



**Politecnico  
di Torino**

# **Honors Thesis**

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**Master's degree Science in Architecture Construction City**

**Abstract**

**Enfolded in Care: Design Tools and Typologies for Dementia-Friendly Living**

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The demographic shift towards an ageing population creates one of the most critical social and healthcare challenges of our time. Longer life expectancy presents a growing need for environments that can support the ageing process. This demographic situation is accompanied by a growing number of older adults with cognitive decline and dementia diagnosis. This creates a need to reconsider models of care and living to be more inclusive and community integrated in a supportive environment.

A significant portion of individuals with dementia are cared for by relatives at home. However, in the later stages of the condition, some eventually require transfer to long term care. Although recent models of residential care are designed to feel more home-like, a gap still exists between aging-in-place models and institutional care. The progression of dementia through its various stages that are prior to its late stage often extends over several years. During these years, it is important to continue supporting well-being. Older adults need innovative housing models that support healthy lifestyles and promote well-being, with the ultimate goal of delaying or avoiding to move into a care home.

This thesis, thus, aims to bridge the gap and explore how intermediate models of senior housing can be more dementia-friendly. The study focuses on how care can be reimagined through the lens of inclusivity and community support in senior housing designed for ageing-in-place.

In order to achieve this aim, the methodology is structured into different phases with the aim of forming a design toolkit that can act as guidelines for dementia-friendly design. These phases combine theoretical research, expert interviews, best-practice analysis, and study visits, which are synthesized into design tools in the form of design matrices. These tools then inform typological explorations that provide guidance on the design and planning of dementia-friendly and community-integrated housing models that support older adults through the progression of cognitive decline.

The results summarize a generative framework of experimental typology scenarios that implement parameters of different levels of staff presence, co-living and contextual conditions, along with some examples of dementia-friendly spatial organization of apartments.

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Following the structured phases, the aim is to investigate:

- senior housing models enhancing care and support through independent living
- design features that support physical, psychological, social and cognitive well-being
- spatial scenarios that can guide the design of innovative dementia-friendly senior housing

