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WAYFINDING

*WHY IS WAYFINDING IMPORTANT TO
OUR WELL BEING?*



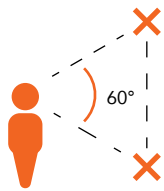
WAYFINDING

DESIGN STRATEGIES

WHAT GUIDES HUMANS THROUGH SPACE?

One’s ability to navigate a space is directly influenced by its design. When purposeful elements are repeated enough to form a predictable pattern, the user is better able to navigate a space. Because of the constant need humans have to situate themselves and others in an environment, they feel more comfortable when patterns of guidance signal both where they are and where to go.

A **prime** is an environmental stimulus that can influence a person’s **subconscious** thoughts, feelings, and subsequent responses. A door, as a simple example, signals departure, revealing the start of one space and beginning of another. Guidance given by thoughtful architectural primes has the ability to minimize confusion, maximize usability, and reinforce a physical sense of self within a space.



NAVIGATION

Providing sight lines into adjacent spaces will aid in wayfinding and encourage awareness of the overall map of a building. Placing focal points in clearly visible spots will draw individuals from one room to the next, connecting each space in a design.

“... to navigate our bodies through space, our brains non-consciously image a hexagonal lattice of points, and locate the place of our body with reference to two objects in space, forming an equilateral triangle ...”
- Sarah Goldhagen, Welcome to Your World!



REGIONS

Grouping areas strengthens the identity of spaces and the users within them. Clearly characterizing each area encourages the formation of a mental map for one to reference each time they re-enter the building.

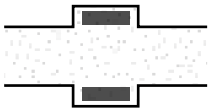
“... continuity of color, texture, or material, of floor surface, scale or facade detail, lighting, planting, or silhouette. The more these characters overlap, the stronger the impression of a unified region ...”
- Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City²



NATURE

Making users feel close to nature is proven to improve mental health and well-being. Comfort and productivity are improved when spaces are properly illuminated and give nod to the natural world.

“We are so biologically wired to embrace the natural world that, in addition to greenery and light, we respond strongly to natural materials, biomorphic forms, and specific topographical features ...”
- Sarah Goldhagen, Welcome to Your World!



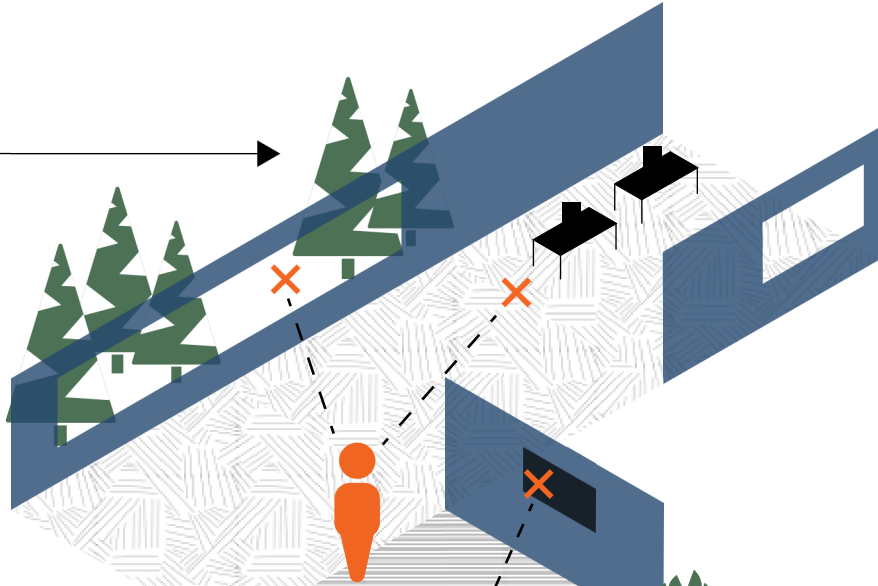
PATHS AND NODES

Our eyes are naturally drawn to areas where we can hide and rest. Creating breaks will curb monotony and enhance well-being.

“Without even thinking about it, we can identify the areas where we can take refuge to hide and to rest.”
- Sarah Goldhagen, Welcome to Your World!

- Provide **natural light** and views to the outside for orientation.
- Integrate plantings or other natural materials and references.

- Organize the plan with **sight lines** to add identifiable focal points.
- Integrate **views** to multiple focal points at each point in space.



- **Differentiate** spaces through the use of color, texture, material, lighting, scale or otherwise.

- Provide areas for **rest and refuge** to break up large or long areas.

- Intentionally design elements as **primes** to signal behavior.

“... legibility in overall forms ... works well with our rapid-scanning, gist-extracting eyes and brains ...”

- Sarah Goldhagen, *Welcome to Your World: How the Built Environment Shapes Our Lives*¹

¹ Goldhagen, Sarah Williams. *Welcome to Your World: How the Built Environment Shapes Our Lives*. Reprint, Harper Paperbacks, 2020.
² Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City* (Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies Series). Illustrated, The MIT Press, 1960.