

PART II - The house along the street: types and trends in home space



Source: by author



THE VISIONARY HOUSE

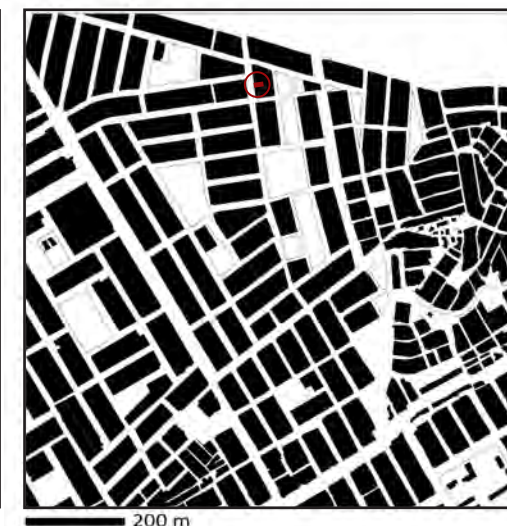
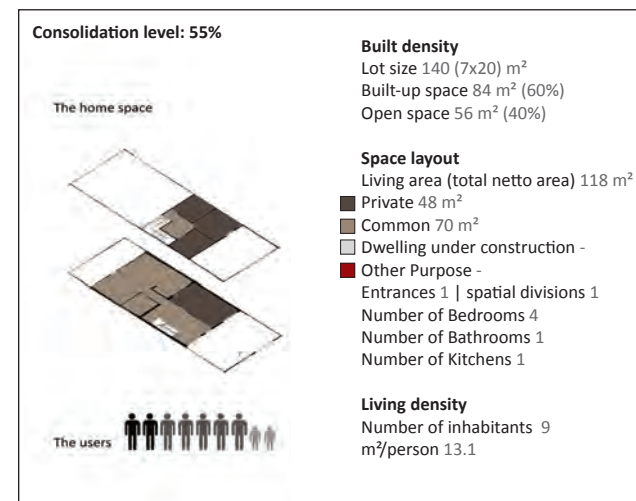
The sun rises above the hills of Pampas de San Juan and the house of Nora Jesusi and her husband Wilberto slowly wakes up. Rays of sunlight find their way to the small openings in the corrugated sheet ceiling and the walls made out of wooden panels, cardboard covered with plastic sheets and other material the family gathered together to build the house. The silence is broken by the barking street dogs. A rooster crows and a baby cries. There is the sound of several televisions that are turned on. A mobile phone rings. You can even hear the eggs frying in the pan in the kitchen below and the lady from next-door singing along with the *saya* music on the radio.

The house of Nora and Wilberto is small and consists of two floors. In contrast to many other houses in the surrounding area that are directly facing the street this house lays back from it because of a small front patio. A large tree grows promptly in the middle of it. Its branches rise above the small dwelling, providing a little shade, though in summer the family will cover the patio with a large white plastic sheet for shelter against the bright sunlight. The patio is enclosed by an old brown entrance gate and a smaller wooden door beside it that creaks when it opens. On

it visitors knock when passing by, a knock that is soon answered by a voice coming from the house calling out *Quien?* The door can only be closed from the inside. There is no need to close it from the outside. Of the large family, there will always be someone at home. In total, nine children and six grandchildren live in the house. Four of the nine children moved out to live with their in-laws, though they all still live close by and many of them can be found in their parents' home almost every day. Besides that Nora prefers to always have people around the house to prevent burglars to enter.

The house is mainly built with money the parents earned through the years, with the exception of a small loan to finance the roof. The children did not invest much in their home, though they do contribute to the payment of monthly bills, including electricity, water, cable television and Internet connection. Occasionally they buy luxury products for their mum and dad. The computer, washing machine and refrigerator that are shared by all household members were bought with money the children gathered.

The ground floor is partially built in durable materials and covered with a concrete roof that was constructed about ten years ago. Big



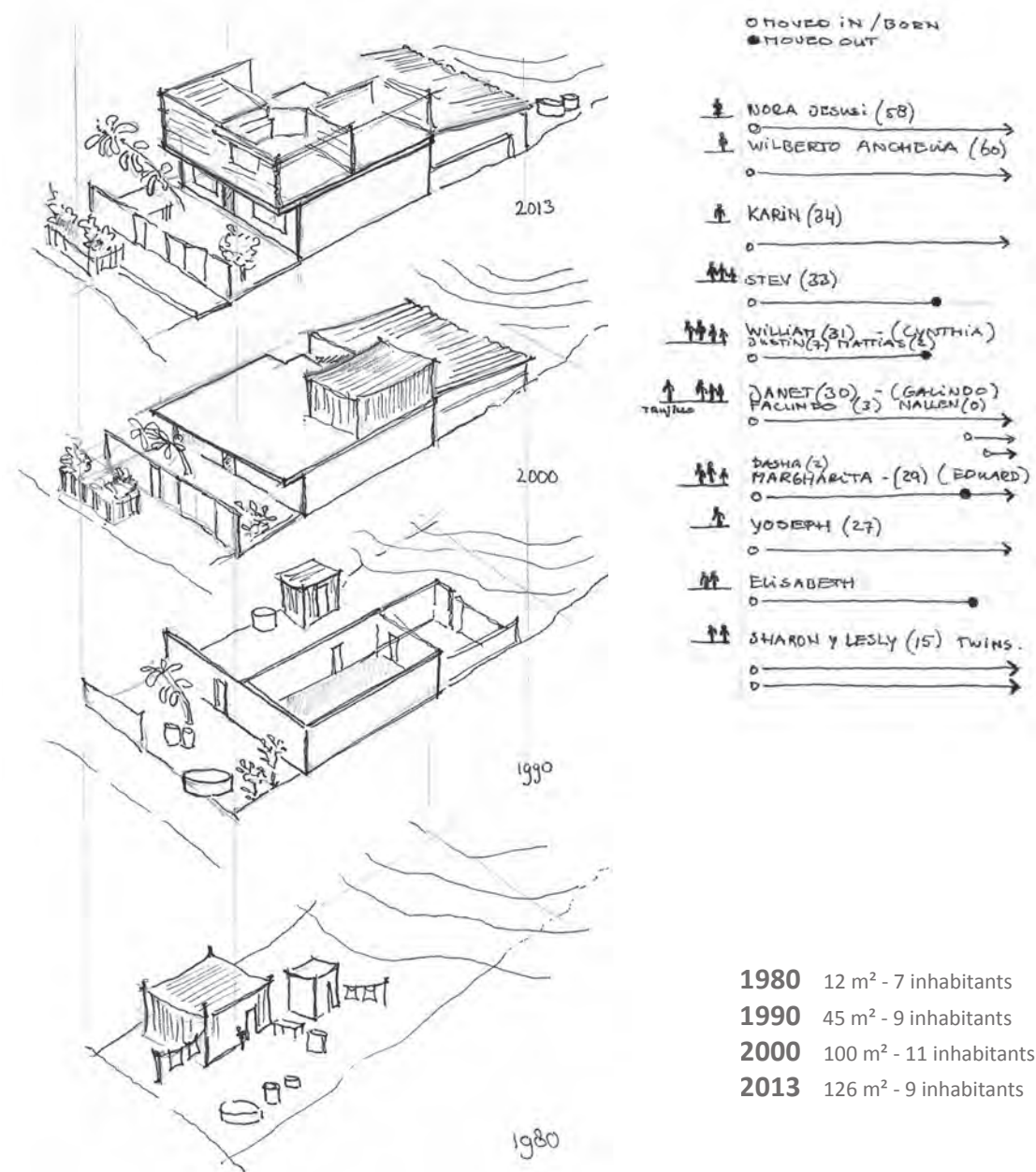
openings perforate the front façade, painted in a glaucous green. For the time being the windows are filled up with wooden panels, until there is money available to complete the finishing. The back part of the house does not contain a consolidated roof yet. Semi transparent corrugated sheets cover the passageway linking front and back. The front part, consisting of a spacious hallway and a bedroom quarter is in stark contrast with the improvised spaces that lie behind it. The provisional kitchen and capacious living area under the temporary roof have a sandy floor and are enclosed by walls partially built in concrete that are further closed up with roofing sheets and wooden panels. At the backside of the house a small exterior space is found that holds a pen for breeding ducks. This part of the plot is left empty since building on this part of the plot it more complex due to the steep slope implying the necessity to first construct a retaining wall. The staircase in the hallway leads to a compact upper floor covered by a corrugated sheet roof. Wooden cardboard partitions distribute the small bedroom spaces.

Nora and Wilberto built their house without any official plan or technical assistance. Although it is lagging behind in its consolidation, they have great ideals of how the house will develop in the future. While none of the

interior spaces in the entire house have a finishing yet, Nora dreams of her beautiful kitchen complete with modern equipment and spacious quarters with painted walls and tiled floors. Of the nine children, the first-born daughter sketched out a proposal for the family's dwelling. The patio will be kept and from it a newly planned staircase will lead to the upper floor that is bound to be twice as large as it is today. Here either the children can build their own private apartment or the spaces can be rented out to others. The family is highly creative and imaginative in envisioning the construction of their house of the future. However little of their dreams are represented in the actual home improvement process. What is left behind is the small visionary house where the large family gathers together in improvised spaces while they keep dreaming about future possibilities.



Site plan scale 1:200



House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





THE COURAGEOUS HOUSE

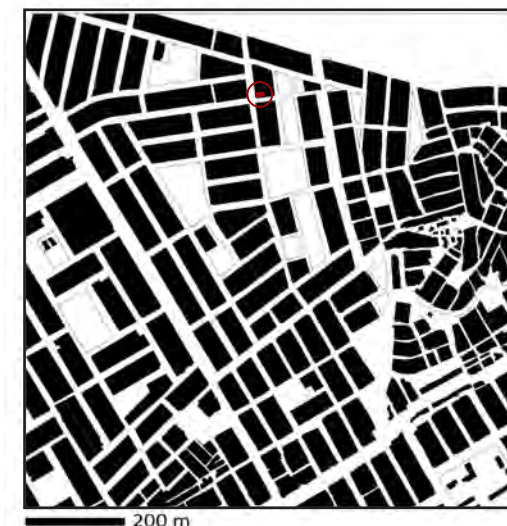
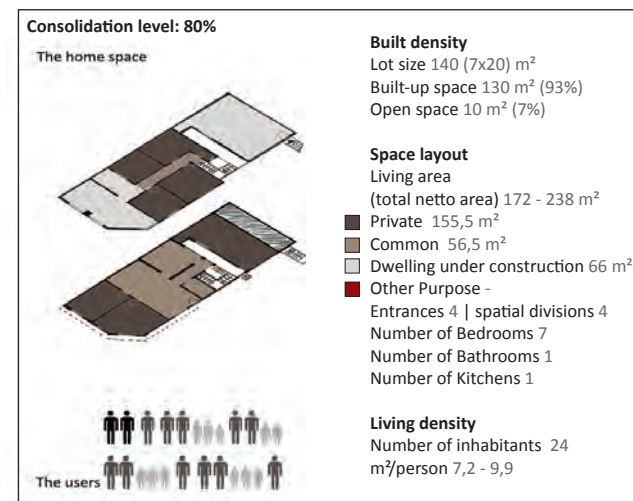
A few houses down the block a young man is putting up a banner on the façade of a two-storey house. “*Apoyo el NO*”, it says. The young man is Alexander, one of señor Aleman and señora Flores’ ten children. The house of the Aleman family, painted in pale orange and sharp white, is situated at the corner of the block along the main road that runs all the way up to the hill. It is the perfect place to look out over the street and the surrounding area. During the day looking for shelter from the sweltering heat, señor Aleman can be found here, observing the neighbourhood from under the small tree in front of the house.

The house covers nearly the entire plot. Only a narrow space containing a staircase and a blue tiled sink for the laundry is left open. It separates the original dwelling from the quarter adjacent to it.

The house is split up both horizontally and vertically into different apartments, some completely detached while others are still connected with additional living areas. From the street the dwelling can be accessed through four entrances, although one is not in use anymore. The upper floor protrudes slightly

over the narrow exterior alleyway lying at the corner, shading the space that guides to the main entrance. Behind the front door, which is usually found wide open during the day, lies the living room. In recent years this area has been perfectly finished with a decorated tile floor, plastered walls matching the colours of the floor and an outer façade. Under the tree further up the steep road lies a small staircase that leads directly to a separate room on the second floor that is still under construction. A third door located in the middle of the house gives access to the small open space in the heart of the dwelling and connects to the interior staircase and the rooms on the upper floor. Señor Aleman likes silence to read his books. This was one of the reasons he encouraged his children to make the additional entrances to the house they share.

The family invaded the land in the early 1980s. When Señor Aleman and his wife Lucia settled in their straw shelter of no more than twelve square meters they already had nine children. Soon after the invasion the land was subdivided into individual plots after which the people could start building their homes. For señor Aleman, who was the community leader, the house was not always the first thing to worry about. Aleman could see the houses slowly rising around him and the straw transforming



first to wood and then to brick, while his own home was still in its ‘incipient stage’. Aleman and his wife remember well how bricks were piled up in front of the houses along the not yet paved dusty roads, waiting till the self-builders had money to buy cement and could continue the home construction. On other occasions the people had different priorities and the bricks remained there lying in the shade of the house. The Alemans were fortunate to obtain a lot in the corner that allowed them to build the various entrances and several large windows in the longitudinal façade. These ventilate the quarters that lie behind it and allow for daylight to enter in abundance.

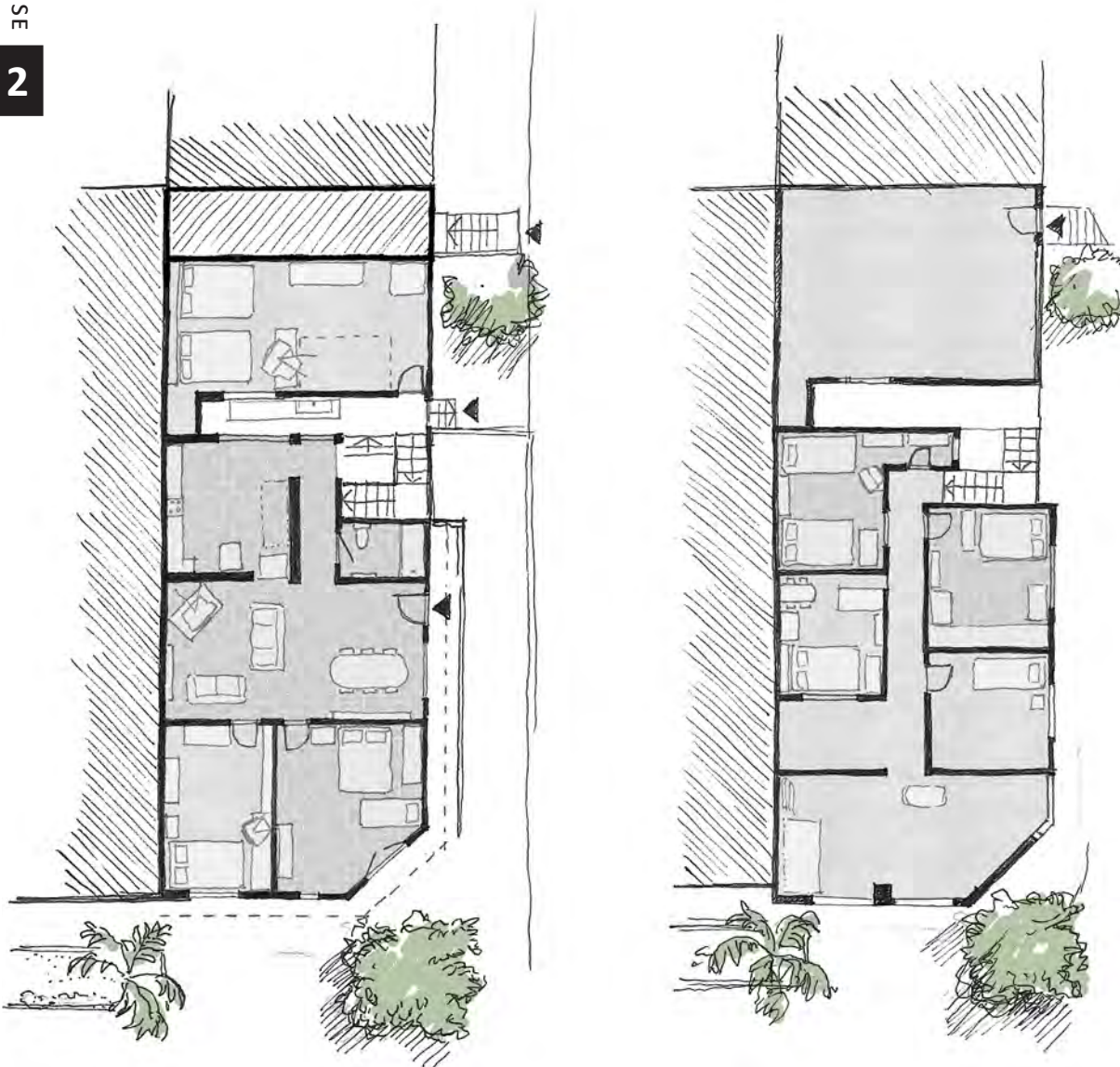
While the family increased in number and the children grew, Aleman’s house expanded in parallel. It synchronically adapted to the family’s growth. In the early 1990s, ten years after the families invaded the land, the straw house had been transformed into the initial dwelling that would represent the next stage in home improvement. By that time Aleman’s children were becoming teenagers and the house soon would become too small for all of the ten children. In the following years three of the children moved out but the other seven stayed. The second-generation members that remained in the house started to collect their savings to invest in their home. With the

additional input of some loans they continued to expand the house. Eventually the second floor was built. While the parents were putting most effort in building the house, the children took over though the parents remained the official owners.

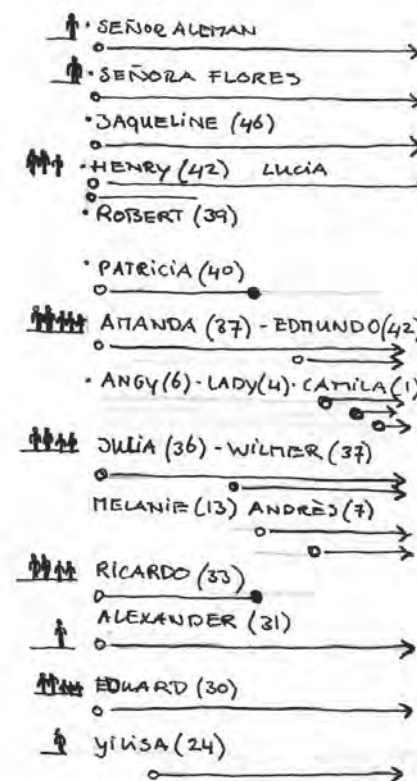
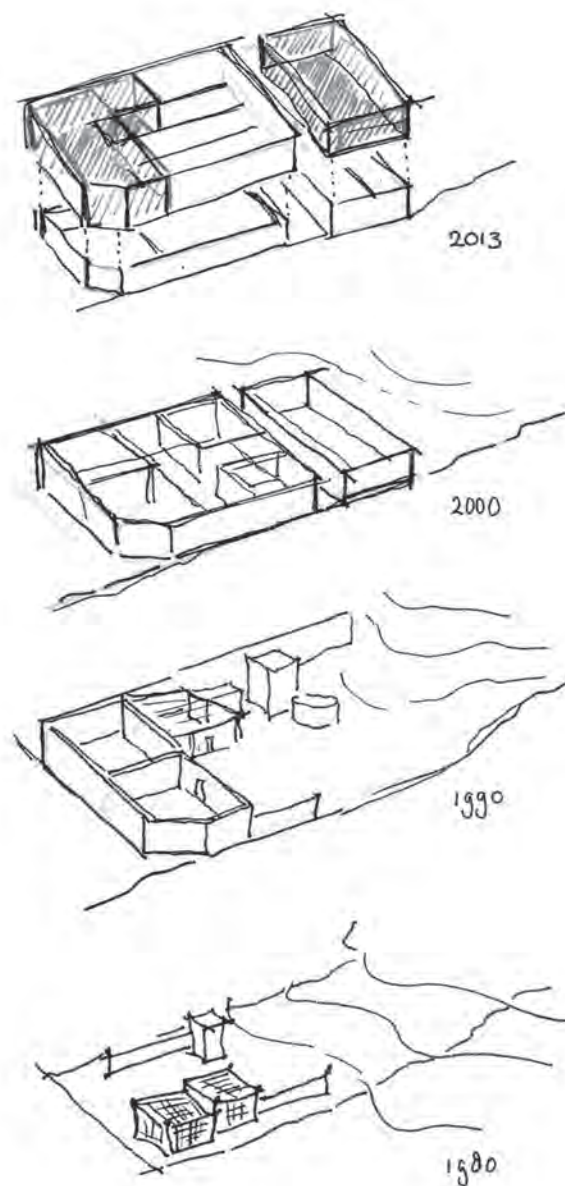
Over the past ten years not only the house doubled in size, but the family extended considerably as well. By 2013 it counts twenty-four family members sharing one home space. Husbands and wives of the second generation moved in and numerous third generation children are growing up under the same roof. During this period the second-generation members invested in the finishing of the ground floor living area though their main concern was now focused on the upper floor. On this floor each one has constructed their own single room apartment. Some of the rooms already have complete flooring and finished walls and windows and are completely furnished. In other spaces only the walls are up though the rooms are furnished and immediately inhabited. The quarters built last still need roofing and are not used yet. Until new capital can be invested these incomplete spaces function as an extension of the small individual living units built by the Alemans’ children.

All efforts that were made towards home improvement, first by the parents and later by the children, were rewarded. Today this results in a spacious and highly consolidated home built without the help of any contractor or professional builder. The tremendous

family size did not scare off the Alemans. With great determination and family cohesion they together built the courageous house. It is one of the most creative results of a fully self-managed house in the neighbourhood of Pampas.



Site plan scale 1:200



1980	12 m ² - 11 inhabitants
1990	50 m ² - 12 inhabitants
2000	110 m ² - 13 inhabitants
2013	238 m ² - 24 inhabitants

House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





THE STEADY HOUSE

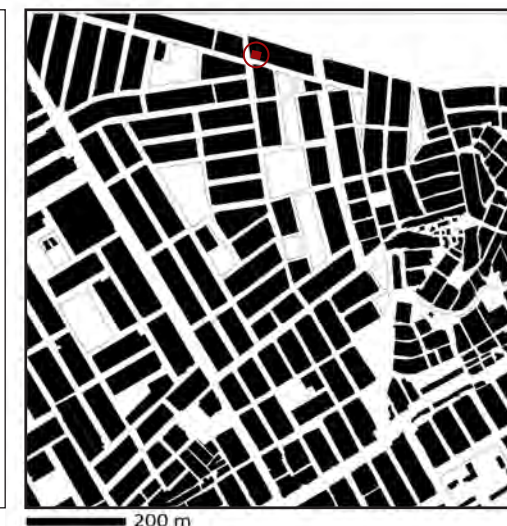
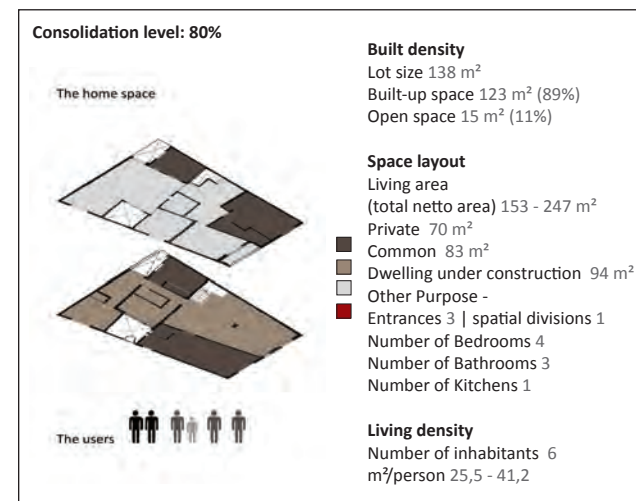
Longitudinal blocks in the urban fringe enclose the northern area of Pampas, neighbouring the open strip of land reserved for the power pylons that supply almost all homes in the larger district with electricity. In the inner corner of one of the fringe blocks stands a corpulent edifice offering an introverted cement façade to its surroundings, but closing off all glimpses of life inside the house. Its shape differs from the surrounding homes due to the squared shape plot on which the house is built. Two voids ventilate the interior spaces and bring in the light.

Sandra and Cecilio Flores procured the plot at the beginning of the 1980s. Like other families that settled in the area, the young Peruvian couple lived in a straw squat until they obtained their individual land titles several years after the invasion.

Upon arrival in Pampas the oldest daughter Magaly was still a baby of only a few weeks. Several years after Sandra gave birth to a son named Samuel. Before Samuel was born his father Cecilio had already constructed two extra rooms with a separate kitchen and a bathroom that were then connected to the living room combined with a sleeping area.

Along the years the straw mats gradually vanished and newly built brick quarters popped up in the large corner plot. The well-organized parents both worked since their early years. They would always keep close track of their expenditures setting aside small amounts that were reserved for future investments in the house. All the savings went directly to home improvement, which is built without any loans or external funding. At the end of the 1980s a professional builder was contracted to make the outline and plans for the Flores' future that cost them a considerable amount of money. Despite the fact that the architectural plans for a fully constructed house consisting of two floors was already on the table in 1988, final realization took much longer. Home extensions and transformations followed an incremental pattern of investment, where small amounts of personal savings were employed.

Nevertheless the overall process of home consolidation, in which first the family and later professional scholars built up the house, is depicted in a linear trajectory of progression in which the volume of the house would increase constantly, doubling in size throughout every passing decade. Meanwhile the family increased moderately with a third child born ten years after Samuel. The family has further extended recently with the husband of Magaly

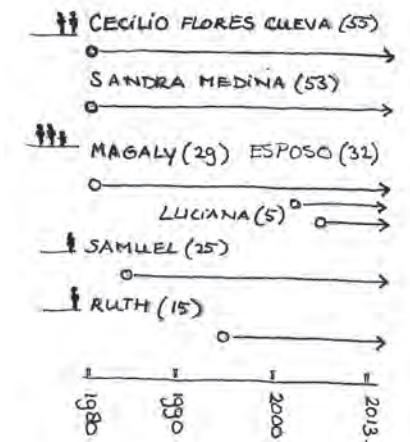
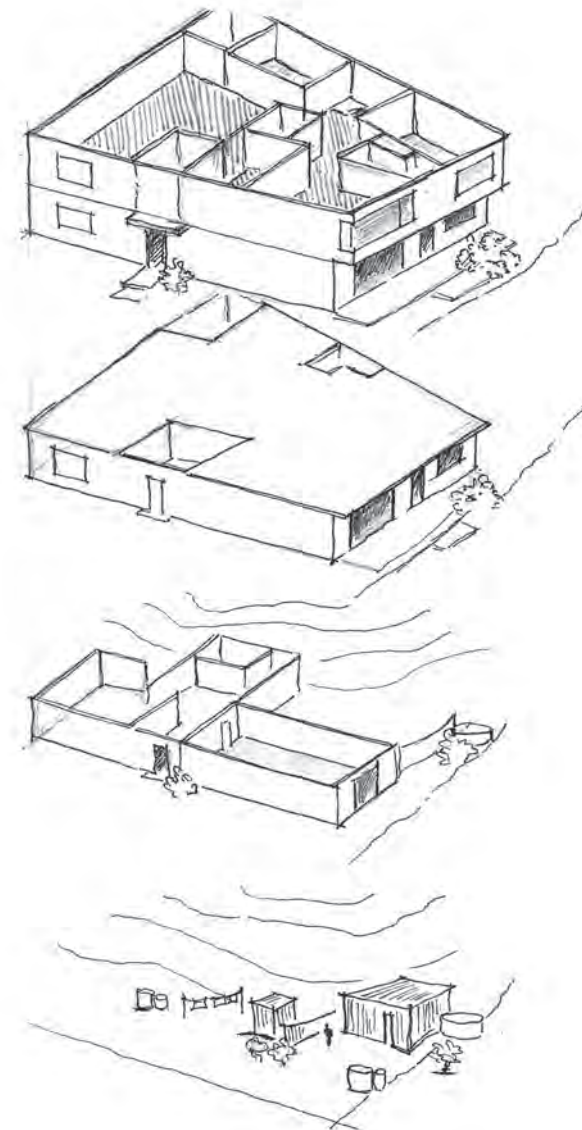


moving in and the couple's first child born soon after. The second generations claimed a part of the second floor and the parents correspondingly moved to a more comfortable bedroom space with a private bathroom on the upper floor. The latter is accessed through a concrete stairway positioned at the heart of the ground floor.

The ground floor, made up of several consolidated living room spaces, is connected to the street w by two doorways slicing through the thick outer walls. The corner plot offers many opportunities to create numerous private entrances, yet the family chose not to split up their home. While the household is now made up of multiple families sharing the house, the dwelling remains a single-family home in its typology. Throughout more than thirty years of settlement the home developed steadily, giving more and more comfort to Sandra, Cecilio and their small family.



Site plan scale 1:200



1980	10 m ² - 3 inhabitants
1990	70 m ² - 4 inhabitants
2000	123 m ² - 5 inhabitants
2013	247 m ² - 7 inhabitants

House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





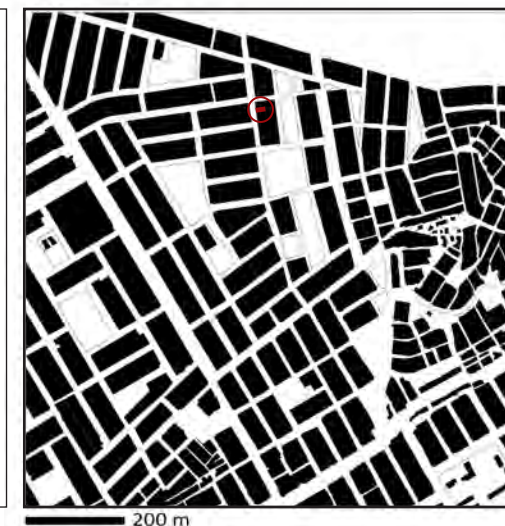
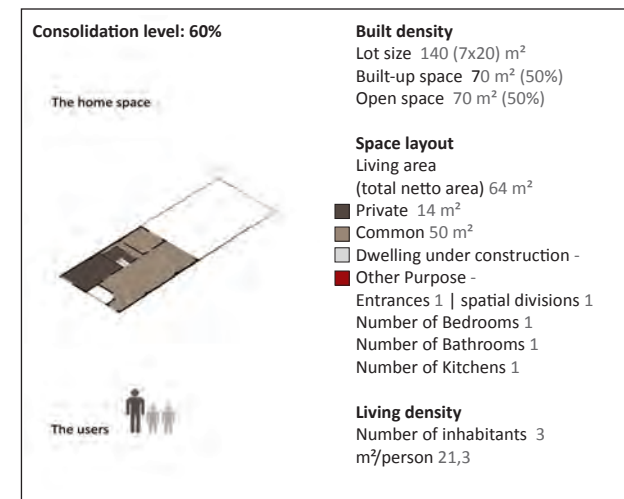
THE FALTERING HOUSE

Brenda's tiny one-storey house stands out against the background of the street where the majority of the houses count at least two floors. The small house appears ambitious while at the same time it features elements, which reveal its faltering past and the difficulties it has constantly tried to overcome. A brand new metal fence door is placed in front of the old worn out front door. The memories of old times cannot be erased; a creaking wooden door will always remind Brenda of the original entrance from where she accessed her home as a child. However it is placed in the background and covered with a layer of current times. Walls are plastered with a fresh coating of cement but small cracks in the original wall, like a wrinkle on a human skin that betray one's age, unfold the fact that the house was there years before these layers were applied. The shiny reflecting windows hide every glimpse of what is happening inside.

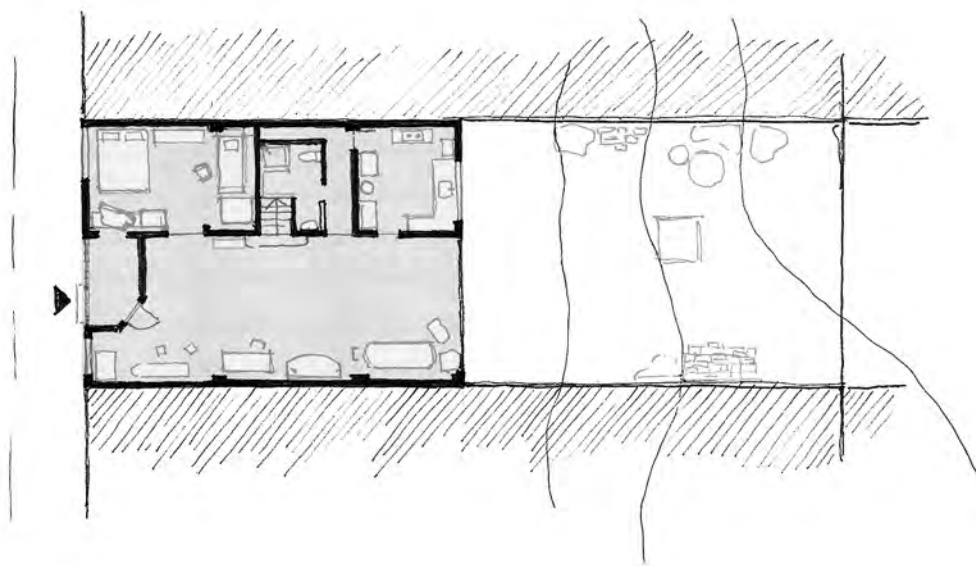
Brenda and her younger sister Sandra arrived as little kids with their parents who invaded the land. Ten years after a third daughter was born and the small brick house of no more than forty square meters was extended to make place for the three daughters growing up. The young parents built an internal stair-

case and with a small loan from a local bank they were able to construct the consolidated roof of the small home. On the additional floor Brenda and Sandra each had their own room their father built with the leftover construction materials. The kitchen was moved to the courtyard at the back of the house and concealed with a corrugated sheet cover. Even though the original quarters on the ground floor had barely been modified they seemed discharged from the previous overcrowded living situation and the rooms suddenly looked incredibly spacious as if they were brand new and freshly built.

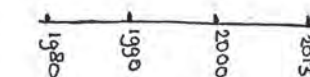
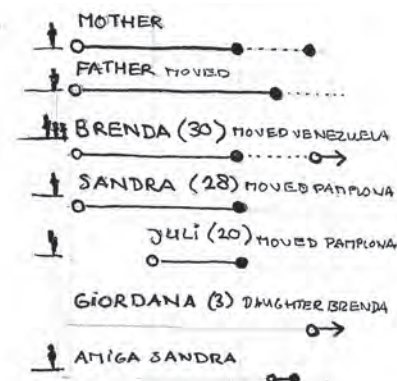
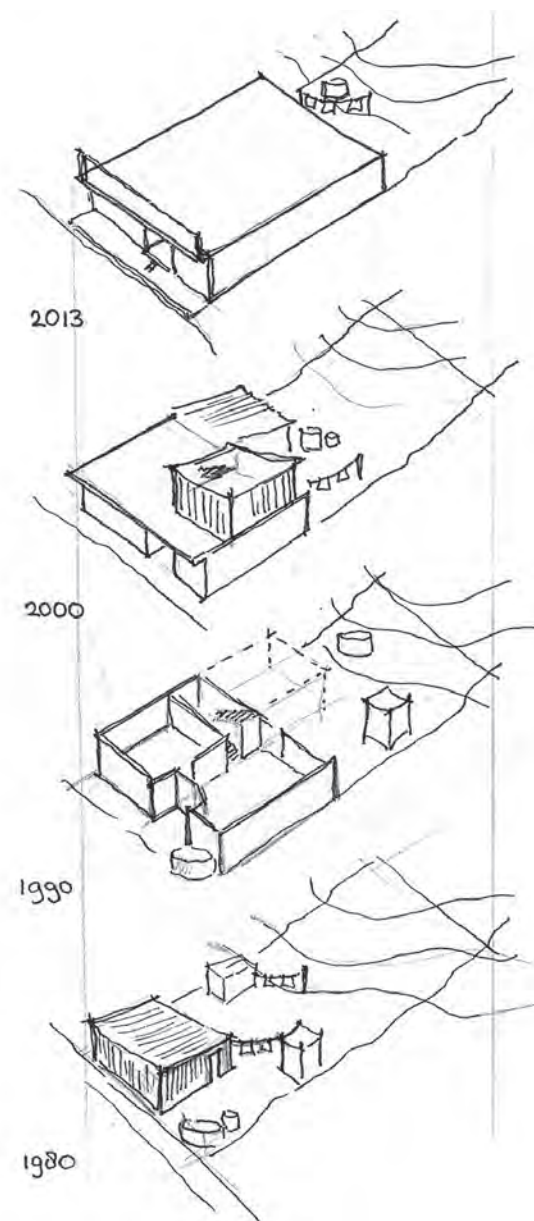
The years that would follow were not as prosperous, neither for the family nor for further home improvement. The parents separated, though they lived together in the house for years after that. Finally, the situation deteriorated to the point that Brenda's mum decided to join her mother in Pamplona, bringing along the youngest daughter. Brenda and Sandra would leave soon after. In the year 2000 Brenda set off to Venezuela and Sandra settled with her mother, grandmother and little sister in Pamplona. The father stayed unaccompanied in the tiny house that was at the beginning of its course towards consolidation, now forcefully interrupted. It got even worse when a few years after the dad was obliged



to move due to his economic and drinking problems, leaving the once so lively house alone. This departure almost caused the owners to lose their property. The mother managed to recover their tenurial rights, though she could not return to live in the original house due to incumbent illness. The house was abandoned for a while, till the mother rented it out to one of Sandra's friends. The little money gained by renting the home could only just cover health costs made necessary by Sandra's mother's worsening health situation. Hospital treatment came nevertheless too late and the poor old lady passed away, forcing the heavily pregnant Brenda to return from Venezuela. Sandra's friend left and Brenda moved back to the house. Her sisters wanted to sell the place, but Brenda disagreed. She recovered the house with the little money she earned in Venezuela and the help of an additional small loan, redistributing and appropriating the spaces. The property rights were passed to the second generation and for the first time local builders were called upon. The spatial layout was redrawn and made into an official plan, which was required for making a home extension. The house was now ready to make a new start after a painful past and faltering growth.



Site plan scale 1:200



1980	15 m ² - 4 inhabitants
1990	40 m ² - 4-5 inhabitants
2000	65 m ² - 1-0 inhabitants
2013	70 m ² - 3 inhabitants

House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





THE EXPEDITIOUS HOUSE

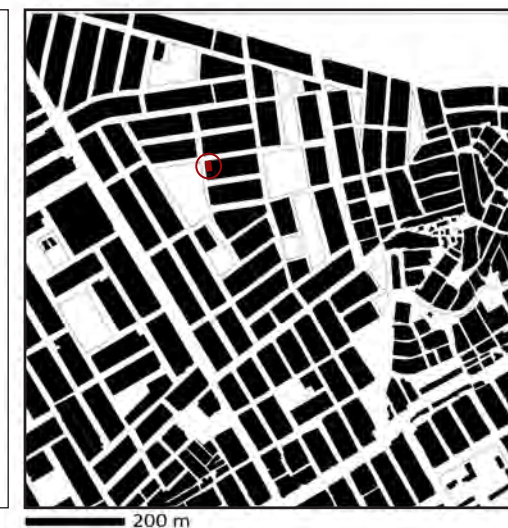
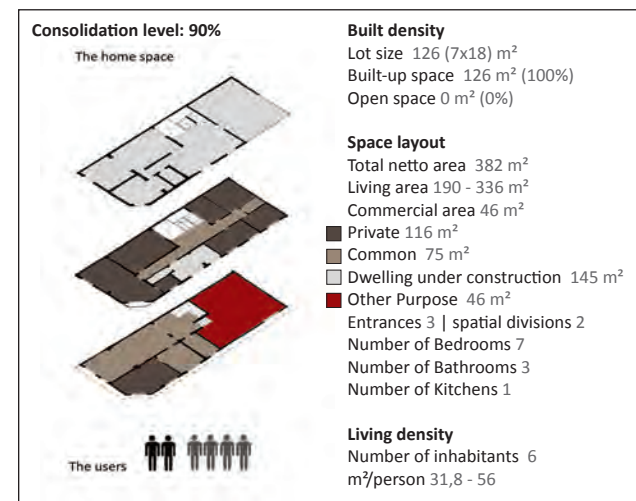
During a hot summer day in Lima hardly any shade place can be found along the road crossing the main uphill street in southern Pampas. Only a small cool and dark void at the corner of a sidewalk relieves passers-by from the bright sunlight. The corner is sheltered by overhanging plants and walled on one side by a three-storey house of brickwork. The bulky brick house stands in front of the football field and allotment garden embedded in the sloping hill. It is owned by señora Vacilia and her second husband Marcelo.

Vacilia arrived in Pampas more than thirty years ago together with her first husband and their four children. The family lived for years in the small straw settlement on the longitudinal corner plot looking out over the wider peripheral areas of Lima with the Pacific Ocean in the distance. The relationship between Vacilia and her first husband did not last long and several years after they settled in Pampas they divorced. Shortly after the two separated, Vacilia remarried a young carpenter called Marcelo. From then on the young couple started transforming the improvised dwelling of straw, sheet and wooden poles into a solid brick house.

Marcelo raised Vacilia's kids as if they were his own children and later the couple would have another son and daughter. The children's growth triggered Marcelo to build an extra room for the boys at the back of the house. Since their childhood the little boys watched their father's skilled movements when making furniture for the house as well as doors and window frames. The beautifully carved woodwork raised their interest in carpentry from early times and they later all followed in their father's footsteps, joining in his carpentry workshop.

The house as found today has transformed tremendously since then. The corner location exposes an outsized part of the brick façade shaping the street walls. The different shades of weathered brickwork express the house's layered stories and leave no doubt of its different phases of development. The ground floor paint is of many years ago. The sun has faded out the paint and softened the original orange colour.

From the street one does not immediately notice the large carpentry workshop behind the immense façade. Only shrill sounds of machinery coming from the narrow opening under reveals Indoor activities. A large living area borders the productive space on the ground



floor separated by a hallway and staircase enlightened by voids in the upper floors. Little light enters through the void that cuts through the three layers of the built-up space. Furthermore the ground floor consists of a separate kitchen and the original bedroom quarter that now functions as a room for occasional visitors since Vacilia and her husband moved in to an oversized new bedroom they built upstairs. Amazingly the old room has hardly been transformed and no finishing has been applied since it was built at the beginning of the 1980s. The past times can strongly be sensed, even by means of the distinctive warm smell of earth that spreads through the space. The greyish brick walls form a large contrast with the decorations and painted walls of the highly consolidated spaces around it as if the house grew all around, over and on top of its original embryo.

The home spaces of *los aires* are distributed among the second generations and the parents, currently all claiming their individual room on the second floor. The third floor is still under construction but is reserved for the second generation in the future. Mum and dad retain their bedroom area with private bathroom in the most prominent and brighter section of the second storey corner, while the youngest children are accommodated in

substandard blind rooms in the back.

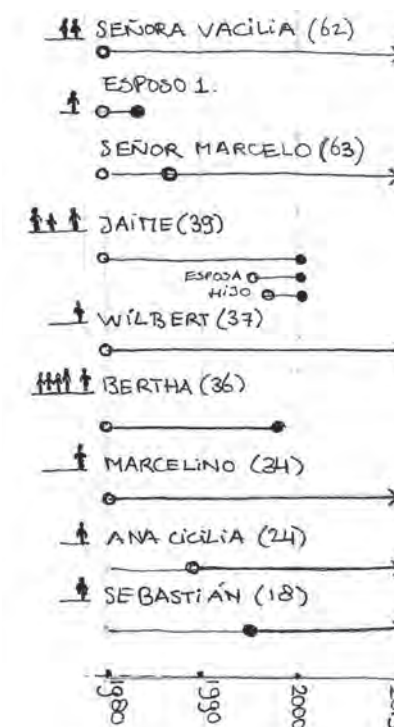
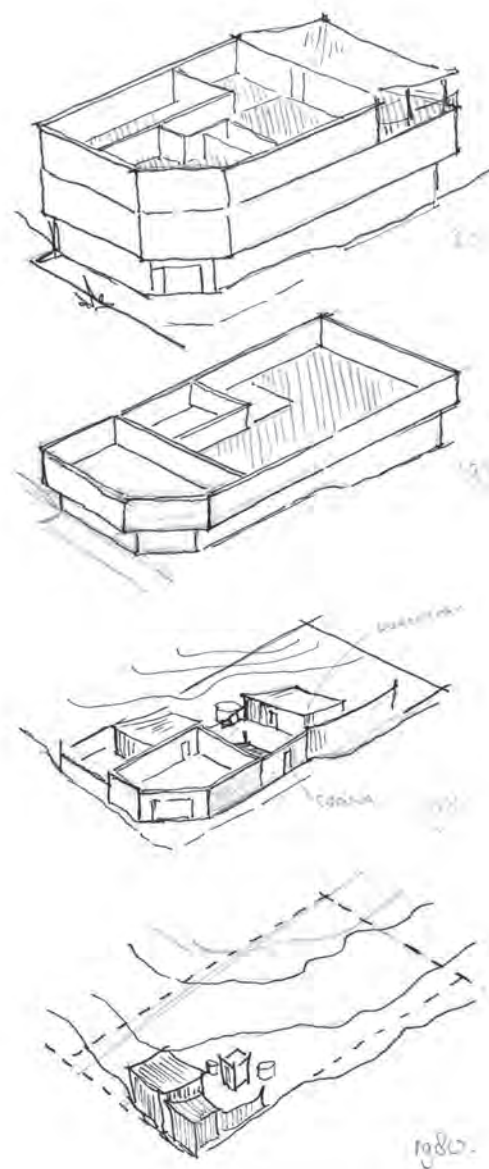
In the kitchen of señora Vacilia's three-storey house an old lady is staring out the window. She is dressed in traditional Peruvian attire, wearing a long dark blue skirt, an old pink jacket and a pretty brown felt hat. The old lady with her weary face is holding her whisk tight, trying to kill every housefly that lands within her reach. The old lady is Vacilia's mother who comes to stay with her daughter from time to time. The lady sits silently at the kitchen table, occasionally murmuring unintelligible words in Quechua or Spanish, and observing the outside world from this kitchen window. She can see the football field where youngsters gather, the brick houses surrounding it, the little shops across the street, people passing by, sometimes not paying attention to the outside world, sometimes waving at her at the kitchen window. Every now and then a small *mototaxi*, with a sharp buzzing sound announcing their approach, runs by the window.

The old lady is bewildered of what she sees and of all that is not in tune with her remembrances. Lately she gets confused more and more and all her observations of the neighbourhood find scarce recognition in her mind, which is filled with memories of the past. Her bewilderment makes her constantly complain



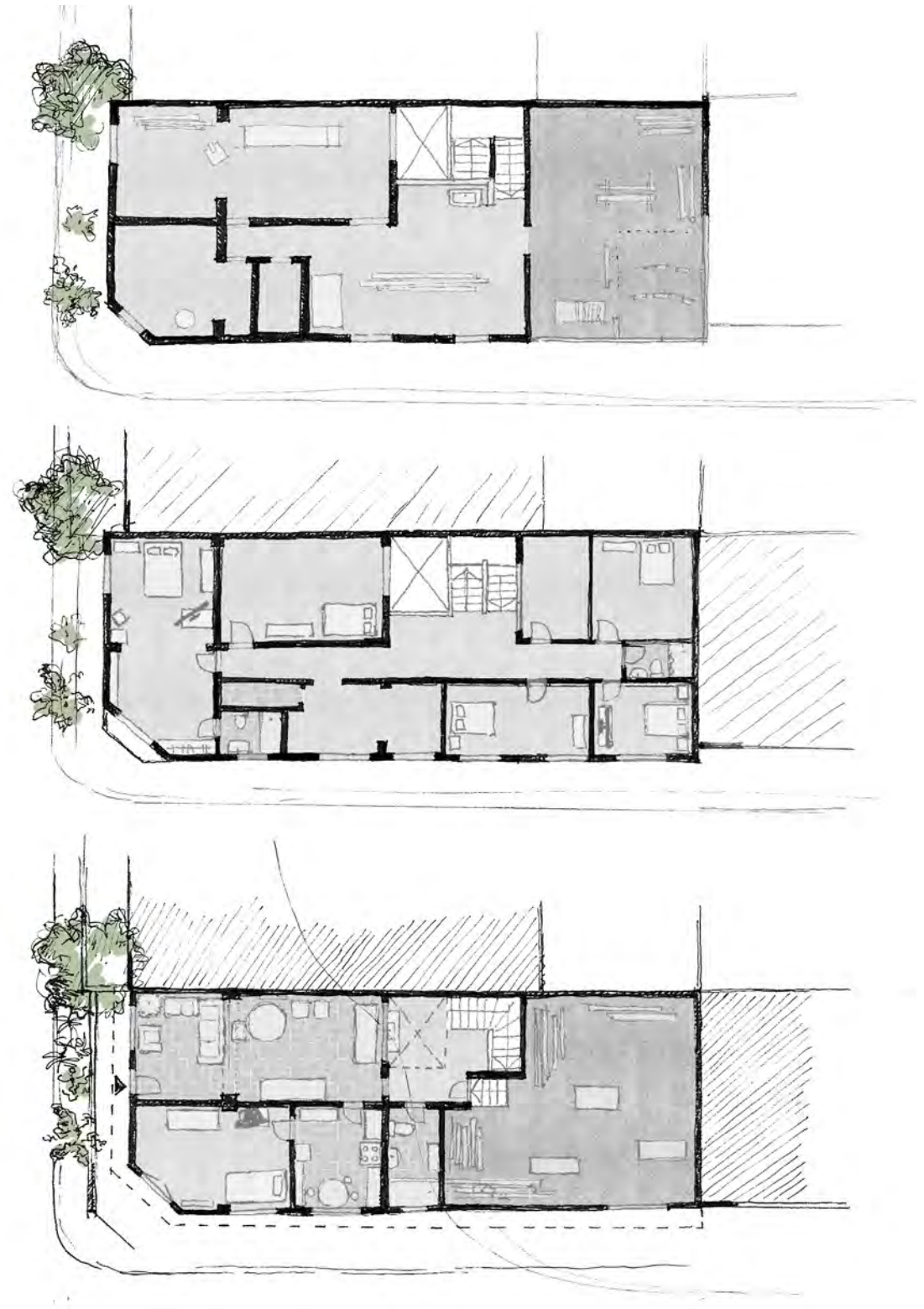
she wants to go back home. She cannot keep track of all that is happening in the fast world, nor with the speedy way in which her daughter Vacilia, her husband Marcelo and his sons are transforming the house.

In recent years the house developed remarkably fast. While at the start of home transformations the father improvised and built the house based on his experience with his skilled talents as a carpenter, the final phases were built with formal construction plans made by an architect. The workshop generated an abundant financial backing since there was a high demand for woodworks in the direct surroundings. The money could be invested back in the house. Apart from that, the family attained financial assistance from a local government program named *techopropio*. With the money generated by the workshop, the support from other second generation workers, the financial assistance from the local government program and additional banking loans the expeditious house could grow at a speed that hardly no other house in Pampas could keep up with.



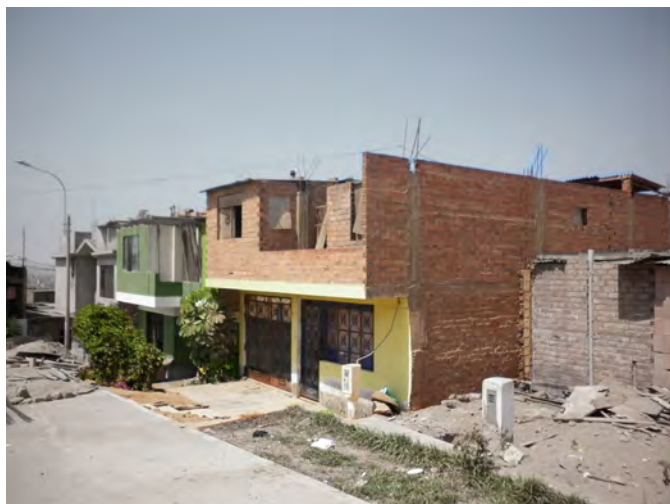
1980	14 m ² - 6 inhabitants
1985	50 m ² - 6 inhabitants
1995	250 m ² - 10 inhabitants
2013	336 m ² - 6 inhabitants

House trajectory vs. Life trajectories



Site plan scale 1:200





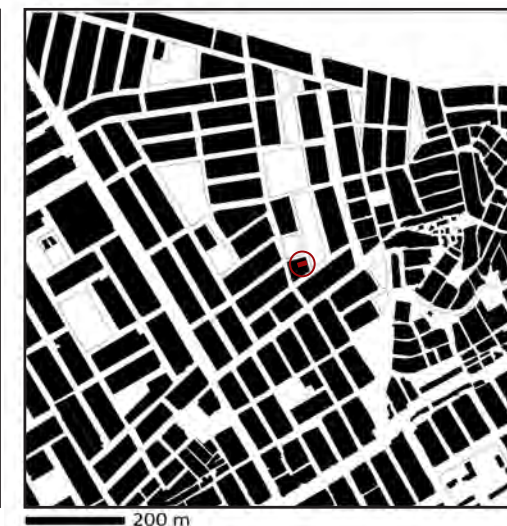
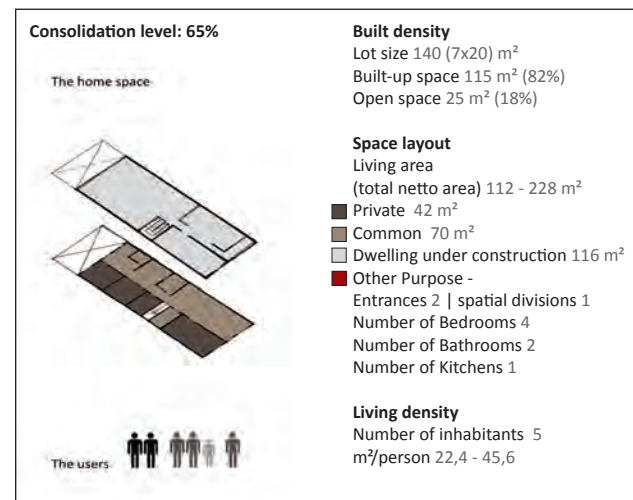
Of Cristina's modest two-storey home, the ground floor is clearly completed. The partially built spaces in *los aires* makes it very emblematic of the self-built Limean homes emerging in all variations along the streets of Pampas. Over more than thirty years of self-managed construction, the residents have gained significant experience in home construction, often copying from their neighbours and depending on skilled workers or kinship networks for construction. On the other hand certain families hired building professionals at some point. Though this practice is also based on regulations making government approval a requirement for home extension, this does not mean the informal self-building activities have actually lessened.

Initially Cristina, a divorced mother of two children, lived with her offspring in a single quarter they extended during the 1990s when the children grew older. Four years after the second child was born she got one more child from another relationship. Though the father disappeared from the eye soon after, leaving the young mother behind with her three kids. Cristina constructed various rooms in a row on one side of the dwelling, illuminating the spaces with large openings facing the living room and interior spaces. At this point the house co-

vered almost the entire plot. Due to the steep drop at the back of the plot, they left this part open with a lower open space that could not be entered until a staircase was built.

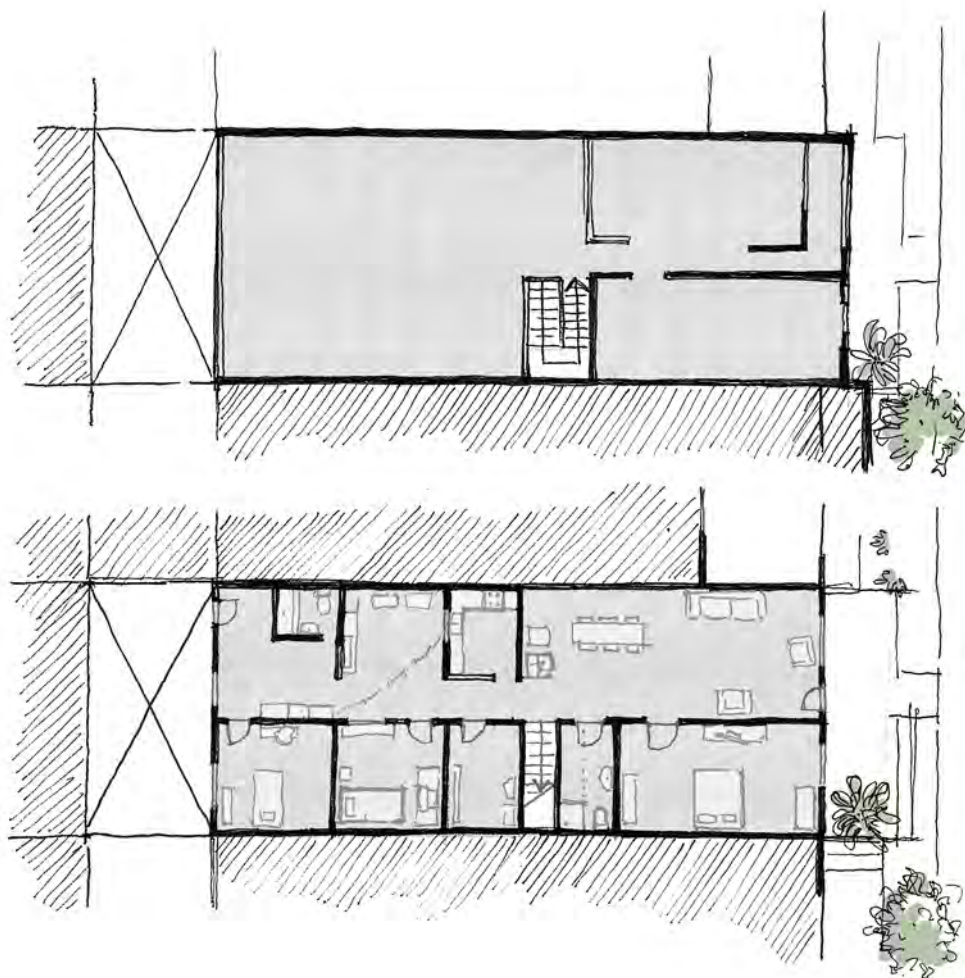
Eight years ago Cristina took out a loan to fund the construction of consolidated roof. This home extension came at the right moment since Cristina's sister Meli also divorced and moved in with her five kids. She stayed for a couple of years until she found a place for her own in Villa El Salvador. The sisters improvised a space on the second floor where Meli could settle with the children. When Meli moved out there was a little money available. Cristina, the homeowner, saved from her earnings in the many hours she worked as a housekeeper in one of the upper-class districts of Lima. With these savings she started buying the bricks and building materials required to give shape to the upper floor.

In the meantime the ground floor had simply become too small. In addition, the oldest son Jaime got married and his wife moved in when pregnant. Though Jaime worked, he was still finishing his studies. Family extension was more of a priority than home improvement, so he contributed little to the latter. Cristina's other children were also primarily concerned with their studies which meant that further

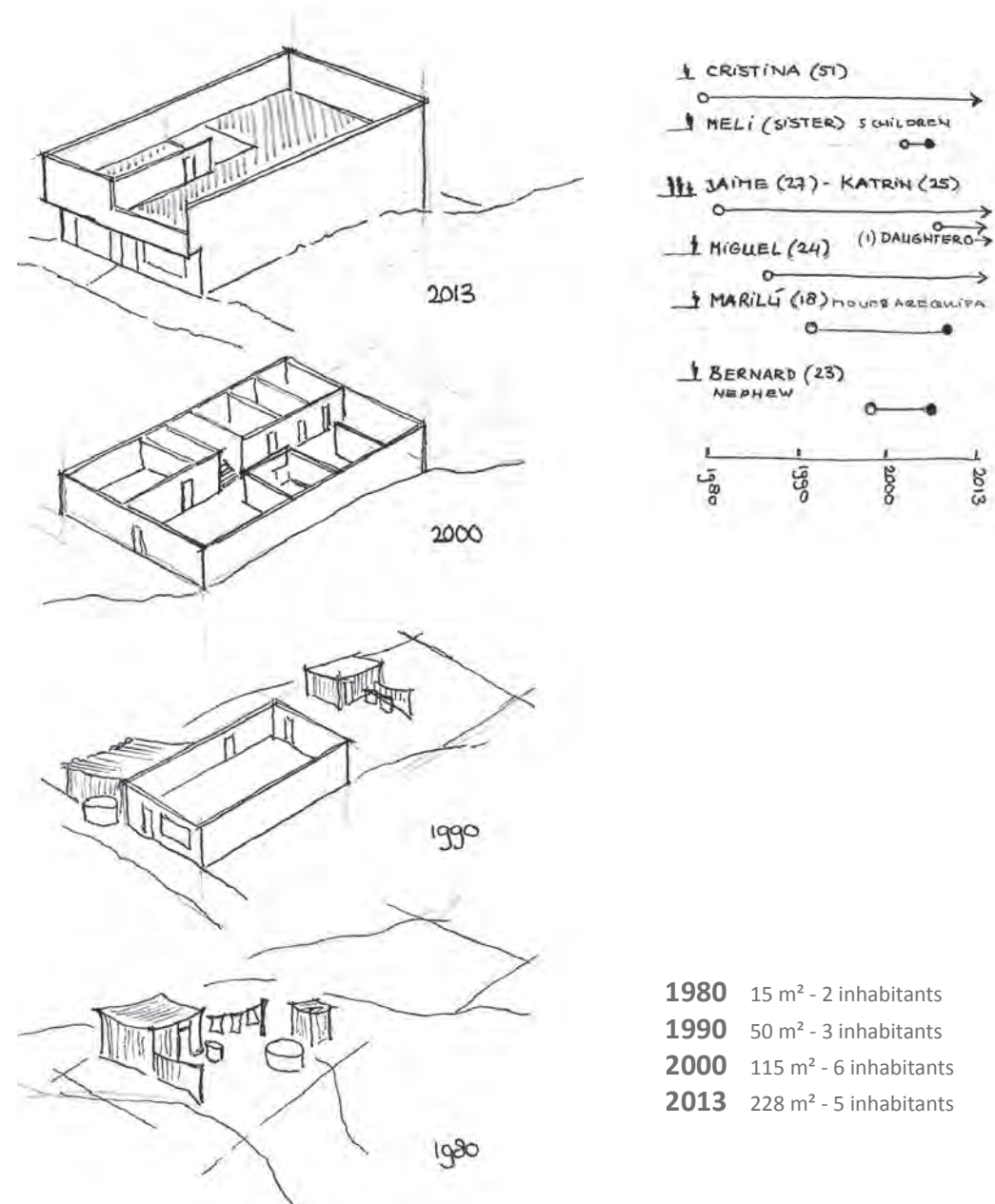


dwelling extension initiatives came to a halt.

Nevertheless the house, which was moderately transformed over time, has undergone major changes compared to when Cristina first settled in Pampas. Moreover, Cristina is determined in continuing to steadily extend home space until the second floor is finished. A third floor will not be achievable because the structure will not be able to support more than two stories. All arrangements were made at low-cost with sketches Cristina made with a friend who had some building experience. The outcome is a modest house that not stands out particularly, but is nonetheless spacious and well kept. The large living room allows for a gradual transition into the back part of the home with a kitchen lying in between. The visual relation between front and back allows visitors to perceive the full length of the house immediately upon their entrance through the heavy steel front door. A big window at the back offers a stunning view over Pampas. When the evening falls, thousands of tiny lights show up little by little reflecting the starlit sky above.



Site plan scale 1:200



House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





THE AMIABLE HOUSE

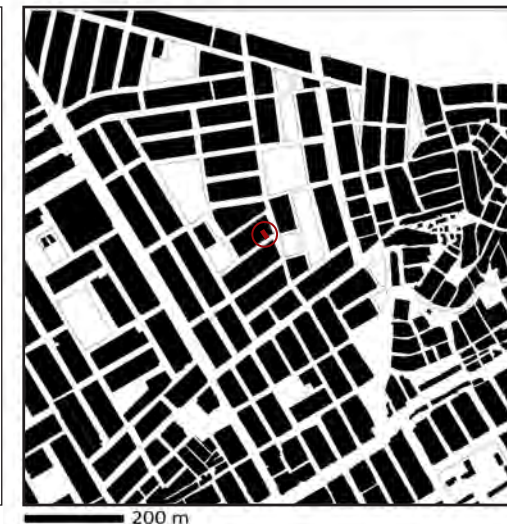
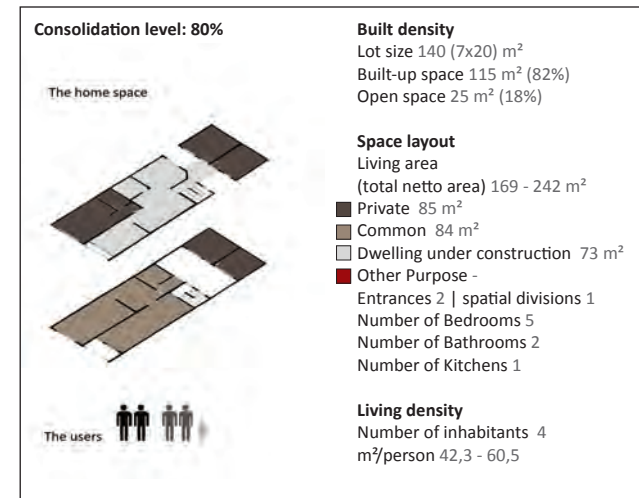
Julia arrived rather late in Pampas and was lucky to obtain one of the last vacant lots where she could fabricate her straw dwelling. She almost immediately changed this 'squatter's shack' into a small house consisting of two rooms and a patio where she installed her kitchen. She ran a small shop next to the dwelling for years. Here she sold basic food supplies, groceries and liquor. When her husband, who had a drinking problem, started to drink away her liquor supply she closed it down. Once the young couple eventually separated, Julia did not re-open the shop. Instead she integrated the commercial space into the house to have more room for the kid she adopted and had to raise.

Over the last thirty years the house transformed into an amiable house with colourful spaces that are extremely inviting. A smooth concrete pavement lies in front of the flamboyant green house. The front door is set back holding a small threshold shaded by the tree on the sidewalk and closed off by a metal fence. Another larger door gives access to the main part of the house. The attractive interior spaces with the bright blue, pink and yellow walls are as vibrant as the exterior suggests. They are highly consolidated and built in

durable materials with complete finishing and shiny tiled floors. The spaces on the ground floor are furnished with comfortable sofas and chairs inviting visitors to stay on for a little chat.

The major transformation of the house started eight years back when Julia took out a bank loan to construct the second floor. A professional architectural company was paid to draw the plan and shape the future home Julia imagined for herself and her son Cesar. She moved her bedroom upstairs and created a private bathroom integrated in the space. The new bedroom space upstairs was gradually finished with tiles and fresh layers of paint on the walls matching the details used to decorate the rooms. In contrast with the caring way with which Julia rapidly completed her bedroom space, other spaces on the newly added storey were not even touched. The idea was to wait until enough money was gathered so they could be finished in one go. Cesar remained in the bedroom quarters downstairs neighbouring the patio in the heart of the plot.

One day Julia's niece knocked at the front door in search for a place to live with her child. The house seemed to almost naturally open up to provide a place for them. A comfortable room was arranged to host the



newcomers as if it wanted them to stay and never leave again. The house is as hospitable as Julia's kind-hearted personality. Two rooms were quickly finished, including the tile flooring, warm coloured walls, new windows and freshly carved wooden doors. Nothing was left unfinished. Nevertheless the niece moved out several years later.

Cesar was less happy with his mother's niece moving in. The young adolescent was really keen on his privacy. Although he shared the single-family house with his mum, they two lived separate lives. When the Cesar's cousin moved in with her children, part of his personal space was taken from him by the newcomers.

Cesar used to come home after long unwounded Sunday nights, somewhat mellow from gatherings with friends at the corner shop. He then would always enter the house through the garage door, trying to make as little sound as he could, avoiding the living room hoping not to bump into his mum, to go straight to his quiet bedroom space on the ground floor at the back part of the house. Other times, especially during the fresh summer nights, he stayed at home and climbed the roof on the second floor that was partially built. Here he could look out over the hundreds of rooftops

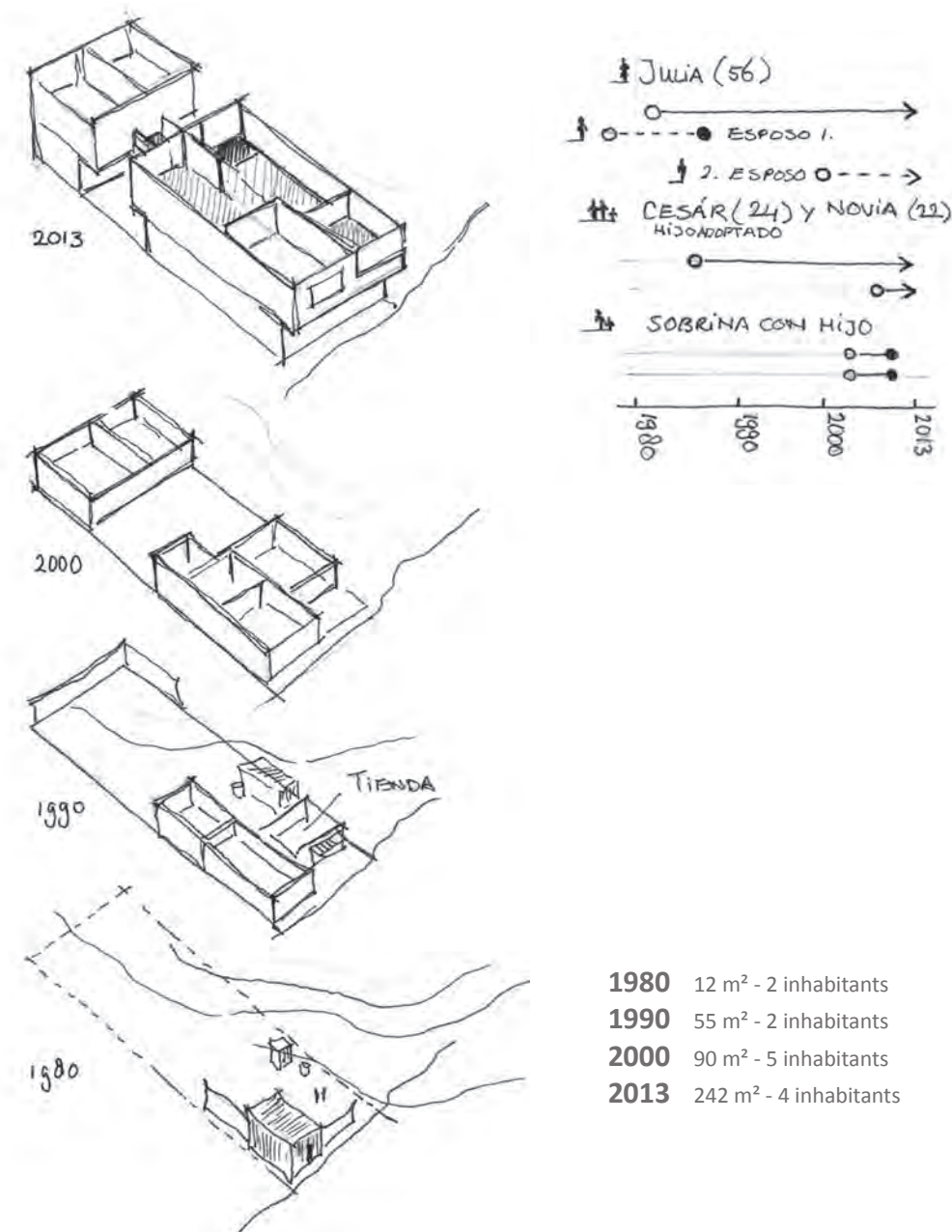
in the surrounding area and smoke some pot. When his cousin moved in, occupying the upper floor with her children, these beautiful silent nights were over.

Over an eight-year time span the house extended massively from a ninety square meter one-storey building to a large and generous home more than twice its initial size. During the final years of this period Julia and Cesar were the only sharers together with Julia's boyfriend who comes to visit occasionally. Last year Cesar's girlfriend moved in and is now expecting a baby. Since then Cesar started paying rent to his mum and every now and then he buys new furniture or decorations for the house.

Julia's amiable house of Julia is an unquestionably hospitable place. It lives to give space to the upcoming second-generation family. Despite its friendly openness there is no intention to modify its typology and strangers are not welcome to come and rent a room. As long as Julia lives here, spaces will remain as part of a well-kept single-family house and household.



Site plan scale 1:200



House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





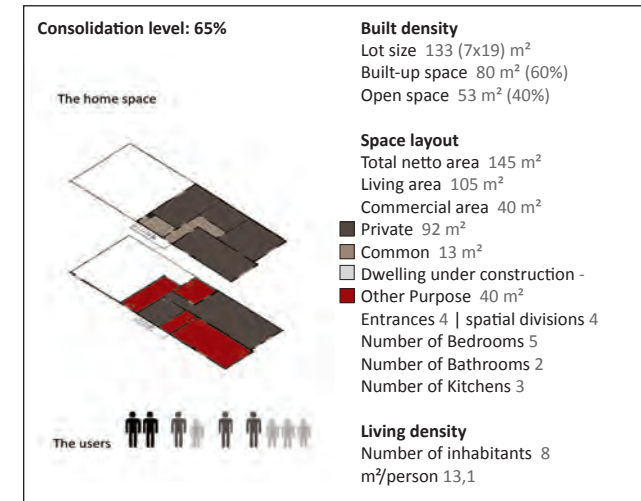
THE PROGRESSIVE HOUSE

Justina settled in Pampas with her baby daughter Liz and older son David. During the first year the threesome slept in holes they dug in the sand, surrounded by a precarious shelter built out of a few wooden sticks, plastic sheets and straw mats. Without any intervention from professional builders and with the little financial resources Justina had, she built the house step by step all by herself. For heavy construction works some relatives came to help and gradually the house transitioned into the two-storey corner house it is today. The solid brick structure covers half of the plot. Its few openings do not make optimal advantage of the corner location.

Nevertheless various entrances divide the home space vertically and horizontally into individual apartments. The upper floor is accessible through an improvised staircase located outside the house. Downstairs a corner shop is assimilated in the home adjacent to the lower apartment that is accessed through a separate entrance. The other half of the plot is left vacant apart from a small self-built structure that nearly falls apart. It is here Justina has run her community kitchen for elderly people for over twenty-five years.

Speaking in terms of the building structure, Justina's progressive house is far from consolidated. Both exterior and interior spaces under the corrugated sheet roofing are lacking all kind of finishing. Additionally, some parts of the roof contain gaps and openings, which are temporally closed off with cardboard and recycled billboards. Despite the quality of the building lagging behind, the home did extend considerably, doubling in size every decade in synchrony with the increasing number of inhabitants.

Initially the ground floor, now split up in three parts, was built as one house for Justina and her children. It progressively grew till major transformations were made at the end of the 1990s. David and Liz were starting to have their own families and the small home of no more than eighty square meters would soon become too small. The children did not have many financial resources, but they gathered what they had in order to construct a second floor. Liz gave birth to her son while the home extension was still fully in progress. When the upper floor was completed the two children moved upstairs. They built their individual rooms out of brick. No money was available for further finishing and the family was still very poor.



A few years later Justina decided to rent out the floor downstairs in order to gain some additional income. This move was not necessarily motivated to collect funds for home improvements. Rather, the money was primarily needed for everyday expenses. She knew a young lady named Sandra was desperately looking for an affordable place to stay, not easy to find in Pampas. Sandra was planning to build a house with her four brothers and sisters further down the road on her parents' plot. After the parents' passed away, the five children had tore down the old dwelling and planned to construct a completely new apartment with a separate room for each of them. Nonetheless, the plot had remained vacant for years due to intense disagreement between them.

At the same moment that Justina contacted Sandra, Justina's niece who lived close by wanted to start a small business. However, her house did not have a very strategic location. Consequently she asked her aunt if she could rent a piece of the house for her commercial activities. Justina did not hesitate and moved to a room upstairs and arranged the spaces downstairs for the newcomers. The door opening between the living room and additional room with bathroom was closed off with recycled wooden panels. The smaller space

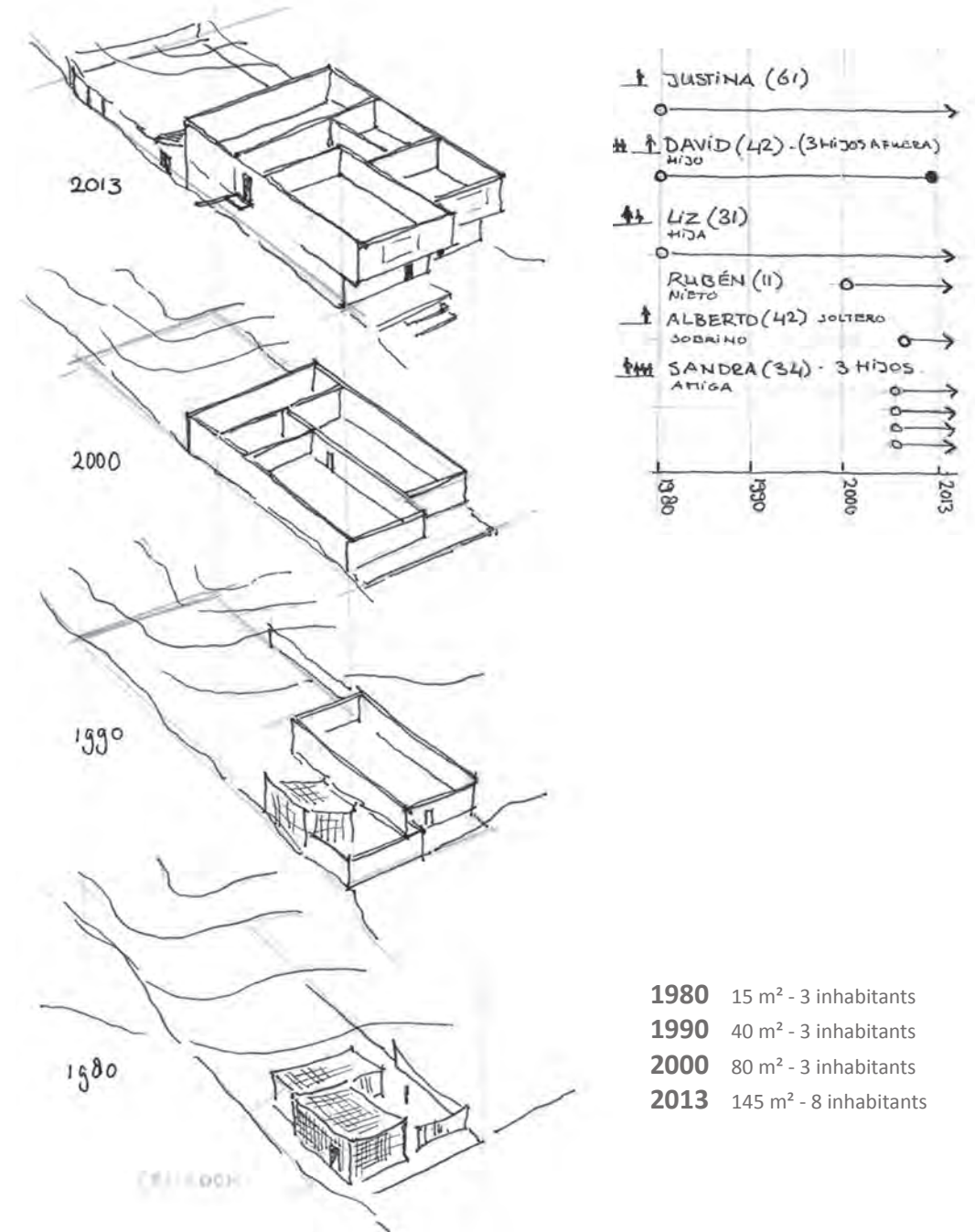
containing the bathroom was occupied by the niece and Sandra moved to the adjacent dwelling with her three children.

A year later Justina's nephew, who had previously lived with his parents in Villa El Salvador, knocked at the door. He had changed jobs and needed a room closer to his workplace. With the same ease as she did before, Justina switched rooms again, swapping the large well-lit corner room on the second floor for a tiny blind room further down the tiny hallway.

For the last ten years the household characteristics as well as the dwelling typology have changed incredibly. The house has transformed from a single family home to a multi-family dwelling and beyond. The flexible home adapts to the various sharers and renters that come and live with homeowner Justina, who easily sacrifices her own living space for them. In a certain sense, the home was consolidated proportionally to the increase in built surface over time. On the other hand it is hard to speak about home improvement since the building structure is very poor and over the last ten years the living comfort has not improved for any of the progressive home's inhabitants.



Site plan scale 1:200



House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





THE GARDEN HOUSE

The majority of houses along the quiet backstreet behind the main avenue heading to Villa El Salvador count multiple stories and their facades are freshly painted in green, blue and white. Some of the upper floors are still naked with a skin of reddish brick waiting to be plastered with a layer of cement. Consolidated homes form a sharp contrast with the dusty road of loose sand, which after more than thirty years of settlement is still unpaved. The heavy heat radiates from the ground burnt by the bright Limean sun, inviting people to stay inside.

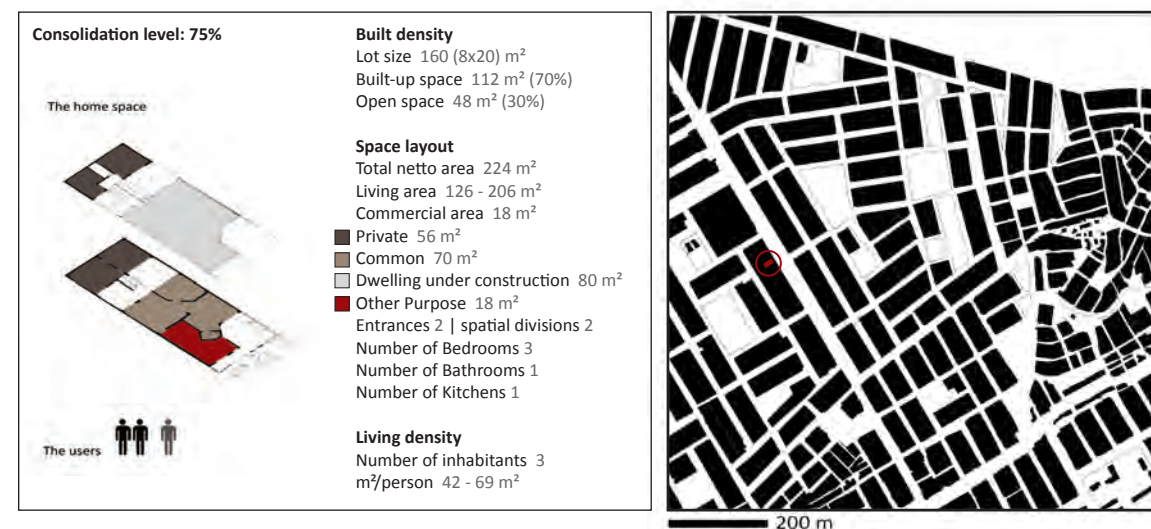
At the end this dusty street Cita's garden house emerges as a cool oasis of densely growing plants, shrubs and small trees. It claims a part of the public area outside the plot. The house that lies behind it only counts one storey. All its spaces feature a high level of finishing and though the house did not grow much vertically it is highly consolidated.

Cita's house is part of the so-called *asociaciones de vivienda*. Unlike other dwellers in the *asentamientos humanos* who illegally occupied the desert land areas, Cita and her husband Feliciano bought the land at the end of the 1970s. It soon turned out that the land

titles were fake and a long struggle began to obtain their official property rights. While the *asentamientos humanos* were privileged under the rule of socialist mayor Barrantes during the 1980s, the *asociaciones de vivienda* were not considered. Cita and Feliciano finally received their individual land title in 2011, more than thirty years after they started building the home.

The absence of a clear title did not prevent the family nor other members of the *asociaciones de vivienda* from extending and transforming their home space. Remarkably the processes of home consolidation are very similar to those occurring in the *asentamientos humanos*. Cita and her husband lived in a small straw settlement during the early years, after which they changed the precarious structure into an incipient brick dwelling in the early 1980s. With two children born at the end of that decade, a second floor was added to the small dwelling occupying the backside of the lot. The large patio stayed in front of the house. Here Cita used to keep her plants, which she later moved to the street edge.

The tiny built structure remained until the late 1990s. It was always just enough for the small size of the family. Back then all home investments came from personal savings and inco-



me the parents gained from work. The latest transformation the dwelling has undergone was financed through bank loans and allowed to fill the vacant front part of the plot. Still the house did not have official property rights by the time the large renovation was undertaken. This time round, unlike previous changes, architectural plans determined the new interventions and labourers were hired for most of the construction works. Feliciano however, completed the finishing of the tile floor and the painting of the walls independently.

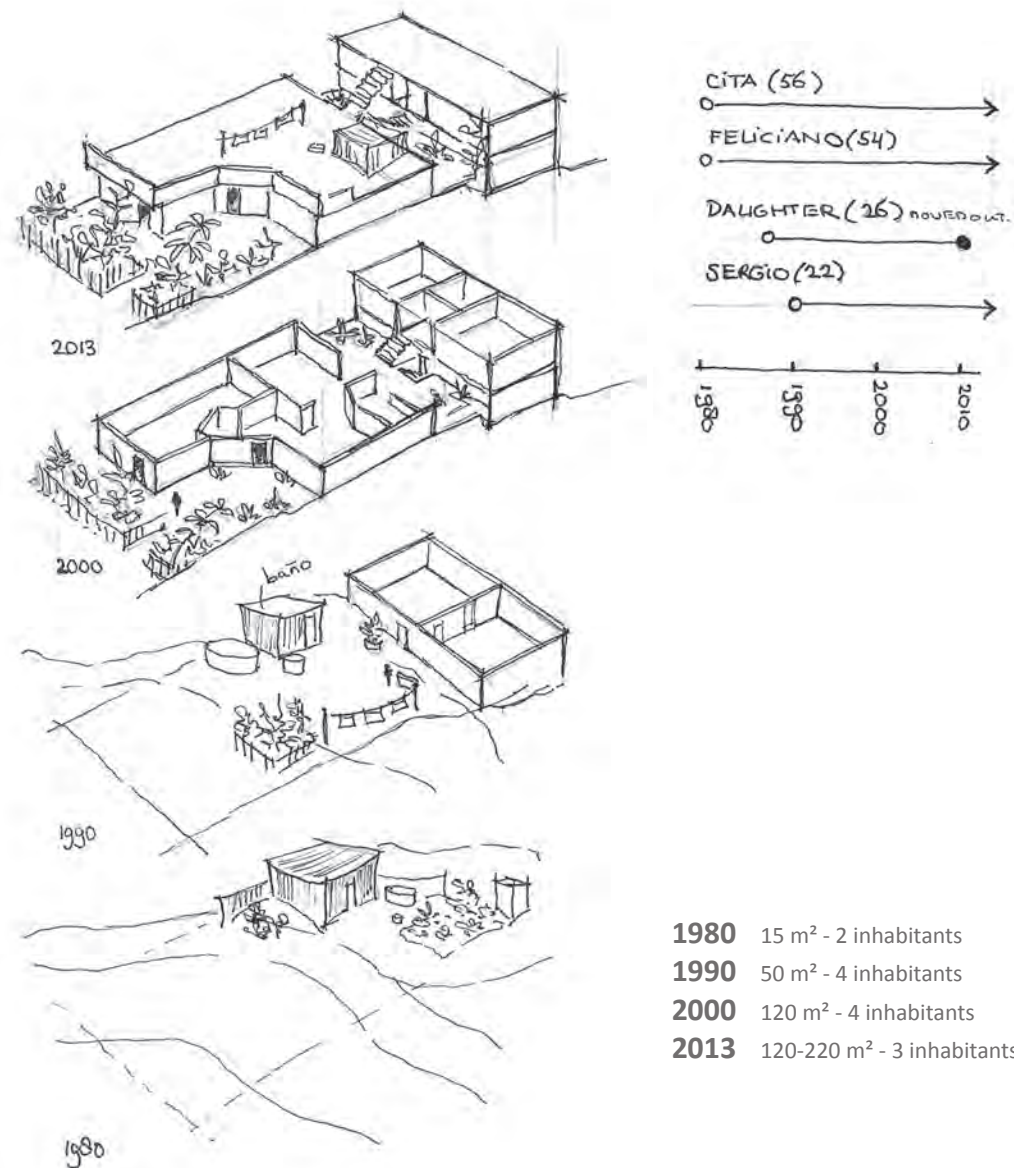
Cita worked with the architect - a friend - to distribute the rooms in order to keep the large open area in front of the house for the garden. An inner patio with cactuses and a small rose garden, allowing a fresh breeze to cool the bright living room and kitchen were also installed. They made smart use of the different heights of the plot by creating a split-level between the original two-storey structure and the newly added section, with the patio in between lighting all indoor spaces. The home could now be entered through two new doors allowing Cita to have a more private area for her neighbourhood work for which she receives guests.

The brand new house that arose on the sloping plot did not erase traces of the past.

Apart from a new coat of paint, the old home is still intact with the original front door opening into the spacious inner patio. Although the home more than doubled in size with the latest extension, the garden of Cita and Feliciano still grows and dominates the everyday home environment.



Site plan scale 1:200



House trajectory vs. Life trajectories





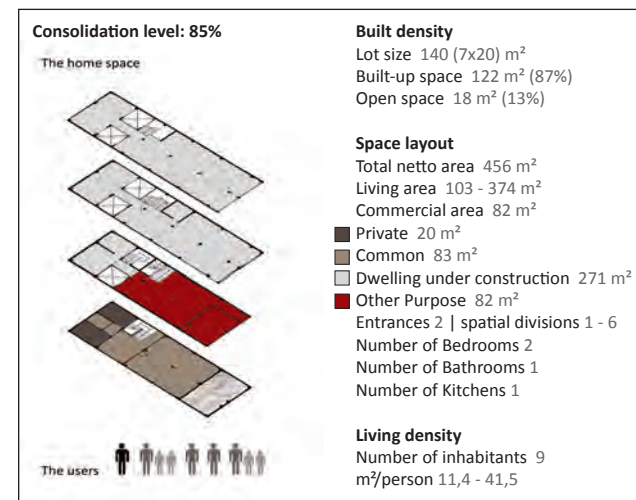
THE AMBITIOUS HOUSE

Rufina's ambitious house is located along the main road to Villa El Salvador. The dwelling is currently undergoing massive reconstruction. Piles of sand and stones lie in front of the house along the busy street. Every now and then a young guy comes out of the building to load some materials on his wheelbarrow. Concrete pillars with jutting bars stick out of the skyline facing the southern district of Lima. The house is covering three layers of *los aires* and will eventually become a five-storey apartment building. The closed ground floor façade, apart from two heavy steel doors through which the house can be entered, does not contain any window or opening. From the outside the spaciousness of the home and the immense basement it includes can hardly be spotted. Big windows are kept in the upper front façade that at the same time provide a stunning view over the busy commercial street where *micros*, buses and *mototaxis* run up and down, and where the residential blocks of Villa El Salvador appear in the distance. The internal staircase also offers some illumination, though when all five floors will be constructed this will be greatly reduced. The lack of light can already be previewed in the dusky basement lit by fluorescent tube lights during daytime. Here the family spends most

of their time. In between the furniture that is stored and waiting to be carried up to the brand new apartments, an old mattress lies on the ground where Rufina sleeps. The family lives in an improvised manner.

In the provisional kitchen downstairs Rufina runs her *comedor*. Every morning you can find Rufina cooking here among the young construction workers running up and down the stairs carrying bags of cement. She started selling food at a small stall on the street more than twenty years ago. Back then the house was already built in brick, set back from the street and consisting of a single floor. Here Rufina, her husband and the four children lived together in two small quarters with the patio and separate toilet at the back of the house. The parents later extended the house to the outer borders of the plot adding an extra floor. The *comedor* was integrated in the home space. Just after they completed the home extension Rufina's husband passed away. The oldest daughter Elida had already moved out to live with her husband and parents-in-law. The young couple did not last long, and Elida, who could see her mother suffering, moved back in with her, together with the two children that were born in the meantime.

While the second generation was growing



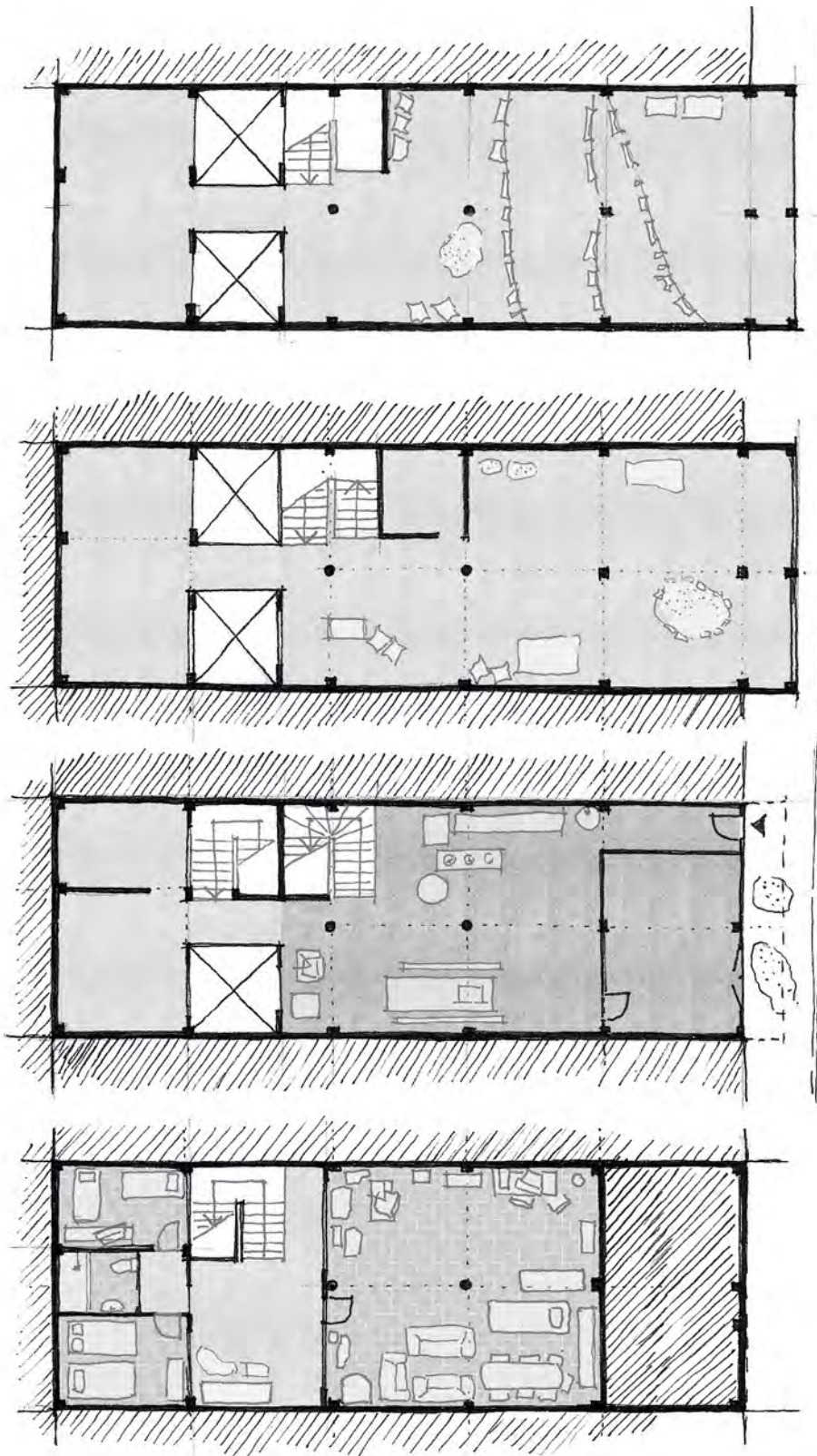
older and starting to have their own families, new ideas were discussed. The mother and the four teenagers agreed on an ambitious plan for the future development of their home. The second generations each claimed a part of *los aires* where they still are constructing their individual apartments. Most resources for home improvements are now also provided for by the children.

All of Rufina's children went to university. The oldest son Wilfredo finished law school a few years ago and managed to access a well-paid job. This allowed the family to take out big loans to finance the house, though the children also had to pay for university with the loans. Nevertheless the ambitious plans of transforming the original dwelling into a multi-storey apartment building could take off. It was based on the principle creating an individual living space for every child on each of the upper floors. Additionally, the possibility of renting it to outsiders, in case the children would have to move somewhere else closer to work, was acknowledged from the start.

The ideal situation for the vertical subdivision of the house would be to create an exterior staircase sewing individual entrances to the upper floors, but since the plot was already entirely built up and construction on

the sidewalks is strictly prohibited, the only solution was to create an internal connection. The ground floor is to be kept as a semi-public commercial space, which in the future will function as an entranceway for the residents of *los aires*.

The final home transformations were completed rapidly by means of hiring various construction workers active seven days a week. The old incipient dwelling has completely disappeared, as did many other buildings along the busy commercial street. The house epitomises the ambitions of the highly educated second generation, who invested collectively in what will be their future home (or source of income).



Site plan scale 1:200

