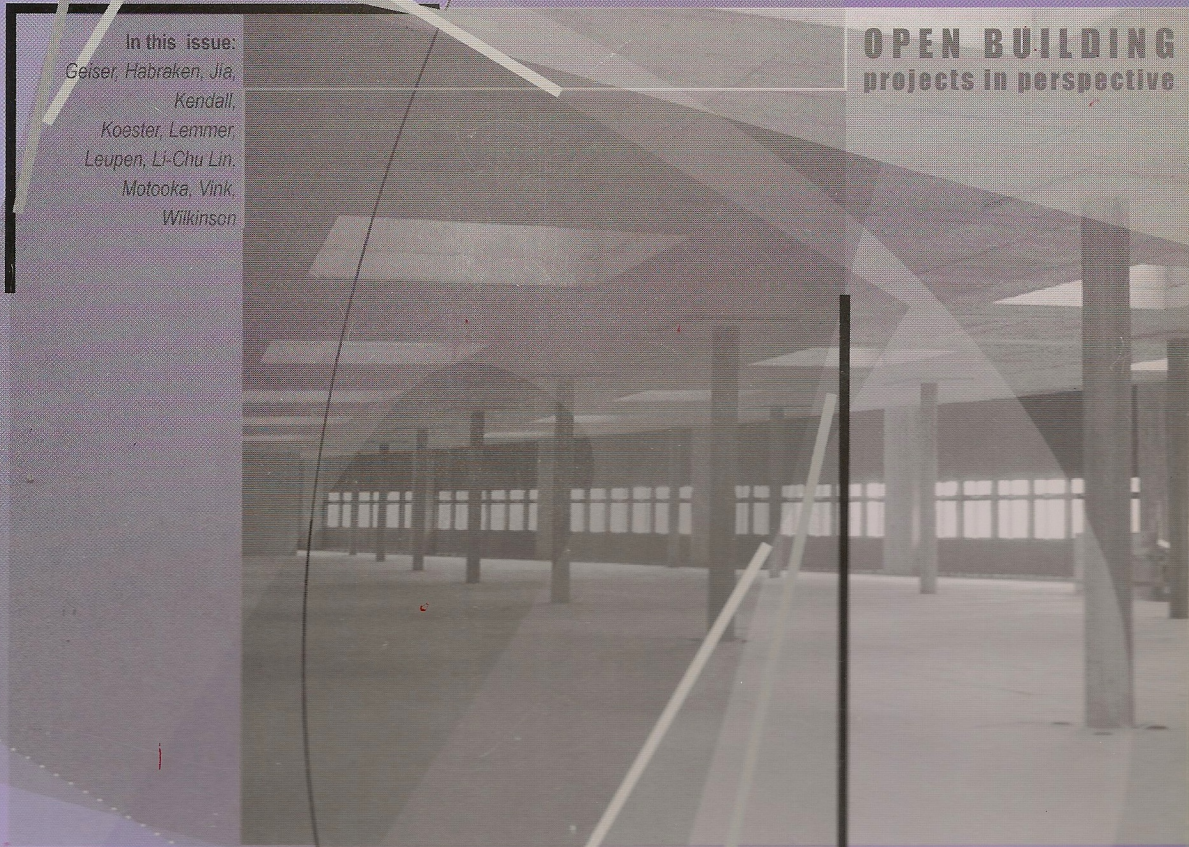


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**OPEN BUILDING**  
projects in perspective



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# INCREMENTAL URBAN AND DWELLING PROPOSALS IN GUANAJUATO, MEXICO

Andrea Martin-Chavez & Jorge Andrade

## Abstract

An International Competition of Architecture, Urban Development and Sustainable Housing, was held in Mexico in 2001. The aim of the contest was to create a vanguard and imaginative urban and architectural design that could accommodate the local regulation, the concept of sustainability and bioclimatic design. The proposed site is located within Guanajuato city's periphery.

From a critic review of the finalist projects we concluded that although they were very innovative in bioclimatic design they maintained the concept of prototype at the unit level and groups of prototypes layout in the plot at the urban level. We decided to take the same theme as an academic exercise for the following reasons:

- The opportunity to design under the same rules but changing the concept of a traditional mass housing complex to a slice of city that transforms itself in time with incremental dwellings.
- The city of Guanajuato is a colonial city very important for its history, cultural activity and architecture. The urban layout adapts to its rugged surface, which is very similar to the one of the given site.
- The contest program had a similar objective to that of the academic program of the last year of architecture in our University.

From the analysis of Guanajuato City thematic and non thematic elements of the urban tissue and with the aid of the Tissue Model method, students made the urban proposals. The unit proposals were designed with Open Building in mind instead of designing the required prototypes.

This article will focus on the tissue model methodology applied, first to formulate the tissue characteristics of downtown Guanajuato, then to develop the urban layout of the new housing complex and finally to develop the agreement documents for the urban design. Some examples of different final urban and support design will be given.

**Keywords:** Incremental Urban Design, Incremental Dwelling Design, Open Building, Urban Tissue.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to present some examples of application of Tissue Model and Open Building methodology in academic work. These examples of application were developed by students in the last year of their architectural training in the Metropolitan National University of Xochimilco (UAM-X) in Mexico City.

After the International Competition of Architecture, Urban Development and Sustainable Housing held in Mexico, we decided to use the same guidelines to teach the students Tissue Model and Support methodologies. The idea was to use

them as tools for the design, not of a traditional mass housing complex, but of a slice of city that can grow and transform itself in time. The winning projects were very innovative in bioclimatic design but they maintained the concept of prototypes at the unit level and groups of prototypes layout in the plot at the urban level.

The development of the academic course throughout the year was divided in three units. Each unit lasted for three months and a half. In the two first units students worked in teams and in the last one they produced individual work.

The first unit had as main objective to teach the students the basics of the Tissue Model and Support