

# Spaces of opening

METROPOLITAN HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

THESIS BOOK

# 1

SHARED SPACES

Living in community is one of the oldest sustaining forces of humanity. The ways and system of living together is constantly changing, and this also changes the spatial relationships that provides the daily framework of our lives.

# 2

HOUSING

## SUBSIDY SYSTEMS

To create a collective tenement model, it is necessary to think of such a subsidy system that provides solutions to overall social needs, thus evolving an integrated solution, and creating a financially sustainable model due to it's broader social base.

# 3

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

Only a robust collective tenement system can flexibly fulfill our periodically changing housing needs. Establishing this is a significant architectural task of our time.

Our housing ideas follow a general ideal that lacks a temporal perspective. We are following the shadow of our current life situation, projected into eternity, thus we only build for today, not considering either the time of planning and implementation or the foreseeable changes in our lives. From the security of the present - deceiving ourselves - we obscure the uncertainty of inevitable change, while we keep alive the sentimental fetish of the single family house. However, the reality is, that not every apartment suitable for our current and future life situation is available in the real estate market. Not only the demand, but also the supply must react to this basic situation in a different way than usual. Therefore, we must create a broad spectrum of tenements that offers apartments and housing options that serve a variety of real needs.

A rental housing system that integrates the entire society must operate in a much broader range of interpretation than the classic, wealth-focused social housing model. Our social status is not the same as our financial status (or its differences); our age, marital status, work circumstances and cultural background all influence our needs and opportunities. It is interesting to think about the different, well-defined life stages that arise in our own lives and the housing conditions that correspond to them, in order to understand: housing is an ever-present, but constantly changing framework of our lives.

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# 4

NEW TYPOLOGIES

During the constantly changing ways of housing, we are thinking about different spatial relationships between the same rooms. Still, this change is not unidirectional, meaning there is no end state that is suitable for everyone, everywhere. Therefore, the dwelling does not have a fixed form, nor does dwelling have an exclusive standard that works in all situations.

# 5

OBJET TROUVÉ

The ideal locations for collective housing are not suburban housing estates built on empty lots, but existing buildings in the city that are unable to fulfill their original function.

Architectural sustainability of our time has become an indicator, verified by complex calculations of technical qualification systems. We qualify and limit materials, structures, and systems that can be built. The future has always been shaped by technological progress, but buildings of our time built with significant material and energy input, will most likely fail life cycle analyses. Meanwhile, by continuously tightening legal obligations, we are gradually excluding those groups from the construction market, that cannot afford advanced building materials. This also makes the maintenance of the existing buildings complicated, or even impossible. In order to transform these existing buildings into something really useful, we must resolve this paradox. We must develop the practice of transformations as a future-conscious architectural tool, and to do this, we must redefine the architectural and legal frameworks of reconstructions that are different from the usual. The efficient management of the ever-increasing building stock will be the most important segment of the architectural tasks of the future, so we must focus on the practice of adaptive reuse rather than new construction.

Transformation of our cities partly involves the obsolescence of the existing built framework, with eventual demolition and rebuilding in the end. This process creates fault lines not only in the circular use of building materials, but also in the organic development of the city. Reviving of our empty buildings has repeatedly proven its viability, not only through the efficient use of resources, but also through the maintenance and the continuation of historical layers. The urban rust-spots of our time are the B and C category office buildings that are losing their tenants, and which are mostly waiting for the lifeline in a continuous downward trend. These buildings must be activated with an infusion that completely turns their negative image - and thus their real value- upside down. The active ingredient of this intervention is the change of function, thus the building is liberated from its previous use as a receptive framework, and presents an alternative to similar projects in the future with a whole new image.

# 6

BUILD & FORGET

Our currently transforming buildings must be liberated from immutability with easily adaptable construction, so we can meet today's needs while also providing an opportunity for the future reconstructions. New aesthetic concepts are also created by using these new tools, thus adaptations will act as an understanding continuation of unfinished stories, instead of sole preservation of the original state.

Our buildings are reference points in the world around us, reflecting the greatest degree of stability with their often centuries-old presence. Despite this, very few buildings' status is unchangeable. The distribution and existence of all functions that are needed, and are easily accessible elsewhere, constantly changes. Our cities and houses therefore undergo internal transformation time-to-time. The peculiarity of these transforming spaces is that we still regard the states that have developed during individual adaptations as stable resting points. The constant change of our buildings and thus our cities requires (re)construction methods and design approaches that differ from the usual architectural routine.

It is advisable to examine the most variable functions of our time, the very short-lived office and hospitality spaces, which already allows adaptability and a possibility of later reconstructions in their original design. These technologies have an impact not only on reconstruction, but also on construction, since with their application we can replace previously unreconstructable mistakes with reconstructable opportunities. In this way, the architecture of adaptations steps out from the well-dug, secure cover of classical monument protection into uncertainty, in which, instead of preserving the original, the context of the two states -that cannot be guaranteed in advance- and the resulting composite will be the real value. The attentive reinterpretation of existing frames is both a fine-tuning and a proud adaptation, in which there will be a delicate balance of what we keep or build on, and whether a quotation or a transcription is created through this method.

## Abstract

The focus of my research is the future of metropolitan collective housing. The topic seeks answers to the housing problems that are affecting increasingly significant social strata. The basis for this is that a stable municipal rental housing system, that would be able to meet the increasing overall social demand for accessible housing, has not been established in Hungary. In fact, not only have the necessary apartments not been built, but the foundation of the rental housing system, and its basic goals and means have not been defined.

My goal is to draw attention to the housing problems and the untapped opportunities revealed during my research. I do all this by outlining an idealized, theoretical model of a collective tenement building that provides acceptable conditions. My individual approach is a rational utopia: my essay presents the changing housing needs and an attempt to synchronize the different aspects of builders, maintainers and users. To this end, I analyze the conditions of the acceptable minimum of dwelling, focusing on the importance of collective housing and the benefits of a coordinated system of these two. In addition, I map the changes in our housing needs over time, and I show effective architectural methods for space densification strategies, cheap square meters and the real integration of shared spaces. My long-term plan is to start a dialogue on the topic and to develop the foundations of an architectural model of a functioning and operable rental housing system, based on the good examples presented. Instead of creating classic architectural plans, I focus more on preparatory work and coordinated program definition. To this end, I form opinions in strategic decisions and make specific architectural proposals, thereby supporting the development of a livable, architecturally sound collective housing model. In summary, I will demonstrate that it is advisable to implement future housing goals based on a community-focused architectural program that -in addition to creating compact apartments targeted to keep rents low- enriches our established housing ideas with a network of shared functions and spaces that support collective living. In order to implement the rental housing system outlined on this basis and with a stratified housing composition, I will advise locations for planned apartment buildings, which I propose to create not on vacant lots, but by functionally transforming existing buildings that were not originally built as residential buildings. This adaptive reuse creates the necessary rental apartments integrated into urban situations, and thus the resulting composite assumes a set of architectural tools that interprets our housing ideas and traditional design methods in a new context.

More important than all these architectural goals, however, is the hope for a social benefit by contributing to the creation of an affordable rental housing program that fulfills the everyday joy of living, in the broadest possible spectrum.