

# **Party Wall Housing: Objects in Environments as Contestation**

by

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## Abstract

The front line of architecture is the housing crisis, but is also *a crisis of how we live*. The home is where structural principles of society are created and reinforced. The city has become an all-encompassing domestic environment. Differentiation of work, domestic labour, socialization, rest, leisure, and exchange are no longer understood as separate domains, but as part of the same productive system. Artists and creative workers are challenged by the reduction of affordable work space and storefronts in the city. Market-driven developer housing is further pressuring the building stock in Halifax. The project establishes a communal housing prototype to revive a live-work housing model, resisting market exploitation and capitalist understandings of private property. The proposal redefines spatial conditions of the row house, a common typology in Halifax. The *party wall*, typically a wall dividing two individuated units, is expanded to provide space and objects for collective negotiation.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

The front line of architecture is the housing crisis, but is also a *crisis of how we live*. The home is the atomic unit of society. It is where structural principles of society are created and reinforced. Many contemporary cities are undergoing rapid housing development, but these trends are further propagating unaffordability and individuated patterns of living. The city has become an all-encompassing domestic environment. Differentiation of work, domestic labour, socialization, rest, leisure, and exchange are no longer understood as separate domains, but as part of the same productive system. The concept of private property has been established through the basic element of the wall, which typically leads to the compartmentalization of domestic function and space for commodified objects. The problems articulated here are ones of privatization and commodification. The thesis proposes an interstitial strategy to disclose domesticity in favour of collective living. How may reuniting spaces for living and working contest the logic of capitalism (privatization and commodification), instead providing spatial conditions that allow for the sharing of space, objects, and domestic labour?

A new generation of workers is increasingly finding employment in creative industries. Halifax lacks work space for this demographic. An urban live/work type of housing will revive Nova Scotia's earlier models of communal housing. These 20th century models were largely focused on the social relationships of domestic life and food production. The proposed model will focus on the relationship between domestic life and varying

forms of labour. Many live/work models of housing have similarities to nuclear-family domestic spaces, all of which enforce capitalist understandings of private property. To resist market exploitation, a new live/work communal model must undermine the very premise of private property as a necessity for living together.

The site for the proposed model is a large lot on the Halifax peninsula, located at Shirley Street and Preston Street. It is situated between Quinpool Road, a main transit artery and commercial street, and Dalhousie University campus. It is the site of a demolished bread factory, flanked by single-family residences and low-rise apartments. The site presents an opportunity to build on two parallel streets, spanning the city block, while creating a courtyard at its centre. This courtyard challenges the individuated yards adjacent to it.

The thesis discusses the emergence of the bourgeois interior and its impact on privatization and commodification. The interior emerged as both a social diagram and a space for the collection of objects. A series of case studies are discussed, each a radical challenge to the principles of private property. Each employs an ownership model and collective spatial strategy to support alternative principles. The projects formulate questions of how an environment may be made more flexible through the articulation of spatial constraints. The projects are desirable, viable, and achievable. This is what the thesis proposes: an alternative to commodification, privatization, alienation, and enclosure of domesticity. This is achieved through the contestation of the privatized wall and the commodified object.

The proposed housing type redefines principles of the row house, a common typology in Halifax. The row house is associated historically with workers housing and military housing, where a row of attached dwellings share side walls. The *party wall*, typically a wall dividing two individuated units, will be expanded to provide space for collective gathering and the sharing of domestic labour. The party walls bracket spaces for living and working. The *ownership model*, the *structural scheme*, and *partitions to redistribute space for being alone and being together* generate rules to support the contestation of private property and commodified objects. *Party Wall Housing* ultimately establishes a new spatial commons, offering a place of collective negotiation, spaces and objects for use and misuse.

## Chapter 2: Contestation

### Individuation

#### The Housing Crisis



Collage by Superstudio (Lang, Menking, and Superstudio 2003, 164)

Systematic change is only possible through the recognition that there are other intentional actors in a system. These actors and the principles they propagate contribute to the creation of the context we live in. Engagement in interstitial activities are necessary to the contestation of privatization and commodification of our lives.

We live in a society in which the rights to private property and profit trump any other conception of rights you can think of (Harvey 2003, 940). Defenders of these rights argue that they encourage 'bourgeois virtues' of individual responsibility, independence from state interference, equality of opportunity in the market and before the law, rewards for initiative, and an open market place that allows for freedoms of choice (Harvey 2003, 940). "Let's admit it, these derivative rights are appealing and many of us rely heavily upon them; but we do so much as beggars live off the crumbs from the rich man's table" (Harvey 2003, 940).

#### DISLOCATION

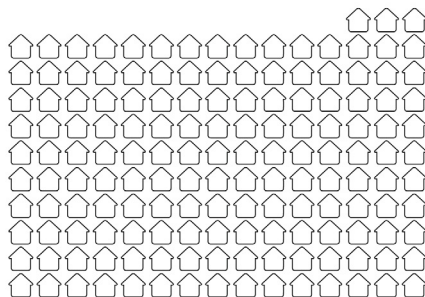
"Culture, history, and ultimately architecture are not fixed and merely additive, but are a continual process of reiteration and simultaneous dislocation which at every moment modifies the previous instant of meaning and structure" (Nesbitt 1996, 181).

There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals (Harvey 2003, 940). Thirty years of neoliberalism teaches us that the more free the market, the greater the inequalities and the greater the centralization of power (Harvey 2003, 940). Markets require scarcity to function. If scarcity does not exist, it must be socially created (Harvey 2003, 940). This is what private property and the profit rate do (Harvey 2003, 940). It creates unnecessary deprivation in the midst of plenty (Harvey 2003, 940).



## ROOMING HOUSES

153 rooming houses in Halifax in 2007



25 rooming houses in Halifax in 2012



## STATISTICS



Percentage of renters and owners **spending 30% or more income** on shelter costs in Nova Scotia in 2006 (highest in Canada):

Renters 45%

Owners 13.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2006.



**One-third** of young adults aged 20 to 34 **lived with their parents** in 2016, a share that has been **increasing** since 2001.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017, "Young adults living with their parents in Canada in 2016".



In 2014, **6.6%** of young Canadians aged **15 to 30** reported they had temporarily lived with family, friends, in their car, or anywhere else because they had **nowhere else to live**.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2017, "Chronic low income among immigrants in Canada and its communities," Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series.



**53%** of youth aged **15 to 30** years graduating with a bachelor's degree **have student debt**.

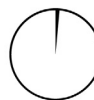
Source: Statistics Canada, 2013 National Graduates Survey, class of 2009/10.



## Average student debt:

College \$15,500  
Bachelor's \$25,600  
Master's \$27,900  
Doctorate \$47,000

Source: Statistics Canada, 2013 National Graduates Survey, class of 2009/10.



**Vacancy rates** in apartment structures of six units and over in Halifax:

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| 2014        | 3.7%        |
| 2015        | 3.3%        |
| 2016        | 2.6%        |
| 2017        | 2.2%        |
| <b>2018</b> | <b>1.5%</b> |

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0127-01, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, vacancy rates, apartment structures of six units and over, privately initiated in census metropolitan areas.



**Home ownership** among people 20-64 years old **recently declined** for the first time in 20 years.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey and 2006 and 2016 Census of Population.



Between 2012 and 2016 in Canada, **100% of the increase in the debt** of families was **due to mortgage debt** while consumer debt remained constant.

Source: Uppal, Sharanjit, 2019, "Homeownership, mortgage debt and types of mortgage among Canadian families," *Insights on Canadian Society*, August, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X.

In 1981, **44.4%** of **baby boomers** lived in a **single-detached home** compared with a rate of **35.0%** for **millennials** in 2016.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1981 and 2016.

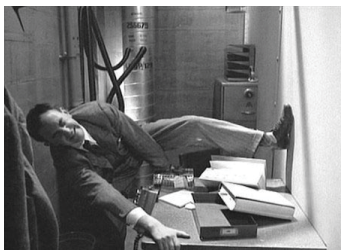


Young adults in 2016 were also **more likely to live in apartments** than their 1981 counterparts.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1981 and 2016.

Harvey explains: "If this is where the inalienable rights of private property and the profit rate lead, then I want none of it. This does not produce cities that match my heart's desire, but worlds of inequality, alienation and injustice. A different right to the city must be asserted" (Harvey 2003, 940).

### **Affordability**



Film still from *Brazil* by Terry Gilliam (Gilliam 1985). The desk is split between two adjacent offices by a wall. A bureaucrat struggles with his coworker for an equal share in a context of scarcity.

Housing affordability is a serious problem in Halifax. More than 22,000 households in Halifax Regional Municipality are in core housing need, placing Halifax at 11th on Statistics Canada's list of cities with the highest percentage of core housing need (Woodford 2018a). A household is in core housing need if the home doesn't have enough rooms, is in need of major repairs or if more than 30 per cent of the household's pre-tax income is spent on housing (Woodford 2018a). This is paired with the decreasing amount of art spaces, creating a potential cultural void in Halifax (Nauss 2014). The city and developers trade on the cultural capital artists produce, then leave artists out of the deal (Nauss 2014). Creative types establish themselves in neglected urban areas, invest in the neighbourhood, encourage popularity, and soon find themselves priced-out by developers (Nauss 2014). Housing precarity in Halifax is further propelled by the emergence of short-term rental operators such as Air BnB (Grant 2019). Density bonusing is the primary strategy of the Halifax government for creating affordable housing. The concept is that a developer gets to build a bigger building in exchange for some public benefit. The Centre Plan requires 75 percent of the public benefit go to affordable housing. In the end, the developer can either build the affordable units or just cut a cheque to

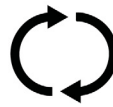


Photograph of Robin Hood Gardens by Alison and Peter Smithson (Lousada 1972)

GENOSSENSCHAFTEN COOPERATIVE MODEL



The cooperative member pays a moderate fee for using the flat



The shares of the building are reimbursed to the member when leaving the cooperative



The flat belongs to all the shareholders



Members have lifelong right of residence



Joint ownership makes living affordable, costs low, and serves the interests of the people who live in the building



Cooperatives cannot be sold

DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION



Supervisory Board

Appoints



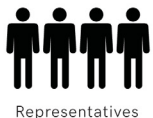
Executive Board

Employs



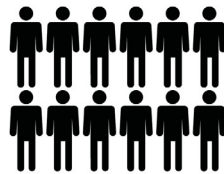
Staff

Elect



Representatives

Elect at regular intervals



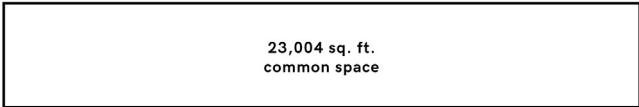
Members have one vote

COMPARING SPACE

48 - one bedroom apartments - 785 sq. ft.



1 Party Wall Housing - 48 rooms - 306 sq. ft.

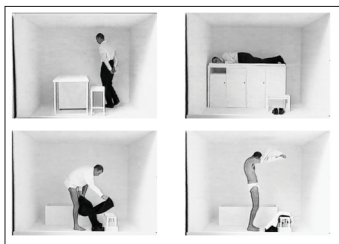


23,004 sq. ft. common space

Ownership model organization, digital drawing, 18" x 24"

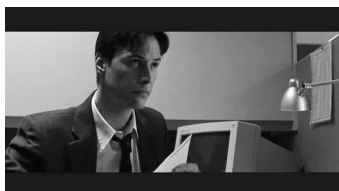
the municipality for the value (Woodford 2018b). The current models for developing housing are clearly not working. The thesis proposes a housing model with a collective ownership structure that exists outside of the speculative housing market.

### Context Collapse



Video still from *Solutions* by Absalon (Absalon 1992)

Jean Baudrillard realized from the onset that our culture is getting divorced from life (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 10). His analysis of consumer society hadn't been a limited case study; it applied everywhere (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 12). He explains: "Everything within production and the economy becomes commutable, reversible and exchangeable according to the same indeterminate specularly as we find in politics, fashion or the media" (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 12). Capital no longer is a process of production, production itself is dissolving into the code (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 12). He also understood that there is no amount of distance that would still allow for a critique of society (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 12). Any counter-discourse filtering into the code would immediately be "disconnected from its own ends, disintegrated and absorbed" like everything else (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 12). Baudrillard's version of capital is a homogenizing principle based on repetition, bringing together differences from various sources on a larger and larger scale (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 12).



Film still from *The Matrix* (Wachowski and Wachowski 1999)

It is increasingly difficult to imagine alternatives to the way we live, to create cognitive dissonance. We live in a world of hegemony of homogeneity. As Jean Baudrillard



Levittown, PA, USA (Instant House 2011)

remarks: "domination can be overthrown from the outside, hegemony can only be inverted or reversed from the inside" (Baudrillard, Lotringer, and Hodges 2010, 34).

Karel Teige writes in *The Minimum Dwelling*:

We must observe and notice not only how problems are posed but also how they can be solved, not just seeing them as an accumulating mass of common obstacles but primarily focusing on how they may be overcome. To show not only how the housing crisis has worsened but, most importantly, where to look for a way out. (Teige 2002, 5)

Current 'affordable housing' schemes reinforce single-family individualized housing and status quo ownership models. We must seek to understand the root cause of our symptoms, enabling us to create new types of living from within the current system. The thesis aims to mask new possibilities of living within a shell of status quo development.



*Multiplying, dividing*, collage, 8" x 8"

## Collectivity as Alternative

### Dialectics of Imagination and Material

#### SYNECDOCHE

a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (Merriam-Webster n.d.)

Marx held that we change ourselves by changing our world and vice versa (Harvey 2003, 939). This dialectical relationship is at the foundation of all human labor (Harvey 2003, 939). The architect erects a structure in the imagination before materializing it upon the ground (Harvey 2003, 939). Harvey explains:

We are, all of us, architects, of a sort. We individually and collectively make the city through our daily actions and our political, intellectual and economic engagements. But, in return, the city makes us. Can I live in Los Angeles without becoming a frustrated motorist?

The right to the city is not merely a right of access to what already exists, but a right to change it after our heart's desire... The sheer pace and chaotic forms of urbanization throughout the world have made it hard to reflect on the nature of this task. We have been made and re-made without knowing exactly why, how, wherefore and to what end. (Harvey 2003, 939)



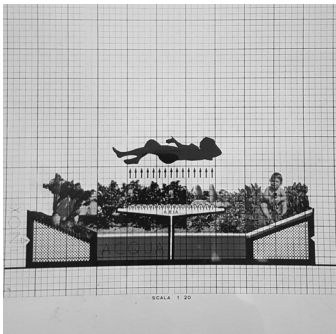
Film still from *Synecdoche, New York* (Kaufman 2008)

Our built and social environments are becoming more homogenized, propelled by the emergence of self-design, of the individuation of the self. Boris Groys' analysis of the emergence of aesthetic and political self-design is useful for understanding the emergence of individuation and its relationship to objects. Modern design emerged precisely from the revolt against the tradition of applied arts (Groys 2010, 22). This paradigm shift is usually overlooked. Groys explains:

The function of design has often been described using the old metaphysical opposition between appearance and essence. Design, in this view, is responsible only for the appearance of things, and thus it seems predestined to conceal the essence of things, to deceive the viewer's understanding of the true nature of reality. Thus design has been repeatedly interpreted as an epiphany of the omnipresent market, of exchange value, of fetishism of the commodity, of the society of spectacle - as the creation of the seductive surface behind which things themselves not only become invisible, but disappear entirely. (Groys 2010, 22)

## MEANS AND ENDS

"One must leave everyday activity to be able to control it critically, and then return to reality itself in a different situation. Only thus can one check means and ends; only thus can criticism become action." (Lang, Menking, and Superstudio 2003, 164)



*Bedroom for the Vegetable Garden House, 1972 by 9999 (9999 1972)*

Modern design emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and internalized this critique, taking on the task of revealing the hidden essence of things rather than designing their surfaces (Groys 2010, 22). It sought to eliminate everything that the practice of applied arts had accumulated on the surface of things in order to expose the true, undesigned nature of things (Groys 2010, 22). Modern design understood its task to be the elimination of the surface: as negative design, *antidesign* (Groys 2010, 23). Genuine modern design is reductionist; It does not add, it subtracts (Groys 2010, 23). It is no longer about designing individuated objects to be offered to the gaze of viewers and consumers in order to seduce them (Groys 2010, 23). Instead, "design seeks to shape the gaze of viewers in such a way that they become capable of discovering things themselves" (Groys 2010, 23).

The paradigm shift from traditional applied arts to modern design was one defined largely by the subject of design: to no longer design the world of things, but to design human beings themselves (Groys 2010, 23). Design has taken over the function of religion, where self-design has become a creed (Groys 2010, 34). "By designing one's self and one's environment in a specific way, one declares one's faith in certain values, attitudes, programs, and ideologies" (Groys 2010, 34). Modern design belongs not so much in an economic context as in a political one (Groys 2010, 34). All of social space has become an exhibition in which individuals appear as artists and as self-produced works of art (Groys 2010, 34). Groys' assertions about modern design's desire to design the individual is helpful for understanding the desire for self-design. The design of the self can take place through

the collection of objects, but it may also be used as a strategy to resist privatization and commodification. Pier Vittorio Aureli argues that adopting an ascetic form of life can offer this resistance to the subjective power of capitalism.

### The Ascetic as Resistance



Roosenberg Abbey by Hans Van Der Laan, 1975 (Furlong, Van Der Laan, and Verde 2001)

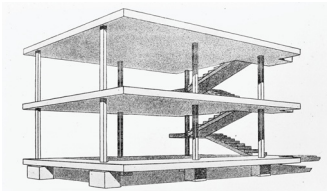
The word 'ascetic' derives from the Greek word *askein*, meaning exercise, or self-training (Aureli 2013, 15). Asceticism is a way of life in which the *self* is the primary object of human activity (Aureli 2013, 15). It is possible to argue that the very first ascetics were philosophers (Aureli 2013, 15). The fundamental goal of philosophy in ancient times was to know oneself. Living was understood not simply as given fact, but as an art: the *art of living* (Aureli 2013, 15). Within asceticism, it is possible to give life a specific form (Aureli 2013, 15). The ancient philosophers believed life should be entirely consistent with one's own teachings, where there was no difference between theory and practice (Aureli 2013, 15). Philosophers were thus individuals who challenged accepted habits and social conditions through their chosen form of life (Aureli 2013, 15). Asceticism is not simply a contemplative condition or a withdrawal from the world as it is commonly understood. It is, above all, a way to radically question given social and political conditions in a search for an alternative way to live one's life (Aureli 2013, 15).

#### SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

"Architecture is peripheral to the most important social aims. I wish it was less peripheral. That's why I'm an architect."  
- Cedric Price (Parvin 2008, 4)

Pier Vittorio Aureli argues that asceticism can be a form of resistance to the subjective power of capitalism (Aureli 2013, 12). Resistance to power is often discussed in terms of ideology or belief, but rarely as a matter of habits or customs (Aureli 2013, 12). Even the most humble aspects





Maison Dom-ino by Le Corbusier  
(Aureli 2015)

of everyday life can be a means of resistance (Aureli 2013, 12). What is interesting about asceticism is that it allows subjects to focus on their life as the core of their own practice, by structuring it according to a self-chosen form made of specific habits and rules (Aureli 2013, 12). The architecture that has developed within ascetic practice is an architecture focused not on representation, but on life itself (Aureli 2013, 12). Aureli explains:

The development of modern architecture itself, with its emphasis on issues such as hygiene, comfort, and social control, has been driven by a biopolitical logic. However, it is especially within asceticism that the enactment of forms of life becomes explicit. This is evident, for example, within the history of monasticism, where the architecture of the monastery was expressly designed to define life in all its most immanent details. Although monasticism ultimately spawned such disciplinary and repressive typologies as the hospital, the garrison, the prison, and even the factory, at the outset the main purpose of its asceticism was to achieve a form of reciprocity between subjects freed from the social contract imposed by established forms of power. And this is why this tradition still stands as a paradigm for our time, when capital is becoming not only increasingly repressive but also increasingly unable to 'take care' of its subalterns as it did in the heyday of the welfare state. (Aureli 2013, 13)

## REVOLUTION

"Vittorio Gregotti wrote some years ago that we cannot plan a revolution with architecture, but that it is our precise duty to plan a revolution in architecture." (Lang, Menking, and Superstudio 2003, 164)

Architecture can be used to give physical form to a desired set of values or principles. The form will support specific values while negating others. Building type can be understood as a potential outcome of structural principles of society. The thesis design project proposes a building type to support collective living and the rejection of private property.

### **Structural Principles**

The rebuilding of the commons must happen in a physical and social way through the provision of space and resources, but also in an intellectual manner, where models may be generated in opposition to the individuation of ideas (Aureli 2012, 25). We must understand the pre-

individual basis from which we work (Aureli 2012, 25). The Common, meant as the pre-individual, is in radical contrast with the category of the Universal (Aureli 2012, 25). Aureli draws on Paulo Virno's understanding of the Common and Universal:

As Virno argues the Universal is a *nominalist* category, it is a product of verbal thought, which abstracts certain characteristics that uniformly recur in already individuated entities... the Common instead is a *realist* category because it addresses the pre-individual reality that makes communication between individuals possible." (Aureli 2012, 25)



Video still from *Water Walk* by John Cage, 1960 (Nave for Eva 2014)

For Aldo Rossi, type does not reveal the origin of something, but is simply the potential of a structuring principle (Aureli 2012, 26). The structuring principle is formed by the social and political conditions of a particular place in a particular time (Aureli 2012, 26). Type only becomes tangible through what Rossi identifies as the singularity of the urban artefact (Aureli 2012, 26). As stated earlier, what is common (and therefore potential) cannot be exhausted in the singularity. In the same way, no type can be identified with only one form, even if all architectural forms are reducible to a type (Aureli 2012, 26). In Rossi's theory, form becomes the *Principium Individuationis*, the process of actualization of what is potential (Aureli 2012, 26). In order for these forms to make evident their common origin, they must exhibit their *principium individuationis* (Aureli 2012, 27). An example of such architecture would be projects such as Le Corbusier's *Maison Dom-ino* and Mies' "skin and bones" building technique (Aureli 2012, 27). In these examples the pre-individual basis of architecture - the industrial techniques that were necessary for their realization - is not hidden, but fully exposed as the very image of architecture (Aureli 2012, 27). This means that

## UTOPIA

"We could say that the original motive of utopia is hope. Utopia is the true preparation for projecting, as play is preparation for life. The revolutionary charge of utopia, the hope which is at its foundation and the criticism which is its direct consequence, bring back its dignity as a rational, ordering activity." (Lang, Menking, and Superstudio 2003, 166)

architectural language must be thought as a generic language that engenders singular forms (Aureli 2012, 27).

### Interstitial Strategy

Erik Olin Wright explains his position on social justice as being one of radical democratic egalitarian understanding (Wright 2010, 12). He defines a socially just society as one where “all people would have broadly equal access to the necessary material and social means to live flourishing lives” (Wright 2010, 12). He defines a politically just society in the following way:

All people would have broadly equal access to the necessary means to participate meaningfully in decisions about things which affect their lives. This includes both the freedom of individuals to make choices that affect their own lives as separate persons, and their capacity to participate in collective decisions which affect their lives as members of a broader community. (Wright 2010, 12)

The home is the atomic unit of society. It is where social norms and power relations are created and perpetuated. Wright’s definition is integral for understanding how new models of housing may enable the creation of a just society where meaningful participation and access to material and social means is provided.

An interstitial strategy involves the deliberate development of interstitial activities for the purpose of fundamental transformation of the system as a whole (Wright 2010, 324). Wright explains: “a strategy means we can think through a set of practices, activities, both individual and collective, in which we can engage in the present to bring forth the goal in the future” (Ohio State Center for Ethics and Human Values 2019). Strategies imply we live in a world with intentional actors (Ohio State Center for Ethics and Human Values 2019). “We must

### LIMITS

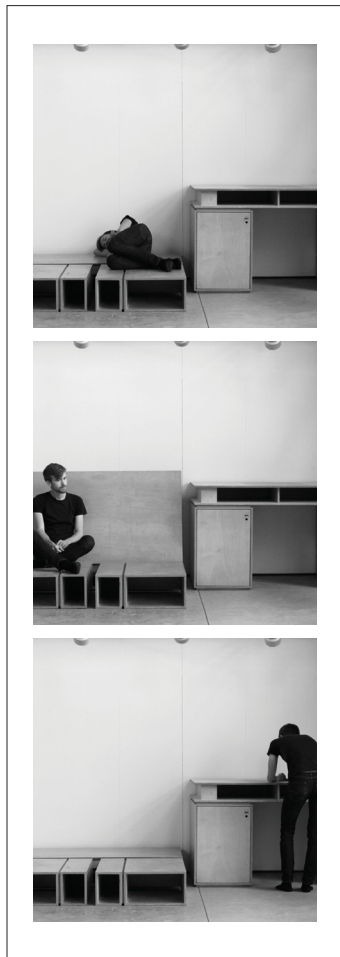
“The series title [Architecture and Limits] is significant in its use of the concept of limits. As Tschumi explains in the first essay, “limits are the strategic areas of architecture,” the base from which one can launch a critique of existing conditions. This idea is fundamental to poststructuralist and deconstructionist thought, both of which posit that the contents of the margins (of texts or disciplines) are more important than their location indicates. The implication of this idea is that through careful efforts, one can disclose the repressed contents of a work and gain access to a new interpretation. Tschumi advocates use of this critical approach to challenge “reductionist” attitudes, which operate to eliminate differences and attack works at the limits... Tschumi maintains that without limits, architecture could not exist.” (Nesbitt 1996, 150-51)



*A Situation Constructed from Loose and Overlapping Social and Architectural Aggregates* by MOS Architects (MOS Architects 2016)

## (DE)CONSTRUCTION

"If you are focused, you are harder to reach. If you are distracted, you are available... Perhaps, having deconstructed everything, we should be thinking about putting everything back together."  
 - Excerpt of lyrics from "Shut Up" by Savages (Savages 2013)



Furniture designed for work is reconfigured to create a living space. The drafting table becomes a bed and sofa. The desk remains, but now stores personal objects.

develop a coherent, credible theory of the alternatives to existing institutions and social structures that would eliminate, or at least significantly mitigate, the harms and injustices identified in the diagnosis and critique" (Wright 2010, 20). Social alternatives can be evaluated in terms their *desirability*, *viability*, and *achievability* (Wright 2010, 20).

The thesis aims to propose an alternative way of living that is desirable, viable, and achievable. We must imagine and make the material conditions for a more socially just world. Housing is used as a frame to identify and render the spatial conditions that will allow for the sharing of objects and space. This is what the thesis proposes: an alternative to commodification, privatization, and alienation. This is achieved through the contestation of the privatized wall and the commodified object. The thesis proposes an interstitial strategy to disclose domesticity in favour of collective living. A series of case studies are discussed, each a radical challenge to the principles of private property. Each employs an ownership model and collective spatial strategy to support alternative principles. The projects present strategies that are utilized in the thesis design project. The *ownership model*, the *structural scheme*, and *partitions to redistribute space for being alone and being together* generate rules to support the contestation of private property. Party Wall Housing establishes a spatial commons, offering a place of negotiation of difference, freeing the individual from issues of private ownership.

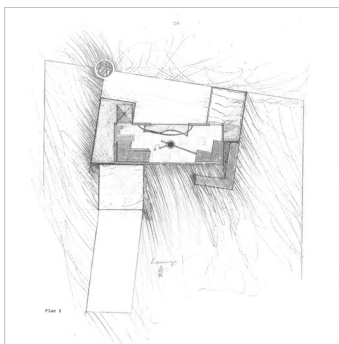
## Chapter 3: Room as Enclosure

### A Room as Social Diagram



*The Art of Painting* by Johannes Vermeer (Vermeer 1666)

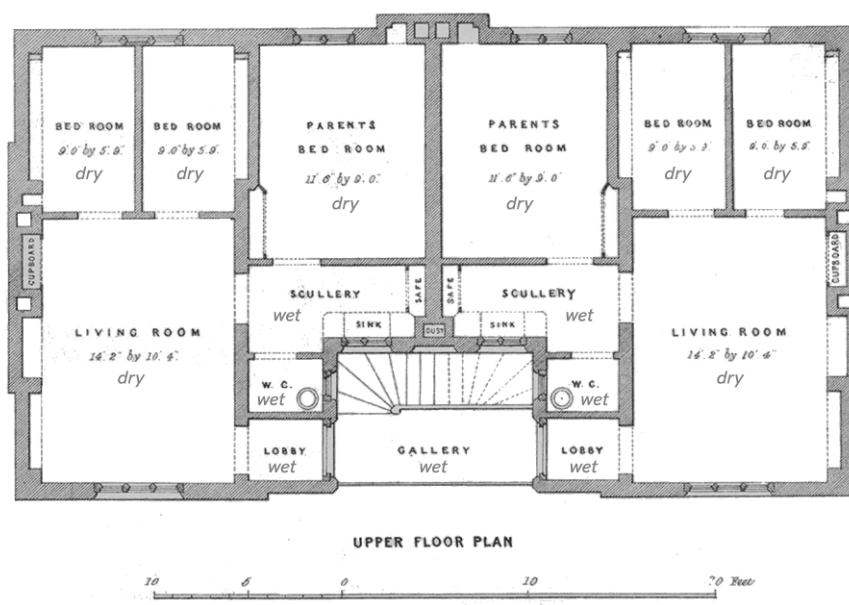
Housing has long been a grounds of debate in terms of its scale, provision, urban morphology and technological advancement, but it often escapes a political critique of its interior logic (Giudici 2018, 1203). Most of the newly built stock conforms to models established more than a century ago, *petit-bourgeois* family flats. (Giudici 2018, 1203) The concept of type is a useful grounds for debate because it helps us to read housing as a tool for the construction of subjectivities (Giudici 2018, 1203). Giudici assumes a feminist standpoint, re-reading modern housing types as a place of women's hidden, unwaged work (Giudici 2018, 1203). Being critical of the role played by the house in the institutionalization of reproductive labour is important to understanding how this may be addressed today, with the emergence of new types of labour and the dissolving boundary between them. There have been changes in the organization of work and most of the architectural discipline has not adapted.



No Family House by Lars Lerup, 1978-82 (Lerup 1987, 37)

British architect Henry Roberts built an unassuming two-floor prototype that would influence the way housing has been conceived, designed, and inhabited in the last 150 years (Giudici 2018, 1203). The Model Houses for Families were a simple aggregation of four units, but as the unit is repeatable, it had a major impact on the city (Giudici 2018, 1204). Roberts created a link between type and city, but also put forward an actual idea of society, a specific form of subjectivity (Giudici 2018, 1204).

## SPACE AS SOCIAL MANAGEMENT



Henry Roberts. 1851. *Model Houses For Families*.

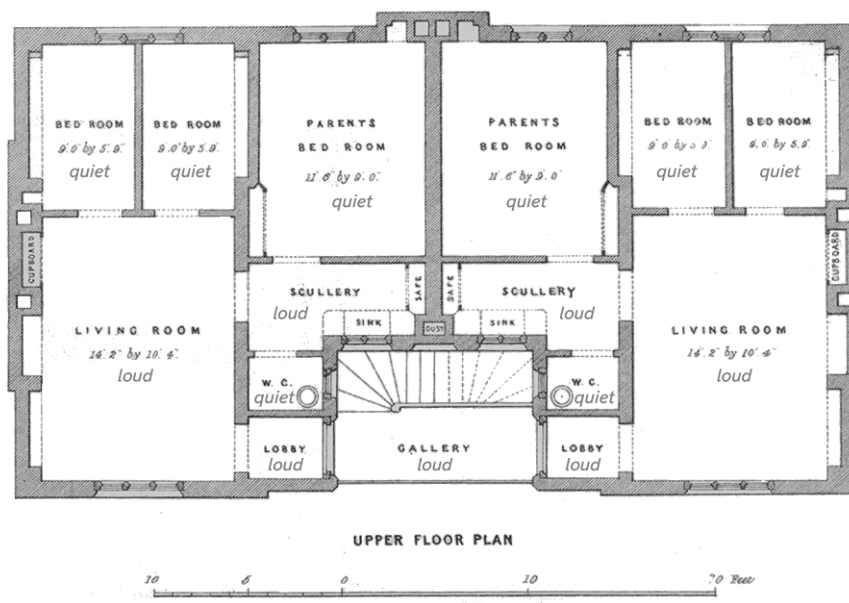
*Subverting Space as Social Management: Wet and Dry*, collage, 8" x 8" (base drawing from Giudici 2018, 1204)

Giudici explains:

The plan spells out very clearly the type of family life it is designed for: mother and father sleep in the main bedroom, from which the mother has easy access to the scullery, but also visual control of the living room. The children should be divided by gender: one room for boys, one for girls. The family should not need to share anything with their neighbours, apart from a space to launder and dry larger items, therefore becoming truly 'nuclear' in its functioning. (Giudici 2018, 1205)

Most urban dwellers in continental Europe lived in flats (Giudici 2018, 1205). With a growing concern for

## SPACE AS SOCIAL MANAGEMENT

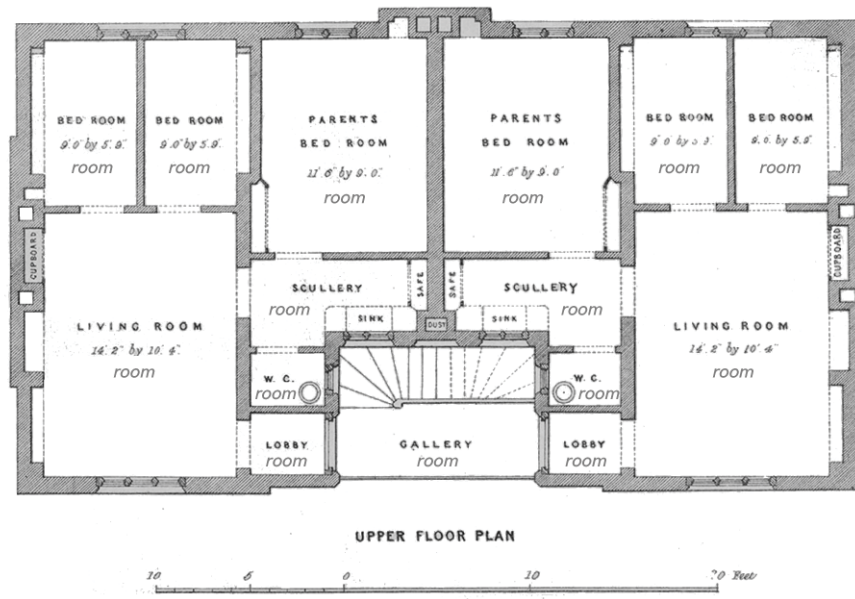


Henry Roberts. 1851. *Model Houses For Families*.

*Subverting Space as Social Management: Loud and Quiet*, collage, 8" x 8" (base drawing from Giudici 2018, 1204)

privacy, most flats were organized roughly following Roberts' logic (Giudici 2018, 1205). Roberts offered a repeatable, optimized layout (Giudici 2018, 1205). What he designed is, therefore, not only a spatial type: it is a set of human types (Giudici 2018, 1205). Paraphrasing Tolstoy, Roberts' proposal suggested that all happy families *should* be alike (Giudici 2018, 1205). The Model Houses for Families has become the most invisible and yet influential type: "a spatial organization that is in fact

## SPACE AS SOCIAL MANAGEMENT



Henry Roberts. 1851. *Model Houses For Families*.

*Subverting Space as Social Management: Room, collage, 8" x 8" (base drawing from Giudici 2018, 1204)*

a social diagram" (Giudici 2018, 1205). First imagined in a specific historical and geographical context, Roberts' diagram has become a totalizing apparatus that can now be found all over the world, enforcing a form of life that is often not aligned with the actual needs of the inhabitants (Giudici 2018, 1205).

The emergence of the *petit-bourgeois* flat manifests new structural principles that have now existed for over 150 years. The division of rooms as a social diagram is



being critiqued in the thesis. The project will use type as a method to suggest how it may influence the city fabric and the subjectivities of the city dweller. The building will challenge the interior's status quo social diagram through the proposal of a less deterministic plan. Four case studies are presented in the following chapter. Each project is a challenge to Henry Roberts' social diagram, allowing alternative ways of living.

### A Room for Collection



Film still from *Spring Breakers*  
by Harmony Korine (Korine 2012)

'Against the armature of glass and iron, upholstery offers resistance with its textiles' (Rice 2007, 10). In this single line, embedded within Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, arcade and domestic interior come together (Rice 2007, 10). Benjamin writes of arcades as interiors in the city, spaces that reorganize relations between inside and outside (Rice 2007, 10). 'The domestic interior moves outside... the street becomes room and the room becomes street' (Rice 2007, 10). The bourgeois interior has a short historical life, a 'natural' lifespan equal to that of the arcades (Rice 2007, 11). For the bourgeoisie, dwelling became divided from work, and in this division, the conditions for the emergence of the domestic interior were made possible (Rice 2007, 11). Benjamin thought the division of dwelling and work was related to a problematization in modernity of the philosophical conception of experience (Rice 2007, 11). Long experience (*Erfahrung*) is founded on an appeal to tradition and the accumulation of wisdom over time. This comes into conflict with the many momentary, instantaneous experiences (*Erlebnisse*) that contribute to the dynamic energy of the modern city (Rice 2007, 11). The city alienates long experience so it finds refuge in the domestic interior (Rice 2007, 11). Benjamin captured

#### LONELINESS

"Forget sex, politics or religion,  
loneliness is the subject that clears  
out a room."

- Douglas Coupland (Rantzen 2011)

this problematization in his 1936 essay 'Experience and Poverty':

Everyone knew precisely what experience was: older people had always passed it on to younger ones. It was handed down in short form to sons and grandsons, with the authority of age, in proverbs; with an often longwinded eloquence, as tales, sometimes as stories from foreign lands, at the fireside. - Where has it all gone? (Rice 2007, 11)



The Alcove Bed in Thomas Jefferson's bed chamber at Monticello (Wilson 2008)

#### HOPE

"We can imagine a form of design as being more cultured and precise, far from the continuous race, more conscious of human living: a form of design which will also leave wide open spaces for reflection and silence, a design which will really furnish the instruments essential for physical and mental survival, Our aspiration to calm and serenity through greater balance is also our hope." (Lang, Menking, and Superstudio 2003, 168)

The interior's emergence became important in relation to the idea that long experience might somehow be extracted from objects (Rice 2007, 12). The hope was that what was previously offered in the immateriality of stories by the fireside, might somehow be manifested in a material substitute (Rice 2007, 12). Fabricating and thereby inhabiting an interior was an active, ongoing process, one manifested through the figure of the collector (Rice 2007, 12).

The challenge faced by the collector was to present a 'connoisseur's value', rather than a 'use value', on objects (Rice 2007, 12). Once objects are commodified, they begin to repossess the categories they seemingly obliterated: they begin to have their own social relations (Rice 2007, 12). From the beginning of the nineteenth century, industrial modes of production replace individual handicraft (Rice 2007, 12). This division of labour causes the relationship between producers and things to be discontinuous, based on partial experience (Rice 2007, 12). Objects that were once experienced in their totality through the bond between maker and user were now traded as abstract entities, "stripped of all qualities that were once derived from an embeddedness in time and place, and a natural necessity of production and use" (Rice 2007, 12).

## OBJECTS FOR PERSONAL USE



**Compact Fridge**  
Function: cooling  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 23.5 kg  
Capacity: 90 L  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Immersion Element**  
Function: heating water  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 109 g  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Hot Plate**  
Function: cooking  
Material: steel  
Weight: 1.3 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Laptop**  
Function: work, entertainment  
Material: aluminum  
Weight: 2.0 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Aeropress Coffee Maker**  
Function: coffee brewing  
Material: plastic  
Weight: 181 g



**Mug**  
Function: drinking  
Material: porcelain  
Weight: 131 g



**Toothbrush**  
Function: cleaning  
Material: plastic  
Weight: 18.1 g



**Blanket**  
Function: warmth  
Material: wool  
Weight: 792 g



**Towel**  
Function: drying  
Material: cotton  
Weight: 763 g



**Phone**  
Function: entertainment, communication  
Material: aluminium  
Weight: 431 g



**Lamp**  
Function: lighting  
Material: steel  
Weight: 2.31 kg  
Requirement: 120 v outlet



**Projector**  
Function: entertainment  
Material: plastic  
Weight: 2.1 kg

## OBJECTS FOR COLLECTIVE USE



**Dishwasher**  
Function: washing dishes  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 36.3 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Drip Coffee Maker**  
Function: coffee brewing  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 1.2 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Clothes Iron**  
Function: pressing clothes  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 1.2 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Toaster Oven**  
Function: cooking  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 3.72 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Television**  
Function: entertainment  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 43.1 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Electric Range & Oven**  
Function: cooking  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 64 kg  
Capacity: 150 L  
Requirement: 240 v outlet



**Freezer**  
Function: freezing food  
Material: steel  
Weight: 40 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Wood Stove**  
Function: warming  
Material: steel  
Weight: 180 kg  
Capacity: 85 L  
Requirements: flue pipe



**Washer/Dryer**  
Function: cleaning clothes  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 36 kg  
Requirements: water supply, 220 v outlet



**Microwave**  
Function: cooking  
Material: steel  
Weight: 10.5 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Electric Kettle**  
Function: heating water  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 1.4 kg  
Capacity: 1.7 L  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Dining Table**  
Function: surface  
Material: wood  
Weight: 14.5 kg



**Standard Fridge**  
Function: cooling  
Material: stainless steel  
Weight: 143 kg  
Capacity: 564 L  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Oscillating Fan**  
Function: cooling  
Material: metal  
Weight: 5.1 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Printer**  
Function: printing  
Material: plastic  
Weight: 5.8 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Books**  
Function: reading  
Material: paper  
Weight: 3.1 kg



**Record Player**  
Function: playing music  
Material: aluminum platter  
Weight: 3.9 kg  
Requirements: 120 v outlet



**Board Games**  
Function: entertainment  
Material: wood  
Weight: 798 g

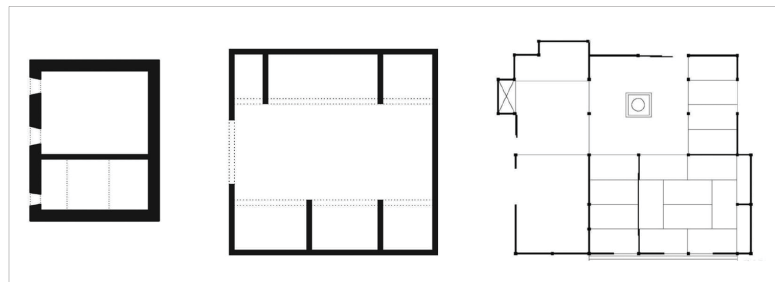
Everything We Own, digital collage, 18" x 24"

Rice explains how the commodification of objects and their embedding in the house created an illusion of long experience, one that is understood as 'natural', *a priori*. The thesis design project will organize space in order to allow the sharing of objects. Personal spaces will contain objects for personal use, while interconnected collective space will offer objects for collective use. The next chapter surveys four case studies that contest the principles of private property. Each employs an ownership model and collective spatial strategy to support alternative principles.

## Chapter 4: Room as Disclosure

### A Room Without Function

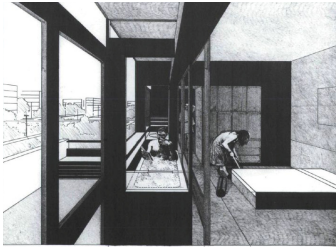
The alpine stone house, Dutch Hallenhuis, and Japanese Minka are all houses that are pre-typological; they are spatially very simple (Giudici 2018, 1211). Their rooms do not represent a rigid diagram of life, instead allowing reproductive and productive labour to happen at the same time, in the same spaces (Giudici 2018, 1211). Flexibility of use was enabled by the lack of any fixed service and simplicity of furniture (Giudici 2018, 1211). Spaces would be inhabited based on environmental concerns: what was warm, or dry, or humid, or cool, or light, in any specific moment (Giudici 2018, 1211). However, as we have seen, the modern flat implies a much more strict division of roles within the household (Giudici 2018, 1211). This division of roles is enforced by the subdivision of the house into specific rooms (Giudici 2018, 1211). Primitive farm houses offer a precedent for spaces that are not defined by functional roles or capacity for profit. The following case studies are each housing projects that stand as a contestation to the individuation of rooms as a social manager. Each project employs partition and spatial strategies to support alternative principles.



Alpine Stone Hut; Dutch Hallenhuis; Japanese Minka (Giudici 2018, 1210)

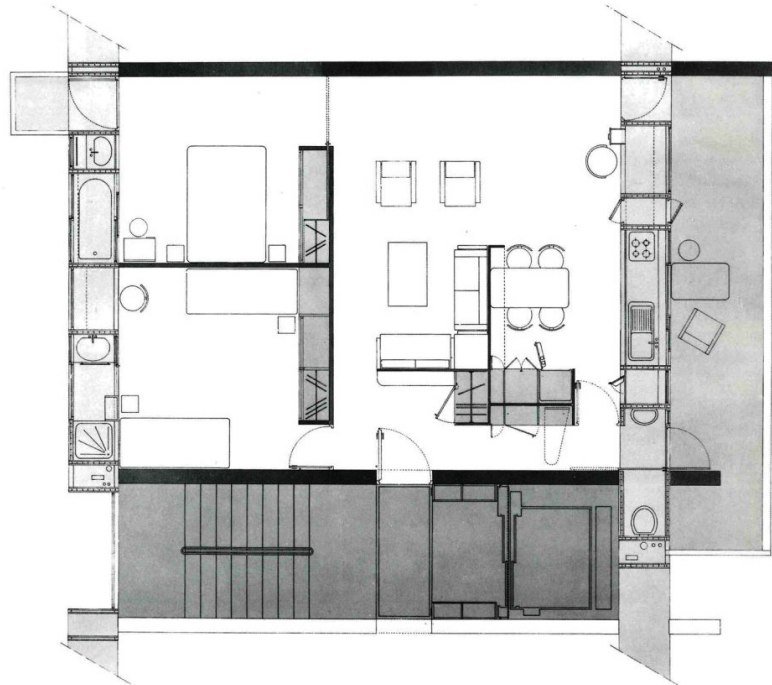
## Case Studies

### *Domus Demain by Yves Lion and François Leclerq, 1984-88*



Domus Demain by Yves Lion and François Leclerq (Cohen 2005, 22)

Domus Demain derived from a critical analysis of Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseille (Cohen 2005, 38). Lion rejected contemporary buildings where centres were given to "abandoned spaces" and facades "enclosed" (Cohen 2005, 38). The proposal advocated for an active band at the building's exterior, occupied by building services and mechanical equipment (Cohen 2005, 38). Kitchens and bathrooms are lit with direct sunlight (Cohen 2005, 40). Each bedroom is allocated a bathroom along the facade, supplying light, noise, fluids, and energy (Cohen 2005, 40). The interior of the dwelling is a place of quiet, of liberty from the outdoors. (Cohen 2005, 40). The themes explored in this housing competition would later be deployed in future built projects by Lion (Cohen 2005, 40).



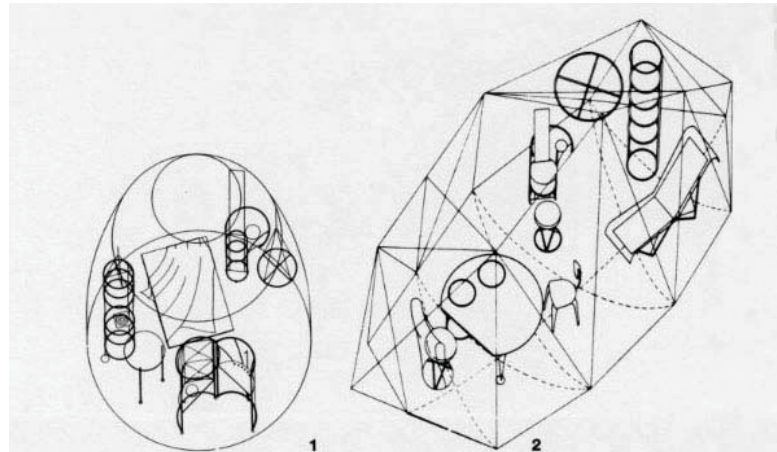
Plan drawing of Domus Demain by Yves Lion and François Leclerq (Cohen 2005, 39)

### *Dwelling for the Tokyo Nomad by Toyo Ito, 1985*



Pao I and II: Dwelling for the Tokyo Nomad Girl by Toyo Ito (Ito 1985)

Dwelling for the Tokyo Nomad is a house without a type, a generic enclosure, with no kitchen, no bathroom and almost no architecture, just furniture. This project blurs the difference between sofa and bed, living room and bedroom. It refuses to re-propose the traditional kitchen and bathroom that have become the workplace and enclosure of the housewife (Giudici 2018, 1208). It has become rather evident that the Roberts model is inadequate to host forms of living that are increasingly diverse. We are less and less similar to Tolstoy's happy families, and closer to the Tokyo Nomad, moving camp within our house (Giudici 2018, 1214). Work and reproduction cannot be so clearly separated, and the nuclear family has changed, perhaps diminished (Giudici 2018, 1208). However we still cling to tropes cemented in Roberts' Model Housing, including the characterization of different rooms by function (Giudici 2018, 1208). The city has become an infinite domestic interior where the traditional boundaries between production and reproduction, home and workplace, are increasingly blurred (Giudici 2018, 1226). If we define type as a spatial organization that shapes a specific subject, we can see how architectural experiments such as Tokyo Nomad, attempting to reject typological thinking in favour of more entropic, free-flowing space, is ultimately a type (Giudici 2018, 1218).



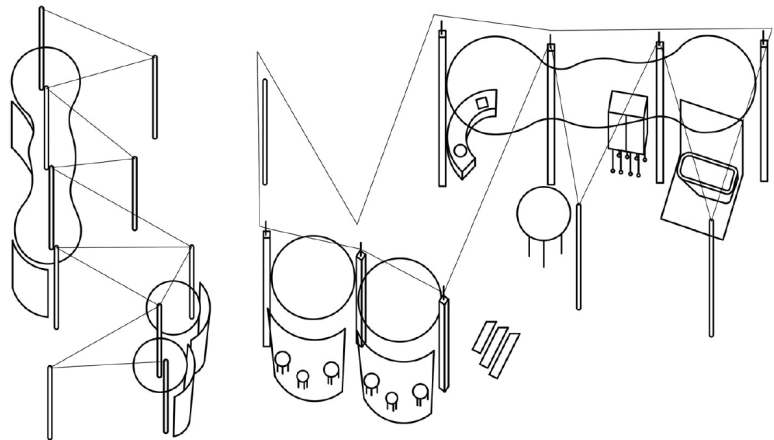
Pao I and II: Dwelling for the Tokyo Nomad Girl by Toyo Ito (Giudici 2018, 1208)

### ***Platform by Kazuyo Sejima, 1990***



Platform I by Kazuyo Sejima  
(Sejima 1990)

As Andrea Branzi claims, architectural diagrams such as the bourgeois flat have become increasingly inadequate in terms of living and working conditions that cannot nowadays be explained using traditional categories (Giudici 2018, 1223). The home is a workplace, and our workplace becomes the very locus of our social life (Giudici 2018, 1224). Kazuyo Sejima designed two houses she called Platform I and II (Giudici 2018, 1223). They are conceived as one-room spaces open towards the landscape (Giudici 2018, 1224). The platforms use light, industrial materials. Their interior is not partitioned and their envelopes are transparent (Giudici 2018, 1224). Sejima conceived of her Platforms as the opposite, indeed as a critique of Ito's Pao (Giudici 2018, 1224). Architecture is envisioned here as a loose platform open for different uses: it is a space for nobody in particular. Inhabitants use the platform rather than owning or being owned by it (Giudici 2018, 1224). Sejima's architecture is conceived as pure infrastructure (Giudici 2018, 1225). Within this platform, concepts such as production and reproduction, office and home, do not mean anything anymore (Giudici 2018, 1225). These projects do not attempt to reform or rethink the domestic condition, they reject domesticity entirely (Giudici 2018, 1225).



Schemes for Platform Houses by Kazuyo Sejima (Giudici 2018, 1225)



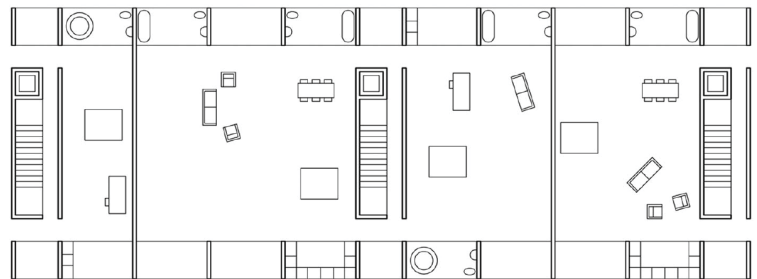
***Habitat and the City by Neutelings, Wall, De Geyter, and Roodbeen, 1992***

SPACE

"...for it remains certain that the use of the crude weaving ... as a means to make the 'home,' the inner life separated from the outer life, and as the formal creation of the idea of space - undoubtedly preceded the wall ... the structure that served to support, to secure, to carry this spatial enclosure was a requirement that had nothing directly to do with space and the division of space."

- Gottfried Semper (Hill 2006, 66)

One of most radical proposals on the topic of served and servant spaces was proposed by W.J. Neutelings, A. Wall, X. De Geyter, and F. Roodbeen for the Barcelona Housing Competition (Giudici 2018, 1223). In their entry, the facades of a residential slab constituted a wall of services, leaving the centre of the building free and unscripted (Giudici 2018, 1223). The negotiation of use of the space is left up to the users (Giudici 2018, 1223). The proposal is a liberating inversion of the standard flat: the servant becomes master, the upstairs downstairs, gender roles have to be rewritten (Giudici 2018, 1223).



Plan drawing of Habitat and the City by Neutelings, Wall, De Geyter, and Roodbeen (Giudici 2018, 1224)

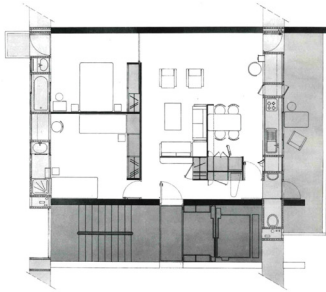
**Analysis**

In *Domus Demain*, the project utilizes the strategy of an *active band* of infrastructure. Rather than placing the active band at the exterior envelope, the thesis design project will utilize bands as social dividers. The spaces become negotiable within the community of tenants. The infrastructure supports generic rooms that may be occupied based on their spatial quality. In Ito's Tokyo Nomad project, a generic enclosure is deployed in the environment of the city. The free-flowing, entropic space

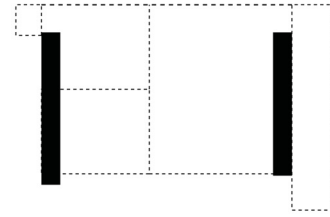
proposed by Ito requires infrastructure to be present around it. The thesis design project is a housing model for precarious workers. The notion of the *nomadic dweller* will be utilized in the design. Simple furniture will be supported by infrastructure in the form of millwork walls and service cores. Furniture becomes a choice, rather than an obligation for occupation. In Sejima's Platform projects, the space acts as pure infrastructures of disclosure. Domesticity is denied a place in the space. The *open platform* will be utilized in the design project, allowing large rooms that may be inhabited based on their spatial qualities. In Habitat and the City, the units offer a generic space within margins of domestic labour. The design project utilizes *margins*, not at the exterior envelope, but between living and working spaces. These margins act as party walls for fire and acoustic separation, but also collective spaces that host circulation and rooms with services. The services are bound to one wall and may be closed off to the room to change its function throughout the day.

Domus Demain, Tokyo Nomad, Platforms, and Habitat and the City all challenge the role of the partition and the opportunities of generic space. Each project reaches back to the pre-typological house, one that is rid of a social diagram. The projects formulate questions of how an environment may be made more flexible through the articulation of spatial constraints. The proposed project will utilize generic space and partitions as a way to support precarious workers in the live/work model. Partitions are used to generate spatial opportunity, compress domestic services, and allow the sharing of objects.

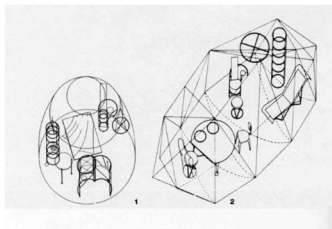
### A ROOM WITHOUT FUNCTION



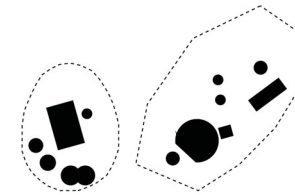
Yves Lion and François Leclercq. 1984.  
*Domus Demain.*



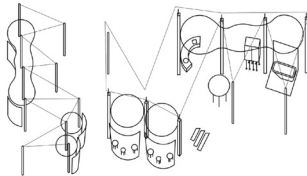
active bands



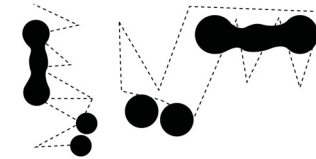
Toyo Ito. 1985-89. *Pao I and II: Dwelling for the Tokyo Nomad Girl.*



nomadic dweller



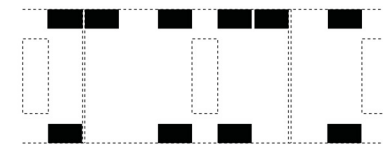
Sejima, Kazuyo. 1990. *Schemes for Platform Houses.*



open platform



Neutelings, J., A. Wall, and X. De Geyter. 1992.  
*Habitat and the City.*



margins

*A Room Without Function*, collage, 18" x 24" (base drawings from Cohen 2005, 39; Giudici 2018, 1208, 1224, and 1225)

## **A Room Against Ownership**

Since the 14th century, inhabiting a house means to accept the conditions of being a family while also entering the economic regime of private property either as a tenant or as a homeowner (Aureli and Tattara 2015). Aureli and Tattara explain that "housing is characterized by an increasing gap between, on one hand, temporary dwellers, freelance workers, and single parents that are producing new forms of cohabiting, and on the other hand, the reassuring and celebrated clichés of traditional family life" (Aureli and Tattara 2015). The current housing crisis is not only a crisis of scarcity and affordability, but also a crisis of subjectivization. Family living is ideologically supported by the current economy, while also being challenged by it (Aureli and Tattara 2015). This crisis is a call for a radical reinvention of the idea of housing that rejects the hegemony of the family (and private property) as the only way to live together (Aureli and Tattara 2015). Co-living and co-working can be more than a temporary solution, and can offer long-term conditions for living that embraces togetherness and solidarity (Aureli and Tattara 2015).

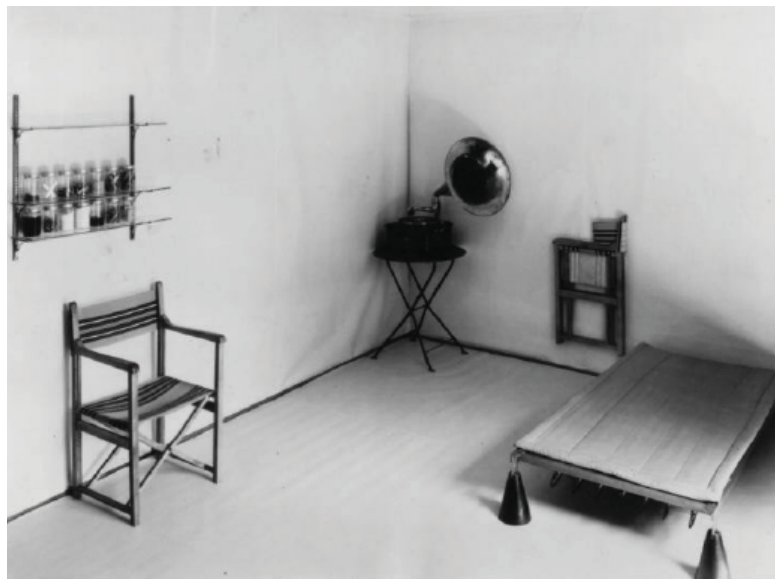
If the evolution of housing has been driven by the need to enclose families, an alternative can be proposed that challenges the boundaries of housing as containment in both physical and economic terms (Aureli and Tattara 2015). Aureli and Tattara argue that instead of being organized as an autonomous unit, "housing must be conceived as a composition of equal private spaces organized in relation to shared collective spaces" (Aureli and Tattara 2015). Rather than being a symbol of private property, "the house can be rethought as a system of

collective property” (Aureli and Tattara 2015). The following case studies are each housing projects that stand as a contestation to private property. Each project employs an ownership model and collective spatial strategy to support alternative principles.

### **Case Studies**

#### ***Co-op Zimmer by Hannes Meyer, 1924***

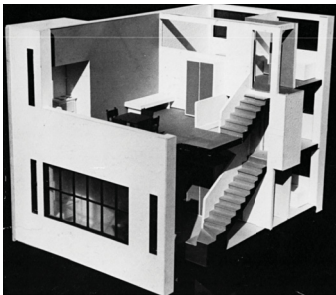
Designed for the nomadic worker, a single room contains a bed, a cupboard, and foldable chair. It is the minimum space for self-seclusion. The remaining space, the building, and city, are considered to be things shared by others. This is an architecture of use against an architecture of property. In Hannes Meyer’s words: “Cooperation rules the world. The community rules the individual” (Borra 2013, 1). Meyer believed that cooperation was the most valuable alternative social structure, “one founded not on the production of surplus value, but on the collective needs and desires of the mass society that produced it” (Borra 2013, 1). His ambition was characterized by the idea of collective



Co-op Zimmer by Hannes Meyer (Aureli 2015)

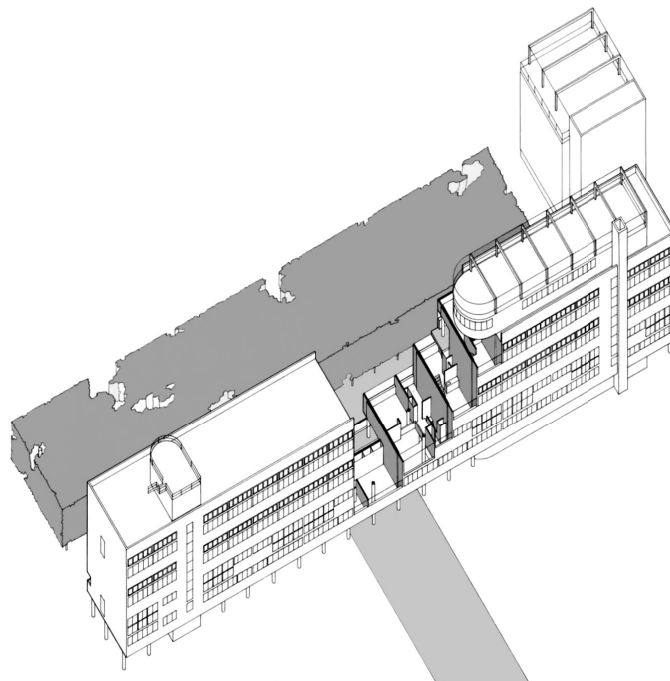
aspects of producing and learning together (Borra 2013, 1). His ambition was to introduce the working class to the liberating potential of cooperation (Borra 2013, 1). It could be argued that Meyer's co-op works tried to find a link between the production of architecture and Marx's concept of the production of man and society (Borra 2013, 4). Cooperation is an autonomous power and is a mode of production that must be reclaimed from capitalism (Borra 2013, 4).

### ***Narkomfin by Moisei Ginzburg and Ignatii Milinis, 1932***



Narkomfin by Moisei Ginzburg and Ignatii Milinis (Lucarelli 2016)

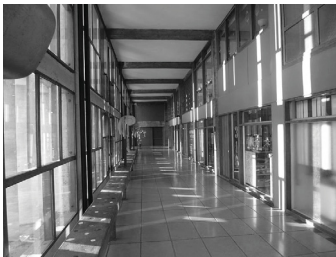
Completed in 1932, the Narkomfin is one of the few built architectural works responding to the constructivist aim of reinventing the everyday life of people, through typologically experimental buildings that embodied new Socialist ideals (Lucarelli 2016). The main principle behind the conception of the building is the collectivization of all the areas that corresponded to collective functions (Lucarelli 2016). Reading, cooking, raising children, doing



Narkomfin by Moisei Ginzburg and Ignatii Milinis (Lucarelli 2016)

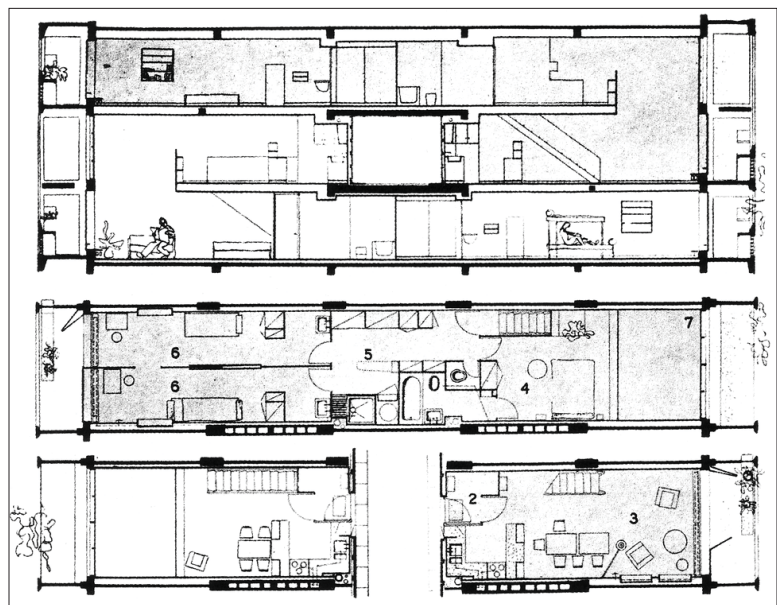
sport, are all functions removed from the traditional bourgeois apartment, and relocated within a glazed, collective volume hosting communal kindergartens, kitchens, libraries and gymnasiums (Lucarelli 2016). The upper roof is a communal recreational space (Lucarelli 2016). The individual spaces, such as rooms for sleeping, washrooms and toilets, as well as study and individual research areas are contained in a long block with ribbon windows (Lucarelli 2016). The windows open towards the exterior natural setting, implicitly questioning the closed and interior nature of a “room” (Lucarelli 2016).

### ***Unité d’Habitation by Le Corbusier, 1947-52***



Unité d’Habitation by  
Le Corbusier (Kohlstedt 2018)

Unité d’Habitation, designed by Le Corbusier, synthesizes his ideas of the relationship between the individual and the collective he admired in monasteries (Jencks 1973, 139). It provides individual privacy for each member of the family along with spaces for twenty-six different social functions, varying from a gymnasium to a shopping centre (Jencks 1973, 139). The inhabitants are a collective association, bound together like a small village in shared, everyday life

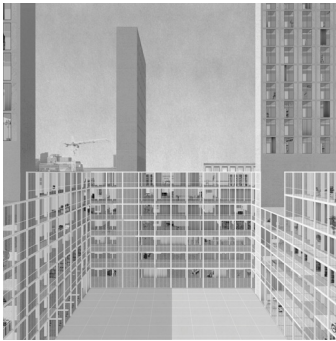


Unité d’Habitation by Le Corbusier (Jencks 1973, 145)

(Jencks 1973, 139). Their individuality is maintained with acoustically separated apartments (Jencks 1973, 139).

Each family apartment has the kitchen at its center, from which the mother can direct domestic affairs (Jencks 1973, 145). The children's bedrooms are placed furthest from the parents', allowing privacy between family members (Jencks 1973, 145). Unfortunately the children's bedrooms are only about six feet wide (Jencks 1973, 146). Life inside the apartments is greatly varied, not homogenous or standardized (Jencks 1973, 146). The building provides a strong frame for urban living which maintains its integrity when taken over or personalized (Jencks 1973, 146).

#### ***Office Park in Zaventem by DOGMA, 2014***

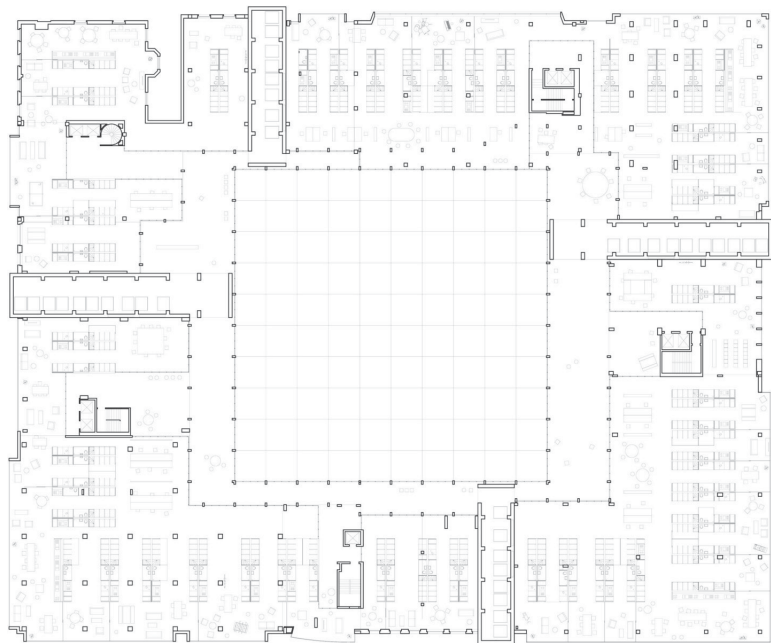


Office Park in Zaventem by  
DOGMA (Aureli and Tattara 2015)

The project proposes the transformation of existing office space into live/work spaces. It is a pilot project that may be realized in different contexts, following three criteria (Aureli and Tattara 2015). First, the new housing is organized according to principles typical of a cooperative, having a collective ownership structure (Aureli and Tattara 2015). The second is the organization of the housing around two spatial conditions: being alone and being together. Individual space is minimized so that one person can live in it comfortably. Collective space is increased to contain functions that are usually squeezed into small apartments (Aureli and Tattara 2015). This exposes domestic labour and allows it to be shared by the collective, reducing the individual burden. The third criteria is the use of industrial finishes (Aureli and Tattara 2015). Contemporary industrial finishes drastically reduce construction costs and enhance quality of



space by ridding them of redundant details, while also reducing maintenance (Aureli and Tattara 2015). After demolishing all non-load bearing partitions, “inhabitable walls,” are inserted, containing storage, a bathroom, and a bed alcove (Aureli and Tattara 2015). The inhabitable walls divide the floor into two parts: a more private area, dedicated to living activities, and a more collective area, dedicated to social and collective activities (Aureli and Tattara 2015).



Office Park in Zaventem by DOGMA (Aureli and Tattara 2015)

### Analysis

Meyer’s Co-op Zimmer establishes the room as the space for the individual. The rest of the building and the city beyond belong to the collective. The room is a luxury, a place to do what one desires, not requiring negotiation with others. The thesis design project utilizes the *room as space for the individual*. Each tenant has right to a personal room and the collective spaces beyond. The

room is not one of minimal existence, it is designed to be generous, allowing the tenant many uses of the space.

The Narkomfin removed spaces of domestic labour from individual apartments and relocated them to a collective space. The structure of the building interrogates the meaning of the room, where all spaces are exposed with ribbon windows to the exterior. The thesis design project will utilize the *collective volume* to allow the sharing of domestic labour. A collective volume in the courtyard will host programs that intersect with the public realm.

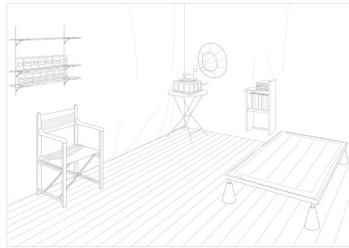
Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation was designed to provide total individual privacy for each member of the family, and spaces for collective activities. The project was a radical departure from individuated housing units, but centred on the nuclear family as the basic unit. The thesis will adapt the strategies of acoustic separation and collective programming to allow *individual rhythm* to be maintained within a collective living model. Rather than use the family apartment as the basic unit, the thesis will use the individual room. The design project will not consider the building to be an autonomous unit. The public realm will be at the center of the proposal, where workers and the greater community come together.

DOGMA's Office Park in Zaventem establishes an ownership model, partition strategy, and material strategy to support the intent of the project. The thesis project will utilize a *collective ownership model* and *inhabitable walls* to support the structural principles of the project. The ownership model enables the reduction of personal space in favour of collective, negotiable spaces. The inhabitable walls will create negotiable space between personal

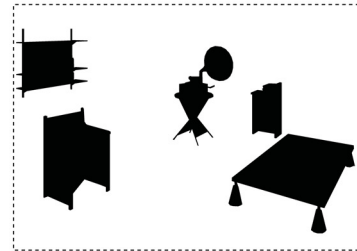
rooms and collective spaces. The collective spaces will in turn be separated by inhabitable party walls.

Co-op Zimmer, Narkomfin, Unité d'Habitation, and Office Park in Zaventem all create rooms against ownership, each employing an ownership model and collective spatial strategy to support alternative principles to those of private property. The thesis design project will use the *ownership model*, the *structural scheme*, and *partitions to redistribute space for being alone and being together* to generate rules to support the contestation of private property and commodified objects.

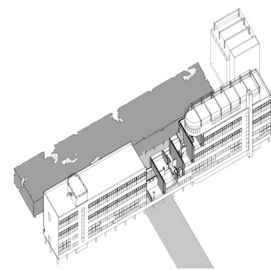
**A ROOM AGAINST OWNERSHIP**



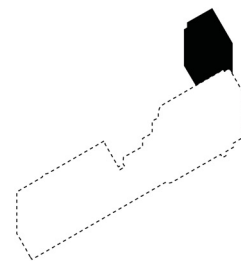
Hannes Meyer. 1924. *Co-op Zimmer*.



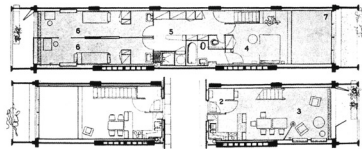
room as space for the individual



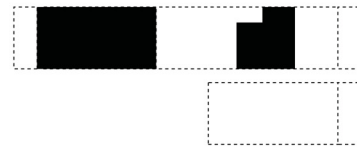
Moisei Ginzburg and Ignaty Millinis. 1930. *Narkomfin Building*.



collective volume



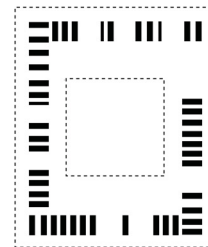
Le Corbusier. 1952. *Unité Habitation*.



individual rhythm

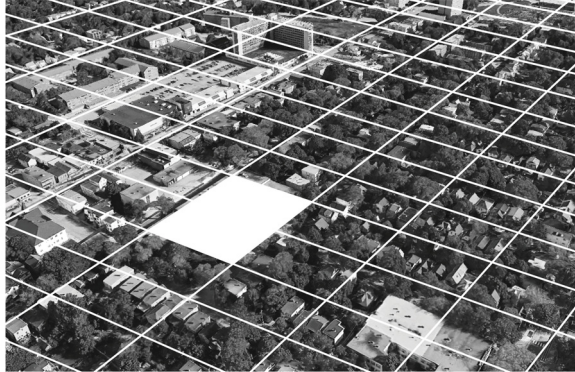


DOGMA. 2014. *Office Park in Zaventem*.



inhabitable walls

*A Room Against Ownership*, collage, 18" x 24" (base drawings from Aureli 2015; Aureli and Tattara 2015; Jencks 1973, 145; Lucarelli 2016)



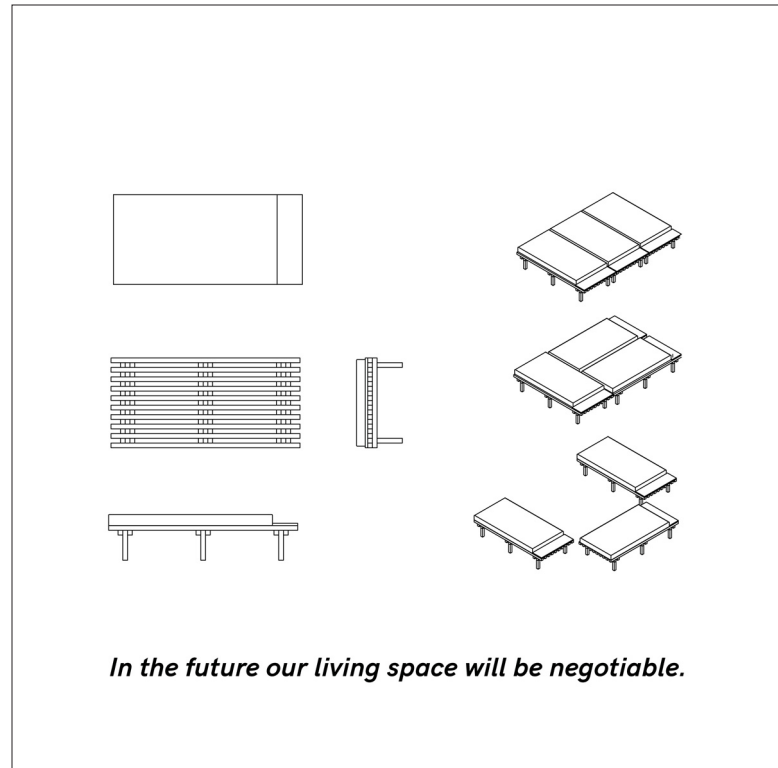
***In the future the form of the city will be one of reciprocity.***

*In The Future: Site, collage, 8" x 8"*



***In the future we will share a common yard.***

*In The Future: Urban Strategy, collage, 8" x 8"*



*In The Future: Collective Work, collage, 8" x 8"*

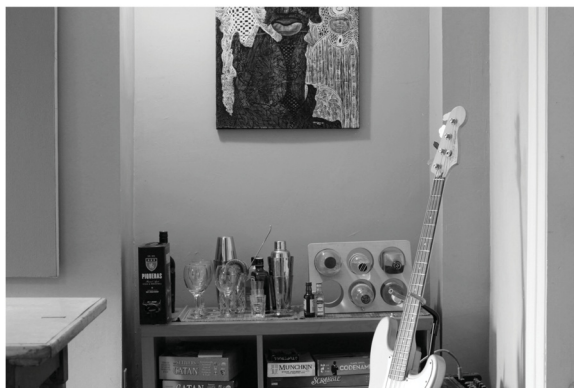


*In The Future: Room, collage, 8" x 8"*



***In the future we will have the right to a residence.***

*In The Future: Contestation, collage, 8" x 8"*



***In the future sharing will be a luxury.***

*In The Future: Everything All At Once, collage, 8" x 8"*

## Chapter 5: Party Wall Housing

### Live/Work Program

#### ENVIRONMENT

"Unlike the living space trapped with our forebears under a rock or roof, the space around a campfire has many unique qualities which architecture cannot hope to equal, above all, its freedom and variability. The direction and strength of the wind will decide the main shape and dimensions of that space, stretching the area of tolerable warmth into a long oval, but the output of light will not be affected by the wind, and the area of tolerable illumination will be a circle overlapping the oval of warmth. There will thus be a variety of environmental choices balancing light against warrant according to need and interest." (Banham 1965)

The project aims to create spaces where inhabitants are free to decide, day by day, how to live and work within them. Alternative forms of living necessitate spatial conditions that promote living together not as a temporary solution, but as a permanent and desirable condition. Aureli and Tattara explain the risk and necessity of merging living and working:

There is a risk in proposing typologies where "living" and "working" can happen in the same space. This scenario represents the complete fulfillment of a condition that already exists in which labor is the totality of human existence and where there is no space and time left free from the "fate" of productivity. Yet a space that does not separate production and reproduction not only makes evident the crucial political role (in spite of Arendt's and Aristotle's depoliticization of the *oikos*) of reproduction within production, but also allows inhabitants to reorganize both production and reproduction in a way that can free their time. By countering the fragmentation of domestic space and its atomization into "family houses," architecture can support a scenario in which it is possible to share and thus minimize the burden of domestic labor, but also make possible the self organization of working activities by cooperation and mutual help, for example by sharing cleaning, cooking, and childcare. Moreover, living and working in the same space means to drastically reduce commuting time and may allow dwellers to more easily limit work time and reclaim time beyond both production and reproduction. Opening up the home beyond the nuclear family living habitus means to challenge the dwelling habits that for centuries have hidden the role of reproduction from political discussions. (Aureli and Tattara 2015, 7)

Aureli and Tattara argue that we should repoliticize the domestic space as a truly public sphere, where different forms of life are no longer enclosed by individual homes, but can be openly confronted, discussed and reorganized (Aureli and Tattara 2015). A new generation of workers is increasingly finding employment in creative industries. Halifax lacks work space for this demographic. An



urban live/work type of housing will revive Nova Scotia's earlier models of communal housing. These 20th century models were largely focused on the social relationships of domestic life and food production. The proposed model will focus on the relationship between domestic life and varying forms of labour.

## **Site**

The site for the proposed model is a large lot on the Halifax peninsula, located at Shirley Street and Preston Street. It is well situated between Quinpool Road, a main transit artery and commercial street, and Dalhousie University Campus. It is the site of a demolished bread factory, flanked by single-family residences and low-rise apartments. It has been recently approved for development. The site presents an opportunity to build on two parallel streets, spanning the city block, while creating a courtyard at its centre. This courtyard is conceived as common space, challenging the individuated yards adjacent to it. The proposal is confined in an unassuming envelope, a three-storey row house model, not upsetting the hierarchy of the street. This is a radical model in a shell of conformity.



commons, parks

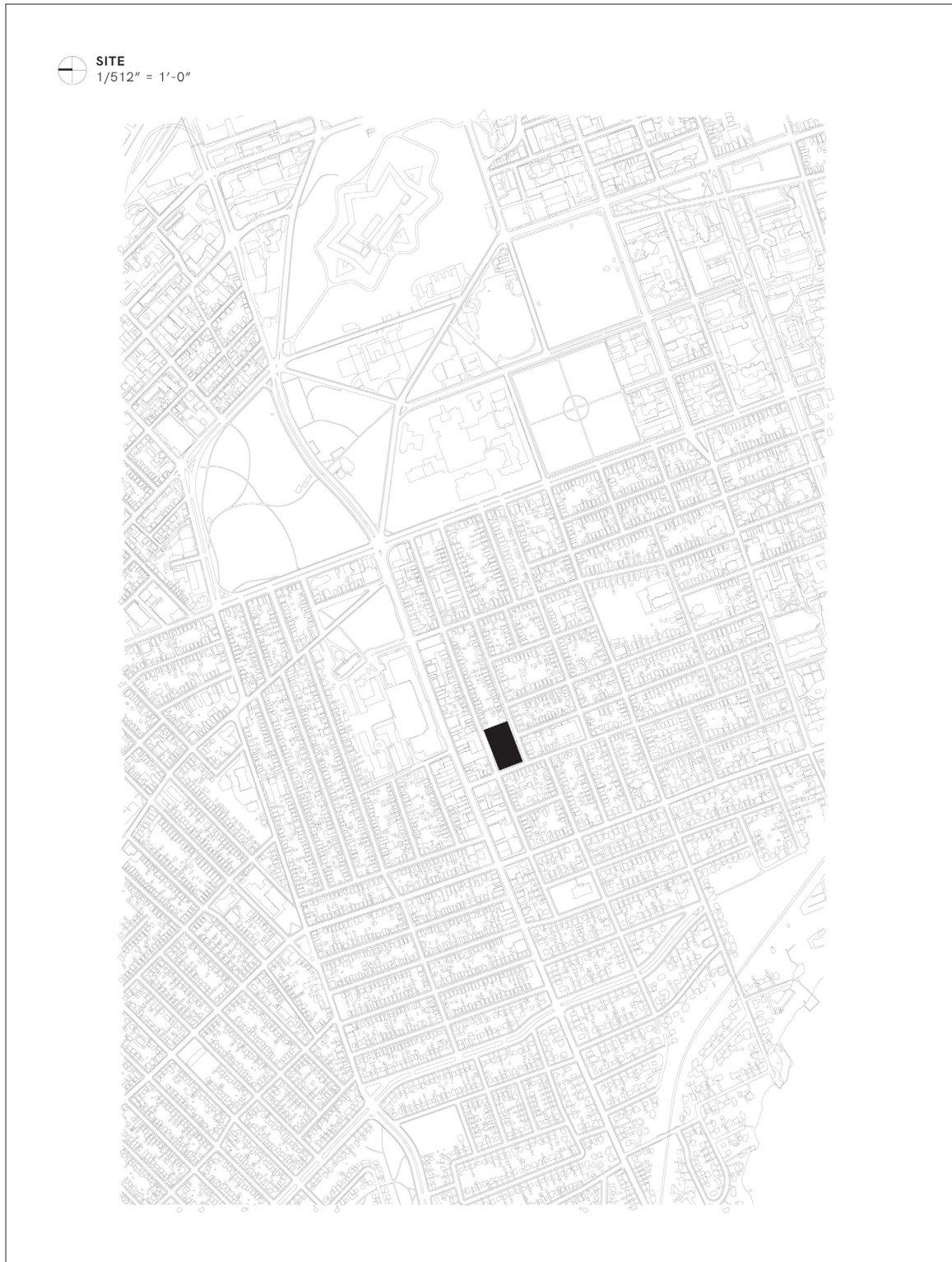


working, living

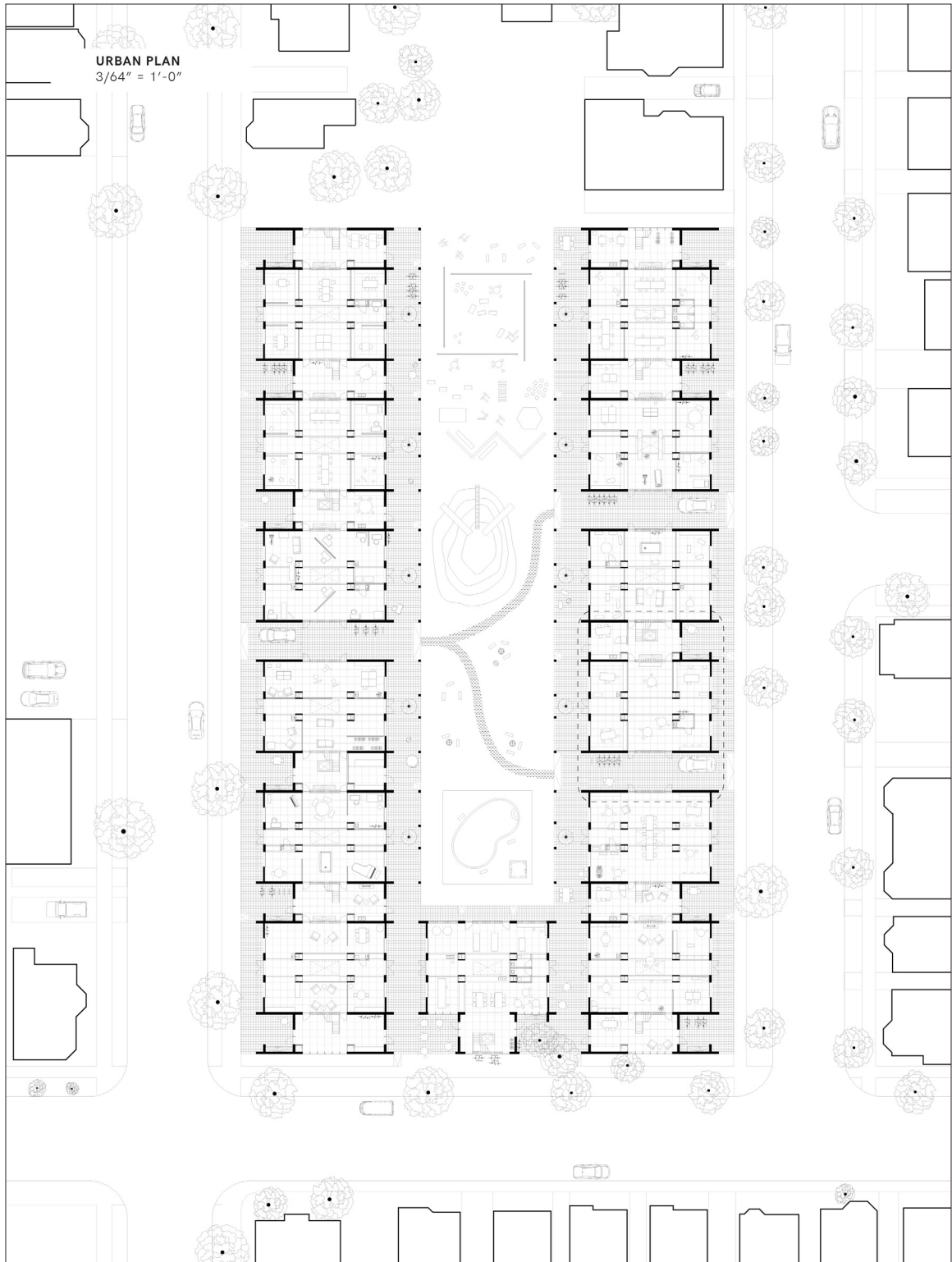


site rendering

Site, drawing, 18" x 24" (base drawing from Nova Scotia Topographic Database 2019)

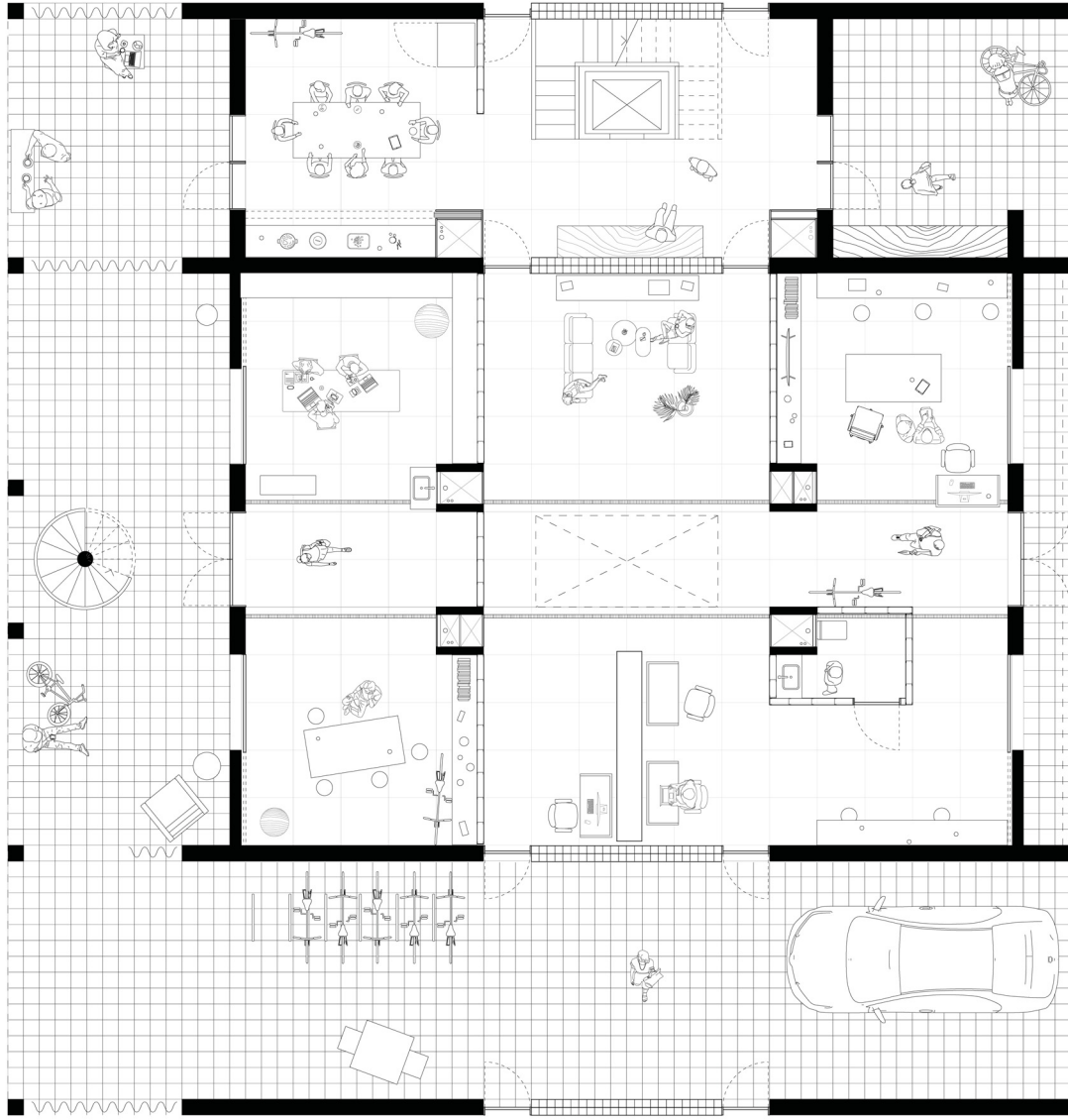


Site context, digital collage, 18" x 24" (base drawing from Nova Scotia Topographic Database 2019)



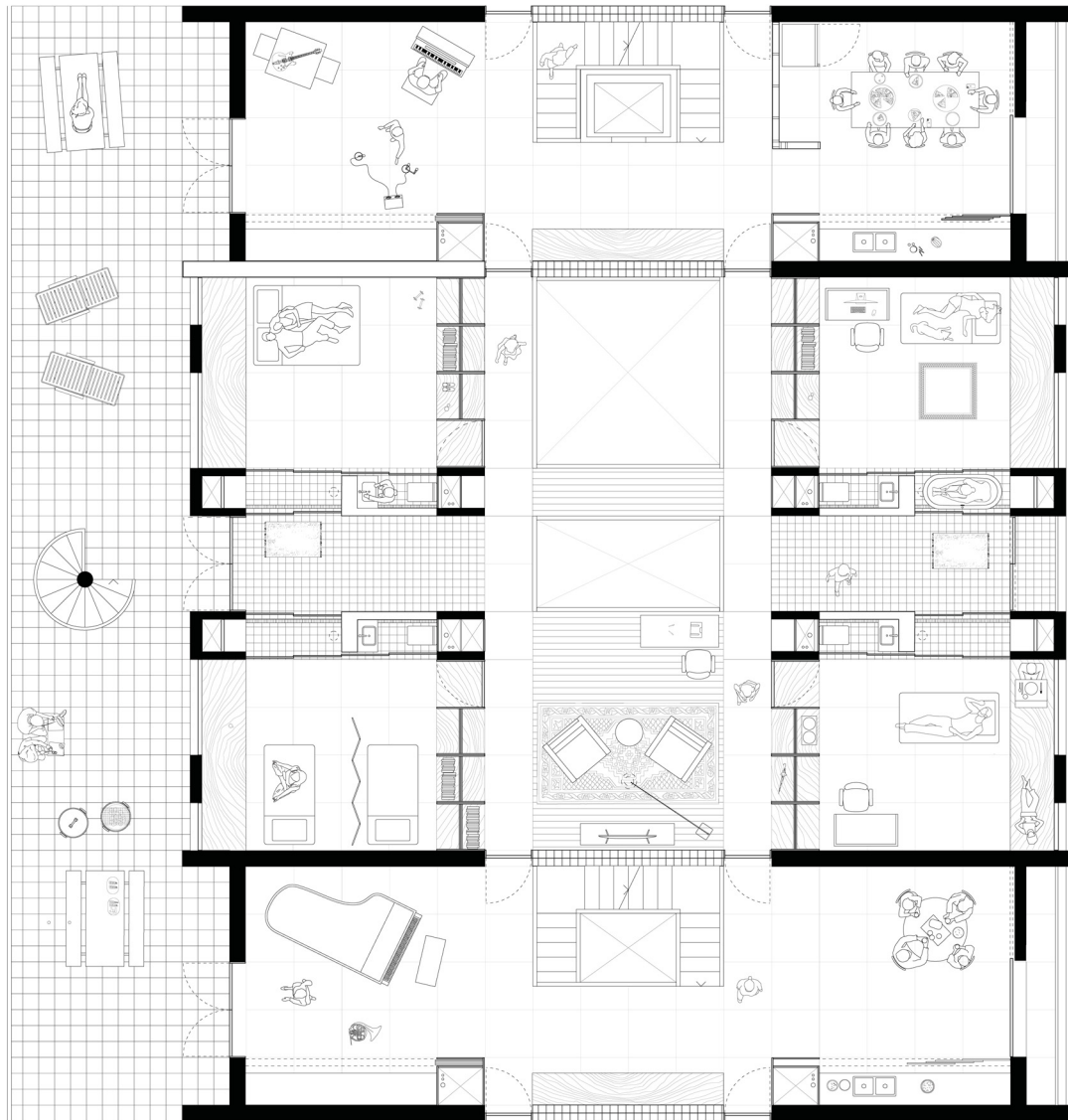
Urban plan, drawing, 18" x 24"

GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



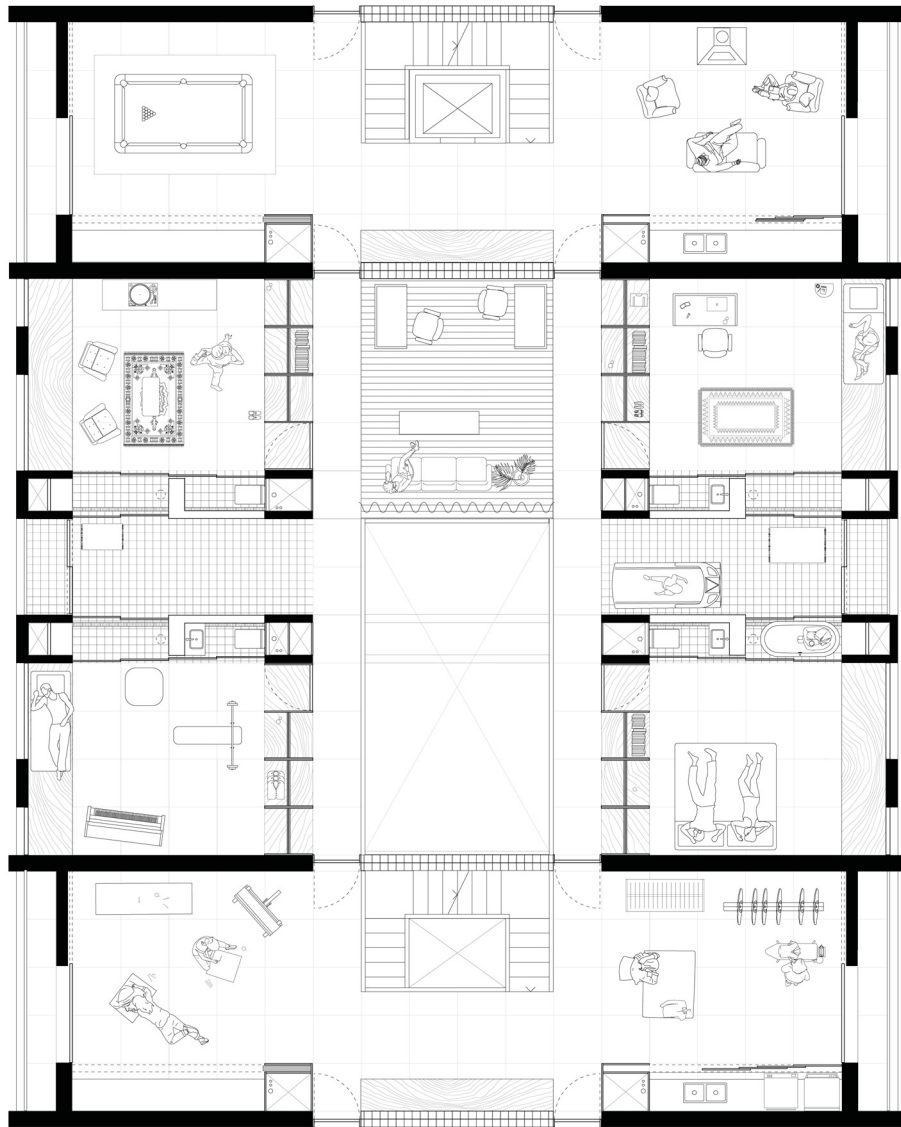
Ground floor plan, drawing, 18" x 24"

⊕ SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



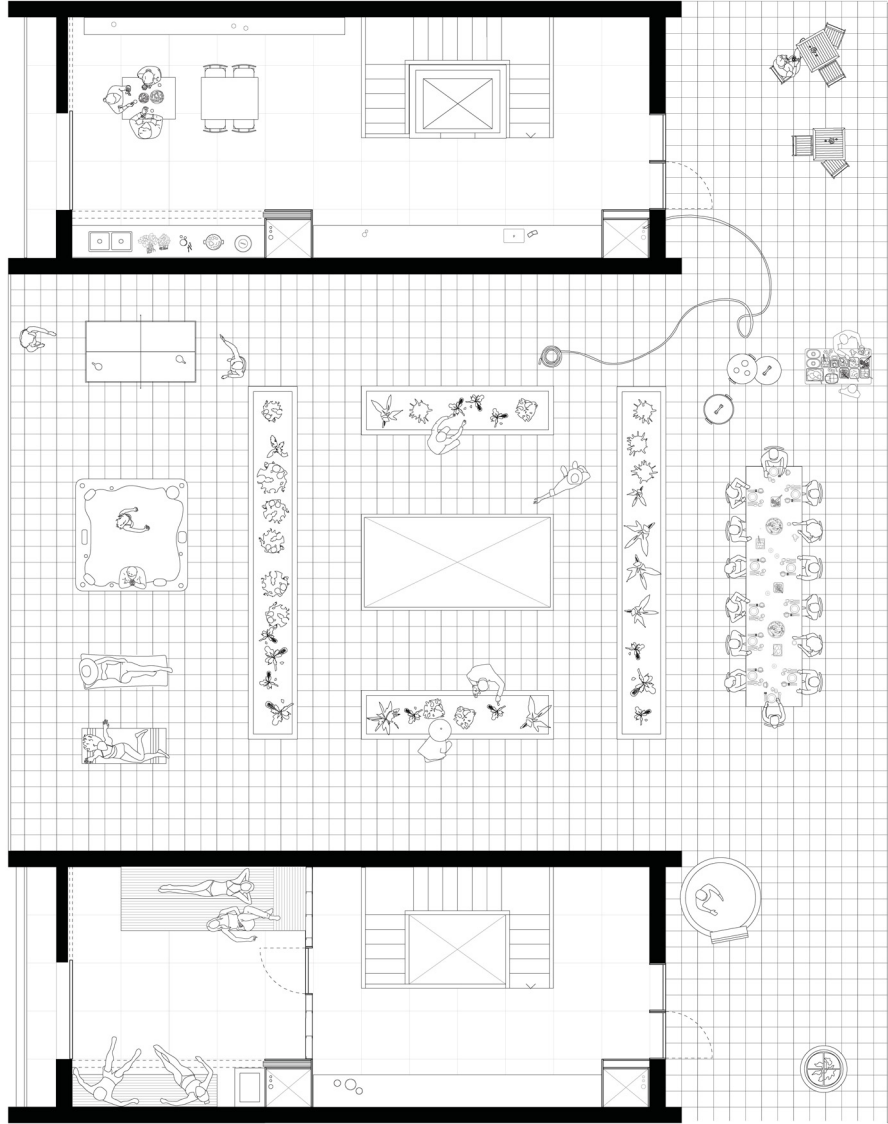
Second floor plan, drawing, 18" x 24"

THIRD FLOOR PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



Third floor plan, drawing, 18" x 24"

ROOF PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



Roof plan, drawing, 18" x 24"



## Party Wall

### HEARTH

"Therefore it was the discovery of fire that literally gave rise to the coming together of men, to the deliberative assembly, and to social intercourse. And so, as they kept coming together in greater numbers into one place, finding themselves naturally gifted beyond the other animals in not being obliged to walk with faces to the ground, but upright and gazing upon the splendour of the starry firmament, and also in being able to do with ease whatever they chose with their hands and fingers, they began in that first assembly to construct shelters."  
-Vitruvius (Hill 2006, 70)

The housing type redefines principles of the row house, a common typology in Halifax. The row house is associated historically with workers housing and military housing, where a row of attached dwellings share side walls. The party wall, typically a wall dividing two individuated units, is expanded to provide space for collective gathering where there once existed a property line. This is only made possible through the collective ownership model. The party walls act as social gathering space but also perform as acoustic and fire separation assemblies. The solid wall is penetrated with fire-rated glass block and doors at the center to allow passage and light through. The main circulation stair is located here, spanning three floors to the roof level. Instead of the minimum circulation, the provision of a grand staircase lends an atmosphere of luxury to the collective space. The central stair also creates a space for social confrontation. Rooms on each side of the stair are provided with operable walls to the outdoors and with water services. Each space is provided water and drainage, with the possibility to be used as a cooking space. The storage wall containing shelving and services may be closed to host other events. The rooms can accommodate cooking space, eating space, laundry facilities, and lounging space. The users can decide for themselves what space and function best suit each other. The party walls also act as solar chimneys, drawing air up through the stairwells. The exterior envelope can be opened on both sides to create a connection to the street and courtyard and allow cross-ventilation. The party walls are located along the preexisting property lines, not interrupting the hierarchy of the residential street.

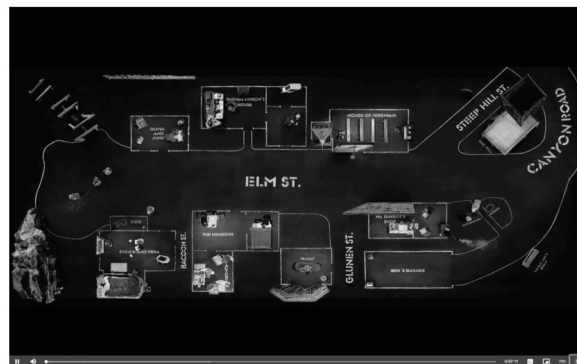
## PARTY WALL

Richard Lester. 1965. Screenshot from *Help!*

The facade of the house appears to be a typical London rowhouse. The house is entered by four separate front doors, but once inside, the Beatles are in one large room, subdivided by colour for each member of the band. Each person maintains their own rhythm in the shared space.

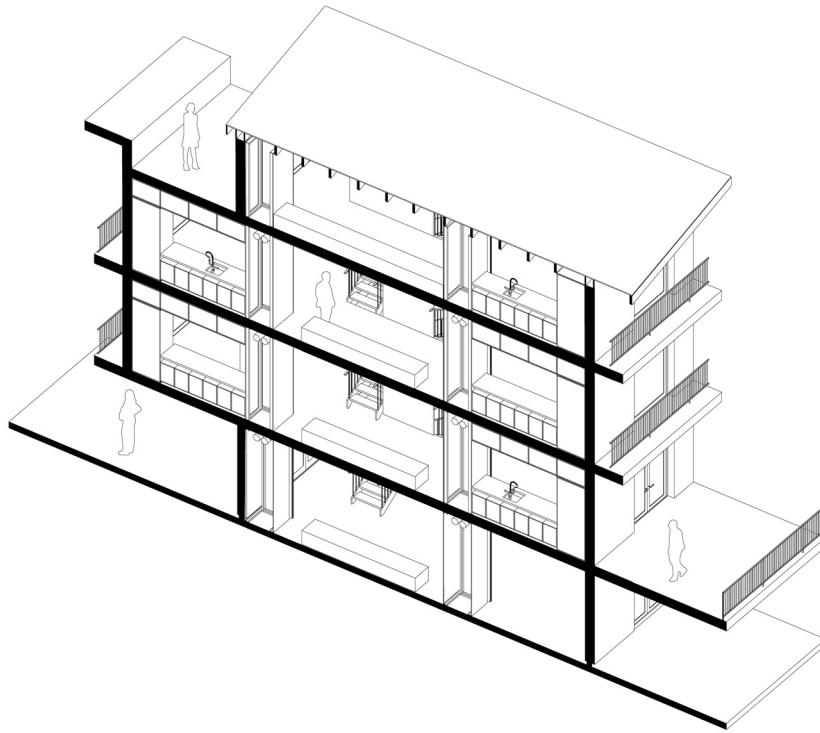
*Party Wall: Individual*, collage, 8" x 8" (base image from Lester 1965)

## PARTY WALL

Lars von Trier. 2003. Screenshot from *Dogville*.

The film takes place on a stage with minimal scenery. Some walls and furniture are placed on the stage, but the rest of the scenery exists merely as white painted outlines with large labels. There is a constant tension in the film between individual routine and community life both spatially and philosophically.

*Party Wall: Collective*, collage, 8" x 8" (base image from Von Trier 2003)



Party wall, drawing, 18" x 24"



Party wall, drawing, 18" x 24"

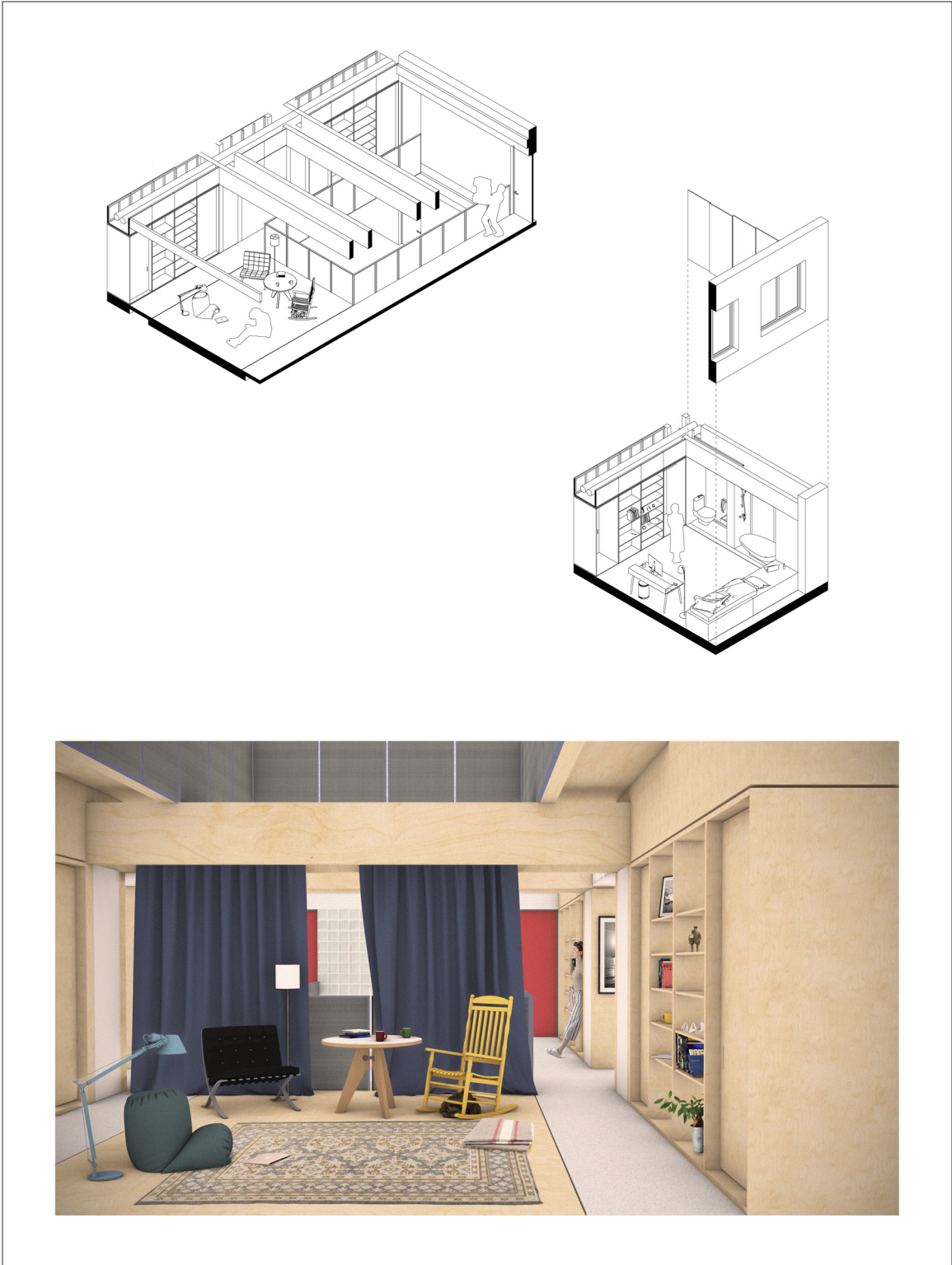
## **A Room of One's Own**

The rooming house was once a common type of living in Halifax. It often emerged as a space of economic necessity. Party Wall Housing situates the single room as the space for the individual. The ownership model gives each tenant right of residence to a personal room and to the collective workspaces and living spaces. Within the context of collective living, the single room offers a luxury. A fundamental tenet of the early Franciscan order was the refusal to own things. It was a refusal of their potential economic value and thus the possibility of exploiting others (Aureli 2013, 27). Rather than owning a robe, a house, or a book, the monks would use these things (Aureli 2013, 27). Use implied the temporary appropriation of an object by an individual. After it had been used, the object would be released and shared with others (Aureli 2013, 27). Use was understood as the supreme form of living in common (Aureli 2013, 27). The luxury offered is not one of possession, but one of being.

Each personal space includes an exterior wall, a brick wall, a millwork wall, and a wet wall. The millwork walls include open storage on both sides, becoming a living mural of domesticity and productivity. Entrance to the room may happen through the millwork wall or wet wall. Bathroom fixtures are located in the wet wall. Sliding partitions allow the bathing area to be opened to both the personal space or to the neighbouring space in order to allow it to be a social environment. The bathrooms may be combined as a space to create a luxurious bathroom. A deep platform by the exterior wall acts as a sleeping platform, for those who don't want to own a bed.



Individual room, drawing, 18" x 24"



Communal space, drawing, 18" x 24"

The personal spaces open to a communal atrium, one that allows light and conversation between the floors. Mezzanines between the personal rooms are generic rooms for living, where shared objects can be used. Glass block walls at the party wall allow further light into the space and offer a view of the social gatherings taking place at night. The space between the party walls can remain a more quiet space, requiring collective negotiation. The three floors of space will inevitably merge living and working.

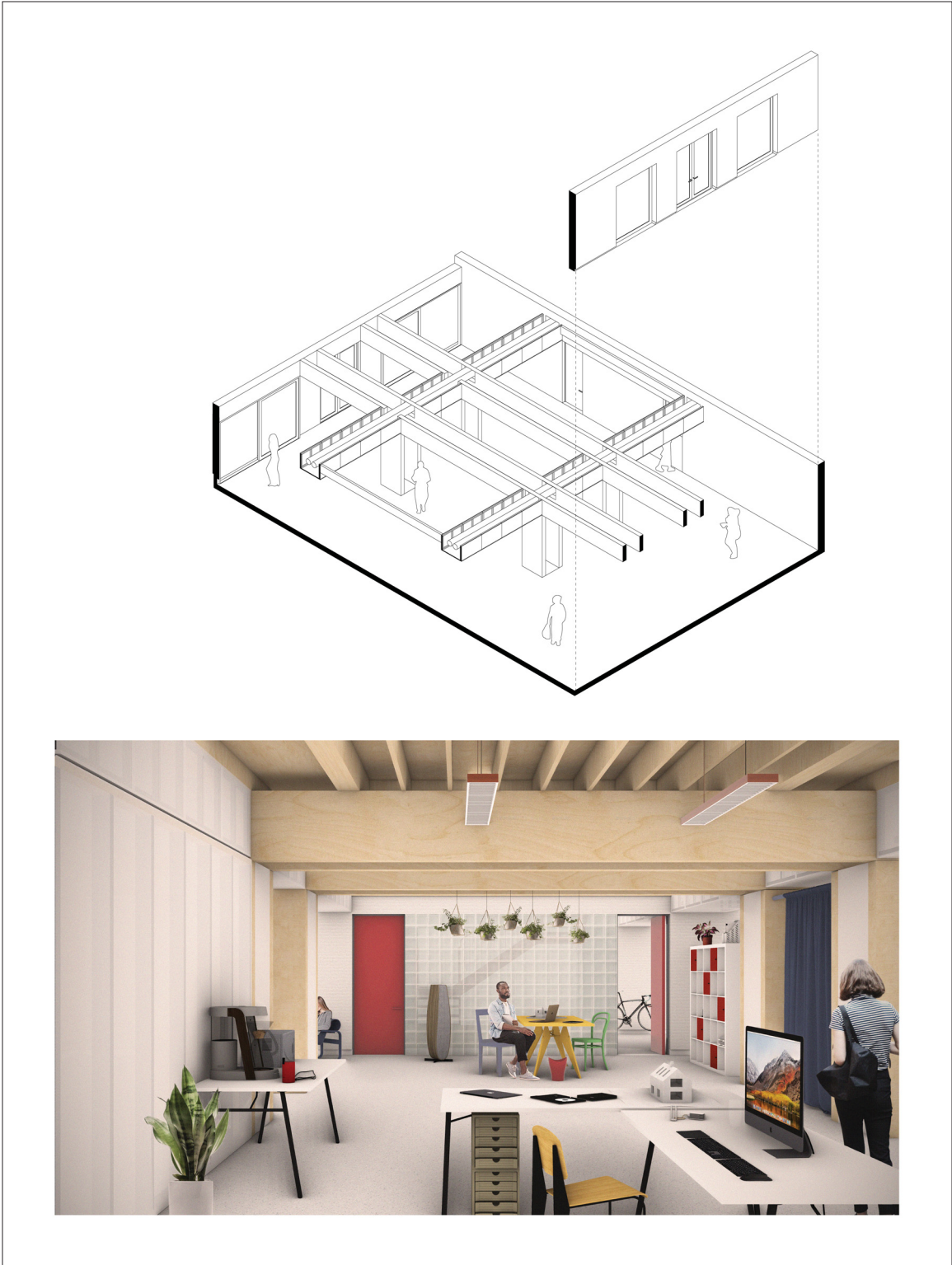
### **Collective Work Space**

The ground floor space between the party walls is a work space for the building tenants. The atrium remains common work space, while space on the perimeter can be rented by building tenants, by local business owners, or opened to the atrium to create larger rooms. The perimeter of the building can be insulated from the atrium, allowing louder programming to occur there. Linear floor drains allow wet activities to take place throughout the space. A patio at the courtyard side offers an exterior covered space and the studios can be opened to the exterior. The production of art and goods in collective work spaces ensures the reduction of the financial burden of designers and artists. The revenue from space that is rented subsidizes studio costs for the building tenants. The ground floor space accommodates a day care and a workshop.


#### UTENSILS

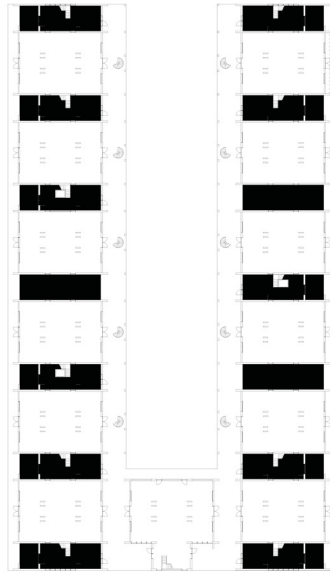
"The objects we will need will be only flags or talismans, signals for an existence, which continues, or simple utensils for simple operations. Thus on the one hand, the utensils will remain (with less chrome and decorations), on the other, symbolic objects such as monuments or badges. Objects perhaps created for eternity from marble and mirrors, or for the present from paper and flowers - objects made to die at their appointed hours, and which have this sense of death amongst their characteristics. Objects, which can easily be carried about, if we choose to become nomads, to stay in one place forever." (Lang, Menking, and Superstudio 2003, 121)



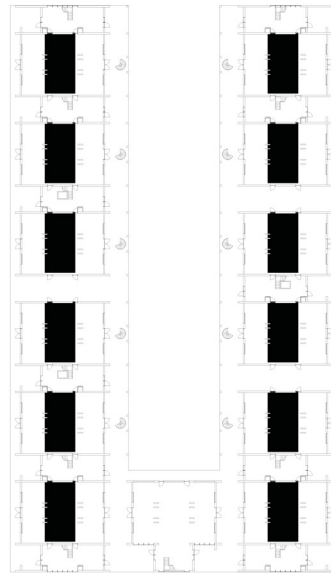


Communal work space, drawing, 18" x 24"

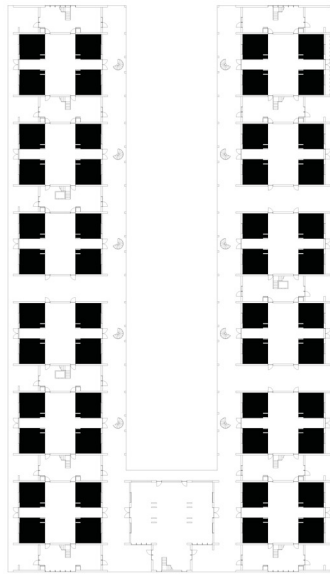
 **BUILDING DIAGRAMS**  
1/32" = 1'-0"



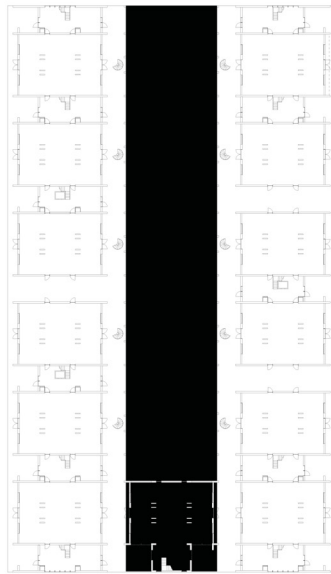
**communal living space**



**communal work space**




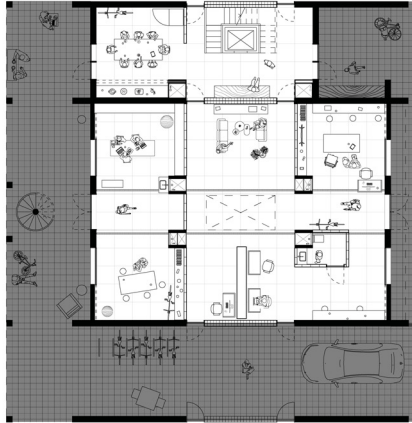
**individual space**



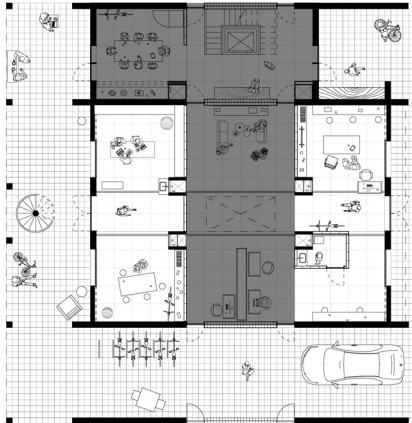
**public space**

Diagrams of typical individual space, communal space, public space, 18" x 24"

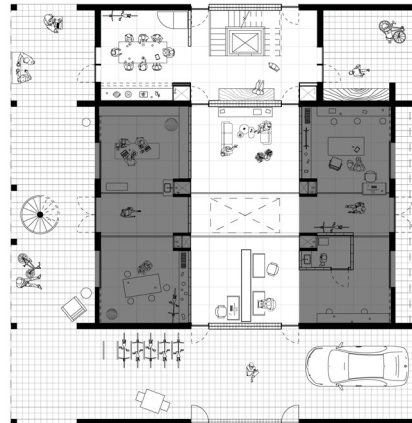
 **BUILDING DIAGRAMS**  
3/32" = 1'-0"



public space




communal space



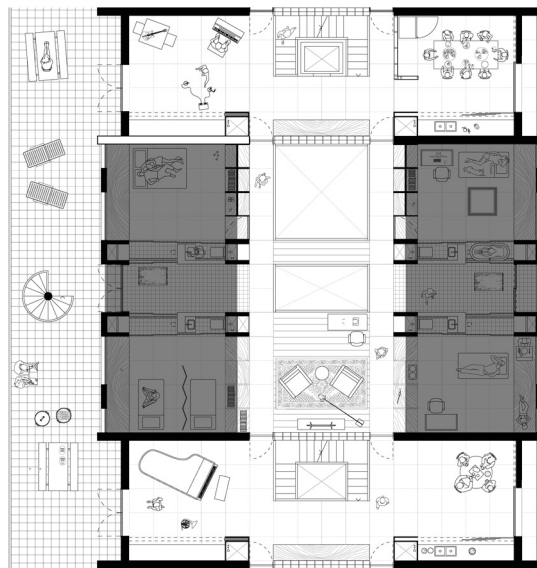
individual space

Diagrams of ground floor public space, communal space, and individual space, 18" x 24"

 **BUILDING DIAGRAMS**  
1/8" = 1'-0"



communal space



individual space

Diagrams of upper floor communal space and individual space, 18" x 24"

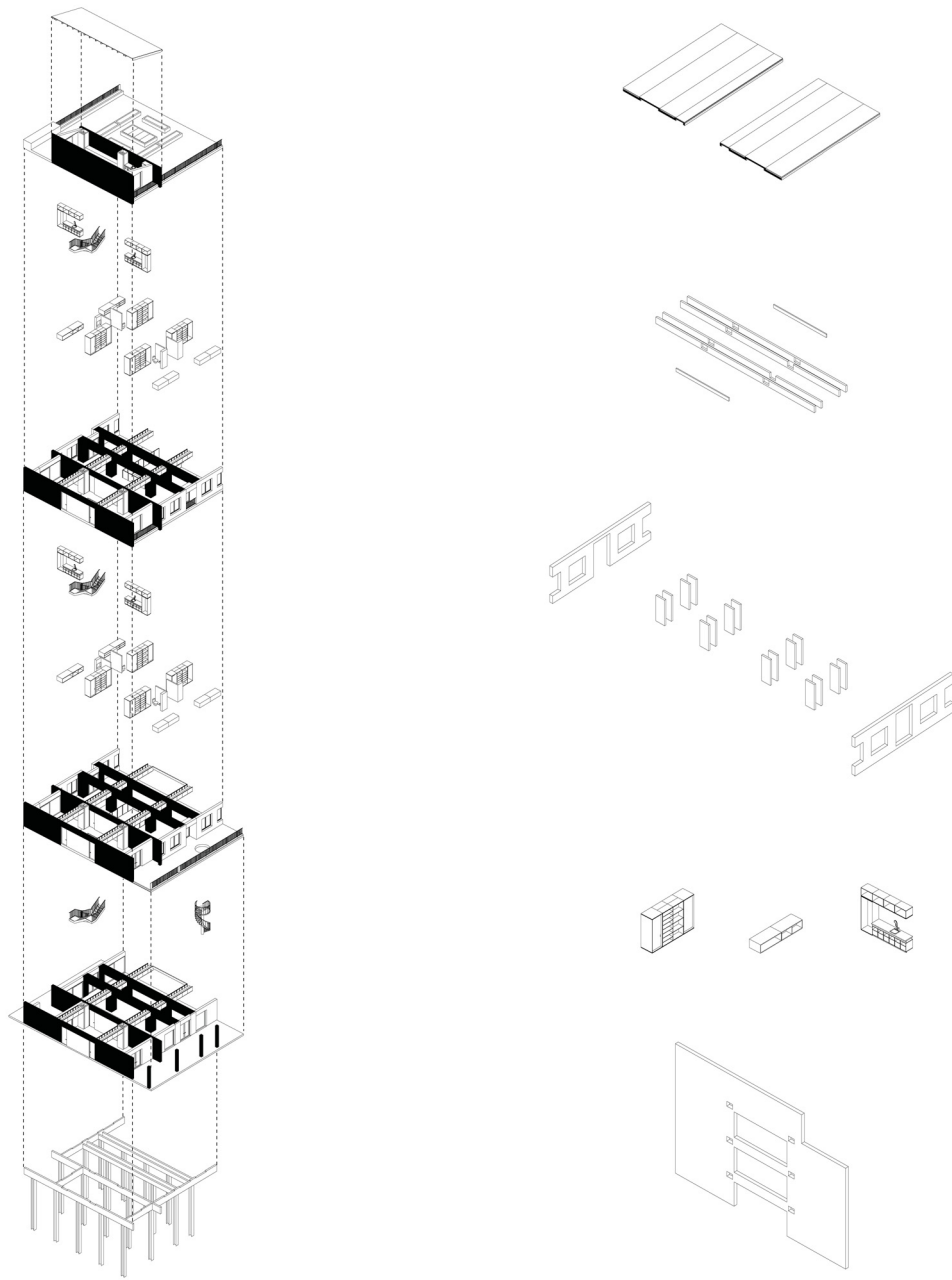
## **Structure**

The structure itself allows for flexibility, but also maintains common space throughout the building. The structural grid creates 12 foot by 12 foot rooms with 3 foot threshold spaces. These spaces accommodate services, millwork, and spatial separations. Nail-laminated timber (NLT) columns are made of two NLT walls with steel bracing between, allowing mechanical chases, dumbwaiters, or shelving to be built into the vertical voids. The columns support NLT slabs that are topped with concrete. Radiant heating is provided through a district heating system. Each room is provided their own manifold to control heat individually. The atrium and party walls allow for buoyancy ventilation to cool the space in the warmer months.


## **Urban Strategy**

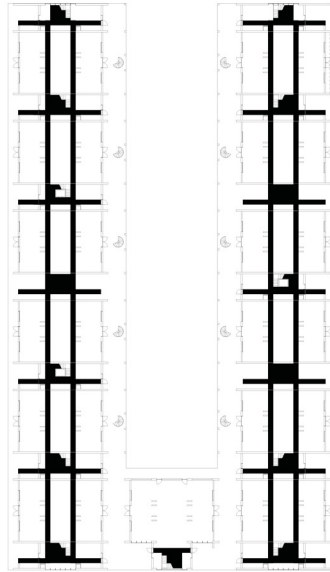
The urban strategy offers a courtyard as a space for community amenity; providing a pool/skating rink, a playground, a hill, and a dog run. A collective volume bounds the courtyard at the end of the block. A bakery faces the street and the second floor offers space for public programs. Several of the party walls are exterior spaces, allowing air to enter the courtyard from both sides, while providing several parking spots for the local car co-op. The building is set back at the street to allow activity to occur at the sidewalk, a car to unload, and views into the party walls. The roof also acts as a common space, where food may be grown and eaten. The skylights are operable, allowing passive ventilation of the units.

**BUILDING COMPONENTS**  
NTS

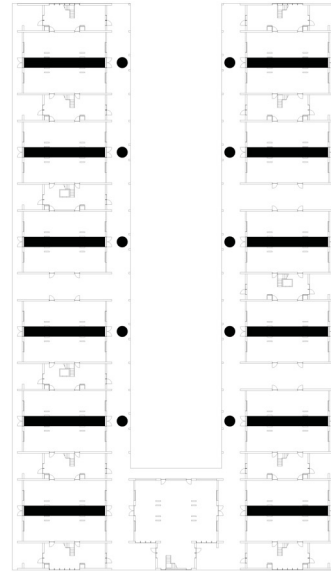


Building components, drawing, 18" x 24"

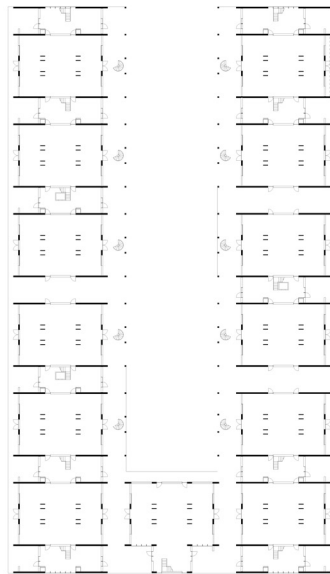
 **BUILDING DIAGRAMS**  
1/32" = 1'-0"



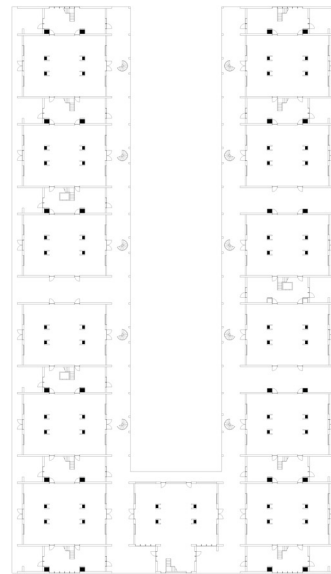
**primary circulation**



**secondary circulation**



**structural**



**mechanical**

Building diagrams, 18" x 24"



Urban realm, drawing, 18" x 24"



## Chapter 6: Conclusion

The building is made up of a series of rooms: indoor, outdoor, light, dark, dry, and wet. The rooms are separated by a margin of space, allowing a service to be installed or millwork to support the use of the space. The collective ownership model allows opportunities not possible in a private ownership model. Pier Vittorio Aureli writes in his essay, *Less is Enough*:

There is an increasing interest in more socially-oriented ways of living such as co-housing or sharing domestic space beyond the compound of the family apartment. But what is seldom discussed is that this way of life requires some effort. To live together requires less individual freedom, although that may be no bad thing. The question is whether such a way of life might only be developed out of economic necessity, or because it is only by sharing and coexisting that we can reclaim the true subjectivity that Marx beautifully described with the oxymoron 'social individuals' - individuals who only become so among other individuals. Here, less means precisely the recalibration of a form of reciprocity that is no longer driven by possession but by sharing; the less we have in terms of possessions, the more we'll be able to share. To say enough (instead of more) means to redefine what we really need in order to live a good life - that is, a life detached from the social ethos of property, from the anxiety of production and possession, and where less is just enough. (Aureli 2013, 59)

*Party Wall Housing* ultimately establishes a new spatial commons, offering a place of collective negotiation, spaces and objects for use and misuse. This is achieved through the *ownership model*, the *structural scheme*, and *partitions that redistribute space for being alone and being together*. By reuniting spaces for living and working, the project contests the logic of capitalism while providing spatial conditions that allow the sharing of objects and labour.

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