

living around the

CORE VALUES

of a collaborative, democratic
housing association

core values

Participating is different from sharing

The aim for this document is to set down some basic, yet specific, values for living around the same staircases, pipes and walls. A document like this is usually developed through a long, participatory process.

While participation is an important factor in the idea of an association, it can also be excluding - participation is not for everyone¹. Not everyone is able to take interest in every little corner of a building block. However, sharing is different. While one can be passive in many participatory aspects, sharing is unavoidable. Even outside the housing association. We do not take ownership of most things we are around in our daily life.

Both participation and sharing should be celebrated in the association. But a great demand for participation should not become an excluding factor. There is a risk that a few inhabitants might not even read a protocol like this - for sure, the kids will not read it. For this reason, the mere informal parts of sharing and participation should be a cornerstone in the social life of the association.

Diversity

Both the building as well as this protocol are developed to approach a high degree of diversity within the association and living situation. The success criteria for the association is not only to attain a certain level of diversity, But also for this diverse community to live together.

One way of attaining diversity is to suggest difference in the apartment sizes. One person, living alone, most likely does not need as many square meters as a family of four. Flexibility and space for negotiation is contained around the otherwise rigid system of installation cores. As a starting point, each apartment consists of a number of units, one to four units. The units are defined by two cores - heavy walls containing technical installations. One for a kitchen and one for a bathroom. If needed an apartment can push the boundaries of the unit.

The interior facade facing the common gallerie spaces is another space for negotiation. Walls, entrances and windows can be pushed out from the facade to extend the apartments. The generous gallery space is not only intended for circulation. A pushed out entrance or facade will create smaller spaces within the gallery to mark soft thresholds between apartments and common spaces. This break away from strict repetition creates a spatial differentiation in the shared spaces aswell as the apartments. The private spaces break up the otherwise repetitive shared galleries.

Shared spaces, private apartments

We should learn to live more on staircases. But how?² Well, first of all the staircases should invite us in to live on them. As it is today, very few staircases do that. A staircase can be a great place for hanging out if it is generous enough. Next we should move parts of our everyday life out on the staircase. As we share the staircase, the parts of our everyday we share should be shared on the staircase. The passing through landings on the staircases will then be a passing through rooms in which we live. We might even start to use different staircases than the ones closest to our individual flats - because we have errands there, or maybe even just because we find them more appealing.

Values and functions of a collaborative, democratic housing association on Enghavevej 76

May 2022

¹ 'Andreas Rumpfhuber: Rethink Public Housing' published on YouTube September 10, 2018, 01:18:00

² Perec, George. Species of Spaces and Other Pieces, pg. 38



Clusters and the dissolution of clusters

When living in small apartments, a close relation with the gallery and staircases become important. It is inevitable that the gallery spaces just outside our apartment(s) becomes a closer relation than the one(s) two floors up and three staircases away. Some might even start taking an amount of ownership of the part of the gallery just outside their front door - this should of course be challenged.

By giving the different landings on the staircases different functions concerning the everyday life, we would have to circulate around most of the building, and not just see our closest staircases and galleries. Ideally every tenant circulates around each core at least once a month. By doing so we avoid each gallery room becoming clusters which are only welcoming the tenants who lives by that specific gallery. Passing from one gallery to another becomes a way of sharing the spaces meant to be shared.

Deliberate but informal

We should move towards making deliberate, informal encounters around the cores. While the formal plans we make to spend time together rarely lives up to our expectations, these coincidental encounters become a central part of our otherwise complex everyday lives.

Shoes

If the staircases become our living rooms, then where do we put our shoes? Do we take them off before we approach our new living room? Do we just keep them on in our homes, as they do in some countries? We could, through a democratic vote, make an official house rule on where to put the shoes. The outcome of such a vote would then be written in this exact document under the subheadline "Shoes". We could even have designated shoe shelves, that tells us where to put our shoes. Maybe this is going too far.

We could just attain a *shoe anarchy* instead. Where everyone just keeps their shoes on and take their shoes off whenever they would like to, This might cause a certain degree of passive aggression within the association, since we might get annoyed with each other, but won't be able to justify our aggression through a protocol. Maybe we should just make a silent agreement and see what happens.

Writing on our walls

It was always the plan to share a calendar. If used well, a calendar can be a great tool for planning in collaboration. The staircases would then be an obvious place to put such calendars. Maybe this way of communicating on walls through text could be extended. Maybe we could just start writing on our walls.¹

¹ Perec, George. Species of Spaces and Other Pieces, pg. 39 (again)

core functions

Six cores in total. Four is in the larger building, two in the smaller one. Three apartment floors in the larger building and two in the smaller one makes sixteen landings within the cores.

$four * three + two * two = sixteen$

Three laundry rooms. To do laundry, wait for laundry to be done, hang laundry up to dry, dry laundry in a dryer, wait for laundry to dry. A place to chat with neighbours while waiting for laundry to be done or dry.

Three common kitchens. To cook food with neighbours. To share it with them, while making people passing through envious, while saying "bon appetit!".

Two rooms with a large TV, or maybe even a projector. A place to look at a screen together with neighbours.

Six rooms for work that require silence during the daytime. A shared office for inhabitants to read, work or do homeworks together. In the evening all the reading and working might burst out into conversation.

One room that tends to get very messy. A sort of workshop where stains on the walls and floor are acceptable.

One informal daycare. A place for parents to play with their children. For children to play with other children. For parents to leave their children with other parents.

gallery functions

The gallery is the most immediate shared space in the building. One can not, and should not, be able to access their home without passing through a gallery. The gallery has no function as such. Well, of course they provide circulation. Inhabitation of the gallery is very likely to happen. The fact that one private facade is pushed back from the perimeter of the building should encourage us to seek out on the gallery. To move our furniture out there. So that other people as ourselves can sit on them, and maybe even move them around.

courtyard functions

The courtyard is not only shared between us and each other. The fact that most parts of our ground floor is rent out for commercial purposes means that it is actually not the housing association who has the closest encounter with the courtyard. It is likely most some cafe or restaurant start serving take-away for the costumers to eat out in the courtyard. Hopefully we can take advantage of our growing experience on sharing and living around each other when the association really meets the city.



