

Creating Vibrant Villages and Towns

Historic Towns and Villages Forum
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Penelope Tollitt

penelopetollitt@makingplacetogether.co.uk



making places together



“Visual art or social setting”

RK Jarvis 'Urban environments as visual art or social setting',
Town Planning Review 51(1) 1980 51-66

Jan Gehl

'Life Between Buildings' (1971!)

'Cities for People' (2010)

(Other books by Gehl are also available!)

The biology and physics of space

How to connect

physical design choices

use of public realm choices

Not covering in any detail, but this has benefits for
human health
planetary health

Not covering at all

the role of economics in why so often the human scale is ignored

The biology of our eyes and the physics of light

social field of vision



0.5 m / 1.6 ft
2 m / 6.5 ft
5 m / 16.5 ft
7.5 m / 25 ft
10 m / 33 ft
20 m / 66 ft
50 m / 164 ft
80 m / 262 ft
100 m / 328 ft

We can see people 100 meters/328 feet away, and if the distance is shortened, we can see a bit more. But the experience only becomes interesting and exciting at a distance of less than 10 meters/33 feet, and preferably at even closer ranges where we can use all our senses.²

other human being as a dim shape in the distance. Depending on the background and light, we can identify people as human rather than animals or bushes at a distance of 300 to 500 meters (330 to 550 yards).

Only when the distance has been reduced to about 100 meters (110 yards) can we see movement and body language in broad outline. Gender and age can be identified as the pedestrian approaches, and we usually recognize the person at somewhere between 50 and 75 meters (55 and 82 yards).

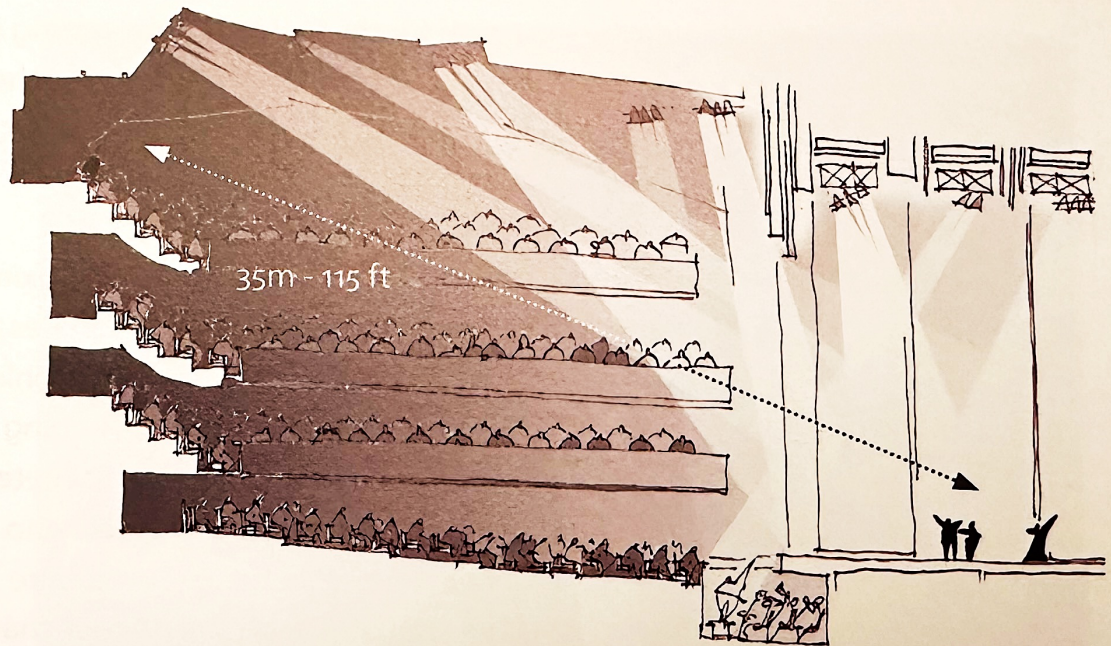
to see events

The ability to see people at distances up to 100 meters/328 feet is reflected in the dimensions of spectator space for watching sports and other events.

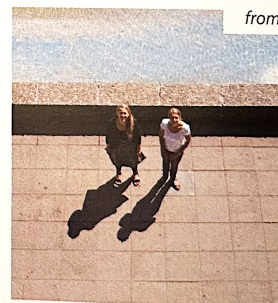
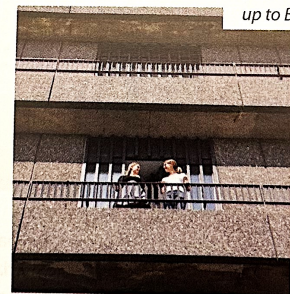
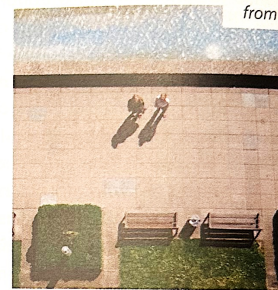
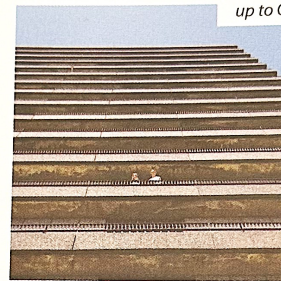
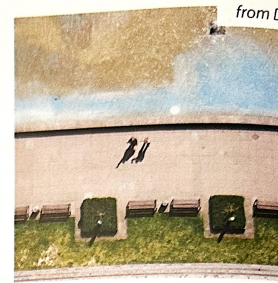
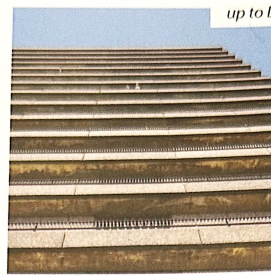
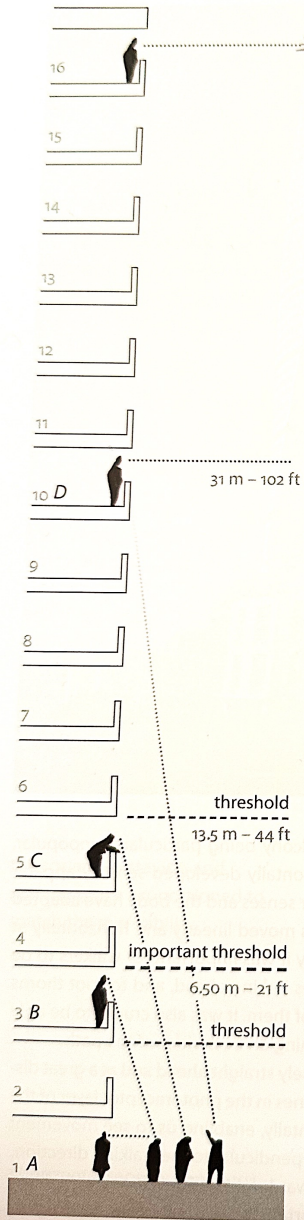


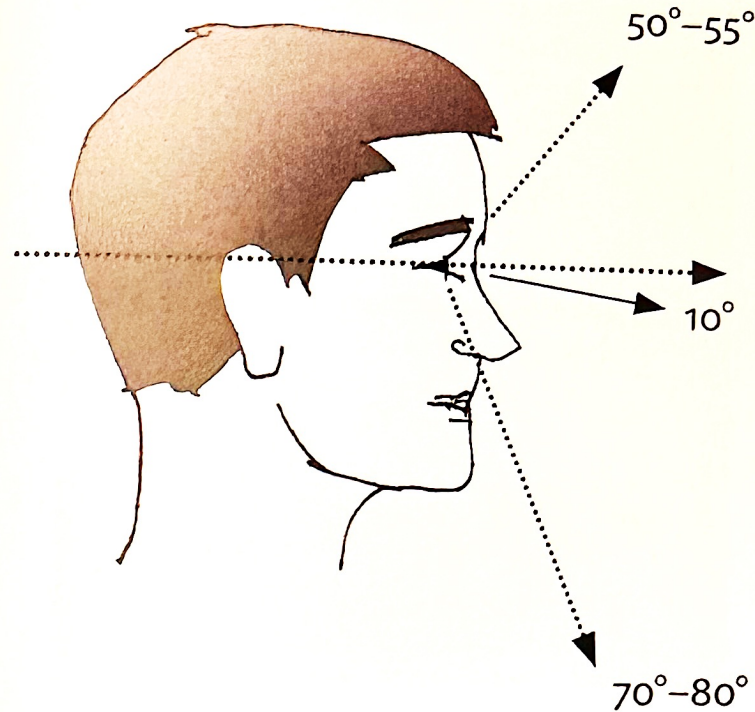
to experience emotions

When emotion rather than motion is in the spotlight, 35 m / 115 feet is the magic number. Used in theatres and opera houses all over the world, this is the greatest distance at which audiences can read facial expression and hear speech and song.



senses and tall buildings



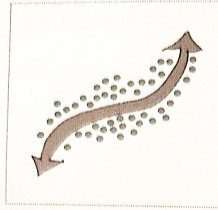


Our sense of sight has developed to enable us to walk on a horizontal plane. We do not see much above us and only slightly more when we look down in order to avoid obstacles in our path. In addition, we typically bow our heads 10 degrees while we are walking.⁵

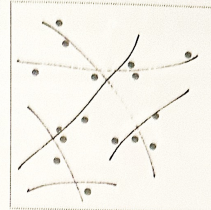
“Only Connect”

city planning principles: to assemble or disperse

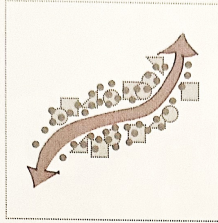
To assemble



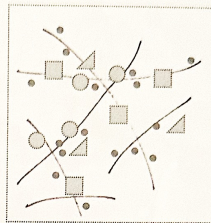
To disperse



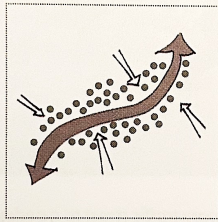
To integrate



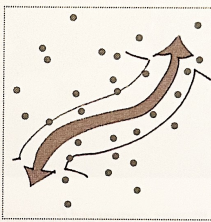
To segregate



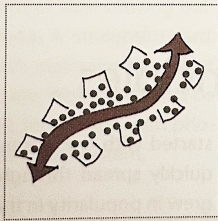
To invite



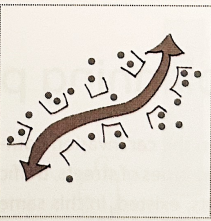
To repel



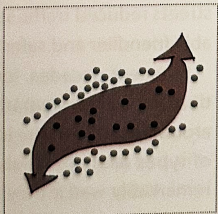
To open up



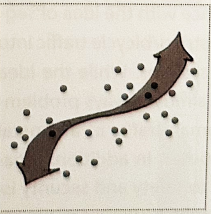
To close in



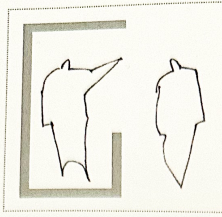
To increase



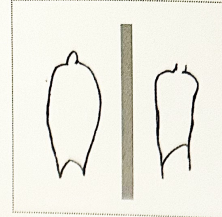
To reduce



TO INVITE



No walls



TO REPEL

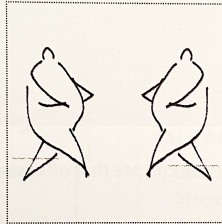
Walls



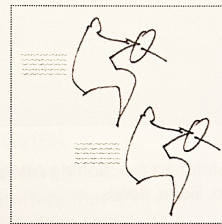
Short distances



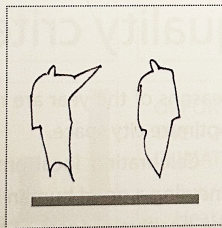
Great distances



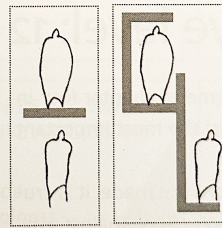
Low speed



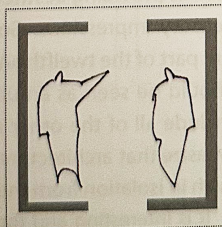
High speed



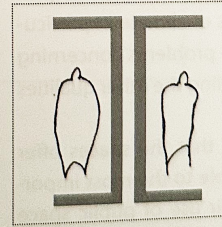
On one level












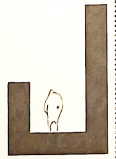


Stacking, several levels



Face-to-face orientation



Back-to-back orientation

Protection	<p>PROTECTION AGAINST TRAFFIC AND ACCIDENTS — FEELING SAFE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection for pedestrians • Eliminating fear of traffic 	<p>PROTECTION AGAINST CRIME AND VIOLENCE — FEELING SECURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lively public realm • Eyes on the street • Overlapping functions day and night • Good lighting 	<p>PROTECTION AGAINST UNPLEASANT SENSORY EXPERIENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind • Rain/snow • Cold/heat • Pollution • Dust, noise, glare 
Comfort	<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO WALK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room for walking • No obstacles • Good surfaces • Accessibility for everyone • Interesting façades 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO STAND/STAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edge effect/ attractive zones for standing/staying • Supports for standing 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO SIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zones for sitting • Utilizing advantages: view, sun, people • Good places to sit • Benches for resting 
	<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO SEE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable viewing distances • Unhindered sightlines • Interesting views • Lighting (when dark) 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK AND LISTEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low noise levels • Street furniture that provides “talkscapes” 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY AND EXERCISE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations for creativity, physical activity, exercise and play • By day and night • In summer and winter 
Delight	<p>SCALE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings and spaces designed to human scale 	<p>OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CLIMATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun/shade • Heat/coolness • Breeze 	<p>POSITIVE SENSORY EXPERIENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good design and detailing • Good materials • Fine views • Trees, plants, water 



the city at eye level — ground-floor design

A — active

- Small units, many doors
(15 – 20 doors per 100 m/328 feet)
- Large variation in function
- No blind and few passive units
- Lots of character in façade relief
- Primarily vertical façade articulation
- Good details and materials

B — friendly

- Relatively small units (10 – 14 doors per 100 m/328 feet)
- Some variation in function
- Few blind and passive units
- Façade relief
- Many details

C — mixture

- Large and small units (6 – 10 doors per 100 m/328 feet)
- Modest variation in function
- Some blind and passive units
- Modest façade relief
- Few details

D — boring

- Large units, few doors (2 – 5 doors per 100 m/328 feet)
- Almost no variation in function
- Many blind or uninteresting units
- Few or no details

E — inactive

- Large units, few or no doors (0 – 2 doors per 100 m/328 feet)
- No visible variation in function
- Blind or passive units
- Uniform façades, no details, nothing to look at

Source:
"Close Encounters With Buildings," Urban Design International, 2006
 Further developed: Gehl Architects — Urban Quality Consultants, 2009












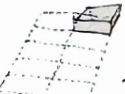

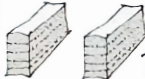








Portobello Rd

← 46 Bonchurch Rd
Lincoln, England
Google Street View
Jul 2022 See more dates



New residential areas are sparsely populated. A century ago seven times more people lived in the same amount of space.¹

	1900 Old city areas	2000 New city ares (high density)	2000 New city ares (low density)	2000 New city areas (suburbs)
Average size of household	 4 people	 1.8 people	 2 people	 2.2 people
Average dwelling area per resident m ² /sq. ft.	 10/110	 60/650	 60/650	 60/650
Floor to plot ratio	 200%	 200%	 25%	 20%
Number of dwellings per hectare	 475	 155	 21	 8
Number of residents per hectare	 2,000 persons	 280 persons	 42 persons	 17 persons

Not just what, but also how

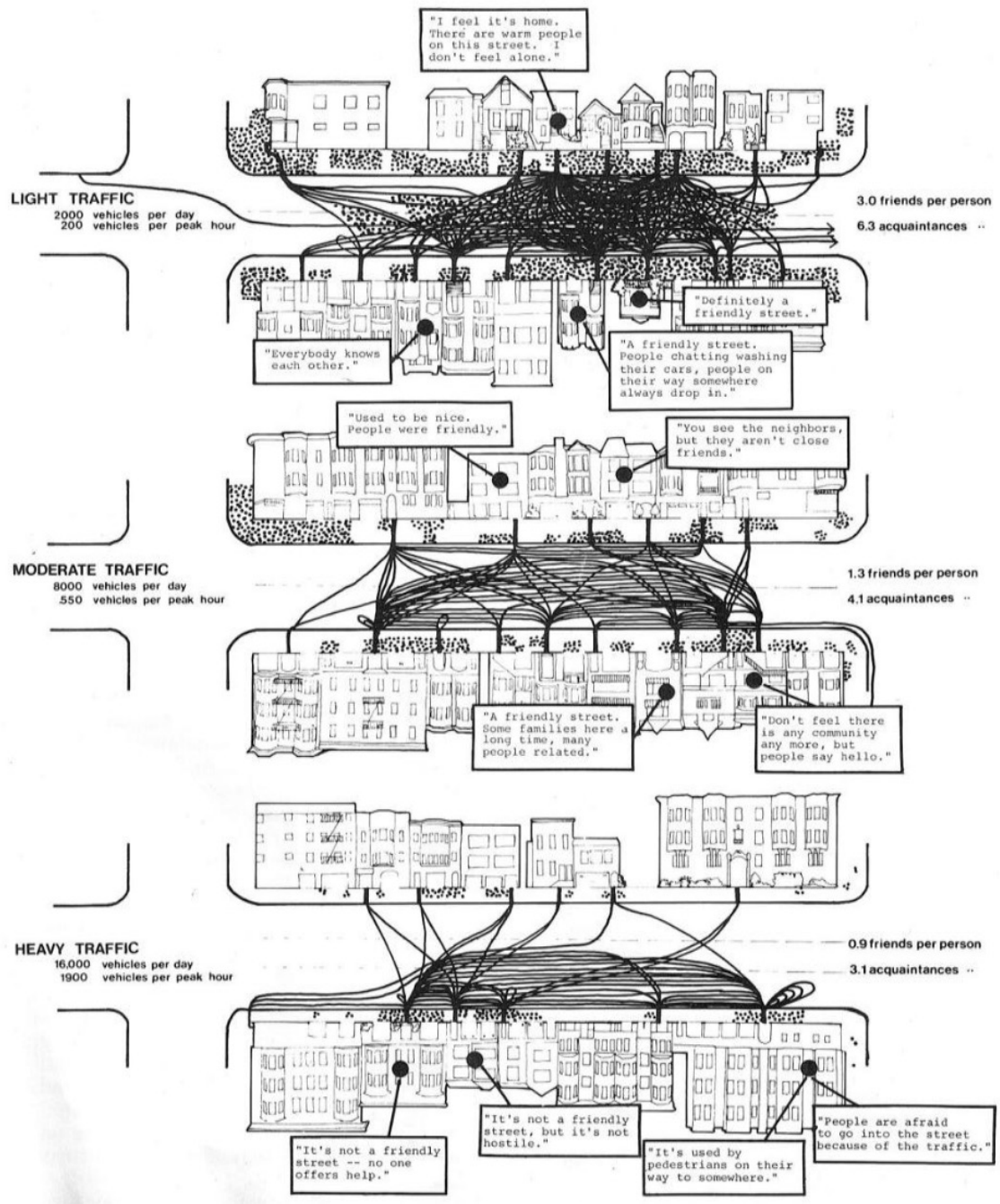


Figure 4 Community interaction on three Bristol streets

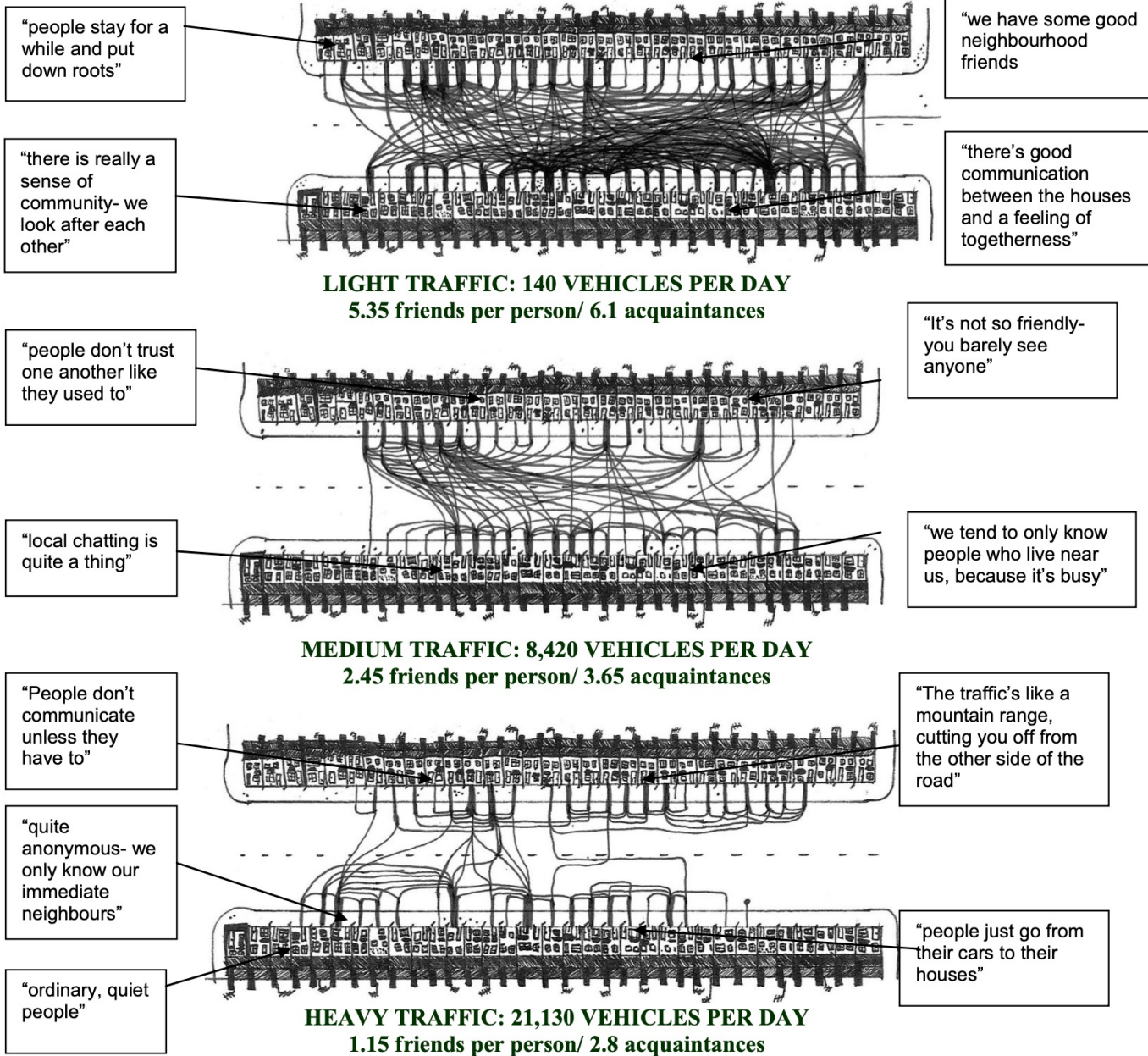
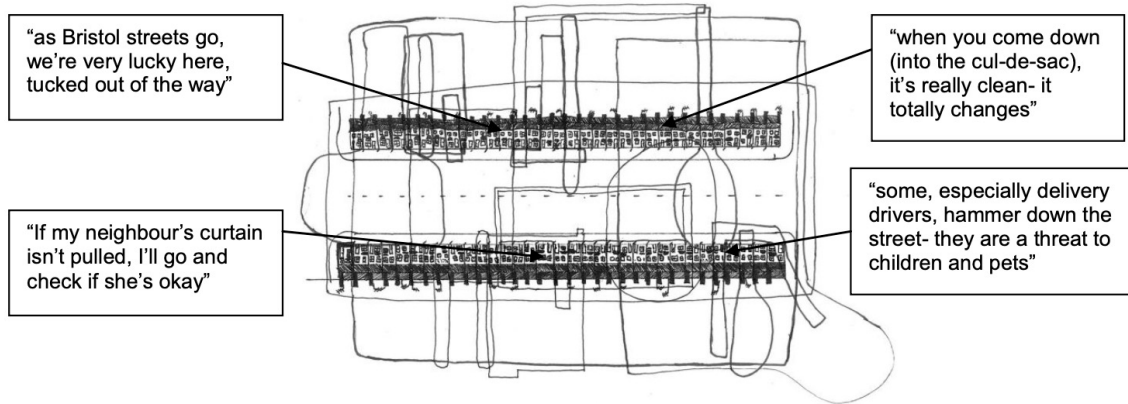
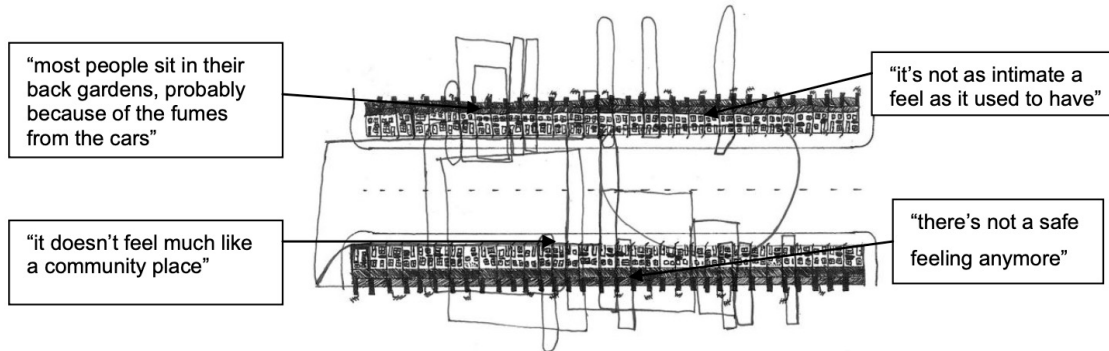


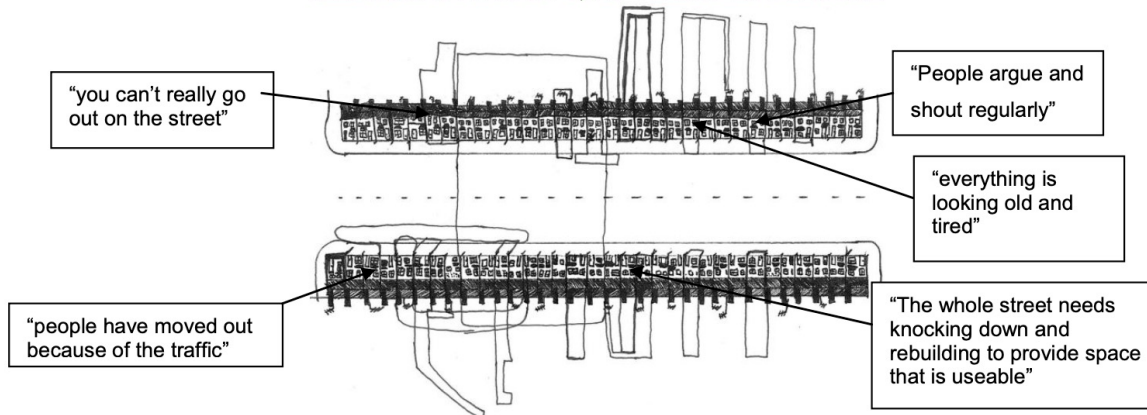
Figure 3. Composite Home Territory Diagrams for Interviewees from each Street



LIGHT TRAFFIC: 140 VEHICLES PER DAY



MEDIUM TRAFFIC: 8,420 VEHICLES PER DAY



HEAVY TRAFFIC: 21,130 VEHICLES PER DAY



