MKM believes that individual well-being is essential for communities to thrive. That’s why we work so hard to improve the culture of health with stakeholders across the care continuum.

We are in the business of designing meaningful places.
To better understand successful ways in which nursing facilities can provide “home-like” environments, we must explore the role homes have had on personal identity throughout the centuries – especially as it relates to privacy and intimate space.

Homes have become an experiment in personal happiness and control. However, to identify the act of dwelling has affected our everyday routine there needs to be careful consideration in how human perception alters our evaluation of these systems.

With “home” being an extension of our personal identity, the creation of “home-like” environments in nursing facilities should consider how such spaces can be legitimized through their design and operation.
HOME

In the most basic terms, home has served as a centuries-old experiment in the creation of intimate space, transforming over the years from a largely public environment to an industrial response to the romanticism of privacy. Home is our attempt to manifest our most personal attributes (e.g., memory, emotions, belonging) into the physical world. Home is an extension of self.

**PRAGMATIC UTOPIANISM**

"Yes is more."

Bjarke Ingels (2009)

"Historically the field of architecture has been dominated by two opposing extremes. On one side, an avant-garde of wild ideas, often so detached from reality that they fail to become something other than eccentric curiosities. On the other side there are well-organized corporate consultants that build predictable and boring boxes of high standard. Architecture seems entrenched between two equally unfruitful fronts: either naively utopian or terrifying pragmatic.**
While academics and designers have idealized the meaning and function of dwelling for centuries, the way in which the average home is used and experienced is much different than many of us care to admit.

Architects have glorified the design of the home as an idealized utopia, void of use, ware, clutter, or personalization. This is an unfair and dismissive approach to a much more complicated space.

The role of “home” in the twentieth century has centered itself around an evolving obsession with an idea. The pursuit of American Dream has transformed the marketing, construction, appreciation, and function of houses throughout the country into a delicate and often volatile balance between private and public endeavors. However, this duality has evolved over time.

AMERICAN DREAM: The role of “home” in the twentieth century has centered itself around an evolving obsession with an idea. The pursuit of American Dream has transformed the marketing, construction, appreciation, and function of houses throughout the country into a delicate and often volatile balance between private and public endeavors. However, this duality has evolved over time.
The "general store" (i.e. "Mom and Pop") mentality presented a inwardly focused social network that utilized and depended on centrally located goods and services.

The suburbanized development model (i.e. "Big Box retail") presented an outwardly focused social network that depended on destination events.

The suburban sprawl popularized in the 1960's had a dramatic impact on how communities behaved socially. Like an epidemic, a new behavioral model transformed our social patterns and, as a result, radically altered our health.
TRADITIONAL SENIOR LIVING SERVICES

SUPPORT NETWORK

independence is a myth

and we shouldn’t continue it with tacit approval.
CHANGE

The way in which cities have been developed over the last fifty years has left a growing number of citizens isolated and unable to engage the world around them. If we are to survive the coming demographic shifts, we must acknowledge the connection between place and quality of life. More importantly, we must understand HOME as a conduit for our own meaning and identity.

SYSTEMS OF INDENTITY
While houses come in all shapes and sizes, a “home” is, as Gaston Bachelard claimed, a shelter for our daydreams. It protects the daydreamer and allows them to dream in peace.

“Dwelling is a fabric.”

Renee Chow, Ph.D. (2002)


“Dwelling defined as an ideal or as a set of normative patterns for living oversimplifies and limits the possibilities for ways of living. Instead, dwelling should be considered as involving creative and complex acts. More than a sheltering of activities, it is a multifaceted phenomenon that brings together *where we live* and *how we live*, each informing and changing the other. The creativity in dwelling is found in the ever-changing discourses that residents conduct between their physical place and their ways of living. Its complexity is derived from the diversity of those discourses. Thus, the term dwelling is simultaneously noun and verb, the interaction between our places and our ways of dwelling.”

THE EVOLUTION OF INTIMATE SPACE

Privacy (1600-1700)
- Experiments in privacy begin
- Large groups sharing one or two rooms with little or no sense of privacy
- Introduction of furniture to divide space
- Birth of bedrooms
- Words like "self-confidence" and "self-esteem" emerge
- Domestic age begins (kitchen as central focus, large windows, family garden, etc.)

Comfort (1700-1900)
- Comfort (intimate space)
- Birth of the "dining room" as a central gathering place
- Increased use of "high" ceilings and "wall windows" for ventilation
- Birth of plasterboard and "false walls" to define space
- Development of "privacy" as a concept

Efficiency (1900-1960)
- Rise of suburban sprawl and gentrification
- Home begins to be subdivided into formal and informal (or day/night) zones
- Birth of domestic technology ("labor-saving technology") and decline of servants
- Mechanization of the home (gaslight, ventilation, etc.)
- Growth of domestic authorities
- Size of average home dramatically shrinks
- Privacy becomes engrained in the American Dream

Isolation (1960-2008)
- Rise of suburban sprawl and gentrification
- Home size and amenity privatization dramatically increases
- Segregation of residential neighborhoods from commercial zones transforms function of average home

PRIVACY COMFORT EFFICIENCY ISOLATION

Emanuel de Witte, Interior with a Woman Playing the Virginals (c. 1660)

Georg Friedrich Kersting, Girl Embroidering (c. 1814)
BOOKS like Catherine Beecher’s 1841, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies in Home and at School* was addressed to women—not men.

“Small is comfortable.”

*Catherine Beecher (1841)*

“Everyone in the house adds to the expense involved in finishing and furnishing it, and the amount of labor spent in sweeping, dusting, cleaning floors, paint, window, and taking care of and repairing its furniture. Double the size of the house, and you double the labor of taking care of it, and so vice versa.”


By 1900 more than 90% of American families employed no domestic servants.
THE RISE OF DOMESTICITY

Le Corbusier, L'Espirit Nouveau, Paris, France (c. 1920)

The rise of domesticity

Le Corbusier's pavilion at the 1925 World Exposition transformed the home. Instead of containing furniture, it would become furniture — spawning a new age of consumerism defining the home as a product.

The rise of domesticity

Following World War II, returning soldiers were promised the American Dream — packaged in the GI Bill, incentivizing the need to quickly produce private, detached dwellings for everyone.
PERCEPTIONS OF INDEPENDENCE

"As one reaches old age, changes in social, economic, and health status often lead to greater dependence on the home environment, especially with advanced old age."


PERCENTAGE OF 45+ WHO AGREE THEY WOULD "REALY LIKE TO STAY IN THEIR CURRENT RESIDENCE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE:

86%

Source: AARP, *Home and Community Preference of the 45+ Population*, November 2010
SOCIAL INTERACTION

Surveys show that more than 88% of NORC residents talk with more people than they used to, participate in more activities than they used to know more about their community’s services than they used to feel healthier and more active than they used to.

PLACE ATTACHMENT

HUMAN ENGAGEMENT

“Inhabiting does not only mean living within. It means occupying – infusing a particular site with our presence, and not only with our activities and physical possessions but also with our aspirations and dreams.”


CONTROL

“The house contains our dreams, but it is also contained by them – which is to say that our houses take life in our imaginations, or, as an analyst might say, in our unconscious. That is why the places that people have fashioned for themselves are more touching than those – no matter how splendid – that others have made for them.”

"People cannot be genuinely comfortable and healthy in a house which is not theirs. All forms of rental – whether from private landlords or public housing agencies – work against the natural processes which allow people to form stable, self-healing communities."

- Christopher Alexander, The Pattern Language (1977)
LEGITIMIZING HOME

The ultimate complexity in the design of senior living environments is the paradoxical relationship between designed utopias and personal belonging and control. This is the critical consideration.

INSTITUTIONAL CUES

In the pursuit of a "home-like" quality of life for residents, one cannot ignore the constant institutional icons distracting from such an experience. Institutional icons distract from the reality of resident life. What becomes most evident is that these items are strategically counterproductive to the pursuit of intimate space:

- Fluorescent lighting
- Overhead paging
- Monotonous furniture
- Shiny industrial flooring
- Staff uniforms
- Call lights
- Schedule meal times
- Shared rooms
- Monotony

CASE STUDY (Heritage of Fort Wayne)

1. ASSISTED LIVING
2. DINING
3. COMMUNITY/PUBLIC SPACES
4. NURSING HOUSEHOLDS
5. REHAB GYM
6. REHAB HOUSEHOLD
7. MEMORY CARE HOUSEHOLD
8. ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICE SPACES
The Heritage of Fort Wayne embraced the conventional household model, but was careful to separate these considerations from how the residents would ultimately experience and define "home."

**Public Realm**
- Typical "household" configuration serves (12) private rooms, common support space, and healing garden.

**Private Realm**
- Resident privacy and "home" restrained to limits of private room.

**HOUSEHOLD ≠ HOME**
The conventional household model is not "home-like." It is, in almost every sense, civic space utilized by a variety of users and functions. No space can be rightly claimed or defended without permission. Conversely, no user can be limited by claims of trespassing.

650 sf/resident (as designed for household model)

While the household is designed and decorated in an approachable house-like aesthetic, it still functions as public space – something that should not be forgotten in the design and use of the space.
FACILITATION

The central household kitchen area serves as the control site and "nurse station" for staff while offering a shared community amenity for the residents. It is not, however, an extension of "home."

VISITORS

In addition to other residents and staff, many household (i.e., rehab) have the ability to accommodate visitors. How these individuals are allowed to interact with intimate space is critical in the protection of the "home."

The typical room for the Heritage of Fort Wayne centered itself around an idea of intimate space, forcing the experience of the room to acknowledge the transition from public to private space.

305 sq. ft.
THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME | August 24, 2016 ©MKM |

CASE STUDY (Heritage of Fort Wayne)

Semi-Private Realm:
- Resident "Control Center"
- Views to the outside and internal household common space
- When allowed, public allowed to access space with limited permission.

Private Realm:
- Bedroom, wardrobe, chair provides semi-private space buffering connection between public and intimate space.
- Permission is required to enter this space.

Intimate Realm
- Bathroom, washing area, etc.
- most private area with direct connection physically and visually with bedroom.
- Access to area from front door must be considered.

The typical room for the Heritage of Fort Wayne centered itself around an idea of intimate space, forcing the experience of the room to acknowledge the transition from public to private space.

Semi-Private Realm is connected by partially concealed from public (semi-private) space, protecting the transition to intimate space.

The surrender of furniture and other possessions was important, not only because the objects were missed, both as items in themselves and as reminders of the family events associated with them, but also because their absence and the substitution of cheaper and less distinguished furnishings was a continual reminder of general loss of status.

Consider asking new residents:
- What kinds of objects or memorabilia tend to set you to reminiscing more than others?
- List and describe any personal possessions or objects that is particularly special to you or cherished more than others.
- Why does the objects have such special meaning to you?
PRIVACY vs. CARE
Further research is to be conducted exploring the success of this room type and prioritization of intimate space on resident quality of life, operational efficiency, and staff interviews.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. "HOME" STARTS WITH THE ABILITY TO CLAIM AND PROTECT SPACE

   To better understand successful ways in which nursing facilities can provide "home-like" environments, we must explore the role homes have had on personal identity throughout the centuries—especially as it relates to privacy and intimate space.

2. OUR HAPPINESS BALANCES MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE

   Homes have become an extension of personal happiness and control. However, to identify how the act of dwelling has affected our everyday routine there needs to be careful consideration of how human perception alters our evaluation of these systems.

3. "HOME" IS A SYSTEM OF LEGITIMACY

   With "home" being an extension of our personal identity, the creation of "home-like" environments in nursing facilities must consider how such spaces can be legitimized through their design and operation.

THANK YOU.