

SMALL SPACE, LARGE AMENITY CATALYST BY GENTLE CONFRONTATION

by Philip Stejskal Architecture, published in:

Drawing the Line

Deliberations on Density



URBAN DESIGN FORUM WA

The book includes some other wonderful articles and a number of thought providing discussions. The book can be bought at **Boffins Books**, 88 William Street, Perth and via [Amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au), category Books / Urban & Land Use Planning.



Philip Stejskal Architecture
Image: Louise Allen



Small space, large amenity - catalyst by gentle confrontation

SMALL

densification + apartment footprint + cost

LARGE

spatial quality + building performance + future possibility



Our project is all about proposing a medium density living situation that would initially attract / be suitable for a wide range of people and demographics, by offering a range of dwelling types. Yet more than this, the project allows this mixed cohort to continue living there and growing as a community for decades rather than years. So, as singles become couples, have children, who grow up and eventually leave home...we wanted to offer a place where all of these stages of life can be accommodate without having to uproot and relocate. The entire spatial and technical resolution of the project is in service of this idea.



The Young Couple by Claire Holmes

For the newlyweds, what is attractive about this community is the ability to lay down roots with the opportunity to expand as the family grows. With first home affordability at the forefront of young West Australians' minds and many moving to the tips of the freeway to achieve this, the modest one-bedroom studio is an attainable option. What separates this residential typology is the curated chance to build up, or build in.

The studio starts its life for the couple as a place to sleep, hang out with friends, even socialise with neighbours if they wish and work from home. They enjoy having a barbeque with neighbours on the weekend and have become attached to their veggie patch that continues to yield year by year. When it comes time to think about growing their family, they don't want to move from the amenity of the suburb they are now used to. So instead of moving, they expand. First, they fill in the mezzanine, allowing them to create privacy between the sleeping area and the living. A good stop-gap with a newborn offering them supervision and connection, and the opportunity to save for the big extension!

A new level is added above creating a second and third bedroom with a terrace. The young family move upstairs for privacy and the new views they've created, finding themselves with a spare room they once slept in. She's been wanting to quit her 9-5 and pursue her photography business full time for a while and their old bedroom provides the perfect space for this. Private from the rest of the house and with good proximity to the public street she can close off the shutters for focus or open up to both clients and those intrigued.

For the couple, a time comes when they no longer require the ground floor level. With the simple addition of a kitchenette, a student moves in, they barely notice him as he comes and goes via the street.



The Bachelor by Yang Yang Lee

For the bachelor, this residential typology offers opportunity of a workspace to pursue his personal enterprise and simultaneously create an intimate sense of home. A studio in the full sense of the word; a place to work and study and also to live and sleep - neither

getting in the way of each other thanks to a double height volume that offers spatial separation yet also connection. The pivoting façade screens diffuse light or shut down the entire space whenever he wishes. Or if occasion calls, by opening up to the courtyard, he holds social gatherings that spill out of his space into the communal greenery and sky above. By throwing open the same screens toward the street, he creates an interface with customers of his trade –an impromptu storefront –the high internal walls allowing him to display his works proudly.

During winter he enjoys a flood of northern light entering his space. In summer, he positions the façade screens to deflect the searing sun yet admit cooling breezes. It may be argued, but the space empowers his life's passion of creativity and social fulfilment.



The Family by Philip Stejskal

For the family of 5, the dream to live near the beach is made possible not only by the price point of the 3 bedroom apartment they recently bought in the complex, but also by the way this feels nothing like an apartment!

They now live across three floors. The kids chase each other up and down the stairs and throw paper planes between levels.

At other times, the eldest is able to focus on his studies in a discreet study mezzanine, while another reads books with mum on the adjacent daybed.

Dad is cooking dinner, but gets talking to one of the neighbours while collecting herbs from the communal garden. The youngest follows him out, spade in hand, ready to dig something up.

His friend from number 4 comes out too. It starts raining – summer rain –everyone has their windows open and the noises of life filter through the complex.

Five years on, the eldest has moved into the room at street level. He studies and volunteers.

Comes and goes often with friends. Has his own bathroom, life is good. An upward extension means they now live over 4 floors, dedicated play space for the boys who were starting to take over the house.

Mum has turned 40. A big party is planned by the community in the courtyard, open fire, long table, party lights. The kids run between apartments well past bedtime.



The Retired Woman by Louise Allen

For the single retired woman, the space begins as a compact container, easy to manage and dense with amenity. She is on a pension and has invested her life savings into this home; its here she will age in place.

Her life here is enriched by a multitude of moments that enhance her daily experience. They are the northern light that spills across the floor, dictated by the positioning of the pivoting screens and ever changing. The cool breeze that floats up from the street and into the courtyard. Watching the communal garden as it changes from season to season.

Dog-sitting for the neighbours while they escape Down South. Watching the weather roll over the courtyard.

Teaching the young ones to play Bridge in the common room while doing her laundry. Marvelling about the absence of power bills thanks to the communal battery storage facility. Washing down in the outdoor shower following a swim at the beach. Enjoying the fact that she can stay put even when her mobility decreases.



The Neighbourhood Friend by unknown

For the passer-by who lives in the area, this complex holds no end of intrigue. He knows many of the residents, and has known them for years. He himself has moved three times over the past 15 years as his family grew and then contracted again. Yet his friends who live in the complex, of similar age, have managed to stay put despite similar changes in their lives. At one point they built an extension on top of their apartment – most curious. In fact, the entire building has continued to evolve as various residents have done the same.

They all seem to want to stay there. And he understands why – he has been there many times, invited for dinner, or to toast marshmallows on the open fire. He knows many of the people there, even gets his weekly massage at number 6 – accessed via the street front, this friend has set up a shop in the ground floor of her apartment.

When the complex first opened, he was mildly confronted by the lifestyle that was being proposed by the building. It seemed to require something of him even though he



was merely a passer-by. He initially avoided walking past it, but found himself drawn to the vivacity of life it seemed to exude. It didn't take long before he found himself chatting with a resident, next dining with a whole group of them. His gaze still fixates on the building whenever he walks by.

However, it no longer haunts him – he now understands it means well.

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