

inhabitable structures studio

semester project brief



photo ©Dana Andronesu

1. Residential buildings as transformable infrastructures

Today's forms of living – in tune with our contemporary biographies - are becoming increasingly individualized and heterogeneous. Urban residential buildings are being asked to integrate a highly diverse range of apartment sizes and types, in accordance with a multitude of inhabitation scenarios. Furthermore, as the limits between domestic realm and workplace are dissolving more and more nowadays, there is an urgent need to reconsider the idea of the apartment as the mere place of eating, sleeping and leisure. At the same time there is a desire for community in an atomized society that needs to be addressed within the anonymity of the city. A second challenge that we are currently facing, is the adaptation of a myriad of residential buildings – often of the post war period - to the aforementioned contemporary needs. What we realize in that process, is that the rigid building structure that was designed to fit a specific idea of housing of that particular period, often makes a long-term transformation very difficult. While the biographies of the inhabitants have diversified and shifted, the plans and walls have remained. There is a lot to learn from office buildings in that instance, destined to accommodate the change of their functional and technical content as well as that of their outside appearance. With transformation and reuse increasingly becoming the dominant forms of building, it seems highly questionable whether the post-war model of functionalist housing is still valid in an age of sustainable urban development.

2. inhabitable structures

During this semester our aim is to conceive an urban residential building as an inhabitable structure that is specific to a particular site. In other words, the focus will be placed on the development of simple and robust core-and-shell-structures which embody three main aspects:

- they are able to accommodate typological and functional variety.
- they provide a response to the mid- to long term transformability that the contemporary apartment building requires.
- through their more permanent structural features they redefine the character and urbanistic order of the site, thus participating in a conscious and sensible way in the perpetual building and renewal of the City as a collective project

We are interested in developing buildings with a structure that is generic enough to allow for changes of its interior organisation and even use over a longer period of time. This does not mean that the structures we are aiming for will be architecturally unspecific or interchangeable. They should be interacting sensibly and intelligently with their surroundings through their architectural qualities, their positioning, their dimensions, etc.

The intention of our studio is to explore together the spatial and organizational potential of open plan structures for housing, investigating the interplay between structure, façade and interior life of a building. We will be dealing with the dialogue between building and context, and with the continuity between public space and the private realm. We will work on construction as a means of architectural expression, developing a contemporary idea of tectonics as a tool by which the character of a city can be formed and new typologies invented.

3. urban housing in munich: project site

The site chosen for the project is a park-like, unbuilt block corner popularly called „Bismarckwiese“. It is located in the heart of München–Schwabing on Clemens- and Bismarckstraße. The approximately square lot measuring ca. 57x57m is public property and currently serves as a leisure area for the people living in the neighbourhood. Surrounded by large trees, it hosts a children's playground, a basketball court and table tennis tables. To the north and east sides, apartment buildings are facing the site. To its western side, the Bismarckwiese is delimited by the former building of the School of Photography, which today is used by the architecture department of the Munich University of Applied Sciences (Hochschule München). A documentation of the site in form of pictures and video clips from the site will be made available to the studio participants on our online exchange platform.



photo ©Alexander Fthenakis

4. program

Instead of a specific program, the structure to be developed should comply with the following basic requirements:

- accommodate apartments for 1, 2, 4 and 6 inhabitants that can be randomly arranged, combined and transformed on the long term
- integrate spaces for common use and/or workspaces that are accessible to the inhabitants of the structure itself or to people from the neighbourhood
- take into account a potential change of use in the future while conceiving the building
- maintain and redefine the public use and character of the unbuilt part of the site

The general dimensions of the inhabitable structure - and hence also the number of apartments – are not predetermined. They shall result from the general volumetric and structural concept of each particular project. The following apartment sizes can be used as a first starting point but can be redefined individually during the course of the project work:

- 1 inhabitant 30-45m²
- 1-2 inhabitants 60-75m²
- 2-3 inhabitants 75-90m²
- 3-4 inhabitants 90-105m²
- 4-5 inhabitants 105-135m²
- 5-6 inhabitants 135-150m²



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5. working and communication methods

Due to the health security measures implemented by the TUM, the reviews will be held online till further notice. In case the circumstances and directives of the university allow it, the goal is to switch to personal reviews in the designated location within the university.

The studio will be organized on the basis of dialogue and exchange between all the participants. The participation in the weekly reviews is mandatory. The reviews will be held over the Zoom app. Lectures, exercise presentations, the early idea reviews, the mid-term and the final reviews will be held together with all students present. Once the project proposals start taking shape, they will be reviewed individually with their authors. For this a review schedule will be made available a day in advance (the order and the duration of each review are fix). A punctual start of the meetings is important, as well as sticking to the predefined schedule of each review.

In every stage of their development and for each review, the projects shall be illustrated three-dimensionally in form of handmade sketches, collages, working-model pictures or 3D models. The students are free to choose their way of expression. The illustrations can be quick rough sketches. Their aim is to show the interaction of the projects with their surroundings and their urbanistic and spatial implications. Under normal conditions this would be done in form of a large site model accessible to all students, which is not possible currently.

Presentations have to be prepared and uploaded one day in advance of the online studio meeting (till Monday evening) onto the online exchange platform. It is important for us to have all presentations in advance in order to be able to use the time efficiently with full focus on the reviews. All sketches, models, plans, pictures etc. should be drawn in scale or include a graphic scale and laid out in DIN A3 landscape format. The files should be uploaded as a multipage pdf per student or group (no single independent pages). File names should be given according to the following nomenclature:

iss_date(yyymmdd)_name1_name2_topic (example: iss_200512_Meier_Müller_exercise_1)

6. Milestones

- 21/04/20 introduction to the project (10am, Zoom)
- 28/04/20 presentation preparatory exercise 1
- 05/05/20 presentation preparatory exercise 2 / presentation site drawings
- 12/05/20 presentation first idea
- 09/06/20 mid-term presentations
- 22/07/20 final presentations
- 24/07/20 final hand-in of projects

The participation of the whole group is mandatory for all aforementioned dates.

7. contact

Alexander Fthenakis: fthenakis@tum.de