

LOTS IN COMMON

Re-Forming Domesticity

Current attempts to address the housing crisis too often rely on conservative, nostalgic models of ownership—in turn largely failing to impact the interrelated problems of scarcity, homogeneity, unaffordability, unsustainability, and isolation. Rather, the very nature and meaning of home itself needs a more fundamental re-mixing: from homes in isolation to shared spaces held in common.

A diverse ecology of living sprouts forth, growing from the interstices of the formal city. It harnesses underused zones of space—laneways, front yards, infrastructural and latent ecological corridors—activating them with a shared network of collective activities. Instead of nostalgically recreating older modes of living and working based in static ownership of a singular space, this sharing network both decentralizes domesticity and weaves collective space into the domicile. The city's components shake loose from their traditional roles and distribute into the urban fabric, allowing them to be held collectively.

Lots, in Common

This evolving network of shared spaces hosts a multiplicity of activities impossible in isolation. Shared space proliferates throughout North Vancouver as a field of experimentation, in which collective social life is continually re-formed through everyday rituals. Urban space is reframed via acts of sharing and solidarity: the denizens of the city find they have Lots In Common.

TENET 2: FROM 'COMMUNITY' TO 'COMMUNITIES'

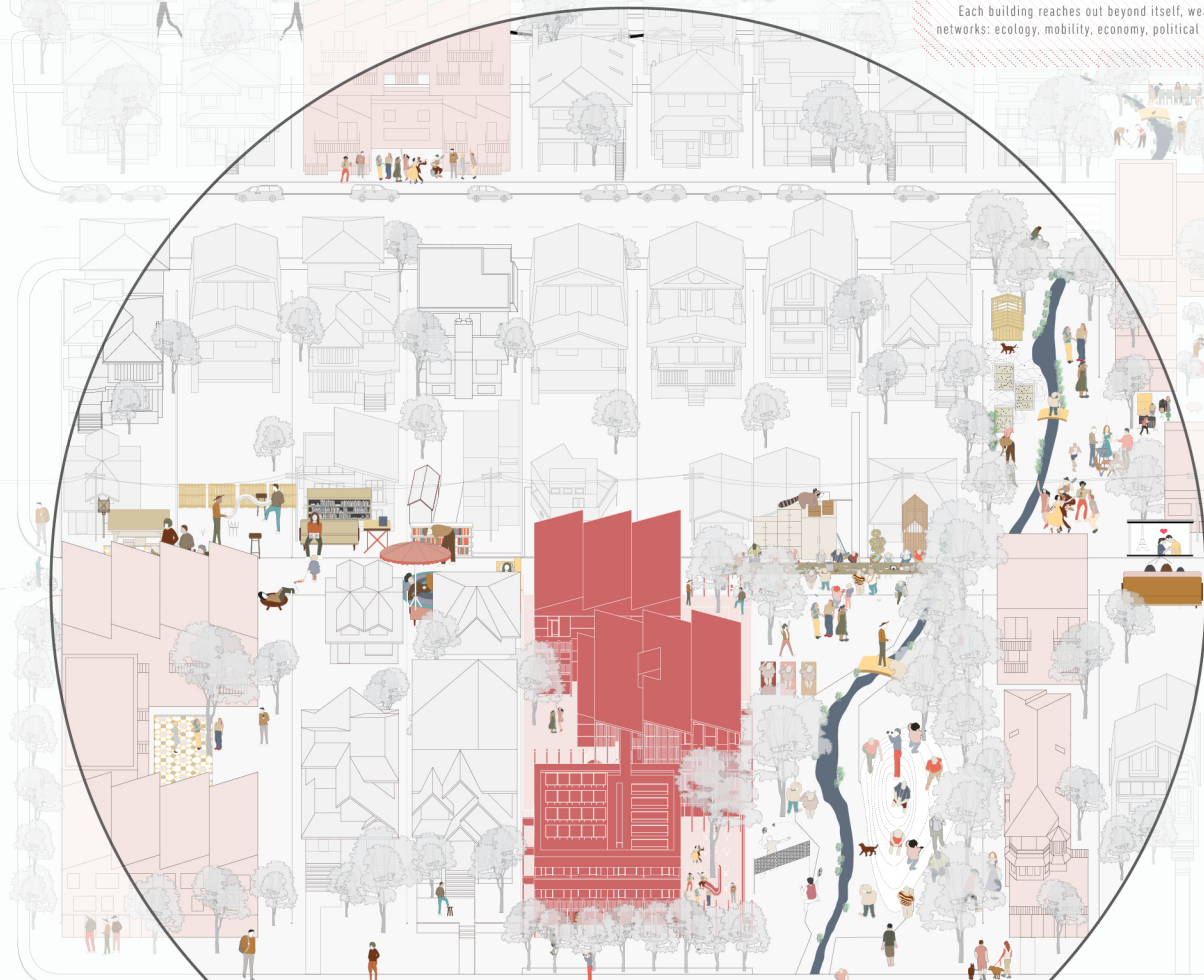
True mixing pluralizes notions of community—no longer stopping at building inhabitants or immediate neighbors, instead incorporating a myriad of actants.

TENET 1: BE A SPONGE, NOT AN ISLAND

Each building reaches out beyond itself, weaving into larger networks: ecology, mobility, economy, political exchange, and more.

TENET 3: (INTER)FACING THINGS TOGETHER

Seams between programs are thickened and made inhabitable—growing into focal points for new communities and new types of commoning.



TENETS OF MIXING

Lots in Common is a series of spatial protocols rather than a rigid, standardized building prototype. Its deployable design moves can adapt to varied scenarios, using them to weave together the many systems and inhabitants of the sites. These design moves harness the diversity of the site's inhabitants, livelihoods and needs—encouraging convivial and synergetic relationships.

Tenet 1: Be a Sponge, Not an Island

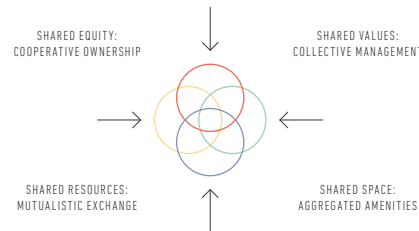
Integrate building into larger networks.
entanglement with trans-scalar systems of ecology and livelihood

The failure of current housing policy is, first and foremost, a failure to understand how individual projects relate to larger networks of economy and ecology. Instead, *Lots In Common* is networked at its core. It builds from a commoning platform of collective ownership, using the processes of collective self-governance to negotiate larger economic and ecological networks. True local democracy starts in the home: with collective control and equity.



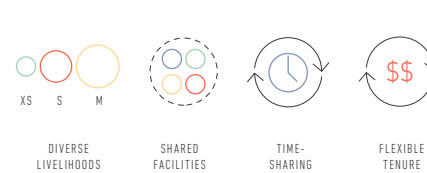
1A COMMONING

Allow small-scale lot assembly towards cooperative ownership and make space for connection-building through shared activities and synergetic relationships.



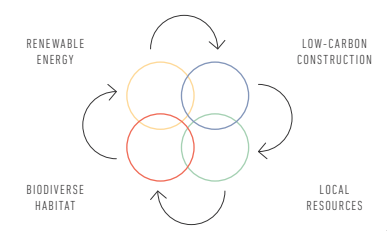
1B DIVERSE ECONOMIES

Accommodate mixed-use programs across a range of scales, tenure types and space needs to support a variety of livelihoods, such as micro-retail, craft workshops or shared workspaces.



1C ECOLOGICAL COUPLINGS

Integrate environmental systems & provide habitat for more-than-human residents.



Tenet 2: From 'Community' to 'Communities'

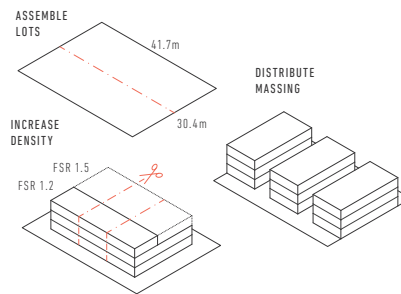
Distribute across a common ground.
massing and landscape as a collective platform

In lieu of the monoculture of single-family homes and laneway houses with near-identical massing, the ground plane is freed up to serve a broader, more-than-human array of communities via courtyards, landscaped strips, and public spaces. This is achieved via two-lot land assembly (via a land bank or by individual groups of commoners), which maintains neighborhood continuity while allowing for a significantly more flexible and nuanced approach to how to integrate communities (human and non-human alike) into the projects.



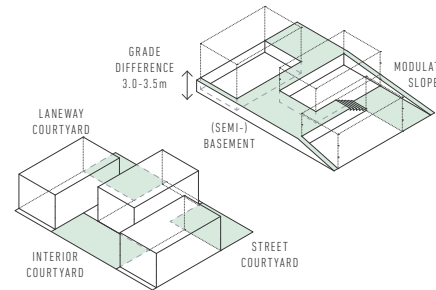
2A DISTRIBUTED DENSITY

Break up building mass into multiple volumes to optimize access to light, ventilation and views, and minimize impact on neighbours.



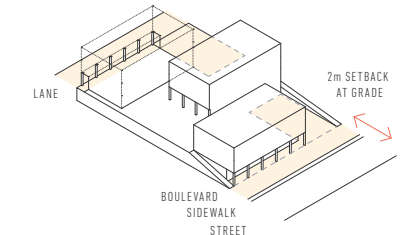
2B POROUS GROUND PLANE

Open up the ground plane with courtyards of varying degree of intimacy and modulate it in response to topography.



2C ACTIVATED BLOCKFACES

Reduce setbacks, create visual transparency at grade level and program the street boulevard.



Tenet 3: [Inter]Facing Things Together

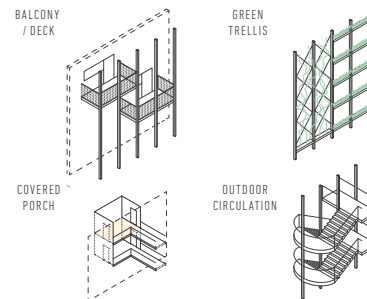
Mediate between different habitats.
architectural & landscape interfaces filter distinct zones and practices of inhabitation

Architectural surfaces are, ironically, often overlooked when addressing larger questions of ecology and sociality—or at best, treated generically in codes. Instead, *Lots In Common* embraces architecture's role in mediating and accommodating difference: using spatial devices to transform potential conflicts into spaces of togetherness and delight. An interface-based code turns density into conviviality.



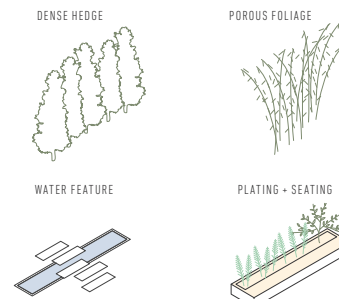
3A INHABITED FACADES

Activate interior-exterior relationships by animating the vertical envelope with circulation, balconies, covered porches or trellises.



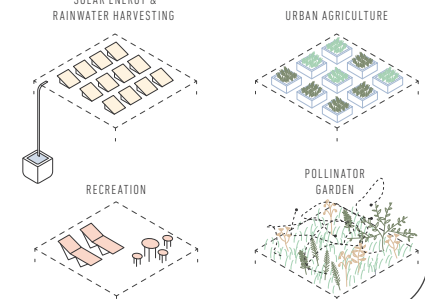
3B LANDSCAPED THRESHOLDS

Create intermediary zones between public and private spheres using landscape elements such as hedges, planting or water features.



3C MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROOFTOPS

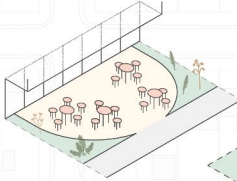
Activate rooftops with recreational activities, urban agriculture, extensive planting or rainwater harvesting.



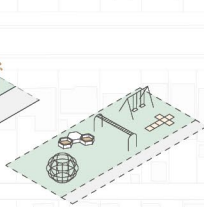
SPATIAL PROTOCOLS FOR THE BLOCK

E KEITH ROAD

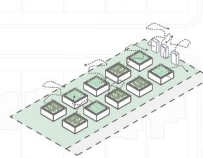
RAIN OR SHINE PORCH
front terrace & expanded sidewalk



SHAPES FOR STAYING IN SHAPE
exercise and play for all ages



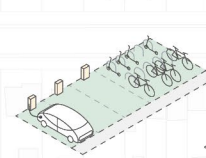
GROW AND BEE TOGETHER
community gardening & apiculture



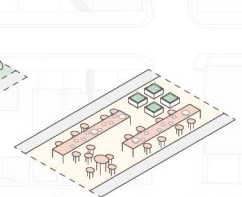
NO-LONGER-LOST STREAM
waterway remediation



TWO WHEELS AND SOME
shared mobility docking station



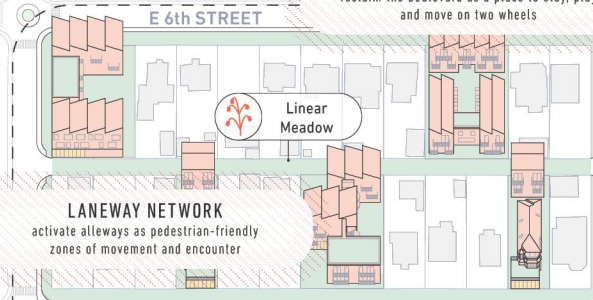
BLOCK/PARTY
street / laneway social makeover



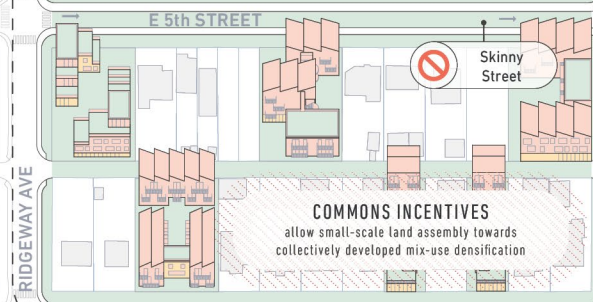
ALPHABET OF COMMONING IN THE PUBLIC REALM

YARDS TO BOULEVARDS

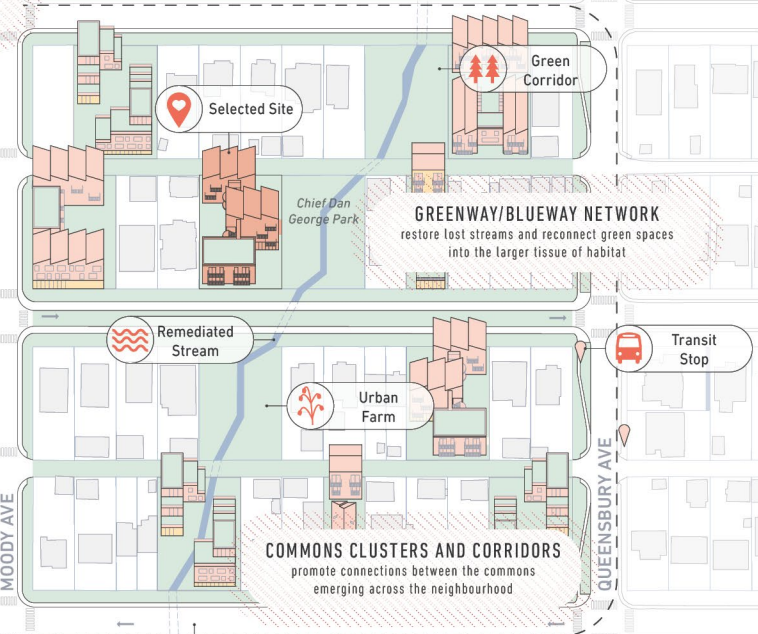
reclaim the boulevard as a place to stay, play and move on two wheels



LANEWAY NETWORK
activate alleyways as pedestrian-friendly zones of movement and encounter



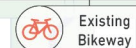
COMMONS INCENTIVES
allow small-scale land assembly towards collectively developed mix-use densification



GREENWAY/BUEWAY NETWORK
restore lost streams and reconnect green spaces into the larger tissue of habitat

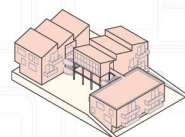
COMMONS CLUSTERS AND CORRIDORS
promote connections between the commons emerging across the neighbourhood

4-BLOCK STUDY AREA



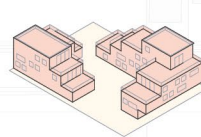
COURTYARD CONDENSER

FSR 1.5 lot coverage 40%
massing staggered bars with courtyards
residences diverse mix of households
mixed uses co-op businesses & commons



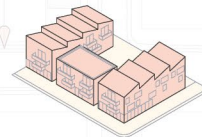
TERRACED TOWNHOUSE

FSR 1.2 lot coverage 50%
massing L-shaped, stepped with roof decks
residences family-oriented + shared households
mixed uses urban agriculture + crafts



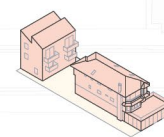
COWORKING CORNER

FSR 1.5+ lot coverage 60%
massing C-shaped with central courtyard
residences diverse mix of households
mixed uses coworking spaces + corner stores



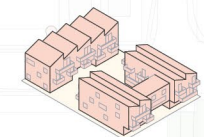
LIFTED LODGE + LANEWAY LOFTS

FSR 1.0+0.5 lot coverage 40+20%
massing raised up house + lane-facing bar
residences family-oriented + single-person suites
mixed uses family-run business + SOHO studios



SHARED SOCIAL SPACES

FSR 1.5 lot coverage 50%
massing U-shaped block
residences shared households + assisted living
mixed uses neighbourhood community centre



ALPHABET OF MIXED-USE DENSIFICATION

Urban Design Gestures

In response to (and incorporating) the five key principles of Missing Middle 2018, *Lots in Common* proposes five additional urban design and planning principles underlying this sharing network:

1. **Commons Incentives** relax zoning codes for groups of citizen-owners creating commons-oriented buildings that are generous to the community.
2. **Yards to Boulevards** recasts the space of the street edge, front yard, and municipal easement as a multifunctional zone for living, making, and growing.
3. **The Laneway Network** renews the space of the lane as it densifies, using it as the new centre of informal, shared neighborhood activities.
4. **Greenway/Blueway Networks** use ecology to drive urban form, creating pedestrian and habitat corridors linking parks or along daylighted streams.
5. **Commons Clusters and Corridors** incentives encourage new commons-oriented development to cluster along these corridors — encouraging individual commons projects to aggregate into a larger network of commoning.

Towards a Network of Commoning

Via bridging institutions such as a prospective 'Commoners Corps', individual groups of commoners are able to harness resources and receive expert guidance through the process of development. As these projects combine into a larger system of common space, a diverse ecology of living sprouts forth at the block and neighborhood scale. Paired with membership access or a digital overlay, neighbors could partake in the latest happenings in the network. The whole becomes more than the sum of its parts.

From the balcony a lace of reflection obscures the renewed life in the unearthed stream. The threads weave into the mountains beyond, knotted up with the stream of goods that feed the city: lumber, water, salmon.

While the route rarely changes, the sights always do. A jaunt through the network of lanes provides a glimpse into neighbours' varied lives. It's a chance to see familiar faces and watch gardens grow. This assemblage of life—of shared activities, spaces, and memories—provides the foundation for a convivial community.

A larger lattice of mobility supplants the homogeneity of the street grid. Foxes warily amble beneath bushes pruned to the tops of their ears. Pollinators flutter and flit between clusters of vibrant flowers. Milled wooden shutters stutter in the wind, sheltering both humans in the loft and bats in the eco-jamb.

Along the block, backyards become speckled with infill structures, creating a space that is both fragmented and continuous: wood-working abuts a fire-pit platform for coffee roasting and barbecues, which opens onto another neighbor's lavish greenhouse. Elderly retirees like to have breakfast here, playing cards and garnishing their eggs with the fresh herbs in reach as conveniently as salt and pepper shakers.

Teacher:
Afternoons of accounting and laborious yet meditative time at the wheel are the mainstays of a pottery hobby-turned-small-business. Leading an evening wheel-throwing class brings in extra income, but sharing skills with others and helping them grow is what makes the time sing.

Student:
Little hands cupped in larger (though hardly more skilled) hands press on the spinning clay. A day of work and school culminates in one more class where both parent and child are students.

TEST FIT: COURTYARD CONDENSER

Harnessing Found Potential

After locating their North Vancouver site and consolidating two parcels under the commons-incentive plan, the first order of business was to embrace the slope of the site. The buildings step downward in height following the slope, creating a varied roofline and a series of terraced gardens. Site specificities fuel architectural expression.

Yards to Boulevards

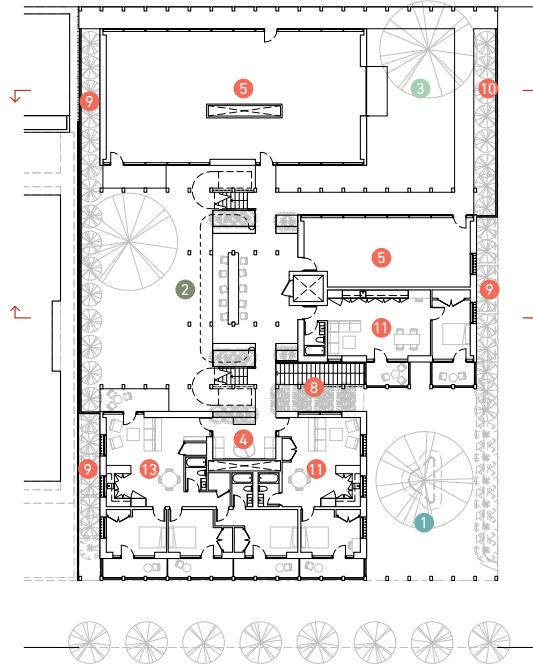
The front edge of the site reclaims underused space from former yards and municipal easements, thickening it into a boulevard. Multiple uses combine in this strip: cafe seating, parking, rainwater gardens, street trees, parklets and more.

Business In The Front, Party In The Back

The three courtyards of the project similarly tie into the larger boulevard, laneway, greenway, and blue-way networks. Their design and programming embraces the wide range of communities that traverse these networks:

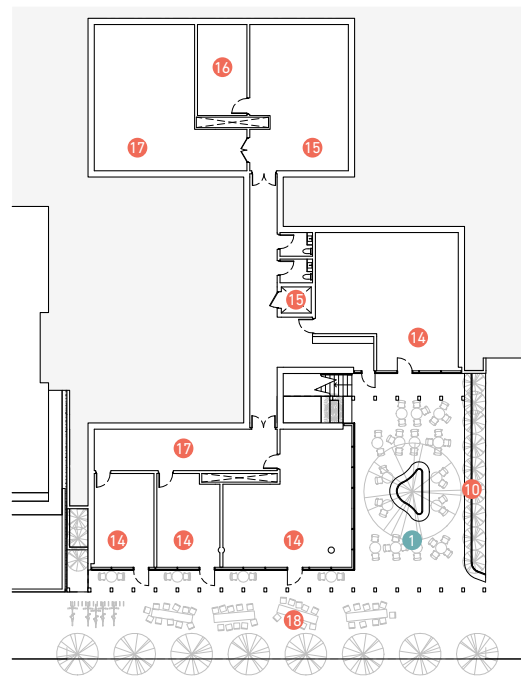
- The **street-facing courtyard plaza** gives space for Simon to get tea with Anupreet when she's biking by on her way back from work.
- The **lane-facing neighborhood courtyard** hosts Theresa's parties or Natalie's yoga classes, while neighborhood passersby (human and animal alike) drop in from the park for a visit.
- The **inner common courtyard** lets Dakota run wild with their preschool pals, while their parents work from home upstairs.
- All three courtyards are scaled, oriented, planted, and programmed to buffer adjacent buildings when needed, while also opening out to embrace fortuitous connections with context.

1. street courtyard (1600 ft²)
2. common courtyard (2000 ft²)
3. lane courtyard (1600 ft²)
4. shared porch (4 @ 160 ft² each)
5. common spaces at courtyards (x2, 2400 ft² total)
6. common spaces at upper levels (x2, 930 ft² total)
7. roof terrace + garden + solar PV + meadow (2300 ft²)
8. colonnade screen interface
9. vegetated screen interface
10. connections to park
11. 1 bedroom unit (6 @ 600 ft² each)
12. 2 bedroom unit (6 @ 900 ft² each)
13. 3 bedroom unit + courtyard access (1 @ 1200 ft²)
14. small-format work / commercial space (x4, 2860 ft² total)
15. common services, laundry, elevator, storage (900 ft²)
16. bike lockers (250 ft²)
17. mechanical (1500 ft²)
18. boulevard w/ rain gardens, parking, seating



LEVEL 2 (LANE)

1:550



LEVEL 1 (STREET)

1:550



COMMON COURTYARD



LANE COURTYARD

TEST FIT: COURTYARD CONDENSER

All Up In Your [Inter]Face

The mix of conditions is mediated by a system of architectural interfaces: screens, balconies, colonnades, hedges, planters, bleacher-stairs, and more. The challenges of proximity are transformed into sites for interaction, juxtaposition, and delight.

Thickening the Surfaces

Rather than merely passive objects, building and site elements are treated as *productive surfaces* within systems. Migratory birds refuel in the roof meadow; bees and mushrooms inhabit hedges; stored carbon inhabits mass timber elements; thick envelope walls wrap it all in a cozy insulating blanket.

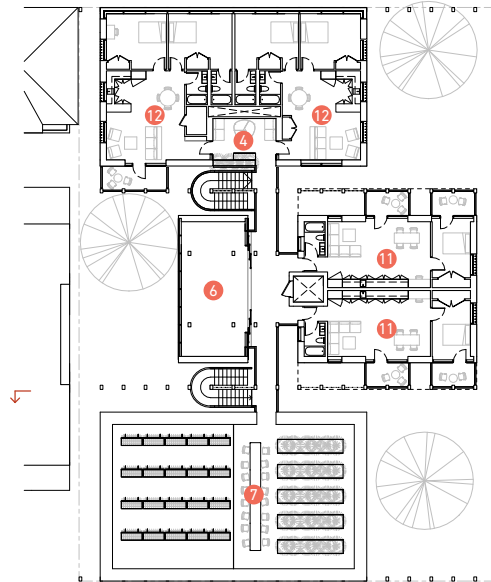
Scales of Commoning

As the residents worked through the design with their architect, they sought out a richly-varied network of common spaces:

- Ground-floor shared spaces allow residents with mobility limitations to join in with ease.
- Shared porches give a space for neighbors to sit, chat, play board games, and entertain visitors outside.
- Open, canopied terrace balconies and exterior corridors overlook the courtyards—often hung with props when the daycare stages a play.
- The indoor common space on the top floor floods with indirect natural light from clerestory windows during morning art class and glows with golden sunset light during parties.
- The harvest table on the rooftop terrace hosts communal meals for the entire building, complete with very local veggies (travel distance: three feet).

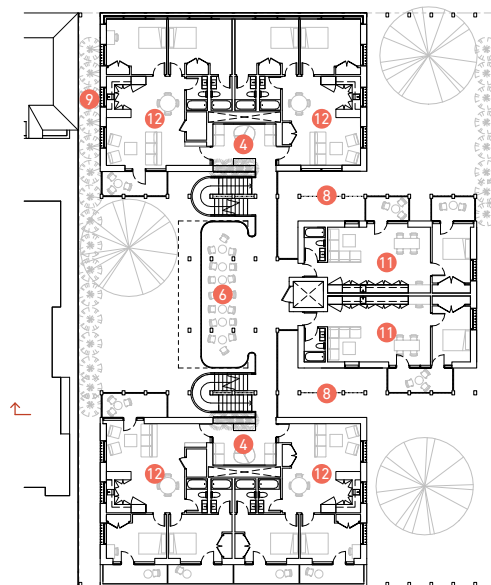
Project Data: FSR: 1.50 Lot coverage: 38%
Setbacks: 1.6m at sides Typ height: 10m

1. street courtyard (1600 ft²)
2. common courtyard (2000 ft²)
3. lane courtyard (1600 ft²)
4. shared porch (4 @ 160 ft² each)
5. common spaces at courtyards (x2, 2400 ft² total)
6. common spaces at upper levels (x2, 930 ft² total)
7. roof terrace + garden + solar PV + meadow (2300 ft²)
8. colonnade screen interface
9. vegetated screen interface
10. connections to park
11. 1 bedroom unit (6 @ 600 ft² each)
12. 2 bedroom unit (6 @ 900 ft² each)
13. 3 bedroom unit + courtyard access (1 @ 1200 ft²)
14. small-format work / commercial space (x4, 2860 ft² total)
15. common services, laundry, elevator, storage (900 ft²)
16. bike lockers (250 ft²)
17. mechanical (1500 ft²)
18. boulevard w/ rain gardens, parking, seating



LEVEL 4

1:550

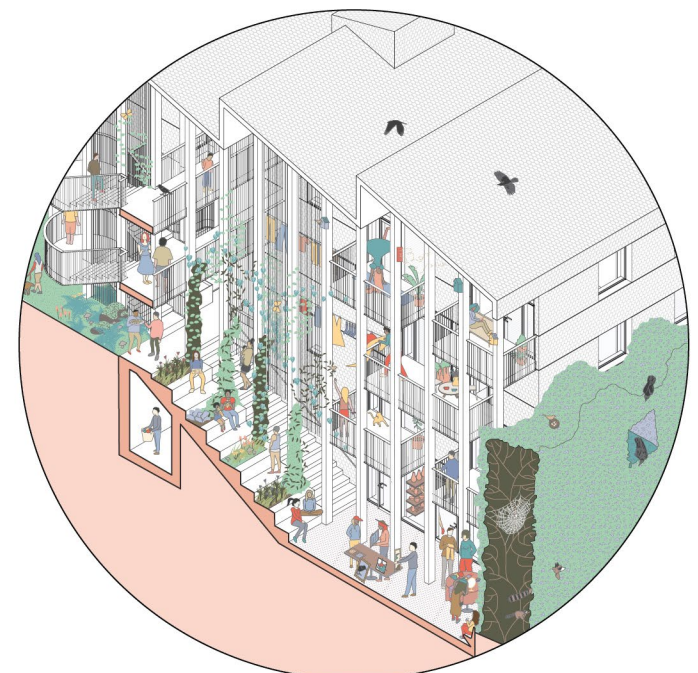


LEVEL 3

1:550



MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROOFS



INTERFACES AND INHABITED FACADES