Graduation Plan P2 Architecture

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Studio
Theme: Design as Politics – We the People, Architecture, Democracy and the City
Teachers: 1st mentor – Wouter Vanstiphout
2nd mentor – Jack Breen
BT mentor – Engbert van der Zaag
Argumentation: I’ve chosen this studio because of the link from architecture to society. I think sustainable architecture is embedded architecture and with design as politics you make that connection to society. Nowadays with the fiscal crisis and the re-defining of the architectural scene I think it is important to anticipate to this world of opportunities. What actually caught my eye was the sentence: ‘Who are you designing for?’ This was also the question that rose in my internship with a project developer and while I was studying in India working on low-cost housing. The role of the architect was questioned all the time. Next to that I was looking for a research studio and one where you had freedom of creating your own graduation project.

Title
New-Activism:
The search for bottom-up urban renewal in a low cost housing area

Product
Motivation
While cycling in the centre of Rotterdam, my eye caught a small poster saying ‘wij blijven’– we are staying- and I wanted to know more about this small sign of protest. With the motto of the studio being ‘power to the people’, I thought of this as a Rotterdam example of citizen-power. I think that a connection with your urban environment is important for a more durable and sustainable world and that everyone should have the possibility of influencing that. Here there was already a sense of activism and it is close to where I live: ideal for a deep research.

Problem field definition
The major problem is the struggle between top-down planning and bottom-up initiatives. The stakeholders involved have different interests and goals, and the people turn about to be the weakest link. In their history it has been different for a long period, it was then that the people had the power. The problem field is changing the system from top-down to bottom-up, like it has been before.

Problem statement
The people in the neighborhood Het Oude Westen in Rotterdam live in an unsecure world, they don’t have any grip on their environment. This situation is new to them: in the past they have had a lot of influence on the development of their living environment. The people had a say in urban planning and approval of
Renewing of housing is needed, politics are shifting and the economy cries for attention: It is time for change. And in this change, the people are going to play a big role.

Research Question

What can be the role of the designer in giving back the power to the residents of Het Oude Westen in shaping their own living environment?

Since the people have had a lot of power in shaping their living environment in the 70s, it is worthwhile to compare this situation with the current situation and use this information to create a new situation where the people again have a big role. Therefore, the sub questions are:

- What was the economic, social and political situation in the 1970?
- What has been the outcome of the Stadsvernieuwing, what are the benefits and what are the critiques?
- What is the economic, social and political situation now?
- What is the difference in demographics?
- Who will be the new activist?

Design assignment

The design exists of two parts. One is the concept of a system where in the people have power over their living environment. In this system the responsibility of maintenance is for the residents. Next to that they share the responsibility for their living environment, collective space and urban space. The relations between municipality, corporation and residents shift and they will act more like the consultants for the residents. This system is specific for Het Oude Westen but can be an example for other neighborhoods. The other part will be the architectural part. This is what will be designed and worked out in detail. It will be the platform for the transformation. It will be the factory that produces and the place where the work will be done. It is a gathering place for the people who live there and a platform of trade. Activities for the neighborhood can also be organized there. People can get a crafts education; it can be a learning center.

Goal

Finally I want to create a building for the neighborhood. The building should have an open character and can be used for multiple functions.

My aim is to let the people discover how much power they have and discover their ability to change. My aim is to empower the people by making them aware of their skills and acknowledge their strength. Their mentality should change from being an awaiting person to a pro-active approach. This should make them more confident and independent and with this, letting them be one step ahead of politics.
My expected outcome is a self-sufficient neighborhood where everyone takes a part of the responsibility of his or her living environment. All the initiatives taken can be supported from within the community.

**Process**

**Method description**

The research started with a broad research on the current situation of the area with specific interest in the social, economical and politic situation of the neighborhood. After that a comparative research with the situation in the 70s was done. From this a system was created, by using the conclusions from the research and a precedent-analysis.

**Precedents used for the system:**

Ik Bouw Betaalbaar in Almere (Almere)
Bouwen in Eigen Beheer (Rotterdam)
Een Blok Stad (Rotterdam)
Klushuizen (Rotterdam, Wallisblok)
Oosterwold (Almere)
Political system Vancouver, Canada

In this system is a special interest in Building Technology. There are changes for BT in the way the system will work and the materials that can be used. Therefore Material studies should be done. *(Building Technology)*

Now it is time for the more architectural part of the project. For this I have the following steps in mind:

- Situational analysis
- Historical analysis of building site
- Collage of materials
- Model studies
- Precedents analysis

**Literature and general practical preference**

**Literature used:**

- Death and life of great American cities – Jacobs, J. - 1962
- De alledaagse en geplande stad – Reijndorp, A. - 2010
- Laboratorium voor de Stadsvernieuwing - Gaag, S. van der, Reijndorp, A. - 1993
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- Democratie in de wijken, Beck, W. – 1978
- Mooi Werk, Klerk, L. de – 1999
- Het sociaal kapitaal van een afgeschreven straat, Zwaard, J. van der - 2011

Next to literature, the research is also fed by workshops organized by the studio.

- Electoral Geography (Josse de Voogd)
- Visual Storytelling (Afaina de Jong)
- Campaigning (ZUS)
- Lecture and excursion to Almere visiting Homeruskwartier, Almere Oosterwold
- Majority Report (Play the City foundation, Ekim Tan)

**Precedents for the design:**

Works of Prouvee
Atelier Van Lieshout
**Reflection**

**Academic relevance**

In the current situation of fiscal crisis, the re-evaluation of real estate and shifting politics, the struggle from top-down to bottom-up systems is very up-to-date. People are repressing against the hierarchical, bureaucratic ways of governance and organization. The reaction is a more Do It Yourself-like society with small-scale initiatives. Architecture can play a big role in this DIY way of thinking and bottom-up approach and should respond to it. It should think of new ways of practicing urbanism and architecture, and this project can be added value to this discussion.

**Social relevance**

Again, my project will contribute to the discussion of the value of bottom-up initiatives. But next to that, the people from low cost housing neighborhoods will get attention and all their creative solutions to the regime or the corporations gives a new perspective on how things work.

Another thing is the focus on crafts: Crafts and craftsmanship is of added value to everyone and this should not be forgotten, neither should the crafts disappear. The knowledge that people have will be acknowledged. These two things will improve society a little.

**Time planning**

All credits for Msc1 and Msc2 are already earned. Next to graduating I work 2 days a week for an interior-architecture office.

Until the end of Msc 3:
- Work on conclusions from the research
- Work on the created system
- Work on the Program of Content
- Create concept for architecture, interior and detailing

Start Msc 4 – P3
- Analysis of building site (making sections, collecting used materials, etc.)
- Historical analysis of building site
- Model studies
- Create a collection of materials
- Using precedent analysis
- Develop architecture, interior, detailing (VO phase)

P3 – P4 phase
- Develop building in detail
- Make it real: Concept for financing, building process, campaigning

P4 – P5 phase
- Work on a persuasive presentation of the project where theme, research and architecture are explained to the public
P2 report
Suzanna Weeda
INTRODUCTION

This report covers the graduation plan, facts and figures of the research, the progress on the research, a theoretical essay on the topic and the first steps of the design.

It is an integral report with the P2 presentation and it contains the following chapters:

1. project description
2. relevance
3. methodology and phasing
4. theoretical framework
5. preliminary results

The report is established with help of tutors: Wouter Vanstiphout and Jack Breen

The report is written by Suzanna Weeda

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Motivation

While cycling in the centre of Rotterdam, my eye caught a small poster saying ‘wij blijven’—we are staying—and I wanted to know more about this small sign of protest. With the motto of the studio being ‘power to the people’, I thought of this as a Rotterdam example of citizen-power. I think that a connection with your urban environment is important for a more durable and sustainable world and that everyone should have the possibility of influencing that. Here there was already a sense of activism and it is close to where I live: ideal for a deep research.

Problem field definition

The major problem is the struggle between top-down planning and bottom-up initiatives. The stakeholders involved have different interests and goals, and the people turn about to be the weakest link. In their history it have been different for a long period, it was then that the people had the power. The problem field is changing the system from top-down to bottom-up, like it has been before.
The area of interest is a neighborhood with about 10,000 residents, mostly in social housing. It is a pre-war neighborhood, which has been renovated in the Stadsvernieuwings period. It was then when many blocks with collective space were built in collaboration with the residents. In the Stadsvernieuwings period, het Oude Westen has been an example for other neighborhoods in Rotterdam, the Netherlands and all over Europe when speaking about citizen-participation. At the moment the municipality and corporation have many plans with the neighborhood. Gentrification ideas mostly, but certainly the current residents will be moved out and not taken in account by making the plans. On top of that, apartments are getting empty. They are not rented out again when someone is leaving. They neighborhood is getting more and more empty houses and in an area which has a long history in criminality and unsafety it is problematic.
WIJ BLIJVEN
The concerned area is in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Part of the partial-municipality Rotterdam Centrum, the area is called Het Oude Westen. It has many spatial qualities: it is in the city center, well connected with public transportation, close to the central station, health care, schools and other public facilities. The urban plan is known as urbanized landscape: it follows the structure of the waterways. Only a little has changed in the urban plan since then. The edges of the neighborhood have always been in private ownership, therefore these buildings have not been changed much. It is the sugarcrust of the cake, inside it is mushy and mixed. It has architecture from the 1900, 30s, 40s, 70s, 80s, 90s and 00s, mostly apartments and smaller dwellings. Also the people of the neighborhood are very mixed. Ethnicity, age, education… it is very multicultural but even more cultural neighborhood and that is recognizable in mostly the shops. There are two main shopping streets and one is with eclectic creative shops (music, food, clothes) and the other with many foreign shops in food, clothes, beauty, etc. Both streets have been selected as best shopping street in Rotterdam for the last 2 years.
WIJ BLIJVEN
FUNCTIONS
- sports
- education
- care
- culture
- commercial

DEMOGRAPHICS
- 9,570 inhabitants
- 5,040 households
- 4,940 men
- 4,620 women
- 54% single
- 28% with kids
- 31% high
- 51% low
- 38% average
- 4940 men
- 4,620 women
- average income: 15,500
- 62% non-western immigrants & autochtons
- 38% western immigrants
- 62% non-western immigrants
- 38% western immigrants
- 38% average

CONNECTIVITY
- train
- tram
- metro
- highway
**Nieuwe Binnenweg**

- Many creative people live and work in these small apartments.
- This has made place for a fancy sandwich store.
- Building collapsed; now there is more air.
- Here is the Leeszaal: built on the initiative of the residents.
- Base of the Wijsgroep.
- Westkustlaan: best mixed shopping street in Rotterdam.
- Some dwellings have workspace as well.

**Gouvernestaat**

- Wilpark.
- The Gouvernestaat is the oldest street of Hotel Cade Wagen, named after the developer Mr. Gouverne.
- Cultural facility - historic building for the neighborhood.
- Empty commercial space.
- Expensive parking.
- Official viewpoint of the area.
- Sport facility which is going to be closed soon.
- Home for elderly.
The main stakeholders are the partial municipality and the housing corporation. These are the ones who make the decisions on physical and social level. The ones influenced are the people, who are not participating in these decisions but only being informed. The only way they have influence is by making complaints: official complaints on the plans made by the municipality. The residents of Het Oude Westen formed in the 1970 an Aktiegroep. A group of students and indigenous people from the neighborhood became activists to protest against the plans the municipality had with the neighborhood. This actiongroup still exist and controls the municipality and housing corporation. They are not longer seen as activists, since they are dependent on subsidies from the corporatoin and municipality. They censure themselves in order to maintain peace. They are working more like a social platform together with official institutions of care and well-being. They are very important for the neighborhood and support more then 60 working groups, who organize something for the area.

The partial-municipality and corporation work together to maintain the neighborhood; since they own 70% of the housing stock. They work together, in collaboration with a social service to make it a livable area. Education, health care, social support and housing are being arranged. The municipality is responsible for participation and communication of the plans. The lack of participation is therefore also their responsibility. The daily board makes the visions for the area, where they decide on the social and physical environment. They use the housing corporation to execute the plans and also payment is usually done by them.
influence

level of influence on physical and social situation

type of influence

influence
The political system is representative democracy. This system works on all scales: municipal, provincial and national. The people have influence in which party they choose to govern for them. Out of the group of people a board is chosen who makes the laws and functions as the board. All the others have the obligation to control the board and decide on the rules and laws they are making. The bigger group can also make laws and get them approved.

In the city of Rotterdam there is one main party who has always been in the municipal council, and that is the social labour party (PvdA). Also in the neighborhood of Het Oude Westen are they the main party. The people say that they represent them the most but it is also common that most of the immigrants vote for this party. Their socialist approach fits in with the needs of the residents, since most of them use the social services provided.
10,000 residents of Oude Westen

- local: daily board (deelraad)
- municipal: municipal council
- provincial: Council of State
  - Queens commissioner (gedeputeerde staten)
  - provinciale staten
- national: House of Representatives
  - Council of Ministers
The Netherlands have many scales of governance, and in the end they have all ideas and policies that have more or less influence on the area, Het Oude Westen.

On the national level the policies involve the Randstad, an area in the Netherlands that is most development of the whole country. It is the core part of business and trade. The policies for the Randstad and for the province are not so much influencing the neighborhood of interest. But they do influence the municipality of Rotterdam itself.

Within Rotterdam you have the municipality and the district (deelgemeente) which both have policies over the area.

Rotterdam is coping with an identity-crisis. They have to deal with negative selective migration of middle- and higher income people over 30. A group of people where the municipality has invested in during their years of study. This group the municipality would like to keep in their area, because of the knowledge and business activity they can add to the society of Rotterdam. But to keep these people, Rotterdam things that they have to change their city, starting with looking more like Amsterdam or Almere, since these 2 cities are the only ones about to grow in the coming future. The city of Rotterdam is therefore building new dwellings in the centre of Rotterdam.
national:
Nota Ruimte, Nota Mobiliteit, Nota Belvedere, Randstad Urgent, Randstad 2040

provincial:
Visie op Zuid-Holland, Ruimte, Nota Provinciaal Belang, Handreiking Cultuurhistorische Hoofdstructuur

municipal:
Stadsvisie Rotterdam 2030, Woonvisie Wonen in Rotterdam, Visie Werklocaties 2030, De Rotterdamse Stijl, Hoogbouwvisie, Collectie Rotterdam Monumentenbeleid

partial-municipal:
Rotterdam Citylounge, Horecanota, Verkeer- en Vervoersplan Rotterdam, Visie openbare ruimte binnenstad

local:
Wijkvisie binden en verleiden, Masterplan Het Oude Westen, uitwerkingsplan Alliantie West Kruiskade
The development of plans in the current society of Rotterdam works as follows:

The municipality assigns the dS+V (dienst stadsontwikkeling) to create the development plans (bestemmingsplan) for the area. External committees and the housing corporation give advise in this and finally the municipality concludes the plan. The housing corporation is the executing party. During this process there are several moments for the residents to react. They can send formal objections to the district with their reactions. Secondly they will get invited to the public meeting to explain their arguments and the parties can react on this. Everyone is invited to have their say. The parties of the district will then decide on the plans.

The way the residents have influence is a negative way: They can complain and complain and complain and hopefully the governors will listen to them.

On the other hand, you have the neighborhood itself. There things are arranged differently. In short you could say that where the system fails, the people will pick it up and change in into a beneficial situation for themselves. This will be explained in the following panoramas.
adviescommissies
ex. cultuurhistorische verkenning

dS+V

Deelgemeente

Woonstad

interest committee residents + Aktiegroep

developed of plans

execute plans

residents
Where the system fails... The people in the neighborhood have a great ability to cope independently. They are arranged in working groups, supported by the Aktiegroep and the official well-being institutions. Many activities are organized, divided in groups by interest, ethnicity, education, help, culture, etc. 60 of these groups can be named which are organized by the residents self and working fully with just little support.
Where the system fails... The people are acting independent but do have needs they can't fulfil. Therefore the swap point is set up. People can trade things, services, small jobs within a system of points so that everything will be honest and fair. What is also traded is apartments. A semi-legal house swapping system is created since not everyone in the neighborhood lives in a dwelling that is suitable for their family situation. Therefore people swap houses and inform the corporation afterwards. This is needed since the waiting lists for the area are very long: it takes 6 to 10 years to find something else.

With the fiscal crisis not all commercial spaces are rented out in the area. Therefore you find a lot of pop-up stores in the area to fill the empty spaces with local initiatives. Many people get a change of starting a small business—something in their neighborhood.
Where the system fails... The people will fill in the gaps. Via citizen-initiatives, a system where people can request money for an initiative they want to take, a big deal of the neighborhood is shaped in that way. On this image you see all the initiatives taken by the residents and sponsored by the municipality. Executed by the people self, they managed to run a library, create frontgardens, do a research after the housing situation in the neighborhood, have streetfestivities, have art on walls, let kids play with toys they can borrow and have a decent playground. This is only a small amount of what is established in only 3 years of initiatives (2 times a year the prizes are being awarded).
Problem statement

The people in Het Oude Westen live in an unsecure world, they don’t have any grip on their environment. This situation is new to them: in the past they have had a lot of influence on the development of their living environment. The people had a say in urban planning and approval of architectural plans. When the Stadsvernieuwing ended (begin 1990) and the housing corporations became privatized this influence stopped. In the Stadsvernieuwing period many blocks were renewed for approximately 30 years. So now again, it is time to renew the housing blocks. Politics are changing. The welfare state is being changed into a more liberal, neo-liberal approach. Health institution become privatized, subsidies are canceled, and also the money that the Aktiegroep receives is begin questioned. The economic crisis has hit everyone. There is little money to invest, people are losing their jobs and the society is searching for a new reality.

Renewing of housing is needed, politics are shifting and the economy cries for attention: It is time for change. And in this change, the people are going to play a big role.

Aim and expected outcome

My aim is to let the people discover how much power they have and discover their ability to change. My aim is to empower the people by making them aware of their skills and acknowledge their strength. And with this, letting them be one step ahead of politics and make them self-sufficient. My expected outcome is a self-sufficient neighborhood where everyone takes a part of the responsibility of his or her living environment.

Research Question

The main research question is: What can be the role of the designer in giving back the power to the residents of Het Oude Westen in shaping their own living environment?

Since the people have had a lot of power in shaping their living environment in the 70s, it is worthwhile to compare this situation with the current situation and use this information to create a new situation where the people again play a big role.

Therefore, the sub questions are:

- What was the economic, social and political situation in the 1970?
- What has been the outcome of the Stadsvernieuwing, what are the benefits and what are the critiques?
- What is the economic, social and political situation now (2012)?
- Who will be the new activist?
2

RELEVANCE

Academic relevance

In the current situation of fiscal crisis, the re-valuation of real estate and shifting politics the struggle from top-down to bottom-up systems is very up-to-date. People are repressing against the hierarchical, bureaucratic ways of governance and organization. The reaction is a more Do It Yourself-like society with small-scale initiatives. Architecture can play a big role in this DIY way of thinking and bottom-up approach and should respond to it. It should think of new ways of practicing urbanism and architecture, and this project can be added value to this discussion.

Social relevance

Again, my project will contribute to the discussion of the value of bottom-up initiatives. But next to that, the people from low cost housing neighborhoods will get attention and all their creative solutions to the regime or the corporations gives a new perspective on how things work.

Another thing is the focus on crafts: Crafts and craftsmanship is of added value to everyone and this should not be forgotten,
neither should the crafts disappear. The knowledge that people have will be acknowledged. These two things will improve society a little.

*Studio WTP relevance: politics*

How can the design give power to the people?

The design proposal contains a new system. A system where the people are again in charge of creating their own living environment. They will get responsibilities and chances to improve their neighborhood. The design includes the building which will provide this change.

It tackles democracy in the way that the neighborhood will turn into an autarkic situation. It will work and develop independently, where the role of the government will be different then before. They don't make the plans but they support the plans that the citizens make, starting with supporting the stadsfabriek. From a representative democracy on a district scale (30.000 people) it goes to a direct democracy on the neighborhood scale. Decisions will be made on the scale which they adjace: the house, the communal garden, the street.

The neighborhood will be "governed" by self-organization. The progressive power from within the neighborhood is used to respond to the local politics and create a new relation where the people again are a partner of the governors.

*Ethical Issues*
Through the design proposal, the people of the neighborhood are directly empowered. They will again have a say in the plans for their own living environment and also have a great deal in establishing this.

When referring to ‘the people’ I am referring the new activists who will start the project of the Stadsfabriek. This will not be the current Aktiegroep but a new, young group of independent people with a strong vision and drive on their neighborhood. These people are already present in the neighborhood, my proposal is to just move their activities to the Stadsfabriek and get things going.

How will they get the power? The people are in charge of the maintenance of their own housing, collective space and urban interior. They will directly affect their own neighborhood. They will participate to urban renewal not only in words but also in deeds. In the Stadsfabriek ideas, services and products can be created, made and swapped.

Subsequently, the Stadsfabriek can also support in education. Youngsters can learn craftmanship and get educated in all kinds of crafts. This will make them even more independent and self-reliant.
"Current urban development has to be innovative, more applied to the demand, on the smaller scale and with a new role for the government" - Director-General of space and water of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment Chris Kuijpers.

This new role of the government has to be more facilitating then determining. This is exactly what is being done in Het Oude Westen. The district is not making the plans anymore, but they give the area back to the people and let them find out what is best for themselves.

On the other hand, the responsibility for the neighborhood is also shifting. The district, together with the housing corporation and the residents, share the responsibility. They together take care of the situation in Het Oude Westen. The people return maintenance to the corporation, and to the district they give responsibility in return for money.

So with gaining power, the people also gained responsibility. The more democratic situation not only brought rights to the people but also duties.
type of influence

level of influence on physical and social situation
3 METHODOLOGY AND PHASING

Methodology

For the research I am going to design the Stadsfabriek and an interior of a dwelling simultaneously. The design of the Stadsfabriek should be inspiration for the users of it, and the interior of the Stadsfabriek should be like it could have been done there.

Method description

The research started with a broad research on the current situation of the area with specific interest in the social, economical and politic situation of the neighborhood. After that a comparative research with the situation in the 70s was done. From this a system was created, by using the conclusions from the research and a precedent-analysis.

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Political system Vancouver, Canada

In this system is a special interest in Building Technology. There are changes for BT in the way the system will work and the materials
that can be used. Therefore Material studies should be done. (Building Technology)

Now it is time for the more architectural part of the project. For this I have the following steps in mind:
- Situational analysis
- Historical analysis of building site
- Collage of materials
- Model studies
- Precedents analysis focussing on the representation of the building

**Literature and general practical preference**

**Literature used:**
- Death and life of great American cities – Jacobs, J. - 1962
- De alledaagse en geplande stad – Reijndorp, A. - 2010
- Laboratorium voor de Stadsvernieuwing - Gaag, S. van der, Reijndorp, A. - 1993
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- Majority Report (Play the City foundation, Ekim Tan)

**Precedents for the design:**
- Works of Prouvee
- Atelier Van Lieshout

**Phasing**

Until the end of Msc 3:
- Work on conclusions from the research
- Work on the created system
- Work on the Program of Content
- Create concept for architecture, interior and detailing

Start Msc 4 – P3 (preliminary design phase)
- Analysis of building site (making sections, collecting used materials)
- Historical analysis of building site
- Model studies
- Create a collection of materials
- Using precedent analysis
- Develop architecture, interior, detailing

P3 – P4 phase
- Develop building in detail
- Make it real: Concept for financing, building process, campaigning

P4 – P5 phase
- Work on a persuasive presentation of the project where theme, research and architecture are explained to the public
5 PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Research findings
The research existed out of 2 parts: the situation in the 70s and the current situation.

After 1970 the residents gained power by expressing their thoughts and ideas thoroughly and keeping faith in politics. They partnered up with the government and had a big role in the urban renewal. At the end of the Stadsvernieuwing period 40% of the housing stock was built new and 55% was being renovated. They focused on small apartments for the current dwellers, in a collective architectural style where here is a lot of shared space. They made the area for residents only, all the economy was taken out, to make it as livable as possible.

At the moment, the residents only have power by making official complaints to the government and speaking up in public debates. The decisionmaking process is therefore very slow, and the people don’t have the feeling that they are represented in this representative democracy. Where the system fails the people create a new system. An example is the library, which closed, and the people opened up a new one. They have a semi-legal house swapping system and a swappoint where services and products are traded. They are
dwellings only

residents as partner

40% new collective architecture

X#±%$!!!! (negative influence)

second level of economy

housing stock not sufficient

pretty independent
acting pretty independent, because they know how to find the money very well. They use the citizen-initiatives frequently and with this they researched the current housing situation. The outcome was that there are no sufficient dwellings for elderly and that it is impossible to make a ‘dwelling-career’, because the differentiation in housing is not sufficient if you get too rich for social housing.

This all together needs a solution. Therefore, a system is created. The design that this system needs is the Stadsfabriek.

Design requirements
The system describes how the neighborhood will be working after the Stadsfabriek is built. The people will take care about their own interiors, collective space and urban environment.

How will it work?
First, the swap-platform will be installed in the building. Also a pool of creative people, who already have a small business in Het Oude Westen, can have a space in the Stadsfabriek. Second, the available houses will be rented out to people. People who are interested in living in this way, building and working on their house and neighborhood themselves, so it is open to everyone. The renting will be done house by house, so people have to form a CPO before they can rent the house. With this CPO they make a plan of describing what, who and where they plan to do. This plan will be approved by the people of the Stadsfabriek (a coach and architect). When they start building they have to make choices, collaborate and have patience. Together with this, they will have responsibility over the decisions they make.

On the other hand, also current residents can start maintaining their own house. They have to decide with the whole house that they want this, form a CPO and make a plan. This plan will be approved and then they can start. They also have to make choices, collaborate and have patience. Together with this, they will have responsibility over the decisions they make. They can produce furniture and make pre-fab installations for their houses. A group of professionals is available for consults in the workshops and also at home: Plumbers, electriciens, construction workers.

Subsequently, ideas can be created and supported there. There is space for meetings, events, courses, education, markets...
Design pitch
What het Oude Westen needs is the newly built Stadsfabriek. De Stadsfabriek will be the means to the transformation of the neighborhood; the people will be in charge. The residents will become in control of the maintenance of their own interior, their collective space and urban environment. It is building in the change in the neighborhood. The urban renewal will be done for and with the residents of the area. People will participate not only in words but also in deeds. It doesn’t set an endgoal for the urban renewal but it will guide an ongoing process of change. Secondary, it brings back the crafts, trade and industry into the neighborhood. It will support the economic activity, which was taken out –by the people– in the first edition of the Stadsvernieuwing. De Stadsfabriek will be the tool to support all the initiatives that there already are in Het Oude Westen. It will attract people who are interested in this way of living and together with the existing residents they will together make their neighborhood into an autarkic island in the city. De Stadsfabriek will house the workshops needed for the crafts and have place to meet people, create ideas, swap things, services and enthusiasm. De Stadsfabriek will give the people a voice and strong hands for their urban renewal.
urban renewal for the people, by the people
Design domains met so far

Out of the system of the Stadsfabriek a Program of Requirements is created: It consists of three parts, the hardware, software and the support (backbone) these three must be represented in the building.

The building will be located in het Oude Westen. The location is at the park and at a narrow street. The building has 2 strong sides which need a different approach.

The location already has a building: this building has been a community center for a long time and has been in use as a sports-centre for the last 20 years. It will be closed and demolished: high residential towers will be instead. Of course there is no money and no plan yet, so this alternative will be implemented.

The building is built in 1924 and refurbished many times. The original structure has been affected by this so in architectural terms the building don’t has to be maintained. In social and cultural value it is very important as a location for the whole neighborhood. This function I should keep. The existing structure can still be used so that is what I will do.
tools, workshops

HARDWARE
- wood workshop
- steel workshop
- sewing atelier
- multifunctional spaces
  - felting, screenprinting
  - tools

swap - platform

SOFTWARE
- swapcafe
- exposition space
- space for events (inside + outside)

pool of professionals

SUPPORT
- office space
- meeting rooms
- storage

PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS
WE RULE
As our king Willem-Alexander spoke in his speech last April:

Democracy for me is a having the choice to be of influence on your own living situation. To have the ability to speak out and be heard – but also to get the opportunity to change your own situation in what you think suits best for yourself. Democracy is trust in your own government, but also trust from the governors in the people – the notion that you share the responsibility for the best conditions of society.

The relationship between the theme of the studio and the case study chosen
Design as politics: democracy, architecture and the city.

The studio responds to the emergence of movements for more democracy all over the world, and for the right to choose and build your own environment.

Housing, choosing the place where you live, has always been a certainty for me. But, while cycling in the centre of Rotterdam, my eye caught a small poster saying ‘wij blijven’ – we are staying - and I wanted to know more about this small sign of protest. I realized that not everyone has the opportunity to choose where and how they want to live.

Can design give people the power over their environment? Does that happen through participation? Through autarkic self-determination, through gaming and social media? Or through timeless classic representative democracy where you delegate your decisions by means of voting to professional politicians?

With the motto of the studio being ‘power to the people’, I thought of this as a Rotterdam example of citizen-power. I think that a connection with your urban environment is important for a more durable and sustainable world and that everyone should have the possibility of influencing that. Trust in your chosen government is a principal of life and if they, together with the housing corporation, work on a situation where you don’t longer exist in, then there should be a way to change that.
this transition. They use terms as (burgerkracht) citizen power and stimulation of (zelfredzaamheid) the ability to live and do things independently in their new approach to social housing situations.

Also the social housing corporations are looking for a new way of dealing with social housing. Social housing doesn’t make any money at this moment but the housing stock has to be renewed. Dealing with this situation, if only the corporations should take a look at the power of the people /burgerkracht/ which is there present they will understand that there might be a solution. All their creative solutions to the social housing regime gives a new perspective on how things are working now but can also be working in the future.

The relationship between research and design

How can the design give power to the people? The design proposal contains a new system. A system, where the people are again in charge of creating their own living environment. They will get responsibilities and chances to improve their neighborhood.

The design includes the building which is providing this change. It tackles democracy in the way that the neighborhood will turn into an autarkic situation. It will work and develop independently, where the role of the government will be different then before. They don’t make the plans but they support the plans that the citizens make, starting with supporting the Stadsfabriek. From a representative democracy on a district scale (30.000 people) it goes to a direct democracy on the neighborhood scale. Decisions will be made on the scale which they abject: the house, the communal garden, the street. The neighborhood will be “governed” by self-organization. The progressive power from within the neighborhood is used to respond to the local politics and create a new relation where the people again are a partner of the governors.

De Stadsfabriek is the catalyst of the renewing process. It is the place where the transformation will start by and for the current and future dwellers of het Oude Westen. Therefore the building represents all of them, all the cultures, the shared history, all the initiatives of the community, are gathered in the façade – the neighborhood as a union. The building contains many symbols that refer to the users of the building and shows all the options and opportunities that there are in the neighborhood. It is a showcase and testcase in one. It also contains referrals to industrial architecture as a symbol of a clear and logical system and clear politics. The existing building used is stripped down to its naked system; it is honest and distinct – as a symbol for the new political system.