



SPIRIT OF  
HUMANITY  
FORUM

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THE COMMUNITY HOUSE

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## COMMUNITY HOUSE

NOVEMBER 2016



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In 2016, The Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, Michigan together with the Guerrand Hermès Foundation for Peace brought together a group of people to discuss Peacefulness in Community. Towards the end of this gathering, Marianne Marstrand, Anjum Ali and David Cadman, brought forward a proposal for a Community House that could be built or provided in the centre of a new or existing community. With the support of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, Michael Harris of The Prince's Foundation for Built Community was then asked to provide a drawing that would show how this might be. Designed to show how the various elements of The Community House could be brought together on site, it is, of course, just one possibility, and there would be many others. It shows the relationship between work, care and prayerfulness, all of which, it was thought, should be present in community.

Thanks go the Fetzer Institute, the Guerrand Hermès Foundation for Peace and The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment for their help in enabling this idea to be visualised. Copyright for the images remains with The Prince's Foundation for Building Community. The ideas are to be shared widely by anyone who would care to take them up.

### KEY

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| ① Community House       | ⑦ Clinic            |
| ② Demonstration Kitchen | ⑧ Workshop          |
| ③ Accomodation          | ⑨ Entrance Pavilion |
| ④ Agricultural Garden   | ⑩ Meditation Room   |
| ⑤ Worship Hall          | ⑪ Public Garden     |
| ⑥ Quiet Garden          |                     |

### THE COMMUNITY HOUSE

The Community House is designed as a project that can be replicated and adapted in whole or in part into city neighbourhoods, small or large towns, and rural communities. As communities, with or without choice, re-organize themselves in response to current life events, the Community House provides a model for spaces that may be needed to bring people together to enrich their lives and thus enrich their community.

It is a response to the importance of community in our lives and the need, in urban and in rural communities, for there to be a place where local people can gather, a place of education and celebration. It will serve as the 'piazza' or 'plaza' of old, where people came together each day in friendship, curiosity and in the celebration of life. The motto of such a community project should be that life not be regarded as merely an effort of survival or toil, but as a gift given to each of us, an endless quest for wisdom, knowledge and truth always imbued with joy and with beauty.

It comprises two main parts:

- A house, a garden and learning spaces to be used for education purposes
- A place of worship for the community's faith traditions and a space for silent reflection and meditation..

Each of these is related to the other.

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## THE HOUSE, CLINIC AND WORKSHOPS

The House has various spaces and functions. It includes a large kitchen and dining room, a large living room and three bedrooms with attached bathrooms. One of the bedrooms is for the Housekeeper, the other two for visiting teachers/guests.

The House is welcoming and provides space for educational programmes and events that can include: gardening, cooking, nutrition, health courses, arts and crafts, simple repairs, small business skills and more.

The central garden in the courtyard is designed to serve as an informal classroom space, bringing together old and young members of a community to learn about plants, the growing of food and using the ingredients in cooking classes. It might include a small orchard, and would certainly have vegetable and herb gardens. Different faith groups would be encouraged to use the central gardens to grow their own traditional foods.

Apart from cooking classes, the kitchen and dining room are also available for cultural and faith groups to come together to share their feast days and celebrations and unique cultural traditions with other members of the community.

The large living room provides ample space for many communal activities to take place. The House must be for everyone, mothers and young children, the elderly, young adults, all will find something of benefit and something to share in the variety of workshops to be offered as part of the educational programmes. It will also be a space where local people,

young and old, can share their own skills and talents with others. The living room can also be used for community gatherings where local issues can be discussed and resolved. It will provide space for individuals, private groups and public intuitions and organisations, all of whom will be encouraged to invest in the on-going operation and maintenance of the Community House.

The clinic provides an opportunity for visiting doctors and other healthcare practitioners to come to offer services in healthcare, including those providing courses in nutrition and self-care. There might well be the opportunity for local health professionals to provide some of these services by gift as volunteers. A waiting room in the clinic, with some overflow in the House, would allow a fair number of patients to be seen in any one day.

## THE PLACE OF WORSHIP AND REFLECTION

Separated from the House by a colonnade, is a place of worship and reflection with its own quiet garden. The place of worship is open to different faith groups in the community, either for their own purposes or to share their way of worship with others. A meditation space is available to those longing to find stillness and silence. These facilities are of course available to all of those using the Community House either privately or as part of a course taking place there. For example courses in meditation, yoga, mindfulness practice or interfaith gatherings would utilise both the House and the places of worship and reflection.



Fetzer Institute



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