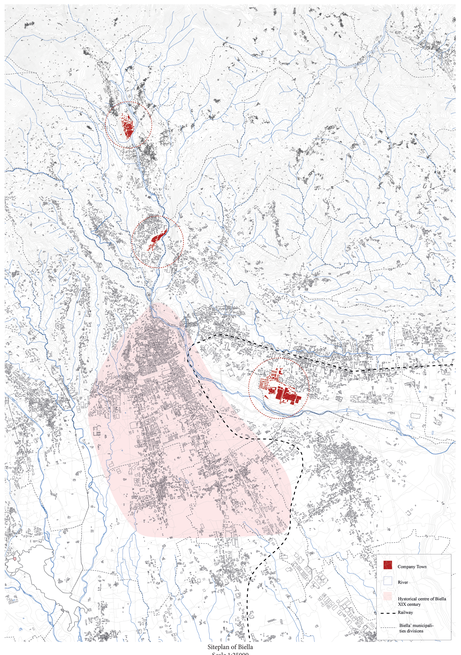
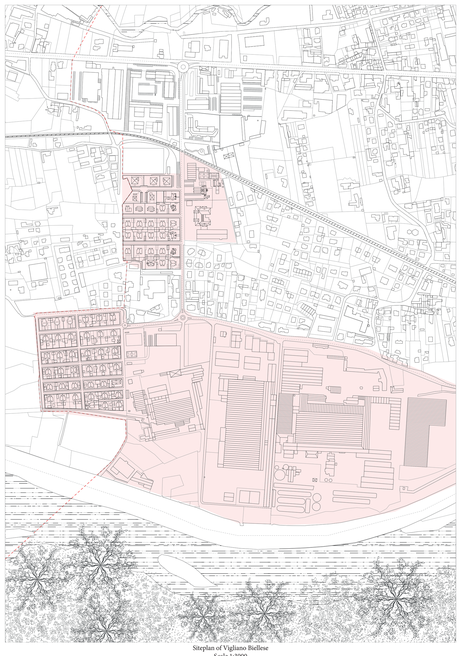
IN GOOD COMPANY

Using the Case Study of Vigliano Biellese to Propose a Retrofitting Model for Company Towns

Company towns were a paternalistic response to entrepreneurs' new challenges during the Industrial Textile Revolution. Building housing for company workers demonstrated the desires of private entrepreneurs "to provide and to separate": providing property they could not have otherwise had, by separating private space from public, home from work, domestic rooms from each other, favoring the specialization of functions, labor, and sexual division, and creating a fertile field for horizontal control at all levels of life.
My thesis, *Factory of Lives*, uses witnesses' memories and narratives from three Biella case studies to understand company towns' history and importance. The biopolitical role of the house as a true factory—not of goods but of human lives—is considered the ultimate control device to maximize labor exploitation. However, oral testimonials also show nostalgia for a lost community.
In response, the project proposes a residential and urban retrofitting concept using the former company town of Vigliano Biellese as a case study. A legal framework suggests the introduction of a cooperative and community land trust to reconsider domestic and territorial boundaries. At the scale of domesticity, movable partitions enable flexible spaces for today's modern households, while different gradients of privacy and communal spaces are provided to accommodate mixed-income tenants. At the scale of the neighborhood, property boundaries and streets, which currently reveal municipal neglect and upkeep difficulties, are being blurred into pedestrian paths, where people can meet and care for each other.
Ultimately, *In Good Company* proposes a new way of living based on commoning to give more to the residents of this historic company town by inserting spaces for reciprocity and care.



Siteplan of Biella
Scale 1:25000



Siteplan of Vigliano Biellese
Scale 1:3000

Present State

€ from citizen's taxation that municipality should use for maintenance:

€ from citizen's taxation that municipality spent for maintenance:

Resulting in NEGLECT of maintenance by the municipality.

Proposal

Phase 1: Architect in BETWEEN Municipality/People

Transfer € to

Municipality

In Good Company Comunity Land Trust (CLT)*

In Good Company Houses Cooperative (Coop)**

People

In order to obtain their village managed, they need to consider certain requirements from the municipality as a site of historical industrial interest

Phase 2: Architect works for the CLT and Coop

€ received from the municipality

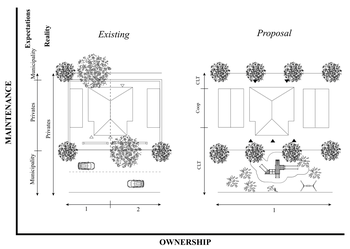
€ here CLT - Coop spent for maintenance

According to people's NEEDS, by vote at the general assembly in which all inhabitants (association members) participate once a month

Resulting in POSSIBILITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY

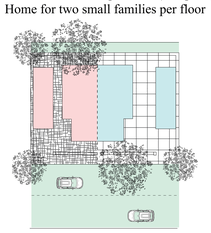
*CLT
A community land trust (CLT) is a nonprofit corporation that holds only the land on behalf of a place-based community, while serving as the long-term steward for affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces and other community assets on behalf of a community. CLTs balance individual needs for secure housing with community goals, such as preventing displacement, and promoting economic and racial inclusion.

**Coop
A housing cooperative, or housing co-op, is a legal entity that owns residential buildings. It is typically owned by shareholders or sometimes a nonprofit. Unlike other forms of home ownership, co-op members buy shares that grant them the right to occupy a unit. This pooling of resources lowers costs for all members.



Existing

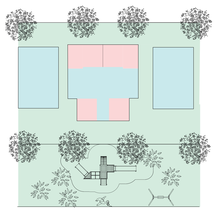
Home with maximum four bed per floor (two per apartament)
Home for two small families per floor



Own by family 1
Own by family 2
Own by municipality

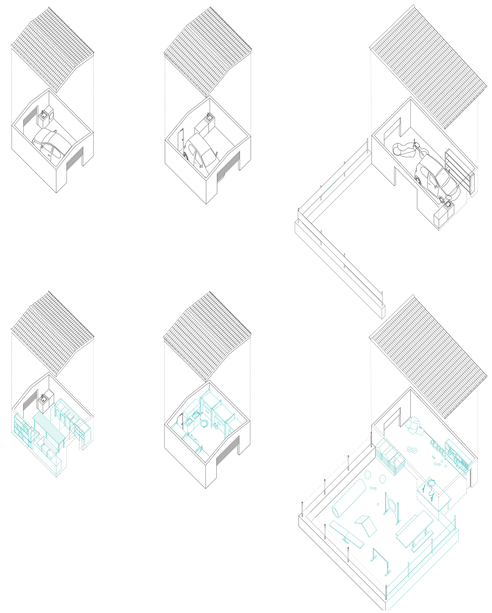
Proposal

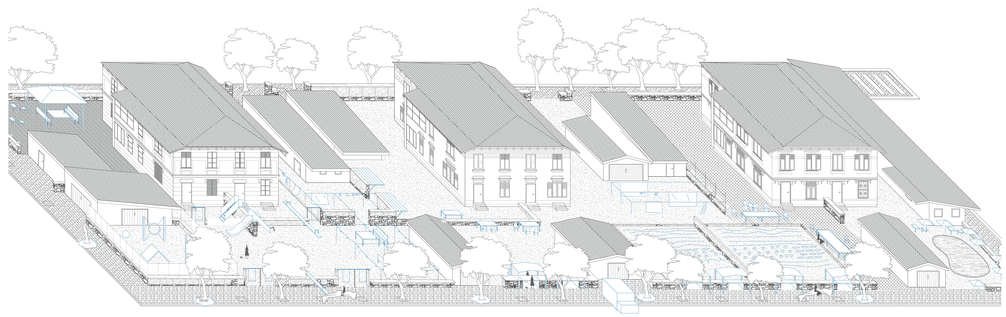
Home with two to six beds per floor
Home for singles, couples, elderly ,small and large families



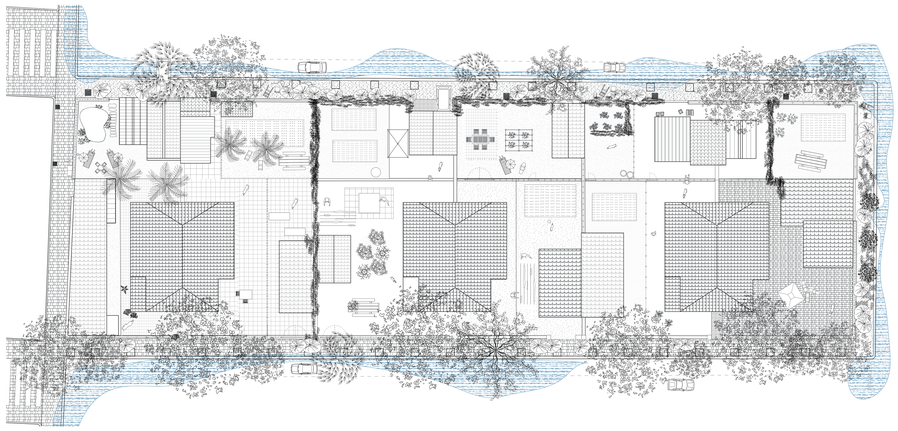
Private spaces own by COOP
Shared spaces own by COOP
Own by CLT

New road directions viable by car
Parcel selected as prototype
Roads converted into pedestrian walkways
Added buildings considered illegal or in a neglected state
Added buildings considered legal and in good condition
Buildings chosen as examples of how they could be transformed according to the needs of the neighborhood into 1. communal laundry 2. waste collection center 3. Dog care center
Former communal laundry of the Company Town now abandoned





Axonometry of the proposal of the prototype parcel
Scale 1:150



Plan and Facade of the selected parcel
Scale 1:150

Marta 35 years old. She is alone with her baby and she would like a work space which could become a room.
Mauro and his husband can decide either to share the common space at the ground or first floor.
Upstairs a **young couple**, a young student **Matteo** 25 years old, and **Simona** a single person now widowed, would like to having someone to share space with.

Scenario 3: Two households on the same floor agree.

Giuseppe e **Laura**, 95 years old.
Marta's parents would like to move closer to their daughter and granddaughter but they need a private space for their **caregiver** and a chaining room accessible from the garden.
A **medical clinic** can be used from the tenants and the rest of the community.

Sceanrio 4: Four households agree

One the day, when Marta's parents will no longer be there Marta with her daughter would like a versatile space that could also turn into a small private kitchen in case of need.
Antonio, a 75-year-old single man, would like to share his daily life with someone. He would need an atelier space to cultivate his passions .
Upstairs **Lucia** has a more private space with her two children. **Matteo**, the young student, will also share the space with three other rooms for couples or singles

Ground floor and first floor of the house A of the Company Town
Scale 1:100