

POSITIVE OUTDOOR SPACE (106)¹

Innsbruck (Foto is named after the wife of the emperor

The building front angles. It's a main Innsbruck, finished



2011) Maria-Theresienstrasse empress Maria Theresia, the Franz Stephan.

of the boulevard have slight pedestrian shopping street in 2009 with a new pavement.

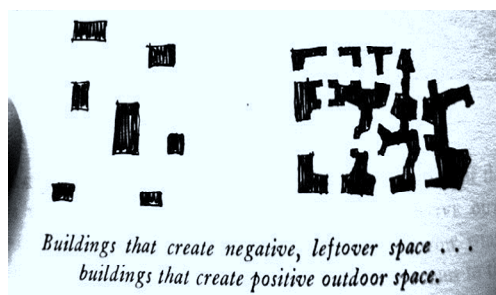
Introductory paragraph, which sets the context of the pattern . . . This pattern gives you the geometric character of the outdoors



Essence of the problem: Outdoor spaces which are merely 'left over' between buildings will, in general, not be used.

Empirical background of the pattern: There are two fundamentally different kinds of outdoor space: negative space and positive space. Outdoor space is negative when it is shapeless, the residue left behind when buildings – which are generally viewed as positive – are placed on the land. An outdoor space is positive when it has a distinct and definite shape, as definite as the shape of a room, and when its shape is as important as the shapes of the buildings which surround it.

These two kinds of space have entirely different plan geo-metries, which may be most easily distinguished by their figure-look at the plan of an door spaces are **negative**, figure, and the outdoor no reversal. It is impossible figure, and the buildings as plan of an environment **positive**, you may see the out-door spaces as ground – outdoor spaces as figure buildings. The plans have figure-ground reversal.



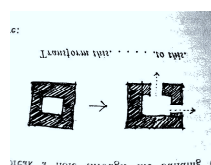
ground reversal. If you environment where out-you see the buildings as space as ground. There is to see the outdoor space as ground. If you look at the where outdoor spaces are buildings as figure, and and, you may also see the against the ground of the

Now, what is the functional relevance of the distinction between 'positive' and 'negative' outdoor spaces. We put forward the following **hypothesis**:

People feel comfortable in spaces which are 'positive' and use these spaces; people feel relatively uncomfortable in spaces which are 'negative' and such spaces tend to remain unused.

The case for this hypothesis has been most fully argued by **Camillo Sitte**, in *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (republished by Random House in 1965). Sitte has analysed a very large number of European city squares, distinguishing those which seem used and lively from those which don't, trying to account for the success of the lively squares.

And when an existing open space is hole through the building to open the

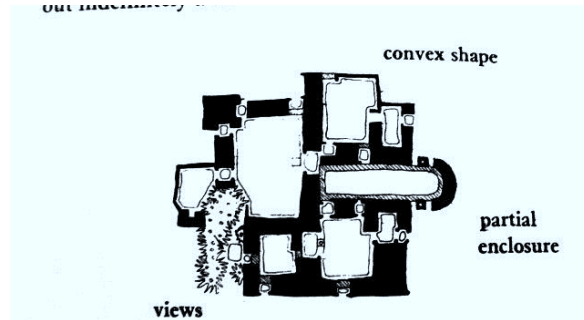


too enclosed, it may be possible to break a space up.

¹ ALEXANDER. Christopher et al.: (1977): a Pattern Language. N.Y. Oxford University Press. p.517-523

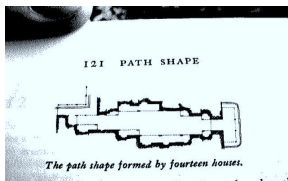
Solution: Make all the outdoor spaces which surround and lie between your buildings positive. Give each one some degree of enclosure; surround each space with wings of buildings, trees, hedges, fences, arcades, and trellised walks, until it becomes an entity with a positive quality and does not spill out indefinitely around corners.

The solution in form



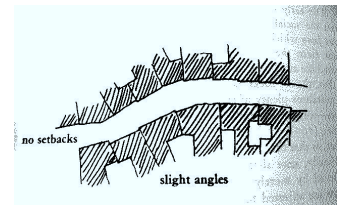
of a diagram

Paragraph which ties the pattern to all those smaller patterns in the language, which are needed to complete this pattern, to embellish it, to fill it in.

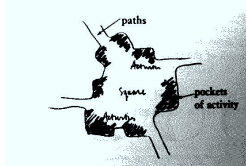


PATH SHAPE 121 and BUILDING FRONT 122

Make a bulge in the middle of a public path, and make the ends narrower and let the buildings fronts take on slightly uneven angles as they accommodate to the shape of the street. Change the laws in all communities where obsolete by-laws make this impossible.

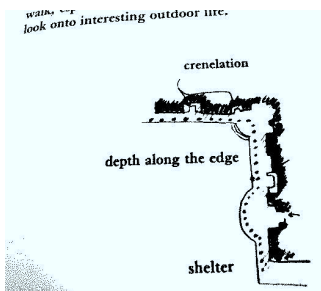


places which have a natural for people to be involved.



ACTIVITY POCKET 124

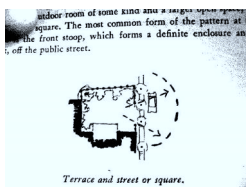
Surrounding public gathering places with pockets of activity – small, partly enclosed areas at the edges, which just forward into open space between the paths, and contain activities which make it natural for people to pause and get involved. For instance a street café where people can sit lazily, legitimately, be on view, and watch the world go by.



BUILDING EDGE 160

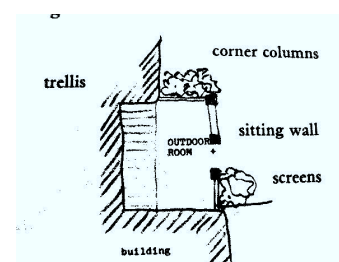
Make sure that you treat the edge of the building as a 'thing', a 'place', a zone with volume to it, not a line or interface which has no thickness. If you have a machine age slab of steel and glass, you cannot approach it anywhere except at its entrance.

Crenelate the edge of buildings with places that invite people to stop. Make places that have depth and a covering, places to sit, lean, and walk, especially at those points along the perimeter which look onto interesting outdoor life.



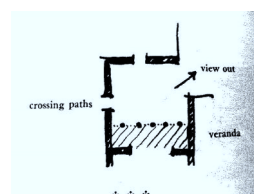
HIERARCHY OF OPEN SPACES 114

Whatever space you are shaping – whether it is a garden, terrace, street, park, public outdoor room, or courtyard, make sure of two things. First, make at least one smaller space, which looks into it and forms a natural back for it. Second, place it, and its openings, so that it looks into at least one larger space. When you have done this, every outdoor space will have a natural 'back'.



OUTDOOR ROOM 163 and COURTYARD WHICH LIVE 115

Build a place outdoors which enclosure round it, that it feeling of a room, even to the sky. To do this, define with columns, perhaps roof it trellis, and create 'walls'



has so much takes on the though it is open it at the corners partially with a around it, with

fences, sitting walls, screens, hedges, or the exterior walls of the building itself .