Housing for older people:
learning from the past to design for the

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Building on the HAPPI report
the question posed to the panel of experts:

'What further reform is needed to ensure that new build specialised housing meets the needs and aspirations of the older people of the future?'

Housing for older people; learning from the past and designing for the future

Building on the HAPPI report
how the project came about and what we did:

- fulfilling a commitment made by the previous government in **'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: a national strategy for housing in an aging society'**

- funded by CLG and project managed by the HCA

- begun in June 2009 and completed November 2009

- panel of 13 national experts, chaired by Lord Richard Best

- visits to 24 exemplar case studies in 6 countries

One question became 4 questions:
- **Why is meeting older people's housing needs a national priority?**
- **What kind of housing will meet our needs as we grow older?**
- **How can this housing be delivered?**
- **Who can make it happen?**

Housing for older people: learning from the past and designing for the future

Monday, 18 April 2011

Building on the HAPPI report
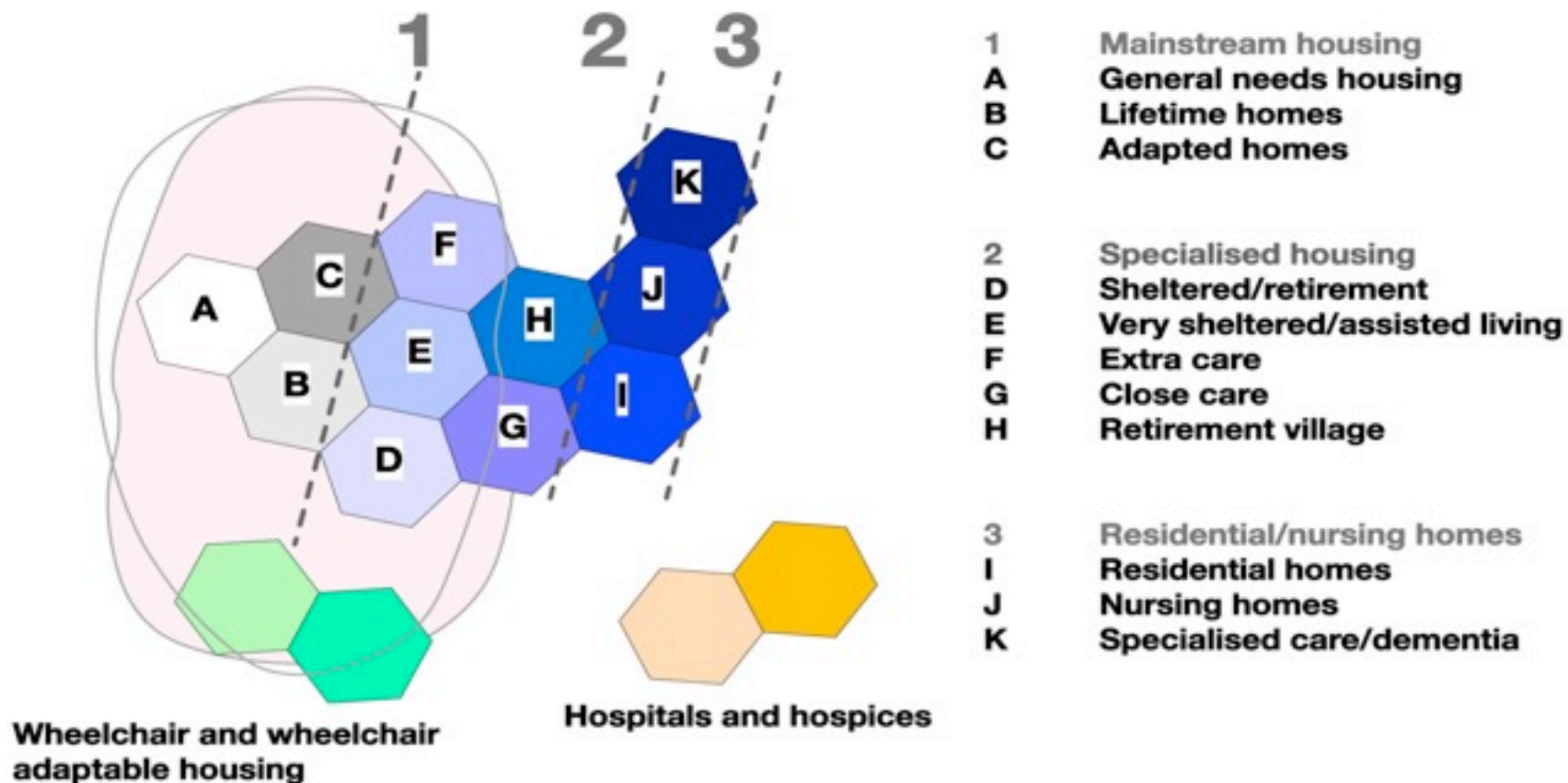## the first question: Why?

some staggering statistics:

- the population of pensionable age will grow by 3.8 million over the next 25 years

- the number of 'oldest old' – those over 85 – will more than double and the number of over 60's will increase by 7 million in that time

- injuries due to falls cost the state £1 billion each year – 1 in 4 involve stairs and most take place at home

- postponing entry into residential care by one year could reduce non-care costs by £26,000

- more than half of all babies born today will live to be 100

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the second question: What?

1	Mainstream housing
A	General needs housing
B	Lifetime homes
C	Adapted homes
2	Specialised housing
D	Sheltered/retirement
E	Very sheltered/assisted living
F	Extra care
G	Close care
H	Retirement village
3	Residential/nursing homes
I	Residential homes
J	Nursing homes
K	Specialised care/dementia

Wheelchair and wheelchair adaptable housing

Hospitals and hospices

CURRENT UK HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

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Building on the HAPPI report
examples of the schemes we visited

Darwin Court, Southwark –
Large, mixed use, residential community for the over 50's. 76 flats and extensive shared facilities.

why was it so good?

- **genuinely mixed tenure**

- **swimming pool, fitness suite and IT training all open to the public**

- **emphasis on well-being and healthy living**

- **a very clever floor plan** – residents can reach their flats via the main entrance to the 'community centre' and/or directly into the residential cores via the quiet street on the other side

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Building on the HAPPI report
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De Rokade, Groningen, Netherlands –

Cruciform tower with 74 flats for 'younger olds' in part of the Maartenshoff continuing care community.

why was it so good?

- **stunning building in a great location – no visual clues that this is for older people**

- **very large flats with big balconies**

- **double volume hub at the base, styled as a 'town square'**

- **successful partnering between housing developer, care provider, local stakeholders and the city authority**

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Building on the HAPPI report
examples of the schemes we visited

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Building on the HAPPI report
examples of the schemes we visited

Gradmann Haus, Stuttgart, Germany –
Care facility with 24 flats for dementia sufferers arranged in two groups of 12, with day centre and flats over for partners.

why was it so good?

- **represents the latest thinking in the care of people with dementia**

- **very therapeutic environment with domestic atmosphere**

- **provides apartments for partners and immediate family to live close-by but independently**

- **sustainable design; summer awnings ground source heat**
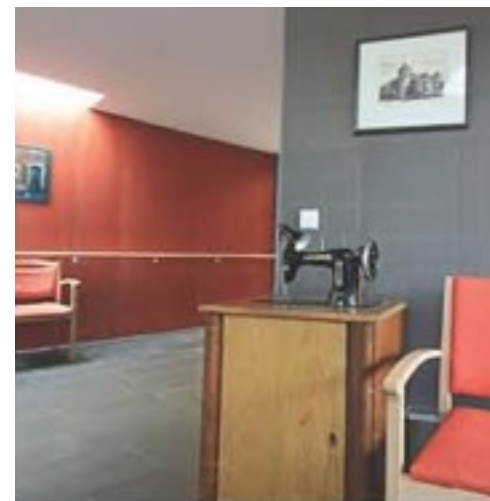
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Building on the HAPPI report
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Building on the HAPPI report
examples of the schemes we visited

Neptuna, Malmo, Sweden – Stylish sea-front development of 95 flats with restaurant, common room and fitness suite.

why was it so good?

- located in Bo01 – a new district designed as an exemplary Lifetime Neighbourhood

- fantastic waterfront location

- attractive enough for people to choose to downsize

- highly sustainable design

- public/private partnership

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Building on the HAPPI report
examples of the schemes we visited

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Soilinsieme, St Gallen, Switzerland –

Co-housing project providing 17 flats above shared ground floor rooms in an converted and extended embroidery factory built in 1880.

why was it so good?

- **perfectly captures the meaning of the name – 'being together and at the same time, being alone'**

- **strong sense of shared purpose**

- **very imaginative – fully open plan flats and great use of limited outdoor space**

- **the architect and his wife got so caught up in the ethos that they moved in too!**

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Building on the HAPPI report
the third question: How?

the need to recognise things we have often got wrong in the past:

- **remote or 'edge of town' locations;** offering poor access to services and amenities

- **introverted developments;** failing to invite engagement with the wider community

- **dull building layouts;** based on ease of management rather than on conviviality

- **double loaded corridors;** institutional environments and single aspect flats

- **over-provision of communal space**; lacking atmosphere and loading service charges

- **small flats;** usually unimaginatively planned and with too many doors!

- **little or no private open space;** often no balconies or roof terraces

- **over-heating and under-ventilation**; stuffy conditions and high fuel consumption

- **lack of flexibility;** a failure to build in the potential to adapt to suit

we have underestimated the potential for good design to enhance the well-being of older people and the need for buildings to evolve

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Building on the HAPPI report
the third question: How?

the panel recommended 10 design components:

1. **spacious** and **flexible** homes
2. **naturally lit and ventilated** circulation areas
3. **dual aspect** homes with **private balconies and terraces**
4. **'care ready' design** and good use of **assistive technology**
5. **non-institutional** approaches; **convivial circulation areas** which offer visual connections with **the wider world**
6. **some form of hub** or **shared space** – perhaps serving the wider community
7. **street presence**, **high quality public realm** and **sensitivity to the natural environment**
8. **thermally efficient**, sustainable design – **passive solar, ground sourced heat pumps, green roofs** and **summer shading**
9. **excellent storage** inside and outside of the home – including **cycle storage**
10. **barrier free design** and **pedestrian friendly streets**

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Building on the HAPPI report
the final question: Who?

action was proposed for 12 bodies:

1. **HM Treasury** – move money from health to housing
2. **CLG** – pursue Lifetime Homes; Lifetime Neighbourhoods
3. **Local Authorities** – understand and respond to local need
4. **HCA** – seek to adopt 10 points and promote generally
5. **Housing Associations** – consider new opportunities
6. **Housebuilders** – recognise the commercial opportunity
7. **Health officials** – adopt partnership approach recognising the preventative and care-giving role of housing
8. **DWP** – review housing benefit to allow older people to under occupy
9. **Financial institutions** – consider investment opportunities and equity release products
10. **ACPO and fire authorities** – review Secured by Design and fire regulations
11. **Award giving bodies** – make older persons housing a new category
12. **Professional bodies** – promote knowledge through education

Housing for older people, learning from the past and designing for the future

New research for the HCA: non–
a comprehensive review of existing design

the list of categories in the brief:

- **housing for older people** – sheltered housing, Extra Care, retirement villages etc

- **supported housing for vulnerable people** – hostels, foyers, refuges etc

- **housing for disabled people** – wheelchair housing, autism, visual and hearing impairment etc

- **faith housing**

- **higher density housing**

- **rural housing**

- **existing unoccupied stock** – rehabilitation, purchase and repair and temporary housing
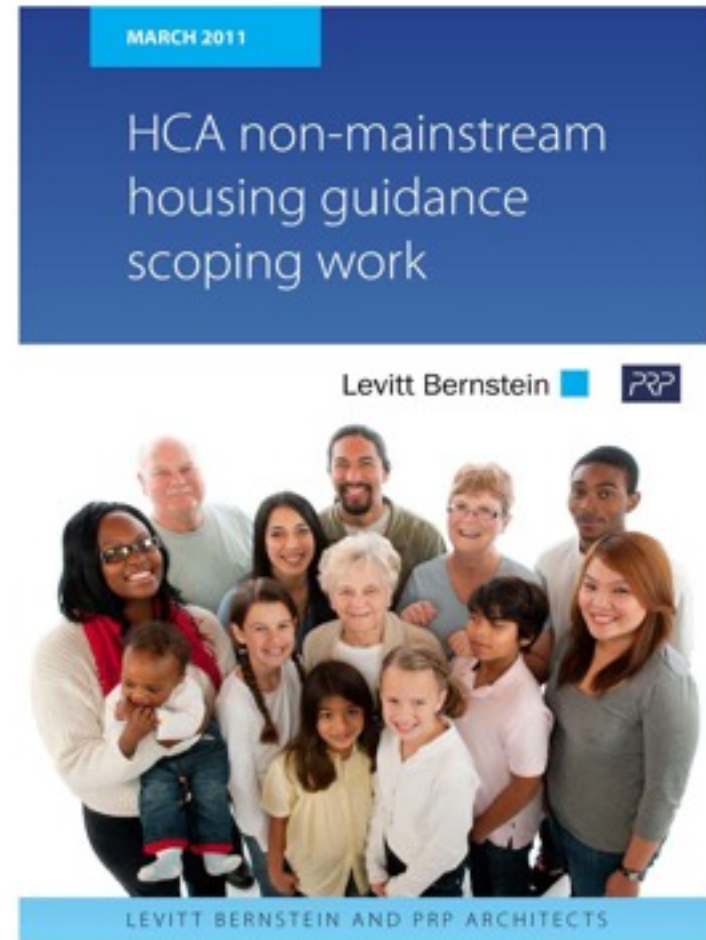
- **gypsies and travellers**

MARCH 2011

HCA non-mainstream housing guidance scoping work

Levitt Bernstein

LEVITT BERNSTEIN AND PRP ARCHITECTS

New research for the HCA: non-
characteristics of older persons housing and

Figure 1 - general characteristics of current HCA stock

HCA stock classifications

general characteristics		general stock mainstream housing Lifetime Homes wheelchair housing	housing for older people designated **purpose designed -** some special features **purpose designed -** all special features	supported housing designated **purpose designed -** special design features
	proportion of stock among registered providers	81%	14%	5%
	design	mainstream standards plus Lifetime Homes or wheelchair design standards as appropriate	specially designed or designated for older people - sheltered, extra care, care homes etc	specially designed or designated for particular client group - refuge, foyer, shared housing etc
	duration of tenancy	permanent (though arrangements currently under review)	permanent (unlikley to change)	temporary - usually less than two years
	eligibilty	let to any individual or family based on housing need	let only to older people (55+) based on support need or lifestyle choice	let to a particular client group based on support need
	support services	no support service as condition of tenancy	support service not necessarily a condition of tenancy	support service is a condition of tenancy
	grant and rent levels		may be higher than for general stock	may be higher than for general stock

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New research for the HCA: non-
organising categories into a matrix of building types and client groups:

Figure 2 - matrix showing full range of housing typologies (including HCA classification), intended client groups and additional design considerations

New research for the HCA: non–

using the matrix to refine options for a selected client group:

Figure 3 - example showing how part of the matrix can be used to examine new-build housing options for older people in more detail

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New research for the HCA: non–
using the matrix to locate relevant guidance:

Figure 4 - example showing how selections made can be used to locate relevant guidance

New research for the HCA: non-
what we learned from this study:

- **huge diversity of subject;** needs can be complex and often occur in combination
- **vast amount of literature and guidance;** often very good but the quantity makes it difficult to manage
- **lack of structure and consistency;** gaps, overlaps and few recognised benchmarks
- **confusing terminology;** varies by sector/tenure and by organisation
- **status and enforcement;** best practice guidance well-meaning but often too onerous
- **little relationship between documents;** a compartmentalised approach – each 'starts again'
- **dilemmas about 'labelling';** we recognise that no two people or households are the same, but we have to work to 'likelihoods' and assume 'common ground'

a more streamlined and co-ordinated approach to guidance would be helpful, and well-designed, inclusive mainstream housing reduces the need for specialised housing

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects

where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people:

Bermondsey Spa, Southwark –
Large, mixed use, mixed tenure regeneration project with more than 800 new homes.

what makes it work?

- **a great location;** close to the Jubilee Line station, bus services, shops, church etc

- **10 flats designed and designated for older people;** own entrance and core but fully integrated and indistinguishable

- **100% Lifetime Homes and 10% wheelchair accessible and adaptable;** all homes **suitable for all ages**

- **private open space to every home**

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a single level designed approach, lift access to all flats, pedestrian

Some Levitt Bernstein projects

where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people:

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects

where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people:

Aylesbury Estate, Southwark –

First phase of comprehensive regeneration of infamous, failed estate. Not intended for older people but highly suitable.

what makes it work?

- **a great location;** close to shops and facilities of Elephant and Castle, opposite Burgess Park

- **new adult resource centre at ground level;** replacing an existing facility

- **100% Lifetime Homes and 10% wheelchair accessible and adaptable;** all homes **suitable for all ages**

- **private open space to every home**

- **an inclusive design approach;** lifts

Some Levitt Bernstein projects
where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people:

Housing for older people; learning from the past and designing for the future

Some Levitt Bernstein projects

where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people:

Brunswick Centre, Camden –
Iconic 1960s building; recently re-furbished and public shopping plaza rejuvenated. Not intended for older people but now 30% 'sheltered accommodation' including many original residents, supported by social services.

what makes it work?

- **a great location;** 2 minutes from tube and buses; flats surround a public plaza with shops, cafes, banks, cinema, surgery etc

- **level access throughout** and **lifts to all flats**

- mostly 1 and 2 bed homes built to **reasonable space standards** with **balconies and winter gardens**

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects

where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people:

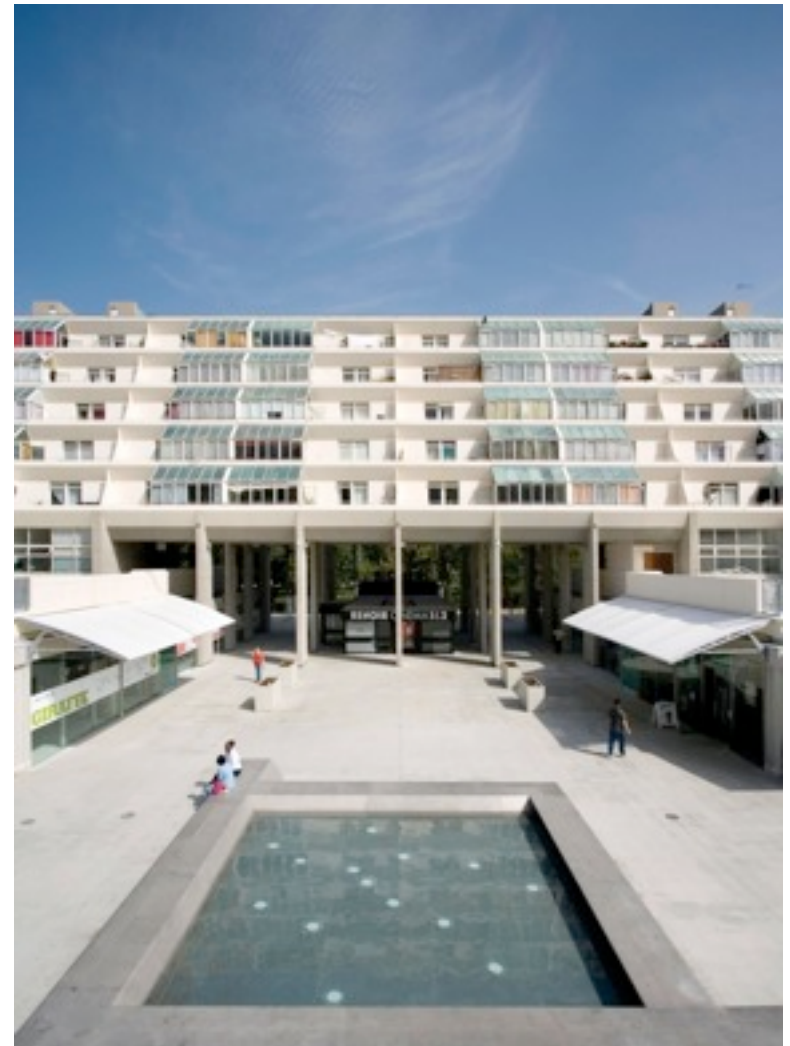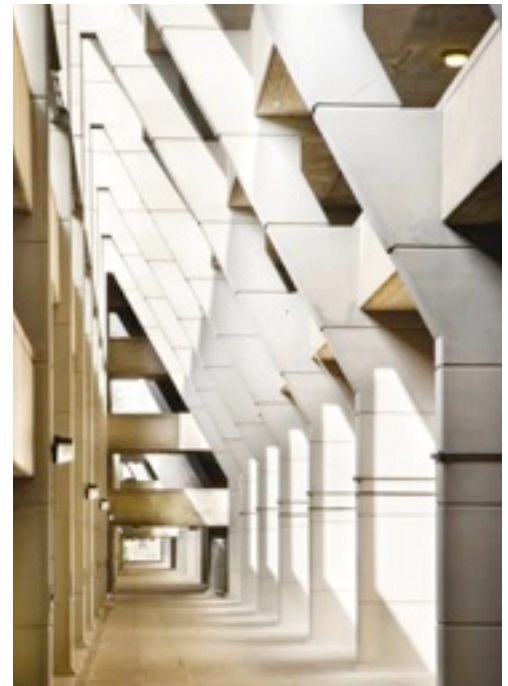**Housing for older people; learning from the past and designing for the future**

Some Levitt Bernstein projects

where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people:

'House 4 Life', Salford –

Shortlisted competition entry: a model for sustainable, urban family living reflecting the principles of the Marmot Review – homes which support all stages of life.

what (would have!) made it work?

- **a great location;** in Salford and only 10 minutes walk from Manchester centre

- **building layouts** and features which foster **community spirit/ shared values**

- **highly sustainable;** Code Level 5

- designed for **healthy living**

- **simple, practical and very flexible homes;** adaptable over time

- some smaller homes; allowing people to **downsize without**

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects

where and how inclusive mainstream design works for older people
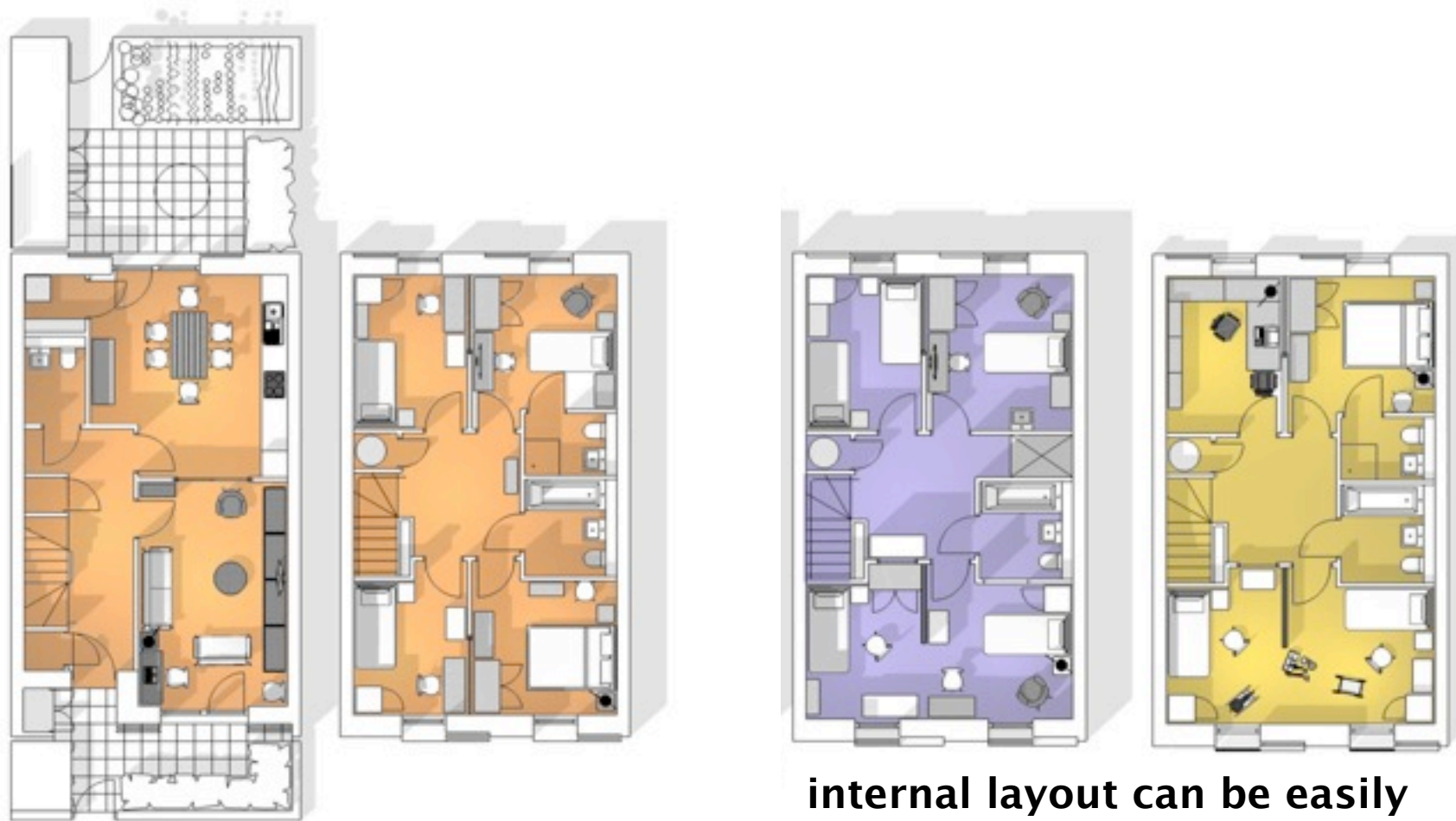
internal layout can be easily modified to suit changing requirements

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects

examples of specialised housing design for older people:

Holly Street Tower, Hackney –
19 storey 1960's tower block
refurbished to re–house existing
tenants as part of comprehensive
estate renewal. Now provides 100
flats designated for over 50's.

what makes it work?

- project overseen by the **Tenants Management Organisation (TMO);** who still play an active management role

- **low rent and service charges;** only one communal room as meals and services provided in nearby Marie Lloyd Centre

- **flats fully refurbished;** high performance windows and **balconies converted to winter**

gardens for older people;

- **2 lifts** and **24 hour concierge**

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects
examples of specialised housing design for older people:

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects
examples of specialised housing design for older people:

Sans Walk, Islington –
Small, sheltered housing scheme for the Mercer's Company. Provides 21 flats for elderly people and wardens' accommodation in Clerkenwell

what makes it work?

- **desirable and convenient location;** in the heart of an established community, close to an historic church

- **small scale development;** three entrances serve **small groups of flats** and **interconnect with communal space**

- **all flats wheelchair accessible;** bathrooms designed for easy conversion to wet room showers

- **appropriate shared indoor and outdoor spaces;** domestic in

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects
examples of specialised housing design for older people:

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects
examples of specialised housing design for older people:

Jewish Care, Barnett –

An integrated complex bringing together a community centre for the elderly, a nursing and dementia care home with 54 bed spaces, 45 supported 'extra care' flats and offices for the charity, Jewish Care.

what makes it work?

- **comprehensive range of facilities** meet **no, low, medium and high care needs** in a single development

- **location within an established Jewish community** in Golders Green, provides a large enough catchment to address **specific religious /cultural requirements**

- **'unapologetic', contemporary design** with **strong street presence**

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Some Levitt Bernstein projects
examples of specialised housing design for older people:

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what this teaches us for future practice:

the evidence:

• demographics tells us that **older persons housing will become an increasing priority**

• there is **no single solution** – needs and circumstances vary widely – as do sites

• **mainstream housing** is likely to remain the **option of choice** for most of us

• at some point, **many of us will need, or want, specialised housing**

currently two extremes; neither particularly satisfactory:

• **mainstream housing** is very variable in size, accessibility and quality – often remote from public transport, care and basic facilities – **leaving us independent but vulnerable**

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• specialised accommodation, including Extra Care, is often expensive

Drawing conclusions from this and other

what this teaches us for future practice:

a need for more desirable, flexible 'middle ground' options?

- a **sustainable and inclusive approach** to the design of mainstream housing will allow many more people to remain in ordinary homes within the community and reduce the need for specialised housing

- **Lifetime Homes in Lifetime Neighbourhoods** combined with personalised care provides a strong starting point, but government needs to provide new momentum

- sometimes it will be appropriate to **designate groups of 'ordinary' homes** (with few or no special features) for older people within mainstream developments

- **specialised housing should often** represent a **well located, high quality mainstream environment'** within a managed or group setting which just provides extra reassurance

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- **communal facilities can encourage** **conviviality mutual support** but
the future

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