



OUTDOOR VERTICAL SPACES

Landscape Architecture Senior Project
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Acknowledgement

My mother: If not for you, I wouldn't have thought of this project

Turhan Sonmez: The words you speak are so deep and make me think

Rob Thayer: For clearing up the problem I had with my project

Apple: for making such great computers

Everyone else: You know that you have affected my life somehow if not by working with you or just hanging out I'm excited that I've meet you.

Balconies and porches which
are less than six feet deep are
hardly ever used.

- Christopher Alexander (Alexander, 1977)

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Even the smallest balcony can usually be counted upon to have a reasonable amount of unused wall space.

-Margaret Davis(Davis, 1997).

PREFACE

This project was first talked about when I was younger sitting out on our balcony I was younger. My mother and I lived in an apartment with a view onto the street. She had always been into gardens when she was younger. Since we didn't have the room for a garden, my mother just turned the balcony into a miniature garden. She would spend a lot of time out there lounging and talking to friends, and maintaining the garden. This mini garden became her "private" space. I would go out there sometimes and take advantage of the space that she made, but I never stayed out that long because she wanted it for herself. What I enjoyed the most about this space is that it had been decorated with a simple style. She enjoyed her garden because it was her creation and she made that place great.

There was a couch that sat three people; the railing was covered with a variety of plants and flowers. There was a hummingbird feeder that hung from a hung and under that was an old stepladder that spiraled around that had plants on it. Finally, in the corner of the space, there was a radio and a television for the nights there was good weather.

After my mother passed away, I wanted to make sure that I did a senior project to make my mother proud. So I started looking at different types of apartment building books and looking at how apartments were designed. Then I was told to look at a book by Chris Alexander called *The Pattern Language*. This book helped me out so much because it talked about every aspect of buildings, different spaces, uses of spaces, and how they all come together.

Ever since I lived in that apartment, I enjoyed living there and. I just wanted to know more about living in that kind of surrounding and how many other people enjoy while they lived there too. It seems that more and more people are choosing to live in apartments, condos, and townhouses with friends and family. It seems less expensive and there are fewer responsibilities. The apartment designs around the world are completely different and the style is new to me. Seeing and understanding how people construct these buildings is very interesting and it has opened my eyes to this design.

My biggest influence, besides my mother, would have to be a show called *National Open House*. The concept of the show is to compare different home prices in different cities across the country. They don't only show homes; the show compare lofts, apartments, condos, and townhouses. With my research, it also helped me determined how much people are paying for homes and how much houses appreciate during the years.

Hopefully in the future, I can become an urban designer and design courtyards and open spaces for apartments with views into the city or a park. Now that I understand more about attractive views and architectural design on apartment buildings is important. I can incorporate that with my designs and ensure that people with balconies and patios will use them more to enjoy the outdoors instead for just storing junk or not using the space at all. More people will start designing their own space and show off the views that their space face instead of just leaving it bare and unused.

INTRODUCTION

As people get through life, they change their life styles from single living to family living they see how the price of living changes as well. The price of living has increasing as time progresses and the public is adjusting gradually. Some people are able to afford homes due to of saving money, family help, or take on the family owned home. Others don't have this privilege of being able to own their own home by the time they get out of college. The next closest thing to do is to rent an apartment by him or her or a home with roommates and try to save money.

This is something that many college students and other people just out of college go through when then enter the working world. Many of them return home and try to work so they can save money, but then they seem to lose their independence and end up moving out on their own.

Being one of these college students embarking into the working world, I know that I am not able to go back home and start saving money. There is a hand full of students that want to keep their independence and go out there looking for their own place even if it is an apartment. It's something they can call their own and can build up from there as they continue to work and save up for bigger and better things.

Inflation price of housing, people seem to be moving into townhouses, apartments, and condos. This seems to be one of the reasons. It is easier, cheaper, and more with daily life when living on your own. Even though you don't have the same amenities as you would if you owned your home, you can still enjoy the community amenities. You are sharing these amenities with everyone in the apartment complex. With these amenities comes landscaping and having a patio or balcony that you call your own and do with it what you please.

With most apartments, tenants may not properly use the space that they have to their advantage while others do. Being able to turn a balcony, small deck, or front space into something that you can benefit from and enjoy your time in that space when you are there.

The first part of this project involves research on inflation of homes and why more people are going to live in apartments. It seems that there could be a relationship connect to this, but it's hard to tell. Living "vertically" has become something that is effective to certain people and at one time or another everyone is going to have experience it.

The research is broken into four parts: Usage of space, surrounding views, near by amenities and design of space. I will three case studies where I will watch certain balconies and decks to see how the spaces are used. I will do this in private so that none of the tenants will know what is going on. This will help find out how everything is used and what works with each setting.

When this project is finished, I hope to enlighten everyone with a new understanding of small spaces with vertical living.

Chapter I:

Research

BACKGROUND

To start, the measurement of home prices poses numerous problems (Grebler, 1979). Inflation is the one topic that I knew would help me show why so many people would consider moving into an apartment. Inflation and increasing housing costs along with a couple of other variables such as density and economy to help me find out why people are moving into apartments in and city and getting away from housing in the suburbs.

Inflation has shown that prices are twice as expensive from what it was in 1987. This would make it were the family would have to save twice as much to afford a house that normally would take one income to pay for. Through out the years, inflation has gone up and down not really settling down and with this flux, it is affecting the housing market and making it harder for people to purchase houses. It seems that the only houses that are cheaper and easier to buy are the ones miles away from a city, more located in the suburbs were a lot of people are trying to get away from.

So more people are getting more loans to pay for the homes that they want to buy, but that puts them more behind because then the families own the banks and lenders more with payments and that's when bankruptcy comes into hand (Grebler, 1979). That's how houses get foreclosed and the market for house increase as well. The number of homes facing foreclosure jumped 57 percent in January compared to a year ago, with lenders increasingly forced to take possession of homes they couldn't unload at auctions. This has been going on in a lot of city across the U.S. since January. The prices of homes have been dropping slightly, but everything else has been going up.

In the Global house price index, Residential property price inflation continued to slow, falling to 6.1%, compared to the 9.2% recorded previous quarter (www.Finfacts.com). This just shows that house may be going down, but the same markets have gone up and are making those same houses harder to buy.

As population grows and cities expand and increasing number of people will start to live apartments do to the density of the area (Norcross, 1968). From single-families to multi-families apartments will become a major factor in housing today. Apartment communities are increasing as the day goes on because of the amount of people that are moving to the city to get away for the suburbs and countless hours of commuting back and forth from their jobs.

There are families that move to apartments because of how they get tired of worrying about yard maintenance and want to spend more time having doing other activities when they aren't working. For a newly wed couple, it would be easier to move into an apartment and start saving for the home they want to purchase when the want to start a family. It seems that the people that are living in apartments these days are the young, single people, young married and the over 50 group (Norcross, 1968).

Location, location, location, this is something that comes up for when people are looking for a place to live. A good location especially for apartments happens to be a factor with certain people, but others don't really mind when it comes to that just as long as that affects nothing else.

This is an additional reason why more people are moving to the city and living in apartments. The don't want to deal with the amount of money it costs to pay for their home and the amount of money they will gain/lose due to the house inflation while they live there for the years to come. With the persons renting out the condo, town-house, or apartment they are able to save money on incidentals and spend it on items that are needed for them to live comfortably.

USAGE OF SPACE

Now that we are able to understand why people are moving to the city into apartments from the suburbs out of houses, we can go forward and talk about how the space that the tenant will receive and what they are going to do with it. There are numerous uses for the balcony, deck, or small space they own and what can be done.

Many people that go from a house to an apartment have too many items and usually keep a few of them. Instead of getting rid of them, they place these items in their space just to make sure that they have them near without having to pay for a storage unit. So they have their space compacted and aren't able to use this space for recreation.

It is different on how different people use their outside space because of where they are located in the complex. Some people are able to use it for multiple things. The closer they are to the ground level while others are only to use it for selective things the higher they get up. Most of the time, they just use their space for outdoor living, or a place to relax if they have the room for the items to decorate it like that.

It seems that if they are facing a view that is appealing to look at, then they will take the time to set up a nice seating arrangement for them to enjoy with someone else if they bring people over (Alexander, 1977). Sometimes, they won't do anything with the space at all. They won't be home enough or they go out to enjoy the space around the complex. I know that I don't use my space in my apartment; it there is a lot of junk that we don't use. When it comes to other people, it could be a different story.

If you live in a city or town that thrives on nature and that type of scene then you are more likely to enjoy outdoor open spaces. People are more likely to go out and not use the space they have. But if the city is full with high-rise buildings and density, then there might be a lack of outdoor open space to utilize when wanting to spend so leisure time with friends and family.



Sometimes the tenant doesn't use their space because they don't think they can benefit from a small space like that so they are always out. Of course warm climates will get more use out of their balconies, but there are other ways of getting variety of uses out during any weather. If there is any effort put towards fixing the space the outcome will have great benefits.

Sometimes it's harder to get proper usage of your outdoor space because of privacy issues. If the view of a balcony is facing a street, it's hard to have privacy when there are cars driving past your outdoor open space (Alexander, 1977). So that may cause the lack of use. But it seems that either you use or don't use your balcony when living in your apartment.

According to Caroline Bulter-Bowdon the city apartment has become respectable as well as trendy (Bulter-Bowdon, 2007). So there are going to be a lot more people that are going to living in apartments. The American dream, the phrase is the same as it used to be. I feel that it has changed over the years and now, but the basics is this the same. James Truslow Adams first used the phrase in his book, *The Epic of America*, but now as long as you are successfully making money and have a healthy life, you are doing just fine.

SURROUNDING VIEWS

Along with usage of space, surrounding views would another reason why people may choose to use such a space. If there is a park near by or a source of water, the space will have many more people in it. The tranquility of nature seems to just calm people down. When you listen to running water or look at it you seem to relax and aren't stressed out by everything else. There are a lot of advantages and disadvantages in the surrounding views of your balcony.

Hopefully, if you find a place that has good views, your chances that the place you get a bad view will be low, but sometimes it is uncontrollable. Depending on where in the city you live, there is a perfect view in every dwelling, but there are some parts where views are not always giving. That is why using the an outdoor space you is put together will help you appreciate the apartment.

Christian Schittich mentions that in apartment buildings, the private exterior space are often placed at the transition from public to private space, which are particularly exposed (Schittich, 2005). So balconies that wrap around the apartment, which are hidden are still visible from a different angle. With more space in your balcony, you have a better chance of looking at different views. Especially when it when it wraps around your place, you can enjoy multiply views at once.

When living in a high-rise apartment, a lot of people have different ways of using his or her view. From the first floor to the sixth or seventh, it's going to be different. If an apartment is next to a freeway, the people closest or lower to the freeway may not enjoy it as much as the people higher in the apartment. The tenants higher may be able to see the freeway and other buildings as well as a park or something enjoyable to look at when looking at from their balcony. While the lower levels can only see maybe what's underneath, they still get the sound from the freeway, which can ruin a view. Comparing that to an apartment that has an ocean view, everyone will benefit from this because looking at incoming waves is relaxing to one.

Finally, from what I see, depending on the location of where the apartment, condo, or townhouse, developers and designers of the building try to utilize the surroundings. They look for views that people would enjoy and continue to look at during their time living in the apartment. Developer Richard Ravitch states that to gain maximum views for the low older buildings is to place a maximum number of the new residents near the most spectacular views (Schmertz, 1981).



NEAR BY AMENITIES

Are amenities such as a club house, sauna baths, swimming pool, billiard rooms, and other such features a sound investment or are they frills which are not really necessary (Norcross, 1968). From what I've seen, they are necessary because of how useful they are.

Beyond the views, the amenities and outside amenities like a near by park or a shopping center can help you with everyday items. Having a shopping center or a park near by can turn a good location into a great one. Now you can worry less about driving to a near by grocery because it's a walking distance away. Now you can buy more items instead of filling up your gas tank.

Transportation can also be an amenity to relate with living in an apartment. Of how a bus stop can help you with traveling into the city you don't have to work about gas and spending extra money dealing with your vehicle. This is where you have a chance to save more money and put it to something more useful. This itself will make it easier for anyone to adjust when you are living in a dense city.

Within the apartment, everyone uses the amenities, but that could be a good thing. If you are new to the complex, that would be a way to meet new people. Plus you can enjoy the landscape that the apartment accommodates for you. With a home, you would have to do maintenance to all of the amenities that you have. With living in an apartment, you have to less to no maintenance with the amenities after using them. There was a survey done about Georgetown amenity facilities and it shows that the young adults used the facilities the most and enjoyed swimming the most (Norcross, 1968).

The next room is the clubhouse that everyone can reserve and hold parties or events. This room is usually next to the rental office but separated from the apartment so to not give off too much noise. It's mostly save for birthday parties for the children because the swimming pool is right next to it. So swimming it used as an activity along with the party.



Ping pong/table tennis and billiards are the next activities that go along with the game room that are included in the apartment. These are two activities that people spend time doing during their leisure time. Instead of going out and spending money on playing at a pool hall, you have the chance to stay at home and play for free. Some places don't have ping pong due to the amount of room they have since a pool table is so big. These are two activities I spent a lot of time doing when I lived at home.

Another near amenity would be a nearby park. With a lot of apartment complex, they are located right next to a greenbelt. For example in north Davis, the greenbelt goes through several communities and I know that I've run through them for exercise. Also the landscape is beautiful and if you have a balcony or deck looking at to the park, you can feel that your property extends to the park. That's something that I think is the best amenity with living in an apartment.

DESIGNING THE SPACE

When designing the balcony or terrace space you have, it depends on what you would like to do in your space. Some might set up the space for relaxation, while others use it for entertainment. Sometimes the location of the balcony happens to be work for the plants we want so much to grow (Davis, 1997). There are many ways to have a successful garden in the space. Designing it for whichever way you want, this is what I found that works.

The first thing that you would like to put in your space is a couple of chairs and a table. Without this item, you can't see how much room you have left to place everything else. Without placing your seating arrangement you will not see how much space you are going to have in the end. You might cut yourself short because you won't be able to put everything you want or have as many people as you want in a space. By having a small couch and a table, you will benefit from it more because you can have at least three people in your space comfortably. Depending if you want the space to yourself or if you want to share, that's how you place everything accordingly and manage your space. Or you eliminate all the big pieces of furniture and just go for small chairs so place around your balcony. As long as there is room for a table or centerpiece, you can decorate to your pleasing.

If you don't have a lot of wall space, there is a simple solution for that; get a trellis. You can do some many things with this addition to the balcony. By securing it to the existing railing, you have added something to give more appeal to the attraction to the space. With the trellis, you can prevent control wind from blowing anything you have set up for you space. Plus you can plant a potted vine or espaliered plant that will wrap around it for the support.

It is possible to sometimes find decorative garden arches of either wire or wooden trellis for the front of your balcony (Davis, 1997). The space between the two sides of the arch can be filled with a backing of either similar trellis or a large sheet of Plexiglas so that the vines can grow over the arch with the open front providing a shelter for hanging or tall standing plants. Chicken wire can also help with growing vine plants because they will trail themselves into or around the wire.



Even if you have a small space, you will have unoccupied or unused wall space. This can be invaluable for placing a variety of plants, but you can use it to get trailing plants started. By placing plants on walls or vertical surfaces, you protect them from winds that might make it hard for a balcony garden to grow. With plants that climb and trail, you can make a very nice background for the walls and even get a plant that will bring a nice aroma to the space that will make it more relaxing than if you keep the walls bare and unused. Once again, you can use a trellis to help your plants grow. This time it's on the wall instead of the front of your balcony. You can hang a number of plants on a trellis. So now you have hanging plants as well as trailing plants that are on the balcony. By painting the trellis, any color will set the color scheme of your balcony and also liven it up. With plants hanging, you create three-dimensional design (Davis, 1997).

Next to the design would be putting shelves on the walls. If you don't want a lot of things hanging from your ceiling, placing shelves on the wall or standing shelves around the balcony. With shelves, there will be a bigger variety of plants that could decorate the balcony because you can put them on the floor of the space and in the air, if they need the space to grow. This will help decide on what kind of them you want to have in your space. Also with shelves, it is easier to change the plants according to the seasons because of how some plants die or go dormant with plants that are blooming.

This next feature will be able to intensify the colors of the plants and also help them grow when the sun is not able to reach them. The feature is lighting. By placing floodlights or ceiling lights on top of the shelves, it will prove to be a good investment as well as enhance your planting arrangement when in your space. Seeing your plants at night under light will glamorize your plants and make them more attractive to look at. Also during the winter season when the sun is prolonged, it will give them the light that plants need to grow if using a Gro-lux bulb. Even the tiniest of balconies and terraces should have the benefit of lighting because the look of a common plant or flower can be changed under a spotlight. There are a number of small portable lamps designed for outdoor use that can be placed for the use of your balcony.

Chapter II:

Case studies

People use open space if it is sunny, and do not use it if it isn't, in all but desert climates.

-Christopher Alexander (Alexander, 1977)

METHODOLOGY

My case studies research took place over the course of two weekends in the month of May of 2008. I went to each apartment complex and took pictures and studied the use of the space. The times were chosen at random because I didn't want people knowing that I was watching. The tenants finding out might change the way that they would use the space. I tried to time it when I thought they could be doing something and other times were just random. I used the same locations for each of the observations because of how they varied in location, types of space, and views that each apartment had. This will make it easy to determine which people consistently use their space or not.

The sites are all various apartments around Foster City that I choose because of the placement of the balcony, the view, and what "amenities" it had close to it. It doesn't matter how long a person was in a space for them to be counted because it doesn't matter how long it takes. As long as they are in the space and using it, it will be accounted for. I also tried to take note of age range because I wanted to show the range of users that used a balcony or terrace. For everyone that went to the space I put them in a category as "U" for user, "S" for storage, "C" for smoke break, "E" for anything they took out and ate, and lastly "R" for lounging. If they spent enough time to do this, this person was categorized as an "X" as extreme user of their space. That type of person is the kind I wanted to see, during the observation on any of the six days that I did observations on the weekends. Along with viewing the users of the spaces, I analyzed the surrounding conditions that may influence how the site would be used. This may include how many people were with them, visibility of the street, traffic, and if there was any activities going on. I tried to get the entire weekend instead of through the week because with people working during the week, they might be inclined to stay inside and rest or do something else.

Since the space is used or not used, I didn't include percentages in my data. It's hard to show percentage in my data in each space one of X amount of people will use the space, so I left that part out. I will just interpret the numbers as how many people to a balcony use the space. This was a difficult task because there isn't a bulk number to get readings off of. There was just the building, the person, and the space. What helped the most was the surrounding environment or the weather. If it was a nice day outside, then it seemed that more people would go out than stay inside. During the observations, the weather seemed to help me out for a moment, but then went back to normal. Since I'm in the bay area or near it, the weather didn't change that much.

With these observations, I was able to see how much the surroundings influenced the usage of the space. The better the surroundings, the higher the number of people used their space. As a user of a balcony, I can describe my own comfort in a space or excitement when the space is decorated to my liking. These case studies may not have big numbers, but the analysis comes from a perspective of a user.

APARTMENTS -THE SITES (Day 1)

Location: Foster City, California

Cross Street: Marlin Ave. and Foster City Blvd.

Ownership: Public

SPACE OBSERVED

Area A

2 story apartment building.

8 balconies viewed from across the street.

View: Trees placed in front to give a little privacy.

Area B

4 -story apartment complex

Multiply balconies viewed from a quad area.

View: The seating area was the centerpiece of the balconies.

Area C

2 story apartment buildings

Multiply balconies viewed from a park.

View: A park, a lagoon, and a boulevard.





Friday 9 May 2008

Weather: Clear, light breeze, temperature in the low 80's

When I got to the location, there were kids walking down the street because there is a shopping center and they were getting something to eat. There wasn't a lot of people around since it was the middle of the day, but people did leave the apartment to get food and whatnot. People would come home from work and bring home bags of stuff, but I couldn't see what it was. It was a very slow couple of hours, but then started picking up towards the end of the day.

12:00-12:30pm

Area A

Total users: 8

Using balcony for Eating: 3 users

Smoke break: 2 users

Weather check: 1 user

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 1 user (reading magazine and watering plants)

Female: 5 users

Male: 3 users

12:30-1:00pm

Area B

Total users: 12

Eating: 4 users

Smoke Break: 3 users

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 3 users

Extreme usage: 2 users (playing a board game)

Female: 7 users

Male: 5 users

12/ 13 apartments -sites

1:00-1:30pm

Area C

Total users: 20

Eating: 4 users

Smoke Break: 5 users

Weather check: 2 users

Storage: 5 users

Extreme usage: 4 users (listening to music, talking, and reading)

Female: 8 users

Male: 12 users

1:30-2:00pm

Area B

Total users: 9

Eating: 2 users

Smoke Break: 1 user

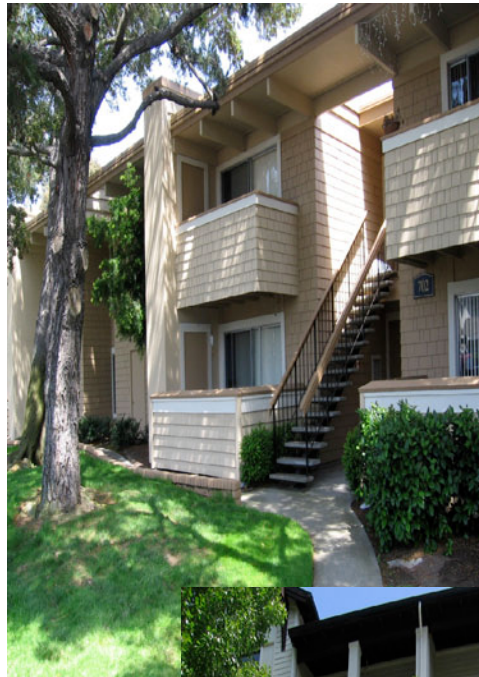
Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 5 users

Extreme usage: 1 user (taking a nap)

Female: 5 users

Male: 4 users



2:00-2:30pm

Area A

Total users: 5

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 3 users

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 2 users

Male: 3 users



2:30-3:00pm

Area C

Total users: 10

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 3 users

Weather check: 2 users

Storage: 3 users

Extreme usage: 1 user (watering plants and people watching)

Female: 5 users

Male: 5 users

14 apartment - the sites

DATA CONCLUSION

Users seemed to enjoy eating in their space if there was something good to look at. With Area A, it was hard to eat without staring canopies that were used as cover. It was hard to see before starting with observation to notice if they had any furniture or not. Seeing if they stored items in the space was easier to see especially if they had a rod iron fence as a railing or a wooden railing that was spaced. For Area C, which had the best view with a park and a lagoon, it seemed that more people would go and spend more time in their space and enjoy the views. Area B that was in between with the view still had people enjoying the space, but not as much due to the fact that they had a quad area, which everyone could share. As the day began to end, the amount of people became fewer and they seemed to just stay out of their space. It seemed to me that people would walk down to the shopping center and get food and bring it back and eat on their balcony. One person that went on their balcony ended up taking a nap after seeing that it was a good day outside, even though they didn't have the best view to look at. This may be cause due to the fact that the weather was nice and it brought more people out.

THE SITES (Day 2)

Saturday 10 May 2008

Weather: Cloudy, cool breeze, chances of rain, temperature in the 60's

There was overcast and a cool breeze was making it colder during the day. It didn't seem like there was going to be as many people using their space as the day before. People were jogging and getting exercise because it wasn't that cold, but you could sense that people were thinking it was going to rain.

12:00-12:30pm

Area A

Total users: 6

Using balcony for Eating: 0 users

Smoke break: 1 user

Weather check: 5 users

Storage: 0 user

Extreme usage: 0 user

Female: 2 users

Male: 4 users



12:30-1:00pm

Area B

Total users: 3

Eating: 0 users

Smoke Break: 1 user

Weather check: 2 users

Storage: 0 users

Extreme usage: 2 users (checking weather. Waiting to see the rain)

Female: 1 user

Male: 2 users

1:00-1:30pm

Area C

Total users: 8

Eating: 2 users

Smoke Break: 1 user

Weather check: 3 users

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 1 user (listening to music and reading)

Female: 2 users

Male: 6 users



16 apartment - the sites

1:30-2:00pm

Area B

Total users: 3

Eating: 0 users

Smoke Break: 1 user

Weather check: 1 user

Storage: 0 users

Extreme usage: 1 user (making sure plants don't fall)

Female: 3 users

Male: 0 users

2:00-2:30pm

Area A

Total users: 0

Eating: 0 users

Smoke Break: 0 users

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 0 users

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 0 users

Male: 0 users

2:30-3:00pm

Area C

Total users: 5

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 1 user

Weather check: 2 users

Storage: 0 users

Extreme usage: 1 user (watering plants and people watching)

Female: 1 user

Male: 4 users

DATA CONCLUSION

Before my study started, I figured that it was going to be uneventful with everyone staying away from his or her spaces because of how it might rain. Even though the chances of rain were higher while I was studying, I still saw some people using their spaces like normal or as if the weather didn't bother them. The people in Area A didn't seem to be bothered with the weather because they had the canopy, which cover a big part of their balcony. While Areas B and C were affected by the rain because they didn't have such canopies similar to Area A to protect their spaces from the weather elements. When it started to rain, people started to migrate inside to keep warm because of how cold it got. That was for the people that still used the space for a moment.

THE SITES (Day 3)

Sunday 11 May 2008

Weather: Partly Cloud, calm breeze, temperature in Low 70's

Since it rained for the rest of the day, everything was wet and no one was outside. Also it looked like it was going to rain again, but you couldn't tell because the sun kept peeking out of the clouds. So I didn't know what was going to come out of the study today. I had a feeling that Area B and C would have more people on their balconies than the day before because the sun was out and being Sunday, more people might have the urge to relax outside.

12:00-12:30pm

Area A

Total users: 7

Using balcony for Eating: 2 users

Smoke break: 2 users

Weather check: 1 user

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 1 user (reading magazine and watering plants)

Female: 4 users

Male: 3 users

12:30-1:00pm

Area B

Total users: 4

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 2 users

Weather check: 1 user

Storage: 0 users

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 2 users

Male: 2 users



1:00-1:30pm

Area C

Total users: 10

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 5 users

Weather check: 2 users

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 1 user (listening to music and cleaning)

Female: 4 users

Male: 6 users



1:30-2:00pm

Area B

Total users: 2

Eating: 0 users

Smoke Break: 1 user

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 0 user

Female: 1 user

Male: 1 user

2:00-2:30pm

Area A

Total users: 5

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 2 users

Weather check: 1 user

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 2 users

Male: 3 users

2:30-3:00pm

Area C

Total users: 10

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 3 users

Weather check: 2 users

Storage: 3 users

Extreme usage: 1 user (watering plants)

Female: 7 users

Male: 3 users

DATA CONCLUSIONS

Although it wasn't raining, there were not a lot of people using their spaces because of the weather. I was walking around trying to be invisible and unnoticed, but I could see that no one was out. It was hard to get accurate data with the weather being so undecided. I feel that this weather kept a lot of people inside due to the fact that you don't know if it's going to start raining. Also the breeze would get strong and the calm down, which I felt doesn't make it enjoyable when people go out to relax or use their space to hang out. So maybe next time I come out to do research, it will be different

The Sites (Day 4)

Friday 23 May 2008

Weather: Sunny, calm breeze, and temperature in the Mid 80s.

I have a feeling since it is Memorial weekend this weekend that no one will be home to be using his or her space. I think that everyone will either be camping or doing something away from home. As I was driving to Foster City to start doing research, I saw a lot of cars on the opposite direction driving away. Also there were a lot of cars that I saw two weeks before not there because the tenants were traveling. But I will have hopes that some people stayed home to enjoy the quiet due to the fact that people left. The weather was better than the two weeks before, but since it's a three-day weekend, people might be leaving town.

12:00-12:30pm

Area A

Total users: 1

Using balcony for Eating: 0 users

Smoke break: 0 users

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 5 users

Male: 3 users

12:30-1:00pm

Area B

Total users: 2

Eating: 0 users

Smoke Break: users

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 2 users

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 0 users

Male: 2 users

1:00-1:30pm

Area C

Total users: 4

Eating: 2 users

Smoke Break: 0 users

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 2 users

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 2 users

Male: 2 users

1:30-2:00pm

Area B

Total users: 1

Eating: 0 users

Smoke Break: 1 user

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 0 users

Extreme usage: 0 user

Female: 0 users

Male: 1 user

2:00-2:30pm

Area A

Total users: 0

Eating: 0 user

Smoke Break: 0 users

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 0 user

Extreme usage: 0 users

Female: 0 users

Male: 0 users

2:30-3:00pm

Area C

Total users: 3

Eating: 1 user

Smoke Break: 1 user

Weather check: 0 users

Storage: 1 user

Extreme usage: 0

Female: 1 user

Male: 2 users

DATA CONCLUSIONS

Just as I thought, there weren't a lot of tenants in town. So the people that I thought that stayed left to go visit friends and family or enjoy the weekend somewhere else. People will often choose an activity that will be better than using an outdoor space bigger than the one they are give because they will feel more comfortable within that space. Going to a park and enjoying a view that is greater than looking from a balcony will benefit the person more sitting on a small balcony and looking at a view that is cut off because they aren't able to see everything they wanted to look at. One of the tenants came out from their apartment to watch someone wind surf, which was funny because they had a perfect view from where they were sitting. Although when they came down, they had the able to see more that one-person wind surfing which is the reason why they came down. My thoughts are if there is a park or green space relatively close to a balcony or terrace, the person that it belongs to will have the feeling that it belongs to them and use it at there exposal.

Saturday-Sunday 24-25 May 2008

Weather: Sunny, clear, calm breeze, temperature in the mid 80's

Since no one really was really home at these apartments to use their space, waited around for a hour and a half. Still after fifteen more minutes no one showed up I decided to conclude the research for the day. I didn't think that anyone was going to use his or her spaces for the rest of the weekend. So I cycled through the apartments again, and didn't see anyone. This weekend showed me that even though you have your own space, you would still go somewhere else to enjoy a barbeque or party. A small space like a balcony or terrace is fun if you are having a small group over to visit, but when there are more people coming it is better to enjoy it within a bigger space.

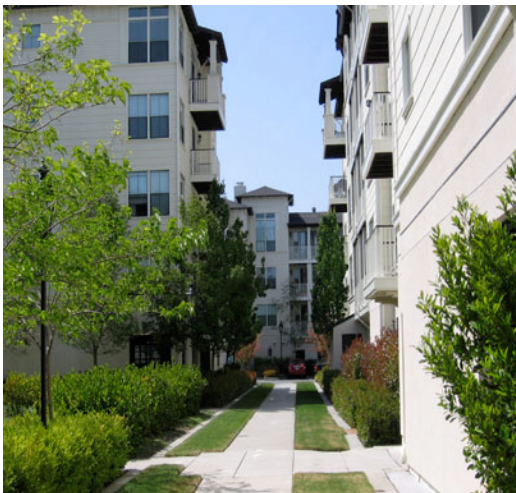
The next day, I went back to see if anyone came home and people were still out of town. Items were still located in the same spot and nothing looked touched. So these studied concluded with me knowing that when holidays come around, people will leave their space to enjoy another. Knowing that the space they are going to will be bigger it doesn't matter to them until they come back. Then they will tend to the space and make sure it is in order for the following days to come.

DISCOVERIES

When I finished my research at three locations, I found out that Area C known, as Harbor Cove was my favorite location to sit at. The view that it had within the park of the lagoon was peaceful and enjoyable and I didn't want to leave. I would sometimes sit there and just people watch after I was done with the case studies. I could see why people enjoyed sitting on their balconies at these apartments because they had a great view of the lagoon and of the park so they could see a lot of action going on. I noticed that when people were on their balconies, they didn't mind any noise that came from the park, although there wasn't a lot of noise that came from the park. There was one barbeque at the end of when I was researching but the people that were talking and eating just kept on doing their activity. Only one person went inside, but that's because they had been out there for forty-five minutes and I think they were getting tired.

The only two locations didn't seem to do as well. With the lack of view onto water or a park, it's hard to pay attention to what you are looking at before you want to go outside. Area A, I think had the shortest visiting time for each of the people that went onto the balcony unless they were watching plants or eating food. Similar to Area b which had a slightly better view didn't compare to Area C. I think that if there all of the areas had a similar viewpoint, then they data would be different because it would be compared to usage and how long everyone would stay on their balconies. But since not everyone can have the same advantages, it works out better this way.

The next thing I discovered is how many people actually use their space. I would say that more than half of everyone I viewed used his or her space for storing junk. From what I saw, the higher the balcony, the more uses it had. The balconies closer to the ground floor seemed to just store for junk, if they didn't have a decent view, they didn't want to put the extra effort into fixing their balconies to the way they want it. From what I noticed, the tenants only made use of their balconies if they had something to look at that would relax them or was interesting to look at. When the balcony didn't have either, it would be a place where items that weren't being used or items too big to be kept inside would be stored.



CONCLUSION

What makes a person truly want to use a balcony when living in an apartment? A place that isn't deep enough to get properly will get ignored (Alexander, 1977). When more than three people can fit into a balcony, there is a better chance that this space will get used more often. Narrow balconies that make people have to face outward have negative results. Almost no balconies at all which are 3 or 4 feet deep manage to gather life to them or get used (Alexander, 1977). Also the fact that there isn't a lot of privacy on a balcony seemed to show when people were using them. If someone noticed me looking in their direction, they would look uncomfortable and after a while they would get up and leave. I had to start wearing sunglasses so I wouldn't get noticed so quickly. Also the direction on which the balcony is facing makes a big difference. If it faces a street or anything like that, then it will be much more inviting because they is action to watch. The privacy will build up if the tenant covers their opening with a shade or something that gives them a little more enclosure without blocking them out from the view. An outdoor space becomes a special outdoor room because of the surrounds it has to make it private. During the research, everyone came to the balcony once to observe the outside or to just look at what was going on. Even though they didn't stay for a long period of time, they enjoyed what they were looking at or doing before they started their day. Weather also has an affect on people using their spaces. Small amounts of people enjoy watching it rain even though it was relaxing to listen to the rain. It had to do with the wind mostly because after a gust of wind would come by, they would get their things together and go inside. It's really hard to say what attracts people to use this space, but from what my research shows, it's to view the outside and be separate from the inside, regardless if you are storing items or having lunch with a friend. When you go to your space, you feel different and have a chance to explore your own little world.



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