



**The role of the Women Advisory
Committees (VAC) in social
housing in the Netherlands**

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Introduction

After World War II, the Netherlands faced a housing crisis, leading to rapid developments in social housing. Within this context, the Women Advisory Committees (VAC) were established in 1946 to ensure that the needs of women and families were considered in the design of new housing projects. These committees, consisting primarily of women who were not employed as architects, provided feedback on spatial layouts, functionality, and livability. Despite their contributions, the role of the VAC has received little academic attention, leaving their role in Dutch housing largely underexplored.

This research explores the role of the VAC in shaping post-war social housing in the Netherlands. It will analyze their methods, recommendations, and interactions with architects and housing associations to uncover how their involvement influenced housing design. The VAC acted as a vital intermediary between residents and professionals, advocating for among others efficient kitchen layouts, logical spatial arrangements, and functional storage spaces. Nevertheless, tracing their influence is challenging due to the informal and advisory nature of their work, which often lacks formal documentation. This study aims to fill this gap by highlighting the significance of the VAC's contributions to housing design.

While the role of the Women Advisory Committees (VAC) in housing design has been largely overlooked in academic research, the female architect María Novas Ferradas (Ferradás, 2024) have previously investigated this topic. Professors Wiebe E. Bijker and Karin Bijsterveld also discussed the VAC in their book *Women Walking Through Plans* (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000). Their research has shed light on how these committees played a crucial role in shaping post-war housing, advocating for more functional and user-centered designs. They emphasized how the VAC's recommendations challenged dominant architectural and planning practices that largely ignored domestic efficiency and social well-being. However, there remains a gap in understanding how these recommendations translated into built projects and whether their

principles still hold relevance in contemporary housing today.

To explore this, this research will focus on the RVS flat design by Wilhelmina Jansen, a social housing project where the VAC had direct influence. By analyzing the details, spatial layout and degree of flexibility, this study will assess how the committee's advice was implemented. To bridge the knowledge gap, the RVS flat will be compared to contemporary housing project Malieklos. This comparison will evaluate to what extent the VAC's recommendations and principles have been maintained, adapted, or abandoned over time.

This analysis will help determine whether the issues raised by the VAC remain relevant in today's housing discourse or if modern developments have taken a different approach.

With today's challenges in social housing, like shortages, increasing density and changing family structures, it is valuable to look at how the VAC dealt with similar issues in the past. Comparing their advice to contemporary housing design gives new insights into their role. This also offers recognition for the committee, whose contribution has been largely overlooked.

1. The establishment of the VAC

The first Women's Advisory Committee (VAC) was founded in 1946 in Rotterdam, a city that had been heavily damaged by the bombing of May 14th 1940, which left 80,000 people without a home (Stadsarchief Rotterdam, n.d.). Rebuilding the city became a top priority, with a focus on housing for the nuclear family (Ferradás, 2024). In this context, women became increasingly worried that their voices were not being heard in decisions about the new living environment.

The first steps toward creating the VAC were already taken in 1939, when women's organizations met with the city councillor of Public Works and Reconstruction to discuss setting up a committee (Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960). A key figure in this process was Johanna (Hannie) Dekhuijzen-Zeehuisen, a city councillor before and after the war. Shortly after the war, she again raised the idea with the councillor of Public Works and Reconstruction, who supported the initiative (Ferradás, 2024).

In 1946, the VAC became an official part of the city's Housing Department and was placed under the Scientific Research Division (Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960). Between 1946 and 1951, the committee mainly worked as a study group, giving advice on housing design—especially from the point of view of married women from working- and middle-class backgrounds (Ferradás, 2024). The initiative was supported by women's organizations such as the Dutch Association of Housewives and the Dutch League of Rural Women, who argued that women, as the main users of the home, should be included in the design process (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000).

In 1960, the Rotterdam VAC had fourteen members, including housewives, architects, a doctor, a social worker, and specialists in housing and electricity. The committee aimed for a diverse mix of religious and political views (Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960). All members of the VAC worked on a voluntary basis and were not financially compensated for their contributions. Although some municipal subsidies were provided, funding was often insufficient, which at times limited the scope and sustainability of their activities (Ferradás, 2024).

In the years that followed, the VAC network grew to more than 200 committees across the whole of the Netherlands (Schot et al., 2001). Since 2000, the VAC has included both men and women (VACpunt Wonen, n.d.). This shift might be caused by the fading of traditional gender roles. Although no longer exclusively female, the name "VAC" is still used as a historical reference. In 2004, the organization chose to retain the term in its updated name, VACpunt Wonen. Today, local committees may refer to themselves as VAC, WAC (Woonadviescommissie), or Housing Advisory Committees (VACpunt Wonen, n.d.).

2. The Methods of the VAC

This chapter examines the various methods employed by the VAC. The VAC used a range of approaches in their advisory work to ensure that housing projects were evaluated from a practical and user-centered perspective. These methods evolved over time and included reports, advices, site visits (excursions), and exhibitions.

2.1 Reports

One of the primary methods utilized by the VAC was the production of reports based on surveys and observations (Ferradás, 2024). In the early years, these reports focused on domestic labor efficiency, particularly regarding washing equipment, recognizing that housewives, especially in working-class communities, faced significant burdens in managing household tasks. The VAC aimed to identify how work could be simplified through improved household equipment or communal solutions (Ferradás, 2024). Over time, their reports expanded to encompass various housing-related topics, providing a foundation for their advisory role.

2.2 Detail and spatial advices

Another crucial aspect of their methodology was their direct involvement in reviewing architectural plans (C. Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960). The committees examined new urban plans and participated in discussions regarding the orientation of housing blocks, such as whether living rooms should face the street or the garden (C. Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960). Their review process included assessing floor plans for elements such as room dimensions, storage provisions, and the integration of essential facilities like laundry spaces and retail units within residential buildings (Ferradás, 2024). The VAC's evaluations were often formalized into checklists that ensured consistency in their recommendations, focusing on functionality, practicality, suitability, flexibility, accessibility, safety, comfort, and hygiene (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000). The procedural structure of the VAC's work typically involved architects drafting plans

in consultation with municipal departments, after which the VAC would receive the designs for evaluation (Ferradás, 2024). They then produced reports, sometimes supplemented with sketches, to examine domestic working and storage spaces in detail. However, their role remained advisory, and their recommendations were not always implemented, often due to financial constraints (Ferradás, 2024). Their working methods varied depending on the situation. In some cases, plans and drawings were sent to members for review, while in others, a select group convened for discussions, occasionally inviting experts to provide additional insights (C. Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960).

2.3 Excursions

In addition to evaluating housing designs, VAC members actively engaged with construction sites (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000; Schot et al., 2001). They visited building projects, participated in building teams alongside architects, commissioners, and contractors, and even revisited housing projects two years after completion to assess the effectiveness of their recommendations. These follow-up visits allowed the VAC to refine their checklists and improve their evaluation criteria for future projects (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000; Schot et al., 2001).

A 1963 newspaper from Eindhoven describes how a local VAC group toured several recently occupied houses, engaging directly with residents to gather firsthand insights (Nieuwe Eindhovense Krant, 1963). During these visits, committee members scrutinized practical details such as storage space, kitchen layouts, and the placement of electrical outlets. They actively questioned both homeowners and municipal officials about design choices. This hands-on approach allowed the VAC to identify shortcomings that architects might have overlooked and ensure that future housing plans better met the needs of residents (Nieuwe Eindhovense Krant, 1963).

2.4 Exhibitions

Another key method employed by the VAC was the organization of exhibitions to educate the public on modern housing solutions (Rotterdams Parool, 1952). Starting in 1951, the VAC recognized the potential of exhibitions as a means of direct interaction with the community. These exhibitions showcased model homes with various interior arrangements, demonstrating both traditional and modern furniture setups. They collaborated with organizations such as department store De Bijenkorf and local housing associations to create these exhibitions (Ferradás, 2024). Between 1952 and 1955, seven exhibitions were held in Rotterdam and its surrounding areas, including Overschie, Hoogvliet, Zuidwijk, and Schiebroek, drawing thousands of visitors. (L. Tummers & M. N. Ferradás, 2021). In the cases of the exhibitions in Schiebroek and Zuidwijk model apartments were furnished according to different budget levels, and visitors could also view photographs and floor plans. (Rotterdams Parool, 1952)

Their final exhibition took place in Pendrecht, where the VAC set up four model flats on Snellendamstraat (Rotterdams Parool, 1957). This exhibition attracted 3,000 visitors and featured a public information evening where hundreds of questions were answered. The goal was to show how a family of five could efficiently live in a small home through smart furniture arrangements and practical solutions. Following the exhibition, real residents moved into the flats, and follow-up visits confirmed that many had adopted the VAC's recommendations, leading to improved living conditions (Rotterdams Parool, 1957). These exhibitions received positive press coverage, and the VAC found them to be a highly effective way of demonstrating practical housing improvements.

3. The advice of the VAC

This chapter explores the specific recommendations provided by the Women Advisory Committees to improve post-war housing design. Their advice addressed a wide range of issues, from small functional details to broader spatial planning. These recommendations can be categorized into three key areas: functional detailing, focusing on hygiene, safety, and convenience (Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960); spatial layouts, which optimized

circulation and functionality (Ferradas, 2024) and flexibility, advocating for adaptable housing to accommodate different household structures (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000). While much of the advice involved minor modifications, it can be argued that they had a significant impact on daily life, demonstrating that even small changes can lead to meaningful improvements (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000).

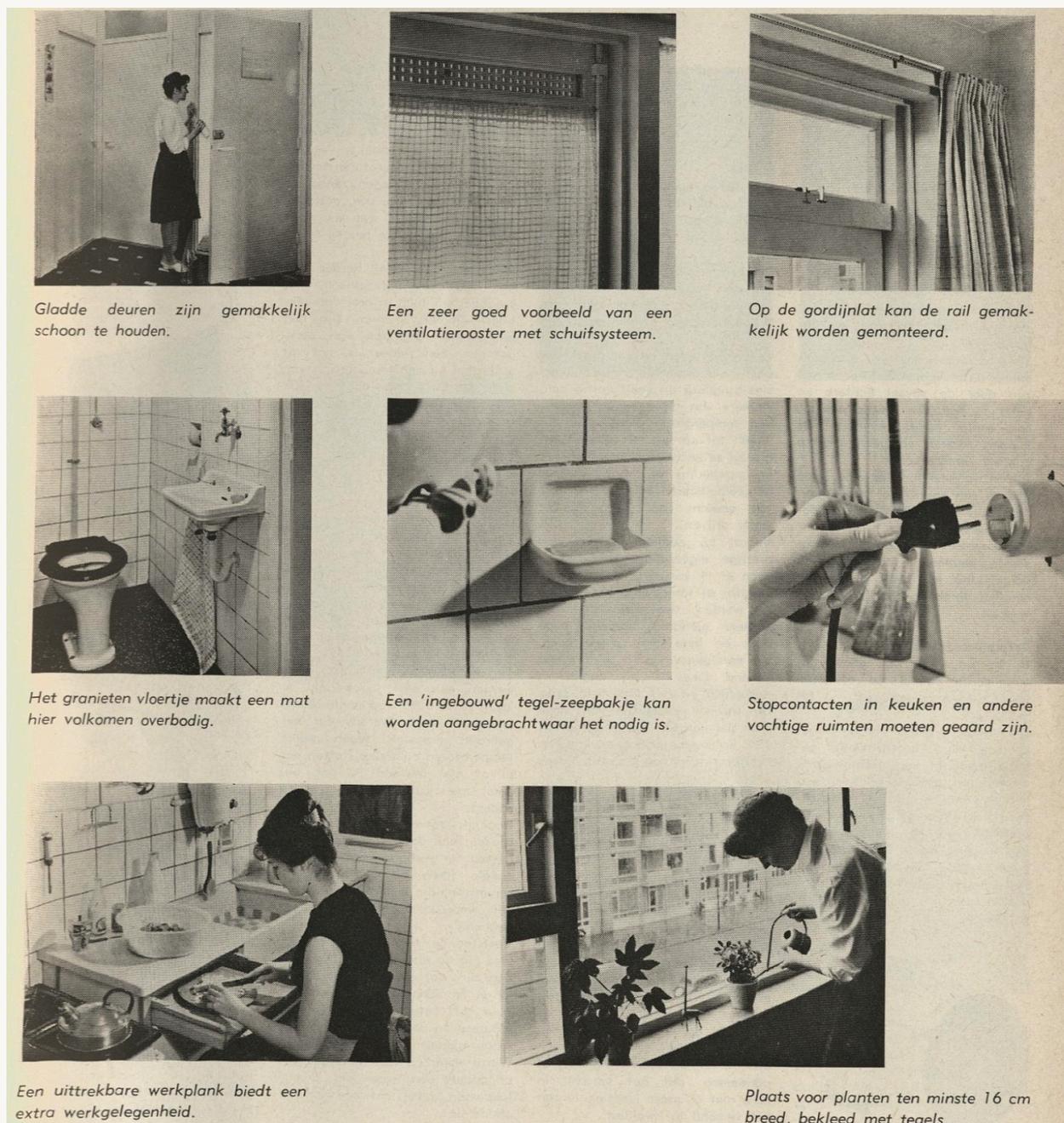


Figure 1. Applications of the VAC's advice. From *Goed Wonen*, no. 5, May 1960, by C. Nicolai Chaillet.

3.1 Functional details

The VACs offered numerous recommendations to enhance the functionality of homes by refining small yet essential design aspects. Their suggestions prioritized hygiene, safety, and convenience, particularly in finishing details (C. Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960). The magazine *Goed Wonen* highlights some of their key recommendations shown in figure 1.

For hygiene, the VAC recommended using smooth doors for easier cleaning, as well as granite flooring in toilets and a tiled backsplash behind the stove. To improve convenience, they suggested installing a 'pottenkijker' above the stove for better visibility, a serving hatch between the living room and kitchen for easier access to equipment, and a slightly recessed plinth under the kitchen counter. In terms of safety, the VAC advocated for grounded electrical outlets in kitchens and other humid areas, as well as adjustable ventilation grilles to improve air circulation (figure 2) (C. Nicolai-Chaillet, 1960).

Additional recommendations included high-quality hinges and locks, smooth flooring finishes, and proper door placement to avoid obstruction (Schot, J.W. et al., 2001). One specific critique noted that the kitchen counter should be next to the stove, with proper lighting and an accessible pot rack.

The impact of these recommendations was evident in their site visits (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000). In 1958, the Rotterdam VAC inspected a housing project and found that 11 of their 20 recommendations had been implemented. Improvements included an enlarged cupboard and the installation of a serving hatch. However, some suggestions, such as increasing the size of a sink unit or adding a washbasin in the bathroom, were ignored. Mainly due to financial limitations.

Other successful changes included adjusting door openings, modifying bathroom layouts, isolating toilets from living areas, adding skylights, and installing extra washbasins in bedrooms (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000). It can be argued that these seemingly minor changes have significantly improved the usability and comfort of the homes.



Figure 2. Criticism from the VAC on a too small ventilation grille. From *Goed Wonen*, no. 1, February 1960, by C. Nicolai Chaillet.

3.3 Flexibility

Additionally, the VACs criticized the rigid nature of post-war housing designs, which often assumed a fixed family structure (Quiroga, 2022). They argued for more adaptable housing solutions that could accommodate different household compositions, including single-person homes and elderly-friendly designs.

A key aspect of this flexibility was the use of variable wall elements in housing design. For example, in a 1958 project in Utrecht, the VAC advised on the implementation of flexible partition walls between living rooms and adjacent rooms (Nicolai Chaillet. C, 1960). These walls could be adapted to meet the specific needs of the residents, allowing for different configurations. Options included walls with doors and glass panels, or even fully open spaces, depending on the desired level of separation between rooms (figure 4).

This approach not only provided adaptability for changing household structures but also allowed for more personalized living environments, aligning with the VAC's vision of flexible, user-centered housing.

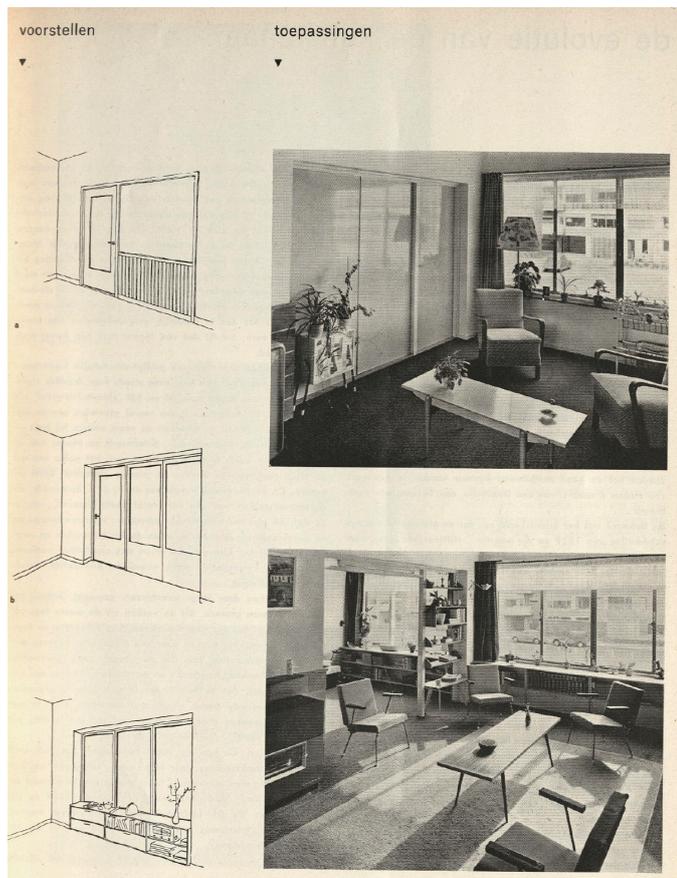


Figure 4. Three suggestions for partition walls and the final applications. From *Goed Wonen*, no. 9, September 1960, by C. Nicolai Chaillet.

4. The RVS Flat, Rotterdam

This chapter examines the design of the RVS Flat in Rotterdam, which was designed by Wilhelmina Janssen, a member of the VAC. The case study investigates the extent of the VAC's influence on the RVS Flat and, by extension, its role in shaping the reconstruction of post-war Rotterdam. The analysis follows the same structure used in the previous chapter, focusing on the three aspects: functional detailing, spatial layout, and flexibility. The main source for this chapter is *De RVS flat: Schone belonging voor vasthoudendheid in Rotterdam* by Anita C. Heijkoop (2010).

4.1 Origin and development

Anita C. Heijkoop describes the origins of the RVS flat in Rotterdam as a project initiated by women's associations advocating for independent living spaces for single, working women (Heijkoop, 2010). The idea emerged from the Stichting Vrouwen-centrum Rotterdam, a coalition of seven women's organizations. In 1947, structural engineer Wilhelmina Janssen designed the building, but early plans were rejected. After securing financial support from Rotterdamse Verzekeringen Sociëteiten (RVS), the project was approved, albeit with an expanded target group including elderly couples

and incomplete families. Construction began in 1956, and by 1958, the RVS flat was officially opened, marking a milestone in housing for independent women (Heijkoop, 2010).

4.2 The architecture

The building consists of 160 apartments in six variations, ranging from one- to three-room units (types A to F) (Heijkoop, 2010). The tall, elongated building (figure 5) has a brick exterior, a flat roof serving as a communal terrace, and gallery-style corridors for access (Heijkoop, 2010). Twenty one-room apartments were reserved for members of seven involved foundations, while forty two-room units were for single occupants. The three-room apartments were allocated to elderly couples or incomplete families. A clause in the rental contract stated that unmarried women's leases would be terminated upon marriage (Heijkoop, 2010). The design reflects Functionalist ideals common in post-war Rotterdam, using modern materials like concrete, steel, and glass (Heijkoop, 2010). The RVS Flat features a clear split between the gallery and residential sides, distinct entrances, and a non-hierarchical facade. A central hall connects to the main stairwell and two elevators, ensuring full accessibility.



Figure 5. The finished RVS-Flat. From *Wederopbouwrotterdam. nl*, "Woongebouw voor alleenwonenden en onvolledige gezinnen (RVS-flat)" by M. Lageweg, May 1958.

4.3 VAC and the RVS-flat

Heijkoop argues that the experiences of Wilhelmina Janssen in the VAC are strongly reflected in the design of the RVS flat, both in the detail, spatial and flexibility aspects of the building.

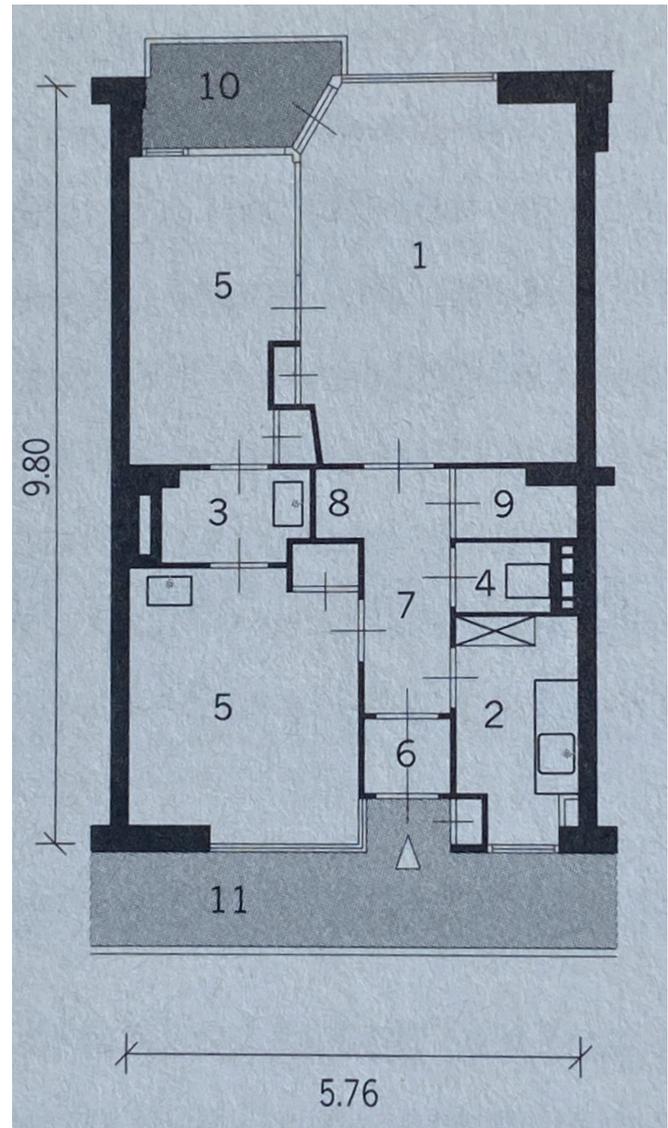
4.3.1 Functional details

According to Heijkoop, the advice and interests of the VAC are evident in the detailed finishing of the RVS flat. Small details that contributed to living comfort include a slightly protruding baseboard under the kitchen counter, a sliding ventilation grille, a backsplash behind the stove, a granite floor in the toilet, smooth doors that are easy to clean, and a window sill covered with tiles. These typical VAC recommendations, discussed in chapter 3, were directly applied in the RVS flat.

4.3.2 Spatial layout

In addition to Heijkoop's analysis, the spatial layout of the RVS flat demonstrates a focus on efficiency, reflecting the VAC's emphasis on practicality. The floor plan (figure 6) features large storage space, room for a stove and refrigerator, and the strategic placement of the sink and countertop. This practical arrangement aligns with the idea that "those who come home tired after a hard day's work have no time for unnecessary hassle" (K. de Ridder, 1958). The design effectively maximizes functionality and ease of use for residents alienating with the principles of the VAC.

Additionally, the building's ground floor housed storage spaces, garages, and two retail spaces—a delicatessen and a barbershop—which further exemplified the VAC's aim to provide convenience for residents.



- | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----|------------------|
| 1. | Living room | 6. | Hallway |
| 2. | Kitchen | 7. | Corridor |
| 3. | Bathroom | 8. | Built in cabinet |
| 4. | Toilet | 9. | Closet |
| 5. | Bedroom | 10. | Balcony |
| | | 11. | Gallery |

Figure 6. Floor plans six different apartment types. From *De RVS flat: schone belonging voor vasthoudendheid in Rotterdam*, A.C. Heijkoop, 2010.

4.3.3 Flexibility

The flexibility of the RVS flat's layout is another notable aspect. Although Heijkoop does not explicitly link this feature to the VAC, the design allows for various household compositions, moving away from the traditional family model. For example, Type A apartments can serve as a three-room unit for two people sharing a living room, each with a private bedroom. Alternatively, one resident could use the bedroom and living room, while the other occupied the bedroom with the sink. If the two residents shared a bedroom, the other room could serve as a dining or study area. A glass partition wall in the living room enabled this adaptability (figure 7). This flexibility made the apartments suitable for two single women sharing the space, elderly couples, or incomplete families (A.C. Heijkoop, 2010). The application of this degree of flexibility by Wilhelmina Janssen also indicates a clear influence of the VAC in this area.

Through this analysis, the role of the VAC in social housing in Rotterdam becomes clear, with the RVS flat serving as a prime example.

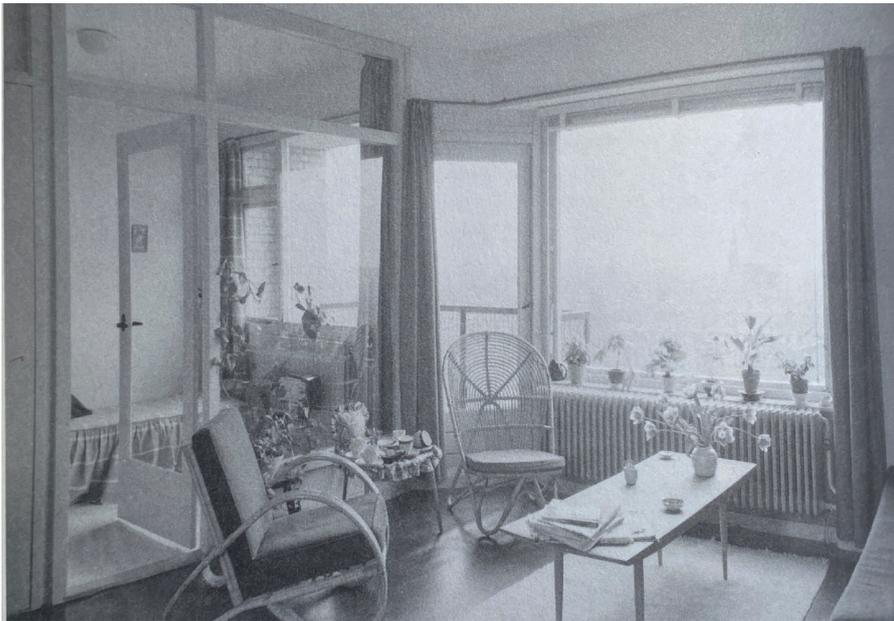


Figure 7. Three-room apartment with small bedroom (type A). From *De Vrouw en Haar Huis*, "Woongebouw voor alleen-wonenden" by K. de Ridder, June 1958, p. 255.

5. Malieklos, Rotterdam

To determine whether the influence of the VAC can still be seen in contemporary housing, the RVS flat will be compared with the Malieklos in Rotterdam. This comparison will focus on similarities and differences in terms of functional details, spatial layout, and flexibility.

5.1 Malieklos

The project Malieklos has been selected for this research as it represents contemporary social housing in Rotterdam. It was chosen because it targets similar households as the RVS flat, falls within the same rental price range, is located in Rotterdam, and was recently completed. This makes the project a relevant example of contemporary housing that can be compared with the historical context of the RVS flat.

5.2 The architecture

The Malieklos is a social housing project in Rotterdam designed by architectural firm DP6 in Delft and contains 51 Apartments and 31 single-family homes (DP6, 2025). The apartments are energy-efficient and gas-free and fit well into the existing urban fabric featuring modern, open portico designs for a welcoming entrance. Malieklos is part of the revitalization of Hillesluis and Rotterdam-Zuid. The previous buildings, plagued by structural issues, were replaced with sustainable homes equipped with solar panels and green roofs to manage rainwater. (DP6, 2025)

The architecture reflects local design themes, with concrete plinths, subtle brick detailing, and slanted corners (figure 8). The building has one main entrance on Klosstraat encouraging community interaction.

In 2022 Malieklos won the Vakjury Architectuurprijs Rotterdam for showing that limited budgets in social housing can still result in high-quality architecture (Rotterdam Architecture Prize, 2022). The jury admired the project's attention to detail and its demonstration of Rotterdam's commitment to inclusive urban development, offering generous and well-designed social housing that radiates quality.

5.3 Comparison to the RVS flat

To compare the Malieklos apartments with those of the RVS Flat, a site visit was conducted at Malieklos. The information and visual materials gathered during this visit are original work, sourced from a one- or two-person apartment on the third floor, currently occupied by a female resident. The comparison will be based on previous information about the entire building as well as specific details from the resident's apartment.



Figure 8. Architecture Malieklos. Own photograph, 28 March 2025

5.3.1 Functional detail

In terms of functional details, many elements from the RVS Flat can be recognized in the Malieklos apartment. Looking at the kitchen, several features stand out. The kitchen has a recessed plinth, there is enough space for both a refrigerator and a stove, with the stove featuring a tiled backsplash. However, the tiles do not extend fully to the end of the stove, limiting their effectiveness (figure 9).

Ventilation is also a key consideration in Malieklos (figure 10). Numerous ventilation grilles are positioned above both the kitchen and the living room, ensuring sufficient natural air circulation. Throughout the rest of the home, the doors and baseboards are smooth, making them easy to clean.

A difference between the two buildings is the window design (figure 11). While in the RVS Flat, windows do not extend as close to the floor, in the Malieklos, they reach almost to the ground. However, beneath these windows, there is still a stone windowsill. Instead of individual tiles, as seen in the RVS Flat, this windowsill is now made from a single composite slab.

One significant feature that has not been carried over is the granite toilet floor. In the Malieklos apartment, this has been replaced with tiles.

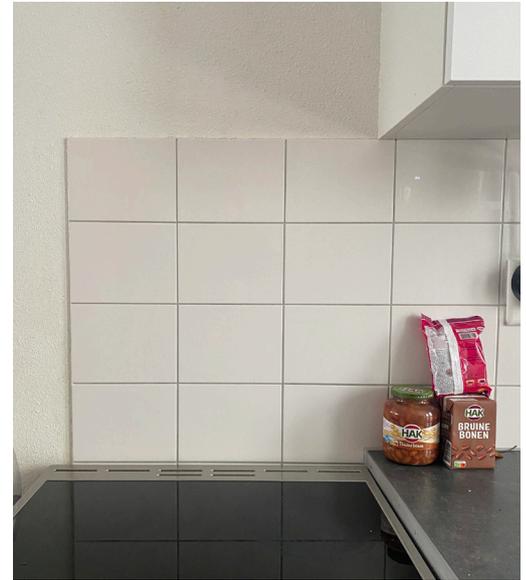


Figure 9. Tiled backsplash. Own photograph, 28 March 2025

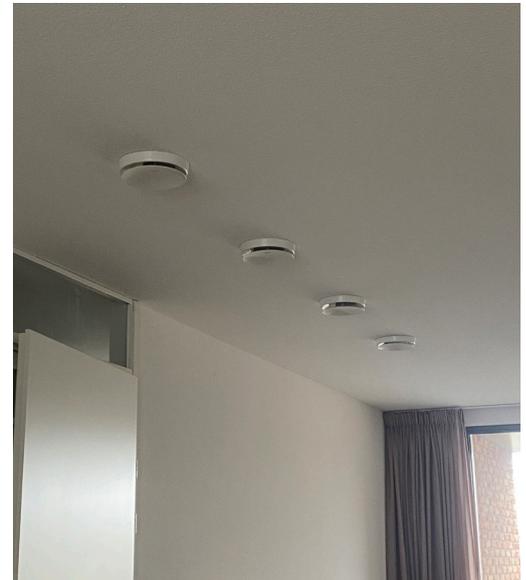


Figure 10. Ventilation grilles. Own photograph, 28 March 2025

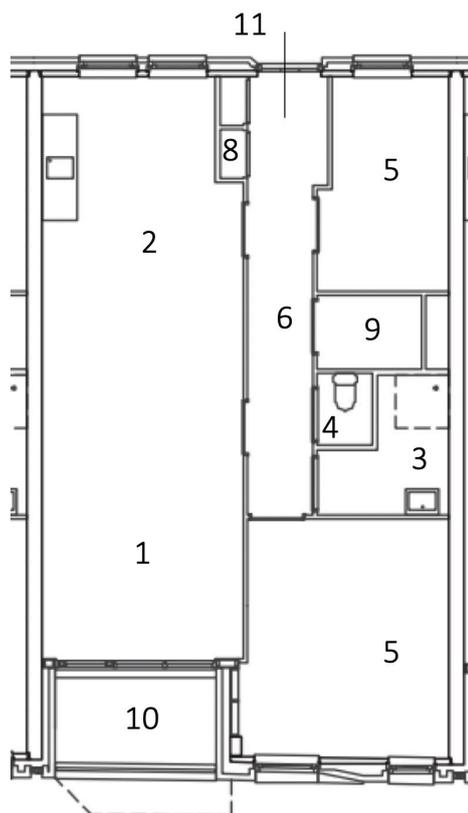


Figure 11. Windowsill. Own photograph, 28 March 2025

5.3.2 Spatial layout

The floor plan of the Malieklos apartment is highly practical (figure 12). The kitchen is spacious, with enough empty space for both a stove and a refrigerator. One notable difference from the RVS Flat is that, in the Malieklos, the kitchen is integrated into the same space as the living room. While this layout differs, it still aligns with the VAC principle of maximizing functionality and ease of use for residents, as it creates a stronger connection between the dining area and the kitchen.

The rest of the floor plan is efficiently organized, featuring a long central hallway that connects all the rooms. The toilet is separate from the living area, and there is ample storage space throughout the apartment. However, unlike the RVS Flat, the Malieklos consists solely of housing units, with no commercial spaces in the plinth.



- | | | | |
|----|-------------|-----|------------------|
| 1. | Living room | 6. | Hallway |
| 2. | Kitchen | 7. | Corridor |
| 3. | Bathroom | 8. | Built in cabinet |
| 4. | Toilet | 9. | Closet |
| 5. | Bedroom | 10. | Balcony |
| | | 11. | Gallery |

5.3.3. Flexibility

When it comes to flexibility, the Malieklos shows several similarities with the RVS-flat. The project features a mix of different types of dwellings designed for a variety of target groups, rather than adhering to the traditional family structure (DP6, 2025). The apartment examined in this comparison includes two rooms that can both serve as bedrooms, but could also function as a home office or storage space. In that sense, the apartment can be seen as adaptable to different household compositions.

Although this design does not include a (glass) partition wall that can be adjusted according to personal needs like in the RVS-flat, it does feature one large, open space combining the kitchen, dining area, and living room, which can be arranged flexibly. It could be argued that this open-plan design reflects a contemporary interpretation of spatial flexibility, aligning with some of the core ideas promoted by the VAC.

Figure 12. Floor plan of the third-floor apartment. *By DP6, 2022. Used with permission.*

6. Discussion

The role of the VAC in post-war housing in Rotterdam is demonstrated through the analysis of the RVS-flat. The aspects of functional detailing, spatial layout, and flexibility are clearly evident in the design, showing how these elements are strongly reflected in post-war social housing development.

To understand the role of the Women's Advisory Committee (VAC) in current social housing, a comparison was made between the RVS-flat and the recently built Malieklos housing project. This comparison reveals several important insights.

In terms of functional details, many of the VAC's original recommendations are still visible in modern social housing. While some elements have been updated, such as the use of composite materials instead of tiles for windowsills and the disappearance of granite flooring, the basic ideas remain the same. The newer materials may reflect changes in construction methods or trends, but they still meet the VAC's original goals of durability, hygiene, and functionality. It can therefore be argued that their advice has evolved with time, but the core principles have remained intact.

On a spatial level, the floor plans show strong similarities. Functionality is still a key concern in housing design, not only for practical reasons but also due to limited space. While modern layouts often combine kitchen, dining, and living functions into one open space, these areas are still organized around a central hallway, just like in the RVS Flat. This shows that the organization of space still follows the same logic, even if the use of space has changed.

This open layout, now common in contemporary housing, offers flexibility to residents and allows them to adapt the space to their needs. In a way, this aligns with the original intentions of the VAC: to design homes that reflect the everyday needs of the people who live in them. Back then, these needs were mostly defined from the perspective of the housewife. Today, the idea of a traditional housewife is no longer the norm. However, the tasks that the VAC

aimed to support — like cleaning, cooking, and organizing the household — still exist, even if they are shared more equally among household members. Technolog, such as the invention of the dishwasher, may have made some tasks easier, but functional housing design remains important.

Interestingly, besides the advises they gave for traditional family homes, the VAC also advocated for households that did not follow traditional family structures. This idea is more common today, and while it is not possible to prove a direct link between the VAC and this social shift based on this research, it does show that the VAC was ahead of its time in many ways.

However, this research also has its limitations. The comparison was based on just one modern housing project: Malieklos. A broader study including more housing projects would give a more complete and reliable view of the VAC's role. It is also difficult to separate the influence of the VAC from other factors that may have shaped today's social housing. Some features may resemble VAC recommendations, but they could also be the result of other developments in architecture or policy.

Still, this research offers new insights into an overlooked topic: how the VAC shaped post-war housing in Rotterdam and how their ideas still live on in today's social housing. This influence is often unrecognized, yet seems more significant than expected.

The practical implication of this study is a renewed appreciation for the role of the VAC in shaping housing design. Their work deserves more attention, especially from today's architects and planners. Further research could explore whether similar patterns can be found in other housing projects or cities, and what more we can learn from their forward-thinking ideas.

7. Conclusion

This thesis has examined the impact of the Women's Advisory Committee (VAC) on social housing during the reconstruction period in the Netherlands, focusing on two main questions. The first question explored the role of the VAC in housing design during the post-war reconstruction, while the second investigated whether the VAC's influence is still visible in contemporary social housing.

The research revealed that the VAC played a significant role in shaping post-war housing developments, despite the lack of formal documentation. Through archival research and an examination of the RVS-flat, it became clear that their recommendations, although often informal, were implemented in a variety of housing projects. This suggests that the VAC's contributions had a far-reaching impact, even if the full extent of their influence is not fully captured by surviving records.

The second question focused on whether the VAC's principles and recommendations continue to be present in modern housing. A comparison between the RVS-flat and the Malieklos in Rotterdam indicated that many of the VAC's core ideas, such as functionality, spatial flexibility, and efficient use of space, remain relevant in contemporary social housing designs. These principles have been adapted to modern needs and technologies but still resonate in current housing trends.

The research also pointed out that the VAC's forward-thinking approach may have anticipated issues that are now more prominent, such as the demand for efficiency and flexibility in contemporary living.

In conclusion, the VAC had a lasting influence on both post-war and contemporary social housing, even though their contributions were often understated and not always immediately noticeable. Their recommendations, though sometimes small in scale, have quietly left a significant mark on social housing design today. This thesis highlights how their advice continues to resonate in modern social housing, demonstrating the lasting impact of their work.

Further research into other contemporary projects could provide a deeper understanding of the lasting legacy of the VAC's contributions to social housing.

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Figure 12. Floor plan of the third-floor apartment. By DP6, 2022. Used with permission.