

Reflection P3

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My design project is a nursing home in Schilderswijk. Den Haag and my research is about the front garden.

The relation between the Healthcare building and the front garden

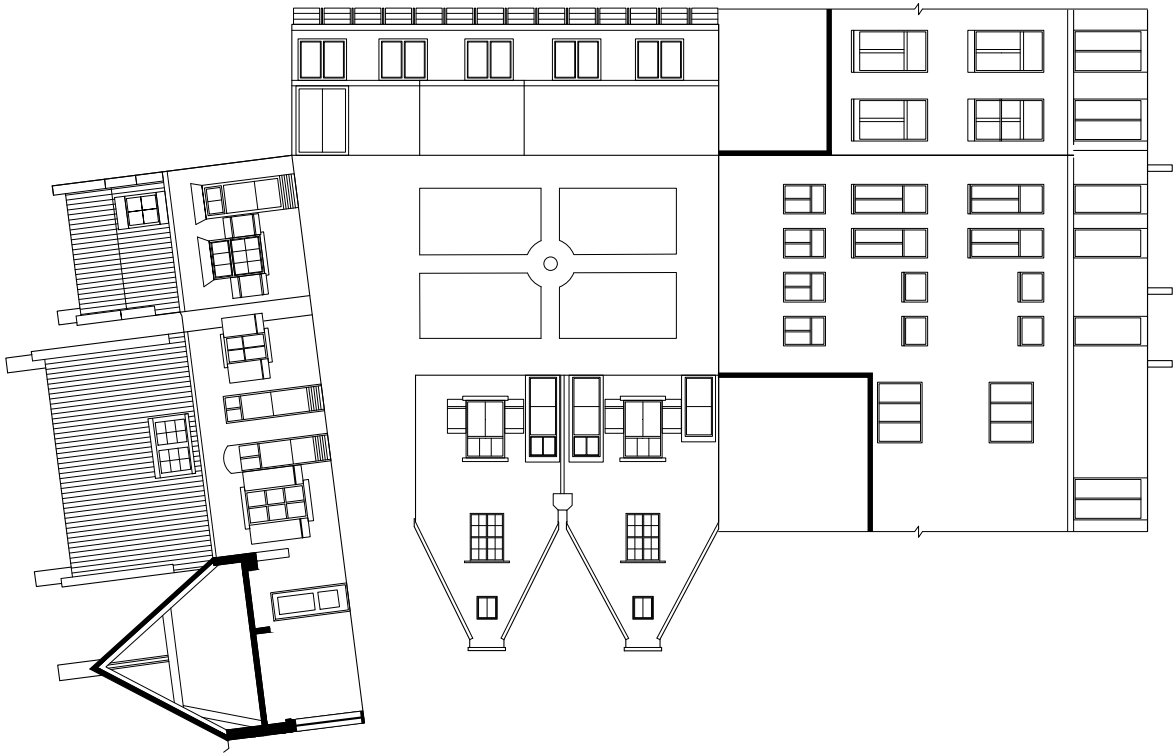
The front garden refers to the portion of green land in front of the residential house at the entrance. The front garden consists of two somewhat contradictory functions. On one hand, it is the connection between dwellings and street, on the other hand it serves as a separation. The path in the garden and views into and out of the front garden sets up the connection between the individual, personal world and greater public space. However, the front garden is also one part of the house owner's property, which means it is a private oasis as well. In the Schilderswijk, there are many front gardens which work perfectly in this way. As for me, the design of a nursing home has somehow connected with the design of a front garden. The nursing home is a building that contains private living and social activity at the same time. This directly triggers one problem: how to deal with the relationship between private space and the wider public realm. I chose the front garden as my study object, because the attribute of the front garden is dealing with this issue.

The relation between the design and research

My first impression of nursing home was formed when I made the drawing of Margrethahof, an old hofje in Utrecht. This hofje is in the city center in the urban rush. But the environment of the hofje is surprisingly nice. It has a very closed facade facing the street and a small garden in the middle. When I was standing in the garden, I felt that the urban noise disappeared and only the wonderful nature scenes. The strategy of this hofje chooses to close itself from the surrounding and creates a beautiful environment inside.



Margrethof Floor Plan



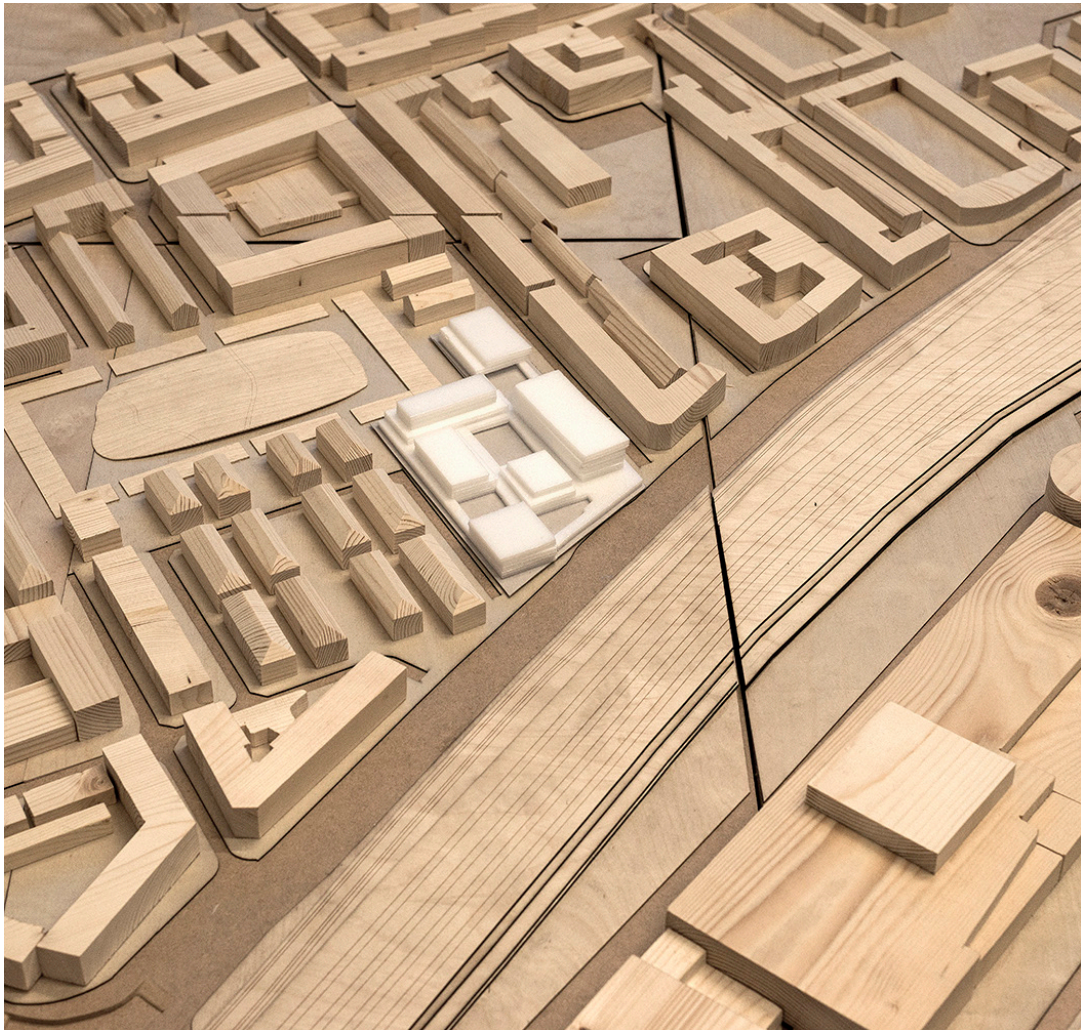
Margrenthof Foldout Elevation



Margrethof Perspective

After that, I participated in the excursion in the Belgium. This closed strategy appears in the Kloosterhof Pamele designed by NOA. As a contrast, the Housing and Social care in Aarschot designed by DRDH and DVT is totally different. The designer paid a lot of attention to the relationship between the building and the city. But at that time, I still prefer the close strategy in the urban area. In my understanding at that time, the nursing home should be a green and quiet enclave, associated with oases in the urban rush.

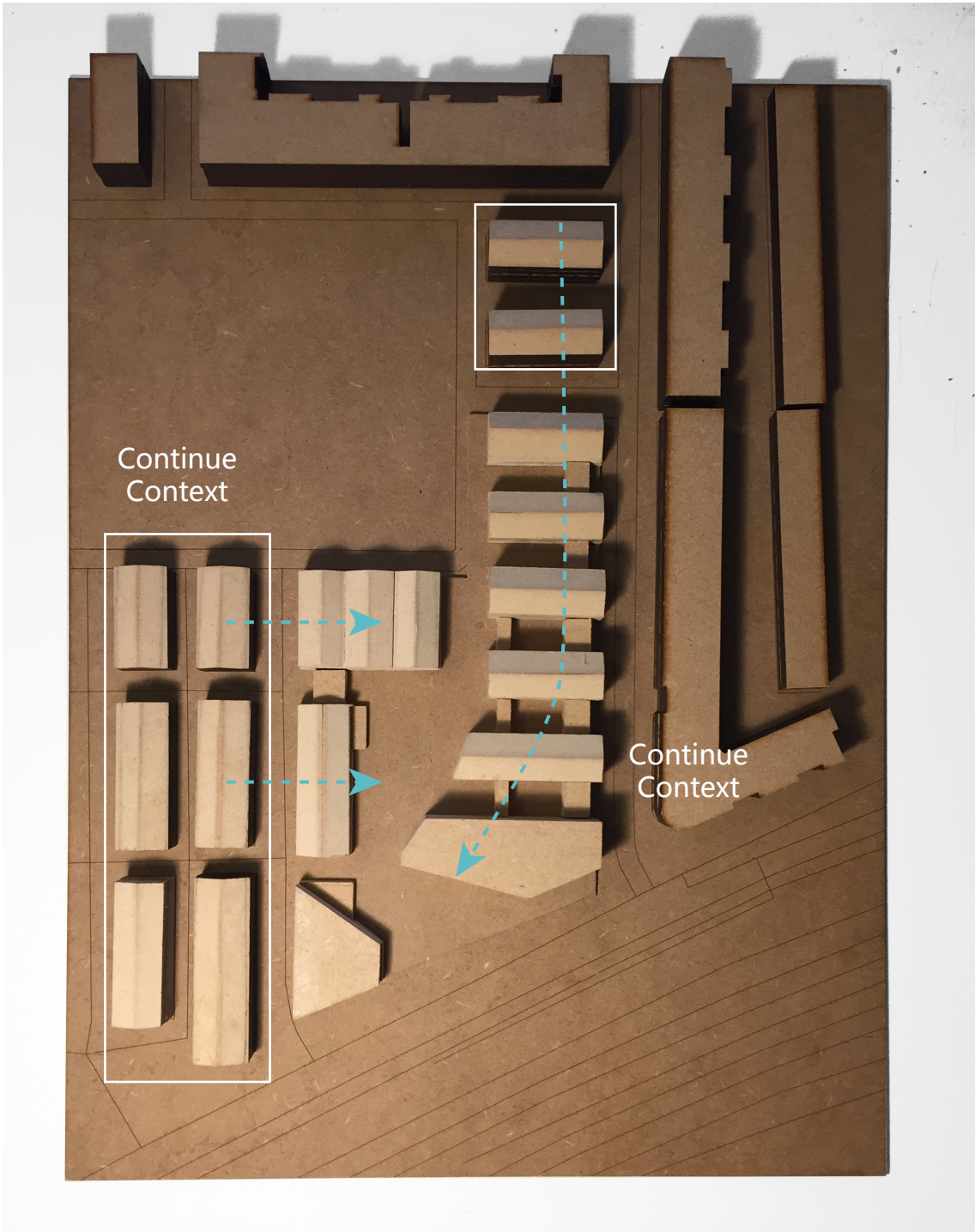
With this initial impression, I started my typology and mass model study. I took the strategy of creating a closed and protected inner world. I created a continuous terrain with small blocks on it and gardens in between. The terrain provides extra protected outdoor space, and the garden could be extended vertically on these terraces.



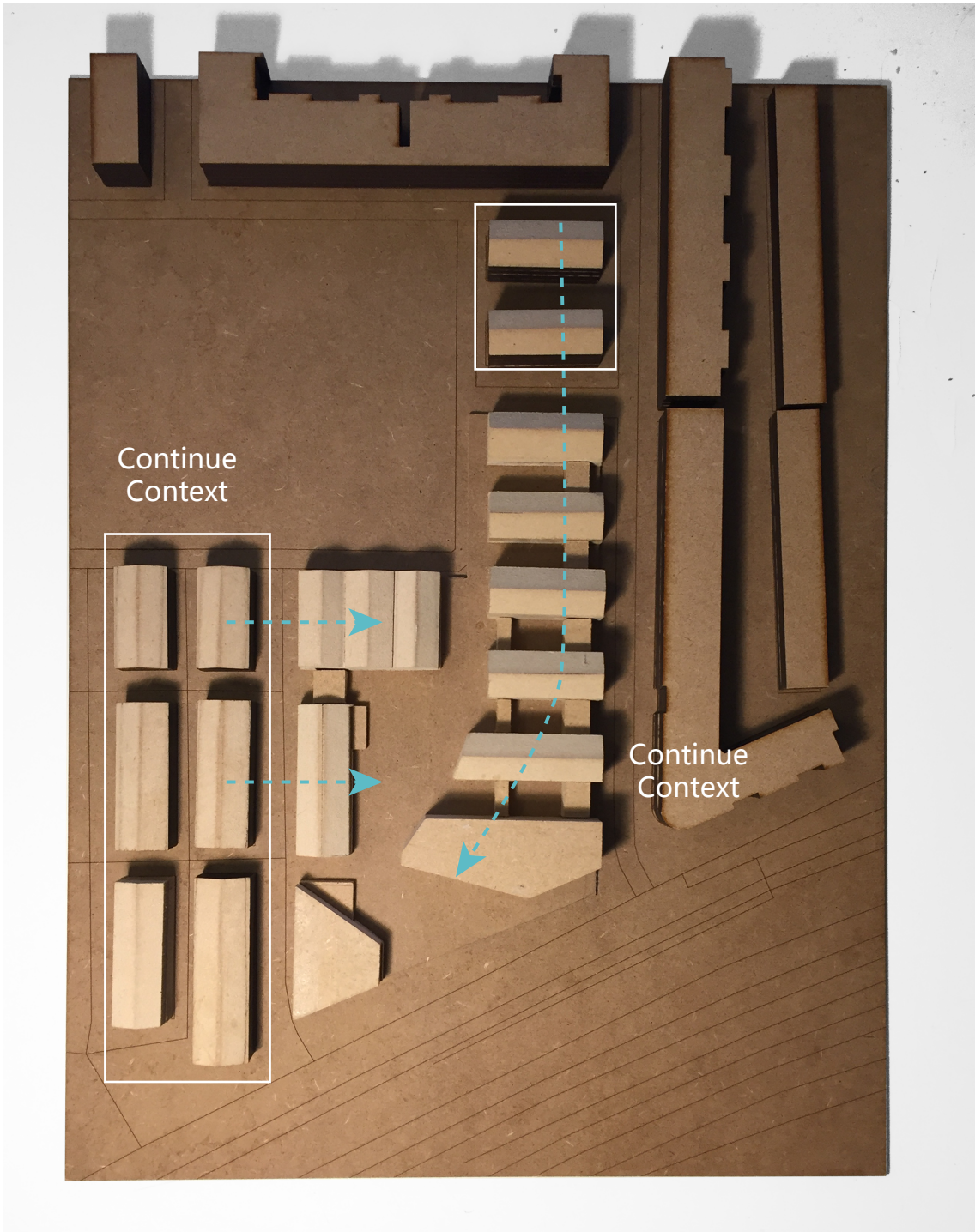
Old mass model before P2

However, during the tutorial and my research, I started to feel this closed strategy might be too reckless. From the research, I began to understand how the front garden works. The front garden is a transition space between public and private. The boundary between private zone and public space is blur there. This seems to be a more interesting way for me to make a private zone in the urban than just spectate. Before the P2, Mr. Daniel Rosbottom gave me a great help. He was critical with my mass model because it was too separated with the surroundings and have no relationship with the city. I changed my layout after that. The front garden research gives me an idea of creating different level of public and private relationship. And I formed my master plan from the urban context. The surroundings of the site are very complicated. On the west side of the site, there is a series of small Spanish style houses while on the north side, there are two small houses designed by Siza. From the context, those to side is more like a village, but their extent directions are perpendicular with each other. Meanwhile, the south side and east side is more like an urban with long strips of buildings, a road and a railway. This collage of the urban context gives me an idea to continue the context and let them meet together to form a new square and parks. So on the east side, I continue the context of two Siza's blocks. I repeat the block to the south and make a variation in the end. Meanwhile, on the west side, I continue the Spanish houses context to let them extend to the east. The south side is facing the city. I put two special blocks with public functions in them. The space between these two blocks is a new public square. In the middle of the whole building is a semi-private garden and the private gardens are located in between the repeated small blocks.

The research of the front garden also influences my design when I develop my interior space. The front garden give me an idea of "threshold". When I design the interior, I reserved many small transition spaces, for example, between the private room to the corridor, the room to the private garden and the outside to the inside.



New mass model and analyze



New mass model and analyze