

Generous Edge - Inviting the Spontaneous

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Abstract : This article is about a growing focus in the city of Copenhagen – the edge zone between the private space inside the residential building and the public space out at the residential street. A slow transition between the private living room and the public urban space creates a mutual benefit. The urban space benefits from an insertion of a homey atmosphere by the extended performance of living rooms to the exterior. The dwelling benefits from belonging to a liveable neighborliness, which means an extension of the private home to a collective home (= the neighborhood). Grounded by this reciprocal value of the edge zone, through the article, it is argued that a wide generosity of the edge zones is of interest among both planners and residents. The article introduces the idea of the edge zone and its possible implications in the development of the liveable residential city. Three examples of ongoing projects at Arkitema Architects are brought to illustrate the challenges and potentials of a generous edge zone. Every example represents a specific dwelling typology in a particular urban context: (1) multi-family residential building in a previous industrial area in the city (2) new courtyard building in the city's outskirts (3) low and dense residential area out in the suburbia. Throughout these examples, the article seeks to discuss the significance of the edge zone in forthcoming residential areas in Denmark. The analysis of the Danish examples raises the question of why a social behavior that happens spontaneously in the south of Europe has to be carefully implemented in the architecture of north of Europe. In this light, the article ends with a discussion on how to create edge zones that are not designed for a particular usage, but rather as an architectural invitation for varied social behaviors that spontaneously occur in different moments of time by different people. Finally, the article ends with a list of recommendations for the development of the generous edge zone as an open invitation for diverse usage over time.

Keywords : dwelling, edge zone, generosity, livability, urban space

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