

# PLANNING FOR AN AGING POPULATION

Peter Landshoff  
[pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk](mailto:pvl@damtp.cam.ac.uk)

- The problems
- Some solutions

# My experience

- Closely involved in the design and delivery of a complex of buildings for Cambridge University – and had to negotiate with the planners



- For 7 years chaired the Planning Committee of the civic society in Cambridge

# What I have learnt about planners

- You are over-worked
- You really do care
- But could you pay more attention to those with reduced mobility?

[The regional RTPI had a meeting about this in 2013 ....  
Do courses on planning perform?]

# The problems

- Life expectancy at birth increases by 6 hours every day:

1991	2017
75	82

[New figures](#) released December 2017

boy	89.5
girl	92.1

- 21% of dwellings have one or more person with a mobility problems
- There are currently 850,000 people with dementia in the UK. There will be 1.14 million by 2025

# Loneliness

- Half of all older people say television is their main company.
- Loneliness leads to lack of sleep and cardiovascular problems
- It increases the likelihood of mortality by 26%
- Many people go to their GP just for someone to talk to
- There is a stigma to admitting to loneliness, which makes people withdraw even more
- People can be lonely in a crowd
- It afflicts people of all ages

Some frail people need specialist housing.

Examples may range from a small scheme of cluster flats with additional facilities for support staff, to much larger extra care schemes enabling older people to live in their own self-contained accommodation but with care and support.

[Cambridge City Local Plan 2014]

But 90% of older people live in mainstream housing

# Effect on the economy

- Need to keep people out of the NHS – it is overloaded and hospital is perhaps 5 times the cost of being looked after at home
- Dementia costs the UK economy £26 billion per year. Predicted to be £65 billion by 2050 (<http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org>)
- If it is easier for people with physical or mental problems to get out they are more likely to stay away from the NHS
- *House of Lords Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change*: should consider housing in tandem with health and social care provision because well-designed housing, as well as older people's capacity to avoid social isolation, are strongly linked to better health outcomes

# Scope for big savings

AgeUK estimates cost of falls and accidents in the home at £1.7 billion a year

Providing simple things such as

- **level access**
- **circulation space**
- **walk-in showers**

could save the country more than £5 billion over the next 60 years



House of Lords Built Environment Committee, 2016

We believe that the Lifetime Homes standard can play a key part in addressing the demographic challenge facing our housing stock. We recommend that local authorities should be required, within their local planning policies, to set appropriately ambitious targets for the delivery of Lifetime Homes.

All-party parliamentary group on Housing and Care for Older People, April 2018

All new houses should be built with the elderly in mind, and more consideration should be given to building bungalows

Bathroom planned to give side access to WC and bath

Provision for a future stair lift

Identified space for future platform lift to bedroom

Low window sills

Walls able to take adaptations

Identified space for temporary entrance level bed

Living or family room at the entrance level

Distance from the car parking space kept to a minimum

Easy route for a hoist from bedroom to bathroom

Sockets, controls, etc. at a convenient height

Accessible entrance level WC (opportunity for shower later in 3 bed or larger homes)

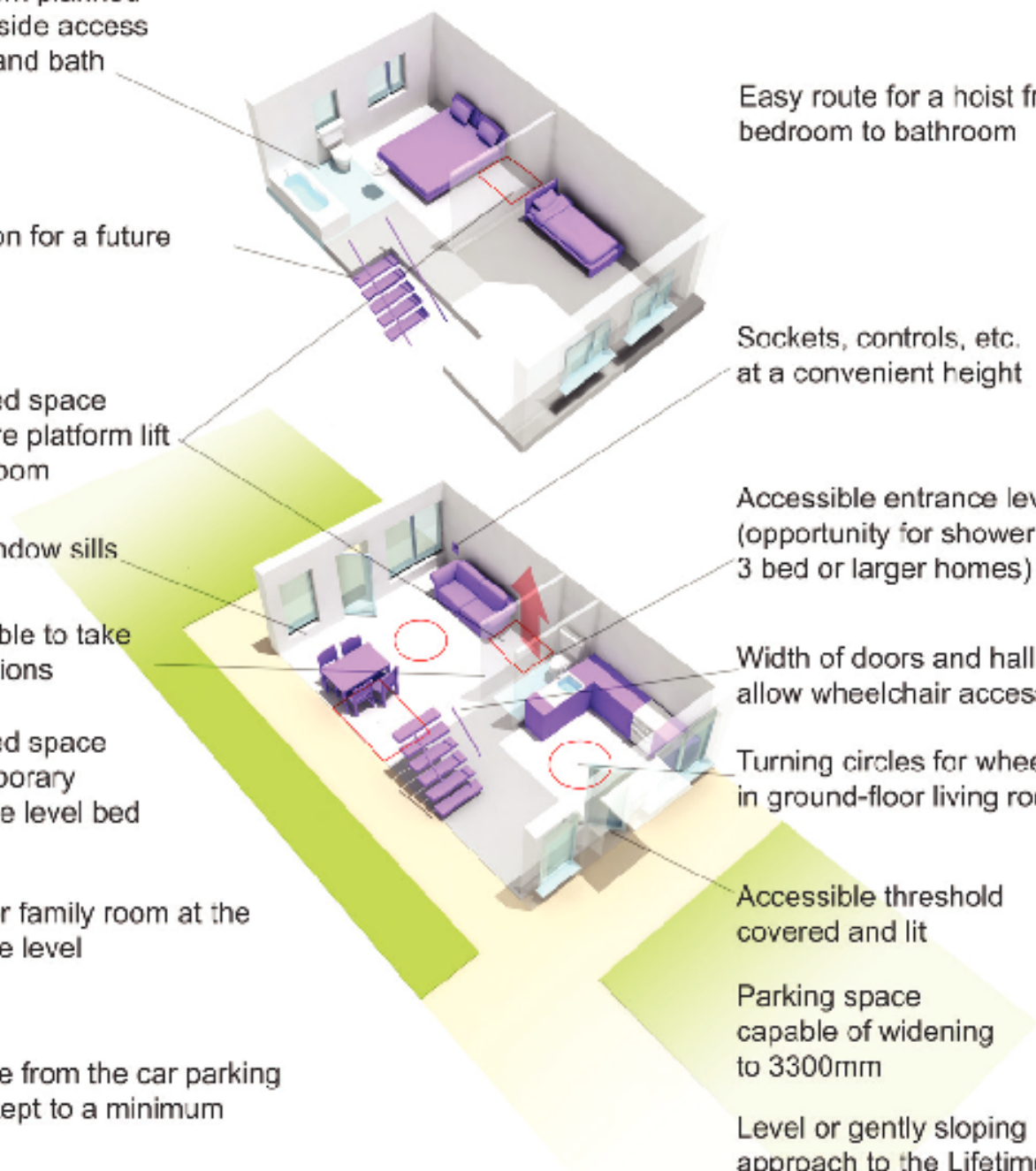
Width of doors and hall allow wheelchair access

Turning circles for wheelchair in ground-floor living rooms

Accessible threshold covered and lit

Parking space capable of widening to 3300mm

Level or gently sloping approach to the Lifetime Home



# ALL new homes should be lifetime homes

- So that, when people become frail or are suddenly disabled, they can stay in their own homes for as long as possible
- Costs typically less than £2000– less if done in bulk
- Includes small increase in floor area – our houses are the smallest in Europe

IF THINGS ARE BETTER FOR OLDER PEOPLE THEY WILL  
BE BETTER FOR EVERYBODY



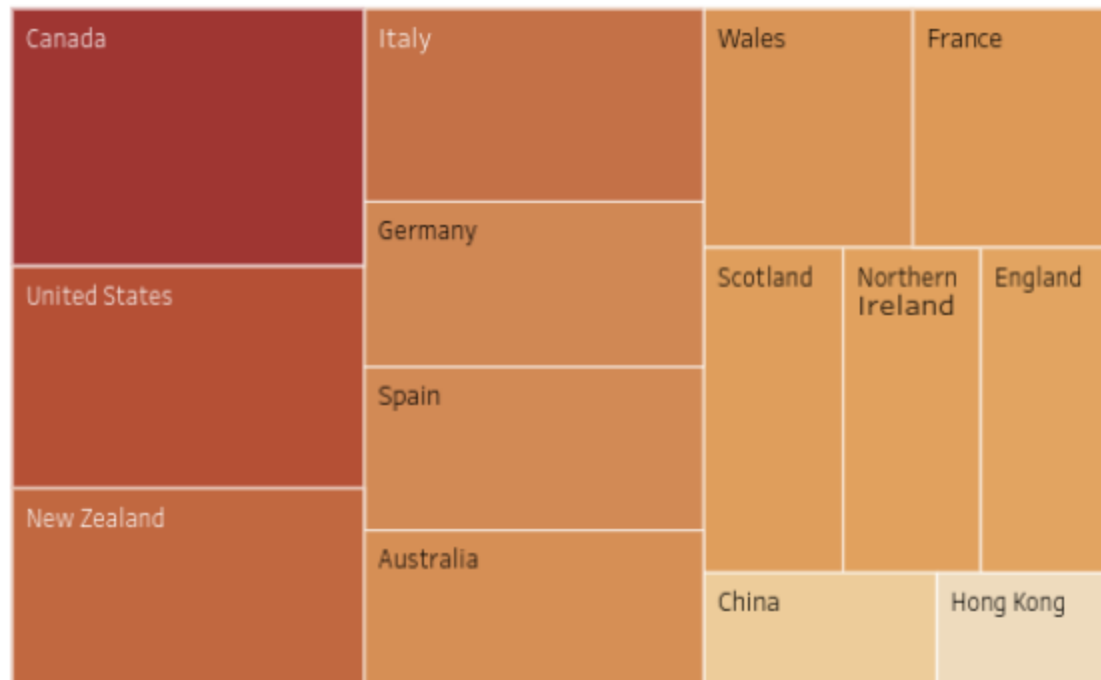
The one on the right is much better – but the switches could perhaps be painted red (like at Cambs Police HQ)

And why are sockets usually at floor level?

## Average home areas

England 71.2 square metres  
<https://www.findmeafloor.co.uk/>

### Average Floor Space - Square Metre



# South Cambs Local Plan 2014

Building all affordable homes and 5% of private new homes to the Lifetime Homes Standard will help ensure that our housing stock will better meet the needs of all our residents

????

## Building regs **optional** requirement M4(2)

- a. Within the curtilage of the **dwelling**, or of the building containing the **dwelling**, it is possible to approach and gain **step-free** access to the **dwelling** and to any associated parking space and **communal** facilities intended for the occupants to use.
- b. There is **step-free** access to the WC and other accommodation within the **entrance storey**, and to any associated **private** outdoor space directly connected to the **entrance storey**.
- c. A wide range of people, including older and disabled people and some wheelchair users, are able to use the accommodation and its sanitary facilities.
- d. Features are provided to enable common adaptations to be carried out in future to increase the accessibility and functionality of the **dwelling**.
- e. Wall-mounted switches, socket outlets and other controls are reasonably accessible to people who have reduced reach.

House of Commons [Report](#) February 2018: effectively, this should apply to all new homes

# Empty nesters

Older people should be helped to downsize to match their changing need

But

- They want their children and grandchildren to come and stay
- They do not want the disruption

Design houses that are adaptable, perhaps easily divisible into two?



# Design of localities

One in five older people admit that they cannot remember the last time they did any exercise – Age UK

Essentials:

no steps

seats

cafes

community halls

green spaces and community gardens

But environments should not make things too easy: there needs to be a bit of a challenge

# Lifetime communities

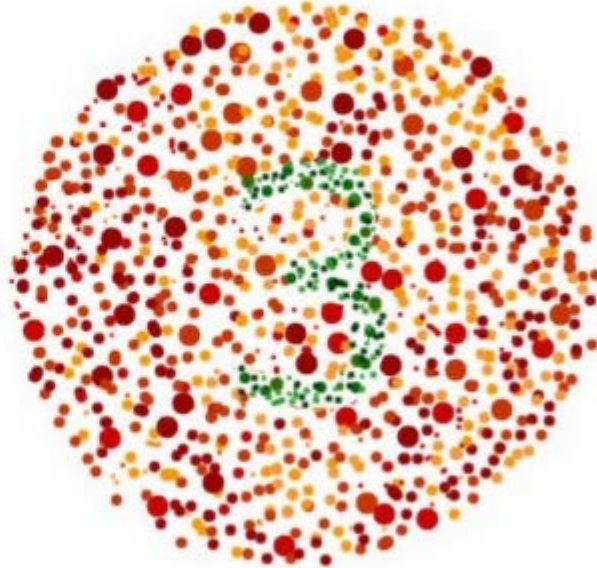
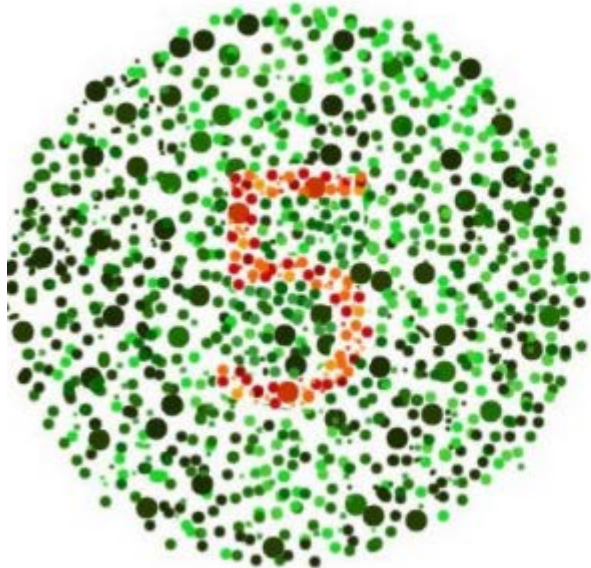
<http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

- An environment that is accessible and inclusive, aesthetically pleasing and safe (in terms of both traffic and crime)
- A community that offers plenty of services, facilities and open space
- A strong social and civic fabric, including volunteering and informal networks
- A culture of consultation and user empowerment amongst decision makers
- A strong local identity and sense of place

Almost 2 million people in the UK have sight loss that has a significant impact on their daily lives

<http://fightforsight.org.uk/>

**Make text large enough for us to read  
Don't expect us to distinguish colours  
– can you see the numbers?**



# What I have learnt since I fell off my bike

There should be many more places to sit down – low walls will do

Waiting in the draught at a bus stop with no shelter and no seats is really horrid

# Remarks from a developer

- There are areas for improvement in the regulations - such as improved quality of automatic doors
- Refurbished buildings present a more challenging environment especially where planning restrictions limit the viable solutions (listed / historic building etc)
- We have had success in using public art money to benefit the needs of those with reduced mobility and compensating for the impact that the new buildings have. This could be considered further with resting areas, covered walk ways restricted traffic movements, wider footpaths and drop off points etc
- Planners should generate a 'city' wide plan for those with reduced mobility to which each construction project has to contribute beyond the site boundary

# Need to lobby planners, architects and builders

The things I have mentioned need vigorous campaigning – there is a lack of awareness among architects and builders