RESEARCH PAPER

STRUCTURE OF FREE ZONES

THE PROCESSES OF LEGAL AND SPATIAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF FORMER SQUATTING COMMUNITIES IN VACANT BUILDINGS' OCCUPATION

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Abstract

Amid a shortage of affordable spaces, squatting in the Netherlands has emerged as a grassroots response—offering shelter, preserving vacant buildings, and fostering inclusive, community-led spaces. Despite its criminalization, many squatting initiatives have transitioned toward legal recognition through organizational, legal, and spatial transformation.

This research explores the architectural interventions that support this transition, focusing on six case studies: OT301, Tetterode, Plantage Dok, Het Domijn, Poortgebouw, and Boschgaard. Through site visits, interviews, and documentation, it reveals how communities initiate urgent maintenance, reorganize space for safety, and later improve comfort and sustainability—often with collective ownership and funding from donations or public programs like “breeding grounds.” The findings shed light on the spatial and legal dynamics of these self-organized, non-profit practices.

Keywords

self-organized community, squatting communities, commons, ownership, autonomy, spatial transformations, collective, vacant buildings, self-building, incrementality

Contents

Glossary

Space Appropriation	The process by which individuals or groups take possession of and modify a space to suit their needs, often informally or outside of conventional planning, transforming its function and meaning.
Spatial Activism	The use of spatial practices and design as tools to advocate for social, environmental, or political change, often challenging dominant systems of power and inequality in urban and architectural contexts.
Squatting	The occupation of unused or abandoned buildings or land without legal permission, often as a response to housing shortages or as a form of protest against property and land-use policies.
Self-organization	A decentralized process in which communities or groups independently manage and plan their spaces or resources, often without external authority, fostering adaptive and participatory practices in urban development.
Collective	A group of individuals working together toward shared goals, particularly in managing spaces or projects collaboratively, emphasizing joint ownership and decision-making in architectural and urban planning
Autonomy	The ability of individuals or groups to self-govern and make independent decisions regarding the use and management of spaces, free from external control or interference.
Ownership	The legal or perceived right to possess, control, and use a space, which in architecture and urban planning shapes access, responsibilities, and the potential for development or transformation.
Commons	Shared resources, including spaces, that are collectively used, managed, and maintained by a community, promoting inclusivity and equitable access in urban environments.
Free zones	Self-managed, collectively organized environments that emerge outside formal institutional structures. Often originating from squatting practices, these spaces serve as hubs for alternative cultural, political, and social activities. They prioritize autonomy, horizontal decision-making, and community engagement, providing platforms for experimentation and resistance against dominant socio-economic norms.

* Terms in Dutch will be provided in italics alongside their English translations.

Introduction

Problem statement and thematic research question

The building vacancy is a significant global challenge. Cities, as dynamic entities, often leave spaces and structures obsolete and abandoned (Simon and Mseddi, 2020; Rietveld, 2015). In the Netherlands, approximately 63,000 homes remain empty (nltimes.nl, 2022), creating urban voids that fail to positively impact their surroundings (Trancik, 1986).

Politically promoted concepts for a prosperous future emphasize individualism and property-based frameworks (Harvey, 2012) converting forms of common and collective property rights to exclusive private ownership, exacerbating unequal access to capital through economization and marketization (Squatting Europe Kollective, 2013). This commodification of space has driven individuals to rely on personal resources and foster alternative forms of collectivity and civic agency (Boer, Verzier, and Truijen, 2019). Through forms of spatial activism, such as occupation or protest, these movements highlight the injustice and unsustainability of capitalist urbanization (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer, 2012), advocating for alternative ways of living, producing, consuming, and socializing (Staniewicz, 2011; Dodd, 2020) opposed to gentrification, displacement, and neighborhood destruction (Harvey, 2012)

The squatting movement exemplifies this resistance, emerging when the demand for space intersects with vacant properties (Boer, Verzier, and Truijen, 2019). Squatting often fosters vibrant, non-profit-driven communities that address needs unmet by conventional systems. Despite their positive impact (Minkjan, 2019), squatting and “commoning” remain legally unrecognized (van Wetten, 2024). Legal frameworks primarily limit these initiatives, prioritizing commercial interests over socially beneficial projects, leading to deeper social divides and deterioration of inclusive urban transformations (Squatting Europe Kollective, 2013).

Squatting experiments with bottom-up and incremental urbanism, creating a multitude of self-built habitats (Boer, Verzier, and Truijen, 2019). This research explores architectural interventions that support squatting

communities in adapting spatial arrangements during negotiations for legal recognition. It focuses on forms and pathways for gaining legal status, spatial and architectural transformations post-recognition, and the stakeholders involved in these processes.

Squatting movement in the Dutch urban context

The emergence of these social movements advocates for a collective right—specifically, the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996). Squatting, defined as "living in or using a dwelling without the owner's consent" (Squatting Europe Kollective, 2013, p. 2) encompasses intentions ranging from survival to social revolution (ibid.). Often regarded as a utopian struggle for a better society (Kallenberg, 2001), it is also viewed as a politically, counterculturally expressive non-goal-oriented practice (Lowe, 1986). Motivations include an alternative housing strategy, a preservation tool, a political act, entrepreneurial activity, or deprivation-based aid (Pruijt, 2017). Squatting manifests in diverse forms, shaped by local and national contexts (Pruijt, 2013).

The squatting movement in the Netherlands has become one of the most stabilized in Europe, supported by dialogue with authorities (Morawski, 2019). Modern squatting originated in urban changes of the 1960's-1970's (Pruijt, 2017), driven by suburban migration and numerous buildings left vacant (Minkjan, 2019). Claiming unused spaces as residences, with basic signs of habitation and declared intent to live was enabled by a 1914 statute offering legal protection against eviction (Labuhn, 2019).

Social institutionalization legitimized squatting, with repeated actions normalizing the practice (Pruijt, 2017). Groups like Provo and Woningbureau de Kraker promoted squatting as social innovation, sharing manuals, financial support, and collaborating with neighborhood movements like Nieuwmarkt in Amsterdam. Media support popularized terms like *kraken* (to crack) and *krakers* (squatters), rebranding squatters as activists. Progressive lawyers introduced the right to domestic peace (*huisrecht*), protecting squatters and requiring lengthy court orders for eviction. In 1971,

squatting was declared non-criminal, solidifying legal protections (Pruijt, 2017; Kadir, 2016).

In the 1980's, squatting reached peak, with 160,000 sqm of new squats versus 20,000 sqm evicted in Amsterdam between 1980 and 1984 (Breek and De Graad, 2001). It served housing, cultural, and political purposes, leading to some squats being legalized as social housing. However, divisions arose between squatters seeking legal adaptation and political squatters favoring confrontation (Pruijt, 2017). Public opinion shifted after the 1980 squatter riots during Queen Beatrix's coronation, as police shifted from condemning evictions to aggressive actions (Kadir, 2016). Post-1985, rising middle-class demand for urban centers and legal changes pressured squats (Breek and De Graad, 2001). The 1981 Vacancy Law (*leegstandswet*) regulated vacancy, enabling temporary rentals and requiring proof of vacancy before squatting (Labuhn, 2019; Kadir, 2014). Squatting was absorbed into the market and reshaped within neo-liberal policies as anti-squatting (*antikraak*), offering temporary, low-cost occupancy to protect properties from unintentional use (Minkjan, 2019).

In 1998, Amsterdam's breeding grounds (*Broedplaatsen)* initiative was launched in response to eviction threats targeting alternative cultural spaces. A petition signed by 700 individuals prompted municipal policies to support cultural-economic initiatives through financial aid and guidance. It resulted in the 2000 "No Culture Without Subculture" action plan, which used former squats as prototypes for new incubator places creation, inspiring similar policies nationwide (Minkjan, 2019).

Legal changes culminated in the 2010 criminalization of squatting (Pruijt, 2017). Despite restrictions, squatting persists on a smaller scale, driven by activists and marginalized groups, with some cultural projects enduring legal challenges (Collectief Eigendom, 2024). Cities now attempt to support non-commercial, creative, and innovative initiatives. Based on the principles of the breeding grounds program, Amsterdam's recent Free Spaces policies (*Vrije Ruimte*, 2019; *Expeditie Vrije Ruimte*, 2020) focus on fostering creative, experimental living-working communities and explore their potential in shaping inclusive envirnments (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2020).

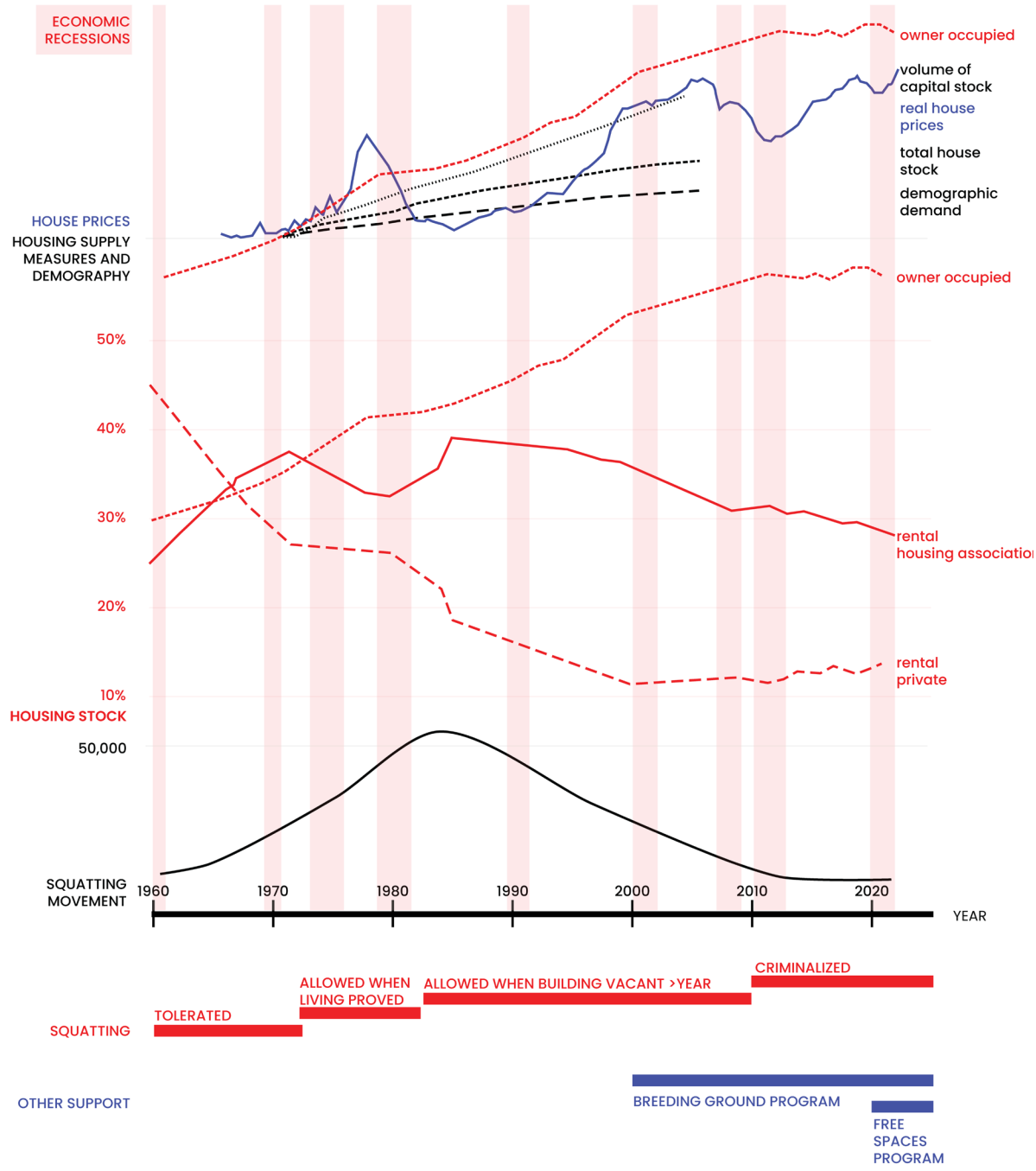


Fig. 1. Squatting, housing and economic in the Netherlands 1960-2025.

The figure illustrates the correlations between the squatting movement, its related policies, the housing market, and the economic situation in the Netherlands from the 1960s to the present. The squatting movement emerged in response to a shortage of affordable housing, the growing emphasis on private homeownership, and opportunities for self-organization enabled by high vacancy rates and permissive legal frameworks.

Sources: author's own illustration, synthesized from the content and visual elements presented in works of Boelhouwer (2017), Hochstenbach (2022; 2024), Prujit (2017), Vermeulen and Rouwendal (2007).

Squatting communities and their impact

Squatting challenges the commodification of space by prioritizing use-value over profit revenue. It operates on principles of horizontal hierarchies, democratic decision-making, and mutual aid, fostering community building and a sense of solidarity through collective action (Boer, Verzier, and Truijen, 2019). The movement, though not measurable through conventional financial assessments (Collectief Eigendom,2024), has had a significant and lasting impact on spatial, social, and political development (Minkjan, 2019). Practices emerging from squatting have profoundly influenced urban development, architecture, policymaking, and the real estate sector. By inhabiting and repurposing abandoned buildings, squatters rescued many from demolition, such as Amsterdam's neighborhoods of Jordaan, Nieuwmarkt, and Staatslieden (Collectief Eigendom, 2024). Notable examples like OCCII (ibid.), Tetterode (Theunissen, 2020), in Amsterdam, and Poortgebouw in Rotterdam (Boer, Verzier, and Truijen, 2019) have since achieved architectural heritage status. Squatting also redefined perceptions of vacant buildings and wastelands, showcasing their potential for creative reuse - transforming spaces such as hospitals, schools, offices, churches, and warehouses into inventive living configurations, including workspace-home-public arrangements (Minkjan, 2019; EHBK, 2014).

The movement spurred innovative policies and practices oriented toward the social good (Minkjan, 2019). Squatting's societal impact extends to creating spaces for social initiatives, particularly for small-scale, non-commercial organizations and the "creative class" in need of affordable work and performance spaces, as well as dissenters, activists, and experimentalists (Collectief Eigendom, 2024). Some of the Netherlands' most vibrant cultural hubs, such as Paradiso, Melkweg, and the NDSM, trace their origins to squatting (Minkjan, 2019).

Squatting communities are diverse, including artists and creatives seeking affordable studio spaces, students and young professionals struggling with high rent, homeless and refugees or migrants lacking access to formal housing. They have fostered practices of care and exchange, offering

initiatives like give-away stores, affordable dining through *voku's* (people's kitchens), consultation hours, language courses, and other supportive activities. (Collectief Eigendom, 2024) Moreover, squats serve as platforms for addressing societal issues, from housing crises and vacancy to speculative real estate practices, making these challenges visible (Minkjan, 2019).

Methods

The research explores the phenomenon of squatting practices in the Netherlands as socio-spatial systems. Given the multidimensional nature of these practices, they cannot be fully understood by examining only their material aspects. Therefore, a wide range of sources is assessed and evaluated.

From a set of 30 legalized squatted communities in the Netherlands, found in Appendix 1, six case studies were selected based on these criteria: the building must have been residential during squatting, obtained spatial legal status, and demonstrated adaptive reuse. The case studies are: OT301, Tetterode, Plantage Dok in Amsterdam, Het Domijn in Weesp, Poortgebouw in Rotterdam, and Boschgaard in Den Bosch. This selection process is depicted in Table 1. Selection ensured diversity in size, location, building typology, functions before and after squatting, and the time of squatting and legalization. Access for visits and interviews also guided the final choices. The study employed case examinations using a combination of sources, including publications, archives, community websites, site visits, and participation in events. These methods led to semi-structured interviews with community members and official meetings with their representatives, which served as the main source of information. Key informants included: Ivo Schmetz (2024) from OT301, Mikel van Gelderen (2024) from Tetterode, Jutta Hinterleitner (2025) from Plantage Dok, Irène Lesparre (2024) from Het Domijn, Sebas Beckeringh (2025) from Poortgebouw, and Jochem Kromhout (2025) from de Boschgaard.

The case studies were analyzed through multiple techniques for comprehensive understanding. First, timelines of key events were examined to explore relationships between legal status changes, spatial transformations, and renovations. Social, economic, legal, and political factors of each period were considered for correlations. Second, the investigation detailed renovations, including building condition, primary requirements, aspirations for spatial changes, execution, supervision, and financial aspects. Changes in the distribution of living, working, and public spaces were key for comparisons. Third, the study investigated legal

adaptation, focusing on motives, opportunities, limitations, organizational structures, and stakeholder agreements. Lastly, it examined space appropriation, methods of meeting needs, and interior characteristics, revealing how these factors shaped outcomes.

The analysis of each case study concluded with insights into spatial and legal changes, their interrelations, and the broader context in which they occur. Based on these findings, recommendations were developed to guide stakeholders systematically. This strategy harnesses the potential of vacant buildings, the demand for affordable spaces, and the squatting movement's creativity and commitment to socially beneficial, non-profit goals, illustrating how these elements can address needs often unmet by conventional systems.

case	**Boschgaard**	**Het Domijn**	**OT301**	**Plantage Dok**	**Poortgebouw**	**Tetterode**
location	Den Bosch	Weesp, outskirts	Amsterdam, city center	Amsterdam, city center	Rotterdam	Amsterdam, city center
size of the building	+/- 1,600 sqm +11,000 garden	6,000 sq m + 6,5 ha forest	+/- 2,500 sqm	+/- 2,900 sqm	+/- 1,800 sqm	11,000 sqm
squatted	2005	1989	1999	1998	1980	1981
years vacant	<1	+/- 30	<1	4	3	<1
legalized	2023	2003	2002	2002	1984	1986
property owner	housing corporation Zayaz	collective ownership by Het Domijn	collective ownership EHBK	collective ownership (renewed every 50 years)	private owner	housing corporation Stagenoot (het Oosten before)
function before squatting	community center	locomotive factory, military warehouses	film academy	church, printing company, vocal school, gym	offices (mainly Port of Rotterdam)	factory
function now	residential, community center, community garden	work (theatre arts)	residential, work, public (culture + arts)	residential, work, public multipurpose (culture + art)	residential, underground cultural center	residential, work, public - multipurpose
size of community	30	40-50	30	45-50	20-30	250-350

Tab. 1. Comparison of chosen case studies

Results

To derive results from the case studies, all data was compiled into a Catalogue of Case Studies, available in Appendix 2. The following results highlight the most relevant findings obtained from the analysis.

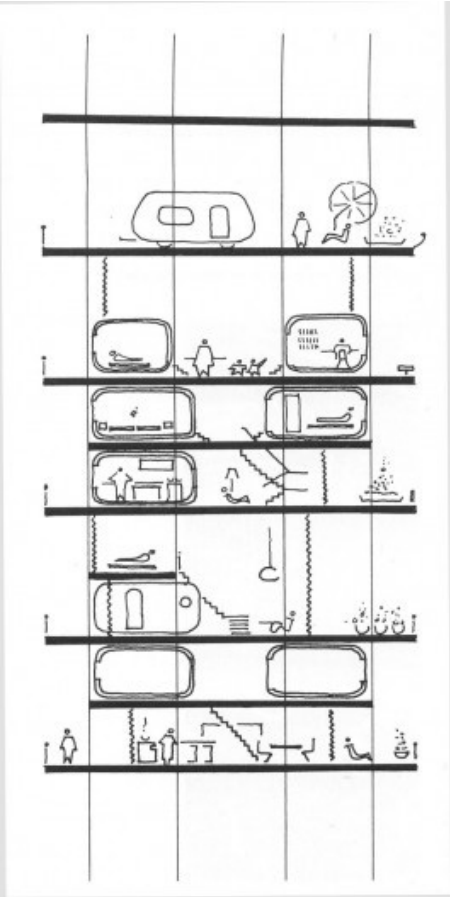
Pathways and forms of legalization

Legalization configurations vary based on the timing of squatting, legal frameworks, and available support. During high-tolerance periods, initiatives like the breeding grounds policy aided projects such as OT301 and Plantage Dok and facilitated financial arrangements like mortgage guarantees for Het Domijn. Legal adaptation tends to be more stable when municipalities own or are willing to purchase properties, which can be managed through direct agreements and sales (e.g., OT301), symbolic purchases (e.g., Plantage Dok), or transfer to housing corporations (e.g., Woonwerkpand Tetterode, Boschgaard). Challenges arise with multiple ownership parties involved (e.g., Het Domijn) or frequent ownership changes (e.g., Poortgebouw).

Many legalized squats faced demolition plans or permits, as seen with OT301, Boschgaard, and Tetterode, making renovation efforts and neighborhood support critical for securing legalization. Communities often begin with 5–10-year user-lease contracts, which can success provided security and autonomy. Most organize as associations for housing and work ateliers, promoting democratic governance, while combining this with foundation structures for public or commercial sections to maintain financial flexibility. Main differences between these legal forms are provided in Appendix 3. Over time, communities frequently purchase occupied properties to prevent demolition (Het Domijn), eviction (OT301), or to align with cultural policies (Plantage Dok), often restructuring into foundations or hybrid organizations to secure loans (OT301, Het Domijn).

Partnerships with housing corporations are common. For example, Boschgaard's owner incorporated community goals into housing development plans, while Tetterode's housing corporation supported the squatters' initiative from the outset, additionally gaining adjacent land for its project when taking under supervision the experimental initiative. Such contracts often follow Habraken's (1972) open building concept and the following shell-infill division of responsibility, where inhabitants are charged through rent for the exterior maintenance and manage the interior. However, frequent ownership changes and contract renewals create uncertainty, risking replacement or eviction. When ownership changes but contracts remain, differing interpretations can affect residents' comfort, building maintenance, and long-term viability.

Policies during squatting and legalization periods significantly shaped outcomes. The acceptance of alternative living arrangements, driven by social movements, protests, and squatting's legality between 1971 and 2010, facilitated large-scale efforts to develop legal frameworks, share expertise, and integrate non-conventional arrangements into formal systems.



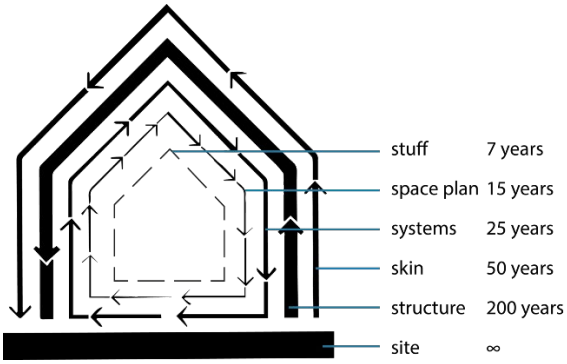


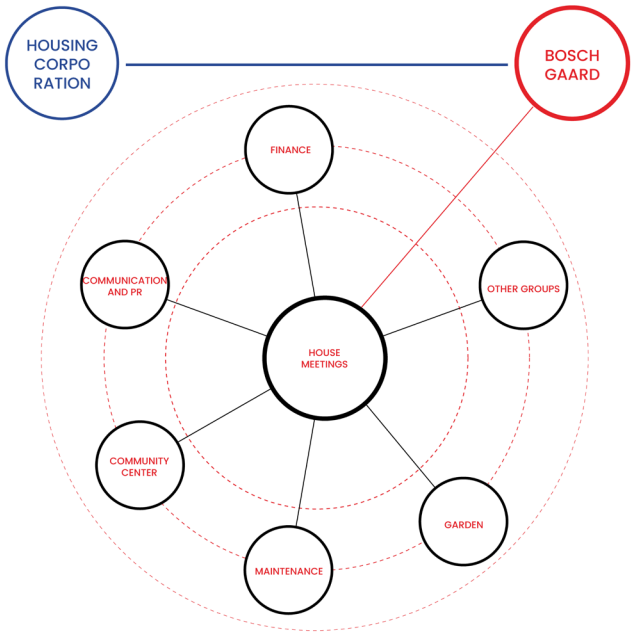
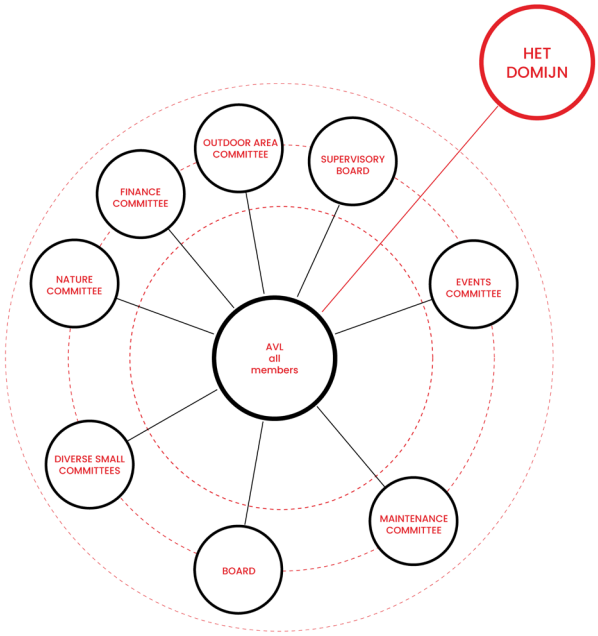
Fig. 2. Depiction of the support-infill principle of the open building concept by N. John Habraken.

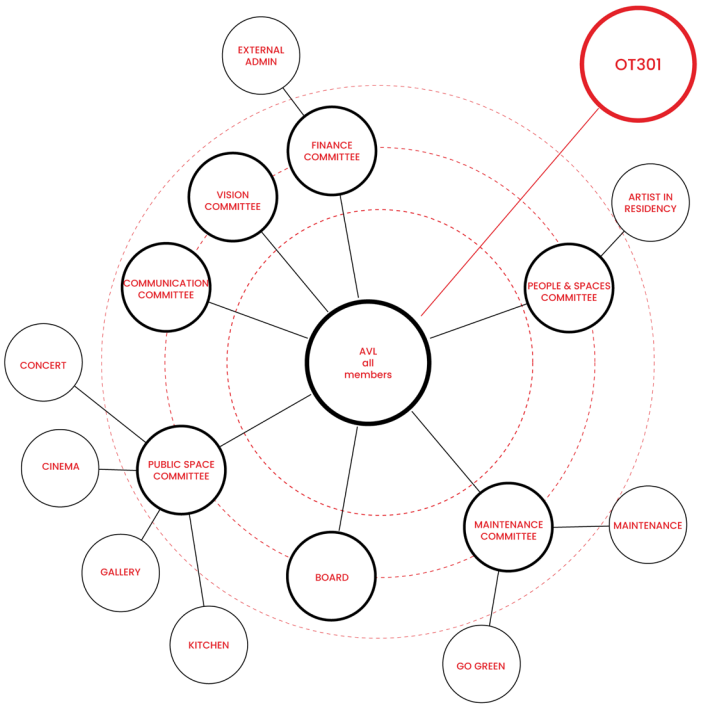
Source: N. John Habraken archives, https://vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/entrevista/13.052/4542 [Accessed 18 February 2025].

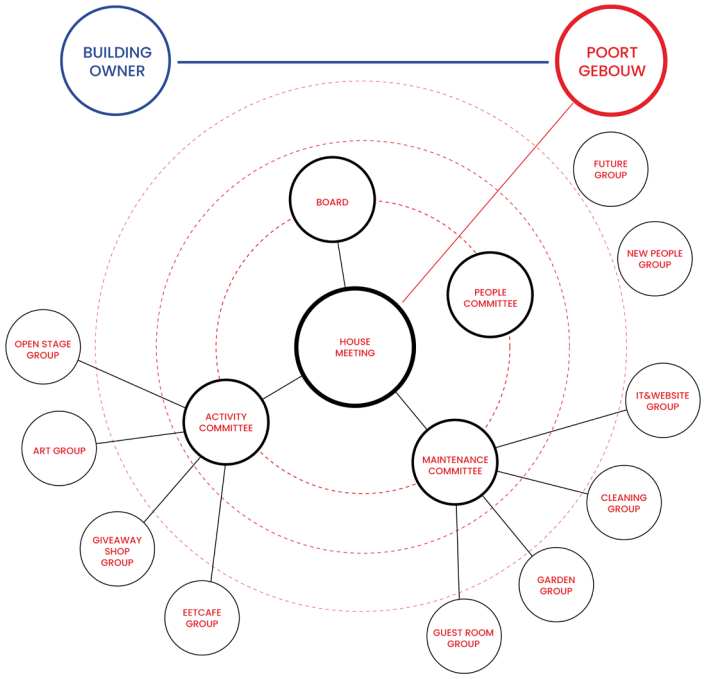
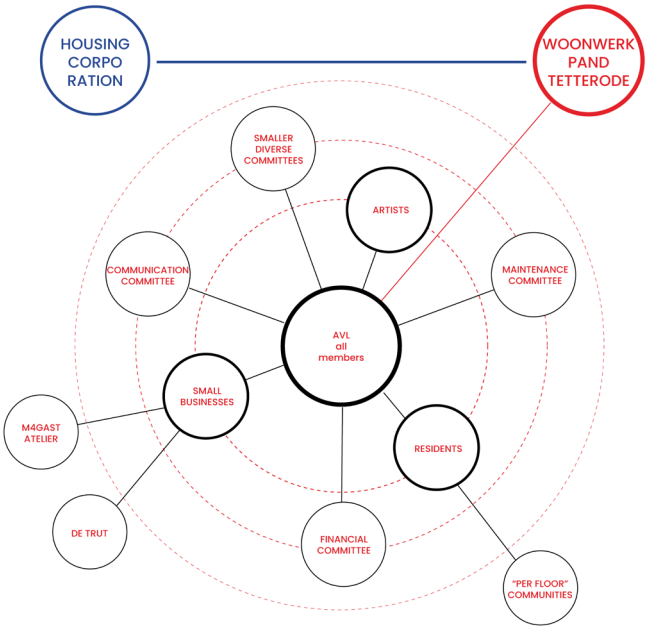
Fig. 3. Shearing Layers of Change by Steward Brand.

Source: OpenBuilding.co (2021). Manifesto. [Accessed 18 February 2025].

According to Habraken (1999), the Open Building concept proposes a distinction between building components based on their life cycles. *Supports* refer to the more permanent elements of a building, such as the structural framework, while *infills* represent the adaptable parts - those that can be changed over time. Habraken argues that supports belong to the public domain, whereas infills are part of the private realm, allowing for individual freedom and user participation in shaping living spaces. This approach aligns with Brand's (1994) concept of Shearing Layers of Change, which helps assess the varying lifespans of different building components.

Case	Legal form(s)	Property agreement	Organizational structure
Boschgaard	Association (housing) + foundation (community center)	Partnership with housing corporation – lease agreement since 2023 Full responsibility/ management over the building owned by housing corporation Zayaz Co-ownership of the garden with neighbors managed by Transfarmers	 Figure 4.
Het Domijn	Cooperative association before foundation, then association	Collective ownership since 2012 Before lease agreement with municipality between 2003-2013	 Figure 5.

Case	Legal form(s)	Property agreement	Organizational structure
OT301/EHBK	Association EHBK	Collective ownership since 2006 + Land lease (*erfpacht*) from municipality (before lease agreement between 2001-2005)	 Figure 6.
Plantage Dok	Foundation over the foundation (public space) + association (housing)	Collective ownership since 2001 Automatically (if conditions met) renewed after 50 years Full responsibility of management of the property	 Figure 7.

Case	Legal form(s)	Property agreement	Organizational structure
Poortgebouw	Association	Lease agreement with municipality, then transferred to several (private) owners since 1984	 Figure 8.
Woonwerkpand Tetterode	Association	Lease agreement with housing corporation since 1986 Partial management and responsibility over the infill – housing corporation responsible for the shell (exterior maintenance)	 Figure 9.

Tab. 2. Comparison of legal forms and organization of studies cases.

Figures 4-9. Organizational structures.

Source: Author's illustrations.

Spatial organization and function distribution

Spatial organization and changes vary across case studies, reflecting unique challenges and opportunities. During squatting, functions are flexible and undefined, with interchangeable use of spaces. Some projects retain their original functions (Tetterode, Poortgebouw), often under agreements requiring cultural activities (Plantage Dok, OT301). Legalization, however, may impose adjustments, such as limiting residential use due to regulations (Het Domijn) or high readjustment costs (OT301). Others, like Boschgaard, expand residential capacity by adding new units.

Legalization often introduces clearer functional divisions, though some contracts allow flexibility, as illustrated in figures 8-9. Tetterode, for example, maintains adaptable arrangements under regular inspections and committee oversight. Public and private areas are typically separated through spatial hierarchies, with public spaces on ground floors or front façades for accessibility, while work and residential areas remain private.

Larger spaces are often assigned to public use, with heating efficiency influencing private function placement. Plantage Dok features separate entrances for visitors and members, while Boschgaard and Poortgebouw include public-facing commercial areas and restricted access to upper floors. At OT301, public spaces are located in the rear courtyard, accessible via the now-residential front building. Large factory complexes are often subdivided into smaller units (e.g., Tetterode, Het Domijn), while Boschgaard added a building extension for residential use. Clustering residential and work units around shared kitchens and sanitary facilities fosters smaller, self-sufficient communities within larger complexes.

The building and its surroundings mutually influence one another, as shown in figures 10–11. In urbanized areas, activities like music venues may create conflicts with neighbors, requiring noise mitigation measures. Green spaces play a vital role, enhancing both the immediate environment and the broader community. Examples include Boschgaard's Akker Garden and Het Domijn's preserved greenery, where access is managed to align with activities and protect habitats. Thoughtful landscaping not only preserves ecological value but also enhances social and environmental impact.

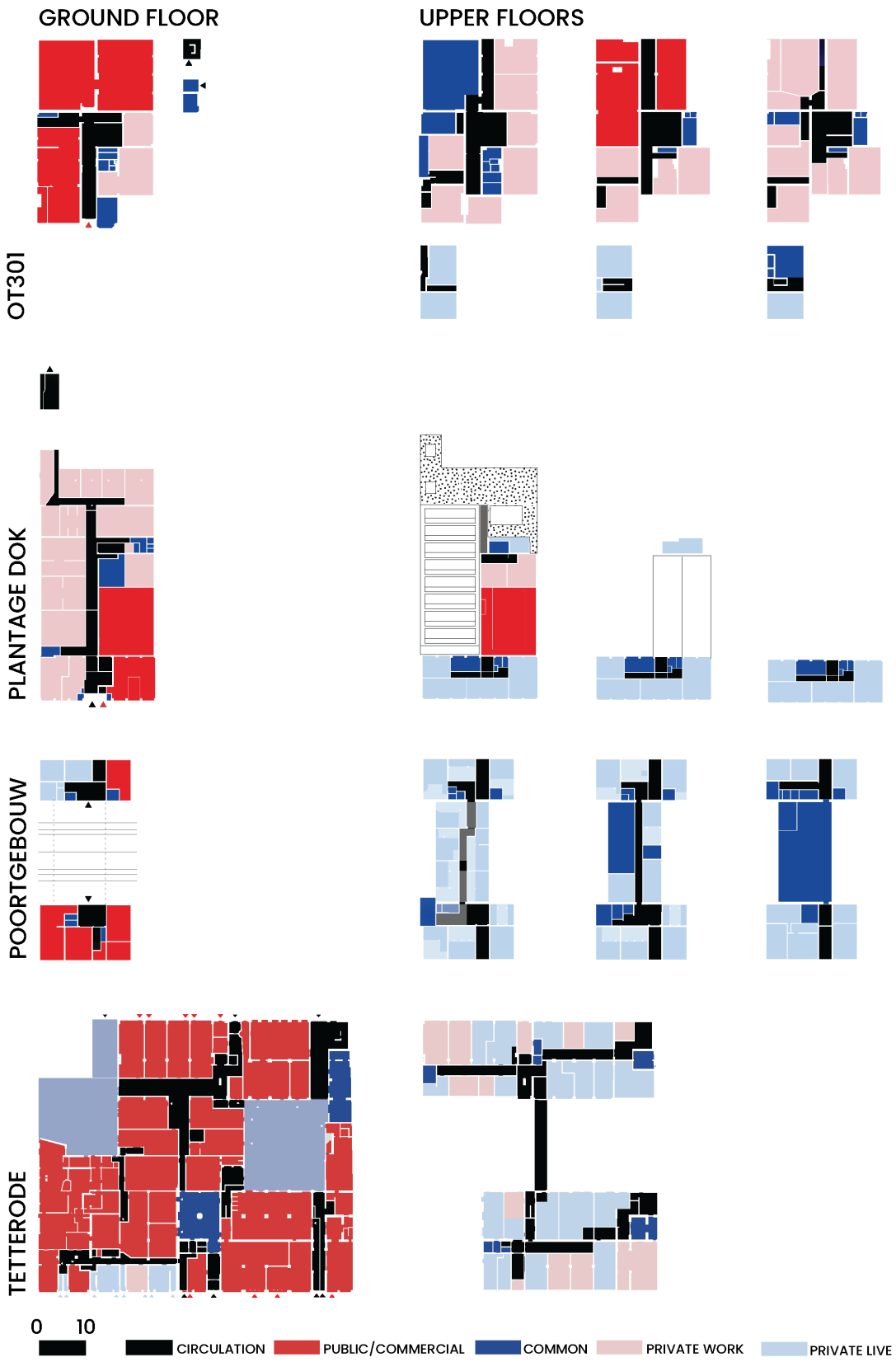


Figure 10. Functional distribution in studies cases.

Source: Author's illustration.

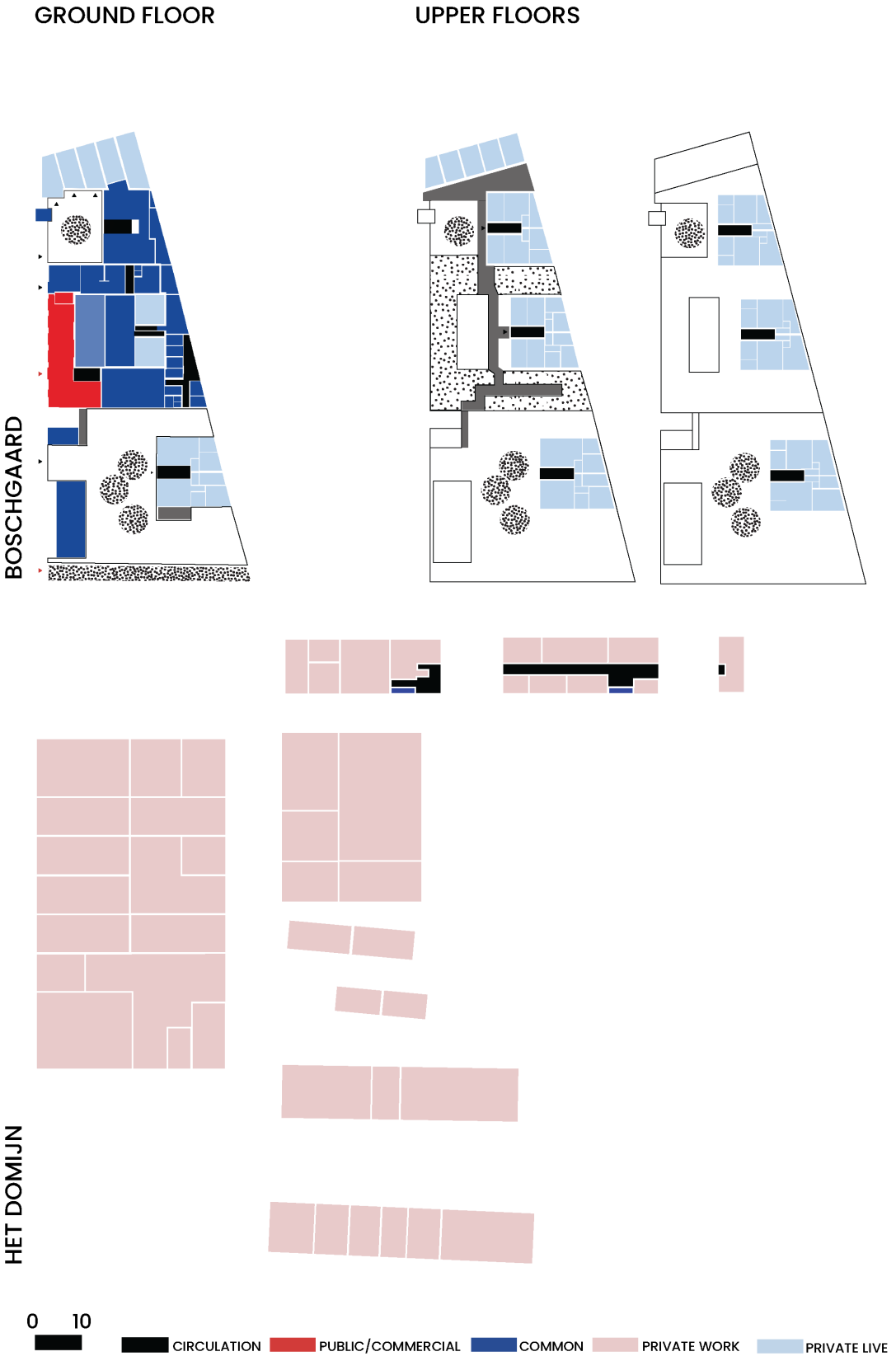


Figure 11. Functional distribution in studies cases.

Source: Author's illustration.

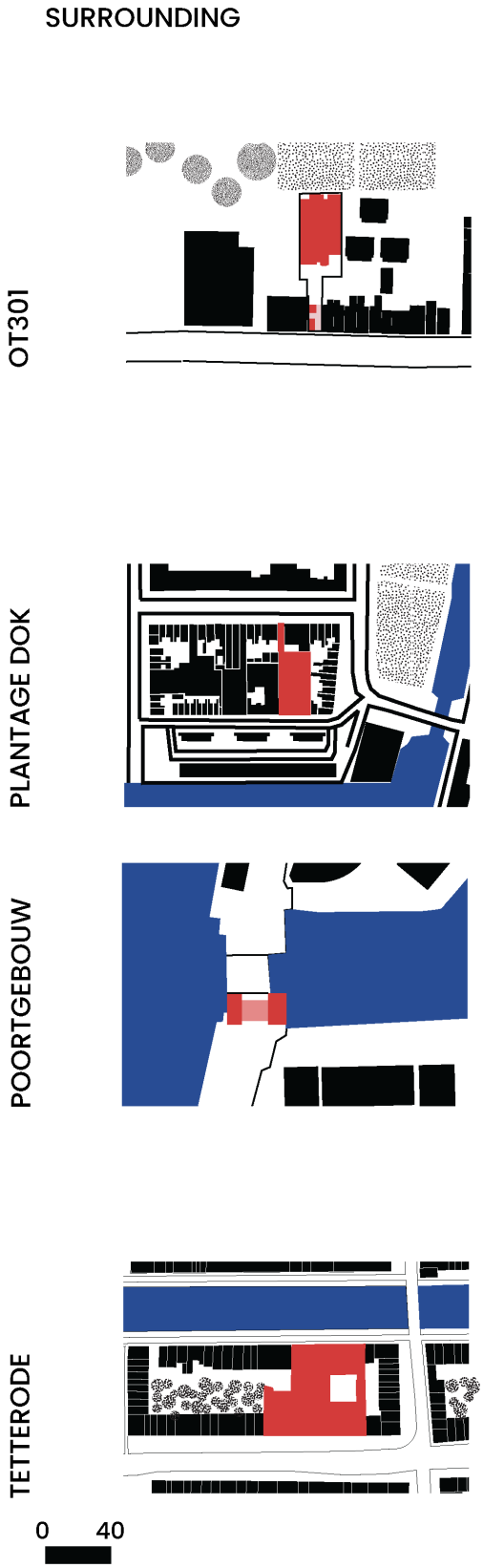


Figure 12. Relation to surrounding of studies cases.

Source: Author's illustration.

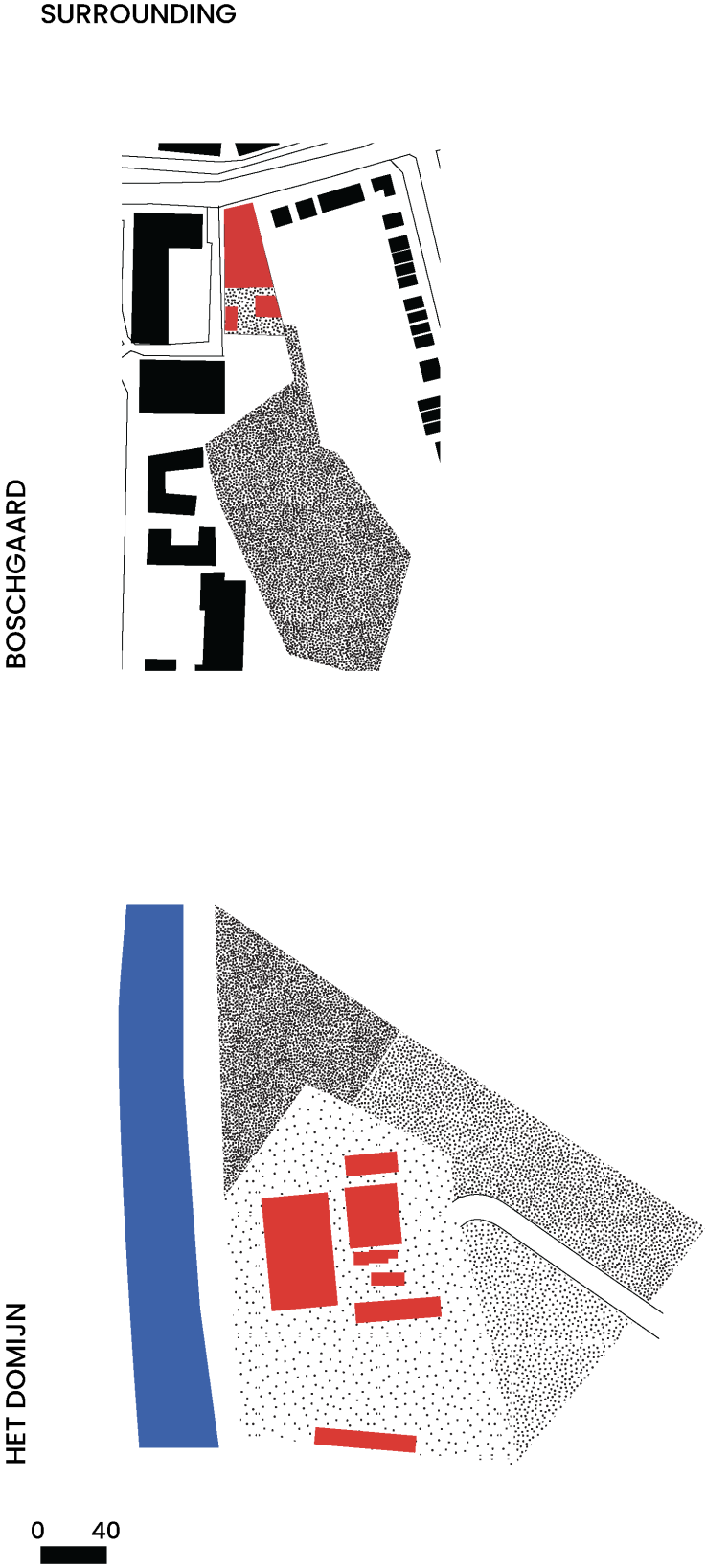


Figure 13. Relation to surrounding of studies cases.

Source: Author's illustration.

Maintenance and appropriation

Maintenance depends on the building's previous function, vacancy duration, size, and adaptation needs, described in detail in Appendix 4. Initial work often aligns with legalization steps. Rental contracts prompt significant early adjustments, while ownership adds regulations and responsibilities. Some communities, like Boschgaard, add extensions or transform buildings due to prolonged vacancy or prior functions (Tetterode, Het Domijn). Others adapt to existing conditions, as seen in Poortgebouw and Plantage Dok, or occupy buildings already aligned with their goals, like OT301. Pre-legalization structures may require minimal (Tetterode) or significant (Het Domijn) reconfiguration.

In larger spaces, partitions and provisional arrangements are reconfigured to meet fire safety regulations, including escape routes, alarms, and fireproof partitions, often leading to broader renovations. Shell maintenance depends on the building's age and condition, addressing overdue repairs such as restoring walls, patching roofs, repairing foundations (Plantage Dok, Het Domijn), removing asbestos (OT301), and installing windows (Tetterode). Utility upgrades—electricity, water, and sewage—are common, especially when required for public programming (Plantage Dok, OT301). Early renovations to public areas, like balconies, kitchens, or bathrooms, ensure quick accessibility.

Subsequent efforts prioritize sustainability, cost reduction, and self-sufficiency, including solar panels, green roofs (for ecological and thermal benefits), upgraded windows, and external insulation. Some communities expand commercial spaces to increase revenue, while others divide spaces to meet renters' needs. Later adjustments focus on comfort, optimizing public spaces, and reducing heating costs, such as upgrading sound systems, creating cinemas or meeting areas, and improving kitchens or bars. Heating larger spaces often requires façade insulation and window repairs. Communities may also prioritize ecological projects like planting trees, creating habitats, installing beehives, or developing vegetable gardens. Heritage status (Tetterode, Poortgebouw) adds

complexity, requiring specialized renovations or supervision for historic elements.

The first renovation is typically the most extensive, followed by a second phase addressing ideas initially constrained by finances or time. After a decade, renovations often shift to less invasive, desired transformations, limited by ongoing activities and operational constraints.

Space appropriation provides users the most freedom, reflecting prior spatial arrangements and showcasing creativity with minimal funds. Private and some common spaces are open to user-driven adaptation, provided they remain safe and do not affect the building’s structure. These adaptations, often unsupervised and unfunded, rely on reclaimed materials. Interiors are eclectic, tailored to users' needs, often blending work and living functions. Items from evicted squats frequently find new uses, such as ORZK elements in Poortgebouw or a balustrade from ADM in Plantage Dok. Mezzanines in taller spaces create additional floors, as seen in Het Domijn, Tetterode, and Poortgebouw.

Stakeholders and contribution

Each case involves various stakeholders, including squatting communities, governmental bodies, current or former building owners, management entities, and financial or organizational aid providers. Governmental bodies, as primary regulators, may authorize temporary leases and later facilitate property sales under conditions prioritizing social benefits and restricting open-market transactions. In some cases, governments purchase properties from private owners to enable these transitions. Planning and zoning regulations often impose restrictions, requiring flexibility to align unconventional uses with legal and financial frameworks. Reframing these spaces beyond monetary value allows communities to operate sustainably and work toward independence.

Squatting communities, though rooted in subcultures, are highly diverse. Many are connected to creative fields, influencing the programming of spaces and choices of buildings. Legalized initiatives are typically led by experienced individuals who leverage networks built on mutual support and shared expertise. These networks are vital to success, and support from neighboring communities often proves instrumental. Given their unconventional nature, such spaces demand tailored approaches to design, management, and operations. External professionals with relevant experience and local stakeholders often value squatting communities for their contributions to shared environments.

Arrangements for managing these spaces vary. When housing corporations or private owners are involved, responsibilities for external and internal maintenance are delineated through contracts. Maintenance, largely handled by the squatting community, significantly reduces costs. Labor is often organized through expected member contributions or collective work for larger projects, overseen by internal committees committed to building preservation and functionality.

Financial challenges primarily involve maintenance and acquisition costs, covered by community rent contributions. Maintenance usually begins as a prerequisite for legalization and is often funded through loans and targeted programs like Amsterdam's breeding grounds initiative, which supports

major renovations but is typically limited to metropolitan areas. A common condition for aid is difficult to collect base capital, often sourced through crowdfunding, donations or support from friends, neighbors, or community organizations. Managing costs while maintaining affordability requires careful financial planning, with expenses distributed over time. Grants and awards recognizing cultural or social contributions often supplement funding, though subsidies are constrained by rigid eligibility criteria, making them inaccessible for many former squatting communities.

Re-imagining free zones

In today's context, the urgency for alternative, affordable housing solutions is growing. Squatting communities offer compelling examples of adaptability, spatial regeneration, and the ability to meet diverse needs—transforming occupied buildings rather than allowing them to fall into disuse or be demolished.

Granting legal space for self-organization and temporary occupation to test viability could be a vital first step. Early-stage autonomy often fosters innovative approaches. Once proven successful, these models can be assessed, refined, and integrated into existing frameworks through various organizational structures, additional financial and advisory support, or new partnerships.

This chapter explores how such processes can be supported architecturally in the adaptation of vacant buildings.

Functional model

For this model to be viable in a profit-oriented world and attractive to all stakeholders, a certain degree of compromise may be necessary. A proposed mixed-use programme could combine rented, affordable private residential and workspaces with community-oriented and cultural initiatives. Additionally, a necessary profit-generating function could involve partnerships with private investors or include public functions managed by governmental bodies—such as light industry, vertical farming, libraries, sports facilities, or transportation hubs—including those often considered undesirable in close proximity to residential areas. This combination could form the economic foundation for maintaining affordability. However, long-term stability and community autonomy remain essential to the success of such models.

Given the characteristics of these transformations - emphasizing self-building, self-maintenance, and recycling - this chapter proposes the

creation of a dedicated community workshop for wood, metal, and ceramics. This space would allow elements needed for building adaptations to be prepared in advance and assembled on-site. Operated by experienced residents, the workshop would also offer training and support, making the process accessible to anyone interested in participating. Such engagement fosters community involvement and care for the building, which in turn significantly reduces operating costs.

Ideally, a mutually supportive relationship would develop between the profit-generating function and the workshop. For example, a light industry producing tiny houses could supply leftover materials to the workshop, which could be reused or repurposed. The community could also test unconventional prototypes, and the workshop could provide additional training - creating an exchange that benefits both sides.

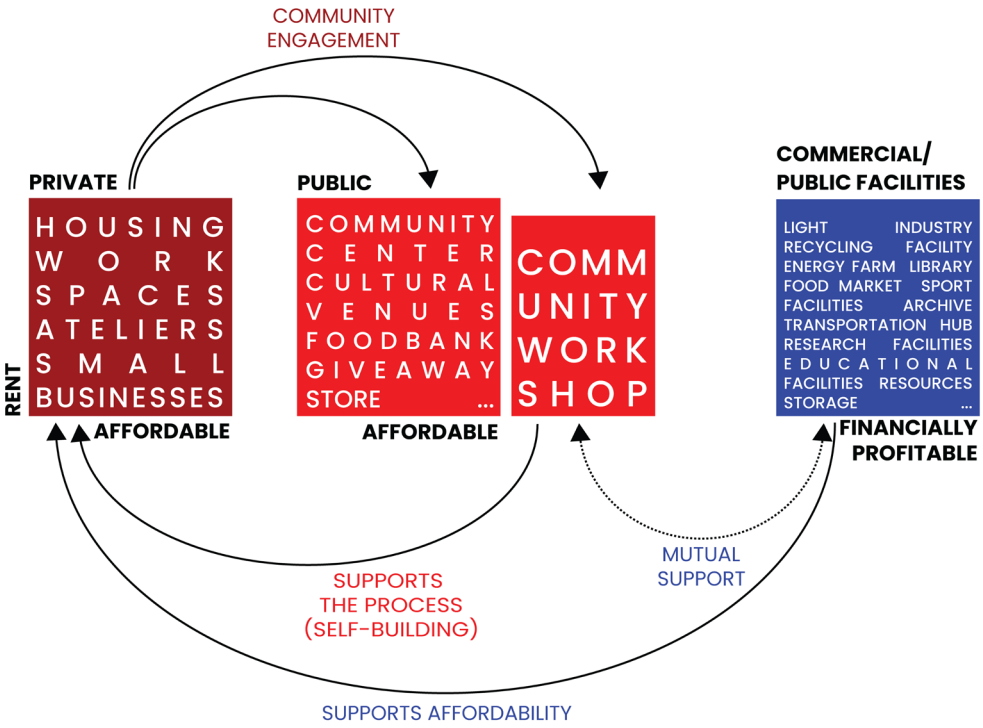


Figure 14. Proposed functional model.

Source: Author's illustration.

Adaptation timeline and open-building concept

Although the adaptation of vacant buildings should allow a significant degree of freedom for the communities inhabiting them, ensuring safety and meeting basic needs through clear guidelines remains essential. The solution proposed below focuses primarily on providing affordable spaces and enabling flexible transformations that respond to current, context-specific needs. The process envisions an incremental approach to building practices - starting with basic comfort and gradually evolving toward higher standards through community engagement and self-maintenance.

The first step involves providing an organizational masterplan and phasing strategy that structures further development, treating the adapted building as an urban project rather than a static architectural object.

This approach is largely inspired by Habraken's (1999) *Open Building* concept, which distinguishes between building components based on their life cycles. *Supports* refer to the more permanent elements of a building, such as the structural framework, while *infills* represent adaptable components - those subject to change over time. Habraken argues that supports belong to the public domain, whereas infills are part of the private realm, allowing for individual freedom and user participation in shaping one's environment.

The following steps of adaptation are proposed:

1. Structural assessment: Evaluating the safety and spatial potential of the existing structure (support), considering aspects such as size, orientation, and context.

2. Organizational grid: Establishing a circulation framework, including the placement of fire escapes, to guide spatial organization and ensure safe movement throughout the building.

3. Service infrastructure: Introduction of a grid for services and installations. Sustainable solutions are encouraged not only for environmental benefits but also to reduce future operating costs and increase self-sufficiency.

4. Wet infills: Installation of shared bathrooms and kitchens, tailored to the specific context and needs of each location. Evenly distributed and aligned with the established service and circulation grids, encouraging both functional organization and the formation of smaller community clusters.

5. Dry infills: Construction of individual living and working units (e.g., bedrooms, ateliers) as dry infills. These can be self-built and installed by residents following a simple recommendation set (e.g., placement lines, maximum built area, entrance orientation). While these units can connect to wet infills, this is optional. All infills need to meet fire-safety regulations, and should be designed for easy disassembly, preferably portable for reuse elsewhere if needed.

6. Façade adaptation: Implementation of incremental repair and transformation of the façade, led by the community, to support bio-conditioned mechanisms that enable passive environmental regulation (e.g., natural ventilation, solar gain). The goal is for the building to function with minimal intervention beyond basic user actions like opening and closing windows.

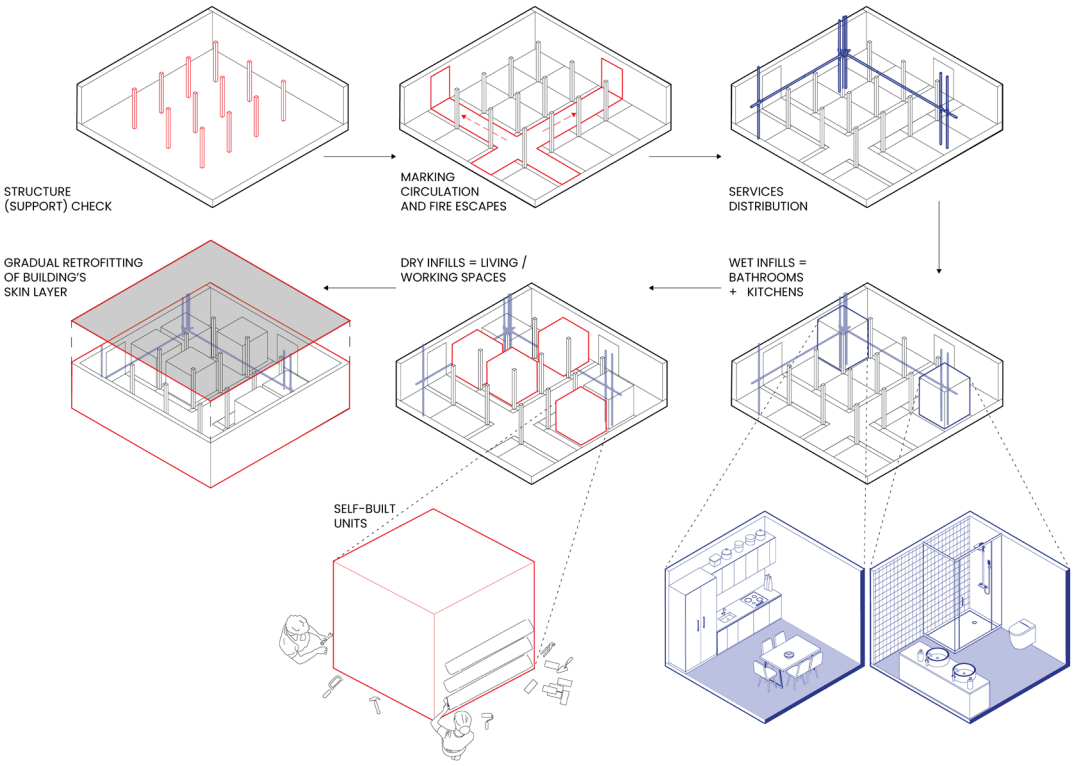


Figure 15. Building adaptation strategy proposal.

Source: Author's illustration.

Conclusion

This study analyzes six diverse case studies of formerly squatted communities in the Netherlands that adapted spatially to legal frameworks. Using various methods, it examines pathways to legalization, post-recognition spatial and architectural transformations, and the stakeholders involved. The findings provide an overview of possibilities rather than fixed patterns, highlighting characteristics and inspiring potential solutions, though they are not exhaustive.

The building itself plays a central role in influencing spatial changes. Its construction date, materials, and previous function dictate how it can be repurposed. Larger spaces, particularly post-industrial properties, offer flexibility but require significant effort and expense to subdivide, especially under safety regulations. The duration of vacancy and neglect also heavily impacts the scope of necessary work, as abandoned buildings deteriorate rapidly. Squatting communities address critical issues with considerable effort, though financial constraints often limit these fixes to provisional solutions. Rules, spatial regulations, and building codes further shape adaptations. Some cases are treated as experimental, allowing partial regulatory compliance if safety standards are met. Others require revised layouts to meet evolving legal requirements. Initial maintenance typically prioritizes fire safety systems, partitions, evacuation routes, repairing building envelopes (especially roofs), and upgrading utilities like electricity, water, and sewage. This process mirrors early construction phases, progressing from structural repairs to interiors and finer details. Subsequent changes often focus on optimizing public spaces to enhance revenue while prioritizing sustainability and self-sufficiency. Efforts include addressing heating issues, repairing leaking roofs, and replacing single-glazed windows, reflecting the communities' commitment to essential maintenance. Over time, desired additions improve comfort and functionality. The heritage status of a property significantly influences the scope and approach to maintenance. The persistence of squatting communities, their mutual support, and their extensive effort in tackling

basic issues - despite limited resources - showcase remarkable dedication.

The relationship between legal forms and spatial changes highlights the limitations and consequences of legal organization. Ownership provides freedom to manage spatial changes but requires decision-making and long-term planning. Major maintenance is funded through collected rents and loans, which increase costs, challenging affordability. Partnerships with housing corporations vary depending on contracts, with conflicts often arising over shell maintenance, requiring a balance between quality and cost. Inhabitants ultimately bear these expenses through rent but have limited influence when corporations oversee the process. In contrast, community-led management, though demanding more time and effort, often leads to satisfactory outcomes with decisions made directly by residents. However, when ownership changes or the owner neglects responsibilities, buildings fall into disrepair. Without secure long-term rental agreements, investment becomes a significant risk.

In a world marked by rapid change and uncertainty, exploring alternative living arrangements is essential. Affordable, inclusive, and adaptable approaches, like those in squatting communities, organically address evolving local societal needs. The emergence of free zones and discussions on integrating such movements within legal frameworks reflect growing interest in these practices. Nevertheless, studying squatting communities and their transformations is challenging due to their intangible and unconventional nature. These communities often thrive through combination of effort, luck, and opportunities, supported by connections and advocacy. Squatting is deeply tied to economic conditions, social dynamics, specific buildings, neighborhoods, and the communities inhabiting them. Broader factors, such as laws, municipal strategies, and property plans, also shape their evolution. In an era dominated by data and automation, prioritizing human stories and unconventional solutions offers a meaningful way to understand these practices. This study primarily draws from publications and interviews reflecting squatting communities' perspectives. Including viewpoints from other stakeholders - governmental bodies, neighbors, housing corporations, and contractors - would provide a more balanced understanding. However, oral accounts, often emotionally

charged, can influence objectivity. Communities typically seek legal adaptation after years of squatting, using their experiences as a foundation. Legalization decisions stem from personal and complex motivations, intertwined with unique circumstances and stories. These decisions are less about detailed planning and more about comparing improved opportunities with past hardships. They depend on community goals, prior adaptations, and the suitability of spaces for legal habitation - factors inherently difficult to measure or compare.

This work serves as a starting point, gathering foundational knowledge and conceptual design strategies. While it may not provide new insights to those deeply involved in the squatting scene, it is a crucial step in preserving and studying these precarious yet innovative practices.

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Appendix 1. Matrix of case studies selection

* Chosen cases (6) highlighted

Case		Location	Placement within the city	Year squatted	Year legalized spatially	Form of legalization	Motivation for squatting	Years vacant	Function before squatting	Function now	Size	Spatial changes	Collective size now	Source [accessed: 11.11.2024]
1	**Boschgaard**	Den Bosch	160k city	2005		Community – management of newly constructed units Rental contract with housing corporation Zayaz (owner of the building and finances)	Vacancy		Neighborhood center	Residential + community center + garden		Adaptive reuse + newly built extension finished in 2023	25-30	https://boschgaard.nl/
2	**Woonwerkpad Tetterode**	Amsterdam	920k city center	1984	Start 1986	1. Association (*Vereniging*) All users need to be members – responsible for interior maintenance + contract with housing corporation Stadgenoot (het Oosten before)- responsible for the building shell maintenance when the city purchased the building	Demolition prevention – vacancy	3	Factory complex, printing industry	Residential + work (approx. 160 places) + public/ cultural (*woonwerkpad*)	>7000sqm (169 x 40sqm for work-live units only) Around 11,000 sqm	Heritage – 3 monuments Adaptive reuse of existing buildings	350	https://dash-journal.com/woonwerkpand-tetterode/
3	**Het Domijn**	Weesp	Edge 20k city, 15km to 920k city	1989	Start 2004	1. Foundation (*Stichting*) 2. 2004-2013 Association + 10-year lease (2003-2013) 3. 2013-now collective ownership	Vacancy		Locomotive factory	live work (45 spaces) cultural (mostly theatre related)	6,5 ha Inside 3200+1100+ 800+ 600+300 Approx 6000sqm	Adaptive reuse of existing buildings	50	https://www.hetdomijn.nl/nl/home/ https://www.collectiefeigendom.nl/vrijplaatsen/het-domijn
4	Nieuwe en Meer		Edge of 920k city	June 25 1988		1. 1988 Foundation (*stichting*) Nieuw en meer 2. 1991 contract between *sichting* and city of Amsterdam – extensive renovations Supervision by casa architect, many works carried out by tenants 3. 1991 Tenants' association	Vacancy		Military warehouse	80 live-work studios	3.7 ha	Adaptive reuse	100	https://www.nieuwenmeer.nl/en

5	Het Grone Veld	Amsterdam Noord	Edge of 920k city	2019		1. Association (*Vereniging de Verademing*) – previous ADM community + collaborators With partnership with the municipality of Amsterdam ("Expeditie Vrije Ruimte" policy) for temporal 3years lease agreement (until 2024)	Vacancy	15 years	Water treatment plant	Live Work Culture	6 ha	Temporary structures, adaptive reuse of existing structures	150	https://hetgroeneveld.amsterdam/
6	**Plantage Dok**	Amsterdam	920k city center	Jan 3 1998	2002	1. Foundation (*stichting*) + "Collective ownership" with a long-term rental with municipality automatically renewed every 50 years (breeding ground policy) – in the future building can be only sold back to municipality	Vacancy	5	Printing company, Church, school, office	Residential + work+ public/cultural (*woonwerkpad*)	Inside 2900 sqm	Adaptive reuse of existing buildings	45	https://plantagedok.nl/
7	**OT301**	Amsterdam	920k city center	Nov 14 1999		1. Nov 2002 User contract on breeding ground policy 2. Feb 2006 Collective ownership	Vacancy	> 1 year	Art. School	Live Work Public/cultural		Adaptive reuse of existing buildings	25-35	https://www.collectiefeigendom.nl/vrijplaatsen/ot301 https://www.ot301.nl/
8	Grote Broek	Nijmegen	City center	1984	2002	residents manage it under a housing cooperative city of Nijmegen bought it in 2002, then corporation bought it in 2004	Vacancy	+/- 4	Print shop – newspapers, furniture store	Social center, residential		Renovations, endedn in 2009	15-20	https://grotebroek.nl/
9	The Ruigoord	Amsterdam	main city outskirts	1973	2000	Lease agreement with port of Amsterdam and Ruigoord foundation	Vacancy	13	Agricultural settlement, church	Workspace for artists, cultural events, community space, residential	120,000 sqm, 20-25 buildings	Adaptive reuse of existing buildings, new additions	40-50	https://ruigoord.nl/
10	NDSM	Amsterdam Noord	main city	1990's		foundation Kinetisch Noord, multiple organizations combined	Vacancy	6-10 years	Shipbuilding and repair yard	Cultural incubator zone with multitude of cafés, event venues, art galleries and studios, offices, new residential developments	90 ha	Adaptive reuse, new construction around	-	

11	OCCII	Amsterdam	main city center	1984	1992	Foundation	Vacancy		Horse tram garage with stables	Cultural (music) center, part of Binnenpret complex	-	Adaptive reuse	-	https://www.collectiefeigendom.nl/vrijplaatsen/occiibinnenpret https://occii.org/
12	Binnenpret	Amsterdam	main city center	1984	1993	Leasehold contract with municipality since 1993 for 30 years, extended in 2023 Association of Binnenpret	Vacancy	4-6 years		Residential Workspaces Public facilities: music venue (OCCII), café (Kasbah), a restaurant (MKZ), a library (Bollox), a children's theater (Kinderpret), a bike workshop (Farafina), rehearsal studios, and a courtyard		Adaptive reuse	50-100	https://www.collectiefeigendom.nl/vrijplaatsen/occiibinnenpret
13	ACU	Utrecht	main city center	1976	1994	Collective ownership since 1994	Vacancy	9	Car repair shop	Cultural center (cafe, library, concerts)		Adaptive reuse	30-50	https://acu.nl/
14	Effenaar	Eindhoven		1970	1971	Lease contract, municipality is the owner of the building *Stichting*	Vacancy	6	Linen factory	Cultural youth center, now music venue		New unit in the same location, old demolished	-	https://www.effenaar.nl/over-effenaar
15	Fort Pannerden	Fort	out of the city	2000		Temporary agreement before renovations started	Vacancy, Historic preservation	50	Military fort	Museum		historic preservation		https://www.fortpannerden.eu/

16	Mooira	Utrecht	City center	1983			Vacancy			Cultural center Residential				https://moira-utrecht.nl/
17	Vrankrijk	Amsterdam	main city center	1982	1991	Collective ownership of the building	Vacancy, demolition prevention	7		Cultural center Residential				
18	Zaal 100	Amsterdam	main city center	1984		Cooperative association				Cultural center (theater, concerts, exhibitions, workshops, community gatherings)				
19	Bajesdorp	Amsterdam	Edge of main city	Sep 2003, +2010, +2015		1. 2011 association Bajesdorp (Vereniging) 2. 2020 Het Nieuwe Bajesdorp Co-partnership of the Bajestuin communal garden with municipality of ouder Amstel permanent new-build breeding ground lease & residential cooperative	Vacancy		Prison guard houses	Residential Community center 2 gardens (11 apartments, 3 communal spaces, 4 workspaces, 2 studios, a theatre space, kitchen, storage and 2 public gardens)	Inside 1100 sqm Land 1944 sqm	New units in the same location, old demolished	25 (10 from the original group)	https://www.collectiefeigendom.nl/vrijplaatsen/bajesdorp https://bajesdorp.nl/
20	**Poortgebouw**	Rotterdam	main city center	Oct 3 1980		1. 1982 Association (*vereniging*) 2. 1984 – rental contract Building owned by: 1. Municipality of Rotterdam 2. 1999 sold to Groene Groep 3. Private owners	Vacancy Protest against plans for the place (erotic center)		Offices, lastly for the Rotterdam port operator	Live Work (artist studios) Public/cultural (*eetcafe*, darkroom, meeting space, giveaway store)		Heritage Adaptive reuse of existing buildings		Architecture of appropriation (2019) HNI
21	Papenhulst	Den Bosch	city	1978	2000	Housing corporation as owner, lease contract with association as self-managed community	Vacancy, preservation	8	Hospital	Residential (40 units) Workshops (13 units)	5,000 sqm + 4,000 sqm land	heritage	40-50	https://www.papenhulst.nl/

22	ORKZ	Groningen	city	1979	1985	Lease contract with housing corporation as cooperative association	Vacancy	>1	Hospital	Residential Work complex, Public facilities (cinema, bar, concert hall, exhibitions pace), gardens		Adaptive reuse	250	Architecture of appropriation (2019) HNI https://www.orkz.net/nl
23	De Vrouwenschool	Nijmegen	city	1979	1997	self-managed housing association; residents collectively own and maintain the property	Vacancy		Dominican convent, School building	Residential Workspaces			20	
24	De Grote Pyr	Den Haag	Main city	1999	2002	Managed by the association "De Grote Pyr"; collectively ownership and maintained of the property.	Vacancy		School	Residential Workspaces		Adaptive reuse	40	https://grotepyr.nl/over-de-pyr/
25	WG-terrein	Amsterdam	City	1981	1989	Managed by the association WG-terrein	Vacancy		Hospital	Residential Workspaces		Adaptive reuse	85 residential + 35 workspaces	https://wg-terrein.nl/historie/
26	Casa de Pauw	Arnhem	City	1985	1990	Association	Vacancy		Monastery complex	Residential + workspaces	2,800 sqm	Adaptive reuse	45 + 12 kids	https://www.casadepauw.nl/
27	Frederik Hendrikschool	Amsterdam	Main city center	1983	1989	Association Collectively owned, land received from the municipality on leasehold until 1067	Vacancy		Primary school	Residential + workspaces, cultural spot			25	https://www.wwpt.nl/dit-is-het-verhaal-achter-woonwerkpand-de-frederik-hendrikschool/

Appendix 2. Case Studies Catalogue

PLANTAGE DOK

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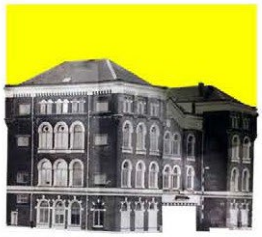


Contents

Case study 1 - de Boschgaard

sources:

www.boschgaard.nl

https://www.superuse-studios.com/projectplus/woongroep-boschgaard/

visit + interview with Jochem Kromhout 02.01.2025

Introduction

location	Den Bosch
size of the building	+/- 1600 sqm +11,000 garden (co-ownership)
squatted	2005
time vacant	less than a year
legalized	extension's construction from 2021
form of legalization as community	association (housing) + foundation (community center)
property owner	housing corporation Zayaz
function before squatting	community center
function now	residential, community center, community garden
size of community	30

Squatting

The community center, originally constructed in 1969, stood vacant for a year before being squatted in 2005. In 2006, a housing corporation acquired the building with plans to convert it into social housing but was unable to obtain the necessary permits. Despite this, the center continued to serve as a vital meeting place for the community. Over time, the community and the housing corporation collaborated to develop a joint housing project. Although the area's planning initially didn't allow the center's community-focused function, its preservation was crucial for the community.

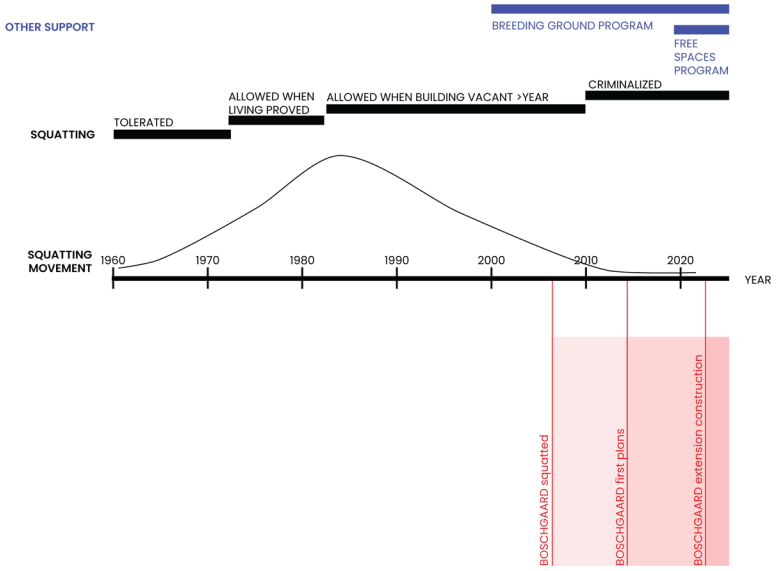


Fig. 1. Positioning in the timeline of squatting in the Netherlands. Author's illustration.

Legal organization

The Boschgaard operates as an association, with a separate foundation managing the community center. The Boschgaarders' association holds a lease agreement with the housing corporation Zayaz, which retains ownership of the land and building. Inhabitants are co-owners of the self-built and self-managed building extension and take responsibility for its ongoing management, subject to annual inspections by Zayaz.

The organization is structured horizontally, with smaller groups focusing on specific areas such as finance, public relations, and the community space. Decision-making follows a consensus-based model, categorized by priority levels: red for high-priority issues requiring community-wide decisions, orange for medium-priority matters resolved within smaller groups, and green for low-priority issues, often decided individually.

Initially, meetings were held monthly but are now conducted every three months. However, the group still gathers monthly for collaborative work on house-related tasks, which also serves as a forum for discussing smaller topics.

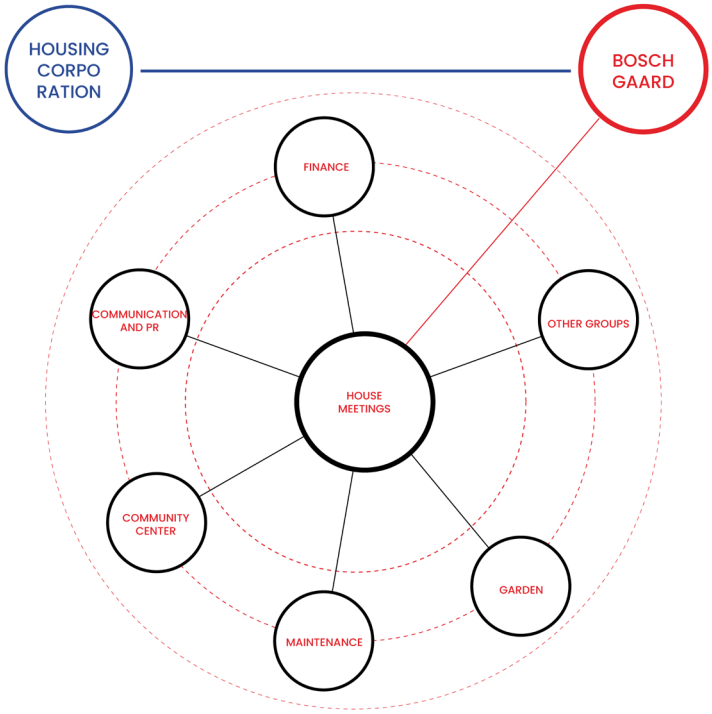


Fig. 2. Organizational structure.
Author's illustration.

Spatial organization

The public section, the community center, occupies the former squatted space adjacent to the street. The community center features a large hall for gatherings and craft activities, alongside an adjacent kitchen used for hosting *eetcafé* dinners.

It connects via a winter courtyard to two communal living rooms, kitchens, and shared laundry and storage areas. These shared spaces are intentionally designed to encourage spontaneous encounters among residents as they pass through, reducing the need for formal meetings.

Housing units are a mix of ground-floor apartments and those in three newly constructed buildings. The 19 apartments, ranging from 35 to 85 sqm, are located within three “towers” and each includes a kitchenette and bathroom.

The neighboring Graafse Akker garden, spanning 11,000 sqm, is managed by Tranfarmers. Crowdfunded and co-owned by Boschgaarders and nearby residents, it includes a vegetable garden, green spaces, greenhouses, and meeting areas. Additionally, the community maintains a green roof garden, offering further green space for residents.

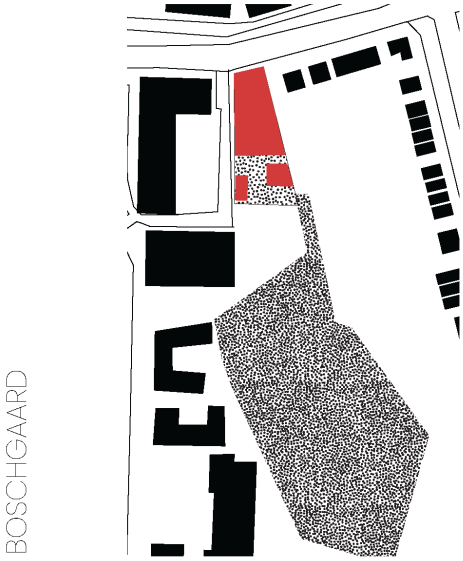


Fig. 3. Surrounding

Author’s illustration.

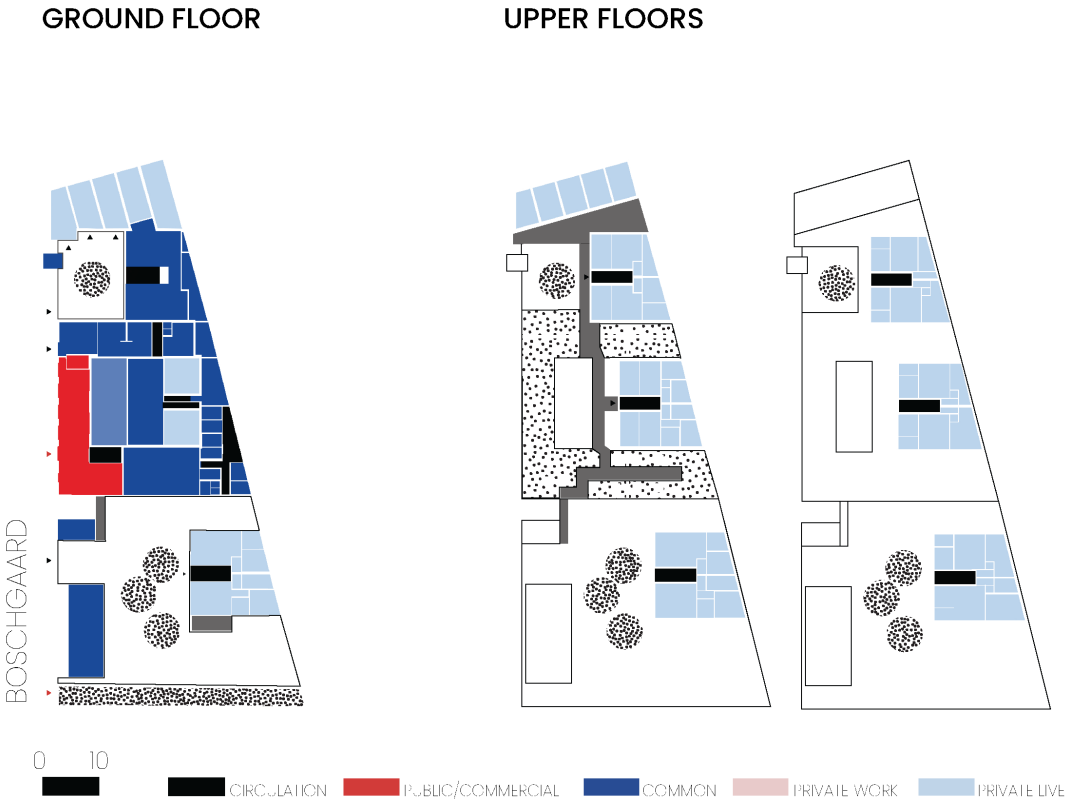


Fig. 4. Functional distribution.
Author's illustrations based on Superuse Studio floorplan drawings.

Maintenance - Construction

The initiative was entirely resident-driven, with the housing corporation Zayaz joining as a partner. After five years of planning and discussions, Superuse Studio was brought on as the architect and contractor, and construction began in 2021. The project was completed in mid-2023.

The contractor managed the construction of the building shell and all legally regulated aspects. However, much of the interior work and tasks during the dismantling of the old structure were self-constructed by the community, which acted as a subcontractor. Residents took on tasks such as tiling, installing partition walls, and applying clay layers to walls. This approach helped reduce costs, ensured the building met eco-standards, simplified future maintenance, and allowed residents to have control over details, such as choosing regular curtains instead of automated ones.

The building was constructed using 85% reclaimed materials sourced from demolitions, renovations, and abandoned construction projects. Many

elements, such as the foundation, were reused in place, while others, like bricks and beams, were carefully dismantled and reassembled in new configurations.

Finance

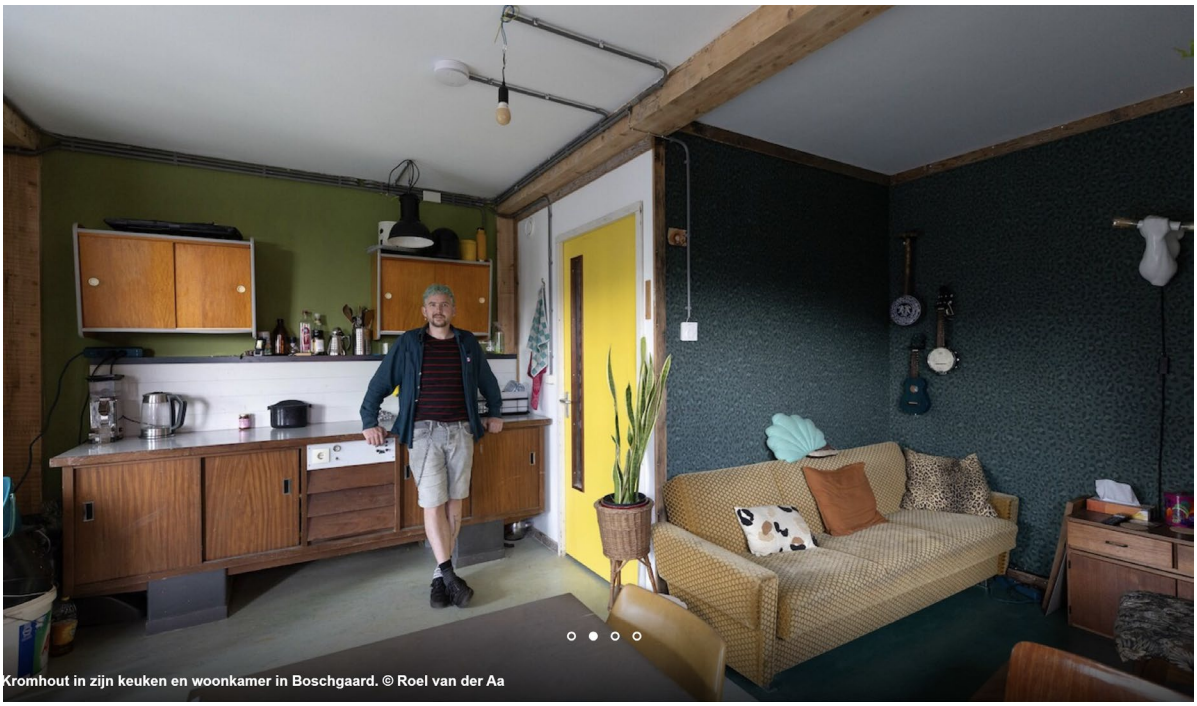
The community operates as a social housing rental in partnership with the housing corporation. However, their subsidy situation is complex. They do not fit neatly into conventional categories such as private ownership, cooperatives, or regular renters. This ambiguity complicates access to subsidies.

For eco and circular subsidies, their high reliance on reused materials works against them. Many programs prioritize new materials with higher rated circularity. Additionally, subsidies like those from *Bureau Broedplaatsen*, which support alternative spaces adapting to legal frameworks, are unavailable in smaller cities like Den Bosch. Subsidies are primarily allocated to social initiatives, but the neighborhood center relies on other sources of income. These include low-cost space rentals, community activities such as *De Juin* dinners, and hosting tours or meetings.

The community is exploring the possibility of purchasing the property in the future, contingent on securing adequate funding and loan options.

Fig. 5-10. Gradual space transformation with the community involvement. https://boschgaard.nl/. [Accessed 17.12.2024]

Fig. 11-12 Project of Boschgaard by Superuse.
https://www.superuse-studios.com/projectplus/woongroep-boschgaard/. [Accessed 17.12.2024]



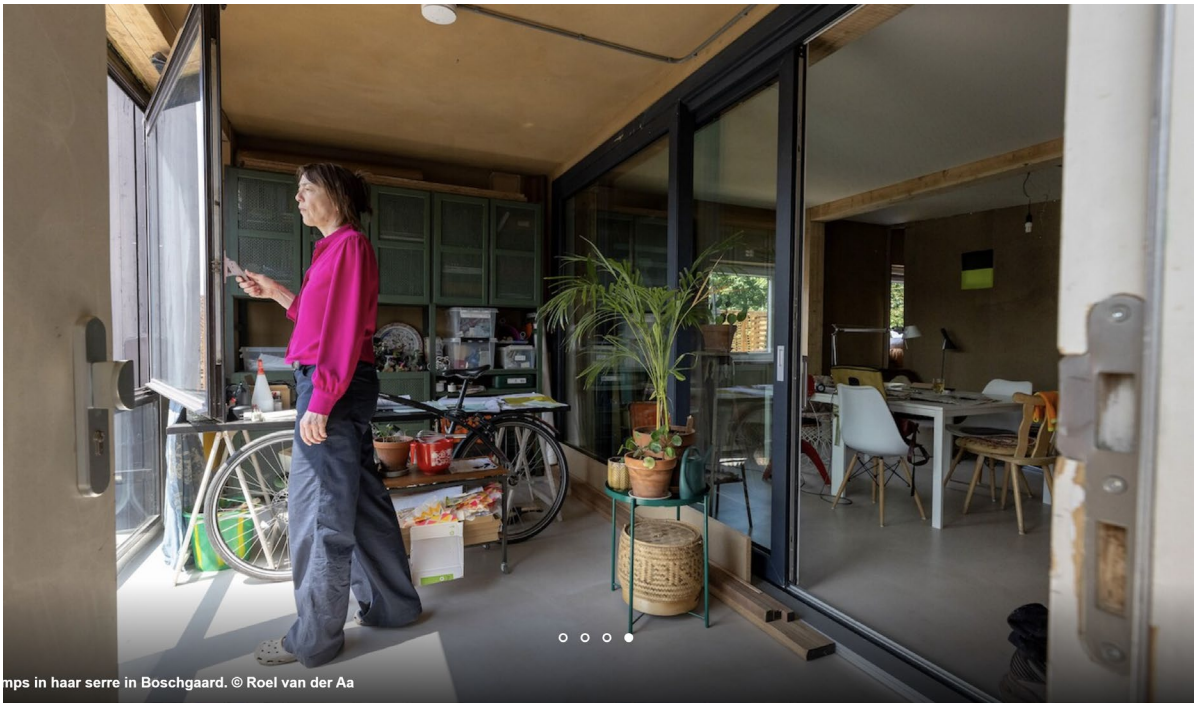


Fig. 13-14. Inside apartments of Boschgaard.

https://www.bd.nl/den-bosch/bewoners-van-dit-bossche-woonproject-doen-heel-veel-samen-als-je-met-iemand-goed-kunt-klussen-kun-je-ook-goed-samenwonen~aa983798/. [Accessed 17.12.2024].

Case study 2 – Het Domijn

sources:

www. https://www.hetdomijn.nl, accessed 28.11.2024

www.collectiefeigendom.nl, accessed 21.11.2024

visit + semi-structured interview with Goda Žukauskaitė, 21.11.2024

Introduction

location	Weesp, outskirts, 15km from Amsterdam
size of the building	6,000 sq m + 6,5 ha green area
squatted	1989
time vacant	almost 30 years
legalized	2003-2013 lease 2013 collective ownership
form of legalization as community	cooperative association
property owner	collective ownership by Het Domijn
function before squatting	locomotive factory, military warehouses
function now	working, semi-public (theatre arts)
size of community	40-50

Squatting

The locomotive factory, built in 1917, ceased operations in 1936 and was subsequently purchased by the Ministry of Defense. It was repurposed as a storage facility and, in the 1950s, became part of the Navy's operations, serving as a clothing depot with tailors and repair workshops. After years of vacancy, the factory was quietly squatted by a small group of individuals in 1989. The following year, a larger group of artists and festival set builders joined them, bringing equipment and creative energy. This influx led to the establishment of the International Events Foundation (*Stichting Internationale Evenementen*), the first formal organization representing the site's users.

With this newfound activity, tensions began to rise among various stakeholders, particularly between the site's occupants and the government and the municipality of Weesp, both of whom sought control over the valuable land. Over the years, several proposals emerged for the site's future, including transforming it into a park-like residential neighborhood, an industrial harbor with shipping facilities, or a logistics hub connected to the highway. These conflicting visions marked the start of a complex and contentious struggle for the site's ownership and purpose.

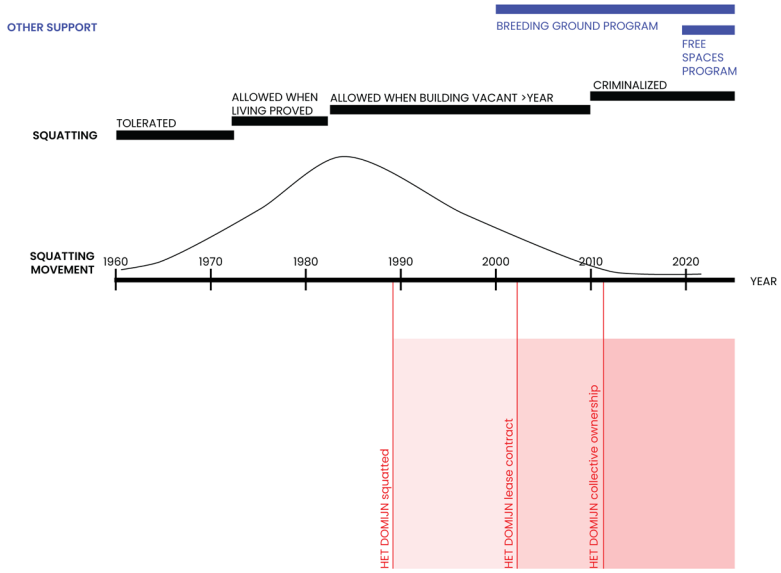


Fig. 15. Positioning in the timeline of squatting in the Netherlands. Author's illustration.

Road to ownership

The development plans for the site largely excluded the Het Domijn community, disregarding the fact that they inhabited the area and had made significant contributions to its recognition in provincial and municipal studies. Neither the community's potential as a long-term site buyer nor their interests as renters were seriously considered. Instead, most proposed solutions involved forcing Het Domijn to leave Weesp or dispersing them across the region.

The community responded with protests, discussions, and collaborative meetings, developing alternative visions that included their continued presence. In 2009, Het Domijn co-developed a vision called *Vrijhaven* ("Free Harbor"), which reimagined the site without a harbor and included plans for landscape revitalization. This proposal, recognized for its ecological merit, was nominated for the North Holland Landscape Prize. By 2011, Het Domijn had formalized its plans in a ten-year proposal that focused on preserving the existing buildings, establishing a combined exposition and restaurant facility, and promoting small-scale business growth without compromising nature. The plan also proposed converting part of the nearby forest into a recreational area.

Despite these efforts, later proposals to retain only three buildings and parcel the surrounding forest for development were unsatisfactory to the community. The road to purchasing the site was fraught with challenges, including decisions made behind the community's back, conflicts among stakeholders, and inconsistencies between plans and actions. Ultimately, Het Domijn was given priority to purchase the property before it could be placed on the open market.

Triodos Bank and the Triodos Culture Fund committed to providing Het Domijn with a mortgage loan, facilitating the purchase. The "Breeding Grounds Guarantee Fund" also supported the community by pledging part of the purchase price as a guarantee. Additionally, members of the cooperative contributed one year's rent as a security deposit, strengthening their financial position.

Although the purchase was successful, the municipality later acted against the residents occupying the buildings, citing zoning violations. To secure

financing from Triodos Bank, the site's zoning had been changed from military to industrial use. As a result, the residents—five at the time—were given six months to vacate. Considering Weesp's proximity to Amsterdam, the community decided not to contest the order, as reclassifying the site for residential use risked future development demands to replace existing buildings and green spaces with housing. Preserving this green oasis remained a key motivation for Het Domijn's acquisition of the property.

Legal organization

Het Domijn's organizational structure has changed over the years. First there was a formerly formed foundation (Stichting International Evenementen) advocating in their interest as they resided in Het Domijn. Then from 1999 Het Domijn set their status as an association – following the desire for a more democratic approach. This organizational structure was changed to cooperative association in 2012 because of finances, bank and loan that was taken to purchase the property collectively. There were many debates on what organizational structure Het Domijn should have. Association of owners was an option, but was not ensuring affordability of the spaces, which is very important to the community, support of new artists. In that case the owner could have invested in their space and resell it for a higher price according to the law. That's why cooperative seemed like the best option.

Between 1997 and 2000 there is a policy of tolerance for Het Domijn as a creative site of cultural significance. During that time Het Domijn starts to operate as an association and is registered as a potential buyer. Between 2004 - 10 year the association received lease user contract starting in retrograde 2003 for the property buildings along with the ground around them. From 2012 the collective ownership started as cooperative association that gathers various artistic organizations. It took years to develop plans, write up (financial) rapports and hold consultation rounds at council and commission meetings in the city hall.

Now, Het Domijn is an entrepreneurial cooperation, where members work independently, but contribute to the maintenance of the cooperations grounds and buildings. The organization as a new legal entity Cooperation

Het Domijn U.A., bases on the General Members Meeting, (approx. 6-8 times a year), as a decision-making body, keeping the democratic values. There are also smaller committees finance, nature, construction/building, party, outdoor areas, and other various small committees where members are expected to play an active role. The objectives are monitored by the members, and the board consists exclusively of members of the cooperation. There is also an external monitoring through supervisory board and consists in majority of non-members of the cooperation.

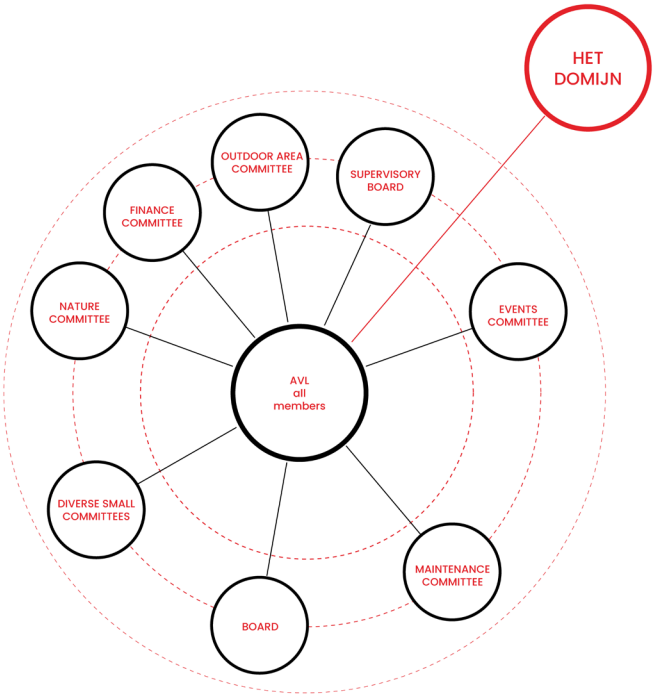


Fig. 16. Organizational structure.

Author's illustration based on graph from collectiefeigendom.nl and interview.

Finance

In 2001, Triodos Bank agreed to provide a mortgage loan of approximately €1,200,000 to support the collective ownership of property and land by Het Domijn. This loan came with several conditions. To create a buffer for maintenance and renovations, the community issued certificates with a

2.5% dividend, raising €250,000 within a week through contributions from interested private individuals. Members also increased their own capital base by paying one year of rent in advance, while the requirement for a legal entity with a more business-oriented structure was addressed by establishing the Breeding Grounds Guarantee Fund.

Later, a second loan of approximately €400,000 was taken to refurbish Building A. This loan carried a 6% interest rate, and certificates with a 3% dividend were issued exclusively to members or their parents, with over half of the members participating in this effort. However, each loan increased the rent, which was structured in two ways: members either paid rent solely for the ground-floor area while constructing upper floors themselves, or additional floors built with subsidies from Het Domijn were also subject to rent.

Solar panels were installed with the assistance of Het Domijn members as part of the “Broedplaatsen in het zonnetje” project. To address financial challenges, the community introduced new income-generating activities, such as organizing educational visits. While financial constraints remain, the community manages most tasks independently. Initially, funds were primarily allocated to essential maintenance and building renovations. However, priorities are gradually shifting toward landscaping and enhancing ecological diversity, including planting new trees and creating green spaces. This evolution reflects a growing commitment to balancing building upkeep with fostering biodiversity and sustainability.

Spatial organization

Building A, originally the factory's office, possesses a distinct character and qualities compared to the larger warehouse halls of Buildings B and C. Building C, constructed in 1917, is the oldest of the three, while Building B, being the most recently built, is in the best condition. All three buildings have been repurposed into workspaces tailored to the needs of various groups, fostering a diverse and dynamic community.

The complex spans 6.5 hectares of land, where nature plays a vital role. It is divided into four distinct areas, each designed to support different habitats. Trees planted within the grounds are carefully selected to provide food for

animals, enhancing the site's ecological value. Several walking paths meander through the property, inviting human interaction with nature. However, specific corners are strictly off-limits to visitors, serving as sanctuaries for rare or nearly extinct species such as owls and eagles. These protected areas exemplify a commitment to conservation and biodiversity.

The site aspires to achieve the status of an ecological stepping stone, a designation that would prevent future construction near the adjacent forest. This ambition reflects the community's dedication to preserving and enriching the natural environment, ensuring a harmonious coexistence between human activity and wildlife.

* Ecological stepping stone - a series of small habitat areas that can act as corridors for the movement of species, even though they may be separated by relatively small gaps. In the context of landscape fragmentation in cities, ecological stepping stones have become a vital connectivity scheme

Luo, Y., Wu, J., Wang, X. & Peng, J. (2021) 'Using stepping-stone theory to evaluate the maintenance of landscape connectivity under China's ecological control line policy', *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 296, p. 126356. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.126356.

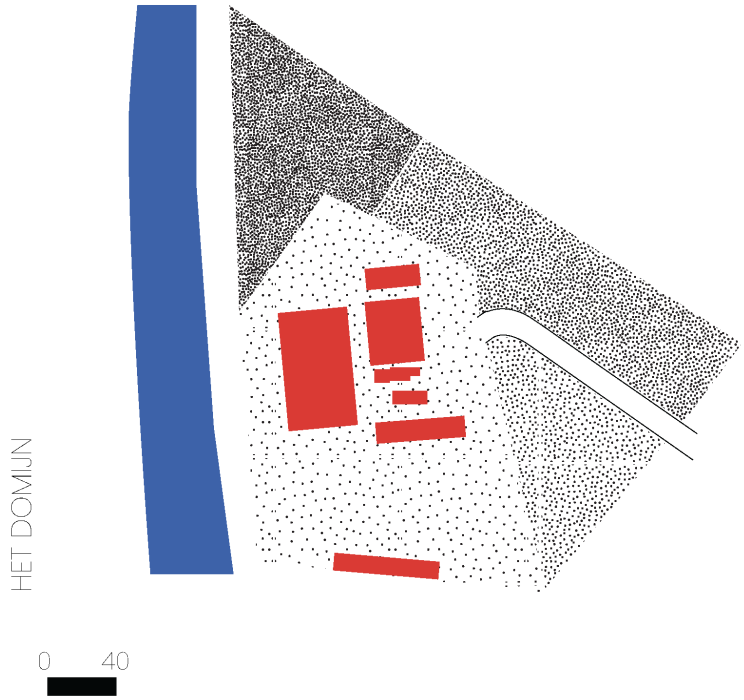


Fig. 17. The surrounding.

Author's illustration.

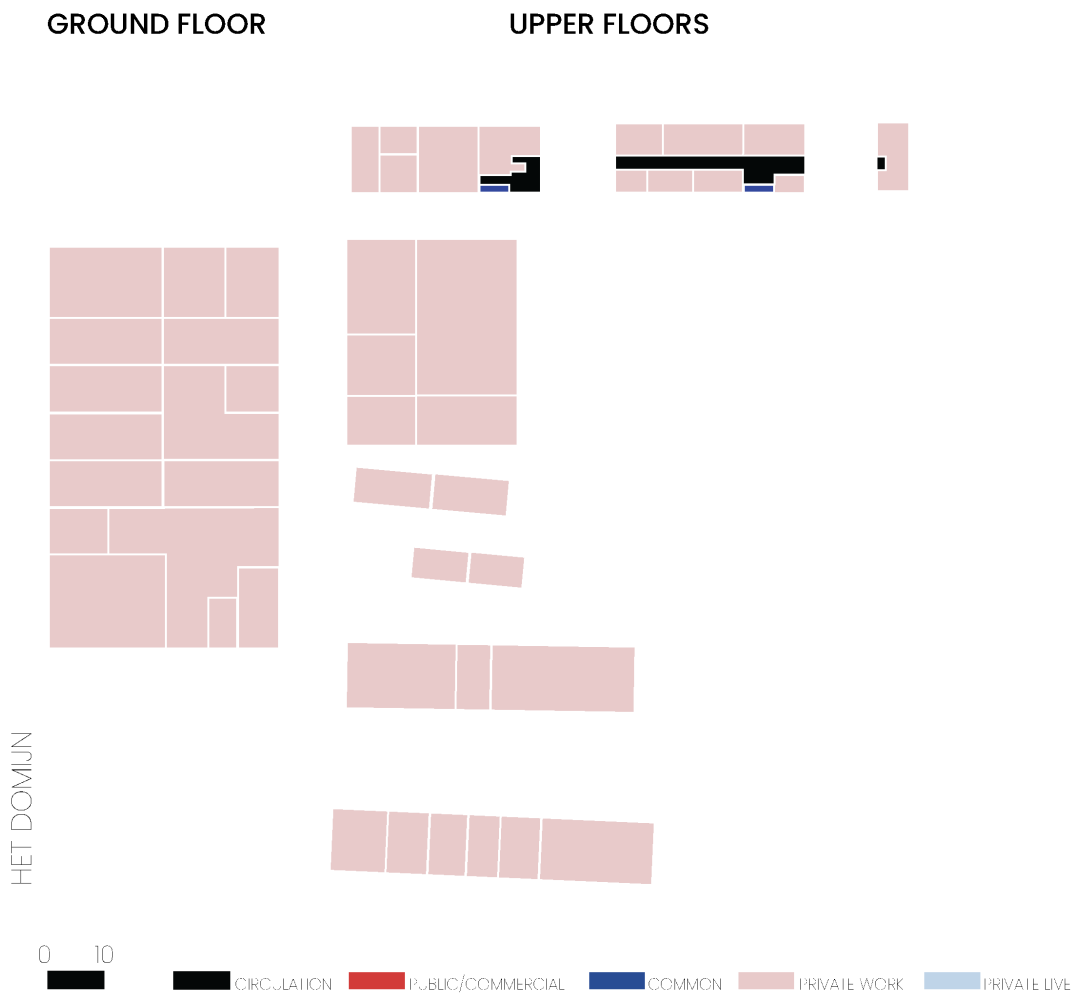


Fig. 18. Functional distribution.
Author's illustrations.

Maintenance

The first official big maintenance begun in 2004 after signing the user's lease contract. The maintenance begun from building B, then C (the oldest). A was in the best state, so initially was not refurbished too much. Before, all was built illegally, without permits.

An immense amount of work was needed to be done, which revolved around structure of the building, especially leaking roofs. Then fire-resistant partitions, big warehouses were divided into smaller studios. Also, existing structures like floors, stairs and partitions were checked according to building regulations, great part of them had to be changed due to not meeting regulations, especially fire escape routes, some spaces changed

to meet environmental regulations. Electricity, gas, sewage and water lines were then installed.

Following the purchase, many changes were necessary. Extensive works begun after 2013 and continue. Roof of the building B was fixed and 1850 solar panels were installed, Building F also received 300 solar panels, then the oldest building C. The project ranks as one of the largest private solar energy initiatives in the Netherlands. Being self-sufficient was important to the community from the very beginning.

Many of the users invested themselves before in refurbishment and maintenance of building B, whereas building A was falling apart. Foundation was cracked and needed to be fixed, the asphalt covered walls couldn't breathe for years and the moisture made it necessary to have bricks redone, later add insulation. Windows were replaced with triple glazing. Roof also had to be fixed. After refurbishment of building A, building B was painted outside, then in building C big group left, which now will be divided into 5 smaller units.

Additionally, there is a lot of work with the landscape around. There is issue with old trees that have to be cut out regularly, dangerous because break like matches in the storm. Even now there's 30 pending to be cut. They are replaced by new ones, diverse, versatile trees to provide food for both animals and humans.

Members did it mostly themselves. It was cheaper to buy equipment and do the work themselves (minimum of work hours dedicated for Het Domijn stated in contract, approx. one full time workweek/year) and also keep the machines for future maintenance in the complex. As the loan was taken, the rent went up again, distributed to all users of Het Domijn, not only certain building that is renovated at the moment.

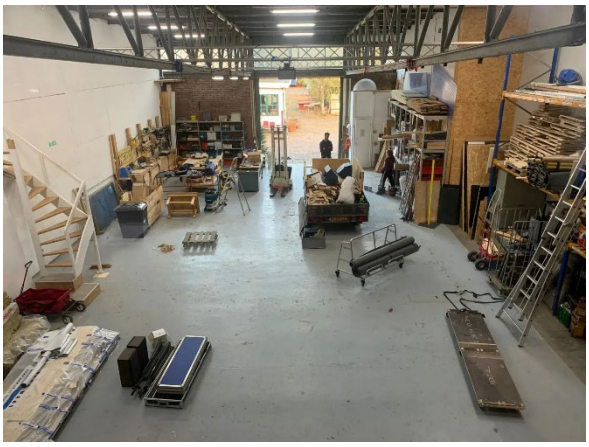
Regular maintenance is also self-done by members, includes cleaning solar panels, fence repairs, landscape work. It is important to be involved in the community, it is not just a place for renting out the space.

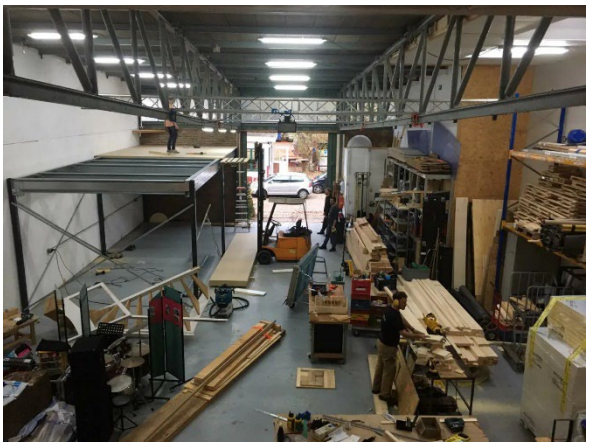
Appropriation

In 2021, the theatre group Platform Nexus joined Het Domijn, renting space B2 in Warehouse B. The facilities at Het Domijn support all phases of the creative process, from building and rehearsing to presenting. The contract is designed for automatic renewal, with the group renting the shell of the building and constructing the interior themselves.

The space, initially an empty part of a large warehouse, has gradually transformed. Additions include an atelier with mirrors, a dance floor, sound equipment (convertible into a black box theatre), a shared workspace, an office, and a kitchen with upper-floor units where heating was installed. A portion of the space remains a workshop and a 6.5-meter-high, 100 sqm area for performances, rehearsals, and montage, which lacks heating.

The transformation of the main space was self-built, funded primarily through crowdfunding. Most materials were recycled or salvaged, often sourced from museum exhibitions and theatre sets after their use. However, storing these materials is a challenge, as many items are collected without knowing when or how they will be used. The space continues to evolve to meet the group's changing needs.





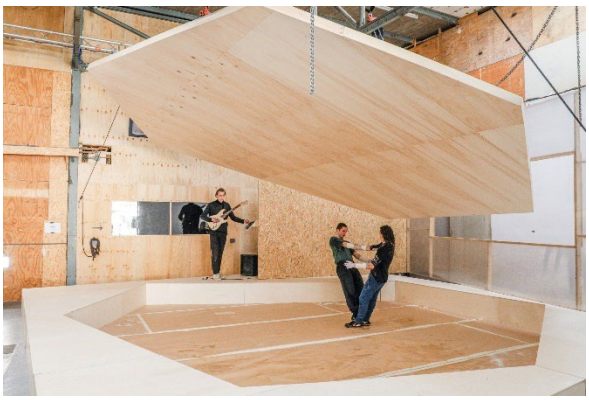


Fig. 19-24. Spaces of Nexus. Gradual space transformation of one of the spaces. The main area changes accordingly to the needs of performances.

https://www.facebook.com/platformnexus/photos. [Accessed 17.12.2024]

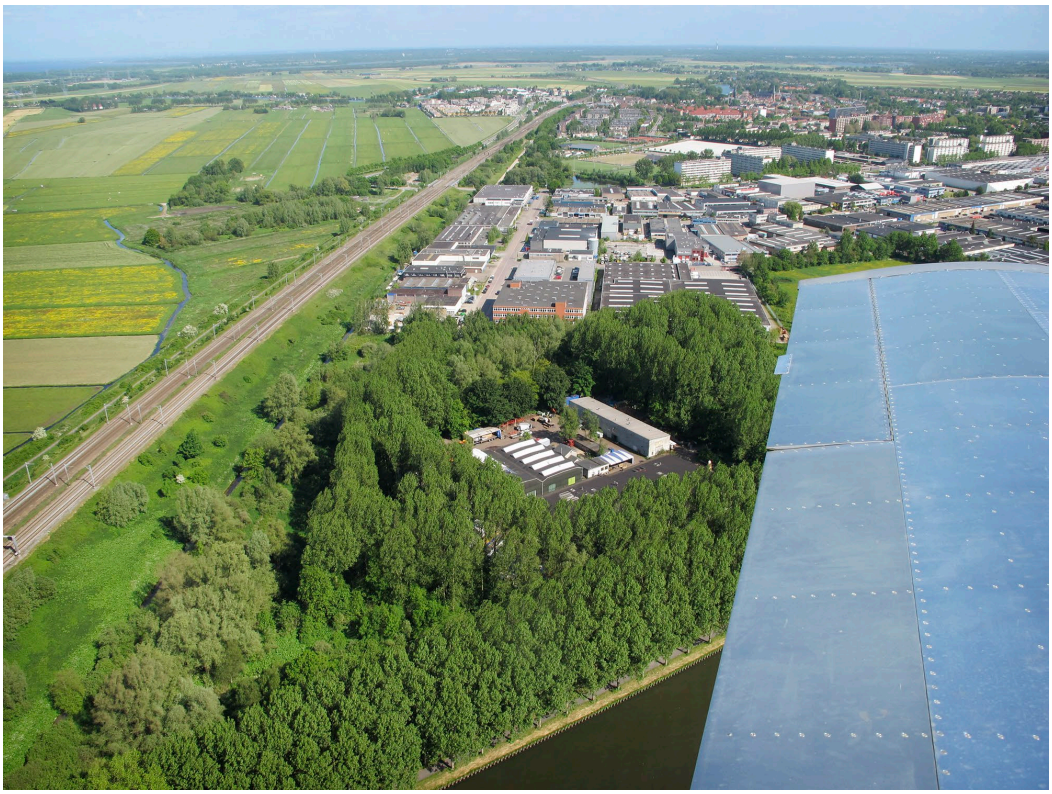


Fig. 25-26. Het Domijn from above.

https://www.hetdomijn.nl. [Accessed 17.12.2024]
https://www.facebook.com/HetDomijn/. [Accessed 17.12.2024]

Case study 3 – OT301/EHBK

sources:

EHBK/OT301 (2014). Autonomy by dissent.

www.collectiefeigendom.nl, accessed 21.11.2024.

visit + interview with Ivo Schmetz 09.12.2024

Introduction

location	Amsterdam, city center
size of the building	+/- 2,500 sqm
squatted	1999
time vacant	less than a year
legalized	2002
form of legalization as community	Association EHBK, 1999
property owner	collective ownership EHBK
function before squatting	film academy
function now	living, working, public (culture + arts)
size of community (approximately)	30

Squatting

The building of the Amsterdam School of the Arts (Film Academy) was vacant for only three months between 1954 and 1999. On November 14, 1999, EHBK squatted the property following their eviction from the OLVG hospital. Politicians and the press were kept informed to emphasize the goal of creating affordable in-house business spaces and accessible event stages in the city.

Despite threats of eviction and plans to demolish the building for a cycling path and expensive owner-occupied housing, the sale of the property proved difficult with squatters inside. Eventually, ownership was transferred to the urban district council, which tolerated the community under the condition that they began paying rent. This led to the initiation of negotiations for the first user's contract.

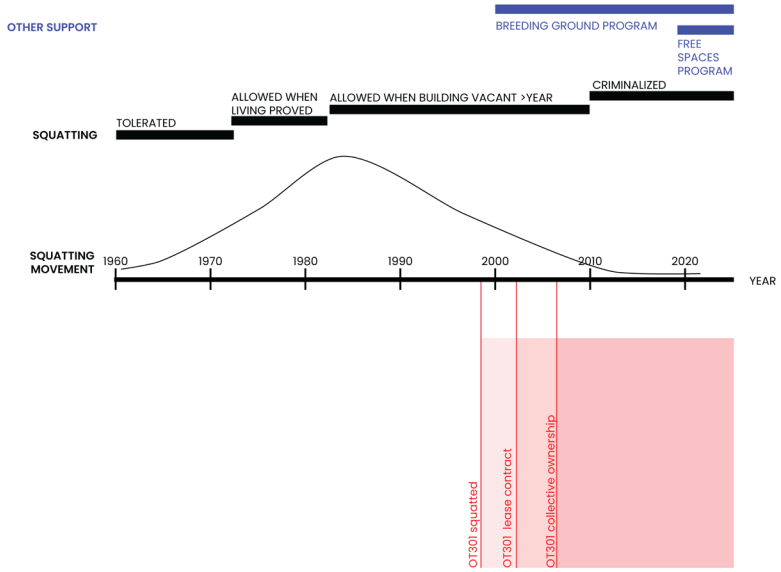


Fig. 27. Positioning in the timeline of squatting in the Netherlands. Author's illustration.

Legal organization and ownership

EKBK is a bottom-up initiative that prioritizes self-management, autonomy, and internal democracy, making it highly reliant on its members. Cost efficiency and member empowerment in decision-making are central principles. Established as the association *Eerste Hulp Bij Kunst* in 1999, EKBK has retained this legal structure. In 2012, it modernized its governance by introducing a mixed board of three internal and two external members to balance perspectives. The board oversees operations, supported by six committees managing various departments, with all members required to participate in at least one. Members are expected to contribute at least 40 hours per year to the community, emphasizing that membership is about collective participation, not just space rental.

Public spaces such as Ventilator cinema/bar, Stichting Studio 301, 4bid Gallery, and the Junction are independently managed by dedicated groups. External professionals handle critical tasks like bookkeeping, rental administration, and major renovations, ensuring operational stability. External advisors, treasurers, and individuals with experience in squatting provide additional support to address emerging challenges.

The building is now collectively owned, a significant milestone following years of eviction threats due to squatting laws. User contract negotiations

began in 2000 when the property's ownership was transferred to the urban district council. High initial square-meter prices were reduced by emphasizing its cultural and artistic public spaces, leading to a contract with *Bureau Broedplaatsen* in 2001 that secured a five-year lease for breeding ground activities.

In 2006, EKBK purchased the property to ensure its long-term viability after rejecting unsatisfactory 15-year contract extensions. The below-market-value purchase came with conditions: maintaining cultural activities, limiting future resale to the municipality, adhering to an *erfpacht* leasehold agreement, and committing to a robust self-maintenance plan. This purchase guaranteed the continuity and safety of the projects into which the community had invested so much effort.

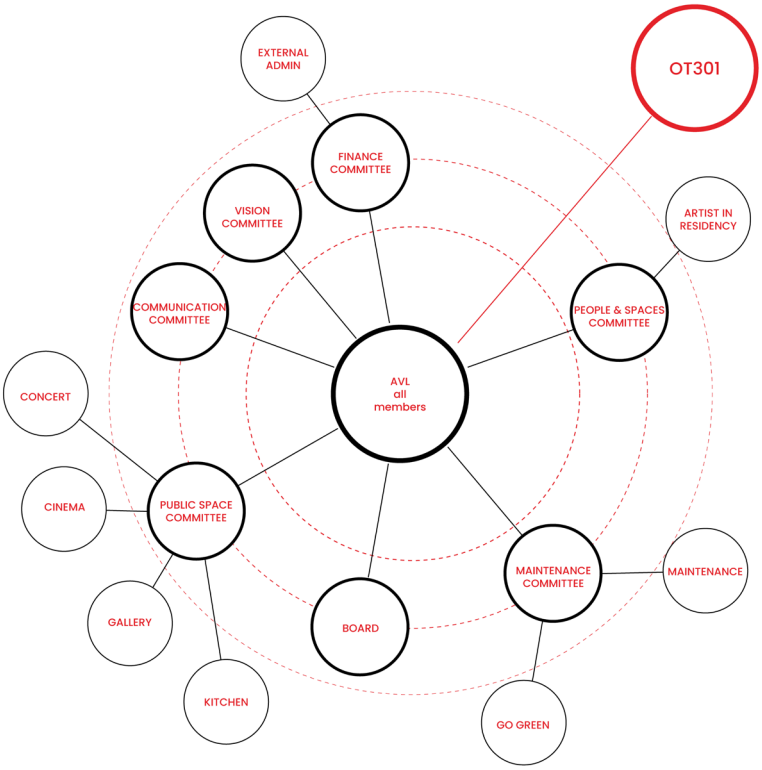


Fig. 28. Organizational structure.

Author's illustration based on the OT301 organization diagram.

Finance

Since 2002, EHBK has operated with subsidies primarily allocated to renovations. Financial support was received from Bureau Broedplaatsen (2003, 2010–2012), the AFK Trajectory program (2011–2013), and grants such as the AFK Art Award (2006). A loan from Triodos Bank facilitated the property's acquisition and renovation. Currently, rental income from its spaces is the primary revenue source, with much of the operations supported by volunteer efforts.

In 2012, a finance committee was introduced, along with an audit certificate to ensure both internal and external monitoring of income and expenses. Since 2014, EKBK/OT301 has been financially independent, with bookkeeping managed by an external party.

Spatial organization

The building, squatted in November 1999, had been vacant for less than a year. Its well-preserved condition and history as the Film Academy (1954–1999) made it an ideal match for the plans of the EHBK squatting group. Unlike the complexities of repurposing the abandoned OLVG hospital, this building required far less adaptation to meet the community's needs.

The space retains a hidden quality; after entering, visitors pass through a front house and courtyard before reaching the larger section of OT301. The allocation of living, working, and public spaces unfolded organically, as many areas were already suited to specific functions. For example, the cinema and performance spaces came equipped with layouts and infrastructure for lighting and sound, ready for immediate use. Smaller rooms were claimed by artists and converted into living spaces, studios, or combined live-work areas, with a flexible and fluid distribution.

Following legalization, inspections, and adjustments for safety compliance—particularly fire regulations—the number of living spaces was reduced and is now limited to the front house. Public areas frequently double as communal spaces, hosting internal meetings and community events.

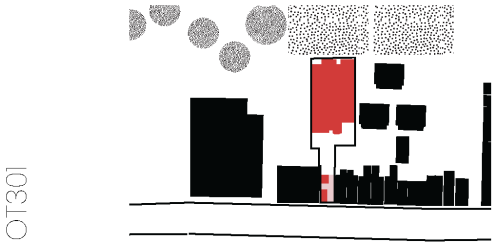


Fig. 29. Relation of the building to the surrounding

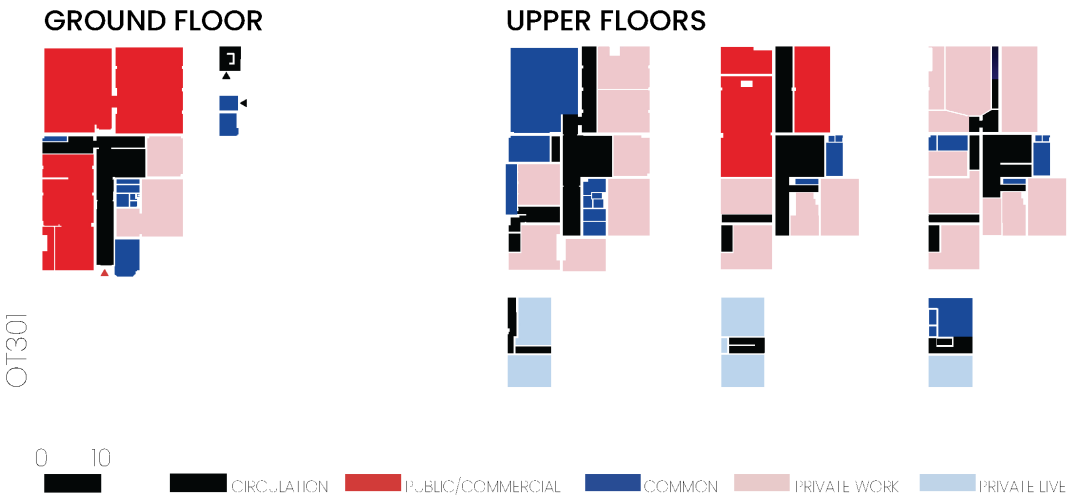


Fig. 30. Functional distribution.

Author's illustrations.

Fig. 31. Relation of the building to the surrounding.

Maintenance

The first major maintenance occurred in 2002, aligning with the initial user lease agreement and subsidies for breeding grounds. As the property had not been vacant for long, it showed no significant damage and was already suited to the artistic functions envisioned by the community. Efforts primarily focused on fire safety, including the creation of escape routes, fire zones with partitions, and the removal of asbestos discovered unexpectedly. These works necessitated a public closure for a year, with an unofficial reopening in October 2003 and an official launch in May 2004. Renovating public areas was prioritized to quickly resume operations and generate income for legal compliance. Self-management and maintenance kept costs low. Additional maintenance followed between 2006 and 2008.

From 2011 to 2014, *Overhaul* sessions addressed both organizational and spatial improvements. During this period, the *Go Green* pilot program launched, targeting sustainability. In 2012, sedum plants were added to the roof, laying 25 tons of earth on mats to enhance insulation and aesthetics. Solar panels followed in 2014. Structural changes included removing the elevator to increase natural light and visually connect surrounding spaces. The cinema bar was refurbished in 2013, creating a new public area. By 2014, all critical renovations were completed, with the community handling most tasks while outsourcing major work to external contractors.

Between 2022 and 2023, windows in the front house were replaced, with maintenance focusing on fireproofing, window replacement, and pending refurbishments. Beyond essential upkeep, efforts also aimed to enhance space quality. These included investigating additional soundproofing and optimizing noise management through a better sound system targeted at the dancefloor.

Major maintenance projects are planned well in advance. Notably, in 2025, the external façade and windows of the larger building are scheduled for replacement.

Fig. 32. Graph as a result of brainstorming sessions during the overhaul between 2011 and 2013 regarding spatial qualities of the space and possible improvements.

EHBK/0T301. Autonomy by dissent.

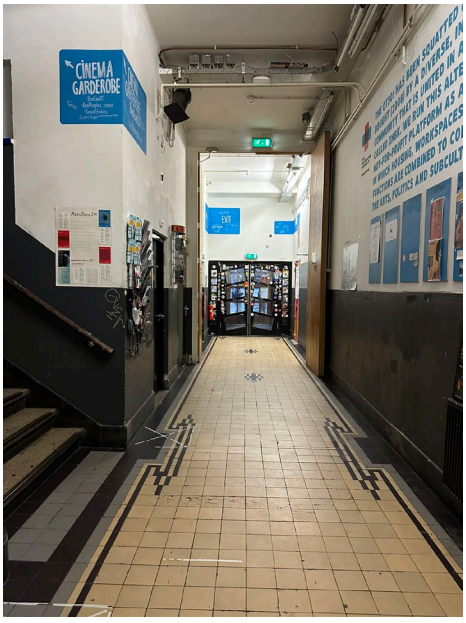


Fig. 33-36. Spaces of OT301.

Case study 4 – Plantage Dok

sources:

Boer, R., Verzier, M.O. & Truijen, K., (2019) *Architecture of Appropriation: On Squatting as Spatial Practice.* Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut.

https://plantagedok.nl/ accessed 24.11.2024

visit + interview with Jutta Hinterleitner 03.01.2025

Introduction

location	Amsterdam, city center
size of the building	+/- 2900 sqm
squatted	1998
time vacant	0 (4 years vacant with anti-squatters)
legalized	2002
form of legalization as community	foundation over the foundation (public space) + association (housing)
property owner	automatically renewing 50 years lease contract with ownership over the property since 2001
function before squatting	church, printing company, vocal school, gym
function now	living, working, public – multipurpose (culture + art)
size of community	before 20, now 45-50

Squatting

The first building of the Plantage Dok complex, the Plantagekerk, was constructed in 1872, with expansions added by a printing company in the 1930s and 1950s. After the company relocated in 1980, the building served various purposes. Following the eviction of the first squatters in 1981, it housed a vocational training school and a separately managed gym. Between 1994 and 1998, the building faced intermittent vacancy and was temporarily occupied by anti-squatters.

In January 1998, it was squatted by a group previously evicted from the Graansilo and Houtkopersburgwal squats. Upon entry, the group used scrap wood and canvas to construct provisional walls, creating separated living spaces alongside the remaining anti-squatters. In early 2000, a feasibility study under the newly introduced *Broedplaats* program assessed the possibility of legalizing Plantage Dok, initiating negotiations for its future use.

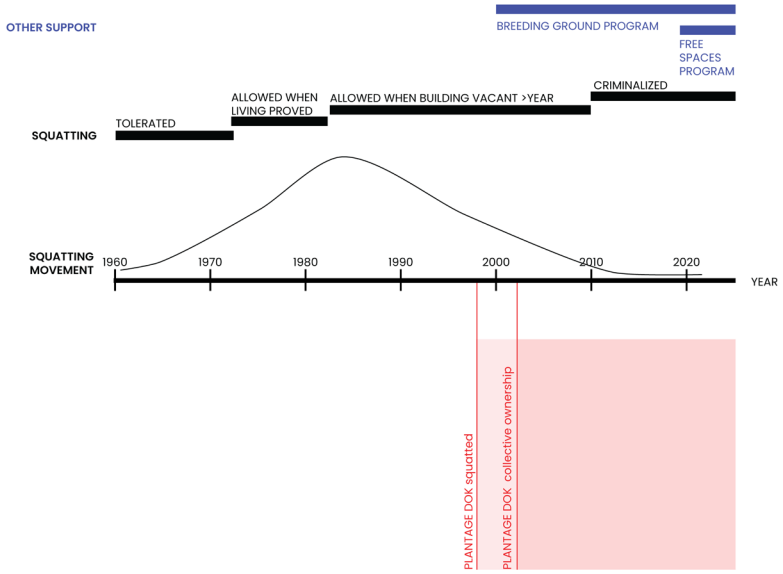


Fig. 37. Positioning in the timeline of squatting in the Netherlands. Author's illustration.

Legal organization

Plantage Dok operates as a foundation, *Stichting TOK*, which works alongside a foundation designated for public spaces and a housing association. In 2001, the municipality purchased the building and later sold it to the foundation for a symbolic 1 guilder, signing a 50-year lease with automatic extensions, provided the building is well-managed and maintained. The agreement grants the community full responsibility for the building's management and upkeep, with a stipulation that it can only be resold to the municipality.

The organization functions horizontally, supported by various committees that ensure the smooth operation of the complex. Every community

member is required to participate in at least one committee. These committees oversee responsibilities such as finances, neighbor relations, the café, the venue, the internal shop, gas and electricity management, insurance, fire safety and inspections, and solar panel maintenance.

In its early years, community-wide meetings were held twice a week but later became less frequent. They are now conducted once a month. Additionally, the community benefits from an external supervisory board, composed of former residents. This board provides valuable outside perspectives while staying informed about the community's operations and objectives.

Fig. 38. Organizational structure.
Author's illustration.

Spatial organization

The distribution of work, living, and public spaces at Plantage Dok developed organically, influenced primarily by the height and layout of the

building. This arrangement has remained largely unchanged since its inception.

Public spaces are located on the ground floor, including the *Dokzaal*, a former church transformed into a venue for performances and exhibitions, accommodating up to 400 people. The café, also on the ground floor, serves as a space for meetings, cooking activities, and smaller performances.

Workspaces and studios occupy the industrial section of the complex, characterized by large, high-ceilinged spaces with glass roofs. While these areas can get very cold in winter, they are well-suited for large-scale projects due to their adaptability.

The front building houses residential studios, each floor featuring a shared kitchen and bathroom. It also includes a guest artist studio and residence, hosting artists for periods of 2–6 months throughout the year. Although official permission for residential use in the front building has not been granted, the space has been adapted to meet building standards and is officially tolerated.

Private work studios and living spaces are accessed separately, ensuring a clear distinction between communal and individual areas.

Fig. 39. Relation of the building to the surrounding

Author's illustration.

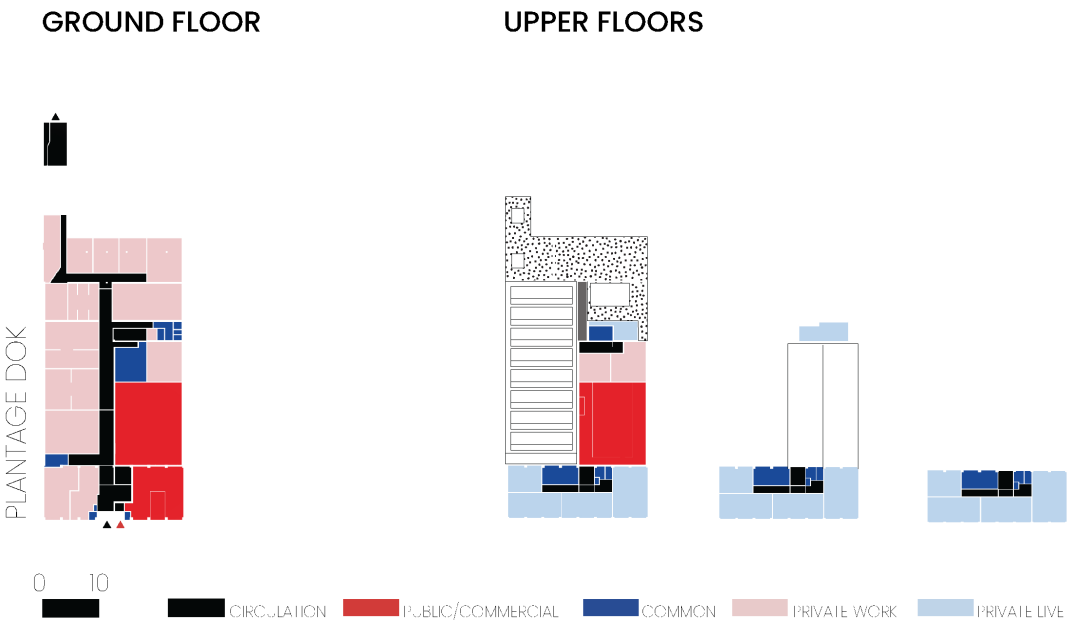


Fig. 40. Functional distribution.

Author's illustrations.

Maintenance

Before legalization, limited finances and uncertainty about future tenancy meant changes to the space were largely provisional. However, in 2002, following legalization, the community received approval for extensive renovations. Between 2002 and 2005, the interior underwent a significant transformation aimed at fostering social interaction. Studios and workshops were created, balconies were added to the church nave for exhibitions, performances, and lectures, and internal windows were installed to improve visibility and connections. A section of the future café-restaurant space saw a concrete floor removed, with salvaged fencing from the ADM squatted terrain repurposed as balustrades. To ensure financial sustainability, one-third of the church was converted into five additional workspaces to generate revenue.

The frontal residential building underwent key changes, including the removal of one of two staircases and the relocation of the remaining staircase. Internal partitions were also reconfigured to create smaller, cozier, and more functional spaces.

The renovation process spanned two years. Initially, progress was slow, involving deconstruction and planning, with construction taking about a year. During this period, community members lived in igloo tents, relocating weekly to spaces not under renovation. An architect and construction company experienced in squat remodeling handled complex tasks such as foundation work, distribution of main installations, external insulation, and addressing significant leaks. Simpler tasks, like deconstruction, railing installation, solar panel mounting, roof patching, and extending plumbing and electrical systems, were carried out by the community. Members with expertise supervised these works, ensuring long-term quality through internal checks.

Subsequent maintenance focused on sustainability and comfort. In 2014, the roof was renovated, with 200 solar panels installed and a green roof added, improving insulation and resolving long-standing roof fixture issues. In 2019, external wall insulation and major leak repairs were completed. Current plans aim to further insulate external walls and enhance wheelchair accessibility.

The community continues to take an active role in maintenance. Initiatives like "work week together" allow members to collaboratively address essential upkeep, blending collective effort with shared responsibility.

Finance

The initial renovations were supported by the *Breeding Ground* program and financed with a loan from Triodos Bank. Subsequent renovations, focusing on comfort and maintenance, were funded through rental revenues. Public spaces are open for rental by everyone, with differentiated rates: lower fees for community members and higher rates for external users. The goal is to keep the space accessible and affordable for a wide range of activities.

Housing and workspace rentals involve a thorough and selective admission process when space becomes available. Rent is also differentiated: those able to pay the full rate do so, while students or emerging artists qualify for social rent. This approach maintains a balanced ratio between affordability and financial sustainability.

From the outset, an association from Utrecht provided financial guidance, evaluating the budget, calculating appropriate rents, and ensuring the community could build a financial buffer. This buffer has been critical for funding larger maintenance projects and managing unexpected challenges, such as the pandemic. Additionally, the community maintains a *goede doelen* fund, which supports other initiatives, such as helping Nieuwe Meent secure construction investments and stakeholder agreements.

Currently, the largest expense is electricity. While solar panels installed on the church roof offset some costs, the building's classification as a public space means it does not qualify for the favorable energy rates offered to residential properties. The community continues to address these challenges through planned maintenance and ongoing improvements to the building's energy efficiency.

Appropriation

Over the years, many people have moved between studios within the space, adapting to their changing needs. Both workspaces and residential studios are fully customized by the renters, allowing them to build or modify as they wish, provided the changes meet safety requirements. No subsidies are provided by the community for these adaptations, and renters are required to restore the space and remove all additions at the end of their rental period. Each studio is equipped with water access, ensuring basic functionality for all users.

Fig. 41-42. Public spaces. The café and the venue.

Fig. 43. Common kitchen located on each floor.
Visual connections through transparent walls.

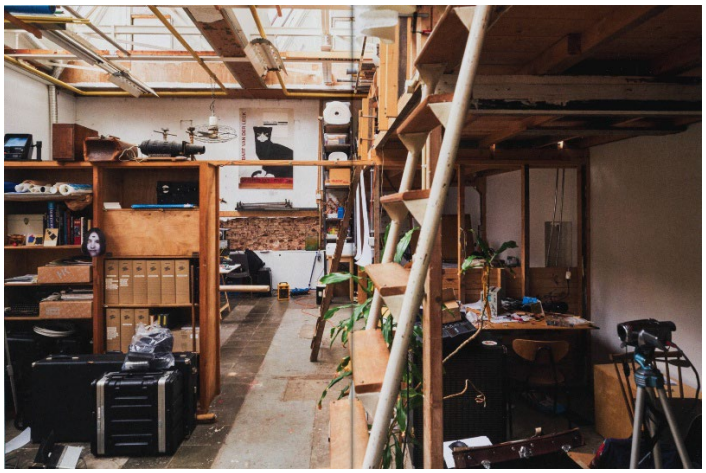


Fig. 44. Private workshops.

Boer, R., Verzier, M.O. & Truijen, K., (2019) *Architecture of Appropriation: On Squatting as Spatial Practice.* Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Case study 5 – Poortgebouw

sources:

Boer, R., Verzier, M.O. & Truijen, K., (2019) *Architecture of Appropriation: On Squatting as Spatial Practice.* Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut.

https://poortgebouw.org, accessed 24.11.2024

visit + interview with Sebas Beckeringh 02.01.2025

Introduction

location	Rotterdam
size of the building	+/- 1800 sqm
squatted	1980
time vacant	3 years
legalized spatially	user's lease contract since 1984
form of legalization as community	Association Poortgebouw, 1982
property owner	private owner
function before squatting	offices (mainly Port of Rotterdam)
function now	living, working, underground cultural center
size of community	20-30

Squatting

The Poortgebouw, constructed in 1879 as the headquarters of a trading company, was later acquired by the city of Rotterdam and used by the port authority. After the Port of Rotterdam relocated in 1977, the building was left vacant. Municipal plans to convert it into an erotic center faced protests, leaving the property unused.

In October 1980, the Rotterdam Association of Squatter Groups occupied the Poortgebouw. Legalization discussions began, but the municipality's plan to convert it into housing units was deemed too costly by the residents. The community proposed renovating the building themselves to lower rent, but the plan was dropped. Instead, Poortgebouw became a hub for squatters, hosting meetings, rehearsals, and performances. In 1982 the building was purchased by the municipality, as well as the community

became an association. In 1984, the first user's lease contract was signed, with residents managing the building while the municipality retained responsibility for the exterior.

Ownership of the building changed hands in the following years. The Rotterdam Housing Association (*Woning Bedrijf Rotterdam*) acquired it from the municipality before selling it to De Groene Groep in 2001, with a contract prohibiting eviction for three years. From 2004 to 2010, conflicts arose as De Groene Groep sought to vacate the building for renovations without offering suitable alternative accommodations. The court sided with the Poortgebouw Association. In 2016, the building was sold to a private owner, but its condition and the situation remained unresolved. Discussions continued, including conferences and research projects.

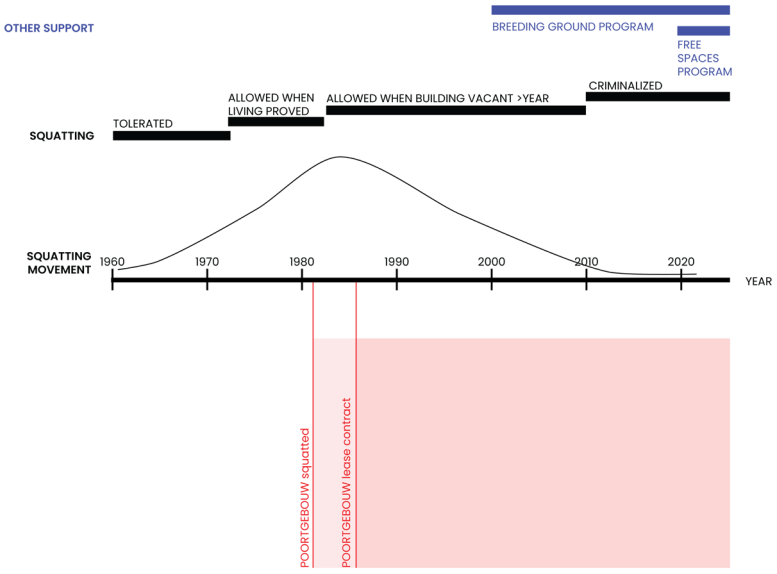


Fig. 45. Positioning in the timeline of squatting in the Netherlands. Author's illustration.

Legal organization

The Poortgebouw Association was established in 1982 to formally represent the residents. A rental agreement has been in place since 1984, despite the building's frequently changing ownership. Over the years, ownership has transitioned from the municipality (1982) to Woning Bedrijf Rotterdam, then

to *de Groene Groep* (2001), a group of private owners (2016), and now a single remaining member of the previous ownership group.

Under the rental agreement, the owner is responsible for exterior maintenance, while the community manages the interior. The indefinite contract allows for eviction only if the entire community is provided with alternative housing of equivalent size within Rotterdam. However, there is little to no contact with the current owner and infrequent interaction with the maintenance group. Since a 2001 court ruling, the contract no longer includes initial agreements made with the municipality regarding shared responsibilities. Currently, there are no inspections or enforcement of regulations.

The organizational structure revolves around monthly general meetings and smaller task-oriented groups. The board, which oversees future planning and onboarding new members, also meets monthly. Maintenance groups, including those responsible for the guest room, cleaning, garden, and IT/website, meet every two months. Activity groups, managing the open stage, art events, and giveaway shop, meet biweekly. Although an external supervisory board, composed of former residents, once offered oversight, it was disbanded due to internal conflicts.

Some residents, known as the "ghosts" of the building, opt not to participate in house meetings, collective projects, or events. Their decision is respected, allowing them to maintain their privacy while coexisting within the community.

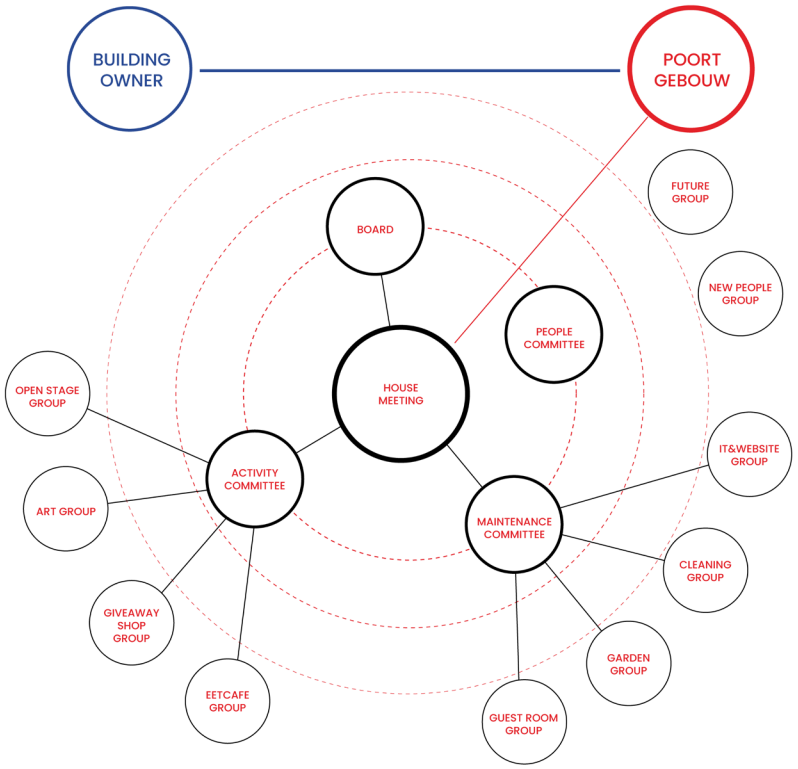


Fig. 46. Organizational structure.

Author's illustration.

Finance

Inhabitants pay rent directly to the Poortgebouw Association, which allocates 40% to the building owner as rent. The remaining 60% is used to cover utilities, primarily electricity, as well as cleaning, maintenance supplies, legal and financial assistance, and contributions to a communal savings fund. Any surplus funds are reinvested in projects such as audiovisual equipment and larger maintenance initiatives.

Public spaces operate on a non-profit basis, sustained entirely through donations and voluntary support from the community.

Spatial organization

The majority of public spaces are situated on the ground floor, including a performance venue with an adjoining bar and *eetcafé* kitchen, a giveaway-swap clothes store, and a small meeting room. However, the *eetcafé* is currently inactive due to a lack of community members willing to

manage it. Public spaces and events require the involvement of at least one community member in the organizing team. While these spaces are not rented out, they frequently host performances and initiatives from friends of the community.

Private spaces occupy the upper floors and consist of 27 studios averaging 30 sqm, often featuring mezzanines for combined living and working. These spaces accommodate around 30 residents, including some children and pets. A guest apartment is available for temporary stays, hosting performers, community guests, or individuals in need of short-term housing. Shared bathrooms and kitchens are located on each floor, as most studios lack direct water access.

The attic is an open space equipped with a kitchen and is used for diverse activities such as performances, exhibitions, game nights, and movie screenings. Due to poor insulation and leaks, it is mainly utilized during warmer months. Its use adapts to the interests of residents, serving as a venue for circus performances or a temporary art studio for exhibitions. Additional common areas include a large living room, used for meetings, and a nearby office, now repurposed as an archive or smoking space.

The distribution of public and private spaces reflects the building’s original design. Two towers, previously divided into offices, now house private studios, while the middle section, once an open space, was partitioned to create the main living room. Structural changes have been minimal, with only one wall removed to expand a communal area.

Between 1993 and 1997, the community fought to retain the adjacent garden, but the municipality reclaimed it through court action. Previously part of the property, the garden is now managed by the city and has been converted into a parking area and waterfront square. Only 10% of the original garden remains under the community's care, now limited to flowerpots around the building.

The building’s secluded location over the water and street limits its integration with the surrounding neighborhood. Frequent turnover in nearby developments further restricts opportunities to build lasting connections. However, the community occasionally participates in joint activities with

Hefpark, a nearby tolerated initiative. These collaborations include a veggie garden and various community events.

A research initiative by *Stad in de Maak* explored future plans for the space. While based on earlier community proposals from 2010, which aimed to convert the ground floor into cultural spaces and bars for economic sustainability, these ideas were deemed too radical and were ultimately rejected by the majority for being overly ambitious and misaligned with the community's vision.

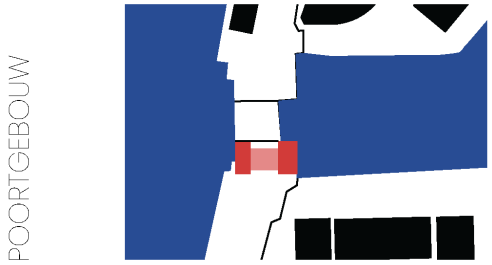


Fig. 47. Relation of the building to the surrounding.

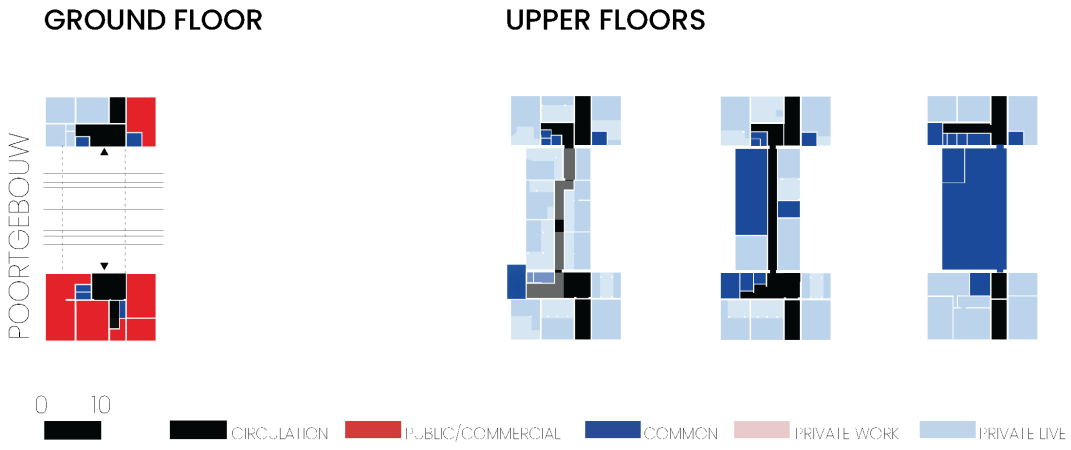


Fig. 48. Functional distribution.

Author's illustrations.

Fig. 49-50. Relation of the building to the surrounding.

Maintenance

From 1986, the Poortgebouw has a state monument status which brings both benefits and challenges. While the monument status mandates certain maintenance works on the building's shell, these are often enforced by the municipality, and the owner consistently does the bare minimum. Essential improvements that fall under the owner's responsibility, such as replacing windows, are neglected due to high costs and the need for custom designs. This lack of investment has led to worsening conditions, with maintenance issues accumulating over time. The last major interior maintenance was completed in 2001.

Exterior work on the shell has been superficial, focusing on painting and temporary coverings rather than addressing structural problems. Key issues include a non-functional heating system, persistent roof leaks, and deteriorating windows—some single-glazed or unable to close properly—all of which require urgent attention.

In the past, the community managed interior repairs and sought compensation from the owner. However, a 2012 court ruling confirmed the owner's lack of responsibility for the interior, leaving the burden entirely on the community. The residents, disagreeing with this interpretation, have refrained from significant investments, believing that the owner should address these issues.

The community's priority improvements include better insulation, a functional heating system, heat pumps, and window replacements, followed by upgrades to communal spaces to enhance comfort and efficiency. While funding is not a critical barrier—since all expenses are covered by the community—time and the limited availability of members to carry out these works pose significant challenges. Most maintenance is self-managed, with contractors only hired for tasks beyond the community's capacity, as with basement insulation or heating repairs.

Maintaining the Poortgebouw as an underground, alternative space is central to the community's identity. This commitment is evident in its operations, aesthetics, and the programming of its events, which reflect its dedication to fostering a non-mainstream, collective culture.

Appropriation

The construction of mezzanines has been a defining transformation of the internal spaces at Poortgebouw. High ceilings in most private rooms have allowed for the addition of mezzanines, typically used as sleeping areas above and living spaces below. Beyond their functional role, these mezzanines serve as a spatio-political strategy, allowing residents to claim more usable space in the event of forced relocation.

The internal layout remains highly flexible, with divisions often created or dissolved using wheeled partitions. This adaptability facilitates easy reconfiguration, such as setting up exhibitions in the attic or rearranging furniture for different activities. Materials used in these transformations are frequently recycled, reclaimed, or purchased second-hand. Notable examples include bookcases salvaged from the ORKZ squat and paint found on the street.

Many design interventions draw inspiration from façade arch templates discovered in the basement by the first squatters, integrating the building's historical elements into its evolving interior.

Fig. 51-52. Mezzanines constructed in Poortgebouw.

Boer, R., Verzier, M.O. & Truijen, K., (2019) *Architecture of Appropriation: On Squatting as Spatial Practice.* Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut.

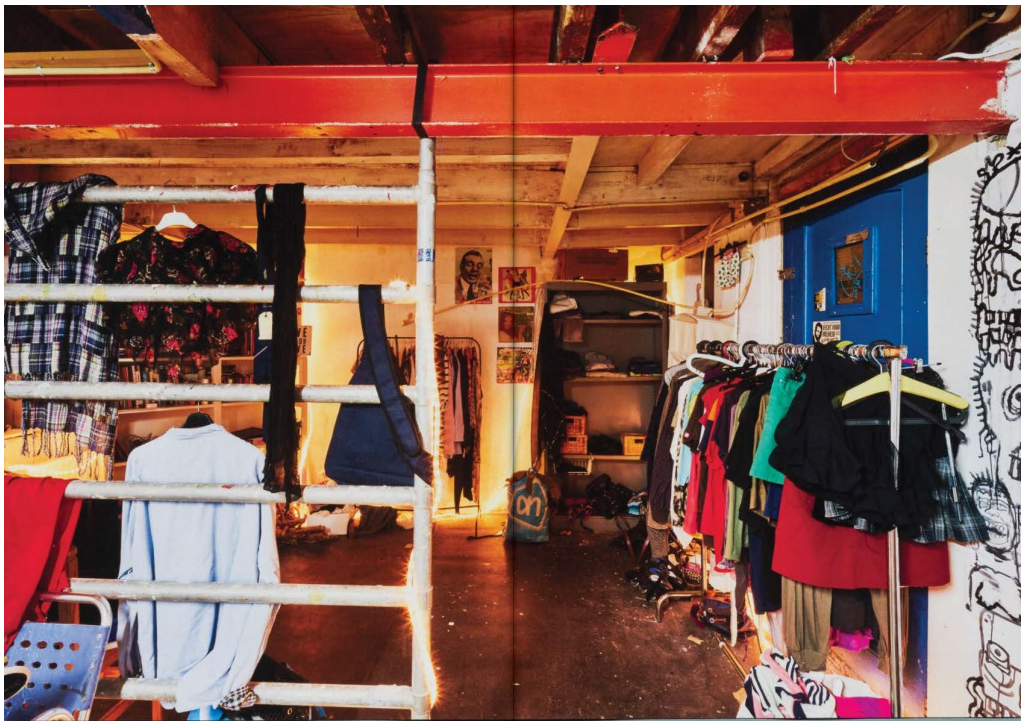


Fig. 53-54. Interiors of Poortgebouw.

Boer, R., Verzier, M.O. & Truijen, K., (2019) *Architecture of Appropriation: On Squatting as Spatial Practice.* Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut.

Fig. 55. Interiors of Poortgebouw.

Case study 6 – Woonwerkpand Tetterode

sources:

https://www.wwpt.nl, accessed 13.11.2024

van Gelderen, Mikel (2019). "WoonWerkPand Tetterode Amsterdam (NL): Johan W.F. Hartkamp, Jan Frederik van Erven Dorens, Merkelbach & Karsten, Merkelbach & Elling, K.P.C. de Bazel, residents and users". Delft Architectural Studies on Housing (15): 138–145. ISSN 1877-7007.

Woonwerkpand Tetterode (2020). Zeggenschap zonder bezit.

visit + interview with Mikel van Gelderen. 09.12.2024

Introduction

location	Amsterdam, city center
size of the building	11,000 sqm
squatted	1981
time vacant	Less than a year
legalized	rental agreement from 1986
form of legalization as community	Association, 1984
property owner	Housing corporation Stagenoot (het Oosten before)
function before squatting	factory
function now	living, working, public - multipurpose
size of community	varies, between 200-350 (130-150 contracts)

Squatting

In 1902, Lettergieterij Amsterdam established its headquarters on Bilderdijkstraat, gradually expanding the complex into three buildings by 1948. The structures reflected a mix of industrial architectural styles, including Delftse School, Modernism, and Nieuwe Bouwen. The Tetterode Printing Company vacated the building in 1980, leaving it stripped and uninhabitable, lacking heating and electricity.

The building didn't remain vacant for long. On October 17, 1981, a group of activists and local residents squatted the complex, transforming it into a hub for creative living and working. At the time, the property was slated for

demolition to make way for luxury shops and apartments. The squatters repurposed the vast industrial spaces—some as large as 12 meters high and 70 meters long—using reclaimed materials. Large basins and found objects inspired innovative transformations during this experimental phase.

The first winters were challenging, as the poorly insulated space was exposed to weather damage and intrusion. Over time, squatters constructed studios, workshops, and ateliers using recycled materials sourced from nearby demolition sites. A turning point came when they connected with other squats, such as Nicolaas Beetstraat, creating a broader community with shared resources and collective knowledge.

In 1981, initial contact was made between the squatters and the housing corporation Het Oosten. Negotiations began after several visits, involving Het Oosten, the squatters, the city of Amsterdam, the PGGM pension fund, and other stakeholders. Het Oosten developed a strong rapport with the squatters, motivated by its support for self-organized communities and its interest in adaptive, inclusive housing models. The squatters also gained significant local support through good relations with neighbors and legal protections allowing the occupation of vacant buildings.

In 1986, the property was sold to Het Oosten for a symbolic 1 guilder, cementing the residents' self-management model. As part of the deal, Het Oosten also acquired an adjacent plot for future housing developments, ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship between the housing corporation and the community.

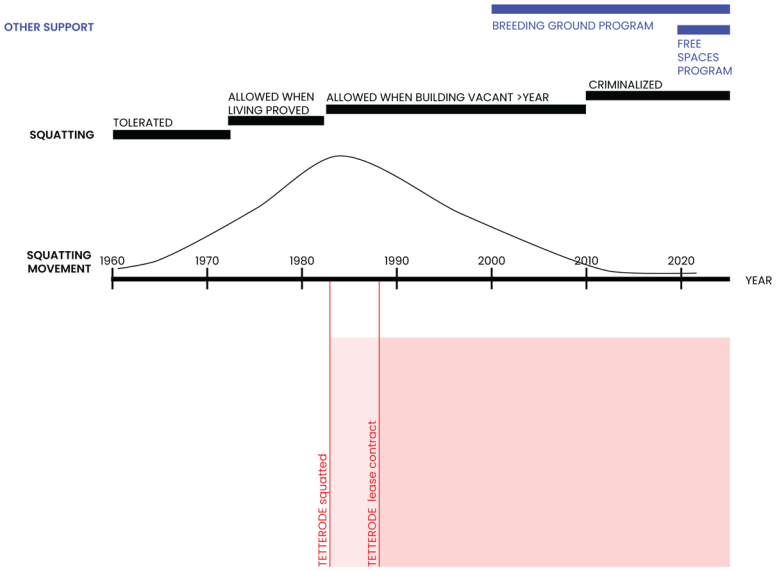


Fig. 56. Positioning in the timeline of squatting in the Netherlands. Author's illustration.

Legal organization

Since 1986, Tetterode has been managed as an association, *Vereniging Ruimschoots*, where all users of the complex are members. That year, the association signed a collective lease agreement with the housing corporation Het Oosten (now Stadgenoot). Under the agreement, Het Oosten is responsible for maintaining the building's exterior shell (*casco*), while users manage and maintain the interior, granting them ownership and control over their living and working spaces. Although the contract terms remain unchanged, their interpretation has evolved over time due to shifts in the housing corporation's structure and priorities.

This shared responsibility reflects concepts from John Habraken's 1961 manifesto on *casco + infill* design and Frank Bijdendijk's *Solids* framework. Tetterode stands as a significant example of applying these principles in an industrial context. Its success relies on strong social cohesion and a community-oriented mindset, ensuring collaborative space creation and management.

Collective decision-making is fundamental to Tetterode's operation, relying on consensus rather than top-down directives or majority voting. Community issues are discussed and resolved collectively, often following research and proposals from smaller groups. Members are divided into

three primary categories—small businesses, workspaces (mainly artists), and residents—with individuals free to participate in multiple groups. Meetings are held as needed, ranging from bimonthly to biannual, depending on the urgency of issues.

Specific tasks are managed by various committees, including finance, construction (addressing technical maintenance such as leaks, ventilation, and broken stoves), fire safety (consulting experts and maintaining alarms and evacuation systems), and sustainability (overseeing projects like solar panel installations). Committees are formed as required, prioritizing projects based on urgency and feasibility.

Self-management fosters autonomy, reduces costs, and strengthens social cohesion by encouraging members to take responsibility for maintaining and improving their spaces. This approach not only sustains the functionality of the complex but also creates a strong sense of community and belonging among its users.

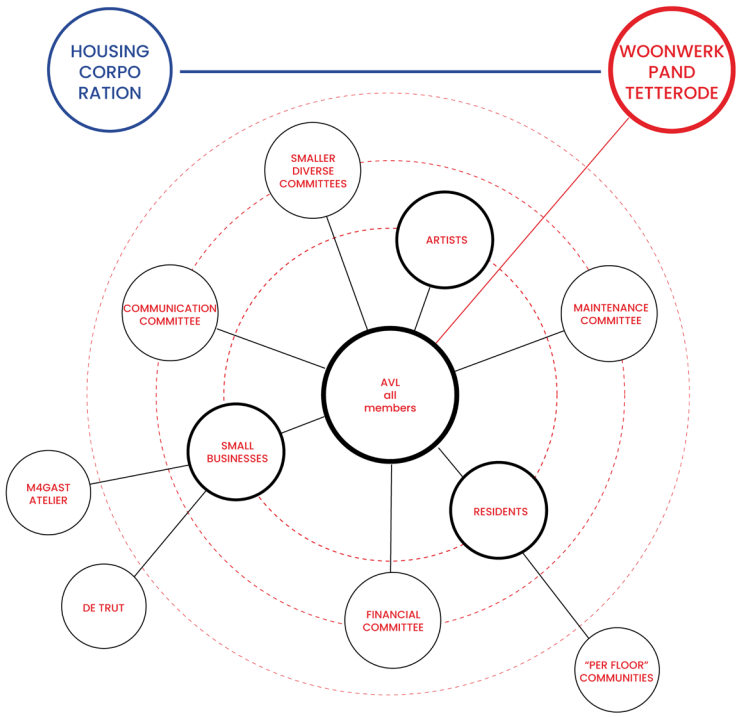


Fig. 57. Organizational structure.

Author's graph based on information found in Architecture of Autonomy (2019) and interview.

Finance

The rent paid to the housing corporation is based on the expenses incurred for maintaining the building. To ensure efficiency and minimize conflicts, the housing corporation appoints inspectors and contractors for the work. This system poses challenges in balancing cost neutrality—ensuring the landlord avoids losses—while accommodating the community's desire for quality and sustainable choices, as residents ultimately cover these costs through rent.

Initially, rent was calculated as 2% of each user's income to ensure fairness. However, this approach proved difficult to manage, leading to the adoption of a price-per-square-meter system. According to resident Mikel van Gelderen, charging by cubic meter, considering the building's height and scale, was discussed but ultimately not implemented.

Currently, rent is divided as follows: 66% goes to the housing corporation, while the remaining 34% covers internal expenses, including daily operations and interior maintenance.

Spatial organization

The building embodies free spaces where creativity thrives, fostering dialogue between users and architecture. It celebrates imperfection, spontaneity, and evolution, with character emerging from collaborative efforts. Acting as a vertical village, the complex has a dynamic layout where functions organically combine and evolve over time.

The complex consists of three heritage buildings, featuring multiple entrances that connect to a network of halls. Ground-floor workshops and businesses often have direct street access. Public and semi-public spaces include *de Trut*, an LGBTQ+ disco focused on creating a safe, inclusive, and affordable environment, and *M4gastatelier*, a collaborative artist space with projection rooms, film studios, flexible workspaces, and meeting areas. These spaces are supported by the association for insurance and general costs but also rely on project-based subsidies, external sponsors, or revenue from operations, such as the disco's sale of low-cost drinks run by volunteers. Private businesses include a hairdresser, thrift store, and others.

Common areas foster gatherings and collaboration. The roof, *het Schip*, hosts community events, while the *Marble Hall* serves as a focal point for lectures, exhibitions, and performances. The basement features music practice rooms, and shared workshops for ceramics and metalwork are scattered throughout. These spaces are linked by corridors, industrial lifts, and footbridges, creating a connected and adaptable environment.

Floors typically operate as small communities with shared kitchens and sanitary facilities, though many residents add private amenities within their spaces. Large halls often accommodate shared washing machines and storage furniture accessible to designated users. Private spaces with high ceilings and large windows are versatile, frequently featuring mezzanines.

While many spaces adapt dynamically to changing needs, core elements such as halls, corridors, and the building's shell remain more static due to safety regulations and fire-proofing requirements.

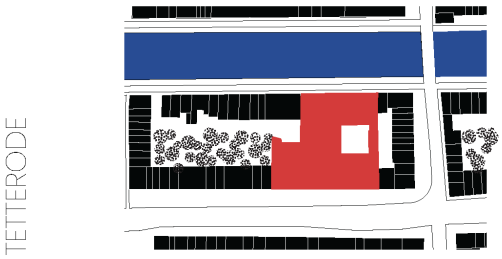


Fig. 58. Relation of the building to the surrounding

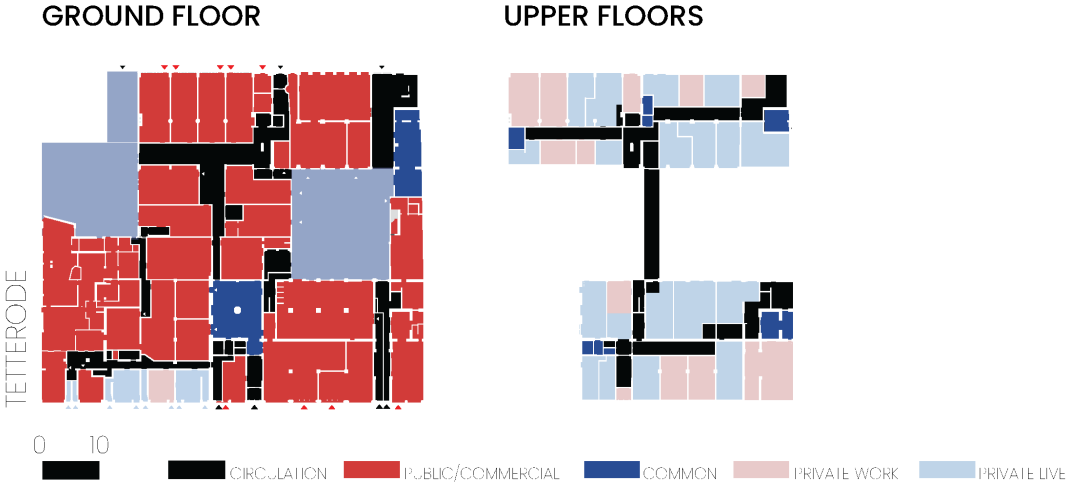


Fig. 59. Functional distribution.

Author's illustrations.

Fig. 60-61. Relation of the building to the surrounding.

Maintenance

One of the residents describes three main phases in Tetterode's evolution as a community living arrangement. Initially, it involved separation from society, with residents creating their own spaces in the abandoned, decayed complex. This was followed by a period of uncertainty and experimentation, characterized by makeshift homes and disorientation. Finally, the community reintegrated with society, using Tetterode as a platform to rethink and reshape roles within the broader world and neighborhood, symbolizing creative resistance.

In 1986, the first renovations began. Het Oosten took responsibility for restoring the building's structural elements, including the facade, roof, and main structure, enabling residents to formalize their housing arrangements. At that time, approximately 100 homes and business premises had already been created and invested in by tenants.

Initial renovations focused on ensuring safety, such as removing part of the roof between factory buildings to create an inner courtyard, establishing escape routes, and installing main sanitary, water, electric, and fire systems. These systems were later expanded and distributed by the residents. The works followed the *Solids* concept, prioritizing flexible spaces that allowed tenants to design layouts and adapt the environment to their needs. Inhabitants often consulted civil engineers to safely construct mezzanines and organize their spaces, especially during first years' renovations.

Renovation required significant manual labor, much of it performed by community members, volunteers, and local supporters like the sanitation department (*Stadreiniging*), which helped remove renovation waste. Materials were sourced inexpensively, often recycled or salvaged, such as large quantities of wood from city demolition sites used for construction and firewood.

The project faced legal and procedural challenges, including zoning issues and mandatory housing agreements. Tetterode resisted the creation of HAT units (*Huisvesting Alleenstaanden en Tweepersoonhuishoudens*), a subsidy program for one- and two-person households active between 1975 and 1995. Ultimately, Tetterode was treated as an experimental and

exceptional housing case, exempt from conventional building regulations as long as safety measures were upheld.

Since 2002, Tetterode has held heritage status, which imposes specific maintenance requirements and dictates how work is executed, such as the preservation and protection of windows or chimney.

Appropriation

The interiors, including internal walls, are entirely self-built and self-financed by the residents over the years, using materials they gathered. Various structures have emerged, layering functions to adapt to changing needs. High ceilings, such as those reaching 4.2 meters, allow for mezzanines that are often reconfigured as requirements evolve. Kitchens and bathrooms are added or removed from units, and residents frequently relocate within the complex as opportunities or needs arise.

Changes are typically simple, prioritizing flexibility—for example, using shutters or furniture as partitions to create privacy. While there are no restrictions or external interference regarding what happens inside each unit, residents also receive no financial subsidies for their work. However, since the building gained heritage status in the 1990s, any significant changes, especially those involving the *casco*, must be approved by the construction and maintenance committee for safety and preservation reasons.

Fig 62-63. Examples of common spaces. Courtyard and the Marble Hall.

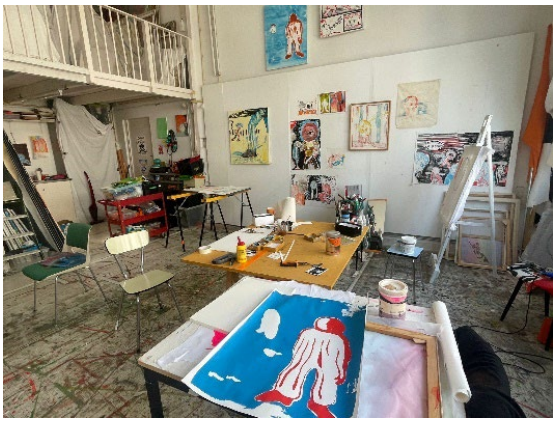


Fig64-65. Examples of interior private spaces.
https://www.facebook.com/WoonwerkpandTetterode/. [Accessed 20.11.2024].

Appendix 3. Legal organization differences

Legal form	**Dutch name**	**Purpose**	**Structure**
Association	*Vereniging*	Formed by a group of individuals (members) aiming to achieve a common goal, such as promoting a particular interest or activity.	Must have at least two members. Governed by an executive board elected by the members. The highest authority lies with the General Assembly of Members (*Algemene Ledenvergadering*), ensuring a democratic decision-making process.
Cooperative	*Cooperatie*	**Special type of association** aimed at providing for the material needs of its members through agreements with them, often operating as a business.	Consists of members who use the cooperative's services or products. Managed by a board (*bestuur*) accountable to the members, and supervisory board (*raad van toezicht*) optionally. Profits can be distributed among members or reinvested.
Foundation	*Stichting*	Established to achieve a specific goal, often of a social or idealistic nature, without the intention of distributing profits to founders or board members.	No members; governance is solely by a board of directors. The board appoints its own members and holds decision-making authority. Profits must be reinvested to further the foundation's objectives.
Corporation	*Vennootschap*	Aimed at conducting business to generate profit, which can be distributed to shareholders or reinvested.	Shareholders own the corporation, with decision-making rights in the general meeting of shareholders (*algemene aandeelhoudersvergadering*). Managed by a board of directors (*bestuur*), with a supervisory board (*raad van commissarissen*) optional for large companies.

source: https://www.kvk.nl/en/starting/legal-forms-of-business/, [Accessed 18.12.2024]

Appendix 4. Maintenance and spatial changes

Case study	Building size	Building built	Vacancy time	Previous function	Current function	Main maintenance	Financing	Execution
Boschgaard	+/- 1600 sqm	1969 and 2023	<1 year	Community center	Community center + (co)housing + garden co-sharing with neighbors	Deconstruction of the previous building, maximal reuse of elements Material harvesting New construction between 2021-2023	Rent payment to the housing corporation (owner) as a housing association, Subsidies complicated due to unusual legal status and unconventional circular construction (reuse rather than new elements with green certificates)	The works were executed collaboratively, with the housing corporation Zayaz that contracted a construction company, handling the building shell and regulatory aspects, while residents acted as subcontractors. The community completed much of the interior work, including tiling, partition walls, and clay layers, reducing costs, meeting eco-standards, and

								ensuring control over design details.
Het Domijn	6000 sqm	1917 and the following years	+/- 30 years	Locomotive factory	Workspaces for artists (mainly theatre fields)	2004: Official maintenance began after the lease contract. Order: Building B → C → A. Fixing roofs, adding fire-resistant partitions, dividing warehouses, and updating structures to meet fire and environmental regulations. Utilities (electricity, gas, sewage, water) were installed. Post-2013: Extensive upgrades after purchase: Building B: Roof fixed, 1850 solar panels installed. Building F: 300 solar panels installed. Building C: Solar panels added later. Latest Refurbishments Building A: Fixed foundation, replaced bricks, added insulation, installed triple-glazed windows, and repaired the roof.	Mortgage and maintenance loan supported by community-issued certificates and own capital by advance rent payments	A hands-on approach, completing most work themselves to save costs and retain equipment for future maintenance, fulfilling a contractual commitment of about one full-time workweek per year. Regular maintenance, including solar panel cleaning, fence repairs, and landscaping, is also self-managed. External help hired only when necessary.

						Building B: Painted exterior. Building C: Spaces divided into smaller units after a group left. Landscape Regular removal of old, dangerous trees and replacement with diverse, food-providing trees for animals, 4 different habitats.		
OT301/EHBK	+/- 2500 sqm	1958	<1 year	Film academy	Public (music venue, bar, *eetcafe*, cinema), work ateliers, residential	2002-2004: Initial major maintenance aligned with the lease agreement and subsidies. Focused on fire safety (escape routes, fire zones, asbestos removal), requiring a one-year closure. Public areas were renovated first, with an unofficial reopening in October 2003 and an official launch in May 2004. 2006-2008: Follow-up maintenance addressed additional needs. 2012: Sedum roof installed (25 tons of earth for insulation).	Since 2002, EHBK has funded maintenance through subsidies, grants, and a Triodos Bank loan for property acquisition and renovations. Rental income now serves as the primary revenue source, supported by volunteer efforts.	Community does lots of work themselves, although for major works, like exterior maintenance, installation of solar panels or safety regulated works external contractors are hired.

						2013: Cinema bar refurbished. 2014: Solar panels installed, elevator removed for better lighting, and all critical renovations completed. 2022-2023: Windows in the front house replaced. Maintenance included fireproofing, soundproofing investigations, and noise management improvements. 2025 (Planned): External façade and windows of the larger building scheduled for replacement.		
Plantage Dok	+/- 2900 sqm	1872, 1930, 1950	0	Church printing companyschool, gym,	Public (venue, *eetcafe*), residential, work ateliers	2002-2005: Legalization enabled extensive renovations. - Studios, workshops, and balconies added to the church nave. - Internal windows installed for visibility and connections. - Café-restaurant space partially renovated, with salvaged fencing	Initial renovations were funded by the Breeding Ground program and Triodos Bank loan, with later works supported by rental revenues.	Complex tasks handled by professionals (foundation, installations, insulation). Community handled simpler tasks (deconstruction, solar panel mounting, roof patching).

						repurposed as balustrades. - One-third of the church converted into five workspaces for revenue. - Frontal residential building: One staircase removed; remaining staircase relocated. Internal partitions reconfigured for functionality. 2014: Roof renovated. 200 solar panels and a green roof added for insulation and sustainability. 2019: External wall insulation completed. Ongoing: Continued focus on sustainability and comfort. Plans to further insulate external walls and improve wheelchair accessibility.		"Work week together" initiative fosters collaborative upkeep and shared responsibility.
Poortgebouw	1800 sqm	1879	3 years	offices	Residentialunderground cultural center (venue, bar, meeting space, not running *eetcafe*, giveaway store)	The construction of mezzanines has been a defining transformation of the internal spaces at Poortgebouw. Due to conflicts regarding responsibility over the		Most maintenance is self-managed, with contractors only hired for tasks beyond the community's capacity, as with basement insulation or heating repairs.

						building's maintenance the last major interior maintenance was completed in 2001. Before that, many of the works were focused on intermediate solutions, patching and painting. Many of the maintenance works are overdue.		
Woonwerkpand Tetterode	11000 sqm	1902 to 1948	<1 year	factory	Commercial (of all kinds), work ateliers, residential	1986: Renovations began under Het Oosten's oversight, focusing on structural elements (facade, roof, main structure). 1986-1990s: Initial safety-focused renovations: - Roof sections removed to create an inner courtyard. - Escape routes and main sanitary, water, electric, and fire systems installed. - Systems expanded and adapted by residents following the Solids concept, enabling flexible, tenant-designed spaces. - Residents consulted civil engineers for safe	The rent paid to the housing corporation is based on the expenses incurred for maintaining the building. Currently, rent is divided as follows: 66% goes to the housing corporation, while the remaining 34% covers internal expenses, including daily operations and interior maintenance.	The housing corporation appoints inspectors and contractors for the work. Works in the interior of the building are done entirely by the community, hiring external contractors only when necessary.

						construction of mezzanines and custom layouts. Since 2002: Tetterode has held heritage status, which imposes specific maintenance requirements and dictates how work is executed, such as the preservation and protection of windows, repair of the chimney.		