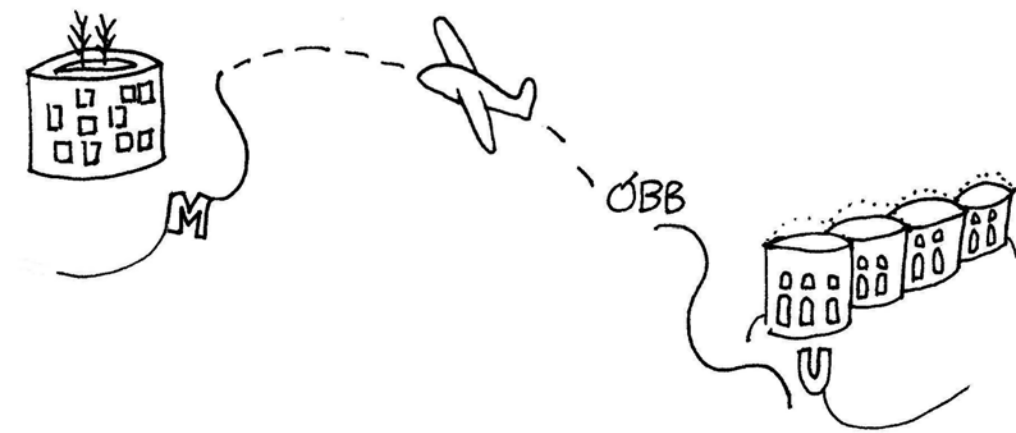


# circular dormitories between city and private life

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO ICONIC  
STUDENT HALLS IN COPENHAGEN AND VIENNA



UNICA EUROMASTER IN URBAN STUDIES 4CITIES

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# ABSTRACT

*Studentenheim Gasometer* and *Tietgenkollegiet* are two circular dormitories inaugurated in the 21st century. They are both highly iconic pieces of architecture with an important placement in new urban developments. In this way they deviate from the widespread conception of student housing as temporal and not worth personal investments as a home, nor external investments in quality and architecture. This thesis explores how the iconic dormitory has developed in a historical context, and what it means to student life in relation to the surrounding society and city.

The analysis shows how the iconic dormitory is inscribed in a tradition of student housing dating back to the dawn of the medieval university, while it also embodies current ideas of student living, in line with contemporary domestic and urban developments. The circular dormitories frame a community that the students experience as salient for their satisfaction with the dormitory as a home, and the architecture is seen as an expression of both the social and personal identity of the students. The architecture is thereby also important in relation to the city. The iconic dormitories are landmarks and highly symbolic in their neighbourhoods, but the circles at once close around themselves and the student community within, as well as stand out exceptionally in the cityscapes. The circular architecture thereby accentuates the exception that also student culture forms in society. But as the thesis concludes, living in a dormitory is about learning to take responsibility as a citizen and participate in the dormitory community in order to belong, and this experience is preparatory for young people to take part in society.

# PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Motivation letter to 4Cities UNICA Euromaster in Urban Studies, May 2010:

*My interest in urban studies developed when I moved from my hometown in the countryside to the city of Copenhagen. The importance of urban space and architecture for peoples' lives became clear to me from the moment I moved into a concrete bunker-like dormitory in the outskirts of the city. Architecture defines our homes, the way we move, the way we are together and apart, by openings and closures of space; written into the walls of the city we find both the memory of the past and the possibilities of the future.*

In my 27 years I have lived in eighteen places and along with the thoughts of Bachelard I should thereby have learned to dwell within myself: "Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are 'housed.' Our soul is an abode. And by remembering 'houses' and 'rooms,' we learn to 'abide' within ourselves" (Bachelard, 1958: xxxvii). My personal experience of dwelling and moving has been speeded up from studying in the 4Cities program and it has triggered my academic interest in the meaning of home to young people. In Copenhagen alone, I have lived in six places of which three were dormitories: Valkendorf, the oldest dormitory in Denmark dating back to 1589, Frankrigsgadekollegiet, a high-rise dormitory from the 1970's, which was an experience I refer to in my application to 4Cities, and Tietgenkollegiet, an iconic dormitory and one of the cases of this thesis.

I wish to thank my parents and all my family for showing me how to make good homes and for always being my safe haven in the world, whether it is being together or apart. I would like to thank my supervisor Henrik Reeh for inspiring conversations on student life and motivating remarks for my work. Thank you to every one of the great people involved in 4Cities. I am grateful for the mosaic of experiences it has opened to me and the friendships it has set off with my fellow 4Citizens.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Problem statement

*Studentenheim Gasometer* and *Tietgenkollegiet* are two circular dormitories inaugurated in the 21st century. They are prestige projects located in new urban developments and designed by renowned architects. Both are highly iconic pieces of architecture. They form part of an axis leading from the historic urban cores of Vienna and Copenhagen to the airports of the respective cities; their gateways to the world. These two building projects are examples of how iconic dormitories are located in a space between tradition and contemporary knowledge society.

As the amount of literature indicates, while housing research is popular in general, studies on student housing are limited. First of all, this is related to the widespread conception of the student home as a temporary form of accommodation the quality of which, for this reason, is not considered particularly important (Thomsen, 2007). Secondly, students are perceived as a group with low socio-economic influence in society (Mayer, 2002). On this background, the erection of the iconic dormitories is salient and a closer examination of these two conceptions seems to be called for. Accordingly, the thesis is structured around a double perspective:

From an interior perspective, the iconic dormitory presents student housing of such a high quality that it breaks with the perception of the student home as inferior to permanent homes. I will argue that the student years are essential in the transition from childhood to adulthood, which is marked by the move from the parental home to the first home of one's own. For many students the frame of this transition is the dormitory.

From an exterior perspective, the iconic dormitory occupies a place in urban planning which indicates a shift in the socio-economic perception on student housing and the student. Today education has an enormous influence on the parameters with which competition in globalised economies are measured. The ambition of urban governments to house first-class universities manifests itself in the iconic student residences that stand as landmarks in the city scape.

By describing the historical background of the dormitory in relation to central urban and domestic developments, this thesis sets out to analyse contemporary student halls and their importance in the everyday life of students as well as their significance in a broader urban context. The problem of the thesis is the following:

How has the dormitory developed in relation to historical changes of city and home, private and public life? What is the impact of the contemporary iconic dormitories on students' home experiences and social life? How is the city perceived by students living in iconic dormitories and what is the significance of them in neighbourhood and city?

## Methodology and structure

The methodology of the thesis is desktop research, case studies and photographic documentation.

The first part analyses historical sources related to dormitories, found through research in the university and city archive of Vienna, and archives in Copenhagen (School of Architecture, Royal Library etc), as well as a literature review of works by central authors in cultural theory, urban planning and architecture such as Walter Benjamin, Peter Hall and Le Corbusier.

The second part is comprised of an architectural analysis based on the theory of Steen Eiler Rasmussen as presented in his book *Experiencing Architecture*. He sets out to make architecture comprehensible to ordinary people and to convey the meaning architecture has in an everyday life perspective. His methodological framework thus suits the analysis of the dormitories very well, as it forms the basis for discussing the significance of the architecture for the inhabitants in part three and the surrounding cityscape in part four. The architectural analysis is based on a personal experience of the architectures, observations of the everyday life, movement in and around the dormitories and by talking to the students living there. Inspired by Steen Eiler Rasmussen's work with illustrations, I have exhibited photography to support and interact with the analysis.

The methodological basis for the rest of the thesis is information gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews with inhabitants. The interviews took place in the rooms of the students and followed a thematic guideline developed to inquire into the students own understandings and interpretations of their home, its architecture and the surrounding city (see Annex). The semi-structured form is useful as it allows for reflections and further inquiry during the interviews. Seven students at each dormitory were selected. They were between 20-27 years of age, and represent both genders, various lengths of stay in the dormitories, different regions within the countries and foreign students.

Complementary to the interviews, mental mapping was used to explore how the students perceive their dormitory and its relation to the city in spatial terms. Mental maps work with the significations attributed to space. It has roots in the research made by Kevin Lynch in the 1960's, and is becoming increasingly used in studies that set out to understand people's subjective relationship towards the objective spatial world. Mental mapping is considered an "important tool of enquiry in youth research focused on urban spaces" (Green and White, 2012: 59).



# PART 1: HISTORY

## Introduction

Many themes are relevant for discussing the interconnected history of dormitory and university, home and city, private and public. I will focus on six epochs that are central to the rest of my analysis. The first chapter analyses the roots of public and private life, the university and the dormitory. The following chapters look into private and public life from the nineteenth century and up until today, how the two spheres were interrelated and how this relation was reflected in urban and domestic spaces, as well as how it was paralleled in the way dormitories were built and student living took place in the city.

### 1.1 The dormitory and notions of home and city, private and public

*The crucial point about Athens is that it was first [...] first in so many of the things that have mattered (Hall, 1998: 24)*

Athens in the fifth century BC was first in establishing a public sphere. The *polis* itself was the scene for public life centred on the *Agora*; the spatial framework of freedom and political debate by the (privileged few) citizens. It was directly opposed by the private sphere of the household, *oikos*, which contained all necessities related to sustaining life (Arendt, 1958). It was the only space where rule and violence was permitted and in its very constitution unequal; women, slaves and children were confined to the *oikos* without the freedom of the public sphere (Ibid: 32). Thus, all Greek and Latin words expressing a rulership originally refer to household relations: *rex*, *pater*, *max* etc (Ibid.). Only the master of the household, by mastering the very necessities of it, had the possibility to become free; the existence of the private household was the condition of the freedom of the *polis* (Ibid: 30). Public life was valued as the highest good, while privacy had a negative connotation to it. As Hannah Arendt writes:

*In ancient feeling the privative trait of privacy, indicated in the word itself, was all-important; it meant literally a state of being deprived of something [...] A man who lived only a private life, who like the slave was not permitted to enter the public realm, or like the barbarian had chosen not to establish such a realm, was not fully human. (Arendt, 1958: 38)*

Privacy was considered a lack of civilization, and a man who stuck to his own, *idion*, was an *idiotes*, meaning idiotic (Morley, 2000: 17). As we will see, the idea of privacy has undergone major changes, but the Greek notions prevailed throughout the Middle Ages, perhaps culminating in monastic Latin where the written word for private, *privatae*, denoted the latrines (Duby, 1985: 6).

#### 1.1.1 Dawn of the university

The medieval city was cradle for the first universities in the world. As Thomas Bender writes, the anti-urban academic pastoralism of Anglo-American universities is a deviation from the much more common historic bond between university and city, which since their inception have been closely identified with one another (Bender, 1988). The universities of Vienna and Copenhagen were both founded as city universi-

ties. Student life was thus urban in its origin, and city life and intellectual life was mutually stimulating (Zerlang, 1997: 241). The medieval university was to a certain extent a city within the city, an academic republic, with its own rules, privileges, festivities and hierarchy. The architecture of medieval universities was modelled on the monastery, with its arcaded spaces for contemplation. For Vienna the ideal was the Collegio di Spagna at Europe's oldest university in Bologna (Mühlberger, 2007: 51). The architecture was also representative for the power of the founder, Duke Rudolph IV, in 1365. His original plan was to build an enclosed university district, die *Pfaffenstadt*, from Schottentor to Hofburg; a *Quartier Latin*, as Latin was spoken in the academic world. It was never realized this way because the pressure against it from the citizens of Vienna was too severe, but the district from Stubentor to Stephansplatz became known as das *Universitätsviertel*, as it was dominated by university facilities surrounding the main building *Collegium Ducale* (Mühlberger, 1990).

### 1.1.2 Medieval urbanity and student life

The medieval city was spatially constricted behind the fortifications raised upon the fall of the Roman Empire, so living and dwelling was a challenge for both citizens and students (Schrauf, 1895: 3). The density made the medieval home an open place without boundaries between professional and private life, it “was neither private nor public, as these terms are understood today; rather, it was both simultaneously” (Aries, 1977: 228). The majority of Viennese students lived in dormitories, *Burse*, in the *Universitätsviertel* (Steindl, 1990: 79). *Bursen* existed as both *Bursenstiftungen*, managed by the university with private donations to provide scholarship housing, and as *Groschenburse* and the poorer *Koderie*, where the students paid for accommodation and food (ibid.). The oldest *Bursenstiftung*, *Rosenburse*, was constituted in 1432 and placed in today's Postgasse (Gall, 1965: 118). The life of the students was strictly regulated in the dormitories, especially in *Bursenstiftungen*, where everything from studies to religious practice was described in details in the constitution and if the student failed to comply, the punishment was set in fines or as reductions of the meat or wine rations (Steindl, 1990: 80). The aim was to make student housing tranquil study environments (Gall, 1965: 120). Even so, as the dormitory was an integral part of the city and the city an integral part of student life, several conflicts between the students and the citizens of Vienna have been recorded, listing complaints about “Nachtschwärmereien, Saufgelagen oder anderen Ausschweifungen von Studenten” (Steindl, 1990: 79), which we will see is perhaps a universal feature of student life. Another universal feature is the community that was created in the medieval dormitory. There was a parallel between this and the medieval home. Historians have described the community in the dormitories as a *familia magistri*, which in its structure was very similar to the manorial households of the Middle Ages, ruled by a *pater familias*, which in the dormitory was a magister or an older student (Mühlberger, 1993: 137). The concepts of childhood and youth did not exist in the Middle Ages, as children were not counted before they became adults. Youth understood as a specific group was an invention of the fourteenth century colleges, where “student youths was set apart from the rest of society, which remained faithful to the mixing of ages” (Ariés, 1960: 174). Ariés' description of British and French colleges of the time correspond accurately to the accounts of life in the Viennese *Bursenstiftungen*.

### 1.1.3 Monastic dormitories and Sturmfreien Buden

The University of Copenhagen was founded in 1475 and placed in the heart of the old town, *Latinerkvarteret*, named like in Vienna; *Universitetsfirkanten*, where also the first Danish dormitories were built. Just as the university had the monastery as its architectural model, so did the dormitories, as can be seen in some of the oldest dormitories of the world, which are still inhabited by a privileged group of students in Copenhagen today: *Valkendorf Kollegiet* from 1589, and *Collegium Regium* (Regensen) from 1623. The dormitories were scholarship homes, donated by benefactors, and similar to the university were they monumental in their architecture.

In the sixteenth century renaissance spirit emancipation from the university as an all-encompassing authority took place among students in Vienna (Mühlberger, 1993: 134). The tradition of *Bursen* was slowly abandoned and students began to live in private rooms, *Buden*, which during the seventeenth century became essential parts of student life, as *Bursen* disappeared completely (Gall, 1965: 121). Living in the “Sturmfreien Buden” signified not only an emancipation of the student, but also a privatization. He was no longer solely a citizen of the academic republic, but a private citizen of the city itself. Living in private also implicated the beginning of bad living conditions for students in Vienna, who in many cases were forced to live in cellars with earthen floors or lofts with wrecked ceilings (Gall, 1965:121). The students were not alone. The transformation from a pre-industrial rural society to an industrial, made the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century cities into places of dense growth, overcrowding and pollution. Friedrich Engels documented the atrocities caused by the industrial revolution to the working class city dwellers in Victorian England: workers lived under the most horrific conditions ever to be seen in Europe (Engels, 1845). The intense urbanization made cities expand beyond the fortifications. Ramparts were taken down and replaced by *grand travaux* of boulevards and open spaces, making the city into a construction site of modernity. These conditions became catalysts for the emergence of the bourgeois home.

## 1.2 Golden age of private life

The nineteenth century was the golden age of private life in many ways. It was the century where the term was invented and the idea took shape (Perrot, 1987). Following the writings of Walter Benjamin the history of the private home is contiguous with the developments of the city, the economy and the politics. The bourgeois home emerged out of an opposition to the workplace, as places of dwelling and of work were separated for the first time (Benjamin, 1935: 8). A dividing line thus materialized through the nineteenth century home in order to delimit what was thought to belong to the public and what strictly belonged to the private sphere (Habermas, 1962: 45). To Benjamin and Habermas the dividing line mostly favoured privacy over publicity.

### 1.2.1 A bourgeois addiction to dwelling

The city itself became alienating to its inhabitants. Due to the emerging capitalist society and imminent planning schemes, such as that of Baron von Haussmann, the great ‘Demolition Artist’, the city was no longer a place to feel at home in (Benjamin, 1935: 12). All traces of communitarian life were disappearing from the public, and the interior thus came to carry the evidence of everyday life (Ibid: 20). The bourgeois

(male) citizen experienced a rising need for a refuge from his own role and function in society. As Benjamin writes:

*The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply in the dwelling's interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, where the instrument with all its accessories lies embedded in deep, usually violet folds of velvet (Benjamin, 1940: 220 [14,4])*

Through the design of the bourgeois home with its heavy furniture, velvet draping and knickknacks, the citizen constituted himself as a private individual. He distanced himself in time and space from the society, and created an illusion of someplace and sometime better than the present (Benjamin, 1939: 19). The illusion was so well-kept that in Benjamin's memory of the bourgeois homes he moved about as a child in *Berliner Kindheit um neunzehnhundert* it appeared to the young Benjamin that even death had no place in the interiors (Benjamin, 1938: 88). Later in *Das Passagen-Werk* Benjamin writes that living in the nineteenth century domesticity was like having a tight fabric woven around oneself that lets no air in (Benjamin, 1940: 216 [12,6]). This points to the dialectics that the bourgeois home was written into; a dialectic that is present in every notion of home. As Gaston Bachelard writes, a house is imagined as a polarity between roof and cellar, whereby he meant that a home ontologically opposes the rational and safe represented by the roof and the irrational and uncanny represented by the cellar (Bachelard, 1958: 17). The uncanny as an intimate part of the bourgeois home was later discussed by Freud, but it was anticipated in the debates among scholars in the nineteenth century (Vidler, 2000: 70).

### 1.2.2 Urban pathologies

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a great concern arose about the consequences of the new metropolitan way of life (Vidler, 2000: 25). The city was considered so precarious to the human psyche that a medical diagnosis was made for it: *neurasthenia*. A cerebral fatigue caused by an overstimulation of the nervous system (Bresnahan, 2003: 169). It was a condition of the intellectual only to be cured by a retreat to the tranquillity of the bourgeois home (Robinson, 1996). The medical discourse did not stand alone; Georg Simmel's article on "The Metropolis and Mental Life" gives another account of the *neurasthenic*: the *blasé* type. The development was also worrisome for architects. Camillo Sitte linked the newly diagnosed disorder *agoraphobia*, fear of the open, to modern planning and aesthetics:

*Agoraphobia is a very new and modern ailment. One naturally feels very cosy in small, old plazas [...] On our modern gigantic plazas, with their yawning emptiness and oppressive ennui, the inhabitants of snug old towns suffer attacks of this fashionable agoraphobia. (Sitte, 1889: 186)*

Sitte criticized modern architecture and planning for its abstract, mechanical relationship to the city, and the lack of an organic understanding of city life, which was how the public spaces of the ancient city developed *in natura* (Frisby, 2003: 62). Sitte not only recognized the connection between urban pathologies and modern planning, but also how it was connected with the retreat from the public sphere to the bourgeois interior (Ibid: 65). He found expressions in modern architecture of the retreat: what were originally exterior elements such as stairways and galleries became exclusively interior features in modern design (ibid.).

### 1.2.3 The loss of community and its replacement

German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies described the transition from a rural society, characterized by its traditions and emotional bonds, which he named the *Gemeinschaft*, to an urban society, the *Gesellschaft*, with the weakening of social ties and a loss of the sense of belonging to a community as a result (Tönnies, 1887). The emotional and social needs that were previously satisfied in the smaller communities were sought to be met through stronger family ties (Ariés, 1977). The attitude towards children changed, as they became central in the emerging family life. This escalating importance of the family as the strongest emotional bastion laid the ground for what was later denoted the nuclear family. The idea of the home as a private space was primarily a privilege reserved the upper classes. During the nineteenth and twentieth century it spread to the general public (Prost, 1987). From the mid-nineteenth century different housing types were invented to replace the one-room tenement, which had been the sole type of dwelling available for the urban proletariat (Hall, 1988: 19). In Berlin the *Mietskasernen* (*Zinskasernen* in Vienna) were built as a solution to deal with the social and health related problems caused by the living conditions of the poor (Borsi, 2009: 133). The same architectural development was seen all over the western world (Hall, 1988). The technical construction was paralleled by a construct of the modern family for the working classes, in line with the bourgeois nuclear family model. The rental barracks and other tenement houses demarcated the single-family dwelling for the poor by defining roles, functions and hygienic procedures through its spatial configuration, which offered both privacy and freedom to the inhabitants, while at the same time serving as a strategy for governmental control (Borsi, 2009: 146, Donzelot, 1979: 93-95, Foucault, 1977). Also the bourgeois home was a construct in this sense, even though it “attempted to repress its constructedness” (Bresnahan, 2003: 175), through the denial of its own economic origins (Habermas, 1962: 46). But it was nonetheless inscribed in the capitalist society, also through the vast amount of things pertaining to the interior; the commodities, so central in the description by Benjamin. Not only was the bourgeois home covertly commodified, it was also from the very beginning individualized, as the spatial configuration emphasized the individual rooms for the family members over the rooms for the family (Habermas, 1962: 45).

## 1.3 Streets and flâneurs in the fin-de-siècle metropolis

At the turn of the century a new current in architecture, *Jugendstil*, broke with the nineteenth century fascination of copying architectural styles of the past, historicism. If the bourgeois interior in the words of Habermas was individualized, in the words of Benjamin *Jugendstil* took individualism to the front of the house and plastered it all over the façade:

*The shattering of the interior occurs via Jugendstil around the turn of the century. [...] the house becomes an expression of the personality (Benjamin (1935): 4).*

The domestic realm was thus no longer solely a retreat from the city, but a sign to the city of the inhabitant's individuality. From being a box in the theatre of the world (Benjamin (1935): 4), the home enters the very stage. This also changes the theatre, the city, itself. As the home is turned inside out, the street regained its importance. However not in its original form.



### 1.3.1 Flâneuring

The street was the stage for another protagonist of the nineteenth century city: the flâneur. The flâneur expressed a new archetype and way of moving and feeling at home in the modern metropolis. Flâneuring was a behaviour very suited for the intellectual. Moving from the flâneur's cradle in Paris to Copenhagen, the prominent Danish philosopher Kierkegaard was one of the first flâneurs to walk the capital streets, marking the modern interplay between thinker and city (Zerlang, 1997: 242). Benjamin describes the flâneur character in contrast to the bourgeois individual who hid himself in the mollusc shell of his interior. The flâneur was only at home in the city. The streets, arcades and cafés of the modern city gave him the illusory break, similar to that of the home. Just as the bourgeois home took the inhabitant to sometime and place better, so did the city for the flâneur (Benjamin, 1940: 419 [M2,4]). He did not hide in velvet covers, but in the bustling crowd. He walked the streets as were they his own living room (Benjamin, 1940: 423 [M3a,4]).

### 1.3.2 Straight or crooked streets

At the turn of the century the university was undergoing great changes. Industrialization created a demand for a broader part of the population to take an education, and new disciplines were conceived. This called for new buildings. In Copenhagen several buildings were erected around Østervold, where also the students flocked:

*'Here the students who are carefree as gipsies have broken into the densely populated land of the bourgeoisie filling the cold and dark houses in the formal and tedious streets with their merry laughter and the tears of their unhappy love affairs' (Johannes Jørgensen (1893) in: Zerlang, 1997: 242)*

The fin-de-siècle student life had a vibrant effect on the atmosphere on a broader part of the city as the university expanded. In Vienna, the new main university buildings were inaugurated in 1884, centrally placed on the Ringstrae (Mühlberger, 2007: 30). The Ringstraße was the locus for a great debate on 'gerade oder krumme Straßen' in the creation of Greater Vienna (Frisby, 2003: 59). The straight street was represented by Otto Wagner in his rationalistic fascination with the new civil engineering (Schorske, 1980). He wanted to create a city of movement, where the former ramparts should be streets flowing with modern forms of transportation. The other part in the debate, Camillo Sitte, was archaic in his attempt to keep the city-space organization of the past and he bemoaned the loss of public life (ibid.). He advocated for the use of antique and renaissance aesthetic principles in creating streets for pedestrians in close relation to buildings and squares in order to reanimate public life (Sitte, 1889). As Wagner won the contest for the planning of Greater Vienna and became the city architect so the rationalist planning prevailed (Schorske, 1980). The straight street triumphed over the crooked. Yet, when it came to the university on the Ringstraße, the architecture was full-blown historicist. The new buildings were designed in Renaissance aesthetics to represent secular learning, the new liberal culture and politics. The importance of the representational monumentalism thus overthrew the considerations for the functions and necessities of a modern university (Schorske, 1980: 40).

## 1.4 Modernism, mass-dormitories and the private city

Like the flâneur rather had the cityscape as his home, so the modernists viewed the bourgeois home as

claustrophobic and constraining (Jaschke, 2009: 175). The bourgeois home became the negative reference for the early twentieth century modernism. The early modernist architecture, represented in works by Le Corbusier, wanted to bring light, air and sun into the dwelling and the city.

### 1.4.1 Absolutely modern

The private dwelling and its inhabitants were central for the modernist city planning (Zerlang, 2006), but the modernist visions changed the relation between private and public. In Le Corbusier's utopian account of *The City of Tomorrow* the movement and automobilization are focal points and no mention is made of either public spaces or people (Le Corbusier, 1925). He wanted to build a private city, where nothing would stand between the eye and the horizon. Modernism strived towards a break with traditional planning forms as well as with past aesthetics (Zevi, 1948: 17). The city had to be *absolument moderne*. Modernist architecture should be free from ornaments and democratic in its starting point. This ideology is very clear in the development of housing for the working classes. The rental barracks were not fit for modern living. Thus, *Mietskasernen* were replaced by *Siedlungen*. They envisioned equality among the inhabitants in the uniform structure of the apartments and equal access to panorama, sunlight and air. In the well-known phrase of Le Corbusier "A house is a machine for living in" (Le Corbusier, 1923: 151), just as the ocean liner is a machine for transportation and the aero plane is a machine for flying (Ibid: 161), a new paradigm for ideal domesticity is indicated. He posed a critique of the prevailing pre-modern living conditions as dwellings were the only part of modern society that was not yet industrialized (Ibid: 297). People suffered from it according to Le Corbusier; it threatened to destroy the family and thereby society as a whole (Ibid: 307). Le Corbusier wanted to clear the mind from the romantic cobwebs that tied the home emotionally to one's personality (Ibid: 262). Homes should be practical, economical and mass-produced according to Fordist principles characteristic of the time. The modernist ideals of the home, as here presented with Le Corbusier, was thus of a rational and instrumental character, where the only function of the home was as a place to rest in the eight hours left from work and leisure in the Fordist tri-partition model. However, looking at the interior organization of *Siedlungen* built after the 1920's, they did not break with the past but continued the scheme set by *Mietskasernen* on a structure for the ideal family (Boyer, 1983: 285)

### 1.4.2 Mass-university, mass-dormitory

As the number of students continuously grew, the need for student housing became critical. In both cities this led to the building of the first large-scale dormitories. In Copenhagen the tradition of dormitories was never abandoned as in Vienna, and in the beginning of the twentieth century it was still benefactors who built dormitories in Copenhagen. The novelty was in the size and composition. The dormitory was no longer reserved for the few as it became home for both men and women from a variety of studies. As the university became a mass-university, so the dormitories were built as mass-dormitories.

Le Corbusier's visions of urbanity and domesticity were also directed at the problem of the dormitory. In *Towards an Architecture* (1923) he criticized architects who build dormitories following the traditions of institutions such as Oxford:

*The student belongs to an age of protest against old Oxford [...] What the student wants is a monk's cell,*

*well lit and well heated, with a corner to gaze at the stars [...] Every student has a right to the same cell: it would be cruel if the cells of poor students were different from the cells of rich ones [...] each cell has its vestibule, its kitchen, its bathroom, its living room, its sleeping loft, and its roof garden. Walls afford privacy to all. (Le Corbusier, 1923: 286)*

The privatization of the medieval student by living privately in the city enters the campus in the proposal of Le Corbusier. In this passage we can see the same principles as for the modernist city and home: democracy and privacy. But there is also a reiteration of traditional ideas about student life present: the monastic lifestyle and contemplation of the cell.

### 1.4.3 Intimacy in a private city

Le Corbusier's promotion of *pilotis* to lift the house, and the flat roofs allowing for the rooftop garden, gives a different account of what kind of homes he wanted to build. In such a home there is no space for either a cellar or an attic. Le Corbusier thus tried to make completely away with the uncanny, the pathologies and phobias. Perhaps it was in light of these uniform modern homes, that Bachelard in the 1950's felt the nostalgic urge to write his *Poetics of Space*. The house of Bachelard is in its polarity between cellar and attic also a home that induces daydreaming and intimacy (Bachelard, 1958). The contrast between the bourgeois home and the modernist equivalent becomes even clearer when we look at the furnishing. Edgar Allan Poe once said that a chair is a sofa that hasn't been finished, thereby indicating the bourgeois need for lying-down, soft cushions and plush. Le Corbusier disapproved of these useless objects and decorative arts that filled up the houses without serving a purpose (Le Corbusier, 1923: 148, 166). He on the contrary once said that chairs are architecture and sofas are bourgeois, and thus advocated a domestic interior consisting of purely functional elements, that are comfortable and easy to clean, just like the city. But the functional division of the city, where city-dwellers move around enclosed in their own private space of the car, made no social interaction or encounters possible. Life was withdrawn from public to the private rooftop or the automobile (Sheller and Urry, 2003). The connection between interior and exterior became panoramic rather than interactive. The panorama was an individual viewpoint over the city indicating the alienation from everyday life following upon modernist planning.

## 1.5 The urban failure of modernism and its defective domesticity

In setting of Second World War's end, Henri Lefebvre wrote "l'homme sera quotidien ou ne sera pas" (in Sheringham, 2006: 134). The restoration of the quotidian, the everyday, was urgent according to Lefebvre. The focus on the everyday came to stand as an opposition to the abstract planning that had impoverished city living. Cities should be human again, and take the everyday life, or in the terms of other writers of this time; the social or public life, into account.

### 1.5.1 Man baut keine Studentensiedlungen!

Though new ideas simmered among architects, the inspiration from the early modernist ideology remained dominant. The technological development allowed for new practices of construction in cheap materials, and the building of modernist housing blocks proliferated all over Europe as the need for dwellings exploded after the war. In Denmark the building of dormitories became a matter for the state, and it was



thus systemized as part of the general social housing policies. In Vienna the student associations initiated the highly demanded building of student housing, and several dormitories were built during the 60's. A brochure from the *Österreichische Studentenförderungstiftung* from around the end-60's accounts for some of the ideas present in these buildings:

*Man baut in Österreich keine Studentensiedlungen. Dazu fehlt nicht nur der Platz in der Nähe der Hochschulen, die meist im inneren Stadtbereich stehen. Man baut sie nicht, weil man vermeiden will, daß der Student der behutsamen Führung, daß er ein anonymes Mitglied einer großen ungegliederten Gesellschaft wird. Man will auf den direkten Kontakt nicht verzichten. Das Großheim kann in der Regel nur außerhalb des Stadtkerns entstehen. Allein die Räumliche Entfernung schränkt die Beziehungen des Studenten zur Bevölkerung ein. Sie erschwert ihm den Integrationsprozeß in die Gesellschaft, sie schließt ihn aus, kapselt ihn ab. Im Großheim geht für Studenten das Gefühl der Selbstverwaltung und der Verantwortung leichter verloren“ (Hofer, 196X: 20)*

The ideal student living should thus be urban and in interaction with the surrounding society as to form the student towards a civil adult life. Unfortunately the ideals were not always realizable. In the post-war years and up until the 70's there was a building boom of mass-dormitories in suburbs. In Denmark it was highly criticized by student organizations, and residents at several of the dorms demonstrated against the very institutional setting of the mass-dormitory (Bolow, 1982). This was in line with the challenge of the institutional organization of universities in the late 60's with reforms and democratization to follow (Delanty, 2001: 4).

### **1.5.2 Backyard, backstage**

Urban sprawl was the common way of providing more housing, but housing blocks was not the only way. Detached houses in suburbs became very popular for the rising number of middle class families. They moved out of the city to a life in private home-ownership, where the focus was not on the front door towards the street, but on the door towards the private enclosure of the backyard (Zerlang, 2006). In the work of sociologists in the 1950's and onwards different attributions to public and private life were discussed. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) Erving Goffman advocated the need for privacy, what he denoted the backstage, in opposition to the public front stage. The authenticity was not to be found in public, since that was the scene of a constructed performance of the self, but in the safe and secretive interior of the home (Wolfe, 1997: 184). The bourgeois ideals of the home as a necessary retreat from the distressing public underline the thoughts of Goffman. Among other sociologists and culture critics at the time, there was a revival of the antique disregard of private life, as it was considered to be on the expense of citizenship and participation in public life (Kumar, 1997: 205). It was followed by a renewed interest in the reanimation of public life through the architecture of public space. William H. Whyte started his explorations of social life in American cities in 1969, and Jan Gehl published his work on how to make life between buildings in 1971. Writers like Jane Jacobs found that the decline of public life and rise of crime in American cities was due to the modernist rationality of a functional division of the city. Her emphasis on the street as the central node for public life stood in grave contrast to the modernist street of speed (Jacobs, 1961: 29). The critique was also expressed in popular culture, such as French director Jacques Tati who took the urban failure and defective domesticity of the modernist home under treatment in *Mon Oncle* (1958) and *Playtime* (1967), where he as his alter ego Monsieur Hulot satirizes over the uselessness

of functionalism.

## 1.6 Home nostalgia and the iconic dormitory

The growth and reform of the universities has entailed many more scholars to debate about society, city, home, private and public and literature on these subjects has manifolded, as has opinions on the current condition. Authors such as Sennett, Habermas, Augé and Ariés among others have declared that the increasing globalization, speed, mobility, mass-media and individualism, put private and public life under pressure and cause a demise of home and family. Despite and because of this development, the concern with the home has bloomed in the first decade of the 21st century as expressed in the high demand for home-ownership, investments in renovation and public interest in interior design (Saunders, 1990, Culens, 1999, Mechlenborg, 2006). As Saunders writes:

*The home is a core institution in modern society [...] It is the private realm in an increasingly public and intrusive world. For many of us, its integrity is of the utmost value in our lives (Saunders, 1990: 311)*

The intrusive world is catalyst in the description of Saunders. As urbanization caused the bourgeois citizen to retreat to the safe haven of his interior, so globalization is seen to trigger a similar reaction.

### 1.6.1 Privatization of citizenship and geographical promiscuity

However, contrary to the modern city, contemporary reactions are not just in private but also in public. Recent planning ideals, such as new urbanism, are a reiteration of the strive to make the city homely as already Camillo Sitte called for more than a hundred years earlier. In the two case cities, examples such as the urban living room in the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna or the urban kitchen on Islands Brygge in Copenhagen, are among many. This ubiquitous domesticity, where private in every sense of the word enters the public, attain to a criticism of the colonization of the public realm and a privatization of citizenship. As argued by the Frankfurt School, the commodification of mass-media is undermining for democratic communication (Sheller and Urry, 2003). Bourgeois domestic ideals persist and spread to public space, but also new forms of being at home surface. Agnes Heller describes a geographically promiscuous character that in contrast to traditional geographical monogamy has several homes or none at all, as hotel rooms of worldwide chains provide a known frame for a global life (Heller, 1995). In this way the nuclear family is replaced by a familiarity in the physical surroundings, however transient or fragmented they may be.

### 1.6.2 Bilbao dreams and dorms

Student dormitories have undergone several characteristic changes within the past twenty years that correspond to the above debate and both Tietgenkollegiet and Gasometer are examples among several of this trend. With Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao from 1997 as prime example, architecture has increasingly become iconic. Iconic architecture is a debate in itself, but central is the "starchitects" that bring fame to the project with their name, the unique appeal and the symbolic value of the architecture (Sklair, 2010). The iconic dormitory has a spectacular architecture, but with the scale of a mass-dormitory, as Gasometer has 250 inhabitants and Tietgenkollegiet around 400. The changes from what I have named the mass-dormitory to the iconic dormitory are closely linked to the actors involved. Universities act in an increasingly

competitive market of attracting students and funds, and dormitories have become an important factor in this (Macintyre, 2003). Dormitories are no longer a state nor a university affair, but that of private real estate developers, public-private companies or private funds (Ibid.), just like the state and the university no longer has monopoly on knowledge production in the globalized knowledge society (Delanty, 2001: 3). Gerard Delanty links this with the aforementioned critique of mass-media that diffuses knowledge and weakens the position of university in society, which calls for a new role and identity of it (Ibid: 7).

## Conclusion to PART 1: HISTORY

PART 1 showed how the histories of private and public life, city and home, university and dormitory are interactive. The central notion from the nineteenth century was the bourgeois home, enclosing the private life of the family in retreat from an alienating city and society. At the turn of the century, the interior became an exterior as street life, embodied in the flâneur character, and architecture came to be an expression of subjectivity. The bourgeois domesticity became a negative reference in modernist architecture, which attempted to open up the home in a democratic panorama over the city. Modernism was later criticized for its large alienating housing estates and the destruction of public life in its vast functional division of the city. The analysis ended in the present debate on a dialectics of nostalgic longing for the bourgeois home as well as high pressure on it from the globalized knowledge society.

In parallel to and interacting with these general trends, the university and the dormitory have taken their setting in the city. I have identified the development from the city dormitory, over the mass-dormitory, to the iconic dormitory. The latter is the centre for the rest of the thesis and PART 2 will look closer at the architecture of the two cases.



# PART 2: ARCHITECTURE

## Introduction

107 years separate the completion of the Gasometers from Tietgenkollegiet, yet the dormitories have a history in common: they both have their roots in nineteenth century industrialism, Gasometers as the primary monument of industrial architecture in Vienna, while Tietgenkollegiet is named after the greatest Danish industrialist, C.F. Tietgen. This part will take a closer look on the dormitories' architectural qualities. Analyzing the architecture with the theory of Steen Eiler Rasmussen sets up the framework for the later analysis of its relation to the social life of the dormitories, by focusing on how the architecture is experienced. The theory of Steen Eiler Rasmussen will be presented after an initial introduction of the two dormitories.

### **From containing gas to containing students**

The Gasometers were built in the end of the nineteenth century in the periphery of Vienna; Simmering, and they stand as monuments of industrial architecture and the art of civil engineering in the nineteenth century. This was a period of great change in the urban fabric, not least in Vienna, which at this time was the fourth largest metropolis in Europe with a population just above two million inhabitants (Kretschmer, 2001: 3). Nowadays they also represent the post-industrial urban condition (brown field redevelopment). Building the Gasometers was a landmark in new building technologies, and at their completion in 1899 they were the greatest facilities of their kind in Europe (Ibid: 9). Besides the functionality of the buildings, the concern among architects was on the aesthetics, which is visible in the rich brick ornaments on the facades. They are thus listed as monuments for the arts of civil engineering (Klier, 1996: 7).

By 1986 the Gasometers were no longer in use, as Vienna converted the gas supply to natural gas, and temporal cultural uses of the buildings were tried out in the next ten years (Klier, 1996). As an example,





the Gasometers were the mecca for techno-rave parties in the mid-90's, as well as exhibitions, which were housed in the impressive empty containers (ibid.). But in the end it was decided to make a permanent conversion of the buildings into a mixed-use area with a focus on housing, criticized by Reinhard Seiß (2008). The reuse of the Gasometers was the flagship project of the strategic planning of the Erdberger Mais area, also involving the extension of the U-Bahn U3 to Simmering. Star architects Jean Nouvel and Coop Himmelb(l)au, the latter responsible for the architecture of the Studentenheim Gasometer, together with local architects Manfred Wehdorn and Wilhelm Holzbauer, were employed to make the redesign.

### **Marshlands made into young urban landscape**

In 1989, around the same time that the ideas for the Erdberger Mais redevelopment were put forward in Vienna, the former Danish Prime Minister Poul Schlüter, established an initiative group to discuss the future development of Copenhagen, resulting in the publication "The Capital – what will we do with it?" (By og Havn, 2011). Here the ideas for new infrastructural redevelopments were proposed: the Øresund Bridge, connecting Copenhagen to Southern Sweden, as well as the metro. Ørestad was planned to pay for the metro, as the income from the rising land prices in the urbanizing areas was seen to pay for the investment in public transportation – a novelty in urban financial schemes in Denmark (COMET report).

Already in the 1960's a large debate had occurred in Copenhagen as to the placement of new university facilities, as the historic ones in the city centre no longer contained neither sufficient nor proper amenities. KUA, Københavns Universitet Amager, was built as a temporary housing of the university placed on the former military grounds on the marshlands of Amager Fælled. In the 90's it was decided to permanently establish the university on Amager, with the building of New KUA. This was in accordance with the plans for Ørestad, where KUA would form the central gateway to the new neighbourhood from the city centre. Tietgenkollegiet was part of the local plan, but not in the circular form given by the winning architects, Lundgaard & Tranberg. The local plan had to be changed to accommodate the circular architecture in the rectangular divisions of the new urban land (Steensgaard, 2007: 24). Tietgenkollegiet was initiated and financed by the private charitable fund Nordeafonden, who invited



four architectural firms to participate in the competition. A large research was performed by the developer and architects with visits to several other dorms, many of them mass-dormitories, to see what works and what not, and the design of Tietgenkollegiet was born out of these experiences (Ibid.).

## 2.1 Steen Eiler Rasmussen's framework for experiencing architecture

*Architecture is a very special functional art; it confines space so we can dwell in it, creates the framework around our lives. (Rasmussen, 1959: 10)*

The Danish architect, urban planner and theorist Steen Eiler Rasmussen approaches architecture as an art form characterized by its utility. His understanding of architecture has roots in architectural theory from the Antique and onwards as Vitruvius categorized architecture as *soliditas*, foundation, *utilitas*, function, and *venustas*, beauty. Followed by art critics up until today, Vitruvius meant that beauty, the aesthetics, was the finest element of architecture as it transcends the necessities characteristic of the mortal human lifeworld (Bundegaard, 2009). The focus on aesthetics in architecture is emphasized by the visual way architecture presents itself and the prominence of the visual experience of it. Especially iconic architecture almost becomes the image of itself. Vision has been dominant in western culture since the very beginning of it, privileging vision over all other senses, and this “ocularcentric paradigm” has also been prevailing in the understanding and practice of architecture (Pallasmaa, 2007: 16). In contrast to this perception, Rasmussen has the human lifeworld as the focal point for understanding architecture, as the opening quote of this chapter demonstrates. But access to the experience of architecture in the frame of everyday life is hindered by the very habitual nature of it (Reeh, 2012: 29). The double reception of architecture is very well described by Walter Benjamin in *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*:

*Bauten werden auf doppelte Art rezipiert: durch Gebrauch und durch Wahrnehmung. Oder besser gesagt: taktisch und optisch. Es gibt von solcher Rezeption keinen Begriff, wenn man sie sich nach Art der gesammelten vorstellt, wie sie z.B. Reisenden vor berühmten Bauten geläufig ist. Es besteht nämlich auf der taktischen Seite keinerlei Gegenstück zu dem, was auf der optischen die Kontemplation ist. Die taktische Rezeption erfolgt nicht sowohl auf dem Wege der Aufmerksamkeit als auf dem der Gewohnheit. (Benjamin, 1936: 381)*

Architecture is the prototype to Benjamin of a modern art form that is collectively received in a state of distraction. It is perceived optically and tactile-tactically. The first is exemplified by the tourist (or the art critic) who appropriates architecture in a contemplative, concentrated manner. The latter, tactile and tactic, perception of architecture is shaped by the everyday life movement through buildings, characterized by a distracted, habitual sensing of the surroundings. Rasmussen begins his work *Experiencing Architecture* with the example of tourists arriving in bus to “sight-see” the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, where also a group of young boys play a ball game on the top of the staircase, up against the walls of the church (Rasmussen, 1959: 16). The distinct experiences of these two groups illustrate the point made by Benjamin and inform the work of Rasmussen:

*Understanding architecture, therefore, is not the same as being able to determine the style of a building by certain external features. It is not enough to see architecture; you must experience it. You must observe how it was designed for a special purpose and how it was attuned to the entire concept and rhythm of a specific era. You must dwell in the rooms, feel how they close about you, observe how you are naturally*

*led from one to the other. You must be aware of the textural effects, discover why just those colors were used [...] You must experience the great difference acoustics make in your conception of space (Rasmussen, 1959: 33)*

The aim of Rasmussen in *Experiencing Architecture* is to provide the tools necessary to make this experience comprehensible. A solely visual interpretation of architecture will lack to communicate the whole, which is essentially more than listing the individual elements (Ibid: 32). To Rasmussen architecture is an expression of the way people live in a given period, what he in the quote above calls the rhythm of an era. Rhythm is an elemental concept in Rasmussen's theory on architectural experience. He identifies a close relation between spatial and cultural expressions, between the objective qualities in the architecture and the tactile way it is experienced by people, which is reflected in the habitual movement staged by the architecture of a certain period.

A basic assumption in Rasmussen's work is that to experience architecture is a tacit knowledge acquired from early childhood, where the child familiarizes himself with various objects and their characteristics, such as the Italian boys' ballgame, transferable to the later interaction with architecture. *Experiencing Architecture* is structured according to the central elements of architecture: how it arranges space in solids, cavities and colour planes, proportions and scale, rhythm, texture, light and acoustics. This linear structure is contrasted by Rasmussen's descriptions of his own experiences of architecture, where he breaks with the linearity and follows a more unstructured analysis moving in and around the buildings or places (Bendsen, 2012: 61). Part of Walter Benjamin's analysis of the double perception of architecture is that the tactility is to a large extent determining for the optical reception, as the habitual movement directs the vision (Reeh, 2006: 102). Rasmussen's descriptions are in this sense bound to be based on movement and interaction to convey the whole experience of architecture and the significance that the different elements have on the spectator, how they activate and affect him.

Rasmussen's many detailed descriptions richly complement his theory, as well as demonstrate his fine sense of place and urban settings. One of the finest examples of his architectural analysis is to be found in his description of Baker House dormitory by Alvar Aalto at MIT (1947-48). This analysis gives an account of what Rasmussen means with the concept of rhythm, as well as what he perceived to be a modern dormitory, because the rhythm of the building simply is that of "a modern student dormitory" (Rasmussen, 1958: 158). The waving rhythm of Baker House gives vitality to the architecture that goes hand in hand with the life of the young people living there. The architecture of Aalto incorporates the complexity of student living. As Rasmussen writes, "He [Aalto] has sought to give each one [student] a chance to exist as an individual as well as to lead a corporate life." (Ibid: 157). Aalto has created areas for both social life and private life in the Baker House and he has integrated his understanding of modern students' need for individuality within the collective in an architecture where all rooms are unique, with different views over Charles River, while forming part of a whole, a whole that is so well defined and kept together by its distinctive rhythm.

Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet have both received a large amount of attention in architectural magazines, but these reflections will not figure in the following. It is my intention to follow the tactic of Steen Eiler Rasmussen in my analysis of the two dormitories. His work as framework opens up for an understanding of the buildings as more than objects. I will thus discuss their characteristics from the experience of mov-



ing towards them from the city, around them, inside them through the halls, kitchens and into the rooms of the students. This is also a movement from the most public areas to the most private ones, from the exteriors to the interiors.

## 2.2 Experiencing Studentenheim Gasometer

### 2.2.1 Moving to the Gasometers

Arriving by U-bahn might be the most convenient way to the Gasometers, but the sense of the place gets deprived from travelling underground. The way to the Gasometers by car follows the highway next to the Danube canal, from where the Gasometers rise from a nest of criss-crossing car lanes. The trip by bike from the Ringstraße around the first district begins on the broad Landstraße Hauptstraße that, bordered by ornamented buildings, crosses the third district and ebbs away in dreary social housing and industrial sites, where it comes to an end at the former slaughterhouses, now St Marx Mediaquarter. The way from there is a wasteland of office buildings scattered among hardware stores, parking lots and high-way bridges behind which the Gasometers unveil themselves. The four Gasometers stand in an exact row and stand out from these surroundings in every way: the circular form, the colours, the materials, the proportions and scale. Looking closer at Rasmussen's concepts to describe these elements, we will see why.



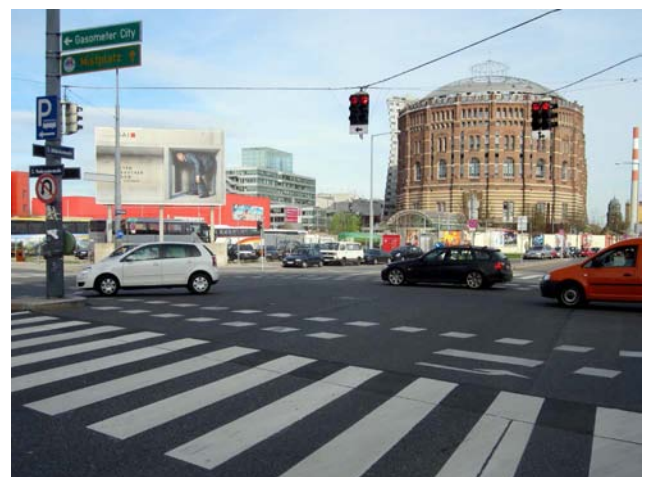
## *Die Straßen zum Gasometer*















### 2.2.2 Moving around: convex masses and cacophony

Rasmussen employs the notions of concavities and convexities to describe the way architecture works spatially. Typically the architect will work with forming the materials and giving them a structure. This focus on the solids of a building shapes convex forms that bend outwards giving an impression of the building's body and making the mass stand out (Ibid: 46). Concave forms, that bend inwards, occur when the architect focuses on forming a space carved out from the materials, a cavity, that gives an impression of the architectural space, *Raum-Gefühl*. In circular architecture in particular the convexity can be the most striking element of the design. The exterior of a circular building has an impressive sense of mass through the overall convex shape towards the surroundings. It appears massive and solid, monumental in the geometrical purity of its shape. This is the case with the Gasometers, where the convex form is further emphasized by the proportions and rhythm of the architecture. The convexity however is broken by the concave shield in concrete and glass next to Gasometer B, which is Coop Himmelb(l)au's original contribution to the industrial monument.

The Gasometers are placed on conic grass-clad hillsides, a small leftover of the open fields that once marked the area. This way they are lifted from the ground on a podium that adds volume to the building. The walls appear massive from below but they are pierced by more and more openings, giving a lighter appearance towards the top, where the rounded roofs meet the sky. The window openings are curved and framed by small arches and columns. There is a rhythmic progression both vertically and horizontally; in the regular



division of the windows, from the large ones below divided first into two openings and then into five at the top, and in the square columns that cover the total height of the buildings making regular sections all the way around. Rhythm is, as already mentioned, central to Rasmussen. In the objective sense, it is the regularity in the elements that constitute a rhythm visible to the spectator, but Rasmussen also understands rhythm as an activation of the spectator in the experience of architecture. Architecture is stable, it does not have a time dimension, like music or dance, and it does not move in itself, but it takes time and movement to experience it comparable to the activity of listening to music or watching a dance performance, which gives a bodily sensation of rhythm even though the spectator does not participate in the creation of it (Ibid: 135). The rhythm in this sense is also in tune with the way people move and behave in a given period. The Gasometers were built more than a hundred years ago, in a time where people dressed and moved differently, at different speeds, than today. The façade stands as then, while the new architecture is constructed within. Behind the openings of the historical façade one can glimpse the interior cylinder of the contemporary structure. The actual windows of the dwellings behind seem out of sync with the openings of the façade. They contrast the ordered rhythm of the exterior, which conveys a harmonic whole, with a disordered experience of an interior that one can only glance inconsistently behind the slits. Up close, the layers in the façade trigger an interest in the spectator to grasp what hides behind the otherwise calm surface, to find a beat in the dissonance.

The rhythm and proportions of the Gasometer do not convey a homey impression. The window openings in the façade seem out of scale for a dwelling, and the bars that cross give a prison-like impression, rather than a home-like one. They do not seem to be for the people living inside the buildings; they are

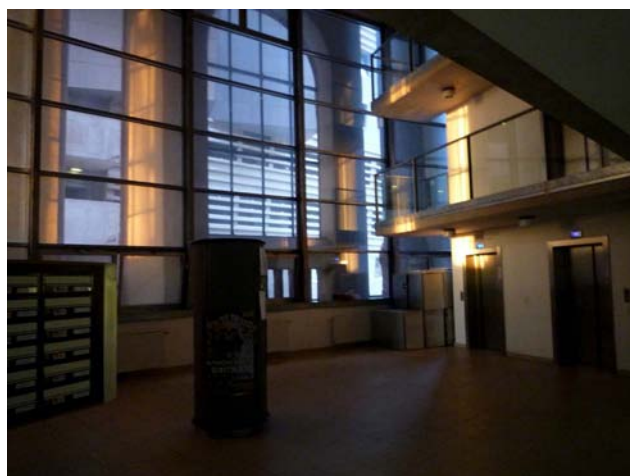


windows without glass, voids in the ornamentation of the façade. The columns are also merely ornamental as they do not carry any weight of the building. The walls become mere screens in the architecture, which gives the contrasting experience of both mass and lightness. The walls appear thin against the concrete cylinder within, making the façade seem fragile, as a skin, in contrast to the solid masonry of which it is made. The elements of the façade serve no function in the building, which in a way is truthful to the fact that the buildings are devoid of the function they were built to serve: containing gas, not people. However, the colours and texture of the architecture nuances this impression. The masonry is made of bricks in burnt, warm shades of brown over red and light yellow, with horizontal bands in light brown stone, smoothing the coarser texture of the bricks. They make the buildings distinctive in the modern surroundings as they are weathered by the decades. The colours and texture emphasize the tactility of the buildings, the bricks fitting the human hand, which gives a much stronger impression of a building for people to live in, than the rhythm of it conveys.

### 2.2.3 Moving inside: a cylinder within

To move inside the dormitory, one can pass through a shopping mall that extends throughout the length of all four Gasometers, or one can enter from the side of the Gasometer B, to a high-ceiled room, revealing the concrete structures of the cylinder within, and the three elevators that carry inhabitants up and down in the interior to the five floors inhabited by students. Carried to the third floor, the dormitory residents have their mailboxes in a room that presents very well the relation between exterior and interior. One side has windows in the height of the third floor that overlook the great rounded foyer in the shopping mall below and on top the hallways of both the fourth and fifth floor face the room. The other side is panelled with large windows giving a view to the inside of the historical façade. They extend the whole height of the lower window openings in the façade. This gives a clear impression of the relation between the monumental scale of the exterior as opposed to the ordinary scale of the interior domestic architecture.

The floors are very different in the way the movement and entrance to the individual apartments for the students is structured: the third floor is the main hallway for the students, while on the other floors the student flats are accessed individually. On the third floor the hallways are in the middle of the cylinder surrounded by doors to the student apartments on each side. The halls are not strictly circular but slight-



ly angled all the way around. They are floored in light-beige tiles, with white painted walls, and since there is no natural light inflow, the artificial lighting comes from underneath panels in the ceiling, where bright fluorescent lights beam down on both sides of the white walls. The homogenous pale interiors and the continuing curve almost makes one lose the sense of orientation. The only change in the interiors is found in the colours on the doors to the student apartments. The third floor circle is divided in three sections of bright red, yellow and blue, the triad of primary colours, and the effect is remarkable, an effect also Rasmussen describes in his work (Ibid: 221). While the fluorescent light remains the same, it is experienced very differently from one coloured section to the other. The character and feeling of the hallways change as one moves from the mellow, warm sheer that the yellow doors give to the beige tiles and white walls, while the blue doors reflect the colder notes in the stone and paint, giving a clear crisp feeling of the hall.





A second point of reference when moving around is not fabricated by any intention of the architect but by the residing students, who have decorated the number signs of their apartments in various fashions: with name tags, postcards, stickers and collages of pictures of themselves, thereby personalizing the otherwise anonymous numbers. Small tactics like these decorations soften the experience of the uniform, angled hallways. Behind the doors are apartments that are all unique in their shapes and sizes, with rooms facing either the outside or the inner courtyard. They form a small unit equipped with kitchen, bathrooms and a little common room, which the students share, two and up to five together.

## 2.2.4 Visiting the rooms: detached from time and place

All the rooms are special due to the fitting of the cylinder to the shell. They have yellow linoleum floors and wooden panels on one wall, while the other is painted white. They are furnished with a closet, a desk and shelves, but the uniformity is partial as the students have their own belongings to also decorate their rooms. The aforementioned lack of connection between exterior façade and cylinder reduces the light inflow in the rooms towards the outside, as some face the inside of the façade. Rasmussen writes that the quality of the light is of greater importance than the quantity (Ibid: 189), but in the Gasometer the quality is also poor. The rooms on the inside give a view of the most interior





of the Gasometer B; the courtyard. The courtyard is not made as a place one can step onto since the base is of glass to channel light down to the shopping mall below. The courtyard is lit from the open dome above. Rasmussen's example of this type of lighting, the monumental Pantheon in Rome, is far from the quality of the light found in the Gasometer B. In Pantheon, the circular opening in the domed ceiling provides a lighting that emphasizes all the architectural qualities (Ibid: 193). In the Gasometer B, the opening broadens out so that the daylight from above gets a diffused effect, giving poor textural qualities to the surfaces, where the light is reflected and thus spread out in the circle of windows. There are no dark shadows, only the schematic lines of window frames and grey plates broken up by an occasional open window. The light never reaches far neither downwards or to the interiors, and the inner courtyard is completely closed off from the outside. The students experience darkness in their rooms and a feeling of almost losing the sense of day by not having direct sunlight and the view to the sky to orient after. The experience of living on the inside of the Gasometer is like a detachment from the outside time and space.

The courtyard is only visible to the residents of the Gasometer. They overlook the common rooms of bar, music and fitness on the sixth floor and all the windows of each other. Rasmussen ends his work with discovering how colours and sounds form an integral part of the experience of architecture. The acoustics of the inner courtyard is central to how living in the Gasometer feels: the sounds of student life reverberate in the enclosure of the cylinder.



## 2.3 Experiencing Tietgenkollegiet

### 2.3.1 Moving to Tietgenkollegiet

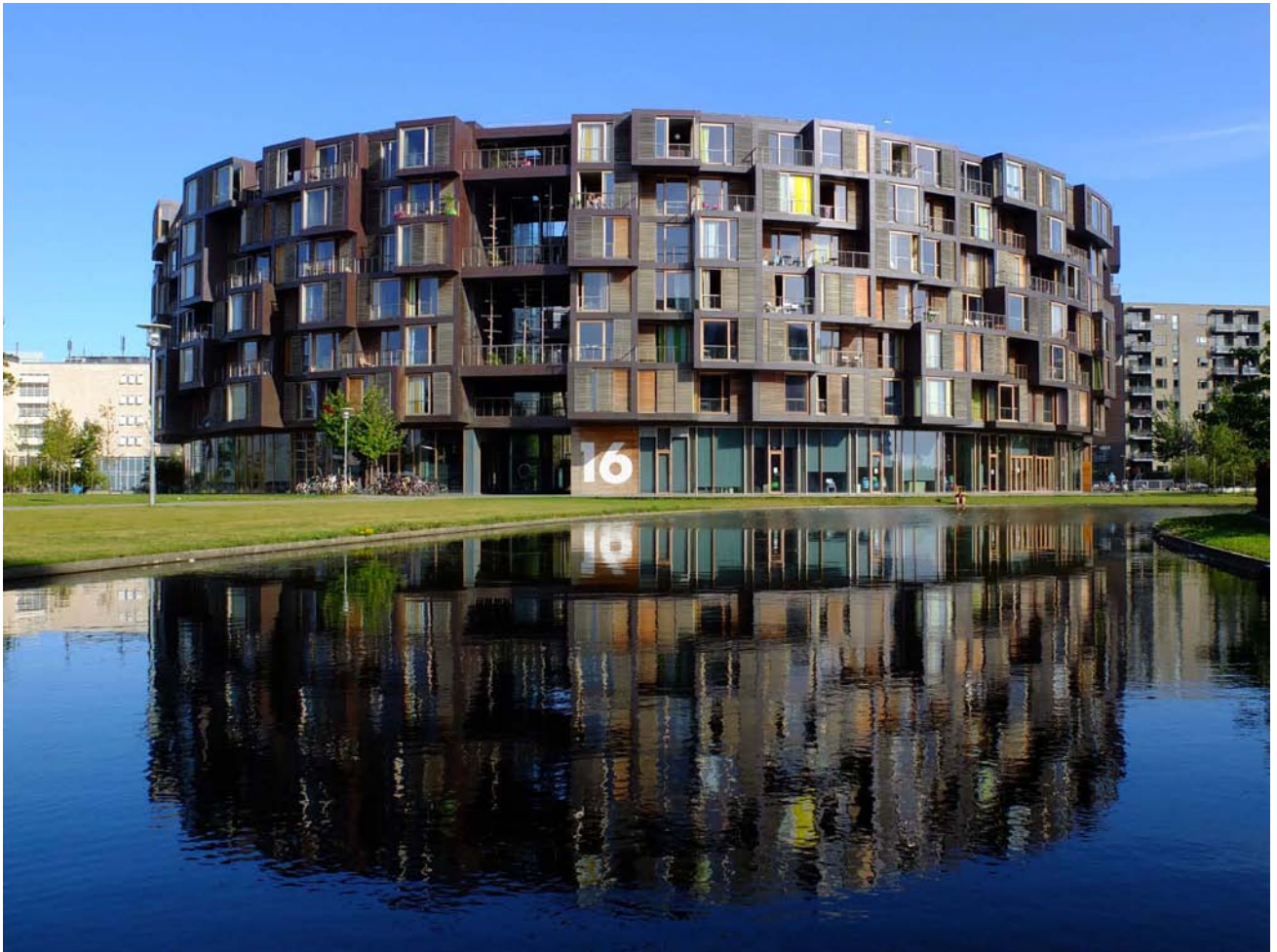
Tietgenkollegiet can be reached from several directions: from the city centre, from KUA, Københavns Universitet Amager, or from DR Byen, the headquarters of the Danish national broadcasting corporation. What all entrance ways have in common is water, as the canals that emblematically meander through Ørestad pass on both sides of Tietgenkollegiet. Arriving from the city centre involves leaving the monumental figures of City Hall, Tivoli and Glyptotek behind as the broad H.C. Andersen Boulevard crosses the harbour via Langebro, the 'long bridge', connecting the old city with the new. Passing by office buildings in glass, the casino and the former SAS high-rise hotel, a wasteland of new roads lead to the university buildings from the 1970's, old KUA, from where the Ørestad canal springs. Following the canal around the university Tietgenkollegiet appears, standing solely on an open lawn. Where the canal makes a bend the half circle of the waterway is met by the circular façade of the dormitory. As explained about the Gasometers, the overall convex shape of the building gives a strong impression of mass. From afar Tietgenkollegiet thus appears monumental in its circularity; it floats sculpturally in its reflection in the water. The pathway behind the university is the only entranceway to the dormitory that allows an impression of the building as a whole.



*Vejene til Tietgenkollegiet, continued*





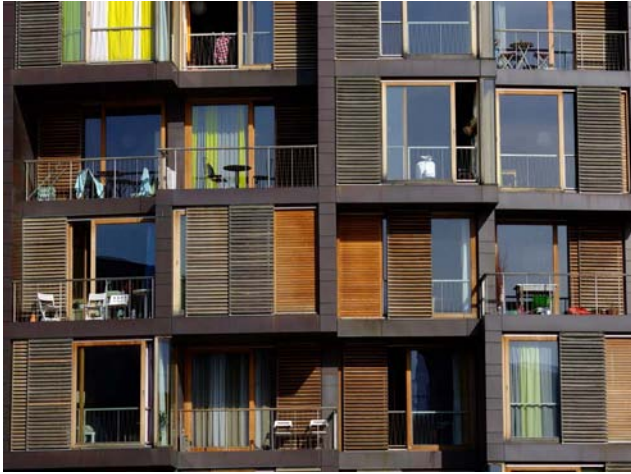


From DR Byen one passes the blue-screened, quadrangular concert hall of Jean Nouvel placed on the verge of the broad Emil Holms Kanal, which provides a straight view down the slender rectilinear buildings of Ørestad North. The view to the right is from KUA, characteristic in its repetitive travertine-clad north-south orientated buildings, along which the curvy façade of Tietgenkollegiet stands out.



### 2.3.2 Moving around: contrasts and the experience of a concave space

Moving closer to the building, the strictly circular façade is broken by the interplay of cavities made up



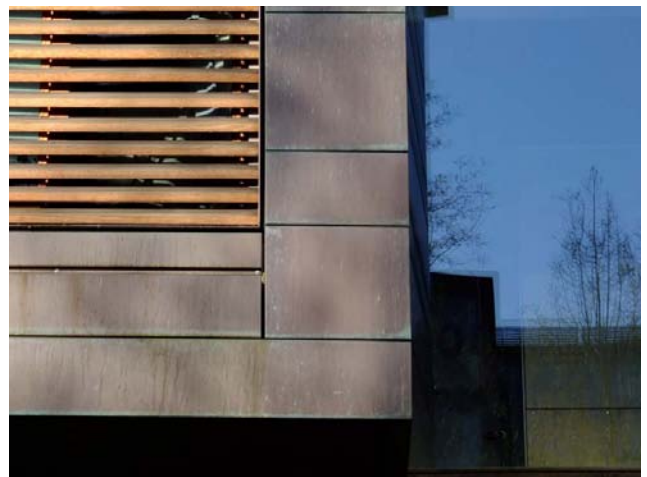
of the individual rooms that intermittently extend and withdraw from the convex surface, making it less well-defined than from afar. Where the Gasometers activate the spectator to create coherence between the exterior façade and the core behind it, the obvious contrasts in the façade of Tietgenkollegiet challenges the spectator to shift between perceiving the whole or the elements. Rasmussen explains this perceptual effect by the example of Rubin's vase (see picture to the left), a drawing showing the figure of a white vase on a black background. When shifting focus from the figure to the background the facial profiles of two men appear, but it is not possible to see both the vase and the profiles at once, one must change perception completely between the figure and the ground, or in architecture between the solids formed by the materials or the cavity created within (Ibid: 46). However, the principal contrast in Tietgenkollegiet is not on the surface of the façade, but moving from the outside to the inside through one of the five massive gateways. The inner courtyard is distinctive in the concave form giving a compelling impression of space, where one almost forgets the solidity of the convex exterior. Also here do the architects play with the contrasts, penetrating the open space with the massive bodies of the kitchens and common rooms, hanging like weightless yet heavy boxes in the space within. The floating sensation of the hanging kitchens is emphasized by the large glass panels that reflect the sky and thus draw the gaze upwards. Inside the courtyard another experience of architecture than that of solids and cavities is encountered; colour planes. Rasmussen describes the experience of colour planes by the example of how materials, colours and texture create a sensation of lightness, such as that experienced in some Venetian architecture (Ibid: Ch. IV). The lightness one can experience when enter-



ing Tietgenkollegiet's courtyard, and looking up at the building from below, is due to the dominating colour being that of the sky, reflected in the glass. The colours are thus continuously changing by the shifting light of the day, the weather and the season, altering the experience of the architecture. The trees shooting up in the courtyard also contribute to the changeability that characterizes all the materials used in the building. The tombac that clothes the sides of all elements and the oak that frames the windows will change over time as the dormitory grows older and will give more character to the architecture. The materials contrast each other by the softness of the wood and the hardness of the metal alloy and glass, and they are all of a high quality and cost, which also makes the architecture stand out against other residential buildings in the vicinity, clad in prefabricated masonry, where the lines between the brick panels give away the factory-like nature of the façade, rather than the handmade character so characteristic of the masonry of the Gasometers, as an example.

### 2.3.3 Moving inside: tacit differences

The contrast in materials is repeated on the inside, where wooden wall panels and polished concrete floors combine softness and hardness in the hallways. The wall panels carry a pattern in changing shades of brown, from dark on the lower floors to light on the top floors. Each panel carry a unique design, which in its whole, as can only be seen when looking across the courtyard at all the floors on the opposite side, form a forest of branches and leaves, accentuating the organic curve of the hallways, yet standing out against the aforementioned hard materials. The difference in colour from one floor to the other is so diminutive that it is very much in the habitual movement around in the building that the differences are intuitively felt, moving from one floor to the other, or from one hallway to the other,





where the pattern changes. When walking around the hallways, the courtyard is visible through the windows on the one side, occasionally interrupted by common rooms and kitchens that present themselves and the life within through glass doors. All common areas are placed in the dragged-out boxes towards the courtyard, which frames the social life of the dormitory and makes it visual and audible to every resident. When one enters Tietgenkollegiet by night, the lights in the hanging kitchens and the voices of the students echoing in the courtyard confer a strong feeling of the everyday life taking place in the dormitory.

The dormitory is divided in five large sections that form units of twelve individual rooms on each floor, sharing a kitchen, common room and laundry room. On the other side of the hall the doors to the individual rooms are slightly withdrawn from the hallway, in regular cavities in the patterned panels.

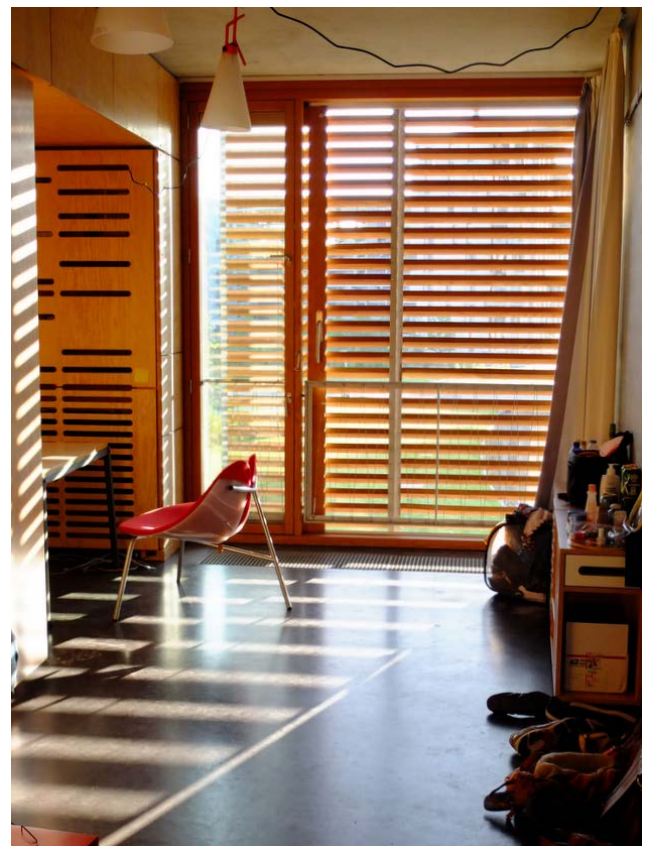
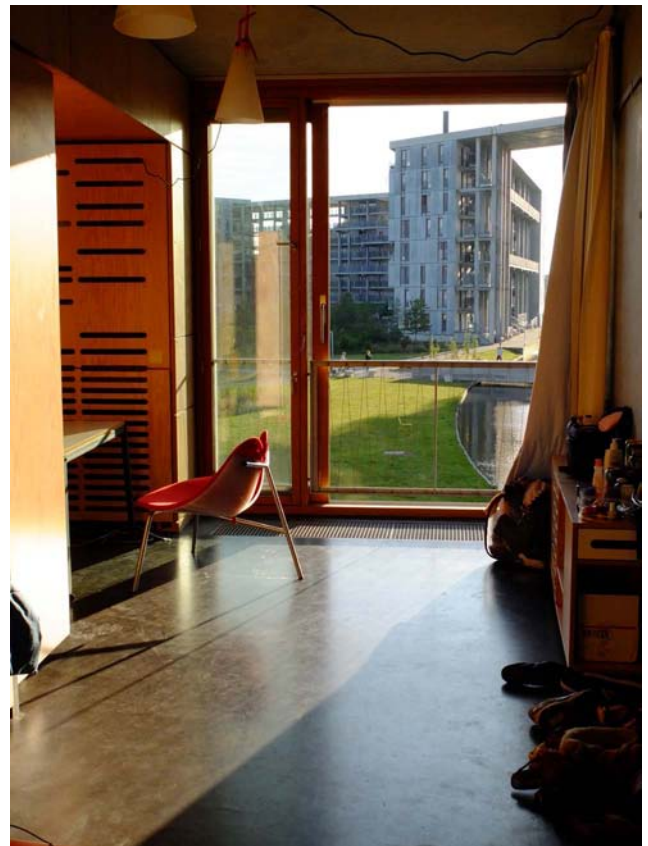




### 2.3.4 Visiting the rooms: glass-walled caves

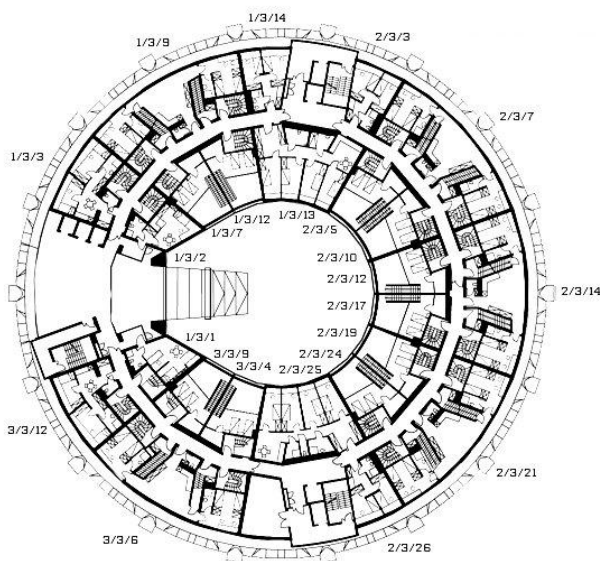
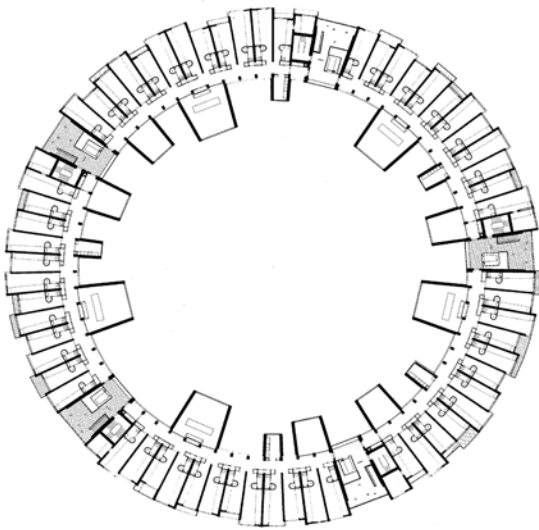
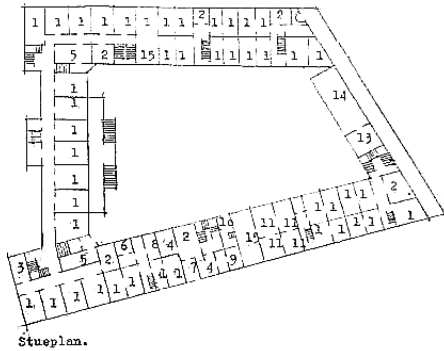
The rooms are all elongated from inside towards the outside. They grow out from the core and end in a wall of glass, like a cave where social life takes place within the cave, and the more outwards you move, the more alone you are, and the more you are in the external world. The interiors are objectively a continuation of the design of the rest of the dormitory, with polished concrete floors extended to one wall and the ceiling, while the other wall is covered by panels of wood, yet they are also highly personalized by the students. It is especially in the lighting that a remarkable difference is experienced. The circular shape leaves out a lot of light toward the interior, while letting sections of the exterior bath in light during all the day. The windows in the room take up the entire end wall, letting in large amounts of daylight. But as every room is orientated in a different manner the experience of the brightness and colour shapes of the room is unique to each one of them, just as the views of the outside vary. The light and the gazes from the occasional passerby can be

regulated by large rectangular shutters in wooden latticework that gives a freedom to the student to adjust the intimacy and privacy of his dwelling.



## Conclusion to PART 2: ARCHITECTURE

REGENSEN.  
Arkitekt:  
Ukendt.  
Stiftet: 1623  
Maal. 1:400.



The architecture and the purpose of the building go very well hand in hand in Tietgenkollegiet, approaching the description by Rasmussen of Baker House dormitory at MIT, where the fine intentions of the architect shine through in the building. Where Baker House had the rhythm of a modern dormitory in the 1950's, Tietgenkollegiet expresses the rhythm of a 21st century dwelling for students. Yet at the same time its architecture reflects a fundamental dormitory structure that dates back to one of the first in Copenhagen, *Regensen*. Based on the form of the monastery, the traditional dormitories had a four winged figure surrounding an inner courtyard. In Tietgenkollegiet the four wings have become one single curve tightening together the social life on its inside, while letting the individual life radiate towards its outside.

Gasometer is a very different project as it takes its starting point in an existing structure that from the beginning limited the possibilities of the architect to purposefully shape the architecture. The spatial limits were followed by financial limits, which also stand in contrast to Tietgenkollegiet that was built without economic boundaries. The boundaries of the architecture are visible in the façade where history and present-day interplay between shell and core. The historic shell is made of living materials that gives a sensual human expression to the large proportions of the architecture. The inner courtyard serves no purpose in the dormitory, but the circular enclosure allows for the acoustics of student life to vibrate within its walls.

From my experience of the architecture with Steen Eiler Rasmussen by my hand, I will now introduce the experience of the students living there.

# PART 3: INTERIORS

## Introduction

From 1955-56 Steen Eiler Rasmussen was professor for a class of architecture students at the Art Academy in Copenhagen. He employed them to make a study of dormitories, yet not only of the architecture, but in collaboration with a class of sociologists. Their work was published as a little book that I found in the archive of the Academy. They have several interesting reflections on the material qualities of a dormitory and the social life that are an inspiring background for the analysis of the two contemporary cases, bridging the historical and architectural analysis with the coming case study.

They did a comparison of fourteen dormitories in Copenhagen and Aarhus of different ages and degrees of common and private facilities. An quality of the study is how the two disciplines of architects and sociologists work together. The architects describe the dormitory as a housing category similar to that of the hotel. They view it as serving three functions; studying, living and resting, that should be incorporated in the design of the student room, yet stating that the difference between the hotel room and the dormitory room lies in the personal furnishing (Behrens et al., 1956: 21). In the sociologists' study this wish appears to be of great importance to the students. Moreover, the students state the social life and community as main contributors to their satisfaction with living in a dormitory. One of the main concerns in the study was thus:

*In Denmark new dormitories are built as one-room flats with kitchenette and toilet/bath. It can be interpreted as a luxury or as progress that the tendency is towards one-room flats, but it can also seem as a setback if one expects the dormitory to give the students more than solely meeting the material demands [...] One must therefore make it clear whether it is desirable to build dormitories that isolate the students, or whether one wishes to build dormitories where social relations among the students are naturally created. (Behrens et al., 1956: 5, my translation)*

This concern against the privatisation and individualization of the student reiterates Austrian ideas of the time. With this 56-year old study as setting, I will now turn to my two cases. The two dormitories have already been presented, so here follows a presentation of the students interviewed (cf. Annex):

<b>Studentenheim Gasometer</b>	<b>Tietgenkollegiet</b>
Max, 25, France/Vienna, 6 years in G.	Michael, 27, Birkerød, 5 years in T.
Michael, 24, Burgenland, 1½ years in G.	Klaus, 21, Varde, 10 months in T.
Murat, 20, Turkey, 2 years in G.	Frederik, 23, Frederiksberg, 1½ years in T.
Agnes, 20, Upper Austria, 1½ years in G.	Mathilda, 22, Rungsted, 2½ years in T.
Fiona, 20, Upper Austria, 1½ years in G.	Ursula, 24, Brønshøj, 3 years in T.
Gabriela, 21, Bulgaria, 2 years in G.	Olga, 22, Brønshøj, 2 years in T.
Camille, 20, France, 1 month in G.	Veronica, 22, Australia, 6 months in T.

Although originating in a similar tradition of city dormitories, the differences between the two groups of interviewees reflect some of the differences in dormitory culture in Vienna and Copenhagen. Out of the



seven students interviewed in Vienna, none of them are from Vienna. Three are from Upper Austria and Burgenland and the four others are international students, of which one was on an exchange. It is not common for Viennese students to live in dormitories; it is primarily students coming from the other regions or outside Austria. Understanding housing behaviour is complex. First of all housing is a composite good as it consists of several inseparable elements: tenure, size, quality, location etc., but mainly because residential choice in most cases is not based on preferences, but on constraint (van Ham in: Clapham, 2012: 48). This is especially the case for students as they are an economically weak group. In Austria students are economically reliant on their families, who receive *familienbeihilfe*, and depending on the financial situation of the family the student can also receive *studienbeihilfe*. It is common for Austrian students to live in the parental home while studying, given that the place of study is in the vicinity, and the dormitory culture is not a very widespread idea. In my interviews none of the students knew about it before they moved in. Their reasons for living in Gasometer were the affordability and accessibility of the rooms. Dormitories in Vienna are typically organized and built by organizations, some affiliated with political parties or with the different regions. The Gasometer B was redeveloped by the *Wohnbauvereinigung der Gewerkschaft für Privatangestellte*, a non-profit company created by the Union for Private Employees, but some regions also have a quota of rooms: Upper Austria (50) and Vorarlberg (30), and ÖAD, the Austrian Agency for International Mobility, have 41 rooms reserved for international students.

In Copenhagen five out of the seven interviewed were from the Capital Region, and with the short distances they could have kept living at home, but they chose to move away for different reasons. In Denmark all students over eighteen years of age are entitled to a governmental grant, given independently of their economic background which gives more personal freedom to the student in making residential choices. All but one of the students interviewed knew about the dormitory culture beforehand, and named it as a reason for living in Tietgenkollegiet. The students are accepted based on a motivated application that a committee consisting of representatives for the residents and the administration select from. Next to the social life, the students named the architecture and facilities as central for their residential choice.

The following chapters will commence in the context of a British study on student housing, in the comparison to which the home-meanings for the students will be analysed.

### 3.1 The first home of one's own

For most students the dormitory is the first home of their own. Elizabeth Kenyon has researched the ideas of home among British students (Kenyon, 1999). She identified four key constituents of what young people perceive as a meaningful home and concluded that students are unable to locate one home, because the student home does not live up to them all. They are thus split between the parental home, the student home, and the ideas of a future home, that will contain all the elements missing from the present home configuration:

*In understanding that during this transitional period sustaining a number of homes may be necessary until a 'real' future home can support and provide for all of student's needs, we can additionally understand why, for students, the meaning and experience of home become diverse, complex and fragmented. (Kenyon, 1999: 95)*

This pattern of multiple homes is also present in the interviews that I have conducted, but the two dormitories vary in a significant way: the students in both Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet depict their dormitories as carrying the meaning of home to them – despite and because of the transitional period of life they are in.

### **3.1.1 Feeling at home in a temporal environment**

In Kenyon's study the student home lacks a sense of belonging and independence as it is subject to rules from a landlord or roommates and the freedom to personalize is limited as compared to an imagined future home (Kenyon, 1999: 87). The ideas of a future home exist in Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet but it is not the main story told by the students as they find meaningful personal aspects in other elements; community and architecture. According to Kenyon the student home does not carry the load of memories and the students are not willing to invest or commit to it due to its impermanence (Kenyon, 1999: 90). Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet are perceived as temporary in the sense that the students know that their stay is limited to a certain period of their life. It is a home related to being young, to study intensely, to make new friendships, to party, have fun and less responsibilities, and the dormitory is highly mnemonic in this sense.

The physical setting in Kenyon's research is very different from the one in Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet. The students' inability to feel at home was closely related to feeling insecure and uncomfortable (Kenyon, 1999: 92). In Tietgenkollegiet most students tell how they had a wish to live in a dormitory, but could not abide to a traditional dorm with small, worn-out rooms and dirty kitchens. In Gasometer several students account for feeling so safe that they never lock their doors. This demonstrates the importance of the material qualities of student housing. The social life was the only element that contributed positively to a home feeling in Kenyon's study and this aspect is also found in my cases. The communal life in Kenyon's student homes created a supportive, homely atmosphere of peers. All students in my research talk about the student community as central to their feeling at home.

### **3.1.2 At home in iconic dormitories**

Comparing Tietgenkollegiet and Gasometer with Kenyon's study demonstrates ways that the iconic dormitories differ from other contemporary student homes. Kenyon finds several reasons why the student home is not home to the students, and concludes that the home-meaning for students is fragmented. However, the key elements that Kenyon identifies in her research presumes that the home-meaning can only be based on traditional values of privacy and intimacy in a family-setting, values dating back to the nineteenth century bourgeoisie. The bourgeois values are present in the ideas of the students in my research because they are still culturally dominant in the society. But that does not imply that the dormitory does not carry the meaning of home, or that it is merely a temporary substitution for the "real" home of the future, which will be more in line with common socio-cultural ideas. My research in Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet tell a different story. It accounts for the tactics of creating a home in a non-permanent environment and it shows that traditional categories of home-meanings are not sufficient for understanding the relation young people have to their home. In a comparative analysis, the next chapters will explore these similarities and differences further.

## 3.2 A dormitory narrative: an imagined community

*It's like a little family here. The longer you live here the more people you know the more cosy it gets. Everything is here – Agnes, Gasometer*

*It's your second family here. We do many things together, go out, play board games, and cook together. Mostly spontaneously. Because we like each other – Frederik, Tietgenkollegiet*

When moving away from living in a family to living in a dormitory some students experience that the dormitory almost replaces it with a new one in which there can be more freedom and independence than in the original. This balance between community and individuality is fragile. As the students of Steen Eiler Rasmussen stated, the dormitory is close to the hotel in its structure, but the hotel is a negative reference in a family context, as Mary Douglas points out (Douglas, 1993: 61). To just come and leave as one pleases is the contrary to creating a community:

*The order of day is the infrastructure of a community [...] But home is a fragile system, easy to subvert. It is generally well recognized that the main contribution of members to the collective good is to be physically present at its assemblies [...] Perhaps the most subversive attack on the home is to be present physically without joining in its multiple coordinations. To leave erratically without saying where and for how long (Douglas, 1993: 65)*

The synchronization, rituals and fixed frame for the social life do not exist in a dormitory per se, but have to be created and maintained by the inhabitants. The basic relation between student and dormitory is contractual, as the student rents a room, and the responsibility towards the community is limited to what is stated in the lease, thereby making the social conventions ever more important.

### 3.2.1 Young dormitories and traditions

The students in Tietgenkollegiet are especially aware of the social conventions. As the tradition of dormitories dates centuries back, all the Danish students consider the youth of their dormitory and compare it to their idea of a traditional one:

*It's a bad thing for the dorm that it's so new, there are so few traditions that can bind people together – Mathilda, Tietgenkollegiet*

*It's a new dorm, so there are not so many traditions. That means that there isn't common dinner every day, or drinking rituals that you need to go through. You can create it yourself. Some people expect it to be more like that, and get disappointed, because normally dormitories are like that – Michael, Tietgenkollegiet*

*It's a young dorm, the traditions are missing, but we're good at creating something – Frederik, Tietgenkollegiet*

The students feel differently about this. As Michael tells from his five years in Tietgenkollegiet, some students end up moving out because they do not feel at ease with the lack of social frames. For him, as well as other interviewees, it is a reason for living there to be free from the social pressure and expectations they imagine in traditional dormitories. Others, like Frederik, take up the challenge of initiating social life and traditions by participating in committees and in the past years clubs for running, football, parties etc. have



been created on initiative from the students. But the socially very active students tell that it is only a small part of the people living in Tietgenkollegiet who participate and join in on the activities, which is similar to the experience of the students in Gasometer. They are both large dormitories where it is impossible for everyone to know everyone on a daily basis. The community is broken into smaller divisions where the kitchens are described as the main locus for social life.

### 3.2.2 Everyday life equality

In Gasometer the students live in small shared flats, however the smaller size does not change their awareness of the lack of synchronization of everyday life:

*Our kitchen is a place where we meet, and we talk a lot in the kitchen. It's very comfortable. Sometimes we have dinners together, but it's a bit difficult because everyone have different times for coming home – Fiona, Gasometer*

*Fiona is really family-family, she's like the mum here. I was never used to have common dinners at my home, but she wanted to eat together every day. It was really difficult. Now we just do it spontaneously, but it's not so often – Agnes, Gasometer*

Agnes and Fiona live happily together in a flat, which they have named *Die Ombres*. They both tell about the difficulties in the beginning when they were trying to establish a dormitory life based on the family norms they carried with them from their parental homes. But now they have found a more spontaneous way to share their home, which provides them with freedom and social life without the constraints of keeping a schedule.

The family-like community the students tell about is not in the traditional sense, such as the medieval dormitory where the everyday life was strictly regulated. It is not only the size of contemporary dormitories that hinders such a structure. In the contemporary dormitory all members of the community are considered equal. In the circular dormitory the equality is further pronounced by the architecture as all rooms have the same relation to each other and to the centre of the dorm, like pieces of a pie. However, in order to belong to the community the student must respect the social conventions and participate to a certain degree. As compared to the well-ordered traditional dormitories, the iconic dormitory demands more responsibility from the individual. The communities are based on dialectics of having more individual freedom than in a family as it is a home of one's own, yet living closer together and sharing more because the students are among peers. Yet, the community is not founded on friendships either, as Olga puts it:

*Living together with twelve people you didn't choose by yourself can be a bit difficult. You get better along with some than others. Some you become really good friends with, others you don't want to see again after you move – Olga, Tietgenkollegiet*

Living in a dormitory is something to be learned by everyday negotiations and interactions, especially in the primary social circle of the kitchen.

### 3.2.3 Dormitory community as language game

The larger circle of the dormitory community is not constituted on everyday coordination. The rhetori-

cal territory forming it is more central, an idea of home discussed by David Morley (Morley, 2000: 17). The students share a vocabulary about the dormitory that articulates the community. They participate in a language game, whereby they jointly construct the dormitory as a home, by naming it as such. When the students are asked the same questions they often, independently from one another, answer with phrases, images and stories that are similar within each of the communities, and thereby reveal the narratives that bind them together. The community exists in the way it is imagined by the students. It becomes apparent when new inhabitants, such as the exchange students are asked, or when students who are not partaking in the social life tell about their experience. A strong narrative in both dormitories is that “all you need is within the circle”. In Gasometer it is shaped around an image of the buildings being like a self-sustaining village where everything is available so that you do not need to leave and in periods actually just stay. The only person not mentioning this aspect is Camille, the exchange student who had only lived in Gasometer for less than a month and who did not take part in the social life yet.

Another strong narrative concerns the special architecture that frames the community. As the only one of the students interviewed at Tietgenkollegiet, the exchange student Veronica told me that she thought the architecture was ugly:

*First I thought it was a bit ugly. The concrete and brown exterior, not the most attractive I have seen [...] I was talking to one of the kitchen mates when I arrived, she was explaining to me the significance and the whole focus on creating a community, that you can see each other in the kitchens, that the common spaces are communal [...] We're the round brown building – Veronica, Tietgenkollegiet*

That the kitchen mate shared the story about the architecture with Veronica, and thereby corrected her in her image, was an initiation into the community, so that Veronica in the end felt that she herself could identify very much with it. What she considered the ugly feature, the brown exterior, became a positive marker of the identity of the community: “We're the round brown building”. The story of how Tietgenkollegiet's architecture was brought into being is a *foundational myth* for the community (cf. Hall, 1992: 294).

The narratives are also founding for a network beyond the dormitory. The Austrian fraternities, *burschenschaften*, have their etymological roots in the *Bursen* (Czeike, 1992: 527), and the old dormitories in Copenhagen have strong alumni associations, with yearly meetings for all generations of present and former residents, who have the dwelling in the rhetorical territory of their dormitory in common.

### 3.3 A city within the city

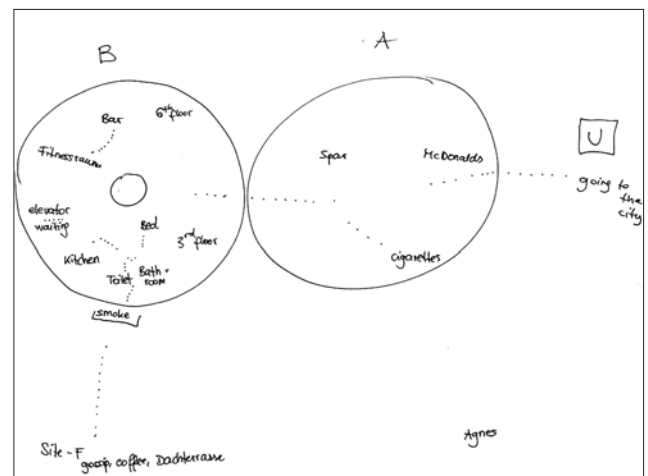
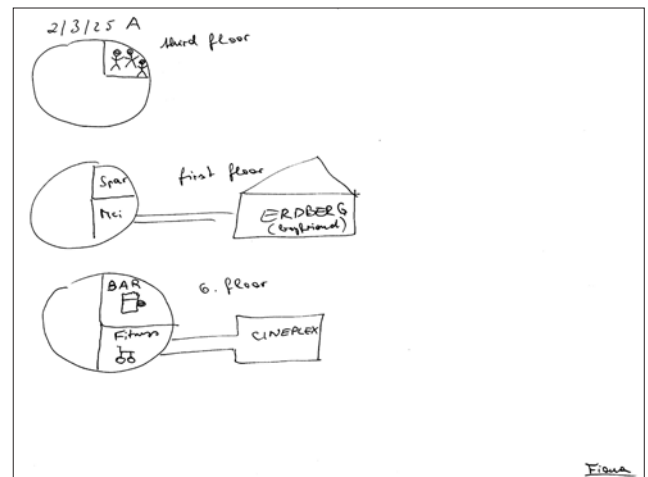
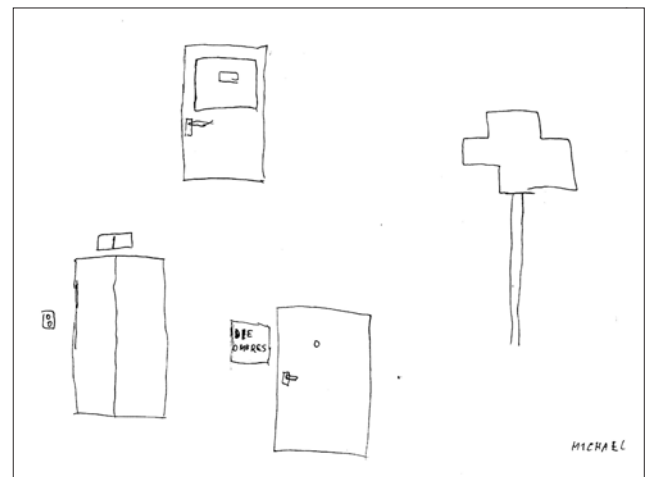
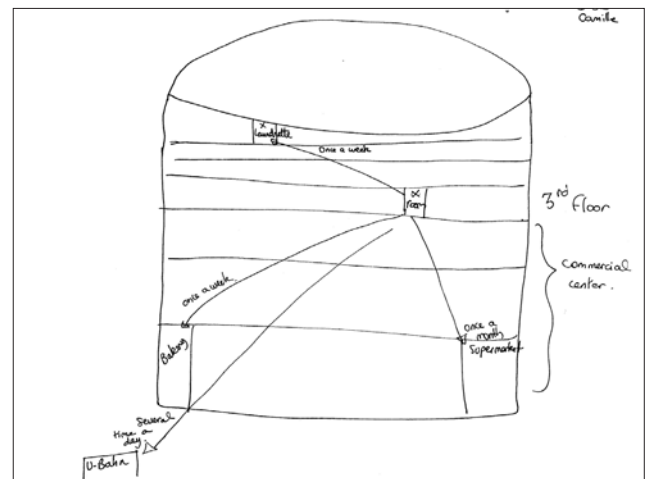
A very simple definition of a city could be: “A city is a bounded space that is densely settled and has a relatively large, culturally heterogeneous population” (Gottdiener, 2005: 4). The same definition could be given of a dormitory: it is comprised of strangers living together in an enclosed space where it takes a certain citizenship to belong. In this way a dormitory could be seen as a city en miniature. This chapter looks closer at the relation between the heterogeneous community and the students' experience of spatial divisions between private and public.

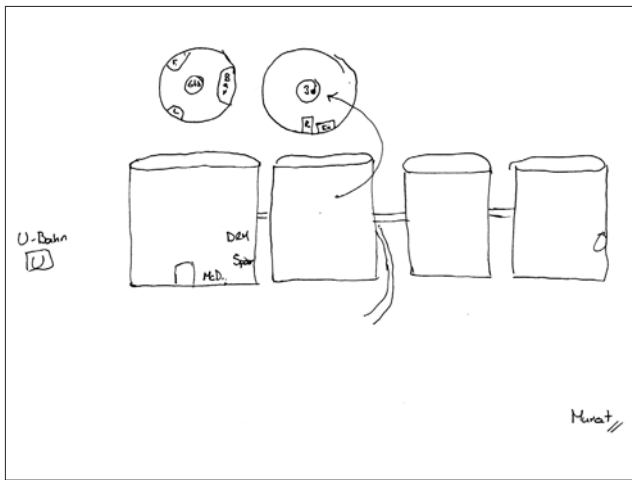
### 3.3.1 Gasometer Gemeinschaft

The students' mental maps show how they attribute meaning to the spaces of the dormitories. There is a marked difference between the students who are very active in the social life and those less active. The exchange student Camille draws her room in the centre of the building. She does not draw the apartment, kitchen or other common rooms, but only her room alone on the floor, and many lines dividing the places she uses in the Gasometers. Michael only draws doors on his mental map, of the elevator, the flat, and his own door. Both Michael and Camille are not very active in the social life, and their images of the Gasometer thus stand out in the amount of edges, lines and doors they depict.

Agnes and Fiona are very active in the kitchen community and in the community at large, and both draw their apartment as one large room with no borders. The third floor on Fiona's drawing is a circle, where one quarter encloses the community of her three flat mates. The rest is empty space, as the other apartments are not part of her image of the dormitory. They are perceived as privately belonging to the people living there. Her image includes all the common areas, like the bar and fitness room, and the shops in the mall. In this way she does not distinguish between the semi-public areas of the dormitory and the public areas of the shopping mall. They all form part of her image of the dormitory.

Agnes draws the whole dormitory on one floor of the Gasometer B. The only line in her drawing is the one separating the exteriors from the interiors; all other functions are equally spread out with small dots indicating her footsteps around, interconnecting all levels of privacy and publicity equally. Agnes tells that she goes to the bar in her home-slippers, because she feels very much at home there. The footsteps also move to the Gasometer A, the shopping mall, and Site F, the neighbouring dormitory – whether she also goes there in her home-slippers



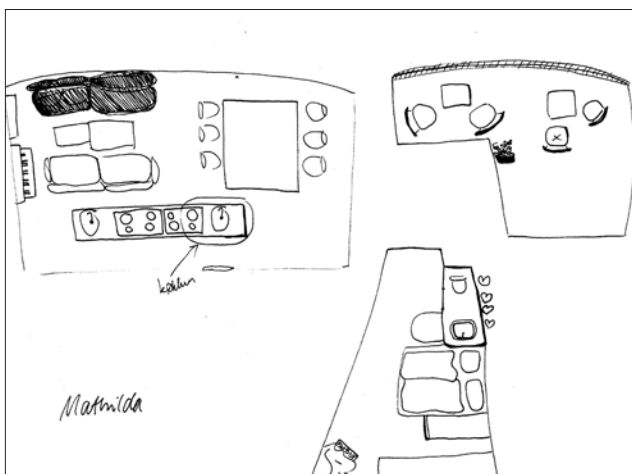
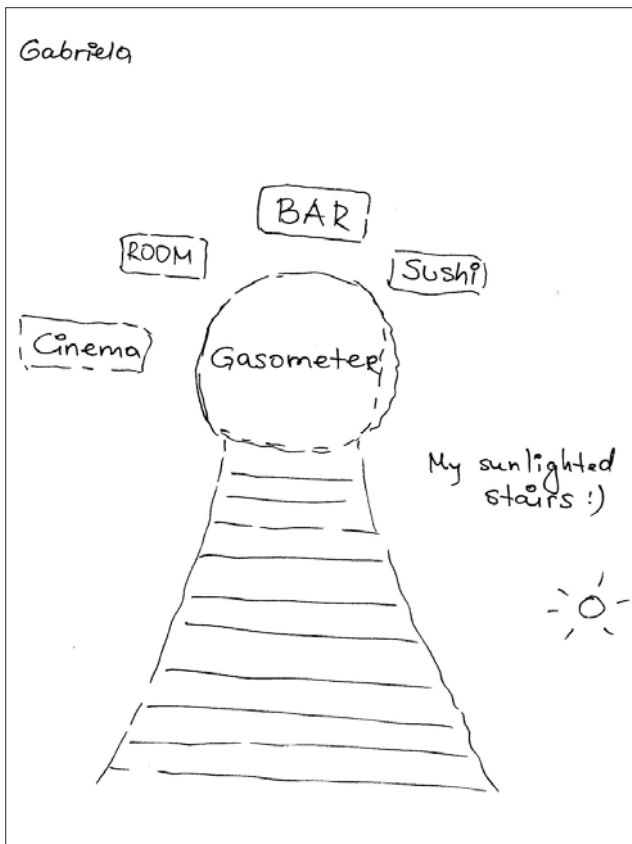


remains unknown, but like Fiona she makes no divisions between these areas. Like the other students Murat and Gabriela do not draw their kitchens, but their own rooms and the common rooms (bar, fitness, shops). Especially the bar is very important as a meeting place for the community and social life.

Murat and Gabriela live in rooms with views towards the surroundings. Their drawings depict an awareness of the exteriors as they both draw the buildings as viewed from the outside. Fiona and Agnes live towards the inside of the Gasometer and account for an experience of detachment from the outside world and time. In the imagery of the students there are no large distinctions between public (shopping mall) and semi-public (fitness, bar) areas, it all forms part of on whole, as seen by Fiona:

*Gasometer is my little village in Vienna – Fiona, Gasometer*

In this way, Gasometer could be described as a *Gemeinschaft*, following the terminology of Tönnies described in the historical analysis. The concept is an ideal type and thus informative for discussing certain characteristics of the dormitories. Like Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft*, the community is important and the bonds among the students are close both spatially and emotionally in the Gasometer. And as we will see the students' relations to the surroundings reiterate the *Gemeinschaft* character.



### 3.3.2 Spatial fractions and visual bonds

Like in Gasometer, the division between the smaller and the larger communities are clear in Tietgenkollegiet. Mathilda draws a very detailed image of her room, the kitchen and the hallway terrace. Everything else is left out and each element is disconnected. Ursula also draws her room and kitchen, but as part of a hallway that is distinguished from the ground floor, in which she depicts the bicycle room and the study hall. Nothing connects the two.

As reflected in their mental maps, Klaus and Frederik are both active in the committees. To Klaus the kitchen, common room and his room are interconnected by the hallway. Outside lies the party and fitness rooms, enclosed individually and disconnected from the hallway section: each area is home to a different community. Frederik makes a similar drawing but in his image the enclosed entity of the kitchen and the party and fitness rooms are connected. He is also the one who speaks most warmly about the larger community of the dormitory, which is reproduced in his image.

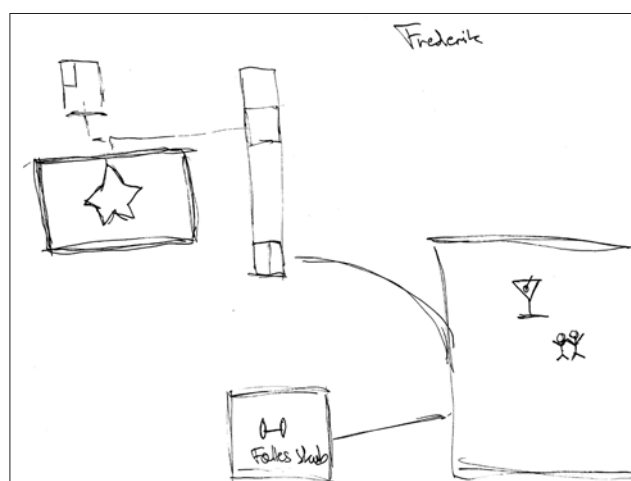
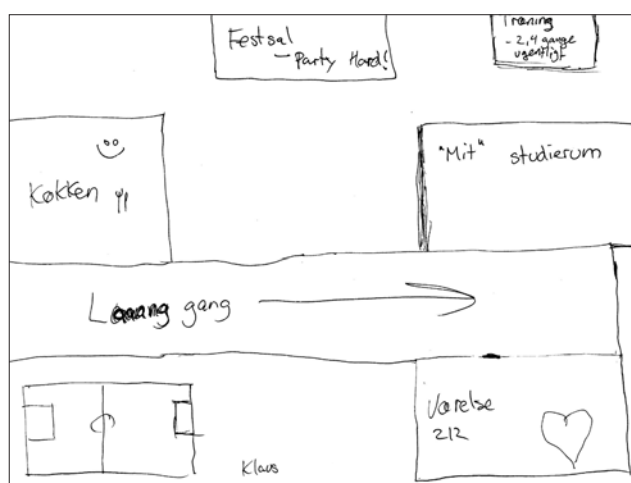
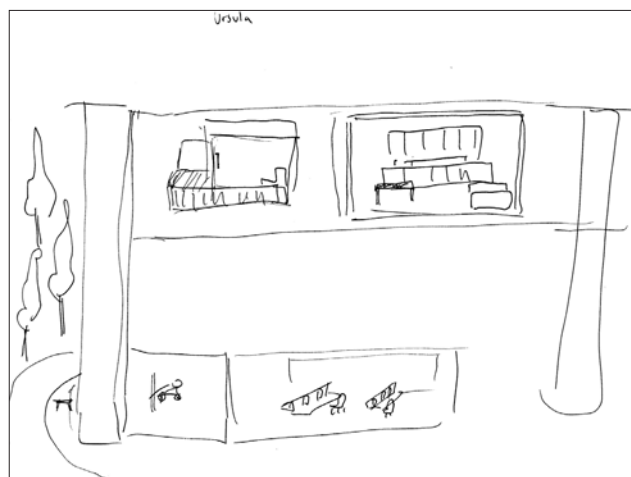
The common areas are made up of fine divisions of public and private. Each hallway has a common room that is supposed to be for all residents. But in fact it is viewed as highly private to the kitchen community. All terraces are also for all residents but as Mathilda said:

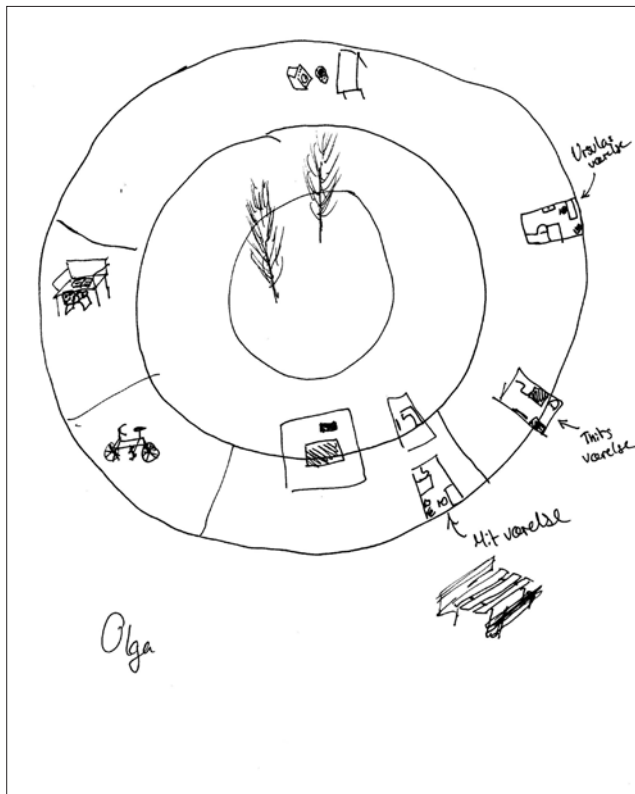
*It seems very strange when someone else comes to use the terrace. I would also feel strange going to other peoples' common rooms. It's theirs!*  
– Mathilda, Tietgenkollegiet

When asked about the movement around in the building, most students explain how they rather want to go down by the courtyard to get to the common rooms on the ground floor, than to cross the hallways of the other residents – even in rain. There is little interaction across the kitchen communities and it is emphasized by the architecture:

*The physical frames here makes it fast to build up a common life [in the kitchen], but it also makes it difficult to get to know people at other kitchens – Ursula, Tietgenkollegiet*

There are at least six doors to pass to get from one kitchen to another, and a key card is needed to open them. Like in Gasometer, other kitchens do not appear in the images. None of the mentioned students draw their image of the dormitory as circular, which makes the enclosure of each entity more striking:

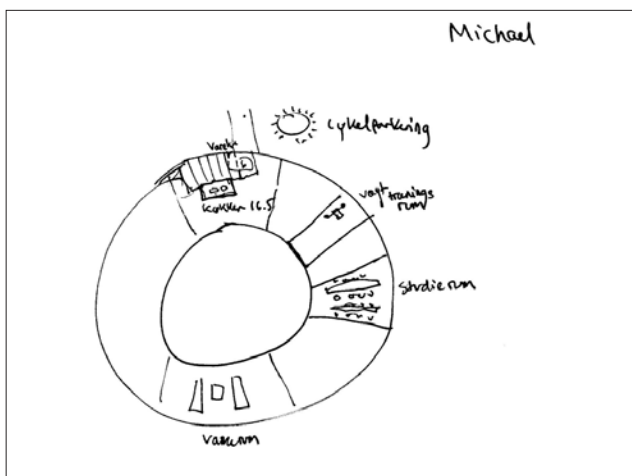




the room is one thing, the kitchen and the common areas are others. But the very circularity of the dormitory is also what binds the private areas together as the concave space that opens between the windows of the kitchens makes all communal life visible:

*I don't feel like a stranger to the people I see, as if it was an apartment complex, because they're people I live with in the dorm. There's some sense of community – Olga, Tietgenkollegiet*

The sense of community is in the visibility and in the knowledge of forming part of the *Gemeinschaft*, even as a narrative one. Olga and Michael both draw their image of Tietgenkollegiet as circular, with all elements on one floor and the courtyard in the middle. The courtyard as a public place and a scene of social life is central to the students. The courtyard is the front stage in a circular dormitory, now I will turn to the backstage; the individual room.





### 3.4 A room of one's own

*The emergence of modern subjectivity has been linked to the popularization of architectural features that made privacy possible [...] In a culture in which "a room of one's own" has been viewed as the minimum existential requirement of the functional literary self, it is not surprising that literature itself has consistently underlined the sense of connection between the structure of the self and the structure in which the body that contains that self abides. (Cullens, 1999: 212)*

*I love it here, there's no place I would rather live than here. I like the community we have, but still possibility to be yourself in your own room – Mathilda, Tietgenkollegiet*

*They [the rooms] are all built in the same way, but they are so different to go into, the decoration, it gives ideas. You want it to reflect your self – Klaus, Tietgenkollegiet*

A room of one's own can be understood as a prolongation of the self, as in the quote from Chris Cullens. Having a room of one's own is a necessity in a student's life as it gives the tranquillity of contemplation, comparable to the work of the literary self. The structure of the rooms in Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet is given in advance but the structure of the self that inhabits them is not defined thereby, as would follow from the argument of Cullens. The room is connected to ideas of freedom to be yourself, as Mathilda states, or reflect yourself, as Klaus explains.

#### 3.4.1 A cave

*I love the room, the design, a bit like a cave with the wooden cupboards in the ceiling – Mathilda, Tietgenkollegiet*

In the tale of architecture, the cave is imagined as man's first home; the first shelter man took from the torments of the world, evoking nostalgia for the womb, as Umberto Eco writes (Eco, 1973: 183).

Where the cave was for the whole clan of the Stone Age man, the room is experienced as a very private space, in the sense defined by Saunders: "exclusion of others or withdrawal of oneself from the presence of others" (1990: 80). The room demarcates the self towards the others and is of utter importance in the dormitory where the students live close together. All students draw their rooms as enclosed entities, centrally placed on the mental map. To get together in the rooms can become a strong symbol of closing the others out. It is considered anti-social and regarded negatively within the community. Ursula links the privacy of the room with the many common facilities:

*In reality we're not at each others' rooms. When I think of Tietgen, I think of movie nights and common dinners. The rooms are more private somehow. We have so much space out there, so we don't really go to sit at people's rooms – Ursula, Tietgenkollegiet*

The room is one's own. There is also an awareness of the potential intruding gaze of the others and all the talk and gossip that follows from living in a dormitory *Gemeinschaft*. As he also draws on his mental map, Klaus tells how he feels like living far away from the kitchen as his room is in one end of the, to him, long hallway. But he is happy to then be able to move in and out as he pleases, and with whom he pleases, without it being noticed too much by the "family".

### 3.4.2 A room with a view

A room of one's own is in both dormitories also a room with a view or a room to be viewed. In Gasometer the visibility is between the private rooms:

*You have to take care that nobody looks into your flat, that's really – dangerous. But it's nice to look out of the window and to see other people, working or dancing, or what they are doing. It looks very nice at night, when the lights are on in the flats, I like it – Fiona, Gasometer*

*We have the curtains, normally they're always up. If someone wants to see me, he can see me [...] If I want to be alone, I just put them down – Agnes, Gasometer*

The inner courtyard of Gasometer is surrounded by individual rooms and as it is of no use to the residents none of the students draw it as a node in their mental maps, but the reciprocal visibility generates a passive as well as active communication among the residents, which is also very auditory. The inner courtyard reverberates with sounds blending into the privacy of the rooms, but it is an anonymous clatter since the source is unknown. In Gasometer the private domesticity is extended into the common areas. It decreases the need for privacy in the room, which is also linked to a sense of ownership and freedom:

*Gasometer is very nice because it's not a normal Studentenheim, because there is no reception, and it's very free. You can do things without observation – Fiona, Gasometer*

To the contrary, the students in Tietgenkollegiet experience a high degree of control:

*The administration and fund that own the dorm takes away the ownership of it. It's rigid in the rules. You have to ask about everything – Ursula, Tietgenkollegiet*

As the privacy of the room is highly valued in Tietgenkollegiet, so high that social life is kept out of it, it could be related to the lack of ownership over the dormitory.

### 3.4.3 Ontological security in silent production

An important meaning of the home is as provider of ontological security and in housing research this is linked to the ownership of the home (Saunders, 1990, Dupuis and Thorns, 1998). Ontological security is essential for trusting in the coherence of everyday life, without which anxiety and chaos would be overwhelming (Giddens, 1991). Saunders made a large research on British home owners in comparison with renters, and found that “owners are more likely than tenants to express a sense of self and belonging through their houses, and that this difference is related to ownership rather than to the nature of the housing itself” (Saunders, 1990: 273), as was also the case in the study of Kenyon on student housing. But the students in Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet are not docile bodies in an institutional setting. They employ their own tactics, which bears to mind the writings of Michel de Certeau, where he connects the tactics of the reader to that of the pedestrian – or the renter. Readers, pedestrians and renters all move in the territory of someone else; of the author, the planner, the landlord. But they do not necessarily subvert to the strategies of the other. In silence they actively produce their own places:

*the activity of reading has on the contrary all the characteristics of a silent production [...] A different world (the reader's) slips into the author's place. This mutation makes the text habitable, like a*

*rented apartment. It transforms another person's property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient. Renters make comparable changes in an apartment they furnish with their acts and memories (De Certeau, 1984: xxi)*

The students furnish their rooms with acts and memories, such as Michael who has put up trunks from birch trees in his room in Tietgenkollegiet because he dreams of living in a forest and in this way invites nature as close in door as possible, even though the administration would not allow for it if they knew. In both dormitories the students decorate every free surface with personal emblems that makes no doubt of who inhabits it and that it is theirs.

Home decoration becomes increasingly important as an expression of self-identity, as seen in the explosion of magazines, television programs etc bearing witness to this interest (Cullens, 1999). Furniture warehouses like IKEA makes it possible to redecorate more often and for a larger part of the population with its cheap and well-designed products. The permanent furnishing is complemented and substituted by temporary design, which is highly valued as personal demonstrations of style. IKEA design matches dormitory living. Permanent changes are impossible but lifestyle expressions are essential. This is also highly recognized by Giddens:

*The reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives, takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems. In modern social life, the notion of lifestyle takes on a particular significance [...] lifestyle choice is increasingly important in the constitution of self-identity and daily activity. (Giddens, 1991: 5)*

Material continuity is not the defining feature of self-identity, such as it is found in certain research on home ownership. But lifestyle choices constitute





a self-narrative and are part of constructing a continuous biography (Giddens, 1991: 53). This is especially the case for young people (Miles, 2000: 28).

#### 3.4.4 Circular architecture and narrative self-identity

The circular architecture makes all rooms in Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet different in light and orientation, and it renders each room unique to the students. They are proud of the architecture and relate it to a reflection of themselves and of the community:

*I love the place. Who else can say I'm living in such a beautiful castle? – Agnes, Gasometer*

*If you live in a castle, you have to accept that people want to come and look at it [...] It's an icon building, that people who live here are proud of. Perhaps it's also an icon community – Michael, Tietgenkollegiet*

This is in line with research from Norway, where Judith Thomsen conducted a PhD study of contemporary Norwegian dormitories. She reached the conclusion that the limits in personalization emphasized the role the architecture played in identity formation for the students (Thomsen, 2007: 583-7). It has been claimed that modern identities are in crisis as they are de-centred from themselves as well as from society (Hall, 1992). Stuart Hall argues that the narrative self-identity, the story of the self, becomes increasingly important due to the process of de-centring of the subject in late-modern society (Hall, 1992: 293), which is consistent with the discussion above on lifestyles and self-identity in the work of Giddens. Hence, the story of living in Gasometer or Tietgenkollegiet is identity forming for the students by belonging to a community framed by an iconic architecture. The dormitories are significant for the formation of self-identity, as well as the communication of a social-identity towards the surrounding society.

### Conclusion to PART 3: INTERIORS

The comparison to research on contemporary student housing and housing research in general shows how the iconic dormitory takes other categories than traditional ones to explain the home meaning it conveys to the students. Next to the appreciation of the unique architectural qualities and facilities, the students perceived the dormitory community as central to this. The social life is elemental in a dormitory new as old. In this way the iconic dormitory cultivates both universal values and contemporaneous ideas: the communal life and contemplative cell of the room, but also the individual freedom and lifestyles. In analysing the communities it became clear that they are not structured as a family even though the students name it as such, but they allow each student to exist as an individual. It led to the conclusion that the communities are narrative and the strong imagery of the circular architecture is part of the tale. Spatially, the dormitories are heterogeneous and so is it the case socially. Not only is it forming for young people to live on one's own, but it is schooling to learn how to live along closely together with others. The young dormitories are not bound by traditions but by meanings and conventions negotiated in the student body, where each student must actively take responsibility and participate in order to belong. I described the communities as *Gemeinschaften*, a concept in which a contrast to urban society is inherent. The next part of the thesis will analyse this relation further.

# PART 4: EXTERIORS

## Introduction

So far, the thesis has established the close interaction between developments in urban space and the domestic realm and how the delimitations of public and private cross through the home, as it does the dormitory and the city. These developments have affected the way students lived in private as well as in public, and the influence is even greater in the globalized world of today. PART 4 will look at the interrelations between the dormitories and their surroundings, the architecture as experienced in PART 2 and the social life as described in PART 3. First I will analyse the significance of the city in the life of students. Then I will explore how they perceive their neighbourhoods and what this emplacement means to the dormitory community. This leads to a discussion on student culture. Finally I will discuss the significance of the architecture in its socio-spatial context, relating it to the other parts of my thesis: history, interiors and exteriors.

### 4.1 The iconic dormitory in the city

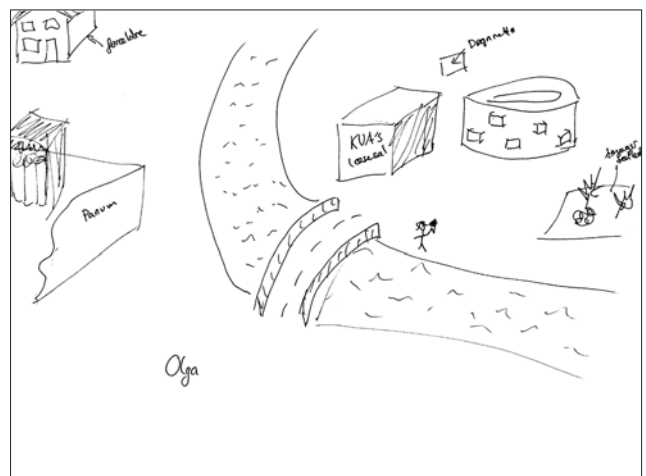
From the dawn of the university the city has been an attraction in the life of students. In Tönnies' analysis of late nineteenth century urban development, he writes about the pressure it puts on the *Gemeinschaft*:

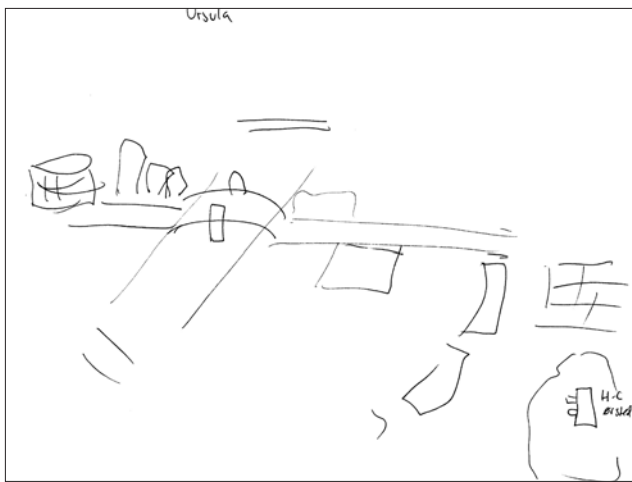
*there are only few who will confine their energies within such a narrow circle [Gemeinschaft, or the circular dormitory]; all are attracted outside by business, interests and pleasures, and thus separated from one another. (Tönnies, 1887: 21)*

All students describe the city as related to fun, to go out, meet friends as well as to go to the university. However, when the students are questioned further, it becomes clear that the dormitory *Gemeinschaft* is experienced as contrasted by the *Gesellschaft*. As Fiona says:

*I like the privacy when you move in the city; you don't know the other people. In my village you know everyone, you always meet someone. In Vienna you can be on your own [...] Gasometer is my little village in Vienna – Fiona, Gasometer*

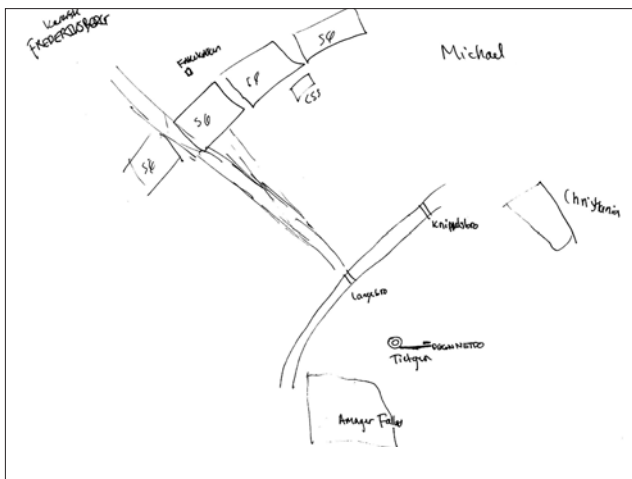
There is an attraction of the city in Fiona's statement. It gives the privacy that is not found in the village-like dormitory in Gasometer. But it also shows a longing for the *Gemeinschaft* in the midst of the urban anonymity. The dormitory community is not only contrasted socially to the city, also spatially. By analysing the mental maps drawn by the students, Vienna and Copenhagen appear fragmented in their imagery. The dormitories are drawn like islands in the cityscape. In Copenhagen Tietgenkollegiet is literally located on an island, and the students draw a clear border through their image.





The harbour is the edge for the bicycling young people (Ursula, Olga, Michael), while the students who move underground by metro simply draw a line through their maps (Frederik, Klaus, Veronica).

Gasometer is also perceived as separated yet more connected to Vienna as the path of the U-bahn binds the two locales together. Whereas the Copenhagen students draw a path signalling the walk to reach the metro station, the U-bahn almost begins inside the dormitory.



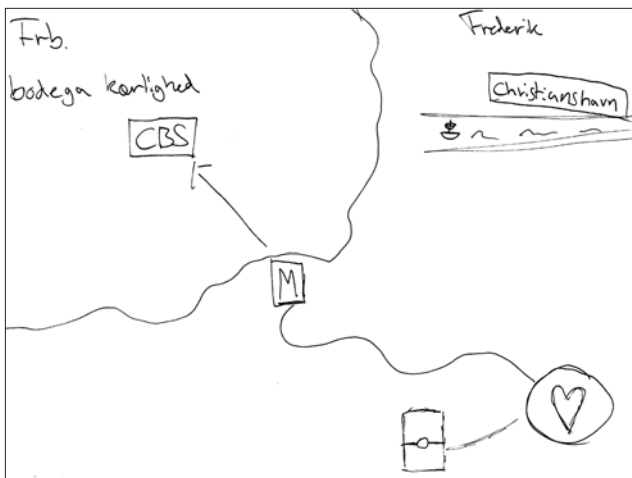
However, both dormitories are experienced as remote in the cities. As Ursula tells, the city is where the fun is but it is too far away:

*The bike ride to the city is so boring. Moving past Langebro and Rådhuspladsen. There's a long way until you get somewhere fun. It's too long to go somewhere just for drinking a coffee – Ursula, Tietgenkollegiet*

The reverse is also experienced, especially in Gasometer:

*Who's going to the Gasometer station and walking for hours to the Gasometer B to have a coffee? – Agnes, Gasometer*

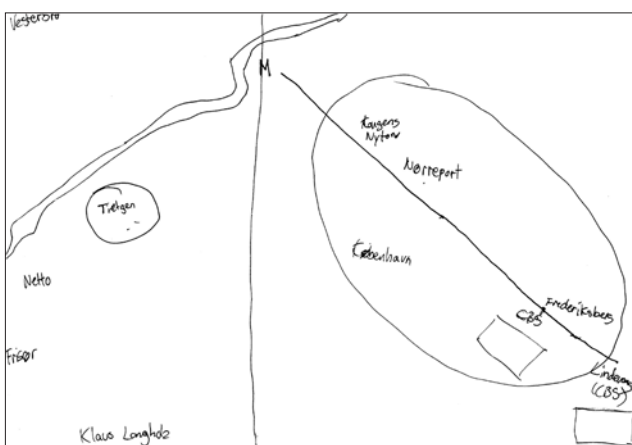
The answer is no one but the students living there.



#### 4.1.1 Islandization

My findings in the interviews of students and the mental maps they draw correspond to recent research on youth culture. Sociologists have argued that an increasing 'islandization' of young people is taking place in European cities because they are marginalized in public spaces, as captured in the concept of *Eigenwelt* of Imbke Behnken (Dienel and Schophaus, 2005: 118). Some students have this experience due to the dominance of spaces of consumption:

*Going out and using the city is really limited, because everything is here, and it's inexpensive.*





*It's mainly a money issue – Max, Gasometer*

*I sometimes go to Vienna to go out but it's expensive to go with the U-bahn, so sometimes I just stay here – Gabriela, Gasometer*

The dormitories are an *Eigenwelt* for the students, cities within the city, indicating the double motion present in both dormitories: it opens a world up for the individual in terms of the dormitory community while at the same time closing it off from the city. Youth culture has been described as counter cultural where 'islandization' also is central in appropriating places and reacting to the dominant culture of the society. In the next chapter I will analyze the ways the students appropriate the primary locale of the dormitories.

## 4.2 Young people in young dormitories in young neighbourhoods

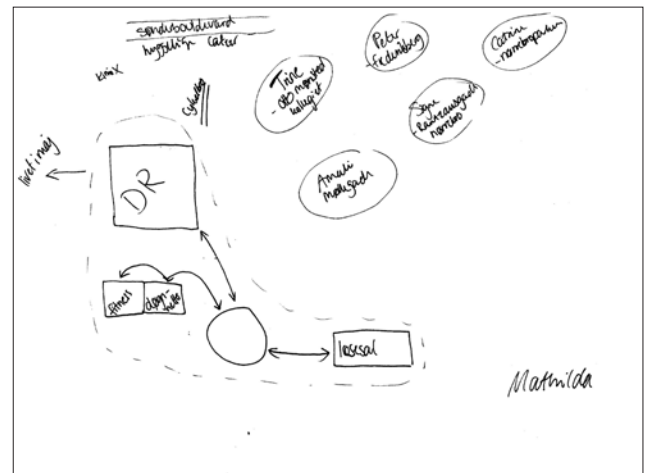
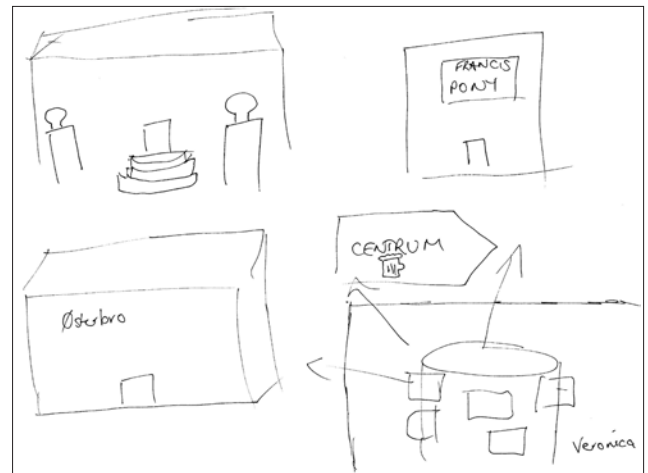
When drawing the cities, the students in Vienna draw nothing around the Gasometers, but the circular buildings alone. The Gasometers are their neighbourhood.

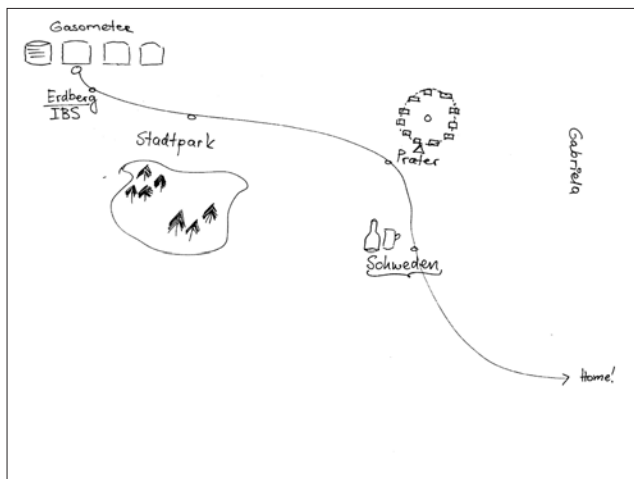
The Copenhagen students have different impressions of their locale dependent on whether they use the spots around. The one student interviewed who studies at KUA, also depicts the university and the library on the dormitory island in her drawing (Mathilda).

The islandization is apparent and Ørestad does not figure on any of the drawings. As the students say, when asked:

*It's bit like an island here, not really connected to the city [...] I don't know what happens out in Ørestad, it's just a place where people live – Ursula, Tietgenkollegiet*

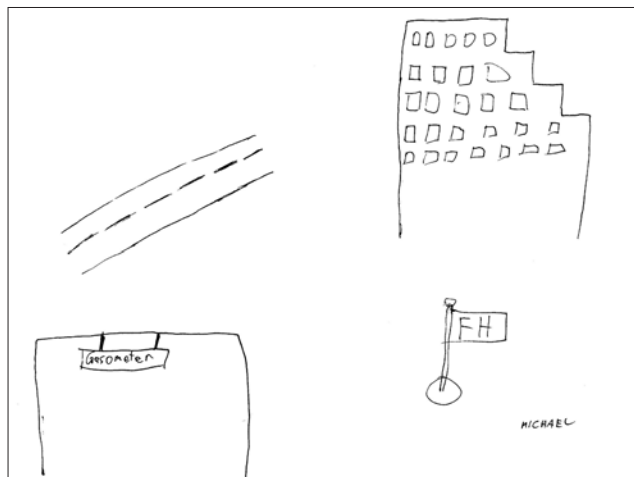
*There's no life, no cafés here. It's not very urban with all the green areas and water. It's an island. I really wouldn't know what to do out here – Klaus, Tietgenkollegiet*





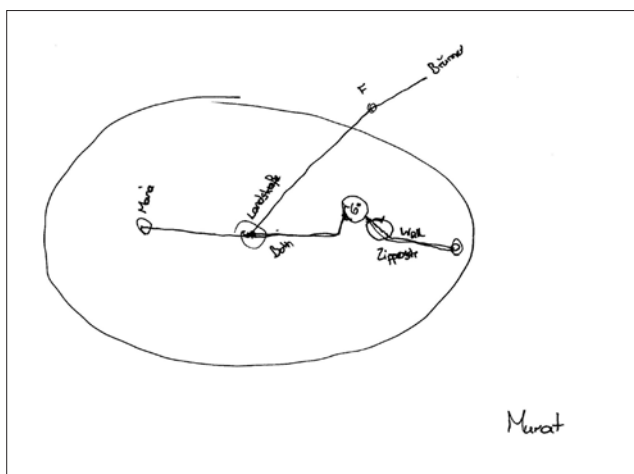
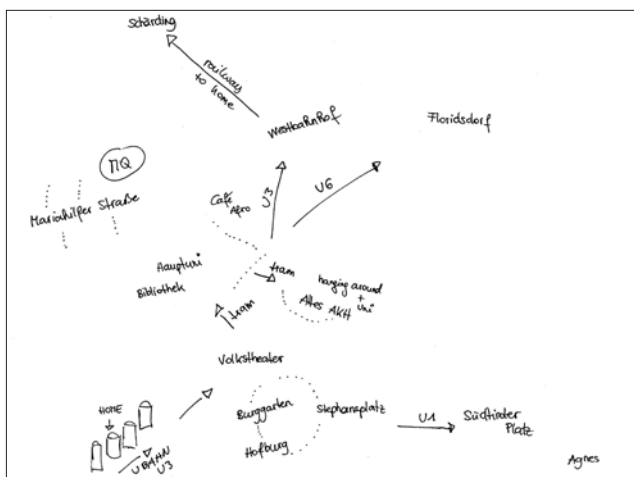
*It's a very dead neighbourhood, nice architecture everywhere, but no city life [...] I do nothing here besides going to uni and being at the dorm, I don't know what else I would do here – Mathilda, Tietgenkollegiet*

The students do not feel an attachment to the neighbourhood they live in; they only live in the dormitories. The neighbourhoods are not perceived as urban and thus not attractive as the city:



*Because of the ugly, industrial environment, you have the impression that you live in the suburbs, not in the city. You have the impression that no one lives here except from the students in the dormitory. Camille, Gasometer*

The students wish for cafés and lively streets but there are no spaces for flâneuring around them and thus not an urban exterior to feel at home in. Studies have shown that student housing can contribute positively to local communities with both cultural and economic activity (Macintyre, 2003), and neighbourhoods with a large student population have been labelled “gentrification factories” because the process of gentrification is initiated through a ‘studentification’ (Smith, 2005). My research does not look at impacts on this level, as it is the perception of the students I have analysed, but it is interesting how dormitory and locality interact in my cases. The bourgeois home emerged as reaction to the modern city, which Sitte criticized for the rational planning in contrast to the ancient cities that developed *in natura* and where people could feel at home in public. His critique still appears to be relevant in the cases of Ørestad and Erdberger Mais, and the effect is reciprocal; the absent urban life of the neighbourhoods and the experienced alienation of the dormitory makes the interiors more important and enhance the community, which in turn weakens the new urban developments.



### 4.3 Student culture and society

The dormitories are not sealed off from the city. They are viewed as castles by the students but the drawbridge is always down. Tietgenkollegiet is intended as a public space with concerts in the courtyard and other cultural activities that invites the neighbours inside. Gasometer B houses a concert hall in its core and from this fall also a music academy. All architecture is characterized by fine openings and closures, but in the dormitories they are of a complex nature. In Gasometer the architectural analysis showed the discordance between the historic facade towards the exteriors and the interior structure housing the students. The public-private divisions of the interiors were experienced as a blur by the students as domesticity was extended beyond the walls of the rooms and even of the dormitory.

The largest contrast in the architecture of Tietgenkollegiet was between the convex surface and the concave space within. The distinction between public-private was very clear in the image of the students of the interiors. On an exterior level, the dormitories appear open to the public, but as shown in both architecture and social life it is an illusion of access. The dormitory community is a socio-spatial world of its own, and the citizens of it are more citizens of their dormitory-city than of their cities. The dormitories thus never become truly public places as intended either because the access is controlled by consumption (Gasometer) or because the apparent community within imposes itself on the spectator, who comes to feel as an intruder in the *panopticon* of the circular dormitory (Tietgenkollegiet). As Michael has observed:

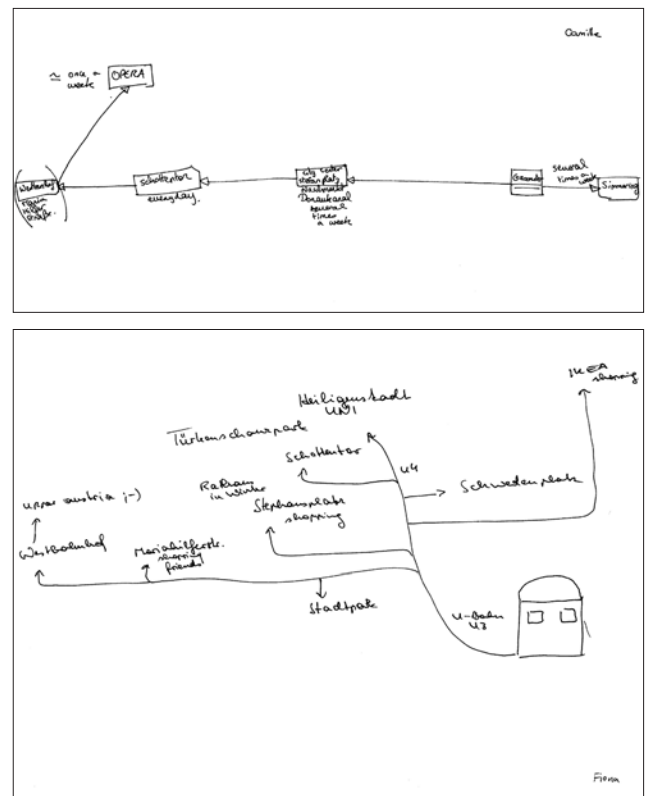
*When people come here to look, they feel they cross some sort of boundary stepping in here, they don't really know if it's OK to go in or not – Michael, Tietgenkollegiet*

One of the main problems in creating a coherent neighbourhood community lies in the difference of lifestyles between students and residents, as also observed by Kenyon in a study of the university town Sunderland in the UK (Kenyon, 1997). Historically the town-gown relationship has been alive with conflicts. From the perspective of the students, they are aware that their lifestyle at times clashes with their neighbours, but it is not a divergence they necessarily want to take into consideration:

*I think it was a mistake to build normal dwellings for families here because they complaint about the noise from the dorm – Frederik, Tietgenkollegiet*

*The other people living here complaint, but you don't know who complaint, which window. When you hear something, you don't know from where it comes – Agnes, Gasometer*

As Frederik says, it was a mistake of the planners to place families in the vicinity of the dorm, implying that the students are not mistaken in their lifestyle. Or as Agnes tells, the acoustic anonymity makes it easier





to ignore that someone complains in the Gasometer. They do not perceive themselves as being part of a neighbourhood community; rather they are their own special community within it. As Klaus states:

*My neighbourhood is the 400 other students who live in the circle – Klaus, Tietgenkollegiet*

The locales of the two dormitories are young and thus in transition, which is a parallel to the life phase of the students. Transitory urban places, such as de-industrialized areas, have during the twentieth century been important sites for manifestation and creation of youth culture (Dienel and Schophaus, 2005: 117). Ørestad and Erdberger Mais present such possibilities for the students, yet they do not use them. The counterculture of the students takes place within the walls of their dormitory, and only resonates in the surroundings. It is a silent production of student culture, in line with their tactics of appropriating the interiors.

#### 4.3.1 The life of students

In contrast to current occupy-movements and other contemporary youth cultures of socio-political critique the student culture is non-manifesting. This distinction can be enlightened by Walter Benjamin's text on "Das Leben der Studenten" which he wrote just before the outbreak of the First World War. As part of a longer critique of the lack of learning community and critical reflection among German students, Benjamin writes:

*Das Deutsche Studententum ist, bald mehr bald minder, von der Idee besessen, es müsse seine Jugend genießen. Jene ganz irrationale Wartezeit auf Amt und Ehe mußte irgendeinen Inhalt aus sich herausgebären [...] Weil man dem Bürgertum die Seele verkauft hat, samt Beruf und Ehe, hält man streng auf jene paar Jahre bürgerlicher Freiheiten. Dieser Tausch wird im Namen der Jugend eingegangen. Offen oder heimlich – auf der Kneipe oder in betäubenden Versamlungsreden wird der teuer erkaufte Rausch erzeugt, der ungestört bleiben soll. Es ist das Bewußtsein verspielter Jugend und verkauften Alters, da nach Ruhe dürstet, und an ihm sind die Versuche der Beseelung des Studententums zuletzt gescheitert. (Benjamin, 1914/1915: 85)*

Benjamin draws a highly critical and glooming image of a pre-war youth and society. It shows how student life can be understood as an exception to society which is allowed because it is already embedded in the bourgeois values and upholds the core societal institutions. As opposed to other youth cultures, student culture does not need to be manifesting since it is already accepted by society, as the price for the "soul" of the student which is the duties he will perform as a true citizen upon graduation. The students in my cases have been given iconic dormitories to live in that just by the architecture demonstrate the place of students in contemporary society. The dormitories are exceptional in their circularity. Particularly Tietgenkollegiet, which in its circular shape does not conform to any planning regulations of the rectangular north-south facing landscape. The dormitory is the manifestation of the students and it is the island they inhabit in the city.

#### 4.4 The circular dormitory and its signifieds

This last chapter will round off the analysis of Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet by summing up and discussing the circular architecture in relation to the four parts of the thesis. From a historical understanding of

architecture as relating to developments in society in PART 1, to an everyday life perspective in PART 2 and PART 3, the understanding of architecture is further broadened in this chapter by interpreting it as signs and symbols. First the semiology of architecture will be explained by the theory of Umberto Eco and Roland Barthes. Then the meaning of the dormitory architecture will be discussed in three sections relating to the history, interiors and exteriors.

In PART 2 it was discussed how architecture traditionally is presented visually, but primarily experienced in everyday life's habitual use, as shown in the works of Benjamin and Rasmussen. As Umberto Eco observes architecture also functions in symbolic ways, it is communicative (Eco, 1973). Architecture as communication is embedded in everyday life, since meanings, signs and symbols are inattentively passed on from object to subject, or from subject to subject. Eco gives the example of the cave, an image I already touched upon briefly. A cave denotes the function of a shelter, but at the same time it has a variety of connotations attached to it; ideas of family, security etc. Whether the cave is inhabited and its function as shelter is used or not, or even if the cave only existed as an image, it would still connote these ideas (Eco, 1973: 183). The cave becomes a sign full of meaning beyond being a cave. The cave as sign is recognizable for people who share the same cultural context, or in Eco's words the same semiotic framework, and is used to share meanings, cultural codes and values in an everyday context. In the same way, architecture is communicative, it is a sign that conveys meanings, hence a signifier. But the meanings attached to architecture, the signifieds, are transient and plural (Barthes, 1967: 169). Roland Barthes gives the example of the Eiffel Tower:

*The Tower attracts meaning the way a lightning rod attracts thunderbolts; for all lovers of signification, it plays a glamorous part, that of a pure signifier, i.e. of a form in which men unceasingly put meaning (which they extract at will from their knowledge, their dreams, their history), without this meaning thereby ever being finite and fixed: who can say what the Tower will be for humanity tomorrow? But there can be no doubt that it will always be something [...] something other than something much more than the Eiffel Tower (Barthes, 1964: 173)*

The Eiffel Tower is in Kevin Lynch's terminology a landmark, perhaps in this case the landmark above all landmarks, as it stands as the universal symbol of Paris. It is a pure signifier and thereby it has a variety of meanings which must be decoded within the context of their creation. Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet are less universal in their symbolic communication and their signifieds are deciphered in the next sections.

#### **4.4.1 History**

The circular dormitories in my two cases combine features of both the monumental dormitory of monastic origin and the mass-dormitory of modernist ideas. They are monumental in their overarching convexity, but democratic in their circularity. They diverge from the hierarchical medieval dormitory by conveying a horizontal impression instead of a vertical, and each of the rooms is equally centred according to the others. The democratic monumentality of the circular dormitories implies that there is no front side or back side. There is only an outside and an inside, reflecting the double reference of the contemporary dormitory: to the student community as an exception to society, which at the same time is written into the very structure of it by forming part of the planning of the neighbourhoods. The village-like enclosure of the circular dormitory conveys a longing for home and community, similar to the general urge for homeliness in a globalized world. But the openness of the exterior expresses individualism, like *Jugendstil* according to

Benjamin, where the façade comes to represent the subjectivity of the inhabitant. The façade is etymologically understood as the face of a building, from the Latin *facies* (Fleischer, 2007: 128). Hereby the circular dormitories diverge from the mass-dormitory, which in its modernist equalitarian principles only showed a blank face to the surroundings.

Both dormitories are placed outside the city centres, just as the universities have moved from their initial placement in the urban core. The architecture of the dormitories reflects that this movement is not to be understood as a degradation of neither dormitory nor university. Rather the dormitories stand as symbols for the importance of students and universities in the knowledge society. In the age of digital technologies and distance learning the university moves towards a placelessness. Nevertheless, the universities of Vienna and Copenhagen represent their cities not only by carrying their name, but also by consolidating this significance spatially as it is anchored in the homes of the students; the iconic dormitories. The iconic architecture, accentuated by its circularity and prestigious architects employed in the design, show how investing in students is considered worthwhile.

#### 4.4.2 Interiors

Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet share the circular architecture but as discussed throughout the thesis they are two very different projects whereby the impact of the architecture on the student life differs. However, the signifieds of the dormitories are very alike in the imagery of the students. The circular architecture stands as a symbol of the community, while framing the individual life lived within it. The architecture forms part of the narrative of living in the dormitories, and the circular shape is so central in this communication that it becomes a foundational myth for the communities. Several students describe the architecture in fairytale-terms, as a castle, a kingdom, emphasizing the uncommon circular shape. The folklore narrative embedded in a fairytale can be associated with the *Gemeinschaft* character of the community and the utopian character of the architecture as secluded from the real world. A fairytale is pre-modern, like the *Gemeinschaft*, and thereby hints at the students' desire for close social bonds in their home environment. The fairytale connotes the *fantastic* elements of the architecture and thereby expresses the happiness most students feel about their dormitory. Living in a circular building is not necessarily functional as the walls are uneven and the light inflow is limited, but the students express a satisfaction and pride in their castles. Finally, fairytales are rites of passage that in the dormitory tale take the protagonist, the student, from childhood to adulthood. The dormitory living is a coming-of-age and educating for the student's formation of identity as an individual and as a member of society. The architecture is experienced as inspiring, as Michael tells:

*I like the idea that you in your years of study live inspiringly. You win a lot by throwing inspiring experiences after people in our age. It shapes our perception of the world – Michael, Tietgenkollegiet*

Student life is a mosaic of academic challenges, individual development and friendships and the centrifugal power of the circle keeps it all together.

#### 4.4.3 Exteriors

The circular architecture is even more central when the students relate their dormitory to the exteriors. In

their mental maps the circle is very noticeable. All students draw Tietgenkollegiet as a circle in the mental map over the city, whereas only two of them used the circle in the mental map of the dormitory alone. For Gasometer the students identifying with the community also draw the dormitory as circular. The circularity is significant for the students in communicating their community as well as their personal social-identity to the surroundings.

For the neighbourhood and city, the circular dormitories are important in establishing an urban imaginary in a new development. Gasometer has been a symbol in Vienna of industrial heritage for more than a century, and thus hard to relate to ideas of city life as industry at all times has been peripheral to the city. Placing a dormitory inside the Gasometers transforms the meaning of industry as peripheral into ideas of young urban living. It connotes dreams of loft apartments in converted warehouses in hip bohemian neighbourhoods. The image is still far from the reality in Erdberger Mais, but it is powerful and the place has the potential.

Ørestad is a city without a memory. In its spatial planning it articulates references to older parts of Copenhagen, Frederiksstad, but the reference is not enough for bringing inner city culture to a new place. However, placing a dormitory, which was traditionally part of the medieval urban form, in a new development is a strong narrative of urban life, as it is associated with the lifestyle of young people. The iconic circular architecture of Tietgenkollegiet and its success in creating a lively student community are known in the Copenhagen imaginary. And as Tietgenkollegiet stands as a symbol of Ørestad, the success of it might spill over to the neighbourhood in time.

## Conclusion to PART 4: EXTERIORS

Dormitory and city are paralleled in their socio-spatial heterogeneity but where the city is an uncloistered heterogeneity (Bender, 1988: 290) the dormitory is a cloistered heterogeneity. Tietgenkollegiet and Studentenheim Gasometer are islands in the cities. The community was experienced as heterogeneous in the analysis of the interiors, but when opposed to the exteriors the student culture appears homogeneous. This is symbolised in the circular architecture enclosing the dormitories from the city and keeping the internal divisions together. The circular architecture is an exception in the city scape, resembling the exception that students form in society.





# CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

In four parts the thesis has analysed and discussed contemporary dormitories. The analysis demonstrated the importance of the dormitory as the student's home, reflecting at once an ontological need for a private space and personal freedom, and a need for belonging to a community. The iconic circular dormitories are experienced as highly valued frames for both needs and the unique architecture is seen as an expression of the personal and social identity of the students.

The circular architecture accentuates that the dormitories are socio-spatial worlds of their own which are easily secluded from rest of society. Gasometer and Tietgenkollegiet are experienced as islands within the city. This experience seems to arise from the students' experience of the peri-urban locations of the buildings. The dormitories are young and so are their neighbourhoods. It takes time to build up a community, and both dormitories and neighbourhoods are taking their first tentative steps to establish conventions and ties to form a base for a local culture. Tietgenkollegiet and Gasometer are central landmarks to their surroundings. This is significant in establishing the interrelations between city and students, as they meet each other in the dormitory as an icon.

Scholars have argued that contemporary society suffers from a demise of citizenship as private and public blurs in the mass-mediated spaces of city and home. Student life was described as an exception to society, which has its roots in the history of the university and dormitory. The exceptional status of student life is broadly accepted in society. Dormitory living is a temporal exception in between childhood home and adult home, but the good dormitory is experienced as a meaningful one that plays an active part in the personal formation of the student. Living in a dormitory is about learning to take responsibility as a citizen and participate in the dormitory community in order to belong, and this experience is preparatory for young people to take part in society.

On this background, it is important to consider the architecture of student housing and the kinds of student cultures it is desirable to encourage in the way dormitories are built. The thesis has looked at iconic dormitories in two European cities and how student culture as habitual everyday life takes form in this context. But culture is also a question of cultivation and critical self-reflection. The student home must be taken serious in a nuanced political debate on higher education as it forms part of the civil schooling and spiritual formation of the student. This task also falls upon the students themselves, who must contemplate on and discuss the kinds of student cultures and communities they wish to form in their university and home environments.

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# Thematic guideline for interviews of students (Vienna example)

1. Introduction of the interviewee: personal information (age, gender, origin, field of study)

## 2. INTERIORS:

2.1. Why did you choose to live in the Gasometer Studentenheim?

2.2. For how long have you lived here, and how long are you planning to stay?

2.3. What do you think about your dormitory? What do you like? Dislike?

2.4. MENTAL MAP: visualize the Gasometer and your everyday life here. Draw a mental map of the Gasometer (the important places, detailed description of movement through the building(s))

2.4.1. How do you move around in the building, to and from your room?

2.4.2. Where do you spend the most of your time when you're here?

2.4.3. Do you use some of the dorm facilities, like the bar, gym, sauna..? How often?

2.4.4. What spaces are the most important to you?

2.5. How do you experience the social life with the other inhabitants of the dormitory?

2.6. What do you think about your room? Likes / dislikes? (privacy, interior design, views, furniture)

2.7. How do you experience your kitchen? Do you have dinners together with the others you live with? Do you, or the others you live with, have friends over, who spend time in the kitchen?

2.8. Do you feel at home here? What makes you feel that way?

## 3. EXTERIORS:

3.1. What do you think about the architecture of the Gasometer? The exterior of the building (the historical part) as well as the interior.

3.2. Do you think there is a relation between the architecture and the social life of the dormitory?

3.3. What do you think of your neighborhood? Do you use the facilities that are around here (cinema, supermarket, shops)? How often?

3.4. How do you see the relation between your dormitory and the city? How often do you go to the city center, or some of the other districts? Where do you go and why?

3.5. MENTAL MAP of VIENNA: visualize Vienna and the places you find are important in your everyday life, the routes you take from your home to the places you go in the city (university, friends, and other places you use?). Would you draw a map over Vienna, where you show the most important places for you and the way you move around to get there?

3.6. Do you feel at home in Vienna? What makes you feel that way?

4. THE ROOM: Would you show me your room: what are the most important things in your room? Where are they from? PHOTOGRAPHY



## Interviews

The following are notes and quotes from the interviews. Interviews in Vienna were conducted during March 2012, interviews in Copenhagen during June 2012.

NOTE on interviews: the students in Vienna were interviewed in English and the Danish-speaking students in Danish. It is thus my translation of their answers. And a remark for future interviews on perceptions of home; as it is a very personal field and difficult, especially for young people, to articulate in a foreign language, I will recommend conducting interviews on home-meanings in the mother tongue of the interviewees.

Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Max From France/ Berlin/Vienna, architecture student, 6 years in Gas- ometer and Site F	That you live in an apartment that you can share with friends, or strangers that become friends – but it depends a lot on the people.	Normal room is small, not really for entertaining people. Furnished like a prison	W/G is central, depends very much on the people you live, with, if they wish to participate, then it can be a really good community. Girlfriend moved in here with 3 friends, so they share a flat together.	The bar is very important. 50-100 people who participate in creating social life. Heimvertretung – Max is the leader. Gasometer is less sociable than Site F: same structure with units, but more sociable btw the apartments – Gaso = bunker architecture. It is only the bar that keeps up the social life. In site F, with the traditional dormitory hallways, it is a popular spot, to see people. Also there is a rooftop terrace, that is used every night in the summer, also by the Gasometer students	Yes, especially because of the bar and the rehearsal room and the social life – especially in the summer, where the gasometer people also come to Site F, to grill and hang out on the rooftop terrace.	Bunkery architecture: reluctant to stop and talk. Halls, no light, they all look the same, colors on doors – when outside only about getting in through the door. “Is it the best you could have done?” Got a lot of surface area, which is money and popular for the people who payed, but not for the people who live there. that actually you don’t need to leave.	Shopping mall is a complete fail, with shops closing and not the great shops that stay (spar, mcdonalds), but everything is so nearby.	U-bahn central, because its located in the industrial periphery of Vienna. But going out and use the city is limited, because everything is here, and its inexpensive. Mainly a money issue	

Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Michael 24, from Burgenland, studies computer science, 1½ years in G. (2.3.25)	Needed place to stay. Hadn't heard about it before. Room: sucks, gets dirty It's quite cool. You've got almost everything you need just downstairs [...]. I'm not here that often or that long. I'm just here for eating, sleeping, showering.”	Everything you need, but in fact he doesn't use it very much: draws doors to elevator, front door (die ombres – agnes idea).	He isn't there when the others are home. Share cigarettes sometimes.	Is not there very often, only meet people randomly. Only for eating, sleeping, showering. Not in bar for ½ year, since he started working full time (not really a student anymore (tired when get home, and has friends he sees in other places.)	Lived there for long, know each other well, fun. Parents place = primary home = lived there 22 years. My new flat will become my primary home. “I've lived in a WG for almost 5 years now, but a little bit of more room for myself would be nice”	Really cool, because it looks really massive. Downside = usually no sunlight, only when reflected from the outside. I definitely like the architecture. Everyone knows the Gasometers.	Nothing around here, no bars. Outside the Gasometers there not really that much interesting. A lot of companies are here, but almost no people living here, except from in the gasometers. Inside: the people who work here are here in the day. Concert= people, otherwise no.	City: not often – because work at airport. Underground is important, because there is nothing around here. If you want to do something funny you have to go somewhere else.	

Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Camille 20, from France, studies French and English literature, 1 month in Gaso (1 semester in Vienna) (2.3.11)	By University	No natural light in the flat, no window in the common room. The apartment is well maintained, my flatmates are nice. I like the atmosphere. Its quiet, not too noisy. Room is nice, bigger than other dormitory room she has had. Two large windows.	Spend quite a lot of time in the kitchen – to cook, talk to roommates, hang out – main place for social life “We have very different schedules, so we don't cook together or eat together, it would be too much constraint.” Once she invited everyone for French crepes. Hasn't tried the other dormitory facilities yet, like bar or fitnessroom, so mainly stays within her own room/unit.	Not much contact. The launderette was a good way to create social life – the washing machine wasn't working so she talked to a lot of people to get help. Murat invited her to the bar on the first night but she was too tired. She has seen posters for drinking games etc – but she doesn't drink so much, but she doesn't feel like going. She doesn't feel she had the occasion. Doesn't know any others here, than the two she lives with.	“It's a pleasant place to live. If I had a very hard day, I would just come here and its safe and quiet and I live with friendly people. Feeling at home is linked with a good atmosphere.” Not special objects needed to feel at home. Meaning of home: security, friends.	I was really surprised, I found it beautiful and strange – the big clock gave an impression of a film by Tim Burton. Good impression about the architecture, but I was a bit disappointed that it was changed into commercial center – they could have done something less commercial. Its very special to live in this building.	I was really disappointed by the environment, it is so ugly, just an industrial area – I was just thinking; I won't do anything in this district. There is nothing for people, just factories.” Compares it to further out in simmering – where there's life, shops and restaurants.	Easy to get to the city, well connected. “Because of the ugly, industrial environment, you have the impression that you live in the suburbs, not in the city. You have the impression that no one lives here except from the students in the dormitory.” Likes the city, to see different sights in the center, discover streets, buildings, go to the opera, several times per week. Goes out of the dorm every day.	



Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Agnes 20, from Upper Austria, studies communication technologies, 1½ year in G. (2.3.25)	Have your own flat, 4 people together, each have a room and share a kitchen. A lot of dormitories are with single or double rooms and a shared kitchen with the floor. Here you have your own flat. Everything you want.	Not much sunlight. Everything else perfect. The windows – social life – music and cigarettes in the window. The other people living here complaint, but you don't know who complaint, which window. When you hear something, you don't know from where it comes. The room is small and cosy, feels homey. The lack of sunlight = the circle takes away the feeling of daytime, where you don't realize what time it is on the day, because you're deprived of the sun.	Family norms from home = different btw the inhabitants, whether they had these traditions at parental home. Different schedules, come and go at different times. When they're here together, they eat together, but only spontaneously. Fiona is really family-family, she's like the mum here. I was never used to have dinners at my home, but she wanted to eat together every day. It was really difficult. Now we just do it spontaneously, but it's not so often. Hearing each other – it's okay because	"It's like a little family here. The longer you live here the more people you know, the more cosier it gets. Everything is here" "I love the place. Who can say I'm living in such a beautiful castle?" It depends on the people how long she will stay. "it could be a world war outside, but in here I'm not afraid of anything. It's like a bunker – in the war, where you're safe. Bar keeper. Very homey to go there, in slippers. Meet at the washing = new people, who don't know how things work. Table	Wanted to move away from home: own flat, own life. "My first own flat" "I'm really feeling like coming home when I go in here". When were going by car to Vienna, and going down from the highway: my home! You just see the towers, you go in, and ah: they are here. Coming in and open the window and shout out "im home". People she knows. I don't feel connected anymore to my parents home, the connection is here. When I'm home for 3-4 days I miss my	Impressed. Like a castle. Excursion with school to the gasometers 5 years ago: who the fuck is living here!? And 5 years later im living here! Walk behind the gasometers it is like 100 years ago, with the bricks and the church behind. The circle is difficult to break out from. You all in common, you all have the same view. You feel like running in a circle (when drunk and difficult to find the right door). Feeling free and being enclosed in the same time. Dif people get together in the circle: children	Site F, the other dorm – terrace and social life with the other students. The shops closing down in the 1½ years Agnes lived there: "whos going to the Gasometer station and walking for hours to the gasometer b to have a coffee?"	Want to discover the city as well. Keep it 50 /50 when meeting friends: in Gaso and city. Uni in city, so go there a lot. Good connection with ubahn = fast to be in the city. U3 is the best line. Hometown = It's like going on holidays, on weekend. Want to go back to home, to Vienna. When im talking from my home, im talking about Vienna. When my mum ask "when are you going to Vienna?" I say, I'm going home" Every day she meets someone from her hometown.	The importance of the bar. Place where you can be as you want to. Privacy: do you feel you have a lot of privacy? Yeah, kind of... "We have the curtains, normally they're always up. If someone wants to see me he can see me. If im naked okay – who hasn't seen a naked woman before? I don't care. Its strange – the clubraum, where people are playing billiard they just know what I'm doing. If I just want to be alone, I just put them down. You have your own room every-one, so I think



Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Fiona 20, from Upper Austria, studies biotechnology, 1½ years in G. (2.3.25)	I wanted to move with Agnes to the big city. We wanted to party. "Gasometer is very nice because its not a normal studentenheim, because there is no reception, and it's very free. You can do things without observation"	Multicultural, free, meet people (bar, Doesn't like: there are no windows to the outside, there is no light from the sun, and sometimes its very dark, when you get up in the morning. Bar = twice a week. Site F: you can walk inside all the way. Room: whitened the wall (because it was dirty) bought furniture, so she really likes it. I like that people before me lived in here. Everything is a bit used, it is a nice touch – in erdberg everything is a bit sterile.	Our kitchen is a place where we meet, and we talk a lot in the kitchen, sitting around, talking, laughing. Very comfortable. Sometimes dinners together, but it's a bit difficult because everyone have different times for coming home. Friends over = sit in the kitchen.	Strong community, also because I work in the bar. A group of people, but very easy to get into.	I will stay another year. Then I want to have my own flat. Buy things, furniture, have my own style! Feels at home here because of Agnes and ombrino. The atmosphere here. Once a month in parents place, but im more at home here than in upper Austria. It's like holidays when I go there. My room at home is very beautiful, but there is not that connection to it as here.	I like the shield, other say no that's, they don't like it at all. I think it pushes the modern sense of the gasometers. I like the old parts, it has an old an-tique touch, its very nice here. People are impressed, and want to know how it functions, cause its round, so how to the flats look – I say: like a normal flat, but the walls are a bit uneven. Everything is a bit uneven.	Everything exist here. You have got a pharmacy, doctor, everything is in here. You don't even have to go out, you could live the whole year in here. But I need to see the city and to go out. It gets too cramped (beängt einen, die decke fällt einen auf dem kopf). Thoughts of own flat, in the city, drive in the tram and see the old city. Live somewhere that is not so industrial. Here everywhere there is car shops and big companies,	Yes feel at home in Vienna. The parks. I live her and I have chosen this big city for me to live in. I like the privacy when you move in the city, you don't know the other people. In my village you know everyone, you always meet someone. In Vienna you can be on your own. Gasometer is my home, but it is not extended to the whole city. "Gasometer is my little village in Vienna"	You have to take care that nobody looks into your flat, that's really – dangerous. But its nice to look out of the window and to see other people, working or dancing, or what they are doing. It looks very nice at night, when the lights are on in the flats, I like it. The circular architecture = you meet people more often

Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Murat 20, from Istanbul, Turkey, studies business administration, 2 years in G. (2.3.11)	Heard from friend that Gasometer was nice, and that it was easy to get a room. The difference with the Gasometer and other dormitories, that it's very independent dormitories, with little control. Where you live, defines you.	The combination of that were living in a mall, where there's restaurants, shopping and everything, and the transportation. The u-bahn is running right underneath us. The control is not strict enough. Some people misuse this place. Dirt, drugs etc. "I never lock my door, I sometimes leave it open to go to the washing machine" Wallpanels, and shelves = really nice, but the other furniture he doesn't like. Bought his own things to decorate, but temporary.	Bad ventilation and lack of natural light, no window there. When cooking it is really uncomfortable. Social life, I never had any problems with neighbors	Go to the bar, very often, to be social. I don't use the dormitory-things much. Being in the bar is also part of home. The social life is really really good. First of all because of the bar. A really good community. People are grown up and treat each other good, and the things they have. People protect each other and care for each other.	I like to spend time at home. I know in a student and I don't have the luxury that I don't need. What kind of student needs a room with really luxurious stuff? I define a home more with the people, than with the places. When my friends are not here I don't feel at home. The same in Istanbul. At home = freedom and independence, and he feels that at Gasometer. Friendly atmosphere. Habits important, to feel at home.	I don't like the architecture of the interiors, the rooms are badly shaped. I lived in a room that was shaped like a trapez – you can't live in such a room. Difficult to furnish, no empty spaces. I like my room, because it looks outside. I was living in one room that was looking inside – it was too hot in the summer, and open in the window, but then you could hear everything from the other windows, or smell what people were cooking and it was distracting when he needed to concentrate.	Walk, small rounds around the gasometer, fresh air especially in the spring weather. The area is not nice, it is a construction area. Dust problem, you see on the windows – due to the construction in neighborhood.	Well-connected, u-bahn comes every 5 minutes and takes you to the city in 5 minutes. Some people say it's far away, but I don't think so. Gasometer is definitely part of Vienna, no difference – for Murat it depends on the time, not the distance. "Vienna is a little bit a dead city. Everything closes at 18, after 19 nothing works." What "home" means depends on the place – Istanbul = family, here = friends, education – that's why some people when they finish their education, they go back home.	Murat lived in 4 cities in his life – and he feels he can easily change his opinion about a city, to make it a home. If it has what he wants, and he makes friends. Meaning of Gasometer in everyday life = home.



Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Gabriela 21, from Bulgaria, studies German, lived in Gasometer 2 years, in double room.	Knew Bulgarians who lived there, so she also wanted to move in. Made fun of name – in Bulgarian: gasometer. When she saw it, she couldn't believe she would live here.	Gasobar, the most important thing, the stairs that are always in the sunlight. Some people complaint about the weird shapes	4 Bulgarian girls share a flat, 2 double rooms – now 3, and she shares the room with an Austrian girl, but it doesn't work so well. This type of apartment is the best; so big, so many windows and sunlight. They spend a lot of time in the kitchen, cook together sometimes (once a week). Being alone: say to each other when they need some privacy, also for studying. Only Bulgarians in the beginning, but she is happy to have other people there. Too much with only Bulgarian.	Gasobar very important – she works there, and the best place to make friends. The people who know the bar and have been there make friends for sure. It is a bit more private here: when you pass someone in the hall its just a polite hi – in other dormitory, the doors were open, when here its more private. Difference between Erasmus-students and people staying for longer – they are there for enjoying the place more than studying.	“When im in Bulgaria I say that I go home, when I go back to Vienna. It makes my mum sad. The first thing that made me feel at home was my roommate, then I felt I had someone to share with.”	Amazed, impressed. From a gasometer and to make it into a dormitory - The re-use – where they have used every single small space – makes strange shapes. They have managed to do it really comfortable.	You can stay here without going out, she has done that for a month, not leaving the Gasometers. The uBahn, takes you directly home. The neighborhood: I don't know it so well, I know it from some walks, its in order, but not so familiar with it. Were close to 2 parks, which is a good thing, and the international busstation, to take a bus to Bulgaria.	I know Vienna, but underground. I haven't been out for a long time. Go to Vienna to go out – but its expensive to go with the uBahn, so sometimes I just stay here.	

Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Mathilda 22, from Rungsted, Copenhagen, studies media science, 2½ years at Tietgen (14.3)	Wanted to live in a dormitory, but couldn't imagine living in a disgusting dorm, with no space in kitchen to cook – I could only imagine living here. I already decided that when I started at the university, which is right next door.	“I love it here, there is no place I would rather live than here. I like the community we have, but still possibility to be yourself in your own room.” Love the room, the design, a bit like a cave with the cupboards in the ceiling and the movable closet. And the large windows and balcony.	It's so important the people who live here – if theres just one person on the hallway who doesn't clean, it compromises everyone” Room and kitchen most important – when friends and guests are over were in the kitchen. Sometimes I wish it was more social – its has become better, because new people moved in. “Mostly the girls on my kitchen take initiatives and then we invite the others, but I wish there would be more that would take initiative”	I love all the facilities, but I rarely use them. I don't know why. “It seems very strange when someone else come to use the terrace. I would also feel strange going to other peoples common rooms – its theirs!” Ask for permission to use other peoples rooms. She feels she is bad at talking to all people, mainly the kitchen. Bad thing for the dorm that it is so new, do few traditions that can bind people together.	I like it so much here. Especially when coming home from a family vacation, and closing the door behind me, its so nice and quiet.	Very grey the wall – I would like more pictures to cover it. “Everytime when I come home I think “wow its so beautiful” “When I enter the circle, looking up, especially by night, there's such a good acoustics, it makes me so happy to come home in the evening, to look around and theres lights in the windows”	“Wish it was placed somewhere with more city life. Nothing happens out here.” KUA: sometimes she doesn't really leave the area: study at KUA, sleep and eat at dorm – scary, fine, but it shouldn't be like that. Its necessary to get away sometimes, otherwise you get “ø-kuller.” “It's a very dead neighborhood, nice architecture everywhere, but no city life.” “I do nothing here besides going to school and being at the dorm, I don't know what else I would do here”	I don't feel so much at home in the rest of copenhagen, besides just here. Experience of Copenhagen is more like a tourist, looking at places. I live in Copenhagen, but im not a Copenhagen, I just live here. Maybe because im bad at finding my way. Tietgen, kua, dr-byen – an island, especially during the exam period.	I want to live here the five years I can. At some point it would be nice to have my own kitchen.

Personal data	Why do you live here?	Interiors / mental map	Social life in kitchen	Social life in dormitory	Feeling at home	Architecture	Neighborhood	Exteriors / mental map	Ekstra
Olga 22, from Brønshøj, Copenhagen, studies medicine, 2 years in Tietgen (16.1)	Moved in because her sister lived here, and she got the opportunity to move into her room, when she left for exchange. Experienced the social life and liked it as well as the physical frame – other dorms are typically small. Nice to always come home and there's someone to talk to – also what's sometimes not so nice about living here. Could have lived at home while studying, almost same distance, but wanted to move away from home.	Room _ very nice, and very nicely designed with the bathroom and cupboards. Feels very secure and private in her room. Loves the window and all the light it gives. The double room = strange dynamics to the community that a couple live here, a unit a bit outside the community. The reading room: used a lot when she doesn't need to go for classes in the city. Sister live in other floor with terrace = makes it easier to go and use it, it doesn't feel as strange. They know me up there.	Kitchen very important (also because its so big – loves to cook). Eating together 3 x week. (8 out of the 12 inhabitants). Also use the kitchen when friends are over (but use room when its more focused on the friends) TV-room, used a lot for TV (series) and movies. Not really traditions, but TDC every semester and dinners for the kitchen sometimes. "Living together with 12 people you didn't choose by yourself can be a bit difficult – you get better along with some than others.	Important to participate in committees to get to know other people, especially when you get tired of the people you live with. More and more communal life and traditions are emerging. The summerparty and semesterparties. But nothing compared to older Copenhagen dormitories. But wouldn't really go to a party at another floor – feels "it would be like crashing someone else's party." But if sees someone she knows, she would call to hear if they should do something. "I don't feel like a stranger	"When I have good time, and I get to spend a lot of time here, I feel very much at home. Otherwise it's a bit like a railway station" "Time to participate in the social life here is important to feel at home here – to know how the others are doing. Otherwise it wouldn't make sense to live in a dormitory." When sees Tietgen: what a lovely place to live. When tells friends about living in dorm = negative, because you're burdened by other people in the kitchen – but for me it has been very positive. What one expects from	I like the architecture, its very beautiful. Sometimes I think theres too much concrete and wood – it's a bit too clinical. Not in the room, theres more space to decorate." Wouldn't really sit in the courtyard – rather the terraces, or outside.	Theres not really any life in the streets, but its getting a bit better. On Islands Brygge theres more life, but that's also not really part of the new development. "Ørestad – I wouldn't really know what to do out there"	Daily life: tietgen, studyhalls and university. Feels very much at home in Copenhagen, been here always + knows the city when biking around.	Why someone from CPH moves to dorm in CPH? Most people in Olgas kitchen come from around Copenhagen – tradition for dormitory-life in Copenhagen. Olgas parents also lived in a dormitory when they studied, and she heard about it. Very common to live in dorm when studying – goes hand in hand when studying. Also difficult and expensive to live in private room or flat – and its less independent – more accessible to get a room in a dorm.

		<p>To move around in hallways – depend if you know someone if you would walk through – its not just common rooms – something that is discussed: make it more legitimate to move around in the dorm, use the common rooms etc. as it was planned for.</p>	<p>Some you become really good friends with, others you don't want to see again after you move.” For a period it wasn't so good socially on the kitchen, people didn't participate – considered an internal move of room. Decided to move away completely.</p>	<p>to the people I see, as if it was an apartment complex, because they're people I live with in the dorm. There is some sense of community”</p>	<p>a home – differs among her friends. For Olga: “I want to live in a place where you can feel there is life, and where you can feel that you are young”</p>				
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Ursula 24, from Brønshøj, Copenhagen, studies physics, 3 years in Tietgen (1 semester in France) (14.3)	Wanted to live in a dormitory, and because parents live in Copenhagen it was difficult to get into one of the dormitories administered by the central committee [they value the distance from home to place of study high] A friend lived there and was very much part of the social life, and Ursula also wanted that. She applied at different ones, coincidence she came in here.	Kitchen, common room and terrace most important unit. Room: "in reality we're not at each others' rooms – when I think of Tietgen, I think of movie nights and common dinners – the rooms are more private somehow. We have so much space out there, so we don't really go to sit at peoples rooms" The cycle basement, important – see people and bike. Study room: go there together with people from kitchen. Also important for me with the terraces, together	Kitchen was difficult in the beginning – people didn't want to participate and didn't take initiative to social things. Change in inhabitants – good when new people moved in: new ideas for food club, parties. Physical frames: fast to build up common life – but also makes it difficult to get to know people at other kitchens! But kitchen is most important place. Tour de Block: began in block 18, and others took the ideas – one can sense it's a new dormitory, it takes time to build up something. Not visit the	Doesn't participate in committees, so know less people. Moving around, difficult also because of key cards – entering someone else's place. Dorm traditions are emerging – football team functions well, running club – but its up to individual initiatives, what you can get support for socially. Not like other dorms, with firm traditions. "its more a dormitory known for its physical frame, than the social life." Adm: very focused on initiatives like Culture Night – but	"This is where I live – you compare it to other places to live, but in the kitchen there are some good opportunities for common life" After exchange in France: more important to feel at home. The window and that its so spacious – nice place to live. Feeling comfortable with the kitchen and that people stay for long now, contributes to her feeling of being at home. People who sublets their rooms in summer – problematic because its your home, then there's so many strangers going in and	"From the outside it looks really special and beautiful, outside it really strikes me as beautiful, but there's some things where I think there has been some opinions to materials and looks that were prioritized higher than how it should function." Very dark around because of the concrete – you always need to turn on the lights. There's no windows on the sides of the boxes, so light only comes in from the end. At night to look at the lights in the kitchens – its something to live in a building so special.	Likes that there's light and air around, Amager Fælled. In the architecture, you get very centralized in the unit, it's a shame. You don't naturally meet other people, but you only see them. Its bit like an island. Not really connected to it. For me its more the nature around here that matters to me, than the city life. theres not really any city life around here, nothing happens. Islands Brygge; not really a place people come to, a bit isolated – the	"I spend my life biking back and forth from Tietgen and the university" Meet friends in the city – more in the middle. Also other dormitories, to parties and dinners with friends who live there. "The bikeride to the city is so boring. Moving past Langebro and Rådhuspladsen. Theres a long way until you get somewhere just for drinking a coffee" Maybe its different for people who study at KUA, maybe they feel more connected to the place. And have friends	The administration and fond that own the dorm takes away the ownership of the dorm. Its rigid in the rules – you have to ask about everything. People take less responsibility for the place, than if they had to care for things themselves. Some people live here without being engaged, and that's easy because no one expects anything from you.

		<p>he water and greens – “I get the feeling I’m overlooking my kingdom from my window here”</p> <p>Foodclub once a week + spontaneous.</p> <p>Girl community – do many cosy things</p>	<p>other common rooms much.</p> <p>More fun parties than before, but most social life in kitchen.</p>	<p>not so much the social life in here – more towards the public.</p>	<p>out.</p> <p>Egmont: shared show-ers – other demand for social life: you need to go all-in on social things, and I don’t feel like I have time for that.</p> <p>Wouldn’t want to move to another dorm now, because finishes in 1½ years, and then something new has to happen anyways.</p>	<p>But aesthetics more than practical. And it’s not so easy to keep.</p> <p>If she sees there’s a party in another kitchen, she wouldn’t go to join.</p> <p>Common rooms: want to make them more accessible to everyone, but it doesn’t work. Theme-rooms – but a fail: here = library, but bad books: threw them all out.</p>	<p>summer life, but otherwise not a place where many things happen.</p> <p>“I don’t know what happens out in Ørestad – sometimes you’re forced out in Field’s, because the shops are open on Sundays.</p> <p>But it’s just a place where people live”</p>	<p>who live closer by.</p> <p>After exchange in small city, she has become more aware of using the city and the culture it has to offer.</p>	
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Frederik 23, from Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, studies business and psychology, 1½ at Tietgen (10.2)	Went to party with friend who lived here. Wanted to move away from home, missed social contact, people around, young people studying other interesting things. Didn't know about dormitories or dormitory-culture, but after one day at Tietgen he was fascinated.	He likes to get up in the morning and having other people in the kitchen. Always something to do. Very happy to be here and wants to stay as long as possible. Mental Map: thicker lines around the room = more important. But unfortunate to not be able to personalize = hand things on walls etc, but nice otherwise, huge windows, nice view. Kitchen = best place to be, spend most time and the best friends. All facilities are there, if something breaks = administration fixes it.	Like a second family, they do many activities together go out, play boardgames, cook together (5 out of 7 days). Boy-kitchen (drengerøvs-køkken), dominated by boys and their activities: x-box, beer etc. Frustrating when people live here, who don't want to participate in the social life, who don't want to create this dormitory culture. TDC: put a lot of effort into it, also exchange students + tour de cuisine on the floor: themes in all kitchens = connect with	Bar Committee: a group of people (around 25 + others more loosely connected). Important to know people across kitchens. "It's a young dormitory, the traditions are missing, but were good at creating something": Tietgen Running Club: FB group – get more people joining, different types, not just parties, more everydaylife. People take the initiative themselves. Overall, maybe 1/3 participate – same people who are in the different committees. Makes it easier to move around the	Here you have everything you need "If it can't be done within the circle, it's not worth doing – imagine Døgn Netto [the supermarket] was within the circle, then it would never be necessary to leave!" Feel at home = here. Parents home app once a week (Fred-eriksberg)	A home for Gods. Genially built: privacy outwards and everything in glass to the inside so you can look around and see where there's a party taking place. Very impressive, especially when people enter the circle and looks up.	Not so cosy, everything is a bit too big. A mistake to built normal dwelling for families, because they complain about the noise from the dorm. Wish for more café-culture and housing for students, it should be a youthful place, like a campus. Either you're in the dormitory, or you go to the city. There's football field and basketball court = we young people have been taken into consideration. Young environment, a bit cool	Mental map: Tietgen is the center. But Tietgen is not really part of Copenhagen. Everything is a bit separated, both in taking the metro to the city and other places and socially in the friends he has. He studies at CBS; work on Chr. HAvn,	Crossing dormitory: join party at other kitchen = respect peoples privacy – if it's a party for friends = not dominate. Moving away – dreadful Lives to be young, but not for studying. Not busy in getting done and move on. Workplace: want to make it his new Tietgen – with social life and happenings

		Common rooms = for everyone, but not used like that. Elevator = communica- tion, posts and saying hi. Partyroom: for everyone, brings friends	other people. Bound by rental contracts = limited what to do about people not participating,	dormitory, visit other kitchens, because he knows people there from the committee. Football club: tournament against other dorms					
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Klaus 21, from Varde, Jylland, studies intercultural market communication. 10 months at Tietgen (10.2)	Sister and brother lived here – it sounded cool and he visited them: community, not a dormitory like every other: larger, not just a 8 m2 room, more luxurious. Many people fear dormitories = dirty kitchens etc.	Go to other kitchens = mainly if you know someone there (foreign place) “man er et fremmed sted. De vil gerne at det skal være for alle, men sådan er det ikke” Terraces = a bit different, but he would choose an empty one to go to. Room: he has tried to personize it a bit. They are all built in the same way, but they are so different to go into, the decoration, gives ideas. You want it to reflect yourself. Hall: is long, he feels he lives a long way from the kitchen, but	Lucky with his kitchen. 4 boys that are very similar and like each other. Doesn't like people who just live there, without being part of everything – but difficult to do anything about.	He participates in bar committee, football club, running club – meet people, the same + new. Its very much up to oneself to take part. NEG: that it is the same type people living there: middleclass, long educations, people are very centered on their studies. The community: people he will communicate with the rest of his life. 80-100 people who really participate, and very much the same in the committees. Footballteam: compete against other dormitories.	This is my home. Its not temporary in any way, all my things are here. “10.2 makes me feel at home here” Good transition to move to a dormitory. Not like moving completely away from home. Happy about it. Took ½ year to make it feel like a home – socially and mentally, also to get used to move away from home.	Voluminous. Very big. Circular shape works very well: the view, you can “stalk” people without it being disgusting. The interior, the contrasts, concrete = not nice, boring. He thinks that the architecture wouldn't matter if it was the same people and rooms.	Indifferent towards the neighborhood. He doesn't use it. “My neighborhood is the 400 other students who live in the circle” Intention to make it a youthful neighborhood, but there is no urban life, no cafes etc. Not very urban with all the green areas and water. “Its an island – I really wouldn't know what to do out here”	MM: Tietgen is the one extreme (yderpunkt) in my life, the other is the city – separated by the metro. Two different worlds, also socially and I would like to keep them separated, also because Tietgen is physically distant from the other.	

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Michael 27, from Birkerød, Nordsjælland, studies economics, 5 years at Tietgen (16.5)	Saw it from the outside, and thought it looked interesting and a place he wanted to live. He didn't think about living in a dorm, but mainly the specificities of Tietgen, the architecture, place etc. Best: freedom to be social or not. Worst: no stable frame for the social life, how the social rules should be. It suits some people, others get disappointed.	I have been very happy about it, otherwise I wouldn't have lived here for 5 years. Its different from other dormitories in many ways. First of all it's a very beautiful building and there's a lot of space for us – a lot of space to be alone and a lot of space to be together. There's not so much pressure to be social in all kinds of traditions. Its a new dorm, so there's not so many traditions. That means that there isn't common dinner every day, or drinking rituals that you need to go through. more wild.	Depends. Lived in 12.1, but moved up to get the sun and terrace, and because it was a lot of drama on the kitchen. On 16.5, they do things together in periods, have dinners with exchange students, parties, TDC, Some new residents have tried to revolutionize the kitchen, but they haven't really succeeded and thus moved out. Primary social life = outside the dorm.	There's not much social life across the kitchens. There's not a lot of support to participate, the kitchen as a group that wants to participate. Its on the kitchen there's community, Some people meet others in the clubs, the football clubs or the training room.	Feels that Tietgen is his home, because he has his own space and because he has lived there for so many years. At his kitchen it has been quite stable in the people living there, also part of that feeling. Room: put up birch trees in there. Dream of forest and alternative forms of living. Not important that the administration wouldn't like it. It's a freedom here, that makes you want to stay longer	The architecture is a masterpiece, it has become very expensive, but I like the idea that you in your years of study live inspiring. You win a lot by throwing inspiring experiences after people in our age. It shapes our perception of the world. It's a very creatively thought building, many ideas that can inspire you. Invites you to think in new ways. In terms of using other kitchens and common rooms: the key cards are a barrier. Icon building, that people who live here	Under construction since I moved in, one large construction site. Now things are happening. The supermarket means that many more encounters take place. Use it because it's comfortable. Its very windy here on Amager, a big barrier to using these places. Tietgen is an example of a place that could be used, because its enclosed. But when people come here to look, they feel they cross some sort of boundary stepping in here, they don't really know if it's ok to go in or not.	Copenhagen = important while studying, cand-polit is in the city center, so the city life is tempting with shops and cafés. Now he doesn't use the city as much, because he doesn't have classes in there anymore. Tietgen is a bit outside the city, in a new neighborhood. If I had lived more in the city center, I might have felt more like a Copenhagenener. Use the green areas around Tietgen, but not so many other of the city spaces.	Its more expensive here than other dormitories, but its worth it – its good offer for students, its cheap compared to what you get for your money, to live in a world monument in dormitory building. Sometimes I feel its strange that such a “ghost” pass through (about people walking around the hallways, who don't live there)





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Veronica 22, from Sydney, Australia, studies law, 1/2 year in Tietgen (18.5)	The university organized it, she read feedback from other students, that Tietgen was a great place to stay, so "I was lucky to get a room here" You get the opportunity to get to know everyone, because of the parties and the spaces that are common, you get to know a lot of the people. So it doesn't just feel like it's a place that you sleep, where you have your stuff. It actually feels like a home.	Part of my life is coming in and out of the dormitory. All the travelling to see Europe, and then come back. "Coming back home, means coming back here" The room is sort of not connected to it all. I spend time in my room sleeping, but at the same time most of what I do is in the dorm.	We share a kitchen with 12 people and everyone become quite close. We get along quite well. In the beginning it was a bit daunting, but I took the attitude that I want to force myself upon them. The girls have dinners together, but for the most part everyone's doing their own thing. They were quite welcoming and pretty used to have exchange students.	The social life is important. The bar committee Knowledge among the exchange students that Tietgen is one of the better dorms. Part of that is definitely the exposure to Danish students. Others are in dorms with just international students. Even though they're happy about their exchange in general, I would feel like missing out on half of Danish life. you have to live with them, go out with them to really form any bonds. Everyone at Tietgen you can have an intel	I felt at home really quickly, I became quite attached to living here and the people. The biggest thing is definitely the people. All the things I would normally have back home in Australia, I also have here, the facilities, a comfortable bed... plenty of space. I always lived with my parents. Here I have independence without feeling completely isolated. If you really wanted to, it wouldn't be too difficult never seeing anyone. It has become like a second home, a home-away-from-	This building is not like other ones around here. Its not boxy, its not like modern Danish design. But the living is like living in an ikea-ware-house Kitchenmate told her about the significance of the place, the meaning of the architecture. Feels like she can use all the facilities, just go around, say hi. At first it has always been identifiable, the place itself has got a quite special social aspect, that is reflected in the design. Hard to tell what comes first, its quite of.	Amager. There's nothing really out there, people are a bit more dodgy. But were a lot closer to islands brygge. The area is very family-friendly, a lot of small children. It's a nice area, you have the canal, the grassy-green areas, you're close to amagercentret, Døgnnetto – I don't know what its like for other people, like the residents who live close to the dorm – it gets a bit noisy.. At home I have to commute 1½ hours to get to the university, here it only takes 20 minutes. Its more like a suburbia with	The city center is where I have spent most of my time. Take the metro around, afraid of biking. Tietgen is slightly re-moved from the rest. You have to do bit of a trip to get somewhere. If the metro wasn't running 24 hours it would make it slightly difficult.	Its one of the more expensive dorms, but its obviously fair enough

