

DO IT TOGETHER

Cohousing as a tool for finding better ways of living

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Living and acting in collectivity has been a substantial aspect of human development. Built examples of intentional collective living complexes are found in various cultures around the globe and still in use today. With the arrival of the industrial revolution and influx of huge numbers of workers into cities, the question of collective housing gained momentum. The later quest of feminists to liberate women from housework and even later liberalization of societal values during the 1960s student protests prepared the ground for the first known modern cohousing community which was created in Denmark in 1967.

After decades of heavy growth consisting mainly of inland urban sprawl relying on the personal car for transport, the city of Reykjavík is currently focussing on its new strategy of growing inwards. The Icelandic capital also has a substantial housing backlog making the construction of new units necessary. Additional issues comprise high building, labor, living and money lending cost, isolation of immigrants and difficulties to take part in Icelandic society and high average energy consumption in the housing sector due to detached housing. This thesis analyses both in research as in design how the above issues can be tackled with the tools of architecture.

Research on the topic was carried out in literature review, case study of existing cohousing projects and survey of local people. The design project was based on insights gained in the previous stages and aimed at achieving additional observations.

Design work on the housing complex demonstrated that with use of shared cars and compact building typology, high residential density can be achieved. Furthermore, spatial sizes, proportions and relations between rooms seem critical to enable interaction between people.

