

**hybrid**  
**HOUSING**

**A CONTEMPORARY BUILDING TYPE  
FOR MULTIPLE RESIDENTIAL & BUSINESS USE**

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# hybrid HOUSING

## A CONTEMPORARY BUILDING TYPE FOR MULTIPLE RESIDENTIAL & BUSINESS USE

*Sherry Ahrentzen, Ph.D.*

### ABSTRACT

This report documents 100 cases of a re-emerging building type: hybrid housing, or residential structures intentionally designed to contain both residential and business space, and in which residents occupy and manage both spaces. Major considerations in the design and construction of such housing are identified. Each of the 100 homes, many with floor plans, is described. An extensive typology of hybrid housing is included. This project was sponsored by the Structures and Buildings Systems Program of the National Science Foundation.

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# *Executive Summary*

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The intent of this report is to make the invisible visible.

In newspapers and the popular press we see references to mixed-use housing, house-over-the-shop, live/work space, workshop homes — all labels of the same building type in which occupants both live and work. In this report I refer to this functional building type as *hybrid housing*:

a residential structure which contains both residential *and* business spaces and activities; residents of that structure occupy and manage both spaces; and such housing is intentionally designed to incorporate both spaces.

Today's home-based workforce is primarily accommodated in residences designed almost exclusively for residential functions. Yet recent surveys reveal that many households, when looking for a new home, search for residences that will also provide compatible work settings. Increasingly, housing developments are intentionally designed to address this new live/work situation of a growing number of American households.

This report documents the existence of such housing. It does not include a census of such homes, but rather provides material which justifies and demonstrates the prevalence and diversity of this re-emerging housing type. This report represents the efforts of a planning study to locate examples of such housing, describe them, and classify these houses according to a typology which reflects both the uniqueness of and diversity within this new housing form.

There are seven sections to this report. Section One offers the purpose of the study. Section Two establishes the relevancy and need of examining and documenting this re-emerging housing type which is likely to be affected by prevailing demographic and employment patterns in this country. Major considerations involved in the design and construction of such housing are contained in Section Three: such considerations involve occupational requirements and safety, privacy and social connection, flexibility and adaptability, tax laws, zoning and land use regulations,

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building codes, and labor laws. A sample of 100 hybrid houses was located and annotated. A listing of these projects is provided in Section Four. A typology of hybrid housing was developed, based on floor plan, location of work space to other rooms in the house, and circulation patterns. An explanation of the typological system is provided in Section Five. A detailed description of each of the 100 homes, many with floor plans, follows in Section Six. Section Seven offers some thoughts and ideas on future directions. The methodology for the study as well as other informational sources and explanations are located in the various appendices.

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# Acknowledgements

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Making the invisible visible is no easy or solitary task. In initially locating numerous examples of hybrid houses in magazines and books, and those that turned out not to be such, I was assisted by Wendy Garber. Wendy Meister's relentless telephone pursuit of the architects and owners of these many structures made me want to designate her an alternate "P.I." — private eye — of this study. Kristen Day made life easier — and this report considerably more readable — by her keen ability to describe the essential features of these dwellings. Both Wendy Meister and Kristen Day were invaluable compatriots as we hammered out the typology and classified these houses. Kyung Ho Lee graciously consented to draw a number of floor plans when he really had more pressing plans of his own. Kasia Gawlik will probably never forgive me for inadvertently crashing an earlier draft of this report, suddenly making invisible — and unretrievable — 100 pages of text and graphics. I appreciate her patience with me as well as her strong graphic eye and expertise in setting up the layout of this report.

In addition, the National Science Foundation, the major sponsor of this planning study, gave their ear and eventual support to my initial pleas for the need to document and examine this re-emerging building type. The Graduate School at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as well as the Center for Architectural and Urban Planning Research, while sometimes making my life miserable with their complex accounting regulations and budgetary systems, generously provided assistance in funding research assistants to help me with this project.

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