London Generation Rent

From nuclear families to cohabitation: anthropology of reappropriation

Ana Claudia de Lima Carvalho

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Cohabitation

/kəʊhabɪˈteɪʃ(ə)n/

Noun

The state or fact of living or existing at the same time or in the same place.[1]

"a harmonious cohabitation with other living creatures"

Dear reader,

Do not be fooled by the critical tone of this research. Housing is fortunately no culinary recipe, therefore I have no pretention in stating a binary point of view by declaring what is a good or bad typology for cohabitation. This is a call to all architects, developers, to all who have one day experienced 21st century London. It is a humble tribute to the souls who one day have been involved within the joys and disenchantments of renting in the capital, who I hope will find some food for thought at least, and hope at the most optimistic of scenarios.

This essay is a tentative to draw attention to an old and yet emerging problem by motivating the ones involved in housing development to rethink cohabitation as a different way of living, requiring other needs than the ones architects have been fulfilling in new developments.

No recipes nor binary answers are given in this text, however it proposes diverse solutions for similar problems for the ones who would be interested in embracing cohabitation as an architectural type in itself.

The never-ending rent-trap
chapter 1

Over the centuries, the cost per square meter in London has become one of the highest in the world to the point where buying a house or land seems a distant dream. Though this is not a situation specific to this metropolis, however, in the last four years, British newspapers have revealed the existence of a "generation rent", a generation that will never be able to afford buying a property and will have to rent a house for the rest of their lives. This fact may seem trivial, since this reality is not unique to metropolises, but the English capital comes to a higher level: the "generation rent" now faces the rent of rooms and no longer apartments. Despite the fact that often in the world we see flat-sharing as an essential situation in early adulthood, it seems to be the only way out for Londoners up to the age of 40 or even 50. This reality is often ignored by architects, who seem to design housing for the same model of nuclear family that has been wrecked multiples times, no longer nourishing the illusion of being the only possible way of life. Therefore, it is important to reconsider the way architects have been conceiving housing in London as the economic reality calls for a change of social beliefs when it comes to shared homes.

When it comes to housing crisis, London has a long history. The adult and middle-age flatmates being one of the consequences of the housing market state, it is not unwise to assume that the city's past has partially influenced the way we inhabit the capital today. Therefore, it is of great interest to recall some main moments in the modern history of housing that were crucial in the shaping of London's urban fabric.

Rodney Street, Liverpool Georgian terrace houses[153]

Paulet Road, London Victorian terrace houses in Minet Estate[154]

Map of Minet Estate[155]

A brief housing crisis history

As London grew into a metropolis, it started to experience a housing crisis that seems to have never ended, only metamorphosed. Consequently, one can suppose that a fraction of the housing crisis the capital is experiencing nowadays is a consequence of the decisions taken during Victorian and Georgian Era besides other historical events.

As London housing history is deeply influenced by the birth of terrace houses, this typology may be seen as the beginning of our modern domestic history. The housing market asked for a rapid and efficient urban answer to the needs of a capital that had been partially destroyed by the Great Fire of 1666. Thus, the Georgian town house became an abstract housing model made to occupy as little land as possible and to be as inexpensive as conceivable.[2] This typology will be increasingly popular by the end of the Georgian era and will later evolve into a less abstract terrace house: the Victorian row houses.[3]

The Victorians on the other hand face new problems. This era is characterized by a fight for hygiene and the awakening conscience of the need to control the metropolis.[4] It is also a period of serious housing crisis shaped by overcrowding and the need to build an important number of houses for the working class, as migration increases dramatically.[5] It is also the consequence of destruction of working-class houses for the sake of urban operations to embellish but also to improve the city.[6]

With the need to build homes for an overwhelming demand, the idea of land estate expanded itself to a less elite market, with models such as the Minet Estate.[7] This concept will evolve through the decades and evolve into the famous 20th century Council Estates. As those estates are built in the end of 19th century to fight overcrowding due to the housing crisis, the Council Estates strongly influenced by modern-

ist architecture emerge after World War II in order to rebuild a city that had been recently bombarded.[8] The decades to come will continue to be affected by a housing stock lower than its demand up to the 21st century.

The 21st Century London's urban fabric is known to be a unique patchwork of different housing stories dating from 17th century to our century and they all have a similar beginning: housing crisis. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition of those answers to a century old crisis gave the British capital its unmistakable identity. In a time in which there is still not enough new homes built to fulfil the demand, being able to take advantage of the perennity of these typologies to densify existing homes becomes imperative. Thus, answering the needs of the generation rent is an opportunity to rediscover the potential of the remaining witnesses of London's past in order to preserve its urban uniqueness.

The generation rent

British press has exposed many times an extremely recurrent problem in the UK: the generation rent. This generation of adults will never be able to buy a property, they were sold a dream they will never be able to fulfil, a dream whose origins will be explained later. Thus, they are forced to learn how to overcome the frustration of not achieving a social status they were taught to seek. As the years go by, the generation rent had to absorb internally a new level of frustration, they are no longer facing the impossibility to buy a house but the impossibility to rent a property alone, consequently being forced to share it with flatmates. Therefore, flat-sharing is no longer a necessary step at the beginning of adult life but a collective way of life imposed well into Londoners' 40's because of an economic situation. It is the result of rising property prices in the British

Generation Rent
noun BRITISH
"A generation of young adults who, because of high house prices, live in rented accommodation and are regarded as having little chance of becoming home-owners."[156]

capital because of a housing demand superior to the available stock.

Nonetheless, who are the people flat-sharing in London? They are obviously young adults in their 20's but what is truly fascinating is the rising share of people sharing a home in their 30's, 40's and even 50's as the housing market is no longer giving well grown adults the possibility to rent a small property for themselves. A survey led in 2015 showed that the number of house-sharers aged 35-44 rose 186% in just five years.[9] Also, in 2018, the flatshare website SpareRoom reported that searches by people aged 35-54 had increased five-fold over the past 10 years.[10]

We have been told by commercials, TV shows, films and other ways of media that the happily married couple with two children and a house is the way life is supposed to be but the reality is not as straightforward as we may think. People choose to stay single, they get divorced, families are recomposed.[11] These realities increase the importance of being able to afford a place to live on one's own. As the housing market makes it impossible for adults, who are no longer in the beginning of their adulthood, to do it alone they turn to flatsharing.

The British press has addressed the subject exhaustively during the last decade exposing the fact that flatmates are in all kinds of social and economic status. In 2015 the Guardian portrays the situation by revealing the views of Alex Forsey, 44 years old well-paid photographer trapped in the London renting market. Forsey is the typical case of a Londoner being obliged to share a home because of his incapability to afford a reasonable one bed flat; his flatmates are lovely but he cannot help feeling anxious about flatsharing at his age.[12] The Guardian also presents the experience of 41 years old Rachel Churney in the same article. Churney was able to buy a home in the North but had to move to London because of a job

opportunity and she seems to relate to Forsey's apprehensions as her own journey brought her feelings of uncertainty. At the time of the article, she shares her concerns about a recent demand of the landlord to take the property back, which means that she has to move out. It seems that the flatsharing life brings a certain level of insecurity and the feeling that one is no longer on control of one's own life.

Hence, this way of living concerns more than the lowest income classes, it is a problem of a market that is becoming too exclusive, thus transforming the act of owning or renting a home into luxury instead of a necessity. The generation rent is now facing a reduction of the sought private space to a minimal cloistered sphere; the bedroom. The access to an actual liveable private space for oneself is becoming a luxury due to the impossibility to rent a home alone.

Rachel Churney also found herself unable to rent a room as no landlords would allow her to bring her Labrador with her. Consequently, she rented a two-bed flat that she cannot afford, which led her to search for a flatmate. She recounts her first experience with a flatmate who was 10 years younger than her and estates that this age gap meant that she was the one mostly in charge of the house responsibilities which seems to be rather unpleasant despite the good character of her cohabitant.[13] The possibility of freely choosing where to live, for how long and with who is now imposed by the landlord.

But not all flatmates are forced to live in community, it is also a choice. Sharing a home does not mean choosing to live with others, it can also lead to more individualised forms of life. Some claim they do not like the loneliness of living alone, some want to build a meaningful relationship with their flatmates while some just value more the possibility to live in a certain location as it will be demonstrated in further analysis. One of the members of the *Stylist*

recalls having a flatmate suffering from similar intimate bodily issues and found in each other a place of trust that the flatmate could not find outside of her home.[14] Apparently, flatsharing does not have to be a burden imposed by a certain economic condition, it can be a choice for a person to live in a certain area. It can even be a pleasant experience. Psychologist Sam Gosling insists that there are even benefits in sharing a home as humans are better equipped to live with multiple people than living alone or with just one partner. He also adds that *"...as housesharing becomes more normalised, the societal stigma of sharing later in adulthood is quickly waning*."[15] Therefore, there is a certain potential that has not yet been fully explored in the new kind of domesticity generated by households composed only by unrelated adults.

Flatshare is also the opportunity to rethink the domestic space as we know it and develop new ways of living as a collective, lifestyles that go against the standard image of the nuclear family, a more wholistic way of living that takes in consideration other social status as long as an opening to rethink appropriation of the domestic environment. It is also an occasion of densifying existing housing stock in the metropolis with a parallel cleverer method, as London struggles to build enough housing stock for its population. In fact, some households even have empty rooms waiting to be occupied.[16] In conclusion, the idea of exploring the possibilities of reappropriation of the existing housing stock that has been deeply involved in the urban identity of the capital could be one of the arms fighting against London's housing crisis.

Architecture and lifestyle
chapter 2

Ways of living

Cohabitation is a remerging lifestyle that requires rethinking the domestic space but one must first understand what exactly does it mean to share a home before any architectural consideration. "*A lifestyle is a composition - in time and space - of daily activities and experiences that give meaning and shape to the life of a person or a group*". That is the definition of a lifestyle according to sociologist Luca Pattaroni.[17] In order to understand the complexities of cohabitation as a way of living, it is important to comprehend the exact meaning of this statement.

A way of living is mainly composed by the individual characteristics of a person, which can be related to one's past experiences and stories, but it is also determined by the environment in which an individual lives.[18] Therefore, it is composed simultaneously by the past and the present experience. It is also important to note that lifestyles are different from one another but they will always be shared by a collective.[19] Consequently, to cohabitate is to gather different individual experiences that form diverse ways of living that are shared in the same space and time.

According to Pattaroni, every way of living has three different spheres[20]:

1. "*Experiences and activities related to the living space*"
2. "*Experiences and activities where relationships with others and, more broadly, the development of a satisfying social life are at stake.*"
3. "*Experiences and activities which refer to a functional relationship with the built environment where, more broadly, the practicality of daily life is played out.*"

The first sphere concerns all the places that constitute one's easiness in the world but nowadays dwelling experience is no longer limited to housing, thus familiarity is no longer reserved to the domestic realm and other spaces develop the potential to become a sphere for one's easiness, such as cafés and trains,[21] spaces in which one could possibly live experiences that are now imaginable outside of one's home. The second one covers all aspects related to the way in which social and family relations are maintained as well as the conception of what constitutes a satisfactory relationship to others while the last sphere relates to the question of personal choices.[22] Therefore, ways of living are always a question of what motivates one to act and how meaningful experiences develop in time and space.[23]

Furthermore, Amos Rapoport proposes a study of the relation between people and their environments through a decomposition of activities in his book *Culture, Architecture and Design* and he claims that "activities are the expression of the way of living"[24]. Thus, cohabitation is a lifestyle composed of experiences and activities that demonstrate the way in which one interacts with the domestic space. However, it also suggests that lifestyles are not solely defined by personal parameters unique to one's own past and present experience, they are also influenced by external factors such as one's own environment. Thus, life in the metropolis will inevitably encourage other ways of living than the ones common to the countryside for instance.[25] Hence, the way one interacts with the built environment and the surrounding individuals is crucial to defining a lifestyle. Nevertheless, Bourdieu claims that ways of living are also influenced by factors external to the environment such as social and economic status. He also affirms that cultural practices are a reflection of one's social position.[26] Subsequently, not all experiences constituting a lifestyle can be linked to architecture alone. As architects, it is not

possible to design human interactions but there is an opportunity to influence a certain way of living by building an environment that promotes certain behaviours, thus the importance to be conscious of the kind of lifestyle we are building for. Additionally, one does not solely inhabit a home, as it was mentioned before, to inhabit goes beyond the residence, it expands itself to the scale of the city as it is possible to inhabit a workplace, a public space, a train.[27] As London's housing history has a significant link to the city's urban fabric, it has also an important effect in its urban space and the way Londoners interact with it. Indeed, housing is not a natural construction but a project that "has been gradually built up since the middle of the 19th century, as a statistical and economic category, as an architectural form and as a political issue"[28], therefore housing is the architectural form of an economic and political project. Indeed, London provides a strong example of this relationship already in the 17th century as residential squares such as the St-James square rise. This housing scheme is developed around a square that will increase the land value thus increasing the price of the constructions in it, these houses made for wealthy people become more expensive accordingly because of their location instead of their construction alone[29]. Consequently, the housing project starts already to become an economic and political project and dwelling becomes part of a social construction. Thus, a fraction of the experiences constituting ways of living are dictated by this same social construction which justifies the importance of being conscious of what kind of lifestyle we are including in the architectural project.

Taking this factor into account, it becomes clear that housing becomes an important element in city planning and if housing is related to a social construction of a desired encouragement of a certain way of living, then planning a city consists in excluding, as well as promoting, certain lifestyles.[30] We have been
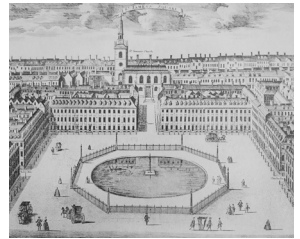
St-Jame's Square second state of Sutton Nicholls's view[157]
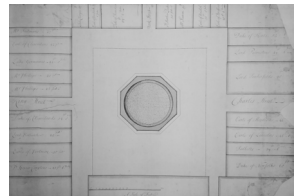
Plan of St-James square 1725[158]

witnessing in the last decade the rise of new ways of living induced both by the new practical possibilities and the value systems that accompany them.[31] However, as long as the infrastructure and the models of the old ways of life such as individual housing and the ideal of fulfilment through consumption and social distinction continue to exist, so do the lifestyles that they make possible.[32] Indeed, Pattaroni states that "*lifestyles do not depend precisely on individual psychology alone, but rather on the set of the material and institutional arrangements that guide and align the ways of living. [...] Thus, as long as the infrastructures and the models of the old ways of life persist [...] , also continue to exist the lifestyles that they make possible.*" [33] Furthermore, the nuclear family is no longer the one way of interacting with the domestic environment and may have never been the only one, but now more than ever cohabitation is a reality and not an alternative. To fully accept this lifestyle in our *palette* of typologies is to be mindful of the way of living buildings are designed for as much as to be conscious of the social impact it will have not only in the lives it homes but on the city itself. To design housing for only one way of living is to exclude others hence making the city itself less inclusive. Thus, one must understand exactly how this process takes place to be able to consciously design for cohabitation and recognise how the existing typologies encouraged the rise and reinforcement of the nuclear family becomes essential.

London housing

Indeed, it is not shocking to notice that Londoners flatmates live in dwellings that were built for another lifestyle: the cohabitation between members of the same family. Taking a look at the first 40 ads to appear in Spareroom, one can easily understand that London's housing history is still alive and inhabited.

18 out of 40 ads were rooms in terrace houses dating from Georgian to Edwardian era, while 12 were council flats and another 3 houses were ex-council estates. All of those categories together make up to 82,5% of the ads, which means that most flatshares in London take place in ex-council housing and terrace houses. Those ads also showed that most shared homes house between 3 and 5 people and often they have no other common space than kitchen and bathrooms.[34]

The typologies mentioned are great examples of the relationship between ways of living and architectural typologies and illustrate perfectly one of the main issues of cohabitation in London. Terrace houses and ex-council estates were designed for the nuclear family lifestyle, however cohabitation does not correspond to the same logistics of this way of living. Consequently, the following original features of these types of dwelling do not correspond to its contemporary reality but in order to understand why and how they still house such ways of living, one must recognise the relationship between these typologies and the lifestyle they originally encourage.

The terrace house appears for the first time during the Georgian era as the newest personification of abstraction at the time, an architecture that belonged to a narrative solely dictated by economy. Its typology was narrow but the rooms were distributed on different floors thus making the whole property a narrow but tall house, which is the consequence of a high land price. Thus, the size and hight of these houses were dictated by the economic need to fit as many houses as possible in one street. Every floor consisted in the same layout that made possible the distribution of rooms in such narrow buildings, one room would be placed in the front facing the street while another room would be in the back facing the garden. Next to those rooms was the circulation space with corridor and staircase as it is the only

Charles Hocking House, Mill Hill Park Estate London[160]
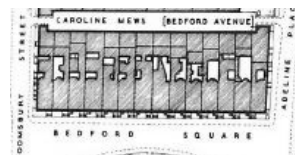
Council Estate
noun BRITISH
"A housing development built by a local council."[162]

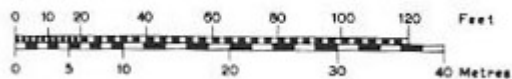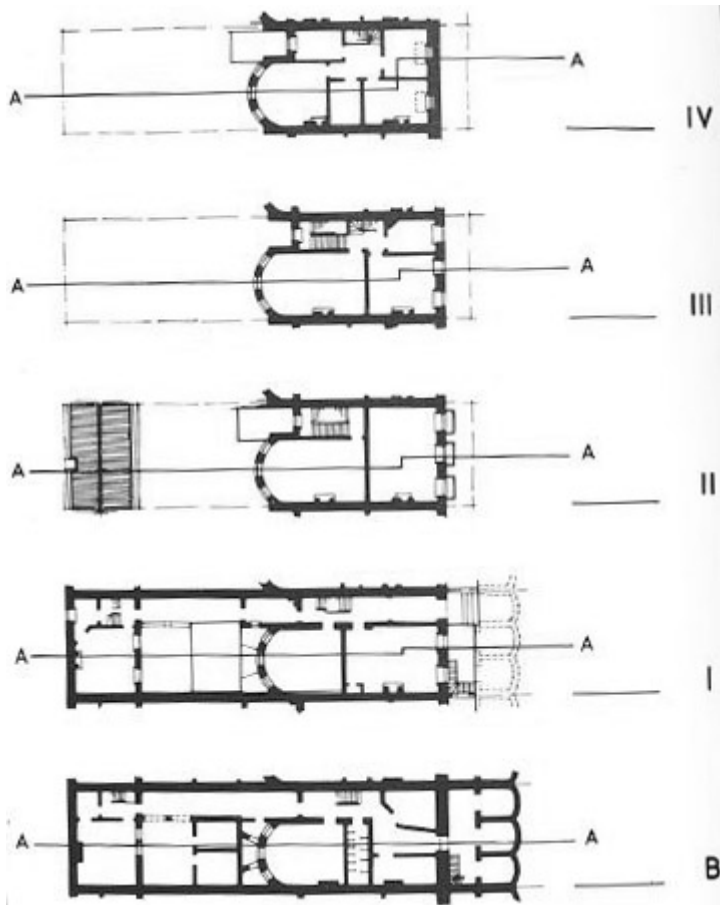**Terraced House**
countable noun
"A terraced house or a terrace house is one of a row of similar houses joined together by their side walls."[161]

Bedford Square, London Parcel plan[159]

Bedford Square, London
Best preserved Georgian Square in London[163]

A-A

IV

III

II

I

B

0 10 20   40   60   80   100   120   Feet

0   5   10   20   30   40 Metres

way to place it in this type of dwelling. The Georgian terrace house had also a complicated relation to the street as its ground floor was commonly built on a higher level than the street[35] thus distancing the private domestic realm from the publicness of the street. What made this first version of terrace houses especially abstract and closer to the way we build housing nowadays is the fact that this typology was in principle the same whether they belonged to upper classes or to the poorest classes, the only factor that truly distinguished both was the façade ornamentation.[36] Therefore, they are prone to a higher level of abstraction than its successors since they were above any other concerns the result of a building and estate economic issue, so the question of ways of living was a secondary one, meaning that regardless of economical and social status, the typologies would encourage similar lifestyles.

The Georgian townhouse became extremely popular by the end of the century. As the Victorian era started, new rowhouses had to be built and the terrace house kept its throne. Nevertheless, the latter is different from its Georgian ancestor as other problems arise.[37] During Victorian era what was at stake, besides a fight against overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions, was the morality of Victorians[38]. Thus, the Victorian terrace house was no longer as abstract as it once was during Georgian times but its typology remained similar.

The 19th century is also marked by a change in the spatial relation between work and dwelling. Pre-industrial Britain had been characterized by a combination of those two realms in one building but by the middle of the century, the row houses would start to banish all sorts of trades and crafts, then later in the century the division between housing and working became common even for the working classes. With this division came the idea of suburbs that was made possible due to the arrival of a more

Bedford Square, London Facade[164]

Pond Square, London Facade[165]

Terrace House, Brighton Relation to the street[166]

efficient rural transport. However, the suburban life started as an option for the more advantaged classes to live away from the burdens of industry and only towards 1880 the working class started to move to the suburbs.[39]

Pre-industrial London was also a time where housing was designed for a lifestyle that privileged the extended family while 18th and 19th century would encourage the emergence of the private sphere of the family and increasingly the nuclear family so the individual became more defined. It is a time in which the home becomes more specialized as activities such as work and leisure start to be carried outside of the dwelling space.[40] So the 19th century ways of living were closer to the 21st century lifestyle in those terms. However, the housing crisis was so important during the Victorian times that the newly built houses were ironically rented by more than one family.[41] So already at the time of their conception, row houses were inhabited differently from what they were expected to because developers somehow failed to assess the needs of the working classes by designing houses for a lifestyle that did not correspond to their economic and social reality. Thus, the individualized way of living corresponding to the nuclear family would not always dwell in the Victorian terrace house as intended, instead they were only uncomfortable for the more collective lifestyle of forced cohabitation, which was indeed the way families inhabited these typologies.

Between 1850 and 1880, cleanliness also became closer to godliness. In fact, concerns about the moral and spiritual well-being of workmen became stronger during that period. From this rising interest in housing came an increasing interest in morality which may clarify why that time has an outburst of religious indignation solemnly pledging for the improvement of domestic lives of the poor. However, this intensification of moral concerns is not only a

reflection of the Victorian beliefs but the result of a greater knowledge of London's working-class districts. Therefore, there is a belief that the filthy life in the slums is linked to immorality and unchristianity.[42] In order to ensure this type of godliness, the Victorian houses became more complex as they started to be constituted of more space and more kinds of rooms.[43]

Along with the rising concept of nuclear family came the strengthening of the patriarchal society, meaning that the home was the place that the working father would use as a refuge while the mother's task was to ensure this refuge. Although the fireplace represented a place of togetherness, the terraced houses both from Georgian and Victorian eras did not necessarily emphasized this feeling in their plans. In reality, the domestic plan would oppositely divide and differentiate, for instance by adding more than one fireplace in the house, Thus, the idea of a central large room would not be introduced again in the British home before the 1900's.[44]

Each room would be attributed to a specific function which testifies for decisive divisions and the reception room became more important during the 19th century, the "drawing room" being the most prestigious room. The latter was mainly used by women to withdraw themselves after dinner while the men would go to the study or the library. The dining-room would usually be placed of the ground floor while the drawing-room would be on the first floor, conveniently away from the kitchen smells and the dining-room. Thus, the idea of eating outside of the kitchen became very important and the best room was the front one facing the street. This spatial complexity led to a way of living in which everyday activities and more formal and rarefied ones were strictly separated, characterized by an increased desire of privacy.[45]

At the same time the Victorian terrace houses
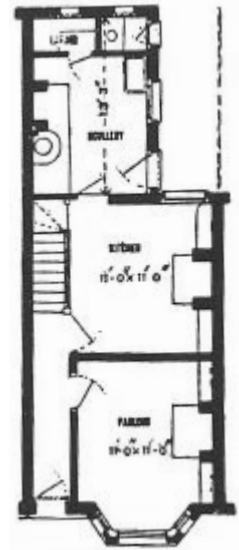
Terrace house ground floor plan c. 1900[167]
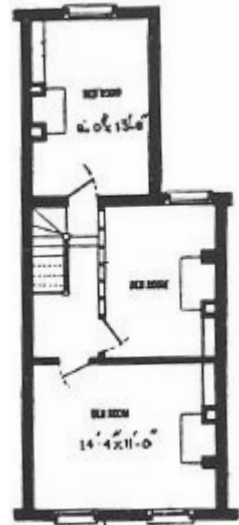
Terrace house first floor plan c. 1900[168]

27

emerge, the first London council housing rise at the end of the century.[46] Decades pass after these first experiences and different types of council estates were developed before the famous post-war complexes.[47] Post-war England wanted to build a society with less inequalities so there was less instability than France as rich and poor united against one enemy instead of being divided like Paris had been by Vichy. The difference between both capitals is also that London was bombarded by German Army and slums were not in the suburbs but in the inner city so the council estates were also built within the city to lodge its population unlike HLM developments that were conceived as an outside *cité*. [48] So after the second World War, there was an urge to build as many homes as fast as possible, leading to a competition between every succeeding government to demonstrate their own greatness to its people. Two of those Government's strategies shall be remembered: Bevan government in 1941 and Macmillan government in 1951. The first built 1 million houses of very high standard in six years but it was far from his 5 million house target which is also a low amount considering the after-war crisis. The second made a massive turning point in London housing history by being ruthless in achieving his target. Macmillan's government started to envision housing as a matter of numbers, thus the dwelling became an affair of stacking as many boxes as possible.[49]

The buildings from 1934 were the first estates to give access to the homes from a balcony as the blocks around a courtyard were meant to preserve the nuclear family by reproducing the suburban way of living.[50] The post-war estates are also somehow related to the terrace houses, the latter have in fact given birth to what the British call maisonettes. Maisonettes are multi-floored flats that have a direct access to the exterior[51] as the flat distribution was made through what architects call the *"street-in-the-air"*, an outside space that served as a corridor

to the flats.[52] Thus, the ex-council estate replicates the street of terrace houses repeatedly many meters above the ground.

After Macmillan it was Sandys' turn to bring an answer to the housing crisis by incentivising the building of high-rises. This tendency was to continue through the successive governments up to the 70's as in 1964, 60% of housing approvals in London were for the building of high-rise housing. However, some council estates of the time were also lower developments that copied some of the features of the high-rise.[53]

The new estates were to continue Le Corbusier's legacy by proclaiming the death of the street as we know, which is why Allison and Peter Smithson proposed instead a "*multi-level city with residential streets-in-the-air*". Therefore, the decks were designed by the architects as an opportunity to socialize and replicate the busyness of the street without its dangers. Unfortunately, this was not the case as these buildings were often possessed by a sinister soundlessness as Gary Oldman depicts the Ferrier estate in *Nil by Mouth*. The housing blocks would feel like a maze for the unfamiliar guest as much as it seemed to disconnect itself from the city and the *"street-in-the-air"* would often be spaces of fear. Oldman emphasizes this feeling by showing the constant feeling of insecurity floating above the women characters in the movie, who are constantly under threat in these spaces. *Nil by Mouth* shows that despite the vision projected by architects like Alison and Peter Smithson, these spaces fail to embody this ideal world. Finally, they were no ordinary street as no windows would look into the front doors would often belong to flats on three different floors, thus creating spaces that were neither public or private and that were devoid of any purpose.[54] Consequently, the unhomely appearance of these estates added to the underlying fear due to an image of a danger-

"Girl on a street in the sky"
1972
Sandra Lousada
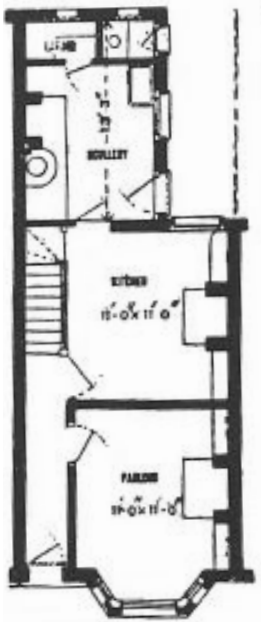*Robinhood Gardens, Allison and Peter Smithson[169]*

"Nil by Mouth" 1997
Gary Oldman
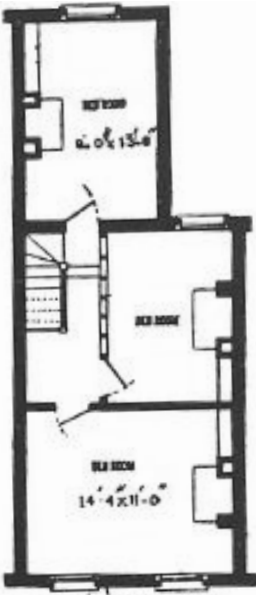*Kidbrooke Ferrier Estate, demolished between 2009 and 2012.[170]*

"Nil by Mouth" 1997
Gary Oldman
Val and her Mum return to the flat to find it trashed.[171]

Terrace house ground floor plan c. 1900[172]

Terrace house first floor plan c. 1900[173]

ous dwelling made people who had better financial conditions to flee from the blocks thus increasingly accumulating a socially disadvantaged population. Despite architecture's influence on lifestyles and its power to include and exclude certain ways of living in the city through dwelling, a certain part of this matter is due to political and economic issues that will always affect buildings. If housing is a political and economic project, then encouraging certain lifestyles should be included in this project along any architectural consideration. Thus, the council-estate depicted by *Nil by Mouth* shows on one side the impossibility for an architect to perfectly design the way one interacts with space and the consequences of the misconception of common spaces.

The maisonette flat may be seen as the heir of the terraced house as its *"streets-in-the-air"* seem to replicate the sought suburban lifestyle emphasised by the Victorians but opposed to its ancestor it abandons the complex domestic play set up to orchestrate a modern and more private lifestyle. The post-war maisonette is actually closer to the poorest versions of the Victorian row houses in order to tame the housing crisis. Indeed, its typology is oddly similar to the basic principle of any terrace house. For instance, the maisonette flat in Hatfield house, Golden Lane Estate, is narrow with one room in the front and another one in the back for each floor. However, what differentiates the flat from the Victorian row houses is that the kitchen is now placed at the front while the living room is at the back as if the place in which the reception takes place should be hidden away from the community external to the dwelling while the kitchen assumes a new relation to the street and the neighbourhood since it is no longer considered as a place of filth and is stripped from the intimate realm to become solely the place to cook assuming a strictly functional aspect. The maisonettes occupying ground and first floors are particularly introvert since the kitchen windows

only face the living room meaning that no passer-by can look inside the flat. Consequently, the council-estate maisonette flat reinforces the desire for privacy by keeping a similar rigid division of rooms that enables almost every room to be locked away from the others while firmly separating private from public space within the dwelling as well as in it hides itself from the street. Thus, the ex-council estate from 50's to 70's reinforces the ways of living that start to emerge during the Victorian era.

All of these typologies are still inhabited in the 21st century. Their persistence in London's urban fabric is no accident as they forged the peculiar character of the capital. Oddly enough, London is a metropolis shaped by its housing architecture that somehow managed to successfully impregnate our minds. Its housing tissue became one of the most iconic trademarks of the city and they even surpassed the conventional touristic status by conserving its purpose. This is probably due to the fact that these typologies encourage a modern lifestyle that is still quite similar to our contemporary ways of living, though new forms of interacting with others and space in the domestic realm have emerged. Londoners need better homes for cohabitation but this does not necessarily requires building new housing blocks. Indeed, both terrace houses and ex-council estates have also persisted in the urban fabric because of their flexibility since their layout is not extremely specific to housing. When one examines the plan without any furniture one could easily imagine replacing the domestic furnishings, thus it is easy to imagine a small office for example, or in a broader plan concerning multiple Georgian terrace house, one could imagine an architecture school, then is born the Architectural Association School's home in Bedford square. It is no surprise that Londoners flatmates persist in living in these typologies since they can easily readapt them to their small scale, however the rise of cohabitation as a lifestyle in itself asks for a long-term

Hatfield House
Golden Lane Estate, ground floor, London[174]
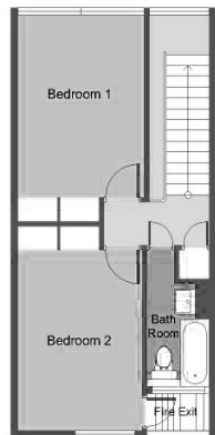
Hatfield House
Golden Lane Estate, first floor, London[175]

solution easing the life with others. Therefore, this transition could be imagined in the already existing stock in which Londoners already cohabitate.

Living together and apart

Nonetheless, co-living within unfamiliar individuals is a way of living that is prone to different peculiarities than living together with members of the same family and require architects to rethink the poetics of domestic space. So, in order to design for an emerging lifestyle, one must also recognise the needs and complexities of the latter.

Cohabitation is firstly a matter of conjugating different living experiences in the same space and time but at different rhythms. Roland Barthes introduces the concept of idiorhythm which refers to the way of living of certain monks in the Athos who live alone but who are simultaneously dependant of the monastery. The term belongs to religious vocabulary and its etymology comes from the words *idios* (proper) and *rhuthmos* (rhythm). Therefore, it designates a community in which all personal rhythms can find their own place. However, idiorhythm also indicates in Barthes's work all the companies that reconcile or attempt to reconcile collective and individual life, the independence of the subject and the sociability of the group.[55] He opposes as well the *system-family* against this concept,[56] cohabitating with family works with a different concept of rhythm since these rhythms are not independent from one another and they have to be played at the same pace sometimes. Opposed to the *system-family*, cohabitating without any familiar relationship is closer to idiorhythm. Indeed, the philosopher also refers to idiorhythm as his phantasm, "a return of desires, images, which lurk and search for themselves within you, sometimes a whole life and often crystallise only through a word",[57] a phantasm that is probably shared with

Idiorhythmic
adjective
"(of an institution) allowing each member to regulate his or her own life"[176]

anyone who has ever tried flat-sharing. Thus, the Londoner flatshare could be seen at first glance as an idiorhythmic collective but individual rhythms are not as quite independent as they seem. Just like the monks in the Athos, all residents live their own life following their own rhythm, they live their own private experiences at their own temporality while being linked to the same structure. Nevertheless, the monks described by Barthes are at the same time autonomous and members of a community, they have no obligations of praying, they can even eat in their own cell[58] while flatsharing suggests a copresence of different rhythms that have to be coordinated in the same space as they may overlap. For instance, if all residents must leave to work at the same time, they must negotiate who showers or not and in which order. The same silent negotiation may take place at night time in the kitchen to discuss who can use which utensil to cook or even at what time one can cook. Thus, cohabitation is a polyrhythm aiming to become an idiorhythm, different individual rhythms composing one same domestic polyrhythm.

However, one does not have to live accordingly to one's flatmate's lifestyle, many of these rhythmic conciliations happen naturally and unconsciously because they do not imply a desire to engage within the community or fully living a collective life, one can still live semi-independently. Life in community remains a choice as the individual must also make himself available to meet his cohabitants, they must choose to live collectively. This is paradoxical because even when one withdraws from the community, the absence of a certain individual can disrupt its functioning, thus disrupting other inhabitants rhythms.[59] Therefore, to share a home is necessarily to be part of a community to which we have to respond even if it does not mean to live collectively. To respect the principles of idiorhythm is to create an environment in which one can evolve at one's own pace, bringing to life a domestic play in which inti-

Copresence
noun
"The presence of multiple things together".[178]

Polyrhythm
noun
"A rhythm which makes use of two or more different rhythms simultaneously."[177]

macy and space appropriation are staged through public and private spheres but mostly important through the idea of threshold.

To share a home is to acknowledge the existence of physical and virtual limits that are essential to conceal individual and collective space. Doors and walls work of course as physical restrictions but there is a subtle line around the private sphere that takes place through tacit rules, thus building virtual boundaries. For instance, one should not disturb someone's individual sphere with the sound made in one's own private space or in the collective space, sound becomes in this way a limit in itself even if one is not physically present in a foreign private space.[60] This audible limit creates tacit rules of utilization of the common space which question where exactly one's freedom in space stops. In this sense, the idea of threshold is much more complex in the polyrhythmic home as it is no longer solely the visible distinction between private and public.

The lack of consideration towards this matter leads to a misuse of certain spaces or even the rejection of the common space.[61] Monique Eleb illustrates this issue in her book *Ensemble et Séparement*. During her research, she meets two groups of students living in two distinctive XIXth century apartments. The flat is characterized by its original enfilades between kitchen, dining room and main bedroom that correspond perfectly to the lifestyle of the time of its construction but this layout becomes problematic in the way the students use the common spaces. One of the students regrets the reality of living together meaning to not disturb other flatmates, which in her case leads to the withdrawal from the living room. She feels constraint to watch series and work in her room because she fears to bother her cohabitants. However, she enjoys working in the living room when she is alone in the flat.[62] The student gives up the living room since inhabiting it would mean

to cross her flatmates' virtual boundary since she could disturb them with the sound of her activities. Besides, the act of working requests a specific behaviour from others to not intervene in this occupation, which explains why this usage is not possible in the presence of other inhabitants, thus to work in the common space while others wish to use it as leisure is to deprive others from their freedom of use. Additionally, one would not dare to invite strangers to linger in the common areas without disturbing the cohabitants so when it happens, the whole flat-share is involved in a special event like for instance a planned party,[63] so it becomes difficult to invite someone to a more intimate gather within the common space.

The domestic environment has often been imagined as a binary distinction between private and public space, especially when it comes to cohabitation. The case previously described shows that this conception of space is inefficient as the shared home hosts not only visual and physical limits but virtual boundaries. Therefore, cohabitation requires rethinking the threshold to develop buffer areas as the "grey space" opposed to the rigid distinction between private and public space. Perhaps, to build thresholds in the common dwelling is to accept that there are different shades of publicness and intimacy.

There is also a corporal relation to space that silently relates to the question of intimacy. The way one interacts with the public space states massively about one's own idea of appropriation. Monique Eleb also recalls the story of a student who enjoyed working while lying on the couch but would not do it when others were present in the flat, as she cohabitated with men.[64] Perhaps this embarrassment comes from the fact that certain behaviours may be perceived by the spectator or felt by its actor as a sign of intimacy that has not been particularly desired. Eleb reveals this matter also by exposing the ques-

tion of clothing. In some cases, the residents would be dressed in the common spaces, such as kitchen and living room, with their "public clothes", which excludes underwear, but also the trip from the bathroom to the bedroom wrapped in a towel.[65] The way one dresses within the common spaces witnesses of the desired level of intimacy just as someone's behaviours do since they communicate one's relation to others and the environment. The simple fact that office workers wear shirts at their work environment is an indicator of this relation between clothing and environment.

With the idea of intimacy comes also the question of the unbearable. The notion of unbearable as "a set of phenomena originating in the familiar world but also contributing to its dislocation".[66] Thus, the unbearable as the individual that infringes the private sphere by imposing oneself, generally unintentionally, thus causing a feeling of embarrassment.[67] This feeling can obviously be generated by the over-exposure to someone's physical presence but one can also feel uncomfortable by a virtual presence such as filthiness. Indeed, dirtiness imposes a contact with the other as the responsible for the filth touches indirectly the private sphere of the person cleaning it, thus the act of cleaning becomes an excess of proximity,[68] which is why one may experience the filthiness of a loved one with more easiness than an estranger. However, flatsharing naturally imposes the confrontation of unknow dirtiness and the unbearable is especially present in common spaces in this case,[69] in particular the bathroom and the kitchen. What makes it particularly difficult to face is also a conflict of notions of habitability.[70] Firstly, because the concept of cleanliness and filthiness do not exist in nature, this binary opposition is in fact full of symbolic and cultural values,[71] which means that diverse cultures have different concepts of hygiene. Secondly, because it is also a question of appropriation. Since the unbearable of dirtiness is at the threshold

of habitability, the rejection of filth excludes the possibility of appropriation.[72] For instance, the process of moving into a squat requires the disappropriation of the previous squatter by cleaning the environment in order to be able to reappropriate the space.[73] The previous squatter leaves behind traces of his own personal use of space such as malfunctioning objects and filth, so for the new squatter to reappropriate the new home is to erase the imprint of its previous dweller through cleaning.[74]

Consequently, the question of the unbearable is also present in the concept of appropriation. This feeling comes from a tiredness of being together, the excess of proximity.[75] But this excess is not only caused by a physical presence or an explicit violation of one's private space, it also happens through misappropriation of space since it can be perceived as an illegitimate conquest of the common space.[76] As much as thresholds are important elements in the question of limits, space appropriation remains another virtual boundary. Just as clothing is an indicator of one's relation to a specific environment, the way one appropriates a space by adding and subtracting objects from the common areas is something to be rethought when it comes to shared housing.

Thévenot illustrates this matter with two examples of different manners of dealing with appropriation. The first scene happens in St-Petersburg. Two students share a room and so two different bedside tables can be seen, one is described as a "chaos indescribable in the eyes of the unfamiliar" and the other one as "prepared for a public engagement, but prepared by the choice of the objects chosen and their arrangement on a white tablecloth - as in a museum exhibition".[77] Nevertheless, both students have the opportunity to appropriate their own space as they have a specific location dedicated to them in the room. But this form of appropriation does not seem to function in the Californian cohabitation, which

leads to Thévenot's second scene. In a San Diego student housing flat, a new resident adds personal belongings to the living room in order to rearrange it. The episode will upset one of the flatmates who no longer feels at home.[78] A similar event occurs in a papy-loft described by Eleb, in which two inhabitants decided to place plants in the common room without consulting the other residents' opinion. This tentative of improving the common space will be misunderstood as an illegitimate appropriation of space, leading to the abandonment of the common space.[79] Therefore, space appropriation must go through negotiation in the common space, one cohabitant cannot try to appropriate a common space by imposing his personal views of a well inhabited space.

The question of appropriation reveals that a part of cohabitation cannot be controlled through design alone as it is influenced by the individual experiences that forge each lifestyle in the shared dwelling. Thus, certain ways of living can facilitate or complicate appropriation. As we can see in the Californian cohabitation and in the papy-loft, there is a rigid notion of private and public, a sensitive meaning of private sphere that often makes common appropriation difficult.[80] That is because of the importance given to the private property in the liberal society that aims to ensure and maintain individual autonomy. However, this conception of private sphere colonizes a reality in which different registers of appropriation cohabitate.[81] Thévenot displays a different relation to the question of private sphere in his research.[82] Dimas lived in a room for two people in a home in St-Petersburg, or at least he was told so. In reality he was living in a room where five people slept in. In the same student home people felt at ease visiting different student rooms,[83] so here the same private sphere seemed blurred by a different concept of familiarity in comparison to the cases showed previously.
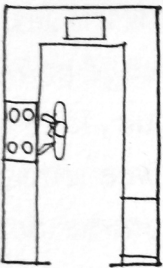
Shared homes have a complex poetics of space deeply linked to its lifestyle. If the flatshare is a polyrhythmic environment aiming for idiorhythmy, it requires a certain attention to the thresholds between public and private space along a subtle and well-designed organisation of those spaces in order to provide a comfortable freedom of use without the constant feeling of disturbing someone. Polyrythmy in the domestic space also involves rethinking how inhabitants can appropriate space and how housing could be more flexible as shared flats have a different concept of temporality.
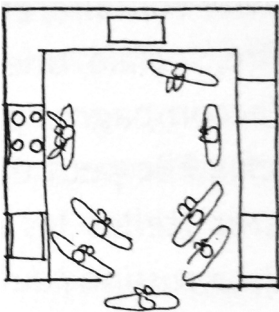

Kitchen stories

If architects must rethink appropriation, thresholds and flexibility within the domestic realm, then the kitchen is a good start. The kitchen is clearly a particularly important subject in the question of housing alone but it requires an even greater reflection when it comes to cohabitation due to all the current issues previously mentioned, that come along with this way of living. It is indeed probably the shared space that better stages all the complexities of living together and apart.

To cohabitate naturally involves being in contact with others and when it comes to human relations, there is an undeniable link to culture besides personal experience. A man is generally defined by the fact that he has a culture but it is also a paradox since many specific aspects of culture such as language, religion and eating habits divide the mankind.[84] Culture is also important to understand a particular group of people, situations and environments.[85] Consequently, it affects deeply the way we interact with others and space itself, it is a determining feature of a way of living. Therefore, similar environments cannot produce similar responses from all individuals.[86] For instance, the act of cooking seems like a trivial

task for surviving but the way one cooks is revealing of one's own culture[87]. The kitchen can be a private or communal space, it can host more than the act of cooking itself, it can be a central space in the house where all the inhabitants socialize.[88] Therefore, the kitchen is more than a crucial space for survival but an important stage for domesticity. For example, cooking can be extremely private like in the Kenyan culture with kitchens as hidden rooms or they can host many domestic functions of the house becoming the place where the children do their homework as it is for the British working class. Cooking can also become more than function, it can be a form of leisure which will give a different spatial meaning to the kitchen, thus developing the gourmet kitchen.[89] Therefore, the kitchen is also a great illustration of the relation between ways of living and space as it influences the way one interacts with the surrounding environment.

A study on the Porto Rican communities living in New York showed a great difference between the way of life the kitchen has been designed to and the lifestyle brought by the immigrants. As the flat was cramped, the kitchen was originally built to be as functional as possible but in the Porto Rican culture the act of cooking is more than purposeful, it is a representation of the feminine hierarchy. The women usually cook in front on the guests in order to show their status so the kitchen has to be larger in order to be able to stage the performance of all of those women cooking together. Thus, the efficient narrow kitchen is inappropriate for the lifestyle of the Porto Rican immigrants.[90]

This study shows that appropriation of the common space is also deeply linked to cultural factors since the question of the unbearable can unsurprisingly vary according to one's personal experiences and conception of habitability but also that world metropolises have the particularity of hosting confron-

Rational kitchen
A. Rapoport[180]

Kitchen readapted
A. Rapoport[179]

tation between two different cultures by the way of living it has been built for and the actual culture occupying it. But in the case of cohabitation there is also another level of cultural conflict between the inhabitants as they are often from different cultures. This study also demonstrates that once different cultures cohabitate together and are confronted to a design that prioritizes a different type of use, inhabitants will find ways of adapting the space to their needs. Consequently, shared homes, especially in international metropolises, need to be as flexible as possible so they can be adapted and readapted as the communities living in them change frequently, thus changing the way residents appropriate space. London is known to be a melting pot of cultures because of its cosmopolitan characteristics so it would be unfortunate to assume that only one way of cohabitating fits all communities residing in London as each culture has a different relation to the questions of intimacy and thresholds in general. So, the cosmopolitan shared home requires a certain level of flexibility in its layout because of its multi-cultural characteristics but also because of its temporality as inhabitants move frequently according to life changes such as new work locations, a new relationship or even a desire to leave the city. Nevertheless, the suppleness in the domestic realm should not be mistaken for the idea of open plan but the possibility of readaptation and reappropriation of the dwelling, it should reflect on matters such as considerations towards room sizes, possibilities of rearranging the dwelling typology or even distribution.

The kitchen also takes a significative role in the Londoner flatshare as it is often the only possible space for socialization since the living room commonly becomes a bedroom, thus going from public to private space. It is also frequently a scene for conflicts. Thévenot exposed in his article the tales of a communal kitchen in the Cité Universitaire de Paris that showcases the distinction between the origi-

nal design of the communal kitchen and the way it is used by foreign students. The communal kitchen was built following the principles of a shared space that is privately appropriated, but the Spanish and Italian students decided to give it a more collective meaning. All students have a specific delimited space for one's supplies, even in the fridge, each delimitation corresponds to one room so all residents have an equal space in the communal fridge.[91] This testifies for a more individual way of living, closer to the way Londoners live in their shared homes as it will be later demonstrated. A way in which all flatmates live according to their own private schedule and often feel only respect and friendliness towards their cohabitants being able to spend days without crossing each other's path.
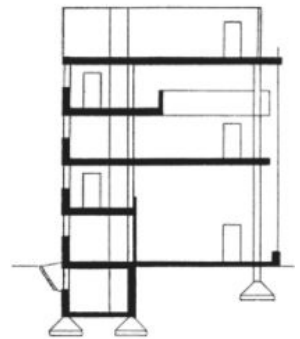
Nevertheless, these students decided to have a shared life conscious of the possibility of living actively within a collective. This group of inhabitants tries to organize themselves to cook together and eat their meals together which is something that the other students do not take part into, one of them will even state that "[…] *there are residents who use their room as a private flat. They almost never enter this room. Out of 60 residents, only 25 or 30 of them are living together*".[92] However, the casual lifestyle brings conflicts eventually. One night a meeting is organized for the students living in the Cité Universitaire because the "*food loans*" have taken a significant proportion. The meeting itself will not lead to a change in the way the kitchen is used but it will serve as an effective intervention to stop the conflict as the incident will not occur again.[93]

By exposing this event, Thévenot illustrates clearly the importance of the kitchen in shared homes. The kitchen as a common space exists in almost all possible cases of cohabitation as it is a vital space for all but also because it is a functional matter to not privatize the kitchen. It is often the only character in

the domestic play that assumes a social role in the shared home, therefore two types of kitchen exist: the extrovert and the introvert. The extrovert kitchen is a full protagonist that accepts its social character and becomes the place of encounters where flatmates discuss not only trivial domestic aspects but share experiences together. The introvert kitchen on the other hand is a domestic space that seems to refuse its social duties and is most of the time used by one inhabitant at a time. Then the introvert type can also be a privatized space such as the kitchenette commonly present in cluster flats.

The extrovert kitchen can be represented at its extreme by the communal kitchen in the Narkomfin building due to the original concept of the building and the lifestyle it is trying to build. The architect Ginzburg developed through his building the concept of 'transitional type of dwelling' by combining, in the same building, several apartment types, differing in the level of privacy. The building fostered and idea of transition from the family-based lifestyle to collective ways of living. Thus, family apartments were built within the lowest floors of the housing block while one-room apartments were placed on the higher floors. In order to encourage this transition, Ginzburg introduces communal spaces such as dining-hall and kitchens in the communal block thus separating common areas from private dwelling.[94] Therefore the kitchen becomes a space open to the whole community that explores dining as a collective moment in which a social life can be developed.

Narkomfin, Moskow, 1930
Moisei Ginzburg
Section[181]

The introvert kitchen can be well represented by the Frankfurt Kitchen. In 1926 Ernst May invites the architect to join his Frankfurt department in order to design the famous kitchen. The Frankfurt Kitchen was designed like a laboratory inspired by contemporary theories about hygiene, workflow and efficiency. Therefore "*each kitchen came complete with a swivel stool, a gas stove, built-in storage, a fold-*
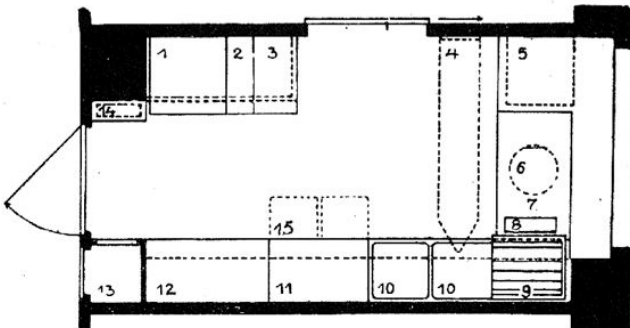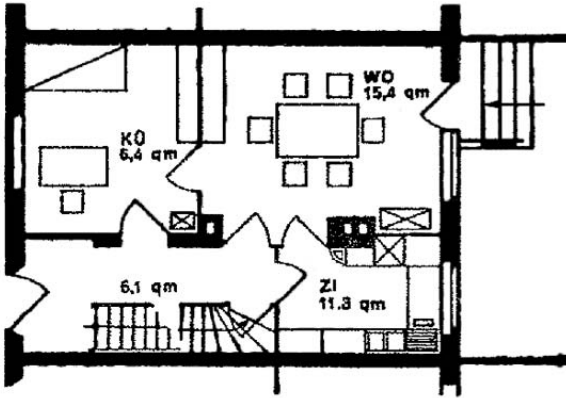
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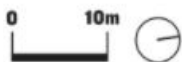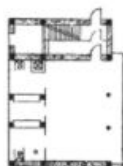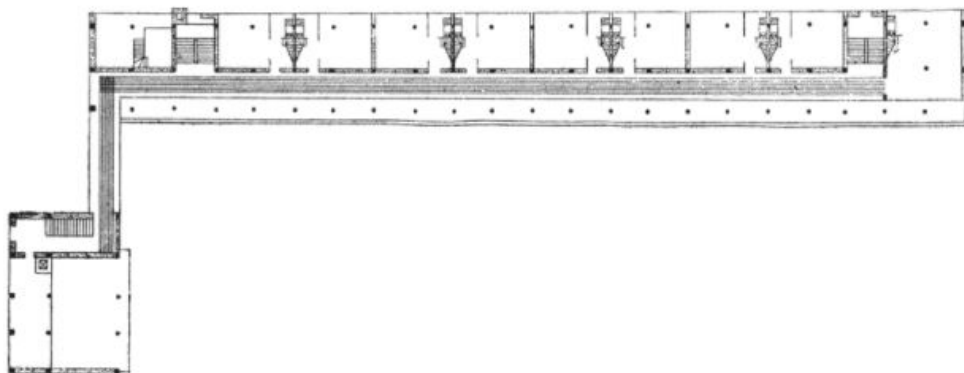
Frankfurt Kitchen, 1928
Margarete Schütte-Lihotz-ky[184]

down ironing board, an adjustable ceiling light, and a removable garbage drawer. Labelled aluminium storage bins provided tidy organization for staples like sugar and rice as well as easy pouring. Careful thought was given to materials for specific functions, such as oak flour containers (to repel mealworms) and beech cutting surfaces (to resist staining and knife marks)." Thus, the kitchen becomes extremely functional as it was created by the architect Schütte-Lihotzky who wanted to reduce the burden of women's labour in the home.[95] The ideas behind the Frankfurt kitchen imply that this room was a working space for women that corresponded to the popular ways of living of the 20's families, so there was no space to add any social function in the kitchen. Therefore, the Frankfurt kitchen is introverted because it isolates itself from the other rooms.

Those two architectural examples show that the kitchen has already been an important topic of discussion and reflexions about housing in the 20th century and, as one looks into the way Londoners have been living together during the 21st century in 19th and 20th century typologies it becomes clear that this room has not lost its relevance in the architectural scene when it comes to dwelling. The kitchen is indeed the room in each all the complexities of cohabitation take place. Appropriation is naturally an issue since it is a common space while the question of the unbearable resurface through the different concepts of filthiness and habitability. Appropriation in the kitchen also brings the question of private and public property, but it similarly requests thinking who has the right to use the common space and when, which probably will lead to re-evaluating how thresholds are built between private and common space. Besides, cohabitating in existing typologies often involves adapting the functional introvert kitchen to the needs of a way of living that requires a more extrovert kitchen. Therefore, one cannot rethink shared homes without reconsidering the role

of the kitchen in the domestic realm.

The London Life
chapter 3

As it was mentioned in the last chapter, Londoners cohabitate in typologies that were not designed for their lifestyle and have to readapt them for the ways of living of cohabitation and all the intricacies it involves. In order to rethink how an architect could reorient the existing housing stock, one has to understand how Londoners ways of living have been fostered.

Most flatshares host between 3 and 5 flatmates but each typology has a specific tendency due to their particular layout. For instance, terrace houses can fluctuate since their size can vary depending on the era they were built and for what social class they have been designed for. So, it is common to have smaller households of 3 people in these typologies but when gathering together the number of houses hosting groups of 4-6 people, the proportion becomes similar to the number of households composed of 3 people.[96] The tallest and wider row houses are also often subdivided in different flats thus becoming a home for more than one flatshare, which is oddly closer to their cramped occupation back in the Victorian era. However post-war council estates tend to host bigger households despite of their size. This is due to the fact that their rigid separation of rooms allows to privatize every space, including the kitchen which allows to create an additional private room by transforming the living room into a larger bedroom.

Since ex-council estates and terrace houses are the most common homes for flatshares, 4 people who are currently living or have lived in those typologies were interviewed in order to understand how flatmates use the space that were not necessarily de-

signed for them. B. and E. are in their late 20's and live together in what is possibly an ex-council estate maisonette with other 2 flatmates, while K. is in her 30's and lives in a eleven-storey slab block part of an ex-council estate[97] with 2 other flatmates and A. is in his early 20's and used to live in a Victorian house with 3 other flatmates. None of them are British.[98]

All the residents claimed to be happy with the place in which they live but it is quite interesting to recognise that all of them would prefer to live alone if they could afford it. There are many reasons but the most common is the will for finding freedom. Freedom to bring friends home, freedom to live the kitchen in the state they want it to be, freedom to make noise without having to care about others.[99]

When asked what they look for in a shared home, the social aspect did not seem to be one of the most important requirements. However, the location seemed to be an essential point,[100] which shows that there is still this idea of home as a refuge but the social life deploys itself outside of the domestic realm similarly to the Victorian era. Thus, the Londoner flatshare is closer to the lifestyle of a hotel more than the domestic nuclear family way of living. This fact may justify the kind of relationship all interviewed claimed to have with their flatmates, which is the "friendly stranger". Since all cohabitants seem to carry on with their ways of living at their own rhythm, their lifestyle is also closer to the idiorhythmic ways of living of the monks from the Athos. Nevertheless, K. being older, seemed to care more about the quality of the place she was living in than the younger flatmates interviewed while E. and B. seemed to care more about the social aspect of their home. This might be an indicator that the longer Londoners embrace this lifestyle, the less they search for more than stranger friendliness as they have accepted their fate.

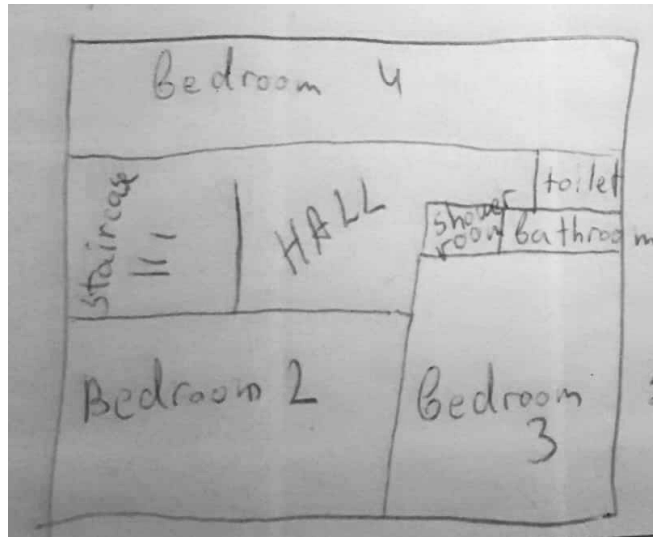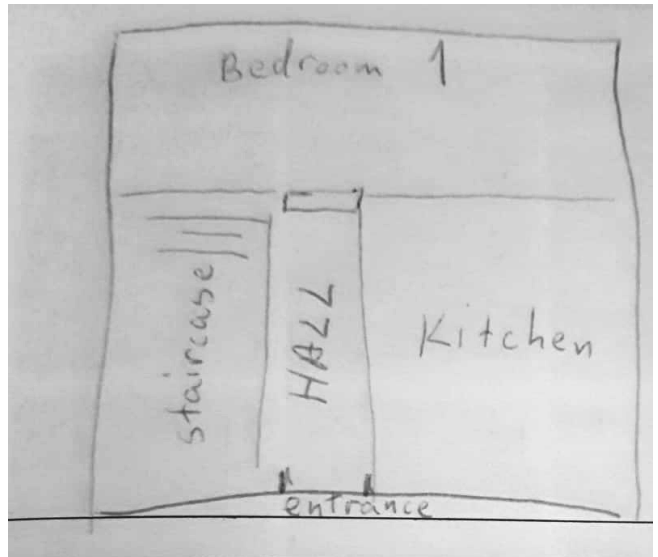The following points will be analysed in order to un-

derstand how the cohabitants interact with space: common spaces, in particular the kitchen, appropriation, thresholds and flexibility. All of these topics allow to understand how the intricacies of the 21st century cohabitation take place in the typologies designed for the ways of living that took place in 19th and 20th century.

Common spaces and appropriation

There are five types of common spaces in the Londoner shared home: kitchen, living room, garden, balcony and patio. The kitchen is omnipresent in all households because of its essential function but it can be either extrovert or introvert according to its size and individual ways of living. Because of the lifestyles these typologies have been built for, the recurrence of these public spaces changes according to each type of building. For instance, the terrace houses tend to have spaces other than the kitchen while the post-war council estates rarely have other spaces than the kitchen. The terrace houses incline more often to outside spaces because of the fact that they were conceived according to the ideal of the suburban lifestyle to which they no longer correspond probably because of the urban sprawl of the metropolis during the 20th century while the council-estates and high-rises were the result of the number competition between the different successive governments and aimed to house as many people as possible into one parcel.

However, the majority of these properties have the kitchen as their only common space, which is why it is such an important place in the flatshare. Although it is not always the case since terrace houses have at times other common spaces such as the terrace itself and a living room,[101] the kitchen keeps its relevance as it is a major witness of the changing functions of the domestic space, the conversion from the

B.'s drawing of the maisonette's plan
Ground floor and first floor

Bedroom 1

staircase

HALL

Kitchen

entrance

Bedroom 4

staircase

HALL

shower room

toilet

bathroom

Bedroom 2

Bedroom 3

purposes of the nuclear family to cohabitation of adults. Thus, the transition from the ways of living against the principles of the idiorhythmic organization to a polyrhythmic home.

For example, B. and E. claimed that the kitchen is big enough but while E. claimed it was enough as common space, B. stated that the kitchen can get crowded when multiple people are cooking at the same time and also she wished for more space to socialize such as a living room or some space to be able to bring friends over.[102] If we think about the time in which maisonettes were built, it was the time in which the nuclear family model was the rule to follow, thus the kitchen seems to be big enough for the cooking space and a table to eat since the woman of the house was expected to take care of the family, so she would be the only person to cook in the kitchen. While the living room still existed as such at the time the flat was built, it served as leisure space for the family but now that its function changed, it became B's bedroom thus the kitchen became uncomfortable at times for its new residents.

Nevertheless, the kitchen sure is a space that shows what sort of relationship exists between the flatmates. In all cases, the cohabitants share the kitchen as a space but not necessarily as an experience since they do not share their eating ritual purposely neither share their meals and ingredients. Every resident has their own specific space in the cupboards that shall not be trespassed. They occasionally cook at the same time by chance but they do not cook together or explicitly linger in the kitchen in order to create a special bonding. B stated at a certain moment that she saw her relationship with her flatmates as "friendly strangers"[103] and this connection is tacitly exposed in this way of using the kitchen.

Despite the fact that human relations cannot be solely dictated by architecture, it is interesting to understand why the kitchen seems to be abandoned as a
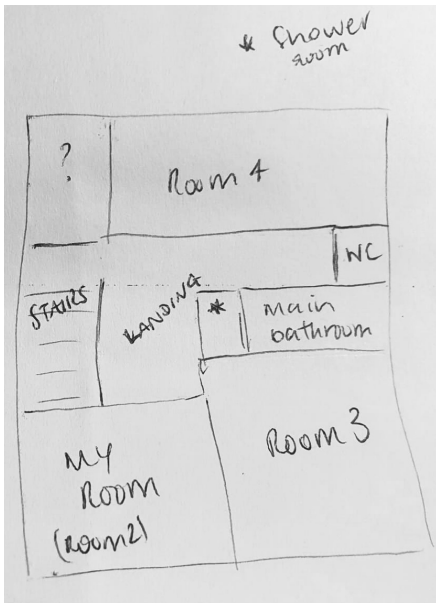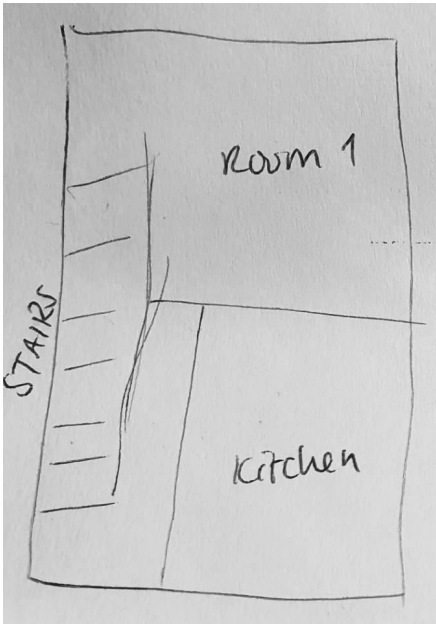
EXTERNAL CORRIDOR
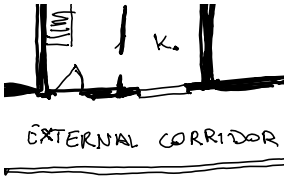
B. and E.'s maisonette entrance

social space in these two cases from an architectural point of view. The maisonette's kitchen is too small for a collective of people to cook together but another inconvenience might be its location. Opposed to the terrace house, the ex-council estate's kitchens usually face the "*street*", thus bluntly exposing the events taking place in it, which strips out its private character, but protecting the intimacy of the family by distancing all the other rooms from the occasional neighbour's gaze. In fact, B. even stated never using the deck access as a balcony because she saw it more as a corridor since it has not enough space for arranging it. This characteristic of the space facing the kitchen window discourages both the use of the balcony and the kitchen as a social environment. However, this layout is paradoxically convenient for the polyrhythmic lifestyle of the flatshare since the only common space of the flat is facing the external corridor, which means that all private spaces are set away from the publicness of the street, thus the kitchen works as buffer zone between the external world and the residents' private sphere.

A further sign of the abandon of the kitchen as a social space is its lack of personal belongings. Most of the kitchenware and cutlery belongs to the landlord, which can avoid tension between users while all individual kitchenware is hidden away from the visitor's eye. No signs of decoration can be spotted which shows a certain lack of interest into arranging the common space, a consequence of the unwillingness to inhabit the kitchen.

A. recalls his experience sharing a Victorian terrace house. He lived in with the Landlady, her teen son and another flatmate unrelated to the family. The house itself is divided in two flats, A. and his flatmates occupy the bottom flat with access to the terrace. Consequently, 2 households occupy the same terrace house which is similar to the way they were originally inhabited. As Victorians had to deal with

E.'s drawing of the maisonette's plan
Ground floor and first floor

ROOM 1

STAIRS

Kitchen

* Shower room

?

Room 4

WC

STAIRS

LANDING

*

Main bathroom

Room 3

MY ROOM (ROOM2)

56
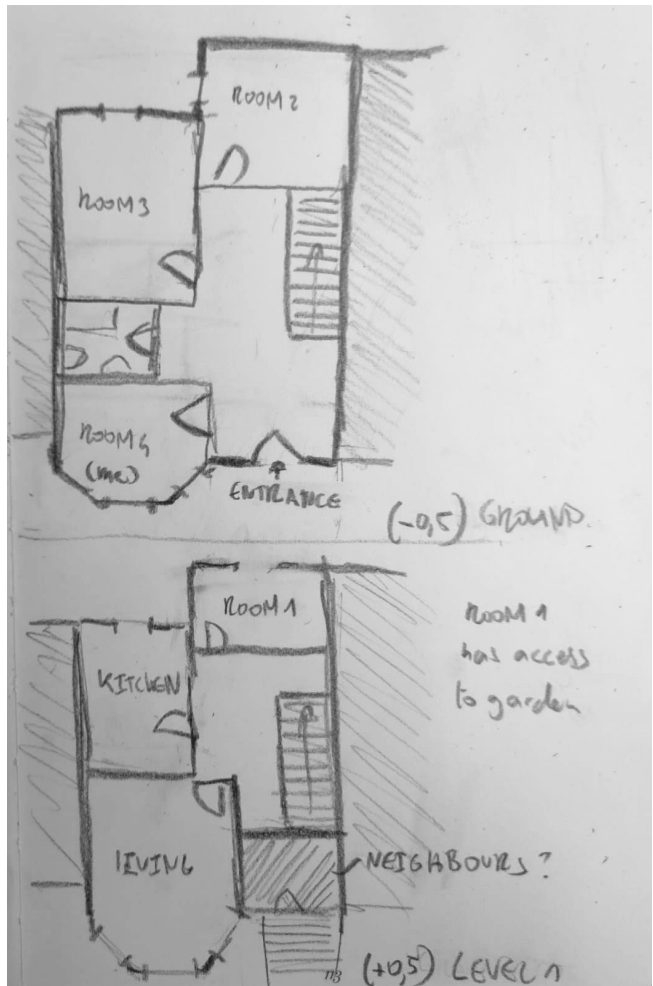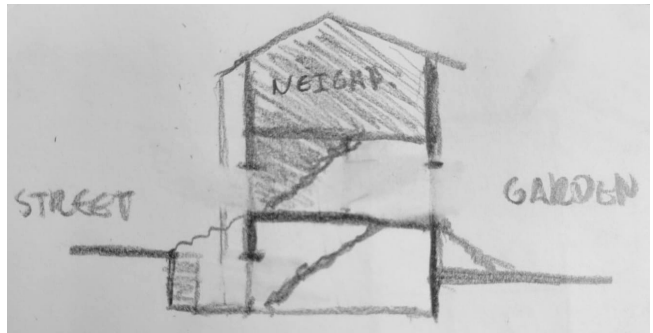
an important housing crisis because of the lack of homes in the capital for the demand it was facing, it was common for more than one family to live in the same house despite they not being necessarily intended for this use.[104] Thus, Victorian houses have been involuntarily homes for cohabitation since their creation and have shown an unfortunate potential to host unfamiliar cohabitation.

A. drew the kitchen slightly smaller than the bedrooms and living room, so the kitchen does not seem as spatially important as the other rooms. However, it stands right next to what is considered to be the living room facing the street. This combination of two common spaces can be justified by the original usage of the Victorians who wanted to divide everyday activities from reception space.[105] Therefore, the Victorian kitchen is an introvert one that wants to be hidden away. Since it was not conceived as a social space, its size is not adapted to this function.

Probably what allowed this use and what still guarantees the success of this typology is its flexibility. Likewise, terrace houses usually have more common spaces than post war ex-council estates because of its context, which can also justify a lack of attention given to the kitchen. In fact, half of them had living rooms, some had a terrace and/or a balcony, and sometimes when there was no living room there was at least an external space.[106] A. was one of the lucky Londoners to have this kind of space. However, he barely used it. He claims that he did not like the living room because of the decoration, everything had been decorated by the Landlady and he did not appreciate how it looked. Therefore, there is a problem of appropriation, since he was directly living with her, it was harder to appropriate space. Thus, there is also a problem related to power, since the Landlady owns the house, she is in a position of higher authority regarding the flatmates. As Barthes said, power hierarchy is always complicated in idio-

rhythmic systems,[107] thus a sort of independence is taken away from the other inhabitants. The Landlady probably felt that she has the right to position her own goods as she likes without permission since she legally owns the property, thus appropriation is far easier for her than her flatmates. It seems that the only space that the other residents can fully appropriate is their own private bedroom since even the kitchen has been invaded by the Ladlady's plants. So, to have access to more common spaces does not mean that there is a more collective way of living or that people will actually use it freely and it will be a plus for the dwelling, generosity and negotiation are also required.

A. also complains about the impossibility to use the garden as it is not well furnished. When asked if he could arrange it himself, he replied that even if he wished to, the Landlady would probably not allow him to do so. Also, to access the terrace, one must go through the teenager's room, which implies that to go to the common space one must violate another's private space. Thus, to encourage the usage of common spaces it is important to organize the space itself and its activities but also to facilitate its access.

When it comes to external spaces, one would be tempted to consider the external corridor as a balcony, however the inhabitants of the maisonette seem to disagree. As it has been mentioned before, B. confirmed that she ever uses the building's external distribution as a balcony since there is not enough space for arranging it and that the place is more considered as a corridor. Indeed, one would not want to spend time in a place where they could be watched by their neighbours. However, the kitchen creates a special link with this space. The kitchen's window is directly open to the balcony access making the extrovert kitchen in this case available to the publicness of the street by its direct relationship and by its size capable of hosting both eating

and cooking spaces. Besides, if one feels at ease to do so, it is possible to live the entrance door open as it would be impossible for someone to enter int flat without being seen by the presence of a resident in the kitchen. Thus, due to its relation to the main circulation, the kitchen becomes a point of control between the public and domestic realm. Therefore, it becomes more comfortable to spend time at the kitchen table looking outside thank actually lingering outside.

The external corridor also raises the question of how many people have the right to access the common spaces. K. lives in a maisonette inside a 11 floors slab. The flat's main entrance is an access through external corridor but what is odd in this complex is that the bedroom upstairs has a direct access to a similar space thus being directly exposed to the publicness of the street. Since all the flats on this same floor show the same glazed pattern, one can assume that this same floor is only occupied by private rooms implying that this corridor could be used as a shared balcony since no formal door opens to it. Nevertheless, in such a high and long slab one may wonder how does it feel to share the balcony with so many neighbours, it can feel rather intimidating.

It is important to consider that during these interviews, some residents complained about the kitchen but none protested against having to share a bathroom. However, the cluster typology that has been in fashion lately usually privatizes the bathroom while giving a kitchenette to each resident and a wider communal kitchen. When A. was interviewed about his experience flatsharing in a Victorian terrace house in East London, he stated his thoughts on cluster housing, which according to him duplicates elements irrationally such as the kitchen.[108] This inefficiency is probably caused by a misunderstanding of individual needs as the cluster flats replicate the studio type in a smaller scale while introducing

K.'s drawing of the maisonette's plan
Ground floor and first floor
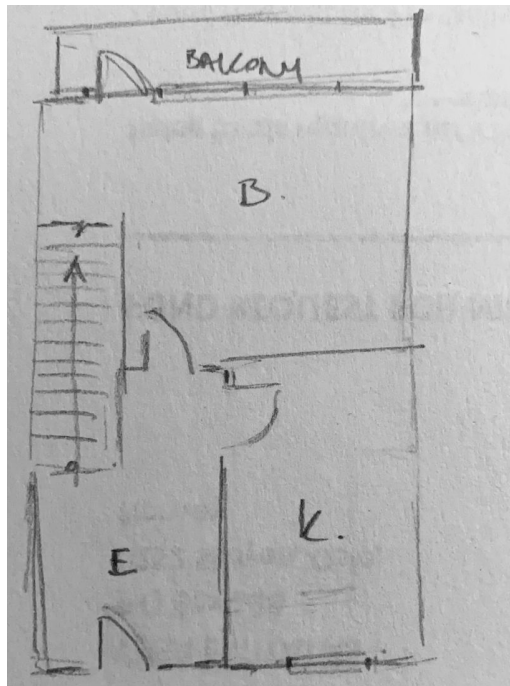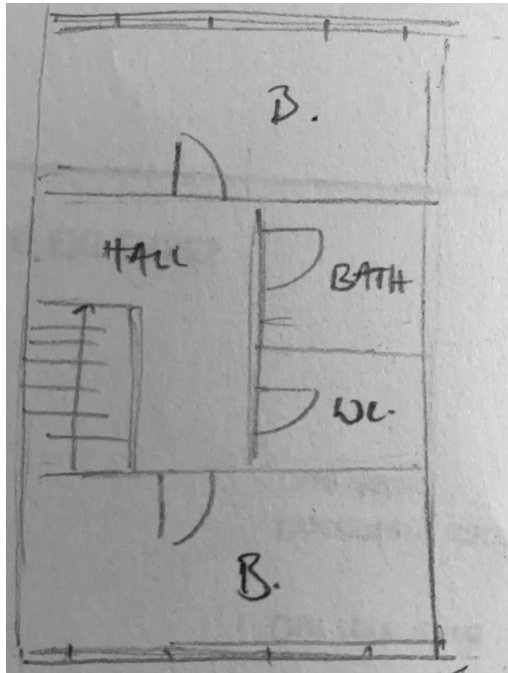
them in a broader context. Thus, the cluster housing has not questioned yet what spaces should actually be privatized or shared.

Perhaps the bathroom is not as problematic when it comes to sharing space because one usually uses it alone. However, it involves a harmonization of the domestic rhythms to not cause disturbances in the polyrhythmic home. Both maisonettes have different rooms for WC and shower, which allows for a better sharing as it gives the feeling as if two people could use the bathroom at the same time for two different functions without having to be in intimate contact with one's filthiness. Additionally, E. and B. have the chance of one ordinary bathrooms besides the separate shower and WC rooms, which helps preserving a greater independence of use. Nevertheless, it is important to add that the bathroom is also under a delicate position since it touches the dirtiest aspects of the human body, thus it relates to the question of the unbearable through the notion of filthiness. Therefore, the line between acceptance of sharing is rather thin because despite all good design intentions, if the concept of cleanliness between cohabitants is not compatible, sharing would be impossible. These simple features however show that it is still conceivable to bring cohabitation closer to the ideal of idiorhythm without having to privatize all human needs to a minimal scale, instead architects could question what can be shared at which scale and how. Besides the question of what rooms should be of common use, there is also a question of how many people share the same space, and once these interrogations are fully embraced, they naturally raise again concerns about thresholds.

Threshold and flexibility

The flatshare taking place in B. and E.'s maisonette also raises the question of limit between public and

private space. If one looks at the original layout of the flat, the bottom floor filled a public function as the kitchen would be at the front facing the deck access and the living room at the back away from the glance of a neighbour. At the top floor were the bathrooms and bedrooms just as they still are today. Nonetheless, as the living room became B's bedroom it disturbed this system. The biggest bedroom was now next to the kitchen which implies that all the noise and odours from the kitchen may disturb B. (which luckily does not)[109], therefore a certain freedom is taken out of the way one can use the kitchen as a social place or for example at what time one can use it, thus inhibiting appropriation because of the closeness to B.'s private sphere. Despite the fact that all the rooms can be closed and locked, there are still a non-visual boundary that can easily be crossed, although this original feature for the maisonette allows a certain flexibility to the appropriation of the home since all domestic spaces can be privatized, even the kitchen. However, this possibility does not seem to be sufficient to allow enough freedom for the flatmates and perhaps one of the reasons why the kitchen remains uncomfortable for socializing is the fact that it has a vital function in it and is often seen as functional space in this matter since all dwellers live at their own pace while the living room is strictly used for leisure. Additionally, as it was previously mentioned, the position of the kitchen in relation to the external circulation in both maisonettes may discourage one to linger in the kitchen.

When it comes to the Victorian house, the relationship between private space and publicness is similar. Indeed, the only room facing the street is the living room which is similar to its original Victorian usage. Similarly, to the maisonette type, all bedrooms except for the smallest one are kept away from the common spaces by occupying another level of the house, so there is still in both cases some attention to the division of those two spheres. This is a rath-

er classic and efficient way of partitioning day-time and night-time spaces in the modern family dwelling but such a complex lifestyle as the polyrhythmic cohabitation deserves to rethink these transitions. For instance, B. complained about not being able to invite friends freely[110] despite this easy spatial organisation and the fact that her room is the only one next to the only public space of the flat. Perhaps it is because inviting someone can lead to a certain discomfort and the apprehension of disturbing other inhabitants, so this issue requires an in-between room that is not in the intimacy of the bedroom but also not fully open to all cohabitants all the time.

The distinction between private and public space in the dwelling is similar in all of the three typologies presented, which explains why one of the rooms in K.'s flat has a private balcony. Considering the location of this private external area, this bedroom had probably been a living room in the past, which means the architect had imagined a pleasing feature for a familiar lifestyle but once it is confronted to cohabitation, the comfortable common space has to become private space in order to densify the building. The architect imagined an interesting feature to isolate the balcony at least from the gaze of neighbours by prolongating the dividing wall to the whole hight of the flat, thus protecting the privacy of the familial balcony from its neighbours. However, this feature becomes slightly awkward as the flatmate in the bedroom above can watch what is happening in the private balcony belonging to the room on the entrance floor, which means that one private sphere can look into the other directly. Furthermore, the bedroom on the top floor having an access to the common balcony overly exposes a private space to the public outside of the flat considering the proportion of the glazed surface. Nonetheless, it could give the inhabitant of the bedroom the luxury of entering into his/hers private space without having to face other flatmates.
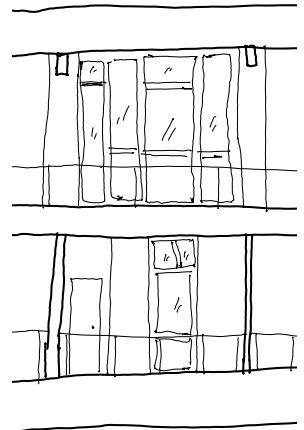
K.'s maisonette entrance facade
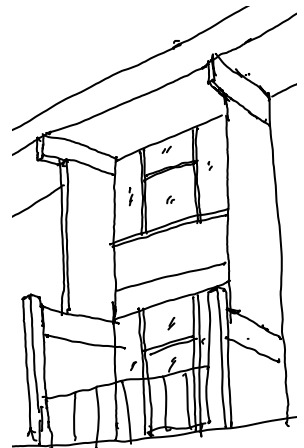
K.'s maisonette private balcony facade

When it comes to entrances, the Victorian house has also an interesting point. The terrace house being divided in two flats in this case, it required dividing the entrances. Thus, the inhabitants of the lower flat enter through the door on the level under the road, which was probably a functional entrance during Victorian times, never intended to be the main entrance, while the upper flat residents enter through the original main entrance. This typological change is peculiar since one would assume that the living-room exposed by the bow-window on the same level as the main entrance belongs to the upper dwelling, however it belongs to A.'s residence. Consequently, the living room is overly exposed to the inhabitants of another home when they enter, which would probably never be accepted in Victorian times as it breaks the distance it establishes from the public by elevating the floor, thus breaking the spatial logic of the Victorian terrace house.

Conclusion

All of these considerations showed that indeed it is possible to share a home in these typologies without any major architectural changes since they correspond well to a way of living that cared deeply about private sphere. Besides, those three examples show a paradoxical flexibility on their own special ways. Yet another question remains unanswered: if Londoners are happy with the place they live in but still want to live alone because of the freedom it implies, how can architects make home sharing more appealing? Architects cannot change society and economy, thus to believe that it is possible to make studio apartments affordable through architecture alone seems unachievable. Cohabitation on the other hand can be better designed for a generation that will hardly escape the rent trap and for that architects need to think of new ways of achieving a

freedom similar to that of living in one's own space while giving all the advantages of living collectively. Nevertheless, the dwellings analysed give hope that they can be readapted to better home this emerging lifestyle.

Brave New London:
rethinking collective life
chapter 4

Most Londoners cohabitate in spaces that were not designed for this way of living. However, more and more architects and developers are rethinking the collective dwelling and bringing new typologies to encourage this lifestyle. Therefore, to fully understand the possibilities and opportunities shared homes can offer one must be aware of the solutions existing in the market, and in the case of London it requires an analysis of the emerging typologies as well as the usage of its old existing housing stock. Cohabitation being a timidly resurfacing subject in architecture in the last 10 years, it is also interesting to understand what architects beyond the UK have been proposing.

Two main themes outstand from the following reflections: on one hand the large-scale collective dwelling through cluster housing and the concept of co-living, and on the other hand the local intervention that rethinks cohabitation at a smaller scale, but introduced into a bigger community at the scale of the city. The cluster consists in a mix between the comfort of living alone and the collective life, so it is the model that comes the closest to the concept of idiorhythmy described by Barthes. While co-living is a type of cluster, it has more than cohabitation in mind: it consists in living as part of a community, sharing common spaces and events[111]. Therefore, it can include in the renting bill more than the basic needs, for instance rent, concierge, internet, room cleaning, daily events and gym membership.[112]

All buildings designed for cohabitation face a matter of scale as they are built for different sizes of communities and elaborate spatial sequences accord-

The title is a reference to Aldous Huxley Brave New World as well as William Shakespeare's quote in The Tempest : "Oh brave new world, that has such people in it!". In The Tempest the quote has a positive meaning as Miranda is full of hope once she meets the men from the outside world, however the title of Huxley's masterpiece is ironic as John does not carry the same positivity as Miranda once he recites Shakespeare's work. Thus, the title here carries both promises and potential of a new chapter in the history of housing but simultaneously the disenchantment coming from certain examples. The title is intentionally ambiguous as these new typologies are still emerging and we are not sure of what they will bring in the future.[185]

The images regain their colour in this chapter in order to explore the materiality of the following spaces.

ingly. Therefore, three topics shall be analyzed: the Londoner co-living represented by The Collective, the swiss cluster typology represented by the Kalkbreite complex in Zürich and finally the network co-living along with the small-scale cohabitation represented by Noiascape.

The new domestic stages

The Collective

The Collective Old Oak, 2016
PLP Architecture[186]

The Collective is not a building but an organisation possessing different buildings that prone a collective way of living by providing fully furnished rooms and apartments along with communal spaces enabling inhabitants to experience a sense of community.[113] Their aim is "to build and activate spaces that foster human connection and enable people to lead more fulfilling lives."[114] The organisation describes co-living as "an innovative way of living that combines thoughtfully designed private space with one-of-a-kind amenities and ground-breaking experiences."[115] Therefore, The Collective sees cohabitation as an opportunity to experience a so called modern collective lifestyle in which the cohabitants can inspire each other.

The building chosen for the following analysis is more specifically The Collective Old Oak. The edifice was referred to at the time of its construction in 2016 as the largest co-living development and it is located in an emerging regeneration area, Old Oak and Park Royal Development Area.[116] The 16,000sqm slab mixes both social and residential spaces within a hybrid typology where collaborative spaces complement the private sphere.[117] However, the common spaces are diverse as the building is conceived like a vertical neighbourhood made of 550

micro-units, communal facilities including kitchens, spa, gym, restaurant, games room, cinema, library and disco launderette, and a co-working incubator hub.[118] Thus, working, living, creating, exchanging, socializing and entertaining are all condensed together in The Collective Old Oak.[119]

The ground floor and first floor are the most public ones since they only host public activities like the lobby, gym, bar, restaurant and co-working space, while the floors above contain private bedrooms, shared kitchens and one common space dedicated and accessible to all the residents of the building.[120]

There are two types of bedroom: the Ensuite and the Studio. Both bedrooms are fully furnished and equipped with a private bathroom, the only difference is the kitchenette that is private in the Studio typology and shared in the Ensuite bedroom. In both cases the entrance gives a direct access to the kitchenette followed by a tiny circulation in from of the bathroom door giving access to the double bed laying between the façade and a narrow wardrobe.[121]
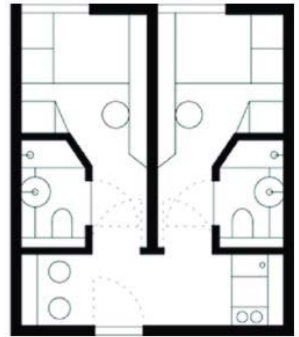
Ensuite bedroom in The Collective Old Oak[187]

Genossenschaft Kalkbreite

The residential and commercial building Kalkbreite is located in the intersection between Badenerstrasse und Kalkbreitestrasse in Zürich. The building covers a stop of the Zurich public transport company VBZ. Above the railway, is the 2'500 m2 large public courtyard.[122]

The upper four floors house 55 apartments with 97 units, in which 240 people live while 25 companies and offices with a total of 150 jobs take place in the two lower floors. The goal is to offer reason-

Kalkbreite, 2014
Müller Sigrist Architekten[188]

Kalkbreite, 2014
Müller   Sigrist   Architekten
Section and second floor[189]

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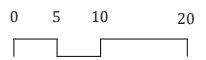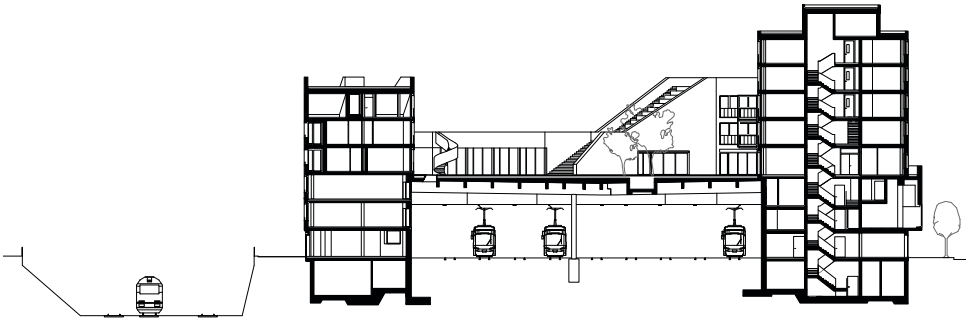
Erschliessung / Access

Büro - Dienstleistung / Office - Service

Gemeinschaft Gewerbe - Dienstleistung / Community trade - service

Gemeinschaft Wohnen Allgemein / Community Housing General

Gemeinschaft Cluster-Grosshaushalt / Community Cluster - Large Household

Wohnungen Grosshaushalt / Flats Large household

Jokerzimmer / Joker room

2 - 5 Zi-Wohnungen / 2 - 5 room flats

Nebenräume - Technik/ Auxiliary rooms - Technical

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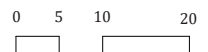
Kalkbreite, 2014
Müller Sigrist Architekten
Third and fourth floor[190]

Erschliessung / Access

Gemeinschaft Wohnen Allgemein / Community Housing General

Gemeinschaft Cluster-Grosshaushalt / Community Cluster - Large Household

Wohnungen Grosshaushalt / Flats Large household

Jokerzimmer / Joker room

1 Zi-Wohnungen / 1 room flats

2 - 5 Zi-Wohnungen / 2 - 5 room flats

6 - 7 Zi-Wohnungen / 6 - 7 room flats

8 - 9 Zi-Wohnungen/ 8 - 9 room flats

Nebenräume - Technik/ Auxiliary rooms - Technical

0   5   10   20

Erschliessung / Access

Gemeinschaft Wohnen Allgemein / Community Housing General

Gemeinschaft Cluster-Grosshaushalt / Community Cluster - Large Household

Wohnungen Grosshaushalt / Flats Large household

Jokerzimmer / Joker room

1 Zi-Wohnungen / 1 room flats

2 - 5 Zi-Wohnungen / 2 - 5 room flats

6 - 7 Zi-Wohnungen / 6 - 7 room flats

8 - 9 Zi-Wohnungen/ 8 - 9 room flats

Nebenräume - Technik/ Auxiliary rooms - Technical

0   5   10   20

able rents through a wide offer of shared, family, couple and single apartments while promoting a broad social mix. A large shared flat of 20 dwellings disposing of a large kitchen and dining room accommodates 50 people while smaller flats gather around a common room and kitchen. Besides, the complex benefits from additional spaces, also known as "*joker spaces*", distributed throughout the building, in the form of single rooms that can be rented as a complement.[123]

The Kalkbreite also hosts rooms for meeting and exchanging along with common spaces including activities such as guest rooms, workstations, training and meeting rooms, the reception hall with its cafeteria, a laundry room and a guesthouse. These rooms compensate the lower average surface per inhabitant. Indeed, Kalkbreite offers 33sqm while Zurich counts with an average of 40sqm. Finally, the complex is finally crowned by semi-public terraces on the roof intended for the use of tenants, who in return contribute to their furnishing and maintenance.[124]

Garden House, 2017
Teatum + Teatum Architects[191]

Noiascape, Garden House or Grove Mews

Noiascape is a property development company created by architects Tom and James Teatum.[125] *noia* means new thinking, new approach and new direction while *scape* means space, landscape, communities and places.[126] Therefore, the company is committed into creating alternate ways of living and working in cities.[127] They intend to create a network of spaces across the city that are open to all the Noiascape community, which means they are building a series of shared living spaces from gardens to libraries across London.[128] Thus, to live in a Noiascape building is to be con-

nected to something bigger that stretches beyond the front door.[129]

Consequently, the company has different housing projects and the one chosen for the following analysis is the Garden House in Hammersmith, London. The dwelling is a three-bedroom terraced mews house. Noiascape describes Grove Mews as "*the prototype for a modern living machine.*" It is made of flexible interconnected spaces allowing a flowing open plan to run through the house from ground to second floor. Two bedrooms, both having access to their own bathroom, are located on the ground floor with sliding doors allowing all the ground floor rooms to open and form one interconnected space.[130]

Garden House axonometry[192]

The double height space is organized over first and second floor, top lit and side lit, it creates a bright room leading to an enclosed roof terrace on the second floor. The whole house is defined by a vibrant mix of materials including birch joinery, laser cut steel bridges and red concrete floors.[131]

Designing cohabitation

Once the main characters of this chapter have been presented, it is time to understand what are the answers architects are bringing to the complexities linked to cohabitation in the 21st century. Chapter 2 demonstrated that the main concerns that make cohabitation such a delicate dwelling are appropriation, common spaces and thresholds. The typologies designed for this emerging lifestyle must be able to allow its residents to easily appropriate space while giving the plural and independent rhythms enough space to deploy themselves through rethinking flexibility and thresholds in the domestic realm. Therefore, the

preceding points will guide the analysis of these three different experiments that will show propositions of how to rethink living together.

Since the previous schemes were built for a poly-rhythmic community, it is important to define for what kind of lifestyle and for how many inhabitants the building is being designed for. Hence, the architect decides of the scale of a collective. However, an architectural project is not bound to be defined by only one specific scale, it can also have different communal scales within its structure like it's the case of The Collective Old Oak and Kalkbreite development.

Scale

The scale in The Collective is an interesting one since its changing along the different thresholds. There is a first vast scale which is the building, or the vertical village, as a whole. This happens with the largest common space like the coworking spaces, the restaurant, fitness room, yoga classes, the cinema room, the bar. In fact, it also raises the question of the scale of the city, linked to the scale of the neighbourhood outside of this self-contained world since some of these activities can also be open to externals, for instance the bar or the restaurant. Despite the similarity of the development to the scale of the hotel itself, The Collective Old Oak distances itself from the hotel typology in its procession between different scales. Hence, the transition starts in the large scale of the hotel but then the different private dwelling floors have communal kitchens that are meant for the direct neighbourhood of the floor which restrains again the scale. Then, once again the scale is reduced to fit the kitchenette as the buffer zone between the room and the neighbourhood. Therefore, there is a shift of scales at every door that is crossed, thus progressively reducing

the size of the community at every doorstep up to the private cell. This technique is supposed to allow one to fight a feeling of total anonymity and almost dehumanisation within the structure in such a large cohabitation with few private spaces while finding one's own place within the collective with the possibility of withdrawing from it when needed. Accordingly, there is an illusion of flexibility that allows the individual to coordinate private life along with community life in the shared dwelling. This progression of scale is indeed rather helpful in cohabitation because of its consideration towards thresholds and relation between private and public space. However, there are a few particularities in Old Oak that show that this combination is not enough to ensure personal development on the long run without taking other factors into account.

When one faces The Collective website for the first time, it may not be clear what exactly they are selling as little is said about the actual place they are renting in comparison to the idea of lifestyle they are marketing. The group also claims that the communities they are building have no age limit[132], which is technically true since this kind of typology is similar to the hotel room. The hotel room is thought as a short stay private cell comprising the commodities of an ordinary bedroom with private bathroom facilities and no-cooking facilities that still allow one to eat in the room if necessary. Subsequently, the hotel room is designed to fulfil the basic needs of a person during a short stay away from one's original home, thus being able to briefly accommodate any type of lifestyle. Since the guests are not expecting to stay in the hotel room for more than a few weeks or days, they are willing to bare features they usually would not accept in the domestic realm, such as the room size. Therefore, the hotel room is a typology that can easily host different ways of living because it covers the basic needs of a human being during a brief period of time. However, if the same

typology had to host the same lifestyles for a longer period of time, for instance a year, it would become unbearable for some of the ways of living it could host for a week. Considering the similarity between the hotel room and The Collective Old Oak room, it is safe to assume this spatial configuration is not suitable to such a large diversity of lifestyles as they claim. Thus, the way of living they are proposing is implicitly targeting young adults who are deeply focused on their career and would be willing to pay as much as "typically" 1083£ per month[133] to rent such a small room. It is subtly taking advantage of a generation living in the "age of loneliness" by marketing a dream lifestyle, the digital nomad community that gave up on the deskbound nine to five job to work remotely from anywhere.[134]

In fact, The Collective Old Oak is more successful as a long stay hotel than an actual shared home. Firstly because of its difficult relationship towards appropriation. The room is already furnished when one arrives, which is not necessarily a problem, it can actually be a desired feature, but its size makes it impossible for one to store more than the essential to live. Emma Ledger recounts her short experience in The Collective and argues that her biggest problem within the building was the size of the room which is no more than 8.5 square meters in which one can find a few shelves, a shower room and a bed that can hardly bear two people in it.[135] She also claims that it would be impossible for one to bring more furniture into the bedroom.[136] Thus, the private room gives away a feeling that one should not stay there for long by providing only the strict minimum of private space in such a way that one might think that The Collective is trying to discretely force its inhabitants to be always present within the community. Thereby appropriation in the private space becomes a rather difficult matter since one has few spaces to bring personal belongings or to simply rearrange the room in order to make it more familiar.

Its standard decoration also challenges personal appropriation in the common spaces since there is no possibility to add or take out any items as they are ready to use. Similarly to a hotel, the building ignores the needs of appropriation on the long run by imposing its style in common rooms without giving any possibility to change it. None of these aspects are an unbearable issue in everyday life but they do not correspond to such a large group of individual lifestyles as The Collective claims in their approach, thus limiting the ways of living it can house to only a specific fraction of the group of citizens concerned by the obligation of flat-sharing. Indeed, co-living developments claim that living is about experiences and not possessions[137] which echoes with the modern emerging minimalist ways of living. However, it is not yet the most common lifestyle at sight, therefore, The Collective Old Oak fails to propose a solution that could help easing the housing crisis in London on the long run. Matthew Stewart, a researcher and designer at the University of Westminster, claims that co-living cannot be a radical alternative if it is led by developers because it lacks the social intent of collective living.[138] He also points out that modernists almost a century ago already addressed the issues coming from interwar housing shortage with proposition of collective living, such as Karel Teige.[139] The Czech theorist proposed in his 1932 book *The Minimum Dwelling* to restructure living space around community and collective domestic labour.[140] Stewart also affirms that "The Collective make similar claims about solving the housing crisis but it doesn't stand up,". "Teige was talking about a mixture of different ages, generations, classes – it wasn't targeted at a specific group. It was more about democratising housing, rather than just having these enclaves of millennials who are being charged a lot of money."[141] So behind this apparently activist and revolutionary lifestyle, there is in fact an important economic motivation.

"Minimalism is a lifestyle that helps people question what things add value to their lives. By clearing the clutter from life's path, we can all make room for the most important aspects of life: health, relationships, passion, growth, and contribution."[193]

Nevertheless, when it comes to transition of scales in the community and appropriation, the Cooperative Kalkbreite seems more efficient. This transition is different for the latter since its goal is different from The Collective's objectives. Both claim to bring new ways of living although the question of typologies for cohabitation is an old one. However, the status of both groups shows already a different approach between them. The Collective is a group trying to make profit out of the process of gentrification while Kalkbreite was built by a Cooperative that, additionally to bringing new ways of cohabitation, aims to bring new dwellings for a more affordable price. Therefore, both buildings are in reality targeting two different ways of living. The Collective is implicitly targeting young adults with a higher purchasing power by making cohabitation "gourmet and sexy" while the Cooperative Kalkbreite is targeting a diverse population in Zurich that could benefit from affordable housing. Keeping these lifestyles in mind, the latter developed different ways of cohabitating in the same building through rethinking thresholds and flexibility in housing. The most public rooms are situated on the same level as the courtyard along with some ordinary flats kept away from the public by a slightly higher floor level while clusters, other ordinary flats and broader flats are on upper floors away from the most public area of the complex. The scale within Kalkbreite is not a gradually restraining of itself like in The Collective but a diversification of community sizes. The building combines indeed ordinary flats, clusters and flexible wider flats than a regular family apartment that can also be divided in into different flats or clusters if necessary. Hence, the cooperative is betting on housing diverse ways of living by developing different sizes and types of cohabitation.

Another particularity of Kalkbreite is that the clusters are broader than the bedrooms in The Collective. In fact, they are between 30 and 45 square

Gentrification
noun
"A process by which middle-class people take up residence in a traditionally working-class area of a city, changing the character of the area."[194]

meters which is the equivalent of a studio flat in Switzerland. Thus, the scale found in Old Oak's shared kitchens and kitchenettes can be retrieved if desired within the private domestic realm because of the size of these clusters, that could allow one to have at least some space to receive more intimate visits, which is not possible in The Collective. Thus, Kalkbreite is also mindful of the different levels of intimacy between residents.

Common spaces

Intimacy implies a possibility of socializing and in order to build relationships and conjugating diverse lifestyles that develop themselves through time and space at different rhythms, the architect must re-think the space shared between those ways of living. Thus, the common space becomes a key factor in developing typologies for cohabitation. When it comes to shared rooms, there are many types. Just like there are scales of communities, the shared areas obey that logic and must be analysed both individually and within the broader context of the building. Hence, spaces designed for cohabitation and sharing come in all shapes and sizes in order to encourage socialising and to simplify life in shared homes. Sometimes they can be especially wide as it is the case of the common spaces in The Collective Old Oak. However, most of its common areas are displayed in a way that does not allow one to withdraw oneself from others. Thus, the only possible way of one to withdraw from the community is to stay in the private 8.5sqm cell. The preceding considerations may seem debateable but in fact they would not be problematic if the private space was broader, thus allowing one to carry on more than survival activities such as sleeping and using the bathroom. Furthermore, privacy is not always about a need of withdrawing from the collective but simply the need to occasionally recluse in a more intimate and famil-

Common library in The Collective Old Oak[195]

Secret garden in The Collective Old Oak[196]

iar group. This option does not seem easy as most social spaces are conceived in a rather exposed way that does not create a pleasant atmosphere for a more intimate gathering like a living room, a kitchen or a house's garden would. As B. affirmed in her interview, one of the reasons why she prefers living alone is that she would not need to be considerate towards others which inhibits her from inviting friends over,[142] so to be able to have such private encounters is an important feature to make shared dwellings more attractive. Nevertheless, to meet anyone in The Collective Old Oak means mostly to interact socially under the gaze of other residents in an open environment that does not allow for more private and deep conversations that one would not wish to be overheard. Needless to say, this sort of gathering is no different than inviting someone to drink a coffee in one's favourite *café*, it surely is enjoyable but it is a different type of encounter. Consequently, this sort of open space is conceived in order to optimize the building's plan more than to encourage meaningful and sensitive relations. The Collective Old Oak probably lacks a space allowing for more intimate encounters in its scale transition. One could argue that the kitchenette could potentially be one of these places, however its introvert and extremely functional design makes it extremely tight to be considered as a friendly environment for socializing, thus inhibiting any desire or ability to mingle in such spaces. Consequently, The Collective could benefit from wider bedrooms allowing to add more depth to the design of community such as in the Cooperative Kalkbreite.

The Zuricher cooperative has a different approach to the question of common space as it provides more private than common space proportionally in comparison to The Collective. Their so-called cluster apartments are no different than a studio flat in other housing complexes. Therefore, the common areas for its inhabitants have a different focus, in-

stead of building shared spaces for the sake of survival they become an actual option for collective life, one does not have to engage within the collective in order to carry on with one's own rhythm. For a resident, to engage in these areas, is to choose to participate in the community, so in this case these rooms become an extra amenity to an already existing urban typology. However, as A. suggested in his interview, the cluster flat duplicates services in a rather irrational way[143], which in terms of comfort is pleasing as it allows one to have a private dwelling. Nevertheless, the solution proposed for the clusters in Kalkbreite may work well in Switzerland but in London it would be no different than trying to rent a place alone, so the prices would be unaffordable for most of the population. Therefore, to rethink typologies for cohabitation it is necessary to reconsider which domestic rooms and with how many people one is willing to share in order to avoid excessively small privacy or replicating the existing privatised models.

Nevertheless, the wide common spaces such as co-working spaces, libraries, common kitchens, cafeteria, game rooms, both in The Collective and Kalkbreite are highly appreciated regardless of the relation established between private and public space. These rooms allow residents to make themselves available to meet others and eventually develop a community. However, it is not enough to simply create an open room and let residents arrange it since this would also arise conflict between the inhabitants as it was previously shown by the cases studied by Monique Eleb. The community being considerably large, the question of the right of appropriation becomes stronger and therefore it virtually inquires who has the right and power to appropriate it. Therefore, for a major entity to impose its vision on common spaces of interior design and arrangements is not necessarily negative, and both The Collective and Kalkbreite understand this

issue. However, what truly makes it bearable is the balance between private and public space. Indeed, Emma Ledger states in her experience in Old Oak: "Co-living is not for everyone, but I think it is one solution to the loneliness crisis. It's certainly something I'd consider if I was moving to another city and wanted to live somewhere while I found my feet and figured out which area I wanted to live in, and who I wanted to live with, but I don't think I could cope with the lack of space longer-term."[144] Therefore, to be able to house not only young adults but also older adults, and perhaps even elderly people in the future, new typologies must rethink the balance between private and common spaces

Some of these spaces are also thought on the scale of the city. The features proposed by Kalkbreite are indeed rather enjoyable as they are thinking of housing at the scale of the city, thus being fully mindful of the impact of dwelling in the urban fabric. They propose both outdoor spaces that are exclusive to the residents but also a courtyard that is available for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The roofscape and the courtyard have different registers, the courtyard being open also to the city, it is available to everyone's gaze as it is surrounded by the dwellings while the roofscape distances itself from the gaze of its inhabitants by placing itself on the top of the building. The external space exclusive to the residents has a sensitive scale to its population because of the way it has been compartmented and arranged. Instead of blindly building a straight rooftop that creates a huge unique terrace, they scaled it down by creating different levels through a promenade articulated at strategic points by monumental staircases that can potentially be a space in itself. This features allows residents to easily appropriate and develop a feeling of familiarity by having a space that is not disproportionally broad to the human scale.

The Collective has also a terrace for its inhabitants,

Kalkbreite model[197]

Kalkbreite roof terrace[198]

The Collective terrace[199]

however as it was mentioned before, to socialize in Old Oak is to expose oneself to one's neighbours and it is no different when it comes to their external spaces. The terrace bluntly faces some of the private bedrooms and common spaces. While one would be tempted in claiming that the courtyard in Kalkbreite has a similar effect, its size and function makes it acceptable. The courtyard is indeed a place for the city and not only the inhabitants of the cooperative which makes this feature acceptable. Besides, it is superiorly wider than Old Oak's terrace. The Collective tries to create some sort of intimacy in the external space by building small wooden boxes that resemble garden houses in order to create a tighter space protected from the rain. Nonertheless, they seem rather uncomfortable firstly because of their size, which can barely host a table with two benches, and the darkness inside it. Therefore, the terrace seems to be closer to a rooftop at the top of a pub, which is still a nice feature considering the lack of external space in London.

Subsequently, it is clear that the Cooperative Kalkbreite has a more sensitive approach to cohabitation than The Collective, but when referring to common spaces in cohabitation one cannot avoid the kitchen as a subject on its own. As it has been demonstrated in chapter 2, it can either be introvert or extrovert according to its ability to host social interactions but the kitchen is also a crucial moment in the shared home because it is often the only public space in this domestic realm and it hosts all the complexities of cohabitation as a way of living. Anyhow, the kitchen is a common space full of potential that needs to be carefully rethought in order to build spaces specially for cohabitation. Thus, to understand how architects design common spaces in the shared dwelling, one must understand for which practices the kitchen has been designed.

The shared kitchen in The Collective is an odd crea-

ture. Its size is adequate for the number of people cooking together but when it comes to the place where one actually sits down to eat, there is only a small table for four people almost as the kitchen did not want its inhabitants to stay inside. Besides, its lack of windows contributes greatly to the unwelcoming feeling, firstly because it develops a feeling of being trapped, secondly because it complicates aeration. According to Emma Ledger, the competing smells in the kitchen were indeed hard to control[145] in a place where many different meals are cooked at the same time. The feeling of discomfort and unhomeliness is further amplified by a kitchen that strangely has no tiles in it but instead a sort of styled wall painting on the right side and green painting on the other. Additionally, the furniture does not seem of better than average quality. It becomes clear that The Collective Old Oak has a great interest in the broadest common areas but when it comes to a smaller scale, a strange feeling of rejection emanates from these spaces as they would intentionally build the construction for a stay that will not last for long.

Since Kalkbreite homes different types of cohabitation, it unsurprisingly has different sorts of kitchens: the cafeteria on the same level as the courtyard, the cluster common kitchens, the family kitchen in private flats and private kitchenettes in the clusters. The cafeteria is the most important one in size since it approaches a larger community while the common kitchens are adapted to the size of each group of clusters, being almost as big as a cluster, seeming appropriate in size since instead of serving 30 residents as it is the case in The Collective[146] it may be used by 10 people if one cluster host one person or up to 20 inhabitants if each cluster hosts 2 people. In any case, the surface of 30 to 40sqm seems appropriate. However, when looking at the plan, the imagined appliances imagined looks insufficient for the number of residents using the facilities. Besides its

Common kitchen in The Collective[200]

Cafeteria in Kalkbreite[201]

Cafeteria in Kalkbreite[202]

surface, the common kitchen has also an access to a balcony, thus transforming the kitchen into a pleasant room not only for its function but for engaging within the collective.

The cafeteria on the other hand gives into a natural feeling of community by its ceiling hight that is superior than the average kitchen hight of a home. Beside the well-crafted surface of exposed concrete mixed with wooden and delicate kitchen tiles gives the whole space a sophistication despite the average quality of the cafeteria tables. It creates a nice atmosphere in which one would appreciate to engage as part of a community. Therefore, the cooperative Kalkbreite seems to have given special attention to the kitchen as an extrovert and collective space.

Nevertheless, as it has been mentioned multiple times, the kitchenette can be an irrational duplication of appliances, and the clusters in Kalkbreite fall into that category. On the other side, the idea raised by The Collective Old Oak of sharing the kitchenette between two inhabitants is also interesting because it minimises this multiplication of services. Yet it raises questions, for instance what would happen if one wanted to use the kitchenette when the neighbouring resident was already using it ? What if one of the two inhabitants has an odd sense of smell? The kitchen becomes more personal and intimate because the source of the dirty becomes obvious with so few sharing. The Collective is probably conscious of this issue which is why there is an external person taking care of the cleaning, it makes this question more bearable.
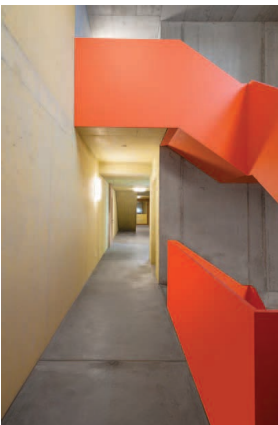
When it comes to the question of filthiness, the bathroom becomes an important moment in the domestic realm. The bathroom in The Collective is a completely private space which is widely acceptable considering the number of residents in Old Oak. However, in this case it also shows an architecture that wants to prone collectivism without intimacy.

In such large scales of community with so little private spaces, the only way to be able to bear it is to have a private bathroom. As explained in chapter 2, filthiness naturally imposes intimacy between two people, therefore to privatize the bathroom is to protect one from the others, which is absolutely necessary in a community like the one living in The Collective.

Both buildings show complex and interesting relations between private and public space and how to build for cohabitation as a lifestyle in itself. Different common and cloistered rooms can be found within the same building and they require a well though transition. Besides to question the relation between commons and private unquestionably requires rethinking the threshold. Therefore, it is also important to understand how the architects have designed the latter in order to fully comprehend what sort of behaviour towards publicness is being encouraged.

Thresholds

Inner street in Kalkbreite[203]

The primary threshold is the entrance door to the private spaces. It is magically dividing a private world from a wider community. But what is outside of one's own space? It can be a corridor, an inner street, a staircase, a promenade, a common space. In the case of Kalkbreite, it is a joyful ascension to the rooftop through orange staircases combined with ordinary circulation blocks punctually piercing all the floors. Thus, the corridor becomes an inner street serving different apartments through skylit staircases. This system links the whole community together but at the same time different types of cohabitation are separated from one another through doors that compartment different community sizes and configurations. For instance, at the 3rd floor 4 communities are defined. One on the northwest with an ordinary flat and 2 broader ones, another

separated from the first by a thick partition wall between two apartments, the latter is connected to Cluster 1, which leads to the third community, the cluster 2, through the corridor. The last division is in southeast and is similar to the first one. Therefore, most dwellings are interconnected by the inner street but at the same time they are apart from each other because of this compartmentalisation.
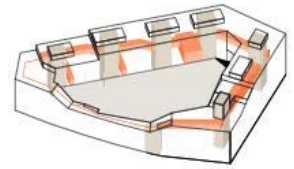
Kalkbreite's circulation diagram[204]

When it comes to The Collective, the same thoughts about circulation are absent as it is simply a corridor without the same thoughts about materiality that the cooperative shows. However, the kitchenette serves as a thicker threshold separating the domestic from the publicness. It works as a buffer zone shared between two bedrooms, implying that to enter in the most intimate spaces one has to first cross a less private one, protecting accordingly the private realm from the extreme publicness of the corridor.

Corridors in The Collective[205]

When looking in detail into the thresholds inside The Collective's private cells, there is a timid procession from common to intimidate space. It starts from the eating spaces, then a tiny entrance in the bedroom that tries to give enough space to open de the bathroom door, then one is directly confronted to the desk and at the back against the wall the minimum of all intimacy and privacy: the bed, placed away as further possible from the common space in such small scale. This simple system is disturbed by a window. It is not possible to eat neither cook in this space with natural light without opening the same door that protects the bathroom from the kitchenette, thus exposing intimacy. Therefore, in any case the two cohabitants sharing this thicker common threshold have to somehow accept they have a more intimate link than with their neighbours, similarly to college students in a dormitory.

Kitchenette in Ensuite room, The Collective[206]

Kalkbreite proposing different types of cohabitation, it is difficult to identify one common approach to thresholds. Clusters in general have either a tight

Wohnjoker
27.0 m2

Treppenhaus
30.8 m2

3.5 Zi-Whg
64.4 m2

4.5 Zi-Whg
107.1 m2

6.5 Zi-Whg
152.1 m2

Treppenhaus
33.3 m2

3 Zi-Whg
61.0 m2

0   5   10   20
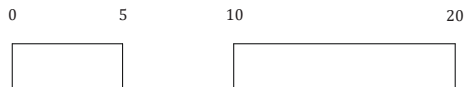
entrance space or arrive direct in the kitchenette. However, the typology that gives the most interesting contrasts of thresholds are their broader flexible flats. In this case on the 4th floor four flats can be joint together into one dwelling or separate into different apartments: 3.5 rooms, 4.5 rooms, 6.5 rooms and finally 3 rooms flat. Apart from two exceptions in the biggest complex, all bedrooms are kept away from common spaces such as kitchens and living rooms, all of them are accessible through halls or corridors. The bathrooms and lift are purposely placed in the plan as blocks allowing to create transitional spaces to protect the intimacy of its inhabitants without necessarily placing a door. Thus, the division between private and common space is built trough subtle visual thresholds defines by a broadening and compression of spaces leading to the final rigid affirmed limit of the door opening to one's private realm.

Both examples demonstrate that thresholds are clearly a main feature in the design of typologies for cohabitation as they allow to create a more refined transition between the complexities of the shared home. They also show the creative potential behind this lifestyle proving that there is a multiplicity of ways of cohabitating, sometimes they even live together in the same building as it is the case for Kalkbreite. Nevertheless, these constructions are new and have been built to encourage this way of living but London faces an important disruption between offer and demand of housing. Therefore, it is not enough to wait for developers to embrace the collective trend and invest in these typologies, it can also start with smaller companies or private landlords at a smaller scale in the existing housing stock.

Designing cohabitation in the existing urban fabric

Noiascape has a different scale from The Collective and the Cooperative Kalkbreite, it is a small terrace house but it inscribes itself in the scale of London through the network of space behind the company's constructions. Still, it is important to see how the principles initiated in the broader cohabitation schemes can be applied in a refurbishment project at a smaller scale.

Garden House is a 99sqm terrace house including 2 bedrooms with their own bathroom, a double height living room open to the kitchen and a working space on second floor with access to the terrace.[147] The dwelling is rather generous considering it only has two bedrooms, however its working space could easily be converted into another room if necessary, it has been projected so because of the beliefs of the company in the need of gathering housing and working at the same space. This claim is similar to The Collective's but Noiascape is in fact against the idea of large number of residents sharing impersonal kitchens and lounges,[148] which explains the similar design approach do Kalkbreite when it comes to interior design. Their aim is to encourage inhabitants to spend more time at home by creating pleasant spaces that inspires cohabitants to stay longer in the common space.[149] Thus, the architects wanted to create fluid spaces that would allow residents to socialise, work and spend alone time without being restricted to their bedrooms.[150] In this combination, one feature make Garden House stand out from all the previous examples: its reversed vertical organization. In all the situation previously studied the collective space was situated on the lower floors while private spaces were set on the upper floors, however in Grove Mews the entrance occurs through the darker private space ascending to brighter shared rooms.[151] This is due to the desire

Garden House, 2017
Teatum + Teatum Architects
Second, first and ground floor[208]
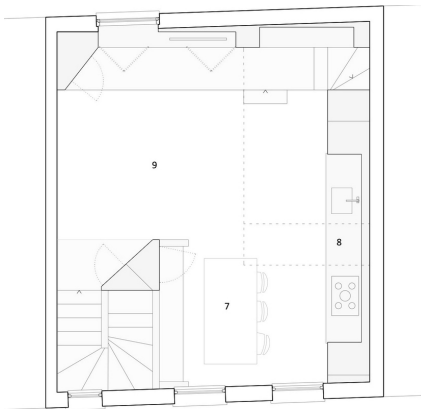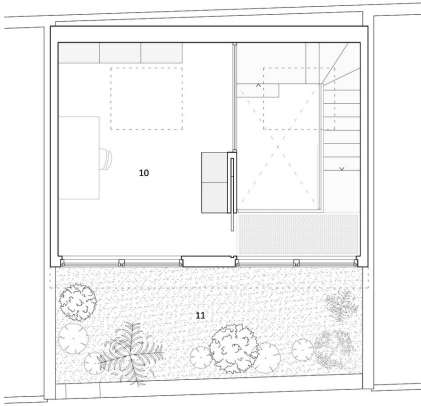
Garden House, 2017
Teatum + Teatum Architects
Section[209]
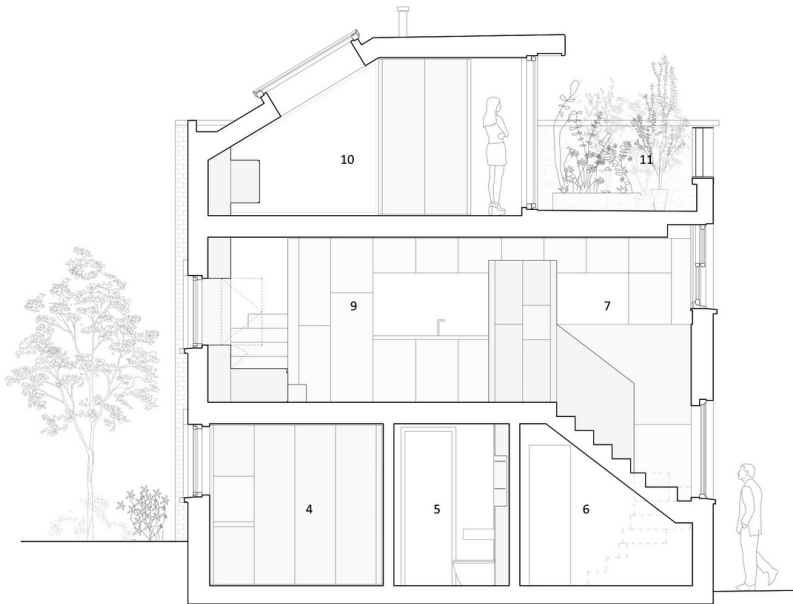
of the company to create an external terrace that did not exist originally.[152] This reorganization of space extinguishes the originally privatized model of both Georgian and Victorian terrace houses by stripping out all the enclosing walls that originally delimited every room. Its spatial sequence is also reversed as the terrace house originally places its most public rooms in front of the city, so the entrance always land into public spaces oppositely to Grove Mews' new scheme. Besides, external spaces were usually hidden away from the street but the new terrace establishes a different relation between the domestic space and the street. Thus, Noiascape's Garden House demonstrates the potential of terrace houses to become something new and adapted to the new generation rent.

Garden House facade[210]

In fact, the facade adds to the contrast by keeping its original layout despite the new green basement. It witnesses a time in which the division between domestic affairs and publicness started to become more rigid while its interiors no longer translated that. Indeed, the new basement colour is the only hint of its new ways of living. It involuntarily references its richer siblings, the Georgian houses in central London with their stuccoed white basement, bringing so a touch of nobility to what was once probably a humble dwelling.

Similarly, to Kalkbreite, it takes advantage of elegant and joyful interiors to make them attractive to its inhabitants. Noiascape brings to it wooden joineries as an interesting feature for appropriation. The joineries retain a certain neutrality and bring cupboards, libraries, flat surfaces to be filled with one's belongings and personal touches. Besides they ease the struggle of negotiating the furniture in the common space while still giving enough neutrality for one to appropriate space. Yet their biggest accomplishment is to open the kitchen to an extrovert *usage* by seamlessly unifying not only living room and
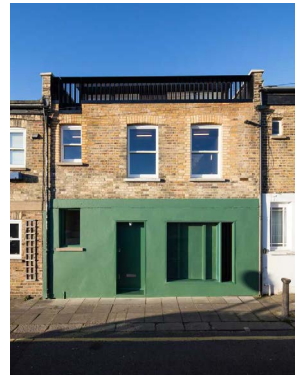
Georgian townhouse in Hyde Park, London[211]

Garden House, 2017
Common spaces[212]
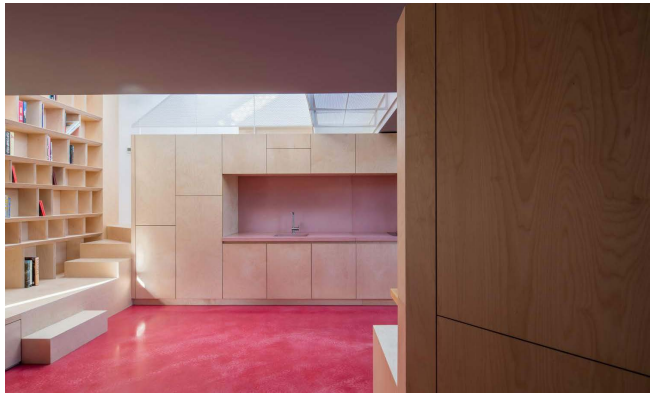
kitchen but also a library. Thus, they exploited the potential of the kitchen in ways Kalkbreite and The Collective Old Oak have not achieved.

Nonetheless, one could argue about the decisions taken on behalf of esthetically and bodily pleasing interiors. By stripping out the terrace house from all of its internal features, the architects affirm that its only beauty and specialty is the façade. The terrace house is accordingly reduced to a limit. It may be comprehensible in the case of Garden House because it is probably not one of the fanciest examples of this typology, however the poetry that resides in refurbishing these dwellings comes also from embracing its qualities. Yet, when entering in Grove Mews, it is almost impossible to recognize the terrace house apart of one exposed brick wall accompanying the new staircase in the entrance.

In conclusion, the project proposed by Noiascape remains an interesting solution, despite the fact it could be more densely inhabited. Indeed, the space proposed by Noiascape seems more luxurious than average and maybe not financially accessible to people with lower incomes, which could be solved by simply transforming the working room into an actual bedroom. Yet, it has remarkable spatial qualities, for example the double-height room bringing light to an otherwise dimly lit room, or the treatment of the threshold transforming the staircase from first to second floor into a discrete but dreamy library because of its absurd height. However, one could imagine such typologies combined with the neighboring row houses, thus transforming the set of houses in one elaborate community. Garden House also gives hope for taller Victorian terrace houses having multiple floors capable of being easily densified. Cheaper materials could also be used to make these dwellings more accessible without compromising quality but also embracing some of the original characteristics of terrace houses, such
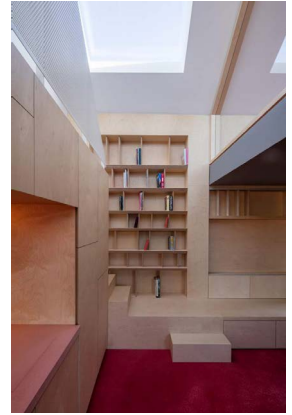
Library in common spaces[213]

as wooden floors, moldings, chimneys. Nonetheless, Noiascape smartly embellishes and ennobles what was probably a poor house.

Conclusion

These three contemporary examples firstly show that there is indeed a market for cohabitation that is emerging. Secondly, there is not only one way to cohabitate as different communities, scales and economic situations generate different answers for diverse variations of cohabitation as a way of living. Each of these projects aims for a different profile and their design changes accordingly. What truly is important to note is that none of the above is truly good or bad, they each have different approaches to different communities. Noiascape and The Collective, despite the fact that the latter may not say it explicitly, are building for thriving millennials in London while Kalkbreite has a different social goal, which explains the decisions taken. However, remains a question of diversity and accessibility. As it was mentioned in chapter 1, millennials are not the only population included in the generation rent and London could truly benefit from developments also aiming for lower incomes and more flexible dwellings like Kalkbreite, although the latter would probably be too expensive and require a shrinking of spaces to become affordable in London. Nonetheless, all three buildings are both victims and fighters regarding the issues around cohabitation, sometimes questioning filthiness, appropriation, flexibility, common spaces and thresholds and at times rethinking it involuntary by bringing no answer at all despite the unusual typology.

Unfinished Project
conclusion

London has been facing housing crisis for more than a century now, fact that may lead one to question if it is a crisis at all or just a reality to be accepted. The rise of cohabitation between unfamiliar adults well into 30's and 40's is a direct consequence of this issue. Rethinking architecture for this lifestyle may not solve the crisis on its own but it can surely help or in the worst case make it bearable. Furthermore, the influence of housing in London's urban fabric in non negligeable, thus to decide to build these typologies means consciously including this way of living into the city. Therefore, rethinking cohabitation in London could be a powerful way of making the capital perhaps less exclusive.

Cohabitation is a lifestyle on its own with specific intricacies. It requires rethinking the relation between private and common spaces while reconsidering thresholds and appropriation. In the end, it always comes down to the art of living together and apart, so cohabitation is a polyrhythmic dwelling envying the idiorhythmic phantasm described by Barthes. Although it is tempting to build a modern millennial cluster, the goal is no longer about trying to make private housing affordable through minimal living spaces but to reconsider what one is willing to share and under which conditions. Despite the interesting features seen both in cohabitations in not adapted older buildings and in contemporary typologies, the trend is still strongly bending itself towards the minimal private cell with all basic features in it against the biggest collective spaces possible, when it is time to question what should actually be in the private cell.

However, all buildings analysed through the last chapters have given lessons worth being remem-

bered. Both maisonettes in chapter 3 showed the importance of rethinking thresholds and common spaces in order to ensure more freedom while A.'s Victorian terrace house demonstrated how appropriation can lead to the abandon of the collective space. Despite all the questions around The Collective, it shows a diversity of scales and thresholds while Kalkbreite shows similar considerations, it also exposes the need of designing different ways of cohabitating while preserving the possibility of changing their layout through flexible typologies.

The past also brings lessons. Victorian terrace houses and maisonettes bring an unexpected flexibility through the possibility of opening and enclosing every room and its possibility to easily separate private from commons due to a plan on multiple floors, thus giving space for densification by having more residents per ground. Both terrace houses and ex-council estate blocks have proven their potential to be readapted to collective life despite being designed for a highly privatized lifestyle. Nevertheless, to reuse these typologies may require more than rethink the flat or the house but the ensemble. Indeed, Noiascape proved that it is difficult to radically requestion these typologies in such a small scale, one can either rethink them at the scale of the city as the company does or when possible to regroup the entire housing block, or street for row houses, and redevelop them as a bigger entity composed of smaller communities that together form a wider one like in The Collective.

Still, to face the private dwelling model to a new collective lifestyle is no easy task and requires more than simply locking doors and bringing more beds. It asks for giving more space to kitchens as social environments, rethinking trivial elements such as the entrance of a building, as cohabitation may ask for plural entrances, thus a different relation to the street than the reclusive one developed in century old British typologies and even post-war estates.

However, to refurbish and adapt these models for hosting cohabitation is more than keeping its facade, it is about recognising the features worth taking advantage of, such as the compartmentation of certain spaces or rearranging external corridors in estates to make them more appealing, perhaps by enlarging them.

This emerging lifestyle is in any architectural case about embracing the existence of different rhythms that do not live in the illusion of constantly being part of a community, a combination of different experiences through time and space that do not necessarily seek intimacy with its cohabitants. Equally to any other lifestyle, cohabitation between adults is constantly evolving as the society changes. Therefore, just as housing in general is an unfinished project, so is building typologies for cohabitation.

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Research of flat-share patterns
annex

A small research was done between the 27th October 2020 and 19th November 2020 through the website Spareroom. A total of 40 ads for flat-shares in London zones 1 and 2 were collected in order to understand the main characteristics and patterns of these areas. Zone 1 and 2 have been chosen as they are the closest areas to central London.

The following parameters were chosen while researching for ads: rooms for rent during 7 days per week, including both rooms in existing properties and whole properties for rent. Regarding the characteristics of the room itself, the following parameters were selected: any room size, furnished or unfurnished to share with any occupation, smoking or not.

The study consisted of applying these parameters into a research of rooms to rent on the website Spareroom on different days. Each time the ads were picked at their sequence of appearance in order to determine which typologies appeared the most. Therefore, the main aim of this procedure was to understand what fraction of flat-shares takes place in existing buildings and more precisely in which building, but also the average number of people living together.

However, the investigation also allowed to understand how often shared homes have other common spaces besides kitchen and bathrooms. Additionally, it revealed what typologies tend to have common spaces more often along with what sort.

Results

From a total of 40 ads, 18 were terrace houses, 15 were ex-council housing, 6 were new flats and 1 was a detached house. From all ex-council housing, 12 were flats while another 3 were houses.

In terms of number of flatmates, most buildings host between 3 and 5 people. These are the exact numbers:

Number of people per home	Number of ads
2	3
3	9
4	7
5	10
6	3
7	1
No Information	6

Terrace houses and ex-council flats being the most common typologies, the same count was done for both categories separately:

Number of people per terrace house	Number of ads
2	1
3	7
4	1
5	2
6	3
7	1
No Information	3

Number of people per ex-council flat	Number of ads
2	2
3	0
4	5
5	4
6	0
7	0
No Information	1

Common spaces (except kitchen and bathroom) were counted only for ex-council flats and terrace houses since the other categories had too little examples to give a reliable number:

Type of common space in terrace houses	Number of ads
No living room	8
Living room	10
Garden or terrace	8
Balcony or patio	5

Type of common space in ex-council flats	Number of ads
No living room	11
Living room	1
Garden or terrace	1
Balcony or patio	1

It is important to note, especially for terrace houses, that despite some of them not having living room, they had some sort of external space.

Interview with A.

annex

All the answers of the following interviews were written by the interviewees. The same questionary was given to all participants; however, more specific questions were given to some of them according to some answers. These are the *"Further questions"*

Q: Question
A: Answer

Original questions

Q: How old are you ?

A: 24.

Q: What is you nationality ?

A: Swiss.

Q: What is the highest level of education that you have ? / what is your profession ?

A: Bachelor in architecture.

Q: Why do you live in a flatshare ?

A: I worked as an intern at an architecture office in London and I could not afford a full rent.

Q: In which part of London do you live ?

A: Hackney. In the first row of houses on the north-west border of Victoria Park.

Q: In what type of building do you live ?

A: I lived in the lower flat of a Victorian house. The flat was divided in two storeys, the upper one hosting the kitchen, the living room and one bedroom. Downstairs were 3 extra bedrooms.

Q: With how many people do you live ?

A: I first lived with 3 other people, who were the landlady of the house, her teenager son and a medical student of my age. After 4 months, the latter left and I stayed only with the landlady and her son.

Q: What do you look for in a flatshare ?

A: It really depends. Working in London for only 5 months, I was not really interested in finding flatmates whom I could do activities with. I wanted to find a room that would be close to the office I was working in and would be accessible with public transportation. My financial resources were limited so I compared the priced of different ads online and took one in the average.

Q: How is it like to share the space with your flatmates ?

A: My flatmates and I would not really spend much time together so we usually cooked and ate at different times. I didn't use the living room a lot because I didn't feel very comfortable there. Sharing spaces meant rather having our stuff in the same space than actually being in the space together.

Q: How would you describe your relationship with your flatmates? Why do you think it is so ?

A: I was in good terms with all of them but we were not close. It was almost like being neighbors rather than flatmates, because we lived rather independently from each other, because of our different ages but also different schedules and interests.

Q: What would be a typical day in your flat/ house ?

A: I would not often spend an entire day in the house because I worked during the week and on the weekend I enjoyed London city life. I spent most of the time in my room but I would also spend some hours

cooking in the kitchen.

Q: What do you like about the place you live ?

A: The kitchen was the most beautiful space of the house. The landlady had bought ancient kitchen furniture and a gas cooker. We could use her collection of cookware that were all of very fine quality. The kitchen was the only space I could enter that had a window to the backgarden. As much as I avoided staying in the living room, I enjoyed spending time in the kitchen. I also hold with me the memory of the Victorian staircase and its absurd step-height-step-depth proportions, as if the stairs had to be squeezed to fit into that tiny house. It's a particularity that I encountered in several flats that I've had the chance to visit in London. I have always been curious of finding out the typology of the flat above, because its inhabitants and ourselves must have somehow shared a storey of the house, as their entrance was on the level of our living room. The situation of the house was incredible. Living in the first row of houses in front of Victoria Park, I could enjoy the view and have walks along the canal during the weekend. Shoreditch was a 30-minute walk and the 24/7 bus system around the block would take me almost anywhere in the city.

Q: What do you dislike about the place you live ? What would you change about it ?

A: This question is directed not only to the people I lived with but also to a good amount of Londoners. Why does your back garden look so sad? Do you realize how rare it is to live in a city where you can enjoy a garden while living at walking distance from the center? The city may not have the sunnier weather I have seen in my life, but it doesn't mean that your garden should look like it's just some grass at the back of your house, which you forgot the existence of long time ago. I would have loved to use the garden when the weather would have allowed it, but

it was just not made for it.

I did not like the living room, mostly because of the landlady's questionable interior design taste. The room was full of cushions and furs, carpet on the floor and curtains on the wall. You could feel the weight of all this fabrics in the air. The furniture of this space was directed towards the TV, which I didn't use and the space was not really suited to any other activity.

Q: Do you think you need more collective space or more individual space in the place you live ? Why ?

A: I would say it depends on your expectations. Had I spent more time with my flatmates, had we become friends, I would surely have asked for more common spaces. However more individual space would have been more suitable to the way we were all living in the house. For me, there are two types of flarshare : hotel or convent. In a "hotel" type, you want as much individual space as possible, and common areas can be quite minimal. In the "convent" type, you do not need much individual space as you rather spend time in community in the shared spaces. Research on cluster flats have shown an ambition to mix both types and enjoy all their different advantages, letting the inhabitants choose their way of living, resulting often in a (not very rational) duplication of services and inefficiency of space use.

Q: Are you happy to live in this flatshare ? Why ?

A: Yes it was very convenient for me. It met my expectations and the geographical situation was perfect. That being said, had I lived there by myself, it wouldn't really have changed my daily routine as we lived rather independently from each other.

Q: If you could choose between living alone or sharing a place to live, which one would you choose ?

A: Why ? Depends on a lot of aspects. How much money can I put into my rent and how easy is it to find a place to live in the area I'm searching in ? What is my situation, am I single or in couple, do I have family ? Being of my age , I'm not against sharing the place I live in, but I wouldn't be surprised if I would think differently in 5, 10 or 15 years. The general questions is what do I earn with sharing the place I live in. Am I looking for a better geographical situation, bigger spaces or more social interaction? I could imagine living in a flarshare when working in a big city, where the price of the square metre is exponential and living spaces are shrinking, or when I grow old and may feel lonely living by myself to enjoy the company of others. But I could also imagine having my own living bubble and inviting friends to come when I would feel like it.

Further questions

Q: Were you happy with the size of your room or did you think it was too small for the lifestyle you had?

A: It was fine for me but it wasn't big, I wouldn't have lived any longer. If I had stayed for a year I would have looked for something else.

Q: you said you thought it was a pity that the garden wasn't really laid out, but if you had the desire and the time, do you think you could have done it?

A: No, I don't think the landlady would have let me. And the only access to the garden was through her son's room, so I wouldn't have gone through anyway.

Q: Were there ever any problems between you due to age differences?

A: Rather because she was the owner. Like she com-

plained that I use too much heating or I make too much noise etc.

Q: How do you share the kitchen space? Do you usually share food? Do you cook together? Does everyone have a precise delimited space in the kitchen? Also is there any personal items that stay in the kitchen like decoration, someone's plants? Do you share cutlery or anything like that?

A: We were cooking individually one after the other. We did not share food and had it in separate cupboards. We only shared the fridge. Yes everything was owned by the landlady, I could use all the pans and utensils. There was also decoration and a plant at the window.

Interview with B.

annex

Q: Question
A: Answer

Original questions

Q: How old are you?

A: 26.

Q: What is your nationality?

A: Bulgarian.

Q: What is the highest level of education you have ?

A: A-levels.

Q: Why do you live in a flatshare?

A: It is more affordable than having your own space.

Q: In which part of London do you live

A: East London.

Q: In what type of building do you live?

A: Ex council flat.

Q: With how many people do you live?

A: 3 more people, in total 4.

Q: What do you look for in a flatshare?

A: Peaceful and friendly atmosphere.

Q: How is it like to share the space with your flatmates?

A: Sometimes it can get very crowdy in the common area(kitchen) if everyone is cooking lunch/dinner

around the same time.

Q: How would you describe your relationship with your flatmates?

A: We are friendly but everyone has their own lives and we don't really hang out together, I guess you could say we are friendly strangers living in the same house.

Q: What would be a typical day in your flat?

A: It can vary, sometimes you bump into the flatmates all the time and sometimes there goes days where you don't see anyone for a few days even if they are in the house.

Q: What do you like about the place you live?

A: I like my room as it is quite spacious for a typical room you can rent in London. I also like the area.

Q: What do you dislike about the place you live?

A: The lack of more communal space for example living room. There is only the kitchen besides our rooms and the kitchen can be small for 4 people. We even only have 3 chairs in the kitchen.

Q: Do you think you need more collective space or individual space?

A: As my room is quite big I am happy with the individual space I have, however I think it would be nicer if there was a living room in the house.

Q: Are you happy to live in this flatshare?

A: In general yes. I have seen people move in and move out and usually there are nice bunch of people. There have been a couple of instances where I didn't like a flatmate.

Q: If you could chose between living alone and sharing a space?

A: If I could afford it I would prefer to have my own place. When you live with flatmates you are constantly mindful of them and have to be considerate. For instance I would love to invite a few friends over and host a dinner party at my house but that is just not feasible when you need to consider the fact the there are 3 more people living in the house and you might disturb them.

Further questions

Q: Do you ever use the balcony as a balcony and not just corridor? Why if I may ask ?

A: No. Just as a corridor. Well it is really just an entrance to the flat, we can't put tables and chairs as it will obstruct the entrance to the other flats.

Q: Do you ever get disturbed by people talking in the kitchen, or smells or anything like that? Do you have maybe an example?

A: Not really but I am quite relaxed about noises and cooking smells. I think I would only get annoyed if I have troubles sleeping and there are loud noises - but that would be in any living situation, not just in flatsharing.

Q: How do you share the kitchen space? Do you usually share food? Do you cook together? Does everyone have a precise delimited space in the kitchen? Also is there any personal items that stay in the kitchen like decoration, someone's plants? Do you share cutlery or anything like that?

A: Everyone has their own cupboard that can put their stuff in. There is common cutlery and pans and stuff but I don't think anyone uses them - everyone has their own sets. Normally everyone cooks for themselves.

Interview with E.

annex

Q: Question
A: Answer

Original questions

Q: How old are you ?

A: 27.

Q: What is you nationality ?

A: French.

Q: What is the highest level of education that you have ? / what is your profession ?

A: BSc (currently reading for Msc).

Q: Why do you live in a flatshare ?

A: More convenient for work and uni, busy schedule so living closer to both is better.

Q: In which part of London do you live ?

A: East London.

Q: In what type of building do you live ?

A: Terraced flats.

Q: With how many people do you live ?

A: 3 others, 4 total.

Q: What do you look for in a flatshare ?

A: Quiet, tidy, but sociable flatmates.

Q: How is it like to share the space with your flat-mates ?

A: Good when everyone is doing what they need to be with keeping shared areas clean and tidy.

Q: How would you describe your relationship with your flatmates? Why do you think it is so ?

A: Good with most, mutual respect for each other's space and belongings.

Q: What would be a typical day in your flat/ house ?

A: I'm working from home so home all day long. 2 flatmates are out the door for work between 8.30-8.50am. I have breakfast, lunch. Others come back just after 5pm. House is quiet by around 9pm.

Q: What do you like about the place you live ?

A: Convenient area for travelling to work (after COVID) and anywhere else I need to go.

Q: What do you dislike about the place you live ? What would you change about it ?

A: The upstairs landing is a bit narrow, but if it were wider, we couldn't have the shower room, there would be no space so then we would only have 1 bathroom. No natural light coming in upstairs (apart from the rooms). No window in bathrooms, only vents which leads to quick build up of mould.

Q: Do you think you need more collective space or more individual space in the place you live ? Why ?

A: I think the space in the kitchen is enough, the table can be extended as well if necessary. No other changes to individual space necessary in my opinion.

Q: Are you happy to live in this flatshare ? Why ?

A: Yes, get along with flatmates, convenient area to live in and travel to/from. Landlord is responsive

and helpful.

Q: If you could choose between living alone or sharing a place to live regardless of finance, which one would you choose ? Why ?

A: At the moment (during COVID) I chose sharing because otherwise isolation would be very isolated. Also, sharing is cheaper than finding a 1 bed flat in London zone 1-2 which is what I was searching for. If I could afford to get a 1bed flat AND we're not in a pandemic, I would definitely go for living alone because I prefer having my own space and not having to share etc.

Further questions

Q: How do you share the kitchen space? Do you usually share food? Do you cook together? Does everyone have a precise delimited space in the kitchen? Also is there any personal items that stay in the kitchen like decoration, someone's plants? Do you share cutlery or anything like that?

A: We share the kitchen. Normally don't share food, pots/pans or cutlery. We sometimes end up cooking together but cook our separate food just at the same time and not all of us at the same time, usually just two of us at a time. No plants or decoration in the kitchen apart from some fridge magnets, but nothing else.

Interview with K.

annex

Q: Question
A: Answer

Q: How old are you ?

A: 32 years old.

Q: What is you nationality ?

A: Greek.

Q: What is the highest level of education that you have ? / what is your profession ?

A: BA(hons) RIBA I and MAarch RIBA II : Architect.

Q: Why do you live in a flatshare ?

A: Living in London where the living expenses are so high, the only to save money is through flat-share. It allows me to live in zone 1 (the most central part of London) without spending all my income for rent.

Q: In which part of London do you live ?

A: London Bridge / Borough tube station : South-wark London Borough Council.

Q: In what type of building do you live ?

A: Council house, 10 storeys around 100 flats.

Q: With how many people do you live ?

A: 2 boys.

Q: What do you look for in a flatshare ?

A: Good condition of materials / state of walls and internal finishes, double glazing window, heating

and water pressure to be sufficient. Generally clean / especially the wall to wall carpet (common for English houses), convenient size of the bedroom I will rent with large windows and lastly but important : friendly flat mates.

Q: How is it like to share the space with your flatmates ?

A: I don't mind, everyone has there own routine and so we don't interfere with each other's life.

Q: How would you describe your relationship with your flatmates? Why do you think it is so ?

A: They are quite private people and so it's like I live alone to be honest. Plus there is no living room in the house (as it has turned into a bedroom) so it's not like there was ever a room to socialise.

Q: What would be a typical day in your flat/house ?

A: Without covid I would be at work and by the time I go home it's late so I just prepare dinner and I stay in my room.

Q: What do you like about the place you live ?

A: I like it's location (very important for me to be able to move easily across London for work reasons and for leisure). Also I like that I'm on the 10th floor and that my room has large windows.

Q: What do you dislike about the place you live ? What would you change about it ?

A: I don't like the size of the kitchen and I would prefer to have a living room so friends could come by.

Q: Do you think you need more collective space or more individual space in the place you live ? Why ?

A: Yes as I said above I would like a living room for

humans to social not only for my friends to visit but also to allow a more friendly relationship (instead of the collaboration relationship) with the flat mates. I'm happy with the size of my bedroom I wouldn't mind a double bed and why not an en-suite bathroom.

Q: Are you happy to live in this flatshare ? Why ?

A: I'm content as I feel nice in my room and the location allows me to have a day life that I enjoy.

Q: If you could choose between living alone or sharing a place to live regardless of finance, which one would you choose ? Why ?

A: Definitely I would prefer alone so I could do whatever I want, from a little thing (ie. wash the dishes when I want and not when I have to as others will need to use the kitchen) to a big thing (have a friend over to spend the night).

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