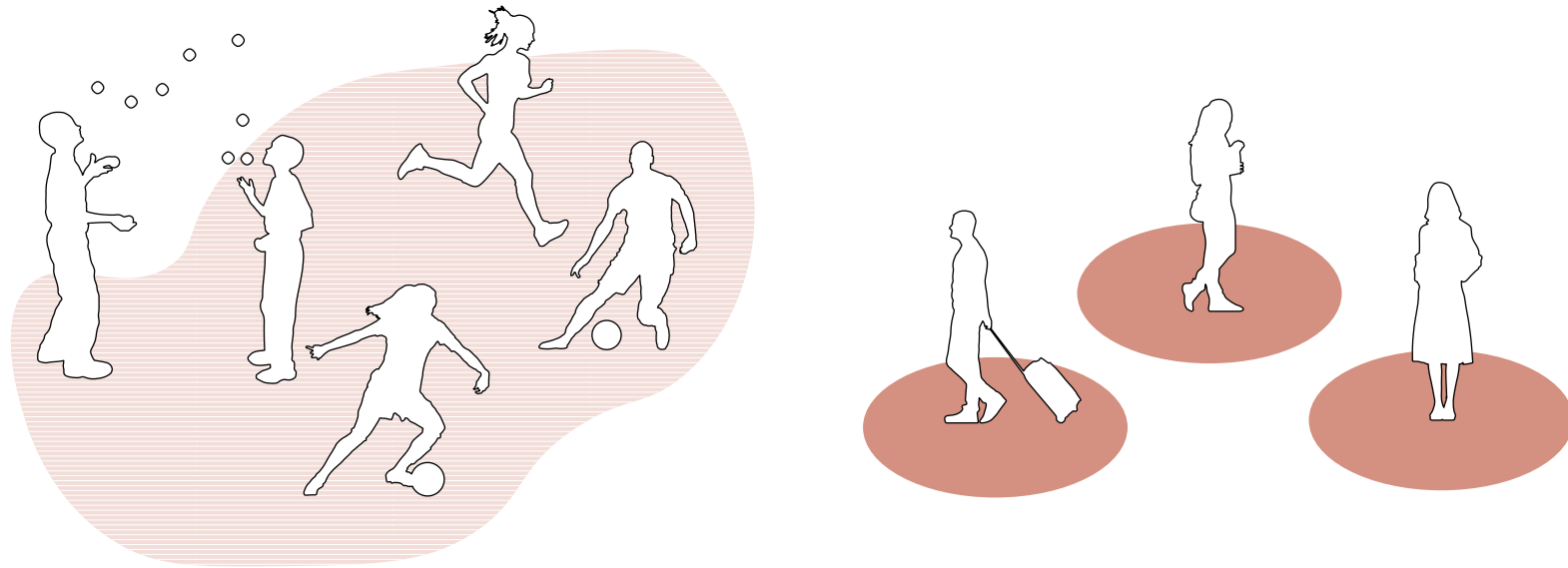# BETWEEN COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL

Rethinking Common and Private Spaces in Student Dormitory Design

Master's Degree Course in Architecture for Sustainability
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ZHU ZEXI

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CONTENT

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the space issue of "between the collective and the individual", and discusses the structural logic and social significance of common spaces and private spaces in student dormitories.

With the expansion of higher education and the diversification of residential needs, student dormitories have gradually transformed from a single residential facility to a complex environment for learning, socializing and self-development, so it is important to re-examine the spatial relationship between common space and private space.

This study first sorts out the global evolution of student dormitories since the 20th century, from functionalism to community orientation, and then to the contemporary hybrid trend, and constructs an analytical framework. Then, focusing on Italy, the uniqueness of Italian dormitories in terms of spatial continuity and hierarchy is revealed from three aspects: uniqueness of culture, spatial functions and boundary management, and transitional space. Taking Turin as a case, this thesis analyzes the spatial structure of four typical student dormitories and explores the synergy between collectivity and privacy under different institutions and building configurations. The study shows that dormitory space is not a simple collectivity-private binary structure, but a dynamic balance achieved through hierarchical organization and transitional space.

Based on theory and case analysis, this thesis proposes three design implications: to improve the openness and flexibility of space with porous boundaries; build a multi-scale co-living structure with layered commonality; Experience-centered emphasizes students' practical sense of participation and belonging.

The thesis aims to provide a new understanding path and practical reference for the design of student dormitories in the future.

INTRODUCTION

When I first came to Turin six years ago, I made the decision to abandon the student dormitory provided by EDISU and rent a private apartment for almost twice the rent I had budgeted. Not just because of the poor dormitory conditions, but whenever I returned to that standardized unit at the end of the day's classes or group discussions, I never felt like "home". Communication in common spaces is always limited to polite greetings, unable to form true community connections, and private spaces are so narrow that they can only accommodate a bed and desk, and there is no sense of comfort in organizing luggage and storing personal belongings.
This kind of separation that cannot be integrated into the collective or maintained by the individual, I later found that it is not an isolated case. Many international students around me, like me, would rather bear high rents than look for a space that balances social needs with personal comfort.
It was this personal experience that made me think about why contemporary student dormitory design struggles to respond to our dual desires for collective life and individual belonging. This was

also the initial impetus for this thesis on the topic "*Between collective and individual: Rethinking Common and Private Spaces in Student Dormitory Design*", and I wanted to find out whether the feeling of "home" can be realized in student dormitories through space design.

Under the wave of internationalization of higher education, students in EUROSTUDENT countries continue to predominantly live outside the parental home. In 84 % of countries, the majority of students live away from their parents (Hauschildt et al., 2024).
For students, dormitories are never just places to sleep, they need to carry more, not only to alleviate the loneliness of strangers through common space, so that we can find companions in unfamiliar environments, but also to be able to preserve our own territory through private spaces, so that we can have a place to retreat under intense academic pressure.
However, the reality is that existing designs often go to two extremes, either continuing the collective dormitory model of the

industrial age, reducing the number of common spaces into cold corridors, underused activity rooms and one large common space, making socializing a mandatory task. Or pursue the ultimate individualization, narrow and long corridors, with completely independent units on both sides of the corridors, which isolate students making them, particularly international students, at higher risk of loneliness

As Jan Gehl said in "*Life Between Buildings*", a good space will make people naturally want to stay and communicate, rather than be forced or escaped (Gehl, 1987). That points to the core of the problem, that contemporary dormitory design ignores the symbiotic need that the collective and the individual are not opposing options, but need space to reconcile.

As a crucial hub for international students in Europe, Italy's dormitory designs seem to hold the key to resolving this predicament. Some dormitories in Italy are not isolated accommodation box, but continue the spatial logic of "piazza-street-courtyard" in Mediterranean culture, from the public courtyard at the entrance to the semi-open floor corridor to the independent dormitory units, each floor is like a buffer zone, which neither makes collective communication seem abrupt or makes individuals feel closed when they are alone. This design made me realize that the feeling of "home"

is essentially freedom of choice. When you want to socialize, you can easily find companions in common spaces, and when you want to be alone, you can quickly return to your own little world.

However, existing academic research still does not pay enough attention to this point. In "*From Modernism to Multiculturalism: The Historical Evolution of Student Housing*", Diogo Borges Ferreira provides a rough overview of the design trends and changes in student dormitory over the past century (Ferreira, 2024), but rarely analyzes the needs of students for different spaces. For example, we need semi-private corners in common spaces to facilitate deep conversations with a few friends and comfortable study rooms where we can read or listen to multimedia contents in sight of others but with spatial arrangements that limit background noise.

Based on these observations and reflections, this thesis focuses on rethinking the design of common and private spaces in student dormitories, and unfolds according to a four-layer progressive logic, corresponding to four chapters of the full text.

Chapter 1 sorts out the evolution of student dormitory around the world, and analyzes the differences between students' demands for collective life and individual life in the context of different educational concepts and times. This difference in demand directly affects the space design logic, which leads to the corresponding

different design of common and private spaces in student dormitories.

Chapter 2 focuses on the characteristics of common and private space in Italian student dormitory through the analysis of cultural uniqueness, spatial function and boundary management, and transitional space, and clarifies its design logic driven by historical heritage constraints and modern needs.
Through the empirical analysis of specific cases in Turin, Chapter 3 extracts the three strategies of porous boundaries, layered commonality and experience-oriented design. Chapter 4 finally answers the initial question, how to make student dormitories feel like "home".

For me, this thesis is more than just completing a dissertation. I hope that future students, especially international students, will no longer have to choose between renting a high-priced apartment and a poor dormitory, and I hope that through my thesis, more designers will realize that the core value of student dormitories is to let the collective not become a burden and the individual not fall into loneliness.

CHAPTER 1

THE EVOLUTION OF STUDENT DORMITORY AROUND THE WORLD
from Accommodation Box to Smart Communities

With the expansion of the global higher education system and the increase of student mobility, the design concepts and spatial organizational models of student dormitories are undergoing changes.

This chapter will explore the development and evolution of student dormitories on a global scale. Driven by changing residential needs, new learning habits, and shifting institutional priorities, student dormitories have gradually evolved from the basic functional space of the "accommodation box" to a comprehensive community, "smart communities" with multi-functional and emphasis on social and intelligence.

Early dormitory design focused on cost control and space efficiency, mainly meeting students' most basic living needs, such as sleep and learning. However, with the transformation of educational philosophy, the development of technology, and the growing concern for student well-being, the role of student dormitories has undergone fundamental changes. Modern student dormitories are regarded as an important carrier for promoting academic success, social integration and individual growth.

This chapter will review the key stages in the development of dormitory, combine typical international cases, analyze the evolution paths of dormitory space under different cultural and policy contexts, and lay a theoretical foundation for subsequent discussions on the relationship between public and private spaces.

1.1 Functionalism (Early 20th Century)

"A house is a machine for living in." [1]

[1] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells, trans. Frederick Etchells, New York: Dover Publications, 1986, p.95.

[2] Rothblatt, Sheldon, and Björn Wittrock, eds. *The European and American University since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.10-p.17.

The prototype of modern student dormitories can be traced back to the early 20th century, when access to education expanded in parallel with the acceleration of global urbanization and the rise of modernist architectural thought. The technological innovation and social structural changes brought about by industrialization have prompted architects to rethink the paradigm of collective living space in ways that were inconceivable before.

The Influence of Industrialization and Modernism

In the early 20th century, the wave of industrialization, which first swept through Western Europe and North America, led to a massive influx of people from rural areas and small towns into the cities, creating large groups of urban immigrants,[2] and with a larger proportion of urban population and new social awareness, more pupils had a chance to enroll in colleges and universities.
Traditional college-style dormitories, such as the closed courtyard model of Oxford and Cambridge, which were built between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (e.g., Morton's College in Oxford was built in 1264 and King's College in Cambridge was built in 1441). Their enclosed courtyard form emphasize the creation of an academic atmosphere, discipline, and community isolation, based
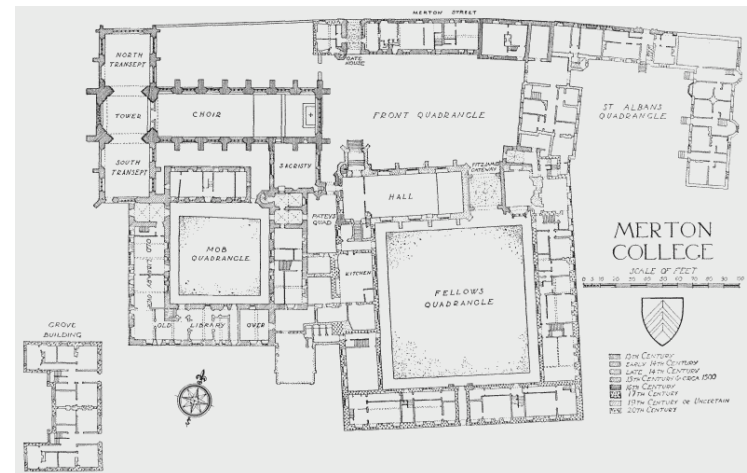

Fig 1. Merton College Plan (1954)
https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol3/pp95-106.

on constraints in available space and a lack of flexibility, which makes it difficult to satisfy the needs of contemporary colleges for mass scale student accommodation and efficient resources allocation and operational management.

Common spaces were extremely compressed, individual spaces were mainly used for sleeping and learning, the boundaries of space were clearly defined, emphasizing control and supervision.

With the rise of the Modernist architectural movement, functionalism has become the mainstream idea of architectural design, and its core proposition is "form follows function".[3] Le Corbusier proposed "a machine for living in" affecting the types of collective residential buildings, including student dormitories.

For example, the Bauhaus Dormitory, built in 1926, has an area of about 10 m² per single room, equipped with standardized furniture. These rooms are compact and well laid out, and contain basic living and learning facilities such as beds, desks, closets and bookshelves, reflecting the concept of space standardization and functional efficiency.

Standardization and Function Distribution

Functionalism, as an architectural philosophy, emerged in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, especially in Germany (Bauhaus), France (Le Corbusier) and the Netherlands (De Stijl) in the 1920s and 1930s, and its development was closely related to the demand for efficient and rational spaces in industrialized societies.[4] Peter Behrens triggered the exploration of architectural standardization through the design of industrialized building components, and Gropius further developed the architectural concept of functionalism in the Bauhaus period, emphasizing structural rationality and spatial efficiency.[5] The design of student dormitories during this period reflects an obvious trend of spatial standardiza-

Fig 2. Bauhaus Building, Student Apartment
hhttps://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/51252

[3] Louis H. Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered," *Lippincott's Magazine 57*, March 1896, p.403–p.409.

[4] Curtis, William J. R. *Modern Architecture Since 1900.* London: Phaidon Press, 1996, p.154–p.161.

[5] Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus,* trans. P. Morton Shand, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965, p.51–p.52.

tion: unit rooms are usually uniform in size, embedded in furniture, and compact in layout to maximize living efficiency. These standardized rooms are mostly based on single or double rooms, which emphasizes privacy.

On that basis, common spaces are compressed to the most necessary functional places - such as simple dining rooms, laundry rooms or shared bathrooms. Most of these spaces are arranged at one end of the corridor or the bottom floor of the building, and are centrally arranged as functional nodes. Space mainly revolves around life needs, rather than creating sociality or sense of belonging. For example, the Pavillon Suisse designed by Le Corbusier in Paris from 1930 to 1931 concentrates most of the common space on the ground floor of the building, while the typical room floor is directly connected to the individual rooms through narrow corridors, with clear spatial boundaries.

Pavillon Suisse — Le Corbusier

Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris began to be planned in the early 1920s, with the aim of creating a meeting place for students, researchers and intellectuals from around the world in a spirit of peace, unity and friendly cooperation after World War I.

Countries, like Armenia, Argentina, and some South-East Asian countries, have invested in the construction of their own student dormitories, while demonstrating their respective cultural, artistic and architectural levels. Against this backdrop, the Swiss government commissioned Corbusier to collaborate with Pierre Jeanneret to design the Pavillon Suisse.

The Pavillon Suisse, built between 1931 and 1933, at the Cité Internationale Universitire de Paris is a milestone in early modernist student dormitories.

Fig 3. Pavillon Suisse from Main Entrance
Photo by Olivier Martin-Gambier, 2005

Le Corbusier implemented his most famous concept, "A house is a machine to live in.", in design and followed his "Five Points of Modern Architecture", which are "Pilotis","Free Plan", "Free façade", "Ribbon windows", "Roof Terrace".[6]

Corbusier had a deep interest in collective life in this period of time, emphasizing the organic combination of "Unité d'habitation" and "Collective Space". He did not pursue absolute privacy but emphasized the tension between the private space and the collective space, between the needs of the individual and the social life of the community.
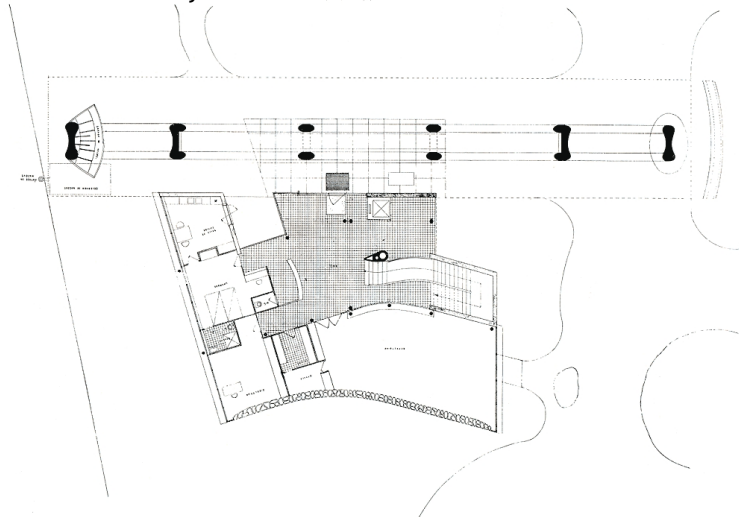
[6] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, trans. Frederick Etchells, trans. Frederick Etchells, New York: Dover Publications, 1986, p.90-p.110.
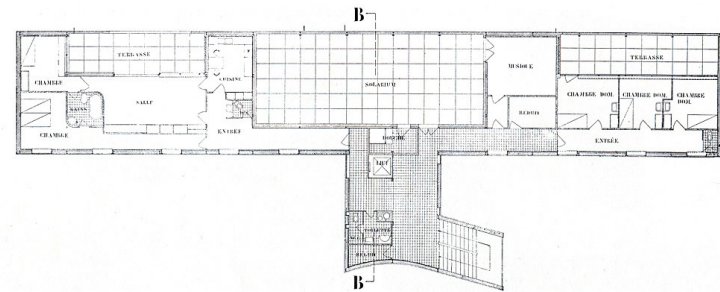

Fig 5. Roof Plan
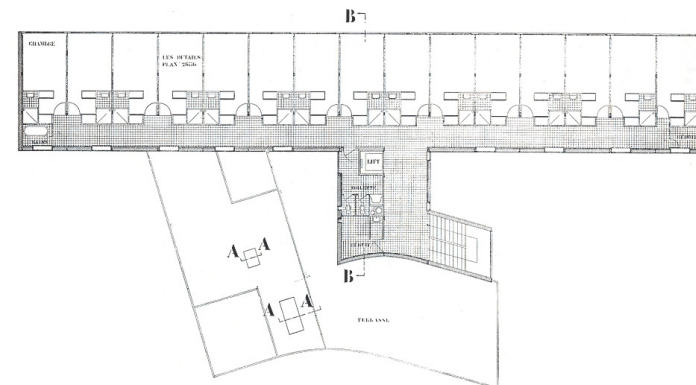

Fig 4. Ground floor plan

Fig 6. Typical room floor plan

As a site for this concept, the Pavilion Suisse was layered by Corbusier according to its function and privacy.

The overhead floor supported by pilotis is completely public and connected to the surrounding environment. The ground floor of is mainly used for public space functions, such as hall, laundry room, public living room, staff office... as a "collective social space".

On the typical residential floor, fifteen rooms are all arranged in the same orientation along a narrow corridor, whose width is extremely small (only 1.1 meters), making it almost only accessible by one person. The kitchen and bathroom of each floor both connect with staircase. The roof garden serves as a collective living space for students who live in the dormitory.

From the perspective of spatial privacy, the horizontal corridors of the Pavilion Suisse are extremely narrow and have been intention-ally designed as "passageway" spaces that limit communication and stop, allowing for a high degree of isolation between the living units. The extremely narrow corridors not only emphasize the func-tionality of the circulation, but also diminish the possibility of social interaction, creating a higher degree of privacy.

Vertical circulation is organized by a separate staircase, further reducing the extent of shared space, which improves the efficiency of the flow but at the same time reduces the chances of episodic encounters.[7]

[7] von Moos, Stanislaus. *Le Corbusier: Elements of a Synthesis.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979. p.150-p.160.

This circulation organization reinforces the spatial boundaries between students, making each room more like an individual unit, reflecting the emphasis on individual privacy in modernist housing.
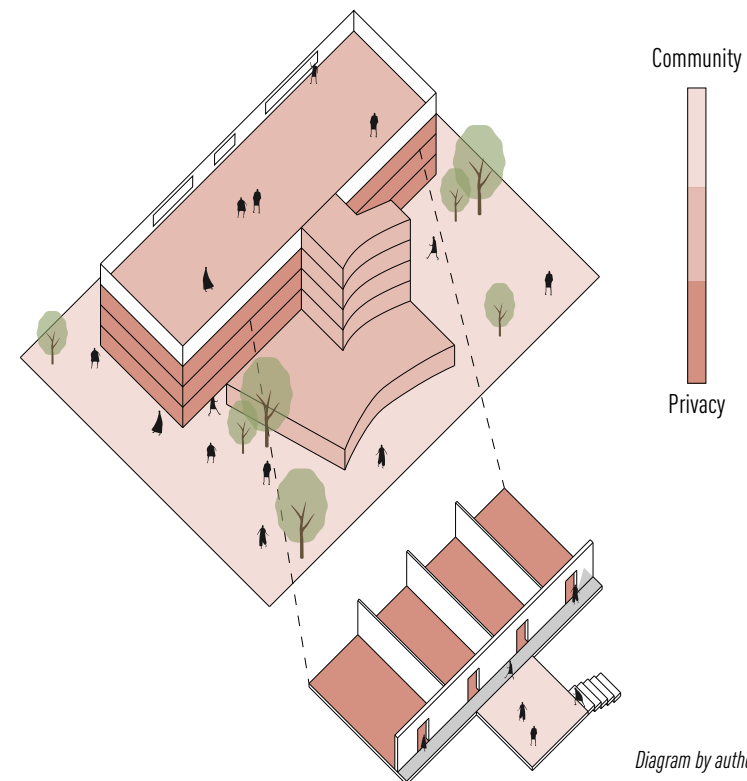

Community

Privacy

Diagram by author

Fig 7. The Entrance of Pavillon Suisse *(overhead floor supported by pilotis)*
Photo by Olivier Martin-Gambier, 2005

Fig8. Public Living Room *(Ground Floor of Pavillon Suisse)*
Photo by Olivier Martin-Gambier, 2005

Clear Boundary between Individual Space and Collective Space

In the student dormitory design of the functionalist period, the spatial organization embodies a highly clear zoning logic, especially in the strict distinction between individual space and collective living space. This distinction is not only reflected in the architectural structure, but also in the architect's understanding of the order of life and spatial function. Individual spaces are usually clearly defined by solid walls and independent doors, and rooms are independent from each other and not connected, emphasizing the exclusivity and inwardness of individuals; while collective spaces are extremely limited, meeting only the most basic functional needs, such as restrooms and staircase, with almost no shared spaces for students to communicate and stay. This design avoids any possibility of "ambiguous" or "intermediary" spaces.

In a typical functionalist student dormitory building, one enters the corridor from the staircase and then goes directly to one's own room, with almost no visual intersections or social buffers along the entire path; there are no sitting areas, platforms, or atriums, and the corridors themselves have been reduced to the bare minimum, serving only as a means of passage, reflecting the logic of prioritizing the efficiency of passage over the possibilities of social interaction. At the same time, this layout also reflects the clear boundaries between different spatial and temporal levels: each floor is almost a complete horizontal "living line", with upper and lower floors connected only by vertical transportation (e.g., staircases or elevators), and there are no cross-floor shared activity spaces or open lobbies.

Although this spatial pattern improves living efficiency and facilitates management, it also leads to a lack of a sense of belonging and communication space for students in campus life. Although this dualistic spatial organization laid the foundation for the modern student dormitory design, it also laid the groundwork for the subsequent design reflection centered on "community".

1.2 The Community-Oriented Turn (late 20th century)

"It should look like a village, not like housing." [8]

Le Corbusier and Bauhaus have promoted the growing trend of modernism in student dormitories, however, modernism and functionalism aim to define standardized needs, addressed with a design that conform to minimum standards.

Those principles were functional to the context of expansion of high-education after World War II,[9] especially in Europe, the United States and other industrialized countries, the expansion of universities has become a trend, the number of students has increased dramatically, making the original accommodation resources strained. Governments and university administrators have regarded the large-scale construction of student dormitories as a top priority. In order to cope with the pressure on space and limited resources, the new dormitories in this period often adopt a functionalist approach to construction, emphasizing standardization, modularity and high-density layout, in order to achieve construction efficiency and maximize the functionality of the residence. However, this efficiency-oriented spatial organization model was soon criticized.

Jane Jacobs pointed out that excessive functional zoning leads to a lack of diversity and life in the space, and destroys the natural interaction structure of the community[10]; architect Jan Gehl further emphasized that human interaction occurs in the space of "life between buildings" rather than in isolated cells[11]; meanwhile, Aldo Rossi also emphasized the fact that modernism has severed the historical continuity between architecture and the city, erasing collective memory and the spirit of place.[12]

Under the impetus of these multidisciplinary theories, architecture has begun to pay attention to the social behavior and psychological needs of students, emphasizing a sense of community, belonging and interaction, and pushing the spatial strategy of student dormitories from rational functionalism to a more humanistic and social community-oriented design model.

This "community-oriented shift" is different from the early modernism that emphasized functional efficiency and pure living

8 Rudolph, Paul. "Four Current Projects by Rudolph." *Architectural Record*, March 1961, p.142.

9 Trow, Martin. "The Expansion and Transformation of Higher Education." *International Review of Education* 19, no.1, 1972, p.61–p.84.

10 Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York: Vintage Books, 1992, p.222–p.227.

11 Gehl, Jan. *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space.* Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2011, p.18–p.23.

12 Rossi, Aldo. *The Architecture of the City.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982, p.21–p.31.

needs, and pays more attention to the social attributes of space and the interactive experience of residents. In this context, student dormitories are no longer regarded as buildings that provide accommodation functions, but are redefined as a social space. Their design needs to respond to individuals' needs for privacy and groups' expectations for belonging, socializing and collaboration. Spatial privacy is not only a demarcation of physical boundaries, but also a social process and an important mechanism for the interaction between individuals and groups to regulate social distance.

Meanwhile, this transformation in spatial thinking was also shaped by broader cultural and educational shifts. In particular, 1968 movements and the subsequent innovations prompted architectural education to re-examine the relationship between space and learning, emphasizing that learning is a process embedded in social interaction. Giancarlo De Carlo's experimental dormitory projects in Urbino, which will be clarify in the next Chapter in detail, challenged the principles of modernism by exploring how spatial articulation could encourage participation, diversified use, and forms of communal life. Similarly, cross-institutional platforms such as ILAUD promote architecture to re-understand the role of space in the learning process through interdisciplinary and cross-institutional collaborative practices.

Therefore, the characteristic of student dormitory design in the late 20th century was the beginning of public open space.

The mutual influence of architecture, education and sociology

As higher education develops from elite to popularization, as well as the diversification of educational concepts, social structures and student groups, functional paradigm has gradually given way to a more "community- oriented" spatial concept, that is, student dormitories are not only accommodation places, but also a key platform for shaping students' sense of belonging, promoting cross-cultural exchanges and promoting social integration.

Vincent Tinto pointed out that the degree of social integration of students on campus significantly affects their stay or not and their learning experience. In "*Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*", he wrote that Student Integration Model depends not only on academic factors, but also on whether they can find a sense of belonging in the campus community, that dormitories, clubs, and study groups are important areas for promoting social integration. The higher the degree of social integration, the greater the likelihood that the individual will persist.[13]

[13] Vincent Tinto, *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, p.102-p.114.

At the same time, environmental psychology and architecture studies generally believe that living space is not only a physical shelter, but also a social environment that triggers social interaction and emotional connection.

The cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall's "Proxemics" Theory points out that different spatial scales correspond to different levels of social intimacy[14], such as public distance, social distance, intimate distance, and that these "invisible spatial boundaries" profoundly affect the possibilities of communication. Robert Gifford emphasizes that the built environment not only affects the emotional state and behavioral patterns of users, but also participates in shaping the sense of belonging and social identity of the community, and that the living space should not be regarded as a neutral background, but should be understood as a structure with "behavioral affordance"[15]. These theories have motivated architects in the design of student spaces. These theories have prompted architects to focus less on density and efficiency indicators and more on how space supports social behavior and emotional identity when designing student dormitories, thus promoting the transformation of dormitories from "living units" to "social living environments".

This change was also in line with the wider social issues in the architecture community at that time. Since the late 1970s, architecture has not been regarded as only a collection of "form" and "structure", but has been given a mission to respond to social responsibility and cultural diversity.

In student dormitories, this responsibility is reflected in in-depth attention to the resident experience. Space design began to revolve around keywords such as sense of dwelling, emphasizing the potential of space as a social tool. From the 1980s to the 1990s, educators and architects began to reflect on the negative effects of functionalism - the sense of isolation in space, the poverty of social interaction, and the neglect of individual psychological needs. As Richard Dober pointed out in his book "*Campus Design*", the space in which students live is itself a teaching instrument, which can influence students' cognition, behavior and relationship establishment.[16]

Therefore, the new generation of student dormitories has gradually introduced the "community-oriented" spatial concept, which advocates promoting group identity through spatial organization, shortening interpersonal distances, and encouraging spontaneous, informal interactive behaviors. Specific strategies include converting corridors from one-way circulation to social nodes, opening the kitchen and living room to the entire floor to share, setting up small public spaces for collective learning and relax...

[14] Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, New York: Doubleday, 1966, p.110–p.124.

[15] Robert Gifford, *Environmental Psychology: Principles and Practice*, 4th ed. Colville, WA: Optimal Books, 2007, p.27–p.30.

[16] Richard P. Dober, *Campus Design*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992, p.178.

Architectural design no longer serves only the basic functions, but begins to intervene in students' psychological and social structures, and constructs "micro-community" through space.

Common Space: from Circulation Nodes to "Community Living Room"

In the periord when functionalism prevailed, dormitory public spaces were often regarded as attached circulation spaces. Corridors and staircases mainly undertake vertical or horizontal ciircualtion functions. The spatial scale and atmosphere are mostly designed based on the principle of efficiency, and lack the possibility of staying and socializing. As mentioned in chapter 1.1 above, the Pavilion Swisse uses the narrowness of the corridor to reduce the chance of talking in the corridor. However, as scholar Gehl said, the existence of space does not automatically produce life. It becomes a real place of life only when space invites people to stay, talk and participate.[17]

It is precisely the integration and influence of multidisciplinary disciplines that common spaces no longer correspond to a certain function alone, but rather integrate multiple uses such as rest, study and entertainment. For example, an open hall can be used as a reading area and can be temporarily transformed into a small lecture venue or art exhibition space. This flexible design conforms to the characteristics of diverse life and activities of students. At the same time, more and more "semi-public-semi-private" gray spaces have appeared in student dormitories, such as shared balcony, open relax room, and small living room on the floor. These spaces are different from pure public places and private rooms, and become an important link in community life.

Just like Simmons Hall, MIT designed by Steven Holl Architects in 1999, distribute lounge at the vertical staircases convergence of each floor, all public activities are avoided from concentrating on the ground floor, and a sense of community between different floors is enhanced. In addition, lots of multi-story voids are combined with vertical staircases to form an internal space system with the characteristics of "dispersed atrium". It not only provides a path for natural lighting and air convection, but also strengthens the visual connection and spatial permeability between different floors in the vertical direction.

[17] Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2011, p.22.

Fig 9. Big Staircase
Photo by Steven Holl Architects, 2002

Fig 10. Small Lounge beside Staircase
Photo by Student who living in, 2004

Fig 11. Atrium as Common Space
Photo by Steven Holl Architects, 2002

Mansfield Street Apartments: Married Student Housing for Yale University — Paul Rudolph

In the 1960s, the number of graduate students enrolled in American universities showed the largest increase in history, with the proportion of married students and families rising[18]. This group puts forward spatial and social needs for residential housing that are completely different from those of undergraduates:

· Require both a relatively independent and quiet family living space
· Establish moderate social connections with neighbors
· Child care and spouse integration into the community

Therefore, there was a core proposition for the design of student dormitories at that time: how to create a "small community" for graduate families in an urban environment. As architects Charles Moore mentioned in his book "*The Place of Houses*", that university housing for married students must support both academic life and the family's need for privacy and community ties[19].

In this context, Paul Rudolph designed a married student dormitory for Yale University in the 1960s. Located in New Haven, the project,

[18] John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 3rd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019, p.301.

[19] Charles Moore, Gerald Allen, and Donlyn Lyndon, *The Place of Houses*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974, p.166-p.178.

Fig 12. Model of Final Scheme
Photo by Joe A. Watson

as a home for married students on campus, not only responds to the growth in demand for family housing in the post-war expansion of higher education, but also reflects the architects' high concern for public spaces and social connections.

Rudolph abandoned the linear layout of the traditional student dormitory "corridor-room" and instead adopted a highly three-dimensional with interlaced stacking spatial combination. The building generally presents an image similar to the "hill", which is composed of a series of staggered volumes, each volume accommodates multiple residential units. The different floors are connected to each other through external terraces, platforms, open stairs and semi-enclosed corridors, forming a rich visual and physical connection. This design breaks the vertical partition between the traditional residential floors and floors, creating a continuous, dynamic spatial experience.

· *Small Courtyard in front of Each Unit Entrance*
The entrance to each unit is not next to the corridor or staircase, but first passes through a small courtyard with moderate privacy. This space is not only an extension of the private space of residents, but also within the sight of neighbors, becoming a buffer zone between the public and private space.
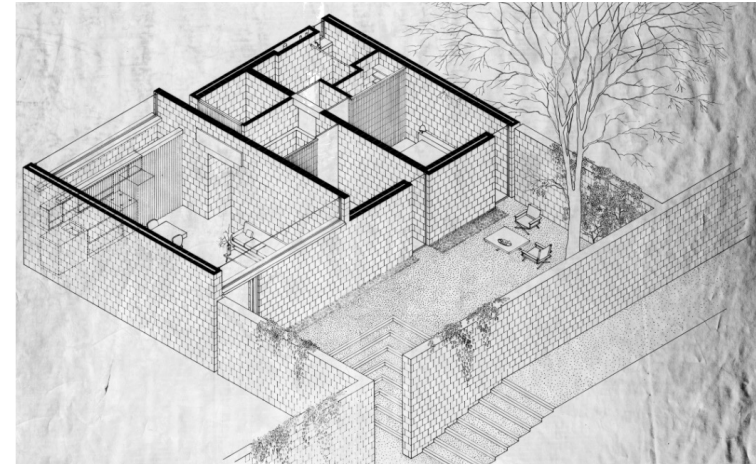

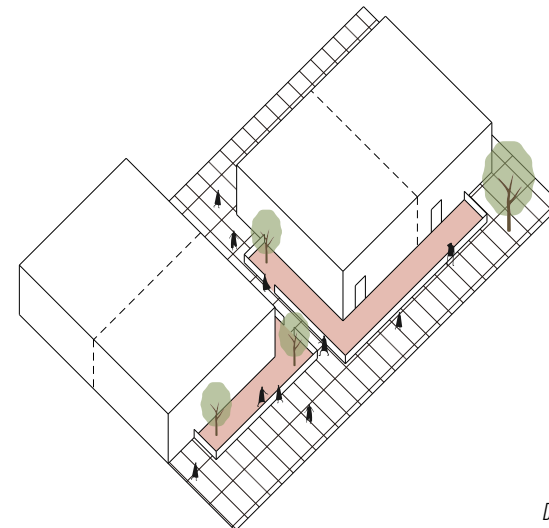Fig 13. Two bedroom unit perspective rendering, roof removed

Diagram by author

- *Large Circulation Space*

Unlike the linear and enclosed spaces that emphasize "fast passing" in typical corridor-style student dormitories, Rudolph gives the circualtion sociality in design. The corridors mostly use open forms, with a slightly larger width than traditional corridors, and form a "stay node", making it easier for students to stop and communicate when passing by. The stair platform is not just a connection point for vertical traffic, but is designed as a small public space with pleasant scale. It is often combined with natural lighting and external landscape, so that people have reason to stay or see the scenery during the process of going up and downstairs.

In the process of returning to private apartments from external public spaces, people do not suddenly enter the closed private space, but through a series of spatial levels that are gradually getting smaller and more familiar to the users.

During the passage, people may briefly talk to their neighbors on the platform of staircase or stay in the small courtyard. These encounters and interactions not only relieve the strangeness of the space, but also psychologically smooth the boundary between public and private. Through this spatial layout that progresses from public to private, Rudolph transforms the usually overlooked circulation space into a "living room" that has both social potential and privacy protection functions, reflecting the meticulous practice of the "community-oriented" concept in space.

Mansfield Street Apartments not only solves the residential function, but also is a social experiment. Students from multiple families living together, from different disciplines and cultural backgrounds gather here to form a highly diverse micro-community.
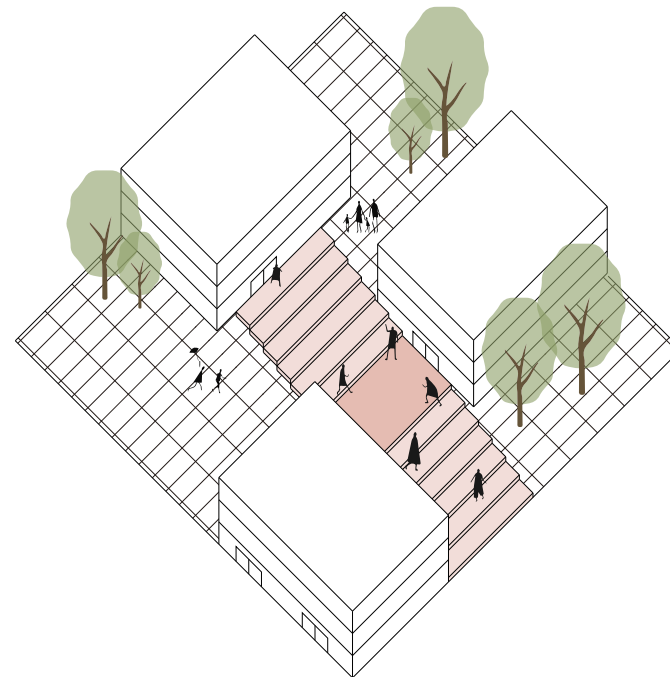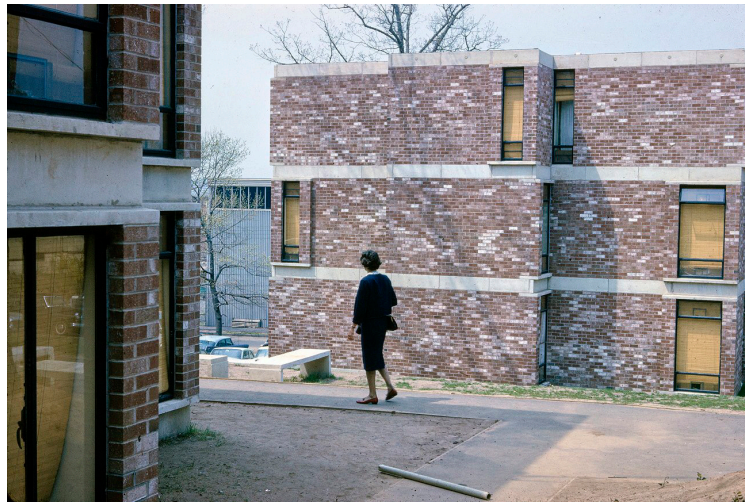

Diagram by author

Fig 14. Image of Circulation Space in the Site
Photo after completed construction

Fig 15. Courtyard for Children
Photo after completed construction

1.3 Hybridization (2000s-present)

"First life, then spaces, then buildings — the other way around never works." [20]

Entering the 21st century, the spatial organization of student dormitories is undergoing a profound transformation driven by changes in sociaty structure, technology innovation and diversified lifestyles.

First, higher education is undergoing a transition from elitist to popular or even universal[21], with an increasing number of students from a variety of backgrounds entering higher education, including international students, students from low-income families, continuing educators, and non-traditional age learners. This demographic diversity makes it difficult to meet today's needs with the traditional accommodation model, and accommodation spaces need to be more adaptable and inclusive.

Family structures and youth lifestyles are also becoming more diverse. Many young people choose to delay marriage and parenthood or remain single, placing greater emphasis on individual privacy, self-expression and quality of life. They expect dormitories not only to provide basic housing functions, but also to support a balance between personal development and social interaction. Identity mobility has also become more prominent, for example, some students may frequently switch roles between part-time jobs, internships, and academic exchanges, which puts a higher demand on the flexibility and composite functionality of the dormitory space. These social changes are driving the transformation of dormitories from a unified spatial model to a diverse spatial organization.

At the same time, technological innovation is also profoundly reshaping the design concept and use of student dormitories. The rapid development of information and communication technology has made Wi-Fi, Internet of Things (IoT), smart home systems, widely used in campus[22], which has changed students' learning mode, living habits and even the mode of interaction between people. Modern dormitories are often equipped with high-speed internet, smart access control, energy consumption monitoring and

[20] Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People.* Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010, p. 115.

[21] Trow, Martin. "Reflections on the Transition from Elite to Mass to Universal Access." *International Handbook of Higher Education*, 2006, p.243–p.280.

[22] Cavus, Nadire, Seipati Elizabeth Mrwebi, Imran Ibrahim, Temiloluwa Modupeola, and Albert Y. Reeves. "Internet of Things and Its Applications to Smart Campus: A Systematic Literature Review". *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM)* 16 (23). 2022.p.17-p.35. https://doi.org/10.3991/i-jim.v16i23.36215.

shared equipment management systems to provide residents with a more efficient and personalized living experience. These technologies are pushing the student living environment from a closed housing unit to an open, intelligent, and sustainable learning and living community.

On the basis of community orientation, the development of student dormitories has further evolved a hybridization spatial model. Hybridization is not only a simple superposition of spatial functions, but also reflects a pursuit of flexibility and functional integration. Scholar Kim Dovey proposed, "Hybrid spaces are those that blur the boundaries between public and private, between formal and informal, between consumption and production."[23]

Under this trend, student dormitories are given richer functions and meaning than before. Living, learning, socializing, creating, leisure and even entrepreneurship activities are all integrated into the same spatial system. At the same time, the design of contemporary student dormitories is also very inclusive to many different cultures, such as adding prayer rooms provide for religious students.

Therefore, the hybrid student dormitory in the 21st century can be regarded as the inheritance and transcendence of the concept of "community-oriented". It retains the importance of community interaction and sharing space emphasized in community-oriented, while introducing multifunctional integration and digital management to adapt to the diverse and changing lifestyles of modern students.

Functional Overlap, Adjustable Privacy, Flexible Identity

In contemporary student dormitory space, function is no longer the result of linear, static division, but is seen as a fluid state that can be redefined and activated.

The same physical space, at different points in time and in the hands of different users, may take on completely different functions and attributes. For example, a unit may be used for intensive study during the daytime and transformed into a place for socializing or lounging at night; the same shared kitchen or corridor may be transformed into a temporary workspace or discussion area under the leadership of some tenants. More importantly, residents can define the degree of openness and the boundaries of privacy through moving furniture, flexible partitions, lighting control, and even digital tools (e.g., reservation systems, virtual access control), thus realizing adjustable privacy. While the distinction

[23] Kim Dovey, *Becoming Places: Urbanism/ Architecture/ Identity/ Power*, London: Routledge, 2010, p.16.

between common spaces and individual spaces in traditional student dormitories is often predetermined and fixed by the architects, in hybrid dormitories the residents become the participants or even the dominant players in the definition of space, which makes the spatial boundaries no longer a stable physical demarcation line, but a dynamically adjustable social outcome. This makes the spatial boundary not a stable physical demarcation, but a dynamically adjustable social outcome.[24]

This flexibility is also about the student's flexible identity and self-positioning in the space. Contemporary students' living space is not only a container for their bodies, but also a living interface that reflects their social networks, rhythms of life, and individual preferences. The adaptability of the space allows each resident to choose different modes of space use according to his/her own habits and social strategies, thus constructing a personalized living experience.

BaseCamp Lyngby is a large student dormitory complex located in the north of Copenhagen, Denmark, designed by Danish architectural, Lars Gitz Architects in 2017 and to be completed and put into use in 2020. Taking it as an example, the rooftop space is no longer like the Pavilion Suisse designed by Corbusier 90 years ago, which only provided a common space for students, but the rooftop green-

way of BaseCamp Lyngby not only provides a common space for students to enjoy the landscape and leisure, but also used as a jogging track, a social platform, and even a shared space for the neighbors, reinforcing a sense of identity as city residents rather than just campus students.
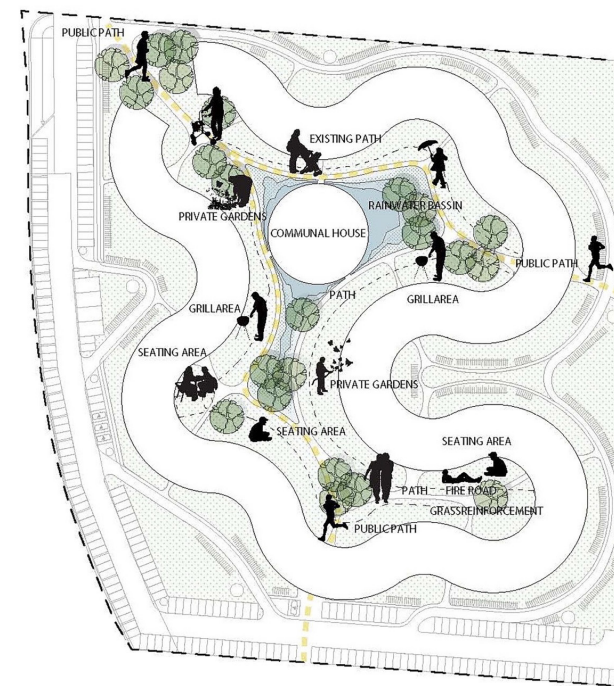

Fig 16. Diagram of Different Function of the Rooftop Greenway
Draw by Lars Gitz Arkitekter
https://landezine-award.com/skovbrynet-basecamp/

[24] Dovey, Kim, and Stephen Wood. "Public/Private Urban Interfaces: Type, Adaptation, Assemblage." *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 8 (1),2014. p.1–p.16. doi:10.1080/1754917 5.2014.891151.

The building is also equipped with a large number of open lounge areas that can be used for studying, socializing and small events, as well as a shared kitchen and a projection room with multimedia equipment. These spaces can be used individually on weekdays and quickly transformed into small community events on weekends. Each living unit is a full-featured micro-home, with en-suite bathrooms and kitchens for basic privacy, while users can decide how much they want to be involved in communal life, from semi-private circulation and shared kitchens, to open reading areas and rooftop greenways.

Tietgenkollegiet — Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects

Tietgenkollegiet, located in the Ørestad district of Copenhagen, Denmark, has a conspicuous circular shape, inspired by traditional southern Chinese Hakka architecture,[25] and is designed by Danish architects Lundgaard & Tranberg in 2006.

The building uses a continuous circular plan to enclose a large open atrium that serves as a level of common space open to all residents throughout the day and accommodates a variety of activi-

Fig 17. Image of the Entrance of the Rooftop Greenway
Photo by Lars Gitz Arkitekter
https://landezine-award.com/skovbrynet-basecamp/

Fig 18. Image of Tietgenkollegiet
Photo by Jens M. Lindhe
https://www.ltarkitekter.dk/tietgen-en

[25] Christina Tækker, "Som at få et knus," *COWIfeature*, no. 12, November 2005, p.21.

ties such as exhibitions, concerts, and communal meals. The architects intended this area to be a "social core" to reinforce informal interactions and spatial identity among the students.

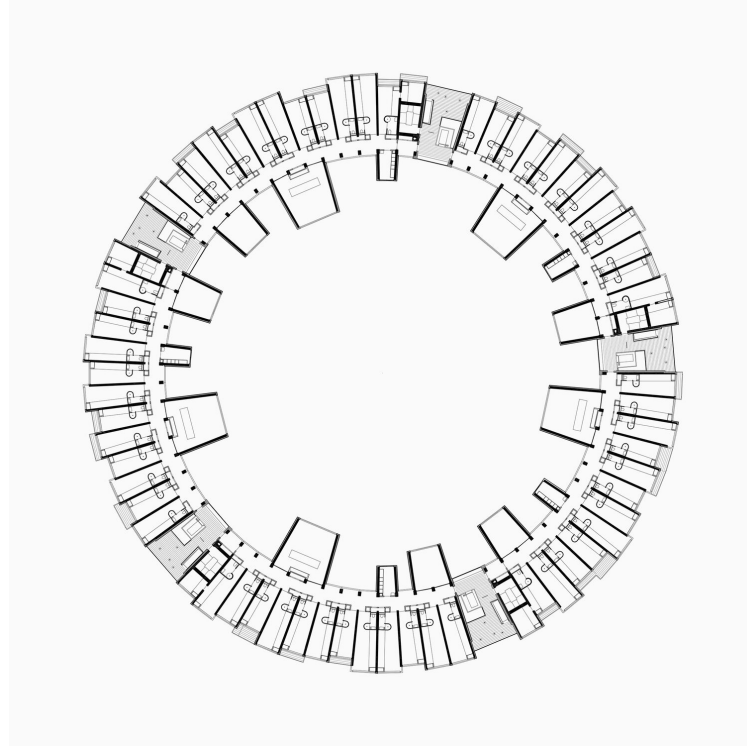The cylindrical volume completes itself and orients itself around the inner courtyard. The upper levels are organized with residences along the perimeter with views to the surroundings, while the communal functions are oriented toward the inner courtyard. The communal areas find expression as dramatic, projecting forms pointing inward to the courtyard. [26]
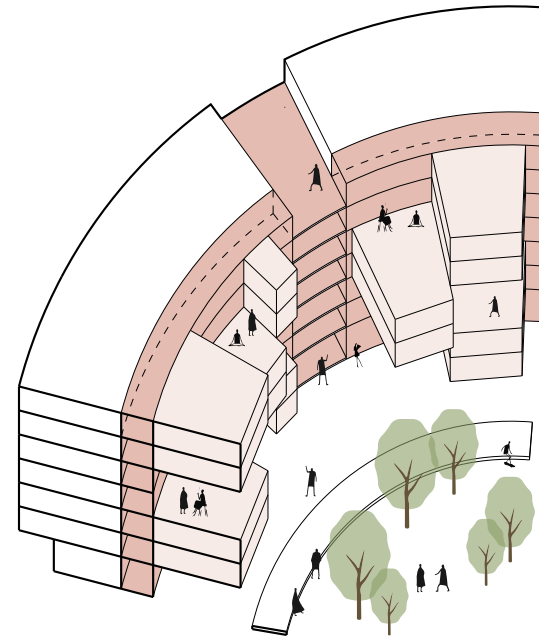

Fig 19. 4th Floor Plan
Draw by Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects

Diagram by author

[26] "Tietgen Dormitory / Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects", 07 Feb 2014. *ArchDaily*.

Around the atrium, the architects have modularized the living units into five cylindrical parts, each of which is equipped with a common kitchen, a living room and a staircase, constituting a secondary common space. These kitchens are not only cooking places, but also "community cores" around dining, learning and socializing, and become daily platforms connecting individuals and communities.

Between the entrance of each dormitory unit and the kitchen,

spacious corridors and semi-open spaces such as balconies facing the windows are designed, so that the building builds up a kind of "progressive communality" at the spatial level - from the highly open atrium, to the kitchens with socialization attributes, to the corridors with selective openness, to the corridors with selective openness, and to the corridors with selective openness. From the highly open atrium, to the social kitchen, to the corridors with selective openness, and finally to the individual rooms.
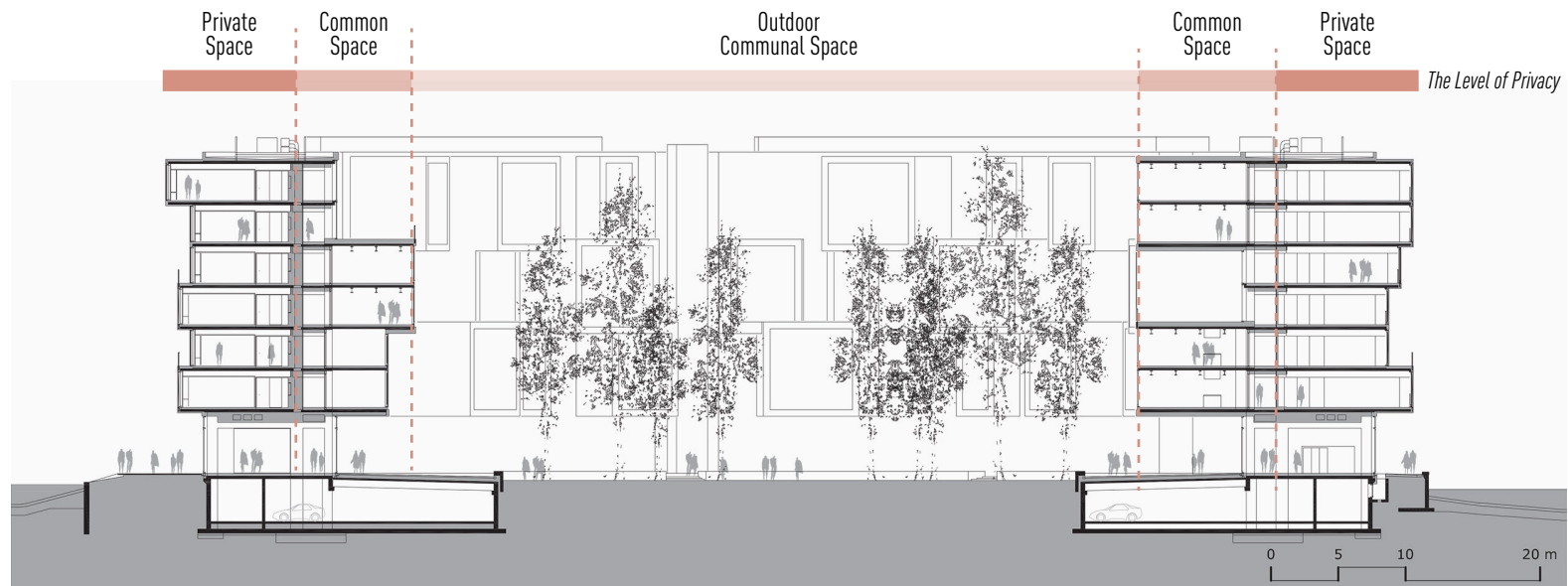

Fig 20. Section (with analysis by author)
Draw by Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects

Fig 21. Image of the Life in the Courtyard
Photo by Jens M. Lindhe
https://www.ltarkitekter.dk/tietgen-en

Fig 22. Image of the Interior
Photo by Jens M. Lindhe
https://www.ltarkitekter.dk/tietgen-en

In summary, since the 20th century, the design of student dormitories has gone through a functionalist phase that emphasizes functional zoning and privacy, a community-oriented phase that focuses on community belonging and shared common space, and a hybrid phase that takes into account flexibility and multiple identities. This evolution reflects the changing needs of students' lives and educational concepts, and the relationship between common space and private space is constantly being reconstructed.

In the functionalist era, the boundaries between them were clearly defined and privacy protection was emphasized; in the community-oriented phase, the boundaries were weakened, and interaction and social integration among students were promoted through abundant shared space; and in the hybrid phase, the common and private nature of the space showed dynamic adjustment and overlapping characteristics, and users were able to share the space through the layout of furniture and activities. In the hybrid phase, the public and private aspects of the space are dynamically adjusted and overlapped, with users continuously defining the boundaries and identity attributes of the space through furniture layouts, activity arrangements, and technological means.

However, despite the trend of diversification and integration in the development of global student dormitory, there are significant differences in the evolution paths of different countries and regions due to differences in historical backgrounds, cultural traditions and institutional environments. As a country with a unique educational system and architectural tradition, the development of student dormitory in Italy has shown different rhythms and characteristics from those in Europe and the United States in terms of time course and spatial practice.

In the next chapters, the thesis will focus on the characteristics of common and private spaces in Italian student dormitory, especially in Turin, explore how they find a balance between functionality and community, and analyze the design and use of common and personal spaces.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMON AND PRIVATE SPACES IN ITALIAN STUDENT DORMITORY
between Heritage Walls and Modern Needs

This chapter will focuse on the unique characteristics of common and private spaces in student dormitories in the context of Italy's specific culture.

The spatial morphology of Italian student dormitories shows a unique evolution trajectory within the global macro-trend of higher education spatial development.
Unlike the student community model that has been rapidly emerging and becoming standardized since the second half of the twentieth century in Northern Europe, North America or East Asia, Italian student dormitory is based more on the renovation and reuse of historical buildings.

This model not only directly influences the ratio, scale and layout of common space and private space on the physical level, but also invisibly continues the cultural context and spatial narrative contained in the historical buildings, thus creating an environment of historical ambience and modern needs. This creates a continuous and complex tension between historical atmosphere and modern needs.

In this process, the form of common space is often restricted and guided by the original architectural layout - for example, traditional elements such as atriums, arcades, and monastic corridors retain their openness and socialization after functional renovation; whereas the definition of private space is more often realized through the re-separation of the original rooms or light renovation, which makes private space, although having basic independence, often limited in scale, sound insulation, lighting and other aspects.

This chapter will explore the structural characteristics and interrelationships between common space and private spaces in Italian student dormitories from three perspectives: uniqueness of culture, spatial function and boundary management, and transitional space.

2.1 Uniqueness of Culture

"Place, time, and culture create that architecture, instead of another." [27]

The spatial form of Italian student dormitories (Collegi) is deeply influenced by historical architectural heritage, religious and aristocratic traditions, and socio-cultural power structures. Many of the dormitories were not entirely new, but were transformed from old monasteries, noble houses or educational institutions, resulting in a spatial layout that retains the forms of medieval and Renaissance communal living, and emphasizes the structural characteristics of the intense tension between common and private spaces.

At the same time, Italy has a deep piazza culture and familism culture, so the spatial logic of the student dormitory is not only a single product of functionalism. The piazza culture promotes the "weak ties"[28] of students to communicate in the common space, and the familism makes most students pay attention to their own privacy environment. Therefore, in Italian student dormitories, common space is like "piazza" to the city, which is extrovert, while private space is an extension of "home" and is introvert.

Central collectivity: the symbolic common space

Early traditional collegi often adopted a public core layout featuring "courtyard-cloister-chapel-refectory," where monastic-style cloisters, refettories, chapels, and library spaces were typically concentrated along the central axis of the building, forming both a visual and functional focal point. This arrangement served not only as a physical framework for living and learning but also carried symbolic significance: the courtyard and cloister reinforced daily public activities, while the refectory and chapel formed the collective spiritual and disciplinary core.

This results in common spaces that are often large, have high ceilings, and are beautifully decorated, but have relatively single functions and are mainly group activities. The private space is extremely simplified, mostly single or double rooms, with an area of between 6 and 10 square meters, and the configuration is simple, only meeting the functions of rest and storage, and most of

[27] Petranzan, Margherita. *Gae Aulenti*. New York: Rizzoli.1996.

[28] Granovetter, M. S. The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), p1360-p1380. 1973.

the living and learning activities are completed in the public area.

For example, the oldest surviving Almo Collegio Borromeo (1561-1564), designed by the Italian architect Pellegrino Tibaldi, created a place for public life with its square courtyard and encir-
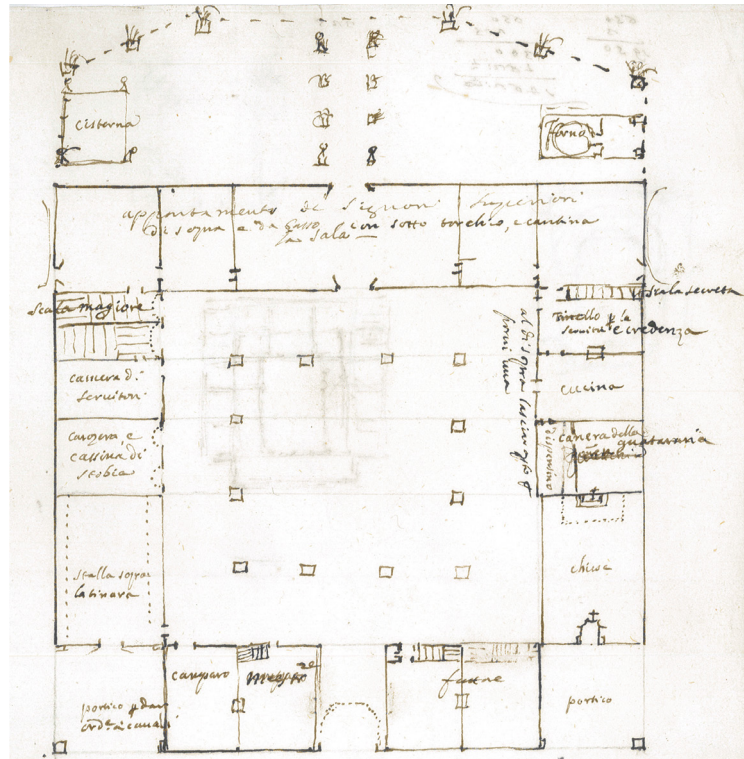
cling double corridors, appearing solemn and compact.
In addition, in the common spaces, such as refettorio, chapels, and libraries, tall spatial scales and rich decorations are common, which not only satisfy the ceremonial function, but also strengthen the sense of community.

Fig 23. Hand Drawing of the First Floor of Collegio Borromeo
http://www.collegioborromeo.eu/biblioteca/storia/tempi-e-luoghi/

Fig 24. Image of the Hall of Frescoes (Salone degli Affreschi)
https://www.collegioborromeo.it/visita-il-collegio/

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the college has been modernizing its structure and technology: building electricity, heating and telephone systems. An additional floor, which is called "Iperuranio", was built to be used as the whole student dormitory, and at the same time, there are functional transformation of large areas of the building,such as transforming basements into libraries, multimedia study rooms or other common spaces.[29]

A similar spatial layout will be reflected in the next chapter of the analysis of the student dormitory in Turin, 3.3.4 Residenza Universitaria EDISU Verdi, where the same courtyard inside and surrounding outdoor corridors establish a place as common space, while the interior of the building adopts a closed corridor, and only some large common spaces are set up at the traffic nodes for refettorio or study rooms. At the same time, the design compresses the transitional spaces, and although the later renovation increases the interaction between the courtyard and the outdoor corridor, the students' life is still dominated by "room-corridor-refettorio". This also echoes the traditional college-style dormitories type space mentioned in chapter 1.1.

Despite the many renovations made in modern Italy to increase spatial flexibility, it is still impossible to break away from the structural framework of the original old buildings.

[29] Collegio Borromeo, "Storia del Collegio," *Collegio Borromeo*, accessed August 3rd, 2025. https://www.collegioborromeo.it/storia-del-collegio/.

"Piazza" and "Home" inside dormitory

The spatial characteristics of Italian student dormitories not only stem from basic functional needs, but also reflect the understanding of "public" and "private" in Italian social culture.

As a collective living place for young people, the spatial organization of the dormitory presents a kind of "micro city". The common space corresponds to the city's piazza culture, while the private space echoes the familism culture. This continuation makes the student dormitory as a social space that connects the individual and the collective, learning and life, open and sheltered.

In Italy, Piazza is not only the geometric center of the city, but also the place of social relations and the symbolic stage. Since the Middle Ages, the square has served as a space where politics, religion and daily life meet, carrying the visibility of the public identity and social behavior of urban residents. Each city has a square that is important to the city, such as Piazza della Signoria in Florence, in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, a symbol of Renaissance urban politics; Piazza del Campo in Siena, still maintains the twice-annual "Palio di Siena", that originated in the Middle Ages, and is an important place for the citizen living.

As architectural historian Saverio Muratori has pointed out, Italy's

urban morphology has always revolved around the hierarchical relationship of "piazza-street-courtyard", in which the "piazza" is the starting point and destination of all social activities.[30] In such a spatial culture, common space is not just a place for urban activities, but a concrete embodiment of social structure: a person gains a sense of social presence by being seen by others.

This social visibility constitutes the core feature of Italian spatial culture. As Richard Sennett emphasizes in "*The Fall of Public Man*", the tradition of the piazza in Europe embodies an aesthetic of visibility in which the identity of the individual and the order of society are shaped through interaction in public spaces.[31] This openness is not only reflected in political rallies or religious ceremonies, but also permeates the scale of everyday life: in cafes, balconies, corridors and even on the steps in front of doors, people maintain social networks through face-to-face encounters and small talk.

Based on this social logic of visibility, the common space in the dormitory, whether it is a shared kitchen, study room, common living room, or central courtyard, is often designed as a kind of place for meeting.

The spatial organization, scale relationship and openness of these spaces all echo the social logic of the city piazza.

In the Collegio Po in Turin, renovated by Luca Moretto, the entrance has full height glass walls, as well as those for the kitchens and study rooms. There is visual continuity between one environment and the next.[32] The main reception has been moved and placed more centrally, making it easier to control access and the common living areas, allowing students to constantly make eye contact as they walk through.

Fig 25. Image of the Entrance
Photo by Luca Moretto Architect, 2015, p.17

[30] Maretto, Marco. "Saverio Muratori: Towards a Morphological School of Urban Design". *Urban Morphology* 17 (2):93-106. 2013. https://-doi.org/10.51347/-jum.v17i2.3990.

[31] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977, ch.1-2.

[32] Luca Moretto, *L'architettura di un collegio Einaudi a Torino*. Firenze : Aión , 2015. p14.

Fig 26. Image of the New Hall, the Main Desk, Entrance and Other Associated Areas
Photo by Luca Moretto Architect

Fig 26. Image of the New Hall, the Main Desk, Entrance and Other Associated Areas
Photo by Luca Moretto Architect, 2015, p.18-19

This spatial strategy is consistent with the theory mentioned in Chapter 1.2 , "human interaction occurs in the space" proposed by Jan Gehl in "Life Between Buildings", which is not in the form of space, but in its support for interpersonal encounters.

Therefore, it can be considered that the common space of Italian student dormitories is not simply a functional area, but a miniature piazza under cultural heritage. It continues the social visibility in Italian cities, so that students can still experience piazza life in the buildings of daily life.
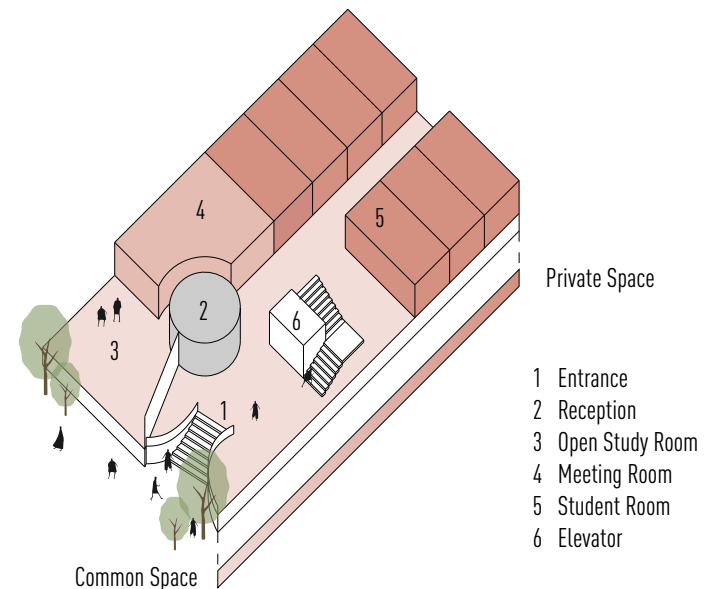

Private Space

1   Entrance
2   Reception
3   Open Study Room
4   Meeting Room
5   Student Room
6   Elevator

Common Space

Diagram by author

In contrast to the fervent communality is the "familism" that is deeply rooted in the Italy society structure.

As historian Paul Ginsborg points out, the family is not only an emotional and economic support unit in modern Italian society, but also an order of life, which profoundly shapes individual social behavior through intergenerational relationships, eating habits, and space use patterns.[33]

The family is not just a vessel for kinship, but an institutional field that continues to produce social meaning and cultural identity. In Italy, the family is seen as the core of emotions and identities, while the public space is often seen as an external area to be defended.[34] Therefore, the extension of the home is not only reflected in residential spaces, but also has a profound impact on how people understand, use and recreate places for collective life, such as student dormitories.

For many students who are away from home for a long time for the first time, the small private room in the dormitory may assume the psychological replacement and spatial extension of the home function. Environmental psychology research shows that people personalize their living spaces to construct identity, maintain psychological stability, and gain a sense of control.[35]

In the context of Italian culture, students' needs for a sense of boundaries (sensitivity to physical intrusion), control (dominance of light, sound, furnishings), and personalized expression of private space are not only due to functional needs, but also expressions of cultural habits. As sociologist Pierre Bourdieu said, habitus is a social structure internalized in the body.[36] It shapes people's perception and practice of home, making specific spatial preferences and usage patterns a way of reproducing cultural identity.

This home-habitus space is projected on Italian student domitories, such as the CAMPLUS, a network of student domitories operating in several Italian cities, like Turin, Bologna, Milan, Rome..., with a clear emphasis on "accoglienza" and "vita familiare", while also emphasizing "more than a house but home".

In CAMPLUS dormitories, the building layout is usually made up of a clear "home-community" hierarchy, as seen in the Chapter 3.3.1 CAMPLUS Torino MOI and Chapter 3.3.3 CAMPLUS Torino Regio Parco. Students' private rooms are highly independent, such as en-suite bathrooms, small desks, and personalized storage systems, while the common spaces are a continuum of "shared kitchen-dining room-living room", creating a social rhythm similar to that of a family.

Students often collaborate to prepare meals in the shared kitchen and gather in the living room for conversations. Within this familiar

[33] Paul Ginsborg, *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. p68–95.

[34] Banfield, Edward C. *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958, p. 41-57.

[35] Altman, Irwin, and Carol M. Werner, eds. *Home Environments*. New York: Plenum Press, 1985, ch.1.

[36] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p78-86.

and informal daily rhythm, they attain emotional stability and a sense of belonging. In other words, dormitories have evolved into spaces for the social reproduction of family life, representing a modern form that seeks a cultural equilibrium between the public and the private.

Taking the CAMPLUS Roma San Pietro dormitory, designed by Roselli Architetti Associati and renovated in 2022 as example, its spatial logic also reflects the modern extension of the Italian family space organization: small-scale private units and large-scale common space, by adding a semi-open shared kitchen with a grid and a living room with flexible partitions for eating and gathering, creating a socializable but not losing boundary atmosphere. This is in line with the core of daily communication in the trinity of "living room-refettories-kitchen" in traditional Italian houses, and this spatial strategy not only reflects the cultural continuation of familialism, but also responds to the living expectation of modern students for autonomy and connectivity.
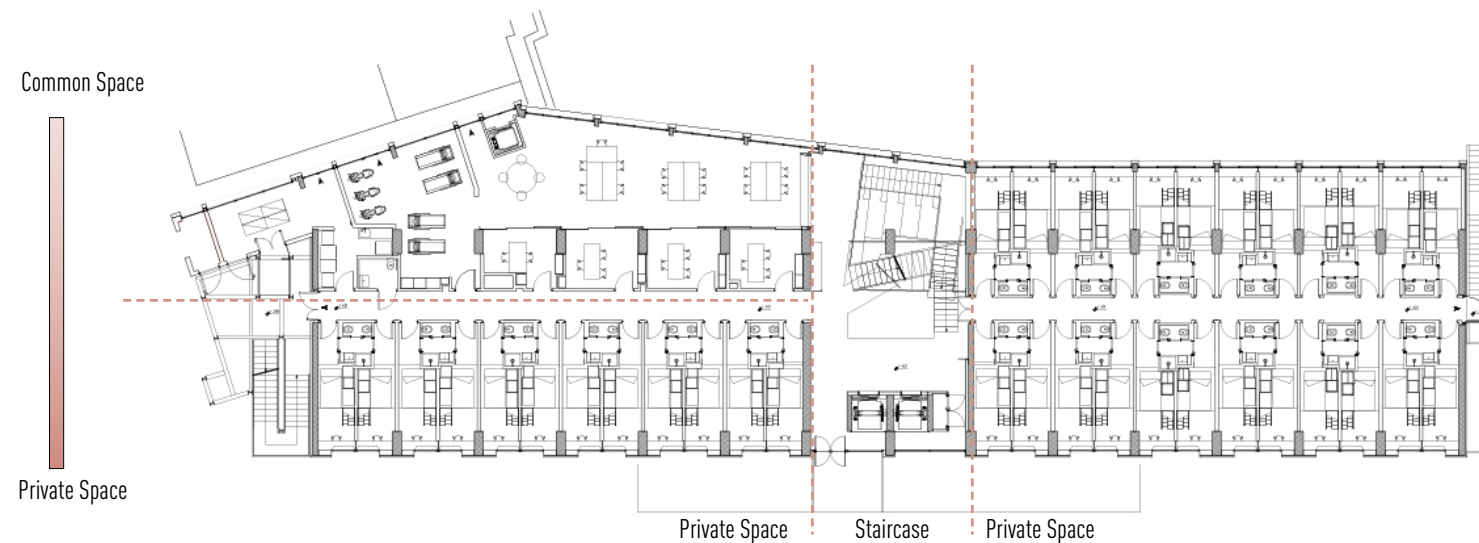
Common Space

Private Space

Private Space   Staircase   Private Space

Fig 27. First Floor Plan
Drawn by Roselli Architetti Associati, 2023

Fig 28. Image of Living Room and Shared Kitchen on the First Floor
Photo by Luigi Filetici, 2022

Fig 29. Image of Individual Private Room
Photo by Luigi Filetici, 2022

2.2 Spatial Function and Boundary Management

"A building is not a building. A building, in the sense of walls, floors, empty spaces, rooms, materials, etc., is only the outline of a potential: it is only made relevant by the group of people it is intended for." [37]

The previous section analyzed the formation logic of Italian student dormitory spaces in the social and cultural context, that is, common spaces often carry the symbol of urban spirit and collectivity, while private spaces continue the intimacy and shelter characteristics of family culture. The two are not diametrically opposed, but form a mutually penetrating relationship at the spatial level.

Common space does not exclude the occurrence of intimacy, and private space is not a completely isolated individual field. Although many student dormitories renovated from existing buildings are still limited by structural conditions, resulting in relatively cramped private spaces and concentrated common spaces on traffic nodes, designers generally reconstruct the social connection and spatial interaction between students through transitional spaces with semi-public attributes such as courtyards, corridors or terraces.

For example, the Residenza Universitaria EDISU Verdi in Turin, which will be analyzed in the next chapter 3.3.4, exemplifies this design orientation of creating interactive spaces under confined conditions.

It can be seen that the spatial organization of Italian student dormitories is not only a functional "residence-learning" partition, but should be understood as a deep cultural expression and social practice. Its spatial boundaries are neither open nor closed in a single way, but are continuously "managed", "negotiated" and "reproduced" in multiple physical structures and social mechanisms. This "boundary management" is not an administrative or institutional regulation, but a socially constructed process embedded in architectural design strategies and daily spatial practices. Through this process, the common space and private space in the dormitory are dynamically balanced, thus reflecting the unique Italian socio-cultural logic and concept of living.

[37] Giancarlo De Carlo, "Architecture Is Too Important to Leave to the Architects: A Conversation with Giancarlo De Carlo," interview by Ole Bouman and Roemer van Toorn, *Archis*. October 7, 1987.

Collegi Universitari di Urbino — Giancarlo De Carlo

In the 1960s, during the wave of expansion of the Italian education system and the modernization of society, architect Giancarlo De Carlo was commissioned to plan Collegi Universitari di Urbino. The formation of Collegi Universitari di Urbino is closely related to the historical structure of the city.

The main idea he proposed was for student dormitories to become part of the city rather than isolated campus appendages, and the dormitory area was seen as an extension of the city rather than a separate campus.[38] Located in the hilly terrain of the city, the dormitory complex, including Tridente, Aquilone, Vela and Serpentine..., is laid out along the slopes of the Colle dei Cappuccini, forming a multi-level spatial system with steps, corridors, terraces and open courtyards, which echoes the topographical characteristics of the Italian hill city and creates a continuous transition zone between the public and the private, forming a complex that echoes the scale of the streets and alleys of the old town.

De Carlo sees the dormitory as the infrastructure of life and advocates for social learning through common spaces, like cafeterias, study halls, squares, corridors.

Common spaces and private rooms are not antagonists, but are connected by a series of transitional thresholds. This spatial mechanism allows students to gradually adjust their social distance in the process of walking and communicating, reflecting a social living form between the family and the city.

· Fluidity Spatial Organization

The "Collegi" complex unfolds according to the hilly terrain and follows the natural undulations of the terrain, forming a decentralized spatial organization. The building volume is intertwined with each other through steps, ramps, corridors and terraces to form a

Fig 30. Image of the "Collegi"
Photo by Fulvio Palma, 2018

[38] Borgarino, Maria Paola. *Giancarlo De Carlo "Collegi" in Urbino: Conservation Plan*. The Getty Foundation, 2018, p.34.

multi-level and continuous spatial system. This topographic spatial logic breaks the geometric order of traditional campus dormitory architecture, allowing residents, learning and communication activities to coexist in an organic circulation.[39]

As one of the representative works of "participatory architecture", De Carlo emphasized that the building should serve the action logic of the residents rather than the formal logic of the designer,[40] so the spatial organization of the Collegi Universitari di Urbino does

not unfold from the center or axis, but from the relationship between students' daily paths and activities. He calls this approach the spontaneous order of social space, that is, the spatial order should grow naturally from human interactions, rather than from a preset functional framework.

As Kenneth Frampton points out in his review of Team X in his book "Modern Architecture: A Critical History", Giancarlo De Carlo's architecture refuses to reduce architecture to a matter of form of

[39] Borgarino, Maria Paola. *Giancarlo De Carlo "Collegi" in Urbino: Conservation Plan*. The Getty Foundation, 2018, p.117-121.

[40] De Carlo, Giancarlo. "An Architecture of Participation." *Perspecta,* 17, 1980, p.74–79. https://-doi.org/10.2307/1567006.

Fig 31. Masterplan and Longitudinal Section
Drawn by Giancarlo De Carlo

Fig 32. Image of the "Vela", View from the Terraces Roof
Photo by Antonio Garbasso

composition and structure, but rather sees it as a materialized expression of social processes.[41]

In this context, the common space and private space are not completely separated, but form a gradual social gradient through a series of spatial layers, like semi-open balconies, corridors, step squares.

· Porous Boundary Strategy

In the Collegi di Urbino, Giancarlo De Carlo treated the "boundary" with great meticulousness, that is, between different areas, such as common space and private space, natural and artificial...
In his design, he does not simply divide the space with walls or enclosures, but makes the boundaries blurred, permeable, and communicative through architectural forms, paths, level changes, and view guidance, so that students can naturally switch and interact between common space and private space, building and environment.
Because, for him, boundaries are not walls of division, but a medium of social relations – they regulate the interaction between the individual and the collective, indoors and outdoors, and the city and the landscape.[42]

Dormitory units never exist in isolation, but are always embedded in a system that is visible and accessible to each other. Each room is connected to the outside through an open porch or corridor and a shared terrace, allowing students to maintain their individual space while always being within the confines of a sense of community. This semi-permeability of vision and hearing will also make the residents constantly aware of the existence of others, so as to construct a sense of community through spatial experience.[43]

Fig 33. Image of the Side façade of two of the three "arms" of the "Tridente"
Photo by Antonio Garbasso

[41] Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, 4th ed.London: Thames & Hudson, 2007. p269-279.

[42] De Carlo, Giancarlo. 1970. "Architecture's Public." *Architecture and Participation*, edited by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu, and Jeremy Till. London: Elsevier, 2005. p3-22.

[43] Spence, Charles. "Senses of place: architectural design for the multisensory mind", *Cognitive Research Principles and Implications*, 5(1):46, 2020. DOI:10.1186/s41235-020-00243-4

Moreover, De Carlo's border strategy is not motivated by formal ambiguity, but by an expressive mechanism of social processes.

In "An Architecture of Participation", he clearly argues that architecture should not delimit the boundaries of human behavior, but should allow behavior to be freely generated in space.

In Collegi di Urbino, this concept is realized through a multi-layered spatial organization: from the communal canteen, the ramp, the square to the shared balcony of the dormitory on each floor, the thickness of the boundary is given social meaning.It is a potential field of encounter, stay and collaboration, rather than an interface of isolation.

Layers of terraces and ramps intertwine the interior and exterior spaces. The continuity of space is not only visual, but also behavioral. The path of students from the room to the corridor and then to the stairs and public terrace is also a kind of social accessibility. This is similar to the period of the "Community-Oriented Turn" in the evolution of student dormitories mentioned in Chapter 1.2.

The "Colle"

Taking the earliest and most well-preserved individual building "Colle" in the building complex as the analysis object, the characteristics of its common and private spaces, as well as the spatial

[44] Borgarino, Maria Paola. *Giancarlo De Carlo "Collegi" in Urbino: Conservation Plan*. The Getty Foundation, 2018, p.129.

Level 1 | RESIDENCES

Level 2 | RESIDENCES
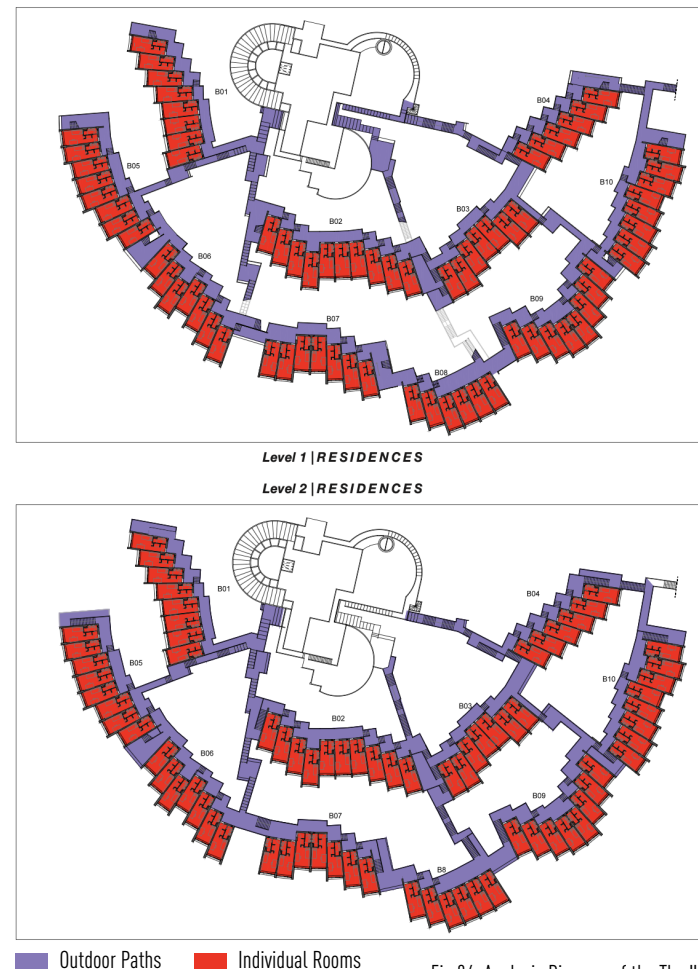
Outdoor Paths   Individual Rooms

Fig 34. Analysis Diagram of the The "Colle"
Drawn by Politecnico di Milano, ABC Department of Architecture, Built environment and Construction engineering

functions and boundary management, can be discussed more specifically.

In the overall layout of "Colle", the service building located at the core serves as the center of the common space, gathering main shared functions such as lounges, meeting rooms, and libraries... The dormitory units are arranged in a circular shape around it, built along the slope according to the terrain height difference. Through multiple spatial elements such as corridors, passageways, and terraces, it is interconnected with the common space and forms a continuous spatial network.

This topography-based spatial organization allows students to visually extend to the next floor of the roof greenery, a kind of semi-public space, even if they are in their individual room. It can be seen that the building reflects the same emphasis on the concept of "community" in the design of student dormitories at that period. The spatial relationship progresses from the urban fragment layer by layer to the green space, corridor, terrace, and finally to the individual room, forming a continuous transition from collectivity to private. In other words, the student dormitory is not an isolated living vessel, but an organic whole that interacts with the city and the natural environment, continuing the tradition of urban continuity in Italian architecture.[45]

[45] De Carlo, Giancarlo. "An Architecture of Participation." *Perspecta 17*, 1980, p.74–79. https://-doi.org/10.2307/1567 006.
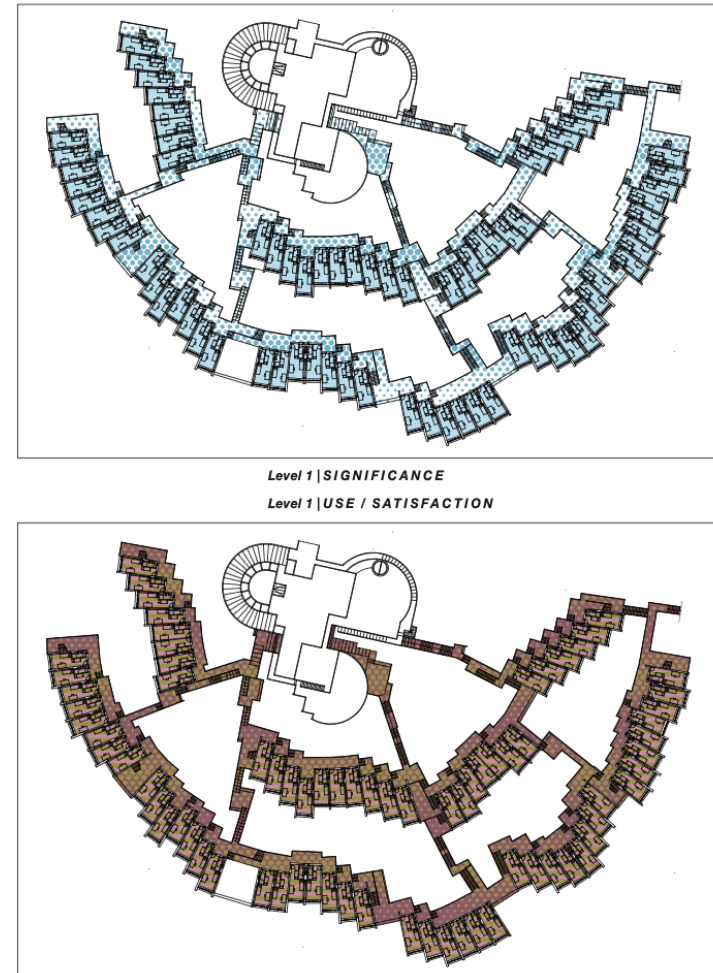

Level 1 | SIGNIFICANCE
Level 1 | USE / SATISFACTION

Fig 35. Analysis Diagram of the The "Colle"
Drawn by Università degli studi di Urbino CARLO BO DESP

At the same time, according to the "LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE, USE AND SATISFACTION" analyzed by the Università degli studi di Urbino CARLO BO DESP (Department of Economics Society Politics), we can know that students have a high level of satisfaction with the use of corridors whose main function is circulation. [46]
This also illustrates the success of the student dormitory's experience-centered design. The blurring of boundaries weakens the binary opposition between common space and private space by setting up semi-open corridors, terraces and permeable interfaces, making the boundaries of space more negotiable and open.

Overall, the "Collegi" represent a socially generated order, that is, their spatial forms are not top-down formal compositions, but derive from the behavior and communication logic of the students (occupants), reflecting the openness of life experience and the variability of space use. De Carlo transforms the dormitory into a city within dwelling that creates the possibility of self-generation and continuous evolution of the student community through non-linear spatial organization.

[46] Borgarino, Maria Paola. *Giancarlo De Carlo "Collegi" in Urbino: Conservation Plan*. The Getty Foundation, 2018, p.134-136.

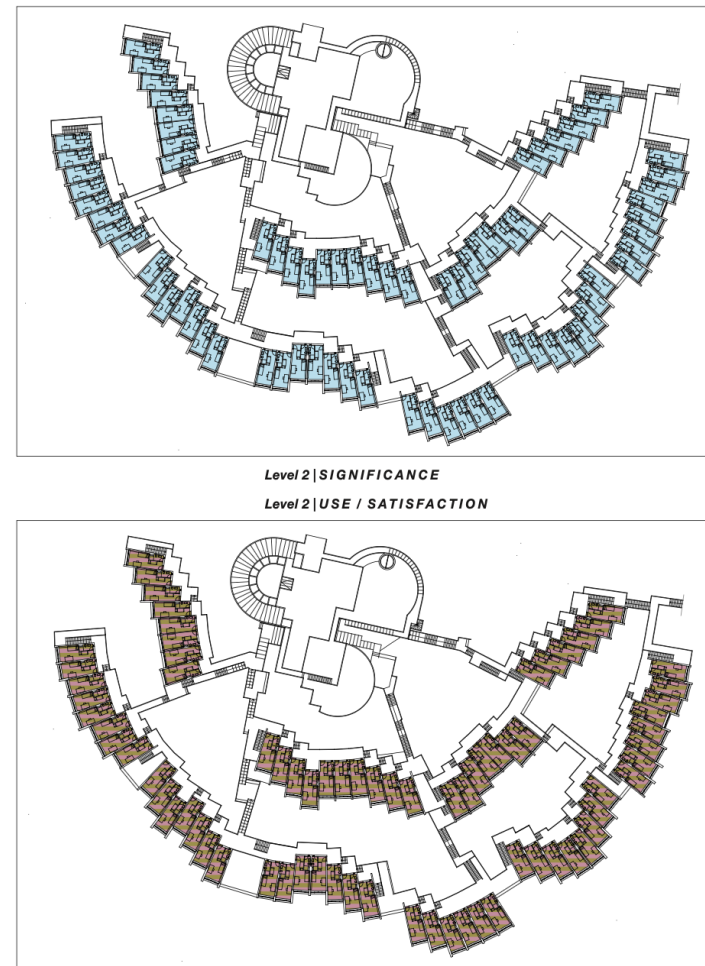Level 2 | SIGNIFICANCE
Level 2 | USE / SATISFACTION

Fig 36. Analysis Diagram of the The "Colle"
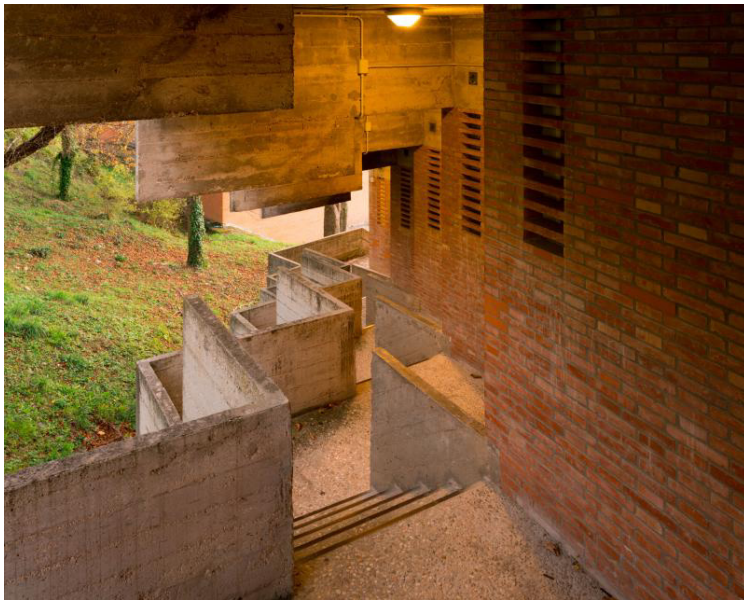*Drawn by Università degli studi di Urbino CARLO BO DESP*

Fig 37. Image of Outdoor Corridor for students of the "Colle"
Photo by Leonardo Calvi, 2017

Fig 38. Image of Outdoor Path for all the people of the "Colle"
Photo by Leonardo Calvi, 2017

2.3 Transitional Space

"The drawers work because they hide whats inside, if everything was transparent there would be disorder and no privacy." [47]

In Italian student dormitories, the "transitional space" between common space and private space is not only a spatial organization strategy, but also an architectural experience deeply rooted in social culture and living habits.

It not only regulates the social boundaries of collective life, but also reflects the preference for ambiguity and continuity in Italian architectural culture. This is one of the reasons for the analysis of culture and boundary management in the previous sections.

As long as we talk about common space and private space, "transitional space" will always be one of inevitable topics.

"Transitional space" has always been regarded as an important medium in architectural theory to connect the individual and the collective. Architect Herman Hertzberger pointed out in "*Lessons for Students in Architecture*" that architecture should create conditions for "in-between space", which is also called transitional space, so that individuals can maintain their independence and participate in social life.[48] This kind of space is not only a physical transition, but also a generating field of social relations.

Similarly, as mentioned above many times, Jan Gehl proposed the concepts of interpersonal distance and edge activities in "*Life Between Buildings*", believing that the quality of urban life depends on those spaces where people can stay, talk and encounter by chance.[49] These theories can also be used to understand the micro-social field within student dormitories.

Transitional Space Typology

In Italy, the sociality of space is not an abstract idea but a long-standing cultural experience. Influenced by the Mediterranean climate and open lifestyle, historical urban landscapes has developed a series of typical "semi-open spaces", such as loggia (covered corridor), portico (column corridor), cortile (inner courtyard) and terrazza (terrace), these spaces not only adjust the

[47] Cino Zucchi, interview by designboom, "Interview with Architect Cino Zucchi / CZA," *Designboom*, July 27, 2015, https://www.designboom.com/architecture/interview-architect-cino-zucchi-cza-07-27-2015/

[48] Hertzberger, H. *Lessons for Students in Architecture*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers. 1991, P. 32-43.

[49] Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, trans. Jo Koch. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2011, p. 129–183.

climate and light, but also become the main place for interpersonal communication and collective life.

This concept of continuous space continues in student dormitories as a redefinition between common space and private space.

· Loggia / Portico

In the context of Italian architecture, loggia and portico are one of the most representative transitional space. Loggia usually refers to a covered space supported by colonnades, open to one or more sides, and is usually located on the ground floor, courtyard or street facade of buildings. Portico emphasizes the ritual of the building's entrance, which is a formal transition space leading to the interior of the building. The two are formally between indoor and outdoor, which means, they are neither completely inside the building nor completely exposed to the external environment. Instead, they form a spatial state with ambiguity. This ambiguity is a highly cherished quality in the Italian architectural tradition, embodying the delicate response of architecture to social interactions and environmental adaptation.

For example, Residenza Universitaria EDISU Verdi, which will be analyzed in Chapter 3, is a student dormitory renovated from an old residential building, which uses portico to transition the urban spaces and buildings, and then loggia to transition the common space and private space in the ground floor building.

From a functional perspective, loggia has multiple functions of shelter, ventilation and social interaction. It not only provides a buffer zone for climate regulation, but also becomes a living space for people to stay, communicate and observe.

For example, the Ospedale degli Innocenti (1419–1427), designed by Brunelleschi in Florence, and Portici di Bologna respectively
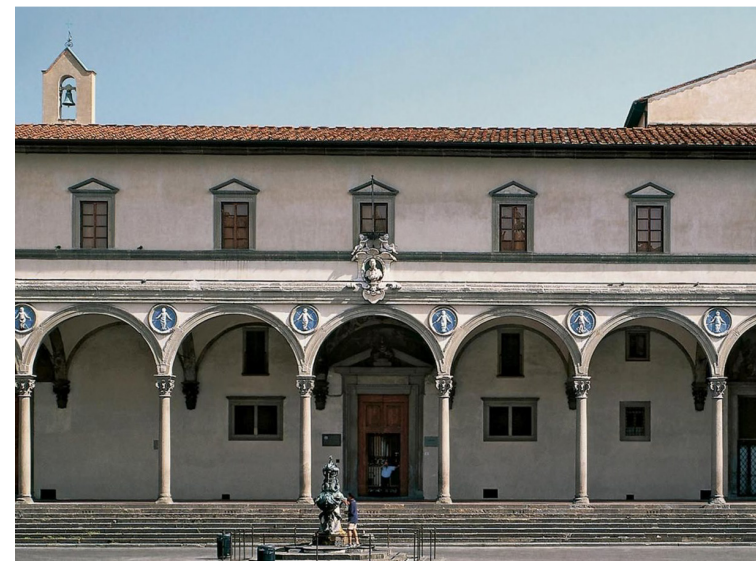

Fig 39. Image of Portico degli Innocenti
Photo by Giuseppe Nifosi, 2021

showed that continuous colonnades morphologically define the boundaries between buildings and urban space, but also extend the collective activities of the piazza under the buildings.

As architectural historian Bruno Zevi emphasized, the spatial value of Italian architecture often lies not in enclosed forms, but in the continuity and flow between different spaces.[50]

In student dormitory, loggia is often used on the ground floor to connect living units and common spaces, such as canteens, rest areas or study rooms... allowing students to naturally enter a semi-public interactive environment when entering and exiting. Unlike the closed corridors in Nordic or British and American dormitories, loggia in Italian student dormitories are often characterized by visual transparency and behavioral visibility, promoting chance encounters and communication between residents.

For example, the Student Halls of Residence in Chieti were designed by architect Giorgio Grassi in 1979. Loggia plays a key role as a space organizer in this student dormitory, which not only achieves the order and unity of the entire building, but also protects the individual privacy of the residents. Although this student dormitory complex is composed of multiple buildings, it can form a unified and compact whole.

[50] Bruno Zevi, *Saper vedere l'urbanistica. Ferrara di Biagio Rossetti, la prima città moderna europea*. Torino: Einaudi, 1971, p. 14.

Fig 40. Image of Full-height Loggia of Student Halls of Residence in Chieti
Photo by Giorgio Grassi, 2017

The full-height loggia is the skeleton that connects the whole, that all dormitory units, soggiorno and public paths are centered around it. Students need to enter the dormitory through the full-height loggia. This design not only avoids the interference caused by external streets directly penetrating the residential area, but also makes the access paths as clear and orderly as traditional streets,
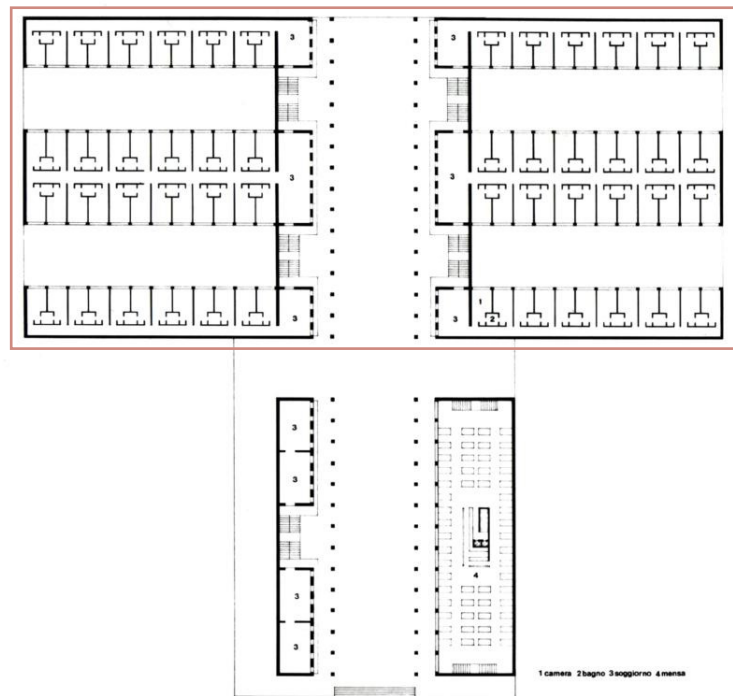
at the same time, the full-height loggia also realizes the privacy layer. Each element in the complex, like soggiorno, is closed to itself and is only open to the full-height loggia. The dormitory soggiorno is a semi-private space for students, the loggia is a semi-public transition space connecting the inside and outside, and the external street is a complete public space.

This spatial hierarchy of "street - loggia - soggiorno - dormitory", with the semi-open characteristic of the loggia, effectively guarantees residential privacy without making the overall space appear closed and depressing, perfectly balancing the needs of function and experience.[51]

Fig 41. Typical Room Floor Plan
Drawn by Giorgio Grassi
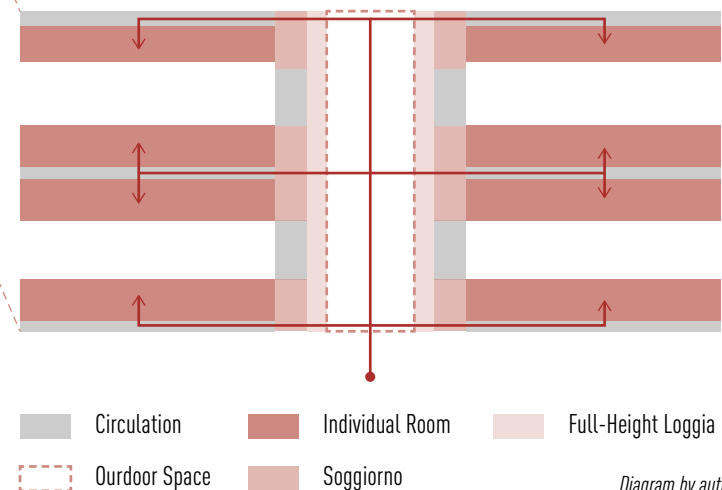
Circulation   Individual Room   Full-Height Loggia
Ourdoor Space   Soggiorno   *Diagram by author*

[51] Giorgio Grassi, "Student Halls of Residence in Chieti", *Divisare*. 2017. https://divis-are.com/proj-ects/337701-gior-gio-grassi-stu-dent-halls-of-residen ce-in-chieti

· Cortile / Patio

Cortile, Italian-style inner courtyard, and Patio, courtyard space originating from Spanish and influenced by Mediterranean culture, the two are often classified as one in the student dormitory scene due to similar functional logic, are also key transitional space types, especially when connecting the collective activity common space and the individual private space, forming a spatial hierarchy with both pivot point and buffer zone, which not only continues Italian architecture's emphasis on ambiguity also meets the needs of student dormitories.

From the perspective of spatial organization and functional logic, Cortile/Patio is mostly located in the core area of student dormitories. It is neither attached to the building facade or the edge of public space like loggia, nor focuses on the ritual transition of the entrance like portico. Instead, in the form of inward enclosure, it becomes an intermediate node connecting different private space and common space.

Similarly, in the renovated student dormitories, like the student dormitory in the former Fiat area in Novoli, Florence,[52] the Cortile/Patio is often expanded or newly enclosed by the original building's patio, surrounded by private units, and common space are

[52] AA. VV., *Ediliza Sociale in Europa. Premio Ugo Rivolta 2007*, Milano 2008, pp. 110-113
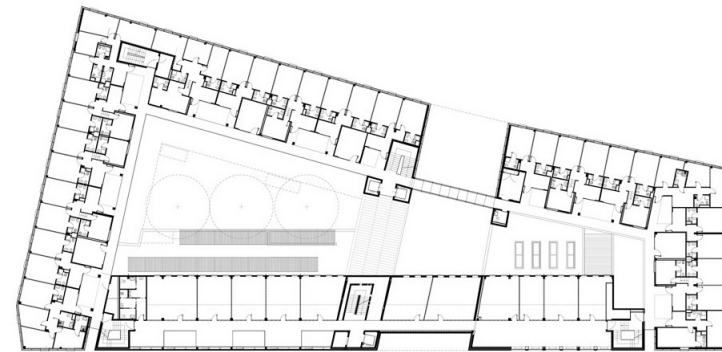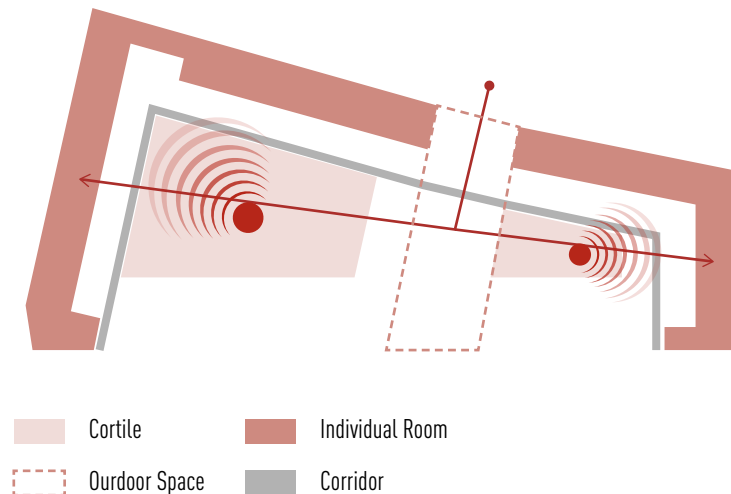

Fig 42. Typical Room Floor Plan
Drawn by C+S Associati

Cortile

Ourdoor Space

Individual Room

Corridor

Fig 41 C. Cappai, M.A. "Segantini, Residenze universitarie e servizi nell' area ex-Fiat a Novoli, Firenze", *L´industria delle costruzioni*, n. 394, marzo-aprile 2007, p. 26-33.

Diagram by author

arranged inside or on the edge of the courtyard, forming a circulation of "private space - courtyard transition space - common space".

When students walk out of the private room, they do not need to directly enter the noisy common space. Instead, they first pass through the semi-open environment of the cortile, which may have green plants, seats or small landscapes. This not only retains the transparency of the outdoor space also creates a place through architectural enclosure.

Students can stay here briefly, organize their belongings or simply chat with frienda, completing the psychological transition from private state to collectivity state. On the contrary, when returning to the room from the common space, the courtyard also becomes a buffer zone to relieve the pressure of social interaction, preventing the private space from being directly interfered by collectivity activities.

At the same time, it also strengthens the connection between common space and private space instead of separating them. It does not form a rigid separation like a wall, but uses an enclosed but not closed form, such as partially open entrances and exits, transparent railings, and low walls, to allow the activity atmosphere of the common space, like the voice of classmates and the feeling of fireworks in the kitchen, to penetrate into the periphery

of the private area in a weakened manner, maintaining the vitality of the common space without destroying the quietness of the private space.

· Terrazza / Balcony

Terrazza/Balcony breaks the inward enclosure limitation of cortile/patio and is distributed on the facades of each floor of the dormitory building in a form that attaches to the main body of the building and extends outwards.

Balcony is mostly a small cantilevered space outside the dormitory units on each floor, directly connected to the private bedrooms, while terrazza is mostly located on the top floor of the building or on the podium roof, undertaking collectivity functions on a larger scale. The two jointly create a hierarchical circulation of "private space - vertical transition space - common space".

For example, in modern student dormitories in Milan and Bologna, Balcony is often used as an extension of the bedroom, each private dormitory unit is equipped with its own small balcony, while a shared terrazza is set up on adjacent floors or top floors, with public seats, green planters or flower, simple fitness facilities. Some renovated dormitories (such as the project similar to Cam-

plus Torino Regio Parco analyzed in Chapter 3.3.3) will also widen and integrate the narrow balconies of the original building to form a terrazza connects multiple dormitory units on the same floor with other common spaces, becoming a dual node for horizontal and vertical transitions.

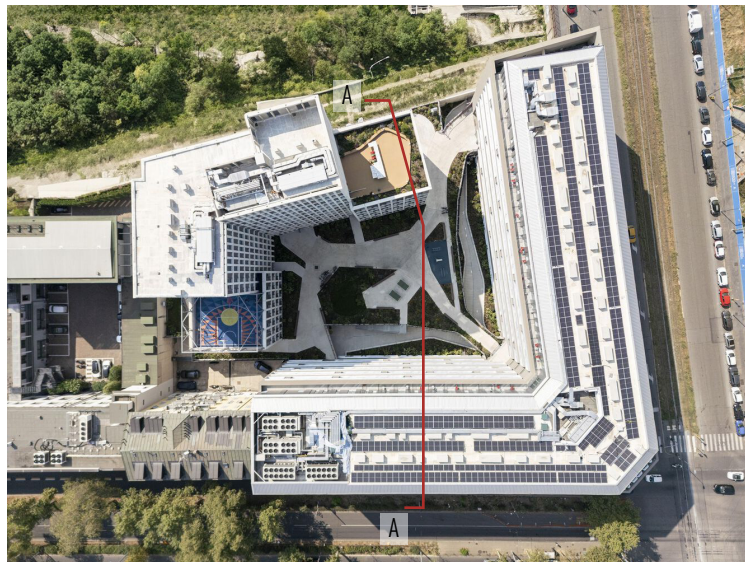This transition is more reflected in the vertical buffering of private space and common space than the buffering of cortile/patio on the horizontal circulation. Before leaving the private bedroom, students can first step into the exclusive balcony, open only to individuals or members of the same dormitory, where can dry clothes, relax for a short period of time.

Students can complete the initial transition from home state to social state, avoiding the cramped feeling of directly entering other common spaces. When they need to participate in collectivity activities, they can reach the shared terrazza through stairs or elevators, completing a complete transition from individual privacy to group public.
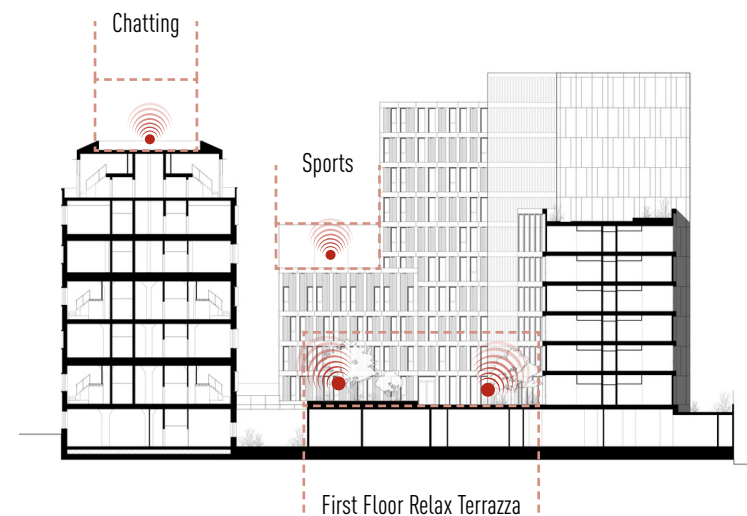

Fig 43. Image of the perspective top view of Aparto Ripamonti in Milano
Photo by Nicola Colella

Chatting

Sports

First Floor Relax Terrazza

Fig 44. Section AA of Aparto Ripamonti in Milano
Drawn by Park Associati
Analyzed by author

Terrazza/Balcony uses an enclosed but transparent form, such as metal railings, glass guardrails, and partial green plant shading, to create a gentle visual and atmospheric interaction between common space and private space.

Students in the dormitory can catch a glimpse of the collective activities on terrazza, such as doing sports and group discussions, through balcony and feel the vitality of the space. Collective activities on terrazza will not appear isolated due to the closure. Its sound and atmosphere penetrate appropriately to each floor through the conduction of vertical space, forming a non-interfering but relevant spatial relationship.

This vertical penetration complements the horizontal extension of loggia and the inward penetration of cortile, and jointly constructs a multi-dimensional transitional space system for the student dormitory.

In addition to typical transitional spaces such as Loggia/Portico, Cortile/Patio, and Terrazza/Balcony, in student dormitories transformed from old residential buildings, micro-transitional spaces such as corridor nodes and shared kitchens are also key links between common space and private space.

By partially widening the corridor nodes and adding simple rest facilities, the corridor nodes have become buffer stations for students from private dormitories to common areas. The shared kitchen breaks the closed pattern with a semi-open interface, allowing the atmosphere of collective cooking and communication to naturally connect with the tranquility of private living.

Their small and flexible shapes adapt to the site constraints of the renovation project. They not only continue the traditional exploration of spatial ambiguity in Italian architecture, but also accurately respond to students' needs for moving lines between common space and private space. Together with various typical transition spaces, they build a coherent and daily living space system, allowing old buildings to achieve an organic blend of common space and private space in the functional renewal.

In summary, through the analysis of cultural uniqueness, spatial function and boundary management, and transitional space, this chapter constructs the characteristic framework of common and private space in Italian student dormitories, and clarifies its spatial design logic driven by historical heritage constraints and modern needs.

The spatial form of the Italian student dormitory is not a simple functional carrier, but carries the piazza culture and familism culture. Through fluidity spatial organization and porous boundary strategy, the openness of common space and the independence of private space are effectively balanced. This boundary management model not only avoids the interference of collective activities in the private sphere, but also retains the visual connection between spaces, so that the private space is both independent and not isolated, which provides key support for the harmonious coexistence of common and private spaces.

As an intermediate zone connecting common space and private space, the transitional space not only provides a psychological transition for students to switch from public to private scenes, but also alleviates the abruptness of space transformation. And by setting up small leisure facilities, green landscapes... informal social opportunities are created, allowing students to establish lightweight social relationships in a relaxed atmosphere, which just responds to the space needs of modern students who need to be alone and desire to connect.

In Chapter 3, it will take the student dormitories in Turin as the specific research cases, analyze in detail how the common space and private space are connected, and then summarize the design implications about student dormitory, provide practical reference for more student dormitory renovation projects or new design project in the future, improve the use quality and humanistic value of student dormitory space, and respond to the diversified needs of modern student groups for living space.

CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW OF STUDENT DORMITORY IN TURIN
Case Study of EDISU and CAMPLUS

The first two chapters analyze the evolution of student dormitories from a global perspective, which has undergone a long transformation process to form unique design concepts and models in connecting common spaces and private spaces, as well as in Italy, its unique historical and cultural background, which make student dormitories show distinctive characteristics in space creation and connection.

As the fourth Italian city for overall and student population, and one of the country's most attractive university cities, Turin provides a particularly revealing context for examining the construction and evolution of student dormitories. The city hosts two major higher education institutions, the Università degli Studi di Torino and the Politecnico di Torino, which together attract a large and diverse student body, including a substantial number of international students. This sustained demand for student housing has stimulated continuous dormitory development since the early twentieth century.

The study of the case of Turin student dormitories is helpful to deeply understand how to optimize the connection between common space and private space in specific cultural and social contexts, and provide new ideas and methods for global student dormitory space design, which is of great theoretical and practical significance.

Therefore, this chapter summarizes successful experiences through the historical development of student dormitories in Turin, the analysis of distribution and the detailed study of specific cases, and provides targeted suggestions for the design and improvement of student dormitory space in the future.

3.1 Development of Student Dormitories in Turin

Early Stages of Evolution (late 19th – early 20th centuries)

The origins of student residences in Turin date back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At that time, Turin, as one of the first cities in Italy to achieve industrialization, expanded its higher education system.[53]

With the development of the Università degli Studi di Torino and Politecnico di Torino, the number of students continues to increase and the demand for accommodation increases rapidly. However, the initial student accommodation was not uniformly planned by the university, but mainly relied on simple rentals provided by private landlords. These "dormitories" are scattered and lack systematic design and management, which is more reflected in the spontaneous response of the urban housing market to the demand for education.

These early dormitories had a single function, often providing only the most basic living space, a small room where you could sleep and put your belongings. The rooms are compact, there is a lack of public facilities, and the sanitary conditions are poor.

The so-called "common space" is almost non-existent at this stage, and students are more engaged in social and learning activities in cafes or libraries.[54]

The form of student dormitory during this period reflected a spatial logic of mainly residential and lack of community, which was closely related to the cultural structure of familism in Italian society at that time.

As Ginsborg points out, the spatial culture of Italian society has long been family-centered, and collective life is often seen as an external sphere, which also contributed to the lack of collectivity in the spatial organization of early dormitories.[55]

In the early 20th century, some universities gradually realized the need to provide student dormitory and began experimenting with smaller on-campus dormitories. Most of these dormitory buildings are masonry and conservative in design, continuing the proportions

53 Elena Cottini, Paolo Ghinetti, and Simone Moriconi, "Keeping up with the Joneses? The Rise of Modern Universities and Local Economic Development in Italy." *CESifo Working Paper* No. 7483, 2019

54 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989, p. 36-40.

55 Paul Ginsborg, *Italy and Its Discontents: Family, Civil Society, State.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.p68–95.

and decoration traditions of academic architecture.

For example, in the Casa dello Studente, designed by Ferruccio Grassi in 1935, the façade of the apartment is a compact yellow-orange brick structure dotted with square windows of various sizes, a continuous loggia at the top, and all the common spaces are arranged in the basement. Although there is a preliminary zoning in terms of function, the boundary between common and private spaces is still stiff, that the corridor has become the only "shared space", lacking transitional and social nature. [56]

In general, the Turin student dormitory at this stage is still at the level of "accommodation units" and has not yet formed a real student community.

[56] Ferruccio Grassi, "La Casa Dello Studente a Torino", *L'architettura italiana periodico mensile di costruzione e di architettura pratica, v. : ill.* Torino : Crudo & Lattuada, 1939, p. 4-13.

Fig 44. Image of Casa dello Studente in 1936
https://www.aclorien.it/torino-casa-dello-studente-ora-collegio-universitario/
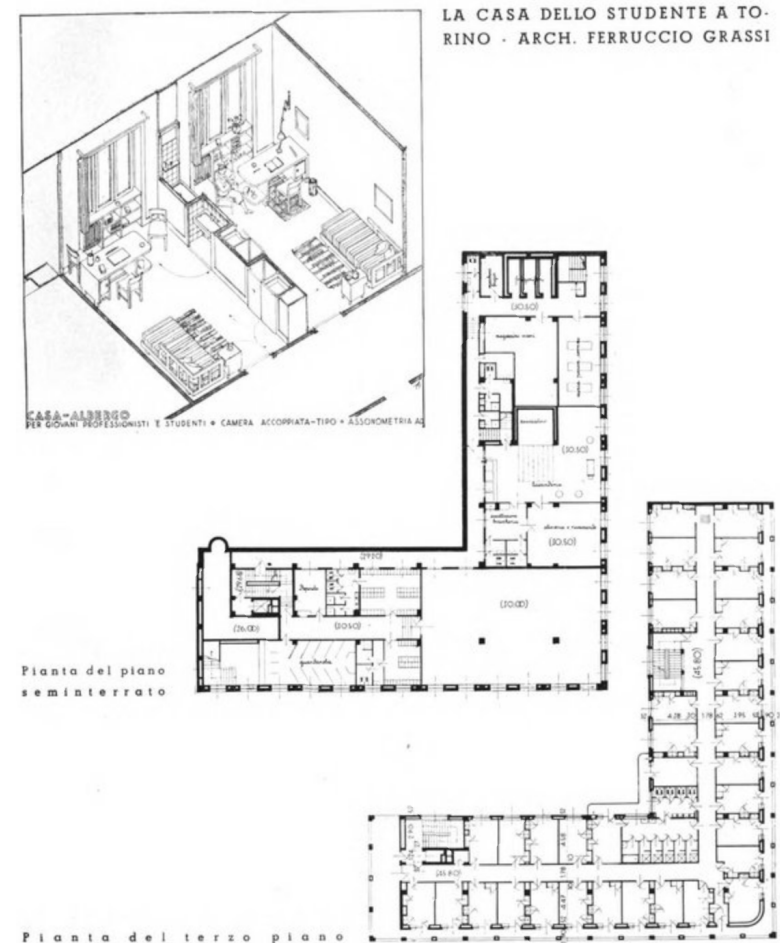
Fig 45. Plans and Axonometry of La Casa dello Studente a Torino
Drawn by Architetto Ferruccio Grassi, 1939, p.13

Peak Period of Development (mid-20th century – late 20th century)

After World War II, Italy entered a stage of rapid industrialization and urbanization (1950s–60s) with the "new economic miracle", and Turin as an industrial center, especially the expansion of FIAT, experienced significant growth in population between 1950 and 1970.[57]
During the same period, higher education entered a period of expansion throughout Italy, resulting in a large number of international students at the Universities in Turin, and a significant shortage of student accommodation, which prompted local governments, colleges and foundations to intervene in the construction and management of dormitories.

At the architectural perspective, student dormitories in Turin during this period embodied a distinctly modernist character, around 20 years later than the period of Functionalism of student dormitories worldwide. The architects abandoned historicist decoration in favor of simple geometric forms and functionalist spatial organization. Dormitory buildings mostly adopt modular design, with standardized living units and repeated structural systems to achieve large-scale construction.

At this time, the student dormitory was no longer just a place for sleeping and storage, but gradually developed into a complex of "learning-life-community".

For example, several dormitory areas built by Collegio Einaudi in the 1950s.[58]

· In 1954, the historical site in via Galliari was enlarged, today Valentino residence hall, and the "Women's Section" was created in via Maria Vittoria 39, now Po residence hall.
· In 1956, the residence halls were built in corso Lione 24, now Crocetta residence hall, and corso Lione 44, now via Bobbio 3 – San Paolo residence hall.
· In 1968 the "men's section" of via Principe Amedeo 48 was built, today the Mole Antonelliana residence hall of via delle Rosine 3.

In addition to the basic private bedroom, dining room, reading room, laundry room, and a courtyard as common space have been added. These common spaces are often arranged on the ground floor or in the center of each floor, with rest areas, which are important places for students to communicate and informal in their daily lives. The design of private spaces (bedrooms) also tends to be standardized. Individual private units usually include a bedroom

[57] Erica Mangione, "Housing the student population in the post-industrial university city", *Doctoral Dissertation*, October, 2022. p.66.

[58] Collegio Einaudi. Prof. Renato Einaudi: Our Founder. https://www.collegio-einaudi.it/en/our-founder-renato-einaudi/

and a small desk, but lack separate sanitary facilities, students need to share a bathroom and kitchen, and private bathrooms are added to all rooms when they are subsequently renovated.

This organizational logic of "sharing-private" embodies a social compromise, maintaining individual independence in collective life and forming social connections in the common sphere.
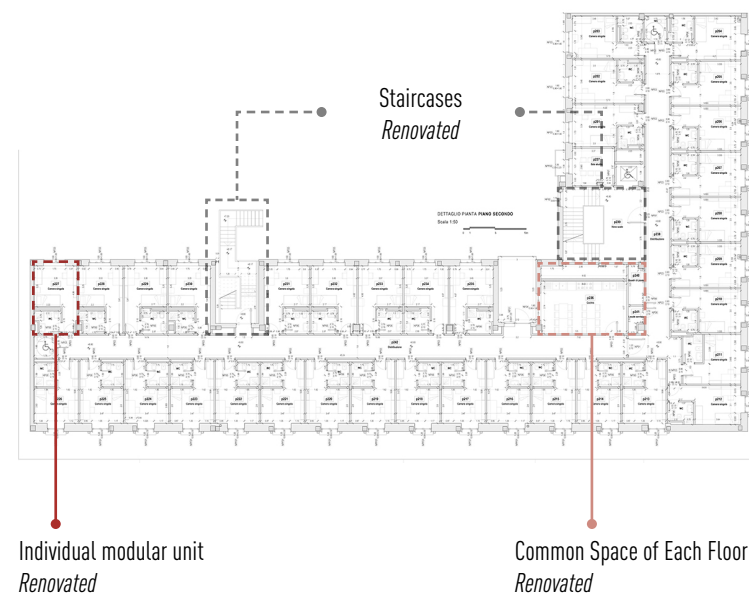

Staircases
Renovated

Individual modular unit
Renovated

Common Space of Each Floor
Renovated

Fig 46. Second Floor Plan of Collegio Einaudi, Sezione Mole
Drawn by DAR e Stefano Toscano
Analyzed by author

Modern Period of Change (21st Century to Present)

In the 21st century, with the transformation of globalization, digitalization and lifestyle, the Turin student dormitory has ushered in a period of modern change with diversification, sustainability and humanism as the core.

During this period, the 2006 Winter Olympics promoted the construction of many Olympic villages, and then most of them were renovated into student dormitories or social housing. The increase in public provision of EDISU, founded in 1992 by regional law, that was significantly increased in the post-Olympics, but after that basically stopped to grow. Between 2010 and 2020, the rise of private operators both national and international landed in the local real estate market and started a long lasting wave of construction of new private and for-profit dormitories, also thanks to welcoming economic development strategies by the Turin Municipality, like PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan).[59]

And the closed management during the COVID-19 period in the 2020s made students and managers more aware that student dormitories were no longer just to meet basic accommodation needs, but were redefined as integrated spaces for learning, socializing, research and self-growth.

[59] Erica Mangione, "Housing the student population in the post-industrial university city", *Doctoral Dissertation*, October, 2022. p.87-91.

In terms of function, the types and services of dormitories are significantly diversified. Traditional student dormitories are gradually giving way to small, apartment and mixed layouts to meet the needs of different student groups. Single rooms, suites, family dormitories coexist with international student dormitories, and the communal kitchen and study room serve as a medium for communication. For example, Residenza Universitaria EDISU Olimpia, which is analyzed in 3.3.2 below, is a typical example of the renovation of 2006 Olympic village into student dormitory.

Meanwhile, the dormitory design for master degree students and international students places greater emphasis on academic and cultural sharing. For instance, in the renovation project of Collegio Po analyzed in Chapter 2.1, multi-functional seminar rooms, language learning areas, and shared terraces have been added. Through the design strategies of semi-open spaces and the use of glass elements, the boundaries between common spaces and private spaces are blurred, enabling continuous learning and living experiences in the spatial context.

The connection between common sapce and private spaces has undergone a qualitative change. Compared with the one-way connection of corridors in early dormitories, modern dormitories are more inclined to achieve space flow and psychological comfort through layers of transitional space.

For example, small courtyards, balconies, loggias or shared kitchens, which have already analyzed in the Chapter 2.3, become typical in-between zones that provide both personal relaxation corners and natural guides for students into common communication.

In terms of spatial atmosphere, modern dormitories generally use warm tones and flexible materials, and build a sense of home through furniture arrangement and lighting design.

This de-institutionalized design trend has transformed the dormitory from the original accommodation building to a social experience place. At the same time, with the development of digital technology, dormitories have also integrated intelligent systems, such as access control, online learning platforms and online social networks, so that private life and collective activities have formed a new connection at the virtual level.

In general, the evolution of contemporary Turin student dormitories reflects a profound shift from accommodation to co-living. Common space is no longer a functional appendage, but becomes the core of shaping collective identity and social experience.

Private spaces are no longer enclosed shelters, but individual units flexibly embedded in the shared system.

As the architect Giancarlo De Carlo said, the real task of architecture is to create conditions that enable man to negotiate between coexistence and difference. It is under this concept that the contemporary student dormitory in Turin explores the dynamic balance between the common space and the private space, the individual and the group.[60]

Fig 47. Image of Study Room in Collegio Einaudi – Sezione Crocetta
Photo by DAR Architettura
https://www.dar-architettura.com/works/collegio-einaudi/

Fig 48. Image of Individual Room and Common Space in Collegio Einaudi – Sezione Crocetta
Photo by DAR Architettura
https://www.dar-architettura.com/works/collegio-einaudi/

60 De Carlo, Giancarlo. "An Architecture of Participation." Perspecta, 17, 1980, p.74–79. https://doi.org/10.2307/1567006.

3.2 Distribuition of Student Dormitories in Turin
EDISU, COLLEGI AND PBSA

In Turin's higher education system, students concentration activities are associated with higher education around the main campuses districts, and the student dormitories and apartment system is located throughout most of Turin.[61]

As the Regional Agency for the right to study, providing scholarships and other services to students as housing, canteens, study rooms, EDISU Piemonte operates a number of public university dormitories in the Piedmont region, and its dormitory network extends to the city's main campuses as well as easily accessible urban areas and satellite towns to meet the needs of different institutions and student groups. [62]

Complementing is Collegi di Merito, which is run by foundations and receive consistent State funds, are oriented towards academic training and community life, and are relatively small and close to the core of traditional universities , such as the Collegio Einaudi dormitories area mentioned in Chapter 3.1, with the goal of

combining accommodation with academic and training activities, with an emphasis on selection, competitive admission and educational support. [63]

The third important category is PBSA (Purpose Build Student Accommodations), which included CAMPLUS as well as CampusX, Relife and many others operating in Turin, often relying on transportation nodes and redevelopment areas, such as urban renewal projects Regio Parco, emphasizing managed services and community living experiences, reflecting the focus of private dormitories on accessibility and modern service offerings in their location choices.[64]

In general, these three types of institutions together constitute the threefold structure of student dormitory in Turin: public (EDISU), market-oriented (CAMPLUS) and academic (Collegio).
Their geographical distribution not only reflects the spatial organizational logic of the Turin Higher Education, but also responds to

[61] Erica Mangione, "Housing the student population in the post-industrial university city", *Doctoral Dissertation*, October, 2022. p.74-77.

[62] EDISU Piemonte, "Le residenze EDISU," EDISU Piemonte, accessed November 11, 2025. https://www.edisu.piemonte.it/residenze/residenze-universitarie/le-residenze-edisu

[63] Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca, "Collegi Universitari di Merito," MUR, accessed October 14, 2025. https://www.mur.gov.it/it/aree-tematiche/universita/studenti-diritto-allo-studio-e-residenze/collegi-universitari-di-merito.

[64] CAMPLUS, "Residences, Colleges of Excellence and Apartments in Turin," CAMPLUS, accessed November 11, 2025. https://www.camplus.it/en/city/turin/.

the differences in the needs of the student body to varying degrees. The following diagram shows the basic division of higher education districts in Italy and further illustrates the distribution of dormitory locations in Turin by EDISU, CAMPLUS and Collegi, in order to better understand the spatial relationship between the three and their correspondence to the university campus.
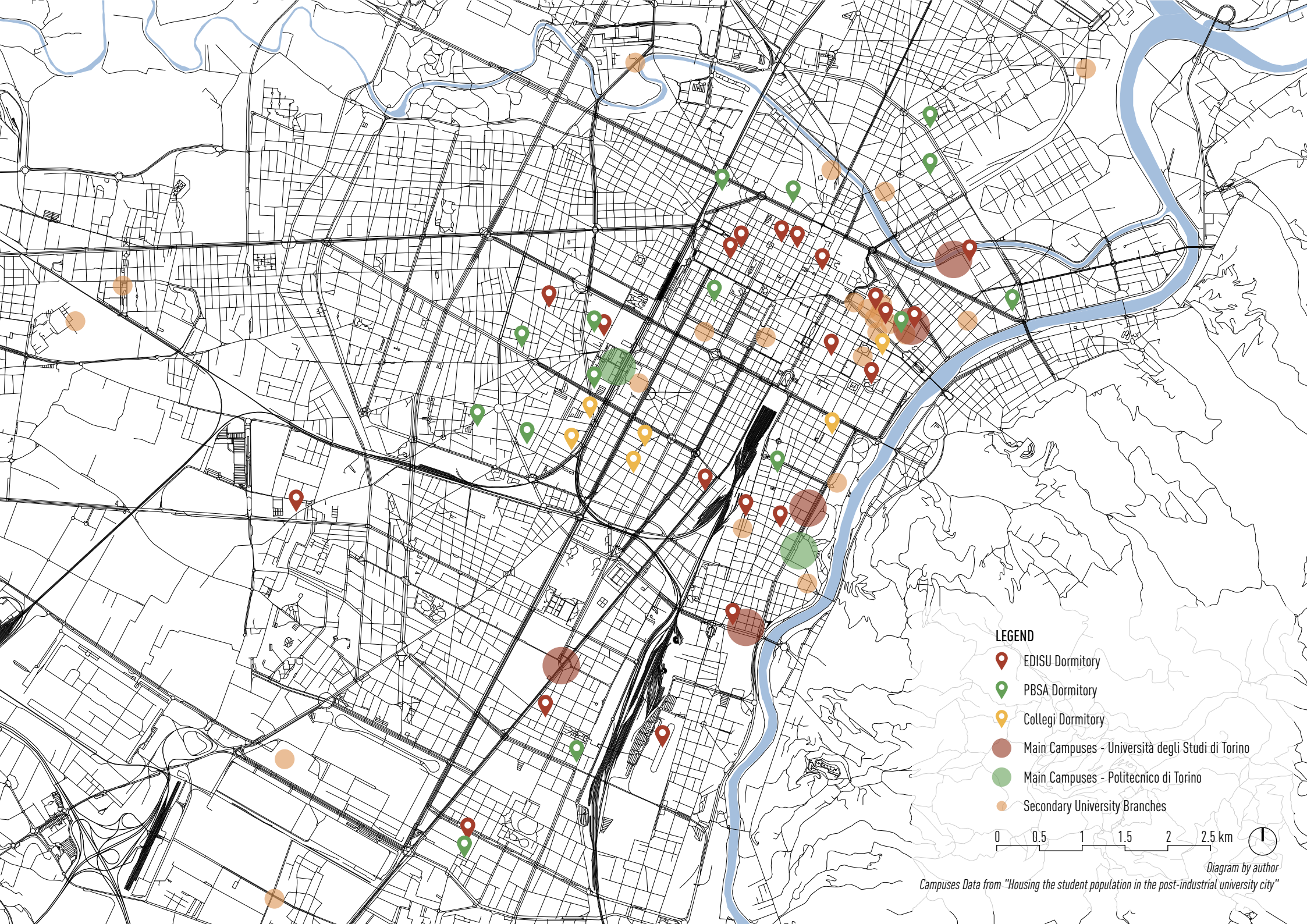
LEGEND

- EDISU Dormitory
- PBSA Dormitory
- Collegi Dormitory
- Main Campuses - Università degli Studi di Torino
- Main Campuses - Politecnico di Torino
- Secondary University Branches

0   0.5   1   1.5   2   2.5 km
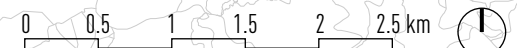
Diagram by author

Campuses Data from "Housing the student population in the post-industrial university city"

3.3 Cases Study in Turin

The four student residences, Camplus Torino MOI, Residenza Universitaria EDISU Olimpia, Camplus Torino Regio Parco and Residenza Universitaria EDISU Verdi, are not randomly sampled, but are theoretically selected based on their construction period, management agency, etc. The selected samples cover a wide range of types, from Olympic village renovation to urban renewal, from public institutions to private operations, from traditional corridor layouts to decentralized shared units, thus constructing a research sample group with both breadth and depth suitable for horizontal comparison.

In terms of architectural analysis methods, this study adopts a multi-scale and multi-dimensional comprehensive analysis strategy.
At the urban level, the accessibility and connectivity between the dormitory and Turin's main higher education institutions and transportation nodes are examined to understand the potential impact of its location on students' daily travel and social interaction.

At the architectural level, the composition logic and spatial strategy of common and private spaces are further revealed by analyzing the organization of circulation in the dormitory, the distribution of shared facilities, and the area ratio of different functional spaces in typical plans.
This method can systematically summarize the spatial organization characteristics of different types of dormitories between collective creation and privacy protection, and provide an empirical basis for subsequent design analysis and theoretical discussion.

3.3.1 Camplus Torino MOI

Via Giordano Bruno, 201, 10134 Torino TO

Original construction: 2003-2005
Restoration construction: 2021-2023
Supported by **CAMPLUS**

The Olympic Village (EX MOI), originally built for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, was reused in various ways (resold to private apartments, public housing, establishment of youth hostels and university dormitories, regional headquarters of state institutions and headquarters of local authorities, and abandoned and deprecated, becoming the largest illegal occupation of immigrants in Europe.

In 2017, renovation projects were carried out with the support of various government agencies and related organizations to solve related problems.

In 2020, the Fondo Abitare Sostenibile Piemonte (FASP) purchased 7 of the 39 buildings of the former Olympic Village and through a massive reconstruction project by PICCO Architetti, they were allocated to student dormitories, which could accommodate a total of 388 beds including studio apartments, two-room apartments, and both single and double rooms in shared apartments.

https://www.sinloc.com/la-rinascita-dellex-villaggio-olimpi-co-torino-student-housing-dimpatto/

Greening — **Tram** — **Metro** — **Po River** — **Universities** (UniTO, PoliTO, ESCP, Accademia Albertina)

Tunnel Lingotto — **Parking** — **Railway** — **Footbridge** — **Bus stop**

Lingotto Station

8 Gallery

Lingotto Fiere Torino

0 100 200 300 400 500 m

0 50 100 150 200 250 m

Distance to Universities

UniTO, PoliTO, ESCP, Accademia Albertina......

Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino
Main Campus
🚊 36 min (5.6 km)

ESCP Business School
Torino Campus
🚊 40 min (5.1 km)

Università di Torino
Main Campus
🚊 48 min (6.1 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Main Campus
🚊 36 min (4.2 km)

Università di Torino
Scuola di Management ed economia
🚶 16 min (1.1 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Dipartimenti DAD-DIST
🚊 40 min (4.4 km)
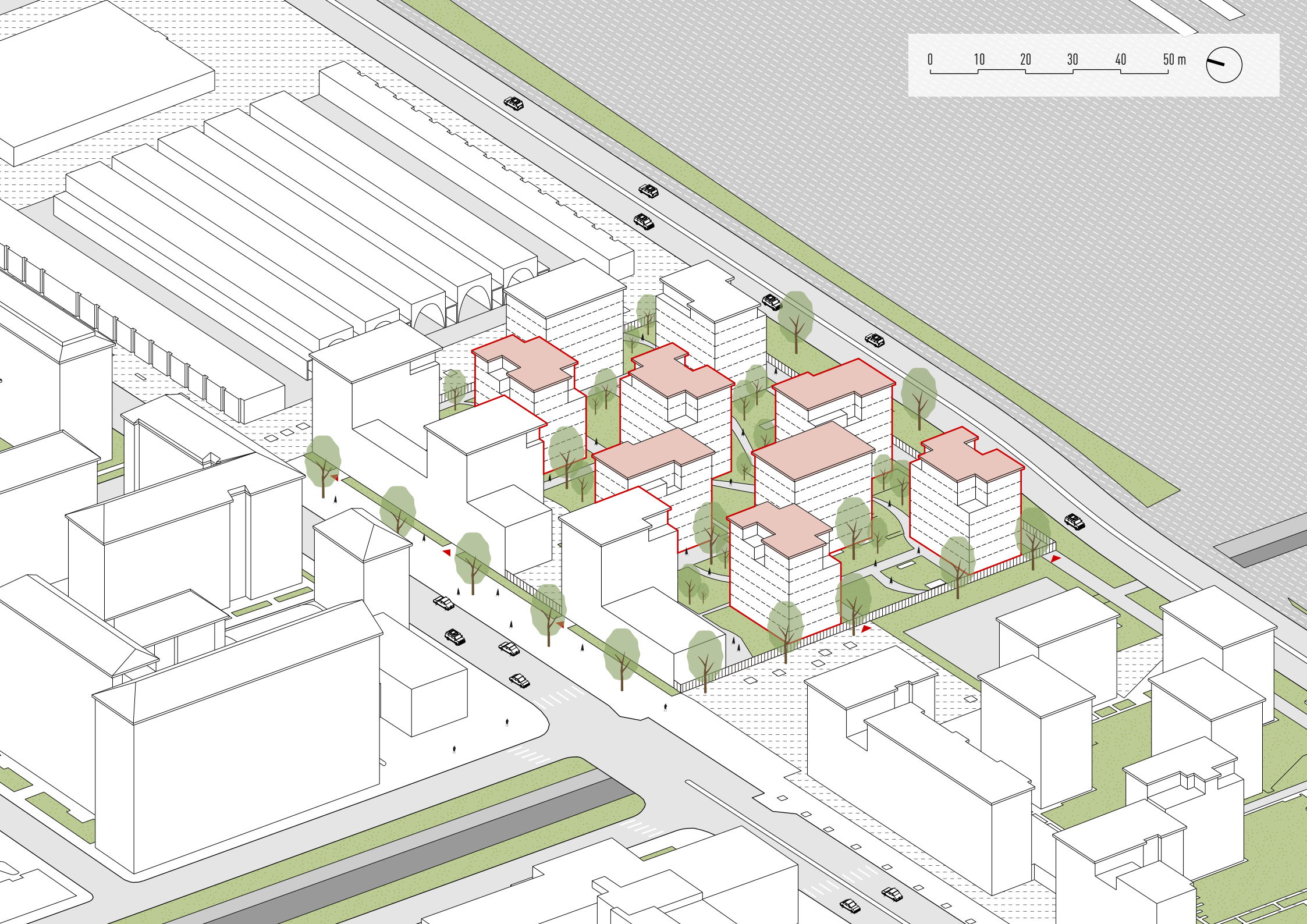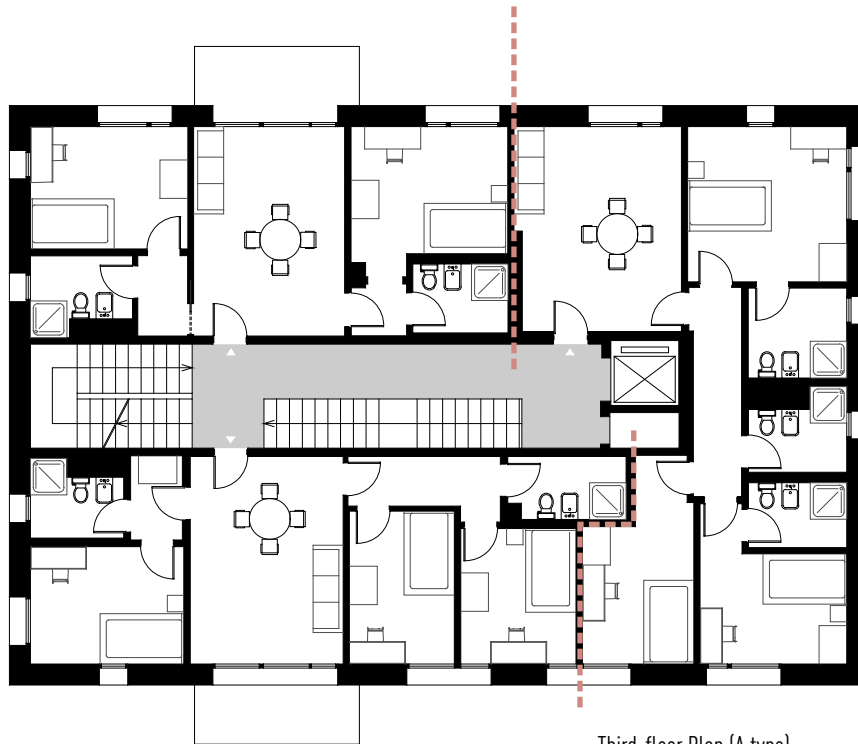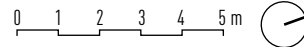
Distance to City Center (≈5 km)

Porta Nuova

🚶 ≥ 57 min

🚲 ≥ 19 min

🚊 ≥ 20 min

🚗 ≥ 13 min

75

Third-floor Plan (A type)

0 1 2 3 4 5 m

Apartment Layout
Occupancy and Size

Two-person Apartment
56 m²

Three-person Apartment
78 m²

Three-person Apartment
66 m²

Common Space

Common Circulation
Vertical

Circulation Space

Staircase
https://www.piccoarchitetti.it/projects/social-housing-ex-moi-2/
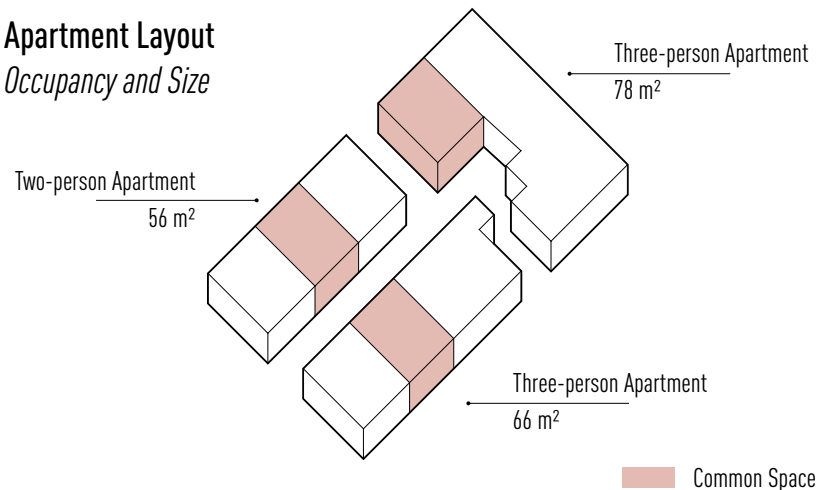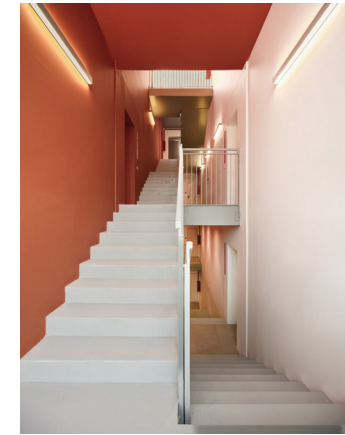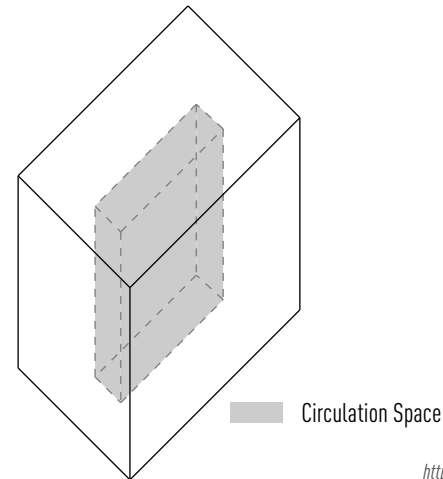
The staircase is located at the center of the building and serves as a hub for organizing the internal traffic circulation, allowing for an efficient and centralized movement of people. Each floor is divided into three or four independent units, each of which has a shared area consisting of a kitchen and living space, which is directly connected to the entrance of the unit and serves as a transition and distribution function.

The design ensures that each person is provided with an individual bathroom, an arrangement that responds to the high demand for privacy and independence among contemporary university students.

By clearly defining the shared and private spaces, the apartment model achieves a good control of the "Public-Private Interface" at the functional and spatial levels, which reflects the modern trend of the spatial organization of dormitories.

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory
Detailed data

3rd Floor (8 people)	Amount (number)	Area (m²)
Common Space *(Living Room+Kitchen)*	3	56
Bedroom	8	92
Internal Circulation	-	24
Balcony	2	12
Bathroom	7	28
Common Circulation *(Staircase)*	-	44.5

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory
Percentage

Bedroom 35.87%	Internal Circulation 9.36%
	Balcony 4.68%
	Bathroom 10.92%
	Common Space (Living Room+Kitchen) 21.83%
Common Circulation (Staircase) 18.53%	
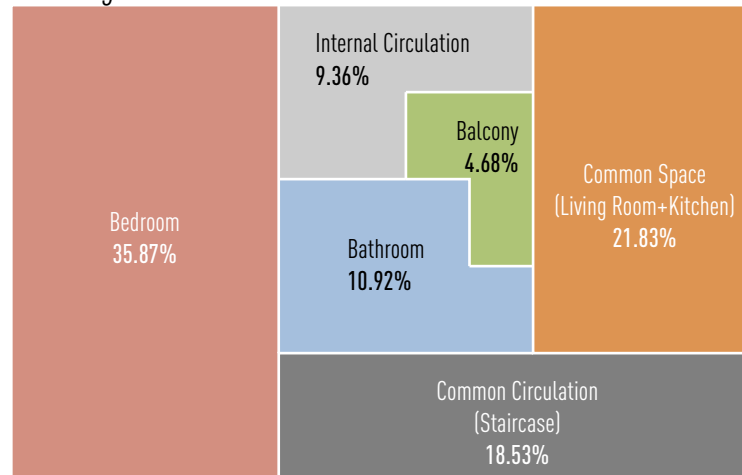
4th floor Axonometric
Out of Scale

3rd floor Axonometric
Out of Scale

Living Room
Balcony
Bedroom
Bathroom
Staircases

Analyzing the ratio of functional areas, the main space of EX Moi still serves private functional areas such as bedrooms, reflecting the basic protection of individual living comfort.

However, the proportion of common space is significantly high, even higher than the circulation, reflecting the emphasis on communal living and social interaction.

This spatial layout not only enhances the diversity and flexibility of the accommodation, but also better matches the contemporary students' need for sharing and communication, which may become an important factor in attracting students to move in.

From Collectivity to Privite
With a common space as a transition

Type 1
Common space in the middle

Type 2
Common space at one end

Common space   Private space
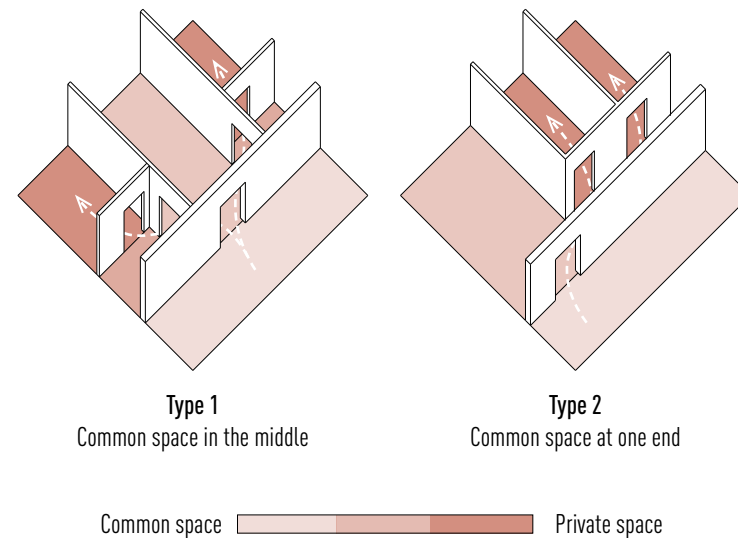
3.3.2 Residenza Universitaria EDISU Olimpia

Lungo Dora Siena, 104, 10153 Torino TO

Supported by **EDISU**

Olimpia Residence, originally built for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, is strategically situated near the Einaudi Campus, which houses the Departments of Law and Political Science at the University of Turin. Its location in a green area adjacent to the Dora River, at the foothills and within close proximity to both Piazza Vittorio and the Mole Antonelliana, offers residents a unique combination of tranquility and accessibility.

Olimpia is the first residence to have obtained the ECOLABEL certification, conferred on those buildings that comply with the severe environmental sustainability rules.

There are a total of 208 single rooms, including 17 single rooms reserved for students with disabilities. Additionally, there are 53 double rooms and 41 two-room apartments with a kitchenette, of which 19 are single and 19 are double. Furthermore, there are 3 single two-room apartments specifically for students with disabilities.
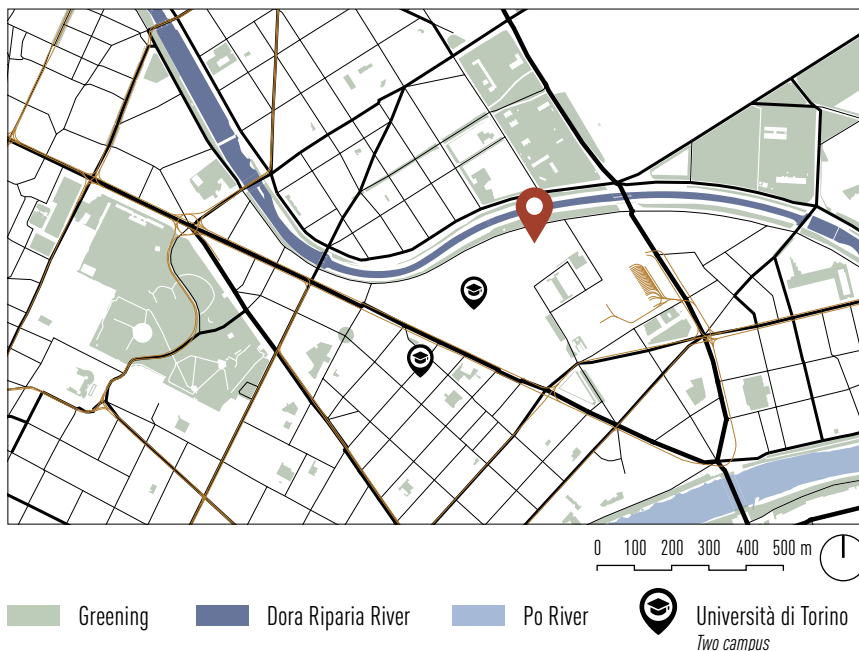
Greening	Dora Riparia River	Po River	Università di Torino *Two campus*

Tram	Parking	Università di Torino-*Campus Luigi Einaudi*	Bus stop

Distance to Universities
UniTO, PoliTO, ESCP, Accademia Albertina......

Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino
Main Campus

🚆 10 min (1.4 km)

ESCP Business School
Torino Campus

🚆 13 min (1.9 km)

Università di Torino
Main Campus Complex

🚆 11 min (1.3 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Main Campus

🚆 32 min (4.3 km)

Università di Torino
Campus Luigi Einaudi

🚶 4 min (0.3 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Architettura
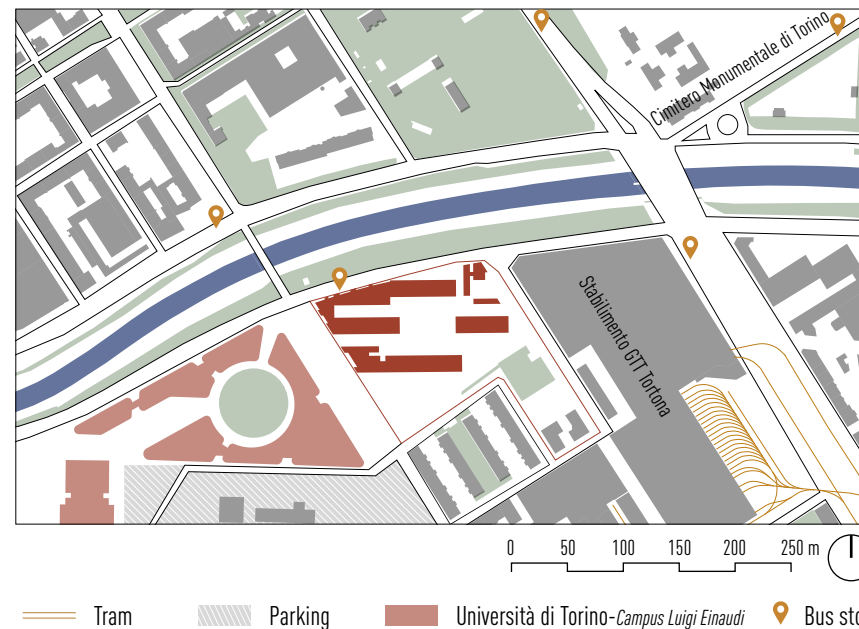
🚆 24 min (2.9 km)

Distance to City Center (≈2.6 km)
Porta Nuova

🚶 ≥ 36 min

🚲 ≥ 9 min

🚆 ≥ 19 min

🚗 ≥ 9 min
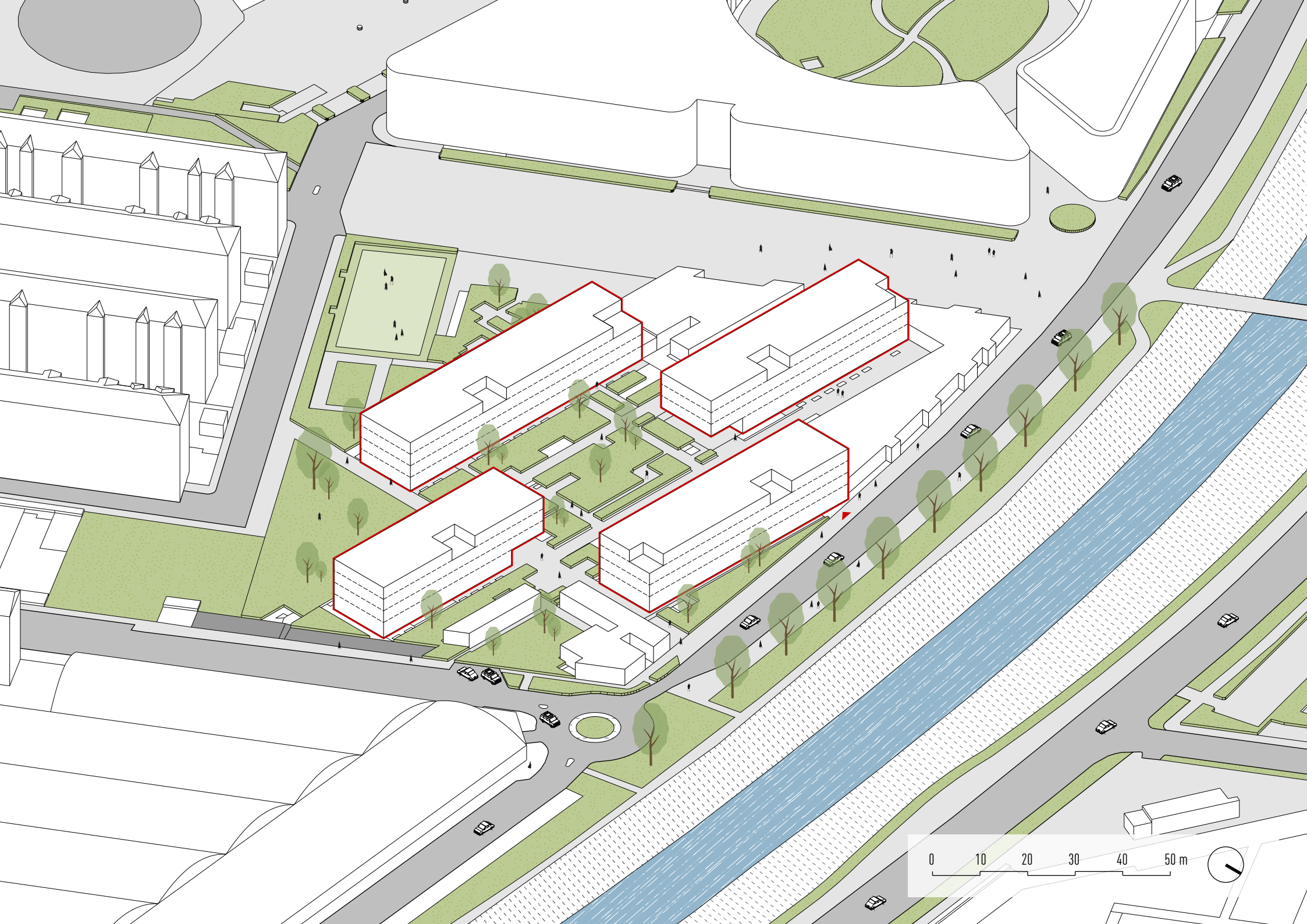
0   10   20   30   40   50 m
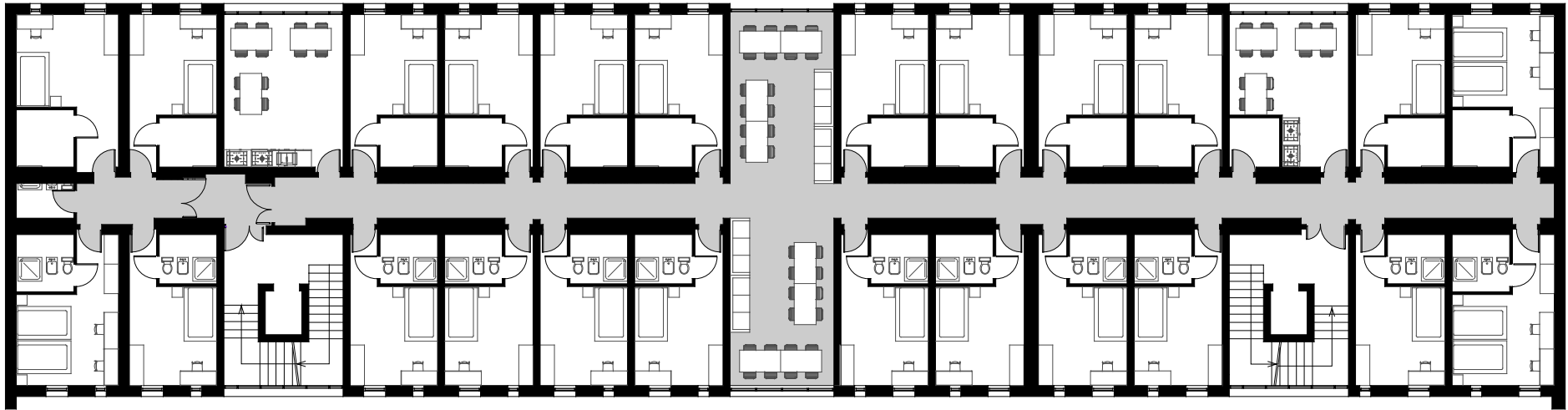
First-floor Plan (Building A)

0 1 2 3 4 5 m

Apartment Layout
Occupancy and Size

Accessible Room
18 m²

Kitchen
26.4 m²

Double Room
18 m²

Single Room
15 m²

Kitchen
26.4 m²

Meeting Room
45 m²

Double Room
18 m²

Common Space

Common Circulation
Vertical and Horizontal
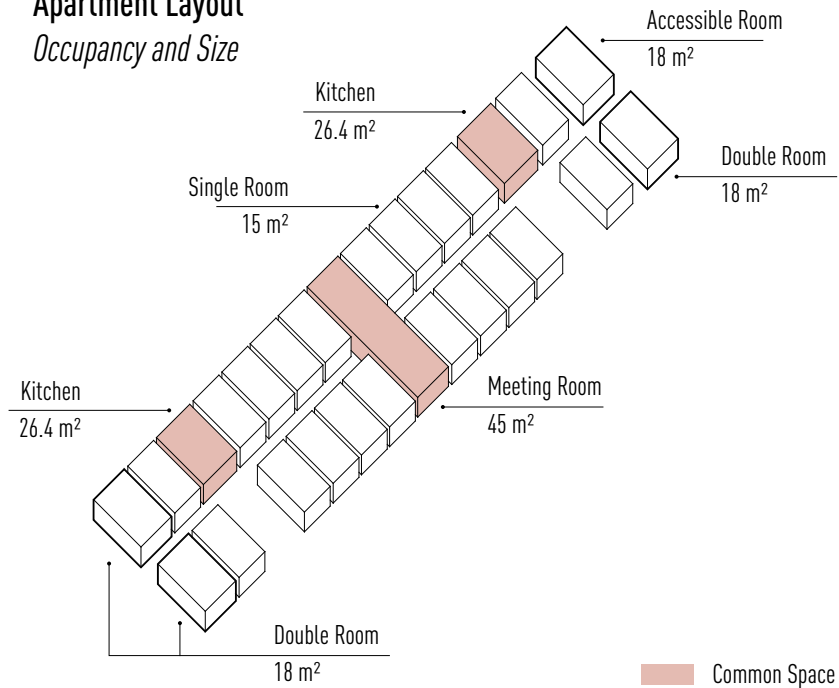
Staircase

Corridor
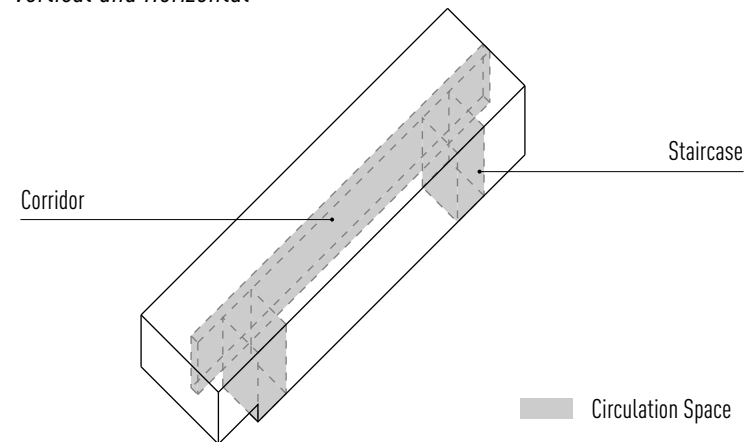
Circulation Space

The circulation system is organized with staircases positioned at both ends of the building, while a central corridor serves as the horizontal connection. Individual student rooms are arranged along both sides of this corridor.

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory
Detailed data

1st Floor (27 people)	Amount (number)	Area (m²)
Common Space	-	**97.8**
Kitchen	*2*	*52.8*
Meeting Room	*1*	*45*
Bedroom	**24**	**300**
Bathroom	**24**	**72**
Common Circulation	-	**109.2**
Staircase	*2*	*52.8*
Corridor	*1*	*56.4*
Others	-	**6.5**
(Technique Room...)		

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory

Percentage

2nd floor Axonometric
Out of Scale

1st floor Axonometric
Out of Scale

Kitchen
Meeting Room
Bedroom
Bathroom
Corridor
Staircase
Others (Technique Room)
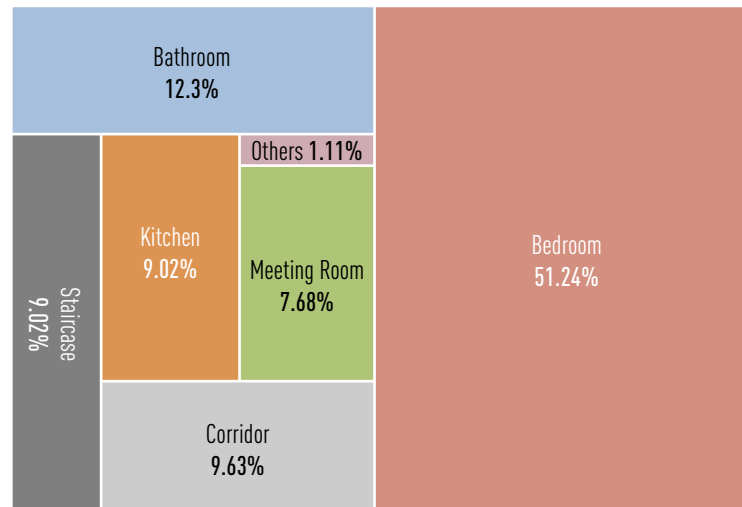
Through the analysis of the proportions of the functional spaces, the layout of each floor of the Olimpia student dormitory is dominated by the bedrooms, which occupy the majority of the building and serve the students in a centralized and efficient manner.

Common spaces are relatively limited, with each floor consisting of two shared kitchens and a meeting and study space as a common space in the center of the building, accessible from the individual rooms through a longitudinal corridor.

The overall spatial organization presents a clear hierarchy of functions and public-private zoning, with no buffer zones, reflecting a clear boundary between common and private spaces.

Collectivity and Private
With a clear boundary, no spatial overlap

Common space

Private space

Corridor *(Circulation System)*
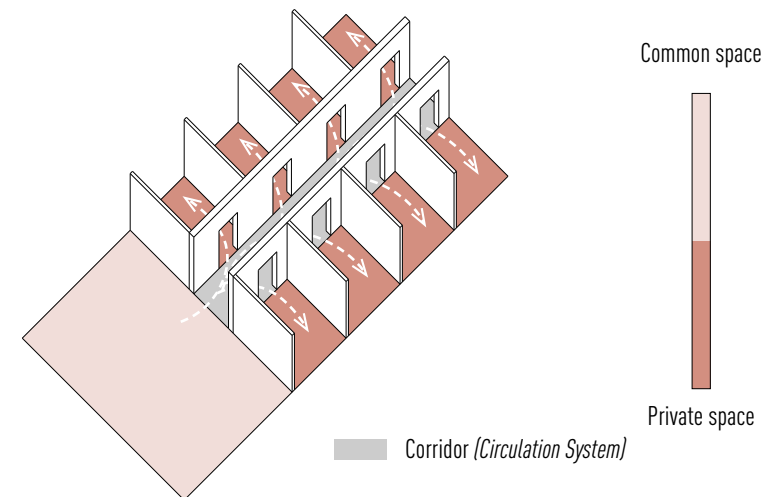
3.3.3 Camplus Torino Regio Parco

Via Perugia, 45, 10152 Torino TO

Construction: 2019-2020
Supported by **CAMPLUS**

Camplus Regio Parco, which is part of an ambitious redevelopment project promoted by the City of Turin, is renovated by PICCO Architetti. It has achieved the highest energy efficiency rating (class A4), reflecting its strong commitment to sustainability.

The residence offers 226 units—including single, double, and family apartments—for a total of 307 beds, with 16 rooms specifically designed for students with disabilities. Each unit includes a private bathroom and a fully equipped kitchenette; some also feature living areas or balconies. Amenities include air conditioning, Wi-Fi, television, and modern furnishings.

Camplus Torino Regio Parco is designed as a co-living space that blends independence with community, offering students and young professionals a comfortable and dynamic environment in which to live, learn, and connect.

https://www.camplus.it/citta/torino/camplus-regio-parco/

Greening	Dora Riparia River	Tram ⦿ IAAD. Torino

Parking	⦿ Bus stop

Distance to Universities

UniTO, PoliTO, ESCP, Accademia Albertina......

Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino
Main Campus

🚆 15 min (1.7 km)

ESCP Business School
Torino Campus

🚆 17 min (2.3 km)

Università di Torino
Main Campus Complex

🚆 16 min (1.7 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Main Campus

🚆 34 min (4.2 km)

Università di Torino
Campus Luigi Einaudi

🚶 15 min (1.1 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Architettura

🚆 27min (3.5 km)

Distance to City Center (≈3 km)

Porta Nuova

🚶 ≥ 43 min

🚲 ≥ 13 min

🚆 ≥ 24 min

🚗 ≥ 13 min
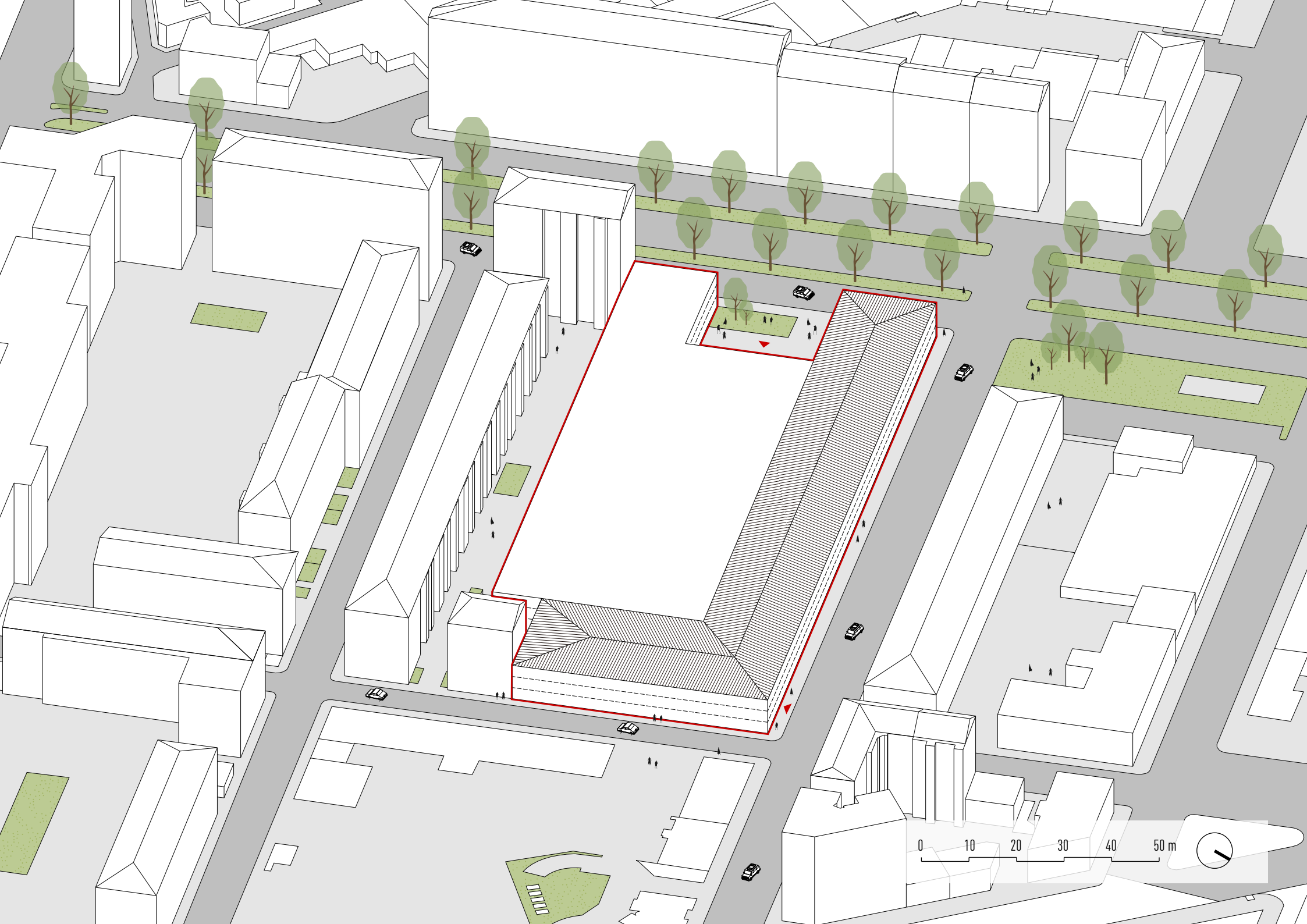
0 10 20 30 40 50 m

Apartment Layout
Occupancy and Size

Double Room
≈35 m²

Single Room
≈24 m²

Void
Common Space

Common Circulation
Vertical and Horizontal

Staircase

Corridor
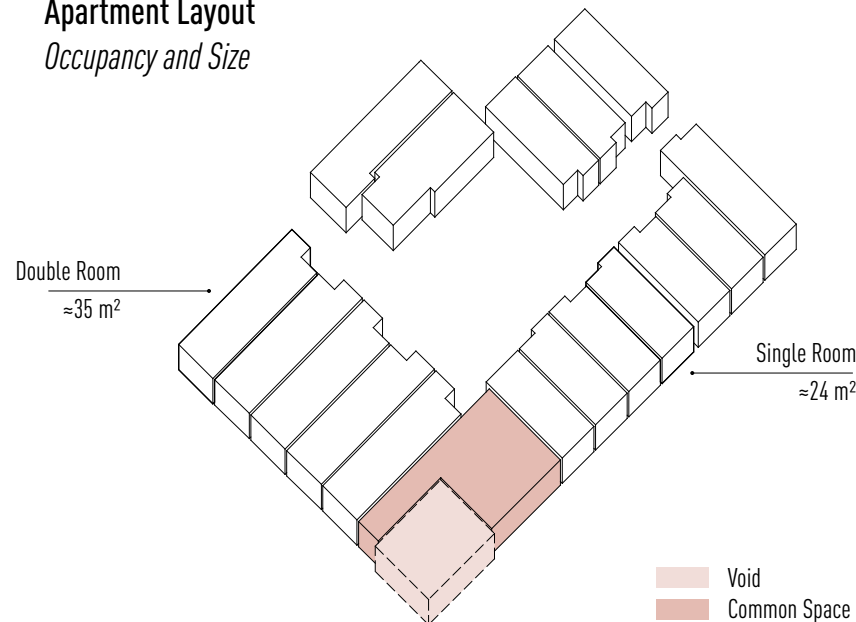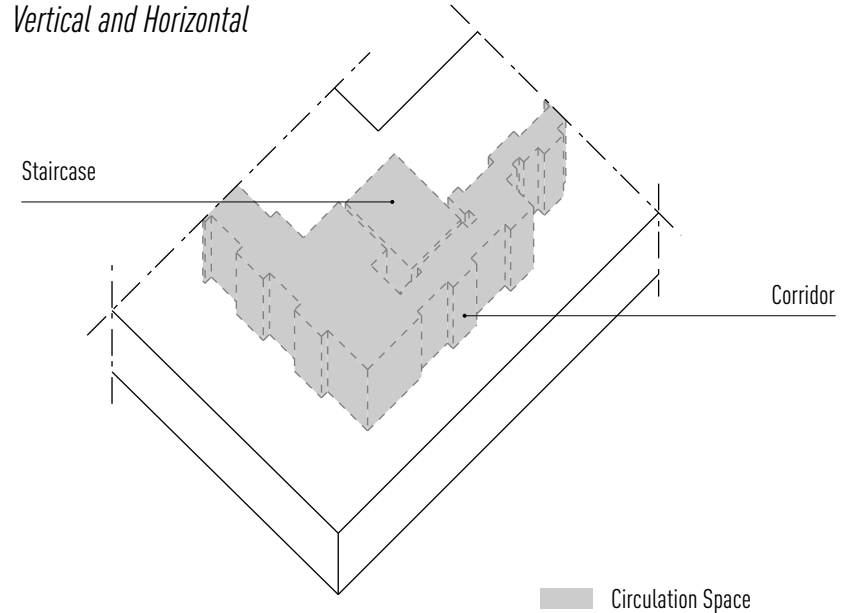
Circulation Space

The analysis part selected in this study is the corner space with a full - height void, and its open interface enhances the visual penetration and sharing potential of the internal space.

The circulation system still follows the structural logic of traditional student dormitories, that a vertical staircase centered as the traffic core and individual rooms linearly distributed on corridor both sides .

However, the key difference in its spatial characteristics lies in the variability of the common spaces on each floor, like indoor resting areas, self-study spaces, and terraces are respectively set on different floors, making the common spaces present a dynamic hierarchical sequence both vertically and horizontally.

This common space strategy of juxtaposing indoor and outdoor spaces ensures the privacy of private rooms, while significantly improving the diversity and spatial quality of collective living.

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory
Detailed data

1st Floor (24 people)	Amount (number)	Area (m²)
Common Space	-	**92**
Shared Living Room	*1*	*58*
Void	*1*	*34*
Bedroom	**45**	**472**
Single Room	*8*	*156*
Double Room	*8*	*244*
Bathroom	**16**	**72**
Common Circulation	-	**226.8**
Staircase and Elevator	*-*	*46.8*
Corridor	*-*	*180*

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory
Percentage

Common Circulation
26.28%

Shared Living Room
6.72%

Bathroom
8.35%

Bedroom
54.7%
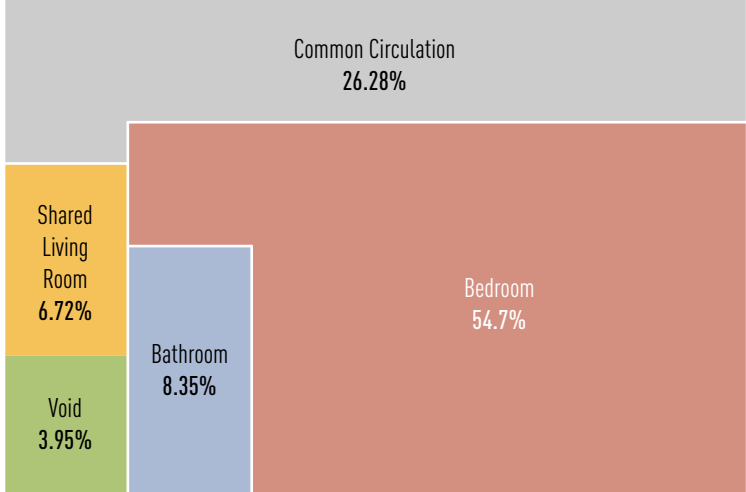
Void
3.95%

1st floor Axonometric
Out of Scale

Shared Living Room
Bedroom
Bathroom
Circulation
Void

Through the analysis of the functional area ratio, it can be seen that the student dormitory, as a project operated by a private institution, still occupies the main area of the building with private spaces such as bedrooms, reflecting the operation logic oriented by accommodation income.

Common space is compensated in terms of overall area through diversified forms. Although it only analyzed a part of the building, it was possible to identify two types of common spaces, which not only make up for the lack of function and area, but also play an important role in improving the living experience and enhancing the attractiveness of students in terms of operational strategy.

Therefore, the diversity of types of common spaces not only reflects the adaptability of design strategies, but also constitutes one of the key factors in attracting students.

Collectivity and Private
Combine different types of common space in one floor

Common space

Private space

Corridor
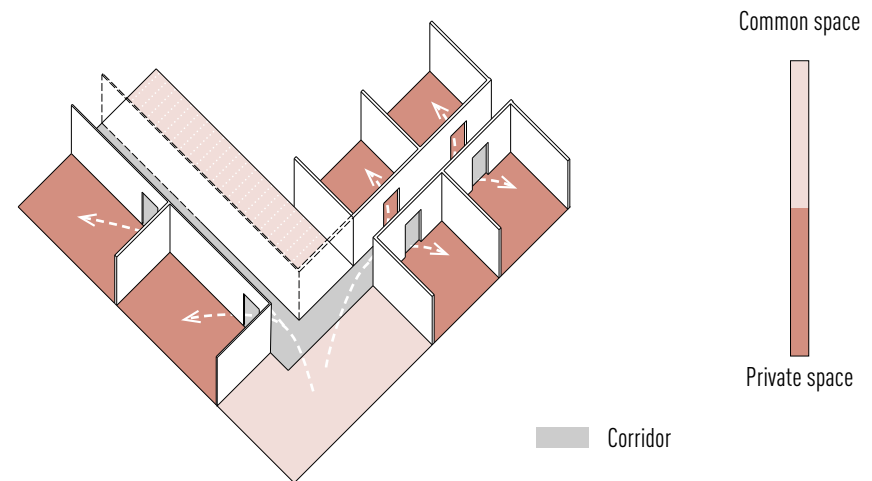
3.3.4 Residenza Universitaria EDISU Verdi

Via Giuseppe Verdi, 15, 10124 Torino TO

Reconstruction: 1978–1982
Major Renovation Construction: 2000-2002
Supported by **EDISU**

Verdi residence, created from a 17th-century historic palace and renovated in the last century, is located in the heart of Turin at the corner of Via Rossini and Via Verdi. It is just a short distance from the Mole Antonelliana and within easy walking distance of the University of Turin.

The building was renovated by DE-GA S.p.A. between 2000 and 2002, preserving its original structure while incorporating modern facilities.

The dormitory offers a total of 126 single rooms and 25 double rooms to accommodate different student housing needs. Each room is equipped with a private bathroom, basic furniture, and essential amenities. Additionally, every floor features at least four shared kitchens and one study room.

https://www.edisu.piemonte.it/it/servizi/abitare/residenze -universitarie/residenza -universitaria-verdi
https://due.to.it/residenza-universitaria-verdi-e-d-i-s-u/

Greening | Dora Riparia River | Po River | Universities
UniTO, PoliTO, ESCP, Accademia Albertina

Parking | Tram | UniTO | Accademia Albertina | Bus stop

Distance to Universities
UniTO, PoliTO, ESCP, Accademia Albertina......

Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino
Main Campus
🚶 3 min (0.21 km)

ESCP Business School
Torino Campus
🚆 6 min (0.8 km)

Università di Torino
Main Campus Complex
🚶 4 min (0.35 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Main Campus
🚆 22 min (3 km)

Università di Torino
Campus Luigi Einaudi
🚆 9 min (1 km)

Politecnico di Torino
Architettura
🚆 14 min (2 km)

Distance to City Center (≈1.4 km)
Porta Nuova

🚶 ≥ 20 min

🚴 ≥ 6 min

🚆 ≥ 9 min

🚗 ≥ 11 min

0 10 20 30 40 50 m

1-*Study Room*   2-*Dining Area*   3-*Kitchen*

First-floor Plan

0 2 4 6 8 10 m

Common Circulation
Vertical and Horizontal

Staircase A

Staircase B

Staircase C

Staircase D

Indoor Circulation Space

Outdoor Circulation Space

Apartment Layout
Occupancy and Size

Two-person Apartment
≈30 m²

Double Room
≈21 m²

Single Room
≈18 m²

Two-person Apartment
≈35 m²

Two-person Apartment
≈35 m²

Common Space

The building features a courtyard-style layout, with staircases located at all four corners serving as vertical circulation cores.

Horizontal connectivity of each floor is achieved through internal corridors, while the first and second floor incorporate external corridor balconies as circulation paths. These external corridors not only provide passageways but also create visual connection and spatial interaction with the central courtyard through their open design.

The building retained the spatial organization logic of the original old-style residence, maintaining two-person apartment units, which consists of two relatively independent single rooms and a shared bathroom.

Meanwhile, the common space follow the structural layout, concentrated together with staircases at the four corners, creating distinct functional zones and clear circulation paths.

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory
Detailed data

1st Floor (52 people)	Amount (number)	Area (m²)
Common Space	-	**167**
Kitchen & Dinner Area	*5*	*149.5*
Study Room	*1*	*17.5*
Bedroom	**45**	**561.5**
Bathroom	**32**	**130.8**
Common Circulation	-	**350**
Staircase	*4*	*70.5*
Corridor	*-*	*279.5*
Others	**4**	**11.2**
(Technique Room...)		

Functional Space Allocation in Student Dormitory
Percentage

Other
0.92%

Kitchen & Dinner Area
12.25%

Bedroom
46%

Common Circulation
28.68%
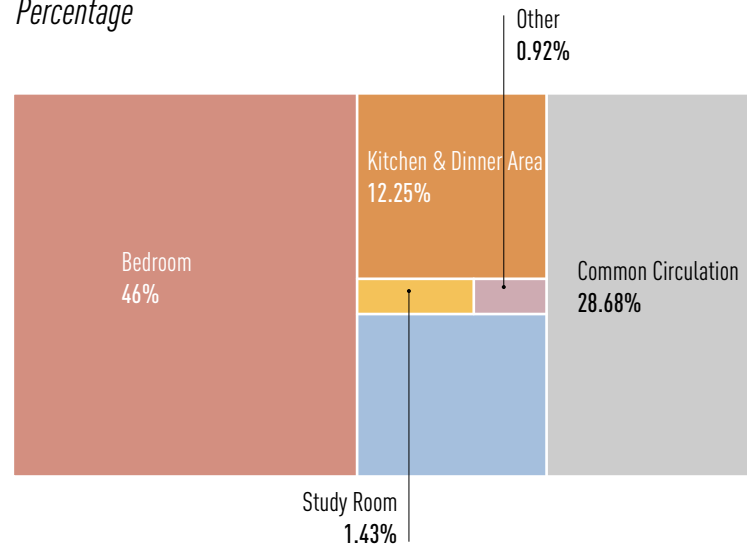
Study Room
1.43%

1st floor Axonometric
Out of Scale
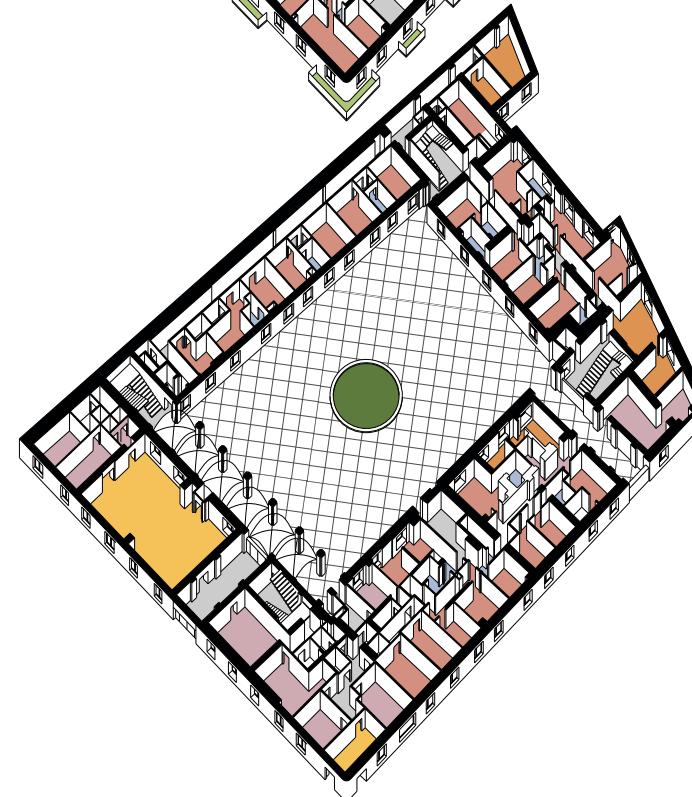
Ground floor Axonometric
Out of Scale

Kitchen & Dinner Area
Study Room & HALL
Bedroom
Bathroom
Circulation
Balcony
Others (Office...)

Verdi student dormitory continues the traditional layout of a residential building, with the spatial organization centered on the bedrooms, which occupy nearly half of the building. The other large portion of the space is occupied by the circulation system.

The building is enclosed in a zigza shape to form an internal court-yard, and commnual space, like kitchen, is set up at the four corners as a shared node so that students on each floor can access them easily.

The overall design presents a progressive spatial hierarchy of public-traffic-private, reflecting a strategic thinking of optimizing the allocation of resources and the organization of moving lines in limited space.

Collectivity and Private
Integrate common space with vertical circulation cores

Common space

Private space

Corridor
Staircase
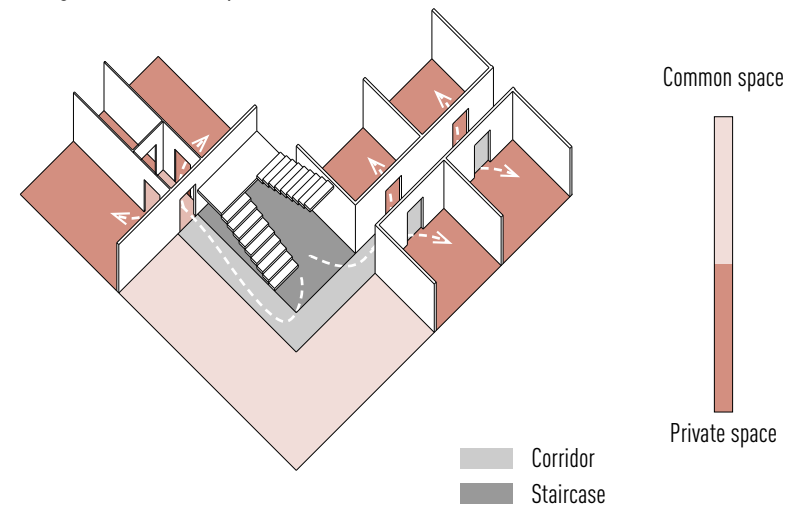
CHAPTER 4

DESIGN IMPLICATIONS ABOUT STUDENT DORMITORY
for Future Inspiration

The spatial design of student dormitories is essentially related to how to coordinate the tension between collective life and individual autonomy in the same architectural system.

Based on the previous analysis of the historical context and the cases of Turin, this chapter will summarize the key enlightenment of the future student dormitory in the organization of common spaces and private spaces from the design level.

First, "Porous Boundary" emphasizes that boundaries should not be simply separated, but should be used to achieve a gradual transition from collectivity to private through a semi-open, adjustable, and permeable spatial strategy. Secondly, "Layered Commonality" points out that common space should constitute a multi-level and differentiated system, from shared corridors, learning corners to large-scale public halls, forming a diverse social platform to choose from. Finally, "Experience-Centered Design" emphasizes that dormitories should go beyond functional satisfaction and create a spatial atmosphere that supports daily experience, social interaction, and personal rhythm through architectural operations such as light, materials, scale, and circulation.

This chapter will use these three points as a framework to put forward the directional thinking of future student dormitories in terms of spatial organization and design strategies.

4.1 Porous Boundary

In the spatial organization of student dormitories, boundaries are seen as the dividing line between common space and private space. However, contemporary architectural theory has increasingly emphasized that boundaries do not have to exist in a closed, rigid way. Instead, it should be flexible, permeable, and negotiable to more finely regulate the dynamic relationship between collective life and individual needs. As architectural theorist Herman Hertzberger pointed out, architecture should create spatial interfaces that allow people to move flexibly between independence and participation,[65] which provides an important theoretical basis for porous boundary.

The so-called "porous" includes not only openings, hollows, and translucent structures at the physical level, but also ambiguous space at the behavioral level and interaction mechanisms at the social level, so that boundaries can filter rather than block different usage patterns. This multi-dimensional permeability makes the common space and private space no longer form an opposing binary structure, but constitute a continuous gradient space.

Porous boundaries often achieve a gradual transition from common space to private space through semi-open transitional spaces, visual but controllable interfaces, recessed front spaces, vestibule areas in front of shared entrances...
This "filtered" space design can:

· *Reduce direct interference from collectivity events to the room*
· *Provide space for short stays in informal interactions*
· *Encourage students to choose their own way to access common space*

This design principle is embodied in the four cases of Turin, and two representative types of "porous boundary" organizational strategies can be observed, which provide important enlightenment for the integrated design of student dormitories in public and private spaces in the future.

[65] Hertzberger, H. *Lessons for Students in Architecture.* Rotterdam: 010 Publishers. 1991, P. 72-75.

The first type of strategy (A) emphasizes the construction of collec-
tivity through the openness of veiw and the introduction of external
space.

A large number of transparent or translucent interfaces are used to
form a continuous line of sight and flexible boundary between the
common space, the circulation and the living space. At the same
time, the outdoor courtyard or semi-open exterior space is no
longer only used as an accessory environment, but is transformed
into an external common living room with a social function.
As students move from courtyards or open spaces to their individu-
al private rooms, they often pass through intermediate levels such
as overhead levels, semi-open corridors, or loggias, making the
common space and private space transition a gradual experience.
This strategy emphasizes the visibility, accessibility, and overall
openness of space, allowing students to maintain a certain
freedom in collective life.

The second type of strategy (B) refines the interface between
common space and private space through multi-level indoor
transitional spaces.

For example, small halls, shared living rooms, transition platforms,
semi-open staircases... are all given the role of buffer zones,
allowing students to experience a brief pause and transition before
entering their private space. Whether it's a short corridor between
a separate room and a shared kitchen, or multiple buffers between
an apartment entrance and an external corridor, these spaces form
a flexible boundary through stay ability rather than a purely
passage function.
This type of design is particularly critical in compact dormitory
units, which reduce the direct conflict between collectivity and
privacy by creating a "third space" that makes collective living
more comfortable and psychologically acceptable.
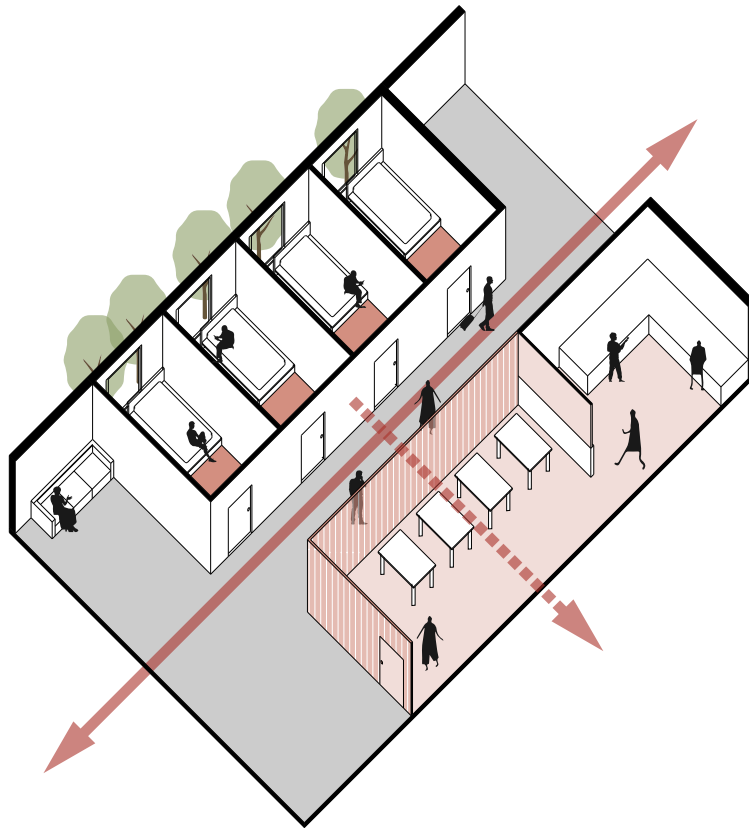
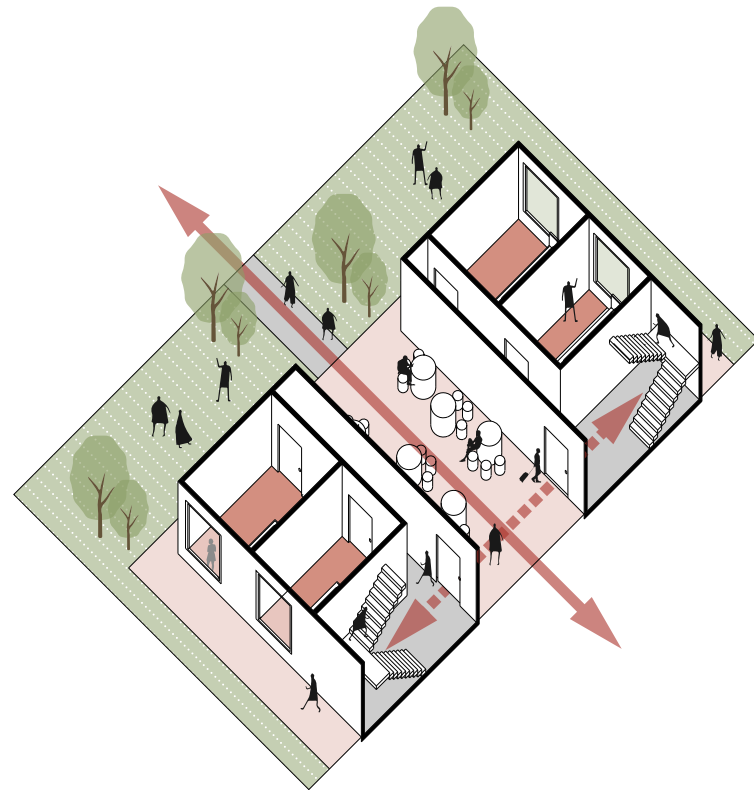## A.1 Transparent or translucent interfaces

A.2 Semi-open exterior space

B.1 Shared living rooms with small rooms

B.2 Staircases with platform

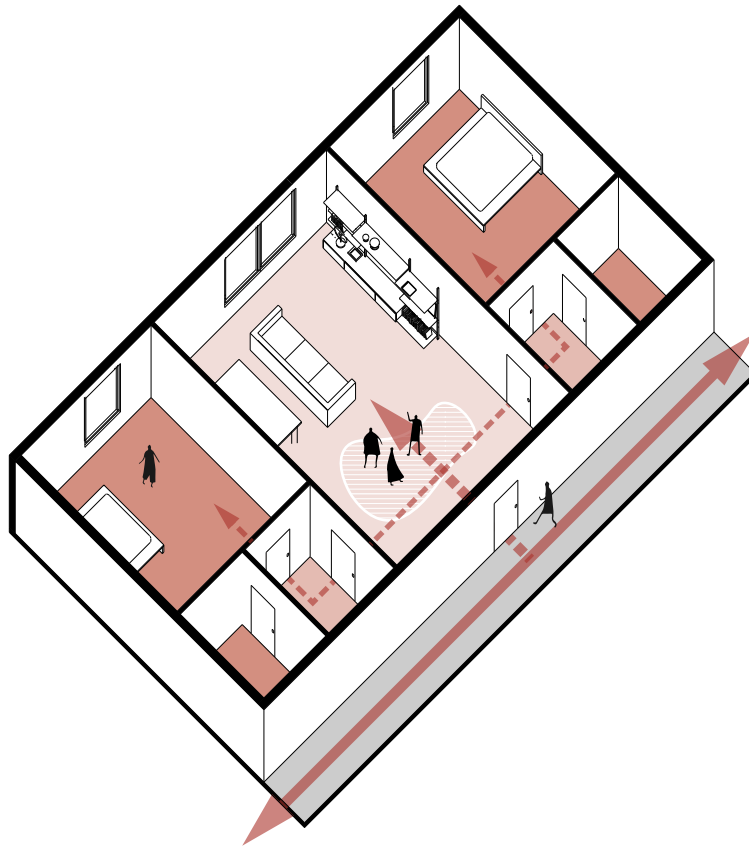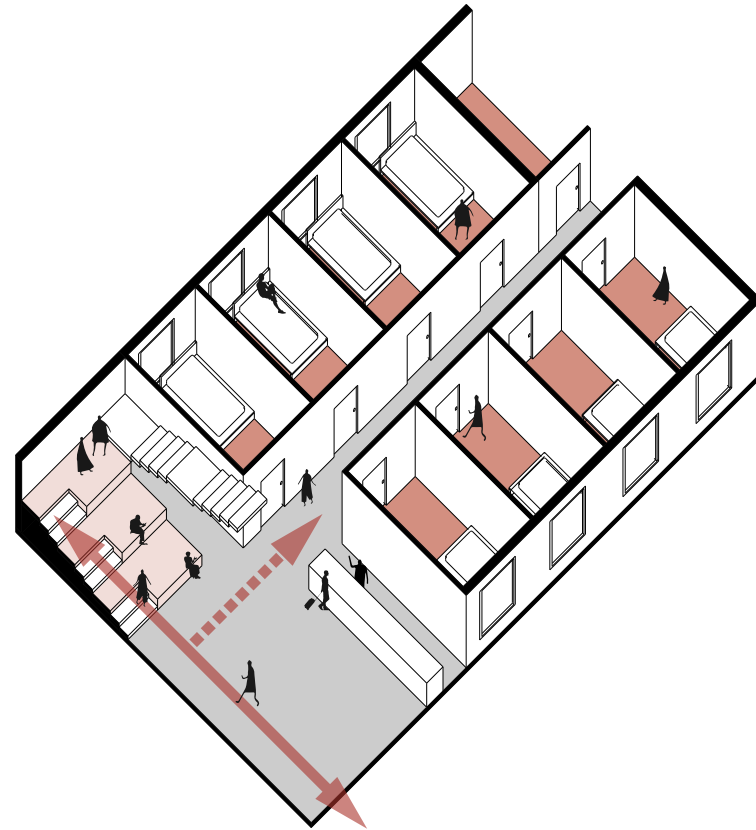*Diagram by author*

Diagram by author

4.2 Layered Commonality

If porous boundary focuses on how the interface between common and private space is filtered and flexible, then layered commonality further emphasizes that common space is not a single level, but a composite system composed of layers of common space with different scales, different degrees of openness, and different functional densities.

This cascade of commonality does not simply increase the number of common spaces, but organizes them to form a gradient of collectivity from the strongest collective to the weakest individual in the spatial sequence. Therefore, common space in student dormitory is no longer a point, but a continuous, selectable, and adjustable experience structure.

As a space for students from all over the world, its spatial organization should be shaped by a multi-level social distancing system, which means that the organizational logic of the space should be more from a completely open space, to a semi-open, semi-private, and then completely closed private space, which is manifested as the layer and gradient of common space, providing students with different intensities of social choices.

In the architectural practice of student dormitories, "commonality" is usually composed of three types of spatial hierarchies:

· *"Collective commonality" of ground floor or dormitory cluster*
· *"Semi commonality" of floors or building units*
· *"Micro commonality" in front of the entrance of the room*

"Collective commonality" of ground floor or dormitory cluster

The collective commonality of dormitory cluster or ground floor are concentrated in multiple spatial carriers such as courtyards, lobbies, overhead floors, learning centers, large kitchens, and canteens. These spaces are not isolated functional partitions, but break physical boundaries with high accessibility, allowing students with different needs to easily reach, and carry diverse daily activities with high cohesion, naturally becoming the most collectivity core field of the dormitory.

As the first layer of commonality, the core value of this kind of large common space lies in the emphasis on collective presence, which not only provides a fixed place for formal collective activities and in-depth academic discussions, but also creates possibilities for random encounters and informal socialization of students across grades and majors through the flow of circulation design and open space form, so that the collision of ideas and emotional connections occur naturally in student daily life. The result is a sense of community belonging and collective identity rooted in space.

"Semi commonality" of floors or building units

The "semi-commonality" of floors or building units is mainly realized by small shared spaces such as corridor rest areas, small study rooms, shared balconies, common living rooms, and semi-open loggias, which serve a single floor or unit as the core function and constitute the middle level of the community common space system. Its core characteristics are a limited range of users, higher familiarity and a milder collective intensity. The limited service radius allows students to be mostly neighbors on the same floor or unit who meet frequently on a daily basis, which naturally gives birth to a acquaintance society communication scene. The

milder intensity of collectivity is different from the large common space on the ground floor, which not only retains the interactive attributes of the common space, but also avoids the social pressure caused by excessive openness, and provides students with a safe and inclusive communication field.

The core of this level of spatial design is the adherence to the neighborhood scale, which is not a simple functional supplement, but builds a gentle buffer between the commonality of group life and the privacy of individual life, which not only meets the needs of lightweight social interactions such as daily learning and collaboration, leisure gatherings, but also built trust and emotional connection through high-frequency informal interactions, becoming an important spatial carrier for maintaining the neighborhood relationship of floors or units and cultivating a sense of community belonging.

"Micro commonality" in front of the entrance of the room

The micro commonality in front of the entrance of the room focuses on micro-scale spatial forms such as the recessed space in front of the door, the entrance hallway, the small aisle, and the stay area in front of the shared kitchen, as the last link between the common

space and the private space, and they constitute the most sensitive and delicate existence in the commonality hierarchy.

The core value of micro common space is reflected in three points. First, it is stayability , which is different from pure traffic corridors, and its spatial design reserves the possibility of a short stop, creating a physical basis for immediate interaction. Second, it has low functional density but high potential for social interaction, and does not need to carry complex use functions, but can accommodate lightweight social behaviors such as chance encounters, greetings, and short chatting. Third, it has the dual attributes of privacy protection and controllable exposure, which not only protects the privacy of the room with micro-scale spatial definition, but also avoids the social alienation caused by absolute isolation, allowing students to achieve moderate social connection.

As the superficial expression of commonality, although these extremely small-scale spaces may seem inconspicuous, they directly affect students' perception of privacy boundaries and daily social comfort, and become a key spatial medium to balance individual privacy needs and collectivity connection needs.

The core meaning of layered commonality is to build a flexible balance between collective life and individual life, rather than just staying at the level of physical space. It breaks the single layout of "black and white" of traditional student dormitory, and provides students with different intensities of choice of social exposure through the gradient design of "collective commonality, semi-commonality, micro commonality, and complete privacy".

Common space is no longer a passively imposed attribute, but a life option that can be controlled by itself, and students do not need to compromise between excessive collectivity and absolute individual, and can freely define the degree of participation in collective life and protect the boundaries of individual life through spatial choice. Achieve the unity of psychological comfort and community belonging with precise space adaptation, so that the dormitory can become a warm community that balances collective connection and individual independence.
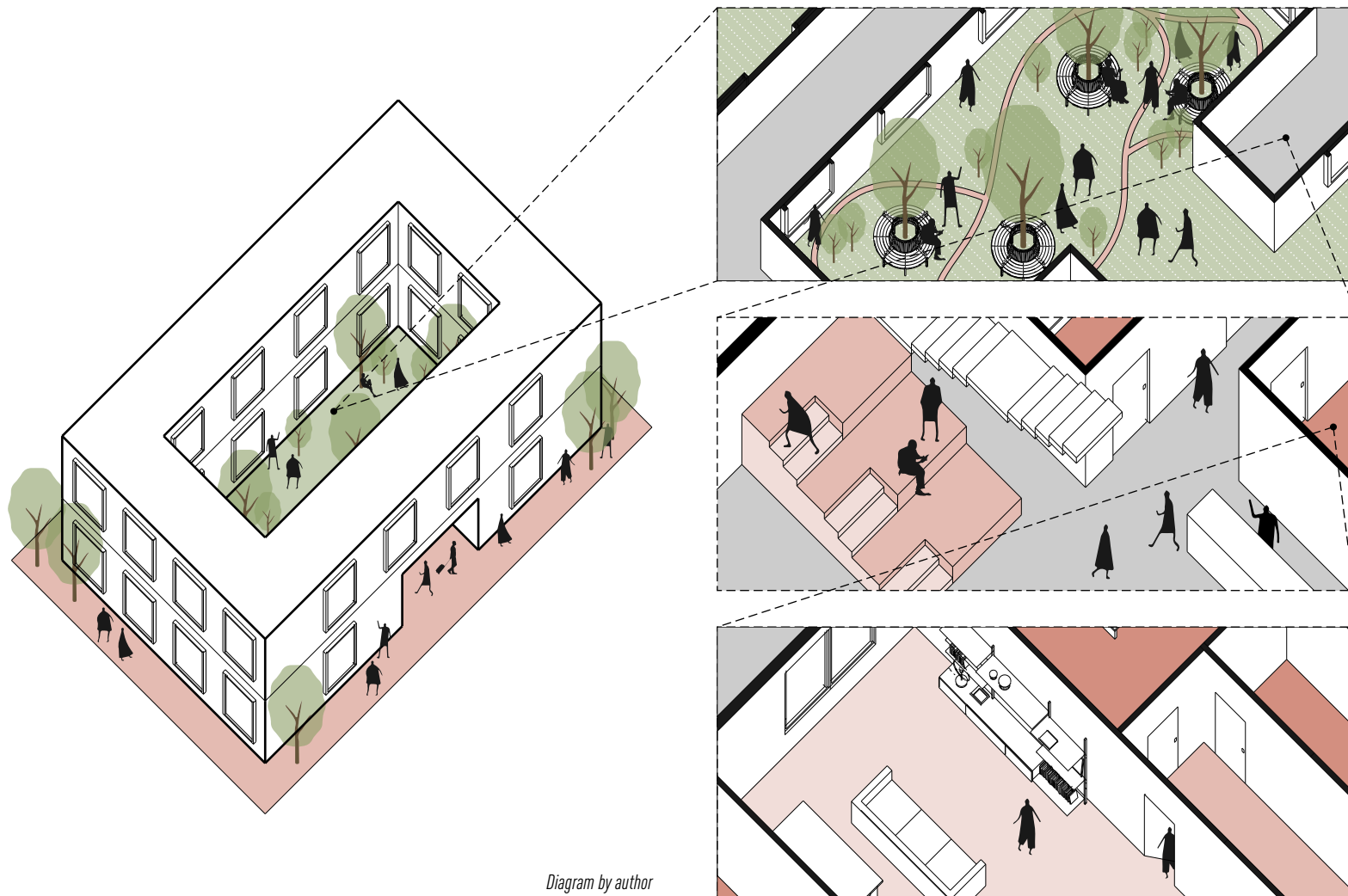
Diagram by author

4.3 Experience-Centered Design

Experience-centered design explores how dormitory space shapes students' daily behavior, psychological state, and social style, and emphasizes how the space is ultimately felt and used by students, rather than just the formal logic of the space itself.

Student dormitories are not only accommodation facilities, but also the main scene of students' daily lives. Therefore, experience-oriented design focuses not only on the functional organization of the space itself, but also on whether the space can support diverse behavioral rhythms, flexible social modes, and psychologically adjustable individual-collective.

Rhythmic everydayness

The daily scenes of student dormitories are composed of a series of highly repetitive "micro-behaviors", such as entering and exiting private rooms, walking through corridors and common spaces, going to and from functional areas such as kitchens, and staying in common communication spaces, which are woven together into a stable rhythm of life. Traditional student dormitory design often simplifies the behavior path to a functional connection of starting point and end, ignoring the experiential value of the movement process itself.

Through the refined creation of spatial forms, experience-oriented design allows these repetitive micro-behaviors to have recognizable and perceptible spatial characteristics, so that the originally monotonous behavior sequence can be transformed into a coherent and high-quality life experience.

Through the progressive spatial sequence of "small hall - common living room - overhead floor – courtyard", a coherent and layered mobile experience is constructed.

From the private room to the small hall, the initial transition from private to semi-common is completed. The common living room is the core communication space, providing the possibility of staying and interacting. The overhead layer realizes indoor and outdoor visual connection through transparent design. Finally, it arrives at the courtyard, completing the full opening from the interior of the

building to the natural environment.

Throughout the path, the scale, enclosure, and functional attributes of space are constantly changing, making each section of walking have unique perceptual characteristics, and the rhythm of behavior becomes rich and recognizable.

The core enlightenment of this dimension is that the value of dormitory space lies not only in "reaching" a functional area, but also in the meaning of life carried by the "path" itself - through the optimization of the path experience, repetitive micro-behaviors can be transformed into quality life sequences, and the dormitory space is also transformed from a "a machine for living in" to a "life scene".

Optional sociality

Traditional dormitories are equipped with large common spaces to promote social interaction, but this design often ignores the different needs of individual students for social interaction, such as some students may need to be alone, and some students may want to participate or withdraw from social interaction at any time. Experience-oriented design pays more attention to students' freedom to participate in social interactions "willingly, unwillingly,

and at any time", and the core goal is to provide students with multi-intensity and switchable social scenes, rather than forcing them to promote group activities.

Through the construction of multi-layered common spaces in the courtyard - floor common space - indoor living room, students are provided with a free choice path of "watching, passing by, and participating". With a transparent layer design, it provides a bystander participation experience. Transparent materials such as glass are used on the common floor, allowing indoor activities to be perceived by the outside world, but maintaining a certain physical distance. Even if students do not enter the common space, they can visually perceive the collective atmosphere, which not only satisfies the psychological need for community connection without actually participating in social interaction, achieving a social balance of not participating but not isolating.

The core idea of this dimension is that socializing is not an obligatory requirement of the dorm space, but a fully supported free option. Through the setting of multi-intensity social scenes, individual differences of students are respected, so that the collective and individual relationship has the possibility of flexible adjustment at the social level.

Psychological Comfort & Belonging

The quality of the student dormitory experience depends on whether the space can respond to the psychological needs of individuals, including the protection of privacy, acceptance of collective life, sense of security and order, and identification and belonging to the environment. Experience-oriented design accurately responds to these psychological needs through the refined design of a series of micro-spaces and spatial nodes, and realizes the adaptation of space-psychology.

Specific design methods include the use of visible but not exposed translucent interfaces, such as frosted glass in the room partition and hollow grilles in the desk area, which not only retain the overall transparency of the space, avoid the oppression caused by closure, but also cleverly block the trajectory of private activities to prevent privacy leakage.

Create a recessed space and transition area in front of the door, and build a psychological buffer zone from the common corridor to the private room through the retreat of space, so that students can complete the emotional switch from collective state to private state before entering the private room, reducing the sense of abruptness. Reserve the space in front of the room that can be personalized, such as the tabletop where personal items such as green plants and books can be placed at the end of the corridor, and the decoration area where photos and posters can be posted on the wall at the door, so that students can leave a unique personal trace in a unified collective space and strengthen the sense of exclusivity of the space.

Plan small scale but stay attribute shared nodes, such as single seats at the corners of corridors and small rest areas in hallways, which are not separated from the collective environment, but can also provide flexible scenes of solitary collectivity to meet the needs of students who occasionally want to get away from the crowd and relax for a while.

When the student dormitory space design begins to take into account the emotional needs and psychological feelings of students, students will truly regard the dormitory as "home". Through these refined designs, the psychological comfort is improved, so that each student can not only find their own private corner in the high-density collective dormitory, but also naturally integrate into collective life, and then obtain a solid sense of belonging and sufficient security. This psychological balance is the key prerequisite for the harmonious coexistence of collective and individual in the dormitory space.

CONCLUSION

This thesis centers on "Rethinking the Common and Private Spaces in Student Dormitories". Through a comprehensive review of the global context, in - depth analysis of regional characteristics, and verification of local practices, it ultimately focuses on the three core dimensions proposed in Chapter 4, "Porous Boundary", "Layered Commonality", " Experience-Centered Design", and constructs a theoretical logic and practical framework for the dynamic symbiosis of common - private spaces, offering a solution with both academic value and practical feasibility to address the living dilemmas of contemporary students, especially international students.

The essence of the porous boundary design lies in the reconstruction of the traditional rigid spatial interface. Through the organic combination of visual connection and physical adjustability, it breaks the binary opposition perception that common space means open and private space means closed. This permeable and transformable spatial interface not only maintains the sense of commu-

nity connection in the collective domain to avoid individual isolation but also protects the boundary autonomy of the private domain to prevent privacy infringement. It precisely addresses the historical contradiction in the global dormitory evolution, where functionalism suppresses the individual and community - orientation squeezes privacy, and provides medium - level support for the transition of spatial layout from fragmentation to integration.

Furthermore, the layered commonality design is a deepening of the adaptation logic of common space needs, which is not a simple division of space, but based on the difference in the social intensity of users, such as small chatting with friends, academic collaboration with classmates, and large cross-cultural exchanges in residence, the "demand-space" matching system constructed, which not only avoids the inefficient use caused by the simplification of traditional common space functions, but also makes the common space a natural field for non-compulsory social interaction through different scene. It echoes the theory of the character-

istics of common space as a cultural carrier in Italian regional practice, and improves the academic cognition of common space from formal supply to demand adaptation.

Experience-Centered Design is a value embodiment of the first two core dimensions, and the key is that the idea of space design has changed, no longer just for basic functions, but to meet the individual needs of students and help them grow. By integrating students' three distinctive needs， namely cross-cultural adaptation, demand for flexible academic scenarios, and mitigation of homesickness， spatial design transmits humanistic care and facilitates comfortable experiences, enabling both common and private spaces to jointly serve as a supportive force for students' growth. This not only makes up for the shortcomings of existing research that space design ignores the differences in the experience of different student groups, but also improves the balance between common and private spaces from simply adjusting the ratio of the two to how to help students realize their self-worth.

The three are not isolated design strategies, but an organic whole that progresses and supports each other. The porous boundary provides the media foundation for the dynamic switching of spatial layout, the layered commonality is the framework for the precise adaptation of spatial needs, and experience-centered design is the final implementation of spatial value.

From a practical point of view, this framework can effectively reduce the scarcity of high-quality dormitories, and through the low-cost interface transformation of porous boundaries, the optimization of the scenario-based layout of layered commonality, and the implantation of humanistic details in experience-centered design, ordinary dormitories can achieve a balance between common and private space without high cost investment, thereby alleviating the practical dilemma of high rental costs and sought-after high-quality dormitories for international students.

There are still limitations in this thesis, such as the discussion of the different demands of student dormitories in different climate environments and different education systems, which can be further expanded through cross-regional comparative research in the future. At the same time, more empirical exploration is needed on how the combination of intelligent technology and spatial design, such as intelligent regulation of dynamic boundaries, can better serve the demand.

In general, the core value of this thesis lies in the rethinking of the

relationship between "collective and individual", so that the student dormitory design can return to the fundamental human needs, and its conclusion can not only provide a reference for the design of student dormitories, but also provide reference for the development of similar living spaces such as youth apartments and shared communities, and promote the living space to move towards a more inclusive, more efficient and more humanistic direction, which is also the core position of people-oriented that contemporary architectural design should adhere to.

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