

# The Ethics of Open Types

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## **Abstract**

A characteristic of the 21st century for some societies is the establishment of better healthcare systems, a reduction in infant mortality, and a growing number of adults living longer. However, these accomplishments can have a downside. For example, people are living longer and therefore there has been an increase in age related conditions such as dementia. At the same time, societies are becoming more aware of the potential increase in demand for high dependency related services, and their impact upon health and social care budgets. Additionally, difficulties in defining a clear dividing line between normal ageing and pathological ageing have led to stigmatisation and segregation of older adults as a social and economic burden. These societal changes have informed only a few architectural examples that attempt to adopt innovative care models. If we consider Architecture as a practical and conscious answer to a posed unconscious problem, these few architectural examples set the basis for a theoretical contribution to architecture through a typological analysis. They are “Open Types” which expand the nascent theoretical discourse on “Open Architecture.”

This paper describes and empirically explores the Rudolf in Helsinki as an open type example. The Rudolf is a senior home with a population of 18 young adults with mental impairments; 50 older adults with later stages of dementia; 52 older adults with early stages or no mental or physical impairments, and four young adults/university students. By welcoming a renewed investigation of Aristotelian ethics, open types promote multidisciplinary, collaborative and socially inclusive design principles, and thereby order as a result. Consequently, the analysis will introduce an approach to ethics that is concerned with the notion of dwelling that emphasises the value of the common. This allows a work of architecture and ageing to reject their medicalisation while to reveal new forms of collective life.

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