

NEIGHBORHOOD'S URBAN FABRIC

The neighborhood scale shapes the everyday environment in which residents move, shop, relax, and interact with others. Its structure, a network of squares, streets, public functions, and varying levels of publicness, forms the foundation for social interaction. When amenities are clustered, routes are organized hierarchically, and staying spaces are interwoven with movement spaces, opportunities for casual encounters and recognition arise. A neighborhood with a distinct identity fosters a sense of belonging and collective pride.

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- N.2 VISIBILITY OF COMMUNITIY NETWORK
- N.3 DESIGN INBETWEEN SPACES
- N.4 NECKLACE OF SPACES
- N.5 DISTINGUISABLE NEIGHBORHOODS
- N.6 FOCUS ON SLOW TRAFFIC
- N.7 URBAN THEMED ROOMS
- N.8 AMENITIES CLUSTER
- N.9 MARKETS
- N.10 MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES
- N.11 PRIORITIZE LOCAL SHOPS
- N.12 HIERARCHY IN ROUTES
- N.13 PUBLIC SCHOOLYARDS



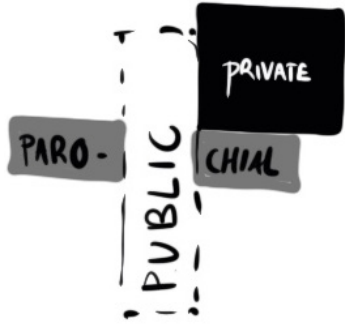
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N.1 LAYERS OF PUBLICNESS LEVELS

Creating different layers of publicness facilitates different uses



THEORATICAL BACK UP

The built environment consists of different layers of publicness, which are used in various ways (Platform31, 2021). Creating different layers of publicness in the structure of the urban fabric could indicate to users how spaces could be used (Van Dorst, 2016). Clustering public functions in one area makes other areas more private, facilitating greater engagement and use by residents.

REFERENCE STUDY

The concept of Woensel West is characterized by a clear arrangement of levels of publicness, a public axis with surrounding pockets of residential parochial clusters. The houses along the axis are taller and have a more urban character. The houses in the courtyards have soft transitions that facilitate the engagement and use of the public shared spaces. The courtyards have small entrances that indicate to users the change in territory.

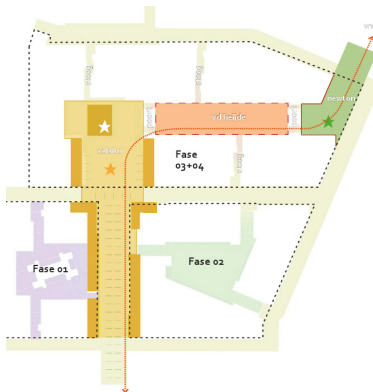


Figure 1: Layers of publicness in Woensel-West
Source: Plan Celsius in Woensel-West: Celsius 3-4. (2021, June 30). Trudo. <https://www.trudo.nl/woensel-west>

IMPLEMENTED IN STRATEGIES:

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.4 B.6
N.12 B.7
R.1 B.8



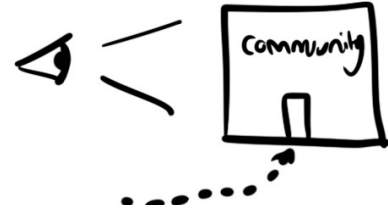
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N.2 VISIBILITY OF COMMUNITY NETWORK

Better visibility of the community network will engage new people



BACK UP

Making the network recognizable and discoverable can attract new people. The network of communities is intended for and with people in the neighborhood. When this engages with an open character in the urban fabric, it could be easier for new people to join in.

REFERENCE STUDY

In transforming the Woensel West neighborhood, they have given the community center a striking color and a central place in the urban fabric. The building is visible from various places in the neighborhood and stands out due to its color.



Figure 2: Visibility of Community center
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.7



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N.3 DESIGN INBETWEEN SPACES

To connect different targetgroups designers must design the inbetween space as connector



THEORATICAL BACK UP

The book 'Opzoek naar nieuw publiek domein' (Reijndorp, 2001) states the challenge for designers is to craft "in-between" spaces that facilitate dynamic exchange, making the public domain a vital and transformative aspect of urban society. The value lies in the potential for urban proximity between elements meaningful to various groups to offer shifts in perspective. By experiencing lifestyles, ideas, and ways of thinking different from their own, individuals are momentarily challenged to reconsider their worldview, providing "competition" to their default perceptions. The design of these spaces must balance diversity with usability, avoiding frictionless, homogenized designs that fail to reflect the vibrancy and tension of urban life.

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the design of BospolderTussendijken the inbetween space of the gijsinglaan flats and the surrounding urban fabric is used to connect urban fabric. Unused green space is transformed into space that provides entrances to homes.



Figure 3: New edge of Gijsinglaan flats in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.4 B.9
R.1
R.2



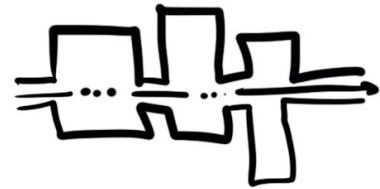
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N.4 CHAIN OF SPACES

The shape and connection of spaces influence the degree of interaction between people



THEORATICAL BACK UP

The city has a network of squares, streets, alleys, and parks. The shape and connection of spaces influence the degree of interaction between people (Platform31, 2021). It narrows and widens, and the spaces allow people to pass through as they connect, facilitating human flows that accelerate, decelerate, or sometimes come to a standstill. Platform31 (2021) states that a chain of smaller spaces, which are perceived as safe and valued, are the spaces most people come across, not the big open spaces meant to increase interaction. The spaces are defined by the edges of building blocks (Sim, 2019). The pattern of block edges can create different types of spaces and thereby uses

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the design for Bospolder-Tussendijken, a new route through the neighborhood is created. Along this route, the urban fabric opens into staying spaces and narrows into streets that guide people. In the open staying spaces, people will feel encouraged to linger, which could lead to people acknowledging each other.



Figure 4: Flow of spaces in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.1 R.1
N.3 B.3
N.5



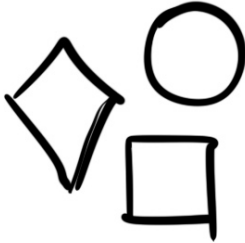
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N.5 DISTINGUISABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

Creating distinguishable neighborhoods creates a connection between residents



THEORITICAL BACK UP

Identity and pride are essential for people to feel part of a specific group or area. Recognizable neighborhoods add to the feeling of togetherness (Sim, 2019). Neighborhoods formed from the composition of multiple building blocks with a distinct character add to the sense of identity.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Woensel West project, four neighborhoods have been developed along a public axis. Each of these neighborhoods has the same principles but its own character. Thus, the public space's volumes, materials, and functions are handled differently. Residents can therefore position themselves within the Woensel neighborhood as part of certain area.



Figure 5: Neighborhoods with own characters
Eindhoven.nl (n.d.). Woensel West 2013: 24 Recente ontwikkelingen.
https://www.planviewer.nl/imro/files/NLIMRO.0772.80176-0301/t_NLIMRO.0772.80176-0301_24.html

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

N.4



C —●— A



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N.6 FOCUS ON SLOW TRAFFIC

Focussing on slow traffic promotes meeting



THEORITICAL BACK UP

When neighborhood design promotes slow traffic, people are more likely to encounter each other in public spaces (Platform31, 2021). Furthermore, Sennet (2019) argues that walking is a method of developing embodied knowledge. Experiencing something new fills the gaps in knowledge, teaching us more about the space and the people around us. This process cannot be replicated when you move quickly due to the number of elements a person can experience while standing still, moving slowly, and moving quickly.

REFERENCE STUDY

Reference: In the Vauban project, Freiburg, the area has been designed in such a way that the car is explicitly a guest in the neighborhood (Gebiedsontwikkeling.nu, 2023; Sim, 2019). As a result, there is visibly more space for residents as a usable area. Also, due to the focus on slow traffic, the chance of people encountering each other while moving from location to location is greater.



Figure 6: Car-free Vauban
Paterson, T., & Schoenen, D. (2009, June 30). Vauban, milieuvriendelijke pionierstad. Voxeurop. <https://voxeurop.eu/nl/vauban-milieuvriendelijke-pionierstad/>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.12
R.2
B.3
B.11



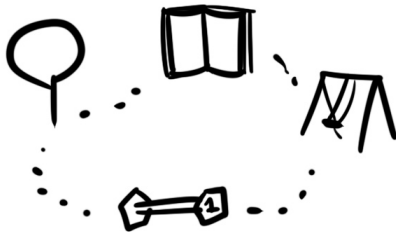
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N.7 URBAN THEMED ROOMS

Urban themed rooms connect residents with common interest



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Creating spaces for different user groups or different interests draws people outside and gives opportunities to facilitate meetings between people outside their social bubble. The greater the diversity of spaces, the greater the potential to facilitate all the needs of the residents (Sim, 2019)

SPATIAL IMPLICATION

In the design for Bospolder-Tussendijken, urban rooms are created. These urban rooms have a parochial character, which enables amicable meetings between residents. The parochial character is established by connecting the spaces to adjacent functions. This provides clarity about the target groups and offers a sense of control over the space. The urban rooms facilitate activities that attract residents who share commonalities, for example, a playground.

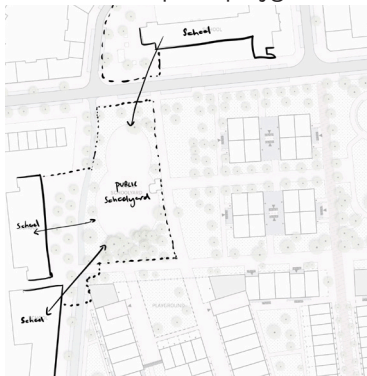


Figure 7: Urban themed room in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between common interest

RELATES TO:

N.2 B.9
N.9
N.13



C —●— A



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N.8 AMENITIES CLUSTER

Concentrating amenities increases meeting between residents



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Facilities have a certain type of audience. Thus, the general practitioner post and the local supermarket will mainly attract neighborhood residents. If these facilities are clustered, it can increase the chance that people will encounter each other while going about their daily activities. It is also important to consider the accessibility of these places (platform31, 2021), so that local residents can easily reach them on foot.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the neighborhood of Woensel West, a public axis has been created where local functions and amenities are located. This central axis is accessible on foot from all places in the neighborhood, so residents who use it might run into each other by chance.

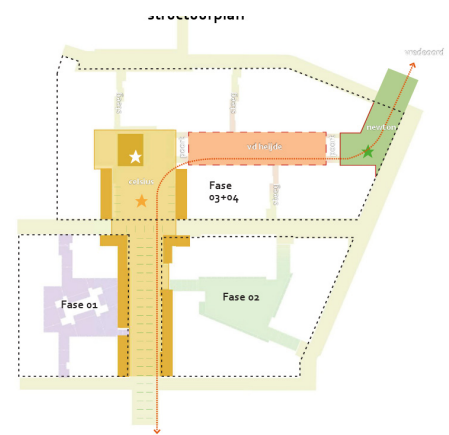


Figure 8: Amenities cluster in Woensel-West
Source: Plan Celsius in Woensel-West: Celsius 3-4. (2021, June 30). Trudo. <https://www.trudo.nl/woensel-west>

STRATEGY

Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.10 T.4
N.11
B.9



C ● — A



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N.9 MARKETS

Markets enable spontaneous meetings between residents on a routine basis



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Markets have historically been centers of social life, where economic exchange intersects with social interaction. They house informal, spontaneous encounters between visitors. Markets encourage diverse social interactions by attracting people from various economic, social, and cultural backgrounds. According to William H. Whyte in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980), markets naturally encourage social encounters because of their dynamic and fluid nature, open layout, and diverse stall configurations.

OBSERVATION

The Bospolder-Tussendijken market attracts many visitors from the surrounding area. This routine activity has the potential to give people the opportunity to recognize and meet others. In order to give space to a market, the neighborhood should include an open space that is multifunctional in use.



Figure 9: Meeting at market
Source: Made by author

STRATEGY

Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.7
N.10



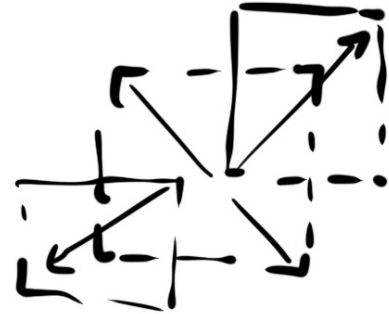
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N.10 MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACES

Multifunctional spaces provide space for (recurring) activities that enable meeting



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Flexible spaces are adaptable to different activities, functions, and social interactions over time. In *The Open City* (2006), Richard Sennet advocates for spaces that can evolve and accommodate changing social needs. Flexible spaces can support a city's resilience by allowing informal, temporary, and seasonal uses that foster community engagement. Jane Jacobs (1961), in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, similarly emphasizes the importance of multi-use areas that can support a wide range of social activities. Furthermore, flexible spaces are necessary when the available space is limited, like in densely populated areas. It increases the capacity of the available public space.

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the design for Bospolder-Tussendijken, a multifunctional space is facilitated. The Visserijplein provides an open space that can be used for events or markets, and also supports the use of adjacent functions. The use of the open space for the adjacent functions will be more extensive when the area is not occupied by events. The implementation of movable furniture enables this flexibility.

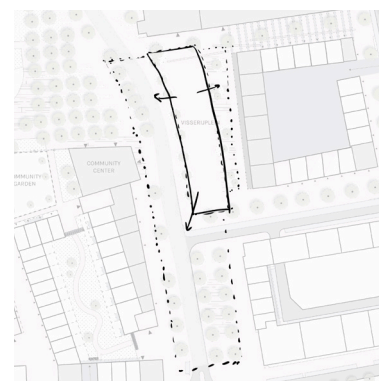


Figure 10: Multifunctional market square in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.8
N.9
B.9



C ● A



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N.11 PRIORITIZE LOCAL SHOPS

Prioritize and help shops that are connected to the local community



OBSERVATION

Bospolder-Tussendijken contains many shops that are focused on the local scale. These places have the potential to become part of the social infrastructure of residents. Shop owners and workers have the potential to guide social interaction between other residents.

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

Facilitate spaces for local shops in a central area of the neighborhood. In the design for Bospolder-Tussendijken, spaces will be prioritized to accommodate shops that are important for the local community. Existing shops will be guaranteed to have space provided in the transformation of the Visserijplein. Furthermore, the shops will have an active plinth that engages residents.



Figure 11: Local shops in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.8



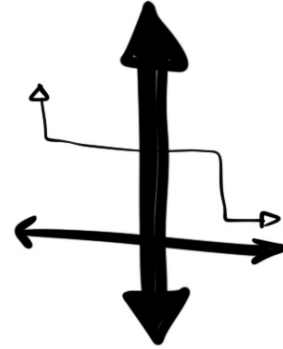
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N.12 HIERARCHY IN ROUTES

By creating a hierarchy in routes through the neighborhood, desired types of meetings can be enabled



OBSERVATION

Different publicness domains facilitate various types of meetings and uses (Lofland, 1998; Van Dorst, 2016). When creating hierarchy in the routes through the neighborhood, differentiations in the perceived publicness can be facilitated. Thereby, the desired types of meetings can be enabled.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Vauban project, various types of routes have been integrated into the urban fabric's structure. In the image below, it can be seen that two public routes run along green public spaces to the other areas of the district. The residential block located between them does not have any connected paths to longer lines, which means that visitors are less likely to use the paths between the residential blocks. This makes the street feel more private and facilitates more use by residents, thereby promoting encounters among them.

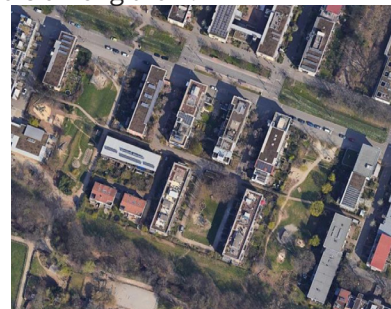


Figure 12: Routes through Vauban
Source: Google, (2025). Google Maps [map]. Retrieved on 15 april 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.1 R.2
N.6 B.11
R.1



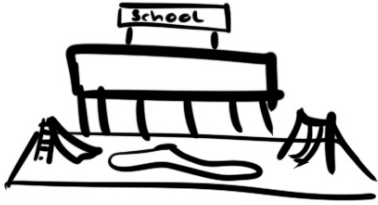
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N.13 PUBLIC SCHOOLYARDS

Schoolyards and playgrounds can be combined to act as public space



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Schoolyards and playgrounds are vital elements of a social infrastructure in a neighborhood (Klinenberg, 2018). These activities draw children outside, but also their parents. A fleeting encounter could potentially be enabled between residents while using the playground. In Dense urban areas, space is often scarce. A solution could be creating a public playground that acts as a schoolyard during school hours.

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the design for Bospolder-Tussendijken, an existing playground near a cluster of schools will be transformed into a public schoolyard. The area will be multifunctional over time. During the day, it serves as a schoolyard, while outside school hours, it acts as a playground for everyone to use.

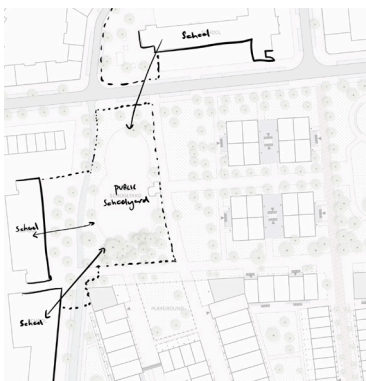


Figure 13: Public schoolyard in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between common interest

RELATES TO:

N.7
B.9



ROUTE

The route represents the daily movement from the front door to the rest of the city. This routine path has the potential to transform from a functional passage into a social route. By aligning routes along shared spaces, green areas, and moments of pause, spontaneous meetings between neighbors become possible. The gradual shift from public to semi-private space allows residents to position themselves and feel at home, reinforcing familiarity within smaller social groups.

CONTENT

- R.1 URBAN DEPTH
- R.2 SOCIAL ACCES
- R.3 ENTRY GARDEN
- R.4 STAIRS
- R.5 SHARED PARKING
- R.6 STAYING PLACES ALONG ROUTE
- R.7 EXTENDED GALLERY



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R.1 URBAN DEPTH

Urban depth enhances private use of public space



THEORATICAL BACK UP

As described in the literature, a person's identity is partly determined by their living environment and the individual's position within the group. The route to a home enhances the sense of the individual's position as the route transitions from public to increasingly private spaces. The group the person is part of becomes smaller, clarifying who your neighbors are (Platform31, 2021).

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Le Medi project, there are various levels of shared spaces. As residents move closer to their homes, the groups sharing these spaces become smaller and shared with a smaller group of people, leading to more privacy. This design encourages residents to use the spaces more. By creating different levels of public and semi-private areas along the route home, residents can position themselves within the urban block.

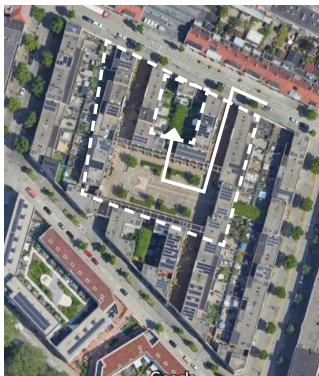


Figure 14: The urban depth of Le Medi
Source: Google. (2025). Google Maps [map]. Retrieved on 1 may 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

N.1 R.2
N.3 R.3
N.4 R.4
N.7 B.7
N.12



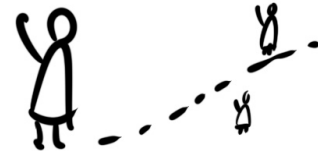
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R.2 SOCIAL ACCES*

A social acces enables meeting between residents



THEORATICAL BACK UP

The way to get to your home determines the chance of meeting your neighbors. When a building is designed so that parking can be done in the garage with an entrance directly at the back of the residence, the chance of encountering neighbors will be low. Designing a social route along residential areas can promote the spontaneous, fleeting encounters that foster recognition between neighbors. It is important that residences are accessible and that a connection between the residence and the route is possible at various points along the route, so that the places do not feel anonymous (Platform31, 2021).

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Vauban project, some blocks have been enhanced with an open porch (portiek) entrance. The stairs are located along the front doors of the block, allowing residents to use the gallery as a communal space. A meeting between neighbors can thus be enabled.



Figure 15: Portiek acces in Vauban
Source: Google. (2025). Google Maps [streetview]. Retrieved on 1 may 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

*Acces= ontsluiting (Dutch)

RELATES TO:

N.3 R.5
R.1 R.6
R.3 R.7
R.4 B.7



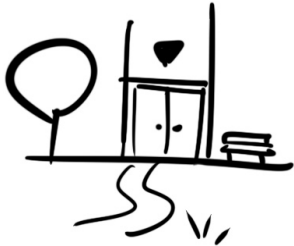
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R.3 ENTRY GARDEN

Placing the route home through shared space, lowers the bar of using the space



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Platform31 (2021) recommends putting the route through or close to the possible common areas. The bar for actually using the space is lowered since residents may walk by it without realizing it. Additionally, this raises the likelihood that they will cross paths. If someone else is using the space, they will run into each other on their way home.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the project Vauban residents walk past a shared garden. The likelihood that people will feel connected to the space is bigger.

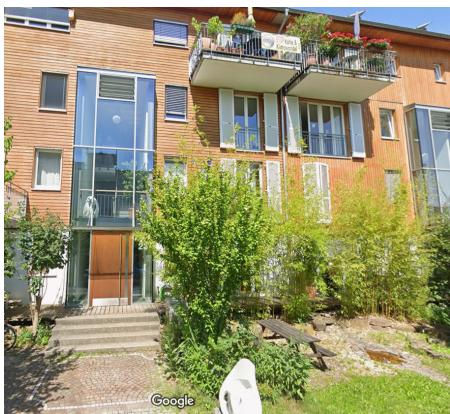


Figure 16: Entry garden in Vauban
Source: Google. (2025). Google Maps [streetview]. Retrieved on 15 april 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

R.1
R.2
R.5
R.6
B.6



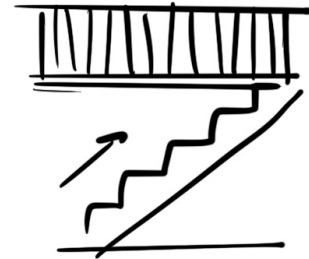
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R.4 STAIRS

The use of stairs enables meeting between residents



THEORATICAL BACK UP

The stairwell is the backbone of a walk-up-height building (Sim, 2019). It provides, apart from exercise, opportunities for neighbors to meet. It is more likely that people will recognize their neighbors in a walk-up building than in a high-rise building with an elevator (Sim, 2019). Furthermore, it has the potential to create a small community of neighbors right next door. Buildings with no more than five floors are small communities near the public outside.

REFERENCE STUDY

Reference: In the Vauban project, various types of entrance stairs have been established. In the example below, a shared indoor space around the entrance stairs has been facilitated. In this space, residents can place a plant, and there are opportunities to meet their neighbors.

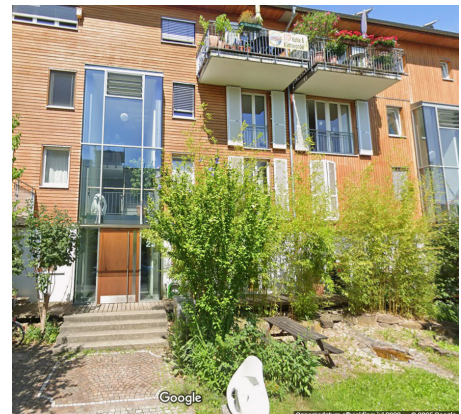


Figure 17: Portiek Acces
Source: Google. (2025). Google Maps [streetview]. Retrieved on 15 april 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

R.1
R.2



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R.5 SHARED PARKING

Shared parking increases the likelihood residents meet during their walk home



OBSERVATION

In the Le Medi project, a meeting occurred between neighbors while walking from a shared parking space to their homes. By centering parking and designing the route to homes socially, opportunities for encounters can be created.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Le Medi project, parking is clustered in the eastern part of the project. Residents have to walk through the shared inner garden to get to their homes. During this walk, an encounter may take place.

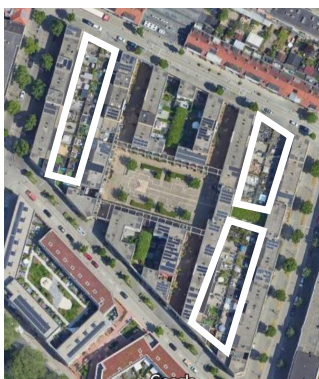


Figure 18: Shared parking in Le Medi
Source: Google. (2025). Google Maps [map]. Retrieved on 1 may 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

R.2
R.3
R.6



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R.6 STAYING PLACES ALONG ROUTE

Facilitating staying places along routes increases the likelihood of spontaneous encounters



OBSERVATION

While relaxing on a bench or playing outside, residents that walk past meet each other. When organizing routes and keeping spaces adjacent to each other, spontaneous encounters between residents could be facilitated.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Le Medi project, the front doors of the residences are located in the courtyard, which means residents must walk through the shared courtyard to reach their homes. When other residents use the space, spontaneous encounters can occur. Staying places can be created by facilitating a seating area or functions like a playground.



Figure 19: Staying along rout in Le Medi
Source: Made by author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

R.2 B.7
R.3 B.8
R.5 T.3
R.7



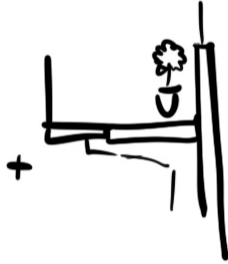
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R.7 EXTENDED GALLERY

Extended galleries facilitate use by residents along the access of their home



REFERENCE STUDY

In the Vauban project, some buildings are equipped with a wide gallery. As a result, people are using the space as an outdoor area. The area in front of each door has a personal influence from the residents. When residents use the space, an encounter can occur.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the buildings of the Vauban project, the galleries are two meters wide. This ensured that half a meter is available for the resident's use, and one and a half meters remain for movement along the gallery. To represent this functional separation, different materials or recessed facades can be used.



Figure 20: Wide galleries in Vauban
Source: Google, (2025). Google Maps [streetview]. Retrieved on 20 April 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

R.2
R.6



BLOCK

The block defines the direct living environment of residents: the scale at which neighbors recognize each other, children play together, and shared spaces are maintained. Its layout, size, mix of typologies, and communal facilities strongly influence the type and frequency of social interaction. When blocks are designed at a human scale and communal areas are legible and welcoming, they create a sense of comfort, identity, and openness to social connection.

CONTENT

- B.1 SIZE
- B.2 JOINED UP BLOCKS
- B.3 HUMAN SCALE
- B.4 HEIGHT
- B.5 UPPERFLOOR NEIGHBORS
- B.6 LAYERED OUTDOOR SPACE
- B.7 SHARED COURTYARD
- B.8 SHARED SPACES
- B.9 READABILITY OF SPACE
- B.10 THE EDGE OF PUBLIC SPACES
- B.11 COURTYARD ENTRANCE
- B.12 SPATIAL DIVERSITY
- B.13 RECLAIM STREETS



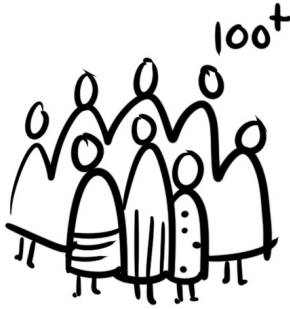
C — ● — A



1:100

B.1 SIZE

A smaller group size enables faster recognition



THEORITICAL BACK UP

According to Platform31 (2021), a housing block of around 100-130 people is interesting because they are still able to recognize each other as neighbors. For shared amenities, they have to make arrangements or create groups with certain tasks.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Vauban project, within a building block, the block is divided into different buildings. As a result, the group size per building is smaller, and residents can recognize each other more quickly.

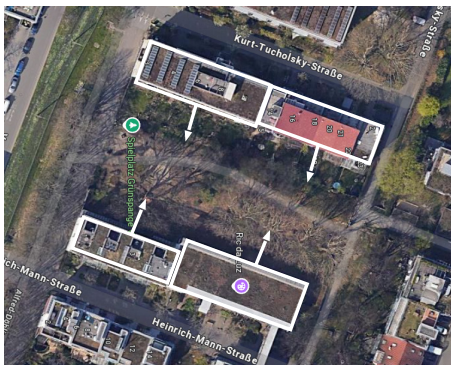


Figure 21: Buildings within urban block in Vauban
Source: Google, (2025). Google Maps [map]. Retrieved on 20 April 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

R.1
B.2
B.4
B.5



C — ● — A



1:500

B.2 JOINED UP BLOCKS

Different buildings, help the resident position themselves within the courtyard
themselves within the courtyard



THEORITICAL BACK UP

Different typologies and buildings help residents position themselves within the courtyard. Furthermore, it creates the potential to accommodate different user groups nearby (Sim, 2019).

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Vauban project, within a building block, the blocks are divided into different buildings. As a result, residents can position themselves within a structure of buildings. The differentiation is made by materialisation, height, divided entrances and access, and even height of elevations.



Figure 22: Joined-up block in Vauban
Source: Google, (2025). Google Maps [streetview]. Retrieved on 20 April 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

B.1
B.4
B.5



C ● — A



1:100

B.3 HUMAN SCALE

Human scale design makes spaces more pleasant and promotes intimacy and interaction



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Human scale is the dimensions rooted in human senses and behavior (Sim, 2019). David Sim (2019) explains that it is designed with attention to the experience at eye level. The coziness of the created spaces gives the feeling of comfort, which promotes intimacy and sociability.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Vauban project, air bridges have been installed in certain areas to reduce the perceived scale of the buildings, bringing them closer to a human scale. By creating a height barrier, the design fosters a stronger connection to the environment and enhances the sense of human scale.

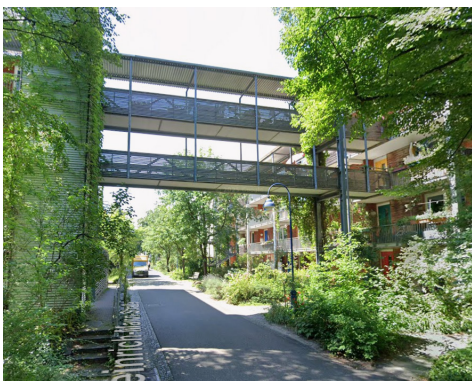


Figure 23: Air bridge in Vauban
Source: Google, (2025). Google Maps [streetview]. Retrieved on 20 April 2025, of <https://www.google.com/maps>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.4
N.6
B.4



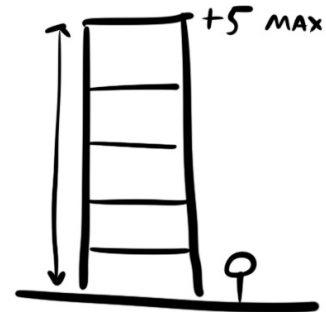
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B.4 HEIGHT

Low rise buildings give residents stronger relations with the public space



THEORATICAL BACK UP

The height of a building partially determines the relationship that residents will have with the ground level (Platform31, 2021; Gehl, 2010; Sim, 2019).

SPATIAL IMPLICATION

A height of up to five floors has the potential to maintain contact with the ground level (Gehl, 2010). However, the lower the elevations, the higher the contact with the ground floor.

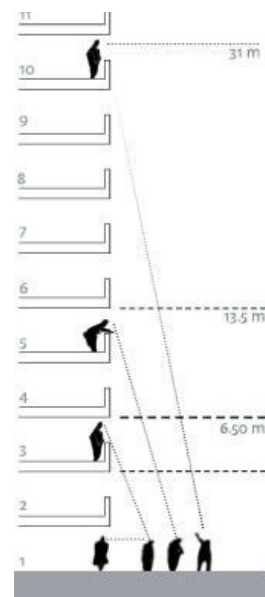


Figure 24: Looking up and down
Source: Gehl, J. (2010) Cities for People. Island

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

B.1
B.2
B.4



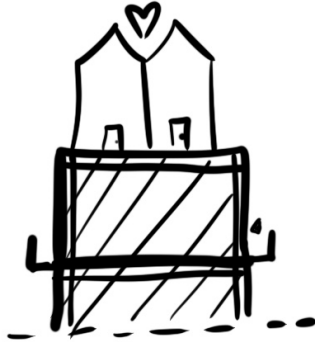
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B.5 UPPERFLOOR NEIGHBORS

The roofs of buildings can act as a small neighborhoods



REFERENCE STUDY

In the Vauban project, the upper layers of the building block have been designed so that residents form their block on top of an existing building. The residents thus have a shared space on the roof, where interaction between neighbors is encouraged.

REFERENCE STUDY

On top of one of the most central buildings in the Vauban district are houses. The houses are oriented in opposite directions and have their front and back sides, gardens, and elevations. The residents of these houses form a smaller group on top of the building.



Figure 25: Upper floor houses in Vauban
Source: Green City Times. (2023, November 9). The greenest town in Europe | Green City Times. <https://www.greencitytimes.com/europe-s-most-sustainable-city/>

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

B.1
B.2
B.4



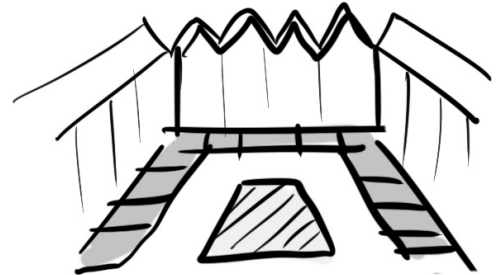
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B.6 LAYERED OUTDOOR SPACE

Different layers of publicness gives space to different types of use by the residents



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Providing private outdoor space and communal space invites different uses (Sim, 2019). The common space is perceived as neutral and represents the shared interest of the neighbors who own it. The space has the potential to create a sense of community among neighbors with front doors on different streets, as they realize they are neighbors (Sim, 2019). The private ground-floor gardens are useful spaces that directly connect to the adjacent rooms.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Le Medi project, spaces have been reserved for adjacent residents at the edges of the shared courtyard. As a result, residents have direct access to and connection with the shared space.



Figure 26: Private space adjacent to shared courtyard in Le Medi
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

N.1 B.9
R.1 B.10
R.3 T.3
B.7



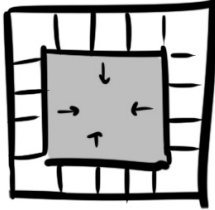
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B.7 SHARED COURTYARD

The shared courtyard facilitates space for residents to meet



THEORATICAL BACK UP

An enclosure between buildings or inside a block provides privacy and security (Sim, 2019). The space is protected, both visually and physically, which makes it suitable for use as an extension of the life inside the surrounding buildings. David Sim (2019) describes them as spaces for tolerance in the urban fabric, playing a vital role in buffering human activities from one another. The group using the shared courtyard has a common interest in cleanliness, safety, security, and quietness at night (Sim, 2019). This creates a sense of identity and belonging to the group.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Le Medi project, an open space has been created in the middle of the building block that can be used by residents. Adjacent gardens provide residents with space to use. It gives the opportunity for residents to see and meet each other. The courtyard is perceived as parochial, as the transitions from one territory to another are clearly defined by arches, fences, and materialization.



Figure 27: Shared courtyard in Le medi
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

N.1	R.6	B.10
R.1	B.6	B.11
R.2	B.8	B.12
	B.9	T.3

RELATES TO:



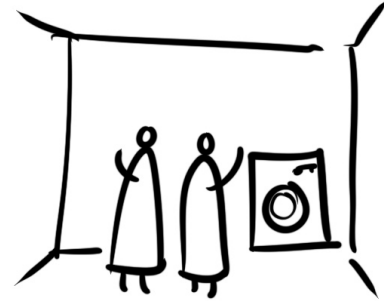
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B.8 SHARED SPACES

Shared spaces increase meeting between residents



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Space shared by residents has the potential to play a significant role in fostering neighborly contact (Platform 31, 2021). This space acts as a transition between the public city and the private home, creating a parochial atmosphere that facilitates residents in recognizing and meeting their neighbors. According to Platform31 (2019), spaces should be oriented to encourage frequent pedestrian traffic, as this lowers the threshold for using the area. Additionally, the use of the space must effectively reflect the residents' wishes. Within a building block or shared garden, communal facilities can be provided—such as a place for washing machines, garden tools, or a garden kitchen. Other shared amenities, like a communal living room or kitchen, can also foster interactions among residents.

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the design for Bospolder-Tussendijken, the entrances of the Gijsinglaan flats are enlarged. These spaces can accommodate shared amenities or a place to relax. Residents will pass by the shared spaces every day and possibly meet others.

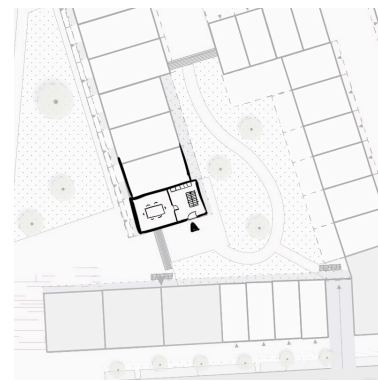


Figure 28: Shared space in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

R.6
B.7
B.9

RELATES TO:



C — ● — A



1:10

B.9 READABILITY OF SPACE

Readability of space increases the use



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Spaces that are clearly defined and visually comprehensible encourage people to interact with them. Jan Gehl in *Life Between Buildings* (2011) highlights that spaces designed for visibility and ease of access foster social interactions and increase the likelihood of their use. When the purpose of a space cannot be easily understood, people do not know how to engage with it. This can lead to underused public areas that fail to facilitate the needs of users.

OBSERVATION

In Bospolder-Tussendijken, the transition from public to private spaces has been enhanced by the addition of a Delft sidewalk. This is indicated in the materialization of the sidewalk. For residents and visitors, it is therefore clear that the piece of sidewalk belongs to the house and can be used by the resident.



Figure 29: Delftse stoep in Bospolder
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

N.1 B.8
B.6 B.10
B.7 T.3



C — ● — A



1:10

B.10 COURTYARD ENTRANCE

The entrance of a courtyard makes a spatially clear transition to a new territory



OBSERVATION

The entrance of a shared courtyard has the potential to make a clear difference between the public outside and the parochial character of the courtyard. A courtyard does not have to be locked, but the clear spatial order still reflects a sense of control, which influences the privacy script and, in turn, the behavior of unfamiliar strangers.

REFERENCE STUDY

The entrance to the shared gardens in the Woensel-West project is designed with clarity in mind. Utilizing specific materials, arches, and signage, it signals the transition into a different area. This helps users understand the privacy level of the space. The entrance features an open design, inviting passers-by to enter, but the archway indicates that this area is not as publicly accessible as the main public pathway.



Figure 30: Courtyard entrance in Woensel-West
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

B.6 B.7
B.9 B.9
T.1 T.1



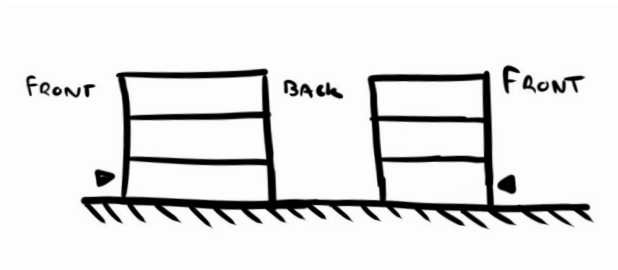
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B.11 SPATIAL DIVERSITY

Embracing spatial diversity facilitates a wider range of informal uses by the residents



THEORITICAL BACK UP

Creating spatial diversity increases the likelihood of different potential uses (Sim, 2019). The front is the most exposed side, which is expected to have a certain formality. While the back side is less visible, it facilitates more informal use. On the other hand, residents generally accept greater freedom of use (Sim, 2019).

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the design of Bospolder-Tussendijken, spatial diversity is a key focus. The layout clearly distinguishes the front of each house from the back. This distinction is also reflected in the level of public interaction; the front is more formal and accessible to passers-by, while the back offers a more private and relaxed atmosphere for residents.

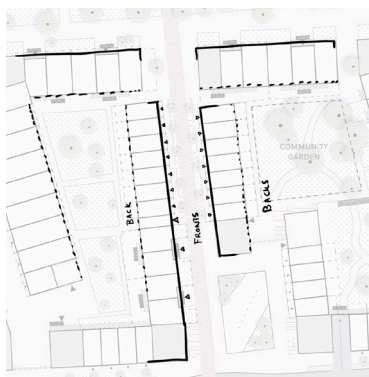


Figure 31: Fronts and backs in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.1
N.12
B.6



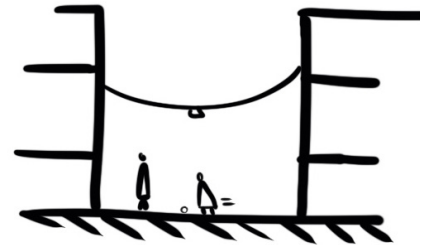
C —●— A



1:500

B.12 RECLAIM STREETS

Prioritising use, instead of moving, will increase meeting between residents



OBSERVATION

The street is not just an infrastructure for traffic, but forms the heart of public life in the city. In her groundbreaking work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jane Jacobs argues that the vitality, safety, and social cohesion of a neighborhood are directly linked to the use and design of its streets.

REFERENCE STUDY

In the Le Medi project, the spaces between houses are designated as living streets with a focus on pedestrians. As a result, it can be seen that the space is being used differently by the residents. The space has become a usage space instead of a traffic space. Through use, opportunities for encounters are created.



Figure 32: Used streets in Le Medi
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

N.6
B.7



TRANSITION ZONE

Transition zones form the threshold between the public realm and private living. These in-between spaces, such as stoops, porches, plinths, and small front gardens, are where public life subtly overlaps with private life. These are the spaces where informal interactions emerge: a greeting, a short conversation, a visual connection. By designing transition zones as active, layered, and inviting, they become more than passages; they become moments of meetings, recognition, and familiarity.

CONTENT

- T.1 CREATE FOURTH SPACES
- T.2 LIVELY PLINTH
- T.3 YOUR OUTSIDE
- T.4 IN FRONT OF AMENITIES
- T.5 PUBLIC TO PUBLIC
- T.6 EYES ON THE STREET
- T.6 SOFT TRANSITIONS



C — ● — A



1:10

T.1 CREATE FOURTH SPACES

Fourth spaces encourage interaction between a diverse set of users



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Urban design needs to offer possibilities for creating fourth spaces, which could come from gaps, overlaps, or the adaptation of uses. Fourth spaces are characterized by an open character and encourage interaction between a diverse set of users (Aelbrecht, 2016). These are the places that can be named transitional zones or entrances. It can be thresholds, edge spaces, paths, nodes and props. Places that have a truly public and anonymous character. Their most distinct characteristic of fourth spaces are spatial, temporal and managerial in-betweenness (Aelbrecht, 2016).

OBSERVATION

Designing fourth spaces involves shaping transitional zones with physical elements that invite people to pause. Introducing edges, benches, props, or trees encourages passersby to sit or stand still, transforming anonymous in-between spaces into areas of informal social encounter. These spatial cues subtly prompt dwell time and layered use, creating opportunities for spontaneous interaction among a diverse set of users.



Figure 33: Used fourth space in Tussendijken
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.8 T.3
B.11 T.4
T.2



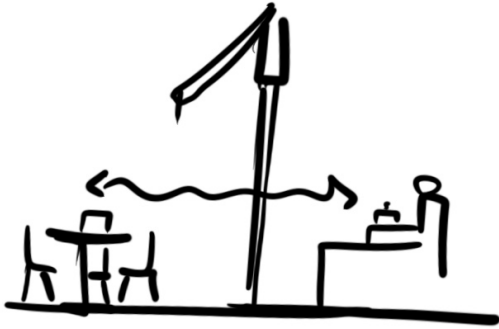
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1:10

T.2 LIVELY PLINTH

Lively edges enable social interactions



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Spaces are often defined by the quality of their edges: how the building interacts at a ground level with the surrounding public space (Gehl, 2011). By designing a transparent, active, and engaging edge, it attracts people and generates social interaction. If the edge fails, meaning it is inactive, blank, or closed off, the space itself struggles to become lively, regardless of its other features.

REFERENCE STUDY

The neighborhood of Woensel-West demonstrates how minor architectural adjustments can transform inactive edges into lively, interactive zones. By adding windows at the back of shops, what would otherwise be a blank, dead edge becomes visually permeable. This intervention enhances the sense of safety, transparency, and engagement with the public realm, fostering casual encounters.



Figure 34: Back of stores in Woensel- West
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

N.3 T.4
T.1 T.5
T.3 T.6



C ● — A



1:10

T.3 YOUR OUTSIDE

The space in front of private doors and windows are spaces where residents can engage with others



THEORATICAL BACK UP

The area in front of a private window/ door could become a space to be used by the resident. This space has the potential to be a space where the resident can engage with the community of the street (Sim, 2019). Creating space between the transition from the private home to the public space provides opportunities for neighborly contact (Platform31, 2021). It is important that the residents have direct access to the adjoining public space. The dimensions of this 'your outside' space determine the use of the space.

OBSERVATION

In some streets in Bospolder-Tussendijken, a small front garden, of one meter width, is created, which people can use as their own. Hereby, people are engaging with the public space of the street. Residents spending time outside are more likely to meet others.



Figure 35: Used your outside in Bospolder
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

R.6 T.1
B.6 T.2
B.7 T.5
B.9 T.6



C ● — A



1:10

T.4 IN FRONT OF AMENITIES

Lingering activities in front of amenities increases meeting between residents



THEORATICAL BACK UP

Vibrant urban spaces are created when people naturally encounter each other in the course of their daily activities (Jacobs, 1961). Frequent, informal meetings between neighbors help build trust and strengthen community ties. People are more likely to interact when they pass through or linger in well-designed public spaces that are part of their daily routes and routines (Whyte, 1980). Amenities form the base of the daily routines of the residents in a neighborhood. Lingering activities in front of amenities increases the likelihood of residents meeting.

OBSERVATION

Residents repeatedly ran into each other at the entrance of the supermarket. In Bospolder-Tussendijken, there was no space at this location to stop and meet each other. Creating space and/or placing a bench here can add value.



Figure 36: Front of supermarket on Schiedamseweg
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

T.1
T.2



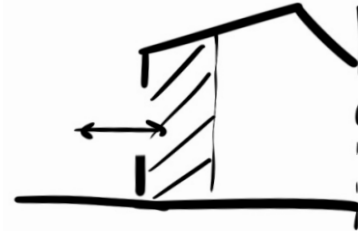
C ● — A



1:10

T.5 PUBLIC TO PUBLIC

The transition between public and private works best if public functions are oriented adjacent to the transition zone



THEORATICAL BACK UP

From the inside of the house, it is possible to make contact with neighbors who pass by and vice versa (Platform31, 2021). This must also be desired from within the house. Public functions, like the kitchen or living room, can create a softer transition with the outside public space. Thereby, interaction with neighbors is more desired (Platform31, 2021).

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the Bospolder-Tussendijken design, homes are arranged so that public areas, such as kitchens or living rooms, face the public realm. This spatial configuration enhances the connection between the dwelling and the street, allowing for more opportunities for casual visual or verbal interaction with passersby. By diminishing the boundary between inside and outside, residents are more inclined to engage with public space, fostering a sense of familiarity.

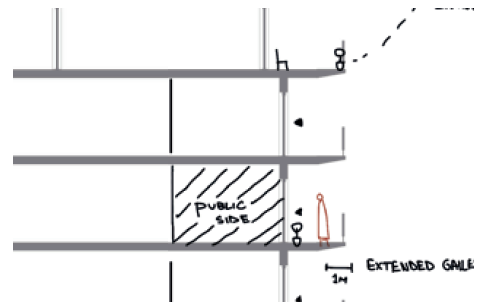


Figure 37: Public function to shared gallery in design
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors

RELATES TO:

T.2
T.3
T.5



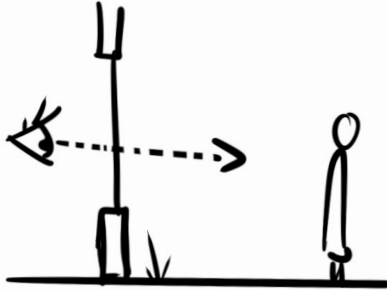
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T.6 EYES ON THE STREET

Eyes on the street increase perceived safety



THEORITICAL BACK UP

"Eyes on the street" emphasizes that social control arises when residents feel engaged with their immediate surroundings. Open windows, active ground floors, neighborhood shops, and public amenities ensure that people are in touch with what is happening on the street. As a result, the public space itself is perceived as safer, and crime is reduced (Jacobs, 1961).

SPATIAL IMPLICATION

Promote an engaging facade at eye level for the buildings. This approach enhances the link between the building's function and the surrounding public space, ensuring visibility and accessibility. Incorporating features like windows, doors, and gardens can help achieve this connection.



Figure 38: Eyes in the street in Bospolder
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

T.2
T.3
T.5



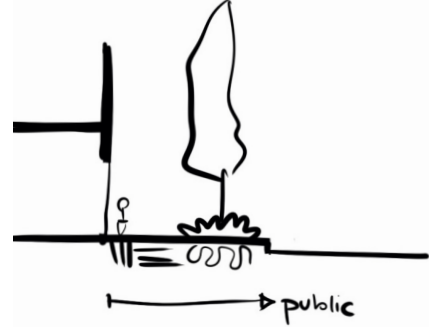
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T.7 SOFT TRANSITION

Soft transitions create privacy for residents, which will increase meeting



BACK UP

When the transition that needs to be softened is more abrupt, a gentler transition is necessary. A softer transition gradually blends the boundary between public and private spaces. If the two domains are further apart, it becomes essential to have a softer transition to facilitate this shift.

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

In the design of Bospolder-Tussendijken, the transitions between public and private spaces are made softer by incorporating elements that minimize abrupt changes. One way this is achieved is through the addition of privatized green areas, which serve as a boundary between public pathways and private residential facades. Additionally, a Delftsestoep is included in the design. As a result, the transition zone between public and private areas becomes broader and more gradual compared to other areas in the design where the shift is more sudden.

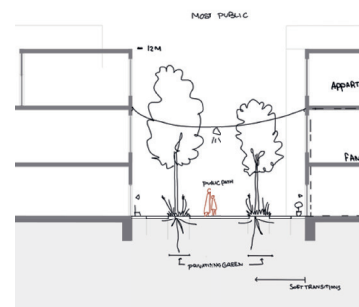


Figure 39: Soft transition in public street
Source: Made by Author

STRATEGY

Meeting between direct neighbors
Meeting between common interest
Meeting between residents of the neighborhood

RELATES TO:

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Master thesis

2024-2025

Marin Zeeman