David Franco, *architect, teacher,* Madrid (ES)

Architectural portions

As we have seen, quantity certainly affects quality when we are talking about fragmenting urban structures, or to put it another way, the size of the fragment is essential in defining the type of urban fabric that is created. As a final step in this panorama, therefore, a unique situation arises when the fragments tend to be as small as possible, minimum architectural units combined to create an urban tissue. The small size of the combinatory units makes the whole system more flexible and easy to adapt to very specific conditions.

Compared to the other blocks included on the urban plan of the Vuores district in Tampere (FI), the **Alice in Wonderwall**[14] project (p141) is very diffuse and, unlike the other blocks, does not seem to define an easily readable spatial structure. Instead of that it creates an irregular network of houses with a complex porous structure amongst them. These buffer zones are as rich and open as the units, and remain protected from the wind and colder temperatures. The units are all different but generated by the same systems and the same

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elements combined in a slightly different way each time. Inside them, we also find different types of spaces in terms of privacy and environmental practice. The result is a complex system that tries to embody within it the beauty of the Finnish landscape and at the same time to create a rich variety of public/private spaces, something which constitutes the very essence of urban quality.

Inès Nizic, *architect, teacher,* Wien (AT)

Updated domestic space

Many of these concepts, in providing for explicit activities and social spaces, address the frequent lack of community within neighbourhoods today. Thus, in order to achieve the right development density, many designs dispense with single-family housing solutions in favour of complexes that provide large open spaces for collective use. The street as a place of social exchange has become meaningless, and is now replaced by the traffic hub, manifested in the form of densification, grids, matrices or randomly constructed routes. The elements of classic urban development are deconstructed and decontextualized so that the resulting fragments can be reconstructed to new standards.

The project in Tampere (FI), **Alice in Wonderwall**[8] (p141), closely matches its natural conditions and scenic positioning. The first step in this concept was to partition the project zone into a grid, into which are embedded three larger, 10-metre blocks that open up to provide space for neighbourhood activities. This fragmentation creates continuous, slightly staggered communal areas, which flow through the neighbourhood in the form of gardens and walking and cycling tracks.

Each living space has an outer room – winter garden, garden or terrace – that can either be used privately or shared with the neighbourhood. This evolved private space features in many projects as a room that takes on an alternative, semi-public function.

The structure of the building remains largely flat (with a maximum of three storeys). The outer walls are built with a physical as well as a conceptual double skin, a structural core and a translucent outer shell. The space between the two layers is so large that it can be used to accommodate hallways, stairways, storage rooms, closets or small winter gardens.

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This double skin also subdivides individual rooms, allowing residents to make a smaller room to their own personal design. Though conventional forms are employed, the two-layer outer wall subverts and alters them, generating new layouts and impressions. The interplay of the different buildings and the spaces between them produces a landscape that is constantly evolving into different ambiences.

It is apparent in many of these projects that nature plays an increasingly significant role. Today's architecture should no longer be self-sufficient, but stand in symbolic relation to its surroundings.

8. **Alice in Wonderwall**, Tampere, FI 9. **Scion Vuores**, Tampere, FI