



Site Design Considerations For Ecovillages and Cohousing Neighborhoods

This summary has been prepared by **Concord Ecovillage**, an organization of local people seeking to build and reside in an environmentally and socially sustainable neighborhood.

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Ecovillages and **cohousing** are two similar movements that:

“Combine the advantages of private homes with the benefits of more sustainable living, including shared common facilities and ongoing connections with neighbors. These intentional neighborhoods, created and managed by residents, offer an innovative solution to today's environmental and social challenges.” From *Cohousing.org*

Ecovillages and cohousing neighborhoods have **a demonstrated track record:**

- Over 200 have been successfully completed in the USA the last 25 years, and many times that world-wide (<http://www.cohousing.org/directory> and <http://directory.ic.org/records/ecovillages.php>)
- Over a dozen books have been published on the subject of how to create ecovillages and cohousing communities (<http://www.cohousing.org/mkt/bookstore>)
- Over a dozen development/architecture firms specialize in building these neighborhoods (<http://www.cohousing.org/mkt/professionals>)
- Units typically sell and resell quickly at higher than market rates, and most neighborhoods have waiting lists of would-be buyers (http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/realestate/2008226351_greenneighborhoods05.html, <https://www.cohousing.org/cm/article/remarket>, <http://www.madisoncommons.org/?q=node/341>)

There are **Six Defining Characteristics of Cohousing**:

http://www.cohousing.org/six_characteristics

1. Participatory process
2. Neighborhood design
3. Common facilities
4. Resident management
5. Non-hierarchical structure and decision-making
6. No shared community economy

Ecovillages add a 7th

7. Environmentally sustainable design

The **Neighborhood Design** characteristic is summarized as:

- The physical layout and orientation of the buildings (the site plan) encourage a sense of community. For example, the private residences are clustered on the site, leaving more shared open space.
- The dwellings typically face each other across a pedestrian street or courtyard, with cars parked on the periphery.
- Often, the front doorway of every home affords a view of the common house.
- What far outweighs any specifics, however, is the intention to create a strong sense of community, with design as one of the facilitators.

Examples of Site Plans for Ecovillages and Cohousing neighborhoods:

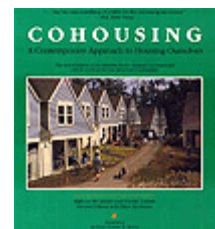
- Dozens of examples are shown in the book:

Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves, by Kathryn McCamant, Charles Durrett, Ellen Hertzman (Ten Speed Press, 1994)

- An excellent explanation for the purposeful separation of car from home is given on page 126-127 of the book:

The Cohousing Handbook: Building a Place for Community, by Chris ScottHanson, Kelly ScottHanson (New Society Publishers, 2004)

- Many other examples can be found on the websites of existing Ecovillage and Cohousing neighborhoods. Two examples:



- Fresno Cohousing, California (<http://www.fresnocohousing.org/>)



LA QUERENCIA COHOUSING
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

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- Liberty Village, Maryland (<http://www.libertyvillage.com/>)

