

Typo-Morphological approach to Housing Transformation in Tehran

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The paper attempts to investigate the transformation of housing typology in relation to changes in urban morphology. It looks at the process of change in housing typology, as one dominant type of dwelling replaces another in Tehran, Iran: why, how and by what means dwellings evolved and adapted and how traditional types have been transformed to become modern. The relationship between type of house and built form will be explored and examined using morphological analysis and by reference to the 'archetypal building' proposed by Steadman (2001). The sample areas are selected from three boroughs of Tehran corresponding to important periods in its morphological transformation. The analysis is carried out more on the built forms and external envelopes of houses than on their internal plans. The emphasis is on questions of plot size, shape, the ratio of open to built space, and the provision of access and lighting.

The plot is not without its effects on built form. In fact, the geometry and dimensions of plots limit what can be built on them. This is not to claim that a given plot dimension would lead to one particular typology. Yet the theoretical possibilities for house types have a strong relationship with the shape and properties of the plot. The focal issue of this study is to discover how the attributes of plots such as dimensions and shape are essential in constraining possible house types, by establishing their relation with enclosure, access and day-lighting. In summary, this study sets out to investigate the mutual effects of plot on built form and built form on plot.

The first phase is the abstract analysis whose purpose is to enumerate geometrical/configurational possibilities that plots could allow. This will be achieved through designing some systematic experiments by both establishing the dimensional parameters and their possible ranges and possible plan configurations. This method enables the study to compare house types and plots with respect to their frontage width and depth. Then these theoretical possibilities are compared with the actual plans observed in different areas. By looking at the actual samples it should be possible to clarify which types have occurred more often and try to interpret the reasons. The theoretical possibilities are considered regardless of localities since the representation is an abstract one.

It is hoped that the study will establish and evaluate other possible forms and may make some suggestions for what other possibilities which were not actually built could theoretically have occurred.