Active Aging Center: Holladay, Utah
Master’s Thesis 2007: Krystal Watts

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Special thanks to my family for all their support and help, and to my husband Aaron for his late night support and hard work helping me finish.
Table of Contents

Project Description

Program

Site

Precedents

Design

Bibliography
Project Description
"The gain in U.S. life expectancy...was a major victory for public health...The Challenge of the 21st Century will be to make these added years quality years...We have no time to lose in learning how to help older adults lead healthier, more independent, and more satisfying lives.”
(Department of Health and Human Services Administration of Aging)
Everywhere we turn we are confronted by the fact that we are aging. The baby boomers are reaching their “silver” and “golden” years. In fact, in 2004 the older population (65+) numbered 36.3 million, in the year 2030; this number is expected to be around 71.5 million. (A Statistical Profile of Older American Aged 65+, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration on Aging) This increase is staggering. Everyday we are bombarded with concerns about how to care for this age group.

The baby boomers impact the U.S. politically and socially. Politically they make up a large percentage of the voting population. They are an age group that is more conservative than the younger generation. They are interested in the struggling Social Security system which has had great impact on the past elections. Their taxes contribute greatly to the funds used in local governments for education. Medical and health impairments often are often associated with the aging, the increases in this population raises concerns about their abilities to drive and remain mobile. (Bureau of Transportation Statistics)

Previous forms of care for the aging are being rejected because of their perceived inhumane treatment of the aged. Nursing home has a negative connotation. One major factor in the contributing to the increased elderly population is the increased life expectancy. Modern medicine has enabled the elderly to live longer and healthier lives. Our grandparents no longer want to live in nursing homes. They want to age gracefully and respectfully.
“Everyone wants to maintain their ability to go where they want, when they want, especially as they grow older and enjoy more leisure time.” (http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)
After extensive research there are three main areas of needs that enable the elderly to enjoy aging more fully. These three areas of need are social interaction, maintained health/healthcare and a sense of independence.

“Social life may cut Alzheimer’s risk.” (http://news.bbc.co.uk/l/low/health)

There are many implications for the social interaction of the aging. In fact US researchers claim that taking part in lots of leisure activities, such as visiting with friends or family can reduce a person’s risk of getting Alzheimer’s by 38%. Their study showed that habitual social interaction may help boost the brain by storing a “reserve capacity” that can delay the onset of Alzheimer’s. This study states that people can benefit from keeping active regardless of what their background and social status may be. As stated by Dr. Richard Harvey, director of research at the Alzheimer’s Society, “use it or lose it.” (Published in Neurology, and also on http://news.bbc.co.uk/l/low/health) Social interaction gives the elderly a sense of place. It allows them to see their need in society and gives them a chance to enrich and help the lives of those around them.

The ability of social interaction to diminish the risk of getting certain diseases, ties right in to the need of the elderly to be able to maintain their health and to have adequate healthcare in reach. The health of an individual impacts all aspects of their lives. The healthier they are the more able they are to be independent and to be social.
“The number of older adults in North America is growing quickly and physical limitations and disabilities of this population are becoming the largest health care challenge today.”
(Self-Efficacy and the Progression of Functional Limitations and Self-Reported Disability in Older Adults with Knee Pain, Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences)
There are two design criterias that need to be incorporated into designing environments for the aging Americans. They are to create an environment for older adults that will foster confidence in their physical abilities through limiting physical obstacles and barriers, and by being more aware that the mental well-being of older adult’s is directly connected to their physical performance.

“More than 33% of elderly people experience a fall one or more times annually.” (http://www.informedesign.umn.edu, Preventing Falls in Elderly Persons, The New England Journal of Medicine, 2003. volume 348; issue 1 by Mary E. Tinetti)

As people age they experience a decline in strength, coordination and flexibility. This decline can really diminish a person’s ability to care for themselves and to maintain a sense of autonomy. Everyone experiences a decline in vision as they age. As the vision declines images become blurry. The aging eye “yellows” with time. Blues and greens start losing their distinction and a design awareness that incorporates these shifts greatly aids the comfort of the elderly.

Be independent greatly affects the way people age and how they feel. A major key in being independent is the ability to drive.

Even as teenagers driving is what gives us our sense of freedom and independence. Every year we hear of incidents where the elderly are involved in accidents due to the complications of old age. While every one wants to drive for as long as possible, no one wants to be threat to themselves or to people around them. Currently in the United States there are no age limits set for drivers being too old.
In 1991 an estimated 23.5 million licensed drivers in the U.S. were age 65 and older. By 2001 this number had increased 4.7 million. (Bureau of Transportation Statistics; Travel Patterns of Older Americans with Disabilities) In all, this age group is 13 percent of the United State's total population; they have greatly changed the way Americans look at health care and facilities for the care of the aging. They have changed the way buildings are designed to facilitate their needs and they have brought awareness to issues that come with aging. 42 percent of those aged 65 and older have a disability compared to 19 percent of those aged 16 to 64. These disabilities often affect driving ability. Facilities need to be designed and sited in locations that are easy to reach for the elder but that can also incorporate housing and commercial uses in the same location. Around 31.9 percent of the elderly that are disabled need specialized assistance or equipment to travel. Of the one quarter of the disabled that consider their disabilities as severe, almost 60 percent of those never leave their homes. (Bureau of Transportation Statistics; Travel Patterns of Older Americans with Disabilities)

"Most rural communities lack easily managed forms of residential settings for the semi-independent elderly not yet ready to live in an assisted living facility" (Aging Population and Housing in Rural Communities, by E. Raedene Combs and Yan Xia)

Facilities and residences that are well-designed and affordable promote independence, privacy and give a sense of dignity to older persons.
“Mixed-use centers are valuable assets to suburbs but are criticized for their lack of pedestrian accessibility, connectedness, automobile dependence, and monotonous physical environments.” (http://www.informedesign.umn.edu; Synergy & Movement within Suburban Mixed Use Centers: The Toronto Experience; Journal of Urban Affairs.)
Mixed-use centers can serve to not only provide a healthy living environment for the aging, but they can revitalize a struggling building type. Malls throughout the United States are in need of a program change that can lift them to their former status as center of activity and success.

Cheuk Fan Ng in an article in the Journal of Environmental Psychology titled Satisfying Shoppers’ Psychological Needs: From Public Market to Cyber-Mall outlines a few major criteria of design that need to be taken into consideration for designing a vibrant retail center. They are to “include stimulus and new information as user’s progress through a mall, to excite and involve users in mall design, create an easily understood building layout and circulation path, facilitate the ability to see deep into the space, and provide clear signage in universal pictographs to ease way-finding in malls, and to be aware that shoppers may dislike places that are too crowded or too empty and may desire crowding in some settings, but not in others.”

Another article found in the Journal of Retailing, titled It’s All in the Mall, identified more design criteria. These are to “create comfortable sitting areas and restaurants or food courts, ensure safety in and around the shopping facility by providing ample lighting and open areas, integrate a large number of designer or specialty stores in the mall, and to consider how color, decoration, theme, and spaciousness of furnishings may attract or appeal to specific types of consumers.”
Proposal

My thesis proposal is to take a retail center and rehabilitate it into a mixed-use center that while designed specifically for the aging American, will attract a diverse age range of inhabitants and tenants. For a community to be truly sustainable it must appeal to all people.

The site that I have selected is in the Holladay Village area, located at; 2300 East and Holladay Murray Road, Holladay, UT 84117

Holladay is an ideal location for many reasons. Around 22% of the City of Holladay’s inhabitants are over the age of 55, an additional 27% are over the age of 35. (http://www.cityofholladay.com/about.censusdemographics.html) The Holladay village center has experienced a decline in business and revenue over the past year. This decline and the age of the building make it a great candidate for adaptive reuse and revitalization.
Program: 37,380 square feet
Medical Supply Store: 1300 square feet
Gift Boutique: 1750 square feet
Craft/Hobby Store: 1800 square feet
Floral Shop: 890 square feet
Cyber Cafe: 1680 square feet
Sporting Goods Store: 2000 square feet
Fitness Center: 5860 square feet
Restaurant: 3600 square feet
Furniture Store: 2500 square feet

Program: Retail  21,380 square feet
Housing Unit Type 1: 1200 square feet
Housing Unit Type 2: 1000 square feet
Housing Unit Type 3: 800 square feet
Housing Unit Type 4: 500 square feet

Total number of units:
Housing Unit Type 1: 7 units
Housing Unit Type 2: 3 units
Housing Unit Type 3: 2 units
Housing Unit Type 4: 6 units

Program: Residential 16,000 square feet
Neighborhood Context: Holladay Village Zone
Neighborhood Context: Holladay Village Easement and R.O.W.
Neighborhood Context: Architectural Patterns
Site Context: Existing Buildings
Neighborhood Context: Average Rainfall in Area

- 77.5°F average daily temp. in July
- 28.6°F average daily temp. in January
- 15.3" average annual rainfall
- 54.0" average annual snowfall
- 60% annual sunshine
Neighborhood Context: View of Site
Site Context: Vehicular Traffic Patterns
Location: Site Context
Location: Distances from Site to Related Locations
Neighborhood Context: Site Location
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