In search of a collective form

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Thesis Project - Fall 2012

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"Genom att öppna upp sin loggbok för allmän bekvämlighet har Maja Knochenhauer i sitt examensarbete "In Search of a Collective Form" blytats en kritisk och reflekterande process, som visserligen inte mynnar ut i ett slutligt förslag, men som genom en febril produktion finner desto mer mening på vägen. Arbetet är väl rotat i arkitekturteorins mylla, där det hittar näring i Maki och Allen och förgrenar sig från abstrakt till konkret. Knochenhauer korsar, ympar och gallrar medvetet, och visar därmed prova på självständighet och en metod som kommer att bära frukt utanför skolans murar."

Jonas Elding
Elding Oscarson, Stockholm

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Head of Institute of Urbanism and Landscape, AHO
Background

Last fall I attended the course “Emergent Urbanities” at KTH, and wrote an essay about conditions and limits that define “urbanity”. During the course I read Paul Virilio’s essay “The overexposed City” where he states that telecommunication - immaterial networks, (that today might be translated to “Internet”) are violating the meaning of built spaces in the city. Virilio states a clear disbelief in the built spaces in the city and foresees a quite dystopian future with a dissolved urbanity and deprived people in “suburbs of time”.

Another text about similar issues is the essay by William J. Mitchell from 2003; “Boundaries/Network”. Mitchell claims that our notion of home loses more and more geographical importance, and gradually transforms into consisting of social relations. He also elaborates on the distinction between the material and immaterial as two opposite conditions - where networks (immaterial) could not exist without the boundaries (material). In the essay he stresses that the material divides and the networks connect.

I agree with Mitchell that our notion of “home” is changing. Nevertheless our lives take place in a physical reality that affect us every minute. I do not agree with Mitchell that the traditional domain of architecture, the material, divides. I’m sure that spaces have strong abilities to connect, in many different ways.
Today. The strongest emotions so far. We turned off the main road through Cordes
junction, onto a dusty desert road that made the bus driver swear. We got off and
approached a village we knew by the name Arcosanti. Wrapped concrete structures
cling on to a rocky edge of a valley. Bells of bronze were ringing in the wind. A
diagnostic view intensified by the red sun. Where were we supposed to go?

- To the dorms, said someone. Paths, stairs, terraces, levels. Domes, arcs, circles.
Spaces in the earth. Concrete, concrete, concrete. And the desert views. New
unfamiliar spaces, almost sacred, still human. It felt usual. It felt abandoned. Small
sounds from a piano. Why was I so moved? Intoxicated by architecture? By the
evening sun? By the desert? Students in perplexity, cameras in our hands. We walked
into a lit up dining hall. A concrete structure in golden glory when hit by that red
sunlight. A tall squared room with large circular openings that allowed our gaze to
drift out. Allowed the desert to come inside. There we sat around lit up tables. Had
organic food among the indwellers. Amazed and delighted. Dusk was falling fast. I
went exploring in the dark. A flashlight and whiskey in my pocket. Climbed some
stairs up onto the huge concrete arcs. There were the others. An euphoric moment
Laying on our backs on the top of an arc in the night. Whiskey, cigarettes, beef
jerky and the neverending milky way. I told Emil a native American story about
seven little sisters that eventually became stars. Life is beautiful.

Eventually it was colder and we returned to the dining hall. Had raspberry tea,
mint tea and beer. Quite a stir when a black widow was found behind a trash
bin. The indwellers insisted in not killing it, since it doesn’t go hunting but stays in
the web... Help. We sat in a corner, singing and playing guitar for hours. Awaited
Eva’s birthday. Guo, Anders, Aleksander, Eva, Marco and me. When the clock
struck twelve we went up on the highest roof, with wine and cigarettes, whispering
a birthday song, howling to the moon. The coyote answered!

My immediate passion for Arcosanti still puzzles me. It was strong. Not logical.
There we were, set aside from the world for a while. I believe the affection
arose by us being there, right in that moment, with our common experience
in the group. Our tentative steps at first, followed by curious voices. A slow
accustomedization to the place. In the end habituating a roof that no one else
showed interest in. A part of a larger structure that we shared with people we’d
never met before. Spaces inseparable from one another and the surrounding
grounds. Giving an impression of evolving of its own through natural growth.
Spontaneously and unplanned. An infrastructure, physically appropriating as
little of the earth as possible, still claiming the whole valley in the attempt.
One Project - Three Parts

My thesis is of an investigative character, and the focus has not been to end up with a result that is a building, but rather a collected material from an ongoing discussion on collective form, through the process of sketching on a building. I see the whole project as divided into three different parts, that are equally important.

Theory

The theoretical context has its basis in theory that tries move away from the singular. I have particularly studied Fumihiko Maki’s “Investigations of Collective Form” and parts of Stan Allen’s writings on “Field Conditions”, and these texts have been generators for the project. Theory also regards texts and discussion that I have assimilated during the work, as well as my own theoretical reflections. Reading, writing and discussing are essential parts of the project and has continuously affected the work.

House

I have chosen to focus on, and challenge, our notion of privacy and dwelling, and investigate in how we can live more collectively in our daily lives. I have sketched intuitively in physical models, and later on tried to push these free studies into a more complete building. The context is Scandinavia today, and I have taken advantage of a site in Oslo to exemplify a situation while developing the house.

Process

Parallel to theorizing and sketching I have kept a journal documenting the process. After finishing a model or sketch I have tried to evaluate it by discussing and writing about it, and stating how to move on from there. I never intended to stop the process at a certain date, but to continue the investigation as long as I could. This is once again another, quite zoomed, context, that has to do with the architectural profession and how we can work, produce knowledge and investigate in different societal issues.

Parts from the journal, that have been significant for the development of the house, are presented in this book.
A residential building

My aim has been to develop a residential structure/building that are to be inhabited by people who will claim it as their home. A structure where people are invited to contribute, participate and interact with one another, but still with the freedom to retreat into their own personal spheres again. The spheres that today might have grown too large, too isolated and too geographically independent (where our need of social interaction is satisfied in front of screens).

Can I carry the notion of group form into action? Can this generate a possible new way of dwelling today, together?

I make a distinction between “collective” as a social construction and collective form. My aim is to search for a collective form, to create a building or rather groups of buildings / quasi buildings, that have reasons to be together. My wish is to challenge the relation between privacy and sharing, and search for a collective form where the social construction of collectivity hopefully can occur.

“In an age in which people are communicating through various medias in non-physical spaces, it is the architects responsibility to make actual physical spaces for people to meet in real life.”

Kazuyo Sejima, Venice 2010
Introduction to Collective Form - Maki

Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki wrote in the 60s that we had to reexamine the theory and vocabulary of architecture and single buildings, and instead search for a collective form. He distinguishes three different approaches in achieving that:

1) Compositional approach (classical)
2) Structural approach (megastructures)
3) Group form (historical vernacular)
Compositional form

Here there are individually tailored buildings, that are composed on a two-dimensional plane. This approach, is commonly accepted and classical, and a natural extension of the architectural approach. Maki claims that this is a static way of working with collective form, where the act of making a composition itself has a tendency to complete a formal statement.
Megastructure

The megastructure instead is one large frame, that contains all the functions of a city, or part of a city. This is an example from 1960, Kenzo Tange’s proposal for how Tokyo could expand into Tokyo Bay.

The idea is that diverse functions can be concentrated in one place and benefit from each other, like an artificial landscape, made possible by technology. The concept of megastructures grew popular in the 60s and was popularized by avant-garde architectural groups such as Archigram or the metabolists in Japan.

Maki claims that the ideal megastructure is a kind of master form that is not static, that has several independent systems, that is non-hierarchical, but still can maintain an identity and persistence in the long run.
Group Form

Maki claims that the generative elements of group form often are the essence of collectivity; a unifying force, functionally, socially and spatially. Group form can be found in historical towns like medieval cities, greek towns and villages in north Africa. Determining factors of group forms are:

- Consistent use of basic materials and construction methods, as well as spontaneous and minor variations.
- Wise and often dramatic use of geography and topography
- Human scale preserved throughout the town
- Sequential development of basic elements such as dwellings, open spaces between houses, repetative use of visual elements such as walls, gates, towers, open water etc.

Igna Village, Japan
El Ateuf, M’Zab, Algeria
Linking operations / Linkage in Collective Form

Group form is a sequential development without apparent beginning or end, distinct from the "closed" compositional forms.

Maki states that linking and disclosing linkage are integral activities in making collective form. "Vernacular unit and link evolve together and appear in the end as a perfectly coordinated physical entity; a village or town." He elaborates on different linking operations (see diagram to the right) and writes that each type may be done physically (as a bridge) or by implication (as a balanced composition of spaces).
01. From object to field.

Field conditions move from the one towards the many, from individuals to collections, from objects to fields. […] To generalize, a field condition could be any formal or spatial matrix capable of unifying diverse elements while respecting the identity of each. Field configurations are loosely bound aggregates characterized by porosity and local interconnectivity. Overall shape and extent are highly fluid and less important than the internal relationships of parts which determine the behavior of the field. Field conditions are bottom-up phenomena, defined not by overarching geometrical schemas but by intricate local connections. Interval, repetition and seriality are key concepts. Form matters, but not so much the forms of things as the forms between things.
Collectivity as a social awareness

I believe that collectivity as a social awareness, can be programmed into almost any building, like a function, where the collective lifestyle is a deliberate wish from the inhabitants. “We decide to live here and to share certain necessities”.

The images show a few modernistic examples of collective houses in Sweden, France and Russia. If we take out the event of “dwelling” from these structures, the spaces inside are quite isolated from each other, and laid out according to a strong hierarchical order, with clear borders between mine, ours and yours. They are therefore not very collective in their form according to me, but collective in their programming / functions / social awareness.

So if these collective houses are not examples of collective form. What is?
I will present a few reference projects, existing buildings or groups of buildings that I consider being examples of collective forms in different ways.

First a few historical villages/buildings - vernacular collective forms, what Maki calls "group forms". Then some public buildings that I consider being not just programmed to be public, but also spatially collective. The last examples are a few residential buildings, that are maybe the most important references for my investigation in this project.
Historical villages / buildings

Vernacular group forms like these are not planned by one person, but built by many people over time. That is a fundamental condition in the making of group form (as Maki describes it), and hard to compare to the forces that are present when an architect plans/develops/designs a building or group of buildings.

Anyhow, I think these examples can be of great interest. Partly for the physical forms and development of units and links. But also in the temporal aspect, in the challenge there is in finding ways for architects and others to program space over time.
Public buildings

These are three buildings that I have visited during recent years. As public buildings they are of course programmed to be collective, but I also consider them collective in their form. They are open, non directional and houses many people at the same time. They offer a free movement for the visitor and gives a feeling that they almost can be added onto, like something that grows.

The borders between different functions are diffuse, and they invite for many types of activities to take place, and welcomes different types of habitation.

Accidentally they are all pillar structures and lack massive walls. Though, I do not think that is a necessity for collective form, especially not for a residential programme.
Residential buildings - Hunstad Code

The first residential example, Hunstad Code, is a proposal for an artist village in southern Sweden. It is 17 small huts that are laid out as an anachronistic field, and according to Abraham the challenge was to create the greatest possible tension between the units that are roughly similar. They searched for functional and architectural homogeneity, and added some simple programs that are service for all.
Residential buildings - Moriyama House

The second residential example, Moriyama House in Tokyo, is a residence where each room is an own building. In this house, the owner is given the freedom to switch among the series of living and dining rooms or use several rooms at a time according to the season or other circumstances. The rest he rents out. In between the buildings one finds small gardens and pathways that are open to the street. The project blurs the boundaries between what we perceive as private and public property.
Residential buildings - Schindler House

My last reference is Schindler house in Los Angeles, built 1922. The residence was meant to be a cooperative living and working space for two young families. Schindler was inspired by camp sites, and each room in the house represents a variation of the following conditions: a protected back, an open front, a fireplace and a roof. The rooms are continuously interlocked and create a sequence of spaces where indoor meets outdoor, and private meets shared.

I consider all these projects very relevant for my search.
EXTRACTS FROM THE
PROJECT JOURNAL
“The dissolution of the singular”

8 isolated entities, rectangular rooms, that lose one corner each. The open corner leaves a shared space, lower down, binding all the entities together. A social plane, cutting through the structure. Leaving no closed rooms behind.

This is an attempt to break up isolated entities. To open up. To create fragile boundaries between mine and yours. I want the structure to invite for a collective habitation. To provide spaces that can be claimed by people. Some spaces by just one, or a few, and other spaces by many. I want the inhabitants to feel a closeness to one another. To sense when someone else is there. A sound behind a wall. A movement around a corner. Steps passing by the terrace.
“Shared plateaus”

The rectangular rooms are dissolving. The floors on the same levels unite. The cut off corners are now a social continuous platform, with a logic of its own. The entities from before become another continuous plateau, their individual shapes weaken. Wall fragments are penetrating the plateau, still keeping the original rooms somewhat apart.

I see it as four different types of spaces that I am working with. Hopefully the tension and transition between them will generate a field for the collective to grow. Outside the structure is the unknown, in my case the city. When the structure is grounded it will meet the complex and changing conditions of the city, unique for the specific place where the structure lands. The outer “leftover” areas of the structure I call joint space, a transitional space, open, common and unpredictable. This is a space for meetings, where the dwellers meet the city and the city meets the dwellers. From the joint space you can enter into the social space of the structure. I consider this to be the link and mediator inside the structure. No one owns it individually. It is collecting the dwellers in different ways, linking, leading, and offering a communication to and between the personal spaces.
“Individual Nests”

Shrinking “Personal Space” to a minimum. The boxes are small and have one opening. Inside you have full control of the space, but you lose control of the surroundings. You are safe, but alone. The “individual nests” create new zones in the social platform. They block views, they create spaces that are more or less visible, reachable, open, approachable, accessible. Not only providing personal shelters, but also creating a pulse and spatial hierarchy in the social platform.

Introducing the ramp intuitively. New spaces appear under it. It falls down towards some spaces, and rises above some other. The role as a divider becomes stronger.
“Flows through a social field”

Free movement, directionless and open. There are no given way to choose, no certain path to follow. The space leads everywhere and nowhere. Sometimes there are narrow passages, sometimes they grow. Elevated parts are like pauses in the field, here the movement changes, slows down.

Model A: A field with different levels. The structure meets the city distinctively. Inside and outside is obvious.

Model B: A field with different levels. The structure is outstretched towards the city. The borders are not linear.

Model C: One floor and elevated plateaus. The plateaus are something else. The structure meets the city distinctively. Inside and outside is obvious.

Model D: One floor and elevated plateaus. The plateaus are something else. The structure is outstretched towards the city. The borders are not linear.

Model D has something that I like.
“Between the cut corners”

Two floors are added to the ground floor. For each floor, one more corner is cut off – the rooms become more and more dissolved the further up in the structure. More open for weather, views and sounds. More transparent, more receiving, more fragile, more temporary, more changeable. More open for nature and the city. More private?

Between the rooms is something. Who owns it? What flows there? What does it look like? How does it feel to be there? Can I even be there?
October 4th

A. Continuous floor.       B. Cornercut floor.        C. Framing floor.         D. Leaking Floor

Plans of model #5. Each plan is here understood separately. It becomes more and more dissolved. Here I try to elaborate on the floor / platform. In alternative A there is just one level inside and outside the structure. The walls generate the spaces. In alternative B the interior floor of the units are elevated from the spaces in-between. The elevated floors are cut where the walls stops. Intensifying the importance of the walls and strengthens the borders between inside and outside. In alternative C there are rectangular elevated floors that indicate a rectangular space, which is partly surrounded by walls. Alternative D is similar the floor is subordinated the walls, like it is leaking out of a shell.

October 4th


Plans of model #5. Here the plans are understood together. The hatched areas indicate outdoor space. The idea is that there is a social platform on street level. Each unit will be offered a vertical communication upwards, to plan 1 and 2. The further up you go the less social the spaces will be (due to less links/communication) yet more fragile and exposed. Drawing E-G investigates different shapes of floors and roofs. Drawing H is different. Here the walls on plan 1 is inverted from street level, the open corner is mirrored and creates a visual communication with the city, and a more closed relation to the shared outdoor in-between-space in the building. Plan 2 is also different, more closed than in other alternatives. I must move on to section.
24 units. 8 boxes in three layers. Like small towers standing close to each other. What does a corner of a box perform? It defines space distinctively. Two walls meet, and strengthen the direction of the other wall. They also close a room. Define inside and outside. You can be inside or outside that room. The act of removal performs in two manners. It performs inwards and outwards. Inwards, directly on the room that is affected. The room that is opened up. From inside that room you are now connected to the outside. It also performs outwards, being outside the box. Invites you in. Exposes what is inside. Creating in-between spaces that has vaguer boundaries. I find the two manners equally important. By one act of removal, a new outside space is created, with a strong but unarticulated relationship to the inside of the box. By assembling boxes beside and on top of each other, interstitial spaces are created between the units.

“The removal of corners towards a new collective.”
“Private + Shared = Collective?”


LIGHT: How to take light down to the bottom? Or in from the sides? Or both?
MATERIAL: Different on inside and outside? Would change the play between mine and yours, but make it more obvious... Less complex?

Private/Inner structure: A cross. Can hold functions? Works spatially, internally. Inside each unit. Private. Divides the unit into more or less exposed parts.

LIGHT: The cross? How? Dimensions? All the way up to the roof? All the way down?
MOVEMENT: Doors / holes in it? Direction? Must it be a cross? Can it be a circle?
“Removing one corner of a box”

Investigation in removing one corner of a box. The boxes are independent. Common for all examples are that the openings should be connected to the floor – able to step inside. And there are only straight cuts. The intention is more to find a certain relationship between many boxes, than to study the space inside, and to find a spatial and constructive order to combine many units together.

I evaluated the variants related to certain factors:
- Works differently in plan and section
- Works differently towards roof and floor
- Cuts the slabs (roof and floor)
- Opening from floor to roof
- Extrovert (folds out from the box)
- Elevated
- Stable
- Diagonal cuts
"Removing one to eight corners of a box"

Discussion: After the evaluation I chose a few alternatives from yesterday to push further. Tried to remove 2, 4 and 8 corners. The boxes are dissolving and become something else. Can they build the interstitial space that I am searching for? And what is left inside? Is there even an inside? I want to draw plans and sections as a tool to combine them in different manners.
“Overlapping structures”

The corners of the units open up horizontally and vertically. New relationships are created between floors and levels. The walls are flipped sideways, up and down, creating new borders. The boxes become active outside themselves. The rooms are empty, unprogrammed and contain no specific functions, yet. They welcome a free habitation.

Superior systems are added. Chimneys, stairs, ramps, ladders. They contain heat, water, communication possibilities. Holding the structure together. Connecting the boxes and levels, providing water and heat. Serving and stabilizing.
House #1

A three floor structure composed by three different elements; the cores, the stairs and the containers.
- The **containers** are squared rooms, non-programmed, inviting for all kind of activities. They are initially squared but the further up you move, the more open they become as the corner walls / floors are removed. Some walls have other kind of openings/windows in an axis from the area between core and stairs, creating long sight lines through the different containers/apartments.
- The **cores** are standing free, penetrating the containers vertically. The cores serve the containers with water and chimney and all the warm and wet functions can connect to it. On the ground floor there is a shower in the bottom of a shaft reaching to the top, letting the light in from above. There is also one little bathroom with a toilet on each floor. On the ground floor kitchen functions and a heat source (open stove?) is connected to the outside of the core.
- The **stairs** go diagonally between the containers, creating apartments that reach up and sideways, and that are intertwined with one another. The stairs are also lit from above and cast lights down into the containers. The stairs are isolated and private, and only work internally in the containers.
November 12th
Second floor

House #1 on site
November 12th
“Introducing shared functions”

To keep the functions to a minimum in the containers will make them more open for inhabitation by various people/activities. Instead some common programs can be offered to the inhabitants. By giving up some of their private necessities, they win something greater that they share with others.

The idea is to offer collective functions that are dug down into the bottom floor slab, following the principle about the shift in privacy in section. The further down in the structure - the more collective/shared space. Each function (i.e. large kitchen, common bathroom, laundry room etc) can be differend. “I can have a shared kitchen in my basement, you can have the bike storage.”
House #2

A three floor structure composed by three different elements; the platform, the cores, and the containers. The vertical communication is not developed in this sketch.

In the platform, there are sunken rooms. These rooms can hold different common functions and the cores of the towers are grounded here. This will give each household a common function in the basement. The rooms in the platform can be pushed differently deep depending on public and spatial desire for the specific function, and desired floor levels of the tower. The containers are free from the heights of the neighbouring containers and create diagonal visual relationships between them.

The containers are still squared rooms, non-programmed, inviting for all kind of activities. The further up you move, the more open they become as the corner are removed. They have no additional windows in this sketch.

The cores are the same as earlier.
House #3

A three floor structure composed by four different main elements; the platforms, the containers, the private units and the common functions.

The platforms are the collective base that offer a free movement in many directions, and accessibility to all containers. The platform is penetrated by a light shaft that brings light into the middle of the structure as well as holds two stairwells.

The containers are similar to earlier but the cores are now exchanged to a small functional wall only present in the ground floor. They then become more open and the diagonal see-throughs are back. They are more open the further up you move.

The private units are new. Each person has one movable unit. It is 1x2 m and can hold a bed, storage, working space or whatever one prefers. It can be lifted between the floors with a certain crane in the light shaft. The units can also work as dividers and create rooms in the rooms.

The common functions are distributed in corners on all floors, creating horizontal and vertical flows of people.
House #4

An attempt to question the group form and start with the whole instead of the small parts. The total perimeter of the volume is similar to previous sketches. But here the volume came first, and I tried to divide it into smaller parts with a variation. This was a quite quick attempt to “kill some darlings” and learn how to move on.
House #5

A three floor structure composed by four different main elements; the containers, the collectors (platforms/stairs), the common functions, the private functions.

There are four types of containers, with different size and openings. They are distributed in groups on the different floors. The openings are centralized in the groups, creating “households” that have three or four boxes facing eachother. There are still passages that other people can pass through. This sketch has nine households in total.

The collectors are platforms and stairs that are added after the boxes. Like a glue that binds them together where a wish for circulation is present.

The common functions are localized in three compact volumes inserted into the structure. One communicational volume (elevator & stairs). One wet volume (bath, kitchen, laundry, green house) and one dry volume (storage, library/office).

The private functions are small bathrooms and kitchens inserted into each group of containers (households) and. Not fully developed yet.
Comparative presentation of

HOUSE # 1 - 5
Circulation - Water - Sightlines

The ground is the public foundation. The shared platform from which the buildings rise. In groups of four they create intimate spaces in between them, where the entrances of the households are directed towards each other.

In each household there are three containers. One on each floor. Staircases connect them diagonally upwards, offering a circulation as you ascend. What may look like four towers are rather four intertwined sequences of rooms. The loops are directed in two ways, meaning that your neighbours change for each room you dwell in. On the other side of the wall, under the floor, above the roof, or across the courtyard. From each room there will be different relations to the neighbours.

You are active in a large part of the building. You can dwell in rooms and on terraces in north and south, east and west.

Openings penetrate the long walls in axis parallel to the cores. These axis are consistent through the whole structure, and from the right position you can look through and out of many rooms at once.

The central cores penetrate the building vertically, hence they are shared with your neighbours. The above-lit shower is only for the one occupying the first floor, further up there are small bathroom connected to this shaft. From there you can hear your neighbour taking a shower.
Outdoor space
Public access between the quarters

Functional zones - water / heat
Centralized in containers

Households vs Shared space

Vertical communication - Private
Connects diagonally to upper floor (intertwined households)

Ground Floor
Households vs Shared space

Indoors vs Outdoors

Floor 1
Households vs Shared space (none)

Floor 2
Households vs Shared space (none)
View over court yard
Sightlines through the houses
Passage between houses
Passage under stair towards 4 entrances
The ground is the public foundation. The buildings are all separated from each other (above ground) and offers a public access in between them. You enter the houses from a “sunken garden”. All the entrances are located in these “half-basements” that differ in relations to the street. From this level you ascend vertically upwards to your own household (tower).

The basements hold common functions that are offered to the inhabitants, such as a bath, common kitchen, bike room, laundry room etc. The basements shift in position (depth) depending on what light conditions and degrees of privacy that is needed. All the basements are connected under ground and creates a shared semi-underground field for only the residents of the houses.

On the first floor the containers are directed towards each other in groups, and are more closed to the outside. The further up one moves, the more dissolved they are. On the top floor they are totally blurred and opened up, revealing long and unpredictable sightlines between and through the buildings.

Private terraces are created on top of the boxes that cantilever. The small differences in floor levels create animated views and unique relations to all surrounding houses.
Outdoor space - public access between the towers and to sunken ‘entrance yards’

Vertical communication - Private
One staircase for each household

Functional cores - water / heat
Centralised in containers

Shared functions with underground connections
One program in the entrance zone of each household

Interior pattern of movement
Households are vertical - One container on each floor, that opens up more the further up one moves.

Basement floor
Households vs Shared space

Floor 1
Households vs Shared space (note)

Floor 2
Households vs Shared space (note)

Ground floor
Indoors vs Outdoors

Floor 1
Indoors vs Outdoors

Floor 2
Indoors vs Outdoors
Sunken garden

Top floor

A continuous passage between houses
The platforms are the collective base that offer a free movement in many directions, and accessibility to all containers. On the first floor the containers are directed inwards towards each other. The further up one moves, the more dissolved they are. On the top floor the containers are totally blurred and opened up, revealing long and unpredictable sightlines between and through the structure.

The small private units can hold a bed, a table, a wardrobe, or something else. Each inhabitant would have his or her own little unit. It is moveable and can be placed anywhere. They create a dynamic and everchanging plan that calls for participation. New zones and borders, possibilities of making territories.

The ground floor is all indoors, in relation to the platform on first floor that is outdoors but with heated up containers. On the top floor the containers are only shelters and not heated up. So, the further up in the structure, the more exposed you are to weather and climate. There are two common stairs in a courtyard. In order to move between the platforms one must use these. There are no way of ascending privately.

Functions of water and heat are located on the ground floor. On first and second floor there are stoves connected to the chimneys, that gives the opportunity to warm the containers up when wished for. All the functional necessities are thus located on the ground floor, and those who does not want to would never have to move upwards.

There is a seasonal change of the use of the building. The lifes expands in the summer and the private units can be lifted between the floors, so you can sleep on the roof. On the other hand, at winter time, everybody might want to dwell on the warm ground floor. A collective change in use over the year. Life as a campsite.
Outdoor space
Public access only outside, court yard for inhabitants.

Vertical communication - Shared
Staircases (and lift for private units) in the court yard

Functional cores - water / heat
In the back of containers only on ground floor

Interior pattern of movement

Households are vertical - One container on each floor, that opens up more the further up one moves.

Ground Floor
Households vs Shared space

Ground Floor
Indoors vs Outdoors

Floor 1
Households vs Shared space

Floor 1
Indoors vs Outdoors

Floor 2
Households vs Shared space

Floor 2
Indoors vs Outdoors
The outdoor top floor

The continuous platform as a collective floor

A private unit creates new borders and zones

The shared bath on the middle floor
Common functions are placed in a central cluster and serve as communication zones between households. Here you will meet your neighbours, for example you might have to pass through the bar in order to get to your apartment.

The sizes of the rooms vary from very small to very large. The sizes of the rooms changes also vertically, and the households are not extended only horizontally or only vertically, but in a mix. The openings between rooms are always centralized on the walls, creating long sightlines through the building, as in a palace.

In this house every household is unique in its form, and there are different spatial relationships everywhere. The idea is that we all prefer different things, and that the house should be inviting to different people.

Each household has at least one connection to a common space, and one connection to an outdoor space (court yard), and one connection to the functional cross (that houses small bathrooms and pentrys).
Outdoor space
Public access only outside, court yard for inhabitants.

Vertical communication - Private and Shared
Randomly distributed stairs that differ from floor to floor

Households are mostly horizontal but sometimes on 2 floors

Functional core - water / heat
Cuts through the building, all households connect to it.

Interior pattern of movement

Ground Floor
Households vs Shared space

Floor 1
Households vs Shared space

Floor 2
Households vs Shared space

Indoors vs Outdoors

Ground floor

Floor 1

Floor 2

Indoors vs Outdoors
Sightlines through private and shared rooms

One household on two floors

Shared kitchen

The shared kitchen connects to many parts of the house
There are four types of containers regarding size and openings. They are distributed in groups on each floor, creating horizontal households that have three or four boxes facing each other, creating semiprivate zones. None of them are closed, and all households can be passed through by any resident.

There are nine households on the ground floor and first floor. The upper floor is outdoors but the containers there can be heated up. Here they stand more free and not in groups, and can be claimed by anybody. Small bathroom and kitchens are inserted in some of the containers, and those are not shared.

The platforms and stairs are all collective, like a glue that binds the households together, where a wish for circulation is needed. There are opening between ground floor and first floor, so the visual and audial connections can be stronger to your neighbour on top than the one around the corner.

The common functions are localized in three compact volumes that triggers circulation and movement in the whole building for each individual person.
Outdoor space
Public access only outside, court yard for inhabitants.

Households are horizontal - 3-4 containers in groups
Directed towards each other

Functional cores - water / heat
In the back of the second smallest container size

Vertical communication - Shared
One core with stairway and doors, plus a few stairs

Shared functions assembled in three volumes
water (top), heat (the circle), communication (cube)

Ground Floor
Households vs Shared space

Floor 1
Households vs Shared space

Floor 2
Households vs Shared space

Floor 2
Indoors vs Outdoors

Floor 1
Indoors vs Outdoors

Ground Floor
Indoors vs Outdoors
A large terrace on the top

Diagonal sightlines through households

Holes and stairs create vertical connections

Light sweeps in through and between the containers
FINAL DISCUSSIONS

HOUSES

The architectural core of the project has all the time been based on an idea of a horizontal movement. When attempting to extend the early sketches upwards I have had troubles to dissolve the horizontal planes and plateaus, which shows clearly in the house sketches where the units always are stacked with clear divisions between each floor. There is a hierarchy embedded in the stacking, and I do not look upon any of the sketches as being three-dimensional fields. If I were to sketch on the next house one way to go could be to dissolve the clearly distinguished floors.

Though, I do think that these five houses are collective in different ways, and that they take on different aspects of the discussion on collective form and field conditions. Whether it is a collective ground, collective movement, collective functions or collective views, they all contribute to the discussion and builds up a material that rather is growing than narrows down to one preferable solution.

My goal has never been formal in the sense that I am searching for a certain visual appearence, but instead a condition of an architecture that admits change, accident, and parttakings.

And worth noting is that a nonhierachical form cannot guarantee a democratic and open society / collective construction. But by investigating residential buildings with a group from approach or as a field condition, that connects to the city, a space might be created that is open for improvisations of future inhabitants.
THEORY

It is hard to make strong conclusions or standpoints this short after the project, and also hard to summarize what exact knowledge that has come out of the work so far. The intentions with the project was to investigate the plural, as a comment or critique to the observation that we are becoming more and more isolated from people in our physical reality due to an ever increasing virtual impact upon our lives.

Architects as Fumihiko Maki and Stan Allen has been sources of inspiration and generators for the discussion and search. This adventure has been just as much a theoretical investigation as a spatial one. Without initially meaning to, I have strived to figure out how architectural theory can be useful to me when developing a building. It has been an attempt to connect theory and practice, to search for theoretical conceptual tools that can offer a deepened understanding of fundamental architectural themes. So my hope is that this work will be useful to me continuously.

Architectural theory is often used to explain things afterwards. In this project I have tried to take advantage of theory in order to generate something new. Instead of explaining the world, as Maki did, I have wanted to produce the world out of those explanations.

PROCESS

This project has been a chance for me to find another way of working and another way of thinking architecture, different from how I have often done before. It has allowed me to engage in a discussion rather than pragmatically solve a problem, or artistically design an object. So this is the result from my way of spending 100 days (and is today more important than the first?).

I have been very uncertain at times. It was frightening to give up on the idea of drawing one fantastic building, and instead continue the search, to never settle. I had a quite long gone plan of making house #6, but time stopped me.

As architecture students we are so used to complete things. To know the answer already when we are asked the question. In that sense this project is unfinished. When looking back at this semester it turns out the the process itself could almost be described as a field condition. The material is growing, in different directions. It has not a clear start, and definitely not a clear ending.

These are questions that have occupied my mind before coming to this school, and they will probably continue to do so, even though the story of the thesis ended on day number 105.
THANK YOU

Tor Lindstrand, devoted tutor.
Anders Wilhelmsen, head of the studio.
Sara Förbom, dedicated discussion partner and collective friend.
Jonas Tjäder, saving me in late hours, always there to cheer me up.
Eva Johansson, tireless encourager and gluing expert.
Johanna Nordén & Karolina Schönemeyr, exhibition rescuers.
Johan Navjord & Johan Zetterholm, travel companions.
Maria Claësson & Linus Yng, fellow thesis students.
Catharina Dahl, presentation counsellor.