

# graduation plan

By Linde Petit dit de la Roche



ugliness  
of the  
emptiness

## **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

### **Name**

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4289617

## **STUDIO**

### **Name**

Adapting 20C Heritage Heritage  
and Architecture

### **Mentors**

Lidwine Spoormans (design)  
Wido Quist (building technology)  
Nicholas Clarke (cultural value)  
Dr. J.L. Heintz (delegate)

### **DATE**

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# Ugliness of the emptiness

## Argumentation for the choice of the studio

The studio of 'Adapating 20C Heritage' allows me to think and design in a new field of heritage: the young postwar, unlisted heritage. Exploring a new field, a seventies residential area, makes me exited to work with. The research into their values among the experts has recently started, which allows me to contribute to this research with my graduation project. Besides the newness of this heritage field, the topic of residential areas did not occur in my chosen master curriculum. The scale of the intervention of Almere Haven will address my lack of knowledge in this field. These two challenges, a new field of heritage and a residential area, will enrich my knowledge within the field of architecture.

## Graduation Project

### Title of the Project

Ugliness of the emptiness

### Location

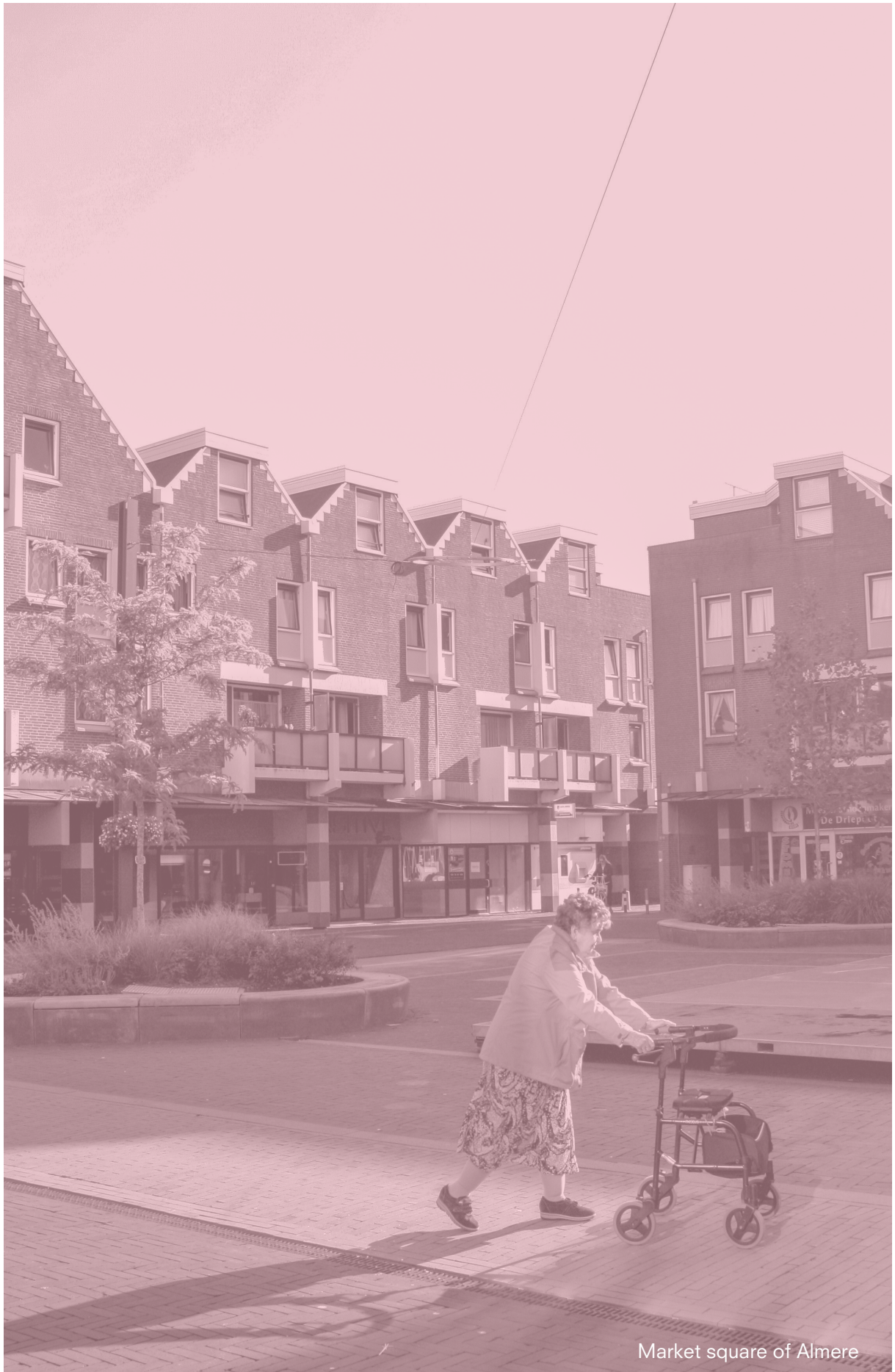
Almere Haven Centrum,  
The Netherlands

### Background

In the 1960's the forecast was that the Netherlands will grow with millions of inhabitants, so the housing stock had to increase enormously. Therefore, the policy for Architecture and Urban planning had to change, which was done by the Minister for Public Housing. This marked the beginning of the Dutch 'Volkshuisvesting'. Several small towns were extended with large neighbourhoods. These created cities are called in Dutch 'Groeikernen'. Almere Haven, the location of this graduation project, is a special Groeikern since it had been developed on new created land, Flevoland. Which means that the entire new city had been developed without any urban context. Therefore, the developers chose the concept of multiple spread core, also called the polynuclear city-concept. This concept would make it easier to build in phases. Besides this, they decided to make a garden-city, with facilities close by and a brand-new infrastructure with separate lanes and a focus on public transport.

Almere Haven is the first core of this polynuclear system which has been created between 1974 and 1981. The main goal was to make it as common Dutch and hospitable as possible. Within the urban structure and architecture, the aim was to create a town where the new inhabitants could relate to other normal, generic Dutch towns. For this reason, the design team studied old Dutch towns such as Hoorn, Alkmaar and Edam. The centre of Almere Haven has been developed from a typical seventies' philosophy, to create low rise building with a mix of commercial functions and housing above. Which was a direct reaction on the high rise, monofunctionally of the sixties. To keep the centre carefree, the supply of the commercial functions was programmed at the backside, the so-called expedition areas. In Almere Haven the separation of the functions of leisure and supply can also be found in the aesthetics of the buildings. The front sides are well designed and have spatial qualities. The backsides are poorly designed and without any spatial quality.





Market square of Almere



## Posed Problem

The current problem in Almere Haven arises from the differences between the frontside and the backsides of the buildings in the city centre. The centre is designed as commercial space in the plinth with housing above. Every side street along the central spine leads to a so-called dead space. A dead space has a lack of spatial quality, liveliness and gives an unsafe feeling. These days most of the commercial spaces are vacant, which is not conducive to the liveability of the centre. Now, not only the backsides are a dead space, but also the frontside becomes dead. This negative development means that there is a challenge to revitalize the centre of Almere Haven.

## Research question

How can a seventies expedition area with a lack of spatial quality be improved and provide an answer to the current question for densification?

01. What are the elements that are creating an area with a lack of quality, no liveliness and gives an unsafe feeling and what are generic design solutions to solve this?
02. What are the possibilities for infill and improvement regarding the current sustainable and densification questions?
03. How to deal with the national densification question and the strong Almere Haven village feeling?

## Design assignment

Like the rest of the Netherlands, Almere Haven has to densify. In this specific case, it's important to densify with an eye for the philosophy of the low-rise buildings in the 1970s. Because the human scale was highly important in the projects of the seventies. The chosen ensemble is a typical seventies building that is now facing vacancy in the plinth and an unattended back area without spatial quality for the residents. The design challenges are to make the ensemble coherent, liveable and with an improvement of spatial quality. To achieve this there are three themes set as starting points. These points are the size of densification, the improvement of backside elements and the current desires from the residents of Almere Haven.

After defining these starting points, research to several infill and improvement possibilities of this unattended areas will be conducted. With these possible urban design solutions, new questions will arise on how to deal with the chosen ensemble on a more detailed scale of aesthetics, technical and cultural values. These possibilities will also lead to a program of requirements that will address the three starting point themes. The final design will be a case study project that addresses several improvements for backside elements. These improvements can be used as a tool for other areas facing the same challenge.

## Process

### Method description

Before the choice of a plot within Almere Haven was made, a detailed analysis and research into the urban and architectural scale was conducted. This analysis addressed the following subjects: social, urban, building aesthetics, building technology and cultural values. Archives, literature, field and residents research were conducted and lectures on the future

development of Almere Haven were attended. Based on this research several issues that need improvements have been selected for the design.

By doing the field research a personal fascination for the number of unattended spaces within the centre was formed. These spaces have been analysed and researched via the following methods

01. Location analysis: Going back and experience the unattended spaces and observe what is taking place.
02. Case studies: Expedition area's in Rotterdam have been visited, observed and analysed.
03. Massa studies: Several mass studies that improve the qualities are and will be compared with the current situation.

Besides the above research, the design concept is based on a densification study, research to the backside elements and the resident's research. These researches lead to a more elaborated starting point theme. The densification study is based on implementing cases studies in Almere Haven with different aims. The densification was combined with the cultural values to see where the risks are. Three possibilities for the size of the densification have been identified, first giving Infill and improvement, second a small densification and improvement and lastly a high densification and improvement as a starting point. The second starting point is based on the research of the backside elements. Several generic solutions are designed for the elements and are used as ingredients to improve the ensemble. And can be seen as a small and simple toolbox for improving spatial qualities in such areas. The last starting point is an overview of the desires of the inhabitants which are based on residential research and observations.

All this combined leads to several proposals for the chosen ensemble and will be compared in order to choose the best possible design. The starting points and the design will be developed further via sketching, references and computer modelling to get an elaborated project.

## **Literature**

### **Background**

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### **Research framework**

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Backentrace of a housing complex

## Reflection

The chosen subject of revitalizing a mixed function ensemble, with an unattended and without spatial quality, backside is a typical seventies occurrence. 'How could be dealt with these types of areas?' is a question that is in direct relation with the studio question that concerns dealing with the new, unlisted 20 century heritage. The chosen subject touched on a fundamental philosophy of that time, as explained earlier. Besides the cultural value question, there is a national densification question that comes along with it. This has a direct relation with the entire master track Architecture. The graduation project touches on the question; How to densify in a low-rise town with a strong town identity and respect the current social cohesion. Adding a large number of new inhabitants will affect that social cohesion. Therefore, the projects aim is for any other architecture studio interesting when it comes to densification. On an even larger scale, the subject concerns all three disciplines in relation to the master program Architecture Urbanism and Building Sciences. The problem statement arises from an urbanism issue within Almere Haven, the large number of unattended, non-quality, spaces. In addition to addressing an existing building complex, the graduation project is likely to create a new architectural form for the future. It is therefore not only about the building science of the seventies, but also about the creation of a new futureproof building.

Besides the relation between the different layers of the faculty, there is also a relevance within the bigger picture where the graduation topic touch on. The chosen ensemble is not the only semi-open building block, with an unattended space programmed as expedition street, in the centre of Almere Haven. Along the central spine of the centre, four more blocks can be found which are facing similar problem. Since Almere Haven was built from a seventies philosophy of mixing functions, more Groeikernen are facing this kind of areas. Which means that it is relevant for the rest of the Netherlands. Rotterdam, for example, has many of these expedition areas. The graduation project will be a case study design with several design solutions for these typical non-quality spatial backside elements.