

GRADUATION PROJECT REFLECTION

DESIGNING FUTURE PROOF ELDERLY HOUSING

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Colophon

Delft University of Technology

The MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences MSc3

Dwelling Graduation Studio 2021-2022

AR3AD110 Designing for Care - Towards an Inclusive Living Environment

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The relationship between research and design

The research was used as the base for the design. First, the anthropological research that has been conducted during our stay in Habion's nursing home in Loenen. Then the theoretical framework that compliments the anthropological research.

To be able to design a pleasant living environment for the elderly it is not only important to design *for* but also *with* the elderly. During the fieldwork a lot of emphasis has been put on the elderly people as single individuals to truly understand them and not generalize the word 'elderly'. Additional to getting to know the elderly was observing their apartments. The interviews inside the homes of the elderly gave a good impression of what their living conditions are and who they are, based on the interior and decoration of their apartments. The elderly people were very proud to show their apartments, which led to ten detailed records of the apartments and personal diaries.

Subsequently, this study focusses on the needs of the elderly and what housing for the elderly should meet based on their needs. Design principles have emerged from this research that have been used as a foundation in the design. The graduation studio is a people-oriented studio, which has also ensured that the research has become mainly people-oriented research. I find this approach very fruitful.

The design assignment concerns the design of a residential project and its surroundings. Central to this is the negotiation process to make (design) decisions about an environment in which elderly people with care needs can live together with others and become part of the community. It is therefore important to get in touch with the elderly and find out what they really want. Which different groups in our society and which different functions should be included to offer our elderly a pleasant, dignified, and safe living environment? Through the fieldwork we were brought into contact with the elderly and we were able to look into their lives for a week. This human approach to research and design is something that should be done more often in this field. Ultimately, we design for people, so I think we should get to know people too. My stay in Loenen has not only changed my view on design, but also my view on people and life as a whole.

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The relationship between the graduation subject, the studio subject (Design For Care Towards an inclusive living environment), the Master's track in Architecture and the Master's program (MSc AUBS).

The relationship between how housing for the elderly can meet the needs of the elderly and can later be made suitable for other target groups with the graduation studio Design For Care Towards an inclusive living environment is that the focus is on housing for the elderly (an often forgotten target group) but also how it can be adapted to meet the needs of other target groups. This is very appropriate for the Master's track in Architecture, because I believe that the training should not only focus on buildings, but especially on people.

In this studio the first step is taken towards changing the homes and living environment of the elderly. It is very positive that our faculty pays attention to researching relevant topics, such as the housing for the elderly in the design for care graduation studio. As students, we are encouraged to think differently and to incorporate the needs and wishes of people and especially the elderly in the design. We need to make the change through this studio. The elderly are a vulnerable target group to which extra attention must be paid and that is what is done in this studio.

This training can be very analytical, as we often use the analysis of reference projects. Which is very architecture oriented and technical. While in this studio and in my design the emphasis is on the user. By using observations and informal conversations with the elderly. This then leads to design principles that are implemented in the design.

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Elaboration on research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the graduation studio methodical line of inquiry, reflecting thereby upon the scientific relevance of the work.

The method that was stimulated during this graduation studio is anthropological research. This is a very interesting approach to doing research because it focuses on the human sciences. This has also been applied in my research through the fieldwork. The method of participating and observing that has been used is called participatory observation and is one of the main features of ethnographic fieldwork. Through long-term contact and shared experience during fieldwork, I learned to understand and empathize with the elderly's lives. Acquiring this 'deep' knowledge of and about others also makes it necessary to pay special attention to the way of reporting research. It is mainly a visual elaboration.

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Relationship between the graduation project and the broader social, professional, and scientific framework

In my graduation project it was decided to design a project that is as inclusive as possible. An aging society calls for architectural designs in which people can grow old. At the moment, our housing designs and living environments are not well equipped for this. This often results in loneliness or neglect of the elderly, who then have to take the sad and inevitable step of leaving their familiar living environment and moving to a care home: the last station of their lives...

The research looked at the needs of both the elderly and other target groups that are often forgotten. In order to make a design that is as appropriate as possible for the elderly and when the peak of the elderly decreases again, they can be changed to homes for other target groups. We are rapidly moving towards an aging society that will certainly have an impact on our living environment. Cities find that the elderly are hidden, forgotten and, especially if they are frail and less mobile, are often lonely.

The Design For Care studio is very people-oriented compared to the other studios in the Architecture master track. During this studio there is a lot of focus on thinking about the elderly and how we can involve them in society, but especially in a living environment. Unfortunately, the elderly are often a target group that is forgotten or is not added to the housing program because it is too expensive. The fieldwork ensured that we came into contact with the elderly and were able to experience the activities of the elderly for a week. This has ensured that we become familiar with the needs of the elderly and also take this into account when designing the elderly housing. This has resulted in a completely different view of the target group of the elderly. They are just as different as the rest of society, only they are more vulnerable and have more life experience and knowledge.

I think the focus of this studio is very important for this study because it is often mostly about designing buildings for people where all programs are thought of without really looking at people's needs.

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Ethical issues and dilemmas

When doing fieldwork, in many cases it comes down to the partial elimination of one's own identity. Because it could interfere with a smooth integration. I am personally very emotional by nature, so I often had to shed a tear during the fieldwork. When the elderly told me that they don't like being in this nursing home or constantly call their apartment a "hok", I had a hard time looking at a situation neutrally. Unfortunately, I can't write about all the negative parts because this may harm the elderly.