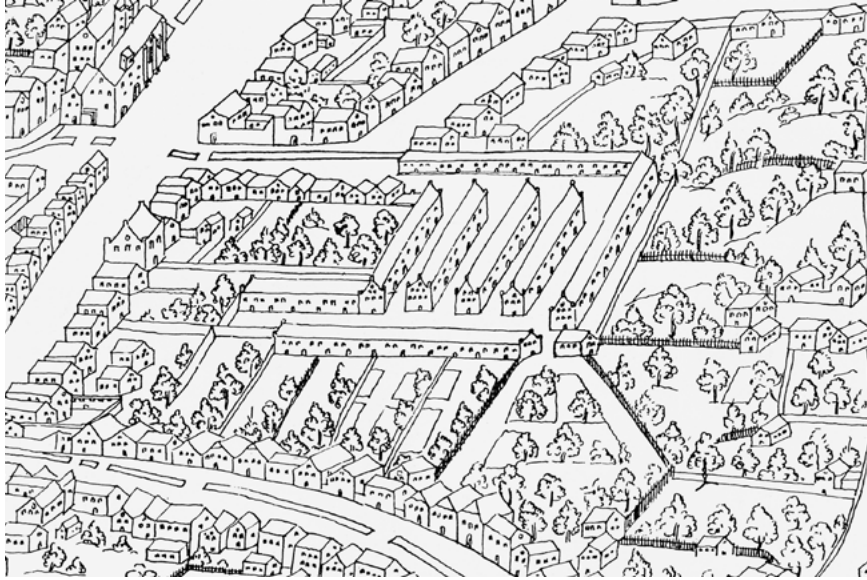


Poverty and Architecture

The Fuggerei as an Early Example of Affordable Housing

Theodora Giovanazzi



Axonometric view of the Fuggerei in 1521. Josef Weidenbacher, *Die Fuggerei um 1521*.
From Josef Weidenbacher, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg*, Abb. 9.
(Augsburg, Germany: im Selbstverlag, 1926).

Built in 1523 by the Fugger family in Augsburg, part of today's southern Germany, the Fuggerei's affordable housing complex was established to accommodate the so-called "Hausarme," or "house poor," in two-story, dual-occupancy row houses within a walled compound. Within the scheme, 10 rows of houses with 52 single-family dwellings are present, which follow an almost unvaried and repeated architectural pattern in elevation and plan. Upon completion, the housing scheme was inhabited by 102 citizens. Tenants were required to pay a rent of one Rhenish florin per year. In exchange for accommodation, they committed themselves to pray daily for the Fugger family from the comfort of their own home, to avoid begging activities, and to maintain a decorous behavior inside and outside the Fuggerei.⁰¹

Often regarded as one of the first examples of affordable housing in Europe, and a forerunner of modern philanthropic housing,⁰² the Fuggerei project marked a radical departure from the predominant European charitable housing types for the poor in Europe during the Middle Ages. Previously, charitable foundations were based on what Bronislaw Geremek defined as the "economics of salvation."⁰³ This concept described an exchange between a donor and a recipient where a donor would make charitable donations, in the hope of redeeming their soul from sin, while a recipient was required to pray for the soul of their benefactor. A motivational change behind charitable activities, however, was already taking hold at the time of the Fuggerei. The roots of this shift can be traced back to the changing perceptions towards poverty typical of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which, on the one hand, led to the secularization of

01 Cfr. Marion Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1982).

02 Cfr. Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Die Familie* (Hamburg: tredition, 2011).

03 Bronislaw Geremek, *Poverty: A History* (Oxford, Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1994), 20.

poor relief and, on the other, to the legal, moral, and social definition of what was considered socially “acceptable” and “unacceptable” poverty.⁰⁴

As Rafael Moneo asserted in his seminal article “On Typology,” the emergence of a new type can be considered a tangible signifier of changed architectural and historical circumstances, new modes of production or social attitudes towards specific subjectivities: “*The most intense moments in architectural development are those when a new type appears. [...] Often, external events—such as new techniques or changes in society—are responsible for impelling [the architect] toward this creation of a new type, in accordance with a dialectical relationship with history.*”⁰⁵ Manfredo Tafuri also argued that, during critical moments of long-term histories, “*eloquent,*” motifs may emerge which allow us to illuminate contingent “*mentalities, conflicts and resistances.*”⁰⁶ In response to these two stances, the paper argues that the Fuggerei foundation presents a case of typological innovation, especially when analyzed against the backdrop of early capitalist development, the new religious ethos of the Reformation and the rise of the High Middle Ages bourgeoisie. The changing social, political, religious and economic climate of the time is reflected in the formal outcome of the project, where the organizational and typological aspects take precedence over the formal representation of the housing complex as a bearer of meaning for both its tenants and the city. The Fuggerei’s architectural framework—made of standardization, abstraction, repetition, and the structural promotion of familial privacy—indicates a changed mentality when compared to previously established housing types for the poor, such as Almshouses, Beguinages or Medieval Hospitals. The Fuggerei provided a *new* solution to a *new* “problem”: its *deserving* “house poor” inhabitants—a subjectivity that can be seen as a precursor of the modern working class. While previous poor relief institutions were typically designed to house single, needy individuals, in a communal setting, the Fuggerei catered to impoverished working families in the most private manner. This pivotal change, I argue, symbolized an awareness that the reproductive labor performed within the privacy of the home should be considered as an essential prerequisite to maximizing the efficiency of the working class. In this sense, the Fuggerei can be seen as a paradigmatic example of a changed attitude towards a new form of *productive* poverty, consistent with the growing centrality of early capitalism typical of the time.

In the notes that follow, this shift is analyzed together with the novel architectural and typological approach of the Fuggerei. The first part of the paper introduces the Hausarme as an emerging social subject at the dawn of modernity and provides a brief description of the founder of the institution, Jakob Fugger, in order to elucidate some key motivations behind the establishment of the Fuggerei. A brief spatial and architectural description of the Fuggerei will serve to introduce some key architectural transformations that materialize this novel typological approach, namely: the emergence of the boundary wall as a preventive enclosure against the temptation of moral deviance outside the complex; the absence of the square and the introduction of roads as main organizational devices; the advent of mass housing; and, lastly, the introduction of the family dwelling as a tool for enhanced privacy and paternalistic education to the cult of work.

04 Cfr. Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Chapter 9.

05 Rafael Moneo, ‘On Typology’, ed. MIT Press, *Oppositions*, no. 13 (1978), 28.

06 Manfredo Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architects* (New Haven: Cambridge, Mass: Yale University Press; Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, 2006), 126.

A NEW CONCEPTION OF POVERTY

The emergence of the social category of the *Hausarme* can be understood as the result of the changes in the perceptions of poverty which began to occur during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries throughout Europe.⁰⁷ Since the thirteenth century, the term *Hausarme* was used to describe either those who had fallen into a condition of poverty for no fault of their own—i.e., due to a condition of sickness or old age—or those who were industriously working but were experiencing economic hardship and were threatened by poverty.⁰⁸ However, it is during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that this category became one of the only socially and economically acceptable forms of poverty as it entailed, in a subtle way, that *poor* people were still *productive* members of society, in spite of their destitution.

In order to fully appreciate the impact of such a shift in the understanding of poverty, we may trace the semantic transformations of the words *poor* and *poverty* within this period. It is a widely accepted view among scholars that, during the Middle Ages in the Western context, poverty was understood as a form of *relative* deficiency and therefore it was a permanent characteristic of societal structures.⁰⁹ In this sense, *poverty* could affect anyone, regardless of their economic situation or social status, as the word in itself simply indicated a “lack of something” or even a religious and voluntary choice of refusal of material possessions.¹⁰



Charity for all. Fra Angelico, *St. Lawrence Giving Alms*, 1449. Chapel of Nicholas V, Vatican Palace, Vatican State.

07 Benjamin Scheller, *Memoria an Der Zeitenwende: Die Stiftungen Jakob Fuggers Des Reichen Vor Und Während Der Reformation* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 135.

08 Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 11.

09 Cfr. Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

10 Often poverty in the Middle Ages was still understood in its Christian sense of holy, voluntary poverty. See: Giorgio Agamben, *Altissima povertà: regole monastiche e forma di vita*, Homo sacer, IV, I (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2011). Peter Brown, *Treasure in Heaven: The Holy Poor in Early Christianity*, Richard Lectures for 2012 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016).

However, between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the semantic meanings of the words *poor* and *poverty* started to gain *negative* connotations throughout Europe.¹¹ In the context of Augsburg, where the Fuggerei project was to be constructed, the city's growth as the top mining and fabric trade center resulted in a marked polarity between the wealthy and the impoverished during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹² Augsburg has existed as a Free Imperial City and as a crucial junction for important European commercial routes since the thirteenth century. Large business enterprises with close banking connections to Venice and Antwerp were also located in the city.¹³ Despite Augsburg's Catholic imprint, the changing European attitude towards the control and repression of poverty, influenced by the Protestant Reformation, left an influential mark. Beginning in the middle of the fifteenth century, the authorities started to control the dispersal of alms in tandem with stricter regulation of the guilds to ensure peace and stability.¹⁴ Beggars were seen as a threat to the bourgeoisie's cult of hard work that was gradually taking hold in the public realm of Augsburg.¹⁵



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Studies of Beggars and Vagrants*, ca. 1465-1559.
Albertina Collection, Vienna, Austria.

11 Numerous causes have been attributed to these changed attitudes towards poverty i.e., the rise of pauperism in the 14th century, the shifts from agricultural to industrial means of production, and from feudalism to capitalism, etc., natural phenomena such as famines and epidemics (i.e., Black Death), etc.

12 Scheller, *Memoria an Der Zeitenwende: Die Stiftungen Jakob Fuggers Des Reichen Vor Und Während Der Reformation*, 134.

13 Isabel Rousset, 'Streets for Movement, Streets for Dwelling', in *The Architecture of Social Reform: Housing, Tradition, and German Modernism* (Manchester: Manchester university press, 2022), 127.

14 Scheller, *Memoria an Der Zeitenwende: Die Stiftungen Jakob Fuggers Des Reichen Vor Und Während Der Reformation*, 134.

15 Scheller, 134.

A renewed interest in the topic of beggars and fraudulent poor in the region is also evidenced by the publication of the *Liber Vagatorum*, or “*The Book of Vagabonds and Beggars with a Vocabulary of Their Language*” in approximately 1509-10 in Pforzheim. This book’s content has been described by Robert Jütte as “proto-ethnographical”¹⁶ as it illustrated various types of evil trickeries performed by beggars as a social category of their own. The plethora of terms used to describe vagrants and beggars increased as people started to doubt peripheral individuals of the society of criminality and deviance.¹⁷ Legal efforts to label and control the poor began to gain traction ever since the fifteenth century, as is testified to by the multiple international poor relief policies¹⁸ that were published almost at the same time throughout Europe. Through these legal frameworks, the poor were for the first time described as commensurable legal subjects whose behavior could be regulated and controlled. Various categories of poverty were introduced to legally define those poor subjects that deserved to be either helped or punished.

Following the Reformation and the secularization of poor relief, the various relief institutions were organized according to an even stricter hierarchical stratification, which distinguished those “deserving” and “undeserving” members of society in need of relief. In his seminal and important study, “*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,”¹⁹ Max Weber argued that predestination, a central tenet of Calvinist theology, had a substantial influence on the formation of a certain work ethic and mindset toward wealth acquisition and poverty. Calvinism held that one’s accomplishments or failures in the physical world were decided by God and that material wealth may be seen as evidence of God’s blessing. Weber asserted that Calvinist beliefs motivated people to work hard and amass wealth as proof of their salvation. On the other hand, poverty was frequently seen as a manifestation of spiritual failing or damnation. This established a moral and psychological need for Calvinists to work toward financial prosperity to escape from destitution and hell. This new, fully individualistic school of religious and economic thought was founded on the idea that the only legitimate motivation for economic planning, activity and employment was the individual’s freedom and duty to pursue profit and self-interest through hard work.²⁰ Therefore, it is no surprise that, with the rise of early capitalist development and the new religious ethos promulgated by the Reformation—which led to the gradual secularization of poor relief, affecting all areas of central Europe—the very notion of poverty began to pose a loud threat to the praised and necessary concepts of work and of private property. In turn, as work started to be heavily regulated, the very forceful methods and conditions imposed on laborer reframed the refusal to work as a criminal offence.²¹ In this sense, the poor subject began to be understood as a social and economic misfit. As it was not possible to fundamentally eradicate poverty, new categories to describe forms of destitution began to spread. The poor *jobless* individual was seen as a dangerous criminal who needed to be regulated, while the *working* poor—amongst whom, were the *Hausarme*—were perceived as honorable members of society considered worthy of help due to their willingness to participate in the labor market. It was this category of poor subjects that the *Fuggerei* was designed to house.

16 Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe*, 179.

17 Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages*. 5 See also: Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe*.

18 Poor relief reforms aimed at controlling the poor population were drafted at this time in numerous European countries: England, France, Germany, Low Countries, Italy, Spain etc. See: Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe*, 201-203.

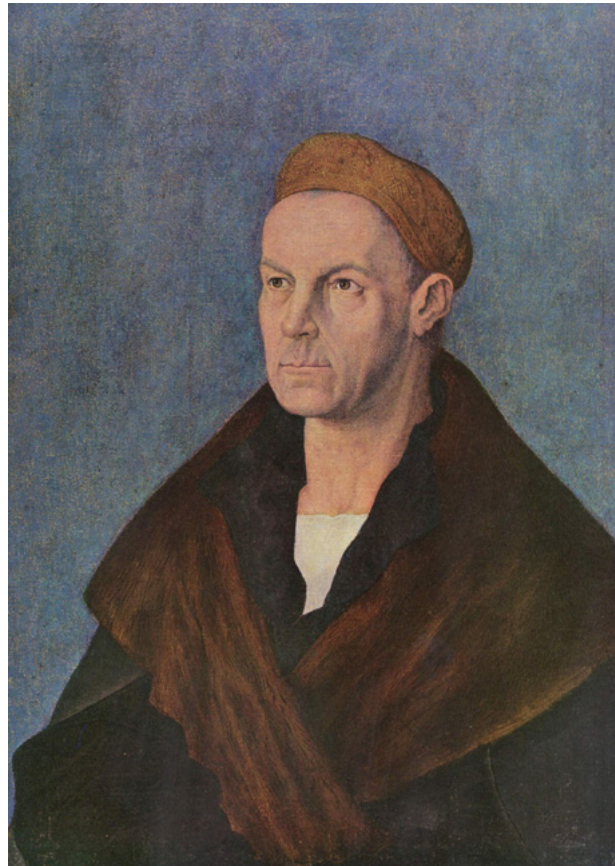
19 Max Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013).

20 Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 16.

21 Bronisław Geremek, *Poverty: A History* (Oxford, Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1994), 83.

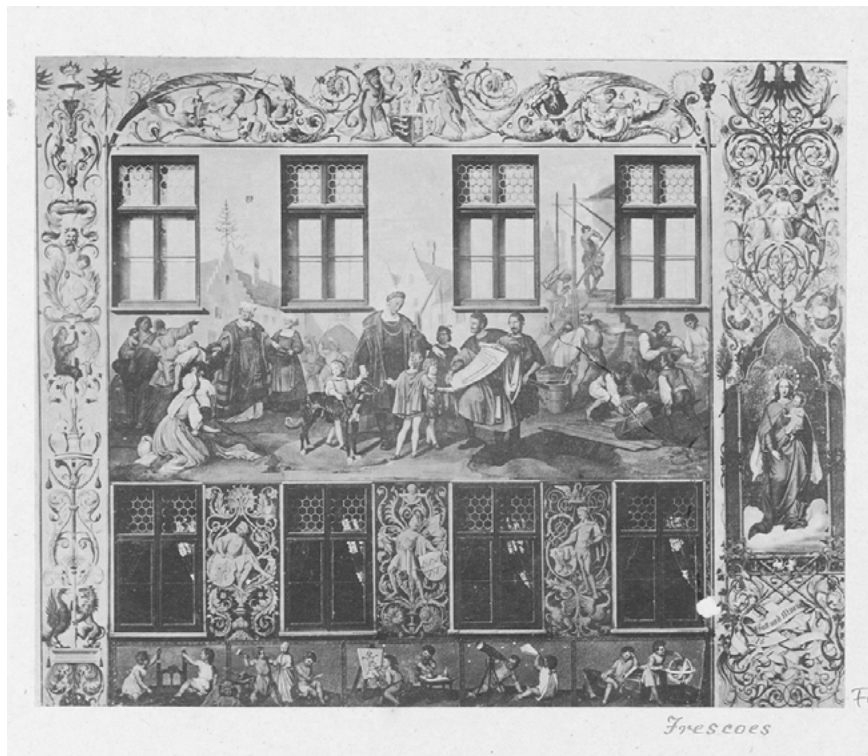
GOD AS CREDITOR AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM

Jakob Fugger (1459 – 1525), the founder of the Fuggerei complex, was a German Catholic mining entrepreneur, banker and merchant. Throughout his career, he became one of the most well-known and successful entrepreneurs in Europe. A major exponent of industrial capitalism, Jacob Fugger made his fortune throughout Europe and particularly in Italy, where he stayed until 1496. Here he was exposed to Italian Renaissance culture and the economic ethos of Venetian and Tuscan merchants and bankers, who fashionably set up accounts of their own—the “di Messer Iddio”—with God as a creditor to fund charitable projects. Through this mechanism, as argued by Marion Tietz-Strödel, their economic goals were adorned by God’s grace, who participated in the investment as a co-partner and account holder, ultimately becoming a creditor of the business and directly sharing the profits through the foundations. In a similar fashion, the “St Ulrich Account” set up by Jakob Fugger for his company in Augsburg makes Saint Ulrich a shareholder of the three institutions: the Fuggerei, the burial chapel of St. Anna and the sermon endowment at St. Moritz.²²



Albrecht Dürer, *Portrait of Jakob Fugger* (1459-1525), ca. 1519. Staatsgalerie Altdeutsche Meister, Augsburg, Germany.

22 Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 27.



Fresco on the façade of Jakob Fugger's house representing the master builder, Thomas Krebs, with the plan of the Fuggerei, and Jakob Fugger, surrounded by the Hausarme. From Hans Burgkmair, *Fresko an der Fassade des ehemaligen Hauses von Hans Jakob Fugger in Augsburg*. From *Teil des Reisealbums mit Fotos aus der Schweiz, Österreich, Italien und Deutschland*.

After the loss of his two brothers, Jakob Fugger initiated plans to establish a foundation for the poor, as testified by his Foundation letter of August 23, 1521. The founder's desire was to balance his personal wealth with deeds of social and civic goodwill²³ to assert his influential position within the local arena and to leave a long-lasting mark in the city of Augsburg. The Fuggerei settlement was thus erected in less than 10 years under the tutelage of the Augsburg master mason Thomas Krebs. Despite the mention of the latter as the master builder, his involvement in the design of the Fuggerei remains unclear. Twenty-two houses were finished by 1517, forty-five houses had been built by 1520, and fifty-two houses, occupied by 102 taxable Catholic citizens, had finally been completed by 1522.²⁴

Through this project, on one hand, the Catholic ethos of Jakob Fugger was fulfilled, while on the other, a changed mentality can be detected, which is more aligned with the entrepreneurial spirit promoted by the Reformed church and the early capitalist mindset of the time.

²³ Rousset, 'Streets for Movement, Streets for Dwelling'.

²⁴ Mark Häberlein, *The Fuggers of Augsburg: Pursuing Wealth and Honor in Renaissance Germany*, Studies in Early Modern German History (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012). 156



John William Reps, *Street in the Residential Complex (Die Fuggerei, Augsburg, DE)*, n.d. John Reps Papers; <https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMA01101.html>; 15-2-1101; Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Cornell, NY. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.1503526>.

But where did Fugger find the inspiration for such project? Venetian commerce had long served as the main point of reference for Augsburg. Jakob Fugger completed his commercial apprenticeship there at the end of the fifteenth century, where he became familiar with the extremely advanced business and accounting practices used by Venetian merchants.²⁵ Despite its predominantly Catholic setting and its ties to established Catholic powers, the Venetian Republic's independence, religious tolerance, and sympathetic attitude towards religious reforming trends, guaranteed a flexible economic and political ground for exchange and innovation. Due to its reliance on trade with Protestant areas of Europe, Venice also admitted Protestant merchants and thinkers, while taking advantage of their connections and expertise. Within this context, the Catholic entrepreneur Jakob Fugger might have been influenced by the latent economic mentality which pre-dated the diffusion of the Reformation and the development of modern capitalistic thinking, after being exposed to the vibrant commercial and mercantile environment of sixteenth-century Venice. This environment was important not only for his successful enterprise but also for his attitude towards the management and welfare of the poor. Already at the end of the fifteenth century, Venice began to introduce a radical reform of its welfare politics with the aim of controlling urban poverty through public entities and semi-public institutions, such as the Scuole Grandi, and an urban expansion intended for structures of assistance.²⁶ However, already in the 1540s, private entities began to participate in the welfare sector with speculative, charitable housing projects for the disadvantaged, which Tafuri describes as being "anonymous" architecture.²⁷ For Tafuri, the Venetian pauperist ideology manifested itself in an ascetic kind of architecture devoid of ornamentation and thus of any symbolism. The moment in which buildings began to be reduced to bare types²⁸—a phenomenon that Tafuri defined as the "crisis of form"—is intertwined with the professionalization of architecture. If architects as individual "authors" of buildings emerged by mastering the language of classical architecture, they were also confronted

25 Mark Häberlein, *The Fuggerei of Augsburg: Pursuing Wealth and Honor in Renaissance Germany*, n.d. 49

26 Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*. Chapter 3

27 Crf. Tafuri, 120. Tafuri refers to a specific project, namely Corte San Rocco.

28 Tafuri, 119.

with programs that escaped the representational tropes of architecture, such as housing for middle and lower classes. Examples such as Sebastiano Serlio's *Book VI*, on habitations in which the Bolognese architect proposed housing types for poor and middle-class dwellers, or Jacopo Sansovino's designs for rental property in Venice, can be interpreted as early cases in which architects who had been trained in the classicist tradition had to design a kind of architecture devoid of any form of representation.²⁹

The link between architecture and its capacity to express symbolic values was therefore seen to be experiencing a crisis, which Tafuri described as a crisis of architecture as a means of representation.³⁰ In a similar manner, the architecture of the Fuggerei was mostly designed to respond to typological issues and to maximize its standardization, rather than being produced as a formal architectural statement for the city of Augsburg.

ENCLOSURE

The location that Jakob Fugger chose for the Fuggerei was the rural area of Jakobervorstadt, which, at the time, had only recently been incorporated within the city walls of Augsburg.³¹ Instead of building on land that the Fugger family already owned, Jakob Fugger decided to purchase seven new plots through the account of St. Ulrich. The housing scheme was built in two construction phases: from 1517 to 1520 and from 1520 to 1523.³² The Fuggerei's layout was influenced by its placement within an existing building block surrounded by three pre-existing streets. Despite its predominantly agricultural character, the site of the Fuggerei was well integrated with the surrounding densely populated Kappenzipfel area. For this reason, the Fuggerei should not be understood as an independent settlement outside the city, but rather as a craftsmen's affordable housing complex that depended on, and interacted with, its urban surroundings for economic and social exchanges.³³ The austere and unassuming façades of the complex recall the Venetian, "case a schiera," or terrace houses, which Jakob Fugger might have known following his stay in Venice. Multiple elements, such as windows, doors, ceiling beams and roof trusses were standardized, and, together with the shared partition walls between dwellings, helped minimize costs,³⁴ guarantee an ease of maintenance and simplify the building process.

The housing rows are separated from each other by seven internal streets: Herren Gasse, Saugasse, Finstere Gasse, Mittlere Gasse, Ochsen Gasse, Hintere Gasse and Neue Gasse. Each single-family dwelling of the Fuggerei occupies one floor of the two-storied houses and has an independent, street-facing entrance: the ground floor flat is equipped with a back enclosed garden, while the first floor flat has access to an attic. The design of the plan follows a standardized organization throughout the scheme with three rooms including a kitchen and two other rooms. In total, each flat measured roughly 45 square meters. The overall ascetic and neutral architectural character of the scheme evidences the wish of the founder to provide austere, yet decorous dwellings for the inhabitants of the Fuggerei. In turn, the formal and architectural uniformity of the complex subjected and reminded the Hausarme of their shared social status and class, and of the importance of work to be able to maintain their place in society. Such ethics of simplicity and neutrality will remain key themes in the emergence of later examples of social housing.

29 Tafuri.

30 Tafuri. Introduction.

31 This area had been incorporated within the Augsburg city walls only in the 14th century. See: Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 65.

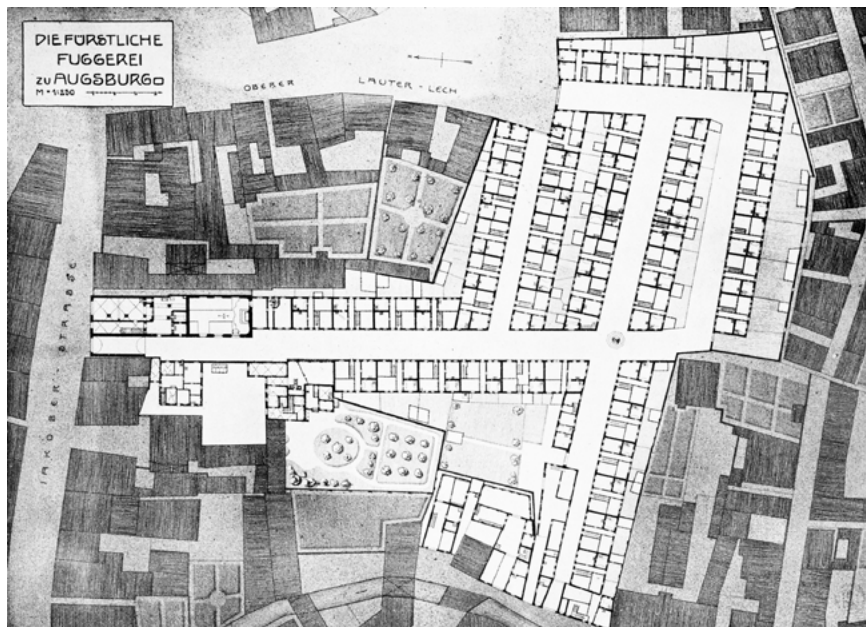
32 Tietz-Strödel, 48.

33 This area had been incorporated within the Augsburg city walls only in the 14th century. See: Tietz-Strödel, 66.

34 Scheller, *Memoria an Der Zeitenwende: Die Stiftungen Jakob Fuggers Des Reichen Vor Und Während Der Reformation*, 131.



Map of Augsburg highlighting the Fuggerei complex in the area of Jakobervorstadt. Georg Braun, Frans Hogenberg, 1575. Augsburg (Free State of Bavaria). From *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, Liber Primus (first published in 1572), Antwerp: Gilles van den Rade, 1575. (Van der Krogt 4, 41:1.1).



Plan of the Fuggerei from 1909, based on the original plan in the city of Augsburg. From Marion Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, (Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1982), 76.

The Fuggerei complex is surrounded by a boundary wall with two gates and two gatehouses, which make up the four main entrances to the housing scheme. Three epitaphs and the coat of arms of the founder are displayed at these entrances, as was common in domestic foundations of the Middle Ages.³⁵ The entrance and exit of the inhabitants of the Fuggerei were dictated by strict opening and closing times of the entrance gates, which were only open between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The boundary wall feature was common in other Medieval poor relief institutions such as Court Beguinages and Hofjes, which usually developed outside of the city's boundary walls. The Begijnhof was a gendered institution which first appeared in the form of a network of communities in the Southern Low Countries in the thirteenth century to house beguines or religious poor lay women in need of housing and assistance. Typologically, Court Beguinages vastly varied in size, ranging from smaller arrangements similar to convents to large architectural complexes, often referred to as Court Beguinages, which were usually separated from neighboring urban establishments by the means of walls or moats. A paradigmatic example is provided by the St Catherine Groot Begijnhof in Mechelen,³⁶ which dates back to the late thirteenth century and came to signify one of the Low Countries' most densely populated and prolific begijnhoven. This community was initially constructed outside of the city walls and therefore was surrounded by a large boundary wall.³⁷ As noted by Tietz-Strödel and by Scheller, in the case of the Beguinages, the boundary wall had a defensive aim and was mainly constructed for security purposes, since these institutions were located outside of the city walls and therefore needed their own means of protection. However, in the case of the Fuggerei, the boundary wall can be seen to assume a new function. Tietz-Strödel has argued that the Fuggerei's boundary wall should be viewed primarily as a "bearer of meaning"—a figurative device of the settlement's identification and representation—which did not have a defensive feature since the inhabitants of this housing scheme were economically reliant on the nearby city and were not subject to extreme regulations.³⁸ Scheller added to this thesis that the Fuggerei's boundary wall, with its precise opening and closing times, was also a physical boundary between the order of the settlement and the disorder of the city, between honorable poor citizens and dishonorable poor mendicants.³⁹ In this sense, the boundary wall of the Fuggerei acted as a tool to discern moral and immoral behavior. To these arguments we may add that the boundary wall of the Fuggerei should be seen as a reminder to its inhabitants that they were part of a community of like-minded, *shamefaced* individuals who belong to the same social class and who actively chose industriousness and morality over begging and unsocial behaviors. Moreover, the wall assumed the double function of protecting and controlling device for the inhabitants of the Fuggerei and the Fuggers.

35 Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 72.

36 In general, Beguinages like the one of Mechelen included four sub-institutions within their spatial confines: the Hof, or court, the Infirmary, the Church or Chapel, and the Table of the Holy Ghost, also called Poor Table, which functioned as a parochial Almshouse. Moreover, also a series of individual houses were part of the settlement. These were usually arranged around a garden or a central square, creating a sense of typological interiority.

37 Kim Overlaet, Replacing the Family? Beguinages in Early Modern Western European Cities: An Analysis of the Family Networks of Beguines Living in Mechelen (1532-1591), *Continuity and Change* 29, no. 3 (2014): 325–47.

38 Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 74.

39 Scheller, *Memoria an Der Zeitenwende: Die Stiftungen Jakob Fuggers Des Reichen Vor Und Während Der Reformation*, 151.

FROM SQUARES TO ROADS

The Fuggerei's rigid grid of internal streets may be read as an intention to get rid of typical forms of commonality: a square or courtyard is lacking throughout the entire complex. The only semblance of the intent to create such a space is given by the presence of a fountain at the intersection of the two main roads, the Hintere Gasse and the Mittlere Gasse. However, the fountain is a later addition of the seventeenth century and for this reason, cannot be analyzed as such. Seven narrow roads, ranging from 4.85 m (Finstere Gasse) to 8.85-12.15 m (Hintere Gasse)⁴⁰ break up the rhythmic pattern of the Fuggerei's row houses. Their purpose is primarily distributive, as tenants were able to access their dwellings through these streets. However, no square or common place of gathering is present for the inhabitants of the Fuggerei for the purposes of meeting up, gathering, or even protesting. This architectural feature signals a sharp departure from other relief institutions of the time; one which indicates that urban optimization and typological clarity within the complex were taking precedence over commonality. In comparison, the Almshouse type always included a central courtyard, as the individual dwellings were arranged around it, while Beguinages also featured a square with a fountain and other common amenities as a space of gathering. In the case of the Bruges Beguinage, even though dwellings are accessible via a road in a similar fashion to the Fuggerei, at their back an open space consisting of a communal garden is present. Even more contemporary examples to the Fuggerei, such as the 12 dwellings for the poor of the Corte Lando Correr in Padua, were arranged around a central open space, creating a sense of typological interiority and community. In the Fuggerei the space for a square is instead given up to the road grid. Each dwelling is equipped with individual private back gardens—reinforcing the opposition between the private sphere of the house and the public one of the community. In a sense, this choice reminds one more clearly of today's social housing estates, which are based on a logic of conglomeration and grouping of all houses within one compound. The avoidance of a space of commonality may be interpreted as the intention of the founder to reinforce the importance of the private sphere and to circumvent the fear of rebellion and organized gatherings through a conscious design and typological choice.



Katarina Prugger and Henry Trumble, "Photograph of the Fuggerei," 2020.

40 Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 70.

AN EARLY PROTOTYPE FOR MASS HOUSING

One of the most innovative features of the Fuggerei is to be found in its sheer size, which far exceeded that of other contemporary housing schemes for the poor. Built to cater for over a hundred tenants, the Fuggerei comprised 52 dwellings upon completion. The housing rows are built as close as possible to the property boundary and are arranged in a rationalized and effective manner to provide as many dwellings as possible. For this reason, the Fuggerei may be understood as a prodrome of mass affordable housing. Other foundations and housing organizations for the poor, such as Almshouses and the specific example of the Corte Lando Correr in Padova (Italy), were designed to not exceed the “apostolic” dozen. 12 cells, 12 one-roomed houses or 12 dwellings: the strong importance given to the number 12 signaled the religious motivations of their founders. The case of the Fuggerei, on the other hand, was designed for a very large number of needy people in a closely similar fashion to the medieval care of hospitals.⁴¹ The unitary, repeated, and standardized architectural style of the Fuggerei’s facades becomes a symbol of the foundation’s purpose and identity, highlighting its separation from the surrounding urban fabric. It communicates that it is indeed a foundation built to house a specific group of individuals in a socially equalizing setting who are dependent on the foundation for their sustenance.

Moreover, the Fuggerei complex provided single-family dwellings rather than an individual cell as would have been the case within the distributed care of the common Medieval hospital. One of the many novelties of the Fuggerei complex is to be found in it being a residential foundation for needy *families*—rather than just needy individuals. In this sense, the family is given a crucial role in guaranteeing the welfare of the individuals within it.⁴² The complex is composed of 52 dwellings, each occupying one floor of two-storied, double-apartment houses with a separate entrance. Houses are typically 9.2 m wide and 7.9 m deep. The living area is around 45 square meters overall, while the walls are 40 cm thick. The room height is around 2.3 m in all livable spaces. 43 of the 52 houses follow a consistent ground plan and standardized design. In the remaining nine houses, minimal variations have been introduced because of the site topography or other constraints. Moreover, there are two single-apartment homes, one of which is a semi-detached home, three smaller two-room dwellings, one of which is also a semi-detached home, two commercially expanded homes, and two homes confronting the entrance in addition to the 43 standardized type homes.⁴³

Rooms within the dwellings are defined by function, and provide spaces for both living and working, further emancipating the familial unit from the community. All services are privatized within the boundaries of the individual dwelling, as also demonstrated by the possibility of the tenants to pray and work from the comfort of their own home. On the ground floor, the front entrance is close to the center of the standardized ground plan, and a narrow, straight corridor runs all the way to the backyard’s entrance. Different entrances to the same two-apartment house further guarantee a degree of privacy and detachment from other neighbors. The entrance to the first-story flat leads to a staircase which reaches the floor above. The ground level’s layout and that of the upper story are almost identical. The kitchen and the living area are separated but located next to each other since the kitchen served as the primary source of heat for the living room furnace. The kitchen is situated at the back of the house to allow the smoke to be released through the open flue above the kitchen to the chimney at the rear of the house.⁴⁴ Each ground floor house is equipped with a back

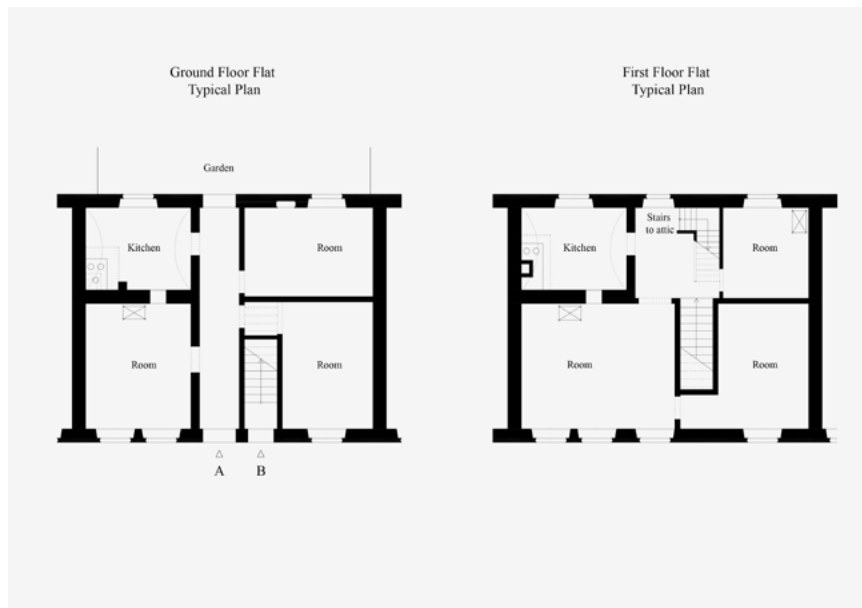
41 Scheller, *Memoria an Der Zeitenwende: Die Stiftungen Jakob Fuggers Des Reichen Vor Und Während Der Reformation*. 138

42 Tietz-Strödel, *Die Fuggerei in Augsburg: Studien Zur Entwicklung Des Sozialen Stiftungsbaus Im 15. Und 16. Jahrhundert*, 23.

43 Tietz-Strödel, 79-80.

44 Tietz-Strödel, 81.

garden, which is not visible from the street side. This garden was often used for practical undertakings despite its modest size, less so for recreational activities. Due to its location, the garden is isolated from the community and can be understood as a completely private and familial area. As Tietz-Strödel has noted, some gardens were so reduced in size that they could only be utilized for purely functional purposes and had no leisure value for the tenants.⁴⁵ The provision of a back garden in each ground floor dwelling can be seen as a further tool to reinforce the cult and centrality of hard work within the domestic sphere of the *Hausarme*.



Typical plans of the ground and first floor dwellings in the Fuggerei. Drawn by the author, adapted from R. Sticht, *Fuggerei, Bauaufnahmen - Grundriss EG*, Grundriss 1. OG. Architekturmuseum der Technischen Universität, München, Germany.

TOWARDS A “TYPOLOGICAL ARCHITECTURE”

The relevance of the Fuggerei in the context of both the emergence of the modern idea of poverty and the rise of affordable housing is manifold; however, certain aspects set this project apart and make it a paradigmatic case study within the field. Firstly, the typological approach of the scheme—defined by its rational organization, programmatic design, and the symbolic and aesthetic concept of uniformity—indicate a changed perspective towards the topics of poverty, production, and work. Different from other earlier examples of welfare institutions, the Fuggerei was designed to cope with a new problem, that of the *Hausarme*. In these regards, it can be read as a project which assumes the function of educating the proletariat of the sixteenth century to become a cohesive and identifiable working class, to which its members felt a sense of belonging. To maintain and secure their tenancy, the residents of the Fuggerei were indirectly obligated to hold their economic status unchanged, since they would have been forced to leave if they accumulated too much wealth.⁴⁶ Such a condition of social immobility further elucidates that the project was not intended as a solution to the issue of poverty, but rather as an educational device for a specific subjectivity to a life regulated by work and produc-

⁴⁵ Tietz-Strödel, 81.

⁴⁶ Tietz-Strödel, 40.

tivity. Under this light, the project is a testimony of new intentions, which have to do with a paternalistic relief strategy that, on one hand, provided a welfare net for its inhabitants; while, on the other, further segregated the subjectivities it housed. Such segregation operated on two fronts, namely that of the urban context, as the Fuggerei became a walled neighborhood within the city of Augsburg, and within the realm of the domestic, as it housed individual families in single homes. To go back to Tafuri's concept of the "crisis of form," the novelty of the project is to be found in its strict and methodologic use of typological design as a conscious response to the management of a new subjectivity within the urban context. Since the role of the master builder Thomas Krebs remains unclear in the design and ideation of the project, as is that of the founder, we might be able to conclude that the figure of the architect was not anymore understood as the sole author of a project, but rather acted as a technician who had the function of bringing the founder's ideas into reality. The themes of austerity and neutrality explored within the equalizing environment of the Fuggerei will remain key tropes in the history of working-class housing. As such, the paradigmatic case study of the Fuggerei might not seem too far off from other twentieth-century social housing schemes, in which the mixed intentions of decency, care, control and segregation appear to be similar, if not the same.

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