



National Housing
Conference 2023

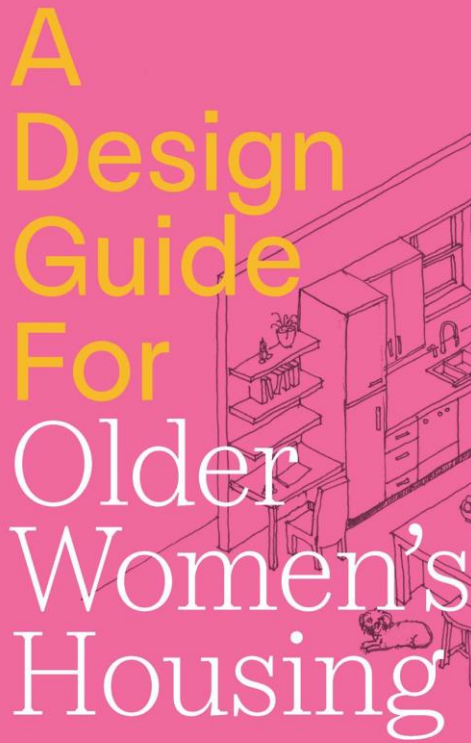
Concurrent 12: Designing better homes for older Australians living in social housing

Sophie Dyring

Schored Projects



A Design Guide For Older Women's Housing



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XYXLAB
GENDER+PLACE

Develop a **precise understanding of housing needs for women over 45** at risk of homelessness in Melbourne

Analyse existing housing types through interviews with women residents with lived experience and community housing providers

Develop a **post-occupancy evaluation**, and clearly identify relationships between housing types, qualitative or desired qualities, and women's housing experience

Engage an expert panel for critical feedback on the preliminary findings and case study analysis

Produce a **design guide with practical design strategies** that address older women's health and wellbeing within their home environment

To provide research findings and insights that support the **development and construction of quality, affordable housing for older women**

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

RESEARCH DESIGN

1

- LITERATURE REVIEW
- ARCHITECTURAL DOCUMENT ANALYSIS
- COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDER INTERVIEWS
- POST OCCUPANCY EVALUATION INSTRUMENT DESIGN

2

- WOMEN OVER 45 RESIDENT INTERVIEWS
- RESIDENT PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY
- POST OCCUPANCY EVALUATION

3

- DATA CODING AND PRELIMINARY FINDINGS
- EXPERT PANEL SESSION
- DESIGN GUIDE + REPORT

Harris Transportable Housing
Launch Housing
Schored Projects

Bayswater DV Housing
Women's Housing Ltd.
Clarke Hopkins Clarke

DHHS
HAW & Schored Projects



Coburg Townhouses
Women's Property Initiatives
Schored Projects



Female Rooming House
Servants Community Housing
Schored Projects - audit



Women's Property Initiatives
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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



Comfort

Connection

Independence

Noise

Personalisation

Privacy

Security

RESEARCH THEMES

Additional Space

Additional space allows older women to do more varied activities within their home. Examples of additional space might include an integrated study area within a larger room or hallway, a spare room that doubles as a workshop or exercise room, or an alcove that provides space for a spare bed or desk.

“It has helped me [in] that I have my own space, quiet [place] to study, which is great.”

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DESIGN PRINCIPLES

FIGURE 10: ADDITIONAL SPACE OUTDOOR



- 1 Prevent noise transmission from outside or inside the space using acoustic rated materials for boundary walls. Older women who are working, meditating or studying need acoustic privacy.
- 2 Consider how older women can adapt the flooring finish to suit various activities. Workshop or making requires an easy to clean, solid surface, whereas exercise or meditation requires a warmer material.
- 3 Natural lighting and ventilation improve the amenity of additional space for older women working or studying at home, but these might be borrowed from openings in adjacent rooms if necessary.
- 4 Task lighting can be integrated for desks/workbenches to improve lighting levels for older women at desk or workbench height.

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A DESIGN GUIDE FOR OLDER WOMEN'S HOUSING

Objectives

For older women, their home can positively contribute to their sense of wellbeing and belonging. When asked what their housing lacked, a typical response was ‘a spare room’. This desire for more space was about activities, not objects.

Many older women work, study, have regular yoga or meditation practices or create objects or artworks. Many older women regularly care for children or grandchildren in their homes. These activities often do not ‘fit’ in the living or dining area.

1.5-bedroom units provide more flexibility for single older women to work, exercise and care within their home. A 1.5-bedroom means a full-sized bedroom with another smaller room, which may be attached to the bedroom or separate in a loft or other configuration. This additional space is ideal for accommodating younger children or family members for short periods. This may be one area in which housing for older women differs from general social housing — the continued commitment to caring for others and looking after themselves.

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A DESIGN GUIDE FOR OLDER WOMEN'S HOUSING

Strategies

ACTION

Good storage solutions

Well considered storage will maximise available space for activities. Older women benefit from a sense of order and easy maintenance for additional spaces. Provide various storage options — open shelving, cupboards with adjustable shelves, or hanging devices where appropriate.

Additional balcony space

Where additional internal space is not possible, increased external space via larger balconies or verandas can provide older women with additional quality areas for activities. Although this might not be ideal in wet or cold weather, this type of area can be designed to suit many uses and has additional benefits of access to fresh air and daylight.

The importance of third spaces

When an older woman's housing does not include additional space, consider community centres, cafes, local libraries and public parks. These ‘third places’ are important for building an older woman's sense of belonging and independence. They are an extension of the first place (home) and second place (work), and they help build community networks through the use of available physical space.

Shared additional area for developments

Integrate additional space that can be accessed by all residents using a booking system in developments. Older women may benefit from occasional access to additional space if their units do not provide the area.

Acoustic privacy

Older women stated a need for better noise control between units. Provide acoustic separation between additional space and boundary walls to provide older women with acoustic privacy when using machinery or musical instruments.

AVOID

Controlling temperature and comfort

Additional space needs good thermal/comfort control to ensure comfort and a healthy environment for older women. Depending on the time of day or season, variations in temperature, humidity, and daylight will affect the space. Mitigate these effects through good design of openings and insulation.

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DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Components

FIGURE 11: ADDITIONAL SPACE INDOOR



- 1 Consider the relationship of the additional space to the living areas. Alcoves can provide study space with a desk and chair. A private nook with a screen can provide a sleeping area for visitors. These solutions help older women maintain a sense of order and flexibility in their home.
- 2 Provide operable, built-in furniture where possible to maximise space. Solutions might include fold-out beds or desks. Ensure mechanisms are easy and safe for older women to operate.
- 3 To provide a place for sleepovers for family or friends, an older woman can have privacy and separation between the bedroom or living area and additional space with a screen or sliding door.
- 4 Dedicate ample storage in additional space for items and equipment to enable older women to study, exercise or make things.

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DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Typologies

- Additional spaces depend on each building type's available footprint and construction budget. According to standards, additional spaces do not qualify as bedrooms, so the additional area requires careful consideration and budgeting.
- Tiny houses have the most extreme restrictions on available space; however, additional space can be integrated with balconies or by the addition of an outdoor deck space that extends the interior for older women to be able to use in good weather.
- Rooming houses generally do not provide additional space as there is a more temporary arrangement to leases.
- Townhouses and apartment buildings can easily integrate additional space into living or bedroom spaces at the design stage with available space and funds. Added space does not have to be an expensive addition.

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A DESIGN GUIDE FOR OLDER WOMEN'S HOUSING

Outside Space

Communal Space

Entry

Kitchen/Living/Dining

Bedroom

Bathroom

Additional Space

Laundry

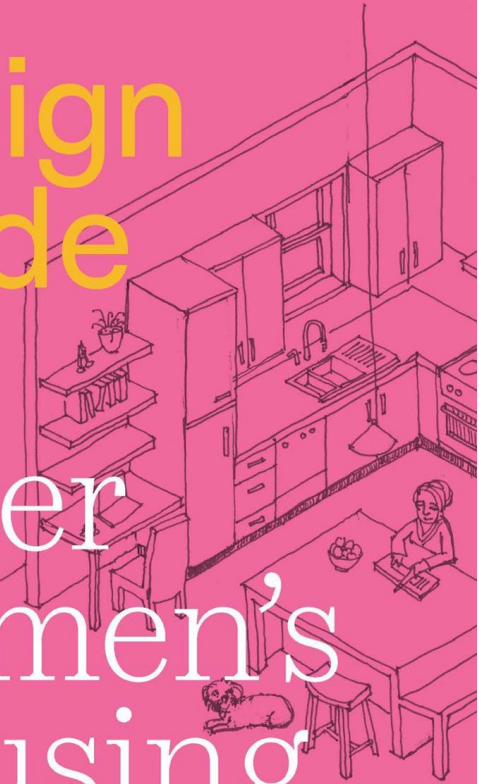
Urban Location

'...his sister comes over, my daughter - if she comes over where is she going to stay? Same with the Scottish lot - five of them might be a bit crowded in here.'



ADDITIONAL SPACE

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'I like my bedroom — it's my favourite. It's a good size and it gets the sun. And I find it quite a little haven and I feel comfortable... you can make it feel very homely.'



BEDROOM

ENTRY



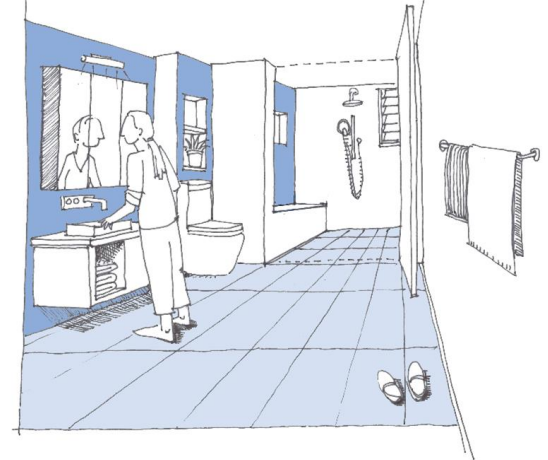
'[In other apartments] the hallway is huge, so it's actually like a house. I would like a hallway where you can pop your coats down.'

OUTDOOR SPACE



'I have a little front yard. I like to open my door every morning, doesn't matter how cold it is. I like fresh air. Because everything has been closed up at night, the first thing I do when I wake up is open my front door and turn my kettle on.'

'The bathrooms are small. The bathrooms could be bigger. Say, I know in my job I have to go into homes and assist someone to have a shower. So I have seen some that are really big and some where it's really tight. The older houses. It's not easy to help someone when it's a smaller bathroom, so I think they need bigger bathrooms.'



BATHROOM

