

The Owner-Built Home - Chapter 4 - Planning Systems: Group Living Space

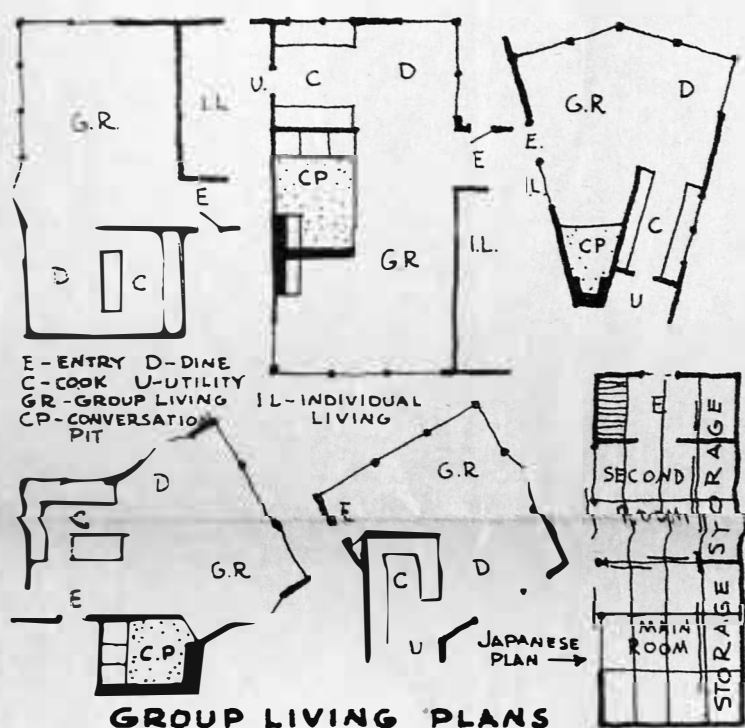
Ken Kerns

The Owner-Built Home — Chapter 4 Planning Systems: Group Living Space

By Ken Kern

In planning group living space we seek first of all to satisfy our physical space needs. We classify furniture groupings into (1) Primary Conversation; (2) Secondary Conversation; (3) Reading-Writing-Study; (4) Music; and (5) Games. The furniture arrangements thus made constitute an interior view in the same way that window and door arrangements constitute an exterior view. A volumetric furniture sequence is suggested: placing the bulkiest furniture against solid walls, with medium-volume furniture between, and light furniture closest to window and door openings. Under open-plan design concepts a light, adaptable type of furniture is recommended. Let low individual pieces of furniture be sparsely distributed in the room.

Open-planning concepts can offer an Owner-Builder a much more satisfying living environment. Contrast the studied "activity planning" approach to the traditional, standard-sized Victorian room-box planned exclusively to receive, entertain, and impress guests. The monotonous symmetry of box-shape cells should be replaced by the spaciousness and flexibility found in the open plan. The open plan living arrangement provides for changing demands at different times of the day and year. It also meets the changing demands for the different stages of family development; simultaneously engaged active and passive activities are provided for. An almost unrestricted inside view prevails in the examples of open planning illustrated below. Cooking and eating areas are only a few steps apart, and neither area is cut off from the rest of the group living space. Quiet and passive functions are placed in dead-end areas (by nature we prefer the cozy feeling of enclosure when reading).



Open-planning concepts should serve as important tools to the modern architect; a means, however, when the disciplines of one tradition are replaced; substitutes merely, not alternatives, are established. Alternatives too often necessitate a painful thought process and a major change in basic living patterns. It may have been this notion that prompted Frank Lloyd Wright to say that:

In our country the chief obstacle to any real solution of the moderate-cost house problem is the fact that our people do not really know how to live.

Open-planning concepts enable us to satisfy our physical needs—but this is only one purpose of "making spaces." We also design space to satisfy our impulses and add richness to our lives. These emotional qualities are too often overlooked by architects, and hardly ever considered by Owner-Builders.

A surprise view or a changing vista in a room can add immeasurably to its charm. We should contrast the narrow-wide, the light-dark, and the high-low characteristics of a room area. There should continually be a feeling of change in the places we inhabit. Wright spoke of "filtering from one place to another." A hall, for instance, "filters" us into a room. The architectural treatment we give the hall thus influences the emotional impact created through the transition from one space to another.

Entry-passage planning warrants our special care and attention. It is here that guests are first received and it is here that we wish to feel the first impact of homey welcome. A low, wide entry has a more appealing shelter suggestion than a tall, narrow one. A small, low-ceiling hall makes the adjoining room appear wider and adds a sense of movement and spacious rest when one is entering the room. Hallway doors and room-openings should be grouped together to reduce major circulation across a room. To prevent the division of a space into two sections, a good hall location is at the corner of a room rather than in the center of the wall.

(continued next month)

Letters To The Editor

Ahimsa Children's Camp

To the Editor:

Many parents who care deeply about social justice and peace have difficulty locating activity for their children which is compatible with this concern. Therefore a group of pacifist individuals are banding together to create a new summer camp

which can provide an answer.

They have purchased a beautiful camp in eastern Connecticut, renamed it Camp Ahimsa, and hired Richard King to serve as the director. The first summer season begins July 1 and runs for eight weeks, until Aug. 27.

Camp Ahimsa is incorporated as a non-profit enterprise and will be open to children of all

races from ages 9 through 15. A brochure is available.

To meet an up-coming property payment, financial contributions are needed. An arrangement is in effect by which 50% of each \$100 share purchase may be credited toward the camp fee of any child.

Children or their parents (as well as young people interested in counseling) are urged to write the camp.—Paul Salstrom, Secretary, Camp Ahimsa, Volun-town, Conn. 06384

Don't Overcook Greens

To the Editor:

Re your item on greens in the February issue, who wants to cook the poor greens one full hour? Better to boil a small amount of water, drop in the greens, cover, let it come to boil for one or two minutes, and turn off the fire. In a few minutes they are ready to eat. (The water in which dandelions and chicory are cooked is like medicine to people with gallstones or gall troubles.) Chicory is easier to clean. The best greens grow on plowed land. Don't pick greens on the highway; they are loaded with lead poisons. No green should be cooked in 3 or 4 waters; even pokeweed is not poisonous, and need not be cooked to death if picked young and only the tender part eaten. Needs only a minute or so in boiling water. To those who send a stamped, addressed envelope, I'll send some Florence Fennel—excellent raw, flavors fish, and helps digest food. —Calliope Columbus, 2429 N. Broadway Ave., Springfield, Mo. 65803

Ways with Fruit Trees

To the Editor:

As soon as peach blossoms appear in the spring, spatter wood ashes over them and the young leaves. Attach a perforated tin can to a pole and sprinkle ashes through the branches, on a damp day when there is no wind.

To prevent fruit tree blossoms from being damaged by frost, a hemlock is intertwined among the branches of the tree in blossom, and the end of it brought down to terminate in a bucket of water. If a frost occurs during the night, the tree will not be damaged, even though a film of ice may form on the water in the bucket. My grandparents brought this lore from Germany and I saw it in use on their Kansas farm. —Alice M. Kennedy, 1355 Ivy St., Denver, Colo.

Educating At Home

To the Editor:

Will Evan was born on Feb. 25—another natural birth, this one the first time we were really at home. While I (Carol) was impatient for 3½ hours of labor, Will was born with no problems. I felt better than before the birth, by the very next day. In the week since, 3-year-old Don has done a lot of growing up; he's quite proud of "his" baby.

We've been looking into education laws and found that Vermont will permit children being educated outside public school, if they are getting "the same" education (the decision as to

"same" being made by the principal of the school). It looks like Vermont is one of the few states where, with enough education, you can educate your own.

Enclosed is Dave's favorite list of books. *Green Revolution* readers might be interested in a list of what we think is conducive to "creative living." You tuned us in to *Normal Neurosis*—and thanks. It surely hit home with us and many who have borrowed it. Hope you are well. We sure are!—Carol, Dave, Don and Will Hatch, 8 Pine St., St. Johnsbury Vt.

Books on Creative Living

Dorothy Baruch, *New Ways in Discipline*, \$5.50; Ralph Borsodi, *Education and Living* (4 parts); June Burn, *Living High*, \$3.75; Albert Ellis, *How to Live with a Neurotic*, \$3.95; Albert Ellis & Robert A. Harper, *A Guide to Rational Living*, \$4.95; Paul Goodman, *Compulsory Miseducation*, \$3.95; Ammon Hennacy, *The Book of Ammon*, \$3.00; Aldous Huxley, *Island*, paperback, (continued on page 4)

Wend to Produce Better Chairs

One of the best bits of news we've had in a long time comes in Milton Wend's announcement that he is going into production on chairs suited to the human body. Among the popular lectures of this erect, vigorous 70-year-old is one that shows how badly the "modern" chair is designed for body support and comfort. The seats are too deep, padding is a mistake, the backs are no good, and usually the chair is too high.

Mr. Wend, director of Human Engineering Research, Edgartown, Mass., lists at least three body needs that a chair should sustain: an erect spine, with body weight on the fleshy rump bones; back support just under the shoulder blades; and no pressure on the under thigh muscles. This gives the body maximum support, no nerve pinching or pressure, and true comfort and relaxation.

Check the chair you're sitting in. Is it low enough that your feet touch the floor, and leave a space between the chair seat and the thighs? Do the knees extend out at least two or three inches beyond the edge of the chair, to make sure of no pressure on the thigh muscles? Are you sitting with a straight spine, perpendicular to the chair seat? Is your weight on a maximum of 2 inches of padding, so that the rump bones carry your weight? Is there back support to the three or four inches below your shoulder blades, and nothing from there to the chair seat?

Mr. Wend says that requests for decent chairs have grown to the "pressure" stage. He is now equipping and expanding his craft shop to go into production on good chairs, this spring. It will be a part-time occupation, and if orders exceed his individual capacity to fill, he will try to get some parts made else-

(continued on page 4)

THE GREEN REVOLUTION — 3 May, 1966

ADVERTISING RATES

Classified: 35c per line. Minimum 3 lines or \$1.05. Average line has 40 spaces.

Display: \$5 per column inch. No discounts on any ads. Payment must accompany order.

Deadline: 10th of preceding month (example: April 10 for May issue).

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YOUR LIBRARY: Let's Get Well, Davis. Get Well Naturally, Clark. Food Facts and Fallacies, Fredericks. Books on nutrition, health, gardening, childbirth, breastfeeding. Free loan or sale. Products too! Yeasts, grains, mills, supplements. HATCH LIBRARY, St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

BOY, 14, active, enthusiastic, interested in livestock. Needs farm, country experience, work for summer in Christian home. No heavy lifting. Mrs. F. E. Simpson, 4720 3rd Place, N.W., Washington, D. C.

LIVING HIGH by June Burn. Joyous homesteading classic, New illus. edition, \$3. Wellington Books, 346 Concord, Belmont, Mass. (y4)

WANTED—Someone to live on our homestead; food and lodging in exchange for work in garden, house and health food store. Lefever's Sonnenwald Homestead, Spring Grove, Pa.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS FOR ALL by O. B. Johansen. Provocative essay on purpose of education. Why it should be conducted as private enterprise. 50c.—Committee of One, 825 Walnut St., Roselle Park, N. J.

SHARE our search for HEALTH and WISDOM on a guest homestead in the Ouachita Mountains. Camper parking, neighborly help. Mary & Ed Borsodi, Star Route 1A, Smithville, Okla. 74957

I WISH to contact sane western growers, dealers, etc. who are interested in a good life for all people. Rev. Herb Blackschlager, Box 1028, Ridgecrest, Calif. 93555 (3-66)5

80 ACRES for sale, new log house, good soil, gravity water, timber. Ideal for group. Harry Griswold, Kaslo, B. C., Canada. (2-66)5

HIGH, BEAUTIFUL 22 acres in pasture, hofenced, crossfenced, pine woods, 2 springs, pond, young orchard, 3 gardens, flowers, ugly unfinished CB house & patio, smokehouse, barn, chickens, 7 cattle, well, some furniture, \$10,500. F. Burn, Rt. 1, Marianna, Fla. (2-66)4

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OF HOLY DISOBEDIENCE, by A. J. Muste—15c.

written by both kinds: HANDBOOK ON NONPAYMENT OF WAR TAXES, edited by Ernest Bromley; 42 pages—35c.

All titles, \$5.65 (you save 30c). Also available: machine-printed books from India written by Gandhi. Free list. Greenleaf Books, Raymond, N. H.

School of Living Center News

Heathcote Road, Freeland, Md.

Many projects are available at the Old Mill for groups this summer and fall. The following are the most important and pertinent:

1. Repair retaining wall near the bridge, to provide space near the stream for patio, garden and parking.
2. Rebuild stone wall and steps near porch to upper terrace level.
3. Excavate, drain and lay flagstone on second-level terrace.
4. Willing hands and backs always welcome in garden.
5. Repair stone wall from big dam to Mill.
6. Remove wheel house from east end of Mill, and restore east wall to attractiveness.
7. Sanitize and convert chicken house to summer living quarters.
8. Design and construct covered cooking facilities in lower meadow.
9. Bring in available large quantities of wood for use in the Mill.

These projects can best be done by a few people at a time. We will be glad to hear from interested persons and help arrange a schedule to meet your convenience. —Ken and Dee Sprague, School of Living Center, Freeland, Md.