

Spatial configuration within residential facades

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Abstract

This paper outlines the preliminary outcomes of an interdisciplinary approach to describe the physical characteristics of urban residential facades. Utilising architectural knowledge and computer imaging, the spatial configuration of elements within a dwellings façade are shown to form patterns that are then repeated in other dwellings. The method relies on the visual analysis of a dwellings façade. Stylistic elements, textures and other features at a fine scale are considered in the same way that more formal elements such as doors and windows are considered at a larger scale. When the urban façade of a dwelling is studied as a composition of elements at different scales, the built form might be considered as a textured surface defining the open space of the street. This surface that dominates the visual field may play a critical role in the way that abstract information is retrieved from the city, as discussed by Hillier and Hanson (1984) as description retrieval. This paper shows that the facades of dwellings of similar styles have similar patterns of composition.