Aspects of a changing residential culture - some architectural issues

FINNISH ACADEMY - RESEARCH WORKSHOP – 03.06.09:

THE FUTURE OF LIVING

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Aspects of a changing residential culture - some architectural issues

“a fresh perspective on the subject and to provide inspiration for the afternoon's working group session”

1. starting point: FRAMEWORK

2. changing residential cultures – some phenomena and architectural issues

3. architectural strategies – architecture as agent for change

4. conclusion / reflection
residential culture – a multidimensional concept

VALUES – IDEAS – ATTITUDES

ARCHITECTURE – PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

SOCIAL STRUCTURES – WAY OF LIFE

1. starting point: FRAMEWORK
a dynamic understanding of culture

"culture intervenes in a dynamic way in how we live, produce and build our houses, but it is not way of life, production nor building tradition”

(Marianne Gullestad, 1989)

architecture as...

an entry to or a tool for studying / understanding
earlier – contemporary – future living

an agent for change
individual level – societal level

1. starting point: FRAMEWORK
changing residential cultures

• disruption of “the ideal home”

• changing and diversified understandings of domesticity

• reduced place attachment
disruption of “the ideal home”

“.. home implies becoming native to place, setting down roots and investing oneself in a place”

(Quinn, 2004:115 referring to Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999:214)
disruption of “the ideal home”

More than 60% of all Norwegian households live in and own detached houses.

(Norwegian Statistics, 2001)
disruption of “the ideal home”

Changing households and patterns of living:

• nuclear families are a diminishing group, in Norway being reduced from 42% in 1960 till 22% in 2008 (SSB, 1993; 2008)

• 40% of all households consist of one person and 2/3 of residents in central parts of Oslo live alone (SSB, 2007).

2. changing residential cultures – some phenomena and architectural issues
disruption of “the ideal home”

- need of extended understandings of the architectural qualities that may constitute frames for other images of home and new ways of living

Housing for homeless in Trondheim
changing and diversified understandings of domesticity

"Under the supervision of its mistress, the private house became, rather than simple shelter, an environment dedicated to the physical and psychological comforts we associate with the term domesticity (...) If the private house no longer has a domestic character, what sort of character will it have?" (Riley, 1999:25-26)
changing and diversified understandings of domesticity

• new ideas of privacy?

“Putting the inside, even your own, on display seems a very modern topic. It might be perverse but it has similarities with the mixture of privacy and publicness these days: walking on the zebra crossing [crosswalk] and listening to the love conversation of the neighbor who is phoning his girlfriend, the way people show their privacy on the television in order to attract attention.

In such a condition the ancient limitations between privacy and publicity seem to be irrelevant”  Winy Maas, MVRDV (1997)

PLOT architects: VM houses (2005) København
“The privacy in the glasshouses is thus maintained not through visual separation, but by the fact that the control which defines private space, in some sense is extended out into public space in front of the window”

(Stender, 2006:p?)
2. changing residential cultures – some phenomena and architectural issues

reduced place attachment

• globalization
• mobility

reduced significance of place rooted localities with a resulting weakening of neighborhood ties and networks

alienation - insecurity - rootlessness

but also..

freedom - mobility - possibilities for a range of individual choices and experiences

“Fhiltex-X” Architect: MMW sivilarkitekter MNAL AS.
Source: BK 2/1999
reduced place attachment

"Multiple dwelling"
(McIntyre et al 2006)

Contemporary understandings of home involve dwelling through multiple places.

Home is not so much about belonging and investing oneself in one place but rather about connecting to different arenas with complementing meanings and practices.

“Fhiltex-X” Architect: MMW sivilarkitekter MNAL AS.
Source: BK 2/1999
second – and third – homes

• more than 400,000 cottages (ca. 2 mill. “primary” dwellings) in Norway

• almost every second Norwegian household own or have a second home at their disposal

• 70,000 Norwegian households own a second home abroad

• average floor space in new second homes > 100 m² (more than average new primary dwellings)

Source: PLAN 6/2006

2. changing residential cultures – some phenomena and architectural issues
second – and third – homes

“... creates a means of re-discovering and re-connecting with places that hold special meanings in peoples’ lives, there serving to counter the sense of place-alienation and dislocation associated with globalization”

(Quinn, 2004: 113)
second – and third – homes

The “escape theory”:

Households...“.. purchase second homes in order to achieve some dimensions of lifestyle that is not available at their primary residence”

(Hall & Müller, 2004:12)
second – *and third* – homes

Escape from what?

from urban housing in a liberalized housing marked...?

• neglect of long term qualities
• neglect of public spaces
Preliminary findings from an ongoing research project

- blurred / ambiguous correlations between diverse home arenas

If we build mountain dwellings in Copenhagen, why do we search for second homes in the mountains?

If we build urban structures in the mountains, why do we want to go there for vacation if we live the rest of the year in “real” urban structures?


Bottom: Hovdinntunet, Skaara Architects (planned)
architectural strategies – architecture as agent for change

Individual level:
Well-being
identity expression
personal situation, values and attitudes

Societal level:
Social equity
sustainable futures
shared values

Housing for homeless: Veiskillet, Trondheim (2006)
Architect: Bård Helland Photo: Karine Denizou
architectural strategies – architecture as agent for change

Two research examples:

How may the physical environment be an instrument in counteracting social exclusion of former criminals and drug addicts?

(Åshild Lappegard Hauge, environmental psychology, PhD-dissertation May 2009)

How may architectural strategies enable residents to make environmentally friendly choices in their daily lives?

(new PhD-project – part of a large interdisciplinary research project: ”Towards carbon-neutral settlements” (2009-2012))
the meaning of architectural qualities for the identity of vulnerable groups

• motivation to change: "Here you get a little extra push"

• strengthened social network

• architectural details as symbols of a crime- and drug-free life and identity

the meaning of architectural qualities for the identity of vulnerable groups

Interviewer: “Do you think that people would perceive you differently now that you have moved here?”

David: “Yes, I think so. My mother, for example, is proud of me!”

the meaning of architectural qualities for the identity of vulnerable groups

“As a drug abuser, you’re used to shutting out the world as much as possible. And then I came here and had a whole wall as a window!”

architectural strategies towards zero-emission living

Planners and researchers together:

*a common vision to combine low energy demand and renewable energy with a social sustainable living environment*

The proposed research combines a better understanding of social processes and lifestyle issues with improved technology, energy supply systems and urban structure.
architectural strategies towards zero-emission living

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Ideas for layout of the Brøset area. Architects: KAP Klorofyll, Stavanger
architectural strategies towards zero-emission living

How may architectural strategies enable residents to make environmentally friendly choices in their daily lives?

- Investigations and / or development of architectural concepts for multifamily passive house design and area layout
- Focus on different user perspectives
- Architectural qualities

Bottom: Batschuns, Austria. Architect: Walter Unterrainer
conclusion / reflections

Questions for further research:

1. *What kinds of ideal homes and domestic life exists today?*

2. *How important are places and localities in a society where moving between different arenas of home seems to be a part of everyday life?*

3. *What is – and will be – the role of architecture in developing a more sustainable residential culture?*

4. *What characterizes the interplay between architecture and the continuously changing social and cultural dimensions?*