

“SELF-EXPANDABLE” SOCIAL HOUSING

REINTERPRETED HALF-HOUSE CONCEPT

New social housing model for the most vulnerable families

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The starting point for developing this new social housing model was the general problem of vulnerable families in Serbia lacking housing accommodation, especially within the Roma community. Housing programs and projects aimed at meeting the housing needs of the Roma who live in inadequate and precarious housing are sporadic and insufficient. The aim of this design is to develop and introduce an original new social housing model and typology in accordance with cultural specificities of the Roma population through construction of six social housing units that will be allocated and occupied by selected beneficiaries from the Orlovsko settlement in Belgrade. The idea is based on creating a model that can have possibility of replication and further extensions in the future. Social housing units are designed to meet all general social housing standards and more specific requirements of cost-effectiveness, energy efficiency and affordability of social housing units for the most vulnerable households, by creating a supportive environment for all beneficiaries.

Reinterpretation of “half house” concept

The model is based on reinterpreted “half house” concept developed by 2016 Pritzker Prize winning architect A. Aravena. The authors’ design concept was to offer a “start-up home”, a minimal housing unit of cca. 45 square meters in a multifamily building, made available to socially vulnerable groups (Roma families, in this case). The vulnerable families cannot afford adequate housing and therefore are limited to poor, sub-standard housing conditions, whereas public housing providers are unable to meet great housing needs. The alternative “half house” concept offers the opportunity for public housing providers to augment social housing construction and provision, and the sustainability for the most vulnerable social housing users. The main idea of the concept is that social housing tenants can build housing extensions by themselves. Authors’ proposals are oriented on providing solutions for Roma families that have tradition of self-built construction and have the tendency to live in large family congregation expected to grow in time.

Personalization and appropriation of social housing

This model enables housing personalization and appropriation through the extensions of their “start-up home”. No common space can be violated by possible extensions, while the personalization of ground level space is flexible for different uses. Such space can find many possible interpretations: starting from garage, through diverse working spaces, to additional bedrooms, without interfering with minimal open and covered outdoor space.

Sustainable ownership status

This model considers dual ownership between public housing providers and social housing tenants. The idea is that after 5-10 years of using, social housing tenants are enabled to buy the part from housing provider, or local housing authority, in case that they were paying the housing rent regularly. In this way, the vicious circle of widespread rent arrears phenomenon among social housing tenants in Serbia can be terminated. With this alternative social housing model the tenants are motivated to pay their rent, and hence receive guaranteed lifetime occupancy, with no eviction risks, and the right to buy, inherit or transfer housing to family members.

