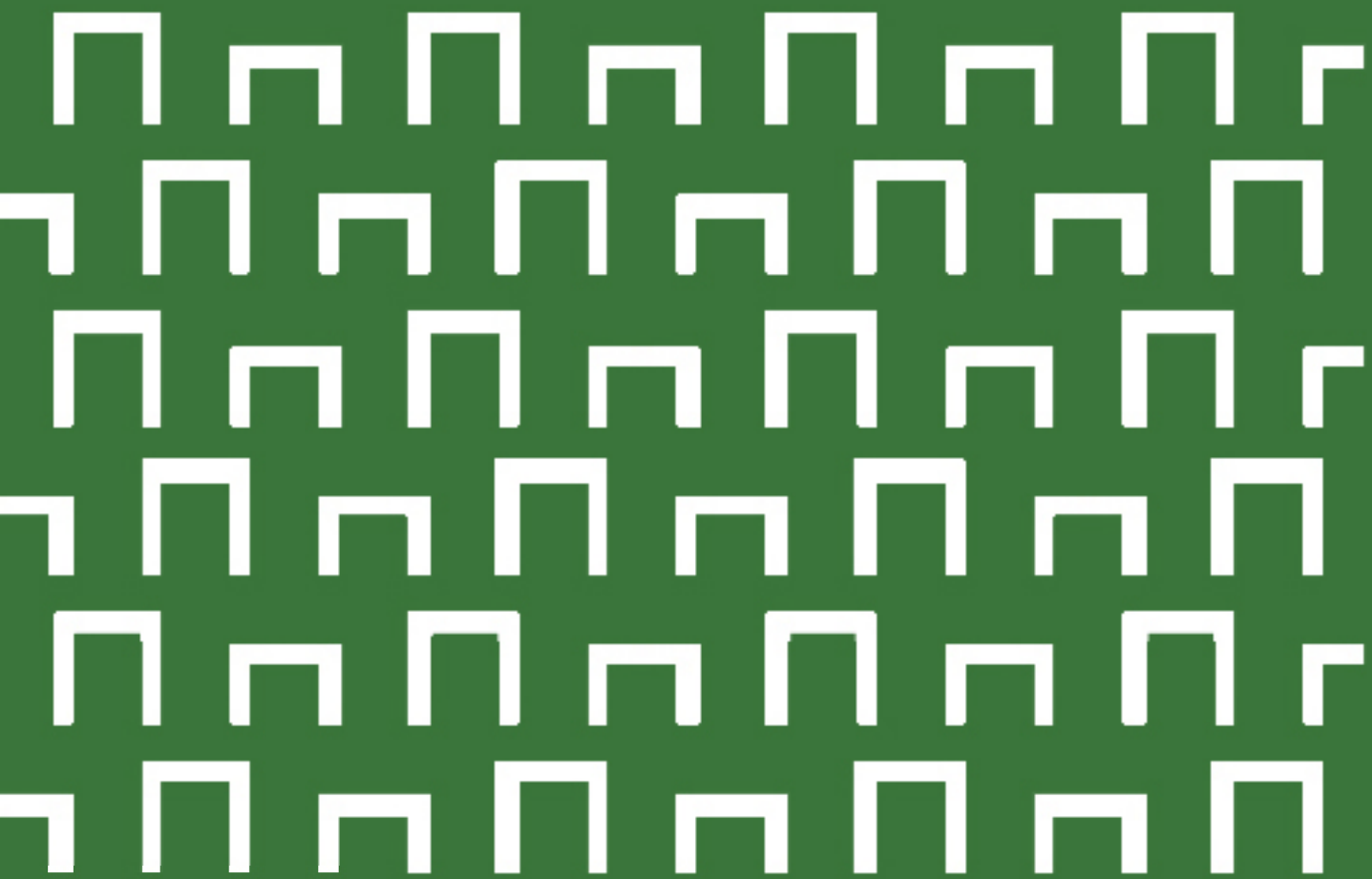
Working Group 3
MCMH Atlas

Public Policies on Middle-Class Mass Housing in Europe and Leveraging Contemporary Architecture Interventions



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European Middle-Class Mass Housing CA18137

Table of Content

Introduction **6**
Public Policies on Middle-Class Mass Housing in Europe and Leveraging Contemporary Architecture Interventions

Part 1
National Policy

Albania 10
Austria 12
Belgium 14
Cyprus 16
France 18
Germany 20
Greece 24
Hungary 26
Italy 28
Poland 30
Romania 32
Serbia 34
Spain 36
Slovenia 38
Switzerland 40
The Netherlands 42
Türkiye 44

Part 2: Stakeholder Workshop
Co(Designing for Quality of Life in a Middle-Class Mass Housing Site: Exploring Challenges and Opportunities

The Gardening School 48
Re-thinking the image of Ümitköy Sitesi 56
Bold Move 64
Strategies for Better Shared Grounds 72
Bridge 82

Introduction

By Müge Akkar Ercan and Uta Pottgieser

Middle-class mass housing in Bucharest, Romania (@photo credit, Müge Akkar Ercan, 2023)

MCMH has been generally underestimated in urban and architectural studies, and there is still a lack of comparative analysis and global perspectives. From 2019 to today, the COST Action Middle-Class Mass Housing in Europe (MCMH-EU) has created a transnational network among researchers conducting studies on MCMH sites in Europe since the 1950s. The Action aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of MCMH sprawl in cities and deepen the knowledge by focusing on the existing cases, public policies, new concepts and research methodologies. Besides the current methods, surveys, and contextualisation that allow us to map the existing cases, the Action also aims to show the diversity and resilience of MCMH in terms of adapting to the current urban and social conditions.

The COST Action MCMH-EU is developed based on the three foci:

1) Documenting the MCMH,
2) Developing a specific set of (new) concepts for MCMH analyses,
3) Leverage contemporary architecture interventions and Public policies.

Working Group 3 members contributed to the Action by studying the MCMH policies of member countries and conducting a Stakeholder Workshop on an MCMH site in Ankara, Türkiye as a COST member and, at the same time, an Inclusiveness-Target Country. Hence, this book consists of two major parts. The first part provides readers with brief historical public policy reviews of the 17 countries on MCMH. These countries include Albania, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Slovenia, Switzerland, The Netherlands and Türkiye.

The second part, focusing on the collective contributions of a group of action members, comprises the contemporary architectural interventions to improve the quality of life and sustainability of the community living in this MCMH site in Ankara. Within the COST Action MCMH-EU project framework, a stakeholder workshop, titled Stakeholder Workshop: Co-designing for Quality of Life, was organised in Ankara at Middle East Technical University in October 2022 on a 50-year-old cooperative housing estate in collaboration with University College London. It gathered a group of international researchers, designers and residents of the housing estate. Twenty-eight experts from 11 countries (Cyprus, Denmark, France, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Pakistan, Serbia, Spain, Türkiye and the USA) and ten residents (three women and seven men) from the housing estate were involved in the workshop. Located in a highly prestigious and popular middle-class suburb on the West corridor of Ankara, the housing estate, namely Ümitköy Sitesi, was selected as the case study site for the stakeholder workshop due to two reasons. First, the housing site has a lot of regeneration problems. In general, the redevelopment of such housing sites causes urban densification, displacement of the existing residents, social exclusion, and loss of natural and built-up resources that can be used for a while. Using this large typical cooperative housing estate from the 1970s as a case study, the stakeholder workshop aimed to show the possibilities of addressing these problems and finding new and creative solutions through a co-creative process in collaboration with international expert groups, the residents and the local authority. In this way, such MCMH sites can be regenerated, and the residents' quality of life can be improved without destroying and rebuilding such housing estates. The second reason is the enthusiasm and willingness of the management board members of the housing estate cooperative to cooperate with the workshop organisers. It is rare in Türkiye and maybe elsewhere to find such a collaborative, dedicated and enthusiastic community to work in stakeholder workshops.

With the stakeholder workshop, which took three days in Ankara, it became possible to discuss and reveal the needs, problems and challenges of an MCMH community needing help and to create the ground for future architecture and urban design interventions and the development of public policies. The workshop also helped develop alternative improvement strategies and interventions in the MCMH ensemble, reaching optimum solutions to resolve community problems through co-creative means. It also showed that it is possible to develop a collective spirit toward the common benefit of the community by creating such bottom-up endeavours in cooperation with the community leaders, local authorities, universities and civil society organisations to achieve successful and sustainable regeneration schemes for MCMH sites. Five expert groups explained their projects in the second part of this book. They showed how the case of Ümitköy housing estate can be regenerated through different urban design and architectural intervention approaches. These approaches can be exemplary for many similar MCMH sites in Türkiye and elsewhere in Europe and the world. Together with the conference papers, journal articles and, finally, this book, we aim to disseminate existing research results in the scientific community, and within local policymakers and the general public, including the creation of the Action website.

Middle-class mass housing in Lodz, Poland (@photo credit, Müge Akkar Ercan, 2023)

Part 1
National Policies

Albania

By Edmond Manahasa

A typical example of Tirana MCMH, Partizani Neighbourhood
(@photo credit, Edmond Manahasa, 2023)

Albania became an independent country from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. However, due to political instabilities, it became possible to discuss urban development only after Tirana became the capital city in 1920. The first state initiative related to the middle class can be considered the allocation of land plots for the newly arrived governmental officers' dwellings. Such initiative materialised later when Albania changed from the Republic to the Kingdom in 1928, and King Zog administration officers mainly built villa-type detached houses. The first apartment blocks were constructed only during the Fascist invasion period (1939-1942) for the Italian administration "settlers" in Tirana. However, they were not fully implemented due to the Nazi invasion in 1942.

The early socialist period in Albania was associated with an urgent need for dwellings because of the extensive destruction of housing stock during World War II. The communist regime's industrialisation strategy, according to the Soviet model, aimed to increase the impact of the working class. The government had an active policy for internal migration from rural to urban areas, which was done to meet the factories' worker needs. Housing during the socialist period had to be developed based on equality and collectivist principles. Indeed, Albanian society evolved to be a quasi-single class (except for the Politburo members, who were self-awarded privileges), and the concept of the middle class was comprehended broadly. Thus, a state enterprise director and the lowest rank employee could live in the same apartment block.

During the socialist period, strategic decisions on housing planning were taken in the Labour Party congresses based on five-year development programs. In the 1950s, mass housing projects were built as large-scale apartment blocks according to the Soviet models. From the second half of the 1950s to the late-1960s, new neighbourhoods were planned, relying on the Siemensstadt-model social housing from the planning point of view. However, they heavily reflected the political agenda of the regime, which gave them communist names like: "1 Maj, "Partizani", or "Dinamo". In the 1970s, prefabricated-panel housing based on the Chinese model was applied mainly in satellite towns located close to the factories for the working classes.

In the post-socialist period, the urban context was influenced by in-migration to central and coastal Albania. The lack of administrative capacities to cope with the situation produced informal settlements and housing. Mass housing in this period is seen in two forms: social housing constructed by the state and residential complexes built by private developers.

As a form of dwelling, social housing was officially regulated by Law No. 9232, which came into force in May 2004. The Law foresaw dwellers of this housing typology as i. emigrants returned from abroad, ii. in-migrant workers, iii. families of martyr police, iv. disabled persons and v. domestic violence victims. Although most of the residents in these houses are people in need, certain groups are categorised as middle class to some extent.

The residential complexes were constructed at the expense of sportive fields or greeneries, which were returned to pre-socialist period owners. Another form of land allocated for such mass housing typology is related to old householders who unite to obtain the construction right in return for flat agreements with developers. The residential complexes are probably the best representative of post-socialist period middle-class mass housing in Albania.

Finally, after the earthquake of November 2019, the government undertook mass housing construction in the counties that were mostly affected. This process is still ongoing.

Austria

By Constanze Wolfgring

A typical example of Viennese MCMH, Sonnwendviertel (@photo credit, Constanze Wolfring, 2023)

The roots for the construction of mass housing in Austria were laid in the early 20th century during the period of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy against the background of a rapidly growing (urban) population and an industrialised society. The Kaiser Franz Joseph I. Jubiläumsfonds für Werkstättengebäude und Volkswohnungen (1908) aimed at promoting the construction of housing and workshops under one roof, addressing self-employed working and middle classes. While it only had a minor quantitative impact, its lasting relevance stems from the fact that it determined the principle of Gemeinnützigkeit – linking public subsidies to the fulfilment of social interests and the statutory profit limitation of housing developers who wish to access public funds. This core principle (albeit in a modified form) until today guides object-oriented housing subsidies (which, unlike in many other European countries, are the main form of housing-related subsidies in Austria). To date, around 50% of the Austrian residential stock has been constructed with public subsidies in this sense, benefitting large parts of the middle and working-class population.

As in many European countries, the periods after the two World Wars were intense (re-)construction activities and the adoption of respective legal frameworks, which aimed at providing remedies for lack of housing and kick-starting the post-war economy. In 1921, the Bundes-Wohn- und Siedlungsfonds (Federal Housing and Settlement Fund) was established to subsidize the construction of over 170,000 flats with loans, interest and annuity subsidies. The law was replaced by the Wohnbauförderungsgesetz (Housing Construction Subsidies Act, 1954, and amended in 1968), promoting the construction of around 130,000 units. These included, among other things, single-family homes, putting the most popular form of housing for Austrians within reach for the middle classes and contributing to widespread suburban and rural sprawl that has been ongoing for decades.

After World War II, the establishment of the Wiederaufbaufonds (Housing Reconstruction Fund) in 1947 contributed to the reconstruction of over 120,000 apartments through interest-free loans. It triggered a strong foundational wave of limited-profit housing associations, which until today are the key players in the construction of subsidized multi-apartment buildings for the middle classes.

From the 1970s onwards, the thematic focus shifted from new and reconstruction towards housing renovation and urban renewal (see, for instance, the 1970 Housing Improvement Act and the 1982 Federal Act on the Promotion of the Preservation and Improvement of Residential Buildings and Urban Renewal).

Between the 1950s and the 1980s, responsibilities for housing policies shifted gradually from the federal to the regional levels, leading to a highly fragmented situation with very heterogeneous policies and subsidy schemes prevailing in Austria's nine regions until today. Particular mention in this context has to be made to Vienna, which since its legal status as a separate region and the following period of Red Vienna (1919-1934), has assumed a special role within Austria: with today 220,000 municipal flats and another 200,000 built by limited-profit housing associations, around 60% of the Viennese population (and hence, large parts of the middle classes) live in publicly subsidized flats, making Vienna the "European capital of social housing".

Belgium

By Els De Vos, Selin Geerinckx

View from the inner street of the remarkable Belgian MCMH project de Bist (Antwerp) designed in 1960 (@photo credit, Els De Vos, 2021)

Belgium has a liberal housing policy with a tradition of homeownership, which the current government tries to counter by the so-called 'bouwshift' (building shift). From 2040 onwards, no open space may be built on in Flanders (and from 2050 in the French-speaking part of Belgium), and the building must be limited to the area already occupied. This policy was developed because Belgium is the most densely built-up of all European countries, and its open space is the most fragmented. The reason for this fragmentation of open space stems from years of promoting private initiative to build one's own home.

The "Loi sur les habitations ouvrières" (August 9, 1889) [Working-class Housing Act], developed in the late 19th century already, was the foundation stone in the Belgian housing policy that encouraged almost exclusively the individual ownership of new houses. Local authorities were encouraged to establish local housing and credit institutions and to stand in for the promotion of savings and insurance. This provided a financial basis for building or buying one's own home. As such, the government only stimulated people to build their own house, but did not provide it directly.

That changed in 1919 when the Nationale Maatschappij voor Goedkope Woningen en Woonvertrekken (National Company for Cheap Houses and Living Arrangements) was founded under the influence of socialists in the national government. That social housing company built houses for the worker's classes. However, once the Christian Democrats came again to power, priority was again given to home ownership. The Moyersoen Act of 1922 clearly stimulated home ownership by a system of premiums.

After World War II, the influential Christian Democrats in government further created a favourable political climate for the massive spread of private home-building by providing substantial subsidies and facilitating mortgages. They argued for detached single-family homes in the countryside, their electoral territory. The highly influential De Taeye Act (May 29, 1948) – named after its proposer, Christian Democrat Minister De Taeye – granted premiums to individual home builders as well as a state guarantee for mortgage loans. Requirements of a maximum 'habitable surface area' were prescribed. Especially the fact that prospective builders could borrow up to 100% of the price of their homes and the state guaranteed it, created enormous leverage. The building sector is an important motor of the Belgian economy. As a result, Belgium, especially Flanders, saw an early increase in homeownership: today, 71.6% of inhabitants in Flanders are private homeowners, mostly in detached housing.

The Social Democrats, on the other hand, promoted high-rise buildings and large housing complexes in urban areas. On April 15, 1949, a second housing act – the Brunfaut Act, named after the socialist member of parliament Fernand Brunfaut – made provisions not only for the regular annual financing of the construction of housing clusters by semi-governmental and recognized social-housing associations, but also for street layout, including paving, public utilities such as drainage, and open-space planning of grouped houses and flats. That act was an instrument by which to promote social housing. By comparison with the Netherlands, however, social housing remained a rather marginal part of the housing stock, ranging from 2.9% in 1957 to a peak of 30.5% in 1972 and 7.3% today. In the private sector, high-rise housing was mainly used as an investment of the middle and higher classes and as dwellings for the elderly. The high-rise projects were often located on specific sites along the coastline or around important parks, squares or boulevards.

Cyprus

By Byron Ioannou

Early middle-class self-housing quarter in Kaimakli, Nicosia
(@photo credit, Byron Ioannou, May 2023)

The sequence of important historical events of the 20th century for Cyprus follows more or less a colonial Eastern Mediterranean than a core European narrative. World War II, for example, was not one of the major turns in the history of the Island. For this reason, socioeconomic transitions, urbanisation and housing issues decline from a typical central European norm. The first two decades of the post-colonial period are marked by inter-communal military events ending with the Turkish invasion and the division of the island. For this reason, housing issues after 1974 refer only to the southern part of the Island, where the Republic of Cyprus enacts control.

With the exemption of the 1974 refugee housing program, middle-class mass housing through large-scale publicly initiated building projects was not the case in any historic period examined. There are several reasons for this, relevant to the lack of a welfare state and a housing culture, along with the over-provision, fragmentation, and the high dispersal of land ownership and the low- and middle-class population. The state policy to house the middle class was translated to a loose and flexible urban expansion system providing disproportionally large land development zones to the market. Patchy, irregular, and small-scale private plot divisions were facilitated by legislation and fiscal tools so that almost every middle-class household could borrow money from cooperative or private banks, purchase a 520 square meters plot, and build 1 to four housing units in a self-housing scheme. From 1990 to 2010, this process was consolidated through further development zone expansions, and the permitted densities ceiling increased.

In parallel, during mainly the period 1974 to 2000, the state built more than 50,000 housing units for Greek Cypriot refugees under a very effective program that managed the construction of government housing estates, master planning, and large-scale plot construction for self-housing, as well as targeted funding schemes. These housing estates were not provided with a sound management and maintenance scheme and were gradually privatized.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the increase in land values due to the annexation of Cyprus into the EU, the increase in foreign land investments, and the financial crisis have proven the inadequacy of private plot division and self-housing schemes to provide affordable housing to middle-class households. During the last decade, a series of mitigation measures have been taken, like the plans to increase the provision of housing units by the Publicly owned Land Development Corporation in order to cover the middle class, several regulative amendments to promote affordable housing or additional funding schemes for self-housing in marginalised areas. Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine has recently boosted the demand for housing units and premises for relocated middle-class households from the affected areas. It seems that self-housing through the private market as the main concept for middle-class mass housing is getting more and more inefficient.

France

By Bernard Haumont and Ahmed Benbernou

Mourenx, built in the Pyrénées Atlantiques from 1956 to 1961 for around 10 000 inhabitants (@photo credit, carte postale-Mourenx; geneanet.org; CC-BY-NC_SA2.0 Creative commons: https://www.geneanet.org/cartes-postales/view/5186149#0)

At the end of the 19th century, the policies in favour of social housing, mostly private, were pursuing three goals: to house the workers near their workplace (mines, steel mills, forges, cotton and wool spinning mills), to develop family gardens to improve healthy food, to promote home ownership to ensure the social order.

With the establishment of public loans for private social housing developers, the Siegfried Law in 1894 provided the foundation on which all the future social housing policies were built: HBM and later HLM (1950). It is the time of garden cities and small collective buildings. In 1928, the Loucheur Law sought to answer to the housing crisis of the interwar period: the State undertakes to provide 200,000 rental HBM and 60,000 affordable homes for accession to ownership. At the same time, around Paris, in place of historic fortifications, 37,000 dwellings were built between 1926 and 1936, with a peak of more than 9,000 in 1933: to house the Parisian population and fight the Thirties crisis in creating work for jobless people.

After World War II, the country had to rebuild the ruins and face the rural exodus. But, the French Government also faced the costs of two successive independent wars (Indochina 1947-1954 and Algeria 1954-1962), and it did not have the financial resources to impulse ambitious housing policies. However, the first experiments in large housing estates were conducted in Algiers: from 1953-54, three large housing projects were built: (6,500 dwellings allocated in Diar Es-Saada, Diar El-Mahçoul and Climat de France).

Since the 1950s, the work world in France has been changing: the working class declined, whereas employees, professionals and managers strongly increased. It is the turn towards the tertiary sector. Middle classes became predominant in the population. In 1954, a financial arrangement allowed to create the SCIC (Société centrale immobilière de la Caisse des Dépôts). It acted as a developer and generated numerous large housing estates (les grands ensembles): Bron, Mourenx, Bagnols, Poissy, etc. After 1962, with the influx of returnees from Algeria (around one million), the trend increased; Sarcelles, Créteil, Epinay, La Courneuve, etc. From 1954 to 1979 (in the ZUP context after 1958), the SCIC built 170,000 dwellings, mainly towers and blocks, where the middle classes found accommodation. Besides the SCIC activities, HLM Offices and especially the private developers built around 7 million housing units during that time, with pinks of 450,000 units by year, at the beginning of the 1970s. But, as the Government developed policies promoting separate individual houses, with better loans for house purchases (1965), Villagexpo (1966), 60,000 Chalandonnettes (1969-1972), APL and PAP (1977), the middle classes gradually left the large housing estates for individual housing allotments.

The Deferre Laws in 1983 and the Chevènement Law in 1999 strengthened local government powers to shape housing policies. Communal and Departmental Offices HLM became the main actors for social housing, and their share will remain around 16% of the total stock of dwellings (37.2 million in 2021); private developers did the bulk of the housing construction. In the 2000s, about 350,000 homes were built annually, including 50,000 to 60,000 social dwellings. There are more and more owners (58%) and individual houses (56%) in the existing housing stock: that's where the middle classes are.

Now, there are four main challenges:

- to access new land for housing buildings without reducing the arable land,
- to house people with low incomes and the low-middle class,
- to reduce the energy consumption and thereby protect the environment,
- to maintain and upgrade the collective dwellings built over the past half-century.

Germany

By Anica Dragutinovic

Woldenmey Siedlung in Dortmund (1963-1969). Source: Svenja-Christin Voß, photography taken for the student workshop MHN in Essen/Dortmund, February 2022.

German housing policy over the past 100 years has been following housing policy trends similar to most European countries: (1) regulating minimum standards of housing, (2) private sector rent control, (3) provision of social rental housing and (4) subsequent shifts in emphasis towards housing quality and individual subsidies. In Germany (similar to Austria, Denmark and France), there has been less market displacement, and large private rented sectors have been retained. Public expenditure on housing policy typically lies in the range 1-2 % of GDP. (European Parliament, 1996) As noted by Treanor (2015, 55), 75% of households with the bottom quartile of income live in rented accommodation, but so do 45% of those in the highest quartile. Germany has one of the lowest homeownership rates in Europe.

Housing policy in Germany can be divided into three major periods: (1) the pre-World War II (1890s-1940s), (2) the post-World War II (1940s-1980s), and (3) the reunification (after 1990).

The pre-World War II period is characterised by the establishment of social housing "as a central concern" of the country in the 1920s, establishing the central principle of the German housing system, present ever since. According to Glendinning (2021, 42), this principle was "a sharp separation" between the state, controlling legislation, finance and regulation, and "the producer agencies, which treated with strict neutrality: municipalities, cooperative/social companies and private firms were all eligible for the same assistance and subject to the same regulations". The hyperinflation of 1923 strongly affected the middle class, and to address the economic chaos, a national emergency tax on housing values (Hauszinssteuer) was introduced in 1924. The state-supported housing was orientated towards rental housing rather than (lower-income) home ownership. In fact, German legislation outlawed ownership of individual apartments in the period 1900-1951 (in East Germany until 1990) (Urban, 2018, 104).

> *As always in Germany, unlike Red Vienna, the main client group was not the poor but the impoverished lower middle classes and skilled workers – many of whom then had to quit their expensive modern dwellings during mass unemployment in the Depression. (Glendinning, 2021, 42)*

With the Depression in 1931 housing support was abrupted (reduced by 80% in 1933), and in the post-1933 Germany, the position of housing was somewhat peripheral, as Glendinning (2021, 51) notes.

The post-World War II period was characterized by East-West polarization and differentiated housing policies within West Germany and East Germany. The housing policy in post-World War II West Germany was grounded in the ideal of the social market economy and unified guiding principles on a national level were avoided (Glendinning, 2021, 215), which was in contrast to East Germany centralised governance and socialist system.

The scarcity of housing in West Germany was not class-specific and social housing did not necessarily mean working-class accommodation – approx. 70% of the population was eligible for social housing in the early post-war years (Urban, 2018, 201). Thus, the legitimacy and economic prosperity of the new state depended vitally on mass housing production, but it was achieved through taxation concessions stimulating private investment. "Small-scale landlordism" and home ownership were prioritized to a degree, "reflecting the strength of Catholic family values within Christian Democracy", but "the non-profit organisations played a closely supporting role, aided by subsidy-neutrality between rental and home-ownership", supported by the Social Democrats. Most multifamily buildings were built by state-sponsored non-profit housing associations, owned by municipalities or other public bodies such as trade unions (Urban, 2018, 101). The Social Housing Subsidy Act (1950) was one of the Federal Republic´s first laws, which developed a subsidy system, combining state and private inputs via loans and grants. Between 1950 and 1954, around 2.3 million new houses were completed – which "itself massively fuelled the economic-recovery ´miracle´" (Glendinning, 2021, 223-5). The Housing Construction and Family Home Act (1956), emergency controls dismantlement (1960) and a law from 1967, boosted homeownership subsidies. The proportion of home ownership within new social housing increased from 17% in 1950 to 24% in 1960, and 43% in 1975 (Glendinning, 2021, 225). The year 1973 saw the peak of West German housing production: 714,000 dwellings, but "a slide in economic growth from 6.3% annually in 1952-66 to 1.6% in 1974-82" occurred (Glendinning, 2021, 236-7). Following the increasingly negative media coverage, the construction of mass housing was largely discontinued in the mid-1970s (Urban, 2018, 100).

As Treanor (2015, 55) explains, housing was not an immediate priority in East Germany following the war. In 1949-55, East Germany housing received only 0.1-0.3% of total public investment, rising to 3% by 1968. Following the nationalization and dismantling of the

pre-war housing system in East Germany, the Arbeiterwohnungsbaugenossenschaft (AWG – workers' housing cooperative) system was established in 1954 as a hybrid of co-op and enterprise housing, confined to workers in an individual organization. (Glendinning, 2021, 344-6) The co-op building revival came with different legislation from 1953 to 1963´s formation of the housebuilding combines. Housing construction went up only in the 1970s under Erich Honecker and his famous Housing Program (1973), promising the construction of approx. Three million new dwelling units in a country of just 17 million inhabitants – 2 million were actually built (Urban, 2018, 103-4). The late production peak continued in the 1980s, almost to the end of the socialist rule in 1989.

The first "fundamental restructuring of the social housing sector since the 1940s, introducing market elements at an institutional level, as opposed to the individualized ´right to buy´ of Thatcherite Britain", was launched by Helmut Kohl´s Christian Democrat government in West Germany, just before the collapse of East Germany. A 1988 law "abolished federal subsidies for new social-rented construction and the tax-privileged status of the non-profit companies, freeing them to operate in a profit-making manner". (Glendinning, 2021, 238) After the reunification (1989-90) and a wave of emigration to the West, a systematic demolition or radical reconstruction occurred in the East, whose core funding mechanism was 'Stadtumbau-Ost' (2002–17). "Owing to the surprising similarity of the co-op and housing-association systems in East and West Germany, much of the surviving East Germany housing stock was unproblematically transferred to the Western social housing system and targeted for comprehensive modernization." (Glendinning, 2021, 530)

> *On both sides of the Berlin Wall the large housing estates were pragmatically accepted rather than loved, but in the East, there was a strong narrative that connected them to what many East Berliners would sorely miss after the German reunification: low rents, the absence of unemployment and a narrow gap between rich and poor. (Urban, 2018, 100)*

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Greece

By Despina Dimelli

New Philadelphia, the 1960s mass housing group (@photo credit, D. Dimelli, 2019)

In the beginning of the 20th century, mass housing in Greece was the main tool for housing refugees. The 1923 Law attempted to control the country's urban development after the arrival of refugees through the Provision of land for construction purposes. The first organized attempt of the Greek State to promote mass housing started in 1954 with the foundation of the Social Housing Organization, which was responsible for the implementation of social housing policies. In the following years, this organisation was the largest public construction company, responsible for 96% of the total annual construction activity of the public sector. The criteria for new housing were the available land in the two largest cities of Greece, i.e., Athens and Thessaloniki, and the main planning principle was the use of an orthogonal grid. In the following years, the new structures were characterized by low and middle density and the creation of public space and pedestrians' networks.

In 1971, the Law for Active urban planning proceeded to define rules and restrictions for mass and social housing. Its primary aim was the protection of social housing from real estate exploitation. This Law was rarely applied, while in 1972, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs enacted the Readjustment and Improvement of Social Housing, which defined easier terms for loans for social houses based on the social characteristics of the holders.

The Greek Constitution in 1975 defined that the acquisition of housing to those who are deprived or inadequately housed, constitutes an obligation of the State, and it defined housing principles. One year later, in 1976, the Public Urban and Housing Company, responsible for planning and constructing social houses, was founded. This Company organized the construction of buildings provided to beneficiaries, and it caused many reactions from private and professional interests, which eventually caused reduced to insignificant activity.

The last mass housing project funded by the Greek State was the Olympic Village, which was designed to serve initially the temporary housing needs of athletes during the Olympic and Paralympic Games held in Athens in 2004 and after the Games to serve the immediate and urgent housing needs of beneficiaries.

In 2012, the Greek State decided to abolish and merge public services and organizations due to the economic crisis, so it cancelled the Public Urban and housing company and the Social Housing Organization. Today self-housing through the private market is the primary tool for the middle class, as mass housing is inefficient.

Hungary

By Melinda Benkő

The largest multimodal hub and shopping centre has been developed recently on the edge of Budapest's first prefabricated housing estate, Kelenföld. (@photo credit, Melinda Benko, 2022)

Hungary's housing policy over the past 100 years can be divided into three major periods: the pre-World War II (1908-1945), the state socialist (1945-89), and the post-war era (after 1990).

The first law on state housing construction was passed in 1908 and aimed to build cca. 10,000 workers' flats in Budapest's agglomeration. The most significant result of this programme is the Wekerle garden city, an exemplary 4,000-unit neighbourhood on the outskirts of the capital. Following the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary's territory was reduced by almost a third, and migration from the outlying areas, reinforcing the process of urbanisation, led to a serious housing crisis. A few public settlements were built, as well as slums, so-called state colonies, with emergency shelters. Two laws facilitated the housing construction for the middle class. In 1928, private insurance companies started developing settlements and buildings through a state-subsidised housing program, while the 1940 ONCSA (National Fund for People- and Family Protection) Act resulted in 12,000 type-dwellings.

After World War II, the principles of the housing policy were established by the common goals of the Eastern Bloc's state-socialist political and economic system. In Hungary, the Housing Codex in 1948 and the Constitution in 1949 appeared as consequences of the lands, the firms, and approximately 50% of the housing stock were nationalized. The housing policy had new components: centralized economy and planning, state responsibility for housing provision, a priority of public over private property, public social services, construction of new socialist towns, and special support of private housing development in urban areas, but exclusion of rural housing from the support system. Then, following the Soviet model, the national mass-housing policy based on prefabrication and construction of housing estates was initiated by the first "Fifteen-Year National Housing Development Plan" (1961–75), intended to satisfy housing needs fully. Between 1965 and 1991, about 800,000 small dwelling units (average 52 m2) were built in mostly relatively small (less than 2,500 flats) cca. 600 housing estates throughout the country during this plan period. Meanwhile, in Hungary, as a speciality of the former Eastern Bloc, during the "Goulash-Communism", private home ownership existed and developed; most people had a detached house, flat, or secondary house somewhere.

Then, the property reform and the new Housing Law (1993) facilitated the re-privatization. The former tenants received this "national gift", they could buy their flats for 10% of the market price. As a result, approximately 95% of the flats became privately owned. Nevertheless, the owner-residents acquired not only their own flats but also all the problems inherent in the ageing condominium building. After the privatization process, the "self-care" became the keyword of the housing policy, and different types of subsidies - such as state-subsidized housing loans, support for private housing development through tax credits, panel renovation programmes, family home creation allowance, baby loans, home renovation grant etc. - support mainly the upper and the upper-middle-class families. In 2012, Hungary had a new Constitution intending to provide decent housing for everybody. But the housing policy has no national or political institution, and macroeconomic and family policy considerations drive the decision-making. The policy is characterized by the protection of a housing system based on private homeownership and principled rejection of the public or non-profit rental sector.

Italy

By Laura Daglio, Luisa Smeragliuolo Perrotta and Federico Zanfi

Residential building in Via Ponale, Milan (@photo credit, Paolo Romanò and Giulia Rossari)

The progression of Italian housing policies aimed at providing mass housing for the middle class can be synthetically recalled through three consecutive stages.

First, a significant push toward increasing the residential stock within the private residential market was initially triggered by a set of economic and social measures developed after World War II. On the one hand, these measures aimed at boosting the national economy through investments and incentives for the construction industry, thus responding to the demands of a rapidly expanding urban middle class whose income and consumption levels were rising. On the other hand, wide-ranging measures were adopted to boost home ownership and consolidate political stability by obtaining consensus based on a wide home-owning middle class. In particular, the Tupini (Law no. 408/1949) and Aldisio (Law no. 715/1950) Laws provided tax exemptions and subsidized credits for the construction of residential homes that did not have "the character of a luxury home" and had a decisive impact on the "average" building production.

A second step refers to the public housing sector and deals with measures to enable the occupiers of council housing to become owners. The vast INA Casa State-promoted programme (Law no. 43/1949 and Law no. 1148/1955) was established to design and construct thousands of new urban neighbourhoods over the national territory to provide low-income workers with a purchase option. Later, the INA Casa was replaced by the GEStione Casa Lavoratori programme (GESCAL), whose management of workers' housing with a state's contribution was even larger, since it invested the financial resources gained by selling the previously built subsidised houses. With Law 865/1971, the social housing competencies were then entrusted from the State to the Regions (created in 1970) with the duty to manage the locations and public investments; hence, a sequence of measures to reorganize the public intervention in housing with a clear structure was started together with new investments. To complete the picture, starting with the Decree No. 2/1959, we witness the spread of an unsystematic and patchy process of alienation of the public stock in favour of homeownership, which – due to the progressive reduction of public funding – soon contradictorily began the main source of the management of the existing public housing stock.

A third and final step refers to several measures that, from the end of the 1990s onwards, have attempted to respond to the growing need for upgrading private residential properties. Since housing was one of the main family assets in Italy, leverages of this kind enjoyed lasting success, creating the conditions for maintenance and the consequent rise in property value. With L. 449/97, tax incentives were put in place to trigger refurbishment operations. This enhanced the quality of private housing and helped households to save maintenance costs, thus confirming the pro-homeownership policy of previous decades. More recently (with L. 296/2006), compliance with European energy-saving and anti-pollution norms made it necessary to introduce further incentive schemes. In 2017 – in the light of heightened awareness of risks deriving from the buildings' structural inadequacies and earthquakes – the policy was reactivated to safeguard the building stock against the threat of seismic activity (L. 232/2016). To overcome the economic harshen of the Covid19 pandemic economic crisis, a further shift in the upgrading policies was then recently enacted (D.L. n. 34/2020): it is the case of a complex set of measures and fiscal incentives up to 110% of the total upgrading costs (including thus also financial costs) for energy and seismic upgrading, allowing for credit transfer to third parties and establishing specific energy performances of the building.

Poland

By Magdalena Zaleczna

The new form of mass housing in Poland, the project in Konstantynow Lodzki (@photo credit, Magdalena Zaleczna)

The reconstruction of the uniform Polish state began in 1918. At that time, various legal orders and significant socio-economic disparities between different parts of the country were in place. This was because Russia, Austria, and Prussia had formerly partitioned the country's area. The housing situation's structural basis resulted from the state's economic backwardness at the time, its agricultural character, and lack of social reforms. World War II devastated the country economically, ruining its housing stock. Communists took over the government, Poland entered the group of socialist countries, and the socio-economic system was subordinated to the rules imposed by the Soviet Union. Housing systems of the socialist states had separated development paths that differed from models in Western European countries but also differed from each other. In Poland, despite the pressure on nationalization, private ownership of apartments was common in rural areas, while in cities, the creation of housing cooperatives developed very dynamically since the 1960s. The state could not solve the housing problems of citizens; they co-financed their flats. In the 1970s, the activity of housing construction reached its peak. In 1950, there were 2.4 million dwellings in urban areas and 2.7 million in rural areas of Poland. The share of very small and small flats amounted to 58.5%. During the next few years, the number of dwellings systematically increased in urban areas, reaching 22.5 million urban inhabitants living in more than 7 million in 1988 and 23 million citizens living in more than 10 million housing units in 2020.

During the socialist era, socialist (mostly) and non-socialist entities built the new housing stock. In the 1970s, there was an increase in housing needs, which was related to the demand generated by young people (post-war baby boom). Prefabricated construction dominated many cities; the citizens considered them much better in case of technical infrastructure than old apartments in tenement houses. Until the mid-1980s, under the pressure of numerous strikes, the government promised to intensively develop housing construction to provide every family with a dwelling. During 1950–1988, the urban population in Poland increased by 51.6%, and the urban housing deficit was still enormous. In 1989, the shift towards a market economy caused institutional shock, and housing policy adjusted slowly. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland was adopted on April 2, 1997. Art. 75(1) states that: "public authorities shall pursue policies conducive to satisfying the housing needs of citizens; in particular combating homelessness, promoting the development of low-income housing and supporting activities aimed at the acquisition of a home by each citizen". Housing policy instruments mainly supported ownership. Housing cooperatives lost their importance after 1989, unable to adapt fully to the new economic environment. They are primarily concerned with surviving under existing conditions, renovating old multi-family buildings, and introducing new energy-saving solutions (thermal insulation of buildings, photovoltaic panels). Mass privatization caused a very high ratio of own flats, over 80%. Due to high land prices, multi-family housing is dominant in cities. Currently, the leading providers of apartments on the market are developers who build both flats in multi-family buildings and settlements of housing estates.

For many wealthy households, purchasing an apartment becomes a way to allocate funds safely, but many families still have unmet basic housing needs. From 1990 to 2020, almost 4 million dwellings were built. In 2016, a new governmental set of housing policy instruments was introduced to help lower-income citizens; however, without success.

Romania

By Stefan Dragos Dascalu

Tudor Neighborhood, Targu Mures (@photo credit, Lóránd Bach, AZOPAN Photoarchive, 1981)

One of the main characteristics of the Romanian political scene in the 20th century was discontinuity. The changes from the democratic regime of 1923 and 1938 to the wartime dictatorships, to the communist era between 1947 and 1989 (and arguably during the regime as well), up to the current democratic regime, were abrupt and violent. Very few policies, if any, survived from one era to another. Some professionals who were seen as loyal to the old regime were purged, while others were marginalised. These abrupt changes can be clearly seen in the fabric of Romanian cities.

However, in what concerns the housing stock, more than 50% of housing units were built in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (more than 5 million housing units of the total of 9.2 million housing units today), most of which are in mass housing developments. In fact, two of the main pillars of the communist regime were the urbanization and industrialization of the entire country. From 1947 to 1989, Romania went from a 15 million population, with more than 80% living in rural areas, to 23 million citizens, with almost 50% living in urban areas (approximately 12,3 million individuals). Decisions and policy-making during this era were highly centralized, with all directives coming from the Central Committee before them being transformed into laws. Urban planning policies of the era fell into two main paradigms – the Athens Charter open urbanism planning, mainly as cities extensions mostly during the 1960s and early 1970s, and the new planning directives of densification and closed urban blocks starting from 1972 and becoming the national norm with the 1975 Law of Street Planning.

After the December Revolution of 1989 and the transition to a democratic regime, the population continuously declined due mainly to the ageing people and migration. In the past 30 years, only approximately 1.2 million housing units were built (with a pinnacle of 72,552 housing units built in 2021), almost in their entirety by the private sector. However, a good part of these homes are individual houses and are not part of mass housing strategies.

Starting from the early 2000s, Romania entered a process of highly unequal development. Some cities became so-called "magnet cities" while most of the country underwent a shrinkage and decline process. This led to an accentuated increase in land value in some parts of the country, while other areas stagnated or declined in land value. In some areas, such as Cluj-Napoca, housing and land prices doubled in value in the past ten years, reaching historical records of more than 2,100 EUR/sqm for an apartment (considering that the average net income is about 10,000 EUR/year). This tendency is ongoing. In such cities, we could argue that all housing is addressed to the "middle class", regardless of quality, materials, size, etc.

The recent inflation crisis, the war in Ukraine, the pandemic, and supply-chain problems are starting to create a new storm with even higher housing prices. Soon, housing in "magnet cities" will become unaffordable even to the middle class.

Serbia

By Marija Milinković and Sanjin Subić

New Belgrade, Belgrade (@photo credit, Milica Lopičić, 2009)

In Serbia, housing policies related to middle-class mass housing developed in correspondence to three distinct periods of social governance.

I. From the constitution of Serbia as an independent state (1867) until World War II, building laws followed the processes of the society's late but rapid modernization and urbanization. The 19th-century building laws, from the Law on Places (1866) to the Law of Building for the City of Belgrade (1896), continued to be valid through the transition of the Kingdom of Serbia to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia till the enactment of the all-Yugoslav Construction Law (1931).

During the interwar period (1918-1941), the housing needs of the growing middle class were addressed mainly through individual development of privately owned houses and rental apartment buildings. In the late 1920s and 1930s, following the General Plan of Belgrade (1923) and according to the Garden City Concept, several middle-class neighbourhoods were planned and constructed on the outskirts of Belgrade.

II. In the aftermath of World War II, Yugoslav society shifted to a socialist system, thereby nationalising land and housing stock. After the first temporary laws from 1947 and following the First Five-year Plan (1947-1951), the huge set of regulations directed housing construction towards industrialization and mass production, where housing was regarded as a public good.

The early 1950s were marked by a quest for decentralisation and the introduction of the concept of self-government. The Decree on the Administration of Residential Units (1953) implemented the right to housing by granting a subjective right to use the allocated apartment in social ownership permanently. Investment in the construction of housing stock was decentralised, taking the form of numerous funds, Solidarity Housing Fund in particular, with each employee contributing with a part of their personal income. In terms of housing design, the most influential was the Manual for Construction by the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (1955), that set up strict building norms and, coupled with advancements in prefab systems, eventually provided spacious and flexible apartments.

The 1963 Constitution marked a turn towards liberalised market economy and confirmed the previously introduced concept of self-governing housing communities. Business associations and construction companies competed to provide mass housing in still regulated housing market. Architectural competitions were favoured, which allowed for diverse design solutions and, coupled with a skeletal rather than panel prefabrication system, produced mass housing largely devoid of the monotony of the Soviet-model serial production.

The 1974 Law on Spatial Planning and Design established self-managed interest-based communities and sought to further improve mass construction and dwelling design based on advanced research practices. Officially, there was no middle-class mass housing in socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1991) since it was not a genuine class-differentiated society. Yet, the new middle strata gradually developed in the production sector and the sector of services, encompassing 25% of the active population in the early 1980s. Statistics indicate that, from 1953 to 1987, the public sector built 556,170 units, reaching almost 25,000 units annually. The end of the 1980s is marked by a sharp decline in mass housing construction due to the societal crisis.

III. During the disintegration of Yugoslavia, from 1991 to 2003, the Republic of Serbia passed through a turbulent social transition process and turned to (neo)liberal democracy. Following the new Law on Housing Relations of 1990, the entire socially owned housing stock was initially nationalised and brought to state ownership. With the 1992 Law on Housing, the flats were privatized by offering to the tenants for purchase at bargain prices. Except for the social housing sector, during the next thirty years, this domain was almost entirely left to the market and housing regimes in Serbia today are based on the same paradigm. The contemporary moment is again characterised by high housing production, but without thorough planning strategies and eventually, out of reach for decreasing middle class.

Spain

By Paz Núñez-Martí and Roberto Goycoolea-Prado

Commercial and leisure area in Moratalaz, Madrid. Example of the housing policy of public-private promotion for sale in the 1960s-1970s in large Spanish cities (@photo credit: Roberto Goycoolea)

Housing development for the middle class in Spain during the 20th century is marked by four distinct political stages and by what could be understood as the middle class.

I. With an economy based on the colonies' resources, Spain had late and insufficient industrialization. By 1900, it was a poor, mainly agricultural and socially unequal country. In the cities, most of the population lived either in slums or impoverished historic centres. The small existing middle class had access to housing of different sizes and qualities through rentals from private owners. The first housing law, enacted in 1912, established minimum quality standards based on hygienist principles, albeit with no significant results.

II. The Civil War (1936-39) increased the lack of housing dramatically, which the dictatorship could not solve during its first stage. The 1940-1957 period, known as Autarchy, sought a self-sufficient state. It did not work: there were rationing primers until 1952. Severe rural immigration to the big cities in search of work widened the housing deficit. The middle class was restricted to military officers and high-level bureaucrats who received public housing in reconstructed urban areas. The military government enacted magnificent development plans, aimed at most of the population and remained mere propaganda due to the scarcity of resources and materials.

III. In the mid-1950s, Spain began an era of openness and economic growth known as Desarrollismo due to internal and external reasons (social tensions because of the poor economic situation and Franco's alignment with the United States during the Cold War). The housing shortages were still massive, especially in the big cities. In response, a large part of the international credits was allocated to housing construction, which became the country's economic engine. The first measure of the newly created Ministry of Housing (1957) was to approve a Social Emergency Plan. It commissioned private enterprises to build thousands of houses with a new typology, isolated block, always located in the suburbs and for sale: "We do not want a Spain of proletarians but of owners". With such a statement, the dictatorship promoted and established a culture of property ownership that explains, even today, the country's current low percentage of rentals (24%, 1,6% public). In sociological terms, whoever moved from substandard housing to a newly owned apartment -regardless of location, size, or quality- was considered a (privileged) member of an emerging middle class.

IV. After a decade of transition to democracy, Spain joined the European Union in 1985. An extended period of economic prosperity and recovery of social rights began. In contrast to the previous period, which focused on the indiscriminate construction of housing, construction and spatial quality criteria were set for private enterprise, which focuses on the provision of middle-class housing, and for the public sector, which focuses on social housing. The change has been significant. Even social housing is now better built than middle-class housing during Franco's regime.

Addendum: The current situation of housing is complex. In general terms, the middle-class neighbourhoods built during the Franco regime have been consolidated, renovated, and have an acceptable environmental quality. However, they require large investments to improve their building energy performance. On the other hand, the developments of the democracy period need to improve their sustainability and achieve neighbourhood (social) cohesion that has not yet been reached. In contrast to these consolidated and aged middle-class, young people of today's middle class are having significant problems accessing the housing they aspire to—another paradox of our opulent societies.

Slovenia

By Maruška Šubic Kovač

Middle - class mass housing in Maribor, Slovenia (@photo credit, Maruška Šubic Kovač, 2023)

After World War II, Slovenia has become an independent republic within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia's societal and economic model was based on the so-called social property, a specific type of ownership. Unlike other European communist-socialist countries, Slovenia also introduced private property of land and buildings, albeit in a subordinate position.

From the post-World War II period, in the housing sector, the state fully dominated. Later on, its role diminished at the expense of the social property concept and the so-called self-managing of enterprises. The focus was on the renovation of war-demolished and new-built housing properties. At the same time, formerly private residential buildings were nationalized. The financing of new housing constructions came from the state budget. Later, new housing investments were available from special housing funds, accumulated and operated by the municipalities. From 1965 to 1975, the economic reform also defined a stronger market orientation in the housing sector. Banks managed housing funds, and the private self-initiative in housing increased. After 1974, based on the new constitution, the Self-managing Housing Interest Communities were established at the local level. In addition to other sources for financing socially owned housing, the communities also received revenue from the so-called solidarity programme tax. They became the leading mass housing developers for the middle class. The housing funds and the solidarity programme tax significantly impacted the large scale of socially owned dwellings in multi-family buildings designed according to social standards. Large plots of land were acquired from private to social ownership through compulsory expropriation and complex expropriation measures at a low level of administratively determined land prices. Actually, all rental housing fond was in social ownership. The rents were administratively fixed, and, for several reasons, they covered either the reproduction of housing stock or its maintenance. Individual dwellings and one-family houses were bought for their use by private investors with the help of low-interest loans. From 1980 to 1990, inflation was a severe problem that considerably affected the repayment of loans.

In 1989, Slovenia was the first republic of Yugoslavia, which declared its independence. After ten days of war, in December 1991, Slovenia adopted its constitution, which defined the status of private and public property of land and real estate. Since then, the state no longer guarantees citizens' housing acquisition but only creates opportunities.

During the early transition stage, the restitution of housing, including formerly privately owned housing stock nationalised by the state in the socialist era, began to occur. The privatisation of socially owned housing at administratively determined low prices followed. The existing housing finance model was abolished. Financing housing construction based on mortgage loans was unfavourable. The acquisition of land for housing construction, except for non-profit housing, was no longer treated as a public benefit.

Consequently, the construction of large residential neighbourhoods stopped. It only recovered after 2003, but not on the same scale as in the 1980s. After 2007, the global financial and economic crisis caused the decline of mass housing construction. The revival of mass housing construction started again after 2016. Recently, luxury residential buildings have been built predominantly, especially in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. This housing category, however, cannot be considered middle-class mass housing.

Switzerland

By Jennifer Duyne Barenstein

The "Hunziker Areal" of the housing cooperative 'mehr als wohnen': an innovative MCMH reflecting the Zurich's policies to promote sustainable non-profit housing (@photo credit: Jennifer Duyne)

Switzerland is a small and wealthy country with a population of less than 9 million people. It is a country of tenants, with only about 36.6% of the population owning the dwelling in which they reside. Privately-owned detached single-family houses prevail in suburban and rural areas, whereas most of the rental housing stock in cities consists of apartment buildings. Public housing only plays a marginal role in Switzerland. Still, housing cooperatives, a form of collectively owned non-profit housing, play a significant role, particularly in Switzerland's major cities, where they provide affordable middle-class housing.

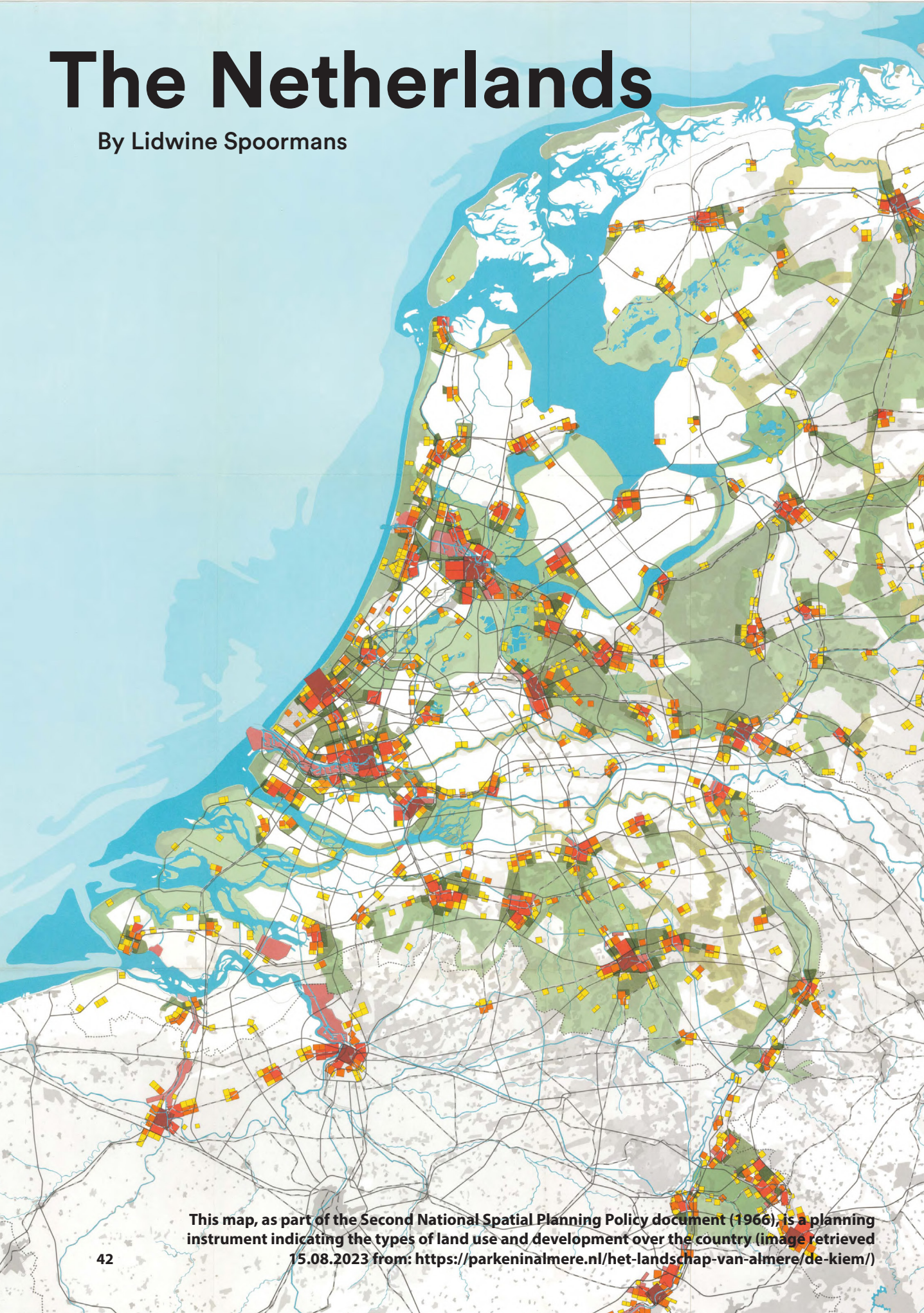
An analysis of Swiss housing policies requires to differentiate between two distinct areas: the regulation of tenancy matters and the promotion of housing construction. Promoting and supporting housing construction is considered a shared responsibility of all three layers of government, the federal level, the 26 cantons, and the roughly 2,000 municipalities. All three levels of government cooperate vertically and horizontally with cantons and municipalities, which enjoy a high degree of autonomy.

Federal housing policies are relatively weak; financial support to the housing supply in the form of loans or grants has been only sporadic and never exceeds support for the construction of more than 10% of housing. In 2003, the federal government replaced the initial law passed in 1974 with the «Housing Support Act», which aims to support the housing supply for low-income households and foster access to homeownership for the middle class. The Act details three financial instruments to attain these goals: (i) direct support to non-profit housing organizations (primarily housing cooperatives) through loans with reduced or no interest rates; (ii) direct support of owner-occupied housing through loans with reduced or no interest rates; and (iii) indirect support to non-profit housing organizations through the provision of a revolving fund and by guaranteeing bonds issued by the umbrella organization of all non-profit housing organizations.

The revolving fund to support the supply of non-profit housing was already installed in 1919, but substantial federal payments towards this fund only began in 1978. Until 2020 it amounted to 300 million Swiss Francs and was gradually increased to 600 million Swiss Francs. Currently, the maximum amount issued is equal to 50,000 Swiss Francs per apartment. These loans are relatively small but account for the equity required to access additional mortgage funds. The engagement of Cantons in the housing sector is very limited. In the absence of effective federal or cantonal housing policies, the main political level in the domain of housing is the municipality. The primary support in cities consists in facilitating access to public land for non-profit housing construction, which is generally leased out to cooperatives for periods ranging from 60 to 90 years. In the Swiss housing policy framework, private actors – such as housing cooperatives – are in charge of providing affordable housing to the middle class, and they play a crucial role in implementing the 2003 Housing Support Act at all administrative levels. The Association of Housing Cooperatives have a particular role in implementing this policy. Besides providing their members access to financial resources and additional funding, they ensure to state authorities that these funds are exclusively targeted to non-profit organizations. They further ensure compliance with a wide range of regulations (e.g., related to building standards and energy efficiency) by controlling their members. Hence, the role of housing cooperatives in Switzerland is strongly mediated by the policy frameworks which foster or hamper their access to land and financial resources.

The Netherlands

By Lidwine Spoormans



This map, as part of the Second National Spatial Planning Policy document (1966), is a planning instrument indicating the types of land use and development over the country (image retrieved 15.08.2023 from: https://parkeninalmere.nl/het-landschap-van-almere/de-kiem/)

Housing developments in the Netherlands have been influenced by national and local policies regarding spatial planning, building regulations, tax regulations and subsidy programs. At the beginning of the 20th century, the 'Woningwet' [Housing Act, 1901] kick-started Dutch policies on housing. This act aimed to put an end to unhealthy housing conditions, promoting the construction of good housing. Although the Housing Act made public housing a 'matter of the State', it designated municipalities as the first executors.

Spatial planning policies are laid down in a series of ministerial memoranda. During the post-World War II reconstruction, the national government made a centrally managed planning in which the number of houses, materials and construction workers were distributed throughout the country (Lans, 2016, p. 52). Later, the focus shifted from 'building large numbers and at high speed' to 'where should we build'. In the 1958 memorandum 'The Development of the West of the Country' the urgency to regulate the problem of overcrowding and congestion was put forward (Faber, 1997, p. 9) followed by the 1960 First National Spatial Planning Policy document sketching an outwardly-focused model for growth for the Randstad around the central open 'Green Hart' (Maas, 2012, p. 7). In the Second National Spatial Planning Policy document of 1966, 'bundled de-concentration was introduced as the happy medium between concentration in large metropolises and total de-concentration as urban sprawl, leading to a series of 'Groeikernen' [new towns] in the Third National Spatial Planning Policy document of 1974. The 1983 memorandum 'Outline for the urban areas' included a preference for new developments at shorter distances to the larger cities again. This led to re-urbanisation and new building locations on the outskirts of cities, laid down in the Fourth Policy Document on Spatial Planning (1988). In 2010, the Ministry of Housing and Spatial Planning was abolished, on the assumption that the Netherlands was 'completed' and new developments could be left 'to the market'. However, a Minister of Housing and Spatial Planning was reintroduced in 2022 to make spatial developments, including housing, a 'matter for the State' again. In the National Agenda on Housing and Building, the Dutch government's ambition is to build 900.000 homes by 2030, two-thirds of which will be affordable (BZK, 2022).

In addition to the policies on the urban planning level, there are also national policy programmes related to building regulations, such as technology, utilisation, safety regulations and sustainability. This series of legislation also starts with the 1901 Housing Act, which stipulated that municipalities had to make building regulations. Because that law did not prescribe what it should contain, large differences in quality arose between municipalities, upon which a provincial model building regulation appeared in the 1930s. In 1950, building regulations, as well as a distribution system of scarce building materials, were enshrined in the Reconstruction Act, developing towards a Model Building Regulation in 1965. The regulations then regarded technical regulations on building, use, planning, and administration (Scholten, 2001). In 1992, the Bouwbesluit [Building Act] was introduced, which has since been developed and updated and is still in use. It distinguishes regulations for different building functions and between new construction and changing, enlarging or renovating existing buildings. This law gives detailed regulations on safety, health, use and (later added) energy efficiency and environment. The Bouwbesluit is the main policy instrument regarding the sustainability of buildings, with regulations, e.g., for insulation and installations, becoming increasingly stringent. Other sustainability policies consist of subsidy schemes for sustainable measures, such as solar panels. These vary from period to period and fluctuate with government policy.

Lastly, there have been several policies by which the national government has promoted homeownership. The main policy instruments used are financial instruments, like mortgage interest deduction, mortgage guarantees and subsidies. Although in The Netherlands, a large part of the population can live in rental social housing, homeownership is believed to positively contribute to citizens' personal development, like wealth and asset accumulation, self-determination and emancipation. But although home ownership has grown from 28% in 1947 to 58% in 2019, the Netherlands lags far behind many European countries (Boelhouwer, 2019, pp. 3, 20).

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Türkiye

By Müge Akkar Ercan

Mesa Koru Sitesi in Ankara: A middle-class mass housing example in Ankara from the early 1980s (@photo credit, Müge Akkar Ercan, 2022)

In the early years of the Turkish Republic (covering the 1930s and 1940s), the middle class comprised civil servants and high-ranking government and military officers. A banking system (Property and Orphan Bank) was established in the 1930s to give credits and loans to investors, house builders and individual home buyers. In these years, the central and local governments were the leading policymakers on mass housing and the primary housing providers. Individual housebuilders with sufficient capital accumulation and housing cooperatives were also the mass housing suppliers for the middle class.

From the 1940s to the 1980s, the governments in power addressed the housing needs of the middle class in Turkish cities by providing different housing options. Between 1945 and 1960, the governments promoted a housing provision for low and middle-income classes through housing cooperatives. Emlak Bank (a participation bank with the state capital) and the social security institution affiliated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security provided loans for funding housing cooperatives. Additionally, several state institutions built rental housing for their employees and officers in the form of mass housing building blocks and clusters on delineated parts of cities.

In 1965, along with the enactment of the Condominium Law (No. 634), a new mass-housing type was developed by 'build-and-sell contractors' through the demolition of single and two-storey single houses and the development of four or five-storey apartment blocks in planned parts of Turkish cities. These modern neighbourhoods became middle-class residential sites. Besides, the Housing Cooperative Law was enacted to regulate the provision of housing cooperatives in 1969. Most cooperatives were established in the 1970s to build mass housing estates for the middle class on the peripheral lands of cities. They operated through cooperative membership, where each member paid monthly instalments. Additionally, the Property and Orphan Bank, which was transferred to Property Credit Bank with Law No. 4947 and the large-scale construction companies built many important mass housing projects for upper-middle-class households in these years.

The post-1980s signify profound transformations in Türkiye. Along with globalisation and neo-liberal economic policies, a series of legislations were enacted to foster the development of the construction sector and establish a competitive real estate market. Prominent among the legislations were those that set up the legal and institutional background for privatising public lands and other state assets, and those related to urban transformation. Before the 1980s, small-scale landowners, local governments, and small and medium-sized building contractors were the leading stakeholders of urban transformation. After the 1980s, however, national and multi-national construction and real estate companies, developers and finance became the key actors of urban transformation, including middle-class mass housing development.

In the 1980s, the Mass Housing Administration (TOKI) and the Mass Housing Fund were established to address the housing needs of middle and low-income classes by building large-scale mass housing projects in Turkish cities. Since then, TOKI has become the leading agency which makes mass housing in Turkish cities by establishing public-private partnerships. Throughout the 2000s, banks adopted new credit mechanisms for urban transformation, and several planning, architectural and civil engineering corporations prioritised the urban transformation work programmes, most of which were carried out by public-private partnerships.

During the 2000s, housing became an essential commodity in Türkiye with its increasingly rising exchange value and symbolic role in representing social status. In the early 2000s, TOKI became the most crucial state agency fully responsible for implementing exclusive housing projects for the middle and upper middle classes and large-scale infrastructure and urban transformation projects in cities. Both the Mass Housing Fund and Türkiye Property Bank reorganised as the funding mechanisms for private construction companies to step into the mass housing development. Over the last four decades, the prominent housing policy for the middle class in Türkiye has been to promote home ownership through mortgage credits, the mass housing fund, or individual family savings. The new policies have been promoted, and legislation has been enacted since 2010 to reduce the risks of natural disasters, rehabilitate or conserve the physical environment, address local needs, improve the quality of life, and improve energy efficiency and sensitivity to climate change.

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MIDDLE CLASS MASS HOUSING

(CO)DESIGNING FOR QUALITY OF LIFE IN MIDDLE- CLASS MASS HOUSING: EXPLORING CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Middle East Technical University
Faculty of Architecture
Department of City & Regional Planning
Ankara, Turkey

30 September-2 October 2022 Friday-Sunday

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Part 2
Stakeholder Workshop

Co-Designing for Quality of Life in a Middle-Class Mass Housing: Exploring Challenges & Opportunities

The Gardening School

By Müge Akkar Ercan, Roberto Goycoolea Prado, Paz Nunez Marti, Irem Duygu Tiryaki, Furkan Erdem Sözeri

The entrance of a typical apartment block in Ümitköy Sitesi (@photo credit, Roberto Goycoolea)

Abstract

The expert group focuses on the three primary quality of life problems commonly seen problems in many MCMH sites in Türkiye: buildings that do not meet current accessibility and energy efficiency standards, neglected and low-quality public spaces, and lack of urban life due to ageing and gentrification. These problems have both quality and quantity dimensions. After thinking together with the Ümitköy Sitesi residents, the expert group realised the necessity of having a vision for the future, summed up in a critical question: Beyond urgent maintenance issues, how do residents imagine their neighbourhood in 20 years? Their answer helped them define their design strategies to achieve this vision through realistic phases. The group suggests a roadmap for the co-design process of Ümitköy Sitesi with the residents and a future vision strategy for the inclusive renewal of the housing estate. Group 5 builds up the future design strategy of the housing estate on developing a garden school on the neglected and underutilised inter-block spaces as the primary initiative of the co-creative renewal process, together with several co-design suggestions that would support its constitution in the medium term.

1. Introduction

The expert group had the opportunity to share different perspectives on the problem posed thanks to the richness and diversity of its components. The group included five members: the Spanish professors Roberto Goycoolea and Paz Núñez from Alcalá University, who are specialists in social architecture and participatory urbanism with extensive experience in neighbourhood improvement processes; Müge Akkar Ercan, who is the professor of urban planning and design specialised on urban design, urban regeneration and sustainable urbanism at the hosting university (Middle East Technical University-METU) and coordinator of the Middle-Class Mass Housing stakeholder workshop in Ankara, knowledgeable about the problems of the place and the two city planners, Irem Duygu Tiryaki who is the research and teaching assistant at METU and Furkan Erdem Sözeri who was the urban design master student at METU.

This multidisciplinary group focused on the three main problems of Ümitköy Sitesi, commonly seen in many MCMH sites in Turkey: i) buildings that do not meet the current accessibility and energy efficiency standards; ii) neglected public spaces, including the common spaces of the housing estate; iii) lack of urban life due to ageing and gentrification. After the field visit and the open dialogue with several neighbours, the group identified additional problems, such as ineffectively designed car parks connected to the low-quality pedestrian network, the lack of elevators in each apartment building and shared spaces for the community members to socialise and re-develop neighbour relations and decreased social bonds to strengthen the community spirit and the attachment feelings to the housing estate.

Among all these issues, the group defined two main problem categories. One problem category comprises technical issues, including improving the quality of pedestrian networks and car parks, construction of elevators of buildings, and refurbishing buildings according to energy-efficiency standards. The problems related to the residents' comfort can be resolved by technical solutions depending on available financial resources. The second problem category has a social nature, and it has no universal answer. The solutions require active residents' collaboration, social cohesion, and a shared community spirit.

The social aspiration and cohesion, which existed in the past in this housing estate, have seemed to disappear lately. Facing this loss, the expert group suggests the revitalisation of social cohesion and the community spirit that can be an excellent potential for the sustainable regeneration of the housing estate and improving its quality of life. Along with the technical solutions, the group proposes a socio-spatial transformation to enhance the spatial quality and fulfil the community's needs, mainly driven by the collaboration of the community, the technical team, and the municipality. This is where 'co-design' appears as a fundamental tool, not only to solve the technical problems of the housing estate but also to bourgeon and nurture community spirit and collaboration, thereby developing a sustainable community in this MCMH estate. (Figure 1.1)

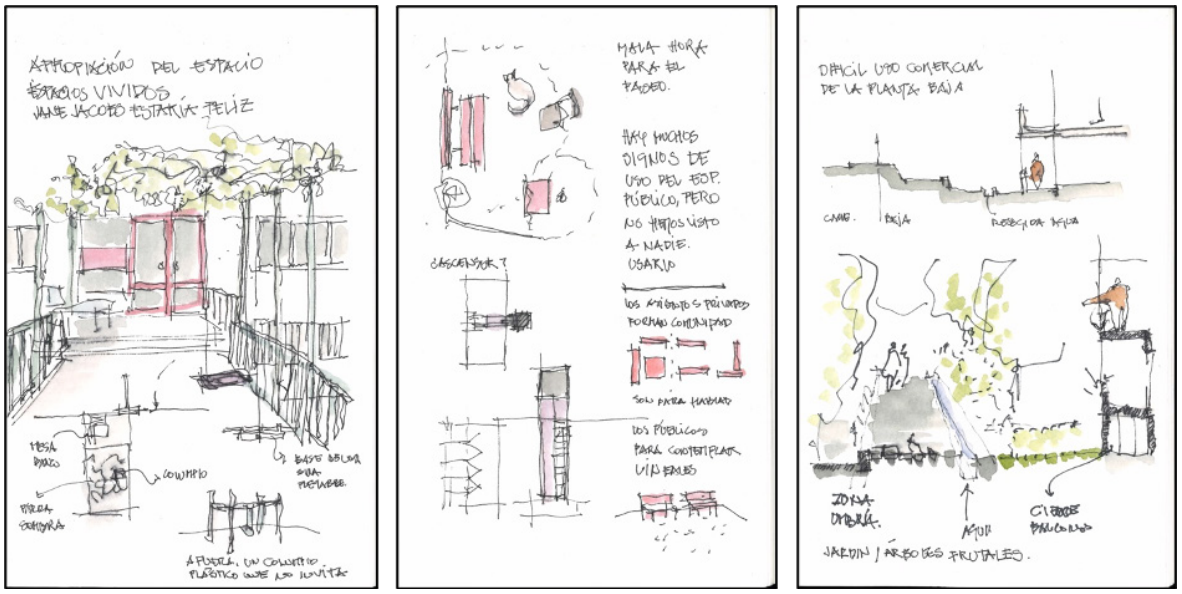


Figure 1.1. First impressions of the site (@Roberto Goycoolea Prado)

2. Preparing a roadmap for the co-design process of Ümitköy Sitesi

After thinking deeply about the problems and potentials of the community, the expert group proposes a roadmap for the co-design process of the housing estate (Figure 1.2). They suggest that the co-design process should not only lead to the analysis and identification of the current shared problems and potentials of the site but also the determination of the common vision of the community for the future.

The first phase of the co-design process includes identifying the community's problems, potentials, and aspirations through the discussion between the responsible stakeholders; i.e., experts and residents. In this phase, it is critical to consult and discuss the nature of problems and potentials and the expected quality of life to be achieved with the help of experts; i.e., architects, urban planners, sociologists, politicians, landscape architects. The nature of problems and potentials can be categorised as *quality* or *quantity*. While the problems related to quantity comprise the basic needs of the community and technical, spatial, and ecological issues of the housing estate, problems related to the quality include legal, social, economic, cultural, and aesthetic issues.

After identifying the common qualitative and quantitative problems and potentials, the second phase is to collaboratively find a vision for the future of the housing estate, which requires an answer to the following question: How do the residents imagine their housing estate in twenty years? Each resident expressed their aspiration about the site separately as follows:

> *"Each of my children should have a house of their own, and they can live close to their work."*

> *"The infrastructure of the housing site needs to be well-maintained."*

> *"I want the exterior parts of the housing site to be more well-maintained, clean, and useful. Repairs should be made for a long time, and the same problem should not occur every year. Renovations made in the housing estate should be sustainable, not only for now."*

> *"To improve the quality of life in the housing estate in twenty years, it is necessary to solve the insulation problem and enhance the buildings for efficient energy use. In twenty years, the community profile in the housing estate will change, and their needs will change, too. Maybe, they will need less space, and an apartment can be rebuilt as two apartments and used this way. The aspiration of the new residents for nature will change. But the natural environment of the housing estate should not be destroyed."*

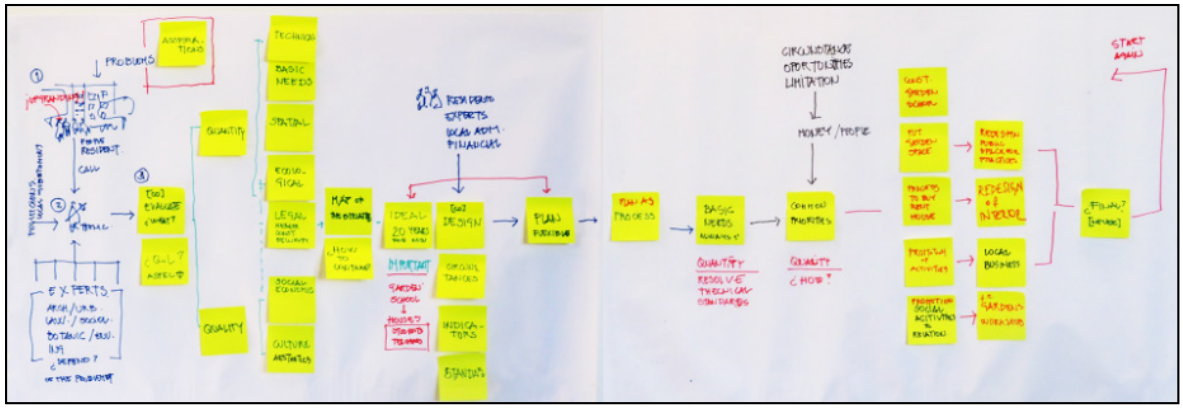


Figure 1.2. The co-design process suggested by Group 5 (@Authors)

"The existing housing cooperative management cannot address the needs of the housing estate. It is tough to keep up with the community's needs financially and psychologically. It is necessary to find a better way."

"The fact that the official regulations for the site are not long-term and leave it to the management's decisions reduces the feeling of trust and reliability."

"The possibility of changing the status of the housing estate into an 'urban renewal site' now or later raises the idea that any expenses for the rehabilitation or refurbishment of the site or houses can be a waste (in monetary or effort terms) for the community members."

The discussion with the experts helped the residents define a future vision for their housing estate (Figure 1.3). Besides the housing estate's future plan, the expert group also emphasised the importance of designing the renewal process in collaboration with different stakeholders. They also asked about the residents' priorities under existing circumstances, financial limitations, and other social, community and convivial constraints. The group concluded that the renewal plan needs a long-term vision, while the community members should set small targets as the priority tasks and try to complete them in a pre-determined time. Then, the new targets should be set again as small tasks, and the renewal process should continue under constant review.

Figure 1.3. Discussions of the expert group and residents (@authors)

3. Setting a Vision for the Future: A Garden School

The expert group suggested the residents build a Garden School on the land allocated as a school site in the original development plan of the estate. While the garden school would help re-qualify the neglected open space, co-design is the primary motivation for building the garden school. With the development of the site as the garden school, the community could use the potential of this neglected space to develop co-creation and collaboration feelings in the community. In this way, the garden school would also function as a place of co-existence, cooperation and collective learning, a generator of a teaching environment for community members of different ages, gender, educational background and skills, and a place that would strengthen the community and neighbouring relations through training and activities. Income generated by selling the school's products could also be used for the expenses of the housing estate, contributing to the site being a self-sufficient and sustainable place. The gardening courses to be given to the community would also help them improve their apartment blocks' front and back yards and gardens, thereby improving the visual aesthetics of the environment and, so, the feeling (and pride) of belonging.

The transformation of the housing estate would start with the development of the Garden School and spread to other parts of Ümitköy Sitesi. The expert group emphasises that the co-design process should continue lively and active. As the housing estate's needs, problems, and potentials constantly change, finding long-term sustainable targets and solutions is vital. Rather than being fixed and unchanged, these solutions can be reviewed time-to-time according to the changing needs and circumstances.

The residents first objected to the idea of the garden school. They claimed that the site was unsuitable for developing a garden school, as the state owns 1/3 of the land designated for the school site, a building can make the site denser, and therefore, this idea could not be realised (Figure 1.3). Additionally, they emphasised their priorities as some technical problems such as elevators and heat insulation of the buildings. Throughout the mutual conversations, the expert group explained that the financial resources would resolve the technical problems of the estate, and the revenue to be raised by selling the products of the Garden School would provide the housing cooperative with financial resources for resolving technical problems.

They also added that the Garden School could be the first step of a long-term plan and a catalyst for upgrading and regenerating their housing estate. The expert team showed examples of greenhouse architecture, in which the school could be built with light construction material and extensive well-designed gardens with aromatic plants (Figure 1.4). With these examples and discussions, the residents started to understand the benefits they would obtain with the project, and they deemed it appropriate to build the Garden School as the first step.

4. Vision plan for Ümitköy Sitesi

The central vision of the expert group is to develop a garden school as the primary catalyst of social, economic, and ecological renewal. The Ümitköy Sitesi's residents aspired to a place with a better quality of life, more comfortable housing, and more social activity. The buildings have several problems and are currently functioning as dormitories. To bring people, activity, and resources, the expert group proposes to develop the large, underutilised, neglected inter-block spaces and an activity that will trigger achieving more sustainable and socially inclusive spaces. In agreement with the residents, the group opted for the Garden School, co-managed by an NGO (i.e., drug rehabilitation), the cooperative, and the local authority. A process that would begin with the community production of compost and the self-building of a classroom can continue with the teaching of gardening and landscaping and the development of nurseries for aromatic and decorative plants, display gardens, and a florist's shop. Eventually, a greenhouse and a flower restaurant would be built. These elements, distributed throughout the complex [Figure 1.4], would make it a dynamic point of attraction. The resources would allow for the technical upgrading of the buildings. The generalisable idea is to develop a permanent facility or activity in this or similar MoMo neighbourhoods to improve the environment and social cohesion in a sustainable way.

The Garden School site can include several different gardens, such as production gardens, workshop gardens, pay practices, exhibition gardens, and shops to sell garden products. Several aromatic and edible plants or flowers are suitable to produce in the area, such as pumpkin flower, rose, basil, lavender, lilac, sunflower, peony, fancy, and hibiscus, some of which will be sold in the shopping centre of the housing estate (Figure 1.5). Moreover, they can be exhibited in front

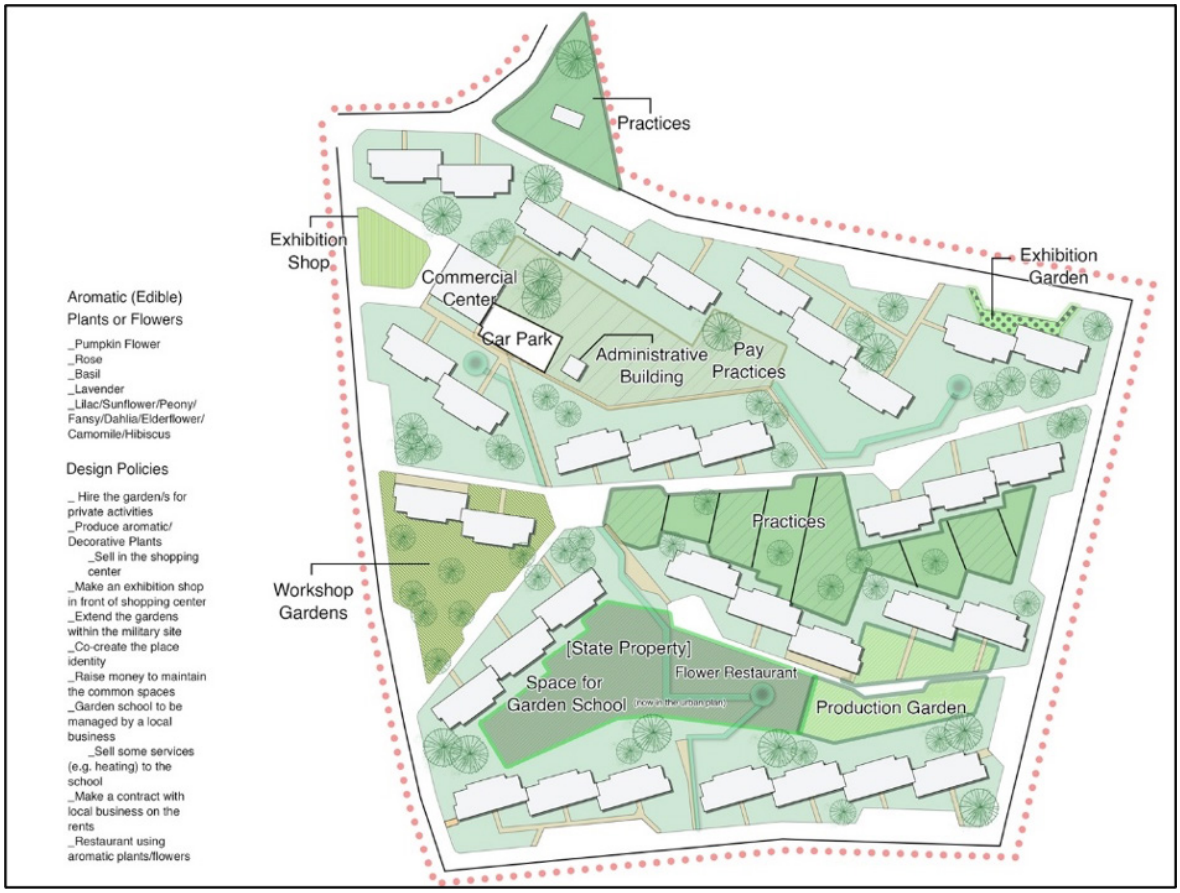


Figure 1.4. The concept design scheme for Ümitköy Sitesi (@Authors)

of the shopping centre closer to the site's periphery. The lands of the military site next to the housing can also be used to produce such aromatic and edible plants or flowers. In this way, the place identity can be transformed in cooperation with the residents through a co-creation process. The training courses and the products sold in the market can be used to fund the management of the school and maintenance of the gardens of the housing estate. If the school needs anything for its process, the site can sell those services, such as heating. The housing cooperative can rent the school to the investors. The expert group also proposes a restaurant that will cook the products produced by the Garden School in the commercial centre.

Figure 1.5. A sketch showing the Garden school proposal for the area (@R. Goycoolea)

The unused lands in the housing estate can be considered potential sites for agriculture. The residents can learn from the Garden School how to grow aromatic and edible plants and other agricultural products, and they can turn their back and front gardens into small community gardens. They can sell these products in the commercial centre of Ümitköy Sitesi, thereby raising new revenue for their apartment block and the site. In this way, the residents can improve the spatial, natural, and aesthetic quality of the common spaces and individual back and front gardens of the apartment buildings. This process can also strengthen the feeling of attachment to the housing estate, improving neighbour relations and developing co-creativity and collectivity in the community.

With the idea of improving the gardens and common open spaces of the housing estate, the expert group suggests effectively re-functioning the existing water canals on the site for irrigation of these gardens and green spaces. As the irrigation infrastructure, those canals can be connected to the small ponds in some key locations (Figure 1.6). These ponds will help the water to be collected and to flow in the canals. Re-functioning the water canals can be a small step to be done collaboratively by the residents, and its impact can be seen quickly and collaboratively. This co-creative action can activate social transformation in the housing estate as a fresh start (Figure 1.6).

Similarly, compost production will improve the soil quality of open spaces and gardens. Using the residents' domestic organic waste, compost can be produced in an inexpensive and sustainable way. The compost bins can be constructed and located in the private gardens of each apartment building (Figure 1.7). Residents should separate their waste into organic, paper, plastic, glass, and metal. The organic waste can be used for compost production as fertilisers and revive the soil, and the municipality can buy other types of waste for recycling. The housing cooperative should also locate paper, plastic, glass, and metal waste bins in different parts of the housing estate. This can be used as another revenue-raising way for the housing cooperative. Likewise, this waste management should be used as a way of community cooperation to improve the neighbourhood gardens and fundraising while helping the local nature to revive inexpensively.

Besides improving the open spaces and gardens, another intervention that will improve residents' quality of life (especially older people, families with young children, disabled people, etc.) is the installation of elevators for apartment buildings. The expert group proposes the construction of an elevator as an additive element to the outside of each apartment building. By reshaping the corridor spaces of each storey of an apartment block, it might be possible to build and use elevators (Figure 1.7)

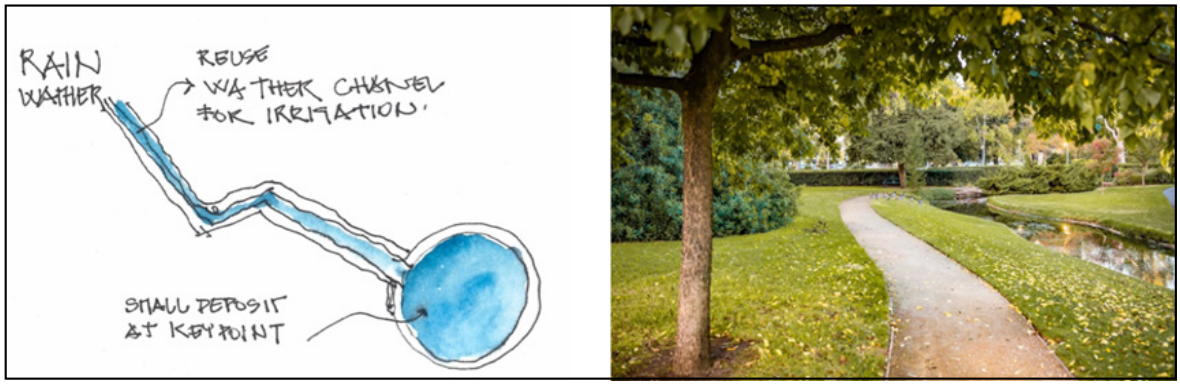


Figure 1.6. Proposed scheme for the water canals and pond, and a designed example of possible water canals (@Roberto Goycoolea Prado & https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/beautiful-shot-park-pathway-surrounded-with-amazing-nature_13291791.htm#query=garden%20path&position=1&from_view=keyword&track=ais)

5. Final Words

The co-creative and co-production process, foreseen by the expert group, is this project's main essence, which will help the community transform into a self-sustained community. This co-creative and co-production process needs to continue on the site. It should be incorporated with activities programmed with the community's support and involvement, such as vocational training courses, workshops, and exhibitions. The continuity of this renewal process will not only cause the community-based transformation, but the neighbourhood will also be socially and collectively strengthened, and its social and economic sustainability will be enhanced. The community will be able to change the negative image of the place, and their feelings of pride will be enhanced. Moreover, pride in the community will be esteemed. This project is more likely to strengthen the cooperation between the local community and the municipality. Last but not least, the community and newcomers will be able to conserve and enhance this modern heritage, symbolising the cooperative housing history and Ankara's typical large-scale middle-class MoMo housing.

Re-thinking the image of Umitköy Sitesi

By Aybüke Balahun Çoban, Hadeel Abuzaid, Sanjin Subič, Shiza Mushtaq, Bernard Haumont

The front garden of a typical apartment block in Umitköy Sitesi (@photo credit, Roberto Goycoolea)

Abstract

Based on Kevin Lynch's book The Image of the City, the expert group adopted the "Re-thinking the Image of Ümitköy Sitesi" as a design vision to improve the quality of life. Considering the demands and needs of the residents, the group explored the possibilities of enhancing the image without tiring them out economically and providing energy efficiency in a way that will give the most beneficial results in the short and long term. Finally, the group proposed design interventions to improve the image and quality of life of Ümitköy Sitesi. These interventions generally cover the topics such as renovating and insulating the facades of the buildings, providing a comfortable and safe pedestrian experience within the area, reconstructing social belonging by arranging common spaces, strengthening communication and solidarity within the community, and using solar energy to benefit from more modern and sustainable technologies. As a result, the MCMH Stakeholder Workshop for this cooperative housing site hosted by the Middle East Technical University once again revealed the importance of meeting and reconciling different stakeholders on a common ground in producing sustainable design policies for future self-sufficient housing areas and neighbourhoods.

1. Introduction

Several factors, including neighbourhood characteristics, safety, walkability, maintenance, sociodemographic characteristics, and management, significantly impact neighbourhood quality and its sense of community (Can, 2016). In Turkey, development plans and policies often result in disconnections between buildings and the street, including the organisation of space between indoor and outdoor areas (Can, 2016). In this regard, most housing cooperatives are absent from aesthetic attractiveness and the necessary equipment needed to support sustainable urbanism in cities (Marou and Aselmad, 2020). The Stakeholder Workshop in Ankara mainly aimed to propose an improved quality of life (QoL) and sense of community in a cooperative housing site, Ümitköy Sitesi.

The Stakeholder Workshop provided a socialisation environment in which participants introduced themselves by explaining which country they came from and what subjects they were working on. As a result of the division of the MCMH Stakeholder Workshop participants into five different subgroups representing the "Quality of Life" theme, the new group members could discuss their first impressions of the area and determine their common strategies. Then, questions were asked about looking for ways to improve life in Ümitköy Sitesi with the participants, and inferences were made to understand the area better.

- What factors affect the quality of life in a neighbourhood?

- What parameters could shape the quality of life in an urban housing pattern?

- How can these parameters be evaluated at the micro and meso scale?

- What kind of interventions can improve the quality of life for Ümitköy Sitesi residents?

We started to shape the design vision for Ümitköy Sitesi to seek more specific answers to all these questions and more through the interviews with the residents.

2. Rethinking of the Image of Ümitköy Sitesi

Among our group members, Bernard Haumont, as an expert sociologist, sheds light on the social and communal problems that the residents of Ümitköy Sitesi may experience. At the same time, Hadeel Abuzaid and Shiza Mushtaq visualised micro and meso-scale spatial problems and solutions, thanks to their urban design expertise and superior drawing and illustrating skills. Based on his experience in the architecture discipline, Sanjin Subić drew attention to issues such as building-scale insulation and solar energy and made the necessary calculations. I, from the field of city and regional planning, tried to make a holistic contribution to how the ideas of different scales from each participant came together in the urban context. Based on Kevin Lynch's The Image of the City, group members from various professions agreed that "Rethinking the image of the Ümitköy Sitesi" is vital to improving the locals' quality of life.

2.1 Residents' views, aspirations, and needs

• Ümitköy Sitesi residents are not flexible enough to tolerate new investments, but it is easier to compromise and act together when dealing with building-based interventions.

• Residents are welcoming to developing interventions that will appeal to different pedestrian groups, including the elderly, children, and people with reduced mobility, and provide an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

• Residents display a wish to establish policies that support the pedestrian experience on the site and the use of bicycles by the young and middle-aged population living in the cooperative housing.

• The young and middle-aged population expect to establish a solar-powered system, but the elderly population's reluctance deters them from producing cooperative actions.

• Residents greet the engagement in proposed joint activities and look forward to engaging in the process. Still, some elderly locals disagree with this idea and have a significant impact on the decision-making process.

One of the most important issues that slowed down the decision-making process of the cooperative was that 40% of the residents were the first generation of the Ümitköy Sitesi. Because of the elderly people's general resistance to change, it became difficult to make new decisions. To make decisions that the majority would approve, the locals had to be convinced that these decisions would be beneficial both in the short and long term. One of the best ways to do this was to think about energy efficiency. Because the decisions to be made on insulation and solar energy would both add to the economic value of houses and offer realistic solutions to the residents within a short time span.

2.2 Analysis: Identifying Problems and Potentials

After a detailed discussion within the group, considering the needs of residents and the situation on the site, we decided upon the themes we would pursue as a group. Based on the site analysis and the context, we found an acute need to focus on rethinking and changing the image of Ümitköy Sitesi. Under the theme of "Recreating the image of Ümitköy Sitesi", we produced an analysis of base maps and mind maps that illustrate the problems and potentials of the area.

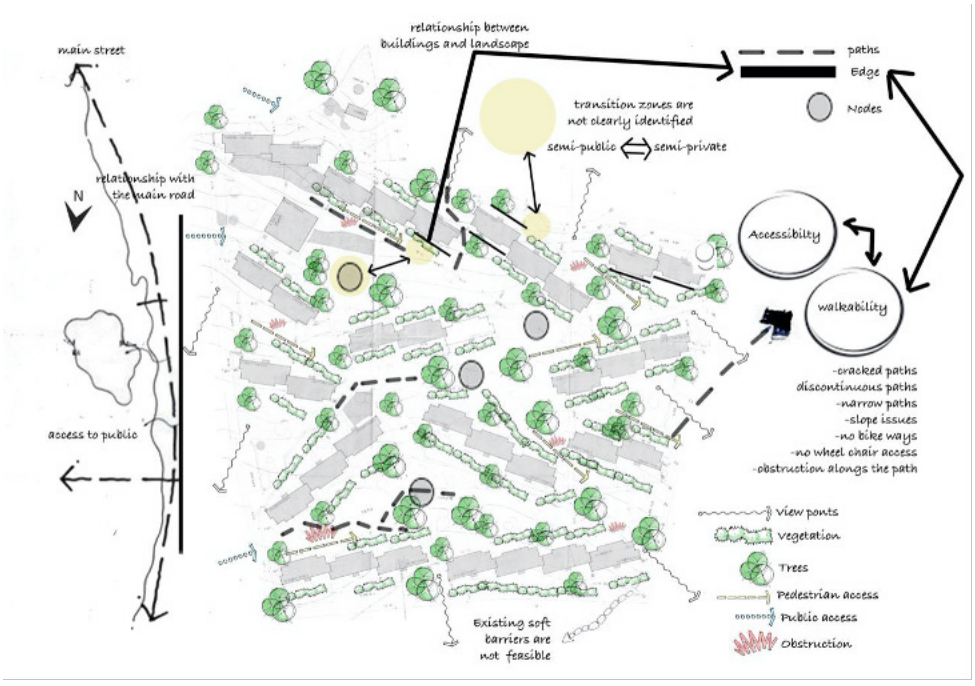


Figure 2.1: An illustration representing the site analysis, including problems and potentials in the design process (@Hadeel Abuzaid, 2022)

Based on the group's observations and discussions with residents and other stakeholders, we focused on the following main problems:

1. The insufficiency of buildings' external insulation and the deteriorated image they produce

2. Challenging pedestrian experience for different groups of users, especially for disadvantaged groups

3. Limited use of bicycles in the Ümitköy Sitesi

4. The lack of solar energy usage, including the preparation of hot water for use in individual households in the cooperative housing

5. Inadequate landscaping of gardens and common places and poor sense of community belonging where these conditions contribute to

According to Bernard Haumont, a change that can start in a single building or one spot has the power to trigger changes in all other areas and the pace with which people are persuaded. It is possible to imagine a lifestyle with less individuality and more collectivity. The best way to mobilise people on this issue is to create other new changes by using the economic transformation and profits brought by implementing the decisions regarding energy usage. The main purpose of our group in supporting this scenario is to develop design interventions that can remove obstacles to changing the long-term image of Ümitköy Sitesi.

3. Synthesis: Proposal Design Interventions

Our interventions centred around the concept of "Recreating the image of the Ümitköy Cooperation Housing", searching the possibilities of improving the image without straining the residents economically and providing energy efficiency in a way that would yield the most efficient results in both the short and long term. According to the design vision, the proposal design interventions we developed during the workshop resulted in four main topics, respectively:

1. Changing the Exteriors: Insulation & Aesthetic Image

2. Pedestrian Experience & Accessibility

3. Common Spaces & Community Engagement

4. Solar Energy Usage

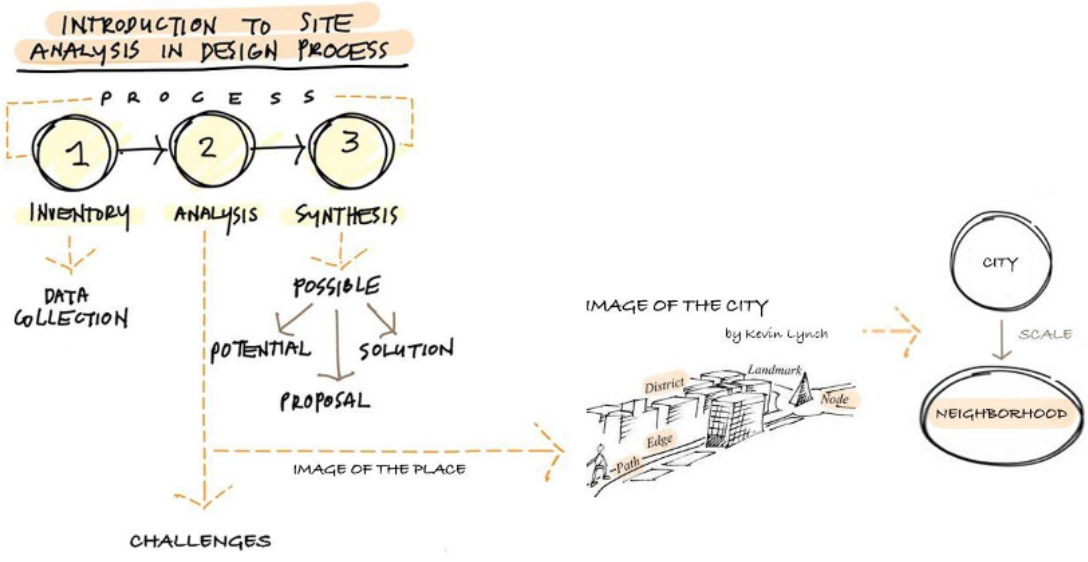


Figure 2.2: An illustration representing the design process (@Hadeel Abuzaid, 2022)

3.1. Changing the Exteriors: Insulation & Aesthetic Image

The first issue we brought to the fore was the change in the exterior of the buildings. One of the first appearances for someone entering the cooperative housing area is the exterior of the buildings. The «Facade» is of critical importance for the renewal of the appearance of the Ümitköy Sitesi, and this renewal can be achieved in a way that creates a solution to two main problems. First of all, changing the exterior facades of the Ümitköy Sitesi would address the building insulation issue. Considering the knowledge of the participants working on insulation in the group and the residents' demands of the site, the most suitable material for exterior insulation was determined as a parge coat. Secondly, it is the reconsideration of the appearance, colour, and integrity of the exterior facades that will be renewed by insulating with a parge coat. These interventions were deemed essential for the image of the area to revitalise an aesthetic building image that would encourage innovation and modernity.

Figure 2.3: A photo from the facade of the buildings in Ümitköy Cooperative Housing (@Bernard Haumont, 2022)

3.2. Pedestrian Experience & Accessibility

The Ümitköy cooperative housing area is situated near an important transit access point within the surrounding urban area, and the settlement's internal pedestrian network is also important for the experience of the local community on a larger scale. The problems observed in the inner streets of the cooperative site and the statements of residents reveal that accessibility should be designed in a way that is suitable for different user groups, such as the elderly, children, and people with reduced mobility.

Equipping the walking area with ramps, rearranging sidewalks with suitable materials, and using appropriate signage would be beneficial for the pedestrian experience in the area. Similarly, softer ground materials for roads can be another solution that could increase pedestrian comfort and improve soil permeability. In addition, developing continuity in fences is essential in determining the cooperative's spatial hierarchy and aesthetic image. Security-enhancing solutions should also be considered, such as better lighting of the cooperative housing area and placement of lighting in different zones.

Figure 2.4: A photo collage illustrates possible solutions for pedestrian access and cycling transport. (@Shiza Mushtaq, 2022)

Dedicated bike lanes and bike parking stations are needed to enable better cycling mobility and support different active modes of transportation. Addressing the limited use of bicycles in a cooperative area requires a comprehensive approach that considers infrastructure development, landscaping, and safety measures. It is possible to create a more bicycle-friendly environment and promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transport in the cooperative housing site. These proposals, which are not overly economically challenging for residents, will lead to positive transformations such as improving internal pedestrian paths, strengthening connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods, and improving cycling transport.

3.3. Common Spaces & Community Engagement

Inadequate and inefficient use of common areas is one of the biggest problems we observed on the site and was heavily emphasised by the residents, thus leading

us to develop a proposal for solving it. We have come to a consensus that more active and efficient use of common areas can be achieved by devising a proposal for the common activities of the residents. With the establishment of the balance of use, better landscaping of the public and semi-public common areas within the site will be provided, and these spaces will gain new meanings through joint activities.

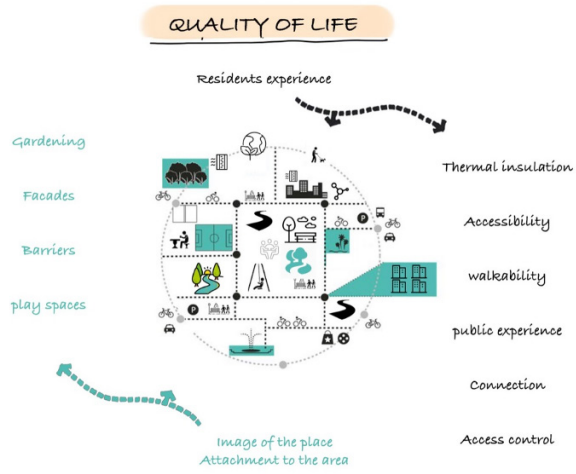
The first idea for improving common areas through landscaping is organic food waste composting collectively by the residents and its use to regenerate the soil. In this way, the soil would be suitable for developing new species using organic fertilisers, and more collective relations will develop among the apartment residents. Renewing plantations with less pine that sheds a lot that does not facilitate the growth of suitable vegetation (grass, flowers, etc.) can also be another solution for landscape planning.

Community belonging can be improved through solutions such as more active use of common spaces, revitalising the soil, and arranging gardens together. Maintaining landscape gardens requires constant effort and resources. Also, where there is no sense of ownership and responsibility, a lack of community involvement leads to a lack of motivation to develop gardens or contribute to their maintenance. Encouraging residents' participation and establishing horticultural committees or agricultural clubs can help address this issue.

3.4. Solar Energy Usage

The biggest obstacle to implementing energy efficiency policies can be summarised as the failure of all cooperative residents to come to a consensus on adopting solar energy and solar water heating systems in the cooperative housing area, as well as large losses due to a lack of insulation. Promoting the adoption of solar energy and solar water heating systems in the area leads to reduced energy costs and environmental benefits for residents. According to our calculations, successful exterior insulation can reduce annual energy consumption by 30-45%. The use of materials such as mineral wool, polystyrene, and parge coat for this process will bring the most efficient results. Insulation of central heating system pipes is also needed for energy savings in the cooperative housing estate. The capital obtained through savings in energy bills has the potential to pave the way for new investments. The surplus of funds can also be used for other improvements, such as replacing windows on the buildings with more energy-efficient ones. According to our calculations, the surface to be covered with thermal insulation is an area of 49,000 m^2.

Southwest-oriented pitched roofs are very well suited for efficiently harvesting solar energy and giving the cooperative a degree of independence. The orientation of buildings is already optimised for solar panel installation. Solar water heaters can be used for hot water preparation for use in apartments to reduce the required energy for hot water preparation by 50-80%. Photo-voltaic (PV) panels can generate electricity for apartments during the daytime, and sell excess electricity to the grid, while electricity can be imported from the grid at night. The area to be covered with solar panels amounts to cca. 4,600 m2, according to our calculations. One building can produce cca. 30,000 kWh / year, considering the national average one building's consumption is 27,600 kWh / year.



The different interventions we developed as a team were prioritised according to stages and different periods of time due to economic reasons. For example, expenditures related to energy and insulation are the expenditures that strain the cooperative residents the most economically. Considering the changing global dynamics and the energy crises that await us in the coming years, heating and energy issues are at the top of our intervention list, and investments developed in these areas are seen as the longest-term, most profitable, and at the same time the most environmentally friendly investments. Following the economically empowering steps, other design interventions mentioned above, such as accessibility, pedestrian comfort, safety, and active use of common areas, will reshape

the image of the Ümitköy Sitesi and can be realised relatively quickly.

4. Conclusion

In studies conducted within the scope of the MCMH Stakeholder workshop, our working group determined that the declining quality of life in Ümitköy Cooperative Houses can be seen in its deteriorating image. The residents' opinions and demands mirrored in understanding the problems and potentials of the Ümitköy Sitesi and suggesting exemplary practices. The results indicated that the residents suffered from old, discontinuous inner streets, poor exterior insulation of buildings, lack of solar energy use, lack of communal activities to strengthen community bonds, and inadequate landscaping of parks affecting residents' walkability experience, city image, and sense of community.

At the end of the workshop, the group proposed design interventions that considered field analyses, current discussions, and requests from Ümitköy Sitesi's residents. These suggestions include changing the facades and insulation, improving the pedestrian experience and supporting the use of bicycles, landscaping the shared spaces to make them attractive for different social activities, rebuilding social belonging and strengthening communication for different age groups, and using solar energy that is more economical and sustainable. As a result, necessary steps have been taken to develop sustainable and efficient alternative policies to solve the current problems of the housing site. Thanks to the contributions of different stakeholders and the healthy communication and cooperation they have established, these efforts promise to follow more sustainable economic, social, and spatial strategies in the mass housing areas in the future.

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Bold Move

By Claus Bech-Danielsen, Lora Licolaou, Aysegül Sarı, Fatmanur Tok, Nurten Müge Ayla, Hamdi Tekin

The walkways in Ümitköy Sitesi (@photo credit, Roberto Goycoolea)

Abstract

The issue of housing renewal is pertinent internationally as the post-war housing stock is coming of age. The future of social and affordable housing in Europe depends on several factors: the condition of the building stock and its effectiveness in accommodating modern needs, the ownership and the mechanisms for its upkeep, land values and public sector policy toward social and affordable housing. Ümitköy Sitesi is a privately-owned estate operating under the cooperative system established in Turkey in the 1970s. It has come of age, and a regeneration/refurbishment strategy is urgently needed. Middle East Technical University organised a three-day workshop with a group of experts from the COST Action 'Middle-Class Mass Housing' and the housing estate residents to investigate possibilities and strategies derived from a European-wide experience on housing renewal.

1. Introduction

The decline of post-war mass housing stock in Europe is mainly associated with modernism and the extensive use of reinforced concrete. In parallel, the lack of maintenance over the years was often due to the inability of the public sector to manage social housing stock effectively and keep up with necessary maintenance; even in the case of the privatisation of the building stock, the upkeep mechanisms were not effective enough. Extensive ground, ageing and wasteful infrastructure systems, lack of experience and support by local authorities and the inability of tenants to pay for expensive maintenance budgets intensify the decline of often very valuable housing stock. Often the only solution was the demolition and construction of new stocks with all the sustainability implications this entails.

The fate of Ümitköy Sitesi would have probably been the same if it was not for two key critical factors; the housing being a cooperative of small ownerships with the need for complete consensus in the case of key decisions relating to the management of the estate and the second is related to the sense of community and a clear understanding of the tenants of its value as a distinct 'place'. Where day-to-day maintenance is managed at present, any major refurbishment and upscale of the estate's infrastructure will inevitably need public sector funding.

In this context, the COST Action on Middle-Class Mass Housing gave the responsibility to organise the stakeholder workshop to Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara in October 2023. The structure of the workshop around five working groups led to a diverse set of outputs, rich in ideas grounded in the 'place reality' in several different ways. Groups of local postgraduate students and academics of METU with a deep knowledge of local reality were infused with different experiences brought in by visiting academics involved in housing renewal in their respective countries.

Another invaluable condition characterising the Ümitköy Sitesi project was the presence of an energetic, informed and committed group of residents, represented by a dynamic residence committee ready and willing to participate decisively in the workshops. They organised a small meeting in the estate, participated in working sessions, and brought to the table an inside detailed view of the condition of the building fabric and local narratives of a distinct culture and appreciation of the unique place they called home.

Working groups acted independently in drawing from the same sources five very different renewal strategies, with emphasis on effectiveness in the local context and relevant renewal tools such as reshaping of open spaces, the upgrade of buildings and infrastructure, enhancement of activity/facilities base, all aiming toward 'kicking off change'. Common to approaches was the emphasis on 'listening' carefully to narratives and experiences derived from the residents and the place itself.

2. The Reading of a 'Place' - Problems and Opportunities

During the Stakeholder Workshop, participants were firstly expected to explore the area together during an extensive field trip and understand the opportunities for change already identified by the residents who were determined to take on the responsibility for upgrading their homes and the 'place'. Associated investigations during the trip (reading and recording of the urban condition, visits to homes, interviews with residents etc.) lead to a multi-faceted set of observations and reflections on issues related to potentially different scales of intervention. The interdisciplinarity

of groups led to parallel discussion across several factors – the condition of outdoor space, mechanical services and building technologies, construction, housing standards, amenity base etc. Since all the issues are interlinked, the initial mapping of findings was brought together under the headline "Community Engagement".

Early in the process, it became clear that a key asset to any associated project would be the energies derived from the 'community' associated with a fully occupied estate. For instance, a resident explained that the name Ümitköy Sitesi was given by his father, a name associated with a volunteer attorney (Ümit Bey) who took good care of the site in the 1970s. The attorney still lives in Ümitköy Sitesi with her family and feels happy to raise her children in the same place where she grew up.

Where a strong community engagement in everyday affairs still characterises the Ümitköy Site, the arrival of new residents (a large proportion of those in rented accommodation with often lower income) eroded the commitment toward extensive renewal initiatives to an extent. New residents and absentee owners are generally less interested in the estate and feel less attached to the area than the original residents, who are now elderly. This demographic change and the lack of public sector investment are now evident in the environmental condition of the place. Nevertheless, Ümitköy Sitesi still offers a sense of belonging to all and its uniqueness is recognised in the context of the new generation high rise urbanity in Ankara's suburbs.

3. Output – Key Findings and Proposals

The expert group aims toward Ümitköy Sitesi regeneration by focusing on four themes: 1) The reshaping of the urban plan and its accessibility patterns, 2) the addition of communal services and integration with the surrounding amenity base, 3) the renewal of buildings and the more intensive use of land for revenue generation, and (4) address key issues of environmental quality

1) *The urban plan:* The outdoor spaces on one side of the blocks (i.e., front gardens of the apartment blocks) seem well personalised and well used by the residents, with a certain degree of sense of ownership being evident. However, the outdoor spaces at the back of the blocks are unused and appear 'no-man's-land'. There is no direct access from internal accommodation to these areas (staircases or flats), and they are inaccessible to elderly residents. Other than the sense of neglect, the lack of people affects the feeling of safety and security of passersby, particularly at night time. This assessment led to the need to reshape these spaces by dividing them and allocating them across groups of blocks in various parts of the estate. These areas would be more useful if they were either partly attached to the ground floor flats or allocated as communal space to groups of residential blocks to increase the sense of ownership and allocate a manageable level of responsibility for their maintenance to residents. In doing this, it is important to keep a certain balance between the plan and the customised/individualised domains.

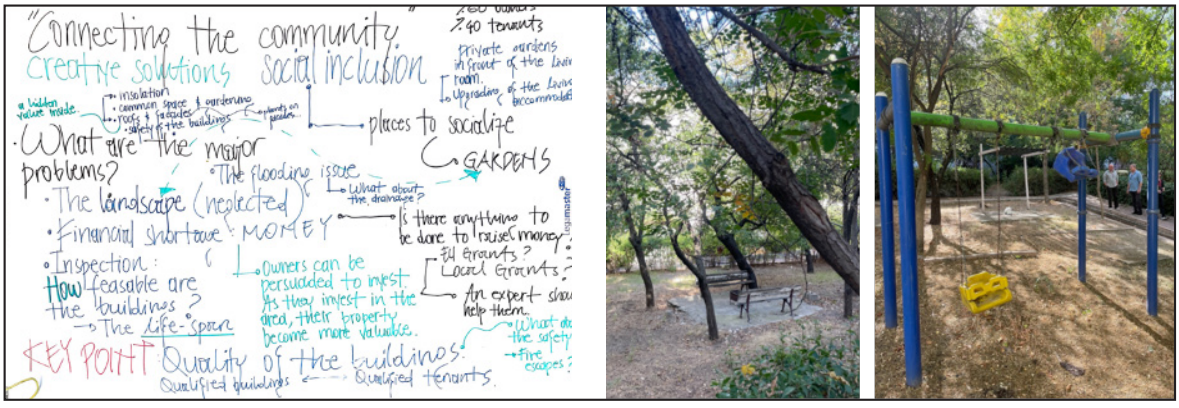


Figure 3.1. After the field study, before finalising the first day of the workshop, Group 1 made a brainstorming activity and highlighted our notes from the trip

This strategy formulates (like in traditional cities) a 'perimeter block' of buildings, with a clear designation of public, semi-public and private outdoor spaces with different fit-out, levels of accessibility, and responsibility for its maintenance. Furthermore, this reallocation of open space clarifies a clear system of public routes through the estate, which concentrates passersby and visitors and helps the plan to integrate with the surrounding area. One final advantage of the reorganisation of the plan is the identification of plots for potentially new buildings on the site with multifaceted advantages – their role in shaping the perimeter blocks and forming a continuous frontage to new public routes through the estates, bringing new residents on the site and diversifying the social mix of the estate, increasing the density of occupation of the estates with implications on sustainability and reduce maintenance costs (distribution across a large number of residential units). More significant is perhaps the potential of this strategy to generate revenue /funds, which can assist extensive refurbishment programs of the estate. This strategy led to the expert group titling their strategy, 'the Bold Move'. The team recognises the difficulty in convincing the residents of its validity. The entire design, with three-dimensional images of the implication and full feasibility highlighting the potential financial benefits, is necessary before any such strategy can be discussed with the residents.

2) *Communal services and traffic/accessibility to amenities:* The junction to the main roads at the south-eastern end of the estate, where the shopping centre is located, is seen by the group as a very important focal point; here, residents (of the estate and the wider neighbourhood) and visitors arriving at Ümitköy Sitesi and the nearby shopping centre can meet, socialise and shop with noticeable regeneration impact. Although structurally a critical urban space, this area is now a glorified road junction with fast traffic, dangerous for pedestrian crossings and a downgraded small public space. In interviews, the group was told that recently two car accidents seriously injured passersby who are still in critical condition. Therefore, the shopping centre and the square in front of the centre should be refurbished and redeveloped into a public space with partly redirected and slowed-down traffic- designed as a shared space where pedestrians and bicyclists take priority. Another essential issue during the consultation was the nature of the main accesses routes through the estate. The streets inside Ümitköy Sitesi, formerly owned by the cooperation, are now under the municipality's responsibility. According to the interviewees, this decision was made to defer the maintenance costs of the streets to the public sector. Although the intention sounds reasonable, the problem that may arise from adopting the roads is an increase in traffic through the estates which worries the residents because of recent incidents of visitors littering public spaces within the estate. The team felt that redesigning a direct 'shared surface' road through the estate with good surveillance by windows and doors of buildings, good lighting, and increased presence of pedestrians could make the environment safer with less vandalism.

3) *The Buildings:* Ümitköy Sitesi was built in the 1970s, and the buildings are thus 50 years old. Even though they possess several qualities (space organisation and space standards, access to light, good ventilation etc.) and are characterised by relatively high housing standards compared to the Turkish housing construction of the post-war era, they do not fully answer to today's requirements and expectations for a modern home. The buildings' limited insulation affects the comfort of the houses, particularly in winter, with cold interior spaces and drafty windows. They will also have difficulties meeting today's environmental requirements and demands for energy savings in winter, which requires a large amount of energy to heat the homes. In contrast, in the summer, significant amounts of energy are used for cooling and air conditioning. Additionally, the lack of lifts at the five stories high blocks poses several difficulties for many older people among the residents of Ümitköy Sitesi. There is, therefore, an urgent need to create increased accessibility for elderly and disabled residents. Modern technologies such as photovoltaics and solar panels could substantially increase the cost of management of blocks through the collective generation of energy. An extensive energy upgrading of buildings and associated services, including the re-design of the lobbies and vertical circulation, is necessary to bring residential accommodation to the 21st century. The cost of such refurbishment will be high, and a funding strategy needs to accumulate funds from various sources (energy grants, local authority grants, tenant contributions, longer-term loans etc.) to achieve such a 'bold' building refurbishment. Strategy no 1, noted above, was particularly shaped with this in mind.

4) *Environmental issues:* Ümitköy Sitesi is responsible (because of the condition of buildings and partly the extent of associated open spaces, for a large CO2-emission, not least in light of the central energy system running on fossil fuels (natural gas) for both heating and hot water supply. With the expectation of growing energy prices, the large energy consumption may also become a significant financial burden for the residents of Ümitköy Sitesi. All the buildings have large south-facing roofs, and they thus contain significant untapped potential for using solar energy. In the Turkish climate, it is an obvious solution, particularly in light of questions raised during our visit conversation about the via bility of the central district heating system and the high maintenance cost in the case of its renewal in the future.

4. The Outcome

After our initial deliberations, we concluded that there are many hidden values in Ümitköy Sitesi, which it is worth using design to reveal and realise through an exciting but realist development concept. On the last day, we had the opportunity to present our ideas to the participants and the residents who stayed with us throughout the process.

The concept concentrated on two distinct categories of action; one reflecting on the "Quality of life of the residents" and the other on the "Quality of the buildings". The former includes proposals for community engagement, enhancement of the sense of attachment/belonging of both original and new residence, addressed aspects of social inclusion, ways of deriving a consensus/a peaceful environment, achieving safety and comfort of older people and children etc.

The latter reflected on the place itself – refurbishment of heating/cooling systems, roofs and façades, drainage, safety of the buildings and streets, fire escapes, insulation, and outdoor spaces.

The 'Latent Value' of the place was also investigated in detail: the location of the housing estate and associated land values, the morphology and landscape of a low-density estate, the sense of place and the residents' commitments, the cooperative organisation and a strong administration team, the high value surrounding neighbourhoods, and the history of the site, etc. Such values can be used as great assets to promote a comprehensive strategy for the extensive refurbishment of the estate.

Figure 3.2. The proposed layout for the mass housing site by the expert group

Figure 3.3. Accessibility, connection and the shared spaces acquired through the design of the roads

Figure 3.4. Detailed design proposals for the apartment buildings

We finally compiled brainstormed ideas in a strategic plan called the 'Bold Move'. First, the necessary refurbishments were determined, and outline costs were calculated. The team also managed very quickly to conceptualise some ideas through plan sketches using case studies to show the potential for remodelling the façades, restructuring the plan and the ideas on a new landscape, interior-shared spaces, and safety measures, all adding social value to the estate. Development sites to produce new owner-occupied row houses (leading to a broader social /income mix) were suggested to generate 'seed money' for the strategy.

The team also discussed further the *Phases of Refurbishment*

Phase 1: "The opening act": regeneration of the shopping centre/node and surrounding square to attract investments and promote the value of Ümitköy Sitesi - Version. 2.0/Upgraded

Phase 2: Reshape the plan to clear sites for the Construction of new row houses – and thus create financing for the continuation.

Phase 3: Refurbishment of 3 first blocks (close to the shopping centre). Testing, learning, and evaluating for phase 4.2.

Phase 4.1: Infrastructural enhancement

Phase 4.2: Refurbishment of the nest blocks creating a 'Backyard 1'

Phase 5: Refurbishment of outdoor spaces in 'Backyard 1'

Phase 6: Evaluating and learning from phases 1 to 4 – and making changes to refurbishments of the Backyard 2-5

Further Phases: Continuing refurbishments of buildings and outdoor spaces in the whole area

5. Conclusions

Although short, the research within the workshop's scope was extensive in terms of understanding the history of Ümitköy Sitesi and its current condition. Mixed groups with local and overseas consultants worked well in understanding the estate and its roots and proceeding faster with realistic ideas relevant to the local context. Early observations and interviews gave the group an evident feeling at the outset of the urgency of the matter considered necessary for the long-term survival of the estate.

The expert group created a design idea within a strategic plan called the 'Bold Move', which suggested an extensive remodelling and refurbishment of the estate but took into consideration the sense of belonging of the community and, most importantly, a precious 'sense of place' and sentimental character the estate is characterised by. Although such as 'Bold Move' was considered by some of the workshop participants as unrealistic, during our presentation, a planner from the municipality who was present at the final presentation confirmed that even big ideas such as this one could be implemented if the legal conditions of and the status of the cooperative were to be resolved.
Ümitköy Sitesi represents the very early examples of the cooperatives in Ankara, which are transformed from villages of urban suburbia, which is worth preserving as a part of a very recent but essential part of Ankara's urban history. Places such as Ümitköy Sitesi offers a unique nowadays sense of belonging long gone in the modern city. As a team, we started with the vital question, "How can we have a community whose members want to be here, to be together, and to sustain the estate?" while feeling proud of their 21st-century home.

Strategies for Better Shared Grounds

By Nilay Nida Can, Meriç Altıntaş Kaptan, Ecem Engin, Aslı Selin Özzade, Sophia Borushkina

The entrance of a typical apartment block in Ümitköy Sitesi (@photo credit, Roberto Goycoolea)

Abstract

Group 2 explored a better environment and life for Ümitköy Sitesi via discussions among researchers and residents. The group collected data from the residents who voluntarily performed administrative roles in this mass housing site. Although the data was limited, the participating residents in the workshop provided a valuable contribution to the development of the design ideas for the project. The social aspect of the site as a place-making became the main focus of Group 2. After discussing the data gathered from stakeholders' interviews, the group members revealed the urgent need for social requirements and the three main topics to understand spatial analysis, strengths, challenges, and limitations of the site. The housing site included a well-connected and active community network, relatively better conditions of the buildings, a well-organised management scheme, and a vast green area providing small-scale biodiversity are the key strengths. Based on the analysis, Group 2 proposed a series of strategies to achieve social cohesion, improve the quality of abandoned green spaces and tackle the feeling of insecurity. Their design strategies emphasised the integration of common outdoor and indoor spaces as critical to transforming the housing site into a better environment for community life.

1. Introduction

The main challenges in developed urban areas are re-designing and re-thinking the quality of life in middle-class mass housing projects. The common ground of the members of the expert group became the social aspect of the site. The group members included young master's and PhD candidates from different international universities studying urban planning, design, and interior architecture issues.

On the first day of the workshop, the participants visited Ümitköy Sitesi. At the end of the first observations, the administrative board members, who were also residents, introduced experts to a series of problematic topics for their environment. After the site visit, individual critics were shared and discussed with group members at the faculty building. The expert group considered three alternative themes for their design proposal (Figure 4.1).

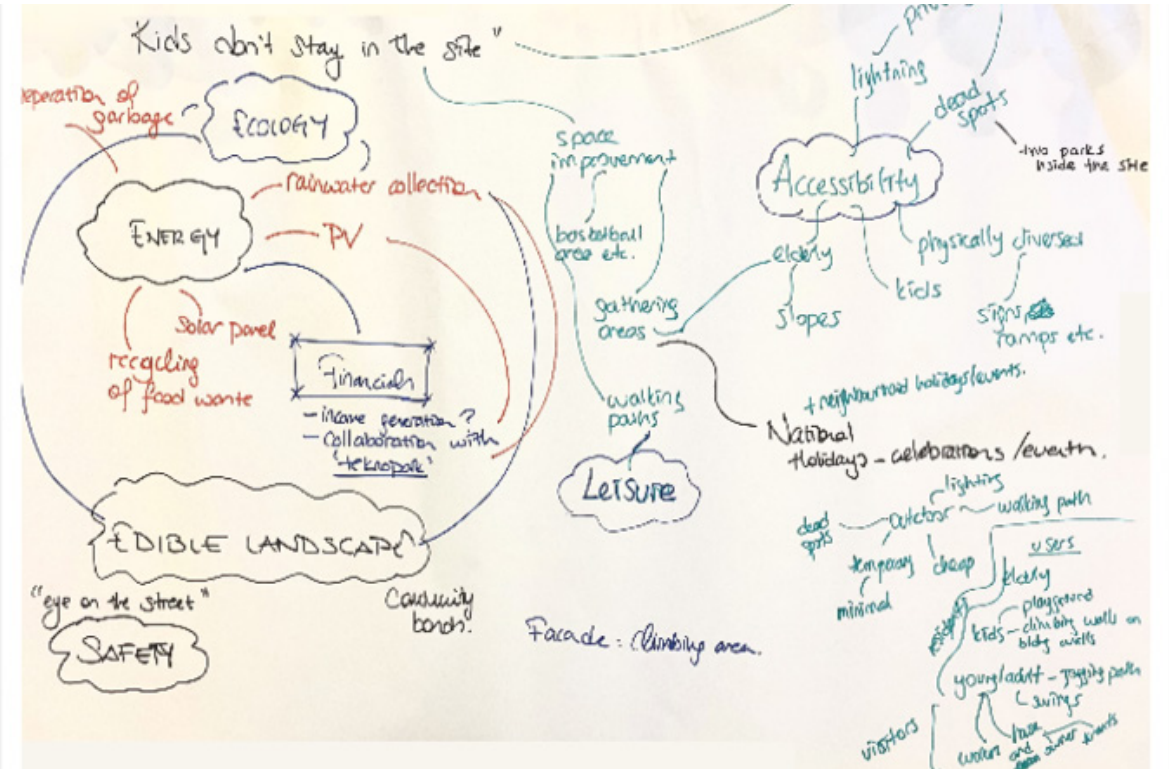


Figure 4.1. First mind map of the expert group members

The first theme focuses on social cohesion between inhabitants, which can be possible by including new and old residents in the community's exterior gathering spaces. The second theme was considering abandoned spots and making temporary interventions with sustainable materials to enhance space quality. The second theme also included the housing site's landscape as a potential. However, the current landscape is unsuitable for different generations as a social space. Therefore, the group decided to create exterior social spaces for residents, balance privacy and safety between buildings and streets, form wayfinding within the mass housing site and set boundaries for different functions. As for the third theme, the discussion of the group members ended with other problems like exterior heat insulation, preserving culture and traditions, and alternative paths and connections.

On the second day, the initial one-to-one meeting with local participants was with Miss Arzu Terzi and Banu Yıldırım, who had lived in the same apartment block (Block no. 11) since childhood. As a result of this meeting, the expert group opted to rethink or re-design the landscape as a theme of their project. In this way, strategies for a better-shared ground have become the central design theme of the group.

2. Discussion with Stakeholders and Findings on the Site

Group 2 collected data about the middle-class mass housing site from the residents who voluntarily worked with them. So, although the information about the area was limited, the information shared with them by the residents with administrative roles was precious (Figure 4.2). The group focused on the three major problems of the housing estate: lack of social cohesion, the feeling of insecurity, and abandoned green spaces for different generations like kids, young adults, adults and older people. Moreover, the group chose an activity-based approach and suggested land-use functions for a series of proposed locations. In the end, the group presented a series of collages for illustration.

Figure 4.2. Existing site (2022)

The expert group investigated the three main topics through the *spatial analysis, strengths, challenges, and limitations* of the site. The well-connected and well-established active community network, the vacant but vast green areas, the relatively better condition of the buildings, the well-organised management scheme and the small-scale biodiversity, are the key strengths of the site. On the other hand, the project site's main challenges are ageing and changing population profiles, neglected spots on the territory, and a lack of well-designed outdoor public spaces for leisure and gathering. Lastly, the group considered the limitations of the impossibility of intervening in big green areas due to property rights and financial sources.

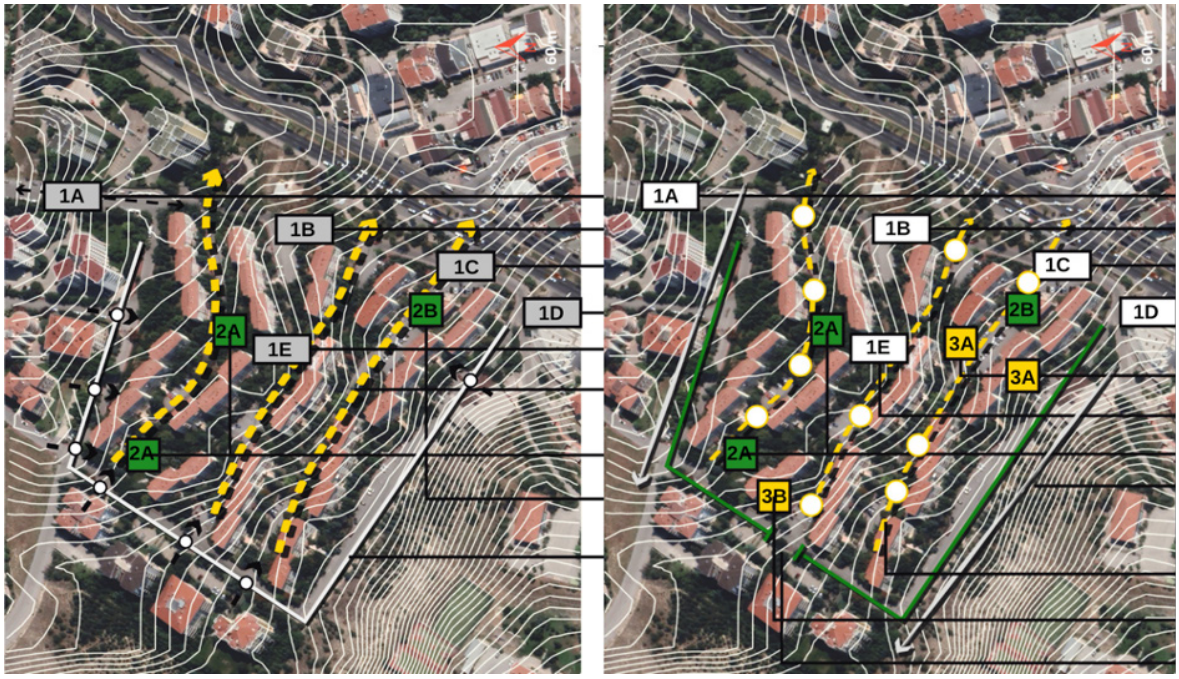


Figure 4.3. Spatial data collected from residents (2022).

After the interviews, the data gathered from the residents was discussed and mapped with symbols and texts. The primary outcome of the group discussion was the necessity of social requirements. The detailed data and the group's draft proposals to solve the problems can be listed below (Figure 4.3);

- 1A: The problem is excessive ground frost in winter, and the group proposes to prepare an additional sign precaution system for ground control along the street.

- 1B: Another security problem is trees in the middle of the lanes lead particularly accidents of trucks. Searching for alternative truck paths and inhibiting from narrow roads might be a design strategy.

- 1C: The uneven condition of the road surface entails a risk for people. Therefore, the first steps are related signs, bumps and ground furnishing with various materials to slow vehicles.

- 1D: The over-parking can be resolved with a limited degree of parking control.

- 1E: As one of the darkest spots in the site, the group suggested the design of diffused light system along the streets or paths.

- 2A: Dead spots and lack of utilisation of central green spaces can be turned into common areas with street furniture utilisation.

- 2B: Abandoned garden of 'Çarşı (Markethall)' , which can be designed for people as seating areas and connected to the inner shops. For instance, street furniture can be added in inclined areas, especially for the elderly.

• 3A: There can be resting spaces for the elderly.

• 3B: The proposal is the design of a skating park, a basketball playground, a climbing wall, etc., at the back of the site and far from the main road.

• 4A: The uncontrolled entrance to the residential site through many entrance points without security destroys the sense of place. Thereby, path lighting along major pedestrian mobility routes can be built.

3. Spatial Analysis and Proposals

The strategies for social cohesion

• In gathering areas

It seems less communication between the older residents and newcomers, and flat owners and tenants. Moreover, fewer social activities and celebrations diminish the cooperative culture. There is a lack of shared places appealing to a range of users like kids, young adults, adults, elderly. Another critical issue is the inadequacy of 'Lokal' and 'Çarşı' for socialisation.

o As a proposal: Urban furniture through outdoor spaces

The installation can be used for a picnic area within the site (Figure 4.4). Community events, such as open-air movie nights, card and board-game nights, can be organised around this furniture to increase social cohesion. Also, the place will have the potential for neighbourhood events and national holiday celebrations.

Figure 4.4. a collage for temporary activity

• In the seating or resting area

The residents of the housing site do not prefer to spend time outside, and the older people usually get tired when they go out shopping, chatting etc., and the current benches are not used effectively.

o As a proposal: Seating areas within private gardens

A series of strategies can be listed to increase the effective use of dead spots, enhance social cohesion among the residents, encourage elderly people to be part of the community more, and have reading and resting stations.

o As a proposal: Resting areas on the pedestrian road

This is useful to prevent elderly people from getting tired and being reluctant to go outside and create gathering areas to preserve the community culture (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5. Placing seats in different parts of the housing site.

o As a proposal: Adding new functions to 'lokal' (community centre) and outside, inclusive playgrounds for everyone

New activity rooms (a room for playing chess and other board games, a library and a music room) can be added to the community centre. It is possible to add new functions outside the community centre, such as a skating park, a basketball playground, and a climbing tree, to create potential social spaces for the young population (Figure 4.6).

o As a proposal: Provide houses for street animals outside

Some street cats and dogs are taken care of by the residents in the shared spaces of the housing site. Providing cat and dog houses in the gardens to stay safe is possible.

o As a proposal: rainwater-collecting elements

They can be attached to building facade downpipes.

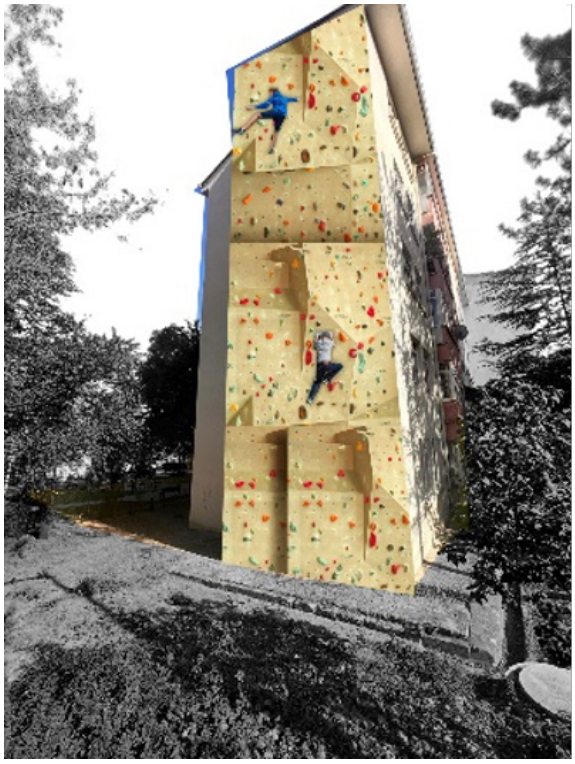


Figure 4.6. Climbing wall on a building side.

• For social engagement of elderly

It is essential to encourage elderly people to go out to engage more in social activities and have a more active life. For example, social events can be organised by considering their preferences, hobbies and needs, and physical and emotional support can be provided to develop shared interests.

Strategies for the feeling of insecurity

• For lack of defined borders in the private garden

Visitors and intruders spend time in this housing site causing several problems (such as damaging the neighbourhood's properties, making noise, etc.). Developing an open and semi-open area strategy for residents' privacy is compulsory, and it is possible to use hedges or fences around gardens.

• For lack of lighting, especially in green areas

Less lighting elements in dark spots and pedestrian roads create difficulty in wayfinding, especially at night, so well-placed lighting elements are disincentive against robbery (Figure 4.7).

o As a proposal: for safety and social concerns

In practice, diffused rather than direct light is a more efficient use of light, and it is a space generator such as gathering areas. Also, providing the feeling of security by increasing the visibility of the space, especially at night, can be attached to building facade downpipes.

"Architecture which enters into a symbiosis with light does not merely create form in light, by day and at night, but allow light to become form." Richard Meier-Architect

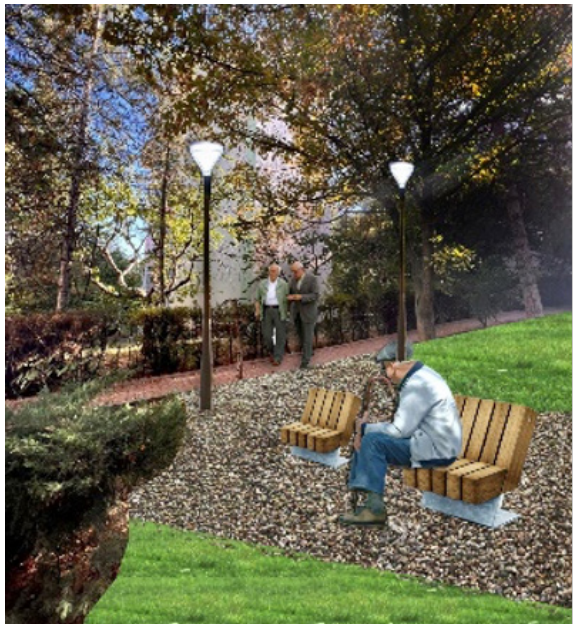


Figure 4.7. A collage of seating with light settlement

o As a proposal: for guidance and wayfinding

The path lighting for walking paths and wall-washing for some walls to emphasise, such as climbing walls, are well-designed strategies.

The strategies for abandoned green spaces

• For lack of effective usage of social spaces

Neglected areas generate a declining image of the housing site. It is essential to use green spaces for physical exercise and social interactions. There is a need to host varied usage patterns, like encouraging communication across different age groups.

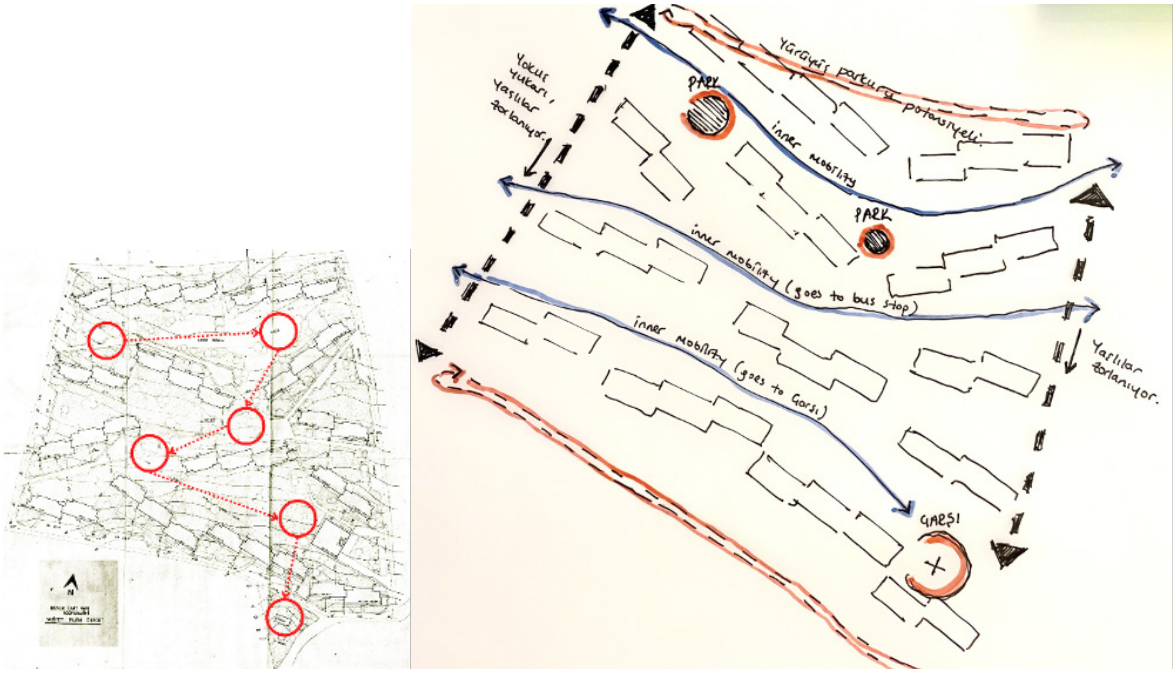


Figure 4.8. Accessibility between common spaces

• For lack of inclusive design elements

Especially physically diverse people, elderly people, and people having temporary injuries suffer from a lack of efficient slopes, and responsive elements attached to stairs and railings can be implemented in the housing site (Figure 4.8).

• For lack of measures of safety elements

There is a lack of security cameras. Misusing the iron bars on the ground floors for the upper floors is possible. For example, robbers may use iron bars to climb the upper floors. Intertwining public streets with the apartment blocks of the site and narrowing down the roads may increase safety problems, such as traffic accidents and jams on the roadways. There need to be some new safety measures for the street network.

o As a proposal: Edible landscapes in urban agriculture or gardening

The possible benefit of the garden's edible landscape is to promote the "grow your own food" movement and achieve healthy food security. It can also help residents to save money, generate income, and help improve communal activities like sharing what they collect from their gardens.

• For lack of specific functions assigned

The neglected front and backyards and the undesigned and unoccupied common grounds that are left idle ironically belong to everyone, but no one uses them. In contrast, these areas have more opportunities for ecological diversity (animals, plants, etc.).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, a series of strategies need to be implemented by the residents of Ümitköy Sitesi. Every resident can contribute to improving the quality of life and the environment. Social inequalities and accessibility to shared outdoor sites cause the main problems of the site. The administrative board of this cooperative house has the potential to inform the residents about the future vision and share common ground. Therefore, informing and communicating with these people will help transform this middle-class mass housing site into a better environment. The critical issue is to integrate residents of all ages into this process. Afterwards, well-structured communication among inhabitants can solve their technical problems like heating insulation, infrastructure etc. Figures 2.9, 2.10, and 2.11 show how the intersection policy can be imported for the first step of transformation.

USER PROFILE		ACTIVITY	PROPOSED LOCATION	FUNCTION PERMANENT (P) TEMPORARY (T) OUTDOOR (O) INDOOR (I)
	RESIDENT (R)			
KIDS		Outdoor Living Room (R)	Backyards	Leisure (O)
		Cycling Road (R+V)	Surrounding the site	Mobility (O)
		Climbing walls (R)	Using building walls	Leisure + Sports (T), (O)
		Playground (R)	Near climbing wall	Leisure + Education (O)
		Skateboard, rollerskate area (R+V)	Not very close to Lokal, toward the other parts of the site and close to site border	Leisure + Sports (O)
YOUNG ADULT		Jogging paths (R+V)	Surrounding the site	Sports (O)
		Basketball field (R+V)	Near 'Lokal'	Leisure + Sports (O)
		Leisure room (chess, board games, music room etc.) (R)	At 'Lokal'	Leisure (I)
		Library	At 'Lokal'	Education + Culture (I)
ADULT		Jogging paths (R+V)	Surrounding the site	Sports (O)
		Night events (R)	At 'Lokal' + Garden	Leisure + Culture (I), (O), (T)
		Leisure Area for Adults (swings etc.) (R)	Garden	Leisure (O)
		Library	At 'Lokal'	Education + Culture (I)
ELDERLY		Park & Seating & Pergola Walking paths (R+V)	Park 2(dead spot) Upper and lower edges of the site (without the incline)	Education + Lesiure (T), (O) Sports (O)
		TV and chatting room	At 'Lokal'	Leisure + Culture (I)
		Library	At 'Lokal'	Education + Culture (I)
		Activity room (painting, knitting etc.)	At 'Lokal'	Education + Leisure (I)

Figure 4.9. The proposals according to different age groups.

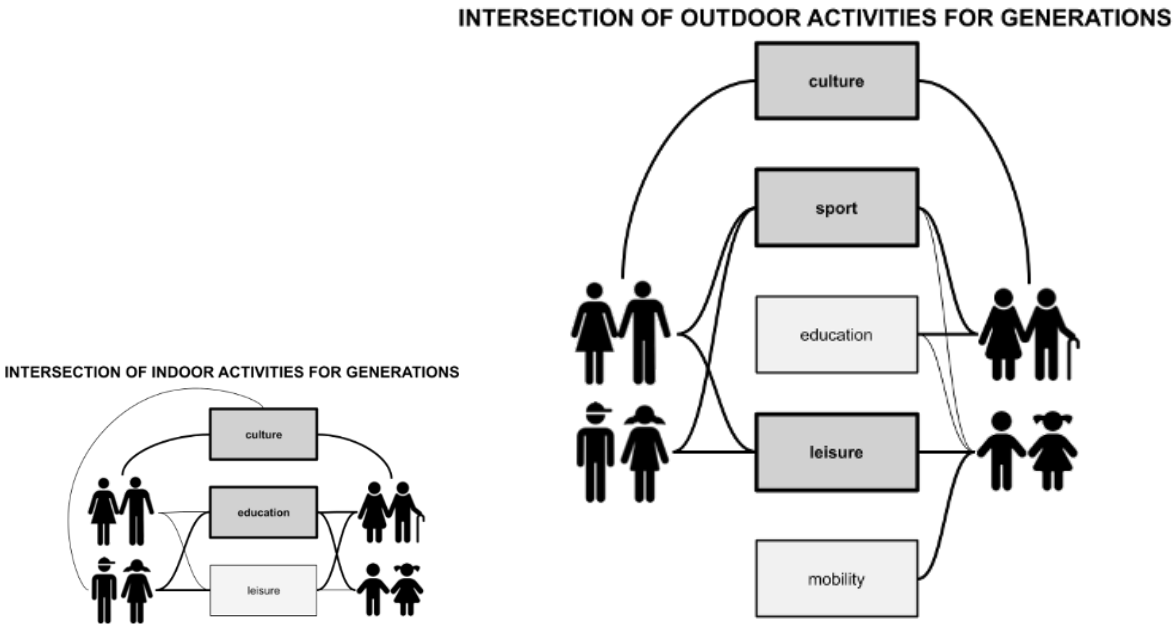


Figure 4.10. Intersection policy for activities.

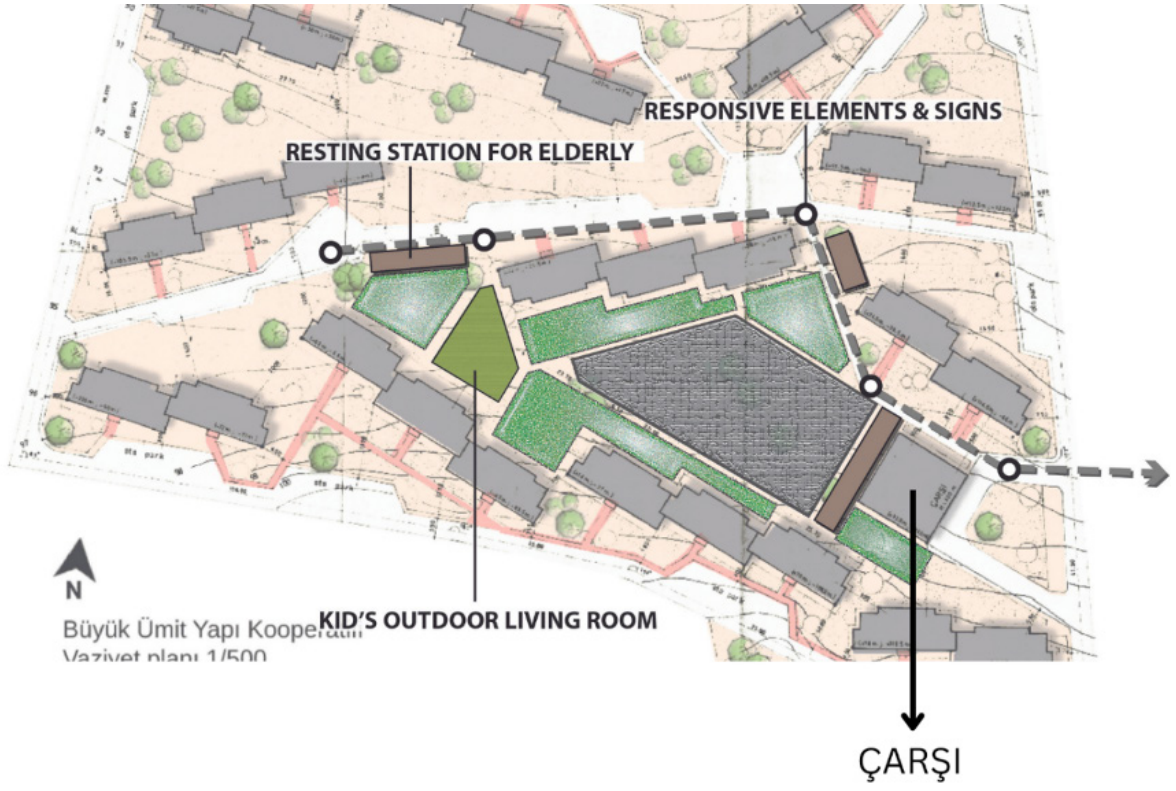


Figure 4.11. Conceptual Illustration of spatial regulation in line with proposals

Bridge

By Hasan Estaji, Byron Ioannou, Berin Güney, Selen Karadogan

The open spaces with some community spaces in Ümitköy Sitesi (@photo credit, Roberto Goycoolea)

Abstract

The group comprises two architects and two urban planners specialising in urban design. The expert group focused on detailed solutions for both building and neighbourhood scales. After the introductory lectures and the site visit, the Group discussed their initial design ideas with the inhabitants. These ideas are primarily shaped with an emphasis on energy efficiency and social groups to increase the site's sustainability and variety of life modes. The expert group combines mixed methodologies (on-site observation, interviews and spatial analysis through the space-syntax analysis). They also shaped and enriched their design ideas through feedback from local visitors. Together with the participatory planning process, the group presented their final projects through visual schemas, diagrams and maps.

1. Introduction: Main Problems, Discussions and Design Ideas

The expert group was composed of two professors in architecture and two young urban designers. Inevitably, the group's focus shifted from the neighbourhood scale towards the architectural scale. The group aimed to define problems and emerging issues for the residents, regardless of scale or the level of intervention needed. Following the presentation introducing the site and the site visit to Ümitköy Sitesi, the team produced the following initial ideas:

- *Shading and insolation* - An investigation is needed into the possibility of adding shading devices to the building facade (Chiesa, 2021).

- S*olar energy* - The current conditions of the roofs need to be changed in terms of optimal shapes and angles for installing photovoltaic panels. The surface area of the usable space should be increased to maximise sun exposure (Dogan and Jakubiec, 2022).

- *House changeability and flexibility* - The spatial configuration of the apartments needs to be changed to match the needs of the current users (Estaji, 2017).

- *Different house sizes* - The project aims to prioritise family needs by redesigning living units of various sizes, which involves changing the spatial configuration of buildings. One idea that was discussed is splitting the house into two or three units. The residents mentioned that the number of households is usually one or two, which means that the current house structure, which is around 96 square meters, is big enough to be divided (Appolloni and D'Alessandro, 2021).

- *Plug-in elevator* - Almost 60% of the population living on the site are above 60 years old. The elevator can be a plug-in to the exterior via a bridge or be placed inside.

- *Open spaces and common spaces* - The neighbourhood's open spaces require a redesign in terms of privacy, ranging from entirely private and semi-private to completely public (Gujar et al., 2022).

- *Bioclimatic suggestions* - Increasing green space and implementing green roofs and walls can help create a favourable microclimate (Peng and Jim, 2013).

- *Creating a buffer zone* - The lack of a hierarchy between spaces requires differentiation while moving from private to public spaces, so the privacy and safety issues will gradually change.

- *Population density* - One of the problems in the project is the low-density population. A population increase is necessary on the project site.

- *Student residents* - Injecting a new generation to the site would increase the dynamism of life, and also, students can help elderly people. It may be good for the mental health of residents to be with young people. Limitations on number of students with percentages may standardise the conditions.

- *Accessibility* - Accessibility for micro-mobility can be attained with the increasing use of non-motorised vehicles such as bicycles and the redesign and construction of decent walkways and paths. This strategy can be supported in those areas with different types of green spaces. The use of green spaces can be encouraged by connecting them with

each other. Even if the green spaces seem next to each other, they may lack connectivity and not be actively used (Kadarik and Kährik, 2021).

• *Integration* - It is possible to provide access to commercial and neighbourhood facilities nearby and open the premises and shops of the complex to neighbouring clients. Some connections can be extended to define the relationship with the surrounding area, especially for pedestrians.

Figure 5.1. Key concepts and terms discussed after the site visit

The methodology is developed after the site visit and problem definitions with initial design ideas.

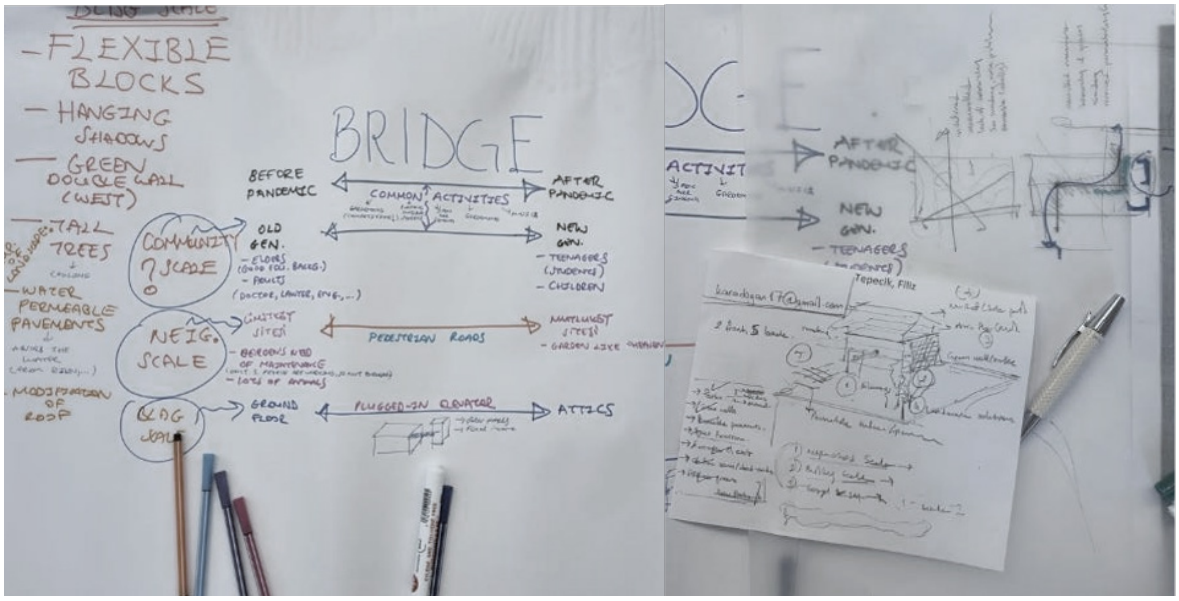


Figure 5.2. Process of study and methods used

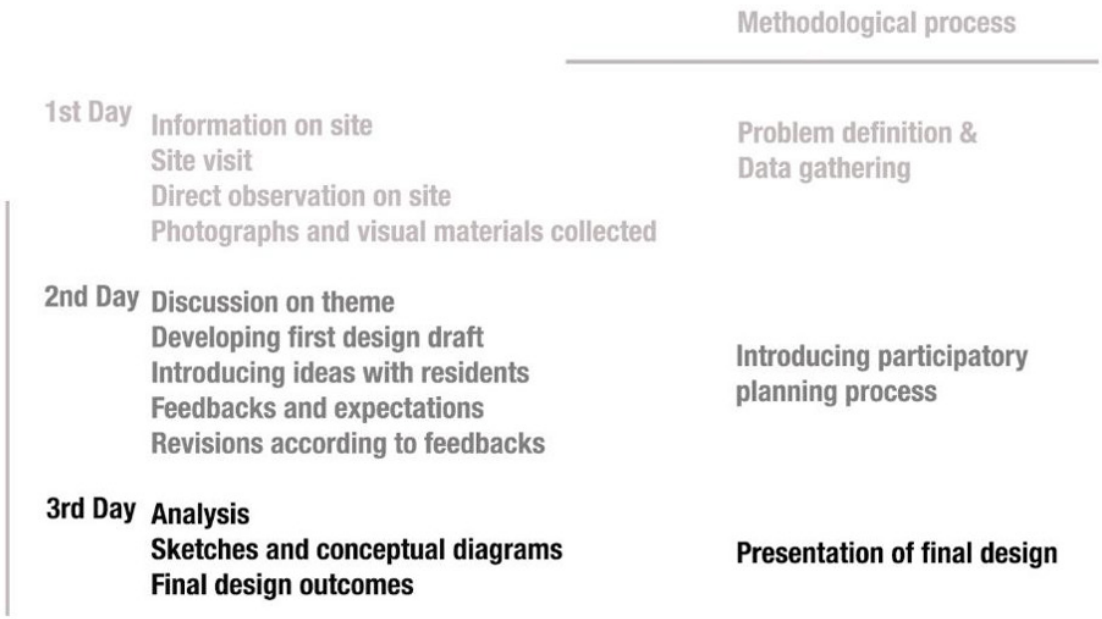
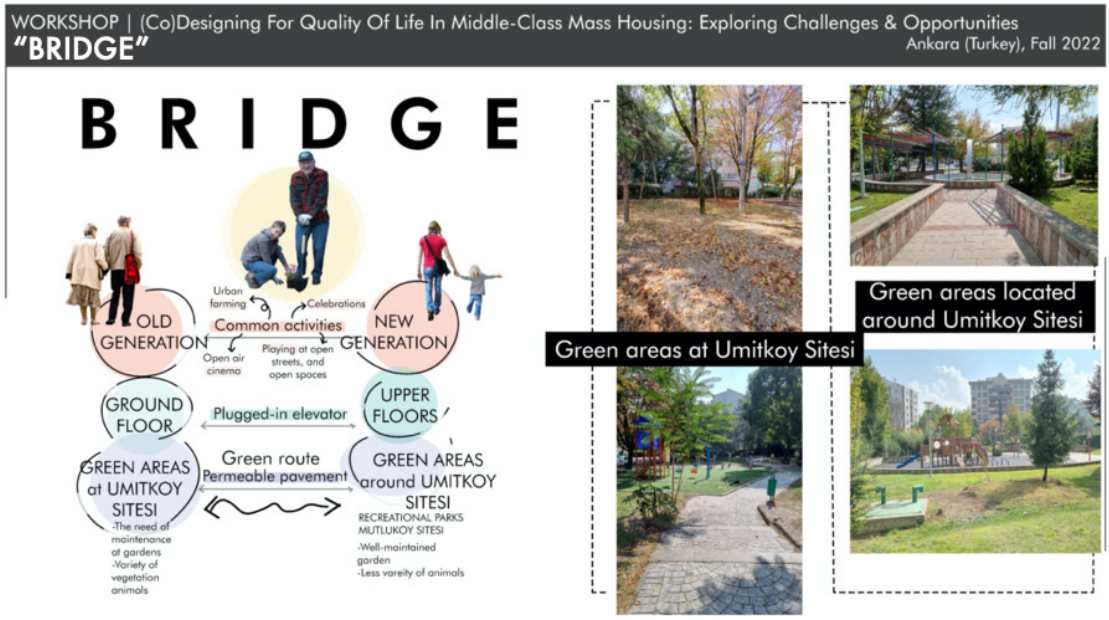


Figure 5.2. Process of study and methods used (continued)

2. Project Concept

The group identified the main problems and combined the thematic solutions with design ideas. Their general design approach is based on small-scale interventions that have minimal impact on social and physical structures. After their initial discussions, they decided to adopt the concept of "Bridge" to the project because the problems at the site could be solved by connecting differences and integrating disparate parts. A bridge would connect old and new generations, different floors in a building, and open spaces with green areas.



3. Methodology and Discussions

The group members conducted face-to-face interviews with the residents, who helped them shape their design ideas. In the interviews, group members noted the residents' feedback and discussed their ideas with them. Some of the information provided by residents are as follows:

"The site is inhabited by first residents and their children. The common activities have decreased over the years, but we try to re-bring the idea of the neighbourhood by marching on national holidays. The social building is used for common activities but is still relatively less compared to previous years."

After getting general information about the project site and learning the needs of residents, we discussed mainly the design interventions, specifically for old people. The focus was the dilemma between privacy and accessibility issues. The traditional meaning of house for the old generations is an obstacle to designing a new entrance from the kitchen which would be enabled by an outside elevator plugged-in via bridges to apartments directly. That intervention would ease the use of wheelchairs which is a need considering the age distribution of the residents. Residents stated that old people sometimes cannot fulfil their daily needs; thus, the people working at the cooperative housing site voluntarily help them. But the number of workers at the site is five, which is not enough for such a large housing site.

Another commonly stressed issue is the uncared conditions of open-green areas. Old people are no longer interested in garden caring or creating social environments, and life has become more individualistic for them. "In the first days of this housing site, gardening was a big issue for residents, and they were even competing among themselves for the most beautiful garden on the site. However, we don't have any farming activities now. Still, we plan to initiate small vegetable production inside the cooperative land, such as planting tomatoes, buying seeds and growing various plants". Fruit trees are important landscape elements of the place, "they all are planted by hand, none of them naturally existed here," said residents. Discussions on open space use led us to ask which paths residents commonly use. Then together with residents, the group drew some sketches of paths and routes on the site.

Under the present circumstances, the group proposed the idea of plug-ins. The working principles for them are similar to Lego. In this way, they observed some problems. The first is about the financial problem of construction elevators, and the other is how to plug the elevator into the buildings. The third is about increasing the population, and the last is about the usable area for solar panels. Overall, the design ideas of the group are various and need some flexible spatial configuration, which will also change the social structure and bridge between old and new generations.

Some solutions were suggested regarding energy efficiency: Photovoltaics are less efficient than solar panels. The lack of technology is an issue to tackle here. Green walls could be another idea for the west side facades. Plants, like creepers, could be integrated into these facades.

4. Final Design Scheme and implementation plan

The final design and the implementation plan started from the neighbourhood scale and narrowed down to the building scale. The main idea of 'Bridge' aimed to connect near spaces that people use for walking as a recreational activity.

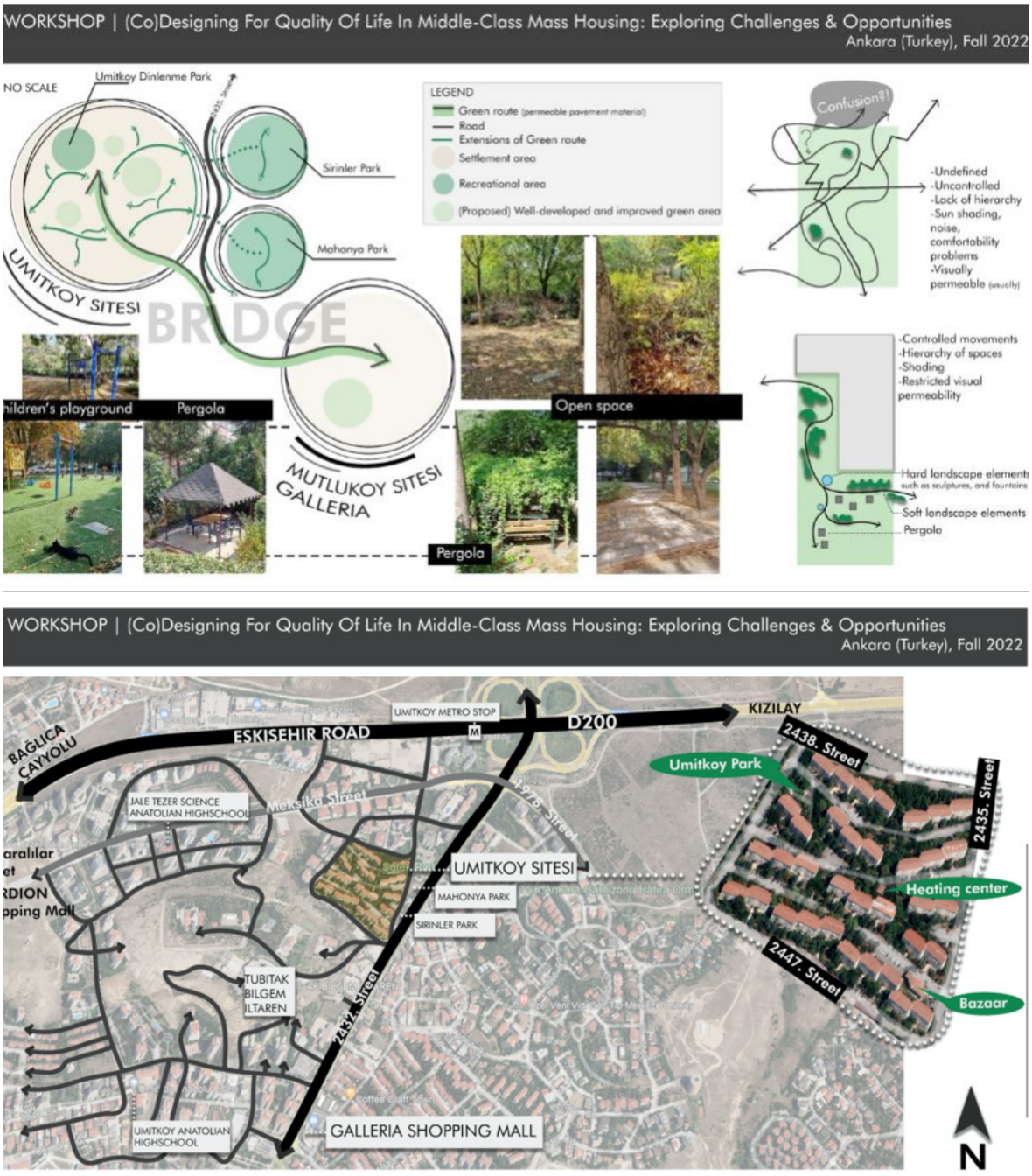


Figure 5.4. Connection with surrounding and location of the site

As a final outcome, we proposed a walking path with permeable surfaces.

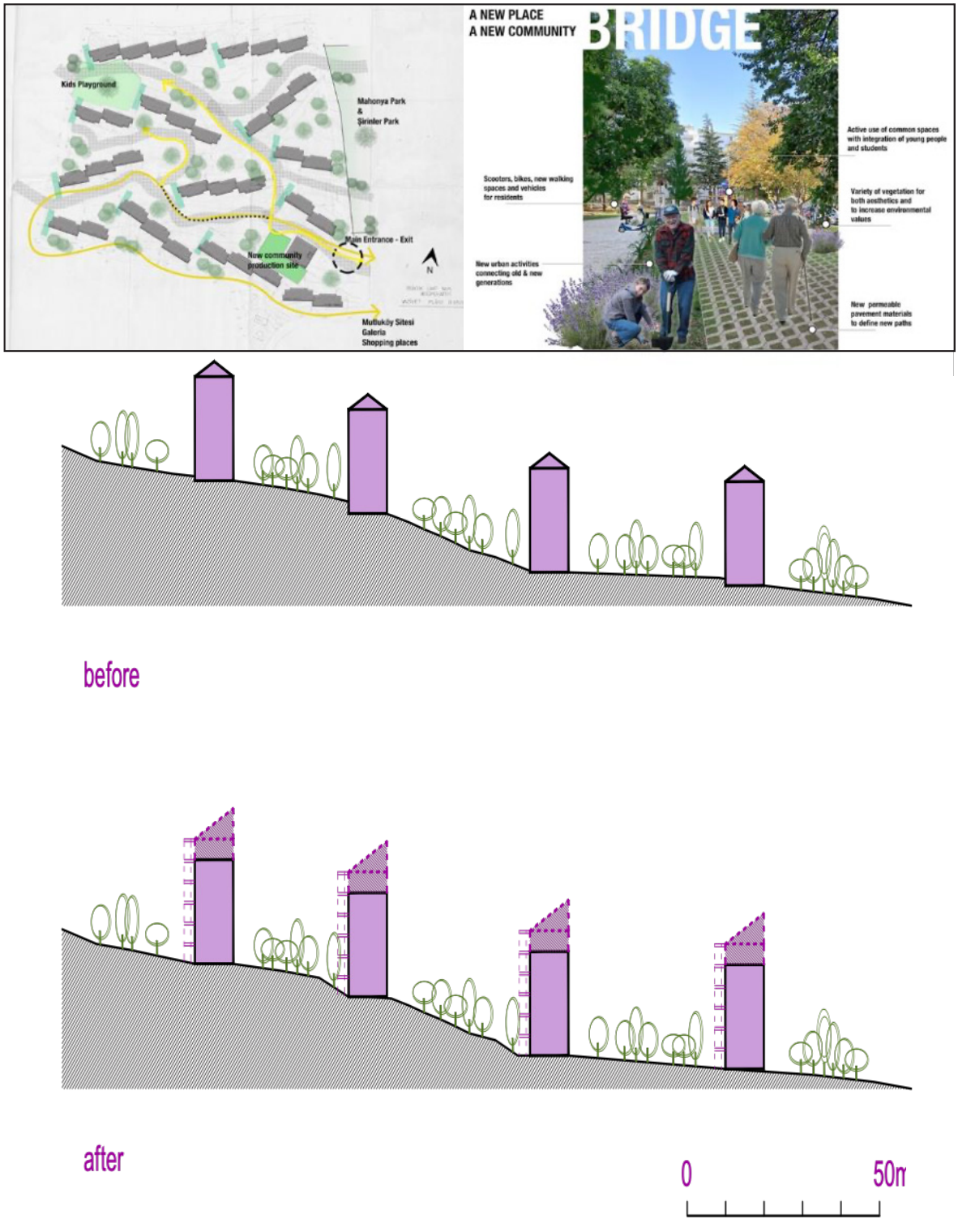


Figure 5.5. Bridge: Main structure and ideas

In general, all the interventions can be grouped under six operations which are different plug-ins in different scales:

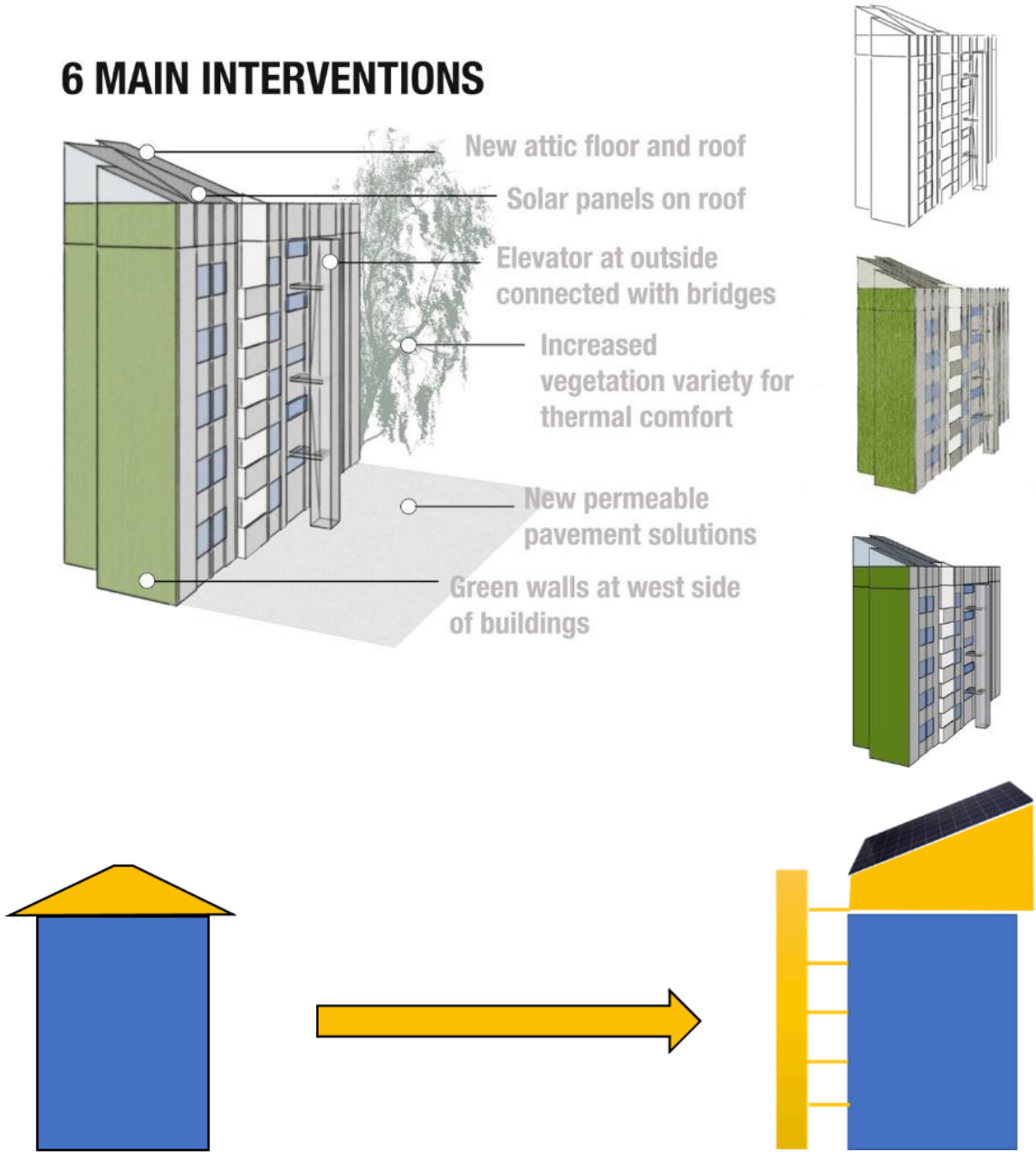


Figure 5.6. The proposed design of the lift and how it is connected to each floor of the building

To measure the different accessibility and connectivity of the proposal and the current structure, the group used the SpaceSyntax analysis, which showed that dividing a house into two units and bringing an outside elevator from the kitchen entrance can increase connectivity. There is a significant difference between the old and new versions of spaces, and each room increases its connectivity.

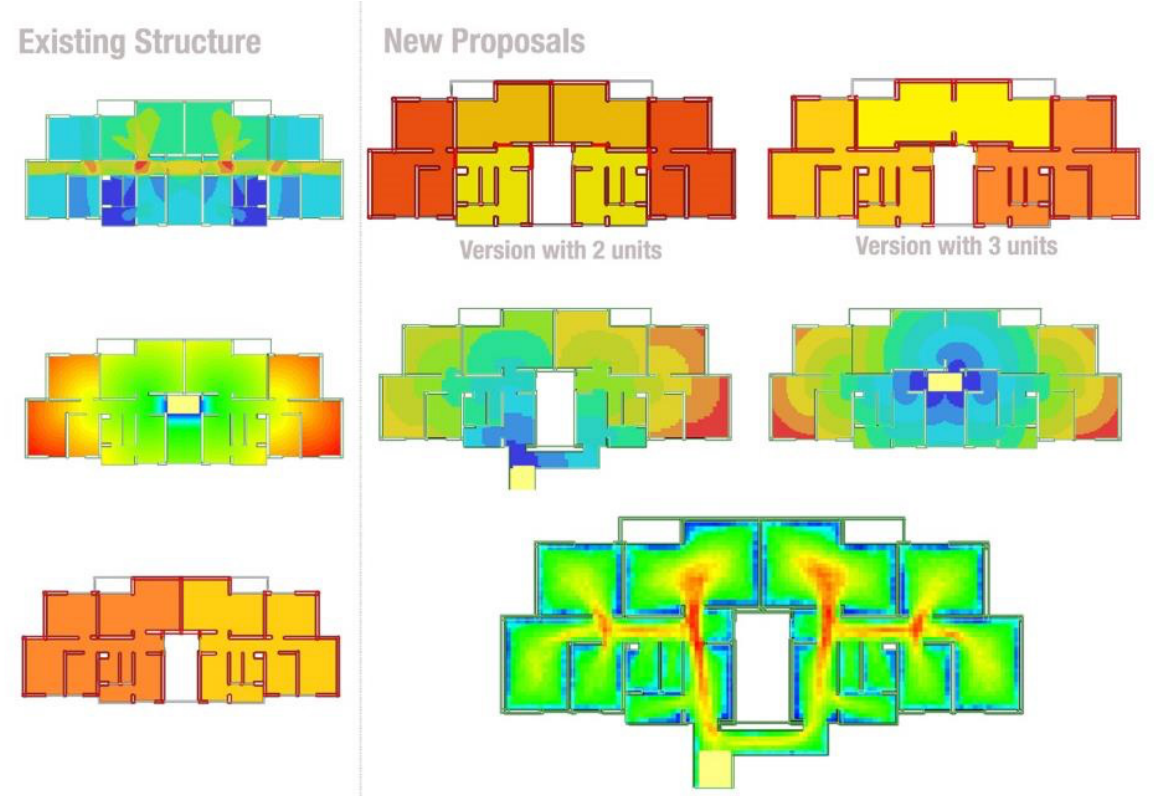


Figure 5.7. Space Syntax analysis on existing conditions and our proposal

At the final presentation, the group members introduced their design proposals to residents, and some ideas were discussed more in-depth. The project's feasibility became the residents' primary concern, which could be solved by using sustainable materials and engineering solutions.

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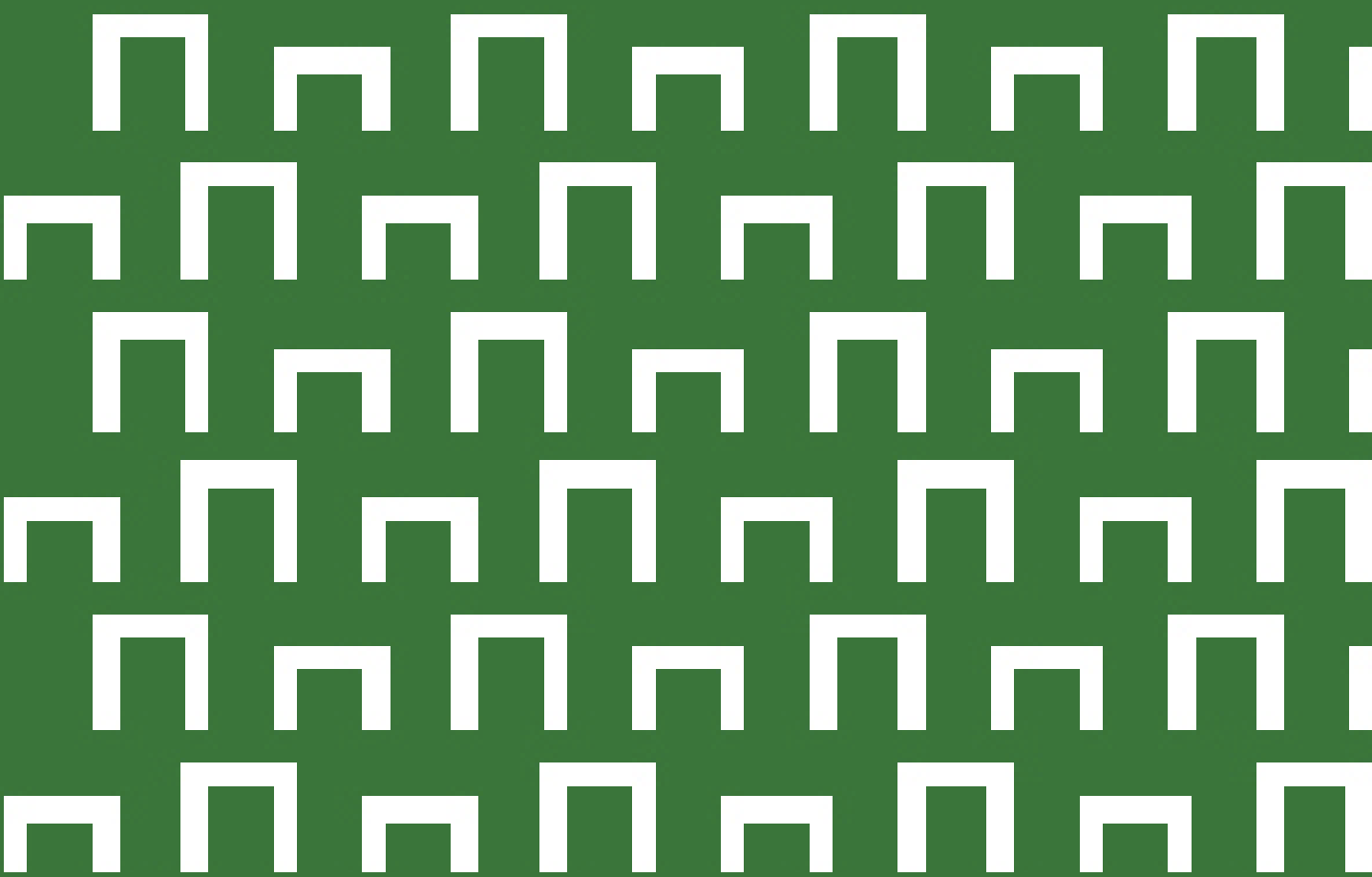

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