

Type, New Urban Domesticities and Urban Areas

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, we are, it seems, witnessing the rise of new modes of urban domesticity—of ‚co-living‘ for young urban professionals, of ‚co-housing‘ of various kinds, of ‚live-work‘ units and of a kind of domesticated working. Sometimes, these trends are born of economic necessity; sometimes, they are driven by aspirations of inclusion, solidarity and sharing. In either case, they are promoted as desirable styles of life, experiments in housing that are linked to the promise of a new kind of collectivity, a new kind of city. The projects Spreefeld (2013), by Carpaneto Architekten, Fatkoehl Architekten and BARarchitekten; Am Lokdepot 14, by ROBERTNEUN Architects and Atelier Loidl, both in Berlin, (2014 & 2018) and the Musikerwohnhaus in Basel (2010), by Buol & Zund, exemplify some of these trends.

Recent experimentations with housing are typically described through their social and economic sustainability, their capacity of forging a different development model and the capacity to encompass a variety of lifestyles. They are also key in the rise of an architectural debate about the emerging models of collective formations in a city, linked to a question of urban everydayness as a continuous negotiation about common grounds, patterns of participation, and shared responsibility.¹

These new housing projects address the stark imbalance of our housing offer in the face of dramatic demographic changes as much as new patterns of work, mobility and globalization. The concept of the family has been extended, blended and reconfigured. A high proportion of urban dwellers live in single households, and an increasingly ageing population further suggests that rethinking housing is long overdue. Moreover, changes in work patterns are increasingly blurring the boundaries between living and working—the bedroom, the café, the co-working office and the new open plan learning and working landscapes are equally intimate and productive. The growth of the service and knowledge economy has propelled a return to inner city living, but also threatens an increasing polarisation of who lives where in the city, and the unequal distribution of access to work and other resources.

The three projects address some of these concerns through a high degree of architectural experimentation and value generation. This paper seeks to

¹ See for example Becker, Annette; Kienbaum, Laura; Ring, Kristien; Cachola-Schmal, Peter (Hg.) (2015): *Bauen und Wohnen in Gemeinschaft. Ideen, Prozesse, Architektur*, Basel: De Gruyter; ARCH +, An Atlas of Commoning: Places of Collective Production. Atlas of Commoning, Vol 232, August 2018.

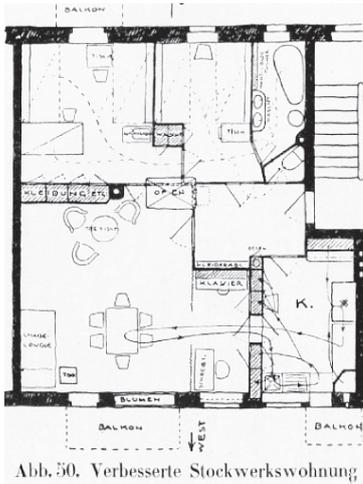


Abb. 1 Bruno Taut's new dwelling

foreground the capacity of architecture in the formation of new urban communities, but doing so as a general question linking urban domesticity to the city itself—relating housing to the question of urban area.

We suggest that these projects generate questions about the possibility of creating collective resources for all, reducing individual cost and add value to our life together. They are generators of conversation about what we value and what we look forward to as a group of individuals living together with others. The questions of what we can share, with whom, and what spaces, resources and processes can be generated will be pursued across scales.

Architecturally, Spreefeld, Am Lokdepot and the Musikerwohnhaus are sites of intense experimentation and innovation. The plan becomes a site of experimentation to accommodate a range of different scenarios of occupation, sectional permutations address flexible thresholds between public and private realms, and the configuration of shared spaces at different levels offer degrees of integration within the collective or the urban realm. While these explorations are often explained through a user-driven approach and a collective decision making process, we seek to focus on the immanently architectural contribution to the formation of these new urban domesticities. Focussing on the projects' typological formation, that is, on the specificity of their forms and spatial organisation, will allow us to argue not only about the formation of the collective, but also about the potential of the urban area.

To investigate the intersection of type and domesticity, we will first cast a look backwards at the very rise of our conception of the domestic. Secondly, we draw upon some of the literature on typology to clarify its agency within the domain of architecture, as well as its capacity to propel transformation beyond its own realm.

Modern Domesticity and the neighbourhood

The standard dwelling plan for the modern domestic family is the exemplar against which the current experimentation with housing, particularly forms of cohousing, seem to be breaking away from.² (fig. 1) Bruno Taut's optimised plan diagrams of 1924 exemplify the generalisation of the self-contained dwelling organisation for the modern domestic family, hyper articulating a set of desired functions into particular spaces, retracting the family as a distinct social unit from the amorphous, indefinable urban mass, distributing its members into defined roles and spaces, and promoting the atomisation of the individual family members.³ Here the plan is aligned with the very formation of the modern domestic family, correlating a spatial unit with a domain of intervention, regulation, support and control. It partakes in the formation of the family as a norm.

According to Michel Foucault and Jacques Donzelot, the modern domestic family rose as a solution to liberal government in the city in the nineteenth century.⁴ Donzelot demonstrates how the bonds of association and care came to be reconstructed to set up relationships of responsibilities and care between family members, while at the same time promoting the autonomy of each in-

2 Maak, Niklas (2015) : "Post-Familial Communes in Germany," *Harvard Design Magazine*, Vol. 41 / Family Planning (no pages, available online at <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/41/post-familial-communes-in-germany>).

3 Kähler; Gerd (1997), "Wohnung und Moderne. Die Massenwohnung in den zwanziger Jahren", *Wolkenkuckucksheim*, Year 2, Vol. 1 [Accessed: 02/06/2018].

4 Donzelot, Jacques (1979): *The Policing of Families*, Baltimore and London: John Hopkins Press. Foucault, Michel (1978): *The History of Sexuality*, Paris, Editions Gallimard.

dividual. Here the spatiality of the home links the government's need for the control and normalization of familial behaviour to individuals' desire for autonomy. What results is that the relationship between the constitution of the family as a norm on the one hand, and the continual critique of that norm on the other, is inherent to the family's mechanism as an institution. Seen in this light, our very tendency of critiquing the standard plan as stultifying is born out of a continuous problematisation with the affiliation of the self, its autonomy and freedom with the space of the home.

A similarly ambivalent and dynamic problem field emerged through the rise of the scale of the neighbourhood, linked to the rise of a form of government through groups of the urban population around the turn of the twentieth century, as Paul Rabinow noted.⁵ Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the concept of the neighbourhood consistently correlates how to house and group the urban population with question of how to promote its health, happiness and prosperity. As such we can conceive of the domestic and the neighbourhood as distinctive discursive constellations, or diagrams, that bring together a number of concerns in a pattern regularity, but also always problematizing an always already emergent subjectivity.⁶

Since their very rise, both the domain of the modern domestic family and that of the neighbourhood are constantly under question. Internally they are composed with centrifugal and centripetal forces, pitting the freedom and autonomy of the individual versus relationships of responsibility and care in the family, and the family's relative autarky pitted against the coherence of the neighbourhood. Simultaneously, they offer distinct domains of discussion and negotiation across disciplines about their optimum functioning in the name of the welfare and prosperity of the population. Architecture's impetus for experimentation serves this ongoing problematisation well.

At stake is here not so much to revisit the emergence of modern domesticity than the very rise and ongoing problematisation of the domestic and the neighbourhood through type. Both the concept of the domestic as well as that of the neighbourhood emerged upon a trajectory of typological reasoning that continuously responded to and propelled questions of government.⁷ The rise of the self-contained dwelling of the modern domestic family, and the emergence of the scale of the neighbourhood at the beginning of the twentieth century were based as much on their formal, spatial and material process of formation, as on a response to the demands of urban reform and urban government.⁸

Typology

Typology is here understood as a form of principled reasoning about architecture's spatial and organisational capacities; type being both product and process working through generative analysis, classification and projection of architectural concerns and objectives. This discipline immanent perspective on typology can be traced back to Quatremère de Quincy's introduction of type and its resurgence by the Neorationalists in the 1960s and 70s. While

5 Rabinow, Paul (1995): *French modern. Norms and forms of the social environment*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

6 The following argument and the section on typology has also been developed in the introduction of the forthcoming Special Edition of *The Journal of Architecture*, Volume 23, no. 7: "Architectural Type and the Discourse of Urbanism", Guest editors Katharina Borsi, Tarsha Finney and Pavlos Phillippou, November 2018.

7 Borsi, Katharina (2009): 'Drawing and Dispute: The Strategies of the Berlin Block' In M. Lathouri, D. Periton, and V. Di Palma, (eds.), *Intimate Metropolis; Urban Subjects in the Modern City*, London: Routledge, pp. 132–152.

8 see Borsi, Katharina (2015) "Drawing the region: Hermann Jansen's vision of Greater Berlin in 1910", *The Journal of Architecture*, 20:1, pp. 47–72, as well as Finney, Tarsha (2015) "The object and strategy of the ground: architectural transformation in New York City housing projects" *The Journal of Architecture* (Volume 20, Number 6.) pp. 962–987.

we do not have the scope to unfold the complexities of typology and its interpretations, a short summary of what it meant to achieve might help clarifying this understanding.

At the moment of the modern movement's perceived urban failure, the 'Neo-Rationalists' sought to retrieve architecture's disciplinary contribution to the city; and proposed typology as a mode of classifying and ordering architecture's material and capacities. Rafael Moneo, for example, argued that type is a notion that inheres in the grouping and seriality of shared architectural concerns, allowing both analysis and decision-making within the design process. As such, he argues that architecture can not only be described by type, but that it is also produced through type.⁹ Also Alan Colquhoun argues that typology is ineluctable in the design process. He suggests that typology entails a mode of formal and spatial reasoning with and upon the materials of architecture, a process based on the reworking and experimentation with previous solutions to similar problems.¹⁰ Central in these perspectives was a focus on the description, analysis and the potentials of architecture and the city themselves, retrieving a sense of disciplinary autonomy within architecture, as well as recognizing the city as its field of application.

Particularly Aldo Rossi's seminal *The Architecture of the City*¹¹ attributes typology a dynamic agency in the articulation of the city. Writing in the mid-1960s, Rossi sought to retrieve the way in which architecture and the city themselves present an immanent field of analysis and intervention for architectural practice from the then dominant sociological and functional interpretations. Similarly to Colquhoun, Rossi proposed typology as a the domain of reasoning on types, being prior to and constitutive of form, thereby interlinking the analysis of precedents and previous solutions to projective practices in design. Rossi suggests that typology as a domain of reasoning about the formal and organizational capacities of architecture, responds to, but is not reducible to 'external' factors—such as, technique, politics or function. Instead, he argues that typology serves to contribute to the formation of the city itself.

Rossi proposed to conceive the city as being composed of parts and components, each subject to their own processes of formation and differentiation, which are nonetheless underpinned by general forces engendering urban dynamics. In this view, the urban past is a resource for understanding pattern of persistence and transformation of architectural and urban elements. Accordingly, typology, as the analytic moment of architecture, is concerned less with the forms of the past, and more with their catalytic agency in urban transformation. For Rossi, architecture's capacity for spatial organization supports the process of formation and differentiation of urban parts and components, themselves subject to the city's evolutionary tendency. Moreover, Rossi argues that the city is too complex to grasp within one given overview. Instead, he proposes to understand, analyse and intervene at the scale of the urban area, a domain that can be analysed and propelled through the work of typology.

This understanding of type implies the following consequences for architecture's intersection with the domestic. Typological reasoning about the

⁹ Moneo, Rafael (1978): *On Typology*, in: *Oppositions No 13*, Oppositions Books. The MIT Press, Massachusetts, pp. 22–45.

¹⁰ Colquhoun, Alan (1991): *Essays in Architectural Criticism; Modern Architecture and Historical Change* (Preface by Kenneth Frampton, Oppositions Books, The MIT Press, Massachusetts. pp. 43–50.

¹¹ Rossi, Aldo (1982): *The Architecture of the City*, Cambridge: MIT Press.

home or the neighbourhood implies the deployment of architecture's immanent materials and concepts within and against a domain of dispute and negotiation about the health and welfare of the population. It addresses, negotiates and integrates the demands from its 'outside', by enfolding these into its own realm. The spatiality of the home and the neighbourhood always already relies on a synthesis to achieve building. At the same time, precisely because of its relative autonomy in formal and spatial experimentation, it has the capacity of opening up new domains of dispute and discussion, and thereby flex the very diagram of the domestic and the neighbourhood.

We suggest that it is in this light that we can consider the typological reasoning inherent in the three housing projects. We suggest that these projects are exemplars of typological experimentations that multiply relationships of association, intimacy and care, but also refocus our attention away from the ongoing concern with the neighbourhood towards that of the urban area.

Spreefeld

Spreefeld is a housing cooperative completed in 2013, jointly developed and administered through its members, and executed by Carpaneto Architekten + Fatkoehl Architekten + BARarchitekten, each office coordinating one of the three buildings. It was developed as a response to the debate around the urban redevelopment of the Spree riverbank, initiated as an alternative proposal to the planned office development. Its typological and morphological articulation is in stark contrast to the recent wave of building development resembling monolithic citadels that claims large chunks of land along the riverbank.

By contrast, Spreefeld assembles three monoliths in a loose open configuration, with the explicit objective to make the external areas and ground floor open to the public, allowing movement across and between buildings, and to provide public access to the Spree and public spaces at the riverbank. Two-thirds of the site remain unbuilt to allow for public uses. The three buildings house 64 apartments, including six cluster-apartments with 6–21 residents. It offers shared spatial and programmatic resources for the collective: rooftop terraces, a laundry rooms, guest apartments, a gym, and a music and youth room. Co-working spaces, carpentry workshop, catering kitchen, studios, a children day-care centre, and a co-working space activate the ground level and open the offer to non-residents. Particularly interesting are the Option rooms—spaces without assigned function, to be used for community, social, or cultural projects, by the collective but also, upon request, by the general public.

The project has been discussed extensively in the recent literature, in particular its development, financing and decision making processes. While these are central to the project, this description focuses on the typological articulation of current urban domesticities and its intersection with its urban area.

The project is both generic and abstract in its spatial organisation at building level as it is highly articulate and specific in its planar and sectional articulation at the scale of the urban artefact. The simple rectilinear volumes, are organised as flexibly dividable stacks, the structure of concrete columns

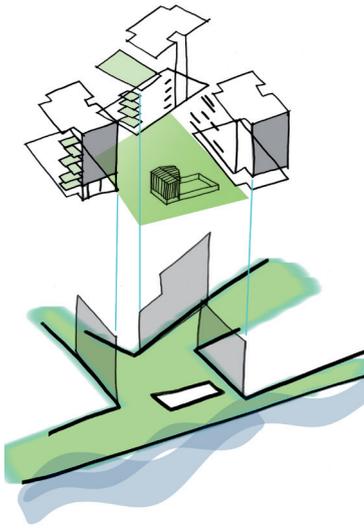


Fig. 2 Spreefeld Diagram of Key Void

offers an unhierarchical organisation with maximum flexibility in its subdivision. A closer reading of its plans will be provided below.

Furthermore, the disposition of the built volumes on site, their staggered and angled distribution supports what we might read as the principle of a free plan, supporting a relative equal value to all orientations. For example, the value of the orientations towards the river is balanced by the south facing aspects of the apartments facing away from the river. However, here we want to emphasise the principle of distributing value through the radial visual synergies. This allows not only a variety of options for contemporary domestic configurations and modes of living, but, more importantly, it is a principally neutral, undifferentiated spatial organisation, open for living, working or indeed any other programme. (fig. 2)

However seemingly simple the internal organisation, it is the intersection with the public voids it configures which propels the project's complexity. The project has an exceptional high proportion of collective shared space. Next to the publicly accessible ground level, shared terraces staggered at different heights, provide diagonal visual synergies. Large balconies protrude mostly at the corners, multiplying sight lines. Some are supported by legs of metal, further adding an interface between the inside and the void. The landings of the open staircases protrude into the central void, further multiplying visual synergies. At ground level, spaces are high and most are fully glazed, visually interlinking inside and outside. Across all facades the window openings are large, at times double height. Taken together, these moves sectionally integrate the key void and propel visual and spatial synergies across different heights. The range of programmes supports the ground level as a space of association and interaction across scales. The generous option rooms, occupying key sites within the project, are particularly strategic in allowing to draw in a range of different stakeholders across scales.

Niklas Maak describes Spreefeld as „test model ,for a new architecture of hospitality, investigating how much personal space a human being needs, and in what form community—beyond the nuclear family—can take place in domestic architecture.“ (Maak, 2015)

Clearly, the above description sought to highlight the typological strategies for the formation of a community. The rotation and dynamic interrelationships between volumes, the sectional integration between buildings and the key void and the multiple movement vectors across the site propel coherence and a permeable interiority. At the same time, these typological operations could also be deployed to enable a strategy of intensification within an urban area.

As described above, the flexibility of its plans entails a potential endless variety of social configurations and groupings, be that for housing, for working, or both. The multiplication of the potential for interaction, visual, spatial and programmatic articulated in the intersection with the key void between buildings can also be understood as being aligned with current work trends. Its spatiality propels a culture of trust and learning, if that is for the

supervision of children or for the engagement between a range of stakeholders and knowledge exchange.

As a design strategy, the project exemplifies how to provide spatial and programmatic intensities, and with its dispersed radial organisation and permeability it also allows for movement vectors across scales. While Spreefeld articulates a complex neighbourhood, understood as a case within a typological series, its experimentations calls into question how live work patterns of urban domesticities can be seen as propelling urban patterns of dispersed intensities activating an urban area, and thereby distributing opportunities across the city.

Musikerwohnhaus

The Musikerwohnhaus (musicians apartment building) in Basel, Switzerland, by Buol & Zund was completed in 2010. The project transformed a former factory building into a new home for 13 units, offering dwellings for family configurations and two large shared apartments. The idea of the project was a pragmatic one, enabling musicians to live with their families and to practice their instruments in soundproofed practice rooms at any hour of the day without disturbing their neighbors. This programmatic focus entailed the formation of an association of musicians at the same time as rethinking the overall structure of multi-residential building - rendering the building into a shared household for all inhabitants. The practice rooms are complemented by a communal cafeteria, guest apartments, large practice/recording rooms and a sky-lit playhouse for children. The latter is conceived as a simple, four-walled box, three of which can be opened towards a courtyard shared with the wider neighborhood.

The project exemplifies the idea of shared responsibility, learning and trust articulated typologically. Its spatial organization of a shared space is open for various activities—be that for childcare, practicing music or other events.¹² On the ground level, the slightly elevated from the street level entrance hall of the house is signified by a landscaped terrace, linking between the communal cluster of cafeteria and the Playhouse on the right with the double story living accommodations coupled with practice rooms and the recording studio on the left. Along a narrow corridor, which is placed perpendicularly to the terrace, „suitcase apartments“ are aligned. They are designed as self-sufficient studios with a small kitchen, bathroom and storage space. Similarly, the first floor is utilized for the four guest apartments offering minimal dwellings for a short stay.

As described in the set of diagrams in Figure 3 the space is conceived both as a clustering of different spatial and functional elements, and as a sequential disposition of collective spaces forming series of landscaped corridors through and enabling synergies between the different programmes of the house. Here an everyday life arrangement facilitates opportunities for diverse interactions, self-development and continuous learning through multiple experiences and exposure to the other. Moreover, the understanding of

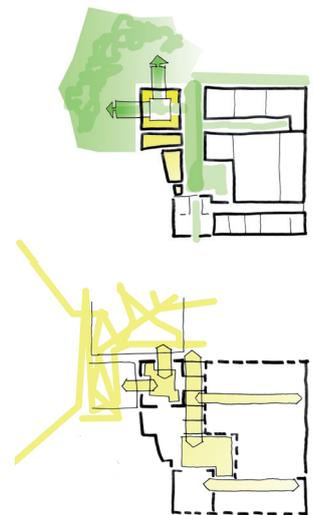


Fig. 3 Organisational Diagram of the Ground Floor Layout in the Context

12 A similar brief for a creation of a communal space that will be shared between groups which can be joined together has been recently presented for Grayson Perry with Apparata Architects initiative for 'A House for Artists' in east London. The brief offers variety of areas could be used to share the responsibility of childcare or host events, depending on the residents' priorities. Similar to the Musikerwohnhaus it will provide a new community arts centre, run by the resident artists.

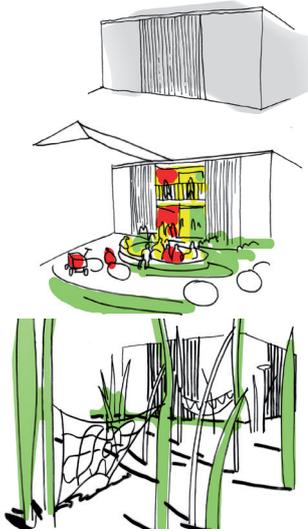


Fig. 4 Spreefeld Diagram of Key Void

community centers as urban equipment solely provided and managed by the local councils is replaced by a new paradigm promoting participation and pro-activeness on the community side.

What makes the Musikerwohnhaus a spatial exemplar of a fluidly evolving relationship of association and care across families and the wider neighbourhood is the typological articulation of the children’s playroom. The double-height, sky lit children’s playroom is physically open to the whole neighborhood, similarly to a working garage space. Its three fully openable facades make it work as a three-dimensional object in a landscape. Two facades are facing the courtyard while the third one is connecting the room with the open terrace of the house. The interactive nature of the playhouse element is rooted in its ability to act as a container for storage, as a versatile work-play environment, and stage for performance.

The drawing in Figure 4 presents the versatile character of the Playhouse, able to dramatically reshape the character and the functional purpose of the adjacent to its open spaces.

Transposed as a concept, its logic links to the current conception of multitasking that dominates the current workplace design agenda. Its semi-industrial characteristics and flexibility could facilitate the contemporary demand for programmatic diversification and our constant need for simultaneous performance of different tasks.

The theatrical potential of the playhouse is centered on a multi-directional stage, generating the potential of a vibrant neighborhood of creatives. The stage within the playhouse actively addresses three different conditions: the cafeteria, the sitting area in the semi-open resident’s garden, and an extensive communal garden space with various games courts shared with a wider neighborhood. The seamless transition between the intensive landscape of the communal garden to the highly programmed structure of the playhouse creates relationships between what once could only belong to the private domain of a single-family household and the public realm of the city. The spatial organization delivers the perception of housing as a culture, one that is as fully imbedded in the everyday life, and linking between the patterns of working, training, performance, hospitality and play.

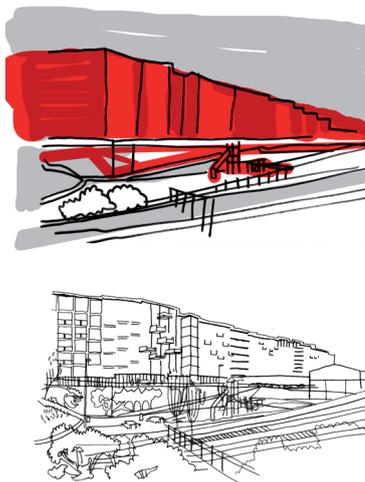


Fig. 5 External Perspective of the Project in the Post-Industrial Landscape of the Urban Park

Am Lokdepot 14

The striking industrial appearance of the project Am Lokdepot 14, designed by ROBERTNEUN Architects and Atelier Loidl landscape architects complements its location within a post-industrial landscape, at the southern end of the park on Gleisdreieck. The building forms a new frontage, from Monumentenstraße to Dudenstraße, and overlooks the railway tracks. The overall linear form combines 17 vertically conceived buildings with 35 apartments, 5 penthouses, and a plinth of 4 commercial and cultural spaces. As we will come to see below, the residential element of the brief is imagined as a repetition of differences. (fig. 5)

Another, recently emerged strategy of urban intensification of post-industrial landscapes transforms parks into pieces of urban infrastructure supportive of family life. Am Lokdepot provides an endpoint to the park of Gleisdreieck, The three-dimensional layering of the landscape surrounding the building works along, across and in relation to the red object, as shown in Figure 6, simultaneously enabling a sense of continuity with its historic heritage and providing an undeniably contemporary approach to urban living.

The agency of type

The comparison of the plans for the three projects, read in relationship to Bruno Taut's plan diagrams of 1924, serves to clarify the agency of type. As mentioned above, Taut's optimised plan diagrams exemplified the plan as having been taken into the service of the normalisation of the modern domestic family, its layout optimising the desired functions of dwelling and wrapping the space tight around prescribed body movements. Furniture in the rooms indicates the range of activities, and dotted lines indicate the ease with which circulation can be achieved without too much interference. Taut recommended that „the process of dwelling needs to be observed and eventually improved, such that it can evolve amongst the family members without the least friction or disturbance.“¹³

This optimal distribution of functions, spaces and individuals, the economy of space, the reduction of unnecessary furniture and the uncluttered organisation of spaces serves both reasons of economy as much as reasons of order, cleanliness and adequate conduct. Beneficial togetherness in a space of responsibility and autonomy, orchestrating spaces of care and separation of intimacies and the exclusion of strangers served the project of the modern domestic family, including its internal dynamism of pitting individual autonomies against the space of care. Here the agency of type is aligned with

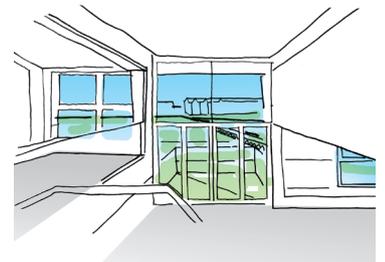


Fig. 6 Internal View of Multi-Level Family Apartment

13 Bruno Taut, *Die neue Wohnung- die Frau als Schöpferin*, Leipzig: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1924.



Fig. 7 Spreefeld Dwelling Options

a broader set of discursive strategies targeting the family as a societal norm. Opposed to forging the ‘normal’ nuclear family, the contemporary plans respond to and activate current social configurations.

As Florian Köhl, one of the architects of Spreefeld argues the question of housing needs to be rephrased as:

„How can we allow diversity, how can architectural program and form offer opportunities? How can we make really strong architecture, offering diversity that allows architects to make cities spatially interesting, fun and nice to use and to look at; but also possible to use, offering a lot more than just a place to live“.¹⁴

His quote implies the terrain, on which I argue the agency of type lies for this project—in delivering a strategy of urban intensification. In Spreefeld, social diversity was inscribed in the project from the outset.¹⁵ The plan catalogue (fig. 7) shows the array of options of sub dividing the floor plates, rendering the building into a generic open stack. Cores and service zones are the only fixed elements, the location of the dividing walls are governed by individual needs and negotiation amongst inhabitants. None of the rooms’ configurations give an indication about the mode of inhabitation, and the possibility of reconfiguring the plan is inscribed. Figure 8 exemplifies how this principle is carried into the individual dwelling—a structure with maximum flexibility of occupation.

The axonometric (fig. 9) exemplifies one version of occupying the generic floor plate, showing the two floors of a cluster flat. Its plan assembles large generic rooms that contain a mini kitchen and bathroom; clustering around a z-shaped communal area. Christian Schöningh, one of the project architects, emphasizes the need for spatial quality for rendering the communal space into a space of encounter.

Whereas Taut sought to instruct in modern domesticity, arguably the project equally propels a pattern of education, only in reverse. Angelika Drescher, another lead architect, described the plans as evidence of a long process of negotiation between inhabitants as well as between inhabitants and architects as an at times difficult process, but helping in the very formation of the collective prior to living together. Opposed to wrapping the space around particular body movements as in Taut’s plan, here all rooms are generous and generic, allowing for various modes of occupation, and the interrelationship of rooms is open for negotiation.

However, what our description of the project above sought to emphasize, is that its key objective appears to lie not only in the configuration of the dwelling as a flexible container, but in the multiplicity of thresholds—actual and social between the room, the dwelling, the building, the cluster and the city. The architects described that it took some of the inhabitants until the moment of moving in to realize the extent of shared space outside the individual dwelling. The generic assembly of rooms in plan is just one stage of the

14 Florian Köhl, interviewed by Hülya Ertaş, Reframing the Social <https://xximagazine.com/c/reframing-the-social>. The description of the project is also substantiated by a lecture by Florian Köhl, held at the *Symposium Building Knowledge Neighbourhoods*, organised by Katharina Borsi, as a collaboration between University of Nottingham, Architectural Association London, Technical University Berlin (Chair of Architectural Theory and Chair of Urban Design and Urbanisation) and Academy of the Arts Berlin. 4.11.2017

15 All the following references by architects of Spreefeld are taken from *Bauwelt* No 39, 2014, pp.16–23. The architects Silvia Carpaneto, Angelika Drescher, Christian Schöningh, Florian Köhl and Michael von Matuschka in interview with Nils Ballhausen and Doris Kleilein.

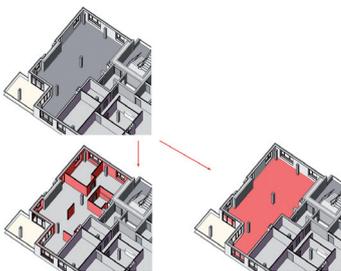


Fig. 8 Spreefeld, FATKOHL Architekten, Dwelling Configurations



Fig. 9 Spreefeld, FATKOHL Architekten, Clusterdwelling

unfolding sequence of spaces, from room to room, to corridor, to staircases, shared terraces, options spaces, the void space between its built figures and the city. It is the typological specificity of the project that it exceeds contemporary domesticity and propels the question of multiple associations and intensities, flexing the very definition of the concept of community.

The Musikerwohnhaus brings together a range of different dwelling types—minimal guest rooms, standard sized flats and two large cluster dwellings. The ground floor plan is both product and process of typological reasoning about contemporary forms of domesticity and professional association, addressed through the reworking and experimentation with the material of architecture. (fig. 10)

It is the latter the architects foreground in the design process. Marco Zünd argues that contemporary architecture needs to devise design strategies helped by existing building as a repository of past design methodologies rather than the representation of a lost epoch.¹⁶ Similar to Colquhoun's statement about the design process as analytical and projective of previous solutions, in the Musikerwohnhaus Bund & Zünd redeploy the repertoire of the existing building, not simply to contrast the old with the new, but to experiment with the material and design concepts of architecture. The plan is evidence of this reworking of the assemblage of buildings that include a previous factory; and it is the typological reworking and insertion that presents an innovation that links structure and organization to a new domesticity.

The plan—a conglomerate of buildings—assembles an existing villa incorporated in the linear slab at the bottom of the plan, housing music rooms and guest flats above; the central field of the former factory building, which now houses the cluster flats in the center of the plan and a row of maisonettes at the top edge. On the left hand side a cafeteria and the playhouse complete the assembly of buildings.

The most obvious correlation of design strategy and new modes of housing can be seen in the field condition of the central part of the project. The structural grid is both a material starting point of the project as much as propelling the spatial qualities of its domesticity. The 4 x 4 x 4 m grid of the former storage shed serves both as physical reminder as much as governing the spatial organization of the cluster flats and maisonettes. A new concrete structure, doubling the old wooden structure, supports and reflects the structuring principle. In particular, the plan of the collective dwelling is organized through the grid—the central collective space distributes two rows of large individual rooms with adjoining bathrooms, and the music room. The maisonettes are also structured by the subdivision of this grid into generous interconnected rooms. Both dwelling plans show a generic, generous spatiality, without hierarchies between rooms.

The grid lends also structure and coherence to the plan overall, distributing and linking the different parts into a field of solids and voids. As such, the overall assembly of buildings can be read as operating as a field of generic rooms—living rooms, practice rooms, or rooms that serve as both—all interconnected

16 P 47 Marco Zünd, Buol & Zünd Architekten, Basel, 'Umbauen / Weiterbauen', in *ZukunftsWerkstattWohnbauen*, Wustenrot Stiftung 2014.

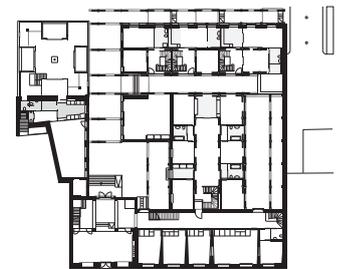


Fig. 10 Musikerwohnhaus, Buol & Zünd Architekten, Ground Floor Plan

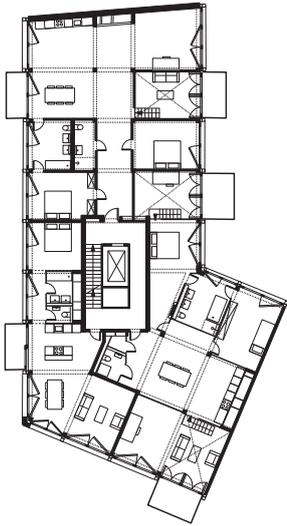


Fig. 11 Am Lokdepot, ROBERTNEUN Architects, Modular Type Plans L

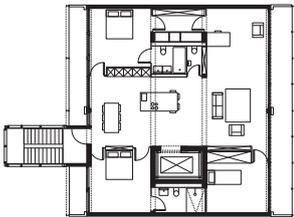


Fig. 12 Am Lokdepot, ROBERTNEUN Architects, Modular Type Plans M

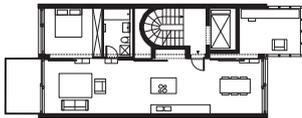


Fig. 13 Am Lokdepot, ROBERTNEUN Architects, Modular Type Plans S

17 Nils Bushmann, RobertNeun Architects quoted in Michael Kasiske "Das Neue Rote Berlin" in: *Grohe Bauwelt* no 1 2017. The description also benefitted from the lecture by Tom Friedrich, RobertNeun Architects, held at the Kolloquium Architektur und Identität, RWTH Aachen, January 2017.

via collective spaces of communication and association, cohered by the grid. While different familial organisations might inhabit the different dwelling configurations, the generous sizes of rooms and their generic disposition do not prescribe particular modes of inhabitation or social configurations. A flexible, changing mode of inhabitation across the whole complex is easily imagined. Moreover, all apartments open up into the circulation and shared spaces, delivering the possibility of flexible, changing association of inhabitation and profession, integrated with the city.

The plan of Lokdepot (fig. 11, 12, 13) exemplifies what Tom Friedrich of ROBERTNEUN architects described as a reflection on the industrial structure, character and materiality of the building, derived from place. The architect argues that „we were concerned with industrial typologies for living and not with residential typologies in an industrial area - this a particular application of the type, through which the concept is tied to this particular place.“¹⁷

Three modular types—S, M, L—are based on the concept of the industrial loft; a shell-structured organization maximizing the individual possibilities of appropriation and change of the household organization. All have a built-in spatial relationship with the outside. In the L-type, the winter gardens expand the space outwards. Both the room heights and levels within the apartments vary, creating a sense of continuity and visual connection between the spaces while simultaneously maintaining a degree of functional separation, as illustrated in Figure 5.

The L-plan, on the left, shows a column and slab construction delivering a grid that permits flexible strata of inhabitation. Double height ‚green houses‘ interrupt the horizontal and forge a three dimensional puzzle of dwelling configurations. The plan shows the generic nature of the dwelling as a subdivision of the grid—offering multiple variations of subdivision and an unhierarchical distribution of similarly sized spaces. The M-type most clearly articulates the loft living concept; its unidirectional grid can be occupied as a single volume or, as shown in the plan, flexibly subdivided. Only the lift and service cores provide book ends in the middle. In the S-type, the apartments extend over two to three levels with an external two-story loggia acting as a highly functional buffer zone between the inside and the outside. Its plan shows a stratified organization of a main space that cuts across the depth of the building, and two equal rooms mirrored around the access core.

Each plan renders visible what the architects call a ‚raw plan‘, a plan allowing inhabitation as open fluid space or subdivided into relatively similar sized rooms. Here the typological experimentation with construction and structure—the industrial shell and its resulting grid—activates a three dimensional shelf of domestic possibilities. The structure of Am Lokdepot 14 allows for a diversity of occupations—diverse living concepts for a range of family sizes and configurations, live work pattern or collaborative working can be effectively accommodated in the space. Similar to the internal organization of Spreefeld and the Musikerhaus, the plan re-evaluates the idea of a fixed individual unit of the family home, replacing this with the notion of

a flexible so called „activity-based“¹⁸ organisation. By reworking and experimenting with the materials and potential of architecture a new mode of urban cohabitation is articulated.

The comparison of the plans and the architects' comments yield both similarities in the principle organization of dwellings but has also shown a diversity in design approaches. Each plan can thus be said to be both product and process of typological reasoning—articulating and propelling the nature of our current domesticity, addressed through a process of repetition, variation and experimentation with the material of architecture.

Whereas Bruno Taut's plan focused on the hyperarticulation of a defined set of activities, each room prescribing furniture, functions and movement vectors, the three projects share a generic disposition in the plan. In each of the drawings, it is only the service spaces of kitchen and bathroom that are indicative of function. All other spaces tend to be generous and undifferentiated, allowing different, flexible modes of occupation. Opposed to Taut's focus on the contraction of the dwelling, in each case the experimentation in plan focused on the possible dispersal and opening of the plan, its configuration open for discussion or offering a broad range of choices, addressing different needs. This loose fit of generic undifferentiated structures of inhabitation could be said to promote the centrifugal tendencies of the nuclear family. Thresholds, intimacies and privacies need to be negotiated and reflected upon. While what is at stake is the relative freedom of choice opposed to Taut's didactic reductions, we might notice that the project of optimization of life still inheres within the domestic.

In particular, the typological articulation of the overall assemblage of Spreefeld and the Musikerwohnhaus propels multiple thresholds and creates shared spaces of association across its community and opening up into the city that the plan can be understood as reworking a new understanding of the individual and the collective, the self and the city.

Conclusion: Type, new urban domesticities and urban areas

The preceding pages sought to extrapolate the contribution of typology, that is, architecture's formal and spatial specificity in the formation of new urban domesticities, as well as their potential activation of an urban area. This reading was both based on the particular solution of the respective project, but also considered as a general case within urban reason, as a concept to be transposed elsewhere, and deployed in a different location, and in a different context.

Opposed to the interiority of the family inscribed in Taut's plan, the social diagram, actualised in all projects, multiplies connections, propelling the potential of multiple relationships of association and care. Where the modern plan for 'frictionless living' purposefully sought to keep bodies apart, the spatial diagrams of Spreefeld, Musikerhaus and Am Lokdepot seek to maximise engagement and interconnections. Here the typological strategies at work can be understood to flex our understanding of the capacity of living

18 In the last decade, we have noticed a conceptual shift in the workspace organization. The shift can be described as a departure from the desk-based organization to the activity based one. The driver behind the change is a higher demand for built-in flexibility and provision of a versatile setting for the employees. Together those characteristics should enable different types of work to take place simultaneously or while multi-tasking. Another aspect related the activity based concept has to do with the need to continuously resize the group involved with the performance of the task, therefore spaces should enable different groups to effectively co-exist.

together, experimenting with multiplying the thresholds between individuals, accommodating and helping to diversify the urban population. We do not suggest that the plans themselves effect this transformation, but given typology's propelling function of experimentation, it could be said to extend a generalised agreement on our modes of living across society.

In particular, we see a typological innovation in the capacity of not only inscribing and probing the cohesion of the neighbourhood, but to open up, integrate, propel and transform the urban area. The typological operations in Spreefeld and the Musikerhaus in particular suggest not only a transformation of the concept of modern dwelling in favour of a complex community, but can serve as exemplars for experimenting with the intersection of housing and the urban area. Here typological reasoning not only asks about the optimisation of the neighbourhood, correlating a spatial scale with the problematisation of the health, happiness and prosperity of a group of the urban population. Instead, it poses a question about how much we can disperse our relationships of care, intimacy and association, and how we can distribute shared spaces, services and programmes across the urban area.

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Figures

Fig. 1 <http://www.cloud-cuckoo.net/openarchive/Autoren/Taut/Taut1924b.htm> (accessed 4.5.2018)

Fig. 2–6 Drawing by Anna Shapiro

Fig. 7–9 Fatkoehl Architekten

Fig. 10–13 Drawing by the authors

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