

Flexibility in Housing

Different notions of flexibility in mass housing

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Developer in Architect's office

A developer comes to the office and asks for a housing scheme proposal on a banal site in Ahmedabad.

- On a Banal Plot in Ahmedabad
- 24 hrs of time

Focus on the uniqueness and also the potential of

- Gaining profit
- Following regulations
- Maximising FSI etc...





Architect's team decides to introduce a research work they have been doing to see its potential.

Architect presenting ideas to the Developer

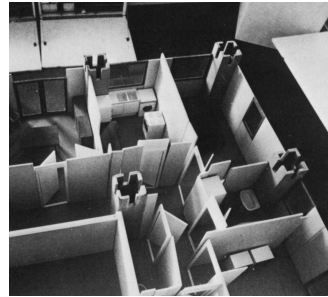
He presents 5 different ideas related to the concept of flexibility in mass housing:

- Soft Flexibility / Raw space
- Hard Flexibility
- Slack space
- Supports Theory - Structure and Infill
- Open Building

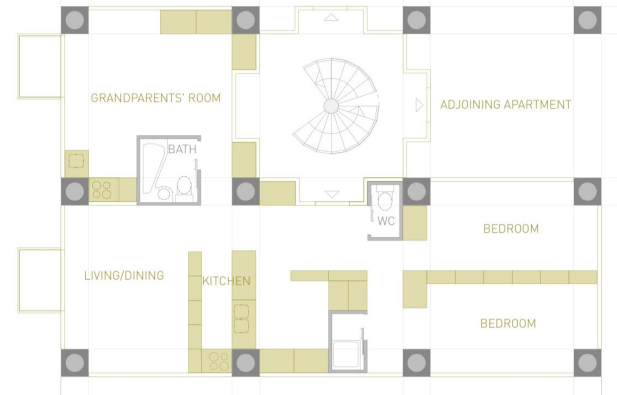


Soft Flexibility

- Indeterminate approach.
- Capability of different physical arrangements.
- Involvement of inhabitants in the design process.
- The service and served spaces could be arranged in various different ways.



Option 1

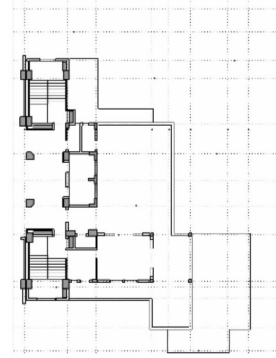
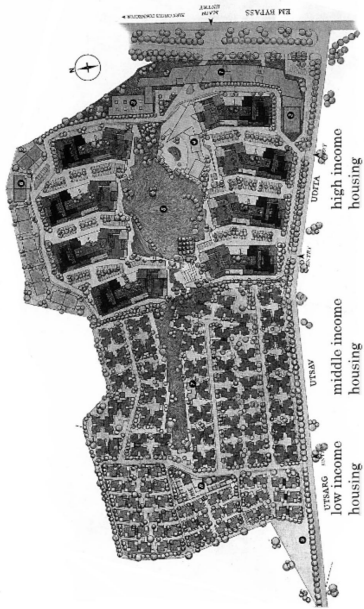


Option 2

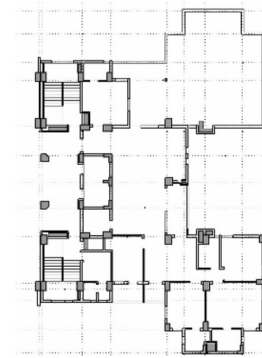
Les Marelles, France, 1975 by Bernard Kohn, Georges Maurios.

Hard Flexibility

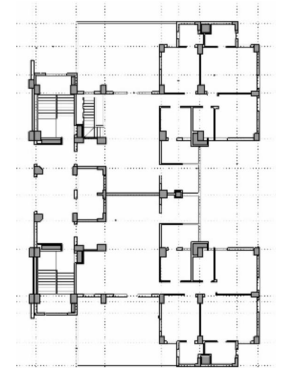
- Determinate approach.
- Curated options by the architect according to the family size and use case.
- Option to choose the floor and the layout they want to live in.



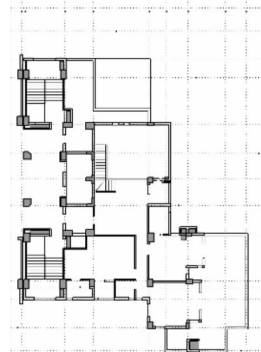
Option 1 - Common party lounge for residents



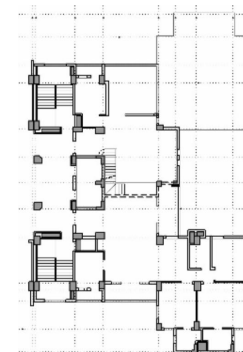
Option 2 - 3 bedroom flat with large terrace



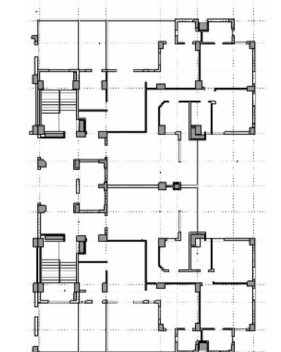
Option 3 - 1 identical 3 bedroom flats



Option 4 - Upper level of a duplex flat.



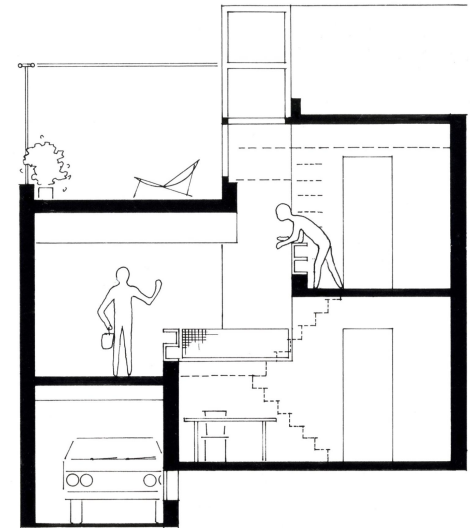
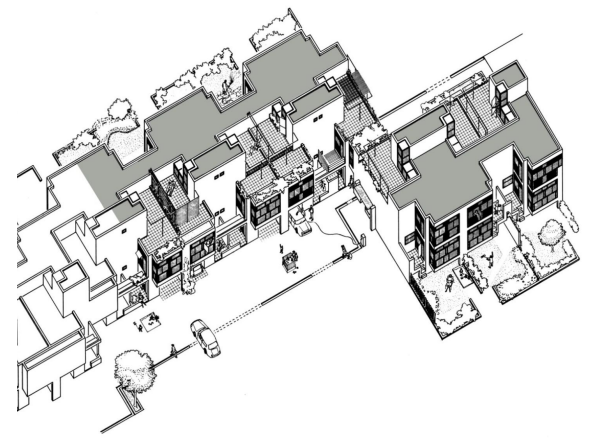
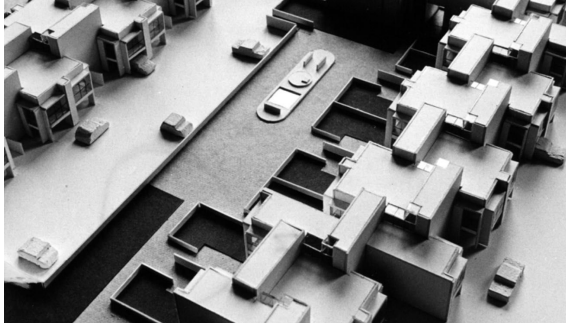
Option 5 - Duplex flat and 3 bedroom flat.



Option 6 - 4 single bedroom studio apartments.

Slack Space

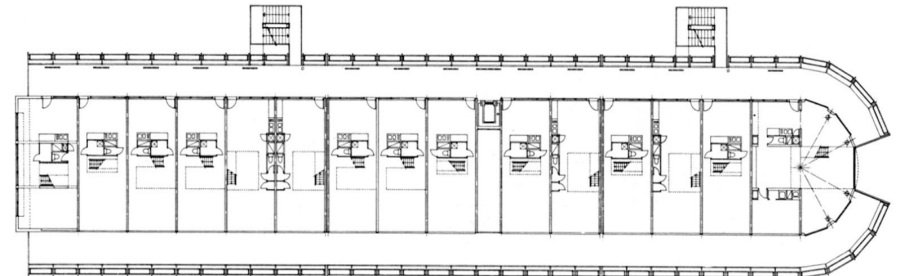
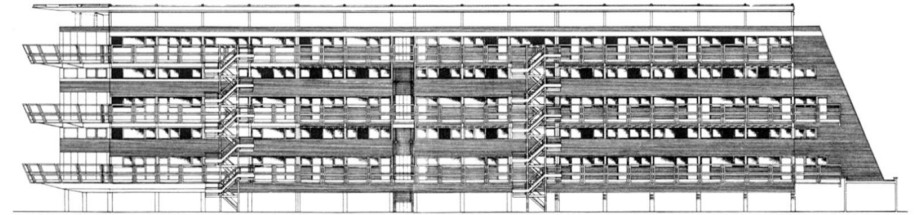
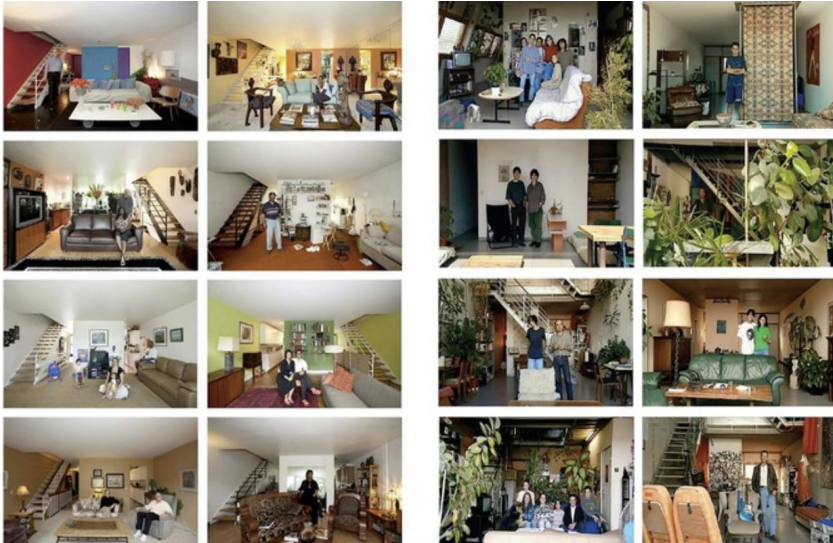
- Spaces for appropriation.
- Areas that are anticipatory of potential occupation.
- Could be either used for community activity or a private activity.



Diagoon houses, Delft by Herman Hertzberger.

Supports Theory - Structure and Infill

- Dwelling divided into two parts: Structure, Infill.
- More permanent is Structure, made in RCC.
- More flexible is Infill, made using panels.
- User's active involvement throughout the lifetime of the building.
- Community engagement alongside the individual control over spaces.

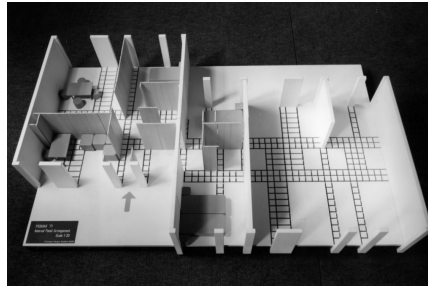
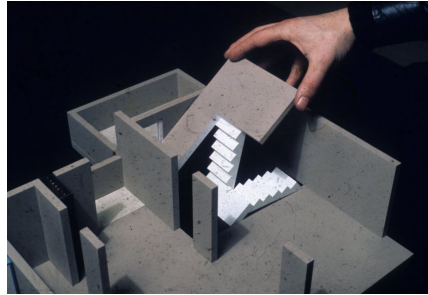
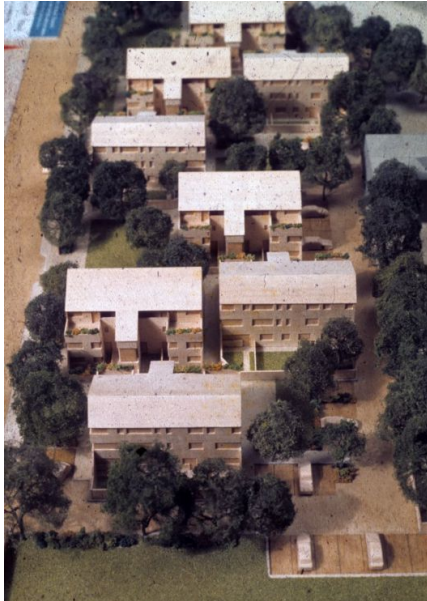


Nemausus Housing, France, 1985 by Jean Nouvel.

John Habraken's Perspective of Flexibility

Open Building Concept

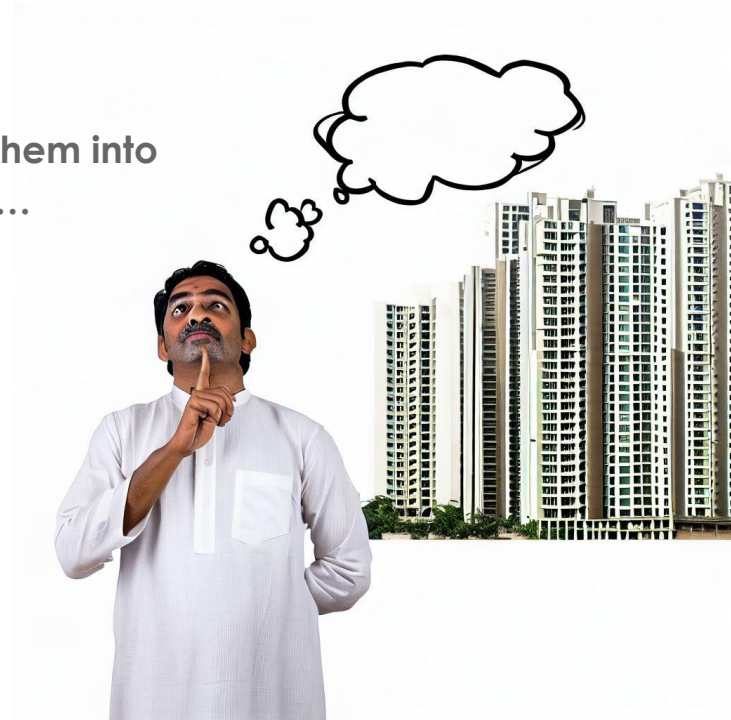
- Method that empowers residents to have spatial flexibility.
- Built environment as an ever-evolving product of an ongoing design process.
- Primarily based on Supports theory; Includes user involvement and collaborative design.



PSSHAK, London, by Nick Wilkinson and Nabeel Hamdi.
(Primary Supports Structure Housing Action Kit),

John Habraken's Perspective of Flexibility

Developer thinks about these different ideas and converts them into USP of the housing schemes to present to the clients...



Developer advertising the Ideas to the clients

He presents USP's of 5 different ideas related to the concept of flexibility in mass housing.



Choice (or) Freedom to / Concept	Soft Flexibility	Hard Flexibility	Supports Theory	Slack Space	Open Building
Relocate wet spaces / service spaces	✓	×	×	×	×
Change the room sizes	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Limited freedom in deciding the plan layout	×	✓	✓	✓	×
Full freedom in deciding the plan layout (room sizes and connections)	✓	×	×	×	✓
Easily movable / changeable partition walls	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Easily changeable plan layout even after occupying	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Occupy a space temporarily for an activity	×	×	×	✓	✓
User involvement	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Community involvement	✓	×	✓	×	✓

**Nuanced comments and queries
form the potential stakeholders...**



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Easily changeable plan layout even after occupying	✓	×	✓	×	✓
Occupy a space temporarily for an activity	×	×	×	✓	✓
User involvement	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Community involvement	✓	×	✓	×	✓

Developer realises that there is no one single option that works for all the users.

Developer goes back to the Architect to discuss the feedback he got and his thoughts about flexibility...



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Let's discuss...