A photograph of a modern courtyard. The walls are white and feature large glass panels. A tree with yellow-green leaves is the central focus. A person in an orange jacket is sitting on a white bench in the background. A metal chair is in the foreground. The ground is dirt.

None of the ten units is purely communal, but detached Unit C, Yasuo Moriyama's "living room," functions the most publicly. It houses a DVD player, a plasma screen TV, and little else, but it has a tea-room ambience. Moriyama says, "This space gives you the freedom to do anything you like, and it makes you want to." Here, Moriyama and his pomeranian Shinnosuke visit with Ippei Takahashi, project manager and fellow resident.

Building Blocks

On a double suburban lot in Tokyo, the Office of Ryue Nishizawa built a neighborhood-scaled, flexible-format minimalist steel prefab compound for Yasuo Moriyama—a very private individual with a powerful social bent—and six rental tenants. Every room is its own building—even Moriyama's bath is a freestanding box. Here, tradition and innovation interweave to create a new kind of community.

Project: Moriyama House

Architect: Office of Ryue Nishizawa

Location: Tokyo, Japan





Each unit has its own outdoor space, but none are physically bounded, facilitating spontaneous interaction. Taeko Nakatsubo (left), an architect with the Office of Ryue Nishizawa, enjoys a quiet moment outside.



Friends from Tokyo are touring the house. Their miscellaneous footwear (far left) litters the entranceway of three-story Unit F.

A stream of curious visitors necessitates plenty of takeout. The 2946-23 chair by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa for NextMaruni (near left) waits patiently near a fresh delivery of soba noodles and curry.

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All but one of the residents work in the design field, giving the place the air of a college campus. Moriyama calls all the residents "family."

Visiting architect Junko Ishii and occupant Yuko Onari (Units G, H) enjoy a cup of tea together in a kitchen featuring an Eames shell chair. Formerly with Nishizawa, Onari recently started her own practice, and is the only resident who works from home.





Mitsue Nakamura (above) is the editor of the contemporary architecture magazine *Shinkenchiku-sha*.

In Unit J's kitchen (near right), the Bouroullec brothers' *Algue* for Vitra echoes the greenery outside. **E** p. 254

Nakamura (far right), Masako Nishizaki (the only resident not involved in design), and Ippei Takahashi enjoy a sushi lunch.

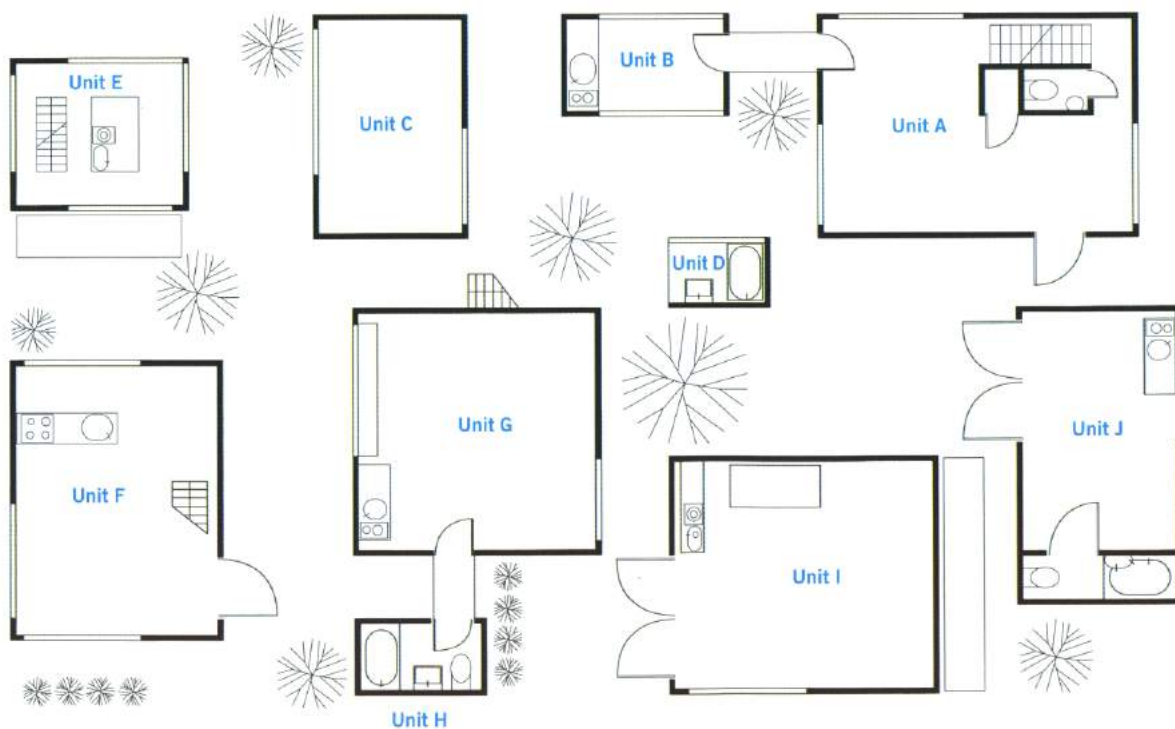


The stereo in Unit A's third-floor bedroom/study box (right) is just a tease compared to the windowless basement "audio room," where Moriyama spends private time in the company of 2,000 vinyl albums, mostly jazz. Here, a few albums are accompanied by Noguchi's Akari Lamp 1N.



The site plan represents first-floor plans for the 10 separate structures in Yasuo Moriyama's compound. Units A, E, F, and I feature multiple floors not depicted here, whose use is indicated in the key below.

- Unit A**
B: Audio Room
1F: Living Room/Bathroom
2F: Storage
3F: Master Bedroom
- Unit B**
1F: Dining Room/Bathroom
- Unit C**
1F: Annex
- Unit D**
1F: Master Bathroom
- Unit E**
B: Bathroom
1F: Dining Room/Kitchen
2F: Bedroom
- Unit F**
1F: Living Room
2F: Sunroom
3F: Bedroom
- Unit G**
1F: Multipurpose Living Room
- Unit H**
1F: Bathroom
- Unit I**
B: Bathroom
1F: Multipurpose Living Room
- Unit J**
1F: Multipurpose Living Room/
Bathroom





Johanna Meyer-Grohbruegge (left), the newest resident and one of the rotating international architects in Ryue Nishizawa's office, works in the sanctuary of her room (Unit 1).



The evening bath is a ritual in Japan, and public baths are still around, but this is a new twist. Moriama curtains the bath (far left) during use, but won't cover any other windows, "because it feels good to couple the inner space with the outside world." Dusk settles on the little village (near left and opposite).

As visiting architect Junko Ishii puts it, "Outside the compound, our awareness is different. Within, we can concentrate on our own realm. This is a pure white space."

