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Caring About Places: Thresholds

Good places need to be excellent in many dimensions.

They need to be structured so that we can remember them,
They need to remind us of important things about our lives,
They need to suggest our position in a sequence of time; not obsessively
marking the moment, but tracing the strands of decisions over time.

Good places need to be stimulating, to be forgiving, to be approachable,
to be more than we first think they are.

Good places need to sustain attention,
to invite and reward the interest that we show in them,
to capture the curiosity and affections of many,
to draw their energy from diverse sources,
to garner and accept continuing investment.

Good places embody imagination,
Good places result from successive generations of care,
Good places engage the landscape, are inscribed with detail,
Good places take advantage of the capabilities of their time; appropriately
and with discretion.

Good places confirm as well as challenge; challenge as well as confirm.

Good places set in motion patterns of social encounter that are constructive;
they are not hermetic
they are not threatening
they allow choices of path and association.

Good places let us see how we could be a part of them;
they have parts that are measurable in human terms —
niches of intimacy, rooms of purpose, spaces of assembly, fields of connection
they register human movement, mask and reveal activity, provide options,
evoke conversation, offer repose.

Good places must be considered at various scales;
they play an evident and welcome part in a larger community, landscape
and region
they have elements that help us to place them in memory
they bear traces of the acts of building, gardening, tending, gathering
they are furnished and give comfort
they are a semblance of thought...the most precious of resources

Good places enrich our lives; they are thresholds between what has been and
what might be.

— *Donlyn Lyndon*