

# Situations of dwelling – dwellings suiting situations

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TOPIC: TIME-BASED DWELLING

## **Abstract:**

Situations of dwelling – dwellings suiting situations.

This article explores changeable dwellings that offer the possibility of satisfying spontaneous activities and needs arising from today's changing family patterns. It deals with dwellings that provide people with room for development and flexibility - an open framework, which can be adapted to new values and needs in different situations, lifestyles and stages. The study is based on information from users in new housing schemes in and around Copenhagen – 'open building' dwellings that reveal a variety of approaches to these problems. Who decides to live in these housing types and why? What are the users' expectations to these housing types - and how is their use of them? Can the goal of architectural quality be maintained together with greater possibilities for individual development and influence? The analysis of the dwellings show that the architecture of the 'open dwelling' is dependent on three basic conditions: the static condition, the suitable condition and the situational condition. Each condition has its own powerful way of articulation. Our aim is to translate the observations of the projects in concepts and models that are applicable in new projects.

## **Key words:**

Dwelling typology, changeability, time-based dwelling, design tools, architectural expression, user-driven innovation, situationism

## Observations

Two people have moved into a new apartment near the Metro in Ørestaden, an urban area south of downtown Copenhagen undergoing development. This is no ordinary apartment: it is laid out as a duplex, with areas of floor-through space. In addition, the apartment has the unusual depth of 16 meters. It's quite dark in the center, but there is a large window on each of the 'end walls', extending from floor to ceiling and from one wall to the other.

The new residents are testing out possibilities in the space and situating themselves in relation to the place:

"...it was the architectonic aspect that we fell for when we bought this apartment, although neither of us has the slightest understanding of either art or architecture, or anything like that. But we thought it would be both fun and exciting – And there was the floor-through space .... and also you could see the Metro .... Even when you're standing inside, you've got the sense that you are outside because the windows are so large that it seems you can step outside and come back in again – in a different way. I'm excited to see how it's going to be in winter ... whether it's going to be depressing when everything gets dark. But I don't think so. We're also looking forward to a thunderstorm. We've been talking about that for some time. Then we're just going to sit there on the sofa and sip wine and look outside ..." <sup>1</sup>

Five stories higher in the same apartment house, extremely large window openings raise the possibility of (figuratively) slicing the dining room table lengthwise down the middle and resurrecting it as a bar in the kitchen. The other half of the table turns into a working table. The two "half" tables are fitted with wheels and have been moved all the way up to the glass façade. Here, on the borderline between inside and outside, the tension emerges – and the unexpected can take place. <sup>2</sup>

Another housing project <sup>3</sup> poses a different kind of challenge for the users. The apartments have been built over a basic layout. The user is encouraged to fill the space out in individually. Some people start out by moving in a rudimentary fashion: a double bed, a baby carriage and a makeshift three-piece living room set. The bathroom is the only element that has been laid out in a fixed way - in the form of a detached core inside the open space. The resident invades

the room – then starts to walk around and starts to test out the spatial possibilities in different constellations. The space places its mark on the dweller, and vice versa.

Some try to plan it out for themselves:

"... Yes, we decided for ourselves – we designed much of it. We got hold of a 'demo' when we saw the model unit – a CD-ROM. Then we made a copy of the drawing of our apartment and printed out a lot of these. And then we started measuring and got rolling. I think we put the kitchen in twenty different places in the apartment ..."

Other people find the frames restrictive:

"... I just didn't have much of a choice here because I was bound by the placement of the windows. There weren't a lot of choices available that could really be implemented. You know, somebody like me doesn't really quite get it that when you're putting up new walls, you're also going to have to deal with things like electrical sockets. That's the kind of thing that I don't quite figure out until after it's over!"

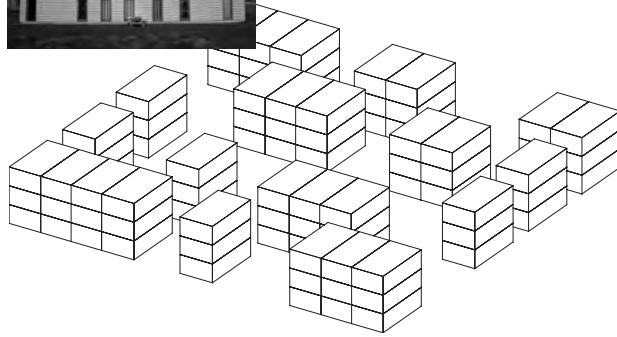
The residential units mentioned above are not entirely functionally single-valued or spatially unambiguous when it comes to the future manner of occupancy. Architecture need not prescribe our behavior. Architecture can be an "open" work which, in an unpredictable way, contains possibilities for future development. The homes of the future will have to offer people sufficient place to unfold themselves and will have to offer options – open frames that can be adapted to new concepts of value and needs in different situations, different ways of life and different stages of life. Can the new open dwellings accommodate the required multiplicity? What happens when the space becomes vague and indistinct? Today's changeable life situations presuppose that the individual can address himself interactively to his immediate surroundings, whether we are speaking about society, the workplace or the family. The dwelling's spatial architectonic quality is not static but is conjoined with the dwelling's capacity to transform.

## The dwelling and the city

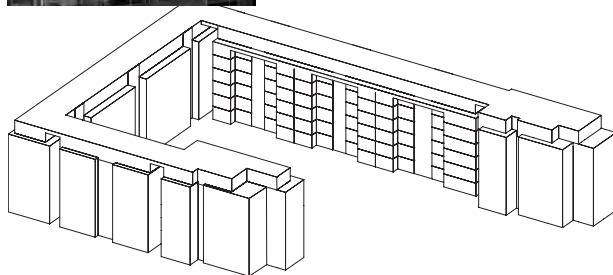
In the twentieth century, Danish residential construction occupied an internationally acknowledged position of strength within the Nordic tradition. The general awareness



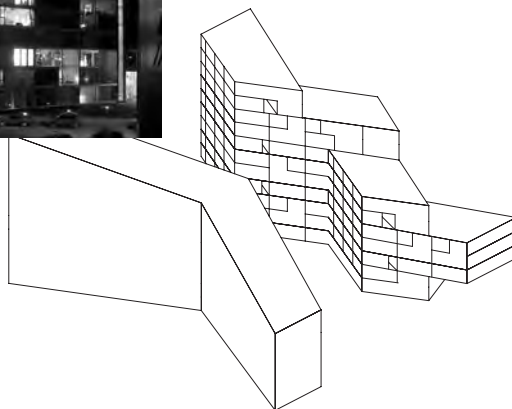
Pærehaven



Fionia hus



VM-huset



in the society about the significance of positive conditions inside the home was manifest in the 1930s' and the post-war's residential production and was followed up by the development in the 1970s and 80s of the low/dense housing as something counter to the large multi-story buildings.

Seen in a global perspective, it is a salient Danish trait that the challenges of residential construction have found such favor among the country's finest architects. The development of the building's quality and form transpired as part of an interaction between the government, public and private corporations, architectural drawing offices and users.

Today, high architectural quality, the articulation in a contemporary idiom and the production of experimental living quarters are significant parameters in the cities' positioning and competition in a regionalized and globalized world. During the dwelling's lifetime, a queue of changing residents, with different kinds of ethnic, cultural, family-related and social stipulations will be posing different kinds of demands on the same residential unit – and on the surrounding city.

The 'young adults' have taken up their positions in the cityscape, where their life style unfurls itself everywhere. They enjoy the focus on the street and in the cafés and they participate in a wide spectrum of cultural activities. People who have become used to this way of living in the city as "young adults" will carry this urban-oriented life style into the ensuing course of their lives. [Frønes & Brusdal, 2001, p. 18 ]. The young citizens' educational programs generally begin in the city. Once the young students take up residence there, it is no longer a foregone conclusion that they will be moving to the suburbs when they have children. In the very fabric of our educational system, a great deal of emphasis is placed on our being able to qualify ourselves. In modern society, the human being is in a position to *choose* more than ever before in history [Frønes & Brusdal, 2001]. Learning to design one's own life story is a form of training in itself. Accordingly, we are also prepared – and perhaps relatively well armed – for being partners in the elaboration of our physical frames.

The challenge lying before the architectural craft is to develop new urban and building forms, new urban spaces and new residences that will be robust, susceptible to change

and architecturally distinctive – apartment buildings and living quarters that can accommodate and can change – in the course of time – between different ways of life and different functions. At The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' School of Architecture, research into this field of inquiry has been set into motion, with support from the Real-dania Foundation and The Danish Ministry of Culture. In the research project, three different building projects with changeable apartments are chosen for analysis: *Pærehaven* [The Pear Tree Garden]<sup>4</sup>, *Fionia Hus* [Fionia House]<sup>5</sup> and *VM-husene* [the VM-buildings]<sup>6</sup>. The aim of the investigation is to uncover how new open residential forms influence the way that residents use the apartments and to ask whether this exchange can eventually lead to enhanced knowledge about better urban dwellings. The registration and the analysis are aimed at examining whether the architecture encourages unforeseen creativity or whether the way in which the apartment is being used has basically been more or less predictable from the architect's side.

### **Our experience from the interviews**

In the *interview technique*, we have emphasized the qualitative interview and the interviewer as a *traveler* [Kvale, 1997]. We visit the place/residence as (an almost) unknown territory and to get an overall sense of orientation. The interviewer engages in a *wandering together with* the user. Questions are asked that stimulate the persons being interviewed to tell their own stories and describe their *life worlds*. The potential meanings are converted into new stories, which are persuasive because of their aesthetic forms and are validated through the effect they have on the listeners [Kvale, 1997]. The dwelling is the frame around everyday life and exists as its own self-contained culture, with its own aesthetics, symbols, ideas and possibilities for expressivity. Gullestad explains that the activities of everyday life have been largely invisible in sociological research. This is chiefly due to the fact that these activities are considered trivial. They have, in other words, been invisible *because* they are all too visible! [Gullestad, 1989]. During our conversations, a common understanding gradually emerges. Important questions start to wedge their way in: What are you doing with the apartment? What effect is the apartment having on you? The questions are repeated in different constellations, with the aim of working our way toward each other

and arriving at a consensus [Ryhl, 2003]. At first, it was difficult for the interviewees to put words on these values. But after some time, the interviewees had more and more to say. Our experience has also shown that the life world is something of a transcendental entity.<sup>7</sup> It has been our task to collate and compare the impressions from the interviewees with the residence's physical conditions. *This beginning, the movement and the story ... this route* [Certeau, 1984] leading through the residence that has come to be occupied provides us with a foundation for evaluating a series of potential fields and possibilities.

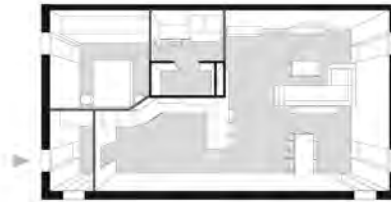
The drawings show different specific interior arrangements and ways of putting up the walls in the apartments of Fionia and Pærehaven.

The drawings show three interior arrangements, all of them interior arrangements of dwellings laid out on two levels. The dwelling is spatially divided into places with different relations and values. The storage area, the bathroom and one separate room are typically situated as niches to the main room. The double bed has been placed all the way up against the window's wall. The internal hierarchy has supplanted the need for privacy from the public.

### **The users, dream ...options, challenges and potentials – but with an economic safety net...**

Most of the interviewees are members of newly established families: ages range from the late twenties to the middle thirties. Some of them are divorced and living as single parents, with smaller or somewhat older children, some of whom are their own children, while some are newly arrived family members. A few of the interviewees are over forty, with teenaged children or children who have already moved from home.

Many of the interviewees have spent a lot of time looking for the 'right' place to live, in the 'right' area and for the 'right' price. All three of the building complexes in our study have attracted a characteristic cross-section of users, who view the possibilities for 'making one's own choice' as a special challenge. This manifests itself on several levels of scale. On the *city-level*, it is important that there is easy ac-



Pærehaven



Fionia hus



VM-huset



cess to the city's life, with its cafés and cultural offerings. It's not always certain that this access will be exploited, however, since most of the people are so busy with their jobs. But the possibilities must be there. In *M-huset*, the visual contact with the Metro, which is like a kind of 'friend', stands as a guarantee that there is always the option of heading

downtown... and getting there just six minutes, while at the same time, one can jump on the bicycle and ride into the untamed landscape or take a walk and marvel at the new developments going on in the surrounding unfinished city. It is this contrast between city and nature that imparts to the place the excitement people are longing for. It is a

basic premise that the unforeseen can be enjoyed, especially when there is simultaneously a sense of security about the economic gains that are held out as prospects upon the purchase of these open residential forms. In the *Fionia Hus*, it is specifically emphasized that there is a sense of adventure in putting on your bathing suit and plunging into the sea... as though you were living at the North Sea...

On the scale of the *residential-level*, what has been attractive is to be able to make one's *own choice* about how the apartment is going to be partitioned. It has been a special challenge to be able to make a fresh start – like a *tabula rasa* after a broken marriage (*Parehaven*) – or to set out into the unknown and see what happens: 'let's try this – and see if it's going to be any fun...' (*M-huset*).

For most of the users, it is difficult to envision a home that has not yet been constructed. For many of them, it has come as a revelation – or as a shock – to see the large open space with the pervading daylight surging through well before they could put the place to use. It has been difficult to get an overview of the consequences for both the spatiality and the influx of light when setting up the partitions in the apartments.

The residential units with the largest window sections have experienced a marked shift in traditional dwelling-patterns: there is so much interplay in the relation between outside and inside that activities like time spent in the living room and eating together and the sleeping 'function' have come to take on a *scenic* character – without causing any bother to the user! There is no longer a desire to create one's own private and enclosed world. It has become 'legal' to gaze out and to be gazed at – and sometimes in a very exposed way. We are still marking off our territory and we are still creating stories that reflect our life's values and our economic and social status, but there is an increasing tendency toward these being temporary. They can change at any time – and then it's only a question of buying a new outfit – a new 'hairstyle' that will hold for a few years. It is this individual 'branding' that can be seen in all three building complexes, albeit in completely different ways. *Parehaven* is for the 'do-it-yourself people'. They are curious to see how the others are doing it, and this kind of mutual curiosity has come to manifest itself as a very important social aspect of life inside the building. *Fionia Hus* has attracted a ho-

mogenous user group of people who are looking for quality and something pure and genuine. Meanwhile *M-huset* has become invaded by those who want to be challenged – and want to challenge – and to a marked degree; a group of unadulterated 'Situationists', you might say, operating in the spirit of Constant's<sup>8</sup> visions from the 1960s.

### The significance of the wall

What do the home's walls mean to the user? What are they being used for? With the 'unfoldings' described below, we aim to display the scope of characteristics we have been able to register.

#### Fig. 1: Unfolding of an apartment in *Parehaven*

An elderly lady living alone inhabits this unit. The apartment is introverted. The walls are covered with mementos and pictures: representations that place the life *outside* the home into perspective. Centerpieces and diverse kinds of still lifes tell about the resident's life story. The resident controls her own scenographic staging and has closed herself off from the life going on outside the windows.

#### Fig. 2: Unfolding of an apartment in *Fionia Hus*

In this apartment, the walls are still empty. What is important here is the view through the large window section, which fills out the entire expanse of the one wall. Everything has been newly purchased for this apartment. The personal expression will be tempered to the space, the light and the exposure – and will especially come to signal the residents' status.

#### Fig. 3: Unfolding of an apartment in *M-huset*

The resident is a collector. The apartment functions as a kind of vitrine, where the resident is exhibiting himself as an exclusive creator. The many acquisitions from auctions are being exhibited in a variety of different and changing constellations. This contemporary presentation and exposure gives meaning to the life of the resident.

Since the dwelling has a limited number of window apertures, the space is sensed more in terms of the protection it offers from the surrounding world. What appears to be appropriate is that the walls can function as surfaces for short stories and for the accumulation of personal history.





Fig. 1



Fig. 2

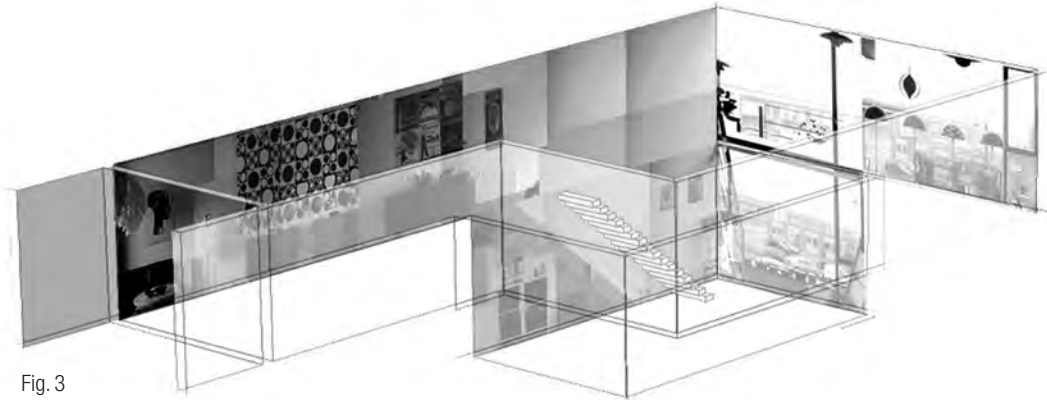


Fig. 3

The heirloom is often given a prominent place in relation to the wall. Or else, “tableaus” are created, arrangements with mementos and still lifes. Some people – especially a number of more elderly users – do not ascribe any meaning at all to the view. For them, the dwelling is still a cave, where the life that has been lived makes sense in retrospective glances. The larger the window openings are, the more focus there is on “the other”, out there, in the surroundings, whether we are looking from the in-

side or from the outside. Inside the new apartment, the wall is emptied of its contents. There is an insistence that the walls undergo constant change and that their surfaces are continuously adapted to the user’s changing frame of mind. In the most extreme case, the viewer feels that the wall should be kept entirely free of meanings, so that the greatest possible focus can be trained on the exchange of impressions – being transmitted both ways – via the large window surfaces.

## The users' transformations of the open planes

Our analysis is based on the fundamental transformations of the architecture and the interior arrangement. We regard the spatial composition as a series of dichotomies involving:

- the space's form, as opposed to the furniture's spaces, zones, hierarchies and domains
- the core's form and placement, as opposed to the storage space
- openings in the outer walls, the light and the view, as opposed to the dividing walls' form and the wall's utilization
- entrance corridors and entrance rooms, as opposed to spatial circulation, axes and the focus in the room's use

What enters into the analysis is a conception of time involving a before, a now and an after. This conception of time raises basic questions about the dwelling's spatial values and possibilities for transformation: as they manifested themselves prior to setting up the interior arrangement; as they can be analyzed after the interior arrangement has been set up; and as they can be transmitted further to the next user.

*Parehaven's* basic-plan apartment is formed by six surfaces: four wall surfaces, the floor and the ceiling. The space is occupied from the one corner and is visually realized **over x** in the room's lengthwise orientation. The perspective foreshortening of longitudinal walls, the floor and the ceiling results in a reading of the main proportion that approaches the Golden Section's clarity and balance. A "ceiling" without zoning or hierarchy. What has been crucial for many users is to establish a relatively large kitchen and to have sufficient space for the family's bedrooms and for accommodating guests. Many of the occupants have, as it were, 'woven their way forward' to a solution where the open living spaces are areas that remain *after* all the other rooms have been established.

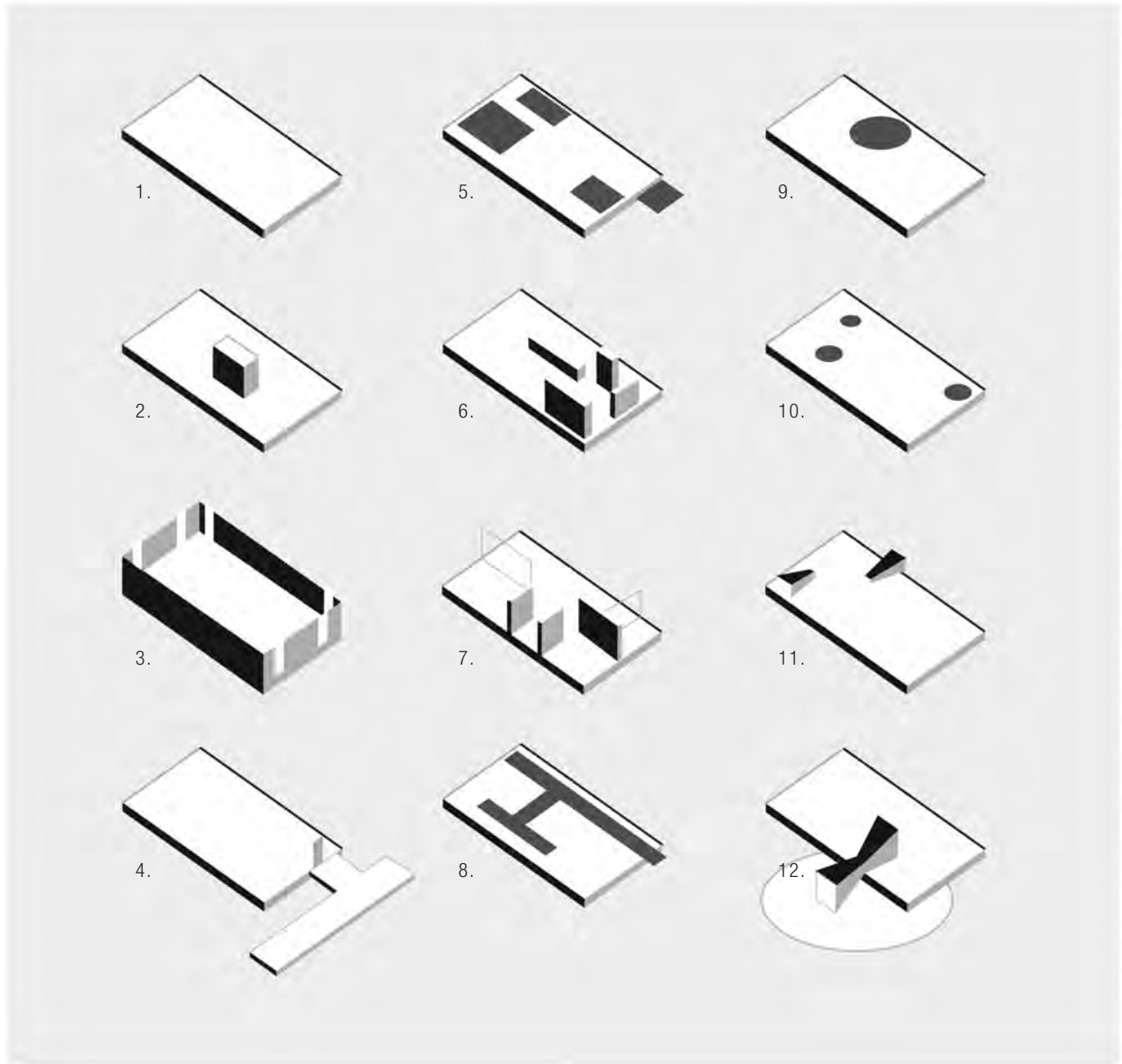
With the placement of the core, a *spatial hierarchy* is introduced: a course of spatialities with the smallest volume between the core and the longitudinal walls, a larger volume in front of and along the core and the largest volume behind the core. Inside the apartments arranged for one person, without any dividing walls, the strength in this spatial lapse is sensed as it runs across the furniture's and the storage spaces' volumes. Inside some of the apartments, there is a

single room that is partitioned up with dividing walls in such a way that a hierarchical sequence is recreated with an entrance room as the smallest room, which continues into a larger room running along the core and finally opens out into the largest room behind the core. In several other apartments, however, there are either one or two rooms separated behind the core in the basic apartment's largest volume. The apartment is divided up in this way onto a *hierarchy of domains*: a common domain at the entrance and a more private one behind the core – but the cost is spatial quality: the residence's common zone gradually closes itself up more and more in the apartment's longitudinal axis, and spatialities are brought forth that are difficult to furnish.

The placement of the windows/balcony-doors in the corners of the room reinforces the walls' architectonic significance and practicability. The light falls evenly in, over all the surfaces, but the room's central zone remains dark. The construction of ordinary enclosing partition walls detracts even further from the space's light conditions and its relation to the surrounding environment. The walls encircle and they turn inward toward a non-defined center, to which the residents themselves assign a function: the kitchen, where conversation takes place, or perhaps just an as of yet uninterpreted empty space that changes meaning from time to time. The spatial circulation is interrupted inside most of the apartments by the furniture's space, which has been sandwiched between the core and the longitudinal wall's surface. The spatial focus and point of rotation are constituted by the core's closed form. Time as it unfolds inside the residence is slow; it embodies generations' and life cycles' rhythms.

It can be concluded that the walls can be set up in a free manner and also that the arrangement of the resident's interior constitutes a project in itself. But there are no *proper* ways of doing this and the core dominates: the apartment's most intimate space has become the apartment's fully enclosed center. The basic model apartment – and also, most often, the materials in the interior arrangement – are lacking in character and there are vulnerable plaster surfaces. The apartment's equal orientation toward the Four Corners reflects the undivided space within the dwelling's context. But how is the guiding notion about the dwelling's openness going to be secured and propagated?





**STATIC**

- 1. Base
- 2. Core
- 3. Envelope
- 4. Entrance

**SUITABLE**

- 5. Void
- 6. Storage
- 7. Subdivision
- 8. Circulation

**SITUATIONAL**

- 9. Nodes
- 10. Assertions
- 11. Dynamics
- 12. Exposure

This home in Switzerland, designed by the architect, Vacchini, has the same basic plan and volume as *Pærehaven*. But the floor and the ceiling are actually large concrete plates, which extend between the columns positioned at the end walls, so that the walls can be closed up completely. The glass is dark, so that it will reflect and offer privacy. The core constitutes a spacious, robust and tangible physical center within the dwelling's architecture and interior arrangement.

Architect Jean Nouvel has designed an apartment building where there is a clear distinction in the zoning between something more public and common in the home's lowest level – and something more private up above. The homes are inexpensive and quite raw in their appearance. The savings are used savings to make the individual apartments larger. Floorage is the architectonic quality that is most worth fighting for. A visual artist has etched designs into the interior walls' concrete surfaces; the residents will respect these walls' character. With this, our conception of the changeable is being challenged: precise frames are being set up for the architectonics of the building and for elements of the interior providing the possibility for a dialogue between architecture and its users.

The basic layout of the apartment in *Fionia Hus* is formed by four surfaces: two bearing perpendicular walls, the floor and the ceiling. One section of the almost square surface of ceiling is lowered, with the consequence that the volume comes to be divided up into three zones. In all the units, this is followed up in a zoning with a common domain on the one side, a private zone on the other and an intermediate zone. The core is constructed inside the intermediate zone, beneath the lowered ceiling. The storage space has been formed as hollow cavities running along the one perpendicular wall, positioned up against – and like an island running parallel with – the core and as a subdivision of the private domain. These structures reinforce the space's dynamic directional orientation, which moves from within and outward. Time keeps pace with the light and the visual relationship to what lies outside – the diurnal rhythms and the year's rhythms.

The apartment opens itself up with the balcony, the bay and a fully open glass façade facing the sun and the view, while the private zone is more closed off. Access is from

the stairway to the intermediate zone. A transitional space between the public and the private spaces is established between the entrance door and the core. The partitioning with the dividing walls takes place only in the private domain; this reinforces the spatial hierarchy. A further formalization of domains that are well known in other cultures could have been realized had there been enough room for a sequence behind the core.

What can be concluded is that the different arrangements of the residential interiors are very much the same. There is actually only one way to put up the three dividing walls. But this is a very good way of doing so. It suits the needs of the residents, who place a greater emphasis on the detail inside the home and on the furniture than on making general alterations in the apartment. The family room is large and light and the rooms are well proportioned. Furthermore, the illumination inside the apartment can be enhanced if the walls are designed with sliding doors. But it cannot reasonably be expected that coming generations of users will be making many changes in the apartments' interior arrangement. The possibility of choosing between different lines in the materials and different colors will, in most instances, only apply to the first people who move into the place – the open dwelling's basic idea is not necessarily going to be handed down.

In contrast to *Pærehaven* and *Fionia Hus*, there are in the *M-House* many different variants among which to choose. The possibilities of variation are found in the choice of the particular apartment, but apartments without dividing walls can also be purchased – in any event, by the first occupants. The basic layout of the apartments consists of a set of volumes: a volume that extending through the deep building

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body; a two-story high volume; and a volume that spreads itself out behind the one façade. The ground layout's complexity opens up for alternative arrangements of zones and domains. In households with more than two people, this inevitably gives rise to conflicts between the yearning for privacy and the yearning for spatiality and adventure. The apartments' bathrooms and installations are built into the "corners" of the complex basic-layout forms. The arrangement of the storage area typically follows this pattern or stands as detached elements. The glass facades extend all the way out to - and beyond - the construction's beams and columns. The influx of light and the relation to the surrounding world are promoted by the glass walls, while the intermediate zone might appear to be dark. In some of the interior arrangements, intimate spatialities are created inside the intermediate zone, to which one can withdraw. But many occupants lose floorage in the circulation and the areas for interior arrangements to the need for storage space. In many of the apartments, the architectonic idea is followed up with glass dividing walls and sliding doors and the walls' decoration is a freely composed layer, with its own life. The mirror images in the window surfaces and the glass dividing walls are juxtaposed with the surrounding

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milieu's pictures into a timeless simultaneity in the present moment. The apartments' entrance rooms have been formed as interior corridors, outside the transitional spaces – or zones – leading into the apartments. There is clearly

an urge to satisfy this intention, seeing that the residents have gradually filled the areas around their front doors with plants and furniture.

Our conclusion is that there is no intention to create privacy – and that the effect of the spatial complexity is that, for many people, there is no necessity to put up walls. The dwelling's guiding idea – and capacity – about openness can consequently be propagated further to future dwellers. In response to the apartment's large glass facades and transparency, one can ask, polemically, whether there is anything at all that remains which can be called "privacy". On the contrary, the space between the buildings is characterized by the life inside the apartments, while the meeting with the foreign, the different and the unanticipated is absent. One might ask, then, whether there is anything at all that remains in the "city" which can be called "the public".

## Conclusion

In our observations we have found three fundamental conditions each connected to different measurements of time:

The *static condition* has the characteristic of permanence

The *suitable condition* has a shorter lifetime

The *situational condition* is only momentary and is continuous transitional

We believe that this division could be inspiring and serve as a key to meaning and value in architecture: inside the residence's physical elements, inside the home, inside the building – and even on the urban level<sup>9</sup>.

If we take a look at the residence, the *static condition* is constituted by the building's permanent entities fitting a determined function, or by space that has the ability to embody different needs for living. The *suitable condition* consists of the dwelling's ability for physical displacement, spatial changes that can suit changing life styles. The *situational condition* is the not defined, the unfinished, the transitory, the raw and the "meaningless", which continuously challenges the imagination and calls for the experiment. In our search we find dwellings that consist of a combination of two or three of the above named conditions. We find that

time-based dwellings do exist within all three conditions. In the second part of our search, we will study and focus on dwellings that are dominated by one single condition.

We propose, that we can project the same conditions on the scale of the city. We envision that, contrary to the normal practice, the *static condition* in the city could be constructed as the public space, the city park and the open town square. Those three spatial entities must be afforded special attention and economy, must be invested with a high degree of quality in the design and must render the historical layers and stories in the city's topography visible. Inside and on the edge of these kinds of spaces, the most overriding and identity-creating functions can be placed. The *suitable condition* in the city could consist of the new constructions and building structures that have to be able to contain homes, businesses and common functions in a changeable form. The *situational condition* in the city could be "the space of possibilities", which is being kept clear for the time being in order to make room for the experimental, the informal, the inexpensive – and will perhaps come to be temporary for dealing with the unforeseen and the various tasks that will arise in the formation of the city.

We envision a field of potential between the physical frames and the way the spaces are put to use. An enhanced awareness about this could be used constructively. It would unfold along the lines of the kind of consciousness with which James Joyce and Jackson Pollock challenged, respectively, the reader and the viewer. Their works are open to interpretation, but they contain such strength and are so distinctive. It will never be possible to deprive them of these qualities in the course of time. About Jackson Pollock's art, Umberto Eco writes:

The disorder of the signs, the disintegration of the outlines, the explosions of the figures incite the viewer to create his own network of connections. [Eco, 1989, p. 103].

The open work is not finished; it is not a dead object. It represents something new in a more flexible version – in a form that is like a field of possibilities. Eco links the work's openness directly with our capacity for attaining an aesthetic experience:

... Thus, in the dialectics between work and openness, the very persistence of the work is itself a guarantee of both communication and aesthetic pleasure. (...) 'Openness' ... is the guarantee of a particularly rich kind of pleasure that our civilization pursues as one of its most precious values, since every aspect of our culture invites us to conceive, feel, and thus see the world as possibility [Eco, 1989, p. 104].

The living quarters, the residence in the city and the city can *also* be seen as open works – as interactive processes transpiring between the user and the architecture, where the architectonic design and the user's arrangement of his own interior engender something valuable: a saliently distinctive character that gives meaning, weight and robustness to the architecture in contrast to the changing uses and the changing interior arrangements, and simultaneously encourages the user's free interpretation of the frames. At the same time, accessibility and sensuousness must be unfurled in the elaboration of the residence in such a way that the notion of architectonic quality will be expanded into something 'universal'.

*Translated by Dan A. Marmorstein*

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## Notes

- 1 The quotation is from one of the interviews in the VM-apartment complex (designed by PLOT) located in Ørestaden. The apartment in question is situated inside the *M-huset*.
- 2 This apartment is also situated in the *M-huset*. The apartment is illuminated on only one side, from the north. Its single lengthwise wall is made entirely of glass from floor to ceiling.
- 3 The complex *Pærehaven* (designed by Juul & Frost), located South of Copenhagen
- 4 *Pærehaven*, designed by the architectural office of Juul and Frost, is a compactly built apartment house, erected in three stories just south of Ølby Station. The first phase of construction has been realized and the building makes its appearance as a stringent complex consisting of rectangular units in three stories, which altogether form an urban block, divided up by streets/squares and green areas, with a view out to the surroundings. The apartments are going to be occupied by owners from different walks of life, with a somewhat equal distribution between condominiums, cooperatively-owned units and rental units. All in all, there will be seventy-six apartments, sixteen of which are included in this study.
- 5 *Fionia Hus*, designed by Danielsen Architects (2003–2005), is close to downtown Copenhagen, near the harbor.
- 6 *M-huset* in Ørestaden is situated along the Metro railway. The two cracked blocks establish reciprocally dynamic spaces which protrude - in ascending levels - toward the elevated railway. The building complex forms a distinctive transition from the scale of Amager's single-family house area in the southern periphery of Copenhagen to the scale of the new Ørestad's large urban sprawl.
- 7 We recognize this in Gullestad's formulation: "... The world of life can be perceived as *doxa*, the unthematicized sense of intuition that has seemingly seeped its way in: only meaning, not knowledge. In this respect, the life world cannot be rendered thematic without ceasing to be the life world. In any event, this would be tantamount to vanquishing the structure in human experience" [Gullestad, p. 25].
- 8 Constant Nieuwenhuys predicted that the future's urbanity would come to be determined by how the city's residents put their homes to use, motivated by an irrepressible need to exert their own influence on their surroundings, all the way from how the space would be partitioned to the sensory influences

of color, light and aroma as well as the influences of warmth and coolness as described in "New Babylon".

- 9 This is not a condition we have searched. We do suppose that the parameters could be functional - not only at the scale of the dwelling - but also at the level of the urban scale.

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