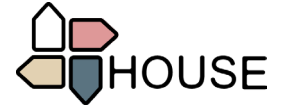


HOUSE research

Taxonomy of Individual and Collective Housing Options



www.HOUSE-research.be

May 2025

How to read this?

This taxonomy offers a structured overview of possible housing options in Flanders. These housing options are relevant for people of all ages, and particularly as they grow older. The different options are categorized based on the degree of spatial and social sharing involved.

Spatial sharing

Columns I to V focus on spatial sharing. In the leftmost column, residents share few or no spaces with others. Moving to the right, the extent of shared space increases. In columns I through IV, each resident or household has a fully private dwelling, including a bedroom, bathroom, living space, and kitchen—though possibly more compact in size. At the far right, in column V, the number of private spaces decreases. Here, residents live more communally and share a home with (non-)family housemates.

Social sharing

Rows A to C categorize housing options based on social sharing. This refers to the **activities** that residents engage in together and the **extent to which they offer help or support** to one another. Depending on the specific project, **housing options may shift** between A, B, or C, as indicated by the grey dotted line. In Row A, residents do **not have an explicit intention to engage in shared activities**. In Row B, residents make a **clear commitment to sharing more or helping one another**—for example, by running errands, looking after children, or cooking and eating together. When residents take on **joint responsibility for managing the project**—such as maintaining the garden, the buildings, or handling finances—the project shifts to Row C.

Color code & additional info












The overview uses the following colors:

- The **beige color** indicates **shared indoor or outdoor spaces**.
- The **light blue color** highlights housing options that (usually) pay greater attention to **accessibility or adaptability**, with a focus on **lifelong living**.




Of course, there are other housing options beyond those currently included in the taxonomy. To illustrate potential options, we've already included *clustered living*—a housing model better known in the Netherlands—as well as three dots in each column to suggest future additions.

HOUSE — *This taxonomy was developed within the HOUSE research project (2021-2025). In this project, three knowledge institutions collaborate to explore complex issues related to individual and collective housing concepts for older adults and subjective well-being: Hasselt University (faculty of Architecture and Arts), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (SARLab), and PXL (Smart ICT).*
For more information, visit the [HOUSE website](https://www.house-research.be).

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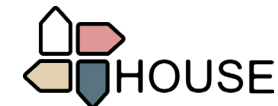
TAXONOMY HOUSING OPTIONS		SPATIAL SHARING					
		← LIMITED SHARING				→ EXTENSIVE SHARING	
		I	II	III	IV	V	
minimum private		all living spaces	all living spaces	all living spaces	all living spaces	bedroom(s) (+ poss. bathroom)	
minimum shared		no	circulation (eg. entrance, stairwell) (+ poss. parking, bicycle shed, storage)	group II + a space that is not a living space (eg. garden, laundry room...)	group III + living spaces (eg. kitchen, dining room...)	group IV + all living spaces + (poss.) bathroom	
<div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">LIMITED SHARING</div> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">SOCIAL SHARING</div> <div style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">EXTENSIVE SHARING</div>	A	no explicit social sharing	I - A  single-family house	II - A  apartment	III - A	IV - A  assistive living	V - A  residential care centre
	B	engagement for shared social activities	I - B  caring neighbourhood	II - B  accessory dwelling unit	III - B	IV - B	V - B  hospita dwelling
	C	group B + shared self-management	I - C	II - C  secondary dwelling	III - C  co-living	IV - C  cohousing	V - C  shared housing
		
		
		
		
		
		

REFERENCE:
HOUSE research. (2025, May).
Taxonomy of individual and collective housing options.
<https://www.house-research.be/nl/publications>

LEGENDE
 engagement for interaction
 Shared spaces
 Adapted, accessible unit

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Description of each housing option (1/2)



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The wide variety of housing options—and the differences and overlaps between terms—can make it challenging to understand what each one specifically entails. That’s why you’ll find a short description here for each housing option featured in the HOUSE taxonomy.

I-A single-family house



The single-family house is located on its own plot and is entirely private. It is designed for a single household or family. This can be a detached, semi-detached, or terraced house.

I-B caring neighbourhood



A caring neighbourhood refers to a consciously formed, active community in which neighbours commit to supporting each other, working together, and creating a positive living environment. It goes beyond simply living next to one another; it reflects a deliberate choice to be involved in each other's well-being and to foster a sense of community. This can result in a caring neighbourhood or be a stepping stone toward a more collective housing option.

II-A apartment



An apartment is a self-contained housing unit within a larger building, typically an apartment complex. Residents have private access to all necessary living spaces. Shared areas are limited to circulation spaces—such as hallways and stairwells—and, in some cases, parking or storage for bicycles and other items

II-B accessory dwelling unit



An accessory dwelling unit (or ADU) is a smaller housing unit located in or adjacent to an existing single-family house, where up to two people with a disability or two older adults can live. This type of housing is defined in the Flemish Housing Code (i.e. 'Zorgwoning') and must meet specific criteria set by the Flemish government. Common synonyms include 'granny flat' and 'granny annex'.

II-C secondary dwelling



A secondary dwelling combines two housing units under one roof. While the residents live in separate units, they aim to coexist as good neighbours and provide mutual support.

III-C (senior) co-living



In a co-living arrangement, each household lives in its own private unit, situated around or next to a shared garden or courtyard. Residents share non-living spaces such as the outdoor area, storage rooms, laundry facilities, or a garage. *Senior co-living* is a form of co-living where the group consists exclusively of older adults.

IV-A assistive living



An assistive living residence is adapted and specifically designed for older adults. Residents can live independently and choose which care services they wish to receive. An emergency call system is always available to provide support in urgent situations. In addition, residents have access to shared spaces and can make use of domestic services.

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Description of each housing option (2/2)



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iv-c (senior) cohousing



In cohousing, each household lives in its own private unit, situated around or near a shared garden or courtyard. The residents choose to live more closely together and, in addition to sharing functional spaces (such as outdoor areas, storage rooms, laundry facilities, or garages), they also share living spaces such as a living room and/or kitchen. Residents often organize activities together and jointly manage and maintain the shared spaces. In senior cohousing, the resident group consists exclusively of older adults.

iv-c dotted living



In an apartment building, a specific target group—such as older adults—intentionally chooses to live together. They each have private apartments and share one additional apartment for communal use (e.g. socializing, activities, care). The group collectively manages and maintains this communal unit. This housing option is similar to cohousing, but within a larger apartment building that also includes other residents. This Dutch concept has no precise English translation (yet).

v-A res. care centre



A residential care centre accommodates older adults who can no longer live independently. Each resident has a private room (usually with a bathroom), while all other spaces are shared. Residents receive continuous daily support and care.

v-B hospita dwelling or home sharing with host



This arrangement involves a homeowner renting out part of their home while continuing to live there. The owner and tenant share at least one space. It often involves an older adult hosting a student or younger person.

v-c shared housing



In shared housing options, all living spaces are shared, except for private bedrooms, bathrooms, or small studios. Unlike hospita living, there is no hierarchy among residents—ownership and responsibilities are equally divided. No one is the landlord or tenant of somebody else.

REFER TO THIS DOCUMENT:

HOUSE research. (2025, May). *Taxonomy of individual and collective housing options*.
<https://www.house-research.be/nl/publications>

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Interested in which housing options might suit you? Or seeking more information on housing options? Please visit:

www.HOUSE-research.be

Interested in getting started with these housing options? We're happy to refer you to several Flemish HOUSE partners working in this area:

- www.samenhuizen.be
- www.kenniscentrumWWZ.be
- www.vlaanderen.be/bijzondere-woonvormen
- <https://kbs-frb.be/nl/zorgzame-buurten>