



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION

INFORMATION

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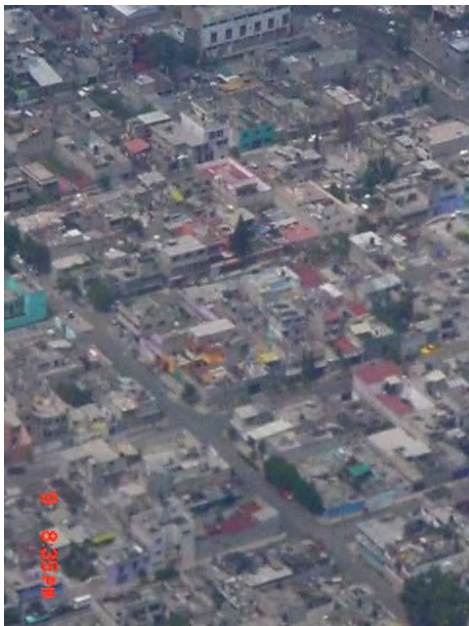
Around the Task Groups and Working Commissions

W104 – Open Building Implementation

Report of the Conference: Balancing Resources and Quality in Housing, October 2002 in Mexico City

Introduction

The CIB W104 Open Building Implementation had one of its most important annual meetings October 3-4, 2002, in Mexico City. The conference was organized by Professor Andrea Martin-Chavez (a W104 member) who served as the conference academic secretariat. A Scientific Committee supported the conference



organization, composed of Professors Jorge Andrade (Mexico), Rob Gerardts (the Netherlands), Stephen Kendall (USA), Enrique Ortiz (Mexico), and Ulpu Tiuri (Finland). An Advisory Committee was composed of Professors

Jorge Bonita, Jose Luis Cortes, and Luis Romero (Mexico). The conference was hosted by the Mexican Institute of Architects, The Housing Institute of Mexico City, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (UAM); the Universidad Iberoamericana; Habitat International Coalition, and TAVI.



Scope and Purpose of this Conference

In Mexico City, self-produced housing constitutes more than 80% of the actual stock. Substantial changes



have taken place in urban families' way of life in the last decade, including family composition (high percentages of extended families and households with female head of family) and some economic activities (usually both parents work). Deterioration of housing units - in terms of quality, maintenance and security problems - is widespread. Recently, the city government and the Housing Institute launched a large and ambitious program to improve the existing housing stock in the city. The Mexican Institute of Architects is supporting this program advising, supervising and assuring its quality. These initiatives provide fertile ground for research and experimentation on Open Building for a future phase in the program that will involve new incremental housing.

With this program in mind on the one hand, and on the other, a profound concern for the growing gap between the use of resources and the quality of housing, this conference aims to be an opportunity to:

- Reflect and share thoughts on what we consider quality in housing.
- Exchange interesting experiences where there has been a balance between the use of resources and the outcome in terms of quality (locally determined).

We have to recognize and define different concepts of quality in different cultures as well as a minimum quality standard for all. The conference aims to discuss these important issues and to explore the benefits of and impediments to Open Building Implementation in new housing production and in housing improvement and renovation programs in developing countries.



W104 members at the business meeting

Thursday October 3

Business Meeting

At the business meeting an invitation was accepted from Professor Jia Beisi, University of Hong Kong, to host the W104 annual conference in Hong Kong in October 2003 (the exact date has not been set). The theme of next year's conference will be: *INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LIVING ARCHITECTURE IN URBAN DENSITY: OPEN BUILDING 2003 HONG KONG*. It will be sponsored by Hong Kong Institute of Architects and the Hong Kong Housing Authority, and will take place at the University of Hong Kong.

Frits Scheublin, a W104 member and a member of the CIB Board, presented the CIB Pro-Active Agenda Theme "Revaluing Construction" and announced the upcoming meeting on this theme in Manchester, UK, February 2003.

Professor Tiuri introduced a discussion about the OPEN BUILDING Competition Initiative.

W104 member Seiji Sawada, who leads a W104 initiative in urban housing refurbishment, reported on recent developments in Leinefelde, Germany. The mayor of Leinefelde – Gerd Reinhardt – and an architect working in this city – Stefan Forster – made a presentation of recent rehabilitation work they have implemented.

W104 member Stephen Kendall reported on a study of the INO Hospital, an innovative hospital project in Bern, Switzerland, that is based on open building principles.

W104 member Seiji Sawada reported on an International research project on sustainable urban management with conversion of office buildings to housing.

Cohuatlán Housing Complex in Colonia Guerrero.

This 60 unit project was built in 1978 with financial support from INFONOVIT, FOVISSTE, and FOVI. The architects were Jorge Andrade and Javier Zamudio.



Cohuatlán is located in the Colonia Guerrero at the perimeter of the historical center, nearby Tlatelolco, one of the biggest multifamily housing developments of the fifties. Colonia Guerrero was developed in the second half of the nineteenth century as a worker's neighborhood, mainly with "vecindades" as the house typology.



The site has almost a square proportion and is located at the interior of a block. The project is conformed by three multifamily buildings, two of six levels and one of only four levels. The three buildings surround a patio that is used as a multiuse open space. The design concept is based in the "support" theory and methodology. There are six different dwelling unit

sizes, with different possibilities of space arrangements in each.

This housing complex has preserved its social organization and most of its inhabitants remain proud and satisfied with their dwellings. There are a significant number of apartments that have changed the original internal space.



Santa Ursula neighborhood



Drawing of one of the dwellings under the "Programa de Mejoramiento de Vivienda"

"The growth and development of this informal neighbourhood has been studied in depth by Jorge Andrade. This extensive neighbourhood was initially subdivided – illegally – by an enterprising clerk of the municipal authority. Exploiting extension of transportation and services that accompanied the Olympic stadium then under construction, he proceeded to sell neighbouring allotments of land that had remained uncultivated, because it was rough and stony, pockmarked with fissures and escarpments.

Unfortunately, the land was not his to sell, and he landed in jail for his efforts. Nonetheless, once started, the neighbourhood grew steadily, always adhering to the original urban layout. First, perimeter walls were built to protect the newly occupied territory. Houses then began to grow, room by room. A marketplace and a church were established. Over the years, the growing population also gained political clout. Eventually, the municipality brought in a sewage system and water mains. Finally, paving appeared on the roads. Santa Ursula's buildings are now two stories high. It would be hard for the casual observer to believe that this substantial settlement, the size of a small town, was created from the bottom up." (from: *The Structure of the Ordinary: Form and Control in the Built Environment*, John Habraken, MIT Press, 1988, p 303)

Former students of Professors Andrea Martin and Jorge Andrade – studying at the UAM Housing Research Program – are working with the Architects College in the Improvement Housing Program of the Institute of Housing. Any low-income family that complies with certain requirements can apply for credit to improve its house. This was the case of the two families – and their homes under development – we visited. The former students provided drawings and other information about these improvement projects.

Xacalli House Complex



This is a project designed by Jorge Andrade – an example of a housing scheme of 50 homes designed for “progressive development”. Financial support came from FONHAPO (National Fund for Popular Housing). The project was built during two years 1996-98.

The project is located 1.5 kilometers north of Lake of Xochimilco, just in front of an ecological park in a popular informal settlement. Xacalli consists on fifty incremental dwelling units in a new housing development with incremental urbanization as well. There was participatory design in the process and it was decided to leave at least 50% of the land as green space. The complex is divided in two equal sections

(each one of 25 dwellings) by the vehicular street that allows parking in both sides.

There is one parking space for each unit. Each 5 to 10 dwellings are facing a semi-public front yard. All dwelling units started with 60 square meters and with the same layout. There is freedom to grow up to 120 square meters preserving two thirds of the private open space in the backyard.

Tourist visits to Teotihuacan (ancient Aztec city) and Acolman (a XVI Century Cloister)



Teotihuacan Fortress

An excellent published proceedings – *BALANCING RESOURCES AND QUALITY IN HOUSING* – containing 19 peer reviewed papers – was edited by Professors Martin and Jorge Andrade, both of the Housing Research Department at UAM., and was published by UAM (ISBN 970-31-0051-1).

