HOUSING THE UNPREDICTABLE
Between order and chaos

by

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ABSTRACT

What can be precisely considered as unpredictable in our society? Well strictly speaking, there is no direct answer. Perhaps it could be attributed to the incessant renewals of electronic technologies, the accelerated flux in media communications and information exchange or the impermanence in city urban fabric. The urban condition resides in a volatile state where change is the only constant. This instability coupled with physical anonymity through wireless connection can impede much-needed social integration into the whimsical progression of IT industry.

Through intense globalisation, cities are no longer isolated but interdependent on one another, subject to the external forces beyond self-control. It is thus important to be receptive towards the unpredictable changes in our daily lives. Analysing housing projects could thus shed some light upon this unpredictable condition of our social environment because it has to contain the individual myriad lifestyles of a living community. This paper attempts to understand unpredictable factors have shaped past housing projects, their initial design intentions and the following responses from its inhabitants. A range of extremes and middle positions were chosen to investigate how housing can accommodate the unpredictable and consequently induce greater living satisfaction.

The struggle between order and chaos is to achieve a symbiosis where the living condition is not to be undermined by either authoritarian concepts or inefficient disorder. Towards a new urban housing condition where architectural is no longer a permanent entity, but acquiring a temporal quality to allow indeterminist usage by different occupants. What kind of freedom be given to users to cater to their variable needs?

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