Single Room Occupancy (SRO)

for Montreal's Homeless Population

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ABSTRACT

The most common of the proposed solutions to address homelessness when it became an alarming issue in North America's large urban centres during the mid- 1980s, including Montreal, were emergency shelters and Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facilities. Therefore, in recent years, SROs and rooming houses have been recognized as an important part of the housing continuum. Ensuring the adequate upkeep of existing buildings and expanding the supply of affordable housing to reduce homelessness for low-income single individuals is a currently discussed by policy-makers and planners.

The author attempts to demonstrate what design aspects could better satisfy the need for privacy of SRO residents, based on literature review, evaluation of four SRO projects located in Montreal, and interviews with their tenants, architects, and managers. The report will finally compound a list of recommendations, in the hopes of providing some design strategies that can help increase the level of privacy and the quality of life in future SRO buildings.

The major findings of this research show that there is no unique solution for housing the homeless and that increasing the flexibility of the projects is essential to satisfy the needs of more than one demographic group. Finally, this report settles that in order for SROs and rooming houses to provide a viable permanent option for very low-income tenants, privacy needs to become the key concern for accomplishing the social potential of these types of accommodations.

RÉSUMÉ

Les solutions les plus courantes proposées pour lutter contre le problème des sans-abris quand il est devenu alarmant dans les grands centres urbains en Amérique du Nord au cours milieu des années 1980, y compris à Montréal, étaient des abris d'urgence et des établissements destinées aux personnes seules (« SROs »). Par conséquent, ces dernières années, les SROs et les foyers d'hébergement ont été reconnus comme un élément important du continuum de logements. Assurer l'entretien adéquat des bâtiments existants et l'expansion de l'offre de logements abordables, pour réduire le problème de sans-abris pour les personnes seules à faible revenu, est actuellement discuté par les décideurs politiques et les planificateurs.

L'auteur tente de démontrer quels sont les aspects spécifiques qui pourraient mieux satisfaire le besoins de vie privée des résidents de SROs, en se basant sur l'étude de documents existants, sur l'évaluation des quatre projets SRO situés à Montréal, et sur des entretiens avec leurs locataires, les architectes et les gestionnaires de ces lieux. Le rapport final proposera une liste de recommandations, avec l'espoir d'aider à fournir des stratégies de conception pour améliorer le niveau de vie privée et la qualité de vie dans les futurs bâtiments de SROs.

Les principaux résultats de cette recherche montrent qu'il n'y a pas de solution unique pour le logement des sans-abri et que l'augmentation de la flexibilité des projets est essentielle pour répondre aux besoins de plus d'un groupe démographique. Au final, ce rapport établit que pour que les SROs et les foyers d'hébergement soient une option permanente viable pour les locataires à faible revenu, la vie privée doit devenir la principale préoccupation pour la réalisation du potentiel social de ces types d'hébergement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of Study

According to The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness:

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability to acquire it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing. (COH, 2012)

The term "homelessness" came into common use in developed countries in the early and mid- 1980s (Hulchanski, 2009) when investments in affordable and social housing were reduced, causing a widespread social problem in which groups of people who were once housed in these wealthy countries were no longer housed. Currently, many Canadians are at risk of homelessness as a result of a cumulative impact of multiple factors, including poverty, personal crises, and lack of affordable housing options. Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of households who earn less than $30,000 per year and pay more than a half of that income on rent or owner costs. As demonstrated by the graphic, many Canadians are paying a great percentage of their earnings only on housing, which progressively pushes individuals and families to lose their capability to pay, and consequently to become homeless.
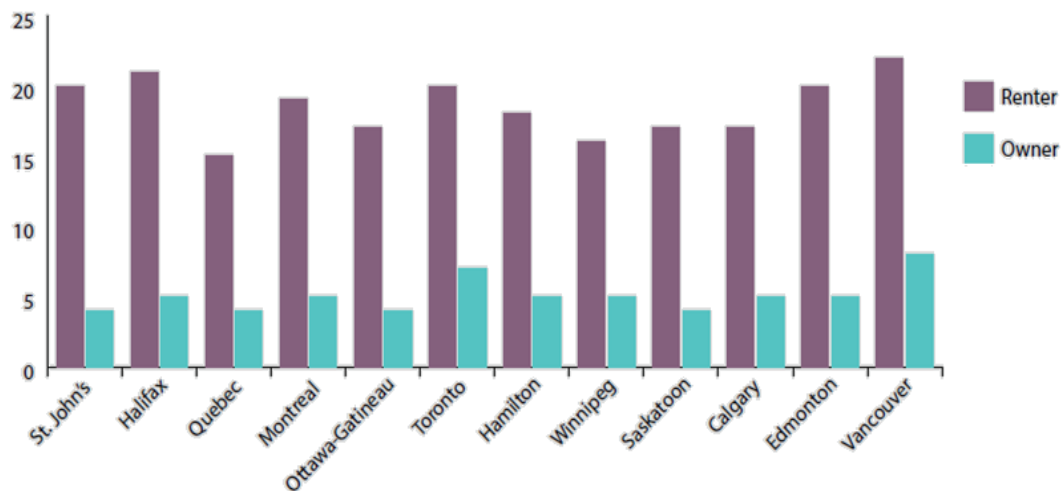
Figure 1.1 Extreme affordability problems by CMA. From *The State of Homelessness in Canada 2014* (p.44), by S. Gaetz, T. Richter, T. Gulliver, (Eds,) 2014, Toronto: The Homeless Hub Press

According to the last report released by The Homeless Hub Paper Series as a Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, it is expected that over 235,000 different Canadians experienced homelessness in 2014, with over 35,000 Canadians homeless on any given night (Gaetz et al., 2014). Additionally, in 2007, the Sheldon Chumir Foundation estimated that the response to homelessness cost taxpayers from $4.5 to $6 billion annually. This figure includes not only emergency shelters but also social services, health care, and corrections. The updated figure, released by the Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press, states that the annual cost of homelessness to the national economy is $7.05 billion.

The problem of homelessness is increasing nationwide and especially in Canada's large urban centres, Montreal among them. It is estimated that there are 3,016 homeless individuals In Montreal according to the last Count and Survey of Montreal's Homeless Population (Latimer et al. 2015). As indicated in Table 1.1, of all the surveyed participants 429 had spent the night outside, 1,066 were in a shelter and 1,041 were in transitional housing. About a quarter of the 3,016 people (784) had been chronically homeless for four years or more, and

almost half (1,357) were episodically homeless, having been in that situation at least twice in the past three years.

	Identified during the count	Clearly Homeless	Present but not interviewed	Adjustment	Facilities Identified after the count	Total
Unsheltered	177	110		142		429
Emergency shelters	552		288		226	1,066
Transitional housing	307		287		447	1,041
Hospitals	10				66	76
Detention centres	0				51	51
Therapy centres in Montreal	18				136	154
Therapy centres outside Montreal	33		9		157	199
TOTAL	**1,097**	**110**	**584**	**142**	**1,083**	**3,016**

Table 1.1: Estimated number of homeless individuals in Montreal. From *I COUNT MTL 2015: Count and Survey of Montreal's Homeless Population on March 24, 2015* (p. 12), by E. Latimer, J. McGregor, C.Méthot, S. Alison (Eds,) 2015, Montreal.

In the last two decades, the role of housing in the problem of homelessness has been recognized, as well as the importance of having multiple housing options which will meet the needs of the full range of users. Thus, since the 1980s, many efforts have been made by the federal government to provide shelter and temporary accommodation for low-income and homeless individuals; the most common of the proposed solutions were, at that time, emergency shelters and Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels.

The term "Single Room Occupancy" (SRO) building is often used in conjunction with "rooming house" and "lodging house". SRO buildings are often hotels or single-family homes sub-divided into private, rented rooms where tenants share common amenities (Figure 1.2); they are a type of housing that confronts many associated challenges as it remains the only

option for homeless individuals who may be struggling with addictions, mental illness, and poverty. Additionally, although single adult males account for the majority of the unhoused population in Canada, other sub-groups face special circumstances and, as such, approaches must be tailored to these different needs.

Figure 1.2: St-André's rooming house was renovated in 2009 to accommodate 20 low-income single individuals as an initiative of DIANOVA, a Montreal-based non-profit organization.[1]

In a study made by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), entitled *Regulatory Factors in the Retention and Expansion of Rooming House Stock* (2000), the authors state that "outside of social housing, rooming houses and SROs are the least expensive form of permanent housing, and essential for very low-income single people." In the same research, the authors also provided information on a number of strategies to stabilize the rooming house stock. Although similar publications exist on the value of rooming houses and SROs, the number of SRO dwellings keeps declining (Table 1.2 and Table 1.3), and a more contemporary approach to the subject is necessary.

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[1] Photos not sourced were taken by the author

Number of rooming houses in the South-West borough in 2002	**29**
Number of non-listed houses in the South-West borough in 2002	**1**
Total homes to check on the South-West borough	**30**
Total	**661units**

Table 1.2: General Information- state of rooming houses in the South-West borough, Montreal. From *Portrait des maisons de chambres dans les arrondissements Ville – Marie et Sud-Ouest de la Ville de Montréal* (p.08) by Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal-RAPSIM. 2005, Montreal

Number of rooming houses in the Ville-Marie borough in 2002	**110**
Number of non-listed houses in the Ville-Marie borough in 2002	**3**
Total homes to check on the Ville-Marie borough	**113**
Total	**Approx. 2847 units**

Table 1.3: General Information- state of Rooming Houses in Ville-Marie, Montreal. From *Portrait des maisons de chambres dans les arrondissements Ville – Marie et Sud-Ouest de la Ville de Montréal* (p.07) by Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal-RAPSIM. 2005, Montreal

Despite their significant role, the housing stock of SRO buildings is shrinking, and the available options are increasing in price. Additionally, there have been many public health problems concerning private rooming houses as many of these buildings were once standard housing that was then later subdivided, and as a result, they can be cramped and have unsanitary facilities with lack of natural light and ventilation.

Privacy has been a concern in rooming houses and SROs since it is very common that tenants have to share facilities, making it more difficult for the residents to define individual and collective territories. Privacy is considered a basic human need (Lang, 1987), and it is a highly complex and varied phenomenon which is determined by culture, context and time. The importance of privacy in this context is based on the need to control our social interactions with

others, which provide a sense of freedom necessary to perform social activities normally. This kind of freedom removes the pressure people experience when in public, and especially for people undergoing difficulties in their lives and high stress, which is what formerly homeless individuals often experience. Ensuring the right level of privacy would allow the true advantages of community life to flourish and this is critical to the success of this type of housing.

1.2   Theoretical Framework

This research argues that Single Room Occupancy dwellings are an important part of the affordable housing continuum in many cities across Canada. Besides providing an option for very low-income tenants, SROs and rooming houses also offer more opportunities for social encounter. Therefore, they can satisfy the social needs of some homeless individuals more effectively than regular independent dwellings, given that its residents are not completely isolated because they share activities with others every day in common spaces. Regarding the advantages of SRO-type accommodations, Shapiro (1966) in his research argues that: "Whereas ties to their primary family tended to be tenuous or absent among tenants, other 'families' developed in the SRO." Furthermore, Hoch and Slayton (1989) argue that: "Rooming houses functioned as communities that helped people to recreate a meaningful life in the midst of severe social disadvantages and economic uncertainty."

Contrary to the views of previous authors, Erin Mifflin (2004) in *No Place Like Home: Rooming Houses in Contemporary Urban Context*, states that: "Existing studies recognize relationships among tenants as a key influence on everyday life but differ on the extent to which rooming houses provided positive social environments." Given the current academic debate on this matter, the present work will focus on the vital, yet understudied, idea of privacy and the relationship between the public and private living spaces of SROs.

1.3   Research Question

How effective are Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings in addressing the particular needs for privacy of Montreal's homeless population while considering the profile of the user?

Sub Question:

Which design strategies could improve the quality of SRO residences for homeless people in Montreal?

1.4   Goals and Objectives

This study will attempt to demonstrate, through literature review and case study analysis, whether SROs provide tenants with privacy and whether they are an effective permanent housing solution for homeless people. From those results, we will be able to discern what design aspects could better satisfy the need for the privacy of users with different age, gender, and mental health issues. The specific objectives for this purpose are:

- To find what kind of solutions for SROs have been developed for new-build projects or retrofit in Montreal
- To investigate the relations between types of SROs and its occupants based on gender.
- To offer guidelines & criteria for future developments in Montreal.

1.5   Intended Audience

The target audience for this research consists of a diverse scope of professionals and non-professionals who have an active role in the development of SRO buildings: policy makers, planners, architects, directors of housing programs for homeless individuals, and non-profit organizations. Scholars and persons who may have a similar subject of interest can also benefit from the literature review, case study analysis, and interviews.

1.6   Methodology

The method combines a literature review of permanent and transitional housing provided for homeless individuals, observation and analysis of the physical environment of specific SRO residences in Montreal, and interviews conducted with those responsible for these programs, including architects, municipal institutions and rooming house tenants. Based on the literature review (Chapter 2) and case study evaluation (Chapter 3), the research will provide some design strategies in Chapter 4 that could be applied to improve the quality of SRO buildings for homeless people in Montreal.

The work of Karen A. Franck and Sherry Ahrentzen (1989) *New Households New Housing*, and the work of Pierre Teasdale (1993) *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* will be considered as main literature references for this research. In their books, the authors explain relevant concepts associated to SROs, demonstrate examples of shelters, single room occupancy and rooming houses, among other facilities that assist the homeless and suggest new perspectives on affordable housing. Their studies were selected because they not only provide plans, diagrams, and photos of SRS facilities; but also design strategies for common places and special auxiliary services. Furthermore, for the case study evaluation in Chapter 4 of this report, the work of Josep M. Montaner, Zaida Muxí and David H. Falagán (2011) *Tools for Inhabiting the Present: Housing in the 21ˢᵗ Century,* was used for the analysis of the buildings following their "Comprehension Assessment Template".

1.7   Scope and Limitations

Since there are no complete lists of rooming houses and SROs in Montreal from which we could randomly select buildings, the study draws a sample of convenience. The visits to the case study need the previous approval and consent of the responsible parties for that program and its inhabitants. The opportunity to conduct interviews is limited by the availability of the

project coordinator. Additionally, some of the individuals living in such accommodation may refuse to give access to their living spaces.

1.8   Research Outline

The research is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the rationale of the research and provides the general approach and scope for the study.

Chapter 2 contains the theoretical framework; the first section of the chapter exposes the state of homelessness in Montreal and the strategies that have been implemented in recent years by the government concerning affordable housing programs for homeless individuals. The second part of the chapter describes the history and evolution of SRO dwelling typology in North America, and finally, the issue of privacy in SROs is discussed and studied in detail.

Chapter 3 comprises the case study analysis and interviews. In this chapter, we study the strategies applied in the selected projects and evaluate the effectiveness of the theory described in Chapter 2 compared with the level of satisfaction of the inhabitants. For this purpose, the interviews are conducted primarily with those responsible for the housing projects but also with some of the residents. We also identify the design components that affect the latter's quality of living through plans and diagrams of the building.

Finally, Chapter 4 will provide some design strategies that could be applied to improve the quality of SRO buildings for homeless groups in Montreal.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

As previously argued, Single Room Occupancy is an important part of the affordable housing continuum. Moreover, homelessness has been a grave concern for decades, and it is critical to ensure that cities' gentrification and redevelopment schemes do not reduce housing options for the most vulnerable members of the population.

This chapter introduces the literature background and history that will enable us to learn the concepts and the development of SRO and homelessness in Canada and, more precisely, in Montreal. Its first section will provide an insight into the current state of homelessness and the second section will cover single room occupancy, privacy and its relevant concepts.

2.2. Homelessness in Canada

From 1929 to 1945 during the Depression and the Second World War, very little new housing was built in the country, and many people were living in poor-quality, aging, and overcrowded housing. After the War, many efforts were focused on revive the housing market, trough creating a functioning mortgage system, building social housing, and providing subsidies for the private-sector rental housing. At the same time, urban planners, public health officials, social workers and related professionals were focused on rehousing people into better housing and neighborhoods (Hulchanski, 2009). These efforts lasted until the 1980s.

One of the main reason why Canadian cities started having the widespread social problem known as homelessness in the 1980s was that promoting adequate and affordable housing had not been a high priority for governments at any level by that time. Across the country, the demand for housing and the willingness of local organizations ready to build greatly exceed the availability of government funds to carry out effective social housing programs. The initial cutbacks in social housing and related programs began in 1984. By 1993 all federal spending on the construction of new social housing ceased and in 1996 the federal government further removed itself from low-income housing supply by transferring responsibility for most existing federal social housing to the provinces. (Hulchanski, 2009)

Regarding the current state of homelessness, the Canadian Definition of Homelessness referred to in Chapter 1, and the Homelessness typologies (Table 2.1) describe the degree of circumstances that people at risk of homelessness can experience. While a substantial portion of the homeless population is unsheltered or staying in temporary lodgings, others do not have a fixed address (commonly known as 'hidden homeless'). As such they stay on a temporary basis with family, friends or acquaintances. On the other hand, others remain precariously housed and are at risk of becoming homeless.

The causes of homelessness are complex and reflect the interaction between, what Gaetz (2013) describes as "structural factors" (poverty, lack of affordable housing), "systems failures" (people coming from mental health facilities, correctional facilities or child protection services) and "individual circumstances" (family conflict, violence, mental health issues).

OPERATIONAL CATEGORY		LIVING SITUATION	GENERIC DEFINITION
Unsheltered	Includes people who lack housing and are not accessing emergency shelters or accommodation, except during extreme weather conditions. In most cases, people are staying in places that are not designed or fit for human habitation.	People living in public or private spaces without consent or contract	• Public space, such as sidewalks, squares, parks, and forests. • Private space and vacant buildings (squatting)
		People living in places not intended for permanent human habitation	• Living in cars or other vehicles • Living in garages, attics, closets or buildings not designed for habitation • People in makeshift shelters, shacks or tents
Emergency Sheltered	Refers to people who, because they cannot secure permanent housing, are accessing emergency shelter and system supports, generally provided at no cost or minimal cost to the user. Such accommodation represents an institutional response to homelessness provided by government, non-profit, faith-based organizations and volunteers.	Emergency overnight shelters for people who are homeless	These facilities are designed to meet the immediate needs of people who are homeless. Such short-term emergency shelters may target specific subpopulations, including women, families, youth or Aboriginal persons, for instance. These shelters typically have minimal eligibility criteria, offer shared sleeping facilities and amenities, and often expect clients to leave in the morning. They may or may not offer food, clothing or other services. Some emergency shelters allow people to stay on an ongoing basis while others are short-term and are set up to respond to special circumstances, such as extreme weather.
		Shelters for individuals/families impacted by family violence	
		Emergency shelter for people fleeing a natural disaster or destruction of accommodation.	
Provisionally Accommodated	Refers to situations in which people, who are technically homeless and without permanent shelter, access accommodation that offers no prospect of permanence. Those, who are provisionally accommodated may be accessing temporary housing provided by government or the non-profit sector, or may have independently made arrangements for short-term accommodation.	Interim housing for people who are homeless	Interim housing is a systems-supported form of housing that is meant to bridge the gap between unsheltered homelessness or emergency accommodation and permanent housing.
		People living temporarily with others, but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing	Often referred to as 'couch surfers' or the 'hidden homeless', this describes people who stay with friends, family, or even strangers.
		People accessing short-term, temporary rental accommodations without security of tenure	In some cases, individuals who are homeless make temporary rental arrangements, such as staying in motels, hostels, SROs, or rooming houses.
		People in institutional care who lack permanent housing arrangements	People who may transition into homelessness upon release from penal institutions; medical / mental health institutions; residential treatment programs or withdrawal management centers; children's institutions and group homes.
		Reception centers for recently arrived immigrants and refugees	Before securing their private dwelling, newly arrived immigrants and refugees may be temporarily housed while receiving settlement support and orientation to life in Canada.

| At Risk of Homelessness | Although not technically homeless, this includes individuals or families whose current housing situations are dangerously lacking security or stability, and so are considered to be at risk of homelessness. They are living in housing that is intended for permanent human habitation, and could potentially be permanent (as opposed to those who are provisionally accommodated). However, as a result of external hardship, poverty, personal crisis, discrimination, a lack of other available and affordable housing, or the inappropriateness of their current housing (which may be overcrowded or does not meet public health and safety standards) residents may be "at risk" of homelessness. | People at imminent risk of homelessness | • Those whose employment is precarious
• Those experiencing sudden unemployment
• Households facing eviction
• Housing with transitional supports about to be discontinued
• Individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, active addictions, substance use, and, but not limited to, behavioural issues
• Breakdown in family relations
• People facing or living in direct fear, of violence or abuse |
| | | Individuals and families who are housed in precarious situations | Those who face challenges that may or may not leave them homeless in the immediate or near future. |

Table 2.1: Canadian Definition of Homelessness Typology. Adapted from The Homeless Hub, n.d., Retrieved February 10, 2016, from http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition-1pager.pdf

Until the present day, communities have struggled to address the issue. Reduced benefits and a shrinking supply of affordable housing have placed many Canadians at risk of homelessness over recent decades. The primary response from the government has been to manage the crisis by providing emergency services, such as shelters and soup kitchens. In the last five years, several cities, including Montreal, have shifted their focus to ending homelessness via Plans like Housing First:

> Housing First is an approach that focuses on moving people who are chronically and episodically homeless as rapidly as possible from the street or emergency shelters into permanent housing with supports that vary according to client need. The supports are provided by a case management team and/or a case manager that serves as a main point of contact for the client from assessment to follow-up. Government of Canada. (2014, January 28) Housing First approach[2].

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[2] Retrieved July 6, 2016, from Government of Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, http://www.edsc.gc.ca/eng/communities/homelessness/housing_first/approach/index.shtml

2.3. Homelessness in Montreal

A study financed by the city of Montreal in 2015 sought to count and survey Montreal's homeless population. The research team and 537 volunteers did the questionnaire in subway stations, streets, shelters, day centres and soup kitchens. For this purpose, they contacted shelters, transitional housing providers, provincial detention centres, hospitals and therapy centres to find out how many homeless people had stayed there during the night of the survey. In their results, they estimate that there were 3,016 homeless people in Montreal (Figure 2.1). This number did not consider the hidden homeless (including individuals staying in rooming houses). Nearly a quarter (24%) of the people surveyed were women. The proportions of homeless women vary according to the kind of place, reaching 54% among those in transitional housing and only 7% among those without any type of shelter (staying on the streets or metro stations). On the other hand, immigrants represent 16% of the sample (Figure 2.2) the research revealed that immigrant women are relatively at higher risk as they represent 39% of this particular group compared to 24% of homeless people as a whole. Finally, it is worth mentioning that Aboriginals constitute 10% of the sample, although they represent only 0.6% of the total Montreal population. In this sample, the Inuit represent 41%, even though, they make up only 10% of Montreal's Aboriginal population.

Figure 2.1: Estimated number of homeless individuals in Montreal 2015. Adapted from*Count and Survey of Montreal's Homeless Population on March 24, 2015* (p.12) by E. Latimer, J. McGregor, C. Méthot, A. Smith. 2015. Montreal.
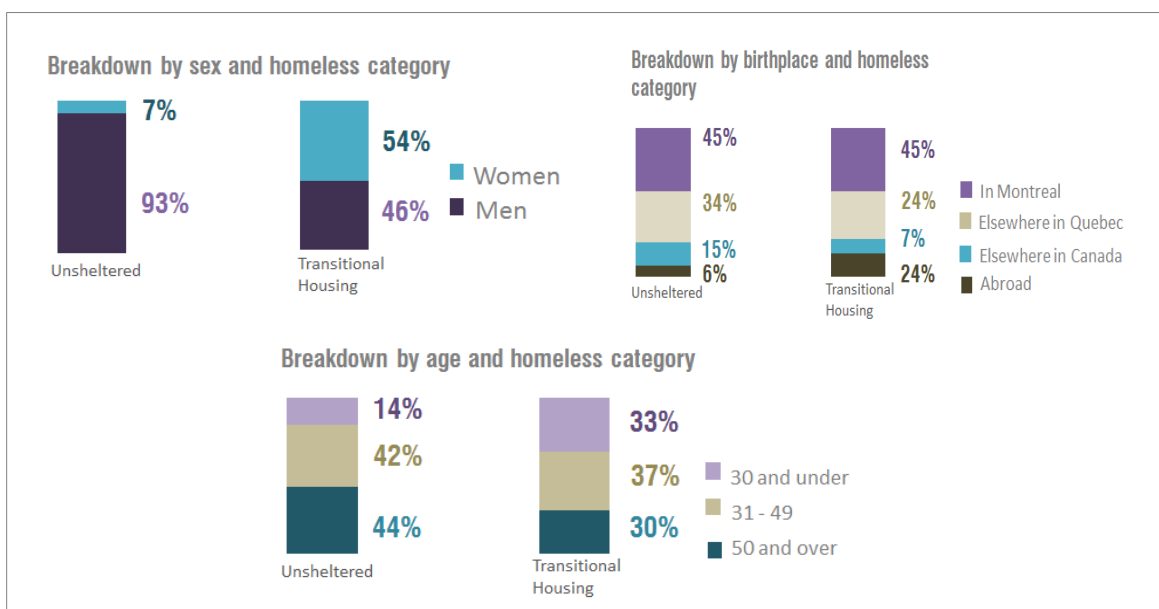
Figure 2.2: Breakdown by category of homelessness. Adapted from *Count and Survey of Montreal's Homeless Population on March 24, 2015* (p.12) by E. Latimer, J. McGregor, C. Méthot, A. Smith. 2015. Montreal.

Moreover, financial problems and drug or alcohol dependency are the two main reasons that were given for their most recent episode of homelessness. Among women and immigrants, violence and abuse were more common causes of homelessness rather than alcohol or drugs.

Women who have experienced domestic violence are a significant segment of the homeless population as well; they are often accompanied by children who may have been exposed to traumatic events that preceded their homeless episode, such as witnessing violence (Noble, 2014). The true number of women in the "hidden homeless" category is often inaccurate, given that they prefer, in many cases, to stay with acquaintances rather than staying on the streets.

2.4. Affordable Housing and its Impact on Homelessness

Affordable housing refers to permanent housing that costs less than 30% of total household income for low and moderate-income Canadians[3]. The notion of affordable housing means that individuals and families are also able to manage to pay for food, clothing, taxes, transportation and other necessities that promote health and well-being. The term covers a broad range of housing types and circumstances (Table 2.2). This "housing continuum" is based on individual differences including their need and ability to generate income, family size and composition and, most importantly, characteristics of the local housing market (Gaetz et al., 2014).

The supply and demand of affordable housing is shaped by investment and government policies, as well as by other contextual factors like the economic development and industrial activity of the country. Furthermore, key demographic shifts also present challenges. Nowadays, large numbers of young people under the age of 30 are having difficulties obtaining stable employment nationwide. Additionally, a large number of baby boomers are moving into retirement, with lower incomes and housing needs that differ from the years when they raised families.

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[3] This definition is an established norm and one accepted by the Government of Canada through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CHMC).

While one-person households "are expected to show the fastest pace of growth up until 2036, making it the single biggest type of household by the 2020s" (CMHC, 2013), most of the new houses built during the past two decades, however, are single detached family homes.

FOR OF HOUSING	CHARACTERISTICS	RESIDENTS/ FORMS OF SUBSIDY
Emergency Shelter	Generally organized in dormitory-style units, many of these shelters also have on-site social services and case management programs. Separate shelters, or portions of shelters, house different homeless populations, such as single adults, families (most often with a single parent), seniors, and young adults. The duration of occupancy varies from weeks to months.	Those without the ability to pay for housing. Some residents may have physical and mental health problems. A combination of public funds and private donations.
Transitional shelter	These often include a mix of living arrangements, including dormitory-style units housing from one to eight people each. Programs emphasize social services, the development of life skills, and job training. The duration of occupancy varies, it is generally six months, but it may be as long as a year or two.	Those without the ability to pay for housing. Some residents may have physical and mental health problems. A combination of public funds and private donations.
Transitional Housing	The transitional housing may take different forms, including single room occupancy (SRO) buildings with small independent studio units. Boarding houses and other shared residences are also common. Social services are included, but not always on-site. The duration of occupancy varies, but it may be as long as a year or two. The lack of sufficient permanent housing has led to long-term occupancy of transitional housing.	Those with some ability to pay for housing, often through rent subsidies. Some residents may have physical and mental health problems. A combination of public funds and private donations.
Supportive Housing	The first element of the continuum to be treated as permanent housing. Many features are comparable to transitional housing. Supportive housing may take many different forms comprising SROs, but other multi-unit buildings with larger apartments and even single-family houses can be supportive housing. Social services and specific programs for residents are integral to the housing, although they are not always provided on-site.	Those with some ability to pay for housing, often through rent subsidies. Some residents may have physical and mental health problems. A combination of public funds and private donations.
Public Housing	Public Housing is created specifically for those with insufficient income to afford the market rent. Funding programs vary. Most often multi-family apartment buildings are designed for specific groups, such as families or seniors. The federal government finances the renovation of older public housing projects.	Those with some ability to pay for housing who are expected to spend 30% of their income on rent. A combination of public funds and private donations. Many projects are funded through credits allocated by state and federal government.
Assisted Housing	Assisted housing is privately developed market-rate housing that also accommodates individuals or families who qualify for rental subsidies (housing vouchers).	Those with some ability to pay for housing who are expected to spend 30% of their income on rent. Many projects are funded through credits allocated by state and federal government.

Rental Housing	Rental housing is privately developed and most often takes the form of apartments or attached dwellings. It includes any housing that is not owned by the occupant.	Those who can pay the market rate and either choose to rent or cannot afford to buy. Some states offer some forms of subsidy (USA)
Owner-Occupied		
First-Time Buyer:	The house type can be a single-family house of any size, or it may be in a multi-family building.	Those who can pay market rates. Tax deductions for mortgage interests and real estate tax (USA)
Assisted Living and Congregate Care for Seniors	This housing is defined as specialized facilities that may include private or double-occupancy rooms. It generally includes group dining facilities, planned activities, social services and health care.	Those who can pay market rates. Although some residents may be subsidized.

Table 2.2: The Housing Continuum. Reprinted from *Designing for the homeless: architecture that works* (p. 10) S. Davis., 2004, Berkeley: University of California Press

As mentioned, the link between homelessness and the lack of affordable housing is that, while many people focus on individual factors when discussing the causes of homelessness, the reality is that many individuals and families in Canada are unable to obtain and pay for housing, and even to maintain the housing they have.

2.5. Definition of SRO and Rooming Houses

Even though rooming houses are common in North America, a standard definition of a rooming house does not exist. This is arguably because rooming houses are categorized as a living arrangement and not a built form (Freeman, 2013). Consequently, different terms are used to describe the same type of rooming house accommodation.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provides a more specific definition of rooming houses as:

> A permanent form of housing that consists of a building, or part of a building, where living accommodation is provided in *at least four,* separate, habitable rooms, each of which may contain limited food-preparation facilities or sanitary facilities, but not both. (CMHC, 2006)

Furthermore, in Chapter 1 of the By-Law Concerning the Sanitation, Maintenance and Safety of Dwelling Units - 03-096; 03-096-3, a. 1. (Ville de Montréal, 2015) a rooming house is simply defined as "an immovable or part of an immovable, as defined in a borough's by-laws." The By-Law continues with the definition of a room in a rooming house as "a room that is rented or offered for rent, used or intended to be used as a domicile and containing *no more than two* of the following amenities: a water closet, a bathtub or a shower, a kitchenette". Bearing in mind both definitions, we can now distinguish the term from other similar types of accommodation.

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) provides a very general definition of rooming houses as "a building divided into furnished rooms or apartments for rent." The term is also associated with boarding-house, lodging-house, private hotel, boarding-place and lodging-hall. Some distinctions between these types of dwellings can be made based on the type of tenure, ownership, living accommodation provided (number of rooms) and services offered. In the case of boarding houses, they usually offered meals and were traditionally situated within a family home. On the other hand, flop houses, unlike rooming houses, traditionally had multiple beds in one room, did not include any shared common space and were rented by the day, not by the week or month.

Rooming houses (Figure 2.3) are commonly associated with SROs, given that they are both types of accommodation aimed at single individuals on a low-income. In terms of the presence that SROs have in the literature compared with the term rooming house, the latter has more citations and multiple associated terms over the period 1873 to 2003. By contrast, the earliest reference to an SRO only dates back to 1941. Single room occupancy (also known as single resident occupancy, single room accommodation) can be defined as a form of housing in which people are housed in individual rooms within a multiple-tenant building. The term is

primarily used in North American cities and Australia (OED, 2000). SRO tenants often share sanitary facilities or kitchens (sometimes both), while some SRO rooms may include kitchenettes, bathrooms, or half-baths. Throughout this work, the term SRO is used as a broader concept that includes rooming houses.

Figure 2.3: Chambredor Rooming House (located in Montreal) was renovated around 1993, and it has always been used as a rooming house. Reprinted from Google Maps, n.d., Retrieved March 25, 2016
https://www.google.ca/maps

2.6.   Profile of the SRO Residents

According to a study made by the CMHC (2006), the typical rooming house resident in Canada is likely to be a single or divorced Canadian-born male of British, francophone (in Montreal) or First Nations ancestry, in his late 30s to late 40s, living below the poverty line. In many cases, the residents have some physical or mental health related issues, including addictions and dependencies, which they may be recovering from. Although the majority of SRO residents are individuals between 30 and 60 years of age, some sub-groups of residents include women, whose profile is much the same as it is for men, students (including foreign

students) who see rooming houses as a temporary low-cost alternative to more expensive on-campus housing, and newly arrived immigrants who also turn to rooming houses as they settle into a new location. In a few instances, individuals who can afford other forms of housing choose to live in a rooming house because they do not want the responsibility of a larger home.

2.7. History of SROs

The history of SROs, in North America, started with lodging houses in the seventeenth century. The term lodging house refers to a house, other than an inn or hotel, in which single rooms or lodgings are rented out for residence (OED, 2000). Sometimes what was rented was simply a bunk, a hammock, or a place on the floor (Schneider, 1986). The term "lodging house" is still used in building codes, although its definition varies from one city to another and may include other similar housing types, such as rooming houses.

In the nineteenth century with the growth of employment opportunities in urban areas, a great variety of SRO housing developed, offering an alternative for lower and middle-class singles and sometimes couples. The majority of these types of accommodations provided single furnished rooms or suites and at least some housekeeping services, many also provided meals (Franck & Ahrentzen, 1989). The boarding house was a privately owned house offering private, furnished rooms, a space for socializing and entertaining (the parlor), and a dining room with meal service, and it supplied primarily the emerging middle class. In the twentieth century, the rooming house gradually replaced the boarding house and served lower-income individuals, providing no social spaces and no meal service (Franck & Ahrentzen, 1989). In many cities rooming houses were located above ground-floor commercial spaces (Groth, 1986). Later, some of these rooming houses became SRO hotels. Lower-cost lodgings, where people rented places to sleep on the floor, were called flophouses.

Figure 2.4: Left, the Shelton Hotel in 1924; right, the building in 2009. From *Mr. Houdini, Your Box is Ready*, The New York Times, by C. Gray, 2009, Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/29/realestate/29scapes.html?_r=0

People with a very low or no income who lived in cities in the nineteenth century commonly rented spaces in tenement cellars, back yards, and inner rooms of apartments; these spaces were often called lodgings. Due to the inadequate conditions in tenements, new housing reforms were established for lodging houses. Those reforms often included social spaces and meal service and were aimed at the working class.

Professional single men could find accommodation in what were sometimes called, "residential clubs." These clubs featured a broad range of amenities and social spaces and were built as commercial ventures. One example is The Shelton, built in New York City in 1923 (Figure 2.4).

Municipal lodging houses were also established for working women, as various religious and charitable organizations sponsored these hotel-like residences for working women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, few of these houses provided affordable accommodation for women in the lowest wage-earning group (Ford, 1936).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the term "SRO" emerged to refer to many kinds of single room occupancy housing: low-cost residential hotels, rooming houses, lodging houses, and the renting out of rooms in private apartments (Franck & Ahrentzen, 1989). With an increase of single, low-income workers moving into cities, many buildings were converted to SRO hotels, adding to the existing stock of low-cost hotels and rooming houses. When SRO hotels emerged as a new version of housing for low-income singles, after World War II, the number of single-family detached houses increased, and they became more affordable for the "nuclear family" of a married couple with children. All types of hotel dweller were increasingly perceived as undesirable mainly because of their marital status and the type of building they inhabited. consequently, they were systematically ignored by those involved in urban redevelopment (Minkler & Ovrebo, 1985; Groth, 1986).

After World War II, many SRO hotels began to deteriorate, and they began to house a more vulnerable section of the population. The economic prosperity of the 1950s allowed many single working people to move to different dwelling types and, as such, SROs were the remaining option for a more defenceless population. This included alcoholics and former mental patients (Shapiro, 1971) yet SROs did not have the facilities to meet the needs of these residents. In other cities as well, the population of SROs came to include more elderly people. Often SROs that were not well maintained or managed became centers for a broad range of antisocial activities, including drug dealing and victimizing of residents and staff. Other SROs, however, continued to be well managed, like most of the residences for single working women (Franck & Ahrentzen, 1989).
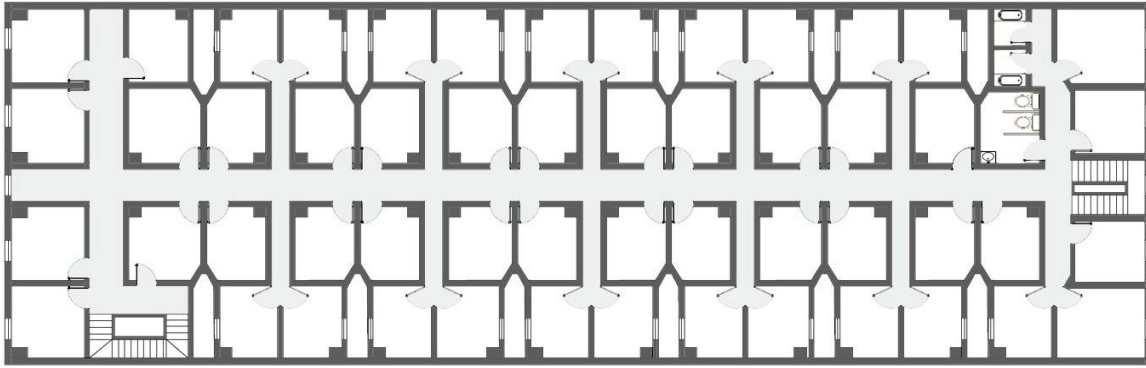
Figure 2.5: The San Francisco Rooming House Layout is considered unsanitary given the large number of tenants (53) that have to share sanitary facilities and the poor ventilation and lighting of some of the units.SCALE 1:250. Adapted from *New Households. New Housing*, by K. A. Franck, S. Ahrentzen., 1989, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York.

The image of the SRO building type as inadequate and as a center of potential anti-social activities (Figure 2.5) made it difficult for policy makers and others to recognize that they may be a valuable source of low-cost housing or might support a preferred way of life for some people. Furthermore, after World War II, much of the housing that had been developed for this population over the course of a century was lost and, when residential hotels were located in areas slated for urban renewal, they were destroyed or converted.

2.8. SRO Design Through History

Historically, single room accommodations were developed by a variety of agents (Mostoller, 1985). The design has always been conditioned by many variables, such as the type of ownership. Services provided location and housing policies. As discussed in previous paragraphs, the services ranged from lobby desk service to amenities similar to those found at a private club. Some individual units had their own sanitary facilities, while other groups of units had to share these facilities. In the upper-class category of SROs the furniture usually included a bed, a dresser, an easy chair, and a table or a desk. Often a sink was provided in each room.

In his study, Ford (1936) states that in some municipal lodging houses for men and women, cubicles rather than rooms were provided, with a simple pallet and a stand; these buildings were typically large and elevator-equipped structures. The rented rooms and their furnishings met the needs of their inhabitants who possessed few, if any, household goods. The sharing of sanitary facilities was more economical while social spaces, and hotel-like services, met additional needs. In many of these a "homelike atmosphere" was promoted as a solution to the homelessness of the new urban migrant or immigrant.

Figure 2.6: Engraving of Emblem XIII by Johannes de Brune, Amsterdam, 1624. From *New Households. New Housing*, by K. A. Franck, S. Ahrentzen., 1989, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York.

The historical analysis of furniture from different periods and locales made by Karen A. Franck and Sherry Ahrentzen (1989) revealed general styles suitable for life in single room dwellings, as well as particular examples that could meet the needs of affordability and durability. Many of their referents were taken from iconic paintings and literature (Figure 2.6). Flexible items like a light, wood side chair, and the "tavern table", a sturdy wooden table with a drawer, were identified as multipurpose pieces. Armoires with storage behind doors and also in

drawers became another precedent. The most prominent item of these rooms at the turn of the nineteenth century was the built-in bed with a canopy to conserve heat.

2.9. SROs in Montreal

Regarding the City's policies for affordable housing, Montreal has a large stock of apartment buildings of up to four stories that have no elevator. The City developed a rental housing acquisition program (the Programme d'acquisition de logements locatifs, or PALL) to revitalize deteriorating neighborhoods and improve the housing conditions of low- and moderate-income households living in such apartment buildings. Through this particular program, the City has acquired and renovated over 3,258 units in 65 apartment buildings (e.g. Figure 2.7). Following the renovation, the management of the units was delegated to non-profit organizations, including a housing co-operative. As of 2013, the City still owned 2,283 of these units operated by non-profit organizations, in 46 projects.

Figure 2.7: Logan House was built in 1989 and currently it is managed by the Fédération des O.S.B.L. d'habitation de Montréal. Reprinted from Google Maps, n.d., Retrieved March 25, 2016 https://www.google.ca/maps

Montreal also has an acquisition program for rooming houses (Programme d'acquisition de maisons de chambres, or PAMAC). Under this program, the City has acquired and renovated about 400 rooms in 15 housing projects. Management of the properties has been transferred to non-profit associations serving clients with special needs. In 2010, the PAMAC had more than 300 rooms in 11 projects.

Nowadays, SROs and rooming houses are overcoming their negative reputation and are being recognized as an important part of the city's housing stock (Alfaro, 2010). For very low-income people that may be at risk of homelessness, SROs constitute a step towards more stable housing.

Figure 2.8: Typical floor plan of a rooming house. Logan House offers 13 dwellings destined for families and 26 SRO units for singles. SCALE 1:200. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.290), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

Due to redevelopments and gentrification, the stock of rooming houses is gradually shrinking. In many cases, the owners of these facilities sell them or convert them to standard housing units. Others are renovated and turned into high-class bed & breakfast style accommodations. Le Réseau d'aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal (RAPSIM), a coalition of organizations that serve the homeless, has recently issued a report on the state of rooming houses in Montreal in which they estimated that there are 143 private rooming houses only in Ville-Marie and the South-West borough, with around 3.508 rooms available (RAPSIM, 2005).

Currently, many buildings of this type are managed by non-profit organizations that provide permanent and transitional housing for homeless, single mothers, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups. The remaining private facilities of this type are still associated with many problems; often the buildings need repairs, are poorly soundproofed, or have pest infestations. Many rooming houses, as stated in the previous chapter, were once standard housing that was then later subdivided, and as a result, they are not up to date with today's construction regulations and minimal requirements.

In its recently released *Plan d'action interministériel en itinérance*, the Quebec government has committed to encouraging the preservation of the existing rooming house stock, as well as building 150 new public units (e.g. Habitations Alexandre-de-Sève, Figure 2.9). Thus, the City of Montreal acknowledges that there is a problem; which is the first step towards change.
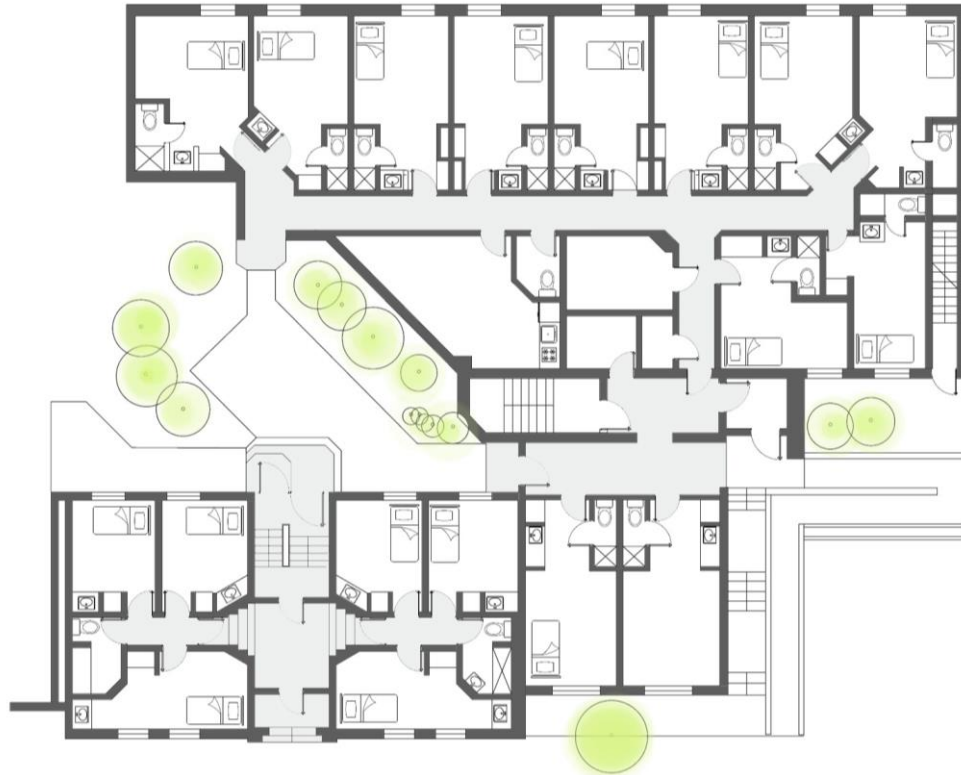
Figure 2.9: Habitations Alexandre-de-Sève. SCALE: 1:250. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.288), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

2.10.   Importance of Privacy in SROs

The concept of privacy is very extensive and includes physical, social and psychological dimensions. It responds to culture, tradition and context. Thus, a dwelling unit should be the most private and liberal place, where people can express their own views and values, as well as having control over their environment. "Home", in this sense, becomes a mirror reflecting and responding to the physical, social, and psychological privacy demands of its inhabitants.

Chermayeff and Alexander indicate the inherent affiliation between privacy and home, stating that:

> Privacy is most urgently needed and most critical in the place where people live, be it a house, apartment, or any other dwelling. The dwelling is the little environment into which all the stresses and strains of the large world are today intruding, in one way or another, ever more deeply (Chermayeff and Alexander, 1963).

At home, people tend to show their authentic pattern of behavior in private. Most importantly, having privacy helps in nourishing identity. Home, on the one hand, provides a physically controlled environment. The architectural elements and behavioral mechanisms shape the spatial arrangement, which regulates human interactions on different levels. Thus, the need for privacy gives the real meaning of home as a place for domestic social activities. In this context, behavior which is directed towards particular people, or activities which focus on issues of no public concern, in the doer's perception at least, establishes ground for privacy.

2.10.1. Concepts of Privacy and Territory

From a more general perspective, "Bodily privacy, understood as a right to control access to one's body, capacities, and powers is one of our most cherished rights - a right enshrined in law and notions of common morality" (Moore, 2003).

The notion of territory is closely linked to privacy in terms of human behavior. Regarding territorial behavior, Sebba and Churchman (1983) define it as the "behaviour of an individual or group claiming control over a particular area." Furthermore, they agree that a dwelling unit can be described as a territorial model. In their research, they have identified five different types of areas within the home environment, depending on the degree of control they offer.
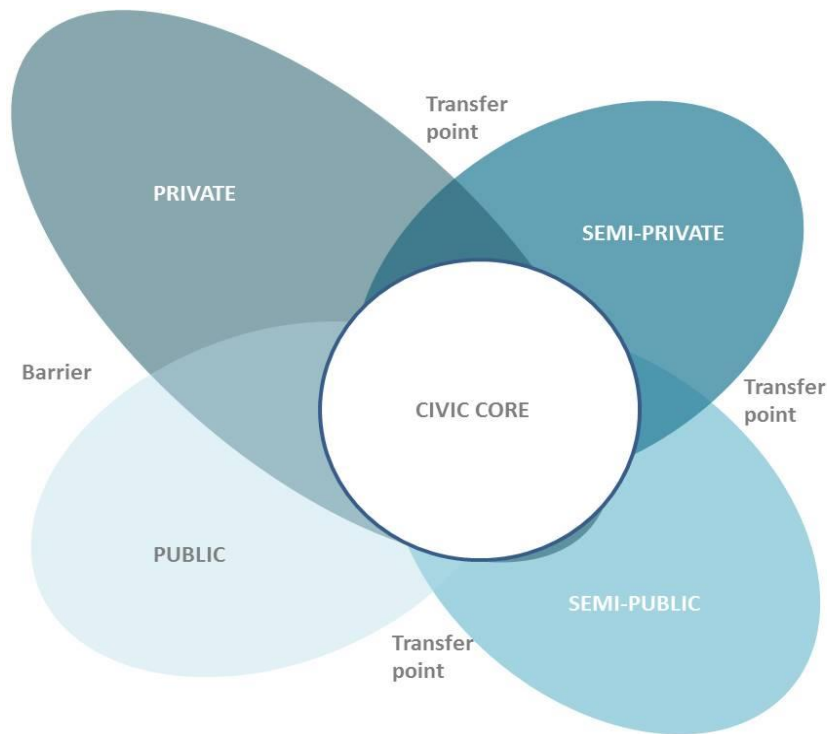
Figure 2.10: Anatomy of Urban Realms: areas of responsibility. The authors also refer to public, semi-public, semi-private and private areas, and state that the need for barriers, transfer point and locks is crucial. Reprinted from: *Community and privacy: Toward a new architecture of humanism (p.248)* by S. Chermayeff and C. Alexander, 1963. Doubleday.

Churchman (1983) describes areas within a home as a "shared territory" when used by all, with limited privacy; "individual primary territories" are those seen as belonging to individuals, such as a bedroom, which becomes the private sanctuary of the individual. Other authors, such as Oscar Newman in *Defensible Spaces* (1972), established a hierarchy of defensible spaces from public, semi-public, semi-private, to private areas. Newman's criteria for creating defensible spaces and related concepts of territories have significant implications for architects and designers. They have great importance in the design of spaces in which residents feel safe and have a genuine control over their immediate environment.

Moreover, in *A Pattern Language*, Christopher Alexander et al. (1977), describe territories within the "intimacy gradient" in the home. The authors state that a dwelling should provide a variable gradient of privacy and intimacy from public to private, and that failing to do so would "rub out all possibility of social interaction in the building" as it is not possible to choose to have control over encounters with other persons.
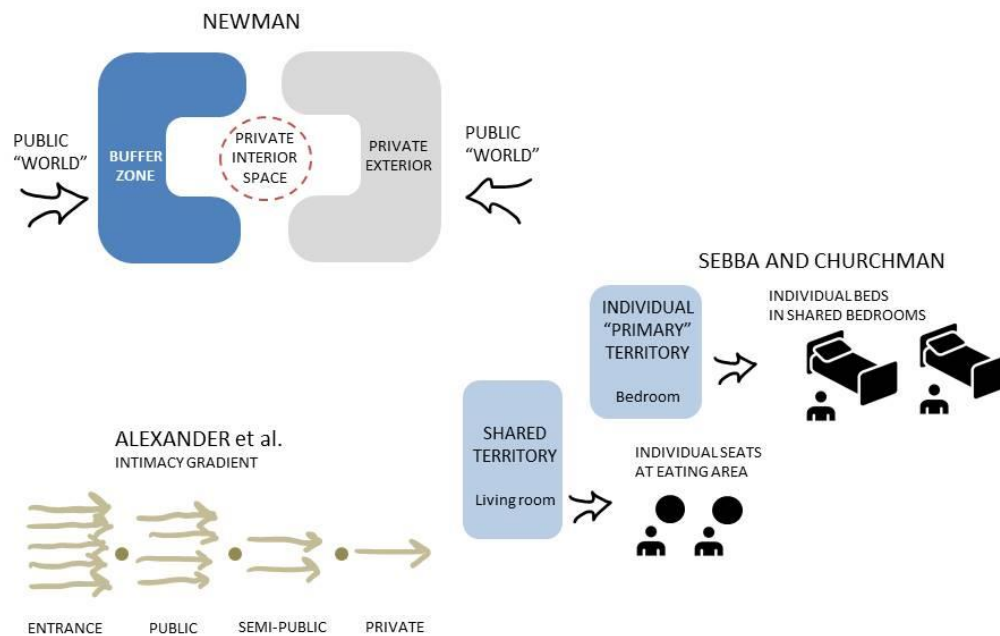
Figure 2.11: Privacy and territories within the domestic domain as identified by theoreticians. Newman (top left) describes the need for a buffer between the public world and private interior territories. Sebba (right) and Alexander et al. (bottom left) describe an intimacy gradient with the most public spaces related to the entrance leading to a sequence of increasingly private spaces. Adapted from *Residential interior design: A guide to planning spaces* (p.04), by M. Mitton and C. Nystuen, 2016, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

In *Community and privacy: Toward a new architecture of humanism*, Chermayeff and Alexander (1963) also provide the same spectrum of private, semi-private, semi-public and public territories as areas of responsibility of "Urban Realms." They continue describing the physical elements that provide separation, insulation, access, and controlled transfer between domains.

The authors suggest that providing "buffer lock zones" is of critical importance. Locks are used to differentiate areas in a building, to provide a transition between zones and to avoid noise and intrusion (e.g. "sterilization locks" in hospitals and "acoustic locks" in broadcasting studios). Newman also refers to the use of buffer zones as a strategy to have more control over the private environment (Newman, 1972).
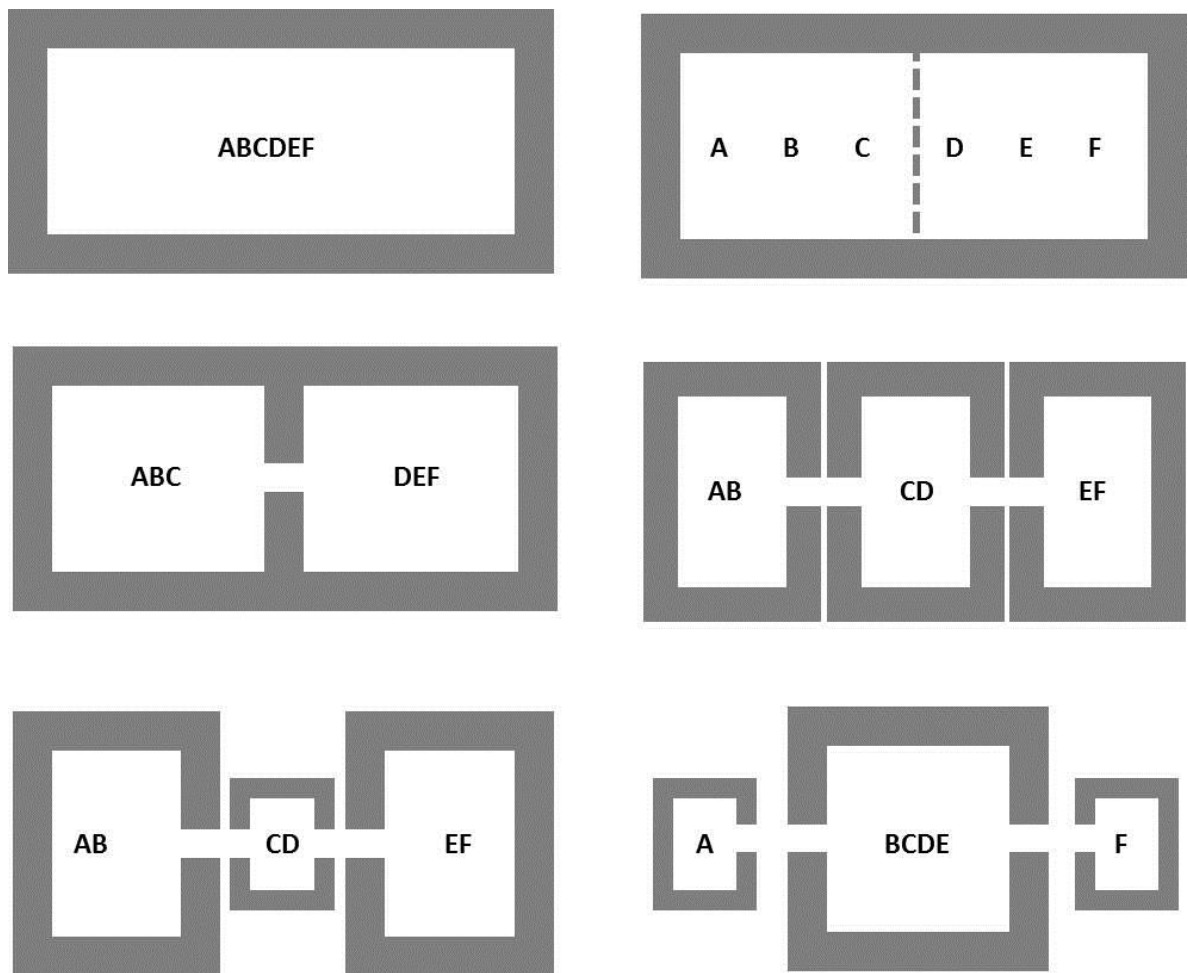
Figure 2.12: The lock emerges as a realm and activity zone. The transition points are exposed in this diagram as "physical joints" that serve as blocks for planners. Reprinted from: *Community and privacy: Toward a new architecture of humanism (p.252)* by S. Chermayeff and C. Alexander, 1963. Doubleday.

2.11. Conclusion

This chapter set the stage and context for a wider understanding of single room occupancy, homelessness and the affordable housing continuum, its meaning and its causes. In this regard, it is possible to say that single room occupancy and its multiple forms provide an effective housing option for single individuals on a low income, and have numerous combinations of spatial relations to provide a variable spectrum of privacy to satisfy the need of different groups of people. In recent years, the federal and local government have had an active role in ensuring adequate standards of upkeep in private rooming houses and in expanding the supply of affordable housing to reduce homelessness in all categories.

Finally, the question to be asked is: does Canada has the right mix of housing to meet the needs of low-income individuals? And furthermore, does the current responses to affordable housing are culturally aware, sensitive and private?

The following chapter chooses three case studies located in Montreal, which house homeless individuals in SRO-type accommodations. The methods used for the case study evaluation consist of fieldwork, taking photos, mapping, and conducting interviews with the administrators responsible for these facilities, their residents, and the architects, to have a better understanding of each building.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 presents four case studies of SROs and rooming houses by different organizations that provide affordable housing in Montreal. The case studies were chosen in accordance with the following parameters:

- Located in Montreal

- Type of construction (new-build, renovation, recycled)

- Relationship between facilities contained in the unit and shared facilities (shared washrooms and/or shared kitchen, common interior and/or exterior areas)

Accordingly, the goal was to provide diversity in relation to these parameters in the study. The first case study is Aylwin's Rooming House, a renovation project that started in 2014 and offers 21 rooms for single low-income individuals. The second case study is Les Jardin du Y des femmes, an SRO project that offers accommodation to women only, built in 2005. The third case study is Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve, a community home for elderly women that was established in 2003. Finally, the last case study is Walker's House, a rooming house for formerly homeless men.

The goal of these analyses is to make observations on the current state of SRO facilities and identify patterns, problems and possible solutions in the design.

Moreover, by contacting the representatives of the organizations, architects and residents, it was possible to gain insight into the many operational levels of SRO, including funding, management, design, construction and maintenance of these buildings.

Case Study	Type of Tenure			Type of Construction		
	Private	Public Housing	NPO	New	Renovated	Recycled[4]
Les Jardins du Y des Femmes			X	X		
Aylwin's Rooming House			X		X	
Walker's House		X	X		X	
Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve			X	X		

Table 3.1: Classification of case studies according to the type of tenure and construction.

3.2. Methodology

As discussed in Chapter 1, the method of this research consists of literature review, interviews, and observation of the physical environment. The interviews and observation process were done simultaneously during the visits to the case study locations, and their results are going to form the basis of the present chapter.

The interviews were conducted with the representatives of four organizations: Dianova, YWCA Montreal, Le Chaînon and Walker's Organization[5]. During the visits, some residents also provided their opinion regarding advantages and disadvantages of living in SROs, as well as how certain architectural elements were appreciated or needed.

Each case study was evaluated following the "General Assessment" scheme proposed by Montaner and Muxi (2011) which considers the society, city, technology and resources as part

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[4] Recycled type of construction refers to the buildings that were originally built to accommodate other use(s), not residential.

[5] In the interest of privacy, the real name of the organization has been changed to "Walker's Organization". All other details given are factual.

of the dwelling. Given the nature of SROs and rooming houses, a new section was created to evaluate privacy in a social context, but also in relation to the other four aspects.

Additionally, model unit plans and perspectives were developed for the analysis of the buildings' spatial layout, as well as photos of the common and private areas. This way, it was possible in Chapter 4 to identify minimal dimensions and to propose an alternative arrangement of the space if needed.

3.3. Aylwin's Rooming House

Figure 3.1: Aylwin's rooming house view from the street. The building is located in a residential borough with multiple services available, including public transport and commerce.

This project was the initiative of Dianova, a non-profit corporation dedicated to addressing the needs of substance abusers primarily through residential intervention programs.

The objectives of the project were to provide 21 furnished rooms (with bed and kitchenette) in a safe and functional environment; as well as, to provide tenants with community support and housing conditions that will improve their independence, their security, residential stability and encourage their reintegration into society (Figure 3.1).

There are 21 individuals currently housed in this building (full occupancy). The typical profile of the resident is a single woman or man, 18-years-old or older and on a low-income. Furthermore, the ratio of women to men living in the building is 25% to 30% (women) and 70% to 75% (men). According to the Housing Program Coordinator:

> There are different types of social housing in Montreal; [nevertheless] there is a lack of availability of housing for women. So we try to increase the mix in the project, we ensure that there are always women participating […] that way is [sic] easier for women to join us if there are already other women living here.

Moreover, all units in the building are reserved for low-income individuals. To be eligible for renting a room, the person must comply with the Rent Supplement Program requirements. To gain access, a potential tenant's annual income must not exceed $27,000. Other conditions include having lived on the Island of Montreal for a minimum of one year before the application to the program. Thus they do not necessarily have to be Canadian to apply.

There are three individuals under 30 years of age living in the residence and one individual over 60 years of age. Persons between the ages of 30 and 60 years correspond to the 98%. According to Housing Program Coordinator:

> Everyone must be 18 and over. The residents sign a lease, and there's not a maximum amount of time to stay; so it is considered permanent housing. They can stay here for the rest of their lives if they want. Some individuals have been here for many years and for them, it is a long-term program. […] It depends on the personal goals of the person, but for the majority of them it is a permanent solution; it is a safe and secure environment for them.

Finally, one of the conditions of living in this building is to be single; there is no cohabitation, given that they only offer SRO units. Consequently, some tenants leave the building to find a bigger apartment in the private market or within another social housing program.

3.3.1. Origin of the Project

In 2013, Dianova's Board of Directors signed an agreement with Service Canada to proceed with the acquisition of a rooming house located in the Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve borough. This was part of their initiative to provide a solution for people at risk of homelessness and homeless individuals, under the Housing First approach, and to offer them additional services of community support.

A few months later, the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) and the City of Montreal confirmed their participation in the project to renovate the building and operate within the framework of Accès Logis and the Federal Government Plan Stratégie des partenariats de lutte contre l'itinérance (SPLI). With this additional agreement, the 21 rooms were administrated as social housing and subsidized by the Municipal Housing Office under the Rent Supplement Program[6]. According to the Housing Program coordinator:

> We also worked with Le Centre des Services Sociaux de Montréal Métropolitain [Centre Intégré de Santé et de Services Sociaux, CISSS], what used to be the [regional] agency[7] […] And with our partners GRT [Groupe de resource technique]

[6] People with low incomes can receive this assistance which limits their contribution to the rent to 25% of their income, in addition to occupancy service charges. The OMHM's calculation is based on the income for the year before the start of the lease. Ten percent of earned income is deducted before these calculations are made. A supplementary payment is also calculated for any household member aged 18 or over who is not enrolled in school. Finally, rent must be paid on the first of each month. (Office Municipal d'Habitation de Montréal - OMHM).

[7] On February 7, 2015, the National Assembly adopted an Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies. This law gives either a Centre Intégré de Santé et de Services Sociaux (CISSS) or Centre Intégré Universitaire de Santé et de

Atelier Habitation Montréal, who helped us acquire the means and the subventions for the project. They [the GRT] accompany you to assure that the zoning is right, to contact the architect and the entrepreneurs.

After acquiring the building, they started the renovation work that consisted of partial demolition of the building, and one year later in November 2014 they opened the doors to the public.

3.3.2. The Building

As previously mentioned, the type of intervention made in this building was a major renovation in which they decided to maintain only the facades. In total, they managed to accommodate 21 rooms in four levels (semi-basement, ground floor, first floor, and second floor). There is no elevator, the units are grouped along a corridor and are kept at minimal dimensions (1.25 meters).

3.1.1.1   Characteristics of the Semi-Basement

The community room is located on this level (Figure 3.2) and the size of the space is approximately 22 square meters, with a cooking area and dining table. The space is reserved for activities like holidays and other events promoted by the organization to support the sense of community and integration in the building. It is not open for the residents on a regular basis which means the space is semi-private. Furthermore, the tenant who works as the building's security supervisor also has his apartment at this level. His 2 ½ rooms unit comes with an enclosed kitchen, bedroom, and living/dining area combined. In addition to the community room and the supervisor's apartment, Dianova has an office in the building for the project administrators. The space is kept at minimal dimensions as required by the city. Besides the

Services Sociaux (CIUSSS) delivers most of the health and social services at the core of a Réseau Territorial de Services (RTS). (Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux)

office, they also have a toilet for staff only. Finally, on this floor, the garbage and laundry rooms are located in front of the staff's office and common area, which allows the staff to have visual control over the tenants who use the space. All the spaces are kept properly clean and well organized.

Figure 3.2: Aylwin's common room, with cooking area and dining table, is a semi-private space in the building where tenants share with the staff in special events and activities.

3.1.1.2   Characteristics of the Ground Floor, First Floor, and Second Floor

The ground floor differs only slightly from the first and second floor, mainly due to the staircase located at the main entrance and the terrace. As such, the number of units located on the ground floor is six instead of seven (as in the upper levels). Also, the number of units with an independent bathroom reserved for female tenants is one instead of two. On all three levels, there are an equal number of shared sanitary facilities: two rooms containing a shower, and two rooms containing toilet and sink; approximately 3.5 users per bathroom (Figures 3.4 and 3.5).

Regarding the room's characteristics, all units contain a kitchenette (without oven), single bed, closet, and living/dining area combined (Figure 3.3). Six rooms include sanitary facilities with toilet, sink and shower; those types of units are strictly reserved for women. Smoking is permitted in the rooms, but no alcohol or drugs are allowed.

Figure 3.3: Aylwin's type B apartment.

Figure 3.4 (right) and 3.5 (left): Shared washrooms (sink and toilet) and showers.
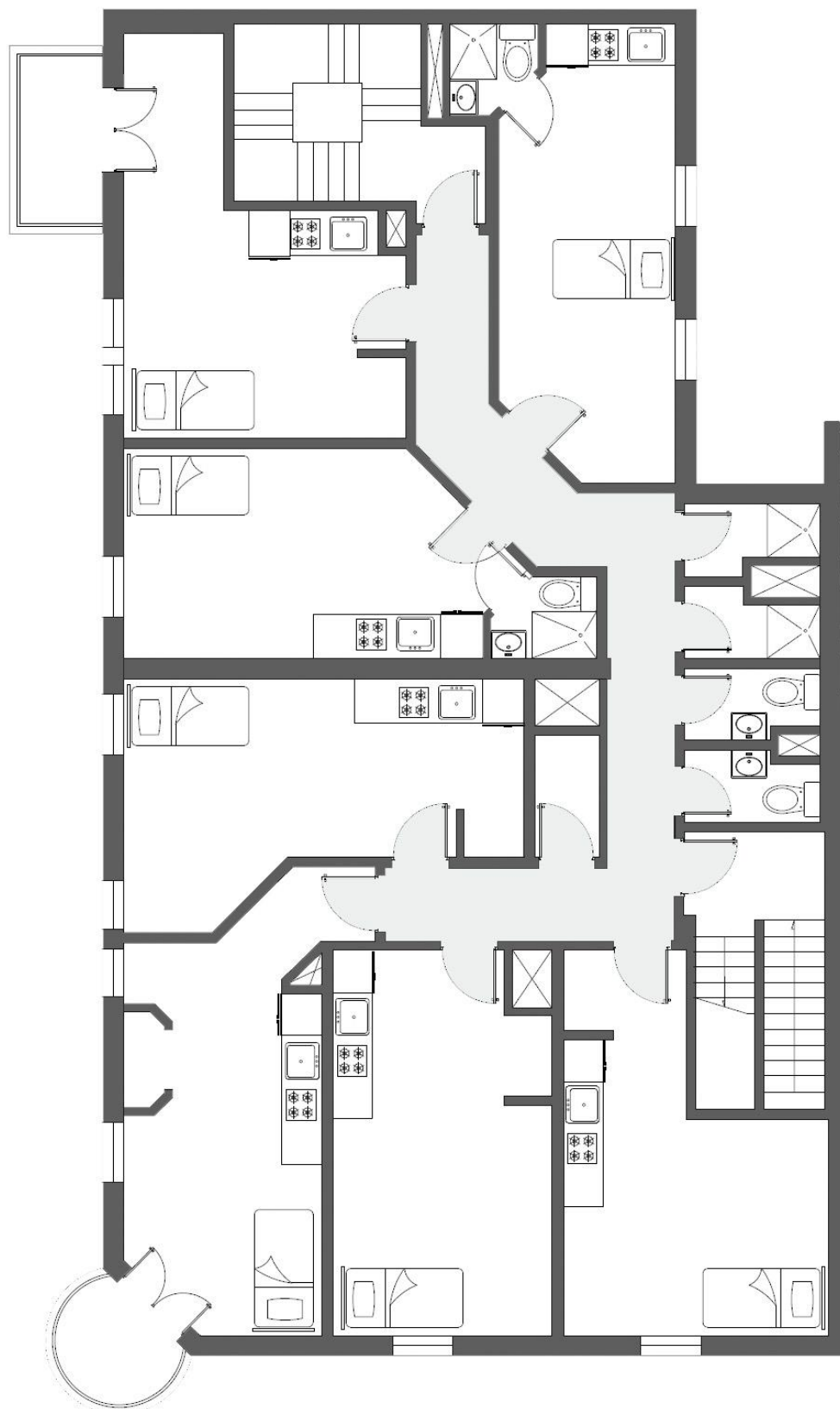
Figure 3.6: Second and third floor's layout – Aylwin's Rooming House. SCALE: 1:100

Society
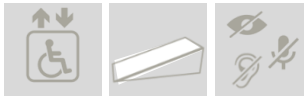
- Adjusting to different types of users

- Accessibility
- Affordability

25%   30%   > 30%

- Flexibility

Space for a kitchenette
(with small refrigerator)
Non-exclusive bathroom
Space for an additional bed

- Storage

- Social spaces
*Space to receive visit
In the unit

City

- Morphology
  - Typology
    - Services

Rural Area

Downtown

Commercial and
residential borough

New district

Suburb

Detached

Attached

Attached around
courtyard

Row houses

Row houses with
courtyard

Folded
row houses

Stepped
row houses
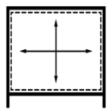
Privacy

- Floor

- 1 bathroom / 2.5 units
- Maximum distance to use shower: approx. 9 meters
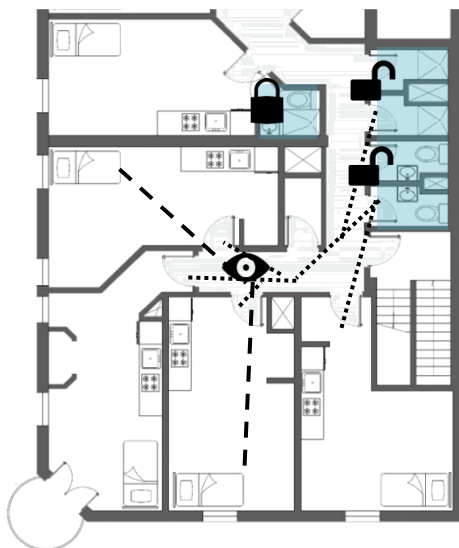
Technology & Resources

- Type of structure

Renovation   New build   Recycled

- Technological adaptation

To economic
resources

To local
traditions

- Innovation

Recycled
materials

Adaptability
mechanisms

Prefab
elements

- Insulation

Figure 3.7: Aylwin's Rooming House Basic Concepts Assessment. Adapted from *Herramientas para habitar el presente: la vivienda del siglo XXI* (p. 71;72) J. M. Montaner, Z. Muxí, D. H. Falagán (Eds.) 2011 Editorial Nobuko.

3.1.1.3. Privacy

As represented in the core concepts assessment (Figure 3.7), the analysis was made in the rooms, as well as in other areas of the building where interaction with neighbors or staff occurs. In Aylwin's rooming house, some units have their private bathroom and other units share these facilities. There are two rooms with toilet and sink, and two rooms with one shower, each located on each floor, where there is enough space to get changed. This avoids some uncomfortable situations, such as walking along the corridor in a towel after using the shower. All of their personal hygiene products are kept in their rooms. Both types of units have a combined open area with kitchenette, dining table, and bed. Furthermore, in all cases, the kitchen is located next to the entrance, and it is the first space that is visually accessible from the outside. Thus tenants pay more attention to having a cleaner and well-ordered kitchen compared to other types of units with an enclosed kitchen. At the end of the hallway, the units create a cluster; in this area, the access to the rooms is more proximate to the neighbors, and depending on their interpersonal relationships this may be perceived as a negative feature.

In Regard to the semi-private community room, the division between the room and the corridor is made of glass which leaves the room and the people inside exposed[8]. Also, the room is located next to the staff's office, and this certainly limits tenant's behavior in it.

On a more psychological level, the presence of community workers and the staff in housing programs that are managed by non-profit organizations have an impact in the sense of privacy and independence of the tenants; in this regard, Dianova pays careful attention to not being too intrusive and to respect the residents' intimacy. Individuals who have experienced homelessness have a different sense of privacy. In many situations they, have had to adapt their

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[8] To illustrate the case, while doing the interview to the project's representative, two tenants went to use the laundry and took the moment to give greeting when they saw her.

perception of private environments to reconcile it with their past reality of living on the streets. As such, in their "new reality", some of them do not consider it too burdensome to have to share sanitary facilities, but they do show concern about what the people on the outside think of them living there.

3.1.1.4. Private and shared facilities

The areas were classified according to their level of privacy (Table 3.2). Private areas are those used exclusively by the staff and are closed to tenants on a regular basis; public spaces are used by all the residents and staff, open on a regular basis, and semi-private areas correspond to those areas with limited access to tenants.

Hall(s)	Public
Kitchen	Private
Sanitary facilities (for men)	Public
Sanitary facilities (for women)	Private
Bedrooms	Private
Conference room (common area)	Semi-private
Terrace	Public
Laundry room	Public
Staff's services (office)	Private
Staff's bathroom	Private

Table 3.2: Public, private and semi-private areas of the building.

Following the list of 13 possible formulas identified by Teasdale (1993) to combine private facilities and shared facilities; correspondingly, two different combinations can be found in this particular case study (Tables 3.3 and 3.4).

Contents of the unit	Shared facilities
Basic furniture Compact Kitchenette (without oven)	Room containing toilet and sink Room containing a shower (no bathtub)

Table 3.3: Formula A. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.72), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

This type of arrangement is the most common in rooming houses. It also corresponds to the 75% of rooms in this building. Meals are eaten inside the unit whereas the personal hygiene activities occur outside.

Contents of the unit	Shared facilities
Basic furniture Compact Kitchenette (without oven) Complete bathroom	None

Table 3.4: Formula B. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.72), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

This formula provides the greatest amount of independence. It can be considered an autonomous unit, although considering that it is a single room, social activities that exceed three persons may require the use of exterior areas. This type of accommodation corresponds to 25% of the total of rooms in Aylwin's rooming house, and they are entirely reserved for women. According to Dianova's representative, "sharing washrooms decreases intimacy for women", as such, they purposely reserve these types of rooms for women. According to the Housing Program Coordinator:

> Once we had a woman here who did not have a bathroom in her previous apartment and she used to be very shy […] she used to leave her apartment at 3:00 am to go pee without being seen by other tenants.

3.1.1.5. Noise

Considering that this project was renovated only one and a half years ago, the acoustic insulation conforms to the current Canadian building's codes and regulations. According to the Housing Program Coordinator:

> There are no complaints [regarding noise] in general […]. It does happen that people slam the doors and then, once a month, I [the representative] have to advise everybody to keep in mind […] that they are not alone and that they have neighbors. But it's stuff that are taken care of easily [sic] […] because we have a relationship of trust that's been built with the tenants. When is brought to them in a respectful way they understand.

Tenants who have been in the building for a longer period of time sometimes experience problems with the new residents. According to the project manager, these new tenants are still adapting themselves to a new environment and their new sense of stability which can be a high level of stress and lead to make certain things like slamming the doors.

3.1.1.6. Safety

Regarding the security of the building, no one has access if the tenant does not have a key. They also have cameras surveying all access areas. According to the Housing Program Coordinator:

> Every person has their own address and […] they have their own key […], so no one has access to the apartment. We have a [second] key for security, […] but we do have a policy of advising the tenant 24hrs in advance [of any visit]
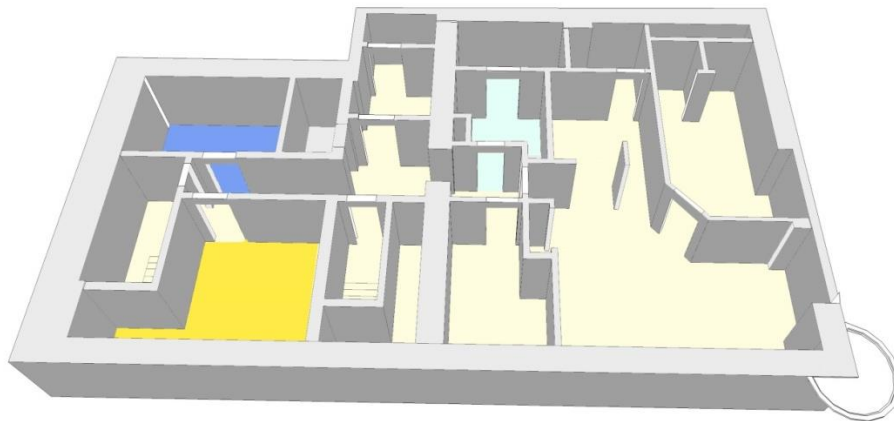
Figure 3.8: Community room (orange) and office (blue) located on the semi-basement level.

3.1.1.7. Community Areas

There are multiple approaches to design and manage community spaces in SROs; some facilities do not deny access to the community area in its entirety, but the residents are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal social life. In Aylwin's rooming house there is one community area, the conference room, which is semi-private (Figure 3.2). Its current function is to accommodate holidays and other events organized with the participation of all the residents, if not the area is kept closed.

Additionally, there is a terrace but it is not yet used by the tenants. Although the space is too small to accommodate all residents at the same time and it would not be used in winter, it is still an excellent opportunity to have an external public area for the tenants were they could do activities outside. Thus, Dianova has plans to adapt this terrace to public use.

Figure 3.9: Aylwin's common area located on the ground floor.

3.1.2. Conclusion

According to Dianova's representative, when asked about the general preoccupations towards SROs and rooming houses, she explains that the tenants' concerns before renting a room in this type of accommodation are how secure are they, in the physical sense, as well as the legal ambit. After being homeless for many years, and being exposed to all sorts of aggression and instability, having a contract that ensures that they can stay in this place gives them stability. The representative points out that the tenants sign a lease of Quebec by la Régie du Logement, which gives them the reassurance for the long term given that they know it is going to be renewed.

Furthermore, as, many of the new tenants have not been accustomed to living in a private dwelling, they tend to be Psychologically insecure and this leads to practical disorganization

and confusion from the very beginning. There have not yet been any cases of physical violence in the building. However, verbal violence, depression and substance abuse are problems due mainly to this circumstance.

As far as the design and management of the project are concerned, Aylwin's rooming house offers more than one room option to satisfy different users. Community areas ideally should be public for the tenants; that could improve the relationship between neighbors in the building and create a sense of belonging and community. The organization has taken special care of the maintenance and general hygiene of the building. Finally, the fact that the planners considered women's privacy in terms of the sanitary facilities differentiates this project from other rooming houses and SROs that have failed to respond to the particular needs of the residents.

3.2. Les Jardins du Y des Femmes

Figure 3.10: Les Jardins du Y des femmes front façade. The building is located downtown.

Reprinted from Atelier Big City Architects, n.d., Retrieved April 04, 2016, from
http://www.atelierbigcity.com/housing/yhabitations4.jpg

Les Jardins du Y des femmes is an affordable housing project developed by the YWCA Montreal, funded by the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) Program (also known as Stratégie des partenariats de lutte contre l'itinérance – SPLI). The main objective of the project was to provide 21 independent housing units (with bed, bathroom, and kitchen) at a low cost, in the Downtown area of Montreal. The 21 tenants living in the building are women who have experienced homelessness and have difficulty accessing stable and affordable housing in the private sector.

To be eligible, the women have to have successfully participated in a YWCA Program for over 12 months. Priority is given to women who are at imminent risk of homelessness.

After one year, if they have completed their particular intervention plan, and satisfy all the requirements, then they are eligible to apply for an apartment when it becomes available at Les Jardins. The Project's representative believes that the reason for this requirement is that they are going to have less support in Les Jardins compared to other YWCA Programs, where the residents meet their counsellor about once a week to work on their personal intervention plan

Not all women come from the Residence; some women were (and some still are) involved in other programs at the YWCA (e.g. participants of the Employability or Caregivers Support Programs) and were at risk of homelessness, experiencing housing difficulties, such as not feeling safe, or paying too much for their previous accommodation. Nonetheless, all tenants must be at least 18 years old and have the level of autonomy required to live independently. These requirements have been the same since the beginning of the project in 2005. Currently, the building has full occupancy, and they do not have a high tenant turnover rate, even though, according to the project's representative, they have a high demand from women looking for the next step.

A large percentage of the women who attend the YWCA's programs are dealing with some mental health or dependency issue. According to the project's representative, approximately 75% to 80% of women have some emotional dependencies, gambling addiction, drug and alcohol addiction, which can lead them to be depressed and have anxiety. Even though the YWCA does not have a "harm reduction approach" in their social-reinsertion programs, meaning that the tenants must be abstinent before entering the program, at Les Jardins women are expected to live independently, make conscious decisions, and keep in mind that they are part of a larger community. The Programs Director states that, "At Les Jardins, women have to demonstrate that they are more autonomous and stable at all levels, financial,

mental, physical, etc. […] To live on their own, with minimum support services" (D. Pizzuti, personal communication, May 17, 2016).

3.2.1. Origin of the Project

Around 2004, the YWCA applied to the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) Program as part of the Federal Government's initiative to provide a solution for people at risk of homelessness and/or homeless individuals. The funding aimed to either improve existing housing or to create new accommodation and, as such, they decided to begin an evaluation process to decide how to proceed.

Despite that the Federal Government's funding was used to build, not for the management, and that the project is not subsidized by the Accès-Logis Provintial Plan, the YWCA as an organization has the ethical commitment to providing low-cost housing. As such, tenants pay approximately 30% of their income for housing which is still considered an affordable option for them.

Modeled after the YWCA's first housing project, Les Jardins was built in collaboration with participants of their social-reintegration program. The committee for the building's construction consisted of a project manager from the Technical Group Resource, two workers, and the rest were six to eight participants that contributed in the entire process. According to the Programs Director, the women participated on all levels of the project, from the design process to the construction, and were also coached on their management and communication abilities.

Their vision was to provide and develop housing in the downtown area because, according to the project's representative, there is not much housing for low-income people in this sector. This vision affected many of the decisions that were made in terms of size and

space, due to the cost of the square meter in the downtown part of the city. Before deciding whether to construct a new building or to renovate, they considered multiple options, but the estimated amount of work required to renovate was greater than finding an empty lot upon which to build.

3.2.2. The Building

The main concept for the design was to arrange the 21 units in four levels towards a collective courtyard accessed visually from all units. According to the architect of the project, there were technical considerations as well, such as trying to maximize the number of units on the lot. The idea they came up with for the layout of the building was also a response to input from the neighbors. Thus, the adjacent building has a "U" shape (Figure 3.11) and a courtyard with a big tree (Figure 3.11), which the architect took as a design opportunity to create a courtyard next to it that could be perceived as bigger and that could create new views, bringing light to all apartments. According to Atelier Big City Architects:

> This space is symbolically clad in a light green coloured metal. The building's communal spaces, as well as each apartment, all face onto this space setting up the possibility for selective or complete group participation in events as casual as conversations between balconies to group dinners and gatherings.

The main difference between this project and the others is the type of units that it offers. While the majority of the case studies that have been analyzed in this research are rooming houses with a shared facility (bathroom, or kitchen), in this particular example the units are self-sufficient, and the only shared facilities are the community areas; although, it is considered SRO as it is for single individuals only. With this particular case, we can appreciate the broad range of housing options that exist for low-income single individuals.

Figure 3.11: View of the inner courtyard.

Reprinted from Atelier Big City Architects, n.d., Retrieved April 04, 2016, from
http://www.atelierbigcity.com/housing/yhabitations1.jpg

3.2.2.1. Characteristics of the Ground Floor

The community room is located on this level and, as in the case of Aylwin's Rooming House and Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve, the space contains a cooking area with dining table, a sofa, computer with internet access, and a TV. The space is reserved for community events, and it is open for the residents on a regular basis. The space is personalized with pieces of bricolage made by the tenants during those collective activities.

Four studios have a kitchen, dining and living area combined, and complete bathroom. There is no bedroom, although they have a mid-height closet that creates a more private space for the bed, allowing light into the space, without the need for a wall (*Chambre à second jour*). All units have access to the courtyard. One of these units is reserved for a tenant with a mobile disability, for this reason, they also have a special elevator with capacity for one person to

descend 0.80 meters of change of level. The traffic space in the corridor has the required dimensions for using a wheelchair.

Other services areas, such as the boiler room which also holds the recycling containers and gives access to the laundry room, are at this level. Finally, there is a garage for one car, but it is used to store maintenance equipment for the building.

Figure 3.12: Les Jardins community living room. The tenants have made some craft projects that they have framed and hung on the walls. One façade overlooks the main street and it is covered by a courting while from the other side, people can access the courtyard from this room.

3.2.2.2. Characteristics of First Floor, Second Floor, and Third Floor

The first floor differs from the upper levels due to the void space over the entrance hall and the community room which have a double height (Figure 3.12). A small office for the community worker and a bathroom are located on the first level, although this person does not have a room in the building in the same way as some of her peers, due to the organization's principle of promoting independence in the project.

In total, there are five units grouped along a corridor. In a similar style to the ground level, there are four studios with bathroom, kitchen, dining and living area combined, and a private space for the bed. All units have a balcony that overlooks the courtyard. Additionally, at the end of the corridor, there is one two and a half which includes complete bathroom, kitchen, dining, and living area. The bedroom is contained in a room. The unit has a balcony that overlooks the courtyard, as well as windows with views of the back laneway.

On the second and third floors, there are four studios and two two and a half units at both ends of the corridor. Finally, the architects decided to keep the original neighboring brick wall, which was an example of very well-preserved street art.

*Figure 3.13:*The corridors on the first, second and third floors show the original street work dating back to the period before the building was constructed.
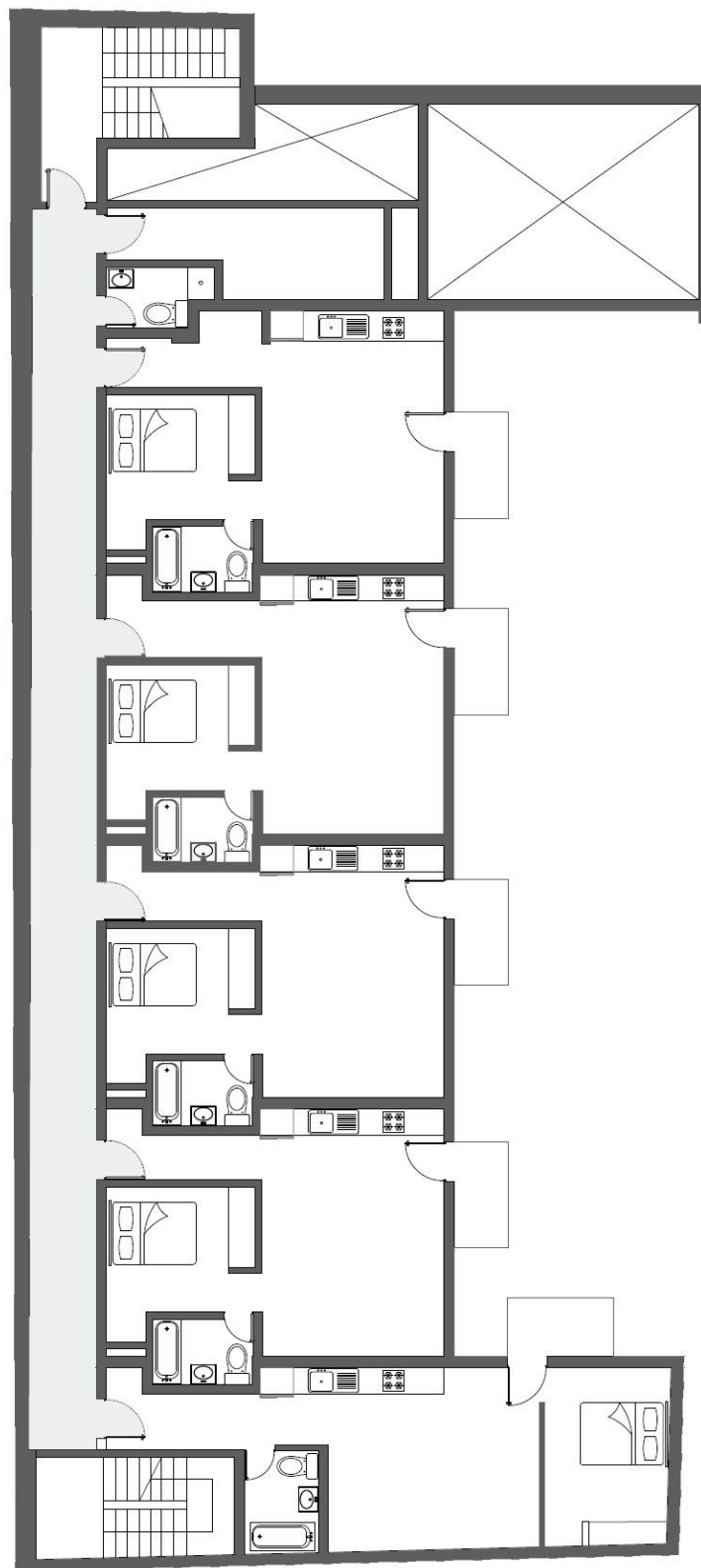
Figure 3.14: Second and third floors' layout – Les Jardins du Y des femmes. SCALE: 1:150

Society

- Adjusting to different types of users

- Accessibility
- Affordability

25%   30%   > 30%

- Flexibility

Space for a kitchenette
(with small refrigerator)
Non-exclusive bathroom
Space for an additional bed

- Storage
- Social spaces
*Space to receive visit
in the unit

City

- Morphology
  - Typology
    - Services

Rural Area

Downtown

Commercial and
residential borough

New district

Suburb

Detached

Attached

Attached around
courtyard

Row houses

Row houses with
courtyard

Folded
row houses

Stepped
row houses

Privacy

- Room

- Building
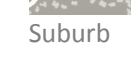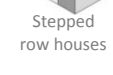
Technology & Resources

- Type of structure

Renovation New build Recycled

- Technological adaptation

To economic
resources

To local
traditions

- Innovation

Recycled
materials

Adaptability
mechanisms

Prefab
elements

- Insulation

Figure 3.15: Les Jardins du Y Basic Concepts Assessment. Adapted from *Herramientas para habitar el presente: la vivienda del siglo XXI* (p. 71;72) J. M. Montaner, Z. Muxí, D. H. Falagán (Eds.) 2011 Editorial Nobuko.

3.2.2.3. Privacy

Tenants in Les Jardins benefit from having an independent unit with kitchen and bathroom, and even though privacy is not a great concern among tenants at this time, it was indeed considered in the design. Inside the units, the areas are well divided into public (kitchen, dining and living room) and private areas (bed and bathroom). Privacy inside the unit was achieved with the use of mid-height partitions for the closet. This element divides the living room from the bed, and any visitor will not see the (usually more private) things that people keep next to the bed, like dirty clothes, healthcare products, among others. Privacy between the exterior and the interior was achieved by positioning the bed beside the entrance and not in front. In the corridor, the studios are positioned next to each other in a single row (not facing door to door as in other cases), which also decreases the chance of neighbors looking inside the unit.

In regards to the common areas, the terrace is overlooked by all the units, and any activity can be seen and heard by the tenants if they are on their balconies or looking through the window. This restricts the behavior of the inhabitants. On the other hand, the community living area with kitchenette and television is a private area, and each tenant has its key, meaning that only tenants can access the space (visitors are not allowed). Finally, the entrance hall, which is outside the community living room, has a double height and it is "controlled" visually by the community worker who has her office on the first floor, even though the worker does not spend the night in the building. During the day, she can see from her office who enters and leaves the building.

3.2.2.4. Private and Shared Facilities

As previously discussed, this case study is perhaps the example with the greatest level of privacy, arguably because the users are all women, and some of them were involved in the design process. Therefore, they asked the organization to consider privacy as a main factor. First, they requested a greater quality of isolation between walls to have more intimacy and not to hear the neighbors. Regarding the distribution of the unit's space, the bed is located in a more private area; it is not visible from the corridor nor is the bathroom door. In accordance with the organization's demands, the kitchen is not clustered in a room. Therefore, they motivate the tenants to keep the space clean and organized, as it is the first area that a person sees when entering the unit.

The relationship between private and public areas is expressed in the next table:

Hall(s)	Public (for tenants)
Kitchen	Private
Sanitary facilities	Private
Bedrooms	Private
Common area	Public (for tenants)
Courtyard /garden	Public (for tenants)
Laundry room	Public (for tenants)
Garage	Semi-private (staff only)

Table 3.5: Public, private and semi-private areas of the building.

In general, there is no conflict over shared facilities, except for some isolated cases where the tenants living on the ground floor complain about people invading the space in front of their apartments, using garden activities as an excuse. Those cases are managed by the community worker and the community life committee.

Following the list of 13 possible formulas identified by Teasdale (1993) to combine private facilities and shared facilities, there is only one combination found in this particular case study.

Contents of the unit	Shared facilities
Basic furniture Kitchen (fully equipped) Complete bathroom	None

Table 3.6: Formula B. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.72), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

This formula, also found in Aylwin's Rooming House, provides the highest amount of independence. It can be considered an autonomous unit, although bearing in mind that it is a single room, social activities that exceed three persons may require the use of exterior areas.

Figure 3.16: Entrance to the building.

Reprinted from Atelier Big City Architects, n.d., Retrieved April 04, 2016, from
http://www.atelierbigcity.com/housing/yhabitations5.jpg

3.2.2.5. Noise

Tenants commented that they occasionally hear noises coming from the neighbors on the upper floor, (e.g. when they move furniture), although these "impact" type of noises are not as common as the "airborne" type. Although in general there are no complaints regarding noise between apartments, one of the aspects that could be improved is the need to install windows with greater insulation for the units located on the front facade, given that the street is highly transited and can be very noisy, especially during the night.

3.2.2.6. Safety

Regarding the sense of security and safety, the tenants feel safe because they know that they can count on the YWCA staff. The project's coordinator contends that this may not be that favorable because they may become too dependent, which could represents a drawback for the women in terms of autonomy. The people living in this type of accommodation want to be part of the social setting and they are very protective with their privacy, because they recognise that control over their privacy protects them from prejudice and potential stigma. Also, especially for women leaving family violence, safety is a great concern. Thus, during the design process, they opposed having any signs that identified the building or any explanatory information about the organization for the public's benefit. Finally, some design strategies to increase safety were taken into account, such as not having any apartments overlooking the street on the ground floor. Thus no one who is on the sidewalk can see inside the units. According to the Project's representative:

> […] They do not want to be identified with an organization that provides housing for women in difficulty. Some work from home and their employers can visit the building and see that they live in a "special" type of housing […] the same for partners or friends.
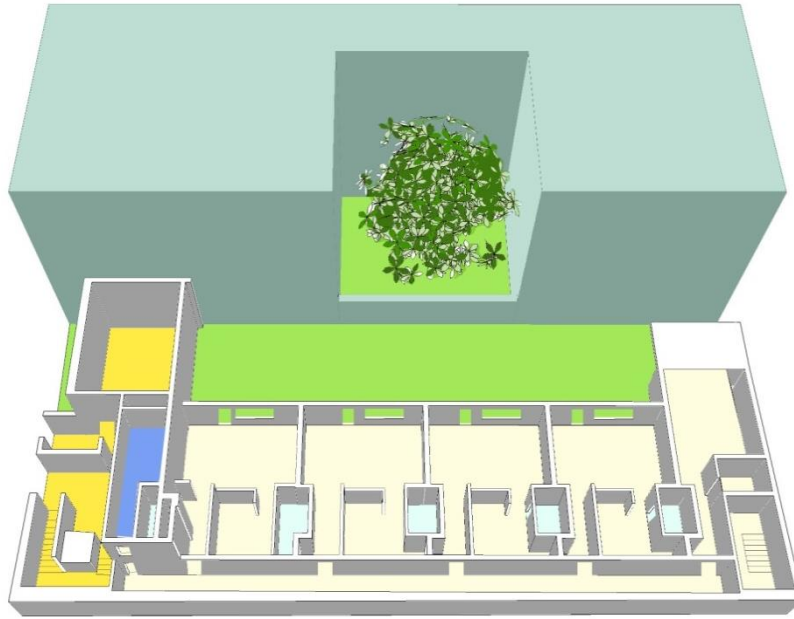
Figure 3.17: Ground Level Layout. Community room (orange) and office (blue).

3.2.2.7. Community Areas

There are two community areas open to the tenants located on the ground floor: the courtyard and the community room (Figure 3.17). The tenants are part of the Community Life Committee, which organizes multiple activities in these areas, such as coffee meetings with the staff where they discuss their preoccupations and aspects of their daily life; they also do small artistic activities and gardening. The purpose of these activities is to avoid solitude, promote community life, citizen participation and good neighboring.

Furthermore, the community room was designed so that the tenants could cook together and share while preparing a meal for everyone; this idea came from the women involved in the process, the architect and the organization. In conversations with the architect of the building, the latter (who is herself female) wonders whether women and men appropriate this space differently and if men prefer to engage in other principal activities in their community spaces.
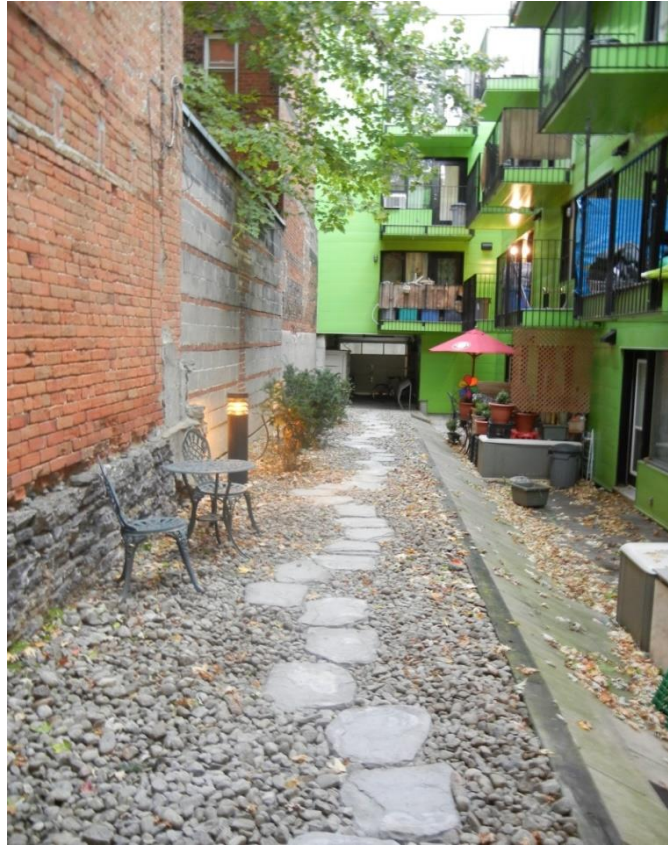
Figure 3.18: The common courtyard area was renovated recently to accommodate a rock path, lighting and furniture that can be easily maintained and are resistant to the bad weather. *Photo credits:* Diana Pizzuti, Programs Director at YWCA Montreal.

3.2.3. Conclusion

There are many challenges when working and designing for vulnerable populations, especially when it comes to women. Women are not necessarily on the street; they will find a place of refuge, but that does not mean they are not homeless. Certainly, women's homelessness is more invisible; it can be someone who does not have a permanent address, or who lives in a very precarious or unstable situation. The Program Director states that "Women's homelessness is not the same as for men, and if we need to create gender based solutions that address their specific realities" (D. Pizzuti, personal communication, May 17, 2016).

Having understood this principle, those involved in the design process could bring a more thoughtful response to the project. Thus, in terms of the project's design approach, the sense of community was considered in multiple aspects of the project. This ranged from an examination of the co-design approach and the participation of the future tenants in the project to the concept of arranging the units into a common area.

Some specific elements make the building design very distinctive and create a sense of belonging among the tenants. For example, the use of bright colors in the courtyard, the preservation of the original neighboring wall with its street art and rough appearance, the quality of the building and the privacy obtained in the studios with the mid-height closet.

3.3. Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve

Figure 3.19: Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve front façade.

The Yvonne-Maisonneuve's House was established in 2003 as an initiative of Le Chaînon to provide permanent housing for elderly women. This rooming house offers 15 units with shared washrooms, common kitchen and community areas (a terrace, community living area and a small office to meet with the workers), as well as support services. All the women have experienced housing difficulties; some of them were on the streets, or without a fixed abode: "couch surfing".

There are 15 individuals currently housed in this building (full occupancy). The admission criteria require that: women are 55 years old or older, are autonomous, or in other words, are able to get dressed themselves, can take care of their personal hygiene, are able to walk and use the stairs, are capable of doing the laundry and can clean their personal space. Finally, during the course of their stay, the women also must actively participate in meetings and activities as required by the intervention plan.

The building is not adapted for handicapped people. Although some of the women living here have mental health problems, such as schizophrenia and anxiety, they are taking medication. If the women have difficulties taking a shower or getting into bed, the organization calls the public service of social workers of Montreal (CLSC), and they go to the building to help them. The community worker cannot assist in those cases.

The Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve provides meals in the community kitchen. Breakfast is served from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; there are snacks from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and from 8:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; and dinner time is from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The cost of the meals is: breakfast $0.50, dinner $1, and coffee $0.25, they do not offer lunch. The total cost per month of the meals is deducted from their rent. Le Chaînon subsidizes the meals and the rest of the

rent. A small amount of the aid comes from the government, but the majority of the support is provided by external donations.

3.3.1. Origin of the Project

In 1992, after five years of operation, The Chaînon started an initiative called l'Accueil de Nuit, to identify elderly women that were homeless or living in extreme difficulty in Montreal. At that time, the SHDM (Société d'habitation et de développement de Montréal) was offering renovated rooming houses to community organizations to be in charge of the management. The same year, The Chaînon agreed to manage the home than then will become the Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve. With this new project, the goal was to provide permanent accommodation for the elderly women while ensuring that they would have support for all their needs.

One year later, in 1993, the Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve opens its doors. The team was composed of a worker whose salary was provided by the Jean Coutu Foundation, assisted by two people whose salary came from the governmental program. One by one, fourteen women occupied all the rooms. Once the team started managing the house, they realized that they needed to change some aspects in the management. So they started providing two meals a day, assistance with room cleaning, support with budget management, and assistance in medical and social care.

In the year 2000, they started a plan to relocate the Yvonne-Maisonneuve's House, given that their premises did not meet the needs of the services. As such, the City of Montreal concedes a parcel to The Chaînon. Through obtaining a grant from the IPAC (initiative de partenariat en action communautaire pour les sans-abris) the building was to be constructed on that plot.

The new Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve (Figure 3.19) opened its doors in 2003 providing permanent housing to elderly women, in units with shared washrooms, common kitchen and community areas (a terrace, community living area and a small office to meet with the workers).

3.3.2. The Building

The layout of the floors is regular which maximizes the areas, half of the units overlook the street and the other half overlook the terrace located at the back. The spaces are positioned in a concentric arrangement with a central core containing the washrooms and service areas. The building has a total of 15 units located in four levels (semi-basement, ground floor, first floor and second floor), with community areas and common kitchen.

3.3.2.1. Characteristics of the Ground Floor

From this level, people can access the building. Once inside, there is an entrance hall (Figure 3.20) with chairs and a corner with a desk and a phone for the residents. Also, the organization has an office for the representative of the project located on this floor. Next to the office, the community worker has a small unit with a single bed that can be hidden. Additionally, there are three regular units for the tenants that contain a single bed, desk, closet, small refrigerator and a counter with a sink, which allows the preparation of small meals. As mentioned in the previous page, the areas are organized around a central module which contains one shared bathroom with bathtub, laundry room, and storage space. Finally, there is an elevator, although tenants must be able to climb stairs, given that the elevator is closed during night hours.

Figure 3.20: Entrance hall space to make phone calls.

3.3.2.2. Characteristics of the Semi-Basement

The community kitchen (Figure 3.21) is located in an open space with the dining area, as such, the tenants can see when the meals are being prepared and then they all sit together to eat. There is one worker who does the meals and another who helps with the cleaning. Next to the kitchen there is a room with two fridges and cabinets for dry food and a small room with a sink for cleaning and maintenance equipment. The tenants access the terrace area through the dining area.

The common living area (Figure 3.22) is located on this level as well, it is an open space with sofas, chairs, and a TV, and there is also an exercise machine for the tenants. There is enough space to accommodate the 15 women and the staff. Finally, from the living room, the tenants have access to a small office with one computer available for their use.

Figure 3.21: Yvonne-Maisonneuve common kitchen opens on to the dining area where all the tenants have meals together.
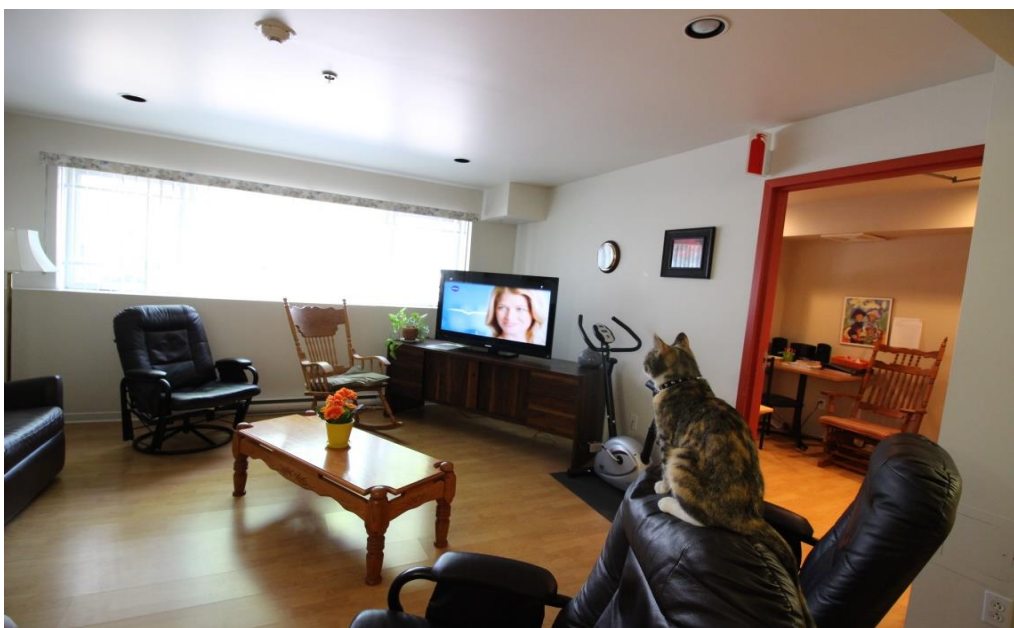
Figure 3.22: The community living area in this building can accommodate all the tenants and it is commonly used to watch television and do community activities.

3.3.2.3. Characteristics of the First and Second Floors

There are six rooms located on each level. All the rooms contain a single bed, closet, and a counter with a sink, microwave, and small fridge (Figure 3.23). Smoking is not permitted in the chambers or other areas inside the building, although alcohol consumption is allowed inside the units, due to the harm reduction approach of the organization.

The tenants have access to two washrooms, one containing a shower and another containing a bathtub. There is a laundry area on each level and a small compartment on each level for storing cleaning products and other equipment.
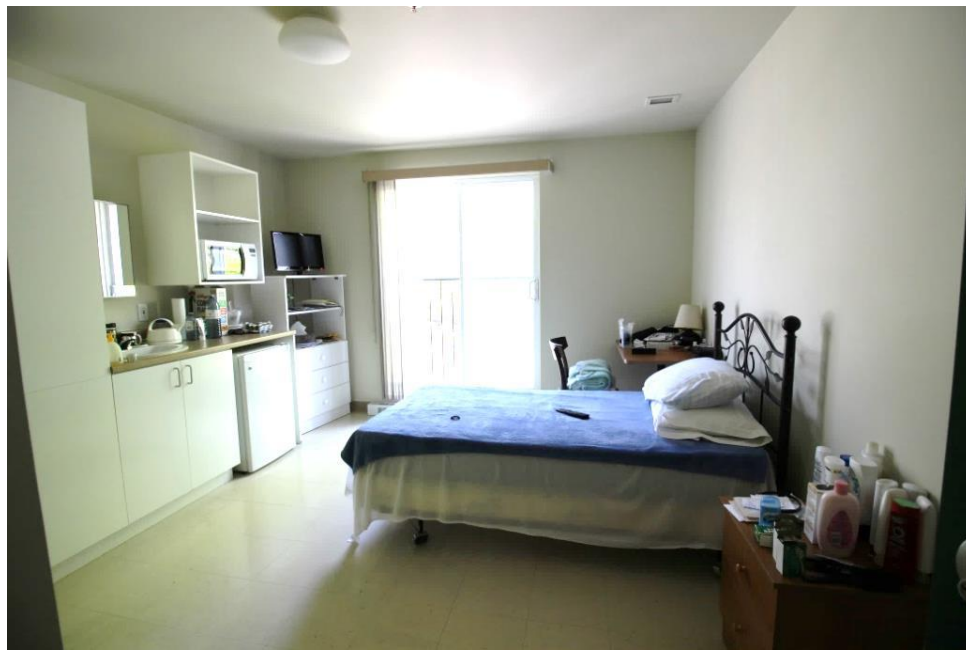
Figure 3.23: Yvonne-Maisonneuve standard type of room.
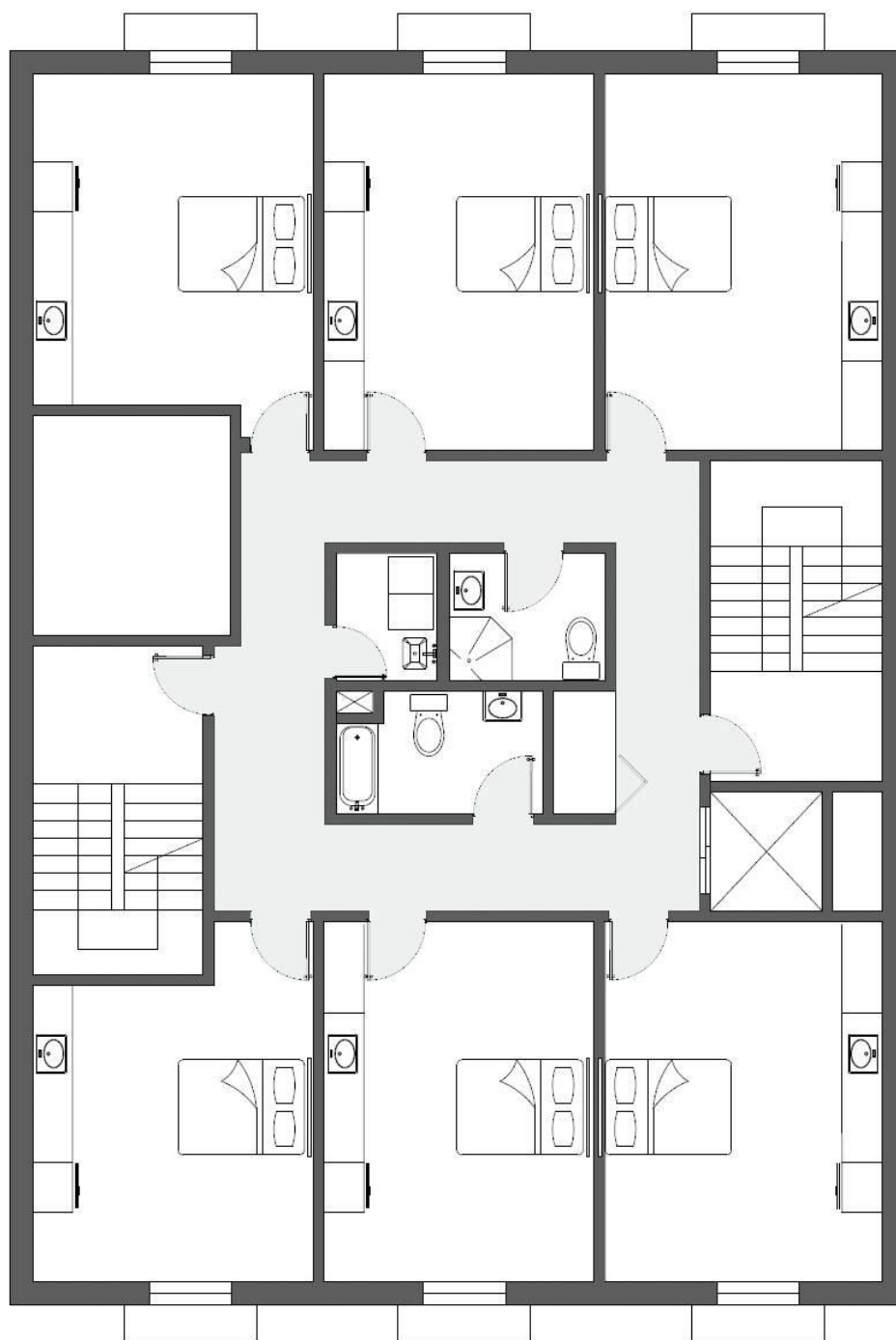
Figure 3.24: Second and third floors layout of Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve. SCALE: 1:100

Society

- Adjusting to different types of users

- Accessibility

- Affordability
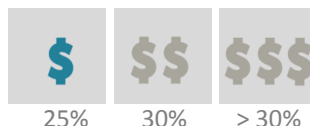
$ 25% $$ 30% $$$ > 30%

- Flexibility
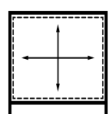
Space for a kitchenette
(with small refrigerator)
Non-exclusive bathroom
Space for an additional bed

- Storage

- Social spaces
*Space to receive visit
Outside the unit

City

- Morphology

Rural Area
Downtown
Commercial and residential borough
New district
Suburb

- Typology

Detached
Attached
Attached around courtyard
Row houses
Row Houses with courtyard
Folded row houses
Stepped row houses

- Services

P   P (bike)
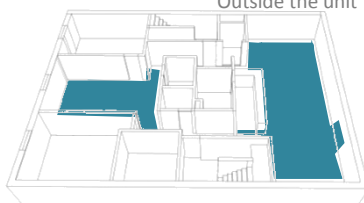
Privacy

- Floor

- 1 bathroom / 3 units
- Maximum distance to use shower: approx. 4.5 meters
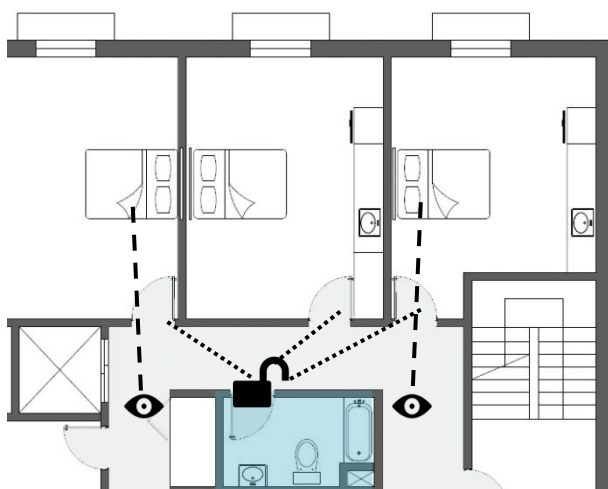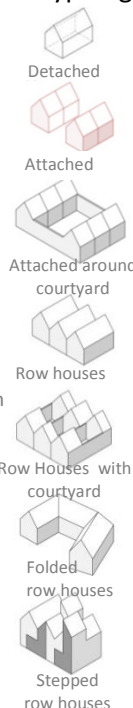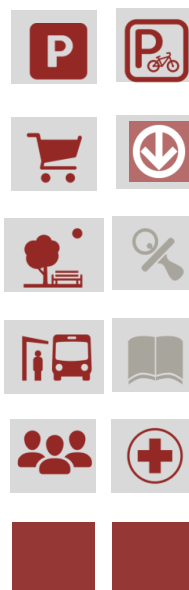
Technology & Resources

- Type of structure

Renovation   New build   Recycled

- Technological adaptation

To economic resources
To local traditions

- Innovation

Recycled materials
Adaptability mechanisms
Prefab elements

- Insulation

Figure 3.25: Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve Basic Concepts Assessment. Adapted from *Herramientas para habitar el presente: la vivienda del siglo XXI* (p. 71;72) J. M. Montaner, Z. Muxí, D. H. Falagán (Eds.) 2011 Editorial Nobuko.

3.3.2.4. Privacy

In Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve, tenants must share sanitary facilities and cooking facilities which may seem too restrictive but, as mentioned throughout this work, privacy is different for each individual or groups of individuals. Moreover, in the case of the women living in this building, they do not place too much importance on the fact that they have to share these facilities; rather, they give more importance to the benefits they get from not having to cook as much, and having a community created with the other tenants and members of staff. For example, during the interviews, one of the tenants was asked whether she would change something in the building (e.g. bathrooms, rooms' sizes) and her answer was, "I would put a room for hairdressing, where the hairdresser gives us a shampoo and massage and cut our hair. That would be nice" (Anonymous, personal communication, May 26, 2016).

Other tenants may have a different opinion, but in these types of projects what seems a very low-privacy arrangement, may be the best solution for its residents. Thus, besides the shared facilities, privacy in the units could be improved, changing the position of the bed in order not to be in front of the door. The rooms have enough space to have a dividing screen so as to hide the bed if necessary.

3.3.2.5. Private and Shared Facilities

As discussed in Chapter 2, the need for privacy is one of the main challenges that SROs face. Privacy is compromised when high-demand areas of a dwelling, such as a kitchen must be shared with an undetermined number of people, and even more so when washrooms are excluded from the units. In this case study, most meals are provided by the organization, but the residents still have to prepare lunch, therefore, they have to make use of the community kitchen. In Table 10, we can see the relationship between public and private areas in the building.

Hall(s)	Public (for tenants and staff)
Sanitary facilities (bathrooms)	Public
Bedrooms	Private (only tenants)
Community Kitchen and dining area	Public
Common living area	Public
Community room with computer	Public
Terrace	Public
Laundry room	Public
Staff's services (office)	Private (only staff)

Table 3.7: Public, private and semi-private areas of the building.

Following the list of 13 possible formulas identified by Teasdale (1993) to combine private facilities and shared facilities, there is only one type of combination found in this project:

Contents of the unit	Shared facilities
Basic furniture Small refrigerator Sink	Bathroom containing shower Bathroom containing bathtub Community kitchen

Table 3.8: Formula C. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.72), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

This formula is closer to traditional rooming houses or students boarding houses, considering the large number of shared facilities that have a refrigerator and a sink. This makes it possible to prepare light meals without having to leave the unit. The sink also makes it possible to execute certain activities related to personal hygiene (Teasdale, 1993).

Of all the evaluated case studies, this type of formula offers the least amount of privacy. In regard to how comfortable the tenants feel sharing many facilities, Christina[9], one of the residents states:

> It is easy to share the bathroom because there are two per floors [sic] so if there is one occupied there is a second one [regarding the kitchen] we wake up in the morning, and we have an early morning coffee followed by breakfast. Then we go out in the morning to do our shopping, or go out for a coffee or something then we come back, at 1:30 pm, there is no lunch, but there is a snack and then at the evening at 5:00 pm there is a supper meal. In the meantime we watch TV or we read in our bedrooms […] we have privacy in our rooms, and when we want to be with people we just come downstairs.

3.3.2.6. Noise

Both the project coordinator and the residents mentioned in the interviews that they had have had issues with exterior sources of noise in several opportunities (like people being loud in the street). Although they did not consider noise as a major preoccupation in the building, they described the noises inside the apartments as "a rumor type of noise." Thus, in a similar way to the previous case studies, the most common noises in the building are the "airborne" type, which occurs and is transmitted in the air (e.g. voices, television). However, they are of a low intensity, and the neighbors cannot discern conversations.

Contrary to other case studies where the tenants are younger, and they receive new occupants on a more regular basis, most of the women living in this project have lived there since the beginning of the project. Thus, they know each other and the staff. Also, the organization has strict policies of expulsion if any of the women show violent tendencies. Consequently, they are more aware of their obligation to maintain harmonious social relations in the building.

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[9] In the interest of privacy, the real name of the person has been changed to "Christina". All other details given are factual.

3.3.2.7. Safety

The organization has clear rules to ensure the women's physical security. First, even though the residents are allowed to consume alcohol in their room, if this consumption affects their behavior and compromises their personal safety or the group's safety, their departure will be required within 24 hours on the third notice of non-compliance with the rules of the house. Also, drug use is not tolerated, even if they have consumed them outside. If the residents show signs of inappropriate, drug-induced behavior within the building they can be expelled on these grounds too.

There have been previous cases of expulsion, mostly related to verbal violence. If the fault is minor, the community workers meet with them and help them identify the source of their behavior; most commonly is due to mental health problems and situations of stress or depression in their lives. Regarding the perception of safety, one of the residents commented: "I feel safe in the building. There is a lot of staff, staff in the office, staff to cook, staff that sleeps with us every night" (Anonymous, personal communication, May 26, 2016).

3.3.2.8. Community Areas

The community kitchen opens to the dining area, as such, the tenants can see when the meals are being prepared and then they all sit together to eat. The views from the dining area are oriented to the garden, and there is an exit to the terrace from this space. According to one of the residents, "We gather in the dining room or the TV launch, but I have other friends, and I meet with them at the café (outside the building)" (Anonymous, personal communication, May 26, 2016).

The tenants access the terrace area through the dining area. The furniture consists of tables, chairs and a canopy for sun and rain protection. This space is frequently used in summer; the tenants can sit in the sun, take care of the plants and participate in outdoor activities. Also, tenants who smoke use this area to do so.
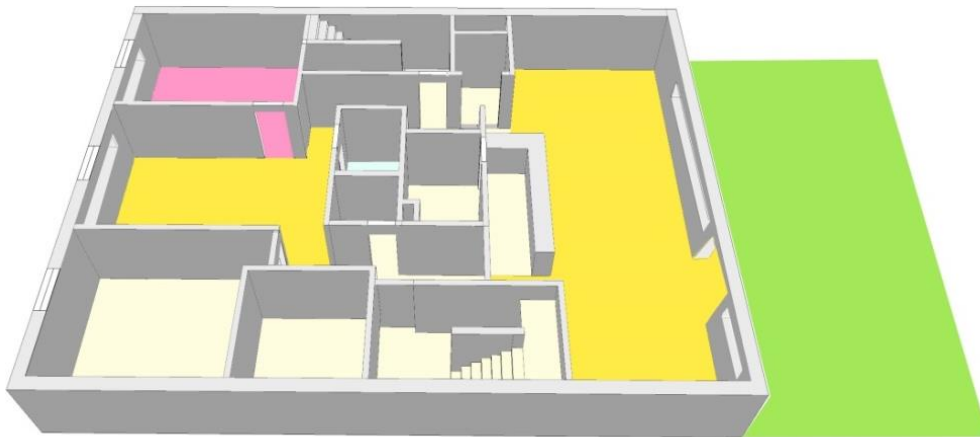
Figure 3.26: Semi-basement layout. Community areas (orange), room with computer (pink).

The common living area is located on this level as well. The furniture consists of sofas, chairs, and a TV and there is also an exercise machine for the tenants. There is enough space to accommodate the 15 women and the staff. This room is the most used community area. There is a good amount of natural light which makes the space seem bigger than it is in reality.

Finally, from the living room, the tenants have access to a small office, this is the space used for individual meetings between the tenants and the community worker, as well as special activities, such as meditation. The furniture in this room includes two desks, one computer, and chairs.

Figure 3.27: Community room with computer – Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve.

3.3.3. Conclusion

As in the case of Les Jardins du Y des femmes, this project accommodates women only. Regarding the design, the architect decided to maintain a logical distribution of the spaces, giving spatial hierarchy to the common areas. Of all the projects this is the only one that has a common kitchen, which could be viewed as an element that restricts the independence of the residents. Yet, in this particular case, it seems to work because of the type of users. According to the project's coordinator:

> Some of them [referring to the residents] have had experiences with other rooming houses. They think many of them are too small, too expensive and sometimes dirty. They are afraid of being isolated, of being alone. Here they are surrounded by people, that gives them a sense of security [also] sometimes the neighborhood is not safe.

Finally, having a consistent arrangement of the rooms (contained in a grid) facilitates future modifications of the building.

3.4. Walker's House

Figure 3.28: Walker's House front façade. The building was renovated in 2014 conserving the original façade's materials and colour.

The objective of this project was to provide permanent housing for men of 25 years of age, or older, who have been homeless or experienced similarly precarious situations in the past. The building had operated as a rooming house years before the Office Municipal d'Habitation de Montréal (OMHM) acquired it and Walker's Organization started managing the project. Walker's House (Figure 3.28) began working again as a rooming house in 2014 offering 56 units with shared sanitary facilities.

To apply the tenants need to have a declared source of revenue, they need to be independent (hygiene wise, being able to walk and climb stairs) and, they have to get involved in the workshops and their individual reintegration plan. Regarding the profile of the tenants, the majority of the men living in this building are between the ages of 25 and 60, and only 10% - 15% of them are 60 years or older. They have tenants who are working and men who receive a monthly government pension. Approximately, 76% of the men that the Walker's

Organization takes into in the housing program have mental health issues, 25% have physical health difficulties and 63% have various problems, including drug dependency, alcohol addiction and emotional dependencies.

Some of the services offered by the organization are administrative support and budget management, and assistance with the building's cleaning and maintenance. Additionally, they can contact health professionals and social workers, they help tenants with their shopping, and they offer support in conflict management

3.4.1. Origin of the Project

In 2014, the Organization partnered with the OMHM for the acquisition and management of a rental, residential building. The purpose of the acquisition was to prevent a 56-unit rooming house from being converted into condominiums, which would have reduced the number of public housing units available in Montreal.

While the OMHM owns the building, the Walker's Organization is responsible for the management and the community support of its residents. The new occupants are selected by the Walker's Organization and can benefit from Québec's Accès-logis program, which ensures an affordable rent based on each person's income.

For most of the new residents, this rooming house forms part of a logical progression in their social reintegration process. Before living in Walker's House, the residents have to go through a period of "stabilization" in transitional housing where they can reorganize their lives, and learn to be self-sufficient again. After this intermediate period, the participants have the opportunity of accessing one of these affordable units.

While the tenants at West House must demonstrate that they have the necessary skills to live alone, some of them need a certain amount of supervision to avoid falling back into homelessness. That is why the Organization's staff is present to make sure the Walker's House tenants keep up healthy living habits. The staff is there to listen to them, as well as to facilitate the steps they take with various authorities. They also intervene in crisis situations and manage any disputes between tenants to maintain calm in the building. Residents may receive trustee service and participate in the organization's social activities if they so desire.

3.4.2. The Building

This case study accommodates the largest quantity of units (56) compared to the other examples explored in this research, and its layout is very common, following the typology of rooming houses. The building was renovated in 2014, keeping the original layout of an "L" shape, while improving the quality of the structure and internal partitions like insulation, plumbing and electricity. All units have a compact kitchen and shared washrooms on each level, the approximate area of the rooms is 14 square meters. Furthermore, there is no elevator in the building, and the dimensions are kept to a minimum.

3.4.2.1. Characteristics of the Semi-Basement and Ground Floor

The ground level and semi-basement layout are very similar. There are 13 rooms located on each level; each room contains a compact kitchen, single bed, and closet. Of all the units there is only one with en-suite bathroom, reserved for the building's supervisor. All units are grouped along a corridor. From the hallway, all tenants have access to three bathrooms that contain toilet and sink, and four rooms that contain a shower. The approximate maximum distance that one tenant has to walk to go to a shower is 12 meters. On the ground floor, in front of the supervisor's unit, there is one room (the size of a unit) where the tenants meet with the community worker and make phone calls.

The laundry room is located in the semi-basement, and all tenants use it regularly. Finally, each level has a small room with a sink and cleaning equipment for the maintenance of the building.

Figure 3.29: The kitchenette inside the units does not have enough work space for food preparation.

3.4.2.2. Characteristics of the Second and Third Floors

Both the first floor and second floor have the same arrangement. There are 15 units on each level; the rooms have a compact kitchenette (Figure 3.29), single bed, and closet. The corridor on this level is kept to minimal dimensions. Moreover, there are four bathrooms (containing toilet and sink) and four showers.
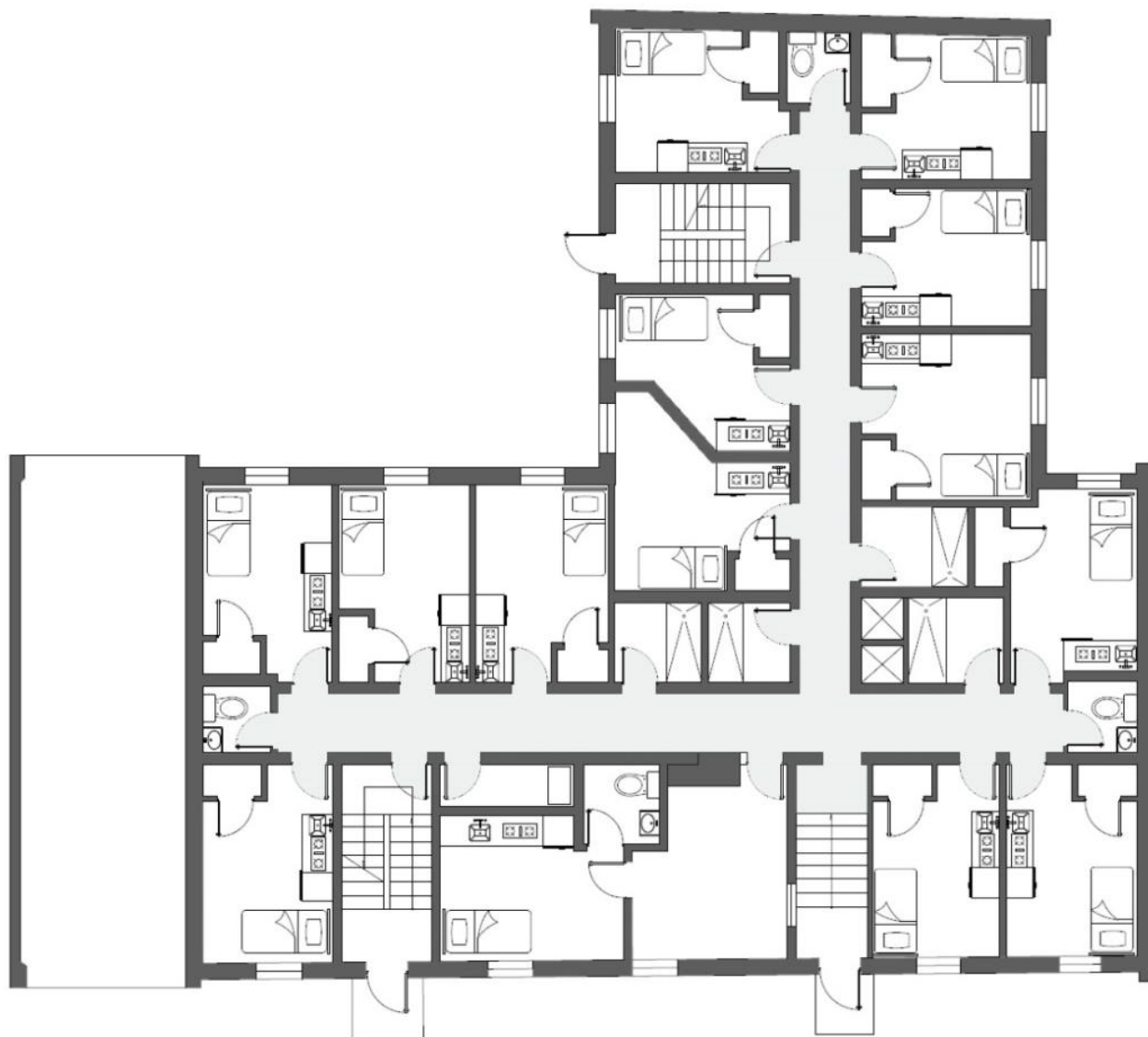
Figure 3.30: Walker's House ground floor layout. SCALE: 1:150

Society

- Adjusting to different types of users

- Accessibility

- Affordability

$ 25% $$ 30% $$$ > 30%

- Flexibility

Space for a kitchenette ●
(with small refrigerator)
Non-exclusive bathroom ●
Space for an additional bed ●

- Storage

- Social spaces

*Space to receive visit in the unit

City

- Morphology

Rural Area

Downtown

Commercial and residential borough

New district

Suburb

- Typology

Detached

Attached

Attached around courtyard

Row houses

Row houses with courtyard

Folded row houses

Stepped row houses

- Services
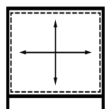
Privacy

- Floor

  - 1 bathroom / 4.3 units
  - Maximum distance to use shower: approx. 10 meters
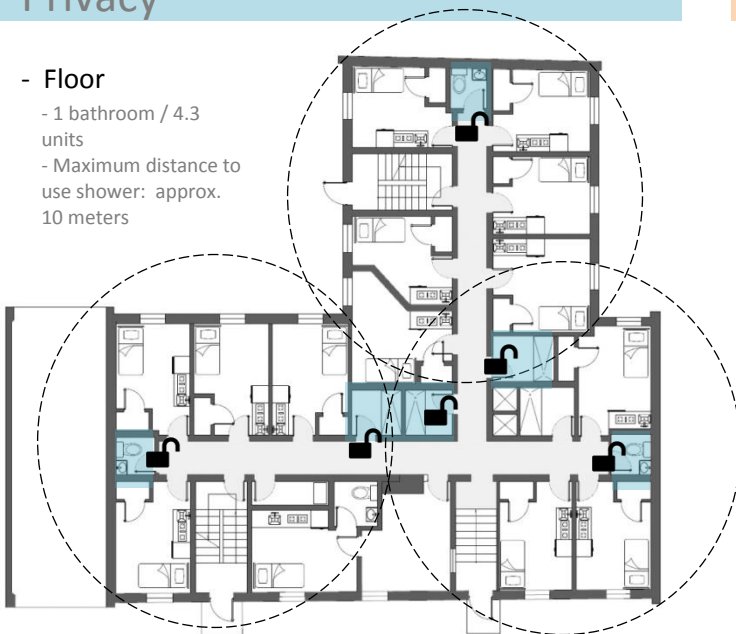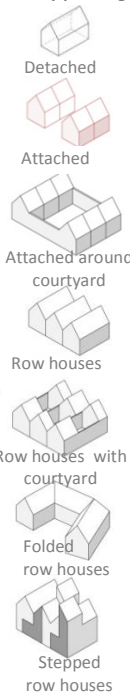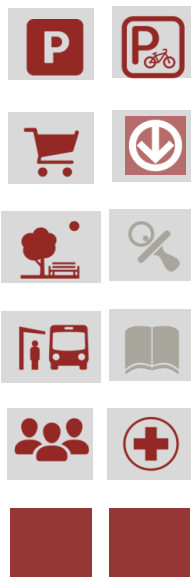
Technology & Resources

- Type of structure

Renovation   New build   Recycled

- Technological adaptation

To economic resources ●   To local traditions ●

- Innovation

Recycled materials   Adaptability mechanisms   Prefab elements

- Insulation ●●●●● ●●●●

Figure 3.31: Walker's House Basic Concepts Assessment. Adapted from *Herramientas para habitar el presente: la vivienda del siglo XXI* (p. 71;72) J. M. Montaner, Z. Muxí, D. H. Falagán (Eds.) 2011 Editorial Nobuko.

3.4.2.3. Privacy

In this project, the design was limited by the original layout of the rooming house before the renovation. Moreover, many decisions were made for economic reasons and to accommodate the biggest number of residents. As such, the units, as well as the corridors, are more compact providing less flexibility to divide the rooms into private areas (bed, closet) and more public spaces (kitchenette, dining table). All the residents share sanitary facilities; there are four rooms with individual showers on each floor, three rooms with toilet and sink in the semi-basement and ground floor, and four rooms with toilet and sink on the first and second floors. The men get changed in the shower room, which avoids uncomfortable situations for the rest of the tenants, but it creates the personal inconvenience of having to do this in a humid room.

Another characteristic feature of the building is its positioning on the plot, very close to the sidewalk and the visual access that any person has from outside the building to the units located on the semi-basement and ground floor if the residents have their curtains opened. Even though the glass is dark, at noon it is completely transparent as it is throughout the day but to a lesser degree.

3.4.2.4. Private and Shared Facilities

Hall(s) / corridors	Public
Sanitary facilities (bathrooms)	Public
Bedrooms	Private
Kitchen	Private
Laundry room	Public
Community room	Public

Table 3.9: Public, private and semi-private areas of the building.

Contents of the unit	Shared facilities
Basic furniture Compact Kitchenette (without oven)	Room containing toilet and sink Room containing a shower (no bathtub)

Table 3.10: Formula A. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.72), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

As seen in Table 3.10, the combination between personal and shared facilities responds to the type "A" (Teasdale, 1993). As in the case of Aylwin's rooming house and their units for men, the meals are eaten inside the unit whereas the personal hygiene activities occur outside the premises. It is also interesting to notice that, according to Teasdale's findings, men find it easier to accept the need to share sanitary facilities rather than kitchen facilities. It is worth mentioning that in this case, the units also have to accommodate social activities given that the building does not have any external or community living space.

3.4.2.5. Noise

Complaints regarding noise are more common in this project than in other cases. According to the project's representative, the tenants do not hear entire conversations from their neighbors (airborne noises), but they do hear the neighbors on the upper floors (impact noises) when they move furniture or when they apply any force to the surfaces, such as slamming doors. During the visit to this building, there were not any episodes of slamming doors or screaming and the regular noises were low.

3.4.2.6. Safety

Some of the problems encountered in the project have been verbal violence, depression, and consumption of alcohol. Drug abuse is prohibited and can lead to expulsion. It is estimated

that incidents involving the residents that are related to these sorts of problems arise every six months, and if they are not properly dealt with, it can put the safety of both the perpetrator and the victim/s at risk. The organization approaches the person and helps them with any personal, economic, or health problem that they may have. If it cannot be managed, they inform the person that if they commit any infringements for a third time they will be expelled.

As far as safety measures in relation to the design are concerned, there are two main entrances both located at the front of the building. One can directly access the corridor and the rooms from the entrance; there is no transitional space which can leave the rooms vulnerable to any non-resident who could enter the building. This fact is a major concern given that the building has 56 units where the tenants may not all know each other.

3.4.2.7. Community Areas

With respect to the lack of community areas in the building, this certainly affects the sense of belonging to the project. People, and especially formerly homeless individuals, need to create new bonds with the community and feel as though they are in a more "normal" home environment, which is already a hard task given the number of residents housed in the building. Due to the lack of social spaces, welcoming visitors is not easy; they have to receive them in their rooms.

As perceived in the visits, the entrance is not inviting, and this can also affect the positive image that the tenants have over the building. Even though, some of the tenants still congregate on the entrance to talk or smoke because it is their only option besides their rooms.

3.4.3. Conclusion

This particular case it is different to the other in many aspects; the number of people housed in the project, the profile of only male residents, and the type of lease of 4 to 5 years.

Regarding the design, the layout of the floors along a corridor with rooms located front to front may appear "too institutional"; in this type of arrangement, the sense of being in a normal residential environment can be affected. Also, the lack of community areas where the residents can be in touch with nature or in a place that remind them of home (a living room, or a dining area) has an impact on the relationships with the neighbors.

Regarding the units, personalisation and flexibility can be achieved in tiny environments with a more creative use of furniture (folded tables and beds) and elements as mid-height movable partitions. Finally, it is worth noting that all the decisions made on each project come from multiple variables as the location of the building, type of ownership (public or private), type of subvention and funding and the organization's own goals and principles.

3.5. Final Observations

All the case studies analyzed in this work are managed by non-profit organizations and their approach and goals of these projects may differ from private or public developments in the administrative, economic and social aspect. All four case studies have positive and negative characteristics in their design that affect the tenant's privacy. Some positive strategies were used in the layout of the areas, such as locating the community areas near the entrance for easy access for all tenants and visual control, as well as creating clusters of rooms rather than long front-to-front units, which is too institutional. In terms of choosing the right type of materials inside the unit, it is preferable to choose "warmer" materials that evoke a residential and familiar feeling. In addition, the use of glass should be moderate given that the people using the spaces can feel that they are under surveillance.

If possible, increasing the amount of flexibility and opportunities to personalize the space is ideal, given that the tenants can appropriate the space. This can be achieved by providing more than one type of unit (for example, with bathroom included, excluding bathroom, with full kitchen or with kitchenette). Inside the units it is recommended to use screens, movable partitions and mid-height walls and closets to hide the more private areas like the bed. Also, using the bathroom module (in cases where the bathroom is included in the unit) as buffer lock zones can create a visual and acoustic barrier between the bedroom and the corridor. Finally, regarding the type of tenure, projects where the tenants have a lease and legal stability provide a greater amount of control for them in their lives and help them feel in a normal social environment at the same time.

CHAPTER 4

DESIGN CRITERIA

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the term "criteria" is used rather than "standards" since systematic normalization would imply that all low-income single persons living in these buildings have the same necessities. From the exchanges with the representatives of the non-profit organizations that provide housing for low-income singles and from the literature review of other SRO projects (public and private), it is evident that there is not one all-encompassing description of SRO users. The typical image of a person living alone, without any family or job, and with insufficient education, is rarely the case. In fact, the most common characteristic among low-income singles is their diversity (Teasdale, 1993). As such, it would be desirable to provide a vast spectrum of SROs, located in different districts, with a variety of unit sizes and services available, to address resident's preferences in the community.

Moreover, all the criteria were nominated in regards to privacy on each aspect of the living environment analyzed in Chapter 3. Interestingly, most residents of SRO, rooming houses and supportive housing prefer regimes with fewer restrictions and more independent living arrangements (Fakhoury et al., 2002). Privacy is also associated with improvements in housing tenure and stability (CMHA, 2005). However, too much privacy can lead to loneliness and isolation (Kirsh et al., 2009). The challenge for choosing the right strategies to maximize privacy in SRO facilities is that there must be a sort of equilibrium between independence, autonomy and community integration in the building.

4.2. Approaching the Project

One approach that has been demonstrated to improve tenants' satisfaction towards the project is the latter's involvement in the very decision-making process that affects their living environment at different stages of the development.

In bottom-up initiatives and partnership models (Reddy, 2002) the community has a greater level of participation which is more desirable. Although, there can sometimes be an overlap between top-down (where the developer makes the fundamental decisions) and bottom-up development, such as the developer's decision to choose low-cost features for the building which goes against the residents' decision to adopt the best quality.

As seen in the case of Les Jardins du Y des femmes, with these types of approaches, the organizations have a deeper comprehension of the tenants and their aspirations within the project. Also, the designers and developers will understand the tenant's ideal level of privacy by interacting in the process, as was the case of the YWCA when they wanted to put the name of the project on the building façade, but the women who took part in the decision-making process opposed the idea and ended up negotiating with the organization to ensure the privacy they desired.

4.3. Location of the Plot

Preferably, the district where the project is going to be located should be familiar to the residents, close to social amenities, commerce, and other facilities which they need. Ideally, they should have different options with reasonable prices to buy food and clothes. Proximity to urban transport is also important.

In addition to adjacent services, access to nature and natural light is imperative. It has been suggested that human beings have an inherent need to be connected to nature (Kellert & Wilson, 1995). This theory called biophilia suggests that the absence of nature can cause mental illness, poor school performance, and antisocial behaviors (Lopez, 2012). Other authors provide support to this theory, as is the case of Robert Ulrich (Pennsylvania, 1984). Further research on the subject needs to be done; however, a great percentage of the tenants living in SRO and rooming houses that cope with certain mental health issues, mainly related to high stress, would prefer having nicer views with natural elements incorporated into their environments.
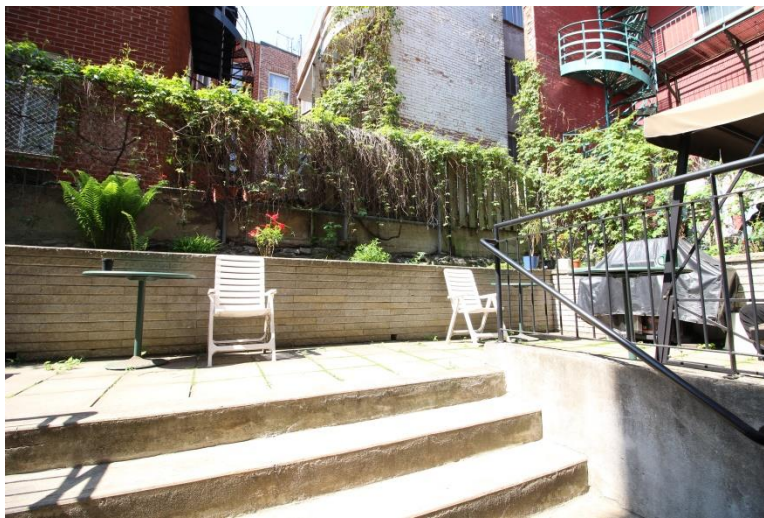
Figure 4.1: Private exterior area with greenery.

Furthermore, the need for tranquility and the necessity of stimulation could be achieved in several forms, by the use of courtyards for quieter spaces, and access to more active sectors of the cities (i.e. busy streets, downtown). These choices are going to be determined by the cultural and traditional notions of comfort prevalent in the particular community.

4.4.   The Building

In regard to the physical features of the building, it is recommended that the exterior and interior appearances resemble a residential building rather than an institution, given that most of SRO tenants prefer not being identified as a different type of person living in a different type of residence. Some criteria to provide a residential atmosphere includes being located in a residential borough and having a scale and setback congruent with the other residential buildings. Additionally, elements of order like height, materials, windows' modularity and type of access should also be consistent with the adjacent residences.

Figure 4.2: In this example we can observe the consistency in modularity and height of the windows compared with the neighbors', which overall helps with the residential image.

As far as privacy is concerned, some design strategies that proved to be successful in the case studies include not having visual access to the apartments located at street level beside the sidewalk and not having the units' windows facing directly into the units located in the neighboring building. Furthermore, the distance between buildings should follow the city zoning laws.

Figure 4.3: Visual restriction to the units' windows from the sidewalk gives the tenants living in these units more intimacy and sefety.

4.4.1. Relationship between the Intimate Interior and the Public Exterior

As discussed in Chapter 2, the notion of territory is closely linked to privacy in terms of human behavior. After the visits made to the case studies and from the literature review, it was possible to create a diagram of privacy principles that took into account the relationship between spaces in SROs. Some of the most relevant concepts were Newman's notions of buffers between public and private areas (1972), Sebba and Churchman's definitions of shared territory and individual primary territories (1983) and Christopher Alexander´s description of the intimacy gradient with the most public spaces leading to a sequence of increasingly private spaces (1977). This diagram could serve planners and those involved in the design process who are preoccupied with establishing the right boundaries of privacy in the building.
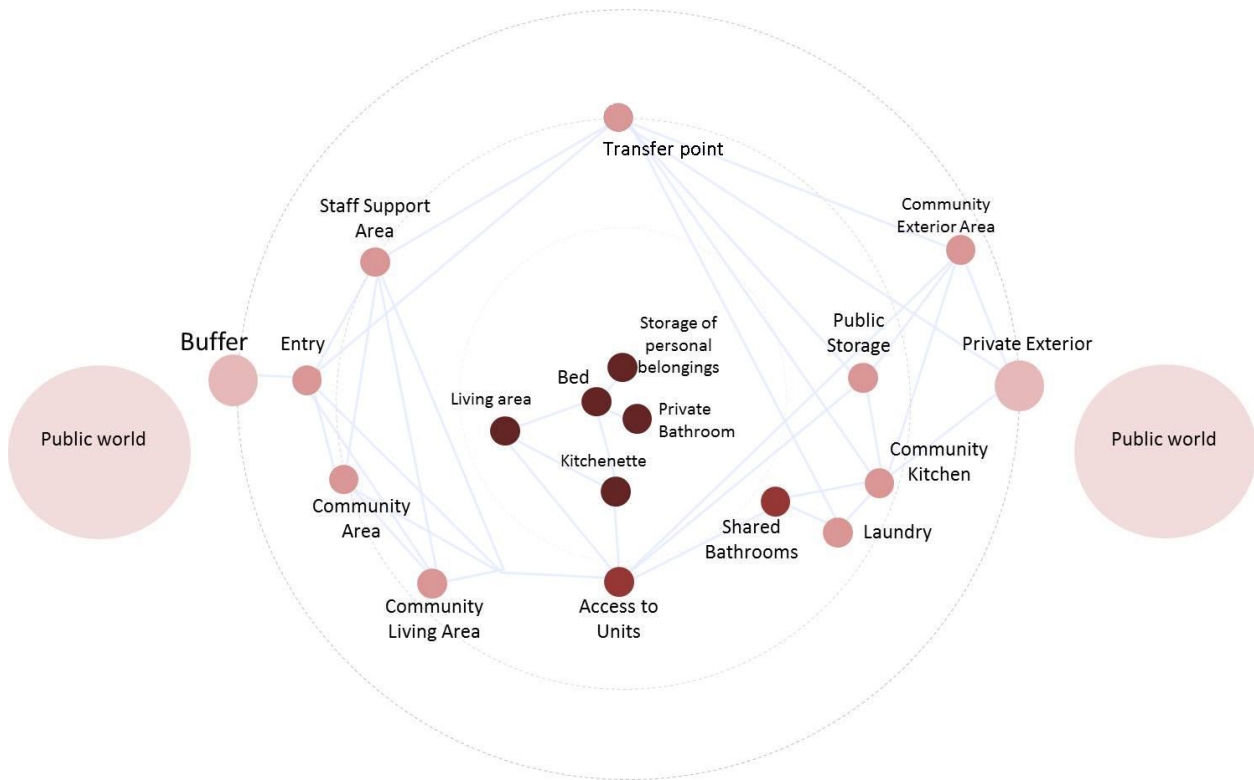
Figure 4.4: Relationship of SRO areas in the private-public spectrum.

4.4.2. Size of the House

According to the representatives of the organizations, the ideal size of a rooming house should correspond to approximately twenty people. This limited capacity facilitates the conditions for good, dynamic supervision and promotes a sense of community among tenants and the wider neighborhood. It also leads to savings on construction, maintenance, and management costs. Regarding privacy, an increased number of residents implies greater uncertainty over whether a person lives in the building or not. Further research is required to demonstrate the positive outcomes that come with having smaller facilities in comparison with the other environmental factors that are commonly associated with a purposely designed, small unit, such as congenial surroundings, safety, and familiarity (Fleming & Purandare, 2010).

Also, the preferable size of the house varies in cities with different urban planning, including Toronto and Vancouver where there is a greater number of rooming houses and SRO residential hotels that house more than 30 tenants (Teasdale, 1993). Table 4.1 shows some advantages and disadvantages that must be considered before choosing the right size for the project, as mentioned previously, the urban context and demand is different in each province and city.

NUMBER OF TENANTS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
From 50 to 100	• More tenants means more economical resources allocated to the project. • This size justifies having services as caregiving or 24h supervision. • There are more opportunities for social interactions.	• It is more difficult to control the progress of the people in larger projects. • SRO projects with more than 50 tenants are often noisy and are not perceived as safe places to live.
From 20 to 40	• It is ideal for managing purposes. • It is still possible to create a familiar atmosphere. • Units are easier to rent.	• Projects of 40 residents need a bigger staff. • Ensuring that all the tenants participate in community activities can represent a challenge for the projects' coordinators.
From 5 to 15	• It has a more familiar atmosphere. • Small projects can "blend" in residential neighborhoods of singular-family households	• Can be too expensive to manage. • Selecting the tenants is critical given that the project responsible need to ensure that all the tenants get along.

Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of different sizes of rooming houses and SRO buildings

4.5. Access

It is recommended that there are "buffer zones" between the entrance and the units; these zones could be, for example, support staff areas or the community rooms. These buffer zones would increase privacy for the tenants. Figure 4.5 shows the entrance hall of Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve. The representative office is located to the left as is the community worker's unit;

the tenants' units are located facing back. Furthermore, the entrance should be designed in a way that it does not open directly into one of the community areas and that units located at the same level are not adjacent to the community areas if possible, or that they are well insulated. Special attention should be paid to make sure that the staff support areas are not perceived as "surveillance control measures" for controlling the times at which the tenants leave or enter the building.

Figure 4.5: In this example of an entrance hall with waiting area the furniture, lighting and use of color provide a warm residential atmosphere for the building.

Other features like benches at the entrance could be a good option for the type of residents who gather at the entrance to interact with each other and the neighbors in accordance with the culturally-rooted concept of the porch. These decisions must be balanced with how much community space there is in the building and the level of tolerance the residents have towards social interaction.

Figure 4.6: Tenant talking with neighbor seated in front of the building. In this example the seats located on the entrance is used by the tenants as a common space.

4.6. Layout of Units

It is recommended that units are located in clusters or along corridors in limited numbers of units so that they do not resemble an institution and maintain a sense of homeliness.

4.6.1. Corridors

The horizontal and vertical circulation should have generous dimensions (ratio between width and length never less than 1:10), windows for natural light and proper ventilation mechanisms. Regarding the colors and materials, light colors and "warm" materials are ideal, although the level of maintenance required should also be considered.

In terms of privacy, the noise produced by doors should be reduced by having robust materials on door frames. Moreover, impact noises, such as people walking, could be mitigated

by installing resilient materials for flooring. Finally, access to the unit should not be located directly in front of another unit to avoid neighbors looking into the apartment.
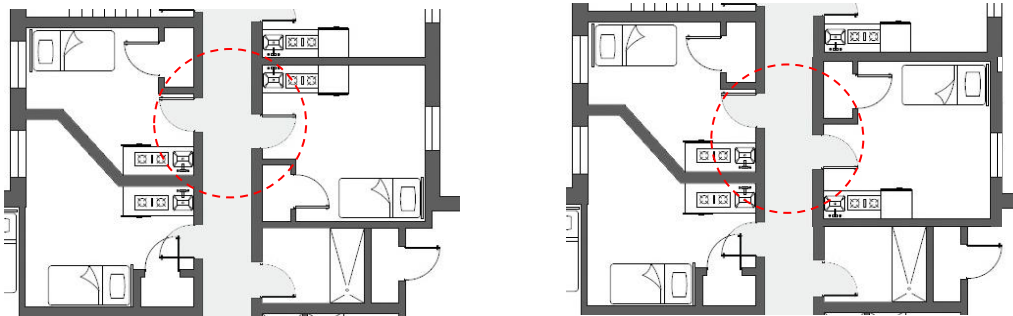
Figure 4.7: The correct positioning of the doors is an example of how some small changes in room's arrangement could increase privacy.

4.7. Community Living Areas

Not all SROs and rooming houses have community living areas. SROs managed by non-profit organizations (like in all the case studies) tend to offer community living areas more often than privately managed buildings due to cost-effectiveness.

The activities that take place in these areas on a daily basis are mainly recreational (e.g. reading, watching television, playing board games or other types of games, meeting with visitors and neighbors, exercising). These areas are also used in special events to congregate all the tenants and have a meal together. Most importantly, these areas are used for activities that strengthen the community and that can be driven by the tenants or the organization (including bricolage, meditation, yoga, or singing). Thus, the dimensions depend on many factors, mainly economic and cultural. Moreover, the dimensions can be determined based on the type of activities, and it would ideally, keep a domestic scale.

Essential furniture must be chosen with careful consideration of the types of activities (e.g. tables and chairs for playing board games, comfortable sofas and coffee tables for watching television, a desk for computers, exercise machines) that will take place in the given

area. Flexibility is the key when choosing the right furniture and positioning. Residents with more individual rooms that suit varying functions and have more opportunities for personalization tend to experience less anxiety and aggression (Zeisel et al., 2003).

Figure 4.8: Community room furniture (comfortable sofas, television and exercise machine).

Given the large number of activities mentioned above, provision of two community rooms should be considered. In the case of Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve, there is an ample room to watch television and to do exercise, as well as a smaller room for the use of a computer and more private activities like meetings with the community workers. Regarding the location of the rooms, they should be visible and easily accessible from the tenants' units. In relation to privacy, the rooms should have controlled visual access so that tenants who are "just passing by" do not feel obliged to participate in any activities that may be taking place.

4.8. Exterior Community Areas

All units should benefit from some form of exterior community space; it connects people with nature and brings numerous benefits for health and community integration. Some types of

spaces usually found in SROs are inner courtyards, front yards, backyards, community balconies, terraces, terrace roofs and inner gardens.

The activities pursued in these spaces vary, but they include gardening, outdoor exercise, enjoying the sun, smoking a cigarette, meeting with other tenants for a picnic or an outdoor meal or meeting with visitors. The furniture should satisfy these requirements and include benches, chairs, tables, sun protection elements (canopies), and storage for gardening appliances.

Figure 4.9: Courtyard-type exterior community area.

As in the case of community living rooms, visual accessibility to the space is important, as well as easy accessibility for persons with reduced mobility. The inclusion of nature is ideal to create new views for the building and even as a climate control mechanism. Privacy could be improved by having trees that create a visual barrier with neighboring buildings.

4.9. Community Kitchen

The common kitchens in SROs can serve different purposes and have diverse characteristics depending on the number of residents, the type of meals prepared, if the meals are arranged by a third party or by the tenants, if meals are prepared all at the same time or at different intervals of the day, if there is a common kitchen area per floor or one that serves the entire building. The use of the space tends to be the same regardless of the type of kitchen: preparing food, cooking, serving the meals, storing dry food, storing cold food, storing cooking appliances, storage for cleaning appliances, eating the food and having social interactions.

In cases where the meals are prepared and eaten together the kitchen is often for a small number of tenants, and the dimensions of the cooking area are similar to a one-family house. In either case, tenants must have sufficient space for preparing the food, as well as storage to provide a counter and a cabinet for their individual use. Ideally, tenants should have the option of having a small or medium-sized refrigerator in their units for their sense of privacy and safety, knowing that they have control over their food.

The dimensions should be proportionate to the number of residents. Ideally, the kitchen should be shared with no more than eight tenants (Teasdale, 1993) if all the meals are going to be prepared by the tenants (see Table 4.2).

Number of people sharing the kitchen	Area suggested for the kitchen and dining area
3 to 4	16.5 m^2
5 to 6	19.0 m^2
7 to 8	21.5 m^2

Table 4.2: Suggested areas for common kitchens and dining areas combined. Reprinted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.168), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

Other general design criteria include having an open kitchen and a dining area for efficiency purposes, having proper ventilation mechanisms and access to natural light. Ideally, kitchens should be located near to the private exterior areas or community exterior spaces.
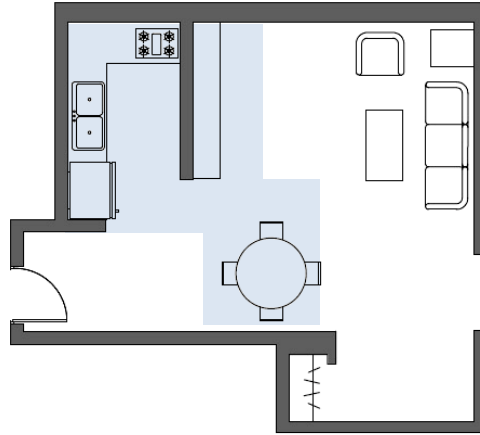
Figure 4.10: Example of a community kitchen opening into the dining area, shared by four tenants.
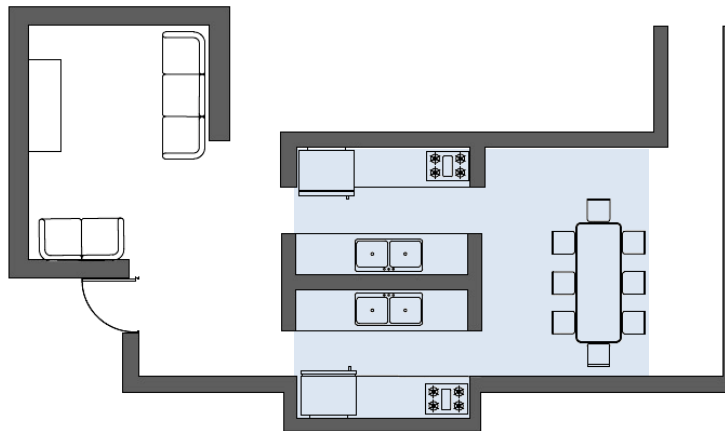
Figure 4.11: Example of a community kitchen opening into the dining area, shared by eight tenants.

4.10. Community Sanitary Spaces

Ideally, for maintaining privacy and hygiene, SROs should not have shared sanitary facilities. Nevertheless, in some cases, this is not an option so many SROs try to minimize the number of people using the same bathroom and shower. Also, the units should have at least a sink where the tenants can carry out their personal grooming activities such as shaving, makeup and so on without being pressured to do so in short time.

Figure 4.12: Shared bathroom (approximately 3 tenants per bathroom).

Regarding the features inside the sanitary rooms, all of them must be set up to be easily accessible for all tenants. Elements like grab bars in the bathtub and possibly a fold-down chair for persons with restricted mobility ensure that the space is safe for the elderly user. Additionally, the water isolation valve must be within easy reach and, in the case of the shower, the head should be easy to manipulate.

In shared sanitary facilities divided by stalls, with more than one toilet, more than one sink and/or more than one shower/bathtub, the users are more exposed and it represents a

challenge for the planners and designers to provide a decent amount of privacy. The areas in these bathrooms should have relatively open passageways between one area and the other and having visual barriers and private space for changing clothes. It is worth mentioning that this arrangement decreases privacy and comfort among tenants and can be the source of many inconveniences. Finally, it would be preferable to locate sanitary facilities next to "neutral noise areas" (e.g. storage rooms) rather than next to the units to avoid uncomfortable situations.

TYPE OF SANITARY SPACE	DESCRIPTION	MIN. AREA
Complete sanitary space (shared by max. two tenants)	Room containing a bathtub and shower combined, sink, toilet and mirror	5.0 m^2
Shared sanitary spaces (shared up to 5 tenants)	Each room contains only one or two of the follow fixtures: bathtub, shower, toilet and sink.	Room containing: One bathtub and a bench 3.5m^2 One shower and a bench: 3.0m^2 One toilet and one sink: 3.0m^2
Common sanitary spaces (shared by 6 tenants or more)	One or more spaces sub-divided in zones each containing a number of fixtures and often divided with stalls. These arrangements are found in student residences and sport centres.	Not recommended

Table 4.3: Recommended areas for shared sanitary facilities. Adapted from *House Design Guide for Low-Income Singles* (p.174), by P. Teasdale, 1993,Ottawa: CMHC.

4.11. Laundry Room

According to other studies and the results of case studies, it is the location of the room in the building rather than any other distinct feature which plays the key role in making the laundry rooms fit for purpose and not places that might be perceived as unsafe or precarious. It

should be located next to community areas (as in the case of Les Jardins du Y and Aylwin's rooming house) or next to the units (Maison Yvonne-Maisonneuve).

4.12. Public Storage

Space for individual exterior storage outside the units should be provided (e.g. bicycles, furniture, clothes) and general storage for daily maintenance material with water gaps, and for seasonal maintenance. The lack of space for storage could be dangerous in case of fire, given that tenants will have their belongings in corridors and transitional spaces.

4.13. Staff Areas

In SRO and rooming houses managed by a non-profit organization, it is often found that there is an office in the building for the representative of the project, or in some cases, administrative purposes. Also, some organizations have a community worker that spends the night in the building to serve the tenants, and they provide a unit for this purpose.

The main design criteria should be to provide a residential image and not the image of an institution. It should also not be hierarchized over other areas of the building and its dimensions should comply with the requirement for these types of areas stipulated by city construction and zoning laws. The location of the room ideally should be near the entrance which avoids the traffic of non-residents inside the building and near the units. In addition, by locating the office in an area which is visually accessible for all tenants it reassures them and gives them a sense of support.

4.14. The Units

Units' entrances should be designed so that the residents can see the person outside without been seen. Ideally, the corridors should be visually accessible from community areas, having "more eyes" on the space creates a sense of security.

4.14.1. The Room's Layout

In SROs units can be individual (for one person) or shared (two or more residents living in the same unit). The evidence-based research has demonstrated the benefits of living alone. Living alone offers residents the freedom to live independently, get chores done and organize their daily routine around their personal priorities rather than having set tasks or required routines (Kirsh et al., 2009). Residents also feel a greater sense of security because their possessions are safe. Owning a key and knowing that they are the only one with access to their apartment gives them the confidence to become more engaged and involved in their communities.

Figure 4.13: Bunk beds are used to possibly accommodate a second tenant in the unit. From *ICI Radio-Canada.Ca | information, radio, télé, sports, arts*, n.d., 2014. Retrieved July 12, 2016, from http://ici.radio-canada.ca/

If possible, tenants should have individual rooms where they can perform their daily activities in complete privacy. If this is not feasible, well-separated areas should be organized inside the shared units, with individual and sufficient space for storage and visual barriers.

Regarding furniture, there are not many innovative Walker examples of furniture design in SROs in the case studies and in many of the other facilities that were examined during the literature review. The furniture found during the site visits by the author consisted of single bed, bedside table, single dresser, dining table, desk for computer/ laptop, chairs, television, kitchenette, sink, closet. The importance of flexibility and applicability has been noted throughout this work, and the furniture in the units should ensure that the tenants have a range of different options. Units should be designed bearing in mind future changes (e.g. change of bed size or additional bed). The pieces of furniture should be on the same scale as the unit and help to optimize the quantity of storage space. The pieces should provide as much flexibility as possible.

Privacy could be provided by the careful location of doors and windows and by using dividers, such as screens and furniture to organize more private areas inside the room. Other strategies to create distinctive private zones in the unit include having "L" shaped units rather than rectangular facilitates dividing the areas. It is also possible to have the bed recessed in a piece of furniture (if it is of a medium height it can be a low-cost response to having a more private area for the bed). Mid-height closets can also act as a false wall in the units, and including folding tables allows for a more flexible space.

4.14.2. Private Kitchen

Some SROs included a compact kitchen or kitchenette in the units. This provides a greater level of independence for the residents. The size of the kitchen should be consistent with the unit scale, and the number of people living in the unit. It should accommodate cooking appliances, counter space for food preparation, cabinets for dry food storage and refrigerator. In all the cases analyzed in this study, the kitchen is located next to the entrance of the room. All

kitchens were linear (with the cooking appliances side by side and the refrigerator under a counter). Compact kitchens should have enough space to prepare the food; an auxiliary counter could be an option if the space allows it.

Many problems associated with compact kitchens result from food smells, vapour and smoke in the same area as the bed and living space, as such, proper ventilation is required. Some SRO tenants pointed out that the smoke sensor in their rooms often activated after cooking and so they ended up manipulating or even taking down the sensor.

4.14.3. Private Bathroom

Some units may include a bathroom or half bathroom (toilet and shower). When the sink is excluded from the sanitary unit, this could reduce the size, but all the activities related to hygiene (e.g. brushing teeth) will be done at the kitchen's sink, which is not recommended. In both full bathrooms and half bathrooms, there should be enough space for hygiene care products. Proper ventilation mechanisms and acoustic insulation should comply with the norms.

Figure 4.14: Bathroom access from the bed area.

Ideally, access to the bathroom should not be exposed to the unit's main door, and its location in the unit should be in the more private zone, even when the size of the unit does not offer many options.

4.14.4. Storage

Due to their size, a messy interior in SRO units gives the impression of a congested and chaotic space; thus, storage is important to consider. The size should correspond to the size of the unit and number of people living in it; it should not be less than 2.05m2 according to the study made by Teasdale (1993). Ideally, the designer should consider the type of objects that are going to be stored (depending on the amount of alternative storage space available outside the units). In cases where the unit is shared by two or more people, storage should be considered for each individual.

Figure 4.15: Closets at mid-height are also used to divide areas.

4.14.5. Sound Insulation

Residents must be protected from extraneous noise so that they can sleep, rest and engage in normal domestic activities in satisfactory conditions. Extraneous noise may be due to external sources (e.g. aircraft, traffic, industry and people screaming or talking out loud outside). Designers should aim to increase the specification of partition walls permitted by the Building Regulations so that their performance is equivalent to the house being detached. It is also prudent to zone the rooms of adjoining houses so that, for example, living rooms, stairs, and toilets do not abut neighboring bedrooms. Also, to ensure privacy the Building Regulations require sound insulation between a room containing a WC (except en-suites) and a habitable room and also between a bedroom and other rooms of 40 Rw[10] decibels.

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[10] The Weighted Sound Reduction Index (Rw) is a number used to rate the effectiveness of a soundproofing system or material. Increasing the Rw by one translates to a reduction of approximately 1db in noise level. Therefore, the higher the Rw number, the better it will be as a sound insulator (Retrieved July 19, 2016, from BUILD, http://www.build.com.au/what-do-rw-ctr-and-nrc-mean)

4.15. Summary of Recommendations

Location of the Plot

Mixed Uses **Close access to transport** **Affordability** **Access to light, ventilation and nature**

Approaching the Project

Participation of the end-user in decisions affecting their living environment at different stages of the development

The Building

Residential **Institutional**

Access

Spaces to socialize **Buffer areas between the entrance and the units**

Layout of Units

Units along a corridor facing each other
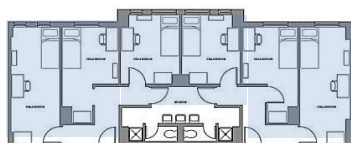
Clusters of units
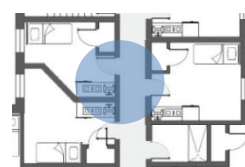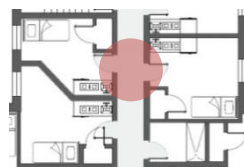
Community Living Areas

Furniture that follows the type of activities carried out in the room **Proper lighting** **Warm materials**

Exterior Community Areas

Community Sanitary Spaces
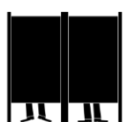
Ideally, sanitary spaces should not be shared

If shared, the minimum number of persons using the same bathroom is preferred

Community Kitchen
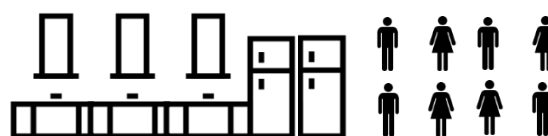
Ideally, the kitchen should be shared with no more than six to eight tenants

Staff Support Spaces

Institutional **Residential**

Storage and Laundry

Locate these spaces in visible zones of the building

The Units

Ideally, units should not be shared

Elements like screens and closet can provide more privacy inside the units

Access to natural light and ventilation is mandatory

Furniture

Photo Credit: Amy Valm; Rogers Media. (2014, October 29). *Sharing a room with baby: 8 space-saving ideas - today's parent*. Retrieved July 4, 2016, from Today's Parent, http://www.todaysparent.com/family/style/sharing-a-room-with-baby/

Photo Credit: Home Designing. (2008). *Multi purpose furniture*. Retrieved July 4, 2016, from Home Designing - Providing Inspirational Home And Interior Design Ideas, http://www.home-designing.com/2010/12/multi-purpose-space-saving-furniture

Photo Credit: Architecture & Design. (2015, September 28). *12 Tiny Apartment Design Ideas To Steal*. Retrieved July 4, 2016, from Architecture & Design, http://www.architecturendesign.net/tiny-apartment-design-ideas-to-steal/

Photo Credit: Home Round. (2013, January 19). *Folding furniture for small spaces*. Retrieved July 4, 2016, from Home Round, http://www.inmyinterior.com/folding-furniture-for-small-spaces/

4.16.   Conclusion

Does Canadians have the right mix of housing?

Throughout this work, the author has emphasized the importance of having a broader mix of housing for affordable one-person dwellings, especially when singles are the fastest-growing type of households ac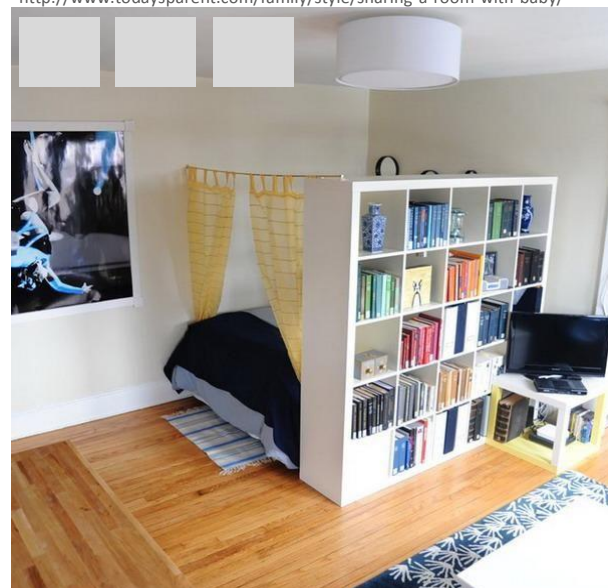ross the country according to the Canadian Housing Observer (CMHC, 2013). Single Room Occupancy and rooming houses are key in housing low-income singles and especially those who have been struggling for longer periods of time and whose housing experiences have affected them in a more fundamental way.

In respect of the current policies towards SRO renovation, the Federal government has realized the importance of mixed housing stock as well and, as such, throughout the last 15 years, many important programs that promote housing for low-income residents have been created. First and foremost, the acquisition/renovation of rental SROs has been used extensively in the province of Quebec, especially in the city of Montreal. These SROs are commonly referred to as hotels, but in Montreal they are more commonly known as rooming houses, managed by charitable groups, that offer support services for those at risk of homelessness. In Montreal the acquisition of the buildings is undertaken by the Société d'habitation et de développement de Montreal (SHDM), a non-profit para-municipal corporation that is financially independent and operates without funding from the Ville de Montreal. The latter organization was engaged in a major rental housing acquisition program (Programme d'acquisition de logements locatifs, or PALL) from 1988 to 1995 which benefited thousands of low-income tenants. Currently, the Quebec Housing Corporation (Société d'habitation du Québec, SHQ) offers the Accès Logis Québec Program which encourages the pooling of public, community and private resources to produce social and

community housing for low- and moderate-income households and for people with special housing needs. It allows housing bureaus, housing cooperatives, non-profit organizations and non-profit purchasing groups to provide affordable rental housing. All the non-profit organizations that provide SRO housing studied in Chapter 3 were eligible for this particular program, but only three benefited from it. Also, The Federal Government released the Homelessness Partnering Strategy Directives 2014-2019 (Stratégie des partenariats de lutte contre l'itinérance or SPLI), which purpose is to connect and maintain housing that can be supported under Housing First and non-Housing First dedicated funding.

Finally, regardless of the strategies and programs that promote housing providers to create affordable options, the primary holdup for the providers continues to be funding for maintaining these programs. Policies concerning stock of affordable housing differ in each city. However, further efforts must come from engaging with city administrators, councilors, activists, non-profit organizations and housing providers in community-based forums focused on supporting the needs of those who are found in an endless circle of housing instability.

How effective are SROs in addressing the particular needs for privacy of Montreal's homeless population while considering the profile of the user?

As previously discussed, it is not possible to identify a particular type of SRO resident, as such, the degree to which this type of accommodation is successful in producing desired results varies according to their goals and the personal sense of belonging towards the house.

The analysis of this study was based on the themes of privacy and how SRO considers the needs of different users. A high percentage of the tenants living in the case studies have

gone through mental health problems, and privacy in these terms could mean the difference between further problems or complete recuperation. It has been demonstrated that sharing facilities, more especially rooms, decreases privacy and intimacy. The importance attributed to sharing the units, bathrooms, showers, and kitchen and how negative or positive this experience can be also varies.

> Although previous literature indicates that there is a strong likelihood for a male-female dichotomy to exist with regard to the home, sex differences appear to be blurred for individuals living on their own. The only consistent difference which emerged with respect to sex is that women appear to be self-driven to create their own home environment. (Horwitz & Tognoli, 1982)

Gender and how we should approach shared facilities, especially sanitary facilities in public spaces, has been a matter of recent national concern and has focused on whether gender-neutral facilities should exist. Although the discussion and the laws that are being created refer to public bathrooms, the same preoccupation exists in some SRO facilities and rooming houses where tenants share water closets, sinks, bathtub and/or showers located in the same or separate rooms. Further research is required, although whether women's privacy is compromised in these arrangements is debatable, although most of the residents would agree that to some degree they are compromised.

Which design strategies could improve the quality of SRO residences for homeless people in Montreal?

Something that can be taken from this work is the importance of flexibility and cooperative discussions with the developers and the end-users of these spaces. A project, like a person, is never the same and for this, the best response is the one that can easily adapt itself to the changing times and people's goals and transitions within these environments.

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APPENDIX 1
GUIDED QUESTIONNAIRE DRAFT FOR THE **RESPONSIBLE OF THE PROJECT**

General Information: (Check if correct)

1.1 Name of the organization? : _____

1.2 Year founded : _____

1.3 Name of the Building /Housing Project : _____

1.4 Built in (year) : _____

      a) Acquisition date:
      b) Renovation:
      c) Date of activation:

1.5 Installations:

_____

1.6 Could you tell me the history of this building? (e.g. was it a renovation? what was the

previous use of the building? what institutions were involved in?)

_____

_____

_____

1.7 What was the role of the institutions involved in this project?

    a)   Sponsor
    b)   Partner
    c)   Management
    d)   Service provider
    e)   Other: _____

1.8 Does this type of accommodation counts with a subsidy or any financial help from the city or the government? (e.g. Rent Supplement Program operated by the Municipal Housing Office)

_____

1.9 How many residents live in this building? : _____

1.10 What are the requirements to rent a room/apartment? (Check if correct)

a)   Being 18 or older
b)   Living alone
c)   To be eligible for rent supplement program
d)   Have a low income
e)   Other:_____

1.11 Could you provide an estimate of the percentage of residents in each category?

Women	
Men	

APPENDIX 2
GUIDED QUESTIONNAIRE DRAFT FOR THE **RESIDENTS**

2.1. How did you know about this project? Could you tell me what was your experience with

housing before?

_____

_____

2.2. Did you have other housing options?

_____

_____

2.3. Could you explain how is a *day in the life* of a resident here (SRO building)?

_____

_____

2.4. What are the *advantages and disadvantages* of living in Single Room Occupancy or

Rooming Houses? (X or √)

Advantages		*Disadvantages*	
Location		Privacy	
Friends/ Social living		Neighbor's behavior	
Access to Services		The conditions of the building	
Cost		The space	
The space is comfortable		Cost	

Other	Other

2.5. (If it corresponds) Why is privacy a disadvantage/advantage?

_____

2.6. From the concepts below regarding privacy, which one in your opinion is the most

important?

   a)   the right to be let alone - intimacy
   b)   the option to limit the access others have to one's personal information
   c)   control over our personal belongings
   d)   autonomy
   e)   security
   f)   health

2.7. How would you rate your *intimacy* in this type of building from 1 to 5? Being 1 "not

intimate at all" and 5 "very intimate"

1	2	3	4	5

2.8. How would you rate your *control over personal belongings* in this type of building from 1

to 5? Being 1 "I don't have any control" and 5 "I have absolute control"

1	2	3	4	5

2.9.   How would you rate your personal *safety* living in this type of building from 1 to 5?

Being 1 "not safe at all" and 5 "very safe"

1	2	3	4	5

2.10.   Where do you usually meet with your friends to talk in the building?

_____

2.11.   How would you describe the *common spaces* of the building? Do you interact with your

neighbors in those spaces?

_____

_____

2.12.   Have you encountered any of the problems listed below with the residents in the

building?

2.12.1. Violence
2.12.2. Substance abuse
2.12.3. Depression
2.12.4. Other:_____

2.13.   Have you been disturbed or interrupted when you are in the shared spaces/ bathroom?

2.14.   How would you rate the *location* (access to services, transport, etc.) living in this type

of building from 1 to 5? Being 1 "not convenient at all" and 5 "very convenient"

1	2	3	4	5

2.15.   What would you change or add to the building to improved?

2.15.1. Location
2.15.2. Services that provides
2.15.3. Size of the rooms
2.15.4. Sanitary facilities (washrooms)
2.15.5. Lighting
2.15.6. Kitchen
2.15.7. Social/common spaces
2.15.8. Other:_____

2.16.   How long do you expect to live in rooming houses/SRO?

	Days	Months	Years	Until:
Temporary				
Permanently				

APPENDIX 3
GUIDED QUESTIONNAIRE DRAFT FOR THE **ARCHITECT**

3.1.   Name: _____   Name of the firm: _____

3.2.   What was your participation in the building process? Could you tell me the story of how you got involved in the project?

_____

3.3.   What was the design approach or guidelines for this project?

_____

_____

3.4.   (If applicable). Did you consider any distinction in the design of the project for different users?

a) Single Women
b) Elderly People
c) Young Residents
d) Students
e) First Nation Residents
f) Other:_____

3.5.   Do you consider "privacy" an important factor in the design of SRO and rooming houses?

_____

3.6.   Was privacy a main concern in the design of this building in particular? How?

_____

3.7.   Could you describe any characteristics concerning the design of the building regarding the following aspects related to privacy:

Common/Social Areas	
Sanitation Areas	
Safety	
Rooms	

3.8.   Which design strategies in your opinion can improve the privacy in these facilities?

_____
_____

3.9.   Have you visited the building after your intervention/design? Has it changed? If so, how?

_____
_____

3.10.   Other Observations:

_____
_____

_____
_____