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The Neighbours of Intergenerational Housing: The Institutional Construction of Elevated Neighbour Relations in Student-Senior Housing Projects

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ABSTRACT

In advanced economies, intergenerational student-senior housing is being touted as a combined solution to two separate issues: social isolation of older people and affordability crises in student housing. Students and older people live together in these models and principally students, through discounted rent arrangements, offer care or friendship to their senior neighbours. What is striking about these schemes is how they elevate the role of neighbour to achieve certain social outcomes. In this article, we analyse a set of European and North American schemes to contribute a novel framework of neighbour-plus roles, social roles that are elevations of the typical expectations of neighbours, to scholarship on neighbours and neighbouring. Through this analysis, we contribute to the underdeveloped scholarship on student-senior intergenerational housing, offer an analytical framework for research into elevated or expanded neighbour roles, and suggest possible successful models for organizations looking to create schemes in practice.

Introduction

Student-senior intergenerational housing[1] is where students and older residents live side-by-side. Such schemes are often delivered or sponsored by universities, local governments, or non-profit housing providers, working either individually or in partnership. Their overarching premise is that students receive discounted rents in exchange for providing services, helping or socializing with their elderly neighbours. A growing number of schemes have emerged, particularly in North America. Their emergence and continued growth in the 21st century are a product of the confluence of three distinct and ongoing socio-economic trends.

First, in many countries across Europe, combatting loneliness and social isolation has become a major policy agenda. While loneliness and social isolation are increasingly found across generations, mixed-age communities are particularly perceived as an effective way to bring social vibrancy into older people's lives (Brouwers et al. 2024; Gurung

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et al. 2022). Second, many advanced economies, particularly those in the Global North, are marked by housing affordability crises (Coupe 2021). Students are a particularly disadvantaged group in these crises (Schwittay 2024); they have limited budgets but often must live proximate to unaffordable metropolitan cores, where their universities are located. Housing schemes offering discounted rent to students have obvious appeal in this context. Third, there is an increased interest, both in practice and academia, in the neighbourhood, following the positive social outcomes achieved by neighbours during the COVID-19 pandemic through the provision of mutual support (Felici 2020). Student-senior housing schemes look to similarly operationalize localized social networks. In other words, these schemes are designed to create new and rewarding neighbourly relationships.

There are three common models of student-senior housing, each discussed sparingly in an academic context: home-sharing, where a student lives in the home of older people (see Even-Zohar 2022), purpose-built accommodation (see Krstic et al. 2020), and schemes where students live in allocated units in pre-existing retirement communities or care homes (see Arentshorst, Kloet, and Peine 2019; Biswas 2023). While there are longstanding existing schemes, particularly home-sharing iterations like ensemble2générations in France, there are many more recent schemes, pilots and innovations of all three models. For example, retirement communities in the US like Deerfield at Drake University, which offer students free accommodation for monthly musical performances (Ward, Spitze, and Sherman 2005). Despite this diversity and the global spread of these schemes, student-senior housing has only been sparsely analysed in housing literature.

In the UK, there is significant interest in bringing forth new student-senior housing schemes. Developments are being explored by universities in Dartington, Worcester, Bristol and Northampton. This article emerged from a UK university-commissioned research project exploring the potential implementation of an intergenerational housing model in a new campus expansion. While the university's interest was on the contribution of such a scheme to address student housing shortages and the potential to increase the access of local older persons to higher education, this article focuses on a different element that emerged in the research team's analysis of the data: the neighbourly relationships prescribed or aspired to by intergenerational housing models. The six schemes, a mix of existing, historical and prospective, that were featured as case studies in this research project, from across Europe and North America, all looked to establish neighbourly roles of mutual support that were elevations of "typical" neighbourly expectations. We call these: neighbour-plus roles. To prescribe or enable these roles, schemes implement a range of institutional and material measures into their design. To explore these dynamics, this article seeks to answer the following two research questions: 1) How is the role of the neighbour distinctly developed and applied in student-senior intergenerational housing schemes?; and 2) How are different resources and spatial configurations combined to produce different neighbourly relations?

Non-family intergenerational living, especially involving students, is an under-researched area in housing studies internationally, and is broadly absent from literature on neighbouring and neighbours that tends to focus on organic, rather than engineered, relationships and roles. Therefore, our research brings a new framework and analysis to intergenerational housing, advancing an undeveloped area of housing studies, and offers original and substantial contributions to literature on neighbouring. Further, our

connection between the two is novel and offers a developed theoretical resource to the currently empirically focused analysis of intergenerational housing (Arentshorst, Kloet, and Peine 2019; Arroyo et al. 2021).

The structure of the article is as follows: we first set out the research project and its methods that this article was based on. It then moves onto review theories of neighbours and neighbouring. We then present the three neighbour-plus roles we observed and the institutional and spatial characteristics supporting these. The article concludes by turning back to the scholarship on neighbours and neighbouring to examine the distinctiveness of these neighbour-plus roles as well as practice implications.

Research Methods and Approach

This article is based on the research which was commissioned by a UK university in 2023. As part of a campus expansion, the project brief sought to explore different intergenerational housing models in order to identify "a pilot project which could test how new models of intergenerational housing could support older people's access to, and participation in, higher education, while helping respond to the challenges of increased demand on student accommodations within the city-region". The themes of this article emerged in the process of the data analysis, which inspired fresh perspectives and a theoretical take.

The method of inquiry for this research was qualitative, using case studies of existing intergenerational housing schemes. The case study approach was chosen for its content-specific explanatory and exploratory power (see Yin 2014), well suited to the university's request for specific models that could be replicated or avoided. Equally, it suited the tight budget and timeframe of the project. There were two stages to our data collection and analysis. First, an extensive desk-based review was conducted on non-family-based intergenerational housing, institutional models, relationships and functions of residents. Part of this was an online search to identify existing intergenerational housing schemes involving older people and young adults (more broadly, not limited to university students) nationally and internationally, using web search, academic literature search, and through our professional contacts. Our search generated 16 relevant housing schemes before we reached the saturation point. We mapped and clustered the schemes by their characteristics, and briefly summarized their location, date of completion, funding and operational providers, main objectives, size including the number of residents and units, tenure status, benefits and limitations of the schemes, and negative and positive impacts on the residents and the wider community.[2] What emerged were three types of student-senior housing: 1) "mutually beneficial intergenerational housing" populated by students and seniors designed for social interaction; 2) "pre-existing care homes or supported accommodation" that brought students in to live with older residents and provide practical and emotional support; 3) "upmarket owner-occupied retirement housing" developed on university campus with student residents.

Second, through the initial analysis of the clustered intergenerational housing schemes, we selected six case studies from the above three different (institutional) models of intergenerational housing for more in-depth analysis (see Table 1). For the selection criteria, we sampled schemes from each cluster, consciously including more established schemes with long-term experiences and visible impact, and some UK-based schemes to evaluate existing barriers. We used publicly available information including evaluation

Table 1. Profile of case study intergenerational housing.

Case Study #	Scheme Type	Location	Year established	Size	Student responsibility	Older residents
1	Mutually beneficial intergenerational housing	Sweden	2019	Seniors (70+), young people and former refugees	2 hours a week interaction	2 hours a week interaction
2	Mutually beneficial intergenerational housing	UK	Due to open 2024	30 ×seniors (55+) and 8 ×postgraduate students	Volunteer few hours a week for reduced rent	Low income
3	Pre-existing care home or supported accommodation	The Netherlands	2016	150+ seniors and 6 ×students	Rent free and provide 30 hours a month in support of	Significant care need
4	Upmarket owner-occupied retirement housing	US	1993	4 students (competitive selection)	Rent free and provide 10 hours of services, e.g. music performance	Homeowners, high wealth, education
5	Pre-existing care home or supported accommodation	UK	2017 (ceased)	23 seniors and 3 PhD students	15 hours a month for reduced rent	Low-income, care need

reports, newspaper articles, recorded talks, and academic journal articles for initial analysis. After the document analysis, we conducted semi-structured individual interviews online with one or more key informants of the selected housing schemes, using a topic guide. With the university interested in scheme design, we sought to principally interview individuals from the schemes' managing organizations. The informants included the Director of Creative Arts Therapy (Case Study 4), housing scheme managers (CS1, CS5), an academic (CS5), a development manager (CS2), and a former resident (CS4). For one scheme (CS3), since there was sufficient information online that corresponded to the research questions, we used document analysis only. The topic guide covered a range of themes including: rationales behind the schemes; what benefits and whose benefits; lived experiences of residents; suitability and selection of residents; what worked and not worked; how equality, diversity and inclusion are considered and promoted; and wider community benefits. We conducted an interview for a sixth case study, a prospective development in a UK city, however in such early stages with little sense of what the finalized institutional design would be, it lacked the data for inclusion in the analysis of this article.

The interviews were conducted in English between December 2023 and early February 2024. Each interview took on average 45–60 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded with the informants' consent and transcribed fully for the analysis. The interview data and documentary information were then organized and analysed using NVivo13, which allowed us to carefully examine the strengths and limitations of the schemes, and social functions and relationships of the residents across different schemes. The initial codes were determined by the topic guide such as "scheme rationale", "benefits" (divided into for older residents, students, wider community), "support/functions and relations" (divided into personal, practical, emotional, others; and by older residents, students, scheme staff), "suitability" (selection process & criteria, residents backgrounds, personality etc.) and so on. We created new (sub) codes when new categories emerged – some of which were distinctive roles of residents (neighbour-plus), the focus of this article. The study followed institutional research ethics guidelines of the authors' institution, and an ethical approval was given by the School's Research Ethics Committee. We anonymized the names of housing schemes as well as the informants for the purpose of privacy and confidentiality.

Following our reporting to the university, as a research team we further examined the distinctness of these schemes. One way or another, all schemes placed emphasis on residents being "good neighbours". What this meant and how this was to be achieved varied between schemes, some hoping organic social development between residents and others formally prescribing the form of some neighbourly relationships. Thus, we turned to the literature on neighbours and neighbouring to identify core concepts that help us understand these distinct neighbour relations. Our review of this literature and its theoretical frameworks that this paper wishes to speak to is set out below.

Neighbours and Neighbouring

As Tkach, Jensen, and Miranda-Nieto (2024, 281) note, literature on the neighbour is not a "distinct field" itself with literature, both theoretical and empirical fairly disparate, principally a mix of philosophical scholarship and sociological literature, partly based in

Housing Studies. In the latter, the interest is in the neighbour as a social role, performed within a geographically proximate relationality. The activities of this, its performance, and the primary interest of this literature, is dubbed "neighbouring", defined seminally by Keller (1968, 29) as: "the activities engaged in by neighbors as neighbors and the relationships these engender among them". In this literature, there are four particular areas of conceptual focus: ties, levels of neighbouring, manifest and latent neighbouring, and the norms underpinning neighbour relations.

An established framework in analysis of neighbouring is weak ties and strong ties, the former relationships that are occasional and/or superficial and the latter relationships with a degree of intimacy and emotional connection (Felder 2020). Neighbouring is often framed in terms of weak ties: Henning and Lieberg (1996, 18) define a three-part of hierarchy of neighbourly weak ties: "people that you recognise and say hello to", "people that you usually also stop and talk to when you meet" and "people with who you exchange services". These are contrasted to strong ties, seen as being composed of "friendship or an affective bond" (Grannis 2009, 25), which neighbour relations are separated from. Henning and Lieberg (1996) also look to add a different "tie" type to neighbourly relations: "absent ties", where a neighbour recognizes another but lacks a relationship to them. Adding to this, Felder (2020, 681) suggests "invisible ties", for those "anonymous yet recognisable", and "non-existent ties", where an individual knows a dwelling is occupied but nothing of the dweller themself.

Ties are not the only framework for understanding neighbouring. Grannis (2009) established an influential four-stage breakdown of neighbouring: a relationship of proximity (Stage 1), unintended conversational encounters (Stage 2), intended encounters revolving around mutual interest (Stage 3), and working together for a common goal (Stage 4). The early stages develop an "ecology" of social connections via contact to build more formalized relations with informal norms, the later stages (Grannis 2009).

Ruonavaara (2022) points out, in view of Keller's (1968) definition, the first two stages appear more like conditions, rather than actual structures of neighbouring. Ruonavaara (2022) suggests a fitting advancement of Grannis's framework (Grannis 2009), building also on Henning and Lieberg's weak ties work: two conditions and four levels of neighbouring. The two conditions are geographic proximity and a chance of interaction through similar "time-space paths", habits offering the possibility of contact, like similar school runs (Grannis 2009, 389). Proximity, as expected, is emphasized across literature on neighbours and neighbouring (e.g. Felder et al. 2023). If these conditions are fulfiled, Ruonavaara's (2022) framework outlines that different levels of neighbouring may be possible to follow:

Level 1: recognizing each other
Level 2: starting conversation
Level 3: exchanging services or favours
Level 4: working towards a common goal

This hierarchy is not intrinsically normative. A "Level 4" neighbourly relationship is not necessarily superior to "Level 3" and so on. Rather, it is established hierarchically as to reach Level 4, the relationship needs to have achieved the other three levels. After all, neighbours are likely not going to start working towards a common goal (e.g. hosting a street party or partaking in a neighbourhood watch service) without recognition, conversation and trust, established in the exchange of previous services. It is worth

emphasizing that progression through these levels is not given; two individuals being neighbours does not mean they will necessarily start neighbouring on Level 1 and ascend upwards, even if their "time-paths" match up and have to navigate the above institutions (Cheshire, Easthope, and ten Have 2021). For one, individual preferences for intimacy may hinder progress into the later levels. Equally, relationships do not solely ascend; over time connections between neighbours may weaken where they move from exchanging favours to just having conversation.

Ruonavaara's (2022) framework is an expression, to use Mann's (1954, 164) dichotomy, of "manifest" neighbouring, "overt forms of social relationship", in contrast to "latent" neighbouring, the prevailing attitudes of individuals towards the neighbour relation, even if not engaging in neighbouring themselves. Latent neighbouring may be positive, seeking involvement in certain circumstances, or negative, wanting distance from one's neighbours. Particularly, latent neighbouring becomes manifest neighbouring, in Mann's (1954) schema, in times of need. For instance, Cheshire (2015) lays out how, from a study of flooding in Queensland, individuals not previously engaged in neighbouring come to the assistance, particularly in terms of providing information, to fellow neighbourhood residents, alike to similar neighbouring behaviour in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mann's (1954) latent neighbouring calls to an important point: norms play a role in neighbouring, whether latent, i.e. overarching expectations, or manifest, i.e. how favours are exchanged. In Western culture, where this research was conducted, the normative understanding of neighbourliness is framed by scholars as being "friendly, helpful and respectful of each other's privacy" and offer degrees of reciprocity (Cheshire, Easthope, and ten Have 2021, 137; Seifert and König 2019). Kusenbach (2006) offers a more expansive development of these norms. Kusenbach (2006) sets out four normative principles that variably apply in neighbouring: 1) friendly recognition, the identification of neighbours, 2) parochial helpfulness, the appropriate amount of aid a neighbour can ask for, 3) proactive intervention, what favours can be done without being asked, and 4) embracing and persisting diversity, the inclusion and exclusion of certain individuals into a neighbour network. Unwritten and informal institutional setups, negotiating these principles within the levels of neighbouring can present challenges (Cheshire 2015). For example, Crow, Allan, and Summers (2002) notes that underlying all norms of neighbourliness, one must establish the appropriate intimacy with another while neighbouring: not too close to infringe on privacy nor too far to appear avoidant. Furthermore, what is considered "appropriate" will vary person to person; someone might enjoy neighbourhood gossip, another might find that too intrusive (Mann 1954). Failure, however, to meet another neighbour's expectations can invoke informal sanctions (Kusenbach 2006). With the variable application of Kusenbach's (2006) normative principles and the varying structure of neighbouring relationships, neighbouring as Cheshire (2015, 1088) aptly puts it is an "interactive practice" with a diversity of outcomes and compositions:

> [W]hile individual choices or circumstances, and neighbourhood characteristics, may influence neighbouring styles, each set of neighbour relations is interactively negotiated and managed between the parties concerned.

The ambivalent framing in Cheshire's (2015) above statement is important; though we have discussed it so far in broadly positive terms, neighbouring should not be presumed as positive. As Mann (1954), for one, notes, neighbouring may host conflict, like those over noise or property boundaries (see Benz et al. 2021; P. J. Lee and Jeong 2021), as well as

enable support care networks and positive attachments to place (see Mahmoudi Farahani 2016; Nocon and Pearson 2000).

What this literature fails to substantially comment on is the elevation of certain neighbour roles in specific housing contexts. The focus is on neighbour relationships are incidental and that develop organically. However, not all neighbours become neighbours as a result of individual choices to live in certain areas. For instance, Beck (2020, 47) notes that people often join intergenerational co-housing because they want "to know [their] neighbours and to be part of a community". Moreover, intergenerational living arrangements are often created because of possibly mutually beneficial relations with "younger residents offering assistance" and older residents providing "guidance and mentorship" (Van Gasse and Wyninckx 2024, 283). Often, these arrangements are supported externally to help the relationships become fruitful for those involved (Van Gasse and Wyninckx 2024). What we observed in our case studies was similar; the intentional agglomeration of specific residents for prescribed or aspired to elevated neighbour roles to create positive social outcomes. In some of these instances, as we describe below, the development of neighbour relations was not left to be organic but relied on considerable scripting. We propose that these can be understood as designing "neighbour-plus" roles; a conceptual framework that we wish to contribute to this sociological literature to use in instances where neighbours' roles or expectations are elevated.

Neighbour-Plus Roles

Seeking specific outcomes from neighbouring, to varying degrees, our case study housing schemes sought to cultivate the social role of the neighbour into a specific form. The research found schemes eager to move beyond the boundaries of the traditional "friendly distance" of neighbours that Cheshire, Easthope, and ten Have (2021) discuss, to structure "intended encounters" for support, a more advanced form of neighbouring in Grannis's (2009) conception. Our case study schemes wanted their residents across generations to become neighbours *and* another social role that would bring benefits to those involved and the community at large. We called this expansion of the neighbour role, "neighbour-plus". We identified three iterations of this expanded social role. Below, we set out these iterations observed in our case studies with their achieved (or expected) social outcomes and the institutional and spatial factors underlying their prescription or aspiration.

Neighbour-Plus-Friend

In the housing schemes aspiring to be mutually beneficial intergenerational housing, Case Studies 1 and 2 (CS1 and CS2), the residents were requested or will be requested (CS2 was a prospective scheme at the time of data collection) to spend time in common areas or socialize with fellow residents with a particular emphasis on intergenerational interactions. Requests that are formalized in an agreement residents sign when arriving to the development specifying a certain number of hours a week spend with fellow residents or in common areas. In CS2, this instruction was anticipated to be only placed on student residents whereas in CS1, an existing scheme in Sweden, it applied to all residents irrespective of age. Despite this formalization, for this role there was no direct management of the residents' time, allowing them to self-determine how they spent time with

others and in communal areas. In both, however, the emphasis and the expectations from the scheme management was on neighbours forming connections, establishing a community and, hopefully, becoming friends with each other. In our terminology, the expectation is that residents would become neighbours-plus-friends. So, even if the time commitment was placed only on one resident group, i.e. students, the roles were expected to be symmetrical, with both seniors and students seeing each other as neighbours and friends.

Case Study 1 (CS1) was an intergenerational housing development with a wide range of amenities including community kitchens, dining and activity rooms, owned and run by a municipality-owned housing company. Residents consist of two generations of old (aged 70+) and young adults (aged 18 to 25)[3] with all residents being offered "affordable market rents". Within and between these resident groups, the scheme offers a strong integration promise by intentionally mixing people with totally different backgrounds of age, value, origin, education, socio-economic status, sexuality and personality. As the social project leader stated that "this is an integration project as much as housing project"; hence, the commitment of all residents to socialize with others at least two hours a week. While a (non-resident) house manager supports the scheme, as there is no direct management of this time. With organizing social activities is left to the residents, some organize more than others; older residents tend to use activity rooms more often during the day. However, "by 4pm, older tenants wait in the lobby area for younger tenants to come home and socialise with them", explained the social project leader informant. While the ongoing operation is relatively "hands-off", being a concept-driven project, it was labour intensive to set up and select suitable tenants to maintain the social mix and diversity through extensive interviews by both scheme and house managers emphasizing the community diversity, as the social project leader stated, "when they apply, they have to come in the house and we try to find those who are most different from all the others in the house". Afterwards, staff were also heavily involved in facilitating early interactions and resolving minor conflicts among the tenants as the community settled.

A significantly less labour-intensive "neighbour-plus-friend" model is planned in a new UK scheme (CS2). This scheme, an apartment building with communal space, will offer intergenerational "affordable" housing,[4] targeting older individuals on low incomes (drawn from the local authority's social housing waiting list) and invite local university students to live alongside them. The profile of actual "older" residents was yet to be finalized at the time of the interview but was proposed for the resident to be above the age of 55 and able to live independently. It is unlikely that they will have significant care needs, although their care needs may change as they grow older in the housing scheme. The principles are the same to CS1 – "promoting social integration and combatting loneliness of older individuals by facilitating social interaction with students". Each block of two complex buildings will have a 4-bedroom flat which will be shared by postgraduate students. Subsidized rent is offered to students and in return, the minimal expectation (on average, one hour per week) is for them to socialize with older tenants or simply spend time in the communal space, where hopefully friendships with older neighbours will form. As the development manager stated that they "wanted the process of social interaction not to be prescribed or forced from either party but develop organically." The assumption here is the time requirement placed on the students will create opportunities for socialization and, in turn, that residents will become more than

just neighbours, and through the friendships formed will provide value in each other's lives.

Neighbour-Plus-Carer

In the schemes where students live within care homes or long-term care facilities and the owner-occupier retirement community we studied, a different neighbour-plus relationship is cultivated: "neighbour-plus-carer". We define "carer" in this context not as formal care worker providing personal/social care, but something more structured than mutual support provided by friends or neighbours through formal time commitments from the students. Here, students receive often a more substantial offer than the neighbour-plus-friend schemes: rent-free accommodation, sometimes with free meals provided in communal areas. In return, the students are asked to undertake light-touch care work (e.g. helping with shopping, cooking meals). Like the neighbour-plus-friend role, this work is quantified in a time requirement. We did observe at points this role involving more top-down management of the student time, prescribing certain activities or tasks. Depending on the care needs of their senior neighbours, these students may help alongside housing and care staff assisting the residents.

A well-established and successful scheme is a long-term care home in the Netherlands (CS3), which requires student residents to spend 30 hours a month to support older residents in exchange of free rent (see Arentshorst, Kloet, and Peine 2019; Biswas 2023; Brouwers et al. 2023; Rusinovic et al. 2020). The care home with 150 older people is run by a well-established national social service and community building organization. Six student flats are located in different floors and corridors, structured so each student is roughly "in charge" of 25 older people in their corridor. The support may take a variety of forms, dependent on student capacity and older residents' interest. It is encapsulated under a shared agreement, alike to the contract in CS1, signed by all residents to be "a good neighbour" (Arentshorst, Kloet, and Peine 2019, 248). While some of the support could be conceived as traditional manifest neighbouring, for instance, socializing, playing games and assisting them with digital technology, there is more formal prescribed support such as each student in rotation cooking a simple "bread-based meal" for a small group of older residents one evening a week (Humanitas 2024). Paid staff work alongside the students providing specialized care where needed (Brouwers et al. 2023). Moreover, the scheme actively seeks students from a non-medical background, those studying medicine or nursing are not allowed to reside in the scheme in order to provide students alternative life experiences and help create "a more natural environment" for older residents (Brouwers et al. 2023, 6).

There was a similar set up in CS4, a US retirement complex; student residents are required to spend a larger time assisting the housing complex with its provision of care and support to older residents than CS3, typically between 10 and 15 hours a week. In return, they receive free accommodation and meals provided in a dining hall. With such a significant time commitment, student applicants go through a competitive selection process similar to scholarship applications. The scheme managers stress the importance of students meeting the time commitment through tasks that match their interests – this ensures engagement. As a former-student resident informant recalled, "given their interest in geriatric support, for example, they could volunteer in the memory care clinic."

Often, care here is not a "looking after" of senior residents but "looking out", as an informant of CS4 detailed, for instance, "checking in" on residents by knocking on doors around the complex as informal wellbeing support. This echoes the likely boundaries of mutual support in collaborative housing schemes (Izuhara et al. 2025). In addition to the student volunteers, with a large age range of older residents, from mid-50s upwards, some older residents also assist with providing care to those in greater need. The senior take-up of the neighbour-plus-carer role, not tied to a tenancy offering, is more ad-hoc and flexible.

We also observed this role in a sheltered housing scheme in the UK (CS5). A similar time commitment (between 10 and 15 hours a week) for light-touch care was also secured from its students by offering a discounted rental arrangement, attractive given expensive rental housing elsewhere in the city. Tasks were flexible but had to be designed around spending time with older residents and undertaking regular practical assistance such as shopping and cooking meals. CS5 was a 2-year pilot scheme run by a housing association with support from a local university. It was a small, supported accommodation block and designed to assess whether 3 PhD students living side-by-side with 23 older people (aged 55+) could replace the warden provision that previously existed in the scheme. In this pilot, however, the students felt time pressure, given their parallel full-time study commitments, and the lack of skills and capacity to meet the need of the older residents. Furthermore, the managing organization, a housing association, struggled to cater to some of the issues the students encountered in their lives. As our informant commented: "students have their own mental health needs, they have their own personal issues." Equally, some of the older residents did not want to engage with the kind of support the students could offer, instead, wanting something more formal akin to the previous warden arrangement. Thus, the scheme, facing issues from both age groups, was discontinued after running for two years.

Neighbour-Plus-Mentor

In our US case (CS4), another elevation of the neighbour role was evident: neighbour-plus-mentors. This scheme provided an opportunity for senior residents as well as distinctive benefits to selected student residents. The housing development which was a retirement community with a mix of independent and assisted living had a range of intergenerational projects alongside an intergenerational living arrangement. It prided itself on its strong civic engagement, especially with the local university. In addition to the scheme's management of their student residents, managers open positions to senior homeowners to mentor both the students in academic matters living in the complex and others at the local university. Many older residents have and continue to get involved as they had an educational background, either staff or student alumni to the local university – stimulating the older residents, forging mutually beneficial relationships between students and seniors and allowing the retirement community to fulfil its objectives of civic engagement.

To help realize these roles, our informants discussed how specific institutional and spatial characteristics of the schemes were shaped to create an enabling or supportive environment for the desired neighbouring. We outline these next before considering

these elevated neighbour roles with the concepts and frameworks found in literature on neighbours and neighbouring.

Institutional and Spatial Factors

Spatial Design

For neighbour-plus-friend schemes (CS1 and CS2), common spaces were lauded as helping spatialize the time commitment. To meet the time expectation, all residents have to do is "hang out" in the communal areas. In CS2, this was planned to be a "garden room" on the ground floor, with a mix of indoor and outdoor space and kitchen facilities. This provision of communal space will act as a locus for the community to connect and de-intensify social relations, as similar spaces did for CS1; as our student informant for CS4 noted when discussing door-knocking "one-to-one support felt more intimidating, especially at the beginning." A common area provides a place that students and seniors alike can come and go, exchange conversation and develop relationships without making appointments and overt social pressure. For the neighbour-plus-carer schemes, common spaces were also noted to serve these purposes, helping students establish a conviviality with elderly neighbours. Through the common spaces the schemes did not have to rely on incidental patterns of similar "time-space paths" for opportunity for neighbouring. For example, in CS4, there was a shared dining hall where residents could have a free meal that offered a place for organic socializing between the resident groups. An additional benefit of common spaces for the students in neighbour-plus-carer roles was it allowed them to host events or activities for seniors (e.g. yoga or meals). This allowed them to reach a larger group of seniors at once in a relax setting. The provision of similar spaces for activities in CS1 were equally used by residents, though more informally, as the community established itself.

The only scheme that lacked a common space was CS5. The housing the scheme was piloted in was previously a supported accommodation block for low-income residents solely composed of individual dwellings. The students then taking up the neighbour-plus-carer role had to reach out to their senior neighbours individually. While this was potentially more challenging, this did sometimes lead to intimate relationships being formed, helping alleviate the social isolation of some senior residents. One of our informants reported that quasi-familial relationships developed with elderly individuals taking a grandparent role for students. The focus on one-on-one relationships, however, placed a burden on the scheme management who had to "spend a lot of time on relationship management", one of the informants reported.

The other spatial factor that was discussed throughout our data was the location of student accommodation. As Felder et al. (2023) and Ruonavaara (2022) argue, spatial proximity in forming neighbour relations is important, and so there was great consideration for the spatial layout of the schemes to enable encounters and interactions, namely structure the patterns of social encounters and interactions without hindering resident privacy. For example, CS2's current design opts for clustering shared student flats in a different floor of the housing scheme, which provide private space for students to experience conventional student shared living alongside broader co-living with older residents. Other schemes deliberately dot student units around to maximize potential

interactions and structure support. In the long-term care home (CS3), students are provided accommodation on each floor (horizontal proximity to older residents) as they are assigned to "look out for" a group of older residents on their corridor. Compared to CS2 (vertical proximity), such horizontal proximity has been successful in structuring accidental social interactions as well as practical support provision and thus forging neighbour connections, through "shared paths" using the same corridor and entrance (Felder et al. 2023). Taking a different approach, CS4 offers students a distinct building on the retirement campus, giving them a degree of separation and, in turn, privacy from the older residents. However, by the offer of free meals in the communal dining hall, the scheme seeks to incentivize students to only use this separation when required and frequently spend time within communal spaces.

Resources, Resident Selection and Governance

With the schemes being value-led and placing a significant time burden on their residents, namely time-poor student residents, having an effective selection process was critical. The schemes broadly wanted student residents who would "buy-in" to the value proposition of the schemes as well as those who had the right skills (e.g. interpersonal skills) and energy for these enhanced neighbour roles. In CS4, for instance, the selection process was, as our informant put it, intentionally "arduous"; it sought to "weed out" anyone who would not manage with the commitment of the neighbour-plus-carer role. It involved: a drug test, hours of learning of relevant government regulation and training on specific diseases (e.g. dementia). Likewise, in CS5, there was an application process with shortlisting and an interview. The focus, like CS4, finds "people who really did actually want to get involved" and be effective neighbour-plus-carers. In neighbour-plus-friend schemes, similar approaches were taken with an application process and interviews. The focus here was on value alignment and/or community fit, rather than the capacity of the student or senior to commit time. In CS1, the interview questions were focused on what individuals could bring to the scheme and what their motivations were. Taking a further step to ensure community cohesion, CS2 plans to involve its seniors in the selection of students, hopefully shoring up the foundations of a potential community in its development. This was one process that, no matter the neighbour-plus-role being aimed for, involved significant resources. For instance, CS1 undertook 139 interviews at the start of the scheme. All schemes felt that getting the right residents in their housing was critical to cultivating their desired neighbourly relations.

However, once the scheme progressed into the "live" stage, different levels of resources were committed to the schemes. Resources here include not only finance for developing and operationalizing the housing schemes but also include the availability of training for students and the availability of paid staff to offer support and management. As mentioned in regard to CS5, the resources the managing organization was able to spend on a scheme was critical to the successful realization of the associated neighbour-plus role and the wider functioning of the scheme. For instance, CS3, the Dutch scheme, and CS4, the community in the US, utilize considerable resources managing its students; staff provide pastoral support to students and, particularly in the case of CS4, have detailed oversight over how their time is spent in the community. The result, as both our informants commented for CS4, was successful: the community receives the support it

wants, and the students undertake activities bespoke to them. Still, despite this resource, our student informant did comment that "the onboarding was difficult", undertaking tasks they were not familiar with and having to develop skills whilst "on the job". Also, in these schemes were seniors have care needs that cannot be met by their student neighbours, resources were also spent on specialist staff to support them.

The failure to provide appropriate resources can destabilize the scheme – an informant stressed this in relationship to CS5, the pilot scheme in the UK. Though resource was spent mediating the student-senior relationships, there was a lack of provision for student needs. A key part of its discontinuation was the realization that students were not "resource-free", our informant commented. They were not a trouble-free source of care and one that the managing organization concluded they were not able to effectively support. What this highlights is that student-senior intergenerational housing is often targeted at resource "needy" resident groups – both older residents and students – who may require significant assistance and support in different ways.

Schemes cultivating the neighbour-plus-friend role, the existing CS1 and the proposed CS2, sought or seek to have minimal resources. For instance, CS2 will have no onsite management for students or older residents. Of course, this scheme, with its low time commitment neighbour-plus-friend role, is placing less of a burden on its student residents. Though students do and will still experience issues, as the institutional pressure is less student have limited scope to request or seek their needs met from the scheme managers. CS1 does have some day-to-day resource provision for the scheme. Initially, a housing manager was available every day between 8 am and 5 pm to help with resident issues. However, as the community has come together and relationships developed, our informant noted that their time onsite was reduced as the residents supported themselves.

Once the schemes were in the "live" stage, low-resource schemes typically favoured a bottom-up growth and operation, following the initial more top-down resident selection process. High-resource schemes, opted for a top-down operation, where resources are utilized for formal prescription throughout, from onboarding to managing all aspects of neighbouring. The differences in committed resources coupled with the other institutional and spatial factors shaped how the schemes respectively developed: high-resource schemes developed in a top-down manner whereas low-resource schemes featured bottom-up growth. Our informant from CS1, the existing low-resource neighbour-plus-friend scheme, described the organic evolution of the scheme. A bonded and well-knit community, through the time commitment, had come together. The social integration it aimed for has been achieved and the community has sought greater self-sufficiency. For instance, residents started integrating new tenants themselves with students acting as facilitators when new former-refugee young adults join, to ensure their integration with the older residents. This type of growth is what the managers of CS2 wish for their prospective scheme.

On the other hand, in the US case study (CS4), with its high-resource commitment, opted for a more prescribed, formal institutional setup with functions determined by explicit social contracts underlining the students' tenancies. The design of the time commitment was determined by the student and scheme management together, providing a script to perform the neighbour-plus-carer role, while the neighbour-plus-mentor

role by older residents similarly functioned in conjunction with managers. The contracts are upheld by significant governance, with dedicated staff time, over the students' time and activity, given the more scholarship-like nature of the arrangement in exchange of free accommodation and meals – it is here that the schemes expend their resources. The difference between the success of CS4 and the challenges of CS5, was that CS4 devotes resource towards its students, whereas CS5 incorrectly presumed the students would not require specialist resource.[5]

With students' roles as neighbour-plus-carer being incentivized by rent levels, this becomes a key "lever" for scheme management to play with when considering the stipulations of any contract with a student-senior housing project. The rents were, as noted by one informant (CS5), part of "expectations management" for the students and seniors, away from the tacit disposition of neighbouring expectations elsewhere. It determines the latent neighbouring of a scheme, the attitude of students towards their "neighbour-plus" roles. For example, in CS4's high number of hours, up to 15 per week when a full-time student (outside of term time, this can increase up to 30 per week), is matched by considerable compensation: free board and lodging. Our informant from the retirement community's management noted, in the context of this offering, there was little disengagement from students. In contrast, in CS5, our informant noted that students arrived at the scheme, receiving only discounted rent, expecting the burden would be less than it was, when in reality, they found it, as our informant commented, "a lot harder to deliver". Therefore, the question of appropriate governance, considering how prescriptive a scheme can be of its neighbour-plus roles, needs to be considered alongside resource questions as well as what rent levels are viable for the latter will greatly determine how a student will respond to the prescription of neighbouring.

Discussion

With this typology of neighbour-plus roles and the commentary on the spatial and institutional characteristics supporting their cultivation and development, we now turn back to the scholarship on neighbours and neighbouring. This discussion considers the neighbour-plus roles with the concepts and frameworks previously outlined: ties, levels of neighbouring, manifest and latent neighbouring, and the norms of neighbouring. After this, we provide some wider reflections on our use of the term neighbour and the implications for policy and practice from this research.

By their very "plus" nature, the neighbour-plus roles that we identified were prescribed in the ambition that ties beyond the occasional and superficial would develop. At the very least, the efforts at cultivating this neighbouring wanted to avoid the presence of Hening and Lieberg's (1996) "absent ties" or Felder's (2020) "invisible ties". In CS1 and CS2, the efforts to enable the neighbour-plus-friend role are orientated to connect residents and establish a social ecology that Ruonavaara (2022) identifies as foundational to closer-knit neighbourly relations: communities where people will recognize and acknowledge each other. Alongside this ambition to avoid resident isolation, the time commitment required by residents to socialize carried a secondary ambition that strong ties, in the form of friendships, would develop between student residents and senior residents. Intimacy was also hoped in the schemes (CS3, CS4 and CS5) through the prescription of the neighbours-

plus-carer or neighbours-plus-mentor role. Whilst much of this was practically orientated (e.g. light-touch care work), through this scheme managers hoped that strong bonds would develop – the ambitions were that the roles would have a practical and social impact. Such hopes were broadly realized, even in CS5, the pilot that ceased. Evidence of these more intimate ties was that in both CS3 and CS5 it was reported that residents felt sad or sense of loss when elderly community members passed away or students moved out as they left the local university.

Translating this into Ruonavaara's (2022) framework of levels, we can further to see the distinctness of neighbour-plus roles. On the one hand, the ambition of these roles is always to speed through the lower levels, of mutual recognition (Level 1) or the exchange of conversation (Level 2). Whether a student is required to "chill" in a common area or to organize a meal for senior neighbours, in both cases the ambition is that student and senior residents will quickly recognize each other and converse. On the other hand, the neighbour-plus roles do not neatly fit into the upper two levels: Level 3, exchanging services, and Level 4, working towards a common goal. In schemes seeking neighbours-plus-friends, there was not direct concern for students and seniors to exchange "services" although mutual support is expected. Rather, the focus was on strong connections and the mutual benefits of intergenerational friendship. This may or may not involve the exchange of services or working towards a common goal. In the practically orientated neighbour-plus roles, the focus may be on the provision of services, not the exchanges of services. Having said that, however, the existing research on reciprocity argues that support exchange is often not symmetrical but rather circulation. It is common for individuals to exchange different kinds of commodities and resources including expressive recourses such as love; and such exchanges may take place over time and not necessarily between the same individuals (see Izuhara 2010). Such circulation can be observed in our schemes where residents (young or old) exchange different types of support and such exchange is not always between the same two individuals. Further, in practice the relationships often ended up being mutually beneficial, for example with the cared-for-seniors offering life advice to students. Reciprocity in a neighbour-plus context was less about direct or immediate neighbourly exchange and more characterized by circulation and unintended benefits accrued over time.

Further distinction arrives if we consider these roles with the framework of manifest and latent neighbouring. All the neighbour-plus roles seek manifest neighbouring, "overt forms of social relationship". From the resident requirements, whether light-touch with the neighbour-plus-friend setups and the neighbour-plus-carer arrangements, a specific relationship between two neighbours was sought to be enabled. The hope was that these relationships would be beneficial to residents, for instance by providing social resources like students' time in the form of informal care to older residents, as manifest neighbouring typically are reported to be (e.g. Cheshire 2015). Through these requirements, irrespective of the significance of their requests, the hope by scheme management was that dispositions to help fellow neighbours, in Mann's (1954) terms latent neighbouring, would develop. Mann's (1954) framework is then somewhat altered: by trying to formalize manifest neighbouring, schemes aspired to positive latent neighbouring conditions that would, in turn, proliferate manifest neighbouring and create a well-functioning community. These aspirations were often achieved, for example evident in CS1's community seeking greater self-sufficiency.

In the schemes that prescribed neighbours-plus-carers, the norms of neighbouring that Kusenbach (2006) and Cheshire (2015) identify relied less on a tacit cultural understanding of neighbourliness but were formalized as institutionalized expectations. These are expectations not set by neighbours but by the managing organization. For example, in CS3, cooking a weekly meal is one of the activities that is classified as being a "good neighbour" by the scheme management, like the agreed upon care work in CS4. Becoming then a "good neighbour" from the perspective of scheme management appears less about the successful negotiation of norms that Cheshire (2015) describes but undertaking given duties. That being said, the performance of these activities by residents did not occur in a vacuum and so likely would have been shaped by wider tacit cultural understandings of neighbourliness, synthesized with the institutionalized expectations of scheme management. Beyond these formal tasks, neighbourly relationships were described as having mutual support, which was spontaneous, temporary and undertaken in a manner akin to the norms identified by Kusenbach (2006); other ways residents were "good neighbours". Where schemes seek friendship between neighbours, there is an emphasis on organic development rather than following prescribed norms. Norms were often prescribed to establish the parameters of neighbouring (e.g. time allowances) with residents allowed to self-determine the form of this neighbouring. Thus, this opens up the communities to more heterogenous approaches to neighbouring unlike the homogeneity of the top-down prescriptions accompanying the neighbour-plus-carer roles.

The distinction of our neighbour-plus-roles with the scholarship on neighbouring and neighbours draws out an important question: do these relations qualify as neighbour relations or are we incorrectly applying the term? It could be argued that the defining characteristic of these relations is at points less their spatial proximity and more the role prescribed. For instance, are the neighbour-plus-mentors not simply mentor with mentee, rather than two neighbours coupled together? In response to such possible critiques, there are a couple of elements to consider. Firstly, the schemes themselves use the term neighbour in their governance approaches or discourses, like CS3's "good neighbour". Secondly, there is the social fact that all those involves are dwelling proximate to each other and, speaking plainly from an outsider's perspective, would be classified as neighbours first and foremost. The schemes want to bring students and seniors into neighbourly relations and elevate these to generate social outcomes. These outcomes, as evident from our analysis and this discussion, are beyond what would be typically found in neighbourly relations. That is not to say that neighbours cannot be friends or carers and so forth. Rather, what we have identified is that the expectations underlying the neighbour relations have been altered, hence the "plus" element. When a student arrives in a scheme like in CS4, the expectation is that they are neighbours and carers to their fellow older residents. If they lived elsewhere, such expectations would not be in place. There, neighbours would establish their relationships through "interactive practice", negotiating how they want to live side by side (Cheshire 2015). Friendships could develop but these would exceed expectations, rather than meet expectations. So, our typology of neighbour-plus roles provides a framework for instances where the expectations around neighbourliness are added to or expanded. Of course, a caveat to our arguments here is that we have predominantly viewed these schemes from the "eyes" of scheme management. We offer limited data on how the residents themselves perceive

their relationships, which may be as solely neighbours, enhanced neighbours or something else entirely. This stands as an important avenue for further research.

As well as this scholarly contribution, this analysis has practice relevance. Student-senior intergenerational housing schemes do, if successfully implemented, offer the opportunity to provide students affordable housing and engineer or enable social outcomes. From our findings, two possible models can be used for successful schemes. First, a high-resource, top-down scheme that prescripts a significant amount of the time of residing students to act as neighbour-plus-carers for seniors. This needs to be matched by an attractive offering of no rent and, potentially, meals. Equally, this needs to be accompanied by significant staffing and resources to both manage the student time and to assist with more advanced care needs,[6] as well as a communal area. The need for external support is a recommendation elsewhere in literature on intergenerational collaborative housing (e.g. Labit and Dubost 2016). Second, a low-resource, bottom-up scheme that favours organic growth and self-management, hoping for low-intensity friendships at a minimum. A small time commitment plus a common space should enable these friendships. In both, care needs to be taken for processes to select residents who are committed and aligned to schemes' values. Only using five case studies, these models are likely not an exhaustive summary of effective models. We present them wanting to inspire and help shape experimentation in practice.

Conclusion

This article has undertaken a comparative study of intergenerational student-senior housing, considering a set of case studies across Europe and North America. It seeks to draw attention to the growing trend of this housing model, a potential small-scale innovation to remedy social isolation and student housing crises. Through a series of case studies and the application of a theoretical framework of neighbours and neighbouring, we have explored how intergenerational student-senior housing schemes prescribe or seek "neighbour-plus" relations; elevated forms of the neighbour role. Three iterations of this advancement were presented: neighbour-plus-friend, neighbour-plus-carer and neighbour-plus mentor. To cultivate these roles, schemes tweak and shape institutional and spatial factors to encourage and mediate the socializing between students and seniors.

These roles do not neatly fit into the current conception of neighbouring in scholarship. Thus, as much as we have read neighbour-plus roles in our case studies, it can also function as an analytic device for scholarship on neighbouring for instances where neighbourly relations are being designed for certain social outcomes outside of common expectations of neighbouring. This has application in the context of intergenerational housing, as this article has evidenced, as well as other instances where expectations on neighbours are elevated, for instance community governed housing (e.g. co-living, co-operative housing) or neighbourhood-based initiatives.

Finally, our exploration of neighbour-plus roles serves as useful material for practice. Cheshire (2015, 1096), in a consideration of a community's neighbour-based disaster response, argues that "good neighbouring cannot easily be engineered". Our research, considering the case of student-senior housing, would partly agree: it is only with the right resourcing, right governance and right spatial

design, neighbour relations can become socially productive. We therefore recommend that organizations interested in intergenerational housing, student-senior or otherwise, consider what roles they want their residents undertaking and what institutional and spatial characteristics can support these roles. Particularly, we have suggested two possible forms of success in a student-senior context: a high-resource, top-down scheme or a low-resource bottom-up scheme. From our case studies, we can only stress the importance of a correct assessment resources, because intergenerational housing is often targeted at "needy" resident groups, enabling scheme design and careful selection of "suitable" residents. We hope that well-designed student-senior housing can then proliferate, at a time when policy debates are looking for solutions to epidemic social isolation and worsening housing crisis.

Notes

1. "Intergenerational housing", multi-household housing schemes with unrelated residents of different generations, is distinct from "intergenerational living", which tends to describe extended-family households that have members from different generations (grandparents, adult children and their offsprings).
2. Home-sharing schemes were excluded from this search because the commissioning university analysis was interested in implementing a student-senior housing in a singular building in its new campus, rather than taking a distributed approach like home-sharing.
3. The young adults were a mix of students and former-unaccompanied refugee adults.
4. The exact tenure and rental level were still to be determined by the scheme at time of interview.
5. While we did not investigate the detail of funding structures as part of our research, it is worth noting that CS4 was an upmarket owner-occupied scheme with management fees that could pay for various resources. CS5, on the other, was low-income supported housing and so, in turn, had much lower financial contributions from residents.
6. While we have not directly discussed this in this article, there is an important issue of safeguarding for any student-senior intergenerational housing scheme to consider when assessing what tasks students can be involved in. Safeguarding concerns that apply to both senior residents and student residents.

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