

## CASE STUDY

### Trudslund, near Copenhagen, Denmark: a cohousing development (1978–81)

Trudslund is situated in the town of Birkerød north of Copenhagen. It is a total urban design of a small residential community (for a full description, see McCamant and Durrett, 1993). The design brief was based on a social ideal that is manifested in its physical design. In 1978, 20 families came together to form a cooperative society in which a number of household activities and responsibilities of daily life would be shared. The focus of concern amongst those shown in Figure 1.6 was thus on patterns of life that both provided for a sense of individuality and a sense of community. The families' immediate objective was to get permission to build a cohousing development on land that was zoned for detached houses. The speed required to process their application for a zoning change led to a lack of clarity of social goals amongst the members of the group, resulting in half of the families withdrawing from the scheme. The group restructured itself and formed a clear statement of its intentions.

The process of moving from an agreed on agenda to a completed project was arduous and time consuming as decisions were made democratically with all members of the cohousing group participating. As with all interactive open-ended decision-making processes it was truncated only by some external circumstance. In this case it was the fear of interest rates escalating (in 1980–1 they rose to 21%). The group asked four architectural firms to submit designs for their consideration and decided to proceed with the one prepared by Vankustein Architects. Interestingly it was the architects who strove for a greater degree of integration and

communal activities than the community members themselves wanted. The members were very conscious of their individual identities and of houses as financial investments and wanted the designs to be non-controversial and less obviously communal. If the community collapsed, they wanted the houses to be easy to sell on the open market.

Trudslund ended up comprised of 33 residences and a common house. The community is laid out on two pedestrian streets lined with row houses in an L-shaped plan (see Figure 7.24a). An L-shaped common house with a small square in front of it is located at their intersection. There are two children's playgrounds – one halfway down each street. In addition, the wooded areas outside the community act as a playing area for children. Each house has a small front garden abutting the street. The parking space for cars is on the outside.

An area of programming conflict arose over the design of the kitchens of each house. Should the house designs be standardized for economic reasons? As each family had its own ideas the kitchens of each unit are unique (all 33 of them). The houses range in size from 90 to 140 square metres (970 to 1500 square feet) and cost from between 77,000 to 1 million Danish Kroner (\$US91,400 to \$US117,600 in 1980 dollars). The price included a financial share in the common house.

The streets act as communal areas especially for children, but it is in the common house that the communal life of Trudslund takes place. It contains kitchens and dining rooms; much communal