DESIGN INTERVENTION

Toward a More Humane Architecture

Edited by

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"... Buildings may be less solid than they seem, existing invisibly in the mind of the architect before they are born, remembered invisibly through the ages in the memories of the generations."

—Yates, 1980
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1. Housing the Single-parent Family

Kathryn H. Anthony

The 1980s have witnessed an explosion of a new generation of poverty, largely composed of women and their children. Forced out of their homes by separation, divorce, or unwed motherhood, this group has grown significantly over the past decade and their housing problems can often only be characterized as desperate. Unless drastic changes in federal housing policies are made during the Bush administration, it is likely that the housing dilemmas faced by America’s single parents in the 1990s will be even worse than they are today. The rapidly changing demographics of the American household and the prominence of single-parent families presents one of the greatest challenges to designers, planners, developers, and politicians.

Single-parent families are an extremely diverse group. At present, the majority of single-parent families are the byproducts of divorce and separation. The 1980 census showed that 3,670,000 single-parent families were caused by divorce, 3,454,000 by separation or an absent spouse, 2,268,000 by never having been married, and 658,000 by death of a spouse. The numbers of unwed parents have skyrocketed, and it is very likely that in only a few years this group will soon become the major source of single parenthood. At present, one out of every five American children lives with a single parent, usually the mother (Bianchi & Seltzer, 1986), and one out of every four American families is headed by a single parent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984).

The author thanks the following individuals for their valuable assistance: for Warren Village and Decatur Place, Judith Weaver, Charles S. Sink, Tom Morris, and Maxwell L. Saul; and for Elizabeth Stone House, Deborah Linnell and Robert Livermore III.
WHAT KINDS OF HOUSING CONDITIONS DO SINGLE PARENTS LIVE IN TODAY?

The high rate of divorce and separation, as well as increasing numbers of unwed mothers, have contributed to a generation of largely impoverished women and children. Almost half (49 percent) of American families headed by women have annual incomes below the poverty line, or about $7,000 for a family of four. In comparison, male-headed households with incomes below the poverty line represent only 5 percent of all male-headed households (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1980).

Single-parent households make up a growing share of both America's youth households and the nation's poverty population. Over the past 15 years, the number of single-parent households with heads aged 25 to 34 more than tripled. In 1987, the median annual income for households in this category was only $9,621. In the same year, for single-parent households with heads aged under 25, the median annual income was even worse—a meager $4,688 (Apgar & Brown, 1988).

The housing conditions of the nation's single parents are, for the most part, rather dismal. Compared to two-parent families, this group appears to be at a clear disadvantage when it comes to housing. Over half of the female-headed households with minor children in America have a housing problem. One third of the households are cost-burdened, i.e., they pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent, or, if homeowners, they pay more than 40 percent of their income for housing costs (Birch, 1985).

Single parents live in a variety of housing arrangements. The more fortunate ones live on their own. Some are able to keep their homes after a separation or divorce, but this often occurs only with great financial hardship (Weitzman, 1985). A series of moves is the more likely scenario. In fact, U.S. national data reveals that in the first year of separation, 55 percent of divorced mothers have moved out of their marital homes. Three years later, 74 percent of them have moved, and by this time, percent of them have moved once, 21 percent twice, and 22 percent three times or more (Bane & Weiss, 1980). Those forced to move often drop their housing standards substantially. Some move back in with their immediate families or other
relatives, often in a less-than-ideal environment that poses new problems of its own (Anderson-Khlief, 1982). Still others rent out portions of their homes as accessory apartments, or share housing with other single-parent families (Mulroy, 1988).

High-rent burdens (the ratio of median rent to income) especially plague single-parent families. In fact, rental housing is increasingly becoming home to low- and moderate-income single-parent households. From 1974 to 1987, median incomes of young single-parent renter households dropped sharply, while rents rose steadily. The rent burden for young single-parent families increased from 34.9 percent to 58.4 percent. From 1974 to 1983, the number of young single-parent households living in inadequate housing rose from 374,000 to 484,000 (Apgar & Brown, 1988).

Although not generally thought of as such, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 program and public housing program are predominantly women's programs. Female-headed households comprise over three-fourths of Section 8 participants. Public housing projects also contain a majority of female-headed households, although exact figures are not known. Approximately three out of four households in public housing are headed by single adults, most of whom are female (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 1980).

The worst off have no homes at all. In fact, a fairly high percentage of the nation's homeless are also single-parent families. The large numbers of homeless women and children who live on our nation's streets and sidewalks are astounding, shattering the stereotype of the old, male alcoholic as the predominant image of the homeless.

In discussing the housing conditions of today's single-parent families, it is important to distinguish between inner-city, suburban, and rural residents. Single mothers are usually renters, and thus are concentrated in central cities. The search for affordable housing after a separation or divorce often results in a move from standard-quality rental housing in a safe inner-city neighborhood to substandard housing in a deteriorated part of the city. The picture in the suburbs and in rural areas is somewhat different, however. Here single mothers have often become the "nouveau poor." Having been homeowners during a marriage, these women are left house-poor in suburbia or rural America. Accompanying this displacement in housing is a dramatic shift from middle- to low-income status (Mulroy, 1988).

Another distinction must be made among the housing conditions of different types of single-parent families. The housing needs of those who are separated, divorced, or widowed are often quite different from those who have never married. Parents with preschool, young school-age, or teenage children, as well as with small or large families, experience a different set of housing needs (Anthony et al., 1990).
A few housing projects have been designed and built, with the assistance of federal dollars, especially for single parents and their children. One of the best known prototypes is called Hubertusvereniging, or "Mother's Home," in Amsterdam designed by Aldo van Eyck. The project was sponsored by the Hubertusvereniging Foundation and directed by the Catholic church. It was completed in 1980 at houses approximately 16 mothers and their children. In addition, it operates a 24-hour emergency shelter for up to 90 people and a child-care center. Its residence include transitional families, pregnant teenagers, children awaiting adoption, the temporarily homeless, as well as single parents (Ahrentzen, 1989b; France, 1988).

Another project that has attracted some international attention is Nina Wes Homes in London, named after a single-parent developer and activist. Nina Wes developed several housing complexes for single parents and their children. She began as conversions of small buildings into multifamily housing with day-care facilities. One of the more well-known projects that Nina West administers is Fio House, designed by Sylvester Bone in 1972. It contains four private apartment units on each of three floors. Windows from each apartment overlook a carpeted interior hallway that serves as a play space for children. Each apartment unit is equipped with an intercom that links up to the corridor and to other apartment units, parents can easily communicate with their children or with other adults residing without having to leave their own unit. Nina West Homes is an example of transitional housing, where residents move out after a stay of about one to two years (Ahrentzen, 1989a, 1989b; Strong, 1975).

Although these housing developments are clearly the exception rather than the rule, they merit attention as prototypes. They are generally viewed as transitional housing, i.e., housing in which people will stay for a minimal period of time generally about three years or less. Residents' tenures in these housing environments are viewed as a time for them to get back on their feet, establish goals for themselves and prepare for a more independent life of work and housing on their own.

The Scandinavian countries, especially Denmark and Sweden, have pioneered relatively recent housing forms known as cohousing and collective housing, respectively. Although these housing developments are not targeted exclusively for single-parent families, such families make up a relatively large segment of the inhabitant. In contrast to some of the housing developments described earlier, these housing forms are long-term rather than transitional environments. While the specific form of housing often differs from project to project, cohousing developments share certain features. Four common characteristics include a participatory planning and design process; intentional neighborhood design encouraging a strong sense of community; extensive common facilities, often with day care, home-based care spaces, and communal dining; and resident management. As of spring 1988, co-housing communities had been built in Denmark and another 38 were planned. In fact, they have quadrupled in number during the last five years. Their sizes range from 6 to 80 households, with most housing between 15 and 33 dwelling-units (McCamant & Durrett, 1988).

Interest in collective housing in Sweden began to flourish in the mid-1970s, a day many of the larger Swedish towns and cities contain at least one example of collective housing. Over 30 collective housing developments were constructed in Stockholm during the 1980s alone (Figures 1-1-1-3). Collective housing is based on cooperation among residents, particularly in domestic work such as cooking and maintaining communal facilities (Almqvist, 1989). Recent studies conducted by the Catholic church have demonstrated that fellowship and a strong sense of community often emerge as a result of sharing interests and activities (Krantz, 1989). An excellent overview of collective housing in Sweden is provided by Woodward (1989). What is admirable about the Swedish example is that these new housing for accommodate the housing needs of single parents, but do not stigmatize them isolate them from the community at large. On the contrary, single-parent fami
become an important part of the entire cohousing community, which includes elderly, two-parent families, and other diverse groups.

A comprehensive overview of residents' reactions to ten housing projects built under the federal Non-Profit Housing Program in Canada is provided by Wekerle (1988). She describes two different types of housing targeted at women: co-ops and second-stage housing. The majority of residents at the co-ops are low- to moderate-income single parents with at least one child. Over 80 percent of these residents report having experienced discrimination when they sought housing. Residents are usually attracted by the promise of a supportive community, rather than by the design or location of the housing itself. In fact, they shared many activities with other members, from informal socializing, shared babysitting, and preparing meals to managing the co-op (Wekerle, 1988).

By contrast, second-stage housing provides short-term housing (from a few months to a year) for women and their children. Along a spectrum of temporary to permanent housing, it falls somewhere in between, and is neither a battered women's shelter nor standard housing in the community (Wekerle, 1988).

Residents are highly satisfied with the physical environment of both the Canadian co-ops and second-stage housing. In the co-ops, residents place great value on the emotional support they provide for each other, in the second-stage housing, women are overwhelmingly positive about the gains they have made (Wekerle, 1988).

A watershed in the American architectural scene occurred in 1984, with a national design competition for the “New American House” sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. The program called for six prototypical units of urban infill housing expressly for nontraditional households, and resulted in the winning design by Troy West and Jacqueline Leavitt. Targeted at the single-parent-family market, the design was centered on a shelter-service concept with a space for conducting paid work on the street frontage. Flexibility was built into the design, allowing a combination of units to become a single-parent or an intergenerational house with a child-care center. While several of the original design components have been modified, the project, Dayton Court, has since been built in St. Paul, Minnesota (Leavitt, 1984, 1989; Ahrentzen, 1989b).

Figure 1-1. One of the first examples of collective housing in Stockholm, Sweden, designed by Sven Markellus in 1935 (Photo by author).
Figure 1-2. Rear view of Katthuvudet, a collective apartment house in Stockholm, Sweden, that opened in 1986 (Photo by author).

Figure 1-3. View of communal dining room at Katthuvudet, Stockholm, Sweden (Photo by author).
For an overview of single-parent housing currently available in the United States and elsewhere, consult Ahrentzen (1989), Franck and Ahrentzen (1989), Sprague et al. (1986), Sprague (1985), and McCamant and Durrett (1988). Some of the American housing developments especially targeted at single-parent families are shown in Table 1-1. For some guidelines about starting up programs to help single-parent families with their housing needs, consult Petitt and Huchet (1987). Some excellent design guidelines for single-parent housing can be found in Cook et al. (1988). In the next sections, we will focus in more detail on two American projects, Warren Village and Elizabeth Stone House.

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<tr>
<th>LOCATION BY STATE</th>
<th>NAME OF DEVELOPMENT</th>
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<td>California</td>
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<td>Hayward</td>
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<td>Willowbrook Green</td>
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<td>North Hollywood</td>
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<td>San Rafael</td>
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<td>Santa Cruz County</td>
<td>Pajaro Valley Shelter for Women and Children</td>
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<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>Denver</td>
<td>Warren Village I</td>
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<td>Lexington</td>
<td>One-Parent Family Facility</td>
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<td>The Haven-Rockland Family Shelter</td>
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<td>Women's Development Corporation</td>
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<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Interim Housing</td>
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Source: Adapted from Ahrentzen (1989); National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (1989); Petitt and Huchet (1987); Sprague et al. (1986); Sprague (1985).
Located in Denver, Colorado, Warren Village is both the oldest and largest housing project built specifically for single parents and their children. The first phase was completed in 1974, and the second phase was finished in 1984. The design of the second phase was based in large part on feedback received from residents and staff in Phase I.

The purpose of Warren Village is to break the cycle of poverty and government dependency among single-parent families by providing a transitional, three-pronged program to help residents become more self-sufficient. In addition to housing, Warren Village provides on-site child care for infants through children aged 12, and family support services in the form of counseling and mandatory goal setting.

Currently, Warren Village contains housing units for approximately 200 families in its two facilities: Warren Village I at 1323 Gilpin Street in Capitol Hill, designed by Charles S. Sink and Associates, now of Sink Combs Dethlefs (Figures 1-4–1-8), and

Figure 1-4. Basement floor plan showing day-care center, Warren Village, Denver, Colorado (Illustration: Sink Combs Dethlefs and Debra Foster).

Figure 1-5. Typical floor plan of Warren Village, Denver, Colorado (Illustration: Sink Combs Dethlefs and Debra Foster).
Figure 1-6. Typical apartment plans, Warren Village, Denver, Colorado (Illustration: Sink Combs Dethlefs and Debra Foster).
Decatur Place at 1155 Decatur in West Denver, designed by Maxwell L. Saul, now of DMJM (Figures 1-9-1-13). Both are located near city parks and public elementary schools. Warren Village I is a seven-story building with 96 apartments and a day-care facility. Decatur Place is a four-story structure containing 105 apartments, extensive day-care space, and offices.

The day-care centers, called the Learning Center, are located on the first level in each building, and are open from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. on weekdays. Between the two sites, the program is licensed to serve 302 children, including 40 infants. School-age children attend the Learning Center before and after school as well as during school vacations. Breakfasts, lunches, and afternoon snacks are provided for the children. Children from Warren Village as well as children who live in the community attend the Learning Center. A sliding fee scale helps residents cover child-care costs.

The housing component of Warren Village operates under the Section 8 housing assistance program. Residents pay 30 percent of their income for rent, with the remainder subsidized by the federal government. Apartments range from one to three bedrooms, with some units specifically designed for disabled residents. Warren Village I contains one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, while Decatur Place has only two- and three-bedroom units. The one-bedroom units have 520 square feet; two-bedroom units have 760 square feet; and three-bedroom units have 965 square feet. Major appliances are provided, but the apartments are unfurnished.

A major renovation project at Warren Village I was completed in January 1989. Whereas the original entryway required residents to walk through the Learning Center on the ground level, residents now have their own entry directly to the first floor. A new ramp, front steps, pavilion, and bermed area have resulted in dramatic improvements (Figure 1-14). With separate entries to the Learning Center and the residents’ apartments, the space functions more efficiently than before. Several focus groups with neighbors helped shape the renovation work. Following early discussions, a number of individuals were shown initial plans and provided input into the design process. A strong attempt was made to involve Warren Village staff, parents, and children as well as neighbors in the programming process and to achieve a final design form that related well to surrounding buildings. In addition, the first-floor common areas have been remodeled, and one-third of the apartments have been upgraded.

Feedback from the architects of these projects is revealing. Tom Morris, who completed the renovation of the playground and front entry of Warren Village I, believes that one of the major problems of the original project was its very tight site, and that a 40’ × 280’ playground was inadequate for 150 children, especially while doubling as a front yard. In the future, similar projects will need more space all around.

Maxwell L. Saul, the architect of Decatur Place, stresses that the combination of day care and human services with housing is a key to its success. Another important factor is the site’s location, close to public transit lines and opportunities for education and employment. Security is another fundamental concern, as residents are often living under conditions of extreme stress. Saul cites the need for more inclusive, forward-looking federal housing subsidy programs that would facilitate the inclusion of day care. A variety of supplemental funding sources were needed to help finance the day-care facilities at Decatur Place, requiring a concerted effort from many groups.

A systematic post-occupancy evaluation of Warren Village has never been conducted. To date, no one has specifically addressed how residents have responded to the physical environmental features of Warren Village or Decatur Place in terms of their interior, architectural, and landscape design. However, Warren Village has been the focus of a study that examined changes over time in employment, educational status, satisfaction with housing and day care, service utilization, personal support networks, and psychological variables such as self-esteem and coping behavior (Chapman & Doucette, 1981). A second objective was to assess respondents’ goal orientations and the effects of Warren Village’s then-new goal-setting...
Figure 1-9. Ground-level floor plan of Decatur Place, 1155 Decatur, Denver, Colorado (Design: Maxwell L. Saul, architect).
Figure 1-10. Typical floor plan of Decatur Place, 1155 Decatur, Denver, Colorado (Design: Maxwell L. Saul, architect).
Figure 1-11. Typical two-bedroom apartment plan of Decatur Place, Denver, Colorado (Courtesy of Warren Village staff).

Figure 1-12. Typical three-bedroom apartment plan of Decatur Place, Denver, Colorado (Courtesy of Warren Village staff).

program. The third objective was to make recommendations for replicating the program. A total of 79 one-hour-long face-to-face interviews were completed with four groups of respondents: non-residents, former residents, long-term current residents, and new current residents (Chapman & Doucette, 1981).

Results from the Abt study indicate that Warren Village residents increase the level of educational attainment during their stay; they tend to increase their rate of employment; and after they leave, they decrease their dependence on welfare. They increase their rate of employment. In terms of education specifically, many residents entered Warren Village with less than a high-school education, but left the program with at least a high-school degree and often with some post-secondary
educational experience. Just under half (47 percent) were employed when they applied to Warren Village, while 94 percent were employed after leaving. The percent receiving public assistance upon applying was 65 percent; after leaving, it was a mere 6 percent (Chapman & Doucette, 1981). No significant changes were found in terms of self-esteem, fate control, crisis coping, or goal orientation. Nonetheless, those who had lived at Warren Village were much more likely to see furthering their education as a goal than people who had never lived there at all. According to this research, it appears that Warren Village achieves its aim to assist people in moving toward a self-sufficient, functional family lifestyle, and that they are better prepared to re-enter the mainstream of the community after they leave.

Among the recommendations related to housing based on both this research and conversations with Warren Village staff are the following:

- The facility should be located close to schools for both adults and children, places of employment, and social service providers (especially medical care).
- Proximity to public transportation is a key ingredient to the project’s success, since many residents lack cars.
- Apartment units should have a minimum of two bedrooms.
- A lounge or recreation space should be made available for adults during both daytime and evening hours.
- Separate exercise rooms for adults are a real bonus whenever possible. The Warren Village staff emphasizes the development of health, nutritional, and exercise skills, and having a physical space in the building devoted specifically to exercise reinforces the importance of these skills.
- Indoor play space not associated with the day-care center should be provided for children and should be available during weekends.
- Adequate space must be provided for meeting rooms. Education is an important component of Warren Village’s programs, and space is needed for classes.
- Building security is a key issue and needs to be carefully provided (Chapman & Doucette, 1981).

Here are some comments from recent residents of Warren Village (Warren Village, Inc., 1987–88).
Figure 1-14. Warren Village playground program. The intent was to present a softer image, a more neighborly face, and to provide a place for children to play and adults talk and watch the kids (Photos: Tom Morris, architect).

To have the full responsibility for a child and not to have the financial wherewithal to support him was devastating to me. . . . The parenting classes have been particularly helpful for me. . . . I had no idea there existed a program such as Warren Village for single-parent families. It was a godsend for me.

The Learning Center helped me so much. It allowed me to work and go to school without having to worry about [my daughter].

Through the counseling and programs at Warren Village, I was given the initiative to start a new life.

With the support of self-help groups, I can talk about my problems, work them out, and also receive support and assistance from the other women in the group.

Warren Village has given me a sense of independence, of confidence. I know now I can do many things on my own.
Elizabeth Stone House

The Elizabeth Stone House operates two facilities in the greater Boston area. The first residential site is located in a multiracial, multilingual neighborhood in Jamaica Plain and is accessible to public transportation, food stores, and community health centers and hospitals. In operation since 1974, it occupies a converted triple decker, a housing form typical of the area. Single women share a room with another adult, and mothers share a room with their children. In the building are two kitchens, three bathrooms, nine bedrooms, a child-care space, a large common space, and two offices. A total of 18 women and children can be housed here. Generally speaking, about a third of the residents have been children (Linnell, 1988; Elizabeth Stone House, 1988).

Women eligible to live in Elizabeth Stone House include former mental patients; victims of battering, child abuse, rape, or incest; women avoiding psychiatric hospitalization; and women making other life transitions. The facility does not house those who currently suffer from drug or alcohol problems, although many have histories of alcohol and drug abuse (Elizabeth Stone House, 1987).

Two programs are in operation at this first site, the Therapeutic Community and the Battered Women’s Program. The Therapeutic Community is a five-month program for women in emotional distress and their children. During the most recent years of operation, 85 percent of the participants in this program have been poor, 40 percent have children with them, and 38 percent are non-white. While some of the women have come directly from public or private psychiatric hospitals, others are deinstitutionalized homeless. The purposes of this program are for women to leave with greater peace of mind and emotional stability through sharing their experiences with others who have similar histories, and for women to help themselves gain greater self-confidence and practical skills such as parenting, maintaining a budget, and searching for housing (Elizabeth Stone House, 1987).

The Battered Women’s Program serves more of a crisis need—women and children fleeing violent situations. As part of this program, residents can stay in Elizabeth Stone House for up to eight weeks, during which time women work on housing and legal issues.

A weekly parenting group is conducted for all mothers in both programs to help share skills and experiences. Each child is evaluated separately from the parent, and a service plan is developed to address medical, nutritional, and emotional needs. Children are referred to day care, after-school programs, therapists, and play groups as needed (Elizabeth Stone House, 1987).

The second site in nearby Roxbury was completed in 1987 (Figure 1-15). It contains a 14-unit apartment building for transitional housing that holds up to 45 women and children. Residents at this Transitional Housing Program have just left either the five-month residential program or the eight-week battered women’s program, and they can stay in the new facility for up to 18 months. In its first months of operation, about two-thirds of the residents at this site were children. Many of the children were in foster care while their mothers were living at the first phase of Elizabeth Stone House. By the time the women have entered the Transitional Housing Program, they often have received permanent custody of their children or are able to substantially increase their visitation periods.

The program operates with a self-help philosophy and a nearly independent living situation. Women are expected to set and work on achieving practical goals regarding nutrition, children, housing, and medical, legal, educational, and vocational needs during their 18-month stay. The purpose of the program is to provide women the time needed to complete job training programs, save some money, and search for appropriate housing elsewhere. Day care is provided on site, and a variety of support groups are offered (Elizabeth Stone House, 1987; Transitional Housing Nears Completion, 1987; Transitional Housing Finished! 1988).

Built on a steep urban site, the building, which is traditional in appearance, steps down the hill. Separate stair modules serve the two basic clusters of units, to avoid
Each apartment unit contains three or four bedrooms to accommodate families, two women with children, or several single women. The building also provides space for offices, a conference room, a laundry facility, and recreation/mes-}

The first residents, 95 percent of whom are below the federally defined poverty level (Transitional Housing Finished! 1988). The program is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services, and it also received a one-year grant from the U.S. Depart-
Figure 1-16. Adult common space at Elizabeth Stone House, Roxbury, Massachusetts (Photo: Elizabeth Stone House staff).

Figure 1-17. Recreation space for children at Elizabeth Stone House, Roxbury, Massachusetts (Photo: Elizabeth Stone House staff).

of Housing and Urban Development for services to children and for security. Residents pay 25 percent of their income toward rent.

The progress of residents of Elizabeth Stone House is monitored regularly. Upon entering the facility, an assessment is made of each resident’s emotional and practical goals, as well as of the person’s mental-health history and prior experiences with drugs, alcohol, or prison. Comparisons are made upon exiting as well as three and six months after leaving Elizabeth Stone House. An analysis of residents’ progress to date demonstrates that the majority go on to live independently, without having to return to a residential treatment center. The recidivism rate is under 20 percent, a phenomenally low figure.
Figure 1-18. Typical bedroom at Elizabeth Stone House, Roxbury, Massachusetts (Photo: Elizabeth Stone House staff).

Figure 1-19. Typical children's bedroom at Elizabeth Stone House, Roxbury, Massachusetts (Photo: Elizabeth Stone House staff).

Figure 1-20. Typical kitchen at Elizabeth Stone House, Roxbury, Massachusetts (Photo: Elizabeth Stone House staff).

No systematic post-occupancy evaluation of either of these two facilities has been conducted. However, one of the staff members involved with the operation of the projects, the program planner, has offered some informal feedback about the facility and its design (Linnell, 1988).

- Residents prefer sharing apartment units to a larger form of congregated living (i.e., sharing kitchens and bathrooms with large groups of people). The latter housing design may work in an emergency shelter, but not for longer-term housing. Even though residents at both facilities share a great amount of physical space than one would normally while living independently (at least two adults share an apartment), this arrangement is preferable to sharing a suite or complex with four or more adults and children.
WHAT HOUSING-RELATED ISSUES FOR SINGLE PARENTS ARE CURRENTLY BEING EXAMINED?

A number of investigators have begun to examine housing-related issues for single-parent families. These studies have been pursued from a variety of perspectives, from the more theoretical, abstract research to the more applied, action-oriented studies (Anthony & Cornfield, 1987). Some have spelled out an agenda for research issues, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches to the study of single parents and housing (Anthony, 1987).

In terms of the more theoretical research, one body of work is testing a model of residential satisfaction developed at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Housing Research and Development Program, and applying it to a single-parent population. Among the issues being examined are the significant differences, if any, among the factors that predict satisfaction for one-versus two-parent families. What factors predict residential satisfaction for different kinds of single-parent families—of different marital status, small and large families, and children of different ages (Anthony et al., 1990)?
WHAT ARE SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE FORMS OF HOUSING TO HELP MEET THE NEEDS OF THIS SPECIAL GROUP?

Single parents and their children are not a monolithic group. Single parents differ in marital status, with children of different ages, and with families of different sizes having special housing perceptions and needs (Anthony et al., 1990). Housing needs of unwed mothers are often quite different from those of parents who are divorced.

A major issue for designers to consider is the degree to which the absent parent is or is not a part of the new family structure. All too often in the case of single-parent families, for both unwed as well as divorced parents, the father disappears, never to be seen again (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). In such cases, the family unit is the mother and the children, often with extended family members dropping in and out.

In the case of single-parent families with young children, the need for nearby on-site child-care facilities is acute. Child care for preschoolers and young schoolchildren must be provided. Single parents often complain, and justifiably so, that their work hours do not coincide with their children's school hours. They often feel guilty about raising "latchkey" children (i.e., children who spend a good deal of an afternoon alone at home while the parent is at work). For low-income single parents many of whom are unemployed or in unsatisfactory job situations, some on-site training and career counseling services are also in order.

Another issue that deserves immediate attention is the case of noncustodial parents, i.e., parents who are not awarded physical custody of their children but regularly host them during weekends, vacations, or other routine periods. With awarding of joint legal and physical custody on the increase, the role of noncustodial parent becomes increasingly important. More often than not, the noncustodial parent is the father; however, the number of noncustodial mothers may be on the rise.

The needs of noncustodial parents are clearly not met by today's housing market. Parents without physical custody need to be able to provide temporary but comfortable living space for their visiting children. When the housing environment of the noncustodial parent is inadequate, as is often the case, the child may feel like an unwanted guest in his or her parent's home. Ideally, children need rooms of their own at both the custodial and the noncustodial home. At a minimum, children need a place to temporarily store their belongings when they visit. Common play spaces where they can meet other children should also be provided, but these are often hard to find.

If space within the individual apartment unit is at a premium and having another bedroom for occasional visitors is unaffordable, another option is to provide rotating temporary space in a multifamily housing complex to house visiting children of noncustodial parents. This could be in the form of a hotel room or suite (i.e., a separate bedroom and bathroom, perhaps with an adjoining small space for a sofa, chair, and coffeetable). A small kitchenette is a possible option. Residents or their visitors could rent this unit whenever the family member(s) arrive. A separate facility could be especially convenient for a number of reasons. If used by a visiting parent, children would be able to see their mother or father in their own environment, not to pack up their belongings in a suitcase. They could spend the day with their
noncustodial parent and then go back home to sleep. This arrangement provides privacy and a more homelike environment for the visiting parent, far preferable to an institutional hotel room. If used by visiting children, it provides privacy and a sense of independence. It also provides a more comfortable environment than many parents can offer their visiting children, many of whom end up sleeping on the floor, on the couch, in bed with their parents, or even in walk-in closets.

Finally, more housing developments are needed that cater to the special needs of single-parent families, modeled after Warren Village, Elizabeth Stone House, and other such developments. This housing form should not only be aimed at low-income single parents, whose housing needs are undoubtedly the most acute, but also at middle-income single parents. Having the opportunity to live amidst other single parents who are undergoing similar experiences, and in a place where their child-care problem is solved, albeit temporarily, can help these women get back on their feet once again.

CONCLUSIONS

What is perhaps most revealing about the analysis of new housing for women with young children is that, while housing developments aimed at single-parent families are indeed innovative, they are pioneering in unconventional ways. Generally speaking, these American developments aimed at single-parent families resemble traditional housing forms, at least from the exterior. Their floor plans are not dramatically different from those of typical multifamily housing projects. The provision of common day-care space is probably the chief distinguishing architectural feature. Furthermore, style, ornament, and other "trendy" architectural appliqués are not typically found in this type of housing. As a result, such developments are unlikely to be spotlighted on the covers of leading design publications. Innovation is not achieved primarily through an architectural mode.

However, this is less the case in our European examples, particularly in Scandinavia. In fact, the European prototypes discussed early in this chapter can serve as useful models.

What is truly innovative in these American prototypes is their unusual design process, their special clients and users, and the fact that they even exist. These developments address a segment of the population whose needs are all but ignored by the traditional housing market—the working poor who are neither homeless nor well housed, and for whom traditional public housing is a very last resort. These exemplary projects provide affordable housing as well as vital services like day care, support groups, and education and employment counseling as essential components of the package.

The amazing success of programs like Warren Village and Elizabeth Stone House provide a sharp contrast to the abysmal failure of all too many of America's public housing projects. While residents of Warren Village and Elizabeth Stone House experience a sense of self-confidence, independence, and optimism, residents of our nation's public housing projects often experience an overwhelming sense of despair, spinning in a downward spiral as victims of a classic "no-win" situation. The projects cited here eliminate that classic trap, and demonstrate that in order to help resolve complex life situations, housing means more than just shelter.

A useful analogy can be made with housing for the elderly. In recent years the numbers of housing projects aimed specifically at elderly residents has skyrocketed. Many of these developments include congregate facilities and services like communal dining and health care. Again, housing encompasses more than a roof over one's head and an individual housing unit. It includes a range of services and facilities that help residents live more independently. Perhaps designers and developers seeking to meet the housing needs of single-parent families would do well to view elderly housing as one of many potentially useful prototypes.
The housing needs of today's single-parent families are far from being met. A broad-brush approach is needed to help address many pressing issues. Architects, landscape architects, interior designers, planners, developers, and other stakeholders must be willing to experiment with innovative housing forms to help meet the challenge of this unprecedented social change.

REFERENCES


