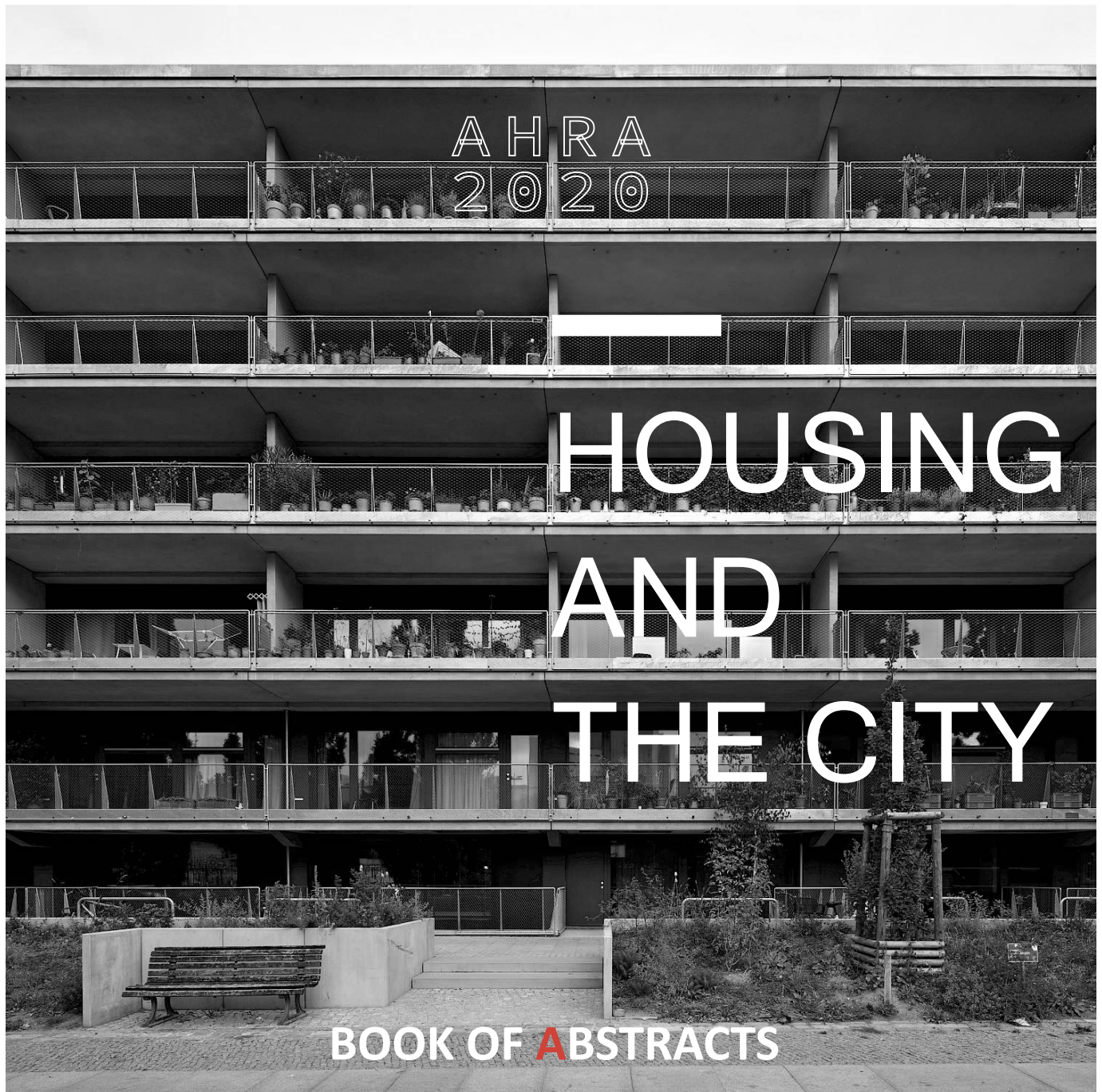




Thursday 19 - Saturday 21, November 2020
Department of Architecture and Built Environment,
University of Nottingham

Image: IBeB, Heide & von Beckerath, Photography: Andrew Alberts



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Housing Facing Transitions:

Domestic Spaces and Uses Build Brussels

This paper investigates how residential spaces shape the specific urban identity. By means of the case study of Brussels, it aims to provide an innovative approach that can explore in new ways the typical characters of a city and their transformation.

The concept of ‘referential housing type’, defined as the archetypal and most ordinary residential type in a specific place throughout urban history, is able to disclose both typological persistence and discontinuity of residential spaces over time. Thus, the referential type can illustrate and provide means of understanding in a more dynamic way the evolutionary mechanisms of dwelling in a built environment, dealing with the legacies of the 20th century and providing a basis for addressing future changes. The referential housing type has three main attributes: it reveals the socio-cultural character of a place, enables a better understanding of other residential types and provides a possible base of interpretation for new forms of housing and living.

New dwelling types are designed to meet to meet contemporary climate and energy challenges, but they should also reflect evolving needs and uses in a specific setting. This paper aims to compare the impact of the uses and spaces transformations on the city development of Brussels, in order to assess their ability to embody the urban identity. By means of re-drawings, this analysis evaluates the typological permanence or discontinuity within the urban fabric. Hence, by clarifying the specific set of features, the referential housing type plays an important role in increasing the knowledge on the contemporary urban condition and in providing new tools for conceiving the 21st century city.