



What Does “Standard Living” Mean Today?

➤ Rethinking and expanding
the contemporary
meanings of “home”

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DESIGN HUMAN LIFE

➤ Designing the New Standard

Within the [New Ways of Living \(NWL\)](#) framework, **Standard Living** represents the most traditional housing typology—historically associated with stability, ownership, and permanence. While Shared Living and Short-Term Living encompass more hybrid housing models, Standard Living continues to form **the backbone of residential development**.

Yet even this seemingly stable typology is **undergoing significant change**. Over the past five years, structural **shifts in lifestyles, working patterns, and demographic dynamics** have **redefined** what “**standard**” means in residential living (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

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Some **key drivers** of this transformation include the consolidation of **hybrid work**, the growing demand for branded residential developments, and the increasing influence of the **Wellness Real Estate Market** on residential design (McKinsey & Company, 2021; Global Wellness Institute, 2024). Together, these forces invite us to **rethink and expand contemporary meanings of “home.”**

The following sections explore three emerging dimensions shaping contemporary Standard Living developments and how they translate into user experience and spatial design.



Hybrid domestic space for work and rest.



Flexible home interior for play and everyday routines.

➤ The New Dimensions of Contemporary Homes

Within our NWL framework, **Standard Living** represents the **classic vision of “home”**: a space grounded in tradition and shaped by expectations of **stability, privacy, and long-term investment**. It primarily serves residents seeking medium- to long-term living arrangements and those who find comfort in continuity and more stable lifestyle dynamics.

It spans a broad spectrum of residential formats—from **affordable housing to luxury residences**; from mixed-use buildings with strong community impact to individual housing units focused on privacy and tailored design. In some contexts, it may also include short-term rental formats that merge hospitality dynamics with the [familiarity of home](#). For this reason, it can be understood as a classic and timeless residential typology—versatile and responsive to the changing needs of contemporary residents.

Within this evolving landscape, **three dimensions** are becoming particularly visible in Standard Living developments: **Hybrid Living**, where work and domestic life unfold within the same space; **Aspirational Living**, defined by identity and lifestyle positioning; and **Regenerative Living**, shaped by the growing influence of the Wellness Real Estate Market.

7 Hybrid Living:

When work and life share the same stage



Compact home workspace for hybrid routines.

Hybrid Living—understood as the overlap of work and everyday life within the home—is no longer an emerging trend but a dynamic that has gradually settled over the past two years (McKinsey & Company, 2022; McKinsey Global Institute, 2023), taking different forms depending on organizational cultures, work policies, and personal preferences. It reflects one of the most visible shifts in contemporary lifestyles, where work, domestic tasks, leisure, and rest no longer follow rigid boundaries but increasingly overlap throughout the day. This can be seen in professionals working across different areas of the home, or in parents balancing professional and household responsibilities. **The boundaries between work and domestic life have therefore become increasingly fluid.**

In this context, work and everyday life often unfold **within the same domestic setting**. For residential design, the challenge is no longer simply accommodating activities but ensuring they coexist in a creative and efficient way. Much like on a stage, different activities take place in specific spaces at different moments. **Homes thus operate as hybrid environments** where activities unfold in a fluid sequence of daily routines.

Designing Hybrid Living requires more than spatial flexibility or acoustic zoning. **It demands supporting multiple rhythms:** focus and play, productivity and disconnection, responsibility and leisure. It further requires a thoughtful, intentional, and inventive understanding of space in all its dimensions. This implies a careful approach to spatial optimization, capable of activating every corner of the home as a potential space for temporary activities, while remaining mindful of real-life and market constraints.

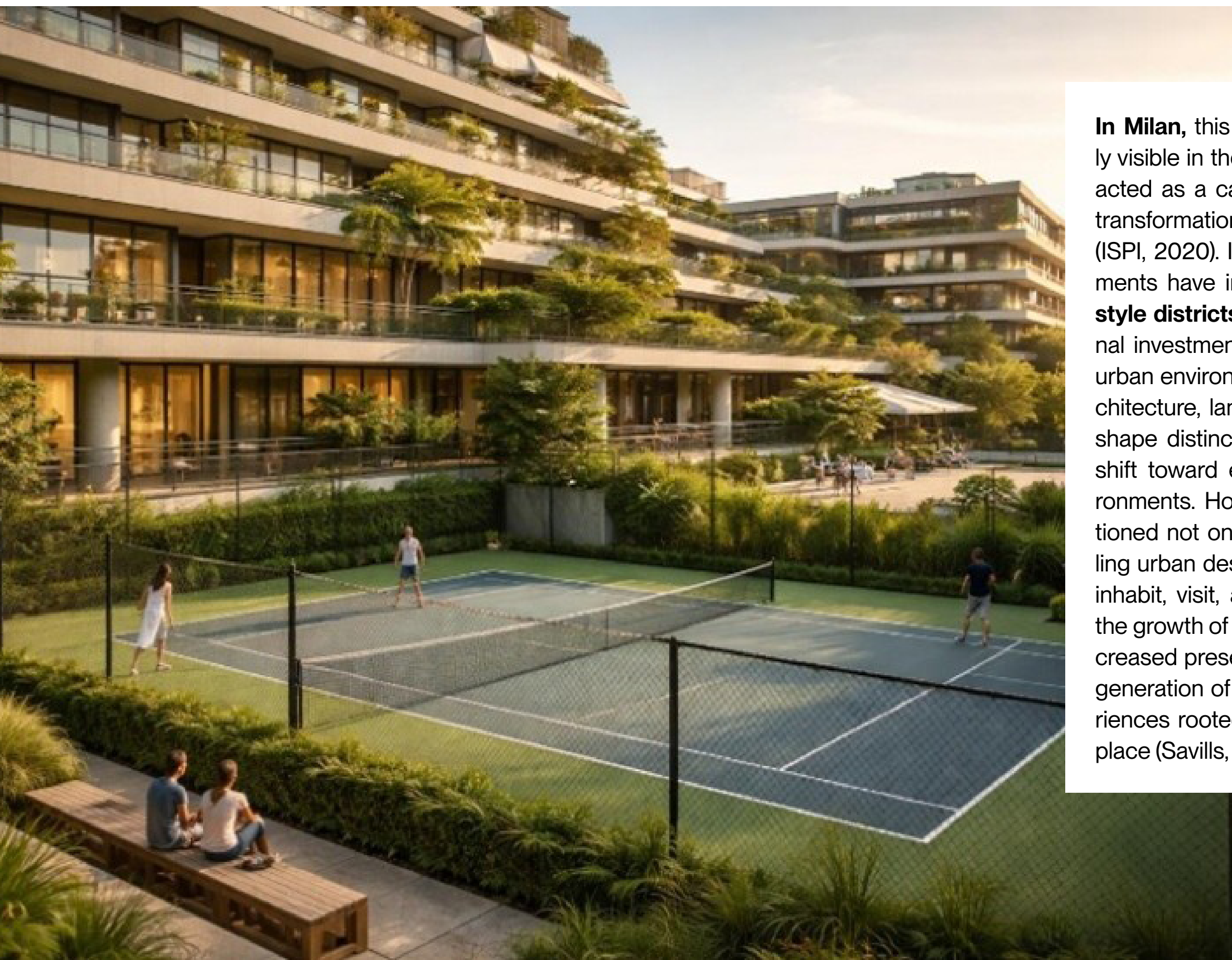
➤ Aspirational Living: from Housing to Branded Destinations

Over the past decade (ISPI, 2020) residential projects—particularly in major urban centers—have increasingly **evolved from real estate assets into lifestyle-driven destinations**. Branded or identity-driven residential developments now represent one of the fastest-growing segments of the global residential market.

In response, **developers and design firms are collaborating more closely with branding specialists**—professionals traditionally associated with the hospitality and retail sectors. Beyond focusing on project naming and single-layer concepts, residential developments are now conceived with **powerful strategic narratives capable of positioning housing as curated lifestyle destinations**. Developers are no longer just selling square meters; they are shaping environments that **evoke belonging**, offer **distinctive experiences**, and position projects strategically within their urban context.



Curated residential lounge and shared amenities.



In Milan, this approach has become particularly visible in the years following Expo 2015, which acted as a catalyst for the city's broader urban transformation and international repositioning (ISPI, 2020). In this context, residential developments have increasingly taken the form of **lifestyle districts**, supported by growing international investment and the expansion of mixed-use urban environments. These projects combine architecture, landscape, and curated amenities to shape distinctive identities, reflecting a broader shift toward experience-driven residential environments. Housing, therefore, has been repositioned not only as a place to live but as appealing urban destinations - places people aspire to inhabit, visit, and experience. This shift reflects the growth of the luxury residential market, the increased presence of global investors, and a new generation of users seeking curated living experiences rooted in identity and a strong sense of place (Savills, 2025).

Residential wellness and outdoor sport amenities.



Indoor-outdoor living with integrated greenery.

➤ Regenerative Living:

From Wellness-driven to Regenerative Homes

This third dimension is particularly relevant because **wellness-driven homes** have followed a different trajectory from aspirational living. While aspirational living largely emerged from retail and hospitality real estate, wellness design began in residential settings and is now expanding into other asset classes, including workplace, retail, and hospitality. What was once considered a niche market is rapidly becoming mainstream: wellness-oriented developments are moving beyond the luxury segment to reach broader demographics, as healthy building principles can be applied across a wide range of residential formats (Gensler, 2024).

Over the past two decades, the role of wellness in residential design has evolved from a focus on environmental performance to a **more comprehensive understanding of human wellbeing**, supported by frameworks such as LEED and later the WELL Building Standard (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.). More recently, broader societal dynamics—including the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic aging, and increasing urban stress—have reinforced the role of the home as a space for physical, mental, and social restoration.

In this context, wellness is increasingly shaping spatial design, influencing how residential environments integrate access to nature, daylight, air quality, comfort, and opportunities for physical and social activity. At the same time, **the concept of the “green building”, which has evolved into that of the “healthy building”,** is now further shifting toward regenerative approaches, where the goal is not only to reduce impact, but to actively support the ecological and social systems in which developments are embedded.

As demand for healthier living environments grows, real estate projects that integrate wellbeing in a holistic way are gaining relevance. This shift also introduces **new challenges:** wellness must move beyond marketing language to become a **tangible design strategy**, supported by **interdisciplinary tools** and measurable outcomes.

At Il Prisma, internal research initiatives such as the [IDEA framework](#) and the Bussola Rigenerativa support both internal teams and clients in integrating wellness-driven strategies into project design and development processes, enabling more informed and impactful solutions.

Wellness-oriented interiors with natural materials.



➤ Keeping up with the New Standard

“Standard” in residential living can no longer be defined by fixed typologies, but by the capacity of housing to respond **to evolving ways of living.** Within the New Ways of Living framework, Standard Living remains the structural backbone of the residential market, while increasingly integrating dynamics that extend beyond its traditional boundaries.

This shift signals a change in performance expectations. **Residential environments are no longer evaluated solely in terms of space, efficiency, or location, but by their ability to support multiple functions,** convey identity, and promote healthy lifestyles. As a result, housing is evolving into a more complex system, where behavioral patterns, market positioning, and environmental factors converge and must be addressed simultaneously through the design process.

Within this perspective, and in line with Il Prisma’s Design Human Life ethos, **the contemporary home is conceived as a living framework,** capable of evolving with users and responding to changing urban and societal conditions.



Shared domestic space for care, play and wellbeing.

7 Contacts

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Il Prisma is an international architecture and planning firm with Italian origins, designing spaces and experiences for the human being. The company has offices in London, Milan, Rome and Lecce, and is divided in 3 Business Units: Cityscape, Worksphere and Destination.

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