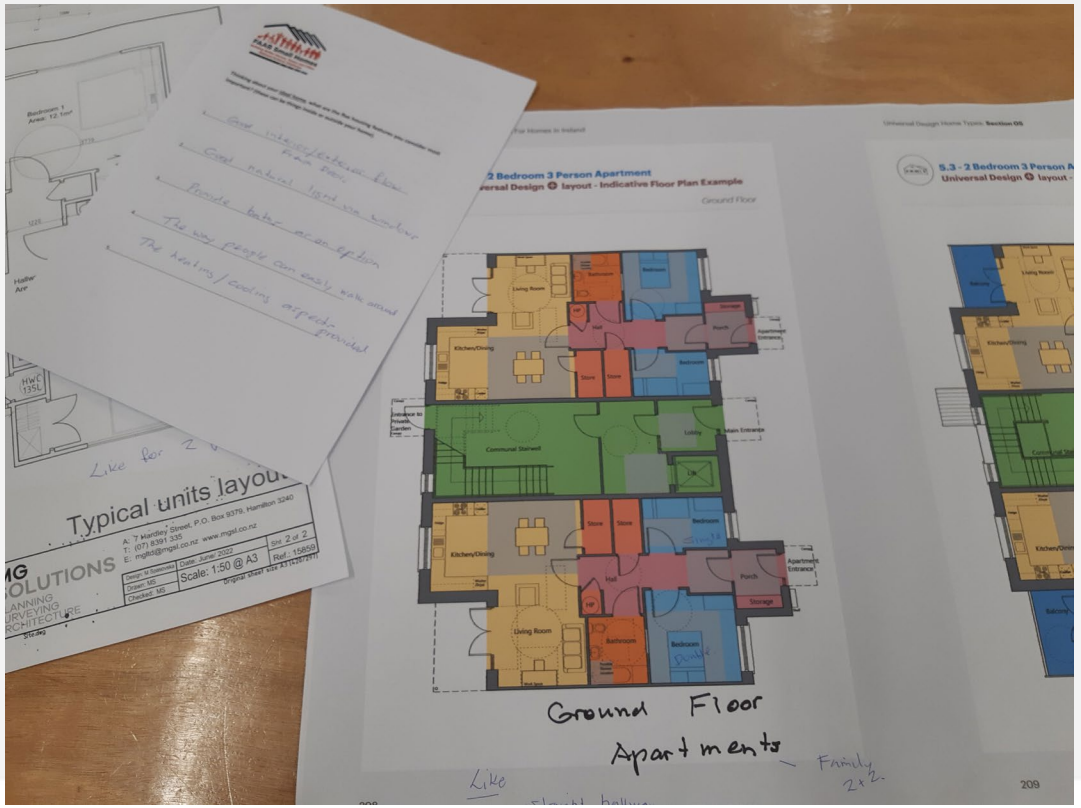
“SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT ON ACCESSIBILITY”

WORKSHOPS ON ACCESSIBLE-DESIGN PLANS



Presentation to FAAB Seminar

Christchurch, 20 May 2024

Bev James

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The workshops

- Reviewing 5 existing plans with accessible design
  - What designs for accessible small homes work for people?
  - How can designs meet people's needs?

- 4 workshops (2 in Blenheim, 2 in Christchurch) with 21 people – older people, disabled, families, service providers
- And feedback about the plans from 3 people

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My ideal home

- Storage
- Flexible use spaces
- Lots of power points
- Good heating / cooling
- Access to sun, natural light
- Privacy in the home
- Private outdoor space / garden
- Safe
- Access to services, amenities
- Space for companion / service animal

Storage! That's not an extra, it's really necessary. You'd be surprised by how much people need.

That's my number one thing – good interior-exterior flow and light.

A big plus is the outdoor plug to charge the mobility scooter.

We use all the space in and around the home which is not thought about in the design. The most used areas for family gatherings are the living area, kitchen and back yard. That's the 3 spaces used the most.

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Desired accessible features

- Future-proofed – provide for future modifications
- Improves safety
- Easy to use
- Light switches and powerpoints at convenient heights
- Wider doorways and hallways, easy to get around
- Wet area shower
- Level entry

The plans: what is not liked

- Unappealing, unwelcoming ambience
- One-bedroom dwellings
- Washing machine in the kitchen
- Small living areas
- Inaccessible cupboards and shelves
- Dwelling not fully accessible

The one bedroom, I don't like it. Very utilitarian. The other has more potential in terms of being able to do things.

I hated this!! Negative ten! It feels like a hotel. It's a place to survive, not to thrive.

If you had visitors and things like that, to me the living space seems a bit small.

Can't access all bedrooms – that's probably a negative. The whole house isn't accessible.

Diverse views about the plans

- No one plan emerged as the favourite
- Each plan had features that were strongly liked or disliked
- Multi-units, duplexes
- Open-plan living areas

While open plan works for some, it doesn't work for others.

The lack of windows really gets me. Some of these places would be quite gloomy.

It's not whether they're an apartment or multi-unit, it's the space.

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User-centred design

We've been asked, consulted in the past, but never involved in co-design. Will consult, but when it comes to implementation our lived experience is ignored.

Need the industry to admit that there's a problem, don't necessarily think they do … How do you change that kind of thinking that they know best?

In the mainstream, it's so hard to find a place that's accessible … If people built to Universal Design, anyone can live in it. You can go next door to your neighbours and talk to them. But if you only have a few that are accessible you can't go around and visit others. They will always have to visit you.

It's really important for the whole community, the people who are going to live in the homes, to be involved in the design of the homes so they feel invested.

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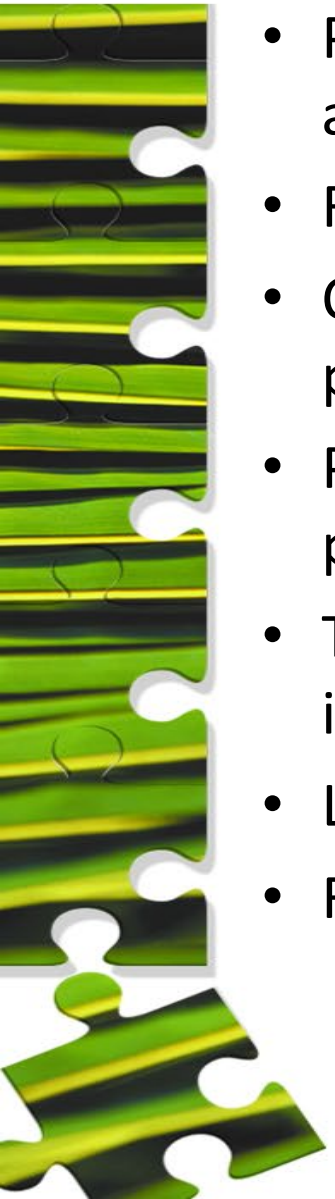
Encouraging accessible design



- Promoting accessible features in real estate advertising
- Register of accessible dwellings
- Connecting the industry with disability and older people's organisations
- People with disabilities in the building professions and governance
- Training and professional development for the industry and councils
- Learning from international experience
- Regulation

We need more disabled people as architects, working in the industry … You see other sectors with disabled in the workforce and the conversation changes. It's a long-term solution.

Get local people involved – information sharing. They may not take it up, but it can only make them more aware.

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Key messages

- User-centred design
- Homeliness
- Space and storage
- The whole dwelling needs to be accessible
- Consider the needs of all residents, and caregivers
- Connect the dwelling to the community

They feel quite impersonal. Not very homely … They just don't feel friendly.

I want to be able to get into the kitchen and not have to back out.

Accommodating the needs of visiting carers, especially those who sleep over … Size of shower area – space for caregiver to assist.

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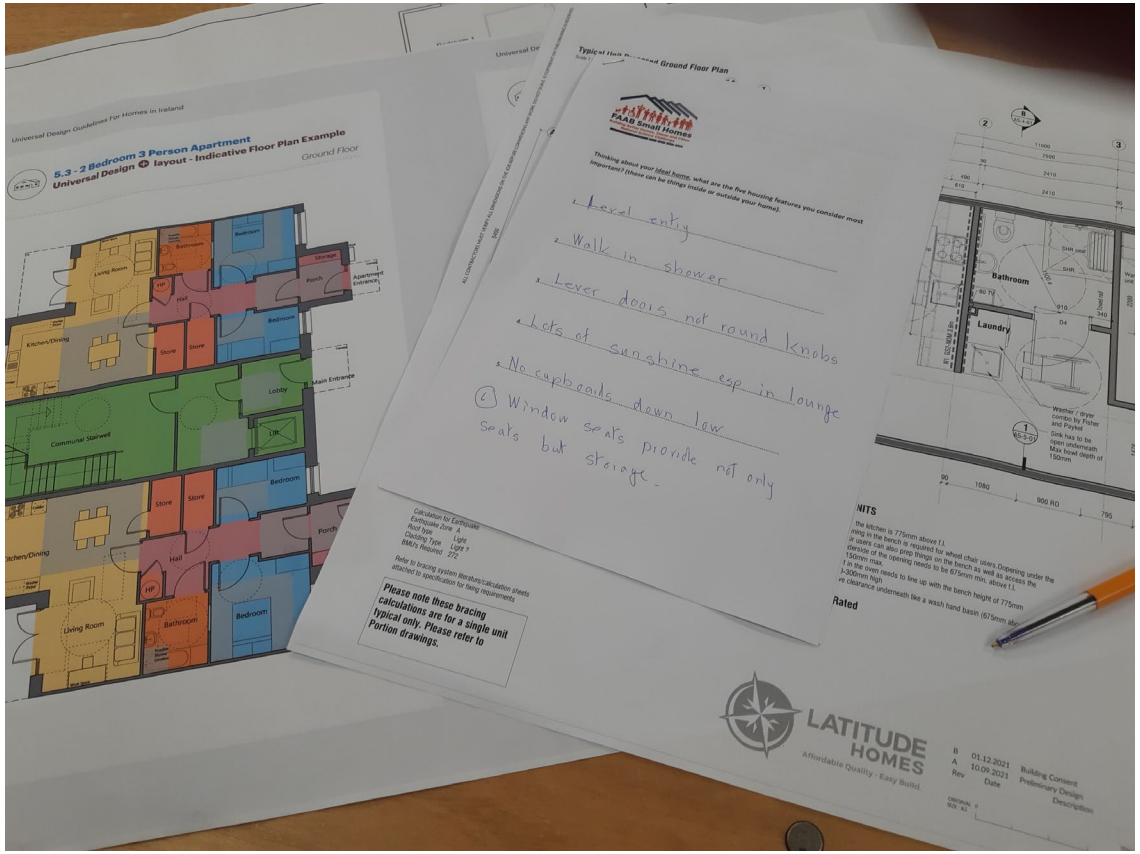
Thanks for listening!

Contact me at: bev@bevjames.nz



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