MORE (ROME) COLLECTIVE LIVING

DESIGNING NEW QUALITY SPACE FOR EMERGING URBAN COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

Architecture being also a social science has to propose and develop solutions for constantly changing human necessities. By providing new forms, orders and shapes of space, architecture aims to embrace simple or complex human activities, as well as offer further possibilities of spatial experience and interaction. Following the contemporary social, economical and environmental transformations architecture is more and more committed to take action in a global framework. Contemporary lifestyles tend to become more urbanized as the global population is concentrated in urban centers and metropolis. As a consequence, new ways of living and housing emerge in search of improving city life that in many cases has become hectic. Meanwhile, climate change has become more evident and real, striking cities and urban centers. For this reason, a more eco-friendly and climate adaptive design is requested, so to produce resilient spaces. Regarding the architectural intervention, a new co-living project is designed as a residential mixed-use complex, in the center of Rome. The idea is to facilitate affordable and adjustable living opportunities of short, mid-term and even long-term duration, along with alternative concepts of living that respect the environment. In particular, a shared living model is introduced, which combines private living units with shared services and spaces, such as laundry, co-working spaces etc., in order to decrease living costs and energy consumption while increase opportunities of real socializing and support within a community. Translating needs into space stands for the methodological narrative. Consequently, an adaptive and sustainable solution is designed to acknowledge the wider compositional urban context.

1. INTRODUCTION | CONTEMPORARY HOUSING AND URBAN CLIMATE

The global population has been rapidly increasing since 1950 and it is expected to increase even more by 2050. Meanwhile, the urbanization is growing continuously and as the UN predicts, about 2.5 billion more people will be living in cities by 2050. The New Urban Agenda calls for more sustainable, habitable and inclusive cities. As a consequence, density of population in the urban centers is an important issue to be dealt with, since the need of housing will become an essential challenge. In particular, one of the urgent matters of the contemporary city is to solve the housing demand without deteriorating the quality of life and the environment. Moreover, taking into consideration the rapid climate change of the

last years, as we have been testimonies of aggressive weather disasters, it is clear that urban centers are at great risk. The word “resilience” has come to the foreground, mainly thanks to the New Urban Agenda and the European Green Deal, as well as its strategies incorporated by local authorities, which aim to make Europe climate neutral by 2050.

The last decades, due to the different way of life (developed connections, minimized travel distances, economic migration, and working from distance ecc.) a new nomadic phenomenon is present, due to which new demands regarding housing are emerged, especially in the cities. At the same time it is noticed a disintegration of the traditional family unit (Blangiardo & Rimoldi, 2006), entailing a larger number of households but at the same time a decrease in the average number of family members. This new demand side cannot find a response in the real estate market, both public and private, as it results inadequate from many points of view: typological, technological and also social. From the social point of view, another phenomenon is gaining space since more and more people -especially elder, but younger too- find themselves isolated in the multitude of urban life with scarce or zero social relations. Moreover, after the recent economical crisis of 2008 there is still instability of incomes and between them and costs of life. At the same time land values raise more and more in the cities, unequally to median incomes, which restrains an essential amount of people, especially young ones, from obtaining an affordable house.

In this global context, Lazio region in Italy demonstrates an increase in the indicators related to Goals 2 (Defeating hunger), 4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 9 (Businesses, innovation and infrastructures) and 12 (Responsible consumption and production) of the UN17 (ASVIS, 2019). On the other hand , Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 16 (Peace, justice and solid institutions) are still low, while Goal 3 (Health and well-being) is in a constant development. Rome in particular is one of the least affordable cities because of various reasons among which are the very expensive rents that correspond to really small spaces, as well as the high rate of private property. As a consequence, people find themselves in difficulty to find affordable housing while city habitants feel deeper loneliness. Relatively recent responses to those needs, which are longing to create a housing idea that is more social, affordable and environmentally friendly appear as shared living projects. The present paper proposes a low-income collective model

of housing in which people from different walks of life will be able to find a community that will support the hasty big city life and offer a shared housing solution which will reduce also living costs.

As an example, there is the trend of refurbishing the existing building stock. In this frame, and despite the real estate crisis, there are some emerging phenomena through which end-users want to bypass the traditional housing market (big developer, top-down processes) able to solve the housing demand with tailor-made and affordable housing. This kind of movements appears to be more self-organized and is generally characterized by private initiative, participatory processes and, due to the commitment of the end-users and depending on the level of their awareness, also environmental values. This sort of projects even if they are referred to new constructions they can be categorized as co-housing.

On the other hand, a new housing model that derives from the contemporary lifestyle, promotes housing solutions today known as “co-living”. Co-living is basically inspired by the collective way of life before the huge migration wave from countryside to the cities and has re-emerged as a hybrid of co-housing, the Scandinavian model of shared living back in the 60s. Co-living combines living and working spaces, so it is adapted to the contemporary user needs and global market tendencies. That is why typologies and concepts of the so called co-living model vary and depend on multiple factors. What also can vary are the initiatives that involve from private agencies to big real estate developers. The main idea though of Co-living housing projects is to facilitate these types of spontaneous gatherings, eliminating travel times or logistical barriers to meeting and connecting with the community, by creating more compact living spaces.

After WWII the destroyed urban centers faced an urgent need for mass housing and low cost construction. In this context and with the contribution of the modernist architectural movement public housing spread out, usually in suburban areas and outskirts of the cities. The idea was to provide a minimum private space with basic living amenities (bedroom, wc, sometimes kitchen, living room) and some shared facilities such as laundry rooms, nurseries etc, in order to favor sociability among residents. The high density of public housing was

supposed to be balanced by providing outdoors green spaces, also for better ventilation and sunlight.

However, the more recent to us collective living examples were brought out in the 1960s. Specifically, the term cohousing as it is known today took its shape when the Danish architect Jan Godmand Hoyer3, begun the construction of the Skraplanet community in 1964 (Bergamasco and Cnossa, 2007). The modern cohousing movement was spread out in Denmark in the 1970s, (DePaulo). Furthermore, Swedish feminist movement played a key role in the late '60s to promote cohousing as a way to share common chores more equally between the genders. The concept of collective living by that time was not a matter o necessity rather than a more ideological belief and political attitude that had roots to utopian communities. The cohousing trend –or also known as collaborative housing- was spread to several other Nordic countries during the 70s, like Netherlands and Sweden. The latter one demonstrates a number of state-owned cohousing buildings, each populated by hundreds of residents. In Swedish are called kollektivhus: a type of housing for various categories where each household has its own apartment, but with access to communal spaces such a large kitchen and dining-room or/and spaces for different hobbies.

The Netherlands' first cohousing "Centraal Wonen" was built in the mid-70s. With regard to its architecture, Centraal Wonen is characterized as village-like communities with row houses, resembling the Danish types of houses rather than the Swedish vertical buildings. On the other hand, considering property structure, they are very often funded and rented by public authorities, as in Sweden. However, today Netherlands have created a particular type of cohousing model, which is based on the organization of large cohousing communities into clusters of 5 to 10 units. In fact, half of the cohousing projects in the Netherlands are subdivided into clusters. This situation was promoted in the early 1980's when Amsterdam was facing an acute housing shortage, so the government enacted a law according to which 1% of total apartments had to be communal. Each of these has its own common facilities and usually one commonly shared building for parties, meetings etc. while community members enjoy the right to choose its new coming members.

Later on between 1980 and 2000 cohousing idea became famous in Germany and Mediterranean countries, including France, Spain and Italy, which are only now beginning to realize the advantages of cohousing. (Matthieu Lietaert, 2007). According to European Union reports, after 2008 and during the latter global economic crisis, shared living projects especially in southern European countries spread out as an affordable and solidarity solution against housing shortage and economic decline.

Cohousing projects are still keep spreading throughout global cities and urban centers. In parallel the co-working trend, which was a fruit of post economic crisis period was born and consequently to rapid technological and socio-economic changes in the last 5 to 10 years a new housing model is being experimented. Its name is co-living and gains a lot of supporters from developers and real estate agencies to young entrepreneurs and travelers around the world. In the next chapter are put in comparison these two typologies of contemporary shared living, cohousing and coliving.

New generations, those after the 60s and especially the so-called millennials driven by notions of independence, detachment of parental households and necessities such as studying or working away from home, started to form communities. Sharing a house or an apartment with friends and even strangers is a solution even forced for thousands of people around the urban world.

Cohousing, in which community lives together and shares household duties, is the organized shared living initiative and usually is characterized by four parameters (McCamant and Durette, 1994) even if there is not a narrow typological pattern. Regarding those characteristics, two of them are more relevant to the architectural design. The first is social contact design, which is referred to a centripetal design that promotes social interaction among community members. The second is the amount and design of collective spaces, that are integrated in the private spaces as an extension of them and in a harmonic way that enhances their every-day use. The rest of the characteristics have to do with the participation of the residents in the management of the community and frequently also in the design and production of the cohousing project. In cohousing, individuals or families have their own houses, bedrooms, or apartments but share facilities such as kitchens and

community gathering spaces. There is a clear hierarchy of private and shared space which is counterbalanced by the self-organized character of the community, in a way that shared spaces are being used by all members equally and frequently.

In Italy cohousing is quite a new concept of collective living since it has been developed the last 10 years mostly. However, before that, different types of shared living such as students' residences, housing for elders and public social housing are quite usual housing projects in the country. Regarding cohousing, two types of organizations have emerged in the last few years. The first, Cohousing Venture, is closer to the American model of a cohousing consultancy firm that provides families with architects, lawyers, team facilitators and more. Following this model cohousers can move in after a short period of only two years. The disadvantage is that many times rent is set at market price in a country where speculation has reached terrible heights. A second type of cohousing organization that is popular is CoHabitando and CoAbitare. These are both non-profit companies created as a response to Cohousing Venture. In this case, future residents can find cheaper solutions, although the whole process might take as long as four or five years instead of the two years proposed by Cohousing Venture. The Italian case illustrates the flexibility with which cohousing operates, namely that it can be adapted to people's desires, needs and financial means.

Although cohousing is still going on, a more recent hybrid that combines working and living, offering also benefits of a community organization has popped up manly in big urban centers where people are gathered in search of new professional and economic opportunities. What is more, innovation and technology in the housing market sector (e.g. prefabrication) gave new mass production solutions of lower cost constructions. In addition, climate change threat and new environmental laws regarding construction have pushed a new housing market that aims to produce dense quality housing by reducing costs and private unit dimensions.

This new housing is mainly referred to young entrepreneurs, travelers and temporary professionals or students that are obliged to be transferred from place to place and are looking for a short or mid-term accommodation. Co-living as it is known world widely was welcomed by housing market sector that is heading towards an affordable to the user

quality growth. According to European Coliving Index report (2019) coliving project appear to be quite diverse regarding size and design of assets. In general coliving as a new hybrid typology can be recognized as purpose built or converted, professionally managed by a corporation or external to the tenants entity, it is comprised of individual leases or licenses, it does not exclude specific social groups of residents and it usually provides a combination of typically smaller private areas supplemented with a larger provision of shared communal space and amenities. That is why coliving is more than just a temporary affordable accommodation, even if certain thoughts have been expressed on its affordability, since there are many coliving providers that advert luxury accommodation in central city neighborhoods).

Co-living has been attributed with different definitions. Some can define it as a mix of residential typology with hotel accommodation amenities. Others support that its concept is a combination of co-housing and co-working spaces, which can be closer to what it is, since common spaces for working collaboration and networking also are a high priority of all co-living existing initiatives. Coliving also points out significantly the aspect of community adapted to contemporary city-life necessities, not only by its design (delegation of spaces) but also from the social aspect of its organization.

The hybrid nature of the coliving sector and its inherent flexibility is what will drive its future growth according to European Coliving Index report (2019). It is specifically mentioned that “it draws on elements from the student housing, multifamily and hospitality sectors, occupier and operator specific preferences” based on a global narrative that attributes its distinctive character. Furthermore, coliving grows along with innovative and entrepreneurial platforms that are influencing how these homes are designed and operated. It represents a new whole lifestyle and thus it is still not a clear housing typology it promises a new way of societal coexistence within today's urban environment and hence also for tomorrow's cities.

Regarding the climate adaptation of the building design, a crucial factor is the structure and material choice. Construction techniques for instance are to be considered as sooner as possible during the design process. Mostly nowadays, according to the contemporary tendency of using more prefabricated and modular structures, the construction method

arrives to influence and even determine the architectural decisions. The evolution of materials is another factor that maintains still concrete as a widely used construction material, due to new improved products, while brick is also a masonry wall solution that appears environmentally friendly. However, after the examination of several case studies, steel and X-LAM are clearly gaining wide use also in residential buildings, while reinforced concrete is still widely used, mainly in low –rise buildings. Another recent design solution, regarding a more passive and energy saving architectural design, is the installation or integration of double facades or sunscreens, in order to offer shading during the hot days of the year. Furthermore, green design, which highlights the integration of nature in the architectural process, usually green roofs, green facades etc. is in wide diffuse around the globe.

Building resilient housing is a complex issue that combines various parameters such as function, aggregation, side, urban context, construction and environmental strategy. Nevertheless, the typologies that are more flexible in terms of adaptability and of interior spaces delegation result those of rectangular forms. The more regular shapes tend to be compact and present a higher level of energy saving. Moreover, in terms of aggregation the bar or tower shape allow more density and also in case of design choice two facing aspects of a dwelling. Depending also on the scale of the unit, more organic shapes can be used in eco-design.

The minimum modular quote -that of the private cell- is always the most determinative design factor, when talking about adaptive and flexible housing. Since the question is to come up with a solution that derives from the consideration of various needs, such as comfort, more rational and functional organizations of spaces, intentions of space and human interaction, possibilities of views, ergonomy, energy saving, balance and integration to the contextual frame, it has to satisfy possibly the most of them. In order to do so, the minimum dwelling module has to be aggregative flexible. Regarding the structure it is also noticed that, timber frame or steel frame are widely used since they permit more flexible structures, as well as dry technology construction solutions that reduce costs. In the case of X-LAM the durability of the structure is high while the cost is significantly reduced. Its popularity as an innovative construction material is justified, as long as specific parameters

are satisfied such as low seismic danger. On the other hand, steel structures maybe cost more respect to concrete and timber, but guarantee stability, longer life cycle and are totally recyclable.

2. A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH | DESIGN STRATEGY & GOALS

The project proposal aims to engage diverse possible communities, respect to multi-user groups, dwelling typologies, collective space types, as well as socialization and commuting opportunities. The idea is that younger and older people live together in supportive communities, where the needs of both groups are acknowledged and met.

Co-living is engaged with co-working spaces in order to provide a more comfortable and compact every-day life to its users. The new shared living model is conceived as a non-commodified model that promotes an alternative solution of ownership and management, rather than another “affordable” luxury hub. It is based on the idea that co-living communities have the power to become key contributors to neighborhood improvement, as part of an ecosystem of community groups, co-operatives, live-work collectives, start-ups and social impact labs. Rather than needing to find small, homogeneous and highly-committed groups of individuals, co-living advocates could deploy effective approaches to civic empowerment and community development. In that sense, place bonding and active citizenship can thrive in these collective spaces. By promoting a system of sharing every-day moments and living spaces, a diverse range of residents from entrepreneurs, low-income families to recent migrants and artists will have the chance to interact and overcome social boundaries in order to establish solid communities.

Furthermore, another important principle of design is to achieve a high level of sustainability and climate adaptation, by adopting several of UN17 goals and the principles of New Urban Agenda (World Green Building Council, 2016-2020). Adopting a passive architectural model and implementing green building strategies defines the purpose to contribute to a more sustainable urban and architectural planning and a healthier living environment.

Trying to achieve elimination of soil footprint and constructed space while increase sociability, the following six decision-steps were adopted: Reduce built surface (add in height) by guaranteeing a free space of 50% of the total lot surface. Secondly, combine spatial functions and relations by careful space programming and functions' delegation, as well as increase multifunctional spaces where possible. As a third step release spatial units, so to create flexible space that can be adapted to actual or future needs. Furthermore, enabling temporary and modular structures within the other 50% of the urban lot, which is dedicated to gardening and urban agriculture, operates as a green filter and a space of interaction. Finally, integration of multiple levels (typology) of social hubs/spaces increases the opportunities of sociability and saves up energy consumption (aprox. 30% common spaces + 20% private spaces).

As far as the eco design in concerned, passive architecture principles are adopted during the design of the buildings. Optimum orientation of the building volumes is considered for better illumination, natural ventilation and shading during the hot months. What is more, technical systems for rain harvest and grey water treatment and reuse, as well as PV panel's installation were considered, in order to achieve a level of renewable energy production and energy sufficiency. Moreover, dry technology construction and use of recyclable materials reduces energy loss and polluting emissions on site. Finally, the green rooftop along with the gardens and urban orchards are supposed to enhance the local microclimate and reduce the urban heating island effect, as well as fortify the resilience against flooding after storms that strike Rome quite often. More precisely, urban orchards contribute to food production in zero kilometers and make part of a recent wider culture of Roman citizens that are occupied with urban agriculture.

Designing primarily a residential space, even if adjusted to additional spaces, beholds traditionally a hierarchy of private and public spaces, a typological path of distribution, organization and relation of spaces. In addition, it is significant to realize that designing a collective residence it not only a question of technical architectural considerations but of a wider urban context, a more complex environment. Therefore, it is essential to engage an integrated design, which seeks to incorporate various parameters of a projects such as

climate, site identity, energy, form, construction, regulatory, economical and of course social characteristics.

In the Urban Plan of the city of Rome (PRG, 2016) it is stated that the area including the lot of intervention is under “refunctionalization” of urban areas according to the mix complex services that allow the preservation of the prevailing residential use or that provide introduction of new shares of residence. Also the revitalization of urban areas for new centralities, green for leisure and sport with a public sense, as well as the reconfiguration of open spaces and the creation of permeable and planted areas with the possibility of agreed public use and the recovery / construction from scratch of spaces serving bicycle paths is indicated. In particular, “Type C” enhancement areas –where the project area is situated-, consisted of abandoned areas and mainly non-residential settlements, are characterized by “the forfeiture of the original use or by the inconsistency between current and desirable uses and in any case compatible with the historical, physical and socio-economic characteristics of the historic city, in the local and urban scale, in which work is being carried out with completion / transformation projects aimed at achieving new quality conditions morphological-environmental and functional complexity, through the localization of residential and non-residential functions and new public spaces”.

Adding into the equation also the legal framework, among the previous mentioned factors the project is developed in a three-branch direction, in order to compromise both requirements of flexibility/adaptability of the co-living units and thoughtful contextualization respect to the urban tissue, but also reassure an eco-friendly and sustainable design and life cycle.

3. THE CO-LIVING HUB | URBAN & ARCHITECTURAL COMPOSITION

The logic of the design strategy is to develop a linear aggregation of the private dwellings that will permit the development of the relevant semi-private and shared spaces following a

kind of zoning model. This way takes advantage of the site configurations also and allows a clear articulation of spaces without depriving the project from continuity and flow.

The urban lot of 5930 m2 is located on the intersection of via Cesare de Lollis and via dei Dalmati, north and west side. It faces on the north side the University Campus of Sapienza, on the west side residential blocks (palazzine) of early 20th century, whereas on the south side is neighboring with a garage/warehouse and on the east side its boundaries are congruent to the Students House. Taking into consideration the inhomogeneous character of the area and in search of architectural references the first step was to recognize the form of the buildings around the project area.

Being diverse regarding the functions (administrative, residential and educational) and mode of settlement the geometric shape of rectangular and square were distinguished as the prevalent ones. The bar rectangular shape is a familiar shape and also convenient for both the aggregation of the dwelling modules and the creation of two urban faces on the north and west boundaries of the lot. The idea is to keep a low construction footprint and dedicate the 50% of the project area to gardens and urban orchards, since they typically are a characteristic of Rome's urban configuration and culture. In order to keep permeability and an urban axial continuity the building mass is limited on the west and north side of the lot, leaving open the rest of the lot and enabling view to the Department of Mathematics as well as the historic building of Pastificio S. Lorenzo from the south.

Moreover, being a mixed-use complex the co-living and co-working spaces adopt a more open identity towards the city than a closed off residential building. Considering this and taking advantage of the intersection of the streets the two volumes hold back from the street boundary and so they create a piazza that welcomes the users and residents. In that way both entrances of the residential complex as well as the co-working are highlighted and visible by the passenger.

The design principles followed, regarding the whole project have highly considered and integrated sustainable architectural and technical solutions. More precisely, aiming to take advantage of passive architectural solutions at first place, the orientation of the building

volumes was decided in order to favor the sun intakes, natural ventilation and illumination, as well as avoid exposing more sensible spaces (e.g. private dwellings) to wind currencies and north orientation. In fact, the positioning of the residential building in bar form enables one façade facing to the south-east where the private dwellings are arranged.

SPACES AND HUBS DESIGN

The dwelling is the basic component of the design process in the sense that its generation came out through a testing process of body measurements and comfort indices, consideration of diverse needs of various users, functional and ergonomic parameters. Since a collective residency represents a specific philosophy of living together, which means sharing services, spaces and moments in a daily basis, it is important to treat the private spaces with respectful attention to the collective ones. However, for the economy of space and resources (energy and expenses), as well as to increase sociability of the residents the aim is to maximize collective spaces and design private units of minimum dimensions, keeping the privacy as a priority for the spaces of hygiene and sleeping. The dwelling typologies are adjusted to various user scenarios.

By deciding to minimize the private space the question of comfort and privacy arouse. A filter space was given as a solution between the private unit (micro-module) and the collective space, in this case the distributor or corridor. That space, remains mostly on the private appropriation and so it is treated as a threshold. According to W. Benjamin “the threshold must be carefully distinguished from the boundary”, means that this zone should not be limitative but a space of transformation and transition. By adopting this approach the threshold is designed as a passage to the collective life and so it has to be more than a division. Polycarbonate panels are set on the exterior wall of the private module, in order to serve as a lighter division element. This choice apart from the fact that is affordable, strong and adaptable it serves also as a way to allow more natural light to enter in the private unit that faces from only one aspect the exterior.

As a secondary transition space that is the extension of the main “street”, the bridges represent the passage to the shared spaces of collective activities and socialization. The idea is to give some breathing space between the building volumes and to render a more clear relation of interior and exterior through a deliberate movement. The bridges as architectural components represent a dual character as they are set in between the internal and external space and so they become part of both, a connective path. The part that extends from the corridor to the curtain wall passes above the open living room of the ground floor and so allows a panoramic view of the patio. Whereas the part from the curtain wall until the cubic volumes of collective activities rests in open air and offers the opportunity to experience the outdoors.

Usually, in multi-storey residential buildings the spaces of interaction of the residents are restricted in the stairwells and corridors, since the construction and design aims to achieve a maximum of pure dwelling-unit floor space. The philosophy of providing more space of interaction and shared activity is on the contrary the principle of the collective living. To this direction the collective space apart from those of the ground floor are detached from the main bar shaped volume that hosts the residential units and vertical connections. The objective of this organization of collective spaces is to render them distinguishable from the private dwellings and as an extension of the private life to create a filter space (bridges) that gives access to the collective life. By this way the level of comfort is also increased since the shared spaces inevitably create more noise. Moreover, the two of the three collective spaces that are repeated vertically, corresponding to each floor level are thought as living hubs and that favor relaxing, gaming and socializing activities among the residents. They are facing the garden area as well as the urban orchards and include one loggia each that enables the experience of outdoors and serves as a filter against sun as well.

The kitchen in many cultures is interpreted as the space of maximum sociability, where the preparation of food is accompanied by moments of gathering, discussing, enjoying. Especially in cultures as the Italian one, cooking is a highly respectful and appreciated activity of daily life, while also is an opportunity of gathering, relaxing and socializing. Consequently, the kitchen should reflect the importance of the activity and suggest a space that is cozy, bright and inviting. In the co-living project the collective kitchen is the central

element, regarding its positioning that allows easy access from all the dwellings respectively and faces also the central vertical circulation axes. In the same way as the other two shared living hubs the kitchen is developed in three levels always in correspondence to the dwelling floors. However, it differentiates its character by its bigger size and the absence of a loggia. Instead, a windowed-wall enables natural light enter and hosts some operable windows for ventilation. As a main feature of community life the collective kitchen offers also a smaller entrance space with couches, as it is used throughout the day by all residents.

The Co-working building is separated by the residential complex in order to clearly attribute its different function. It is designed to foster creativity, productivity and collaboration among the residents of the co-living and also people from the neighborhood. The spatial relationship with the residential complex inhales continuity as the building form is contiguous to one side to the residential building and extends to the direction of the pop-out volumes of collective facilities. In a way the building is touching the residential part but looks more as its side boundary, the mediator between the busy street and the garden. The ground floor hosts a reception and storage front space while in the back a coffee area can be found. In the middle area laboratory spaces (botteghe) are giving face to the street level, allowing the passenger to have visible contact to the interior. The two floors above are eventually dedicated to co-working space, providing various areas for meetings, studying and working. The core part of the building that features restrooms, vertical connections and small kitchens is the one covered by terracotta tiles, while the co-working spaces are covered by curtain walls on both sides. In this way daylight and direct view of the outdoors space is guaranteed, as well as cross-ventilation, in order to create a pleasant environment for working. The mere transparency and lightness of the volume is achieved by the curtain-wall façade, as the intention is to highlight the public character of the building and the role of its actual function, as a place of collaboration that is an extension of the city and so open to the public also visually. On the last floor, the area corresponding to co-working space is transformed into a terrace, covered by aluminum roof and is designed as a multipurpose space with lighter furniture and hammocks. The terrace offers a panoramic view to the north, east and south, to the gardens and collective orchards, as well as the skyline of the city of Rome.

The building complex presents two compact urban fronts, meaning the facades on the elevations facing the city, in order to keep continuity within the urban tissue. Summer and winter comfort is a determining factor in the building layout to optimize the thermal performance of walls and to build with an environmental approach. Sitting of building blocks ensures different orientations of the housing units (east), the collective spaces (west) and double orientation of the co-working space (north and south), also exploiting the sun path and avoiding exposure to strongest wind directions. Regarding the internal fronts which are facing the collective garden and urban orchards, those demonstrate a higher articulation.

The façade, facing the west urban front of the rectangular residential building is aligned seamlessly with the street, establishing a clearly defined mass. The chosen ventilated terracotta coating that covers the façade is in dialogue with the local architectural colors and materials, while assures comfort and protection of the private dwellings that are positioned on that side. Moreover, being the longest elevation, the continuous wall of terracotta tiles is intentionally “broken” by cuts that host windows and balcony doors. The façade is highlighted by the cantilever black aluminum balconies that are projected slightly off, in order to serve the functional needs of natural ventilation and sun, as well as attribute a more playful rhythm. On the ground level the secondary entrance which serves only the residents, pops out from the façade following the logic of the balconies. Moreover, in order to render a more interesting and communicative to the passenger appearance, the color of terracotta tiles becomes darker to specific parts, so to indicate the vertical interior connections of the complex.

Furthermore, considering the “internal” front of the residential building it presents a transparency on the contrary to the one facing the city and also it is extended on the horizontal imaginary axis into cubic volumes that represent the collective spaces. The three volumes seem to pop out from the compact curtain wall façade of the residential building. In fact they are detached of the curtain wall giving a breathing space of almost 2m, thus connected by small bridges on each floor level, in order to give immediate access from the private dwellings to the collective spaces. Alternation of building heights renders it possible to distinguish the diversity of typologies regarding semi-private and shared spaces, such as the collective hubs and collective kitchens.

Common areas are places for sharing and encounters between residents. They are spread throughout the whole project area, with a distinguishably higher concentration on the ground floor of the main residential building though. Diverse itineraries are created through the semi-private and shared spaces (lit halls, common service rooms, deck, patio, bridges, “open” living spaces, collective garden and urban orchards). The project creates places and opportunities for socializing and, through these spaces, provides the means for community living. The rectangular shape of the volumes defined the framework under which all movements and operations are organized, allowing a clear and variable arrangement of interior spaces. At the same time, along with the continuity and the relationship between interior and exterior of the relevant common spaces, the objective regarding all the shared spaces is a free-flow floor plan, which would allow the user and the visitor to perceive the unity of the space.

To sum up, the objective to maintain a continuity of the project, nevertheless the functional division of the buildings and the eventual volumetric diversity, is achieved by setting a semi-open public space in the intersection of the two main buildings. The main entrances of the residential and co-working spaces are positioned on the covered piazza on the north-west angle of the lot that represents a filter space between the city and the project complex, which welcomes the passenger. The diversity of volumes, architectures and uses is the underlying principle of the proposal. The project provides multiple readings of the exterior and interior spaces of buildings that facilitate appropriation by its residents. The success of the project will be determined through the use of the shared spaces that are the essential means for community living.

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