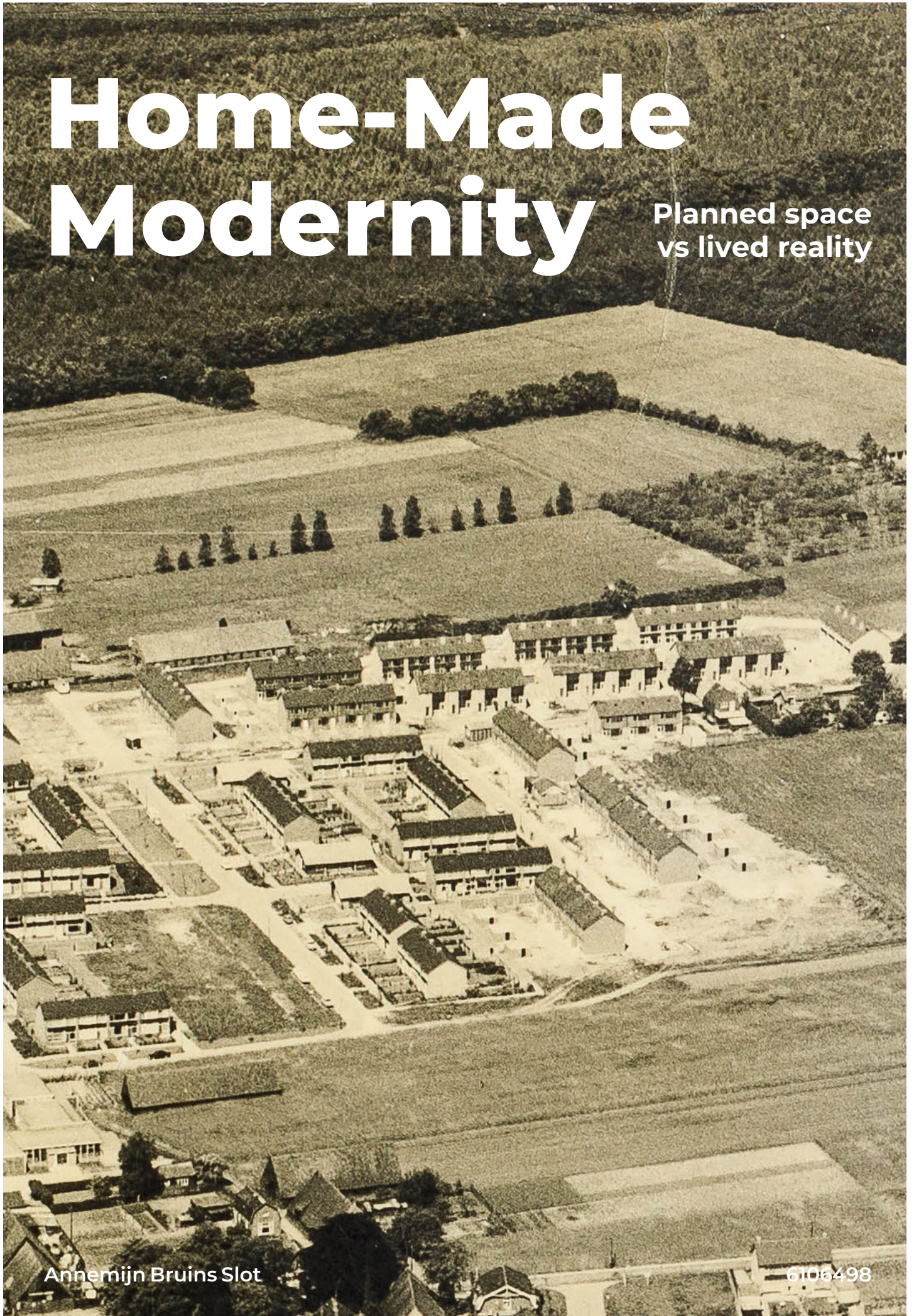


# Home-Made Modernity

Planned space  
vs lived reality



2024 / 2025

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Cover image, Figure 1: Aerial photo from a southerly direction of the northwestern part of the village of Amerongen with the Utrechtse Heuvelrug

# Abstract

This thesis explores how the doorzonwoning, a Dutch post-war housing type, was transformed by its residents over time. In the years following World War II, the Netherlands faced a severe housing crisis. In response, the government launched a large-scale effort to provide efficient, affordable homes using new techniques such as system building and prefabrication.

Using Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space, this research challenges the traditional divide between planned and lived space, and reframes the inhabitant as an active co-creator of architecture.

Through a case study in Amerongen, the thesis investigates how residents adapted and transformed their homes over time. Drawing from archival records and personal testimonies, it reveals how negotiated modifications, from dormers to kitchen extensions, blurred the line between government planning and personal appropriation.

Ultimately, the thesis argues that the doorzonwoning is not only a product of its time but also a dynamic, living architectural form that has remained relevant precisely because of its capacity to change.

# Introduction

*“The meaning of the river flowing is not that all things are changing so that we cannot encounter them twice but that some things stay the same only by changing.”<sup>1</sup>*

Heraclitus fl. c. 500 B.C.E.

*Doorzonwoningen* (sun-through-house) formed the backdrop of my childhood, yet I never consciously recognized them as a distinct architectural or historical phenomenon, at least not until I began searching for a thesis topic. Perhaps this is telling of the imago this housing type has in the Netherlands, so normal\* it's barely noticed<sup>2</sup>.

After the second world war, the Netherlands faced a crippling housing crisis. In response, the government and the building industry got together and came up with a solution, mass housing. Houses were built using newly developed techniques to improve building cost and speed<sup>3</sup>. As a result of this effort, the Dutch citizens got presented with an array of new housing types. One of which is the focus of this thesis, *the doorzonwoning*.

Mass housing was not a wholly new concept. Before the post-war period, large-scale housing projects were carried out by the church, the military, and socially minded industrialists who built homes for their workers<sup>4</sup>. What sets post-war housing apart, however, was its large scale, that it was not limited to a certain group, and the direct involvement of the national government.

The post-war housing effort brought more than just new housing types; it introduced a new modernist way of living. This new era in housing was accompanied by social efforts to shape domestic life. Manuals, campaigns, and design guidelines aimed to educate residents on how to furnish, behave, and function within these modernist spaces<sup>5</sup>. This extended to the level of urban planning as well, there were clear ideas about what the modern Netherlands should look like<sup>6</sup>. There was a strong belief that the future could be planned and manufactured through policy and design.

Yet, as the saying goes, *'the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry'*<sup>7</sup>. The *doorzonwoning* had its heyday between 1955 and 1975<sup>8</sup>, and now, 50 years later, it is worth to ask: what happened once people moved in? Residents have adapted and altered their homes, did they do so in line with the original intentions, or in ways that challenged the planned design? And how did the government respond to the wishes of residents to alter their homes? And how did the residents respond in return? This raises a fundamental question: who produces space, the government, the architect, or the people who inhabit it? Did the plans go awry?

In approach this thesis questions the architectural history canon. While the post-war era has undoubtedly received considerable attention, and the *doorzonwoning* type could even be considered canonical, focus has largely remained on initial designs or exceptional cases. The more 'ordinary' examples are often overlooked. Yet, the uniqueness of this era lies precisely in the large number of identical houses that were built. Rather than criticizing their sameness and dismissing the design as boring, it is worth exploring what they have become. The evolution of these

houses through resident modifications has received little attention. This thesis addresses that gap by examining the transformations of *doorzonwoningen* in a specific neighborhood. It challenges traditional distinctions between planned and lived space and highlights the inhabitant as a co-creator in the architectural process, not merely a passive occupant. To understand this housing type and era, we must look not only at the exceptions, but also at the rule.

To place the discussed themes and concepts in reality, this thesis makes use of a case study in Amerongen, the Netherlands. This location holds particular significance, as I grew up in this area, providing both personal familiarity and direct access to long-term residents. Visits to the Regionaal Archief Zuid-Utrecht<sup>9</sup> provided access to original architectural plans and building archives documenting various changes made to the houses, primarily focusing on exterior modifications. Having grown up in this neighbourhood, I was already familiar with long-term residents and invited them to participate in this research. I gathered insights through personal accounts, which helped reconstruct how the houses appeared in the past and how they have evolved. Based on the collected archival and field data, I created drawings recording transformations over time.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to highlight the houses as more than a functional response to the post-war housing crisis. This is by examining how *doorzonwoningen* have been transformed over time and what these changes reveal about shifting living needs and cultural values.

To get an understanding of the historical context, **Part One** will explore the period in which the *doorzonwoning* as a type emerged, examining the social, economic, and political climate that shaped the development. This chapter will address the key historical events that led to the rise of the *doorzonwoning* as a housing typology, situating it within post-war reconstruction efforts.

**A theoretical interlude** will provide a theoretical underpinning, focusing and reflecting on Henri Lefebvre concept of the production of space.

In **Part Two**, the theoretical frameworks will be explored through a case study, examining a specific neighborhood to analyze how the *doorzonwoning* has been lived in, adapted over time. This chapter will compare original architectural intentions to the lived reality.

Heraclitus' quote underscores the central argument: the *doorzonwoning* is both a product of its time and a dynamic, living architectural form that has remained relevant precisely because of its ability to change.

\*In 2023 there were 8.045.600 homes in the Netherlands, of which 3.380.100 were terraced houses, of which about 1,4 million were *doorzonwoning*<sup>3</sup>. This means about 17% of all houses in the Netherlands were *doorzonwoning*. Most of these homes were built between 1955 and 1975<sup>4</sup>.

1. Heraclitus and G. S. Kirk, *The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954).

2. Luuk Kramer and Bernard Hulsman, *Het rijtjeshuis de geschiedenis van een oer-Hollands fenomeen*, 2e dr (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam Uitgevers, 2014).

3. CBS, 'Hoeveel woningen zijn er? - Nederland in cijfers 2023 | CBS', webpagina, *Hoeveel woningen zijn er? - Nederland in cijfers 2023 | CBS*, accessed 26 February 2025, <https://longreads.cbs.nl/nederland-in-cijfers-2023/hoeveel-woningen-zijn-er>.

4. Tim Smeets and Barend de Voogd, *Ode aan de doorzonwoning* (Zutphen: Uitgeversmaatschappij Walburg Pers, 2024).

5. Smeets and Voogd.

6. Kramer and Hulsman, *Het rijtjeshuis de geschiedenis van een oer-Hollands fenomeen*.

7. Noud de Vreeze, ed., *Goed wonen: geschiedenis van een keurmerk* (Bussum: Uitgeverij THOTH, 2015).

8. Jos van der Lans, '1946 *De Wijkgedachte, Van Gemeenschapszin Naar Sociale Wijkteams*, 8 March 2021, [https://www.canonsociaalwerk.eu/nl/details\\_verwant.php?cps=0&verwant=364](https://www.canonsociaalwerk.eu/nl/details_verwant.php?cps=0&verwant=364).

9. Robert Burns, *To A Mouse*, 1785.

10. Smeets and Voogd, *Ode aan de doorzonwoning*.

11. 'Regionaal Archief Zuid-Utrecht', n.d., <https://www.razu.nl/>.

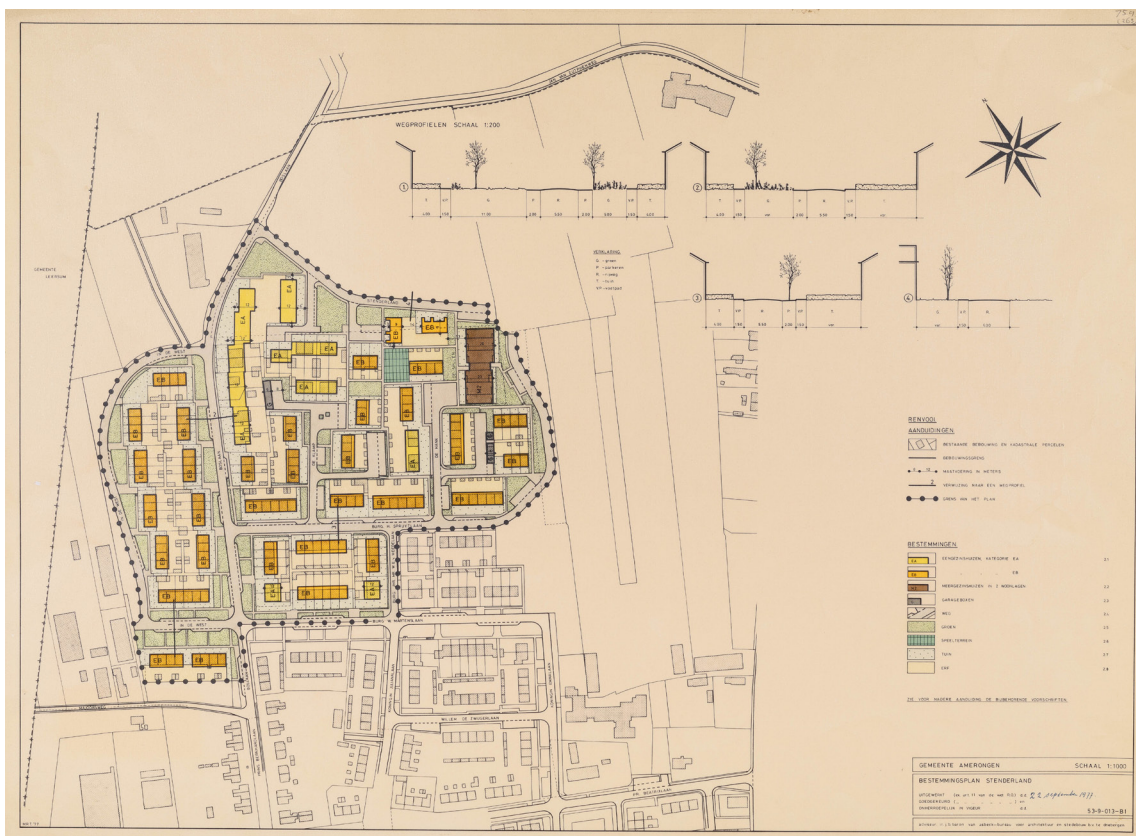


Figure 2. Original plan for the urban development of the case study

# Part One: Best Layed Plans

As the dust of WWII was settling, the reality of post war Netherlands became clear. The country was faced with the aftermath of mass destruction, left to cope with its losses and the strains of scarcity. While the rubble of the past was being cleared away, visions for the future were taking shape, what would the future of the Netherlands look like?

The governments priority was to (re)build infrastructure and industry to revive the economy and create jobs. In the shadow of this productivity, a major problem was looming, a great housing shortage. During the war years 100,000 houses had been destroyed, the construction sector had effectively come to a halt and had a hard time starting back up. Traditional building supplies, for example brick, were scarce. There was also a shortage of construction workers as most had moved on to other professions during the war due to lack of work, and younger workers had little experience. On top of that, the post-war baby boom was underway. Most people had postponed starting a family during the war, and a substantial population increase was expected. Living conditions at the time were poor, especially in the big cities, where overcrowding and inadequate housing were common<sup>12</sup>.

The expectation was that the development of infrastructure and industry would also kickstart housing construction. However, the housing shortage became so great and living conditions were so dire that the government decided to step in. Before the war, housing construction was driven by the market. Now the government took control. Agreements were made with neighboring countries to regulate the prices of building materials, preventing competition and keeping costs low. Within the Netherlands, rules were introduced to prevent competition between municipalities, to ensure a fair distribution of resources so that the construction sector would not depend on locally available building materials. In 1947 the 'Ministry of Reconstruction and Housing' (Ministerie van Wederopbouw en Volkshuisvesting) was instated. With that came an ambitious goal: the right to housing would be included in the constitution, making it a human right<sup>13</sup>.

## Raising housing standards and people

Post-WWII was not the first time in Dutch history that the government took an active role in housing. In the late 19th century, a large portion of the population lived in overcrowded, unhealthy housing and concerns around living conditions became hard to ignore. Hygiene was so lacking that epidemics like cholera could spread rapidly<sup>14</sup>. Still, it took a while before a real solution took shape. Proposals to regulate housing were turned down in fear that the government would gain too much power. Only just before the turn of the century real progress was made<sup>15</sup>.

Reports were written that thoroughly documented the poor living conditions across the country<sup>16</sup>. In addition, scientific developments revealed a clear connection between epidemics and the unhygienic conditions caused by poor housing. As a result, it became increasingly difficult to deny that action was necessary. It helped that epidemics no longer spared the upper class either. When the social liberals won the 1897 elections, they were able to push through meaningful change<sup>17</sup>. By 1901 the first Housing Act was instated<sup>18</sup>.

The Housing Act consisted of 54 articles that laid the ground for government involvement in public housing. While the Act made housing a national concern, its implementation was delegated to municipalities. The government enabled municipalities to distribute low-interest loans and subsidies to officially approved housing associations, facilitating the construction and management of affordable housing for low-income households<sup>19</sup>. Municipalities gained the authority to oversee building quality, and the power to improve or demolish bad quality houses. The act also made it possible to expropriate land for urban expansion<sup>20</sup>.

With the political effort to improve the quality of housing and living conditions also came a social reform movement (beschavingsoffensief). Inspired by British reformer Octavia Hill, who believed that "living has to be learned," Johanna ter Meulen and Louise Went brought her philosophy to Amsterdam at the end of the 19th century, after studying Hill's socially engaged housing model in London. In 1903, they founded the Association of Housing Supervisors, the first of its kind in the Netherlands. Female housing supervisors were actively involved in everyday tenant life: they collected rent weekly and monitored daily routines, ensuring children attended school, banning pets and drying laundry indoors, mandating weekly visits to public baths, and urged to make use of communal laundry facilities<sup>21</sup>.

## The development of the type

Back to post WWII Netherlands, after experimentation with new construction techniques, system building, and prefabrication seemed to be the answer to the housing problem. However, for this to work the layout of all the houses would need to be the same. No exceptions. This way of building gave rise to several housing types, such as Doorzonwoningen. By the late 1950s, the idea emerged to identify the most successful housing types developed over previous years. By further improving these existing designs, a standardized range of dwellings could be created that would meet all necessary requirements. Architecture firms collaborated with experienced builders from local housing authorities developing standard plans that could be repeatedly constructed across the Netherlands, without involvement from local architects. So it happened that between 1960 and 1968, under the supervision of the Rotterdam Construction Centre and the Minister of Housing, five volumes of 'keuzeplanwoningen' (choice plan houses) were published. The choice plan got a lot of publicity thanks to the contribution of known architects and it's success in producing a in large numbers of houses in a short time<sup>22</sup>.

Not only were new construction techniques and housing types developed, but also new approaches to urban planning. A study group on Housing Architecture formed on behalf of the BNA, including architects Willem van Tijen, J.H. van den Broek, and Ben Merkelbach, developed influential concepts. At a 1948 housing

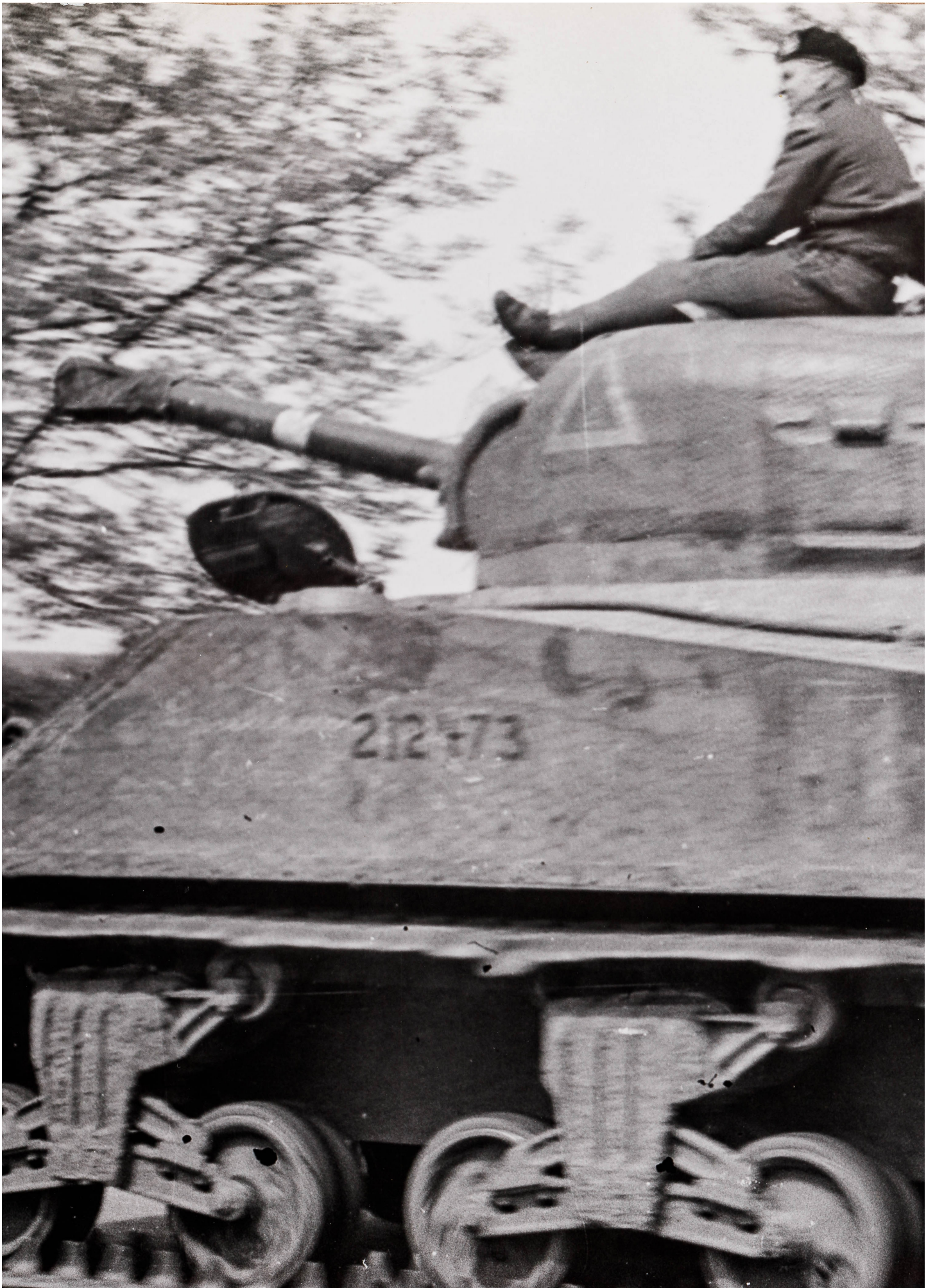


Figure 3. Picture of the liberation after WWII of Amerongen

Congress, they presented their findings, recommending a carefully planned urban composition<sup>23</sup>. New neighborhood should consist of 20,000 people. Either multiple new neighborhoods could form a town, or they could be built as an extension to an existing city or town. The specification of the amount of people was linked to the ideology to create a strong social structure. A variety of housing types and sizes would accommodate different stages of family life, allowing residents to remain within the community as their housing needs changed. The neighborhoods were to provide sufficient employment, space for social functions, shops and good facilities available for everyone. Social cohesion was a high priority, to create a bond within the neighborhoods sports fields and other recreation areas would be created. The focus of these efforts was on the nuclear family and had special attention for how children would grow up in these neighborhoods<sup>24</sup>.

### Education and Propaganda

As at the beginning of the century, efforts to improve living conditions were not only made through political means, but also on a social level. One organization dedicated to this was the Goed Wonen (Good Living) foundation, established in 1946. The foundation's mission was to educate people on how to furnish and live in their homes. It is best known for the magazine of the same name, first published in 1948<sup>25</sup>. However, Goed Wonen was more than just a magazine.

Goed Wonen was an active collective of designers, manufacturers, and distributors. In addition to publishing a magazine, they organized exhibitions, model homes, an information center, publications, lectures, and courses. All aimed at educating the Dutch population on how to live in a modern way<sup>26</sup>.

The mission of Goed Wonen was to bring the modern way of living to the masses and to modernize living culture. They aimed to reach this goal through education, their motto being: taste is a matter of education (smaak is een kwestie van opvoeding). In the book *Goed Wonen, geschiedenis van een keurmerk*<sup>27</sup> the output of Goed Wonen is described as propaganda. There was a strong idea of right and wrong, everything old and traditional was viewed as bad, while all that was new and modern was considered good.

According to Goed Wonen's beliefs, these modern principles would contribute to a better society, improve family life, a more harmonious upbringing for children and create greater opportunities for women. Quite the mission, especially considering it was to be achieved with Rotan chairs and modular furniture. It is important to note that the focus was primarily on families, there was little attention for individuals living alone. This fits with the idea that the family was to be cornerstone of the society after the war. The interior of the home was presented as the woman's responsibility (specifically that of housewives). Classes and lectures were organized at Housekeeping schools (Huishoudschool). It is interesting how open Goed Wonen was about their mission to educate and raise people. In today's context, it seems rather odd to adopt such a paternalistic stance. Yet if it is placed in its time, it does not seem out of place. It was an extension of the social reform movement that started in the early 1900.

\*\*Initially, Goed Wonen consisted of four main organizations: Designers were united in the Federation of Applied Arts (Gebonde Kunst Federatie, GKF), Manufacturers in the Association for Art in Industry Bond voor Kunst in Industrie, BKI), Retailers in the Association of Distributors (Vereniging van Distributaten), Consumers in the Consumers' Foundation (Consumenten Stichting).

Beyond these, there existed a wide and active network of organizations with similar or related goals. These included: the Foundation for New Living Culture (Stichting Nieuwe Wooncultuur), the Federation of Furniture Companies, 'Good Living' (de Federatie van Meubileringsbedrijven, 'Het Goede Wonen), Various women's organizations, including local Women's Advisory Committees (vrouwenadviescommissies), the Dutch Council for Housekeeping (de Nederlandse Huishoudraad), Architectural associations, Housing corporations and their central offices, the Building Center (het Bouwcentrum), the Dutch Consumers' Association (de Nederlandse Consumentenbond).

12. Smeets and Voogd, *Ode aan de doorzonwoning*.

13. Smeets and Voogd.

14. Jos van der Lans et al., *Canon volkshuisvesting*, 4e druk (Amsterdam: Vereniging Canon Sociaal Werk, 2021).

15. Lans et al.

16. Noud de Vreeze, Coosje Berkelbach, and Marly Drummen, eds., *6,5 miljoen woningen: 100 jaar woningwet en wooncultuur in Nederland* (Rotterdam: Uitg. 010, 2001).

17. Lans et al., *Canon volkshuisvesting*.

18. Vreeze, Berkelbach, and Drummen, *6,5 miljoen woningen*.

19. Lans et al., *Canon volkshuisvesting*.

20. Vreeze, Berkelbach, and Drummen, *6,5 miljoen woningen*.

21. Lans et al., *Canon volkshuisvesting*.

22. Vreeze, Berkelbach, and Drummen, *6,5 miljoen woningen*.

23. Kees Somer and Ronald Stenvert, eds., *Bouwmaterialen 1940-1990: vernieuwing, constructie, toepassing* (Rotterdam: nai|010 uitgevers, 2024).

24. Smeets and Voogd, *Ode aan de doorzonwoning*.

25. Vreeze, *Goed wonen*.

26. Vreeze.

27. Vreeze.

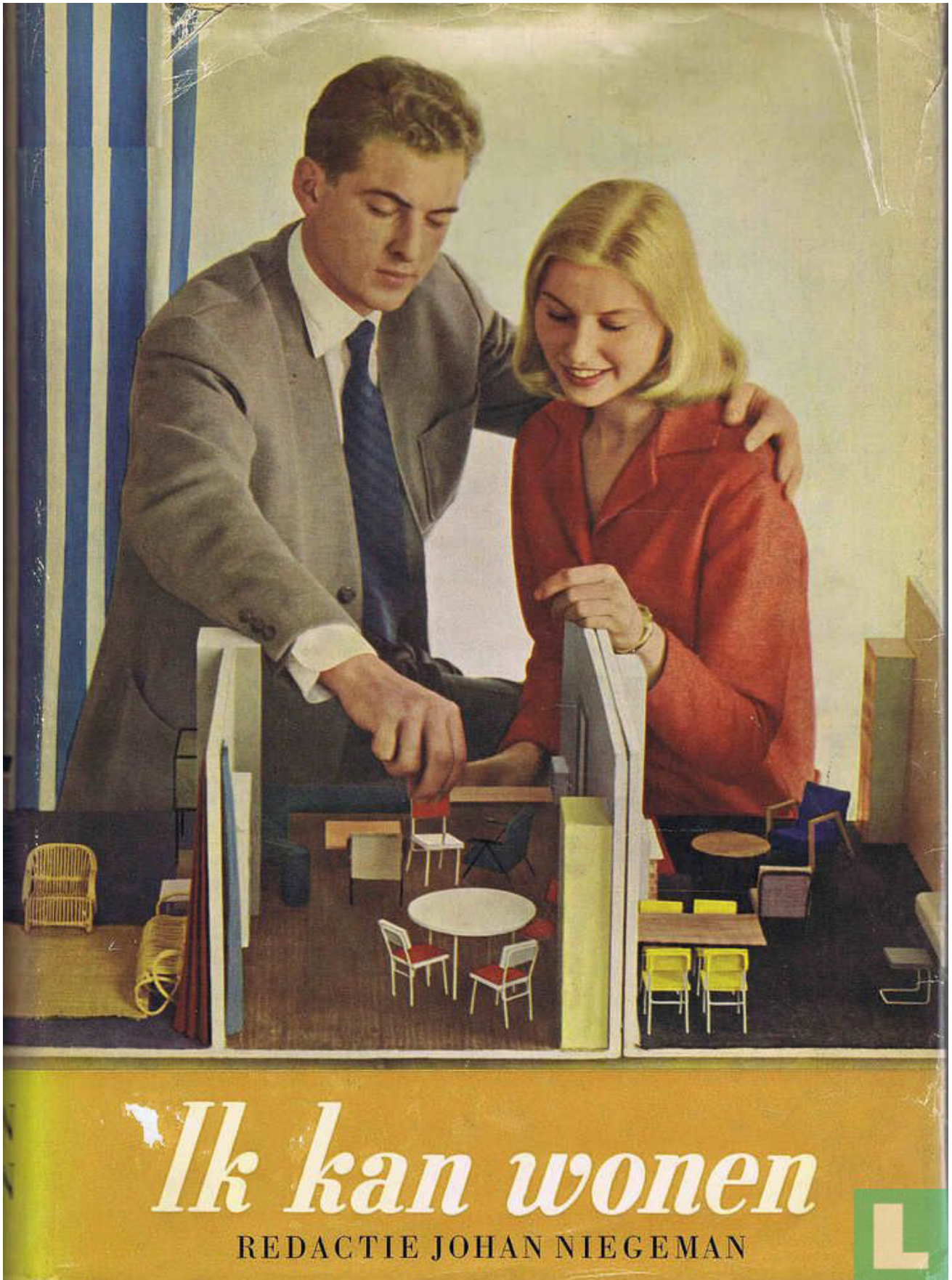


Figure 4. Cover of the book 'Ik kan wonen' (1985), depicting a woman being guided by a man on how to decorate a model living room.

# Theoretical Interlude: Is There a Plan?

As the government and building industry were solving the housing crisis, and Goed Wonen was teaching people how to live and decorate, they were deciding what large parts of the Netherlands would look like. How a large part of the population would live. But if the state and industry designed these spaces, to what extent did the inhabitants themselves shape their homes and way of living? Who truly produces space?

This question lies at the heart of Henri Lefebvre's theory on the production of space<sup>28</sup>. Lefebvre argues that space is more than a geometrical or mathematical concept. The space around us is a product of the way we live in the broadest sense. Space is not the backdrop to our lives or a physical container; it is socially produced. In his 1974 book *The Production of Space*, he distinguishes between three types of space (see figure 5).

These aspects together produce social space. However, it is not a linear process from conceived to perceived to lived. These three influence each other. Through this framework, Lefebvre challenges the idea that space is created solely by architects, planners and the government, suggesting instead that the everyday practices and adaptations of inhabitants are equally part of the process of spatial production<sup>29</sup>.

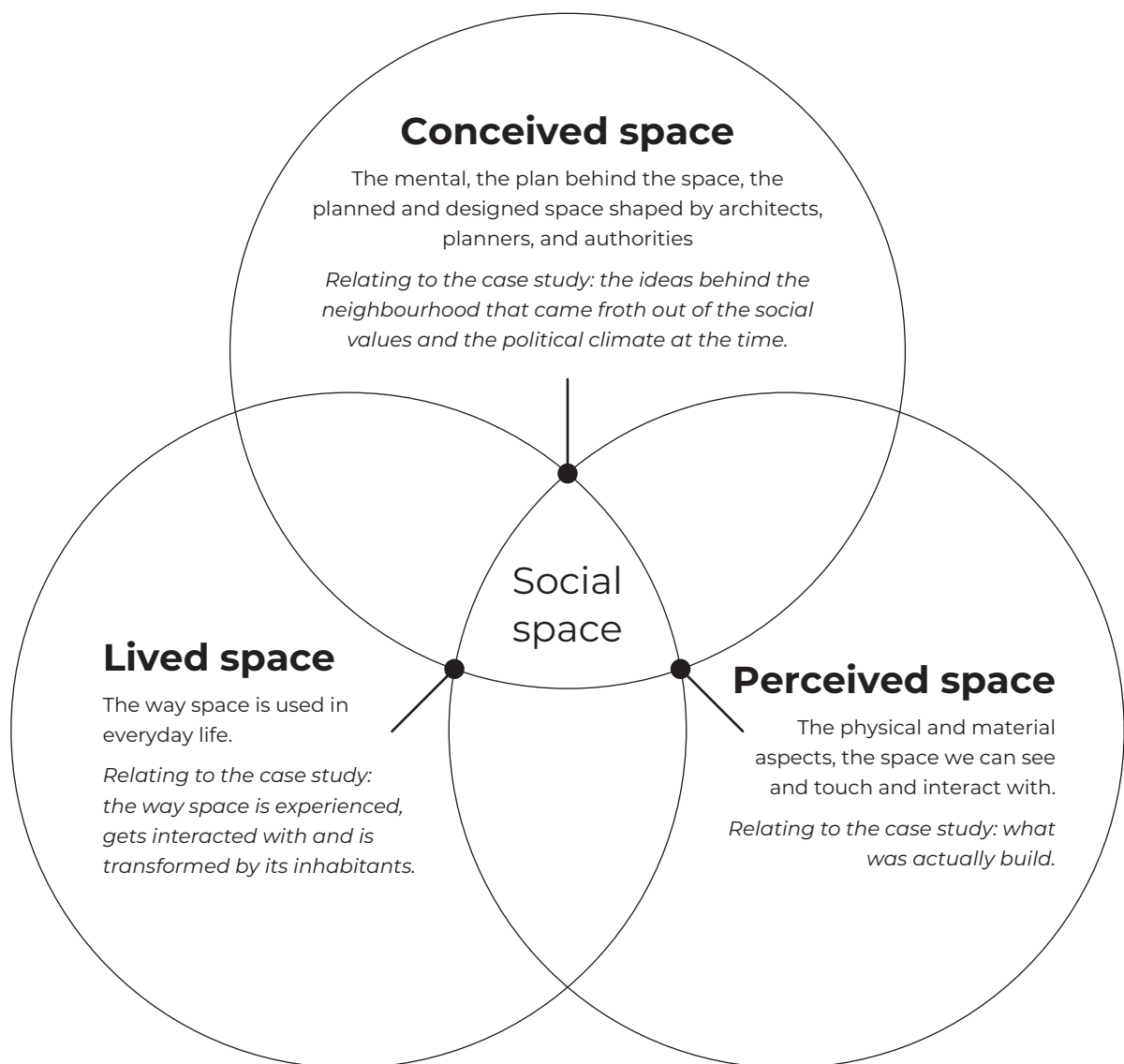


Figure 5.

### Dominated space and appropriated space

Next to how space is produced Lefebvre also writes on how space is being used. He distinguishes two ways: dominated space and appropriated space. Dominated space is defined as natural space that has been shaped, controlled and transformed by means of technology and political power. The case study in Amerongen would be an example of dominated space, as Lefebvre describes them as rigid, geometric, and functional. All three are applicable to the neighborhood of the case study.

Appropriated space, on the other hand, develops when people adapt spaces to serve their own needs and rhythms of life. Appropriation is described as an active, creative process in which people shape and personalize their surroundings. The case study represents the tension that exists between dominated and appropriated space. When built, the houses were part of the government's effort to solve the housing crisis by means of mass-produced housing. The design of the houses and layout of the neighborhood was informed by the efficiency that resulted in repetition, which reflects the notion of dominated space. However, over time, the residents began to adapt the houses to their personal needs and wishes. Extensions were added, and interiors were changed and personalized. This would suggest that the houses evolved into appropriated spaces shaped by everyday life. However, the residents were not free to reshape their houses in whatever way they wanted. For exterior changes, they had to apply for a permit that the municipality could grant, deny or suggest changes to. As the adaptations of the houses were, in a way, also governed, does that mean that they were also part of the domination of space?<sup>30</sup>

Lefebvre was critical of modernism, fitting within his time, the book being from 1974, yet it raises the question: what was his alternative? He must have understood that the times demanded the solutions they produced; living in a modern way was necessary to exist in a modern world. One can reject this direction, but can such large-scale processes be stopped? Post-war housing efforts lacked historical continuity, but didn't the trauma of the wars also disrupt that continuity? Perhaps the modernist approach was a reasonable response. Maybe post-war reconstruction did not end when the country was physically rebuilt, but truly began as post-war structures were being adapted, and integrated. Lefebvre's criticism was legitimate; perhaps by the 1970s, it was indeed time to move on from modernism, but would a full rejection of modernism also mean rejecting post-war housing itself? That doesn't seem justified. The appropriation he spoke of, could that not take place within these modernist structures?

28. Henri Lefebvre, Donald Nicholson-Smith, and Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 33. print (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1974).

29. Lefebvre, Nicholson-Smith, and Lefebvre.

30. Lefebvre, Nicholson-Smith, and Lefebvre.



Figure 6. Prins Bernhardlaan 14 Amerongen, 1930

These images demonstrate the transformation of appropriated space into dominated space over time. They were taken on the same street (from different viewpoints) close to the location of the case study.



Figure 7. Bernhardlaan 69 Amerongen, 1993

# Part Two: Plans Meet People

A consequence of the systematic construction of mass housing is that it also mass-designed the way people lived. But people and their lives are not all the same. This raises the question: what happened when people moved in? How were the houses received by the people who lived in them?

The case study is situated at the Boslaan and In de West in Amerongen, a small town in the middle of the Netherlands. The houses were part of the Construction Flow South-East Utrecht (Bouwstroom Zuid-Oost Utrecht). These houses were not only constructed in Amerongen but also in Leersum, Maarn, and Wijk bij Duurstede. The plans were drawn up by architects W. Hopmans and W. Olthoff from 's-Hertogenbosch. The houses represent a later iteration of the doorzonwoning type, the Z-room (Z-kamer). The original doorzonwoning floor plan divides the ground floor into two sides: a smaller side containing the entrance, stairs, toilet, and kitchen, and a larger side with the living room spans from the front to the back of the house. In the Z-room type, the entrance, toilet, and stairs are positioned on one side at the front of the house, while the kitchen is placed on the opposite side at the back of the house. This layout provided more privacy; people walking by could no longer see straight through the entire house.

The houses were built in blocks of four, with yellowish brick façades and dark grey roof tiles. A recessed front section gives them an introverted character, and the contrast between large windows and solid walls adds rhythm to the design. Each house includes a small front garden and a larger backyard with a shed. The concrete foundation and system floors support a wooden attic structure. RAZU archives document permitted exterior changes, offering insight into how the houses evolved over time.

Nederlandse Vereniging van Makelaars in onroerende goederen NVM

## FOTOPRESENTATIE



**AMERONGEN** **Boslaan 30**

HOEKWONING met garage, gebouwd in 1970 op totaal 222 m<sup>2</sup> grond, op goede stand en in de directe nabijheid van uitgestrekte bossen gelegen.

**Indeling:** hal, toilet, Z-vormige woonkamer ca. 40 m<sup>2</sup> en ruime keuken.

**1e verd.:** 3 slaapkamers en badkamer met ligbad, 2e toilet en aansluiting wasmachine. Vaste trap naar...

**2e verd.:** waarop slaapkamer met dakkapel en ruime berging.

Geheel c.v.-gas.

**Aanvaarding:** in overleg.

**Vraagprijs f 149.000,—** **112**

Aanbieding vrijblijvend. Bezichtiging na afspraak met makelaar:



Auteursrecht voorbehouden aan leden NVM. Gehele of gedeeltelijke overname van deze publicatie of herpublicering van gegevens daaruit is verboden. Aan onvolkomenheden in de vermelde gegevens kunnen geen aanspraken worden ontleend.

Figure 8. This flyer comes from the personal archive of the residents of house number 30 and shows the home as it appeared when they purchased it.



Figure 9. In De West 1995

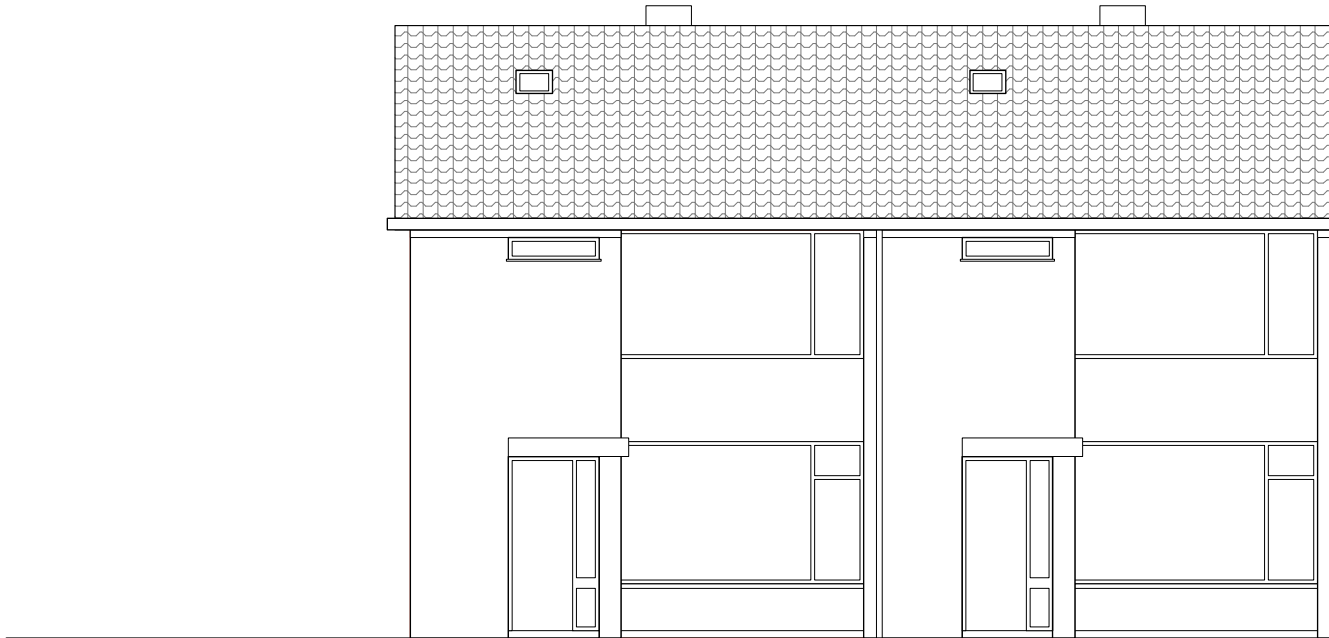


Figure 10.  
Original elevation front - redrawn based on archive material

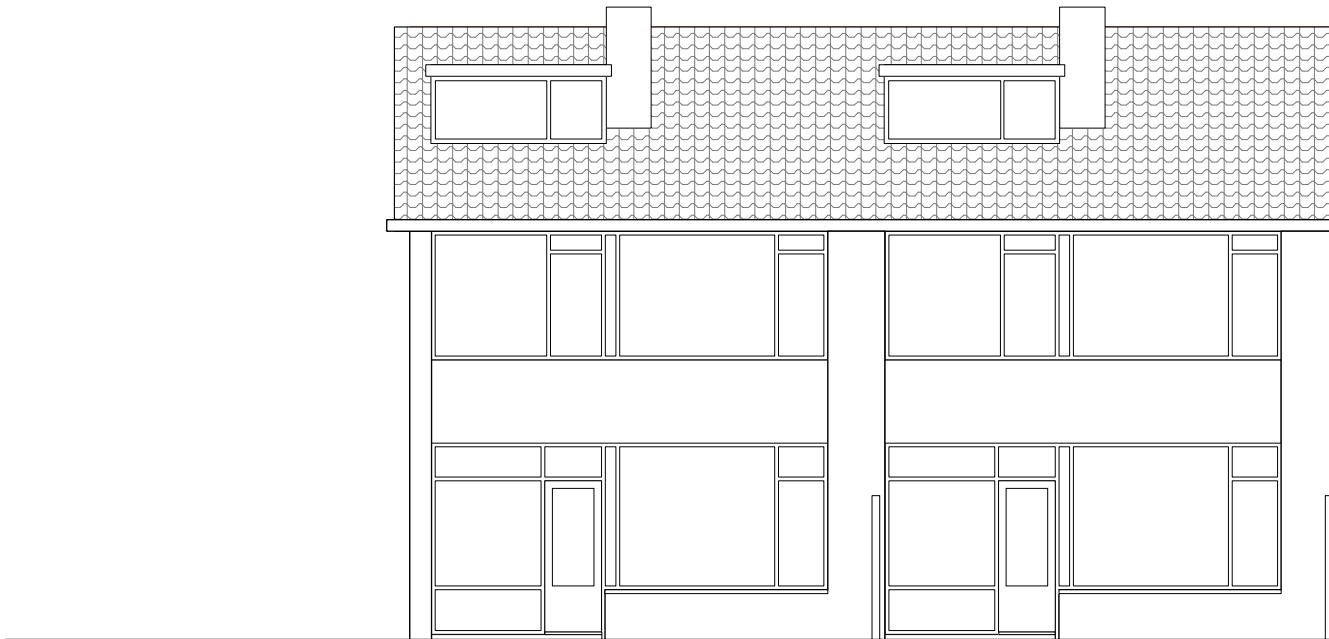


Figure 11.  
Original elevation back - redrawn based on archive material



1:100



1:100

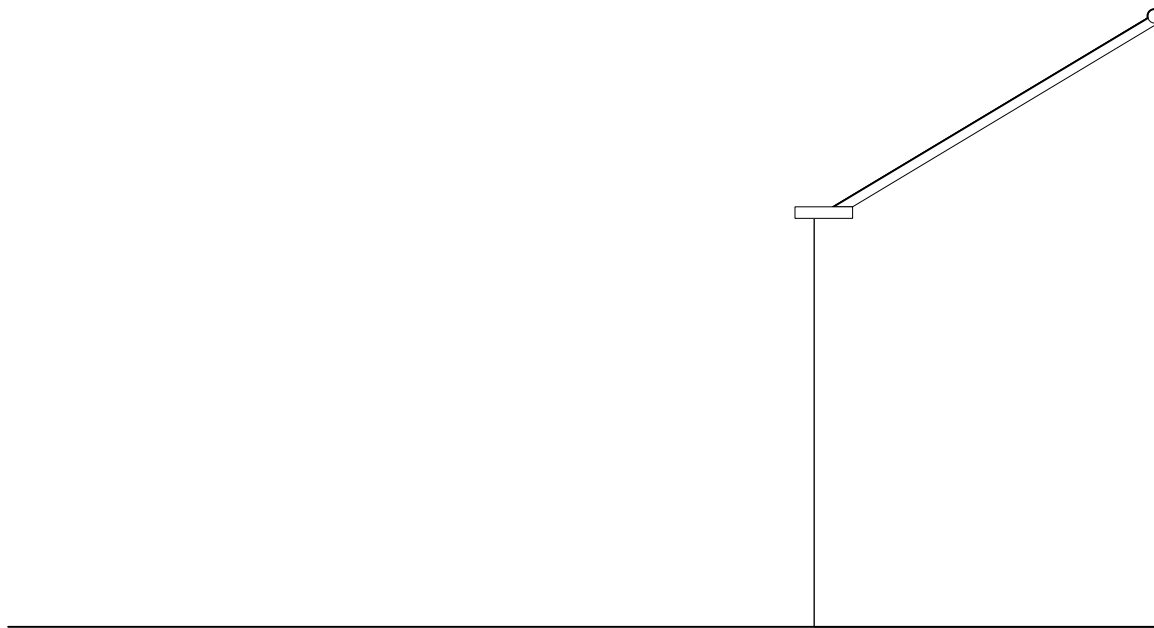


Figure 12.  
Original elevation right side - redrawn based on archive material



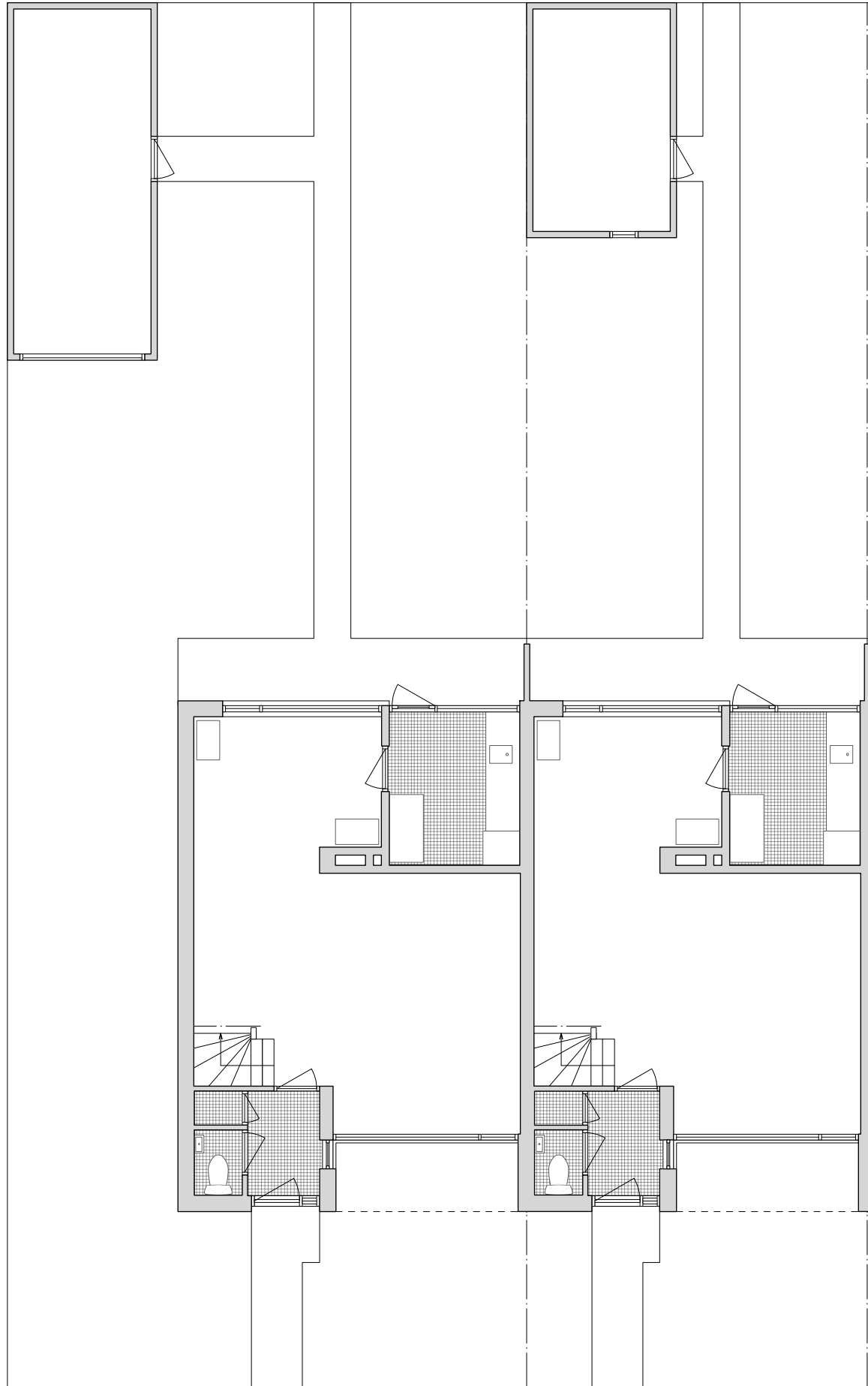
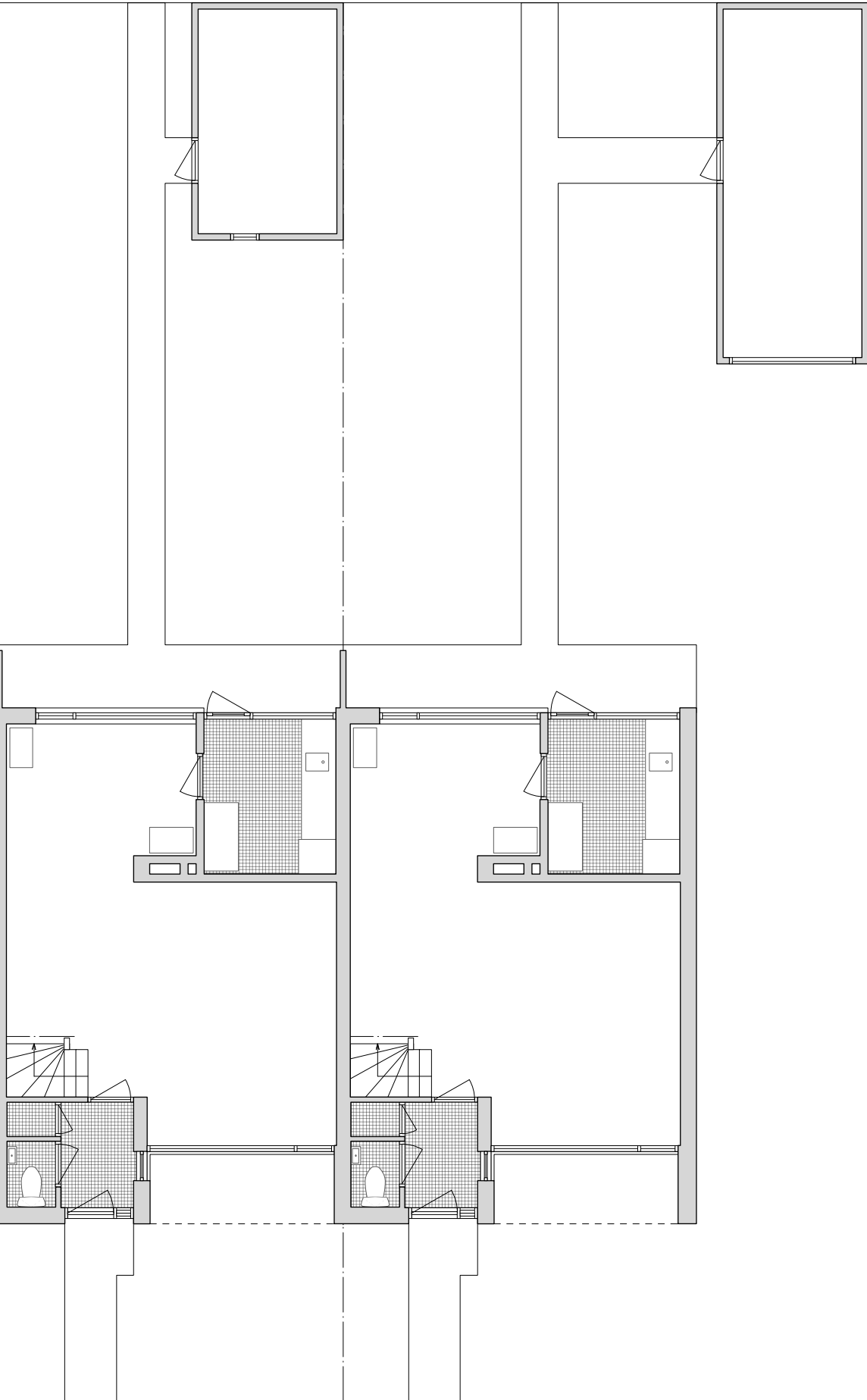


Figure 13.  
Original plan ground floor - redrawn based on archive material



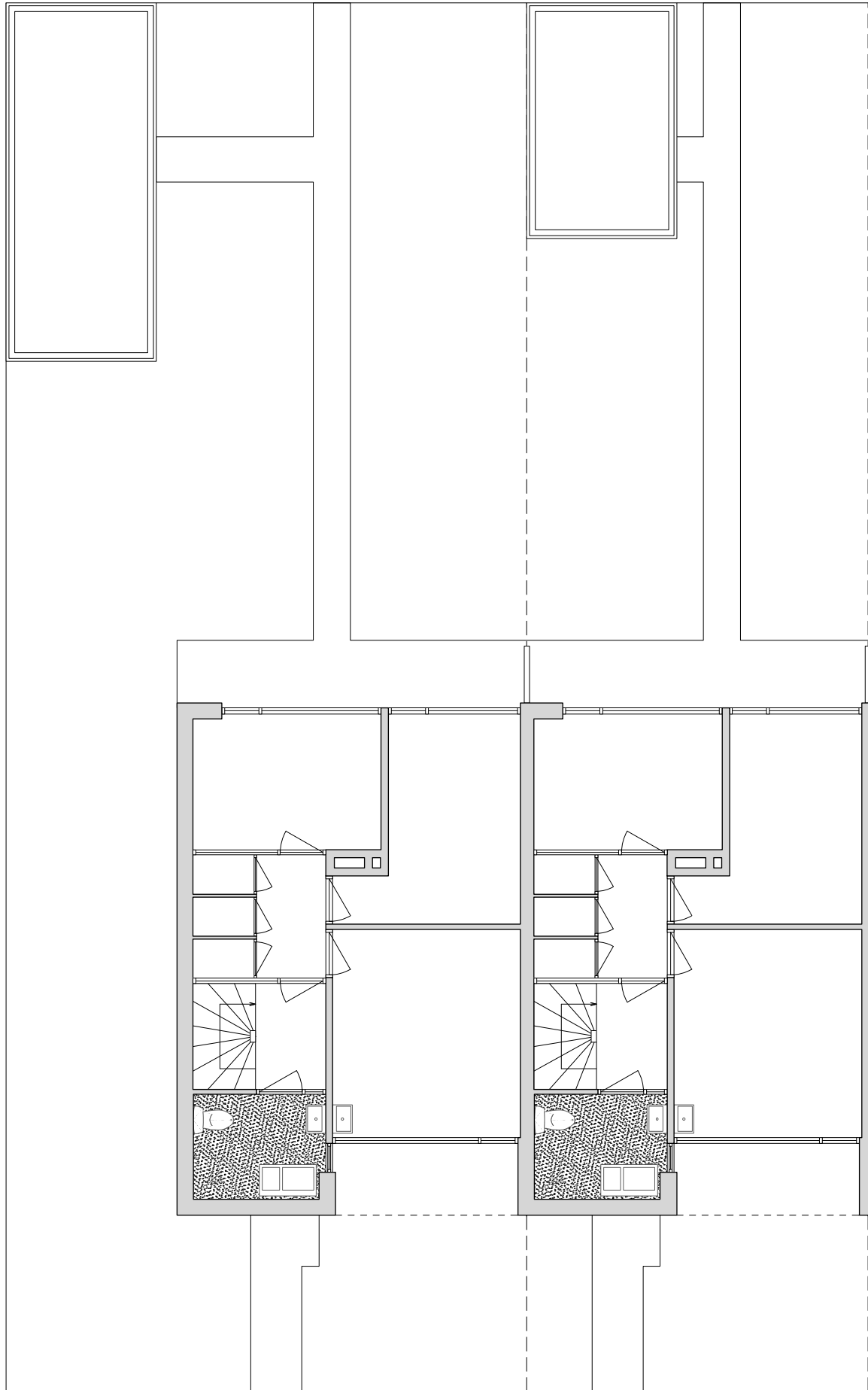
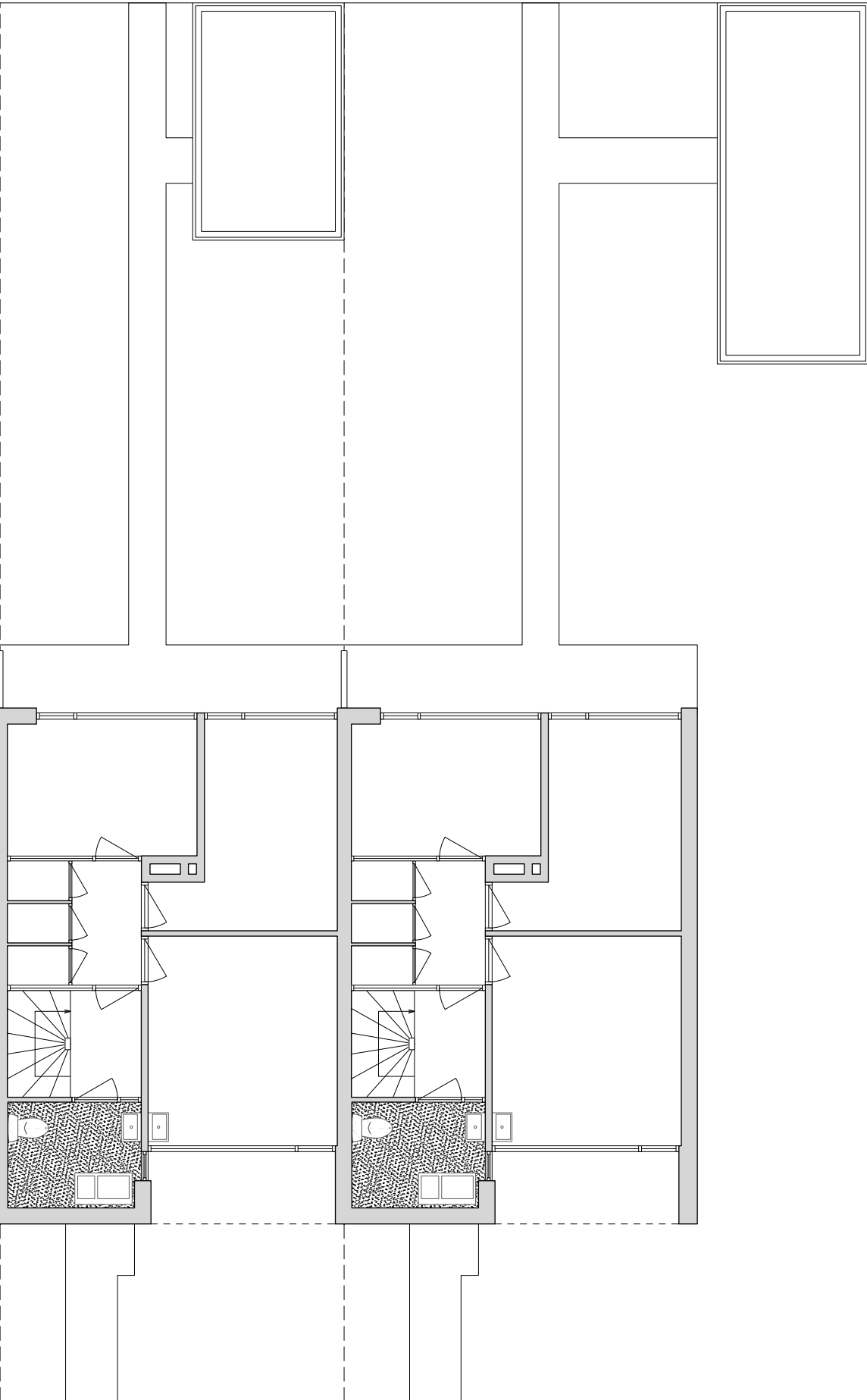


Figure 14.

Original plan first floor - redrawn based on archive material



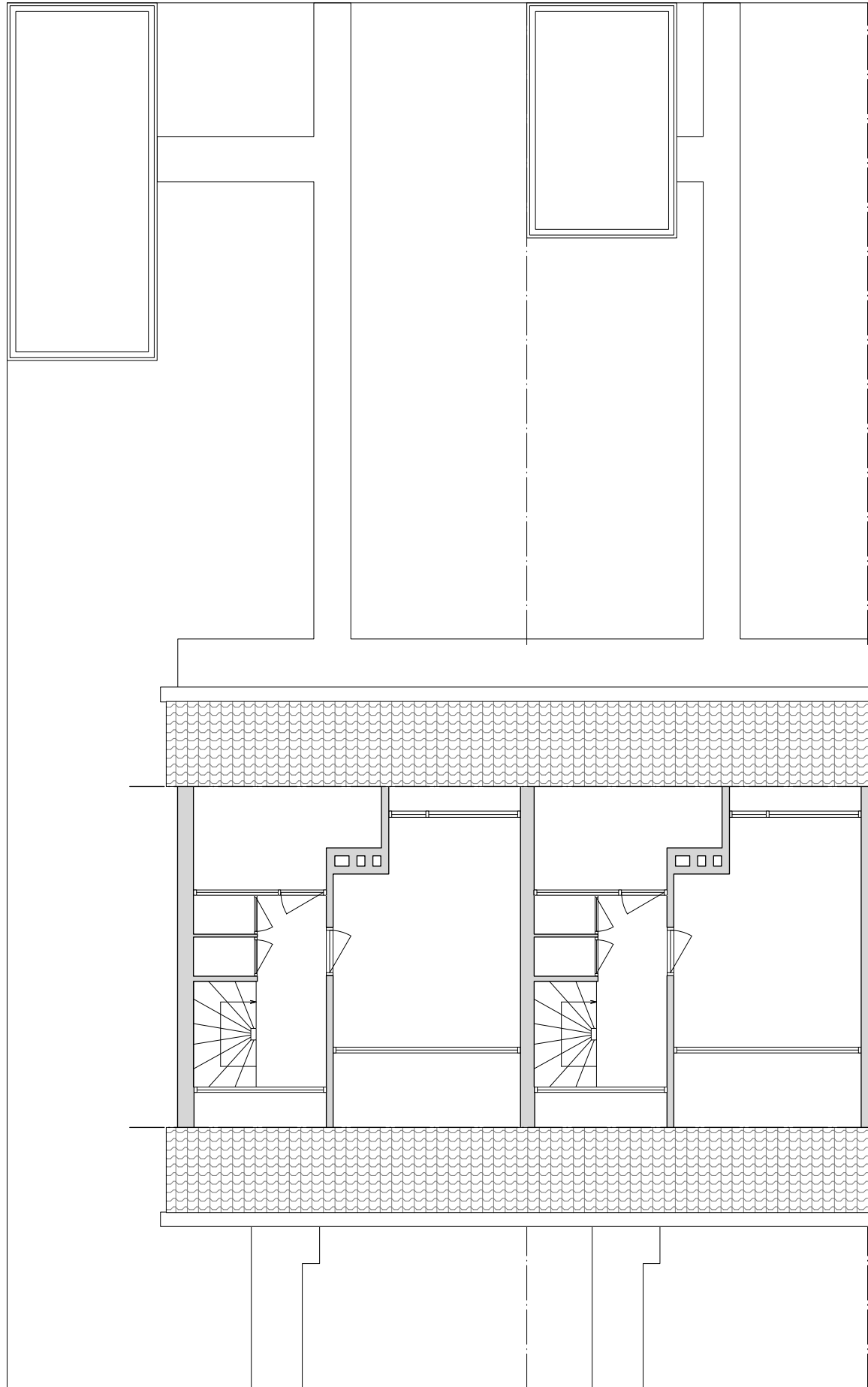
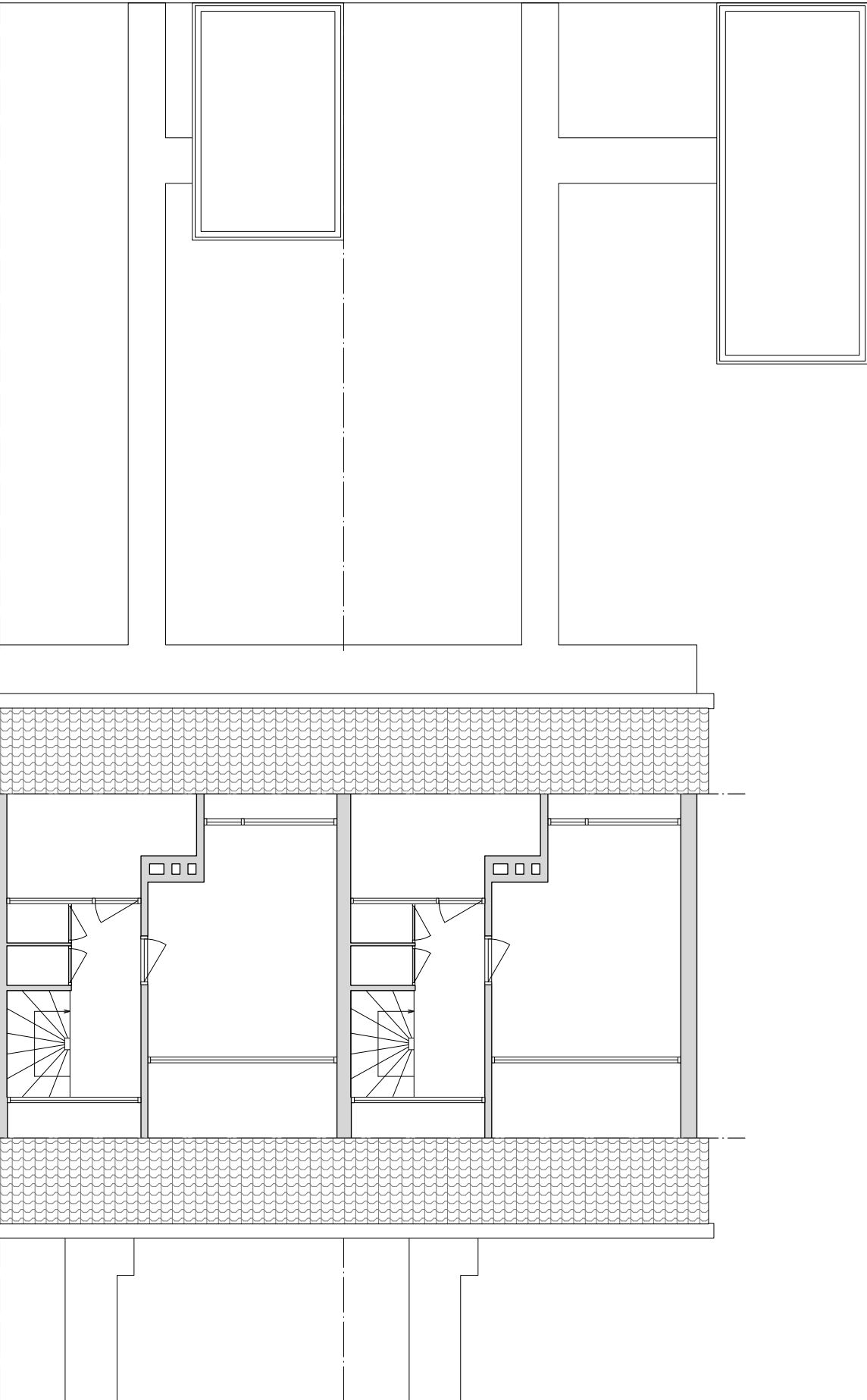


Figure 15.  
Original plan second floor - redrawn based on archive material



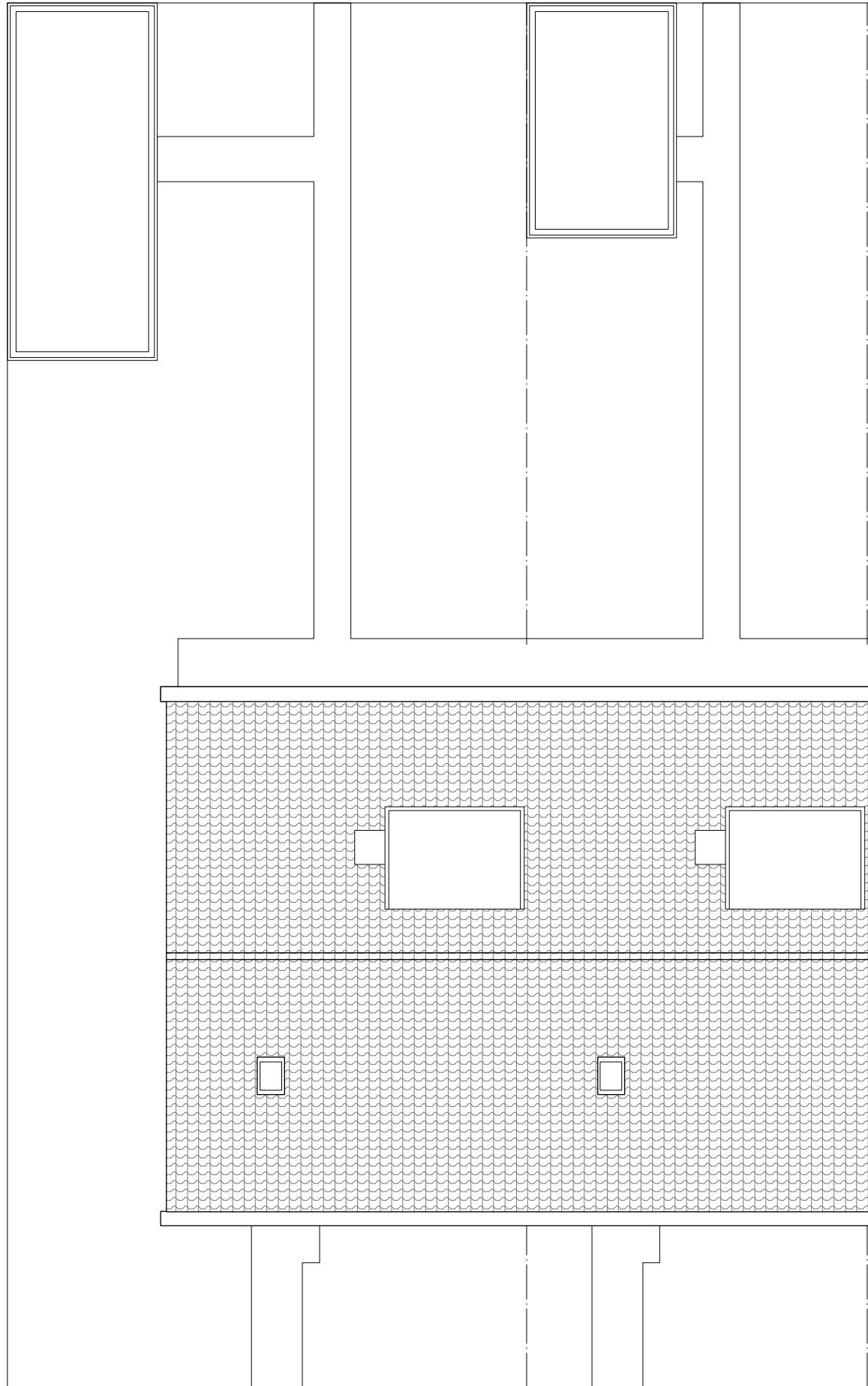
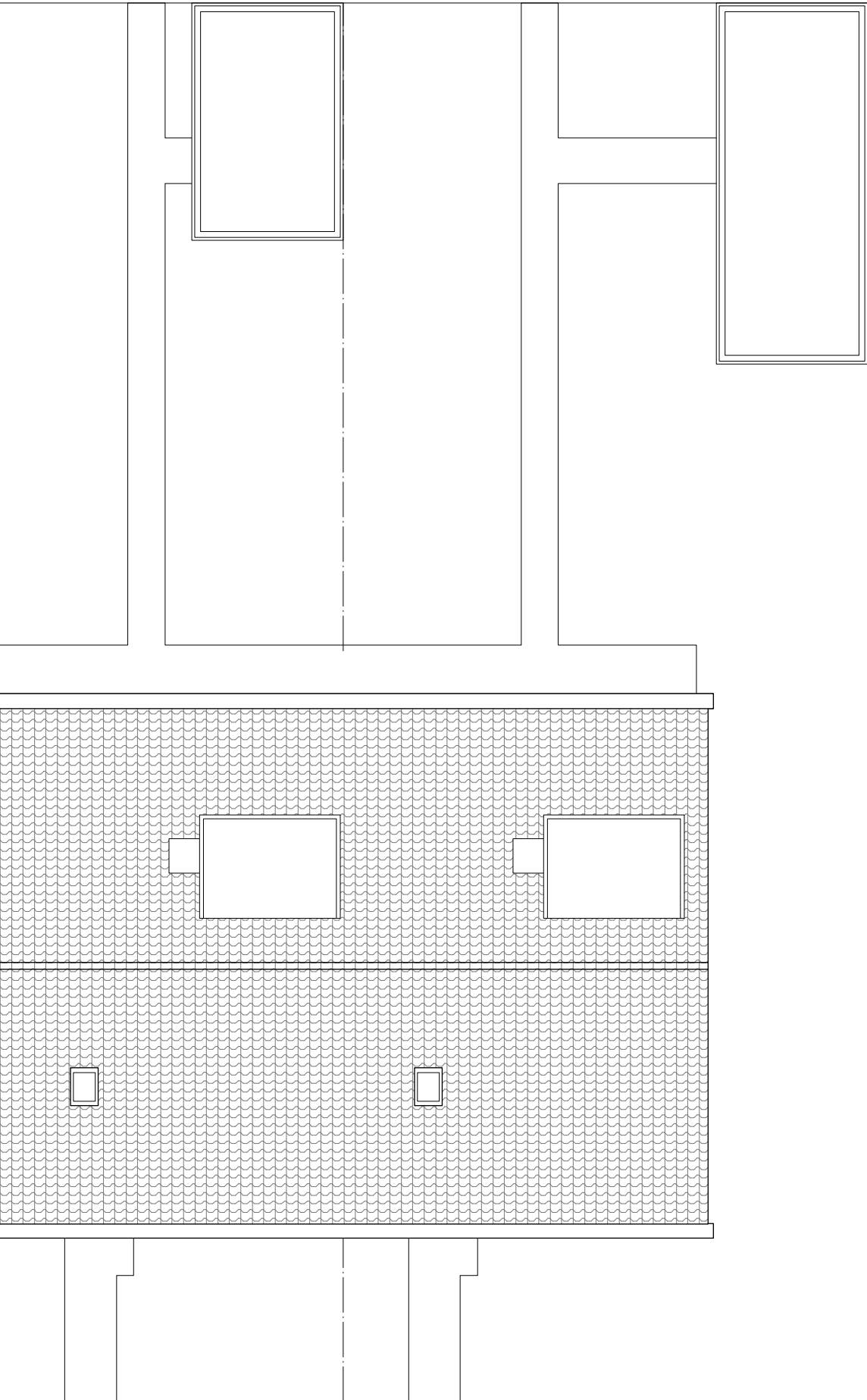


Figure 16.  
Original roof - redrawn based on archive material



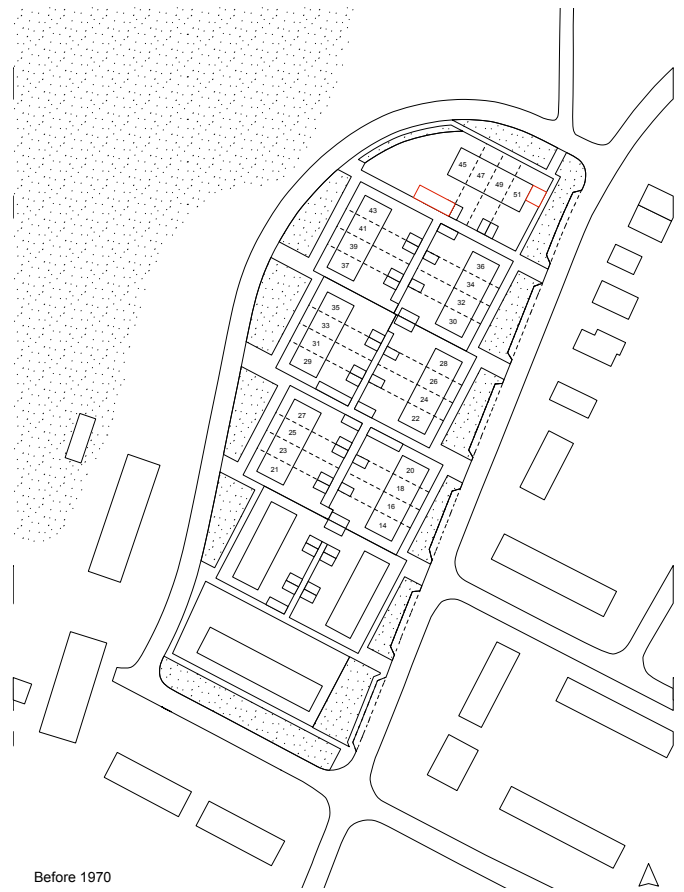
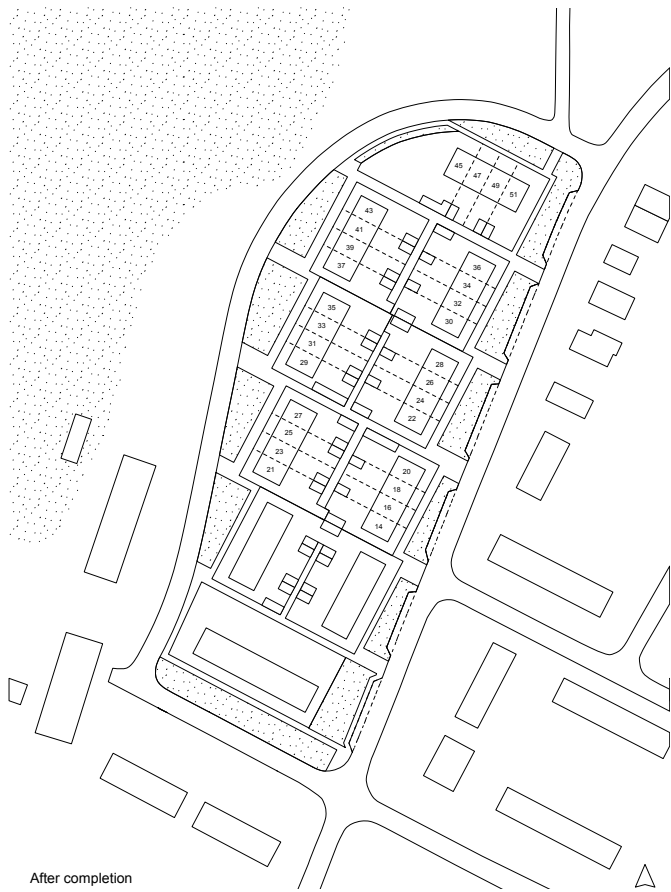


Figure 17.

**Overall changes**

In RAZU, records can be found on the adaptations made to the exteriors of the houses. For most of these changes, the residents had to apply for a permit. This information gives an overview of the overall exterior changes.

Figure 18.

**Before 1970**

- █ Oprichten van een garage, 1969
- █ Oprichten van carport, aanbrengen raam en plaatsen windscherm, 1969

- █ Original plan
- █ New
- █ previously added
- █ Demolished

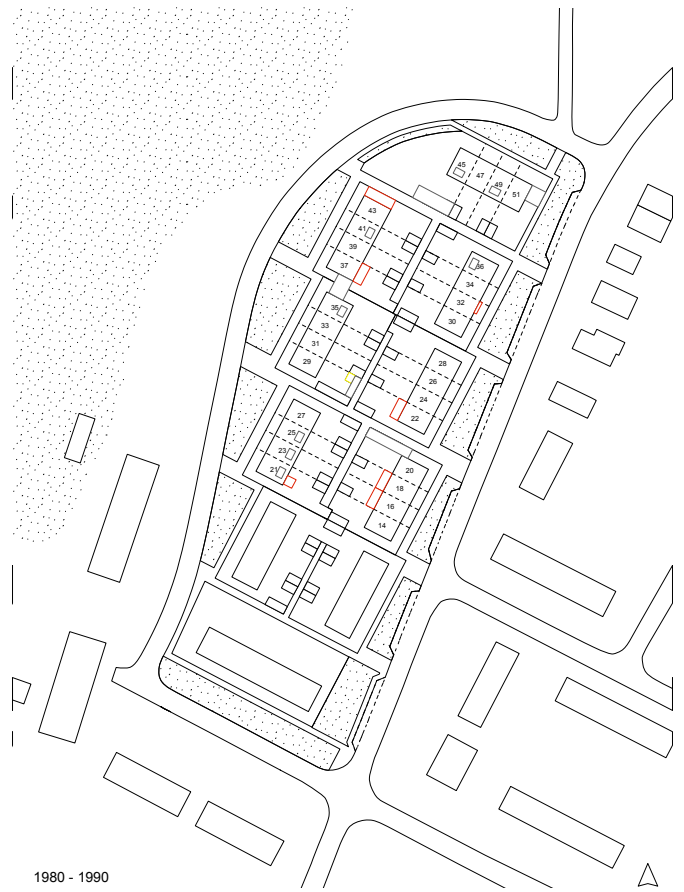


1970 - 1980

Figure 19.

**1970 – 1980**

- Veranderen garage c.q. bergruimte, 1974
- Aanbrengen dakkapel, 1974
- Aanbrengen raamkozijn, 1979
- Veranderen van woning (aanbrengen dakkapel), 1974
- Uitbreiden van woning (dakkapel) , 1977
- Uitbreiden van woning (dakkapel) , 1978
- Oprichten van garage, 1974
- Oprichten van open-carport, 1974
- Plaatsen van dakkapel, 1975
- Oprichten van open-carport, 1974
- Plaatsen van dakkapel, 1978
- Oprichten van dakkapel, 1978
- Oprichten van dakkapel, 1978



1980 - 1990

Figure 20.

**1980 – 1990**

- Uitbreiden woning, 1980
- Oprichten garage, 1980
- Oprichten erfafscheiding, 1981
- Uitbreiden woning, 1981
- Uitbreiden woning met bijkeuken, 1981
- Uitbreiding woning met serre, 1986
- Uitbreiden woning (voorzijde), 1989
- Oprichten van erfafscheiding, 1984
- Uitbreiden van bergruimte (keuken), 1982
- Oprichten van gemetselde erfafscheiding, 1981
- Uitbreiden van bergruimte, 1987

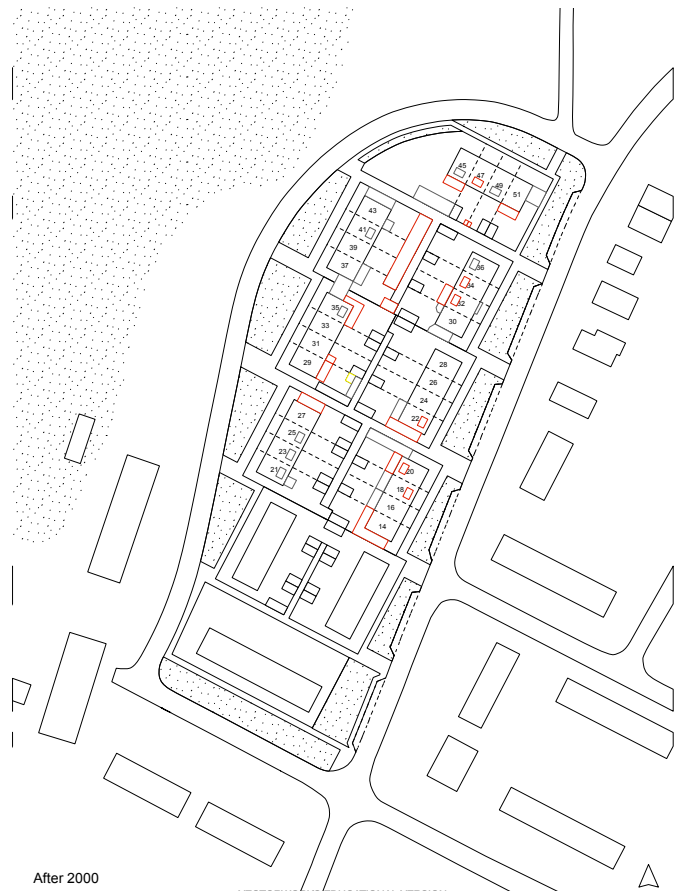


1990 - 2000

Figure 21.

**1990 - 2000**

- █ 43 Uitbreiden woning met bijkeuken, bouwen carport, 1998
- █ Bouw garage, 1993
- █ Uitbreiden keuken, 1996



After 2000

Figure 22.

**After 2000**

- █ Uitbreiden van woning, 2001
- █ Uitbreiden van woning, 2003
- █ Uitbreiden van de woning, 2005



### Zoomed in on one block

To better understand the adaptations, one block of four has been more deeply investigated. For this, a combination of archive research, residents' personal archives, and residents' testimonies was used. Therefore, the exterior changes can usually be linked to a specific date, as most of them were recorded in the archive. The interior changes are more linked to a period, as there are no official records available, and some have been made by past residents.

-  Original plan
-  New
-  previously added
-  Demolished

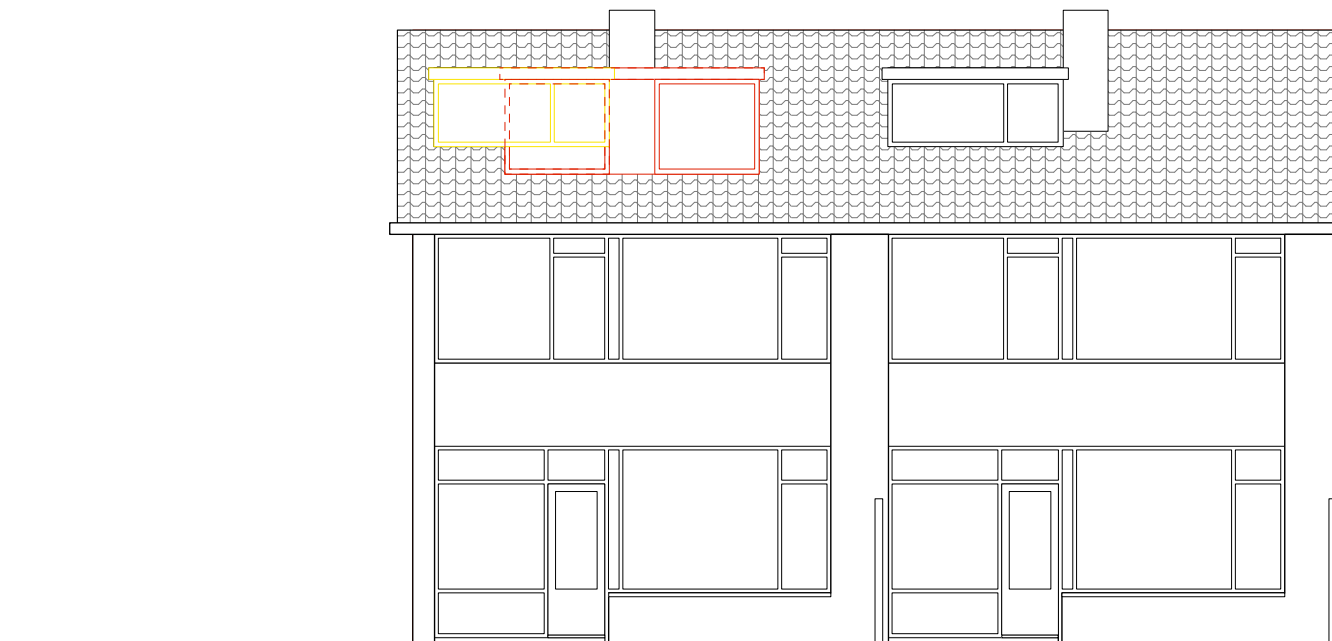


Figure 23.  
Elevation back with initial design for the new dormer - redrawn based on archive material

### 1974: 36, adding dormer

The first recorded change occurred in 1974 at number 36, involving the replacement of the dormer. Archive documentation shows that the initial application was denied on aesthetic grounds. A revised proposal was eventually accepted; however, the file includes a telling note:

*"We actually do not find this dormer acceptable either, but given its placement at the rear, a pro and con position can be taken for this."*

*"Wij vinden deze dakkapel eigenlijk ook niet acceptabel maar gezien de plaatsing aan de achterzijde kan hiervoor een pro- en contra standpunt worden ingenomen."*

There are a few interesting things to note here. First, it is clear that the front of the house was prioritized over the back; appearance mattered. Aesthetics were important enough to reject the first iteration, yet not so important as to require a further revision. Secondly, the note reveals that even the accepted version was not entirely satisfactory. This suggests that, behind the bureaucratic process, one was dealing with an individual, a municipal employee, who made a human decision, weighing the rules against practical considerations.

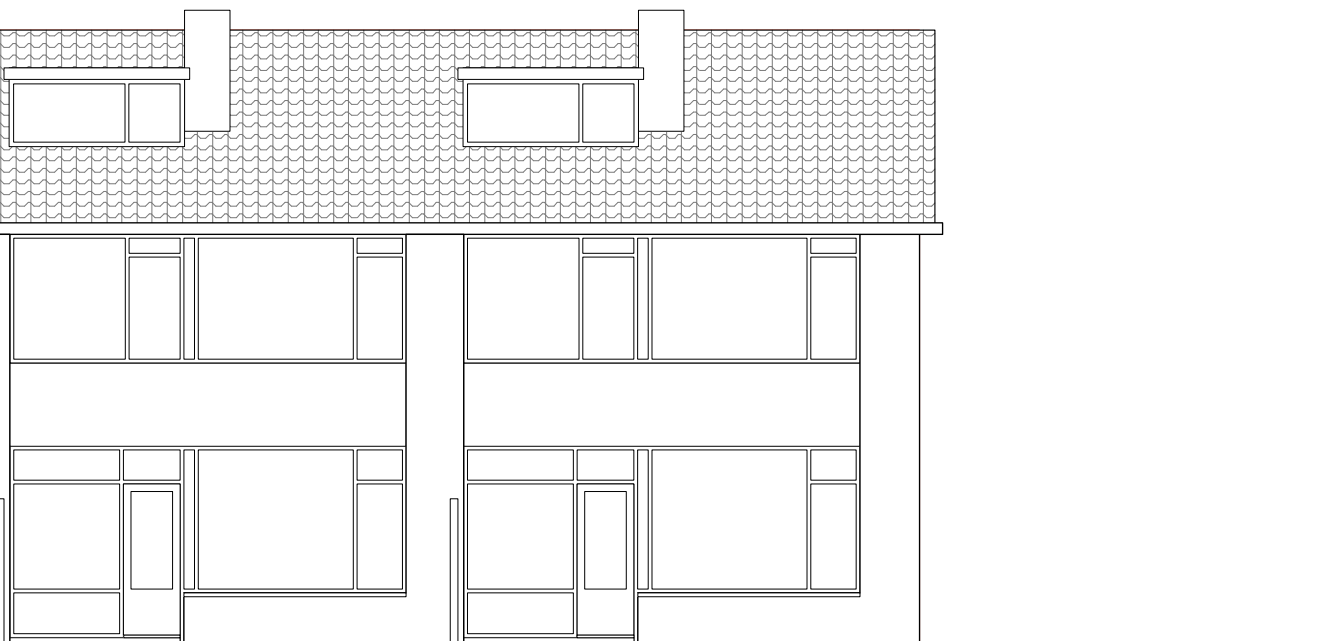




Figure 24.  
Elevation back with approved design for the new dormer - redrawn based on archive material



**1979: 36, adding window**

In 1979, the residents of number 36 applied for a permit to add a window to the side façade. However, when looking at the current situation, this window was not realized, even though the permit was granted. The approval came with the condition that the detailing of the new window had to match the existing ones. Once again, the note in the documentation emphasizes the maintenance of the original aesthetics.

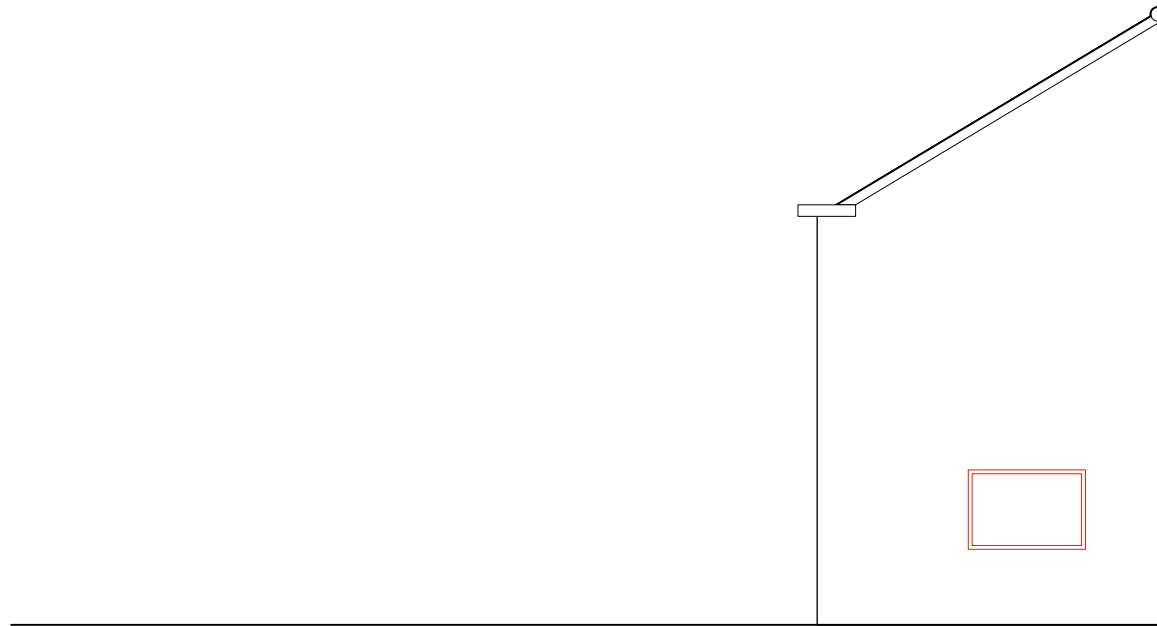


Figure 25.

Elevation right side with proposed new window - redrawn based on archive material



**1981: 36, establishing property boundary**

The establishment of property boundaries is something that can be observed in multiple corner houses, it was even listed as a standard option on the permit form. In this case, a note was included with the permit stating that the space between the wall and the house had to remain uncovered. It is interesting that although the gate would be visible at the front of the house, no aesthetic requirements were imposed.

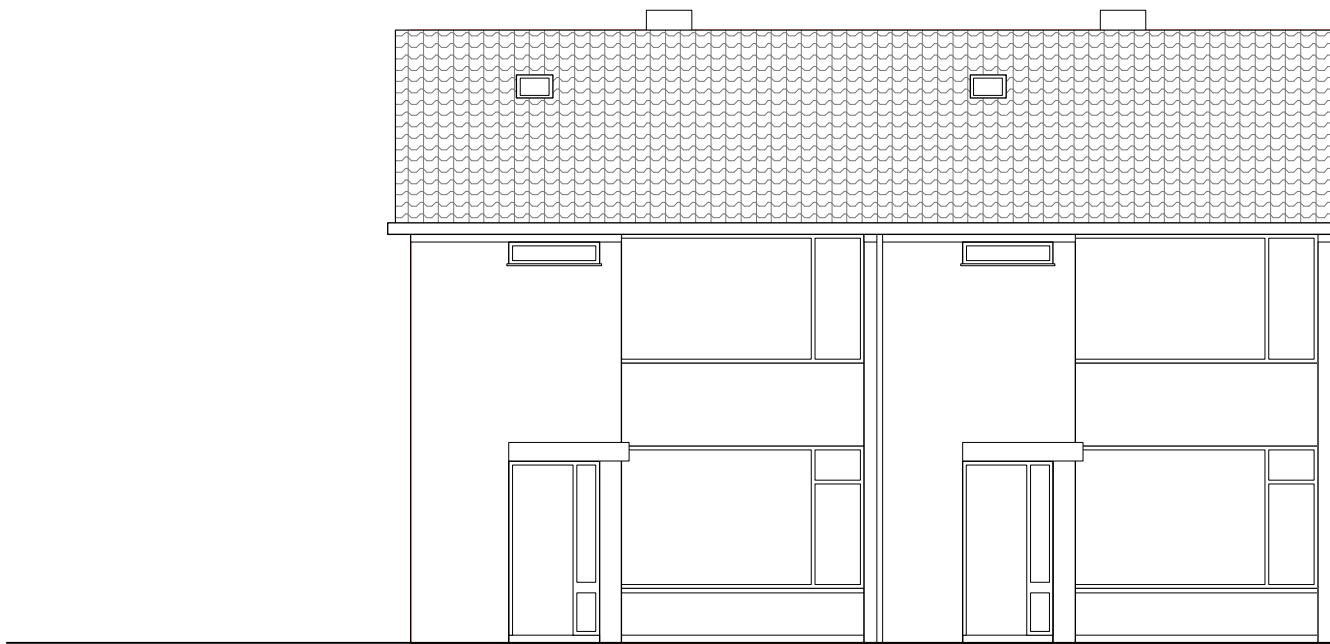
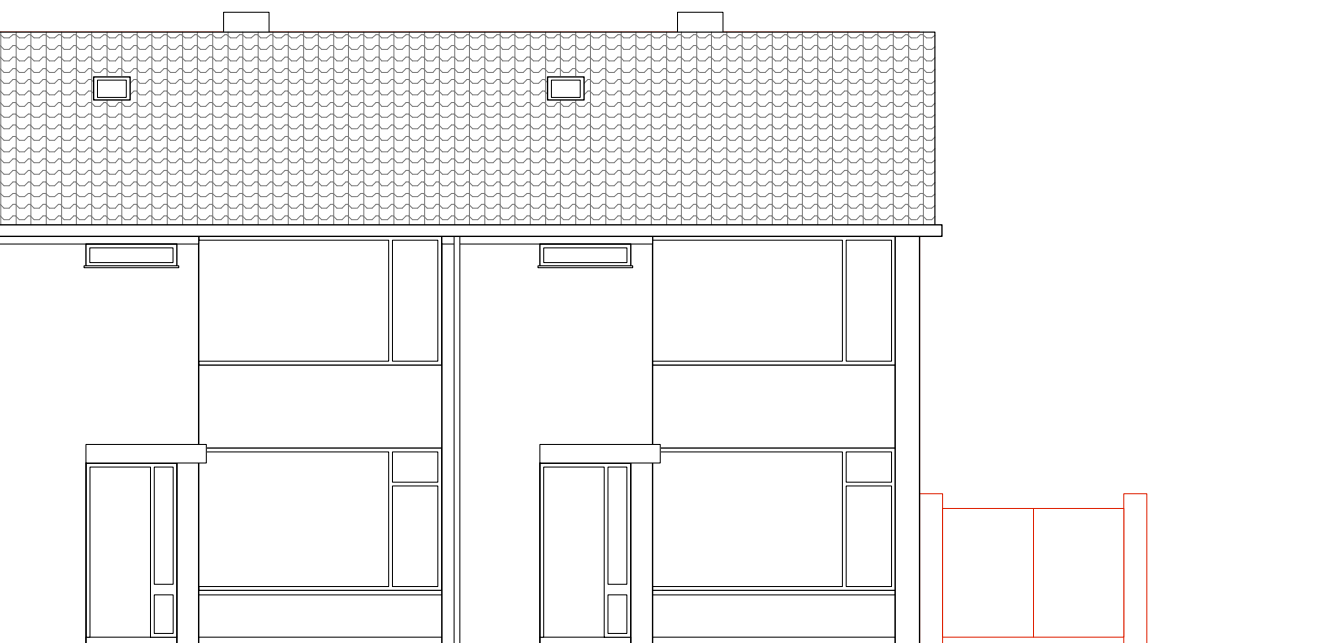


Figure 26.  
Elevation front with new property boundary - redrawn based on archive material



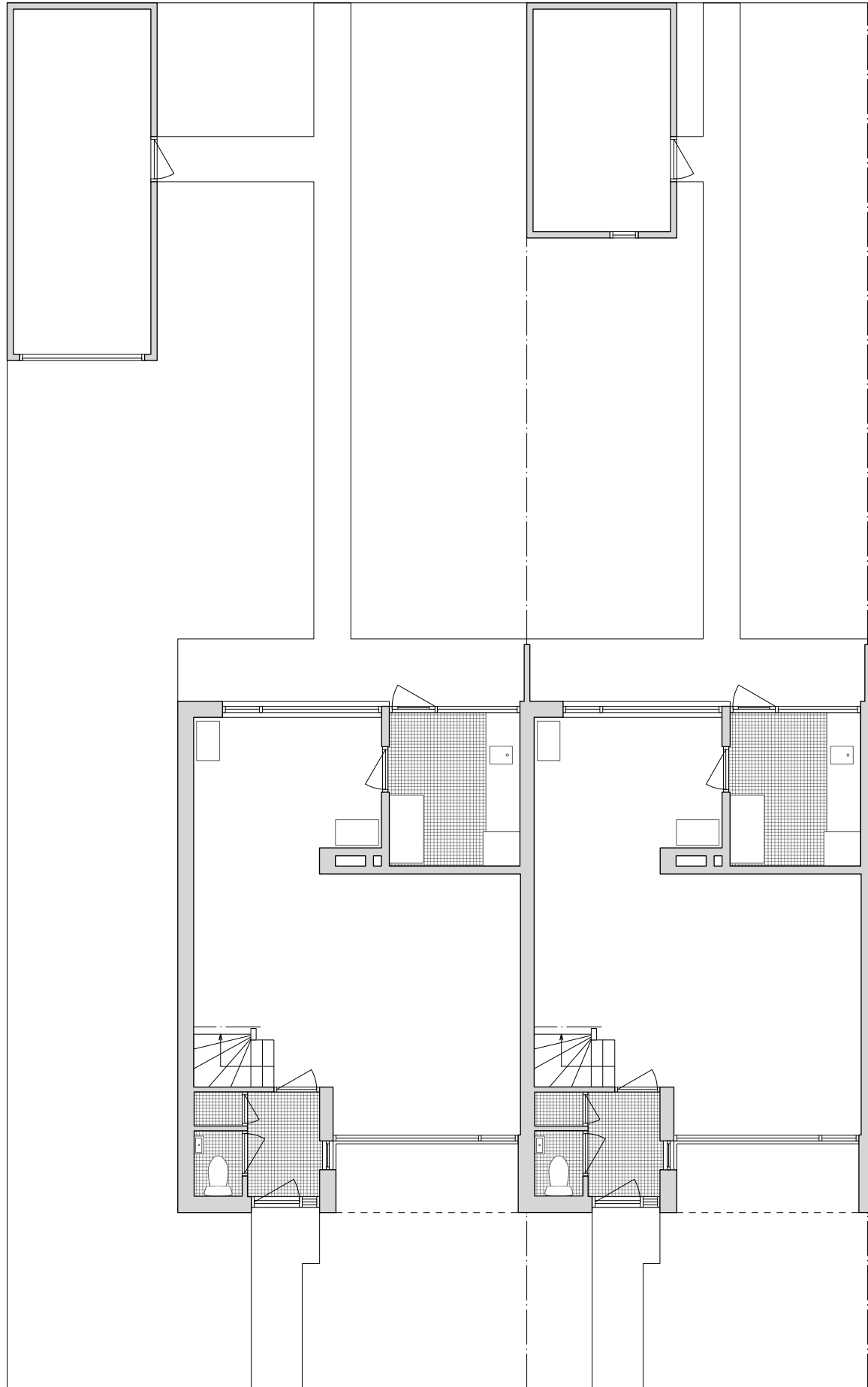
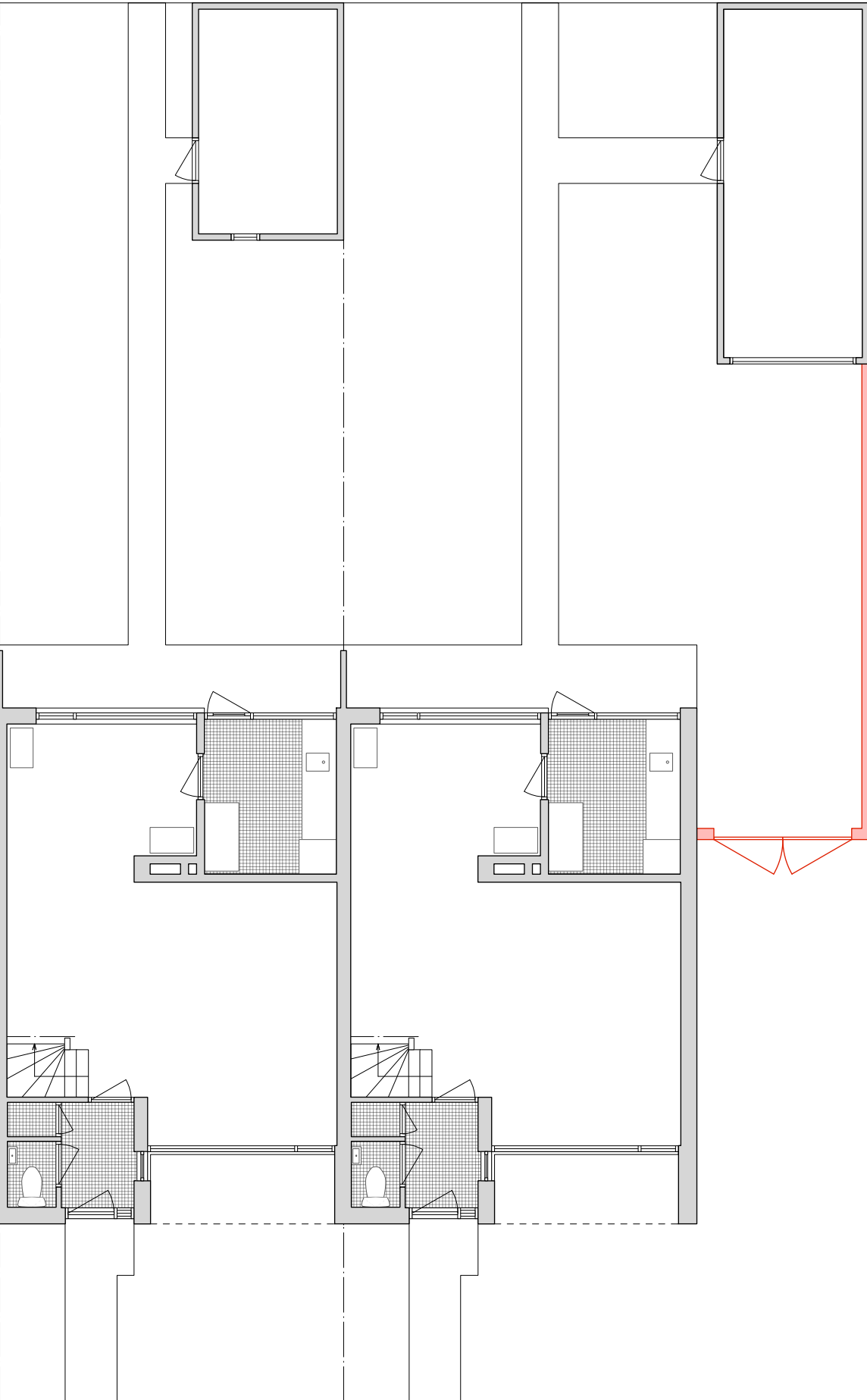


Figure 27.

Plan ground floor with new property boundary - redrawn based on archive material



**Before 1989: 36 , Interior changes, exterior changes back façade**

These changes were not recorded in the archive but were shared by the residents and deduced from drawings of one of the neighboring houses (number 32, dated 1989).

Interior-wise, several walls were removed.

The change made to the rear façade, replacing the window frame with sliding doors, did not seem to require a permit, as no record of it exists in the archive. Perhaps by that time, applying for a permit was no longer necessary for such modifications, or it may have been exempt as it is located at the back of the house. From earlier records (the dormer, 36), can be deduced that the rear of the house was generally given less aesthetic priority by the municipality.

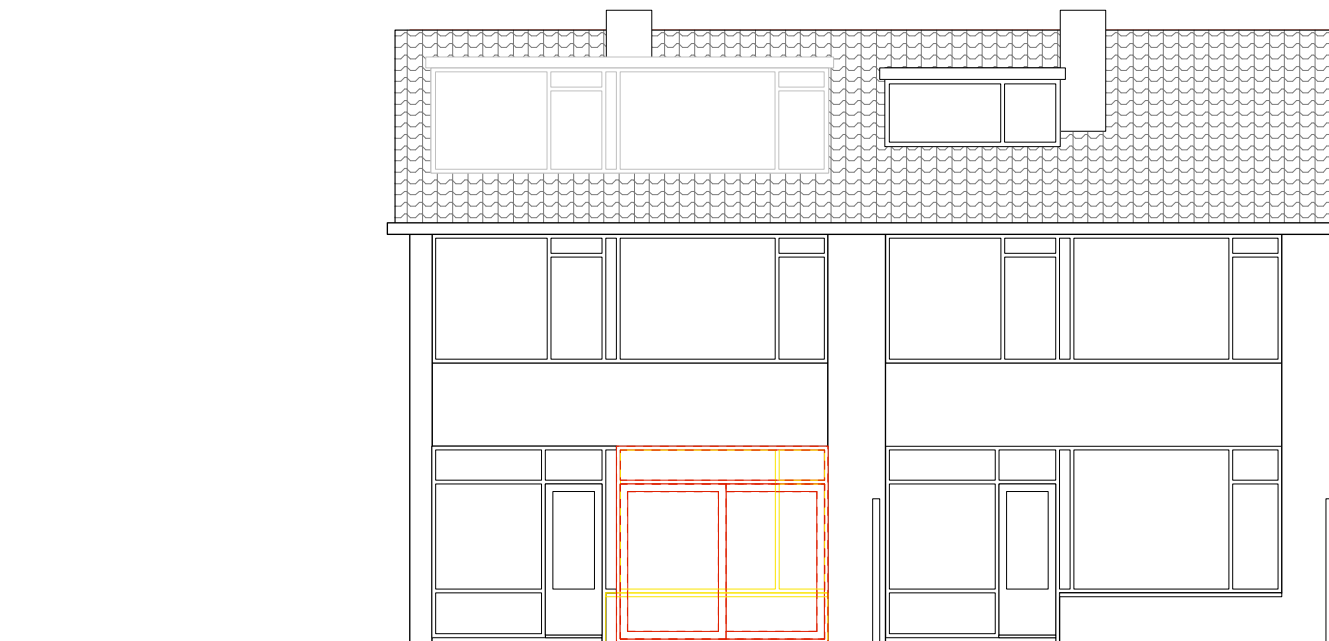
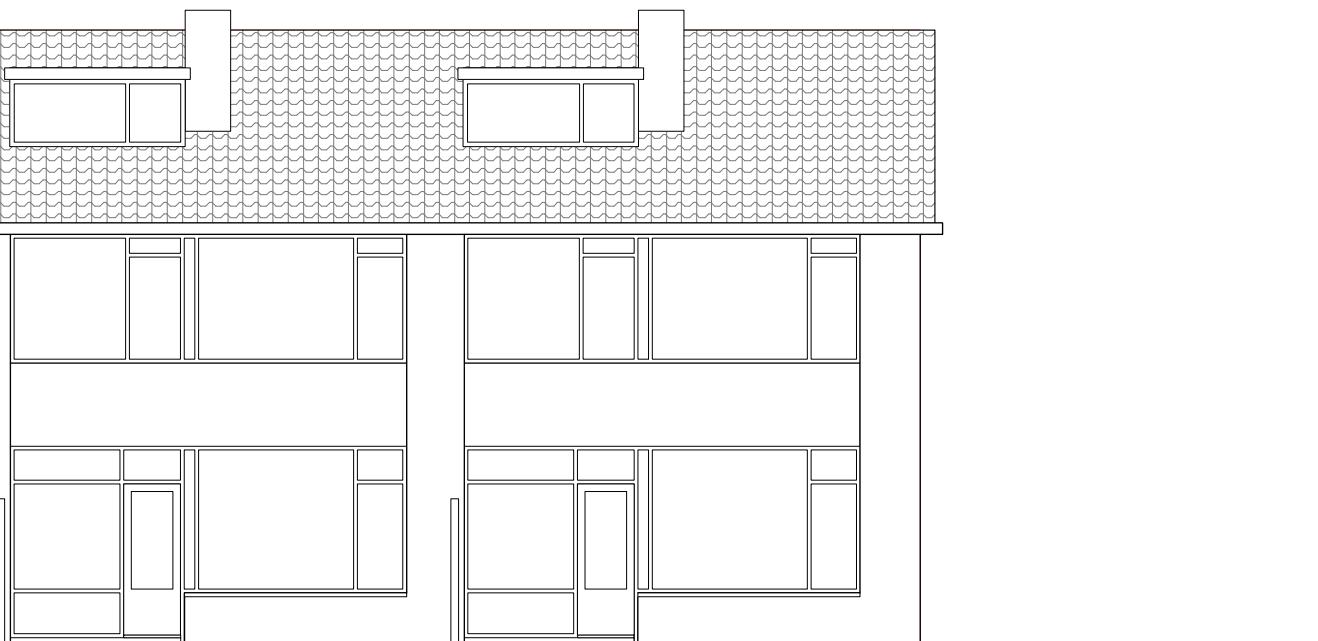


Figure 28.

Elevation back with new window frame - redrawn based on archive material



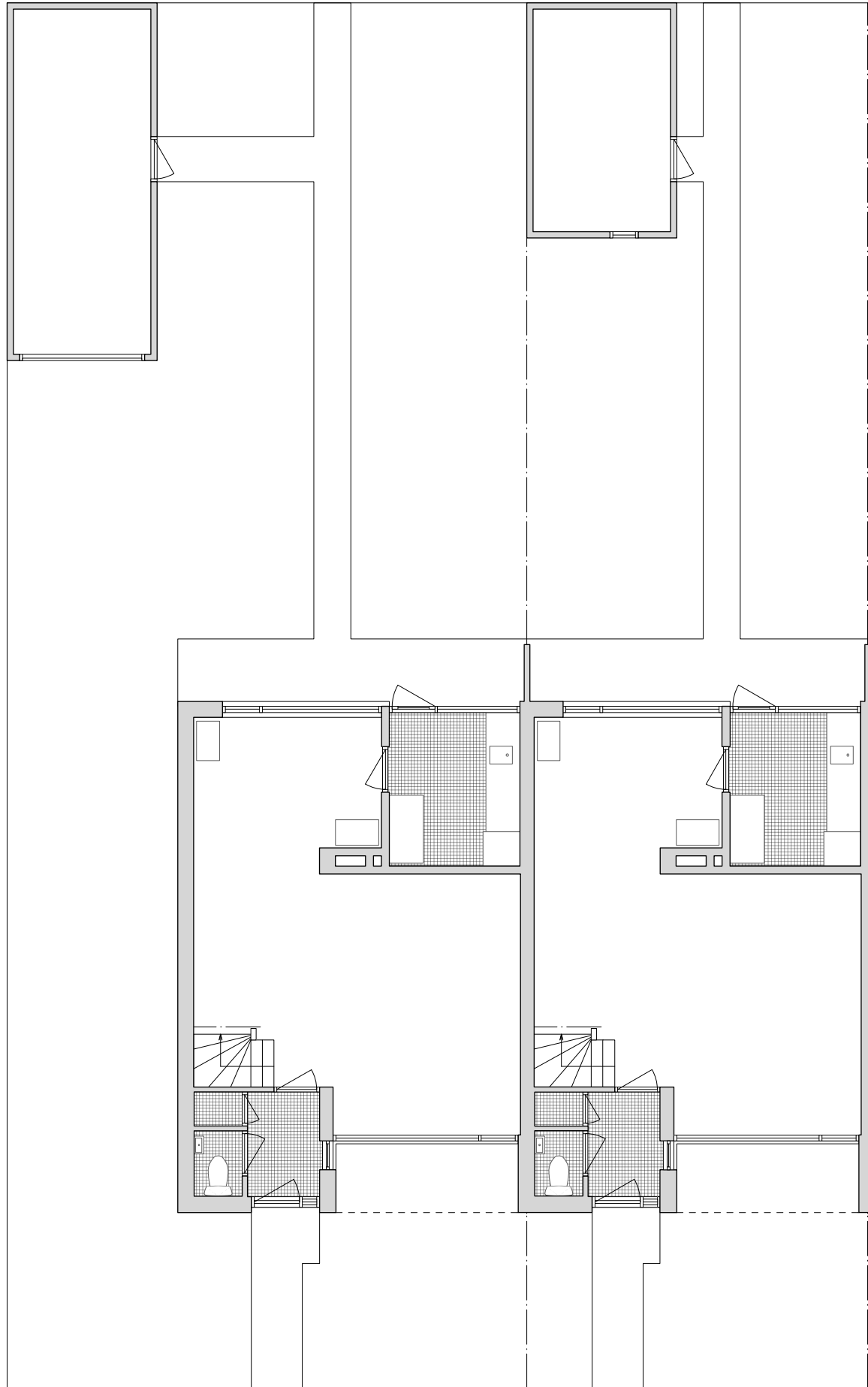
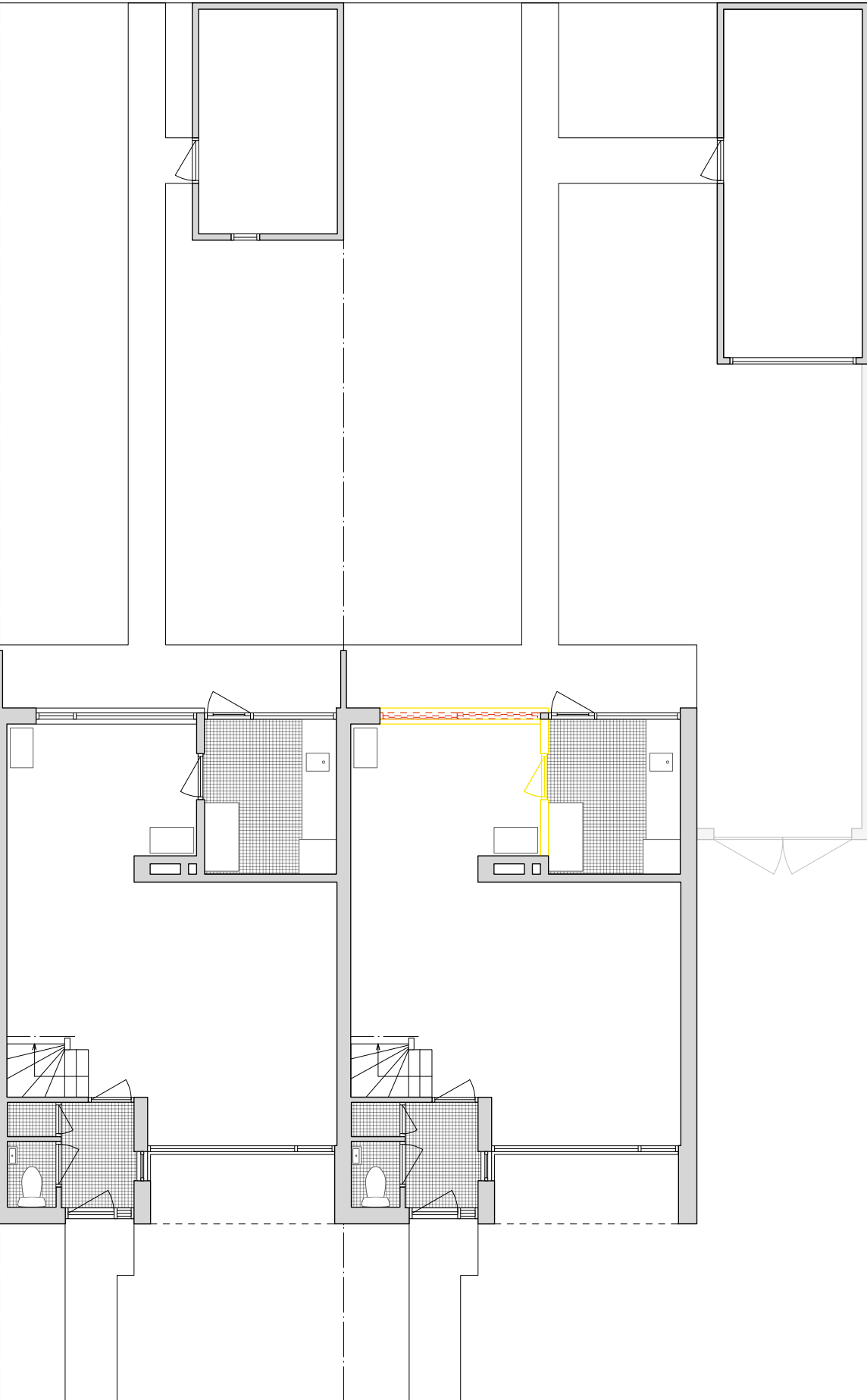


Figure 29.

Plan ground floor with interior changes - redrawn based on archive material



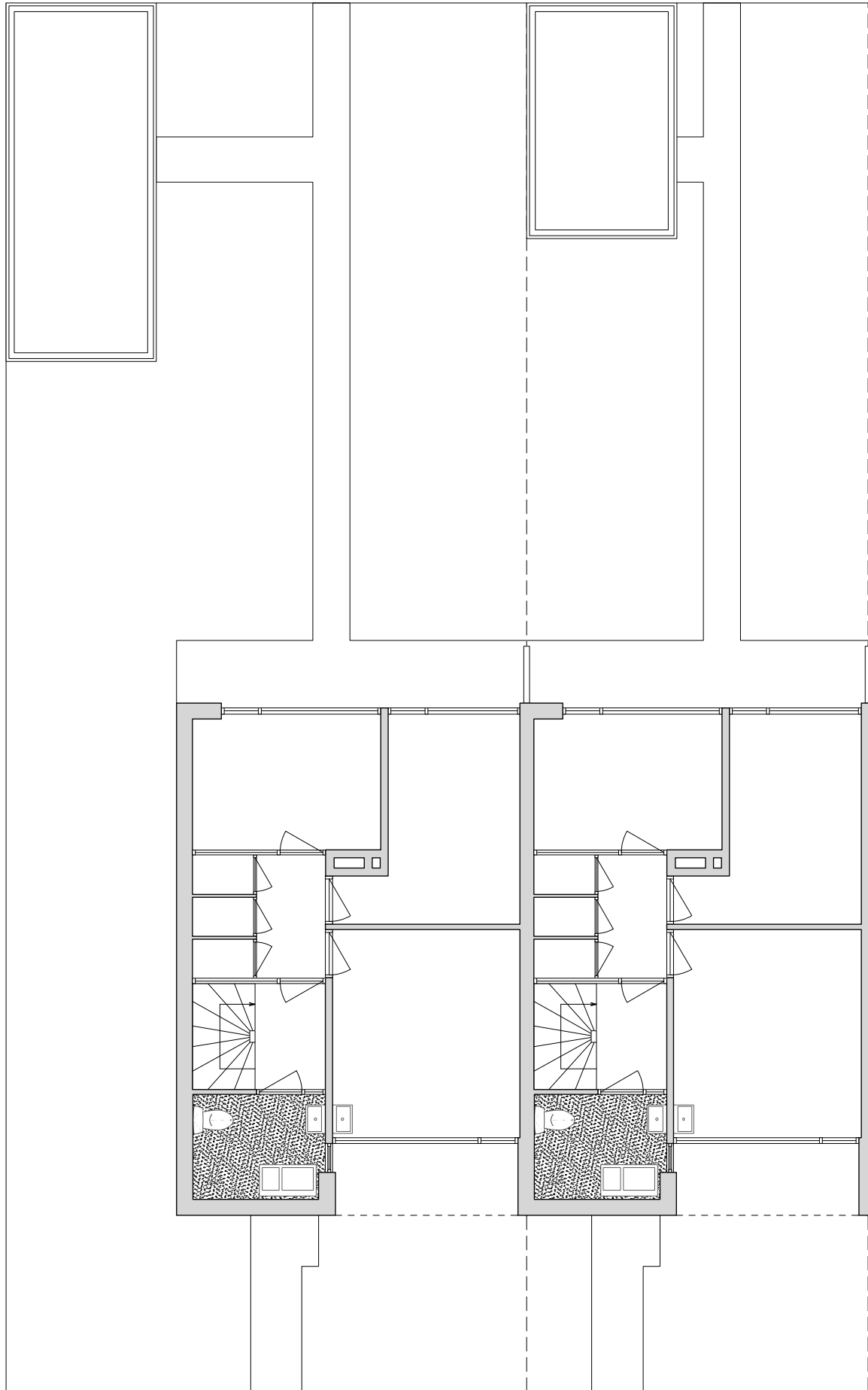
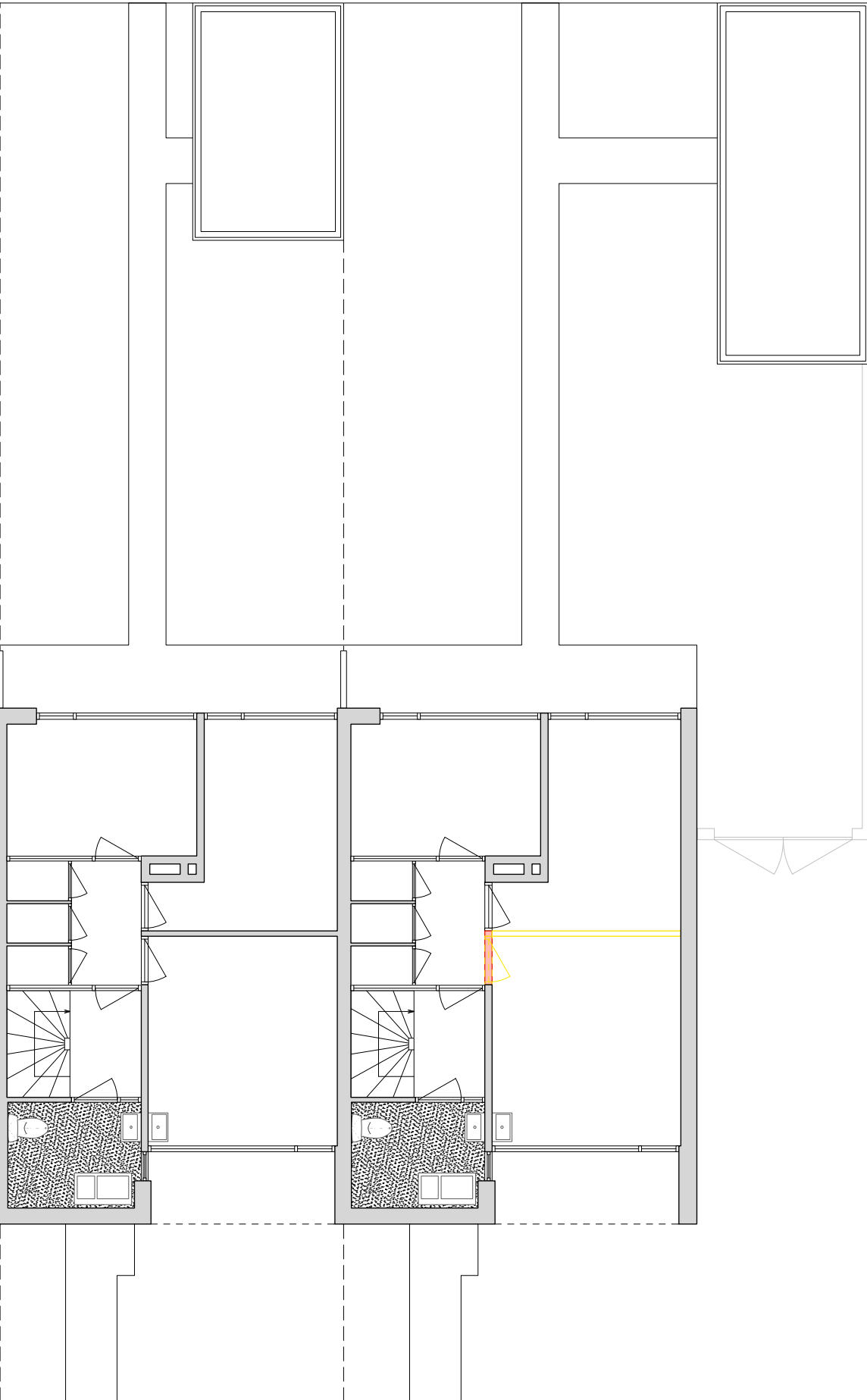


Figure 30.

Plan first floor with interior changes - redrawn based on archive material



**Before 1989: 32,  
Interior changes**

The drawings made for the remodeling in 1989 (from the residents' personal archive) not only reflect the planned renovations at that time but also reveal previous changes made to the interior. On the ground floor, walls were removed and repositioned, and a new kitchen was installed. The changes were quite extensive, which can be explained by the fact that the resident at the time was an architect. Interestingly, the drawings documenting these changes were made by the next resident, who, coincidentally, was also an architect.

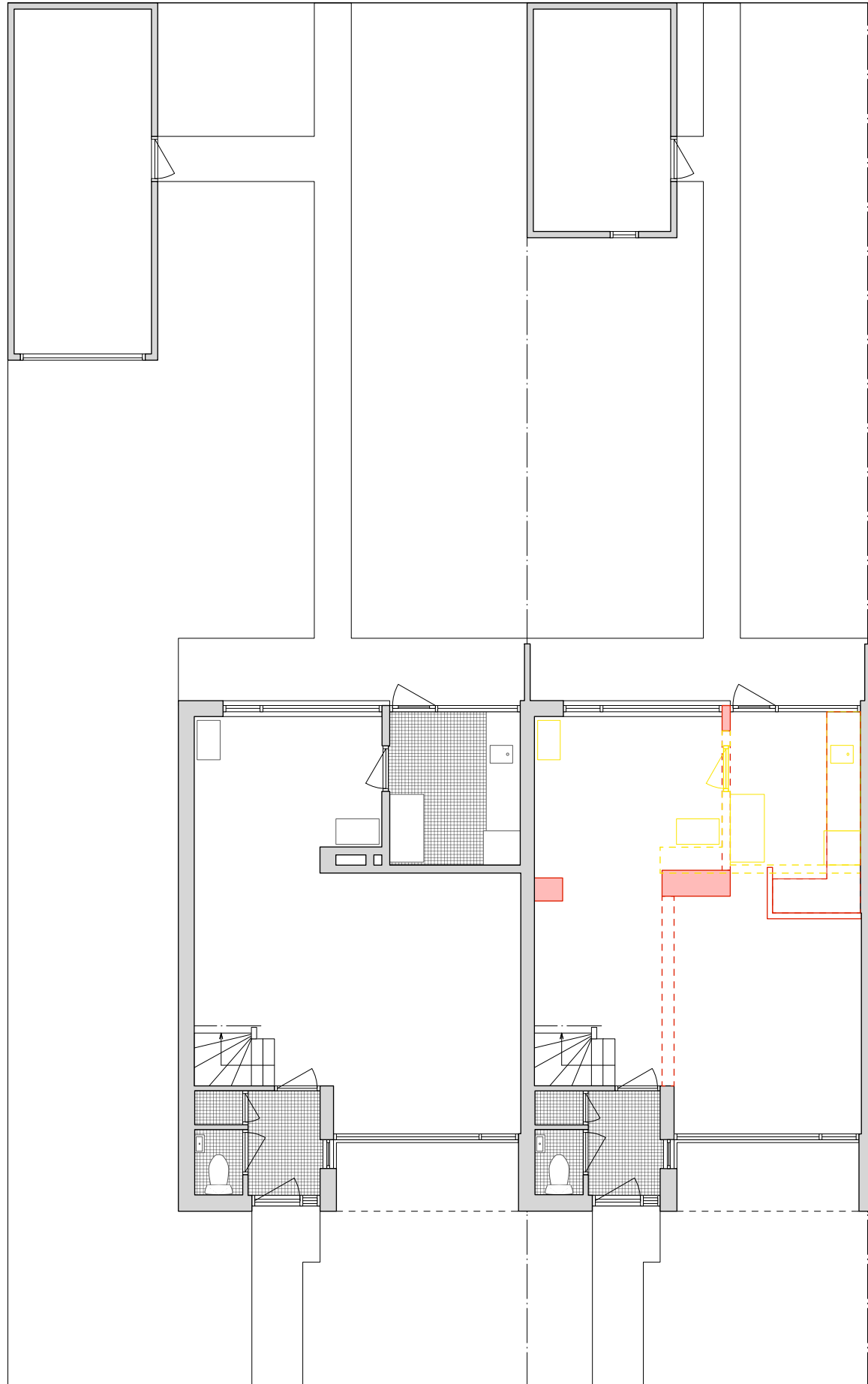
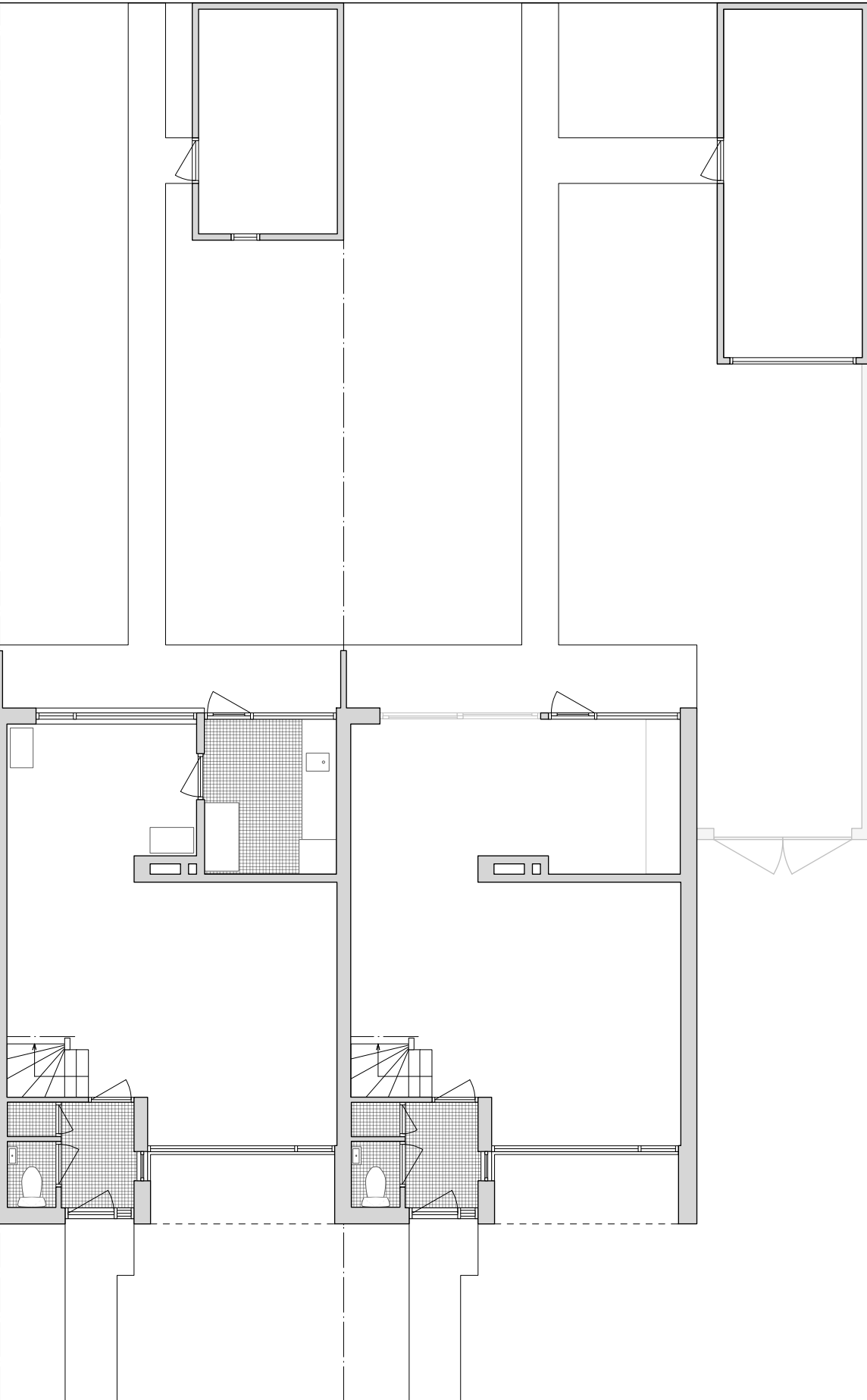


Figure 31.

Plan ground floor with interior changes - redrawn based on archive material



**1989: 32, interior renovations and extension adaptations**

As mentioned before in 1989 the residents of 32 were planning several renovations: enlarging the hallway to include the staircase, installing new window frames at the back, updating the bathroom, removing the door in the hallway on the first floor, and, perhaps most controversially, adding an extension at the front of the house. Getting the extension, or bay window, at the front approved was no small feat.

In the archival records, a letter written by the resident was found, outlining several arguments in support of the plan. The points were divided into private arguments, legal equality, and architectural reasoning. The full content of the letter is included in this study to preserve the tone and voice of the original.

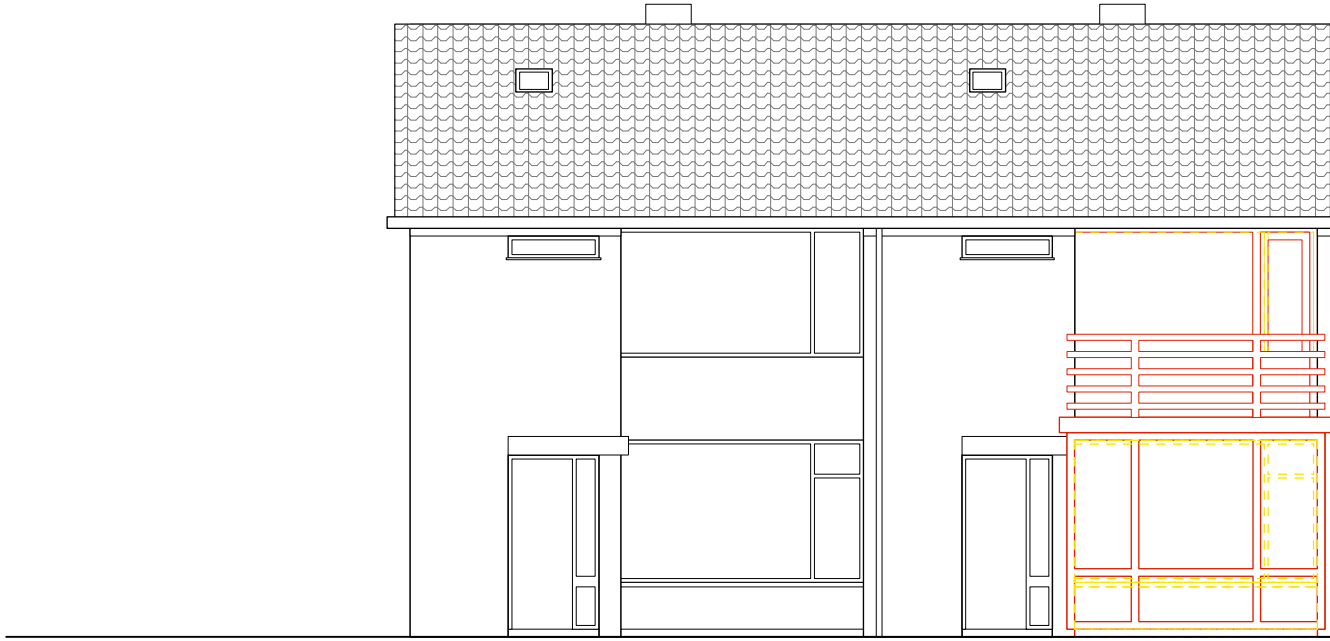


Figure 32.  
Elevation front with first proposal bay window - redrawn based on archive material

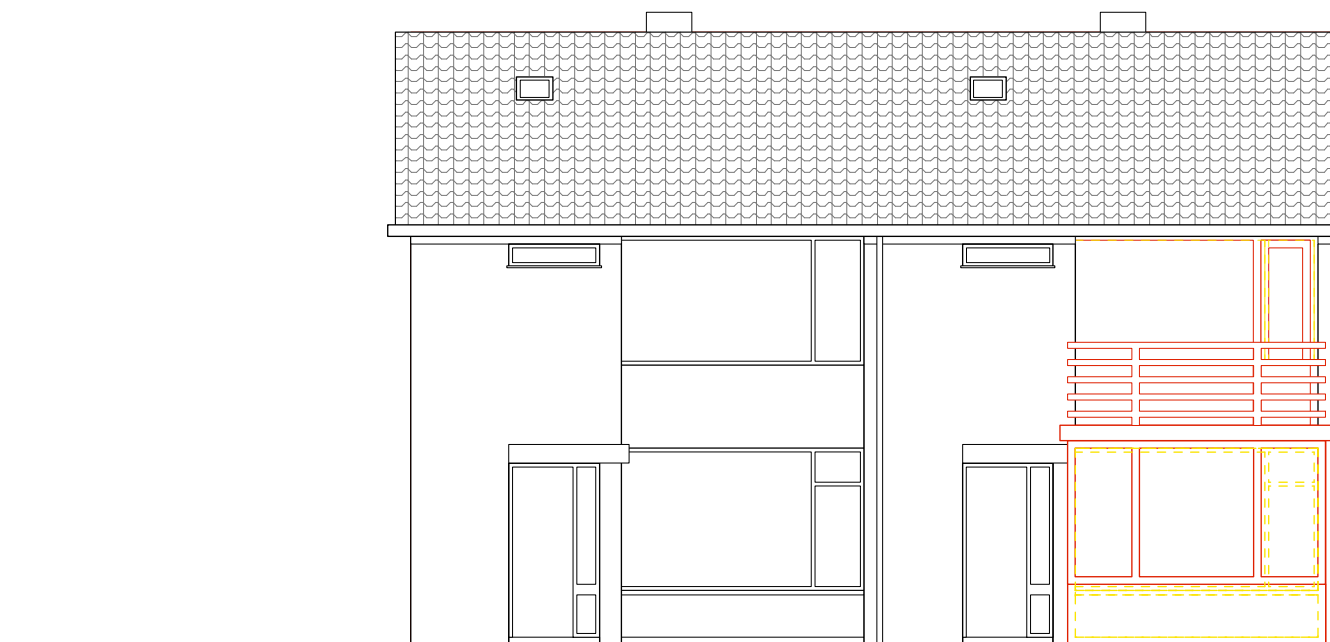
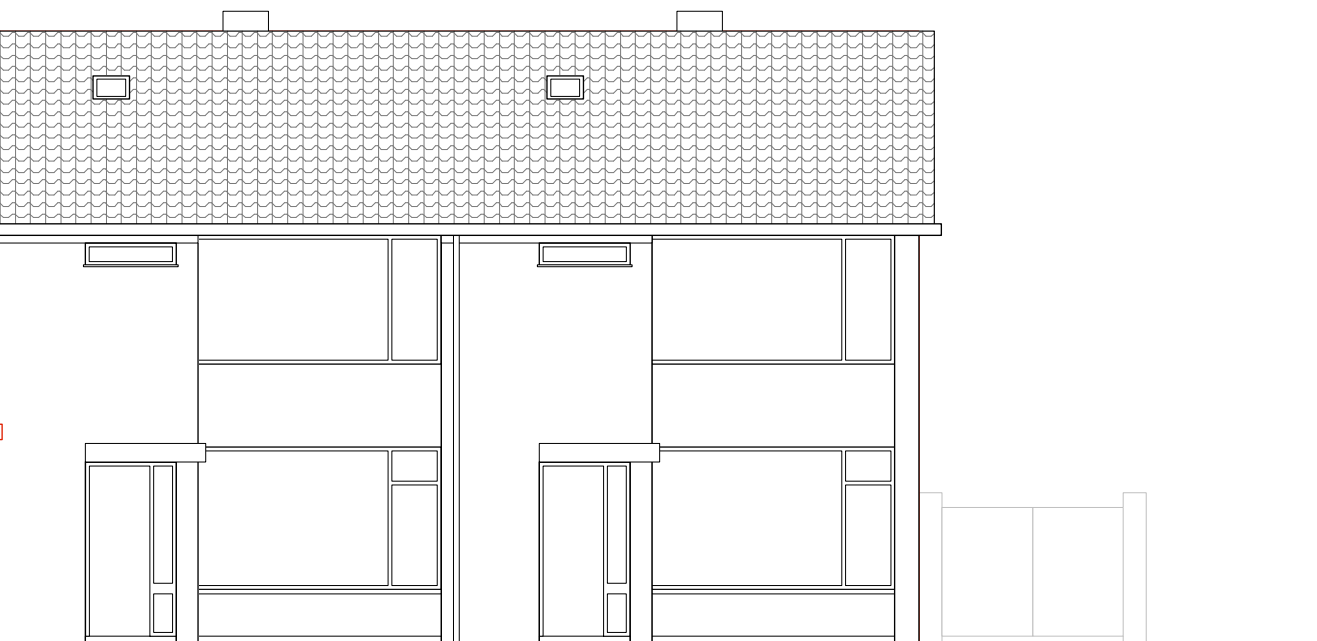


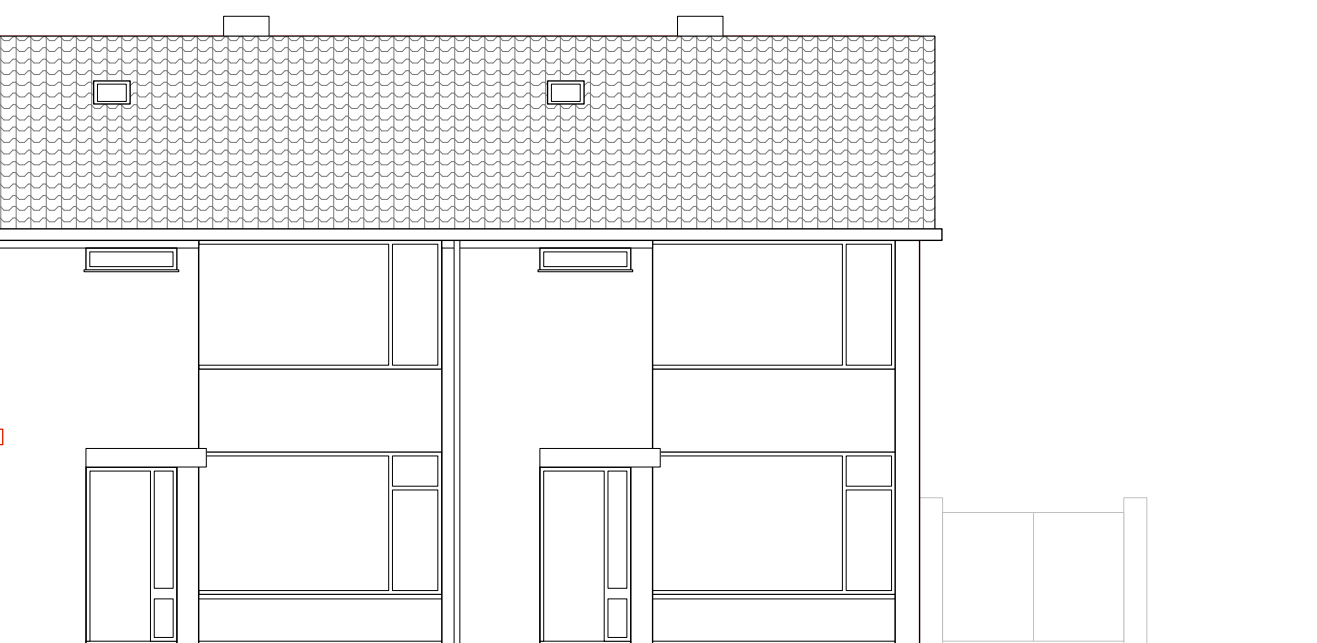
Figure 33.  
Elevation front with approved bay window - redrawn based on archive material

What is particularly interesting is that the resident used examples of changes made to other houses to support their case. Included with the letter was a Polaroid photo of the same housing type in a different town (Woudenberg), clearly showing not just one but three houses where bay windows had been added. This again highlights that there was no general agreement on what was and wasn't permitted, both within and between municipalities. Decisions seemed to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Archival records also reveal that there were discussions between the neighbors regarding the design of the bay window. This suggests that a sense of responsibility for the appearance of the street was shared not only by the municipality but also by the surrounding community.



1:100



1:100

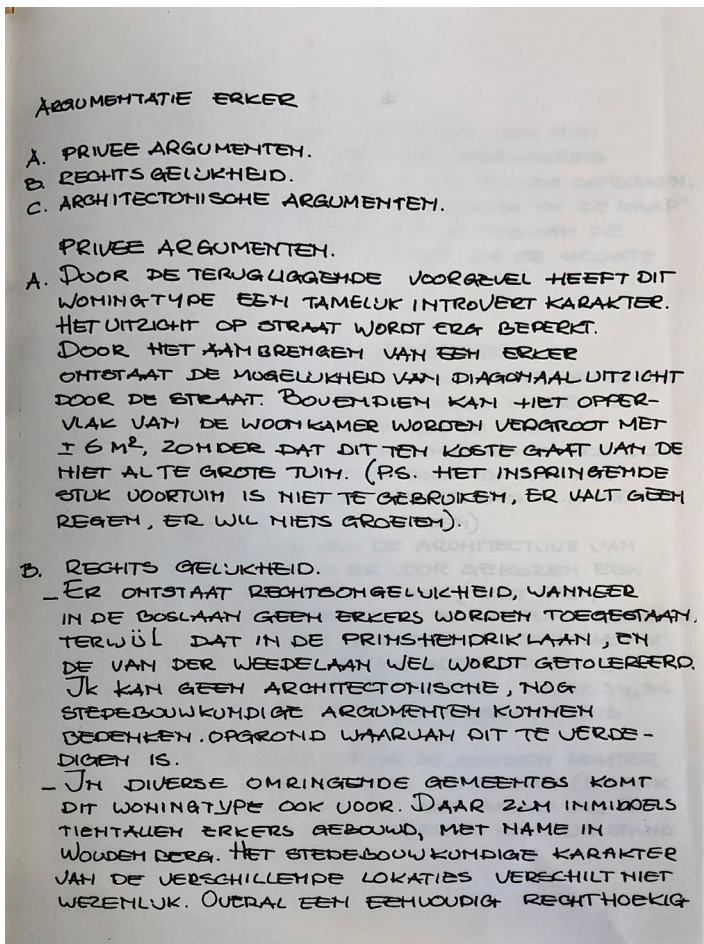


Figure 34.

**Private Arguments:**

Because of the recessed front façade, this type of house has a rather introverted character. The view onto the street is very limited. By adding a bay window, there would be a possibility for diagonal views down the street. Plus, the surface of the living room could be enlarged by 6 m<sup>2</sup>, without taking away from the already small garden. (PS: The recessed part of the front garden is basically useless—it doesn't get any rain, and nothing will grow there.)

**Legal Equality:**

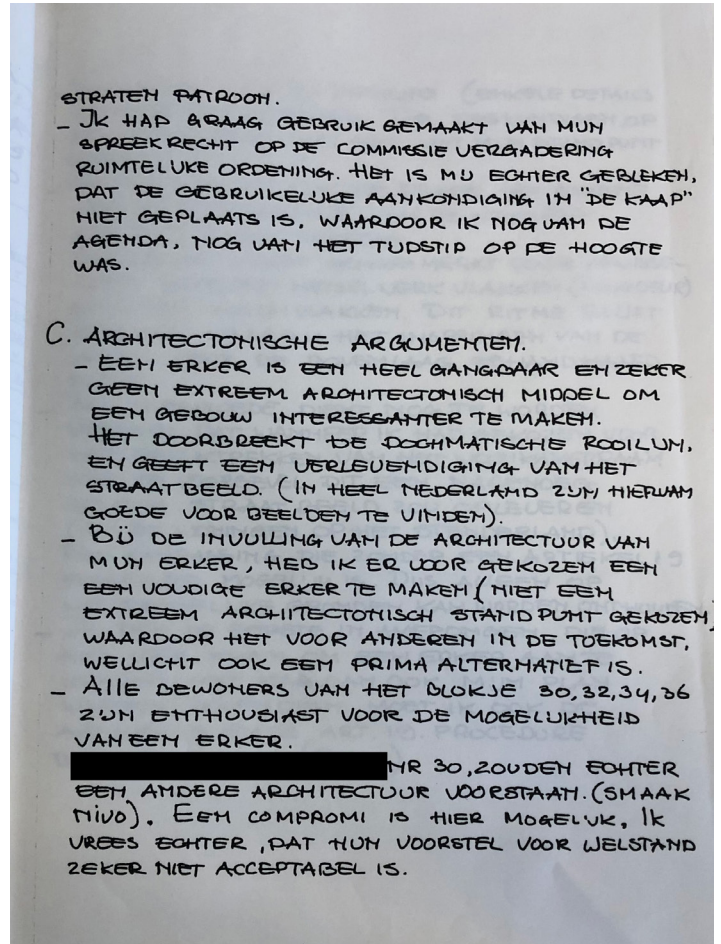
It creates legal inequality if bay windows are allowed on Boslaan, while they're tolerated on Prins Hendriklaan and Van de Weerdelaan. I can't come up with any architectural or urban planning reasons to justify that.

This housing type is also found in several surrounding municipalities. In many of those—especially Woudenberg—dozens of bay windows have already been built. The urban character of those places isn't fundamentally different. Everywhere it's a simple rectangular street layout.

I would have liked to speak at the Spatial Planning Committee meeting. But I found out that the usual announcement in De Kaap hadn't been published, so I wasn't aware of the agenda or the meeting time.

**Architectural Arguments:**

A bay window is a very common and by no means extreme architectural tool to make a building more interesting. It breaks



the dogmatic building line and livens up the streetscape. (There are good examples of this all across the Netherlands.)

For the design of my bay window, I deliberately chose a simple version—not some radical architectural statement—so it could also work as a solid option for others in the future.

All the residents of the block—30, 32, 34, and 36—are enthusiastic about the idea of a bay window. Number 30, however, has a different idea about the architecture (taste, basically). A compromise would be possible here. But I fear their design wouldn't be acceptable to the aesthetic review board.

The review board is, in principle (aside from a few details), in agreement. The experts in this field agree with my perspective. The claim that a bay window would damage the "architectural integrity" of the house isn't really valid. The façade is defined by an alternating pattern of closed brickwork (front doors) and open window frames. That rhythm remains intact, and the recessed section of the façade on the upper floor would still be there.

**Final Note:**

Just to add: if I had chosen to extend the living room straight out to line up with the existing front façade, it would've created pretty much the same look as the houses on Stenderland. That kind of alteration doesn't even require an Article 19 procedure—it could only be rejected on aesthetic grounds.

I'm the first one in Amerongen to come up with the idea of requesting a bay window, so I think it's fair to say it's my plan. On top of that, I also have to pay for the application and the Article 19 procedure myself—a total of 500 guilders.

- DE WELSTAND IS IN PRINCIPÉ (ENKELE DETAILS UITGESLOTEN) ACCOORD. DE DESKUNDIGEN OP DIT VAK GEBIED ZIJN HET MET MIJN STANDPUNT EENS.
- HET ARGUMENT, DAT DE ERKER HET EIGENE VAN DE "ARCHITECTUUR" VAN DE WONINGEN AANTAST, IS NIET TERECHT. DE GEVEL WORDT GEKENMERKT DOOR AFWISSELEND GESLOTEN METSELWERK VLAKKEN (VOORDEUR) EN OPEN KOLON VLAKKEN. DIT RITME BLIJFT BESTAAN, WAARBIJ HET INSPRINGEN VAN DE GEVEL VOOR DE BOVENLAAG BEHANDIHAFT BLIJFT.
- TEN OVERVLOEDE DIENT NOG TE WORDEN VERMELD, DAT WANNEER IK HAD GEKOZEN VOOR HET GELIJCTREKKEN VAN HET WOONKAMERRAAM MET DE VOORGEVEL, DIT EEN NAGENOEG ZELFDE STRAAT BEELD ZOU OPLEVEREN (ALS DE WONINGEN OP HET STENDERLAND). EEN AANPASSING, DIE ZONDER EEN ARTISKELE 9 PROCEDURE MOGELIJK IS. DUS ALLEEN OP WELSTANDELIJKE GRONDEN KAN WORDEN ONTHOUDEN
- IK BEN DE EERSTE IN AMERONGEN, DIE OP HET IDEE KWAM OM EEN ERKER AANTE VRAGEN, HET MAG DAN OOK MIJN PLAN WORDEN, BOVENDIEN MOET IK OOK DE AANVRAAG EN DE ART. 19. PROCEDURE BETALEN (TOTAAL €500,-).



Figure 35.

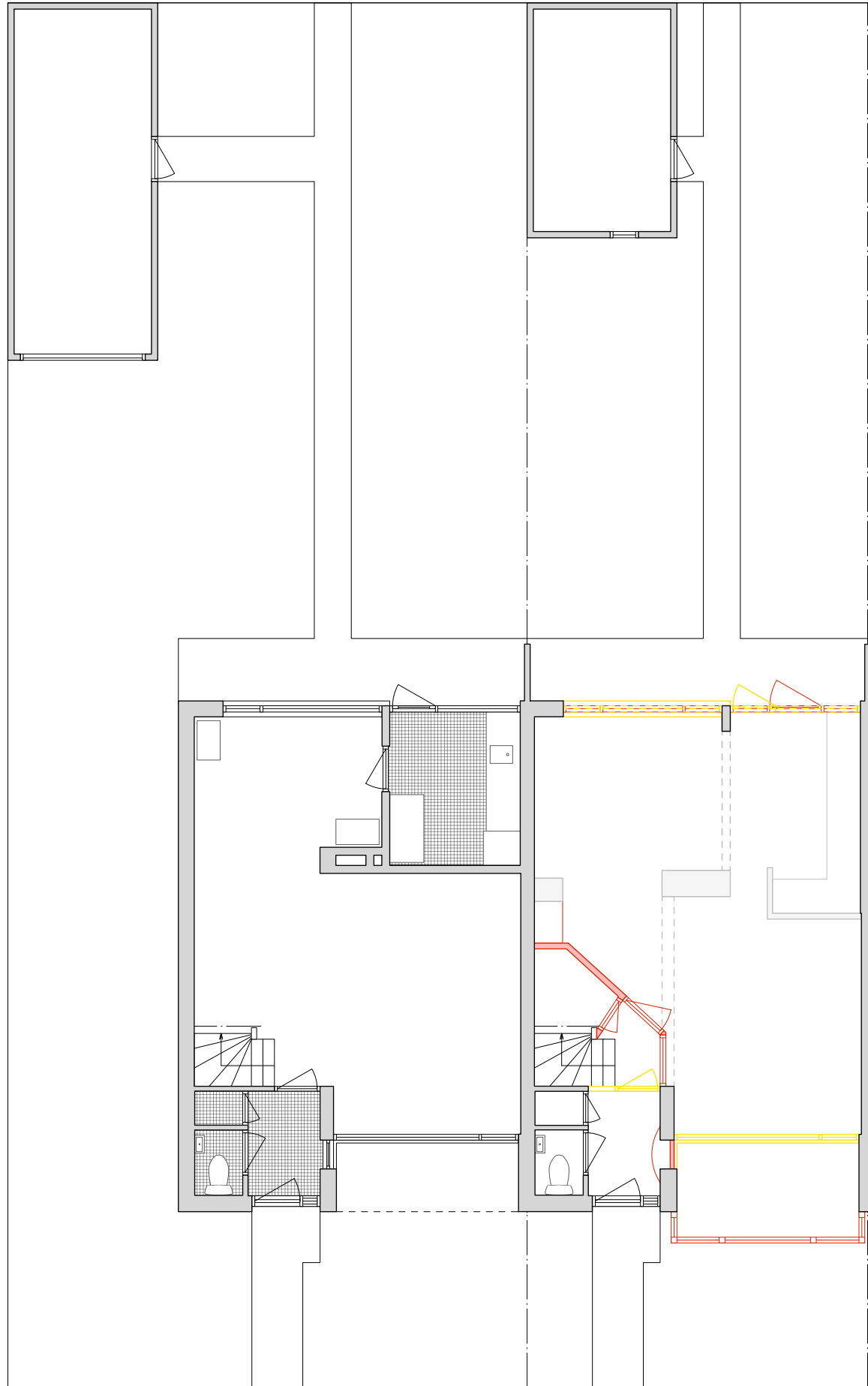
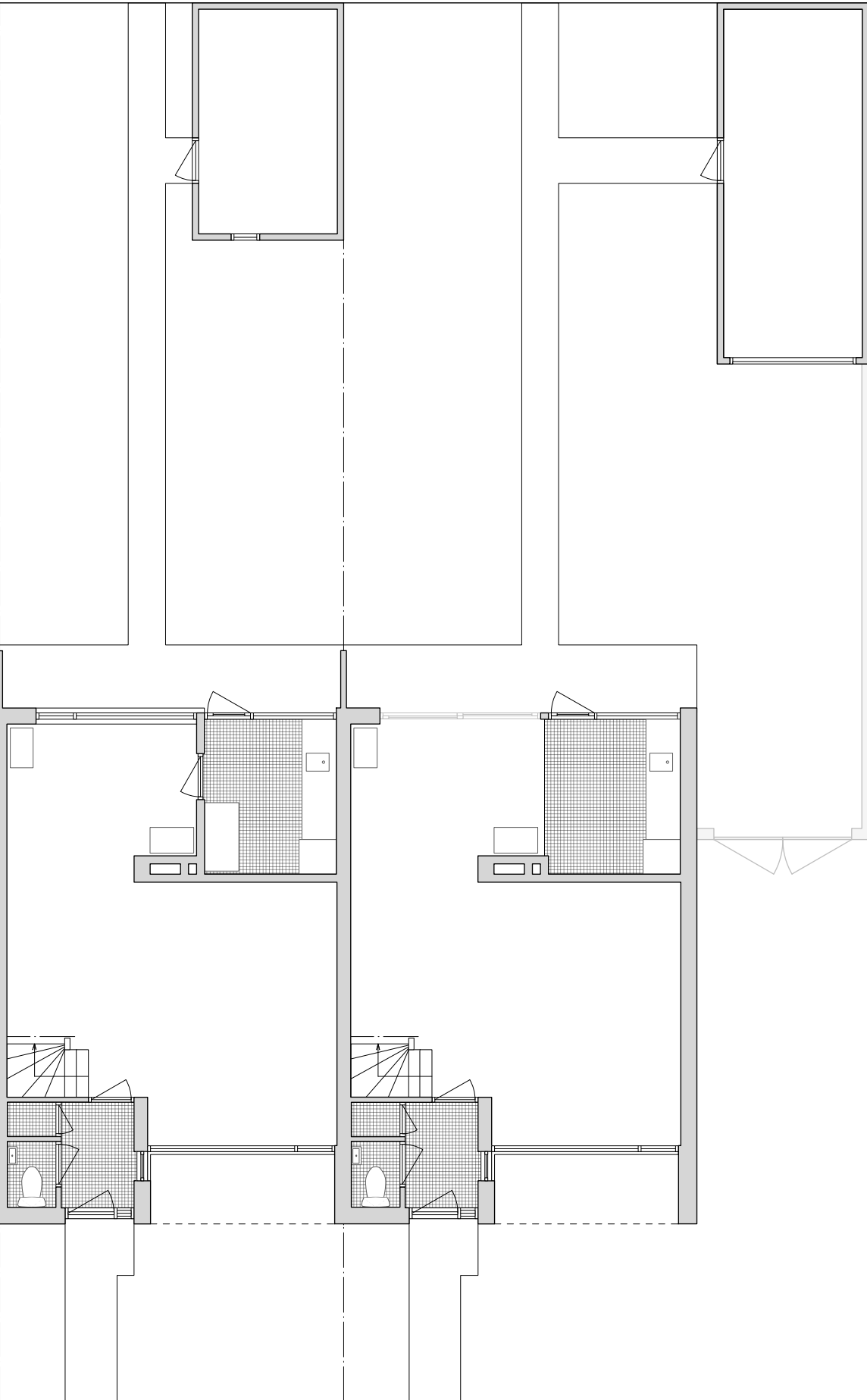


Figure 36.  
Plan ground floor with exterior and interior changes - redrawn based on archive material



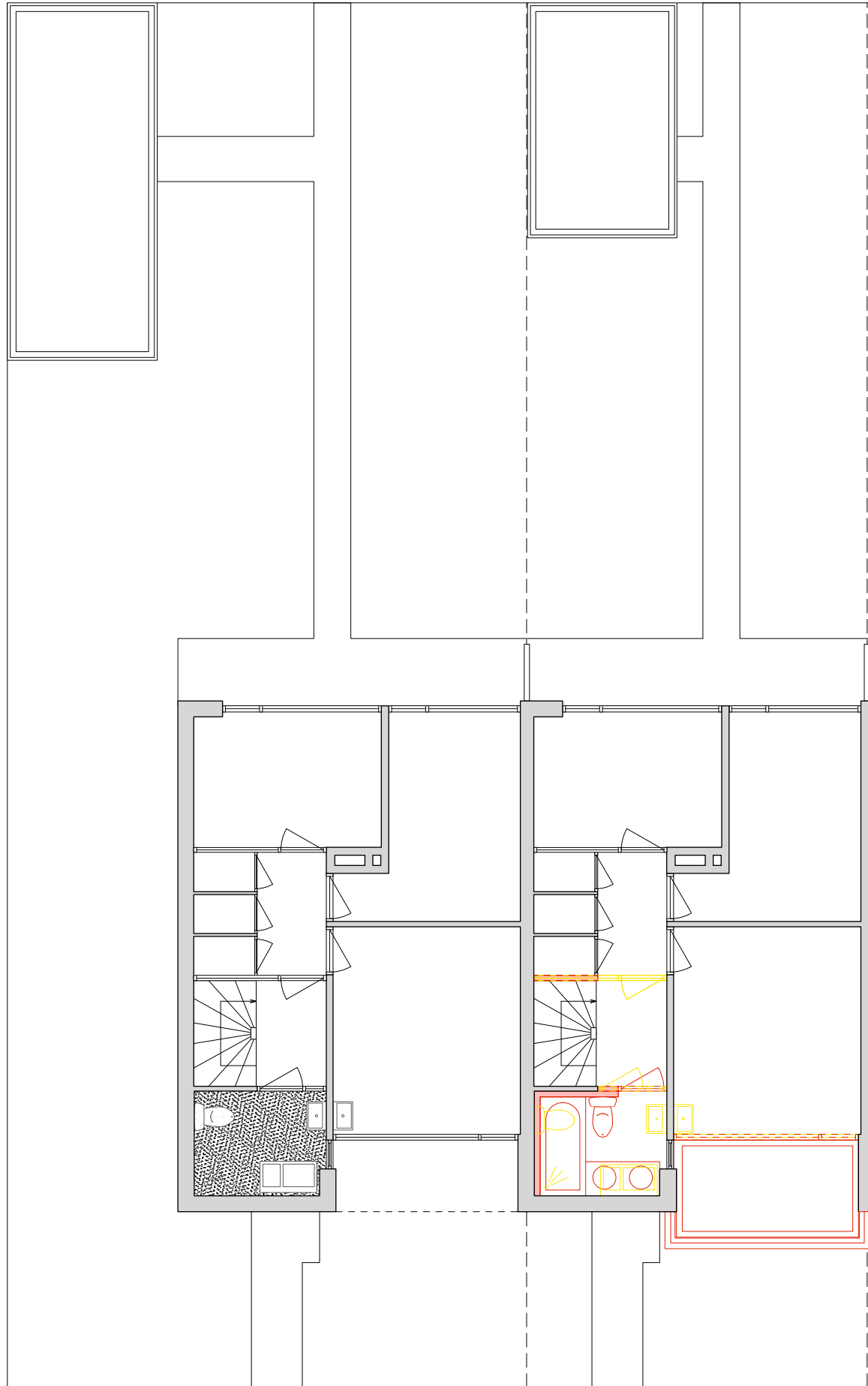
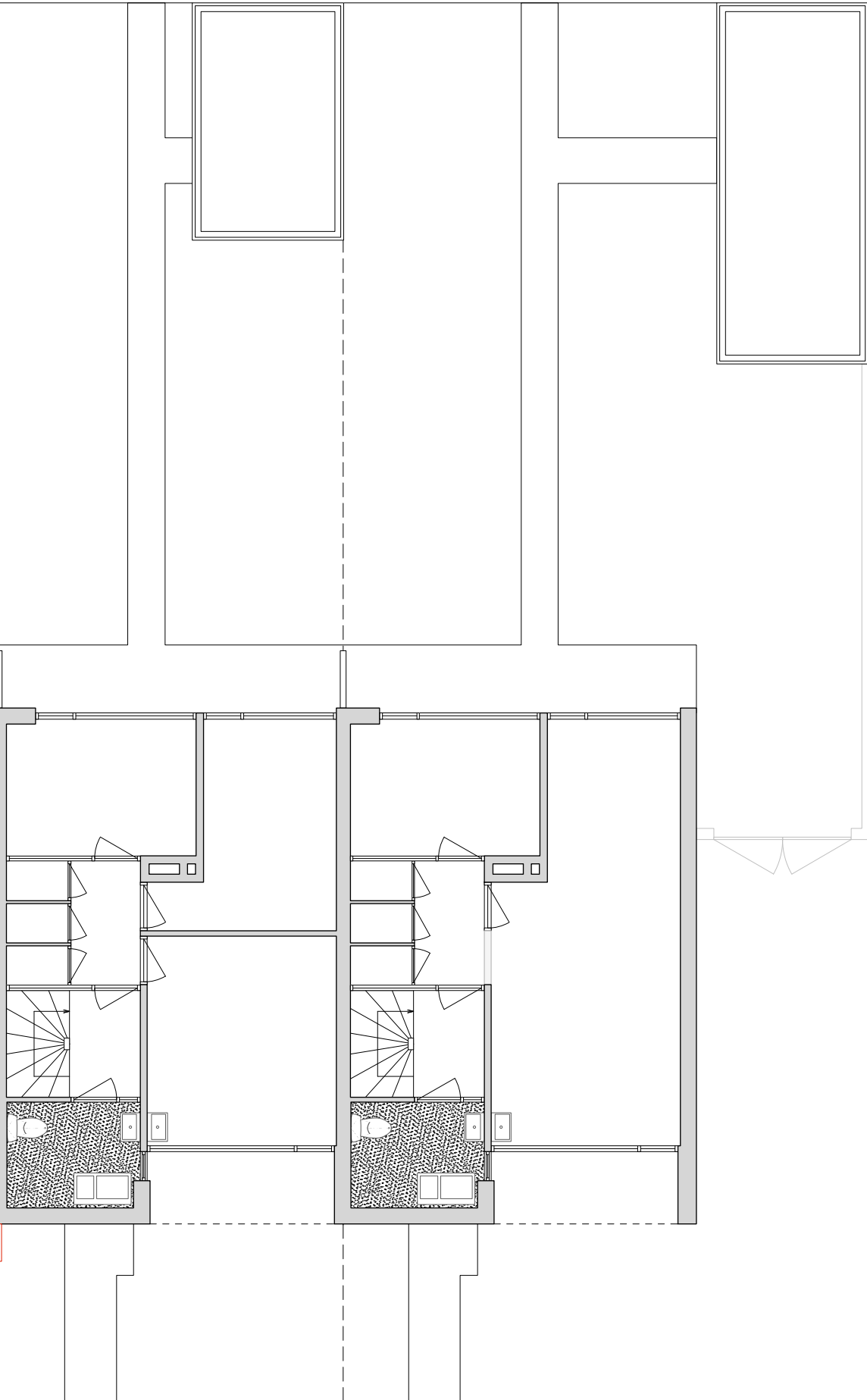


Figure 37.  
Plan first floor with exterior and interior changes - redrawn based on archive material



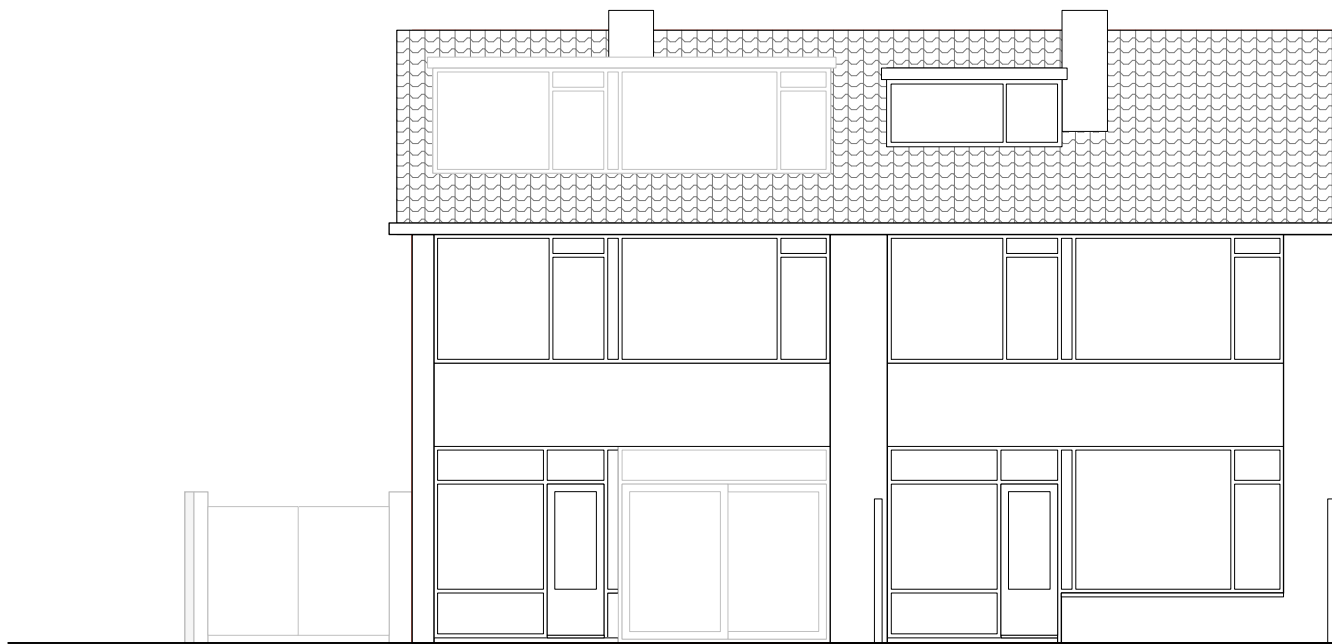
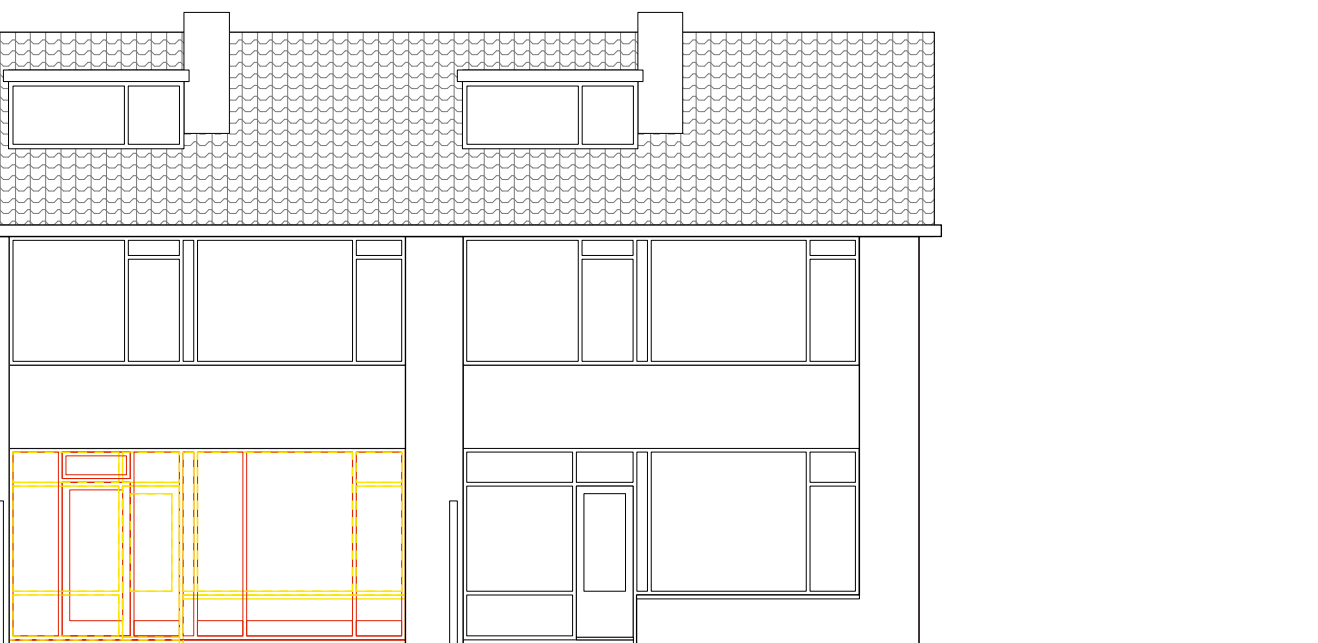


Figure 38.  
Elevation back with new window frame - redrawn based on archive material



### 1993: 30, relocating garage

The residents of number 30 wanted to move their garage from the backyard to the side of the house. The side garden was not in use, and this way, they would also gain more backyard space. The archival record reveals some hesitation from the municipality, although it is not entirely clear what the nature of this hesitation was. There is mention of the zoning plan, and that proposed change conflicted with it. Nonetheless, the plan was ultimately approved. In conversation with the residents, it became clear that the municipality had concerns related to fire safety, but in the end, they accepted the proposal.

Interestingly, the residents also noted that a neighbour from another block was later denied permission to move their garage, even though the fire safety concerns did not apply to that property. This suggests that decisions at the time were strongly influenced by individual officials within the municipality and that, in a sense, one simply had to be lucky.

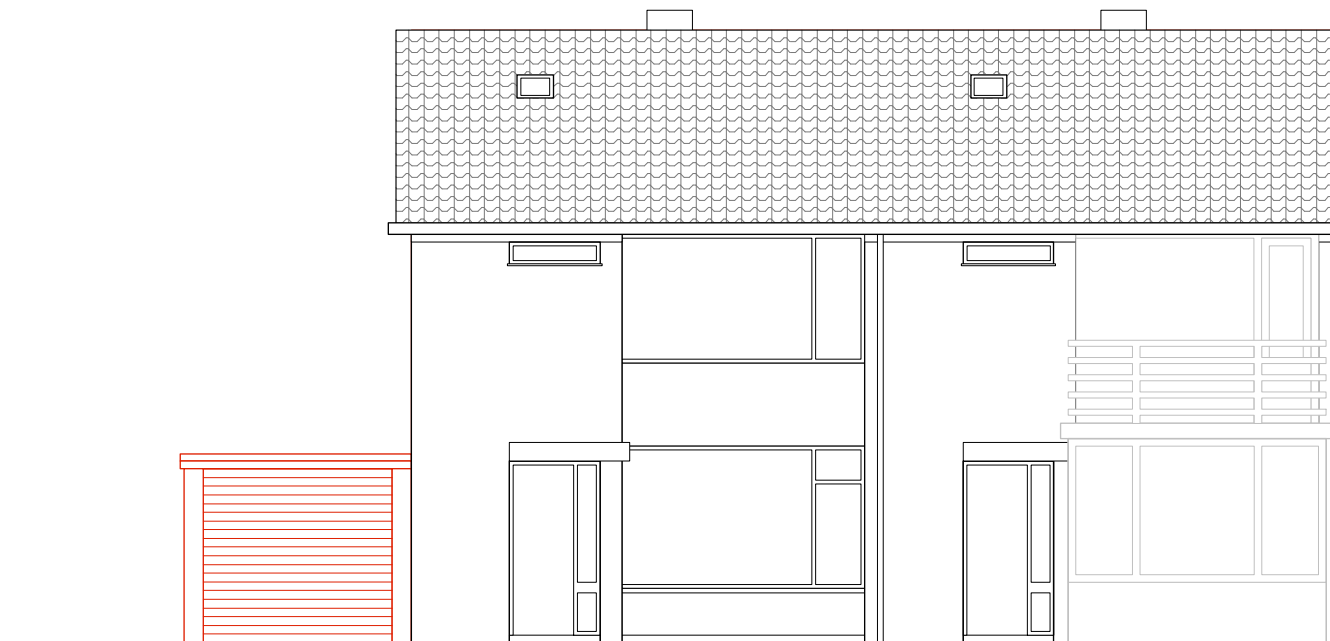


Figure 39.  
Elevation front with new garage - redrawn based on archive material





Figure 40.  
Elevation back with new garage - redrawn based on archive material



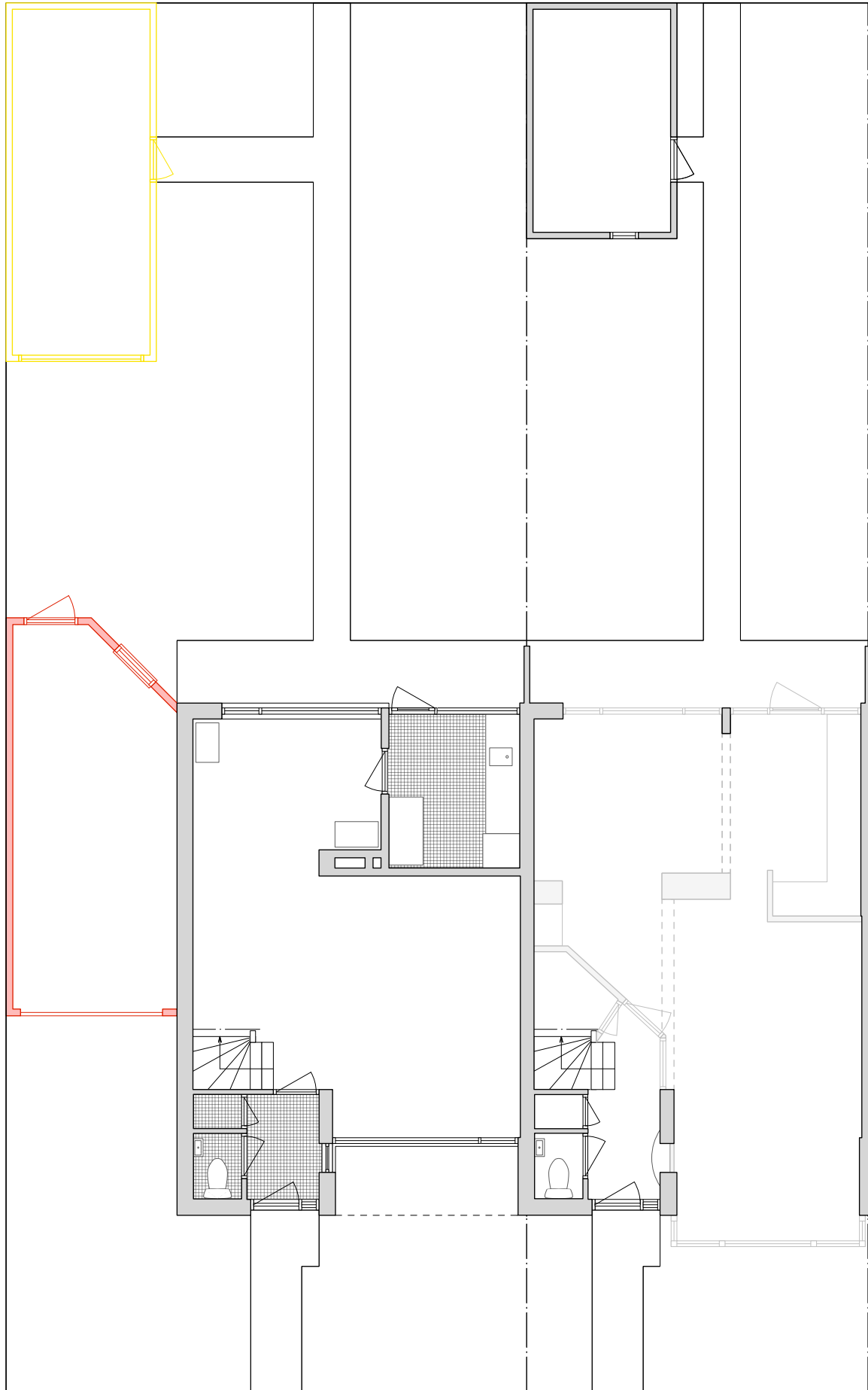
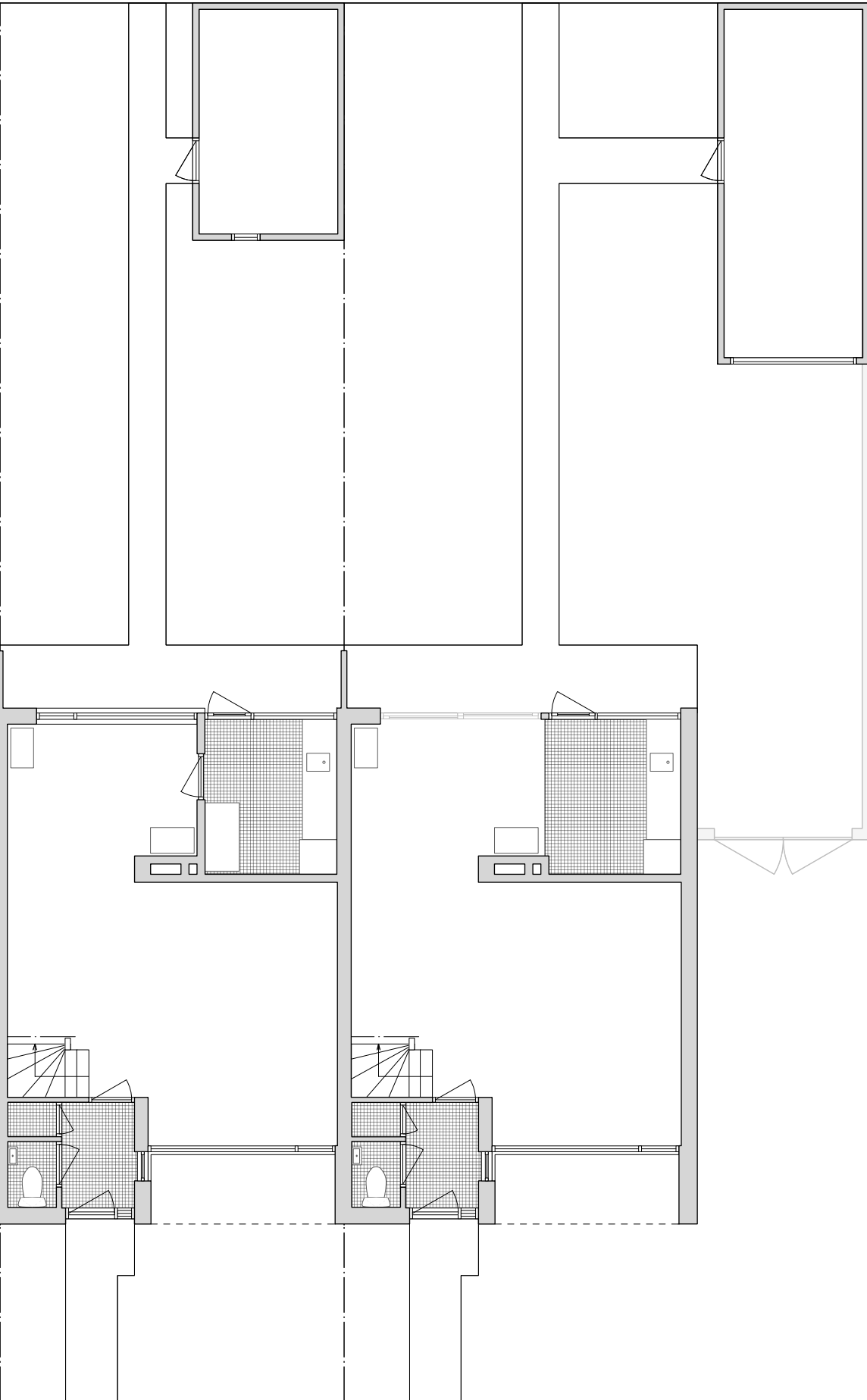


Figure 40.  
Plan ground floor with new garage - redrawn based on archive material

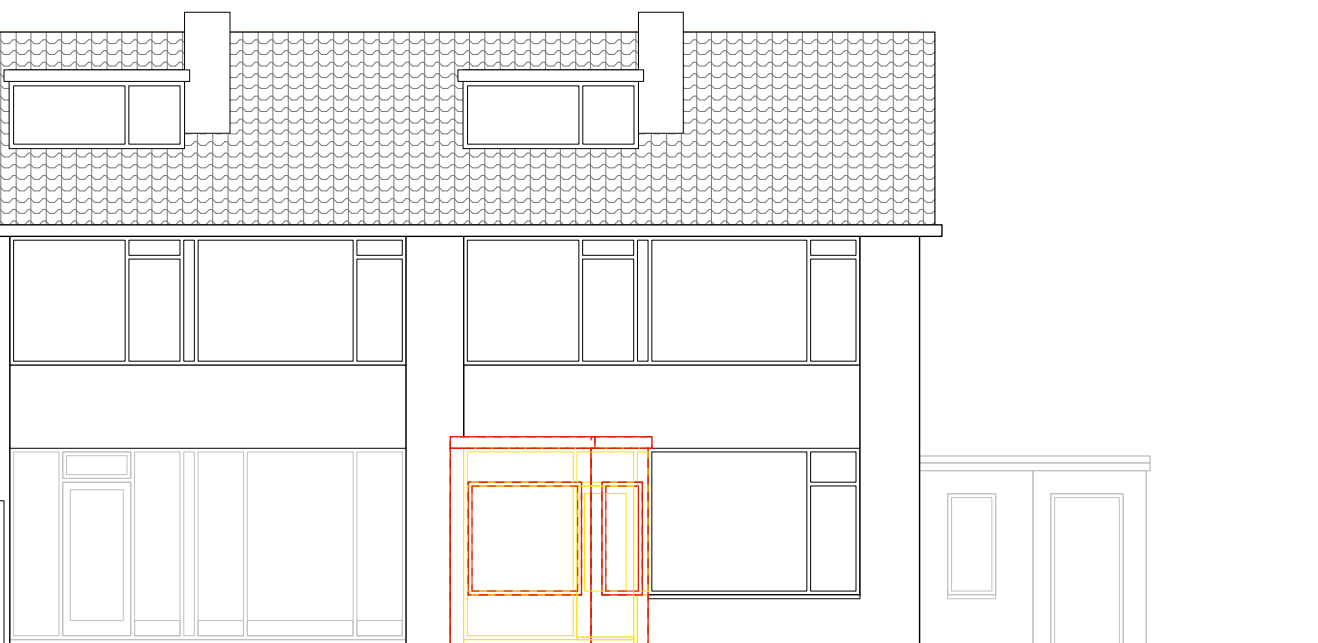


### 1996: 30, kitchen extension

The permit for the extension was granted relatively easily. However, during conversations with the residents, an interesting detail came to light: an inspector from the municipality would visit to check up on the changes made. The resident recalled that the inspector came in with a measuring tape, measured the kitchen extension, and commented that the ceiling had been raised higher than indicated in the plans, and this was not allowed. This anecdote revealed that, at the time, the municipality took an active role in overseeing the alterations made by the residents. The involvement of the inspector suggests a degree of ongoing oversight and regulation, ensuring that modifications aligned with the permitted plans.



Figure 42.  
Elevation back with new extension - redrawn based on archive material



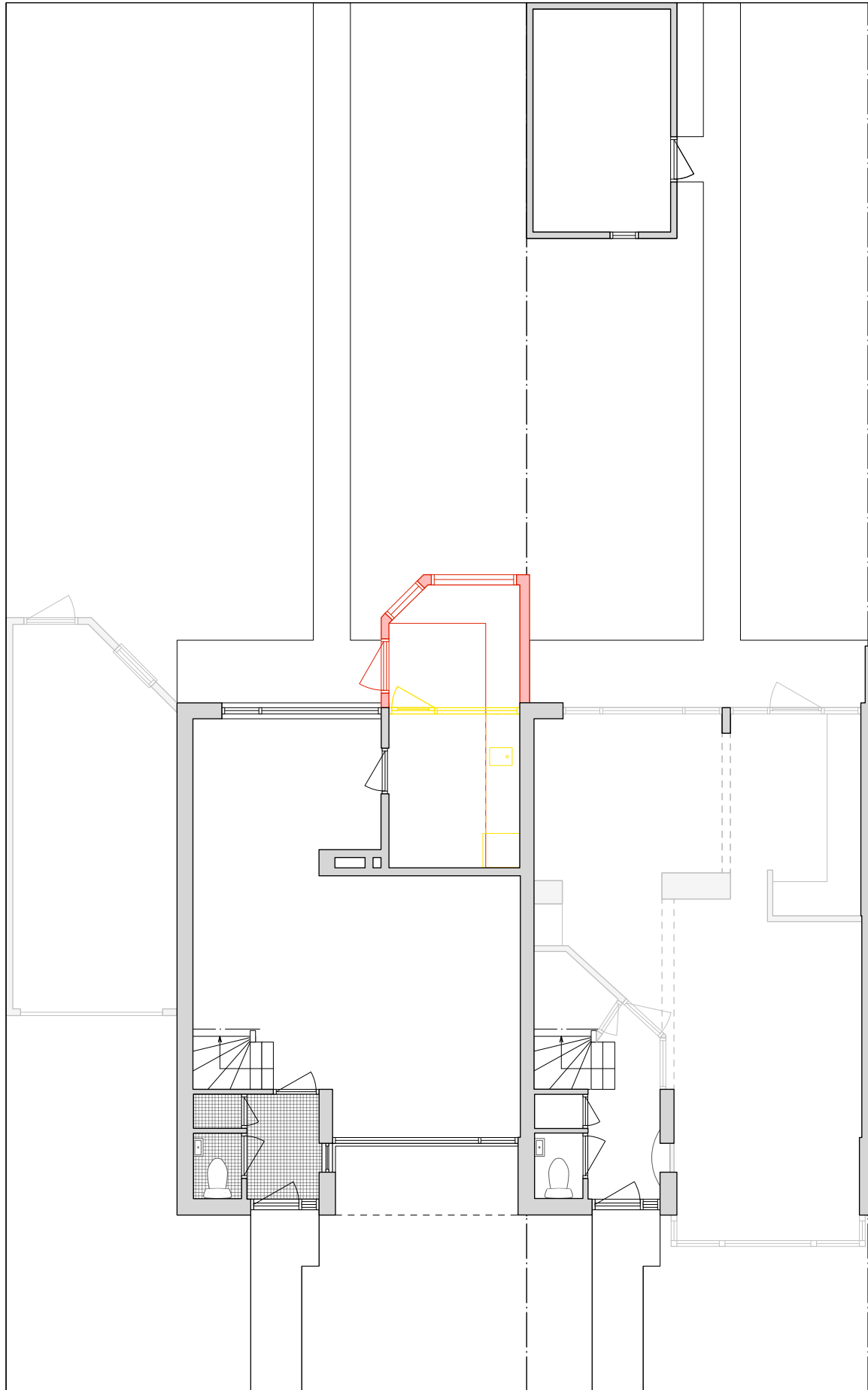
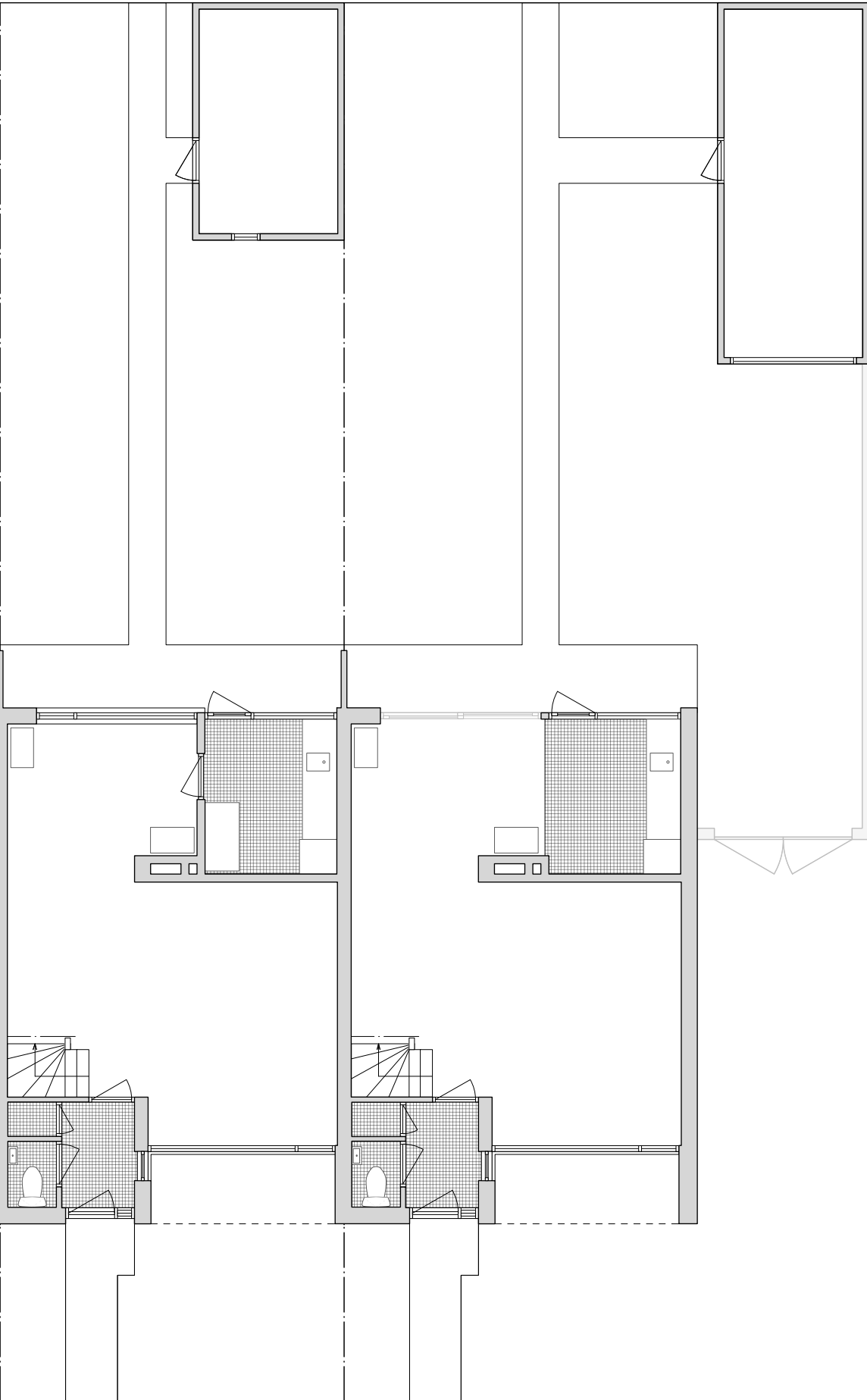


Figure 43.  
Plan ground floor with new extension - redrawn based on archive material



### 2007: 34, Back façade

The current residents moved in in 2007 and, not long after, replaced the window frame in the rear façade. This was not reported to the municipality, as it was not required. Another interesting detail the residents shared was that, when they first moved in, they considered switching the layout of the house. Moving the kitchen to the front so they could keep an eye on their children playing outside. However, because the rear of the house is narrower, this would have required an extension to make the space large enough for a living room. Additionally, all the plumbing would have needed to be rerouted. The costs involved were so high that they ultimately decided against it. This is perhaps the reason that most houses have kept the layout as it is.



Figure 44.

Elevation back with new window frame - redrawn based on archive material



# Conclusion

As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, even as an architecture student, I failed to recognize the house I grew up in as post-war housing. Yet, I think I've come to understand why I didn't experience these houses in the way this era or housing type was presented to me throughout architectural education. The image presented had given me the impression that these environments must be bleak, that living in them must feel like a compromise, yet that wasn't my experience. This also came up when speaking with residents; most weren't concerned with the historical or architectural significance of their homes. And why would they be? They experience these houses not as symbols of the post-war era but simply as the backdrop of everyday life.

When people moved in, the life of the houses truly began. Residents made adaptations driven by practical needs and personal preferences. Over time, the houses became lived-in and personalized. Yet residents weren't entirely free to change what they pleased. As discussed in Part Two, there was an ongoing dialogue between residents and the municipality regarding modifications. Through regulations, rules, and even inspections, the original intentions of the plan were maintained. Still, the wishes of residents that fell outside of the original plan were, at times reluctantly, accepted by the municipality. Through the archival research, it became clear that the municipality was not a faceless figure but rather a more personal and quite human institution, with individuals making decisions.

Reflecting on Lefebvre and the question of who produces space, this thesis's answer is: we do. We—in the broad, collective sense: the inhabitants, the government, the municipality, architects, planners, designers, manufacturers, etc. This aligns with how Lefebvre described the process. Through use, negotiation, adaptation, and, above all, through living, we shape the spaces we inhabit.

This thesis began by questioning the architecture history canon's focus on exceptional cases, choosing instead to explore the everyday. This revealed that the houses in the case study are not static products of post-war planning but living, evolving architectures. By examining how these homes were adapted over time, the inhabitant emerges not as a passive user but as an active co-creator of space. To fully understand this era—and to move beyond the relevant yet, at times, dominant critiques of modernism—we must expand our gaze beyond iconic designs and also consider the everyday.



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## AI-statement

Throughout the writing process of this thesis, OpenAI's ChatGPT was used as a supportive tool. It assisted with refining language, checking grammar and spelling, rephrasing sentences, translating text from Dutch to English, and brainstorming how best to formulate or structure arguments. ChatGPT always worked with the authors input and all outputs were critically reviewed and further refined to ensure they were correct. In addition, Grammarly was used for spell-checking and grammar support.

# Images

Figure 1: Aerial photo from a southerly direction of the northwestern part of the village of Amerongen with the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, 1970, Regionaal Archief Zuid-Utrecht

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