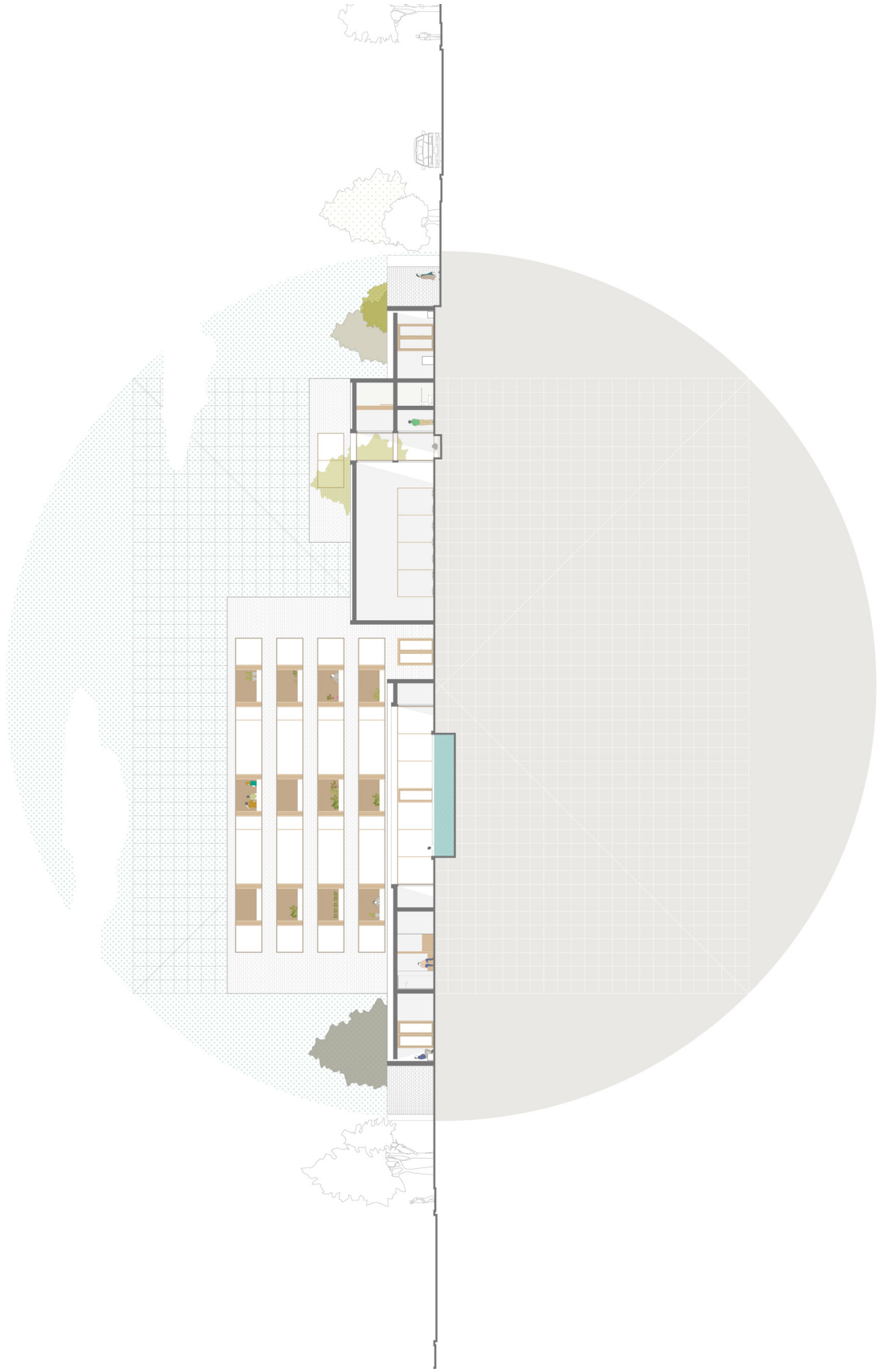


Figure 36. Section B - Spatial sequence through community gym and meditation space



Figure 37. Vignette showing the communal area, circulation, and interior courtyard in the housing building (private dwelling)

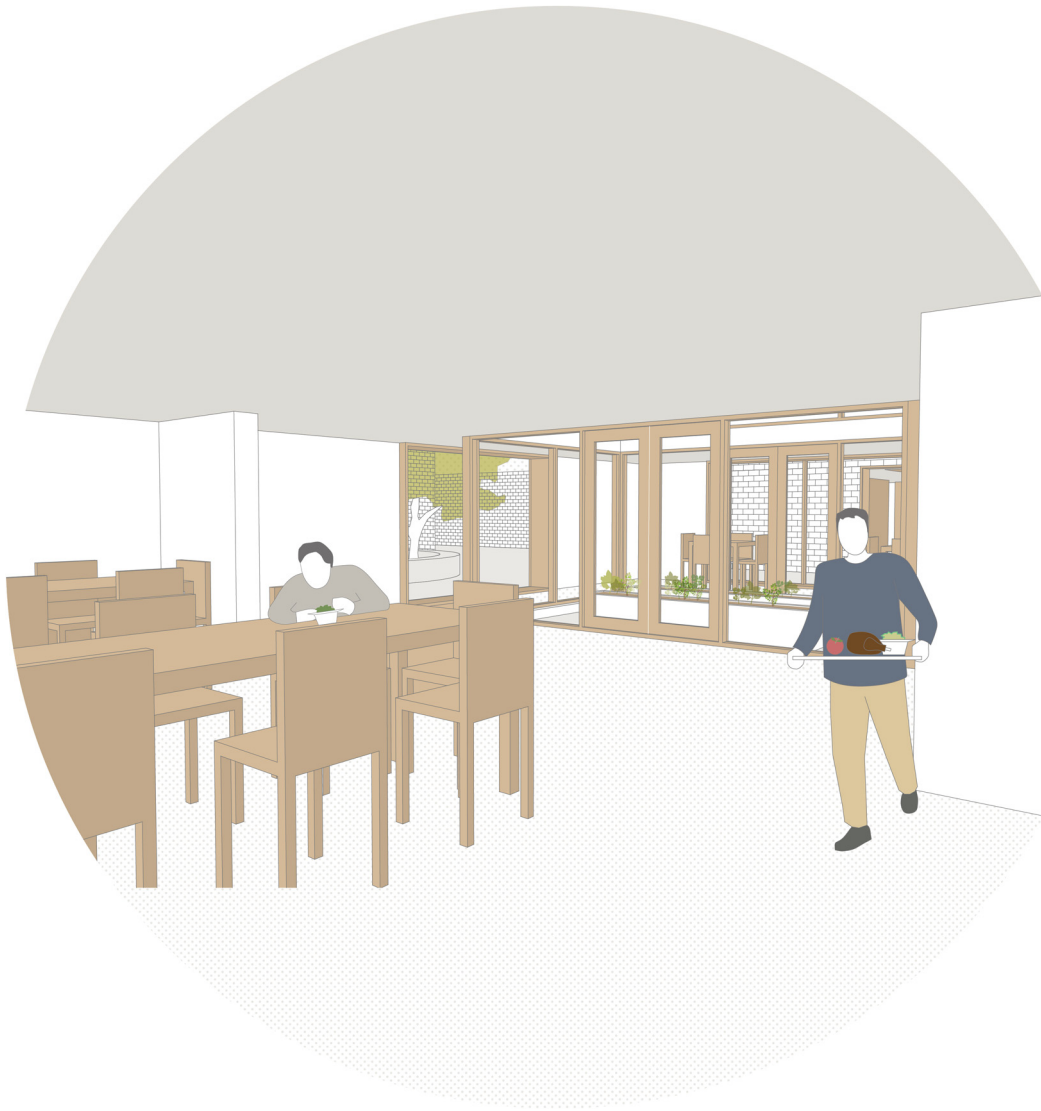


Figure 38. Vignette showing the dining area and interior courtyard in the communal kitchen (semi-private dwelling)



Figure 39. Vignette showing the main contemplative hall and interior courtyard in the meditation space (sacred dwelling)

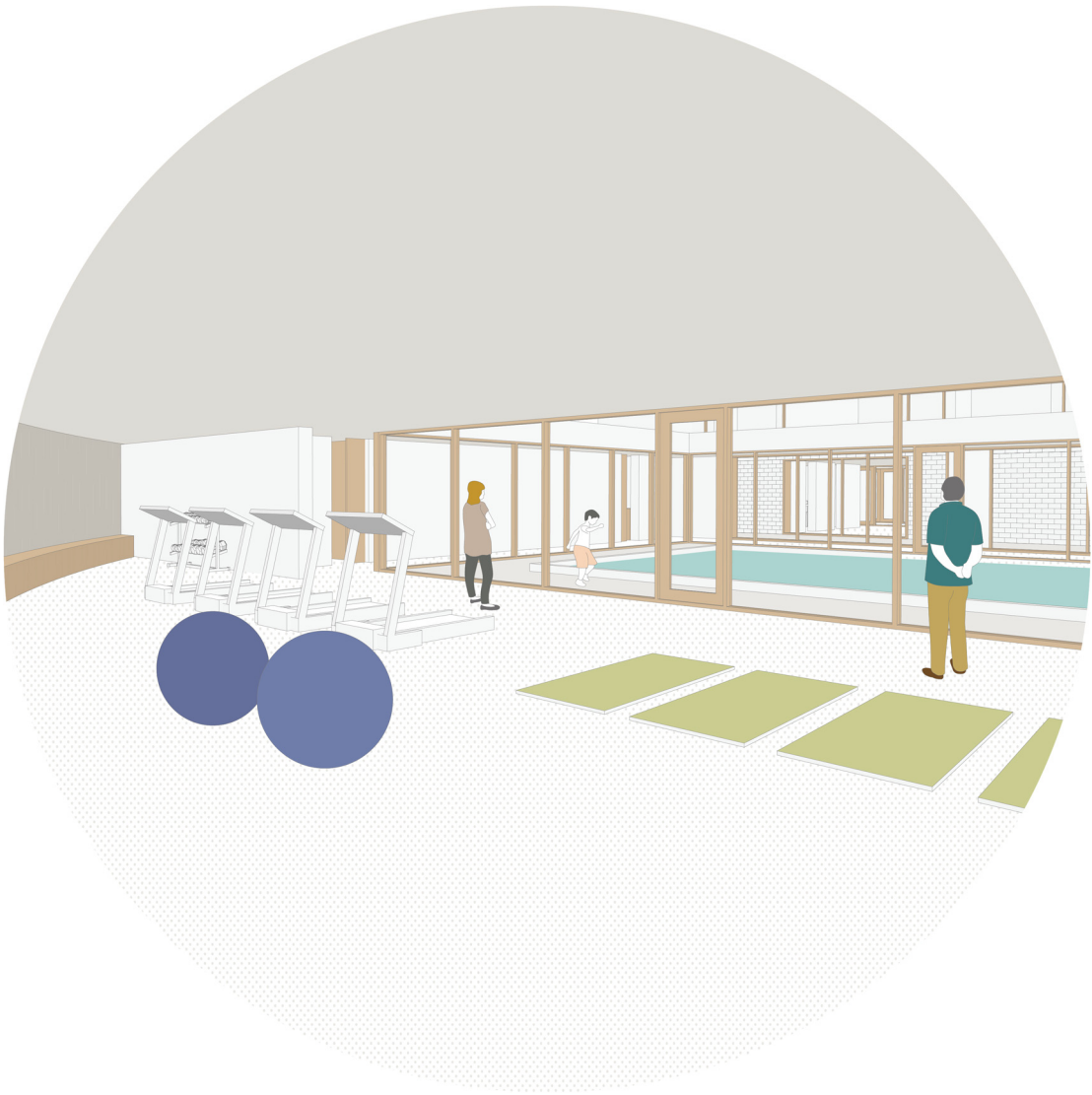


Figure 40. Vignette showing the gymnasium and interior pool courtyard in the community gym (public dwelling)

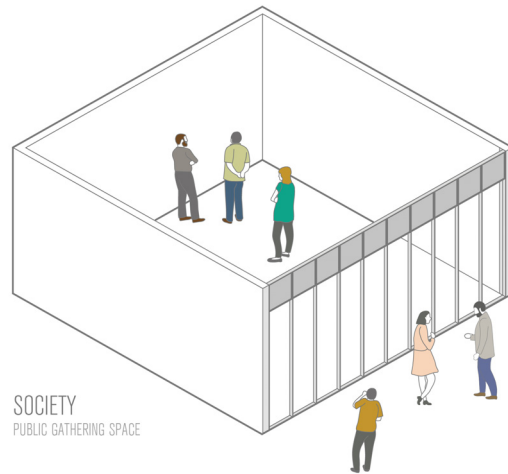
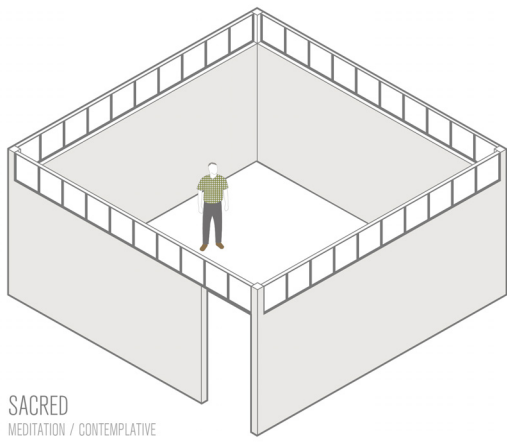
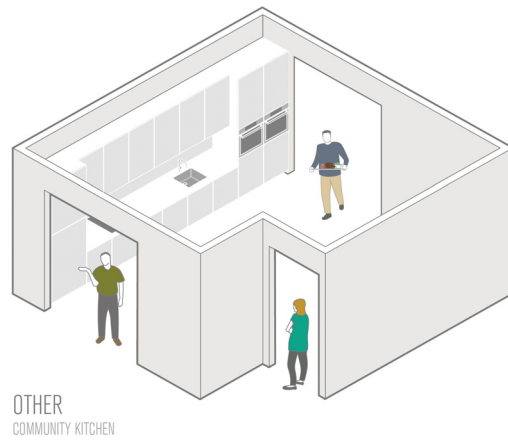
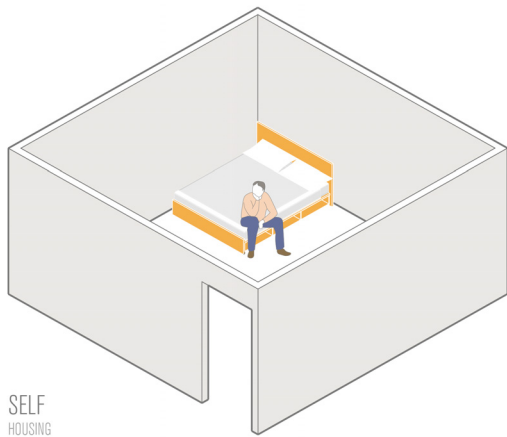


Figure 41. Initial diagrams showing the four different programmatic modes of dwelling based on the four dignities of Shambhala

Dwelling Scale

The figural quality of centers and paths implies a less structured "ground" on which they stand forth. Man's environmental image thus comprises more or less extended domains which are distinguished by a certain qualitative uniformity. We orientate within and in relation to these domains, which have a unifying function in existential space. They fill out the network of paths and make it become a "space." (Norberg-Schulz 1985, 24)

At the dwelling scale, the urban and building strategies can be seen in the design of rooms, units, and in the construction and materiality of the complex. Each of the four individual buildings were designed to cater specifically to each program, while also maintaining consistency in the overall scheme.

Within the housing, the individual units, communal spaces, and generous circulation corridors offer residents varying levels of privacy (see Figure 48). In particular, the unit schemes were designed for flexibility in relation to personal desire, family arrangements, and varying levels of care - each consisting of the core elements of a kitchen, living, sleeping, bathroom, and outdoor space (see Figure 43). Each unit also connects to the natural environment (drala) via a semi-private entrance facing the interior courtyard, private exterior patio, and generous openings (see Figure 42).

Within the communal kitchen building, the large outdoor patio and ample flexible space over multiple levels allows individuals to work and eat privately or with large groups (see Figure 49). The double height room within the meditation building increases the feeling of sacredness and space (see Figure 50), while the single height space in the gymnasium increases light and draws attention with the large skylight over the pool (see Figure 51).

Concrete block was chosen as the main building material for its economic value, thermal and acoustic properties, and as a gesture to other uses of this material within the neighborhood. Concrete slab floors and steel reinforce the concrete masonry units and add to the simple material palette. The heavy quality of the material suggests that the building is "of the earth" and extrudes only where necessary. The openings are framed with wood to invoke connection with the environment and warmth through materiality.

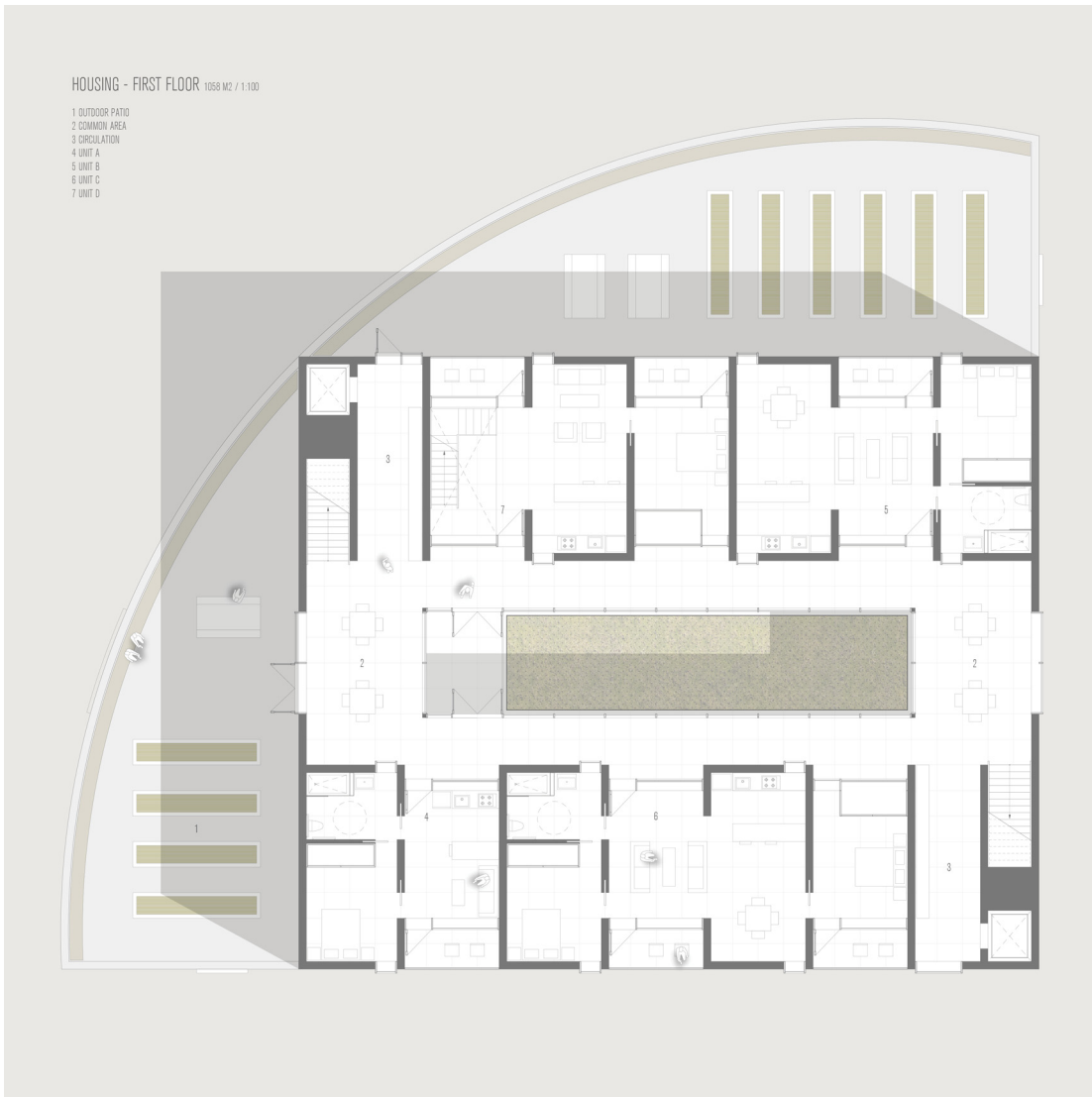


Figure 42. First floor plan - Housing



Figure 43. Unit plans - Housing



Figure 44. Physical model showing the housing main floor plan - 1:200



Figure 45. Physical model showing the communal kitchen main floor plan - 1:200



Figure 46. Physical model showing the meditation space main floor plan - 1:200



Figure 47. Physical model showing the community gym main floor plan - 1:200

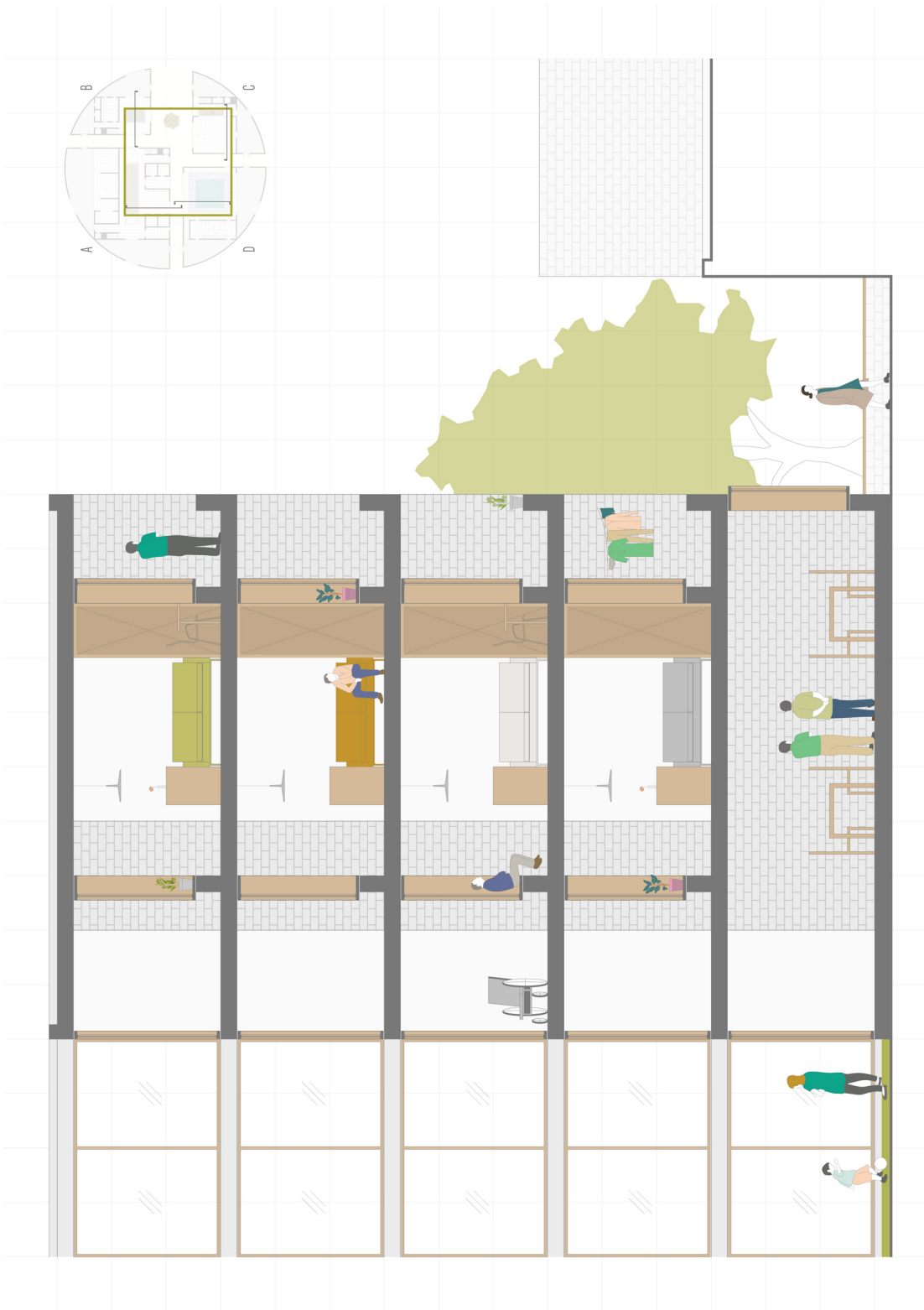


Figure 48. Detail section A - Housing through interior courtyard and Unit C

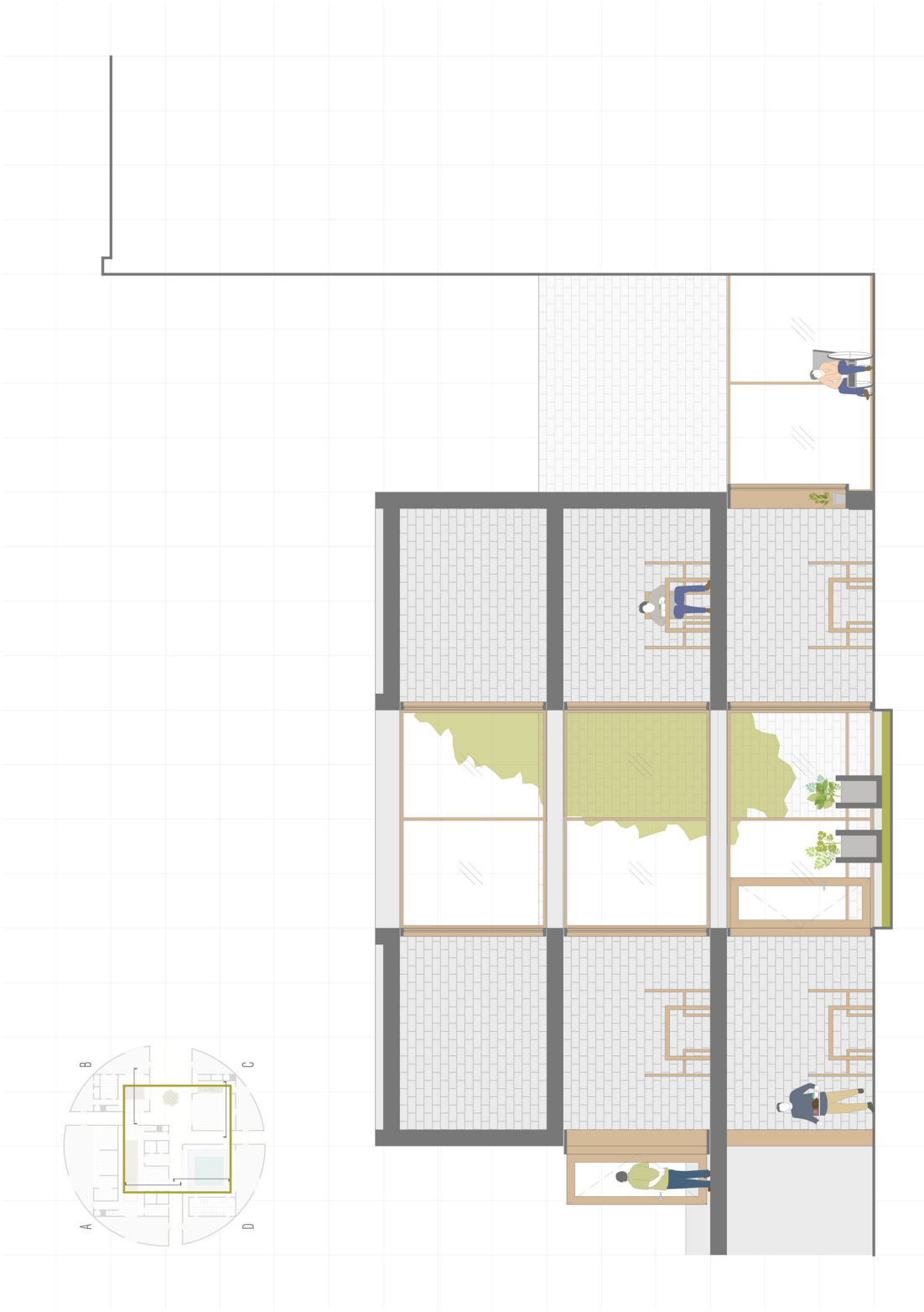


Figure 49. Detail section B - Communal kitchen through interior courtyard

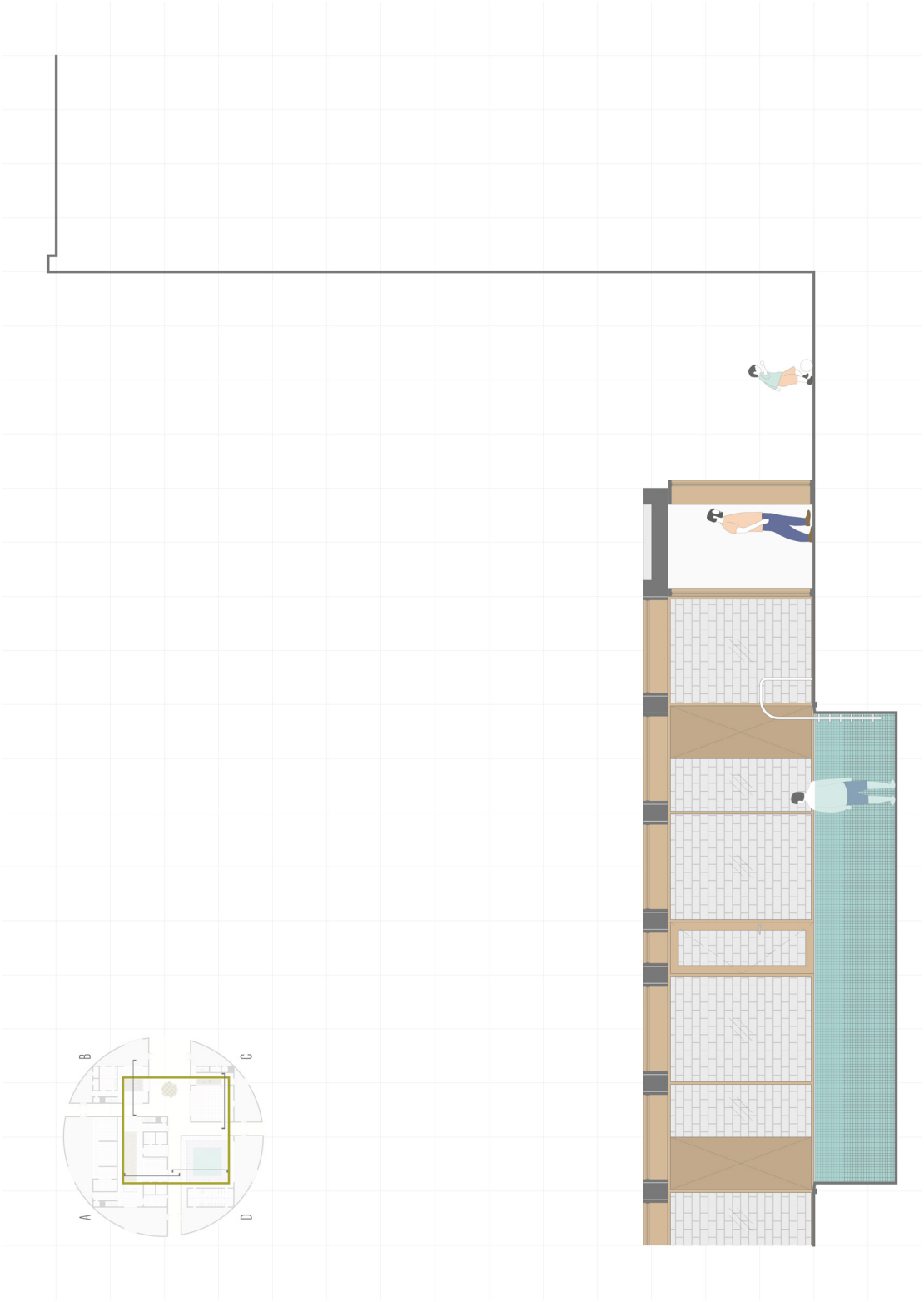


Figure 51. Detail section D - Community gym interior pool courtyard and circulation



Figure 52. Vignette showing the exterior courtyard as the center and natural connection to the housing, communal kitchen, meditation, and community gym buildings

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis began with an interest in environments for the aging, with a focus on the intentional dwelling community of Shambhala. Specifically, the project emerged as a process of synthesizing and making accessible principles of the Shambhala spiritual path as they pertain to the architectural concept of dwelling and the sociodemographic concept of aging.

It became clear through the research that the natural process of aging has the ability to induce great amounts of emotional, physical and mental suffering within the dwelling environment. The question for this thesis became, what strategies and principles can be used in order to maintain human dignity through design and encourage confident aging and balance? This thesis proposes a return a more human-centered community care model through a building complex designed with inspiration from the Shambhala principles of the four dignities, drala, and mandala principle. The unique program mix consisting of private dwellings (housing), semi-private dwellings (communal kitchen), sacred dwellings (meditation space), public dwellings (community gym) and natural dwellings (open-air pathways and courtyards), provides balance and caters to all levels of frailty, while also including programming for the non-resident community to use (see Figure 52).

This line of inquiry is of course not limited to the Shambhala community, or any one cultural group in particular. As such, this thesis may be understood as a preliminary exercise in exploring a narrative through which the spiritual and cultural intentionalities of Shambhala might be better understood and shared with the world at large.



Figure 53. Physical model showing initial programmatic studies of inner, outer and secret domains

APPENDIX A - PROGRAM STUDY

Through the program study I began to categorize different programmatic spaces within the contemplative collective dwelling environment in association with varying levels of privacy. Initially, I identified three major programmatic space divisions, which were categorized as outer, inner, and secret. In Shambhala, the home is said to encompass these three distinct fields, through which “wakefulness manifests” (Mipham 2015, 3). Transitions and layering between public and private space become increasingly important in dwelling environments with multiple programs.

Public Domain [Outer]

The outer domain is concerned with the manifestation of community in nature and society and is considered the most public realm. Materials that are associated with the quality of transparency (ex. acrylic, glass) are shown in the diagram for this domain (see Figure 53).

Semi-Public Domain [Inner]

The inner domain is concerned with cultivating close community relationships to encourage energy, health, and longevity. This domain is considered to be semi-public. Material qualities of warmth and energy (ex. wood) are shown to represent this domain (see Figure 53).

Private Domain [Secret]

The secret domain describes high levels of internal transformations and relationships within the body and mind and is considered the most private realm. Materials that are considered strong (ex. solid structure) can be attributed to this domain and are shown as white blocks in the diagram (see Figure 53).



Wall [Threshold]

This model depicts nyen as a threshold, a means of enclosure that provides transparency and movement.



Wall [Path]

This model shows ways of inhabiting the wall, as a path or a place to rest.



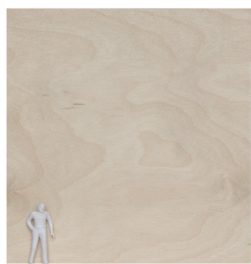
Wall [Pattern]

This models depicts a more inner, semi-public realm with semi-transparent walls and undulating surfaces.



Wall [Light]

This approach to nyen uses transparency and texture as a means of engaging light and providing places to rest.



Wall [Structure]

This could be considered to be a more private approach to nyen, focusing on the wall as an acoustic barrier that also provides thermal insulation.

Figure 54. Physical models showing different approaches to material and atmosphere

APPENDIX B - ATMOSPHERE STUDY

According to Shambhala, natural hierarchy is reflected in the principles of heaven, earth and human, but are more literally described through the principles of *lha*, *nyen* and *lu* (Trungpa 2007, 150). The concepts of heaven [lha], earth [nyen], and man [lu] help to define and categorize material properties and the natural or order of materials and spaces. The atmosphere study became an exploration of these concepts as they pertain to the inhabitation of one particular building element - the wall (nyen). The physical models show studies of how the wall might serve as a threshold, an inhabited path, a device for patterning, a mediator of light or the basis of structure for an entire building (see Figure 54).

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