

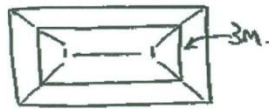


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Essays & Reviews

New Patterns for South Walls

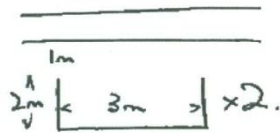
We have derived six new patterns to deal with the problem that strawbale and stucco walls over 2m in height are not good on western and southern walls. Testing over this winter has revealed that moisture contents are just a little too high for long term comfort. We think these patterns, shown below, will be fairly generic at Rosneath to keep rain and gutter overflow off stucco surfaces. Do you have the same sort of problem? Does a solution that looks like this pattern solve it? Please let us know.



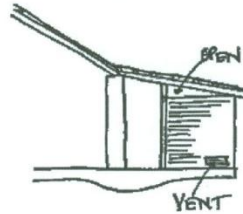
Verandah all around



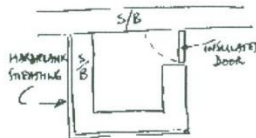
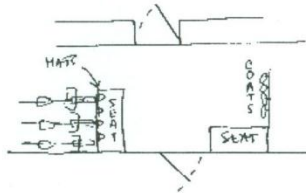
Carport on west



Two years' firewood



Vented spaces for freezer or battery



Outdoor room

Coolroom/pantry on south wall

Other patterns that might be relevant to this issue are:

- 145 - Bulk storage,
- 162 - Pole facing area,
- 193 - Half open wall,
- 196 - Corner Doors,
- 198 - Closets between rooms,
- 200 - Open shelves,
- 201 - Waist high shelf,
- 203 - Child caves,
- 234 - Lapped outside walls,
- 241 - Seat spots.

[Top of Page](#)

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Essays & Reviews

Patterns for Courtyards

Courtyards will be a common pattern at Rosneath Farm; they will ensure safety for toddlers, rather than boundary fences around residential lots. The following extract from *The Timeless Way of Building*, by Christopher Alexander (pages 109, 110), describes the patterns which help create real courtyards.

... a courtyard which is properly formed helps people come to life in it.

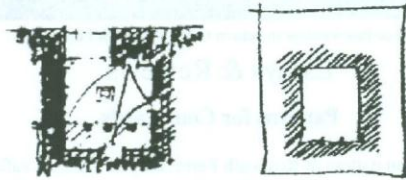
Consider the forces at work in a courtyard. Most fundamental of all, people seek some kind of private outdoor space, where they can sit under the sky, see the stars, enjoy the sun, perhaps plant flowers. This is obvious. But there are more subtle forces too. For instance, when a courtyard is too tightly enclosed, has no view out, people feel uncomfortable, and tend to stay away . . . they need to see out into some larger and more distant space. Or again, people are creatures of habit. If they pass in and out of the courtyard, every day, in the course of their normal lives, the courtyard becomes familiar, a natural place to go . . . and it is used.

But a courtyard with only one way in, a place you only go when you "want" to go there, is an unfamiliar place, tends to stay unused . . . people go more often to places which are familiar. Or again, there is a certain abruptness about suddenly stepping out, from the inside, directly to the outside . . . it is subtle, but enough to inhibit you.

If there is a transitional space, a porch or a veranda, under cover, but open to the air, this is psychologically half way between indoors and outdoors, and makes it much easier, more simple, to take each of the smaller steps that brings you out into the courtyard . When a courtyard has a view out to a larger space, has crossing paths from different rooms, and has a verandah or a porch, these forces can resolve themselves. The view out makes it comfortable, the crossing paths help generate a sense of habit there, the porch makes it easier to go out. More often and gradually the courtyard becomes a pleasant customary place to be. The porch makes it easier to go out but in a courtyard where the pattern of the opening and veranda and crossing paths is missing, there are forces which conflict in such a way that no one can resolve them for himself.

Consider, for example, a dead courtyard surrounded by walls on all sides, with no porch or halfway space between the indoors and the outdoors, and with no more than one, path leading out to it. In this place, the forces are in conflict. People want to go out, but their timidity, which makes them seek a place halfway to the outdoors, prevents them. They want to stay out, but the claustrophobic quality, and the enclosure, sends them back inside again. They hope to be there, but the lack of paths

across the courtyard make it a dead and rarely visited place, which does not beckon them, and which instead tends to be filled with dead leaves, and forgotten plants. This does not help the courtyard come to life - instead it only causes tension, and frustrates people, and perpetuates their conflicts.



Top of Page

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| [WELCOME](#) | [LOCALITY](#) | [DESIGN](#) | [ENQUIRIES](#) | [RESOURCES](#) | [GALLERY](#) |

Design - Building Patterns

[INTRODUCTION](#)
[SITE PLAN](#)
[SITE PATTERNS](#)
[TECHNOLOGY](#)
[LEGAL STRUCTURES](#)
[LETS](#)
[EMPLOYMENT SERVICES](#)
[ACTIVITY LICENCES](#)
[LAND USE](#)
[BUILDING PATTERNS](#)
[EXTENDED FAMILIES](#)
[COHOUSING](#)
[COMMUNITY](#)
[IDEOLOGY](#)

The patterns described in *A Pattern Language* (and the other books by Christopher Alexander, et al) and those we develop specifically for Rosneath Farm, will be important tools for people as they design their houses.

Pattern Language has already proved helpful in designing the broad layout of the roads and the residential areas, and it will be a focus for the detailed layout of the village centre and the tourism area. To assist in this process, we have written summaries of the processes described in Alexander's books for the guidance of our residents, as they build what Alexander calls "an organic whole" on Rosneath Farm over the years.

Below, after a brief description of what pattern language is about, we set out some of the ways we are thinking about and applying pattern language at Rosneath Farm.

What is a Pattern?

A Pattern is primarily a graphic that describes the features that must be present in any solution to a particular problem. A well developed pattern guides us at a hard nosed and factual level; we can determine very clearly whether the problem exists in the context we are considering, and then whether the solution proposed solves the problem. But the pattern can also be tested by assessing our own feelings about it. You can check how you feel with a pattern present or absent, and so use your feelings and senses as a guide to whether the pattern is present and working. Together, this analysis and this feeling can lead you to the right area to repair the whole environment you live in, and then show you the best way to do that repair. Pattern Language is a tool that helps us avoid the stylistic sterile results that can occur when we abdicate too much of our responsibility - our response ability - to architects and town planners.

To give you a feel for Alexander's work, and its possible relevance for Rosneath, part of a book review we hand out on the four-day course, to help people design their houses, is included in the [Resources](#) section. The book is called *Community And Privacy*, by Serge Chermayeff and Christopher Alexander.

Other issues where Pattern Language will be helpful at Rosneath Farm are in the design of courtyards, and the use of south walls of houses. Relevant articles are included in the [Resources](#) section.

[Top of Page](#)



| WELCOME | LOCALITY | DESIGN | ENQUIRIES | RESOURCES | GALLERY |

Design - Site Patterns

INTRODUCTION

SITE PLAN

SITE PATTERNS

TECHNOLOGY

LEGAL STRUCTURES

LETS

EMPLOYMENT

SERVICES

ACTIVITY LICENCES

LAND USE

BUILDING PATTERNS

EXTENDED FAMILIES

COHOUSING

COMMUNITY

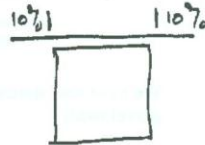
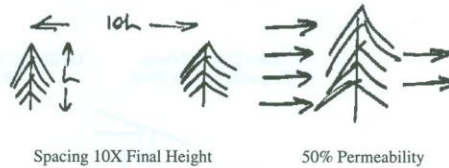
IDEOLOGY

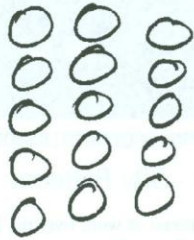
We have done a huge amount of work over the last several years on studying Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language, as it will be a key influence on the design of the site, people's houses and all the other buildings on the common property. Going back through all the books, writing summaries, and extracting patterns for specific projects has reinforced the power and usefulness of the language and its grammar.

There are some patterns that help permaculturists directly: The numbers are those given to individual patterns by Alexander in his classic book *A Pattern Language*.

- 169 - Terraced Slope
- 170 - Fruit Trees
- 172 - Garden Growing Wild
- 177 - Vegetable Garden
- 178 - Compost

When writing about Pattern language for broadacre farmers we derived a number of patterns concerning windbreaks, which will be much used at Rosneath. The original four as well as five more patterns about windbreaks are set out in the diagrams below.





At Least Three Rows

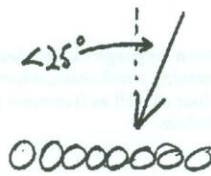
10% Longer At Both Ends



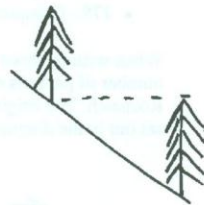
All The Way To The Ground



Slope Both Sides



Less Than 25° From Perpendicular To Wind



On Slopes, Plant Level With Top Of Row Below



To Save Views Extend Roof Line With Shrubs

We have also started developing patterns for the design and construction of gravel roads:

- Level With Ground On High Side
- Minimum Camber

- Swales Across Roads

Other patterns we are working on are to do with traffic management. Some are based on the simple principle that we should make roads dangerous so people drive safely:

- Single Lane Roads With Passing Bays
- Straights No More Than 120 Metres Long
- Make Some Corners Blind
- Reverse Camber
- Signed Narrow Culvert Crossings
- Water Close To Edge Of Road
- Shrubs Close To Edge Of Road
- To Avoid Dust Max Speed 20 Kilometres-Per-Hour

[Top of Page](#)

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