

FIRST STRUGGLE THEN HOUSING

A Critical History of Social Housing in Geneva from
1850 to 2023

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A Critical History of Social Housing in Geneva (1850 - 2023)

Theoretical Statement TPOD EPFL 2023–2024

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NEVER-ENDING STORY

1 “Consommation: Nos Finances Vont Encore Souffrir En 2024 | Tribune de Genève.” Accessed January 12, 2024. <https://www.tdg.ch/consommation-nos-finances-vont-encore-souf->

2 “A Genève, Les Loyers Battent Des Records - Le Temps.” Accessed January 12, 2024. <https://www.letemps.ch/economie/immobilier/geneve-loyers-battent-records>.

3 “Les Bureaux Vides Prolifèrent à Genève. Et Cela va Continuer... - Heidi.News.” Accessed January 12, 2024. <https://www.heidi.news/solutions/les-bureaux-vides-prolifere-a-geneve-et-cela-va-continuer>.

4 McCrae, Nathalie Gerber. “Logement à Genève: à qui profite l'espace?” *Le Courrier*, April 3, 2018. <https://lecourrier.ch/2018/04/03/logement-a-geneve-a-qui-profite-lespace/>.

5 Groupe de travail. *Le Mouvement ouvrier suisse: Situation, organisation et lutte des travailleurs de 1800 à nos jours*. Adversaire. Collection Histoire. Genève, 1978, 104.

6 From 1870 to 1940

7 Cogato Lanza, E. *Maurice Braillard et ses urbanistes*. Slatkine. Genève, 2007, 77.

8 Ibid. p.77

9 Tafuri, Manfredo. *Vienne La Rouge Politique Immobilière de La Vienne Socialiste 1919-1930*. Bruxelles: Pierre Mardaga éditeur, 1981, 27.

At the end of 2023, *The Economist* ranked Geneva as the third most expensive city in the world, and the Swiss Federal Housing Office (OFL) announced a rent increase of 3% for 2024.¹ Despite numerous neighborhood projects underway, including a large proportion of subsidized housing, the State of Geneva is struggling to curb real estate speculation which is due in part to strong demographic growth and a limited land surface², but also to a general lack of planning, allowing among other aspects many commercial properties to remain empty while rents continue to rise.³ The critical housing situation in Geneva today is a long-term one⁴, paralleling the struggles supported by social movements to secure viable, affordable housing. Since the 19th century, social movements such as the labor movement and counter-culture movements have had a strong influence on social housing in Geneva, thanks notably to their struggle to provide healthy, accessible housing that is part of neighborhood life and the city⁵. Social movements, such as the workers' movement (1850 to 1920) and the squat movement (1975 - 2000s), have contributed to the development of rights and laws but also a new vision of housing, of how we live together and inhabit the city. This study analyzes the history of waves of struggles and how their different responses have impacted the vision and policies for subsidized housing in Geneva from 1850 to 2023, and how these three interconnected aspects - housing, social movements, and politics, led to the development of a supportive and collective approach to housing and 'vivre ensemble'.

The first part explores the impact of the labor movement in Switzerland, more specifically Geneva, focusing on its role in shaping legislation and fostering the development of healthy, affordable housing. This social movement, which had a central influence for almost 70 years⁶, reached its peak between 1933 and 1936 during Léon Nicole's ⁷ term as State Councilor for the City of Geneva. During this period, Geneva became the Swiss epicenter of socialism, earning it the nickname 'Red Geneva',⁸ in reference to other European socialist cities such as 'Red Vienna'.⁹

The second part, divided into three chapters, focuses on the paradigm shift that occurred in the 1910-20s, when the state began to finance and promote social housing through new laws and standards. The study will analyze how the state and city of Geneva became essential and necessary tools for the creation of subsidized housing. The impact this had on the city's architecture will be examined through the analysis of several build-

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Top: Geneva plan, 1864, Image from MapGeoAdmin

Bottom: Geneva plan, 2021, Image from MapGeoAdmin

ings constructed from 1920 to 1975, that reflect the evolution and changes in the typology and morphology of social housing.

The third part will explore the advent of protest movements and the squat counter-culture in the 1970s, which actively opposed, among other things, the standardization and commodification of both the city and housing. The influence of the squat movement, particularly from the 1990s onwards, radically altered the way in which the state and the population viewed issues such as self-management, participation, self-building, relations between residents, among others. This period thus played a major role in Geneva, as it brought about a lasting change in the approach to housing and living together.

The fourth part will analyze the squat movement's impact on the development of social housing, with the surge of associative housing cooperatives in Geneva from 2000 to 2023. In order to better understand the enthusiasm of the state and the general public for this model, and the reasons behind it, we will examine the extent to which the state uses these associative structures in its large-scale housing planning, and the impact of these on the architectural and urban design of the city. In light of this history, the concluding section will question what the future of housing could look like in Geneva. How can we implement strategies to overcome the housing crisis? What model should we advocate for? The aim of this study is to sketch out ways of imagining a viable future for Geneva's population, through a plurality of housing types, but also through the development of more flexible laws that offer greater freedom to owners and tenants alike.

FIGHTS FOR SOCIAL RIGHTS IN SWITZERLAND

Social housing rights we have today in Switzerland are the result of a long social and political battle between a number of stakeholders, the main ones being the people, social movements and the state. This leads us to begin our analysis with the workers' movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Switzerland. Examining the workers' housing in Geneva is tied to the broader Swiss labor movement,¹⁰ and it therefore seems necessary to maintain a national perspective to best understand its evolution.

Contemporary Switzerland came into being in 1848,¹¹ with the amalgamation of 26 cantons separated from one another by cultural, political and, above all, linguistic differences.¹² While the laws governing the new Helvetic confederation ensured uniformity between the cantons, the various barriers mentioned earlier persisted, hindering the transfer of information across the country or the consolidation of common thinking within political parties. Swiss workers circulated their ideas through leaflets, flyers, and newspapers¹³, but a national socialist thought was only made possible largely by the arrival of the transnational CFF/SBB/FFS railroad in the end of the 19th century¹⁴ coupled with the introduction of laws breaking down borders (customs, taxes, etc.)¹⁵ between Swiss cantons, encouraging the movement of people and ideas across the different linguistic regions. The creation of the Swiss Socialist-Democratic Party in 1888¹⁶ and its entry into parliament marked an important moment in the

10 Auderset, Patrick, Michel Busch, Alain Clavien, and Marianne Enckell. *Logement ouvrier: cahiers d'histoire du mouvement ouvrier*. Edition en bas. Lausanne: AEHMO, s. d, 5.

11 "1848, Une Histoire Incroyable." Accessed January 3, 2024. <https://www.parlament.ch/fr/services/visite-du-palais-federal/1848-une-histoire-incroyable>.

12 Groupe de travail. *Le Mouvement ouvrier suisse: Situation, organisation et lutte des travailleurs de 1800 à nos jours*. Adversaire. Collection Histoire. Genève, 1978, 24.

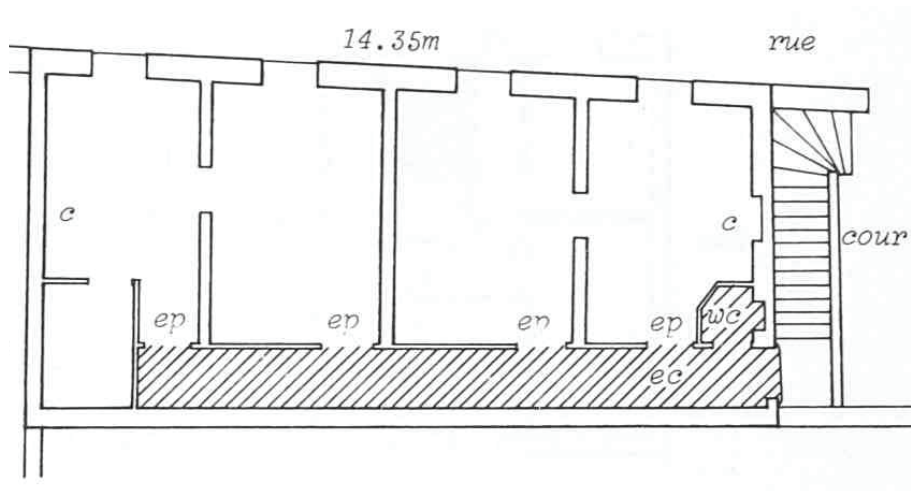
13 Ibid, 63.

14 hls-dhs-dss.ch. « Chemins de fer ». Consulté le 13 décembre 2023. <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/articles/007961/2015-02-11/>.

15 hls-dhs-dss.ch. « Douanes ». Consulté le 12 décembre 2023. <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/articles/013765/2015-02-03/>.

16 Groupe de travail. *Le Mouvement ouvrier suisse: Situation, organisation et lutte des travailleurs de 1800 à nos jours*. Adversaire. Collection Histoire. Genève, 1978, 96.

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Top: Standard housing plan, Eaux-vives, 1860, Case , From Lawrence, Roderick J.
 "Evolution des logements populaires genevois de 1860 à 1960."
 Ingénieurs et architectes suisses, 1981, 3.

Bottom: Family room, for all uses in Zurich, 1890, Case 1, Image from SwissInfo

battle of the workers' movement, as workers were given the opportunity to make themselves heard by proposing or amending laws to improve their living conditions, among other aspects.

17 In 1908, the Société pour l'Amélioration du Logement à Genève (Geneva Housing Improvement Society) denounced the problem, specifying that to determine the situation in the working class, a distinction should be made between two- and three-room apartments in which there was "frightening overcrowding". IN Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 12.

18 Lawrence, Roderick J. "Evolution des logements populaires genevois de 1860 à 1960." *Ingénieurs et architectes suisses*, 1981, 417.

19 Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 70-74.

20 Dr. F. Ferrière, "rapport sur les visites sanitaires institué par le conseil administratif de la ville de Genève pendant l'été 1884", Genève, juin 1885, 32.

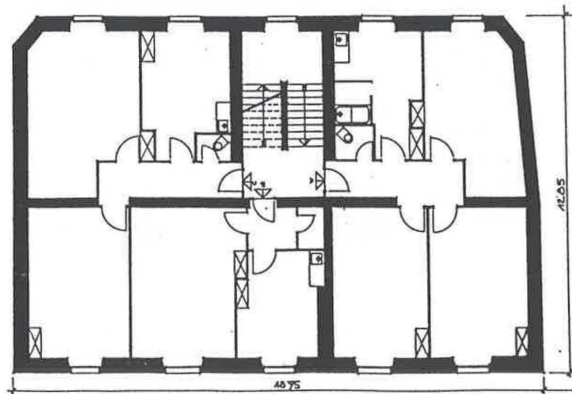
During the nineteenth-century industrial period, there were no laws governing housing and even less for the workers' housing, primarily built by private entities. In the interests of profit, large private contractors built dwellings with the aim of maximizing the number of people they could accommodate in a given space.¹⁷ These accommodations often lacked sufficient light and natural ventilation, tenants shared a single or double room, serving as kitchen, living room and bedroom, fostering disease and conflict. A typical example of this kind of housing can be found in the neighborhood of Eaux-Vives, built in 1860 at the ruelle du Midi 14.¹⁸ These are dwellings characterized by a simple typology and several apartments per floor, where each dwelling comprises one or two rooms of equivalent size shared by several people, with the shower room and septic tank generally located on the first floor and shared with the whole building as well as outsiders. Apartments receive daylight only on one façade, either from the street or from the courtyard side. The distance between the street façade and the courtyard façade varies from 10 to 12 meters. Rooms are often arranged horizontally around a central corridor or vestibule. Although less common than through-apartments, which open onto the two main facades, this type of dwelling was built in several towns in French-speaking Switzerland in the nineteenth century. It demonstrates the desire for economic profitability at the expense of the inhabitants.

It wasn't until 1892, with the creation of the Société des Habitations Salubres, that laws were introduced to regulate such things as the provision of light, the size of interior shafts to allow for cross-ventilation and the introduction of toilets in dwellings to limit the number of 'uncontrolled' septic tanks. From this date onwards, these health features became a standard for the construction of new homes. One example is a building constructed on rue Rousseau number 14 in the Saint-Gervais district in 1898¹⁹, financed by both private investors and the City of Geneva. The four-storey building provided housing for workers in the heart of the city. In order to offer rents that remained affordable, the architects made some very economic choices to reduce the cost, designing extremely simple apartments and facades. Each apartment is equipped with a kitchen and a rudimentary individual bathroom, as described by Dr. F. Ferrière, who was commissioned to investigate the healthiness of housing in Geneva in 1884:

"Drinking water tanks and piping are not subject to any regulations in our country, at least as far as their construction and location are concerned; this partly explains the defective condition in which they have been found. [...] The location of tanks and piping has often been found to be defective; various drinking water tanks are reported to be placed in the latrines themselves, their water thus doubly exposed to contamination."²⁰

Interior distribution is provided by an entrance vestibule or a corridor. The question of air and light in the dwellings played an important role in the debate on street width. The layout of the plots along the new streets

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Top: Elevation, Rue Rousseau, 1898, Case 3

Bottom: Standard floor plan, Rue Rousseau, 1898, Case 3, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 126.

avoided the creation of narrow, dark courtyards. Sanitary facilities were fairly rudimentary, with kitchen sinks fed by a water tank. The architects opted for relatively large, undifferentiated spaces, offering residents a versatile use of the rooms. Thanks to this and economic choices for the material and decoration, the average rental price of these housing managed to stay low despite its central location and the market at the time. This is all the more significant given that legislation protected these rents from any future increases due to property speculation.

From this time onwards, housing became one of the main issues for architects²¹, who had previously worked mainly on public building commissions: schools, museums, theaters, parks, etc., but also on private commissions (villas or residences). Housing was often designed and built by private contractors, who cared little for the quality of the dwelling, their aim being the profitability of the m2 which dictated most of their choices of materials used for construction²². But at the turn of the 20th century, a paradigm shift took place and housing construction became a central element of the architect's work. Switzerland's position at the center of Europe meant that it was influenced by German-speaking, French-speaking, Italian-speaking and Anglo-Saxon countries. What's more, with the 1919 creation of the League of Nations²³ headquartered in Geneva, the city became more international, where many figures,²⁴ with close or distant ties to architecture, would make their home, encouraging experimentation with a range of solutions, both constructive (reinforced concrete, open plan, etc.) and architectural (garden cities, high-density housing, territorial cities, etc.).

The general strike of 1918, following the deployment of the Swiss army in Zurich by the government fearful of a Bolshevik revolution in Switzerland, also marked a major turning point²⁵. In response to the military occupation, the Swiss trade union movement and socialist political parties called for a 24-hour strike against the 'dictature des sabres' ('dictatorship of swords')²⁶. From November 12 to 14 of that year, 250,000 workers gathered in Switzerland's biggest cities to protest²⁷. It was the first time that workers had gone on strike at national level, with common demands such as the introduction of the right to work for all, or the 48-hour week. Thanks to this event, some of these progressive demands were accepted by the state, which took the workers' movement into account in order to avoid a revolution that could jeopardize the existence of the Swiss government and its constitutional and legal order²⁸.

The workers' cause was one of the focal points of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Switzerland, both politically and socially. The movement's national approach helps us to understand Geneva's particular situation during this period. As one of the last cantons to join the Helvetic confederation in 1815, and the westernmost in the country, its influence on industrial and political Switzerland was less than that of cities such as Zurich or Bern. But the establishment of national policies and trade unions helped to overcome linguistic and geographical barriers and bring about national cohesion. Thanks to the creation of public-law corporations and the Social Democratic Party (SP), the first laws to regulate social rights, such as the construction of healthy housing for people at risk, laid the foundations for social housing, which was to be one of the major themes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

21 Charollais, Isabelle, Jean-Marc Lamunière, et Michel Nemec. *L'architecture à Genève 1919-1975*. Payot Lausanne. République et Canton de Genève - DAEL. Genève: Nadir S.A., 1999, 182.

22 Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 41.

23 The League of Nations (1920 - 1946), often referred to as the predecessor of the United Nations, was the first intergovernmental organisation created to develop cooperation between nations. <https://www.ungeneva.org/fr/about/league-of-nations/overview>, Access on 10 January 2024

24 Notably Lenin and Le Corbusier

25 Groupe de travail. *Le Mouvement ouvrier suisse: Situation, organisation et lutte des travailleurs de 1800 à nos jours*. Adversaire. Collection Histoire. Genève, 1978, 156.

26 Pascal Fleury, "La Suisse a évité de peu la guerre civile [archive]", on www.laliberte.ch, 23 mars 2018.

27 Ibid.

28 Groupe de travail. *Le Mouvement ouvrier suisse: Situation, organisation et lutte des travailleurs de 1800 à nos jours*, 162.



National strike, 1918, Basel, Image from solidarités

INTER-WAR RECESSION AND CRISIS PERIOD

During the interwar period, Geneva became an important place for architectural experimentation. Architectural production became an important issue for the state, thanks to a multitude of laws drafted in response to the growing housing shortage and the needs of the ever-growing working class. A number of key figures helped shape modern Geneva, including Camille Martin, Arnold Hoechel, Hans Bernoulli and Maurice Braillard. Braillard became a key figure in Geneva as an architect, town planner and politician, and it is to him and his colleagues that we owe the *Geneva Master Plan* produced in 1935, which transformed the medieval town plan into the modern, international city we know today.

In 1929, the Geneva daily newspaper *La Suisse* published a weekly page entitled *Pour la Cité Moderne*, edited by Hoechel and designed to provide a forum for public discussion of the city. The title of the weekly page was quite meaningful, as Professor Elena Cogato Lanza writes : “[b]y using the term ‘modern’, the Geneva page foregrounds the very general task of modernizing the city, while the use of the term ‘Cité’ underlines the scope of the modernization to be pursued, which would touch not only on the physical dimensions of the city, but also on the social and civic dimensions.”²⁹

Between 1920 and 1929, the state drew up a series of laws to encourage the production of affordable, healthy housing. From then on, politicians considered housing to be a central issue. The creation, in 1919, of the Foundation for Economic Housing and the ratification, in 1928, of the *Law for the Promotion of the Construction of Affordable and Economic Housing*, and finally, in 1929, of the *Law on Construction and Miscellaneous Installations (LCI)*, offered economic and normative tools that enabled the city to be modernized with the help of subsidies and public credits.

Attentive to the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM)³⁰, Maurice Braillard was particularly interested in the rationality produced in contemporary European architecture, such as the *Siedlung*³¹. In 1929, he announced in *Pour la Cité Moderne* that Geneva was “preparing a model intervention”³². With the *Cité Vieusseux*, Braillard intends to set an example for future generations : designed according to the *Siedlung* model, he incorporated the principle of ‘parallel distribution’³³ of bars, allowing both façades to be bathed in sunlight and the apartments to be well ventilated, in contrast to the dense, compact blocks, causing hygiene problems. With these sanitary principles in mind, Maurice Braillard conceived the Vieusseux district which would later lead to the design of the Greater Geneva area as being composed mainly of bars rather than blocks.³⁴

Maurice Braillard was in charge of the urban design of the district, and he along with Frédéric Mezger, Gampert & Baumgartner and Louis Vincent were responsible for the construction of the various buildings³⁵. The plan produced in 1931 by Maurice Braillard is a standard Swiss apartment typology: a central layout with two walk-through apartments on either side of the stairwell, and a seemingly mono-oriented layout. In

29 Cogato Lanza, E. *Maurice Braillard et ses urbanistes*. Slatkine. Genève, 2007, 61.

30 The Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne, or CIAM, emerged from the need to promote functional architecture and urban planning. The first meeting took place in 1928 in La Sarraz, Switzerland, thanks to the impetus of Hélène de Mandrot, and saw significant participation from Le Corbusier. The last official CIAM congress, the tenth in the series, was held in Dubrovnik in 1956. Subsequently, some of them continued to meet under the name Team 10.

31 The “Das neue Frankfurt” program (1925-1930), overseen by Ernst May, was one of the main experiments in housing construction policy in Europe between the wars. The general direction of urban development focused on the creation of low-density satellite settlements (*Siedlungen*), separated from the urban core by a belt of public green spaces. These new districts (totaling around 12,000 homes) are based on the bar concept, consisting of the repetition of a standard single-family home unit with private garden. However, this organization is frequently enriched by a mixed construction of multi-storey buildings (*Mischbebauung*), increasing density while diversifying typological solutions.

32 “une bonne nouvelle”, LS, 16.11.1929

33 M.B. “la reconstruction de la Rive droite”, LS, 19.11.1931

34 Cogato Lanza, E. *Maurice Braillard et ses urbanistes*. Slatkine. Genève, 2007, 67.

35 [s.n.]. “La Cité Vieusseux, Genève”. *L’oeuvre : architecture et art*, 1933, 130.



View of the Cité Vieusseux, Cité Vieusseux, 1932, Case 5,
Image from Fondation Brillard Architectes

36 Ibid, 131.

37 In terms of the rationalization of domestic space in the 1930s, the work of Alexander Klein is fundamental. Klein Alexander, *Floor plan formation and spatial design of small dwellings and new evaluation methods*, Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung, n°33 and 34, Berlin, 1928

38 Paravicini, Ursula, et Pascal Amphoux. *Maurice-Braillard: pionner suisse de l'architecture moderne*. Genève: Fondation Braillard Architectes, 1993, 114.

39 Ibid, 107.

40 Quiring, Claudia. *Ernst May 1886-1970*. Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2011, 88.

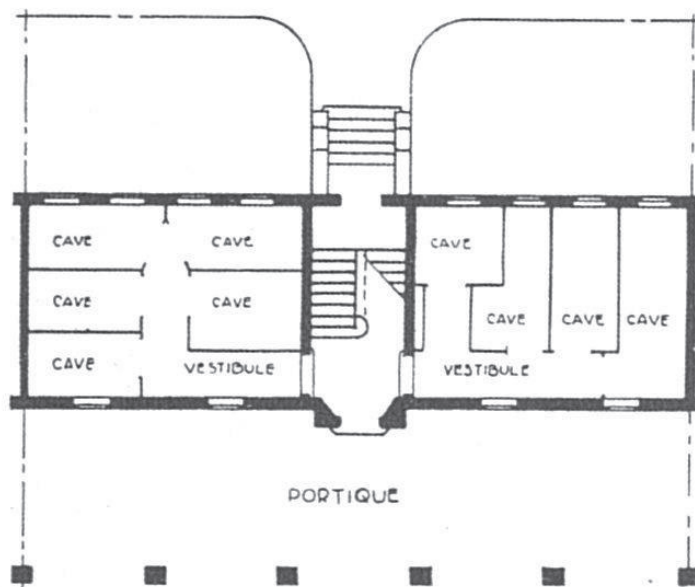
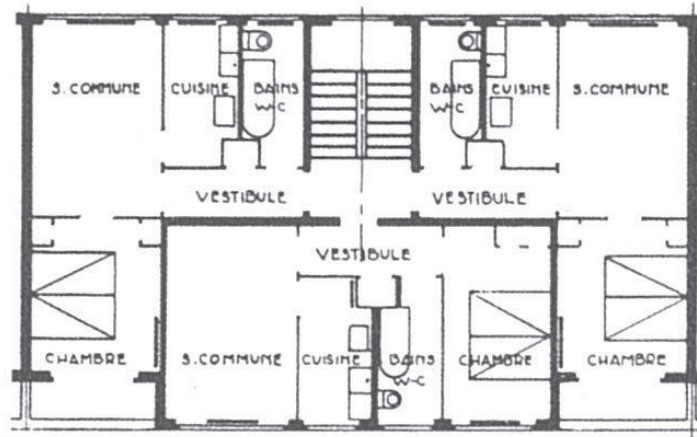
41 Charollais, Isabelle, Jean-Marc Lamunière, et Michel Nemec. *L'architecture à Genève 1919-1975*. Payot Lausanne. République et Canton de Genève - DAEL. Genève: Nadir S.A., 1999, 186.

1928, the Société Coopérative d'Habitation Genevoise acquired a second plot of land bordering Chemin Vieusseux, and with the support of the cantonal authorities and the interest of the Caisse d'Épargne du Canton de Genève, which facilitated the mortgage loan, began the construction of *Cité Vieusseux*³⁶. Work began in September 1930 and progressed rapidly, enabling the first tenants to take possession of their homes in July 1931. In all, 244 apartments were created on a land area of almost 50,000 square meters, allowing for the development of vast green spaces with groups of buildings spaced 50 meters apart. Laying out the buildings without excavation offered a number of significant advantages: in addition to eliminating the need for time-consuming and costly earthworks, this system made it possible to provide cellars and outbuildings on the first floor, as well as long covered porches, ideal for children's play. Each of Maurice Braillard's sketches shows the surface area of the dwelling, its relevance and performance being assessed according to its degree of correspondence to Alexander Klein's *Betteffect coefficient*³⁷, which expresses the ratio between the built surface area and the number of beds. The resolution of housing plans in terms of the combinatorics of different functional cells led, in an increasingly generalized way, to plans whose rooms of equivalent size could be indifferently assigned to one or other of the dwelling's functions.

As mentioned above, several architects shared the work on six different buildings. The low-cost housing program is undoubtedly the area where Maurice Braillard's 'social functionalism'³⁸, which aims, among other things, to democratize access to healthy, affordable housing, was at its most advanced, as can be seen in the Group A building presented here, comprising 60 units of 50m² each with 2.5 rooms. The introduction of the modern kitchen, with its washbasin and hob, underlines the architect's desire to modernize living and lifestyle. The standardization of the units and their linear layout embody the desire to make modern living available to as many people as possible.

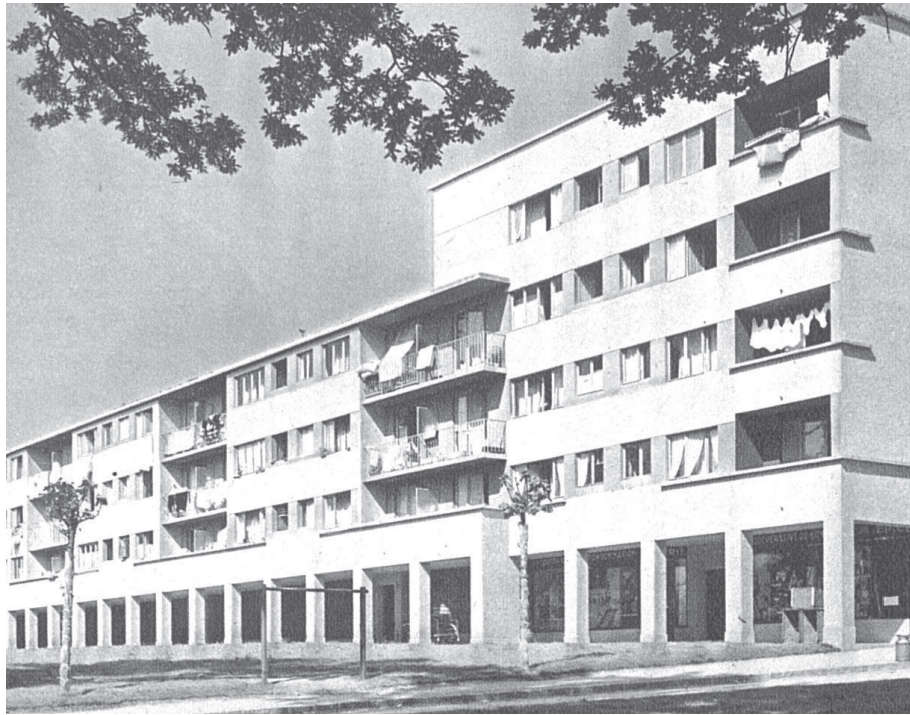
With this housing proposal, we can see the architects' desire to modernize housing in Geneva, but also the way of life: separation of day and night space, introduction of a shower room in each apartment as well as a modern kitchen. The district offers basic services such as stores, laundry and daycare. The *Cité Vieusseux* had become a model in Geneva and Switzerland for the design of a modern, functionalist city, integrating the issues raised at the CIAM³⁹. In 1931, only Berlin and Frankfurt were able to match this achievement, where interior comfort was unrivaled, with modern features such as central heating, hot water and a rational kitchen⁴⁰ inspired by the one built for the Frankfurt complex under the direction of Ernst May. However, due to the economic crisis of 1929 and the small size of the canton, which prevented infinite expansion, *Cité Vieusseux* was the last example of a garden city to be built in Geneva. The garden-city or Siedlung model's need for a relatively large plot of land did not allow for sufficient density to meet Geneva's housing needs.⁴¹

The years 1933 to 1935 marked an important moment in Swiss and Geneva socialist politics: the election of a socialist majority to the Geneva government, led by Léon Nicole. The latter was to form a government with Maurice Braillard as head of the Public Works Department (DTP). Even



Top: Floor plan type A, Cité Vieusseux, 1930, Case 5,

Bottom: Ibid, Ground floor plan type A, Cité Vieusseux, 1930, Case 5,
From [s.n.]. "La Cité Vieusseux, Genève." L'oeuvre : architecture et art, 1933, 6.



Top: View of the facade type A, Cité Vieusseux, 1932, Case 5,
Image from Fondation Braillard Architectes

Bottom: Aerial view of the Vieusseux housing estate, Cité Vieusseux, 1932, Case 5,
From Dumont, Gilbert. *Vieusseux: Mémoire d'une cité*. Cabédita. Bière, 2018, 3.



Director plan of Geneva drawn by M.Brillard, 1935,
Image from Fondation Brillard Architectes

42 Paravicini, Ursula, et Pascal Amphoux. *Maurice-Braillard: pionner suisse de l'architecture moderne*, 109.

43 Cogato Lanza, E. *Maurice Braillard et ses urbanistes*. Slatkine. Genève, 2007, 79.

44 "The master plan is a synthesis of all the economic, demographic, aesthetic, etc. elements required to ensure the rejuvenation and normal, harmonious development of a city... The master plan is therefore a guide and a working tool for the authorities and bodies responsible for ensuring the city's normal evolution. It must be highly flexible in its application and constantly evolving to ensure that it is always up to date.." Maurice Braillard, 1940, translated by the author

45 Paravicini, Ursula, et Pascal Amphoux. *Maurice-Braillard: pionner suisse de l'architecture moderne*. Genève: Fondation Braillard Architectes, 1993, 159.

46 Charollais, Isabelle, Jean-Marc Lamunière, and Michel Nemec. *L'architecture à Genève 1919-1975*. Payot Lausanne. République et Canton de Genève - DAEL. Genève: Nadir S.A., 1999, 112.

47 Ibid, 113.

48 Thalmann, Philippe. "La construction de logements - Logement social". hls-dhs-dss.ch, s. d. <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/articles/013916/2015-01-11/>.

49 Favez, Jean-Claude and Raffestin, Claude. De la Genève radicale à la cité internationale. In: *Histoire de Genève*. Payot. Lausanne, 1986, 360.

50 Charollais, Isabelle, Jean-Marc Lamunière, and Michel Nemec. *L'architecture à Genève 1919-1975*, 151.

though Maurice Braillard didn't call himself a socialist, he chose to join the 'socialist' party lead by Léon Nicole, because he felt it was best suited to meet the needs and aspirations of the Swiss people.⁴² The complicity of the two men led to political and institutional reforms, with the polarity of the discourse revolving around housing and urban land management. As Professor Elena Cogato Lanza notes : "Geneva thus took its place among those local administrations in Europe and Switzerland which, in the 1920s and 30s, were active centers of urban planning experimentation and research,"⁴³ The master plan becomes a symbol for the socialist party and also for Braillard⁴⁴, as it took into consideration the natural/built territory, flows in the city, building zones, with the rationalization of the city as a homogeneous whole that erases social differences between individuals⁴⁵. All this with the aim of highlighting the internationalization of the city of Geneva with the League of Nations as its cornerstone.

GROWTH AND STANDARDIZATION

From 1945 onwards, Geneva experienced particularly intense development. The post-war reconstruction of Europe boosted exports, and domestic demand exploded under the influence of new investors in the Swiss financial center and growth in consumer spending. Thanks to the influx of cheap foreign labor and substantial investment in infrastructure, Geneva was able to build housing en masse in a very short period of time. With the arrival of numerous international structures such as the United Nations or the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva turned its economy to tertiarization to the detriment of the primary and secondary sectors⁴⁶. Between 1945 and 1975, Geneva's population doubled from 170,000 to almost 320,000. Against this backdrop, the apartment vacancy rate fell from 2% to 0.2% in 1946, creating a housing shortage throughout the canton⁴⁷. From 1950 onwards, and even after the end of federal subsidies, this led to a major policy of building multi-family housing, which became the driving force behind Geneva's economic growth⁴⁸. The state became the main vehicle for financing the construction of subsidized housing, through public interest entities such as foundations and cooperatives. As underlined in Favez and Raffestin "[t]he intervention of the State in the life of the community and in that of each individual has continued to grow. In the social sphere, public authorities have been called upon to take on ever greater responsibilities, those of a State concerned with the well-being of all, without calling into question [...] the liberal principles that inspire constitutional texts."⁴⁹

It is within this context that the construction of social housing in Cayla in the Charmilles district took place. This project is an interesting example of low-cost housing built and financed by private real estate developers, whose aim was to demonstrate their ability to build without government assistance⁵⁰. The *Charmilles-Genève* buildings on the Cayla site present, as a whole, a diversity of morphological and typological characteristics aimed at different sociological categories. Building D, which interests us here, is designed for the elderly or young couples without children. It comprises two- and three-room apartments, each with a unique orientation, either facing west or east. These apartments are served by a

central corridor. Another important point is the use of technical ducts, the building is first instance to address issues of technical rationality, as expressed by the systematic grouping of ducts and the search for heating systems other than the heat released by the kitchen, and therefore the location of the heating must be as central as possible, such as a stove system partially recessed between several rooms with heat registers⁵¹. Secondly, for Marchand this system creates “not only fulfils a technical function, in particular through the concentration of shafts, but also creates a system of spatial relationships, regulating paths, the occupation of spaces and relationships of sociability and intimacy”⁵².

The competition's program, influenced by Arnold Hoechel, reveals an extremely pragmatic approach to the problem of affordable housing. Although this generally led to minimalistic designs, it represented a departure from the theoretical presuppositions of the interwar *Existenzminimum* designs⁵³. Participation in this competition gave the architect Georges Addor the opportunity to reflect on the means needed to achieve economical housing, and the interest of his approach lies in its ability to combine different logics: a social and a constructive reasoning. Indeed, the social reasoning is expressed through the organization of the plan, seen for example in the provision of a spacious, easily heatable kitchen is justified by the purpose of the dwellings and the category of tenants destined to occupy them. In addition, the bedrooms are independently designed and arranged to accommodate two beds. The internal street layout, reminiscent of the principle applied in other major architectural projects such as that by Moisei Ginzbourg and Ignaty Milinis (*Narkomfin*, 1932), Le Corbusier (*La cité radieuse*, 1952) or Aldo Rossi (*Gallaratese block D*, 1972), echoed the distribution of ships and the industrial world⁵⁴. Here, distribution is strongly linked to principles of economic optimization, as it reduces costs by requiring only two staircases to distribute a multitude of apartments, unlike the more ‘classic’ distribution where two to four apartments were accessed via a central circulation core. The standardization and optimization of housing then embodied the desire to allow as many people as possible to enjoy modern living⁵⁵.

The reasons that prompted pre-World War II architects to turn to modernist rules, i.e. to move from the block to the bar, or to choose the orientation of the bar in relation to sunlight, were set aside. In fact, the watchword became economic profitability, to the detriment of everything else, including sunlight. This is where the limits of low-cost private housing came into play. In fact, private developers made choices based on economic profitability rather than architectural considerations such as spatial or material choices⁵⁶. In line with the logic of construction and the work of the Honegger brothers, the H.A. ‘Honegger Afrique’ system⁵⁷, prefabrication and standardization became the driving forces in housing construction, this meant shorter construction times, fewer skilled workers and lower overall building costs. This marked the beginning of mass standardization of housing in Geneva, culminating in the 1960s. A few years after the Cayla project, the government introduced a series of laws to encourage the construction of low-cost housing inspired by the French *HLM* system.⁵⁸

Between 1955 and 1957, the State of Geneva equipped itself with several tools, such as credits and laws, to support the construction of social

51 Philippe Meylan, “Logement social/logement minimum. Les années 1950 : quelles histoires pour quels avensirs? ”, EPFL & EAUG, Genève, 1993, 12.

52 Marchand, Bruno. “La campagne Cayla”. *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1995, 18.

53 Marchand, Bruno. “Moving on: Is Existenzminimum Still Relevant?” In *Urban Planning*, 4:186-95. 3. Lausanne: PPUR, 2019, 4.

54 Ibid, 17.

55 Paravicini, Ursula, and Pascal Amphoux. *Maurice-Braillard: pionnier suisse de l'architecture moderne*. Genève: Fondation Braillard Architectes, 1993, 115.

56 Marchand, Bruno. “La campagne Cayla”. *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1995, 17.

57 Courtiau, Catherine. *XXème: un siècle d'architecture à Genève*. infolio éd. Patrimoine suisse Genève. Genève, 2009, 65. See Annexe - Atlas of Housing - case 7 for more details about the HA System and the Honegger brothers

58 The French HLM system, invented in 1950, is housing built with the help of the State and subject to precise construction, management and allocation rules and regulated rents. <https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/logement-social-hlm-definition-categories-finance-ment-attribution-acteurs> Accessed on 11 January 2024

59 Frandsen, Rune. “Les outils de la démesure | Espazium”, 21 mars 2023. <https://www.espazium.ch/fr/actualites/les-outils-de-la-demesure>.

60 Charollais, Isabelle, Jean-Marc Lamunière, and Michel Nemec. *L'architecture à Genève 1919-1975*. Payot Lausanne. République et Canton de Genève - DAEL. Genève: Nadir S.A., 1999, 67.

61 Plans localisés de quartier (PLQ) are land-use plans that specify the conditions under which new buildings can be constructed. The PLQ is a tool that enables public authorities to develop their territory. It serves the public interest by enabling: the creation of public spaces; the construction of accessible housing; the provision of local facilities; the allocation of first floors for craft and commercial uses; the guarantee of neighborhood harmony by ensuring that buildings and outdoor spaces have an overall coherence and provide links with neighboring neighborhoods (streets, passageways); the management of mobility issues; and equal treatment, as each owner has the same building rights, proportional to the surface area of his or her plot.

62 Corboz, André, Jacques Gubler, and Jean-Marc Lamunière. *Guide d'architecture moderne à Genève*. Payot Lausanne. Lausanne, 1969, 39.

63 Courtiau, Catherine. *XXème: un siècle d'architecture à Genève*. infolio éd. Patrimoine suisse Genève. Genève, 2009, 67.

64 Ibid, 193.

65 Corboz, André, Jacques Gubler, and Jean-Marc Lamunière. *Guide d'architecture moderne à Genève*. Payot Lausanne. Lausanne, 1969, 51.

66 Frandsen, Rune. « Les outils de la démesure | Espazium ».

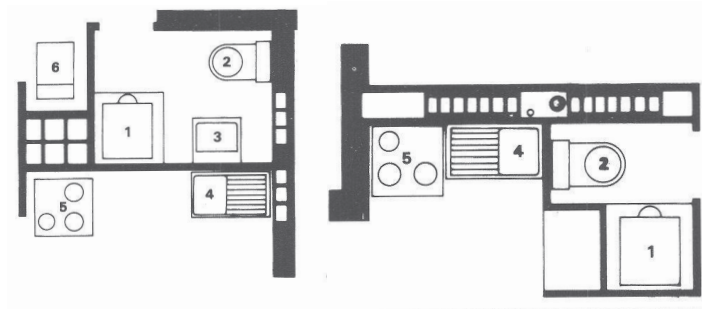
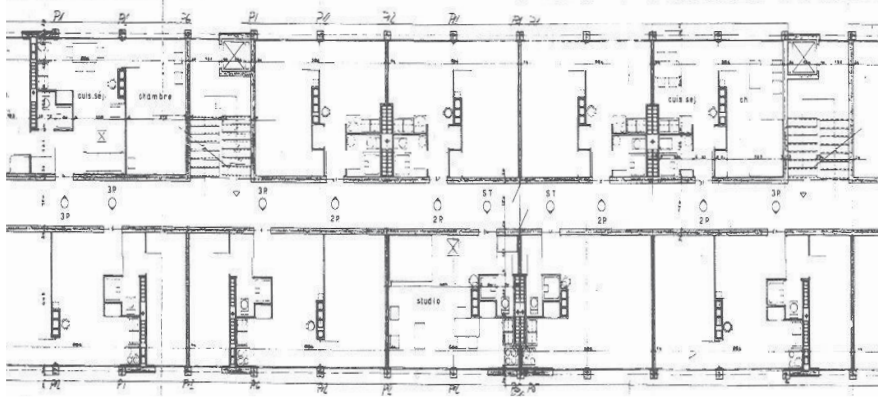
67 Courtiau, Catherine. *XXème: un siècle d'architecture à Genève*, 2009, 53.

housing. It was from this period onwards that Geneva began to see the construction of large housing estates, followed by the construction of ‘satellite housing estates’ in Meyrin, Onex, etc. In 1955, Emile Dupont, then State Councilor for the City of Geneva, introduced a law promoting the *HLM* system. This law, known as the ‘Dupont Law’, enabled the Council of States to grant mortgage loans of up to 85% of the construction cost. To give an idea of the economic resources deployed by the State between 1955 and 1959, the loan increased from 30 million to 220 million Swiss francs.⁵⁹ The aim was to encourage the construction of low-cost housing by both private companies and non-profit institutions. Between 1955 and 1973, one-third of the 100,000 homes built were subsidized by the state⁶⁰. From a legal standpoint, this law introduced a ⁶¹procedure for changing the designated land use. It facilitated the downgrading of agricultural or residential zones to development zones, thereby freeing up land for housing. The 1957 *law on zoning development (LDAU)*, which later became the *LGZD*⁶², gave the City of Geneva the last tools to resort to use expropriation and to set the price of plots. The *Plan Localisé de Quartier* (PLQ), introduced by the *LDAU* law, introducing the possibility of changing the size of buildings by increasing the maximum height.

The *Carouge Towers* project, designed by L. Archinard - G. Brera - A. Damay - J.J.Mégevand - R. Schwertz - P.Waltenspuhl - R. Barro for the Foundation *HLM* de la ville de Carouge between 1959 and 1963, is an example of how land use and building dimensions were changed. The towers, designed by several architects, were among the first high-density towers in Geneva. Located in Carouge, a district close to Geneva’s city center, they initially did not comply with building codes, but in 1957 with the introduction the new laws mentioned above, the city of Carouge was granted permission to build them. The Carouge towers also represent the most radical example of the ‘city within a city’⁶³ principle, and radically changed the Geneva landscape, which until then had consisted of small buildings and houses.

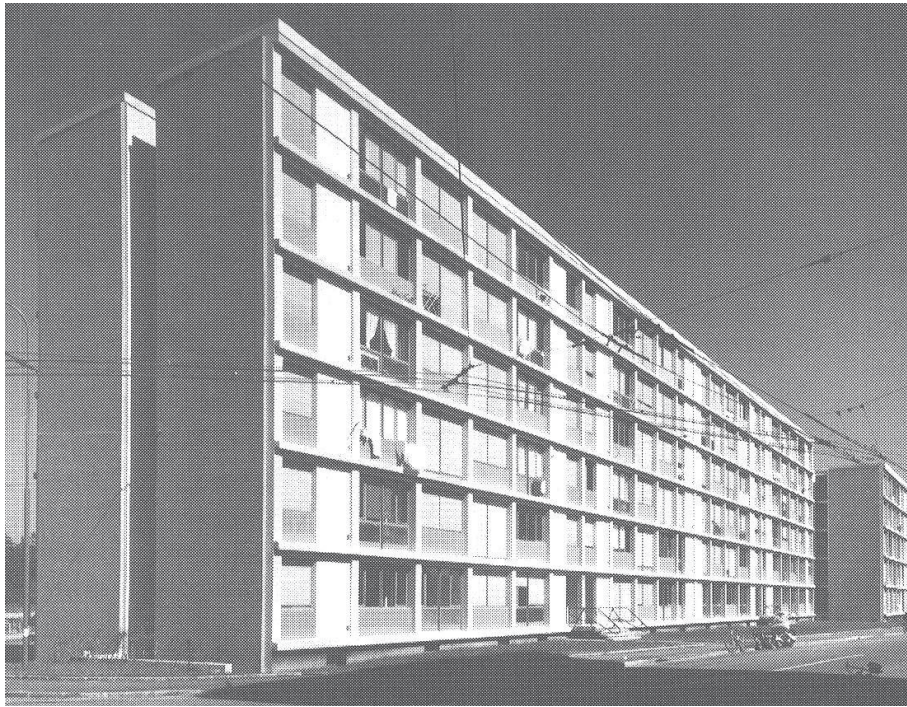
The project comprises 5 buildings each with 12 residential storeys, a mezzanine floor and an office attic. The architects did not want to create a wall with the new towers and enclose the old town of Carouge, so they arranged the buildings parallel to the Avenue des Promenades,⁶⁴ giving them a north-south orientation. The buildings were designed by arraying the same basic unit: two walk-through apartments accessed via a shared staircase⁶⁵. This so-called ‘Geneva-style’⁶⁶ plan can be seen, corresponding to the systematic use of the technical core as a separator between day rooms (south) and night rooms (north). Developed since the 1920s, as we have seen in Braillard’s 1931 *Vieusseux* project, this domestic arrangement became a model for standardized housing in Geneva⁶⁷.

The success of the *Carouge Towers* is due in the first instance to the social mix of the housing, induced by the ‘Dupont law’, which requires different rents at different prices. The second point is the location of the project in the neighborhood. Indeed, the architects’ intention was to create a symbiotic relationship with the old town of Carouge, and to take into consideration the relationships between the future users of the district and the people already living there, in order to encourage social interaction, unlike most large post-war housing estates. The architects were strongly inspired by the urban planning concepts of CIAM and Le



Top: Floor plan of building D with internal passageway, Cayla, 1953, Case 6

Bottom: Principle plan for technical ducts, Cayla, 1953, Case 6,
From Bruno, Marchand. "La campagne Cayla." Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat, 1995, 4.



Top: Photo of the façade overlooking the street, Cayla, 1953, Case 6

Bottom: Aerial view of the projects, Cayla, 1953, Case 6,
From Bruno, Marchand. "La campagne Cayla." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1995, 8.



Photo of the towers, Carouge towers, 1964, Case 8,
From Terrier, Edouard. "Les tours de Carouge." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1964, 7.

68 Le Corbusier designed this functional, entirely Modulor-calculated building, twenty percent less expensive than a traditional structure. Technically and plastically, the factory succeeded in combining a concrete framework with the “brutalism” of the post-war years. He realized this project a few years before the Cité Radieuse was built in 1952 IN Courtiau, Catherine. *XXème: un siècle d'architecture à Genève*, 193.

Corbusier's 1946 reconstruction project of a hosiery mill in Saint-Dié, France.⁶⁸

It's also worth noting that apartment rents vary according to floor. In order to promote a social mix, tenants on upper floors were required to pay higher rent compared to the occupants on lower floors. Tenants on the first nine floors were subject to wage controls, while the top three floors were not subject to the wage scale established by the law of January 25, 1957. However, the difference between subsidized and subsidized housing was in typology or distribution, but in room size. In the case of market-rate rentals, rooms were generally more spacious than in the case of subsidized rents.

THE AGE OF SATELLITE CITIES

Satellite towns built from the 1960s onwards, such as *Les Avanchets* (designed by Steiger Partner AG - W. Förderer - F. Amrhein in 1977) , *La Gradelle* (designed by Jean Hentsch - Jacques Zbinden in 1968) , the *Cité Meyrin* (designed by Georges Addor - Louis Payot - André Gaillard - Edouard Conti in 1961) or the *Cité Caroll* (designed by Honegger Frères, in 1966), are essential elements in the analysis of social housing issues in Geneva, the most emblematic of which is certainly the *Cité du Lignon*. Thanks to the aforementioned 1957 law on ‘zones de développement’ (*L-DAU*), the State of Geneva had the tools to build housing not only in the city but also in the surrounding areas such as the large plots of patrician land, from Geneva's ancestral bourgeois families, which enable the State to build mass housing.

The ‘cités-satellites’ in Geneva will be the first projects on the scale of the European ‘grands-ensemble’. In keeping with the urban planning studies carried out during the inter-war period, the cités demonstrate a new scale of realization. These ‘grand-ensemble’ can be compared to colonizing territories that had previously been little or not at all urbanized, and proposing a new way of life. This new way to house inhabitants enables the State to decentralize the population and limit the overcrowding of the city center.⁶⁹

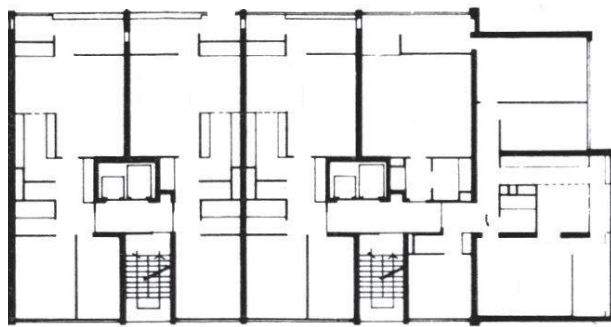
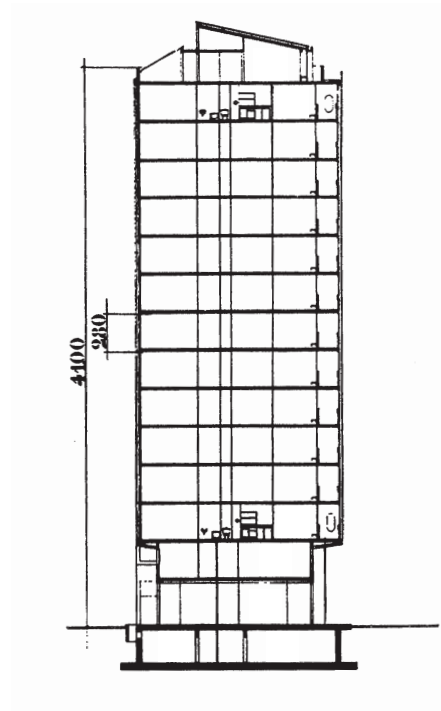
When these satellite cities were built, two types of layouts were used. The first, commonly referred to as the ‘plan en tapis’⁷⁰, such as the *Cité Meyrin* and *Cité Caroll* in Onex, is made up of blocks of flats built parallel or perpendicular to one another. They are generally set on large green spaces, which over time become parking lots, allowing for distribution and a relationship with the land. However from the 1960s onwards, in reaction to the fragmentation of public space generated by these projects, a new type of layout emerged⁷¹. Composed of a folded bar that mostly runs along the periphery of the plot, this second layout allows for large open spaces, for so-called ‘sunny gardens’⁷² and public services, and also ensures that residents' views of the landscape are not obstructed. A prime example of this type of development is the *Cité-Satellite du Lignon* in Vernier. Although much criticized at the time of its conception, this project is regarded by architects such as Franz Graf and Giulia Marino as an example of a successful housing estate, both socially and architec-

69 Lucan, Jacques. *Habiter: ville et architecture*. EPFL PRESS. Essais. Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaire romande, 2021, 93.

70 Frandsen, Rune. “Les outils de la mesure | Espazium”, 21 mars 2023. <https://www.espazium.ch/fr/actualites/les-outils-de-la-demesure>.

71 Franz Graf, *l'ensemble du Lignon: République et Canton de Genève – Département de l'urbanisme office du patrimoine et des sites – service des monuments et des sites, Fiche n° 38: Georges Addor; le Lignon*. Décembre 2012, mise à jour juin 2013, 15.

72 Courtiau, Catherine. *XXème: un siècle d'architecture à Genève*. infolio éd. Patrimoine suisse Genève. Genève, 2009, 441.



Top: Cross-section of the building, Carouge towers, 1963, Case 8

Bottom: Standard floor plan, Carouge towers, 1963, Case 8,
From Terrier, Edouard. "Les tours de Carouge." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1964, 9.



Photo of the towers, Carouge towers, 1964, Case 8, From Terrier, Edouard. "Les tours de Carouge." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1964, 6.

Bottom: Bottom: Aerial view of the project, Carouge towers, 1963, Case 8, Image from Espazium



Photo of one of the tower, Cité Lignon, 1971, Case 9,
Image from DAS Genève

73 Franz Graf, *l'ensemble du Lignon : République et Canton de Genève*, 13.

74 Courtiau, Catherine. *XXème: un siècle d'architecture à Genève*. infolio éd. Patrimoine suisse Genève. Genève, 2009, 442.

75 Ibid, 440.

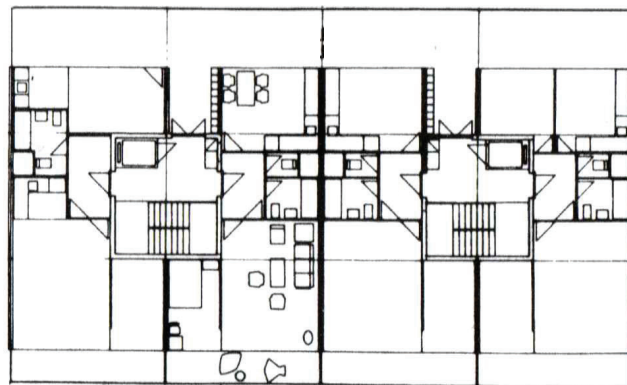
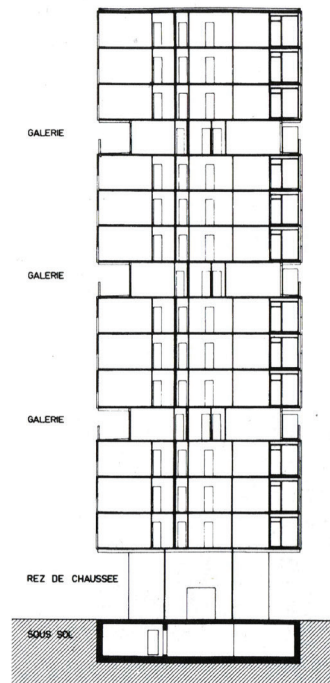
76 Frandsen, Rune. « Les outils de la mesure | Espazium », 21 mars 2023. <https://www.espazium.ch/fr/actualites/les-outils-de-la-demesure>.

turally⁷³.

La *Cité Lignon*, designed by Georges Addor, Dominique Julliard, Jacques Bolliger and Louis Payot between 1963 and 1971, comprises three buildings, two identical thirty-one-storey rectangular towers and a kilometre-long building with 11 to 15 storeys, totalling 2,780 units, more than half of which are reserved for social housing. The majority of the apartments are walk-through, providing plenty of sunlight and unobstructed views of the Jura mountains to the north and of the Alps to the south. The architects decided to arrange the three buildings as an interrupted broken line, following the natural topography of the land. In its center, they placed all the public services and facilities necessary for the life of the Cité's inhabitants: shops, schools, doctors, etc. The result was a pioneering project in terms of layout and scale, including services such as one of the largest elementary schools in the canton at the time⁷⁴.

Another key factor in the success of this project was the building's industrialization principles and the rationalization of the construction system. The implementation of new manufacturing processes, such as the lamellar structure known as 'tunnel formwork'⁷⁵, or the prefabrication of almost 100,000 m² of curtain walling using factory prefabricated blocks, enabled costs to be rationalized and the project to be carried out despite its size. These principles, which have been highly developed since the end of the Second World War and are used on almost all social housing sites, do not lead to radically different housing designs, but rather to a standardization of living styles, so that the housing typology is largely the same throughout the project. We also find the 'Geneva-style' housing typology already presented in the *Cité Vieusseux* and *Carouge Towers* case studies. The two notable differences are, firstly, the desire to densify the central core, by centralizing the staircase, which is no longer on the façade, to maximize the glazed surface area of the apartments. Secondly, the introduction of corridors connecting the different apartments encourages social contact between the different residents. The corridor becomes a tool for sociability and sharing, which will later be one of the major themes of the residents' cooperatives we'll discuss in the final chapter.

This brings us to the issue of housing standardization and rationality. We can see that there is only a 4-year gap in design between the *Carouge Towers* project and the *Cité du Lignon*. And yet the layout is almost identical, which is why Rune Frandsen, a specialist in the history of social housing, refers to the typology as 'Genevan'⁷⁶. These tried-and-tested alley typologies, which have been in use since the interwar period, allow for a wide range of adjustments, depending on whether you need 5 or 3 rooms: simply give or take a room from one apartment and give or take it from an adjacent one. Another solution is to create a three-room apartment with a single orientation on one side, thus modifying the adjoining typologies. It's in these slight variations that architectural, and therefore typological, creativity is expressed. It is necessarily induced by standardization and prefabrication of construction elements and the building site, which forces contractors and architects to design mass-produced housing with the minimum of change between apartments, as any change induces significant costs when building large housing estates such as *Le Lignon*, with its 2,780 units. In a period of mass production, economy of means and therefore of form is the watchword, to the detriment of everything



Top: Cross-section of the building, Cité Lignon, 1971, Case 9

Bottom: Standard floor plan, Cité Lignon, 1971, Case 9,

From Graf, Franz, Giulia Marino, and Mélanie Delaune Perrin. "L'oeuvre de Georges Ador: Inventaire, évaluation qualitative, recommandations pour la Cité du Lignon." Recherche DU/OPS. Lausanne: EPFL, 2013, 45.



Top: Photo of the curtain wall, Cité Lignon, 1971, Case 9

Bottom: Aerial view of the project, Cité Lignon, 1971, Case 9,
From Graf, Franz, Giulia Marino, and Mélanie Delaune Perrin. "L'oeuvre de Georges
Addor: Inventaire, évaluation qualitative, recommandations pour la Cité du Lignon."
Recherche DU/OPS. Lausanne: EPFL, 2013, 25.

else.

On the social level, the Geneva government, in an effort to avoid repeating the mistakes of French or American housing estates on the outskirts of major cities⁷⁷, has introduced laws governing the allocation of apartments with a view to achieving a social mix. As with the *Carouge Towers* project, described above, *Cité Lignon* comprises both market-rate and subsidized housing. Of the 2,780 apartments, 1,000 are for social purposes, thus creating contact and a mix between the different social strata of society and reducing economic, social and cultural segregation.

These 50 years of mass housing construction, intersected by the Second World War, brought about numerous technical and architectural evolutions. Through the drafting of laws and the introduction of subsidies, the State of Geneva has provided public and private entities with the tools to promote mass housing construction. But at what price? Indeed, social housing projects in Geneva during this period were limited to responding to the housing crisis in an economical and efficient way, while relegating to the background the question of use as well as the question of the right to housing, including social conditions and access to subsidized housing. The way in which people live is almost the same throughout the canton, whether subsidized or not, leading to a standardization of housing. The population of Geneva have the impression that it's no longer a question of living, but rather of housing. As Léveillé Alain said: "Henceforth, the question of housing is definitively posed in terms of mass production, as an everyday, necessary consumer product for an ever-increasing population."⁷⁸

77 Lucan, Jacques. *Habiter: ville et architecture*. EPFL PRESS. Essais. Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaire romande, 2021, 95.

78 Léveillé Alain, Il étaient une fois ! Sera-t-il toujours ? *Werk-Archithese*, n°15-16, mars-avril 1978

THE RIGHT TO THE CITY: SQUATS AND COUNTER-CULTURE

In the late 1960s, a new social and cultural wave began to emerge, linked to the May 1968 protests and the release of a multitude of books, articles and films questioning the relationship between an increasingly industrialized society and the human being. In one of the major works from this period, *The Right to the City* (1968), Henri Lefebvre, critiques urban production methods that, in his view, prioritize functionalism and the industrialization of the city while neglecting the lives of its inhabitants. According to Luca Pattaroni, a scholar of urban sociology, the urban issue, and therefore the city, is a question of pluralism:

"At the heart of the urban phenomenon lies the issue of pluralism. From time immemorial, the city has been the place where people who are strangers to each other have had to learn to live together, finding ways of creating a common world despite their different lifestyles, beliefs, languages, aspirations and pace. The composition of this diversity has taken many forms throughout history, offering just as many ways of arranging urban order. The city thus finds its political horizon in the difficult and fragile balance it is constantly required to strike between accommodating diversity and creating a common order."⁷⁹

It is through social housing policies brought about by the standardization of building since the early 50s, despite a certain social justice

79 Translated to english by the author, Pattaroni, Luca, M. In Brassand, Vincent Kaufmann, and D. Joye. "La ville plurielle : quand les squatters ébranlent l'ordre urbain (éléments pour une pragmatique de l'ordre urbain)." PPUR, 2007, 1.

80 Vochtchinine, Nadia, and Fabrice Coppex. "Unité Immersion en communauté - Squats & santé". Faculté de Médecine, Université de Genève, 2001, 3.

81 Ibid, 4.

82 Raully, Catherine. "La Tribune - A chacun son squat", 1990, Hebdo édition.

83 Pattaroni, Luca, and Lisa Togni. "Du bail associatif et de quelques autres compromis en matière de logement social à Genève". In *Logement, autonomie et justice*. Lausanne: PPUR, 2009, 1.

84 A nuclear family is a form of family structure based on the notion of a couple, i.e. "a group of two people linked by a desire to form a material and emotional community; potentially embodied in a sexual relationship that conforms to the law".

85 Piraud, Mischa, Luca Pattaroni, and Elena Cogato Lanza. *De la différence urbaine: le quartier des grottes*. Vues D'ensemble. Genève: Metispresses, 2013, 55.

86 Gregorio, Julien, et Luca Pattaroni. *Squats, Genève 2002 - 2012*. Labor et Fides. Genève, 2012, 100.

sought through these technical means, that it prevents the establishment of a convivial and mixed city. In fact, the policy put in place to respond to the housing crisis posed a problem in terms of housing production, since it was necessary to build a lot in a short space of time, which necessitated the introduction of standardized housing that made housing uniform throughout the canton. But from 1970 onwards, a section of Geneva's population, mostly young (aged 20-30)⁸⁰, began to question the modern city built since the end of the Second World War.

The city became a central topic of debate in the quest for social and cultural emancipation. In addition to these social concerns, economic problems caused by the energy crisis of the 1970s, came to the fore, putting to an end the seemingly boundless expansion of the city and therefore, of housing. The oil shocks of that period triggered a global economic crisis, demonstrating the limits of an economy reliant on fossil fuels. This marked the first instance where, the notion of limited resources on earth came face to face with the capitalist system. Against this backdrop the social and counter-cultural squat movement took root in Geneva. This movement questioned our relationship with life through artistic, cultural, and social experimentation. Geneva became a very important place for the squat movement, with almost 200 squats in 1990, encompassing around 1% of Geneva's population squatting, equivalent to approximately 5,000 people.⁸¹ This movement had a major impact on the city and its population.

The squat movement defended an ideal of collective living and challenged property rights by occupying homes left vacant by their owners. To give an idea of the scale, in 1980, there were nearly 2,000 vacant dwellings⁸² in the city of Geneva. Against a backdrop of severe housing shortages and rampant property speculation, a section of the population took to the streets to protest these issues. They broke with the standard housing model and sought a different way of organizing 'vivre ensemble' (living together)⁸³ on a city-wide scale. This counter-culture movement opposed traditional models of living together by questioning the dominant forms of housing in Switzerland, built around the family unit with private homeownership as its ultimate goal. Squats challenged the nuclear family model and the capitalist, heteronormative ideals of life: earn money - get married - buy a house - have children - die.⁸⁴

Against this backdrop, in 1975, the City of Geneva decided to modernize the popular Les Grottes district located north of the Cornavin train station. The State owned the majority of the parcels in the district and its intentional neglect of these buildings, enabled the occupants to be easily rehoused, as they were legally residing in unsanitary apartments. These former occupants would thus be relegated to the outskirts of the new satellite housing estates, making room for commercial activities or wealthier classes, thereby contributing to the gentrification of the district.⁸⁵ The inhabitants of Les Grottes, keen to preserve their housing and the district's central position in Geneva, demanded 'the right to the city', in the words of Henri Lefebvre. A notion that defends the possibility that the city, as Gregorio Julien wrote: "could be thought out, developed and appropriated by those who live in it in the first place, rather than by those who own it financially"⁸⁶. The inhabitants of Les Grottes organized themselves for political impact, they formed *Action Populaire aux Grottes (APAG)*, and



Top: Popular protest on urban problems, 1974, Geneva

Bottom: Popular protest in Plainpalais district, 1977, Geneva,
Image from Espazium

87 Piraud, Mischa, Luca Pattaroni, and Elena Cogato Lanza. *De la différence urbaine: le quartier des grottes*, 120.

88 “Périphéries - L’Îlot 13, un périmètre alternatif à Genève”. Accessed on 12 octobre 2023. <https://www.peripheries.net/article292.html>.

89 Pattaroni, Luca, Vincent Kaufmann, and Adriana Rabinovich. *Habitat en devenir: enjeux territoriaux, politiques et sociaux du logement en Suisse*. Presse polytechnique et Universitaire romande. espace en société logique territorial. Lausanne, 2009, 130.

90 “contracts of trust” - more ad hoc and based on the two pillars of liberal policies, responsibility and contract, “associative leases” - which seek to place the model of living together promoted by the squat movement on a more permanent footing within the institutional framework of social housing. IN Pattaroni, Luca, and Lisa Togni. “Du bail associatif et de quelques autres compromis en matière de logement social à Genève”. In *Logement, autonomie et justice*. Lausanne: PPUR, 2009, 1.

occupied buildings left vacant by the state, demonstrating renovation was a viable alternative to demolition. Thanks to external support, notably from the Geneva Socialist Party and the Geneva School of Architecture, but also thanks to the political impact of this action, the State of Geneva decided in 1978 not to demolish the neighborhood but rather to renovate it.⁸⁷

This action set an example for the rest of the canton and marked a pivotal moment when the number of squats surged in Geneva, notably at *Îlot 13*. Located between rue Montbrillant and rue des Gares, next to Les Grottes district, *Îlot 13* is considered the oldest squat in Geneva.⁸⁸ In 1984, the building was in a state of ruin due to the State’s neglect of its upkeep. Faced with several eviction notices, the residents decided to lodge an appeal, under Swiss law, against the construction of the new district. They set up the ‘Association de Montbrillant/rue des Gares’, advocating for the preservation of the site’s architectural qualities as a heritage site. The squatters at *Îlot 13* went even further than their neighbors at Les Grottes in their approach to communal living. To garner public support, they organized various public events such as music concerts, plays and conferences held in the squat. The squatters also organized themselves to renovate the site through participatory workcamps, but also thanks to the support of the local population, who saw in these actions the opportunity to envision a potential renewal in the way they lived. Thanks to their initiative, *Îlot 13* gained recognition as an exceptional project on the grounds of its political significance.⁸⁹ In acknowledging its importance, the State of Geneva, led by State Councilor Claude Haegi, proposed a new legal lease known as the ‘contract of trust’ and later the ‘associative lease’.⁹⁰ During his meeting with the squatters, Claude Haegi remarked:

“I called the young people I’d already met to show them around, and they were quite enthusiastic about the premises, and said they were ready to take it over, so I handed them the keys and left it to them to undertake the few adaptations needed to accommodate them. And I had no legal basis for doing so. That’s why the gesture was marked by spontaneity and trust. So, handing over the keys to the astonished head of the department who was present and who saw my attitude, which departed singularly from administrative practice, I understand that he was first surprised and then even a little shocked. [...] I said to my interlocutor, we’ll see what kind of paper we sign, but for the moment it’s a contract - and I’m searching for the right words - but it’s a contract of trust! And I’d sort of given the spirit of this agreement: this building belongs to the City, you’re coming, it shouldn’t cost us anything, it’s up to you to fit out the premises and then we’ll see!”

Claude Haegi recognized the necessity for politicians to depart from traditional administrative and political procedures to make room for new aspirations. Thanks to the trust established between the elected official and the squatters, they were able to avoid confining the squatters’ requests to housing allocation procedures, which would have had to be dealt with individually, making it impossible to envisage a collective solution. This is not a matter of favoring squatters over others entitled to housing, but rather a broadening of social housing policy. As squatted

FIRST STRUGGLE THEN HOUSING



Top: Participative worksite, Painting workshop, îlots 13, Photo by Meister Isabelle, 1987

Bottom: Participative worksite, Clean-up workshop, îlots 13, Photo by Meister Isabelle, 1987

91 Pattaroni, Luca, Vincent Kaufmann, and Adriana Rabinovich. *Habitat en devenir: enjeux territoriaux, politiques et sociaux du logement en Suisse*. Presse polytechnique et universitaire romande. espace en société logique territorial. Lausanne, 2009, 105.

92 The contract of trust ensures the provisional nature of the occupation of the premises through a resolutive condition: the emergency nature of the premises is emphasized, and the signatories undertake to return the premises “unconditionally” at the end of the 3-month contract. A rider, signed in 1990, provided for the tacit renewal of these provisions from month to month... Despite this commendable approach, the associative lease was never signed, which clearly shows the limits of the latter in terms of its difficulty in satisfactorily balancing the ideas of community established by squats and the normative policy of social housing. IN Pattaroni, Luca, and Lisa Togni. “Du bail associatif et de quelques autres compromis en matière de logement social à Genève.” In *Logement, autonomie et justice*. Lausanne: PPUR, 2009, 12.

93 Pattaroni, Luca. “Politique de la responsabilité: promesses et limites d’un monde fondé sur l’autonomie.” Science social, Université de Genève, 2005, 452.

94 Breviglieri, Marc. *Les habitations d’un genre nouveau: le squat urbain et la possibilité du “conflit négocié” sur la qualité de vie*. In *Habitat en devenir enjeux territoriaux, politiques et sociaux du logement en Suisse*. Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2009, 98.

95 Pattaroni, Luca, Vincent Kaufmann, and Adriana Rabinovich. *Habitat en devenir: enjeux territoriaux, politiques et sociaux du logement en Suisse*, 120.

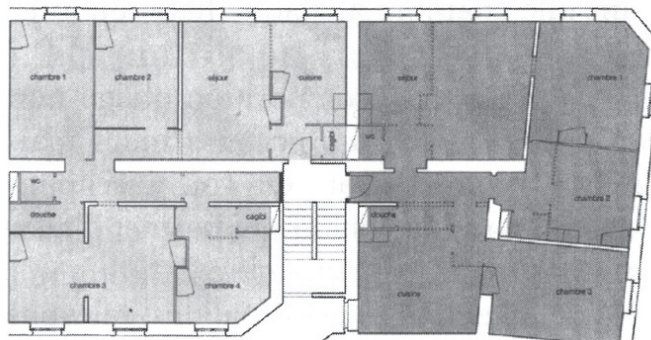
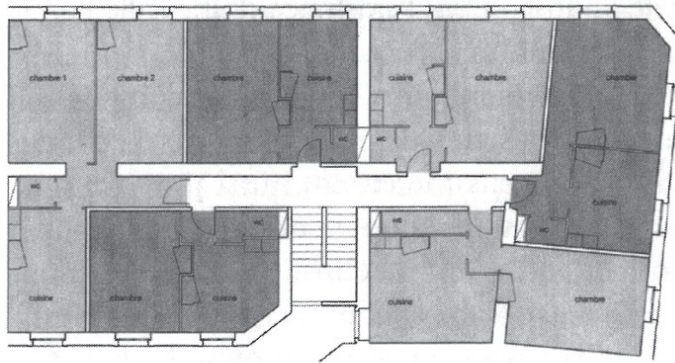
buildings were often in a state of ruin, the State could not rent them out because the buildings did not meet safety standards, therefore entrusting these building to the squatters, with the responsibility of taking care of necessary renovations, was in the interest of the State.⁹¹

In 1986, the squatters of *Îlot 13* signed a ‘contract of trust’ with Claude Haegi and the building’s owners, granting them the right to remain on the premises indefinitely as long as they took care of the building’s upkeep and paid the charges. However, after a few years, *Îlot 13* reverted to being a squat,⁹² until the City of Geneva eventually bought the property in 1998. Following this acquisition, the building’s status changed to that of low-cost housing, and the City of Geneva gave the residents the choice of architect and builder for the renovations. The future residents, or former occupants, all collaborated with the architect, construction professionals and contractor from the outset. They carried out minor renovations themselves, and worked with skilled tradesmen on major projects. The design and construction process reflects the squatters’ cherished ideals of self-management and the participatory process.

The aim of this approach put in place by the State, was to reintegrate the occupied sites into the conventional order of urban policies, ensuring compliance with safety regulations and the legality of its inhabitants, linked to the law on access to housing. The dialogue between the State and the squatters clearly indicates that the State councilors aimed to maintain social ‘peace’⁹³ by encouraging a policy of tolerance towards squats, and at the same time seeking to institutionalize these spaces, by means of legal and administrative innovations. On the other hand, the dialogue established Haegi demonstrates that the squatters were willing to adapt their principles in order to give their project a certain credibility. Through this dialogue with the squat movement the State demonstrated, in the words of Pattaroni et al., “political openness and cultural acceptance of alternative models of living”.⁹⁴ This allowed for a period the two systems to coexist.

In order to institute a way of living together based on the principles of solidarity, hospitality, participation and self-management, squats developed an unprecedented internal social and spatial organization. Where space is concerned, there was a systematic introduction of shared spaces such as common rooms, essential for social cohesion as nerve centers for meetings and collective decision-making. This essential aspect of squats has allowed for a redefinition of ‘vivre ensemble’ and the principle of community. This often involved a reconfiguration of the original domestic typology which was typically linked with the structure of the nuclear family. In squatted dwellings, partitions were dismantled or rebuilt to allow for greater fluidity of exchanges. As can be seen from the plans of rue Montbrillant 24 the original layout featured six two- or three-room apartments, as the building had been designed in the nineteenth century for working-class families. However, when the squatters took over the building, they modified the plan to propose two larger apartments, each with a bedroom and larger shared spaces to promote cohesion.⁹⁵ In this transformation, there was a deliberate effort to reduce to a minimum private spaces which were perceived as counterproductive to their way of thinking and living. These typological alterations acknowledged the fact that the occupied dwellings were not designed for collective living, while

FIRST STRUGGLE THEN HOUSING



Top: Initial typology, Montbrillant, Geneva, 1898

Bottom: Typology after the occupation, Montbrillant, Geneva, 1989, From Pattaroni, Luca, and Lisa Togni. "Du bail associatif et de quelques autres compromis en matière de logement social à Genève." In *Logement, autonomie et justice*. Lausanne: PPUR, 2009.

also allowing for the discovery of new balances between collective life and individualism.

From 1990 onwards, the City of Geneva began to question this approach, fearing that it would no longer be possible to rent out these units once the squatters had vacated. As Pattaroni and Kaufmann pointed out, “this situation shows the strong link between housing standardization and lifestyle standardization. The housing market, and the management of a housing stock, presuppose the interchangeability of tenants [...]. As a result, it’s difficult to let residents make the premises their own, while maintaining the possibility of good turnover”.⁹⁶ One possible solution, implemented to *Îlot 13*, was to offer a certain number of units to other categories and forms of demand, and thus to mix several social and economic groups within the building in accordance with the law. This strategy implied legal obligation to institutionalize squats in order to ensure their survival, which in turn created a division within the movement, since the initial aim of the squats, such as the *Îlot 13*, was precisely to denounce institutional failings. This internal division generated ideological conflicts which, as DeFilippis has noted, contributed to the movement’s ultimate demise.⁹⁷ Indeed, many squats tried to replicate the same approach then *îlots 13*. In the case of the *Rhinocéros* or *Rhino* squat, the state offered to buy back the property, but the owners refused to sell the building to Geneva’s state, forcing the police to evacuate its residents in 2007. To make the institutionalization of this squats viable, two factors would have been necessary: a supportive political framework and shared values and collaboration among different stakeholders who do not share the same financial and social interests, which makes the task challenging and complex.⁹⁸

The heyday of squats in Geneva lasted until the 2000s, although some continued to persist afterwards, such as the *Rhino* squat until 2007, or the *Malagnou* squat, which was dismantled in 2021. This period, marked by cultural, social, artistic, and architectural experimentation, opened up new possibilities on the notion of ‘vivre ensemble’⁹⁹. Squatters, through their innovative approaches, introduced tools for collective work such as participative methods, the introduction of common rooms and improved communication between residents through informative panels located on each floor detailing life in the squat. Through their self-management approach, the squats proved to the State and the general public that it is possible to emancipate oneself from the traditional building management by ‘régies immobilières’¹⁰⁰ or landlords. The dialogue between the City of Geneva and the squatters played a vital role in promoting an alternative way of living together, different from the more traditional vision of housing, a vision that would be later adopted by residents’ cooperatives¹⁰¹ and innovative cooperatives¹⁰². Indeed, in the years following the closure or institutionalization of the squats, former squatters turned to the cooperative model as a viable solution for ‘vivre ensemble’¹⁰³

THE RISE OF COOPERATIVISM

Cooperative systems have been in existence in Switzerland since the second half of the nineteenth century, when they reached a first peak of

96 Ibid, 129.

97 DeFilippis, James. *Unmaking Goliath: Community Control in the Face of Global Capital*. Routledge. New York: Taylor and Francis Books, 2004, 92.

98 Pattaroni, Luca, and Lisa Togni. “Du bail associatif et de quelques autres compromis en matière de logement social à Genève”. In *Logement, autonomie et justice*. Lausanne: PPUR, 2009, 17.

99 Pattaroni, Luca. “Politique de la responsabilité: promesses et limites d’un monde fondé sur l’autonomie.” *Science social*, Université de Genève, 2005, 419.

100 Geneva is home to a large number of property management companies, so it’s worth finding out what’s really behind them. A “régie immobilière” is a property management company commissioned by building owners to look after their properties and collect rent and service charges. It is in this sense that a régie in Geneva differs from an estate agency, since the latter acts more as an intermediary between buyer and seller. IN <https://www.gerofinance.ch/p3315-regie-geneve.html>

101 Ibid, 140-143.

102 Pattaroni, Luca, Vincent Kaufmann, and Adriana Rabinovich. *Habitat en devenir: enjeux territoriaux, politiques et sociaux du logement en Suisse*. Presse polytechnique et Universitaire romande. espace en société logique territorial. Lausanne, 2009, 140-143.

103 Pattaroni, Luca. “Politique de la responsabilité: promesses et limites d’un monde fondé sur l’autonomie.”, 419.



Top: Photo of the project from the street, Ecodistrict Jonction, Jonction,
Photo by Roman Keller, 2018, Case 13

104 Such as the Schwanden workers' cooperative in 1863, which was open to all, managed democratically, offered discounts and was politically and religiously neutral, allowing everyone to express themselves without being excluded. IN hls-dhs-dss.ch. "Coopératives de consommation." Accessed January 11, 2024. <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/articles/016414/2008-10-30/>.

105 Baumann, Serge and Braudo, Alexis. "Société coopérative - Définition." Dictionnaire Juridique. Accessed January 05, 2024. <https://www.dictionnaire-juridique.com/definition/societe-cooperative.php>.

106 DeFilippis, James. *Unmaking Goliath: Community Control in the Face of Global Capital*. Routledge. New York: Taylor and Francis Books, 2004, 10.

107 Ibid, 64.

108 Pattaroni, Luca, and Vanessa Marmy. "Les coopératives de logement dans le canton de vaud - Une étude réalisée par le Service des communes et du logement du canton de Vaud et le Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine de l'EPFL." Canton de Vaud - EPFL, octobre 2016, 43.

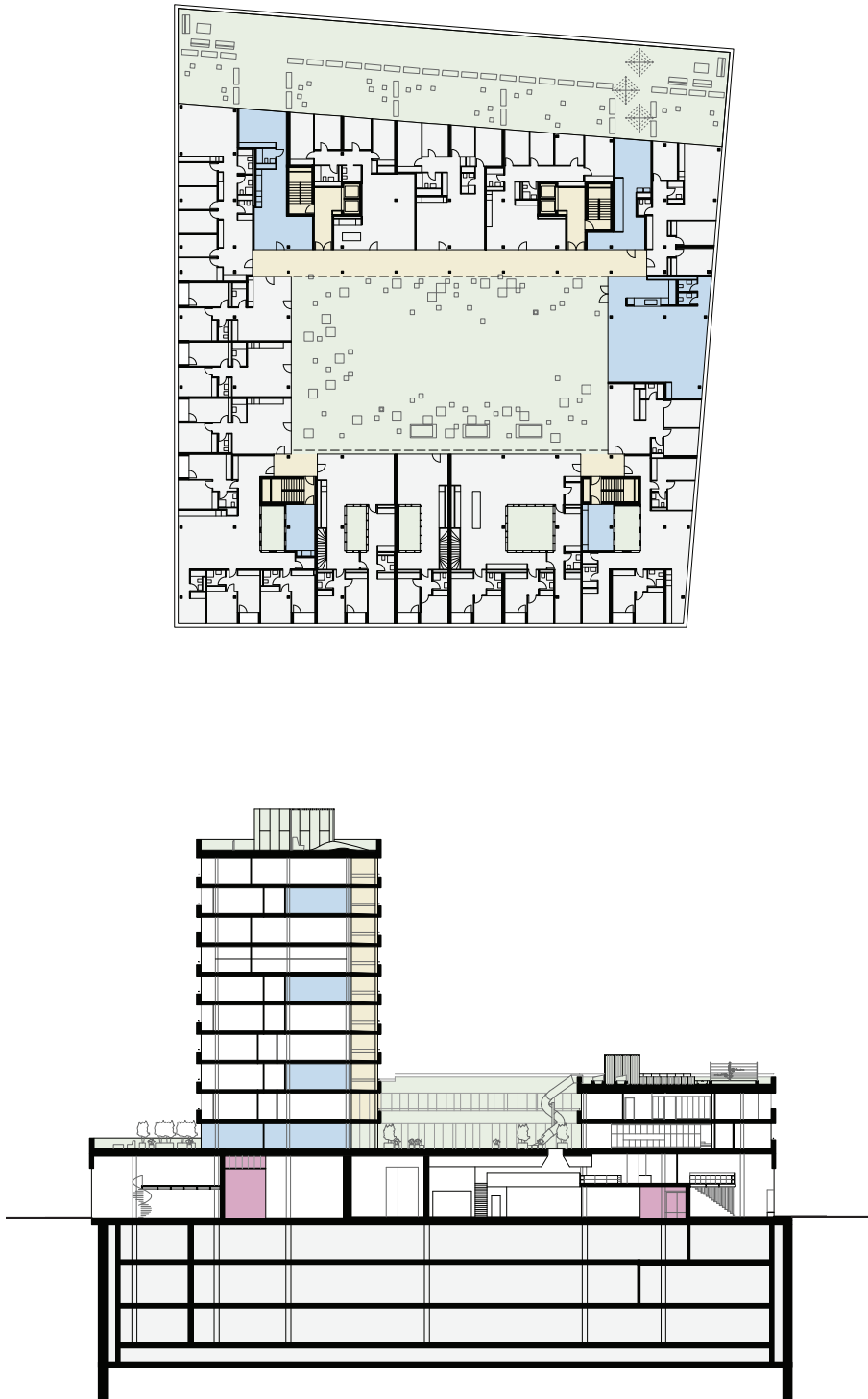
109 Charollais, Isabelle, Jean-Marc Lamunière, and Michel Nemec. *L'architecture à Genève 1919-1975*. Payot Lausanne. République et Canton de Genève - DAEL. Genève: Nadir S.A., 1999, 96-97.

110 "SCHG Société Coopérative d'Habitation Genève." Accessed January 05, 2024. <https://schg.ch/fr/accueil/>.

popularity, primarily in the German-speaking regions of the country. The first cooperatives were created in this industrial context, where several individuals (workers, employees, civil servants and farmers) joined forces to pool their resources and services in order to defend their interests¹⁰⁴. In Swiss legal terms, a cooperative is defined as a type of company with a civil or commercial purpose, created with the aim of eliminating capitalist profit, either by pooling the means of production, or by buying or selling goods outside commercial channels.¹⁰⁵ In other words, if modest-income individuals and workers are to have greater control over their lives, they need to establish ownership and governance structures that facilitate this exercise of control.¹⁰⁶ The first Swiss cooperatives were consumer cooperatives, such as the Coop (1864) or production cooperatives (Agricultural Cooperative, Watchmaking Cooperative, Typographers' Cooperative). They offered affordable food products that were accessible to everyone at all times, especially in times of major crisis. Their aims were above all to create better working conditions for the working class and to build healthy, affordable housing. As DeFilippis has noted, the historical prominence of cooperatives was strongly correlated to periods of economic and social crisis, including the Great Depression (1870 - 1900), the Interwar Depression (1929 - 1939), the post-World War II housing crisis (1945 - 1960), the energy crises of the 1970s and finally the Subprime mortgage crisis of 2008. The correlation between periods of crisis and the prominence of cooperatives underscores the significance of collective belief in these public institutions as a possible alternative to private institutions based on the capitalist system of economic profit¹⁰⁷.

Today, there is a diversity of cooperative housing structures, ranging from small residents' cooperatives managing a few apartments in their building, to long-established and influential cooperatives overseeing thousands of dwellings. These structures also include different entities, including foundations, real estate companies, non-profit limited companies, as well as publicly-owned housing. What unites them all is the embodiment of essential values such as solidarity, mutual aid, democratic management, non-profit orientation and a commitment to harmonious cohabitation. Two distinct structures of housing-related cooperatives can be identified: the housing cooperative and the inhabitant cooperative.¹⁰⁸ The following section will illustrate the differences, by analyzing two case studies that exemplify each system.

In 1920, Geneva's first housing cooperative, the Société des Coopératives d'Habitation Genève (SCHG), was founded. Positioning itself as a new player in the construction of low-cost housing, the SCHG aimed to counter the dominance of the private companies that were the primary builders at the time. The *Cité Vieusseux* project previously discussed, was financed by this cooperative and the city of Geneva. At the time, the cooperative was proposing to finance, with the help of the state, new construction projects inspired by examples in Germany, Austria, France and England. The first three projects carried out by SCHG were strongly inspired by Siedlungs, but also by Toni Garnier's *Cité-Jardin d'Aire*, created in 1921 as Geneva's first cité-jardin.¹⁰⁹ As of 2023, the SCHG administers a substantial real estate portfolio in Geneva, with some 2,000 members and almost 2,000 homes in over 80 buildings.¹¹⁰ The cooperative is even a major stakeholder, by the fact that they manage such a amount of



Top: Plan of the first floor, Ecodistrict Jonction CODHA, Jonction, 2018, Case 13

Bottom: Building cross-section, Ecodistrict Jonction CODHA, Jonction, 2018, Case 13, Image from Batidoc

THE RISE OF COOPERATIVISM



Top: Photo of the interior courtyard, Ecodistrict Junction CODHA, Junction, 2018, Case 13

Bottom: Photo of the share space in the flat, Ecodistrict Junction CODHA, Junction,
Photo by Eik Frenzel, 2018, Case 13

buildings, ranking 5th among the property owners in the canton, underscoring the importance of the cooperative system as a tool for producing low-cost housing. SCHG functions more like a socially-driven real estate developer, since it handles the financing, project management and management of operations to ensure affordable rents for those with modest incomes. Although this type of structure aligns with the cooperative ideal, which is to offer an alternative, economical housing model to its cooperators, it does not implement participatory approaches. Cooperators are not involved in the design or construction of the home, and the only right they are granted is the partial management of the building. These three aspects distinguish housing cooperatives from inhabitant cooperatives, the latter are more recent and stem from the social and counter-cultural movements of the 70s and 90s.¹¹¹

As mentioned in chapter three, the squat movement led to the development of new tools for living together, such as the introduction of common rooms, the participatory approach and the principles of self-management. Thanks to this experience, Geneva's population and politicians became aware that it was possible to live together differently from the way traditional housing was built during the great period of housing standardization after the Second World War.¹¹²

We're going to compare two types of cooperative housing in Geneva: the Coopérative de l'Habitat Associatif (CODHA) and the Coopérative Equilibre, to discern the differences that exist within cooperative housing and to highlight the multitude of possible solutions for designing collective housing and living together. CODHA, founded in 1994, aims to bring together people who want a different kind of housing, a different quality of life, a different relationship with housing, based on participation, conviviality and solidarity.¹¹³ The cooperative realizes its projects by pooling financial resources and thanks to the active participation of residents. Internal management of the buildings by the residents enables them to define a living environment closer to their aspirations. Today, CODHA is one of the largest housing cooperatives in Geneva, with almost 6,000 members, 11 buildings, over 700 homes and 11 new projects under development.¹¹⁴ It can therefore be defined as a large-scale residents' cooperative.

Located in the heart of Geneva, *Ecoquartier Jonction* is one of CODHA's latest buildings and was completed in 2018 by the architecture firm Dreir Frenzel in the Jonction neighborhood. Rising over eleven floors, it offers 113 housing units, with a diversity of sizes ranging from 2 to 25 rooms to meet a variety of needs. The building also includes a dozen community rooms spread across the floors, activity spaces on the first floor, while the basement, owned by the City of Geneva, houses the municipal museum depots. Finally, community life finds its epicenter around four green roofs offering distinct activities, including a vast vegetable garden. The project was developed using a participatory approach and has been awarded Minergie-P-Eco certification.¹¹⁵ At the heart of the Jonction eco-district, the CODHA building represents the essence of the 'social loft' concept, a hybrid notion that merges two distinct types of housing. On the one hand, it is inspired by social housing with its domestic realities and economic constraints, and on the other, it draws on the imaginary of the loft,¹¹⁶ a generous, shared living space.

111 Pattaroni, Luca, Vincent Kaufmann, and Adriana Rabinovich. *Habitat en devenir: enjeux territoriaux, politiques et sociaux du logement en Suisse*. Presse polytechnique et Universitaire romande. espace en société logique territorial. Lausanne, 2009, 142.

112 Pattaroni, Luca, and Lisa Togni. "Du bail associatif et de quelques autres compromis en matière de logement social à Genève." In *Logement, autonomie et justice*. Lausanne: PPUR, 2009, 1.

113 "Codha". Accessed on 12 novembre 2023. <https://www.codha.ch/fr/presentation>.

114 Ibid..

115 Minergie is the Swiss label for comfort, efficiency and climate protection - for both new buildings and renovations. High-quality building envelopes and automatic air exchange play an important role. Minergie buildings are also distinguished by their systematic use of renewable energies and exploitation of solar energy potential. They emit no CO2 during operation and minimize greenhouse gas emissions during construction. Minergie. « ECO ». Accessed on 28 décembre 2023. <https://www.minergie.ch/fr/certification/eco/>.

116 This choice makes it possible to create entirely open spaces, with unobstructed volumes usually illuminated by windows or skylights in the walls or roof.

117 Pattaroni, Luca, and Vanessa Marmy. *Les coopératives de logement dans le canton de vaud - Une étude réalisée par le Service des communes et du logement du canton de Vaud et le Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine de l'EPFL*. Canton de Vaud - EPFL, octobre 2016, 35.

118 SIA. *A voir architectures romandes 2017-2019*. SIA Vaud. Renens, 2019, 101.

119 Lamunière, Jean-Marc, and Philippe Meier. *L'architecture à Genève XXIème siècle*. Infolio. Genève, 2015, 87.

120 A cluster is a large communal flat made up of private housing units (consisting of one, two or more rooms, a bathroom and a kitchenette) linked by a common area, which generally includes a large living room and a kitchen. It's a way of living that's somewhere between shared accommodation and 'traditional' rented accommodation, allowing people to keep their privacy in their own areas while sharing large living spaces to create links between residents. IN <https://www.codha.ch/fr/soiree-cluster-12-04-16>

121 Molineaux Benoît, Nicolas Fournier, Ralph thielen, Sylvie Dafflon, Gertrud Arnold Taha, Olivier Krumm, Christophe Brunet, Uli Amos, Bastien Fluck, Christina Molineaux, Florian Reyren, Lisa Mazzone, Lolita Fischer, Barbara San Antonio, Hélène Monzies, Simone Kaspar de Pont. *2006 – 2016, 10 ans d'Équilibre, Une coopérative en évolution*. Coopérative Équilibre, 2016, 2.

The building's unprecedented size is certainly a response to the exponential demand for membership among cooperators, which is pushing CODHA to produce ever-larger buildings, but the scale of the project means that the cooperators are less involved than in smaller-scale aspects, both during the design phase and on site.¹¹⁷ What's more, the choice made by the cooperators and architects to place the first floor at a higher level than the street induces an isolation that makes us think of an oasis hidden from the eyes of the inhabitants and passers-by of the Jonction district. Passers-by do not interact directly with the cooperative but pass beneath it. This example, which isolates the cooperative from the rest of the district, shows the limits of community principles, and is a far cry from the squat movement, which sought precisely the opposite, by proposing interactions with the city through public events that fostered a certain transparency and participation with passers-byes. With this project, the CODHA seems to be testing the limit of scale in terms of participatory principles and living together among cooperators, but also interaction with the neighborhood in which the building is located.

Founded in 2006, Équilibre is a smaller cooperative than CODHA, and in addition to its social vocation, Équilibre has also introduced the notions of ecology and participative construction into their charter. While CODHA will introduce these notions over time, Équilibre has been a pioneer in this field, notably with the *Soubeyran* building designed by the firm atba SA in 2016. The *Soubeyran* building in Geneva, comprises 38 apartments, commercial zones such as workplace and a restaurant and two cooperatives: Équilibre and Luciole. The building was the result of an intensive, long-term collaboration in which residents chose to be involved at every stage of the project.¹¹⁸ One of the main orientations of the project is to encourage interaction between residents by integrating areas fostering exchanges and meetings. The implementation of this priority involves the construction of three vertical staircases, of which only the central one is equipped with an elevator, as well as two horizontal links connecting them. The first is on the ground floor, connecting the entrance, garden, and the common room. The second is on the third floor, where the communal laundry, guest rooms and independent bedrooms are located.

In terms of typology, the cooperators wanted to maximize shared floor space at the expense of apartments.¹¹⁹ This choice means reducing the size of the flats and therefore reducing private space in favour of communal areas. The introduction of common rooms, guest rooms and generous interior passageways echoes this desire to live together and crystallizes most of the typological revolutions. Unlike the CODHA project discussed above, the cooperators at *Soubeyran* did not want a cluster¹²⁰, as they preferred to promote social contact throughout the building thanks to common areas, rather than encouraging contact between people living in the same cluster, thus promoting cohesion throughout¹²¹ unlike the CODHA project presented above, which opted to maximize common spaces within individual cluster-units.

Another important point is transparency vis-à-vis the neighborhood. In contrast to the *Ecoquartier Jonction*, at *Soubeyran*, the choice was made to encourage locals to come to the building, thanks in particular to a passageway open all day, allowing people from outside the cooperative



Photo of the gallery from a drone, Soubeyran 7, 2018, Case 12. Image from Espazium

to cross through building, as well as a café/bar offering a variety of free public activities, thus contributing to the life of the neighborhood. Ecological choices enabled the use of techniques hitherto unheard of for a building of this size, including the use of natural materials such as straw insulation and the treatment of wastewater within the building, mark a real departure from CODHA's procedures. In this project, the courtyards are developed as meeting places to encourage interaction between neighbors, in addition to serving the apartments. In addition, they have been designed as solar regulators to limit direct exposure to the façade, thus reducing overheating during summer.

Another important aspect of this building and of the Equilibre cooperative was to integrate ecological principles not only in the design but also during the building's lifetime, thanks to the integration of a wastewater treatment system. Indeed, an in-depth study was carried out on wastewater treatment, focusing particularly on the management of toilet evacuations. Equilibre developed a system that uses very little water (4 liters for faeces and 300 ml for urine), enabling a series of biological vermicomposting filters located under the garden to purify this black water. After this stage, it joins grey water (from showers, kitchens, etc.) in a sand filter located in the lower section. Once fully purified, it joins the rainwater from the roofs in a 20,000-liter water recovery tank. The building's toilet flushes are fed from this tank, ensuring the operation of a closed circuit. Here, ecological principles and communal living are strongly linked and influence each other,¹²² modifying the norms of cohabitation and housing to propose new solutions and a so-called 'innovative cooperative'.¹²³

Soubeyran is an example of what Stéphane Fuchs, a partner at atba, calls 'full participation' or 'co-project',¹²⁴ an approach that starts with a group of residents on a blank page and gives the cooperators the freedom to express their wishes. Fuchs begins by showing them around other cooperatives in Switzerland, then presents examples of typologies, and encourages them to draw up the program according to their desires. In order to give the cooperators as much freedom as possible, Fuchs proposes solutions and explains them to the residents so that they can make informed decisions, without ever imposing them in order to guarantee greater ownership of the building by the residents. This horizontal approach is made possible by the small size of the cooperative, where decisions are taken collectively at meetings held every ten days throughout the project, requiring and demonstrating genuine involvement on the part of future residents. This model underlines the changing role of the architect in the development of this type of project. By removing the developers from the housing development process, roles are redistributed. The cooperators take responsibility for the project, while the architects take charge of the project management, making it a new approach offering a production dynamic in which the participation of residents and professional expertise are put to good use.

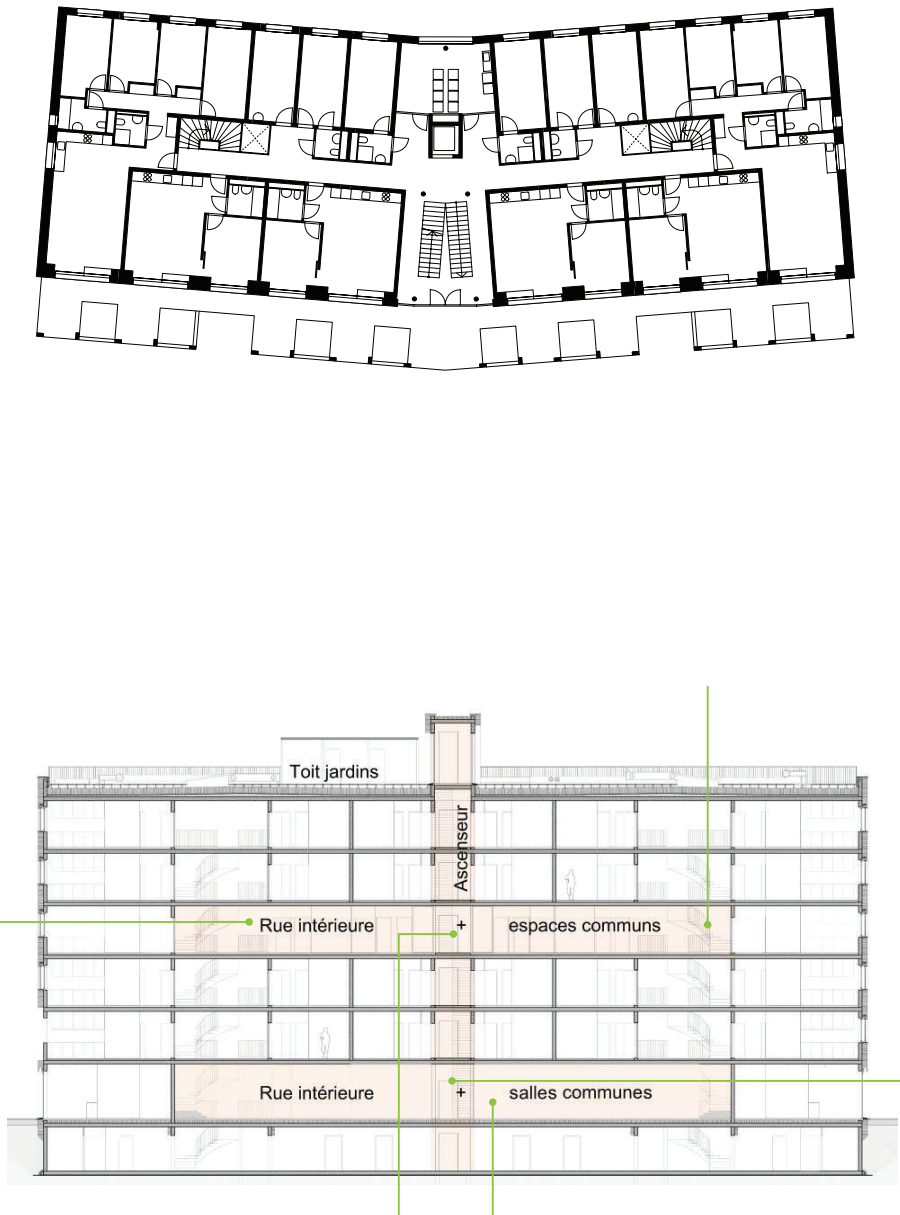
These two case studies showcase different types of cooperatives. Their quality in terms of cooperator involvement depends mainly on their size: large residents' cooperatives such as CODHA do not allow for involvement in all stages of building construction, and tend to become housing cooperatives such as the SCHG presented at the beginning of the chapter.¹²⁵ There is therefore an interrelationship between the size of

122 Pattaroni, Luca, and Lisa Togni. "Du bail associatif et de quelques autres compromis en matière de logement social à Genève". In *Logement, autonomie et justice*. Lausanne: PPUR, 2009, 1.

123 Pattaroni, Luca, and Vanessa Marmy. "Les coopératives de logement dans le canton de vaud - Une étude réalisée par le Service des communes et du logement du canton de Vaud et le Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine de l'EPFL". Canton de Vaud - EPFL, octobre 2016, 42.

124 Borcard, Vincent. *Les fruits de l'architecture participative*. Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat, septembre 2017, 17.

125 Ibid, 35.



Top: Plan with interior street and common areas, Soubeyran 7, Vieuxseux, 2016, Case 12

Bottom: Longitudinal section of the building, Soubeyran 7, Vieuxseux, 2016, Case 12, From the archives of atba SA

THE RISE OF COOPERATIVISM



Top: Top: General Assembly of the cooperatives Equilibre, Soubeyran 7, Vieuxseux, Photo by Thomas Maisonnasse, 2016, Case 12

Bottom: Photo of the participatory worksite with the residents, Soubeyran 7, Vieuxseux, 2016, Case 12, From the archives of atba SA

cooperatives and their participation: the larger the cooperative, the less likely it is to offer participatory approaches, and vice versa.

In the 2000s, as the cooperative system became increasingly popular, the government encouraged residents to set up housing cooperatives, which over time became the main tool for producing social housing in Geneva. The state's support is reflected in the 2007 law on public utility housing, which aims to create a permanent stock of 'public utility housing' (*LUP*) corresponding to 20% of the canton's rental housing stock, and the 2010 Art. 39D(27) *Prêts à terme aux coopératives de logement* (term loans for housing cooperatives) included in the *Loi générale sur le logement et la protection des locataires (LGL)*¹²⁶. Housing cooperatives operating under the *HM* (Mixed Housing) system are required to have socioeconomic diversity, allowing for various rents for diverse salaries within the same building. They also benefit from the status of public utility housing, enabling them to receive subsidies and tax-exemptions.¹²⁷

Although cooperatives must be socioeconomically diverse, the study conducted by Pattaroni and Marmy in 2016 underlines¹²⁸ that since the 1970s, residents have been asked to make a greater financial contribution, consequently primarily aiming at people with relatively high capital¹²⁹, who can plan for the long term and do not urgently need housing. Since 2005, almost half of the Swiss cooperatives require a contribution of over CHF 2,000 per room, whereas from 1900 to 1970, the maximum contribution was CHF 2,000, and almost half of cooperatives required no investment at all.¹³⁰ If the increase can in part be linked to rising construction costs and changing financing practices, it may also reflect gentrification, with the middle class attracted by the concept of living together in a socially and ecologically responsible way and having decision-making power over their home.¹³¹ Nowadays, professions in the tertiary sector are getting strongly liberalized with the generalization of short-term contracts that offer employees greater freedom to change employer or position, but also undermines the lower middle class by depriving them of certain rights that social movements have fought to obtain (maternity leave, sick leave, etc.). Short-term contracts often complicate access to housing and even more so for cooperatives which require greater investment and planning. While cooperatives try to create social diversity that would mix people with different incomes, professions, ages or origins, ex-squatter and CODHA president Eric Rossiaud admits that cooperatives are still not very mixed and his cooperative seems mainly aimed at the lower middle class since "the most modest class have access to social housing. But the middle class is still largely excluded and prejudiced"¹³². In a city like Geneva where the cost of living is steadily rising, but wages are slower to adjust, cooperatives seem above all to be an interesting and affordable housing solution for middle class workers with jobs that are less subject to short-term fluctuations.

Another fundamental question is urban planning, land use and the role of public utility builder and therefore of building housing for social purposes that the state assigns to cooperatives. The City of Geneva, in granting this role, does not provide for a master plan for the distribution of housing across the territory. As a result, the construction of social housing is carried out in successive stages, which proves sufficient in addressing the housing crisis. Moreover, the cooperative system necessitates

126 General law on housing and tenant protection

127 ge.ch. "Logements d'utilité publique (LUP)". Consulté le 09 Novembre 2023. <https://www.ge.ch/node/29622>.

128 Pattaroni, Luca, and Vanessa Marmy. "Les coopératives de logement dans le canton de vaud - Une étude réalisée par le Service des communes et du logement du canton de Vaud et le Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine de l'EPFL." Canton de Vaud - EPFL, October 2016

129 Some cooperatives impose a salary limit above which people cannot apply, but CODHA in particular has problems reaching the social mix percentage because of the large number of households with incomes too high regarding the imposed scales. IN Ibid, 37.

130 Ibid, 37.

131 Defilippis, James. *Unmaking Goliath: Community Control in the Face of Global Capital*. Routledge. New York: Taylor and Francis Books, 2004, 87.

132 "Le Portrait d'Eric Rossiaud, Fondateur de La Codha | PME." Accessed January 12, 2024. <https://www.pme.ch/business/2022/01/17/eric-rossiaud-ex-squatteur-et-entrepre>

133 Defilippis, James. *Unmaking Gotham: Community Control in the Face of Global Capital*, 89.

134 Cogato Lanza, E. *Maurice Brailard et ses urbanistes*. Slatkine. Genève, 2007, 37-38.

135 <https://www.travailler-en-suisse.ch/cout-vie-en-suisse.html>

136 hls-dhs-dss.ch. "Genève (canton)." Accessed January 12, 2024. <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/articles/007398/2017-05-30/>.

137 hls-dhs-dss.ch. "Zurich (canton)."

138 hls-dhs-dss.ch. "Genève (canton)."

139 Nomades, Des Clics. "Genève : Prix d'un mètre carré en ville en 2024 | Combien-coute.net." Combien coûte. Accessed January 12, 2024. <https://www.combien-coute.net/prixm2-centre/suisse/geneve/>.

140 Nomades, Des Clics. "Paris : Prix d'un mètre carré en ville en 2024 | Combien-coute.net."

141 Nomades, Des Clics. "Londres : Prix d'un mètre carré en ville en 2024 | Combien-coute.net."

142 Nomades, Des Clics. "New York : Prix d'un mètre carré en ville en 2024 | Combien-coute.net."

taking land out of the speculative real estate market, obliging the state to densify working-class neighborhoods that are already densely populated. This happens either because land is cheaper or because the state already owns the land. Consequently, cooperatives unwittingly contribute to the gentrification of working-class neighborhoods,¹³³ and raise the issue of land expropriation. Indeed, the state, with its right of expropriation, could very well plan for the long term by becoming a major landowner and urban planner, as the Swiss city planner Hans Bernoulli had called for in the 1930s.¹³⁴ But this point underscores the real problem between the welfare state, which is the foundation of socialism, and respect for private property, which is the foundation of the capitalist system. This conflict is exacerbated in Geneva, one of the world's most expensive cities, bringing along its share of property speculations.¹³⁵ Indeed, the canton of Geneva is small, with 245.7 square kilometers and only 85.3 square kilometers of buildable area¹³⁶, compared with other Swiss cantons such as Zurich, with 1,729 square kilometers and 347.3 square kilometers of buildable area¹³⁷. This particular situation is due to its geographical location; surrounded with 103 km of borders with France (departments of Ain and Haute-Savoie) and only 4.5 with Switzerland (canton of Vaud).¹³⁸ The inability to expand makes the cost per square meter exorbitant and attracts many investors which contributes to real estate speculation in the city. A square meter costs in Geneva around 19'275 CHF¹³⁹, which is higher than in major international cities such as Paris (around 12'270 CHF¹⁴⁰), London (approximately 15'700 CHF¹⁴¹), or New York (about 15'921 CHF¹⁴²). This demonstrates a real issue when it comes to the State of Geneva's ability to purchase these plots.

TOWARDS NEW FORMS OF COMMUNAL LIVING

For almost 170 years, housing has been at the heart of many of Geneva's problems. Indeed, the city experienced an exponential population growth, from 60,000 in 1850 to nearly 420,000 at the turn of the millennium. Starting from 1900 onwards, social housing became an important part of the architect's work, which, thanks to Geneva's internationalization, enabled them to implement new ideas derived from research carried out by architects in other Western countries. What is more, throughout the city's economic and demographic evolution, housing construction in Geneva has developed thanks to a social housing policy aimed at improving living conditions for the population. Since the 1950s, the laws aimed at encouraging the creation of affordable housing, whether through rent control, direct financial support for landlords ('aide à la pierre'¹⁴³), or direct subsidies for tenants (personal aid), have led to the establishment of the *HLM* (Habitation À Loyer Modéré) system and other measures set out in the *General Law on Housing and Tenant Protection (LGL)*. However, since the 2000s, there has been a decline in subsidized housing, revealing a flaw in the social housing system built in the 1960s and 70s. Rent control for this type of housing became uncontrollable after 20-25 years, and since the majority of social housing was built between 1955 and 1980 (a third of the units built were subsidized), over the past 20 years we have seen a major problem in accessing rent-controlled housing.¹⁴⁴ To

143 The aim of the "aide à la pierre" is to help non-profit property developers to offer more low-cost housing. The subsidy is linked to a property newly built, renovated or acquired by a non-profit property developer. IN <https://www.seismoverlag.ch/fr/daten-woerterbuch/wohnraumforderung>

144 Charollais, Isabelle, Jean-Marc Lamunière, and Michel Nemec. *L'architecture à Genève 1919-1975*. Payot Lausanne. République et Canton de Genève - DAEL. Genève: Nadir S.A., 1999, 115.



Converting empty offices into cooperative housing: Utopia or urgency?
Ciguë, Geneva, 2022, Image from Ciguë

remedy this situation, in 2007 the Grand Council passed the *Loi sur les Logements d'Utilité Publique (LUP)*, aimed at establishing a sustainable stock of public utility housing representing 20% of the canton's rental stock. Among other things, this law requires property owners to allocate part of their development projects to public housing, including housing cooperatives. To support construction, the law created a *LUP* fund of 35 million CHF per year, enabling the State to purchase land, allocate it to municipalities or public-law real-estate foundations, or provide its own funds for land acquisition or the construction of *LUP* housing.

Since 2007, thanks in particular to the *LUP* law, housing cooperatives have been one of the main public players in the social housing sector. Their financial policies not only help alleviate the shortage of affordable housing, but also to contribute to fostering social diversity. However, the law's emphasis on cooperatives as public-sector builders raises a number of issues when it comes to access to social housing. Firstly, because cooperatives do not correspond to everyone's housing ideal; secondly, for economic reasons, because the equity required by the residents, originating from the squat movement, and the idea of paying a contribution for shared housing, can be substantial (around 2,000 CHF per room¹⁴⁵). Therefore, while housing cooperatives have become major players in the construction industry, they should not remain the only solution. The answer to 'vivre ensemble' is to be found in a wide range of options: cooperatives, rental buildings, co-ownerships, etc.

In addition, there's the problem of urban planning, which lacks comprehensive plans for housing construction, akin to Maurice Braillard's master plan of 1935. Today, the prevailing planning tool is the *Plan Localisé de Quartier* or *PLQ*, which focuses on neighborhood-scale planning rather than the city as a whole. Due to the *LUP* law, this approach results in the densification of working-class neighborhoods, as the land that the state can buy there is cheaper, and thereby contributing to the gentrification of such neighborhoods, as seen in the case of the Jonction and Vieusseux districts. A comprehensive, long-term solution to this problem and Geneva's limited supply of buildable areas, could involve strengthening the power of the state, as Hans Bernoulli had proposed in 1920.¹⁴⁶ Indeed a welfare state that owns the plots of land, would have the capacity to meticulously manage the modalities of intervention and their allocation. While the 2007 *LUP* law has contributed to state management and better land planning, this solution is hindered by the fact that, as noted by Pattaroni et al., "the main obstacle to pursuing an active land policy today lies in the fact that the public authorities rarely have the capital needed to acquire land."¹⁴⁷

The analysis of Geneva's history of social housing up to the cooperative models developing today, raises questions about the evolution of community living and what tomorrow's collective housing might look like. It also highlights the real need for well-thought-out urban planning to address the housing crisis and anticipate future needs, so as to avoid buildings becoming obsolete by the time they are put into operation. Based on the analysis presented in this thesis, one potential solution lies in drafting legislation that establishes genuine control over land (Bernoulli Law), a law valuing and simplifying access to a cooperatives, or a law requiring all private/public companies to set up a participative ap-

145 Ibid, 27.

146 Cogato Lanza, E. *Maurice Braillard et ses urbanistes*. Slatkine. Genève, 2007, 68-69.

147 Pattaroni, Luca, and Vanessa Marmy. "Les coopératives de logement dans le canton de vaud - Une étude réalisée par le Service des communes et du logement du canton de Vaud et le Laboratoire de Sociologie Urbaine de l'EPFL". Canton de Vaud - EPFL, octobre 2016, 59.

FIRST STRUGGLE THEN HOUSING



Top: Italian seasonal workers protest about housing, 1961, Geneva, Image from solidaritéS

Bottom: Public demonstration on housing, 2021, Geneva, Image from solidaritéS

148 See Annexe - Atlas of Housing - Case 11

proach to housing design and let the residents manage it afterwards, to avoid reproducing austere dwellings like the one built in Vieusseux at Route de Meyrin 27 named *120 Social housing units* in 2011.¹⁴⁸ Another point linked to the drafting of the law is the right granted by the *HLM* ‘Dupont law’. Created in 1955, this right allows the State of Geneva to expropriate land for the public good, however since its creation, it has been used only on rare occasions.

149 “‘New’ New York.” Accessed December 28, 2023. <https://newnypanel.com/>.

But in 2023, following the Covid crisis, the relationship to work is set to change with the advent of telecommuting. In major cities like New York, the state is questioning the use of commercial space, left vacant since the Covid pandemic in 2019, with a project called the *New NY Action Plan*¹⁴⁹. This plan proposes repurposing commercial zones into housing zones, to enable the population to have access to housing in the heart of the city, thereby redefining the zoning of one of the most expensive cities in the world. In the same vein, a Genevan residents’ cooperative called La Ciguë is undertaking a survey of all vacant commercial spaces in Geneva over 200 m² which have been left vacant since 2019, aiming to convert them into housing. In their study entitled *Converting empty offices into cooperative housing: Utopia or urgency?*¹⁵⁰ La Ciguë has revealed that almost 250,000 m², equivalent to over sixty soccer pitches, are vacant and could be repurposed for housing. The cooperative suggests that the State should convert these vacant properties, instead of declassifying agricultural land. This approach could not only preserve Geneva’s countryside but could also offer housing in the city center, instead of decentralizing the population, as is the case of the districts Meyrin and Onex in the outskirts of Geneva

150 “Concours LABEL-CO – La Ciguë,” February 16, 2021. <https://cigue.ch/762258-2/>.

And so the question of expropriation for the common good arises here: does the State have a duty to regulate land use in a way that is more consistent with the common good? Given Geneva’s relatively small size and the pressure of real estate speculation due to the price per square meter, which places it alongside New York as the third most expensive city in the world, it would appear necessary for the state to limit the land use in a profitable way and assume a regulatory role with enhanced capacity to prevent private companies from enriching themselves on the backs of the population. However, Switzerland’s unique legal system, which allows every citizen to modify, remove or even create a law through initiatives and referendums, presents an opportunity for change. Which begs the question: given the housing prices in 2023, is it not imperative to strive for a viable future?

ANNEXE

DEFINITION
ATLAS OF HOUSING
TIMELINE
BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNEXE DEFINITION

Main definition

Social Housing : Social housing is a public or private initiative designed for people who find it difficult to find accommodation, usually for financial reasons.

Collective Housing: It is a building that include individual dwellings, where each unit is inhabited by people

Cooperativism: Socialist and anarchist ideology promoting organization by small groups linked by their activities.

Housing cooperatives: is a group of professional, not-for-profit, players work to provide quality, affordable housing for co-op members. Housing cooperatives are generally old, large and have little or no participation.

Residents' cooperatives: would take the typical form of a small group of residents forming a cooperative to build or renovate heir home. They would be smaller and more participatory.

Innovation cooperatives: are housing cooperatives driven by social-ecological and participatory values.

Housing type

HM : Mixed housing. An HM dwelling corresponds, in terms of rent level, to a HLM-type apartment.

HLM: Low-cost housing. Subsidized housing for people with modest incomes.

HBM : Low-cost housing. Subsidized housing for people with very modest incomes, owned mainly by FIDP

ZD-LOC: Rent-controlled housing for 10 years without subsidies

Laws

LUP : Logement utilité publique

LGZD : Loi général sur les zones de développement

LGL : Loi générale sur le logement et la protection des locataires

LALAT : Loi d'application de la loi fédérale sur l'aménagement du territoire

ANNEXE
DEFINITION

Housing construction entity

ARMOUP : Association Romande des Maîtres d’Ouvrage d’Utilité Publique

CHS: Coopérative d’Habitation Suisse (association faîtière mère de l’AR-MOUP)

DALE : Département de l’Aménagement, du Logement et de l’Énergie

FIDP : Fondations Immobilières de Droit Public

FPLC : Fondation pour la Promotion de l’habitat bon marché et de l’Habitat Coopératif

GCHG : Groupement des Coopératives d’Habitation Genevoises

MOUP: Maîtres d’Ouvrage d’Utilité Publique

ARMOUP : Association Romande des Maîtres d’Ouvrage d’Utilité Publique

CHS: Coopérative d’Habitation Suisse (association faîtière mère de l’AR-MOUP)

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GCHG : Groupement des Coopératives d’Habitation Genevoises

MOUP: Maîtres d’Ouvrage d’Utilité Publique

ATLAS OF HOUSING
GENEVA
SWITZERLAND

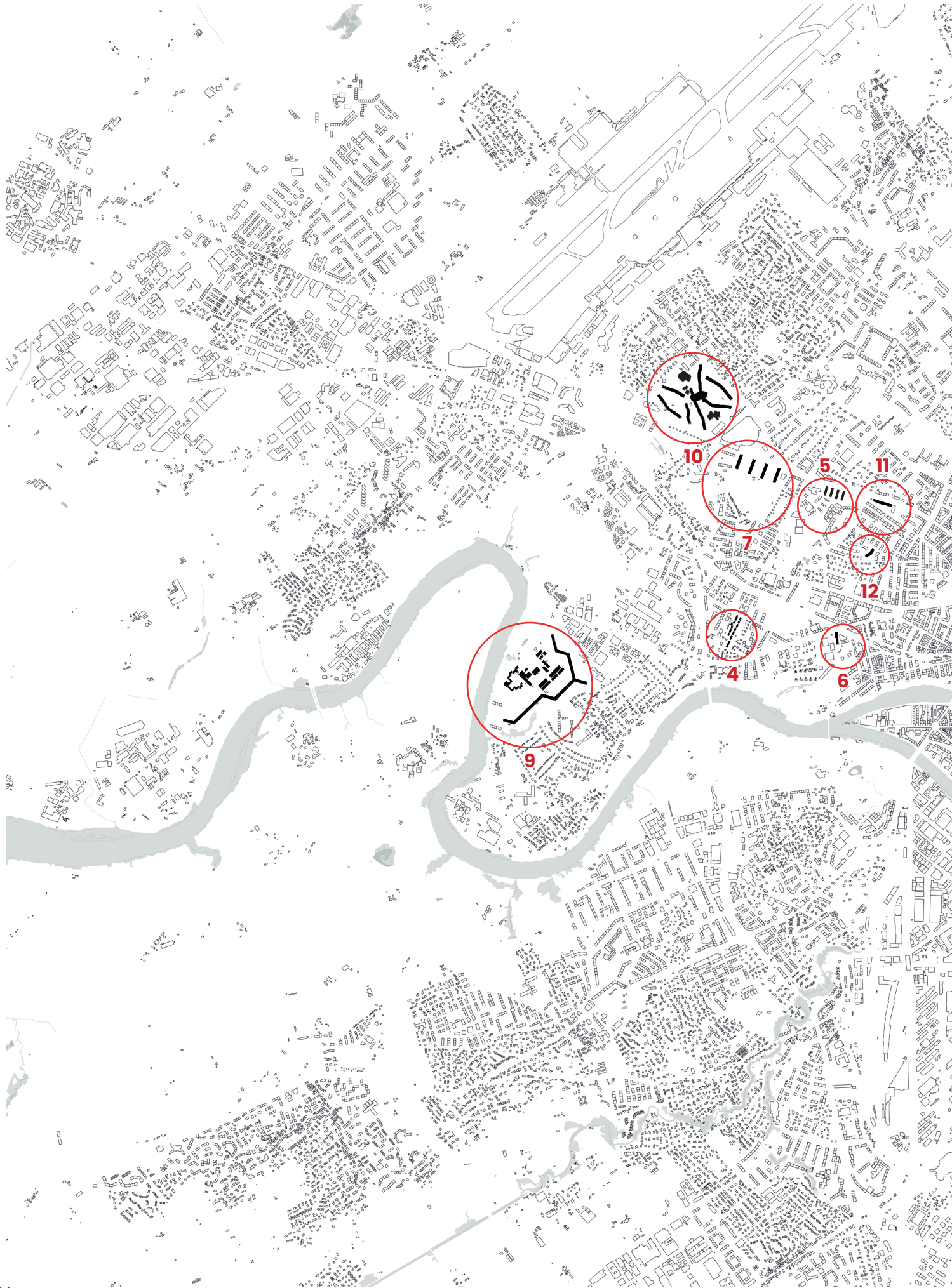
Atlas of social housing projects in Geneva
between 1850 and 2023

This research is based on a wide-ranging analysis of the links between social movements, housing laws and social housing construction in Geneva from the end of the 19th century to the present day.

This study of the evolution of housing over 170 years is, of course, exhaustive, and choices had to be made regarding the buildings analyzed.

This Atlas refers thirteen projects built since 1850 that particularly highlight the three axes of analysis aforementioned. This Atlas includes five additional projects that are not discussed in depth in the text due to lack of space, but which I feel are essential to include here to give a better understanding and further context.

I have selected the buildings that I believe have had a significant impact on Geneva's landscape and for their contribution to the evolution of domesticity and *vivre ensemble*.



List of projects



1: Housing workers, 1860,
Ruelle du midi 14,
Eaux-vives, Geneva

2: Housing worker, 1880,
Rue des Grottes 13, Geneva

3: Housing workers, 1898,
Rue Rousseau 14, Geneva

4: Cité-Jardin d'Aire, 1920,
rue des Sports, Vernier

5: Cité-Vieusseux, building A
1931, Vieusseux, Geneva

6: Social housing at Cayla,
building D, 1953, Charmille,
Geneva

7: La cité Balexert, 1957-60,
Vernier

8: Carouge Towers, 1958-63,
Carouge, Geneva

9: Cité du Lignon, 1963-71,
Vernier

10: Avanchet park, 1969-77,
Vernier

11: 120 Social housing units,
2011, Vieusseux, Geneva

12: Soubeyran 7,
2016, Vieusseux, Geneva

13: Ecoquartier Jonction,
2018, Geneva

 Select project

 Scale 1:30 000

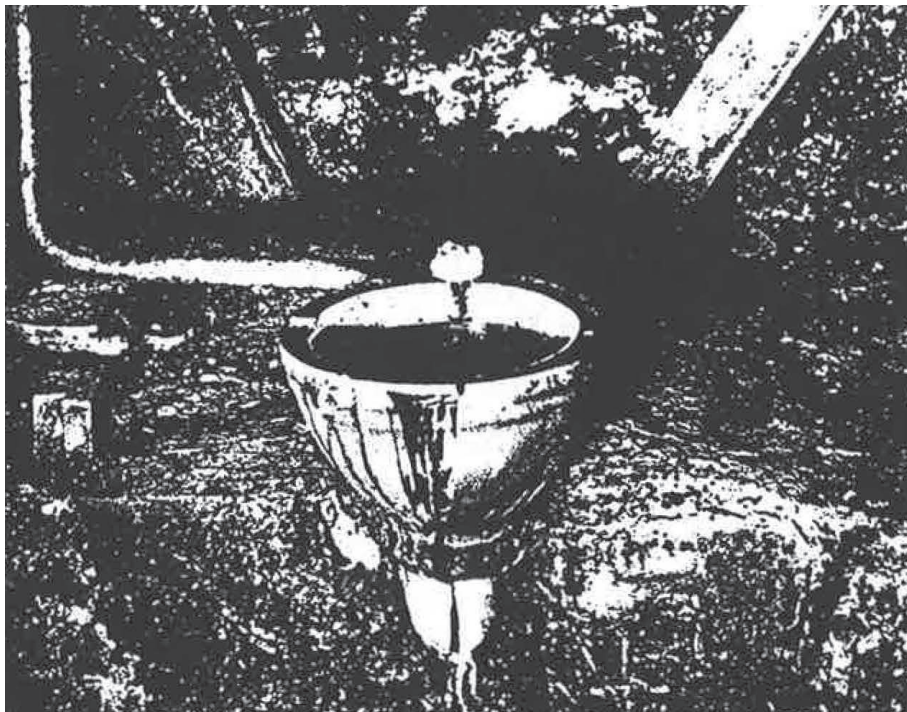
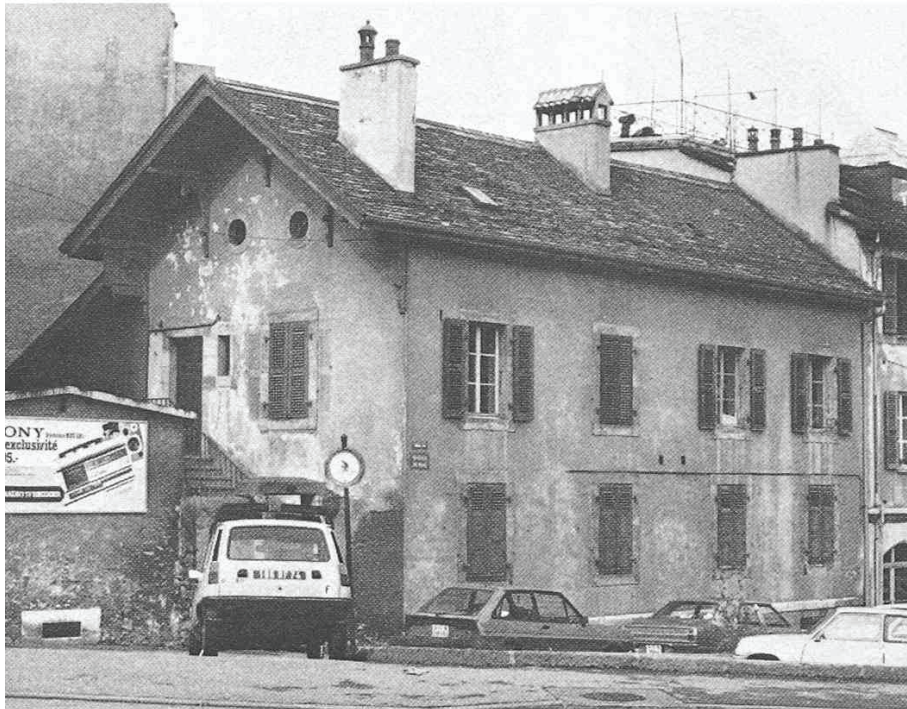


Photo of a typical Geneva courtyard, 1870, Case 2, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna.
“Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910).” Université de Genève, 1992, 36.



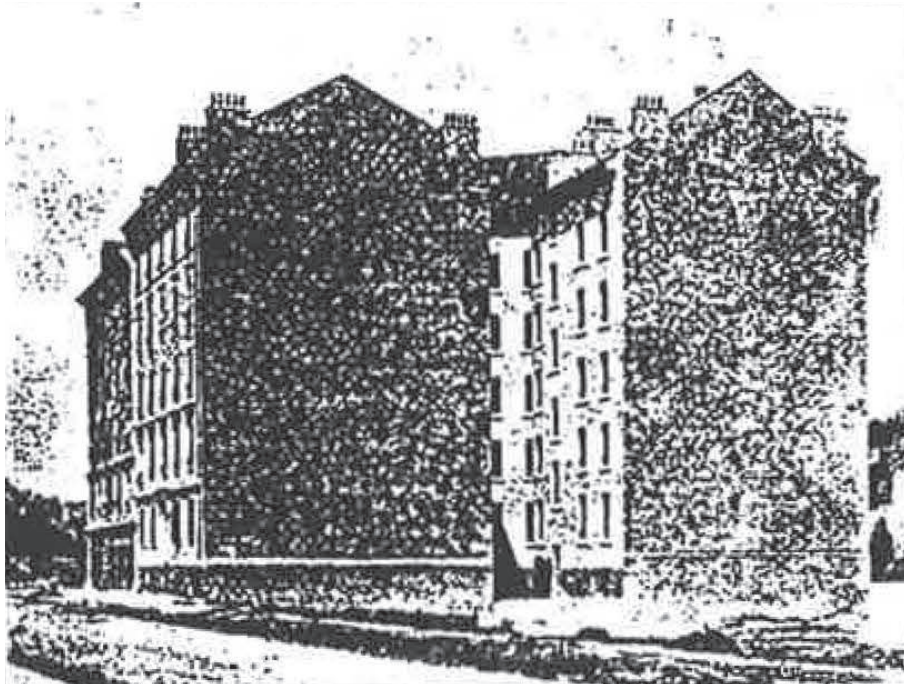
Housing
workers, 1860
Eaux-vives, Geneva

Architect: Unknown
Contracting authority: Private



Top: Photo of a typical worker's dwelling from 1860, Geneva, 1860, Case 2

Bottom: Water closet in the cellars, Geneva, 1860, Case 2, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 42.



Top: Engraving of Geneva's interior courts, Geneva, 1861, Case 2

Bottom: An uncontrolled septic tank in the city center, Geneva, 1860, Case 2, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 56.



View of a worksite in city center of Geneva, 1890, Image from the Archive of Geneva State

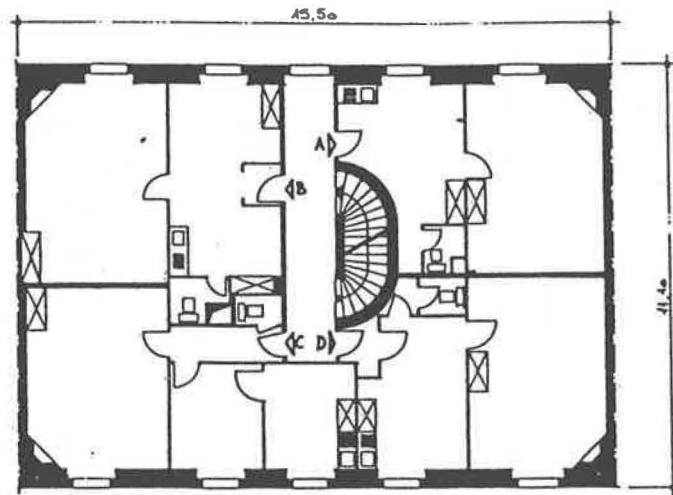
Housing
worker, 1880
Rue des Grottes 13,
Geneva

Architect: Unknown
Contracting authority: Private

There are usually between 2 and 4 flats on each floor, usually with 2 or 3 rooms, including a kitchen and 1 or 2 bedrooms, sometimes with an alcove. In the case of 3-bedroom flats, the rooms are usually accessed only via a passageway (entrance vestibule). In 2-room flats, the entrance is directly into the kitchen, with the rooms arranged in a row.

The builders placed more emphasis on increasing the number of flats than on ensuring plenty of ventilation and light, as evidenced by the modest size of the rooms (around 4.5 x 4.5 metres), the low ceilings (between 2.64 and 2.82 metres) and the side windows overlooking the courtyard or rue de la Faucille.

However, the layout of the plots along the new streets avoided the creation of narrow, dark courtyards. Sanitary facilities are fairly rudimentary, in line with the housing standards of the 1970s: kitchen sinks are supplied by a water tank, and toilets are shared by all tenants in the same flat. (Bianchi Le Henanf Giovanna 1992)



Top: Elevation of the main facade, Geneva, 1880, Case 2

Bottom: Standard floor plan , Geneva, 1880, Case 2, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna.
 “Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910).” Université de Genève, 1992, 88.



Top: Photo of a workers' family housing, Geneva, 1895, Case 2

Bottom: Photo of a room for Italian workers, Geneva, 1895, Case 2, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 48.

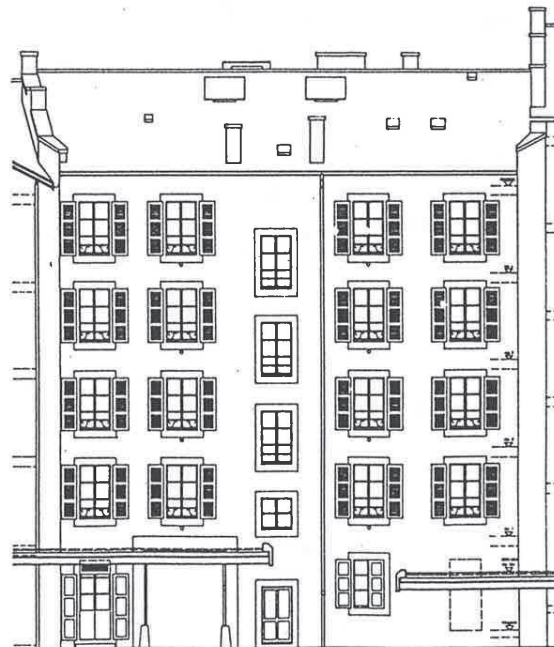
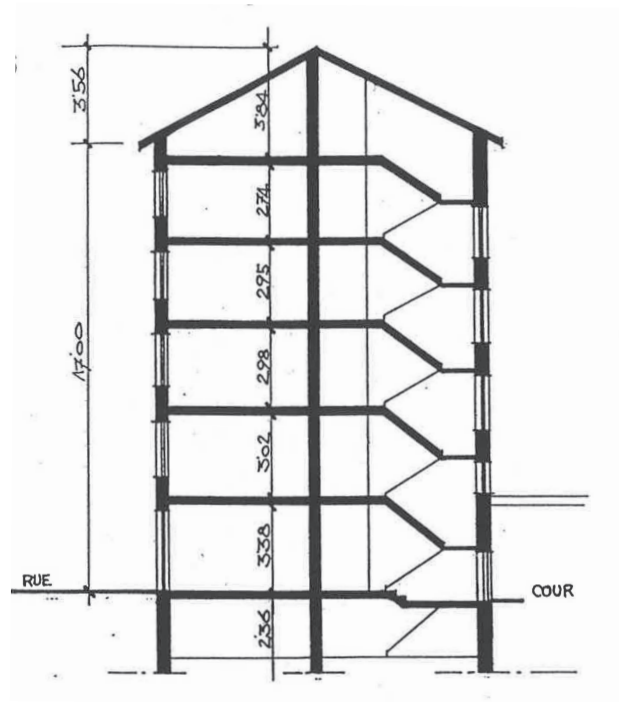


Photo of a typical Geneva courtyard, 1896, Case 3, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna.
“Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910).” Université de Genève, 1992, 112.

3

Housing
workers, 1898
Rue Rousseau,
Geneva

Architect: Unknown
Contracting authority: Private



Top: Cross-section of the building, Geneva, 1898, Case 3

Bottom: Elevation of the courtyard, Geneva, 1898, Case 3, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 126.



Top: Rue Rousseau at the end of the 19th century, before construction work, Geneva, 1896, Case 3

Bottom: Engraving of Geneva's interior courts, Geneva, 1896, Case 3, From Bianchi Le Henanf, Giovanna. "Le logement ouvrier à Genève (1860-1910)." Université de Genève, 1992, 119.

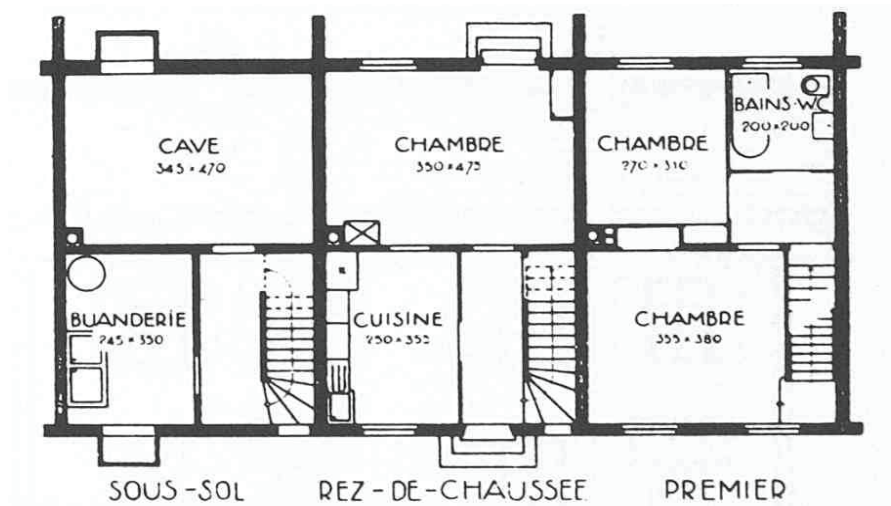
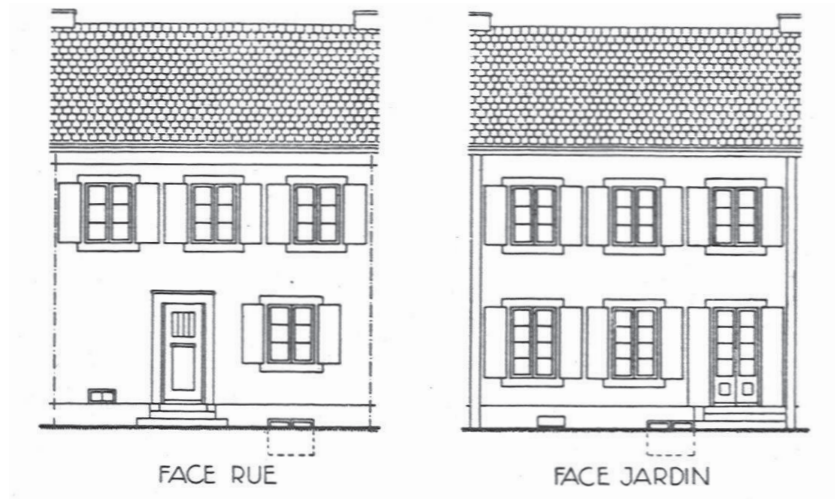


View of the project from the family gardens, Cité-jardins d'Aire, 1920, Case 4, From Martin, Camille. "La cité-jardin de l'avenue d'Aire à Genève." *L'oeuvre : architecture et art*, 1924, 1.

Cité-Jardin d'Aïre, 1920, rue des Sports, Geneva

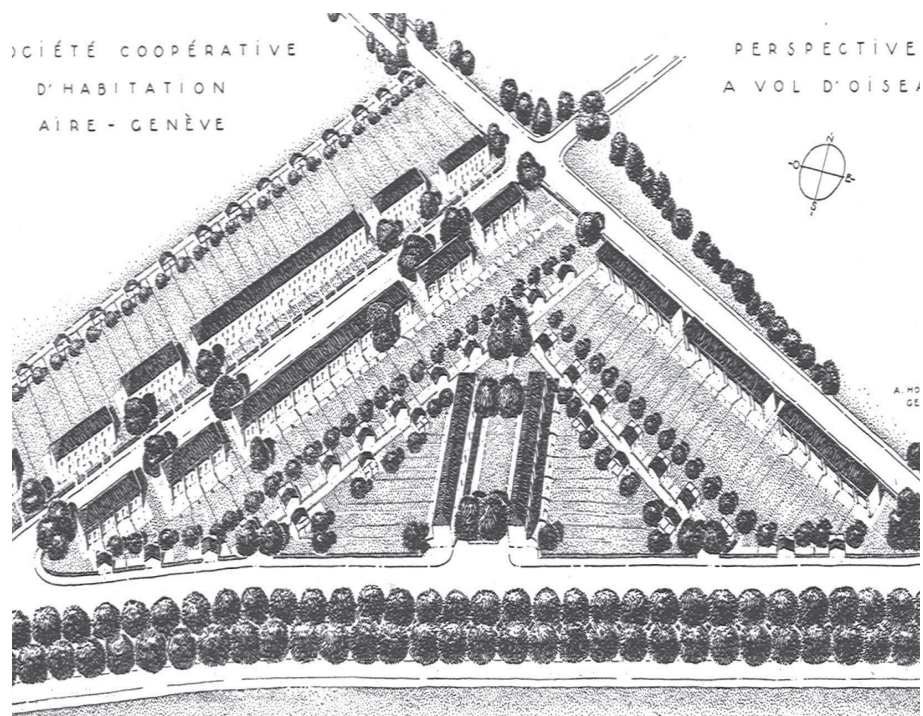
Architects: Arnold Hoechel
Contracting authority: SCHG

These are collective dwellings of the small villa type, whether detached, in semi-detached or terraced houses. In 1919, the firm Piccard & Pictet launched a national competition for the construction of a group of workers' dwellings on the site that was later to become the Cité-jardin d'Aïre. Both the competition and these examples of housing demonstrated an ideology of individuality and privacy through spatial planning. However, there are differences in the way the interior space is organised between the duplex and single-storey cottages, particularly with regard to the staircase and the distribution of rooms. In some cases, there is no clearance between the staircase and the kitchen, while in other cases there is a vestibule, thus avoiding adjoining spaces on the ground floor. On the first floor, there is almost always a corridor between the staircase and the bedrooms. At the outset, the housing estate consisted of around 90 dwellings, mainly 3-room apartments and a few 6-room flats. The obligation to serve the future housing estate from existing roads and the search for optimal sunlight conditions dictated the layout of the buildings.



Top: Elevation of the main facade, Cité-jardins d'Aïre, 1920, Case 4

Bottom: Standard floor plan, Cité-jardins d'Aïre, 1920, Case 4, From Martin, Camille. "La cité-jardin de l'avenue d'Aïre à Genève." L'oeuvre : architecture et art, 1924, 3.



Top: View of the gardens, Cité-jardins d'Aire, 1920, Case 4

Bottom: Bird's eye view of the project, Cité-jardins d'Aire, 1920, Case 4, From Martin, Camille. "La cité-jardin de l'avenue d'Aire à Genève." L'oeuvre : architecture et art, 1924, 6.

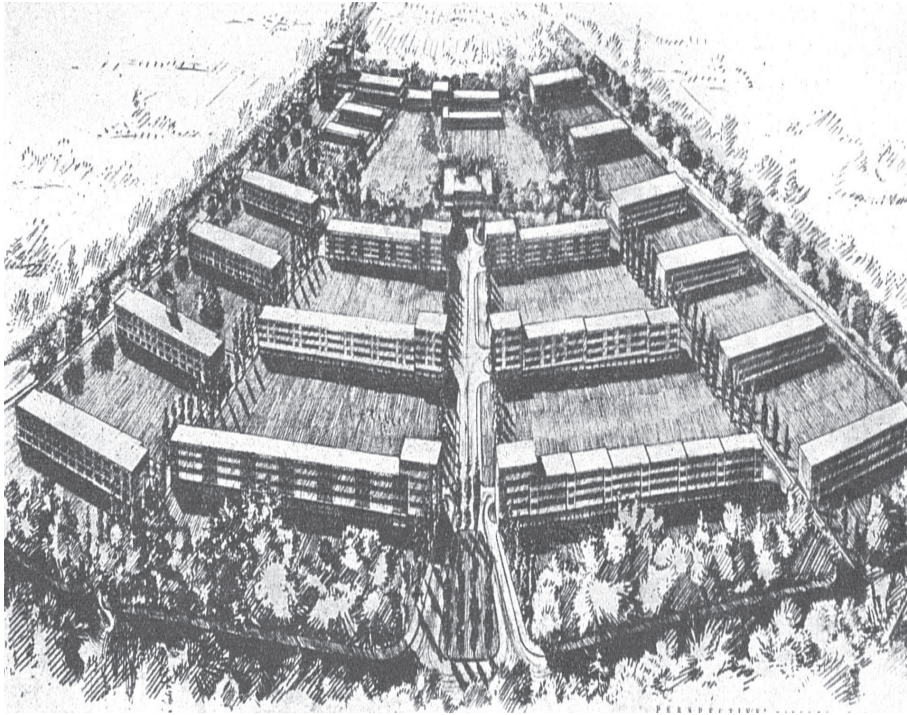


View of the project from the family gardens, Cité-jardins d'Aire, 1920, Case 4, From Martin, Camille. "La cité-jardin de l'avenue d'Aire à Genève." *L'oeuvre : architecture et art*, 1924, 1.

5

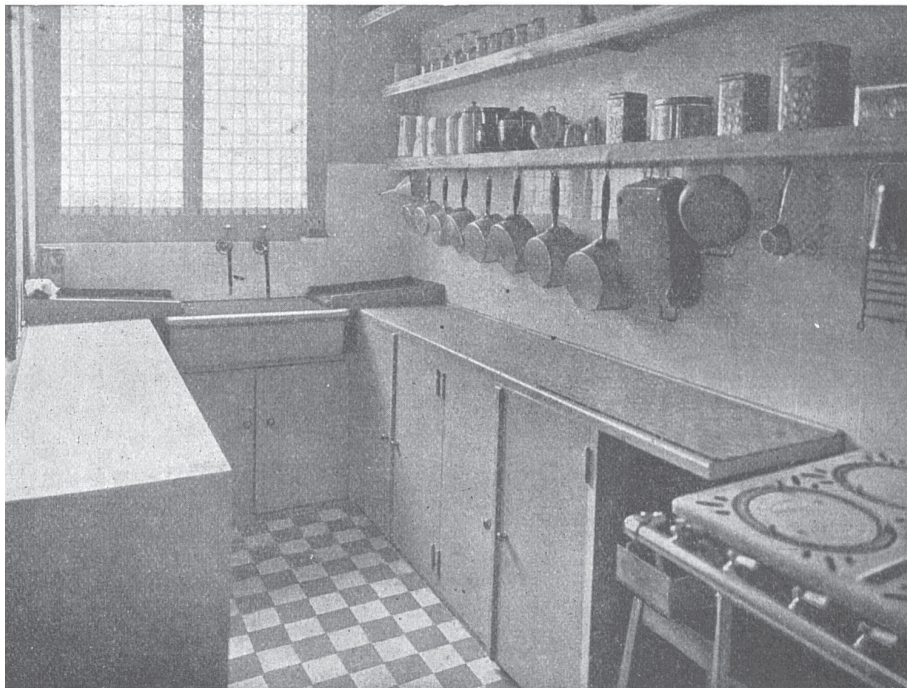
Cité-Vieusseux, building A
1931, Vieusseux,
Geneva

Architects: Maurice Brillard
Contracting authority: SCHG & Fondation pour la
veillesse



Top: Aerial drawing of the Vieuzeux housing estate, Cité Vieuzeux, 1932, Case 5

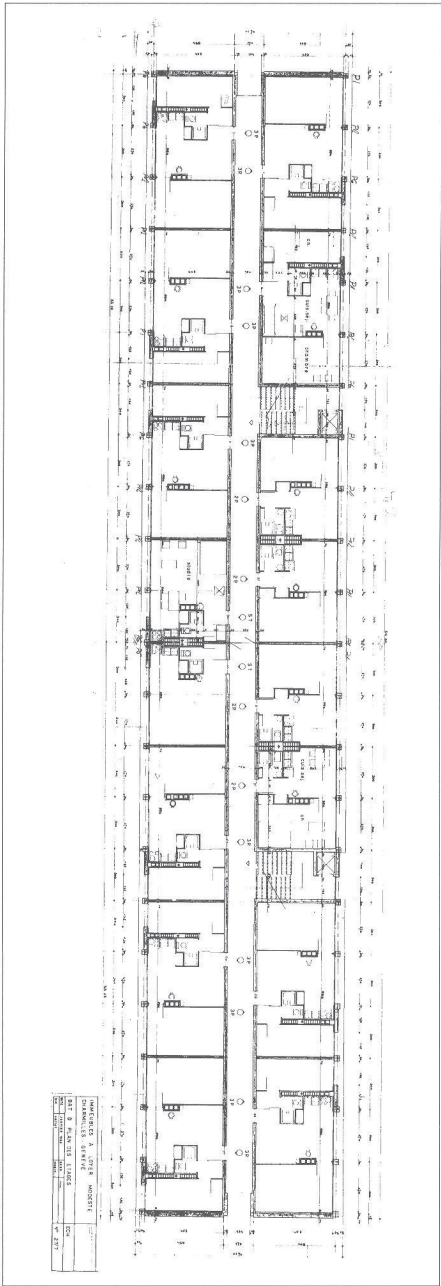
Bottom: View from the main street, Cité Vieuzeux, 1932, Case 5,
From Dumont, Gilbert. *Vieuzeux: Mémoire d'une cité*. Cabédita. Bière, 2018, 3.



Top: View of the gardens, Cité-jardins d'Aire, 1920, Case 4

Bottom: Bird's eye view of the project, Cité-jardins d'Aire, 1920, Case 4, From Martin, Camille. "La cité-jardin de l'avenue d'Aire à Genève." *L'oeuvre : architecture et art*, 1924, 6.

ANNEXE



Plan of the building D, Cayla, 1953, Case 6,
From Bruno, Marchand. "La campagne Cayla." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1995, 5.

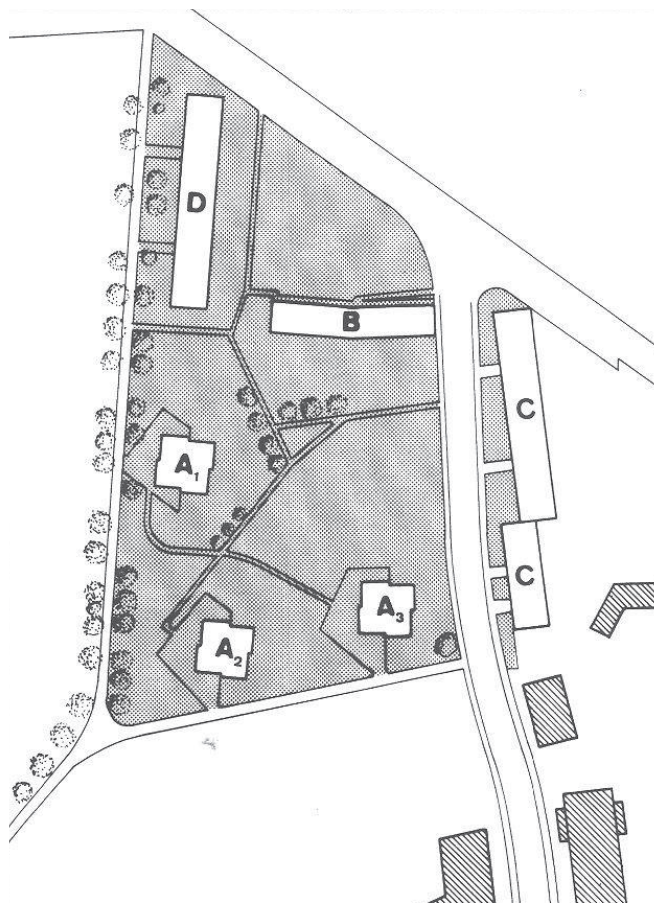
6

Social housing at Cayla,
building D, 1953,
Charmille, Geneva

Architects: George Addor
Contracting authority: Agence Addor et Julliard



Modern fitted kitchen, Cayla, 1953, Case 6,
From Bruno, Marchand. "La campagne Cayla." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1995, 4.



Plan of the complexe, Cayla, 1953, Case 6,
From Bruno, Marchand. "La campagne Cayla." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1995, 4.



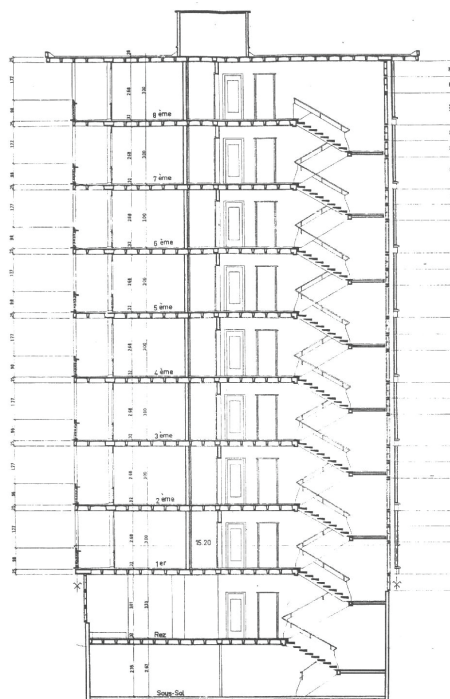
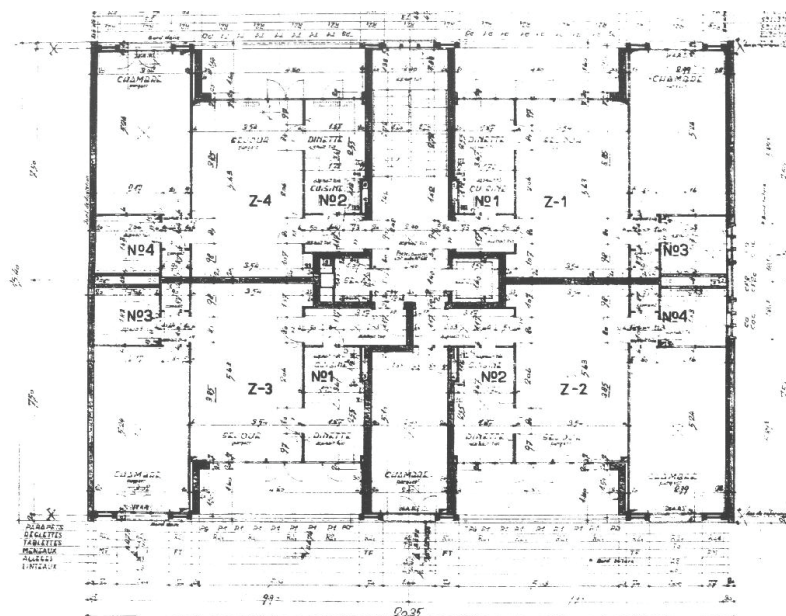
View of the project from the park, La Cité Balexert, 1960, Case 7. Image from Archives of Geneva State of the Office du Patrimoine et des Sites

La cité Balexert, Route de Meyrin 1957-60, Vernier

Architects: Frère Honegger
Contracting authority: S.I. Balexert

The Balexert development marked the start of a major period of property development initiated by a commission from the Honegger office, which lasted until the mid-sixties with projects such as the Cité Caroll, the Budé development, the Cité Carl-Vogt, the Cité d'Aïre and Gennecy-Avully. These initiatives will result in the construction of more than 4,000 homes on the Geneva canton. The layout comprises six residential blocks, the first two aligned north-south parallel to the Route de Meyrin and Avenue de Crozet, offering through-housing. Buildings 3 to 6 follow the Honegger-Afrique system that has been characteristic of the office's projects since La Colombière in 1954. The façades are made up of small prefabricated elements, and the slabs rest on prefabricated caissons measuring 60 by 60 centimetres, organising the entire plan in an orthogonal grid. Each staircase serves four flats per floor, comprising three or four rooms with a living room and kitchen opening onto the loggia, as well as bedrooms accessible from the living room. .

ANNEXE



Top: Standard floor plan, La Cité Balexert, 1960, Case 7

Bottom: Transversal Cross-section of the building, La Cité Balexert, 1960, Case 7, Image from Archives of Geneva State of the Office du Patrimoine et des Sites



Top: Photo of the facade overlooking the park, La Cité Ballexert, 1960, Case 7

Bottom: View of the project from the family gardens, La Cité Ballexert, 1960, Case 7, Image from Archives of Geneva State of the Office du Patrimoine et des Sites

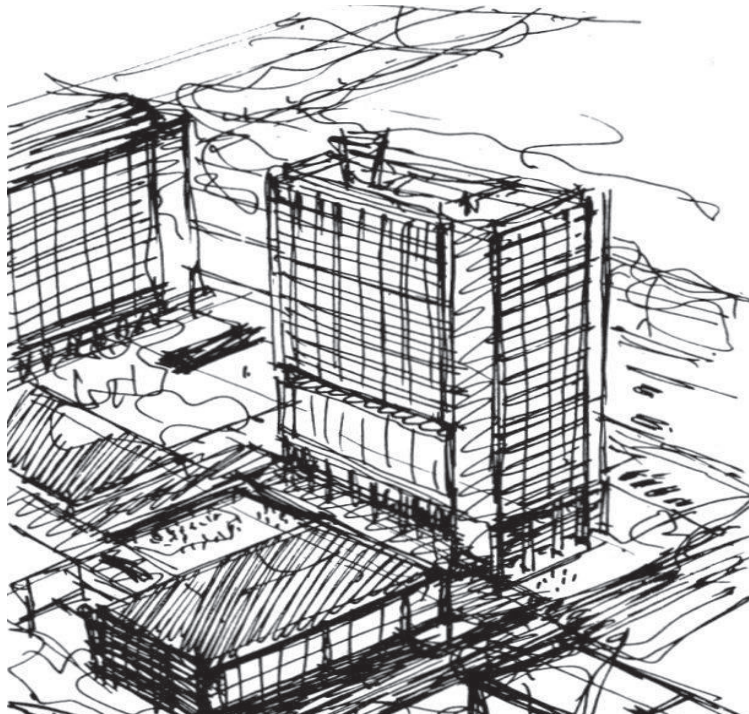
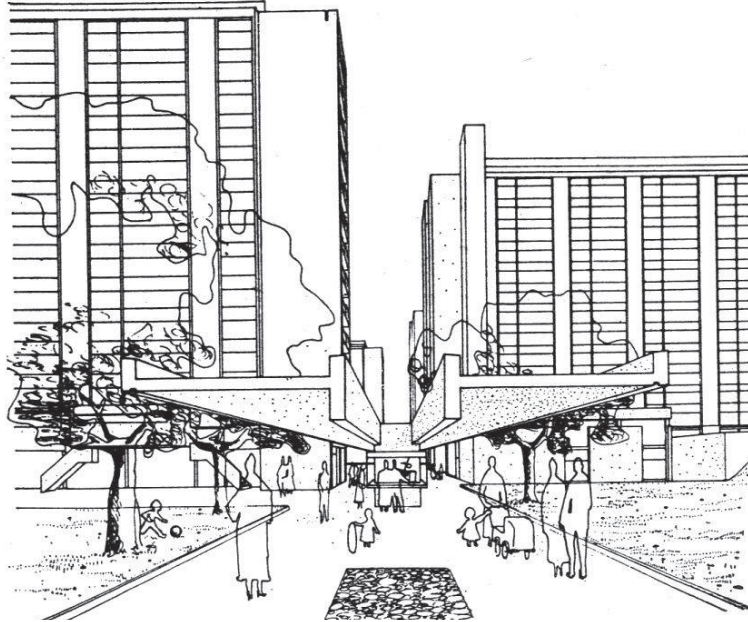


View of the buildings from the ground floor, Carouge towers, 1964, Case 8,
From Terrier, Edouard. "Les tours de Carouge." Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat, 1964, 8.

Carouge Towers,
1958-63, Carouge,
Geneva

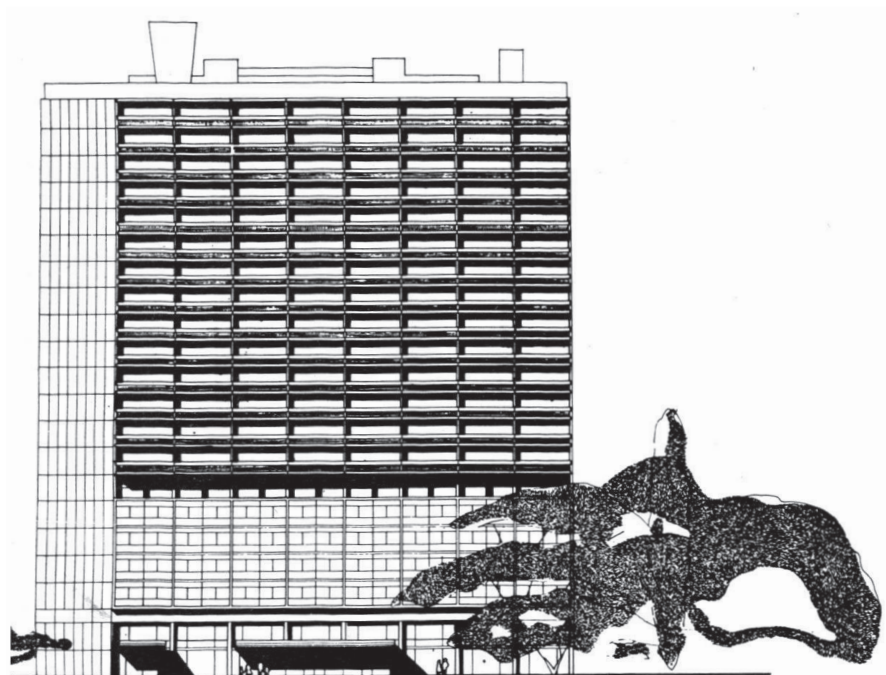
Architects: L. Archinard - G. Brera - A. Damay -
J.J.Mégevand - R. Schwertz - P.Waltenspühl -
R. Barro

Contracting authority: Fondation HLM
de la ville de Carouge



Top: Perspective drawing of the park, Carouge towers, 1963, Case 8,

Bottom: Sketch of the building's volumetry, Carouge towers, 1964, Case 8,
From Terrier, Edouard. "Les tours de Carouge." *Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat*, 1964, 4.



Top: Drawing of the facade, Carouge towers, 1963, Case 8,

Bottom: Photo of the towers from the park, Carouge towers, 1964, Case 8,
From Terrier, Edouard. "Les tours de Carouge." Habitation : revue trimestrielle de la section
romande de l'Association Suisse pour l'Habitat, 1964, 6.



View of one of the towers, Cité Lignon, 2007, Case 9.
Image from Batidoc

Cité du Lignon,
1963-71, Vernier,
Geneva

Architects: G. Addor - D. Julliard - J. Bolliger -
L. Payot
Contracting authority: Agence Addor et Julliard



Top: Photo of worksite using the «formwork tunnel» system Cité Lignon, 1965, Case 9

Bottom: Photo from the gallery, Cité Lignon, 2007, Case 9.
Image from DAS Genève



Top: First floor treatment, Cité Lignon, 2007, Case 9, Image from Batidoc

Bottom: Aerial view of the project, Cité Lignon, 1971, Case 9,
From Graf, Franz, Giulia Marino, and Mélanie Delaune Perrin. "L'oeuvre de Georges
Addor: Inventaire, évaluation qualitative, recommandations pour la Cité du Lignon."
Recherche DU/OPS. Lausanne: EPFL, 2013, 25.

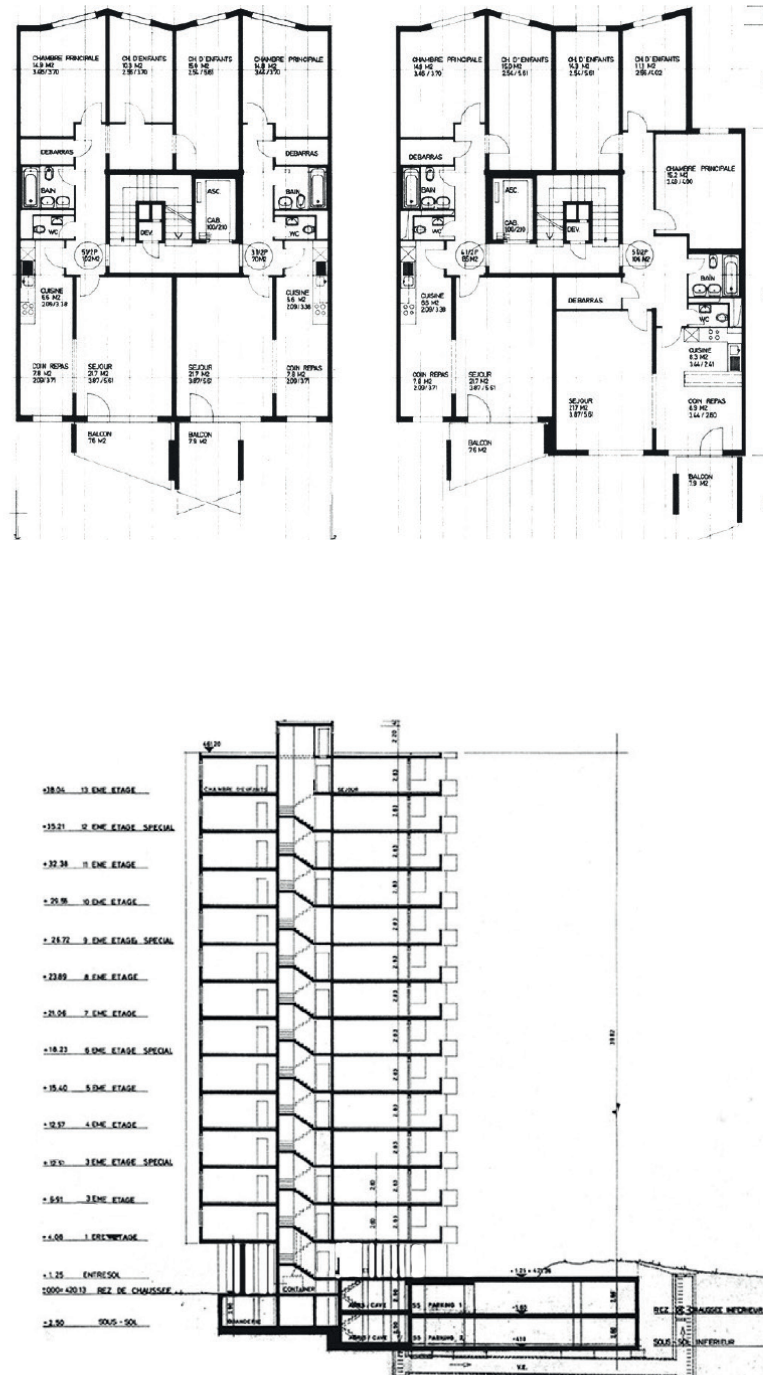


Photo of the Avanchet Complexe, Avanchet park, 1977, Case 10, From Graf, Franz, and Giulia Marino. "Avanchet-Parc in Geneva: An Experimental Housing Scheme, an Exemplary Complex". *Docomomo Journal*, no. 65 (July):70-77, 2021, 1.

Avanchet park, Route de Meyrin 1969-77, Vernier

Architects: Steiger Partner AG - W. Förderer
- F. Amrhein
Contracting authority: Ernst Göhner AG

When viewed from the outside, the Avanchet-Parc housing estate gives the impression of a fortress perched above the road. Embodying the principles of the modern city, the separation of traffic flows, with cars on the route de Meyrin and pedestrians on an upper ground floor, and the free-standing layout of high-rise bars, reinforce an image of a closed city and give rise to prejudices similar to those associated with other large housing estates in Switzerland and France. Avanchet-Parc, the last of Geneva's satellite housing estates, is home to 2,033 flats, ranging from studios to seven-bedroom flats, in seven 7- to 13-storey blocks. Arranged in a 'butterfly' pattern, the backbone of these buildings is a small shopping centre, next to which are two schools, a medical centre and a church. These facilities have been designed as self-contained, radiating, low-rise units, acting as connectors between the bars and blending seamlessly into the design of the external landscaping. The break with the previous large housing estates is mainly manifested in the movement of both the earth and the building; an attempt at organic architecture constrained by the costs of standardised construction. (Franz Graf & Giulia Marino, 2021)



Top: Standard floor plan, Avanchet park, 1977, Case 10

Bottom: Transversal Cross-section of the building, Avanchet park, 1977, Case 10, From Graf, Franz, and Giulia Marino. "Avanchet-Parc in Geneva: An Experimental Housing Scheme, an Exemplary Complex". *Docomomo Journal*, no. 65 (July):70-77, 2021, 3.



Top: Photo of the facade overlooking the park, Avanchet park, 1977, Case 10

Bottom: Aerial view of the complex, Avanchet park, 1977, Case 10, From Graf, Franz, and Giulia Marino. "Avanchet-Parc in Geneva: An Experimental Housing Scheme, an Exemplary Complex". *Docomomo Journal*, no. 65 (July):70-77, 2021, 2.



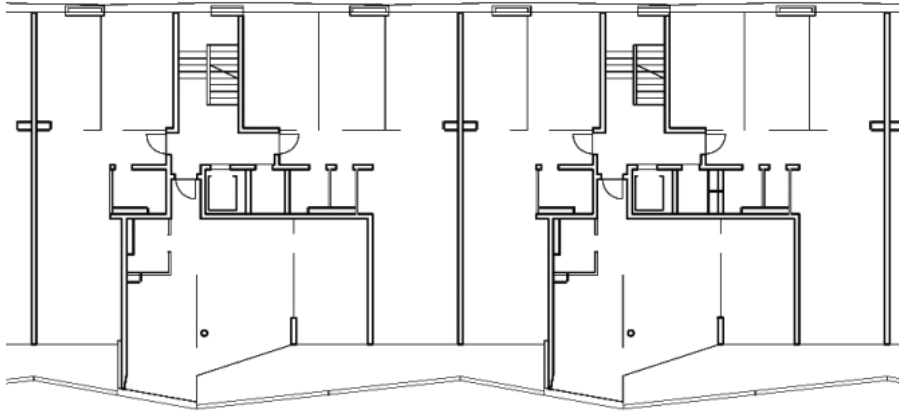
View of the main facade from the park, 120 Social housing units, Vieusseux, 2011, Case 11,
Image from the archives of meier + associé architectes

120 Social housing units,
Route de Meyrin 27,
2011, Vieusseux

Architect: Meier + associé

Contracting authority: Fondation HBM Jean Dutoit

Erected on planted ground, the building has a pleated massing, with alternating bands of lightly tinted concrete undulating along the long facades. The parapets of the balconies and the recessed glazed façade create a rhythm that evokes an ‘organic’ echo of the foliage of the trees on the site. The interior of the buildings is distributed via stairwells that allow light to penetrate the façade, lending a special dignity to this collective and social space. The project uses rational typologies that take into account the ideal north-south orientation and the built environment. They are inspired by a historic local typological layout, with two walk-through flats and a single south-facing flat arranged around a distributive core. Access to the flats is via a hall leading to the living space, which extends the full depth of the building, from the garden to the street. Depending on the size of the units, the sleeping areas are located either to the north or south. All the homes have an extension of the living room onto a large balcony/terrace. of the grid on the façades. (Meier + associé architectes, 2011)



Top: Standard floor plan, 120 Social housing units, Vieusseux, 2011, Case 11
Bottom: View of the facade, 120 Social housing units, Vieusseux, 2011, Case 11,
Image from the archives of meier + associé architectes



Top: Photo of the facade, 120 logements sociaux, Vieusseux, 2012, Case 11

Bottom: Interior view of the kitchen, 120 Social housing units, Vieusseux, 2011, Case 11,
Image from the archives of meier + associé architectes

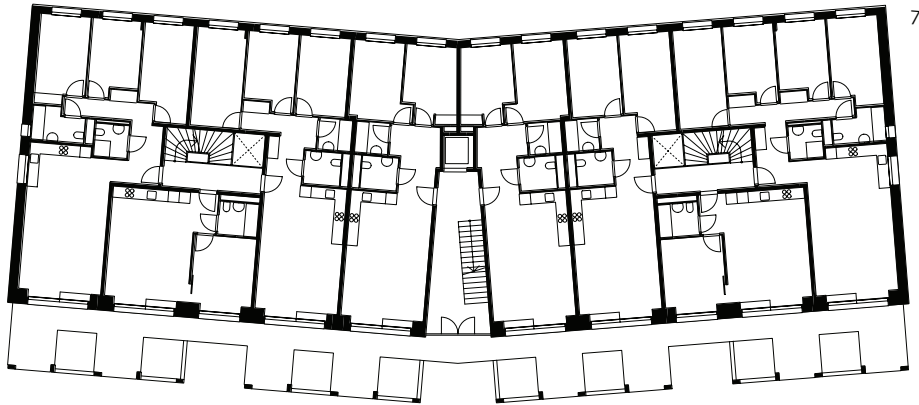


View of the main facade from the park, 120 Social housing units, Vieuvesseux, 2011, Case 11,
Image from the archives of meier + associé architectes

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Soubeyran 7,
2016, Vieusseux,
Geneva

Architect: atba SA
Contracting authority: Coopérative
Equilibre & Luciole



Top: Standard floor plan, Soubeyran 7, 2018, Case 12. Image from Espazium

Bottom: Photo of the share kitchen, Soubeyran 7, 2018, Case 12. From the archive of atba SA



Top: Photo of the south facade, Soubeyran 7, Vieu-Neuf,
Photo by Thomas Maisonnasse, 2016, Case 12

Bottom: Photo of gallery and shared balcony, Soubeyran 7, Vieu-Neuf, 2016, Case 12,
From the archives of atba SA



Photo of the facade overlooking the inner courtyard, Ecodistrict Jonction CODHA, Jonction,
Photo by Roman Keller, 2018, Case 13

13

Ecoquartier Jonction,
2018, Jonction,
Geneva

Architect: Dreier Frenzel
Contracting authority: Coopérative
CODHA, Artamis des rois & FVGLS

ANNEXE



Top: Drawing of every typologie in the project, Ecodistrict Jonction CODHA, Jonction, 2018, Case 13, Image from Batidoc

Bottom: Photo of the share garden, Ecodistrict Jonction CODHA, Jonction, Photo by Roman Keller, 2018, Case 13



Top: Photo of the set, Ecodistrict Junction CODHA, Jonction, , 2018, Case 13

Bottom: Photo of gallery and shared balcony, Ecodistrict Junction CODHA, Jonction,
Photo by Roman Keller, 2018, Case 13

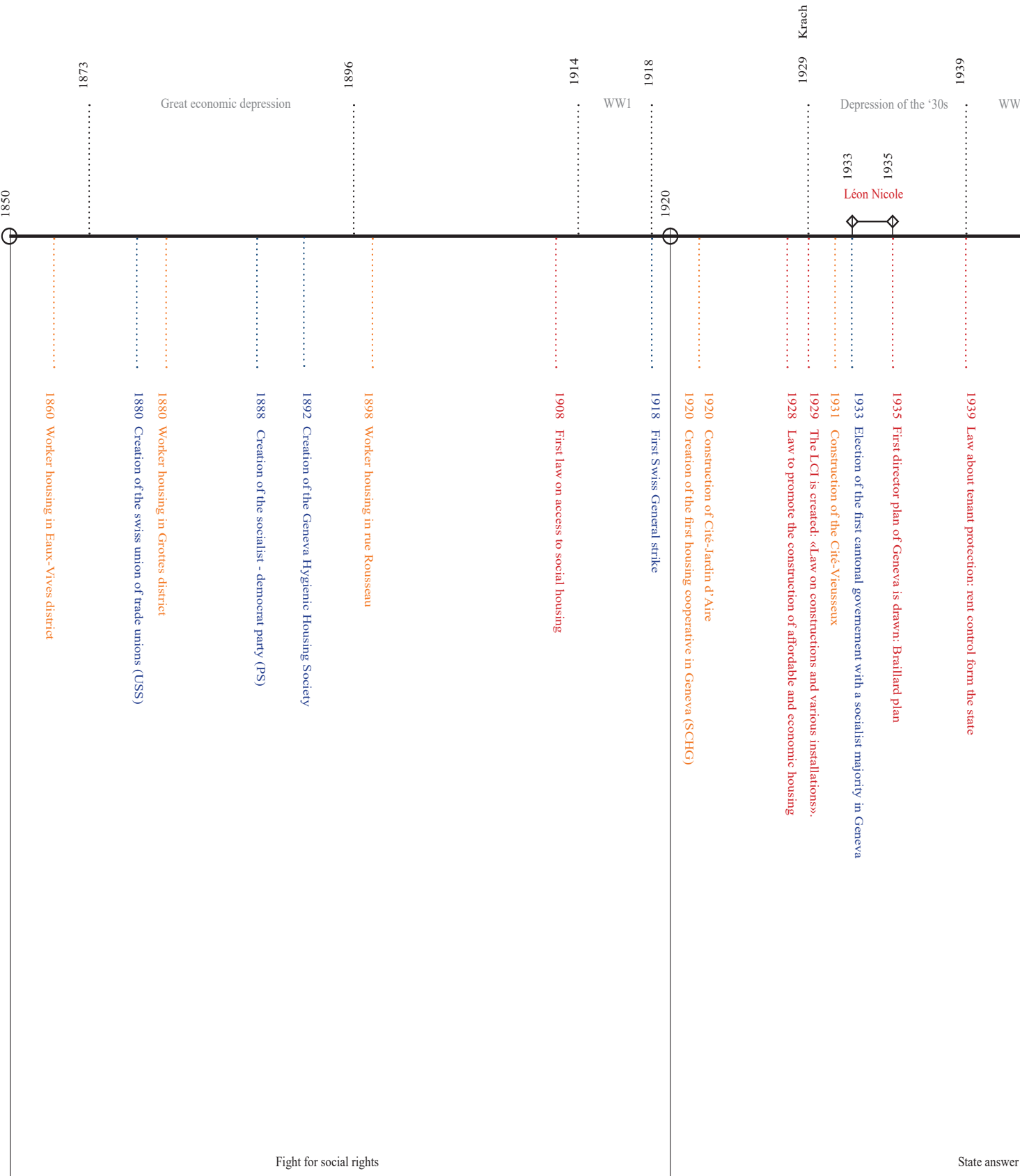
TIMELINE

Timeline from 1850 to X

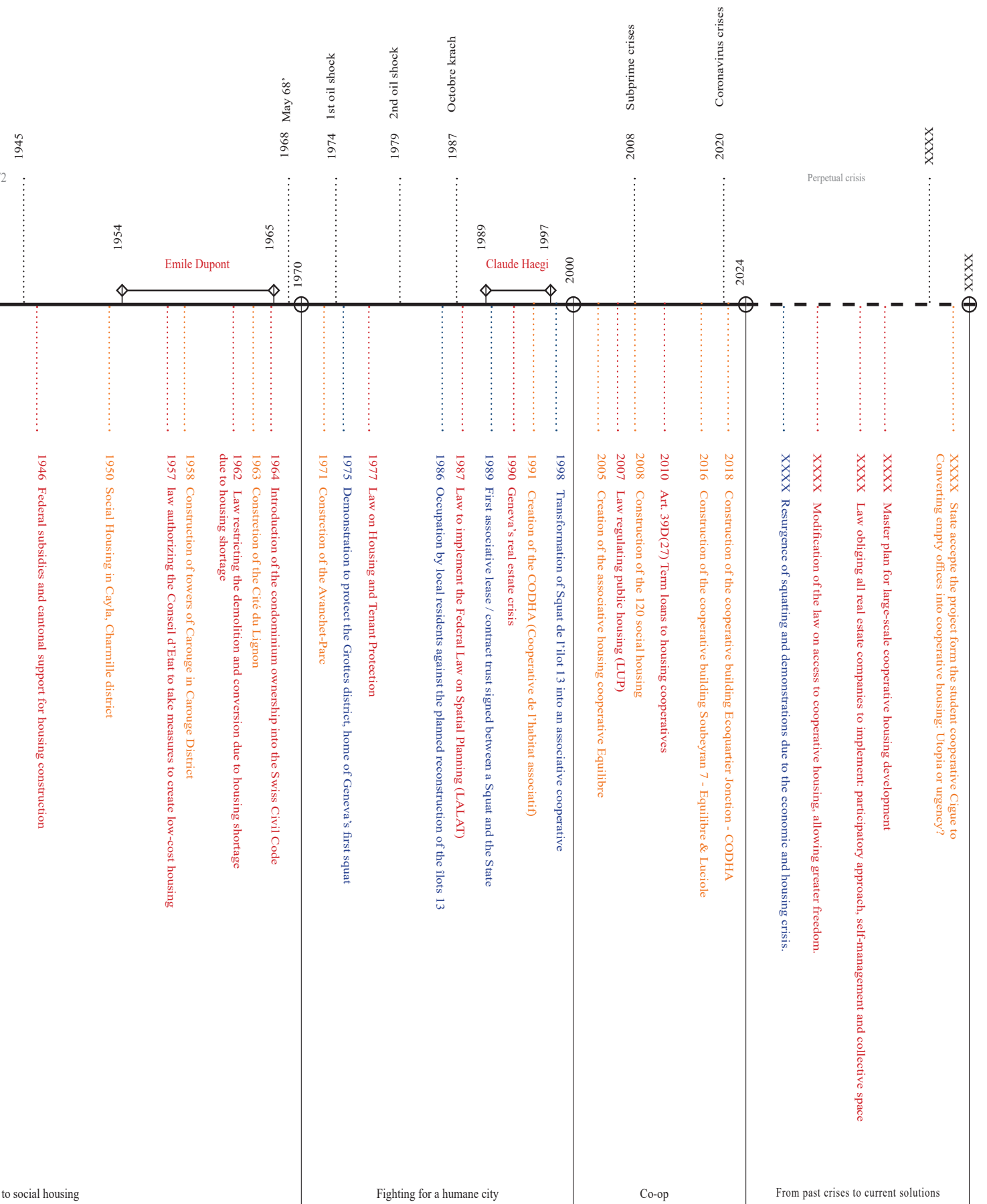
During my work, I developed this timeline to help me understand the relationship between social movements - lawmaking (the laws and political figures who influenced Geneva law) - and housing construction. The color code therefore respects these three points: **Social movements (in blue)** - **Lawmaking (in red)** - **Housing construction (in orange)**.

In addition to these three aspects, I had to take into account historical elements such as the First World War, the Great Recession or the oil shocks among others. Indeed, as a country in the center of Europe, Switzerland was strongly influenced by its neighboring countries. What's more, in a world where globalization is strongly influencing the economy, it appears necessary to have a global vision in order to realize the extent to which aspects influence, dialogue and interweave with each other.

ANNEXE
TIMELINE



ANNEXE TIMELINE



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Housewifization, Meryl Louise Barthe
Persistent Community, Melchior Dechancé
Staging Movement, Ada Massarente
Factory of Lives, Serena Mazzetti
Destination Home, Vanesa Santillan Messina
Beyond the Closet, Klea Ott
First Struggle Then Housing, Antoine Ricard-Gauthier
Pretending to Take the Country's Side, Karl-August Valfells
Room for Women, Camyl Vigneault
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