

## Summary: Best Practices & Recommendations for Outside Spaces in LTC

<b>Location of Outdoor Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible to residents</li> <li>• Available on floors above ground level – balconies, roof terrace (consider design &amp; height of guardrails)</li> <li>• Dementia: not recommended to have views offsite or views of nearby activity</li> <li>• Recommended minimum of 2m<sup>2</sup> / resident of outdoor space</li> <li>• Simple, clear layout</li> </ul>
<b>Interior/Exterior Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor spaces adjacent to common areas (ex. dining rooms, activity rooms)</li> <li>• Outdoor dining areas accessible from indoor dining areas</li> <li>• Large and low windows to view outdoors from inside</li> <li>• Smooth transition where different floor/surface materials are used, with no noticeable bump or difference in elevation</li> <li>• Outdoor space congruent with interior environment</li> <li>• Extend the home-like environment to the outdoors</li> <li>• Sitting areas in both the indoor and outdoor transition areas</li> <li>• Similar lighting conditions between outdoors and indoors – can facilitate by using lighting and shelter</li> <li>• Modify the temperature of the outdoor transition zone with heaters, fans, and covers; provide shelter</li> <li>• Features of interest near the entrance</li> </ul>
<b>Doors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic doors or provide automatic door openers</li> <li>• If no doors are not automatic, then consider a lever-door handle, prop door open, and leave door unlocked</li> <li>• Inconclusive on number of doors. If more than one door, then have a clearly visible hierarchy (clearly mark the main door)</li> <li>• Wide doorway</li> <li>• Indicates where it leads (both inside &amp; outside)</li> <li>• Visible throughout the entire space (landmark)</li> </ul>
<b>Climate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaded areas</li> <li>• Sunny areas</li> <li>• Sheltered areas (umbrella, awning, gazebo, etc.)</li> <li>• Tree cover &amp; plants to reduce sunlight penetration, cut wind, provide shade</li> <li>• Place objects with reflective surfaces in shaded areas</li> <li>• Avoid strong-lined features or incorporate vines and greenery along trellises and arbor-type structures to soften shadows</li> <li>• Heat lamps, heaters, overhead fans to regulate temperature</li> <li>• Avoid surfaces that conduct heat or cold (ex. metal seating or railings)</li> <li>• Access to appropriate clothing/supplies</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fencing: blended into the environment; cannot climb; recommended 8 ft tall</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visibility from indoor staff areas for easy supervision (non-intrusive observation)</li> <li>• Adequate lighting for use in evenings/nights</li> <li>• Avoid toxic plants</li> <li>• Avoid standing water</li> <li>• Avoid protruding objects</li> <li>• Safe, non-slip materials for outdoor furnishings</li> <li>• Safe for residents to use independently in all seasons, weather permitting</li> <li>• Exterior doorbell / access control</li> <li>• Control joints on concrete sidewalks and patios should be sawcut and not trowelled</li> <li>• Avoid gates – if required, blend into environment</li> <li>• Wayfinding: use illustrations / objects (instead of just text-based signage)</li> </ul>
<b>Seating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable and secure</li> <li>• Regular intervals – every 15ft</li> <li>• Comfortable – cushioned support</li> <li>• Resting areas</li> <li>• Positioned to see views</li> <li>• Positioned to promote conversation</li> <li>• Position / angle can be adjusted (balance with sturdiness and support)</li> <li>• Does not absorb heat</li> <li>• Bench on concrete pad – ensure pad is wider than bench for additional room for wheelchair on one side</li> <li>• Space is deep enough that the wheelchair user's legs are not blocking traffic</li> <li>• Ensure wheelchair-accessible space is not near garbage</li> <li>• Arms on benches</li> <li>• Space beside bench to put walker (not blocking path)</li> <li>• Sunny and shaded areas</li> <li>• Large seating areas near the door; private seating areas further away</li> </ul>
<b>Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple micro-spaces</li> <li>• Quiet spaces</li> <li>• Spaces for social interaction</li> <li>• Spaces for different activities based on interests and cultural preferences</li> <li>• Space for resident smoking that is distanced from non-smoking areas and away from air intakes in the home (if supporting residents who smoke) – designated area must be at least 10m away from building</li> <li>• Space for staff respite and relaxation – ex. rooftop gardens, private courtyards</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramps</li> <li>• Avoid steps/doorsteps that impede access</li> <li>• Directly accessible from the building</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible for varying levels of abilities and mobility devices</li> </ul>
<b>Vision Loss considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orient seating to avoid glare</li> <li>• Coloured concrete to lessen glare intensity</li> <li>• Light-coloured walls can cause glare → Plant material to block light-coloured walls and reduce refraction</li> <li>• Signage: bright colours and contrast between light and dark</li> <li>• Decreased tonal contrast between grass and walkways → rumble strip along edge of walkway; painted, raised curb; painted edging in contrasting colour/tone</li> <li>• Tactile friendly plants (avoid pointy/sharp leaves)</li> <li>• Avoid horizontal banding in walkways</li> <li>• Tables and chair colours should contrast with flooring material</li> </ul>
<b>Hearing Loss Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering areas away from loud sources of noise (ex. HVAC system, venting, laundry)</li> <li>• Seating oriented away from sounds (back to noise source)</li> <li>• Interior courtyards to create quiet space</li> <li>• Creating walls to block sound (ex. glass partitions, vegetation)</li> </ul>
<b>Path System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth, level surfaces</li> <li>• Free of tripping hazards / barriers</li> <li>• Circular paths</li> <li>• Views along the paths</li> <li>• No litter / debris</li> <li>• Shade</li> <li>• Reduce glare; Non-glare paving</li> <li>• Wide</li> <li>• Rounded corners along pathways to prevent walking aids from falling onto softer ground</li> <li>• Can accessible multiple walkways – primary path forms walking loop; secondary paths provide different route options while maintaining the integrity of the loop; varying route lengths; short paths can break away at 90 degrees; secondary paths can provide shortcuts and guide towards seating areas, quiet nooks, features of interest; can distinguish minor vs major routes by using diff planting types, narrower paths, colours/materials</li> <li>• Avoid inclines/declines (no steeper than 1:20) – in general, maintain consistent level</li> <li>• Good traction</li> <li>• Open grass spaces</li> <li>• Ramps &amp; stairs for diff levels of difficult; Small 4-inch steps where appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised planting beds</li> <li>• Bird baths</li> <li>• Water features – must not be deep; cannot be pressurized; safe temperature</li> <li>• Views of birds/wildlife</li> <li>• Views of vehicular activity / off-site activities (avoid if dementia)</li> <li>• Privacy from resident rooms</li> <li>• Parking / recharging area for scooters</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting objects in the centre of the space to draw attention away from periphery</li> <li>• Features that can help with navigation (ex. landmarks)</li> <li>• Reminiscence features</li> <li>• Interactive features</li> <li>• Consider dementia – ex. doghouse could create fear; mailbox could add confusion b/c mail not delivered there</li> <li>• Games – ex. shuffleboard court</li> <li>• Intergenerational features – ex. playground</li> <li>• Community involvement – ex. community gardening (volunteers)</li> <li>• Social gathering space for families / parties</li> <li>• Cultural considerations – ex. diff interpretations of bird species</li> <li>• Pockets of spaces to allow diff activities</li> <li>• Opportunities for familiar activities – ex. hanging laundry, stacking firewood</li> </ul>
<b>Plants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonal variation (options for year-round)</li> <li>• At varying locations – each garden can be themed</li> <li>• Indigenous and low-maintenance plants recommended</li> <li>• Avoid overly strong smells</li> <li>• Variety of plant material, shape, size, texture, colour</li> <li>• Place near entry doors</li> <li>• Garden beds – group plants of monotone colours</li> <li>• Warm hues – red, orange, yellow</li> <li>• Raised planters – seated height</li> <li>• Ground level plant beds along walkways for residents in wheelchairs</li> <li>• Medium-sized plants placed to avoid blocking view of residents</li> <li>• Tall plants can be used around perimeter to mask fencing</li> <li>• Can place plants to create privacy</li> <li>• Plants can buffer sound</li> <li>• Consider shape &amp; shadow</li> <li>• Gardening activities</li> </ul>

\*Involve residents, families, staff in the co-design process

## References

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