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The Surveillance Zone as Meaningful Space for the Aged

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Abstract

The surveillance zone, defined as space within the visual field of home, assumes increasing significance as people grow older and spend more time

at home. Using insights from a 3 year participant observation study in an Appalachian community, this paper describes characteristics of the surveillance zone and explores its meaning for old people. The process of monitoring events outside, the emergence of watchful reciprocal social networks, and the potential of the surveillance zone for generating a sense of personal identity, are explored. Implications for locating and designing environments for the elderly are traced.

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