

are stepping up to the task to design living arrangements that suit a fluid generational mix.

Near the sea in Vaux-sur-Mer, France, TICA architectes et urbanistes' 2 en 1 House merges two homes into one single dwelling. Here, two sides, one slightly larger, flow in one long line with a central common space creating a connection point between the two and distinguishing them on the north-facing side. In Melbourne, Austin Maynard's Charles House exemplifies multigenerational homes with an integrated granny flat. Weaved into a ground floor section of the sprawling slate and timber clad home, the space that can easily adapt from a communal living space to a self-contained apartment, allowing the grandparents to be part of the household while remaining independent. Another example, Leckie Studio's Full House in Vancouver, is a five-bedroom home in its default mode, but can easily change configurations to accommodate the family.

Different as their approaches may be, multigenerational houses must all juggle private and common space, accessible and inclusive design for different abilities and ages, and the flexibility to accommodate the comings and goings of all residents. Rooms that are currently occupied by young children are designed to easily expand into studio-like spaces if they return home as young adults. Sliding doors or doors that can seamlessly blend into existing walls can transform a single family home into a duplex, or a triplex, to accommodate grandparents and other family members through the various stages of their lives. When not in use, different parts of the home can be sectioned off into rentable living and office spaces, generating income for the residents. Regardless of their unique design details, material palettes, and connection to their particular surroundings, these homes are designed to evolve with the generations and even beyond them. These core ingredients—flexibility, inclusivity, and separation between common and private spaces—are the factors that make these homes a success.

Architects and homeowners alike often look to Asia as a source of inspiration and a historical reference point, where the engrained tradition of multigenerational living goes back centuries. Rooted in long-standing →

Right
Shotgun Chameleon, designed by ZDES architects in Houston, Texas, is part of a growing international movement towards multigenerational living.

“With just a few strategic, carefully conceived moves you can actually have this great connection but also separation when you need it. That’s the trick.”

