

# Meetings Up Front

*When meeting rooms are buried inside buildings they become the territory of the departments around them, and cannot be used by others as natural places to meet.*

The crucial issue in the location of meeting rooms, lies in the idea of *meeting*. A meeting occurs when several people, each representing a different facet of the social reality, come together. If the meeting occurs in a place that is prominently the home base of one of the parties, then the chance of authentic meeting is diminished. Part of the group is intruding on the other's turf. There is a subtle kind of polarization in the air, before the meeting even begins. This is why important meetings are usually negotiated on "common ground".

There is another consideration, a more practical one, which further aggravates the problem. Very often, in community centers and city halls for example, the most important meetings are held in the evening, when more people can come. If the meeting rooms are buried in the building they will be

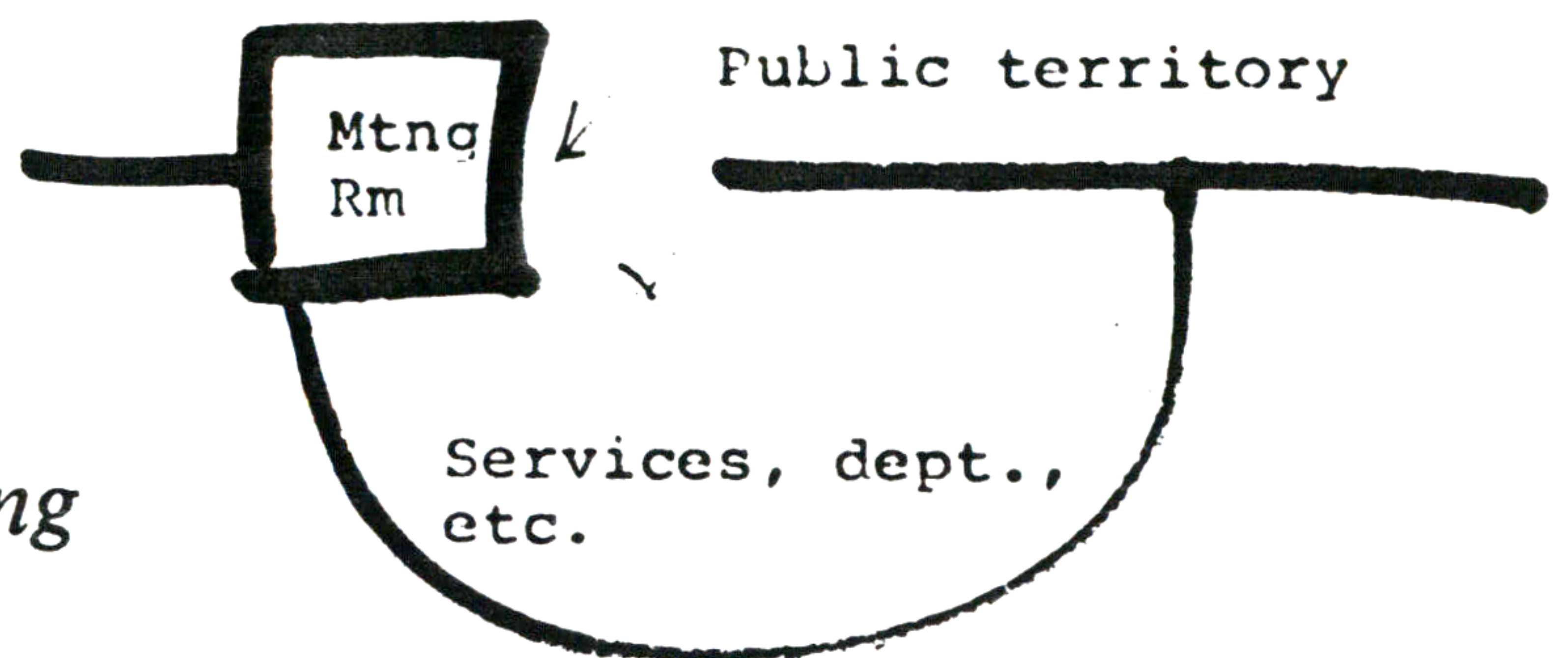
hard for newcomers to find; and, worse, it is likely that the spaces all around them will have to be locked up at night, so people will have to be let in with keys, or find special unlocked paths to the meeting room.

Finally, there is the consideration that traffic in and out of a heavily used meeting room can become a nuisance to the people who have to work around them, during the day.

## Context

Applies to buildings that are heavily used for meetings by the general public. Examples are city hall, school, community center, multi-service center. Does not apply in the case of a meeting room serving only the internal needs of some office or agency.

*Therefore: Locate meeting rooms up front, close to the entrance; make them a visible part of the building's public territory. Don't let any spaces which have to be locked up at night come between the meeting rooms and the entrance.*





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*October 1970*

*This pattern is tentative. If you have any evidence to support or refute its current formulation, please send it to the Center for Environmental Structure, P.O. Box 5156, Berkeley, California 94705; we will add your comments to the next edition.*