

Author Contact and Affiliation Information for Abstract

Paper Title:
URBAN DWELLINGS FOR CHANGING LIFE CONDITIONS

File Name as Submitted: Mortensen_Peder Duelund _A4D_PAPERABSTRACT.pdf

Author(s) Name:	MORTENSEN, PEDER DUELUND
Department:	INSTITUTE OF PLANNING
University or Organization Name:	THE ROYAL DANISH ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS, SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN AND CONVERSATION, SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
University or Organization Location:	COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

Author Contact Information*

E-mail:	Peder.duelund@kadk.dk
Mailing Address:	Philip de Langes Allé 10 1435 Copenhagen, Denmark
Telephone Number:	+45 40 25 68 60
Fax Number:	+45 32 68 61 22

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URBAN DWELLINGS FOR CHANGING LIFE CONDITIONS

Author: Associate professor, architect Peder Duelund Mortensen

In the Nordic countries, there is a century-old tradition for dwellings that can be adapted, rebuilt and recycled regardless of time and place. Functionalism broke with this tradition and created the function-determined dwelling, which was planned on the basis of functional analyses and analyses of the average family's lifestyle. These dwellings were ground-breaking when they were built, but today are clearly a product of their time. The reaction to functionalism and the postwar mass production gave rise to flexible dwelling with possibilities for room divisions – focus shifted *from functional to structural organization principles*. But the housing of this period has characteristics which in the long run have proven to be unfortunate both in terms of durability and architectural quality. Today there is a focus on the development of more open and functionally non-determined housing. A number of new housing schemes in and around Copenhagen reveal a variety of approaches to these goals. This working paper reviews not only a selection of new housing types, but also dwellings from the past and new international examples, which each contain an aspect of changeability. Our study is based on information from users in the selected housing schemes, gathered from questionnaires, information about personal furnishing and zoning as well as interviews. The study is also based on analyses of the architectural configurations of space, light and materiality. Our main question is: Can the goal of architectural quality be maintained together with greater possibilities for individual development and influence?

In our observations we have found three fundamental conditions each connected to different measurements of time. *The static condition* of the inhabitation is constituted by the dwelling's permanent entities fitting a determined function, or by space that has the ability to embody different needs for living. *The suitable condition* consists of the dwelling's ability for physical displacement, spatial changes that can suit changing life styles. *The situational condition* is the not defined, the unfinished and the transitory, which continuously challenges the imagination and calls for the experiment. Our research results will be employed to create a categorization of housing suitable for changing life conditions and with a strong emphasis on high architectural quality. Our focus is shifting *from functional to conditional* in the organization principles.

Keywords: typology, changeability, design tools, architectural expression