

# Diploma Abstract



## Continuum Life in the City

Author: Sten Patrick Een Sture

Advisors: Jonas Lippestad & Espen Vatn

Institute of Architecture

The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

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My interest lies in seeking a credible housing type which enables for all kinds of lived life, making the city a place for all.

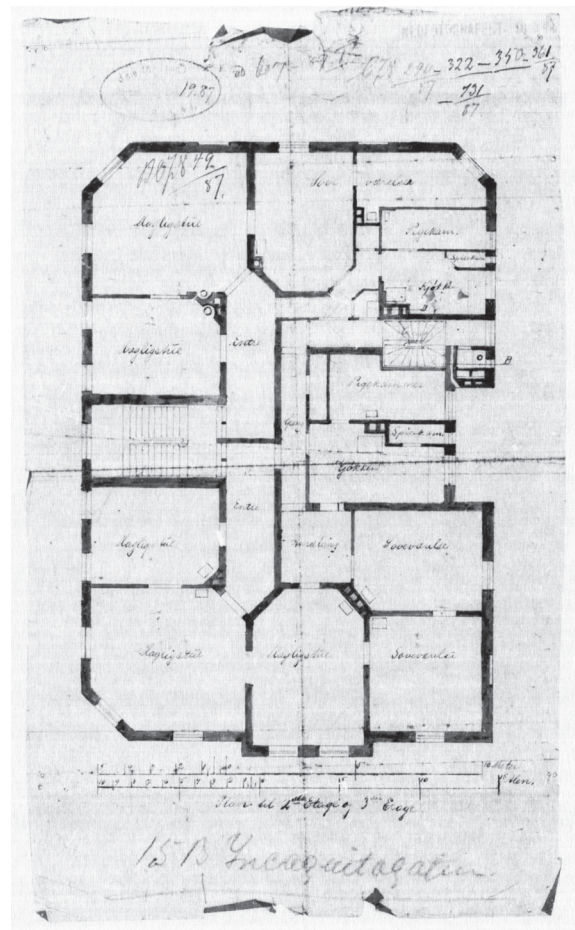
I believe the answer to this interest could be found in an intermediate state of generality and specificity. Rooms that permits a wide range of use, whilst being spaces comprised of specific qualities and particular experiences.

**Background:** I grew up in the city, in the apartment my father grew up in, and where he subsequently lived most of his life. The apartment datet from 1897, and was in a brick house, in a typology defining considerable parts of Oslos built environment. The plan consisted of larger rooms towards three sides of the facade, and smaller rooms towards the back.

Off course, the plan had been through alterations when I stepped my feet within its walls, but the big rooms remained the same. Rooms that allows to a certain extent, free use of program. What had changed was layouts of kitchen and bathrooms, accommodating developments of time.

Today's plans are different. Functions are merged, and rooms designed with specific programs in mind, allowing for little or no change in use. Ultimately effecting the life of the city.

Oslo is characterized by high real estate prices, which establishes a market defined by frequent relocation of housing, enhanced by housing specifically designed to fit the market.



Oslos demography is roughly outlined as a majority of young single people or couples without children, living in the city center, in small apartments, pursuing careers, and a minority of couples with children, living in the fringe of the city.

I believe the capacity and possibility of contemporary Oslo is not fully achieved. Instead of a place defined by temporality, it can be a place of continuity. Constructing housing which permits diversity in ways of living, which ultimately cultivates sentiment and personal investment in the rooms, building and city.

**The condition of Oslos built environment today:** As any capital, Oslo is growing, in numbers of people and buildings. From 2000 until today, the

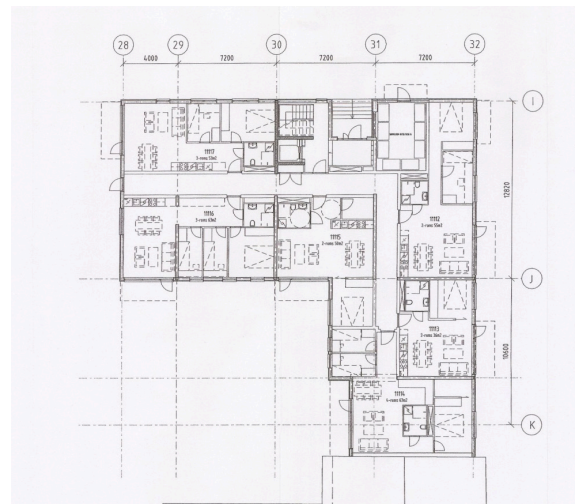
population has had a dramatic rise of 200 000 inhabitants, growing from 500 000 to approximately 700 000, which developments as Nydalen, Løren, Ensjø, Kværnerbyen and Fjordbyen is evidence of. Huge housing and cultural developments, planned already in the late nineties.

The intention of the housing developments was to answer to the expected growth. Locations were and still is, former or active industrial areas in the periphery of the city center. These places demanded a new way of urban thinking, contrasting with the preceding developments during the 50 years prior.

With the ideas and revelations of modernism fresh in mind, they had their eyes on farmers land in the outskirts of Oslo. When their convictions dissolved, focus was turned back to the inner city, to the decaying masses of brick.

When the 21st century arrived, together with a booming economy, it was no longer space in our city center to accommodate the anticipated need, and what had been promised land along our metro lines, did not tempt developers. The solution was transformation, which would facilitate for the required area needed, but also permit a rebranding of our city and accelerate the already pressured housing market.

Developments met their programmatic expectations of answering to the need of housing, to a certain extent. But what seemed to have been forgotten in



the process was a debate on the architecture and urban planning.

Most of the projects were executed with close to similar schemes. The lamella block was taken from its intended context and placed in a semi-dense configuration. It dealt with regulations concerning light and fire, but the typology does not seem to generate the urban qualities we are accustomed to.

The overall impression, is projects quickly developed to answer urgent needs. A simple question seemed to have been left out of the equation; How should our city look like a hundred years from now?



**Everything Has an Origin:** Oslo was not recognised as a city of European scale until the late 19th century. By then the city had experienced a rapid growth generated by the industrial revolution, as Great Britain, half a century before. The majority of Oslos built environment still consisted of wooden houses and unpaved streets.

A growing population, implied a higher risk of devastating fires. Already in 1827 the municipality demanded all buildings within the city borders to be built in brick. During the next eighty years, most of the architecture we recognise as Oslos city center was erected. Three to five floors brick housing, built in carrée structures with rendered facades, as found in Berlin.

A bank crisis in the end of the 19th century, resulted in reduced building activity. During the next thirty years the municipality became the major contributor of housing developments, and projects such as Ullevål Hageby, Ila, Lindern and Torshov was completed. Qualities of air and spaciousness is defining in these projects, not surprising considering they were designed by architect Harald Hals, a man highly influenced by Ebenzer Howards garden city.

The standstill during the war resulted in huge demand for housing. In order to accomodate the need, regulations were changed and new construction methods introduced. It resulted in a cheaper and faster built typology we had not seen alike. And to this day,

these alterations defines our architecture and housing to a large degree.

**Place:** We are in Tøyen, in the inner city of Oslo. Between the new developments alongside the water front and former industrail areas in the periphery.

Tøyen is complex, demographically, architecturally and historically. It was a workers area, housing factory workers who labored in the industrial facilities up alongside Akerselva. Today the demography is diverse in multiple dimentions. Two out of three households are single households. One out of three persons move every year. Half of the population is from a minority background. And the majority of the population is in their twenties and early thirties. It is a place yearning for stability.

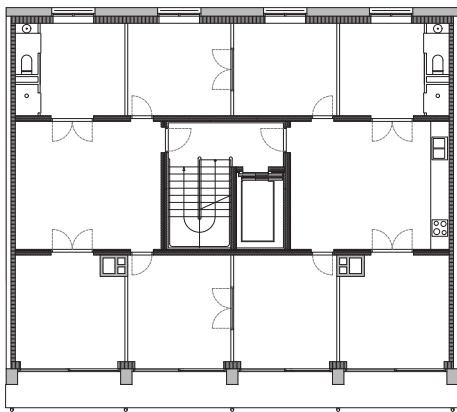
The Architecture is characterized by the Berliner city blocks built in the 19th century, and the postmodern architecture introduced during the city renewal, in the late eighties and early nineties. One very different from



the other, contrary to the intent.

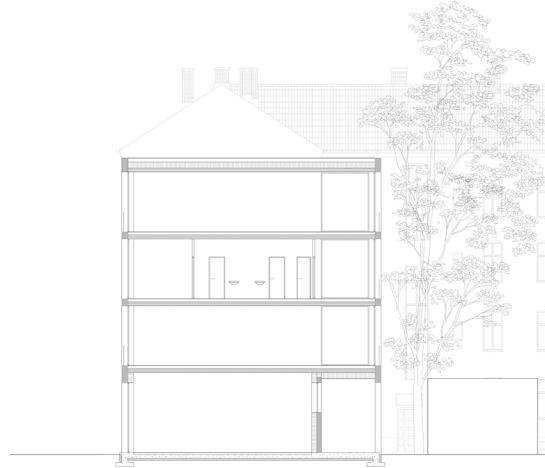
**Project:** My interest lies in seeking a credible housing type which enables for all kinds of lived life, making the city a relevant place for all. I believe the answer to this interest could be found in an intermediate state of generality and specificity. Rooms that permits a wide range of use, whilst being spaces comprised of specific qualities and particular experiences.

I chose two vacant lots, each part of separate carrés, but standing opposite to each other. Their orientation is south-west to north-east. The lots measure 15,4m and 10m wide. Whilst the larger one borders to two solid gables, the smaller borders to one solid gable and one facade.



In the larger lot, I propose a five story housing block. On the ground floor it is rooms for businesses addressing the street, and rooms for living towards the garden in the back. On the consecutive three floors above, it is apartments. The logistical core has a central location, and soil and water is placed on opposite sides of

the building, making it possible to divide the apartment. On the Fifth floor, it is a collective space, with- drawn from the facade, which serves both carrés.



In the smaller lot, I propose a slender four story Town House, securing space and air for the adjacent facade. The house is thought of as one unit, with room for businesses on the ground floor and living on the floors above. It is two stairs, one internal and one external, making it possible to divide the house.

Program and flexibility is established to actualize a post covid world, where home offices is normalized, and to facilitate for self-financed housing.

The idea of continuity is enhanced in the buildings facade, a load bearing stone structure, which carries clt floors.