

WITH OUT

ARCHITECTS



STARTING OUT WITH AN ARCHITECT

The original master-planning and house designs were designed by a Swiss architect in 2001. All the houses were intended to be double story units, designed to allow for incremental extensions. However, the double storey units were only built when the architect was present. When he returned to Switzerland, the residents would build single storey units.

Since its inception in 1994, the Government's subsidised housing programme has delivered over 4.3 million subsidised housing opportunities across the country. Despite this staggering figure, the housing backlog, along with informal settlements, continues to grow each year. Globally, cities are faced with varying degrees of 'housing crises' and market-led displacement. As such, architects are grappling with issues of intensification, adaptive reuse, and inclusionary housing; all the while contending with how to design housing projects that remain affordable. Mixed-use, medium density residential models are being explored across contexts; the notion of providing 'half a house' for future incremental development is being prolifically prototyped; and mixed income models, with separate entrances and shared amenities are being increasingly proposed.

This micro study, 'Without Architects' begins to demonstrate how the RDP houses are in fact 'half houses' and how residents are leveraging the financial benefits of their tenure security through simple, incremental additions and alterations.

The two examples come from a particular housing project in Cape Town which was co-designed and built by residents as a 'People's Housing Process' Project. The PHP programme is often criticised for running over time, and budget - however this micro-study shows that the building knowledge gained through that process has allowed residents to extend their homes in a quick, and well-considered manner.

Since being built almost 16 years ago, the majority of the owners have made incremental improvements to their homes, and many of these improvements, additional and alterations have been made in order to add affordable rental stock to their properties. Without Architects.

These 'micro-landlords' are supplying an affordable rental product for a rapidly increasing sector of the market. Most believe that architects design the built environment - however almost less than 2% of the built fabric is actually designed by architects. The intention of the micro-study is to highlight the design innovation and ingenuity that exists outside of the architectural fraternity. And simultaneously to ignite a dialogue around the role architects and designers can play in these spaces. Can we as architects offer design and technical advice and assistance? Or are we superfluous in these spaces?

The study is part of an ongoing body of research into affordable housing markets being conducted by People's Environmental Planning (PEP), an urban sector NGO with extensive experience in participatory design projects, and community-centred housing developments. Over the last 20 years, the organisation has helped many communities to access the government housing subsidy and to build their own houses.

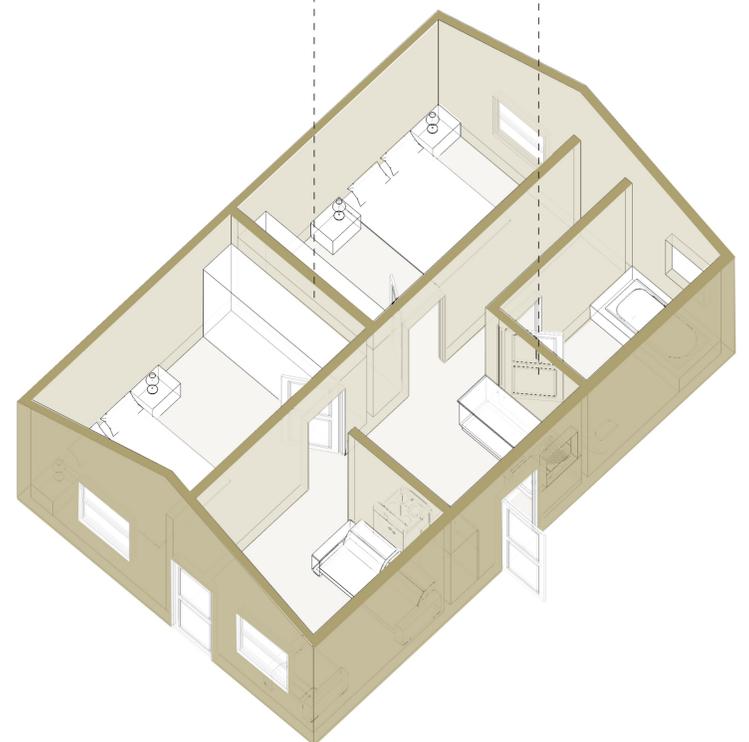
It must be noted that this is the inception phase of the research project, and showcases only 2 typologies of the 'micro-developer' model being built across the metro. This is merely a start, and the intention is for the research to continue, across various locations ; to understand a cross section of both the rental market and associated typologies across the Cape Town Metropolitan region.



2 Bedrooms
Both rooms used for family purposes



1 Bathroom
with toilet and bath
no hot water



Original House Typology

Financed through capital subsidy programme



"I TOLD MY BUILDER WHAT I WANTED"

"I didn't have any plans. I just told my builder what I wanted, and then he would tell me what could work, and what would not work. We would just have a conversation about the building, but there were no drawings."



"I SAW THAT THERE WAS A DEMAND"

"As soon as I started collecting building material, people would come to my house and ask if I was building rooms to rent. There is a huge demand for rented rooms in this area. People can no longer afford to live in Wynberg and Claremont, so they are coming here, and looking for places they can afford."



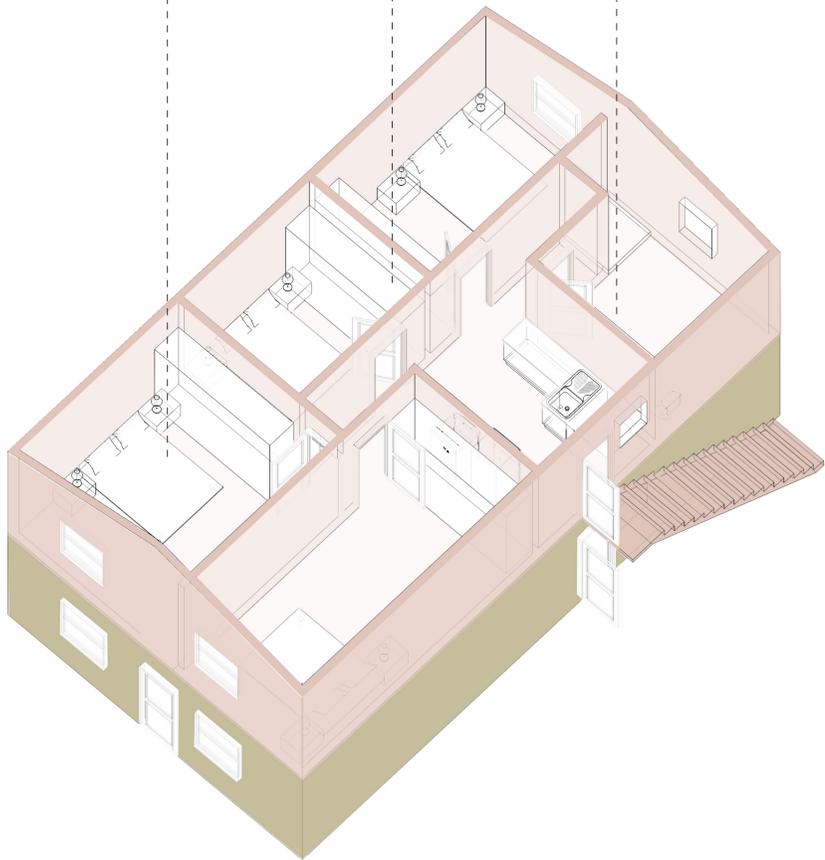
7 Bedrooms
3 rooms downstairs used for family purposes
4 rooms upstairs let out to generate income



R 1,000/room
even though the rental spaces differ slightly in size, they all pay the same monthly rent



1 Shared Bathroom
between the 4 rental spaces
with toilet and shower
geyer shared between the whole house



Extension Typology 1

Financed through material supply store lay-buy



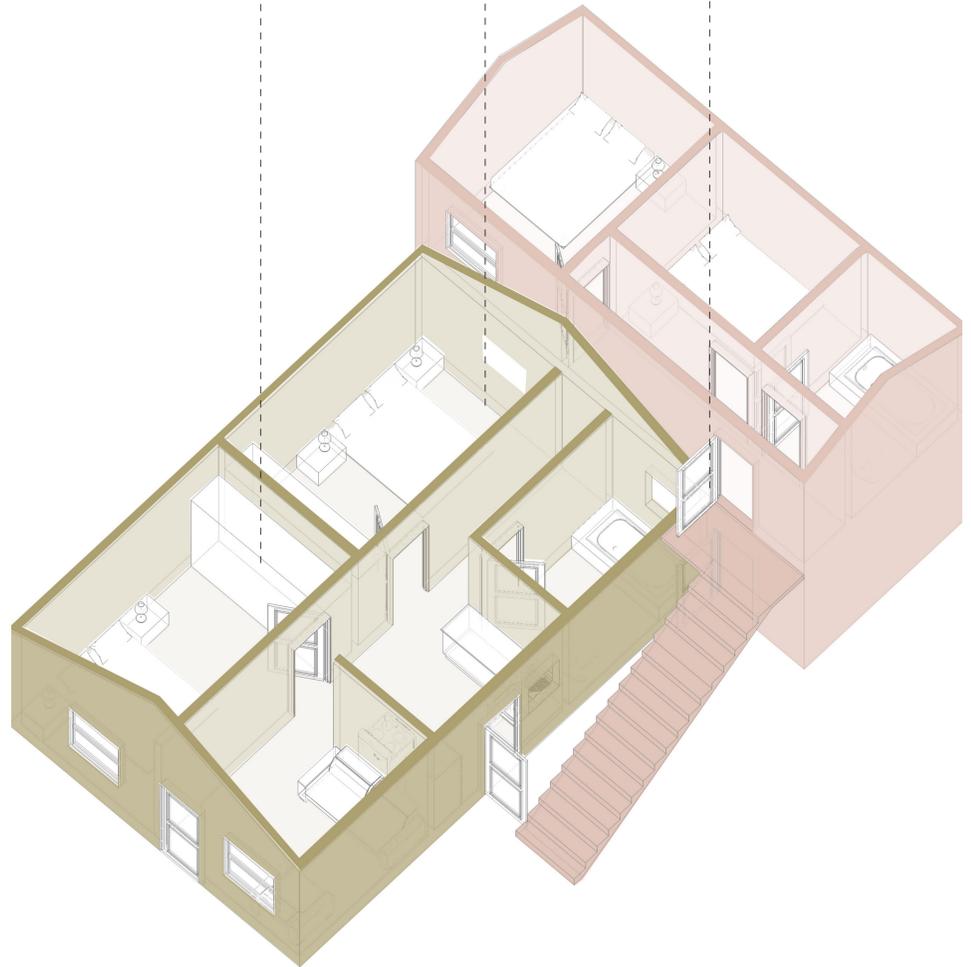
7 Bedrooms
3 rooms used for family purposes
4 rooms rent out to generate income



R 1,000/room
This figure is based on what other, similar spaces were being rented out for in the same area



2 Shared Bathrooms
2 rooms share a bathroom including a toilet and shower



Extension Typology 2

Financed incrementally through personal saving