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Towards a housing preservation culture

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DOI

[10.52200/docomomo.68.ed](https://doi.org/10.52200/docomomo.68.ed)

Publication date

2023

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

DOCOMOMO Journal

Citation (APA)

Pottgiesser, U., & Quist, W. (2023). Towards a housing preservation culture. *DOCOMOMO Journal*, 2023(68), 2-3. <https://doi.org/10.52200/docomomo.68.ed>

Important note

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EDITORIAL

Uta Pottgiesser & Wido Quist

Editors-in-chief

TOWARDS A HOUSING PRESERVATION CULTURE

After the two 2022-issues of the Docomomo Journal, number 66 on 'Modern Plastic Heritage' and number 67 on 'Multiple Modernisms in Ukraine,' this issue reveals another chapter of an often and diversely described theme of Modern Movement and a pressing subject worldwide: Housing.

Docomomo International has published continuously on housing issues, and the bi-annual international Docomomo conferences (IDC) have also addressed the topic of housing in many different ways. In 2000, Docomomo Journal 22¹ highlighted some of the iconic 'Modern Houses,' and in 2008, an overview of 'Postwar Mass Housing' as a "building type afflicted by large-scale redundancy and unpopularity" (Glendinning 2008, 5) was presented in Docomomo Journal 39². More recent editions, such as Docomomo Journals 64 and 65 (2021)³ entitled 'Modern Houses' and 'Housing for All' took on a different perspective, discussing the house as "the place of home, the world and container of the everyday individual and family life" (Noelle and Torrent 2021, 4). And finally, Docomomo Journal 51 (2014)⁴ on 'Modern Housing. Patrimonio Vivo' and Docomomo Journal 54 (2016)⁵ on 'Housing Reloaded' discussed the heritage values and the "progressive shift towards the practice of maintenance" (Graf and Marino 2016, 5), dealing with the conservation and rehabilitation of large housing estates.

This Docomomo Journal 68 continues the argument by shedding light on the gap between individual (often iconic) houses and mass housing by addressing the majority of post-WWII housing stock, namely 'middle-class mass housing' within Europe and beyond. The topic was derived from a European COST Action (CA18137) that aimed to explore the diversity of this typology with regard to design, spatial expression, construction, heritage values, and degradation.⁶ This COST Action was initiated to boost the discussion and collection as well as knowledge dissemination regarding mass housing for the middle class. This Docomomo Journal facilitates this aim by publishing academic, peer-reviewed papers, thus contributing to one of Docomomo International's missions to foster interest in the ideas and heritage of the Modern Movement. Fostering interest and exchanging ideas on the conservation, history, and education of middle-class mass housing is important, as many housing estates suffer from being neglected and maintained. At the same time, the housing shortage puts increasing pressure on European societies that could be improved

or even solved by long-term preservation statutes and a subsequent reactivation and upgrading of this large building stock.

We thank all authors and experts who contributed to this current issue on ‘middle-class mass housing’ and our guest editors Ana Vaz Milheiro, Dalit Shach-Pinsly, Els de Vos, Gaia Caramellino, Inês Lima Rodrigues, Kostas Tsiambaos, Müge Akkar Ercan, and Yankel Fijalkow for their expertise and inspiration. In their introduction, they refer to the crucial role that middle-class mass housing played and still plays in shaping our modern cities. Authors Els De Vos, Selin Geerinckx, Ines Lima Rodrigues, and Ana Vaz Milheiro, in their article ‘Modernism with a Glaze,’ compare the use of Corbusian principles in mass housing in Antwerp and Lisbon and Yael Allweil and Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler elaborate on the consolidation of the middle class by design in the context of Israel. Sotiria Alexiadou sheds light on the middle-class housing development in Thessaloniki through the typical construction principle of polykatoikia. Three articles describe the post-WWII period from an Eastern European perspective: Dana Vais explains the ideal model of Socialist Modernism with the example of Gheorgheni Housing Estate in Cluj, Romania; Marina Sapunova and Sofia Borushkina compare utilitarian heritage in Moldova, Armenia, and Uzbekistan; and Romeo-Emanuel Cuc reflects on the importance of the in-between space for the collective memory in Romanian mass-housing public spaces.

Two other articles elaborate on the potential of participative processes, trans-disciplinary and transnational collaboration: Müge Akkar Ercan with co-authors Claus Bech-Danielsen, Hassan Estaji, Roberto Goycoolea, Bernard Haumont, Byron Ioannou, Lora Nicolau, Paz Nuñez, and Sanjin Subic document a stakeholder workshop aiming to improve the quality of life and sustainability in the Ümesi neighborhood in Ankara. And authors Ahmed Benbernou, Alessandra Como, Olga Harea, Uta Pottgiesser, Kritika Singhal, and Luisa Smeragliuolo Perrotta, in their article *Evaluation and Criticism*, describe transversal comparative approaches using material and data of collected case studies across Europe.

Under *Heritage in Danger*, we like to highlight the article by Vlatko P. Korobar and Jasmina Siljanoska dealing with threats to The Skopje City Wall Housing Complex in North Macedonia. Finally, Maren Harnack and Natalie Heger reflect on *Hidden Champions*: hundreds of settlements in the Rhine-Maine region that are not protected but worthy of preservation. A special thank you goes to Alex Dill, who took the time to present a *Best Practice*: the restored Housing for the Elderly built for Jewish and Christian residents in Frankfurt in 1931 by Mart Stam.

We are also grateful to many colleagues in academia and professional practice for their reviews and advice. It is our great pleasure to launch this issue of the Docomomo journal, published both in print and online via www.docomomojournal.com.

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ENDNOTES

- <https://docomomojournal.com/index.php/journal/issue/view/38>
- <https://docomomojournal.com/index.php/journal/issue/view/49>
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