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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Mat-hybrid housing: Two case studies in Terni and London

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## KEYWORDS

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Mat-building;  
Hybrid housing;  
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## Abstract

This study focuses on the spatial and mutable characteristics of the “mat-hybrid housing” (MHH), a specific type of public housing. Analyses were conducted specifically on the period between 1960 and 1980 and two particular case studies, namely, Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti in Terni, Italy, and Odhams Walk in London. The qualitative research design of this study is based on the methodology called AIFAD (an abbreviation for Archives, Interviews, Fieldwork, Analytic diagrams, and Drawings). The goal of this paper is to identify, define, and extract possible strategies for implementing MHH, which can improve urban growth through compact schemes. These objectives can be achieved by adopting the schemes in such manner as suburban sprawl is prevented, the densities of existing cities are intensified, the possibility of changing the concept of domestic space is tested, and the identity, history, and tenant participation in each city is strengthened. Through this approach, the MHH can be effected.

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## 1. Introduction

One of the first European company towns identified by the presence of workers’ housing was built in Belgium in 1838. Its name is Bois-du-Luc (UNESCO, 2012), and it represents an example of utopian architecture. However, the historical compact courtyard known as “beguine” or “béguinage,” an area declared as a world heritage site by the UNESCO in Belgium, introduced the very first pioneering

“co-housing” way of living or “workers’ houses”; it was created during the medieval times in the thirteenth century and occupied only by women (UNESCO, 1998). In England, 15 cooperative housekeeping projects were operated from 1874 to 1925. This cooperative movement developed the concept of several households composed of one or more people sharing the labor and cost for services, such as laundry, cleaning, and cooking (Pearson, 1988). This concept could also be found in Owen’s utopia and his “Quadrilatero,” Fourier’s phalanstère, and Melusina Fay Pierce’s “cooperative housekeeping” (Hayden, 1981), or in Morris’s theories (Vestbro and Horelli, 2012).

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