OTHER FORMS OF DWELLING

The continuous and physiological evolution of cities and housing needs has undergone a strong acceleration in recent years, driven by profound changes linked to the current political and economic context, increasing social impoverishment, and the urgency posed by the climate crisis.

New segments of the population excluded from the labour market, new forms of poverty generated by climate-induced migration and ethnic and local conflicts, internal migration related to work and education, are fuelling a housing demand to which existing "housing policies" are no longer able to provide adequate responses.

The scenario outlined above calls for the identification of solutions capable of responding more rapidly and effectively to these emergencies, shifting the focus towards experiments that can be transformed into acceptable and practicable innovations, and that can contribute to the necessary cultural updating of design approaches, regulations and policies related to HOUSING. In order to define a common and shared ground for discussion, the call preliminarily identifies a number of research lines closely anchored to design-related themes in which Architectural Technology has historically demonstrated its ability to provide a distinctive scientific and cultural contribution.

Building on approaches already experimented with in the past, this call, promoted by the research cluster HOUSING of the Italian Society of Architectural Technology, aims to initiate a reflection on the capacity of the Architectural Technology discipline to foster the necessary cultural, technical and operational renewal of methods and contents in housing research, by addressing emerging challenges. The objective of the call is to initiate the definition of a field of studies within which to identify and outline, also through the analysis of built/realised projects, forms of dwelling that can be integrated into the consolidated city, generating social, economic and relational "fissures".

Optimising social capital in the face of the failure of social housing policies means carefully investigating increasingly widespread practices of self-construction and self-management of emergency situations; complex and often dramatic phenomena that require housing demand to be addressed within a new eco-socio-technical dimension, capable of recognising "permanent temporality" as an emerging paradigm of contemporaneity.

A critical observation of unconventional building practices for living can help to identify potential strategic approaches in terms of spatial and functional transformation, as well as the possibility of generating new configurations of collective space that experiment with forms of habitat capable of innovatively addressing the ecological question, proposing new relationships between human beings, nature and the city. More broadly, it can foster an anthropological reflection on the rituals of dwelling in an era of profound climate and social transformation.

The call is addressed to scholars and researchers in the field of Architectural Technology who wish to contribute theoretical and speculative reflections, research outcomes and design-oriented experiments related to one of the following topics, which seek to interpret the theme of HOUSING through perspectives and viewpoints that differ from those traditionally adopted. SPECIAL ISSUE 4/2026 aims to collect theoretical, research-based and design experimentation contributions –both completed and ongoing– related to **one of the following topics**: Dwelling in emergency | Appropriate dwelling | Adaptive dwelling | Dwelling in the existing | Dwelling in multiculturalism

1. Dwelling in Emergency

Housing emergency has today assumed a structural character and no longer concerns only the most vulnerable groups, the poor, people with disabilities, migrants or individuals affected by socio-relational fragility, but also new categories of users forced to live in precarious and inadequate housing conditions that prevent long-term planning. Architectural Technology can contribute to defining the profiles of these new user groups, based on changing sets of needs, in order to orient research and design experimentation, including the identification of new performance-based approaches to domestic space that may depart from current regulatory standards.

2. Appropriate Dwelling

Updating the concept of "technological appropriateness", understood as a means to re-establish virtuous relationships between human beings and the environment within a co-evolutionary framework, entails questioning the idea that the architectural production process should derive exclusively from the logics and methodologies of industrial production. On the contrary, it implies the exploration of new design approaches inspired by the generative processes of the natural world and by social innovation practices developed by local communities.

3. Adaptive Dwelling

Short- and medium-term climate adaptation strategies, long-term resilience, the urban and building health, new urban configurations aimed at restoring a balance with nature, and utopian visions that prefigure generative and evolutionary habitats – drawing inspiration from housing prototypes experimented with by radical avant-gardes, as well as from ethnic and cultural hybridisations – form the basis for reflection on how new technologies, both material and immaterial, together with innovative technological processes and renewed housing cultures, can update the conception and construction of domestic space. In this context, flexibility, adaptability, hybridisation of uses, mobility and temporariness become guiding criteria for contemporary dwelling.

4. Dwelling in the Existing

The regeneration of the housing stock has long represented one of the research fields in which Architectural Technology has been able to provide a clear scientific contribution, often validated through applied design activities. Recycling and reuse strategies based on circular approaches inspired by the building life cycle and building metabolism, the reinterpretation and updating of Open Building theories and their application, reuse projects and case studies of spontaneous and informal dwelling, tailor-made interventions, experimentation with co-living practices, and collaborative community-based processes in regeneration projects constitute the foundation for updating strategies and technologies for housing rehabilitation.

5. Dwelling in Multiculturalism

De-colonial and transnational studies show how conditions of socio-economic and environmental emergency have generated hybrid and "informal" approaches to addressing housing hardship that exhibit promising characteristics and overturn the prescriptive design logics of modernism by introducing tactics and policies rooted in everyday life.

Incremental and distributed housing interventions, open and shared urban design practices, and strategies for the regeneration of informal settlements –including in suburban contexts– as responses to housing poverty and social violence, represent examples that should be examined with careful and critical attention in order to envision new possible ways of building and inhabiting cities