



Chapter 3 Village Layout

Begin with the Village Walls.

Know your boundaries.

Of utmost importance is that once the Village boundary is set, it is kept. This is common practice in Europe, where the demarcation of village and country is both clear and permanent. In contrast, the United States has so blurred its boundaries that they have merged into one incoherent mess – with an accompanying decline in the quality of life. At one time, America had its boundaries. Then with the advent of the car, developers persuaded local authorities to let them put in a new subdivision on the edge of town, or a drive-in burger joint. Then a car dealership was added and then a discount shopping mall with big box stores. The same thing was happening in the next town, and fifty years later, the only memory of the demarcation is a roadside sign alerting drivers they have gone from one town to the next. Later, other countries adopted this American approach to sprawl.

If possible, the Village should buy enough land to own its surrounding green space. As a condition of subdivision, seek zoning or consenting authorities' agreement that the green zone be preserved in perpetuity. In granting consent to a project as large as a Village, the authorities should secure the surrounding farmlands and forest as permanent farms and reserves.

Within the green space, we strongly recommend that the Village be surrounded by an urban wall, constructed to keep

domestic animals and wandering toddlers within. Build many gates and doorways in the Village walls to enable people to walk beyond the Village.

The purpose of Village walls go deep into ancient human memory, creating a sense of enclosure. Walls block wind, absorb sunlight, and create a warmer micro climate in winter when the sun is low. They do enable some control of domestic pets who otherwise can wreak havoc on native birds beyond the Village walls. They provide security, especially for young toddlers.

The wall should be built of a solid aggregate – stone, light concrete, perhaps adobe. The Village rules should permit some of its boundary walls to be built into the back of Village houses, although it is recommended that such a wall remain the property of the Village.

In setting out Village walls, avoid the surveyor's temptation to make it perfectly straight. Nature rarely follows a straight line. The best way to set out the village boundary is with a number of people walking the land with pegs and stakes. Let the proposed boundary line undulate with the hills, let it move out to enclose a tree or in so the tree sits outside the wall (but don't cut the tree just because it is in the way). Outside the wall build large gardens, sports fields, an equestrian centre and paddocks for farm animals, and of course, the motorpool and the shipping depot.

In some places, where the nearby buildings are public, make the wall wide enough to walk upon with lovely wrought iron railings. In other places, build a recess in the top, filled with topsoil and planted with cascading vines and flowering plants. If you have the luxury of falling water, consider even using the wall as a Roman aqueduct to transport the water to the right place for a plaza fountain. In some places, leave the wall natural. In others, coat it with brilliant white whitewash or clay-tinted slurry that develops a patina over time as different tints are applied and eventually wear through.

