Breaking Boundaries

- Scenarios for Collective Care in Single-Family Homes

- Selected Bibliography:

Dellz, Sascha, Rainer Hehl, and Patricia Ventura, eds. *Housing the Co-Op: A Micro-Political Manifesto*. 2nd edition. Berlin: Ruby Press, 2022.

Friedman, Avi. *The Adaptable House: Designing Homes for Change*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002.

Hayden, Dolores. *The Grand Domestic Revolution: History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities*. 6. print. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Pr, 2005.

hooks, bell. *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. New York; Routledge, 2009.

Pyschik, Madita. "Der Wunsch Nach Dem Eigenheim: Szenarien Zu Alternativen Eigentumsmodellen in Bestehenden Einfamilienhausgebieten." Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 2023.

Premise*

Before construction begins on the new neighborhood of single-family detached homes for late repatriates, the municipality buys the land from farming families.

1977

In the Neunzehnkamp neighborhood most original homeowners have now died over eighty or have passed. In that case their children or new buyers have taken over the house.

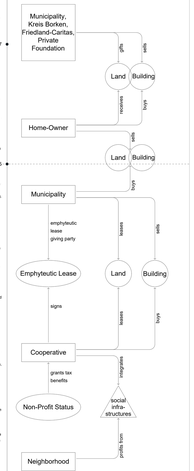
2020

In single-family homes from the fifties to eighties a generational change is pending.

The municipality receives a yearly ground rent from the co-op which in turn uses the leased land. Should the co-op make a non-profit status, the ground rent may be set by law. Once the lease is terminated the building is resold to the municipality.

The three main principles of a co-op are: self-aid, self-administration, self-governance.

*On the basis of the Bachelor Thesis *Der Wunsch nach dem Eigenheim: Szenarien zu alternativen Eigentumsmodelle in bestehenden Einfamilienhausgebieten* by Madita Pyschik, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, 2023.



Type Analysis Existing Single-Family Houses - Site Plan

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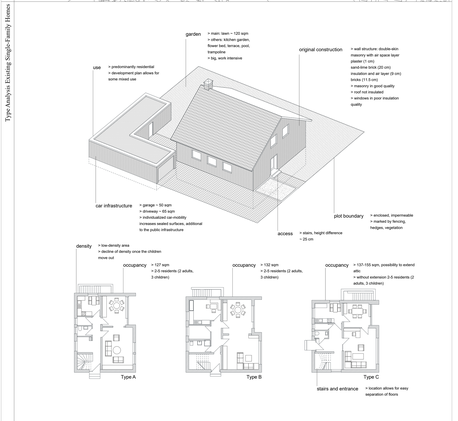

Vocabulary of Interventions
"A place where one can be seen"*

"Self-hooks in the book *Belonging: A Culture of Place*, 2016. Specifically, the chapter "A Place Where My Soul Can Rest."

Especially in the suburban context, care and the labor and individuals connected to it is systematically devalued and hidden in the single-family home. Aids that support those with lack of mobility are often stigmatized and hidden away. To counteract isolation or (violent) exclusion places where one can be seen are integral to becoming aware of each other's struggles and needs, to (re)connect and practice civility.* Here, the notion is expanded to include the importance of destigmatisation of elements that signify dependency.



- Ramps

  Necessary for the mobility of those that rely on a wheelchair or have difficulties walking stairs, they additionally become elements that signify presence.

- Benches

  Places to rest, meet, talk, connect, see and be seen. Their location and even existence are of great importance regarding a person's ability to uphold a social network and take part in public life.

- Squares

  (Small) squares may create room for the other mentioned elements. Depending on their layout, materiality and design, they can draw attention.

- Railings

  They support safe movement through the environment. Often plainly executed elements, contrasting or bold colors may facilitate destigmatization and their use with decreasing vision.

Commoning

"From the book *Housing the Co-Op: A Micro-Political Manifesto*, edited by Sascha Delz, Rainer Hehl, and Patricia Ventura, 2022. Pages 36, 30. Specifically, the chapter "Claims for Action."

Macro-political change is enacted through micro-political action of cooperative practices, part of which can be the commoning of resources, skills, knowledge and reproduction labor. The goal is to "counteract processes of gentrification and the ever-increasing economization and value of neighborhoods, including creating "qualitative architecture with social identity and value".* Regarding the systemic devaluation of reproductive labor and care, creating space is where "social relations are reimagined and redefined in an equitable way."*



- Common Kitchen

  Two or more households may share the work of sustaining each other. A common kitchen may also facilitate the inclusion of those that have difficulties sustaining themselves individually.

- Dining Hall

  At a certain scale and in combination with a common kitchen, these reproductive tasks may be transformed into domestic services with professionalized and paid labor. The ritual of eating together becomes more accessible and inclusive.

- Common Living Room (with Fireplace)

  The sharing of living rooms can decrease the total living space per inhabitant, strengthen community, and facilitate the supervision of children.

- Herbal / Vegetable Garden and Green House

  A possibility to share and accumulate skills and knowledge (inter-generationally).

- Carsharing

  If the use of the predominant car is less individualized, the corresponding infrastructure (garages and sealed surfaces) may be unbuilt.

- Fountain

  Access to water significantly increases the quality of stay in (semi-) public spaces.

Bonding and Bridging

"From the book *Housing the Co-Op: A Micro-Political Manifesto*, edited by Sascha Delz, Rainer Hehl, and Patricia Ventura, 2022. Pages 12, 13.

Bonding and Bridging is a concept adapted from the book "Housing the Co-op: A Micro-political Manifesto". Bonding refers to the ties that a regulatory framework fosters between the members of the co-op (creating social capital) while bridging allows for interaction with and permeability towards external actors.* Not the whole neighborhood can be expected to join the co-op (or become part of an intergrous community), but those who sympathize may profit from bridging. This could mean granting access to the communal resources by opening plot limits and reducing fencing or utilizing new semi-public spaces within the neighborhood.



- Merging of Two or Several Plots

  The lifting of plot limits allows for densification.

- Removing/ Reducing Fencing or Other Separating Elements

  Through common use of gardens, elderly may profit from help with maintenance while children gain access to larger areas for play.

- Area Inaccessible to Humans

  The concept might be expected to apply to the residents' relation to More-Than-Humans. A first step may, for example, be to replace lawns with wild meadows.

Adaptability

"Avi Friedman in the book *The Adaptable House: Designing Homes for Change*, 2002.

Homes are often seen as finished and unchangeable objects. Their layout and design (for example placement and size of windows and room sizes), often assign one room a specific function (for example living room, children's room, etc.). This is often done with regard to the nuclear family in mind. With accelerating demographic change, changing economy and family constellations, adaptability becomes integral if valuable resources are to be preserved. Besides smaller spatial interventions, a nexus of homes used by a co-op leaves more room for flexibility to match the spatial needs of its members.



- Multipurpose Spaces

  Could house guest rooms, offices, small businesses and workshops and rooms for sport courses, thus introducing mixed uses into the neighborhood. Guest rooms, for example, prevent inner vacancy that is typical in single-family home neighborhoods by allowing for the release of rooms for new residents that had previously been reserved for visiting friends and family.

- External Stairs (with Elevator)

  Stairs may be externalized to release space for rooms within the homes.

- Furniture as Walls

  May divide (open) spaces. When rooms remain a grander size (for example in shared flats for elders) instead of inserting another wall a separation is carried out with furniture. It is easily removed should the caring needs of a resident demand for more space (for example introduction of a nursery bed).

Site Plan Interventions

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Scenario 1 (2025-2035), Helga

In 2025 Helga is 62 years old. She lives in a single-family home in Gemen. Together with her husband Werner and her three children, she had moved into the home 30 years ago. Helga worked in a part-time position that she carried out next to caring for the children. A few years after moving in, they added a winter garden and converted the top floor under the roof to offer their growing children bigger rooms. When their children moved out, Werner repurposed one of the children's rooms into a home office. The other rooms became guest rooms.

In 2025 their daughter moves back into the neighborhood with her boyfriend and toddler. They have founded a cooperative with three befriended families and want to move into three houses together. As Helga's daughter is a nurse, she is especially motivated to rethink the way that elderly-, childcare and the household chores involved are organized in single-family homes. While some aspects of the project resonate with Helga and Werner, they find certain plans of the co-op rather extreme such as sharing a living room and kitchen.

In 2028, Werner dies of a heart attack. Part of the grief and demands that Helga deals with is being left alone in her home, which is too big for her. Although Helga is unwilling to change her living situation at first, after some time and many discussions with her daughter, she realizes that she will not be able to finance the upkeep of the home as is. Helga does not want to leave her home, so they decide to modify it. As she does not have the economic means to pay for the renovation herself, her daughter suggests to her to join the cooperative to profit from the pooling of financial resources, skills and general support.

The plans for the renovation are drawn up, with Helga's daughter urging her to already incorporate changes that will accommodate her aging body. In line with the densification goals of the co-op, an apartment for four to five people will be integrated into the upper two floors. Helga will only use the ground floor. During the necessary energetic renovation, the bricks of the façade are reused after the new wood fiber insulation is mounted. The small bathroom is remodeled, becoming barrier-free and a furniture is built that allocates space of the living room to a bedroom. Should Helga need a nursing bed in future, the furniture can be removed to make space for her caring needs.

To make sure that Helga, who is very sociable, can maintain her social relations even at a higher age, her daughter suggests creating a small square with seating towards the street to allow her mother to meet with friends and to connect and talk to those who pass by. For easy accessibility, a ramp and railing which lead to the place are built. A bench is placed on the new stone square which reaches into the sidewalk to promote visibility. It is modified, mounted higher and equipped with a footrest, to facilitate sitting down and standing up. For the color of the coated metal railing, she chooses her favorite color blue. Helga is relieved that these elements are introduced before she is dependent on them as she can enjoy their design without it reminding her of her lack of mobility.

After Helga's grandson befriends the children of her upstairs and next-door neighbors, they decide to dismantle the fences that separate the two gardens to give the children more space to play. Helga appreciates receiving help from her neighbors with work in the garden that Werner used to take care of.

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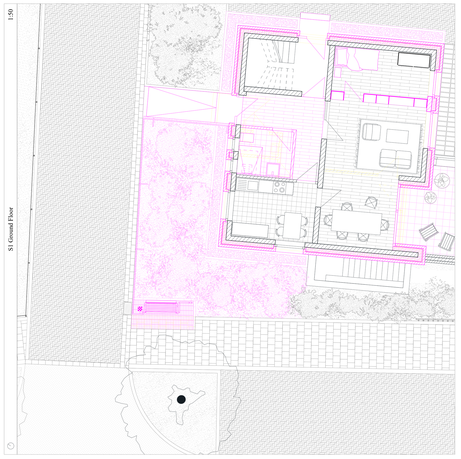
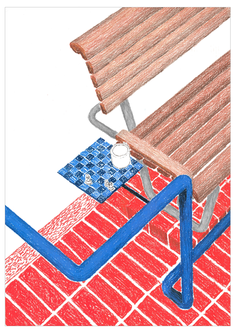


S1 Ground Floor



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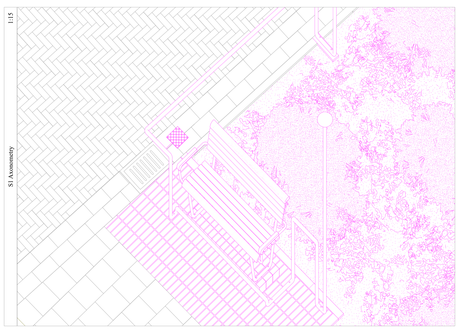


S1 Axonometry

Scenario 2 (2035-2045), Maria

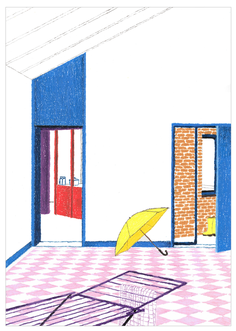
In 2035 Maria is 32 years old. She lives in Borken with her partner Kim and their two children. Since the birth of their second daughter their three-room apartment has become too small for them. Having grown up in a single-family home with a big garden, Maria convinces Kim to start searching for a single-family home in proximity to the city. She knows that Kim has conflicted feelings about moving into such a house because of environmental issues and the huge debt that they would load themselves with.

A few months later a friend and her family approach them, looking for motivated partners to join in becoming members of a cooperative in Gemen. Their plan is to buy two adjacent buildings in the neighborhood. As them joining the co-op would mean a relief of their financial load and both feel that the common values and principles of the co-op align with their own, Maria and Kim decide to join them. Two befriended families quickly follow their example, completing the number of inhabitants.

Together with experienced members of the co-op and their architect the group begins to identify what is most important to them and plan the layout and the necessary features of the two houses. One of their friends' children is dependent on a wheelchair which makes a barrier-free layout of the ground floor and garden imperative. In future, after their children move out, the friends can also imagine founding shared apartments to support each other while aging. Thus, they fit the sizes of the rooms and bathrooms to allow future transformations.

To fit all 18 of them, the existing houses are extended to create enough rooms for the respective families. They choose to rebuilt the poorly insulated existing brick façade, leaving the layer of load-bearing sand-lime brick, and add a new straw insulation which is plastered over. To reduce the use of space per person and to facilitate the sharing of domestic tasks, an extension that bridges the two homes is built. The old bricks which had been stored in a garage of the co-op are reused for the facade of the extension which houses a common living room and kitchen for each floor.

To allow each family to have enough room for privacy all apartments are fitted with a den that corresponds to each family's needs and connects the individual rooms, common spaces and exterior. Maria and Kim's den finds its end in a transparent and light-flooded home office. In the garden, the group of friends creates a vegetable patch and a water play, plants trees, builds a terrace and sets up play equipment for the children.



Scenario 3 (2025 - 2055), Agnes

In 2025 Agnes is 55 years old. She lives in a single-family home in Gemen. She took over the house after her parents, who had bought it when they came to Germany, moved into a retirement home. After having lived in the house for about 15 years with her husband Ewald and their two children, her children moved out. Agnes and Ewald start feeling that the house has become too big for them. Meanwhile, a cooperative has just acquired three nearby houses from the city. When the members of the co-op introduce their project to their new neighbors, Agnes feels inspired to change her own living situation. After her experience with organizing care for her parents, she is enthusiastic about the co-op's focus on collectivizing care. The couple decides to join them.

Gradually the co-op purchases more homes in the direct neighborhood. Agnes' and Ewald's upper floor becomes a multipurpose space that can be used as a guest house, office or meeting space by members of the coop and sympathizing neighbors. Due to a tight budget the first architectural interventions are minor: the ground and upper floor are separated, and two plaster walls are removed to create bigger spaces. Members of the co-op or neighborhood that would like to use the space can pay a fee to gain access. Agnes and Ewald help to set up a vegetable garden and green house which are part of the provisions for domestic services such as a common kitchen with a dining hall that the co-op is planning.

After a few years, plans are drawn up to extend Agnes' and Ewald's home in a general densification effort. As both, now in their early seventies, begin to face difficulties with the maintenance of their household, such as washing laundry in the basement, they use the opportunity to relocate. They move to a home of the co-op down the street which has been remodeled and extended and now houses a shared flat for ageing inhabitants. Agnes and Ewald are specifically attracted to the mutual aid provided among inhabitants and spatial features such as the barrier-free layout of the apartment and easy accessibility to the main building that will house the dining hall.

They move into two generous rooms of the shared flat with a private bathroom. The size of their bedroom allows for additional accommodation of a nursing bed. The den, as the point of entrance, houses a small kitchenette and a wardrobe wall with a washing machine. Accessed through the den the common living room in the extension with a fireplace is shared with all eight rooms on the floor. While Ewald enjoys spending most of his time with other members of the community, Agnes more often likes to use their second room as a place of retreat.

As younger inhabitants they, together with the residents of the upper floor, take up caring responsibilities for the older inhabitants. When they reach a higher age, they can expect the same treatment. Over the years, the community grows their skill and knowledge base, including dealing with the bureaucracy of the institutions that organize care. The third floor of the extension is a multipurpose space that is used for guests, small workout classes, and smaller meetings of the co-op. Meetings with the over 100 members that the co-op has accumulated in 2055 are held in the common dining hall.

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S2 Ground Floor

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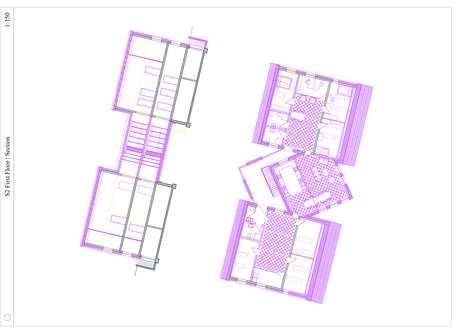
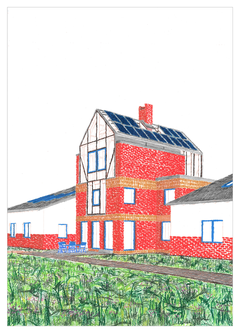


S2 First Floor | Section



S3 Ground Floor



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S3 Ground Floor

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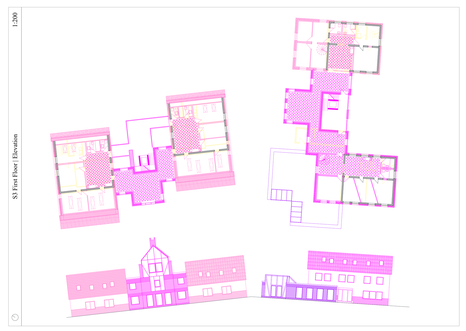

S3 First Floor | Elevation