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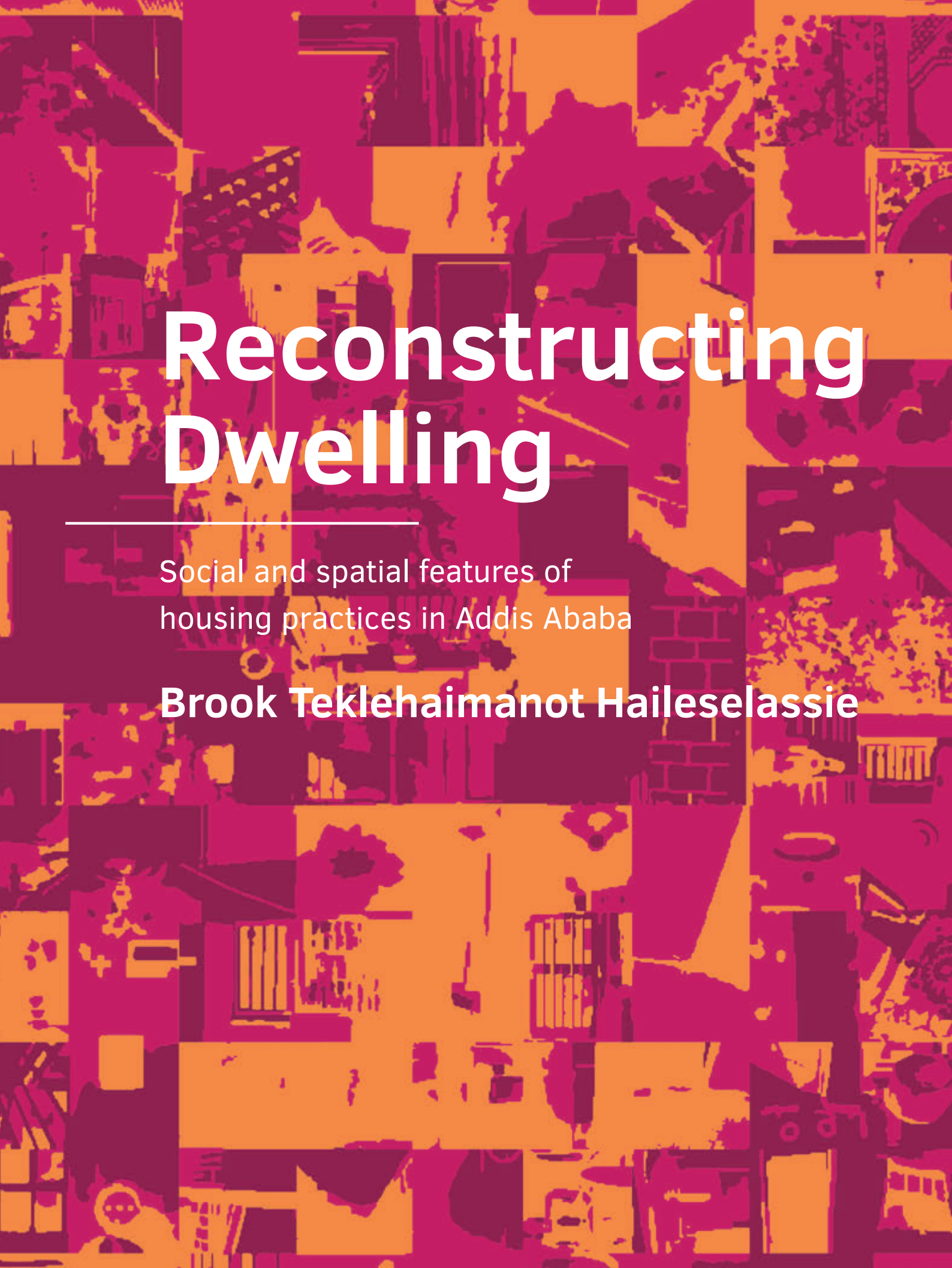

Reconstructing Dwelling

Social and spatial features of housing practices in Addis Ababa

Brook Teklehaimanot Haileselassie

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Reconstructing Dwelling

Social and spatial features of housing practices in Addis Ababa

Dissertation

for the purpose of obtaining the degree of doctor
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by the authority of the Rector Magnificus, prof.dr.ir. T.H.J.J. van der Hagen
chair of the Board for Doctorates
to be defended publicly on
Thursday 27 February 2025 at 10:00 o'clock

by

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In loving memory of
Teklehaimanot Haileselassie Gebreselassie
A selfless citizen and a caring father

Dedicated to
Meaza Hagos and Agazi Teklehaimanot

Preface

The journey of *Reconstructing Dwelling* traces its roots back to my time at the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development (EiABC). Although it was not explicitly conceived as a research topic at the time, it emerged from a broader "movement" focused on developing relevant and contextualised teaching methodologies as a bedrock to influence architectural practice. This movement was central to academic discourse within EiABC and can be traced to the curriculum revision efforts that began in 2005/2006 at the Building College, which later became EiABC.

When I joined the Building College as a junior academic staff member, efforts to revise the curriculum were already underway. These grassroots efforts for curricular transformation coincided with the Ethiopian government's push to strengthen Institutes of Technology (IoTs) under its Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I) initiated for implementation between 2010–15. This alignment brought generous government funding and increased support from initiatives like the Engineering Capacity Building Program (ECBP), sparking interest in the Building College and similar institutions throughout Ethiopia.

At the Building College, this momentum culminated in 2010 when the southern campus was rebranded as EiABC. Informal collaborations with Swiss institutions evolved into formal partnerships, most notably with ETH Zürich (the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology), resulting in major shifts within the institute. While these changes are open to both praise and critique, two significant developments stand out. First, new programs and teaching methods were introduced, fostering connections with international academic institutions and enabling cross-exchanges for faculty and students. Second, the government-mandated increase in student intake with 70% engineering and 30% humanities, brought both challenges and opportunities, prompting shifts in teaching approaches and faculty organization. Power structures were shaken, with younger faculty members assuming more prominent roles. For a brief period, there was a sense of autonomy in terms of both finances and teaching methods.

Animated debates arose regarding the modernist roots of the architectural curriculum and its relevance. These debates were central to the content of the curricular revisions, which introduced a more inquisitive approach to design. This approach emphasised a pragmatic outlook, encouraged questioning of traditional teaching methods, and strengthened the role of research in design education.

During this period, several design studios were initiated by my colleagues and me, many of which I believed sowed the seeds for *Reconstructing Dwelling*. For instance, the *Detail Design Studio* (2011) explored the design of the "Ethiopian Kitchen," examining how diverse food cultures and climatic zones in Ethiopia could inform culinary space design. The purpose was to teach design through spaces that are familiar to the students. In 2012, the SICU (Sustainable Incremental Construction Unit) studio investigated prefabricated affordable housing solutions that could be self-constructed, testing prototypes in real urban settings. *Void Addis* presented a counter-narrative to the city's urban renewal resettlement strategies, focusing on infill design strategies for inner-city development. The *Addis Ababa Sefers* studio (2015) critically analyzed Indigenous neighbourhoods to develop thoughtful design approaches. Meanwhile, protoLAB, a design prototyping lab hosting a prototyping studio, emphasised "craft" in architecture, integrating hands-on making and fabrication

into design education. These studios, each addressing unique aspects of architecture and design, had one thing in common. They explored design teaching from a local perspective while at the same time addressing contemporary discourse.

Another significant development at EiABC was the growing emphasis on research and publications that promoted local knowledge and architectural discourse. For example, *Building Ethiopia* (edited by Zegeye Cherenet and Helawi Sewnet) laid the foundation for further research and publication efforts. Similarly, *Making* aimed to enhance prototyping skills in design education. Meanwhile, *Detail Design* (co-authored by myself, Tibebu Daniel, and Micheal Bekele, unpublished) consolidated curriculum changes through student work into a local reference text that addressed design notions, climatic conditions, and crafts relevant to Ethiopia.

These initiatives, both successful and otherwise, influenced my thinking and served as a prologue to *Reconstructing Dwelling*. They represented a continuum of ideas that seamlessly aligned with the objectives of the Addis Ababa Living Lab (2ALL) project, initiated by the TU Delft in 2019. This project aimed to create resilient dwelling clusters for Urban Resettlement in Addis Ababa. It provided a unique opportunity to study the social and spatial patterns of inhabitation, aligning perfectly with my academic and intellectual pursuits.

Beyond contributing to the 2ALL project's goals, *Reconstructing Dwelling* is intended as a meaningful addition to the dwelling discourse in Addis Ababa, laying the groundwork for further exploration of the subject. On a broader scale, its impact lies in expanding the socio-spatial knowledge paradigm.

Acknowledgements

What would be a dissertation without acknowledgements? A dissertation represents years of effort during which one's intellectual journey intertwines —sometimes in harmony, sometimes in conflict—with career, social relationships, and family life. It becomes a chapter of life where research is deeply entangled with personal experience. I would like to frame this section not as a mere opportunity to pass gratitude but as an illustration of the research ecosystem that sustained and enriched my work. I believe the foundation of my research anchors on the people and intellectuals I had the privilege to engage with and learn from. And hence, I present the acknowledgement as a vital backstage, where the true work unfolded.

I have been fortunate throughout my life to be surrounded by remarkable people, many of whom have contributed to the development of my research. I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone, both named and unnamed, for their unwavering support.

Given the partly anthropological methodology I employed—one that required full participation from dwellers and access to deeply personal and sacred spaces—it would be remiss not to begin by acknowledging this profound privilege. I was granted the rare opportunity to delve into the lives and historical narratives of twenty-two households, who generously shared their spatial stories. Despite having neither the time nor the vested interest in my endless questions and inquiries, they made space for my research. While I would have loved to name each protagonist, I must respect their privacy. I remain deeply grateful for their collaboration, and I am forever indebted to their willingness to share their stories.

I would like to begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to my supervisory team: Dick van Gameren, Nelson Mota and Henk Jonkers, for their dedicated supervision and full support. Beyond his role as my intellectual promoter, Dick fostered a welcoming and supportive social environment that helped me navigate the challenges of my PhD journey. He provided a space where I could build confidence and courage, and his strategic guidance was instrumental in the successful completion of my manuscript. Nelson created an intellectual atmosphere where I was free to explore my research interests, offering exceptional guidance throughout the process. Henk ensured that I maintained scientific integrity and enriched my work with his insightful feedback. Above all, I am grateful to my supervisors for granting me the independence and freedom to think critically and creatively.

There were times of difficulty, such as in January 2021, when my research trajectory got challenged. I faced an emotional impasse as the crisis in Ethiopia and the ensuing ethnic cleansing and genocide in Tigray unfolded. During this grim period, as hundreds of thousands perished and starved, I wrestled with the relevance of my work, feeling acutely the dissonance between the harsh realities of the crisis and the intellectual bubble in which I was cocooned. In those moments, my supervisors offered me their full empathy and support—something rare at that time. Their belief in me and my work carried me through, and for that, I can only say a heartfelt "Thank You".

This work would not have been possible without Michael Bekele's invaluable contributions and involvement. I am deeply grateful for his tireless efforts in producing visuals and his comprehensive support across all aspects of my research, both intellectual and technical. During the challenging years of 2021–2022, when I was unable to operate in Ethiopia, Michael stepped in to support the fieldwork by joining the team, facilitating the remote fieldwork, and later managing our energetic team until the completion of the manuscript.

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The success of the ethnographic survey was made possible by the dedicated work of Yonathan Workneh, Hiruy Geletaw, Fanuel Muluneh, and Eyouel Kassahun. I would like to extend special recognition to Yonathan for his excellent management of the survey and for capturing extraordinary photographs. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Eyouel Lemma, Natnael Abebe, and Hailegebreal Bekele, who joined our fieldwork team at the later stages.

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Delft Global played a crucial role not only by funding part of the project but also by opening doors to a broader network of researchers and institutions. I view Delft Global not only as a scientific platform but also as a vibrant social hub where spontaneous and organic scientific exchanges flourish. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Claire Hallewas, Roel Kamerling, Lys-Anne Sirks, Rezi Moeling, and Sophie Oosteblos for welcoming me as a global fellow and for their ongoing support, which I greatly appreciate.

In Addis Ababa, I would like to extend my gratitude to the faculty members of my former chair, the Chair of Architecture and Design I, and the protoLAB at EiABC, for fostering years of intellectual stimulation and team spirit. I was fortunate to gather research materials from institutions such as the Building College Library (EiABC), the Ethiopian Studies Library (IES), the Addis Ababa City Library (where I was the last to access the archives before they were closed off to the public in 2019), and the archives of The Urban Center (Kebet eske Ketema), with special thanks to Mahder Gebremedhin. I also had the privilege of accessing the private archives of Techeste Ahderom and Wouhib Kebede, for which I am grateful.

My interactions, partly interviews and partly open-ended dialogues, helped me get into the depths of my research topic. I would like to mention my initial interactions in the early phases of my research with Abraham Workneh, Alula Pankhurst, Matheos Asfaw and Zegeye Cherenet. Alazar Assefa helped me explore the housing development models of the pre-condominium era and further establish contact with Amare Asgedom and Demelash Mengiste to understand the housing landscape of Addis Ababa in the 90s and early 2000s. I would like to mention Wouhib Kebede and Fasil Giorghis for their valuable input regarding the domestic spaces of early Addis Ababa.

Techeste Ahderom and Andreas Eshete have a special place in the formation of my manuscript. I held extensive discussions with Techeste and am one of the very few lucky ones to have had the chance to spend valuable time with him. Techeste is an unsung intellectual hero and a towering figure in key decisions that have formed modern-day Addis Ababa. Sadly, the mainstream urban and architectural historiography of Addis Ababa often overlooks figures like him.

Andreas, on the other hand, helped me sharpen my gaze on the historical layers of my topic and led me to places such as Enda Abba Gärima in Tigray. He gave me valuable insights into my inquiry. Andreas passed away on August 29th, 2024, thirteen days before I submitted my manuscript. He was keen to read and see the manuscript published, and it broke my heart that I could not do this in time. The late Andreas was perceptive and knowledgeable about the arts and spatial history of Addis Ababa.

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This work is dedicated to my family—Meaza Hagos and Agazi Teklehaimanot—whose unwavering support carried me through every challenge. Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to DestaAlem Haileselassie, who inspired and mentored me to become an architect and sparked my passion for research.

May God bless you all!

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Glossary

AAMPO	Acronym for the Addis Ababa Master Plan Office.
Birr	The Ethiopian monetary unit.
Chika	Translates to “mud” in Amharic and Tigrigna languages.
Ekub	(Modern) form of a credit union.
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front.
FHC	Federal Housing Corporation. Informally referred to as *Kiray Betoch* in Amharic.
Gasha	A local measurement unit. One *gasha* is equivalent to roughly 30 - 40 hectares.
Iddir	(Modern) voluntary welfare association based on kinship and spatial proximity.
Injera	Staple food of regions in northern Ethiopia made from the teff grain, a species that is native to Ethiopia. Injera is similar to the Indian “dosa” in appearance and preparation but thinner in structure.
kebele, Q’ebele	Popular term used to describe a cooperative urban neighbourhood association after the nationalization of all urban land and rentable dwellings in July 1975.
Mahber	Traditional religious, fraternal association (or sororal). Meaning extending to any kind of voluntary formal or informal association.
ORRAMP	Acronym for the Office for the Revision of Addis Ababa Master Plan.
Qot	loft or an attic space.
Salon	Living room (adopted from French).
Tella	Local beer from barley or other grains.
Woreda	Woreda is an administrative terminology that roughly translates to “district” but can also be a collection of *kebeles*.
Ziker	A feast in the Orthodox Christian tradition that commemorates significant occasions such as a birth, a death, or a particular miraculous act by a saint. On this day, a household invites relatives and neighbours to join in the observance and celebration.

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Summary

Addis Ababa is experiencing a high rate of urbanization coupled with a decades-old housing crisis. This study problematizes the current housing problem not only in the frame of housing shortage but also as a 'housing mismatch', with the underlying dwelling typologies rooted in modernist design ideals not responding to context. These dwelling solutions, as seen in the recent condominium projects, do not fulfil the social and spatial requirements of dwellers.[1] This problem calls for a thorough inquiry into tracing the roots of the 'housing mismatch'. Since dweller-initiated housing transformations are a common phenomenon in most housing conditions in Addis Ababa, the study proceeded to analyze these transformations to understand the housing mismatch in its qualitative and spatial aspects. One of the reasons for dweller-initiated transformations is to finetune living habitats to cultural parameters.[2] In line with this, transformations were observed during the test run of the fieldwork conducted on three households in 2020. Furthermore, the fieldwork revealed that dwellers used local conceptions of space such as the *gibi,* the *gwaro* and the *gwada* to explain the socio-spatial phenomena of transformations.

Based on this preliminary finding, the succeeding phase of research was conducted on Eighteen dwelling cases comprising nonplanned and planned settlements employing the method of Architectural Ethnography.[3] This methodology, involved interviews, photography, drawing, mapping and plan analysis, aimed at understanding dwelling patterns from the perspective of temporality — the dweller-initiated transformations through the life history of the dwelling. The transformations have been analysed in combination with the notions of the *gibi*, *gwaro* and *gwada* to understand the reasons behind transformations but also to theoretically frame the *gibi*, *gwaro* and *gwada* since these terminologies are nebulous, lacking critical framing in the architectural domain. The terminologies do not exist in the English lexicon of space but do have their parallels. The purpose of theoretically defining them then presents better tools for understanding the cultural proclivities in dwelling.

The bulk of literature available on African Urbanisation starts from "normative descriptions" of how cities ought to function.[4] Acknowledging the limitations of this perspective in underpinning alternative city-making processes, this research approaches the puzzle of reading and theorising habitats in the 'African' continent from an epistemological perspective. It engages with alternative epistemological frameworks, such as those proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, which emphasize the importance of unpacking situated knowledge through non-traditional methods and through acknowledging plural conceptions of knowledge formations.[5] An example is Nnamdi Elleh's *Oká*, which draws on alternative epistemes like oral history and performance.[6]

1 Sascha Delz, "Ethiopia's Low-Cost Housing Program – How Concepts of Individual Home-Ownership and Housing Blocks Still Walk Abroad" (No Cost Housing Conference, ETH Zürich, 2016), https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/handle/20.500.11850/127019; Yonas Alemayehu Soressa and Imam Mahmoud Hassen, "Experiences of the Poor in the Contemporary Urban Resettlement of Addis Ababa," in *The Transformation of Addis Ababa: A Multiform African City*, ed. Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu and Laura Stark (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 127–59.

2 Graham Tipple, *Extending Themselves: User Initiated Transformations of Government-Built Housing in Developing Countries*, 1 online resource (368 pages) vols. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/9781781386507.

3 See chapter 3.

4 Martin J Murray and Garth A Myers, "Introduction: Situating Contemporary Cities in Africa," in *Cities in Contemporary Africa.*, ed. Martin J Murray and Garth A Myers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 7.

5 See Chapter 2.

6 Elleh, "African Studies Keyword."

Additionally, the research draws from socio-spatial theory, such as the works of Rapoport, bringing culture into the discussion of built-form. It further anchors on Lefebvre's spatial practices that unpack the social and spatial patterns of people in the setting of the everyday.[7]

The research has identified correlations between dweller-initiated transformations and housing conditions in Addis Ababa's housing landscape. The need for outdoor habitable space that the *gibi* offers, the storage and seclusion purposes of the *gwaro* and the privacy notions embedded in the *gwada* are some of the important ones. The findings highlight the absence of *the gibi, gwaro* and *gwada* in the formal discourse and their strong presence in decisions of dweller-initiated transformations. The findings further highlight the importance of these local concepts in shaping the built environment and argue for their careful consideration in pedagogy, policy-making and architectural practice. The thesis ends by critically defining the *gibi*, *gwaro* and *gwada* and concludes by presenting them as crucial and situated socio-spatial conditions in dwelling discourse.

7 Le febvre.

Samenvatting

De stad Addis Abeba ondergaat een snelle verstedelijking die gekoppeld is aan een decennia oude woningcrisis. De voorliggende studie problematiseert het huidige woningbouw vraagstuk niet alleen vanuit het oogpunt van het woningtekort, maar ook als een woning 'mismatch' waarin de toegepaste woning typologieën geworteld in modernistische ontwerpidealen geen antwoord geven op de lokale condities. Deze woningbouw 'oplossingen', zoals te zien in de recente condominium projecten, weten niet de sociale en ruimtelijke behoeften van de bewoners te adresseren.[8] Dit probleem vraagt om een grondig onderzoek naar de wortels van deze woningbouw mismatch. Aangezien door de bewoners zelf geïnitieerde transformaties van hun woning in vrijwel alle vormen van woningbouw in Addis Abeba zeer frequent voorkomen, wil deze studie deze aanpassingen en transformaties analyseren om de woningbouw mismatch te begrijpen vanuit zowel kwantitatieve als kwalitatieve aspecten. Eén van de redenen voor ingrepen in de woning door de bewoners zelf is het willen afstemmen van de woning en woonomgeving op de culturele parameters van hun bestaan.[9]

Vanuit dit uitgangspunt werden gedurende de test periode van het veldwerk voor drie huishoudens de transformaties van woning en woonomgeving geobserveerd. Door het veldwerk kwam naar voren dat de bewoners plaatselijke ruimtelijke concepten als de *gibi*, de *gwaro* en de *gwada* gebruikten om de socio-ruimtelijke kenmerken van de transformaties uit te leggen.

Gebaseerd op deze eerste bevindingen werden in de vervolgfase van het onderzoek 18 verschillende woningen als casestudies in zowel informele als formeel geplande buurten geanalyseerd op basis van Architectonische Etnografie.[10] Deze methodologie, waar interviews, fotografie, cartografie, tekenen en plananalyse onderdeel van zijn, is er op gericht patronen van bewoning te begrijpen vanuit het perspectief van tijdelijkheid, de door de bewoners geïnitieerde veranderingen gedurende de levensloop van de woning. Deze veranderingen zijn geanalyseerd in samenhang met de begrippen *gidi, guaro* en *gwada*, ten eerste om de gerealiseerde transformaties te begrijpen, en ten tweede om een theoretisch kader voor deze begrippen op te stellen, aangezien zij tot nu toe vaag zijn gebleven en niet kritisch ingekaderd zijn in het domein van architectuur. De drie benoemde begrippen bestaan niet in de Engelse vocabulaire voor ruimte, maar kennen wel een parallelle terminologie. Het doel van een theoretische definiëring van de begrippen levert beter gereedschap op om de culturele eigenschappen en tendensen van bewoning te begrijpen.

Het merendeel van de literatuur over Afrikaanse verstedelijking vangt aan met 'normatieve beschrijvingen' hoe steden zouden moeten functioneren.[11] Door de beperkingen van dit perspectief te erkennen en alternatieve processen van stadsvorming naar voren te brengen benadert dit onderzoek het vraagstuk van de lezing en theorievorming van habitat op het Afrikaanse continent vanuit een epistemologisch perspectief. Het onderzoek verbindt zich met alternatieve

8 Sascha Delz, "Ethiopia's Low-Cost Housing Program – How Concepts of Individual Home-Ownership and Housing Blocks Still Walk Abroad" (No Cost Housing Conference, ETH Zürich, 2016), https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/handle/20.500.11850/127019.

9 Graham Tipple, *Extending Themselves: User Initiated Transformations of Government-Built Housing in Developing Countries*, 1 online resource (368 pages) vols. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/9781781386507.

10 Zie hoofdstuk 3

11 Martin J Murray and Garth A Myers, "Introduction: Situating Contemporary Cities in Africa," in *Cities in Contemporary Africa.*, ed. Martin J Murray and Garth A Myers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 7.

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epistemologische kaders, zoals voorgesteld door Boaventura de Sousa Santos, waarin het belang wordt benadrukt van het blootleggen van lokaal gewortelde kennis met behulp van niet-traditionele methoden en door het erkennen van meervoudige concepties van kennisvorming.[12]

Een voorbeeld is Nnamdi Elleh's *Oká*, dat zich baseert op alternatieve kennisbegrippen als mondelinge verhalen en optredens.[13] Daarnaast maakt het onderzoek gebruik van socio-ruimtelijke theorie om, zoals in het werk van Amos Rapaport, culturele aspecten te betrekken in de discussie over dat wat gebouwd is. Het is verder gebaseerd op de ruimtelijke praktijken volgens Henri Lefebvre waarin de sociale en ruimtelijke patronen van het alledaagse leven worden blootgelegd.[14]

Het onderzoek heeft de relaties geïdentificeerd tussen de door de bewoners geïnitieerde transformaties en de huisvestingscondities in het woninglandschap van Addis Abeba.

De behoefte aan bewoonbare buitenruimte die de *gibi* biedt, de opslag- en afsluitbaarheidsfunctie van de *gwaro* en de idee van privacy ingebed in de *gwada* zijn hierbij van bepalend belang. De onderzoeksresultaten benadrukken de afwezigheid van de *gibi, gwaro* en de *gwada* in het formele discours en de tegelijkertijd sterke aanwezigheid in de besluitvorming van de door de bewoners geïnitieerde transformaties. De bevindingen laten verder het belang van deze locale concepten zien in de formatie van de gebouwde omgeving en pleiten voor een zorgvuldige overweging ervan in onderwijs, beleidsvorming en in de architectonische praktijk. Het proefschrift sluit af met een kritische definiëring van de *gibi, gwaro* en de *gwada* en presenteert de drie begrippen als cruciale, lokaal gesitueerde socio-ruimtelijke modaliteiten in het debat over wonen en bouwen.

12 Zie hoofdstuk 2

13 Nnamdi Elleh, "African Studies Keyword: Okà," *African Studies Review* 65, no. 3 (September 2022): 717–42, https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2022.87.

14 Henri Le febvre, in *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 30–33.

Introduction

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1 The Dwelling Landscape of Addis Ababa

1.1 Dwelling Patterns and Addis Ababa's Urbanization

Urban civilisations like the Kingdom of Axum have existed around present-day Ethiopia since the 1st century AD.[15] The nature of capital cities changed after Axum's decline in the 12th century. The capital cities can be characterised as being nomadic while qualifying for some fundamental urban traits. Ronald Horvath, in his article, *The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia,* describes it as follows:

> Capitals in Historic Ethiopia would appear to have been a kind of quasi-city, for, on one hand, these settlements had many of the characteristics that are normally thought to be urban, i.e. the size and density of the population, the predominance of non-agrarian functions, or even the presence of the literati, while, on the other hand, these capitals were not permanent.[16]

The identified urban centres after the decline of Axum were explained by historians as "roving" or "wandering capitals".[17] Local rivalries and rampant wars were cited as the main reasons for impermanence and discontinuity. They were discontinuous in a way that there was no continuously inhabited urban area seasoned enough with a critical mass sufficient to create a significant urban centre or culture.[18]

Hovarth describes the settlement pattern as typically consisting of tents, with the Royal Quarter forming the core of the capital. Within this quarter, special-purpose tents included a church, a market, a justice hall, and a prison, all enclosed by a perimeter wall approximately 1.6 kilometers long and featuring up to twelve entrance gates.[19] While Hovarth mentions that the dwellings were mainly composed of tents and grass huts, he provides limited details on the types of dwellings in these capitals. However, he does describe the king's residence, which was often a prominent white tent. In some cases, the kings quarters were constructed from more permanent materials such as stone and mud.[20]

15 The name 'Ethiopia' (sometimes also referred to as Abyssinia) is used here to refer to the Christian kingdom of present-day northern Ethiopia in the current regions of Tigray northern Amhara and Eritrea.

16 Ronald J. Horvath, "The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia," *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 2 (1969): 205–19, https://www.jstor.org/stable/179511.

17 Horvath.

18 Girma Kebede and Mary Jacob, "Urban Growth and the Housing Problem in Ethiopia," *Cities* 2, no. 3 (August 1, 1985): 230–42, https://doi.org/10.1016/0264-2751(85)90034-4.

19 Horvath, "The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia."

20 Horvath.

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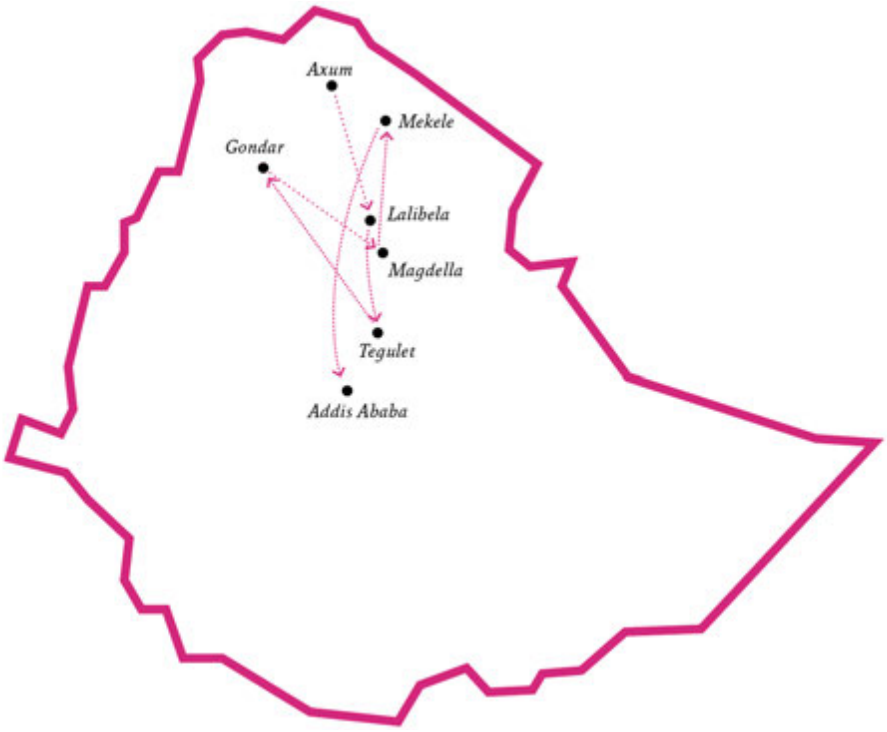

FIG. 1.1 Map of wandering capitals by Hovarth.

1.1.1 The Formation of Sefers; A Dwelling footprint in early Addis Ababa

Echoing the era of wandering capitals, Addis Ababa started as a temporary outpost of Entoto, the earlier settlement in the Yeka Hills. Over time, the city's fate shifted from that of a temporary camp to a permanent settlement. Garretson describes the lack of an initial plan and the unexpected transition into permanence as a "unique creation" in Ethiopia.[21] Addis Ababa's population had exploded after the battle of Adwa in 1896.[22] While the discovery of hot springs and a more favourable climate in the plains of Addis Ababa was the immediate cause, other key factors also played a decisive role in solidifying its permanence. One factor was the issuing of title deeds in 1907 gave assurance to property owners and encouraged building.[23] The other was Addis Ababa's link with Djibouti via the Ethio Djibouti railroad in 1917, establishing a critical channel with the rest of the world.

The typical housing figure in the early days of the city was the *tukul*, circular wattle and daub dwelling. It gradually transformed into rectangular houses following the formal adaptations of the houses of Greek and Armenian traders who settled in Addis Ababa. An intermediary form, the oval typology, had already developed due to cultural exchanges and the evolving lifestyle of the nobility.[24] According to Amare and Fasil, the evolution began in Ankober, Menelik's court town before settling in Entoto, where it also existed as a palace.[25]

21 Peter P. Garretson, *A History of Addis Ababa from Its Foundation in 1886 to 1910* (Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000).
22 Richard Pankhurst, "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa," *The Journal of African History* 2, no. 1 (January 1961): 103–17, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700002176.
23 See Milena Batistoni and Gian Paolo Chiari, *Old Tracks in the New Flower. A Historical Guide to Addis Ababa* (Addis Ababa: Arada Books, 2004), 16.
24 Fasil Giorghis and Denis Gérard, *The City and It's Architectural Heritage, Addis Ababa 1886 - 1941* (Shama Books, 2007).
25 See Amare Dawit and Fasil Giorghis, "Early Architectural Development in Addis Ababa," in *Proceedings of The International Symposium on The Centenary of Addis Ababa*, ed. Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa, 1987), 179.

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A



B

FIG. 1.2 Exterior (A) and Interior (B) of the oval-shaped Menelik's palace in Entoto designed by the Swiss engineer Alfred Ilg.

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Architectural Historians agree that this shift in typology was an important factor leading to the overall change of landscape in the city.[26] Housing during this period can be described as rural in characteristics but within a semi-urban setting that was urbanizing.[27] A traveller in 1934, just before the Italian occupation, describes the city as being in between rural and urban— "It is neither a town nor country, but something between the two; yet it has a population nearing a hundred thousand."[28] It was common to keep cattle, sheep and chickens to complement incoming food supplies from the countryside.[29]

The traditional way of building temporary houses using *chika* (mud) gradually gave way to more permanent construction systems. Cultural exchanges with Armenian, Greek, and Indo-Muslim communities who came to settle in Addis Ababa after the battle of Adwa in 1989 also contributed to the local way of building construction which in turn resulted in hybrid typological formations. The resulting architecture was coined the "Addis Ababa Style" by Bernard Lindahl, a Swedish Architect and educator.[30]

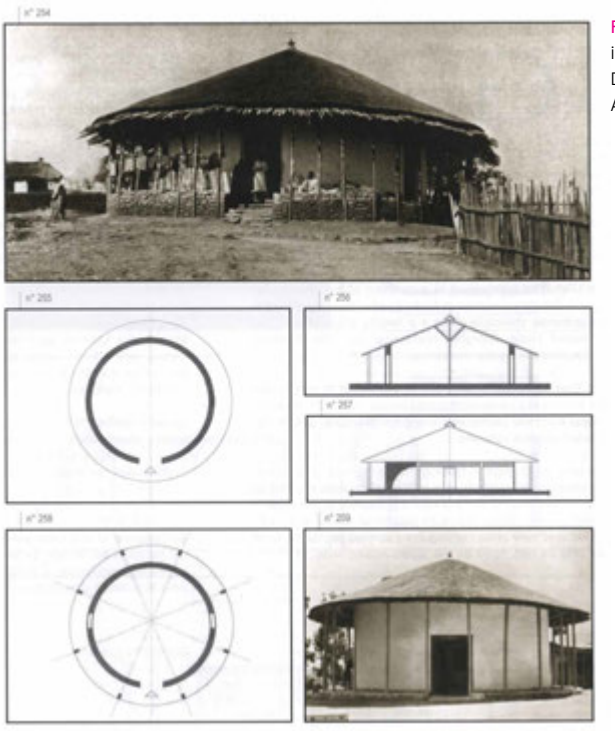

FIG. 1.3 The traditional tukul at the top with an improved model below. Source: Fasil Giorghis & Denis Gérard, "The City and its Cultural Heritage – Addis Ababa", Shama books 2019.

26 Batistoni and Chiari, *Old Tracks in the New Flower. A Historical Guide to Addis Ababa.*
27 See Giorghis and Gérard, *The City and Its Architectural Heritage, Addis Ababa 1886 - 1941*, 122.
28 See Eric Virgin, *The Abyssinia I Knew*, trans. Naomi Walford (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1936), 26.
29 Pankhurst, "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa."
30 See Bernhard Lindahl, *Architectural History of Ethiopia in Pictures* (Addis Ababa: Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology, 1970), 99.

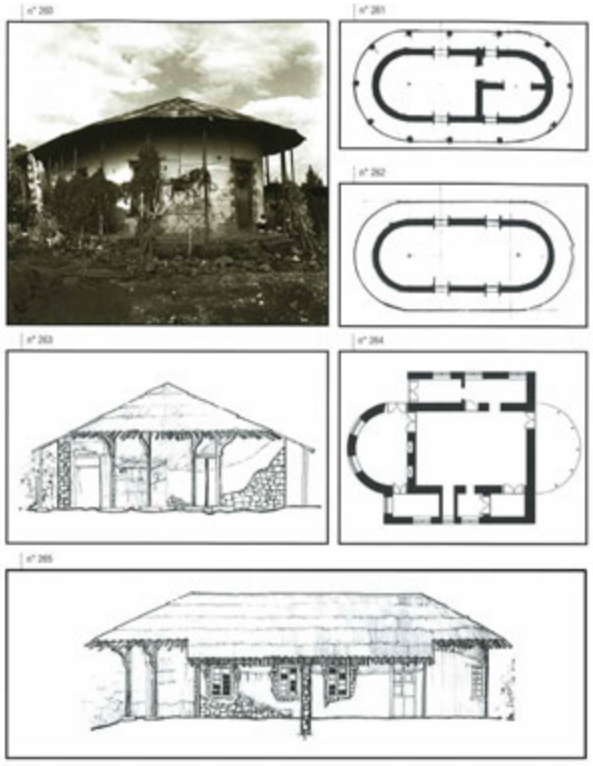

FIG. 1.4 The oval variant of the tukul in early Addis Ababa. Source: Fasil Giorghis & Denis Gérard, "The City and its Cultural Heritage – Addis Ababa", Shama books 2019.

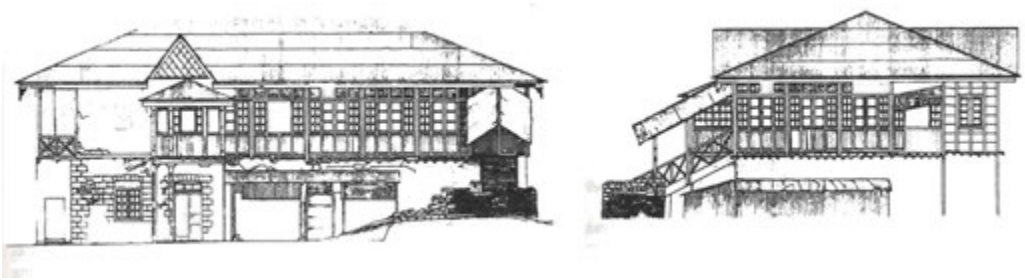

FIG. 1.5 Hybrid architecture of the so-called "Addis Ababa Style" with Armenian, Greek and Indian influences. Source: D Patassini and C Diamantini, 1996, Urban Ethiopia. Evidences of the 1980s , Iuav, Venice and drawn by Mahari Tecle.

Dwellings in early Addis Ababa followed the structure of the *sefer*, organically situated around the nucleus; The *Gibi* where the king resided. *Sefer* translates to mean a "camp" where the nobility and dignitaries settled around the emperor.[31] These dignitaries also followed a pattern mirroring the royal camp.[32] This was in line with the ages-old settlement tradition in the "wandering capitals" era. The early *sefer* settlements and new community-based sefers comprising populations from different corners of the country laid out the very base of the socio-spatial pattern at the urban scale. The *sefer* played an important role in bringing people from various social strata into adjacency and shaped "new ways of living".[33]

31 Bahru Zewde, "Early Safars of Addis Ababa: Patterns of Evolution.," in *Proceedings of The International Symposium on The Centenary of Addis Ababa*, ed. Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa, 1987), 43–56.

32 Zewde.

33 See Giorghis and Gérard, *The City and Its Architectural Heritage, Addis Ababa 1886 - 1941*, 41.

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To understand the *sefer*, it is important to analyse Mekelle, the capital city from 1871-1889 before Addis Ababa as a comparative urban tissue. Emperor Yohannes (1837 – 1889), the then emperor, set out to build a palace in Mekelle, where his subjects settled around shaping the urban tissue of Mekelle in the 1880s.[34] Although the general settlement pattern was of the *sefer*, individual dwelling patterns differed.[35] While the scholarly literature on the former capital is limited, it can be established that the *sefer* comes from a rooted and pre-established northern Ethiopian tradition of settlement that predated Addis Ababa. The significance of the *sefer* in Addis Ababa is much more evident when compared with Mekelle or even Gondar, which has been an urban centre for more than 170 years, as the city entertained a much more diverse population both from within the country and abroad. The few images depicting early dwellings in Addis Ababa and the chronicles of travellers suggest that the *sefer* was the predominant settlement pattern in early Addis Ababa. It was hence the main blueprint for structuring dwellings, where dwellings were organically conceived in a rural sense as islands within defined outdoor enclosures and without streets. These enclosures assisted in keeping the rural traditions of holding farm animals. Toilets and kitchen facilities did not exist even within the homestead of the nobility suggesting that the outside enclosure compensated for this absence.

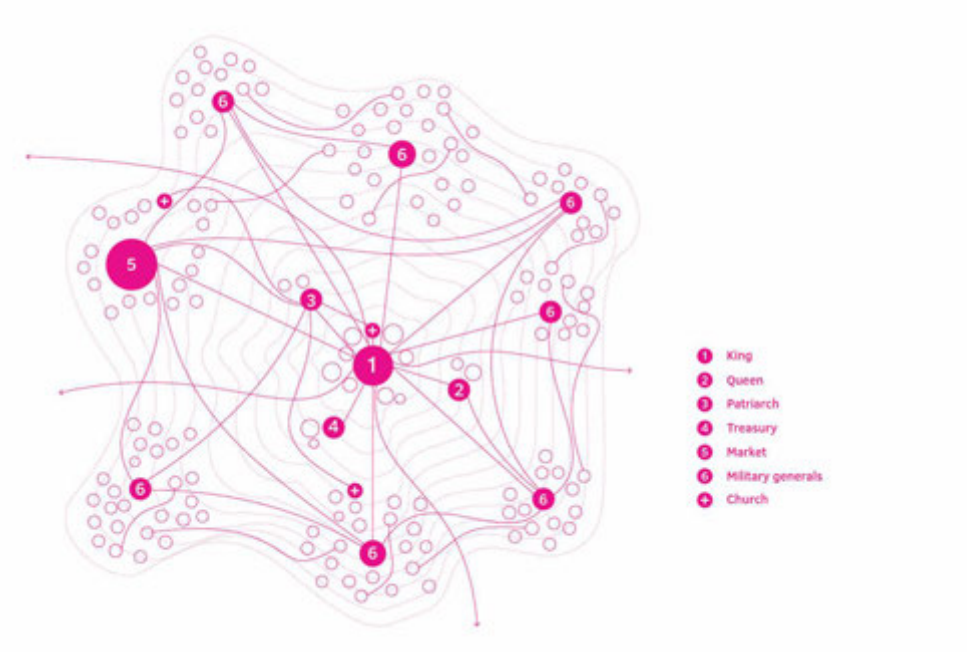

FIG. 1.6 Abstract diagram of sefer settlement.

34 Rumi Okazaki, "A STUDY ON THE FORMATION OF AN IMPERIAL CITY IN TIGRAY, ETHIOPIA, AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY," *Journal of Architecture and Planning (Transactions of AIJ)* 79 (August 30, 2014): 1753–59, https://doi.org/10.3130/aija.79.1753.

35 See Nobuhiro Shimizu et al., "Fundamentals of Hidmo in Lnderta: A Traditional House Type in Tigray Region, Ethiopia," *Nilo-Ethiopian Studies*, no. 24 (2019): 17–30, https://www.janestudies.org/ on the hidmo dwelling type in Mekelle.

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1.1.2 Epochs of dwelling: From the feudal to the post-communist

Political ideologies and forms of government spanning from the feudal days to the post-1991 period of post-communism instituted forms of tenure, housing policies, master planning projects and other decrees that generated new dwelling patterns and influenced existing ones. I have categorized five different epochs of government below and will discuss them vis a vis their influence on dwelling.

Dwelling during the early feudal period (1887-1936)

The emperor, being the sole owner of land during the feudal period, gave land entitlements to his subjects and the nobility based on their social status and loyalty to him. Except for the residences of the nobility, the type of housing for the masses was still predominantly rural, settling around the residences of the nobility or military generals. Addis Ababa essentially belonged to Thirty-one nobles who leased their land to their respective followers for a maximum of 10 years.[36] Except for a few important government buildings, most of the structures in the city were shacks and other forms of temporary housing with mud and wooden construction that mushroomed in the city as the city started to become more permanent. There was no form of state-sponsored or public housing in this period. According to Richard Pankhurst, Addis Ababa lacked a formal municipal institution, and the city lacked urban characteristics. Its formation was nevertheless significant in establishing the foundation for modern-day Ethiopia.[37] This period continued until the death of Emperor Menelik in 1913 continuing to the early days of Emperor Haileselassie.[38]

Except for recounts of early travellers, not much has been documented about dwelling characteristics during this period. In contrast, dwellings that belonged to the nobility have been documented since they survived through the ages. The Residences of the *Rãs (head of an army)*, *Dejãzmach (general of the king's gate)* and *Fitãwrãri (general of the vanguard)* are usually large and elaborate residences built with stone, mud or brick. They had several outhouses for the entourage arranged around the house in the form of a camp. The maids, blacksmiths, craftspeople, and stable guys occupied the outhouses.[39] The 'service quarter', an outhouse typology that persists in Addis Ababa, can be seen as the modern-day counterpart.[40]

36 Tesfay Beza, "Addis Ababa Master Plan: Historical Development of Addis Ababa" (Unpublished, 1987), Addis Ababa City Administration Integrated Land Information Center.

37 Pankhurst, "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa."

38 Ras Tafari was crowned as the Emperor of Ethiopia by the name Haileselassie in November 1930

39 Interview with Andreas Eshete conducted in May 2023, where he primarily discussed the residence of Fitawrari Tafesse as an example and mentioned the presence of outhouses and camps within noble estates. Unlike the main houses, these additional structures have largely been overlooked in heritage publications about Addis Ababa.

40 The 'Service Quarter' existed as a pattern but was more formalized during the Derg Period.

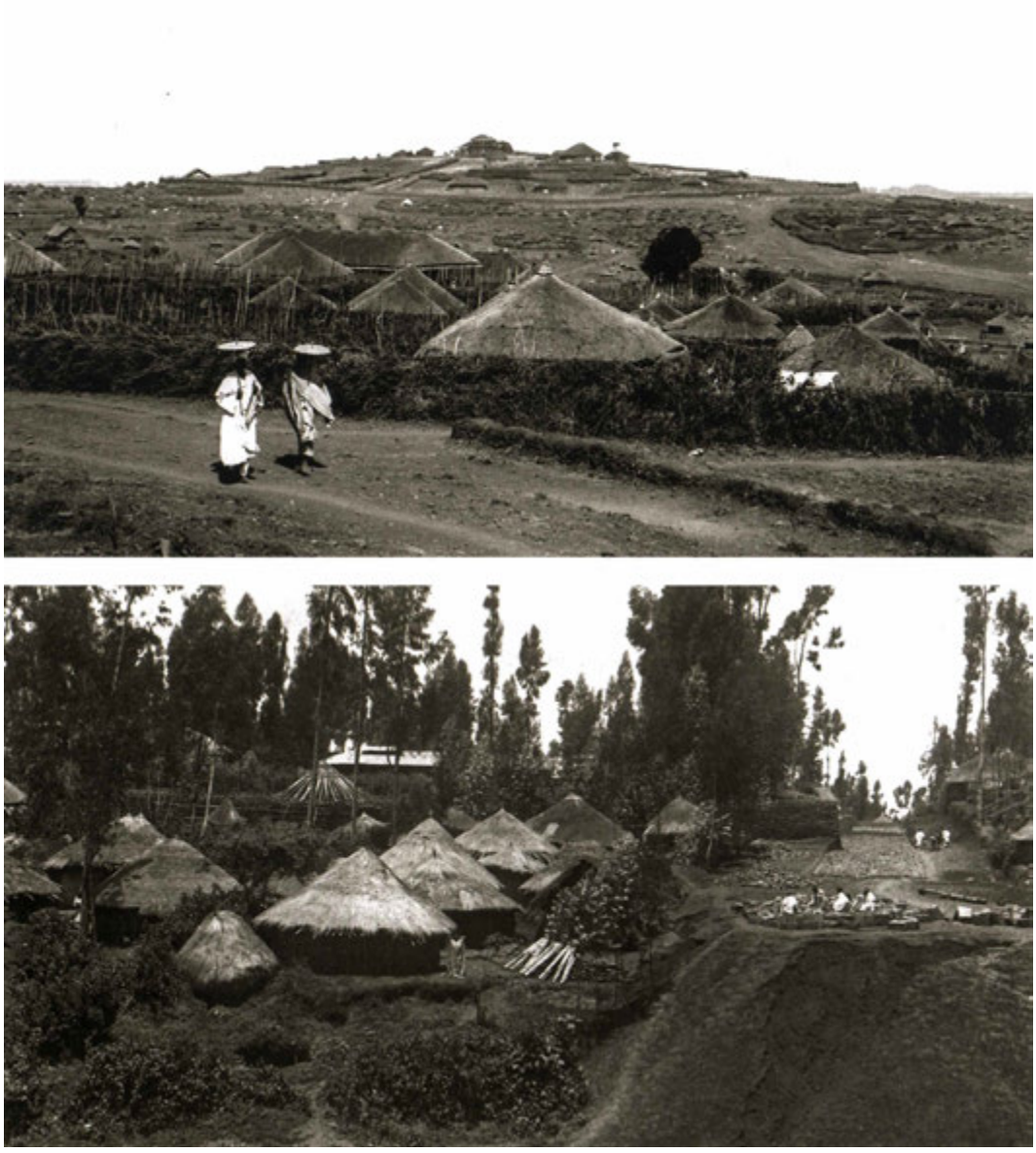

FIG. 1.7 Early housing settlements in Addis Ababa. Source: Fasil Giorghis & Denis Gérard, "The City and its Cultural Heritage – Addis Ababa", Shama books 2019.

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Dwelling during the Italian occupation period (1936-1941)

The feudal period of Emperor Haileselassie was interrupted from 1936 – 1941 because of the Italian occupation. Though insignificant in terms of housing figures, the Italian planning propagated racial segregation. The area on the left of Addis Ababa was designated to the 'natives' and the area on the right to the colonists with a buffer zone and colonial planning in the middle.[41] Housing for the natives was planned according to the cartesian grid, in contradiction to the Indigenous pattern of the *sefer*.[42] "Model huts" that were constructed in the city quarter designated for natives were unaffordable to the large majority of residents.[43] The colonial interest in the *tukuls* was not intended for documentation or improvement of the *tukul* but was more a drive to create new settlements for the *askaris*.[44] In the Italian part, Italian institutions planned and partially executed housing projects like *Casa Popolare* and *Casa Inchis* for civilian Italians and Italian military officers respectively. Very few housing projects were realized in this period and it can be concluded that housing for the majority of Addis Ababa dwellers was not the main Agenda of the time.

However, despite their short-lived five-year occupation period, the Italians played a pivotal role in promoting urbanization throughout the country, especially within the regional towns with Italian presence. This was also true in the case of Addis Ababa.[45] The construction of roads in Addis Ababa "normalized" and highlighted the importance of street-facing dwelling units for the first time as it was customary before that to situate dwellings further away from streets.[46]

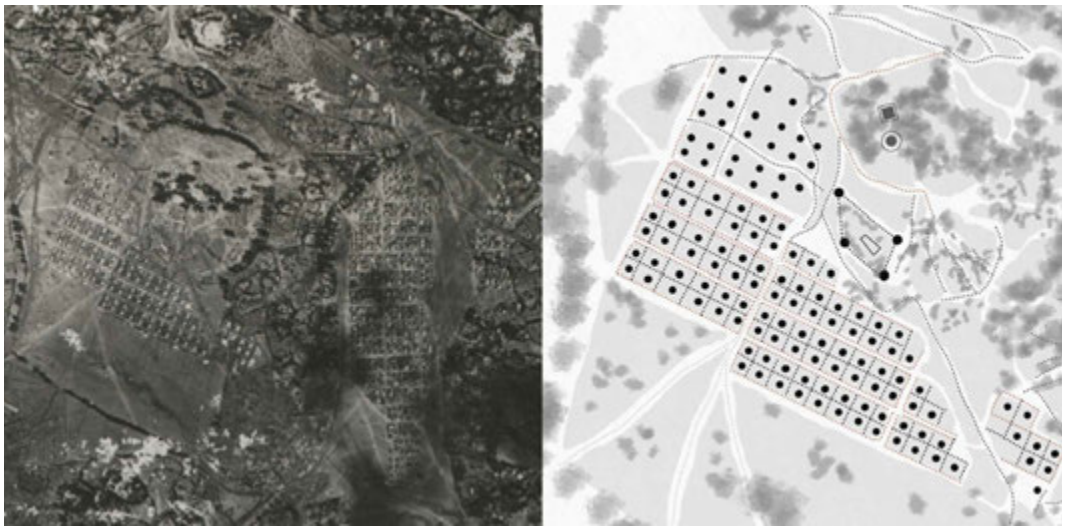

FIG. 1.8 Satellite image and a redrawn pattern showing a settlement of "model-huts" in Addis Ababa. See the larger version of these images on the Addendum on page CCCXXVIII

41 See Techeste Ahderom, "Basic Planning Principles and Objectives Taken in the Preparation of the Addis Ababa Master Plan, Past & Present.," in *Proceedings of The International Symposium on The Centenary of Addis Ababa*, ed. Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa, 1987), 251–52.

42 See Giorghis and Gérard, *The City and Its Architectural Heritage, Addis Ababa 1886 - 1941*, 148.

43 Giorghis and Gérard, *The City and Its Architectural Heritage, Addis Ababa 1886 - 1941*.

44 See Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism*, Architext Series (London: Routledge, 2007), 134.

45 Getahun Benti, *Urban Growth in Ethiopia, 1887-1974 : From the Foundation of Finfinnee to the Demise of the First Imperial Era* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017).

46 Interview with Prof. Andreas Eshete. Prof. Andreas Eshete narrates how dwellings and institutions like the church had to deal with the emergence of streets in the city during the colonial period.

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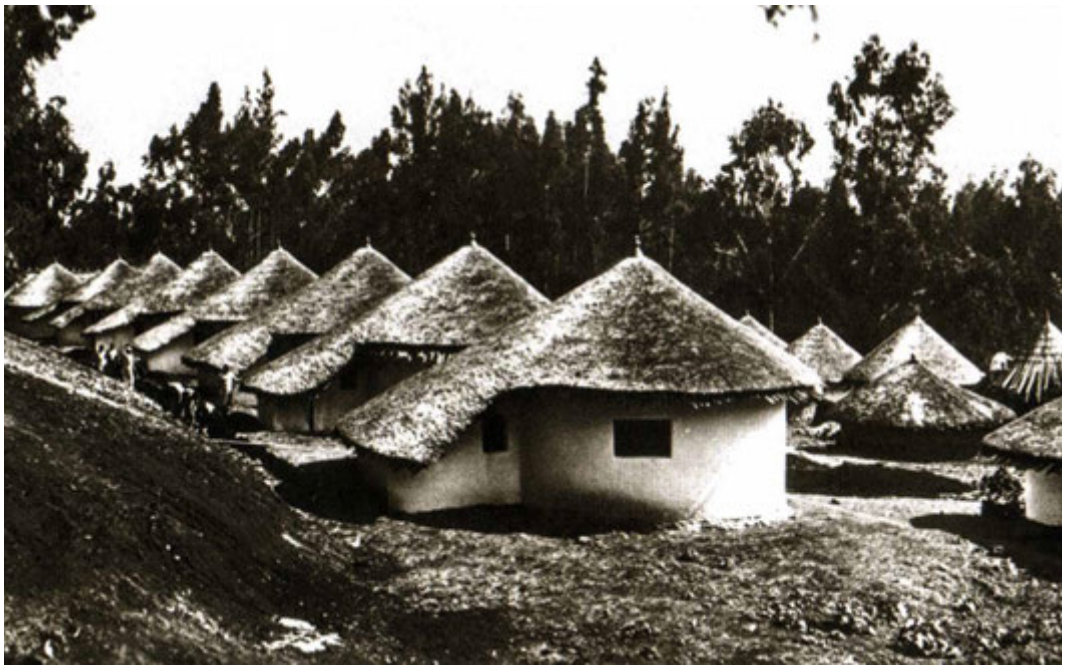

FIG. 1.9 'modernized' version of tukuls during the Italian occupation period. Source: Fasil Giorghis & Denis Gérard, "The City and its Cultural Heritage – Addis Ababa", Shama books 2019.

Dwelling during the late feudal period (1941-1974)

The late feudal period fully pertains to the reign of the late Emperor Haileselassie until he was dethroned in 1974. The feudal structure inherited from Emperor Menelik was being improved in terms of setting up a modern administrative structure. The mode of land ownership did not change albeit with a developed municipal infrastructure compared with the days of Menelik. According to Kebede and Jacob, a survey from 1966 indicated that 5 percent of Addis Ababa's population owned 95 percent of the city's land that is privately owned[47]. Much of the urban population was dependent on the goodwill of very few landlords that monopolized land ownership, and the public sector was not significantly involved in the provision of housing in this period[48]. The nobility, although able to afford modern housing for themselves, did not indulge in building modern houses till late in the 60s.[49]

47 Kebede and Jacob, "Urban Growth and the Housing Problem in Ethiopia."

48 Kebede and Jacob.

49 According to Techeste Ahderom, In the early days of Haileselassie and much until the early 1960s, it was an unwritten law that the nobles and affluent traders did not build modern residences with materials such as brick and stone so as not to "compete" with the emperor which changed later in the 1960s and after the formation of the OAU and more international presence in the city.

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Nevertheless, there were some nonaligned trials like the **Etege Mesk low-cost housing project**, the **Kolfe Low Income Housing project**, and the **Bole Homes** mortgage housing project. Etege Mesk, the first sites and services scheme was designed by Uno Winblad, a Swedish national who was a faculty member at the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology.[50] According to Techeste Ahderom, Etege Mesk was a very small intervention but an important one because it was realized within a dense inner-city scheme and Winblad experimented on the smokeless kitchen and toilet facilities.[51]

The Kolfe Low Income Housing Project introduced aided self-help housing as a strategy and the Hollow Concrete Block (HCB) as a building material. In some of the houses, filled HCB was used as a foundation since it was a light building. It was an experiment to see what an isolated and plot-based low-income typology could look like.[52]

The Bole Homes, 'The Continental Homes Inc Developers', on the other hand, introduced mortgage-based modern housing for the lower middle income. A higher-income version of this project had already been built in the Old Airport area. Later at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 70s, private landowners and the nobility were involved in developing apartments for middle and high-income groups by hiring foreign architects.

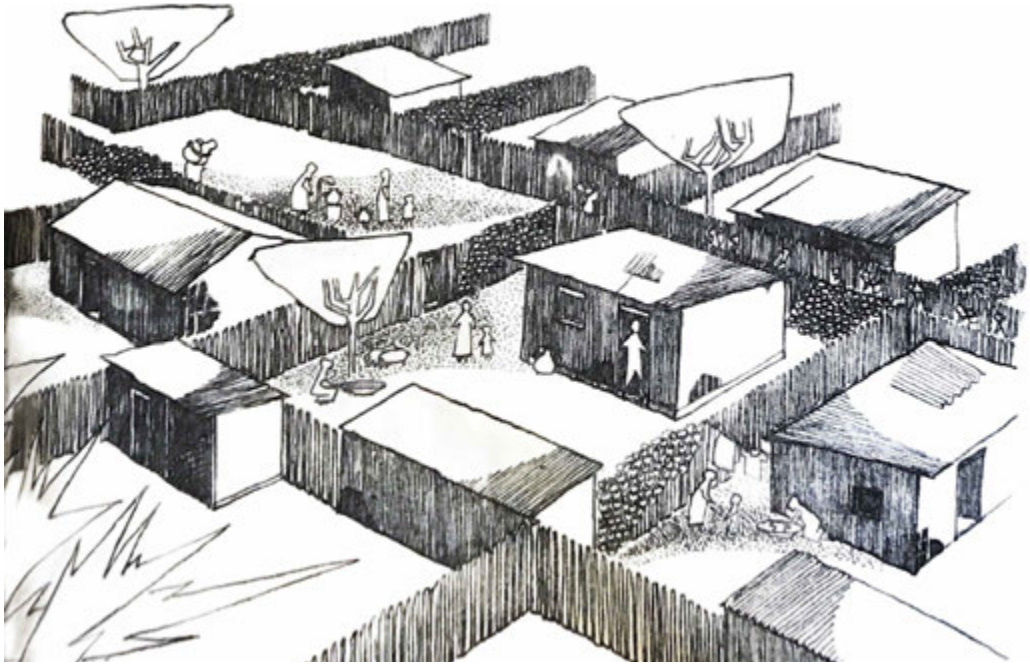

FIG. 1.10 Kolfe Low-Cost Housing Pilot Project visualization, 1950s. (See Addendum on page CCCXXXII)

50 See Uno Winblad, "Basic Urbanization in Africa - A Discussion of Costs and Standards" (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 1972), 28, https://downloads.unido.org/ot/46/87/4687884/00001-10000_03382.pdf on the Etege Mesk Housing Scheme with the core house including an improved kitchen adopted from India and a pit latrine. The project was experimental and did not get replicated.

51 Interview with Techeste Ahderom on July 31, 2019. Techeste worked as an assistant of Uno Winblad in the Etege Mesk Housing project.

52 Interview with Techeste Ahderom on December 17, 2022

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FIG. 1.11 Apartment building designs owned by the nobility. (See Addendum on page CCCXXXIV)



FIG. 1.12 Bole Homes advertising brochure showing the neighbourhood layout, circa 1955. (See the details of Bole Homes in the Addendum after Page CCCXXXV)

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The Communist (Derg) period (1974-1991)

This period, also popularly referred to as the *Derg* period, played a pivotal role in changing the landscape of housing due to the radical change in the tenurial policy. There was a major shift to the left in political Ideology. All land that previously used to be owned by the feudal landowners, as well as private owners, was nationalized.[53] Properties were expropriated from Individuals owning more than one. Apartment building owners had to give up all dwelling units except one, and that would only be availed to them if they didn't own any other additional property or a dwelling unit in the city. Expropriated houses in Addis Ababa were redistributed to dwellers who previously used to rent from private landlords. A new administration structure, the Kebele (urban dwellers association), the smallest scale administrative unit, was established. One of the tasks of the kebele was to administer housing less than 100birr rent. Besides the kebele, another institution, the Addis Ababa Rental Housing Agency (AARHA)[54], was administering dwelling units with a monthly rent of above 100 birrs.[55]

The government devised four schemes to alleviate housing problems. The first scheme was to encourage individuals to build their own homes (middle and high-income). The second was to organize land and loans so that communities could organize self-help housing. The third was a cooperative housing scheme and the fourth was direct government participation in building low-income housing and apartments[56]. All the above schemes could not solve the housing shortage of the period because the demand was always ahead of the supply. Moreover, the scheme benefitted the minorities who had the means to build their own houses while majorities had to find accommodation within the kebele housing setup which had challenges and competition of its own.[57] As it was difficult to administer kebele housing, a lot of informal horizontal growth happened on the parcelled plots as a natural response to the grave housing shortage[58]. These kebele houses, as housing figures, would become the dominant dwelling figure of the inner city sefers of Addis Ababa in the years to come.

Besides institutions such as the Housing and Savings Bank (HSB), the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH)was one of the key institutions set up during this period decreed to administer construction and provide housing. MUDH also produced designs for dwelling typologies and handed them out for free:

53 "Proclamation to provide for government ownership of urban lands and extra urban houses," Pub. L. No. 47/1975 (1975).
54 The AARHA Has been changing names several times during the past. It Is Currently Known as the Federal Housing Agency (FHC)
55 BIRR is the Ethiopian currency.
56 Kebede and Jacob, "Urban Growth and the Housing Problem in Ethiopia."
57 Goitom Abraha, "An Assessment of Urban Development Housing Policy and Residential Real Estate Development in Addis Ababa: Opportunities and Challenges" (Thesis, Addis Ababa University, 2012), http://etd.aau.edu.et/handle/123456789/11672.
58 Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu et al., "New Perspectives on Urban Transformation in Addis Ababa," 2018, 1–20.

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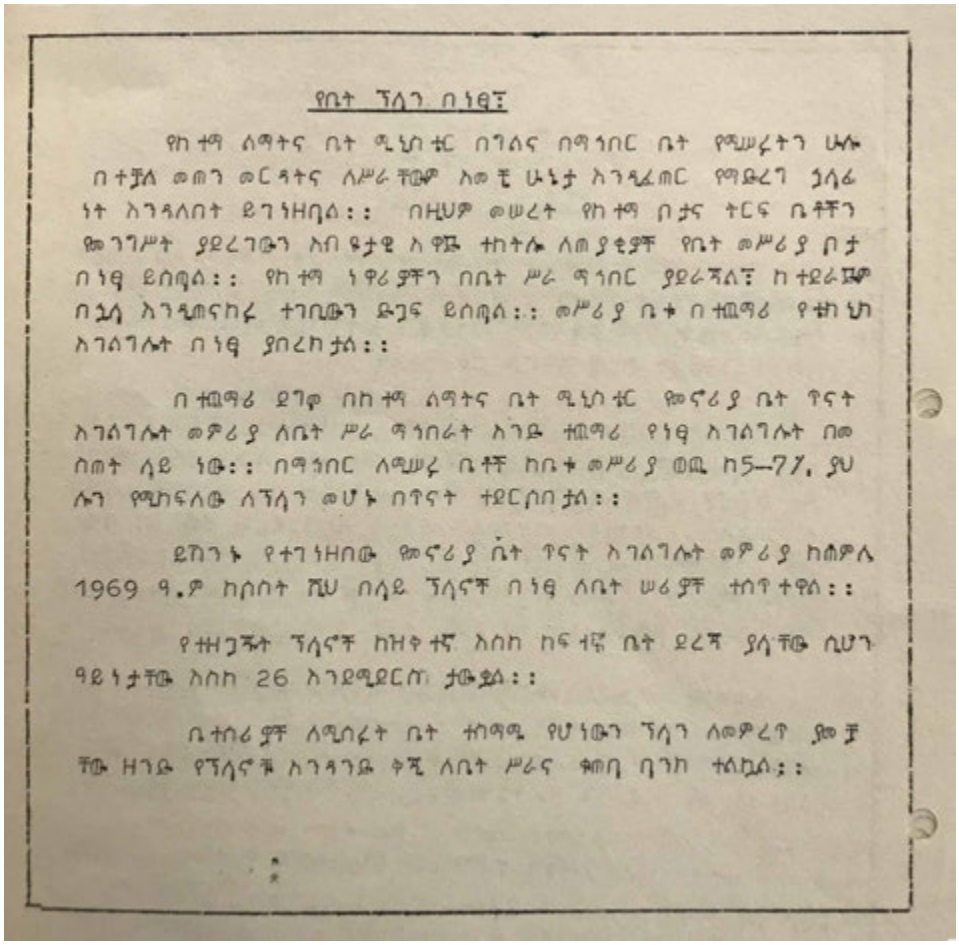

የቤት ኘላን በነፃ፤

የከተማ ልማትና ቤት ሚኒስቴር በግልና በማኅበር ቤት የሚሠሩትን ሁሉ በተቻለ መጠን መርዳትና ለሥራቸውም አመቺ ሁኔታ አንዲፈጠር የማድረግ ኃላፊነት አንዳለበት ይገነዘባል:: በዚህም መሠረት የከተማ ቦታና ተርፍ ቤቶችን የመገንጠት ያደረገውን አበይታዊ አዋጅ ተከትሎ ለጠያቂዎች የቤት መሥሪያ ቦታ በነፃ ይሰጣል:: የከተማ ነዋሪዎችን በቤት ሥራ ማኅበር ያደራጃል፤ ከተደራጁም በኋላ አንዲጠናከሩ ተገቢውን ድጋፍ ይሰጣል:: መሥሪያ ቤቱ በተጨማሪ የቴክኒክ አገልግሎት በነፃ ያበረክታል::

በተጨማሪ ደግሞ በከተማ ልማትና ቤት ሚኒስቴር የመኖሪያ ቤት ዋናተ አገልግሎት መምሪያ ለቤት ሥራ ማኅበራት አንዱ ተጨማሪ የነፃ አገልግሎት በመስጠት ላይ ነው:: በማኅበር ለሚሠሩ ቤቶች ከቤቱ መሥሪያ ወጪ ከ5-7%, ያህሉን የሚከፍለው ለኘላን መሆኑ በጥናት ተደርሶበታል::

ይኸንኑ የተገነዘበው የመኖሪያ ቤት ዋናተ አገልግሎት መምሪያ ከጠምሉ 1969 ዓ.ም ከሶስት ሺህ በላይ ኘላኖች በነፃ ለቤተ ሠሪዎች ተሰጥተዋል::

የተዘጋጁት ኘላኖች ከዝቀተኛ እስከ ከፍተኛ ቤት ደረጃ ያላቸው ሲሆን ዓይነታቸው እስከ 26 አንደሚደርስ ታውቋል::

ቤተሰሪዎች ለሚሰሩት ቤት ተስማሚ የሆነውን ኘላን ለመምረጥ ያመቻቸው ዘንድ የኘላኖቹ አንጓንዱ ቅጂ ለቤተ ሥራና ቁጠባ ባንክ ተልኳል::

FIG. 1.13 A memo of MUDH about the provision of free house designs. Circa 1977

“Housing Design For Free”

The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing understands the responsibility bestowed upon it to facilitate private people and cooperative initiatives to develop houses. Based on this and based on the Revolutionary decree on extra houses and urban land, the government would give out land for housing for free. It will facilitate the formation of housing cooperatives and support them so that they become strong. The office also renders technical advice for free.

In addition, the Bureau of Housing Research services under the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing is giving one extra service for free. Research has revealed that 5-7% of the cost of houses developed under cooperatives is spent on Design (Plan). Considering this, the Housing Research Services Department has issued more than 3,000 plans for housebuilders for free since 1969 (1977).

26 types of designs have been prepared encompassing lower-level and higher-level houses. A copy of the designs has been sent to the housing savings and cooperatives office so that house builders can choose a design appropriate for them.[59]

59 Ethiopian National Archives and Library Agency. The translation is my own. Check no.10 in the Addendum on page CCCXXXVIII for the readable size of the original.

It became a standard practice to issue centrally-issued designs by the Ministry for homebuilders, hence controlling dwelling typologies. Since MUDH oversaw the Addis Ababa Municipality and housing cooperatives, specific typologies became dominant. During the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 90s, the government pursued the cooperative model and housing designs that were mostly influenced by the design templates of MHUD. The share of housing development by cooperatives during 1971-1992 was 47.7%, the highest amongst all other forms of housing delivery.[60]

Next to the design templates of MUHD, the master plan of Addis Ababa in 1986 played a key role in influencing dwelling patterns.[61] One of AAMPOs (Addis Ababa Master Planning Office) significant contributions was conducting a schematic study of local dwelling patterns by allocating a two-person team that included a sociologist.[62] The input of this schematic study was used to develop schematic low-cost housing design typologies with minimum lot sizes.[63] While the typologies themselves were hypothetical and never implemented, the proposed minimum lot sizes and certain elements of the design have influenced planners and housing projects that were developed in later years.[64] The schematic designs included variations of spaces dedicated to workshops, garages, backyard gardening, front yard shops etc. AAMPO set 70m^2 as the maximum allowable habitable space for builders.[65] This rule was enforced albeit not strictly.[66]



FIG. 1.14 Gerji government housing development designed by Gashaw Beza. (Check detailed drawings in the Addendum on page CCCXLVI)

60 See Wubshet Berhanu, "Urban Policies and the Formation of Social and Spatial Patterns in Ethiopia. The Case of Housing Areas in Addis Ababa" (PhD Thesis, Trondheim, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2002), 155.

61 This Masterplan is sometimes referred to as the Ethio-Italian Master Plan.

62 Interview with Techeste Ahderom, December 17, 2022

63 Techeste Ahderom, "Addis Ababa Master Plan," in *World Cities and the Future of the Metropoles*, ed. Luigi Mazza, vol. DI . [2] (Electa, 1988), 380–94.

64 The plot sizes developed by AAMPO (108 – 180) were similar to the plot sizes that were later used by the Baumbachs in Mekanissa I project (105 – 175). This was followed in the Twenty Thousand Housing Project. In my interview, I asked Alazar Assefa if the Baumbachs were using AAMPO as a reference since he was working under Peter Baumbach but he did not confirm how Baumbach came up with the lot sizes. Some typologies with striking similarities with the AAMPO typologies have also been realized.

65 See Berhanu, "Urban Policies and the Formation of Social and Spatial Patterns in Ethiopia. The Case of Housing Areas in Addis Ababa," 152.

66 According to Amare Asgedom (Bureau Head of Works and Urban Development of Addis Ababa in the 90s) the middle income, who wanted to build houses above 70m^2 found ways of cheating the system. Details are discussed under the "Twenty Thousand Housing Project"

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Housing projects such as the Mekanissa I and II and Gerji began to be implemented around the end of the Derg period. After the World Bank Sites and Services scheme was finalized, dwellers were associated with cooperatives and the government allotted land to the cooperatives along with the prescribed design.[67] This scheme also continued during the early stages of the EPRDF[68] government.

The last notable housing project before the demise of the Derg in 1991 was the so-called CMC housing project, named after the contractor contracted to build the complex. CMC stood for *Cooperativa Muratori e Cementisti – di Ravenna*, an Italian construction firm. Following the politics of the Cold War, it was a greenfield development initiative to house the diplomatic community in a gated compound. The project was also a result of the AAMPO and aimed to build two thousand five hundred houses of which only five hundred were realized.[69] Addis Ababa, being a diplomatic capital next to New York and the Geneve, had a high number of diplomats which the state wanted to control. The attempt, dubbed "villagization of diplomats" by Techeste Ahderom, after the famous villagization projects in the 198os in rural Ethiopia, was short-lived since the regime did not survive to see it implemented.[70]

The post-communist period (1991 – 2015)

The EPRDF that took over in 1991 took some time to understand the dynamics associated with land and housing. It was focused on rural areas and poverty reduction for the first decade of its rule. The last scheme active just before the fall of the Derg, the 'Serviced Land and Prescribed Design' scheme, was temporarily halted creating a housing backlog.[71] This backlog lasted from 1991 – 2000 for almost 10 years when there was no clear strategy for housing provision. The EPRDF government maintained the responsibility of administering public land until the 1995 Ethiopian constitution declared all land to be state-owned. The leasehold system was introduced, and Residents could lease land for use rights from the state for a maximum period of 99 years.[72] To ease the backlog, the Addis Ababa city government issued land for private housing development through a lottery system in the Asko area as soon as the lease-holding proclamation was issued in 1993.[73] The housing problem was only articulated with subsequent strategies after the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Plan (SDPRP), the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development (PASDEP), and the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) were launched in 2002, 2005 and 2010 respectively.[74]

67 Interview with Alazar Assefa on September 11, 2019 – Addis Ababa
68 Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
69 Interview with Techeste Ahderom on July 31, 2019 – Addis Ababa
70 Interview with Techeste Ahderom on July 31, 2019 – Addis Ababa
71 Interview with Alazar Assefa on September 11, 2019 – Addis Ababa
72 'Urban Lands Lease Holding Proclamation', Pub. L. No. 80/1993 (1993).
73 Interview with Alazar Assefa on September 11, 2019 – Addis Ababa. According to Alazar, the Asko pilot project had a big turnout and demonstrated the grave demand for housing in the city.
74 See "The State of Addis Ababa 2017: The Addis Ababa We Want," 48, accessed April 17, 2019, https://unhabitat.org/books/the-state-of-addis-ababa-2017-the-addis-ababa-we-want/.

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The Twenty Thousand Housing Project

The first significant housing project in the post-Derg period was the Twenty Thousand Housing Project. The project's objective was to develop twenty thousand houses but later ended up producing more than forty thousand housing units. This project was a plot-based development where the state provided basic infrastructure, planning, and design documents while dwellers developed their plots either as cooperatives or individually.[75] Alazar Assefa, a spatial planning team leader and housing expert who worked on the project explains the scheme:

The Twenty Thousand Housing Project was initiated to expand upon the small-scale experiment conducted in Asko. The design typologies were informed by the Baumbachs study, with plot sizes ranging from 105m^2 to 175m^2. Initially, residents were required to adhere strictly to the provided designs, but later phases of the project allowed for more flexibility, enabling modifications through building permits. I believe the Baumbachs developed these design typologies based on their study of settlement patterns in Addis Ababa, particularly regarding space usage, the importance of the service quarters and the tradition of subletting rooms. Using their scheme as a foundation, we developed housing projects like Mekanissa III (Lebu) Bole Bulbula, and Bethel Keranyo, totaling twenty thousand houses. Subsequently, the government introduced a new regulation reducing plot sizes to between 70m^2 and 105m^2. Approximately forty thousand houses were constructed under the scheme until the project was phased out in 2001.[76]

Amare Asgedom, the then head of the Bureau of Works and Urban Development at the Addis Ababa City Administration discusses the shift of strategy from low-density plot development to high-density condominium projects:

Following the cabinet reshuffle in the Addis Ababa City Administration in 2002, a new approach to housing emerged. The government began to focus on housing through the lens of construction technologies and capacity building in the sector. Another key aspect revisited was the potential for income generation through these housing projects. Additionally, the financing model was reevaluated to explore pathways to homeownership. In terms of urban density, a shift towards vertical development was adopted, moving away from the previous plot-based parcelling and land distribution. GTZ conducted studies on these parameters and implemented a pilot project in Mekelle, which was well received by the Addis Ababa City Cabinet. This led to the launch of the notable condominium projects in 2005. However, before these condominium projects were fully realized, many people had already registered for housing. In response, the Addis Ababa City Administration decided to allocate land to individuals, enabling them to build their own condominiums through cooperatives. This phase can be seen as a continuation of the Twenty Thousand Housing Project, though the key difference was that the land was not initially serviced, and infrastructure was added later. Approximately forty to fifty thousand housing units were developed during this period.[77]

Added to the official Twenty thousand housing project, a total of ninety-thousand houses were developed using this modus operandi. The plot sizes that were suggested by AAMPO and later shrunk by the Addis Ababa city Administration (70m^2 – 105m^2) were commonly accommodating two to three-storey middle and high-income typologies. The designs for the dwellings were mostly prescribed but dwellers had some flexibility to update the designs.

75 Interview with Alazar Assefa on September 11, 2019, confirmed by Interview with Amare Asgedom on September 19, 2019 – Addis Ababa

76 Interview with Alazar Assefa on September 11, 2019 – Addis Ababa

77 Interview with Amare Asgedom on September 19, 2019 – Addis Ababa

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The IHDP

The Integrated Housing Development Project is one of the most prominent results of this period. The program is a consequence of the ideological shift in government towards the 'developmental state' in 2005. The state became a direct provider of housing. The pilot project of the program initially started with developing housing projects as an urban renewal of pocket spaces within the inner city but later resorted to constructing large-scale housing developments on the urban fringes after the pocket spaces ran out.[78] There was an estimated 300,000 housing backlog at that time and the project set out to build 50,000 houses per year.[79] Another important development was the law of eminent domain that declared the eviction of urban dwellers after receiving compensation for any form of construction built on a specific property.[80] This paved the way for the major urban resettlement programs that happened in the city.



FIG. 1.15 IHDP project; Gofa Condominium.

According to Amare Asgedom, the construction of the five-storey condominium structures could be completed in 7 months, something that was observed as being very efficient at that time.[81] Amare explains how the condominium typology was repeated in different sites and places:

Following the tests in Mekelle and the construction of pilot typologies in Addis Ababa, the IHDP project expanded into a national initiative. In the first year, we developed 10 sites, followed by 13 sites in the next year. By the third year, the project scaled up to 36 cities, eventually reaching 56 cities in the subsequent years. The focus then returned to Addis Ababa, where greenfield developments were initiated.[82]

78 Yonas Alemayehu Soressa and Imam Mahmoud Hassen, "Inner-City Dwellers and Their Places in the Context of Addis Ababa's Urban Renewal," in *The Transformation of Addis Ababa: A Multiform African City*, ed. Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu and Laura Stark (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 77–126.

79 Brook Teklehaimanot Haileselassie and Harald Mooij, "The Grand Housing Programme: Interview with Tsedale Mamo," *DASH | Delft Architectural Studies on Housing*, no. 12/13 (2016): 108–14, https://journals.open.tudelft.nl/dash/article/view/5002.

80 "Proclamation on Expropriation of Land," Pub. L. No. 455/2005 (2005).

81 By this time, Amare Asgedom is working as the Head of Planning and Land Development in the IHDP project office.

82 Interview with Amare Asgedom on September 19, 2019 – Addis Ababa.

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The IHDP fundamentally transformed the housing landscape of Addis Ababa, positioning the condominium as the "magic formula" for addressing the city's housing crisis. Subsequent variations, such as the 10/90 and 40/60 schemes, retained the same overall spatial structure, though with different floor plans. When asked for their reflection on the complaints from residents that the spaces do not meet their needs, IHDP officials assert that the typologies were developed with input from university experts and private sector architects. [83] This claim holds some validity, as architectural firms and university figures were indeed involved in the process. However, a noticeable disconnect remains between the standard condominium designs and the actual socio-spatial practices of the residents.

1.1.3 summary

In conclusion, although successive governments made efforts to provide housing, they were unable to keep pace with the ever-growing demand. The literature suggests that limited attention was given to understanding socio-spatial practices or involving dwellers in shaping housing solutions that aligned with their needs. Master plan initiatives such as AAMPO, attempted to recommend optimal lot sizes and housing schemes that reflected the socio-spatial realities of residents. However, the abrupt transition from the Indigenous settlements and plot-based developments to high-density condominium blocks left little room for flexible, ground-oriented housing patterns rooted in the local dwelling culture.

83 Haileselassie and Mooij, "The Grand Housing Programme."

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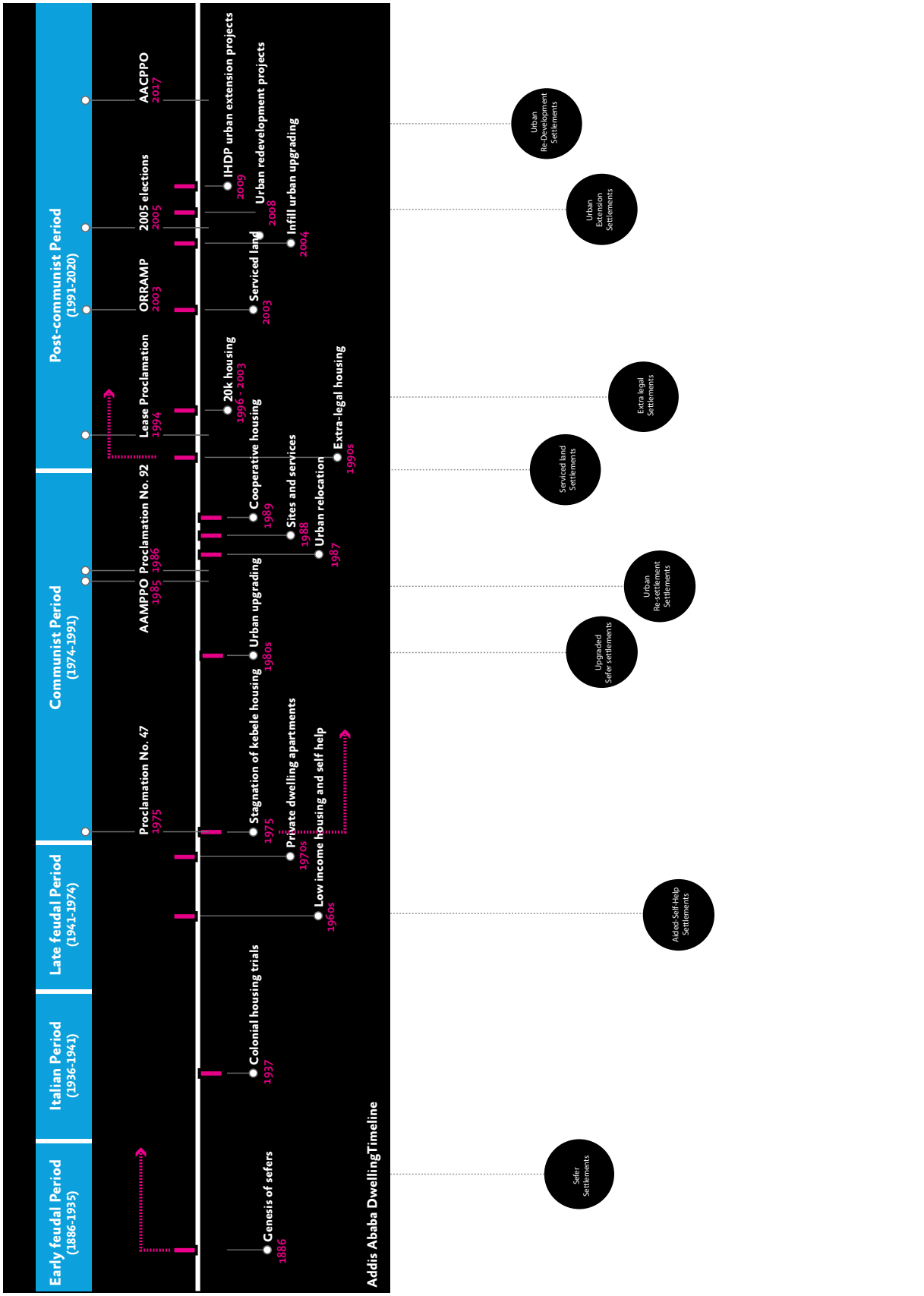

FIG. 1.16 Housing timeline from the genesis of Addis Ababa until 2020. The black bubbles represent different housing settlements that are included as cases in Chapter 4 and 5.

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1.2 Between culture and modernity; underlying socio-spatial patterns

1.2.1 The 'Ethiopian Modern'

The establishment of Addis Ababa as the capital of Ethiopia laid the ground for the emergence of a modern state.[84] Unlike earlier capitals, Addis Ababa utilized foreign expertise in much of its construction.[85] Successive rulers continued Menelik's vision of 'modernity' in multifaceted spheres of technology and governance. This vision initially focused on importing new technologies and materials, including corrugated Iron sheets. These sheets, brought into Addis Ababa through the Ethio-Djibouti railway, began to transform the city's visual landscape by gradually replacing the traditional thatched roofs of its dwellings.[86]

Discourses on Ethiopian modernity had already begun in the early 1920s, led by Intellectuals like Gebrehiwot Baykedagn. While recognizing the contributions of earlier figures such as Gebrehiwot and later individuals like Gebrekristos Desta in the realms of art and literature, Andreas emphasizes the Ethiopian Student Movement of the 1960s as the true "midwife of Ethiopian modernity". [87] In these movements, values such as "equality" and "secularism" were the ultimate objective of modernity, with socialism serving as the means to achieve them.[88]

Much earlier than the student movements, the Ethiopian Monarchy had already started to package itself and the imperial state as an icon of modernity and leveraged the narrative of modernity to strengthen its authority.[89] The colonial period that interrupted the empire tried to work with the existing elements of urbanity and add its colonial layer while Emperor Haileselassie did the same and continued "from where the Italians had left off" after returning from exile.[90] For the Italians, 'modernity', as a planning tool was employed to serve the colonial purposes of segregation.[91] For Haileselassie, it was an entangled conception— Between progress and preservation of the monarchy.

84 Pankhurst, "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa."

85 Pankhurst.

86 Fasil Giorghis, "Modernity and Change in Addis Ababa," in *What Is "Zemenawinet"?: Perspectives on Ethiopian Modernity*, ed. Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis (Addis Ababa: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), 2012), 54–59, http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/09884.pdf.

87 Andreas Eshete, "Modernity: Its Title to Uniqueness and Its Advent in Ethiopia," in *What Is "Zemenawinet"?: Perspectives on Ethiopian Modernity*, ed. Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis (Addis Ababa: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), 2012), 49–53, http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/aethiopien/09884.pdf.

88 Eshete.

89 Elizabeth Wolde Giorgis, "Charting Out Ethiopian Modernity and Modernism," *Callaloo* 33, no. 1 (2010): 82–99, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40732796.

90 AYALA LEVIN, "Haile Selassie's Imperial Modernity: Expatriate Architects and the Shaping of Addis Ababa," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 75, no. 4 (2016): 447–68, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26418940.

91 see Ahderom, "Basic Planning Principles and Objectives Taken in the Preparation of the Addis Ababa Master Plan, Past & Present.," 249–51.

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The modern apartment buildings of the 1960s, primarily designed by expatriate architects, were tailored to serve a specific minority. As Ayala Levin notes, there were visible attempts to incorporates of "Ethiopian grammar" in both formal and structural aspects. These landmark projects helped shape the city's image during the 1960s and had a significant influence on subsequent developments, often being replicated in later projects. However, they failed to cultivate a future modernity rooted in a local culture. In contrast, a more impactful influence on future dwelling patterns came from the invention of the electric *mitad* (*injera* stove) in the 1960s, which had a lasting effect by introducing the concept of a kitchen integrated into the main house.[92]

The statecraft that followed the monarchy framed 'modernity' through the lens of efficiency. Both during the communist and post-communist eras, the state pursued standardized housing solutions to address the housing crisis. Under the Derg, this took the form of mass-produced 'efficient' floor plans, while the EPRDF promoted large-scale housing strategies, such as condominium developments. Despite the shift towards modernist, state-driven housing approaches that gradually displaced Indigenous typologies, cultural practices —such as methods of food preparation, extended family structures, and other cultural traditions—remained intact, transcending the physical form of the housing itself.

This trajectory of modernity significantly impacted the city's housing landscape in terms of both quantity and quality, with the adoption of imported materials and modern construction techniques. However, I argue that a persistent cultural undercurrent has challenged the 'modern' narrative, manifesting in part through the appropriation of housing and self-initiated t transformations, and in part through everyday language and practice. My observation of this cultural resistance emerged during fieldwork in Addis Ababa in 2020, where I re-encountered terms from my childhood—terms that dwellers use to describe their living spaces: *gibi*, *gwaro* and *gwada*.

These terms represent socio-spatial concepts embedded in the Amharic and Tigrigna languages. Although they lack critical framing within architectural discourse, I explore them alongside dweller-initiated transformations to identify correlations and refine their definitions in the context of housing. The following section provides historical and linguistic context for *gibi gwaro*, and *gwada* to establish a foundational understanding of these concepts.

1.2.2 A 'Priori'; Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

In a somewhat similar spirit to Kant's priori, I introduce the *gibi*, gwaro, and gwada below in the state before synthesis. I will start with the lexicon and cite earlier mentions in literature beginning from the *gibi*, which is the most mentioned from various sources. The *gibi*, gwada and gwaro are written in a sanctioned orthography in Geez alphabets (Amharic and Tigrigna languages). Writing them in a standardized orthography in English has become a challenge and writers have chosen different ways to spell them. In this dissertation, I have decided to write them as '*gibi*' (ግቢ), 'gwaro' (ጓሮ) and 'gwada' (ጓዳ) to make the sounds as near as possible towards the proper local intonation and having English speakers in mind since Geez, Tigrigna and Amharic speakers will not have problems pronouncing them. I have included the Geez alphabet above to avoid confusion.

92 The invention of *mitad* played an important role in the conception of a kitchen embedded in the main house. My attempt to interview Girmay Teklehaimanot (who is now 96 years old), an engineer who invented the *mitad* failed.

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The Amharic dictionary defines *gibi* as a Space that is bounded by an enclosure. [93] An English-Amharic dictionary from the 1970s defines it as "enclosure, premises, grounds (land), compound, palace".[94] It further defines it as a "compound" when it has *Ater* in front, i.e. *Ater-Gibi* (translates to fenced-*gibi*) makes it a compound.[95] Garretson refers to it as a church court.[96] Pankhurst mentions it anecdotally as a palace.[97] Gleichen describes Meneliks *gibi* as "the whole of this group of buildings" within the enclosure.[98] Virgin, one of the early travellers in Addis Ababa, defines it as a "knoll" and describes its connection with Menelik's palace:

> Gibi really means knoll, but here the word denotes the area containing the imperial buildings: dwelling-houses, reception-halls, courts of justice and other official places. The Great Gibi lies on a steep hillock to the south, surrounded by a high wall, and here, above a higgledy-piggledy of roofs and spires, soars the cupola of Menelik II's mausoleum. On this side of the Great Gibi, reckoning from the cross-roads, stands the new parliament house. Along the Great Gibi road, which also passes under a triumphal arch, there flows all day long an endless stream of people: chieftains and officials to attend the Emperor, seekers of justice to appeal to him as highest judge, country folk on a visit to the capital, loafers and beggars—all push on up to the Gibi hill.[99]

The *gibi* in Addis Ababa was one of the first structures to be set up during the early days of the city. The *gibi* was a microcosm of the empire where one can find elements that one would normally find in a city. Giorghis and Gérard describe it as such:

> Wandering around through the gebbi you would also find churches, post and telephone rooms, a pharmacy and a minting house. Granaries, an armory, and weavers', goldsmiths', blacksmiths' and saddle makers' quarters are also located within the gebbi. Hence, one can say that the imperial palace and its gebbi comprised a small but self-sufficient town in itself.[100]

One can establish parallels with the Fasil Ghebbi in Gondar and the palace of Emperor Yohannes IV in Mekelle. These are palace premises predating Addis Ababa but with similar spatial layouts. All of them (including Menelik's *Gibi*) house one or more churches in the *gibi*. The Axum Tsion church in Axum, although not commonly referred to as a *gibi*, is also similar in the fact that it is fenced and at the heart of the city.[101] Going further, the Enda Abba Gärima Monastery in Adwa (Tigray) also has similar characteristics.[102] Andreas believes the *gibi* historically comes from a protected parish community like the Enda Abba Gärima, where there are dedicated spaces for people serving the

93 ተክለወልድደስታ, "ዐዲስ ያማርኛ መዝገበ ቃላት," in ዐዲስ ያማርኛ መዝገበ ቃላት (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers, 1970).

94 Wolf Leslau, *Basic Amharic Dictionary Amharic-English, English-Amharic. Final Report* (Place of publication not identified: Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse, 1972), https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED100127.

95 Leslau.

96 See Garretson, *A History of Addis Ababa from Its Foundation in 1886 to 1910*, xvii.

97 See Richard Pankhurst, *History of Ethiopian Towns from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to 1935* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1985), 195.

98 See Edward Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menelik, 1897* (London: E. Arnold, 1898), 157, https://archive.org/details/WithmissionMene00Glei.

99 See Virgin, *The Abyssinia I Knew*, 28.

100 Giorghis and Gérard, *The City and Its Architectural Heritage, Addis Ababa 1886 - 1941*, 60.

101 Axum Tsion has two large concentric enclosures defining grounds unusually big for a church. The church is not ordinary since it was where Emperors in Ethiopia were traditionally crowned. The church also claims that it holds the Ark of the Covenant. See *the sign and the seal* for further details.

102 Enda Abba Gärima is located 5 kilometres outside the city of Adwa and is not in an urban setting. The Importance and protection of this monastery lies in its ownership of the Gärima Gospels, one of the earliest surviving Christian books. See Oxford University's study on the Gärima Gospels for more details.

church.[103] Some of the areas within this parish are not allowed for females and they are further enclosed within. The necessity for protection might be due to the historical targeting of monasteries and churches in the past. According to Andreas, walled parishes and walled cities were common citing the walled city of Adwa and other cities in the region of Shoa as examples.[104]

Gwada and the gwaro on the other hand have fewer historical mentions. While both are more intimate to the dwelling scale in contemporary usage, Gleichen mentions the gwada as a storage "depôt" when describing Menelik's palace.[105] In the Amharic lexicon, gwada is described as a space that is located as part of the house or annexed to the main house to store food and other items. It could be a gwada for *injera*, a gwada for *tej* or a gwada for meat etc.[106]It has also been defined as an "alcove" in some instances.[107] Gwaro, is defined as an enclosed space behind a house within a *gibi* in local lexicon.[108]It might also mean a toilet when it is referred as *gwaro-bet*.[109]

The above descriptions are what is mostly written on these terminologies from the standpoint of language and history. The descriptions of the cases in Chapters 4 and 5 will use these words from the standpoint of dwellers. In Chapters 6 and 7, I will include contemporary takes of other researchers who have investigated these notions in my synthesis.

1.3 Socio-spatial Conundrum

1.3.1 Problem Synthesis

Now, Addis Ababa is facing multitudes of urban challenges. Nearly 80% of the inner-city areas are defined as 'slums'[110]. They have also been earmarked for urban renewal by the city administration. On several occasions, the City Administration has been announcing plans to build new houses over mass media and social media platforms. The recent announcement is the plan to build 650,000 homes by 2027 in the inner-city area.[111]

103 Interview with Andreas Eshete on May 18, 2023 - Addis Ababa.
104 Interview with Andreas Eshete on May 18, 2023 - Addis Ababa. Please see the Addendum no.17 for an illustration on the walled city of Adwa (**CCCXLIX**)
105 See Gleichen, *With the Mission to Menelik, 1897*, 157.
106 ተከለወልድ, "ዐዲስ ያማርኛ መዝገበ ቃላት."
107 Leslau, *Basic Amharic Dictionary Amharic-English, English-Amharic. Final Report.*
108 ተከለወልድ, "ዐዲስ ያማርኛ መዝገበ ቃላት."
109 ተከለወልድ.
110 "The State of Addis Ababa 2017."
111 Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu, "The Addis Ababa City Block" (Addis Ababa Urban Age Task Force, 2022), https://urbanagetaskforce.net/media/pages/addisababa/publications/test-one/1c1c9cda7b-1675698238/aauatf-pb01-addis-ababa-city-block.pdf.

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This announcement is not a surprise as the 10th masterplan of Addis Ababa, endorsed by the parliament in 2016, had already targeted the production of 1.2 million housing units within the 10-year active period of its tenure to solve the acute housing crisis. Following the practice of previously built public housing projects, these projects are envisaged to be implemented following the Development-Induced Resettlement programs (DiRP); whereby existing inner-city sefers will be razed to give way to the new settlements. The livelihood of several low-income dwellers has already been massively affected due to earlier relocations caused by DiRP.[112] To date, more than 200,000 dwelling units have been transferred to dwellers via this modus operandi[113].

Between 2006 and 2018, the IHDP program built 314,000 housing units in Addis Ababa.[114] This includes inner city developments through the DiRP and greenfield developments in the city fringes. Observations on the already executed condominium projects show that the quantitative benchmark on housing focuses on efficiency overlooking the importance of understanding socio-spatial practices and cultural proclivities to guarantee the desired quality of housing. A recent study conducted on three condominium housing projects critically assessed the experiences of resettled city dwellers. One of the most compelling findings is that the new dwellings, although with larger spaced rooms and comparatively better physical conditions, were misfit regarding the resident's previous living patterns.[115] One of the reasons for this is the fact that the rigid spatial typologies do not facilitate informal income generation activities that were previously accommodated in the closely knitted neighbourhoods with more flexible indoor and outdoor spatial conditions.[116]

Internal as well as external dwelling spaces have fallen short of catering for the actual local spatial requirements.[117] Vast outdoor open spaces show how open spaces have been dysfunctional and out of scale with existing as well as emergent programmatic requirements. Important cultural and spatial realities are overlooked in the scale of both the dwelling unit and the cluster, leading to the dissatisfaction of dwellers. The result of a post-occupancy study conducted to evaluate dweller satisfaction and housing quality perceptions on condominium housing shows that the negative perceptions of dwellers are associated with the absence of home-based income generation activities that were well-sutured in the previous dwellings of the Sefers.[118] According to this study, the new housing units do not provide suitable spaces for such activities. Multi-story structures not being children and elderly-friendly is another factor adding up to the negative attitudes.[119]

112 Gebre Yntiso, "Urban Development and Displacement in Addis Ababa: The Impact of Resettlement Projects on Low-Income Households," *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review* 24, no. 2 (2008): 53–77, https://doi.org/10.1353/eas.0.0001.
113 Data on the amount of housing built and transferred to dwellers so far is contradicting. The author acquired this data from the interview with Tsegaye Moshe in January 2020.
114 Tadashi Matsumoto and Jonathan Crook, "Sustainable and Inclusive Housing in Ethiopia: A Policy Assesment" (Coalition of Urban Transitions, 2021), https://urbantransitions.global/publications.
115 Yonas Alemayehu Soressa and Imam Mahmoud Hassen, "Experiences of the Poor in the Contemporary Urban Resettlement of Addis Ababa," in *The Transformation of Addis Ababa: A Multiform African City*, ed. Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu and Laura Stark (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 127–59.
116 Soressa and Hassen.
117 Sascha Delz, "Ethiopia's Low-Cost Housing Program – How Concepts of Individual Home-Ownership and Housing Blocks Still Walk Abroad" (No Cost Housing Conference, ETH Zürich, 2016), https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/handle/20.500.11850/127019.
118 Tigist Ayele Gebrewold, "Condominium Dwellers' Housing Quality Perception and Satisfaction In Addis Ababa" (Enschede, Netherlands, University of Twente, 2015).
119 Gebrewold.

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FIG. 1.17 Spatial practices (sun drying spices) on the new condominiums. (Photo by Fleur Luca)

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FIG. 1.18 Courtyards in the IHDP projects (Mickey Leland Condominium).



FIG. 1.19 Courtyards in the Indigenous neighbourhoods that densified over the years (Drone Image, Talian Sefer)

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This **housing mismatch**, which in my argument is a result of the modernist housing recipe, calls for a nuanced understanding of the prevalent socio-spatial practices, as part of the response to the housing crisis in Addis Ababa. A scenario that ensures the production of affordable housing without a compromise on the socio-spatial needs of dwellers. The ideal balance between accommodating local socio-spatial needs and pursuing modernist efficiency is a sensitive matter. Peer Smets, Jan Bredenoord, and Paul van Lindert bring forth a model illustrating the delicate relationship between efficiency and resilience. They argue that the survival of ecosystems is attributed to the balance between these two contending forces; excessive efficiency resulting in "collapse" and extreme resilience causing "stagnation".[120] A sustainable and balanced ecosystem is attained in what the authors term "the window of viability" whereby these forces are in "equilibrium".[121]

Although "equilibrium" is the desired scenario, it is seldom the case in developing cities like Addis Ababa. One can see the condominium projects in the EPRDF period as a condition of too much efficiency while the Indigenous *sefer* (including extra-legal settlements) is an epitome of resilience. The former creates homogeneity, resulting in "brittleness" and the latter generates incoherence producing "stagnation". I present the housing mismatch as a socio-spatial conundrum persistent throughout the development of the city. It can be expressed as a tension between the traditional and the modern, the resilient and the efficient, the non-planned and the planned. The gibi, gwaro and gwada have prevailed in these dichotomies as dynamic socio-spatial notions.

I establish two key objectives in exploring the **housing mismatch**. The first is to analyze **dweller-initiated housing transformations** within the broader dichotomy of **planned** and **nonplanned** housing developments, using the concepts of ***gibi***, ***gwaro*** and ***gwada*** as central points of focus. The second objective is to theoretically define these socio-spatial notions within the context of housing discourse by examining how residents perceive and utilize the gibi, gwaro and gwada in their everyday dwelling practices. The key assumption I make here is based on earlier studies; that one of the key reasons for dweller-initiated transformations is to address unmet needs as well as to express identity.[122]

The quote below sums up a crucial dimension of dweller-initiated transformations:

….buildings can be seen as multi-generational contexts for housing and transformers are expressing not only housing needs but also the desire for identity, a sense of belonging, and a search for status among neighbours and in the world at large. It is almost a case of 'I build therefore I am'.[123]

120 Peer Smets, Jan Bredenoord, and Paul Lindert, "Introduction," in *Affordable Housing in the Urban Global South: Seeking Sustainable Solutions*, ed. Jan Bredenoord, Paul Lindert, and Peer Smets (Routledge, 2014), 1–14.
121 Smets, Bredenoord, and Lindert.
122 Peter Kellett, "Cultural Values and Housing Behavior in Spontaneous Settlements," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 16, no. 3 (1999): 205–24, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43030501; Graham Tipple, *Extending Themselves: User Initiated Transformations of Government-Built Housing in Developing Countries*, 1 online resource (368 pages) vols. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/9781781386507; A. Tipple, Gillian Masters, and Guy Garrod, "An Assessment of the Decision to Extend Government-Built Houses in Developing Countries," *Urban Studies* 37 (August 1, 2000): 1605–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980020080281.
123 Tipple, *Extending Themselves*, 42.

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1.3.2 Questions and Relevance

Anchored on the research objectives stated above, I pose the key question of the study as follows:

To what extent are ***dwelling transformations*** influenced by ***socio-spatial practices*** in the nonplanned and planned housing settlements of Addis Ababa? What roles do gibi, gwaro and gwada play in dwelling transformations and vice versa? How can gibi, gwaro and gwada be critically redefined based on their contemporary significance to dwellers?

This research aims to explore the socio-spatial meanings of gibi, gwaro, and gwada within the context of dwelling and to highlight the connections between these concepts and dwelling transformations. While dwelling transformations in Addis Ababa have been previously studied, these studies did not focus on these notions. For instance, Shiferaw surveyed how core houses built through an aided self-help program evolved into structures able to respond to the dynamics of family growth and income generation.[124] Tarekegn studied housing extensions on planned low-income housing and established the benefits of meeting the demands of dwellers.[125]

In terms of social and spatial practices, scholars such as Berhanu have analyzed Housing in Addis Ababa by correlating urban policies with social and spatial housing patterns.[126] Ejigu explored how residents' lifestyles interact with the spatial organization and qualities of condominium housing, identifying a disconnect between the design of public housing introduced in 2004 and the lifestyle of its inhabitants.[127]

These studies have contributed to the literature and informed this research inquiry. However, most of the research, except for Alazar's, focuses more on socioeconomic factors than on the actual lives of dwellers. I believe that this study's humanistic approach, grounded in socio-spatial analysis, will provide a fresh perspective. Ultimately complementing the findings of previous scholars and offering a more comprehensive understanding of dwelling practices in Addis Ababa.

Regarding the culture of settlements and dwellings, Genet Alem discusses the 'Ethiopian' conception of spaces at the urban scale vis a vis spatial values rooted in Northern Ethiopia. She attempts to establish a link between the pattern of military camps and the structuring of spaces in the Christian Orthodox Church and the settlement around Menelik's palace.[128] Bernard Lindahl, on the other hand, discusses the architectural history of Ethiopia focusing on the Axumite and Gonderian periods. Lindahl goes further into theoretical analysis of church buildings and palace edifices built at that time. He coins the word "Addis Ababa Style", by examining the architectural creolization of local building tradition with the Greeks, Indians, Arabs and Armenians.[129] Bernhard does not delve into the Architectural analysis of dwellings of those times. He expresses that the topic of "ordinary homes" is a "large and interesting" subject.[130]

124 Demissachew Shiferaw, "Self-Initiated Transformations of Public-Provided Dwellings in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia," *Cities* 15, no. 6 (December 1998): 437–48, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0264-2751(98)00039-0.
125 Elias Ababu Tarekegn, "KITIYA - Transformation of Low Income Housing in Addis Ababa" (PhD Thesis, Trondheim, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2000).
126 Berhanu, "Urban Policies and the Formation of Social and Spatial Patterns in Ethiopia. The Case of Housing Areas in Addis Ababa."
127 Alazar Ejigu, 'Socio-Spatial Tensions and Interactions : An Ethnography of the Condominium Housing of Addis Ababa', in *Sustainable Cities : Local Solutions in the Global South*, vol. s. 97-112 (Sustainable Cities : Local Solutions in the Global South Rudby : Practical Action Publishing Limited, 2012), http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kth:diva-25187.
128 Genet Alem Gebregiorgis, "Traditional Use and Meaning of Urban Spaces: The Case of Highland Towns of North Ethiopia," in *Urban Knowledge in Cities of the South*, 2010, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?cluster=6046472908174821998&hl=en&oi=scholarr.
129 Lindahl, *Architectural History of Ethiopia in Pictures*.
130 See Lindahl, 1.

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Genet's and Bernard's work opens the door for further research and highlights a gap in knowledge that is essential for understanding settlements in 'Ethiopia', particularly in Addis Ababa.

1.4 Dissertation Structure

1.4.1 Thesis outline

The body of the thesis is structured in three parts. **Part I** indulges with theory and methodology after setting the scene in the introduction chapter. It argues for the uniqueness of the case and discusses overarching epistemologies with the assumptions and lays out the methodology (with its unique variations) of research by explicating its relationship with the context.

Part II is the descriptive part of the research, as laid out in the methodology, the two main categories, non-planned settlements and planned settlements, are studied by employing architectural ethnography. Cases from these settlements (involving studying transformations by reconstructions of the dwellings) will highlight aspects of the gibi, gwada and gwaro and are presented and defined as experienced by the dwellers. The cases are presented in a writing style that brings in the voice of the dwellers. Quotes from dwellers are translated verbatim and emphasised in magenta. All the real names of dwellers have been anonymized. At the end of each case, there is an interpretive section that highlights an aspect of the case and stages the scene for further synthesis.

Part III follows as an analytic part of the study, where the cases described in Part II will be further synthesized from the perspective of temporalities. The last chapter in Part III will present synthesized findings of the gibi, gwada and gwaro and propose an interpretive summary.

1.4.2 Introduction to the addendum: Atlas of dwelling practices in Addis Ababa

The addendum at the end of the dissertation consists of two parts. The first part is the *Atlas of Dwelling Practices*, described below, while the second part includes images and drawings that could not be fully integrated into the main text due to size constraints. These are numbered and arranged to follow the Atlas.

The *Atlas of Dwelling Practices* documents nine housing settlements, aiming to capture the prevailing dwelling practices. Each settlement is represented by two distinct dwelling units. The diagram provided illustrates the eight housing development types and the corresponding nine settlements selected to represent them. The visual synthesis begins with a key image and the location of each settlement, followed by a visual comparison of two satellite images showing changes within the settlement over time. The focus then narrows, presenting labelled photographs that convey the atmosphere of the neighbourhood.

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Next, the atlas delves into each dwelling, starting with a key quote from a resident and a featured image, setting the tone for the visual narrative. Technical floor plans are paired with digital collages, where the collage emphasizes an important aspect of the dwelling, and the floor plan provides scale and empirical dimensions. The following pages explore the dwelling's transformations over time, reconstructed through an axonometric diagram. The *gibi*, *gwada*, and *gwaro*, as defined by the residents, are also visualized within these diagrams. Photographs of the current state of the dwelling, both interior and exterior, accompany these technical illustrations. Architectonic sections are enriched with speech bubbles that convey the residents' 'voices'.

A material palette is then presented, offering a sense of the materials used and the color ambience of the dwelling. Additionally, a "photo trigger" includes a framed photograph gifted to the residents during the ethnographic sessions, showing where it is placed in the home and highlighting a favourite space or location of the residents. This provides further insight into how they use their space.

Finally, the visual narrative concludes with a diagrammatic synthesis of the physical transformation of the dwelling, including changes in demography. A representative sketch of both dwellings wraps up the narrative, highlighting the building techniques employed by the residents.

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PART I

Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology

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2 Conceptual Framework

A conventional theoretical overview of social and spatial practices fails to adequately capture the peculiarity of the context (Africa-Ethiopia-Addis Ababa) in terms of both the insufficiencies of socio-spatial theory on the research setting as well as its epistemological shortcoming in theoretically underpinning social and spatial conditions within the broader global south.

Hence, I start with an epistemological frame to situate this study, and critically frame the topic. I will also use it to question dominant epistemological outlooks to explore possibilities for addressing alternative notions of urbanism and dwelling pertinent to the research setting, i.e. The Global South. The theoretical thread in this chapter flows from the general epistemological and continental towards the socio-spatial but one might encounter breaks in this sequence as the socio-spatial is not mutually exclusive from the epistemological and these two might occasionally transgress on each other.

2.1 The Enigma of reading habitat in the African context

A conceptual challenge in current scholarship focused on contexts within Africa is the tendency to shelve countries and regions in Africa into one domain: the domain of African-ness. “African” is prefixed as a characteristic common to the diverse people, cultures, and nations within the continent: “African Architecture”, “African Urbanism”, “African Governance”, “African Economics”, “African Solutions” and so forth. The slogan-turned-book titled: *“Africa is not a country*[131]*, Notes on a Bright Continent”* by Dipo Faloyin is a good example of an antithesis of the reductionist approach of equating Africa to the level of a country. This continental approach overlooks diversity between nations, regions, and cultures within Africa and therefore perpetuates unfounded stereotypical opinions.[132]

131 “Africa is not a country” was first used as a title of a children’s book authored by Arthur Lewin. It was later used as a Venice Architecture Biennale entry in 2006 by Ola-dele kuku. The phrase is usually used as an anonymous quote in situations when conditions are stereotyped as ‘African’.

132 Dipo Faloyin, *Africa Is Not a Country Notes on a Bright Continent* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2022).

Africans went through 500-plus years of slavery, colonial looting, and plunder. A fact that undeniably shaped and continues to shape the present reality of all nations within the continent.[133] Ethiopia, although never colonized (Occupied by Italy for 5 years), was shaped by geo-political and socio-economic forces of this context. This fact will always be a common historical denominator and an important one in understanding any African country or region by posing a postcolonial crisis to be endured by the nation. Nevertheless, there are underlying heterogeneities in culture, language, climate, religion and so forth, strongly calling for nuanced and situated readings. A notion that the term 'African' overshadows.

Looking at the number and type of languages spoken in Africa is a good instance to illustrate cultural diversity within to imagine its implication on theoretical construction. According to studies, 900-1500 languages are spoken in Africa.[134] Looking into Ethiopia alone, 80-100 languages are spoken as well as written with the main ones being Oromiffa, Amharic, Tigrigna and Somali.[135] Oromiffa is spoken as a mother-tongue by 35,3 % of the people and Amharic is spoken as a mother-tongue by 26.2%.[136] This diversity in a country such as Ethiopia alone, a nation estimated to have a population of around 110-120 million, speaks volumes about the extent of distinctiveness within one nation, which in my view, is so much overlooked and calls for studies that are culture-specific and thoughtfully situated. In this study, I will single-quote Africa when Africa is mentioned in a context where it becomes important to make a conscious note of the subtleties that might have been overlooked or generalized. I will follow a similar principle for 'Ethiopia' since this occurs within the Ethiopian context as well.

With the main literature body available on the topic of dwelling focusing on the continent as opposed to being specific to nations or subcultures, the study of dwelling practices in Addis Ababa is not an easy task. It demands one to build some of the primary literature. To do this, it first requires a broader exploration into the larger continental domain of Africa, a subject that is vast and complex but vital to ignore. Exploration of the subject is inherently an epistemological journey, a journey that must deconstruct existing theoretical constructs and raise critical questions about the making of dwelling narratives in regions within 'Africa'.

133 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Verso, 2018).
134 "Africa - Ethnic Groups, Cultures, Languages | Britannica," accessed July 14, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/place/Africa/People.
135 "Ethiopia | People, Flag, Religion, Capital, Map, Population, War, & Facts | Britannica," July 13, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/place/Ethiopia.
136 "Ethiopia | People, Flag, Religion, Capital, Map, Population, War, & Facts | Britannica."

2.2 A World of Alternative Epistemologies

If I want to go to the moon, I need scientific knowledge, If I want to preserve the biodiversity of the Amazonia region, I need Indigenous knowledge[137]

A key and well-grounded argument for alternative epistemologies was forwarded by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. An epistemological outlook that emanates by challenging the singular and mainstream epistemology historically rooted in "capitalism", "colonialism" and "patriarchy".[138] Sousa Santos is challenging what decolonial discourse refers to as the "western episteme". Studies have already established how correlations between capitalism, colonialism and modernity created the bedrock for the hegemony of the western episteme.[139]

Taking the apparent diversity existing in the world into account, Sousa Santos argues for alternative and diverse forms of knowledge production in his seminal work *Epistemologies of the South*, where "south" refers to the "non-geographical south" representing regions and countries that went through a colonial or troubled historical past contributing to their unprivileged present.[140] Sousa Santos is building upon the canonical work of Fanon — *black skin white masks,* where Fanon articulates and questions colonial conditions primarily in relation to the self.[141] His thorough investigation of race politics in the 1960s and 1970s laid the foundation for further corpus on decolonial discourse and alternative epistemologies.

For Sousa Santos, epistemologies of the south refer to knowledges[142] that results from "social and political struggles" aimed at highlighting knowledges that are otherwise overshadowed or deemed non-knowledge by "dominant epistemologies".[143] In other words, they are necessary instruments to break the dominating politics of knowledge.[144]

Here, Sousa Santos uses the phrase "Sociology of absences" to pronounce a present state in the world that has essentially discounted a significant portion of the world through knowledge dominion causing a knowledge absence or what he specifically phrases as "non-existent knowledge". According to Sousa Santos, the episteme of what is termed as 'scientific knowledge' contributed to normalizing the mono-understanding of the world through Anglo-American views. Bringing alternative knowledge to the fore, or "Sociology of emergences" is a way of transgressing this state of normalcy or stagnation. when characterizing the type of knowledges that epistemologies of the South strive to revive, Sousa Santos makes a point that they are "embodied" within "social practices".[145]

137 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Epistemologies of the South and the Future," 2016, 22.
138 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).
139 Walter D. Mignolo, "The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Colonization and the Discontinuity of the Classical Tradition," *Renaissance Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1992): 808–28, https://doi.org/10.2307/2862638; Ramón Grosfoguel, "Colonial Difference, Geopolitics of Knowledge, and Global Coloniality in the Modern/Colonial Capitalist World-System," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 25, no. 3 (2002): 203–24, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40241548.
140 Santos, "Epistemologies of the South and the Future."
141 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Chase Publishing Services Ltd, 1952).
142 see Madina Tlostanova and Walter Mignolo, *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflection from Eurasia and the Americas*, 2012; Santos, "Epistemologies of the South and the Future" The plural form of 'knowledge' is used to argue for the existence of a multiple knowledge episteme.
143 see Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire*, 2.
144 Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire.*
145 see Santos, 3.

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Using this as a reference point, how do we understand, perceive, read, and theorize socio-spatial conditions and practices in contexts within the global south? Do we transpose existing theorems made for and developed from historical and socio-political conditions that are different – namely the global north, or do we seek alternative methodologies? what descriptive tools and norms can we use to read diverse urban ensembles and dwelling conditions in the global south?

These are some of the basic questions that one is confronted with and needs to address when conducting research in the 'African' continent. It would apply to studies on Urban as well as dwelling practices in cities that went through the colonial route, such as Accra or Maputo as well as the very few ones such as Addis Ababa that predominantly stayed indigenous through most of the colonial period and urbanized through a logic and cultural paradigm that does not always fit mainstream conceptions.

Advances in decolonial discourse, especially after the advent of the 'decolonial turn'[146] at the beginning of the Millennium, have contributed to the exploration of alternative epistemologies. It is not the objective here to delve into the depths of decolonial discourse. However, It is imperative to understand that decolonial discourse is not limited to questioning the "colonial episteme" and "world order" but rather opens up platforms to "pluralize knowledge formations" and present variant conceptions of the world.[147]

A key phrase that needs a variant epistemological frame to understand that is common in the global south is "Urban Informality". This phrase has the power to encapsulate spatial, political and economic conditions and describe geographies within the global south regardless of its susceptibility to misinterpretation. Discussing Urban Informality Ananya Roy focuses on the political dimension of epistemologies. For Roy, the urban phenomenon in the global south is primarily a political construct requiring toolsets beyond "spatial ideologies" on which Roy has a radical stance.[148]

Going beyond acknowledging plural epistemologies, Roy puts forth how one context can be used to critically examine another by juxtaposing urban conditions from diametrically opposite contexts into dialogue. She illustrates this by bringing together the photographic essays of Jacob Riis from New York and Popko from Cali as a "transnational" method of investigation, what she calls "transnational epistemologies."[149]:

> The simultaneous discussion of Riis and Popko unsettles both the anomaly and the ideal. As New York comes to light as the site of gruesome capitalism, so Cali emerges as the site of innovative shelter practices. [150]

As Roy further articulates, this initiates critical reviews on mainstream outlooks that shape urban perspectives forged in the context of development.[151] The sections below delve deeper into the variant perspectives of 'African' cities as posited by scholars whom I believe subscribe to what Roy brings forth.

146 'Decolonial Turn' is a term coined by Nelson Maldonado-Torres.
147 Claire Gallien and كلير جاليان, "A Decolonial Turn in the Humanities - المنعطف المقوّض للاستعمار في الدراسات الإنسانية," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 40 (2020): 28–58, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26924865.
148 see Ananya Roy, "Transnational Trespassings: The Geopolitics of Urban Informality.," in *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*, ed. Ananya Roy and Nezar AlSayyad, Transnational Perspectives on Space and Place (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004), 295–97.
149 Roy, 293.
150 Roy, 292.
151 See Roy, 292.

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2.3 Perspectives on 'African' Cities

Aiming to bring the discussion on African cities to the centre, Martin J. Murray and Garth A. Myers have skillfully curated a thought-provoking compilation that effectively delves into the diversity found within African cities and brings forth the "inherent dangers of facile generalizations" that stem from "grand theories".[152] The edited volume titled *Cities in Contemporary Africa* discusses the urban life of various cities across the continent thoughtfully employing multiple methods in studying cities. Murray and Myers discuss common urban challenges faced by African cities: Extreme poverty, and bleak situation of physical and social infrastructure then proceed to summarize the outlooks of scholars on African cities when trying to situate contemporary cities regarding these challenges: [153]

1. A group that feels that "cities in Africa 'don't work'" because of the immense infrastructural challenges in the continent,
2. a group that argues for "African exceptionalism", stating that Urban Development is unachievable in Africa, and only in Africa, due to the inherent exception of cities found in the continent, and
3. a group that believes African cities to be "'works in progress'" where most of the city making process is on the becoming actualized through localized practices.[154]

These broadly fall into two general paradigms. The first paradigm falls under "Afro-pessimism",[155] a narrative that categorizes African urban development and anything that has to do with the continent's future as irredeemable. The second paradigm argues that portraying the African situation as "failed urbanism" due to conditions resembling 'slums', shortcomings in social services, poverty and various other urban malaise overlooks the innovative daily urban practices of African city dwellers and fails to capture the unconventional yet creative processes of city making that occur therein.[156]

The study is framed on the second paradigm to further explore how these unique city-making processes can be understood with an epistemological outlook that is variant and situated. Contexts in African cities need to be read and comprehended with methods that can cope with urbanization's speed, vigour, and nature. How does one grasp the intricacy of the urban phenomenon in most African cities? This is a relevant question to ask at this juncture. Understanding the urban phenomena entails theoretical propositions that not only frame the essence of urbanization but also explicate practical and situated modes of urban practices.[157]

152 Martin J Murray and Garth A Myers, "Introduction: Situating Contemporary Cities in Africa," in *Cities in Contemporary Africa.*, ed. Martin J Murray and Garth A Myers (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 7.
153 Murray and Myers.
154 Murray and Myers.
155 In Ryan Poll's article titled "Can one 'Get Out?' The Aesthetics of Afro-Pessimism," it is stated that Afro-pessimism was first introduced by Saidiya Hartman and later developed by Frank B. Wilderson III and Jared Sexton. This perspective asserts that Black Slavery played a pivotal role in shaping the modern world and emphasizes the enduring presence of this condition in our current global landscape.
156 A. M. Simone, "Urban Development and Urban Informalities," in *Urban Africa: Changing Contours of Survival in the City*, ed. A. M. Simone and Abdelghani Abouhani, Africa in the New Millennium (London, New York: Zed Books in association with CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal ; Distributed exclusively in the United States by Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0617/2004042337-t.html; Antoine Bouillon, "Between Euphemisim and Informalism: Inventing the City," in *Under Siege, Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos: Documenta 11, Platform 4*, ed. Okwui Enwezor (Ostfildern-Ruit, New York: Hatje Cantz ; Distribution in the USA D.A.P., Distributed Art Publishers, 2002); see Introduction Okwui Enwezor, *Under Siege, Four African Cities, Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos: Documenta 11, Platform 4* (Ostfildern-Ruit, New York: Hatje Cantz ; Distribution in the USA D.A.P., Distributed Art Publishers, 2002); Achille Mbembe, "Aesthetics of Superfluity," *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (September 1, 2004): 373–405, https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-16-3-373.
157 Gautam Bhan, "Notes on a Southern Urban Practice," *Environment and Urbanization* 31, no. 2 (October 1, 2019): 639–54, https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247818815792.

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Suturing the City: Living Together in Congo's urban worlds, is an ideal example showing how Filip de Boeck, an anthropologist, in collaboration with Sammy Baloji attempted to depict the urban scape of Kinshasa via a paradigm that resonates with the one discussed above. The Authors view their work as "urban acupuncture", fusing ethnography and photography as analytic tools.[158] Significantly variant city quarters in Kinshasa are narrated accompanied by fascinating photographs. As the keyword in the title "suture" denotes, their work depicts how the various places, and sentiments within Kinshasa make up a meaningful structure.[159] Theoretical narration is mixed with powerful photographic images uniquely reading Kinshasa. De Boeck explains how "urban acupuncture" as they called it, helps them to read space and time in a compounded manner.[160]

Edgar Pieterse on the other hand argues that a more potent policy geared towards solving urbanization problems will have the power to influence better politics which will then be influential in crafting effective and suited policies.[161] This, Pieterse contends, is far more effective than designing ideal or pro-poor cities. While acknowledging scholars such as Filip de Boeck and Mamadou Diouf whom Pieterse believes have overlooked aspects of natural systems and material structures in building a "psycho-social" and "linguistic-discursive", he strongly states that a wholistic theoretical comprehension of the "specificity" of African urbanism will not be achieved through such piece-meal trials.[162]

2.4 Conceptualising Dwelling

The literature discussed above converges on one important conception—the complexity of urbanization processes in the African setting and the emergent need to theorize as well as come up with suitable reading tools to understand this phenomenon. This complexity manifests in the planning, production, and design of affordable housing in the 'African' context. Therefore, the study of dwelling in settings such as Addis Ababa requires a critical theoretical lens, one that can disentangle this complexity and one that is contextually situated.

Western notion of dwelling has been discussed in the works of Martin Heidegger, a leading construct of architectural theory, setting a precedent for post-modern thinking. The question of "What does it mean to dwell?" was first posed by Heidegger to culturally underpin the meaning of dwelling although certainly from the Western or European standpoint.

158 Filip de Boeck and Sammy Baloji, "'Acupuncturing' the City Through Anthropology and Photography:," in *Suturing the City: Living Together in Congo's Urban Worlds* (London Autograph APB, 2016), 20–26.
159 Filip de Boeck and Sammy Baloji, "The Last Post: Congo, (Post)Colonialism and Urban Tales of Unrest," in *Suturing the City: Living Together in Congo's Urban Worlds* (London Autograph APB, 2016), 31–82.
160 de Boeck and Baloji, "'Acupuncturing' the City Through Anthropology and Photography:"
161 Edgar A Pieterse, "Grasping the Unknowable: Coming to Grips with African Urbanism," in *Rogue Urbanism : Emergent African Cities*, ed. Edgar A Pieterse and AbdouMaliq Simone (Auckland Park, South Africa : Jacana Media in association with African Center for Cities, University of Cabe Town, 2013), 19–35.
162 Pieterse.

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Neil Leach, a strong critique of the modern-day theoretical foundations of dwelling, objects to Heidgeer's notion. Leach presents the notion of the Domus as a myth and outdated thinking, pointing out the "dark sides"; "homogenizing" as well as denying "difference".[163] Leach proposes that architecture needs a variant theoretical model other than the Domus, one that is in line with the intricate realities of modern society. Leach calls for an architecture that embraces the complexity of context rather than falling back to canonical theories that do not resonate with the diversity the city accommodates.[164] And indeed, to understand cities like Addis Ababa, one need not start on a theoretical dogma such as the Domus, but rather look for an alternative framework more resonant with its reality.

So how does one approach dwelling from a post-Heidegger perspective? This question can be asked for the 'African' context: 'What does it mean to 'dwell' in an 'African' frame of thinking? Does a theory as such exist? Or one can think of an imaginary scenario where Epergos and Doxius, Viollet-le-Duc's characters, dialogue on the essence of dwelling about the Dogon's village or the troglodyte's of Matmata. What would they have said? How would they have described the permanence and or ephemerality? It is worthwhile to entertain this and discuss perspectives within this frame even while knowing that there will never be a singular answer to this question.

Interpreting prior literature on the topic of dwelling in 'Africa', the general scholarship started on the wrong foot. Labelle Prussin elaborately describes the misconceptions in understanding "African Architecture" citing several flaws committed by earlier Western anthropologists and writers on the subject.[165] One of these misconceptions is the attitude of defining 'African' architecture as outrightly primitive. This is manifested in the works of Paul Oliver such as *Shelter in Africa*.[166] Prussin argues that such perspectives have impeded the development of a genuine understanding of African Architecture per se.[167]

In comparison to the days when Labelle's article was published in the 1970s, the discourse on African architecture and urbanism (in general) has advanced in breadth and depth of understanding.

In the 1960s writers such as Udo Kulturmann documented and discussed dwelling projects and public buildings that foreign architects have mainly realised. Out of the very few indigenous examples mentioned, Kulturmann compares the architecture of the ancient city of Zimbabwe with the structures of Acropolis[168], a comparison that fails to analyze the project in its own cultural setting. Kulturmann fails to acknowledge what existed before the 1960's and argues for the non-existence of genuine African architecture.[169] He calls for a fusion of technical and technological inputs from abroad with African "tradition". Albeit with twisted premises and blind generalizations on 'African Culture'[170], Kultermann contributed to the advancement of further research at the continental level.

163 Neil Leach, "The Dark Side of the Domus," *The Journal of Architecture* 3, no. 1 (January 1998): 31–42, https://doi.org/10.1080/136023698374297.
164 Leach.
165 Labelle Prussin, "An Introduction to Indigenous African Architecture," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 33, no. 3 (October 1974): 183–205, https://doi.org/10.2307/988854.
166 Prussin.
167 Prussin.
168 see Udo Kultermann, *New Directions in African Architecture*, New Directions in Architecture (London: Studio Vista, 1969), 22.
169 see Kultermann, 11.
170 see Kulturmann's characterization of an "African" person Kultermann, 12.

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Susan Denyer was one of the pioneers in conducting a groundbreaking architectural survey on the continent. Her work demonstrates anthropological, historical, and geographical qualities giving a good context to situate the 1,500 cultural groups she covered. As opposed to Kultermann, characterizing a generic 'African' to create dichotomies between cultures with "perishable" monuments versus cultures that strive to create permanent monumental structures.[171] A dichotomy that could be easily refuted by citing the several permanent monuments found in the continent. Susan on the other hand articulates how examples of architecture with non-permanent materials should not be taken as a sign of societal instability and delves into discussing specific and localized reasoning for choosing building materials.[172]

The dwelling, "Architecture" in Denyer's words, was a "personal adaptation of a group solution". A culture of building handed down orally from generation to generation.[173] One of the most important contributions of Denyer's work was to expose the stereotypical attitudes towards Architecture in Africa and illustrate the sheer Architectural heterogeneity evident in the continent.

In the 1990s, Nnamdi Elleh laid a crucial foundation for advancing the study of architecture in Africa through a more nuanced and in-depth theoretical exploration of 'African' architecture. Elleh's work aims to be comprehensive, covering all regions and sub-regions of the continent, examining them through cultural, historical, and political lenses. Drawing on Ali Mazuri's concept of "Triple Heritage Culture", Elleh defines African architecture as a fusion of Indigenous, Semitic, and Greco-Roman influences.[174] One of the strengths of Elleh's research is its placement of Africa within the broader context of world architectural history, addressing the neglect the continent—excluding Egypt and the Maghreb—has historically faced in global architectural scholarship.

Unlike Udo Kultermann, both Denyer and Elleh emphasize the importance of dwelling architecture alongside public and religious buildings, thereby broadening the conversation about human habitats. These studies have uncovered aspects of Africa's built environment that had been overlooked for centuries, stimulating new debates on the continent's architectural landscape.

While acknowledging the contributions of ethnographers like Leo Frobenius and other colonial-era explorers, their work, though valuable as documentation, lacks critical depth due to its colonial biases. Figures like Hermann, Frobenius, and Kulturmann approached African architecture with subjective interpretations, which limits the objectivity of their findings.[175]

In the contemporary era, efforts to posit theories on the 'Theory of African Architecture' continue, with the conceptualization of domestic architecture being an integral part of this endeavour.[176] The subject remains vast and complex. My perspective is that this discourse is still in its early stages. The research conducted so far points to greater diversity, richness and complexity. I believe that it will be more enriched when deeply rooted in local cultures, everyday practices and languages. If a theory of sub-saharan architecture is to emerge, it will likely find its foundation in the region's spoken languages.[177]

171 see Kultermann, 12.
172 Susan Denyer, *African Traditional Architecture: An Historical and Geographical Perspective* (Londen: Heinemann, 1978).
173 see Denyer, 4.
174 see Nnamdi Elleh, *African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997), 9.
175 Philipp Meuser, "Theorising African Architecture: Typologies, Buildings and Urbanism," in *Theorising Architecture in Sub-Saharan Africa: Perspectives, Questions, and Concepts*, ed. Philipp Meuser and Adil Dalbai, vol. 1, Basics 134 (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2021), 41.
176 Philipp Meuser and Adil Dalbai, *Architectural Guide. Sub-Saharan Africa. Volume 1, Introduction to the History and Theory of Sub-Saharan Architecture*, Guide Di Architettura (Berlin: DOM, 2021).
177 See Meuser, "Theorising African Architecture: Typologies, Buildings and Urbanism," 41.

2.5 The socio-spatial frame

This section will delve into select aspects of the socio-spatial, focusing mostly on methodology. The areas I examine are subsets of the socio-spatial, grounded in language, patterns, and the broader inquiry into how to interpret and conceptualize everyday practices—a topic that has long intrigued the field of architecture. Architecture is a discipline that continually probes and theorizes on the human interaction with spaces, but still maintains a limited theoretical and methodological framework to effectively address the "reciprocal" relationship between the social and the spatial.[178]

An Important theoretical reference to understand this relationship is the work of Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre puts forward his seminal proposition that space is a social product under which he develops the so-called "triad model"; namely: Spatial practices, Representations of space, and Representational spaces".[179] Helen Liggett describes Lefebvre's interest to develop a wholistic "theory of space" relevant at different scales and constructs as an exercise in ultimately producing a research model connecting physical space with social space in the sense of imagining new spaces as well as looking into existing spaces.[180] Representations of space are about planning and planning institutions. Representational spaces are about meaning and symbolic associations and spatial practices or "life as perceived", in Lefebvre's words, is about "spatial practices"; the socio-spatial performance of people in their everyday lives.[181] This intellectual basis is a methodological point of departure for the study in terms of capturing as well as understanding everyday practices.

The correlation between culture and the making of buildings is established by Amos Rapoport at the end of the 1960s.[182] This correlation was further expounded by Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language*, a controversial yet canonical work on this topic. Although highly criticized by academia for being too absolutist and reductionist[183], it is a pioneer work in attempting to show the link between human behaviour and architectural space. The 253 patterns presented in the book are a result of analysis of everyday spatial practices. The patterns are "entities" added to make up a larger "language".[184] Each pattern starts from an observed recurrent problem with a detailed narration of the solution.[185] These patterns were realistic problems culturally situated to a specific context; they fail short in being a methodological basis for application when decontextualized. Nonetheless, *A Pattern Language* is a vital intellectual reference for this study especially in the sense of highlighting the importance of drawing from existing spatial practices.

From a similar perspective, *the Habitat Bill of Rights* is another essential document that aims to characterize the design of houses in their qualitative aspect. Its argument is premised on "environmental standards" that have become ever more relevant as there is a shift of scale in housing interventions,

178 Tom Avermaete, "The Socius of Architecture: Spatialising the Social and Socialising the Spatial," *The Journal of Architecture* 23, no. 4 (May 19, 2018): 537–42, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2018.1479353.
179 Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 30–33.
180 Helen Liggett and David C. Perry, eds., in *Spatial Practices: Critical Explorations in Social/Spatial Theory* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), 247–49.
181 Liggett and C. Perry.
182 Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, Foundations of Cultural Geography Series (New Jersy: Englewood Cliffs, NJ : Prentice-Hall, 1969).
183 Ritu Bhatt, "Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language: An Alternative Exploration of Space-Making Practices," *The Journal of Architecture* 15, no. 6 (December 2010): 711–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2011.533537.
184 Alexander Christopher, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, vol. 2, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
185 Christopher, Ishikawa, and Silverstein.

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tending to impact larger communities and cities at large.[186] Planning and design processes cannot be left for "intuitive judgment".[187] The document, pioneer in its attempt to establish qualitative aspects of housing as rights, does a good job of illustrating dwelling design as an important part and parcel of the larger community "clusters" at the spatial level. Written in the 1970s around the same time as *A Pattern Language*, it is a reaction to the aftermath of mass housing realized in the 1950s. Although it strongly addresses qualitative aspects of spatiality in a multitude scales, the work is 'complete' and prescriptive in the sense that it is a catalogue of solutions. Furthermore, it is limited in becoming a direct reference for emergent urban challenges requiring contemporary reading tools.

Both works present a rich level of groundwork on the notion of harvesting design references through the reading of existing spatial practices. The *Habitat Bill of Rights* presents the link as a catalogue of codes whereas Alexander's work has a 'biblical' nature since it frames patterns as being static.

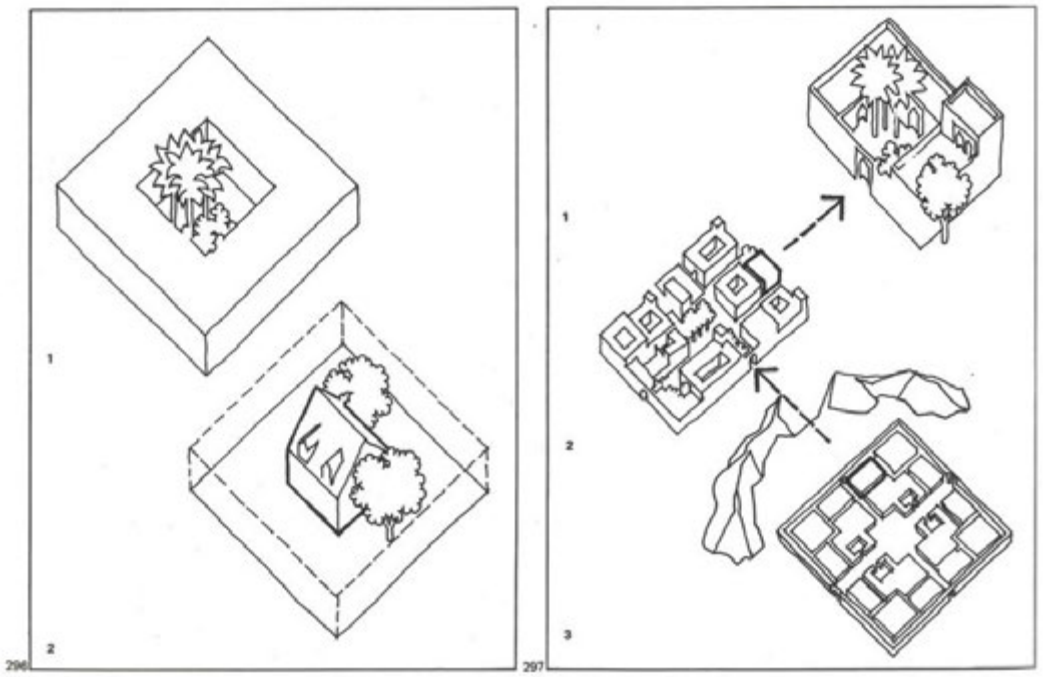

FIG. 2.1 The pedestrian precinct, cluster and dwelling. Source: Habitat Bill of Rights.

What sums up the above works of literature, suggesting a practical approach coupling research with practice is the study *How the Other Half Builds*; a research-design project conducted by Mc-Gill University at the end of the 1980s on several informal settlements in the city of Indore, India. The uniqueness of the project lies in its main premises. It views informal-housing or slums as solutions or positive adaptations to specific challenges in urban systems instead of as problems.[188] The conditions, ranging from intimate house extensions to access streets and plots are thoroughly surveyed and analysed using architectonic methods. The socio-spatial practices of the community within these conditions are drawn and situated within space at different scales. The result of the analysis, varying from a catalogue of Spatial conditions to extracted ergonomic knowledge, is finally used as a design guideline.

186 National Committee for Human Settlements, Government of Iran, 'HABITAT BILL OF RIGHTS', *Perspectives on Habitat* 42, no. 252 (n.d.): 8.
187 National Committee for Human Settlements, Government of Iran.
188 "How the Other Half Builds Space" (Center for minimum cost housing, Mc Gill University, 1984).

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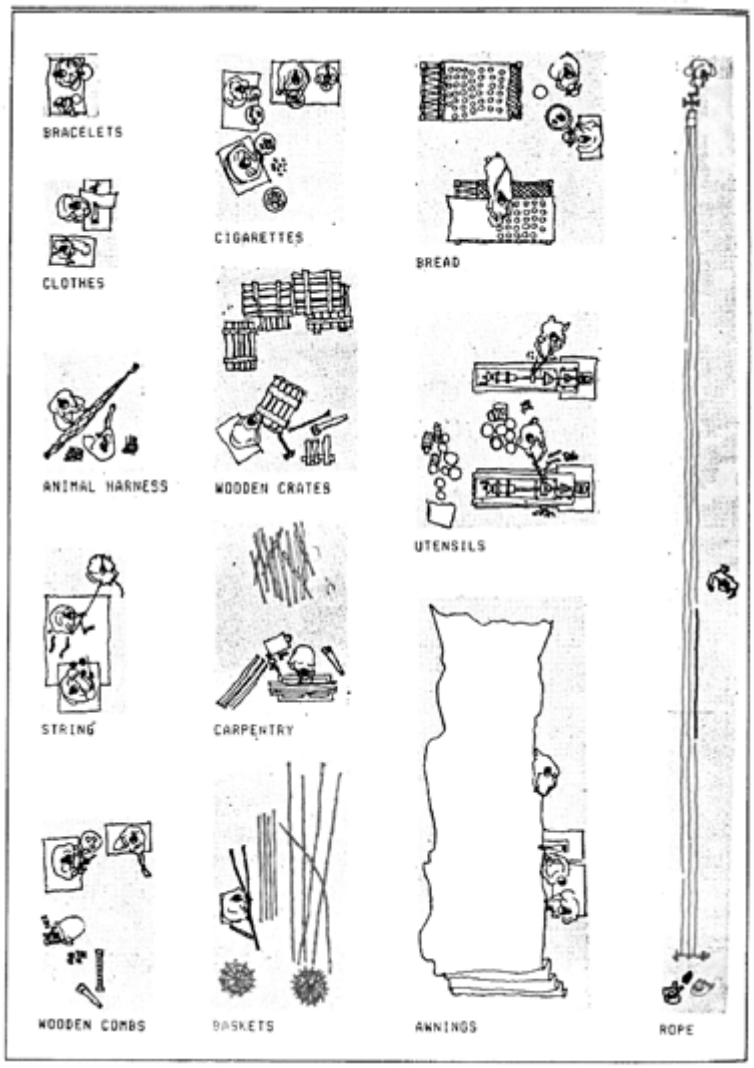

FIG. 2.2 Mapping of working activities vis a vis space. Source: How the other half builds.

While examining socio-spatial practices is methodologically important, It is equally necessary to situate them within the research context. Since a key aim of this study is to understand the socio-spatial notions of the gibi, gwaro and gwada, it requires a diachronic analysis of these terminologies, highlighting the significant role language plays in this process. Language in this research carries a twofold significance. First, it serves to deconstruct and analyse the embedded meanings of socio-spatial concepts by tracing the genealogy of words and later translating them into English. Second, it acts as a means to extract knowledge from living human archives, which is invaluable given the importance of oral traditions and the wisdom of elders in the research context.

Amadou Hampâtė Bâ, another African intellectual said that Africa, when an old man dies, it is a library burning. This is a different form of knowledge that we do not know and, therefore, there is a tension between written knowledge and oral knowledge, so some African intellectuals have developed the concept of orature. Unlike oral literature, orature does not need literature as its ground of legitimation.[189]

189 see Santos, “Epistemologies of the South and the Future,” 26.

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This is quite a popular saying in the wider academic community doing research in an 'African' context. It is also something that I had to grapple with throughout the research—The fact that too little material is found published on a topic while an abundance of oral knowledge exists. Scholars such as Jan Vansina have elaborated on "oral tradition" and how it can be used as historical evidence.[190]

Building on the conceptual framework outlined in this chapter, the next chapter on methodologies will detail the methodological approach designed to analyze socio-spatial practices and dweller-initiated transformations within the context of Addis Ababa.

190 Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, Wis. : University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), http://archive.org/details/oraltraditionash0000vans.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Position and Methodological Framework

Discussing the epistemological foundations of the research in Chapter 2 without considering my positionality would be inadequate. To provide a comprehensive perspective, I must situate my background.

3.1.1 Research Position

I was born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a diverse nation encompassing various nations and nationalities each with distinct histories, cultures, and climate zones. I am proficient in two local languages, namely Tigrigna (my native tongue) and Amharic (the language that was predominant in Addis Ababa when I grew up). Consequently, English became my third language, one that I initially encountered during my primary education. Mastering Amharic without an accent has facilitated opportunities that might have otherwise presented challenges.[191] Moreover, this linguistic versatility allows me to delve into cultural concepts that defy direct translation, a topic I explore further in Chapter 7.

In a society where men hold a dominant social role, I can attest that being male gave me an advantage during my fieldwork encounters and associated archival research processes. Originally, my fieldwork plan involved a comprehensive ethnographic engagement with my research participants However, this plan didn't materialize as expected due to the COVID 19 Pandemic and the outbreak of the civil war in Ethiopia in November 2020. My family originates from Tigray, a northern region of Ethiopia, and we, like many others, were deeply affected by the war. Extended family members lost their lives. Those that were able to immigrate left the country while those who could not were living in despicable conditions. During this difficult period, I couldn't travel to Addis Ababa to carry out my fieldwork, due to the ethnic profiling and confinement of fellow Tigrayans in concentration camps. Given my Tigrayan background, a portion of my research had to be conducted remotely through trained interlocutors, with my identity remaining concealed from the research participants. This was essential to avoid any bias in my interactions with the respondents and to safeguard myself from potential hostile encounters that were common in those days. Following the end of the active war in October 2022, I was able to undertake two consecutive fieldwork trips with the objectives of validating the data collected remotely and conducting additional fieldwork sessions.

191 Using an accent in Amharic that differs from what is considered 'proper' or has rural influences can occasionally lead to ridicule. In Ethiopia, language is closely tied to one's identity and has the power to significantly influence the dynamics of social interactions.

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As a writer, I have chosen to employ the first-person perspective, using "I" to identify myself and to ensure that the reader is fully aware of the presence of a human author behind the ideas and arguments presented. This author, like any other, is not immune to biases but strives to acknowledge and address potential biases through reflexive processes. I believe in the feasibility of maintaining a critical distance throughout the research process, all while acknowledging my role in shaping and contributing to the generation of knowledge. This aligns with the theoretical discussions presented in Chapter 2 regarding alternative epistemologies. I position myself as a researcher who adheres to the belief that knowledge is inherently influenced by the position from which it is generated.[192] This position could be gender, class, race, or political affiliation. In line with the arguments put forth by Ramon Grosfuguel, I challenge the prevalent notion that knowledges can exist in pure, "unpositioned" form with universal attributes, a notion that is primarily tuned by the colonial episteme.[193]

3.1.2 Research Components

In this thesis, I attempt to establish relationships between housing conditions and dwelling practices in planned and non-planned settlements of Addis Ababa through qualitative research approaches. Although the overall methodology of research is positioned as hermeneutical, mixed methods are employed. It is a primarily qualitative research process, as it mostly relies on visual methods for survey and analysis. Nevertheless, a quantitative comparative analysis mechanism is also used to compare results. The three basic components of the methodology are i) Archival research, ii) Architectural ethnography, and iii) Comparative analysis. Archival research is employed to establish an understanding of the eight categories of housing settlements. Pertinent masterplans and decrees that have resulted in or in any way influenced the cases will be reviewed. Architectural ethnography is applied to depict as well as decode the dwelling practices vis-à-vis typo-morphological conditions. Photography, drawing, and mapping, both qualitative and quantitative, are some of the specific techniques employed within Architectural Ethnography. The 18 studied cases will be subject to comparative analysis to explore potential patterns while critically highlighting similarities and differences.

Methodologically, the research will encompass two main areas of focus:

- An investigation into master planning and housing development programs in the period of 1950s to 2010s. I use archival research as well as 'interview' as a key method in this focus.

- An in-depth analysis of housing conditions at the individual dwelling scale, particularly as a result of a combination of the aforementioned components and the housing modifications initiated by the dwellers. It is worth noting that the primary emphasis of the study lies within this third component, which addresses a critical research gap in the field.

Architectural ethnography will be the primary research method employed to explicate dwelling practices in the context of dweller-initiated housing transformations. The section below gives historical and theoretical context to the method.

192 see Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 589, https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066.
193 Ramón Grosfoguel, "Colonial Difference, Geopolitics of Knowledge, and Global Coloniality in the Modern/Colonial Capitalist World-System," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 25, no. 3 (2002): 203–24, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40241548.

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3.2 Ethnographic decoding of dwelling practices

3.2.1 Situating Architectural Ethnography

The term "Architectural Ethnography" was publicized as a theme at the Japanese pavilion during the 16th Venice Architectural Biennale in 2018. The exhibition was curated by Momoyo Kaijima from Atelier Bow-Wow in partnership with Laurent Stalder and Yu Iseki.[194] Although explorations of visual ethnography as a method in the work of Atelier Bow-Wow had already started in preceding years, the biennale promoted the notion to the wider practitioner as well as the academic community. Kaijima explains the interest to depict the architecture and urban space from standpoint of users rather than professionals (architects, planners)[195].

Albena Yavena argues that ethnographic research is one of the very few "social research" tools well suited for the modus operandi of Architects.[196] It is, in fact, particularly well-suited to observe, process and analyze socio-spatial practices in residential communities.[197] Social surveys and similar methods have "dominated" housing studies for quite some time.[198] Adrian Franklin describes how the interest in Ethnography started to slowly build up both from the angle of "social theory" and from "exploration of new methods and perspectives" in housing studies.[199] Ethnography in Franklin's words "centers on *deconstructing* the normal and taken for granted, the usual and the self-evident."[200] For this study, Architectural ethnography falls within the category of "exploration" or experiment, by which housing conditions are explored through the agency of architectonic practices such as drawing. Drawing in Architectural ethnography is used as the primary instrument of research. Although not using the word "Architectural ethnography", Ray Lucas offers key examples of conducting research or generating knowledge through drawing or "inscriptive practices" as he directly refers to them.[201]

After the post-modernist era, theoretical outlooks have taken the so-called "spatial" or "material" turn giving more emphasis to spaces and building elements.[202] While still arguing for the ethnographic study of spatial practices in the context of the spatial and material dimensions, anthropologists such as Marie Stender suggests a "collaboration with the world of architecture" where space and material are the primary subjects of exploration.[203] Architectural ethnography

194 Momoyo Kaijima, Laurent Stalder, and Yu Iseki, *Architectural Ethnography* (TOKYO: Toru Kato, TOTO Publishing (TOTO LTD), 2018).
195 Kaijima, Stalder, and Iseki. Earlier projects involving drawing experiments such as *Made in Tokyo*, *Broken Paris* and *Pet Architecture* guidebook show the trajectory of drawing experiments and the evolution of the concept within Atelier Bow-Wow.
196 Yaneva, "New Voices in Architectural Ethnography."
197 Nelson Mota, "Patterns on Inhabitation in Addis Ababa," in *Global Housing: Dwelling in Addis Ababa*, ed. Dick Van Gameren and Nelson Mota (Prinsenbeek: Jap Sam Books, 2020), 90–107.
198 Adrian Franklin, "Ethnography and Housing Studies," *Housing Studies* 5, no. 2 (April 1, 1990): 92–111, https://doi.org/10.1080/02673039008720677.
199 Franklin.
200 Franklin.
201 Ray Lucas, "Drawing, Diagrams and Maps," in *Research Methods for Architecture*, 1 online resource (208 pages) : illustrations (chiefly color) vols. (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2016), 175–83, https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1234834.
202 Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, "Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," *Perspecta* 33 (January 1, 2002): 72–77.
203 Stender, "Towards an Architectural Anthropology—What Architects Can Learn from Anthropology and Vice Versa."

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would then draw its methods from Architecture while still staying true to the core principles of ethnographic research in dwelling studies. It is important to highlight at this point that architectural ethnography suggest a recalibration of the notion of architecture. Rather than a discipline essentially focused on buildings and other built artefacts, architectural ethnography engages with modes of inquiry focused on places on inhabitation for both human and non-human beings. Possible subjects of inquiry span a multisensory environment that goes beyond occularcentrism, and includes haptic ways of experiencing, atmospheres, and sonic spaces.[204] Exploring the relevance of visual supports in ethnographic research, Sarah Pink demonstrates the importance of using audio-visual material to capture the essence of dwelling spaces in addition to interviews. [205] In Pink's work, home atmospheres captured through audio-visual techniques are critically used to assess the spatial practices of people inside their homes.[206] Adopting Pink's approach in the research, apart from its use in decoding dwelling practices, will enhance the concept of Architectural Ethnography, showcasing its capacity to incorporate diverse mediums like drawings and photography, alongside architectural notation methods. This will contribute to the advancement of future investigations into habitats.

3.2.2 Housing settlements as cases

The study of socio-spatial practices at the dwelling and cluster scale is a core component of this research. A critical survey of the socio-spatial practices is conducted on eight dominant housing conditions in Addis Ababa. A housing condition in the scope of this research is a typo-morphological setting of the dwelling including a neighborhood cluster or its immediate outdoor environment. Most of the housing conditions are initially direct results of government interventions such as 'urban upgrading' and 'urban resettlement' while some, like the sefer and extra-legal housing settlements, are continuous long-term results of community self-actualizations tracing back their original layout from the time the city started as a military encampment.

The housing categorization is an outcome of the test-run fieldwork conducted in July 2019. As it is the intention of the study to have a baseline for the overarching dwelling culture of Addis Ababa, the selected cases represent dominant typo-morphological conditions in the city. A few of the cases represent non-dominant but typo-morphologically significant housing conditions that are deemed important to study dwelling practices. Utmost care is made to choose cases that are mutually exclusive of each other.

204 Máire Eithne O'Neill, "Corporeal Experience: A Haptic Way of Knowing," *Journal of Architectural Education* 55, no. 1 (September 1, 2001): 3–12, https://doi.org/10.1162/104648801753168765; David Seamon, "Architecture, Place, and Phenomenology Buildings as Lifeworlds, Atmospheres, and Environmental Wholes," in *Place and Phenomenology*, ed. Janet Donohoe (London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 247–64; Angeliki Sioli and Elisavet Kiourtsoglou, eds., *The Sound of Architecture: Acoustic Atmospheres in Place* (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2022).
205 Sarah Pink, "Introduction: Changing Gender in the Sensory Home," in *Home Truths. Gender, Domestic Objects and Everyday Life* (New York: berg publishers, 2004), 9–24.
206 Pink et al., "Methods for Researching Homes."

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3.2.3 Tiers of classification

As there is a visible typo-morphological distinction between the planned and non-planned settlements in the city, the principal categorization is between nonplanned and planned. Hence, the first tier is based on a distinction between planned and non-planned housing settlements in the city of Addis Ababa. The second tier of categorization is based on the typo-morphological characteristics of the dwelling unit: whether it is designed as a plot-based single-family unit, or a dwelling unit included in a group of multiple units aggregated in a multi-family block or housing complex. Due to its characteristics, in the non-planned settlements, these two categories are combined. The final and third tier of classification is based on the model of 'urban' development. This is more relevant for the planned settings while the type of settlement (in its typo morphological sense) is used to classify the non-planned settings. In the non-planned settlements, the three models of urban development are i) Indigenous neighbourhood (sefer); ii) extra-legal settlement; and iii) upgraded informal settlement. The plot-based planned developments are divided into three categories: iv) Aided Self-help; v) Serviced Land; and vi) Urban Resettlement. The block-based planned developments are divided into two categories: vii) Urban redevelopment; and vii): Urban extension. This classification structure may not always be universal as it is partly developed from a synthesis of observations on the most common and key housing figures in Addis Ababa.

One residential neighbourhood is selected as a case study to represent each of the 8 types of housing developments except the serviced land which had examples of two neighbourhoods. [207] In each neighbourhood, two different dwelling units were selected, resulting in 18 different case studies.

The selection of dwelling units is made using a **purposive sampling** approach, based on criteria that secure its representativity.[208] It first requires a door-to-door request for a willing homeowner or household delegate to avail his/her house for the case study analysis. Then I will check whether that specific house fulfils the criteria set for the study sample. The sample to be studied shall possess the general attributes of the housing settlement under study.

As noted above, choosing the study sample entailed a random door-to-door search within the housing neighbourhood. [209] A general selection criterion was set as follows:

1. The dweller should be an owner or an originally resettled occupant and not a short-term renter. Owners or resettled occupants can better explain the evolution of the housing condition regarding evolving spatial needs. They can also better describe the socio-spatial patterns at the community level since they are more embedded into the neighbourhood.
2. The original traces of the house shall be visible and modifications over the years shall not have erased the core elements. Houses that have been modified without recognition or replaced will not represent the housing condition under study.

For each case study, the ethnographic research follows three distinct methodological operations: **i) Performative Observation**, **ii) Survey** (Architectural and photographic), and **iii) Processing** (processing data using architectural notation and photo collage). I will describe each of these methods in the following part of this section.

207 Two types of "sites and services" models were experimented with in Addis Ababa. One was with a core house and one was without. Hence, two neighbourhoods have been included in the study to represent both models.
208 The specific selection criteria shall guarantee that the representative sample is not an anomaly in terms of ownership, household characteristics, physical housing conditions, etc. in reference to the prevalent attributes of the dwelling units found in the housing settlement in general.
209 Devising a selection criterion specific to the housing condition is a requirement of the method.

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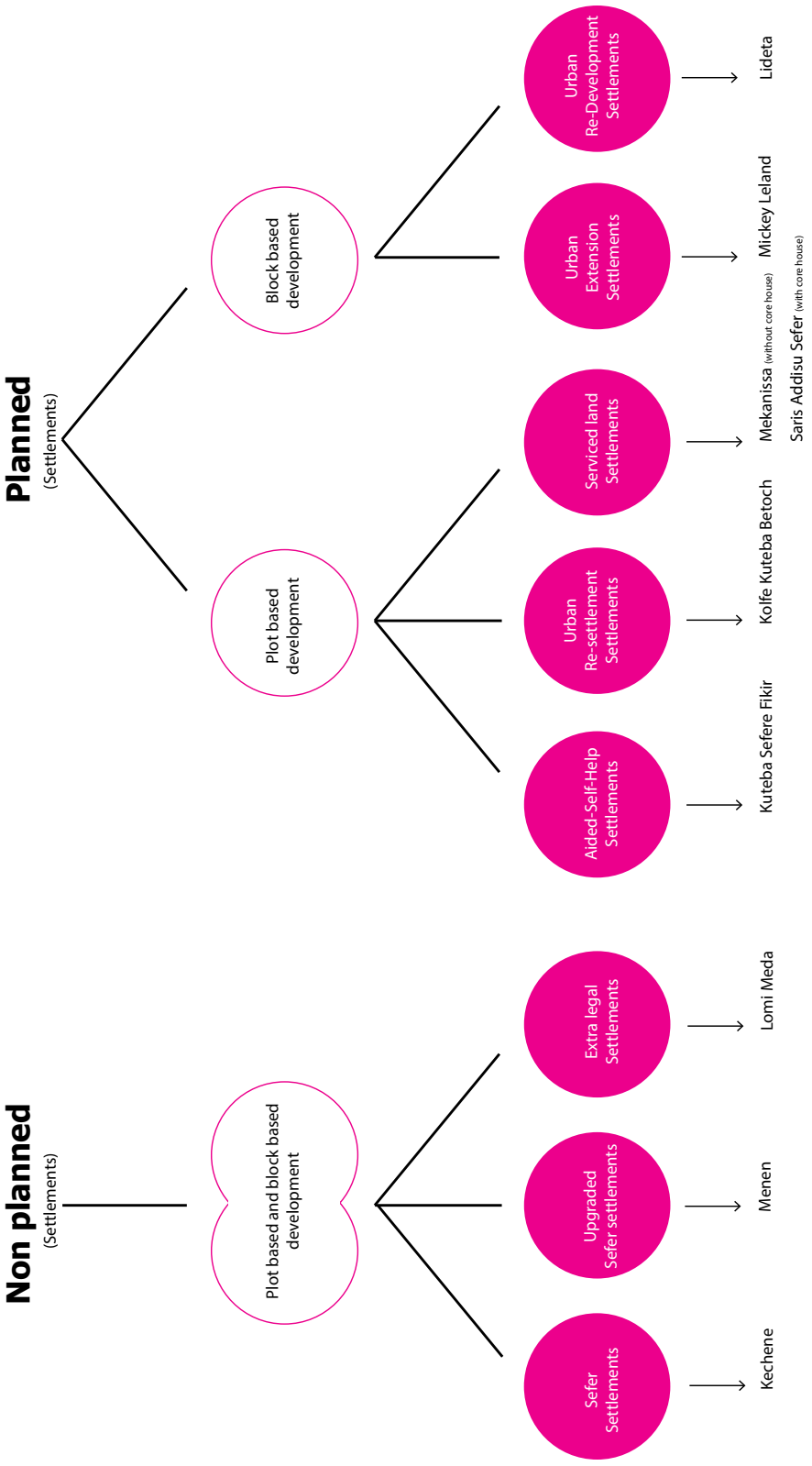

FIG. 3.1 Classification diagram of housing conditions.

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3.2.4 Performative observation

This operation consists of a methodological recording of first impressions and involves a first-hand visit. It is instrumental in identifying core spatial practices for further articulation during the processing phase. This phase has two parts. The first part is the interview. It starts by conducting a semi-structured interview, which can also pass as a very informal and loose conversation with the respondent. Interviews conducted within the home environment are unique and powerful as opposed to those conducted in other settings because they are experiential.[210] The interview happens in a "sensory environment" that the researcher needs to be acutely aware of.[211] The interview then gives way to the second part, a performative spatial observation.[212] This entails a presence in the household whereby the resident goes on with his or her daily chores with the researcher being inconspicuously present taking notes, sketches and recording active domestic chores. A research procedure that is in congruence with William Whyte's observation tactics but performed in a private sphere [213]. Both parts of the performative observation contribute to uncovering the most important spatial practices within the household. This stage is a vehicle to understand, and grasp nuanced daily spatial practices taking place in the dwelling sphere.

3.2.5 Survey

The survey is the core of ethnographic research where architectonic (visual as well as analytic) tools are employed for data collection. The survey phase has two components: The **architectural** and **photographic surveys**. The primary step is the Architectural survey which starts off by producing as-built measurements of the housing settlement. The photographic survey then follows to capture the softer and intangible practices as 'atmospheric' representations.

Discussing the application of visual ethnography as a research method, Camilo Leon-Quijano, a documentary photographer and a sociologist, refreshes the two important paradigms of visual ethnography (related to film and photography) as stated by Sarah Pink; the first one is when visual material is only regarded as data and the second is when the visual material is "phenomenological, sensory and non-representational", when it becomes a generator of knowledge in its own right.[214] . Jon Prosser has presented similar arguments already in the 1990s but is more specific to the use of the camera as a tool. Prosser contributed his reflections on the use of photography in an ethnographic case study underlining the process or phases of photographic research; the three phases being: i) Gaining access, ii) Data collection, and identifying substantive issues iii) Creative phase and theorization.[215] In the final stages of exploration, the author makes an important distinction between the use of photography purely for data collection purposes as opposed to its applications for the illustration of meaning within the research findings.[216] Concluding his arguments, Prosser underlines that photographic methodology needs to be tailored to particular

210 Sarah Pink et al., "Methods for Researching Homes," in *Making Homes: Ethnography and Design* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 93–126.
211 Pink et al.
212 The spatial observation is constructed after the dialogue with the respondent. Key spatial practices of the household have already been discussed. This operation is performative because it involves pre-scripting of these practices.
213 William H. (William Hollingsworth). Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington, D.C: The Conservation Foundation, 1980).
214 Camilo Leon-Qujiano, "Visual Ethnography: Tools, Archives and Research Methods. Introduction," *Visual Ethnography* 6, no. 1 (June 30, 2017), https://doi.org/10.12835/ve2017.1-0073.
215 Jon Prosser, "Personal Reflections on the Use of Photography in an Ethnographic Case Study," *British Educational Research Journal* 18, no. 4 (January 1992): 397–411, https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192920180406.
216 Prosser.

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research and has to be attuned to the research process.[217] Following Prosser's claim, I have customized the utilization of photography to emphasize and highlight and characterize dwelling practices, while also employing it as a means of interaction with dwellers.

Architectural Survey

After a profound discussion with the dweller about the use of space and the history of spatial transformation, me and my team commenced taking as-built measurements. All the physical aspects of the dwelling unit are measured using digital and analogue measurement devices. A Digital meter [*Bosch: xx series*] is used for spaces and building elements and a measuring tape [*Stanley: 10m*] for furniture and fixtures. This data is first inscribed in a sheet whereby quick sketches with dimensions are produced and important figures are documented.[218] The acquired data was then modelled in Autodesk Revit [REVIT Release 2018], a BIM software. [219] All the important dwelling elements, physical as well as spatial, are fed onto the BIM software to generate a model. The significance of the BIM is to have the possibility to extract infinite descriptive drawings (both in view and scale) from the model for further analysis. The Architectural notations derived from the BIM result in spatial measurements, in the form of area and volume, establishing empirical relationships between spaces, building elements, furniture etc.

Photographic Survey

The second component of the survey is the photographic survey. Here the intent is to capture architectural atmospheres. 'Atmosphere' is described by Pallasmaa as a "mental thing", a characteristic construction of feeling with regards to the impression that a certain space or situation evokes.[220]

What tools can one use to illustrate this "thing"? Notations from the BIM model, as precise as they are, do not have the means to depict the ambiance of a particular space. Photography is then used to decipher as well as amplify meaningful social and spatial practices.[221] Still images are framed and captured using a full-frame digital camera [Nikon Z6, NIKKOR 24-70 2.8s] with the intent of outlining the atmospheric condition of the dwelling unit. The goal is to create an imagery of lived space and the image is usually an instance of a daily spatial practice. None of the images are staged. The Images fall into two loose categories. The first category focuses on the dwelling unit while the second focuses on the housing cluster.[222]

Images of the immediate environs of the housing condition are used to understand and describe the dwelling unit in context. In addition, a drone camera [DJI Ronin Mavic 2] is used to capture the bird's-eye-view vantage point of the cluster to map and understand plot structures.

217 Prosser.
218 A sample of this sheet is annexed for reference.
219 Building Information Modelling
220 Juhani Pallasmaa, "Space, Place, and Atmosphere: Peripheral Perception in Existential Experience," in *Architectural Atmospheres on the Experience and Politics of Architecture*, 2014, 18–41.
221 According to Le febvre's framework, 'spatial practices' are everyday social and spatial patterns of people. Le Febvre directly refers to these as "Life as perceived"
222 The cluster is a defined limit of attached houses for the planned settlements and a group of attached houses sharing physical characteristics and trait of development for non-planned settlements.

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As a follow-up on the performative observation section of the fieldwork to re-explore key issues that have been identified during past visits, the research team re-visits the household with a framed picture from the earlier session to be presented as a gift. The image relates to parts of an earlier dialogue with the dweller. Further discussion is casually initiated, and the participants get the opportunity to discuss their opinions via the moment captured in the image. It is important here to observe and record the reaction of the research participants when they receive the gift. The participant would then proceed to place it on one corner of the domestic space. The location of the image and the way it is placed are equally important as they explain location preferences and other cultural nuances that in turn trigger dialogue about the nucleus of the household and the use of domestic space in general. This encounter serves as a reflexive juncture within the survey, flipping the gaze from the respondent to the researcher by giving an opportunity to reflect. It also helps to establish a grounded relationship with the respondent offering an opportunity for the respondent to have an opinion on the survey, upgrading the relationship to something that is beyond "transactional".[223] I have used this occasion as a bridge to the processing phase.

3.2.6 Processing the visual and textual

Two sets of fieldwork results from the performative observation and the survey are availed for the processing phase. The performative observation brings forth evidence in terms of narrative, supporting the creation of textual analysis. The Architectural survey is extracted from the BIM in the form of architectural notations, and the photographic survey in the form of still images. Results of the survey are analytically mapped and processed using techniques/methods such as Architectural mapping, Image analysis, and photo collage. Figure-ground analysis drawings will be used for processing dwelling settlements at the scale of the cluster.

Textual Analysis

The perspective of dwellers on their dwelling environment in conjunction with observations of on-site spatial practices constructs a spatial narrative. The main body of data during this session is an audio recording of a loose (semi-structured) interview. The interview is carefully verbatim transcribed generating a rich text of the interaction. The text is thematically categorized (coded when necessary) into several topics of interest. Processing of this result goes in two directions. The first aspect of it is combined with the architectural survey to enrich it with the concept of 'time'. For example, the past physical conditions of the dwelling are re-constructed via the memory of dwellers and visualized through drawings. The second aspect is discourse-analyzed within the photographic medium. Important features of the house that contradict the narrative of participants are sometimes unravelled from the photographs. This strategy of analysing the texts with the inputs from the survey would lead to a more nuanced interpretation of the texts generated from the interview. Nevertheless, it is important to underscore that the main mode of analysis is through the textual medium.

223 Pink et al., "Methods for Researching Homes."

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Architectural mapping

Architectural mapping refers to the production of diagrams and abstracted drawings with reference to the architectural notations generated from the BIM model and/or the photographic survey. "Mapping" is used here in the frame of meaning as used by Kevin Lynch. [224] Diagramming would result in simplified redrawing to study construction sequence, plot layouts, spatial proportions of built space versus open space, etc. Architectural mapping also involves reconstructing the past physical conditions of the dwelling from the memory of dwellers during the interviews.

Photocollage/digital collage

The primary goal of the photographic survey is to illustrate and create a stage to re-interpret lived space, it is instrumental to capture the atmosphere of both the socio-spatial practices and physical housing conditions in the dwelling unit. With this overarching intent, the photographic survey is used to produce a catalogue of images that highlight the daily socio-spatial practices of the inhabitants. Lenses that are developed from the research question are used as focusing tools.

Collage strives to create new meanings and perspectives via juxtapositions. [225] The technique of Photocollage is applied here as a qualitative vehicle to highlight important aspects of space and material. juxtaposing an image within the thematic category of the lens over a chosen frame of perspective and contriving the image to amplify its ambient qualities enables a deeper analytic visual reading. The results of the collage are visual assemblages of realistic photos 'tweaked' to highlight artefacts, spatial corners, materials, and so on along with a perspective view generated from the BIM model.

3.3 Methodological challenges and limitations

Kaplan argues that Methodology is not a sufficient ingredient for a successful research endeavour.[226] He further points out how an overemphasis on methodological operations could "inhibit" the creative trajectory of ideas in a research process.[227] Architectural Ethnography is not immune from similar general limitations besides others that are more intrinsically grounded to its construct. The very act of combining an anthropological position with architectonic tools comes with its challenges. From the standpoint of anthropologists, Maire Stender argues ethnographic studies on dwelling and the built environment, in general, shall be conducted via the encompassed "social life".[228] Stender further highlights the risk of applying ethnographic methods devoid of the associated theoretical domains of anthropology. Besides these general limitations, challenges pertaining to 'ethics' and 'methodological operations' are further discussed below.

224 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, Publications of the Joint Center for Urban Studies (Cambridge [Mass.]: Technology Press & Harvard University Press, 1960).
225 Collage started within the arts in the 20th Century as an artistic endeavor to introduce three-dimensionality into the artist's canvas.
226 Abraham Kaplan, "Methodology," in *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 3–33.
227 Kaplan.
228 Stender, "Towards an Architectural Anthropology—What Architects Can Learn from Anthropology and Vice Versa."

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3.3.1 Ethical challenges

The ethical conundrum in Ethnographic research stems from its dark history: Its wide use as an anthropological tool to study ethnic groups in non-white or non-western societies such as in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This has also undoubtedly contributed to attitudes and structures of colonial racism.[229] The ethical problematic lies not only in the historically colonial positioning and the resulting Eurocentric worldview it propagates but also in the technique it employs. It requires a human being as a 'research subject' and the physical presence of the researcher in the private arena of the 'research subject'. This breeds a disproportionate power relation, induced by a colonial privilege between the researcher and the researched community. Awareness of this disproportionality and the researcher's conscious effort are required to address and avoid biased epistemic foundations with colonial roots. Ethnographic methods come with this historical baggage when seen through post-colonial discourses. Nevertheless, ethnographic scholarship has advanced in the past century in a way as to also make up for its unenlightened past.

3.3.2 Operational challenges

Getting access to the site and finding transparent information were challenging during the field research. Ethiopia is going through a political crisis since 2018. Although Addis Ababa is relatively immune from incidents that happen in other regions, one can still feel political and security tensions in the city. In addition to this, some of the cases are located next to a police station or a government office, and therefore was not convenient to take photographs of the neighbourhood. Operating a drone camera was similarly difficult. These factors presented an obstacle in finding a research participant complicit to the Architectural Ethnographic research with full access to domestic spaces. After access and consent are acquired, there is still a slight suspicion from the participant about the intentions of the research[230]. Participants tend to be uncomfortable responding to personally sensitive issues such as previous living conditions, income level, sources of income, and ownership status.

A crucial methodological operation in Architectural Ethnography is the visual presentation of the survey. The predicament of what to represent and how to represent come to the fore. Representation is partly a creative process that is beyond the realms of 'objectivity'. The images are never neutral and will always behold the initial subjective judgments at the instance of photographing. Social scientists have already come to terms with the prevalence of "bias" and "personal projection" in such endeavours.[231] Aside from this, the philosophical dilemma always remains: How can the image from the photograph represent what it is meant to represent?

229 Lewis, "Anthropology and Colonialism."

230 Participants are apprehensive about the research and its possible state affiliations. Their first reaction shows distrust toward the system and seldom cooperate if they believe this suspicion to be true.

231 John Collier and Malcolm Collier, "The Challenge of Observation and the Nature of Photography," in *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* (Albuquerque, N.M: University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 10.

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PART II

Reconstructing Dwelling and Decoding Socio-spatial Practices

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4 Cases of non-planned housing settlements in Addis Ababa

As noted in the introduction, nonplanned dwelling settlements are defined as settlements that did not undergo state-led planning operations and developed through other space-making logic. Owing to the city's genesis and the sefers structure, which is an Indigenous logic, nonplanned settlements constitute a significant portion of dwelling settlements in Addis Ababa (approximately 13,000 Ha). Within these nonplanned settlements, I aimed to identify representative sub-categories that possess distinct typo-morphological characteristics mutually exclusive from one another.



FIG. 4.1 Nonplanned housing settlements in Addis Ababa represented in blue regions, 2020.

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This chapter will explore three sub-categories within the realm of nonplanned dwelling settlements: i) Dwelling cases in the sefer or Indigenous neighbourhood. ii) Dwelling cases in the Upgraded Sefer, and iii) Dwelling cases from Extra-Legal settlements. The typical sefer stands out from these sub-categories not only as having a distinct typo-morphological fabric but also as the Indigenous settlement pattern in Addis Ababa. Beyond its spatial characteristics, the sefer expresses localized identities and serves as a navigational aid within the city.[232] The concept of the sefer has evolved beyond its etymological roots and is now used synonymously with "neighbourhood", though with more nuances.

Two types of this indigenous sefer are selected as cases. The first one is the sefer as an Indigenous ensemble with no urban intervention. Although finding such a sefer is challenging, I chose Kechene Medhanialem after reviewing old satellite images and verifying the minimal changes it has undergone. The second is a sefer that has undergone urban upgrading, for which I chose Menen. While several other sefers have undergone similar transformations, the urban upgrading in Menen preserved the original patterns of the sefer while making targeted improvements on housing.

Extra-legal settlements do not qualify as sefers with Indigenous roots in the sense that their logic involved appropriating land through extra-legal means and consolidating ownership over time. However, they still fall under the category of nonplanned dwelling settlements, even though informal planning (with the residents as actors) occurs within them.

The three dwelling settlements that are explored are named after the sefers where they are located: i) Kechene Medhanialem, ii) Menen, and iii) Lomi Meda. The following sections are dedicated to introducing these sefers, with two subsections under each representing the selected dwelling units and their protagonists. The visual narrative that describes each case through photographs, drawings, collages and mappings is included in the Addendum that is part of this document. Pages of the Addendum relevant to each case are provided at the start of each case as well as embedded within the texts.

4.1 Kechene Medhanialem: The Gibi's of Kechene

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page III]

The Kechene Sefer situated in the northern part of Addis Ababa, falls within the larger administrative region of the Gulele sub-city. Kechene is one of the oldest sefers in Addis Ababa. Initially, it started as a parish settlement and derived its name from the Kechene Debre Selam Medhanialem church, constructed by Lij Eyasu (Emperor Meneliks's grandson) in 1913.[233] This church was among the first built during the early days of Addis Ababa's development. The 102 *Gasha*[234] of land and various properties within the area were associated with Fitawrari Habte-Giorghis, a military commander during the reign of Menelik.[235]

232 Anteneh Tesfaye Tola and Brook Teklehaimanot Haileselassie, "Addis Ababa Sefers: Communities in Transformation," in *Global Housing: Dwelling in Addis Ababa*, ed. Dick van Gameren and Nelson Mota (JapSam Books, 2020).

233 ወልደ ቂርቆስ፤መርስዔ ኀዘን, የሀሌያኛው ከፍለዘመን መባቻ፣ የዘመን ታሪክ ትዝታዬ ካየሁትና ከሰማሁት, Second Edition (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2018).

234 A Gasha equals 30 – 40 Hectare

235 Haile Gabriel Dagne, "The Establishment of Churches in Addis Ababa," in *Proceedings of The International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa*, ed. Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1986), 57–78.

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Kechene has maintained its original architectural character and remains largely unchanged over the years. It is primarily inhabited by low-income residents and was historically home to Ethiopian Jewish communities as well as people from the southern regions who were involved in crafts like pottery and weaving. The *Bantiketu* River can be seen as a natural boundary on the eastern front of the sefer. On the south, Kechene is close to *Arada Ghiorghis*, the commercial heart of the old Addis Ababa. Additionally, it neighbours *Dejach Wube Sefer*, known for its vibrant nightlife. In contrast to the liveliness of these two neighbourhoods, kechene has maintained a relatively calm and predominantly residential atmosphere characterized by private as well as shared kebele gibi.

In contrast to most areas in Kechene, the immediate vicinity of kechene Medhanialem church exhibits active street life. The Church remains at the core of Kechene, enveloped by various commercial activities. This is partly due to a bustling traffic junction nearby, teeming with street life. As one of the oldest Christian Orthodox churches in Addis Ababa, Kechene Medhanialem enjoys popularity and boasts a robust congregation, contributing to the vibrant activity on the adjacent streets.



FIG. 4.2 A drone image showing typical private and shared gibis within Kechene. The private gibi's are above the street in the top part of the image while the shared ones are below the street.

4.1.1 Kindu and Amare; Kechene

Ato Kindu served as a member of the Ethiopian army during the communist regime. This kebele-owned house five hundred meters south of Kechene Medhanialem Church was given to his wife by the government while he was at a war front in Eritrea in the 1980s. Kindu is now 80 years old, and his story is narrated to me and the rest of the research team by his nephew Amare who shares the house with him. Kindu, seated next to Amare, was tired and only interjected when he felt that he had to speak something important.

Kindu and his family used to rent from private landowners before they were given this house by the state 35 years ago:

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We rented rooms in other people's homes. Rent was cheap back in the day, and it was not a major business venture as it is now. People used to do it to have someone around. If you were my friend for instance and you had a spare room, you would offer me to live with you and what I would pay for the room would not be a burden on me. It is only in recent times that it has become a business.[236]

The date of when the original one-room kebele house was built is not known. The sefer was already formed and inhabited in 1910 after the construction of the Kechene Medhanialem church and the neighbourhood is visible on a satellite image from the 1960s. According to Amare, their house barely accommodated the family but they didn't have the financial means to expand it. Over the years, their financial status improved, and they asked Kebele permission to renovate the house. The exact date when the Kindus began transforming their house is unknown, but it started sometime in the mid-1980s. After getting permission, the first modification they performed was in 2005 extending the house towards the common gibi and extending the headroom of the dwelling. The horizontal extension enabled them to have a two-room house with a gwada at the back end designated for sleeping and cooking. Increasing the headroom was important to better ventilate the house as more extended family members had already settled in from rural Ethiopia, and were sharing the only available room. It also facilitated the accommodation of more stored items inside the house and the creation of a *Qot* (an attic space) above the gwada. The *qot* is accessed from the gwada via a ladder and serves as a store and a secondary bedroom. Amare recites how the construction process went:

The extension was plastered with mud, and we built the house together with the community here. All our neighbours helped. The children in our house along with the neighbours were all involved. There is not a single person who didn't pitch in with some sort of help, be it throwing blobs of mud onto the wall, or lending us their buckets to carry it. Everyone contributed.[237]

The gwada is particularly important for them because they wanted to make a clear distinction between the gwada and the non-gwada which they refer to as the *salon*. For Amare, the gwada is the master bedroom and the kitchen, the most private space only reserved for the family. The creation of the gwada brought about a sense of privacy and functional convenience to their domestic chores.

The second dweller-initiated transformation of the house was in 2015, whereby Kindu and his family re-expanded their dwelling vertically and horizontally adding a headroom to the *qot* (making it accommodate 4 – 5 persons) and a second horizontal extension to the gibi to extend the living space. They also added a dedicated bedroom, as a side extension, for Kindu. This small room was annexed to the side of the house upon his special request since he wanted to dedicate the gwada at the back for his daughter and her son.

The horizontal expansion of the unit was made by claiming space from the common gibi shared between eleven households. Amare explains that this was done with the consent of the neighbours. Most of the dwellers in the gibi had already claimed some space from the gibi. He underscored that these expansions are always discussed, and consent is given from neighbours:

236 Interview with Amare and Kindu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
237 Interview with Amare and Kindu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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"Our frontage is our space even if it is shared. It is the extension of our house. All you need is a financial muscle to expand your house, you can then claim your frontage and expand. The space has always been part of our domain, it was where we sat and caught the morning sun. It was also a space where the kids from our house played. We did the expansion until the threshold, around three meters from our frontage. One should be careful not to breach into the shared space of the gibi since that is where we set up tents to host events in times of joy and sorrow."

Their gibi is a typical sefer gibi that was formed as the result of the land nationalization proclamation of 1974. It has two accesses with one of them being gated (see Figure 4.7). Amare would have chosen both accesses to be controlled to have a secure gibi but this is not possible due to the houses facing the main street needing access to the gibi in their backyard to use common amenities such as the common toilet.

Kindu and his family do not have a personalized gwaro as they live in a common compound. Amare explains that they used to have a common gwaro at the farthest corner of the gibi. It was a bushy corner and was used as a space for storage and a playing area for the kids. Now that space has been overtaken over by another extension within their compound. The common toilet built in their gibi by an NGO in 1990 also used the space that Amare refers to as the gwaro.

Amare is grateful for the social life their gibi fosters: The holiday celebrations, their monthly *mahber* of *Abune Etchege Yohannes* and *iddir* events are all made possible by the gibi.

He is also optimistic about the future and aspire to enhance their indoor environment by acquiring new furniture. The last physical expansion he would like to make is to replace the ladder access to the *qot* with proper stairs. he would also like to add a ceiling in the *qot*.



FIG. 4.3 Kindu's house and the gibi. Photo taken in December 2023

The Gibi – A model of cohabitation

The primary expansion method that Kindu and his family applied was vertical expansion. Although they have also horizontally expanded the house towards the common gibi up to the threshold of what they call "our domain", the most significant expansion was conducted vertically, an increment of about two meters at the highest point of the roof. The location of the dwelling can explain this. It is neighbouring a narrow access street on the east, an attached housing of a neighbour on the north, another neighbour's domain on the east and the gibi on the south. (see Figure 4.3) This limits their direction of expansion horizontally towards the gibi up until reaching the tolerated threshold by the community. The eucalyptus wooden post structure within the wattle and daub construction was reinforced by additional eucalyptus posts to support a wooden mesh for the floor of the *qot*. A plastic tarp was layered on this mesh to allow a thin cement sand screed on top to have a smooth finished floor for the *qot*. The *qot*, as a vertical extension of the gwada, can accommodate 4-5 people, expanding the bedrooms of the house and allowing to host extended family members that usually visit from the countryside.

Amare has a vivid memory of the early days of living in the kebele house. The internal materials were very different from what they have now:

When we first moved in, our ceiling was made of abujedid and the walls were covered with newspapers. I remember headlines like 'Ababa Janhoy, Ethiopia's Father'. The walls were entertaining, full of newspaper stories. However, over time, the newspapers got damaged and started to harbour pests. We then replaced them with Berhane na Selam newspaper from the communist era. Later on, our walls were mud-plastered and stayed on for twenty years before we upgraded to gypsum plaster. Our floor was also very basic, finished with cattle dung since there were cattle from the neighbours in the gibi.[238]

The kindus expanded from a floor area of 12.45m^2 to their current floor area of 26.14m^2, an increase of 110% in floor space. The availability of the common gibi and the tacit understanding of the neighbours allowed them to make these changes in their dwelling. As their financial status was not stable, their labour expenses were significantly lowered by the fact that the community of neighbours participated in the construction. Kindu is a retiree and is not a breadwinner of the house anymore. Amare on the other hand works in the informal sector of maintaining broken electrical appliances. He sometimes uses the house to work from home. The main purpose of expanding the dwelling space was aimed at securing a gwada for privacy, storage, and functional convenience.[239] This has successfully been achieved by claiming land from the shared gibi while at the same time being cognizant of the unwritten threshold of expansion. The gibi offered land to expand upon and the Kindu's have made sure that a reasonable amount of gibi space is maintained to cater for their community needs.

The kebele houses are owned by the government and the Kindus can be evicted anytime the state wants the land for development. Amare however feels that they are bestowed with a better security of tenure especially considering the fixed rent they pay, a benefit that makes their house incomparable with the current conditions of leasing from a private landowner.

238 Interview with Amare and Kindu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
239 The gwada is used as a water storage space, a practice common in many cases due to the severe water shortage.

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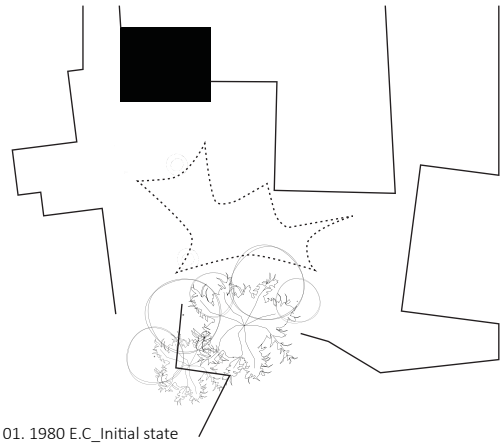
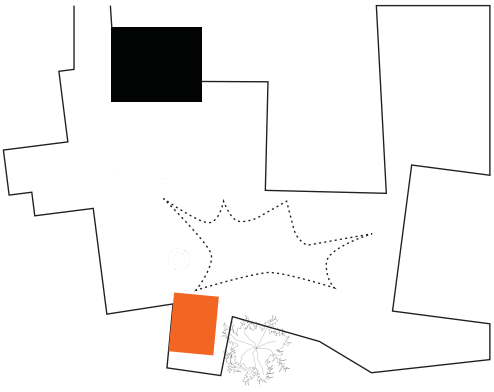
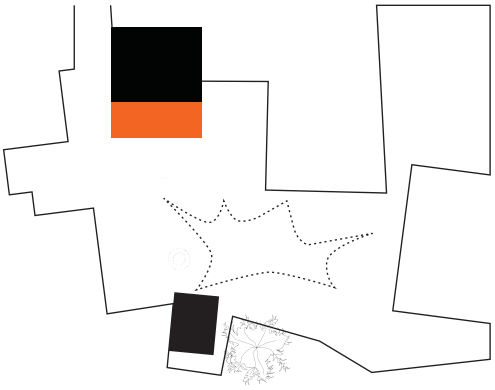


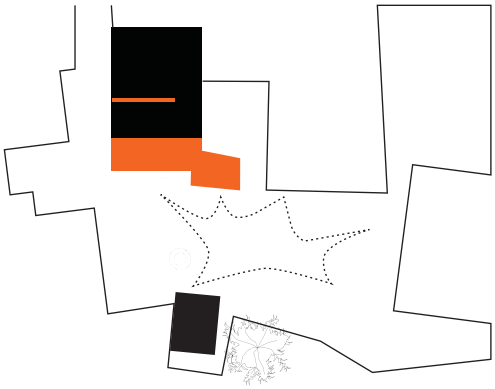
01. 1980 E.C_Initial state



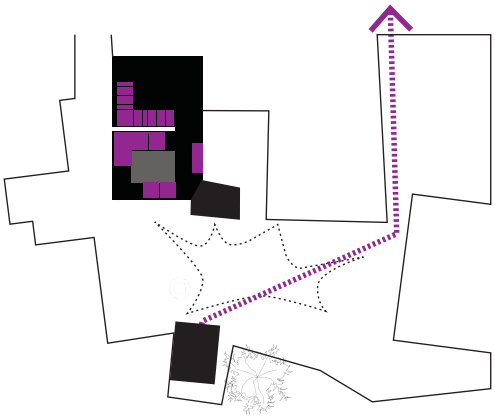
02. ~1990 E.C_The shared toilet was constructed by an NGO



03. ~2005 E.C_Transformed into a house with 2 rooms+ Kot



04. 2015 E.C_Current setup constructed



05. Desired future scenario

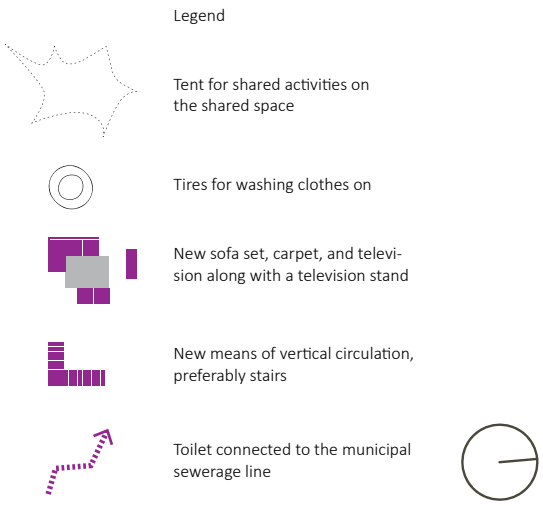


FIG. 4.4 Transformation diagram of Kindu's dwelling unit within the gibi.

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4.1.2 Timnit; Kechene

Timnit was seated in her favourite position by the front door during the interview. The protruding end of the stone masonry is designed by her brother as an outdoor seat of the gibi, contributing to furnishing the space. She explained how she liked to sit there and do her domestic chores as it let her see past her internal gibi outside to the common gibi. These two interconnected spaces serve as the gibi for Timnit's family. The shared gibi is used for bigger-scale events while the private gibi is used for intimate domestic chores. The two gibi's can be interconnected to host larger events. Timint also lets the neighbours use her private gibi for storage and other uses upon request. Timnit feels more connected to the private gibi and considers the shared one a secondary gibi even if she sometimes washes clothes and her daughter uses it as a playground.

Timnit was born in Kechene and has lived there for the past 32 years. She lives with her brother and her daughter and is not keen to discuss details about her current family and how she supports herself. In 2005, Timnit left for the Middle East. She stayed there for 10 years employed as a housemaid. All her earnings were channelled back home both to support the family as well as make significant changes to their house. Timnit vividly remembers how the house changed from a single-room studio that was shared between two households up to its current state; A house with a private gibi and two dwelling blocks.[240]

Timnit remembers when her brother designed the layout for the new extensions and how it was realized through the concerted effort of her parents and her brothers. She recalls how every piece of the house including the furniture was built by the family members. The first changes happened when the municipality built a common toilet in front of Timnit's house giving a sense of enclosure to their dwelling unit. By this time Timnit's family and the other family who used to cohabit the space had divided the room into two separate spaces with independent access on opposite ends. These two occurrences encouraged Timnit's family to claim a 'private' gibi carved out from the communal gibi and partly defined by one wall of the common toilet.

After securing a 'private' gibi, Timnit and her family proceeded to make a horizontal expansion to the single-room house they subdivided until the southern end of the gibi. They added a living room (*salon*) and an additional storage room. In subsequent years, a detached block housing an extra bedroom and a kitchen was built facing the original kebele block:

We thought the height of the house was alright but the width was small for us. Since we had ample space in the gibi, we felt that it was unnecessary to add height and a qot, instead, we went for a horizontal expansion into the open space in our private gibi.[241]

Timnit uses her gibi for cooking, washing clothes, outdoor coffee ceremonies and other socialization occasions. Additionaly, she wants to start a buisness in her 'private gibi' to improve her income situation:

I want to start a liquid soap-making business. I've seen how it is done and I know I can make it. I am convinced it will be profitable because there is a high demand for it. With my gibi, I have the space to set up the machine and begin manufacturing and distributing. My only challenge is not having the initial capital to purchase the machine.[242]

240 The other family that Timnits family split houses with is not studied but they have their 'private' gibi that is accessed separately from a side street.
241 Interview with Timnit, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
242 Interview with Timnit, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Timnit considers her bedroom as the gwada of the house. She does not consider her kitchen to be part of the gwada. Her gwada, in addition to the plywood partition demarcating it from the living room, is embellished by a warm red curtain adding an atmosphere of hierarchy and importance to the space. A China-hutch covers the plywood giving a sense of grandeur to the living space. Timnit wants the China hutch to cover the plywood partition as she feels it is not pleasant to look at from the living space.

The additional block added within the privatized gibi has created a gwaro space at the back purposed to store stowaway items. It is accessed indirectly so that one does not see the stored content from the main space of Timnit's gibi. Timnit mainly uses it to store coal for cooking firewood and other bigger household items that would otherwise create clutter in her gibi.

During the renovation of the house, the Timnits not only transformed the internal spaces but also implemented significant material modifications to the floor, ceiling, doors, and windows. Initially, they placed a woven bamboo mat on the bare earth floor for comfort and ease of cleaning. As Timint invested more in the renovation, they upgraded the floor to a cement screed with a cleanable plastic cover. The original cloth fabric ceiling was replaced with material from mattresses, following local trends, and eventually transitioned to the current plastic ceiling. Additionally, the primary corrugated iron sheet door and wooden window in the main space were replaced with a French window, enhancing the space's illumination.



FIG. 4.5 Timnit's house and her 'private' gibi. Photo taken in May 2023.

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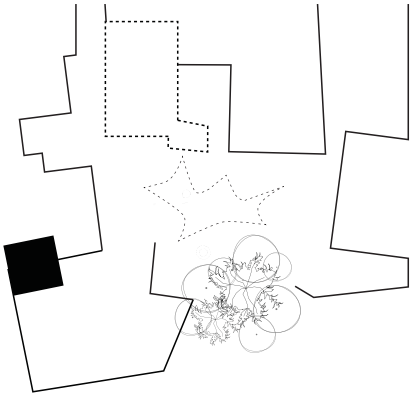
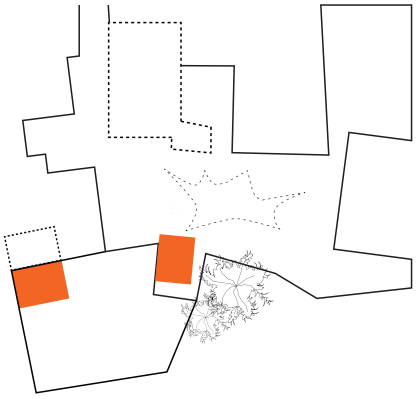
Carving out the ‘private’ gibi.

Timnit’s family started by cohabiting in a 14m^2 house with another household. This was a cultural predicament that they set out to solve and they succeeded by coming up with the design solution of dividing the house into two separate rooms accessed at opposite ends. Cohabiting rooms with other households is not considered appropriate by many in Addis Ababa. While this condition exists in kebele housing, dwellers do their best to change this setup. Subdividing the room allowed them to have the liberty to think of further modifications. Claiming a ‘private’ gibi was possible after this subdivision and also due to the location of their unit in a niche that is almost private at the southern end of the gibi. The construction of a common toilet structure opposite their house by the NGO advanced their wishes to privatize that part of the common gibi, fencing it off with a corrugated iron sheet material with a small pedestrian access gate.

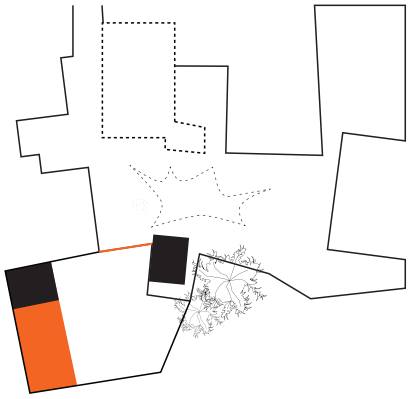
Timnit and her family successfully ‘privatised’ a portion of the communal gibi. The other residents of the gibi did not disapprove of this arrangement as it did not impede the shared use of the gibi. The creation of the private gibi is one of the main reasons for further expansions made by Timnit’s family. The floor space increase is a remarkable 457.14%, a spatial upgrade from a single-roomed 7m^2 house to a five-roomed 39m^2 dwelling unit with outdoor amenities suited for both functional chores such as washing and cooking as well as for the coffee ceremony. Timnit attests how the gibi also helped them acquire infrastructure such as electric and water lines that are private to them. They used to previously share these with their neighbours sharing the gibi.



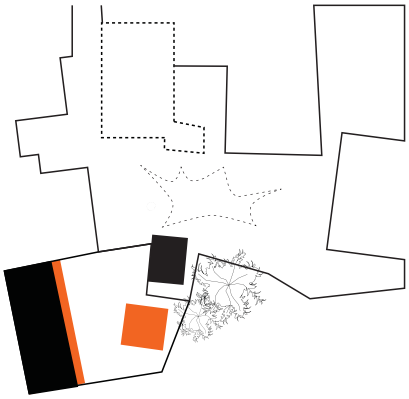
01. 1980 E.C_Initial state of the house



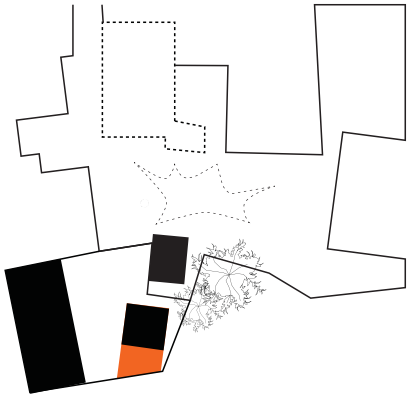
02. ~1985 E.C_The single room was, room-mates became neighbours



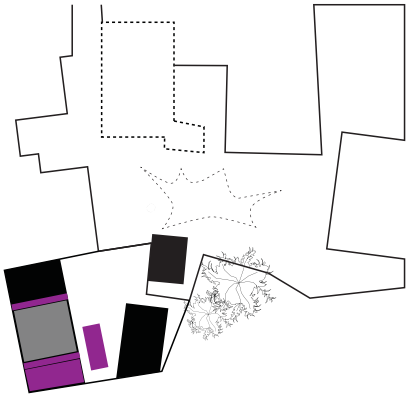
03. 1997 E.C_Extension along the length of the house



04. ~2007 E.C additional extensions were constructed



05. ~2011 E.C_Current setup of the house



06. Desired future scenario

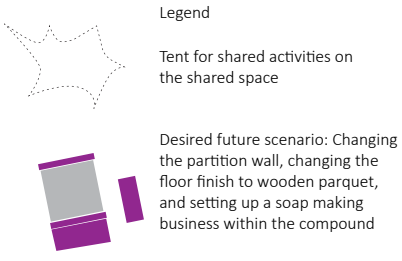


FIG. 4.6 Transformation diagram of Timnit's dwelling unit within the common gibi and the formation of her 'private' gibi..

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FIG. 4.7 Drone Image showing the scope of the gibi and its access from the main street. A narrow open access and a gated access to the communal cloth washing and drying area.

4.2 Menen: Upgrading the sefer

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page XXXIX]

The Menen sefer, situated in the northern part of Addis Ababa, is part of the sefer commonly known as *Sidist Kilo*. It is within the larger administrative region of the Gulele Sub-city. The name "Menen" is derived from *Etege Menen* School, which was founded in 1932 as an all-girls school and was among the first few schools established in Addis Ababa. [243] Menen and *Sidist kilo* held significant importance due to their elevated location and strategic positioning, serving as a connecting link between the Gibi palace and the Entoto mountain range.

Emperor Menelik initially granted this area to *Ras Mekonnen*, Emperor Haileselassie's father, as a private holding during the early days of the city's development. This historical background played a major role in Emperor Haileselassie's decision to construct the new Gibi Palace (*Guenete Leul*), which functioned as the emperor's residence until the coup attempt in 1950 and was later donated to become the main campus of Addis Ababa University. The construction of the Imperial Palace elevated the status of the Sefer, attracting feudal landlords, judges and nobility who built their homes alongside their retinue. One can describe Menen's western boundary as marked by the *Bantiketu* River, and as one heads north, it gradually blends into the *Shiro Meda* sefer.

243 Addis Ababa Municipality, "Mirror of Addis Ababa" (Berhanena Selam Printing Press, 1950).

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Menen is located inner-city area of Addis Ababa, characterized by unplanned, high-density settlements with a predominantly low-income population. This characteristic led to the selection of the area of an urban upgrading initiative in the 1980s by Red Barna-Ethiopia NGO in collaboration with the city administration. The Menen Urban upgrading project successfully constructed 198 housing units across 23 blocks, including a shared kitchen and toilet facilities.[244]

4.2.1 Lemma and Sinidu; Menen

Lemma and Sinidu have been living in Menen since the 1970s. They initially rented a one-room dwelling from the kebele. In collaboration with the city administration and the dwellers' cooperative association, the Swedish NGO Red Barna initiated an urban upgrading project. Lemma and his family were chosen as beneficiaries of the project. They were relocated to a temporary shelter near their home for a year and a half until the project was completed, and. They moved into their new dwelling in 1992. The selection of beneficiaries and the distribution of the units were managed by the administration without the participation of the residents. Although the houses were supposedly distributed through a lottery system, Sinidu has a different perspective on this process:

The committee drew the lots, and we were pleased to receive this house. I'm not sure how those assigned single rooms felt about their privacy here, but for us, coming from a single-room space (though it was larger), we're happy to have a second room now.[245]

We were both civil servants when we came here. I had to discontinue my work to focus on raising our children. I was also studying on the side but I had to give that up as well. I tried to generate income at the edge of our gibi by selling injera and potatoes.[246]

After moving in, It took them 20 years to pay off the house. They paid ETB 11,500 of the ETB 22,000 that is required for the 19m^2 house. The housing block which accommodates 19 families was lightly fenced and handed over to them along with a group title deed including the gibi. The dwellings didn't integrate a private kitchen, toilet, and shower facilities. Instead, they shared a communal water tap and a common kitchen, a separate structure made of wattle and daub with a corrugated iron roof, located at the back of the gibi. The Lemmas didn't find this convenient and effective. The toilet was situated outside the gibi at a considerable walking distance and lacked a shower facility. According to Lemma, it was intended to be shared amongst four families. In addition to the inadequately sized rooms, these were the main challenges that the residents faced and sought to address.

The Lemmas collaborated with the residents in their block to build a structure that could serve as a kitchen and at the same time generate income. Although they applied for a building permit in 2017, it was not granted until 2021:

The Kebele initially refused to give us building permits for the additional block. They kept giving us different reasons for why we couldn't do it. Once they told us that the gibi does not belong to us and therefore we were not allowed to build on it.[247]

244 Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu, "Between Renting and Owning: Saving and Credit Cooperative Based Tenure Transformation in the Inner-City 'Slums' of Addis Ababa," in *Proceedings of the 16th Interntional Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, ed. Svein Ege et al. (International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Trondheim: NTNU-trykk, 2009), 943–56.
245 Interview with Lemma and Sinidu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
246 Interview with Lemma and Sinidu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
247 Interview with Lemma and Sinidu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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After getting the permit, the Lemmas constructed a double-storey structure using wood and mud and divided the units amongst the dwellers of one block. This solved the issue of inadequate space by enabling them to have a private kitchen for cooking and also generate income from the *qot* that is located above the kitchen. At the time of the interview, they used the *qot* as a guestroom.

For the Lemmas, the gwada serves as their most private space where they sleep and store their belongings. While they believe the kitchen should also be private, they view it as separate from the gwada. Sometimes, due to the inconvenience of their downstairs kitchen location, they prepare meals at the threshold between their living space and the gwada. They have marked the transition from the salon to the gwada by painting a red frame; "we painted to mark the area as a door to signify the entrance to the gwada" (see Figure 4.8)



FIG. 4.8 Sinidu cooking in between the salon and the gwada. She still prepares food in the 'threshold space' when she does not want to go downstairs. Note the red band painted between the two spaces.

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Lemma and Sinidu attribute the existence of the gibi to the border (fence). While they acknowledge and articulate the benefits of the gibi, they also highlight the serious problem of the toilet being located outside its boundaries:

If there is no fence, there is no gibi. We consider the toilet outside the fence as 'sid-bota' (vague and unassigned space) and it is not part of our dwelling. We also don't have a say over it. Whatever is outside the gibi cannot be considered as our own.[248]

The layout of the gibi was predetermined when the Lemmas relocated from their temporary shelter. If they had the opportunity to redefine their gibi, they would have incorporated the toilet located outside its boundaries. [249] Since this was not possible, their initial modifications were focused on improving their interior living conditions and solving the problems of the gwada. The Lemmas cherish the social spaces in their gibi, participating in coffee ceremonies and celebrating important Christian holidays in the portion of the gibi between the blocks:

We have a very good social life here. We cooperate, we tolerate each other and live in harmony. Everyone, both young and old, works hard for a living. We celebrate Epiphany or the birthday of St. Mary together here in this space.[250]

Within the gibi, they consider the spaces at the left and right side of the entrance their gwaro. They use it for drying clothes and grains. Sinidu imagines the gwaro as a vegetable garden had it been a rural setting. Despite this, she has managed to plant a *Ghesho* (Rhamnus prinoides), collard greens and a few other plants. Lemma, however, finds it challenging to maintain a garden given that so many people share the gibi.

The Lemmas have been waiting for 14 years to receive the title deed of their property. They aspire to build additional units in the remaining open spaces within the gibi believing that these additional buildings will help generate income and enable them to have a shower and toilet within the gibi.

248 Interview with Lemma and Sinidu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
249 The toilet is oddly positioned next to their gibi. It is very close to the gibi and connected by a side access, but it appears to be intended to serve other upgraded dwellings within the sefer as well. The Lemmas along with other dwellers of the gibi requested to fence the toilet block to their gibi but their request was declined.
250 Interview with Lemma and Sinidu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 4.9 The new block added by the Lemmas in collaboration with their neighbours.

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‘pigeon-holed’ in Menen

The Lemmas are happy to have moved from their shared kebele house into their new units in Menen. It was undoubtedly an improvement from their living earlier conditions. They were grateful for the structure and the shell of the house but were not convinced by the size of the interior spaces:

They have wasted space in the gibi. The living spaces are very small. They should have done a better job.[251]

During the early days, they managed to repaint the house and did the floor finish and ceiling work by themselves. The two-roomed dwelling did not accommodate their growing family size and their daily domestic chores. They had to manage to live in the 23m^2 space with their four children. The common kitchen initially provided as part of the project in the gibi did not cater for the cultural need of a private kitchen, so they had to divide it amongst several other neighbours:

It is difficult to cook together in communal kitchens. But what could we do? We had no choice and had to tolerate each other. Imagine all the injera ovens working simultaneously, with everyone trying to bake injera. It even became difficult to find a place to cool down the freshly baked injera. We tried to take turns, but it was very challenging. We finally decided to have private kitchens.[252]

Through the 30 years of living in the house, Lemma and his wife continued to make small changes in the two-roomed apartment. The radical transformation they undertook was when they collaborated with their neighbours to build an additional block, that they use as a kitchen and storage, encompassed within a full-fledged structure that they shared with their immediate neighbours. Their habitable space increased from 23m^2 to 38m^2, an increase of 65.2%. The fact that they already had a secured gibi and a relatively stable security of tenure enabled them to venture into a transformation of this scale. As an urban upgrading venture, the living spaces of the house have improved in comparison to their earlier living environment. Nevertheless, the upgraded ensemble still fails to provide necessities such as shower facilities and a toilet within the gibi putting the dwellers in a compromised living condition.

251 Interview with Lemma and Sinidu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
252 Interview with Lemma and Sinidu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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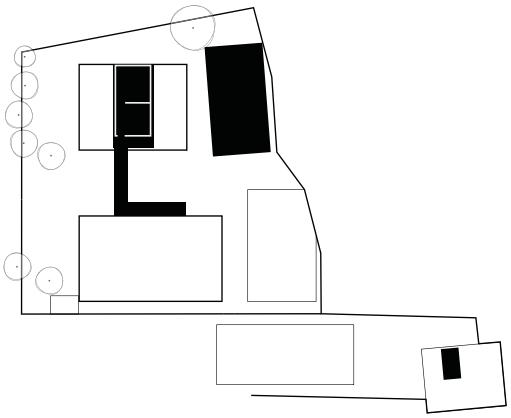
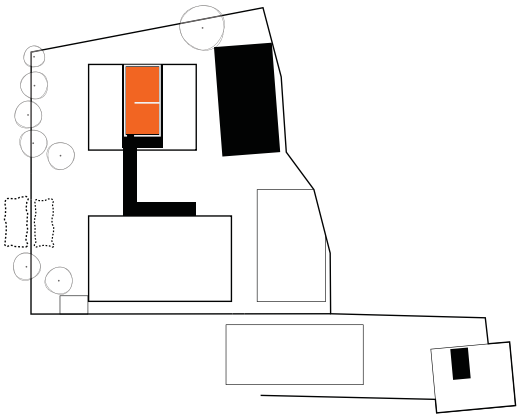
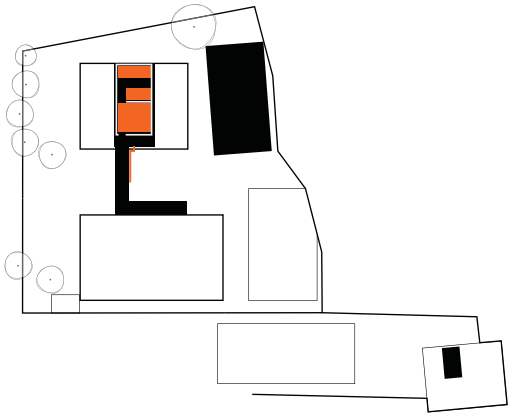


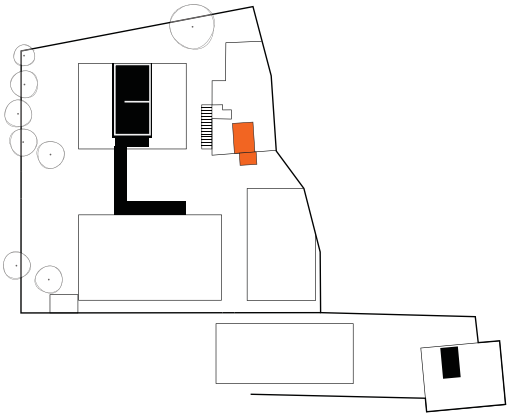
01. 1992_Original state



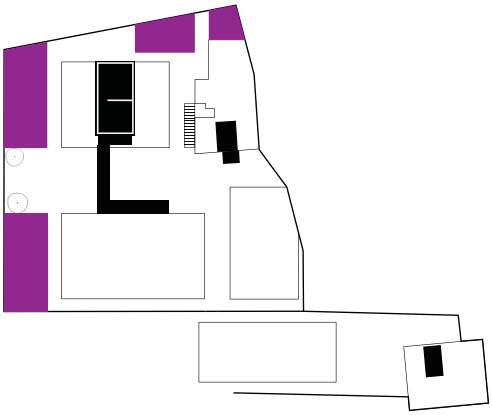
02. ~1992-1996_Material changes to the floor finish, wall finish and ceiling. GULIT space was also claimed on the interior and exterior side of the fence



03. ~2009_More changes were made to the interior space. In addition a private water line was installed by the doorstep



04. 2021_Current setup with a private kitchen space and a Kot was constructed



05. Desired future scenario

Legend

Desired future scenario:
They would like to build additional units in the open spaces around their houses.
They believe having additional buildings will help them generate income through rent and enable them to have showers and toilets closer to their homes.



FIG. 4.10 Transformation diagram of the Lemmas dwelling unit within the gibi. Note the added block on the top left corner of their plot.

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4.2.2 Getahun; Menen

Getahun was born and grew up in Menen, right in the area where the upgraded blocks now stand. He used to live with his parents as a kebele tenant, sharing a room with other families. He recalls how their previous house, a row housing constructed from mud did not have a gibi.

I have memories of us using the gwaro, the space at the back of the house as a small garden to plant vegetables, it was not even a proper garden, it was just a space left over at the back of the house with thick bushes, you could even perceive it as a small forest so they just used it to plant edible plants. Everything was cleared up, including 10 – 11 houses, to build these structures.[253]

Getahun, a bachelor, resides in a single-room unit located on the ground floor of a 12m^2 studio space, which barely accommodates his household activities. His mother also lives ina a neighbourhing single-room unit on the ground floor. It is unclear how they acquired two separate units. Getahun explained that he initially moved out but returned to support his mother when she fell ill. They now share a house help. Additionaly, they share an outside room in the gibi constructed from eucalyptus wood and corrugated iron sheets. Originally a kitchen, Getahun converted it into a study room years ago. The room now generates income by being rented out as a studio dwelling unit.

This isn't the first income-generating activity for them. Getahun remembers his mother extending a small shop from under the stairs to establish a convenience store when their fence was more permeable, allowing passersby to enter the gibi and shop for items.

Getahun considers the space bordered by the fence as the gibi. Comparing them with other similar urban upgrading projects, he believes that the dwelling units have retained their residential character because of the gibi. Beyond its use for daily domestic activities, Getahun and his neighbours use the gibi for celebrating collective Christian holidays and other events such as weddings and funeral services.

Inside his studio, Getahun recalls that the first thing he changed was the door, just like everyone else. The original door was made from formica—a translucent material that let in too much light and compromised privacy. To address this, he initially painted the formica to make it opaque and later replaced the door with a steel one. Additionally, Getahun installed a plastic floor cover since the unit was delivered without a finished floor.

The next significant change made by Getahun occurred 11 years ago in 2012. He appropriated the space under the single-flight stairway leading to the first floor, constructing side walls at both ends and installing a metal door at the front to create a 3m^2 gwada. Getahun considers this as his gwada, a space that was previously non-functional and defined by the stairs soffit. He converted it into a small crouching room. [Fig 4.11,4.12] During cooking sessions, activities from the gwada sometimes spill into the circulation space. while Getahun does not cook in this space, their house help uses it daily to prepare meals for him and his mother.

Getahun does not recognize a gwaro in the common gibi, believing that a gwaro only exists in more concealed settings. He compares this to the previous configurations of the kebele house where he was born before the area was upgraded. Unlike other residents in the gibi, he feels there is no gwaro around the house as everything is accessible and open. Gethaun thinks the gibi space could be better utilized to increase density and address space adequacy issues for the residents. He views

253 Interview with Getahun, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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the location of their dwelling as advantageous because it faces a commercially active vehicular and pedestrian road. In the short term, he plans to divert water from the tap in the front of his house to build a small shower cubicle next to the kitchen space he appropriated under the stairs using a similar strategy of tucking it in the soffit of the stair.



FIG. 4.11 Getahuns and his mother's housemaid cooking in the crouch gwada.

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FIG. 4.12 Interior view of the crouch gwada.

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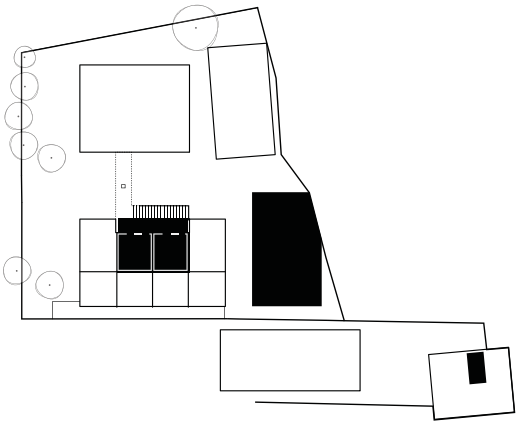
Gwada under the stair

Getahun's studio is a 12m^2 space that does not give that much room for significant spatial changes. The room is located in front of a stair that runs to the first floor making it an active traffic zone. It is therefore visible to people climbing up and down the stairs. This forced him to first repaint the Formica door to make it semi-permeable and later change it into a fully opaque steel door. He also repainted his window facing the circulation space and the gibi opaque for privacy reasons. Sometime in the future, he has the idea of installing aluminium window frames with tinted glasses to be able to see what is outside but deter views from the outside to the inside.

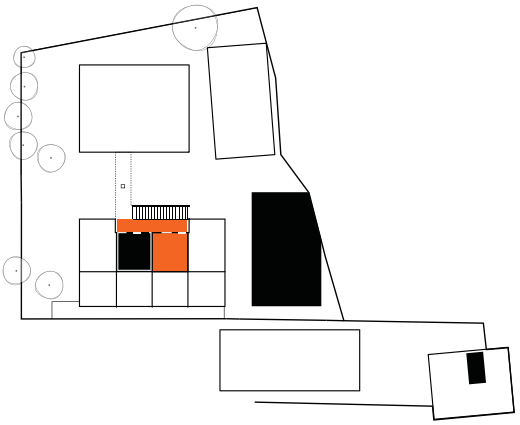
Appropriating the under space of the stairs and remodelling it as a kitchen significantly improved the problem of spatial inadequacy and the absence of the gwada. Getahun has now expanded from a floor space of 12 m^2 to 24 m^2, an increase of 100%. This includes the addition of the gwada under the stairs and the service quarter block that he rents out with his mother to generate income.

The fact that Getahun's unit was on the ground floor facilitated the claim of the outside space that is facing his room. In addition to appropriating the space under the stairs, Getahun also claimed the side walls of the circulation corridor facing the stairs to store kitchen items and other bigger water buckets. He is aware that the space is not legally his property but strongly feels that he has the right to use and develop it as such because he would have been the one responsible to clean and take care of the space as it is located right in front of his entrance.

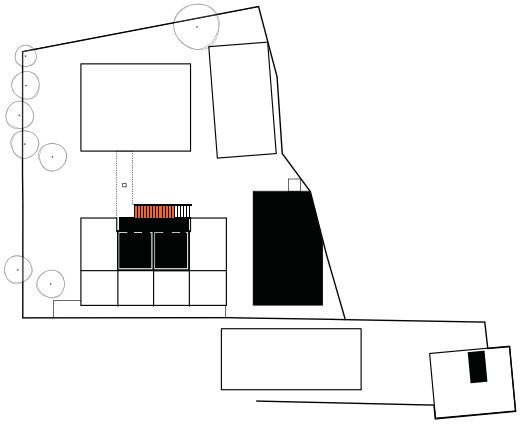
The appropriations and constructions that Getahun made, were possible due to the existence of a gibi that is gated and private to the 19 people sharing the gibi. Getahun aspires for more future developments that could improve their dwelling conditions and at the same time alleviate their financial challenges. The tenure status for Getahun and everyone in the gibi is not secured because the state is not cooperating to give individual title deeds. Nevertheless, the sense of ownership and the drive for further housing transformation persists.



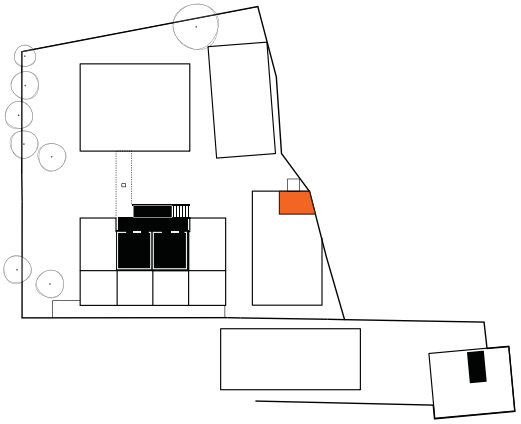
01. 1992_Original state_The family owns both rooms on the ground level. The kitchen space was shared.



02. ~2000_Material changes to the wall finish, the openings and ceiling. The kitchen space was shared.



03. 2013_More changes were made to the interior space. In addition a private kitchen was built by taking up the space under the stairs.



04. 2021_Changes were made to the interior wall finish. In addition the communal kitchen was partitioned into privately owned portions.
Since this owner had already constructed a private kitchen under the stairs, they converted their share of the communal kitchen to a rental unit.



05. Desired future scenario



Legend

His preferred future scenario is to see multiple multi-storey buildings constructed in the compound. He believes that the space is underused at the moment and not making enough of a contribution to resolving the housing crisis in the city.

He is convinced that constructing additional buildings will help them generate income through rent and enable them to have showers and toilets closer to their homes, while at the same time enabling the site to house more people than it currently does.

FIG. 4.13 Transformation diagram of Getahun's dwelling unit within the gibi.

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4.3 Lomi Meda: Dwelling in Precarity

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page LXXV]

Lomi Meda is a sefer bounded by a river to the south, separating it from the Mickey Leland condominium and *Tero* (a sefer named after a mosque) to the south and southeast. The history of Lomi Meda is intertwined with *Mickey Leland*, which is situated on the opposite side of the riverbank. In the late 1980s, Mickey Leland was originally an orphanage established to honour the memory of the Texan congressman George Thomas Mickey Leland, aimed at caring for children who had become orphaned during the Ethiopian famine from 1983 to 1985.

The Caregivers at the orphanage utilised the land across the riverbank, now known as *Lomi Meda*, as a vegetable garden, sourcing water from the nearby stream. In 1998, they began constructing smaller structures, often referred to as "moon-houses"(in Amharic) to claim sections of the land. Studies on these informal settlements in Addis Ababa suggest that some are driven by poverty, while others result from land speculators who seize land, squat on it, and build temporary structures. These speculators subsequently divide and sell the land parcels to low-income individuals or families who are desperate for housing and await potential "Regularisation" (legalisation) by government directives. Regularisation depends on the presence of the dwelling on satellite images.[254]

The City Administration has carried out multiple demolition campaigns against such settlements, including one in Lomi Meda in 2002, which sparked a violent protest from the residents. Tragically, several residents and police officers lost their lives during the ensuing unrest. There have been no further efforts to carry out eviction and demolition campaigns until the writing of this manuscript. However, the residents of Lomi Meda continue to reside in a precarious state, facing not only the anxiety of potential government interventions but also the threat of natural forces such as flooding.

4.3.1 Aisha; Lomi Meda

Aisha is a determined woman who raises her four children as a single mother. To sustain herself, she relies on menial jobs such as providing laundry services. Aisha has been a resident of Lomi Meda for the past two decades. She reminisces about a time when she had a relaxed life while her husband was alive. Initially, they lived in an area known as *American Gibi* (the area where the former US Embassy was located) before relocating to *Q'ality*, situated in the southern part of Addis Ababa. However, her life took a sharp turn for the worse when her husband passed away suddenly, leaving the family in a precarious financial situation:

My children were very young when my husband passed away. We moved here to Lomi Meda and started living in a rented house. After about a year, I started working as a day labourer when the Mickey Leland condominiums were being constructed. Allah didn't let me down and I was able to earn 7 birr per day. I saved 3.5 birr each day and I was able to purchase this land after a while.[255]

254 see Tadashi Matsumoto and Jonathan Crook, "Sustainable and Inclusive Housing in Ethiopia: A Policy Assesment" (Coalition of Urban Transitions, 2021), 43, https://urbantransitions.global/publications.
255 Interview with Aisha, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Aisha recounts how she purchased the cheapest lot available at the time, a 23.6 m^2 plot of land for ETB 1,800. She immediately began living there by constructing a makeshift shelter from woven bamboo screens and plastic tarps, relieving the burden of paying a monthly rent of ETB 40. She started working for clients residing in the Mickey Leland condominium and enrolled her children in a school in Lomi Meda. Through disciplined savings, she eventually upgraded the dwelling into its current state.

Over 20 years, Aisha and her children transformed the single-room dwelling to better suit their social and spatial practices. She made two major modifications: partitioning the house to acquire a salon and a gwada and adding a toilet. Some of the building elements like the doors and windows are reused and adjusted to fit, while others like the ceiling were self-constructed using reused silage bags, typically used for packaging fertilizers or cement.

For Aisha, the gwada is the innermost space, located beyond the salon, and serves as a bedroom. It also functions as a kitchen where Aisha does most of her cooking, except for baking injera. Within the gwada, she added a *qot* primarily for baking injera. However, she does not consider the *qot* part of the gwada. The *qot* also serves as an extra sleeping space for guests visiting from the countryside and as a reading space when her children study the Qor'an. Aisha elaborates on this further:

If my children are reciting the Qor'an, they go up to the qot, one person at a time. By its nature the Qor'an requires one to be on an elevated platform to practice better so they go up to the qot to do it.[256]

Aisha does not feel that they have a proper gibi. She considers the small threshold space at the entrance as their gibi, using it as a buffer zone between the outside and indoors. This space acts as a mudroom where they take off their shoes before entering the living areas and buffers the sanitary spaces she has incorporated. The area with the pit latrine at the back of the house serves as a gwaro for Aisha and her children, also functioning as storage for non-food items. Accessed from the small gibi, the gwaro is separated from the living spaces, though Aisha wants to improve this as the gwaro is still too close to their living areas.

Aisha has plans to transform her dwelling as well as to use it for home-based income-generating activities. She energetically shares multiple business ideas that she can set up in her house:

I want to start an injera business from my house. I am strong enough to do it and I know how to sell things. But it all requires money to start. Finding the customers is not a problem. I also dream of setting up a laundry business from home.[257]

She ponders how to overcome the financial constraints of starting these businesses but remains optimistic that her dwelling can support a home-based enterprise in the future. Aisha is counting on obtaining a title deed for her property to secure her tenure. This title deed will enable her to get a water supply for the laundry business. She aspires to further modify the house, aiming to build a proper two-story structure with concrete block walls, with sleeping spaces on the upper levels and a multi-functional ground floor. She wants to relocate the pit latrine from its current position at the entrance and longs to install a shower within the space.

256 Interview with Aisha, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
257 Interview with Aisha, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 4.14 A view of Aisha's salon taken from the gibi that buffers the street with her living spaces.

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Malleable gwada

I shared my housing and financial situation with the foremen at the construction site, and they advised me to save half of my earnings. We earned ETB seven per day, and I saved half of it, bringing the rest back to my children. With the money I saved, I bought corrugated iron sheets, which were affordable back then at ETB 25 each. I also purchased other construction materials from the equb I am part of. My coworkers helped me set up the wooden structure. I invested as much as I could, and you can see the results. Part of it was damaged by the rain last year, so I had to rebuild it.[258]

Using such a financial scheme, Aisha managed to afford four walls and a roof later articulating the gwada, the gibi and the gwaro within this plot. The plot she acquired was 23.6m^2, a stringent plot leaving almost no room for horizontal expansion. Aisha's dwelling space increased from 18.5m^2 to 27.9m^2 with a remarkable 50.6%. This increase was possible due to the vertical expansion of the Qot as well as the addition of the gwaro at the edge of her property.

Aisha did not clutter her limited living space with bulky furniture. She aims to keep the space as multifunctional as possible, adapting its use and layout to meet changing needs. During our discussion, there was a severe water shortage in the neighbourhood, so Aisha had to fetch water weekly and store it in her house.[259] The best place to store the water was in the gwada. As a result, Aisha and her children dismantled the bed to make space for the water containers and started sleeping in the living room on mattresses. The living room is furnished with floor carpets, rugs and wall pillows on the wall in the style of a *majlis*, which is common in Muslim households.

Despite being unable to install a water line due to the lack of a title deed, Aisha does have a power meter connected to the grid. In keeping with her flexible approach to space, Aisha arranged her electrical outlets to be extendable and movable. They are not fixed in the walls, allowing them to be relocated to power appliances that frequently change positions, such as the TV or the injera stove, depending on the current spatial layout.

258 Interview with Aisha, 2022 – Addis Ababa.
259 Aisha had to keep two large plastic barrels and six jerry cans to store water, consuming a significant living space in the dwelling.

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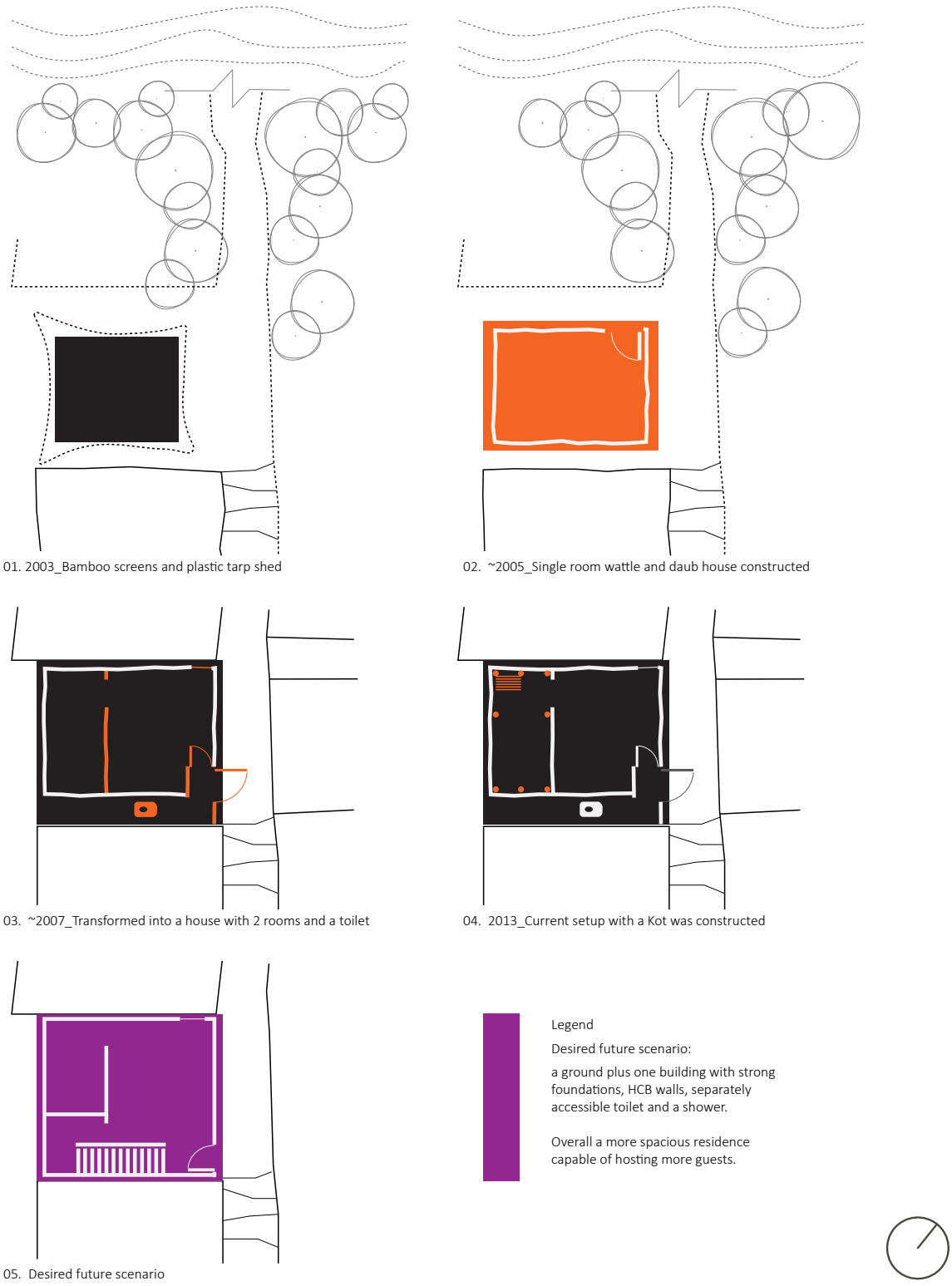

FIG. 4.15 Transformation diagram of Aisha's dwelling unit within the 23m2 lot.

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4.3.2 Khadija, Lomi Meda

Khadija lives with her husband and their five children on a steep site in Lomi Meda. Khadija and her family used to live as a tenant in derelict housing conditions within the same neighbourhood before acquiring their current lot through extra-legal means. Khadija used to earn her living as an informal trader, selling second-hand clothing in *Atena Tera*, a place famous for salvaged cloth auctions. She had to give that up due to the harsh response from law enforcement. Khadija barely makes ends meet through her current occupation of making money doing laundry for her clients.

She recalls the early days when they first settled, the plot was almost underneath a bridge and the street perpendicular to their plot was not well-retained. They bought a small mud house along with the surrounding plot with the house located in the middle of the lot. They had to demolish the mud house because it was in a very bad state. She remembers how they built their first two-roomed house in collaboration with friends and relatives:

Well back in the days, we had people you know, we had friends, and we also had some relatives from my husband's side. They all came together and helped us build the house. The only professional was a carpenter who did only the roof. The rest of the construction was done by us. It is a self-built house. We even plastered the mud with our bare hands.[260]

Over a span of Twenty years, they first managed to secure the gibi and incrementally expand the house. The initial transformation involved partitioning the gwada into a kitchen and a bedroom, which they completed two years after constructing the main house. The next expansion phase added a pit latrine and two rental units in the gwaro. Finally, two more rental units were built at the front end of the gibi. Khadija describes these constructions as "simple houses" and "undesigned houses" because they were built from mud with strip foundations without the involvement of carpenters. She highlights the risks of building with wattle and daub on steep terrain, noting that flooding is very common in Lomi Meda and their dwelling is particularly vulnerable as it is next to a river.

Due to their precarious financial situation, most building elements for these houses, such as doors and windows, were sourced from second-hand markets. Family members also contributed by gifting some of these elements. Khadija notes that their living conditions have improved compared to their early days in a rented house. However, she describes their financial situation as "unstable" because her husband's income has decreased, and her income from renting out rooms and washing clothes still doesn't cover the expenses of supporting their family of seven.

The Lomi Meda settlements are extremely dense, with dwelling units often built adjacent to neighbouring houses. Khadija's gibi is sandwiched by neighbouring plots on both parallel sides and by the street retaining wall at the entrance. The terrain of the gibi is steep, sharply descending towards the river at the farthest end. The gwaro, situated next to the river and its bushy bank, includes a pit latrine, a space with a temporary shade for kitchen activities and two rooms rented out for additional income. The gwaro is also used for hanging clothes to dry after washing.

Khadija considers the bedroom and kitchen to be the gwada of the house. She aspires to build a separate house designated as the gwada, containing only the kitchen, when she has the financial means. This gwada would have independent access from the front end of the gibi, ensuring privacy. She also envisions more radical transformations that hinge on obtaining legal title deeds. Once achieved, she plans to demolish the current house and construct a multi-storey residence using "more durable" materials like hollow concrete blocks.

260 Interview with Khadija, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 4.16 Khadija's salon and the access to her gwada on the left-hand side.



FIG. 4.17 Khadija's gwaro with the rooms to let.

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Landlordship in the gwaro

Khadija's house originally consisted of the classic two-room layout with a *salon* and a gwada. The gwada served as both the kitchen and the only bedroom, while the salon functioned as the living space. According to Khadija, these two spaces were also gendered when hosting guests, especially during special events or holidays: the *salon* accommodated male guests, while the gwada was reserved for female guests. Later, the family decided to divide the gwada into two separate rooms: a kitchen and a bedroom. The kitchen ended up being directly connected to the living space, while the bedroom had external access to the gibi, though the kitchen and bedroom remained internally connected. Khadija sees her current kitchen as a significant improvement over the old days when she used to bake injera on an open fire in her gibi. However, she is not satisfied with its location, as it has strong visual contact with the living room, which she believes undermines the privacy of the gwada, in this case, the kitchen. The design decisions when partitioning the gwada were made by a family member, as far as Khadija recalls:

It is not very nice to be seen from the living room when you are in the kitchen cooking and making injera. So I would prefer it if the kitchen was out of the main house, somewhere more private.[261]

In two decades, Khadija and her family expanded their dwelling from a two-roomed 40m^2 shed to a seven-roomed 101 m^2 residence, marking a 152% increase in floor area. This expansion allowed her to generate income from the gwaro by subletting the two studio rooms she initially built.[262] This home-based venture was crucial for Khadija financially, as she had stopped her second-hand clothing business at the time and was facing financial insecurity. This horizontal expansion included the addition of a pit latrine with a subterranean collection tank. The latrine is connected to a river through a pipe system for waste discharge when the tank fills up. Despite these significant changes, Khadija still feels that the house does not adequately accommodate her family and lacks sufficient structural safety. Like many plots along the river in Lomi Meda, Khadija's household has an extra-legal status. She eagerly awaits a decision from the city government regarding legalisation.

261 Interview with Khadija, 2022 – Addis Ababa.

262 Khadija later added two more rental rooms in the front section of her gibi although she still prefers to use this space for cloth washing and other outdoor domestic chores.

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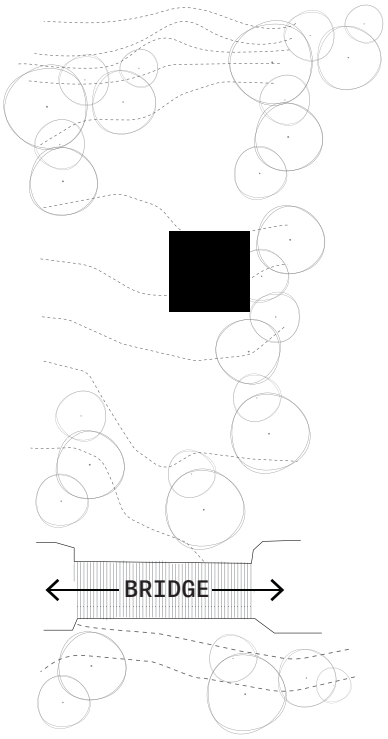
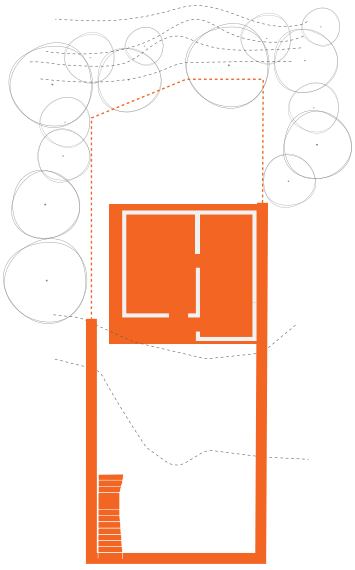
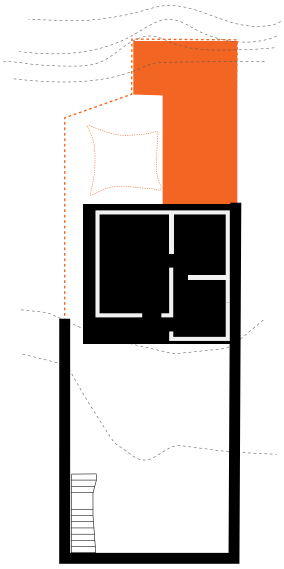


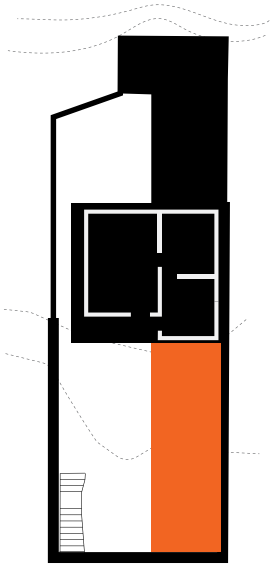
01. Before 2005_Original state of the house



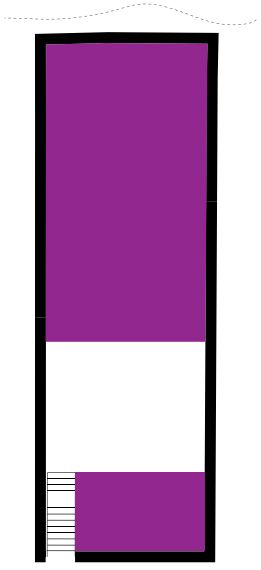
02. ~2005_The main house was constructed. It had two rooms



03. ~2007_A toilet space along the river side was claimed and two rental units were added in the space in between the main house and the toilet. The main house was also turned into a 3 room house.



04. ~2019 _Current setup of the house was constructed. Two more rental units were added in the front.



05. Desired future scenario

Legend

Tent for shared activities on the shared space

Desired future scenario: Demolishing the current house to construct a multi-story residence with a separate kitchen in the space between the stairs into the compound and the boundary of the compound.

FIG. 4.18 Transformation diagram of the Khadija's dwelling unit.

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5 Cases of planned housing settlements in Addis Ababa

In this study, planned dwelling settlements are defined as settlements that have undergone state-led planning operations.[263] According to a study published in 2019, planned settlements constitute a significant portion of dwelling settlements in Addis Ababa, an area of approximately 7,200 Ha.[264] Within these planned settlements, I have identified representative sub-categories that possess distinct typo-morphological characteristics.



FIG. 5.1 Planned housing settlements in Addis Ababa represented in magenta regions, 2020.

263 Dweller-led planning in extra-legal settlements such as *worku sefer* have not been included in this category due to typo-morphological similarities and because they are unique planning processes that are not the focus of this study

264 See Larissa Larsen et al., "The Impact of Rapid Urbanization and Public Housing Development on Urban Form and Density in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia," *Land* 8, no. 4 (2019): 9, https://ideas.repec.org//a/gam/jlands/v8y2019i4p66-d224097.html.

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These sub-categories have been classified according to development types: i) Aided self-help settlements, ii) Urban resettlement settlements, iii) Serviced land settlements with core houses, iv) Serviced land settlements without core houses, v) Urban extension settlements, and vi) Urban redevelopment settlements. The first four are plot-based developments, while the last two are block-based. The serviced land settlements are divided into two categories due to distinct typo-morphological differences. The group with core houses reflects the typical sites and services projects prevalent in the 1980s. The other group, plot-based serviced land developments without core houses, adhered to design guidelines established during the Derg era, featuring a main house and a detached service quarter. In the post-communist period, 90,000 serviced lots were developed under this scheme.[265]

The six explored dwelling settlements are named after the sefers in which they are located: i) Kuteba Seferë Fikir, ii) Kolfe Kuteba Betoch, iii) Sarris Addisu Sefer, iv) Mekanissa, v) Mickey Leland, and vi) Lideta. Each section begins by introducing these sefers, followed by two subsections representing the selected dwelling units and their key figures.

5.1 Kuteba Seferë Fikir: On the Emperor's birthday

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page CXI]

Kuteba Seferë Fikir is a dwelling neighbourhood located on the northern edge of Kolfe, situated within the broader administrative area of the Kolfe Keranyo Sub-city. Kolfe is renowned for being one of the densely populated regions in Addis Ababa.

Originally designated as "The Kolfe Low-Cost Housing Project" by the implementing agencies, Kuteba Seferë Fikir represents an international collaborative effort financed by the Ethiopian government, the United Nations (UN), Germany and Sweden. Construction work began in January 1964 following the signing of a tripartite agreement involving the UN, the Municipality of Addis Ababa, and the Government of Sweden This groundbreaking project, which aimed to provide social housing, was officially inaugurated in 1967 by Emperor Haile Selassie I on his birthday. It distinguished itself as one of the pioneering housing initiatives in Ethiopia, notably experimenting with the 'added-self-help' method of housing in Addis Ababa.[266]

It primarily targeted low-income communities with the following set of objectives: a) To build a habitable environment for low-income communities; b) to promote homeownership for low-income slum dwellers; c) To introduce low-cost housing construction alongside the active participation of inhabitants; d) To develop urban housing programs by promoting available resources such as labour, material, and savings.[267]

265 Interview with Alazar Assefa and Amare Asgedom in September 2019.
266 Ettore Nobis, *Evaluation of the Kolfe Pilot Housing Project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia* (Lund: University of Lund, Dept. of Architecture IIB, 1970).
267 "The Kolfe Low-Cost Housing Project" (Municipality of Addis Ababa, 1968).

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The project has successfully transferred the ownership status from the Municipality to tenants after recovering the costs of the initial investment through monthly rental payments. Over the years, Kuteba Seferë Fikir has not only undergone physical transformations but also changes in its overall density. While many of the original residents are no longer alive, their descendants and third-generation inhabitants have managed to maintain a closely-knit community.



FIG. 5.2 A drone image showing Kuteba Seferë Fikir

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5.1.1 Hassan and Fatima; Kuteba Seferë Fikir

This conversation takes place on a fine Saturday morning, with Hassan seated on an outdoor bench he designed and built himself. The bench, stretched like a hammock between two trees, is ideally positioned outside the Hassan compound to capture the morning sun and enjoy people-watching. The spot is popular with passersby and locals as it offers ample shade from the afternoon sun. Hassen enjoys sitting on this bench, which faces a small neighbourhood park where a marble plaque commemorates the inauguration of the dwelling on the Emperor's birthday.

Our natural inclinations are towards owning and not using something that belongs to someone else, therefore, these saving homes have been inaugurated and handed over to our subjects who have low income, so that they may own it and pass it on to their children upon paying the full rent. His Royal Highness Haileselassie I, Hamle 16, 1959 (16th day of the 10th month in 1959 of the Geez Calendar), 1967.[268]



FIG. 5.3 The marble plaque laid by Emperor Haileselassie on his Birthday to inaugurate Kuteba Seferë Fikir

Hassan was an employee at the Addis Ababa Municipality during the imperial era. He used to live in the *Arada Piassa* area, renting a room from a private landlord. Compared to his current dwelling, he describes his previous house as a "hut". He recalls that he didn't choose his present house' it was assigned to him by the government. He was pleased to live in a two-room house with a kitchen equipped with an efficient injera stove and a proper toilet connected to the sewer line. However, he was not satisfied with the size of the house, as he already had a large family:

The house was barely enough for two people. They even told us not to invite guests over. During the inauguration, I heard Emperor Haileselassie commenting on the sizes noting that he also felt the houses were a bit small. At the time, all my children and grandchildren had to sleep on the floor.[269]

268 Translated from the text on a marble plaque placed by Emperor Haileselassie when Kuteba Seferë Fikir was Inaugurated in 1967. The project was officially known as Kolfe Kuteba Betoch before being renamed by its residents. See Figure 5.2.
269 Interview with Hassan and Fatima, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Hassen is a senior citizen and has already mentioned that he might be too weak to walk around the house with us. His eldest daughter, Fatima, joined our conversation, noticing that her father might tire if he did all the talking. Fatima was born. In this house after the family moved in 1967 and shared childhood memories of sleeping on the floor with her siblings. As they grew up and the family expanded with third-generation children, it became necessary to add more rooms to accommodate everyone. When Hassen retired, generating additional income also became essential.

Fatima explains that they first demolished the partition board between the salon and the bedroom converting it into a spacious multifunctional bedroom. They also turned the $3m^2$ kitchen into another bedroom and started cooking in the gwaro using firewood. For Fatima, the gwaro was initially a place for playing, planting, and storage, activities they mostly did in the early days. Over the years, much of the gwaro was replaced by new structures, and now, Fatima considers the stirp of an outside corridor between the service quarter and the house as their gwaro. Today, the gwaro mainly serves as passage and storage for stowaway items.

The next round of changes was made using the wattle and daub construction method. Fatima now regrets this choice, wishing they had used concrete blocks instead. She explains that both construction methods cost the same at the time, but they were unaware of the differences in outcomes. She believes that using HCB would have ensured a "cleaner" living environment. The first room built during this phase was a corner bedroom in the gwaro meant to generate income. Simultaneously, they extended an additional room from the original living/bedroom structure towards the gwaro. This new room served as a living room with a TV set and had two beds, doubling as a bedroom. Subsequently, two more rental rooms were added in the gwaro, completing the so-called service quarter.

The final round of additions took place in the gwaro and the gibi, using steel structures with metal sheets. A kitchen was added to the gwaro, and an extra rental room was built in the gibi. Fatima considers the gibi the area free of buildings. This includes part of the front yard used for occasional storage and the pocket space leading towards the gwaro, which she uses for occasional cooking.

For Fatima, the term "gwada" refers to bedrooms, but not all bedrooms qualify as gwada. Specifically, in their dwelling, she believes they no longer have gwada because a gwada, in her view, must be annexed to a salon. Since all the bedrooms in their house also function as living rooms, she does not consider them as gwada. This lack of gwada is evident when Fatima gives a tour of the house, showing there is no space with a distinct layer of privacy. This absence of privacy is also reflected in her memories of their gwaro from her childhood:

Almost every child in the sefer used to come to our gwaro to play football. The children here used to refer to our house as 'the house with the short fence' since we were in a corner plot and our gibi was visible due to the short fences we had.[270]

Fatima fondly recalls the gwaro being an open space for playing and cooking but dreams of creating more internal spaces by building a four-storey structure that would accommodate all family members and provide a ground floor space to park their car. She is happy with the social fabric of the neighbourhood, where their activities extend beyond their gibi, utilizing the space for sun-drying and parking as well.

270 Interview with Hassan and Fatima, 2022 - Addis Ababa.



FIG. 5.4 The Hassans gibi.

Engulfing the gwaro

The Hassans first modification was to join the living and sleeping spaces by demolishing the partition. Hassan refers to this combined area as *Adarash* (hall)[271]. During this process, the family also decided to use the sturdy kitchen, which had four walls, a roof, and a proper door, as a bedroom due to the high number of family members needing sleeping space. Additionally, they could easily cook outside in the gwaro or under a small shade.

To create more living and sleeping space, they extended and extra room towards the gwaro from the main house and added a second bedroom in the service quarter. These transformations followed a logic of expanding into the gwaro, adding from the back end (the service quarter) and extending from the original dwelling while leaving a small space for circulation. Fatima covered this circulation space to protect it from rain, leaving a small gap above to let in sunlight.

The addition of rental rooms ensured the family's livelihood after Hassan retired, as he was the only breadwinner. Over 56 years, the Hassans expanded the house's footprint from 27 m^2 to 104 m^2, an increase of 285 %. This transformation secured the family's livelihood but consumed much of the open space in the gwaro and the front yard. Aware of this, Fatima plans to demolish the rental house in the front yard once they achieve a certain level of financial stability. She also maintains a strip garden to compensate for the green space they have built upon.

In addition to the spatial transformations through expansion and addition, the Hassans made several material changes over the years. These include installing French windows in the living room, using gypsum cornice finishes on the interior and exterior fences, increasing the headroom

271 *Adarash* is usually present in the houses of the nobility and the bourgeoisie. A formal space to welcome guests but also sometimes serves as the bedroom in a smaller-sized house. The *Adarash* can be seen as the inverse of the *ilfign*, which functions as the private space, in the earlier houses of Addis Ababa.

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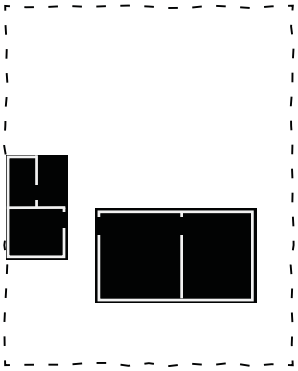
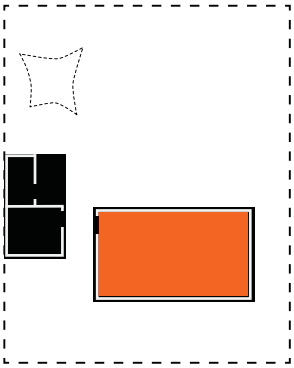
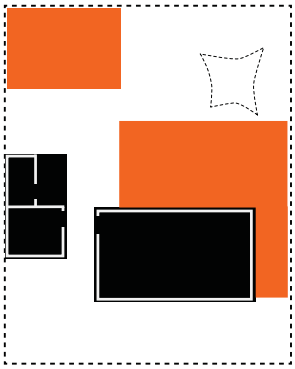
of the original house, and furnishing the living space with a wooden dining table. Fatima describes these changes as “aesthetic” and “social improvement”. When asked about the necessity of these aesthetic ‘upgrades’, she responded, “We want to be equal with everyone else” by following trends. Her aspiration to demolish the existing house and replace it with a four-storey structure reflects this pressure to keep up with neighbourhood trends, a model already gaining popularity locally.



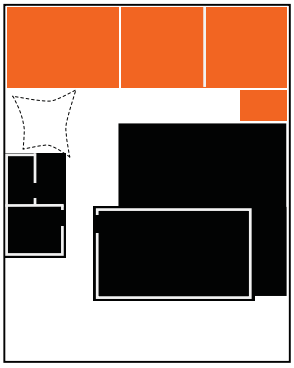
01. 1967_Original state of the house



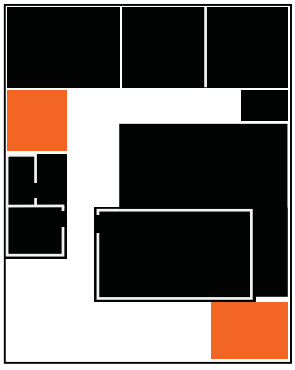
02. ~1994_Partition demolished and kitchen converted into a bedroom



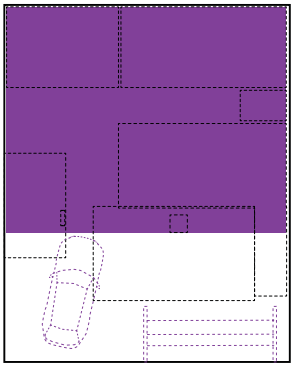
03. ~1997_additional bedrooms were constructed



04. ~2000_Two more rental units were built



05. ~2007 An additional rental unit in the fromt and two small kitchen spaces were added at the back



06. Desired future scenario_A multistorey residence with room for parking and drying clothes



FIG. 5.5 Transformation diagram of the Hassans and the slow disappearance of the gwaro.

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5.1.2 Bizunesh; Kuteba Sefere' Fikir

Back in the day, this area was a forest, and we used to live with hyenas. People were scared and rarely ventured here, as the hyenas would come out early before it got dark. We were given regulations not to keep cattle, chickens, or dogs, partly to prevent conflicts among residents. But the place was not suitable for those practices anyway.[272]

Bizunesh's dwelling exudes a mystical aura, with old furniture and rooms illuminated by dim light. This atmosphere peaks in her bedroom, which feels like a tabernacle nestled within a labyrinth of rooms and corridors. Her home survived a fire two years before the interview, leaving some spaces charred and filled with partially damaged furniture. The door frames, light switches, and wall surfaces bear the marks of this unfortunate event, and Bizunesh wants to preserve them as they are. On the day of our dialogue, Bizunesh was seated in the living room facing the main door, a spot that she seemed to frequent.

In 1966, Bizunesh moved into the Kolfe Housing scheme with her husband and her firstborn. Previously, they had lived in *Fit Ber* area, specifically in *Tekerara* sefer, near the Menelik's palace. She recalls how they enlisted for a new house when the government announced a housing initiative for state employees over the radio.[273] Bizunesh describes their former home as old and less tidy compared to their current one. It was a row house made of wattle and daub, rented from a private landlord. She remembers their surprise at finding the new house to be very small and lacking a proper fence. The identical appearance of the houses often confused the residents. Their new home consisted of two rooms partitioned with plywood, one serving as the salon and the other as the bedroom. It had a separate kitchen and toilet connected by an outside corridor. Bizunesh found the kitchen too small for her cooking needs, so she began cooking outside in the gwaro under a plastic shade. She later upgraded to a new kitchen added in the corner of the gwaro:

The kitchen was tiny and didn't provide enough space to move around. I asked my husband to make the new kitchen a bit larger to accommodate the mesob (container for storing injera). However, when we had events and needed to cook a lot of food, we would do it in the gwaro. We also made bread and roasted asharo (roasted barley for making a local beer) in the gwaro. We worked outdoors whenever the ladies from the neighbourhood came to help us with event preparations.[274]

Bizunesh views the area within her fence as her gibi, equating it with private ownership. Using territorial logic, she explains how her gibi increased from 117 m^2 to 132 m^2 by incorporating patches of land between the street and the original edge of the house.

After moving in, Bizunesh sold injera while her husband worked as a traffic police officer, escorting the emperor and other dignitaries. In the 1970s, Bizunesh and her husband extended the house towards the gwaro to create a master bedroom. The former salon and bedroom were combined to form a new living space, and they added two bedrooms in the service quarter next to the corner kitchen. These changes were necessary to accommodate their growing family.[275] Before the modifications, Bizunesh and her husband slept in the bedroom while the children slept on mattresses on the floor.

272 Interview with Bizunesh, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
273 On another occasion of the interview, Bizunesh mentions that her husband escorted the emperor to Kuteba Seferë Fikir when it was inaugurated.
274 Interview with Bizunesh, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
275 Bizunesh moved in with her spouse and her eldest son. Shortly after she had her second child. The family then grew from four to eight in the years that followed.

For Bizunesh, the gwada spaces include the bedrooms and storage areas: her bedroom, her son's bedroom, her daughter's former bedroom now used for storage, and the old kitchen space now turned into a kitchen store. Bizunesh explains how they managed to afford these modifications:

We could afford the transformations thanks to the help of Ekub and my Injera business. I didn't rely solely on my husband's salary. I worked, sold Injera, and travelled to the countryside to bring items to sell in town.[276]

Bizunesh proudly explains that the house has hosted six weddings, made possible by enlarging the living room—an important milestone in the home's history. A gwaro space between the new master bedroom and the old kitchen was incorporated into the living room. The latest addition as a rental room at the front of the house, along with a small sanitary unit within the former gwaro. She now hosts a couple who have lived there from the past 15 years. Most of Bizunesh's housing extensions were made within the gwaro. Currently, she considers the spaces between the extended master bedroom and the fence, and between the kitchen and the fence, as gwaro, mainly using these areas to store wood.

Bizunesh is the co-founder and president of the iddir in Kuteba Sefere' Fikir. She is a respected member of the neighbourhood and cherishes the social life they have, utilising their shared community space for meetings and important religious celebrations. Bizunesh now lives with her son and grandchildren. She is satisfied with the current design and is not keen to make further changes.



FIG. 5.6 Bizunesh's gibi and secondary access towards the side street.

276 Interview with Bizunesh, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

“The gwada is a prayer room”

The Kolfe Low-Cost Housing scheme was designed with future extensions towards the gwaro in mind. Given the small initial rooms, housing modifications were expected. The availability of the gwaro facilitated most of the expansions. Before these expansions, Bizunesh used the gwaro to plant vegetables, collard greens, and onions. She decided to expand the kitchen first because cooking in the 3.5 m^2 kitchen was challenging. The kitchen originally had a brick stove structure for baking injera, which Bizunesh demolished to enlarge the space for use as a kitchen store. The new kitchen, built at the corner, left a 50 cm gap with the neighbouring wall for storage. This kitchen was equipped with a new brick oven and a vent structure, showing Bizunesh’s intention to incorporate the technology from the previous kitchen into the new one. She uses the ‘smokeless kitchen’ to bake bread and injera during power outages, making it accessible to her neighbours.

The next round of housing transformations was driven by the demographic changes in Bizunesh’s family. With six children, additional bedrooms were needed. A dedicated master bedroom was extended from the main house during this stage, serving as the most private core of the home and still functioning as such. Bizunesh uses this room as a prayer room. Me and my research assistants were allowed a brief entry to take pictures in Bizunesh’s presence. The interior is painted blue, with walls adorned with religious iconography. Translucent curtains on the windows filter the light, softly illuminating the space. While extending this room (gwada) from the main house, Bizunesh left a 50 cm gap between the neighbouring plot and the gwada to serve as a storage space, compensating for the gwaro consumed by the housing extensions. The other bedrooms were built as part of the so-called ‘service quarter’.

Bizunesh didn’t want to marry off her kids in the cramped 20m^2 living space. She incorporated the remaining part of the gwaro that was left into the living room, allowing direct access to the master bedroom from the living area. This modification expanded the living room to 29 m^2. During weddings and special occasions, the door leading to the side streets opens to enlarge and connect Bizunesh’s living space with the gibi and the side street. While Bizunesh later added one room as a rental unit, most of the additions were made to accommodate the growing spatial needs of her family and establish a gwada.

Over the past six decades, Bizunesh and her family have densified their gibi increasing their initial floor area of 31.3m^2 to 101m^2 with an overall increase of 222%. The plot’s corner location has allowed Bizunesh to establish two additional entrances into the gibi. This unique positioning has enabled her to utilize the street by setting up tents for weddings and *mahbers*. The extra entrances also serve to facilitate practices such as sun-drying grains and food preparation activities.

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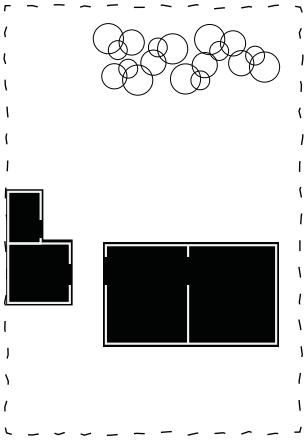
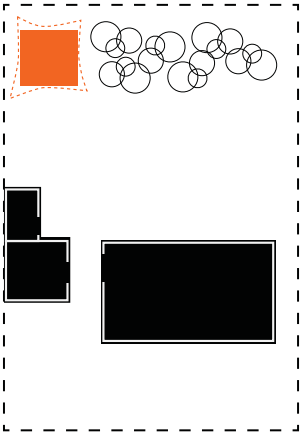
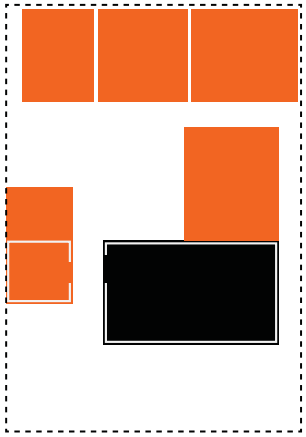


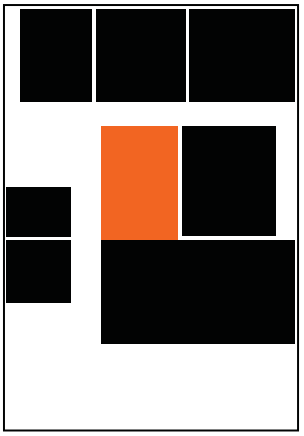
01.1966_Original state of the house



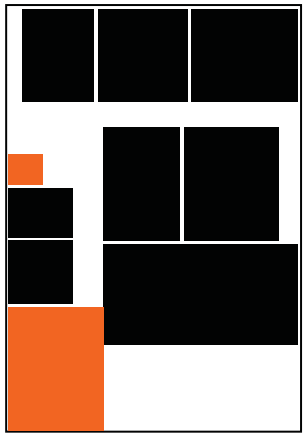
02. ~1968_Partitions demolished and kitchen turned into a kitchen store with cooking taking place outdoors



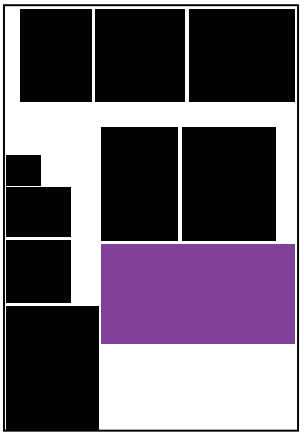
03. ~1970_Master bedroom and a service quarter with a kitchen in the corner were constructed



04. ~1971_Living room and toilet were enlarged



05. ~2007_Rental unit and squat toilet were added making up the current setup of the dwelling



06. Desired future scenario_ The owner does not intend to make major changes but would like to bring back the window to the extended living space.



FIG. 5.7 Bizunesh's extension on the service quarter and addition on the main house.

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5.2 Kolfe Kuteba Betoch: A gift from Gaddafi

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page CXLVII]

The *Kolfe Sefer* is situated in the western part of Addis Ababa, falling within the larger administrative area of the *Kolfe Keranyo* sub-city, which ranks as the second largest sub-city in Addis Ababa. According to the City Administration, it is the most populous sub-city, housing approximately 16% of the city's residents.[277]

Two significant factors have influenced the development of the *Kolfe sefer* since the establishment of Addis Ababa in 1886. The first factor is its strategic location as a border region, serving as a critical crossroads between Addis Ababa and the western regions of Ethiopia. The primary road (Jimma-Road) connection starts from *Kolfe*, serving as one of the city's five traditional gateways. This road facilitates the influx of migrating populations in *Kolfe*.

The second factor pertains to zoning decisions made during the Italian presence from 1935 to 1941. The western part of Addis Ababa was designated as a 'native quarter', resulting in the forced resettlement of residents from other parts of the city to *Kolfe*. This policy encouraged the growth of informal settlements in *Kolfe* and its neighbouring sefers, ultimately making informal commerce a central activity. *Kolfe* sub-city currently has the highest number of squatter settlements in comparison to other *sefers* in Addis Ababa and serves as a prominent trading hub for second-hand clothing.[278]

Kolfe Kuteba Betoch, an Eight-hectare resettlement housing neighbourhood located at the heart of Kolfe, was constructed by the communist government under the Addis Ababa Municipality in the 1980s. Although it is not supported by literature, residents believe that Muammar Gaddafi funded it during his close relationship with Mengistu Hailemariam, the President of Ethiopia during the communist era (1974-1991). Kolfe Kuteba Betoch provides housing for 363 households in three different housing typologies. More than 90% of these housing units are owned by the Federal Housing Corporation (FHC) and managed by the Kebele, while the remaining units are privately owned.[279]

277 Addis Ababa City Administration Integrated Land Information Center, "Addis Ababa City Atlas" (Addis Ababa City Administration Integrated Land Information Center, 2015).
278 Bethlehem Tekola et al., "Kolfe Area, Addis Ababa," ed. Feleke Tadele, Yisak Tafere, and Tom Lavers, *Ethiopian Urban Studies*, 1996, https://www.welldev.org.uk/research/methods-toobox/cp-countries/ethiopia/Kolfe%20community%20profile.pdf.
279 Data sourced from the Federal Housing Corporation, 2019

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FIG. 5.8 Drone image of one cluster from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch.

5.2.1 Hailu; Kolfe Kuteba Betoch

I first met Hailu in the summer of 2019 after months of trying to find willing residents in *Kolfe Kuteba Betoch.* Although it was supposed to be the rainy season in Addis Ababa, that day was unusually bright and sunny, and Hailu's gibi was bustling with children playing and people doing domestic chores. I noticed tenants and relatives of Hailu washing dishes and doing laundry outside, taking advantage of the unexpected, good weather. It was surreal to see a landline telephone outside in the gibi, indicating that everyone was enjoying the outdoors that day. Surprisingly, Hailu preferred not to sit in the gibi. Instead, he ushered me and my research team indoors to the living room, which was tidy and formal but also dark.

Hailu's family was resettled from the *Filwuha* (hot baths) area, an inner-city neighbourhood next to the Sheraton Addis hotel at the western foot of Menelik's Palace. Their locality was specifically known as 'Sudan Club'. Hailu doesn't know the details of their resettlement process since he was born in *Kolfe Kuteba Betoch* after his family moved. However, he vividly recalls his grandmother's stories about the early days. She came with only three household possessions to settle in a larger three-bedroom house but was unhappy, thinking the house was too large for her family. So, she moved to their current dwelling, which was a two-roomed house at the time. Transitioning from a relatively urbanized inner city to a "forest" was a shock for her and her children, and it took some time to adjust to life in *Kolfe Kuteba Betoch*.

Hailu feels that they were not adequately compensated, as they moved from a large house despite having a shared ownership title deed with other neighbours. He also thinks the housing design did not address the residents' needs. Additionally, he is critical of the open stormwater drainage flowing between properties and the shared septic tank which has proved difficult to manage:

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The septic tank is shared among four neighbours and fills up very frequently almost every forty-five days. There is also groundwater beneath. During the change of government in 1991, the police camp arsenal next to the neighbourhood was looted by people in Kolfe Kuteba Betoch. To hide the looted armaments from authorities, people often hid them in septic tanks. We take turns pumping the common septic tank among four households, which is always a challenge because it frequently gets clogged.[280]

In the early days, everyone preferred to enter the cluster through their plot since they were located at the corner. People didn't construct fences and the neighbourhood was relatively communal. Building a fence was crucial for Hailu's family for both security and to demarcate their privately owned territory. Initially, their boundary was made of *koshem*, a native thick thorny shrub, which was eventually replaced by a corrugated iron sheet fence, elaborately painted on the outside but bare on the inside.[281] The interior of the fence exhibits graffiti imprints by Hailu's nieces and nephews. For Hailu and his family, the gibi includes the open ground and the dwelling units within their territory. They also refer to the main outside space where most of their domestic chores are done as their gibi when they want to make a distinction with the gwaro. Constructing a hard border around their gibi was one of the most significant additions in their dwelling's transformation history.

To accommodate their growing family size and economic needs, the family built a two-room unit with mud. Extended family members moved in, necessitating additional housing units. By 2019, their household size had peaked, though it decreased to seven in 2022:

"Close to twenty people reside in this dwelling—my mother, my siblings, two aunts, cousins, and grandchildren from my aunts' side."

Hailu believes that as the family grows, so does the need for more income to sustain it. He explains how they transformed their house by adding additional bedrooms and a kitchen, which enabled them to rent out the original kitchen and other rooms built in the compound. Hailu thinks their family slowly climbed up the socioeconomic ladder as his siblings went abroad and started sending money back. He notes that this is a common phenomenon in *Kolfe Kuteba Betoch*. Design decisions were made by Hailu and his parents, while skilled labour was hired for the physical work. Many decisions are reasonable, and they are capitalised on their corner plot location. Hailu explains:

We just followed our gut feeling to decide on the size and scale of spaces. The interior space arrangement and where to place what was, of course, decided by the women of the house.[282]

For Hailu and his family, the gwada are the two most private bedrooms extending towards what used to be the front yard. They no longer consider the previous kitchen as a gwada. The gwada is adjacent to the elongated living room, which they refer to as the *salon*. This room was created by merging the original living room and bedroom into a more spacious *salon*.

Hailu's family dwelling is unique because it is situated on a corner plot, giving them an elongated perimeter along two streets. They consider their former front yard, located behind the new bedrooms, as gwaro, as well as a small garden on the left side of their entrance where they plant vegetables. For the Hailus, the gwaro serves mainly as storage for wood.

280 Interview with Hailu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
281 When asked why they did not paint the insides of the fence Hailu's reply was: "We didn't paint the inside of the fences because we didn't feel it was necessary. It has no purpose on the inside." This desire of care towards outside appearance is discussed in 6.2.5
282 Interview with Hailu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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To accommodate tenants' needs, they built shared shower rooms. A common kitchen is available for all other members of the dwelling, while a private kitchen was added for the family. The original kitchen, made from concrete block material, was slightly modified to become a rental room, as it is perceived as a better material and offers an income opportunity.

Hailu aspires to future develop their plot by building a multi-storey structure. Their relatively secure tenure, due to private ownership, is an advantage over their immediate neighbours, though the government has not yet issued them a title deed. Future development depends on obtaining this deed.

In the future, I plan to get the title deed and to build vertically, constructing as large a building as the plot can accommodate. I believe it will generate good income for us.[283]



FIG. 5.9 Hailu's gibi is used for washing clothes, dishes and sun drying spices such as chili.

283 Interview with Hailu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

The gibi as an outdoor room

We mostly spend time outdoors, we prefer it. The elderly spend time in the kitchen and make coffee there, while we all gather in the living room in the evening.[284]

The ethnographic probe on Hailu's dwelling reveals a continuous process of transformation that aligns with the demographic changes and social mobility within the family. A significant portion of their plot was initially unbuilt, and their private ownership status encouraged them to make physical improvements. The changes they made were driven by cultural appropriateness and demographic pressure. Like many others in the neighbourhood, the Hailus gave priority to physically defining the gibi. Although Hailu never explicitly mentioned it, comparing on-site measurements with drawings from the FHC and other physical evidence reveals that the Hailus have encroached on public land when demarcating their gibi, a common practice in the neighbourhood and across Addis Ababa.

Given their corner plot, the Hailus made a key land use decision: they opened access to their gibi from the side of the street and closed off the former entrance, making that part of the house more private. This allowed them to extend their gwada in that direction and use the remaining outdoor space as a gwaro. This decision created a wide and multifunctional gibi on the side of the new entrance for various domestic chores.

In addition to parking, we use the gibi for washing dishes and doing laundry. We also use it for cleaning carpets. We have a small vegetable garden where we planted spinach and false banana. The handwash basin is placed outside for ease of access and its proximity to the bathroom. When we hold family mahber and similar events, we place tables in the gibi from the living room and use it as a space for the food buffet. Previously, our compound used to be muddy, but we paved it with mass concrete a few years ago, making it more convenient for our use.[285]

The original 39 m^2 two-roomed house has transformed into a multi-roomed, multi-family dwelling of 104 m^2, increasing the built area by 167%. The gibi has provided a private enclosure for Hailu's family to develop their property as they wished. It has also offered an outdoor living space that aligns with their domestic practices.

284 Interview with Hailu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
285 Interview with Hailu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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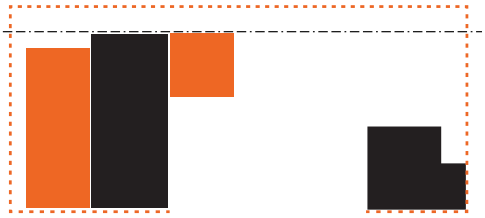
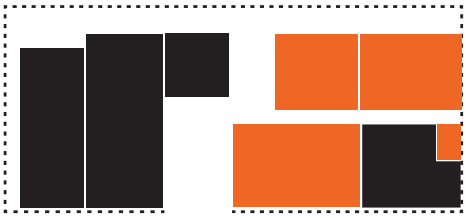
01. 1974 E.C_Original state of the house



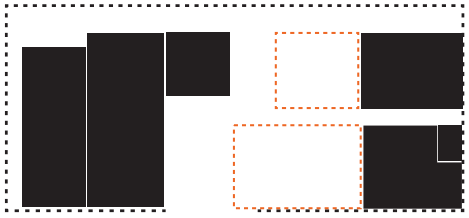
02. ~1981_Corrugated sheet fence



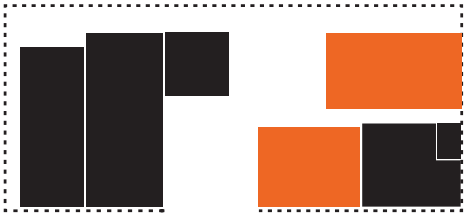
03. ~1984_Extensions added. Property line was pushed to the North



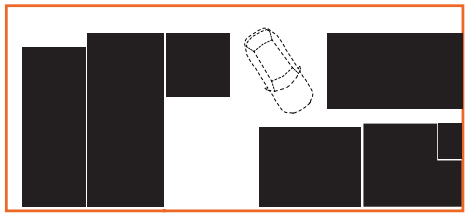
04. ~1984_Extensions added



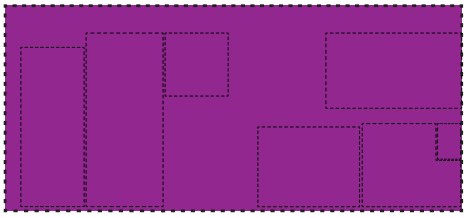
05. 2010_Extensions demolished



06. 2010_Current setup constructed



07. ~2019_Fence closed



08. Desired future scenario



Demolition for Multistory construction



FIG. 5.10 Transformation of Hailu's dwelling over the years. Note the extension of the property.

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5.2.2 Gudina; Kolfe Kuteba Betoch

Gudina was washing clothes in the gwaro on the day we met. Interrupting her didn't feel right, so most of our conversation took place while she continued her chores. She seemed comfortable talking while working, making our interaction smooth and lively. Gudina washed clothes in large plastic bowls, standing up. Some bowls were placed on wooden stools, while others were cushioned by reused car tyres to absorb the pressure from her hands.

Gudina was resettled from the inner city of Addis Ababa in the 1980s. Her life nearly came to a halt after she and her family were relocated with only a seventy-two-hour notice. She was an eleventh grader at the time and had to quit school because Kolfe was far from where she attended school in Nefas Silk. The family was uprooted from their social network, including relatives who lived nearby:

We were separated from our extended family members who were living in the same gibi. My two aunts were resettled in areas called Bihere Tsige and CMC, respectively. We had a good social life, and it was disrupted because we were resettled very far away from each other. Another significant difference was that we were able to work in the previous neighbourhood and earn some money. It is difficult to do that here.[286]

Gudina's journey parallels the evolution of the dwelling unit she has been modifying for the past thirty-three years alongside her parents and later with her husband. Initially, Gudina lived in this 34 m^2 house with her parents. The abrupt evacuation profoundly affected the entire family. Gudina recalls how she would sometimes return to the old neighbourhood to reflect on what had transpired Life carried on, and gradually, she began to acclimate to her new surroundings.

Uprooted from a community where their livelihoods were intertwined, Gudina and her family had to devise new ways to adapt their lifestyle in their new dwelling. One advantage of living in *Kolfe* sefer at that time was its proximity to the area known as *Asko-Chereta*, a thriving market where second-hand clothes were auctioned. Gudina and her sister started participating in these auctions ironing and washing the clothes before reselling them at a profit. It was through this income-generating venture that they began to make gradual improvements to their dwelling:

We were unhappy that there was no fence, it was just a house out in the open where anything could enter, including animals and people with mental illness who wandered into our space and spent the night. Shortly after moving in, we planted around the area and defined the boundary with sensel.[287]

Securing the fence was one of the first modifications they made, symbolizing their adaptation to a new way of life. Initially, the *sensel*, a succulent shrub Indigenous to East Africa, marked the boundary, but it was later replaced by more permanent materials, providing a sense of total enclosure with hard borders. This *sensel* gave way to a corrugated iron sheet fence, and eventually to the current metal sheet. Defining the territory marked an important step in further transforming the dwelling.

286 Interview with Gudina, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
287 Interview with Gudina, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Later on, Gudina began renting half of the kitchen in the backyard to a sex worker. She used the income from this to start a *tella* (local beer) business to support her family. Gudina sees the backyard as both a gwaro and a gibi. Describing it as a space essential in her life:

My main gibi is the one at the back, it is my space of freedom. It is also my source of income. It is a resourceful and functional space. I also consider this space to be a gwaro because of its location in reference to the main house. For my tenants, it is their gibi as it is in front of their units.[288]

In the one-bedroom typology of Kolfe Kuteba Betoch, the structure of spaces inherently suggests the gwaro, with the main house dividing the plot into two distinct areas. For Gudina, the gwaro became less private as it was shared by tenants residing in the dwelling. It functions as a social space and a connection zone to the service areas, including the toilet, shower and common kitchen. In contrast, the front yard is quieter and serves as a place of solitude, which Gudina refers to as "the garden". This area acts as an entrance porch, is well-kept, and welcomes guests. Gudina and her family invite tenants for coffee on special occasions and sometimes on weekends. Although the front garden is private to Gudina's family, tenants experience the space daily as they enter and exit the dwelling. Gudina uses produce from her garden, avoiding the need to buy salads or fruits from the market. The garden fruits are well-known and sought after by her neighbours:

I hand out the fruits from my garden for free. People with high blood pressure always ask for the kazmir. The same goes for the green peach. A neighbour with heart disease asked for it and I gave it to her.[289]

For Gudina, the gwada is the most intimate space in the dwelling: her master bedroom. She does not consider her kitchen a gwada but still desires its privacy. When she began subletting rooms, she added a new kitchen closer to the house's main core for more privacy.

Gudina now lives with her husband and three children. Her husband, a professional carpenter, initially attempted to establish a wood workshop in their gibi/gwaro, but it failed due to the noise. Gudina also tried to start a small convenience store at the front of their property, but this venture was curtailed by the landlord's restrictions. Eventually, she built three mud houses (sponsored by her brother) for rent in the gwaro, providing a legal income source. After several years, these rooms were replaced with a more formal HCB four-roomed unit, mainly for rent. Gudina is satisfied with the current setup and does not wish to be resettled again:

In the future, I would like to live without having to rent out rooms. We pay a lot for electric bills and septic pump pumping, and most of the rent money goes toward these expenses. It also causes quarrels with neighbours since the septic tanks are shared and have to be pumped in rotation I would also like to upgrade my bedroom and living room —to clean them up and make them more beautiful.[290]

288 Interview with Gudina, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
289 Interview with Gudina, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
290 Interview with Gudina, 2022 - Addis Ababa.



FIG. 5.11 Gudina's gibi at the front with the shower, sink for dishwashing and outdoor hand wash basin.

The tunnel of privacy

The ethnographic exploration on Gudina's house have revealed thirty-three years of continuous dwelling and livelihood transformation. Gudina and her family faced a neighbourhood setting and housing design imposed on them without their participation. Notably, 72 percent of the new plot remained undeveloped, with most of the space situated at the gwaro. The FHC, their new landlord, provided relatively better security of tenure, which encouraged Gudina and her family to make impactful physical investments in their dwelling.

The overall built percentage increased by 167%, with the dwelling expanding from 33 m^2 to 89 m^2. The Gudinas had to define their territory as their primary activity, even though it had been implicitly established by the spatial structure of the dwelling cluster. For the Gudinas and their tenants, activities such as washing, drying, and other household chores occur in the gwaro. Initially, Gudina opted to build modest, one-room units using wattle and daub construction techniques, both as extensions of the existing structure and as independent buildings. These structures were used for income-generating activities and extending her habitable space. It was difficult to protect the wall surfaces of these houses from the rain and Gudina was wrapping the façade with plastic tarps. Later, she built a service quarter from a concrete frame structure and hollow concrete blocks, following the same land-use strategy after demolishing the earlier additions. Navigating the bureaucratic hurdles to get building permits was challenging:

The FHC agreed to the project and sent a professional to measure and mark the place where we were allowed to add the service quarter. But we faced trouble from the kebele, where an official opposed the project and even tried to refer the case to higher administrative bodies. My husband gave the guy money for 'refreshments'[291], and he stopped bothering us.[292]

Due to the presence of tenants, the dwelling was transformed to ensure the privacy of the gwada for Gudina and her family through two sets of modifications. The first and most significant was the introduction of a tunnel corridor for the tenants, preventing physical or visual access to the gwada. The second was the construction of a private kitchen for the family. Additionally, a shared kitchen was built for all members of the dwelling unit, which Gudina sometimes uses for baking injera. The original kitchen, as observed in most other dwellings in *Kolfe Kuteba Betoch*, was slightly modified to become a rental room made from concrete block material, providing an opportunity to generate income. Gudina noted that such rooms are socially perceived as better. The 60cm wide tunnel Gudina built resulted in a considerable loss of space from the small gwada, a room she and her husband share with their youngest daughter. However, it enabled them to have a sense of privacy in the gwada and living room.

291 In Amharic, the slang term *yeshay* 'የሻይ' translates to 'refreshment' and is often used as a euphemism for 'bribe'.
292 Interview with Gudina, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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01. 1975_Original state of the house



02. 1975_Green fence



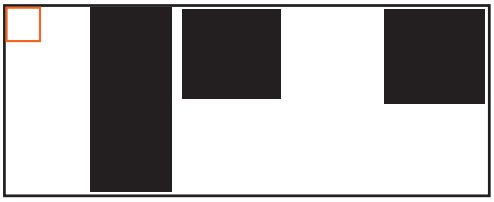
03. 1992_Corrugated sheet fence



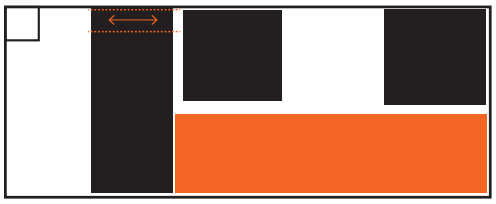
04. 2001_Metal sheet fence



05. 2005_Extensions added



06. 2014_Extensions removed for another new addition



05. 2015 E.C_current setup



06. Desired future scenario



Tents and temporary shades

Addition

Subtraction + rebuilding



FIG. 5.12 Transformation of Gudina's dwelling over the years. Gudina has been using temporary sheds and tents both for permanent cooking as well as for temporal events such as funerals.

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5.3 Saris Addisu Sefer: Sites and Services and Souks

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page CLXXXIII]

Sarris Addisu Sefer is a residential neighbourhood located in the southern part of Addis Ababa, falling within the administrative jurisdiction of the *Akaki Kality* Sub-City. The southern area of Addis Ababa was historically known as *Nefas Silk* and was designated as an industrial zone during the imperial era. Successive urban masterplans have continued to designate it as an industrial enclave, leading to the presence of numerous small and medium-sized operational industries in the region.

The name "*sarris*" is believed to have originated from a Greek-owned liquor factory by that name, which produced wine and other spirits in the neighbourhood. On the other hand, "*Nefas Silk*" which roughly translates to "wind-telephone", was an Amharic term used to refer to a telecommunications and telegram centre that was installed in the area in 1934.[293]

The Nefas Silk Site and Services project was among the earliest site and services projects implemented in Addis Ababa, carried out between 1984 and 1989. A dedicated project office was established to oversee this 130-hectare initiative, involving the formation of cooperatives, the organization of project documentation, and the supervision of the construction.[294] The project featured three single-storey housing typologies intended for low-income groups and a double-storey typology designed for middle-income residents. All plots were sized at 144 square meters. Additionally, the project included amenities such as markets, elementary schools, and a kebele centre.[295] According to dwellers, some of the open spaces seem to have been expropriated over the years:

We do not have strong communal amenities in the neighbourhood. There was a football field where the library is located now. Back in the day, that used to be where we played football. After that, it became a concrete block factory. It also served as a space for temporarily hosting evictees from the ring road construction. We also lack green areas. The natural green areas bordering the Bulbula River had naturally developed into a nice forest. We used to go there sometimes. Now they have been privatized by the middle-income row houses that are adjacent to it and fenced under the pretext that the area became a ground for drug abuse by the youth of the community.[296]

Dwellers have found inventive ways to build their convenience shops (locally termed *Souks*), vegetable shops, small-scale bars, etc. to fulfil the demand for such services. Presently, almost all the residents in the Nefas Silk project have made physical improvements to their houses, and the available sites for expansion have been fully utilized. The majority of the development is Horizontal, resulting in little or no open space within the plot.

293 Addis Ababa Municipality, "Mirror of Addis Ababa" (Berhanena Selam Printing Press, 1950).
294 The World Bank. East African Projects Department, "Staff Appraisal Report. Ethiopia Urban Development," November 1, 1982.
295 See Elias Ababu Tarekegn, "KITIYA - Transformation of Low Income Housing in Addis Ababa" (PhD Thesis, Trondheim, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2000), 110.
296 Interview with Ahmed, a dweller in Sarris Addisu Sefer, 2023- Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 5.13 Drone image of Sarris Sites and Services. Most residents have built souks at the front.

5.3.1 Ahmed; Sarris Addisu Sefer

Ahmed invited me and my team to sit under the shade of an apple tree, the only tree on their property and his favourite spot in the 'courtyard' of the dwelling. He performs his *salat* under this tree, right in front of his room. Ahmed's mother, though busy with household chores and not wanting to participate in the conversation, sat nearby, seemingly listening to her son. His father, indoors for most of the time, occasionally came out to check on things, sitting on the stairs leading to the living room and contributing a few comments.

Ahmed and his family moved to *Sarris Addisu Sefer* from *Dessie*, a town 400 kilometres to the north of Addis Ababa, in 2001. Before acquiring their current dwelling, they lived in a rented house nearby. Their decision to move was based on a recommendation from a family friend living in *Sarris*, as they were on the lookout for a neighbourhood with affordable rent and a nearby school for the children. Ahmed's father, a truck driver who owned his truck, was pleased to live near his friends in *Sarris*, and the family appreciated the peaceful area reminiscent of their former home in *Dessie*. They bought a corner plot of 210 m^2 from one of the original dwellers. Ahmed explains why their lot is 210 m^2 as opposed to the standard 144 m^2:

We bought this house because it was a corner plot and was much larger than the other lots. As you move inwards into the neighbourhood, you notice that the street gets narrower because dwellers encroach into the street. Our lot was on the corner and facing a wider street on one side, so we saw this as an advantage. It also had much green cover on the fence, and we liked that as well.[297]

297 Interview with Ahmed, 2023 - Addis Ababa.

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The original owner who sold them the house had already made a wattle and daub addition consisting of two rooms and a souk that served as a convenience store. The owner lived in the *chika* extension while renting out the main house and *souk* separately. The property was initially defined by a *Tid* (Juniperus) shrub. Three years after moving in, they replaced the *tid* with a corrugated iron sheet fence supported by eucalyptus wood structures. Due to the imminent threat of burglars in the neighbourhood, they later upgraded the fence to a concrete block one. During this process, they demolished the wattle and daub house made by the previous owner and replaced it with a service quarter comprising a living room interconnected with an additional bedroom. They relocated the toilet and kitchen, which were part of the core structures, to different parts of the plot. Additionally, they built a kitchen made of eucalyptus poles and corrugated sheet metals in a corner of the dwelling.

In the final round of transformation, they attached a room to the core house and reconstructed the previous kitchen using concrete frames and hollow concrete blocks. This infill construction filled the space between the new corner kitchen and the core house They also reconstructed the *souk*, making it more permanent and spacious. Ahmed moved into the shop, starting his own business, and used it as his bedroom and living space.

These additions were not aimed at reinforcing privacy or establishing a gwada. Ahmed considers the gwada to be a hidden space within the house and believes that most of the spaces in their house, including their bedroom and kitchens, are not hidden at all. Ahmed expresses that they do not have gwada spaces in their house. “Everything is out there and transparent. We do not have a gwada because we have nothing to hide.”

Ahmed and his family have strong social ties in *Sarris Addisu Sefer*. They are part of an active iddir that also runs a grinding mill business. They do not wish to leave this sefer and instead aim to develop their lot into something “clean and modern”:

Everyone wants something nice and clean for the family to live in. What I mean by being modern is achieving such a way of living. We are human beings and we don’t want to stay stuck on where we are. We want to improve. We are always in pursuit of something better.[298]

I would like to build a five-storey building where my parents live on the ground floor and the remaining four stories could be rented to generate income. I would love to have a house with a nice shower and toilet and a terrace at the top where I can have coffee and chew Khat. This space would replace the gibi space lost while building the house.[299]

Ahmed views the gibi as the void space in their property. In addition to being the space for *salat*, he considers it a vital area where they park their cars, dry herbs and spices, cook, and wash. They also use the space for coffee and meals when the weather permits, and it serves as a playground for the children. Ahmed notes that the family often cooks outside and enjoys coffee during the day and dinner in the evenings in this space.

Ahmed feels that they do not have a gwaro, which he defines as a space between a house and the border with secondary access. For outdoor storage, the Ahmeds have appropriated two relatively concealed outdoor spaces for bulk storage. One is an 80 cm narrow gap between the outside fence and the living room, used to store stowaway items. The other is between the core house and the new addition, where they keep old furniture and large-sized car tyres.

298 Interview with Ahmed, 2023 – Addis Ababa.
299 Interview with Ahmed, 2023 – Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 5.14 Ahmed's gibi with the multifunctional courtyard and the apple tree.

The 'Service Quarter' is the main quarter

The spatial inadequacy of the dwelling was the main impetus for transforming the dwelling. The Ahmeds purchased the house from an elderly woman who was one of the original occupants. According to Ahmed, she lived with her child and her grandchild, and even for their smaller family, the core house was insufficient:

The first thing I noticed in this house is that it is not enough to accommodate a family. There is so much available space, but the buildings are not sufficient. Those who designed it, have not taken the domestic practices of people into account.[300]

As a 'Type A' site and services design, Ahmed's dwelling features a multifunctional core structure attached to an 18 m common wall shared with a neighbour. The house includes a kitchen and a toilet located at a corner, also sharing walls with two neighbouring properties. The design anticipates expansion of the core towards the side and service unit, but this did not occur for the Ahmeds. The original owner had already added a wattle and daub structure adjacent to the kitchen and toilet, which she used as her primary residence while renting out the core house for income. She also constructed a *souk* at the entrance, renting it to a convenience store. Ahmed and his family acquired the house with these initial developments, which partly shaped the transformation pattern of the dwelling.

300 Interview with Ahmed, 2023 - Addis Ababa.

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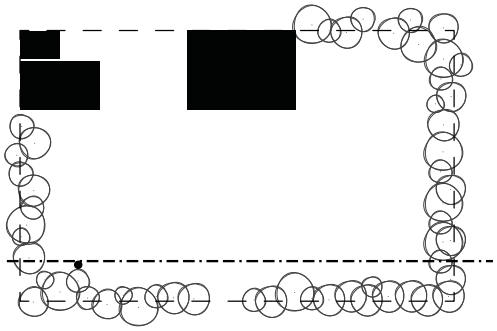
While following the peripheral development pattern, the toilet was relocated to the wider frontage of their plot, while the kitchen moved to the narrow side. Both are corner developments. Ahmed explained this change was made to establish an independent septic tank connected to the municipal sewer line.[301] Another possible motive was to claim more land from the right of way by constructing permanent structures at these strategic corners.

All design decisions for these transformation were made by Ahmed's grandfather, while hired professionals handled the construction. The Ahmed family chose concrete frames and hollow concrete blocks as the primary materials for their renovations. They replaced the the original wattle and daub, as well as eucalyptus and metal sheet structures, with concrete block constructions—What ahmed describes as "clean" and "modern". The gibi, which was once an unsealed ground primarily covered in grass, has been paved with in-situ concrete, leaving a narrow gap for the apple tree and spices like common rue.

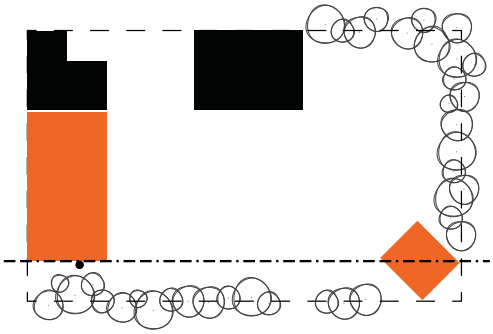
The Ahmeds purchased a house that had already been expanded from its original 20 m^2 to 36 m^2 by the previous owner. They further transformed the 36 m^2 space into a 93 m^2 living area, including the souk, resulting in a 158 percent increase in floor space. Their expansion strategy focused on developing the perimeter using the service-quarter typology, while leaving a gibi in the centre for parking and outdoor domestic activities. This approach was not identified in the potential expansion scenarios of the site and services study. The family chose this development strategy based on their dwelling practices and the corner location of their plot. The *souk*, a common feature in *Sarris*, fits seamlessly into this overall pattern of service quarters along the edges.

Ahmed's souk remains a notable landmark in the neighbourhood, even though it is no longer active. It became popular when Ahmed opened it, as there was already an older *souk* in the same location. Its fame stemmed from its corner position within the dwelling cluster. The *souk* has since transformed into a bedroom for the housemaid while still serving as a bulk storage space for the kitchen, with shelves filled with cooking oil and other kitchen supplies.

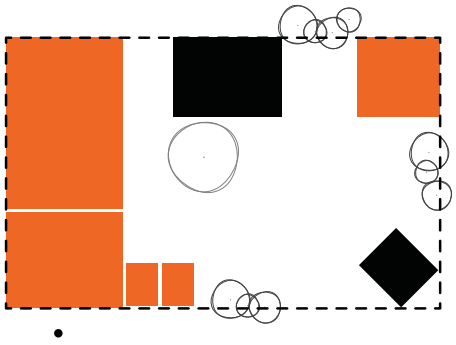
301 As observed in situations where dwellings share common septic tanks, it is always a source of disagreement. In this context, Ahmed's response is valid. On the other hand, It is also observed that the Ahmeds have encroached on both arterial streets and the building on the two corners advances this action.



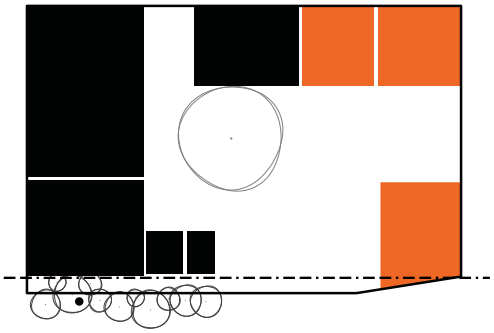
01. Original state of the house. Living room + Bedroom+ Kitchen and a toilet. It had a green fence. Property line was pushed to the South.



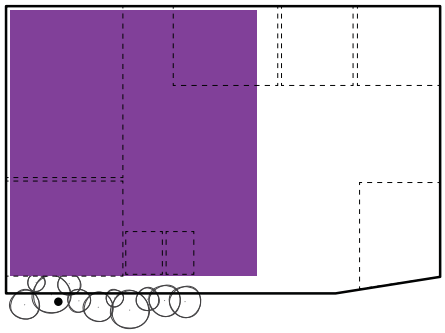
02. ~2002, the previous owners had made a Chika extension and added a corner shop that they rented out to a shop keeper. The electric pole was also in the position marked by the black dot when the current owners moved in. The TID fence was still in place. Property line was pushed to the South.



03. 2003, they demolished the Chika house and built their current house along with a corner kitchen made of eucalyptus poles and corrugated metal sheets.



04. By 2011, they constructed his sister's room and the current kitchen with concrete blocks. The apple tree was also planted soon after this. The shop was also made with corrugated metal sheets around 2004, and then with concrete blocks in 2011. They also fenced the compound with concrete blocks around 2004. The property line was pushed to the South again.



05. Desired future scenario

Legend

Desired future scenario:
In the future they would like to build a multistorey building that could help them to generate income. He thinks that if they construct a G+4 building for, they would let their parents stay on the ground level and rent out the rest of the spaces.

He would like the future house to have nice toilets and showers, and a roof terrace. He envisions the terrace being used to relax, to have coffee, and to chew kha't. In the event that they construct the house, he is open to a proposal that can save the apple tree but he has no problems with cutting it.

FIG. 5.15 Transformation diagram of Ahmed's dwelling.

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5.3.2 Bemnet; Sarris Addisu Sefer

The discussion with Bemnet took place on a Sunday morning, the only convenient time for him as he drives a taxi and is busy during the weekdays and on Saturdays. Since the history of the dwelling is deeply intertwined with his late father, the conversation frequently brought Bemnet back to memories of him. It was evident that he had a unique relationship with his father, and the discussions often transported him down memory lane. Bemnet chose to conduct our talk in the living room, one of the first spaces his father had modified in the dwelling.

Bemnet is thirty-two years old and moved to *Sarris* with his family in 1988 from a locality called *Almazye Meda*, within the greater sefer of *Kera*. He vividly remembers their former neighbourhood, where neighbours kept farm animals. Bemnet recalls his first impression of *Sarris Addisu Sefer*:

There was nothing here; it was full of trees. It was only after we moved in the roads started to get built. I believe we were the third family to move into the neighbourhood. The rest of the area was a thick forest.[302]

The house was purchased from a friend of Bemnet's father who worked in a slaughterhouse. The cooperative was named *Siga Ne'ter* after the industry where the neighbourhood residents used to work. They bought the core house along with the plot and continued modifying it. According to Bemnet, the main reason his family wanted to own a house was the desire to have private property. His parents didn't want to live as tenants, even though rent was cheap back then. They also aspired to have a larger house with a private toilet, something that they didn't have in their previous communal gibi dwelling:

We used to live in a shared facility, which used to be very small. We didn't have privacy and had to share the toilet amongst many other families.[303]

The first physical structure they added during the early days was a bamboo fence. This was important to secure the gibi from wild animals that crept from the nearby forest:

My father fenced the property with bamboo screens in the morning and the hyenas would come and tear it down at night. It was a tug-of-war between us and the hyenas for some time. They used to sleep by the fence and sometimes by the door. There were also large monkeys that came from the nearby woods, so we had to be indoors by five or six before dusk.[304]

Bemnet believes their current house is sufficient for a single-family and that the primary reason for transforming the spaces was to make them more convenient—"if you do not have an extended family, the house is enough. I was living here with my parents and two siblings". However, Bemnet describes the original spatial layout as "suffocating" and they needed to make those changes to make the house more spacious:

The internal space was very cramped and uncomfortable. We made the spaces wider and brighter, which gave us a more modern way of living. It allowed us to furnish the spaces differently. The modifications had a positive impact and improved how we feel here.[305]

302 Interview with Bemnet, 2023 - Addis Ababa.
303 Interview with Bemnet, 2023 - Addis Ababa.
304 Interview with Bemnet, 2023 - Addis Ababa.
305 Interview with Bemnet, 2023 - Addis Ababa.

Bemnet's family began transforming their house by first extending the living room towards the front. They later merged the living room with a bedroom, creating a larger living room with a dining corner. This initial transformation included replacing the wooden doors and windows of the main house with steel ones and installing French windows in the living room to bring in more light. The core house also lacked proper floor finish and ceilings, which were added during these changes.

To compensate for the lost bedroom, they added a new one at the back of the main house, along with a small store at the corner of the gibi adjacent to the street. For Bemnet and his family, the gibi encompasses the front yard, which includes a paved area and a strip garden. This space is used for parking, hosting events like weddings, drying clothes, and occasionally drying herbs.

As Bemnet's siblings moved out or got married and the demographic conditions changed, the newly added bedroom at the back was converted into a kitchen, with an additional kitchen for baking injera added in the gwaro. This extra kitchen, referred to by Bemnet as the gwada, is occasionally shared with the tenants. The original kitchen was too small for them, so it was transformed into a bedroom and rented out. Bemnet considers the secondary kitchen in the service quarter as the gwada. It is used for storage and baking injera and other foods. The gwada, accessed from the outside space, is used by the tenants on rare occasions.

For the Bemnets, the main area for the tenants is the gwaro. Bemnet describes their gwaro as "the open space behind the house". This includes the outside space between the main unit and the service quarter, along with the narrow passageway connecting it to the front yard. It serves as a service space for the rental units and the main house, used for washing clothes, washing dishes, collecting water, and other kitchen-related activities.

The last change the Bemnets made was converting the small store at the corner of the gibi into a souk. Originally intended for a water distribution business, it was later changed into a room to let. Bemnet wants to keep the window connection with the outside in case they decide to use the space as a *souk* in the future.

Bemnet commends their social life in Sarris although he thinks that it is slowly fading off during the years:

We founded the iddir called Fikre-Selam shortly after we moved in around 1989. The iddir has a compound used for meetings and storing items such as tents, benches, and chairs. It helps keep the community together. Nowadays, most of the original settlers have sold their properties and left the neighbourhood. Most current residents are tenants, and they keep changing. I hardly recognize the neighbours and the social ties are not as strong.[306]

Currently, Bemnet lives in the house with his brother and three other tenants. He has no ambition to further develop the house, though he is open to vertical expansion if the means were available. However, he is still reluctant because he doesn't want to lose the memories associated with his late father. He believes the house is adequate for their current family size.

306 Interview with Bemnet, 2023 - Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 5.16 Bement's garden in the gibi.

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Demarcated Gwaro

The initial transformation began with securing the property from wild animals by constructing a bamboo fence. Over the years, this was replaced with a corrugated iron sheet and eventually a solid concrete block fence. Securing their territory was a priority for the Bemnets' family before making further changes to the dwelling. The main impetus for transforming the main house was to make the rooms more spacious, as they were initially too "suffocating", in Bemnets' words.

The Sites and Services lexicon identifies Bemnets' house as "Type C".[307] The core house comprises a living room and two bedrooms as the main house in addition to the kitchen and toilet in the service block. The suggested expansion was horizontal towards the back end of the main unit and an extension on the service quarter. Contrary to this design suggestion, the Bemnets first expanded the living space to the front end of the main unit towards the terrace. The second expansion also expanded the living space by merging one of the bedrooms with the living space. Concurrently, a bedroom was extended towards the back end of the main unit to compensate for the lost bedroom. Successive expansions on the service quarter followed along with the *souk* with a window opening towards the street.

These changes were made without a building permit, except for the transition of the *souk* and the fence to concrete blocks. Bemnets' father was responsible for the design decisions, consulting with neighbourhood engineers for feedback and input and hiring local professionals for the construction. Bemnet's mother handled the decorations and furniture selection, choosing the colours and creating the house's internal ambience. Bemnet and his brother participated by painting the house.

The original 40 m^2 house expanded into a 94.6 m^2 unit, an increase of 137%. This transformation was initially aimed at making the house more spacious. Later, it shifted towards generating income as the demographic conditions changed—Bemnet's mother went abroad, and his siblings got married. The souk at the front and the rooms added in the gwaro are now used to generate income. The gwaro is physically demarcated by an internal gate, creating a sense of gibi within the gibi. According to Bement, the initial purpose of the gate was to contain a violent dog within the gwaro. However, even after the dog is long gone, the gate continued to demarcate two distinct outdoor spaces: a gwaro for wet and kitchen-related activities at the back, and a gibi for gardening and dry activities in the front.

307 The World Bank. East African Projects Department, "Staff Appraisal Report. Ethiopia Urban Development."

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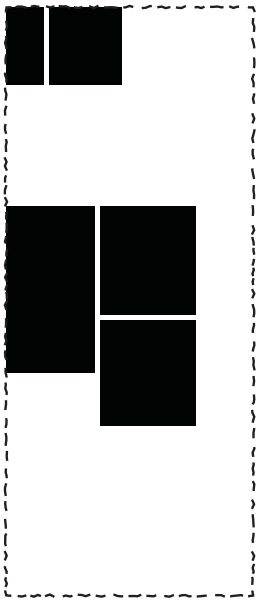
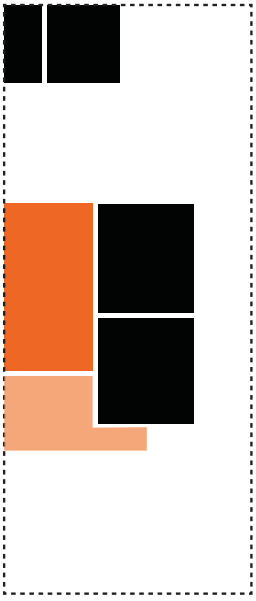
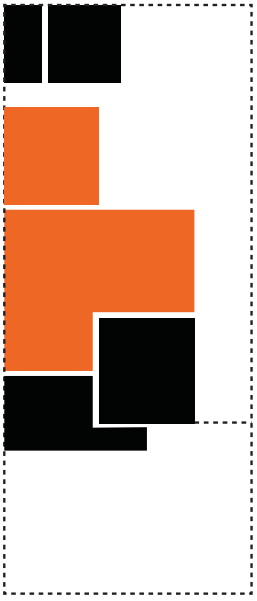


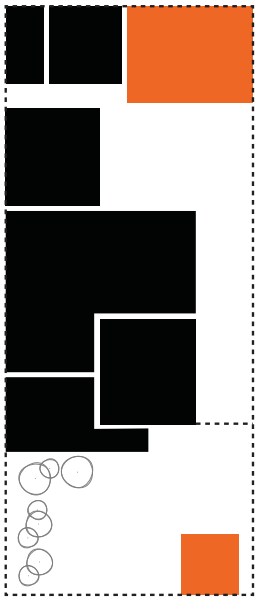
01. 1988_original state of the house when the current owners bought the property



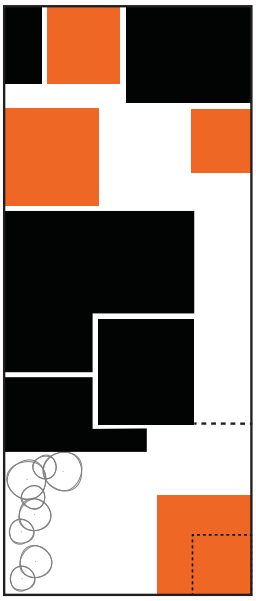
02. 1990_The living room was extended to the front and a veranda was added



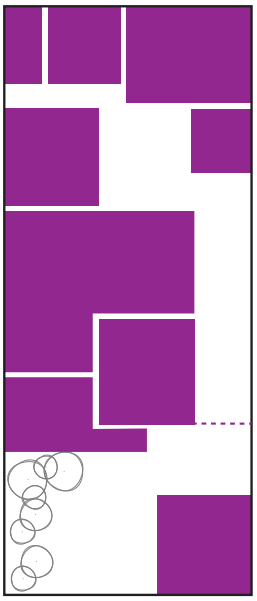
03. 1998_The living room and one of the bedrooms were merged to make a larger living room. A bedroom was added at the back



04. 2015_An additional bedroom was built at the back along with a small corrugated metal sheet shed near the main gate. The shed served as a store.



05. BY 2020_ Another smaller kitchen was built on the other side of the Guaro. The former store at the gate was also converted into a rental unit, completing the current setup of the dwelling



06. Future scenario:
They are content with the current setup of the house, but they are open to growing vertically if the need ever arises



FIG. 5.17 Transformation diagram of Bemnet's dwelling. Bemnet demarcated the gwaro in step 03 and added a souk like most dwellers in Sarris.

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5.4 Mekanissa: Tribute to the Baumbachs

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page CCXIX]

Mekanissa, located in the southwestern part of Addis Ababa, derives its name from the renowned Mekanissa Winery that emerged during the Italian occupation. It is possible that the winery adopted its name from the preexisting farming neighbourhood, as "*bakanissa*" refers to a specific tree species in the Oromiffa language.[308] The northern section of *Mekanissa*, an extension of the Old-Airport area, became a favoured residential area for the affluent elites of Addis Ababa during the Imperial times. Many ministers and government dignitaries have built homes in this region. However, this development was largely limited to the northern side of the Mekanissa Winery, with the southern portion primarily used for agriculture.

Significant changes occurred when the city's 1983-86 master plan designated portions of Mekanissa for housing expansion. The master plan identified approximately 1,700 hectares of land suitable for accommodating 267,000 people.[309] The initial housing and planning experiment in Mekanissa took place between 1987 and 1990, known as the Mekanissa Housing Development, organized into phases like Mekanissa I, Mekanissa II and so on. The spatial planning and housing design for this pilot project were executed by Peter and Ute Baumbach, a couple from the GDR. The Baumbach's studying dwelling practices at that time proposed a 'deep' plot-based scheme attempting to respond to the local context.[310] The main house was designed with a generous front setback and a backyard for kitchen and food preparation activities.[311] The plots were to be fenced although a green cover was designed to cover the fences. The Baumbachs developed the spatial planning based on the realities of Addis Ababa at that time and proposed crop cultivating areas.[312] They also recommended retaining the so-called service quarter, which was already a dwelling pattern in Addis Ababa, as a detached block in the plot.[313]

The land development and delivery strategy drew inspiration from the sites and services scheme, utilizing remaining funds from the Nefas Silk Site and Services project.[314] In this approach, the municipality developed serviced land and distributed it to cooperatives. The land included basic infrastructure services but did not come with a pre-built core house, allowing residents to gradually construct the received typologies at their own pace. *Mekanissa* has now developed into one of the most sought-after residential quarters in Addis Ababa.

The two dwelling examples below are from Mekanissa I, a housing settlement pilot project initially designed by the Baumbachs. Although there is limited literature on the Baumbachs' work, their former colleagues and assistants regard the Mekanissa housing settlements, along with the larger settlement known as *lebu*, as a significant contribution from the Baumbachs. The spatial plans were eventually implemented years after their departure, though not exactly in line with their original proposal.[315]

308 Magarsaa Guutaa, "From a Humble Begining to Advanced Standing: History of Mekane Yesus Seminary (1960-2010)" (Mekane Yesus Seminary, 2011), http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/GuutaaFromAHumbleBeginningAHistoryofMYS.pdf.
309 Wubshet Berhanu, "Urban Policies and the Formation of Social and Spatial Patterns in Ethiopia. The Case of Housing Areas in Addis Ababa" (PhD Thesis, Trondheim, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2002).
310 They were building upon the suggestions of the 1986 Master Plan.
311 Interview with Alazar Assefa in 2019. An architect who worked closely with Peter Baumbach.
312 Monika Motylinska and Phuong Phan, "'Not the Usual Way?' On the Involvement of an East German Couple with the Planning of the Ethiopian Capital," *ABE Journal. Architecture beyond Europe*, no. 16 (December 31, 2019), https://doi.org/10.4000/abe.6997.
313 Interview with Alazar Assefa in 2019. An architect who worked closely with Peter Baumbach.
314 Interview with Alazar Assefa in 2019.
315 Motylinska and Phan have reported that the projects are not built while my field research and interviews show that they are built with several alterations.

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FIG. 5.18 Drone image of part of Mekanissa-I. The corrugated Iron sheet structure in the green area is the Iddir building.

5.4.1 Bekele and Yacob; Mekanissa

Enenesa Behibret (Let us rise in unity), *Wanaw Laboratory* (The main laboratory), Teramed (Making headway) and *Lebet Bekahu* (Qualifying for a home) are some of the names of the housing cooperatives that were allocated land in Mekanissa in the 1980s.[316]

Bekele recalls the name of the cooperatives that were allotted land in what is known to city planners as Mekanissa I, a housing project that was executed by the baumbachs, Bekele, though not aware of them, agreed to discuss his dwelling and arranged a seat for me and my team under the Kashmir tree in their gibi.

Bekele used to live in *Abinet*, a neighbourhood near *Mercato*, before moving to *Mekanissa* in 1991. His former home was a rented *kebele* house in a locality within *Abinet* called *Zigeta*, where he lived with his family. Before retiring, Bekele worked in the construction sector as a mason and a carpenter. He narrates the story of their previous house together with his son Yacob:

We resided in a two-roomed mud house, where we would polish the floor using cow dung. It was kebele-owned, and the toilet and cooking spaces were communal. Typically, five to six families shared the same gibi, and despite differences in religion, we shared a bond of love and support, always there for one another.[317]

316 Interview with Bekele and Yacob, 2022 – Addis Ababa.
317 Interview with Bekele and Yacob, 2022 – Addis Ababa.

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Bekele was unhappy living as a *kebele* tenant and actively sought to acquire a plot. In 1980, he and his friends from the same area formed a cooperative of forty-eight members named *Enenesa Behibret* (let us rise in unity). During those days, the state allotted land to housing cooperatives along with a prescribed housing design. After years of waiting, the cooperative was assigned land in *Mekanissa,* and each member received a 160 m^2 lot by drawing a lottery. Bekele, like most of his neighbours, incorporated 30 m^2 of land from the right of way because they agreed that the road was "wide enough". This land was legalized as part of their title deed in 2018, officially making their plot 190 m^2. The strict design template Bekele received from the state included a three-room main house and a service quarter.

After fencing their plot by planting natural barriers such as *Tid*(Juniper), *Koshem* (Dovyalis abyssinica), and *Kontir* (Accacia abyssinica), Bekele built a wattle and daub service quarter on the back end of his property using the government-provided design, though the specified material was Hollow Concrete Block. The family started living in the service quarter and later moved into the house in 1991, without waiting for the mud/straw mix to dry. Yacob remembers their early days in the house:

We lived for a long time without a ceiling. It was when my eldest sister made a living that she financed a fabric ceiling. Later, my other siblings finished school, got jobs and started to invest in our house.[318]

In 1995, four years later, Bekele changed the material of the service quarter from wattle and daub to a Hollow Concrete Block structure. He also added a bedroom and expanded the toilet and the kitchen. Bekele described how financially challenging it was to complete building his house, noting it took him four years to finish constructing the kitchen. For the Bekeles, the Kitchen and the attached storage space are regarded as their gwada. The gwada was initially part of the service quarter, but they later created a detached gwada and a toilet to make a stronger distinction from the rest of the living spaces.

In the late 90s, they constructed the main house from wattle and daub and added a new structure in their frontage to start a hair salon business. This significantly reduced the garden space they had developed and cherished since moving in. Bekele recalls the orange tree, the *gesho* (Rhamnus prinoides) and the Kashmir as the most prominent trees. The Kashmir is the only tree that survived the transformations over the years and still thrives, providing shade for the coffee ceremony and bearing their favourite fruit:

Our Kashmir is around 11 years old. It gives a lot of fruit and we share it with our neighbours. Once the tree thrived, my sitting space was under it. We usually eat lunch under it and hold our coffee ceremonies. We only use the living room if we have guests.[319]

In 2007, Bekele, with help from his children and financial support from two who went to Iraq and Lebanon, undertook the next significant transformation of their home. They expanded the hair salon and replaced the wattle and daub structure with hollow concrete blocks. In 2018, they added a barber shop on the corner of the house, leaving a narrow entrance between the hair salon and the new barbershop. This entrance is part of what the Bekeles consider their gibi, the outdoor space from the entrance to the main house. They define the gibi as a shared, multifunctional area used for parking cars, washing clothes, drying herbs and family gatherings.

318 Interview with Bekele and Yacob, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
319 Interview with Bekele and Yacob, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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The gibi and much of the service quarter are shared service spaces for the rental units, beauty salon and barbershop. Given the unique occupancy setup, Yacob views the gwaro and the gibi as semi-private. The gwaro, the narrow corridor between the main unit and the service quarter is shared with the tenants.

Although *Mekanissa* was intended to be a serviced land development, water and electricity were not readily available when the dwellers moved in. Residents had to fetch water from a communal water tap, known locally as *bono*, and connect electricity from their neighbours. Additionally, the internal streets were not built. Bekele had to endure a dramatic experience to connect to the power grid and pay for the streets:

We have had some difficult times. The cooperative had decided to raise funds via a contribution of ETB 700. I did not have this money, so I had to sell my gold wedding ring. The cooperative used the money to bribe officials' hefty sums and connect the neighbourhood to the power grid.[320]

The Bekeles have moved past their difficult days and now earn income from their two businesses within the dwelling and from the rooms they rent out. However, they still face financial challenges and believe they need to do more since the house is their sole source of income. Yacob aspires to build a multi-storey building in their plot with several apartments for rent. He believes this will help his family overcome their financial challenges and become an important source of income.



FIG. 5.19 The gibi of the Bekeles with their Kazmir tree in the foreground.

320 Interview with Bekele and Yacob, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Incremental and Self-built

Bekele shares:

Building a house is not an easy task. One needs to be patient and persistent. When we began, we lacked the financial capacity to build all at once, so we had to construct gradually, saving money whenever possible. My kids were young then and could not support me financially. Now that they are capable, we plan to develop the property further.[321]

The Bekeles faced serious financial challenges and could only build a limited portion of habitable space from the provided design, leading to spatial inadequacy. This need for space drove them to transform their dwelling, allowing them to use the additional units for income generation. The house and associated services, such as the hair salon and barber shop, are the family's main income sources.

In the *Mekanissa* serviced land scheme, it was crucial to follow the government-provided design template, which assumed simultaneous construction between neighbours. This included shared walls, foundation footings and septic tanks. Bekele knew that it would be challenging to match his. Neighbours' construction pace due to his unstable financial situation. Therefore, he decided to detach his wall from the neighbours and convinced them to do the same. The cooperative members also protested the shared septic tank plan, foreseeing future disagreements, and the Municipality permitted a one-meter distance between septic tanks. This decision was vital for incremental growth, allowing dwellers to build at their own pace. Bekele notes that this approach helped avoid potential water leakage in common walls and deter acoustic nuisance from neighbours.

The first crucial step Bekele took was securing the plot's borders. Following the state-provided layout, he initially developed the service quarter because it was cheaper and less complicated to build, expanding linearly along the existing fence wall. With the next available funds, Bekele focused on upgrading the service quarter by changing the material and improving the gwada. All modifications were confined to the service quarter because Bekele couldn't afford to build the main house at that time.

Initially, the Bekeles used wattle and daub construction due to the relatively low cost. The service quarter was built with wattle and daub and had an unfinished earth floor before being replaced with a concrete frame structure with a Hollow Concrete Block infill. The main house, also built with wattle and daub, was later jacketed with Hollow Concrete Blocks to protect the mud plaster from rain. It is customary in Addis Ababa to finish adobe facades with Tyrolean-plaster, the Bekeles went a step further by using Hollow Concrete Blocks for the outer skin.

The units added later employed different construction methods. The hair salon was built with corrugated iron sheet facades, eucalyptus pole structure, and steel panels while the barber shop was from load-bearing Hollow Concrete Blocks combined with steel facades. All units feature corrugated iron sheet roofing and concrete flooring. Bekele proudly expresses his satisfaction for masterminding the construction and sometimes designing of these units over the past thirty-three years:

321 Interview with Bekele and Yacob, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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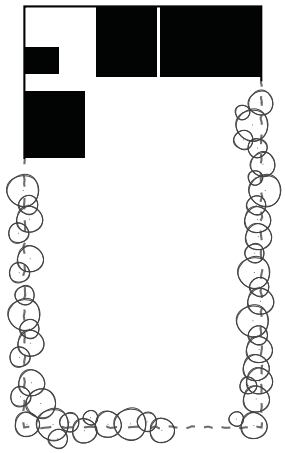
I did the masonry and carpentry works. Except for the electrical installations, we did everything here ourselves. Bending reinforcement bars was assisted by the children but even the cutting of the steel bars was done by me.[322]

Bekele's experience in the construction sector was pivotal in successfully managing the incremental construction of his home over three decades. His expertise, along with his son's allowed them to redesign various aspects of the house. They replaced the wooden doors and windows with French windows and steel doors, a trend in the 70s and 80s. They explain that they did this to let in more light and to make the house "beautiful". They also added a shower, which was not included in the original plans. Bekele and Yacob organized spaces for washing clothes and dishes so these activities could occur in parallel without disturbing a coffee ceremony or meal under the Kashmir tree.

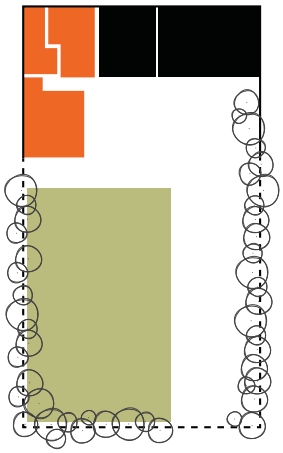
Over thirty-three years, Bekele and his children's self-construction efforts increased the floor space of the house from 42 m^2 to 134 m^2, a 219 percent increase. They ensured their gwaro and gibi, shared with customers and tenants, also had private niches for their own storage and outdoor dwelling practices such as their coffee tradition. Tenants often use the gwaro as an immediate spatial extension of their units, and sometimes even for cooking. The gwaro, covered by the roof eves of the main house and the service quarter, feels like an indoor corridor.

The Bekeles are proud of the thirty-three years of self-built incremental construction and view it as an ongoing process. They cherish their intimate family spaces within the more public and semi-public zones of the dwellings and envision a future where they can further benefit from their developed skills and the potential of their property.

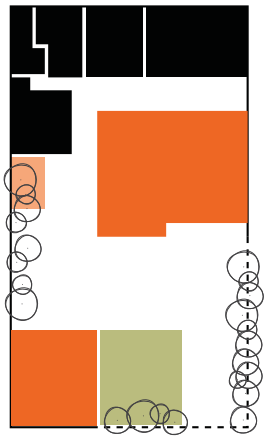
322 Interview with Bekele and Yacob, 2022 - Addis Ababa.



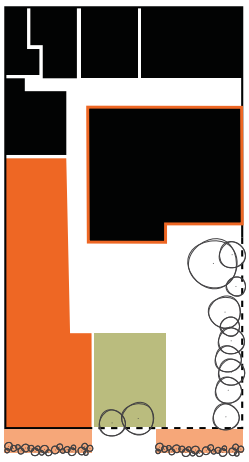
01. 1991_original state of the house



02. 1995_They demolished the wattle and daub house and constructed the service unit with concrete blocks. They also added one bedroom and expanded the toilet and kitchen. They planted a garden.



03. ~1998_They constructed what is now they main house out of wattle and daub and added a female hair salon. They also had a small chicken coop. The green space with flowers became smaller.



04. 2007_by using the funds they got from two of their children (one male and one female), who went abroad to the middle east for work, they expanded the hair salon and added an HCB jacket to the main wattle and daub house in the middle.



05. ~2018_ They added the barber-shop as a means for the owner to earn some money for some of his personal expenses



06. Future scenario:
In the future the owner would like to construct a multistorey building with rooms for rent. He believes that it will help him and his family overcome their financial constraints.



FIG. 5.20 Transformation of the Bekeles dwelling over the years.

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5.4.2 Iyasu; Mekanissa

Iyasu wanted our dialogue to start very early in the morning, so me and my research team made an early appearance. We were excited to finally find a second respondent in Mekanissa who was willing to avail his home and didn't want to get late and disappoint him. Traffic was outbound towards the inner city from Mekanissa so reaching there on time was not a challenge.

Iyasu was born in *La Gar*, the former train station area in the inner city. After leaving the house he shared with his parents and siblings, he lived as a tenant in rented condominium apartments before settling in Mekanissa in 2011. *La Gare* was an unplanned settlement that had the fate of being earmarked for redevelopment by successive City Administrations and was finally cleared in 2019 as part of a city-wide facelifting project. Iyasu remembers La Gare as a vibrant neighbourhood with a rich social life, speaking nostalgically about his former neighbourhood:

It was a chika house in a communal gibi, just a humble abode. The social life I had in La Gar is not comparable with any of the later neighbourhoods I lived in. Social life in its very true sense happened in La Gare.[323]

Iyasu's journey to his Mekanissa plot began in 2002 when the city government distributed land through the lease-holding system lottery. Encouraged by the city administration's push for greenfield housing development in the early 90s, Iyasu strategically chose *Mekanissa* due to its distance from the inner city, increasing his chances of winning in the lottery. His choice paid off.

In 2004, Iyasu received a 175 m^2 corner plot in *Mekanissa* along with the construction drawings from the municipal administration. He began by building a temporary storage structure and erecting a corrugated iron sheet fence to secure the property. Construction of the main house proceeded incrementally, with Iyasu building a floor per year. The provided Design came with building regulations, mandating construction along boundary lines for the main house and the service quarter. It also mandated adhering to strict setbacks. Although the original design was for a two-storey structure, Iyasu decided to build three stories:

The design that I received from the municipality was a two-storey structure and it was enough to accommodate a family. But I decided to add one more level and modified it to a three-storey house after getting the go-ahead from the permit authorities.[324]

Iyasu completed the main house in 2011 and moved in with his bride. While the structure and exterior were finalized, only a few rooms were internally finished and livable. The living room on the ground level and the master bedroom, including the toilet, were complete, though the bedroom had a temporary makeshift door and unfinished floors. Iyasu gradually finished these while living in the house. Although the façade of the main house was complete, the balconies were inaccessible due to the absence of handrails were not installed. As of my last encounter with Iyasu in 2022, the balcony remained in the same state.

323 Interview with Iyasu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
324 Interview with Iyasu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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In 2019, Iyasu completed the semi-basement floor and allowed a relative to live there rent-free.[325] The semi-basement was designed as an independent unit with its own access to the gwaro, complete with a bathroom and kitchen. Iyasu credits this addition to a friend, who happened to be an architect. The design documents from the city administration assumed level ground, but Iyasu's plot had a significant slope. The semi-basement solved this issue:

I was lucky to have a childhood friend who happened to be an architect. He advised me not to fill the level difference and to instead consider a semi-basement. He told me that it would be useful as a store or as an extra space for future use. This helped me to have two levels in the house. The access to the main entrance is levelled and I can easily back out my car— a situation that would have been difficult if the slope was inwards to the gibi. I also do not have stormwater drainage problems since I drain the water to the outside from these levels.[326]

Iyasu considers the open space of his dwelling, excluding the built structures, as his gibi. this includes his lavish garden, the paved front yard where his children play, the area where he parks his car, and the space he uses for his steel cutting and welding activities. He has invested significant time and effort into planting trees and landscaping the gibi, transforming it into a space of relaxation. He often spends his leisure time in the gazebo he built within the gibi. The gazebo features a hanging garden theme with shelves for potted creepers and flowers. The floor is concrete, covered with an artificial green mat where Iyasu placed his mattress. Proudly, he showcases the gazebo and the sun-shading shutters he installed himself.

Within the domain of the gibi, Iyasu describes the gwaro as the space behind the house where the service quarter and the semi-basement are located. He articulates two layers of gwaro. The first is the area between the semi-basement and the side entrance to the house, used by his family for cloth washing by his relatives in the basement and for small-scale wax production. The second gwaro space is situated between the service quarter and the main house, mainly used for outdoor cooking, storage, and dishwashing, equipped with sanitary fixtures.

Iyasu does not consider the kitchen or the bedrooms as part of the gwada. For him, a gwada is a space concealed from the main house, existing only at ground level. Since his private spaces are in the upper stories, he doesn't identify a gwada space in his dwelling.[327]

Although Iyasu is not content with the social ties in Mekanissa, he appreciates the "homogeneity" of the neighbourhood. He notes that his friends in less planned and more heterogeneous neighbourhoods face difficulties when contributing funds for common infrastructure like building arterial cobblestone roads. The community expects those in relatively middle-class status with 'better' houses to contribute more, believing they benefit more from these developments.

Iyasu aspires to transform the single-storey service block into a three-storey structure and connect it with the main house, a plan that has always been in place. A corridor from the main house is ready to connect with the future three-storey service quarter, currently serving as a shoe storage space. In the service quarter, the structure for the future staircase, along with its dedicated space, is temporarily used as tool storage. He envisions the extended service quarter as a means of generating income.

325 Iyasu did not elaborate on why he wanted the relative family to live with him. The relatives, although in the same house, use the gwaro access and are involved in income-generating activities in the dwelling that Iyasu seems to tolerate.
326 Interview with Iyasu, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
327 Even if Iyasu does not identify a gwada in his house, he gave indications of his privacy preferences. When asked what he would like to change in the house, his answer was to do a partition in the entrance corridor. He did not like the fact that the entrance leads directly into the Living room. "I don't like to be seen when I enter my house and my wife's family are in the living room. I would have liked to go upstairs without being seen."

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FIG. 5.21 Iyasu's gibi is utilized by his house help for domestic chores and by his colleagues from the workshop for Aluminium assembly.



FIG. 5.22 Iyasu's self-built gazebo with sun shading.

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Layers of Gwaro

In addition to the goal of incrementally completing the house, Iyasu aimed to expand the backyard to create a separate service quarter for the kitchen and an additional layer of gwaro. The kitchen inside the main house generated an unbearable smell, leading Iyasu and his family to cook outside in a plastic shade to mitigate the odour. The newly created outdoor space on the ground floor between the main house and the service quarter was used for cooking activities that spilt over from the kitchen and for storage. The service quarter was built atop the semi-basement, which Iyasu had constructed earlier. This semi-basement served as an independent accommodation with independent side access from the street and defined its realm of gwaro at the basement level.

Building on top of the semi-basement was a vertical strategy allowing Iyasu to densify his plot without affecting the gibi. he followed the original expansion plan, ensuring the foundations of both the main house and the service quarter could support three and four stories, respectively. The construction method used was a conventional post-and-beam concrete structure with a Hollow Concrete Block and brick as wall infill materials. The exterior walls are rendered with textured coatings, and the roof was made of corrugated Iron sheets supported by wooden truss and purlin systems. Iyasu intends to use the same construction method for future expansions with reinforcement bars already protruding from the existing structure in anticipation of additional levels.

The first phase of Iyasu's expansion resulted in the main house with a built area of 136 m^2. Adding the service quarter increased the built-up area to 150 m^2 with an overall increase of 10.3%. The main house's first floor remains unfinished, with a half-finished master bedroom in use. While the doors and windows are installed, floor finishes, painting and other material finishes are incomplete. Iyasu and his family primarily use the second floor, where the interior finishing is more complete. They sleep on the second floor but plan to move into the master bedroom on the first floor once it is completed.

During the eleven years they have lived there, Iyasu worked diligently to complete the unfinished interior construction. His expertise in wood and aluminium construction allowed him to personally handle most of the interior finishing works, including the stair balustrade, kitchen cabinets, and aluminium partitions. One can see the amount of effort that went into the 'open' kitchen that was later enclosed with aluminium partitions to contain the kitchen smells, prompting Iyasu to build the service quarter and articulate multiple layers of gwaro. Cooking activities have since moved out of the main house, taking place in the gwaro and the service quarter.

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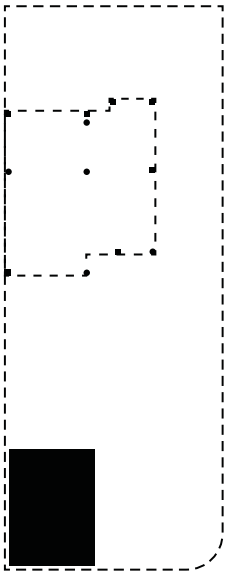
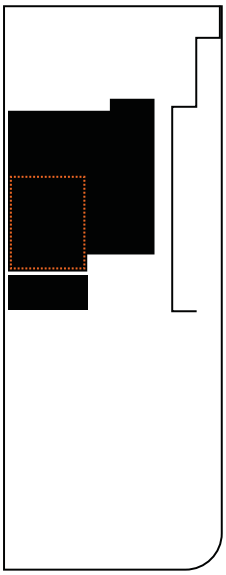
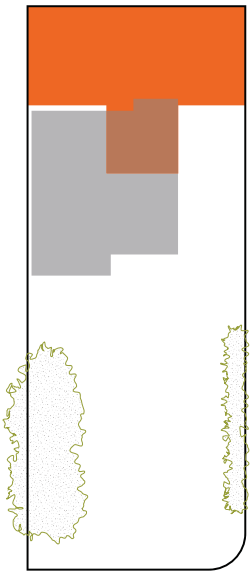


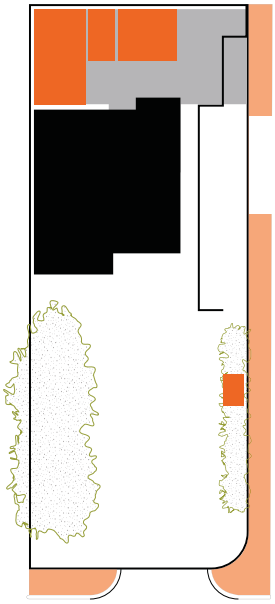
01. 2004 construction began



02. 2011_They finished the whole G+2 building without finishing all rooms and moved in. At this time only the ground level, the master bedroom, and toilets were completed



03. 2019_They finished the basement and let one of their relatives move in with their family.



04. 2020_He constructed the service block at the back. The main purpose was to create another kitchen, because the main kitchen was not ventilated properly and smell from cooking was reaching the living and sleeping spaces on all levels.



05. 2021_Current state of the house was completed. He removed some of the plants and constructed the metal framed outdoor sitting space with the Green, Yellow, and Red aluminium shutters, and with a synthetic grass lawn.



06. Future scenario: In the future he intends to continue building the rest of the house as per the design (the service block was designed to also reach the level of the G+2 house). He intends to link the 2 buildings by a corridor which he referred to as a bridge.

FIG. 5.23 Transformation diagram of Iyasu's dwelling over seventeen years.

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5.5 Mickey Leland: A Gated Archipelago

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page CCLV]

George Thomas Mickey Leland was a congressman from Texas who died in a plane crash on the way to a humanitarian mission in the Gambela region of Ethiopia in 1989. His death was shocking to Ethiopians as well as the international community. A year later, international donors and human rights activists collaborated with the Ethiopian government to commemorate an orphanage under his name in an area called *Birchiko Fabrika*. The orphanage was named Mickey Leland Children's Home (ሚኪ ሊላንድ የህፃናት ማሳደጊያ). The children came from war and famine-affected regions of Ethiopia. The orphanage ceased to exist after the children grew up to be 18 years old and was converted into a camp that served to rehabilitate disabled Ethiopian soldiers during the Ethio-Eritrean war in 1998.[328] Leaving the camp on the northern side of the land, the southern part of the area that used to be a forest was selected as a green field site to develop a condominium housing. After completion, the condominium was again named after Congressman Mickey Leland.

The name 'Mickey Leland' had already slowly started to take over *Birchiko Fabrika*, the former name of the sefer. Mickey Leland Condominium is a 123-block housing condominium that rests on a 26-ha steep terrain. It houses an estimated number of 24,000 inhabitants within its 4,800 housing units. Mickeyleland offers generous open spaces that seem to be underutilized due to their scale and randomness in location. Its gated and somewhat secluded location on a hilly terrain has posed challenges in terms of connecting with neighbouring areas. Nevertheless, the Mickey Leland condominium and the neighbourhoods on its northern end have flourished with various small businesses and shops, primarily driven by the residents' demand for essential services.



FIG. 5.24 Drone image of part of Mickey Leland Condominium.

328 The history of the area is extracted from interviews conducted with several people who resided in the neighbourhood before the condominium was built.

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5.5.1 Shambel; Mickey Leland

Shambel and his wife have been living in a two-bedroom condominium apartment in the centre of Mickey Leland for the past eleven years. After moving out of his parents' home, shamble initially rented a house with his wife. Shortly after, they moved into his in-laws' former residence when it became vacant. The house, located in the *Sebara Babur,* a *sefer* in the *Piassa* area, had two rooms and a kitchen. While Shambel enjoyed the social interactions in *Sebara Babur*, he felt the lack of privacy was an issue, as they had to share the toilet and the gibi with two other families. Fortunately, his wife was able to acquire a two-bedroom condominium flat. They were pleased with the location in the larger *Asko sefer* because it was close to Shambel's family and familiar to his wife.[329] Since Shambel worked as a plumbing engineer during the construction of the Mickey Leland condominiums, he was familiar with the neighbourhood, making the transition easier.

However, moving into the apartment was challenging because it was unfinished. The flooring wasn't done, and the internal doors, except the bathroom door, were not installed. Despite these issues, Shambel and his wife eagerly awaited their daughter's completion of school to move into Mickey Leland permanently. Initially, they stayed there only for weekends, returning to *Sebara Babur* on Sunday evenings. Once they moved in, they found the space inadequate for their social and spatial practices. Shambel describes the situation:

When you live here as a family, it is not adequate. It might be suitable for a single person, and you could host one more person if living alone, but it is just not enough for a family. For example, the kitchen is too small for more than one person to work at a time, and it's the same with the bedrooms.[330]

To adapt to the limited kitchen space, Shambel made some interior design modifications. He installed sliding doors on the kitchen cabinets instead of standard wing doors. Another practical decision was to use a special foldable and movable injera oven. A conventional injera oven, which would permanently take up a 65 x 65 cm space, was impractical, so they opted for one that could be folded against the wall when not in use, saving valuable space in the kitchen. [see Figure 5.25]

Shambel made several modifications to his apartment, including replacing the original terrazzo tiles with ceramic tiles and altering a toilet window to improve security and ventilation. However, he feels that it is not feasible to transform the space further or significantly improve upon the existing layout. Given the small size of the unit, Shambel frequently thinks about moving to a more spacious house with high ceilings and direct ground access, allowing him to enjoy gardening—a hobby he loves.

In principle, the open spaces around the condominium are meant to be shared among all residents and can be used for various activities. However, in practice, this is not always the case. Residents prefer to use the areas only adjacent to their block. These areas are often used for drying clothes, carpets, and other household items after laundry. Children also play in these spaces and on the surrounding streets. The Shambels, along with other residents in their block, utilize the ground-level open space adjacent to their building for such purposes. This area, considered their gibi, has been fenced off by the block residents to prevent theft by deterring people from walking through. While the chicken wire fence helps discourage theft, it is not gated.

329 The history of the area is extracted from interviews conducted with several people who resided in the neighbourhood before the condominium was built.
330 Interview with Shambel, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 5.25 Foldable injera stove to save valuable kitchen space in the condominium.

Regarding the use of space for hosting people, the Shambels utilize the gallery space, as their dwelling is not sufficiently large. Shambel and his wife consider the gallery space outside their entrance as their gibi, more intimate than the one on the ground floor. This area is shared with three other households and serves as an extension of their home whenever any of the households hosts a function. For the past five years, their gibi has been fenced off and is accessible only through a gate at the entrance, which is locked during the evenings for security. They also use the gibi to store bulk items that do not fit inside their unit, such as water barrels. Smaller items are stored indoors, with one of the bedrooms transformed into a storage space, or gwada, after their daughter moved out. The Shambels regard this storage area as their gwada.

The gwada in Shambel's apartment, serves not only as storage but also accommodates the wardrobe and fridge. as these items can't fit in the bedroom and kitchen, respectively. Given these inconveniences and the small size of the unit, Shambel has always viewed their Mickey Leland apartment as a temporary residence. Shambel speaks:

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To be honest, I didn't think I would be living here this long. It has always been a temporary home for me, and I still feel the same. The house is too small, and I often bump into doors and corners. I am not comfortable with it; it is not spacious.[331]

I have lived in places with extremely warm weather and high-ceiling houses. The house I grew up in was a typical tyrolean rendered mud house from the 70s, with high ceilings, large doors, and wooden floors. That is what I am accustomed to, so living here is a bit stressful.[332]

Shambel aspires to move into a larger space with a spacious bedroom and kitchen. He appreciates well-lit spaces and longs to live in one. He also enjoys vegetable gardening and dreams of having a house with a gwaro, which he defines as a space for planting vegetables. He feels that their condominium lacks a true gwaro since the area they use for planting in the gallery is too public.

As an avid reader, Shambel enjoys staying home, putting a mattress in the living room, and reading during his free time. One challenge he faces is finding a proper place to store his books. He initially bought a China hutch for the living room to store his books and accommodate the TV. However, his wife decided to use it for kitchen items, so he had to stack his books beside the bed in the bedroom.

Despite his dissatisfaction with the size of their dwelling, Shambel is content with the social life in Mickey Leland. He and his wife occasionally have coffee with neighbours in their gibi at the gallery. For larger gatherings that can't be accommodated there, they set up tents in the downstairs gibi space.



FIG. 5.26 Gallery space appropriated as a gibi by the shambels and their neighbours.

331 Interview with Shambel, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
332 Interview with Shambel, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

Making do with the condominium

Shambel's expertise as a plumbing engineer and know-how about construction and building renovations have informed his decisions on how to adapt to the spatial constraints of the apartment. He was also involved in the construction of Mickey Leland as a plumbing contractor, giving him a clear understanding of the building's infrastructure. While modifying spaces in the condominium would not have been technically challenging for him, he chose not to make significant spatial changes. This decision stems from his belief that such modifications would not resolve the fundamental issue of spatial adequacy. Additionally, he views the condominium as a temporary home, prompting him to make do with minor adaptive changes rather than extensive alterations.

Over the eleven years of living in Mickey Leland, Shambel made several adaptations such as changing the entrance door, modifying kitchen layouts, upgrading floor finishes and defining the gibi in the gallery. These changes were primarily aimed at making the apartment more functional. One of the most significant alterations was the removal of a dwarf wall and the installation of French windows at the entrance. This was done before moving in and helped bring more light from the gallery into the living room, which otherwise relied solely on this source of natural light. Shambel also believes this modification improved the apartment's appearance. Overall, the Shambels expanded their 41 m^2 apartment to 52.2 m^2, an increase of 27.32 percent by privatizing the gallery space in their floor as a gibi in agreement with the other two households adjacent to them.

Changing the floor tiles from rough-textured terrazzo to ceramic made the floors easier to clean. Another minor but important change was altering the opening direction of the toilet window for security reasons. The original window design was large enough for a person to crawl in from the gallery. Shambel modified it to include a smaller, top-opening portion and added a security metal grill for extra protection. Like many residents in Mickey Leland, he also installed an outside window shade to shield the bedroom windows from rain as they were not properly constructed to be watertight.

These adaptations allowed the Shambels to improve their dwelling conditions without making major changes to the 41 m^2 apartment. While most of the adaptations were technical, one significant change was programmatic. After their daughter moved out, they repurposed her bedroom as gwada, storing the wardrobe, the refrigerator and other items. This room now serves as the primary storage area, making the rest of the apartment more livable. These adaptations, along with others, helped address some of the issues related to spatial adequacy in their home.

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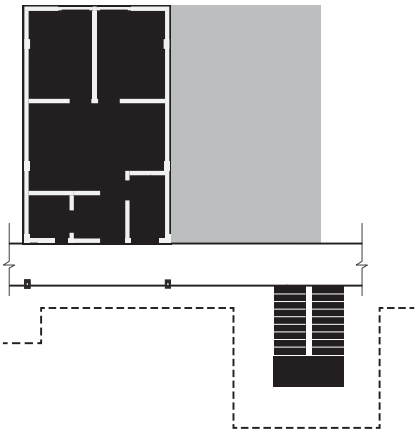
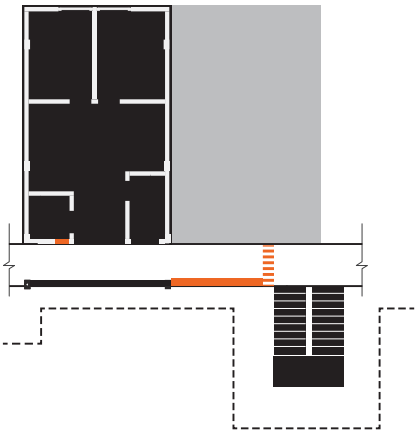


01. 2011_Original state of the house when they won the lottery for it



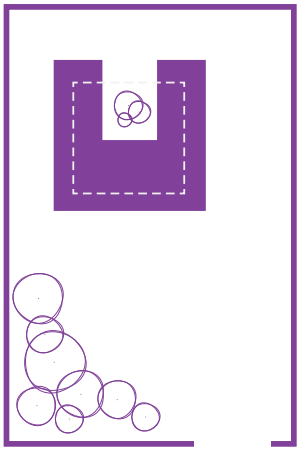
02. ~2012_The family moved in by installing and modifying the doors, removing the HCB dwarf wall, and finishing the kitchen and the toilet



03. 2020_A metal gate and grill were installed for security purposes



04. 2021_Current setup with the storage space being used more often after the addition of the gate and metal grill over the balcony.



05. Desired future scenario

Legend

Desired future scenario:
A villa in a fenced compound that has a simple and open plan house with connections to green spaces within the Ghebbi.

He is convinced that there is no way to improve the current setup of the house to suit his needs. He therefore wishes to someday move to a Villa like the one described above.



FIG. 5.27 Transformation diagram of Shambel's dwelling in Mickey Leland and a drawing of what he imagines as an ideal house.

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5.5.2 Senait, Mickey Leland

During our visits to Shambel's house, I was trying to find another willing participant in Mickey Leland, which turned out to be quite challenging. Shambel was assisting me and my team in this effort, and one day, he excitedly informed us that he had found someone willing to participate. I was thrilled to hear this. He shared the background story of the dweller and mentioned that she agreed to participate primarily because she trusted Shambel. We decided to be extra careful not to sound suspicious while taking photos and measurements of the house and to actively work on gaining her trust.

I found Senait to be a very hardworking and cautious person. Her first remark was, "I am doing this because of Shambel". Shambel stayed with me and my team throughout all our interactions with Senait, except when she showed us her living quarters and gwada at the back of the bar. At that point, he chose to stay behind in the bar. Our visit occurred in the morning when the bar was busy serving breakfast or *Ye'Jebena Buna* (traditional coffee). Senait either stayed behind the counter or sat next to us when there were fewer customers.

Senait used to live with her husband and children in *Shegole*, one of the oldest *sefer* in the northernmost part of Addis Ababa. She recalls that the dwelling there had a shared gibi with other residents, although her unit itself was private. She believes that the living conditions are better in the Mickey Leland condominium. Senait draws a comparison:

I prefer the condominium because the physical conditions are better. Living independently without interference is possible since you have a separate house, not part of a compound. I also appreciate having a private electric and water line. The more private infrastructure you have the fewer conflicts arise.[333]

Senait moved with her family into a two-bedroom apartment in Mickey Leland nine years ago. While living in the condominium, she opened a bar in one of the ground-floor shops. Although she did not explicitly state her tenure status, it appears that she owns the space.

After two years in the apartment, Senait decided to move out with her children and live in the bar space instead. Renting the condominium apartment had become unaffordable due to rising rent prices, and her financial situation was further strained by the death of her husband, making her a single parent. As a result, she redesigned the bar to include dwelling spaces, allowing her to live at one end while continuing to operate the bar. Senait describes the design modifications she made:

The outdoor space was empty and muddy. I made the floor pavements and planted all the trees you see here. The unit was originally an open-plan space. I had all the partitions installed. I instructed the professional I hired on how I wanted the space divided: A sleeping area for me and my children at the back, the kitchen in the corner, and the bar area at the front with a store next to it.[334]

Senait transformed the bar's frontage, creating a semi-private gibi and a terrace area. A remarkable row of trees, a white picket fence and a brick entrance marker defined the outdoor space of the bar, which serves as the main serving area except during heavy rain. The terrace is partially shaded with plastic sheets, providing temporary rain protection. Senait considers the terrace and its surrounding greenery as her gibi. She also includes part of the area at the back, which is somewhat shared with her neighbours, as part of her gibi.

333 Interview with Senait, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
334 Interview with Senait, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Senait uses the space in the backyard of the bar for her household chores, such as washing clothes and preparing grains, spices and herbs. This area merges with a shared open field used by her children for playing. whenever the bar is crowded, her children access their living space from the back to maintain privacy. The area on the side of the bar, between the building and a row of bushes, is generally regarded by Senait as a gwaro. She uses part of this space for storage, though she questions this designation, believing that having a gwaro in a shared setting is challenging.

The rear access to the gibi leads directly to her bedroom/living room, the family's private area, although the bathroom is shared by the bar's customers. For Senait, the gwada is strictly the kitchen, where she keeps essential kitchen items like the stove and fridge. She also connects the notion of the gwada with the presence of these items. She believes in maintaining the utmost privacy of her bedroom but does not consider it part of the gwada. The kitchen serves both domestic purposes and as the area for preparing food for the bar's customers. Senait is dissatisfied with having to live so close to the bar and aspires to have a separate residence, if her financial situation improves.



FIG. 5.28 The gibi that Senait appropriated gibi for her bar.

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The challenge of the live-work Unit

Senait faces the dual challenge of maintaining her business and providing for her children after the passing of her husband, which puts additional strain on the family's finances. The bar did not generate enough income to support renting a separate residence. This led Senait to combine her living and working spaces. Before she moved in and reconfigured the layout, the bar had a counter on the left side of the entrance and a larger indoor serving area. Now, the bar counter is located opposite the entrance, adjacent to a narrow corridor leading to a shared toilet, kitchen, and Senait's private living quarters.

Transforming the space to accommodate her dwelling was a major undertaking. The location had been a supermarket, with only one entrance door and windows. Senait replaced these with a French door and added curtains to create a more private and appealing atmosphere, which also catered to customer preferences for darker, more intimate spaces:

I installed the curtains so that people do not look inside from outside and I also thought they would make the interior look nicer. People prefer darker spaces in the bar; it feels more private and is good for business.[335]

In re-designing the space, Senait placed the kitchen at the end of the circulation area, allowing easy access to both the gwaro and her private space. She carefully considered the existing infrastructure, including the placement of the toilet and the pre-determined locations of doors and windows. A sink was installed in the circulation space for convenience, thought it nearly obstructed the passage. The doors of the kitchen, toilet, and her living quarters all open outward into this narrow corridor, maximizing the interior space. The back access door connects directly to her living area, with a shared window providing light and ventilation to both the kitchen and corridor.

Claiming and defining the gibi at the front of the bar was a strategic move for expanding her business and attracting customers. After planting a row of trees, as a soft border, to delineate the space, Senait upgraded the terrace floor but found it wasn't enough to deter trespassing or attract more customers. She then built a dwarf brick wall and picket fence, which successfully established the bar's entrance and reinforced her claim to the frontage. This expansion significantly increased the bar's area from 57.7 m^2 to 93.2 m^2 a 61.52 percent increase, largely due to the annexation of the outdoor gibi.

Senait's design choices were both economically and practically driven, allowing her to integrate her living space within the bar. She made efficient use of shared facilities, like the kitchen and toilet, for both her family and customers. However, this arrangement came with drawbacks. The quality of. Her family's domestic life was impacted by the bar's social environment, and the need to share amenities with customers. Additionally, she had to set limits on the bar's operation to prioritize her children's well-being, including closing early and avoiding loud music:

I do not promote the bar as I used to do. I have stopped playing loud music, which has deterred some customers. I now close the bar by 10:00 or 10:30 in the evening and explain to customers that it is because my children need to go to school in the morning.[336]

Senait hopes to eventually have the financial means to afford a separate residence for her family.

335 Interview with Senait, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
336 Interview with Senait, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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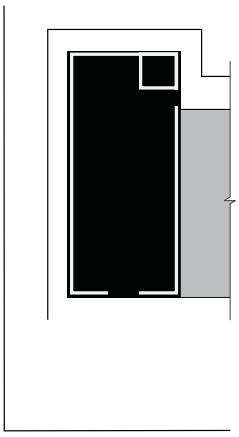
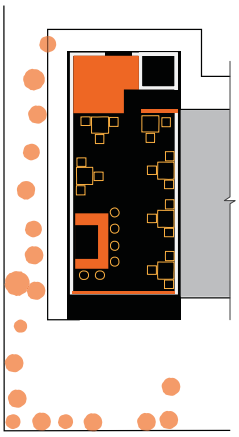
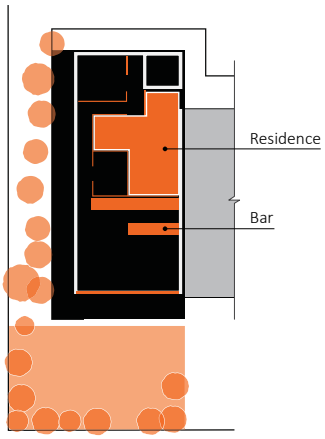


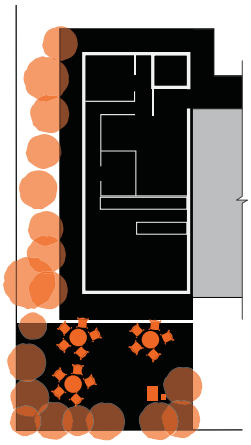
01. 2014_Original state of the shop. It used to be a supermarket before the current owner took over and turned it into a bar



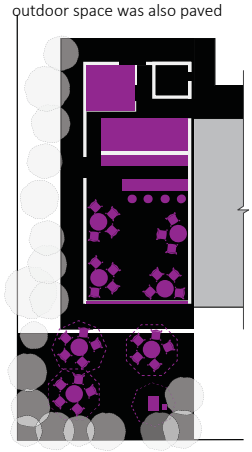
02. ~2014- 2016_It served only as a bar. The trees were also planted around this time



03. 2016_Partitions were added to turn the space into a Bar + residence for the owner and her two children. The outdoor space was also paved



04. ~2021_Current setup was created with the addition of the sponsored blue plastic chairs and new businesses such as the ***Jebena*** Coffee service and the potato snacks and sandwiches (***irtib***). At this point the trees also provided a strong enclosure and made the Ghebbi more defined



05. Desired future scenario

Legend

Desired future scenario:

The owner would like to separate her place of residence from her bar. She strongly believes that mixing the two has impacted her and her children negatively. She would therefore like to move to a more spacious residence not too far from her bar and use the current property to run and expand her business.

FIG. 5.29 Transformation of Senait's dwelling.

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5.6 Lideta: Lideta Tabula Rasa

[To be read alongside the Addendum starting on Page CCXCI]

Lideta stands as one of the earliest *sefers* in Addis Ababa, and it takes its name from the Lideta Church (ማህደረ ስብሐት ልደታ ቤተክርስቲያን), which was established in 1916. Prior to the construction of the church, this area was referred to as *Etchegue sefer*, bearing the patronage of *Etchegue Gebre Menfes Kidus*, a feudal lord under Emperor Menelik.[337] The parish's land spanned approximately 40 *gashas* and was owned by *Lij Gebre Adinew*, who held a prominent position as a close gatekeeper to Emperor Menelik. Additionally, *Dejazmach Balcha*[338], a prominent feudal military general, was closely associated with this sefer, showing his support for the parish and residing in the area. In 1948, the Dejazmach Balcha Hospital, also known as the Russian Hospital, was inaugurated in his honour.

Lideta's significance is further underscored by its location along the Jimma Road, which gained prominence due to the presence of several industries and government offices situated between Maychew Square, now known as Mexico Square, and the old Airport. These included the technical school built by the Italians, St. George Brewery, the Supreme Court, the Darmar Shoe Factory and the Ethio-Swedish Building College, among others.

The Lideta Condominium project emerged because of a brownfield redevelopment initiative, involving the transformation of the central residential area within Lideta to make way for a planned condominium Housing. Officially known as the Lideta Sengatera Fird Bet Project – I, the project was conceived in 2009 as an 'urban renewal' endeavor, spanning twenty-six hectares of densely populated kebele housing, garages and private holdings. To realize this condominium neighbourhood, a total of 1473 houses, comprising 1,134 public and 339 private units, had to be demolished and many of the residents relocated.



FIG. 5.30 Drone image of Lideta Condominium.

337 Haile Gabriel Dagne, "The Establishment of Churches in Addis Ababa," in *Proceedings of The International Symposium on the Centenary of Addis Ababa*, ed. Ahmed Zekaria, Bahru Zewde, and Taddese Beyene (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1986), 57–78.
338 Also known as Aba Nefso

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5.6.1 Abeba; Lideta Tabula Rasa

I just put this up here (pointing to a wall) so the kitchen is out of sight. I didn't touch anything else.[339]

Abeba responded quickly when asked about a noticeable modification she made to define a gwada—a distinct cooking area in her living space. It was the first time speaking with Abeba and she hadn't fully trusted the purpose behind the questioning. She seemed torn between providing honest answers and protecting herself from saying anything that might be incriminating. Since modifying condominium housing is generally prohibited, Abeba downplayed the addition of a wall, describing it as a minor change in a defensive tone

Convincing Abeba to participate in the research took considerable time. Initially, she was reluctant to discuss anything inside her apartment. However, after several conversations and building trust, she invited the team in, offering a seat on the sofas in the living space while she sat on her bed. As she grew more comfortable, she let her guard down and became fully engaged in sharing her experiences living in Lideta.

Abeba has lived in the Lideta condominium for the past eight years, owning a studio flat on the ground floor. Previously she rented a "tiny" house made of corrugated iron sheets in the southern part of Addis Ababa, an area known as *Bihere Tsige*. When asked to compare her former dwelling conditions with those in the condominium, she remarked that the two were "incomparable". However, Abeba was meticulous in detailing the challenges of living in the condominium, which began the very day she moved in. The unit was unfinished, with no glass panels in the window frames, forcing her to cover the openings with cardboard. Abeba vividly describes the difficulties of those early days:

The house was unfinished when I moved in. There were no windows, no flooring, and the toilet was incomplete. I had to find and install a used showerhead myself. The walls were already stained from leaks above, so I have to repaint them regularly. We didn't have electricity for nearly a year and had to rely on candles in the meantime. We also had to fetch water from elsewhere since it was not available here. I lived under these conditions and gradually improved the place over time.[340]

After two years, Abeba decided to rent out the apartment to generate income. The tenant took care of most of the interior finishing work. He lived there for a year before moving out, prompting Abeba to move in herself. The first thing she did was create a gwada in 2019. Since the studio apartment's kitchen area was within the main room and lacked a separate gwada, Abeba considered the cooking space to be the gwada. To her, a working space like this should be concealed from the rest of the home, so she added a wall to physically define it. Although the sleeping area isn't considered a gwada for Abeba, she installed a curtain to hide it from the living space. She explains:

When we have guests, we curtain off the sleeping area. We don't want people to see the clutter at the back.[341]

339 Interview with Abeba, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
340 Interview with Abeba, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
341 Interview with Abeba, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Abeba lives in this 22 m^2 studio with her son, who comes occasionally, and her relative.[342] A corner in the studio is set aside as a sleeping area and she shares her bed with her relative, who sometimes helps with domestic chores. Her son uses the living room when he stays over. Due to her unstable income, Abeba can't afford furniture that fits the small space, so she has large pieces gifted by relatives, like a big TV and a bulky sofa, which crowd the apartment. She explains how she must move all the furniture outside whenever she hosts a family gathering of about ten people to make room. Besides the clear inadequacy of space, Abeba is also affected by the building's dysfunctional infrastructure. Persistent leaks from the vertical sewer lines and flooding from the corridor manholes have impacted her studio, even interfering with electrical systems, leaving only a few power outlets functional. Water interruptions are a common issue in Lideta, forcing Abeba to use her toilet as a storage space for multiple water containers.

Abeba earns her living by buying vegetables from Mercato, the largest market in Addis Ababa, and selling them informally near the Lideta church. She takes advantage of the crowds that gather at the church to display and market her vegetables. Abeba has a deep connection with gardening and caring for plants. If she were allowed to use the open spaces (mostly *terrain vague*) within the condominium premises, she would have loved to fill them with greenery. In late 2018, she, along with two other residents, began cultivating a corner of the so-called "recreational green space" within the condominium, but they were confronted by the authorities. Now, she only has a small patch of greenery behind her flat.[343]

After being forced to abandon her vegetable garden by the condominium housing association, Abeba repurposed a vertical grill structure that had been installed to prevent theft and block secondary access to the corridor. She now uses this structure to hang planters growing jalapeños, and collard greens, creating a permeable vertical garden. In addition to finishing the interior of her house, Abeba has developed two small, claimed corners on the ground floor as extensions of her living space: A small patch of land behind her window and a semi-privatized corridor space blocked off by metal grills. Although she does not formally own a gibi, Abeba considers the semi-privatized corridor as one, viewing it as a shared space with her immediate neighbours. She uses it to dry her clothes, finding it more secure than the open courtyards.

Abeba contends the communal spaces within the condominium are not being effectively utilised. She expresses frustration that the official communal amenities have been converted into private entities and sold as shops. According the Abeba, the condominium administration has sold off communal facilities like the kitchen and other shared spaces:

Those were our showers and communal facilities (pointing to rooms on the ground floor) but now they have been taken over by the three shops that were supposed to serve as communal units for the condominium dwellers.[344]

342 Abeba did not describe the exact blood relations with her relative, but they seem to be close. Her relative used to work in a factory which unfortunately had to stop operations at the time of the interview. She was mostly staying at home and helping Abeba with food preparations and other domestic tasks.
343 Abeba and her relative say that the space was taken away by the authorities (probably a combination of the housing association and the kebele) because they wanted to develop it into a recreational green space. At the time of the interview, the space had not been developed.
344 Interview with Abeba, 2022 – Addis Ababa.

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FIG. 5.31 Abeba dries her clothes in the gallery space for safety.

While some cooking and grain roasting is allowed during holidays, Abeba feels that that the extensive outdoor space available is underutilized, leading her to question why there is so much space with so little functionality. Her decision to develop the patch of land within the communal area— the gwaro, is a subtle form of protest against the condominium administration. This gwaro is in a circulation apron that encircles the courtyard of the condominium block. Though this space is not directly accessible to Abeba, it is visually connected to her living pace through a window.

Despite her frustrations, Abeba is grateful to own a studio in the Lideta condominium, though she strongly criticizes its poor construction quality. She believes the reputation of the condominium is exaggerated:

Lideta condominium is overrated. Even mice and rats borrow through the concrete. We've had to put up paintings everywhere to cover the holes they made. The cement screed is of low quality as you can see that it has come off the ground. I think it is poorly built. The doors are useless too; I've had them welded multiple times.[345]

345 Interview with Abeba, 2022 - Addis Ababa.



FIG. 5.32 Abeba's visual connection with her gwaro.

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FIG. 5.33 Abeba appropriated part of the gallery space along with her neighbours and now considers it as her gibi.

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“I grow my vegetables”

Abeba faces both financial and spatial challenges, but despite these constraints, she has managed to make significant spatial transformations to align her dwelling with cultural proclivities. One of her first modifications was the installation of a partition wall between sleeping area and the kitchen. This change prevented the cooking space from being visible from the living area and allowed her to create a gwada within her studio apartment:

The layout of the space was a bit different when I moved in. I made the partition between the cooking space and the living space to put the kitchen out of sight from anyone sitting in the living space. Everything was visible before, and changing that was important to me. I hired a professional and told him to conceal the kitchen.[346]

Given the small size and limited layout of Abeba’s apartment, there wasn’t much room for drastic spatial changes. After making the internal modifications, she began to utilize the spaces outside her apartment, taking advantage of her ground-floor location. Abeba activated the fenced-off area in the common corridor by creating a vertical garden. She began using it as a semi-private gibi, which also served as a safe space for hanging clothes—a significant improvement compared to hanging them in the open courtyard. This pseudo-gibi is semi-accessible and others with access to the corridor also use it. This space appropriation was made possible by the metal grill fence, which Abeba notes was tolerated by the authorities.

Additionally, Abeba claimed a small gwaro by planting vegetables in planters she collected. Since the gwaro is located in a circulation space, Abeba was careful to leave enough room for passersby. Through these outdoor modifications, she expanded her flat area from 22 m^2 to 49 m^2 by claiming and defining the semi-gibi in the corridor and the gwaro in the courtyard, resulting in a total area increase of 122.73 percent.

Being on the ground floor of the condominium allowed Abeba to develop the patch of gwaro. She creatively reused old cement bags, the metal frame of an old stove, plastic water containers, PET bottles, hollow concrete blocks, paint buckets and various other materials that could hold soil, using them to grow a small but vibrant assortment of vegetables and flowers. This garden brings Abeba immense satisfaction, and her pride is evident whenever she shows it off. Her persistence in creating a vertical garden after her former garden was deemed illegal and after conflicts with the authorities highlight her dedication to the idea of the garden. Abeba explains her attachment:

I grow my vegetables, and we eat from the garden. We have lettuce, beetroots and spinach. We also have Jalapeños and tomatoes, which you can use for facial treatments. We have other plants such as Gesho (Rhamnus prinoides, used for producing tella, a local beer) and Damakese (Ocimum Lamiifolium). I tend to the garden daily, morning and evening. It has helped us support ourselves with homegrown food. Unfortunately, the bigger garden couldn’t be sustained.[347]

Though Abeba faces financial difficulties and her garden’s produce isn’t enough to generate income, her location in a dense urban area allows her to engage in daily trade—something that would be challenging in condominiums located on the city’s outskirts.

346 Interview with Abeba, 2022 – Addis Ababa.
347 Interview with Abeba, 2022 – Addis Ababa.

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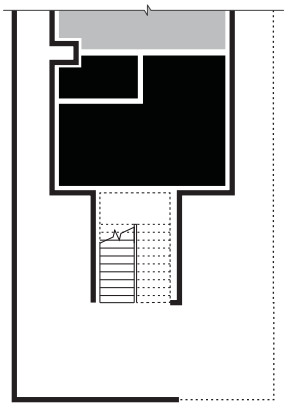
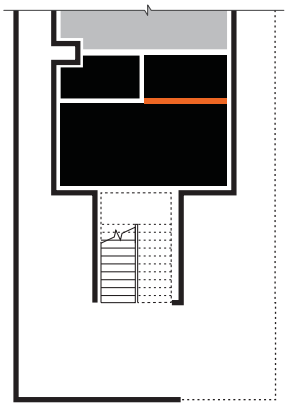
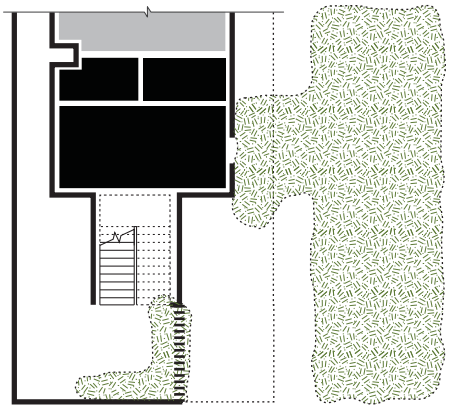


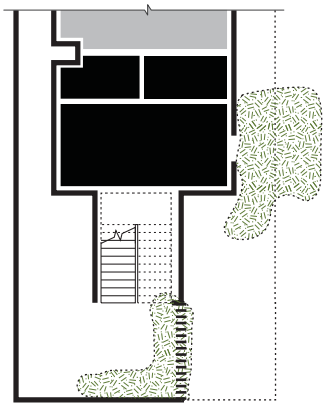
01. 2015_Original state of the house_the kitchen didn't have a partition



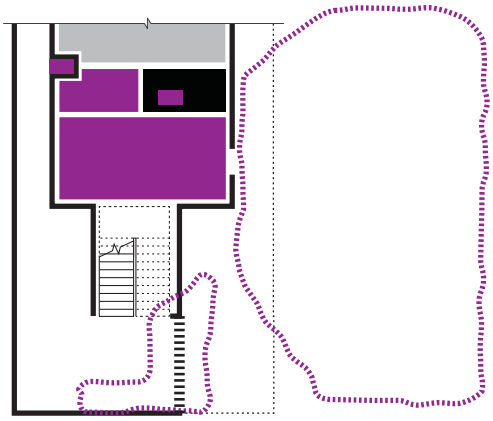
02. ~2019_Partition wall was added to define the kitchen space better and to make it more private.



03. ~2019_A metal grill fence was erected, making the space at the back more private, the owner of the house planted a garden in this back space.



04. 2022_The administrative committee told her she can't use the space to setup a garden, therefore, her garden regressed back to her immediate surrounding in mostly plastic containers.



05. Desired future scenario

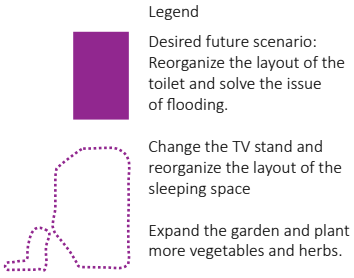


FIG. 5.34 Transformation diagram of Abeba's dwelling with her claimed gwaro and gibi.

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5.6.2 Misrak and Kelemua; Lideta Tabula Rasa

When we set up the appointment, I was unaware that it would fall on the day of Saint George. I have never missed mass on this day, and I did it for you guys.[348]

Saint George is celebrated on the 23rd day of each month in the *Ge'ez* calendar, the official calendar of Ethiopia.[349] The interview took place on the second of March in the European calendar in the living room, where the fieldwork team was directed to sit on the largest sofa in the room. Kelemua remained seated on the mattress that she always sits on, she faced the sofa set and the television, to her left was the door to the balcony, and on her right the open access from the lobby to the living space. Misrak kept moving around while dialoguing, she sat on the sofa for a few questions, stood for others and sat across on the dining chairs for the remainder of the time. She gave a tour of the house and a walkthrough of all the rooms including the exterior spaces.

Misrak is a self-taught pastry chef who lives with her mother Kelemua, in a one-bedroom flat on the sixth floor of the Lideta condominium. Before moving to the condominium, they lived in a densely populated sefer known as *Autobus Tera*, renting a kebele unit. After winning the lottery for the condominium, they initially rented out the flat for four years while continuing to live in their old kebele house. Eventually, they were forced to move out into the condominium when they could no longer keep their old residence.

Misrak fondly recalls the social life in their former *sefer*, noting that while the condominium has a good sense of community, it doesn't compare to what they experienced before:

We lived in a typical gibi setting of a kebele house. There are usually two different types of dwelling settings. One is the houses facing the street, and the other is the ones that are inside the gibi. Ours was the one in the gibi. The social life was vibrant, and we were sharing the gibi with five other households—one of which was an owner, while the rest of us were tenants of the kebele.[350]

Winning the apartment lottery brought mixed emotions. The flat's location on the sixth floor posed a challenge for Kelemua, whose feet were not well, especially since the authorities pushed for the apartment to be occupied before the elevators were installed. Coupled with the burden of paying off a 100,000 ETB mortgage, the family decided to rent out the apartment and continue living in *Autobus Tera*. However, due to severe water leakage issues in the apartment, tenants were discouraged, and Misrak and Kelemua were eventually forced to move in when the kebele authorities gave them just 15 days' notice to leave their former residence. The rushed move was difficult, particularly due to the ongoing leakage problems. They also found the kitchen and toilet to be extremely small, with the toilet being inadequate even for a proper shower.

348 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
349 Each day of the month is dedicated to a specific saint in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Ge'ez calendar, also referred as the Ethiopian calendar, is like the Julian Calendar.
350 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Despite these challenges, Misrak appreciates the corridor space in their new home and uses it as a cooking space:

We like the corridor space of this house. I think it is very good to have a space that is in between and connects the other rooms. It is nice, for example, that the toilet is located after the corridor, and it is not directly accessed from the living room. The corridor has consumed space, but I like it because it also gives options for making partitions for privacy.[351]

Misrak hired a professional to work on the gypsum plastering and did all the paintwork herself, repainting the apartment several times due to the persistent water leakage. Similar to the other dwellings in this study, the interior side of the apartment's main door received less attention painted only with anti-rust coat, while the exterior was properly finished in grey.[352] One of the earliest modifications Misrak made was replacing the agrostone partition wall that separated the kitchen, living space and corridor with concrete blocks. Agrostone, a filler board material, was commonly used for partition walls in the Lideta Condominium and other condominium projects in Addis Ababa.[353] Although internal modifications are illegal, Misrak took the risk because she believed agrostone was unsuitable for their apartment, both aesthetically and technically. She compared it to their former dwelling:

The wattle and daub in our former house were much better than the agrostone.[354]

The second major change was how the kitchen was used. Instead of being used for cooking, the kitchen became a storage area. Misrak considers the kitchen as their gwada, a space she believes should be private and secluded, which is challenging to achieve in a condominium setting. In a "non-condominium setting", Misrak imagines that the gwada would include both the kitchen and the bedrooms. Besides the kitchen, they also use the toilet and parts of the corridor for storage, especially for large water containers needed to cope with frequent water interruptions.

Misrak's family has also repurposed the balcony for storage. Her brother, who no longer lives with them, stores his tools there. In a non-condominium setting, Misrak presumes that they would have used the balcony for drying clothes and bulk storage. However, in their current setting, they do not have a gwaro. Instead, Misrak refers to the balcony simply as a storage area:

We mainly use the balcony for storage, but we also sundry grains there. Sometimes, we dry clothes on the balcony, though we usually hang them in the common spaces downstairs, keeping an eye keeping an eye because people sometimes pick clothes.[355]

351 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
352 Analysis regarding the culture of giving more emphasis to the outdoor image during paintworks and renovations is discussed in detail in Chapter 6, section 6.2.5
353 Agrostone panels are locally produced in Ethiopia. It was extensively used in condominium projects and was meant to cut down material costs and construction time.
354 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
355 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

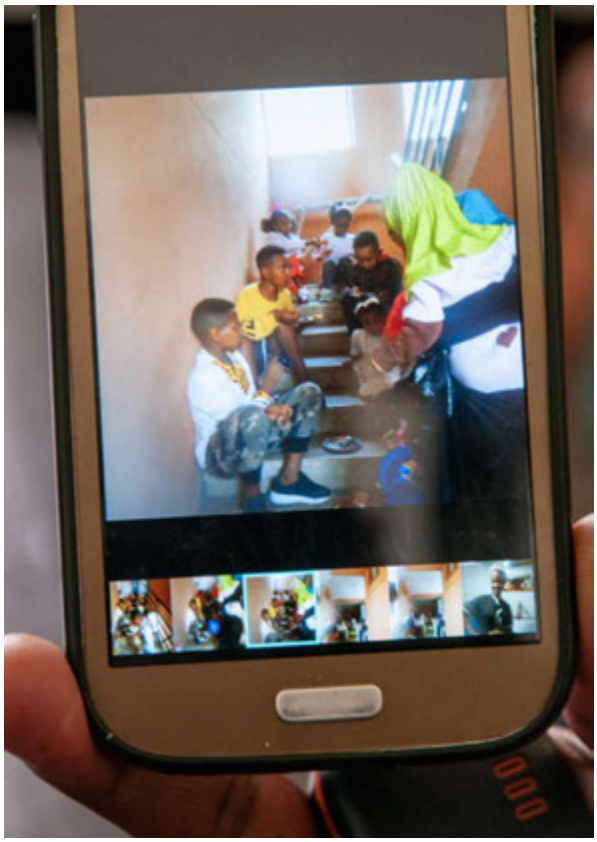

FIG. 5.35 Misrak showing an event that took place at their gibi in the condominium gallery from a few years ago.

For Misrak, the gallery space of the condominium serves as their gibi. They use it for sun-drying grains and hosting guests during events. The gallery connects to the elevator lobby, a larger space that is also considered part of their gibi. Even the staircases can serve as extensions of the gibi, depending on the event. Misrak illustrates this by showing pictures of events that took place in the gallery spaces physically pointing out the areas:

This space (the elevator lobby) can accommodate up to fifty people, and it is used for functions like birthdays, mahbers, or zikers.[356] The shared spaces on each floor are one of the great things about this condominium.[357]

Misrak also sees the courtyard on the ground floor as their secondary gibi. However, she feels that the gibi needs more practical amenities rather than just green courtyards. Her mother, Kelemua, on the other hand, prefers the upstairs gibi, spending most of her time indoors, making the gallery an essential part of her daily routine. Kelemua describes her usual day:

When we first moved here, I used to sleep in the bedroom, but I didn't like it because of the air quality. I have asthma, so I started sleeping in the living room, where it's also convenient to watch TV during the day. When my daughter is away, I prepare food in the corridor, do crochet, and spend time in the living room. I stay there until about five in the afternoon, then go out to the gibi to stretch my legs and muscles.[358]

356 *Mahber* are feasts usually based on religious associations (might also be any voluntary fraternal association) while *zeker* is a celebration and remembrance of a religious figure. Please refer to the glossary for detailed elaboration.
357 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
358 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.

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Kelemua has found a new social pattern in the condominium, especially bonding with neighbours who also resettled from similar sefer environments. She reflects on the behaviour of her neighbours based on their backgrounds:

They come from areas like ours; they know what it is like to have a social life. They knock on my door, check on me, and have conversations. Sometimes, I invite them in for coffee or lunch. Most of the other dwellers, those who came from different housing conditions, aren't sociable and don't communicate with each other. They prefer to live isolated lives.[359]

However, the most pressing issue for Kelemua is the elevator. Living on the sixth floor, they rely on a shaky elevator that rarely works. Due to her physical challenges, Kelemua's movement is restricted to the indoor environment of her flat and the gallery space which she considers her gibi:

The elevator is my main problem here. When we first moved in, it only started from the second floor, so some of us couldn't even reach the second floor, let alone climb higher. After complaints, they extended the elevator to the ground floor, but the problems continued. People tampered with it, and now it is not working at all. Seniors, pregnant women, and others with mobility issues are highly affected by this. Some sick people have been bedridden for over five years, and getting them to a hospital is a real challenge.[360]

Water is carried manually due to the absence of working elevators. Kelemua blames this on the tenants' carelessness, which she believes has contributed to the elevators' damage. However, she mainly attributes the problem to the children living in the condominium. She accuses them of playing with the elevator and engaging in activities like biking and skateboarding in the gallery spaces, which she feels negatively impacts the elevator performance. Kelemua proposes a solution:

The green spaces should be converted into playgrounds for children because they're not serving their intended purpose, and the produce from the gardens is minimal. I can see it from here. Since there's no proper playground for the children, they play in the corridors and tamper with the elevators. The open space has failed as both a recreational garden and a vegetable garden. It should be given to the children as a playground.[361]

Despite the challenges of living in Lideta Condominium, they are grateful to have won the condominium lottery Misrak notes that their one-bedroom unit is more practical and efficient compared to the two- and three-bedroom apartments. Misrak and. Kelemua also recognize the improvements compared to their previous living conditions:

Even though we face challenges, the condominium is not a bad idea. We have our own waterline, electric line and toilet so there is less conflict among neighbours. We have amenities nearby, which is a big advantage of living in a consolidated neighbourhood.[362]

Looking ahead, Misrak plans to organize the interior of their apartment by installing a kitchen counter and shelves in other rooms. She believes this will make the kitchen more efficient and free up some floor space where items are currently stored haphazardly. Aware of the benefits of living in Lideta, Misrak envisions using some of the shard spaces downstairs to start a pastry business, hoping the community could also generate income from these areas.

359 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
360 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
361 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.
362 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.



FIG. 5.36 Misrak's and Kelemua's living room. Kelemua prefers to sleep on the mattress in the living area.

We wrapped our lengthy interaction with Misrak and Kelemua with the final note on aspirations. They then got up and offered us lunch telling us that they cooked for us. We took turns washing our hands from the metal container Misrak brought and she poured water for us. A clear sign that they are treating us as important and respected house guests. The food was delicious. While eating, Kelemua grumbled, "Do you hear that? Those are skateboards. Oh these kids…."

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Reimagining the gibi.

As is expected for a condominium flat located on the sixth floor, the floor layout didn't offer much flexibility for future modifications. Consequently, Misrak and Kelemua couldn't make any major transformations within their apartment. However, they made some material changes and repurposed certain spaces for specific functions. One of the first priorities was replacing the agrostone wall with hollow concrete blocks, as Misrak was dissatisfied with the performance of the agrostone. She explained that it was prone to water damage, full of cracks and a potential fire hazard. Given the persistent leakage problem in the condominium, Misrak decided to remove the agrostone and install hollow concrete blocks herself. Her brother handled the electrical installation work, and a professional later did the wall plastering. In hindsight, Misrak regrets the decision to use hollow concrete blocks, as it reduced the size of the kitchen, limiting its functionality.

The way Misrak and Kelemua use their condominium flat is heavily influenced by the technical issues common in Lideta Condominium—such as inconsistent water supply, frequent water leaks and a malfunctioning elevator. Even Misrak's unusual bed placement is due to a known leakage point in the ceiling. The major leakage areas, particularly in the vertical ducts of the toilets and the kitchen, have forced the family to use these spaces primarily for storage purposes. The kitchen, while also serving as a space for baking injera, is mostly used as storage. The toilet, which laces a shower tray, doubles as a manual laundry area and storage space. The corridor is a strategic connection between the living space, bedroom, kitchen, and toilet. It serves as bulk storage for water and the cooking area. Misrak believes that the spaces can only become more functional and spacious once the water leakage issue is resolved.

The elevator problem, on the other hand, has reinforced the perception of the outside gallery space as a gibi, particularly for Kelemua, since it is the only immediate 'outdoor' space she can access. The gallery has been conceptually and physically reimagined as a gibi. besides being used for hosting special family and community events, Kelemua uses the gallery space daily for stretching and movement, as she cannot leave the floor due to her foot ailment. This reconceptualization of the gallery space as a gibi is especially significant for her. On a larger scale, the community has also defined a bigger gibi by fencing off part of the ground floor spaces. Misrak explained how this has made them feel more secure:

We found companies that could sponsor the fencing of the gibi. After it was fenced, we felt safer, and those who own cars also felt more secure.[363]

Misrak articulates their reimagining of the gibi in terms of proximity. The most significant gibi is the gallery space, with its importance gradually fading as one moves toward the elevator lobby and staircases. On the ground floor, the fenced-in gibi is significant for hosting larger events and drying clothes. However, the courtyards outside their block are less meaningful as gibis due to their distance. Additionally, the gibis on the ground floor are subject to conflicting interests. Kelemua envisions them as playgrounds, Misrak sees them as potential business extension spaces, some residents want them for parking, while others imagine them as dedicated food preparation areas.

363 Interview with Misrak and Kelemua, 2022 - Addis Ababa.



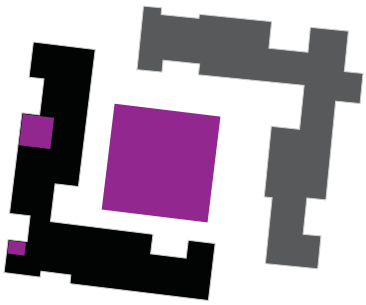
01. 2015_Original state of the house



02. ~2020_Agrostone partition demolished and changed to HCB, the wall was also pushed towards the kitchen to get more space in the living room.



03. ~2021_Current setup of the house_ The walls were repainted to hide the damage done by water leaking from the ceiling. More of her brother's belongings were stored on the balcony, some of it is from his work, the rest is intended to be used to renovate the house in the future.



04. Desired future scenario

Legend

04. Desired future scenario:

Interior:
More space in the Kitchen
Improved toilet layout with a shower tray
Balcony garden (her brother)

Block level:
Working elevators
Over all better construction quality
A communal unit
A different animal slaughtering space
A different garbage dumping location
An improved payment modality

A dedicated space for a children's playground.

FIG. 5.37 Transformation diagram of Misrak's and Kelemua's condominium unit.

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PART III

Geographies of Temporality and Socio-spatial Practices

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6 Temporality of Dwelling Practices

A comparative analysis

Temporality is a concept inherently embedded in dwelling. The notion of temporality is vital in dwelling practices to understand time as a fundamental variable in the making, and conception of dwelling. Richard Sennett beautifully describes the temporality and fragility of man-made landscapes in nature, in his seminal work Building and Dwelling.[364] Sennett is primarily describing the force fields of time on the built fabric. Quite from another perspective, temporality also exists when Humans consciously choose to dwell temporally, a notion that Heidegger is oblivious to but quite a culture in many African settlements. A vast majority of 'African' culture tends to prioritise the "intangible" aspects over "form", a phenomenon that is associated with the transient nature of "indigenous settlement" production.[365] A good instance can be the culture that existed in the older capitals of northern Ethiopia, the so-called "wandering capitals" that were based on temporal settlements or temporal cities.[366]

This chapter synthesizes the ethnographic material unearthed from Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. Dwelling practices in the non-planned and planned settlements are comparatively analyzed using a framework of three lenses that further qualify the Dwelling transformation. The **Stimulus for Change**: "The why", **Nature of Transformation**: "The what", and **Adaptation Typologies**: "The how".

The **"why"** addresses the stimulus for change, the main factors that motivate dwellers to transform their habitat in both the planned and unplanned settlements fall into three broad categories or what I call 'transformation stimulus'. These fall into the categories of Tipple, Kellett and other scholars.[367]

The **"what"** discusses the nature of transformation. All dwellers have shown urgency in defining the gibi. Dwellers give priority to altering the border condition because of its association with securing more territory as well as enhancing security. I discuss the role territoriality plays in housing transformations and the temporality of border conditions in dwelling practices.

364 see Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City* (London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, 2018), 268.

365 Iain Low, "Seeing South:'African' Architecture and Spatial Justice," in *Architectural Guide Sub-Saharan Africa. Introduction to the History and Theory of Sub-Saharan Architecture*, ed. Philipp Meuser and Adil Dalbai, vol. 1, 7 vols., Basics 134 (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2021), 246–49.

366 Ronald J. Horvath, "The Wandering Capitals of Ethiopia," *The Journal of African History* 10, no. 2 (1969): 205–19, https://www.jstor.org/stable/179511.

367 Graham Tipple, *Extending Themselves: User Initiated Transformations of Government-Built Housing in Developing Countries*, 1 online resource (368 pages) vols. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/9781781386507; Peter Kellett and A Graham Tipple, "The Home as Workplace: A Study of Income-Generating Activities within the Domestic Setting," n.d., 12; Peter Kellett, "Cultural Values and Housing Behavior in Spontaneous Settlements," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 16, no. 3 (1999): 205–24, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43030501.

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The **"How"** compares/analyzes the typologies of adaptations applied by dwellers. The **border figure** is when shrubs, fences and curtains are added as space delineations. The **extension figure** is applied in both indoor and outdoor environments. It is structurally less demanding as it uses part of an existing structure. This figure is usually a prelude to the **Addition figure** which is adding a unit or a block in an open space. Lastly, there is the **surface figure** where dwellers apply floor finishes and landscaping to claim space and expand their dwellings.

6.1 The Stimulus for Change

"Anyone who has the space to transform is likely to do so".[368] The motivations for dweller-initiated housing transformations, as outlined by Tippel, are the economic drive and the need to add habitable space. The economic motivation is concerned with adding rooms for renting or sub-letting and generating income. Adding habitable space on the other hand is another strong motivation factor that is aimed at absorbing an increase in household population as well as making space for extended family members.[369]

Although Tipple's dwelling cases are diverse in context comprising cases in Egypt, Bangladesh, Ghana and Zimbabwe, and focused only on government-built housing, the motivations concerning "income" and "habitable space" resonate with the findings in the categories of both non-planned and planned housing settlements. In addition to these, a third motivation concerning culture has been anecdotally mentioned by Tipple but not addressed probably because Tipple was looking into multiple nations and with much reliance on quantitative data. In the subsections below, I will discuss the impetus for transformation under three categories: **i)** The Functional Stimulus, **ii)** The Economic Stimulus and, **iii)** The Cultural Stimulus.

The functional stimulus: dwellers are engaged in transformation when the space is not adequate for their dwelling practices or for other pragmatic reasons such as the need for security or a change in household size. Other reasons such as the lack of basic servant spaces such as the kitchen also motivate dwellers to add or expand. The economic stimulus: is when dwellers yearn to be engaged in home-based income-generating activities and improve their livelihood. The cultural stimulus: is when transformations occur to improve privacy conditions religious outlooks or to propagate social status. Creating the gwada and the gwaro or merging the sleeping spaces with the living spaces are examples of a cultural stimulus. These motivations for transformation are identified and categorized based on the findings from the cases that have been studied.

368 see A. Tipple, Gillian Masters, and Guy Garrod, "An Assessment of the Decision to Extend Government-Built Houses in Developing Countries," *Urban Studies* 37 (August 1, 2000): 15, https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980020080281.
369 Tipple, *Extending Themselves*.

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6.1.1 The functional stimulus

As observed in the cases examined, a significant stimulus for housing transformation stems from the incapacity of dwelling units to facilitate residents' essential domestic tasks. The incapacity compromises the basic minimum functionality the dwelling is expected to offer and hence pushes dwellers to engage in transformations. The functional shortcomings observed during the study are either spatial (aspects of occupancy and spatial adequacy) or technical (lack of utilities and infrastructure)

The following types of dwelling dysfunctionality have been observed: **i)** Dwelling units lack adequate spaces to accommodate their intended activities effectively, **ii)** The infrastructure and utilities associated with toilets and kitchens are dysfunctional either due to design flaws, construction errors, or their absence altogether **iii)** dwellings fail to offer a fundamental sense of security and well-being for their occupants. **iv)** Dwellings experience overcrowding as occupancy rates exceed the unit's capacity.

Spatial inadequacy was an impetus for transformations in both the non-planned and planned housing settlements, but it was most visible in the non-planned housing settlements since the housing figures in these settlements are comparatively small. The kebele housing figures in the Indigenous neighbourhood (Section 4.1) are characteristically one-room dwellings and not suited for growing families. The upgraded sefer figures in Menen provided only one-room and two-room units and hence could not suit the demographic changes through time. The extra-legal dwellings in Lomi Meda had to start small because of affordance and because they followed a building strategy that began with a small intervention but built fast (sometimes overnight) to secure and claim the plot through a temporary one-room structure. When it comes to spatial adequacy and provision of basic infrastructure, the extra-legal dwellings in Lomi Meda were the most precarious and with the most serious challenges. The housing transformations initiated focused on addressing this predicament.

In addition to adding sanitary units in inadequate spatial conditions, the extra-legal dwellings in Lomi Meda had to also carry the burden of dealing with sewer infrastructure by themselves. This process is illegal operating outside the auspices of local authorities. It is typically a localized dry pit latrine system or a sewer line outside the dwelling that is connected to the nearby river, where most of the extralegal housing settlements are located.[370] Aisha had to go through a complicated process of installing a PVC pipe sewer line that connects her sanitary unit with the river passing through neighbours' plots beneath her while Khadija had a system that directly discharged to the river.[371]

From the category of non-planned neighbourhoods, the extra-legal housing settlements miss basic provision of water and sewer infrastructure.[372] In contrast to this, the urban extension and the urban redevelopment condominium housing projects have all the utilities checked but are in an unfortunate state of malfunction. The situation concerning the Lideta Condominium is noteworthy. The prevalence of technical malfunctions was such that it significantly impacted the daily utilization of space by dwellers. The households were able to do minor transformations and adjust the way they performed their domestic chores. The spatial configuration imposed constraints that prevented radical housing transformations. Furthermore, the dwelling units were constrained by limited space.

370 Most of the extralegal housing settlements in Addis Ababa are located along riverbanks although the City Administration has passed a law that prohibits building nearby rivers.
371 See section 4.3 for details on Aisha and Khadija.
372 Unlike water and sewer infrastructure, electricity is quite common in extra-legal settlements as it is relatively easy to connect to the power grid when one can pay land tax on the plots even while they have not been fully recognized by the state and given title deeds.

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Abeba and Misrak reside in separate blocks within the Lideta condominium, yet both encounter similar technical challenges stemming from the vertical sewer and storm-water lines passing through their flats. Abeba struggles with water leakage from upper floors and flooding from indoor manholes, significantly hindering her use of living space. She avoids using areas in her living space that are prone to frequent flooding. Moreover, severe water scarcity forces her to repurpose the toilet primarily for water storage in large containers, rendering it ineffective for its intended use. Similarly, Misrak finds herself unable to utilize the kitchen for cooking due to water leakage, instead resorting to using the corridor for meal preparation. She repurposes the kitchen primarily for storage and banking injera, as it lacks sufficient space for cooking activities. To address the water leakage issue, Misrak replaced the kitchen's agrostone wall with hollow concrete blocks, inadvertently reducing the already limited space in the kitchen.

Another important motivation for transformation has to do with conditions of security.

The gibi, in the sense of a boundary, is one of the basic features that protect the dwelling unit from theft and non-human intrusions such as in the case of Sarris[373]. Dwellers in 16 of the 18 cases that have been studied have reported that they were motivated to construct a gibi to feel secure. The majority of the planned housing conditions did not consider the gibi as an important figure to include and hence did not provide it. Nevertheless, it was included by dwellers when they moved in. In addition to defining the the gibi, it was easier for the plot based dwellings to partake in transformations motivated by functional needs due to the relative spatial flexibility they could afford within the plot. The block-based planned developments on the other hand were designed without any consideration of the gibi and residents in two of the four cases have defined a gibi through fences for security. Abeba in Lideta closed off a passageway at the end of her corridor while Shambel in Mickey Leland closed off a gallery space with steel gates in collaboration with neighbours. This is now becoming a common practice in condominium developments.

Concluding on the topic of the **functional stimulus**, both planned and non-planned housing settlements have experienced changes driven by functional needs. Extra-legal housing settlements encountered significant technical obstacles, yet residents managed to address them through technical and spatial adjustments, facilitated by the relative simplicity of single-storey constructions and available space to claim and appropriate. Conversely, block-based condominiums exhibit pronounced design flaws and encounter substantial technical issues, albeit with fewer observable physical alterations due to rigid spatial layouts. On the other hand, planned developments that are plot-based, primarily consisting of single-storey structures, demonstrated comparatively better standing while displaying resilience to technical and spatial modifications by the dwellers. Repositioning septic tanks, waterproofing wall and roof leaks with plastic sheets and other technical solutions were common in the plot-based settings.

373 Sarris is located at the border of a river. There is a thick forest in between the housing settlement and the river that is home to wild animals such as hyenas and apes. The dwellers in Sarris had to define their gibi's to protect themselves and their property.

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6.1.2 The economic stimulus

The economic stimulus is one of the most evident motivations for dweller-initiated housing transformations. Studies have shown that income-generating activities in turn finance dwelling, whereby dwellers consolidate their dwelling, suggesting a "symbiotic relationship" between the two.[374] From the studied cases, it is noted that whenever the housing condition allows (spatially as well as managerially) the practice of income generation, dwellers show visible effort to spatially transform their domestic space to make it suitable for income generation. Out of the eighteen cases, eleven cases (61%) have transformed their domestic spaces to make them suitable for home-based income-generating activities implying income generation is a prevalent dwelling practice. In this study, renting rooms or subletting, *souks* (convenience stores), workshops and other unnamed activities are the identified home-based enterprises.

The most common type of income-generating practice that was recorded from the 18 cases was private land lordship or subletting. Of the cases that are involved in active income generation, 70% have built additional rooms, extended spaces, or repurposed existing ones to make them suitable for subletting. Subletting from private owners is one of the main modes of housing tenure in Addis Ababa. The Addis Ababa City Administration estimates the portion of dwellers renting from private households as being 35.36%.[375] A figure that is sourced from the census in the year 2007. This portion is expected to be much higher now considering the increase in population without substantial improvements in the housing stock. It is important to note here that the census does not include 'subletting' as a category because it is not permitted to sublet kebele houses or houses from extra-legal settlements. Therefore, this figure would be much higher when considering kebele houses and extra-legal settlements. Taking this in context, it is by no means a surprise that 42% of the studied cases are involved in subletting or renting activities to generate income.

In the non-planned housing settlements, only one case out of the six dwellings was engaged in active income generation through renting rooms. This was Khadija's house in the extra-legal settlements of Lomi Meda. Dwelling units in the upgraded sefer of Menen have built extra units in their gibi for renting out but the cases that have been surveyed did not manifest this. Subletting was not occurring in the two cases representing indigenous neighbourhoods (that were both kebele-owned). This is contrary to the informal subletting of kebele-owned property being a common practice. [376] Subletting was uncommon in the surveyed cases, primarily because it is illegal. However, according to Amare in Kechene, subletting does occur in their gibi when residents have established their sub-gibi.[377] As for Timnit, she prefers to use the extra space that she has, to start a liquid soap production business.

In the planned housing developments, cases from all three plot-based dwellings with a gibi have income-generating rental units that are gradually built through time. The push factor for this is mostly the demographic change in the family requiring more income at the family level. The straightforward way to do this would be to use the readily available spaces in the gibi as assets and generate income by leasing out rooms. Hailu from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch explains how his family needed to increase household income due to the pressure of growing family size. Bizunesh in the same housing settlement had to support her family by first subletting the kitchen and then later adding additional rooms to sublet. She has a sentimental attachment to the kitchen because she believes that it played a significant role in helping the family escape poverty.

374 Kellett and Tipple, "The Home as Workplace: A Study of Income-Generating Activities within the Domestic Setting."
375 See Addis Ababa City Administration Integrated Land Information Center, "Addis Ababa City Atlas" (Addis Ababa City Administration Integrated Land Information Center, 2015), 65.
376 Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu et al., "New Perspectives on Urban Transformation in Addis Ababa," 2018, 1–20.
377 Amare explained that there are a few instances of subletting in their gibi, occurring when dwellers have defined their sub-gibi and the rest of the community did not oppose this action.

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Renting out the 'better-constructed room', usually the kitchen or a multi-functional core house such as in Sarris sites and services, is a phenomenon that has been observed in Kuteba Seferë Fikir, Kolfe Kuteba Betoch and Sarris Addisu Sefer, all the plot-based cases that have been studied. It is to be recalled that three of these housing settlements follow a similar design strategy. They start with a core house and aim for incremental growth. Residents opt to build their kitchens either as temporary sheds with temporary materials such as plastic sheets or with wattle and daub construction and rent out the kitchen built from hollow concrete blocks as they can earn more through renting it out.

Most of the cases have these rental units in the gwaro and dedicate the remaining part of gibi for private use. This is because of the availability of more space at the gwaro and the acceptance of the service quarter as a convenient and mainstream typology.[378] But it also has to do with the preference to have the prime space of the front yard (usually referred to as the gibi when the gwaro is present at the back) for the core family.[379]

The typology of the *souk* is another common way of entrepreneurship at the household level. Four cases from the total of 18 studied cases have used their gibi to build a *souk*. It is also common to use these spaces as a standalone dwelling space in cases where the store is run by the family and not rented out as a shop. Building these small *souks* depends on the area of the dwelling. Some *sefers* have strict regulations on such small businesses. Dwellings situated in these *sefers* do not go for building souks even if there is a demand for them and there is ample space in the gibi as well. Kolfe Kuteba Betoch is a good example to illustrate this. Bizunesh tried to first open a *souk* in her gibi after securing the gibi with steel sheets. This was abandoned because the authorities from the rental agency declined to give her a permit. She then started a carpentry workshop that could not be sustained because of the noise pollution it inflicted. She finally resorted to continuing and building rental units in her gwaro as she found subletting to be less regulated and hassle-free when compared with opening a *souk* within one's premises.

Unlike Gudina, Iyasu from the serviced lands of Mekanissa was able to use his gibi as a workshop. His plot was significantly larger, measuring 320m^2 compared to Gudina's 160m^2, and featured a more spacious gibi with only one adjacent common wall at the front. Iyasu uses his gibi as a workshop infrequently, and he believes his neighbours assume he is only doing minor maintenance. This might explain why he has not received any complaints about noise pollution from them.[380]

In contrast to planned and plot-based housing settlements, income generation is generally discouraged in condominium housing projects due to concerns about its impact on the residential environment. Some ground floor units in condominiums are designed for commercial purposes, with Lideta Condominium having more of these compared to Mickey Leland, particularly because Lideta Condominium is situated within a densely populated urban area where deliberate design choice has been made to allocate ground floor spaces for commercial activities. For instance, Abeba from Lideta attempted to generate income through vegetable farming, although her efforts were short-lived due to the intervention by the homeowner's association. Despite residing on the ground floor, Abeba's unit isn't ideally suited for income generation; nevertheless, she tried to utilize "common green spaces"[381] in the condominium for small-scale commercial vegetable gardening.

378 The "service quarter" typology is discussed in subsection 6.3.3

379 Please refer to sections 5.2 and 5.4 in chapter 5. Gudina from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch explains the meanings she attaches with the front yard while Bekele from Mekanissa articulates the importance of the space in front of the main house.

380 Check the Addendum on page **CLXIX** for Gudina and **CCXLI** for Iyasu.

381 This is a direct translation of how these spaces are referred to in Amharic. They are usually off limits to any kind of private use.

In Mickey Leland, the ground floor unit was originally a commercial space that was transformed to incorporate living facilities within. Both the urban redevelopment case in Lideta and the urban extension in Mickey Leland demonstrated weak associations with income generation, influenced by the typo-morphological conditions of the dwellings. Residents occupying ground floor units often want to start income-generating activities, leveraging their physical proximity to the ground-level spaces, although this isn't always positively received by the community.

This unique case in Mickey Leland involves integrating an active service-providing business (a bar) with dwelling spaces, where the unit is designated and rented out for commercial purposes but repurposed and redesigned by Senait to accommodate living quarters. While Senait appreciated not having to pay separate rent for housing, she strongly opposes the dual working-living arrangement, particularly concerning raising children in an environment where alcohol is sold. Economic challenges as a single parent exacerbate her situation. Leaving her unable to alter her current living conditions.[382]

When contrasting non-planned housing settlements with planned counterparts, it is observed that more income-generating home-based enterprises are practiced in the planned dwellings, excluding block-based developments even though all the cases from the non-planned housing settlements have shown active interest. Residents who have obtained or privatized a gibi in non-planned settlements have either begun actively generating income by renting out rooms or have undertaken housing modifications to some degree while awaiting an improved financial situation to initiate a home-based business. Based on the research findings, it cannot be definitively asserted that planned settlements exhibit superior performance in come generation compared to non-planned housing settlements. However, it can be inferred that the presence of a gibi significantly influences residents' involvement in income-generating activities in both settlement types.

6.1.3 The cultural stimulus

Socio-cultural forces influence how human beings dwell. Ammos Rapoport sees dwellings and settlements as being the "physical" embodiments of "socio-cultural forces".[383] Cultural determinants have had a strong impact on the decision behind most of the dweller-initiated transformations. The most recurrent cultural drives that were overarchingly present in most of the housing conditions are the role of **privacy**, the role of **religion** and the role of **social status**. Seventeen out of the eighteen dwelling cases have exhibited culture-motivated dwelling transformations aimed at attuning the house to norms that are associated with the above-mentioned drives. Six out of six in the nonplanned settlements and eleven out of twelve in the planned housing settlements. This section will focus on cultural motivations that have stimulated dweller-initiated transformations.[384]

Privacy is the most prevalent aspect of culture expressed by the dwellers. Seventeen out of the eighteen cases had reasons related to realms of privacy as a driving factor. They use the word *gwada* and *gwaro* in the Amharic and Tigrigna languages to express privacy in the context of dwelling. Although the terminology relates to concepts of privacy, it sometimes crossovers to indicate gendered spaces based on social constructs on gender roles. Privacy per se might not be an appropriate translation to grasp the shades of meanings that gwada represents but it is with the most terminological intersection.[385]

382 Check the Addendum on page **CCLXXVII** for Senait.
383 Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, Foundations of Cultural Geography Series (N.J Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, 1969), 47 see.
384 Detailed elaborations on the type of transformations are discussed in 6.2 while synthesized findings about the gibi, gwada and gwaro are discussed in Chapter 7.
385 Please refer to section 1.2.2 in the introduction for the 'priori' statement on gwada and gwaro.

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Concerning privacy, dwellers in both non-planned and planned housing settlements have made alterations to their spaces. However, it was more visible in the nonplanned cases because the dwellings were mostly situated in a communal socio-spatial context. Defining the gwada, for the use of a bedroom and kitchen, and a semi-private gibi occurred in the Indigenous neighbourhoods (Kechene) and upgraded sefer settlements (Menen). It was also observed in the extra-legal housing settlements albeit in a different set of processes. The extra-legal cases did not have a communal gibi and the privacy-related operations focused on the indoor sphere.

In the case of planned dwelling settlements, the kitchen and/or bedroom are usually private to the household, so the privacy operations were not focused on defining a new gwada. They were rather about redefining spaces within the gibi so that they respond to the changing needs of spatial definition induced by other transformations. These needs are related to the necessity to have a private kitchen because of multiple households living in the same dwelling unit.[386]

Redefining privacy of the kitchen was only observed in the plot-based developments as the block-based developments (condominiums) were not highly engaged in subletting. Nevertheless, a privacy-oriented transformation occurred in the Lideta condominium.

When dealing with privacy, block-based condominium projects are usually engaged in other types of culturally dictated alterations. Senait from Mickeyleland had to design her dwelling unit so that it is as indirect as possible when accessed from the bar. She did this to guarantee a semblance of privacy for her kids even if the toilet is still shared with customers. She also tacitly claimed a small gwaro at the back to foster a safe zone for the family.[387] Iyasu in Mekanissa built Venetian shutters to limit and control visual permeability between the kitchen and the living room.[388]

A very radical transformation occurred in Kolfe Kuteba Betoch with Gudina when she built a tunnel to connect the gwaro with her front yard space as she did not want the lessees to cross the living room and have visual access to her gwada. She rather chose to deduct valuable space from her already critical living quarters so that the core house remained private.

386 The findings suggest that the desire to have a private kitchen is an overarching cultural pattern regardless of social background or economic status. Dwellers will not choose to share cooking spaces if they have the option of having a private kitchen.

387 Check the Addendum on page **CCLXXXI**.

388 Check the Addendum on page **CCXLVII**.



FIG. 6.1 Gudina's tunnel as seen from the gwaro towards the gibi, 2020.

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Another important socio-cultural aspect that motivated dwellers to make dwelling transformations is the desire to express **social status** through culturally coded building features or through adopting certain building trends. Enlarging spaces for wedding events, elaborating fences and adding symbolic building elements (decorations such as gypsum) when they climb up the income ladder is quite common.[389]

Religion as well as cultural background played a role in how privacy is perceived. A case in point is Hassan's dwelling in Kuteba Seferë Fikir. They started modifying their spaces by removing the partition and enlarging the sitting room avoiding the distinction between living and sleeping spaces. The initial motivation was more functional as the room could not sleep everyone in the family. This problem started to be serious as the children in the family grew up. However, the successive transformations were always based on creating rooms that function both for sleeping and for receiving guests. Multifunctional rooms that function more as full-fledged living sleeping studios. Gwada, in the sense of a private realm, was not present here. The same scenario played out in Ahmed's dwelling in Sarris Addisu Sefer. Both the Ahmeds and Hassans identify as Muslims. This is contrary to Aisha's and Khadija's conception of gwada from Lomi Meda since they have Muslim backgrounds as well. Nevertheless, it is noted that both Aisha and Khadija furnish the living space as also a sleeping quarter with low-seaters even if they have a separate gwada space that is more private.[390]

Dweller-initiated transformations motivated by culture were visible in both planned and non-planned settlements. The notions of the gwada relating to privacy and the notion of territoriality in the case of the gibi manifested in both housing conditions as culturally prevalent patterns.[391] Propagation of social status was not observed in the non-planned cases mainly because they did not yet experience upward social mobility. On the other hand, dwellings in the planned housing settlements of Kuteba Seferë Fikir, Kolfe Kuteba Betoch and Sarris Addisu Sefer have undergone transformations that are meant to express social status.

6.2 Nature of Transformation

"Transformation" suggests radical change within a relatively shorter period. Nonetheless, I have decided to use "transformation" instead of "change" based on two grounds. Firstly, it is because most cases demonstrate significant change, even if the change unfolds gradually over an extended period. Secondly, it involves adhering to the semantics used in the body of literature on the subject, which commonly discusses physical alterations by residents to dwellings using terms like "housing transformation" and "self-initiated transformation"[392]. Transformation in the context of this study encompasses spatial changes induced by physical change or alternation of the housing condition including repainting and re-rendering of wall surfaces.

This section explores dweller-initiated transformations from the perspective of *the what*.

389 Details of these types of transformations are discussed in 6.2.5

390 The seaters are reminiscent of the Majlis, the local name for the couch set on the floor. Majlis translates to a sitting room in Arabic.

391 The nature of transformations concerning territoriality (with the gibi) and privacy (with the gwada) are discussed in 6.2.1 and 6.2.3 respectively.

392 Literature on the topic by Graham Tipple, Peter Kellett and others.

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It delves into the temporal conditions that undergo the process of transformation. The first is **'Territoriality'** or **'ownership'** which is also related to the evolution of the gibi. The second is about adding or expanding **'habitable space'** motivated by the factors discussed in section 6.1. The third is **'habitable outdoor'**, which explores the constantly evolving use of the outdoor space and the continuous effort from dwellers to make it habitable. The fourth is about setting the **'private realm'** and the change in the spatial conditions of privacy—the gwada in the case of indoor spaces and the condition of the gwaro in the case of outdoor spaces. The fifth is about transformation meant to express **'social status'**.

6.2.1 Territoriality and ownership – redefining border conditions

Conditions of territory and ownership status are notions that are very crucial to most of the dwellers in the cases that have been surveyed. The physical delineation of borders and the symbolic marking of the dwelling territory are important in all forms of tenure. During the progression of housing transformations, territories are either strongly defined or altered. The border conditions undergo visible redefinitions that are premised on the stimulus discussed in section 6.1.

Diverse methods of territorial marking occur depending on the tenure status and the physical conditions of the dwelling. The spectrum ranges from subtle border definitions of the gibi to more explicit hard borders that fence off the property in private and semi-private dwelling conditions. In this subsection, the "gibi" is used to signify the overall territory or plot of the dwelling as opposed to its other connotations relating to space.[393]

The nonplanned dwellings have shown fluid territorial conditions when compared with planned dwellings. In the case of sefer where a community shares a gibi, dwellers live in a loosely defined territorial setting, with invisible borders. Take for example the case of Kindu and Amare from the kechene Indigenous neighbourhood, living in a common compound that is open on one side of the street. This was intentionally left open to let the street-facing kebele houses use the back side facilities such as the toilet and common kitchen. In this context, the Kindus do not have distinctly delineated borders. Based on assumed territory within the shared space implicitly defined through what they refer to as the 'invisible borders', their territory used to extend to their frontage (approximately 3 meters). A space they already used to extend their house. The condition of the 'invisible' gibi holds true for all twelve dwellings that share the compound except for three that have defined a private boundary within the larger communal gibi.

Timnit, also living in the same gibi, further privatised the communal gibi to create a private territory even though it is a kebele house belonging to the state. Timnit enjoys multiple layers of privacy in her two-layered gibi along with the associated use of space. Expanding her territory by altering the border conditions was important for the needs of privacy as well as for setting up future income-generating activities.

Territorial conditions in the upgraded settlements of Menen are similar to the Indigenous neighbourhoods of kechene. The gibi is already defined by corrugated iron sheet fencing at the beginning of upgrading. Dwellers have not indulged in changing the border conditions and are still in negotiation with the authorities about receiving title deeds for their apartments and overall gibi. They are nonetheless grateful that their territory is marked as compared with other upgrading ventures in other parts of the city where the dwellings are directly accessed from the streets. They feel that this is an inconvenient setup for residential use.

393 Multiple notions of the gibi are discussed in Part II from the perspective of dwellers and the analysis of these notions is elaborated in Chapter 7.

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The extra-legal neighbourhood of Lomi Meda is an exception from the category of non-planned housing settlements. In the case of extra-legal developments, the gibi is quite essential because dwellers aspire to get title deeds based on satellite images of the gibi and the structure that the state takes factoring to decide on whether to give a status of legality to the properties.[394] Securing the gibi is then grooming the property for future legality. Both cases in Lomi Meda have well-defined gibi through corrugated iron sheet fences.

Coming to the planned housing settlements, all the plot-based dwelling types have asserted their territories by transforming their border conditions materially. This has occurred in cases with different forms of tenure. Out of the eight plot-based developments, four of the cases have expanded their territory while transforming their borders. Hailu from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch did not admit to expanding their plot but evidence from satellite images and physical markers gathered from the site speak differently.[395] The Ahmeds from Sarris Addisu Sefer also expanded their plot while transforming their border from vegetation borders to hollow concrete blocks.[396] They shifted an electric pole in the process and built their fence 80 cm offset from the wall of their dwelling at the edge of the plot. When asked why they did this, Ahmed's reply was the following:

We considered the probability of the road becoming wider in which case the fence can be demolished while the house remains intact and untouched. The narrow space between the fence and our house acts like a setback.[397]

Even though Ahmed did not explicitly state that they expanded their plot during the interview, he gave suggestive comments that they did so. The 80 cm strip of land along the length of their territory is essentially land appropriated from the street. Unlike Hailu and Ahmed, Yacob from Mekanissa openly admits that they extended their plot from 160m^2 to 190m^2.

He explains that they added the 30m^2 legally from the street (the same as other neighbours) by getting the blessing from the authorities in a process locally referred to as *Makatet*.[398] Iyasu, the second case in Mekanissa, on the other hand, did not mention expanding his plot when he transformed his fence from a corrugated iron sheet to a Hollow concrete block. He repeatedly mentions his plot being 175 m^2 while the as-built measurements reveal that his plot is 315m^2. When asked directly about the discrepancy, he explained that he has added 100m^2 to his plot following the procedure of *maktet*, although this does not explain the remaining 40m^2. Further exploration of the existing neighbourhood structure in comparison with the original plot sizes reveals that most of the neighbours have expanded the size of their properties from the public right of way. Looking further into this is beyond the scope of the dissertation but it is conclusive that most of the encroachment into public land happens during redefining the gibi.

394 See Tadashi Matsumoto and Jonathan Crook, "Sustainable and Inclusive Housing in Ethiopia: A Policy Assesment" (Coalition of Urban Transitions, 2021), 43, https://urbantransitions.global/publications for the legalization proccess of extra-legal settlements.

395 Check the transformation diagram in section 5.2.1

396 Check the transformation diagram in section 5.3.1

397 Interview with Ahmed, a resident from Sarris Addisu Sefer.

398 *Makatet* is a process whereby a dweller legally incorporates a *terrain-vague* patch of land into his/her title deed. The sub-city or municipality allows this procedure when there is a piece of no-mans land that is planning-wise better off to be part of an individual's property. Since none of the interviewees demonstrated their title deeds, it is difficult to differentiate between what part of the land is legally incorporated and what part is illegally privatized.

In the case of the condominium developments with communal gibis, dwellers have defined sub-gibi at different scales; at the scale of the block and the scale of the floor. The ones at the scale of the block are mainly constructed to prevent theft by controlling through-traffic between blocks while the ones at the gallery level serve an extra purpose of common storage space for the 3-4 dwelling units sharing a wing of the gallery space. This has occurred in the Lideta and Mickey Leland condominiums respectively.

Territoriality plays a significant role in both the planned and unplanned dwelling settlements that have been studied. The ethnographic interactions with the dwellers reveal that discussion on the topic is not transparent although territoriality is important to them. Fifty per cent of the nonplanned cases have transformed their border conditions to secure a private or semi-private territory while 92 percent of the planned dwellings have transformed their borders from soft vegetation markings to hard borders. In total, 78 percent of the dwellings have physically redefined their borders exhibiting pronounced territoriality. The possibility of redefining border conditions is more apparent in the planned developments, (with the exception of condominium developments) compared to the non-planned settlements mostly due to their tenure status. This accounts for more territorial demarcations in the planned developments.[399]

6.2.2 Habitable Space – The more rooms the merrier

Habitable space is defined as an area within a dwelling unit that includes the living space, dining space, and bedrooms excluding the kitchen and toilets.[400] I generally agree with this categorization but disagree with the exclusion of the kitchen as it contradicts the reality of the cases I have surveyed and perhaps other cases in the global south, where kitchens often serve multifunctional purposes beyond cooking and accommodate various dwelling practices. I have therefore included the kitchen when considering habitable space.

Dwellers in planned and unplanned dwelling conditions opted to add more habitable space whenever the housing condition allowed it, and finances were available. Responses from both housing contexts underscored the benefit of adding more rooms, enabling income generation, responding to cultural needs and absorbing future demographic changes in the family. This section will examine dwelling transformation involving the addition of rooms and the increase in indoor habitable space, comparing this phenomenon in the nonplanned and planned dwelling contexts.

In nonplanned dwelling settlements, adding rooms is challenging due to the lack of finances, available space, and security of tenure. Kebele housing, which accounts for most nonplanned settlements in Addis Ababa, is in a state of neglect and dilapidation.[401] Dwellers are not allowed to add rooms and must undergo permit procedures to perform physical upgrades, which is often unpleasant. Although this is the general rule of thumb, there are unconventional ways to get a permit depending on the availability of space in the gibi and dealings with the local Kebele authorities. The Kindus and Timnit's permit for their 'upgrading' process in kechene went relatively smoothly. It is important to highlight that the Kindus extended their house, while Timnit not only extended but also added a new block within the legal framework of 'upgrading'.

399 Check the Addendum on page **CCCLII** to see the public-private interface of Addis Ababa (in planned settings) when compared with other contexts.
400 see Tipple, *Extending Themselves*, 31.
401 Yonas Alemayehu Soressa and Imam Mahmoud Hassen, "Inner-City Dwellers and Their Places in the Context of Addis Ababa's Urban Renewal," in *The Transformation of Addis Ababa: A Multiform African City*, ed. Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu and Laura Stark (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 77–126.

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Name	Before transformation		After transformation		% Increase	% Increase
	Habitable space	Habitable space/person	Habitable space	Habitable space/person	Habitable space	Habitable space/person
Kindu and Amare	12.45	2.08	22.11	3.69	78	78
Timnit	7	1.4	37	9.25	429	561
Lemma and Sinidu	18	3	28	7	56	133
Getahun	20	5	25	8.33	25	67
Aisha	15.54	3.11	21.72	4.34	40	40
Khadija	36	12	74	7.4	106	-38

FIG. 6.2 Table illustrating the habitable space of the nonplanned dwelling cases. Source: Fieldwork.

Name	Before transformation		After transformation		% Increase	% Increase
	Habitable space	Habitable space/person	Habitable space	Habitable space/person	Habitable space	Habitable space/person
Hassan and Fatima	25.6	5.12	80.7	10.09	215	97
Bezunesh	28.4	3.55	70.98	14.2	150	300
Hailu	37	6.17	84	12	127	95
Gudina	31.13	10.38	70.94	7.88	128	-24
Ahmed	18	9	85	10.63	372	18
Bemnet	37.9	12.63	64.92	10.82	71	-14
Bekele and Yacob	39	7.8	110	13.75	182	76
Iyasu	138	138	212.7	30.39	54	-78
Shambel	35.13	11.71	35.13	11.71	0	0
Senait	43.06	10.77	43.06	14.35	0	33
Abeba	15	7.5	15	5	0	-33
Misrak and Kelemua	23	7.67	23	11.5	0	50

FIG. 6.3 Table illustrating the Habitable space of the planned dwelling cases. Source: Fieldwork.

All the cases in the nonplanned housing settlement have increased in habitable space [Figure 6.2]. Three have added rooms to improve their indoor habitable space. Timnit from the indigenous neighbourhoods, The Lemmas from the Menen Sefer upgrading and Khadija from the extra-legal settlements have radically modified their habitable space by extending and/or adding new structures. Three of these dwellings have a designated gibi, a key feature that has enabled them to add rooms to their dwelling. The Lemmas, a family of 6 at the time of moving to Menen, had to make do in a two-roomed 18 m^2 unit until they decided to build an additional block in collaboration with the neighbours and increase their habitable space. Their indoor habitable space per person increased by 113%, from 3 m^2/ person to 7 m^2/person. Khadija on the other hand extended several rooms in her gibi during the different phases of dwelling transformation. She and her husband expanded their floor area from 40 m^2 to 101 m^2. Nevertheless, their habitable space per person did not increase because they had to sublet most of the additional rooms. Their habitable space showed a percentage decrease of 24% from 13.3 m^2/person to 10.1 m^2/person. This paints a good picture of the reality of overcrowding in extralegal settlements

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In the case of planned housing conditions, all plot-based cases, except for Iyasu in Mekanissa, have added rooms to increase their indoor habitable space. Income generation is a primary motivation for these additional rooms, as most are either rented out or used for service-based income-generating activities, such as those undertaken by the Bekeles in Mekanissa, Iyasu, an outlier in terms of renting or home-based services, owns a 315 m^2 plot—the largest privately owned plot among the studied cases. Over the years, he has incrementally built a high-end, three-storey, structure, affordable only to the high-income group, with an indoor habitable space of 213m^2, which is more than adequate for his household demographics. [402] However, anticipating future financial needs, Iyasu has designed the service quarter as a 'growing house' allowing it to extend vertically and join horizontally with the main house. Reinforcement bars are already in place to accommodate this future growth. The purpose of this is articulated by Iyasu as follows:

"I do not need additional room expansions at the moment, but it is important to anticipate expansion; In the future, I might extend the service quarter and earn income from it—the more rooms the merrier."[403]

Five out of eight (62.5%) of the dwellers from the planned dwelling units with a private gibi aspire to increase their indoor habitable space if the financial conditions are met even if it means that the gibi, which is perceived and used by many as part of the habitable space, is compromised. Hailu from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch and Ahmed from Sarris Addisu Sefer dream of a future multistorey house that rests on their plot. A house with multiple dwelling units. When asked how they would perform the activities that they used to do in the gibi, they responded that they would opt for design solutions that would enable them to compensate for the gibi. Ahmed would like to bring the gibi to the roof terrace and Hailu would like to keep their ground floor open so that it can accommodate functions that previously used to occur in the gibi.

There is a similar sentiment in the non-planned housing settlements. Three out of six (50%) of the dwellers aspire to add more rooms and build densified housing in their gibi if the financial, as well as tenure conditions, allow. In the case of Menen, they are still in negotiation with the government to have ownership rights on the plot making their aspiration dependent on the outcome of these negotiations. Similarly, the extra-legal housing settlement in Lomi Meda awaits legalisation from the government in addition to the obvious financial constraints that they are faced with.

Changes in habitable space per inhabitant have occurred in all cases after transformations. Except for the condominium dwellings, all cases increase their habitable space through these transformations. However, habitable space per inhabitant did not always increase because the extra space was often sublet or demographic changes occurred, such as inviting extended family members or having children. This trend was observed in Lomi Meda (Khadija), Kolfe Kuteba Betoch (Gudina), Sarris Addisu Sefer (Bemnet), Mekanissa (Iyasu), and Lideta (Abeba). Comparing non-planned and planned housing settlements concerning habitable space, the findings indicate that the non-planned settlements had the least habitable space per person after transformation. Indigenous sefer dwellings (Kindu) had 3.69 m^2/person, and extra-legal dwellings (Aisha) had 4.34 m^2/person. The least habitable space recorded among the planned dwellings was from the condominium cases (Abeba), with 5.02 m^2/person. Although there is no universal yardstick for habitable space/person, these figures are on the lower end when compared to the national minimum habitable room in Ethiopia-6m^2.[404]

402 Seven people reside in Iyasu's residence out of which four are extended family.
403 Interview with Iyasu
404 "EBCS-General: Building Spatial Design Code," Dwelling Occupancy (Addis Ababa: Ministry of Urban Development and Construction, 2013).

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6.2.3 The habitable outdoor – furnishing the gibi.

After a degree of stronger private claim on a gibi, Articulation of the gibi with outdoor furnishing, outdoor fixtures and a green zone is a prevalent practice that is present in both settlement types. Dwellers, whenever endowed with an outdoor space, tend to make it habitable by adding fixtures (sanitary) and other infrastructure. This section describes the nuanced conditions of when an outdoor space becomes habitable. Gibi in this section denotes outdoor dwelling space that is either defined by a border or implicitly understood as an outside section of the habitable space.

Although both nonplanned and planned dwellings distinctly demarcate the built from the unbuilt in terms of physical structures, a strict dichotomy between the indoor and the outdoor realm seldom exists when dwellers verbally express their dwelling environment. This resonates with how domestic chores seamlessly flow from the indoor setting to the outdoor and vice versa regardless of the physical 'barriers' between them. Dwellings in both nonplanned and planned housing settlements use the gibi as an extension of their living spaces daily, sometimes more frequently than some of the designated indoor rooms.

In the nonplanned dwellings of Addis Ababa, the shared gibi in a typical kebele housing setting is always animated with social activities, cloth washing and sometimes with cooking activities that overspill from the indoor realm to the outside. The Indigenous neighbourhood in kechene demonstrates how the Kindus use the communal gibi for domestic practices. The use of outdoor space for cooking and water-heavy activities is a result of not having spaces equipped with such facilities although residents still enjoy the social interactions that come along with it.

Comparing Timnit's sub-gibi with the Kindus who only have the communal gibi can shed light on the significance of spatial privacy in the use of the gibi. Timnit has furnished the space with sanitary installations for washing dishes and she has built a kitchen that is in direct contact with her small gibi. An addition was made possible after moving from shared water infrastructure in the communal gibi towards a private water infrastructure that she installed in her gibi. She has also added an outdoor seating bench that is an extension of the strip foundation of her house when the house was transformed. Timnit uses this furnishing daily for her domestic practices and prefers to cook outside, something that the Kindus seldom do.

The other cases of non-planned dwellings in Menen and Lomi Meda did not exhibit strong habitability like Timnit. The gibi conditions in Menen are shared and residents did not furnish the gibi except for adding external water taps. Causal cooking, washing clothes, and drying of spices take place but a more intimate level of habituation did not occur. One would have expected Khadija's gibi from Lomi Meda to portray similar properties because of the private gibi but not so. Khadija uses the gibi in the same manner as it is used in Menen. This is because Khadija's gibi, although it is private to the outside realm, also hosts four additional tenants both at the front and in the back end of her gibi qualifying the gibi like the communal gibis that are common in the kebele setting.

The situation in the plot-based and planned neighbourhoods is quite different in the sense of making the gibi habitable. Eight of the plot-based developments have added outdoor sinks, hand wash basins and other furnishing that render the gibi more habitable and suitable for executing daily domestic chores. In addition to building outdoor washing facilities and a hand wash basin in his gibi, Iyasu from Mekanissa has taken outdoor habitability one step further and built a gazebo space that he uses for sleeping/resting during the day.[405] This condition of outdoor habitability

405 Check the Addendum on page **CCXLVI**.

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drastically changes in the condominium settings. Dwellers in Lideta and Mickey Leland exhibited poor performance in using the spaces that they consider their gibi for outdoor habituation. Abeba has appropriated her assumed gibi far better than the other condominium flats due to the location of her apartment in a corner niche, at the end of a hallway.[406]

Gudina's dwelling from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch, a housing settlement that has been realized as urban resettlement, is a good example to demonstrate how the gibi is made habitable in a dwelling setting where there are multiple households. Gudina successfully maintains a gwaro space that is shared amongst all households and maintains a relative level of privacy (for the core family) in the space she calls her gibi at the front end of the dwelling unit.[407] It is in this space that she added an outdoor sink, a hand wash basin, and a semi-outdoor shower. The same conditions exist in the Bekele's residence in Mekanissa. Whenever the house is shared amongst multiple households, a flip is observed in the usual gradient of privacy that is expected in the gwaro to the gibi, making it more private to the landowners.[408]

Both planned and non-planned housing conditions have furnished the gibi although it was more evident in the dwellings with a private gibi. Forty-two per cent of the non-planned dwellings have made effort, with varying degrees, to make the gibi habitable. In the case of the planned housing settlements eight out of twelve cases (67%) have transformed their gibi to make it habitable. It is important to point out that the four cases that did not show strong habitability in the gibi are the condominium settings, much in contrast to all the other housing settlements. The small attempt made by the Shambels in Mickeyleland to occasionally habituate the semi-private gallery attests to the importance of privacy in outdoor habituation. The ethnographic encounters with most of the dwellers took place in the gibi while they were performing their domestic chores, highlighting the frequent use of this outdoor space. The extent to which the space is furnished suggests considering the furnished outdoor gibi as a type of habitable space. The table below (Figure 6.4 and 6.5) illustrates the gibi that is made habitable and the corresponding gibi/person figures.

Name	Gibi	Gibi/person
Kindu and Amare	5.1	0.85
Timnit	28	7
Lemma and Sinidu	7.8	1.95
Getahun	5.2	1.73
Aisha	NA	NA
Khadija	20.8	2.08

FIG. 6.4 Table illustrating the furnished outdoor gibi and its figure per capita—non-planned dwellings. Source: Fieldwork.

Name	Gibi	Gibi/person
Hassan and Fatima	11.8	1.48
Bezunesh	7.8	1.56
Hailu	17.4	2.49
Gudina	11.52	1.28
Ahmed	31.25	3.91
Bemnet	21.44	3.57
Bekele and Yacob	19.4	2.43
Iyasu	28	4
Shambel	11.2	3.73
Senait	17.8	5.93
Abeba	34	11.33
Misrak and Kelemua	NA	NA

FIG. 6.5 Table illustrating the furnished outdoor gibi and its figure per capita—Planned dwellings. Source: Fieldwork.

406 Check the Addendum on page **CCCI**.
407 Check the Addendum on page **CLXXIV**.
408 Check the Addendum on page **CCXXXI** for descriptions of the gwaro.

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6.2.4 Setting the private realm – marking the gwada, gwaro and gibi

Dwelling transformations focused on setting the private realm have been observed in both nonplanned and planned dwelling contexts. This section will primarily examine changes in the state of privacy concerning the gwada.[409] The act of defining the gwada is evident in housing conditions where the gwada is not defined as per the privacy inclination of the dwellers. The gwada is differently defined by dwellers depending on one's disposition or cultural background. It is marked and set accordingly through minor interior interventions such as curtains or radical transformations such as adding a new block. Attitudes towards the gwaro are similarly varied and depend on the housing conditions or dwellers' needs.

Setting the private realm was more visible in the nonplanned cases because the dwellings were mostly situated in a communal context. The kindus in Kechene had to subdivide and enlarge their one-room dwelling unit so that it has a gwada at the back end. The implications of this were twofold. They wanted to have a private kitchen/bedroom space that is independent of the sitting space which they define as a salon. The other was a quest for a private kitchen. The gibi has a communal kitchen that is mostly used by the households in the gibi for baking bread during the holidays. Timnit in kechene had to build a partition to define her gwada, a bedroom in her case, to have a private sleeping quarter independent from the sitting room. She also defined a gibi as a semi-private turf, by adding a fence with an entrance gate. An act of privatization that is not considered illegal.[410] Lemma and Senedu from Menen had to build a new structure to situate their kitchen because it was not provided in the accommodation. They used to previously use a space in the threshold of their gwada, a bedroom in their case, for cooking.

In Lomi Meda, Aisha and Khadija had to gradually make a privacy distinction on their one-room dwelling units so that they have a space for the kitchen and bedroom as well. Aisha had a very modest 24m^2 plot and she defined a tiny outdoor gibi carved out from her room so that it serves as a privacy buffer zone.[411] She didn't wish her children to directly access the narrow arterial street from the living space. Khadija has a relatively larger family, and she defines the gwada not only as a private zone but also as a zone dedicated to females. During holidays or gatherings, the men are seated in the sitting room while the females reside in the gwada, a space where the kitchen and bedroom are interconnected.[412]

A key point to highlight concerning the extra-legal settlements is that they are designed and built by the inhabitants, making them more attuned to their needs. Both Aisha and Khadija started with a basic one-room functional space, later transforming it into a two-room dwelling. These spaces were defined by two primary functions: a gwada (kitchen and bedroom) and a non-gwada, which served as a multifunctional sitting room. Both, identifying as Muslim, preferred not to have a traditional sitting room with furniture. The structure of spaces in these two dwelling units effectively illustrates cultural notions of privacy and the essence of the gwada. Kellett theoretically expounds on Rapoport's view of how cultural values are found more embedded in informal settlements since they are produced directly by the dwellers as key protagonists.[413]

409 Setting the gibi and gwaro as a private realm is evident but to a lesser frequency when compared with the gwada.
410 Fencing of a semi-private gibi within a communal gibi is considered illegal by the kebele. Timnit did not discuss details about this but other members from the same gibi hinted that the gibi might have been realised overnight while kebele personnel (*denboch*) do not supervise the neighbourhood. It was however clear that this was internally approved by the dwellers in the gibi.
411 Check the Addendum on page **LXXXVIII**.
412 Check the Addendum on page **CIII**.
413 see Kellett, "Cultural Values and Housing Behavior in Spontaneous Settlements," 208.

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In the planned dwelling context, Hailu and Gudina from the plot-based housing settlements of Kolfe Kuteba Betoch had to come up with a new private kitchen dedicated to the family. They both have a common kitchen that is shared with the other households in the dwelling unit which they sometimes use for baking *injera* or bread, an activity that they probably do twice per week. Bemnet from the Sarris Sites and Services scheme had to build a kitchen-gwada within the gwaro, a space that is shared amongst Bemnet's family and their tenants. He also delineated the gwaro with an internal gate to fence it off from the main gibi.

Redefining privacy of the kitchen was observed in the plot-based developments as the block-based developments that were studied (condominiums) did not engage in subletting or rentals. However, a privacy-oriented transformation occurred in Lideta, where Abeba built a partition wall to conceal the kitchen and define her gwada, making it hidden from the living space. She applied a similar approach in her studio space, using a curtain to visually separate the sleeping and sitting areas.

Privacy-oriented transformations have happened in all the nonplanned dwelling cases and in eight out of the twelve (67%) of the planned dwelling contexts. Overall, 78% of the cases have undergone privacy-related transformations related either with the gwada, gwaro or sometimes the gibi.

6.2.5 Expressions of wealth and affluence

Expression of wealth is one aspect of dweller-initiated transformation that is more visible in the planned dwelling contexts even though it might also happen in nonplanned dwellings. It is usually a phenomenon that occurs when dwellers move up the social ladder. Modifications focused on such expressions are focused on the publicly accessible and non-gwada spaces of the dwelling, namely the living spaces, and the gibi.

These modifications are characterized by changes in building materials (of the border or the main house), changes in painting or wall renderings or changes in the size of living rooms. There is a strong desire to follow trends in finishing materials such as the desire to use aluminium or other metal frames instead of wooden ones. The urge to replace the wall materials from wattle and daub to hollow concrete blocks is quite common. Dwellers look down upon buildings constructed from mud and refer to these materials as 'old' and 'out-fashioned'. Hailu from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch has painted the outside face of their gibi while leaving the inside bare and explained the importance of keeping an appearance.

Two of the cases from the planned housing settlements have undergone major dwelling transformations intended to serve and host guests at a wedding event. Bizunesh from Kuteba Seferë Fikir had to enlarge the living space and extend it to the gwaro so that it was "large enough" to marry off her children. She wanted to have a larger hosting space when receiving guests. Similarly, the Ahmeds from Sarris Addisu Sefer conducted a renovation that included repainting the house and changing the plaster finishes when they were about to host a wedding of a family member. The Hailus from Kolfe Kuteba Betoch felt their dwelling needed to match their social status as their socio-economic status improved. They enlarged their living room and added new gwada spaces (bedrooms in this case) that are more spacious.

None of the nonplanned dwellings underwent modifications for wealth expression, whereas three out of twelve cases (25%) in the planned dwelling contexts did. Overall, most of the dwellers in the planned cases aspire to demolish their existing dwellings and expand vertically, believing that they must "modernize" and follow suit on current trends. They perceive vertical development as a sign of "modernity".[414]

414 Interviews with Fatima, Hailu, Ahmed and Bekele

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6.3 Typologies of Adaptations

The **"How"** examines the typologies of adaptations applied by dwellers. This section presents and discusses the predominant figures of dweller-initiated dwelling transformations. While these are not the only methods by which residents actualize transformations, they are the most common and dominant ones associated with the reconfigurations of the gibi, gwada and gwaro. Unique instances such as partitioning a space with a curtain or reconfiguring partition walls are not discussed here as separate categories even though they also define a gwada. Instead, they are considered subsets of the dominant figures.

Three dominant figures of dwelling transformations are identified in this study. The **border figure** is when shrubs, fences and curtains are added as space delineations for the gibi. Then we have the **surface figure** where dwellers apply floor finishes and landscaping to expand and claim space. The **extension figure** is applied in both indoor and outdoor environments. It is structurally less demanding as it uses part of the existing structure. This figure is usually a prelude to the **Addition figure** which is adding a block in an open space.

"Extension" has been previously used by researchers to denote both interventions on an existing dwelling and new structures. I have opted to use "extension" solely for transformations that take place attached to the originally existing structure of a dwelling unit to make it distinct from "Addition" which stands for a unit with an independent structure in this study. The sub-sections below will discuss these figures from the standpoint of materiality, construction techniques and their significance to the socio-spatial notions of the gibi, gwada and gwaro.

6.3.1 The border and the surface figure

The border and the surface figure are two physical interventions associated with the gibi and its territorial expansion. These typologies enable dwellers to transform existing territorial conditions or appropriate additional territory. While they can function independently; they are often used together and are therefore discussed here as a duo.

The "border", known as *ater* or *kiter-gibi* in Amharic, has been a prominent feature of Addis Ababa since its inception. Borders are evident in early satellite images of the city and remain a key part of its dominant morphological structure, including its peri-urban areas.[415] They are crucial temporal figures within the evolution timeline of dwelling units. The border should not be directly equated with the gibi, as the gibi encompasses more substance and meaning, the physicality of the border shapes and sometimes defines the gibi. There are instances when people refer to the border as the 'gibi' but this is on rare occasions. In this section, "border" refers to the physical intervention that delineates the territory of a dwelling unit, with deviations from this definition explained through specific cases.

Two types of border figures have been identified during the fieldwork: soft borders and hard borders. Soft borders are typically created from shrubs and greenery or other subtle enclosures with non-gated openings, common in Indigenous sefer neighbourhoods. They can also be made

415 Check the Addendum on page **CCCLIII**.

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from visually permeable materials like chicken wire fences with openable gates or low picket fences. Hard borders, on the other hand, are constructed from either less permanent corrugated steel sheets or permanent concrete blocks or brick walls. These borders are both visually and physically impermeable.

The transformation of border conditions (from soft to hard) as a method of territorial expansion and plot legalization has been touched upon in section 6.2.2. Soft borders are typical in the early stages of transformation, whereas hard borders emerge in later stages. At this advanced stage, non-planned housing developments are often marked by less permanent hard borders, while plot-based planned housing developments feature more permanent hard borders. Often, the border figure is used in tandem with the surface figure, serving as an external threshold.

In the case of the condominium, borders operate at several layers depending on the type of the condominium and its location. Mickey Leland has soft chicken wire borders at the ground floors at the scale of the block while Lideta does not, owing to its location in the inner part of the city. At the gallery level, condominiums have semi-permeable borders from steel grills, collectively used to enclose the gallery and secure a gibi at the scale of the floor.

The surface figure reinforces hard borders and works together with vertical border structures. A typical horizontal cross-section of a hard border condition in a planned dwelling would have an 80-100cm surface (usually green cover) after the hollow concrete block or steel sheet structure that ranges between 5-40 cm. The surface might have a green patch with shrubs or trees that further buffer the territory. It is usually fenced off by a dwarf picket fence or chicken wire to make it off-limits and inaccessible to the public. [See Figure 6.6]

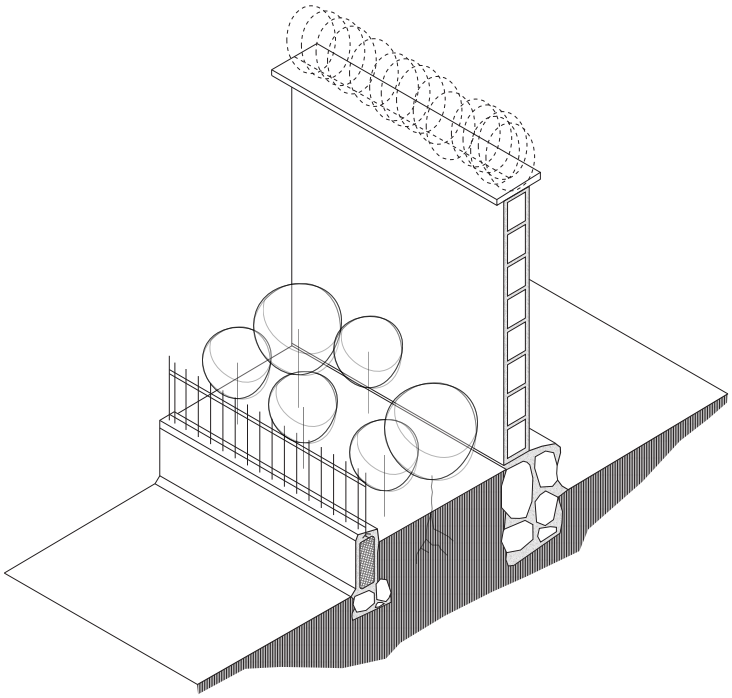

FIG. 6.6 Typical diagram of the surface figure reinforcing the border on the outside.

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The surface figure is evident in the ground-floor cases in Lideta and Mickey Leland. Small acts of defining territories through surfaces can eventually develop into hard gibi borders when the circumstances allow. Transformations involving the ground surface, such as landscape elements, floor finishes, or the placement of potted plants, are common in cases with a private gibi. However, in two instances of condominium dwellings, the surface figure has been used to expand boundaries and furnish the outdoors. Ground floor apartments in Lideta and Mickey Leland have employed this strategy to claim and appropriate nearby land. For example, in Mickey Leland, Senait used a picket fence and concrete tiles to expand her frontage and create an outdoor service space for her bar. This transformed surface area is shaded by a plastic tarp and a metal structure extending from the condominium building. In the Lideta condominium, Abeba's ground-floor apartment walkway at the back is claimed and defined as a gwaro by placing potted plants. [See Figure 6.7]

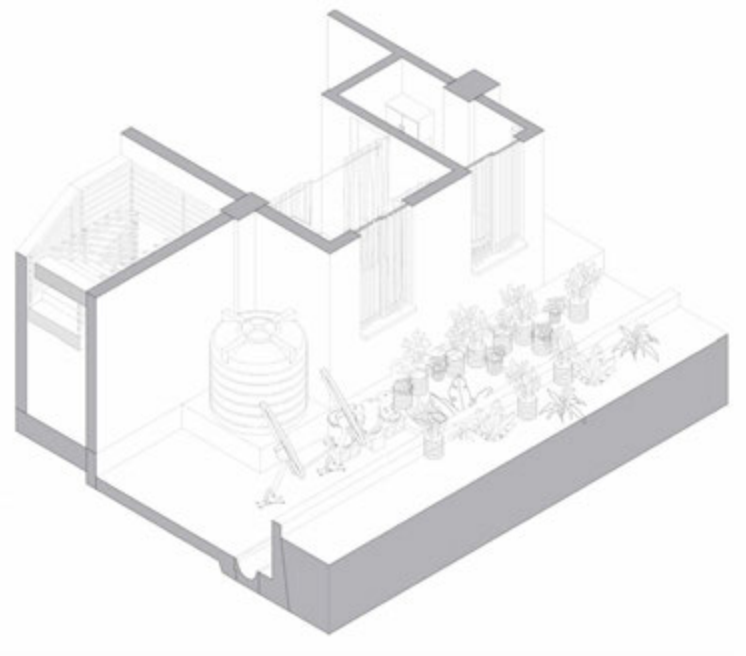

FIG. 6.7 Claiming of space using objects and potted plants. Abeba's gwaro in Lideta.

The surface and border figures are key typologies for actualizing the gibi, and sometimes the gwaro, in both non-planned and planned dwelling settlements. Despite the differences in border types between these two categories, dwellers generally prefer hard borders whenever their financial and legal circumstances allow.

6.3.2 The extension figure

Housing extensions are the most common figures during housing transformations particularly in low-income households in Addis Ababa, enabling dwellers to solve basic spatial challenges. In this study, the extension figure has been employed by both nonplanned and planned dwellings. Annexes and infills, awning structures, *qot* and partitioning adjustments such as moving walls and closing off doors and windows have always happened following or in tandem with an extension of part of the dwelling. The findings indicate that the **extension figure** often goes alongside the **addition figure**, which is discussed in the next subsection, even though one of the figures might be more dominant.

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In the non-planned dwelling settlements, extensions were constructed by first adding a light strip foundation capable of supporting a single-story structure using eucalyptus poles with a diameter of 10-15 cm. This strip foundation, made of trachytic stone, is typically 40 cm wide. Horizontal eucalyptus splints and twigs are cross-braced to span and connect the vertical poles, forming a woven mesh structure that creates a 20cm thick wattle and daub wall. At the roof level, the vertical poles are connected to inclined eucalyptus rafter logs, which are attached to the existing roof structure. After extending the roof, the wall surfaces are seamlessly plastered to make the extension appear as homogeneous as possible with the original structure.[416]

Most extensions follow this general approach when using wattle and daub structures with corrugated iron sheet roofing. However, variations can occur depending on the type and direction of the extension. Three main types of extensions have been identified:

1. **Side Extensions**: These follow the border of a dwelling and use either the back wall of a gibi or a neighbouring house as part of their structure.
2. **Front Extensions**: These follow the existing slope line of the original house and extend towards the front end of the structure.
3. **Vertical Extensions**: These increase the height of the dwelling, often aiming to incorporate a *qot* within the newly extended volume of space

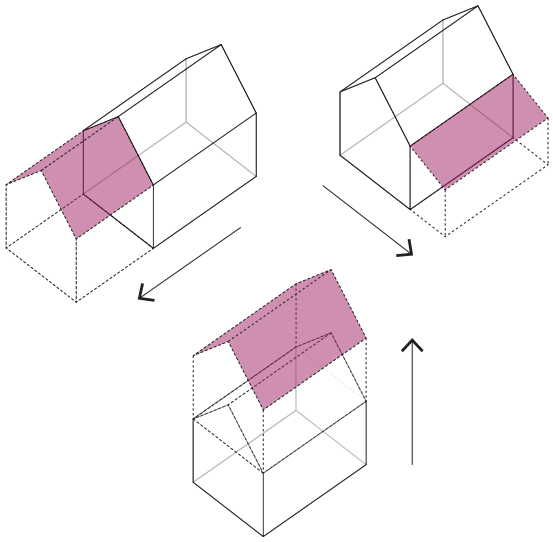

FIG. 6.8 Types of extensions that have been surveyed.

Combinations of these strategies can also occur. For example, the Kindus in Kechene extended their dwelling to the front and also upwards to add a *qot*, requiring additional eucalyptus poles to support the *qot* that was made from cement screed.[417] While extensions are not allowed in non-planned settlements, renovations are permitted, requiring one to pass through a very arduous permit process.[418] Most of the extensions that occur get permits from authorities based on renovation appeals.

416 Check image-02 in the Addendum on page **XVI**
417 Details of the construction are described in Chapter Four Section 4.1
418 Details of this procedure are discussed in Chapter Four

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In the case of the planned dwellings, the extension figure was used especially in Sarris Sites and Services and in Kolfe Kuteba Betoch in the first stages of transformation. Both dwelling settlements have similar spatial structures designed to promote incremental growth. Quite contrary to this, the Kuteba Seferë Fikir dwellings, although also designed for incremental growth, did not use the extension approach initially but rather in later stages. For example, Hassan and Bizunesh from Kuteba Seferë Fikir first started transforming their houses by repartitioning and re-purposing their rooms. Later, they built temporary sheds at the gwaro to serve as a kitchen-gwada before making successive transformations. They used the extension figure in stages, contrary to the incremental scheme of the design, as they chose to develop the vacant gwaro instead of immediately opting for the extension approach.[419]

As far as the construction is concerned, wattle and daub are used in the planned dwellings as a temporary structure and are usually upgraded to a hollow concrete block material when the households can afford it. The usual construction technique is to have a 50cm strip of stone and concrete foundation over lean concrete. A 15 or 20-cm hollow concrete block makes up the skin of the building and is topped with an eucalyptus triangular roof truss with corrugated iron sheet roofing. Although the spatial characteristics of the spaces that are extended is usually similar, using such materials and construction techniques is not common in nonplanned dwellings because of financial and permit issues.

In contrast to the plot-based dwellings, the extensions made in the condominium dwellings were not as significant. A case in Mickey Leland was an exception when Senait constructed an awning structure on the ground floor using a light steel pole structure and a plastic tarp roofing. Senait extended outwards towards the public sphere so she went for an intervention that could be easily disassembled if deemed necessary.

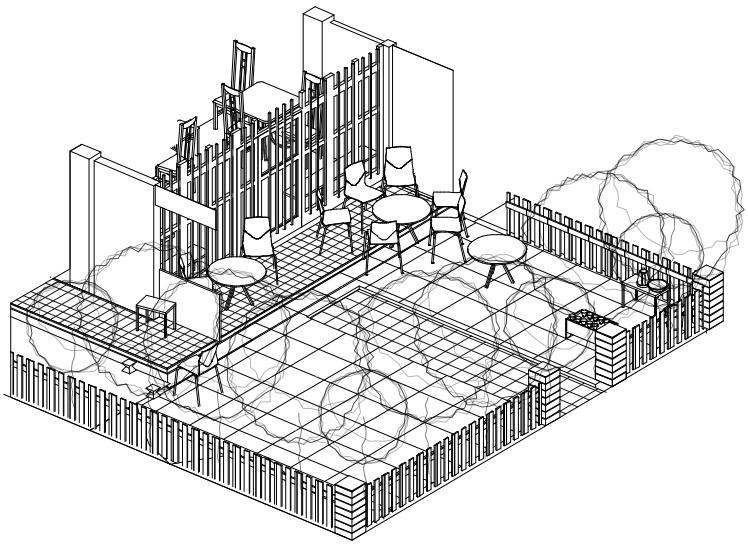

FIG. 6.9 Senait's extension and claim of the gibi in the condominium.

419 See transformation diagram of the two dwellings in section 5.1

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The extension figure is mostly used in housing transformations associated with the gwada. It is used either to add a bedroom or a kitchen space to the dwelling, thereby reconfiguring its privacy conditions. Lower impact transformations such as reconfiguring walls that were recorded in the study took place in the planned housing conditions namely the condominium while the most radical extensions took place in the non-planned housing conditions. The construction of the *qot* in the case of the Indigenous neighbourhood of kechene at Kindus is the most radical while the *qot*, as well as the structural extension made by Aisha in the extra-legal neighbourhoods of Lomi Meda, was quite significant. Both these extensions occurred in a context where the plot was limited and did not support further horizontal growth. Both cases were trying to multiply the gwada as a private sleeping space since the space at the ground level did not accommodate family members and occasional guests.

6.3.3 The addition figure

Housing additions are applied by dwellers when land is somewhat available and tenure conditions allow additions. Compared with the extension figure, the addition figure is a high investment endeavour since a new dwelling structure is built from scratch. Both the planned and non-planned conditions have witnessed such new structures depending on the available space and the diverse variables at play in the specific context. This figure requires dwellers to process strategic spatial design decisions of where and how to place a structure in the gibi. Whether to place the new figure at the edge of the plot and go for the service quarter typology or whether to detach it from the borders and create a gwaro is then dependent on the dweller's particular needs.

Similar to the extension figure, employing the "addition figure" in the nonplanned housing conditions is a complex venture as it is deemed illegal by state authorities. However, this has been observed in Kechene, when Timnit added a new block, in her sub-gibi. A detailed process of how this was made possible was not revealed by Timnit and I have also decided not to dig further into the matter.

In a nonplanned context, an extraordinary case of the sefer upgrading scheme of Menen is the addition of a two-story structure. The block was built from a eucalyptus structure, wattle and daub walls and corrugated iron sheet roofing. The proportion of the addition and some of the architectural features like the external stair seem to have been inspired by the existing formally upgraded blocks of the residents. This addition is realized by the combined effort of the residents involving local unskilled labour and skilled carpenters but without the involvement of architects or engineers. The placement of this addition in the gibi follows the building lines of existing blocks, respects the communal spaces, and is made in such a way that future additions can be implemented when they are found necessary.[420] The physical and spatial structure is complex and well thought out and it is quite extraordinary that it was conceived without the involvement of professionals. One gwada (kitchen) and a bedroom (usually for income generation) belong to each unit making the number of units to be six. The Lemmas have explained how this addition was permitted under the guise of a temporary structure.[421]

420 Check the key image in the Addendum on page **XLVI**
421 See Chapter Four section 4.2

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The addition figure in the case of the planned dwellings usually transitions from the wattle and daub construction to a concrete block dwelling without significant changes in spatial configuration. This transition follows the gradual increase in income. The construction scheme is a conventional single-storey concrete frame structure with hollow concrete wall infills or sometimes with load-bearing hollow concrete block walls. Like the extension figure, it has a stone and concrete strip foundation. The block work requires a grade beam at the ground level and a top tie beam at the roof level, where the eucalyptus-trussed roof rests. The addition of new structures did not occur in the condominium developments due to the tenure conditions and strict building regulations.

The service quarter is a dominant typology within the genre of the addition figure in plot-based planned dwellings. According to responses from expert interviews, the terminology is derived from "servants' quarters" and is currently a popular housing figure in Addis Ababa. As it was witnessed in the development of Kuteba Seferë Fikir, dwellers prefer to have a detached house at the back of their plot whenever there is land where they could construct. This is irrespective of economic status. Low and middle-income dwellers want this to house their gwada or sublet it while high-income dwellers want to dedicate it for the gwada as well as for housing house helps such as the cooks and babysitters. The addition figure follows this logic rather than the logic of incremental growth that was laid by the designers in Kuteba Seferë Fikir.

The addition approach requires the presence of a gibi, whether in non-planned or planned dwellings. A defined gibi, regardless of its legal status, is necessary before residents are willing to take the risk. In non-planned dwellings, three out of six cases (50%) employed this approach whenever a secured and privatized gibi was available, irrespective of tenure. In planned dwellings, seven out of twelve cases (58%), excluding the condominium dwellings, used the addition approach.

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6.4 Synthesis of Findings

As suggested by precedent literature, dweller-initiated transformations are found to be ideal solutions for housing inadequacy, for improving the income of dwellers and for fulfilling unmet social and cultural requirements. I have aimed to explore how dweller-initiated transformations could shed light on both fundamental and evolving dwelling practices in both planned and unplanned housing settlements. Throughout the study, three malleable spatial terms emerged as significant to residents when discussing these transformations. The terms are Gibi (ግቢ), Gwada (ጓዳ), and Gwaro (ጓሮ). The majority (89%) of the surveyed cases have undergone some sort of dweller-initiated transformations that correlate with these notions of space. This chapter aims to study the temporal aspect of the housing transformations vis-a-vis the gibi, gwada and gwaro. I present below some key findings from this chapter. In the next chapter, I delve further to explore the spatial culture as represented by the gibi, gwada and gwaro.

1 The gibi is an important element for security and privacy for the majority of the dwellers. moreover, its presence enables income-generation activities regardless of whether the housing settlement is planned or nonplanned.

2 Privacy, as related to the gibi, gwaro and gwada, emerges as a vital aspect in dwelling practices such as cooking in both nonplanned and planned dwelling contexts. All nonplanned dwellings underwent privacy-enhancing transformations compared to 67% of planned dwellings. Residents in nonplanned housing needed to devise solutions to address the lower room-to-person ratio. They also had to creatively incorporate private gwada for cooking and additional habitable spaces for bedrooms.

3 When it comes to habitable space, nonplanned dwellings have exhibited a higher percentage of an average increase in habitable space while planned dwellings showed significantly lower figures. Planned dwellings have added more space in absolute values but less in comparison to what they originally had. Nonplanned dwellings have added habitable space by expanding and adding on commonly owned or stated-owned gibi suggesting that their tenure status did not stop them from adding vital habitable space.

4 Planned dwellings, except condominiums, have demonstrated significantly greater adaptability for income generation compared to nonplanned dwellings. This adaptability is linked to the presence of a designated gibi, which offers a degree of private use regardless of the dwelling's tenure status. Subletting is the most common type of income-generating activity and residents prefer to have their tenants in the gwaro.

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7 The Gibi, the Gwaro and the Gwada

In Chapters Four and Five, the concepts of gibi, gwaro, and gwada are presented through the voices of dwellers. The cognition of dwellers of the spaces represented by these terminologies and their significance for the utilization of dwelling practices is given priority and emphasis.

Chapter Six proceeds to compare the meaning and significance of the gibi, gwada and gwaro in nine mutually exclusive typo morphological settings through the lenses of temporality in dwelling practices. The analysis in Chapter Six is diachronic, highlighting their significance in the process of dweller-initiated transformations. In contrast to the previous chapters, this chapter investigates the gibi, gwaro and gwada from the perspective of the socio-spatial. I discuss meanings, physical and spatial manifestations, and temporal characteristics, building on arguments and findings from the preceding chapters. I will propose redefinitions of these spatial terminologies at the end of each subsection.

7.1 Spatial notions

To understand the social and spatial practices of dwelling in Addis Ababa, I constructed a framework using two domains of theoretical references. The first domain draws from the corpus of scholarship on **alternative epistemologies** of the global south. This includes Boaventura de Sousa Santos's views on the hegemony of knowledge, and Achille Mbembe and Nguigi wa Thiong'o's work on decolonizing knowledge and the role of linguistics. Jan Vansina contributes the use of oral tradition as a method, particularly in the sub-Saharan context. Additionally, I see Nnamdi Elleh's elaboration of the *Oka'*, premised on an alternative episteme of oral history and performance, as one demonstration of bringing Indigenous spatial knowledge to the fore.[422]

The second domain is anchored on the **socio-spatial frame**. It draws from the works of Rapoport, bringing culture into the discussion of built form/space and culminates in Lefebvre's works, positing space production as a dynamic process proposing a triadic model of understanding space. Here Lefebvre's "spatial practices" or "life as perceived" is one of the three triadic models that tries to unpack the social and spatial patterns of people in the setting of the everyday.[423] Delving further into the "everyday", Michel de Certeau's work elaborates on everyday practices from the perspective of the ordinary individual, linking stories with spaces.[424]

422 Nnamdi Elleh, "African Studies Keyword: Okà," *African Studies Review* 65, no. 3 (September 2022): 717–42, https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2022.87.
423 Henri Le febvre, in *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 30–33.
424 see Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press. Ltd, 1988), 115–30.

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Aligned with this is the interpretation of patterns, hinged on the works of Alexander Christopher, Edward T Hall and the Anthropological theories of Seta Low. While most of these works focus on the meta-level of space-making in the domain of culture, Alexanders' 253 sets of patterns are vividly presented as a design tool marrying human behaviour with space-making.[425]

I single out and discuss some of these patterns to create parallels to spatial conditions in Addis Ababa that I bring forth as socio-spatial patterns. This is in cognizance of the shortcomings of the claim of universality in the *Pattern Language* of Christopher Alexander [426]

It would be totalizing to theorize on nationwide socio-spatial patterns in Ethiopia because of the diverse socio-cultural realities present in the nation. Nevertheless, Addis Ababa stands out as a unique case representing culturally rooted socio-spatial patterns in the nation at large coalesced with modernist planned ones. At the urban scale, layers of formal planning operations have fused with Indigenous settlement patterns, Which Elias terms "a collage of cities"[427]. Zooming in beyond this "collage", I argue that one would find an underlying pattern of space-making at the dwelling scale, which also contributes to the making of the larger "collage" that Elias describes.

The terms gibi, gwada and gwaro, besides being used as justification for housing transformations, are used as descriptive spatial terminologies when residents narrate their domestic sphere. The descriptions are practice-heavy, i.e., dwellers prefer to describe them through the socio-spatial practices that take place rather than from a purely typological perspective. In line with Iain Low's take on this, one of the distinct features of "African architecture" (particularly within the domain of the vernacular), is the dweller's control over the production of shelter.[428] This fact, coupled with temporalities evident in traditional settlements has resulted in a general emphasis of "social practices over that of physical form".[429] In this spirit, the gibi, gwaro and gwada are socio-spatial notions of space that enable social practices to occur. It would indeed be easier to articulate these through the form of practice rather than through spatial form.

I present the gibi, gwada and gwaro as culturally rooted **spatial notions** and individually frame them as a spatial repertoire encapsulating distilled cultural values within practices of dwelling in Addis Ababa[430]. While their origins predate the city's creation, these spatial conditions have played a critical role in its development and have evolved alongside it for the past 135 years. To break simplistic understandings, I use "the compound", "the backyard" and "the bedroom" in the titles below, as reference concepts to emphasize that the gibi, gwada and gwaro transcend the meanings in English that these concepts stand for when direct translations are made from Tigrigna or Amharic.

425 Alexander Christopher, Sara Ishikawa, and Murray Silverstein, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, vol. 2, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
426 Details of this argument are discussed in Chapter Two.
427 Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu, "Addis Ababa: A Collage of Cities," in *The Transformation of Addis Ababa: A Multiform African City*, ed. Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu and Laura Stark (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 21–76.
428 Low, "Seeing South:'African' Architecture and Spatial Justice."
429 Low.
430 The gibi, gwada and gwaro are also meaningful to some other regions in Ethiopia and not unique to Addis Ababa.

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7.2 The Gibi Beyond the Compound

The Gibi traces its roots to a northern Ethiopian culture, a culture that values landholding and land ownership. Its meaning has evolved from the notion of being a large enclosure at the scale of a city, a monastery, or a palace into the scale of a compound.[431] In the cases that have been surveyed, multiple understandings of its meaning exist. Almost all residents have defined or perceive their gibi in terms of space bounded by material borders, fences or building enclosures. Within this classification of space, the vast majority read it as the space that they can use beyond the indoor dwelling space and in extension to it. Whereas some include everything that they consider they own including the footprint of the built mass. In contrast to these understandings, some perceive the gibi as an ensemble of the space inclusive of the material i.e. the defined space including the fence (container). From the standpoint of dwellers, the two ways of defining the gibi are centered on the use of space (appropriation) or ownership.

In terms of spatial manifestations, the gibi has multitudes of existence and is dependent on dwelling conditions. The gibi's in Indigenous dwelling settlements of the sefers tends to have a fluid definition. They are irregular and diverse in their physical characteristics and show "tightly knit social relationships".[432] This characteristic is a consequence of the land nationalization in 1974 after the revolution. In contrast, planned dwelling settlements have a more regularized pattern and are usually well-maintained and made to be habitable when they are privatized.[433]

Gibi's in the condominiums are elusive. Dwellers have varied opinions defined from the perspective of what they consider as their own, which depends on their specific locations and the social dynamics in the condominiums. The individual labelling of the gibi depends on the gradient of ownership, and the extent of appropriation and use. From a managerial point of view, the owner's association might define the gibi based on fenced areas, while dwellers may have alternative views. This illustrates that the gibi represents much more than just the open space in the condominiums.

As far as ownership conditions are concerned, the gibi exists in three tenure states; private ownership, state ownership and cooperative ownership. The privacy parameters of the gibi is directly influenced by the ownership conditions. The privately owned gibi is privately used, the state-owned gibi is used both privately and shared while the cooperatively owned gibi is used in a shared manner. The kebele-owned gibis in the Indigenous settlements of the sefer have the most vivid sharing characteristics when compared with other shared gibis.[434] In Chapters Four, Five and Six, I have elucidated the dependence of meanings attached to the gibi based on ownership and tenure conditions. The fact that dwellers give priority to marking their territory during housing transformations when the gibi is not certain or when conditions to expand territory are ripe makes the gibi a temporal entity. The temporality of the gibi exists in both planned and nonplanned dwelling contexts. It has been shown that the ultimate goal of dwellers in both contexts is to achieve full and private ownership and attain a strict level of physical definition (even when full ownership is not possible). In addition, the continuous drive to expand the gibi is visible in cases where this goal has been achieved. It is a pattern that dwellers continue to encroach on the public right of way of arterial streets by defining a strip of space outside the gibi as a buffer between their gibi and the street. A pretext to later softly claim and annex land.

431 Historical precedents of the gibi and its spatial interpretations are discussed in the Introduction.
432 see Anteneh Tesfaye Tola, "Addis Ababa's Sefer, Iddir, and Gebbi: Nuanced Reading of Complex Urban Forms," *A+BE | Architecture and the Built Environment*, no. 14 (September 20, 2023): 306–7, https://doi.org/10.7480/abe.2023.14.7168.
433 Privatization suggests delineation and private use of the gibi regardless of tenure.
434 For detailed characteristics of the shared gibi, see Tola, "Addis Ababa's Sefer, Iddir, and Gebbi."

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As Chapter Six illustrates, the gibi has temporal dimensions and is influenced by the economic, cultural and functional dimensions of dwelling practices. Its existence in multiple physical and non-physical forms makes it dependent on spatial cognition, which is dependent on ownership status and gradient of space. Its significance in dwelling stems from the fact that it is a crucial space for conducting dwelling practices, often blurring the dichotomy of indoor and outdoor space and enabling dwellers to modify, upgrade and multiply their habitable space whenever possible. The study reveals that the gibi is a spatial condition much more than a mere compound—Which would have been the closest translation in the English Language.

7.3 The Gwaro beyond the backyard

The gwaro is a private zone within the gibi; an outside space that is typically located at the opposite end of the main entrance to the gibi. Just like the gibi, it originates from northern Ethiopia where it is sometimes designated as a space for livestock in rural and semi-urban settings.[435] In the context of dwellings in Addis Ababa, this space has evolved into a working space dedicated to vegetable gardening or for stowaway storage. Programs that households prefer to conceal. It is also sometimes perceived by the dwellers as a 'reserve space' for future expansion. The gwaro is predominantly understood as a portion of the gibi that is deemed private. It is a space that can easily pass as the backyard due to its usual location at the back end of the house. However, it is also often located on multiple sides of the dwelling. The gwaro is also understood as a zone of concealed or indirect access into the gibi. This access might connect to the property of close neighbours or a secondary access into a side road.

In the most ideal situation, the gwaro is dependent on the gibi for its existence as it is an outdoor space. It is found to be more elusive than the gibi because it is an organic zone that exists within the gibi. It is seldom physically delineated although there are situations when this happens.[436] In this study, this stereotypical association with the gibi has been challenged by cases in the condominium developments, demonstrating that it can exist physically disassociated from the gibi according to the resident's perspective. In this case, its privacy is compromised, as it is situated in the public domain, but more appropriated by the dwelling due to proximity, visual control and more importantly the dwelling practices that take place.

Like the gibi, the gwaro manifests in a multitude of forms of use. Typically owing its spatial definition to the formation of a gibi, its spatial extents are shaped in between physical structures within the gibi or sometimes the larger compound (as is the case in the condominium settings where the gwaro is detached from the gibi). The gwaro, in its pure form, is between the main house and the service quarter, or between a built structure in the gibi and a border condition either at the back, at the side, or even sometimes at the front. Using these parameters for its formation, the gwaro serves the dwelling as a stowaway storage, as a vegetable garden or as a temporal space that accommodates future incremental growth.

435 Nobuhiro Shimizu et al., "Fundamentals of Hidmo in Lnderta: A Traditional House Type in Tigray Region, Ethiopia," *Nilo-Ethiopian Studies*, no. 24 (2019): 17–30, https://www.janestudies.org/.
436 See Section 5.3 in Chapter Five.

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The gwaros' use and state of being is influenced more by spatial conditions than by tenure and ownership conditions. Dwellers prefer to designate their gwaro in a private or semi-private niche regardless of tenure conditions whenever conditions of appropriating space exist. However, this is more visible in privately owned or privatized gibi where there is more direct influence by the dwellers. Private gwaro serve as storage spaces while in shared gwaro, the program is less storage but more for cloth drying, gardening, and sanitary facilities such as handwashing or dishwashing. There are also instances in kebele-owned properties where it is used as an open toilet in cases where sanitary facilities are not available.

The gwaro is the most transient and mobile definition of space with minimum spatial requirements other than its relative privacy, and proximity. Gwaro that exist behind the main house and that later accommodate incremental development such as houses-to-let, change their privacy settings and start to function like a gibi under the new set of reality in the dwelling context. However, they still maintain the spatial attributes of the gwaro to the outsider or the guest while they serve as the gibi for the tenants residing in the house. The gwaro, as a private zone within the outdoor realm of dwelling, is a spatial condition that is crucial to the dwelling practices in Addis Ababa where the outdoor space serves as an extension of the indoor habitable space.

7.4 The Gwada beyond the kitchen and the bedroom

The Gwada is defined by dwellers as a space or group of spaces characterized by utmost indoor privacy. The space that residents define as the gwada differs depending on sensitivities towards privacy and the type of dwelling. Some dwellers consider the kitchen and the master bedroom as being a gwada while others only consider the master bedroom or all bedrooms collectively. Unlike the gibi and gwaro, the gwada is an indoor area within the dwelling. It is usually a physically defined room, such as a kitchen, bedroom, or storeroom. When these rooms meet the dweller's privacy needs, minimal or no privacy alternations are necessary. If they do not, the gwada is created either through light interventions, such as the curtains or by adding or extending a full-fledged space.[437]

As stated above, the gwada exists as a singular space(room) or constellation of spaces in a dwelling. In this study, although many of the dwellings considered the bedroom as their gwada, a significant portion also considered the kitchen as their gwada suggesting the importance of privacy in both realms. This makes the notion of the gwada crucial in the overall spatial structure of the dwelling. Here, the gwada recalls the "Intimacy Gradient", one of Christopher Alexander's 253 patterns. Alexander emphasizes the importance of the "intimacy gradient", in building design, particularly for dwellings, where spaces transition from the entrance and public areas to the most private quarter.[438] Alexander promotes the bedroom as the most private space, considering it a universally applicable pattern, but this overlooks variations of this pattern in

437 See section 6.3.3 for details
438 see Christopher, Ishikawa, and Silverstein, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, 2:610–13.

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non-Western cultures.[439] Nonetheless the concept of the "intimacy gradient" is indeed a notion that resonates with the gwada. The fundamental difference would be that the gwada represents a specific set of spaces that are defined as the gwada based on the preferences of the household in line with the dwelling practices that take place.

Unlike the gibi and the gwaro, the state of the gwada is usually more concretely present. Both planned and nonplanned dwellings start with either a one-room or two-room unit. The redefinition of gwada is then dependent on the housing design or more precisely on the flexibility of the housing condition when it goes through stages of transformation. The religion of the dwellers and their cultural background is the underlying impetus, making the state of the gwada dependent on viewpoints of what one deems private or hidden. An interesting encounter with one of the dwellers is expressional when describing why his family do not have a gwada.[440] His response was: "We are from Harar, and we have nothing to hide".[441] This has influenced the transformation of the dwelling in such a way that they opted for a courtyard development avoiding any gwaro or gwada.

Temporal conditions in the gwada derive from changing privacy conditions or changing demographic conditions. An ideal case to illustrate this is the basic intervention of dividing a room with a curtain to create a gwada, kitchen or bedroom, from the non-gwada or the *salon*, sitting room or bedroom. When space is available in the gwaro, the kitchen-gwada is another temporal structure that is easily assembled and set up with simple structures in cases where there is a need to make a distinction between kitchen-gwada for multiple users (tenants or extended family members) within the same household.[442]

The gwada is very malleable in its physical definition and program. The findings in the study suggest that it is mostly the bedrooms and the kitchen that fall within the spatial umbrella of the gwada. However, it can also encompass other private dwelling spaces, such as a storage room or prayer room, specific to each household. I define the gwada as a prominent spatial condition in dwelling spaces. Its existence varies based on personal privacy preferences and cultural backgrounds. I present the gwada as a fundamental element in the dwelling landscape of Addis Ababa.

The "gwada of the family" is an expression that is sometimes used to express the insides of a family or the innermost secrets that are not shared with outsiders. I quote Nnamdi Elleh below to illustrate a similarity of this concept in the context of the Èkpèyè kitchen in the Biafra region of Nigeria:

The most important function of the kitchen can be discerned from its name, the House of Talk (udho okwu). It is the center of the family's nourishment and the space where the nuclear family held its most intimate discussions. Metaphorically, nuclear families wanted to put a situation in a pot, cover it with a lid, and put it away in a corner on the shelf to avoid its migrating to the uluu where it would become the business of the extended family.[443]

439 Christopher discusses the Peruvian *sala*. He also mentions the "African Compound", "Japanese House", and "American Colonial Homes" as examples but fails to capture the cultural nuances behind these, focusing on the pattern that he culturally relates with.
440 Elaborated in Chapter Five Section 5.3
441 A region in the eastern part of Ethiopia that is known for its 'easy-going' urban culture.
442 "kitchen-Gwada" is used here to denote a common typology of Gwada that serves as a detached kitchen usually for baking *injera* and traditional bread. It is usually built from temporary structures and gets replaced by more permanent structure such as the "Service Quarter" in due time. See Chapter Six on the temporality of the "Kitchen-Gwada" and the "Service Quarter".
443 Elleh, "African Studies Keyword."

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Conclusion and Recommendation

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8 Conclusion

In concluding this dissertation, I revisit the hypothesis and emphasise how analysing the scope and nature of self-initiated dwelling transformations has proven to be an effective method for understanding and illustrating core dwelling practices in both planned and unplanned settlements in Addis Ababa. These practices are embodied in the concepts of gibi, gwaro and gwada, which I propose as valuable elements of dwelling design in the city. Although these spatial terms are nebulous, the findings of this study contribute to the ongoing effort to critically conceptualise local terminologies that have been largely overlooked in formal architectural discourse. While these are essential components, they are not exhaustive, and further research is needed to explore additional elements and establish connections with them.

The study lays a crucial foundation for future research on dwelling, dwelling culture, and settlement patterns in Addis Ababa, with potential applications in other regions of Ethiopia that share similar socio-spatial contexts. Below, I will summarise the scientific contributions of this study to dwelling discourse, its impact on pedagogy and praxis, and the methodological insights gained throughout the research process.

8.1 Acknowledging socio-spatial patterns

The primary goal of this study is to explore the housing mismatch created by modernist housing approaches by examining dweller-initiated transformations through the lens of the concepts of gibi, gwaro, and gwada—socio-spatial notions of space that emerged as significant. Since these concepts lacked clear theoretical framing, an equally important parallel objective was to define their meanings, patterns, and manifestations within the context of dwelling. I have used these notions both as subjects of inquiry and as tools to understand the nature of dweller-initiated transformations.

As suggested by existing literature, housing transformations are ideal solutions to address housing inadequacies and improve residents' incomes. A significant portion of the studied cases (89 percent) underwent some form of transformation over time. Moreover, these transformations are closely intertwined with the socio-spatial notions of gibi, gwaro, and gwada within domestic spaces. The ethnographic research revealed that these concepts hold deep significance for over 85 percent of the residents surveyed.

These notions are directly linked to both eminent and transient dwelling practices across the nine housing conditions surveyed. While they do not exist in the formal vocabulary of modern housing design, they are implicitly present in both planned and unplanned settlements. All eighteen cases identified the concept of the gibi as an important element of dwelling. In plot-based developments, it was physically evident, while in block-based developments, it was more imagined or intangible. 78 percent of the cases identified a gwaro in their homes, and 84 percent recognized the presence of a gwada and its associated privacy layer.

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As discussed in earlier chapters, the evidence shows that the gibi is associated with notions of territoriality, security, income generation, and habitable space (both indoor and outdoor). The gwaro is primarily linked to income generation and privacy, while the gwada is related to privacy, religious practices, and habitable space. The findings also indicate that these socio-spatial concepts are in a state of flux, gradually evolving as living conditions change. Residents have redefined and reimagined these notions, even within the constraints of condominium blocks, demonstrating their resilience and adaptability to non-traditional environments. While this highlights the importance of these socio-spatial concepts in both traditional and modern settlements, they have yet to be formally integrated into the housing discourse.

I argue that in the absence of a critical synthesis between traditional and modern housing approaches, the concepts of gibi, gwaro, and gwada hold the potential to bridge the gap between modern needs and traditional practices. Therefore, I recommend their incorporation into both housing values and architectural terminology. The strong correlation between socio-spatial concepts and dweller-initiated transformations underscores the significant influence that traditional practices have on housing modifications. Furthermore, it reveals how these concepts encapsulate practical elements such as habitable space, income generation, and security, alongside cultural aspects like religion and privacy.

In addition to contributing to local academic research, this study also offers insights into how architecture in 'Africa' can be rethought and reimagined based on indigenous concepts and language. [444] This I believe can extend to other regions of the global south.

8.2 Methodological learning

The use of architectural ethnography as the primary methodological approach for understanding dwelling practices has provided valuable insights into the cultural dimensions of housing within both planned and unplanned settlements in Addis Ababa. Building on prior experience with the method in architectural education, particularly at the TU Delft Global Housing Group, this study demonstrates how surveying social and spatial practices through architectural ethnography is an effective tool for informing housing design. In this context, architectural ethnography is defined as a set of sub-methods and techniques, including architectural and photographic surveys, alongside what I term "performative observation." This approach, particularly the spatial analysis combined with performative observation—where active dialogue with residents during daily household activities is central—has revealed subtle uses of domestic space. By pairing architectural ethnography with spatial analysis techniques, hidden dimensions of spatial perception, especially the concepts of the gibi, gwaro, and gwada, have been uncovered.

444 Adil Dalbai, Livingstone Musaka, and Philipp Meuser, "Towards a Theory of African Architecture," in *Architectural Guide. Sub-Saharan Africa. Volume 1, Introduction to the History and Theory of Sub-Saharan Architecture*, ed. Philipp Meuser and Adil Dalbai, vol. 1, 3 vols., Architectural Guide Sub-Saharan Africa (Berlin: DOM, 2021), 149–55.

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Lefebvre formulates how the spatial practices of society are explained through decoding its spaces.[445] As a research model, architectural ethnography expounds this theoretical construct towards a viable methodology fit to explore the built fabric vis a vis socio-spatial practices. In this study, the use of architectural ethnography as a research method is primarily applied as architectural research borrowing methods and techniques usually employed in anthropology. But it goes beyond what Tim Ingold [446] described as 'ethnography for architects' or 'anthropology of architecture'. Rather, the school of thought framing this research method is positioned as constructivist in perspective whereby the performative observation brings negotiated meanings to the fore.[447] The voice of the dwellers partly constructs the socio-spatial narrative of the dwelling in conjunction with the architectural readings.

Methods such as textual analysis of transcribed interviews, architectural mapping, photo collages, and comparative analysis are used to process findings within the architectural ethnography framework. Comparative analysis has proven effective in creating a comprehensive understanding of the varied housing conditions under study, while photo collages offer an artistic and visual synthesis of findings, complementing architectural readings with interpretive images that communicate beyond the domain of architecture.

This research model holds potential for applications in fields like housing studies, housing design, policymaking, or any research setting where the social (human) and physical (artifact) intersect. The eclectic range of methods within architectural ethnography highlights how this hybrid approach excels in reading complex socio-spatial environments like urban settlements, where the creation and evolution of physical spaces are intertwined with social and design decisions. By drawing on the social insights of anthropology and the analytical tools of architecture, it effectively navigates these complex contexts.

The interdisciplinary benefits of this methodological partnership between architecture and anthropology are significant. [448] While past reflections on collaborations between the two fields have leaned toward anthropology, this study broadens the scholarly dialogue by demonstrating how architectural ethnography can be applied in studies where space and architecture are central units of analysis. It thus offers valuable contributions to future research at the intersection of social and spatial inquiry.

445 Henri Lefebvre, in *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 38.
446 "Foreword," in *Architectural Anthropology: Exploring Lived Space*, ed. Marie Stender, Claus Bech-Danielson, and Aina Landsverk Hagen, 1st edition (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2021), xiii–xvii.
447 Linda N. Groat, "Chapter 3 Systems of Inquiry and Standards of Research Quality," in *Architectural Research Methods.*, ed. Linda N. Groat and David Wang, Second edition / (Hoboken: Wiley, 2013), 87, http://www.123library.org/book_details/?id=97247.
448 See Marie Stender, "Towards an Architectural Anthropology—What Architects Can Learn from Anthropology and Vice Versa," *Architectural Theory Review* 21, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 32, https://doi.org/10.1080/13264826.2016.1256333.

8.3 Revisions in pedagogy, praxis and policy

Throughout the history of the architectural profession, and in current educational paradigms, little emphasis has been placed on understanding architecture through the lens of "traditional social values".[449] The prevailing ideology of modernism, which still underpins the philosophy of most architectural schools, is too deeply rooted in positivism, idealism, and rationalism to effectively address the cultural patterns and traditions of society.[450] Dennis Mann highlighted this issue in his critique of 1980s pedagogy, but the dominance of the modernist narrative persists today. However, since the emergence of decolonial discourse in the 1990s, there has been a growing awareness in architectural design pedagogy, though it has yet to become mainstream.

This study is positioned at the intersection of an intellectual context in Addis Ababa and the experimental design pedagogies explored at TU Delft.[451] The "Global Housing Studios," in their various iterations, have successfully challenged classical architectural methodologies and produced critical projects that espouse the 'social.'[452] *Reconstructing Dwelling* builds on the methodological knowledges[453] in these design studios, integrating further ethnographic tools to offer a comprehensive analysis that unpacks a unique spatial lexicon. This lexicon—rooted in the concepts of the gibi, gwaro, and gwada—has the potential to inspire both academics and students to apply these nuanced findings in their design processes or expand upon them to create a broader and more refined vocabulary. In this way, the study contributes to decolonizing architectural knowledge, or as Achille Mbembe suggests, reckoning with alternative "epistemic traditions." [454]

The study's contribution extends into practice, introducing a powerful design framework that is easily communicable between practising architects and end-users. As observed, the spatial concepts of the gibi, gwaro, and gwada transcend conventional and functional spatial compartmentalization, offering new ways to conceive relationships between spaces that go beyond the ordinary, yet remain deeply rooted in everyday life. By exploring these socio-spatial notions, the research broadens the scholarship on dweller-initiated transformations and challenges the modernist housing solutions that dominate the landscape in Addis Ababa today. It is reasonable to suggest that these concepts should influence policy-making. A careful consideration of ownership, territory, and privacy—attributes encapsulated by the gibi, gwaro, and gwada—could have a profound impact on shaping the future of housing design and policy.

449 Dennis Alan Mann, "Between Traditionalism and Modernism: Approaches to a Vernacular Architecture," *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)* 39, no. 2 (1985): 10–16, https://doi.org/10.2307/1424962.
450 Mann.
451 Details are discussed in the Epilogue.
452 Nelson Mota and Dick van Gameren, "Dwelling with the Other Half: Architectural Education for the Design of Affordable Housing in the Global South.," *Charrette* 5, no. 1 (2018): 33–49.
453 Knowledge in plural form is written here consciously to make a point on the existence of multiple forms of knowledge from varying epistemes following Boaventura de Sousa Santos's argument. See Chapter 2 for details.
454 Achille Mbembe, "Mbembe, Achille. 2015. 'Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive.' Africa Is a Country. | Platform for Experimental Collaborative Ethnography," accessed August 16, 2023, https://worldpece.org/content/mbembe-achille-2015-%E2%80%9Cdecolonizing-knowledge-and-question-archive%E2%80%9D-africa-country.

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Biography

Brook Teklehaimanot Haileselassie

www.brookth.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5924-5315

Biography

Brook Teklehaimanot Haileselassie is an architect and scholar based at the TU Delft. He completed his postgraduate studies at ETH Zurich, focusing on Urban Transformations in Developing Territories. Alongside his teaching and research roles at EiABC, Brook contributed to developing several teaching materials, including the publication *Making* in 2014. He has taught and lectured on design and urbanism at various universities and institutions and served as a guest lecturer and researcher at TU Delft's Global Housing Studio in 2015. Balancing academic and professional work, Brook has worked and consulted at Universal Consultants (Ethiopia), Studio Other Spaces (Germany) and Greystone Developments (USA). Brook founded the architectural design firm BOTA Architectoch in Ethiopia in 2015, winning design competition awards and commissions. His photographic works have been exhibited at the Tel Aviv Museum of Modern Art in the exhibition South of the Sahara: Accelerated Urbanism in Africa. As an architect of record, he has designed several complex projects, such as the Addis Africa International Exhibition and Convention Centre. He has designed and overseen the completion of several housing projects in Addis Ababa and other cities within Ethiopia. He served as the project architect for the SICU, a housing prototype collaboratively built with faculty and students, which earned a bronze award in the 2014 Holcim Awards.

Education

2007 – 2008 The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, ETH Zürich, Switzerland.
Master of Advanced Studies in Architecture (MAS)

2000 – 2006 Addis Ababa University, Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development (EiABC), Bachelor of Science in Architecture and Urban Planning (BSc)
(cum laude graduate)

Architectural Practice (selected)

Embassy of France, Addis Ababa. Residence renovation and facilities expansion for the Embassy of France. Design and construction supervision. [BOTA Architectoch with Warkalab Design Plc]
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [Built, 2023]

Wolkite University master planning project. Master plan and Architectural guidelines for Wolkite University. [BOTA Architectoch with bb22 Architekten and OADUS Architecture and Engineering Plc]
Wolkite, Ethiopia [Design completed in 2021]

TOC

Villa Heineken. Residential villa for Heineken, Ethiopia, country manager's residence. Concept and schematic design. [BOTA Architectoch in partnership with GA collaborative]
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [Built 2020]

Ministry of Defense. Landscape design for the Ministry of Defense grounds. Landscape design and planting schedule in partnership with Sebhatu and Sons PLC. [BOTA Architectoch]
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [Built, 2018]

Repi Public Park – Science and Technology Museum. Landscape design and Architectural Design of the Science and Technology Museum. [Universal Consultants]
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [Design completed in 2016]

Moplaco Apartments. Compact six-storey dwelling design for Moplaco employees. Architect of record for design development and execution phase. [BOTA Architectoch with Aenki Architecture Plc]
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [Built 2015]

Addis Africa International Convention and Exhibition Center (AAICEC). Exhibition, convention and public facilities complex. Architectural and Landscape Design [Universal Consultants]
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [Design 2010 – 2016, Phase I Built]

African Pavilion. Design of the African pavilion in the International Zone of Auroville, including galleries, outdoor spaces, workshops, meeting halls, library and restaurants. The Auroville community and the Auroville Town Development Council accepted the preliminary design, and the project awaits funding.
Auroville, India [Design 2006]

Publications

- Housing Innovation and the Global Foreign Aid Agenda in Addis Ababa (1964-1993). / Mota, Nelson; Haileselassie, B.T. In: Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica, Vol. LVI, No. 165, 2021, p. 128-134.

- 'Resilient Spaces for Reuse and Recycling: The Case of Menalesh Tera, A Theatre of Production. Brook Teklehaimanot Haileselassie, 2021 In: Cities in a Changing World: Questions of Culture, Climate and Design, AMPS proceedings series 24.1., 2021. p. 266-278

- 'Addis Ababa's Sefers: Communities in Transformation. / Tola, A.T.; Haileselassie, B.T. Global Housing: Dwelling in Addis Ababa. ed. / Dick van Gameren; Nelson Mota. Prinsenbeek : Jap Sam Books, 2020. p. 49-68.

- Mickey Leland, Addis Ababa, Housing Development Project Office (HDPO) Brook Teklehaimanot, in: DASH 12/13. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2015. p. 280-289.

- The 'Grand Housing Programme' in Addis Abeba: Interview with Tsedale Mamo. / Haileselassie, BT; Mooij, H.A.F. in: DASH 12/13. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2015. p. 108-114.

- Making: Making at EiABC protoLAB, selected works 2009-2014, Brook Teklehaimanot, Addis Ababa EiABC publication centre, 2014.

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- The SICU experiment (conference proceeding/article), Haileselassie, Brook Teklehaimanot, and Donath, Dirk. SB 13 Cairo Conference, 2012

- Meskel Square: The Urban Theatre (article), Brook Teklehaimanot, in Building Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, EiABC publication centre, 2012. p. 279-283

- Model Making as A Tool: The Addis Ababa city model (article), Brook Teklehaimanot, in Building Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, EiABC publication centre, 2012. p. 238-243

Honours and Awards

- Wolkite University Campus Master Planning Project. 1st prize award in partnership with OADUS and bb22. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [2016]

- AAU – EiABC, Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [2015]

- LafargeHolcim Award (Africa and the Middle East). Bronze award winner, along with the SICU project team as the project architect. Beirut, Lebanon [2014]

- Repi public park competition project. 1st prize winner under Universal Consultants. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [2014]

- Ambassador Garment mixed-use development design competition project. 2nd prize winner under Universal Consultants. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [2012]

- Addis Africa International Convention and Exhibition Center (AAICEC) urban and architectural design competition.1st prize winner under Universal Consultants. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [2012]

- Abyssinia Bank headquarters building competition project. 1st prize winner under Universal Consultants. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [2011]

- Commercial Bank of Ethiopia head office design competition. 1st prize winner under Universal Consultants and Henn Architekten. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [2010]

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Addenda

Addendum I



The Gibis of Kechene





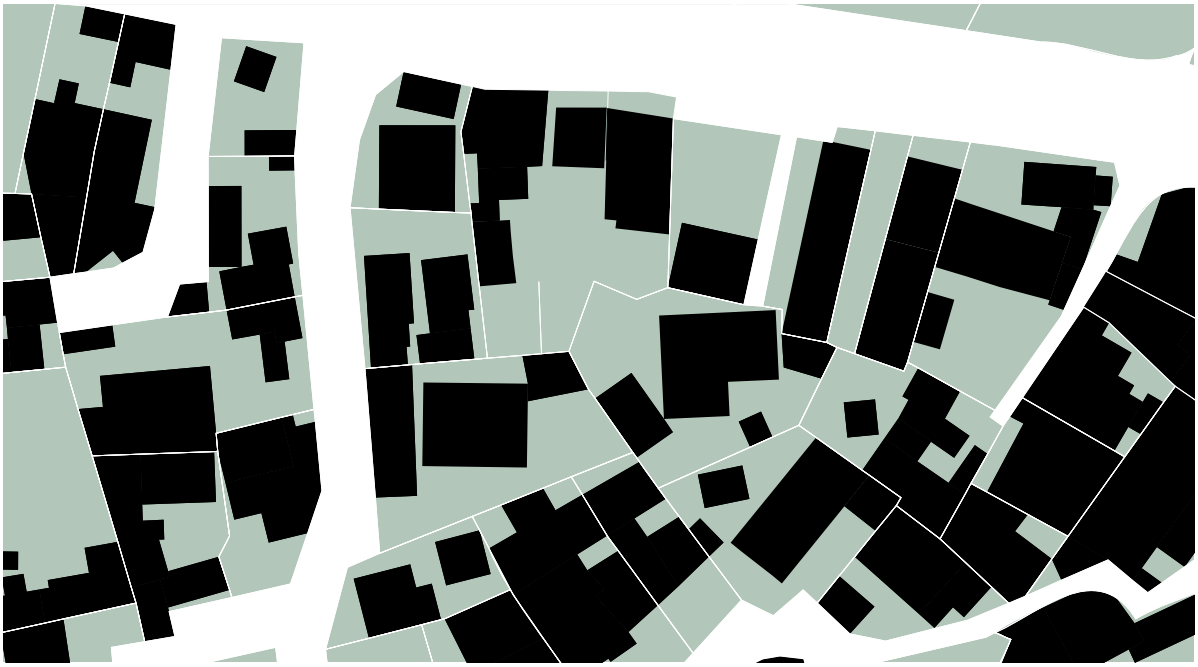
Selected area (2006)



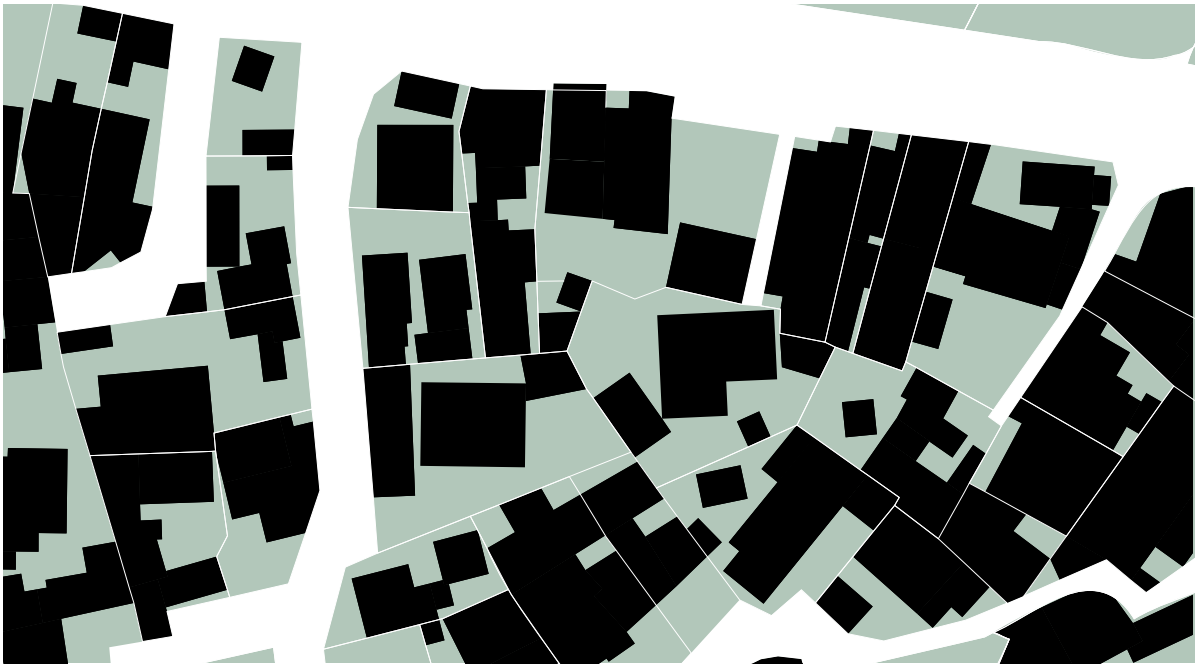
Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selection



Cluster structure_2006_1Ha



Increase in footprint by 2022_ 23.66% in the selected 1Ha area



01



02

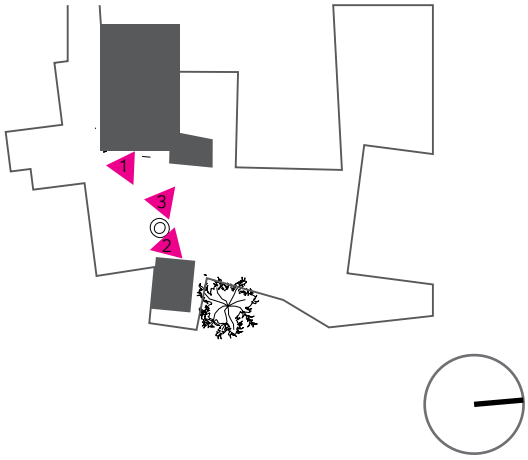


03

01 The shared space hosting a stack of tires for washing clothes on

02 Access to the second compound within the main compound

03 The shared space in use for washing plastic water storage containers. A kitchen coop is also visible in between the house under study and a neighbouring house.





04

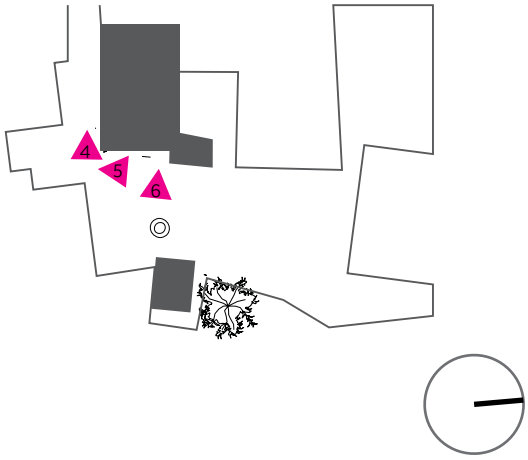


05



06

04 The main access to the shared central space and surrounding houses
05 Communal cooking space, now seldom used
06 Shared water point besides the house under study





X Kechene

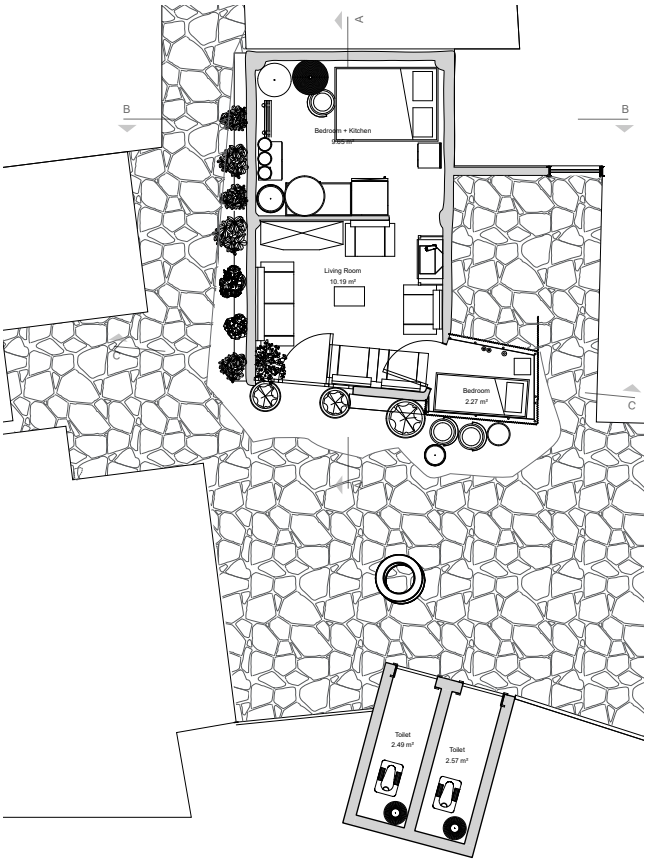
kindu and Amare

The extension was plastered with mud, and we built the house together with the community here. All our neighbours helped. The children in our house along with the neighbours were all involved. There is not a single person who didn't pitch in with some sort of help, be it throwing blobs of mud onto the wall, or lending us their buckets to carry it. Everyone contributed.

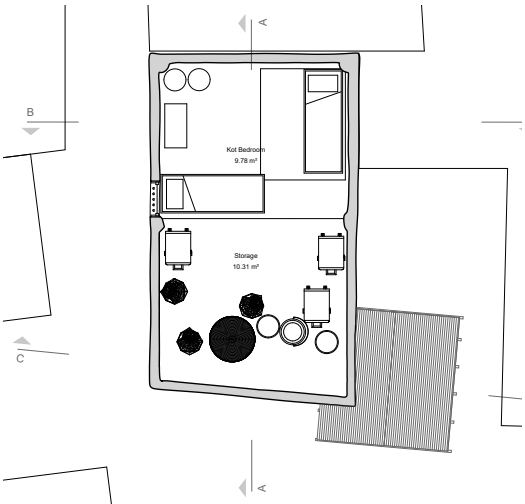
A model for cohabitation



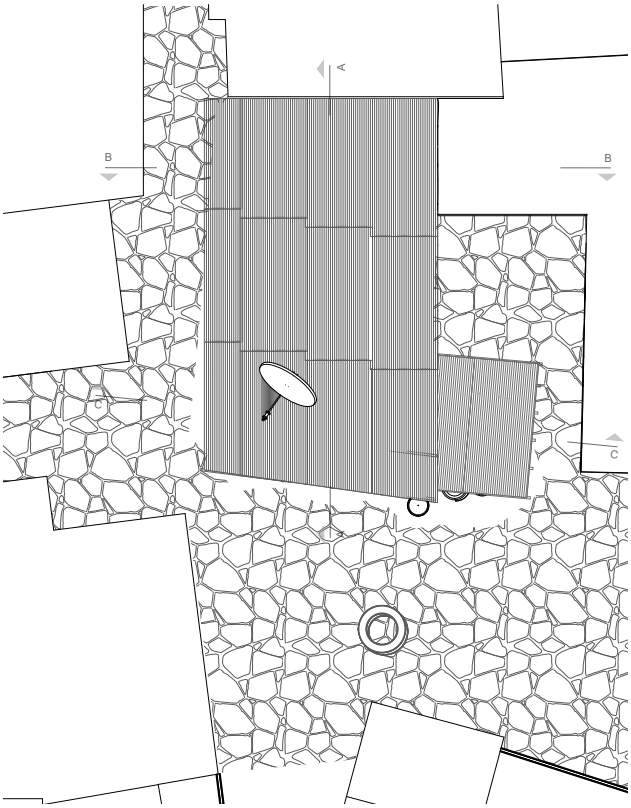
Plans



Ground floor plan



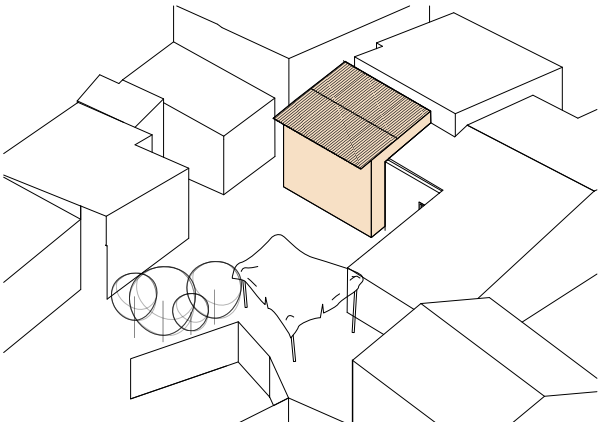
Qot level plan



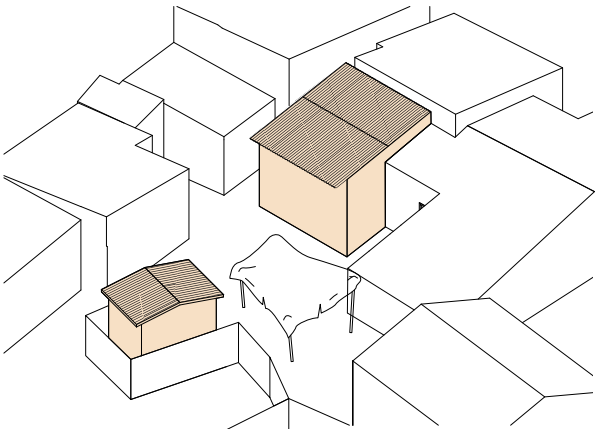
Roof plan



Dwelling transformation

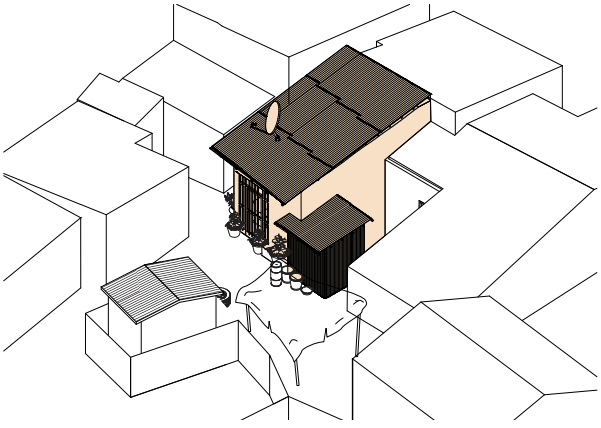


01 Original state

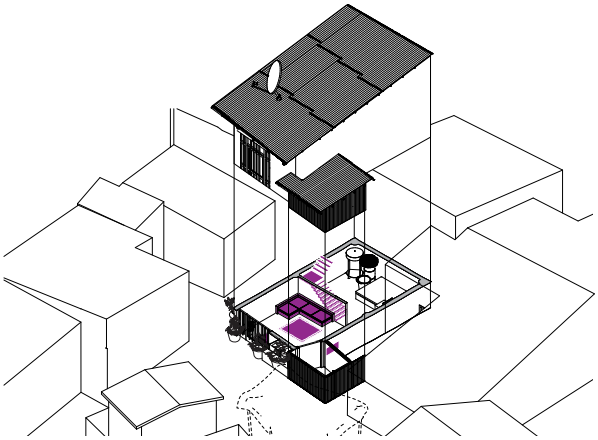


02. ~1990 E.C_The shared toilet was constructed by an NGO

03. ~2005 E.C_Transformed into a house with 2 rooms+ Qot



04. 2015 E.C_Current setup constructed

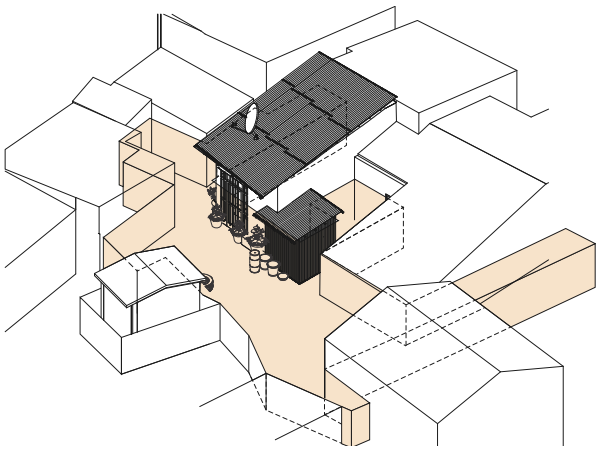


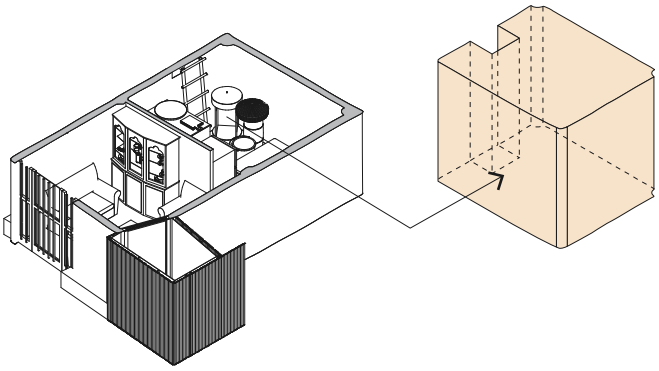
05. Desired future scenario

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Amare and his family share a gibi with other 11 households. Their Gibi is a typical sefer gibi that was formed as the result of the land nationalization proclamation of 1974. The Gibi has two accesses with one of them being gated. Amare would have chosen both accesses to be controlled but this is not possible due to the housing facing the main street needing access to the gibi space and the common spaces within the gibi court.



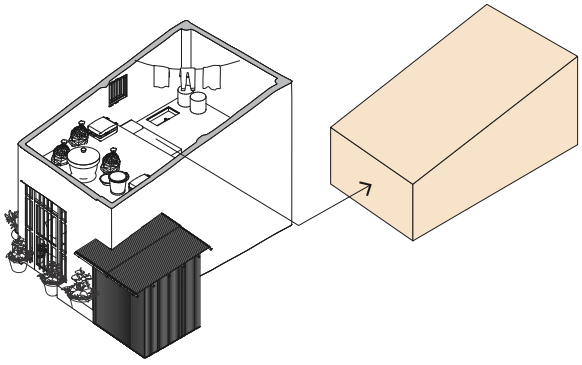


The Gwada

For Amare, the Gwada is the master bedroom and the kitchen. One of the first transformations made to the house was the creation of the gwada to bring a sense of privacy and functional convenience. For Amare's family, the gwada is the most private space only reserved for the family.

The Gwaro

Kindu and his family do not have a personalized Gwaro as they live in a common compound. Amare believes that they used to have a common gwaro that was used as a space for storage and a playing area for the kids. Now that space has been overtaken over by another extension within their compound.





01



02

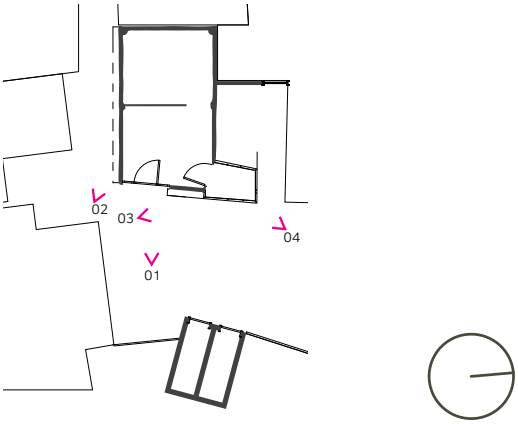


03



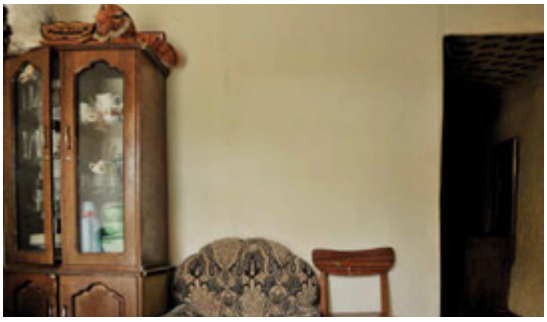
04

01 Front view of the house under study facing the shared space
02 Recycled plastic planters and small windows line the side facing the access street
03 View of the outdoor working space besides the shared water point
04 The additional bedroom for the owner of the house and a storage space owned by their neighbour are seen here in grey and appear to be one building.





05



06



07



08



09

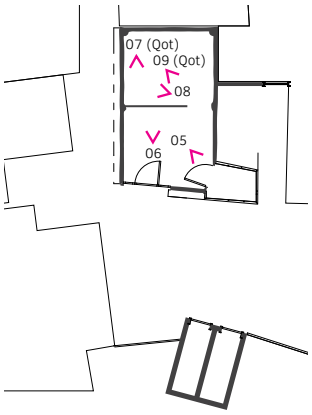
05 The newly added sleeping space by the corner, the only room with a door in the house. Above the door are portraits of the owners of the house accompanied by a religious icon.

06 The buffet, both storage space and display, sits in the living room besides the sofa and not too far from the access to the Bedroom + Kitchen

07 Sleeping space + storage space on the Qot

08 The ladder to the Qot is placed besides the space dedicated for cooking within the bedroom

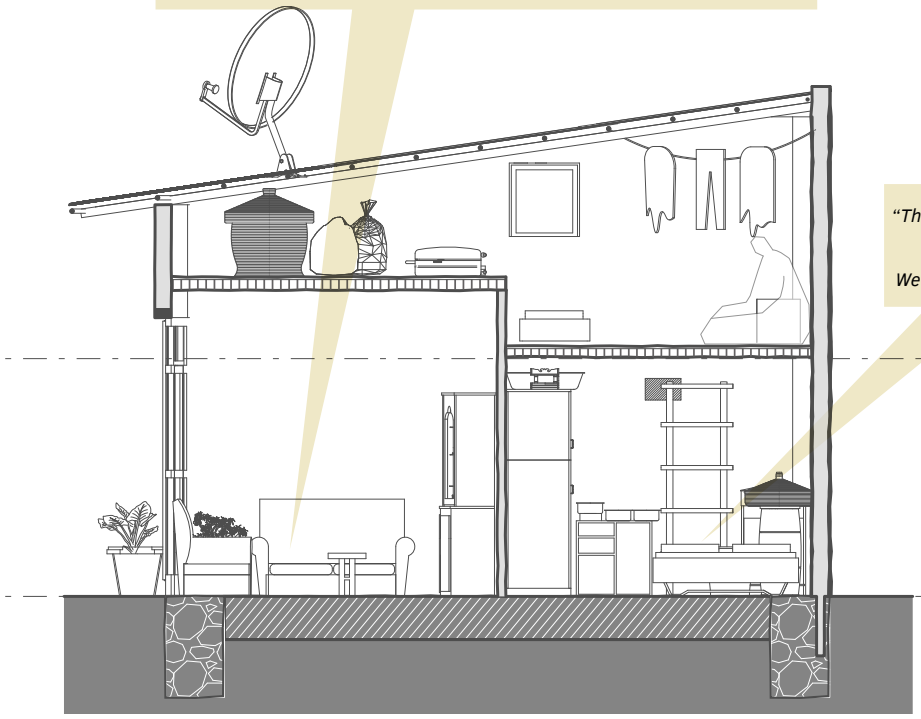
09 Clothes are hung from the roof of the Qot, a storage strategy aimed to take up less space



"We were told a ceiling height of 3-5 meters is possible, so we extended it to three meters. We have a high-ceiling living room now giving us more flexibility in using the space. Since we use the space for sleeping as well, the increased height has made it more comfortable."

"This is our Gwada. It is a sleeping space as well as a kitchen.

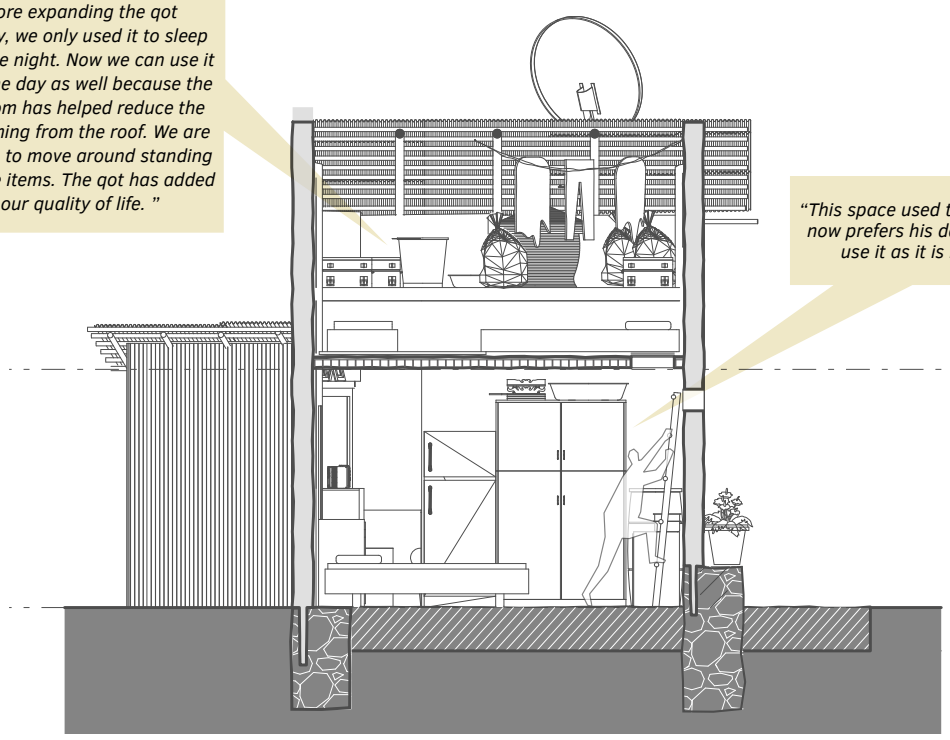
We also use it to access the qot. "



Section A-A

"Before expanding the qot vertically, we only used it to sleep during the night. Now we can use it during the day as well because the headroom has helped reduce the heat coming from the roof. We are also able to move around standing and store items. The qot has added to our quality of life. "

"This space used to be Kindu's bedroom. He now prefers his daughter and grandson to use it as it is relatively spacious. "

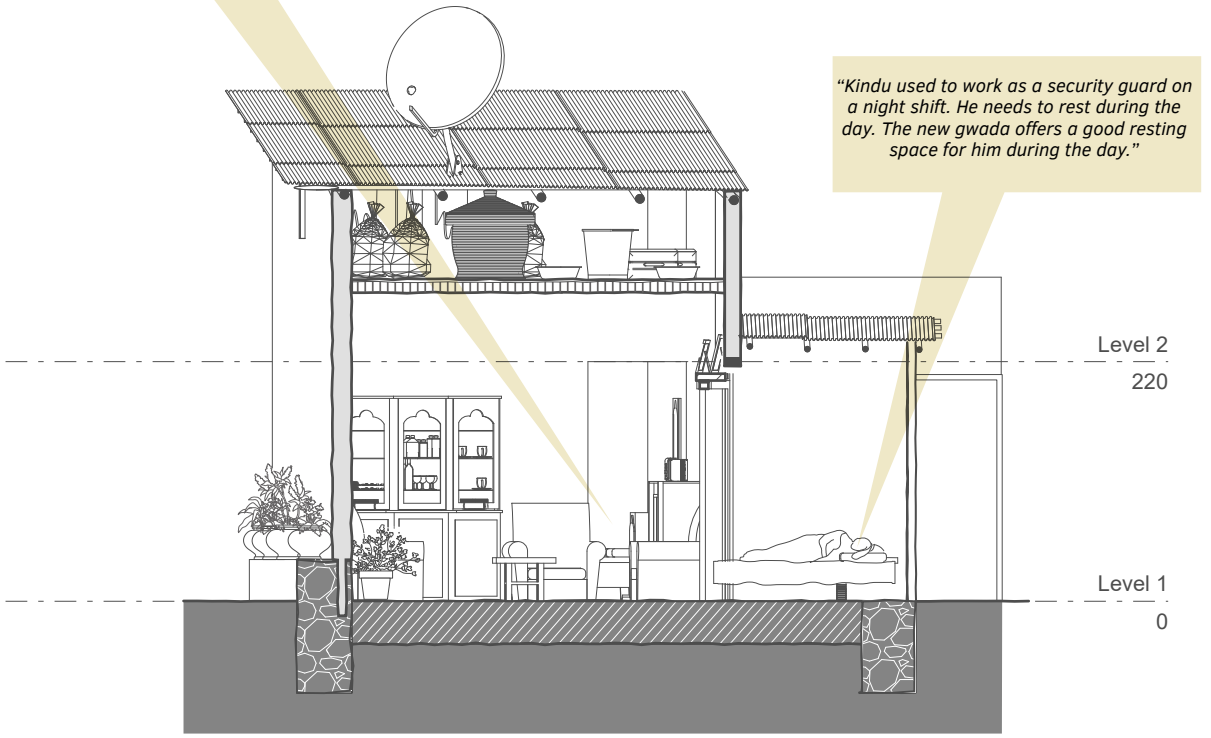


Section B-B



"We love how we come together in the evening, have dinner together and watch evening TV shows. We enjoy gathering here during the evenings while Kindu is resting in his usual spot. "

"Kindu used to work as a security guard on a night shift. He needs to rest during the day. The new gwada offers a good resting space for him during the day."



Section C-C

0m 1m 2m

Material encounters



01 Eucalyptus frames plastered with mud and straw mix
02 Fabric ceiling and lighting fixture wrapped by cloth
03 Plastic ceiling and glass bowl lighting fixture
04 Wooden ceiling structure/ Qot wall
05 Painted corrugated zinc sheet wall
06 Rusted metal doors to the toilets mounted on HCB walls
07 Painted corrugated zinc sheet fence
08 Chicken coop wire mesh enclosure
09 Qot window with mud and paint splatters
10 Bedroom+ Kitchen opening (wire mesh cover)
11 Main entrance door with metal frames and figured glass panels

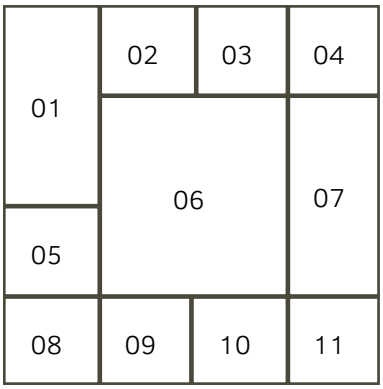
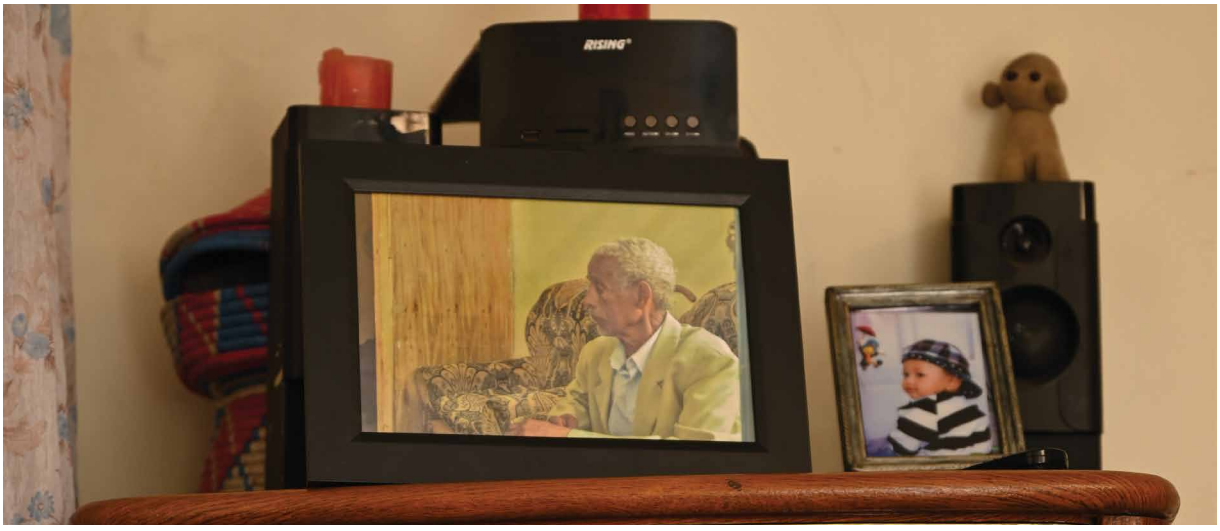


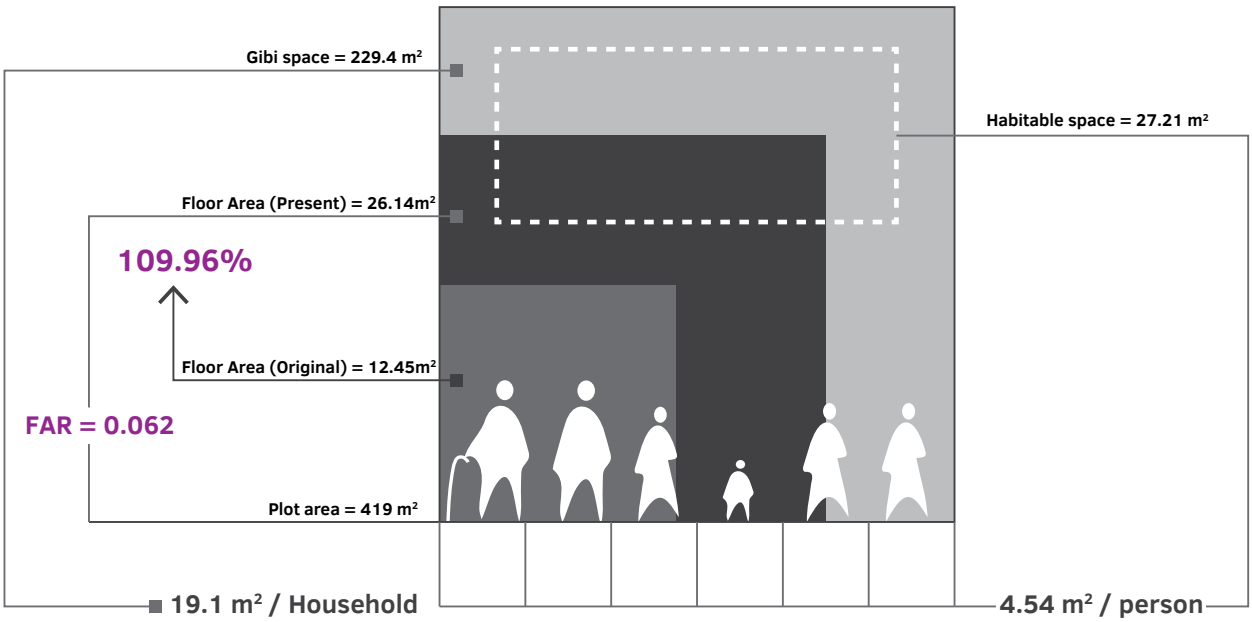
Photo trigger





This picture is a portrait of the owner, Kindu. He was excited about the idea of a photoshoot with his favourite part of the house. He posed by sitting in this location and looking not at the camera but away from it as if he was thinking about his life in the house and all his decisions over the years since he started living here as an ex-army officer. The photo was framed in such a way that it showed his new sleeping space, the latest addition and the only room with a door in the house, and his walking stick, placed between the seats. It was important to depict the usual state of his mobility because he explained that he doesn't move around as much as he used to due to old age, which indicates that his physical relationship with the house is getting intense due to the amount of time he spends indoors. Kindu was happy when he received the framed photograph. He expressed his happiness by jokingly saying asamerachugn (you made me look handsome) and went on to narrate his young days in the army.

Diagrammatic synthesis





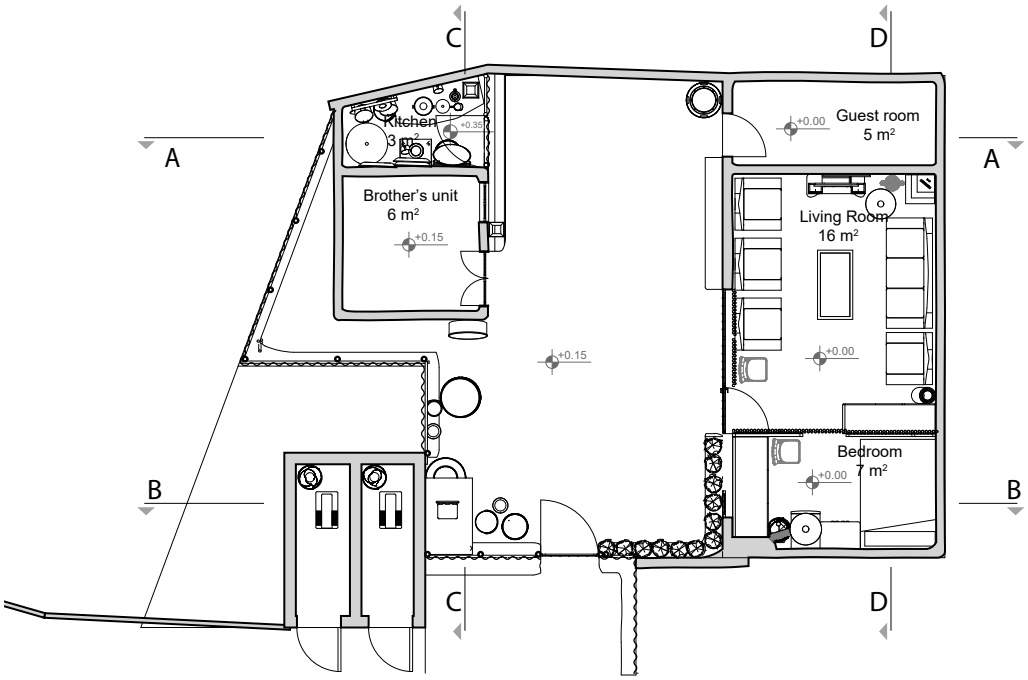
Timnit

We thought the height of the house was alright but the width was small for us. Since we had ample space in the gibi, we felt that it was unnecessary to add height and a qot, instead, we went for a horizontal expansion into the open space in our private gibi.

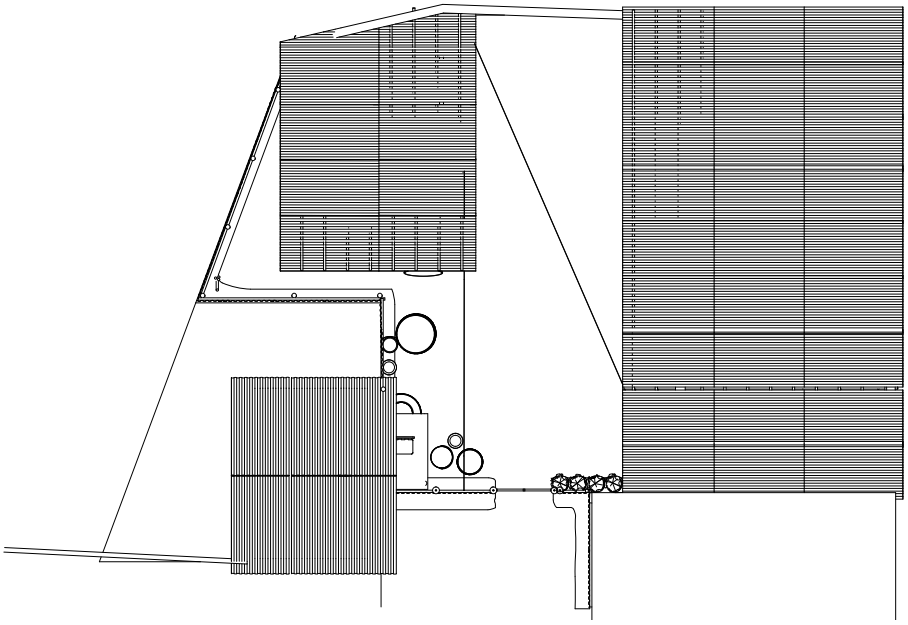
Carving out the ‘private’ Gibi



Plans



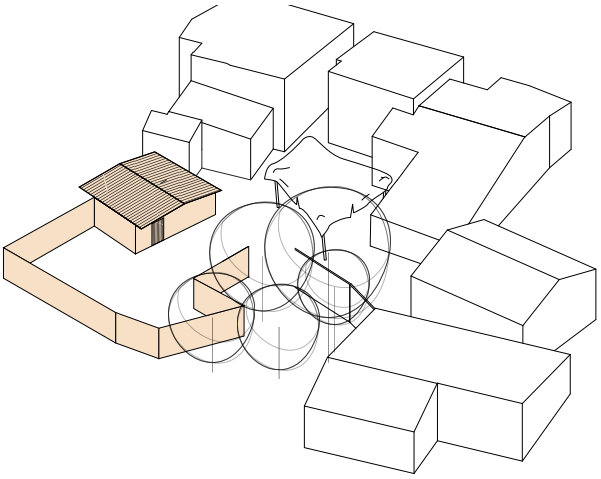
Ground floor plan



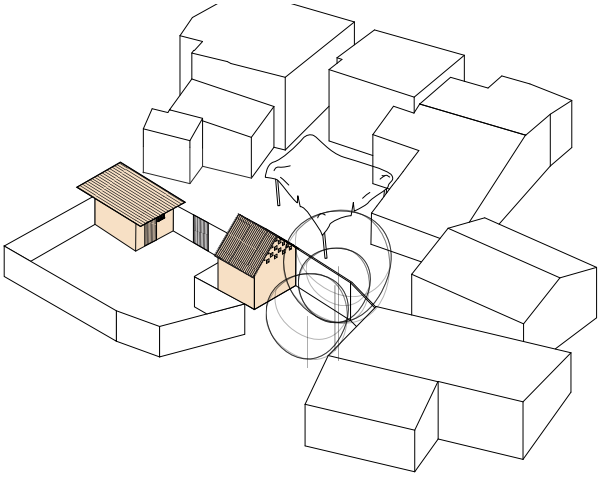
Roof plan



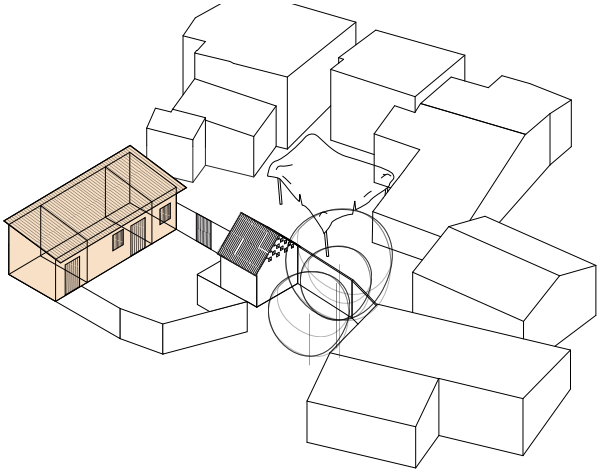
Dwelling transformation



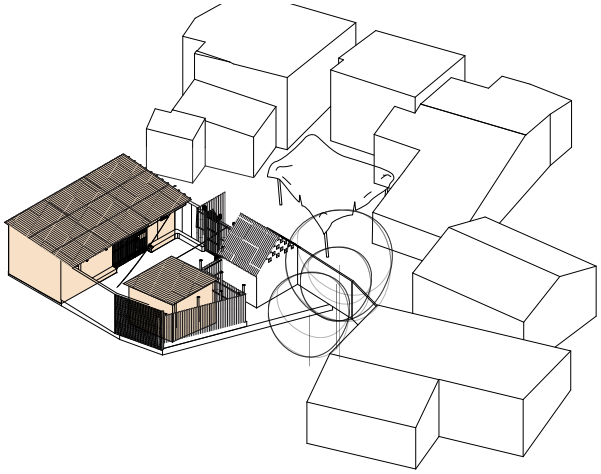
01. 1980 E.C_Original state of the house



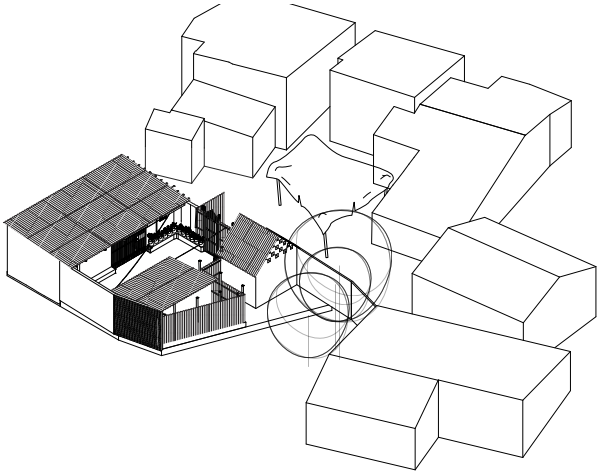
02. ~1985 E.C_The single room was, room-mates became neighbours



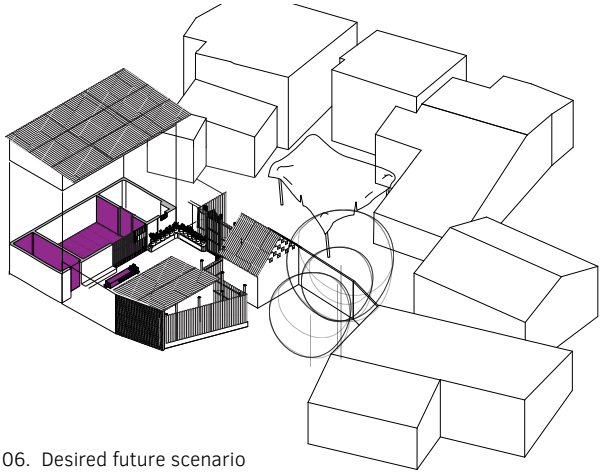
03. 1997 E.C_Extension along the length of the house



04. ~2007 E.C additional extensions were constructed



05. ~2011 E.C_Current setup of the house

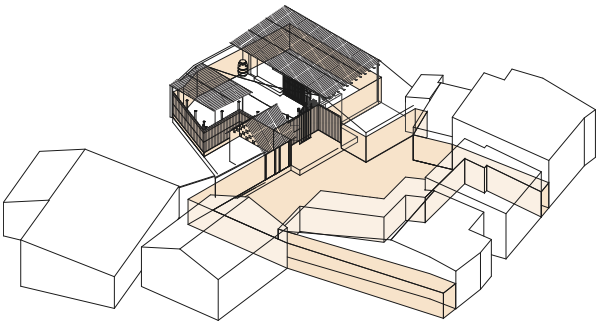


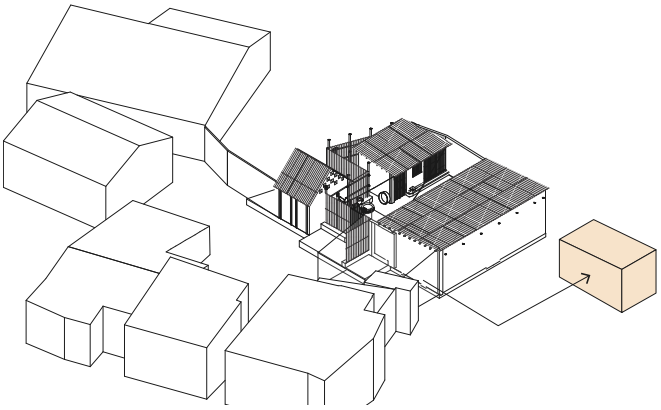
06. Desired future scenario

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Two interconnected spaces serve as the gibi for Timnit's family. The shared gibi is used for bigger-scale events while the private gibi is used for intimate domestic chores. The two gibis have the possibility to be interconnected to host larger events. Timint also lets the neighbours use her private gibi for storage and other uses upon request. Timnit feels more connected to the private gibi and the shared one as a secondary gibi even if she washes clothes and her daughter uses it as a playground.



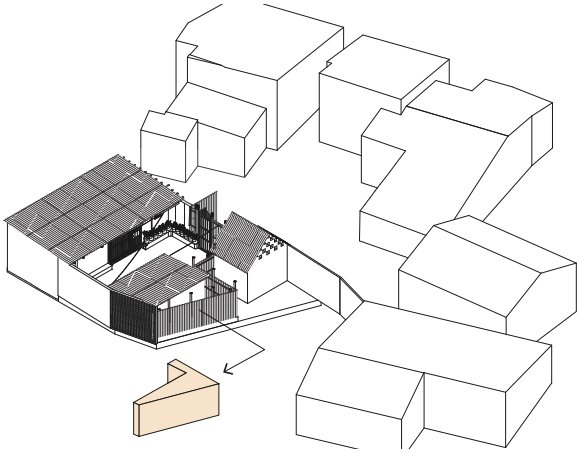


The Gwada

Timnit considers her bedroom as the gwada of the house. She does not consider her kitchen to be part of the gwada. Her gwada, in addition to the plywood partition demarcating it from the living room, is elaborated/ embellished by a curtain adding an atmosphere of hierarchy and importance to the space.

The Gwaro

The gwaro space exists behind an extended block and the enclosure of the private gibi. This gwaro serves as a general storage space for stowaway items that are not regularly used. Timnit uses it to store coal for cooking and firewood.





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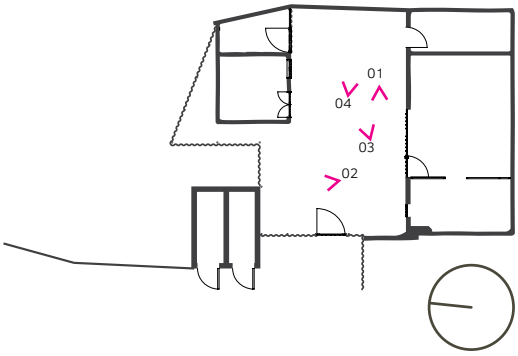
01 Front view of the house under study facing the open space in the compound
02 Dish washing and clothes washing space
03 View of the kitchen and the access to the Gwaro.
04 The front facade of the house





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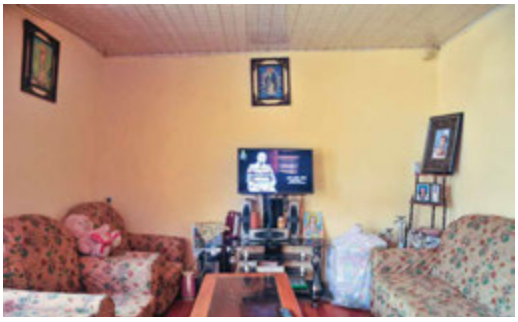

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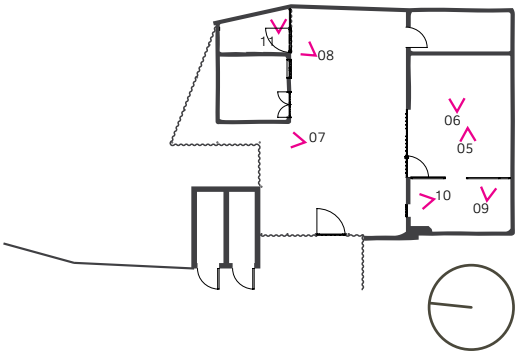
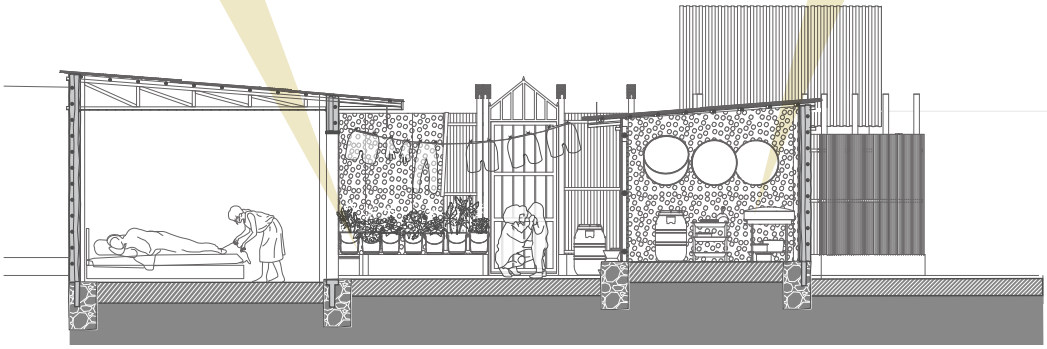
05 View of the buffet and the multi-layered partition wall between the living and bedroom
06 View of the sitting space with the TV in the middle
07 Access to the Gwaro lined with plastic and metal washing pans
08 View of the Kitchen
09 Interior view of the partition seen from the bedroom
10 A small window in the bedroom blocked by the cupboard
11 View of the plastic floor cover used as protection for the HCB wall in the cooking space.



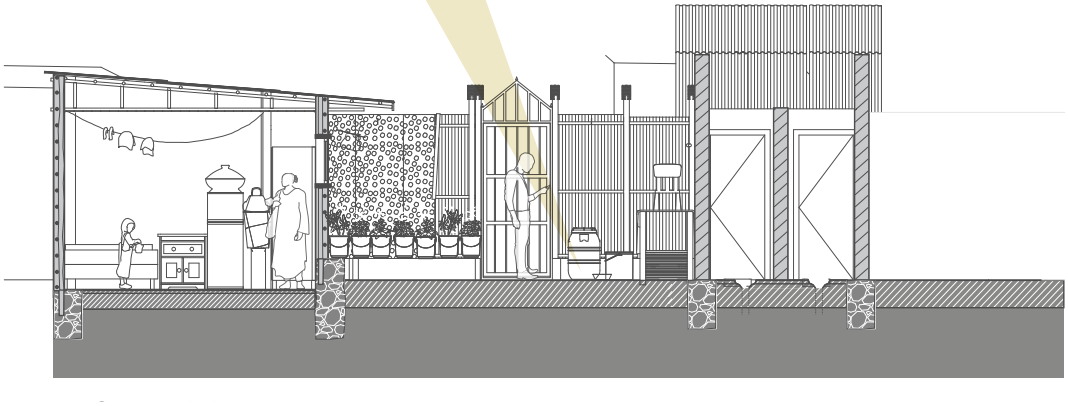
"We use this ledge to sit outside and have coffee. During the holidays the family gathers in this space to have a drink and have a good time."

"I organized the kitchen based on the things that are movable and fixed. The fixed items like the injera oven are placed deep in the room because they cannot move. I have the dish storage and water containers towards the most accessible side of the kitchen. "

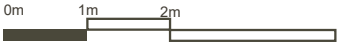


Section A-A

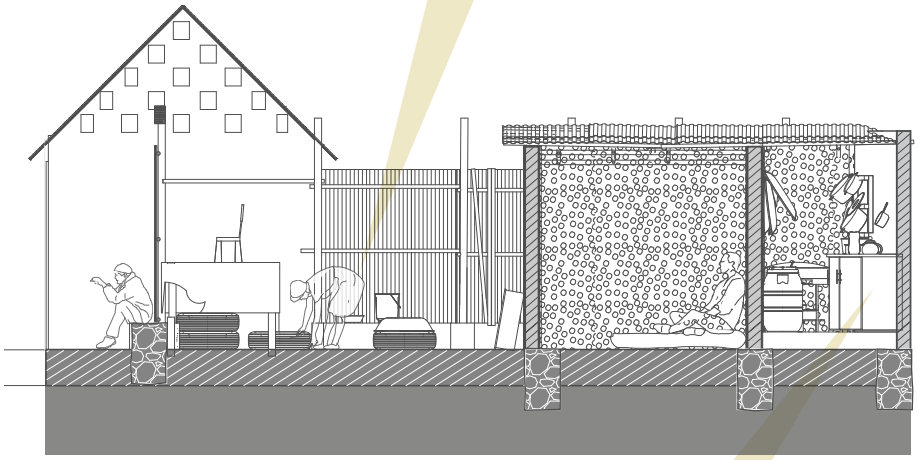
"My private gibi is useful because I can close the access from the main gibi and do all my household chores privately. My child is also protected here. I cook, wash clothes, and do all sorts of activities in private."



Section B-B



"We use the open space in the compound to wash clothes and dry laundry. I use this space here by the door for such activities because I can see what is happening in the common gibi."

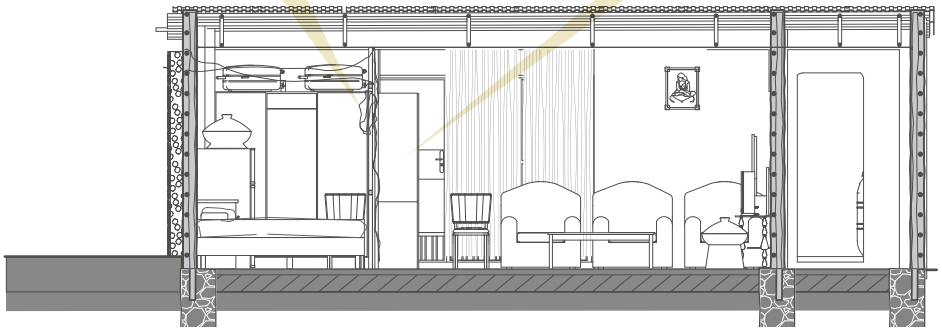


Section C-C

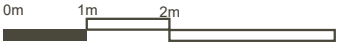
"Since I am using the neighbour's wall on this side of the kitchen, I use a plastic cover to protect their wall from my cooking activities."

"The plywood partition has an exposed structure towards the gwada because it is more private. The plywood cover is on the side facing the living room. I use the structure to hang clothes in the gwada."

"The China Hutch is placed here to cover the plywood finish of the wall. It also thickens the partition and helps to make the gwada more thermally comfortable."



Section D-D



Material encounters

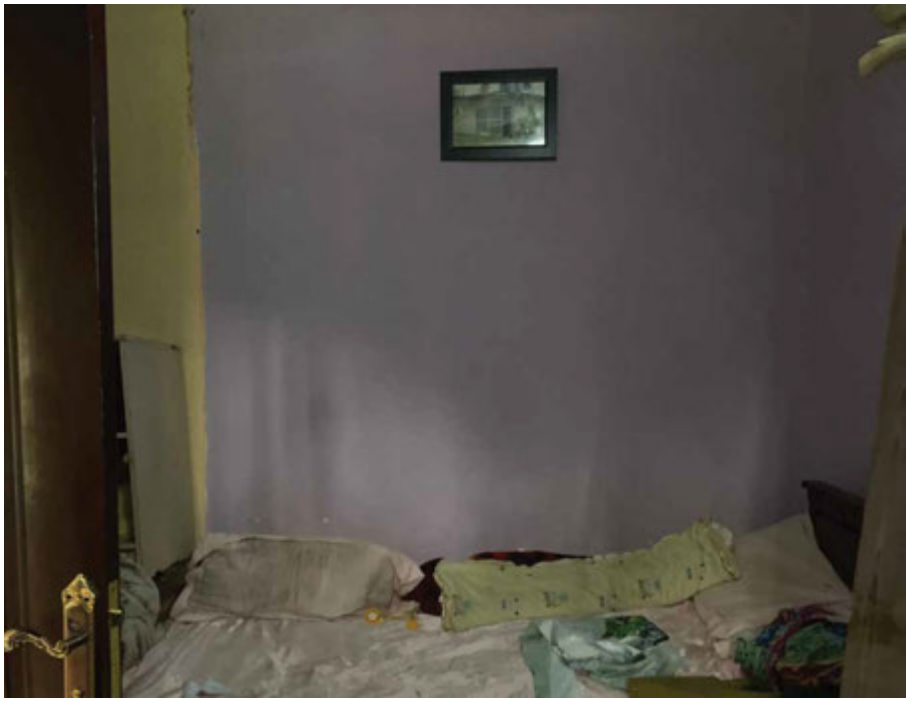


01 Eucalyptus frames plastered with mud and straw mix, sometimes also gypsum plastered and painted
02 The roof and ceiling are the same and the lighting hangs from the wooden roof structure
03 Plastic ceiling and a decorative lighting fixture
04 Wooden frame and corrugated metal sheet make up the kitchen door
05 Painted corrugated zinc sheet walls
06 Colourful curtains in the living room
07 Eucalyptus frames supporting the plywood partition of the bedroom
08 Perforated portion of the HCB wall of the shared toilet
09 Main entrance door with metal frames and glass panels
10 Plastic floor cover used to protect HCB wall from food stains

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">06</td><td rowspan="2">07</td></tr>
<tr><td>05</td></tr>
<tr><td>08</td><td colspan="2">09</td><td>10</td></tr>
</table>

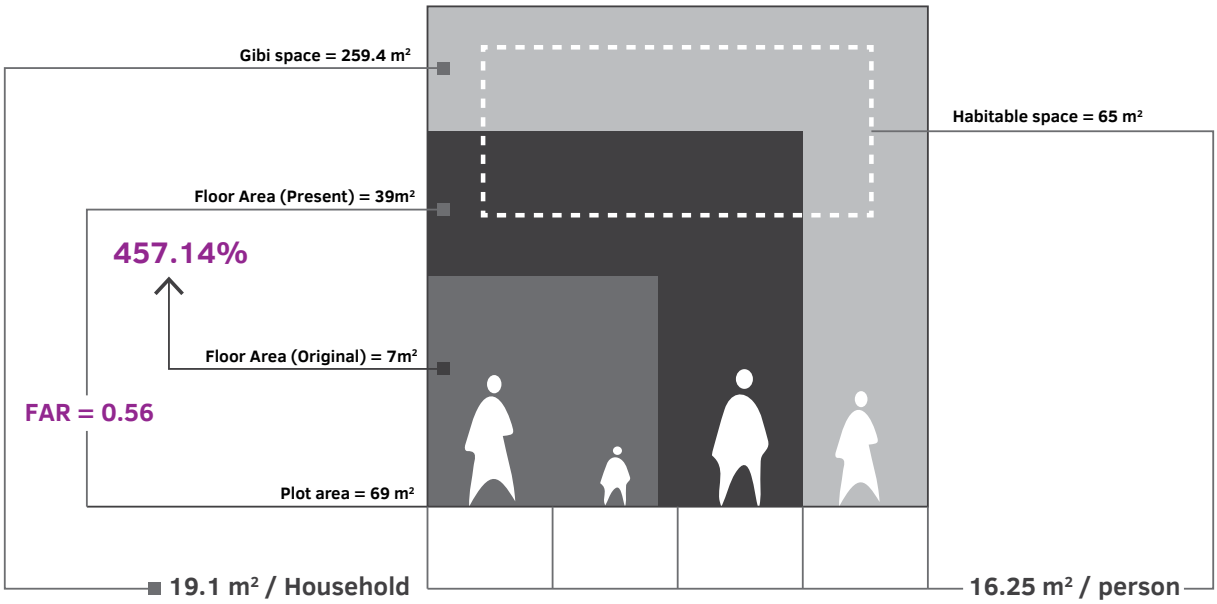
Photo trigger



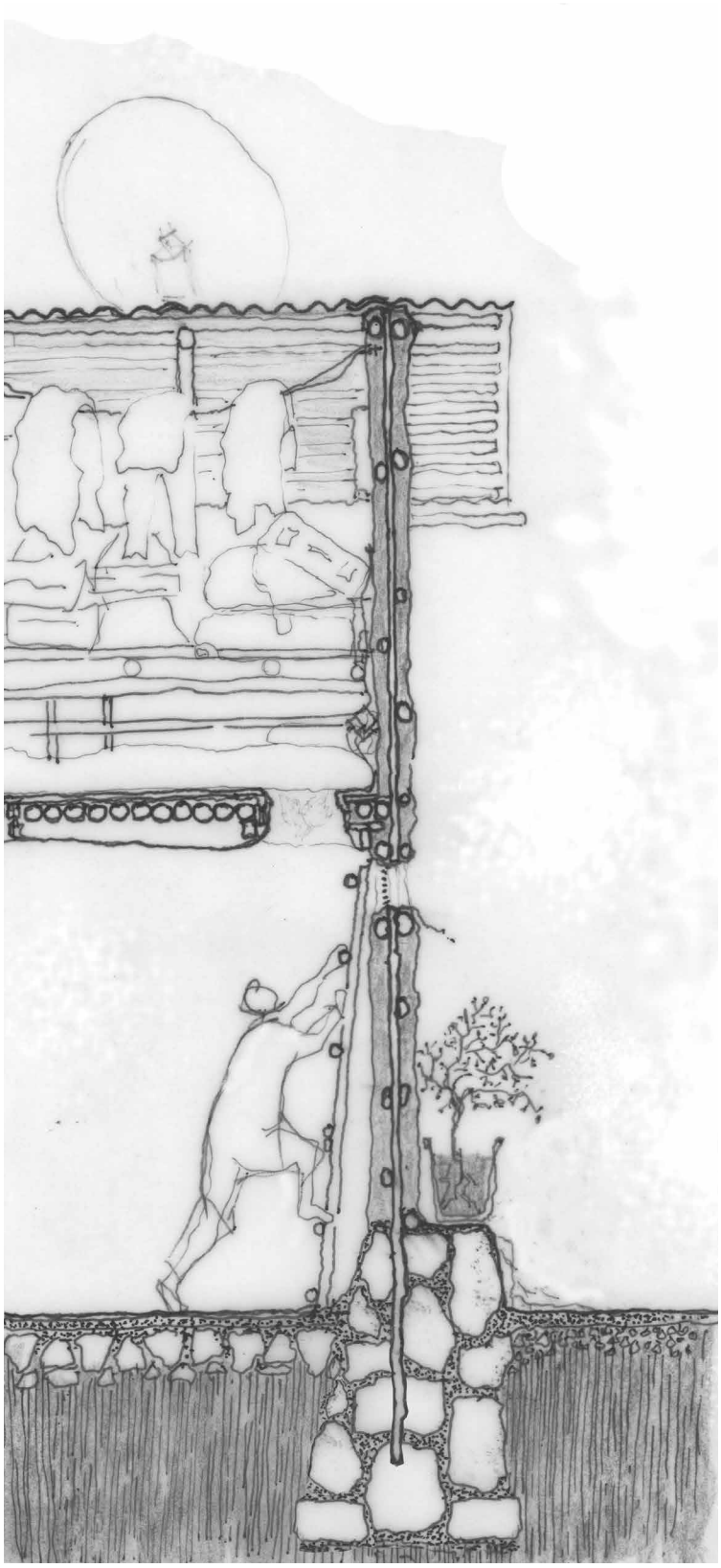


The life of Timnit and the transformation of the house are linked, as can be understood through the stories she tells. These revolved around important events in her life and how they enabled her to transform the house. The first one was that she went abroad as a migrant worker in the Middle East. Once she found work, she started sending money back home to gradually renovate the house. The second event was when she returned, and this decision also prompted certain changes such as the expansion of the house to the front side, the addition of the 'French window', and internal changes in the house. The picture depicts these changes along with the latest ongoing transformations of the space because she became a mother. She was pleasantly surprised when the framed image was presented to her. She immediately went into her gwada to hang it on the wall on the side of her bed.

Diagrammatic synthesis



Building techniques





INDEX

Upgrading the sefer





Selected area (2006)



Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selection



Cluster structure_2006_1Ha



Increase in footprint by 2022_ 3.4% in the selected 1Ha area



01



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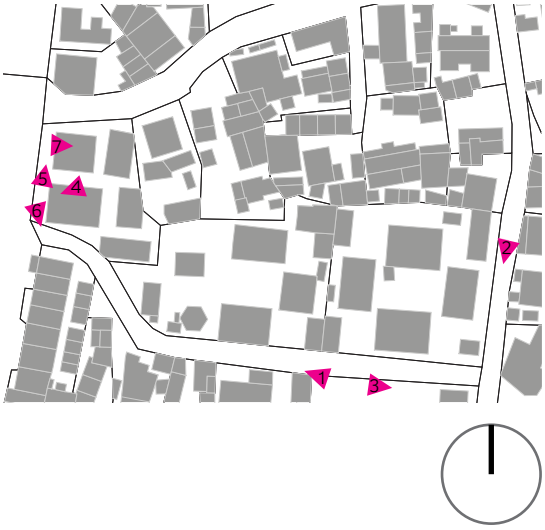
07

01 Cobblestone paved street in the neighbourhood
02 View of the masonry fence from the cobblestone street
03 Cobblestone paved street in the neighbourhood
04 View of the main gate of the compound. The picture is taken from the bridge.
05 View of the gwaro on the left side of the main gate
06 View of the space between the houses and the fence on the side of the secondary access gate into the compound.





08



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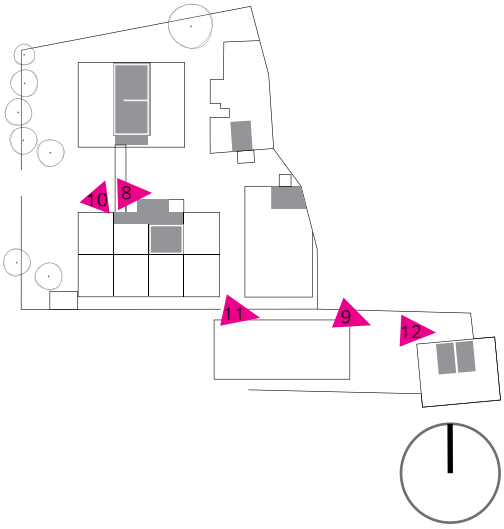
12

08 View of the multifunctional shared space kitchen
09 View of the shared toilet
10 View of the shared water point under the bridge
11 View of the path leading to the shared toilet space, the path passes by the rental units.
12 View of the access to the separate toilet stalls (each toilet stall is in-itself shared by residents on the same floor of each building in the compound)





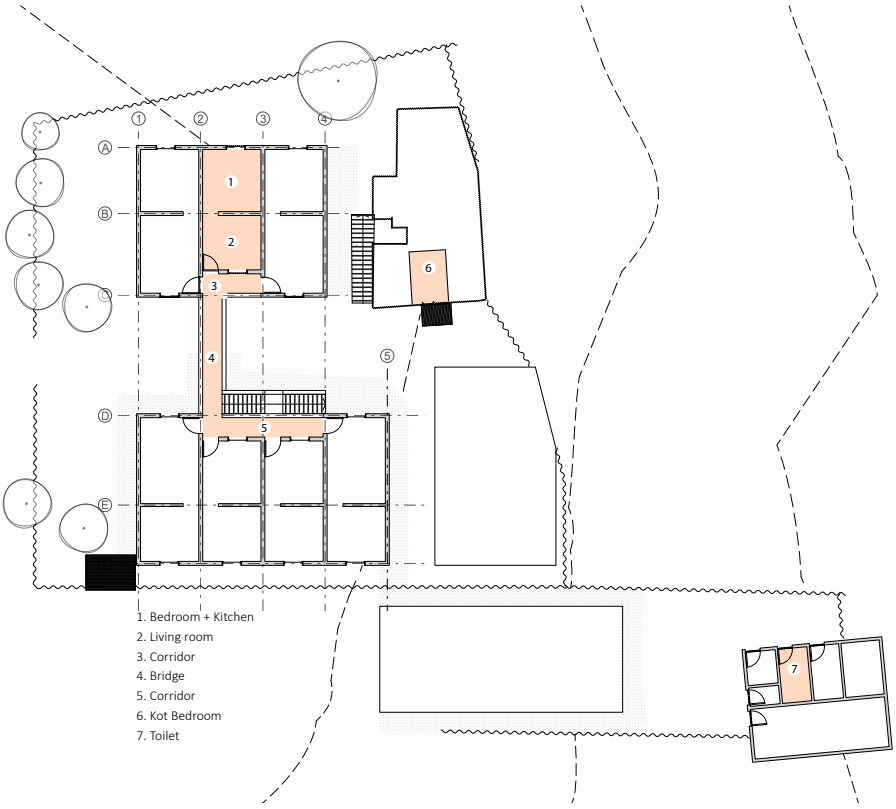
Lemma and Sinidu

We were both civil servants when we came here. I had to discontinue my work to focus on raising our children. I was also studying on the side but I had to give that up as well. I tried to generate income at the edge of our gibi by selling injera and potatoes.

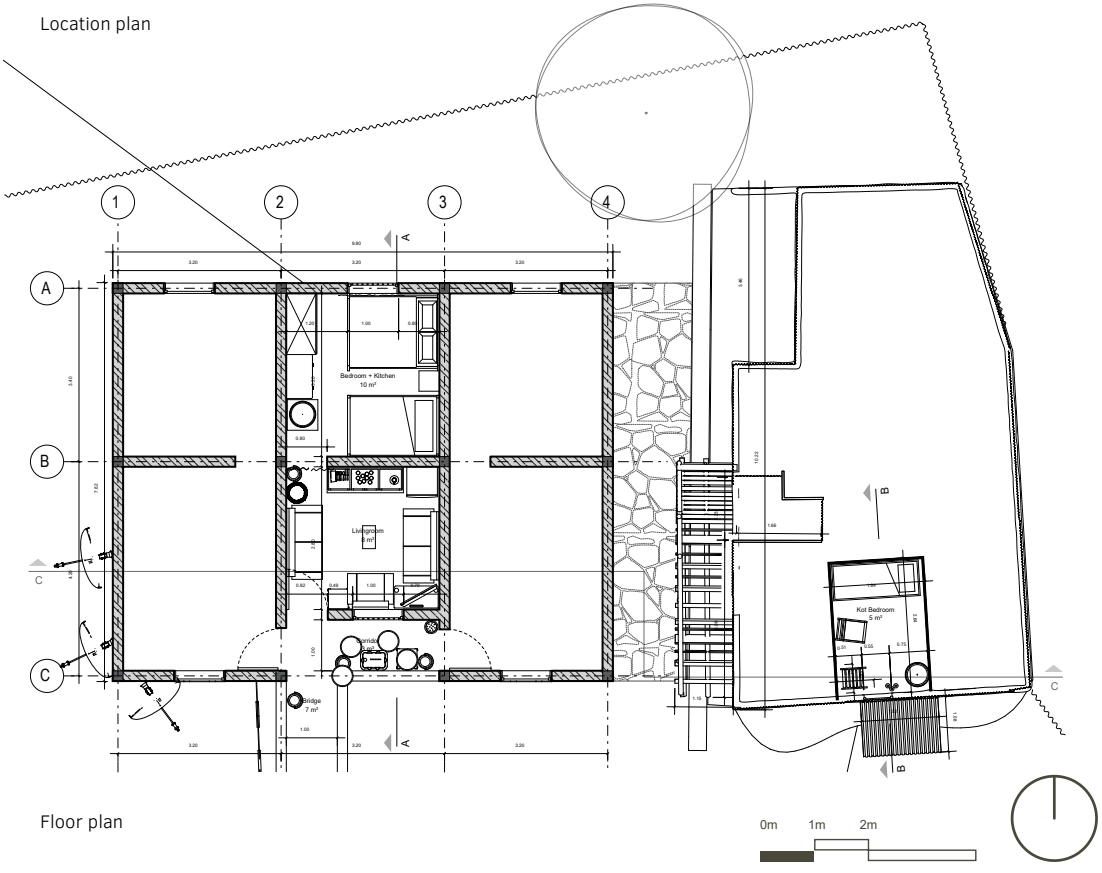
‘Pigeon-holed’ in Menen



Plans

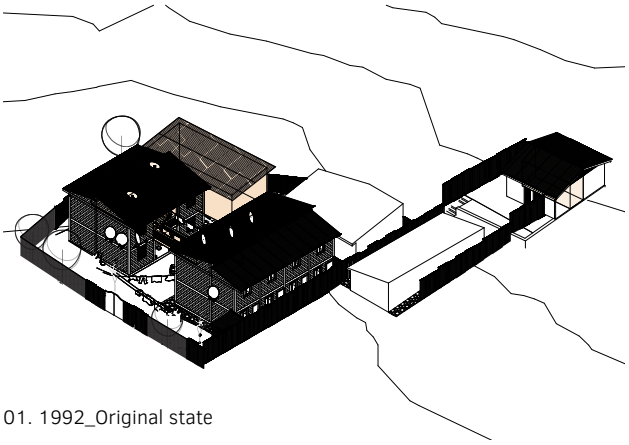


Location plan

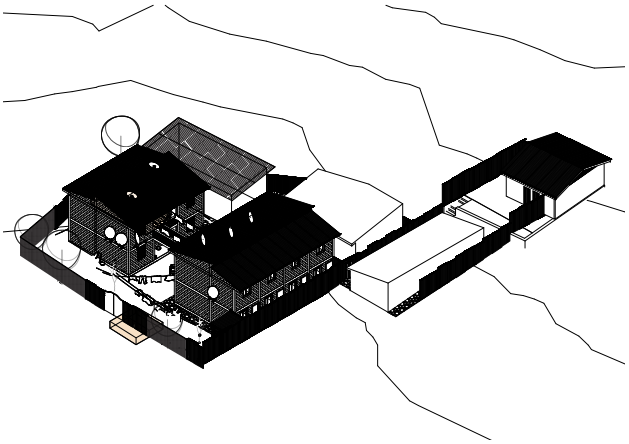


Floor plan

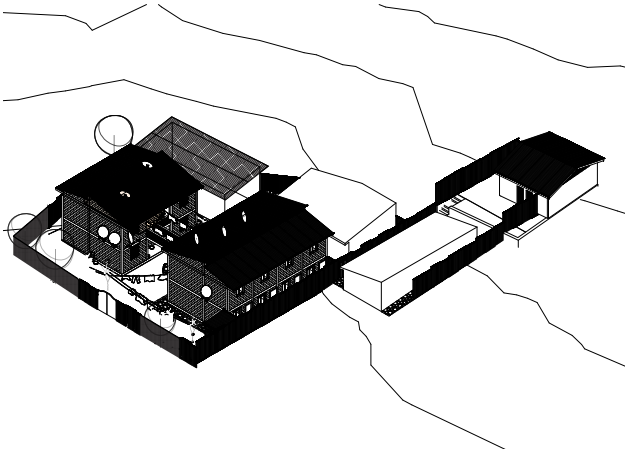
Dwelling transformation



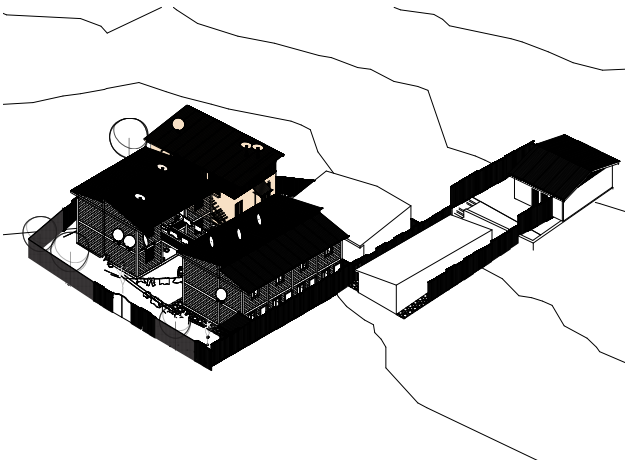
01. 1992_Original state



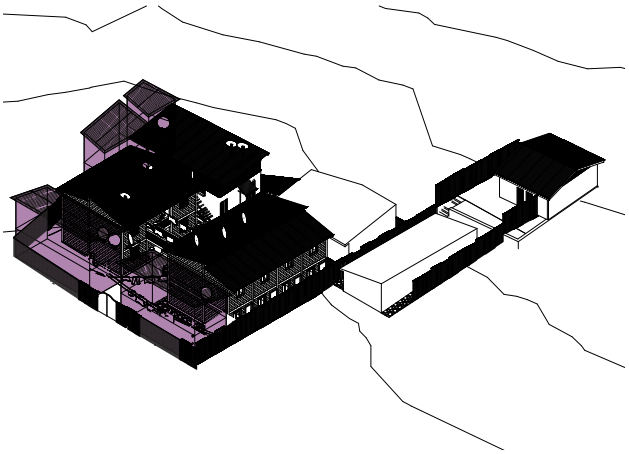
02. ~1992-1996_Material changes to the floor finish, wall finish and ceiling. Gulit space was also claimed on the interior and exterior side of the fence.



03. ~2009_More changes were made to the interior space. In addition a private water line was installed by the doorstep



04. 2013_Current setup with a private kitchen space and a Qot was constructed

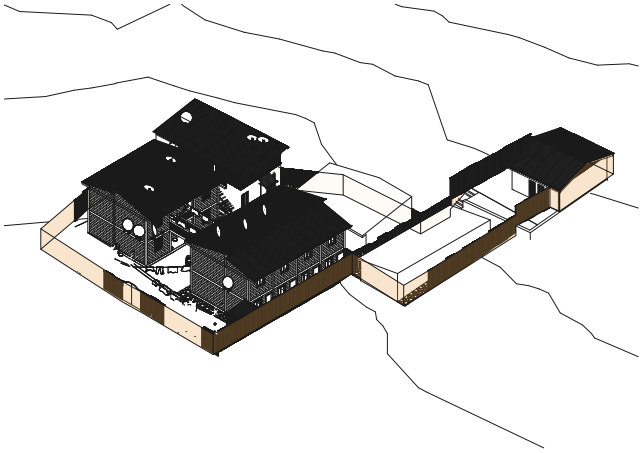


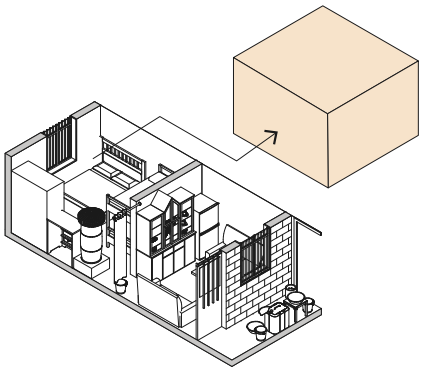
05. Desired future scenario: They would like to build additional units in the open spaces around their houses. They believe having additional buildings will help them generate income through rent and enable them to have showers and toilets closer to their homes.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Lemma and his wife believe that the gibi exists because of the fence. “If there is no fence, there is no gibi. We consider the toilet outside the fence as ‘sid-bota’ and it is not part of our house. We also don’t have a say over it”. They articulate the benefits of the gibi but also mention the issue of the toilet being outside the gibi as a major problem. Whatever is outside the gibi cannot be considered as their own.



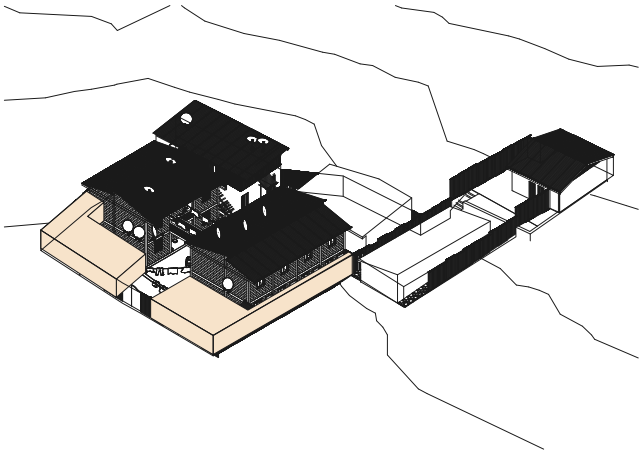


The Gwada

Lemma and Sinidu consider the gwada as a space where they sleep and store items. Although it is still private, they feel that the kitchen is separate from the gwada. They sometimes cook at the threshold between their living space and the gwada because their kitchen is located downstairs, and it is not always convenient to cook farther away from the house.

The Gwaro

The space at the left and right side of the entrance to the gibi is considered the gwaro for Sinidu and her family. This gwaro is used for drying clothes and grains. Sinidu imagines the gwaro as a vegetable garden had it been a rural setting.





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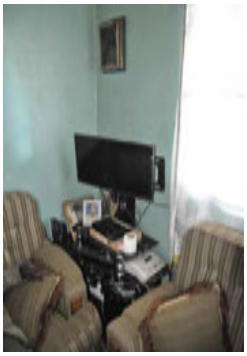


05



06

01 View of the curtain serving as a partition between the living and sleeping space. Its placement is also meant to cover the cooking space in between the two spaces however, as shown in the picture, it sometimes gets dragged along with the owner as she moves to get items from the food storage section of the buffet in the living space.

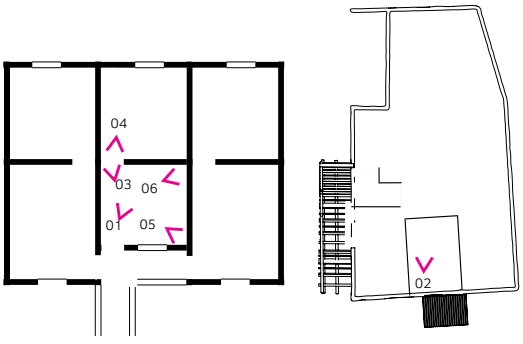
02 Interior view of the Kitchen.

03 The cooking space at the passage between the living and sleeping spaces.

04 View of the living room side of the passage between the living room and the bedroom

05 View of the TV corner, it is tucked in between two sofas.

06 View of the small open space by the refrigerator. It is used to store the small chairs as well as to make coffee.







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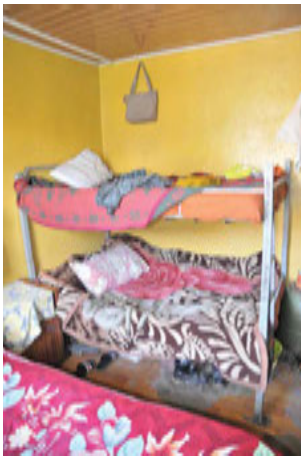

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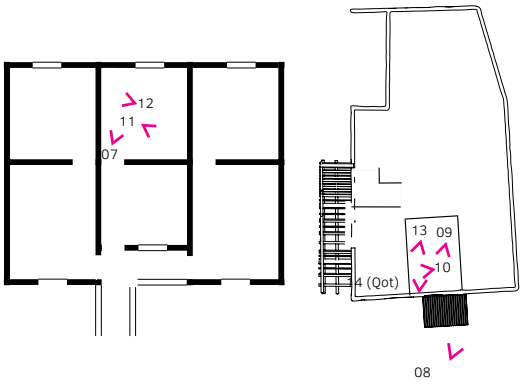
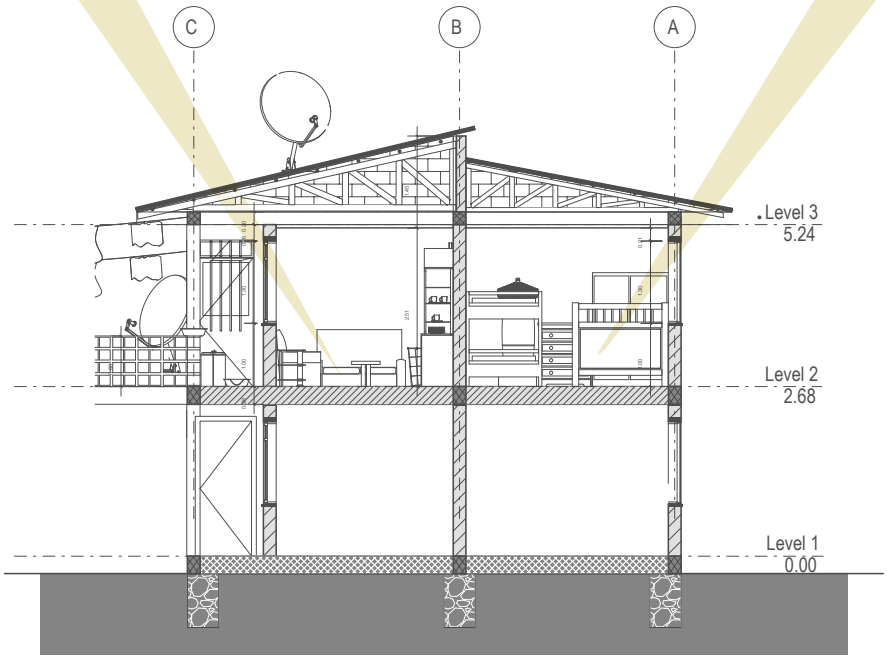
07 View of the sleeping space and the lone window in the bedroom
08 Exterior view of the covered access to the kitchen
09 Interior view of the kitchen door and access ladder to the Qot. The fabric made ceiling is also in view.
10 View of the Injera oven by the access ladder to the Qot
11 Bunk bed setup in the bedroom
12 Clothes storage furniture in the bedroom
13 Access ladder to the Qot made from eucalyptus poles. The space behind the
14 View of the sleeping space on the Qot, as seen from the access hatch to the Qot



"The house was not suitable to live in. We bought cement and sand and made the floor screed with the help we got from our neighbours."

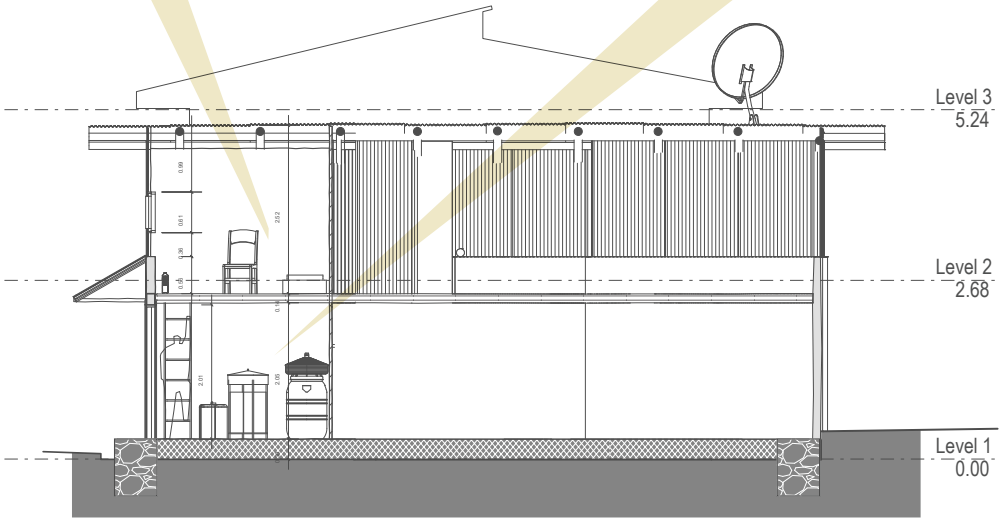
"The bedroom was 9m^2 and was not enough for our family. We had to bring in bunk beds to fit me and my wife along with our four children. The children were paired on the bunk bed. Two more people can sleep in the living space on mattresses when relatives come to visit. "



Section A-A

"We use the qot as a storage space. We also use it to host our guests occasionally. It is easier than setting up a mattress in our living room. "

"We used to share a common injera kitchen amongst four neighbours. It was very inconvenient, especially during the holidays when everyone cooks at the same time. After a lot of trouble with the kebele, we were finally able to build this structure. Now I am happy because I have my private Injera kitchen. "

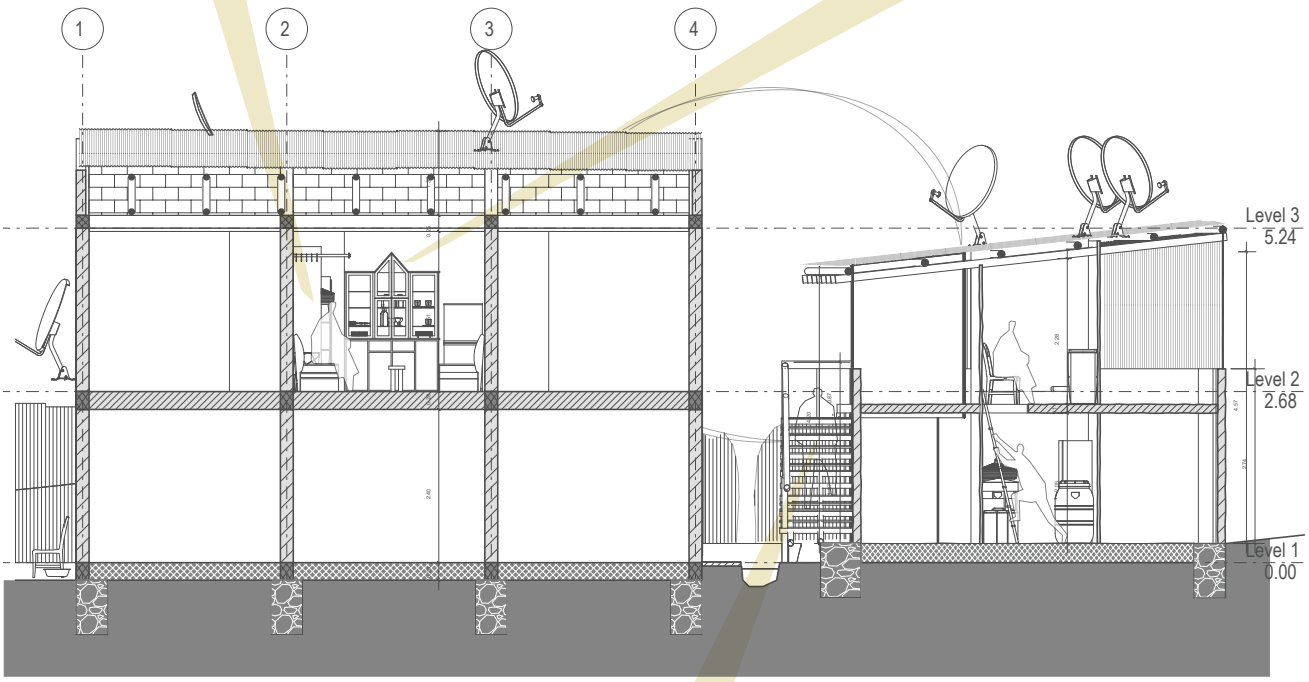


Section B-B



“I use the transition space between the living room and the bedroom for cooking. Although it is not convenient to cook upstairs, I sometimes prepare wot (sauce) here.”

“I contracted a carpenter to build this china hutch for me. It was custom-made to fit the house. I requested the pointed shape you see here so that it resembles a church. ”



Section C-C

“This stair is used by our neighbours to access their qot spaces. This addition has expanded our house and is very functional. There is a good amount of storage space and some people have rented it out to generate income.”



Material encounters

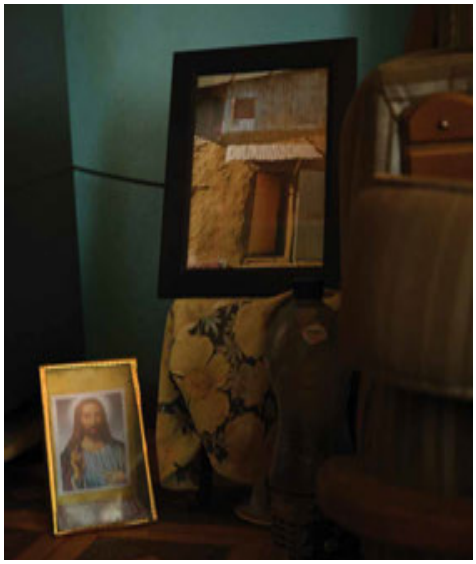


01 Exposed concrete block facade.
02 Ornate lighting fixture mounted on the living room plastic ceiling.
03 Light bulb mounted on the plastic ceiling of the bedroom.
04 Light bulb and exposed cables across the underside of the Qot roof.
05 Perforated concrete block dwarf-wall on the bridge.
06a-06bPlastic floor cover on cement screed finished floor of the house.
07 Eucalyptus frames, mud and straw plastered wall (lower level), and rusted corrugated zinc sheet wall cover (upper level (Qot level)).
08 Redd Barna logo cast in cement.
09 Mini dam makes up the threshold of the main door to the house.
10 Concrete walkway (Bridge)
11 Plywood panels and eucalyptus frames form the kitchen and Qot partitions.
12 Red brown paint marks the transition line between living room and bedroom. Yellow paint covers the walls of the sleeping space.
13 The color of the living room. Electric lines and sockets are left exposed
14 and 15 Main door and the window by the living room as seen from outside.

01	02	03	04
05	06 a	6b	07
08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15

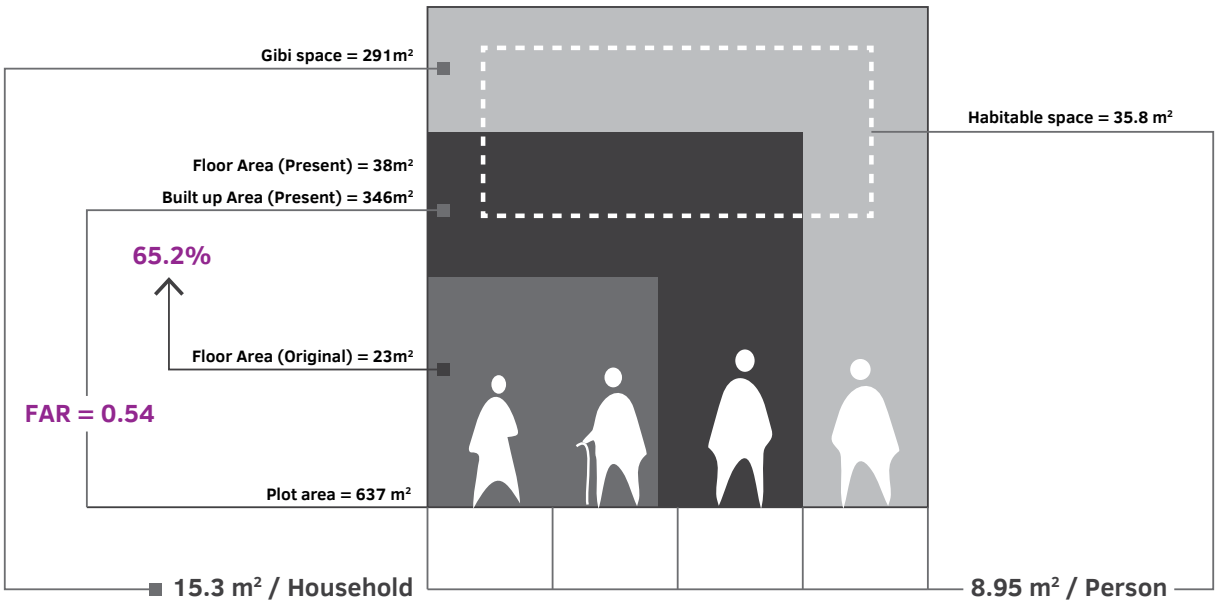
Photo trigger

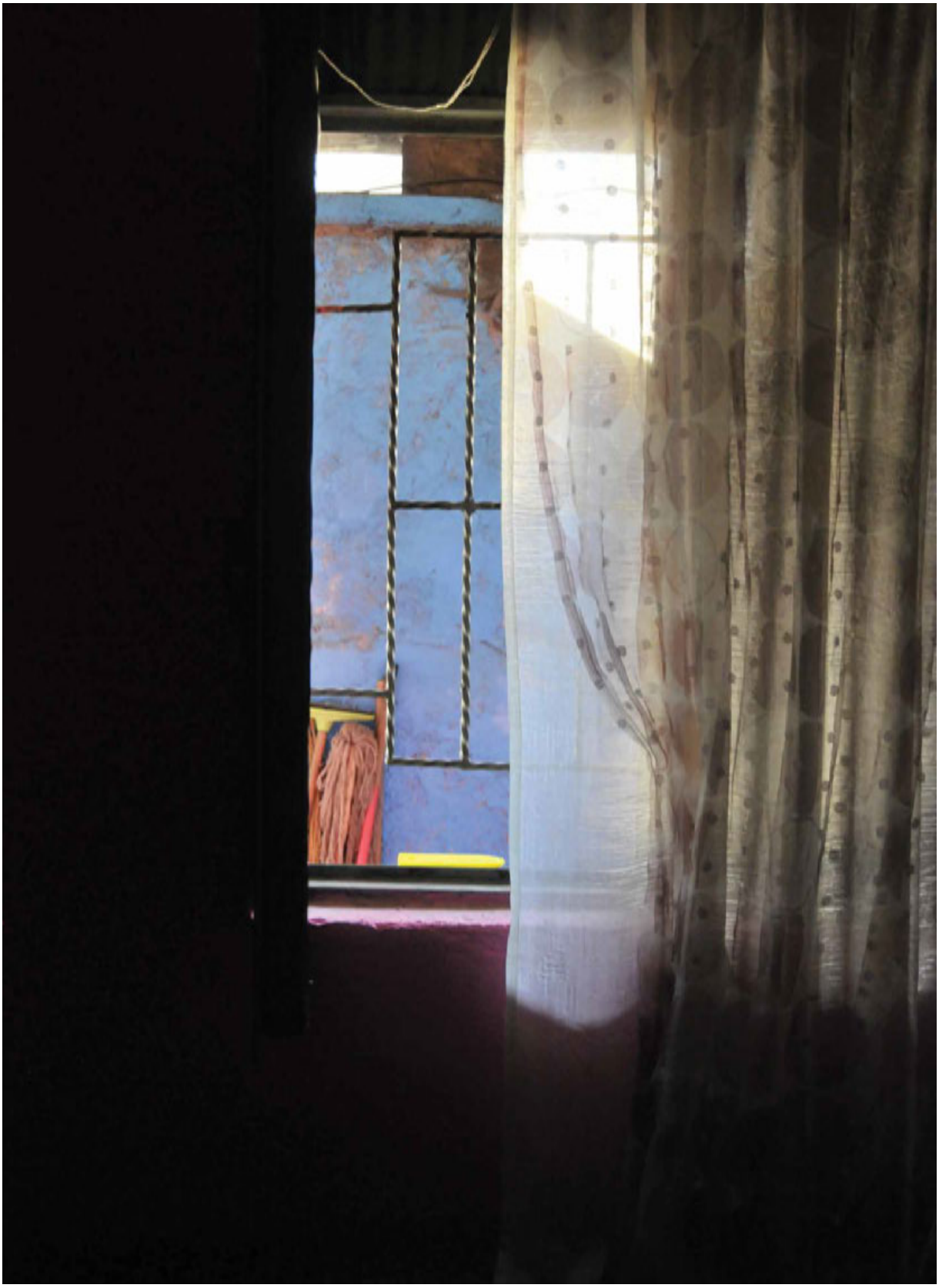




Discussions about Lemma and Senedu's attempt to change the physical setting of their small one-bedroom dwelling unit kept wandering off and ended up in animated stories about the new block that they have built on the open space in the compound. The rather impressive two-storey structure made of eucalyptus, mud, straw, and corrugated iron sheets houses not only the mead-bet (outhouse kitchen) but also rentable living spaces on the first floor. This is an important showcase of a community coming together to build a co-owned structure to provide the needed facilities that were missing in the original design. Ownership of the land, as well as the apartments, is an unsettled matter with the government but the residents enjoy a better sense of ownership when compared with renting a kebele housing or a private one.

Diagrammatic synthesis

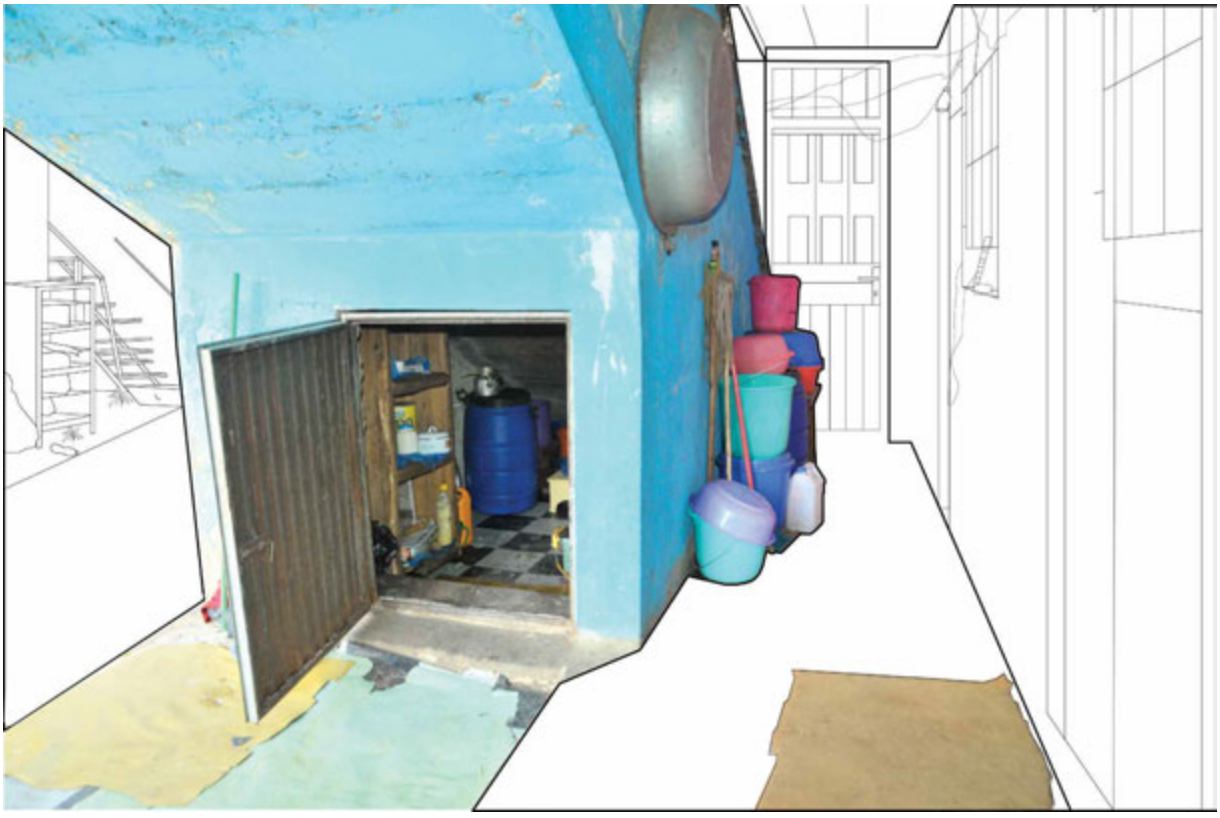




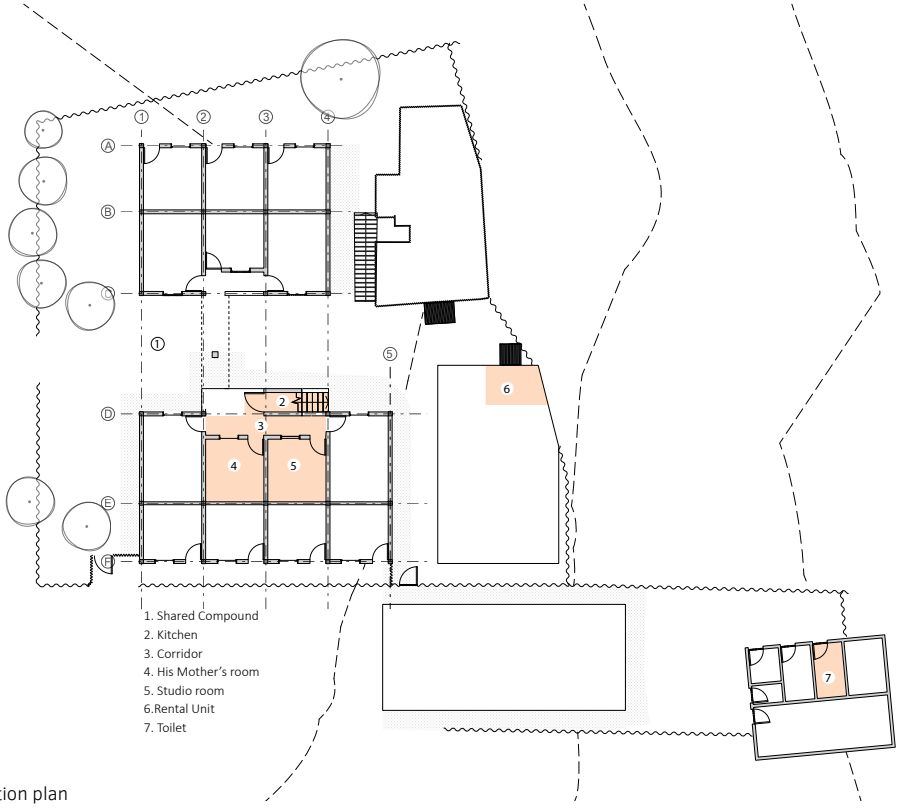
Getahun

I have memories of us using the gwaro as a small garden to plant vegetables. It was not even a proper garden; it was just a space left over at the back of the house with thick bushes. It was like a small forest and they just used it to plant edible plants. Everything was cleared up, including eleven houses, to build these structures.

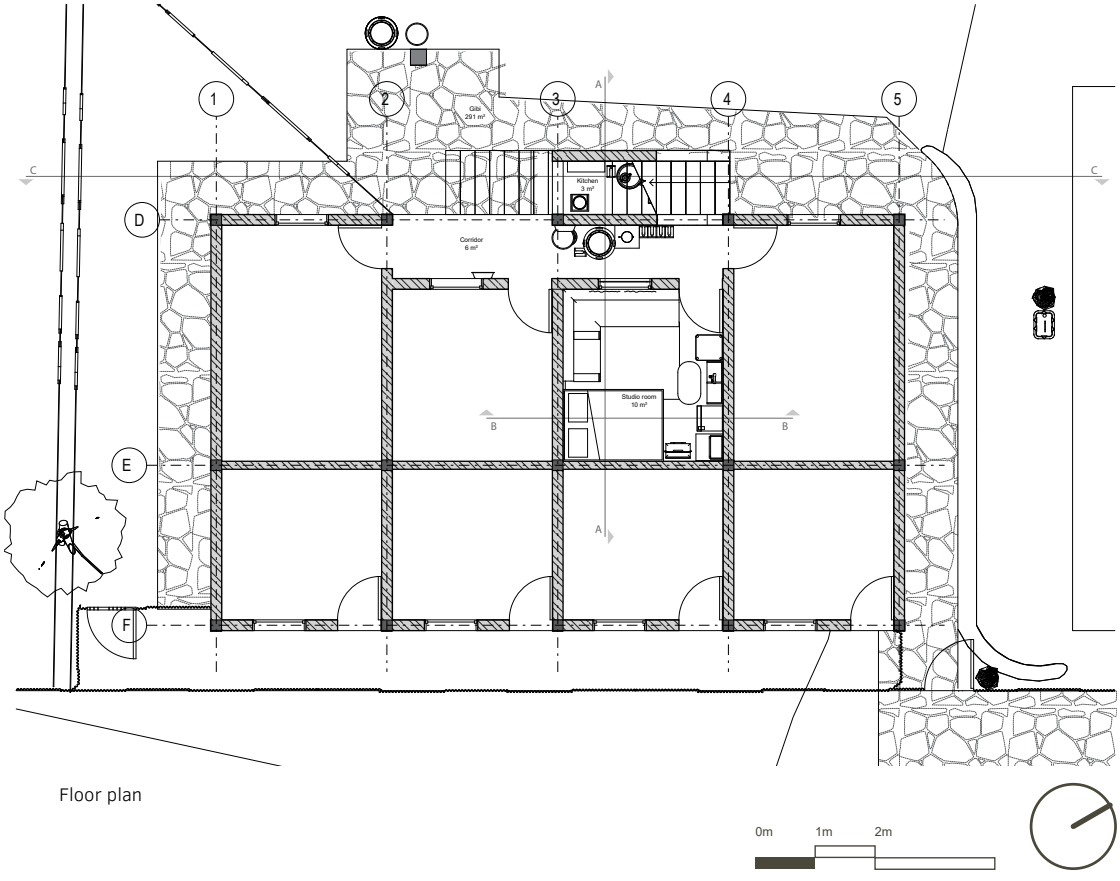
Gwada under the stair



Plans

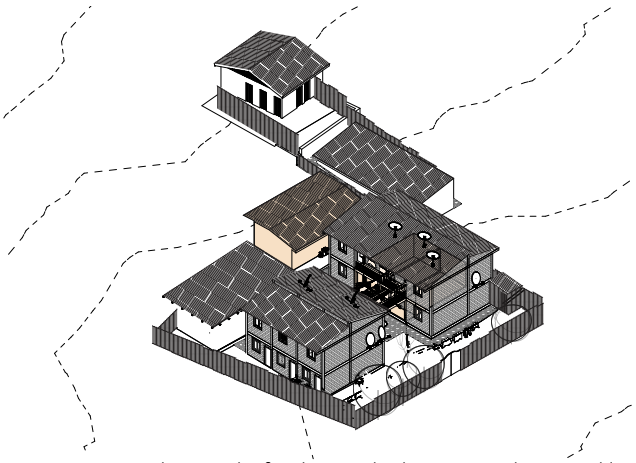


Location plan

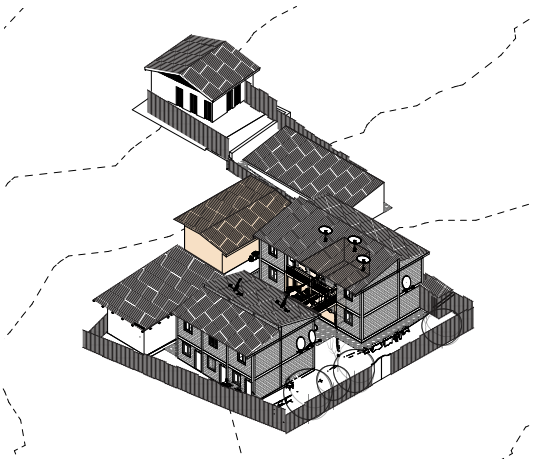


Floor plan

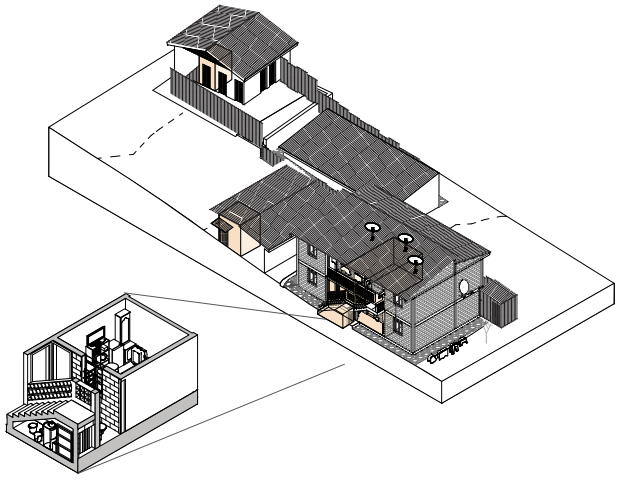
Dwelling transformation



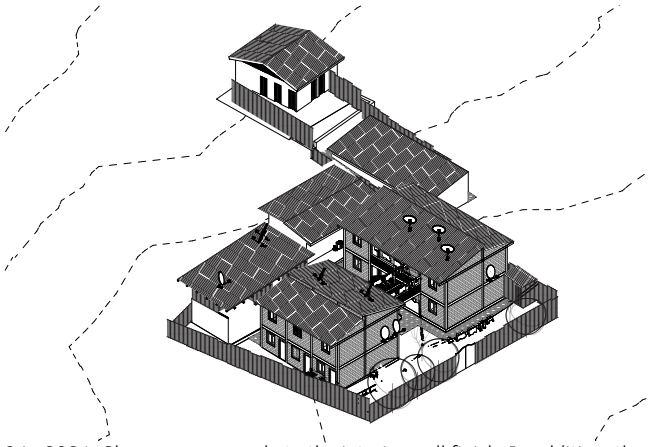
01. 1992_Original state_The family owns both rooms on the ground level. The kitchen space was shared.



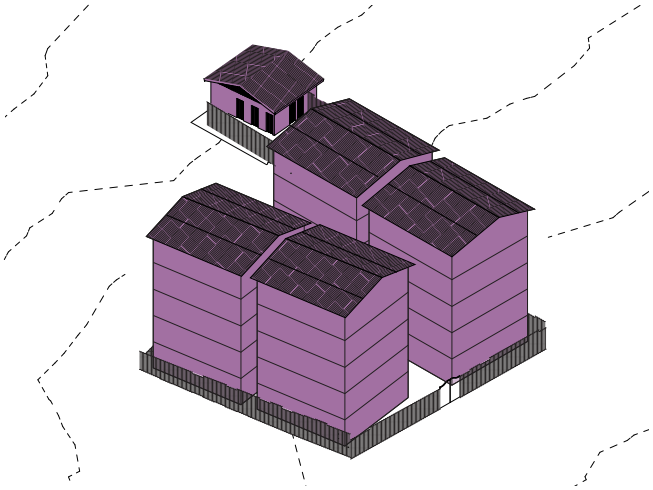
02. ~2000_Material changes to the wall finish, the openings and ceiling. The kitchen space was shared.



03. 2013_More changes were made to the interior space. In addition a private kitchen was built by taking up the space under the stairs.



04. 2021_Changes were made to the interior wall finish. In addition the communal kitchen was partitioned into privately owned portions. Since this owner had already constructed a private kitchen under the stairs, they converted their share of the communal kitchen to a rental unit.



05. Desired future scenario

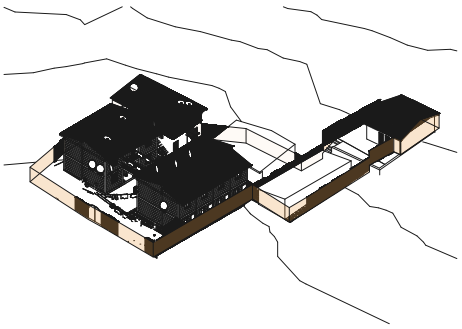
05. His preferred future scenario is to see multiple multi-storey buildings constructed in the compound. He believes that the space is underused at the moment and not making enough of a contribution to resolving the housing crisis in the city.

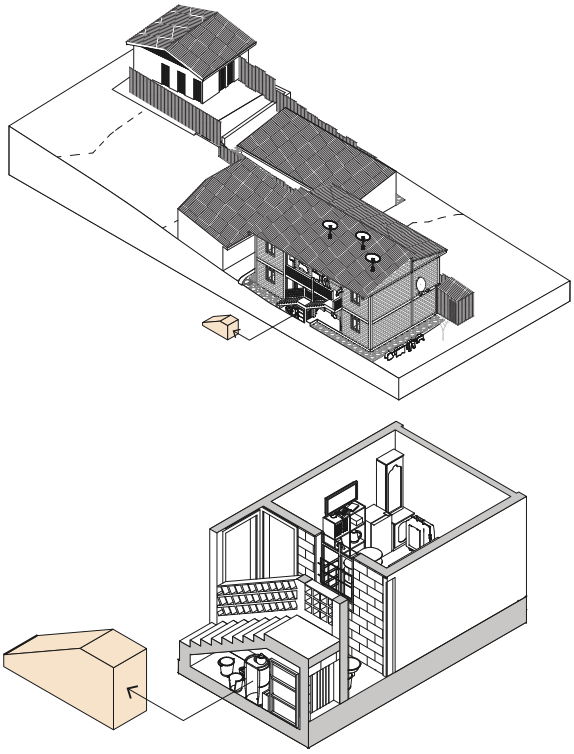
He is convinced that constructing additional buildings will help them generate income through rent and enable them to have showers and toilets closer to their homes, while at the same time enabling the site to house more people than it currently does.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Getahun considers the space behind the fence as the gibi. When compared with other similar urban upgrading projects, he believes that their gibi the dwelling units are still intact with a residential character because of the gibi. Apart from using it for their daily domestic activities, Getahun and the rest of the neighbours use the gibi for celebrating collective Christian holidays and other events such as weddings and funeral services.





The Gwaro

Getahun feels that there is no gwaro in this specific house. He compares this with the previous setting of the kebele house before the area underwent upgrading. He feels there is no gwaro on any side of the house as everything is accessible and open.

The Gwada

The space that is claimed from under the stair is the gwada for Getahun. It used to be a space defined by the soffit of the stair and getahun changed it into a small crouching room with two walls on the sides and a front entrance. Activities of the gwada sometimes overspill into the circulation space during cooking sessions.

No Gwaro



01



02



03



04



05



06



07

01 View of the house in pink and the kitchen under the stairs.

02 Front view of the building where the house under study is visible behind the stair to the bridge.

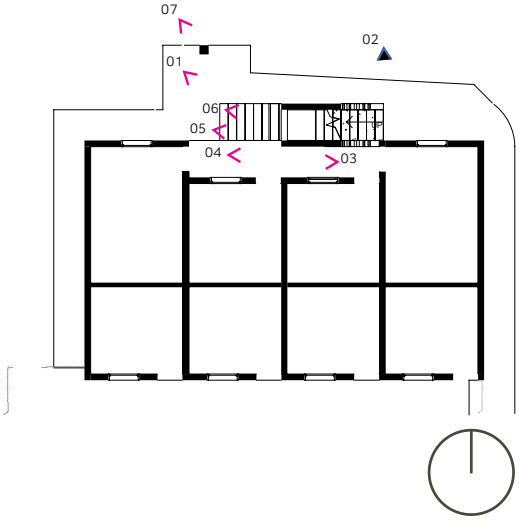
03 View of the corridor, different houses are delineated by their colors

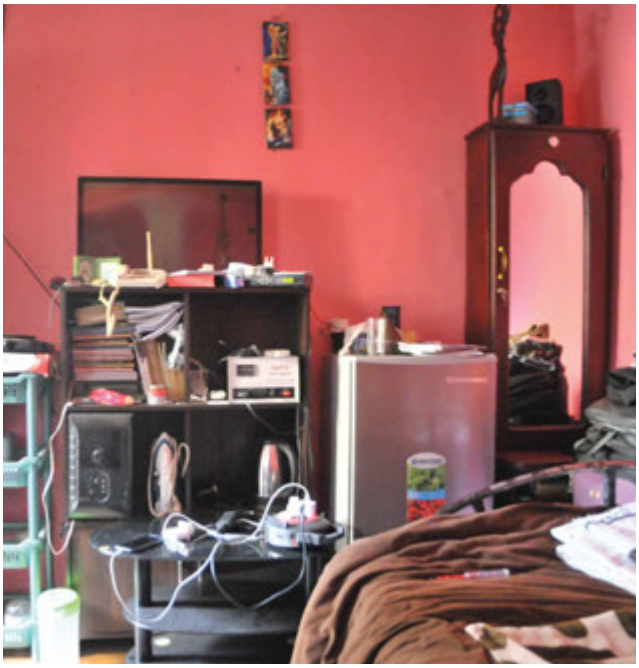
04 View of the access to the house. The corridor also serves as a storage space.

05 View of the kitchen under the stair with the door open.

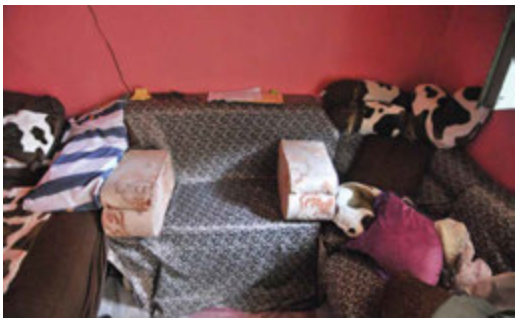
06 View of the kitchen with a person working in a squatting position.

07 View of the shared water point under the bridge. At the back, the dish washing and water storage space of the kitchen is in view .





08



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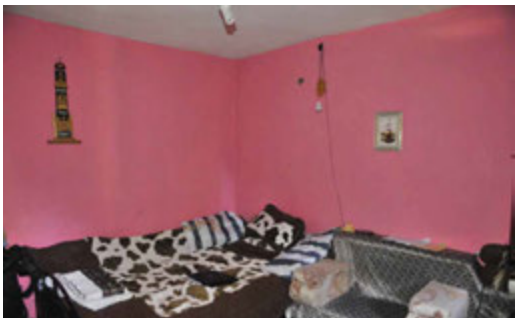


10



11

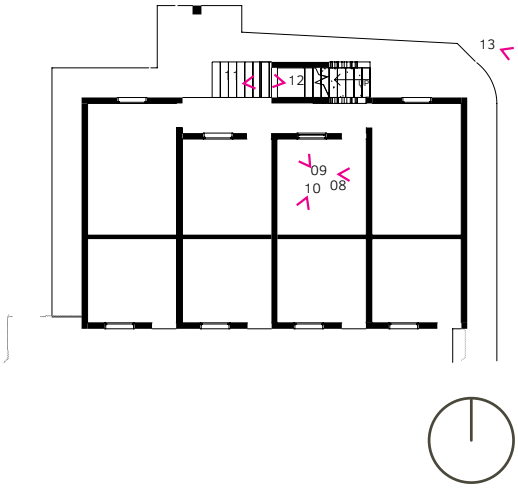


12



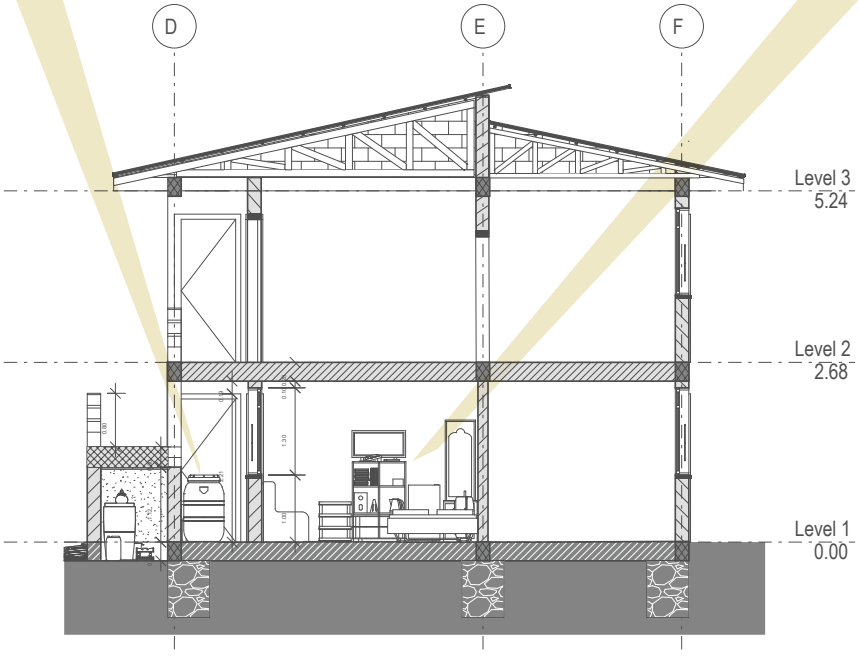
13

08 View of the mixed storage space and TV stand
09 View of the sitting space by the window
10 View of the sleeping/ sitting/ studying space
11 Interior view of the kitchen under the stairs
12 View of the space outside the kitchen, taken from inside the kitchen
13 View of the rental unit (painted green and with a shaded entrance)



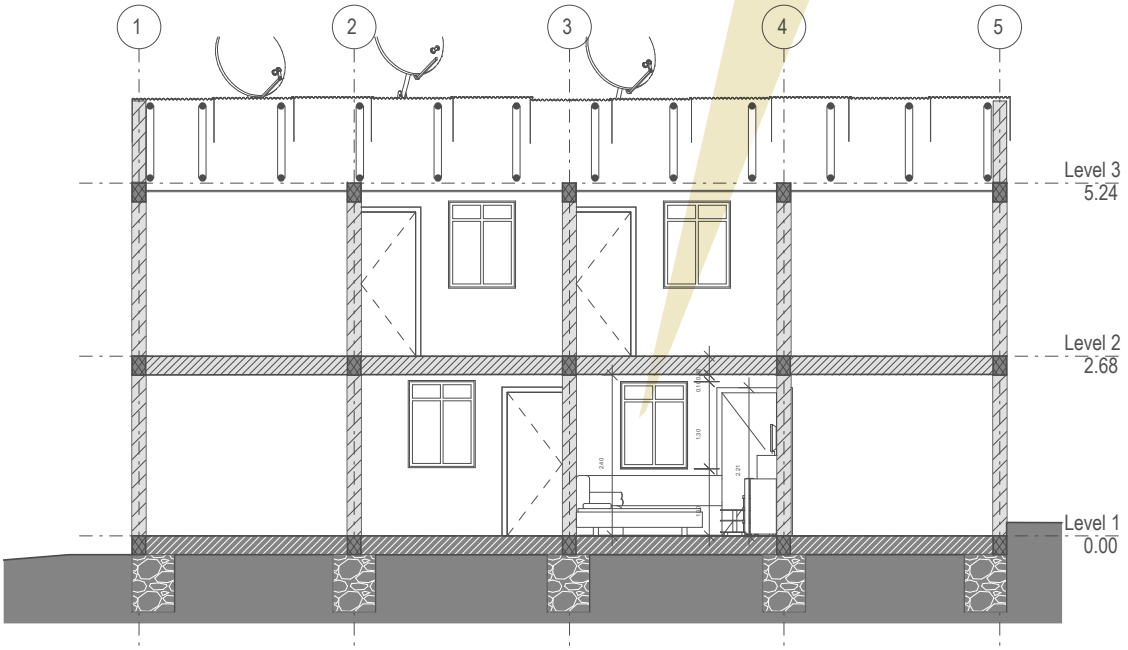
"We never faced water issues back in the day. Nowadays there is a water shortage, so we must place these water containers on the corridor to store water. "

"To be honest, my room is a mess. I would have organized it properly if I had enough space. I tend to like how disorganized it looks, and I think it's fitting for the size of the room."

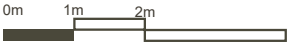


Section A-A

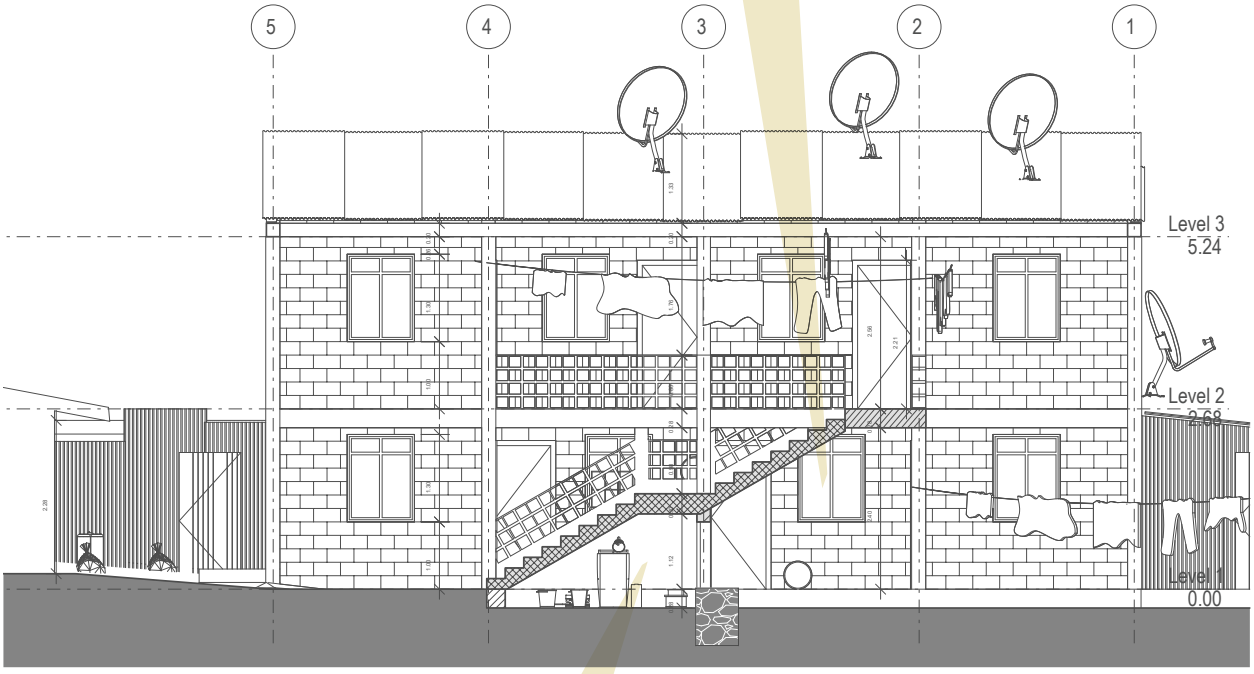
"I would like to install a type of glass that allows you to look outside but prevents neighbours from looking inside. I want to be able to see what goes on in the compound. I want to be in control. "



Section B-B

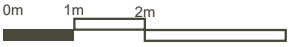


"I do not have a proper shower and toilet so I would like to build one here. I want to build it under the common stair scaled to the available space and connect it with the municipal sewer line. "



Section C-C

"This is our kitchen. You must crouch in there to enter the space and cook. The maid does most of the cooking in there."



Material encounters



01 Cement plastered and painted wall. A light bulb hangs from the plastered and painted ceiling.
02 Wall hung light bulb with exposed electric cables is in view along with a wooden cross that is also hung on the same nail on the wall.
03 Mixed storage space holding items for many household uses.
04 A black internet router mounted on the wall.
06 Exposed concrete finish of the kitchen in contrast with the exterior
06a and 06b Curtains that take on the color of the room when the window is closed. When it is open, its lighter color is revealed.
07 The main door of the house. It is made of metal
08 Perforated concrete blocks that have been filled in with cement mortar.
09 Corrugated zinc sheet wall of the rental unit
10 Metal grill on the exterior side of the window
11 Small metal door of the kitchen.
12 Stone paving of the compound is covered by plastic floor covers of different kinds around the kitchen.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td>05</td><td>06a</td><td rowspan="2">07</td></tr>
<tr><td>08</td><td colspan="2">06b</td></tr>
<tr><td>09</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr>
</table>

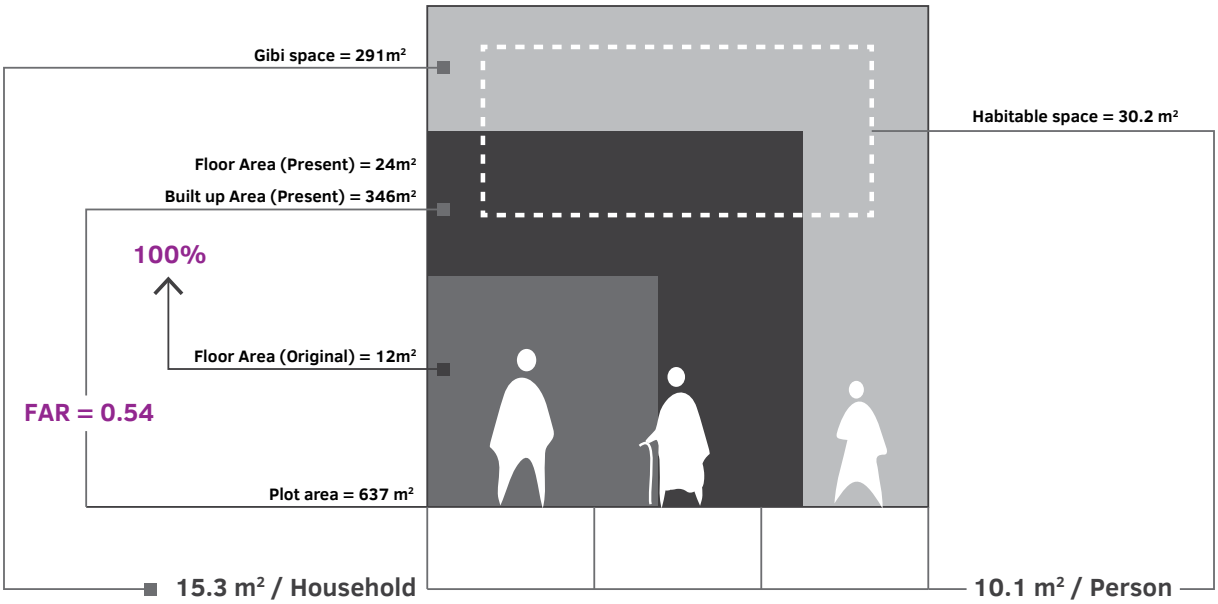
Photo trigger



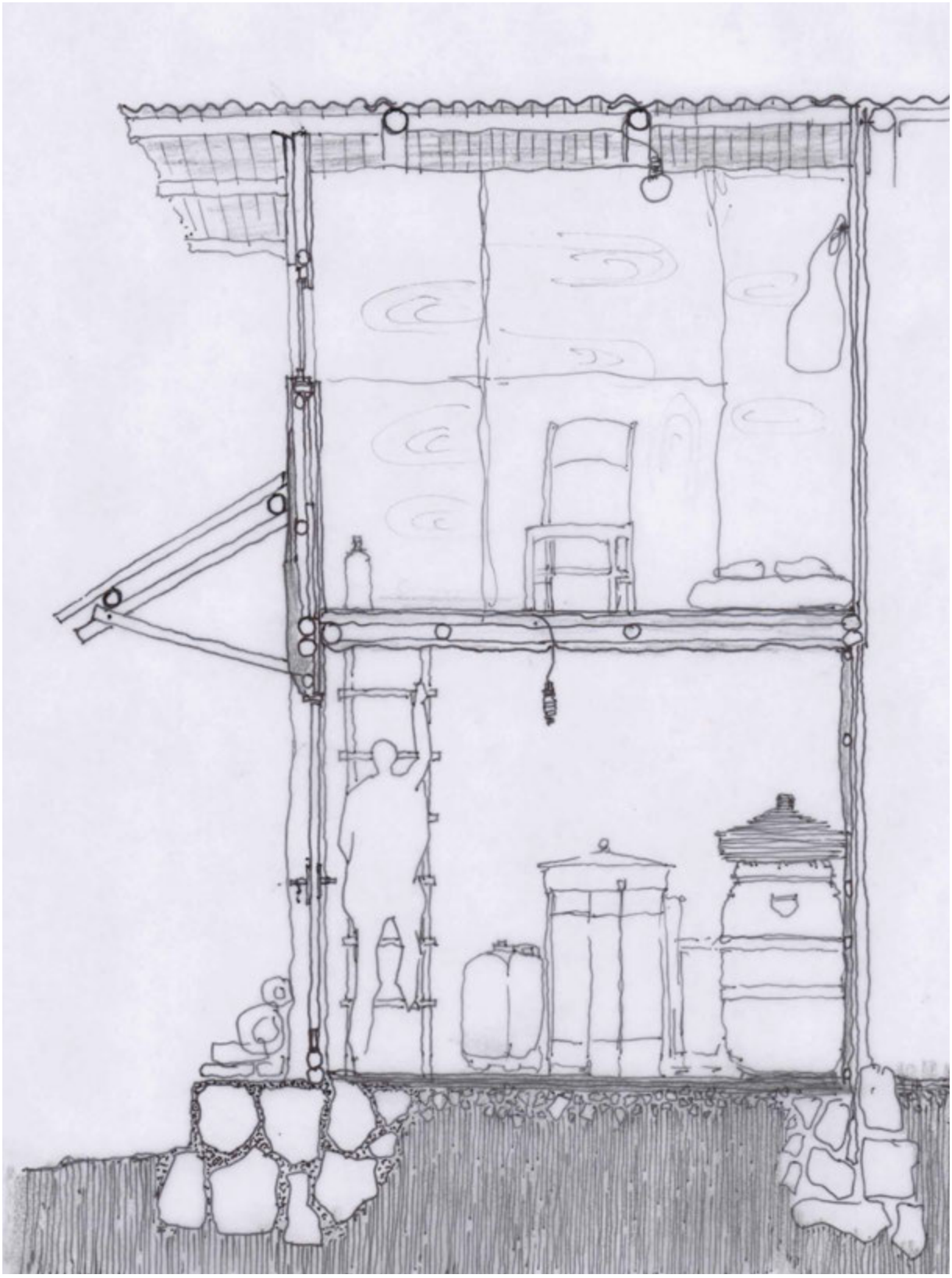


Getahun lives in a studio flat that does not have additional space for cooking. Since his unit is located on the ground floor, he converted the space under the common staircase outside the gallery into a cooking space that he refers to as the gwada. This image captures how he tried to appropriate this space as part of his house by adding a door and applying paint. Meanwhile, he has done his best not to offend his neighbours and the authorities by maintaining the width of the stairs as it was, a decision that limits the height of the gwada to the height of the landing. The image initiated the dialogue about Getahun's modification where he mentioned his plans to construct a shower unit under the remaining part of the stairs in a similar way but by adding side walls. He was very happy to have received the picture of his adaptation and he placed it in a prominent corner of his studio.

Diagrammatic synthesis



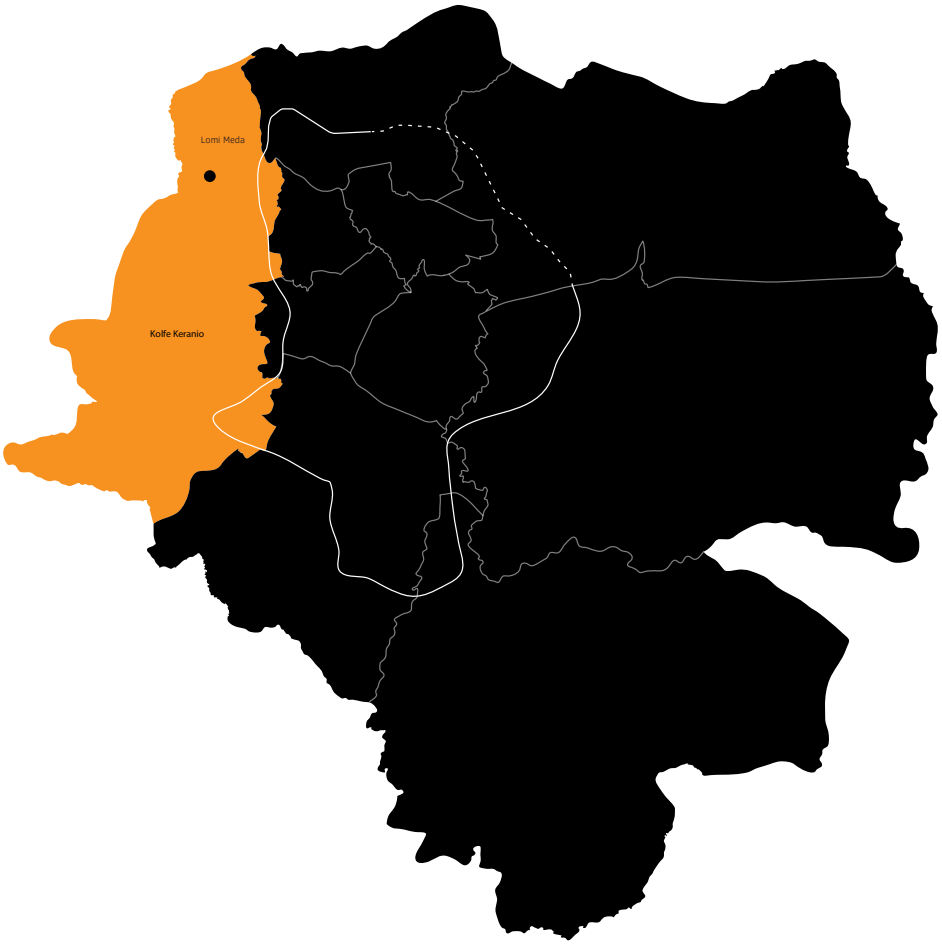
Building techniques





INDEX

Dwelling in Precarity





Selected area (2006)



Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selection



Cluster structure_2006_1Ha



Increase in footprint by 2022_ 104.3% in the selected 1Ha area





01



02



03



04



05



06

01 The approach path to the neighbourhood
02 A view of the neighbourhood from the small gardens
03 The wooden bridge giving access to the neighbourhood
04 View of a young girl carrying water across the bridge
05 A girl walking uphill on the cobblestone street
06 A cobbled stone street leading to the selected sites





07

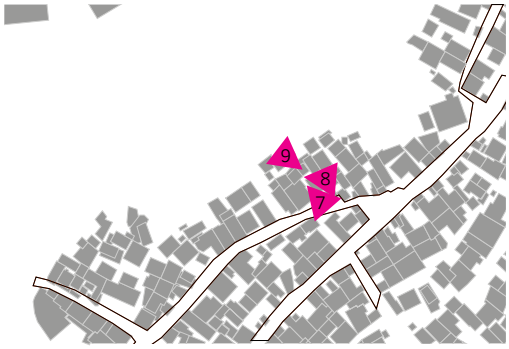


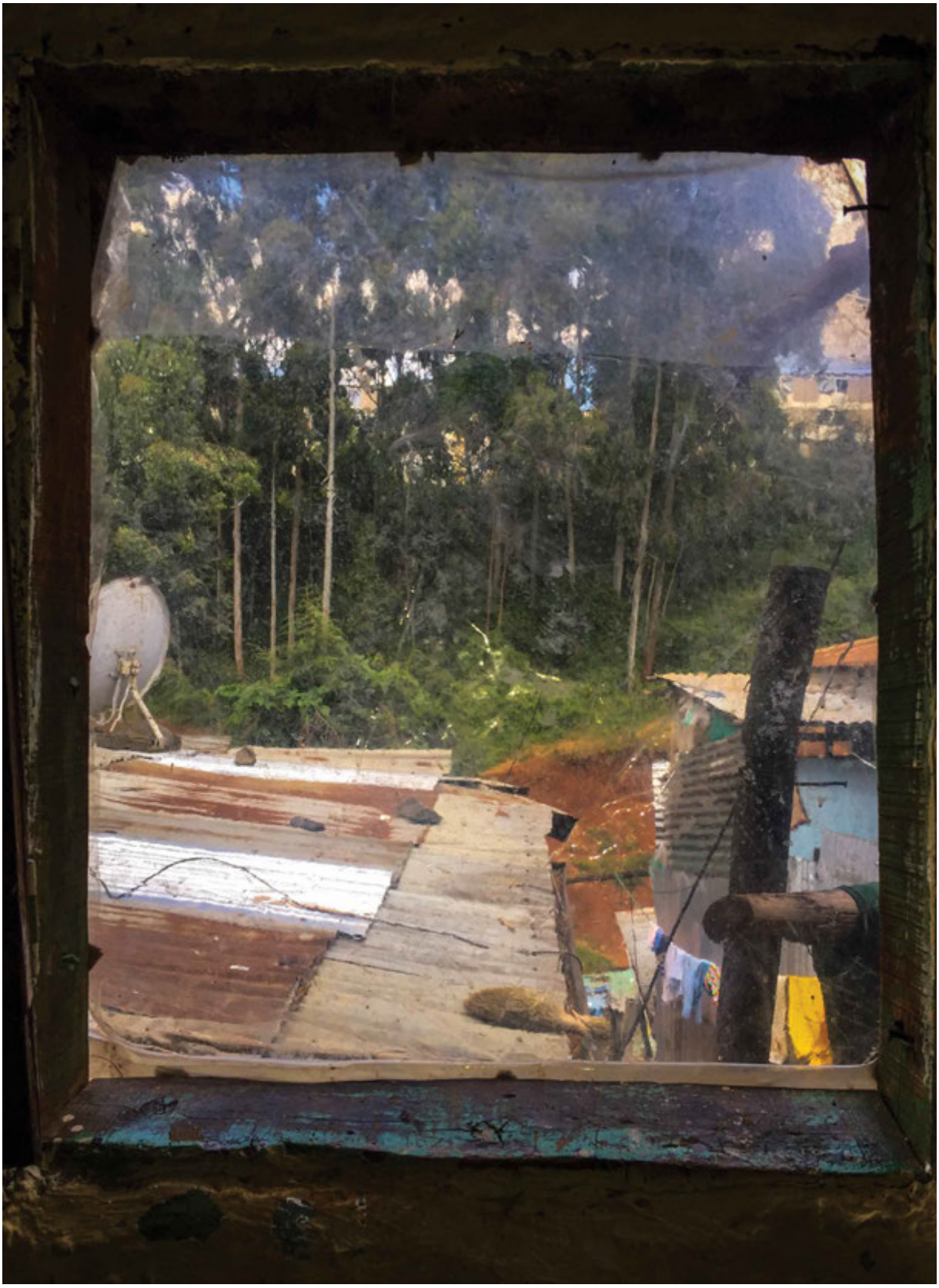
08



09

07 The main access passage to the house under study
08 Exterior view of the house under study
09 The passage from the house to the cobblestone street





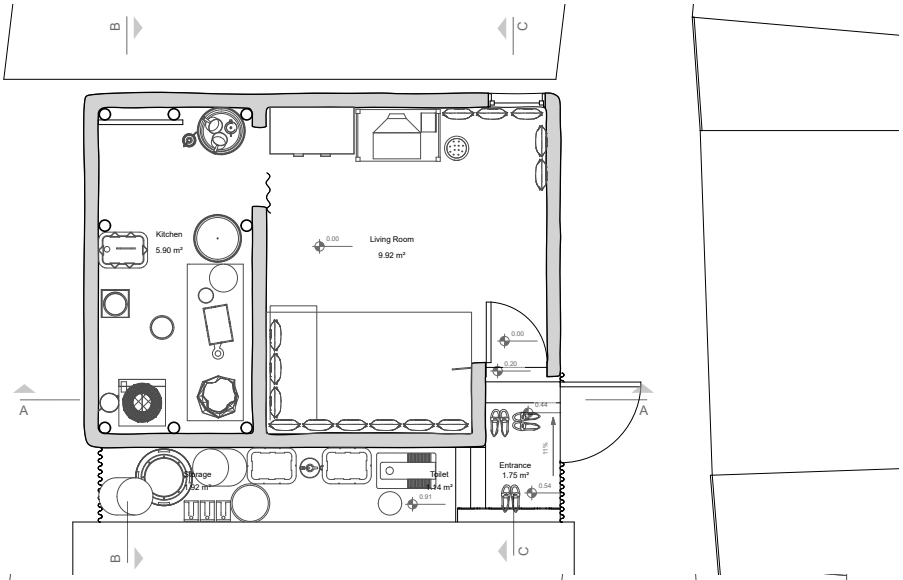
Aisha

If my children are reciting the Qor'an, they go up to the qot, one person at a time. By its nature the Qor'an requires one to be on an elevated platform to practice better so they go up to the qot to do it.

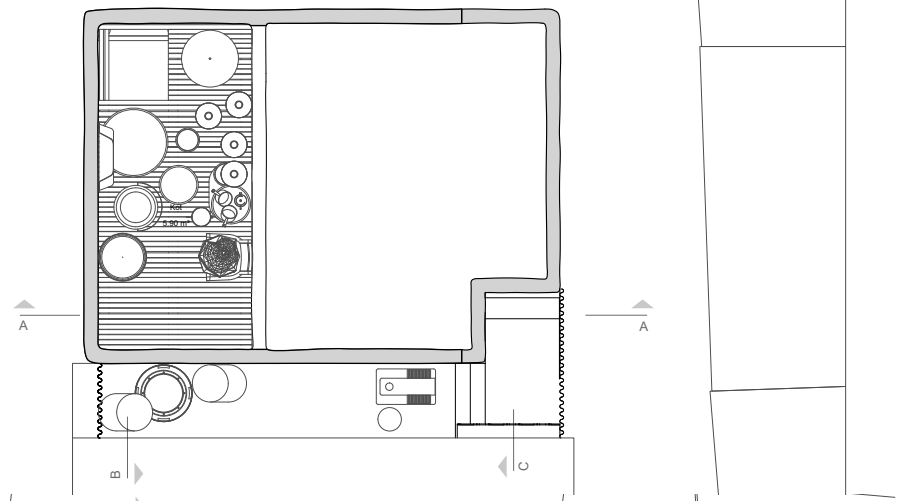
Malleable Gwada



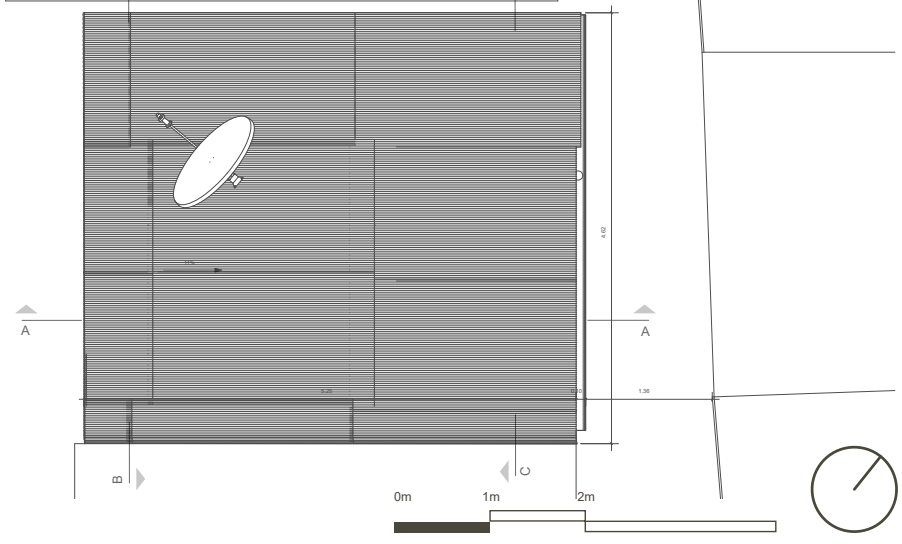
Plans



Ground floor plan

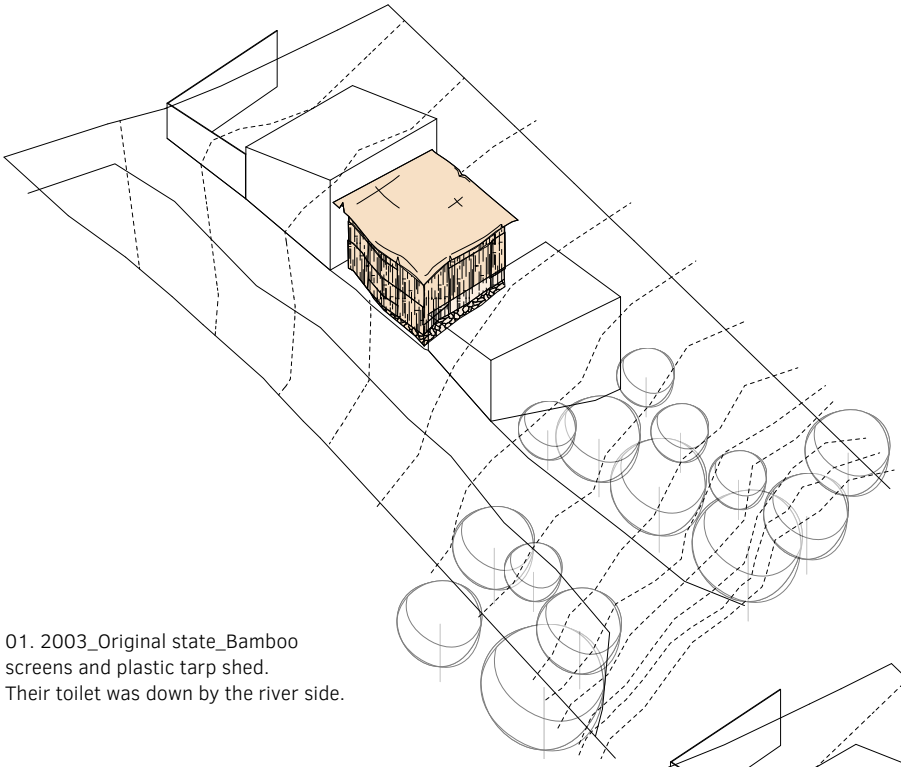


Qot level plan

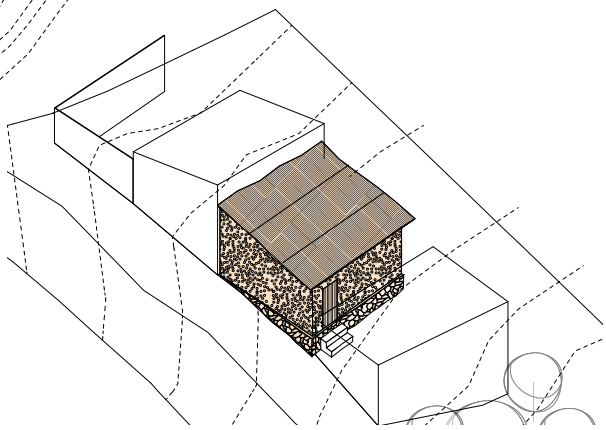


Roof plan

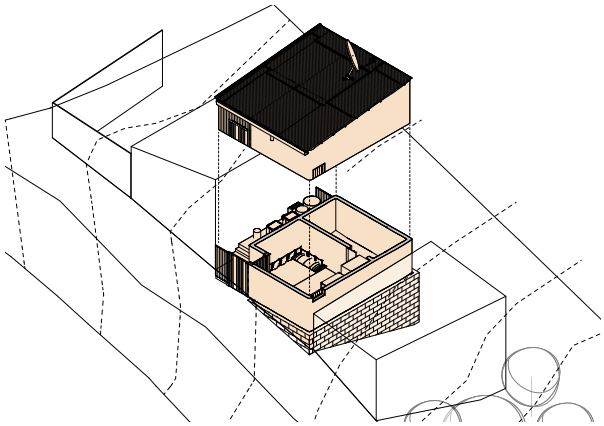
Dwelling transformation



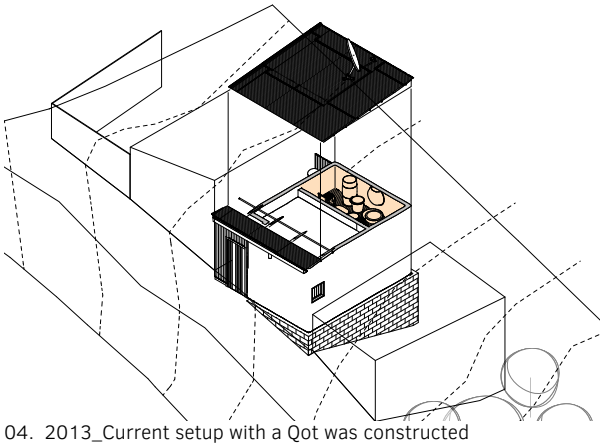
01. 2003_Original state_Bamboo screens and plastic tarp shed.
Their toilet was down by the river side.



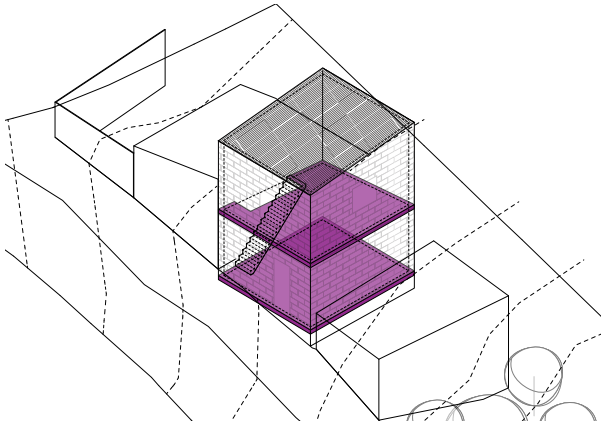
02. ~2005_Single room wattle and daub house constructed



03. ~2007_Transformed into a house with 2 rooms and a toilet



04. 2013_Current setup with a Qot was constructed

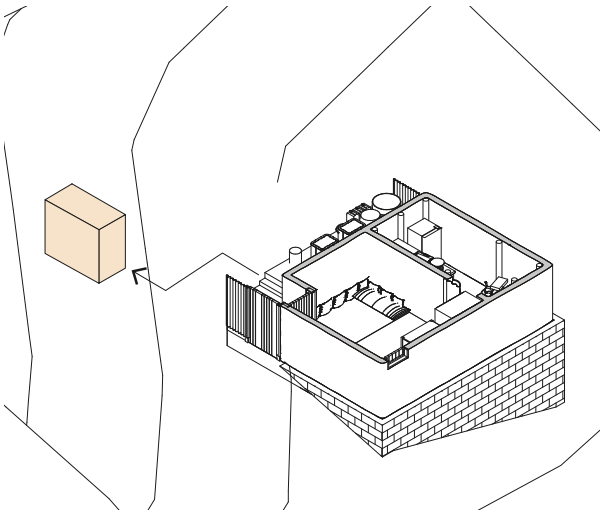


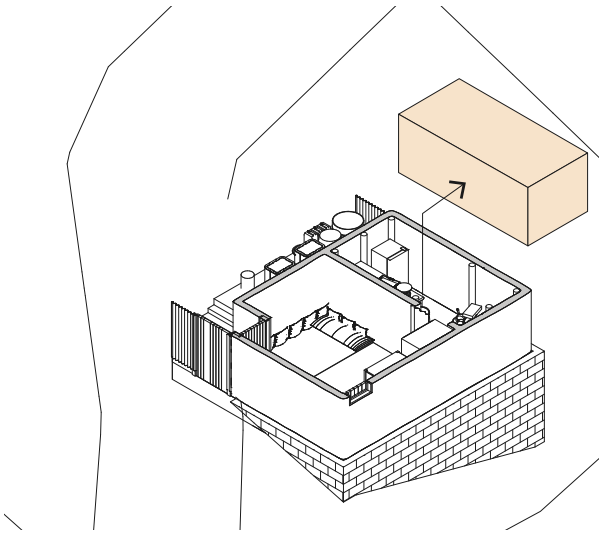
05. Desired future scenario: a ground plus one building with strong foundations, HCB walls, separately accessible toilet and a shower. Overall, a more spacious residence capable of hosting more guests.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Aisha does not feel that they have a proper gibi. She considers the small threshold space that they have at the entrance as their gibi. She uses this space as a buffer zone between the outside and her interior environment. She sees this space as their 'mud room' where they take off their shoes before entering the living space.



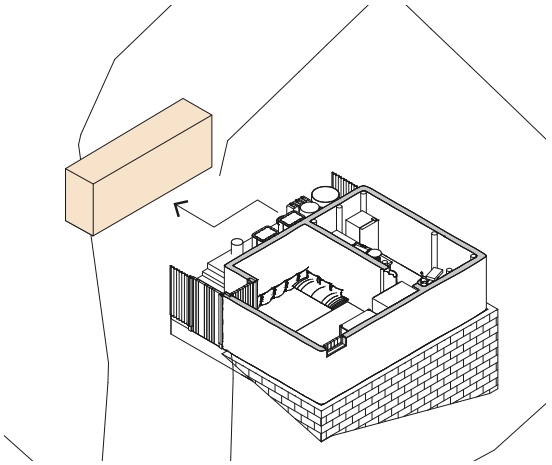


The Gwada

The gwada is the innermost space after the 'salon' and is used as a bedroom. This space is also used as a kitchen and Aisha does most of her cooking here except baking injera. Aisha uses the Qot to bake injera but does not consider the Qot as part of the gwada of the house.

The Gwaro

The latrine area at the back of the house serves as a gwaro for Aisha and her children. This space is also used as a storage space for non-food items such as shoes etc. The gwaro space is accessed from the small gibi creating a separation from the living spaces. Aisha wants to improve this as the gwaro is still too proxim to the living spaces.

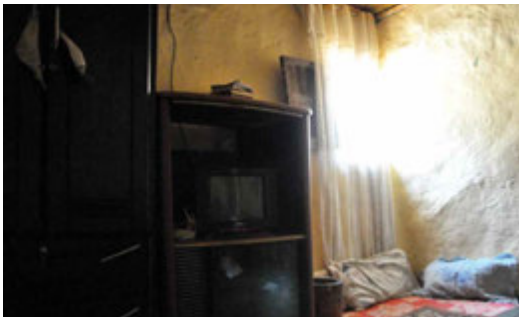




01



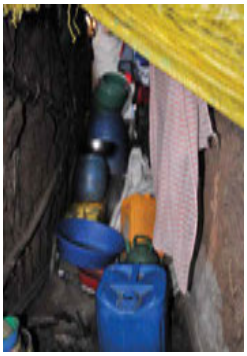
02



03



04



05

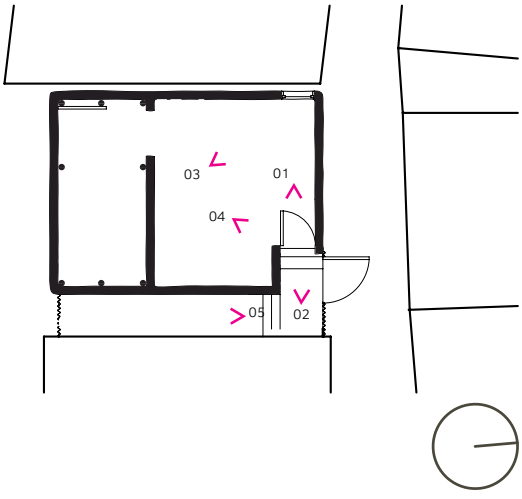
01 View of the main door into the house as seen from the interior

02 View of the Ghebi; the small space where shoes are taken off before entering the house

03 View of TV stand, and the corner where the children sit by the lone window

04 View of the corner defining the sitting space. This space gains more definition the door in to the house is open, as seen on image 01

05 View of the narrow toilet plus storage space





06



07



08

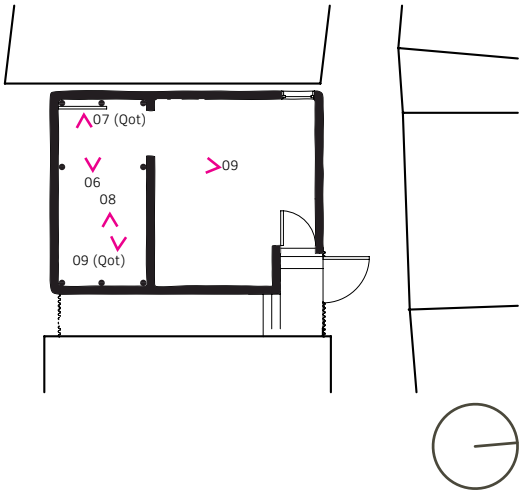


09

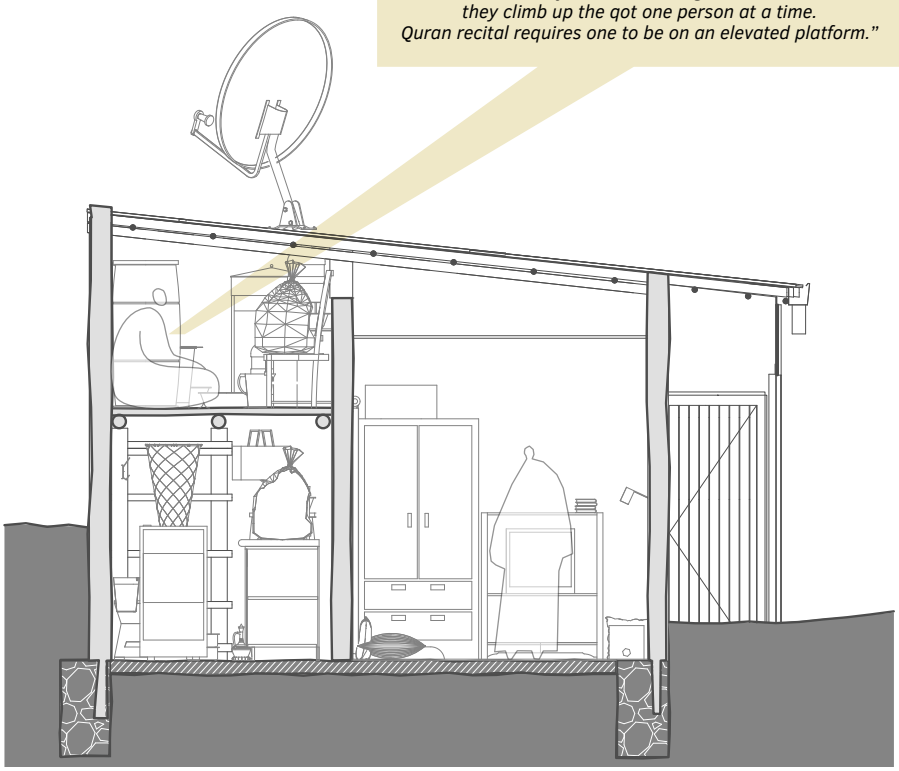


10

06 View of the storage space in the Gwada, and the access ladder to the Qot
07 View of the access hatch as seen from the Qot
08 View of the Gwada (cooking space + storage space + access to the Qot)
09 View of the access to the Gwada. The flexible electric plug is also in view the plug is used in the sitting/ sleeping space as well as in the Gwada
10 View of the Injera making space on the Qot

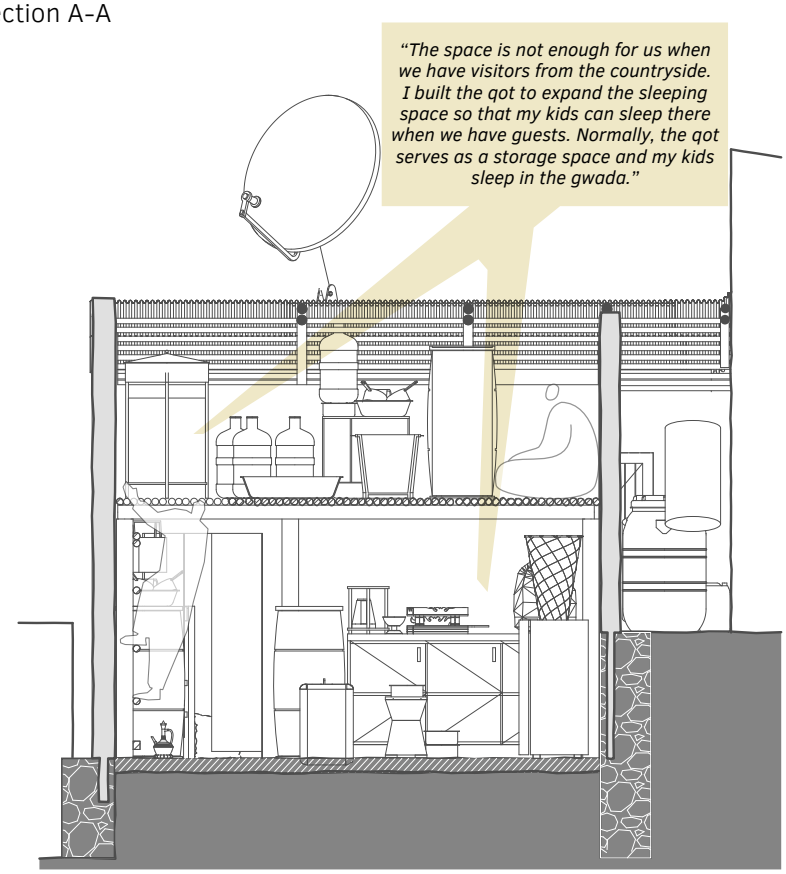


*"When my kids are reciting the Quran,
they climb up the qot one person at a time.
Quran recital requires one to be on an elevated platform."*



Section A-A

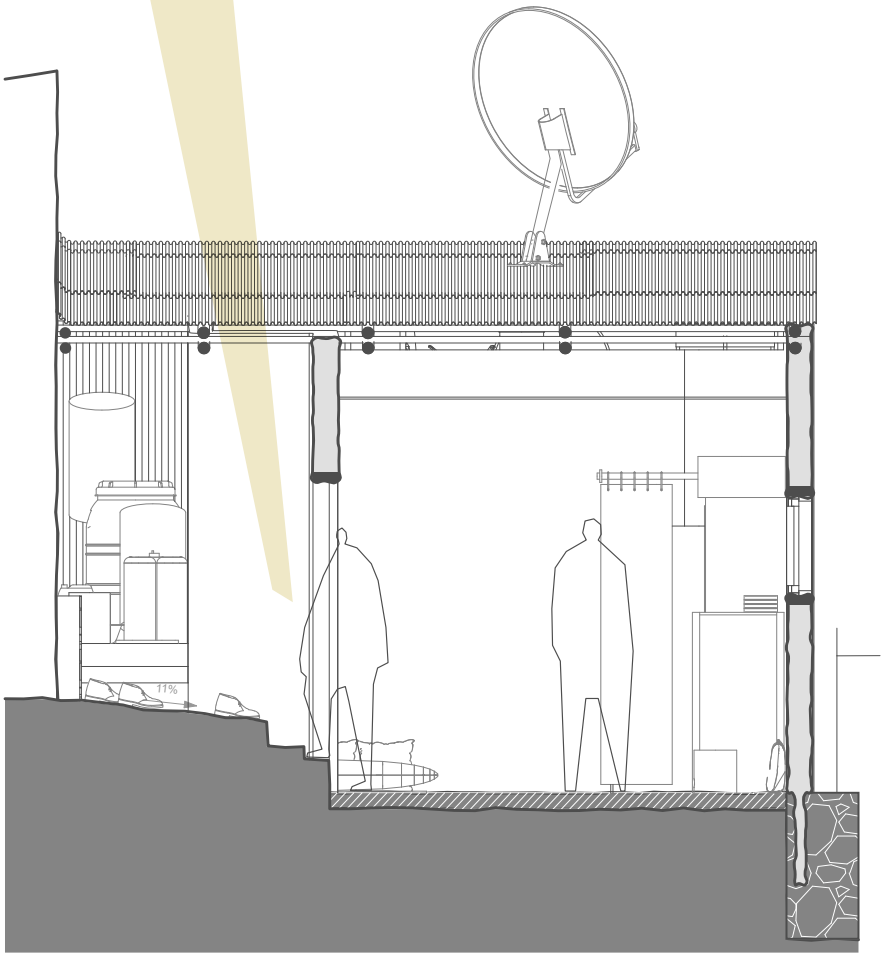
*"The space is not enough for us when
we have visitors from the countryside.
I built the qot to expand the sleeping
space so that my kids can sleep there
when we have guests. Normally, the qot
serves as a storage space and my kids
sleep in the gwada."*



Section B-B



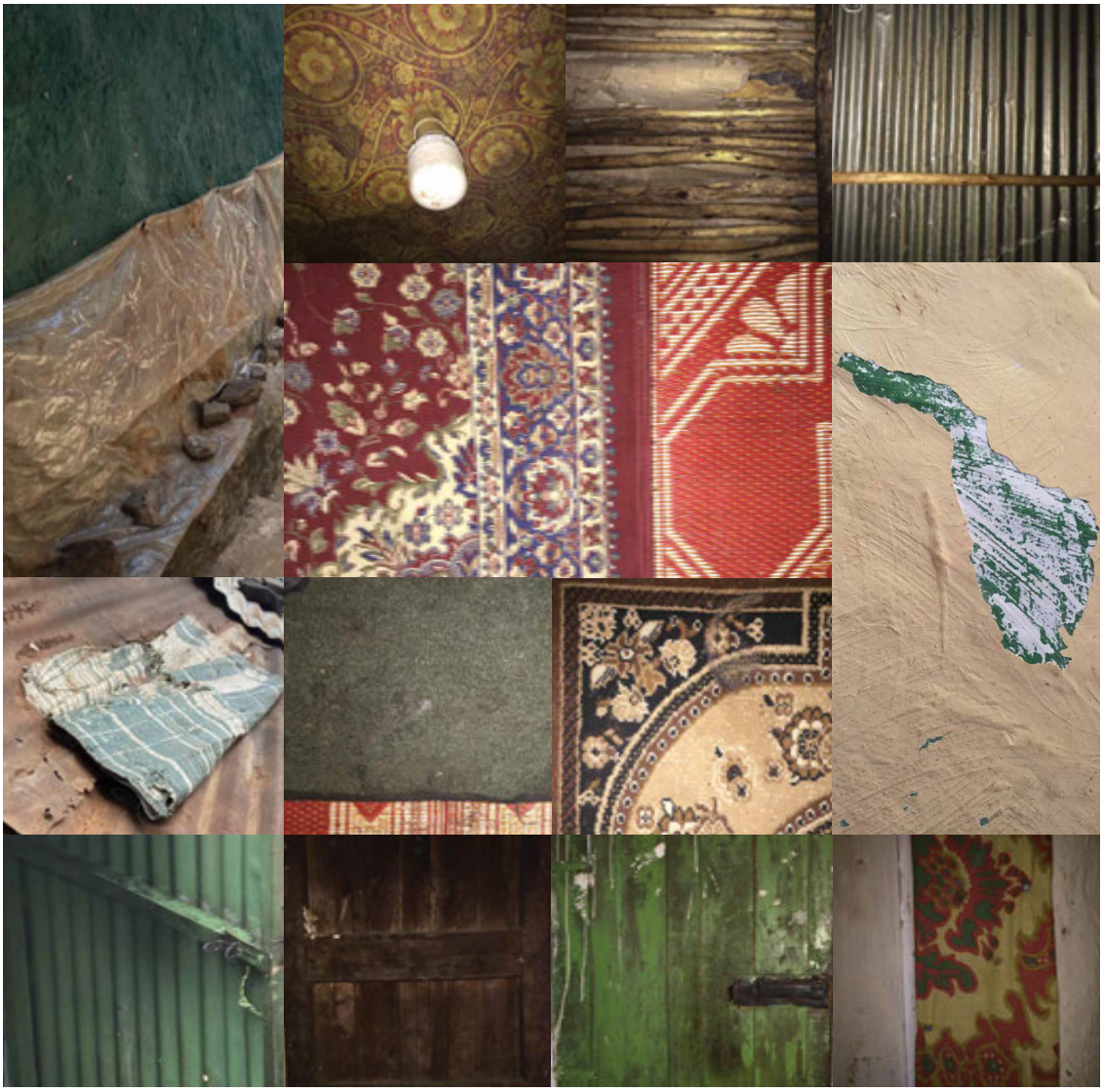
“We do not have a compound and I do not want my children to step outside and engage with strangers. So, I decided to create indirect access to the street with a small internal gibi to privately access our toilet. ”



Section CC

0m 1m 2m

Material encounters



01 Eucalyptus frames plastered with mud and straw mix, gypsum plaster, and paint. The cement plastered masonry ledge and the plastic sheet is applied to protect the building from water.
02 Fabric ceiling and lighting fixture.
03 Rows of Eucalyptus poles making up the floor of the Qot and the ceiling of the Gwada
04 Corrugated zinc sheet on wooden structure used as a ceiling and a roof.
05a - 05cFloor cover carpets and rugs
06 Different layers of gypsum plaster and paint on the wall.
07 Rusted corrugated zinc sheet roof. A used mat is also seen covering some gaps in the roof.
08 Painted corrugated zinc sheet fence/ gate into the Gibi.
09 and 10 Two sides of the lone window (The green painted side is on the interior)
11 Gap between the wall and the door covered with a mattress cover.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">05 a</td><td rowspan="2">06</td></tr>
<tr><td>07</td><td>05 b</td><td>05 c</td></tr>
<tr><td>08</td><td>09</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr>
</table>

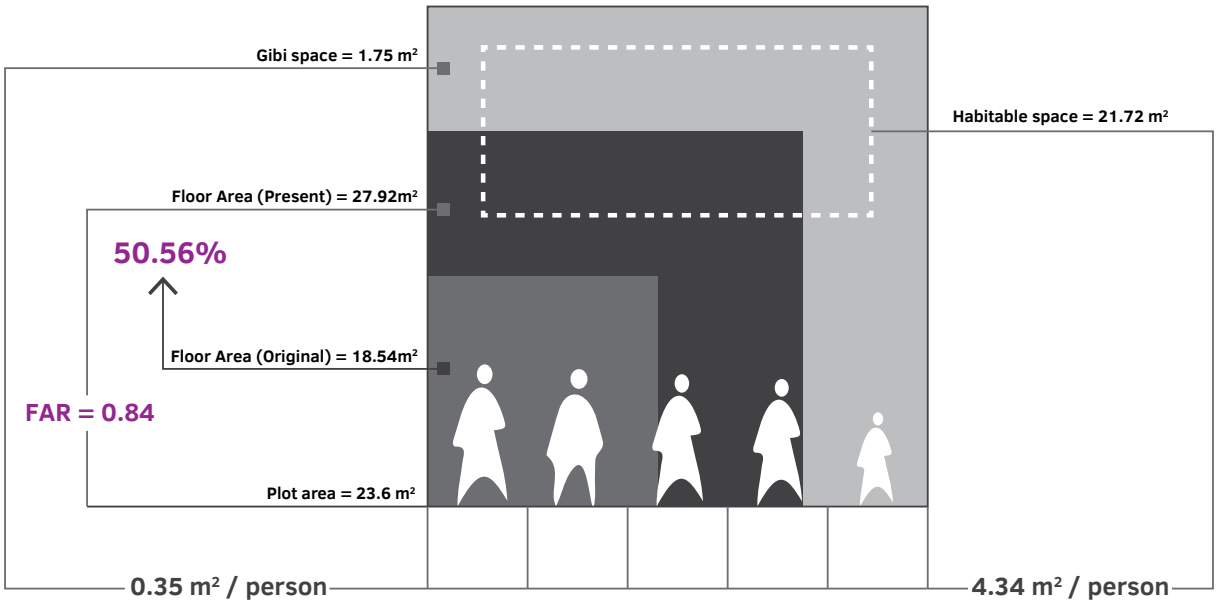
Photo trigger

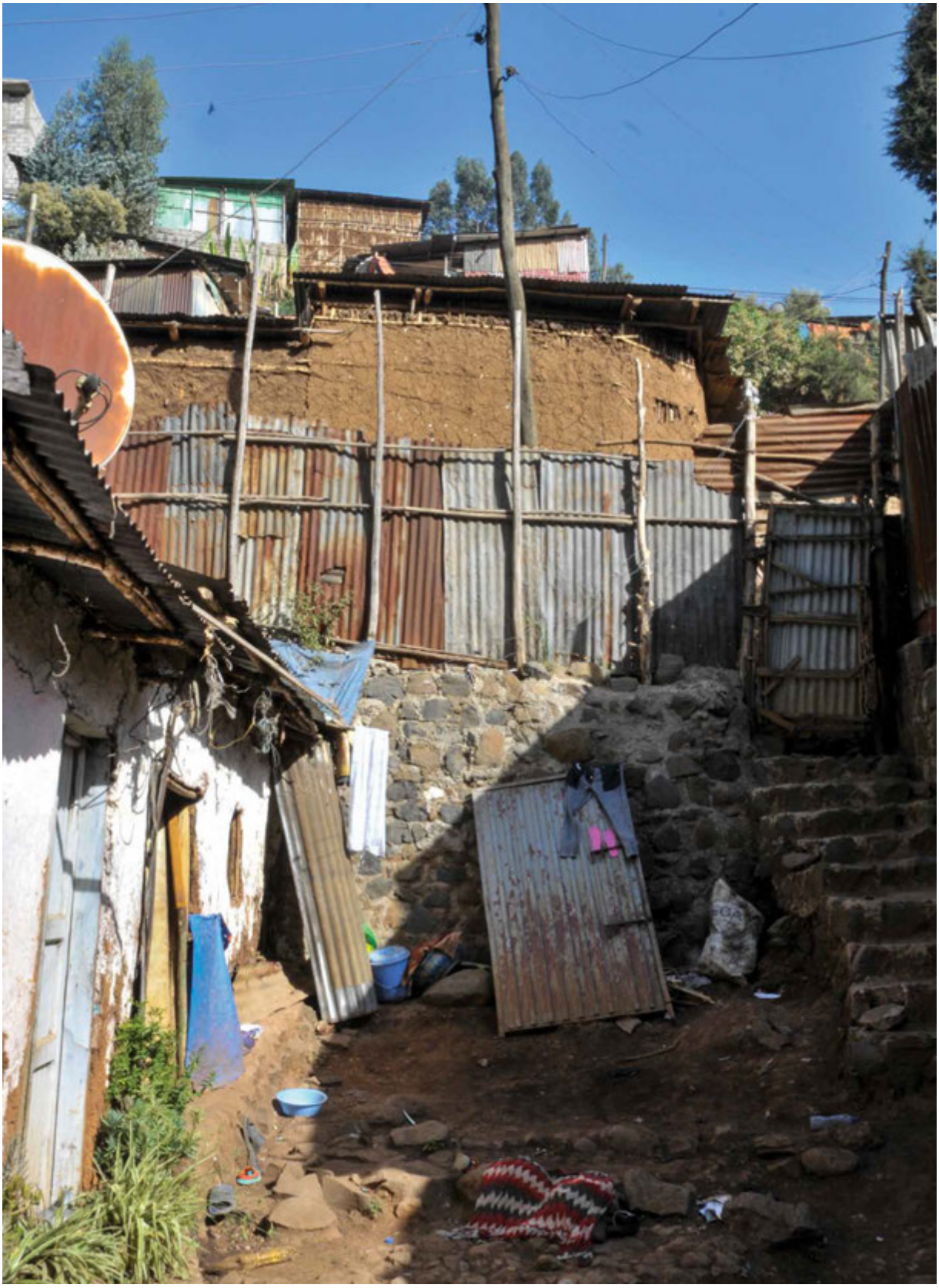




Aisha, a single mother with her two children lives in this house located in one of the riverside neighbourhoods of Addis Ababa that are commonly referred to as “moon-houses” to hint at their shady legal status. These types of houses are classically constructed during the night to evade authorities. This image was taken while Aisha expressed how her children are the most important thing in her life and she was describing the manner they use space in the salon where they usually study if guests are not around in the house. Contrary to the other spaces in this house, the salon is the only well-lit space because it is located next to a window. On the day this picture was presented to her, she placed the image on the floor by the side of an adjacent wall and explained how pictures are not welcome in a Muslim household.

Diagrammatic synthesis





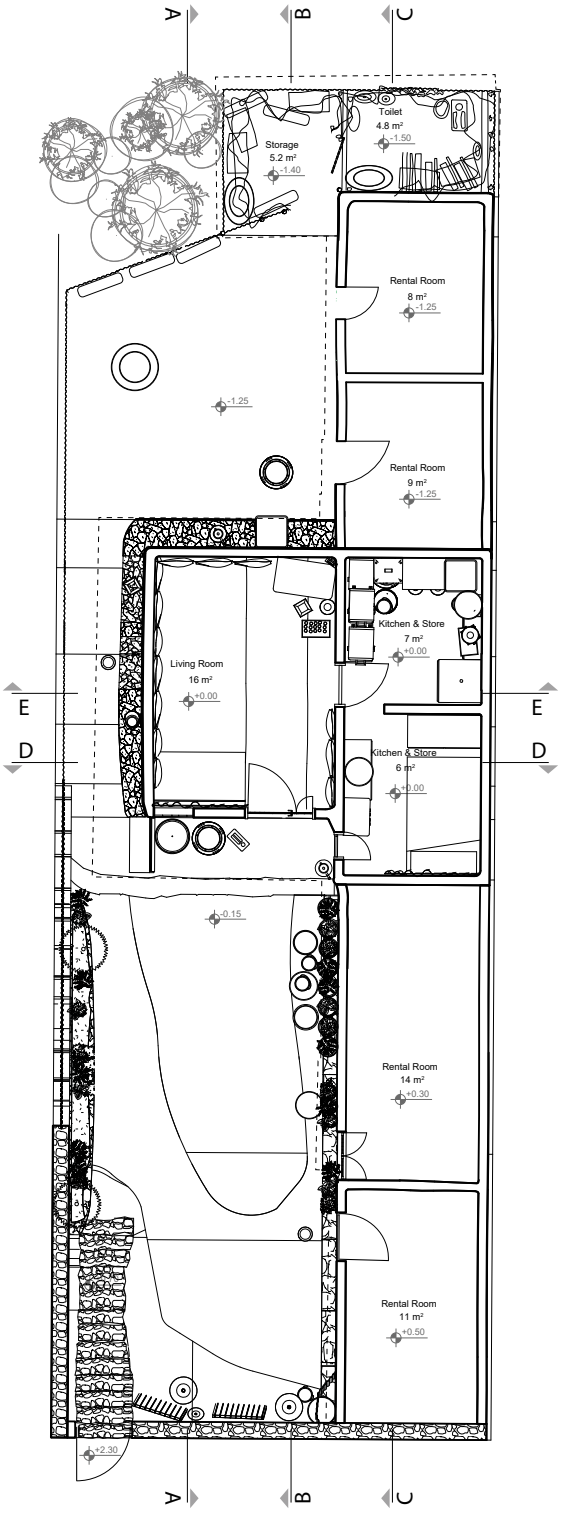
Khadija

Well back in the days, we had people you know, we had friends, and we also had some relatives from my husband's side. They all came together and helped us build the house. The only professional was a carpenter who did only the roof. The rest of the construction was done by us. It is a self-built house. We even plastered the mud with our bare hands.

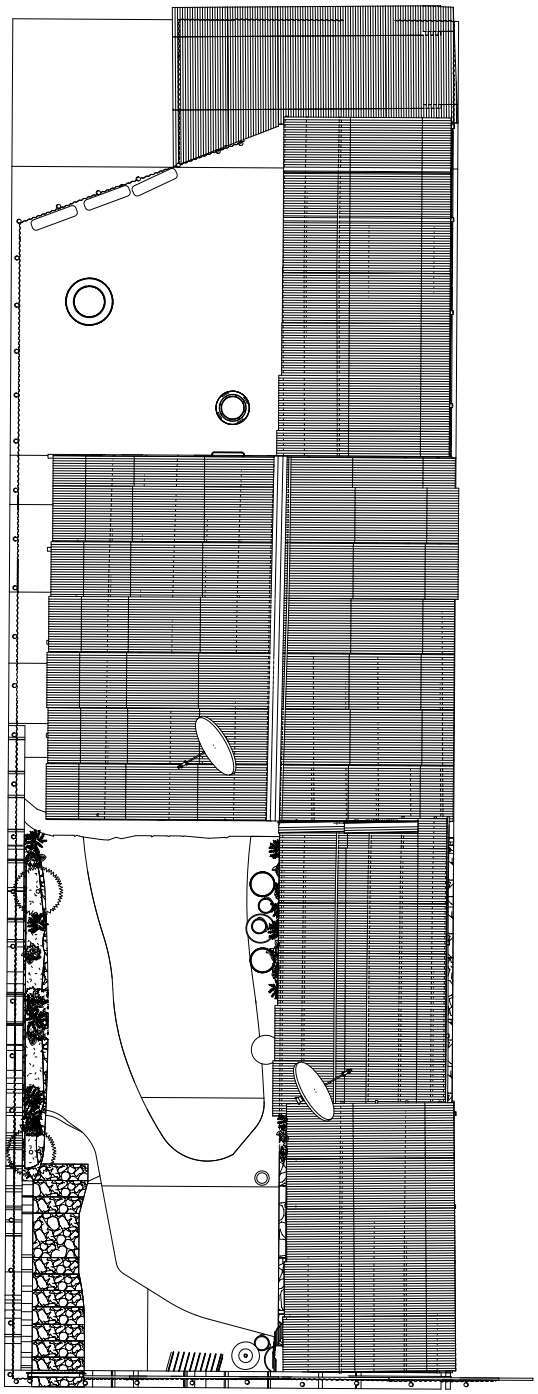
Landlordship in the Gwaro



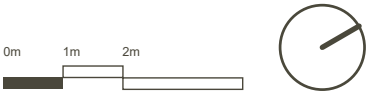
Plans



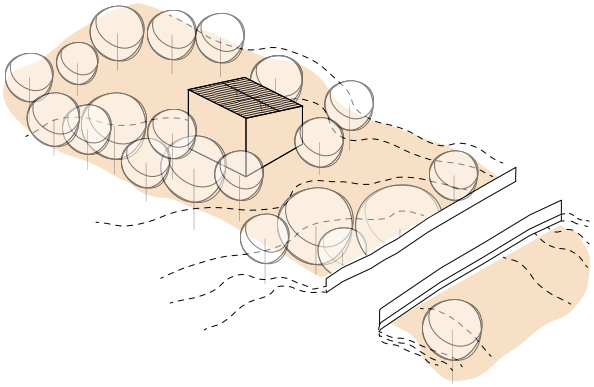
Ground floor plan



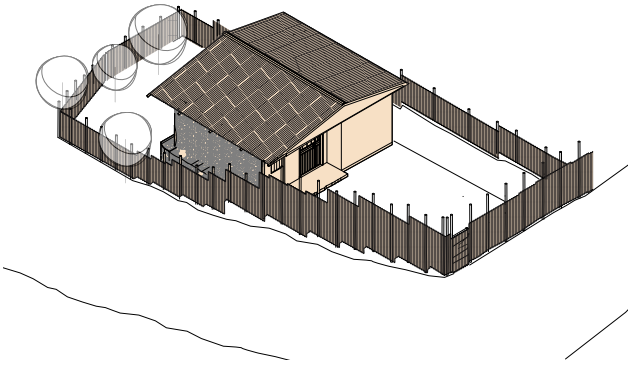
Roof plan



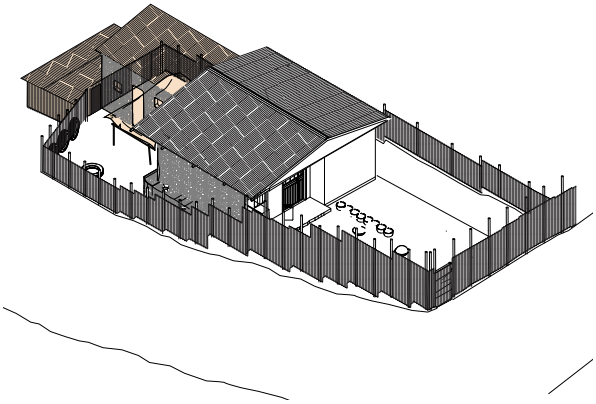
Dwelling transformation



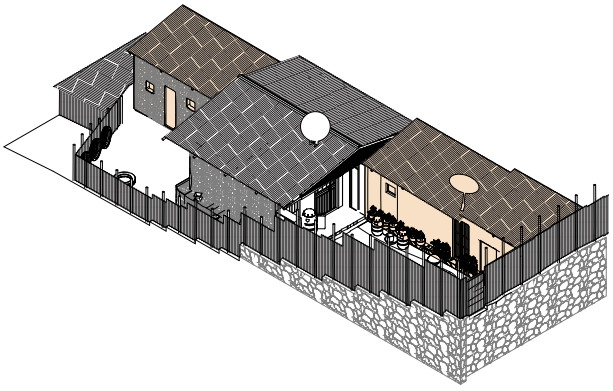
01. Before 2005_Original state of the house



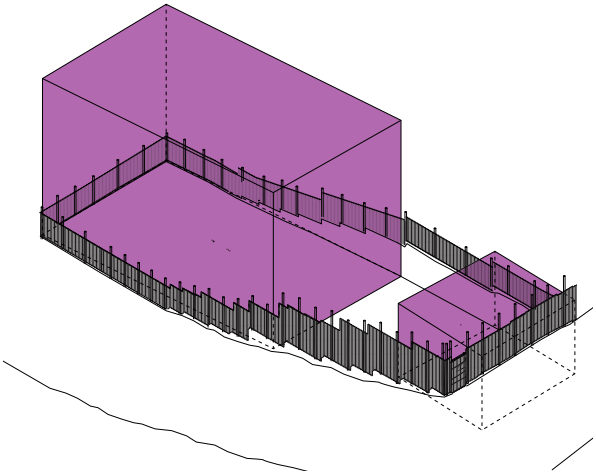
02. ~2005_The main house was constructed. It had two rooms



03. ~2007_A toilet space along the river side was claimed and two rental units were added in the space in between the main house and the toilet. The main house was also turned into a 3 room house.



04. ~2019 _Current setup of the house was constructed. Two more rental units were added in the front.

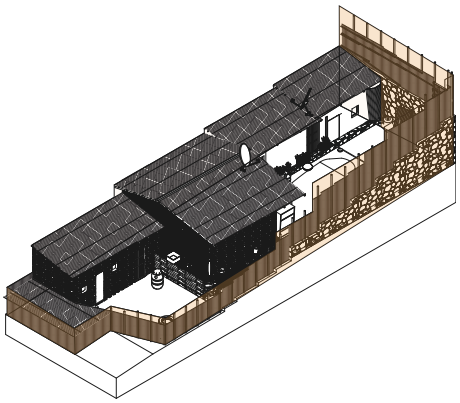


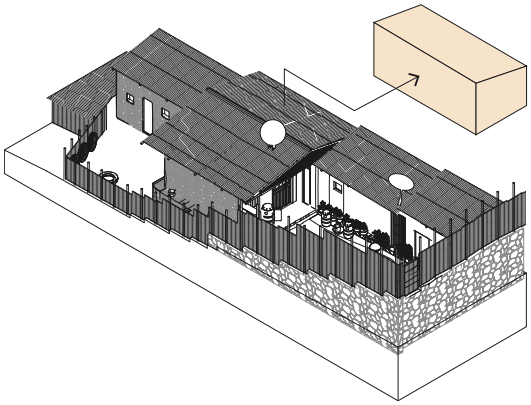
05. Desired future scenario: Demolishing the current house to construct a multi-storey residence with a separate kitchen in the space between the stairs into the compound and the boundary of the compound.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

The lomi meda settlements are very dense and dwelling units are mostly built connected to neighbouring houses. Khadija's gibi is defined by the neighbouring plots on both parallel ends and by the street retaining wall at the entrance. The gibi has a steep that goes until the farthest end where it was possible to build the toilet without proper retaining construction.



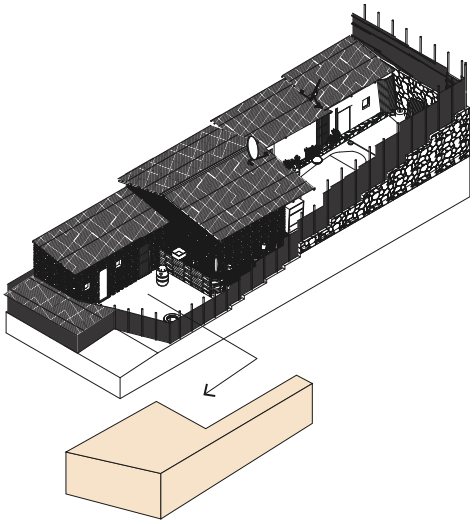


The Gwada

Khedija considers the bedroom and the kitchen as the gwada of the house. She aspires to build a separate house as a gwada with only the kitchen when she has the financial means to do so. The gwada can be accessed independently from the front end of the gibi making it suited for maintaining its privacy.

The Gwaro

The gwaro is located at the farthest end of the compound towards the river end. The gwaro is composed of a pit latrine toilet, a space with a temporary shade for kitchen-related activities and two rooms that are let out for income generation. This gwaro is also used for hanging clothes for drying up after washing.





01



02



03



04



05

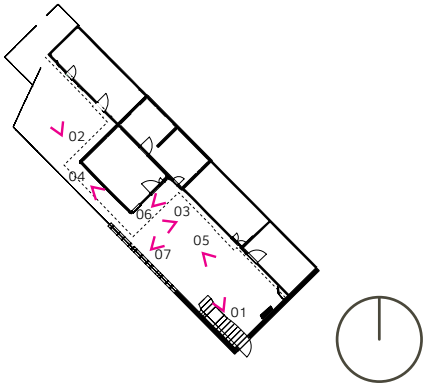


06



07

01 Front view of the house from the gate
02 View of the toilet and the rental units
03 Drainage ditch
04 View of the access to the Gwaro
05 The stairs in to the compound and two of the rental units
06 View of the second door to the bedroom
07 View of the window of the rental unit next to the bedroom. Dish washing and clothes washing space is also in view





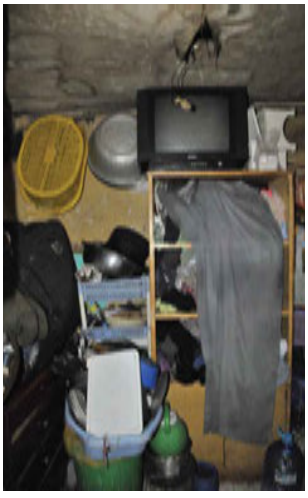
08



09



10



11



12



13

08 View of the coffee ceremony space, the sitting space in the living room and the access to the Kitchen

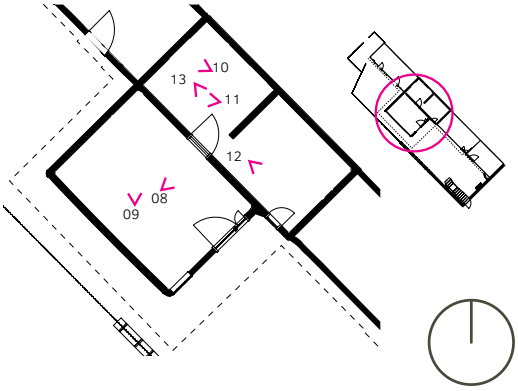
09 View of the coffee ceremony space, the television corner and the sitting space in the living room. The access door to the Kitchen is also in view

10 View inside the kitchen

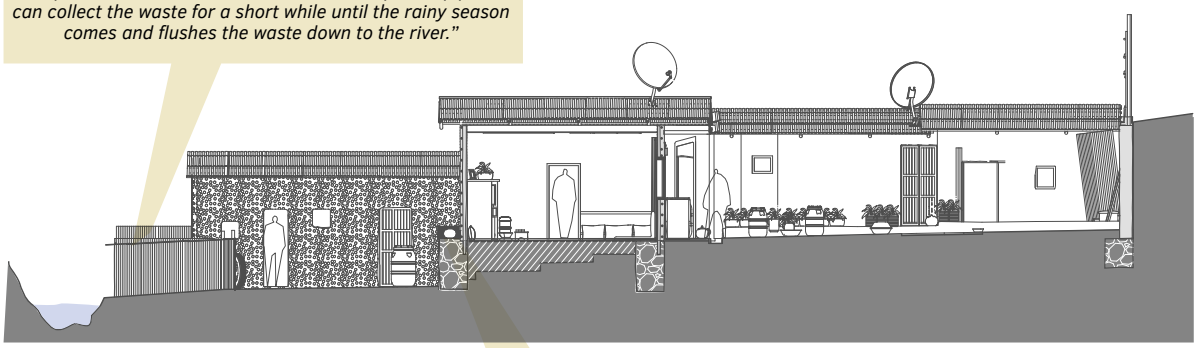
11 View of the storage space inside the kitchen

12 View of the bedroom, and the door to the bedroom

13 Mixed wall hung storage space in the kitchen



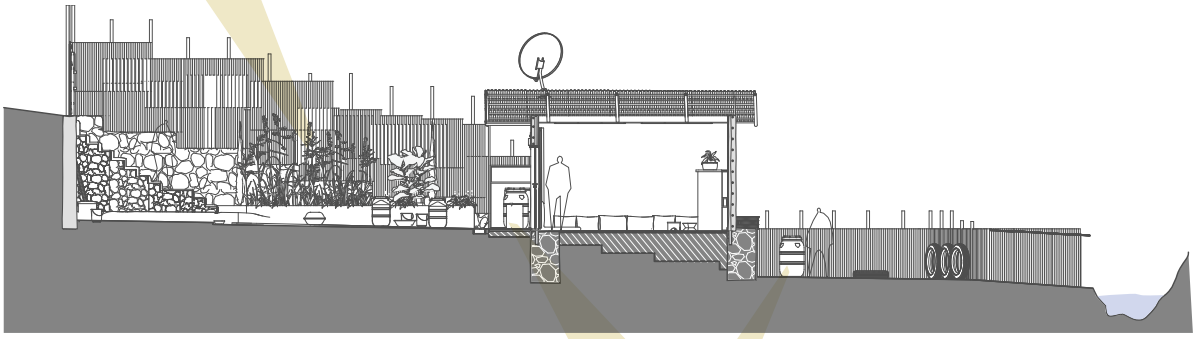
"The pit latrine is connected to the river with plastic pipes. It can collect the waste for a short while until the rainy season comes and flushes the waste down to the river."



Section A-A

"We wanted to prevent the rainwater from going underneath the walls and affecting the structure, so we built this pile of rocks using mud instead of cement. "

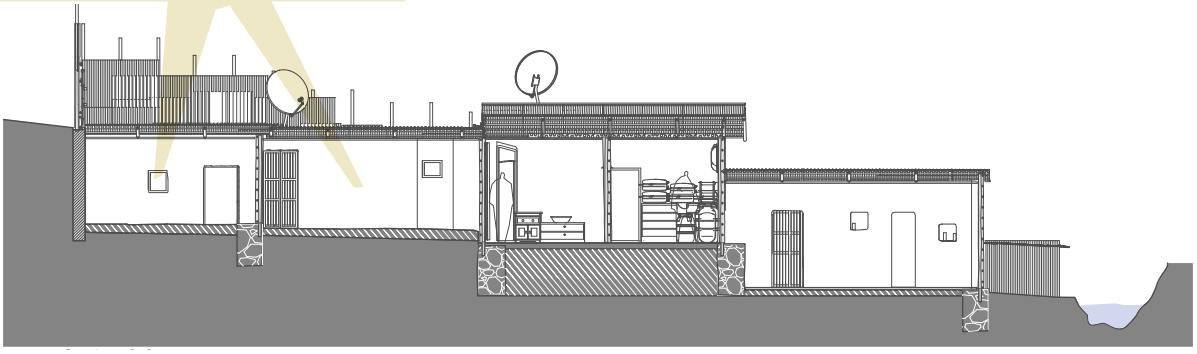
"I used this space to plant vegetables. I used to grow collard greens for our household consumption and the neighbours used to take some as well. "



Section B-B

"We don't have the luxury of getting water every day or whenever we want. We get it in turns. So, when we get the window once a week, we try to get 15-20 containers and place them here. "

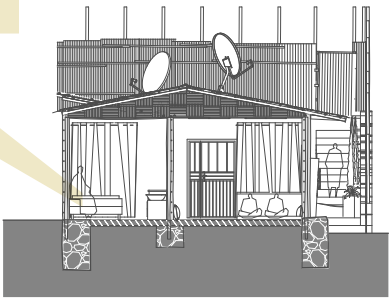
*"We built these houses on our own without masons and carpenters.
These are just simple houses that we rent out without proper foundations. We rebuild part of them each year because they are affected by water during the rainy season."*



Section C-C

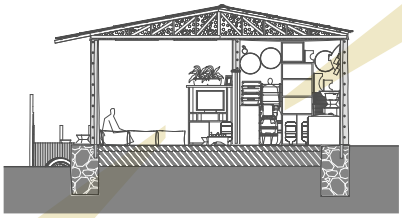
0m 1m 2m

“I would prefer if my bedroom only had a bed and nothing else. We have the bed, the cupboard, and a few other things. The room feels crowded because it is tiny.”



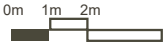
Section D-D

“I don’t like to bake injera here because it is next to the living space. I would have preferred it if it was outside somewhere in the compound. ”



Section E-E

“When we have occasions or guests, the men mostly sit in the living room while the women move into the gwada although the gwada is very small to fit in too many people.”



Material encounters



01 Eucalyptus frames plastered with mud and straw mix placed on masonry foundations covered with rubber
02 Painted Abujedid ceiling on wooden frames.
03 Ceiling made from recycled silage bags, the whole is to let light in.
04 Ceiling made from Abujedid fabric, the hole is to let electric lines pass.
05a - 05a Floor cover carpets and rugs
06 Gypsum plastered and painted bedroom wall
07 Wooden wall covering the space above the ceiling line
08 Stone paving and wall merge into one
09 Wooden window in a mud and straw mix plastered wall
10 Corrugated zinc sheet fence as seen from the inside of the compound
11 Plastic covered window in a mud and gypsum plastered and painted wall.
12 Plastic covered opening above the door to the bedroom
13 Wooden door giving access to the Gwada.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td>05a</td><td>05b</td><td>06</td></tr>
<tr><td>07</td><td colspan="2">08</td><td>09</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr>
</table>

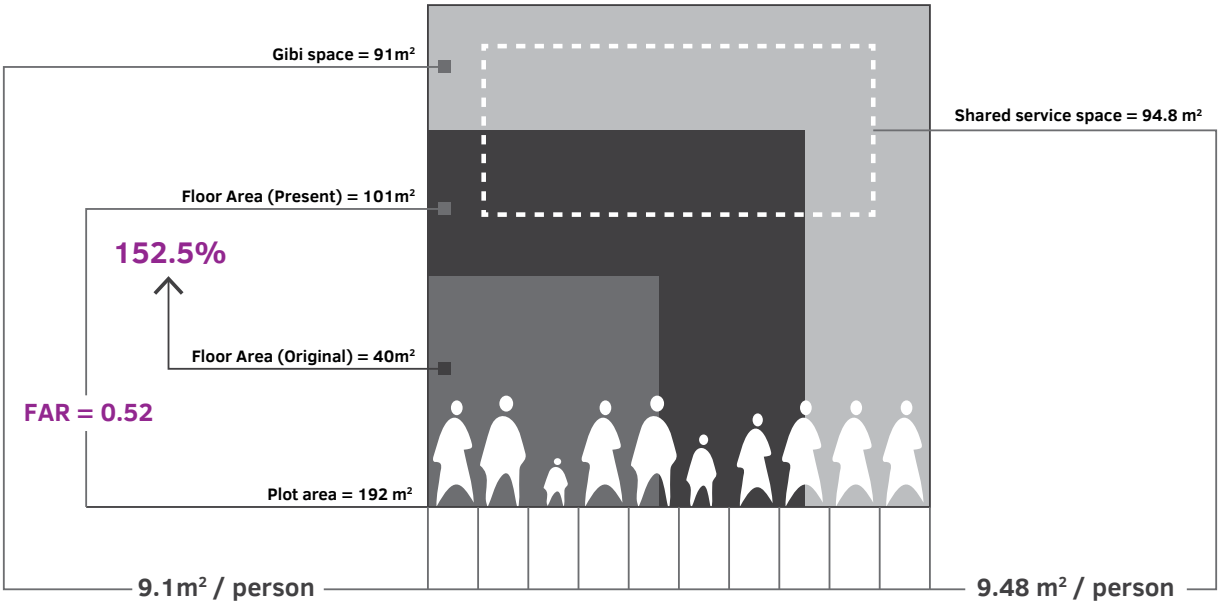
Photo trigger





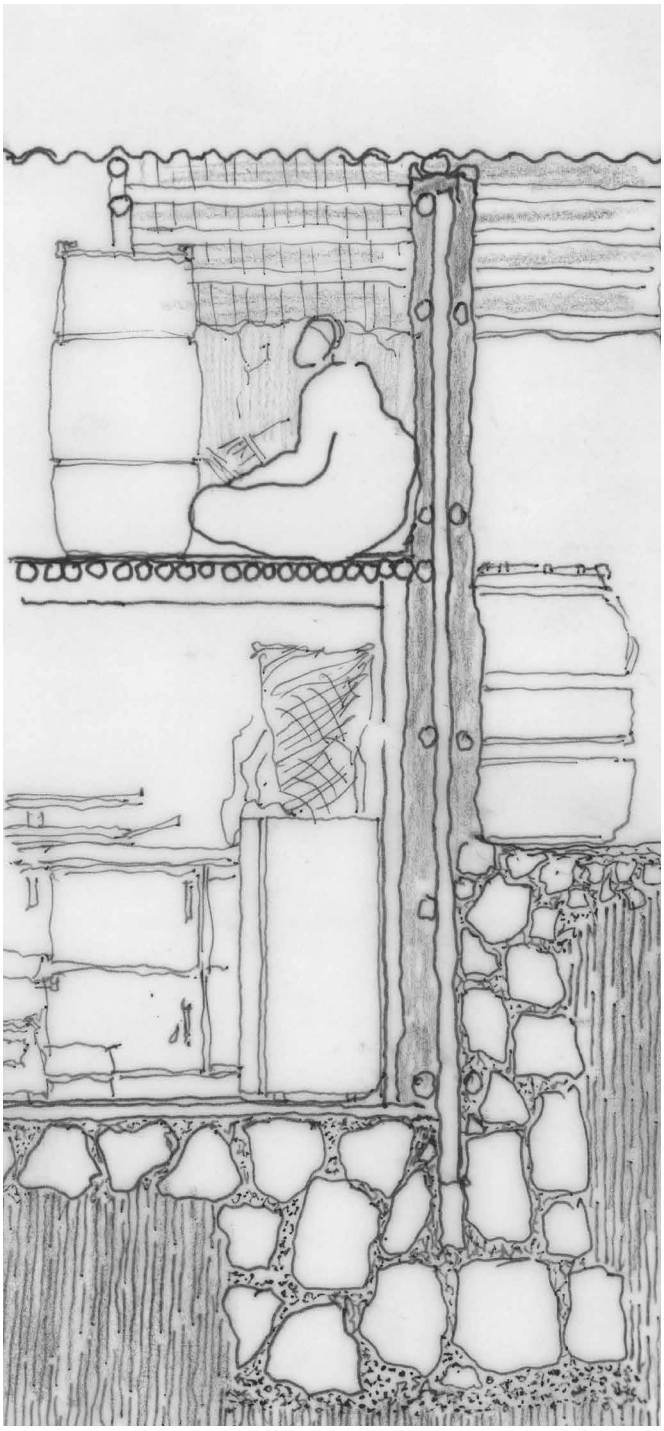
Khadija lives with her family and tenants in one of the most precarious locations bordering a river. This house was mostly self-built by family members and friends. Aisha always felt more comfortable and engaged when the conversation moved from the outside and the living space into the gwada; the kitchen and the bedroom. The dark image shows the location around the only opening inside the kitchen. Due to a lack of finances, the opening does not have a glass pane and is only covered by a transparent plastic sheet which doesn't give the room proper ventilation. Khadija intervened by creating a hole beneath the window to allow heat and smoke to escape the kitchen. This opening can be temporarily closed by stuffing pieces of cloth into it. The reflections coming from the kitchen items and the broken mirror on the wall above the mitad create a somber ambience in the room. Khadija did not agree to meet for the 'photo-trigger' schedule: "My husband was not aware that I invited you guys home last time so it will get me in trouble if you are seen here again. So please don't come".

Diagrammatic synthesis



Building techniques







On the Emperor’s Birthday





Selected area (2006)

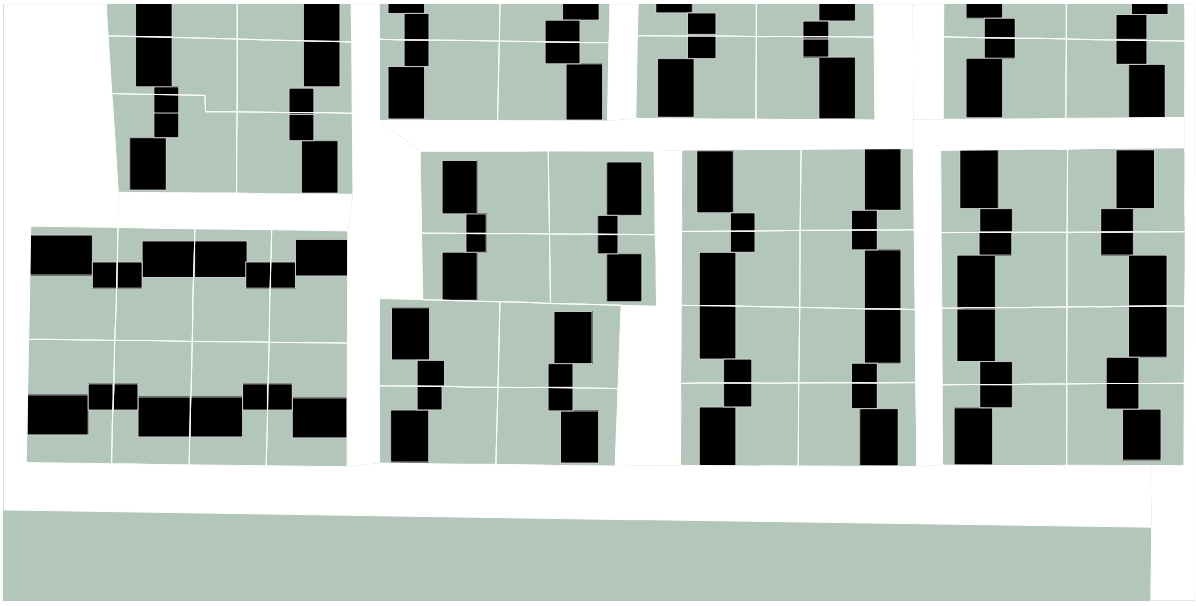




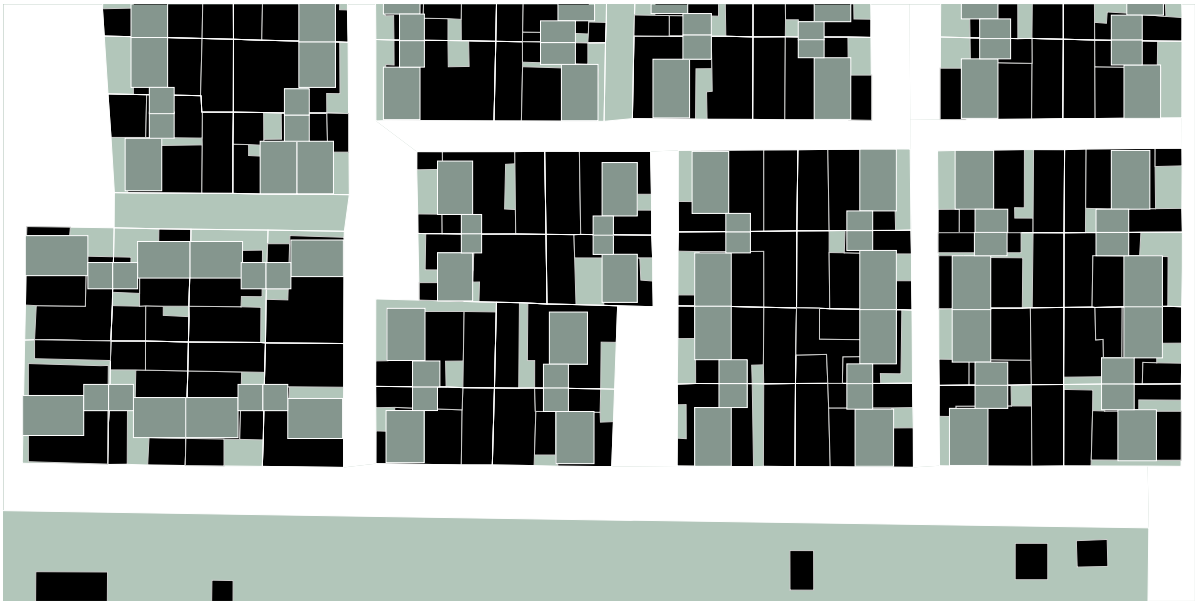
Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selection



Cluster structure_2006_1Ha



Increase in footprint by 2022_ 162% in the selected 1Ha area





01



02



03



04



05



06

01 The approach street into the neighbourhood from the ring road

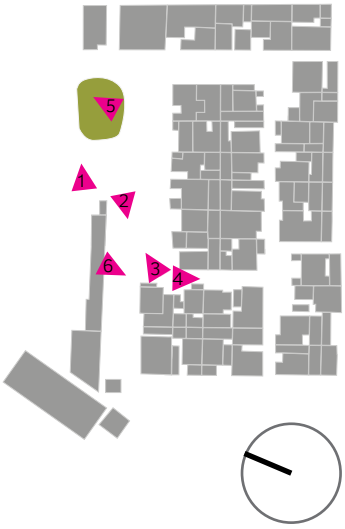
02 A view of the parking + events space in the compound

03 A view of the parking + events space along the wall of the former communal hall

04 A man carries plastic chairs in to the neighborhood along the publicly accessible cobblestone street

05 The green space at the entrance to the neighborhood. The inscription on the marble plaque atop the foundation stone reads: “our natural inclinations are towards owning something and not using something that belongs to someone else, therefore, these saving homes have been inaugurated and handed over to our citizens (subjects) that have low income, so that they may own it and pass it on to their children upon paying the full rent. His Royal Highness Hailesellasie I, Hamle 16 (16th day of the 10th month in the Ethiopian calendar), 1959.

06 People sitting on a wooden bench made between two trees planted by the owner of the house on the corner plot





07



08



09



10



11



12



13

07,10, and 13 Dwellings facing open spaces in the neighborhood: the main gates of the compounds face this space and are mostly plastered and painted. The house in image 07 has plants along its fence line.

08 View of the only completed multistorey residence in the neighborhood to date

09 and 11 Cobblestone street between the neighborhood and the fence to the school and the Kolfe park. On image 09 a yellow and black painted police cubicle can be seen. It is made and placed there to protect inhabitants and visitors.

12 A main gate to a dwelling in one of the cobblestone streets in the neighborhood, this entrance is recessed and has layers of vines topped with fiberglass water container, both of which are supported on a small concrete slab.

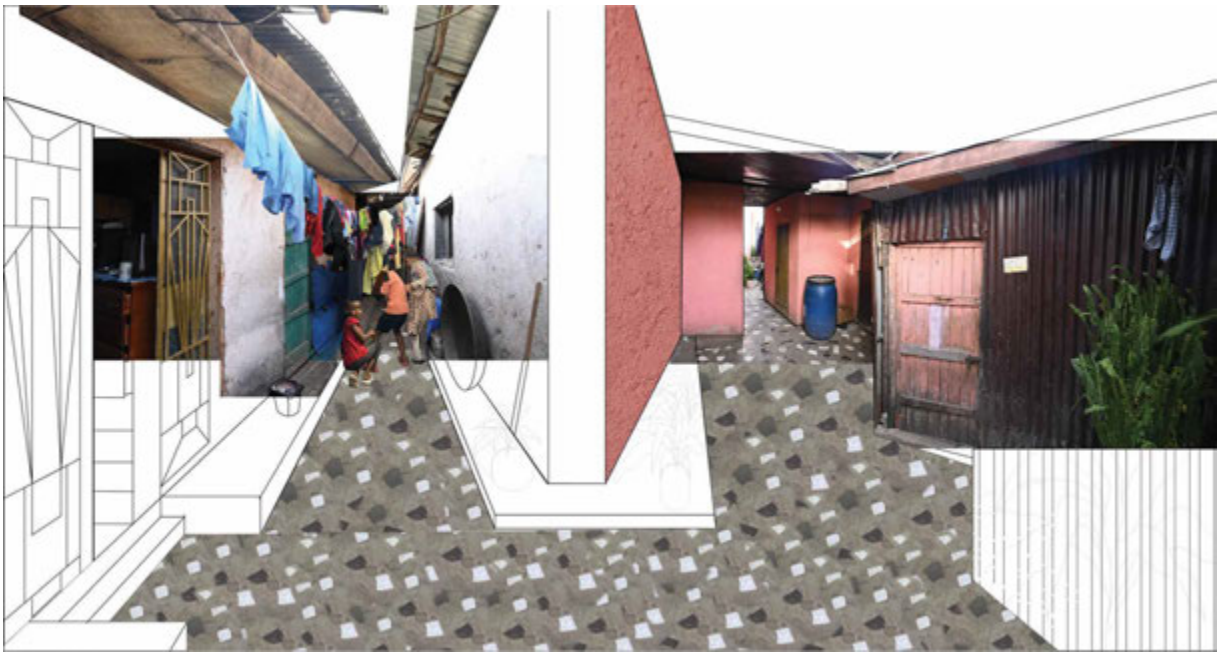




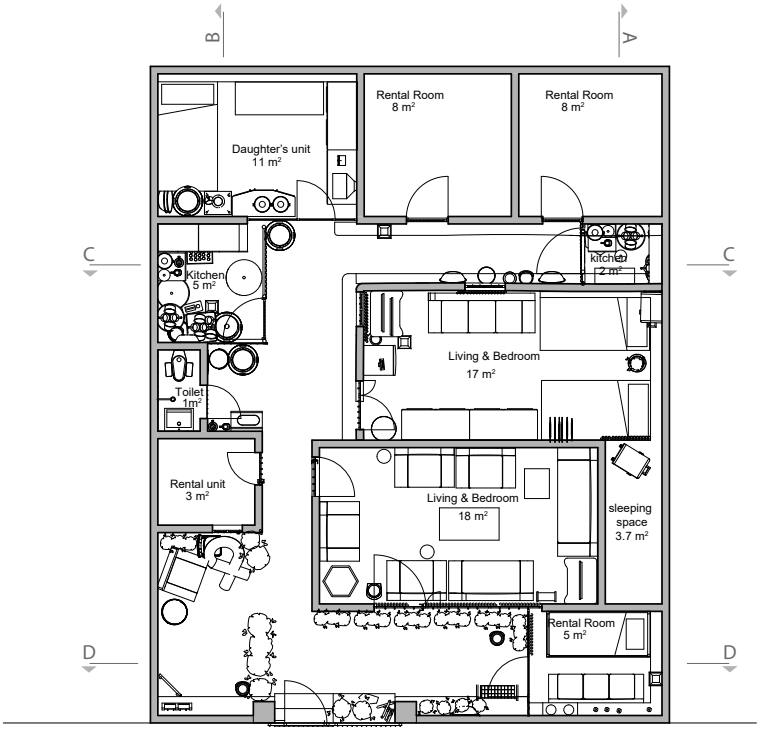
Hassan and Fatima

The house was barely enough for two people. They even told us not to invite guests over. During the inauguration, I heard Emperor Haileselassie commenting on the sizes noting that he also felt the houses were a bit small. At the time, all my children and grandchildren had to sleep on the floor.

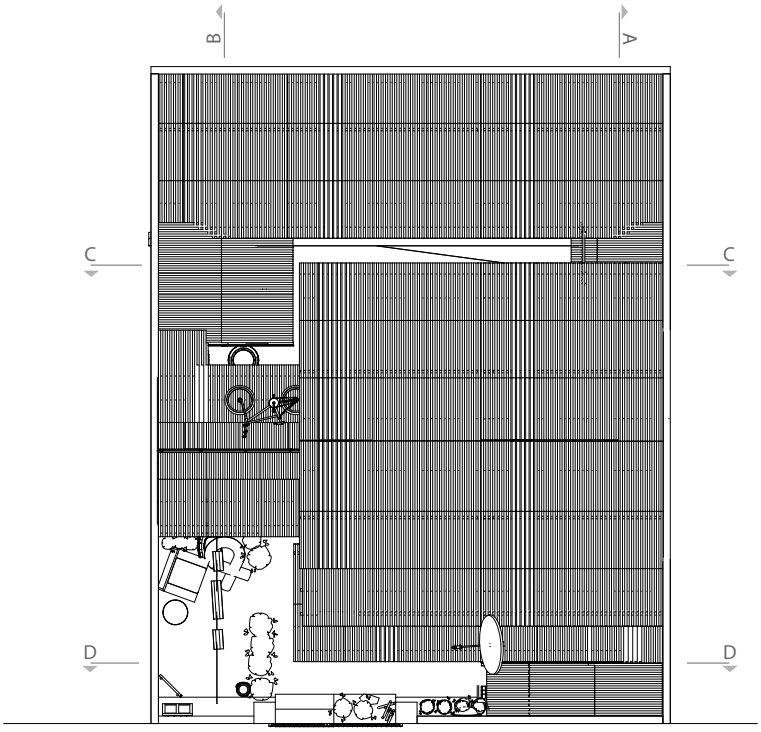
Engulfing the Gwaro

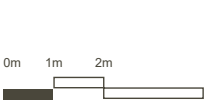


Plans



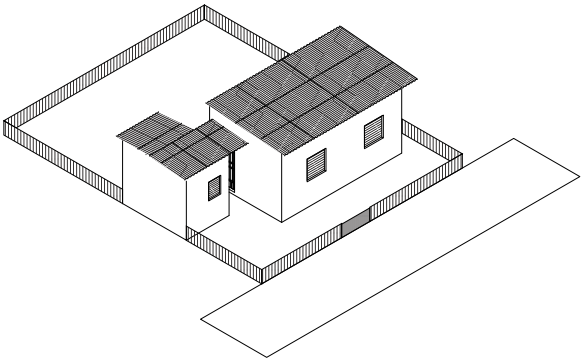
Ground floor plan



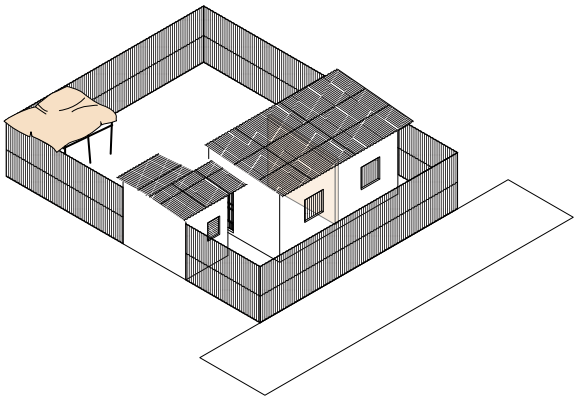


Roof plan

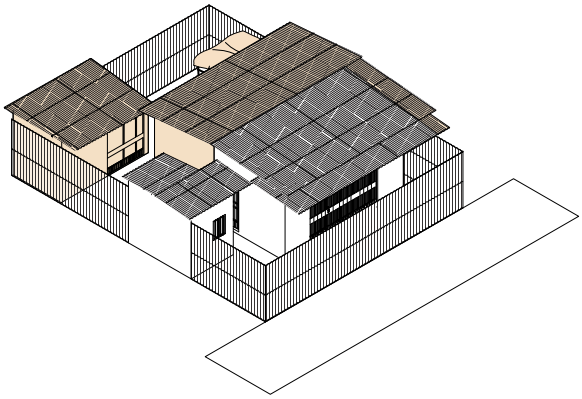
Dwelling transformation



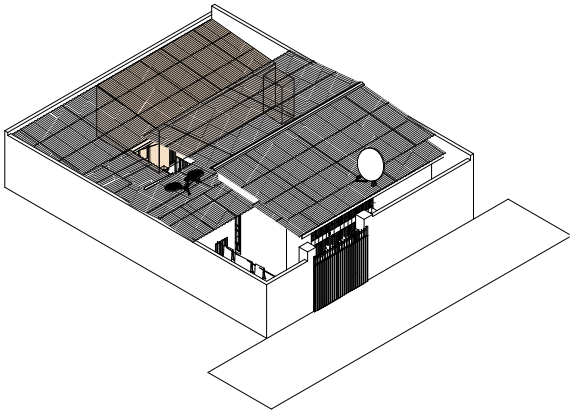
01. 1967_Original state of the house



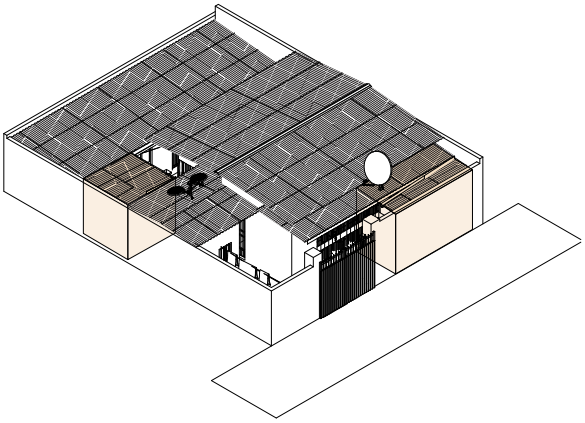
02. ~1994_Partition demolished and kitchen converted into a bedroom



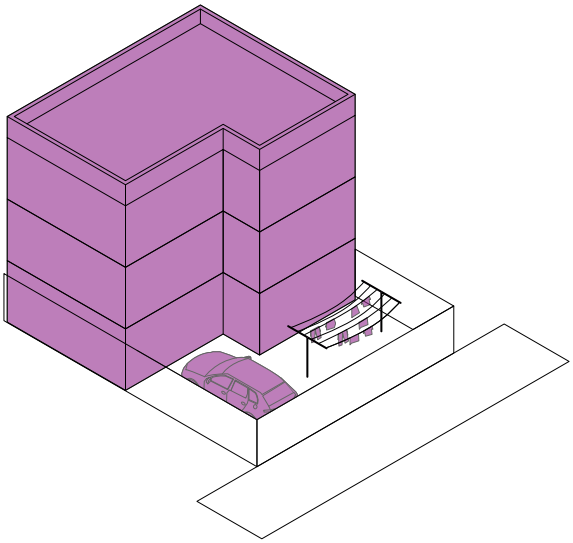
03. ~1997_additional bedrooms were constructed



04. ~2000_Two more rental units were built at the back with a small outdoor cooking space left at the corner



05. ~2007 An additional rental unit in the front and a kitchen were added at the back. The small outdoor cooking space next to the rental unites was also enclosed by adding a corrugated metal sheet door.

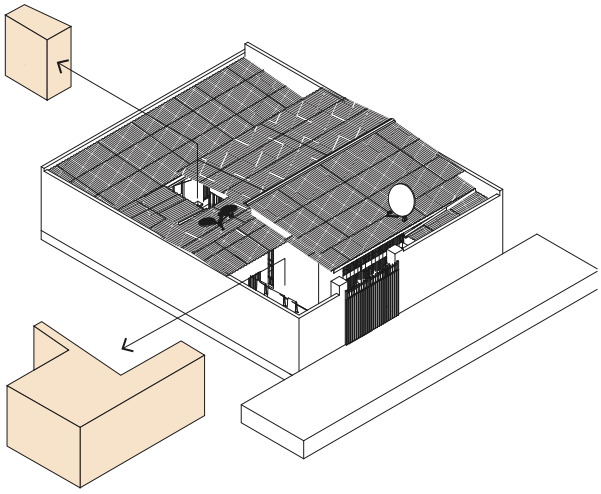


06. Desired future scenario_The residents would like to construct a multistorey residence with room for parking and drying clothes. They also want to keep on renting out rooms to generate income.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Fatima considers the gibi as the area which is free of buildings. Part of the front yard that is used for occasional storage and the pocket space leading inside towards the gwaro is considered a gibi. Fatima uses this space for occasional cooking.



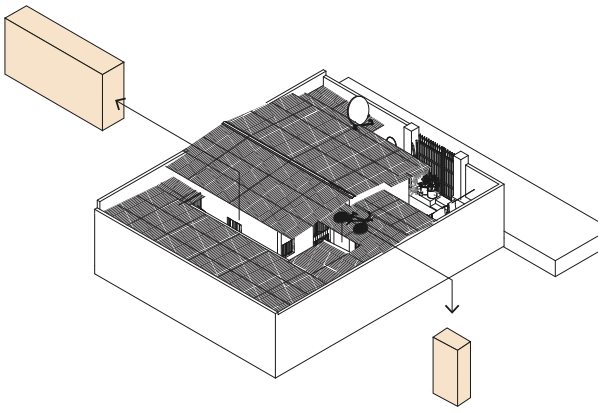
No Gwada

The Gwada

For Fatima, the gwada are the bedrooms but not all bedrooms are gwadas. Fatima believes that they do not have gwada anymore because she thinks a gwada exists when annexed to a salon. All bedrooms in their house function as living rooms so they do not have gwada.

The Gwaro

The gwaro is a place for playing, planting and storage. The majority of the gwaro has been replaced by buildings so Fatima believes the small corridor in between the 'service quarter' and the house is their gwaro. The gwaro now mainly serves as a storage for stowaway items.





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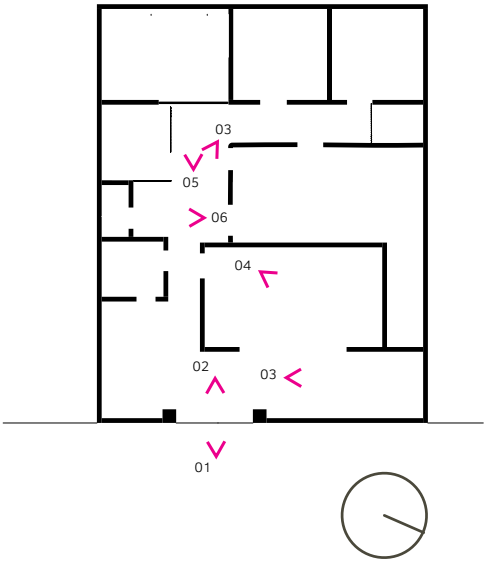
01 View of the main door into the compound as seen from the street
02 View of the main door into the compound as seen from inside the compound
03 View of last built rental unit. It was originally intended to be a shop
04 The original kitchen (now rental unit), the current kitchen and the toilet as seen from the Gwaro, the Gibi space is also in view
05 One of his daughters' house within the compound
06 View of the toilet door and the shaded, outdoor, washing space





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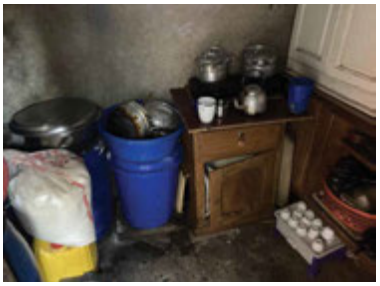

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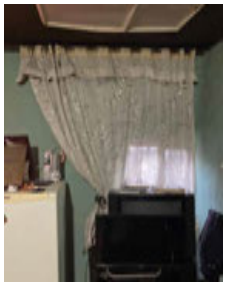


14



15

07 View of the living room

08 View of the Gwaro defined by the rental units on one side and the bedroom in the other, the corridor leads to a small kitchen used by the tenants

09 Access to the bedroom + living room of the owner

10 Interior view of the space described on 09

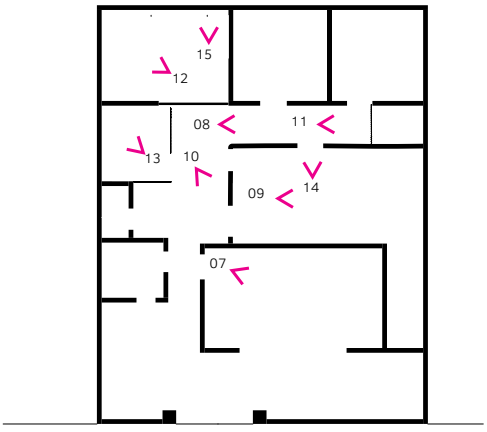
11 The small kitchen at the Gwaro is in view. It is defined by the walls of the bedrooms and the fence and only has a door that also serves as a wall.

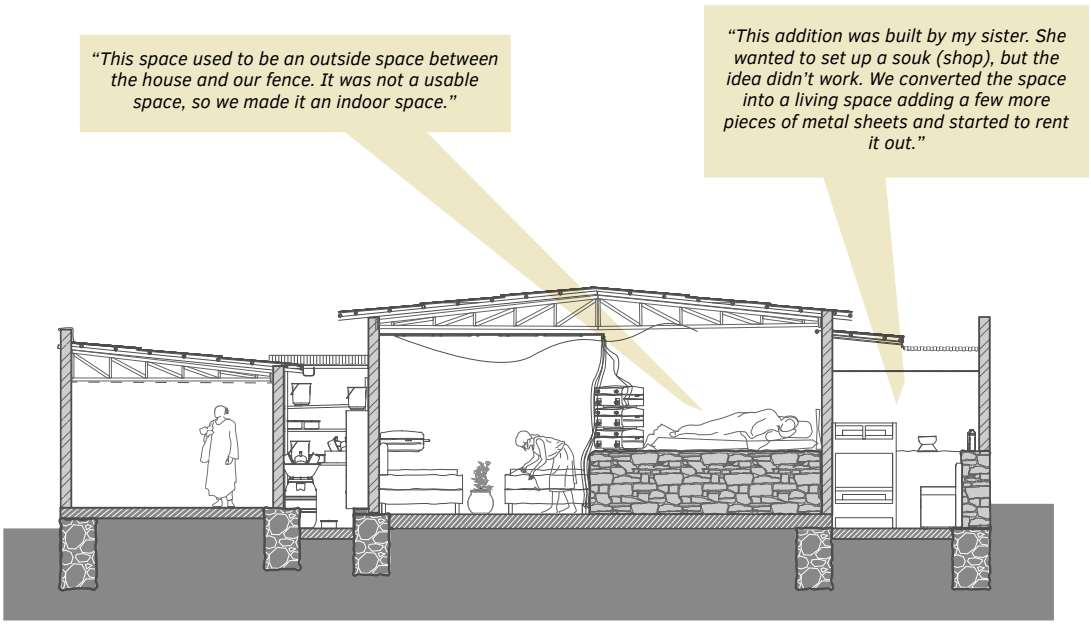
12 View of a sleeping space + storage of one of his daughters' house within the compound

13 Storage and cooking space inside the kitchen

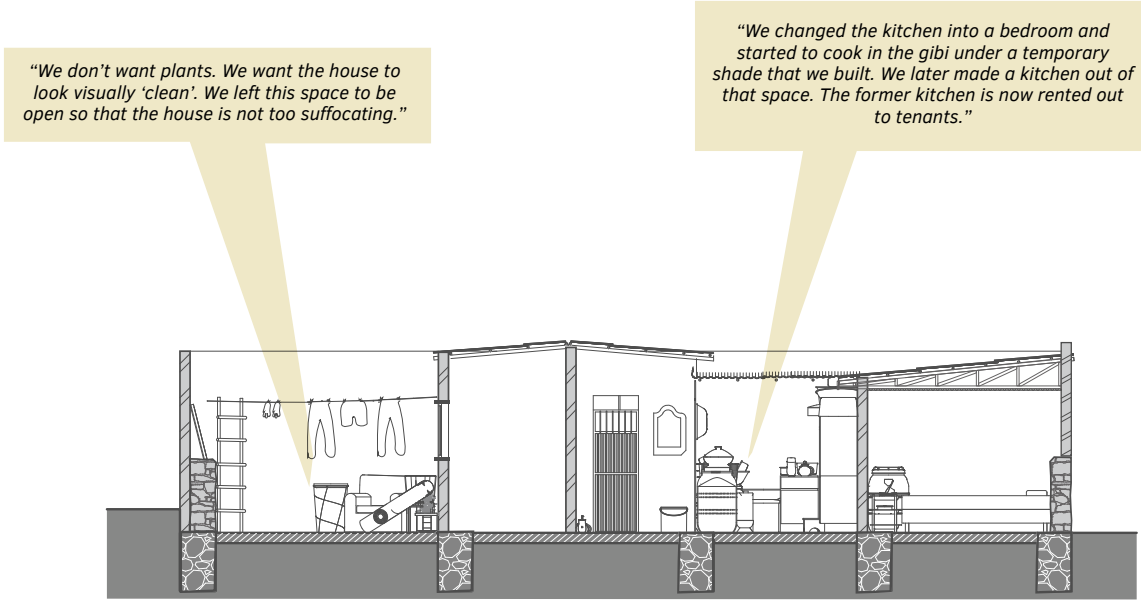
14 The bedroom+ living room window is covered by curtains and a set of old and new TVs

15 View of a sitting + sleeping space of one of his daughters' house within the compound

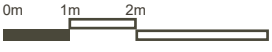




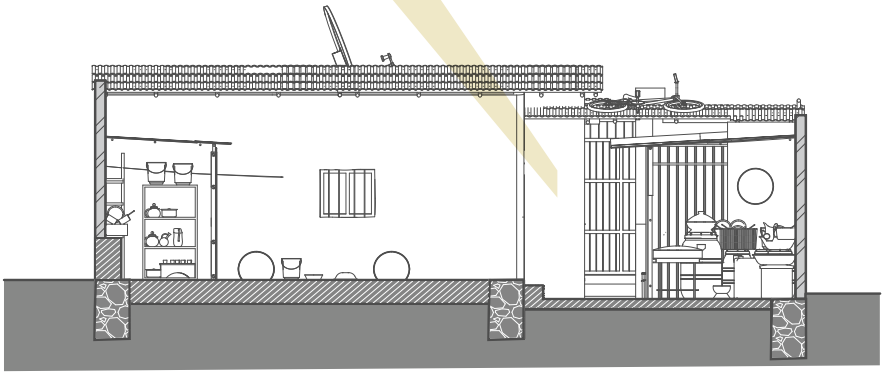
Section A-A



Section B-B



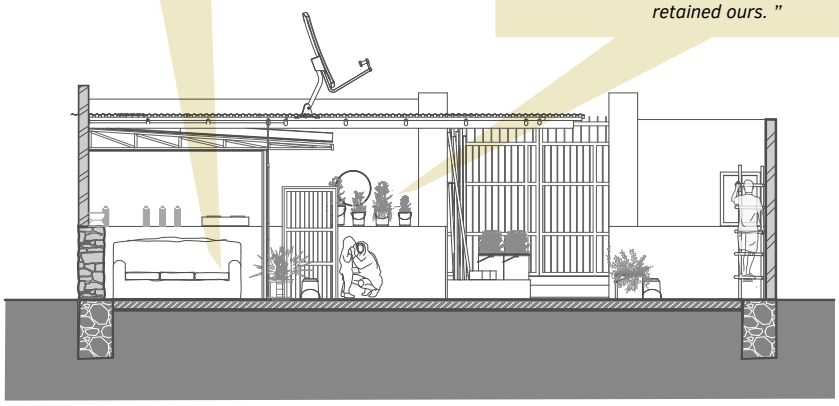
"If we have a small event, we serve the Muslim guests here in our gibi and the Christian guests are served in the neighbour's compound."



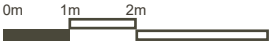
Section C-C

"This is our favourite space for the coffee ceremony. We always prepare coffee at around 9:00 in the morning. My sister, my father and a couple of others from the neighbourhood are the regulars."

"The authorities demanded that we clear off the flowers and all the plants and replace them with lettuce and collard greens. We couldn't say 'No', so they came and planted them on plastic containers. We are not convinced with the idea, and we have retained ours. "



Section D-D



Material encounters



01 Plastered and painted concrete block wall + corrugated metal roof.
02 Decorative light fixture hangs from a wooden framed fabric ceiling in the living room
03 Plastic sheet covered lightbulb hangs from a fabric ceiling
04 A light bulb hangs on an exposed electric cable in the kitchen
05 A light bulb hangs from a ceiling made from Silage bag plastic
06 Broken tiles and cement screed paving in the compound. The drainage manhole cover is covered by an old carpet piece
07 New and old corrugated zinc sheet roof covers placed on eucalyptus poles on mud and straw mix on eucalyptus wood frames + rough tyrolean rendered finish
08 Plastic floor cover in the bedroom
09 Floor finish transition from inside to outside
10 Painted concrete block wall in the living room (original wall)
11 Wooden bench made of eucalyptus poles, attached to the trees planted by the owner
12 Bedroom window made of metal frames, and covered by a metal grill
13 Floor finish transition from outside to inside the compound
14 Painted concrete block wall in the bedroom + living room (it used to be the exterior side, in the original setup of the house)

<table>
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<tr><td>07</td><td>08</td><td>09</td><td>10</td></tr>
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</table>

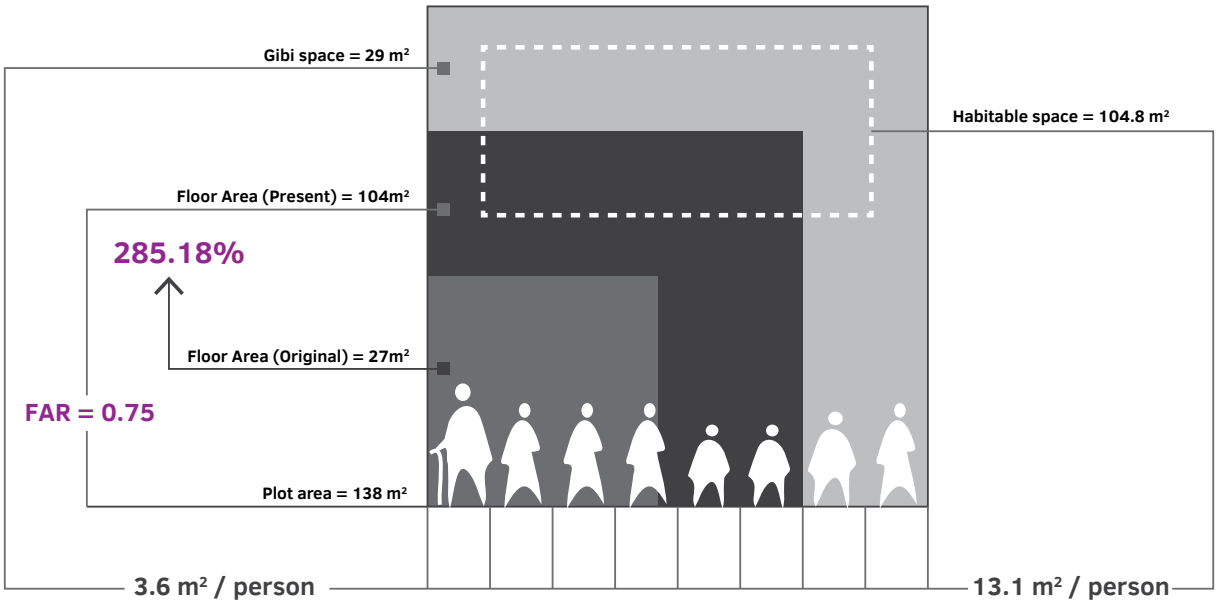
Photo trigger





Hassan, one of the handfuls of original settlers still alive, tells his story and that of the sefer while sitting under the shade of trees he planted and on the only public bench in the neighbourhood, also constructed by him. In the background is a hollow concrete block fence which is quite unlike the one in the original design in the 1960s but also dissimilar to the very tall fences with metal barbed wires that their neighbours have put up. Hassan recalls how It used to be that there were no fences between individual houses and the community was more cohesive sharing a small park and an iddir hall at the northern side of the compound. The good old days. The family was very happy to have received the present but were reluctant to place it on a visible corner as they are Muslim. They first placed it on the floor and then later decided to put it inside their living room china hutch, where it is covered by household items.

Diagrammatic synthesis





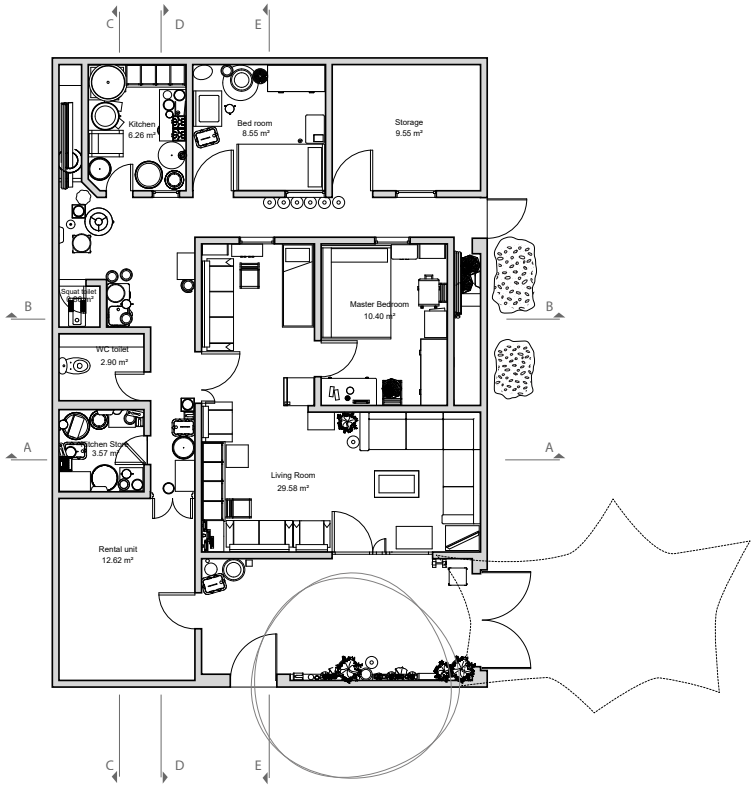
Bezunesh

Back in the day, this area was a forest, and we used to live with hyenas. People were scared and rarely ventured here, as the hyenas would come out early before it got dark. We were given regulations not to keep cattle, chickens, or dogs, partly to prevent conflicts among residents. But the place was not suitable for those practices anyway.

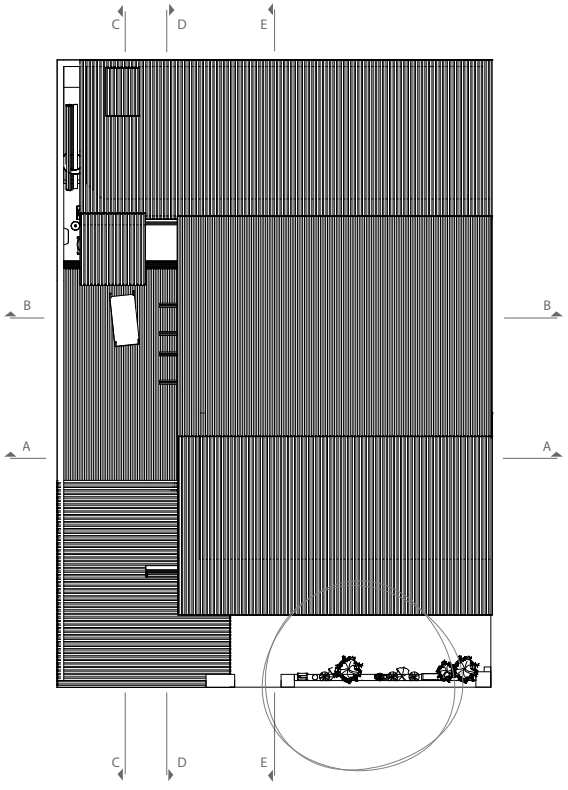
Expanding dwelling for an expanding family



Plans

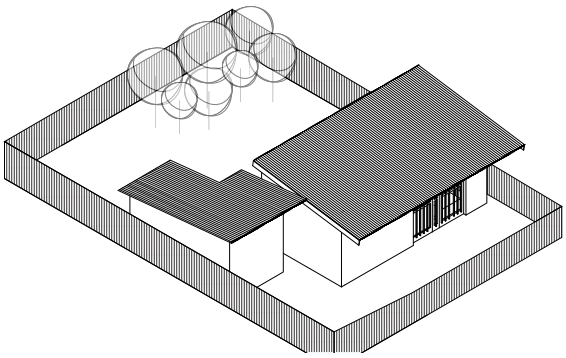


Ground floor plan

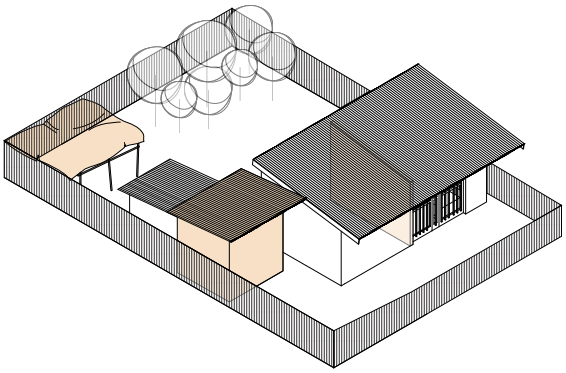


Roof plan

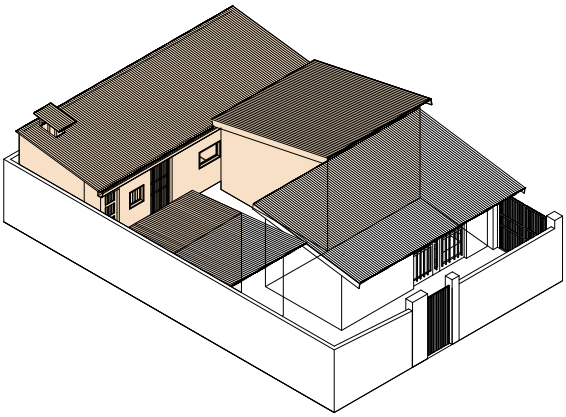
Dwelling transformation



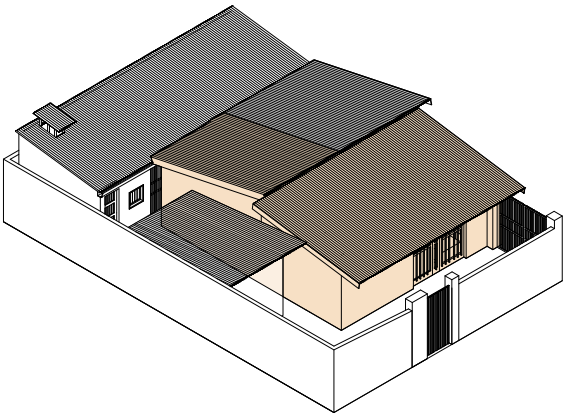
01.1966_Original state of the house



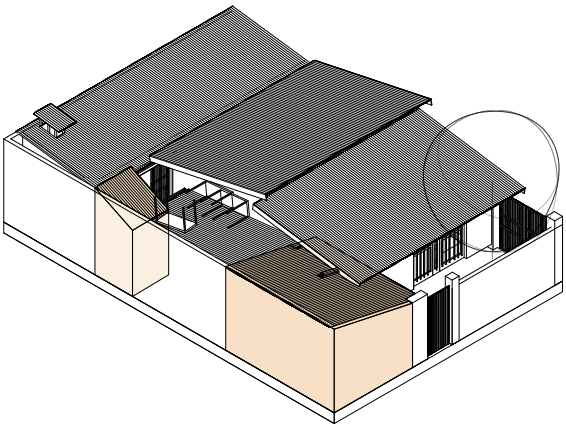
02. ~1968_Partitions demolished and kitchen turned into a kitchen store with cooking taking place outdoors



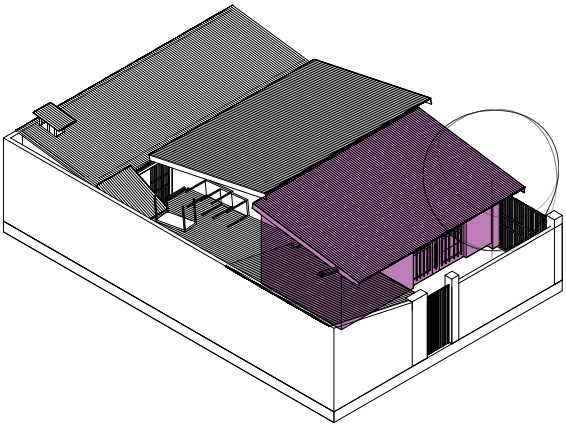
03. ~1970_Master bedroom and a service quarter with a kitchen in the corner were constructed



04. ~1971_The living room and the toilet were enlarged



05. ~2007_Rental unit and squat toilet were added making up the current setup of the dwelling

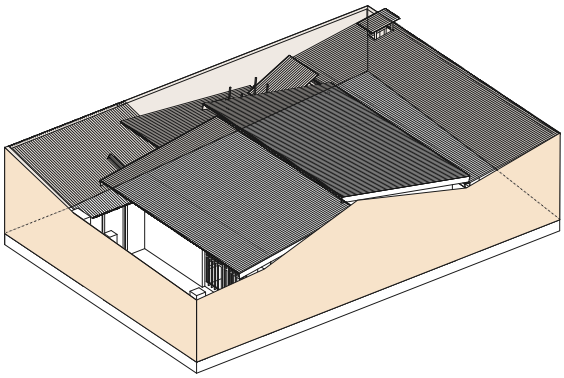


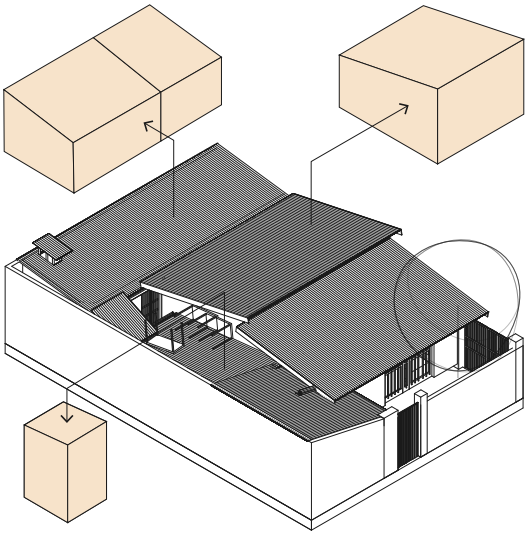
06. Desired future scenario_ The owner does not intend to make major changes but would like to bring back the window to the extended living space. She is open to changes being made by her children in the future.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Bizunesh considers the area within her private fence to be her gibi. She explains how the area of the property increased from 117m2 to 132m2 after incorporating patches of land between the street and the original edge of the house.



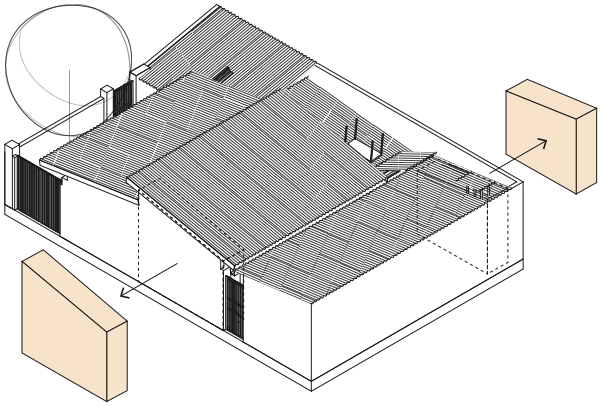


The Gwada

The gwada spaces for Bizunesh are the bedrooms and the storage spaces. Her bedroom, the bedroom for her son, the bedroom of her daughter that is now changed into storage space and the old kitchen space that turned into a kitchen store are considered as the gwada.

The Gwaro

Most of the housing extensions by Bizunesh were made within the gwaro. Bizunesh regards the slot spaces between the extended master bedroom and the fence and between the kitchen and the fence as gwaro. She uses these spaces to store wood.





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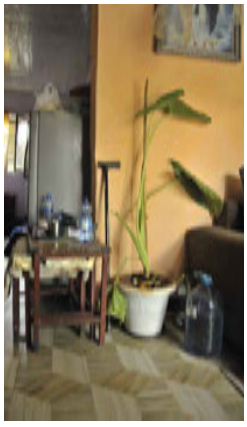
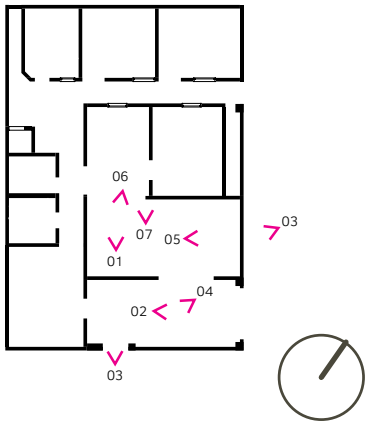


07

01 View of the extended living room
02 View of the vehicular access gate
03 View of the pedestrian access gate from the outside
04 View of the pedestrian access gate from the inside along with the rental unit
05 The sitting space and TV corner in the living room
06 View of the “second living room“
07 View of the indoor plant, walking stick and refregirator in the extended part of the living room





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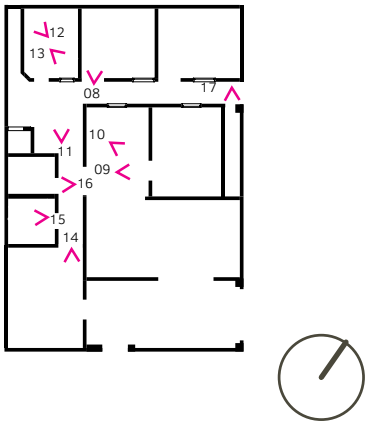
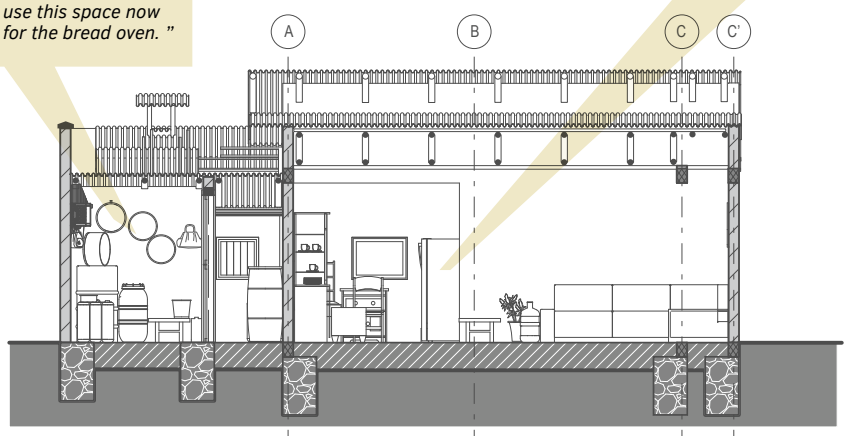
08 View of her children's bedroom. It also serves as a storage space and laundry
09 View of the door to the bedroom, formerly an exterior door
10 View of the bedroom
11 The kitchen viewed from the corridor
12 The wood fired Injera oven modeled after the original kitchen stove
13 An electric Injera oven by the kitchen window
14 View of the corridor leading to the rental unit, the kitchen-store and the toilet
15 Interior view of the kitchen store
16 View of the main toilet (used by the homeowner and her children)
17 The narrow storage space between the walls and the fence



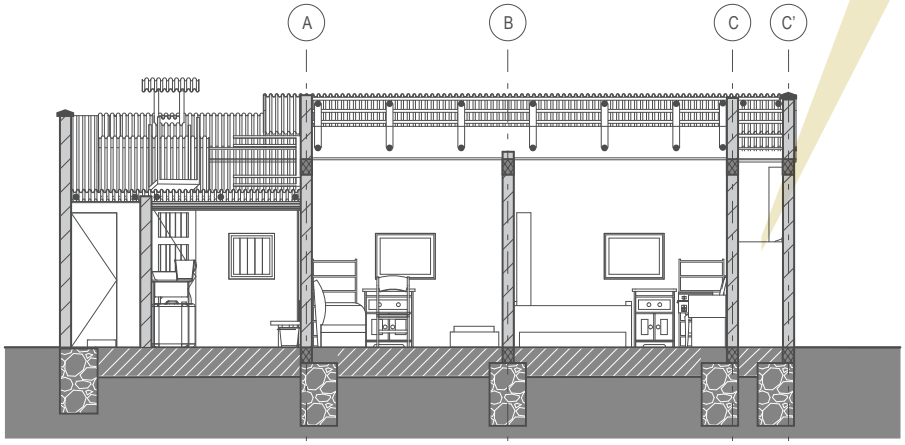
"The kitchen did not accommodate our cooking activities, so I asked my husband to make a larger kitchen when we built the 'service quarter'. We use this space now mainly as storage and for the bread oven. "

"The house was not large enough for the wedding, so we extended it towards the section of the gwaro where we used to store wood. I have married off six of my children from this house. "



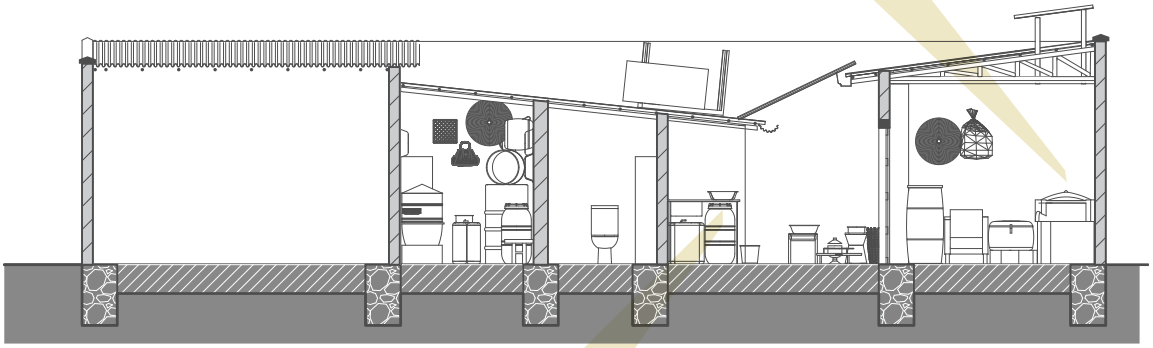
Section A-A

"We consider this space as our gwaro and use it to store wood. "



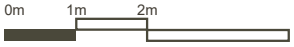
Section B-B

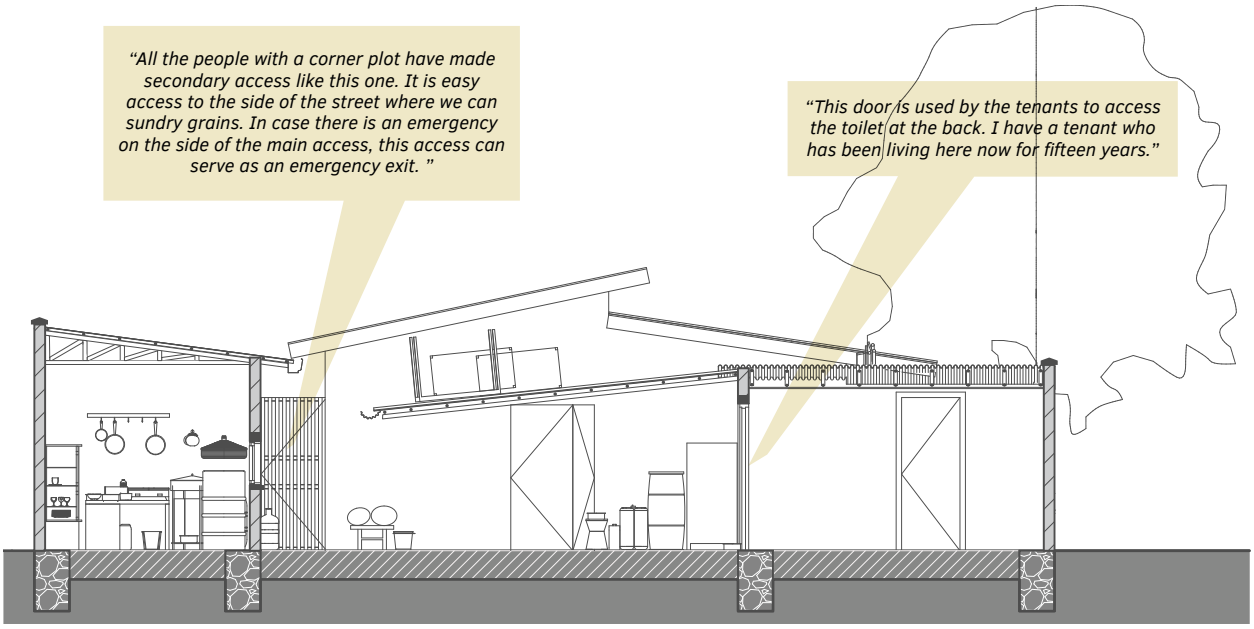
"This is an old 'smokeless kitchen' working with firewood. We use it when we face a power outage. The neighbours come here as well and use it to bake bread and Injera. "



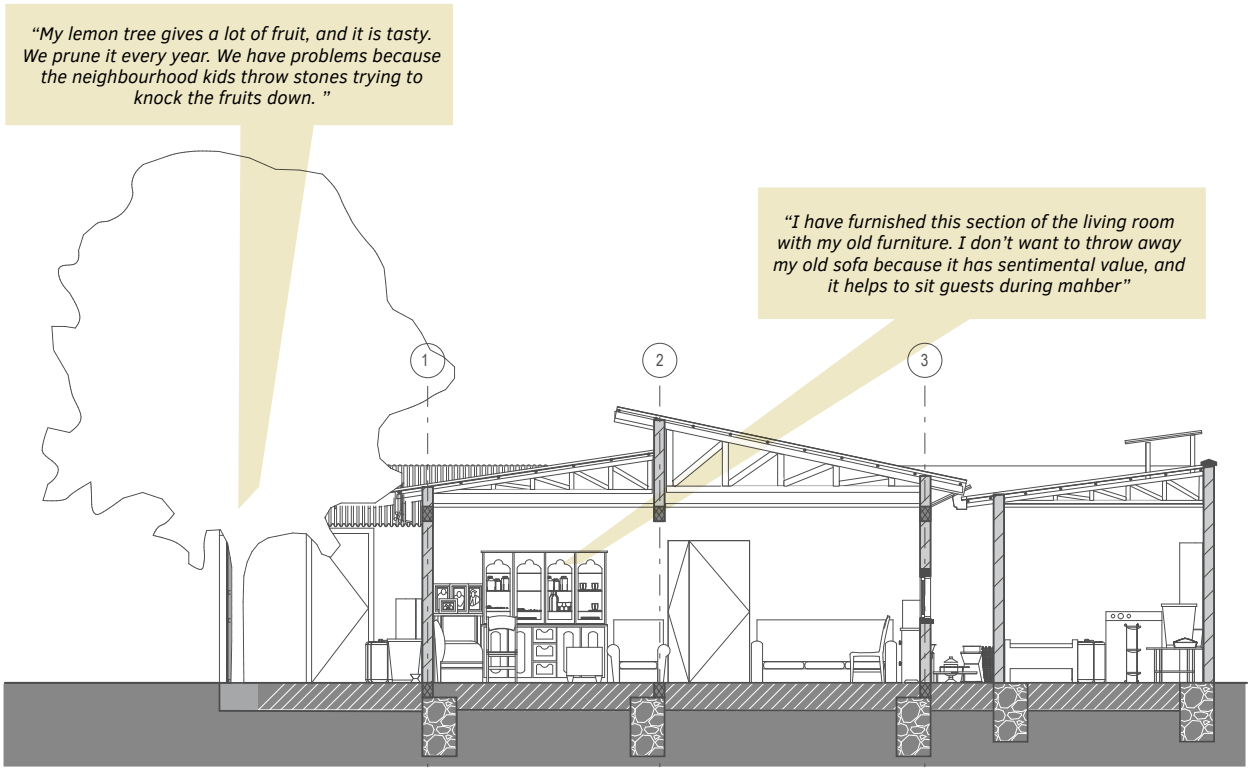
Section C-C

"We use the shaded space to wash dishes and clothes. We get water only once per week, so we also use the space to store our water containers."

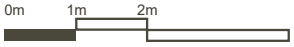




Section D-D



Section E-E



Material encounters



01 Painted concrete block walls with wooden door drames
02 Decorative lighting fixture on shimmering plastic ceiling
03 Light bulb hanging on Silage bag plastic ceiling
04 A plastered and painted concrete beam in between the plastic ceiling
05 Floor finish transition from inside to outside
06 Lightweight plastic fiber mat on top of wooden colored tiles
07 plastic floor covering on cement screed finish in the Gibi
08 Sofa with a colorful cover pattern placed against orange painted walls
09 Wooden and leather made religious and national icons
10 Plastered and blue painted bedroom wall and white Abujedid fabric ceiling secured with wooden frames.
11 Eucalyptus poles support an elevated part of the kitchen roof. The purpose of it is to allow the smoke to escape and to let in some natural light.
12 and 13 Bedroom windows made of metal frames and transparent glass, on the inside both are covered with colorful curtains.
14 New switch hanging from an old, wall mounted switch that got damaged during the fire incident.

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<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
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</table>

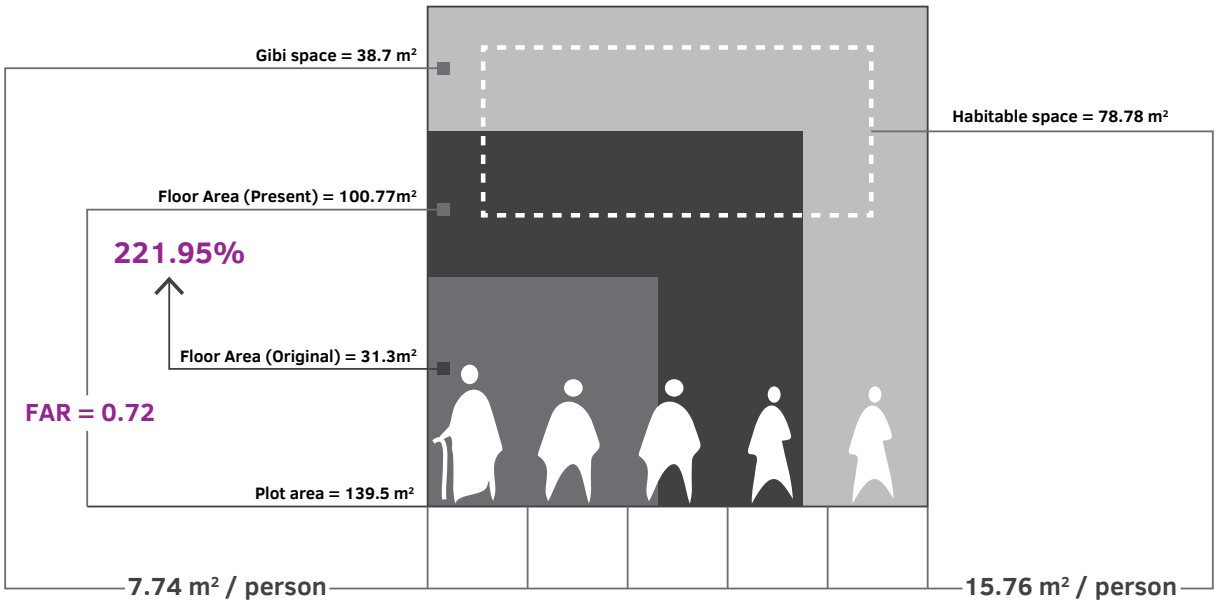
Photo trigger



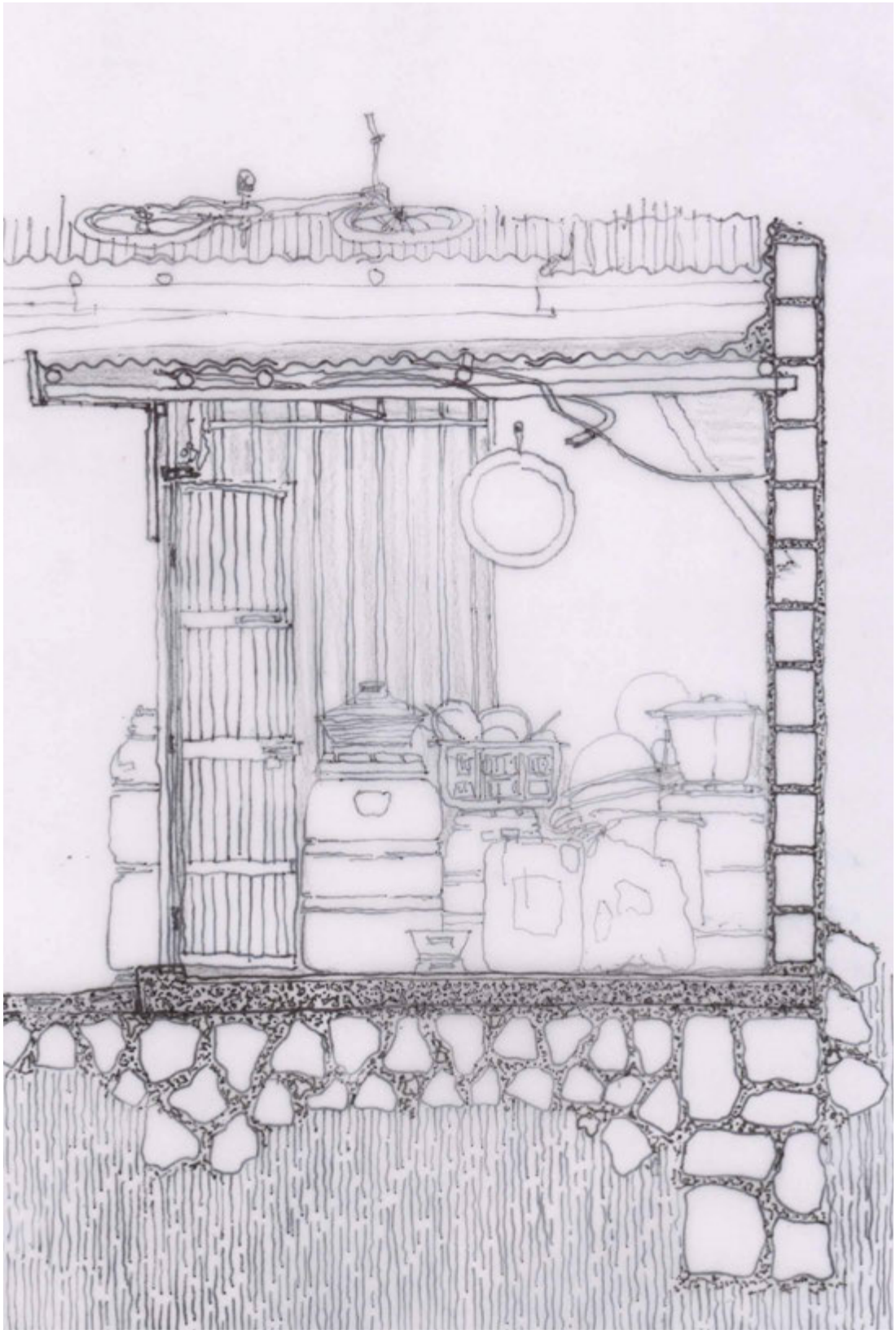


Bizunesh, an elderly lady from amongst the original settlers in this neighbourhood, tells the story of the Kuteba Sefere Fikir, its origins, and the community from her perspective aided by a booklet published to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the settlement. In the booklet, she wanted to show a picture of some of the original settler families and a prominent lady who led the first Idir in the area, from whom she took over as a president. Her house survived a fire that broke out two years ago and one can still see remains from the scourge. The effect of the fire created three distinct quarters in the house: The first one is where the post-fire items are kept, the second one is like a time capsule where all the pre-fire items are kept, and the third one is her gwada, which she uses as her bedroom and prayer room. It is very private and has a religious aura. Bizunesh maintains deep pride in her voice when speaking about her community and the fifty-four-year-long history of her family in this house.

Diagrammatic synthesis



Building techniques





INDEX

A Gift from Gaddafi





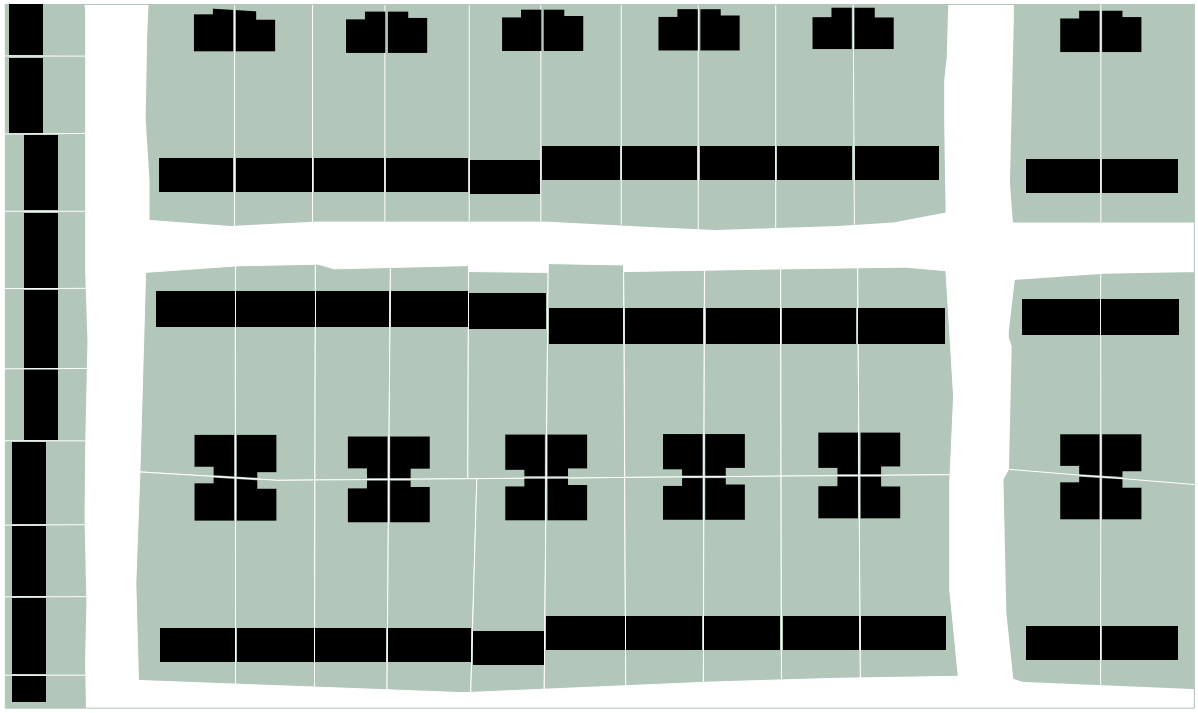
Selected area (2004)



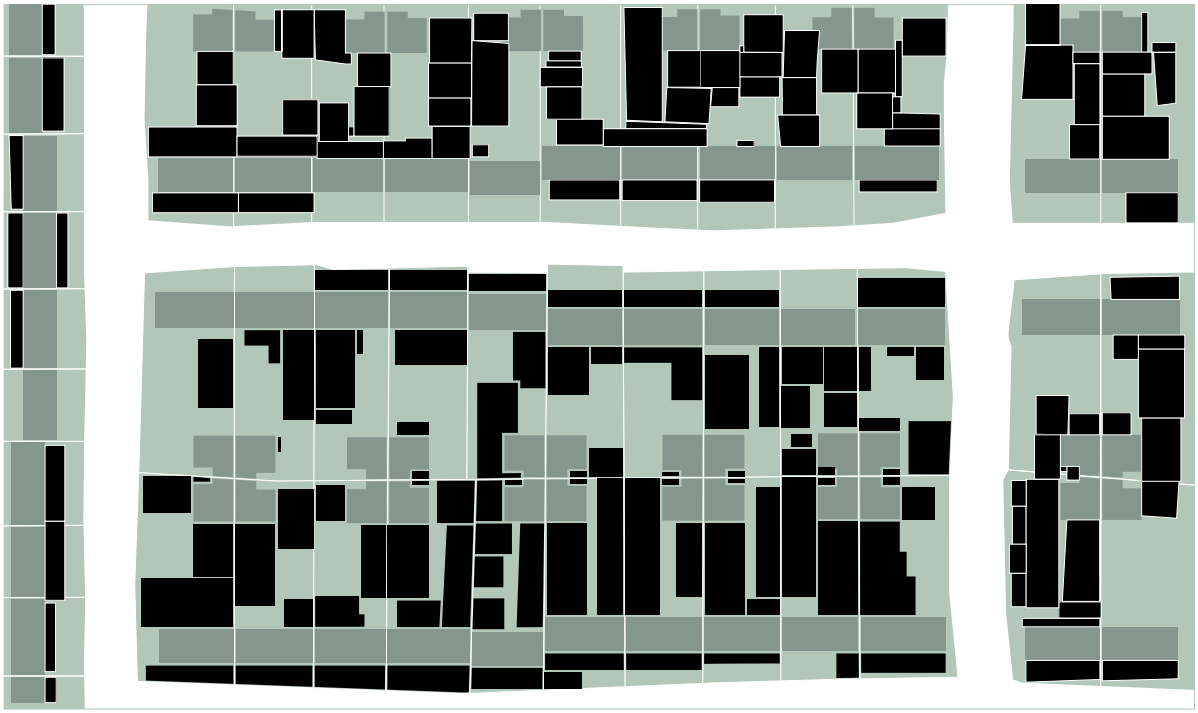
Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selection



Cluster structure_2006_1Ha



Increase in footprint by 2022_ 47.8% in the selected 1Ha area





01



02



03

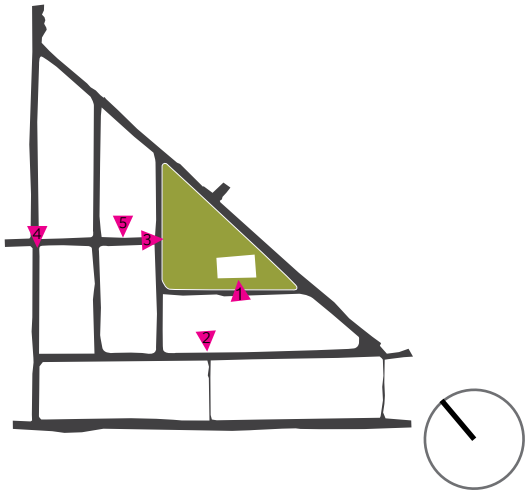


04



05

01 Spectators watching games being played in the shared playground in the center of the neighborhood
02 Narrow street paved with rough stones
03 Children playing foosball under a plastic tarp shed located under the shade of indigeneous trees bordering the shared sports ground in the center.
04 A cobblestone street in the neighborhood lined with metal sheet fences
05 An electric transformer mounted close to the fence line of the compounds on metal posts.





06



07



08

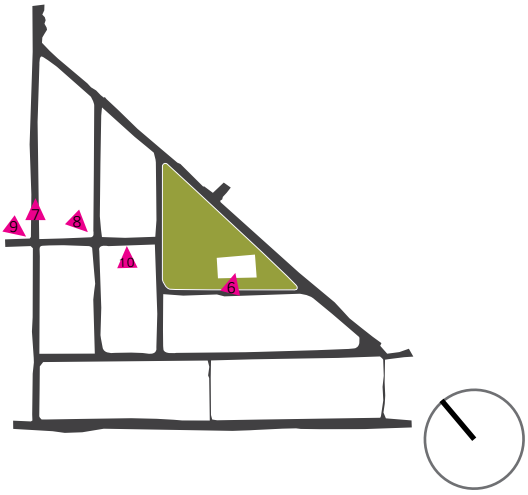


09



10

06 Children playing football in the public field
07 People walking on a cobblestone street in the neighborhood
08 Children talking on a street junction
09 Multi-material fences
10 A fence made from KOSHM (Gum Lac tree)

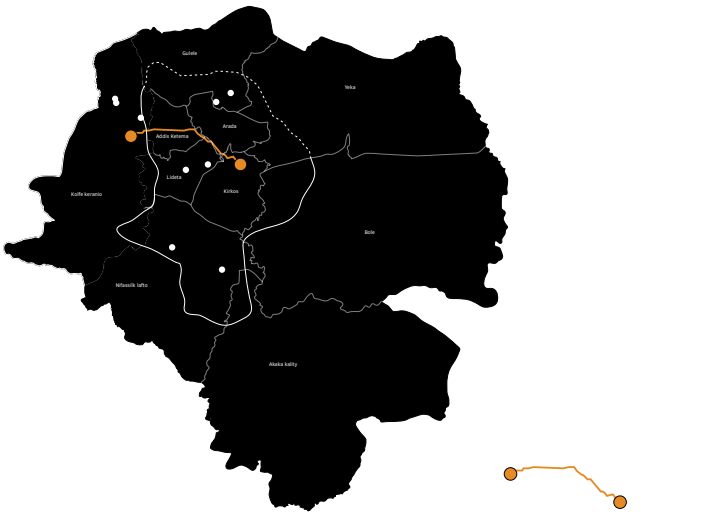




CLIV Kolfe kuteba betoch

Hailu

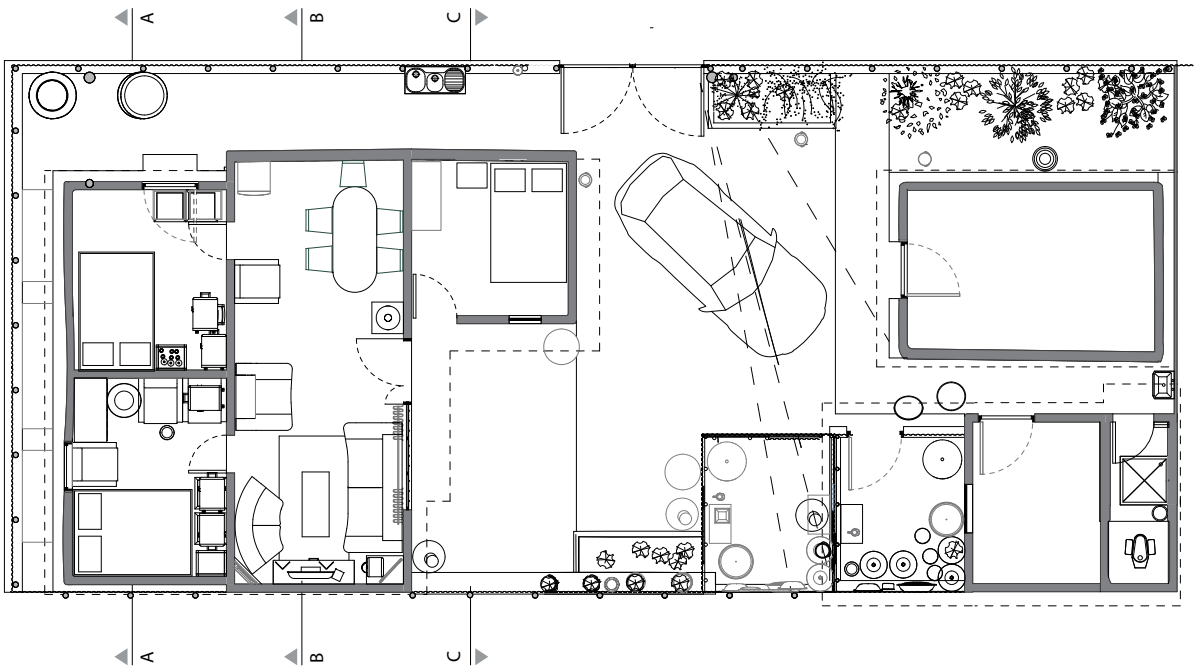
We mostly spend time in the gibi during the day. We prefer the outdoors while the elderly spend time in the kitchen and make coffee there. Everyone gathers in the living room in the evening.



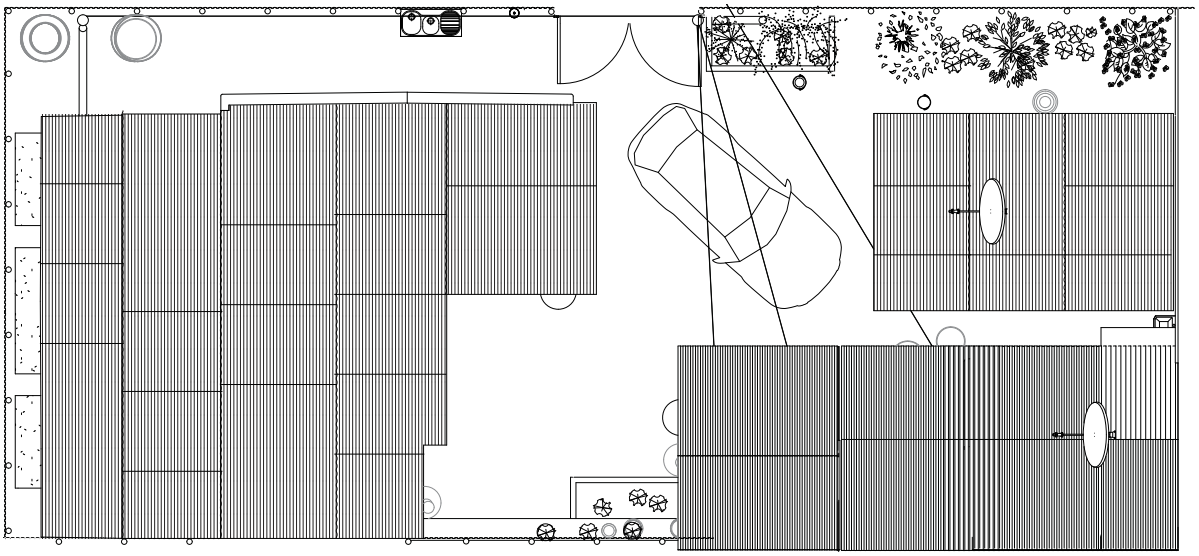
The gibi as an outdoor room



Plans



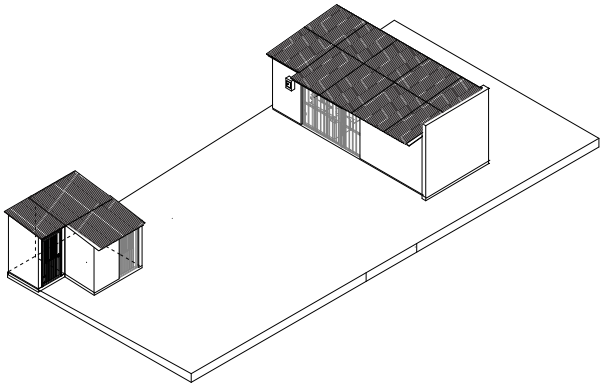
Ground floor plan



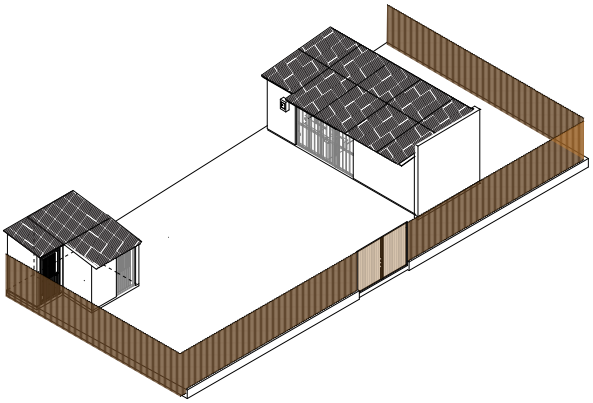
Roof plan



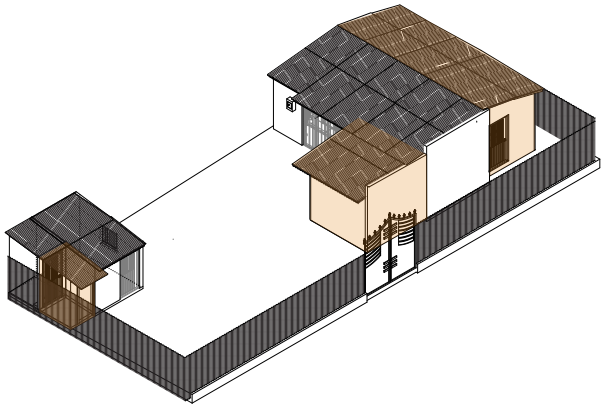
Dwelling transformation



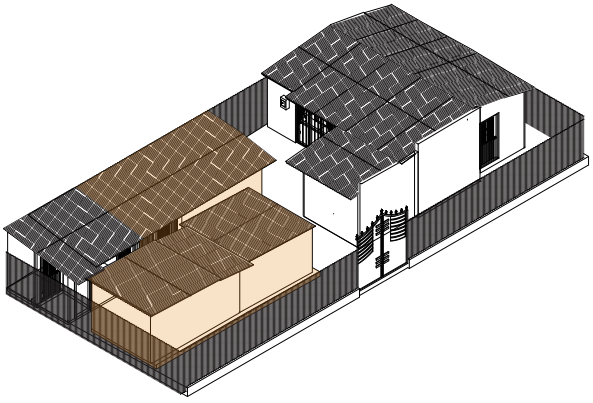
01. 1974_Original state of the house



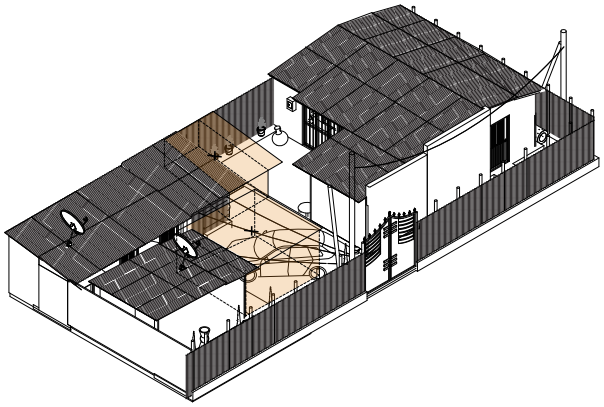
02. ~1981_Enclosing the compound with a corrugated sheet fence



03. ~1984_Extensions added



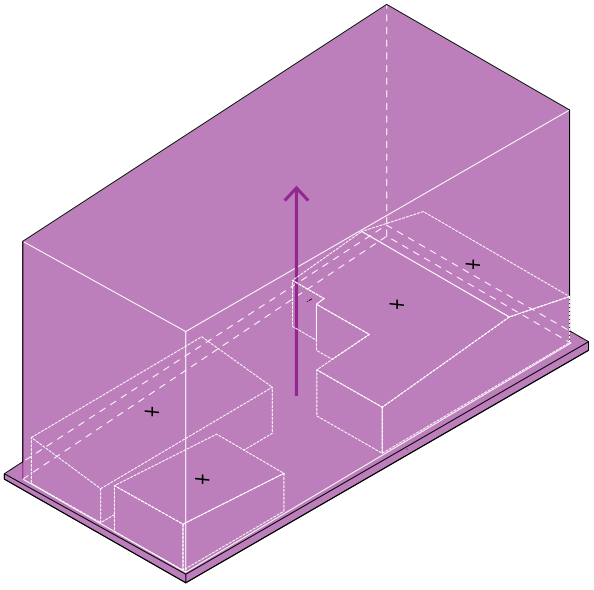
04. ~1984_Extensions added



05. ~2019_Current state

Legend

Desired future scenario: Demolition for Multistory construction

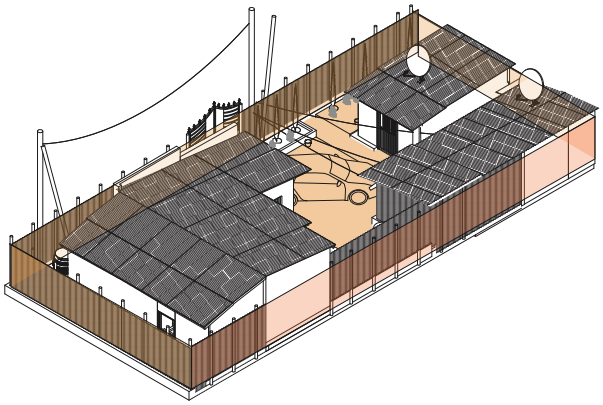


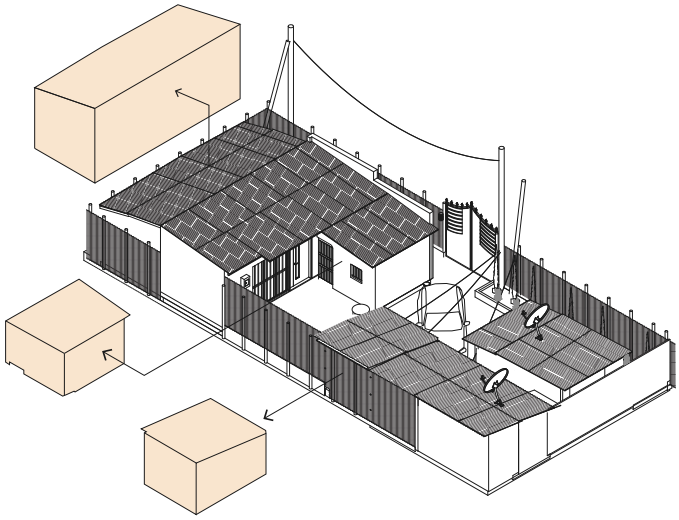
06. Desired future scenario

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

The gibi was initially made of koshem, an indigenous species of shrub. This later gave way to a corrugated iron sheet fence that is elaborately painted on the outside but bare on the inside. For Hailu and his family, the gibi is the house together with the grounds that are within the same fenced structure. The gibi was one of the primary significant addition to Hailu's family in the history of their dwelling.



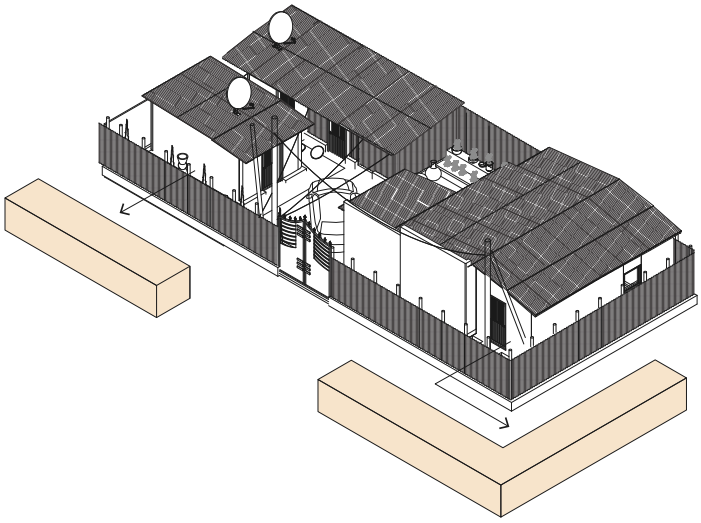


The Gwada

For Hailu and his family, the gwada are the two most private bedrooms that they extended towards the original front yard of the house. They used to consider the previous kitchen as a gwada but not anymore. The gwada is adjacent to the elongated living room which they refer to as the salon.

The Gwaro

The Hailu's family dwelling is peculiar because it is situated on a corner plot. This has given them the advantage of an elongated perimeter towards the two streets. They consider their initial front yard as a gwaro (the one behind the new bedrooms). They also consider a small garden where they plant vegetables next to their entrance as an additional guarro. For the Hailu's the guarro is more of a storage space.

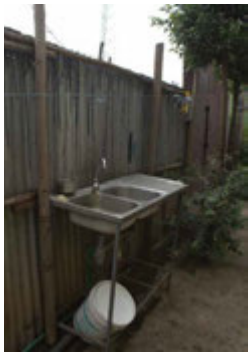




01



04



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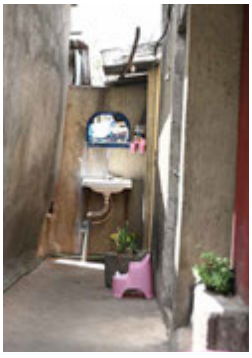

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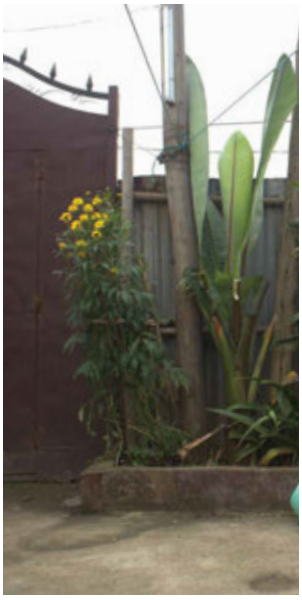

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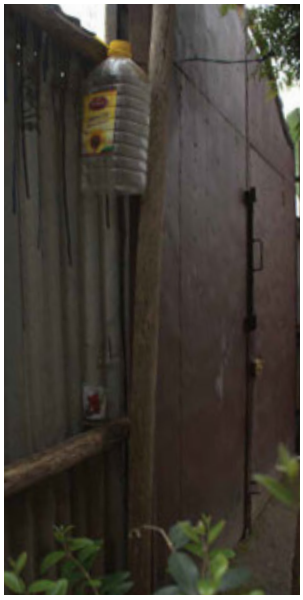
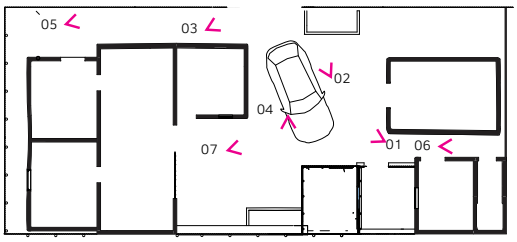


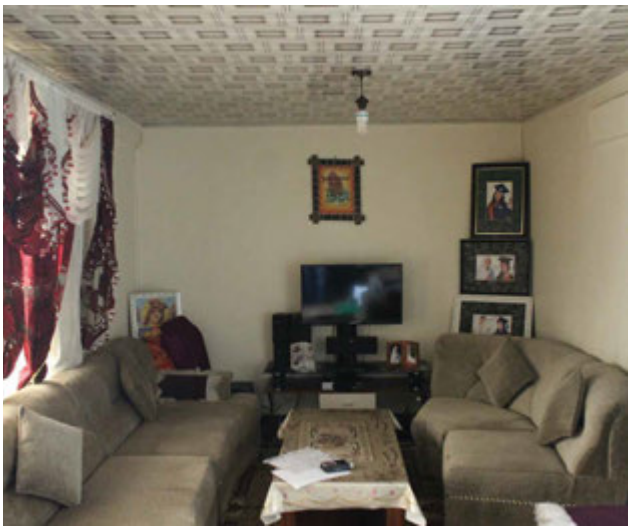
03



07

01 View of the entrance and the parked car
02 View of the main gate and the garden on its side
03 Fence and holywater container
04 Outdoor sitting space by the corner
05 Dish washing space along the Guarro
06 Outdoor hand wash basin
07 Shared outddor service space





08



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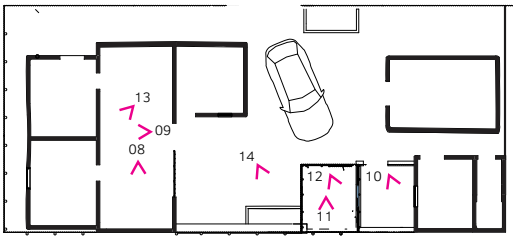
13

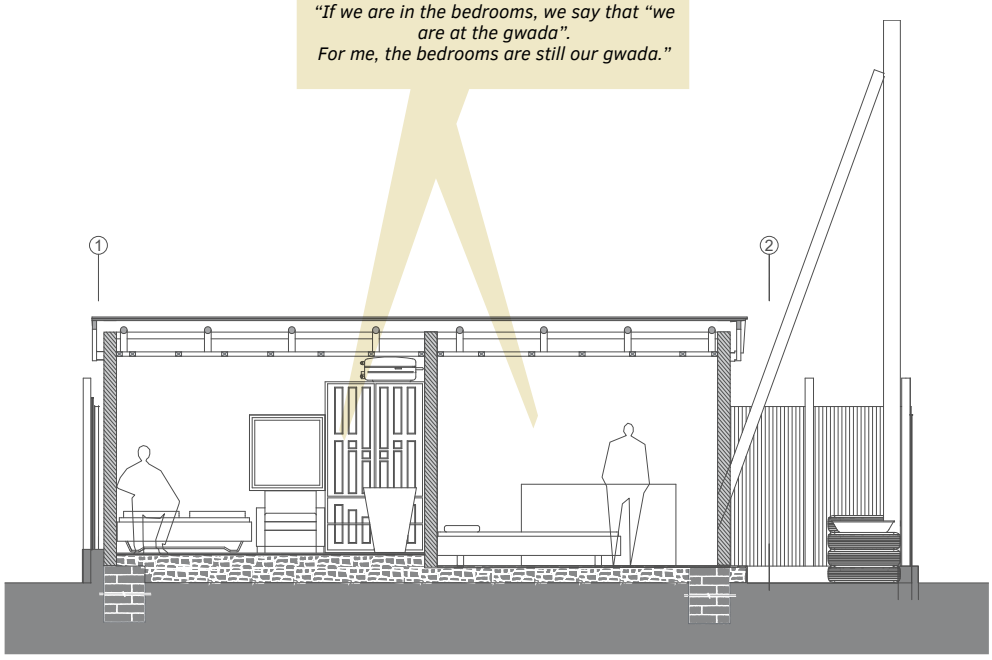


14

08 Living room sitting space
09 Vintage sofa in the living room, by the coffee space
10 A couch in the kitchen to facilitate rest in-between cooking
11 Kitchen wall storage
12 Kitchen injera baking area
13 Coffee ceremony space in the living room
14 Shared phone in the outdoor sitting space



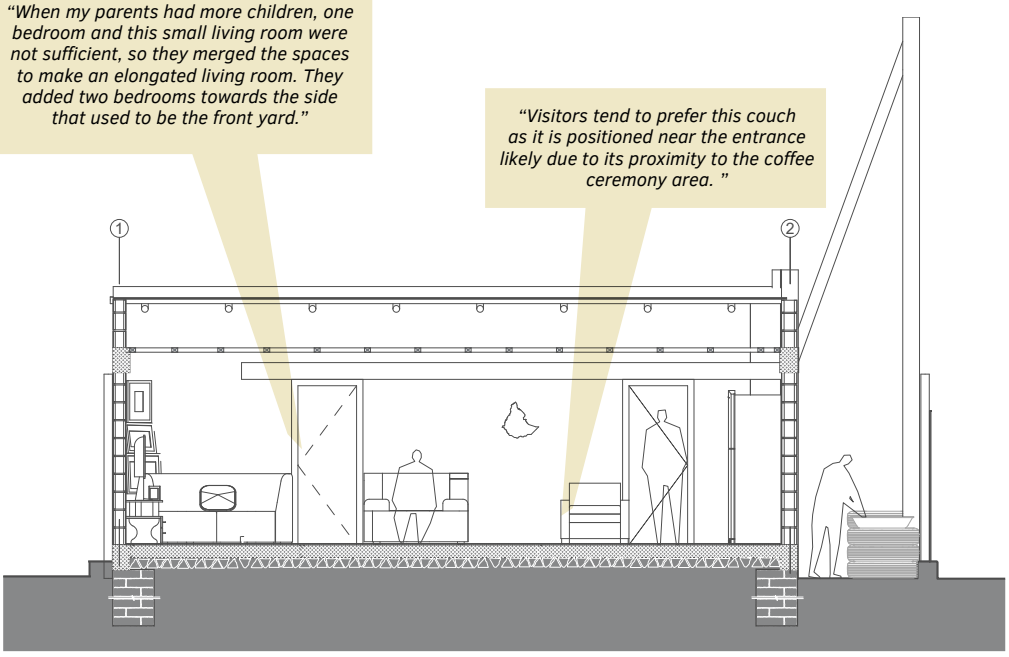
*“If we are in the bedrooms, we say that “we are at the gwada”.
For me, the bedrooms are still our gwada.”*



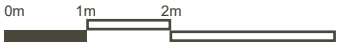
Section A-A

“When my parents had more children, one bedroom and this small living room were not sufficient, so they merged the spaces to make an elongated living room. They added two bedrooms towards the side that used to be the front yard.”

“Visitors tend to prefer this couch as it is positioned near the entrance likely due to its proximity to the coffee ceremony area. ”

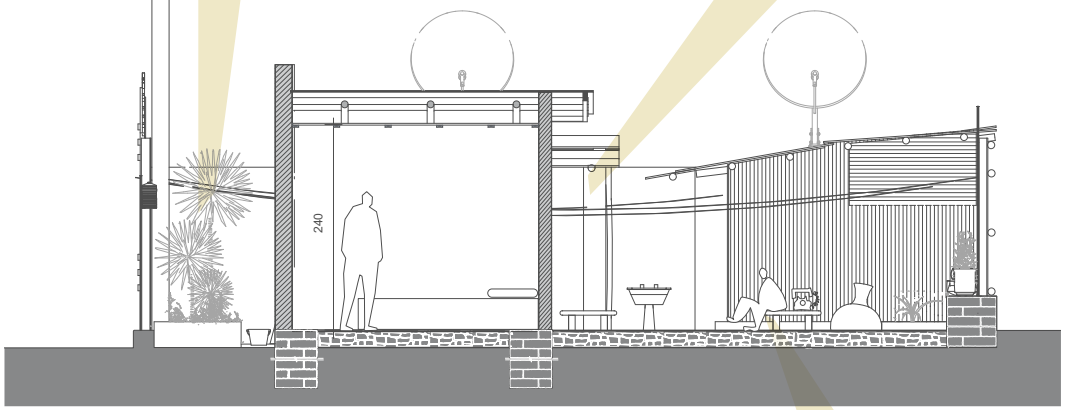


Section B-B



"We left this space for future changes, for instance in case water drainage channels were to be installed. We prefer not to have the house at the boundary line. "

"We placed the hand wash basin outside at the end of the corridor so that anyone using the toilet can wash their hands. It is more convenient when it is placed outside."



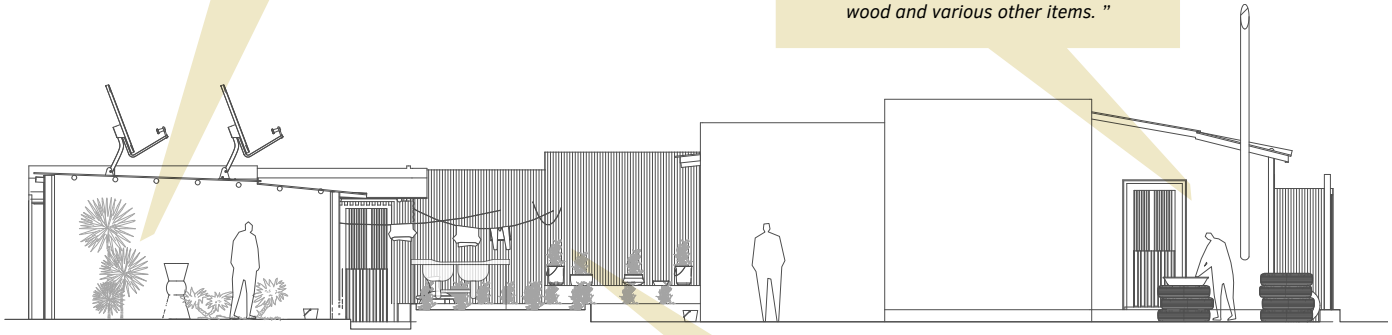
Section C-C

0m 1m 2m

"By the time I get home from work, I am usually very exhausted. I sit over there by the green space in front of the house when I want to drink holy water. I chose it because it is shaded by the plants from the afternoon sun. In the mornings, I can get the morning sun in the same spot; It is fulfilling."

"We have vegetables like collard greens, herbs, and medicinal plants here. My aunt living with us takes care of it."

"Our gwaro is a hidden area located at what used to be the front of the house, situated behind our bedrooms. It serves as storage for wood and various other items. "



South-East Elevation

"We wash our dishes, clothes, and carpets here in the gibi. When we have gatherings, we place the table outside and set up a buffet."

0m 1m 2m

Material encounters



01 Painted corrugated zinc sheet fence nailed on eucalyptus poles.
02 Corrugated zinc sheet walls of the cooking space
03 MDF panel doors lined with a decorative synthetic wood veneer
04 Plastic ceiling and colorful curtains
05 Original wooden window on a mineral plaster finished wall
06 Plastic tiles lining the living room floor
07 Graffiti inspired by a television show drawn on a cement plastered wall
08 Original painted concrete block wall
09 Privacy glass separating the living room from the exterior space
10 Duranta Erecta 'Alba'/ Golden Edge Duranta

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">05</td><td>06</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">08</td><td>07</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">09</td><td>10</td></tr>
</table>

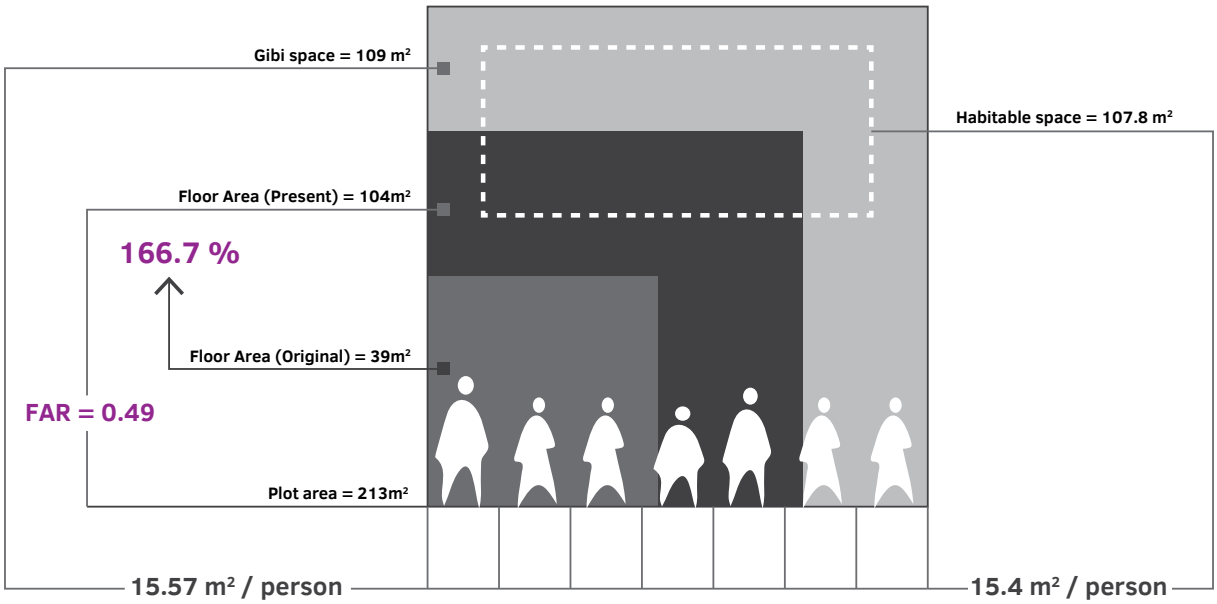
Photo trigger

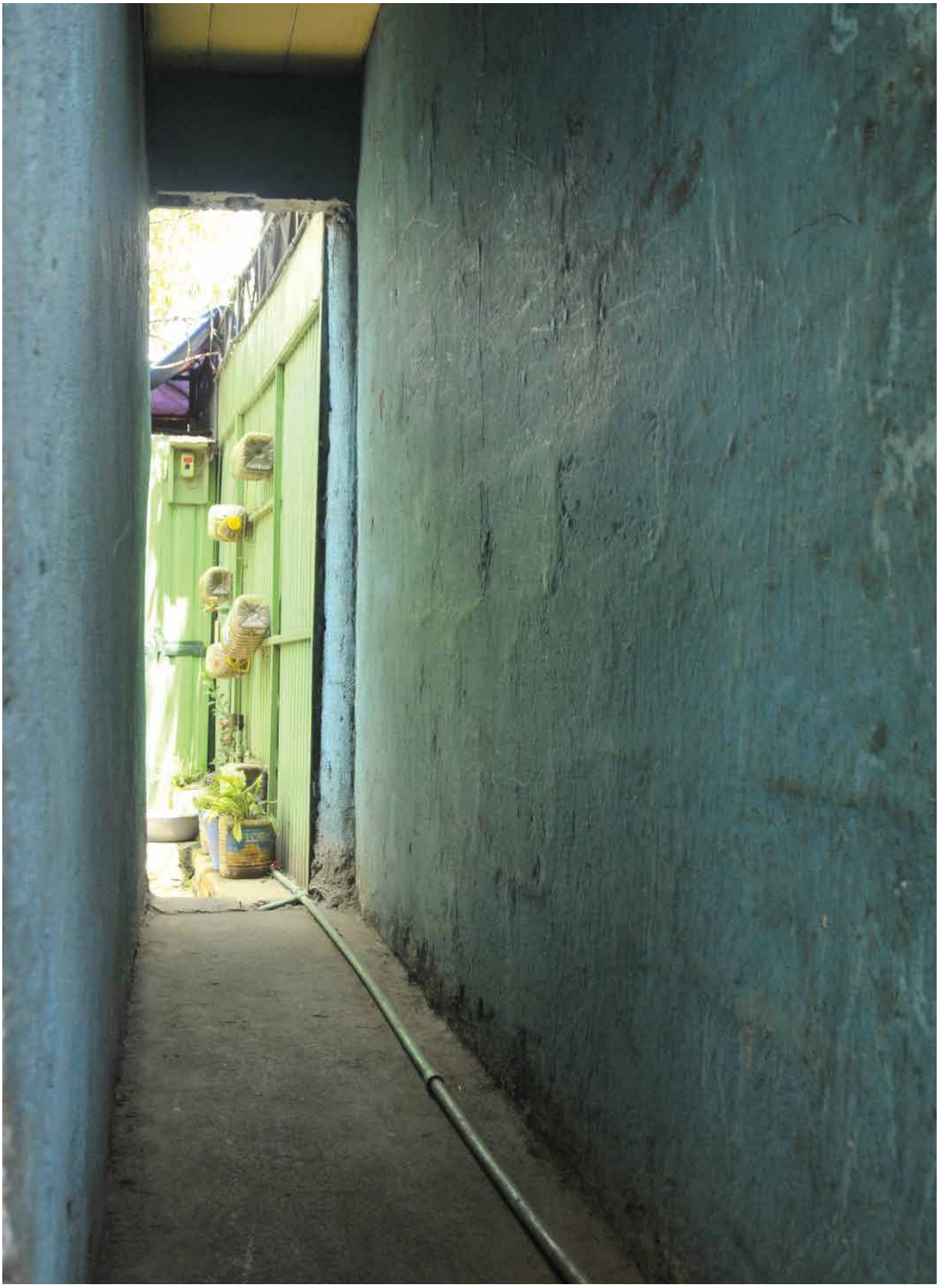




The fence, the plants outside the fence as a secondary fence, and the eucalyptus fence acting as a tertiary layer depict three layers of marking boundaries in Hailu's house. This image was taken upon the request of Hailu but he did not have a particular reason for choosing it; he just liked it. Although Hailu denies it, the electric poles that now lie within the compound give away the fact that public land has been annexed into the property. It is common in Addis Ababa to plantgreenery and lightly fence a meter off from the right of way, the area immediately adjacent to the property with steel or picket fences. Some use this as a technique to later encroach onto the street. This type of layered fencing also helps to discourage people from sitting on the threshold space between the house and the pavement.

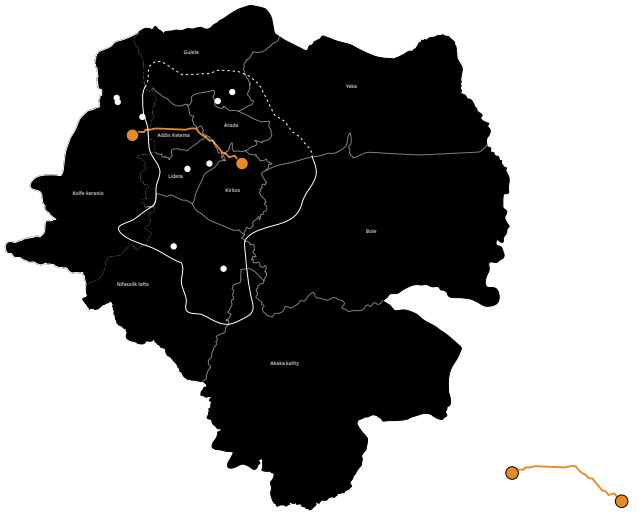
Diagrammatic synthesis





Gudina

We were separated from our extended family members who were living in the same gibi. My two aunts were resettled to different places. We had a good social life and it was disrupted because we were resettled very far away from each other. We were able to work in the previous neighbourhood and earn some money. It is difficult to do that here

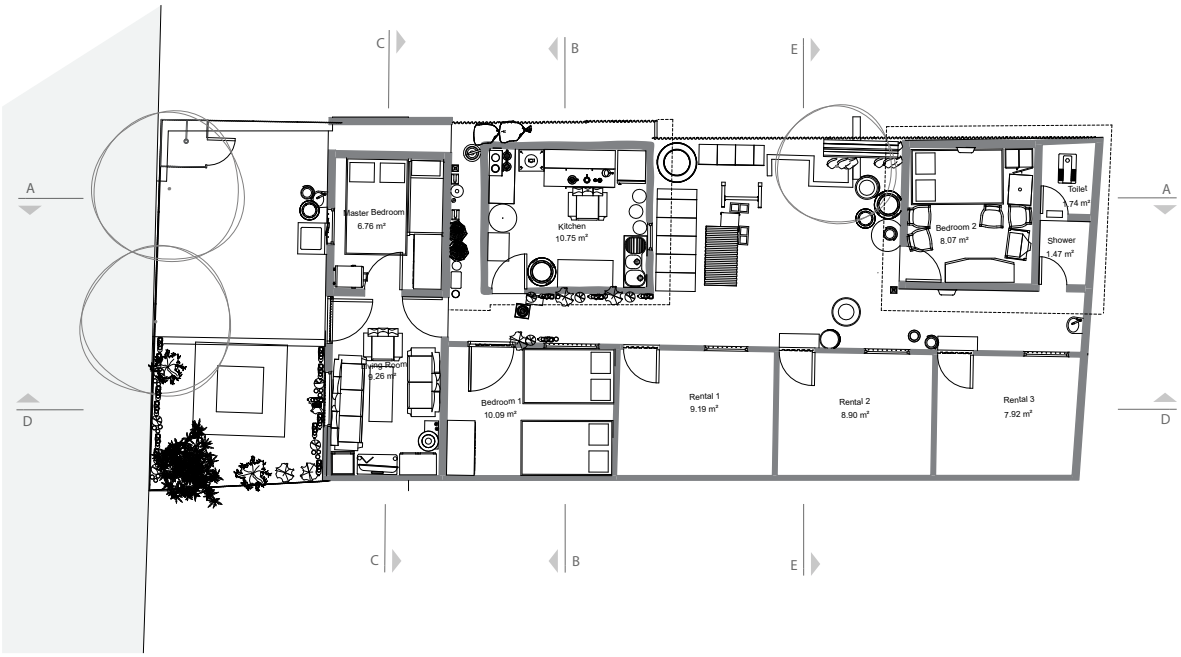


Relocation_7Km

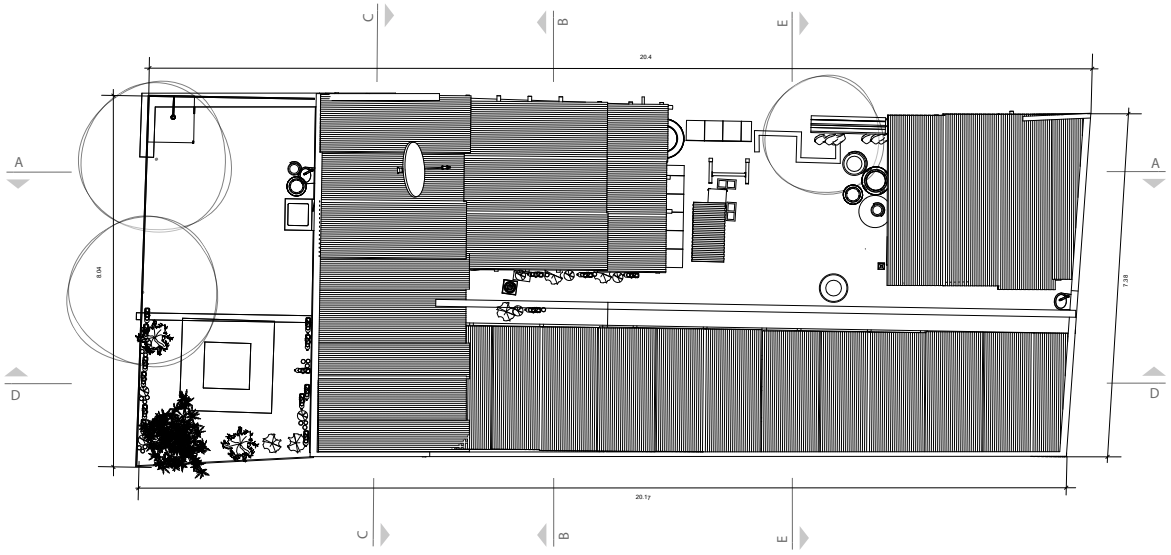
A tunnel to the Gwaro



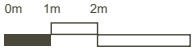
Plans



Ground floor plan

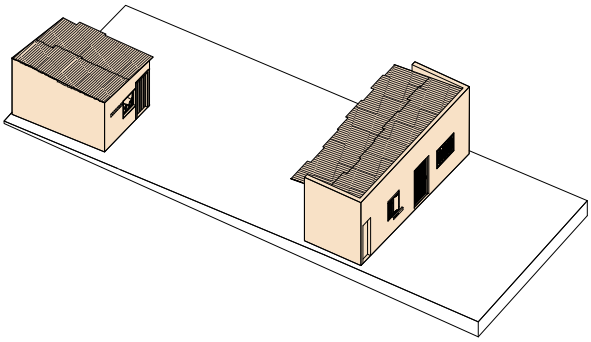


Roof plan

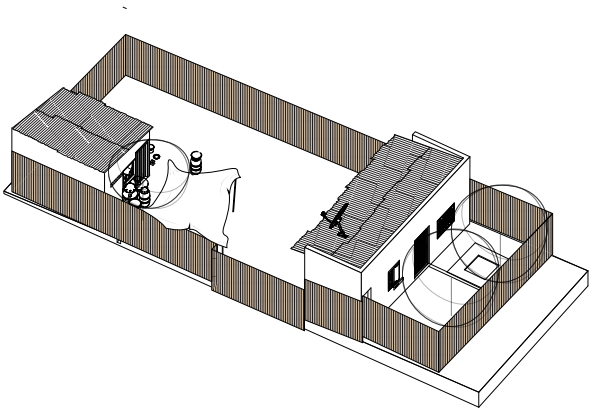




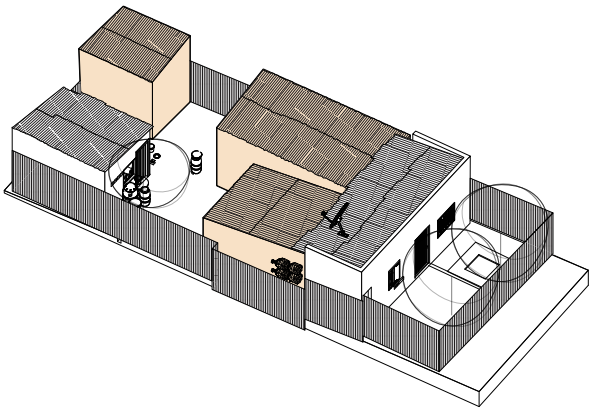
Dwelling transformation



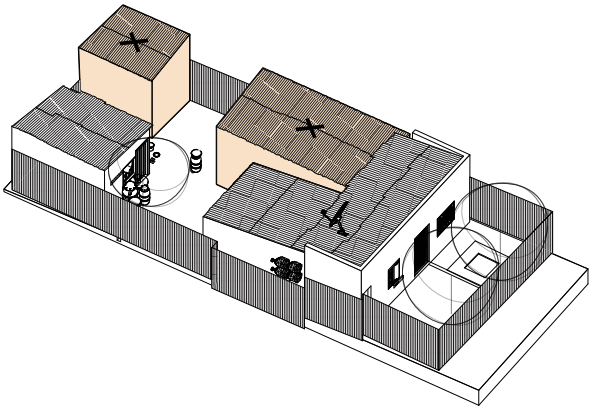
01.1966_Original state of the house



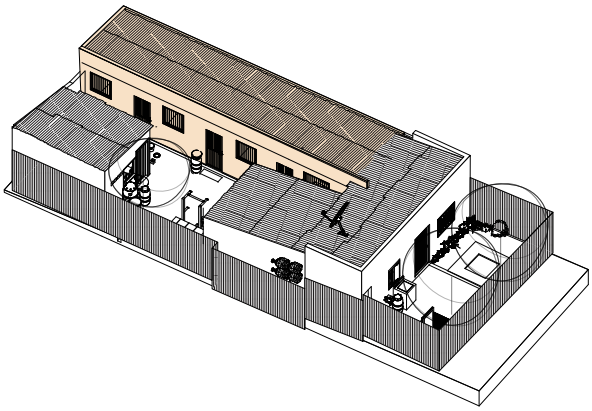
02. ~1968_Enclosing the compound



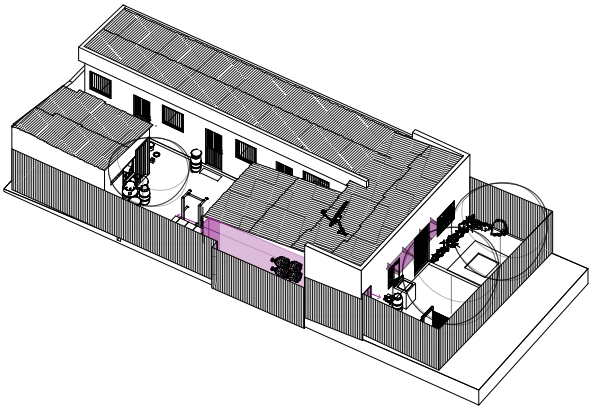
03. ~1970_Addition of extensions



04. ~1971_Extensions demolished



05. ~2007_Latest addition_Current state

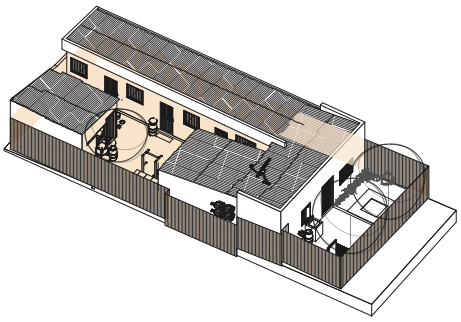


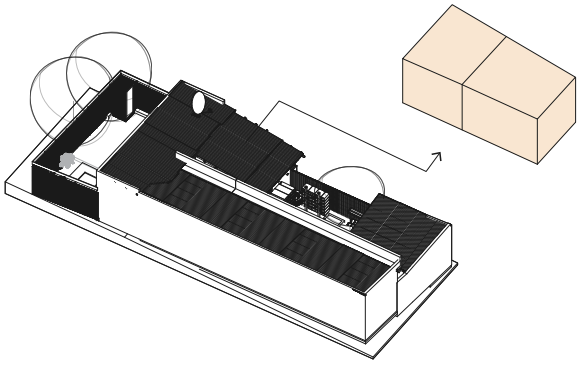
06. Desired future scenario_ The owner does not intend to make major changes but would like to bring back the window to the extended living space. She is open to changes being made by her children in the future.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

The Ghibi was initially made of shrubs. The shrubs were later replaced by relatively permanent materials that gave the plot a sense of total enclosure with hard borders. Defining the territory of the ghibi marked an important step in the upcoming transformation of the house.



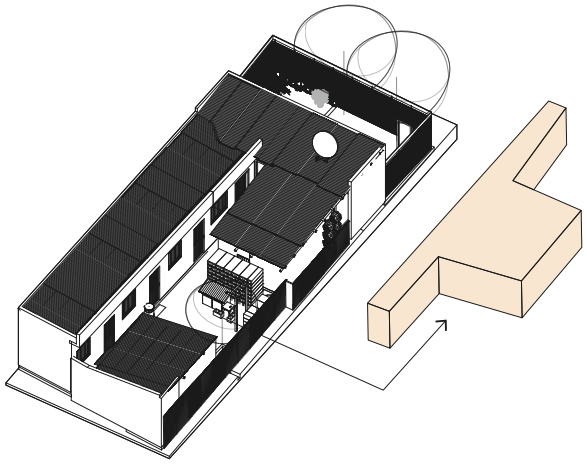


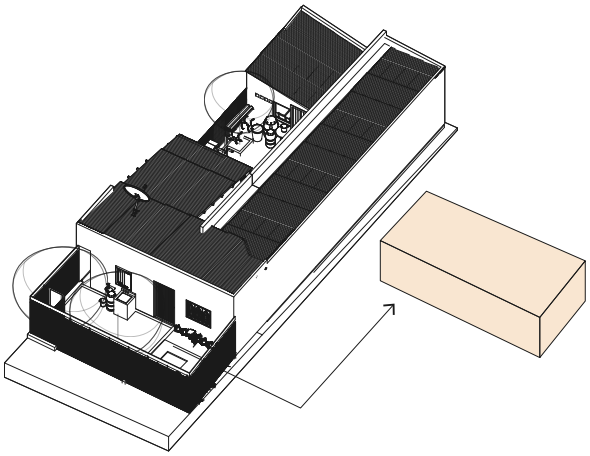
The Gwada

For Gudina and her family, the Gwada comprises the master bedroom and the kitchen. When subletting started in the house, this new kitchen had to be added so that it is private and is nearer to the main core of the house. Gudina has a couch inside the kitchen where she intermittently rests during long hours of cooking.

The Gwaro

The guarro was created through the physical delineation of the ghibi. The guarro is less private now as it is shared by all the tenants living in the house. It serves as a social space and as a connection zone to the service spaces, the toilet, the shower, and the common kitchen.





The Garden

The front garden serves as an entrance porch into the house. It is well-kept and welcomes guests into the house. Owners invite the tenants for coffee on special occasions. The front garden is private to the owners, but the tenants also experience the space daily since it is the main entrance of the lot.



01



02



03



04



05

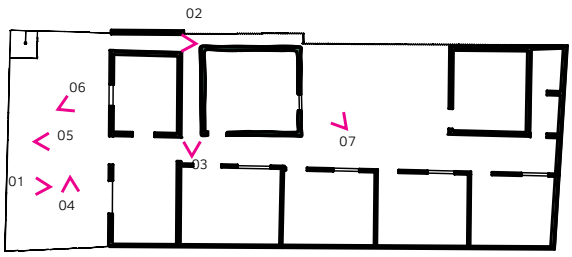


06



07

01 Entrance view
02 Corridor
03 Storage space within the guarro corridor
04 Vertical gardening of chili pepper
05 Front entrance
06 Outdoor hand wash basin installed for convenience
07 Construction material saved for future use





08



09



10



11



12

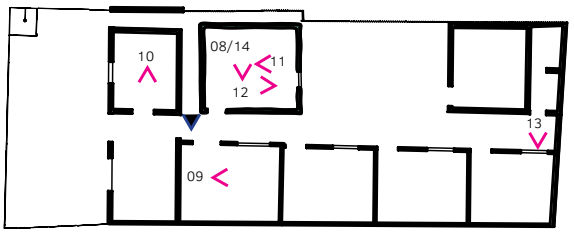


13



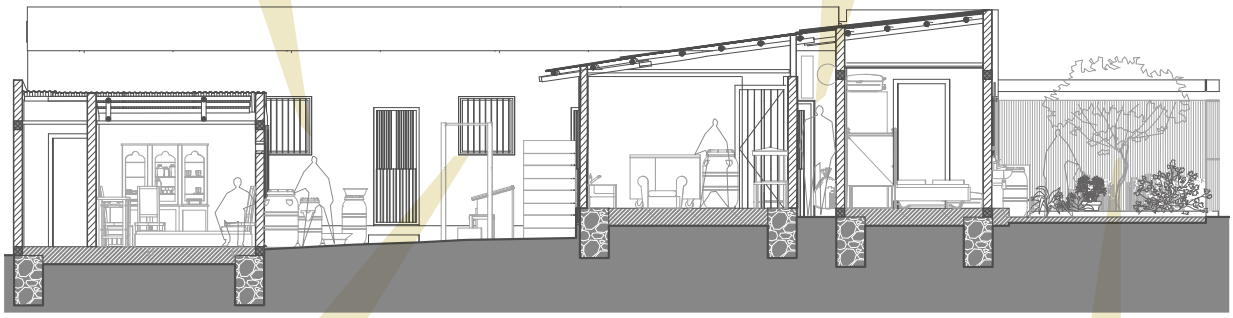
14

08 Kitchen storage
09 Wall art in one of the children's bedrooms
10 View from the children's bedroom to the sitting space
11 Kitchen washing area and storage
12 Kitchen cooking and injera baking area
13 Common toilet with a new ceramic wall finish
14 A couch in the kitchen to facilitate rest in-between cooking activities



"We utilise the gwaro for household tasks like laundry, drying grains, cooking, storage, and similar activities. Additionally, we have planted an apple tree and a false banana. "

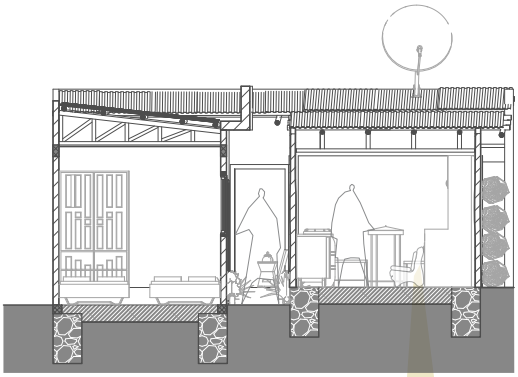
"This passage serves multiple functions. It serves as a convenient storage space due to the roof overhangs that protect against rain. For instance, we store items such as guest mattresses here, readily moving them to the living room as required. "



Section A-A

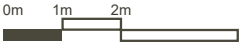
"When my mother passed away, we set up a temporary plastic tarp shade and performed cooking activities until the 40th day was commemorated. A tent was set up by the street in front of the house to accommodate guests."

"We go out and sit here whenever we have an event or when it is a holiday. We have the coffee ceremony here and the tenants also join us. We do the ceremony under this peach tree which was planted by my mother soon after we started living here."



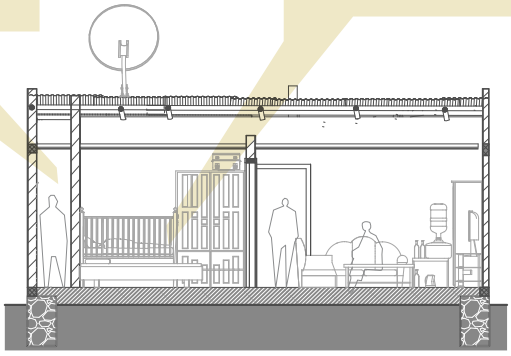
Section B-B

"The couch is very useful here in the kitchen. I use it to rest while I bake injera. "



“We created this tunnel as a narrow passage to the gwaro by subtracting space from the bedroom. It was not comfortable to share access through our living room with the tenants.”

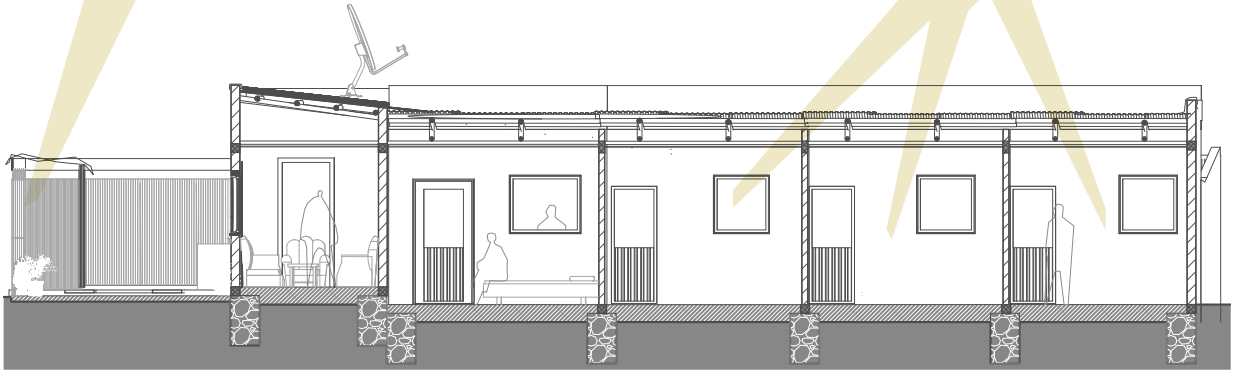
“I have a six-year-old daughter, she sleeps in our bedroom here and prefers to play on the threshold between the bedroom and the living room.”



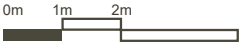
Section C-C

*“I added this metal structure to open a souk but I was denied a permit.
I didn’t want my waste my investment, so I created a shower space for the family inside. It blends well with the landscape and the authorities have not noticed it yet.”*

“We rent three of these units. It has been two years since we built this part of the house. One can get better benefits by renting units made from hollow concrete blocks. The previous wattle and daub construction required frequent maintenance. ”



Section D-D



Material encounters



01 Capsicum annuum (Chili pepper)
02 Decorative lighting fixture on wooden colored plastic ceiling
03 Decorative lighting fixture on a smooth reflective plastic ceiling
04 Plastered and painted HCB wall and recycled silage bag ceiling
05 Layers of indoor and outdoor concrete and plastic floor finish materials
06 Mattress cover turned ceiling cover
07 Cement plastered wall
08 Metallic door stopper on plastic tile floor finish stopping metal door
09 Recycled diameter 110mm downpipe used as a planter and fixed on HCB and Eucalyptus legs
10 Adobe and straw mix wall finish on top of eucalyptus frames
11 Original HCB wall with opening left for ventilation
12 Thin MDF held in place by an old knife covers a broken front window
13 Original wooden window mounted on a concrete wall
14 Ceramic tiles in the toilet

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td>05</td><td>06</td><td>07</td></tr>
<tr><td>08</td><td colspan="2">07</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr>
</table>

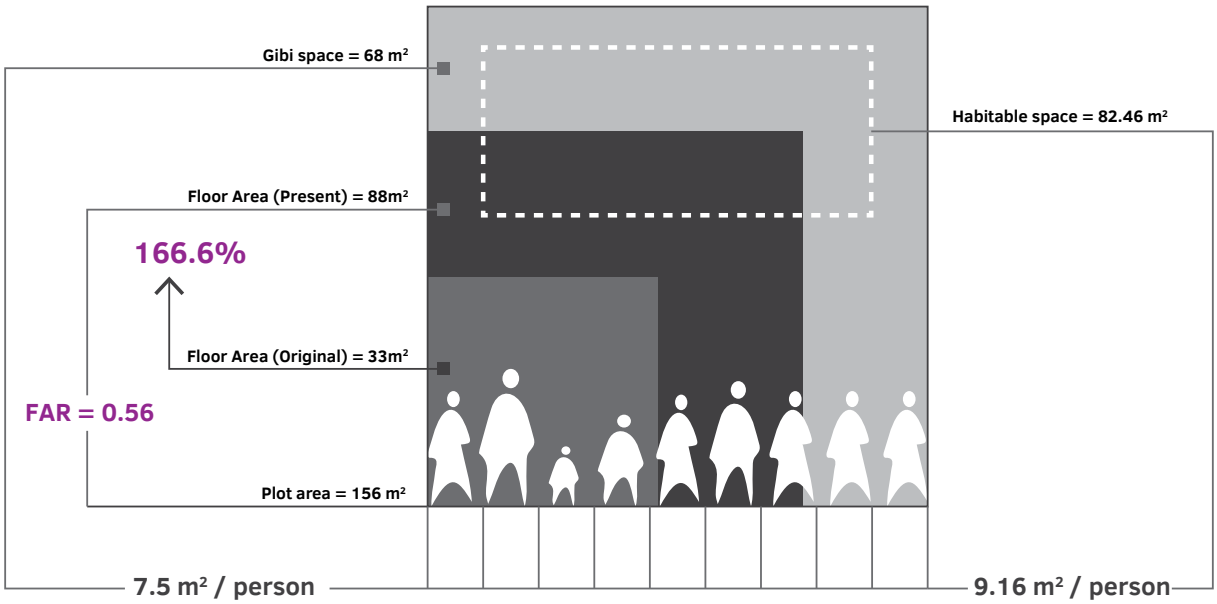
Photo trigger



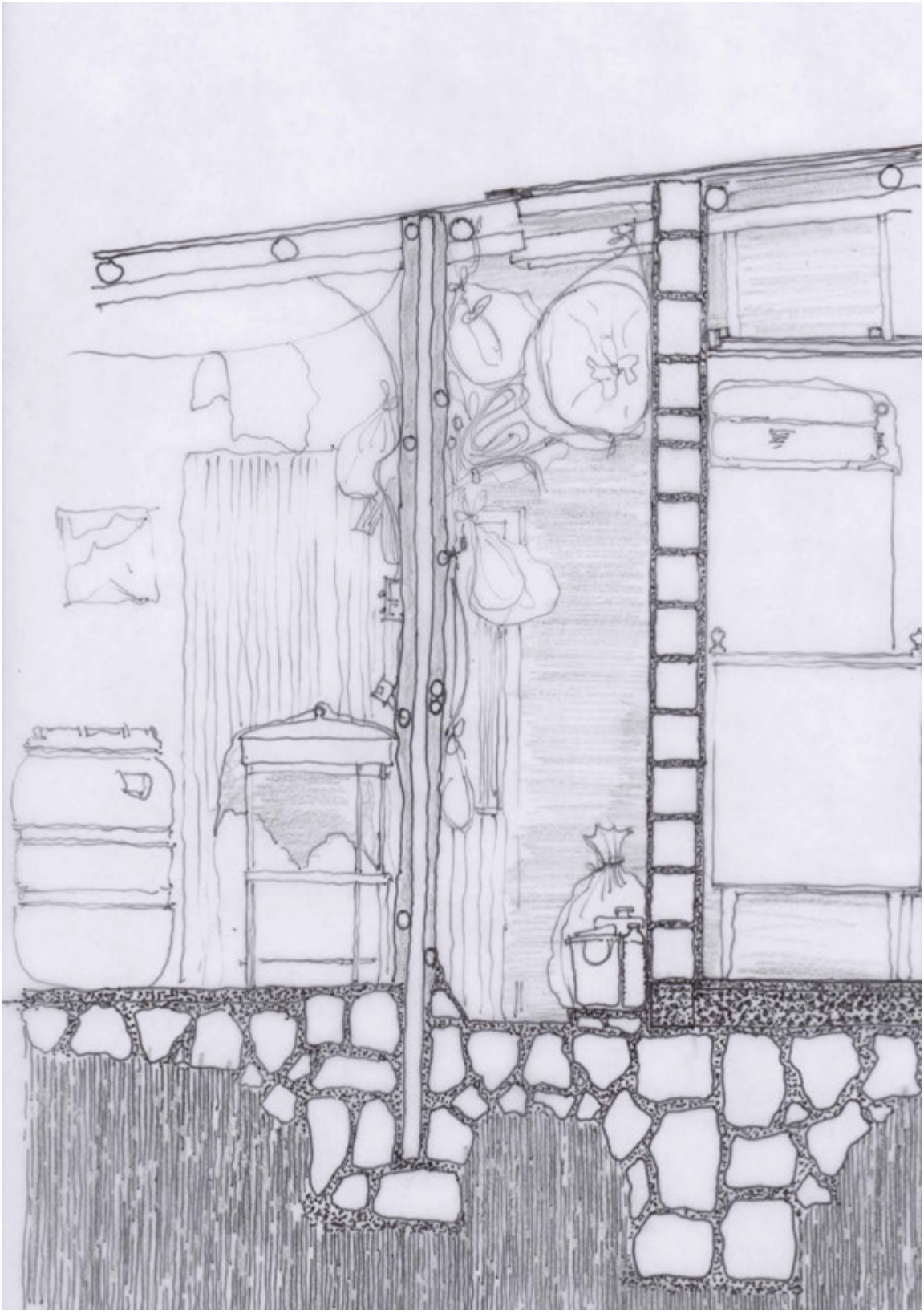


Gudina has a special relationship with her garden. It is located in the front yard of the house, displaying an atmosphere that is in sharp contrast to the clutter of the gwaro, where most of the daily functional routines take place both for Gudina and her tenants. Although Gudina was not explicit about a cherished pace within her dwelling, most of our conversations that went on in the outdoor space, particularly that of the one in the front of the house, ended up being about the garden. Gudina planted and took care of the diverse species of plants that she likes to talk about endlessly. They were one of the main reasons why she frequented the gibi by the main entrance. Gudina was very happy to see the photo of her garden and grateful to know the beauty of her small garden was acknowledged. She happily received the gift and placed it in a prominent spot next to her family pictures.

Diagrammatic synthesis

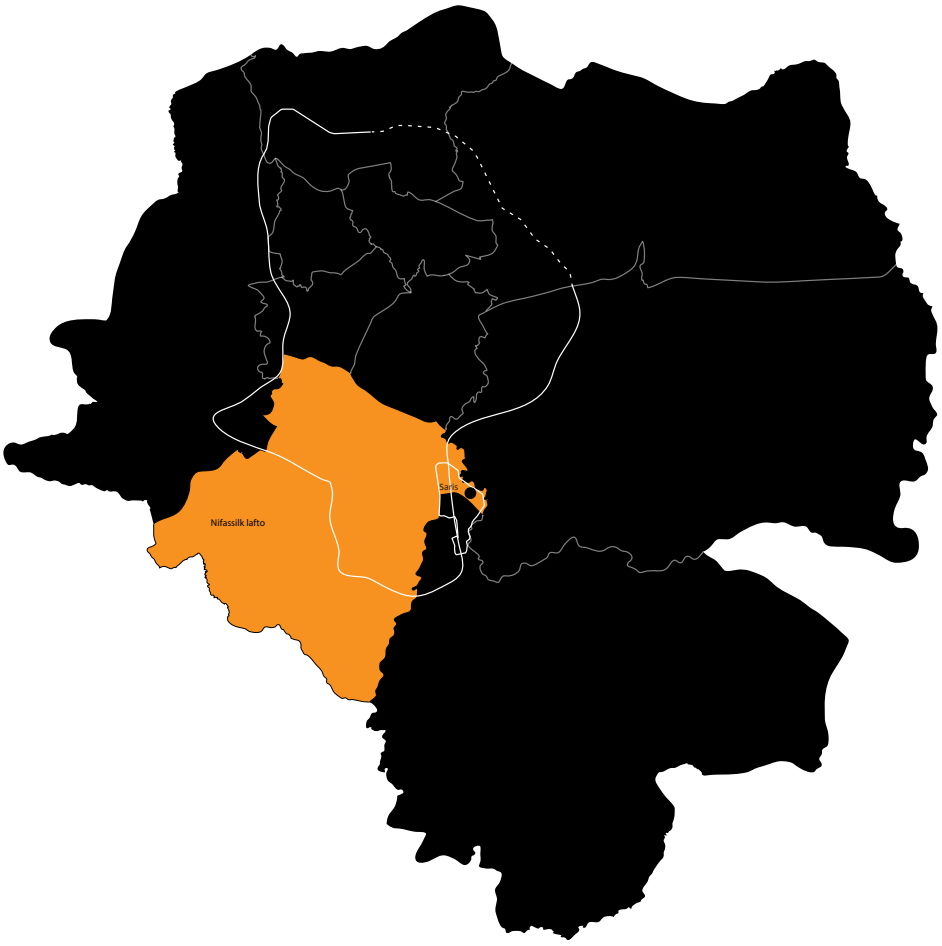


Building techniques





Sites and Services and Souks





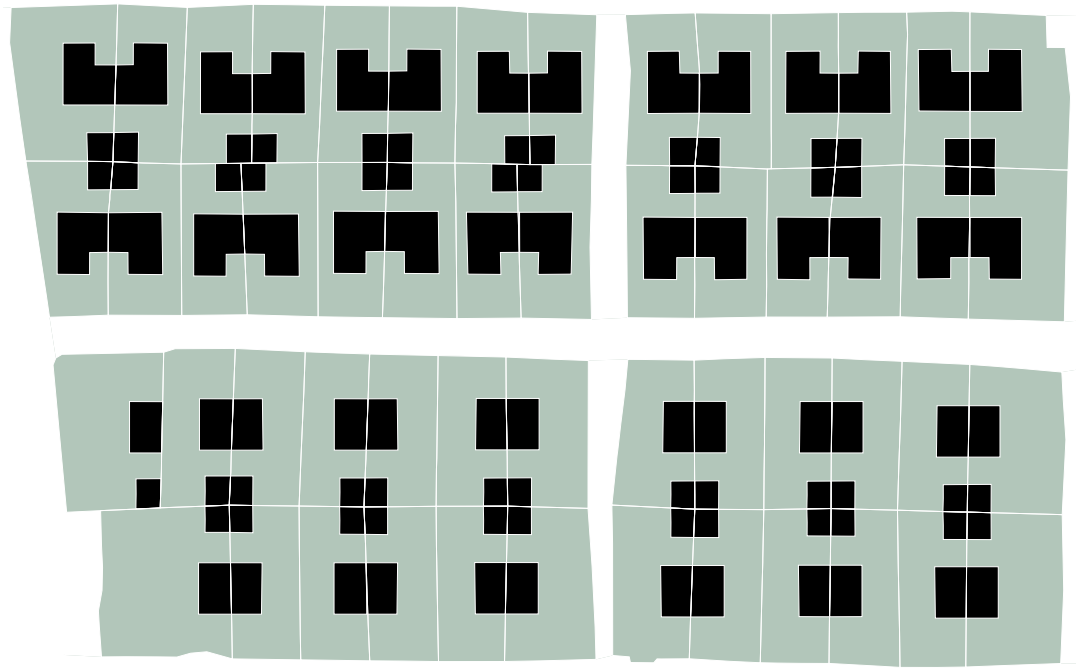
Selected area (2006)



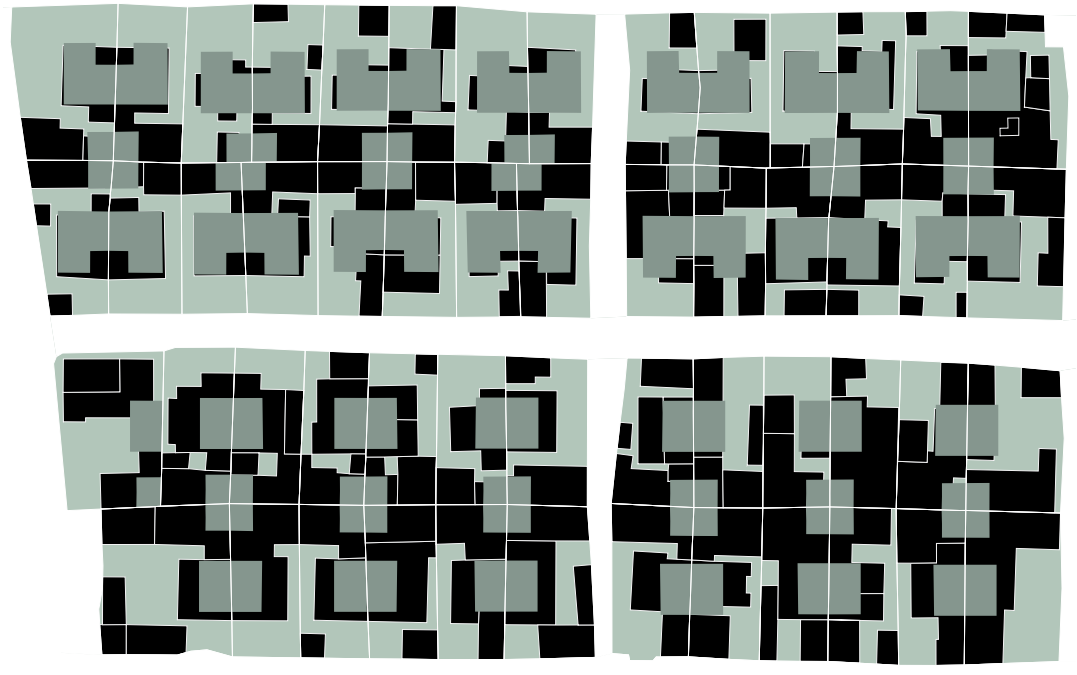
Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selection



Cluster structure_2006_1Ha



Increase in footprint by 2022_ 152.2% in the selected 1Ha area





01



02



03

01 View of a house on a corner plot. They have a shop which is positioned in a way that it can be easily accessed from all directions. The cobblestone street also serves as a parking area

02 View of a main gate in the neighbourhood, a couple of electric poles are also in view. and a few trees planted by the owners if the homes after a national call was made by the PM to plant more trees.

03 A view of the three cobblestone streets from the main gate. The canopy of the shop is also in view.





04



05



06



07

04 View of a neighbouring house still in the original state
05 The passage between the main house and the fence in its original setup. The path has been paved with roughly cut stone pavers
06 The fence and internall walls of houses in the neighbourhood have grown taller over the years
07 The cobblestone streets serve as a pedestrian + vehicular road, a playground fro children who live in the area and also serve as a parking space as shown in the image







CXC Saris Addisu Sefer

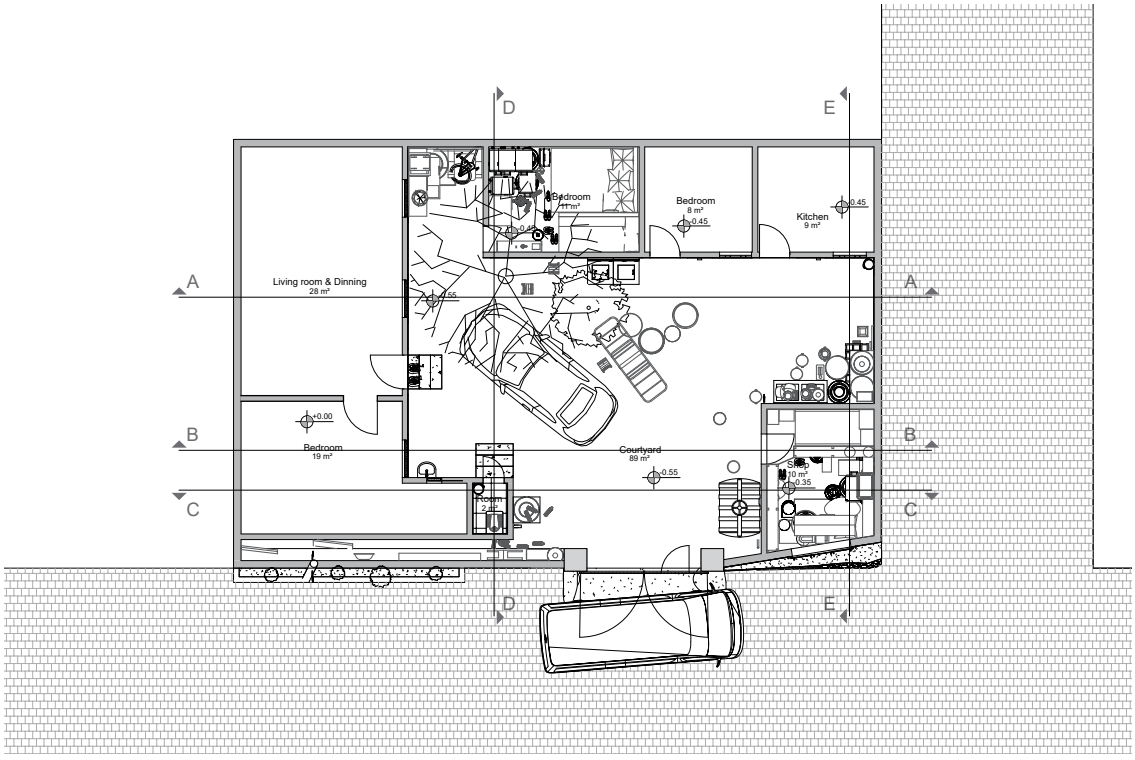
Ahmed

I would like to build a five-storey building where my parents live on the ground floor and the remaining four stories could be rented to generate income. I would love to have a house with a nice shower and toilet and a terrace at the top where I can have coffee and chew khat. The terrace would replace the gibi lost while building the house.

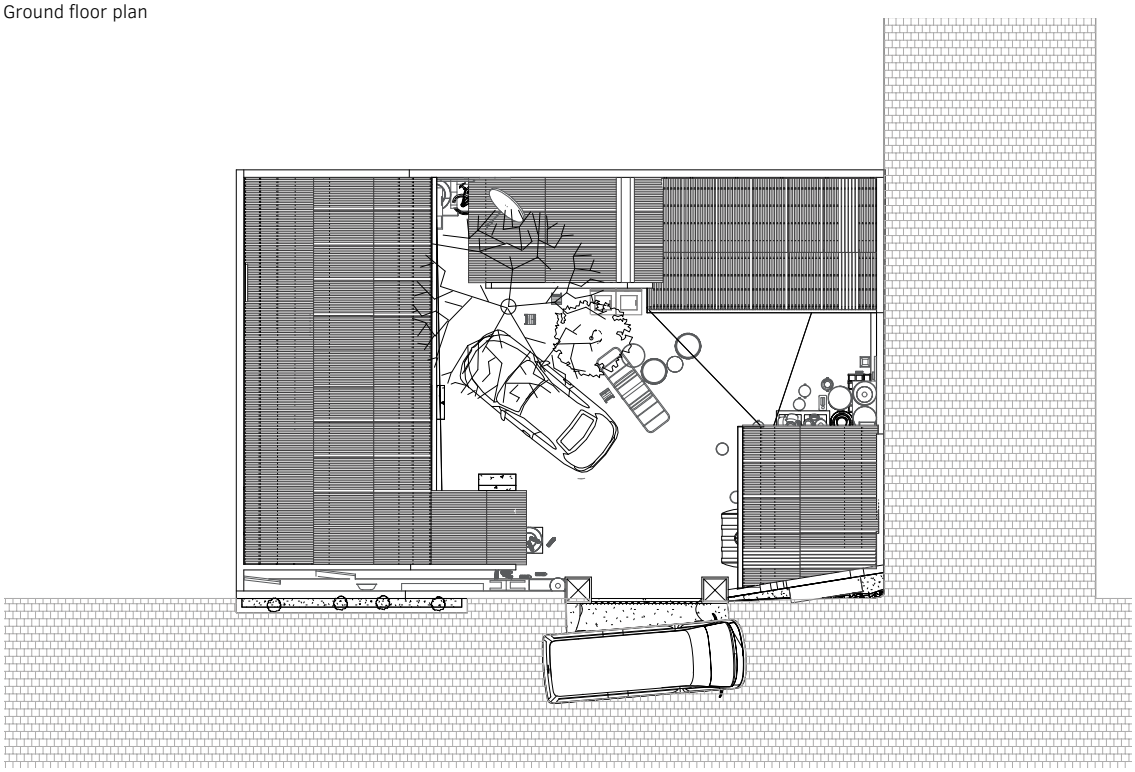
The ‘service quarter’ is the main quarter



Plans



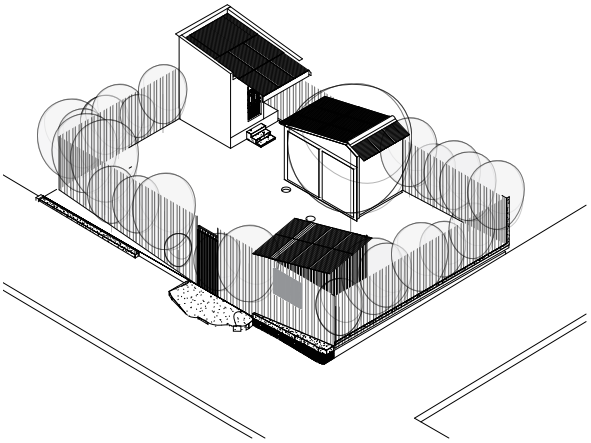
Ground floor plan



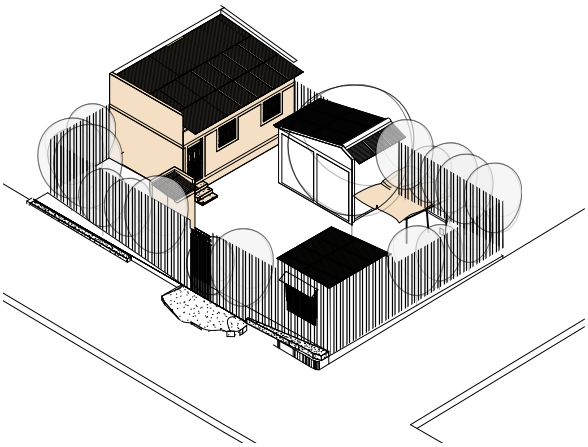
Roof plan



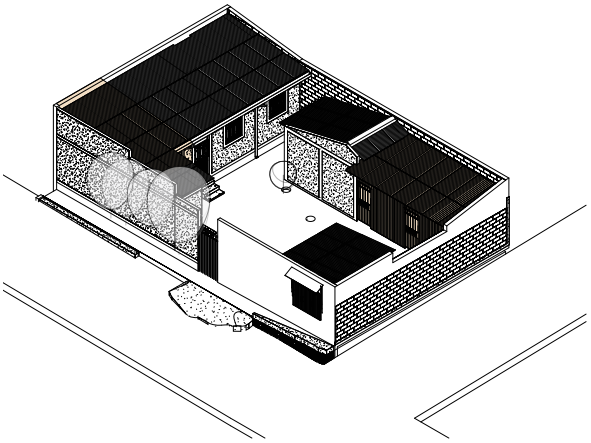
Dwelling transformation



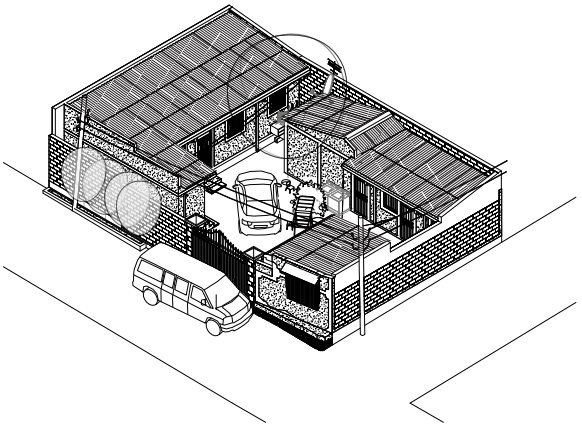
01. Original state of the house. Living room + Bedroom + Kitchen and a toilet. It had a green fence.



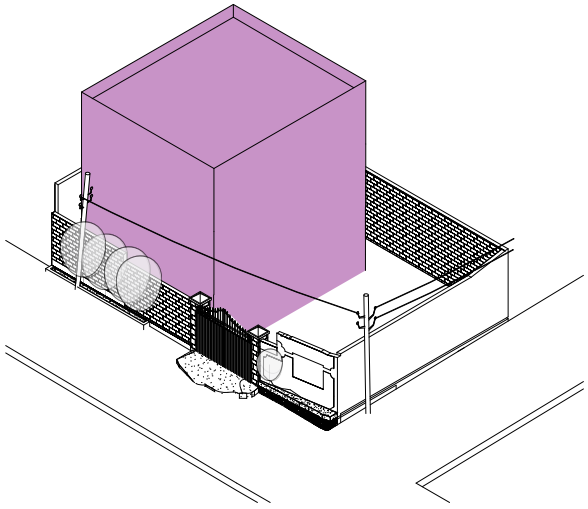
02. ~2002, the previous owners had made a Chika extension and added a corner shop that they rented out to a shop keeper. The TID fence was still in place



03. 2003, they demolished the Chika house and built their current house along with a corner kitchen made of eucalyptus poles and corrugated metal sheets.



04. By 2011, they constructed his sister's room and the current kitchen with concrete blocks. The apple tree was also planted soon after this. The shop was also made with corrugated metal sheets around 2004, and then with concrete blocks in 2011. They also fenced the compound with concrete blocks around 2004.



05. Desired future scenario: A G+4 apartment in a fenced compound.

05. Desired future scenario:

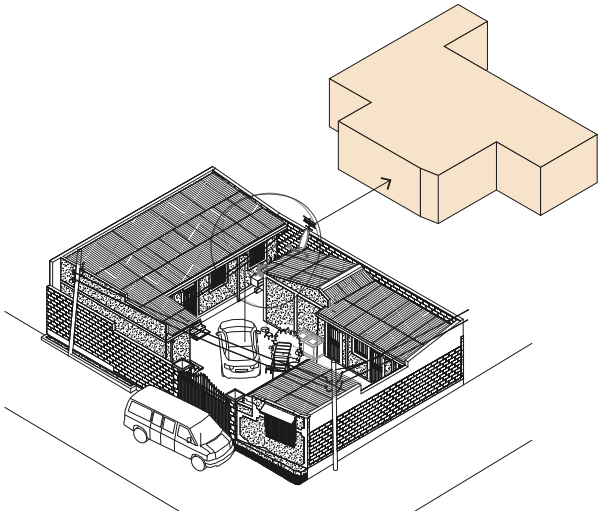
In the future they would like to build a multistorey building that could help them to generate income. He thinks that if they construct a G+4 building for, they would let their parents stay on the ground level and rent out the rest of the spaces.

He would like the future house to have nice toilets and showers, and a roof terrace. He envisions the terrace being used to relax, to have coffee, and to chew kha't. In the event that they construct the house, he is open to a proposal that can save the apple tree but he has no problems with cutting it.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Ahmed considers the gibi to be the void space aside from the built structures. He considers this to be a very important space where they park their cars, sundry herbs, and spices, cook and wash. They also use the space to have coffee and meals when the weather permits. Most of the cooking takes place outside.



No Gwada

The Gwada

Ahmed understands the gwada to be a hidden space within the house. He believes that most of the spaces that they have in the house are unconcealed including their bedroom and kitchens. Ahmed expresses that they do not have gwada in their house because their dwelling spaces are transparent.

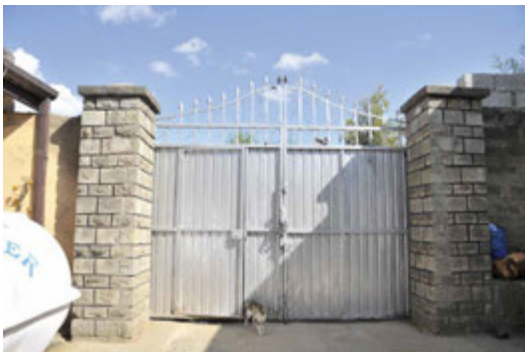
The Gwaro

Ahmed feels that they do not have a gwaro. He believes that the gwaro exists when there is space between the main unit and the gibi enclosure, and if there is secondary access to this space. Since they do not have any of these, they do not have a gwaro in their house.

No Gwaro



01



02



04



03



05

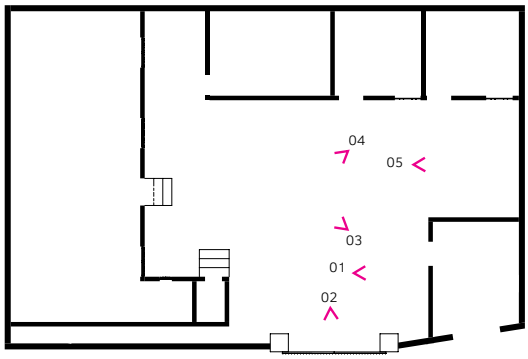
01 View of the shop and the dish washing + clothes washing space

02 View of the main gate of the Gibi as seen from the inside

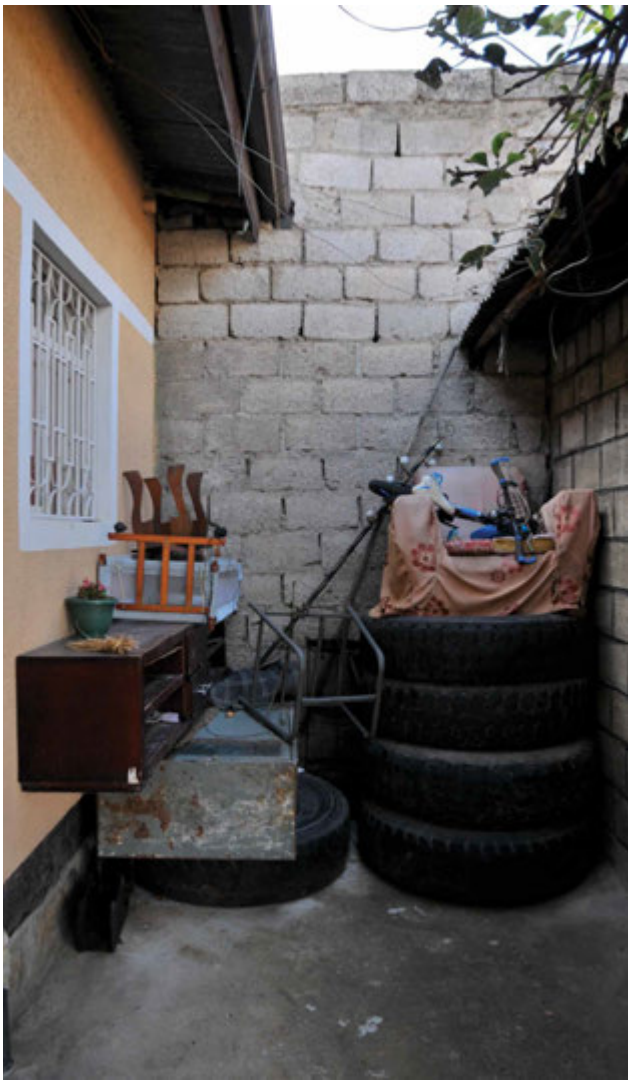
03 View of the Gibi, it serves as a parking space, clothes drying space and a playground for the children. The main house and the additional rooms including the kitchen are also visible

04 View of the Gibi, it serves as a parking space, clothes drying space and a playground for the children. The access to the toilet is also in view

05 View of the Kitchen at the corner of the plot. The outdoor working space used for cooking and dish washing is also in view along with the large plastic water containers.







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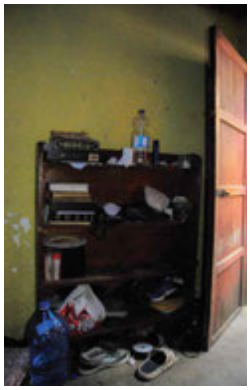
07



08



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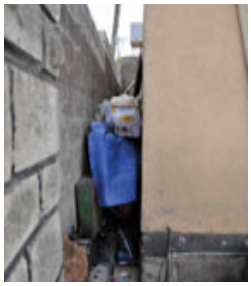


10



11

06 The space between the current main house and the original main house, it is currently being used as a storage space

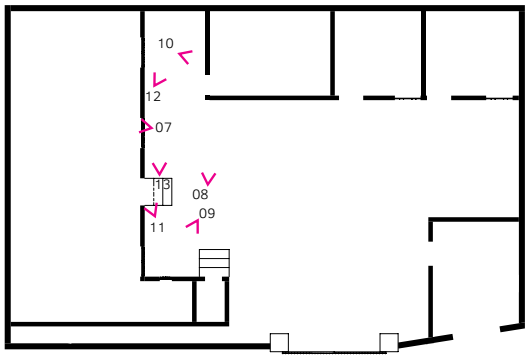
07 The door and window of the original house have been closed off using concrete blocks and cement plaster. The only remaining opening that the room has now is the wooden door facing the current main house.

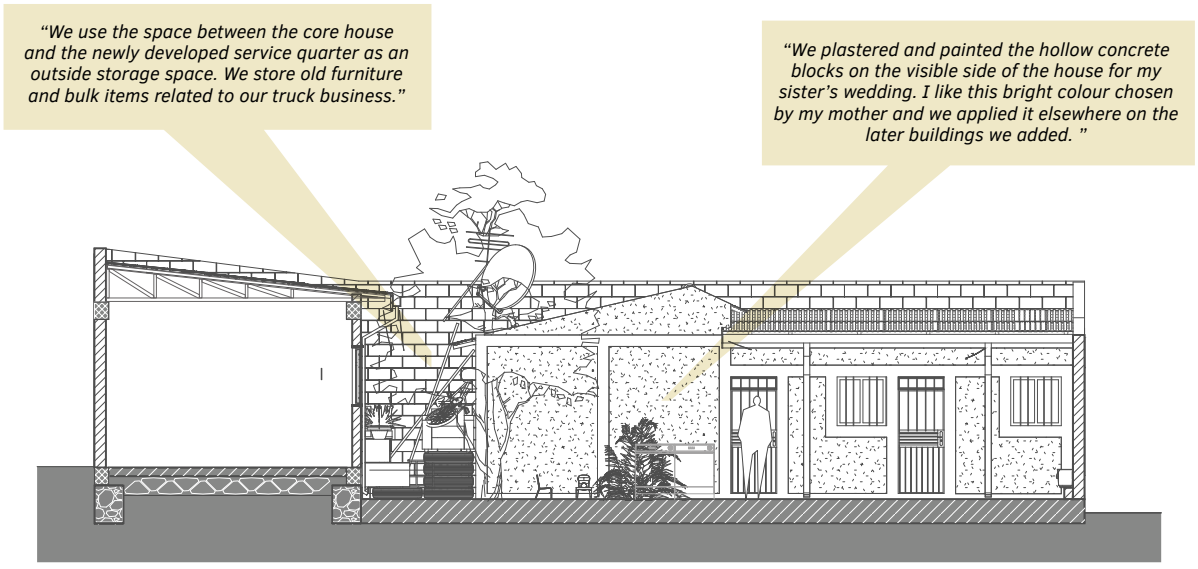
08 View of the toilet + shower. The hand wash basin is located outside.

09 Storage shelf inside the current bedroom

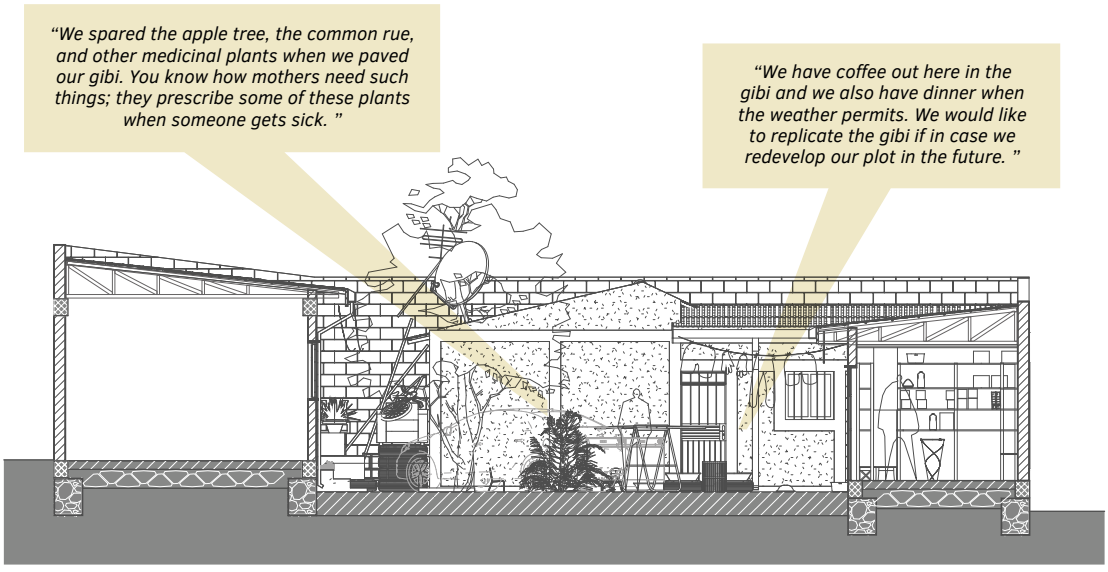
10 View of the narrow storage space between the toilet and the master bedroom and the HCB fence. This space is currently being used as a storage space.

11 Tiles with different colours and textures line the floor and wall of the toilet. Darker and rougher tiles have been used on the ground.





Section A-A



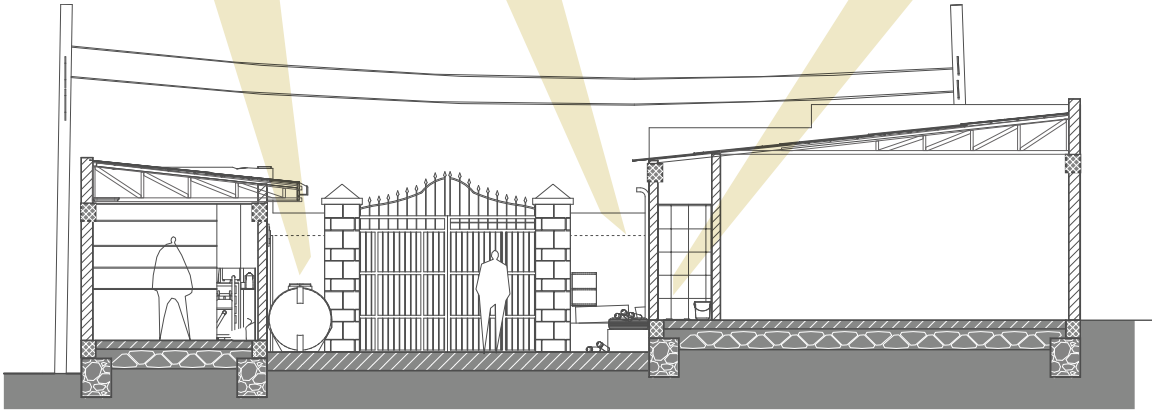
Section B-B

0m 1m 2m

"We face water supply problems; we don't have water for two days per week, so we have installed a water tanker in our gibi. "

"We added two more layers of hollow concrete blocks on our fence because burglars were using the electric pole to climb up over our fence. "

"We built a new toilet and shower on this side of the house because we did not want to share the septic tank with 3 other neighbours. Now we have a private septic tank. "

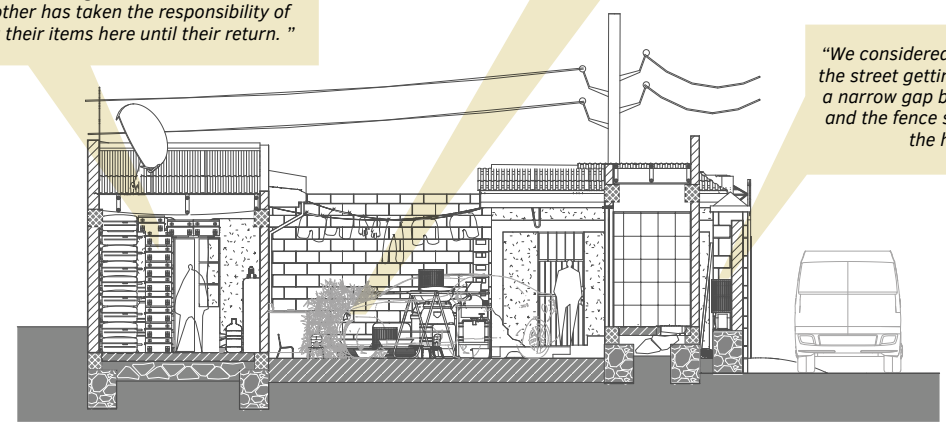


Section C-C

"I use this room as a bedroom and storage. I sleep here with my cousin. We have relatives working in the Middle East and my mother has taken the responsibility of storing their items here until their return. "

"We use the gibi as an outdoor working space. We wash and dry our clothes here in the gibi. Although we have a kitchen, most of the cooking happens outdoors. "

"We considered the probability of the street getting wider, so we left a narrow gap between our house and the fence so that we protect the house. "

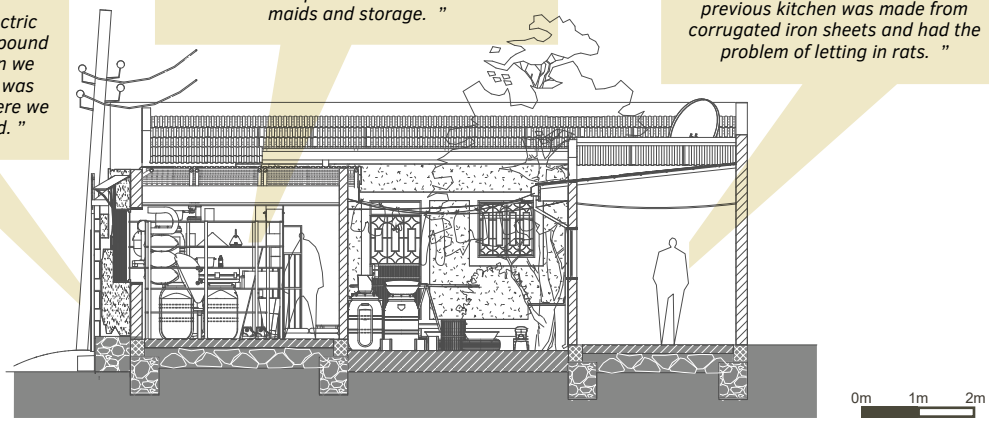


Section D-D

"We moved the electric pole out of our compound back in 2004 when we built our house. It was taking up space where we wanted to expand. "

"The souk was popular, and the community referred to it as 'Mohammad Souk'. It used to be both my living and working space. We now use the space as a bedroom for the maids and storage. "

"Our current kitchen was designed by my grandfather and built by a skilled individual in the neighbourhood. The previous kitchen was made from corrugated iron sheets and had the problem of letting in rats. "



Section E-E

Material encounters



01 Exposed concrete block wall and wooden door on wooden frames
02 Light bulb hangs from an exposed electric cable passing through a ceiling made from colourful silage bags
03 Light bulb hangs from exposed cables attached to a plastic ceiling
04 Metal shower head mounted on metal pipes. The exposed cement plaster is visible above the tiled walls of the shower + toilet.
05 Cement screed finished masonry stairs lead to the living room.
06 The structural elements are highlighted with different colours (vertical ones are in white while horizontal ones are brown)
07 The apple tree provides shade and colour to the Gibi space
08 A decorative metal grill on the toilet window
09 Pointed and painted masonry jacket on the columns lining the right and left side of the main gate
10 A metal latch lock hangs from the wooden frame of the door to the bedroom
11 Metal door of the shop/ storage with metal grill and figured glass details
12 Removable metal covers on the shop window. The shop stand is also shaded with a metal cover mounted on metal frames.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">05</td><td>06</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">09</td><td colspan="2">07</td><td>08</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr>
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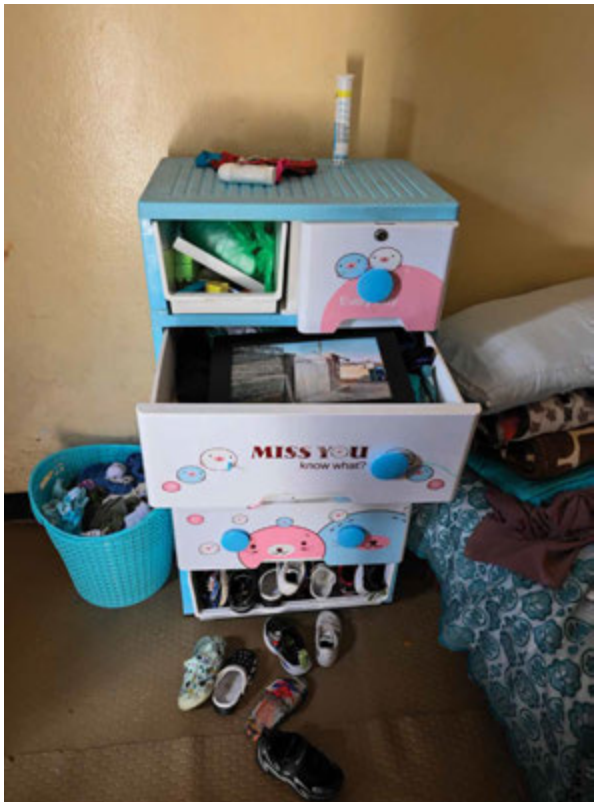
CC Saris Addisu Sefer

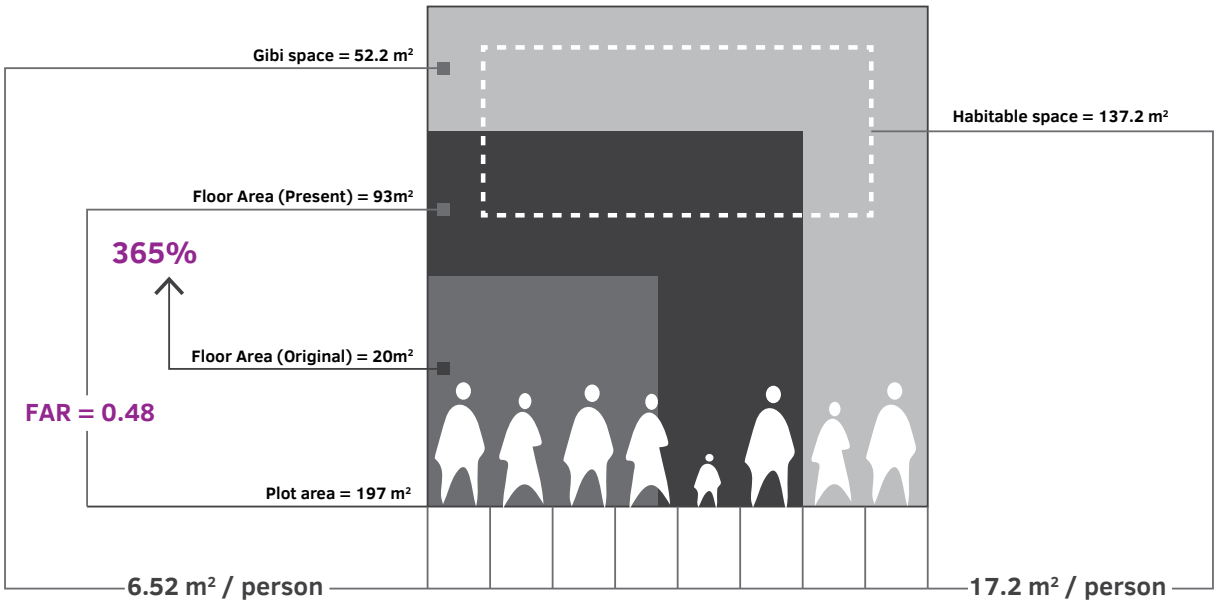
Photo trigger





Ahmed and his family have been constantly modifying their house in Sarris since they moved in. One of the most important changes was replacing the temporary border markers with a proper fence to secure the property and expand their lot. They chose to build along the edges of the plot, following the service quarter typology, which left the gibi at the centre as a multifunctional space. The gibi acts like a panopticon, offering views and access to all the peripheral structures. Ahmed has also emphasized that that they do not have a gwada. Ahmed's favourite spot in their gibi is a shaded area beneath the apple tree. However, when asked which corner of the house he would like to capture in a photograph, he chose the outdoor boundary they extended to the street, which includes a small green patch, their main gate, and a souk facing the road. Due to the street narrowing from encroachment on both sides, the green patch couldn't fit into the frame of the photo. Although pleased with the photo, Ahmed, like many Muslim families, explained that they could not hang it on the wall and instead placed it in a bedroom drawer.

Diagrammatic synthesis





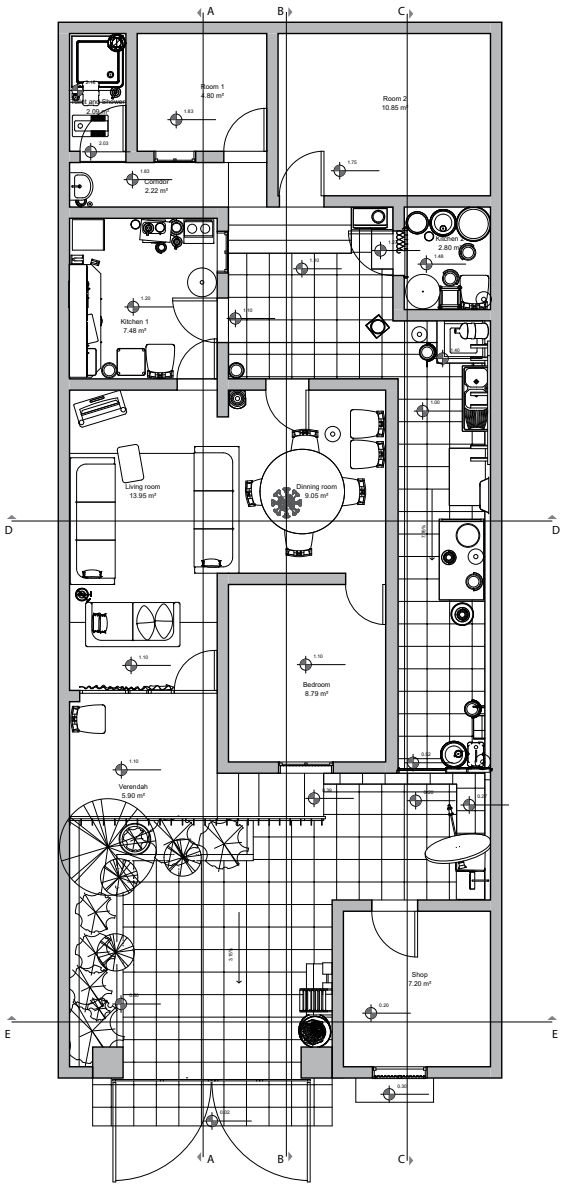
Bemnet

The internal space was very cramped and uncomfortable. We made the spaces wider and brighter, which gave us a more modern way of living. It allowed us to furnish the spaces differently. The modifications had a positive impact and improved how we feelhere.

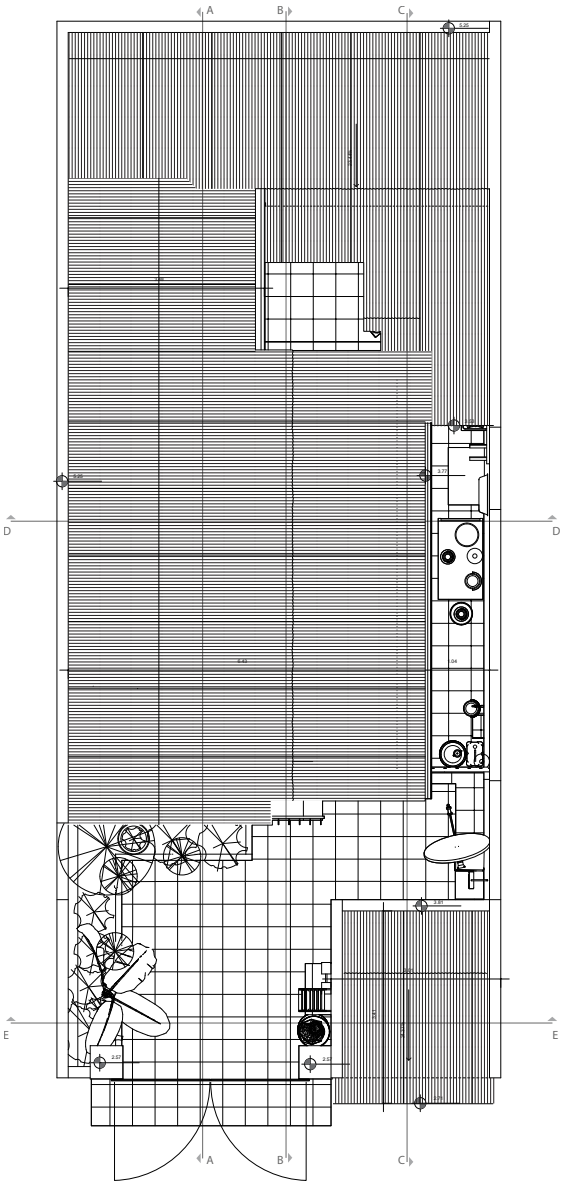
Demarcated Gwaro



Plans



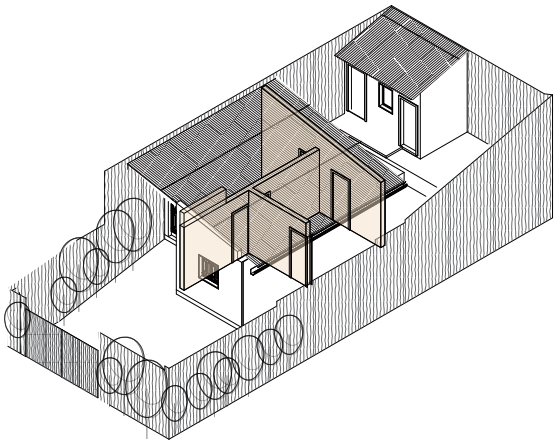
Ground floor plan



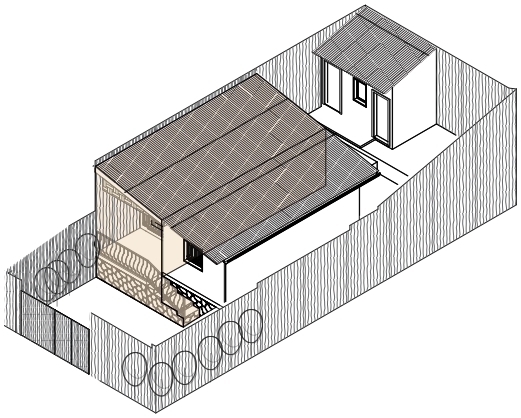
Roof plan



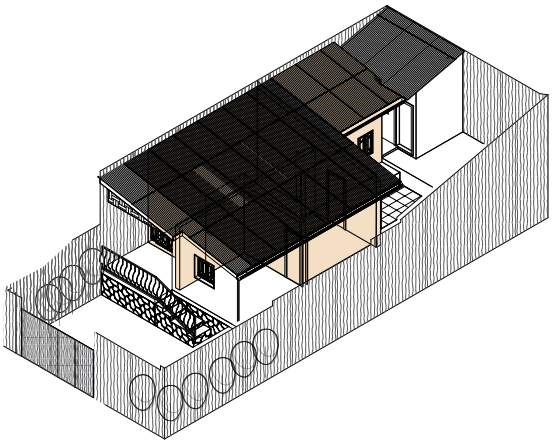
Dwelling transformation



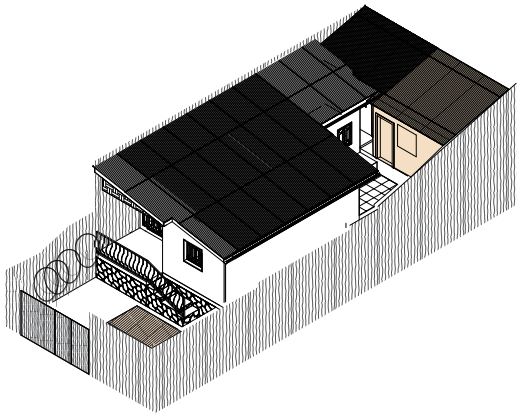
01. 1988_original state of the house when the current owners bought the property. It had a bamboo screen fence lined with trees



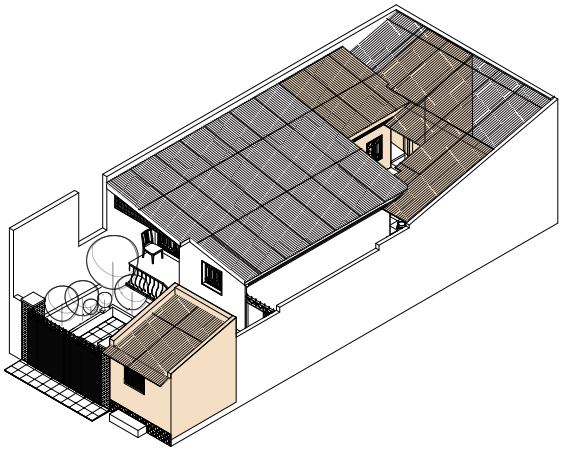
02. 1990_The living room was extended to the front and a veranda was added It had a bamboo screen fence lined with trees



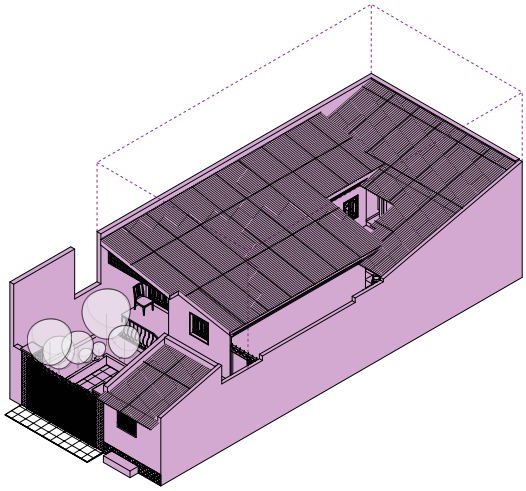
03. 1998_The living room and one of the bedrooms were merged to make a larger living room. A bedroom was added at the back. It had a corrugated metal sheet fence on eucalyptus frames



04. 2015_An additional bedroom was built at the back along with a small corrugated metal sheet shed near the main gate. The shed served as a store. It had a corrugated metal sheet fence on eucalyptus frames



05. BY 2020_ Another smaller kitchen was built on the other side of the Gwaro. The former store at the gate was also converted into a rental unit, and the bedroom added on step 03 was converted into a kitchen, completing the current setup of the dwelling

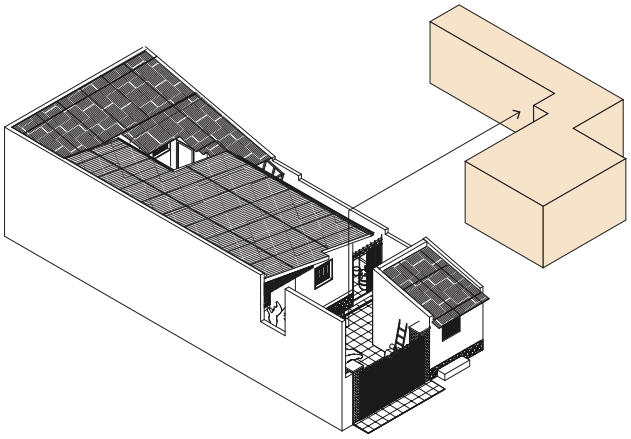


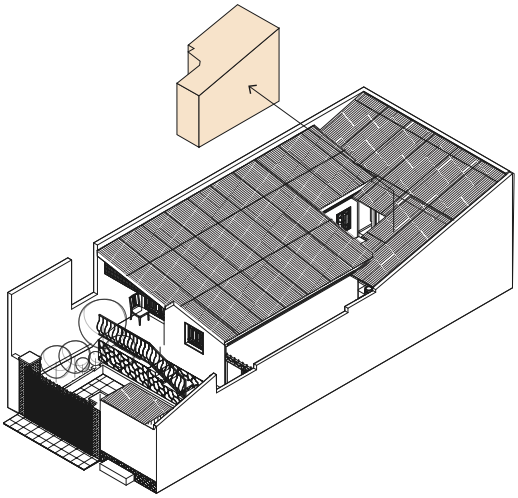
06. Future scenario: They are content with the current setup of the house, but they are open to growing vertically if the need ever arises

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

The front yard of the house encompassing the paved area and the strip garden is the gibi for bemnet and his family. This space is used for parking, for drying clothes. It is also occasionally used for drying herbs.



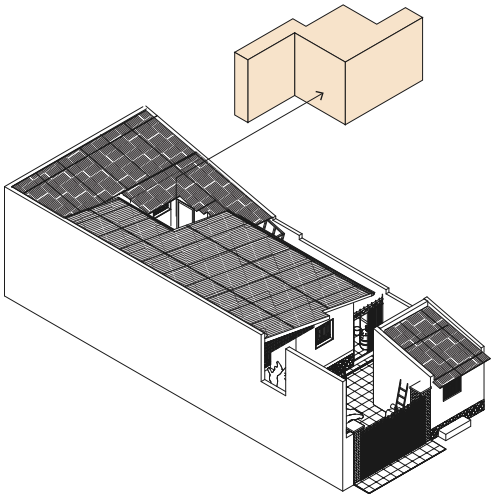


The Gwada

Bemnet considers one of the two kitchens in the house as the gwada. This kitchen is the secondary kitchen they use for storage for baking injera and other types of food. The gwada is accessed from the outside space and is used by tenants on rare occasions.

The Gwaro

Bemnet defines their gwaro as “the open space behind the house”. It is the service space that is in between the rental units and their living spaces (in between the main unit and the service quarter). The gwaro is used for washing clothes, washing dishes, collecting water, and performing other kitchen-related activities.





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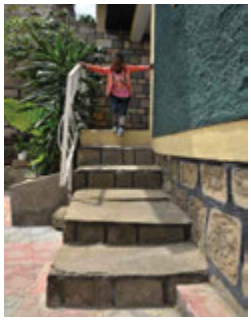

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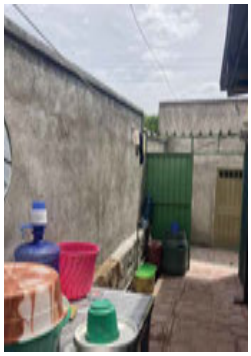
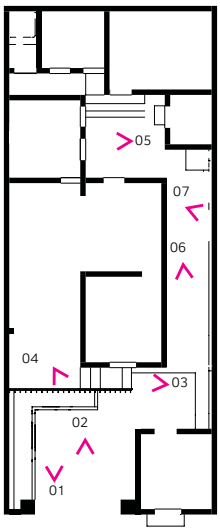


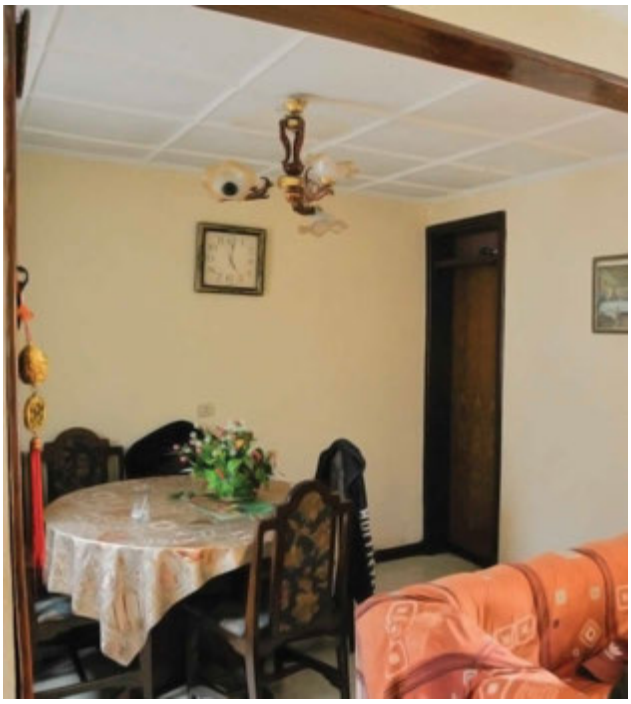
06



07

01 Front view of the house
02 View of the main gate as seen from the inside
03 View of masonry stair leading to the veranda
04 View from the veranda towards the newly added rental unit
05 View of the kitchen and the stairs leading to the toilet as well as the rental rooms
06 The water line along the passage to the Gwaro. The green painted metal gate was added because the owners used to have a guard dog.
07 Dish washing sink next to the small kitchen propped up by an eucalyptus pole





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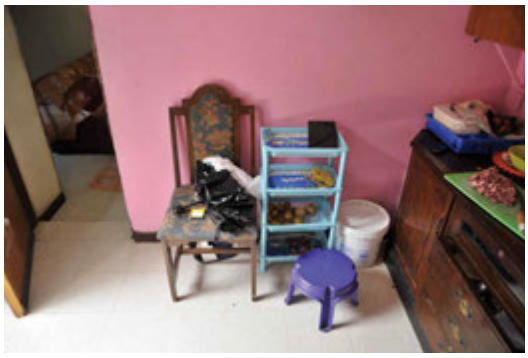

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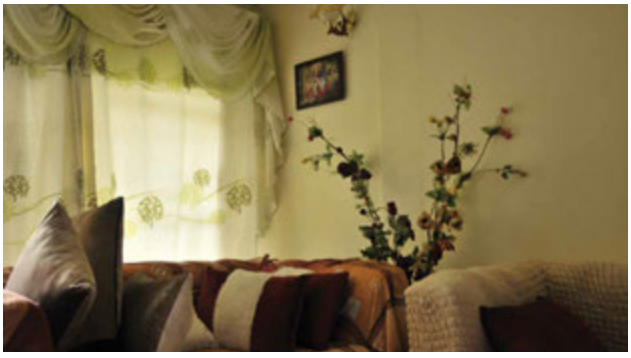


11



12



13

08 View of the dining space behind which is the door to the bedroom

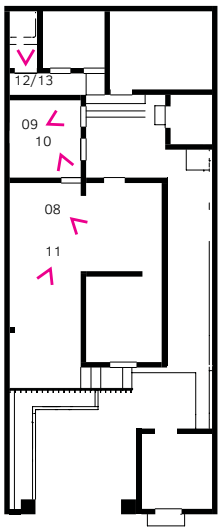
09 Cooking area by the window of the pink painted kitchen

10 View of the preparation and storage spaces in the kitchen

11 The dark red coloured cushions and artificial flowers in the living room are in view, in contrast to the lighter coloured curtains screening the “French window“, diffusing the light coming into the living and dining spaces

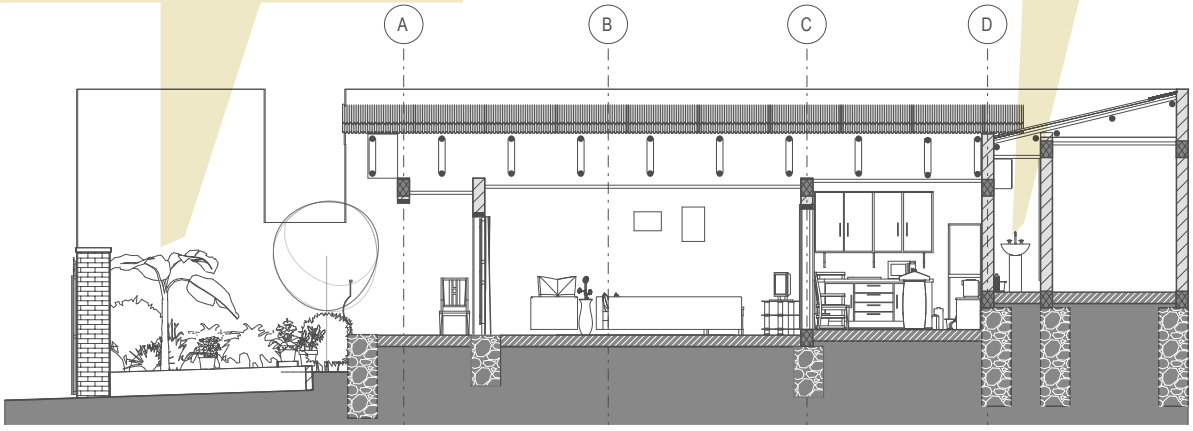
12 View of the toilet + shower, the wall surface above the shower head has been painted a shade of yellow. There is a hole in the plastic ceiling intended to let light pass through the translucent plastic sheet roof cover

13 A metal door with figured glass gives access to the toilet which has the toilet on a lower level as compared to the showering area



"We collect around five kilos when our coffee plant bears fruit. We used to have a problem with the monkeys because they go after the sweet inner part of it. It is not much of a problem now because the forest has significantly lost trees and the monkey population is not as before. "

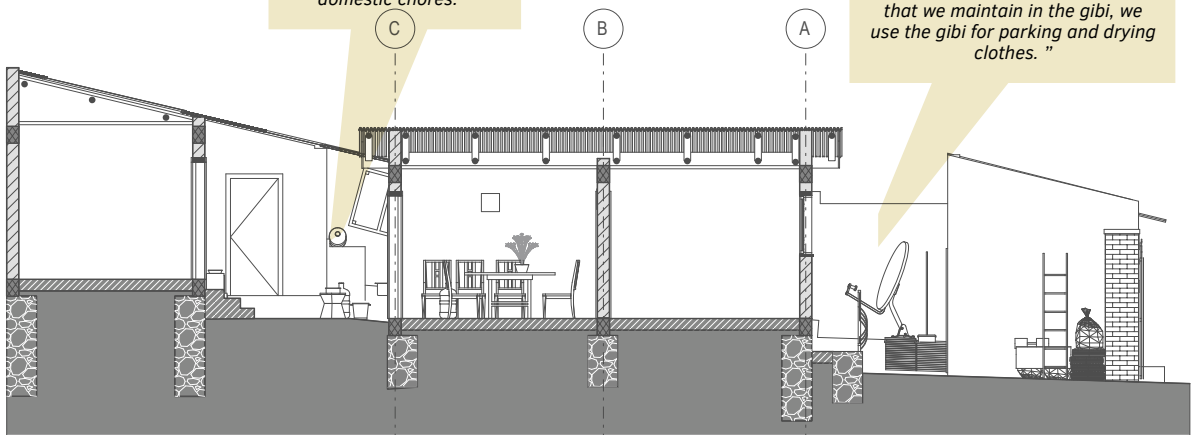
"We placed the hand wash basin outside so that it is accessible even when the toilet is occupied. We also do not have that much space inside the toilet for it. "



Section A-A

"We use the gwaro for cooking-related activities, washing clothes, washing dishes and other similar domestic chores. "

"In addition to the strip garden that we maintain in the gibi, we use the gibi for parking and drying clothes. "

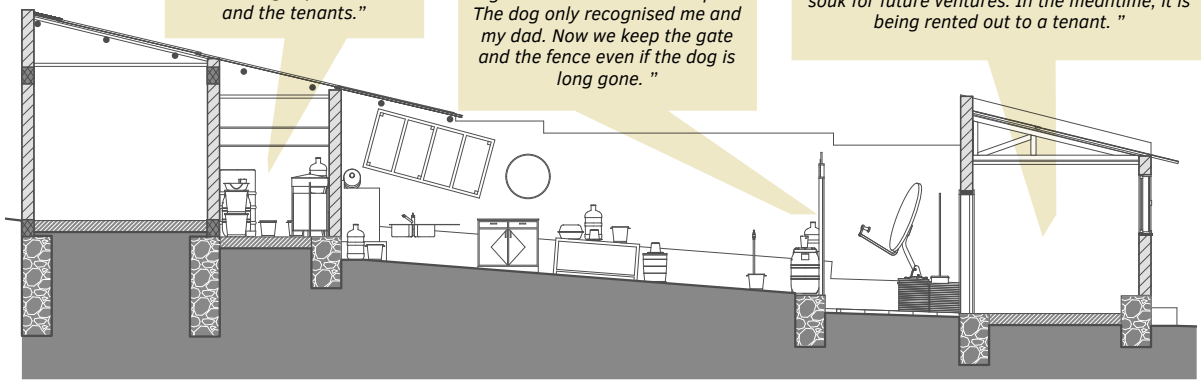


Section B-B

"We bake injera and bread in the gwada. It also serves as a storage space for us and the tenants."

"We decided to fence off the gwaro because of an aggressive dog that we have had in the past. The dog only recognised me and my dad. Now we keep the gate and the fence even if the dog is long gone. "

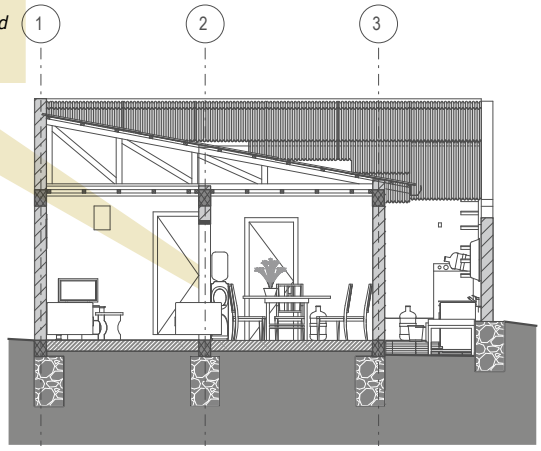
"I came up with a business idea of selling bottled water for the neighbourhood. This idea came up because the source of water in this area is groundwater and the water is usually warm.
I didn't follow up on the idea, but I keep the souk for future ventures. In the meantime, it is being rented out to a tenant. "



Section C-C

0m 1m 2m

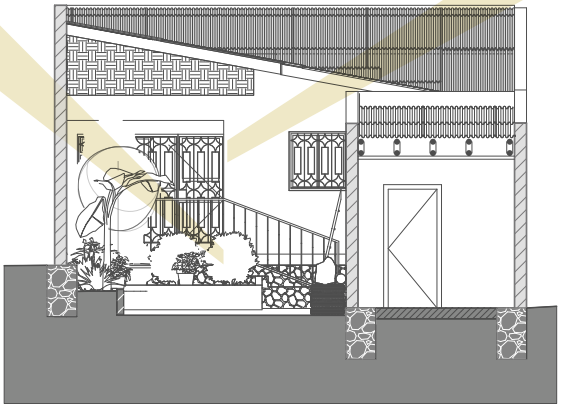
“The salon used to be very small and suffocating. We demolished this wall and merged it with the room that used to be a bedroom. ”



Section D-D

“I and my mother planted these. We have spices and herbs like chilli and spearmint and medicinal plants like Damakesse. This strip garden is very important for us.”

“When we expanded the salon, we extended it towards the front and created this verandah along with the access stair and the strip garden. ”



Section E-E

0m 1m 2m

Material encounters

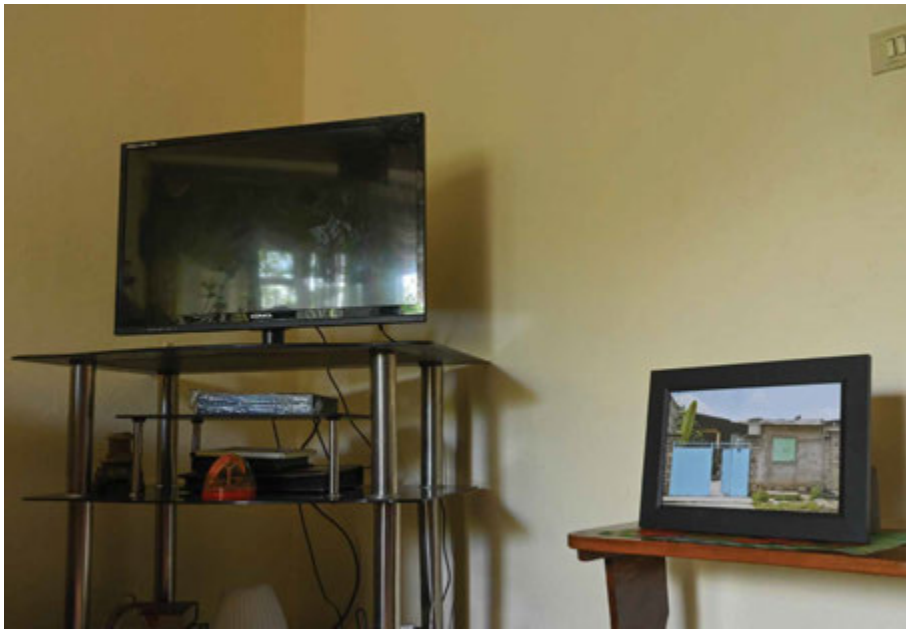


01 Plastered, tyrolean rendered and painted concrete block walls and structural elements along with masonry foundations and walls make up the front facade
02 Decorative lighting fixture on a painted fabric ceiling on the veranda
03 A decorative wall mounted lighting fixture in the living room
04 Decorative lighting fixture hangs from a painted wooden frame of the painted fabric ceiling in the dining space
05 Cement screed floor finish, wooden skirting, and plastered and painted wall
06 A colourful rug on top of the tiled floor defines the sitting space in the living room. The place where shoes are to be taken off is marked by a piece of cloth on the rug
07 A blue door mat forms the transition between the cement screed and tiled floor finishes of the exterior and interior spaces respectively
08 The brightly coloured metal gate is placed on concrete columns on top of which stone facing has been added
09 Cement floor tiles that have colours and patterns
10 Metal exterior door and wooden interior door meet in the large kitchen
11 A decorative metal grill on the kitchen window
12 Removable painted metal covers on the shop /rental unit/ window.
13 A decorative metal grill on the door of the “French window“
14 Metal framed and clear glass kitchen window. Curtains have been provided for privacy and protection from the sun.
15 Vintage switches in the living room

01	02	03	04
	05	06	07
08	09	10	11
12	13	14	15

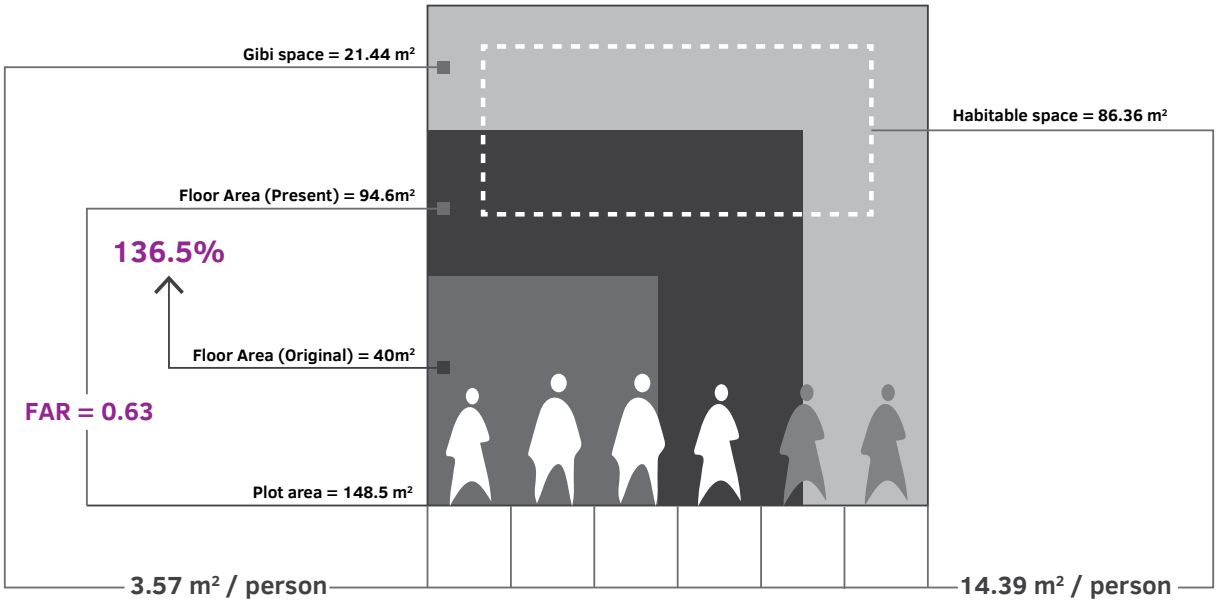
Photo trigger



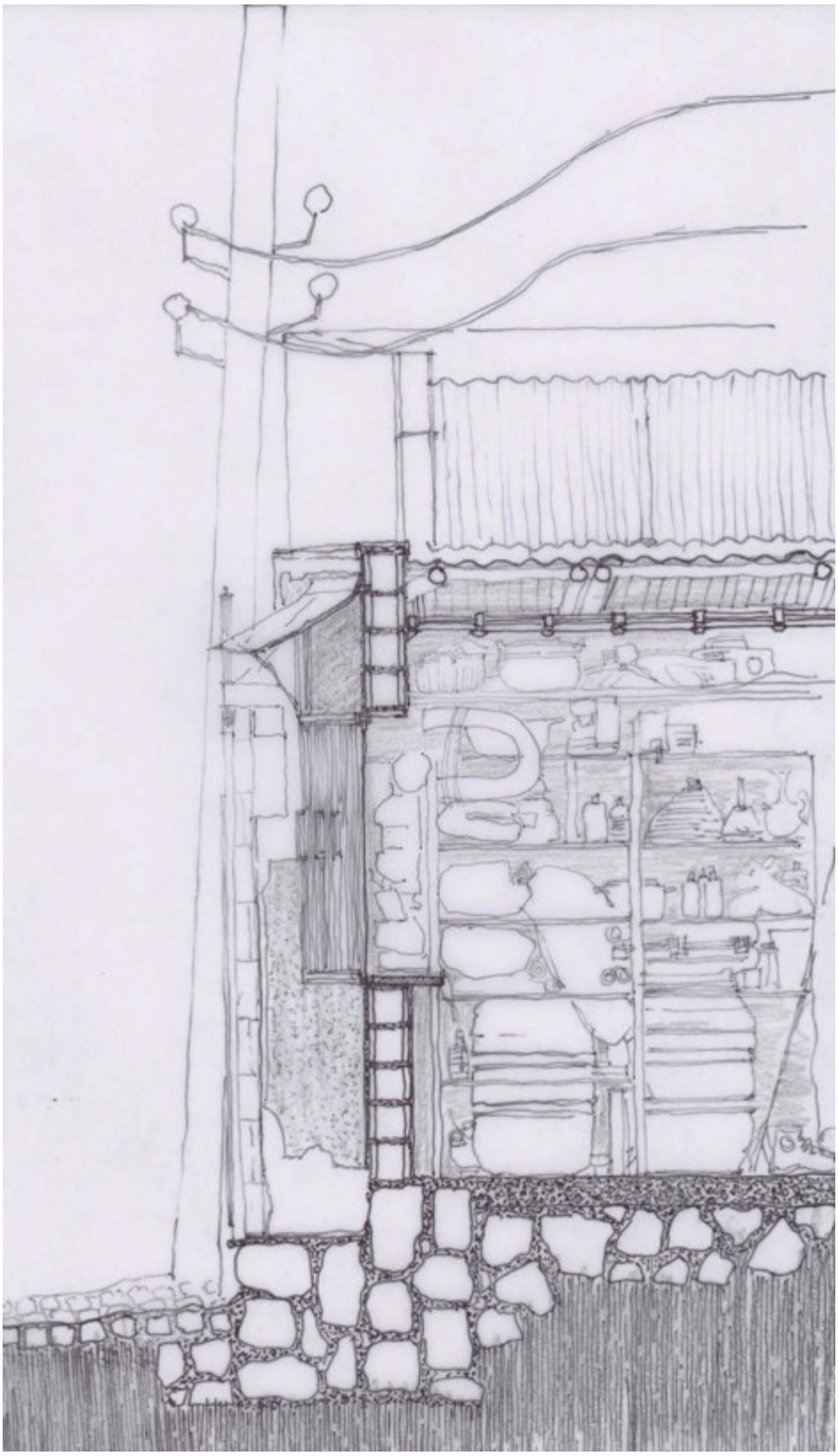


After years of ongoing renovations, Bemnet is proud and content about the current setup of the house. He attributes much of the work to his late father, who led the efforts with the help of the family. They now have a beautiful patch of garden in the gibi, situated at the front entrance of the main house, filled with ornamental and medicinal plants. This section of the house, which has also been extended, is featured in the photo that Bemnet wanted to be taken. He was particular about the angle, expressing his preference for a view that captured the house from the outside, with the main gate on the left and the souk on the right. When he received the photo, Bemnet was pleasantly surprised. He held it for a while, appearing lost in thought, perhaps reflecting on his late father. Eventually, he placed the photo on a coffee table near the television.

Diagrammatic synthesis



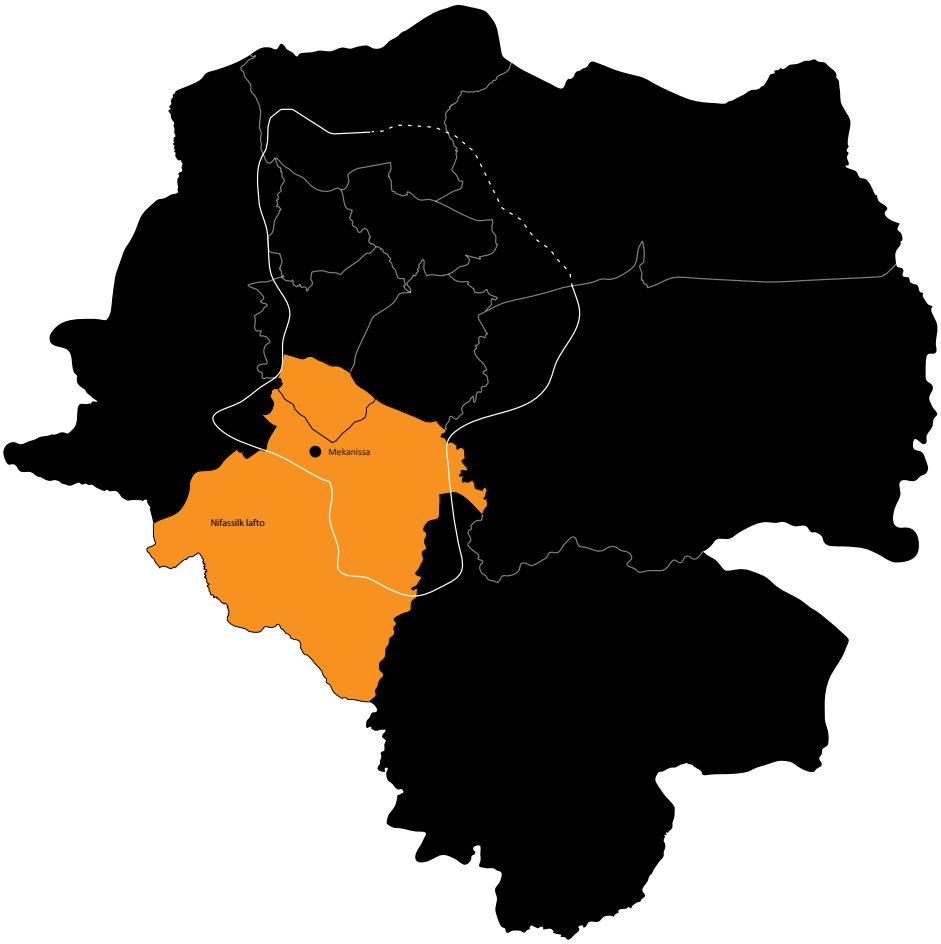
Building techniques





INDEX

Tribute to the Baumbach’s





Selected area (2006)



Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selections



Cluster structure in 2006_1Ha



A: Increase in footprint by 2022_ 245.8% in the selected 1Ha area

B: Increase in footprint by 2022_ 44.97% in the selected 1Ha area





01



02



03

01 Front view of the hair salon and barbershop, the main gate into the compound is located in between the two shops

02 View of the fence/wall of the school as seen from the main gate of the compound towards the left direction

03 View of the fence/wall of the school as seen from the main gate of the compound towards the right direction. Residents of the area, parents, and customers of the salon and barbershop.





04



05



06

04 Front view of the main gate into the compound.
05 View of the main gate and corrugated metal sheet fence of the property in 2002, when construction begun
06 View of the construction site and the neighbourhood, which was mostly composed of open fields in 2003







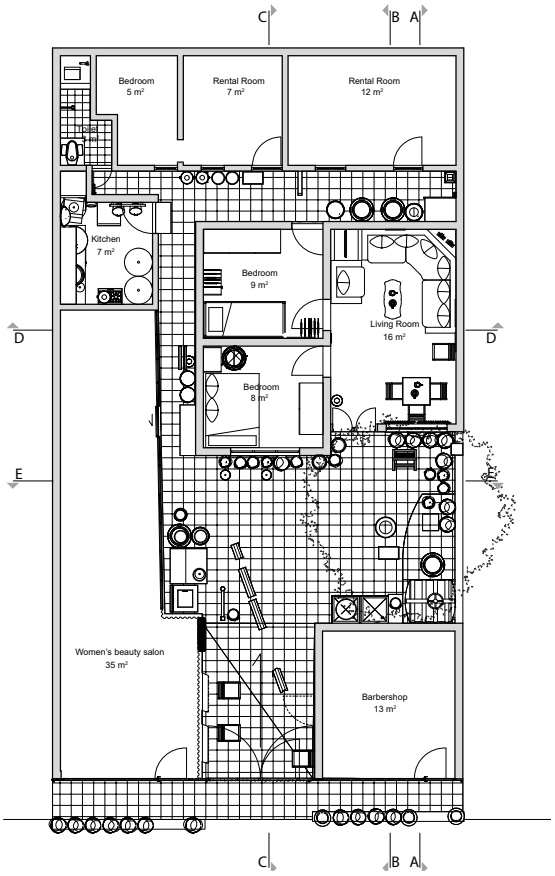
Bekele and Yacob

Our Kashmir is around eleven years old. It gives a lot of fruit, and we share it with our neighbours. Once the tree thrived, my sitting space was under it. We usually eat lunch in the gibi and hold our coffee ceremonies. We only use the living room if we have guests.

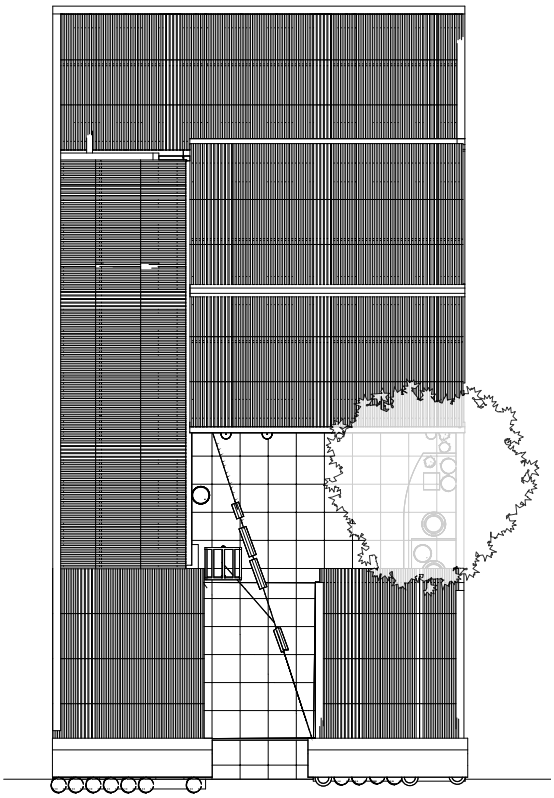
Self-Built and Incremental



Plans



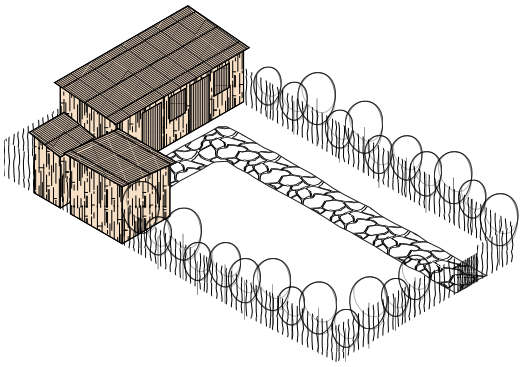
Ground floor plan



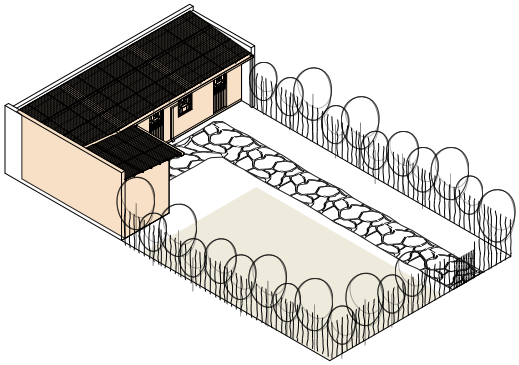
Roof plan

0m 1m 2m

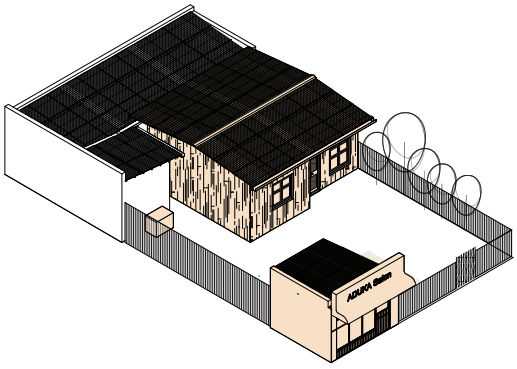
Dwelling transformation



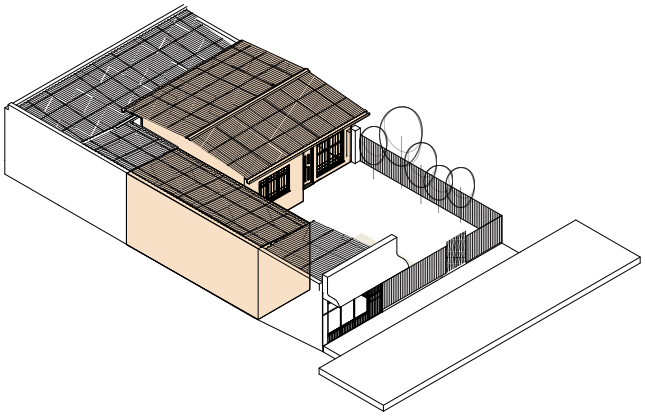
01. 1991_Original state of the house. Small wattle and daub units within a roughly fenced and tree lined compound



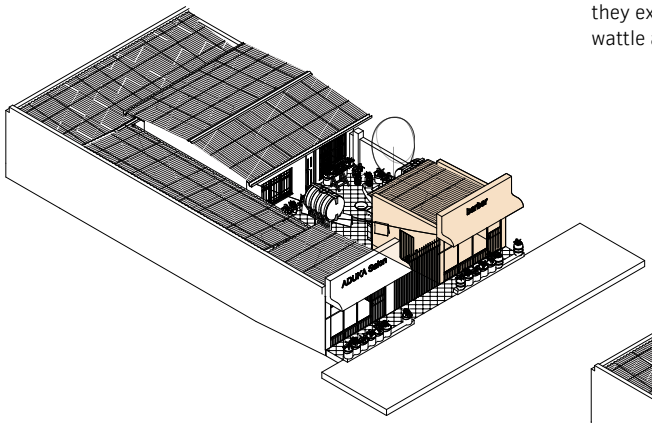
02. 1995_They demolished the wattle and daub house and constructed the service unit with concrete blocks. They also added one bedroom and expanded the toilet and kitchen. They also planted a garden.



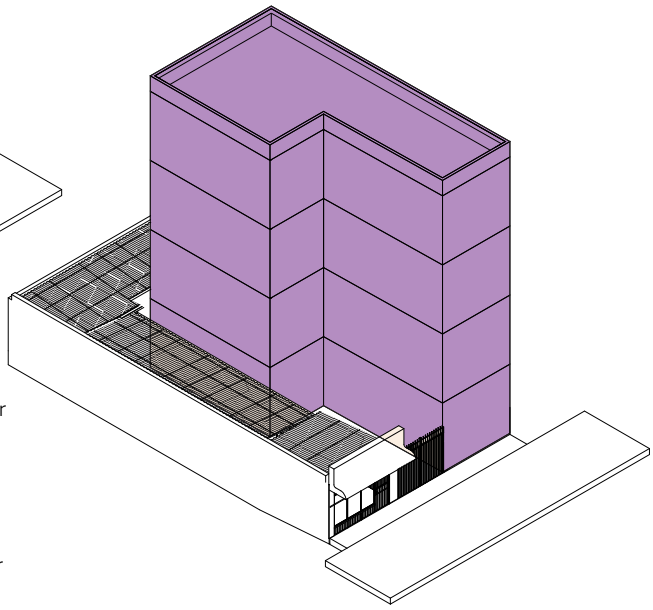
03. ~1998_They constructed what is now they main house out of wattle and daub and added a female hair salon. They also had a small chicken coop. The green space with flowers became smaller.



04. 2007_by using the funds they got from two of their children (one male and one female), who went abroad to the middle east for work, they expanded the hair salon and added an HCB jacket to the main wattle and daub house in the middle.



05. ~2018_ They added the barbershop as a means for the owner to earn some money for some of his personal expenses

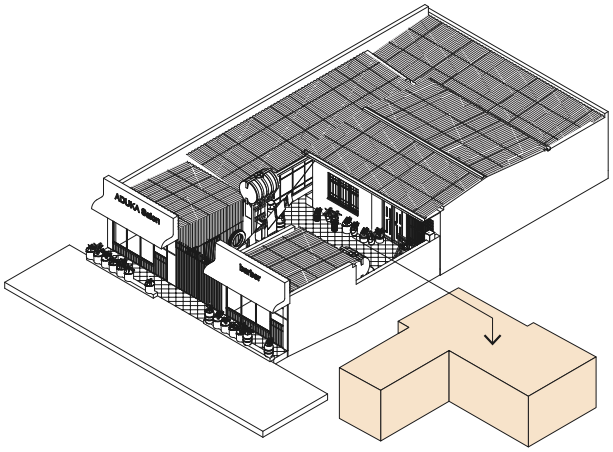


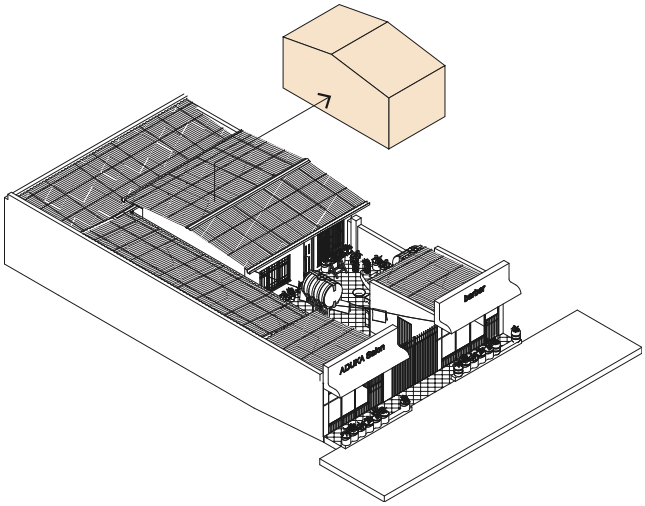
06. Desired future scenario: In the future the owner would like to construct a multistorey building with rooms for rent. He believes that it will help him and his family overcome their financial constraints.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

The Bekeles consider the outside space from the entrance to the main house as their gibi. They define it as an outdoor space that is shared and multifunctional. They use the gibi for parking cars, washing clothes, drying herbs, and family gatherings.



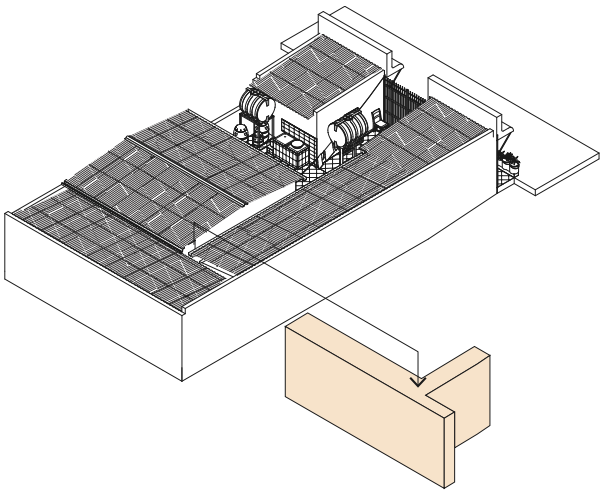


The Gwada

The Kitchen along with the attached storage space is regarded as their gwada. This gwada used to be part of the ‘service quarter’ at the early stage of living in the house. They later created a detached gwada and a toilet to make a stronger distinction from the rest of the living spaces.

The Gwaro

Considering the unique occupancy set up in their house, Yacob considers the gwaro and the gibi to be semi-private. The gwaro is the narrow corridor between the ‘main unit’ and the ‘service quarter’ and it is shared with the tenants.





01



02



05



03

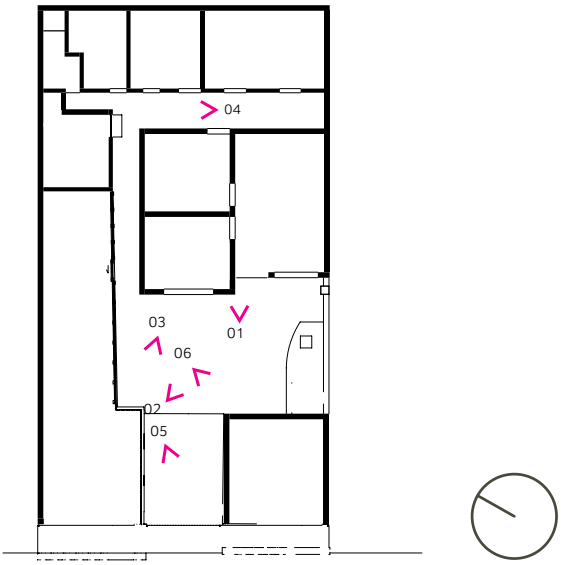


04



06

01 Front view of the main house
02 View of the Gibi in use for domestic chores
03 Beauty salon utilities stored in the Gibi
04 View of the Gwaro for the owners and the Gibi for the tenants
05 View of the main gate as seen from the inside. The space in view is also used as a sitting and storage area when it is not being used as a parking space
06 Custom made outdoor trough used for hand washing clothes. A fiberglass water container is also in view and has been placed under the shade of the tree along with other storage items. The space underneath the tree is also used for hosting coffee ceremonies.





07



08



11



09



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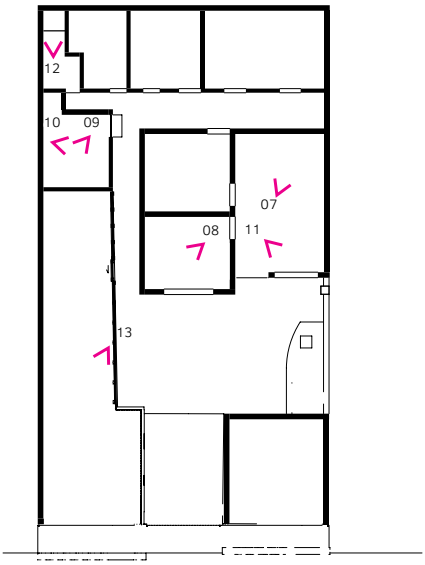
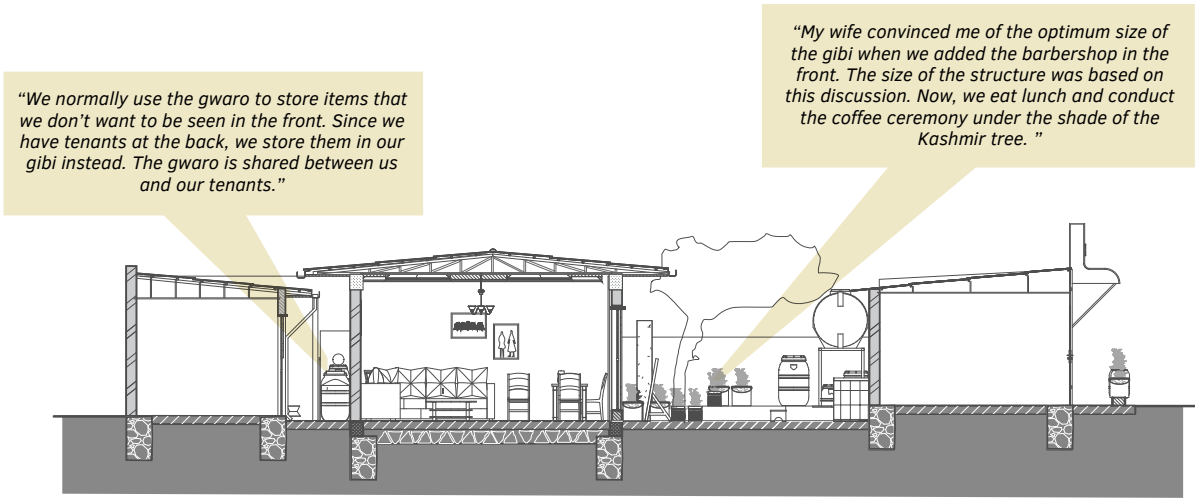
12



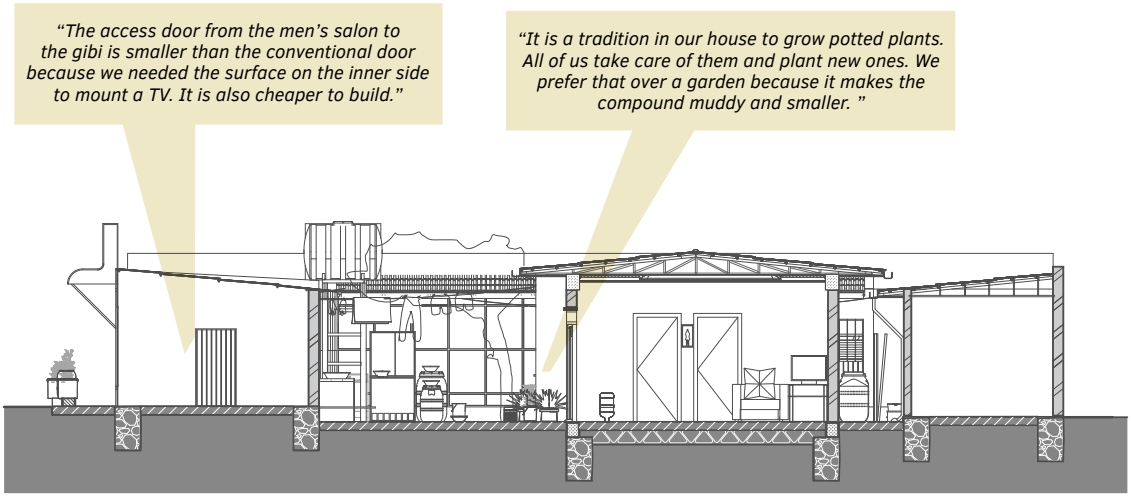
13

07 View of the living room
08 View of the master bedroom
09 View of the storage spaces in the kitchen. There is no ceiling in the kitchen and the roof structure is used to lay strings across the room that are used to cure meat
10 The Injera making station is positioned next to the door to the kitchen. Items needed during the Injera making process are hung on the wall
11 View of the formal dining space in the main house, it is positioned facing the largest window in the house, giving the inhabitants a filtered view of the tree and their Gibi
12 View of the shower + storage space
13 View of the beauty salon from the Gibi

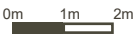


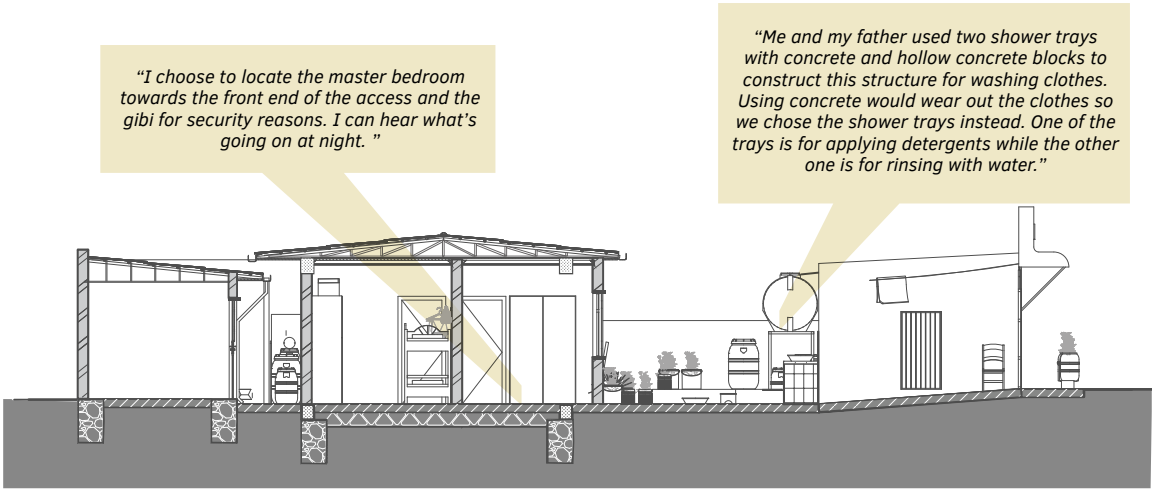


Section A-A

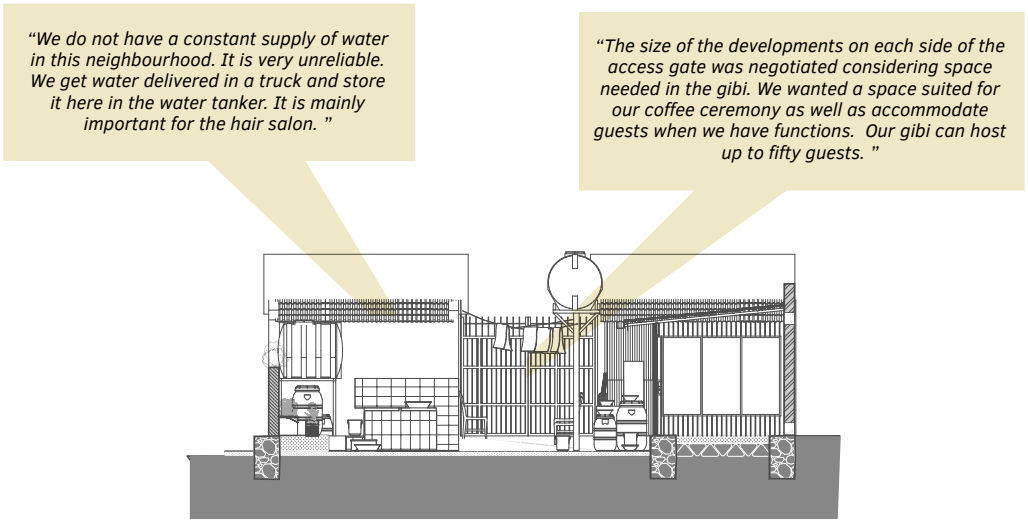


Section B-B





Section C-C



Section D-D



Material encounters



01 Plastered and Quartz finished concrete block wall on top of a wattle and daub base. The metal grill covered window and a solid wood door are also in view
02 A decorative lighting fixture hangs from an ornate gypsum ceiling
03 Strips of beef are hung to cure on plastic strings tied to the roof structure
04 Plastic shower head mounted on metal pipes. A light bulb hangs from an exposed cable suspended from the eucalyptus pole roof structure
05 The Casimiroa edulis (White Sapote) tree and the gutter damaged by its leaves
06 The miniature door to the barbershop held open by the plastic hose that supplies water to the barbershop from the Gibi
07 Blue, Grey, and White painted metal elements make up the front facade of the compound
08 A home made wooden rack is used to dry towels that are used in the barbershop and beauty salon
09 Shower trays are used as a trough used for hand washing clothes. It is held up on a base of concrete blocks and covered with textured tiles. The coloured cement tiles of the paving of the compound are also in view
10 A metal door with a metal grill is used for the kitchen, the grill is partly covered by a corrugated translucent plastic panel
11 Metal framed window with a metal grill added for security
12 Removable laced curtains filter light and provide privacy to the dining space

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">05</td><td>06</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">09</td><td colspan="2">07</td><td>08</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr>
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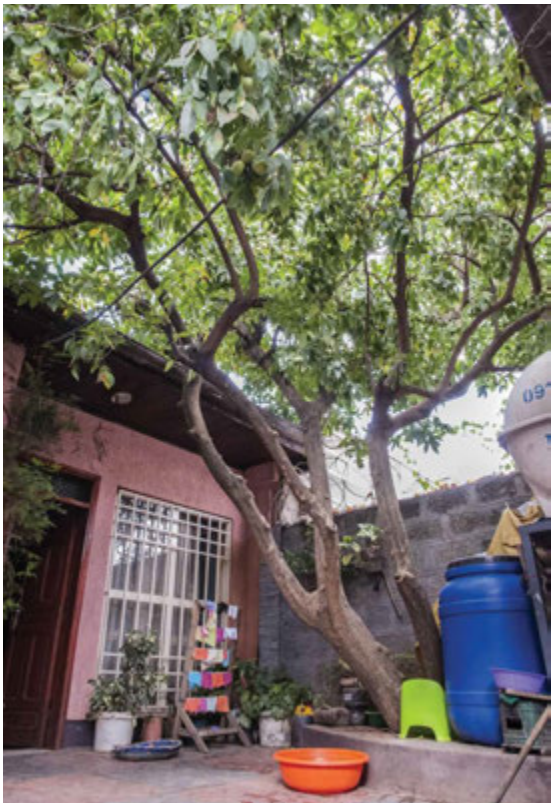
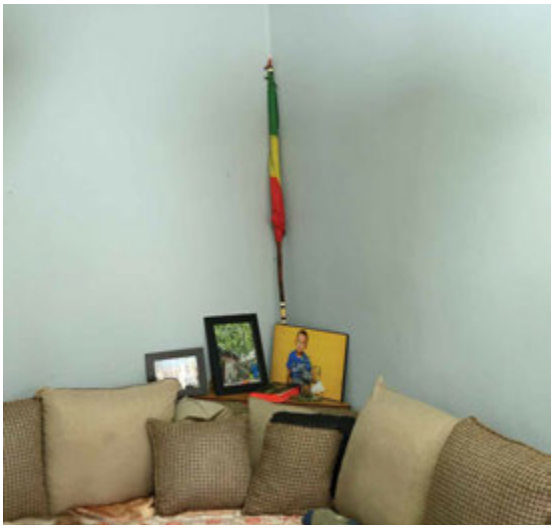
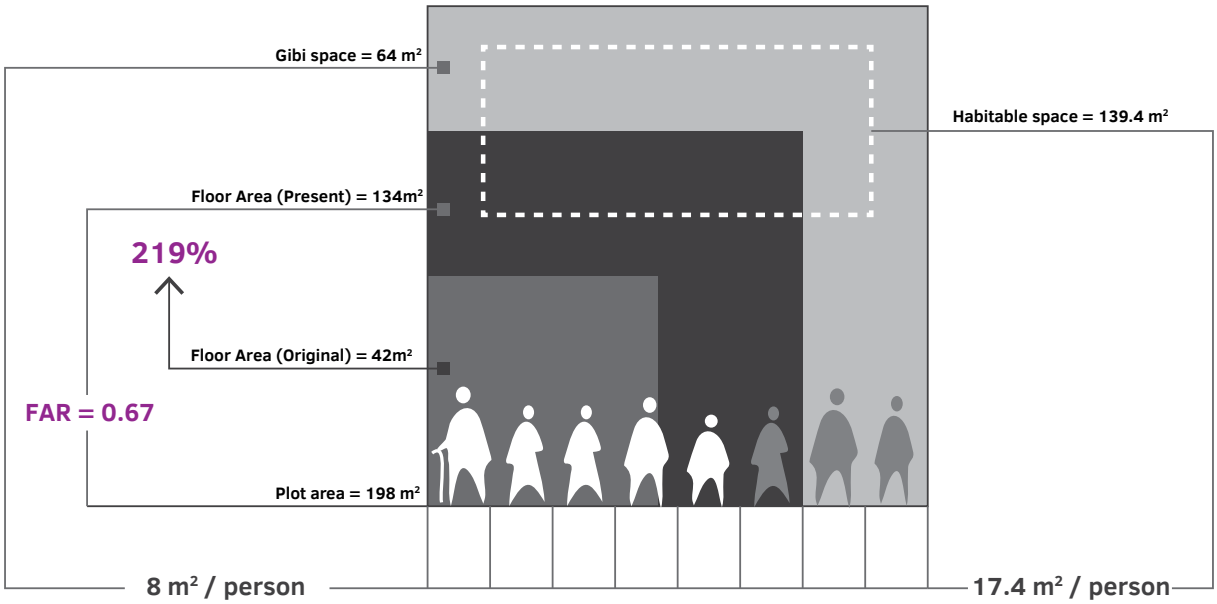
Photo trigger





Bekele has lived in this house with his family for over 27 years. They run a female hair salon business, a barber shop, and several other rentable rooms. Bekele built the original service quarter, with his sons helping in later expansions and additions. This photo was taken at Bekele's specific request, capturing the Kashmir tree and the shaded area it creates—both cherished by the family. However, the tree has been a topic of ongoing debate, particularly between Bekele and his wife, who have discussed whether to keep the tree or remove it to expand the salon business. The decision remains unresolved. When Bekele saw the photo, he reacted as if seeing the tree for the first time, as though reconsidering his plan to use the space for commercial purposes. Proud of the image, he placed it in a corner of the house alongside family pictures and the Ethiopian flag.

Diagrammatic synthesis





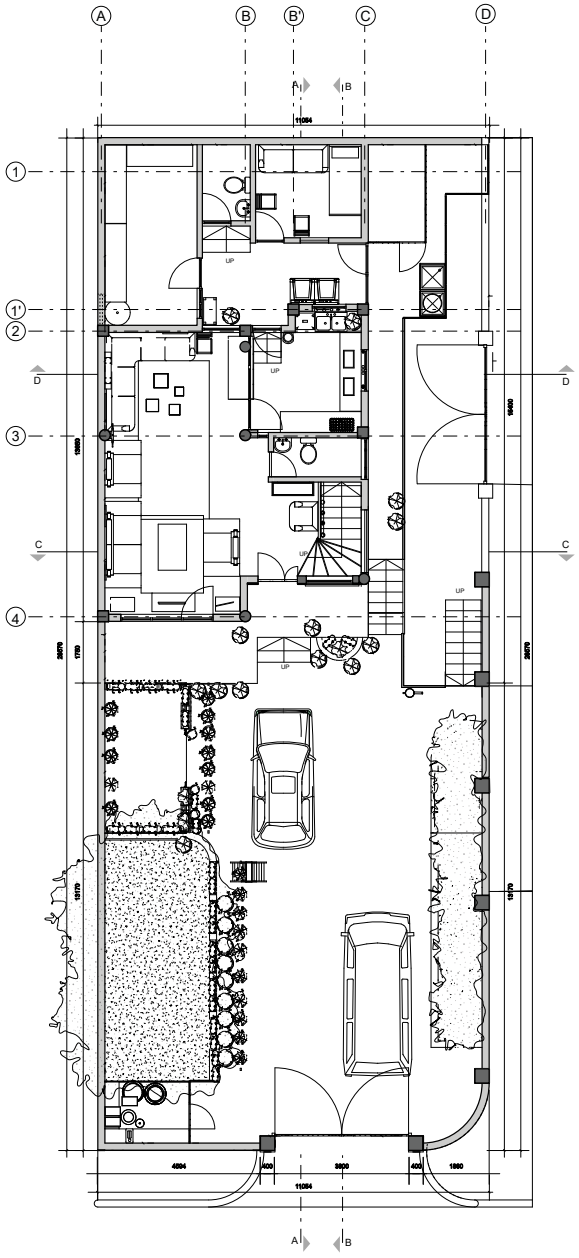
Iyasu

The design that I received from the municipality was a two-storey structure and it was enough to accommodate a family. But I decided to add one more level and modified it to a three-storey house after getting the go-ahead from the permit authorities.

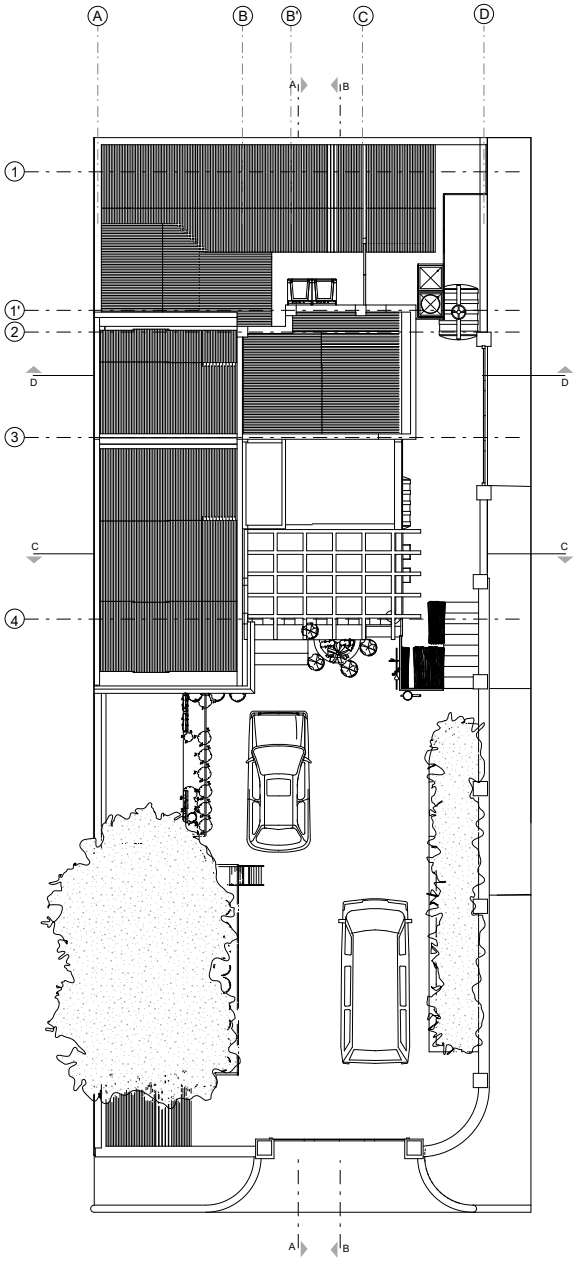
Layers of Gwaro



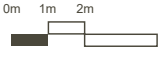
Plans



Ground floor plan

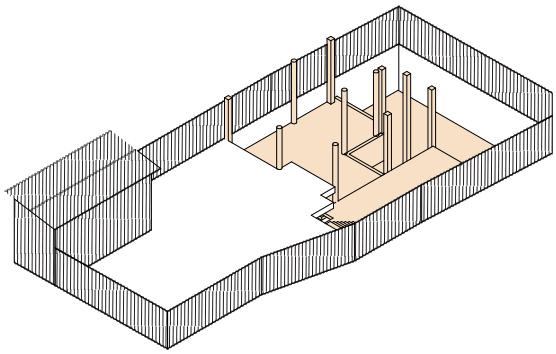


Roof plan

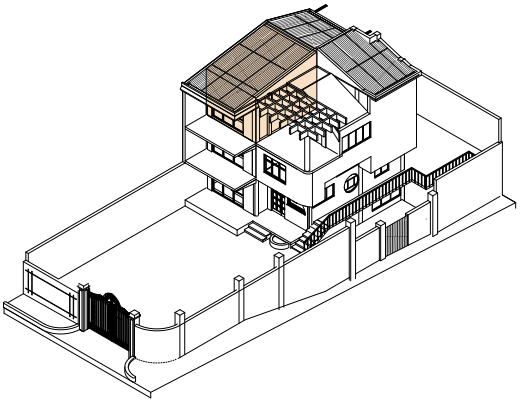




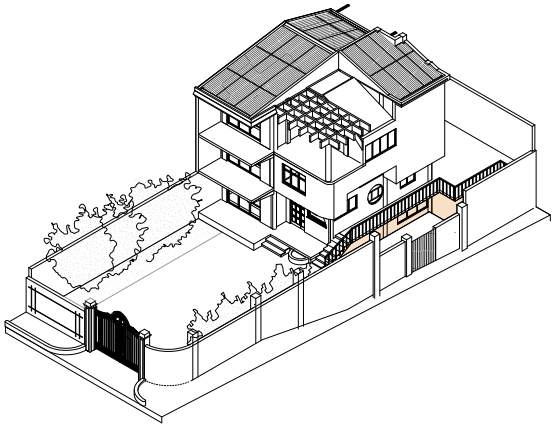
Dwelling transformation



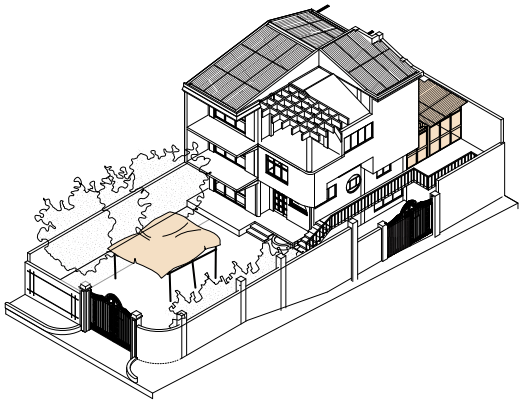
01. 2004 construction began



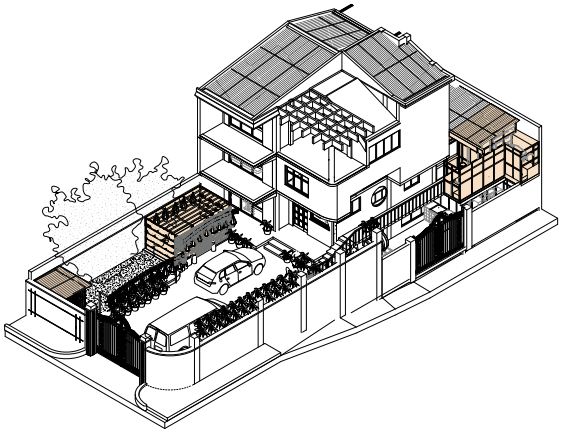
02. 2011_They finished the whole G+2 building without finishing all rooms and moved in. At this time only the ground level, the master bedroom, and toilets were completed



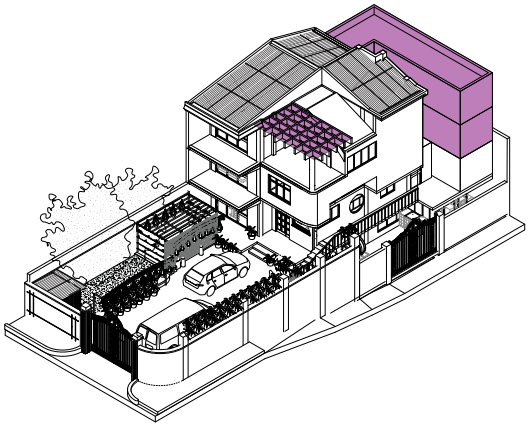
03. 2019_They finished the basement and let one of their relatives move in with their family.



04. 2020_He constructed the service block at the back. The main purpose was to create another kitchen, because the main kitchen was not ventilated properly and smell from cooking was reaching the living and sleeping spaces on all levels.



05. 2021_Current state of the house was completed. He removed some of the plants and constructed the metal framed outdoor sitting space with the Green, Yellow, and Red aluminium shutters, and with a synthetic grass lawn.

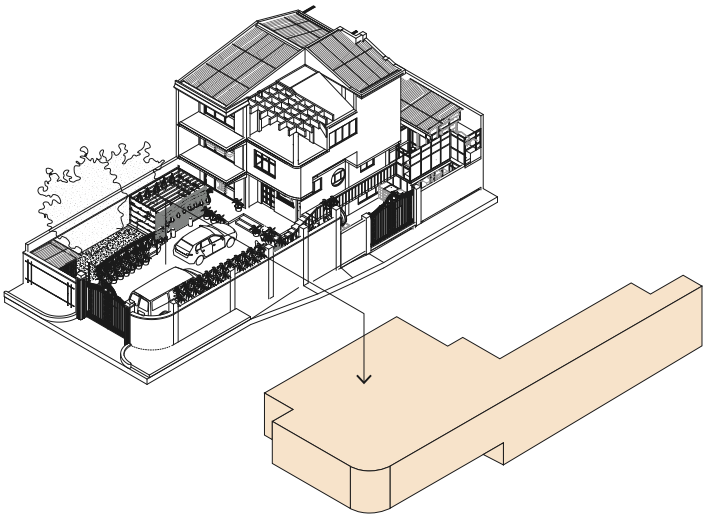


06. Future scenario: In the future he intends to continue building the rest of the house as per the design (the service block was designed to also reach the level of the G+2 house). He intends to link the 2 buildings by a corridor which he referred to as a bridge.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Iyasu considers the open space of the house without the footprint of the built structure as his gibi. His garden, the open front yard where he parks his car and performs his steel cutting and welding activities are what comprise the gibi.



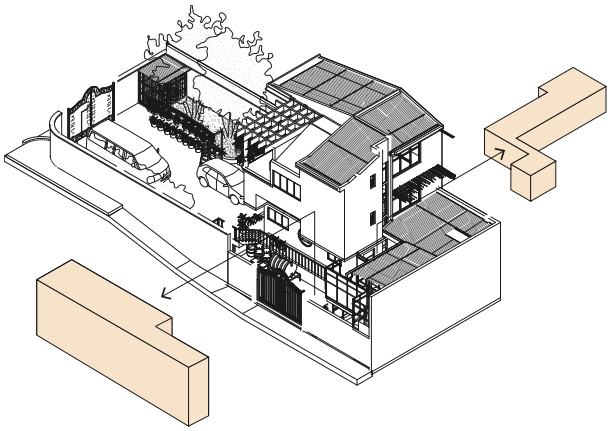
The Gwada

No Gwada

Iyasu defines a gwada as a space that is concealed from the main house. He believes that a gwada can only exist at the ground level and since his private spaces are in the upper stories, he doesn't consider them as part of the gwada. Iyasu does not identify a gwada space in his dwelling.

The Gwaro

Iyasu has two layers of gwaro. The first one is the space between the semi-basement and the side entrance to the house. This space is used for cloth washing by Iyasu's family and for production by the family inhabiting the semi-basement. The second gwaro space comprises the space in between the service quarter and the main house used for storage, outdoor cooking, outdoor sanitary units etc.





01



02



03



04



05

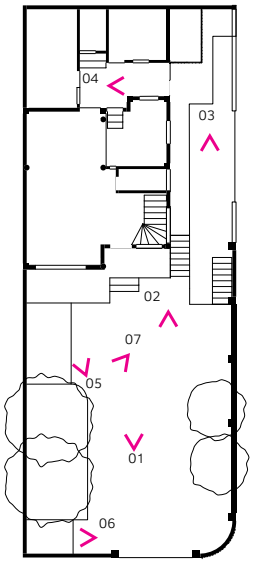


06



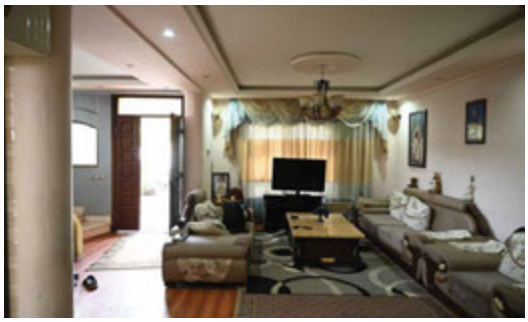
07

01 Front view of the house
02 View of the Gibi in use for domestic and commercial activities
03 View of the lower level of the Gibi, which is used to produce Tuaf (a type of candle used in the church) under a plastic tarp shed. The space in view also serves as an access to the basement
04 View of the service area; the added block is on the left
05 View of the green space with a metal framed outdoor sitting space that can be covered with aluminium shutters, and has been finished with a synthetic lawn.
06 Aluminium framed and glazed storage space by the main gate
07 The fountain by the green space used to water the plants and to wash up after gardening





08



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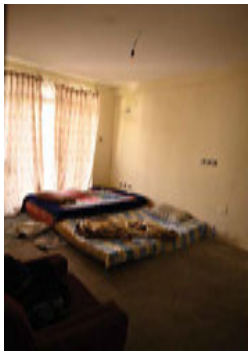

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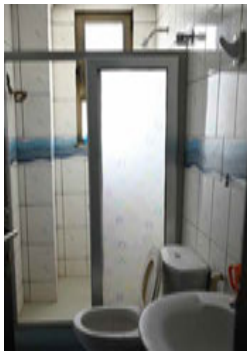


13

08 View of the kitchen with counters on both sides and an aluminium framed sliding window connecting the kitchen with the living space

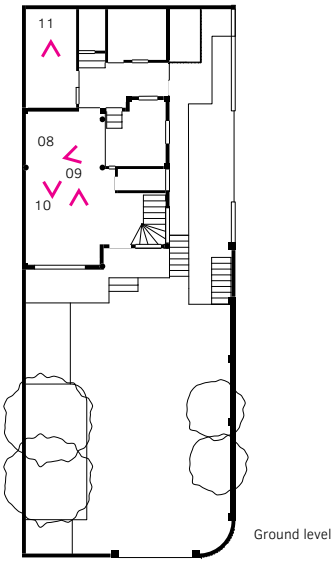
09 View of the main sitting space with the TV at the center of the setup

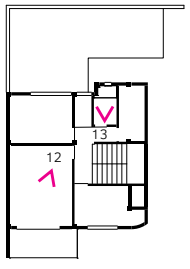
10 View of the secondary and more colourful sitting space by the kitchen

11 The additional kitchen in the service block, it is wider than the kitchen in the main house and now serves as the main kitchen

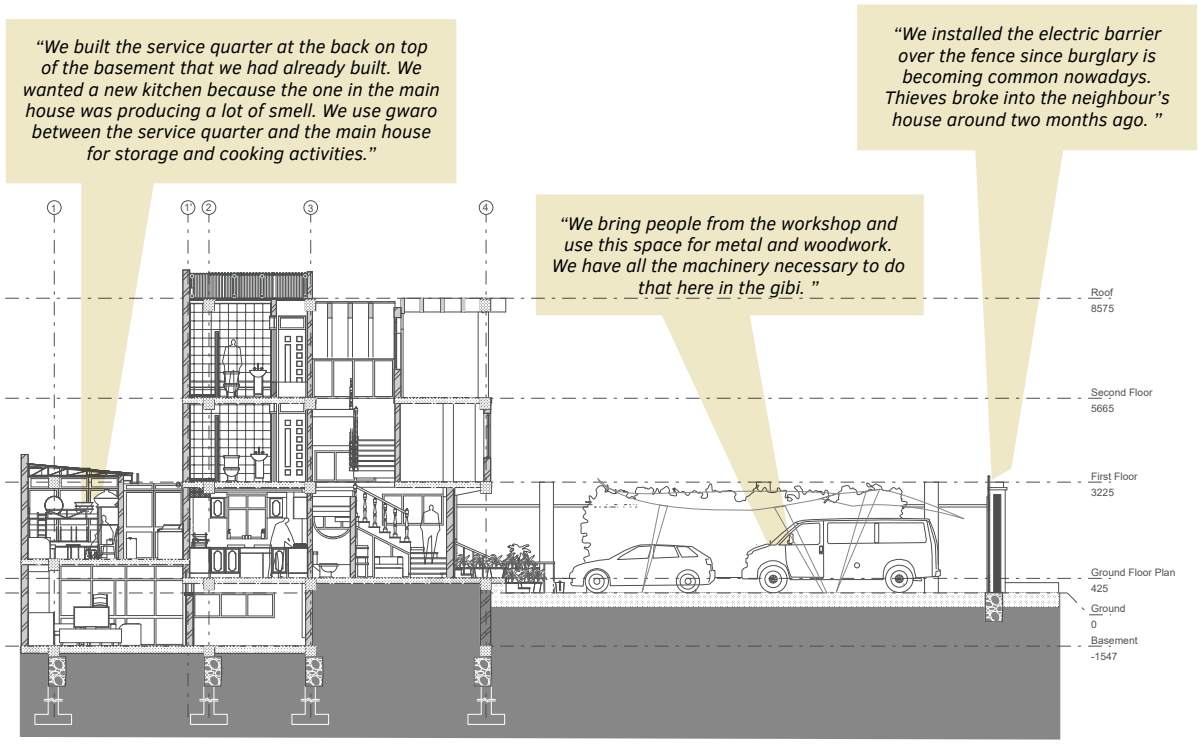
12 Sleeping space in the semi-finished parts of the house on the first level

13 View of the shared toilet. Aluminium frames are heavily present in every part of the house including the toilets

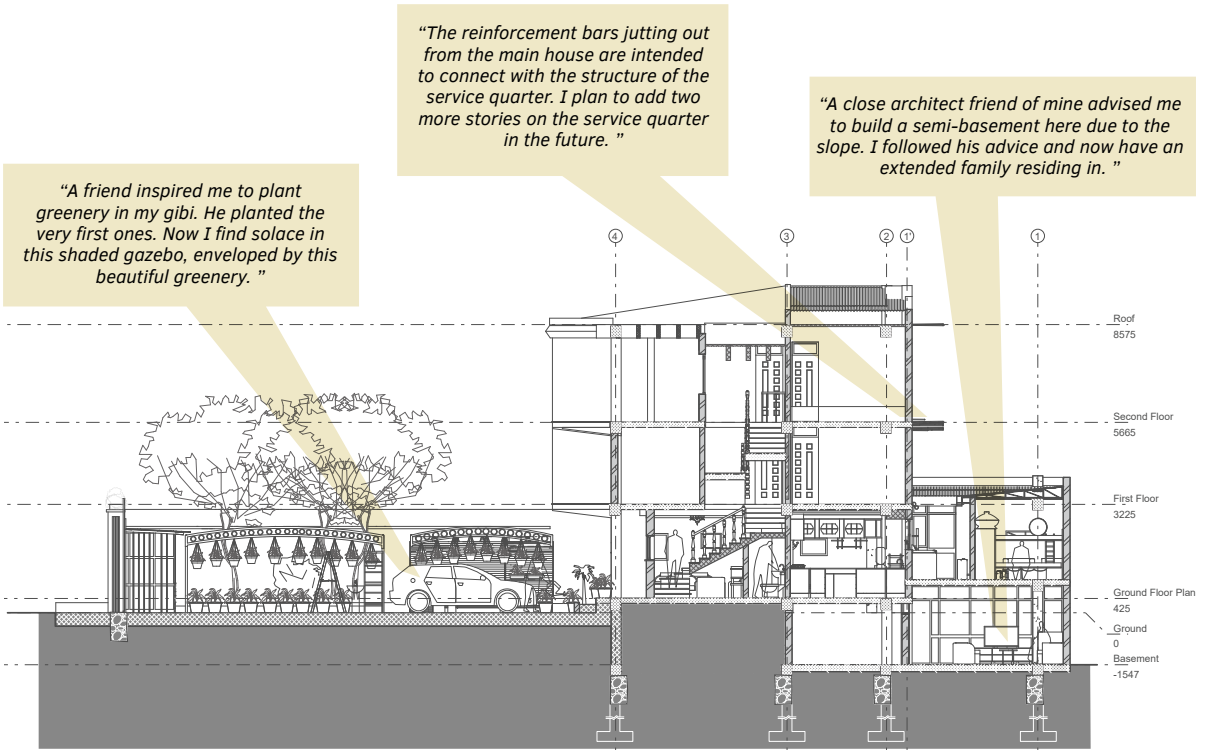








Section A-A

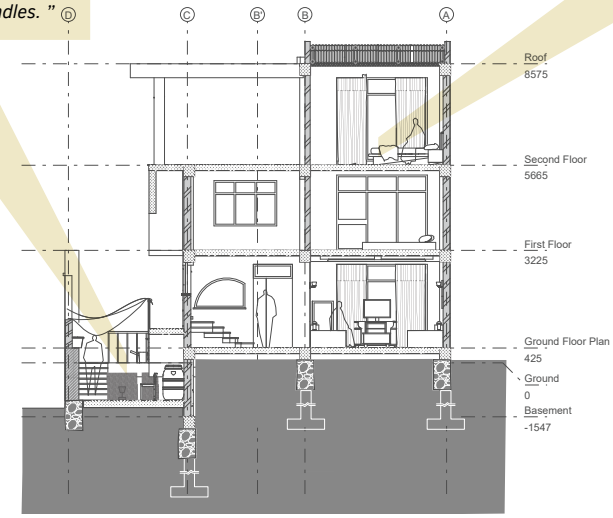


Section B-B

0m 1m 2m

"The family living in the basement has this plastic tarp installed to use the space for producing vigil candles. "

"The interior construction of the master bedroom is still not complete so we use the room on the second floor as the master bedroom. We will move to the first floor after completion. "

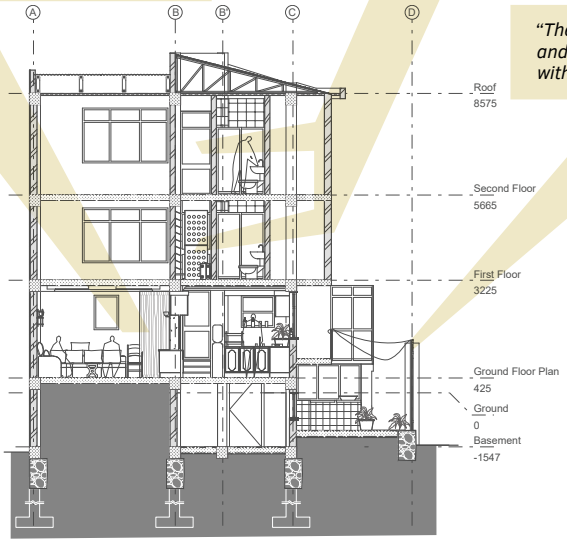


Section C-C

"The kitchen in the main house used to be standalone. I later converted it into an open kitchen. The smell from the kitchen reached the bedrooms so I used glass and aluminium profiles to convert it into a closed kitchen but visually permeable. I built these shutters to control the visual connection between the two spaces."

"I have two corridors ready to be connected to the service quarter when it becomes a 3-storey structure in the future. "

"The space between the basement and the fence function as a gwaro with access from the side street. "



Section D-D

0m 1m 2m

Material encounters



01 Plastered, Tyrolean rendered and painted concrete block walls and structural elements along with aluminium framed openings make up the front facade of the house
02 Decorative lighting fixture hangs from a gypsum detail on the living room ceiling
03 Wooden coloured plastic tiles, marble threshold, and ceramic tiles are used as floor finish materials from the living room to the kitchen respectively. An old brick is used as a stop for the aluminium framed kitchen door
04 Colourful storage space by the main gate
05 View of the Dog house made of metal which has been placed under a green cover
06 Colourful aluminium shutters cover the relaxation area by the green space
07 The secondary gate made of metal frames and panels gives access to the lower level of the house
08 Flowering plants on potters are placed on the metal frame structure of the outdoor sitting space that can be covered with aluminium shutters described in 06
09 Tuaf/Twaf (a type of candle used mostly for religious purposes in the church)
10 Old tires, painted and used as a decorative element within the Gibi
11 The skylight and topmost window of the staircase
12 Colourful stickers line the kitchen window to the Gwaro
13 Plumbing lines are isolated and left exposed in the kitchen for ease of maintenance
14 Colourful rugs define the two distinct sitting spaces in the living room

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
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<tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr>
</table>

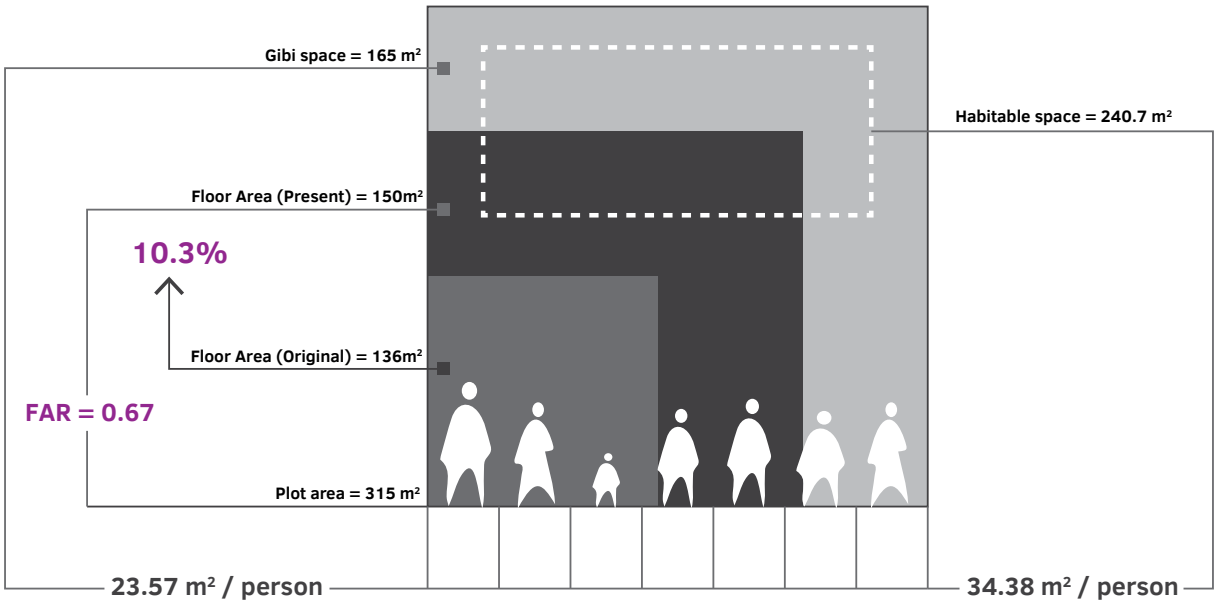
Photo trigger



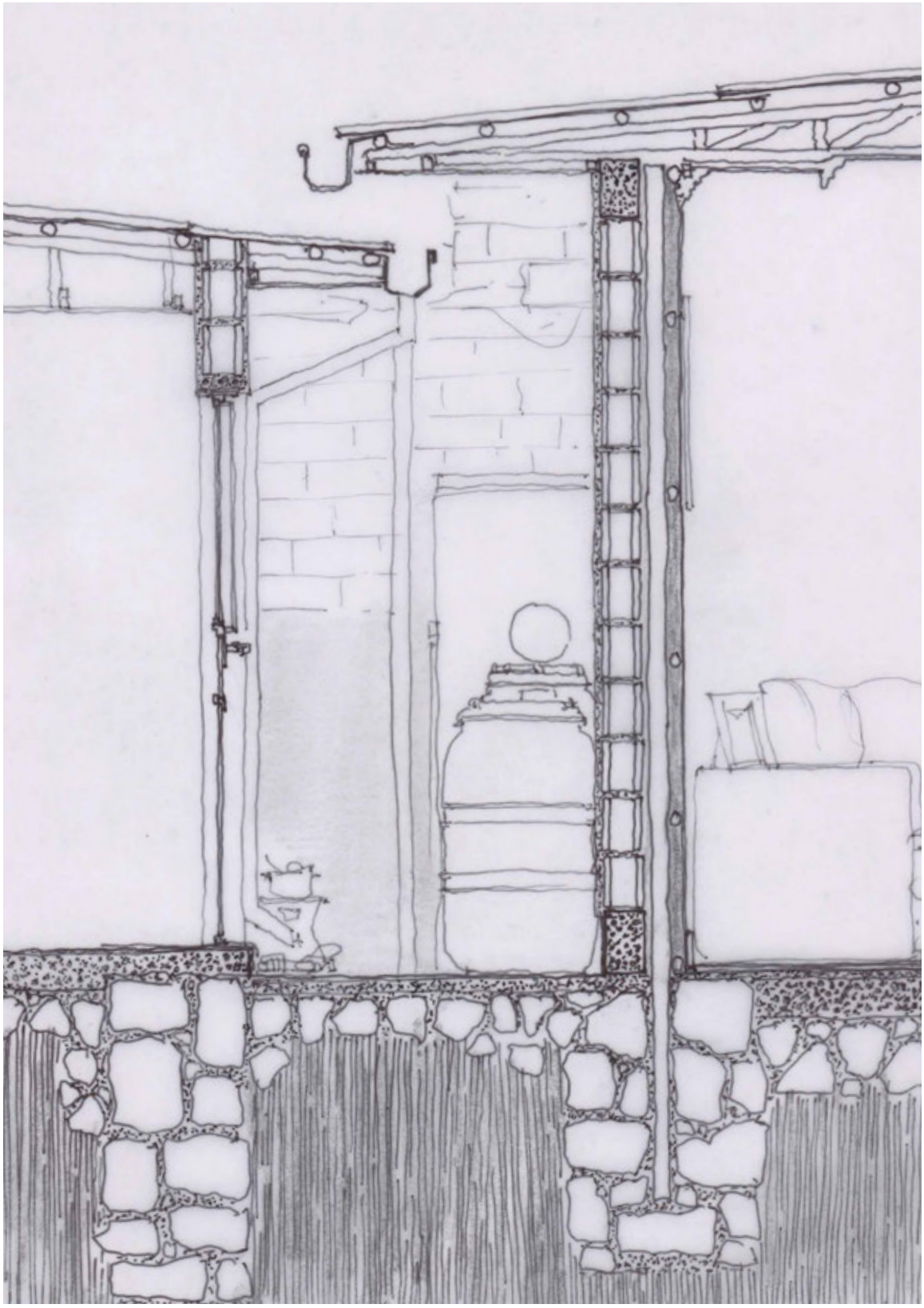


Iyasu owns an aluminium installation business, and this trade has impacted both the construction and everyday functioning of his dwelling. From the way windows are operated to the type of locks used, aluminium is incorporated throughout the house. In the photo, Iyasu is shown opening the aluminium shutters of a gazebo that he and his friend recently installed. While his friend helped with the planting and landscaping of the gibi, Iyasu built part of the gazebo and added the coloured shutters. Iyasu's house is a three-storey structure with a basement; He and his family live on the ground and upper floors, while extended family occupies the basement. The hard surface area of the gibi occasionally doubles as a workshop for the aluminium production. The photo was well received by Iyasu and placed above an aquarium in the foyer at house's entrance.

Diagrammatic synthesis



Building techniques

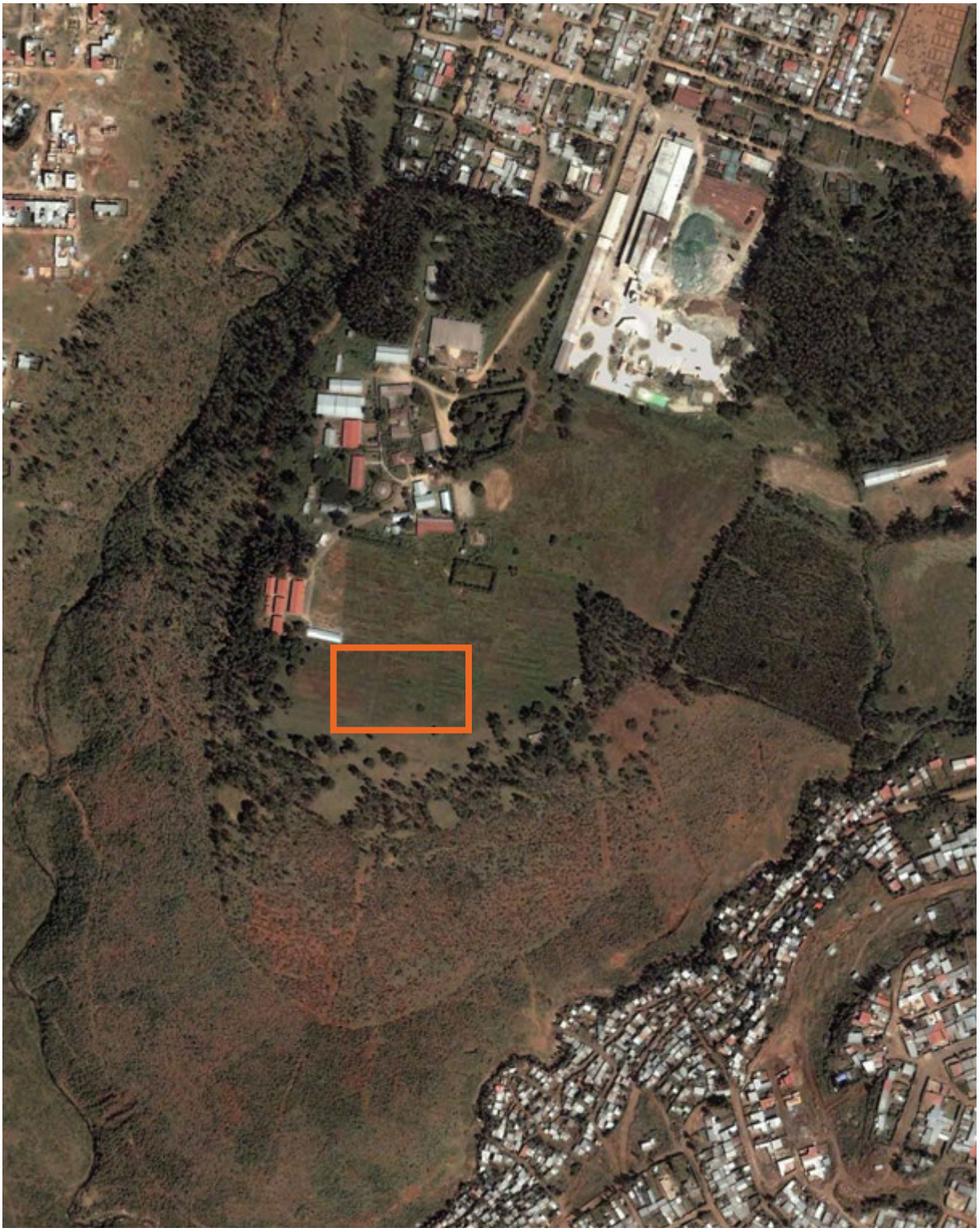




INDEX

A Gated Archipelago





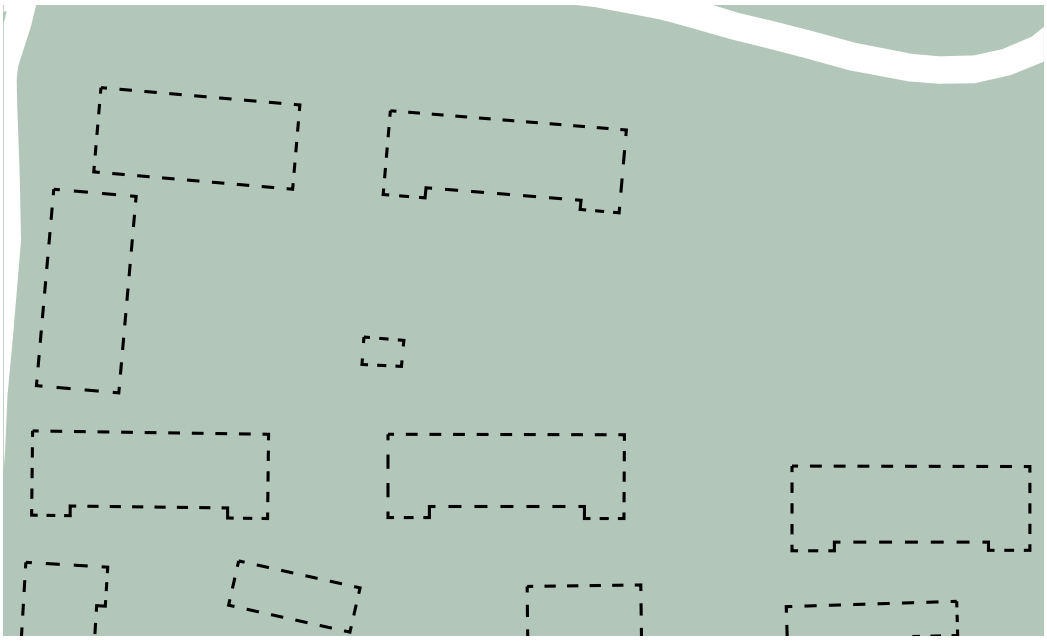
Selected area (2003)



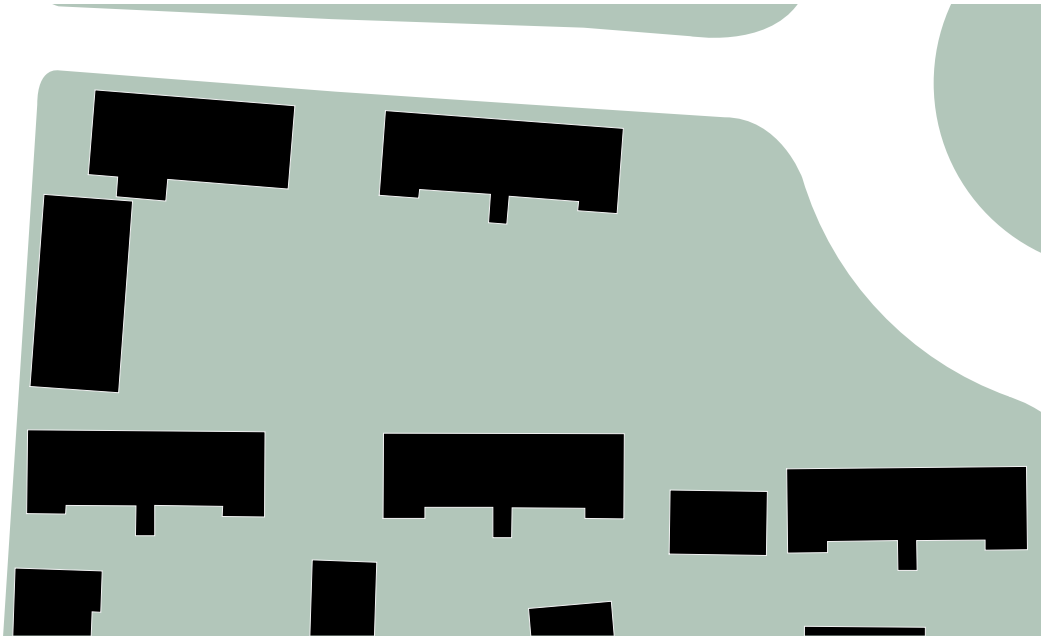
Selected area (2022)



Drone image of the area_1Ha selection



Original cluster structure_1Ha



Added built mass (housing increment of from 0 to 116 apartments on 29 blocks)



01



02

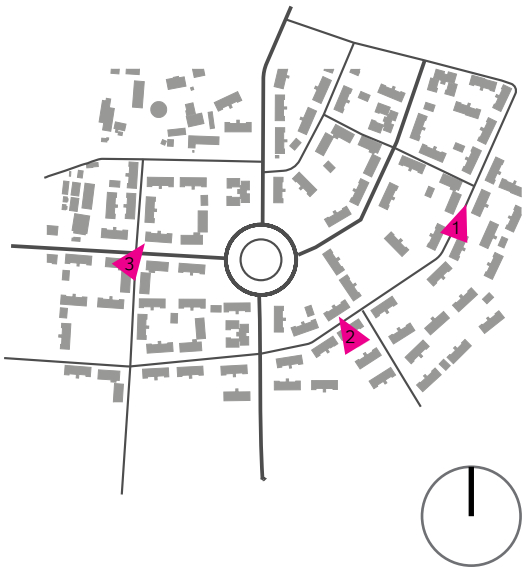


03

01 The street leading to the eastern part of the condominium

02 View of shops on the ground level of a condominium block. Downpipes separate the shops, each shop is marked by its own unique color.

03 A view of the green corner created by the bar owner. Parked vehicles, and satellite dishes mounted on the ground are also in view.





04



05



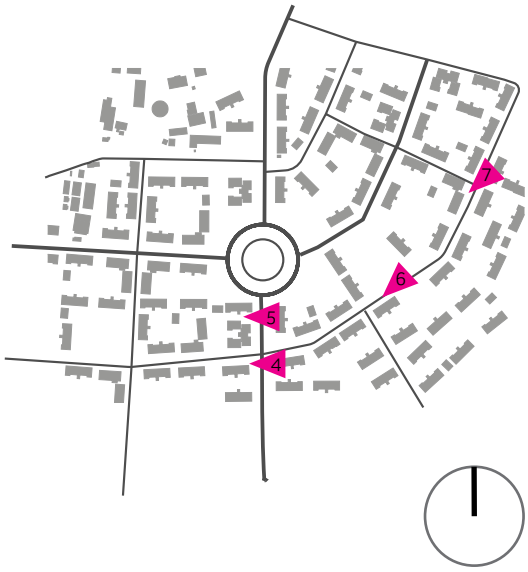
06



07

04, 06, and 07 Views of different condominium blocks within the compound.

05 View of the fenced compound of dwelling. The metal staircase, clothes hanging wires, and water tanker are also in view.





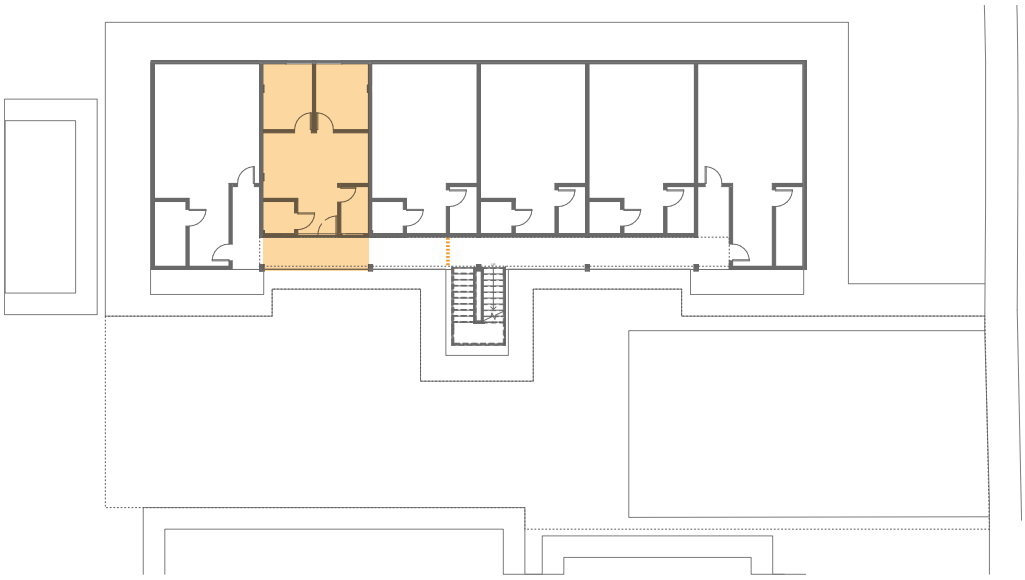
Shambel

When you live here as a family, it is not adequate. It might be suitable for a single person, and you could host one more person if living alone, but it is just not enough for a family. For example, the kitchen is too small for more than one person to work at a time, and it's the same with the bedrooms.

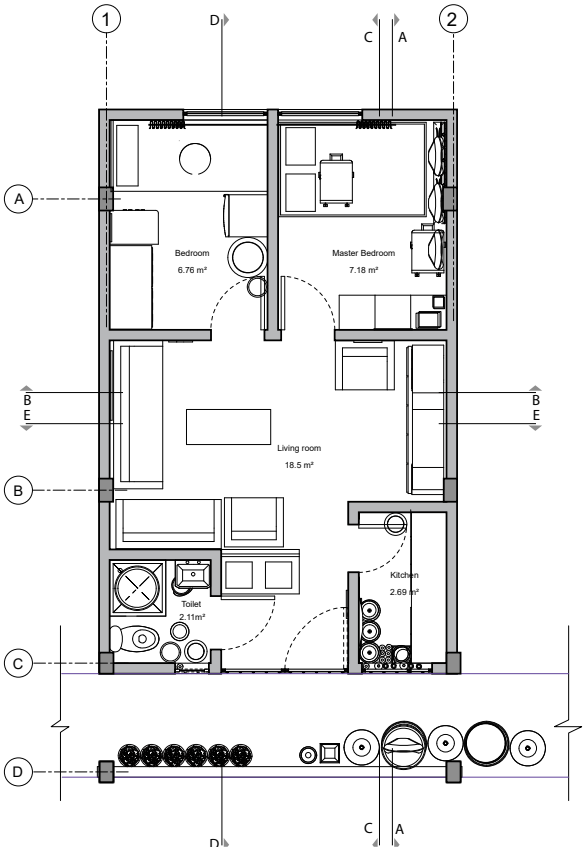
Making do with the condominium



Plans

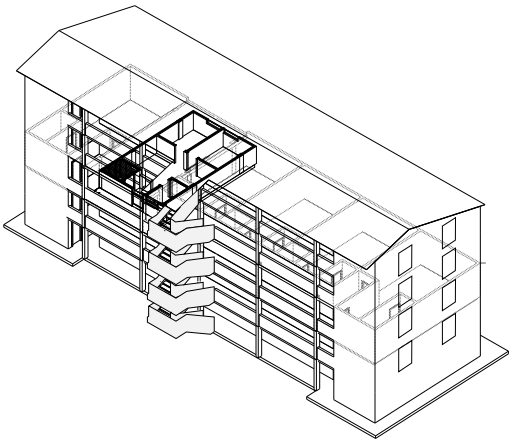


Location plan

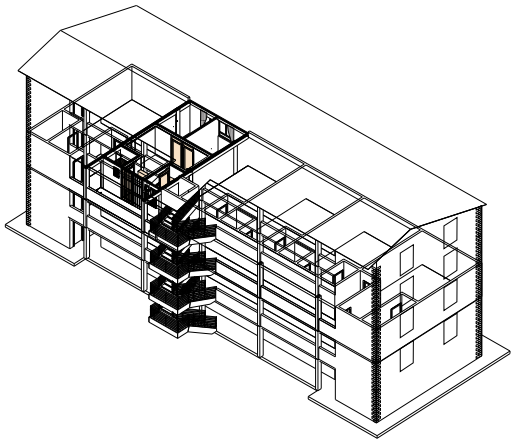


Floor plan

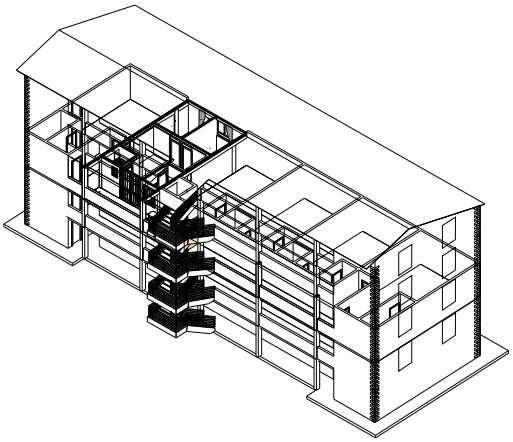
Dwelling transformation



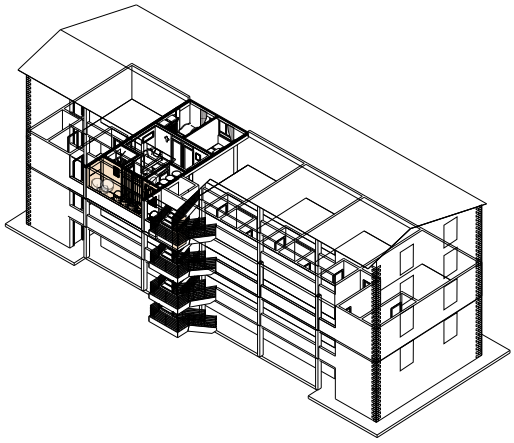
01. 2003_Original state of the house when they won the lottery for it



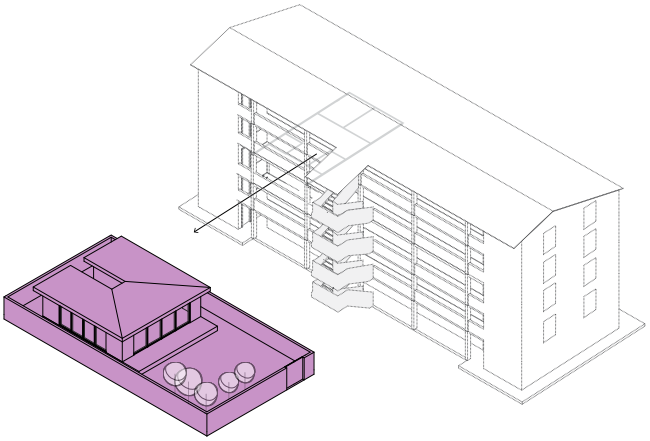
02. ~2004_The family moved in by installing and modifying the doors, removing the HCB dwarf wall, and finishing the kitchen and the toilet



03. 2012_A metal gate and grill were installed for security purposes



04. 2013_Current setup with the storage space being used more often after the addition of the gate and metal grill over the balcony.



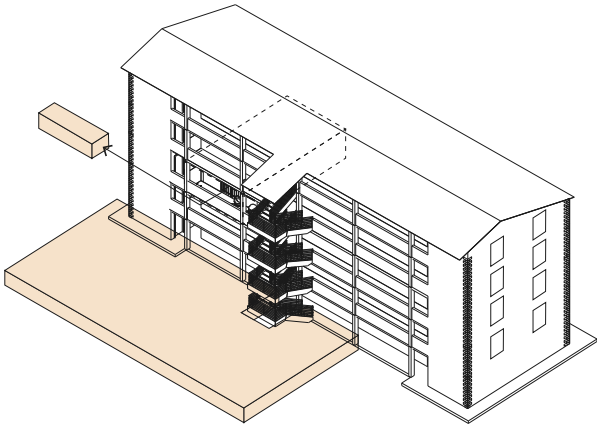
05. Desired future scenario:
A villa in a fenced compound that has a simple and open plan house with connections to green spaces within the Gibi.

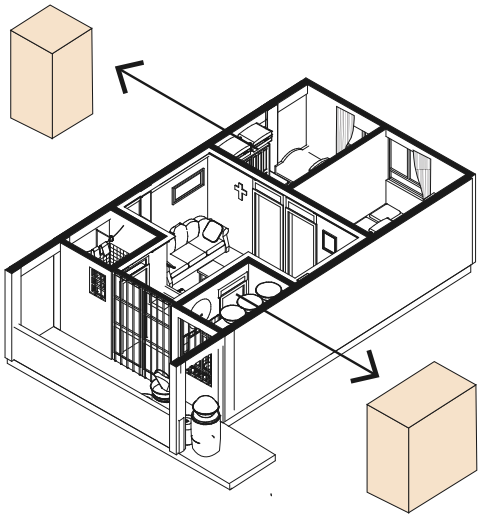
He is convinced that there is no way to improve the current setup of the house to suit his needs. He therefore wishes to someday move to a Villa like the one described above.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Shambel and his wife consider the gibi to be the gallery space just outside their entrance. They share this space with 3 other households and use it as an extension of their home. Since 5 years, their gibi has been fenced off and it is only accessible via a gate from the entrance. This gate is locked during the evenings.





The Gwada

The shambels consider their store as their gwada. One of the bedrooms has been transformed to serve the purpose of gwada since their daughter who used to sleep there has left.

The Gwaro

Gwaro for shambel is a space to plant vegetables. He thinks that they do not have a gwaro in the condominium. He struggles to plant some plants at their claimed gibi but he still does not consider it as their gwaro.

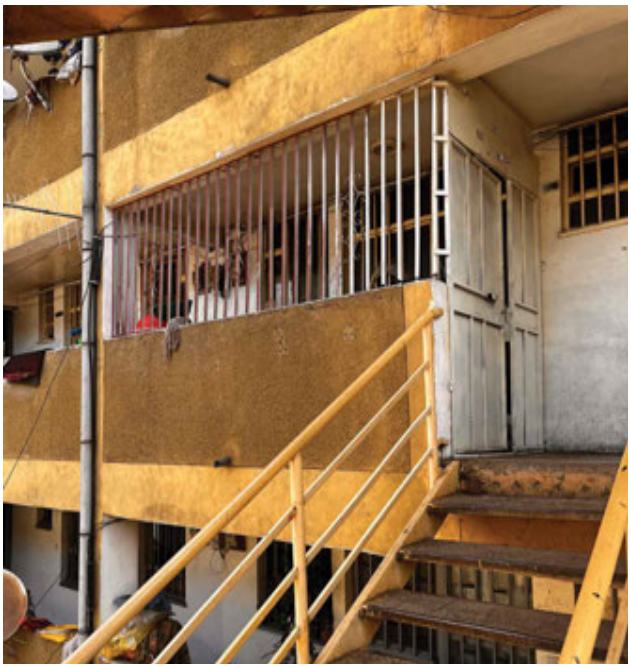
No Gwaro



01



02



05



03



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01 View of the partially green fenced compound. The street side parking and water tanker positioned atop a metal structure are also in view

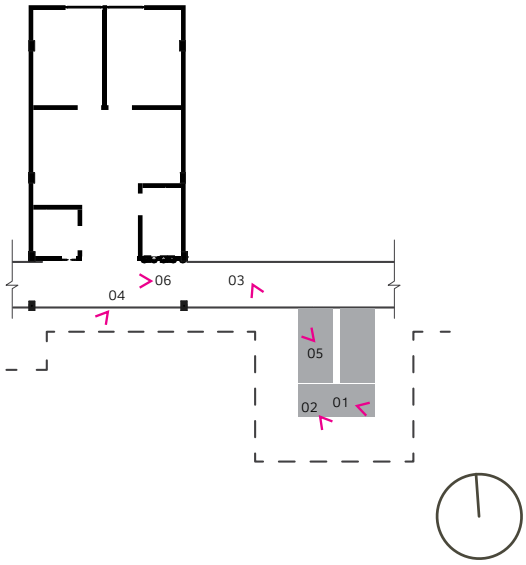
02 View of the clothes washing and drying space within the partially green fenced compound.

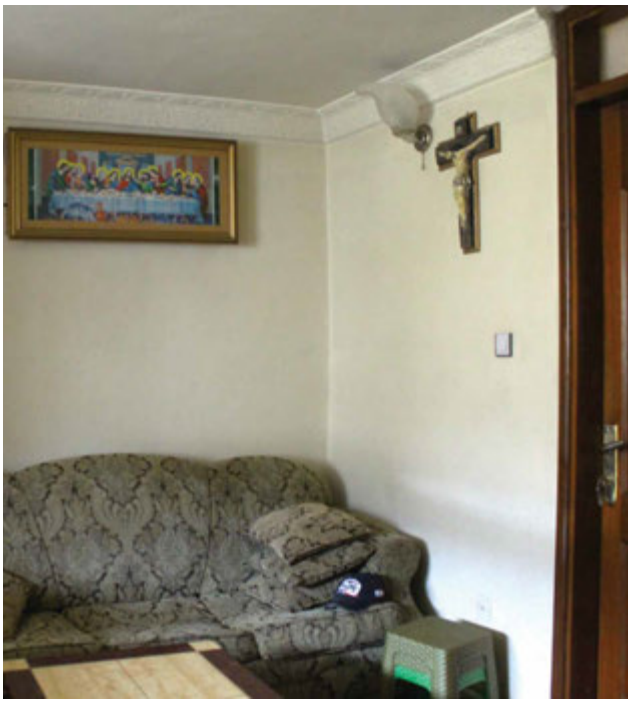
03 View of the metal grill enclosing the access to the dwelling

04 Large and small satellite dishes are mounted along the walkway on the ground level of the building

05 View of the metal framed and concrete filled threads of the staircase. The metal frame and panel door to the second level apartments is also in view

06 The corridor leading to the apartment is lined with storage items and plants.





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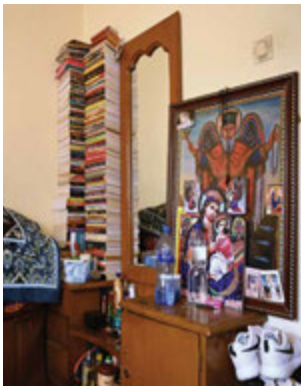

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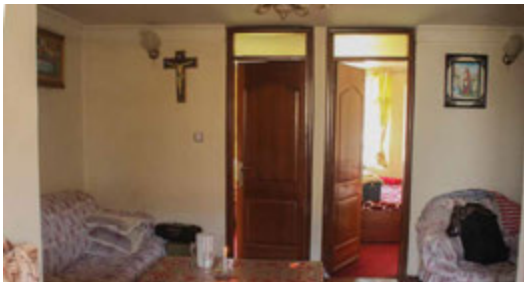
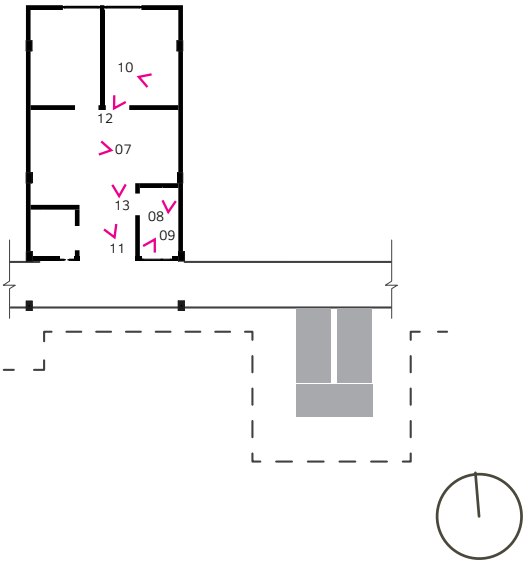
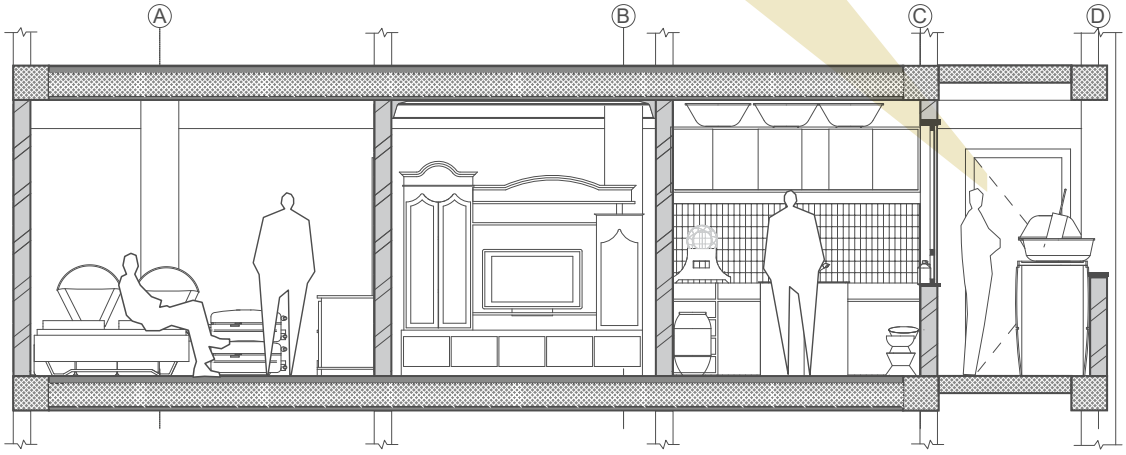


13

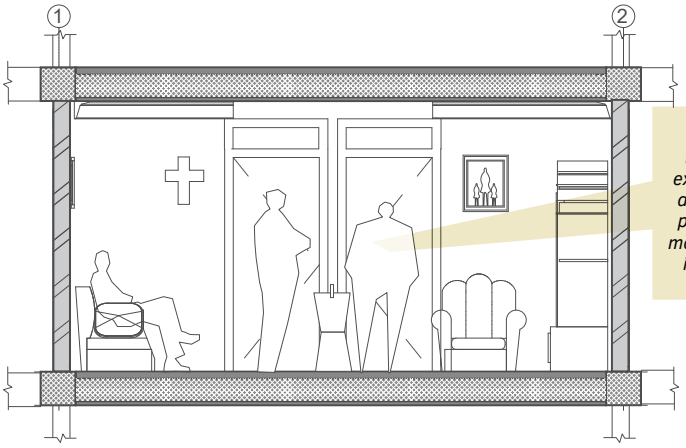
07 View of the sitting space in the living room
08 View of the cooking and storage space in the kitchen
09 View of the fold-able Injera making oven mechanism by the window
10 Stack of books and religious icons in the bedroom
11 The washing machine in the living room is covered by colorful fabric. A plastic mat for shoes is also visible at the entry space
12 Stored items take many shapes and are place in various containers surrounding the bed in the sleeping space
13 Two identical wooden composite doors give access to the two bedrooms. The red carpet floor finish of the master bedroom is also in view.



"Because of the political crisis in 2016 and the resulting turmoil, there was a serious security issue and there were cases of burglary. We decided with the neighbours to install a door here on our side of the gallery. "



Section A-A

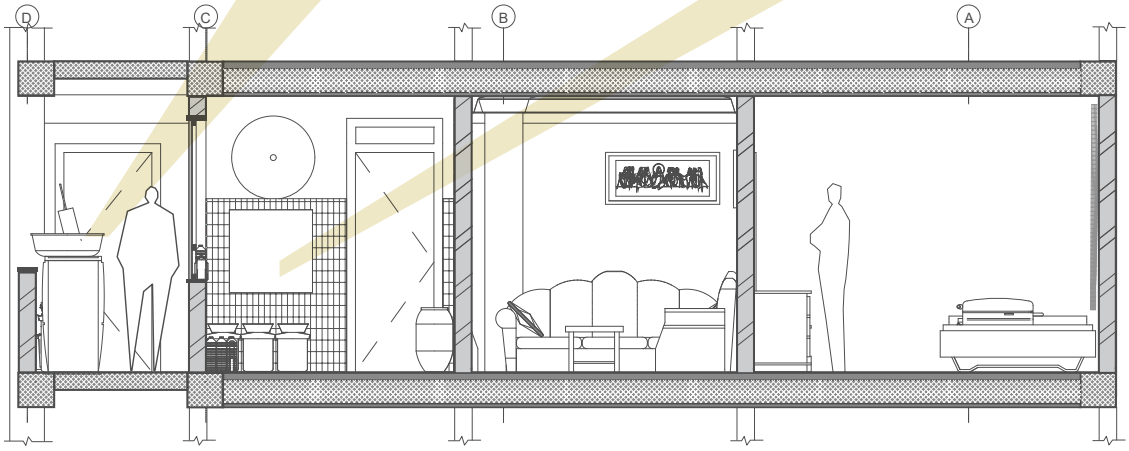


"The space is not adequate for a family. The kitchen for example is not wide enough to accommodate more than one person. I am not comfortable moving around because I bump into furniture and the door."

Section B-B

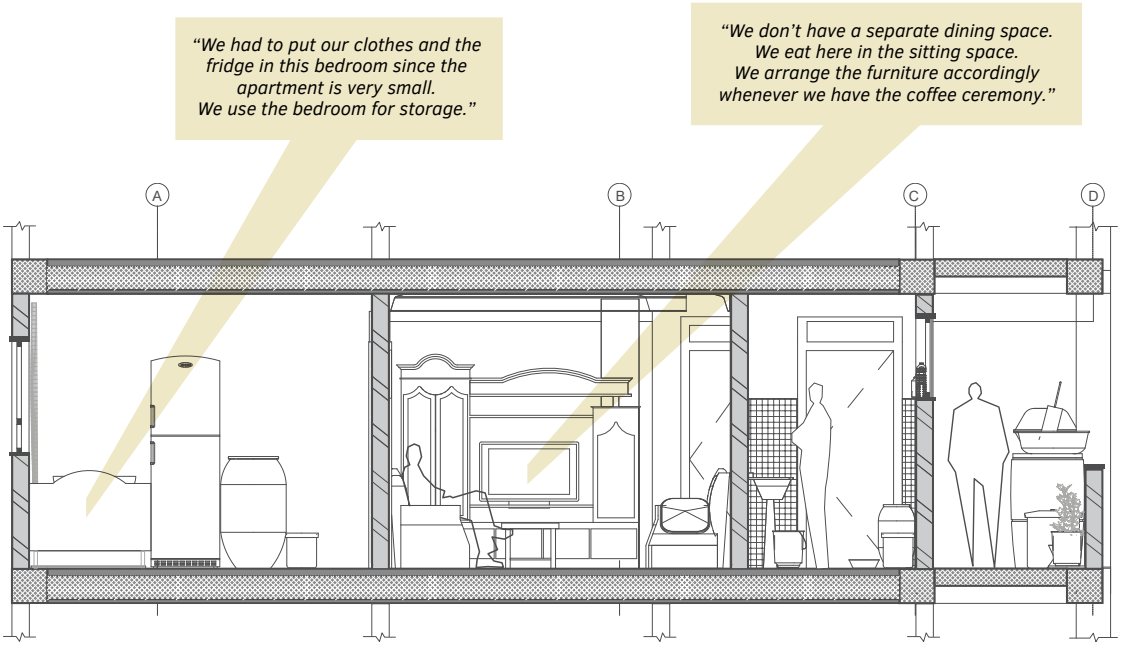
"The gallery space is used for storage. It is also used as a hosting space when we have a function in the house. "

"This is a mobile injera oven and it is foldable. We can have more space in the kitchen when we are not using the injera oven. "

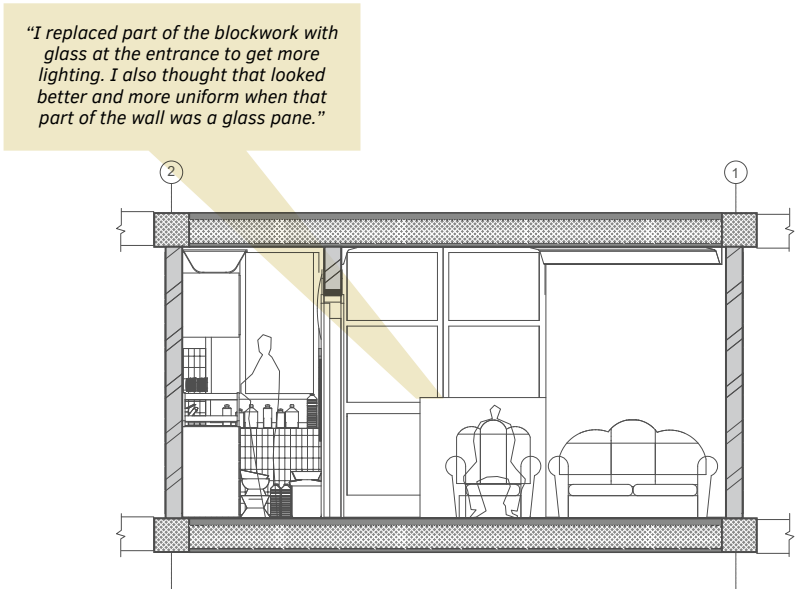


Section C-C





Section D-D



Section E-E



Material encounters



01 Plastered, Tyrolean rendered and painted concrete block wall. Diameter 110 PVC downpipe, and metal grill covers on top of the balcony are also in view.
02 Decorative light fixture hangs from a cement and gypsum plastered and painted ceiling of the master bedroom
03 Florescent light bulb hangs from exposed cables in the kitchen
04 A decorative light fixture hangs from a decorative gypsum detail on the living room ceiling. Wall mounted light fixture beneath the
05 Wooden colored plastic floor cover in the living room followed by the red carpet cover in the master bed room
06 The buffet full of household items forms a backdrop to the beige and light brown fabric covered sofa. Originally it was intended to be a storage space for books.
07 A decorative gypsum detail which also serves as an electric cable passage beneath the slab
08 The corner of the walls described in 01 are adorned with thin cement cast details aimed to mimic masonry quoins
09 Metal framed and concrete filled threads, and metal handrails of the staircase.
10 Metal frame and panel door with a self-closing mechanism made possible by the weight of the water bottle tied to the frame of the door with a shoelace
11 Metal framed kitchen window with a metal grill and transparent glass
12 Vintage ceramic socket on light blue tiles with white speckles

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td rowspan="2">04</td></tr>
<tr><td>05</td><td>06</td></tr>
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<tr><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr>
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</table>

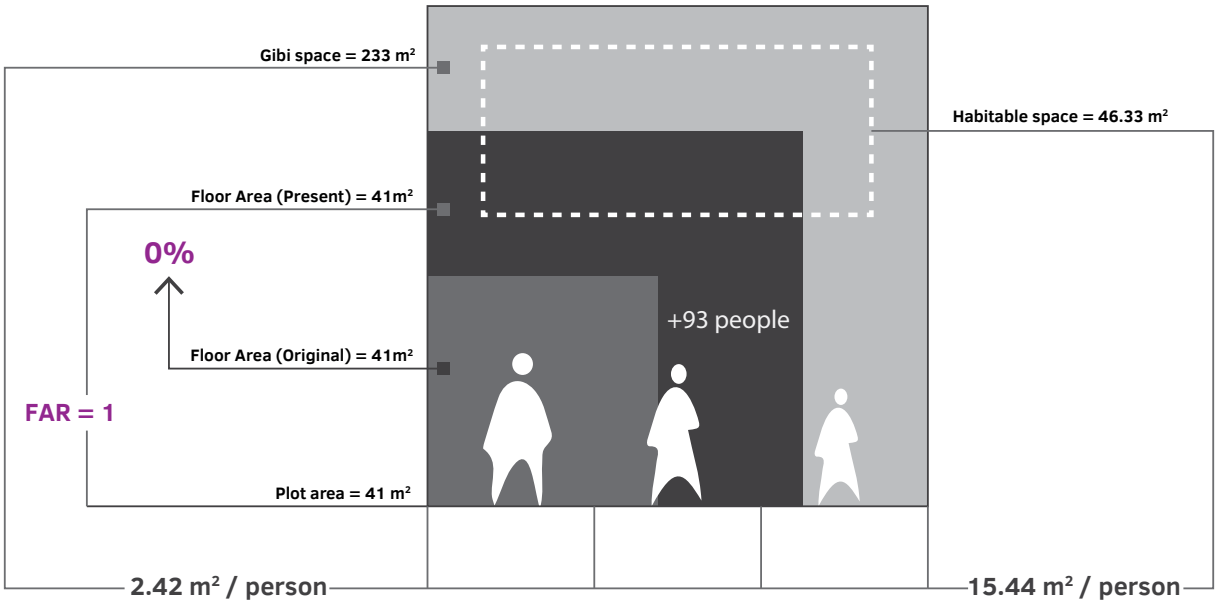
Photo trigger

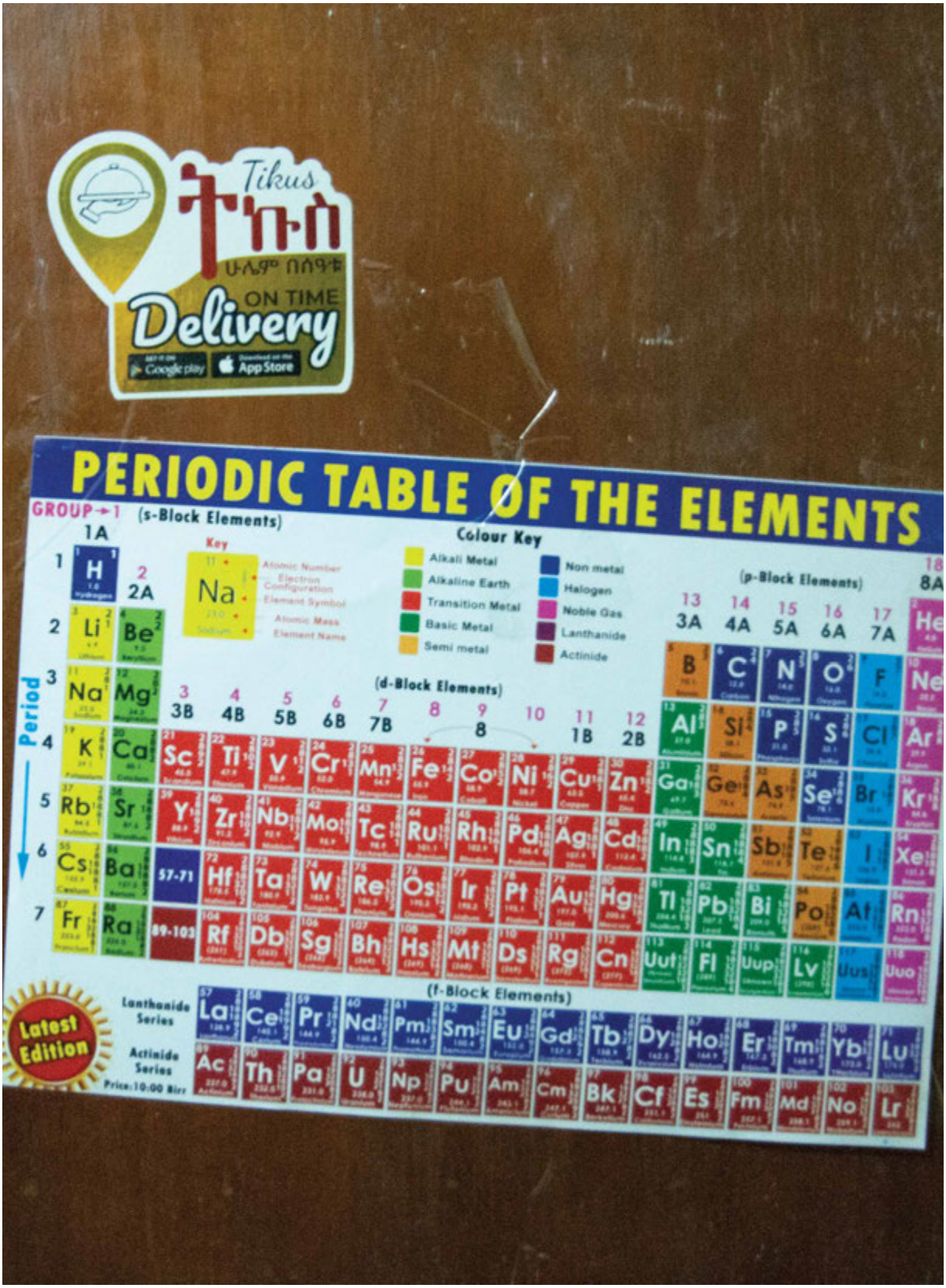




The space shown in the photo is Shambel's favourite corner in his two-bedroom apartment, where he enjoys sitting, reading, and relaxing on the floor. It is one of the few areas in the house not taken up by furniture. Though it's located right next to the television, Shambel explained that he doesn't watch TV while sitting there. The apartment is packed with furniture for seating and storage, but shambel prefers sitting on a mat on the floor to read, even though he still hasn't found a permanent place for his books. The photo also includes the cabinet he had intended for his books, which his wife now uses for storing kitchenware and cutlery in the living room. Shambel found the photo amusing and placed it on a coffee table in the sitting area.

Diagrammatic synthesis

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GROUP → 1
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Colour Key
Alkali Metal
Alkaline Earth
Transition Metal
Basic Metal
Semi metal
Non metal
Halogen
Noble Gas
Lanthanide
Actinide
(p-Block Elements)
(d-Block Elements)
(f-Block Elements)
Period
Lanthanide Series
Actinide Series
Latest Edition
Price:10.00 Birr

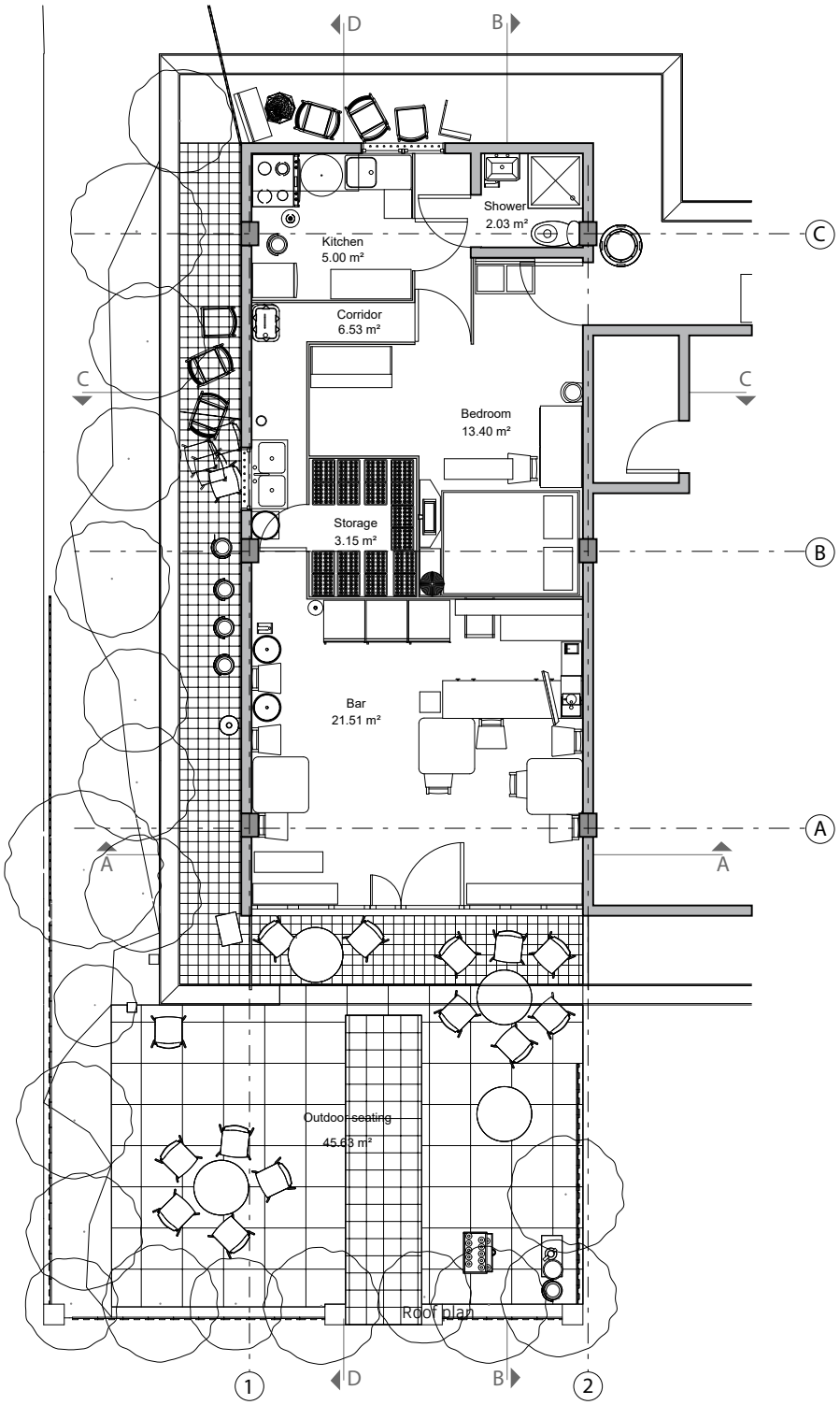
Senait

The outdoor space was empty and muddy. I made the floor pavements and planted all the trees you see here. The unit was originally an open-plan space. I had all the partitions installed. I instructed the professional I hired on how I wanted the space divided: A sleeping area for me and my children at the back, the kitchen in the corner, and the bar area at the front with a store next to it.

The live-work unit



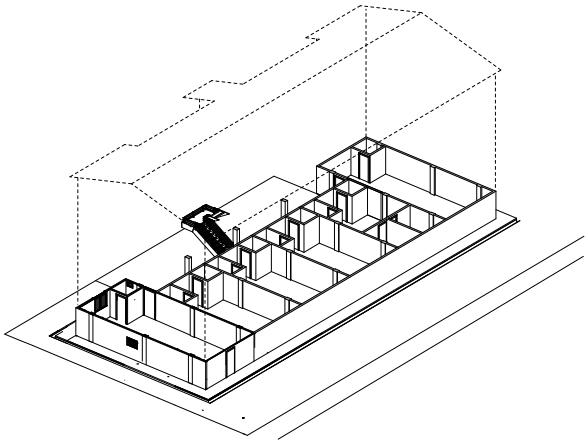
Plans



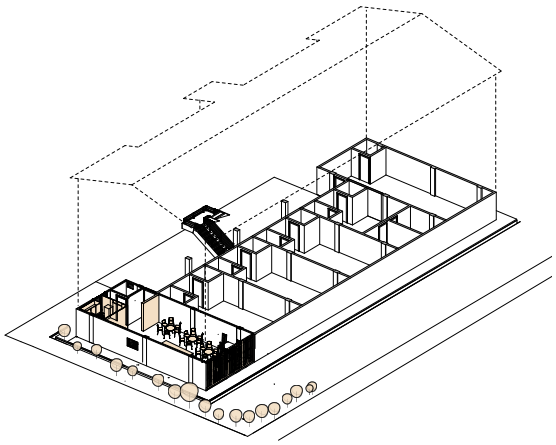
Ground floor plan

0m 1m 2m

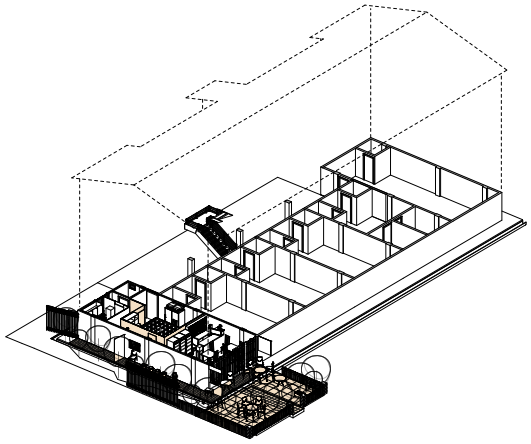
Dwelling transformation



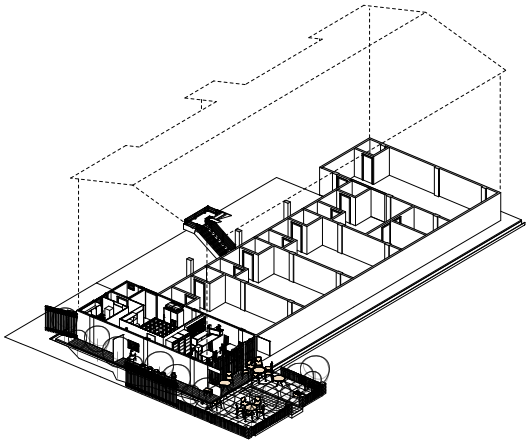
01. 2014_Original state of the shop. It used to be a supermarket before the current owner took over and turned it into a bar



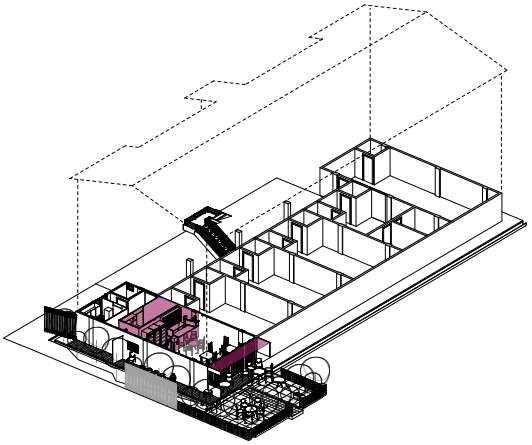
02. ~2014 - 2016_The space served as a bar after modifications to the door and some internal changes. The trees were also planted around this time



03. 2016_Partitions were added to turn the space into a Bar + residence for the owner and her two children



04. ~2021_Current setup was created with the addition of the sponsored blue plastic chairs and new businesses such as the *Jebena* Coffee service and the potato snacks and sandwiches (*irtib*). At this point the trees also provided a strong enclosure and made the Gibi more defined

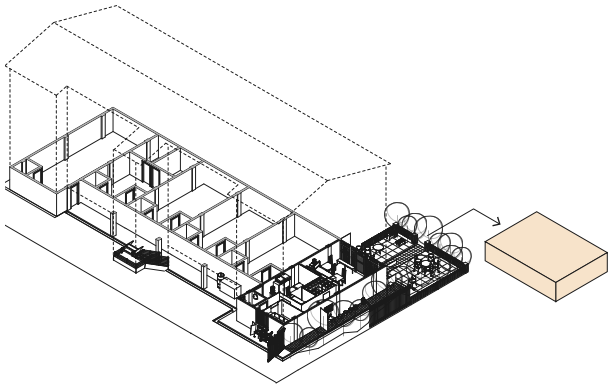


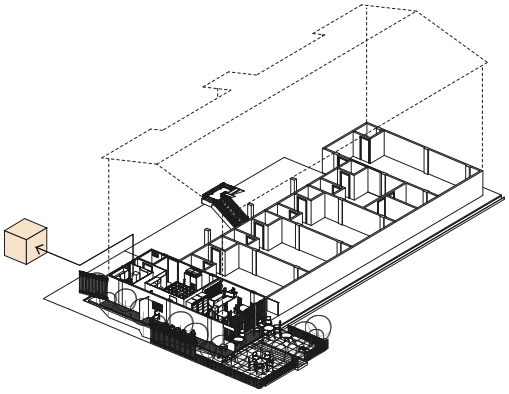
05. Desired future scenario: The owner would like to separate her place of residence from her bar. She strongly believes that mixing the two has impacted her and her children negatively. She would therefore like to move to a more spacious residence not too far from her bar and use the current property to run and expand her business.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Senait considers the terrace that she extended from the bar and the attached green environment as her gibi. She also considers part of the gwaro at the back as her gibi even though it is partly shared with her neighbours.



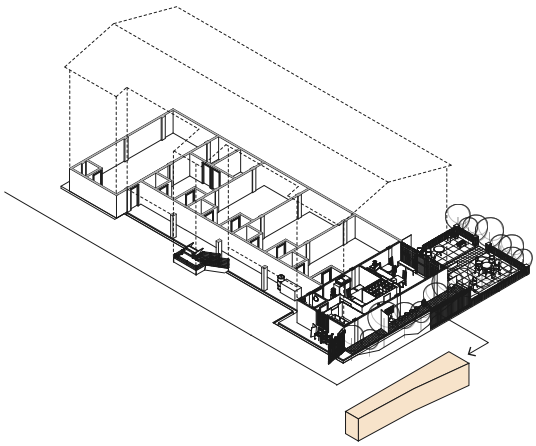


The Gwada

The gwada is strictly the kitchen for Senait. She also connects the notion of the gwada with the location of kitchen items such as the stove and fridge. Senait believes in the privacy of her bedroom but does not consider it to be part of the gwada.

The Gwaro

The area behind the bar is generally considered as a gwaro for Senait. This includes the toilet that is shared between her dwelling spaces and customers of the bar. She considers the space immediately after her dwelling entrance as their gwaro. Nevertheless, she questions this notion because she believes having a gwaro in a shared setting is difficult.





01



02



05



03

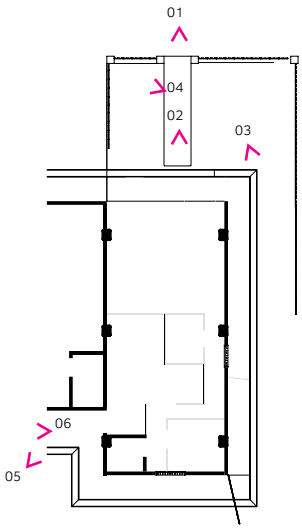


04



06

01 Front view of the entrance to the dwelling
02 View of the colorful plastic seats on terrazzo flooring
03 View of the coffee making area on charcoal stoves
04 View of the Jebena Coffee service/ ceremony setup
05 The back access to the residential part of the dwelling
06 View of the metal staircase and landscape stairs to the communal field where children sometimes go to play





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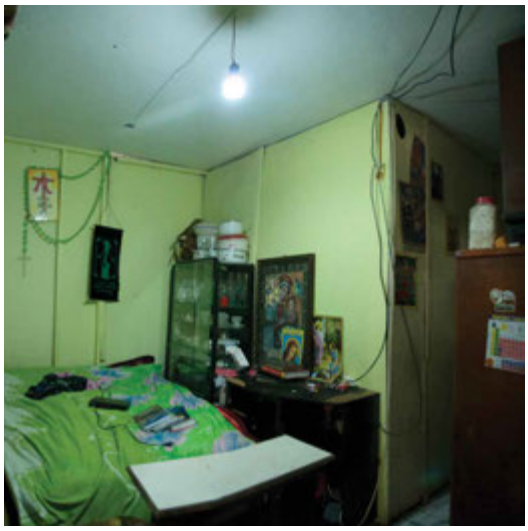

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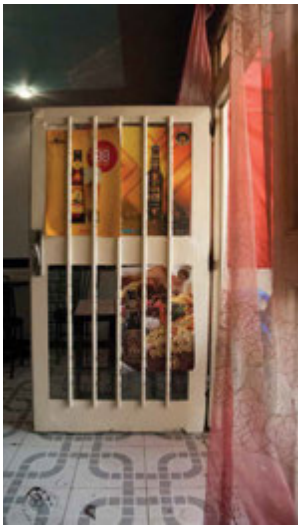

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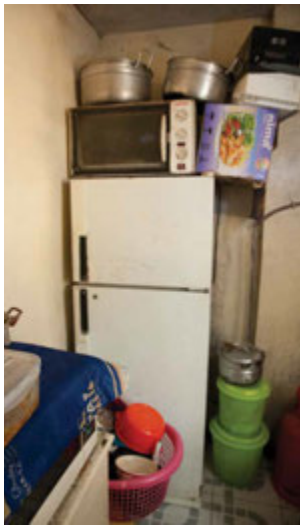

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07 View of the bar. The several sponsored refrigerators and the TV are in view

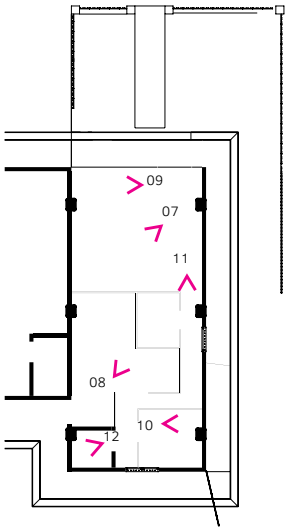
08 View of the bedroom + Living room + studying space for the children

09 Alcoholic beverage posters on the metal framed, reflective glass covered, and metal grill lined main door of the bar

10 Cooking, refrigeration, and storage space within the kitchen

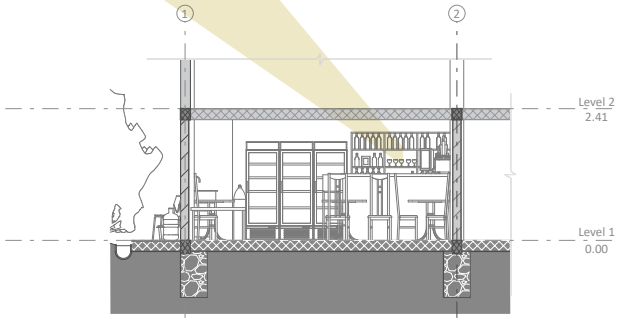
11 The narrow passage to the residential area

12 View of the bathroom with a shower head that heats water. The bathroom window opens inwards and looks out to the Gwaro. The non-tiled parts of the wall are used for storage of plastic containers





“I decided to have the bar counter in this corner of the house so that it is easier to access the kitchen and my living quarters. If my living quarter was not at the back, I would not have placed the bar in this spot. ”

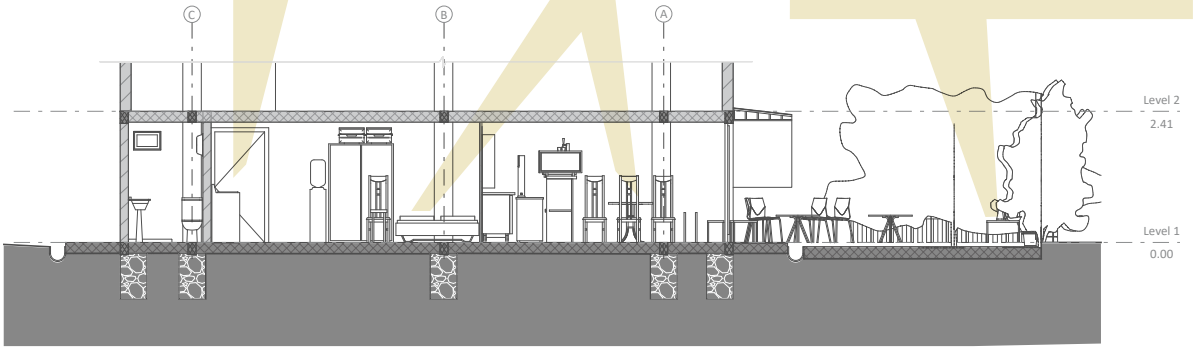


Section A-A

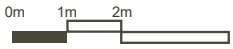
“I made secondary to the gwaro for my children so that they have access to the space at the back. ”

“If I had the financial means, I would prefer to make a larger sleeping space for my children. If I had other options, I wouldn’t even have a bar in a place where my children sleep and study.”

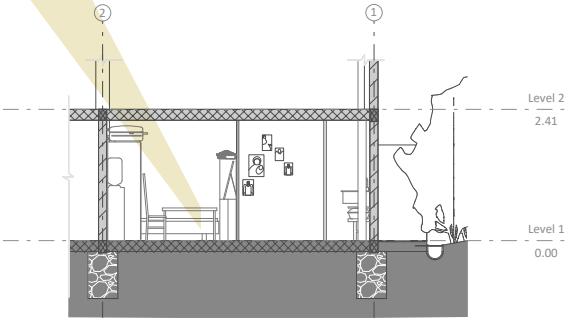
“By setting up the coffee ceremony spot over here, I attract more customers because it is visible to people who walk by, especially from the nearby Health Centre. ”



Section B-B



“This is a study table for my children. They use the bedroom space to study when they are back from school. ”

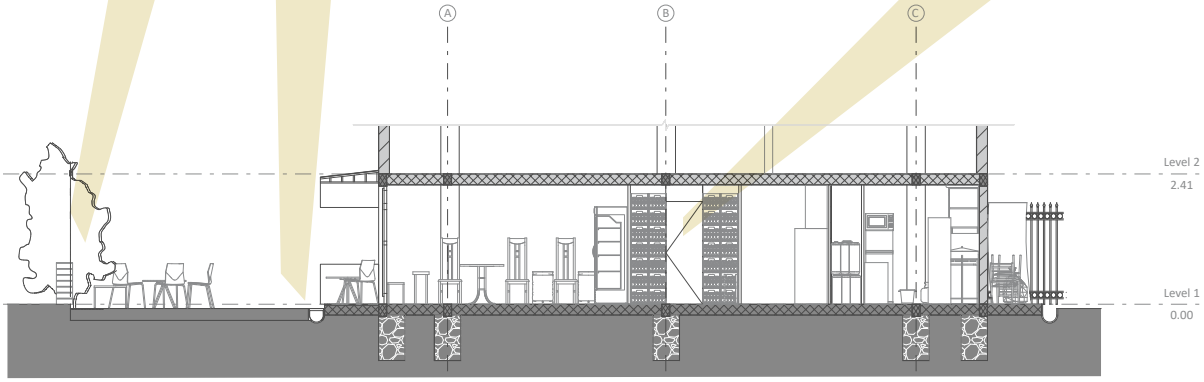


Section C-C

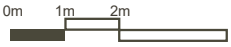
“The trees serve as a barrier, but people sometimes just pass through them. So, I built an extra picket fence to prevent access from all directions and make one formal access. ”

“I brought in soil to plant the grass over here. It didn’t work out well, so I brought in gravel, got it compacted and placed concrete tiles behind the trees.”

“I did the modification design all by myself. I sat down and discussed it with a professional who can build the changes. I explained to them how to make the rooms and partitions. I wanted the sleeping space for my children at the back, the kitchen in the middle and the working space (bar) here. ”



Section D-D



Material encounters



01 Plastered, Tyrolean rendered and painted concrete block walls and concrete structural elements. The metal grill of the toilet window is also in view.
02 Small decorative lighting fixture on a painted ceiling (sky with some clouds)
03 A narrow passage to the residential part of the property. Blue painted, plastered HCB walls form the backdrop to colorful water containers
04 A light bulb hangs close to the plastered and painted concrete ceiling of the bathroom. A shower head that heats water is also in view
05 The bar shelf is filled with local alcoholic beverages. An out of service TV occupies a significant portion of the bar counter
06 Alcoholic beverage posters on the metal framed, reflective glass covered, and metal grill lined door of the bar.
07 Colorful hedge that has grown in between the white picket fence of the establishment. The ends are marked by short brick walls
08 Stored items in the bedroom (within and outside of wooden cupboards)
09 A damaged wooden door gives access to the bathroom
10 The columns in the bar have been painted to look like a masonry wall
11 Exposed PVC sewage line and moisture damage on a white painted ceiling
12 Lime green painted plywood walls of the bedroom
13 Sponsored blue plastic chairs and tables for the outside space

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td rowspan="2">03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td>05</td><td>06</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">07</td><td>08</td><td>09</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr>
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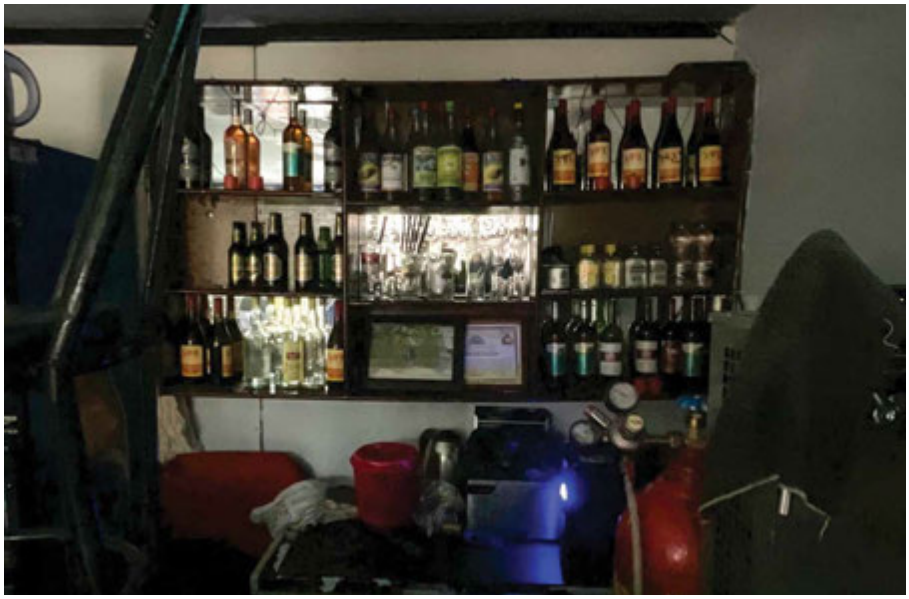
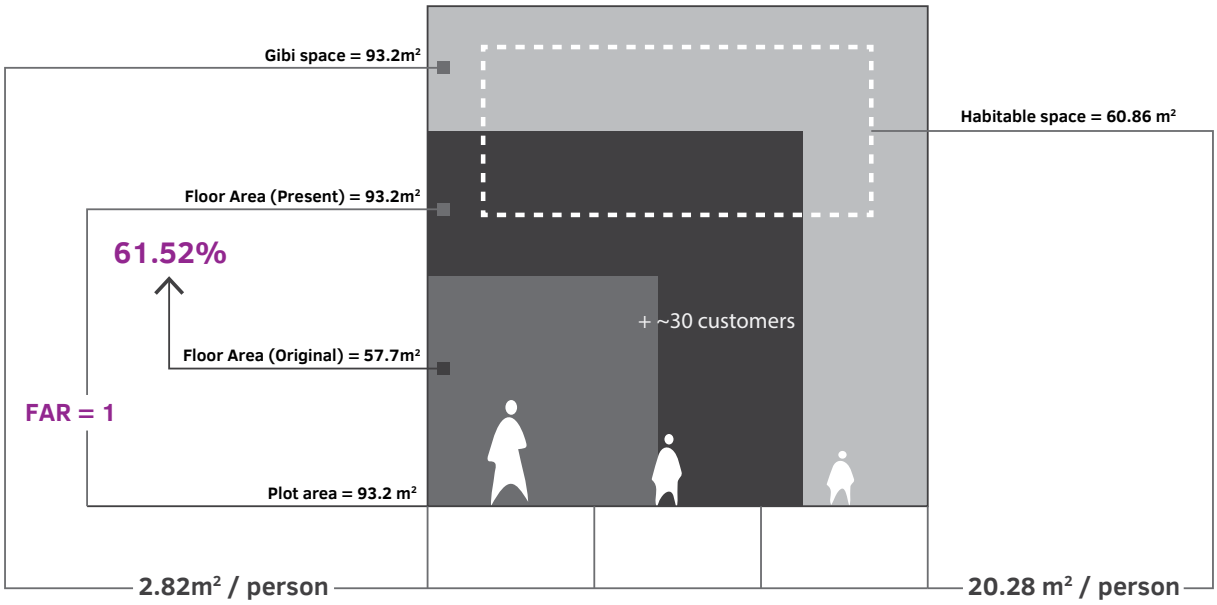
Photo trigger



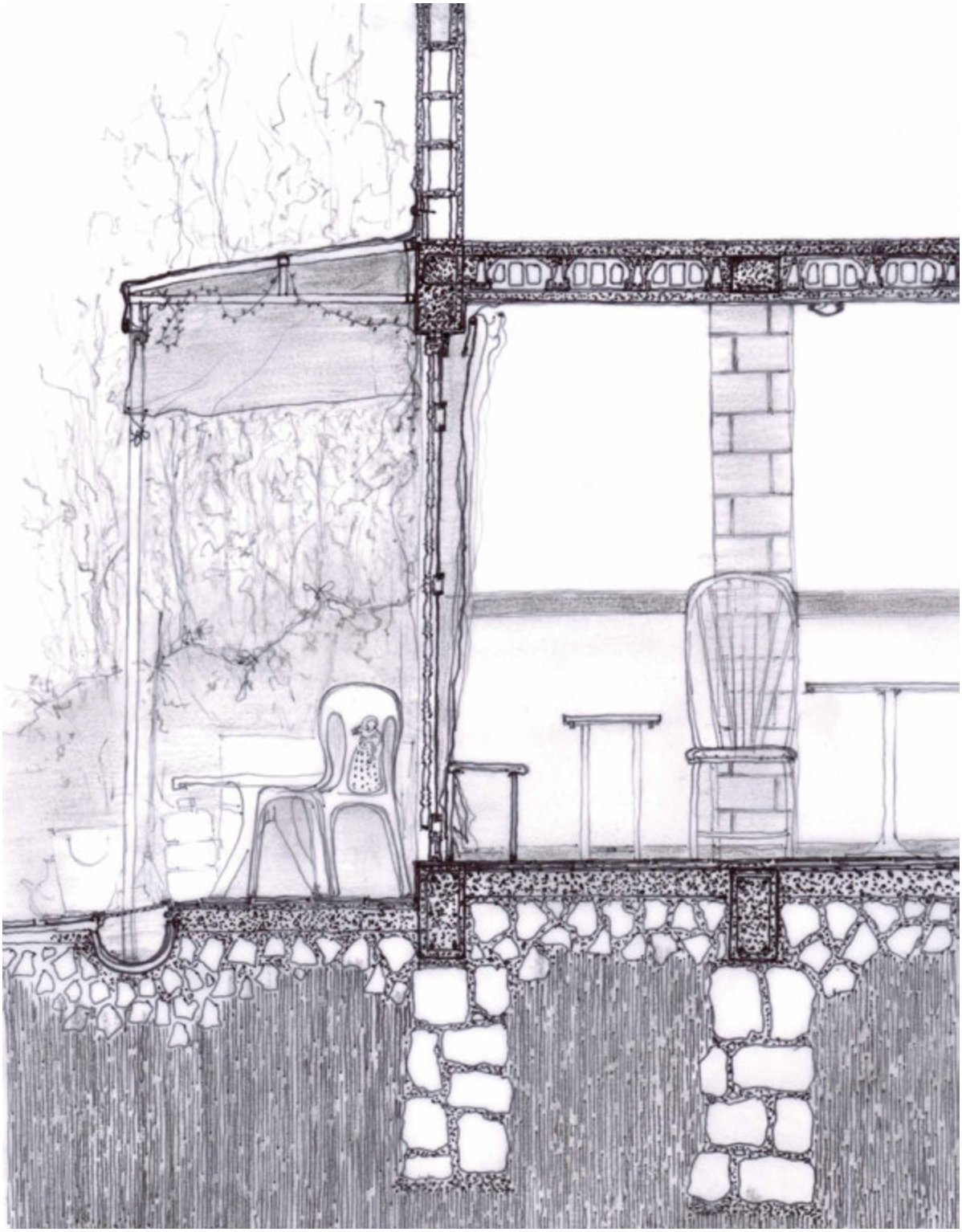


Senait, a single mother, lives and works on the ground floor of a condominium, where she leads her family. The picture depicts how she created a semi-enclosed gibi by planting trees and other shrubs, complemented by a short brick wall and white picket fence. Listening to her recount the challenges she has faced in running her café/bar since her husband's passing, it is clear that she has had to deal with pressure from government bodies and other parties trying to take over her space. The gibi she has created serves as a protective buffer, shielding her and her children from ill-intentioned people both visually and physically. Senait too an active role in designing and modifying the space. She was delighted to receive the photo and placed it on one of the café tables.

Diagrammatic synthesis



Building techniques





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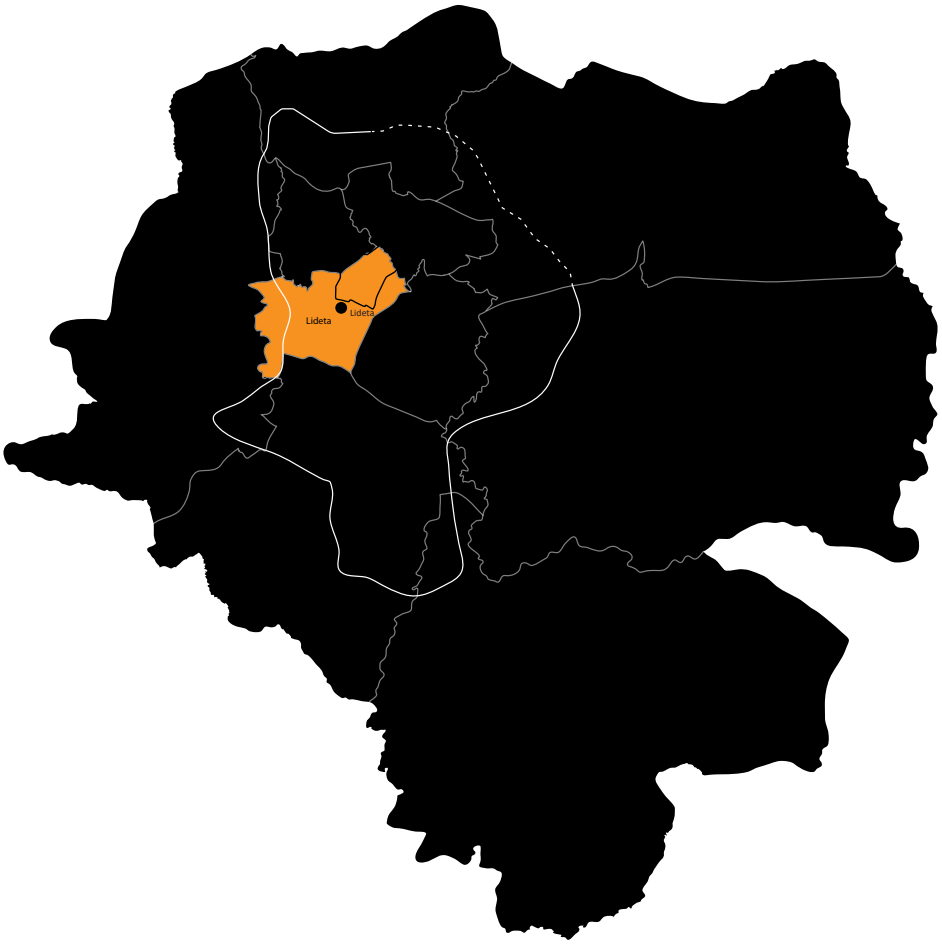
Lideta Tabula rasa





Selected area (2006)

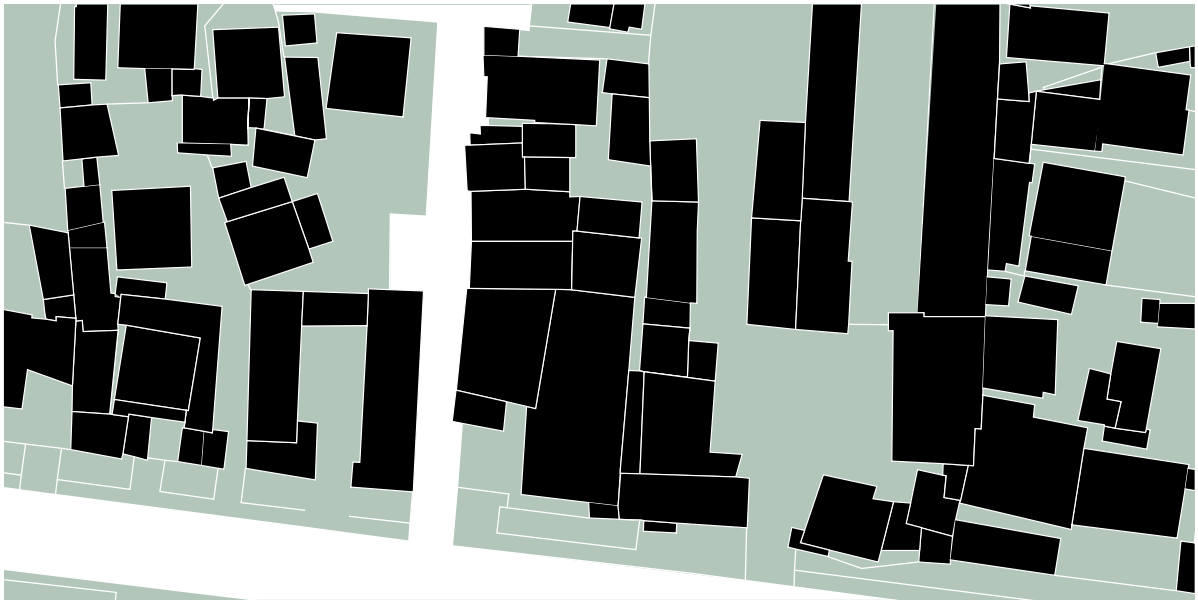


Selected area (2022)

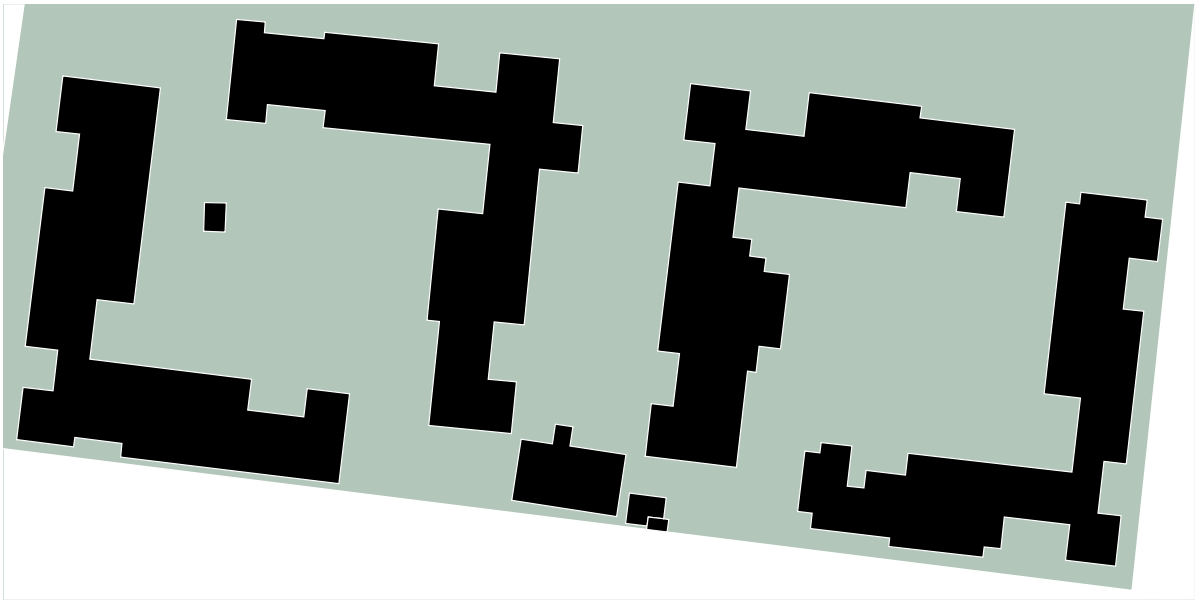


Drone image of the area_1Ha selection





Original cluster structure_1Ha



Increase in footprint by 2022_ 351.67% in the selected 1Ha area



01



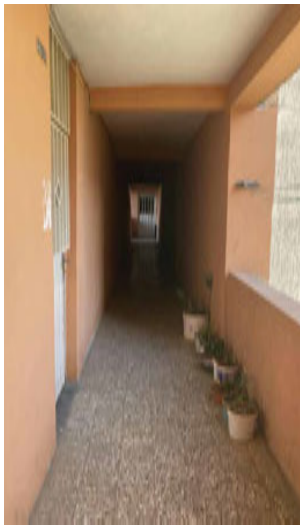
02



03



04



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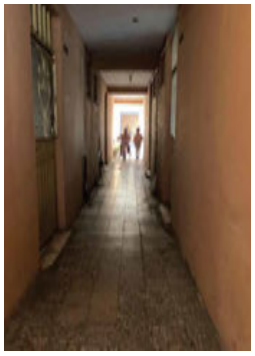
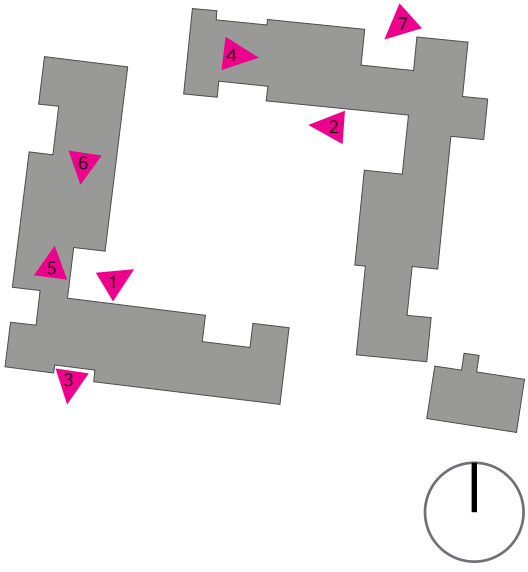


06



07

01 View of the interior green space
02 A view of the grilled windows on the interior side of the block
03 A view towards the city from the balcony of the condominium
04 A view of the main door to house 01
05 View of the corridor leading to house 02
06 View of children riding a bicycle on the 6th floor
07 View of the balconies and ground level of the condominium





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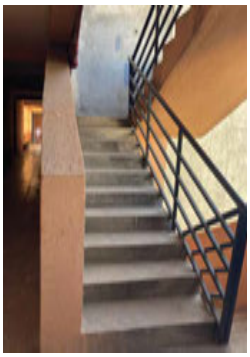


11

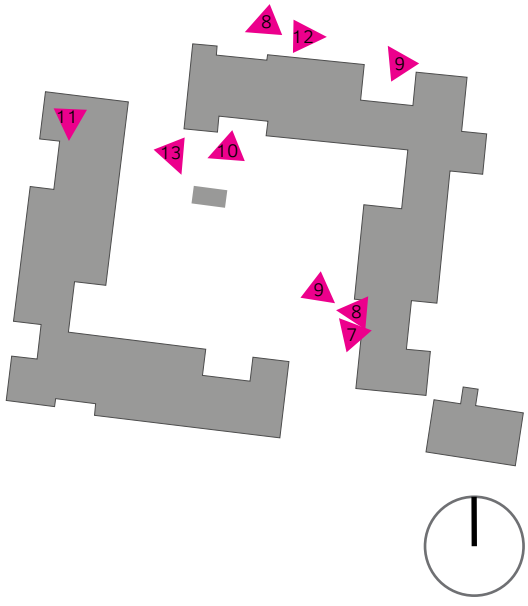


12



13

08 The corner shop on the block's ground level
09 Exterior view of the clothes drying space in front of the parking space
10 View of a wooden stair to the central green space made by the shop owner at the ground level
11 A view of the staircase on the 6th floor
12 A view of the pedestrian walkway on a lower level as compared to the parking space
13 View of the fibreglass water reservoir





Abeba

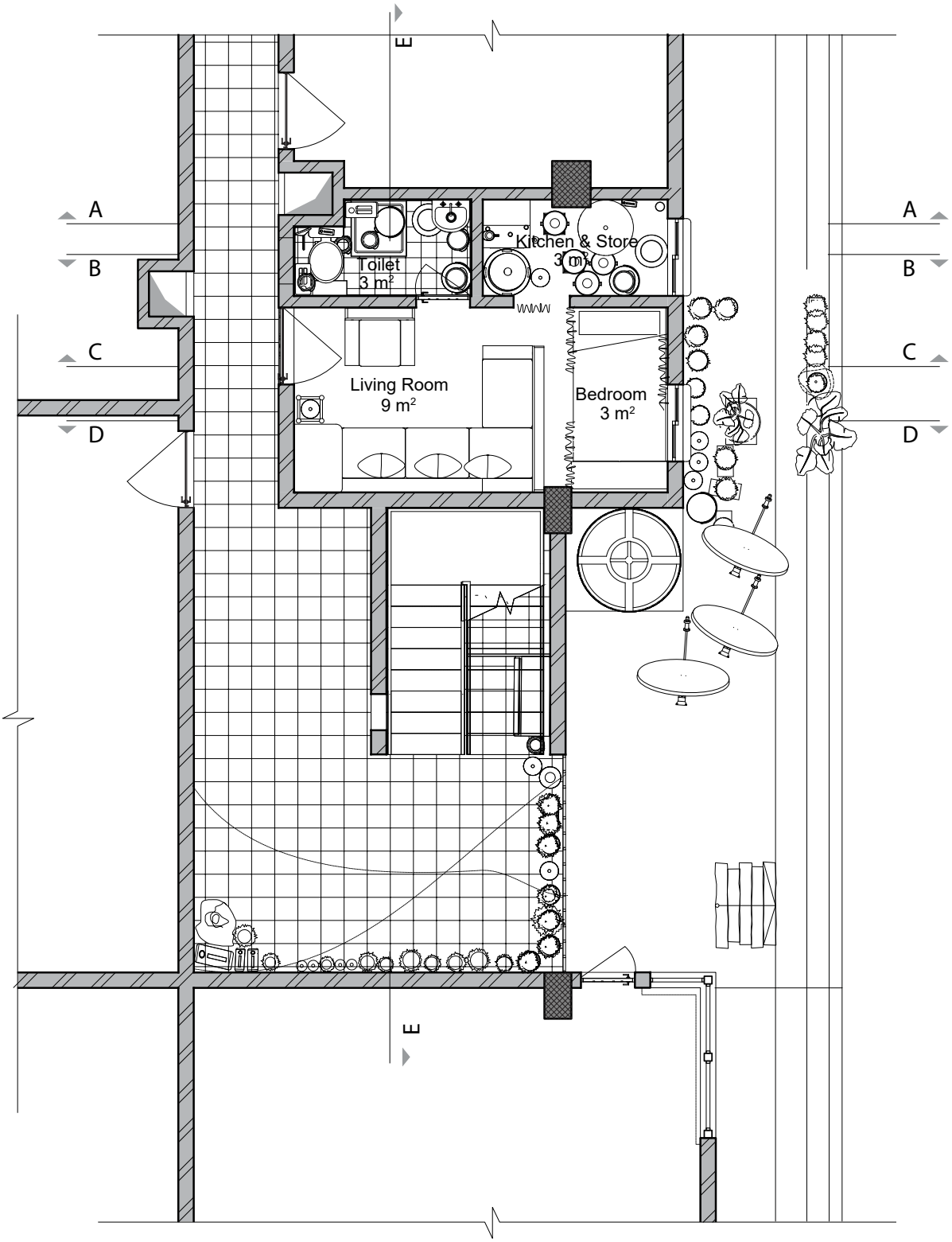
The layout of the space was a bit different when I moved in. I made the partition between the cooking space and the living space to put the kitchen out of sight from anyone sitting in the living space. Everything was visible before, and changing that was important to me. I hired a professional and told him to conceal the kitchen.

‘I grow my own vegetables’



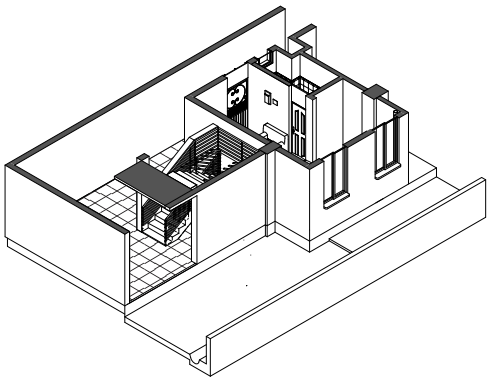
CCC Lideta

Plans

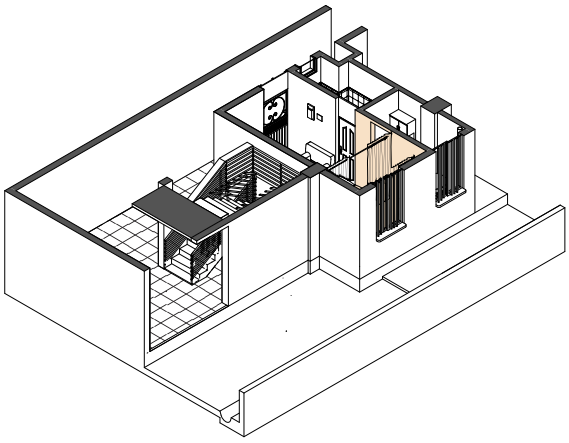


Floor plan

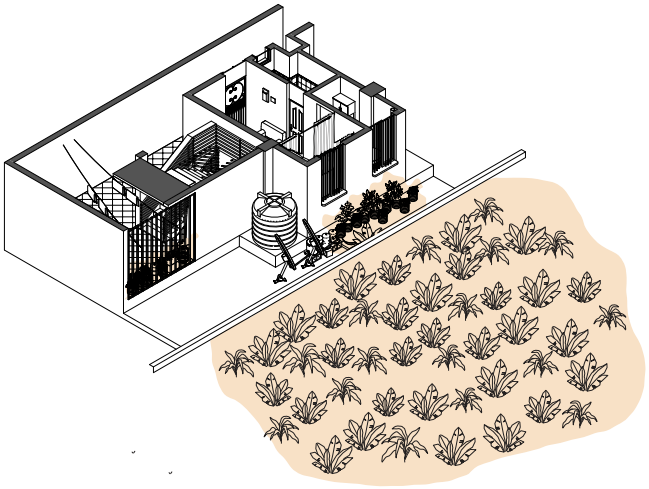
Dwelling transformation



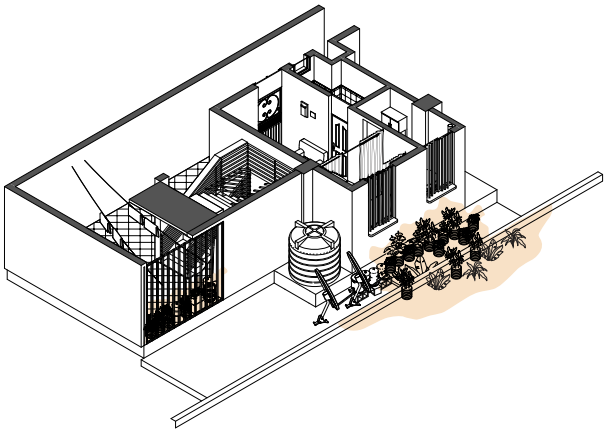
01. 2015_Original state of the house_the kitchen didn't have a partition



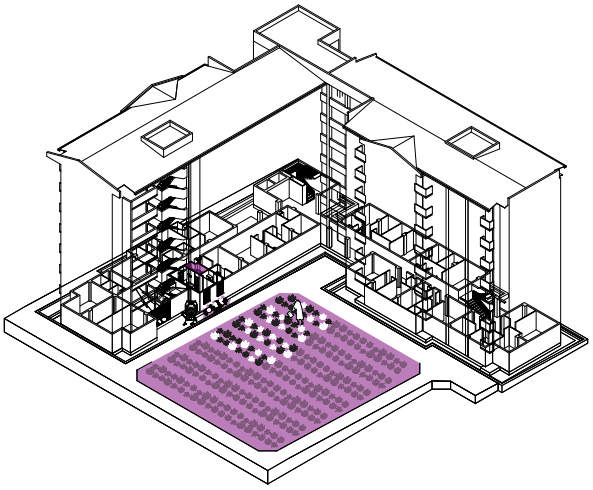
02. ~2019_Partition wall was added to define the kitchen space better and to make it more private.



03. ~2019_A metal grill fence was erected, making the space at the back more private, the owner of the house planted a garden in this back space.



04. 2022_The administrative committee told her she can't use the space to setup a garden, therefore, her garden regressed back to her immediate surrounding in mostly plastic containers.



05. Desired future scenario

05. Her preferred future scenario is to reorganize the layout of the toilet and solve the issue of flooding.

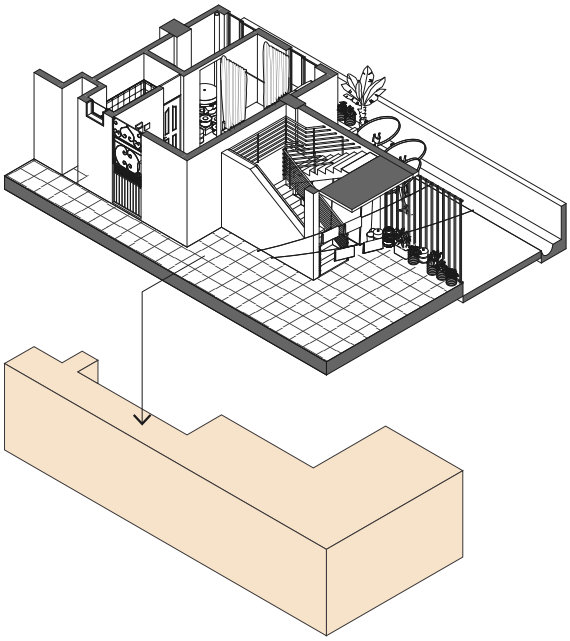
Change the TV stand and reorganize the layout of the sleeping space.

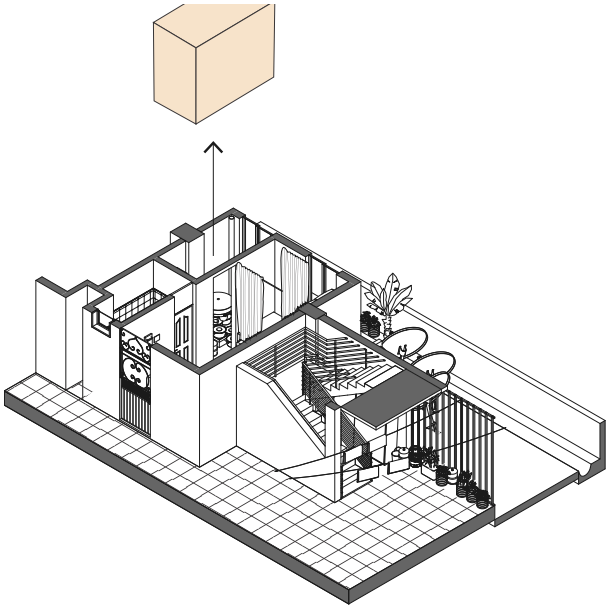
Expand the garden and plant more vegetables and herbs.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

Abeba does not formally own a gibi but had to claim a section of the corridor. She considers this as a kind of shared gibi along with the other neighbours. She uses the space to dry her clothes because it is more secure. She also used the metal grill fencing the corridor as a vertical hanging structure for her plants creating a porous vertical garden



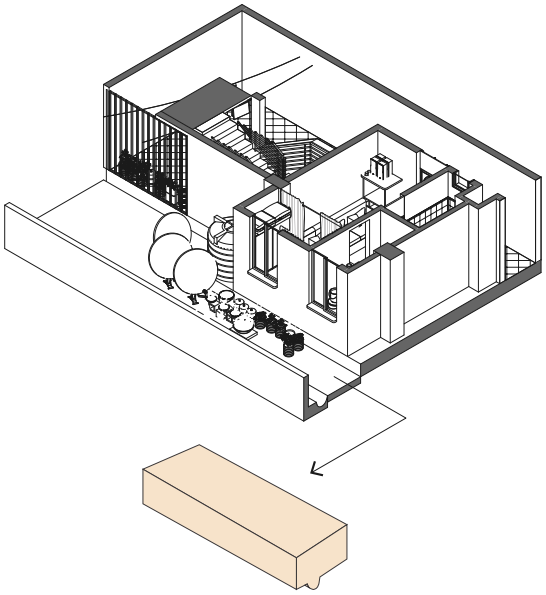


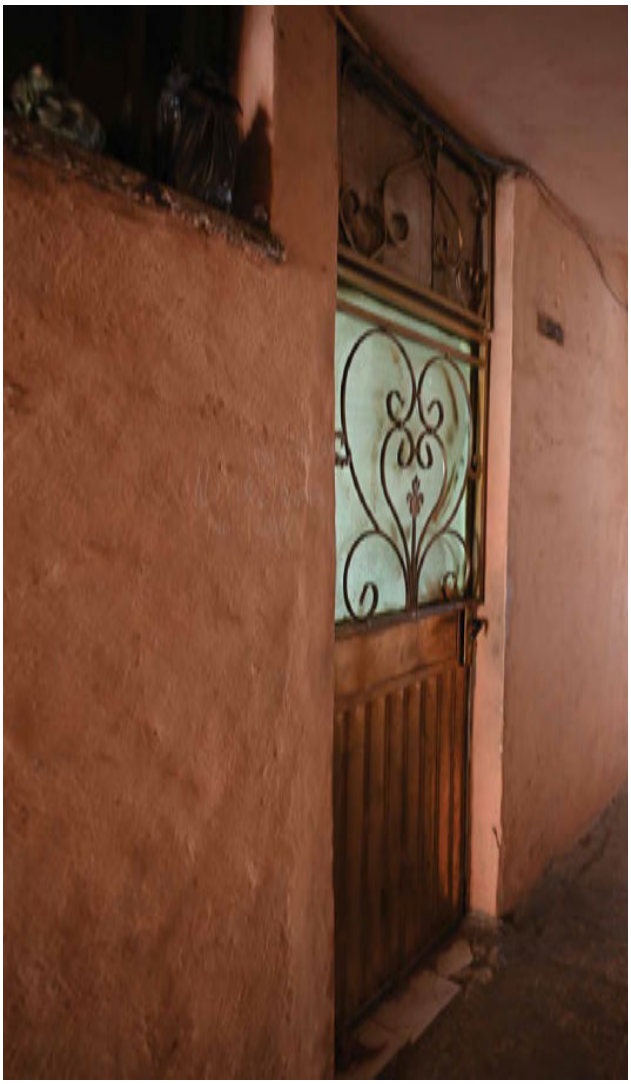
The Gwaro

The gwaro is a small patch of land that is within the courtyard of the corridor. Abeba considers this space as her gwaro because she developed it by planting some vegetables. This space is not directly physically accessible to Abeba but it is visually connected with her living space.

The Gwada

The cooking space within the studio is considered as the gwada for Abeba. For Abeba, the gwada is a space that has to be concealed for work. With this notion, She has transformed a wall to create definition for this space. Although the sleeping space is not a gwada for Abeba, she built a curtain structure to conceal it from the living space.





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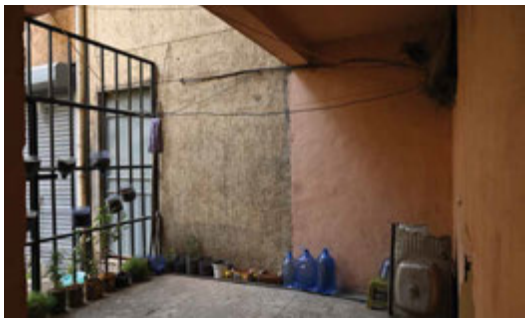

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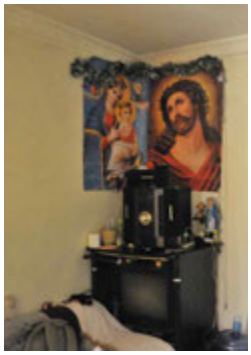
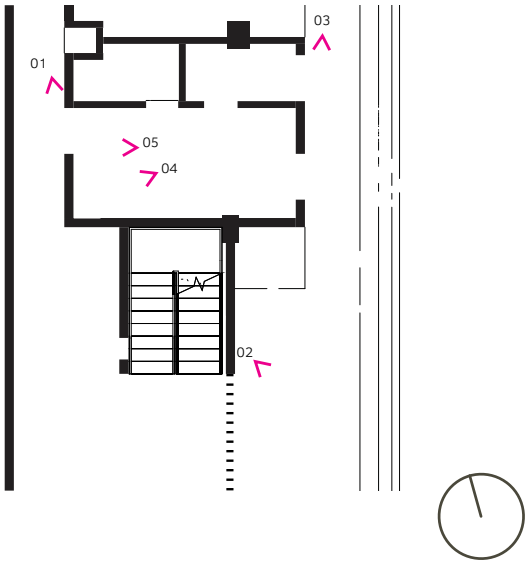


04



05

01 View of the main door into the house
02 View of the Ghebi; the corner space by the staircase where clothes are hung to dry
03 View of the Gwaro, the garden is in view from the sleeping space window
04 TV stand and religious icons by the corner
05 View of main door from the interior space





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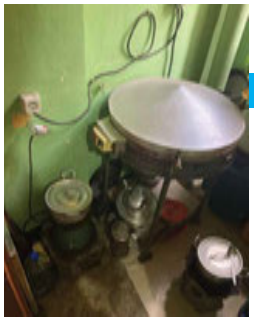

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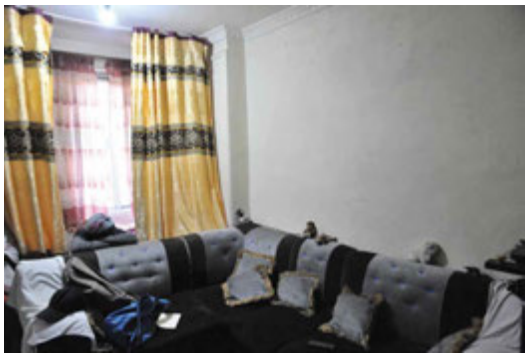
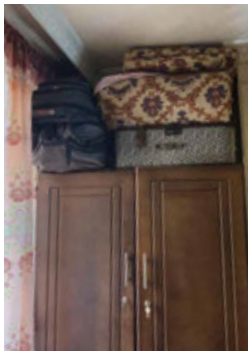


09



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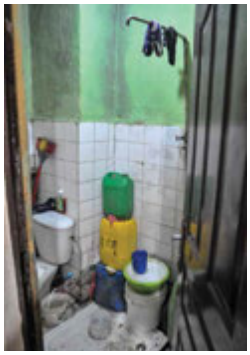
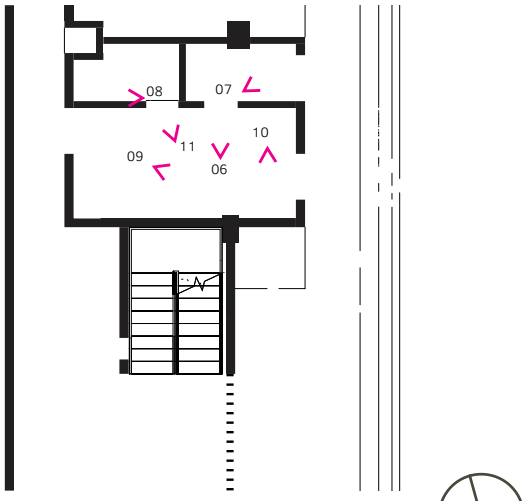
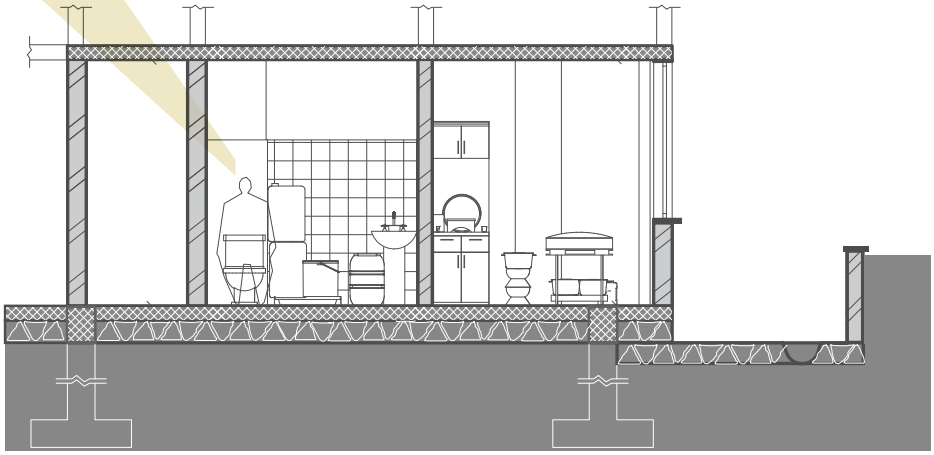


11

06 View of the storage space in the Gwada, and the cooking space on the ground
07 View of the Injera making space
08 View of the toilet seat that has been placed very close to the wall
09 View of the sitting space, at the back behind the curtains is the sleeping area
10 View of the storage space in the sleeping area
11 View of the toilet, it is accessed from the sitting space

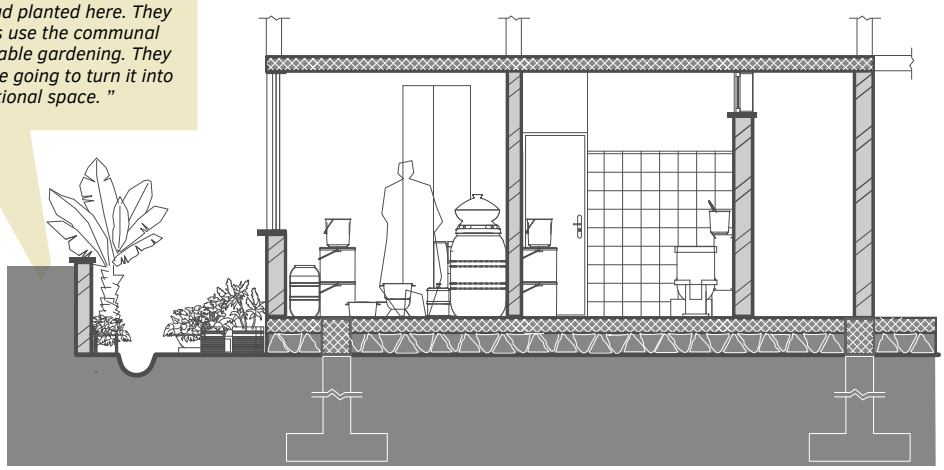


"The toilet seat is not properly placed and is not comfortable to sit on. We couldn't change it because we do not have the financial means. The plumbing of the house is not done properly and water leaks from all over the place especially during the rainy season."



Section A-A

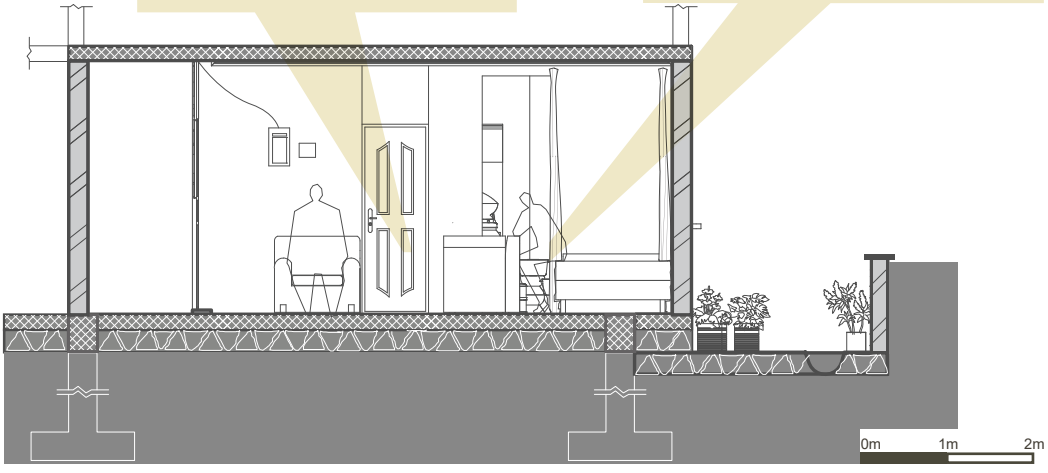
"They ripped off all the collard greens that I had planted here. They wouldn't let us use the communal space for vegetable gardening. They say that they are going to turn it into a recreational space. "



Section B-B

"I hired a professional to build a partition to conceal the gwada. Previously, someone sitting in the living space would see across the gwada."

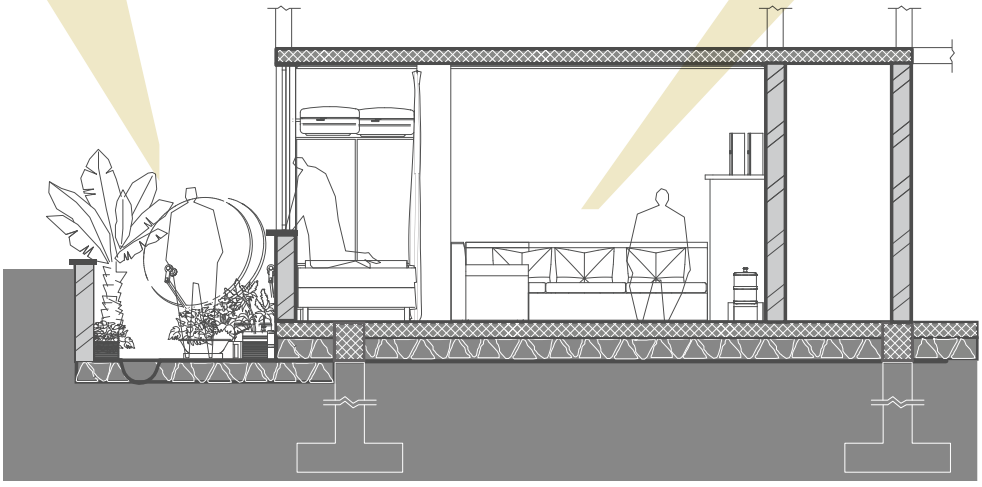
"It is not possible to change the position of the bed because the space is crammed. If I had a larger room, I would have preferred to move the bed around and sleep in different orientations. "



Section C-C

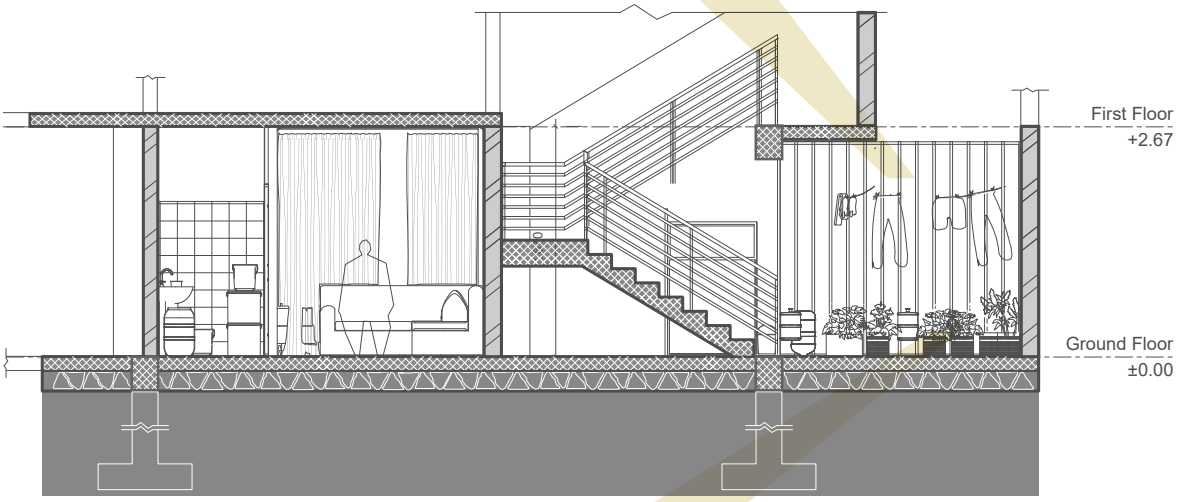
"I requested the housing committee's permission to grow vegetables in this space and was allowed. It is a space where people place their satellite dishes. Now, I consider it as my gwaro. "

"My son sleeps in the living space when he comes to visit. I share my bed with the relative that I share the house with."



Section D-D

"I can't say that I have a gibi as the condominium has communal spaces. I would say that I consider the corridor as my gibi. We dry clothes here in the corridor because it is not allowed to use the common spaces. "



Section E-E

"We collect water containers and use them for planting. I get the soil from the compound and water the plants using water from my house. I grow different types of vegetables. "



Material encounters

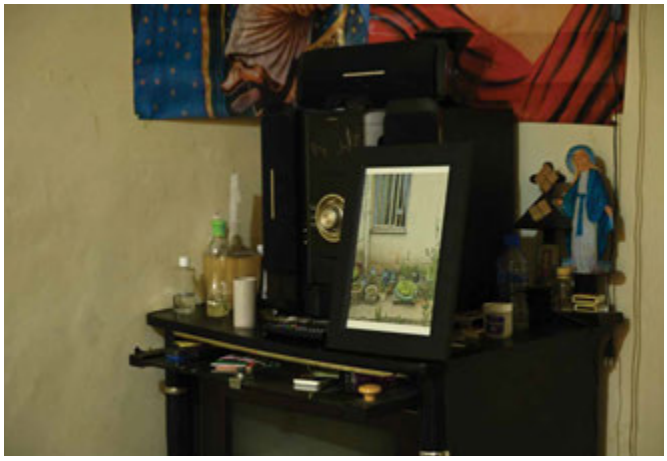


01 Plastered and quartz finished wall + plastered and painted finish
02 A light bulb hangs from a gypsum decorated ceiling
03 Gypsum decorated ceiling without a lighting fixture
04 A light bulb hangs on an exposed electric cable in the toilet
05 Bedroom curtains
06 Bed cover with colorful patterns
07 110mm diameter pipe passes through the corner of the Gwada
08a-08cTerrazzo tiles on the exterior, plastic sheets and cement screed floor cover on the inside
09 Storage space in the Gwada
10 and 11 Main entrance door made of metal, toilet door made of laminated mdf
12 Toilet window with metal grill and figured glass, holy-water flasks on the sill
13 Leaking water supply and drainage line duct access

01	02	03	04
	05	06	07
08a	08b	08c	09
10	11	12	13

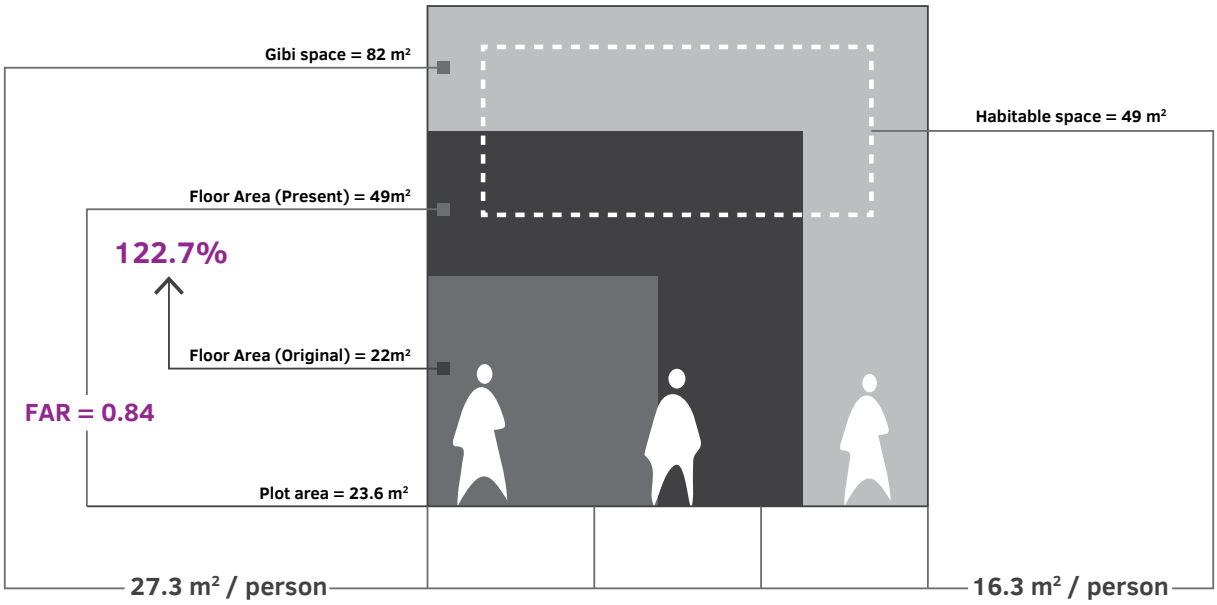
Photo trigger





Abeba is a resident of a one-bedroom studio in a condominium. She is looking out of her bedroom window toward the small gwaro where she maintains a small vegetable garden. This photo was taken because it represented a very important relationship Abeba has with the garden in her gwaro. Abeba was initially hesitant to discuss the transformation of her backyard into a gwaro vegetable garden, fearing potential legal issues since she had appropriated a space meant for pedestrian circulation. A larger vegetable farm she once started in the compound was already shut down by the homeowners association. Despite this, Abeba is grateful to live in the condominium. She shared that she had lived in many places before, often in extremely small, rented rooms. Her last residence was so cramped that it couldn't even fit a proper bed. When she received the gift, Abeba was both surprised and thrilled, continuously gazing at the photo of her gwaro. Abeba placed the photo in her sitting space over her television.

Diagrammatic synthesis





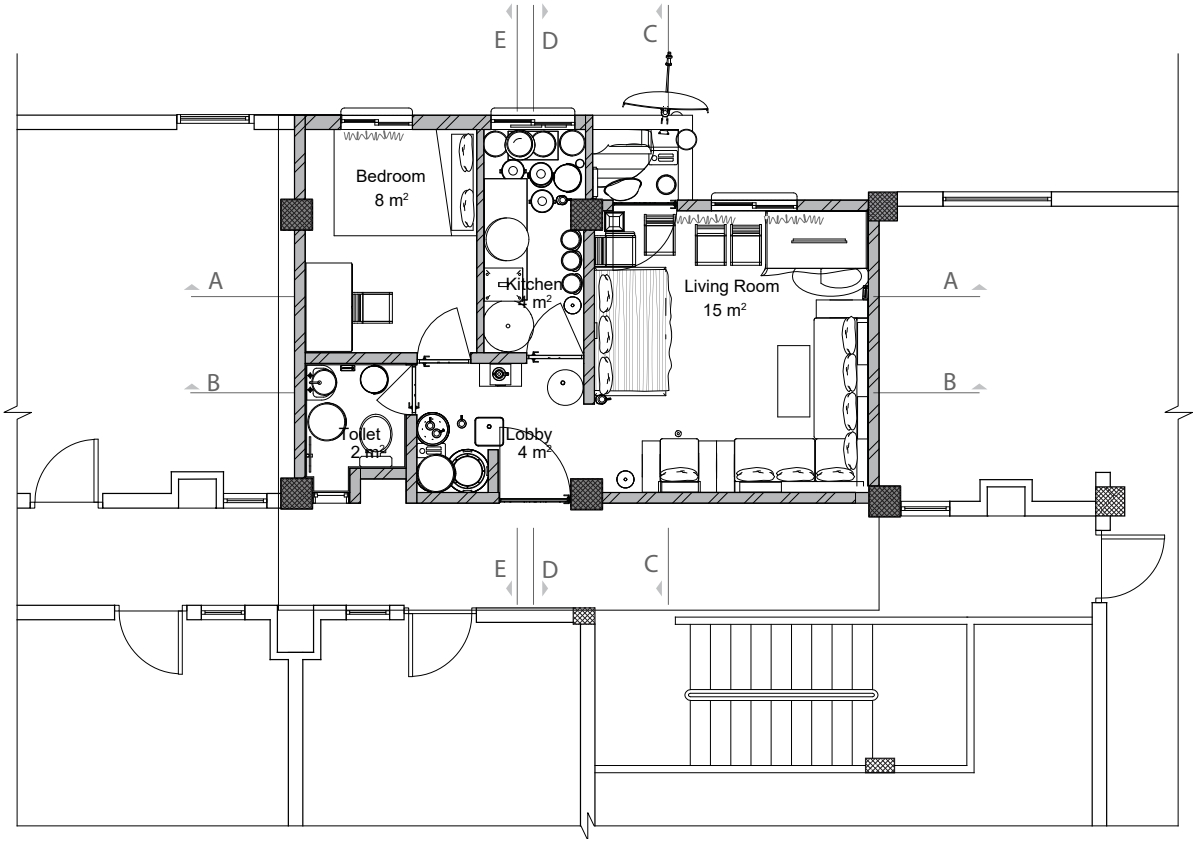
Misrak and Kelemua

We like the corridor space of this house. I think it is very good to have a space that is in between and connects the other rooms. It is nice that the toilet is located after the corridor, and it is not directly accessed from the living room. The corridor has consumed space, but I like it because it also gives options for making partitions for privacy. I do most of my cooking in the corridor.

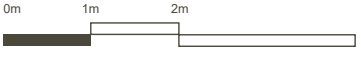
Reimagining the Gibi



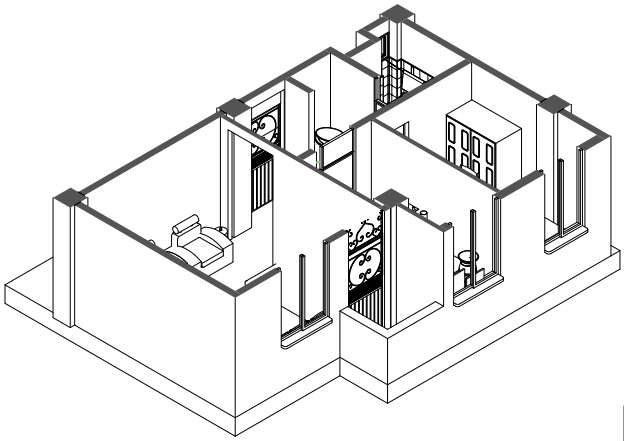
Plans



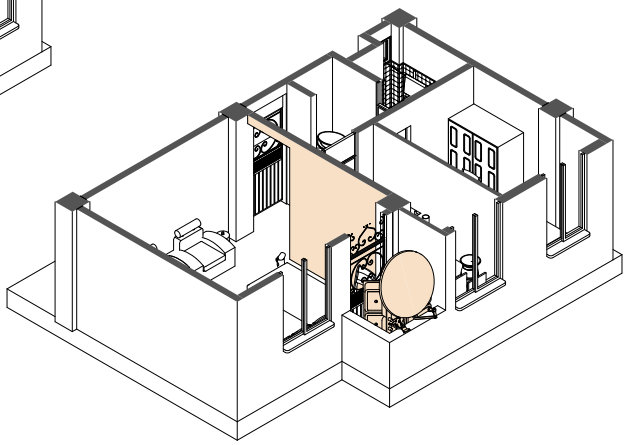
Floor plan



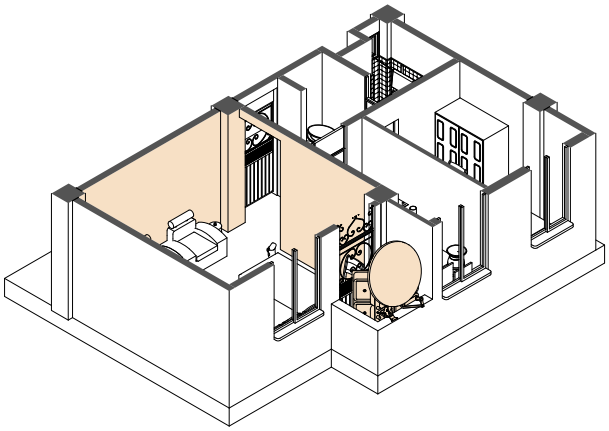
Dwelling transformation



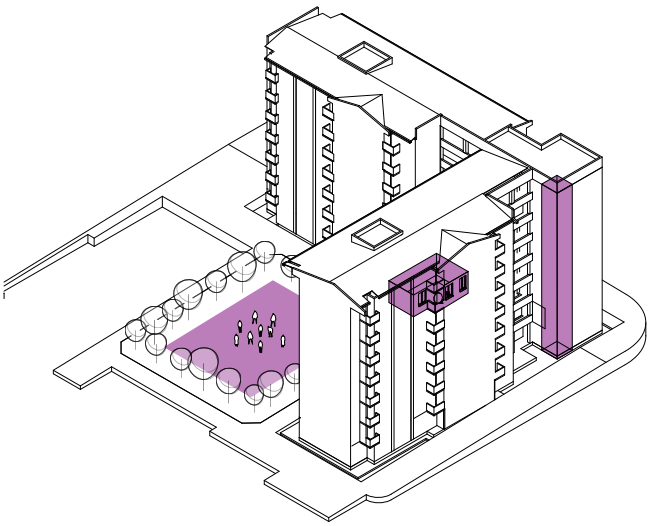
01. 2015_Original state of the house



02. ~2020_Agrostone partition demolished and changed to HCB, the wall was also pushed towards the kitchen to get more space in the living room.



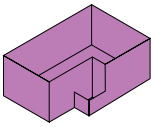
03. ~2021_Current setup of the house_ The walls were repainted to hide the damage done by water leaking from the ceiling. More of her brother's belongings were stored on the balcony, some of it is from his work, the rest is intended to be used to renovate the house in the future.



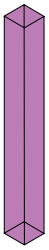
04. Desired future scenario

Legend

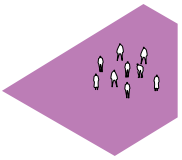
04. Desired future scenario:



Interior: More space in the Kitchen. Improved toilet layout with a shower tray. Balcony garden (her brother)



Block level: Working elevators. Over all better construction quality. A communal unit. A different animal slaughtering space A different garbage dumping location. An improved payment modality.

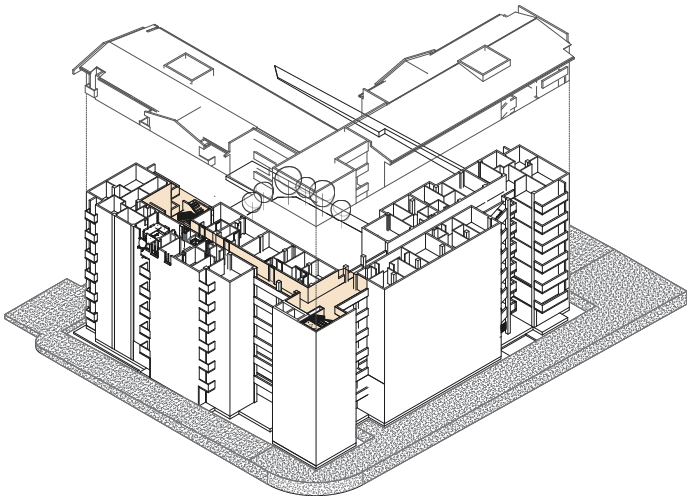


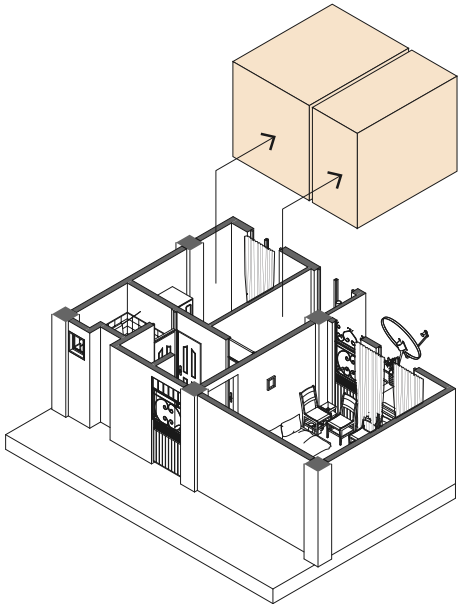
A dedicated space for a children's playground.

Gibi, Gwaro and Gwada

The Gibi

The gallery space of the condominium is regarded as the gibi for Misrak. This space can accommodate upto 50 people and it is used to host functions. The staircases also serve as extensions of the gibi. Misrak sees the courtyard at the ground floor as something that is could be considered as the secondary gibi.





The Gwada

Misrak likes to describe the gwada as the kitchen and the bedroom in a non-condominium context so that it is easier for her to define. In their apartment, Misrak considers the kitchen as the gwada. In “non-condominium circumstances” she would think of this space as a space that is secluded and private.

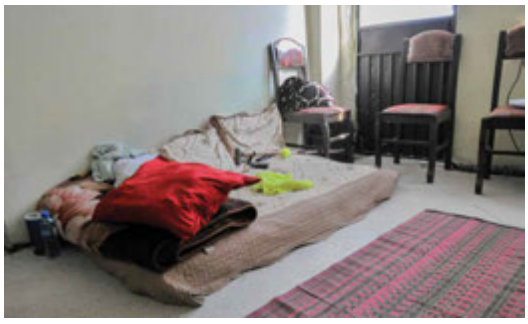
The Gwaro

In a non-condominium context, Misrak thinks of the gwaro as a space for drying clothes. In the case of their apartment, she considers that they do not have a gwaro. She mentions the berenda (balcony) as a storage space and not as a gwaro.

No Gwaro



01



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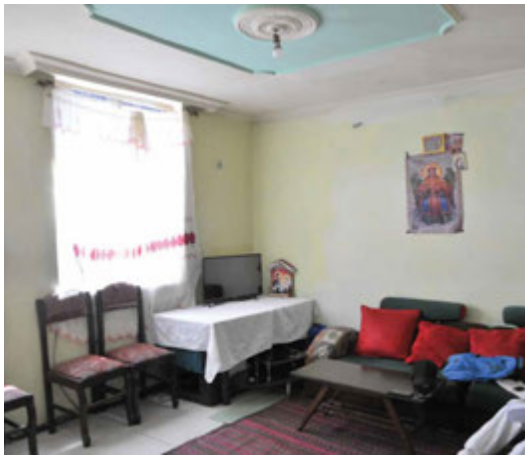
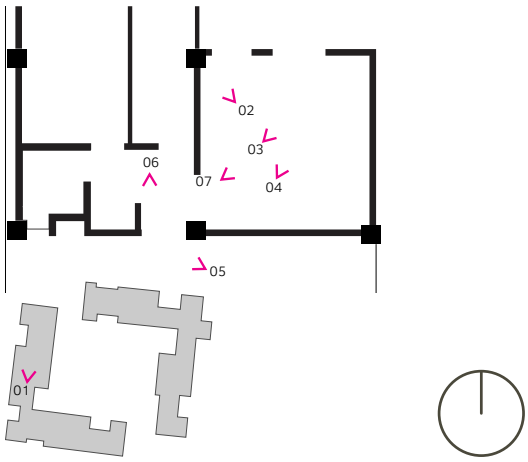


07

01 Front view of the corridor leading to house 02
02 View of the mattress that serves as a sitting space
03 The TV placed on a dining table under which 3 other tables are stored
04 The coffee table transforms into a dining space
05 The main door to house 02, seen from the outside
06 The main door to house 02, seen from the inside
07 View of the living room. The only window in the living room is in view, and faces the main street.





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13

08 View of the bedroom. Light coming in through the windows, coupled with the bright colors of the curtains further enhances the color of the space

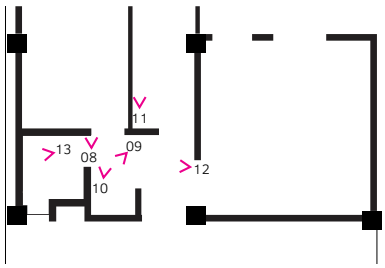
09 Water storage space in the corner of the lobby

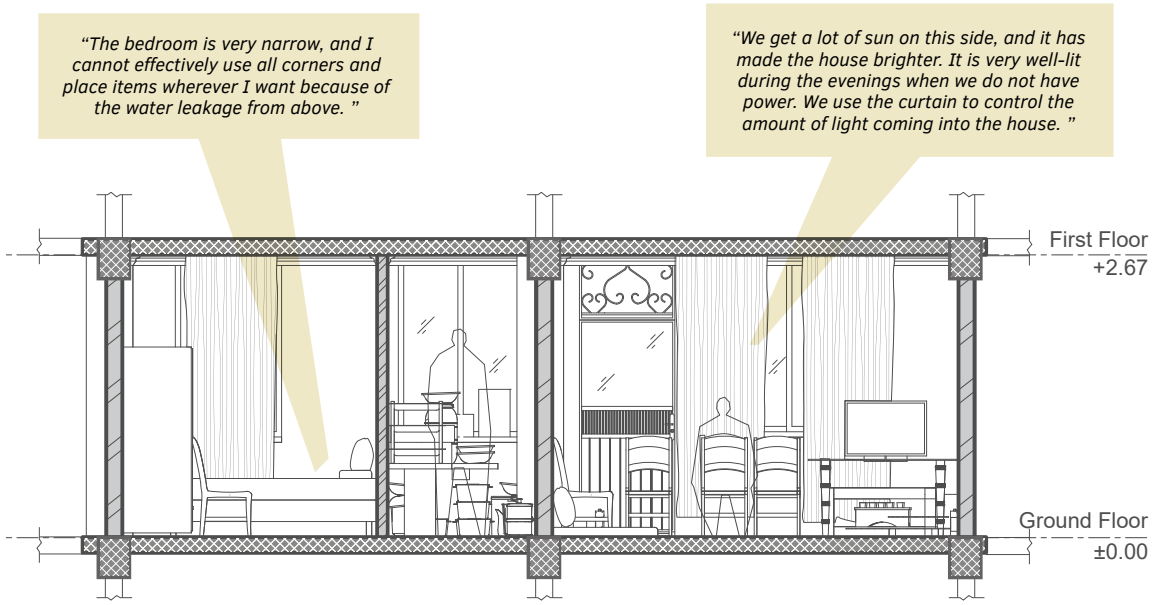
10 Cooking space between the doors to the kitchen and the bedroom

11 View of the kitchen, the window overlooks the main street

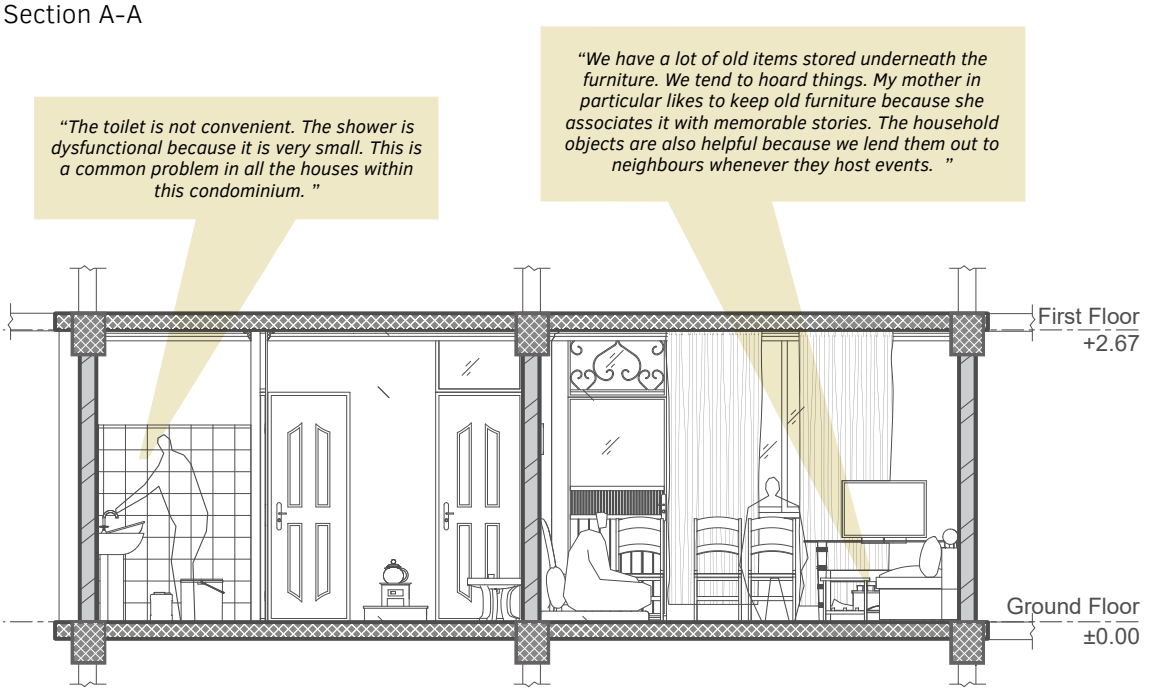
12 View of the lobby being used as a cooking space

13 View of the toilet, the toilet doesn't have a shower tray, the space is used to store water containers.





Section A-A

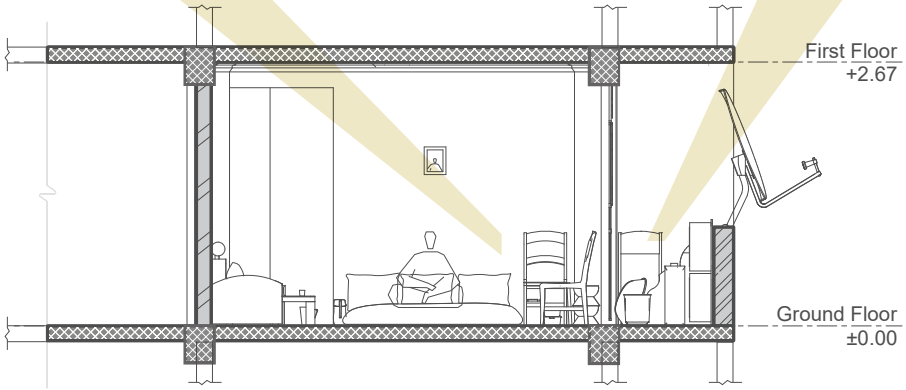


Section B-B



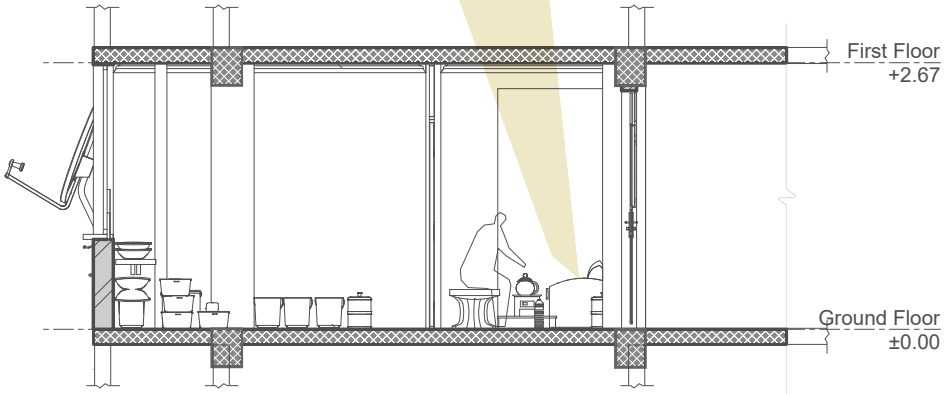
"My mother likes to make coffee here. She does not like getting up and down, so we place the items that she needs for the ceremony in this space. "

"We use the balcony as a stowaway storage. Our neighbours use their balconies very well, but we have this habit of storing items such as old stoves and other objects."



Section C-C

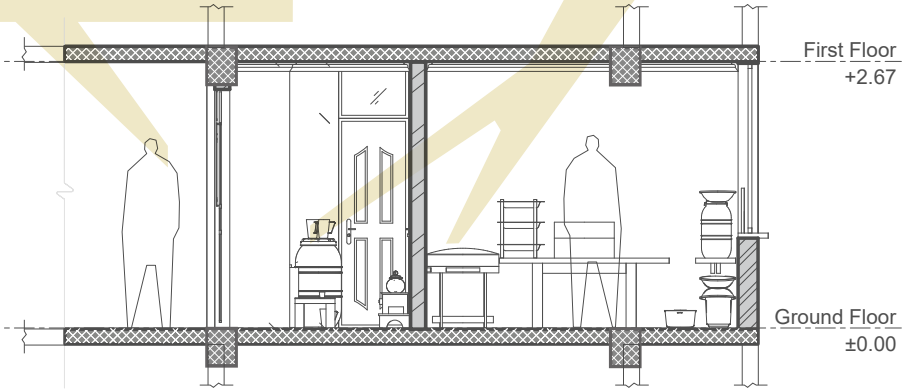
"The corridor (lobby) is a very important space for us. It works very well to separate the rooms. We also use the corridor for cooking because the kitchen is not adequate, and it has plumbing defects making it inconvenient for cooking."



Section D-D

"The shared gallery space and the elevator lobby are some of the greatest things we have in this condominium. We use it to host events and for communal gatherings. We use these spaces as our gibi. "

"We would not use the corridor as a cooking space if we had an adequate and functional kitchen. We use the kitchen mostly for storage."



Section E-E



Material encounters

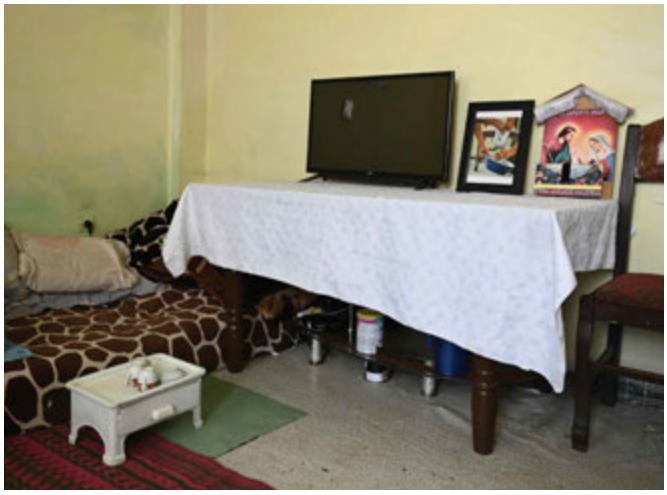


01 Plastered and quartz finished wall + plastered and painted finish
02 A light bulb hangs from a gypsum decorated ceiling in the living room
03 A light bulb hangs from a gypsum decorated ceiling in the bedroom
04 A light bulb hangs from a gypsum decorated ceiling in the lobby
05 Thin rug floor cover in the living room
06 Plastic sheet, movable fabric doormat and cement screed floor finish
07 Terrazzo tiles floor finish on the corridors
08 Plastic sheet floor cover in the bedroom has been cut in the outline of the opening door.
09 Water damage to the ceiling of the kitchen, caused by the leaking pipe
10 Laminated mdf doors to the toilet and the bedroom
11 and 12 Toilet window with metal frames and figured glass viewed from the inside and the outside respectively
13 Water supply and drainage line duct access

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">01</td><td>02</td><td>03</td><td>04</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">05</td><td>06</td></tr>
<tr><td>07</td><td colspan="2">08</td><td>09</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr>
</table>

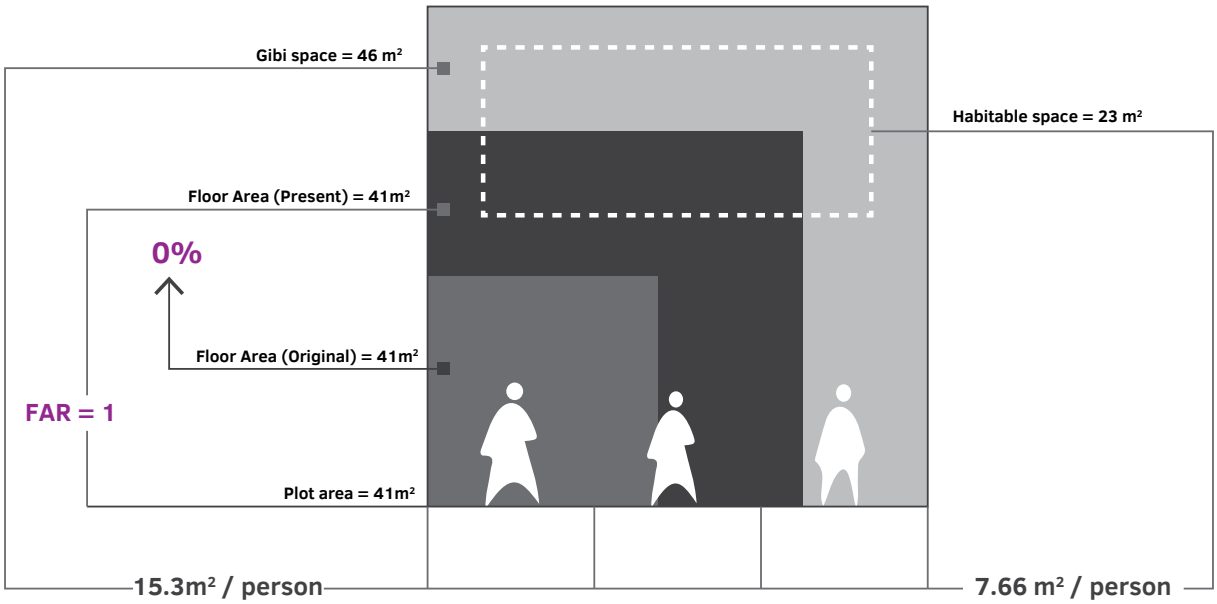
Photo trigger



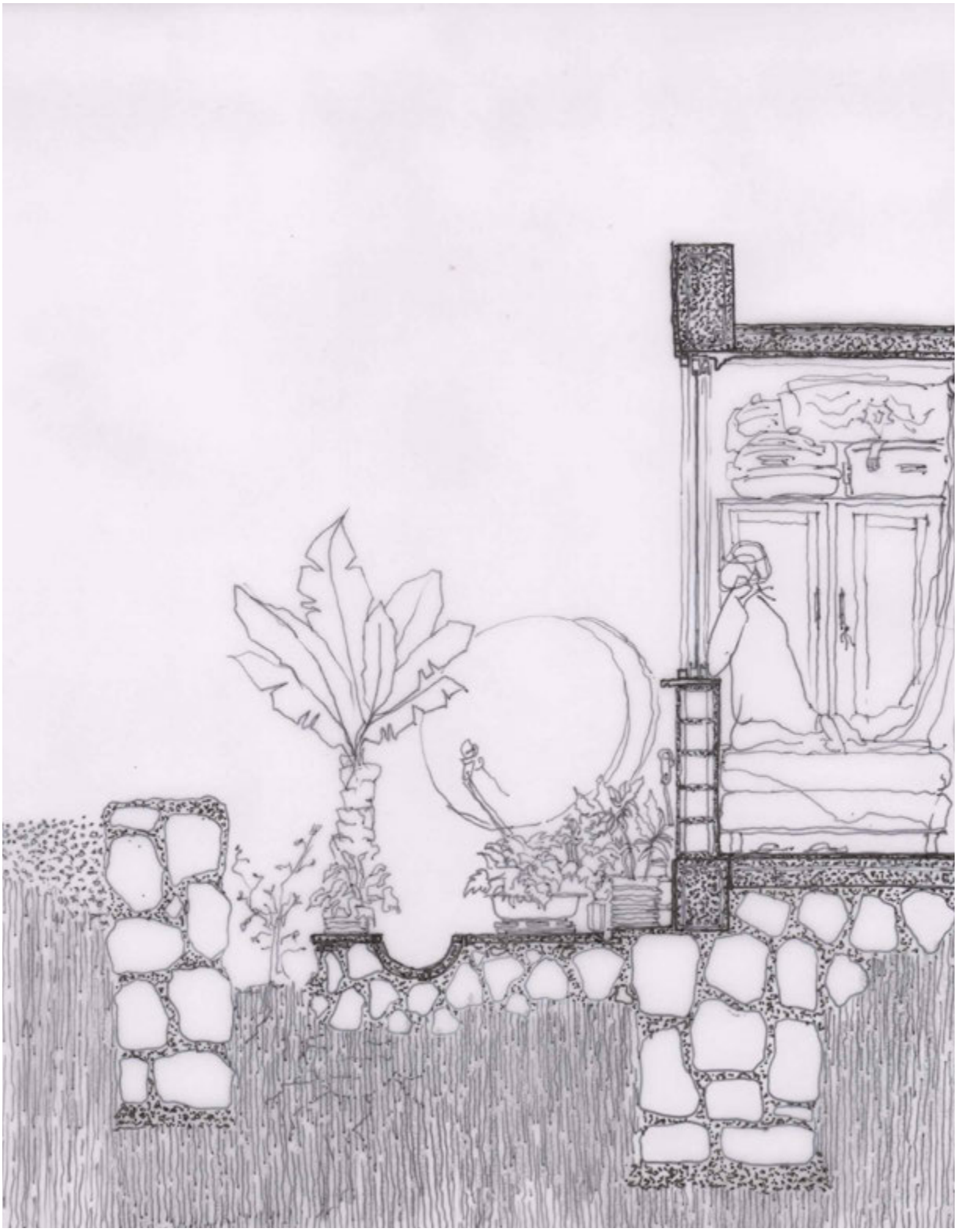


One of the main issues, Kelemua and Misrak, an elderly mother and daughter, faced in their previous slum-like living conditions was the lack of a private bathroom. They expressed their happiness now having one, though a current challenge in their new home is the unreliable water supply. On the day of the visit, they were fortunate to have water, and when they invited the research team for lunch, the natural response was to go to the bathroom to wash hands before eating. However, Misrak insisted on bringing water to wash hands herself, as depicted in the photo. She explained that is how they honour guests, a tradition they maintained from their former neighbourhood. The image illustrates how certain attachments to past ways of life persist, even when the circumstances that once necessitated them no longer exist. Misrak was grateful for the photo and placed it on the table alongside the television and religious icons.

Diagrammatic synthesis



Building techniques

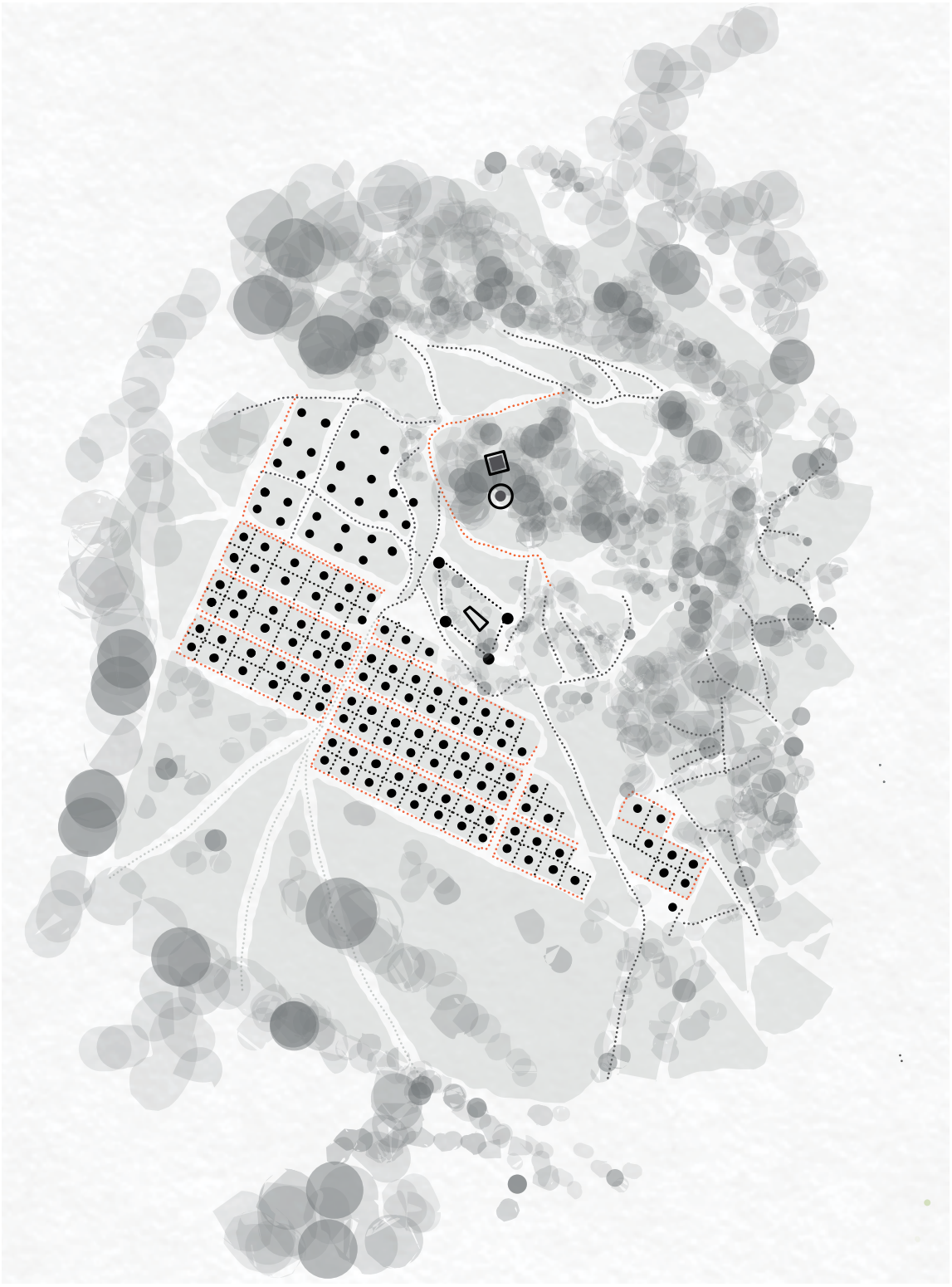


Addendum II

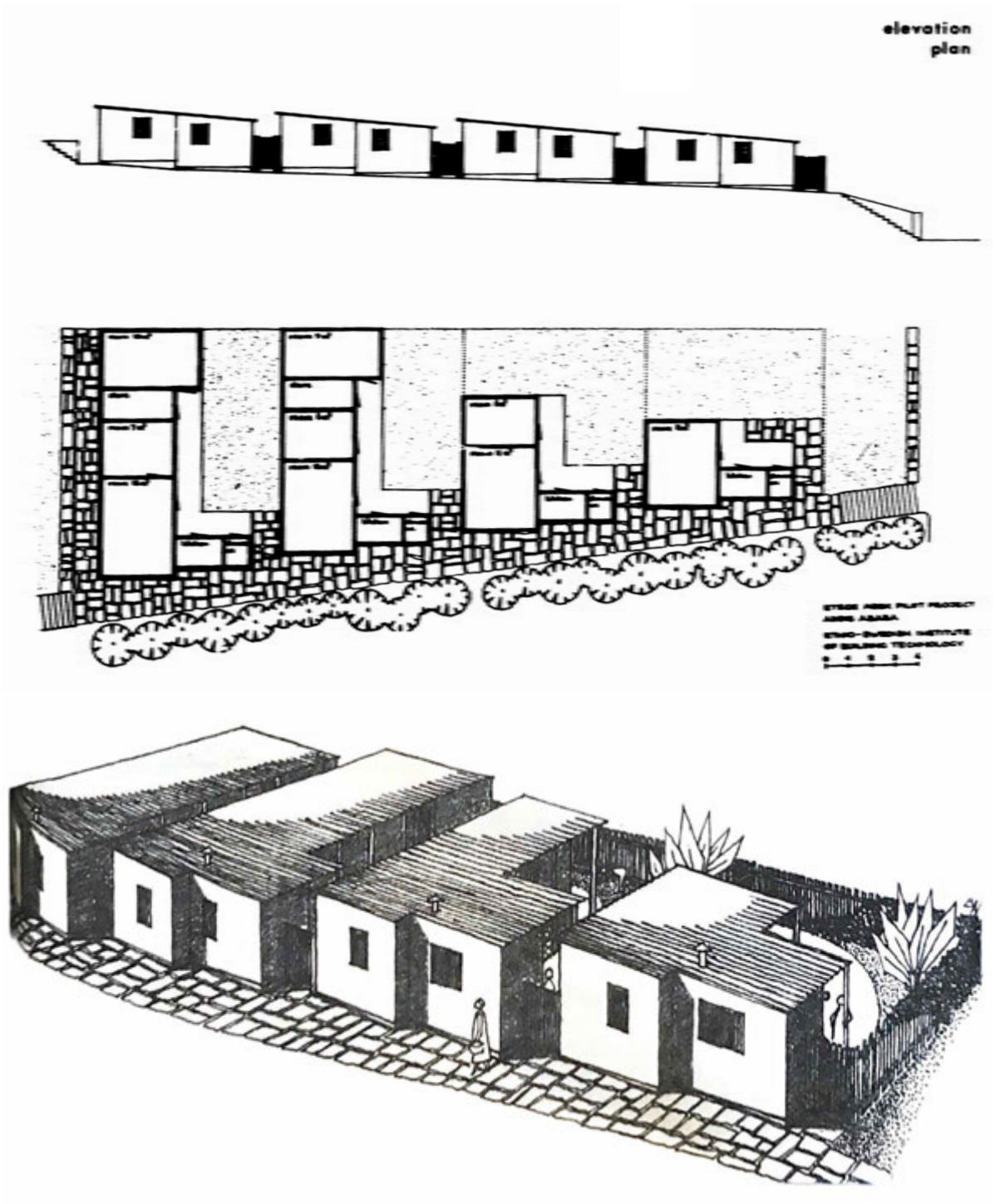


01. Satellite image of Italian-built tukuls during the period of Italian occupation.

Source: Ethiopian Mapping Agency. Ethiopian Arial Photographs archive

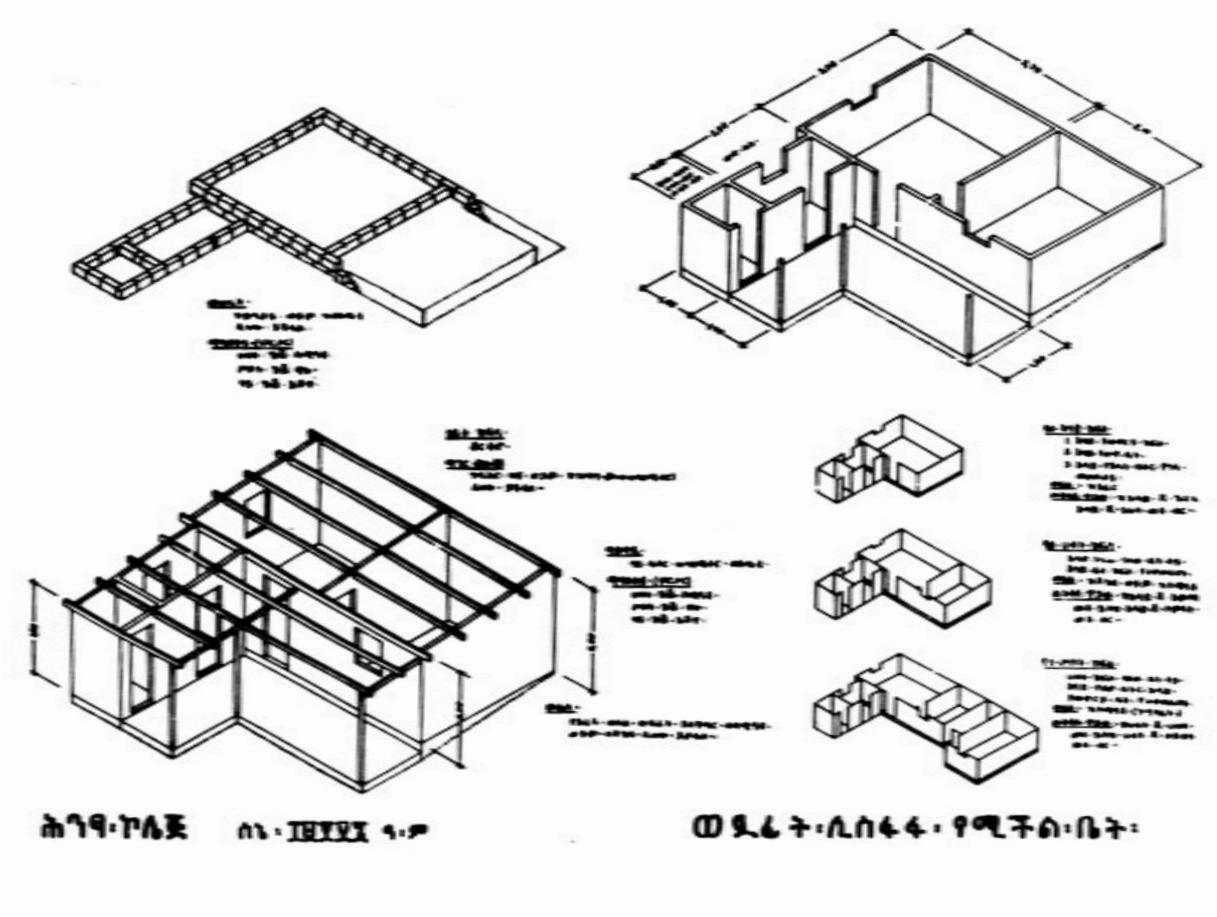


02. The settlement pattern of tukuls is traced from the previous satellite image.
Note the introduction of the cartesian grid system by the Italians superimposed on a more organic setting of pathways with non-grid logic visible in the previous satellite image.



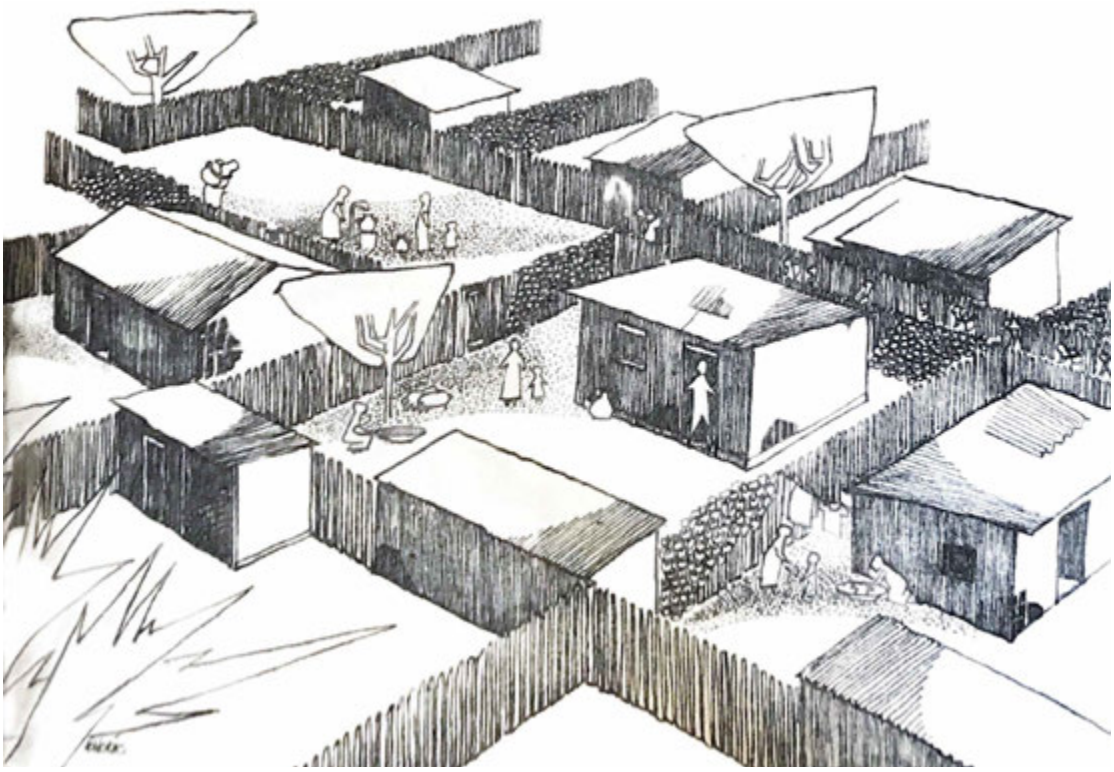
03 A. Etege-Mesk low-cost urban upgrading scheme by the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology in the Imperial Times. Etege-Mesk existed around fit-ber neighbourhood and is now demolished.

Source: "Basic Urbanization in Africa- A Discussion of Costs and Standards" (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 1972), 28, https://downloads.unido.org/ot/46/87/4687884/00001-10000_03382.pdf

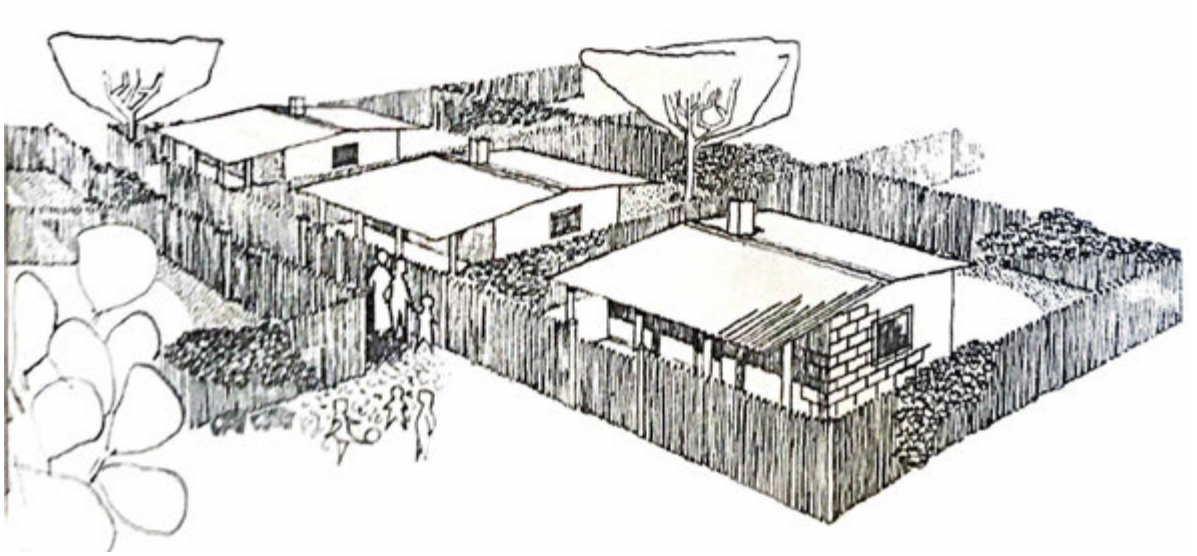


03 B. Etege-Mesk low-cost urban upgrading scheme by the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology in the Imperial Times. The diagram shows construction and extension possibilities.

Source: "Basic Urbanization in Africa- A Discussion of Costs and Standards" (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 1972), 28, https://downloads.unido.org/ot/46/87/4687884/00001-10000_03382.pdf

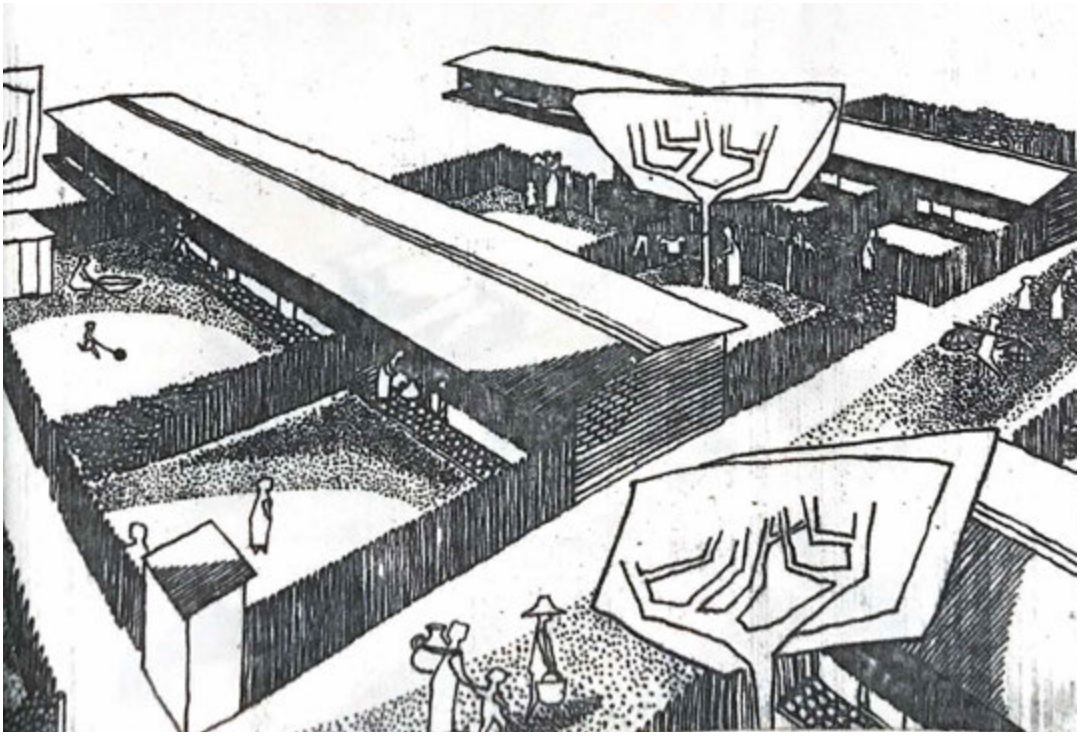


04 A. Studies for housing settlements by the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Technology in the 1950s.
Note the two separate blocks with the main house and the 'out house' as it was common in those days.

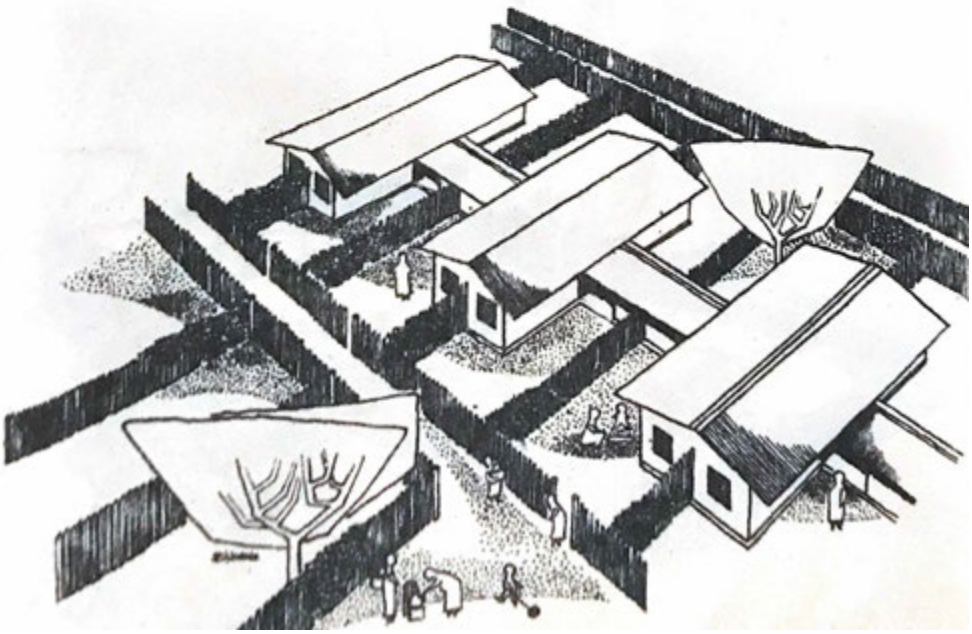


04 B. Studies for housing settlements by the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Technology in the 1950s.
Note the strict marking of territory and gwaro space that is provided at the back.

04 A and B Source: A Housing Pilot Project in Addis Ababa. Report prepared by Municipality of Addis Ababa, Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology in Consultation with Housing Section of the ECA Building College Library, EiABC

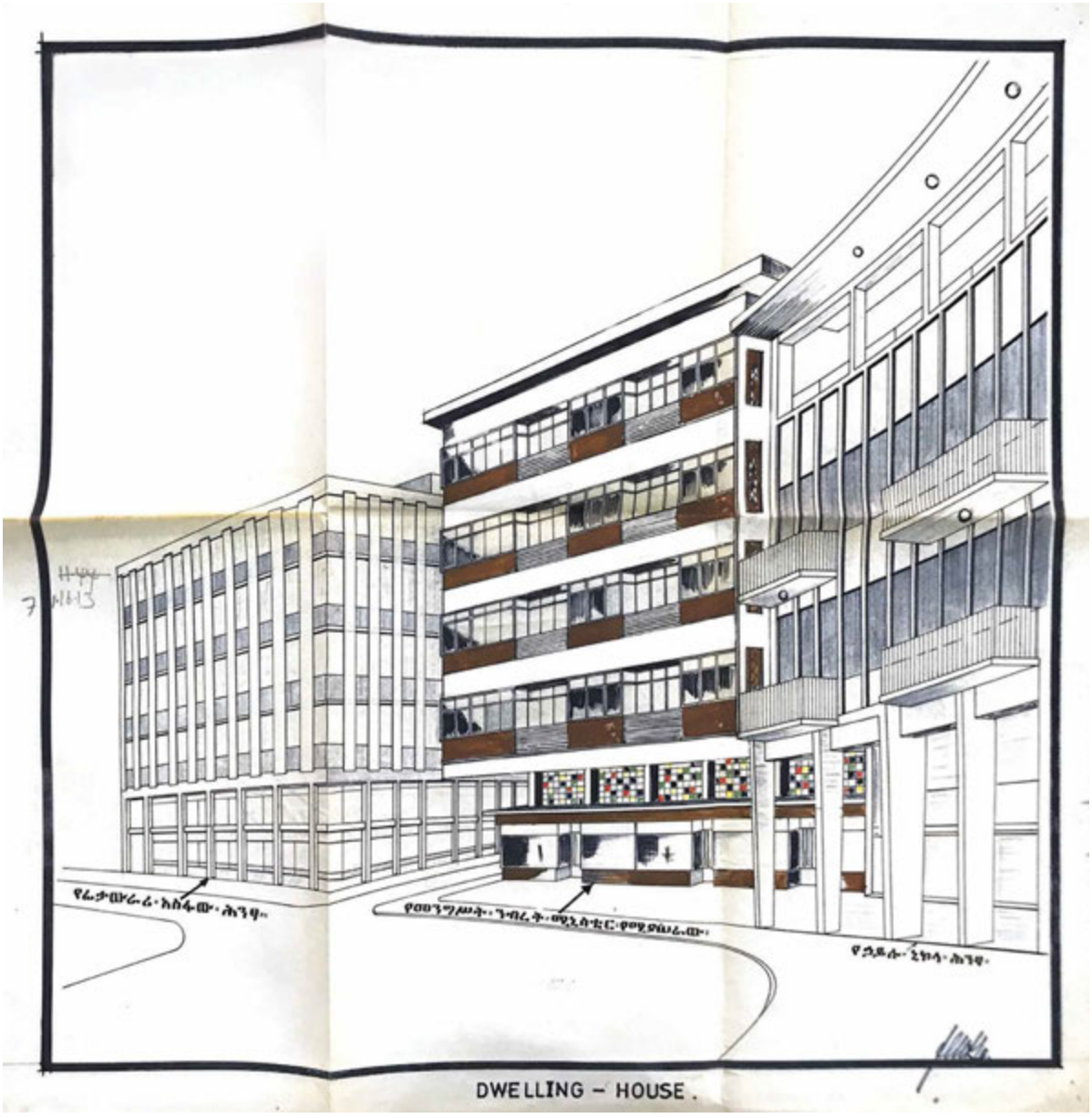


05 A. Studies for housing settlements by the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Technology in the 1950s.
A settlement type that proposes attached housing with a gibi in the front along with an 'out house or shop' on the periphery.



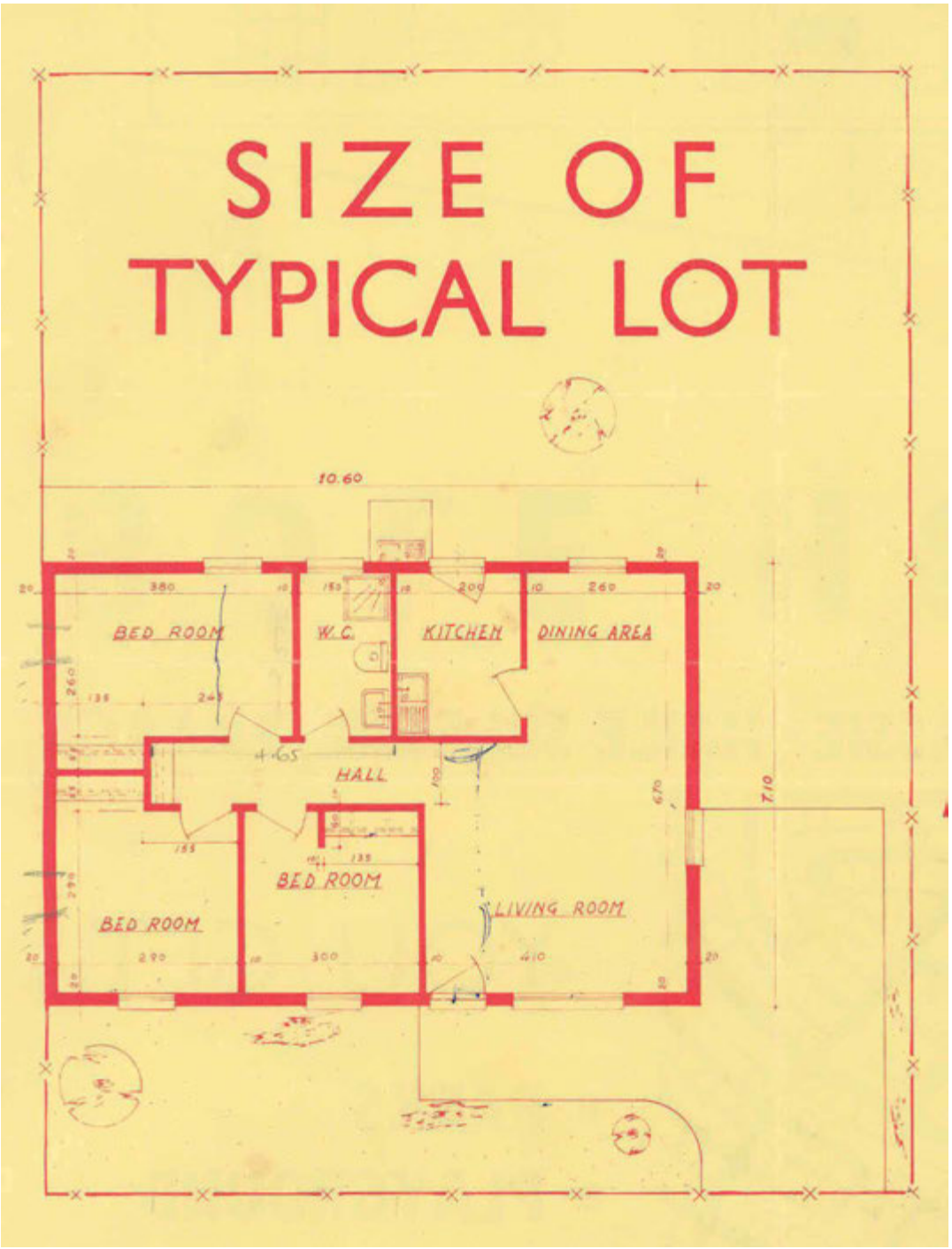
05 B. Studies for housing settlements by the Ethio-Swedish Institute of Technology in the 1950s.
A settlement type that proposes attached housing with an L-shaped built space facing an open space.

05 A and B Source: A Housing Pilot Project in Addis Ababa. Report prepared by Municipality of Addis Ababa, Ethio-Swedish Institute of Building Technology in Consultation with Housing Section of the ECA Building College Library, EiABC



06. Apartment buildings in the piassa area that were built by the government and the nobility during the Imperial times. These apartments incorporate housing in the upper stories and shops on the lower floors.

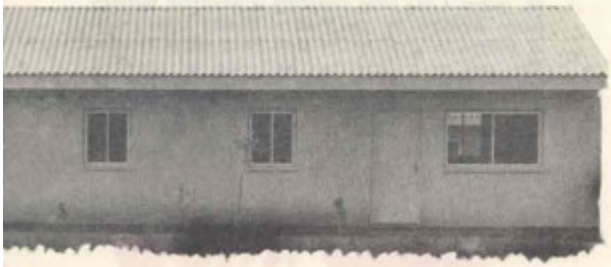
Source: Ethiopian National Archives and Library.



07. Layout of the Bole Homes Housing Scheme.
Bole Homes was a mortgage housing initiative for the middle income.

Source: HaileSelassie Derso private collection.

HAILE SELASSIE VILLAGE









A limited number of single houses are also available at slightly higher prices. Each house is constructed from the finest building materials best suited for indigenous soil conditions. For example, the foundation consists of 11 concrete piles with a reinforced slab on top. A layer of empty space separates the slab from the ground thus eliminating the possibility of cracks through soil movement. Each house is designed for life use and carries a normal guarantee of one year against technical and structural defects. Other features include a weather proof and noise proof asbestos roof.

Each house will have:
- 3 bedrooms
- living-dining area
- kitchen
- bathroom (with space for a tub if desired)
- hallway
- open area for other construction and facilities

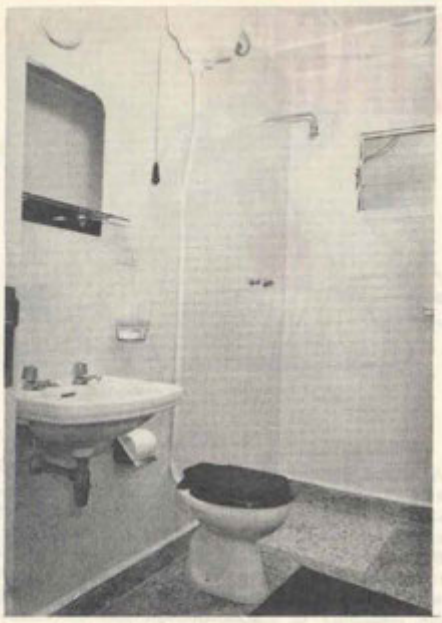
To assure privacy, each house faces the street and its rear the rear of the neighbouring house. A fence is also available as an option. Additional options available include a T.V. antenna access tube, servants call bell, telephone tube box and a double two-way switch in the bedroom. The house lot has enough space to accommodate an injera kitchen, servants quarters, and store facilities. The homeowner can build these according to his own tastes but the plans must be approved by ISHOPA and U.S.A.I.D. Approved plans will be furnished free of charge to each homebuyer. An electrical injera stove is also available as an option. It is guaranteed to produce quality injera and will eliminate smoke pollution. Remember, all options must be paid for in cash.

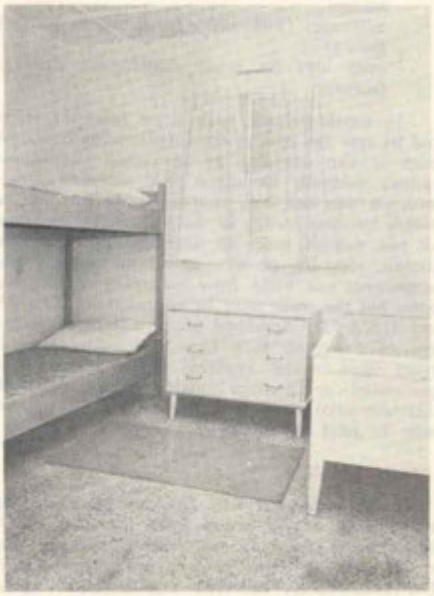
MAINTENANCE

Each homebuyer will be responsible for the maintenance of his house from the date of its possession. Light bulb replacement, painting and repairs will be the homebuyer's responsibility. The municipality, however, will maintain roads, public parks and other common areas.

08. Bole Homes was initiated by the Continental Homes Inc. Developers and named "Prince Sahleselassie: Haileselassie Village" after the king. The marketing brochures promise a 'modern' suburban middle-income lifestyle recognizing the injera mitad (Injera Oven) as part of the kitchen.

Source: Ethiopian National Archives and Library.





How much does a Bole home cost?

A Bole home will cost approximately Eth. $ 19,000 in CASH depending on the size of the lot you choose. For example:

A 242 sq. meter house will cost 19,003.00 while
A 627 sq. meter " " " 20,657.00

The land utilized in the project costs, $2.50 per sq. meter. Long term financing is available through funds supplied by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston in arrangement with Continental Homes. The cost of transferring the house to you and other Municipality charges are not included in this price. A complete list of such charges can be obtained from ISHOPA. If you buy a house on a plot of 300 sq. meters you will repay your debt as follows:

from ONLY
$ 19.003,00

Price of house and land	19,254,84
Less 10% downpayment	1,925.40
Balance payable debt	17,329.08

According to the loan plan you will pay a minimum of 10% of the sales price as downpayment and the rest in monthly installments of approximately 190.00 each extending over a maximum period of 20 years. Interest charged will be 9 1/8% per annum. The combined monthly payment includes

Principal installment and interest	Eth.153.83
Life insurance	10.00
Administrator's fee	8.30
Hazard insurance (fire)	5.00
Reserved fund (20 months)	8.33
Homeowners' Association	2.00
Real estate tax	2.50
Combined monthly payment (TOTAL)	189.96

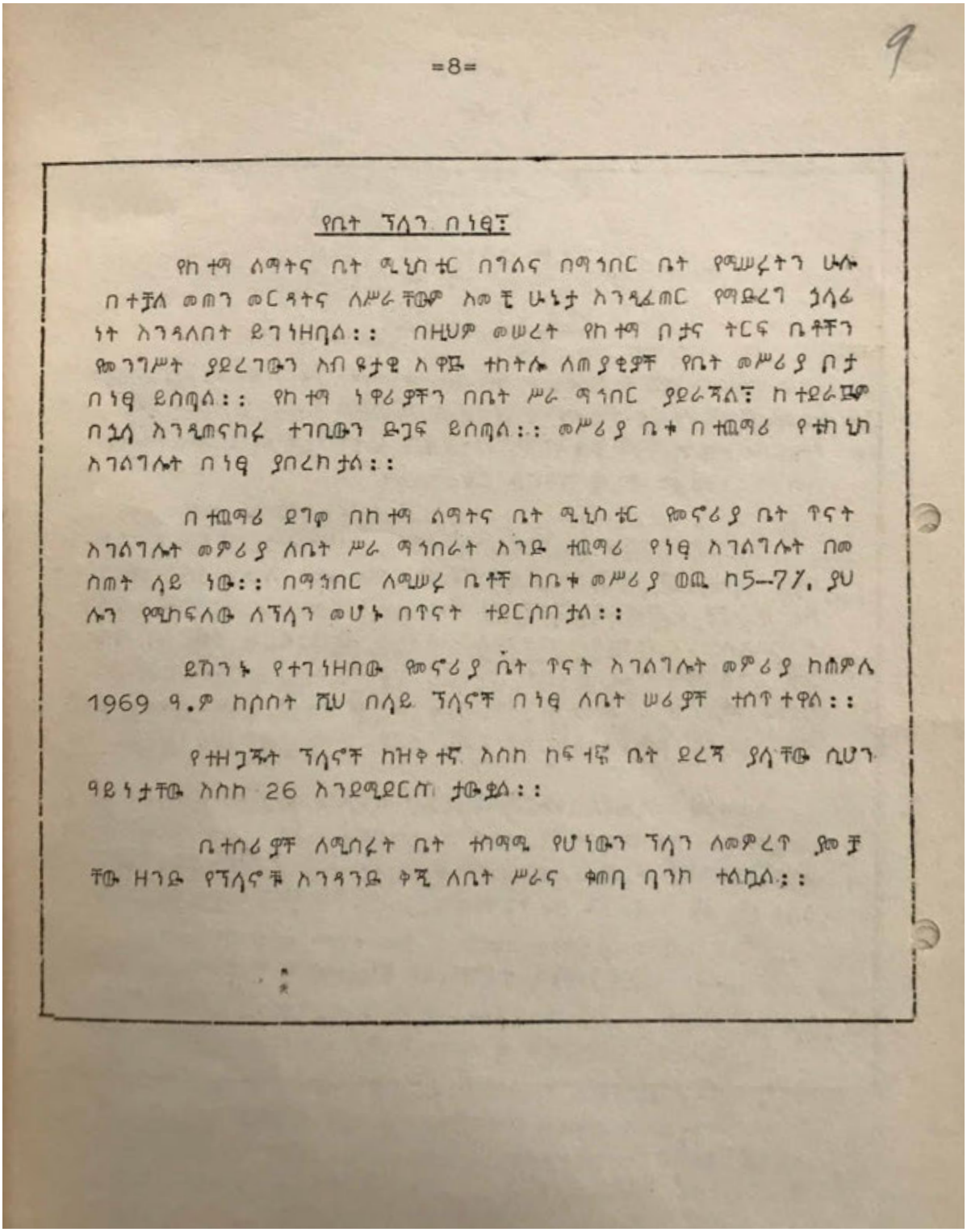
Remember it is to your advantage to decrease the debt as soon as possible to save interest and you can do so after January 1, 1974. The rate of interest charged is based on international financing of similar housing projects.

Will a Bole home be insured?

Each Bole home will be covered by fire, lightening, earthquake, etc. insurance. The cost of this insurance is included in the combined monthly payment. In addition, each homebuyer will be covered by life insurance and in the event of the homebuyer's death, all payments will cease automatically and the house deed will be transferred to the survivors, without additional payments.

09. Marketing brochure of Bole Homes explaining the financial scheme of housing mortgage.

Source: Ethiopian National Archives and Library.



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የቤት ኘላን በነፃ፤

የከተማ ልማትና ቤት ሚኒስቴር በግልና በማኅበር ቤት የሚሠሩትን ሁሉ በተቻለ መጠን መርዳትና ለሥራቸውም አመቺ ሁኔታ እንዲፈጠር የማድረግ ኃላፊነት እንዳለበት ይገነዘባል:: በዚህም መሠረት የከተማ ቦታና ትርፍ ቤቶቸን የመንግሥት ያደረገውን አብዩታዊ አዋጅ ተከትሎ ለጠያቂዎች የቤት መሥሪያ ቦታ በነፃ ይሰጣል:: የከተማ ነዋሪዎችን በቤት ሥራ ማኅበር ያደራጃለ፤ ከተደራጁም በኋላ እንዲጠናከሩ ተገቢውን ድጋፍ ይሰጣል:: መሥሪያ ቤቱ በተጨማሪ የቴክኒክ አገልግሎት በነፃ ያበረክታል::

በተጨማሪ ደግሞ በከተማ ልማትና ቤት ሚኒስቴር የመኖሪያ ቤት ዋናት አገልግሎት መምሪያ ለቤት ሥራ ማኅበራት አንድ ተጨማሪ የነፃ አገልግሎት በመስጠት ላይ ነው:: በማኅበር ለሚሠሩ ቤቶች ከቤቱ መሥሪያ ወጪ ከ5-7%, ያህሉን የሚከፍለው ለኘላን መሆኑ በጥናት ተደርሶበታል::

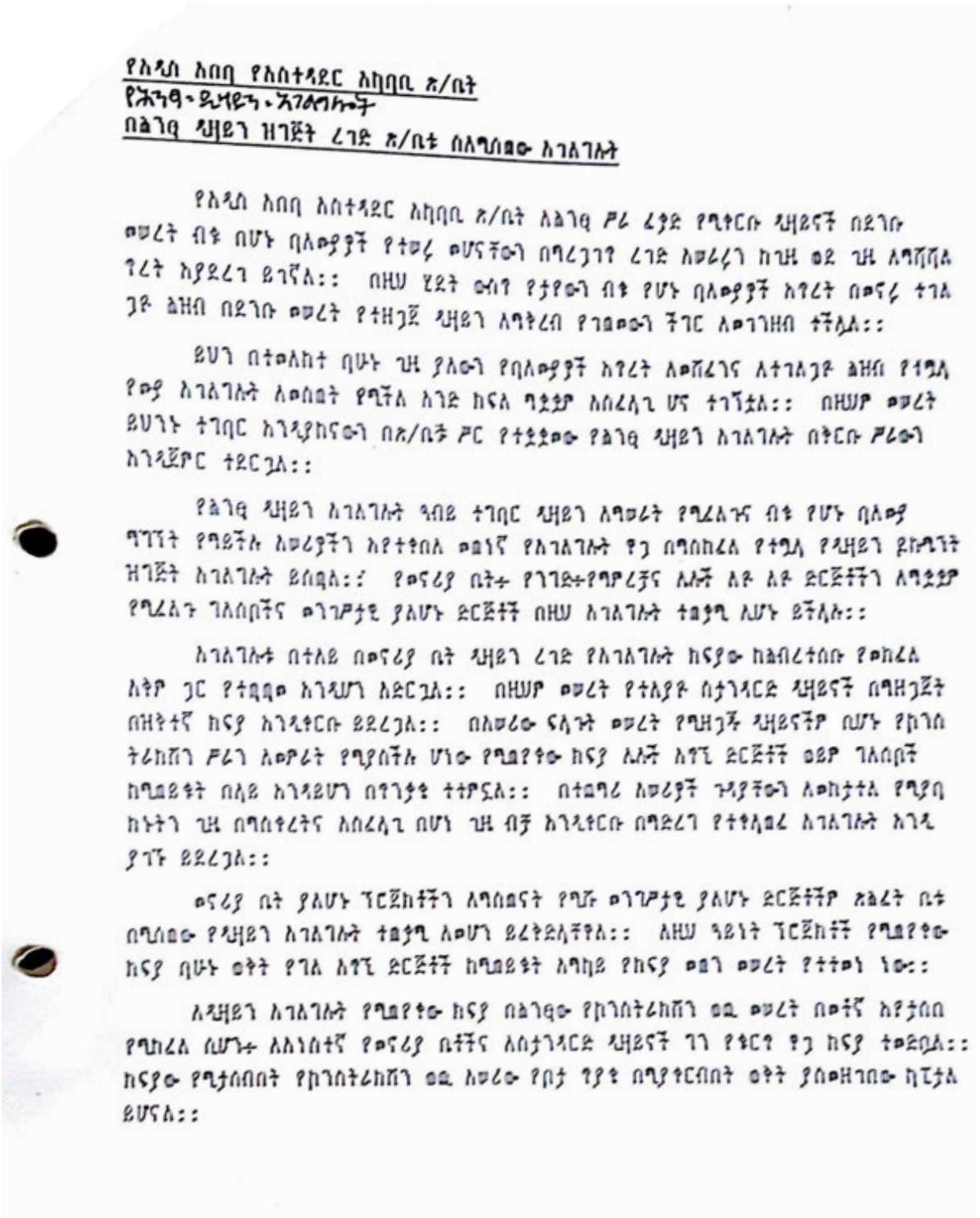
ይኸንኑ የተገነዘበው የመኖሪያ ቤት ዋናት አገልግሎት መምሪያ ከሰምሌ 1969 ዓ.ም ከሶስት ሺህ በላይ ኘላኖች በነፃ ለቤት ሠሪዎች ተሰጥተዋል::

የተዘጋጁት ኘላኖች ከዝቅተኛ እስከ ከፍተኛ ቤት ደረጃ ያላቸው ሲሆን ዓይነታቸው እስከ 26 እንደሚደርስ ታውቋል::

ቤተሰቦቻቸው ለሚሰሩት ቤት ተስማሚ የሆነውን ኘላን ለመምረጥ ያመቻቸው ዘንድ የኘላኖቹ አንዳንድ ቅጂ ለቤተ ሥራና ቁጠባ ባንክ ተልኳል::

10. An internal document of the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing describing the availability of “free housing designs” for homebuilders organized in housing cooperatives.

Source: Ethiopian National Archives and Library.



የአዲስ አበባ የአስተዳደር አስተባቢ ጽ/ቤት
የሕንፃ-ዲዛይን-አገልግሎት
በቋንቋ ሪዘይን ዘገጅት ረገድ ጽ/ቤቱ ሰለሚሰጠው አገለገሎት

የአዲስ አበባ አስተዳደር አስተባቢ ጽ/ቤት ለቋንቄ ሾራ ረቃድ የሚተርቡ ሪዘይናች በደንቡ መሠረት ብቱ በሆኑ ባለቦያያች የተሠረ ቦሆናቸውን በግረጋገጥ ረገድ አመራረገ ከጊዜ ወደ ጊዜ ለማሻሻል ጉረት አያደረገ ይገኛል:: በዘሠ ሂደት ውሰጥ የታየውን ብቱ የሆኑ ባለቦያያች አየረት በመናረ ተገለ ጋዯ ቋዘብ በደንቡ መሠረት የተዘገጀ ሪዘይን ለማትረብ የገጠመውን ችገር ለመገገዘብ ተችሏል::

ይህን በተመለከተ ባሁኑ ጊዜ ያለውን የባለቦያያች አየረት ለመሸረገና ለተገለጋዩ ቋዘብ የተሟለ የቦያ አገለገሎት ለመሰጠት የሚችል አገድ ከናለ ግቷያዎ አሰረሊጊ ሆና ተገኘቷል:: በዘሠዎ መሠረት ይህንኑ ተገባር አገሊያከናውን በጽ/ቤቱ ሾር የተቷቷመው የቋንቄ ሪዘይን አገለገሎት በቅርቡ ሾራውን አገሊጀምር ተደርጋል::

የቋንቄ ሪዘይን አገለገሎት ጓብይ ተገባር ሪዘይን ለማመረት የሚለጉና ብቱ የሆኑ ባለቦያ ግገኘት የግይችሉ አመሪያችገ አየተቱበለ መጠነኛ የአገለገሎት የጋ በግሰከረለ የተሟለ የሪዘይገ ይኮሚንት ዘገጅት አገለገሎት ይሰጧል:: የመናሪያ ቤትሩ የገገጀሩየግሾሪቻና ሌሎች ለዩ ለዩ ድርጅቶችገ ለግቷያዎ የሚረለጉ ገለሰቦችና መገገሾታዊ ያለሆኑ ድርጅቶች በዘሠ አገለገሎት ተጠቃሚ ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ::

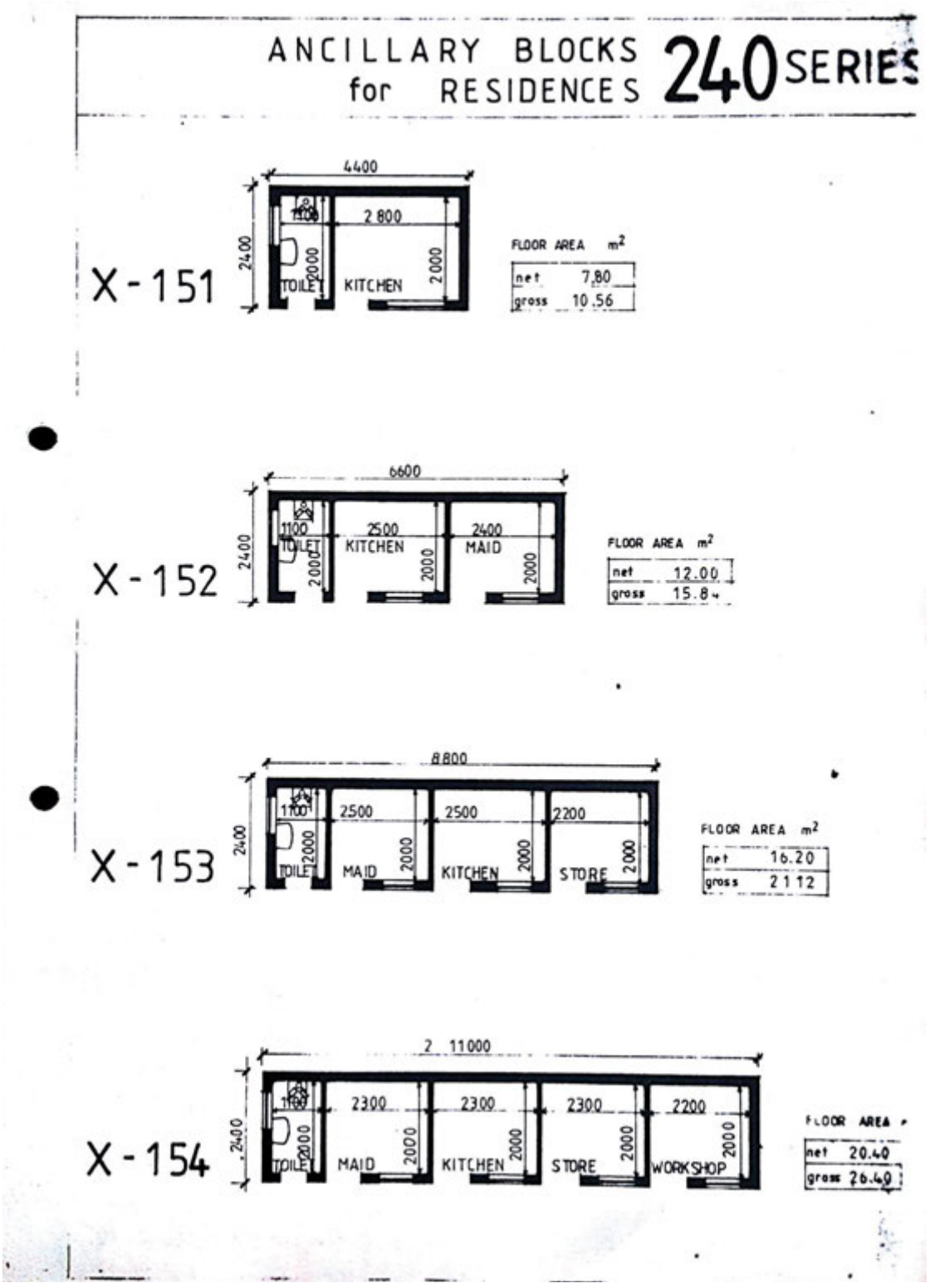
አገለገሎቱ በተለይ በመናሪያ ቤት ሪዘይን ረገድ የአገለገሎት ከናያው ከቋብረተሰቡ የመከረለ ለቱዎ ጋር የተጧጧመ አገዛሠገ አድርጋል:: በዘሠዎ መሠረት የተለያዩ ሰታገጻርድ ሪዘይናች በግዘገጀት በዘትተኛ ከናያ አገሊተርቡ ይደረጋል:: በለመሪው ናሊጉት መሠረት የሚገኙ ሪዘይናችዎ ሰሆኑ የኩነሰ ትሪከሸገ ሾራገ ለመሾራት የሚያሰችሉ ሆነው የሚደየቱው ከናያ ሌሎች አየኚ ድርጅተች ወይዎ ገለሰቦች ከሚመይቱት በለይ አገጻይሆገ በየገቷቱ ተተዎኗል:: በተጨማሪ ለመሪያች ጉጻያቸውገ ለመከታተል የሚያባ ከኑትገ ጊዜ በግሰቱረትና አሰረሊጊ በሆነ ጊዜ ብቻ አገሊተርቡ በግድረገ የተቷሊመረ አገለገሎት አገጊ ያገኙ ይደረጋል::

መናሪያ ቤት ያለሆኑ ገርጀከተችገ ለግሰጠናት የሚሹ መገገሾታዊ ያለሆኑ ድርጅተችዎ ጽቋረት ቤቱ በሚሰጠው የሪዘይገ አገለገሎት ተጠቃሚ ለመሆገ ይረቱድሊቸየል:: ለዘሠ ጓይነት ገርጀከተች የሚመየቱው ከናያ ባሁኑ ወቅት የገለ አየኚ ድርጅቶች ከሚመይቱት አግከይ የከናያ መጠገ መሠረት የተተመነ ነው::

ለሪዘይገ አገለገሎት የሚመየቱው ከናያ በቋንቄው የከገሰትሪከሸገ ወጪ መሠረት በመተኛ አየታሰበ የሚከረለ ሲሆኑ ለእነሰቱኛ የመናሪያ ቤቶችና ለሰታገጻርድ ሪዘይናች ገገ የቱርዋ ዋጋ ከናያ ተመድቧል:: ከናያው የሚታሰብበት የከገሰትሪከሸገ ወጪ አመሪው የቦታ ዓያቱ በሚያቱርብበት ወቅት ያሰመዘገበው ካፒታል ይሆናል::

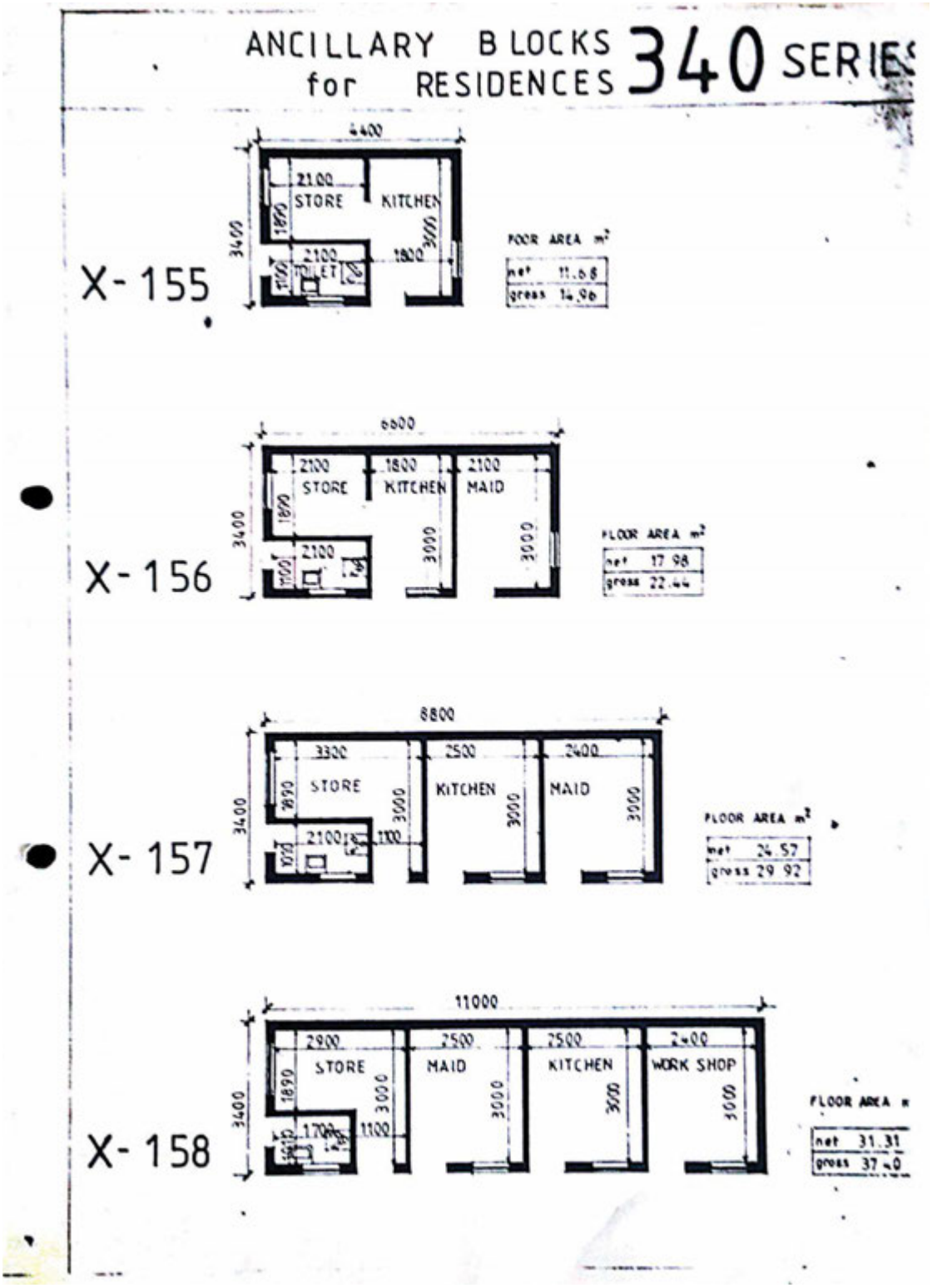
11 A. A document describing the mandate of a unit called “Building Design Services” in the Addis Ababa City Administration responsible for rendering housing design services for customers with nominal fees.

Source: Wouhib Kebede private archive.



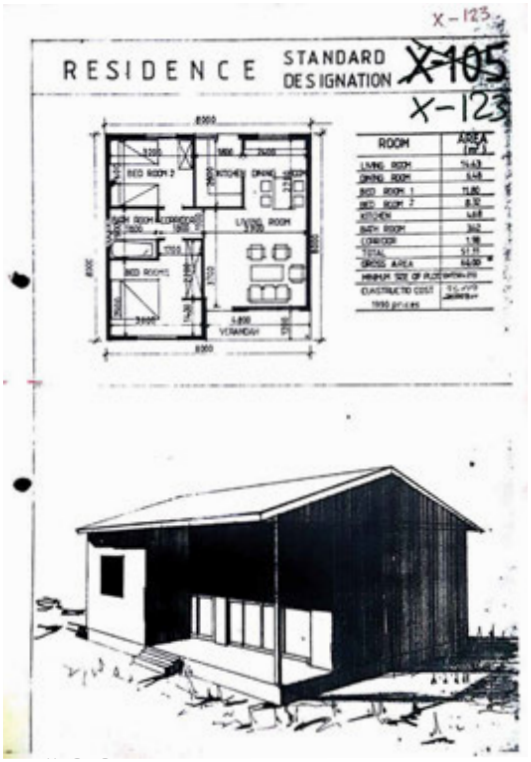
11 B. Various types of residential designs including service quarters prepared by the "Building Design Services" unit.

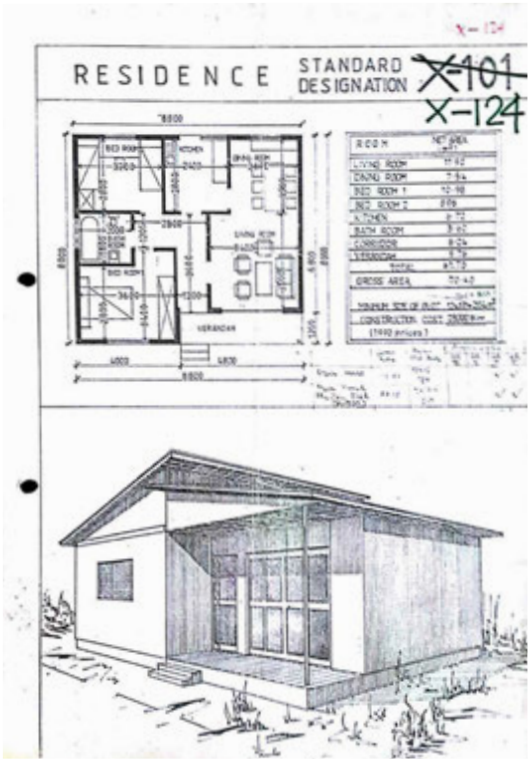
Source: Wouhib Kebede private archive.

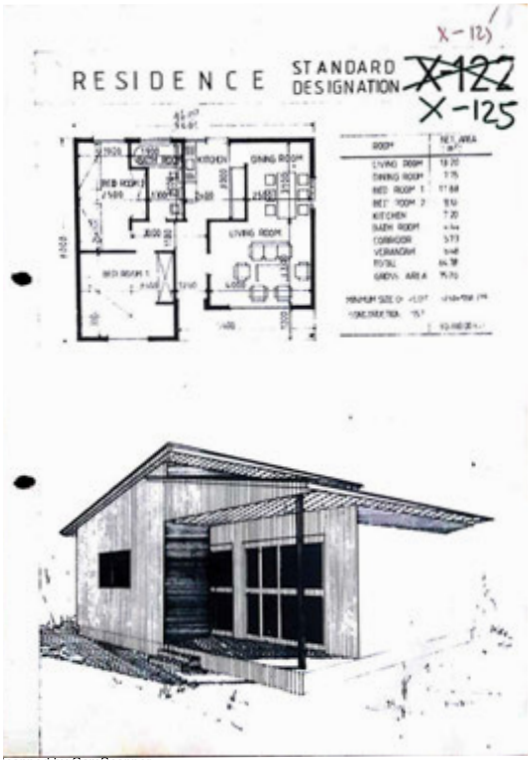


11 C. Various types of residential designs including service quarters prepared by the "Building Design Services" unit.

Source: Wouhib Kebede private archive.

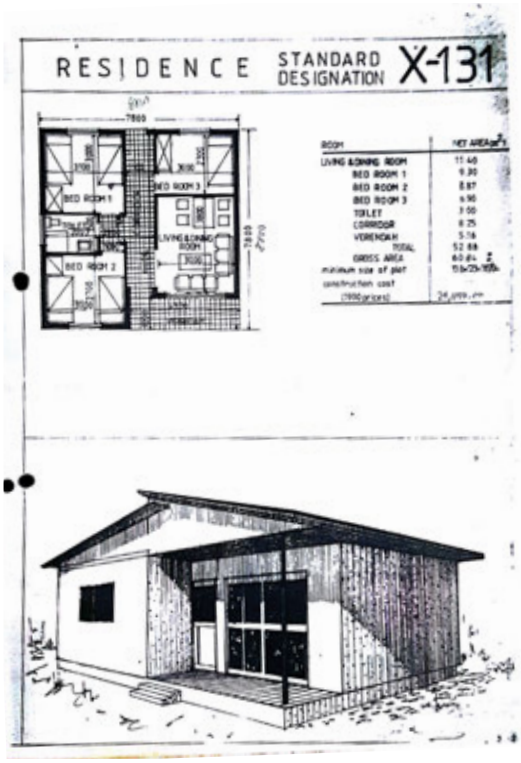


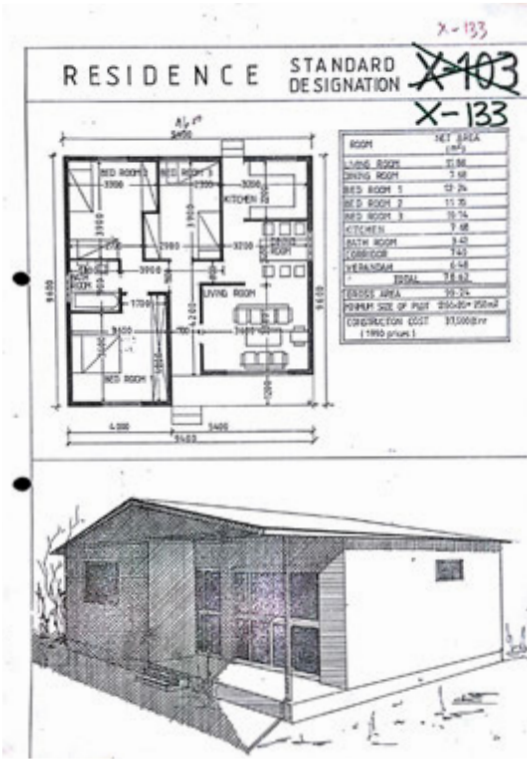


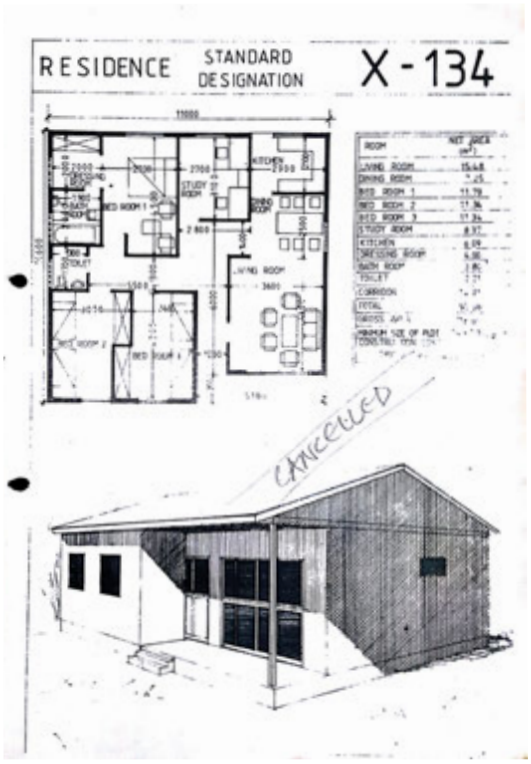


11 D. Various types of residential designs including service quarters prepared by the "Building Design Services" unit.

Source: Wouhib Kebede private archive.

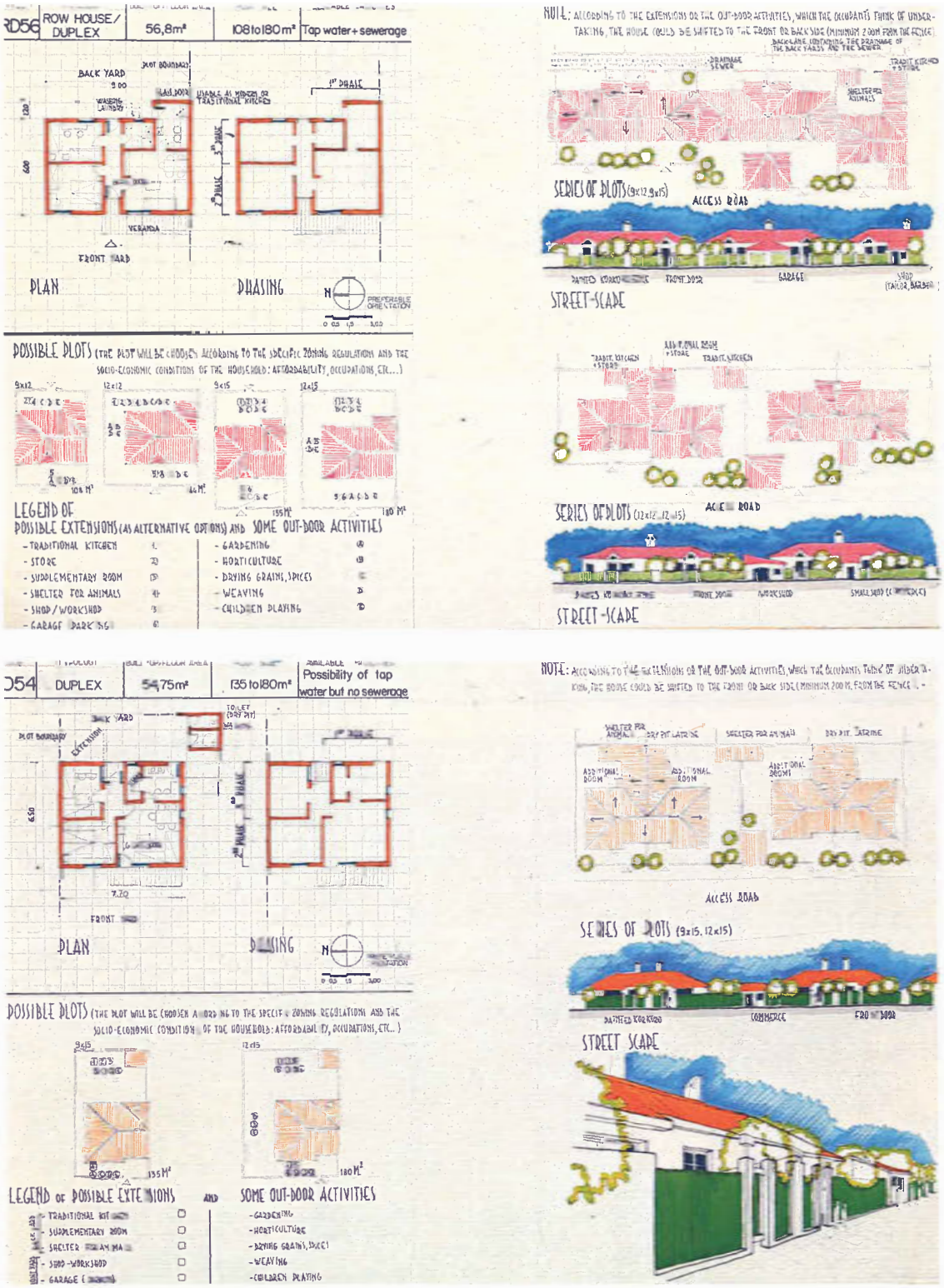






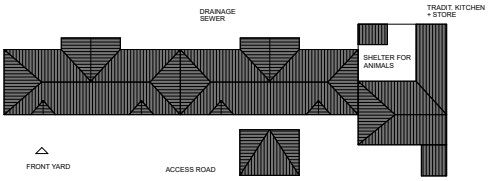
11 E. Various types of residential designs including service quarters prepared by the "Building Design Services" unit.

Source: Wouhib Kebede private archive.

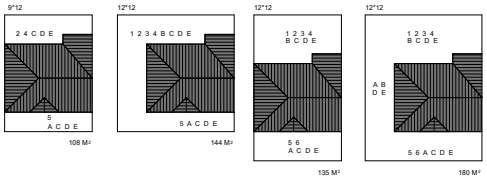


12. Housing studies made by the Addis Ababa Master Plan Project Office (AAMPO) in 1986

Source: World Cities and the Future of Metropoles, Techeste Ahderom private archive.

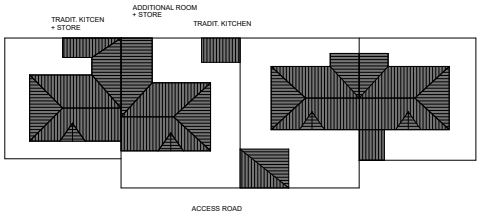


SERIES OF PLOTS (9*12, 9*15)

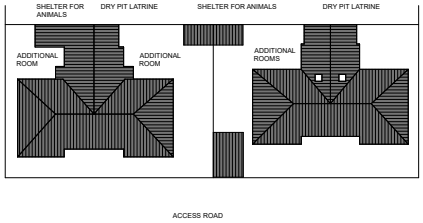


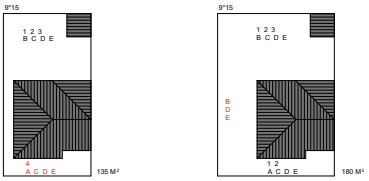
LEGEND OF POSSIBEL EXTENSIONS (AS ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS) AND SOME OUT-DOOR ACTIVITIES

TRADITIONAL KITCHEN	1	GARDENING	A
STORE	2	HORTICULTURE	B
SUPPLEMENTARY ROOM	3	DRYING GRAINS, SPICES	C
SHELTER FOR ANIMALS	4	WEAVING	D
SHOP/ WORKSHOP	5	CHILDREN PLAYING	E
GARAGE (PARKING)	6		



SERIES OF PLOTS (12*12, 12*15)

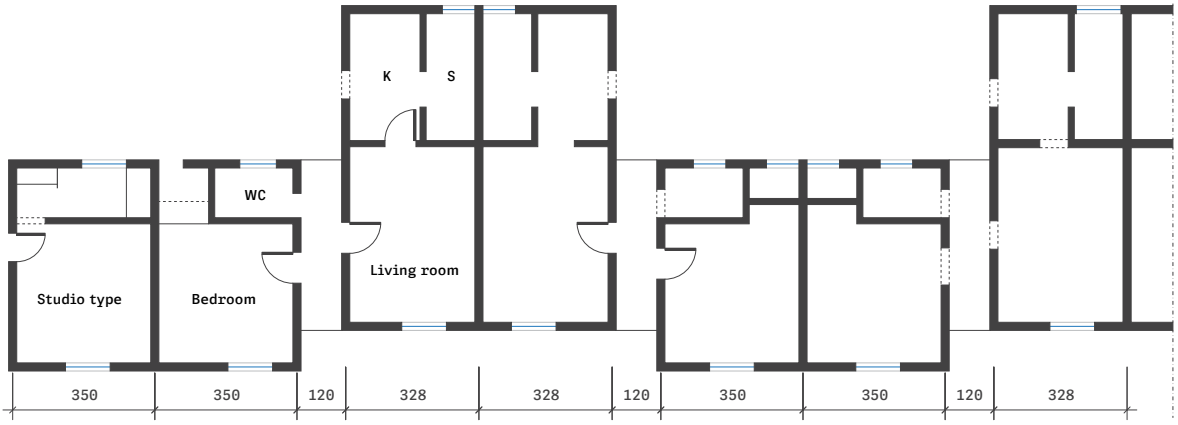


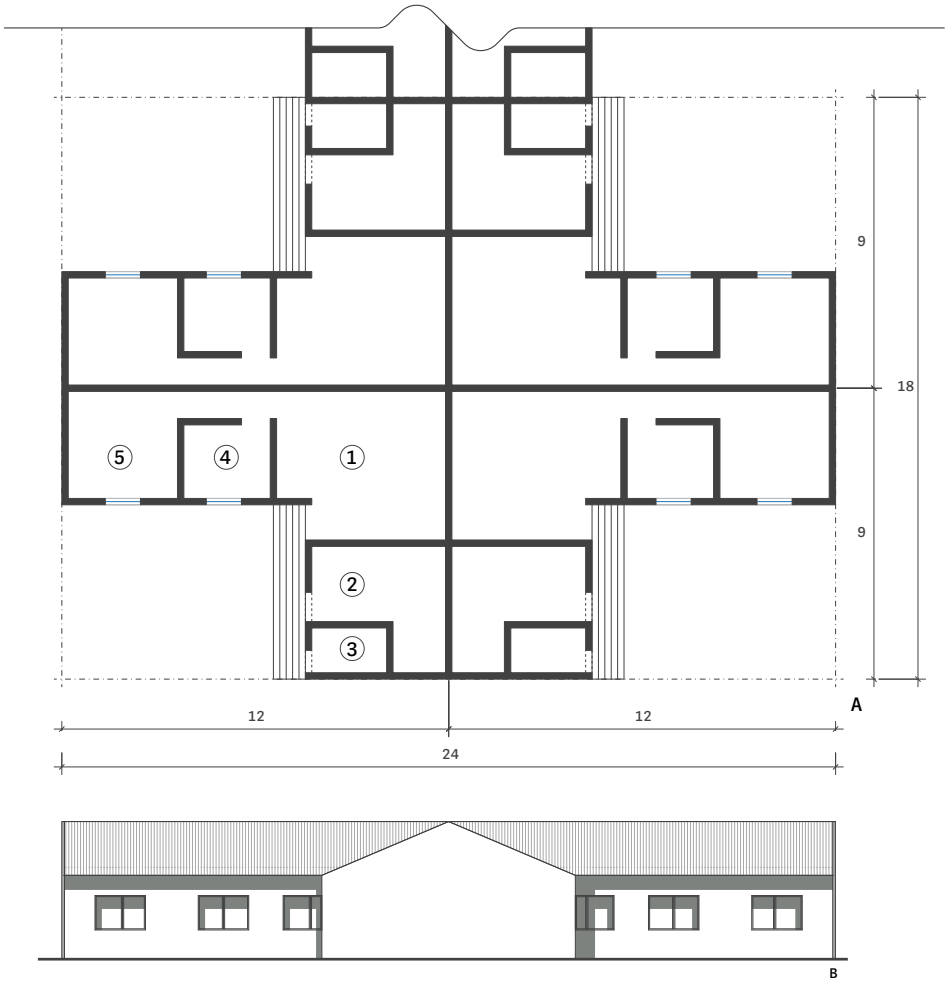


LEGEND OF POSSIBEL EXTENSIONS AND SOME OUT-DOOR ACTIVITIES

TRADITIONAL KITCHEN	GARDENING
SUPPLEMENTARY ROOM	HORTICULTURE
SHELTER FOR ANIMALS	DRYING GRAINS, SPICES
SHOP/ WORKSHOP	WEAVING
GARAGE (PARKING)	CHILDREN PLAYING

13. Redrawing of the Housing Studies made by AAMPO in 1986.





Legend

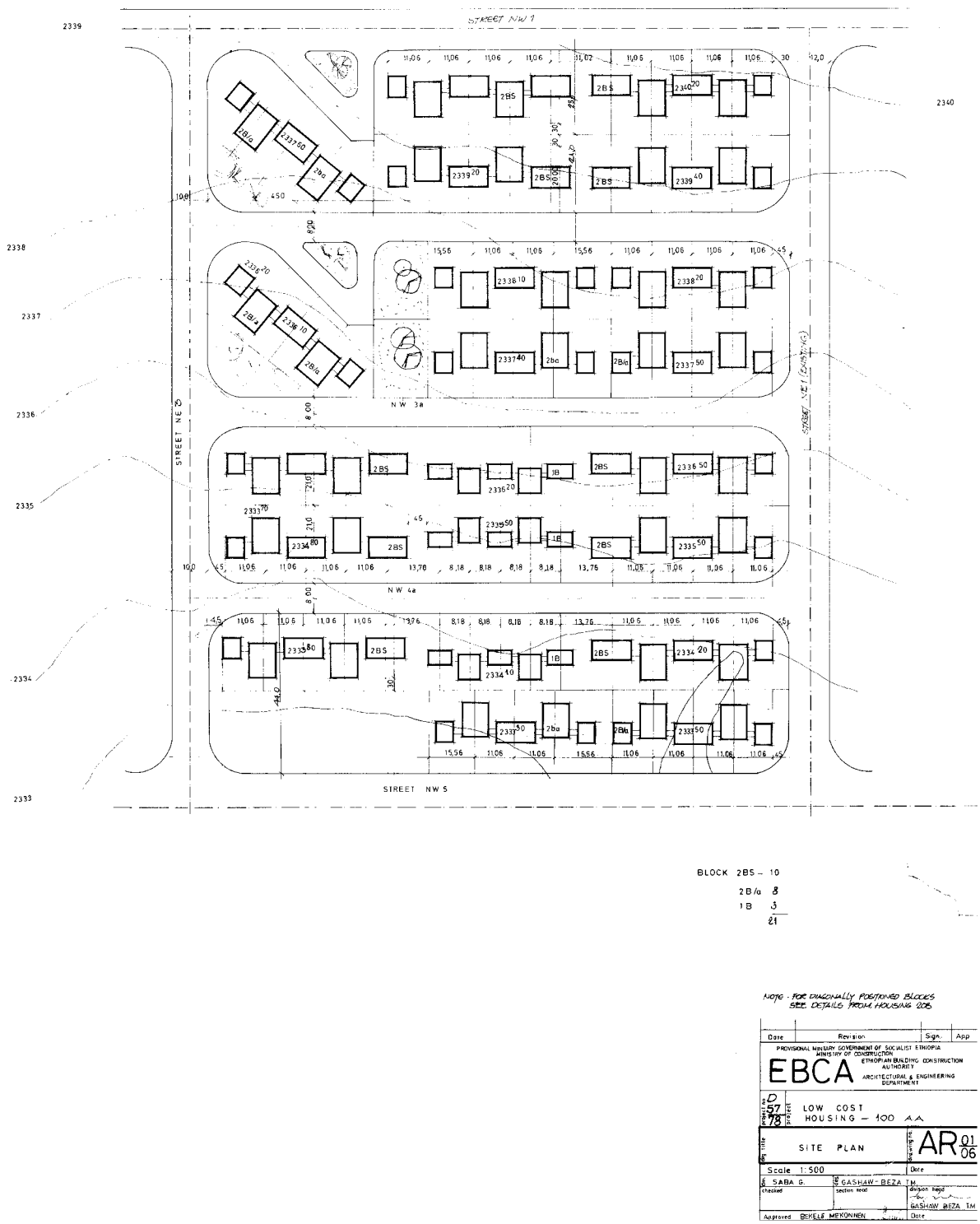
A: Plan

1: Living room
2: Kitchen
3: WC
4: Children bedroom
5: Master bedroom

B: View of the unit

Note that the plots are 9X12m. The living room is dimly lit.

14. Minimum plot sizes were proposed during the AAMPO in 1986 and housing typologies with shared walls became common. These ‘cross’ typologies were built and tested around the Gerji neighbourhood.



15. Site plan of the Gerji Housing designed by the Ethiopian Building Construction Authority (EBCA) in the 1980s. Gashaw Beza, a notable architect in that period, designed Gerji Housing.

Source: Building Design Enterprise



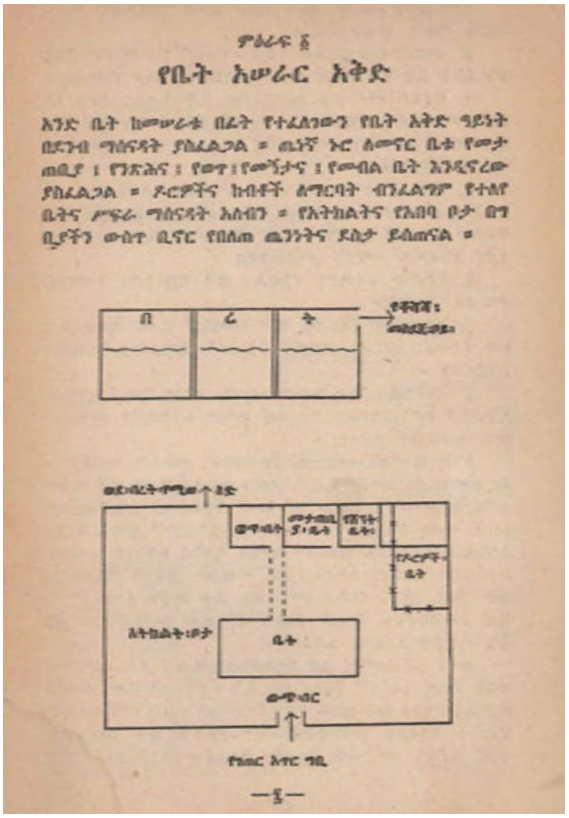
16. Arial photo of the Menelik's Gibi in 1929.

Source: Fasil Giorghis & Denis Gérard,
"The City and its Cultural Heritage – Addis Ababa", Shama books 2019



17. An engraving of the walled city of Adwa by Pippo Vigoni in 1890.

Source: Wikimedia Commons; Interno di Adua, occupata il 26 gennaio dagl'italiani (da uno schizzo del viaggiatore Pippo Vigoni).jpg



ምዕራፍ ፩

የቤት አሠራር አቅድ

አንድ ቤት ከመሠራቱ በፊት የተፈለገውን የቤት አቅድ ዓይነት በደንብ ማሰናዳት ያስፈልጋል ። ጠነኛ ኑር ለመኖር ቤቱ የመታጠቢያ ፣ የንጽሕና ፣ የወተት የመኝታና ፣ የመብል ቤት እንዲኖረው ያስፈልጋል ። ዶርዎችና ክብቶች ለማርባት ብንፈልግም የተለየ ቤትና ሥፍራ ማሰናዳት አለብን ። የአትክልትና የአበባ ቦታ በግ ቢያቸን ውስጥ ቢኖር የበለጠ ጤንነትና ደስታ ይሰጠናል ።

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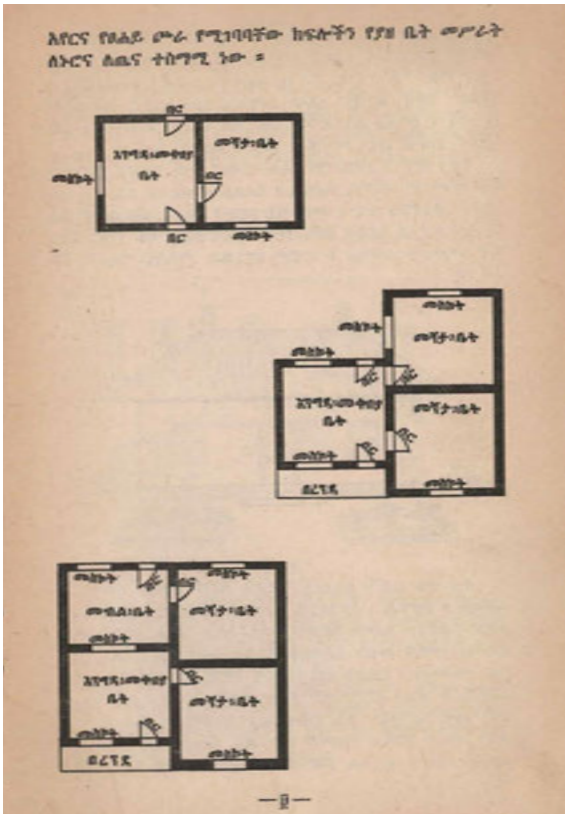


አሰርና የፊደል ሥራ የሚገባባቸው ክፍሉችን የያዘ ቤት መሥሪት ለኑርና ለጤና ተስማሚ ነው ።

—፱—

18 A. Housing design embedded in the Ethiopian curriculum of 4th grade textbook.

The diagram shows the location of a main house in the gibi with a separate quarter at the back holding the kitchen, toilet, shower and a shade for the chicken. The house has a separate access at the back connecting it with a barn.

18 B. Housing design embedded in the Ethiopian curriculum of 4th grade textbook showing three floor-layout options.

The option on the top has a guest room and a bedroom. The second one has a guest room and two bedrooms. The third one has a guest room, a kitchen and two bedrooms. One of the bedrooms is connected with the kitchen located at the back.

Source: ቤትና ግቢው የትምህርትና ፣ ሥነ ጥበብ ፣ ሚኒስቴር ፣ በሥርዓተ ፣ ትምህርትና ፣ መጻሕፍት ፣ ዝግጅት ፣ ዋና ዲሬክሲዮን ፣ ተዘጋጀ ፤ አዲስ አበባ ።

CCCL



ቤት ፣ የሚሄደው ፣ በየትኛው ፣ አቅጣጫ ፣ ነው ? ማርታስ ፣ ከቤት ፣ ወደ ፣ ትምህርት ፣ ቤት ፣ በየትኛው ፣ አቅጣጫ ፣ ነው ፣ የምትሄደው ? የጴጥሮስስ ፣ እናት ፣ ወደ ፣ ወንዝ ፣ ሲወርዱ ፣ በየትኛው ፣ አቅጣጫ ፣ ነው ? ጴጥሮስስ ፣ በየትኛው ፣ አቅጣጫ ፣ ነው ፣ ወደ ፣ ትምህርት ፣ ቤት ፣ የሚሄደው ? ገበያው ፣ የሚገኝበትን ፣ ቦታ ፣ ፈልገህ ፣ አስተውል ። ለማርታ ፣ ለወሰኔና ፣ ለማሚቴ ፣ እንዲሁም ፣ ለጴጥሮስ ፣ ወደ ፣ ገበያው ፣ የሚያደርሳቸውን ፣ አቅጣጫ ፣ ንገራቸው ።

እገበያ ፣ በየቀኑ ፣ ምን ፣ ዓይነት ፣ ምግብ ፣ ይሸጣል ? በገበያ ፣ ቀን ፣ የሚሸጥ ፣ ሌላስ ፣ ምን ፣ ይገኛል ? እነዚህም ፣ ዕቃዎች ፣ ከየትኛው ፣ ሠፈርና ፣ አቅጣጫ ፣ እንደሚመጡ ፣ አስረዳ ። በሰሌዳው ፣ ላይ ፣ ይጋግመህ ፣ ሞክረህ ፣ ልምድ ፣ ከአደረግህ ፣ በኋላ ፣ በዚሁ ፣ ዓይነት ፣ ቀበሌህን ፣ በሌላ ፣ መረቀት ፣ ሥለህ ፣ አሳይ ።



ምዕራፍ ፣ ፭ ፣

የአቅጣጫ ፣ ትምህርት ።

ማሞ ፣ ከበደና ፣ ማሚቴ ፣ ከአባታቸው ፣ ቤት ፣ ማለዳ ፣ ተነሥተው ፣ ወደ ፣ ትምህርት ፣ ቤት ፣ የጥዋት ፣ ፀሐይ ፣ እየሞቁ ፣ ይጓዛሉ ።

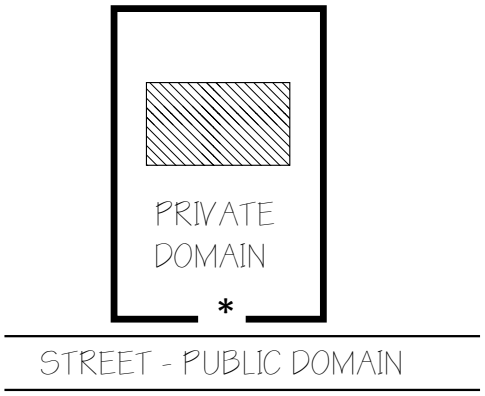
ፀሐይ ፣ ዘወትር ፣ ጥዋት ፣ የምትታየው ፣ በስተ ፣ ምሥራቅ ፣ በኩል ፣ ነው ።

መንገዱ ፣ ከምሥራቅ ፣ ጀምሮ ፣ ወደ ፣ ምዕራብ ፣ ተዘር ግቷል ።

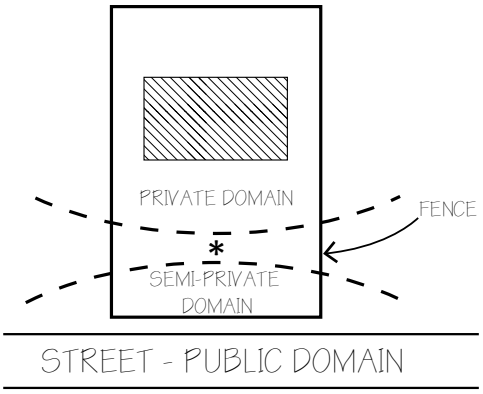
ማሞ ፣ ከበደና ፣ ማሚቴ ፣ ጥዋት ፣ በስተ ፣ ምሥራቅ ፣ ወደምትወጣው ፣ ፀሐይ ፣ ፊታቸውን ፣ ሲያዞሩ ፣ ግራ ፣ እጃቸው ፣ በሰሜን ፣ ቀኝ ፣ እጃቸው ፣ በደቡብ ፣ ጀርባቸው ፣ ደግሞ ፣ በምዕራብ ፣ አቅጣጫ ፣ እንደሚሆን ፣ ያውቃሉ ። ከቤት ፣ ወደ ፣ ትምህርት ፣ ቤት ፣ መሄድ ፣ ወደ ፣ ደቡብ ፣ እንደ

18 C. A geography textbook for 4th graders showing an urban layout with individual houses (circular shapes) a church (hexagonal) a market and a school in a more orthogonal shape.

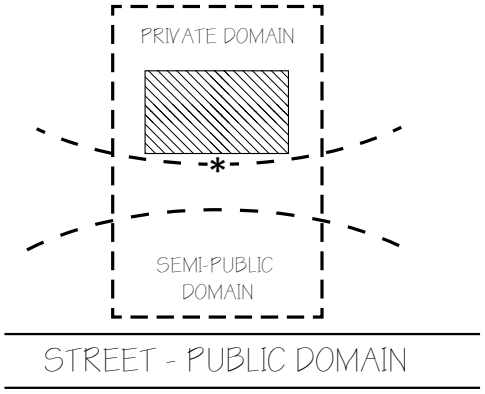
18 D. Visualization of the above scheme in a three-dimensional setting.



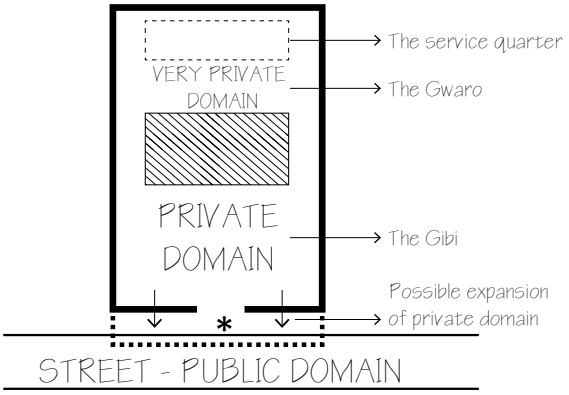
INDIA



ENGLAND



UNITED STATES



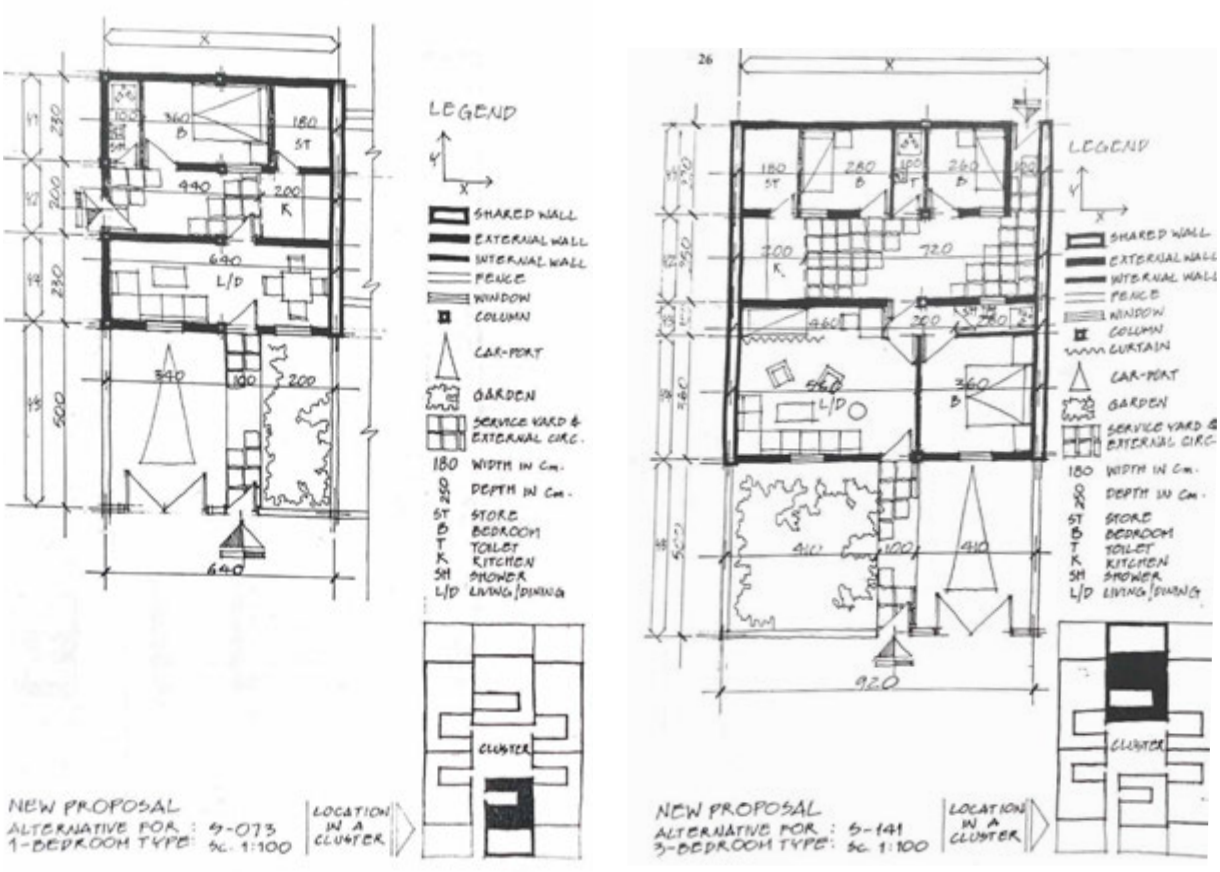
ADDIS ABABA

* = THRESHOLD

19. When discussing ‘territory’ and the ‘definition of place’, Rappoport introduces ‘threshold’, an ambiguous zone between public and private. He compares India, England and the United States to map the approxi mate location of the threshold. Although this is generalized and misses nuance, it captures certain aspects of culture in the regions. Three of Rappoport’s examples are re-drawn here and a case from the planned housing settlements of Addis Ababa is included from the findings.

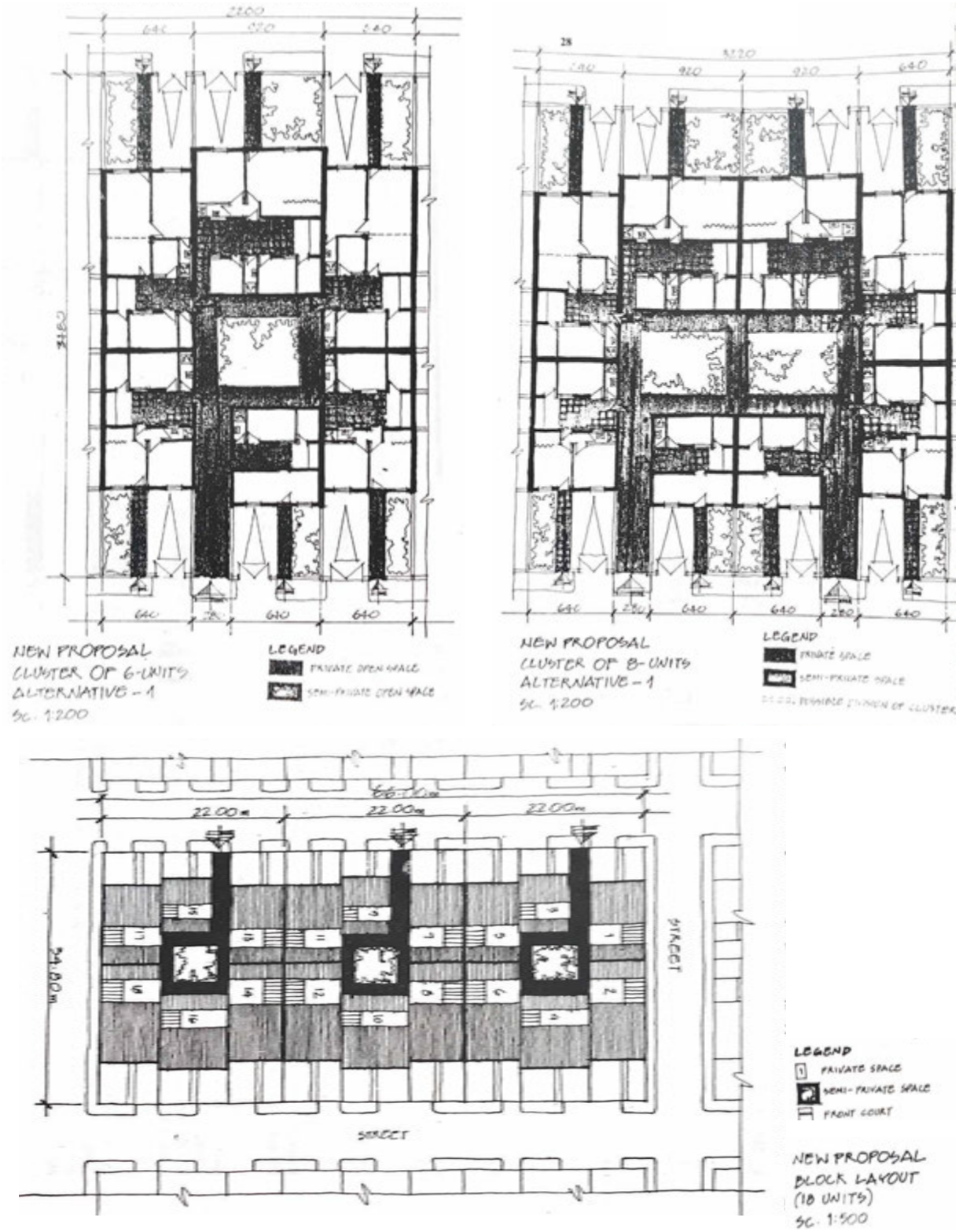


20. A housing settlement amongst farmland in a peri-urban area close to Addis Ababa. Note the gibi delineated with greenery and the round tukuls next to the rectangular house with corrugated iron sheet roofs.



21 A. Design propositions based on “way of life” by Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu. These proposals were produced in a workshop on “Appropriate Architecture” organised by the GTZ and Goethe Institute in 1996.

Source: Addis Ababa City Library.



21 B. Design propositions based on “way of life” by Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu. These proposals were produced in a workshop on “Appropriate Architecture” organised by the GTZ and Goethe Institute in 1996.

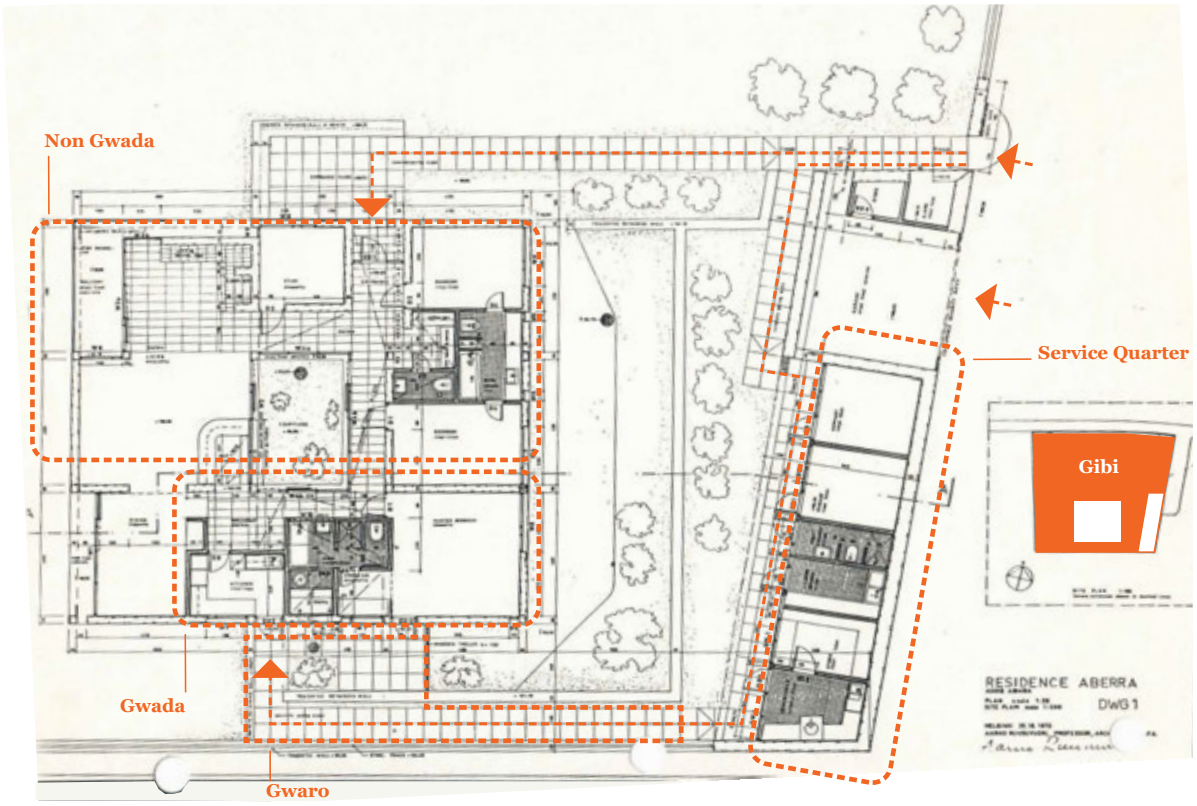
Source: Addis Ababa City Library.

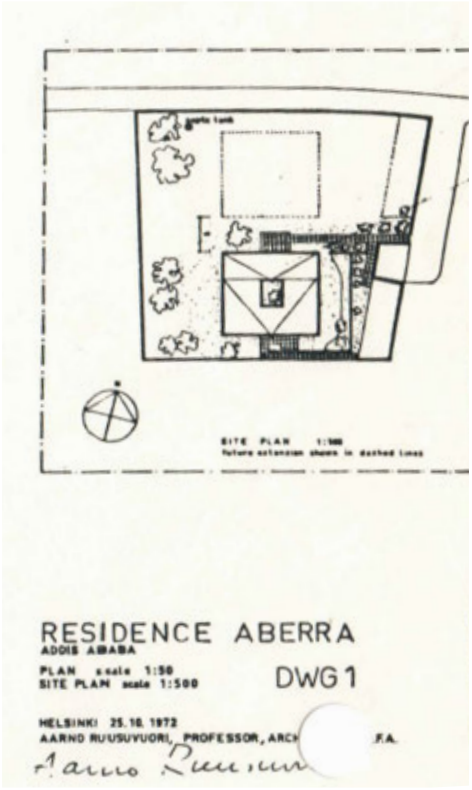


22 A. A gibi in Kechene Medhanialem showing three sub-gibi's. The individuals in the sub-gibis were tolerated by the other residents In the gibi when they defined their own sub-gibis.



22 B. A gibi in Kechene Medhanialem showing three sub-gibi's. The individuals in the sub-gibis were tolerated by the other residents In the gibi when they defined their own sub-gibis.

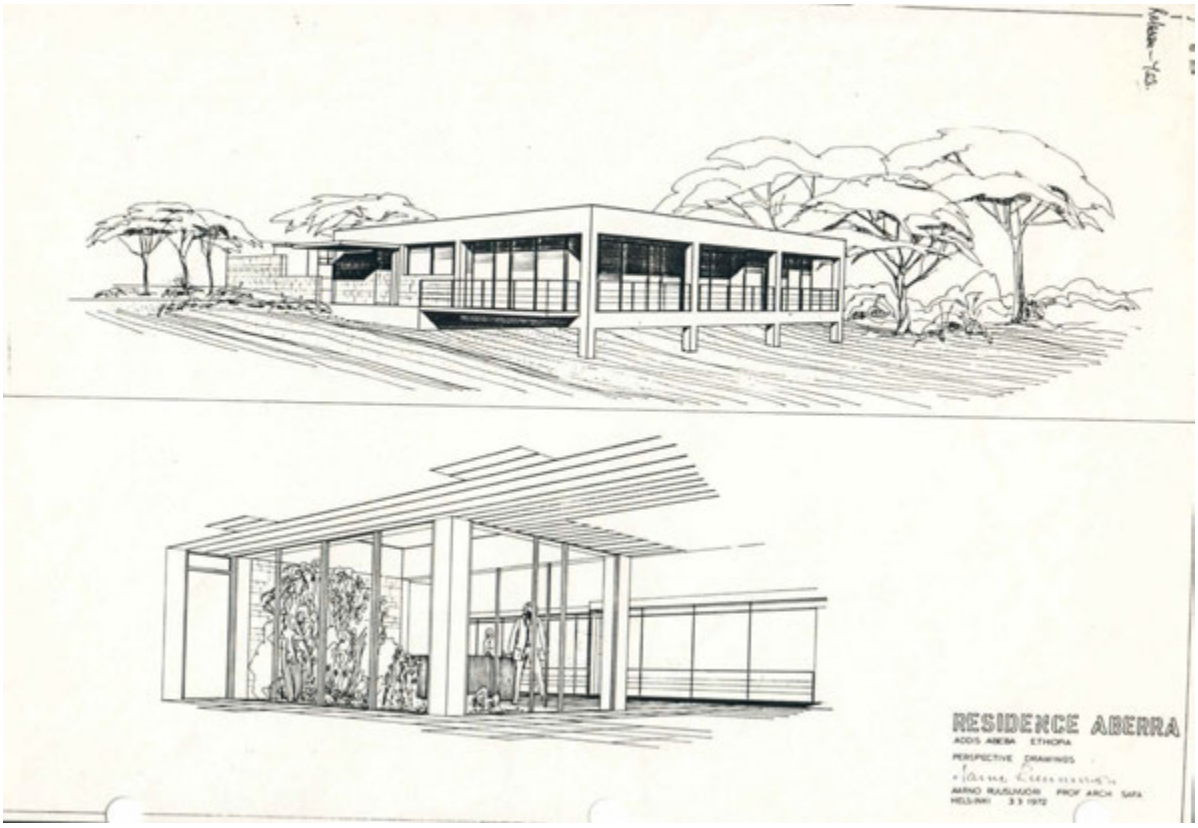




23. A mapping of a modern residence that is designed by the Finnish architect Aarno Ruusuvuori based on the characteristics of the gibi, gwaro and gwada. Aarno developed this peculiar floor plan for an Ethiopian family in the 1960s. This project is published on African Architecture by Nnamdi Elleh.

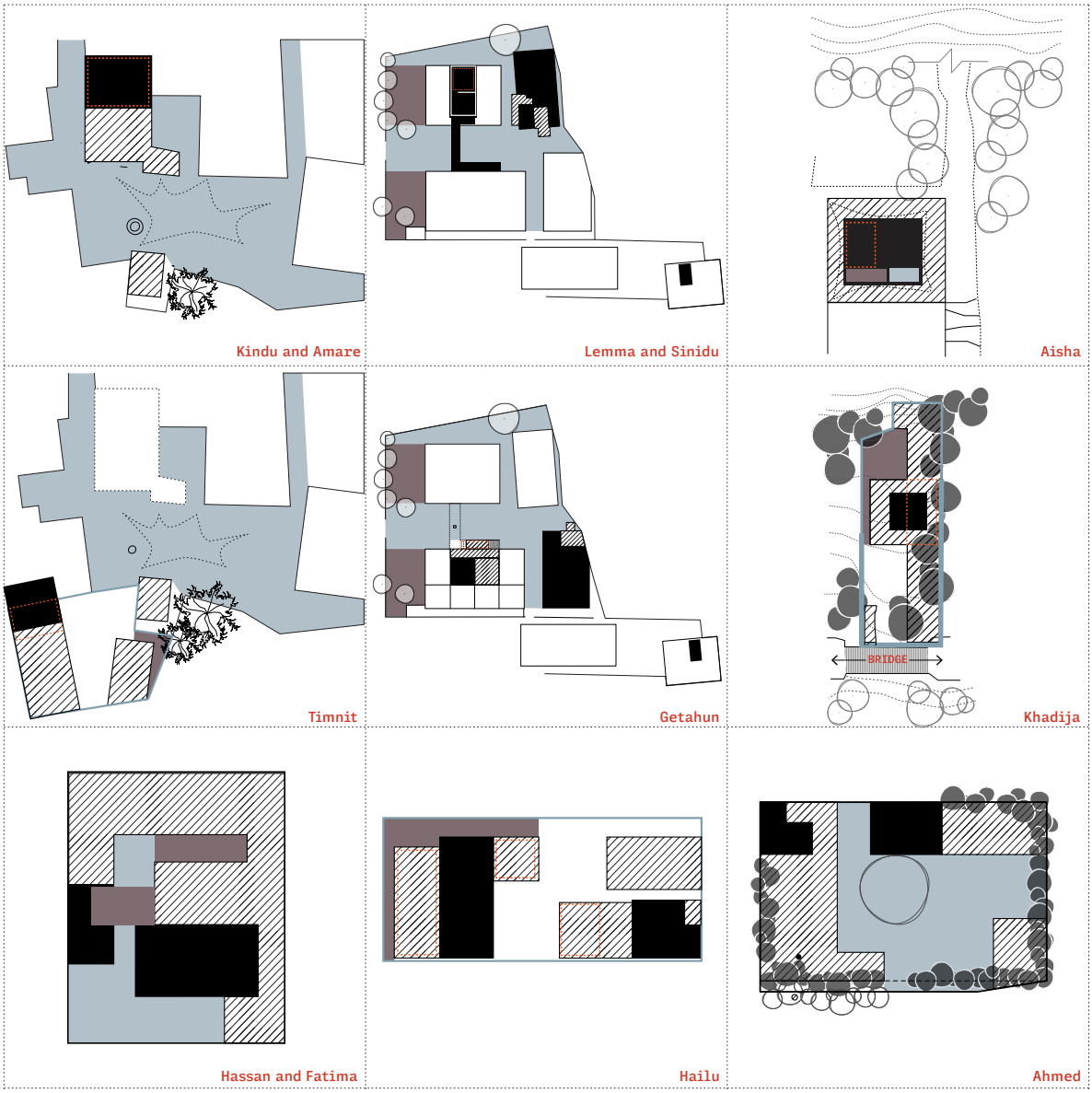
Residence Aberra, is a three-bedroom courtyard house with a lavish gibi situated on the western part of Addis Ababa. Designed by Aarno Ruusuvuori, a modernist architect from Finland in the 1960's. How he managed to design a building in Addis Ababa is not clear but the plan clearly shows the values of the gibi, gwaro and gwada incorporated in this modernist design for the high-income at that time. The property had an enclosed gibi and a service quarter at the left side of the entrance for the garage, house help, toilet facilities and the classical out-kitchen with the injera oven.
The service quarter also has a passage to the part of the house which can be read as the gwada because it has the most private parts, the kitchen and the master bedroom. The front part of the house is the formal entrance for the guests and a bedroom at the front which is most probably meant for guests.

Source: African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation

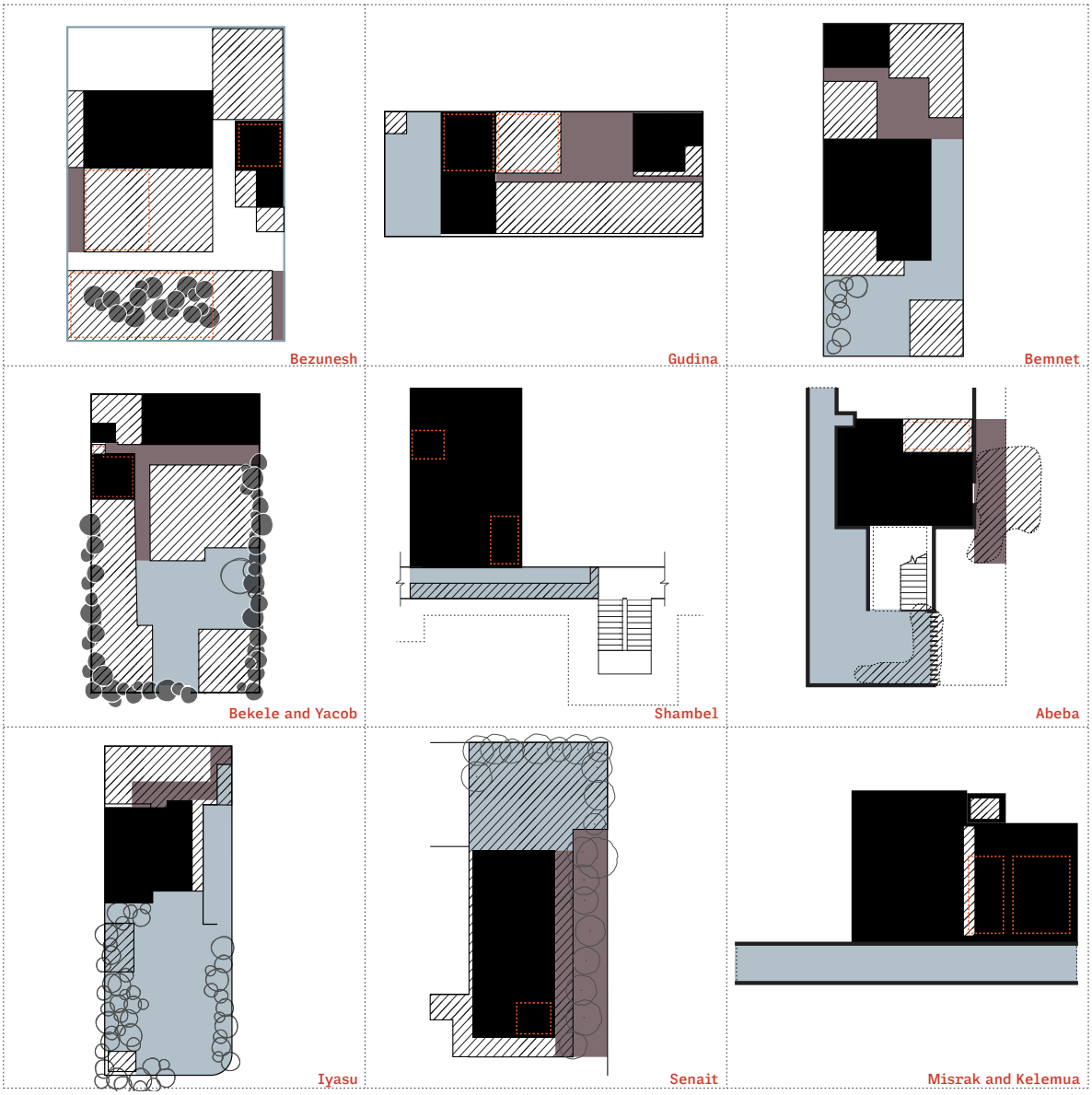


24. Perspective renderings of “Residence Aberra”.

Source: African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation



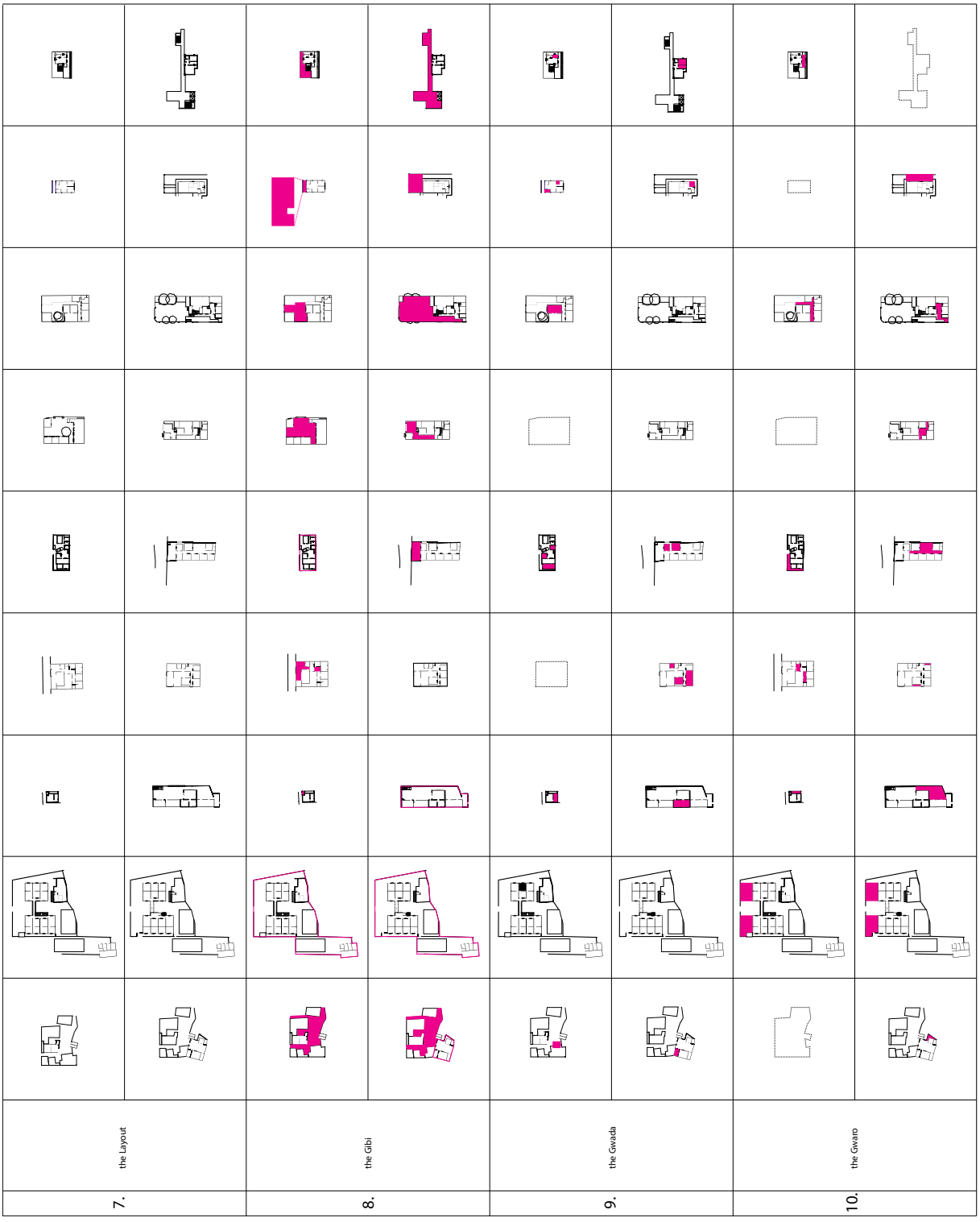
25 A. Mapping of dweller-initiated housing transformations showing the gibi, gwaro and gwada vis a vis the original state and the transformed state of dwelling.



25 B. Mapping of dweller-initiated housing transformations showing the gibi, gwaro and gwada vis a vis the original state and the transformed state of dwelling.

26 A. A visual comparative analysis between the nonplanned and planned housing settlements.

		Nonplanned settlements			Planned settlements					
1.	Morphology & Gross Density Each square is 6.25Ha 250 meters 250 meters	Kechene 1902 EC/1910 GC	Menen 1982 EC/1990 GC	Lomi Meda 1994 EC/2002 GC	Kuteba Sefer'e Fikir 1959 EC/1966 GC	Kolfe Kuteba Betoch 1974 EC/1981 GC	Saris Adissu Sefer 1978 EC/1986 GC	Mekanissa 1982 EC/1989 GC	Mickey Leland 2001 EC/2009 GC	Lideta 2005 EC/2013 GC
		1242 dwellings/6.25ha	887 dwellings/6.25ha	776 dwellings/6.25ha	272 dwellings/ 6.25ha	284 dwellings/ 6.25ha	195 dwellings/ 6.25ha	480 dwellings/6.25ha	810 dwellings/6.25 ha	983 dwellings/6.25ha
		Dwellings/ha (198)	Dwellings/ha (142)	Dwellings/ha (124)	Dwellings/ha (44)	Dwellings/ha (45)	Dwellings/ha (31)	Dwellings/ha (77)	Dwellings/ha (130)	Dwellings/ha (158)
2.	Extent of Transformation Each grid represents 10m2 Plot area Transformed area Original area	419m² 26.14m² 124.5m²	637m² 38m² 23m²	23.6m² 27.92m² 18.54m²	138m² 104m² 27m²	213m² 104m² 19m²	197m² 83m² 30m²	198m² 134m² 40m²	233m² 41m² 41m²	82m² 49m² 12m²
		109.96 % Transformation	65.2 % Transformation	50.59% Transformation	285.18% Transformation	166.7% Transformation	365% Transformation	219% Transformation	0% Transformation	122.72%Transformation
		69m² 39m² 7m²	637m² 24m² 12m²	192m² 101m² 40m²	139.5m² 100.77m² 31.3m²	156.61m² 88.49m² 33.13m²	148.5m² 96.6m² 40m²	315m² 150m² 136m²	93.2m² 93.2m² 57.2m²	87m² 41m² 41m²
		457.14% Transformation	100% Transformation	152.5% Transformation	221.95% Transformation	167% Transformation	136.5% Transformation	10.3% Transformation	61.53% Transformation	0% Transformation
3.	Household occupancy Resident Tenant								+93 people +30 customers	
4.	FSI (space Index)	24.7% 51.1%	9.2% 1.8%	124.5% 23.8%	41.3% 61.2%	30.9% 54.3%	47.2% 63.7 %	55.3% 42.5%	3.5% 6.3%	43.2% 46.6%
5.	Gibi / Person	19.1m²/ Household 19.1m²/ Household	15.3m²/ Household 15.3m²/ Household	0.35 m² 9.1 m²	3.6 m² 7.74 m²	15.57 m² 7.5 m²	6.52 m² 3.57 m²	8 m² 23.57 m²	2.42 m² 2.82 m²	27.3 m² 15.3 m²
6.	Nearest accessible open space									



26 B. A visual comparative analysis between the nonplanned and planned housing settlements.

25#03

Reconstructing Dwelling

Social and spatial features of housing practices in Addis Ababa

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This research is a component of the 2ALL Addis Ababa Living Lab project, which focuses on creating resilient dwelling clusters for urban resettlement in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Funded by NWO-WOTRO, the project explores innovative housing approaches aligned with the overarching Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of building sustainable cities and communities. *Reconstructing Dwelling* examines dwelling culture in relation to housing conditions within both planned and unplanned neighbourhoods of Addis Ababa. Ethnographic methods are employed to study housing practices across various housing development models, focusing on layers of dweller-initiated housing transformations to uncover patterns of habitation. The study also conducts a comparative analysis of the temporalities that are present in the adaptations made by residents.

These transformations are visually reconstructed and documented through ethnographic surveys, culminating in a pattern catalogue to identify and redefine key socio-spatial patterns that shape the culture of dwelling in Addis Ababa: The *gibi*, *gwaro* and *gwada*.

Rooted in the principles of alternative epistemologies, the study emphasises these patterns as critical elements informing dwelling design. It reveals the links between these patterns and dweller-initiated transformations, showcasing their essential role in space-making. Consequently, the research contributes to rethinking architectural pedagogy, practice, and policy in a more contextually grounded and inclusive manner. By situating itself within contemporary challenges, *Reconstructing Dwelling* builds a body of knowledge aimed at developing inclusive and resilient dwelling clusters. This approach offers an alternative to the current disruptive resettlement practices in Addis Ababa, which often undermine livelihoods and disregard existing socio-spatial patterns.

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