

**Future
Architecture
Platform**



Archifutures

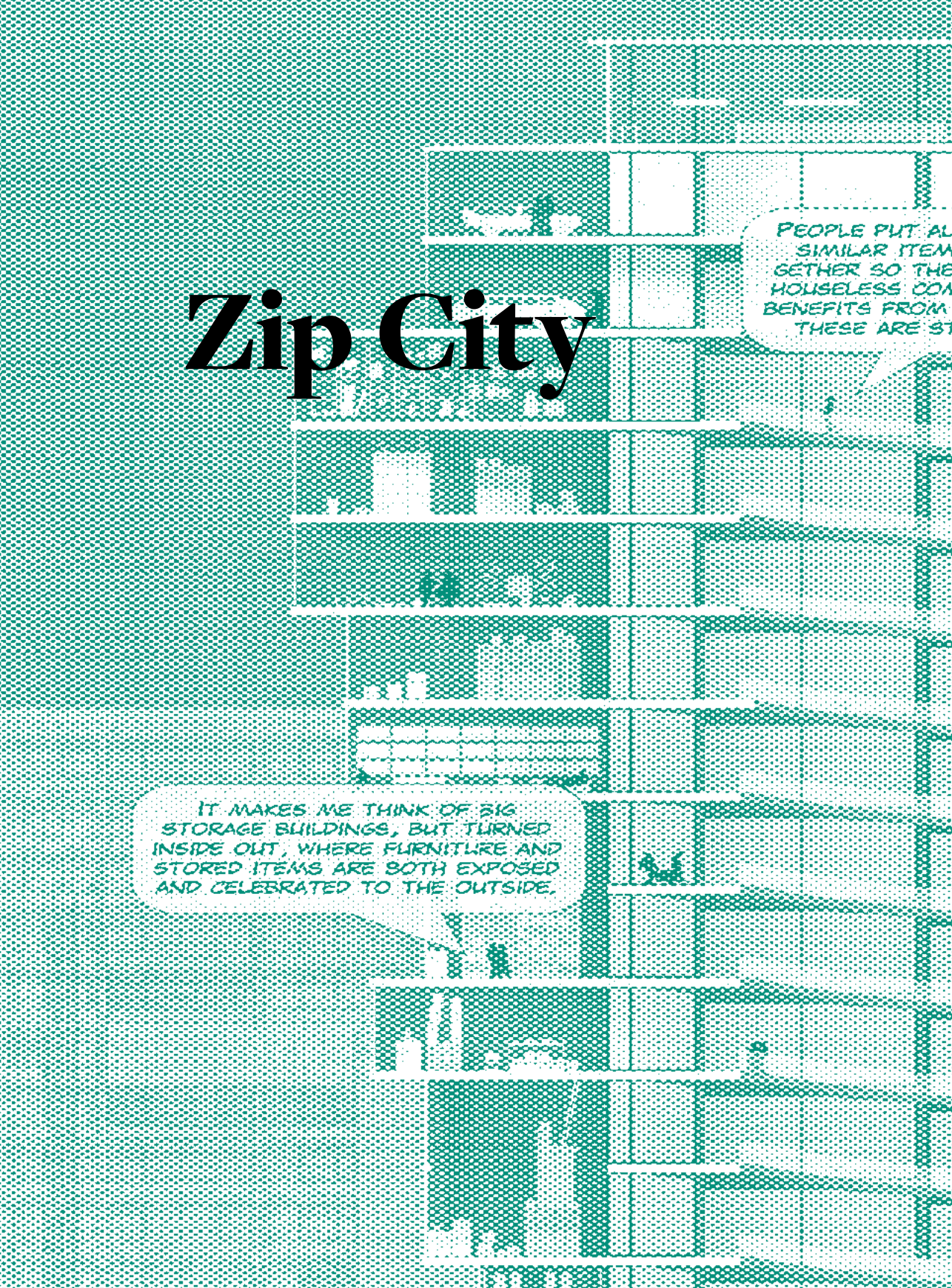
The Site



**A field guide
to the future
of architecture**

Edited by &beyond

Zip City



PEOPLE PUT ALL SIMILAR ITEMS TOGETHER SO THE HOUSELESS CAN BENEFIT FROM THESE ARE ST

IT MAKES ME THINK OF BIG STORAGE BUILDINGS, BUT TURNED INSIDE OUT, WHERE FURNITURE AND STORED ITEMS ARE BOTH EXPOSED AND CELEBRATED TO THE OUTSIDE.

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Houseless not homeless

By Lavinia Scaletti

Zip City
Houseless not homeless

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Zip City

London

“What would
an architecture
of the houseless be?”

London is in the midst of a citywide housing crisis, which, with annual house-building falling short of targets by at least two thirds, shows no signs of ending. For architect Lavinia Scaletti the solution lies not in designing new spaces for living, but in designing new ways of living.

Zip City is an architecture and urban strategy programme exploring a new way of living in cities without a house. Taking London as the site of intervention, it questions whether a possible approach to the city's housing crisis would be to stop building houses and redefine the concepts of ownership, sharing and home.

London is experiencing a housing crisis. With a population of more than 10 million people predicted by 2035 there is an urgent need to provide more homes.¹ As a first response, it seems logical to build more homes to satisfy this growing demand. However, as less than a third of the target number are being built each year, this is a far from viable solution: meaning that more than 300,000 people will be left with no access to housing or experience inadequate living conditions on present estimates.² Simultaneously, it could be said that the crisis is caused not by a shortage of built stock but also by the increasing difficulty of accessing this primary resource, usually considered a fundamental right, but which has been compromised by financial speculation and austerity programmes. This is manifested most clearly with new-build apartments and houses that are bought and then lie vacant and unoccupied, removed from their primary and traditional purpose of providing a home.

Speculating upon this near future scenario, Zip City celebrates a new common condition of not having a

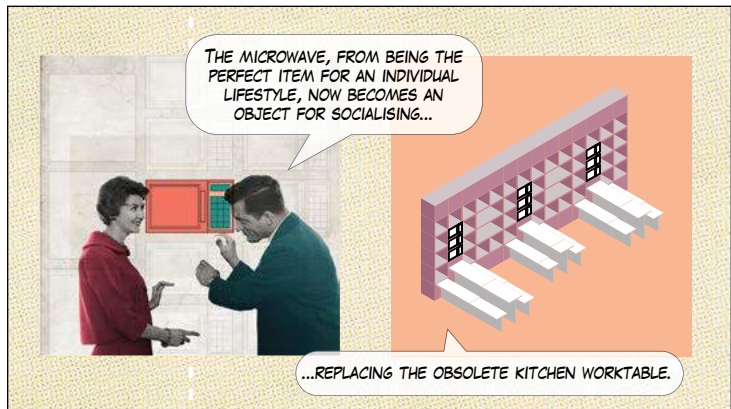
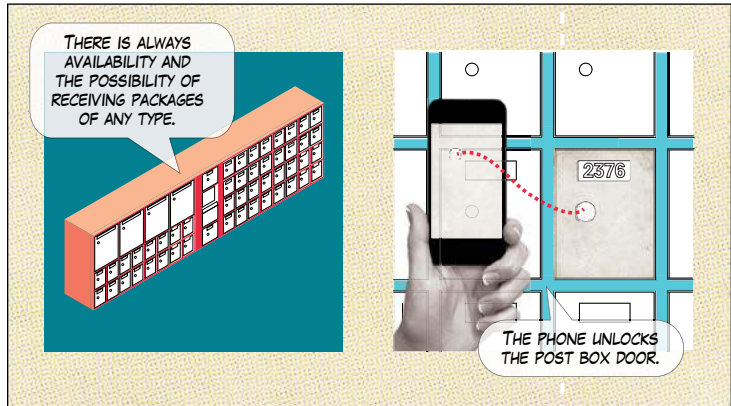
Lavinia Scaletti

Lavinia Scaletti is an urban designer and is currently working for Publica, an organisation that specialises in strategies and design for public space, urban design and masterplanning, and is part of a team developing a detailed public realm vision for a key West End street and its surrounding area in London. She trained in architecture at the Royal College of Art and the University of Sheffield. She has previously worked for Koz Architectes in Paris and Elemental in Chile, where she was involved in a variety of public realm and housing projects.

1 This figure is based on numerous newspaper articles and statistics from 2014-2015 estimating that the population in London will be around 10 million people by 2030, taking into account population growth and migration trends.

2 The number is an estimate of the author's for the next 2025 years, based on the relationship between the estimated population number in 2035 and the fact that less than a third of the homes that are needed are built each year. Towards the end of 2014 less than 20,000 new homes were built in London while the building target was between 40,000 - 80,000 new-built homes (numbers depending on who was setting those targets).

dwelling through the implementation of an infrastructure of urban homes. Do we still need houses to live in the city? What would an architecture of the houseless be? And how can we combine the high efficiency that any new urban system requires with our desire for the comforts of a home?



To test the viability of such a way of living and to come up with a suitable proposal rather than a predefined theoretical solution, the Zip City programme conducted active research through experiment, focusing on exploring the notion of home and London's evolving living patterns. A ten-day ethnographic experiment of living without a

This page (top): Zip Mail: building for mass post boxes.
© Lavinia Scaletti

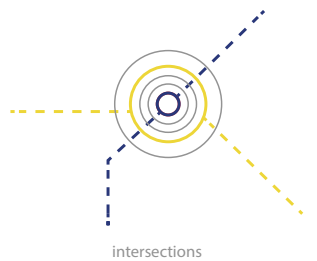
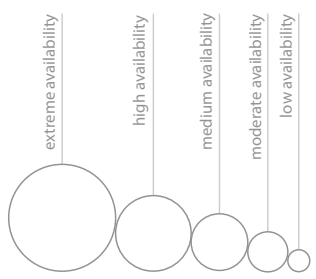
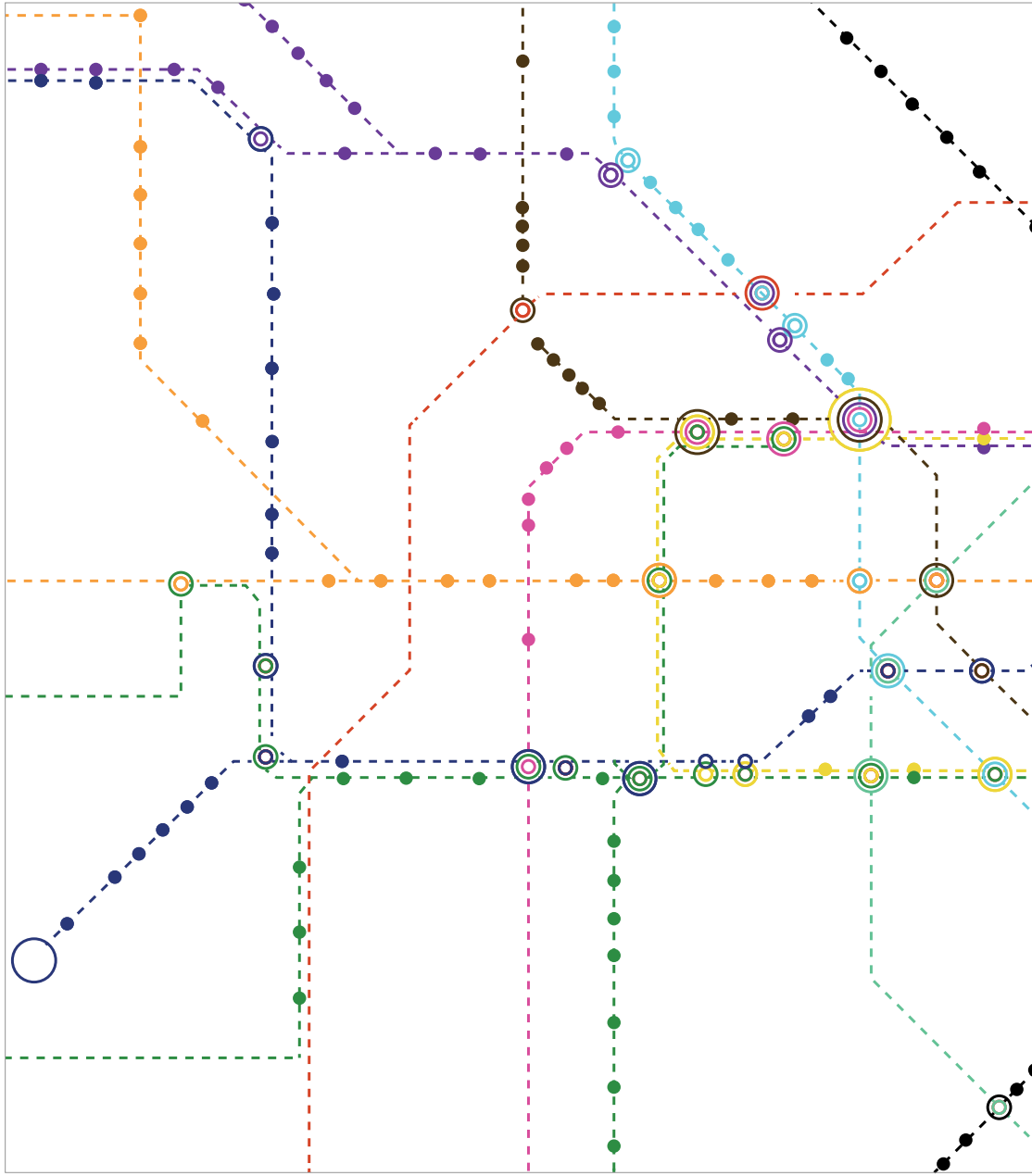
This page (bottom): Zip Eat: multiple microwave structure. © Lavinia Scaletti

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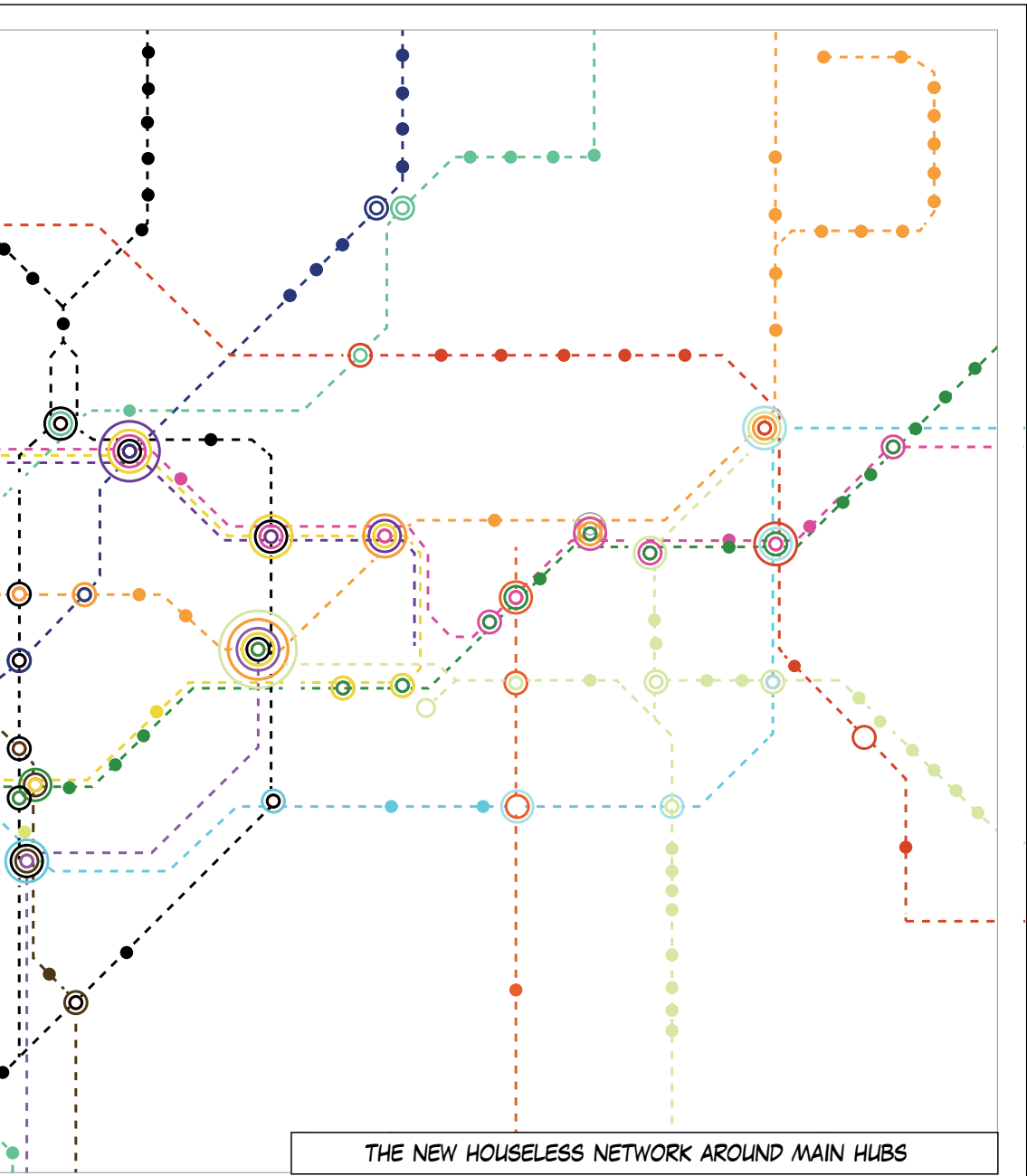
house gave first-hand evidence to better understand the implications arising from a condition of houselessness. The experiment has also helped to define our more “homely” requirements, which are usually taken for granted when living in a fixed location, but which become much more evident when experiencing a nomadic lifestyle. For instance: privacy, technological advancements and the relationship between our bodies and unfamiliar places are some of the issues that have been studied and documented in a research diary. The findings that came out of this initial study have been the prime guide for developing the spatial and programmatic aspects of the proposal.



Section through Zip Storage: multi-functional storage tower for the houseless.
© Lavinia Scaletti



sleeping
 locations
 typologies



THE NEW HOUSELESS NETWORK AROUND MAIN HUBS

housing
working
s of activity

So how is the Zip City proposal grounded in the reality of everyday London and how does this new urban system work, both physically and logistically?

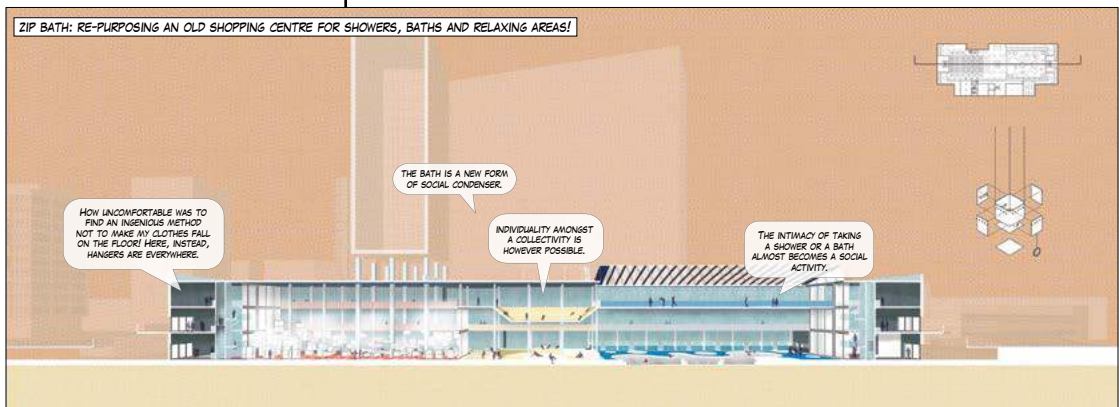
Zip City operates at three scales:

By moving away from the traditional dwelling, the scheme is first of all conceived at an urban scale, adopting London as the main site for developing the houseless network. Taking advantage of the city's existing and planned infrastructure of transport and services, the new infrastructure of urban homes is located around main transport hubs to allow the new houseless to easily circulate from one Zip place to another and to be fully connected to amenities that are already available in specific areas. In this sense, the project promotes a free lifestyle where one can decide the location for spending time eating, sleeping or doing any other activity.

At an architectural level, a system of buildings and spaces designed to fulfill everyday functions are developed around these transport hubs and work within the neighbourhood boundaries. A guide to the architectural typologies for the houseless has been developed using

Urban

Architectural



the research findings, setting up some general spatial principles that would then be adapted to each specific context. For instance, one of these interventions is a microwave wall, which represents an easy-to-reach food station as well as a new idea of consuming meals better adapted to our current way of eating. Similarly, a new public bath redefines the relationship between private and public for such an intimate activity, and a multifunctional storage tower fulfills its functional purpose, but also creates a space for socialising with other people from the community.

At the furniture scale, a small urban kit provides the basic equipment for the houseless and the possibility of maximum mobility and adaptability. This “piece of home” works in conjunction with the overall system; for example, in the case of the public bath, towels and shampoo are provided, allowing people to carry only the essential everyday items.

Zip City: Houseless not Homeless turns the disadvantaged condition of not having a house into a positive one. It questions the validity of the current ways that home and housing are conceived and proposes an alternative way of inhabiting cities, better suited to our changing patterns of living, to our increasing adaptability to new places and to the development of new technologies.

Zip City promotes a new collective lifestyle where the boundaries between public and private, individual and collective are redefined yet where individual subjectivities can still flourish. ■

Previous page: The new “houseless” network around the main transport hubs of London. © Lavinia Scaletti

Oposite page: Section through Zip Bath: a new communal bathhouse in a converted shopping centre. © Lavinia Scaletti

Furniture