

WOMEN'S VISUAL PRIVACY ANALYSIS IN TRADITIONAL HOUSES AND MODERN APARTMENT BLOCK NEIGHBOURHOODS IN FAMAGUSTA (NORTH CYPRUS)

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ABSTRACT: The meaning and importance assigned to women's visual privacy is changing day by day and women try to protect their visual privacy in these days. Women's visual privacy is connected to their house design, religion (in Islamic religion women's visual privacy is more important than other in religions), and socio-economic classes....etc. In addition to these, architectural elements affect women's visual privacy also. The author's main concern in this research is to analyze women's visual privacy according to different points of view in two different streets of the city which includes traditional and modern apartment's neighborhoods. Abdullah Pasa Street (where traditional houses are located) and Yildiz Street (where modern apartments are located) have been taken into consideration as sample streets in Famagusta (North Cyprus). A detailed questionnaire was done with the users of these buildings. As a result, new suggestions are proposed for improving visual privacy.

Keywords – Modern Apartments, Privacy, Traditional Houses, Visual Privacy, Women's Visual Privacy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims, Objectives and Limitations:

Famagusta is a town that was settled on the eastern part of Northern Cyprus. It has important cultural and historical characteristics. Nowadays, a rapid growth has been observed in this place especially after the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) affected the city from 1986 on. Recently, this rapid growth produced some good but also bad effects on the user needs. As a result of these developments, some changes about culture and socio-economic classes occurred. In relation to these developments, women's life and visual privacy were also affected.

The main aim of this research is to examine the women's visual privacy in traditional and modern housing neighborhoods. Abdullah Pasa street and Yildiz street of Famagusta have been taken into consideration as sample streets in this study. The examination finds out the weaknesses of the visual privacy in new designs and indicates the differences in traditional and modern blocks.

The objectives of this paper can be explained with some questions ;

- Are women of both streets satisfied with the visual privacy in their homes?
- How can visual privacy be prevented from outsiders in Abdullah Pasa Street and Yildiz Street?
- What are the visual privacy differences and similarities in residential areas of Abdullah Pasa Street and Yildiz Street?

The research is limited with gender, age and two residential streets in Famagusta. Depending on this research, new suggestions are discussed about women's visual privacy.

1.2 Research Problem

Research problem includes differences and similarities of women's visual privacy in traditional houses (Abdullah Pasa Street) and modern apartments (Yildiz Street) neighbourhoods in Famagusta.

1.3 Research Methodology

Research methodology of this work may be considered in 5 steps;

Stage I: Literature Surveys:

Literature Survey is related to the privacy, visual privacy and women's visual privacy in other countries. Background of visual privacy analysis and its importance in women's life.

Stage II: Field Survey:

Two sample streets, which were selected to examine, are located in Famagusta, and have their different characters about visual privacy.

Stage III: Interview (Questionnaire):

Interview (questionnaire) with the inhabitants through random sampling to understand the social structure, in order to understand the socio-cultural profile of the areas.

Stage IV: Evaluation of the collected data:

Stage V: Discussion and Suggestion:

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 General Concept of Definition

2.1.1 Background

The main goal of this study is to test empirically two contrasting views about the importance of residential privacy of women in two different streets of Famagusta. In Al-Kodmany's (1996) paper, it is reported that the claims by local architects and sociologists suggest that socio-cultural changes have led to an increasing desire for privacy. For example, after migration from the walled city part of Famagusta, to out of walled city such as the Karakol, Sakarya, Tuzla neighborhoods, desire for privacy increased. As neighborhood composition changes in new districts, women increasingly seek minimal social interaction. In the older periods, women often visited each other and shared more things with each other. Nowadays in modern districts, women are less reliant on each other.

According to Al-Kawakibee (1992), some architects view such socio-cultural changes as indicators of an increase in the desire of privacy. Consequently, inwardly designed traditional homes and neighborhoods are more supportive of residential privacy than modern ones. These architects said that new research should analyze the traditional model, architectural design, urban planning principles and socio-cultural relations among the women.

On the other hand, according to Warie(1991) some of the local architects and sociologists suggest that socio-cultural changes have decreased the desire of privacy mostly for women. Norms regarding visibility of women to outsiders have been reduced and some of them are no longer observed as a result of a major shift in women's domain from private to public. Thus, relationships among women and the 'public', including visual privacy, conservations, neighborhoods, are being reinterpreted in a liberal framework.

2.1.1.1 Privacy

Privacy can be divided into several types;

1. Solitude, referring to the state of being free from the observation of others;
2. Intimacy, referring to a person's maintains intimate contact with another person or group but in a manner free from exposure to the public environment; in other words, the state of the maximizing interpersonal relation ships by minimizing outside surveillance;
3. Anonymity, referring to the state of being unknown or unrecognized in a public environment (person is surrounded by others but does not expect to be recognized); and
4. Reserve, referring to the state in which a person employs physiological barriers to control unwanted intrusion (e.g. in a social occasion, a guest may withhold personal aspects of herself from others during a conversation. (Al-Kodmany, 1996)

In basic agreement with Westin's (1970) estimation of the range of privacy types, Marshall (1970,1970,1972,1974) and Kheir Al-Kodmany-(1996) indicated two additional types:

5. Not neighboring and;
6. Seclusion, the formers refers to a regular annoyance with extensive and intimate contact with acquaintances, friends and neighbors in order to satisfy the need for privacy. The latter requires both auditory and visual measures to physically remove the possibility of intrusion by nearby individuals.

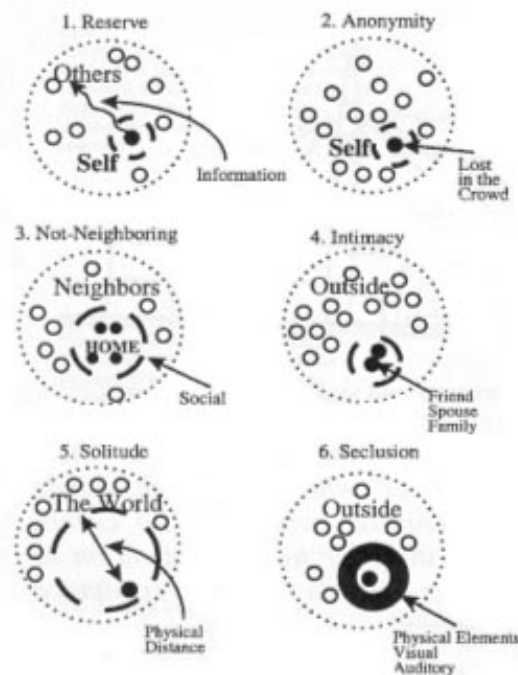


Fig. 1. Types of privacy were tried to explain schematically above figure (Al-Kodmany, 2000)

The starting points of privacy, which affected the traditional houses, come from Islamic religion which directs women and men to sit separately in their houses. This is a good example for the privacy in the early period. Nowadays privacy still exists, but it has some differences than the previous form. Below Fig.2 shows the orientation of houses in Traditional and Modern Streets of Famagusta. Inwardly oriented houses are generally located in the traditional streets of the city. On the other hand, outwardly oriented houses are situated in the modern streets of the city.

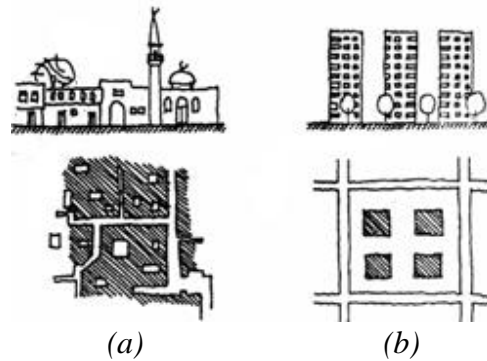


Fig. 2. Inwardly oriented houses (Traditional Houses) (a) and Outwardly oriented houses (Modern Apartments) (b) (Al-Kodmany, 2000)

2.1.1.2 Visual Privacy

Altman and Chemers (1987), Zimring, et al (1978), Margulis(1974) and Al-Kodmany(1996) suggested that any variable or sub-variable could be the focus of study in environment-behavior research. A variable could be singled out for detailed analytical purposes. The current study focuses on visual privacy. Sub-type of seclusion for architectural and urban design can substantially affect the visual privacy. In particular, the layout and orientation of the building (inwardly versus outwardly), site plans and architectural treatment of exterior facades contribute to the achieved level of visual privacy. For example, closely placed outwardly oriented houses may provide less visual privacy than that of inwardly oriented houses. Similarly, placing dwellings of different heights next to one another (e.g. low rise next to high rise) may result in the exposure of residents of the low rise to the residents of the high rise.

In addition to the reasons stated above, this research focuses on residential visual privacy because of its historic importance for Famagusta as user's cultural and religious ways. In Islamic world, residential privacy is essential to refine life of goodness and purity. It suggests that a dwelling should have a certain exclusiveness and defiance. As a result of this importance, designers tried to create suitable buildings for the visual privacy. It can be expressed that visual privacy was produced in the effect of the religious principles and culture.

Janet Abu-Lughod (1993) explains how in response to the religious teachings, traditional Islamic homes explicitly guarded residential visual privacy, dwellings were inwardly oriented, while outer walls at the pedestrian eye-level were blank. Windows at higher levels were frequently accompanied by *mashribiyya* (lattice-wood screens) to ensure one-way vision whereby women could see outside; however outsiders could not see them. Al Kodmany (2000), illustrated specific urban design guideline's that governed the height of dwellings and the positioning of openings, including doors and windows, to ensure visual privacy. They also recount instances that underscore the issue of visual privacy during different periods of history in several Islamic cities. Visual privacy can be analyzed with the help of the concepts of desired privacy and the achieved privacy. Preventing residents for outsiders visual invasion is simply "desired privacy concept" and the applications of this prevention to the houses is "achieved privacy concept".

3. TESTING THE USER SATISFACTION IN ABDULLAH PASA STREET AND YILDIZ STREET IN FAMAGUSTA BY APPLYING A QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1 Description of the Questionnaire

The target of the questionnaire is to test women's visual privacy in Abdullah Pasa Street and Yildiz Street in Famagusta. There are five different types of questions as explained below.

- First type of questions are about the general characteristics of users (age, marital status....etc)
- Second types of questions are asked to search about the age of the houses and the period the women lived in these houses.
- The third type considered women's visual privacy in their homes.
- The fourth types of questions are asked to analyze if women knew about the visual privacy and the factors that affect their visual privacy in general and architectural views.
- The fifth type examines women's proposals to create better visual privacy in future designs.

The questions were asked with random selection method in two different streets that are shown in the map given below. (Fig. 3)

The participants of the study are categorized according to the following criteria:

Gender: Gender differences must be considered in the subject of privacy. Women were the focus of this study, because their privacy is generally important than men.

Age: Women's need for privacy varies with age. Sociologists suggest that the ages between 18-40 are considered major landmarks or turning points in women's lives. The age 18 marks a new stage of entering university (a new stage of life that they feel they earn self-importance). The age 40 is considered as a landmark of entering into a stage of maturity. Although there are sub-stages between 18 and 40 such as entering to the work force, the study is generally interested in this entire group who constitute the majority of women, who attend school and work. This portion of the population is mostly involved in activities outside home, and has a greater interaction with men resulting from the pursuit of education and employment. (Al-Kodmany, 2000)

Socio-economic class: Since socio-economic status influences people's demand for privacy, the compared populations had to be in a similar status. In low-income groups, for instance, crowded living conditions, force lack of privacy, so privacy norms are much less stringent than for high-income groups. Affluent populations may have extra privacy demands and may desire seclusion from economically deprived sectors of population. Therefore, compared participants had to be of similar socio-economic class. (Al-Kodmay, 2000)

Home Design: The main criteria for dwelling selection are that traditional dwellings have to be inwardly and modern dwellings outwardly oriented. Generally, traditional dwellings were one or two-stories and they had a courtyard. Windows of those dwellings opened mainly to the central courtyard. Modern dwellings are high buildings are outwardly oriented; having the windows open to the neighboring windows.



Fig. 3. In this research questionnaires were held in these two streets which were shown on the land use map red lines of Abdullah Pasa Street (a) and Yildiz Street (b)



(a)



(b)

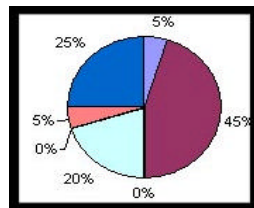
Fig. 4. Photos from Abdullah Pasa Street (a) and Yildiz Street (b) where questionnaires were held

3.2 Result of the questionnaire

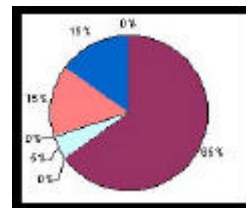
Results of the questionnaires will be discussed in the following steps.

3.2.1 User Determination

There are 40 (100%) female who responded the questionnaire. Forty-five percent (45%) are married and also have children and approximately half of the total number (52%) are single and few participants (3%) are married but do not have children. Age of twenty five percent varies between 18-40 and nearly thirty two percent (32.5%) are between 19-23. About seventeen percent (17%) vary between 23-30 and the rest are between 30-40. The greater percentages (52%) are students and (20.5%) are housewives and the rest (27.5%) are workers.



(a)



(b)

Fig. 5. Yildiz Street (a) & Abdullah Pasa Street (b) user determination shown as the graphical women knowledge questionnaires results about visual privacy

The results of Women's knowledge on visual privacy:

1. 5% of Yildiz street women said that the visual privacy, is the privacy but Abdullah Pasa street women doesn't think like this (0%).
2. 45% of Yildiz street women said that the visual privacy is a part the people's private lives but 65% of Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this.
3. None of the women (0%) said that visual privacy is part of the people's working lives.
4. 20% Yildiz street women said that, visual privacy is people's personal secrets but the 5% of Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this.
5. 5% of Yildiz streets women said that visual privacy is part of the people's lives who live alone, but Abdullah Pasa street women don't think like this (0%).
6. 5% of Yildiz street women said that visual privacy does not apply to any these options stated above while 15% of Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this.
7. 25% of Yildiz street women said the visual privacy consists of all the options stated above while 15% of Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this.

Generally, result of this analysis indicates that women, who live in traditional streets, have more knowledge about women's visual privacy than the others, who live in the modern

apartment. Also in new apartment, nearly 55% of the women do not know the meaning visual privacy or do not know anything about visual privacy.

3.2.2 Women's Home Design Selection Concerning

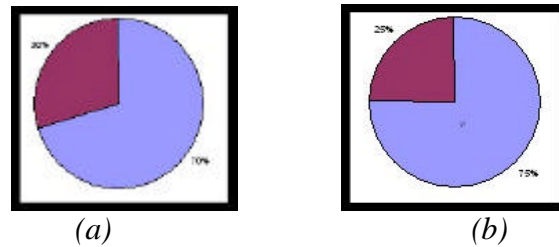


Fig. 6. Yildiz Street (a) and Abdullah Pasa Street Users (b) considered women's visual privacy in their homes graphically

1. 75% of Yildiz street women said that traditional houses had more visual privacy than the modern apartments while 70% of Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this.
 2. 20% of Yildiz street women said that modern apartments have more visual privacy than the traditional houses while 30% of Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this.
- The above percentage of the questionnaire result shows that the women, who live in the traditional houses, have more visual privacy than the modern apartment. This indicates that women prefer traditional houses for their visual privacy.

3.2.3 General Affect to Visual Privacy:

In the two tables shown below, women answered questions about the general factors that affect women's visual privacy. Nearly 60% of Yildiz street women and same percent of Abdullah Pasa street women believes that religion affects to the visual privacy. Nearly 50% of Yildiz street women and 60% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that socio-economic classes affect the visual privacy. Nearly 58.5 % of Yildiz street women and 60% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that home places affect the visual privacy. Nearly 50% of Yildiz street women and 58.5% of Abdullah Pasa Street women believes that age affect the visual privacy. Approximately 26% of Yildiz street women and 24% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that all of the above affect mentioned points the visual privacy. Nearly 22.5% of Yildiz street women and 24% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that none of them affect the visual privacy. Below is some more information about the results of this part of the questionnaires.

Table 1. Yildiz street women is answers about the general affects of their visual privacy

Factors affected visual Privacy	Religious		Socio-Economic Classes		Home Places		Home Designs		Age		All Of Them		None Of them	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
According Age														
18-19	3	9.5	2	5	4	24	5	25	2	5	1	14.5	0	0
19-23	5	25	3	9.5	3	9.5	4	24	3	9.5	2	5	1	14.5
24-30	2	5	4	24	4	24	6	26	1	14.5	1	14.5	2	5
30-40	6	26	1	14.5	2	5	1	14.5	4	24	2	5	1	14.5
Total(20)	16	60	10	50	13	58.5	16	60	10	50	6	26	4	24
According Marital Status														
Total	13	58.5	10	50	7	33.5	5	13.5	3	100	4	24	2	29
Married+ Child	5	25	4	24	3	9.5	2	5	1	14.5	3	9.5	1	14.5
Married	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Single	7	33.5	6	26	4	24	3	9.5	2	5	1	14.5	1	14.5

Table 2. Abdullah Pasa street women is answers about the general affects of their visual privacy

Factors affected visual Privacy	Religious		Socio- Economi c Classes		Home Places		Home Designs		Age		All Them		Of	None	Of	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
According g Age																
18-19	5	25	2	5	5	25	4	24	4	24	1	14.5	0	0		
19-23	4	24	3	9.5	4	24	3	9.5	3	9.5	2	5	1	14.5		
24-30	6	26	1	14.5	6	26	4	24	4	24	1	14.5	2	5		
30-40	1	14.5	4	24	1	14.5	2	5	2	5	2	5	1	14.5		
Total	16	60	10	50	16	60	13	58.5	13	58.5	6	26	4	24		
According g Marital Status																
Total	5	13.5	3	100	5	13.5	7	33.5	7	33.5	4	24	2	29		
Married+ Child	2	5	1	14.5	2	5	3	9.5	3	9.5	3	9.5	1	14.5		
Married	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Single	3	9.5	2	5	3	9.5	4	24	4	24	1	14.5	1	14.5		

The above information shows that the general affects (religious, socio-economic classes, home places, home designs, age) are affect the visual privacy. The above analysis also shows that a religious most important affect for their visual privacy both of the streets. Respondents stated the results that led them to say that these affects are the reasons for provide them visual privacy and need own visual privacy. Therefore, it is assumed that the traditional houses or modern apartment type has affected from these effects nearly same percentage.

3.2.4 Architectural Elements that had an effect on Visual Privacy:

In the two tables shown below the women answered about which architectural elements affect the visual privacy. Nearly 58.5% of Yildiz street women and 60% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that the courtyards affect their visual privacy. Approximately 60% of Yildiz street women and 24% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that the front yards affect their visual privacy. Nearly 24% of Yildiz street women and 58.5% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that the doors and windows affect the visual privacy. Nearly 58.5% of Yildiz street women and 60% of Abdullah Pasa street women state that the balcony has an effect on the visual privacy. Approximately 58.5% of Yildiz street women and 26% of Abdullah Pasa street women believes that the hence affect to the visual privacy. Nearly 60% of Yildiz street women and 24% of Abdullah Pasa Street women believe that all of these designs have effect on the visual privacy. Approximately 24% of Yildiz street women and 26% of Abdullah Pasa street women believe that none of these designs has an effect on the visual privacy. Below is more detailed information about the women's answers.

Table 3. Yildiz street women answers about the architectural elements that had an effect on visual privacy

Factors affected visual Privacy	Courtyard		Front yards		Door/ Windows		Balcony		Hence		All Them	Of them	Non them	Of them
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
According Age														
18-19	4	24	5	25	0	0	4	24	1	14.5	5	25	1	0
19-23	3	9.5	4	24	1	14.5	3	9.5	2	5	4	24	1	14.5
24-30	4	24	6	26	2	5	4	24	1	14.5	6	26	2	5
30-40	2	5	1	14.5	1	14.5	2	5	2	5	1	14.5	1	14.5
Total(20)	13	58.5	16	60	4	24	13	58.5	6	26	16	60	4	24

Table 4. Abdullah Pasa street women answers about the architectural elements that had an effect on visual privacy

Factors affected visual Privacy	Courtyards		Frontyards		Doors/Windows		Balcony		Hences		All Of Them		Non Of them	
According Age	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
18-19	5	25	4	0	4	24	5	25	4	24	5	0	1	14.5
19-23	4	24	1	14.5	3	9.5	4	24	3	9.5	1	14.5	2	5
24-30	6	26	2	5	4	24	6	26	4	24	2	5	1	14.5
30-40	1	14.5	1	14.5	2	5	1	14.5	2	5	1	14.5	2	5
Total(20)	16	60	4	24	13	58.5	16	60	13	58.5	4	24	6	26

Moreover, the reasons given by women visual privacy for their living place not meeting their needs were, not enough distance between houses, lack of courtyard, front yard, is not any hence around the buildings, balcony looks each other, windows and doors looking each other. According to results, these factors should be taken into reference in the planning of new designs.

3.2.5 Analysis of the Visual Privacy in House Designs of Two Different Streets

This part of the questionnaire tried to determine if they believe their house designers are successful in creating visual privacy.

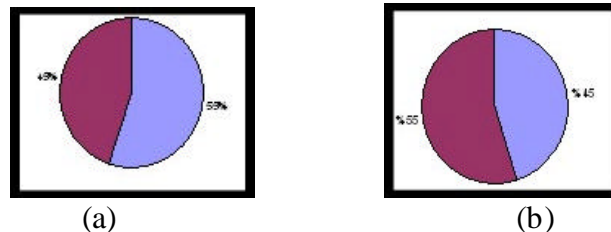


Fig. 7. Yildiz Street(a) and Abdullah Pasa Street (b) graphically analysis of the visual privacy in house designs of two different streets

1. 55% of Yildiz street women said that the traditional houses have more visual privacy than the modern apartments and 45% of Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this. The designers were more successful to create privacy in their designs and users believe that this is because of the designers understanding of the meaning of visual privacy.

2. 55% of Yildiz street women said that modern apartments have more visual privacy than the traditional houses and 45% Abdullah Pasa Street women think like this.

Traditional House designers were more successful to preserve women's visual privacy in their designs and users selected these parts of the city. Generally these people, who live in Abdullah Pasa Street, believe that the new houses have better solutions and most of them who said apartment are better to live, they are in very bad conditions at their homes.

3.2.6 Suggestions to Better Visual Privacy

After examining of all the factors affecting women's visual privacy from these two different street users, the participants wanted to give some suggestions to have better visual privacy at the end of the questionnaire. Nearly 78% believes that if they had some more space between their houses, like courtyards or green areas, they would feel more comfortable about their visual privacy in their houses. On the other, hand nearly 85% believe that if they have more public spaces and if designers think of the users' needs, this could be a remedy for the missing visual privacy.

4. CONCLUSION:

The target of this study is to analyse the users' knowledge about visual privacy and offer some suggestions to improve it. After examining all of the factors affecting the women's visual privacy from two different streets' users, questionnaire results were evaluated and some important results were observed.

In new designs, there are many functions and properties which lack visual privacy with respect to their sites. Accordingly, the traditional houses are inwardly designed houses and have more visual privacy when compared with the new ones. This is because; designers do not consider the general privacy and women's visual privacy too much nowadays. According to the evaluations of the questionnaires, the lack of knowledge about visual privacy was determined. Generally they did not have any opinions about the importance of visual privacy, its effects to their lives and they needed some explanations to answer our questions. All users need visual privacy in the two streets. Modern apartment women live in more comfortable houses but they have less privacy than the ones living in traditional houses. Women in Traditional houses live in bad conditions but they have more visual privacy. According to these results, it can be concluded that early age designers were more successful in creating visual privacy in their designs and this is connected to designers understanding the meaning of the visual privacy.

The end of the questionnaire contained questions about women's proposals to offer a better visual privacy. After the evaluation of their new ideas, it was observed that; there is a great need for some more space between their houses which include courtyards, front yards, hence around the houses or green areas in such a rapidly developing town.

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