



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

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COURSE OF MASTER'S DEGREE IN ARCHITECTURE  
CONSTRUCTION CITY

*Abstract*

**Densification and redefinition of living spaces in Berlin**

**The deconstruction of the Townhouse model**

*Tutor*

Anna Maria Cristina Bianchetti

*by*

Rossana Schiraldi

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This research comes from a certain interest and curiosity developed during these years and through two university experiences in Germany, at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, during the bachelor years, the second at TU Berlin during the master.

The purpose of this study is to investigate contemporary city housing spaces, in particular in Berlin that has been one of the most interesting experimental areas for architecture and urbanism.

This study is specifically concerned with the relationship between individual and collective living in different architectural typologies: the *Landvilla*, the *Stadtvilla* and the Townhouse.

Using local and national data, reconstruction plans and opinions emerged from recent literature, this study was designed to primarily investigate the relationship between the city changes (demographical changes and reconstruction) and the redefinition of living spaces. Furthermore, in order to investigate the “material” of this reconstruction, I focused on a specific area of Berlin, the historical and administrative center of Mitte, where there are several examples of contemporary housing experiments. Among the apparent uniformity of the urban pattern, characterized by the anti-modernistic dogma of reconstruction carried on by Hans Stimmann’s plan for the historical center (1996-1999), not far from Leipziger Strasse’s DDR towers and along the Caroline-Von-Humboldt Weg Strasse, there’s a block of townhouses.

This block is just one example of the contemporary housing experiments that have been investigated by numerous researches that have highlighted a dense background of ideological, economical and symbolical reasons. A model that presents the same features: social homogeneity, not ordinary profiles, advantages due to living together, living in small groups, a special mix of domestic and professional life and an economical mechanism that encourages middle class groups to move to the city. However, the direct observation of this specific case highlights a more complex situation that reveals contradictions with this model’s prerogatives.

To conclude, the thesis uses the project as an instrument of knowledge and develops a conceptual proposal for a different urban block, which is aimed to densify using a different articulation of spaces, with a broader variety of apartments and a better relationship with the context.

The arguments developed in this thesis, provide some support for the international debate that investigates the relationship between collective and individual living in the contemporary city. It focuses in particular on Berlin which for many years has been locally named ‘the hippest city of the planet’ for its housing policy but it is slowly becoming a city in which the claim to the right to the city is continuously increasing.

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For further information please contact:  
Rossana Schiraldi, [ross.schiraldi@gmail.com](mailto:ross.schiraldi@gmail.com)