rhythms of everyday life.

Designing for Health & Care Graduation Studio

Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
Delft University of Technology

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2025-2026

colophon.

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Foreword

This graduation project sits at the intersection of two themes that have shaped my interest in architecture throughout my studies: housing and health. Housing, because I believe it is one of the most fundamental design challenges of our time, not just as a technical or economic problem, but as a spatial one. And health, because I have come to understand that the built environment is not neutral: it can hinder or enable how people move, connect, and live their daily lives. Bringing these two interests together in the context of ageing felt both personally meaningful and architecturally urgent. Houtwijk became the place where these interests took on a concrete form.

What started as a research question gradually became a project about the rhythms of everyday life, the small movements, pauses, and encounters that make a neighbourhood feel like home.
I would like to thank Birgit Jürgenhake and Kobe Macco for their guidance throughout this process. Their critical questions and encouragement to keep pushing the concept further have been invaluable.

I also want to thank my fellow students for their feedback, their willingness to look along at every stage of the project, and for the conversations that helped me think more clearly. This project would not have been the same without them.

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Abstract

The Netherlands is facing a rapid demographic shift in which growing numbers of older adults are expected to live independently for longer, while much of the existing housing stock remains ill-suited for ageing in place. This challenge is particularly visible in post-war suburban neighbourhoods such as Houtwijk in The Hague, where many long-term residents now live in multi-storey family homes that no longer support their changing physical and social needs.

This graduation project investigates how housing typologies and spatial configurations can support healthy and independent ageing within the existing fabric of Houtwijk. Drawing on literature studies, fieldwork, interviews, workshops, and case study analysis, the research explores how architecture can stimulate movement, social encounter, and daily well-being across the scales of the dwelling, the housing cluster, and the direct living environment.

The project introduces the concept of activation architecture: an approach in which movement and informal encounter are embedded within everyday spatial routines through shared circulation spaces, galleries, ramps, visual connections, and collective threshold zones. The design outcome proposes a site-specific housing typology that combines independent dwellings with layered collective spaces, demonstrating how architecture itself can foster healthy ageing, social resilience, and independent living.

01

introduction.

01.0 Problem statement

01.0 Problem statement

National urgency of healthy aging
The Netherlands is an ageing society: the number of people aged 85 and older will rise from about 450,000 today to at least 1.1 million in 2060, while single-person households may increase from 3.4 to 5.1 million (NOS Nieuws, 2025; CBS prognose 2024). At the same time, national policy encourages older adults to live independently for longer in order to reduce pressure on healthcare (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2022). This places growing importance on the home and neighbourhood as environments that support physical, social, and mental well-being.

However, a large part of the Dutch housing stock is not suited for ageing in place: many dwellings are multi-storey, lack accessibility, or are difficult to adapt (Platform31, 2023). Older adults often want to relocate but cannot find suitable alternatives in their own neighbourhoods, the place where they prefer to stay (Alkemade, 2020, pp.107-110). As a result, around 80,000 older residents remain in homes that no longer match their needs, while these dwellings are unavailable to families and first-time buyers (FD, 2019). This represents both a demographic and architectural challenge: the built environment itself falls short in enabling healthy and independent ageing.

Relevance
While discussions on ageing often focus on healthcare or policy, the architectural dimension remains underexplored. Housing typologies, circulation structures, accessibility systems, and neighbourhood layouts fundamentally shape everyday ageing. Understanding how spatial design can anticipate physical decline, support autonomy, and stimulate social connection is therefore essential for contemporary architectural practice. This also motivates my personal interest: ageing is not only a societal shift but a spatial problem that demands design-driven solutions. Many older residents have low monthly housing costs because their mortgages are nearly paid off, while smaller or single-storey homes are often more expensive (Hardeman, 2022).

Houtwijk as reflection of national patterns
Houtwijk, a 1980s neighbourhood in The Hague, clearly reflects these national patterns. Nearly half of its housing stock consists of ground-oriented family homes (AlleCijfers.nl, 2025), originally designed for young families rather than older adults (Research Report Houtwijk, 2025). Many long-term residents who moved here in the 1980s are now 55+, 65+, or 75+, yet the neighbourhood contains almost no accessible or adaptable housing options that allow them to remain in their community. This leads to local stagnation in housing flow: older adults cannot downsize, and families cannot move into larger homes.

Architectural mismatch in Houtwijk
The spatial logic of Houtwijk reinforces this mismatch. Most dwellings are multi-storey with internal stairs, narrow bathrooms, and maintenance-heavy gardens, making them increasingly unsuitable as residents age. The apartment blocks that could function as alternatives lack elevators, have dark entrances, and offer little natural surveillance, reducing perceived safety (Hardeman, 2022). Lifetime homes are scarce and often financially inaccessible. The neighbourhood layout further limits everyday social life. Unlike pre-war neighbourhoods with small blocks and active street edges, Houtwijk consists of deep residential blocks, inward-oriented layouts, and a clear separation of functions. These conditions reduce the number of “social touchpoints”, while poor lighting and long pedestrian routes discourage mobility, especially in the evening (Research Report Houtwijk, 2025).

Consequently, both private and public spaces fail to provide the environmental qualities required for healthy ageing.

Design challenge

The core design challenge is therefore to create realistic ageing-in-place options within the existing suburban fabric of Houtwijk. This aligns with Platform31's call to improve ageing-in-place conditions not only through new construction but through strategic adaptation of existing neighbourhoods, where most older adults currently live (Platform31, 2021). This involves understanding where new housing typologies can be introduced, how existing structures might be adapted, and how small-scale public-space improvements can strengthen autonomy, mobility, and social connection for older residents.

Scope

This project focuses on relatively independent older residents (approximately 55–75 years old) who live autonomously but increasingly experience spatial, social, or mobility-related frictions in their daily environment and prefer to remain within their familiar neighbourhood rather than relocate to age-segregated or institutional care settings. Rather than positioning itself as conventional elderly housing or a care-oriented building, the project approaches ageing as a spatial condition embedded in everyday life and investigates how spatial organisation across multiple scales, including the dwelling, housing cluster, and direct living environment, can support autonomy, movement, informal encounter, and social safety within a familiar neighbourhood context. The project introduces the concept of activation architecture: a housing typology that supports healthy ageing by embedding physical movement, mental engagement, and informal social interaction within everyday spatial routines.

Research questions

How can housing typologies and spatial configurations be embedded within the existing fabric of Houtwijk to support healthy, independent ageing through autonomy, everyday movement, and social encounter?

housing typologies*: are defined as spatial and organisational models of clustered housing, focusing on low- to mid-rise dwellings that combine fully independent homes with shared or semi-public spaces. Institutional care facilities and large-scale senior complexes are excluded.*
spatial configurations: *refers to the configuration of spaces within and between dwellings, buildings and the direct living environment, including access typologies, transition zones between private and collective space, and everyday movement routes. It focuses on how these configurations influence autonomy, encounter and daily movement.*
older residents*: older residents refer to relatively independent adults (approximately 55–75) who wish to age in place but begin to experience spatial limitations in their current housing.*
healthy ageing*: maintain physical, mental and social well-being*
indepently living: *living in one's own dwelling without the need for institutional care, while possibly receiving informal or low-threshold support*

Sub-questions

1. *Which spatial and typological characteristics of Houtwijk create frictions in autonomy, daily movement, and social encounter among older residents?*
2. *Which housing typologies and spatial principles have been shown to support autonomy while enabling everyday social encounter and pleasurable movement in later life?*
3. *How can these principles be translated into a site-specific housing typology and direct living environment that is spatially embedded in Houtwijk and improves everyday life while ageing?*

02

approach.

02.0 Method

Research and Design Approach

This project combines research and design. The research operates across four interconnected spatial scales. The primary focus lies on the dwelling, the building or housing cluster, and the direct living environment (such as galleries, courtyards, entrances and streets). The neighbourhood scale is considered only insofar as it influences daily movement, accessibility and social encounter. Large-scale urban restructuring falls outside the scope of this project. The approach includes four main steps:

Combining literature

This study reviews theories on healthy ageing, housing typologies, and age-friendly neighbourhoods. I compare these ideas with what I observe in Houtwijk.

Collecting new information in Houtwijk

Location-specific insights are collected through fieldwork, interviews and workshops with residents, focusing on everyday use, movement patterns and spatial frictions. Participatory methods are not used to directly design solutions, but to identify recurring spatial patterns and thresholds, which are translated into architectural criteria and design guidelines.

Casestudies

Case studies are used as an analytical design instrument to identify spatial strategies that support autonomy, everyday movement and informal social encounter. Selection focuses on projects that combine independent dwellings with shared or semi-public spaces within existing neighbourhoods, with attention to access, transition zones and circulation.

Design exploration

Findings from literature and fieldwork are analysed and translated into clear spatial criteria. Key themes such as accessibility, safety, social interaction, autonomy, and proximity are identified and linked to different scales: the dwelling, building, direct living environment, and neighbourhood. These criteria guide the development of several design scenarios that explore how new housing types and improved public spaces can fit within Houtwijk's existing structure.

Evaluation and refinement

The design scenarios are tested against criteria such as accessibility, usability, social contact, and feasibility. Early sketches and diagrams are discussed with residents in short feedback sessions. Based on this feedback, the strongest ideas are developed further into a final design proposal that responds to both local needs and theoretical insights.

Planning

Week 1-4	Literature study, fieldwork, mapping
Week 5-8	Interviews, workshops, analysing
Week 9-12	First design ideas and diagrams
Week 13-18	Develop and test scenarios
Week 19-22	Final design
Week 23-24	Prepare presentation

02.1 Theoretical framework

Introduction
This theoretical framework provides the conceptual foundation for this project and explains how knowledge on healthy ageing, housing typologies, and neighbourhood design informs the research and design approach. As the project focuses on enabling older residents to live independently and healthily within the existing fabric of Houtwijk, it draws on theories that explain how the built environment influences mobility, social interaction, safety, and daily functioning.

Definitions
Older residents are defined as people aged 60 years and above, recognising ageing as a gradual and diverse life process (WHO, 2007, p3; Schenk, 2008, p10). Healthy ageing refers to maintaining functional ability that enables well-being in later life (WHO, 2015, p72). Independent living is understood as living autonomously in one's own dwelling, with or without formal or informal support, while retaining control over daily life and housing choices (Platform31, 2023). Ageing in place describes the ability to live in the place of one's choosing for as long as possible, with access to appropriate support when needed (WHO, 2007, p5-6). Housing typologies refer to spatial and architectural configurations of dwellings, including layout, accessibility, adaptability, and their relationship to shared and public spaces (Huber, 2008, p78-79). An age-friendly neighbourhood supports active and healthy ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation, safety, and inclusion (WHO, 2007,p6-10).

Healthy and Active Ageing in the Built Environment
Healthy ageing extends beyond the absence of disease and includes physical, mental, and social well-being. According to the World Health Organization, healthy ageing is fundamentally about maintaining functional ability, which emerges from the interaction between an individual's capacities and their environment (WHO, 2015). Research shows that housing quality, accessibility, walkability, and the availability of safe and legible public spaces strongly influence older adults' mobility and confidence (WHO, 2007; Verma, 2021). When environments fail to accommodate age-related changes, risks of falls, inactivity, social isolation, and stress increase (WHO, 2015).

Active ageing is defined as optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security throughout the life course (WHO, 2007, p72) and focuses on remaining independent and socially involved rather than becoming dependent on care. As Schenk (2008) notes, later life has become a prolonged and increasingly self-shaped phase. Most older adults therefore prefer to remain in their own home and neighbourhood for as long as possible, highlighting the importance of familiar environments that can adapt over time (WHO, 2007; Platform31, 2023).

Environmental Gerontology and Person-Environment Fit
Environmental gerontology provides a key theoretical lens for understanding how ageing individuals interact with their physical surroundings. Central to this field is the competence–press model developed by Lawton and Nahemow (1973) and further elaborated by Lawton (1986) (figure 1) (Environmental Gerontology, 2013, p58-64). The model explains well-being and behaviour as the result of the interaction between personal competence, including physical, cognitive, and social abilities, and environmental press, meaning the demands imposed by the environment.

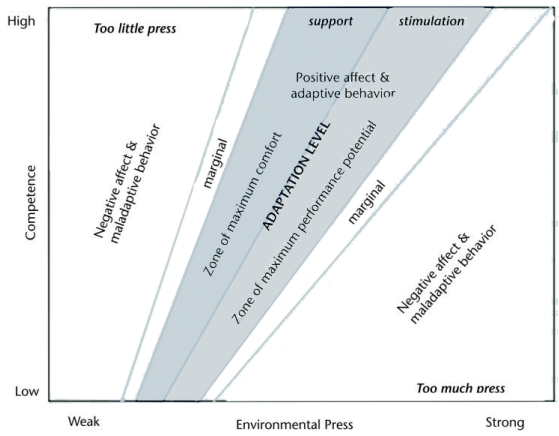


Figure 1: Lawton's press-competence model (Russel, 2025)

Environmental press refers to the demands imposed by the environment, such as stairs, long walking distances, or poor lighting. When these demands exceed personal competence, stress, insecurity, and withdrawal may occur. As competence declines with age, environments that were once manageable may become increasingly demanding. When the environment asks more than a person can handle, stress, insecurity, and withdrawal from daily activities may occur, while demands that are too low can lead to passivity and loss of autonomy. Well-being is highest when there is a balanced fit between abilities and environmental demands (Environmental Gerontology, 2013, p58-64).

Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods and Housing Typologies

The WHO Age-Friendly Cities framework translates these insights to the neighbourhood scale by identifying domains that influence older adults' ability to live independently, including housing, transportation, outdoor spaces, social participation, and community support (figure 2) (WHO, 2007, p9). Unsafe routes, poor lighting, or missing meeting places reduce mobility and social contact.

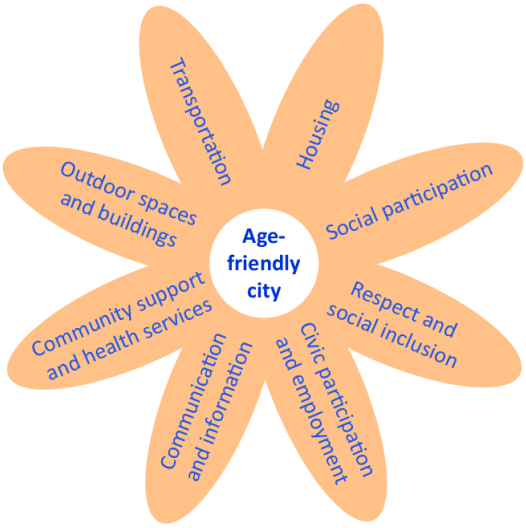


Figure 2: The age-friendly city model according to WHO (2007) p9

At the scale of the dwelling, housing design plays a key role in enabling ageing in place. Lifetime housing and universal design principles emphasise level entrances, accessible bathrooms, adaptable layouts, and the possibility of future modifications (WHO, 2007, p30-37). Housing typologies that incorporate shared or semi-public spaces, such as courtyards, clusters, hofjes, and senior cohousing, can facilitate informal encounters and mutual support while preserving autonomy (Huber, 2008, p121, p179).

Behavioural Factors and Analytical Criteria

Housing decisions in later life are shaped not only by spatial quality but also by emotional and behavioural factors. Research by Platform31 shows that attachment to the home, fear of change, uncertainty, financial concerns, and a lack of attractive local alternatives strongly influence relocation decisions (Platform31, 2021; Platform31, 2023). Drawing on WHO frameworks and environmental gerontology, three core spatial principles guide this project:

autonomy, activation, and social encounter. These principles translate theoretical insights on healthy ageing into spatial design strategies.

1. **Autonomy**
   The ability to live independently and make everyday choices without spatial barriers.

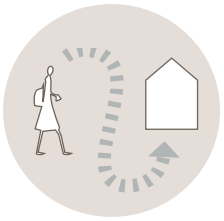
2. **Activation**
   Spatial environments that encourage everyday movement and engagement in daily routines.

3. **Social encounter**
   Opportunities for informal interaction through visible and accessible shared spaces.

These criteria function as an analytical and evaluative framework, used to assess existing spatial conditions in Houtwijk and to guide and test design interventions.

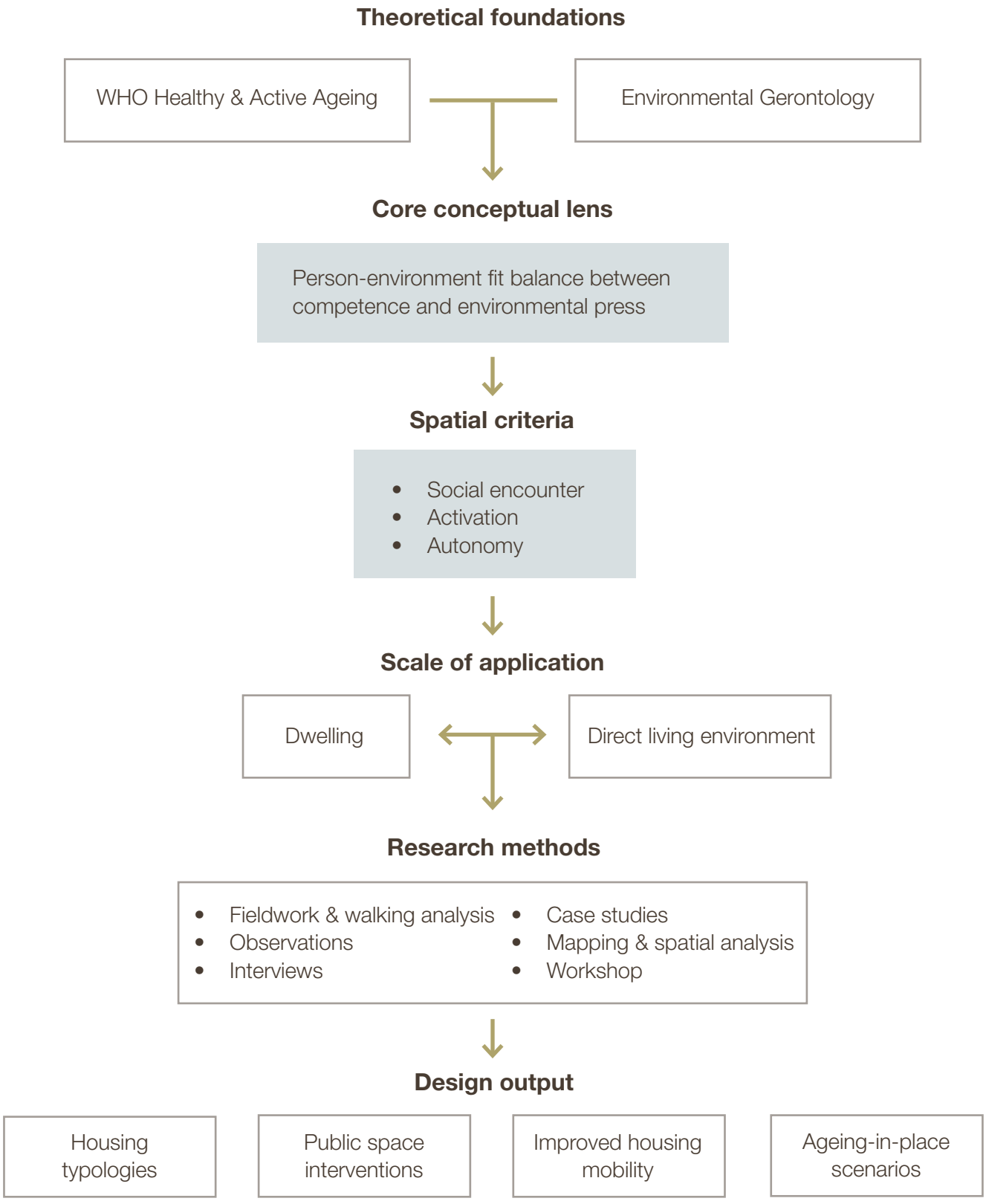
Conclusion
This framework shows that ageing is not only a demographic process but also a spatial one. By translating theories of healthy ageing into three spatial principles: autonomy, activation and social encounter.

Social encouter



Activation

Autonomy


Theoretical foundations
WHO Healthy & Active Ageing
Environmental Gerontology
Core conceptual lens
Person-environment fit balance between competence and environmental press
Spatial criteria
Social encounter
Activation
Autonomy
Scale of application
Dwelling
Direct living environment
Research methods
Fieldwork & walking analysis
Observations
Interviews
Case studies
Mapping & spatial analysis
Workshop
Design output
Housing typologies
Public space interventions
Improved housing mobility
Ageing-in-place scenarios

02.2 Positioning in Houtwijk

The Connexxion site in Vredestein was selected because it combines demographic relevance, accessibility, green surroundings, and a strong existing neighbourhood structure.

First, this part of Houtwijk already has a high percentage of older residents. Many long-term inhabitants who moved here in the 1980s are now over 60. Designing new housing in this location directly responds to the current demographic reality. It allows residents to remain within their familiar social environment instead of relocating to another neighbourhood.

Second, the site is well connected to public transport. A bus stop is located within short walking distance, providing direct access to the wider city. For older residents, proximity to public transport becomes increasingly important as car use may decrease over time. This accessibility supports autonomy and long-term independence.

Third, the site is close to daily facilities such as shops and neighbourhood services. These functions are reachable on foot, which supports everyday movement and reduces dependency on others. Living near facilities enables small daily routines, such as grocery shopping or visiting services, to remain part of an active lifestyle.

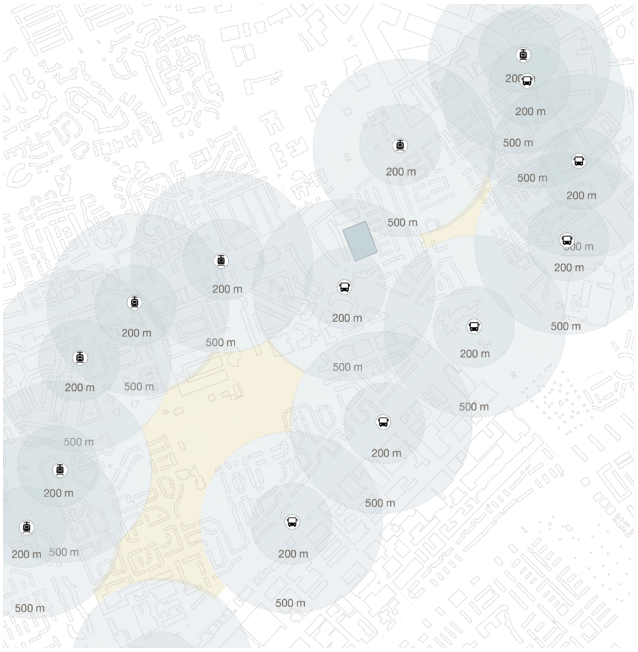
The surrounding environment also offers significant green qualities. Vredestein and the wider Houtwijk area are characterised by generous green spaces, small parks, water structures and tree-lined streets. These spaces provide opportunities for walking, resting and informal encounter. The presence of greenery contributes not only to physical activity but also to mental well-being and a sense of calm within the neighbourhood.

In addition, Vredestein has a strong social identity. It is a neighbourhood where many residents know each other. Although the area is ageing, housing turnover has introduced younger families and expats, creating a mixed demographic composition. Around seventy percent of homeowners are members of the residents' association (Houtwijkblad, 2025). This association organises yearly events such as a summer party, Halloween activities, and a New Year gathering. It also collaborates with the municipality on practical matters such as maintenance and collective sustainability initiatives.

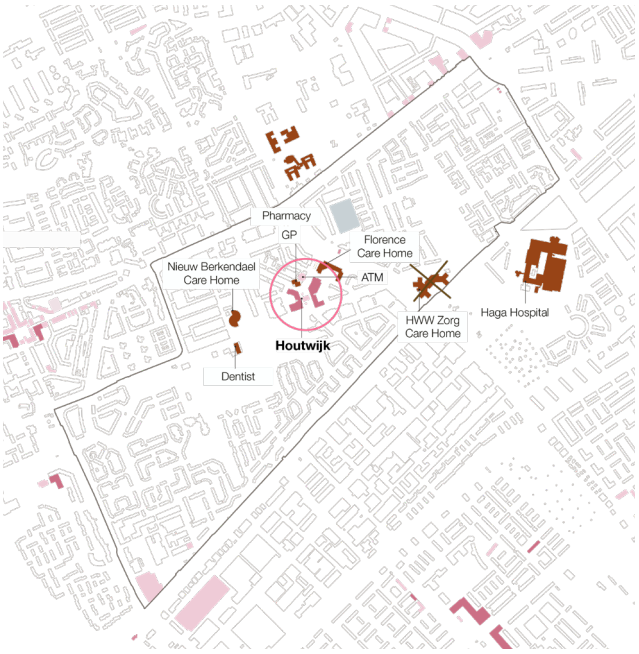
This existing culture of participation and neighbourly contact forms an important foundation for the project. The site therefore offers not only spatial potential but also social readiness.

For these reasons, the Connexxion location in Vredestein provides a strategic and context-sensitive foundation for embedding new housing typologies that support healthy and independent ageing within the existing suburban fabric.

residents



distance public transport



facilities, shops, care

green

SWOT - analysis

Strengths
- Close to daily facilities
- Located within a residential neighbourhood
- Good public transport access
- Green and water on the south side
- On a daily walking route

Opportunities
- Chance to support local housing flow
- New housing without loss of existing homes
- Combine housing with neighbourhood functions

Weakness
- Hard, inward-looking site
- Edges along busy roads (noise)
- No existing social life

Threats
- Building may remain separate from the neighbourhood
- Weak connection to the local community

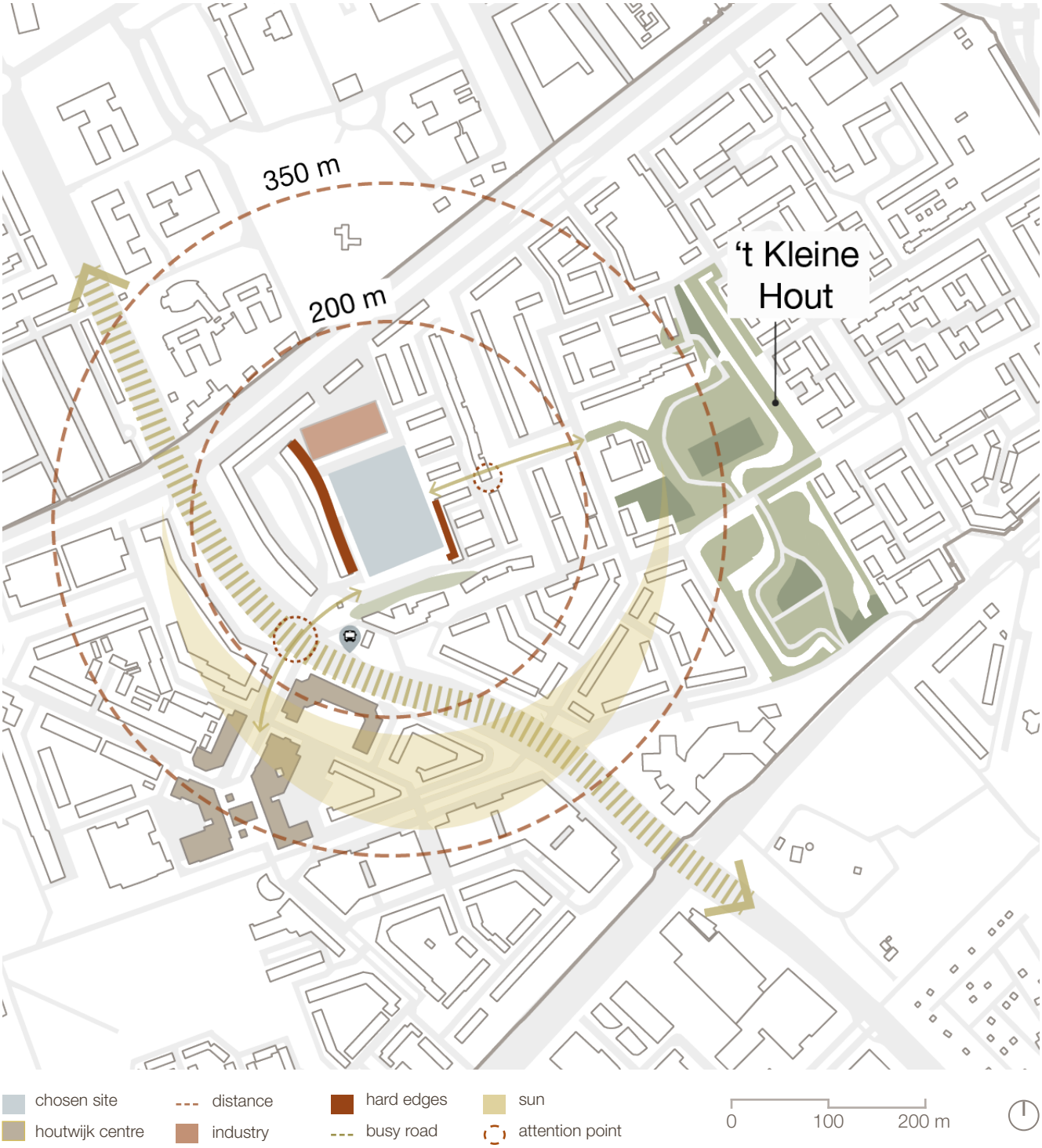


dwellings around site



edges site

SWOT - analyse



03

results.

03.1 Spatial and Typological fricitions in Houtwijk

Which spatial and typological characteristics of Houtwijk create frictions in autonomy, daily movement, and social encounter among older residents?

03.1.1 Typological mismatch: multi-storey family housing

The dominant housing typology in Houtwijk consists of multi-storey, ground-oriented family dwellings developed in the 1980s. While originally designed for young families, this typology increasingly creates spatial frictions in later life.

To better understand everyday spatial challenges, a workshop was organised in which residents from the neighbourhood were invited to reflect on their current living conditions, daily routines, and future housing needs (see appendix).

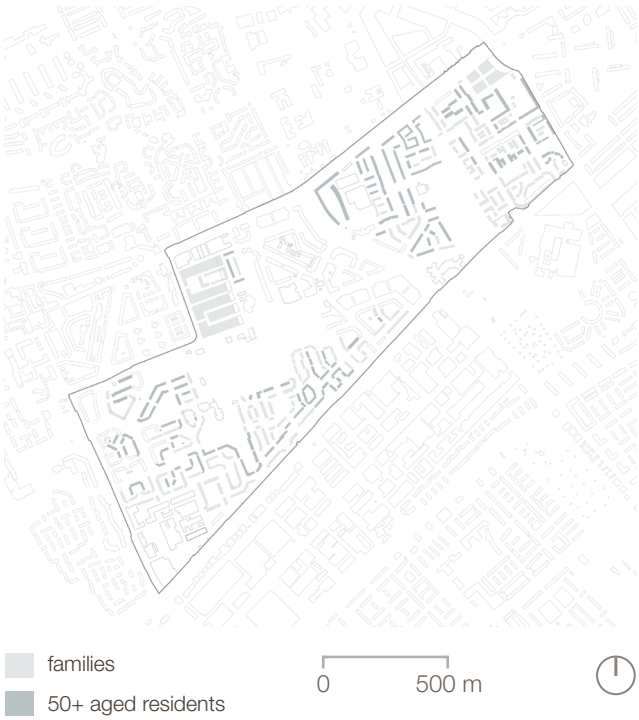
Workshop participants repeatedly identified stair use as a critical threshold. Most residents are still physically capable of using stairs, but doing so requires greater effort, concentration, and time. The friction therefore does not stem from immediate incapacity, but from a gradual reduction in comfort and confidence.

The tipping point becomes visible in moments of sudden change. Residents expressed concerns about illness, temporary injury, or falls, situations in which stairs can quickly transform from a manageable inconvenience into a major barrier. Night-time access to bathrooms on other floors was mentioned as particularly problematic.

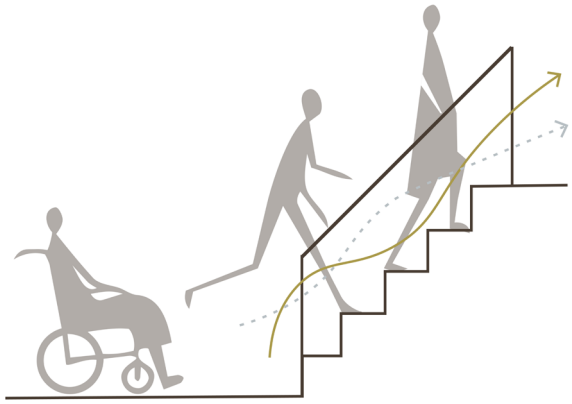
From the perspective of Environmental Gerontology, this reflects a shrinking margin between personal competence and environmental press (Lawton &

Housing typologies

Residents rowhouses



Shrinking margin



Nahemow, 1973). As mobility decreases, stairs shift from neutral architectural elements to latent stressors. The dwelling does not yet exceed personal capacity, but autonomy becomes increasingly fragile.

03.1.2 Oversized dwellings and maintenance burden

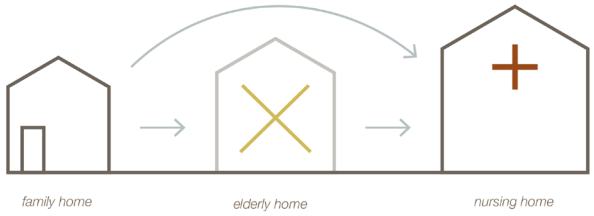
A second typological friction concerns the size of existing dwellings. Many older residents live in relatively large family homes that are financially attractive but physically demanding to maintain. Residents describe their homes as “too large” for their current needs. Gardening, cleaning and maintenance tasks require increasing effort, while daily life often concentrates in only a few rooms. Upper floors or spare bedrooms are used infrequently, yet still require upkeep.

Typical 1980s rowhouse in Houtwijk – Laan van Vredestein 21 (analysed and redrawn)

Environmental Gerontology describes this condition as environmental overload, where the effort required to maintain the dwelling exceeds the resident's physical capacity.

Despite this mismatch, relocation rates remain low. Emotional attachment, accumulated possessions and financial considerations discourage moving. This creates spatial inertia: residents remain in increasingly insuitable homes because no attractive intermediate alternative exists. (woonwensen onderzoek, patform 31)

lack of intermediate housing



03.1.3 Lack of intermediate housing alternatives

Both interviews and workshops reveal a strong rejection of institutional or care-labelled housing. Autonomy was repeatedly described as essential. However, Houtwijk offers few accessible, single-level housing options embedded within the existing neighbourhood. Existing apartment blocks often lack elevators, have poorly lit galleries and provide limited social oversight.

This creates a structural dilemma:

- Staying means coping with increasing physical barriers.
- Moving often means leaving the neighbourhood or sacrificing autonomy.

Within the WHO Age-Friendly framework, housing should support adaptability while maintaining independence (WHO, 2007). In Houtwijk, the absence of intermediate typologies restricts both housing mobility and ageing in place.

03.1.4 Orientation and limited everyday encounter

At neighbourhood scale, the 1980s "cauliflower" urban structure shapes movement and encounter patterns.

Field observations show:

- long pedestrian routes without active edges, ground floors are predominantly closed and mono-functional, offering limited visual interaction

pedestrian network

- limited visual permeability
- poorly lit semi-public spaces
- few spatial thresholds for informal interaction

Age-friendly neighbourhood research emphasises that mobility and social participation depend on safe, legible and stimulating walking environments. When routes lack spatial variation or social visibility, older residents reduce their movement radius.

The spatial structure of Houtwijk therefore supports green living but does not automatically generate everyday social interaction.

03.1.5 Absence of informal meeting spaces in the neighbourhood

While residents are socially active, they identify a lack of low-threshold, informal gathering places such as a café, coffee place, reading space, or small cultural venue.

Social interaction is currently not structurally embedded in daily routes. Ground-floor edges are largely inactive, consisting mainly of housing entrances and private gardens, offering few opportunities for spontaneous encounter.

Informal meeting places

Synthesis: Nature of the spatial frictions
The frictions in Houtwijk are not catastrophic failures, but gradual mismatches between:

- Ageing bodies and vertical housing
- Reduced physical capacity and large dwelling scale
- Desire for autonomy and lack of intermediate alternatives
- Need for encounter and spatial separation of daily life from public space
- Social activity and absence of embedded meeting nodes

These frictions indicate that ageing in place in Houtwijk is not limited by a lack of housing, but by the absence of intermediate housing typologies and spatial environments that support everyday movement and informal encounter.

Spatial Frictions in Houtwijk Across Scales

FRICTION	PRICIPLE AFFECTED		
dwelling	**autonomy**	**activation**	**social encouter**
stair	x	x	
oversized houses	x		
maintainance house and garden	x	x	
building			
lack housing options	x		
poor lighting and limited visibility	x	x	x
Inward-oriented housing blocks			x
separation private housing - public life			x
direct living environment			
lack of informal meeting places			x
neighbourhood			
long and monotone routes		x	

03.2 Spatial Principles Supporting Healthy Independent Ageing

Which housing typologies and spatial principles have been shown to support autonomy while enabling everyday social encounter and pleasurable movement in later life?

To understand which housing typologies and spatial principles can support autonomy while enabling everyday social encounter and pleasurable movement in later life, three sources of knowledge were analysed: theoretical literature, precedent housing projects and participatory research with residents.

03.2.1 Theoretical insights

Healthy ageing as functional ability
Healthy ageing is increasingly understood as the maintenance of functional ability: the capacity to do what people value in everyday life. This ability emerges from the interaction between individual capacities and the surrounding environment (WHO, 2015).

Environmental gerontology explains this relationship through the competence–press model developed by Lawton and Nahemow (1973). According to this model, wellbeing depends on the balance between individual abilities and the demands imposed by the environment. Environments that are too demanding may create stress or dependency, while environments that provide too little stimulation may lead to inactivity. Spatial environments that support ageing therefore offer subtle forms of support while still encouraging engagement with everyday activities.

Everyday movement and spatial activation
Everyday movement plays an important role in maintaining health and independence in later life. Rather than organised exercise, small and incidental forms of movement such as walking, climbing stairs or moving through the neighbourhood form the basis of daily physical activity (World Health Organization, 2015). Urban designer Jan Gehl distinguishes between necessary, optional and social activities, noting that social interaction often emerges from everyday movement and shared presence in public or semi-public spaces (Gehl, 2011). Spatial design therefore strongly influences patterns of movement and encounter. Attractive walking routes, visual connections and places to pause can encourage residents to move more frequently and remain longer in shared environments.

Research on active environments also highlights the role of spatial nudging, where subtle spatial cues such as visible stairs or inviting walking routes stimulate active behaviour without imposing it (Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen, 2023). Studies on so-called Blue Zones, regions where people live exceptionally long lives, similarly demonstrate that movement is embedded in daily routines such as walking and gardening rather than structured exercise (Buettner & Skemp, 2016).

Social encounter and collective living
Social interaction contributes significantly to wellbeing, safety and a sense of belonging in later life. In residential environments, encounters rarely occur through organised activities alone but often emerge through everyday spatial situations where residents briefly see or greet one another.

According to Gehl (2011), social activities arise from everyday presence and movement in shared environments. Research on small-scale collective housing for independent older adults, such as clustered housing, courtyard housing, and gallery-access buildings with shared spaces, demonstrates that spatial proximity and shared facilities can strengthen informal social networks while allowing residents to remain independent (Kuyper, 2025).

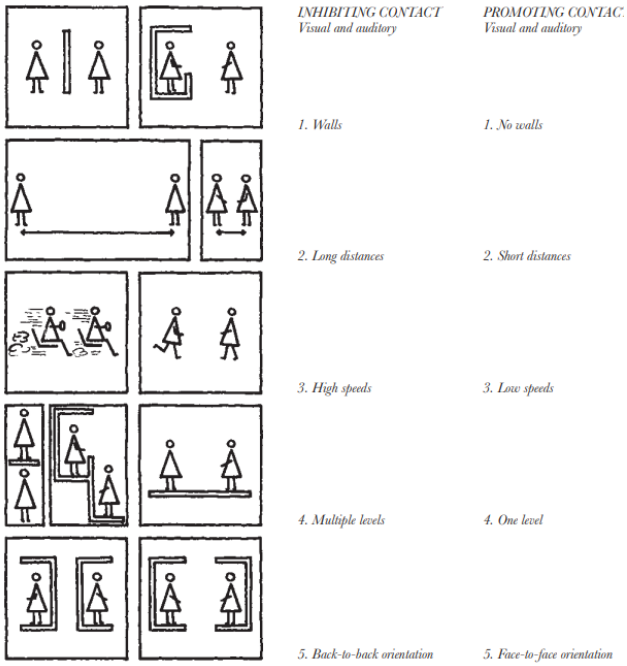
Architectural research further emphasises how encounters along shared routes, entrances or courtyards can gradually build trust and informal support networks (Mantingh, 2020).

Socio-spatial organisation of residential environments

The spatial organisation of residential environments strongly influences opportunities for encounter. Kuyper (2025) shows that smaller residential clusters support stronger social relationships because residents recognise each other more easily. Clusters of approximately 8–15 households allow residents to know one another personally, while clusters of 15–30 households can still maintain a sense of community when supported by shared spaces and circulation routes. Equally important are gradual transitions between private dwellings, semi-private circulation spaces and collective outdoor areas. Kuyper (2025) describes these socio-spatial gradients as essential for balancing privacy and interaction, allowing residents to control their level of engagement while remaining visually connected to others.

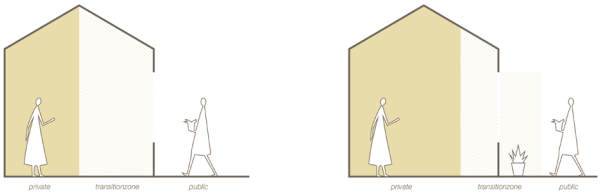
Several housing typologies have been shown to support these spatial conditions. Courtyard housing, collective or co-housing models, small residential clusters and gallery-access housing organise dwellings around shared circulation spaces or collective outdoor areas. These typologies combine independent dwellings with semi-private and collective spaces, creating opportunities for everyday encounters while maintaining residential autonomy.

The senses and communication



Life between buildings, (Jan Gehl, 2011)

Transitionzone principles



Ontwerpen voor ontmoeten, (Platform 31, 2021)

03.2.2 Casestudies

Several contemporary housing projects illustrate how shared spatial structures can support everyday encounter while maintaining autonomy. The collective housing project Zeevaarders in Amsterdam combines independent apartments with shared facilities organised around semi-public circulation spaces. Shared corridors function as everyday routes, while visual connections between dwellings and collective terraces create opportunities for spontaneous encounters. Entrances oriented towards shared spaces and small residential clusters strengthen informal neighbourly contact while maintaining clear boundaries between private and collective areas.

Similarly, the Mobius project in Leidsche Rijn organises dwellings around a large shared courtyard garden that functions as a central collective space. Entrances, walking routes and shared amenities are positioned along its edges, encouraging everyday movement and informal encounters through visibility, proximity and repeated use.

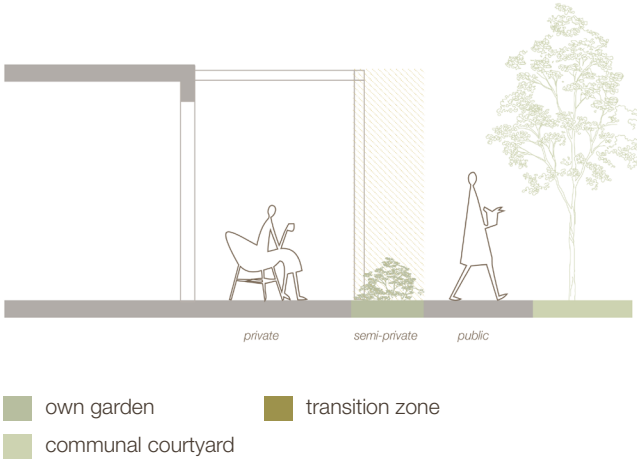
The Olsrød Nursing Home in Norway demonstrates how small-scale clustering and shared circulation routes support everyday interaction and orientation. Although designed as a care facility, these spatial strategies remain relevant for independent living environments.

Across the case studies, spatial elements such as shared circulation routes, entrances facing collective spaces, small residential clusters, and gradual transitions between private and communal areas support interaction while maintaining autonomy. These conclusions are based on a broader comparative spatial analysis of the case studies, including plans, sections, circulation structures and shared-space configurations, which can be found in the appendix.

Mobius

Courtyard with private terrace (KOW ARCHITECTEN & RRog Landschapsarchitecten, 2024)

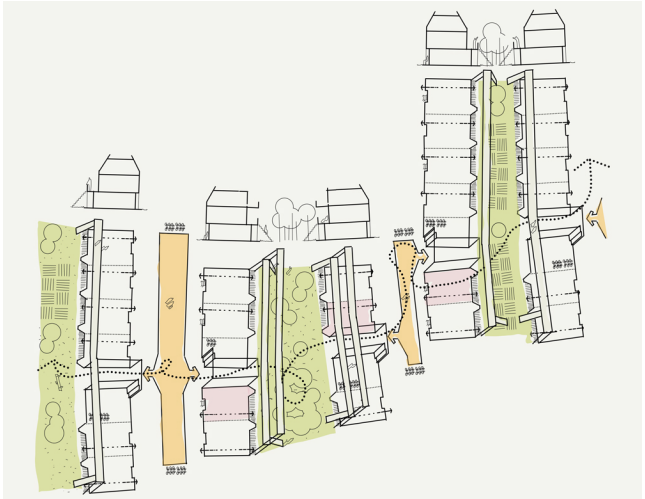
Street facade (KOW ARCHITECTEN & RRog Landschapsarchitecten, 2024)



Zeevaarders

Gallery as social element (Zijdekwartier, 2025)

'Hofje' (Zijdekwartier, 2025)



Connection buildings (Zijdekwartier, 2025)

Olsrød Nursing Home

Olsrød Nursing Home, (3RW, 2025)

Olsrød Nursing Home, (3RW, 2025)

Olsrød Nursing Home, (3RW, 2025)

03.2.3 Insights from interviews and workshop

Interviews and workshops with residents in Houtwijk provide additional insights into housing preferences in later life. Participants expressed a strong desire to remain independent while remaining in their familiar neighbourhood. Institutional or care-oriented housing was generally rejected, with residents instead emphasising independent dwellings combined with opportunities for informal social contact and mutual support.

'Nabuurschap' (Neighbourliness) was highly valued. Residents expressed the importance of knowing neighbours, maintaining informal contact, and having a sense of social control. Visibility and proximity were considered essential, such as sightlines towards entrances, dwellings oriented towards shared spaces, and small collective outdoor areas, supporting feelings of safety and belonging.

Social interaction was preferred when it occurred naturally during everyday routines rather than through organised activities. This highlights the importance of embedding opportunities for encounter within daily routes, such as entrances, galleries, courtyards, and shared walking paths. Informal places to sit and gradual transitions between private and collective spaces were considered particularly valuable.

Residents also emphasised the importance of nearby facilities and identified a lack of low-threshold meeting places such as cafés or small community spaces, preferably small-scale and informally integrated within residential routes.

Participants also expressed a preference for mixed-age living environments, as contact with different age groups was seen as beneficial for maintaining activity and social engagement.

At the dwelling level, flexibility was considered important. Residents indicated the value of an additional room that could function as storage, workspace, guest room, or future bedroom, allowing dwellings to adapt to changing needs over time.

Residents also highlighted the importance of views and visual connection to the surroundings. Views towards greenery, shared spaces, or daily activity were considered important for well-being, orientation, and passive social contact.

Together, these findings highlight spatial elements such as shared circulation routes, informal seating areas, visual connections, gradual transitions, and small-scale shared facilities. These support everyday encounters while maintaining autonomy and independence.

All interviews and workshop outcomes are included in the appendix

03.2.4 Synthesis

Across literature, case studies and resident input, several housing typologies emerge as supportive environments for ageing in place. These include collective housing models that combine independent dwellings with shared facilities, courtyard-based housing organised around communal gardens and small residential clusters connected through shared circulation spaces.

Although these typologies differ in spatial configuration, they share common spatial qualities that support autonomy, everyday movement and informal encounter. Across these sources, three spatial mechanisms become visible that relate directly to the analytical criteria introduced earlier.

Activation occurs when environments stimulate everyday engagement. This includes physical activation through attractive walking routes and varied circulation, as well as mental activation through visual connections, spatial diversity and visible everyday activity. Social encounter emerges through spatial situations where residents can see, greet or briefly interact with one another during daily routines, without creating social obligation.

Autonomy is supported through the spatial calibration of housing clusters and gradual transitions between private dwellings, semi-private circulation spaces and collective outdoor areas, allowing residents to regulate their level of engagement.

Together, these typologies and spatial principles illustrate how residential environments can support autonomy while enabling everyday movement and informal social interaction in later life. They therefore form the spatial framework guiding the architectural proposal for Houtwijk in the following chapter.

03.3 Translation into a Site-Specific Housing Typology

How can these principles be translated into a site-specific housing typology and direct living environment that is spatially embedded in Houtwijk and improves everyday life while ageing?

03.3.1 Activation as an Architectural Strategy

The previous chapters identified spatial frictions in Houtwijk and analysed housing typologies and spatial principles that support healthy ageing. These findings show that ageing in place is not only a matter of accessible dwellings or care infrastructure, but also of how spatial environments influence everyday movement, autonomy and social encounter. The theoretical framework introduced three key principles: autonomy, activation and social encounter.

Many contemporary housing solutions for older adults aim to simplify daily life by minimising movement and spatial complexity. While this improves accessibility, it may also reduce everyday activity and opportunities for social interaction. Environmental gerontology suggests that environments with too little stimulation can lead to inactivity, highlighting the importance of spatial environments that encourage everyday engagement (Lawton & Nahemow, 1973; WHO, 2015; Gehl, 2011).

This research therefore proposes activation architecture as an alternative spatial strategy in which spatial organisation encourages everyday movement, mental engagement and informal social interaction while maintaining autonomy.

03.3.2 Spatial Mechanisms for Everyday

Activation

Activation is embedded in everyday spatial sequences that encourage movement and engagement. Circulation routes, level changes and spatial variation integrate small movements into daily routines. Visual connections, daylight and changing perspectives stimulate mental engagement and allow residents to observe activity within the building and neighbourhood.

Social encounter

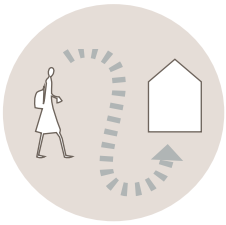
Social encounter emerges through shared circulation spaces and everyday movement. Galleries, stair landings and shared entrances create opportunities for informal interaction without creating social obligation. Smaller residential clusters further support recognition and neighbourliness through repeated encounters.

Autonomy

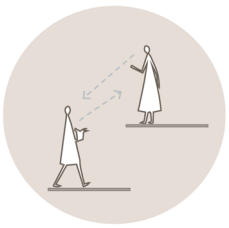
Autonomy is supported through spatial gradients between private dwellings, semi-private circulation spaces and shared outdoor areas. This layered organisation allows residents to regulate their level of engagement while maintaining independence.

ACTIVATION

Essential principles



Shared circulation routes that encourage everyday movement through daily aminties (WHO, 2015; Gehl, 2011)



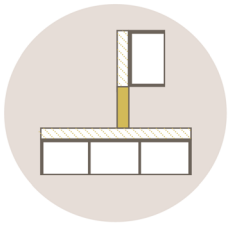
Level changes, small physical challenges that encourage everyday movement. (WHO (2015), Lawton & Nahemow (1973)

Visual connections to outdoor spaces allow residents to observe activity and remain connected to their surroundings. (Gehl, 2011, interviews)

Supporting principles

Visible and inviting staircases/ramps encourage stair use (Spatial nudging)

Benches every ~125 m provide places to pause and rest along walking routes. (WHO (2015))



Bridges connect building volumes and create additional circulation routes (casestudies)

Car-free environment, prioritising pedestrian movement (WHO (2015), casestudies)

SOCIAL ENCOUTER

Essential principles

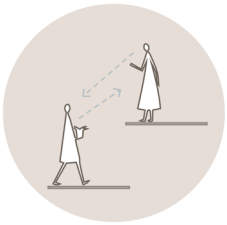
Galleries function as shared circulation routes (Kuyper, Casestudies)

Collective spaces where residents naturally encounter each other. Courtyard, roof garden. (Gehl, 2011, casestudies, interviews)

Mixed generations encourage social interaction (interviews, casestudies)

Supporting principles

Seating along routes enables people to rest and observe everyday life (Ontwerp voor ontmoeten)



Vertical connections allow residents to see activity on other levels and feel connected (Gehl 2011, casestudies)

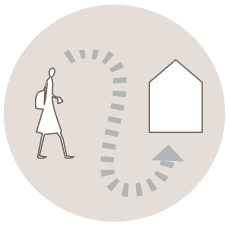
Publicly accessible functions Café, Library, Childcare, Bakery, Dentist, helps residents remain part of society (interviews)

AUTONOMY

Essential principles

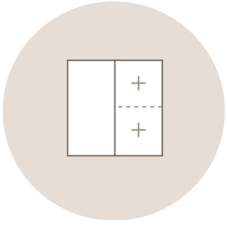
Small threshold zones A soft transition between private and collective spaces (Ontwerp voor ontmoeten, Casestudies)

Independent dwellings combined with shared facilities (Kuyper (2025), interviews, casestudies)



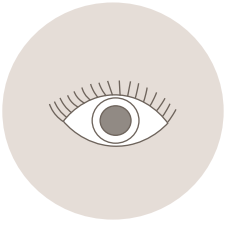
Short distance to neighbourhood functions helps residents remain part of society (interviews, casestudies, WHO (2015))

Supporting principles

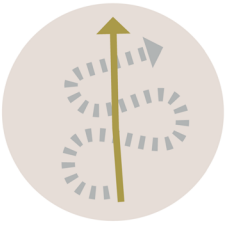


Flexible rooms allow dwellings to adapt to changing needs over time, supporting autonomy (WHO, 2015; interviews).

Spaces for residents' Ground-floor spaces for repair cafés, ateliers,to create opportunities for learning, making, social interaction (interviews, casestudies)



Visibility of everday activity keeps residents curious, active, and engaged with their surroundings (Gehl (2011), casestudies)



Multiple routes leading to the dwellings provide alternative circulation paths. (Gehl (2011))

03.3.3 Towards an activation-based housing typology

Together, the principles of activation, social encounter and autonomy form the basis for an activation-based housing typology. The proposed housing model combines independent dwellings with a network of shared and semi-public spaces that support everyday movement and informal interaction.

Rather than separating private housing from communal life, the typology introduces a spatial gradient between the dwelling, the building and the neighbourhood. Circulation becomes more than a functional necessity; it becomes a spatial framework that supports everyday movement, encounter and engagement.

03.3.4 Synthesis

The research demonstrates that healthy ageing is not only dependent on accessible housing, but also on spatial environments that support everyday movement, autonomy and informal social interaction. Literature, case studies and fieldwork consistently show that spatial configurations such as shared circulation routes, gradual transitions between private and collective space, visual connections and small residential clusters can support engagement while maintaining independence.

Within the context of Houtwijk, these findings are translated into an activation-based housing typology that connects the building to the existing neighbourhood structure and everyday routes. The design responds to the fine-grained network of pedestrian paths, green spaces and local facilities that characterise the district. Shared outdoor areas and entrances are positioned along these neighbourhood routes, allowing the building to function as an extension of the public realm rather than an isolated housing block.

By aligning circulation spaces, entrances and communal areas with these existing spatial structures, the proposal strengthens connections between residents, the building and the surrounding neighbourhood. This integration supports ageing in place by allowing residents to remain part of familiar everyday environments while gradually transitioning between private dwelling, shared spaces and neighbourhood life.

04

conclusion.

04.0 Conclusion

This chapter answers the main research question:

How can housing typologies and spatial configurations be embedded within the existing fabric of Houtwijk to support healthy, independent ageing through autonomy, everyday movement, and social encounter?

04.0.1 Neighbourhood scale

Embedding healthy ageing within the existing fabric of Houtwijk

The research demonstrated that healthy ageing is influenced not only by accessibility, but also by spatial conditions that support autonomy, everyday movement, and informal social interaction. At the neighbourhood scale, the project responds to the fragmented public spaces and inward-oriented structure of Houtwijk through an integrated landscape and urban strategy that strengthens walkability, social visibility, and spatial identity while remaining embedded within the existing neighbourhood fabric.

Autonomy and environmental comfort

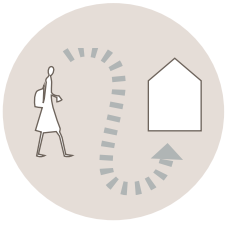
The project supports autonomy by embedding ageing within the familiar spatial structure of Houtwijk rather than creating an isolated senior complex. Daily functions, collective spaces, and public-oriented programmes are positioned within short walking distances, allowing residents to remain independent while integrating movement into everyday routines.

A network of connected walking routes, gradual level changes, and resting points reduces physical thresholds and supports residents to move through the neighbourhood at their own pace. The raised ground level creates a semi-collective transition zone between street and dwelling, increasing natural surveillance and strengthening the perceived safety of entrances and walking routes.

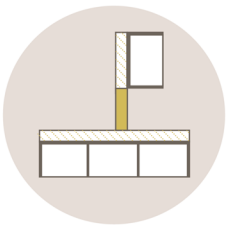
publicly accessible functions

car-free environment

mixed generation



short distance to neighbourhood functions



bridges connect building

benches every ~125 m

Urban plan without industry

green corridor
private green
walking route
car route
wadis
parking
walking path
gallery
benches

0 25 m 50 m

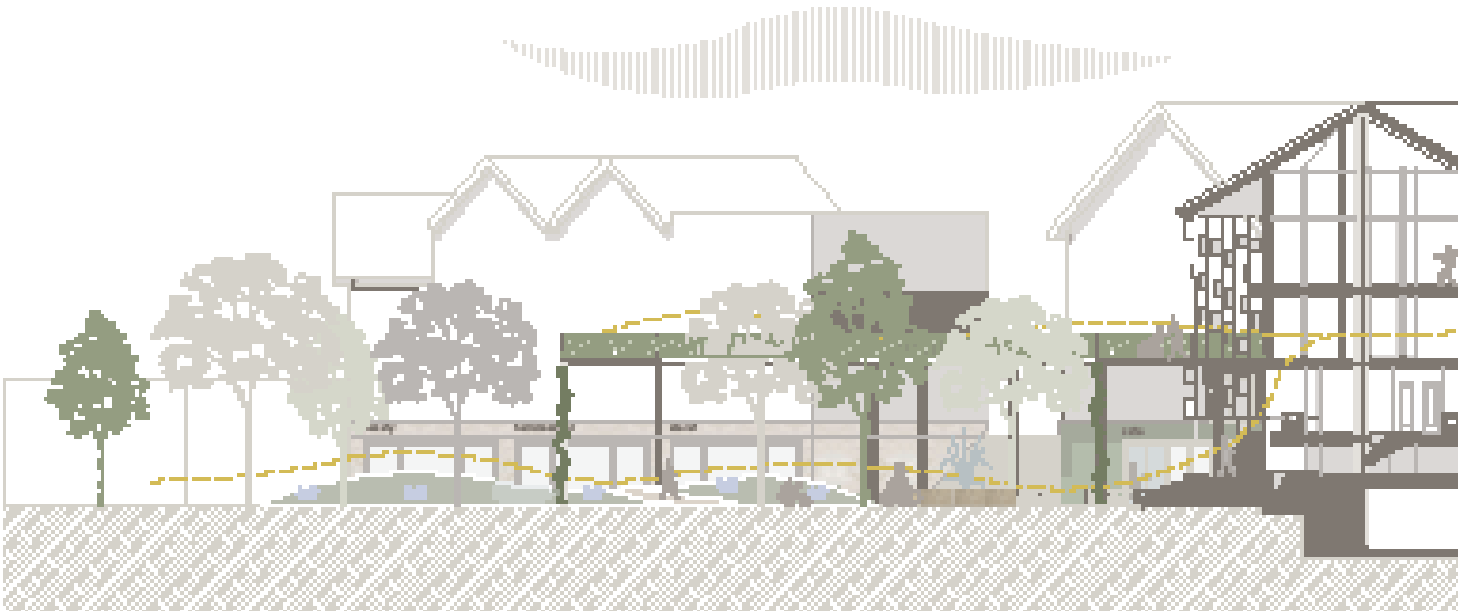
1. library & care
2. café
3. childcare
4. hairdresser
5. bakery
6. dentist

Everyday movement
The project strengthens pedestrian routes and green connections throughout the site through a car-reduced ensemble organised around shared courtyards and collective outdoor spaces. Rather than treating circulation as purely functional infrastructure, movement becomes part of the spatial experience of the neighbourhood.

Connected walking routes at both ground and elevated level distribute movement through collective outdoor spaces and visual connections, making everyday walking both physically stimulating and socially visible.

Informal encounter and neighbourhood integration
Shared courtyards, pedestrian routes, and collective threshold spaces create opportunities for low-threshold interaction between residents and neighbours. Rather than functioning as an inward-oriented residential complex, the project remains connected to the surrounding neighbourhood and existing social structures of Houtwijk.

At street level, Transparent ateliers and public-oriented functions positioned along pedestrian routes activate the plinth and strengthen connections with the surrounding neighbourhood. These active edges create opportunities for informal interaction between residents, visitors, and neighbours while supporting participation in neighbourhood life.

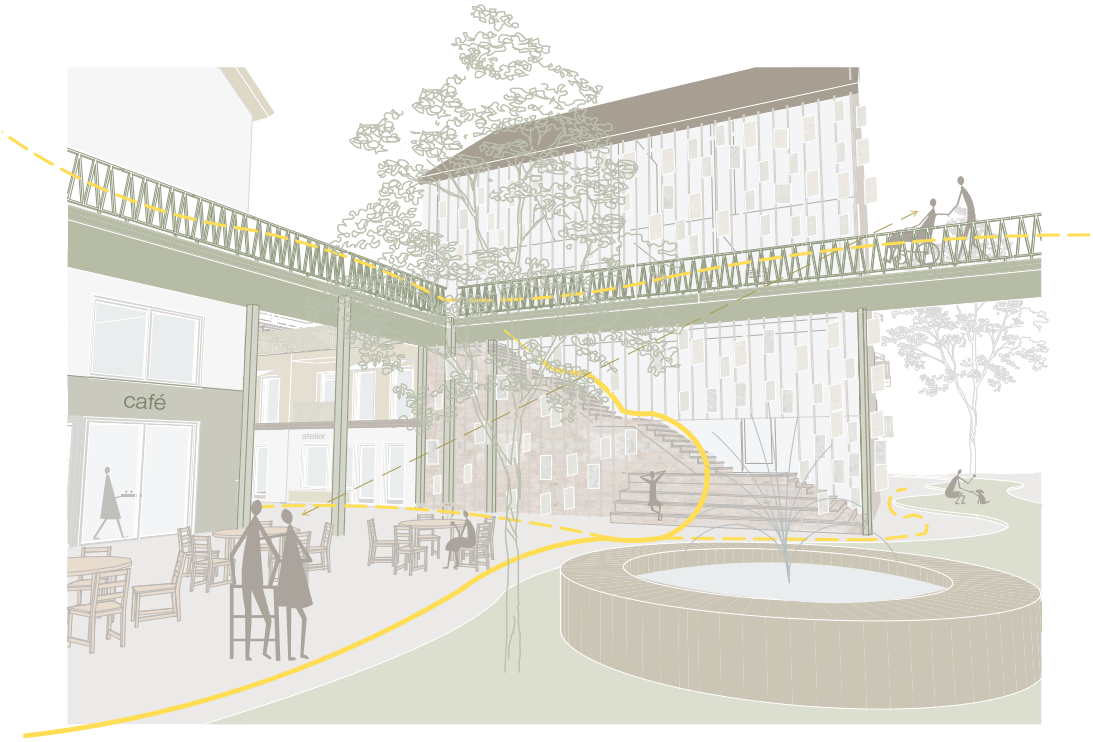


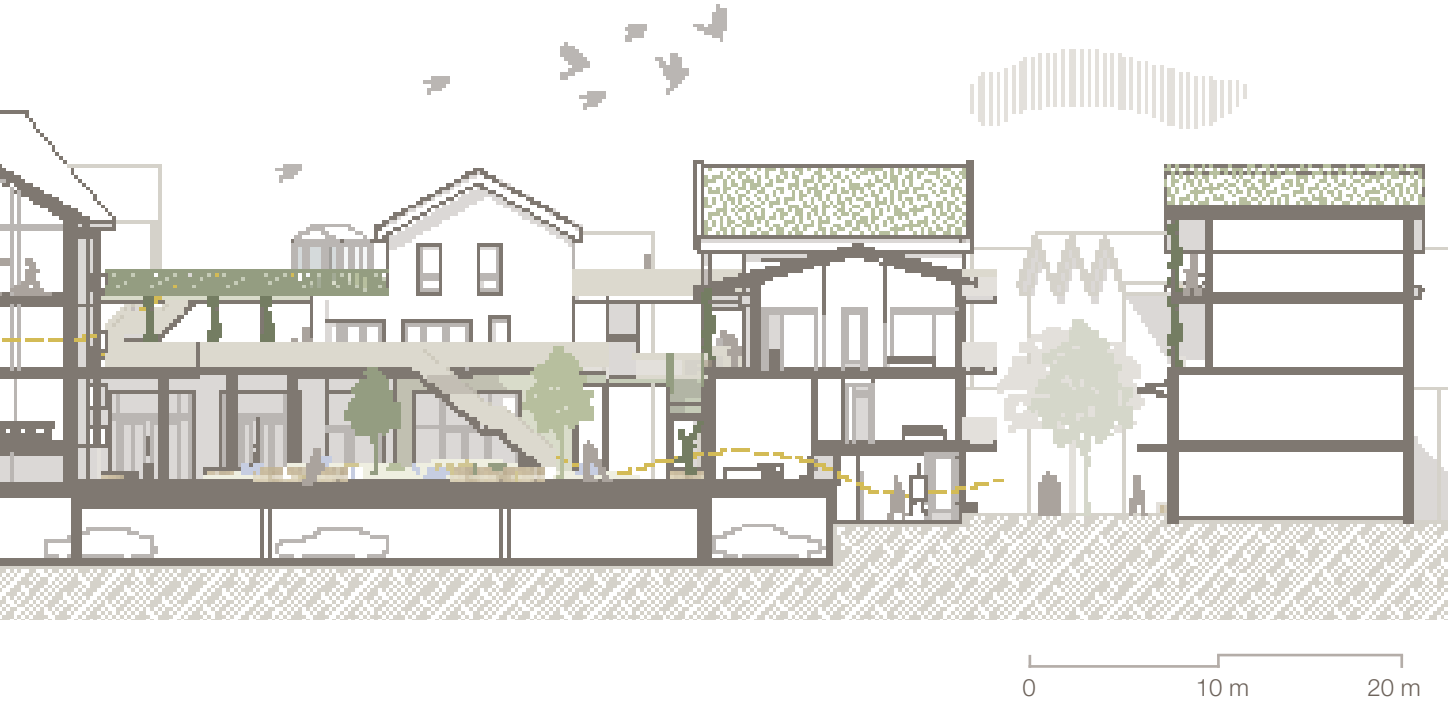
Movement and encounter

visible and inviting staircase

vertical connections

small threshold zones



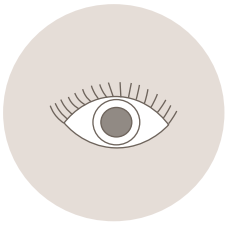


04.0.2 Building scale

Activation architecture through movement and encounter

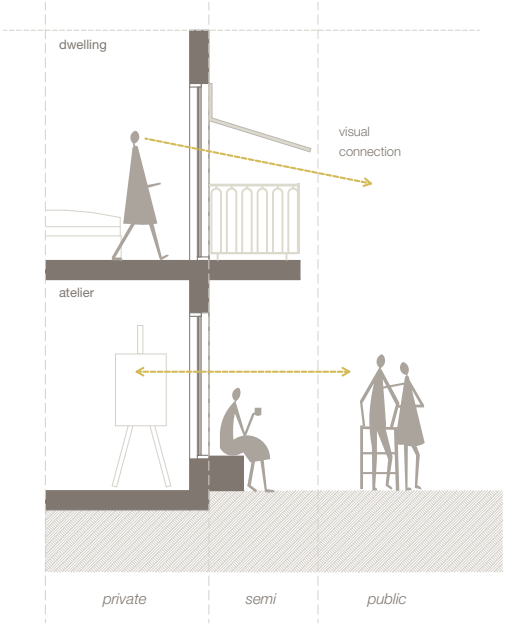
The research demonstrated that housing typologies supporting healthy ageing often combine independent dwellings with shared or semi-public spaces. At the building scale, these principles are translated into an architectural organisation in which galleries, shared circulation routes, visual connections, and collective threshold spaces support autonomy, everyday movement, and informal social encounter.

small threshold zones



visibility of everyday activity

Transition zones

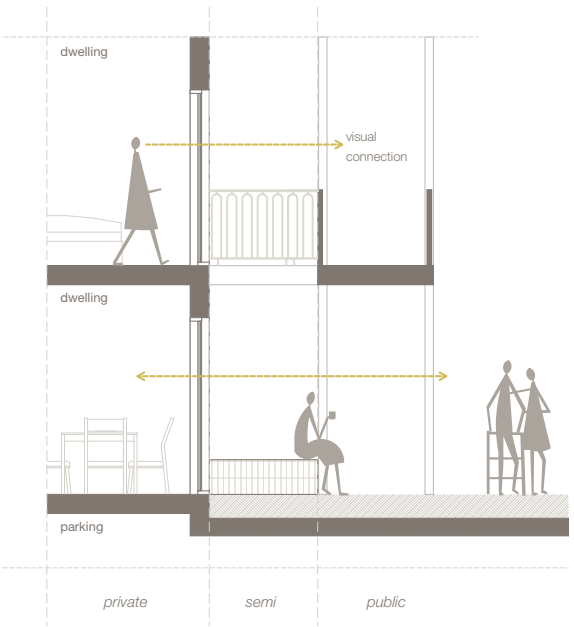


atelier - street side

Autonomy and social safety

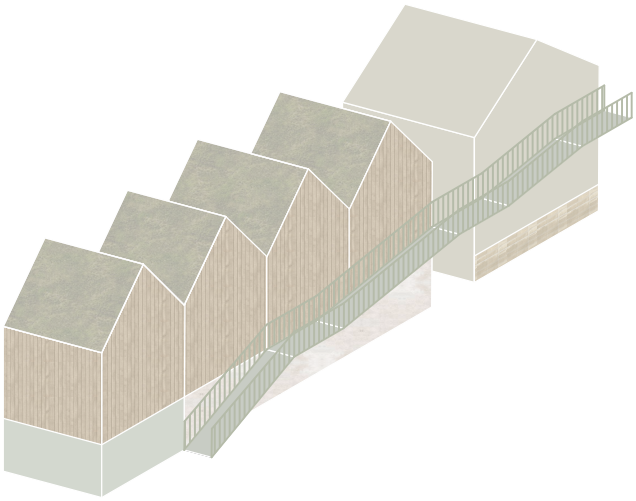
The building combines independent dwellings with shared circulation and collective spaces while maintaining privacy and personal control over social interaction. Gradual transitions between private dwellings, semi-collective galleries, and shared spaces allow residents to regulate their level of privacy and social interaction throughout everyday life.

Semi-open facades, filtered views, and permeable shading systems maintain visual connections to daily activity while preserving privacy and environmental comfort. Within the library and public plinth, a kinetic facade system introduces subtle movement inspired by book pages moving through the wind, attracting attention from the public realm, slowing movement along pedestrian routes, and reinforcing the active and socially visible character of the plinth. The visible staircase, level changes, and permeable threshold zones function as spatial nudges at building scale, integrating small physical engagements into daily routines rather than optimising them away.



dwelling - courtyard

Materialisation

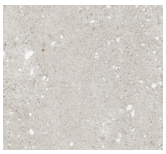


facade

collective functions

Recycled corrugated sheet, green coated (matt)

atelier



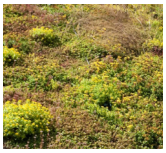
Fibre cement, beige / light grey

residential

wooden accoya slads natural

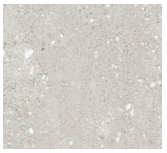
roof

zinc beige coated



extensive green roof

floor



Fibre cement, beige / light grey

elements

ramp

steel green coated

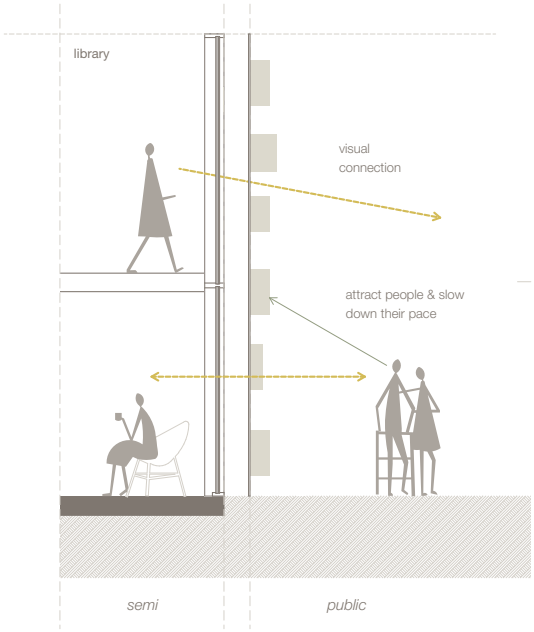
seating edges

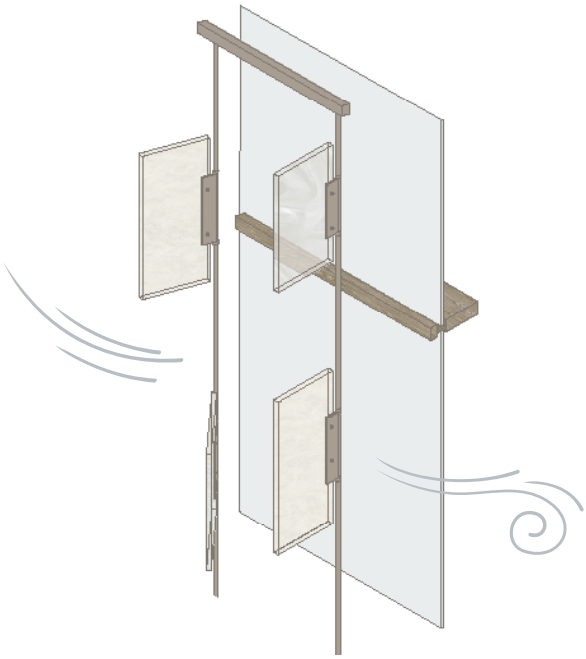
Glazed tiles, yellow / green

panels

recycles pet-panels

Library facade as activation architecture





library - street side

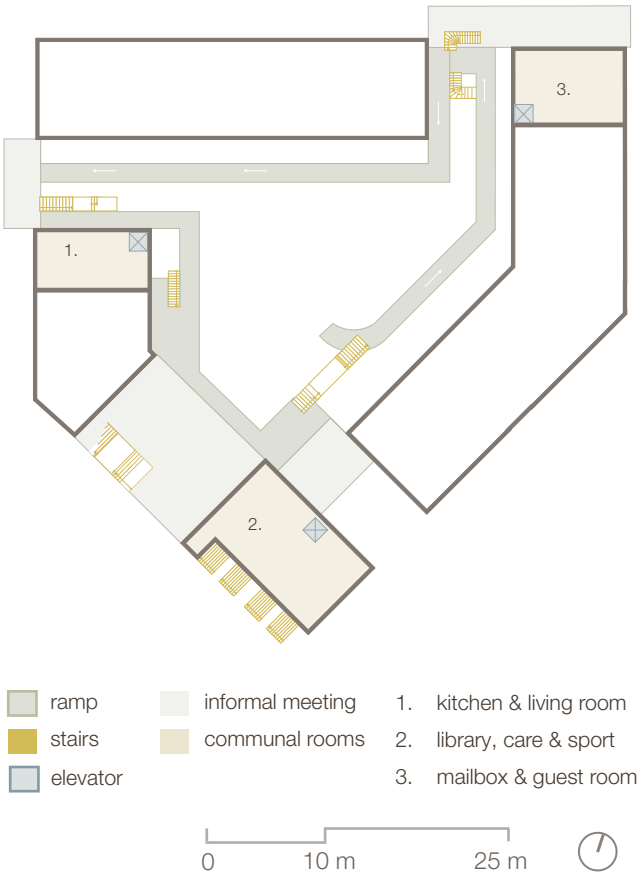
kinetic pet-panels

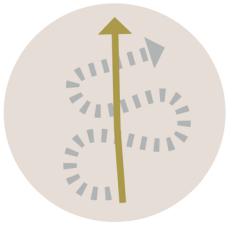
Everyday movement

Movement is embedded within the building through galleries, ramps, stair elements, and connected circulation spaces that encourage residents to remain active through everyday routines rather than organised exercise.

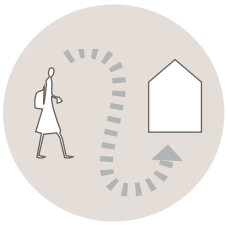
Multiple circulation routes allow residents to choose between stairs, ramps, galleries, and elevators, transforming movement from a purely functional necessity into part of the spatial experience. Integrated seating along shared routes creates opportunities for rest, observation, and informal encounter within everyday movement.

Movement network





multiple routes



shared circulation routes

seating along route

Informal encounter and social visibility
Collective threshold spaces, shared circulation routes, and visual connections create opportunities for low-threshold social interaction without forcing participation. Open galleries and small residential clusters support informal contact through visibility, proximity, and everyday use.

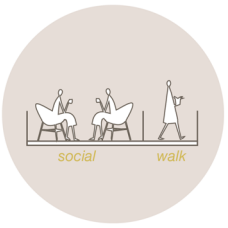
Shared spaces such as ateliers, collective living rooms, roof gardens, and communal facilities support active participation and strengthen the social life of the building. The building therefore operates as an activation architecture in which movement, encounter, and daily routines are embedded within the architectural structure rather than separated into dedicated care or activity spaces.

The kinetic facade system, integrated within the library and public plinth, introduces subtle movement and changing visual patterns within the building envelope. This movement makes everyday activity visible within the public realm while allowing users to regulate privacy, sunlight, and environmental comfort according to personal preference.

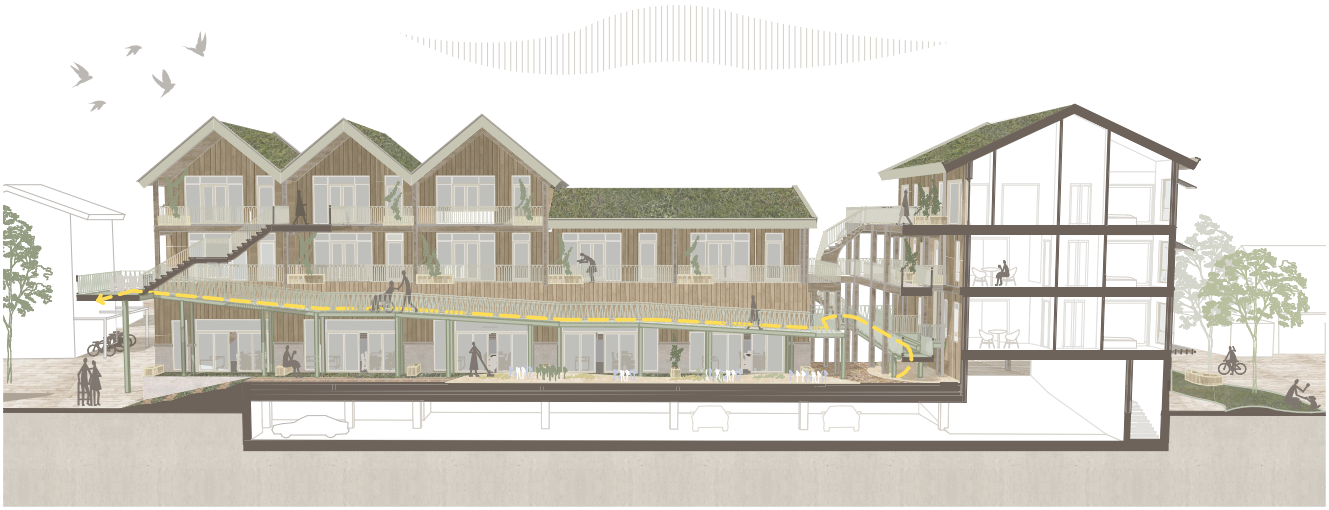
visible and inviting ramp (spatial nudging)

collective space

level changes, small fysical challenges



galleries



04.0.3 Dwelling scale

At the scale of the dwelling, the project focuses on autonomy, adaptability, and long-term independence. The research demonstrated that healthy ageing requires housing environments that can accommodate changing physical abilities while maintaining privacy, everyday movement, and personal control over domestic life.

Autonomy and adaptability

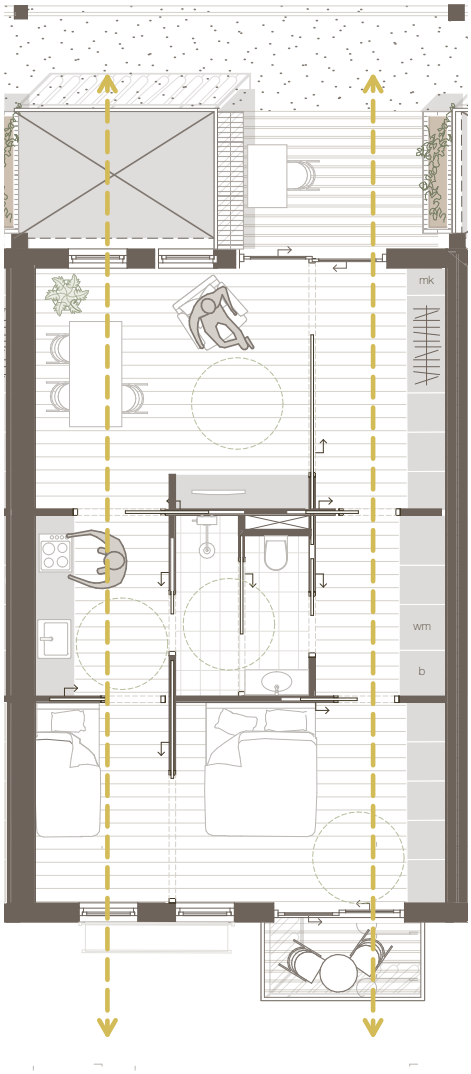
The dwellings are designed as flexible housing typologies that can adapt to changing household compositions and care needs over time. Accessible circulation routes, sliding partitions, and sufficient wheelchair turning space support ageing in place and allow future adaptation while maintaining personal autonomy and privacy. An additional flexible room can serve as storage, guest room, workspace, or future care room, directly responding to residents' expressed need for adaptable domestic space.

Everyday movement

Movement is embedded within the spatial organisation of the dwelling through connected living spaces, continuous walking routes, and flexible openings between rooms. Rather than minimising movement through purely efficiency-driven layouts, the dwellings encourage light

Informal care and changing households

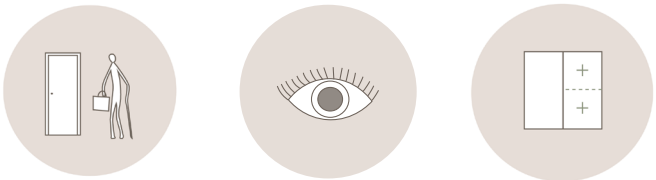
Accessible movement & visual connection



everyday activity as part of daily domestic routines and support residents to remain active within the home environment.

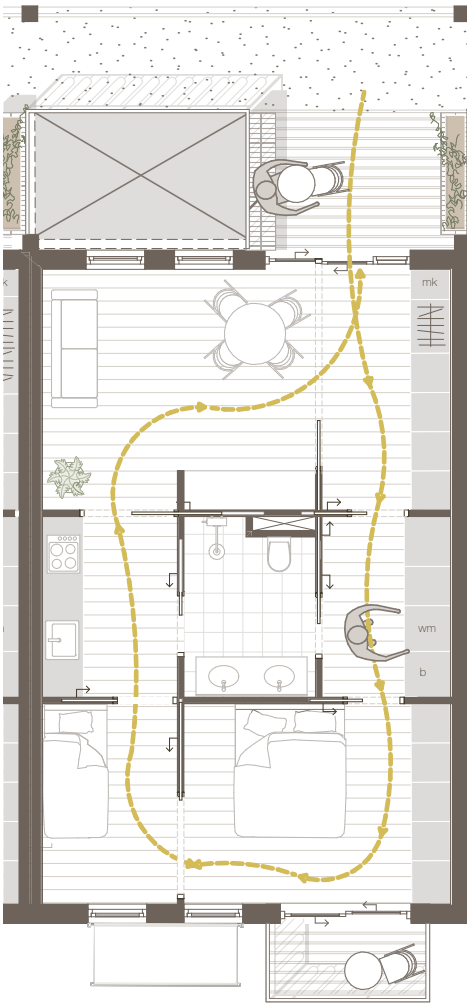
Informal encounter and gradual transitions
Gradual transitions between the private dwelling and collective circulation spaces create opportunities for low-threshold social interaction while maintaining control over privacy. Threshold zones, balconies, and visual connections towards galleries and courtyards allow residents to remain visually connected to green and daily activity without requiring direct participation.

Healthy ageing through spatial organisation
Through this multi-scalar spatial approach, the project demonstrates how housing environments can support healthy ageing through autonomy, adaptability, everyday movement, and informal social engagement embedded within daily life rather than through institutional care environments.

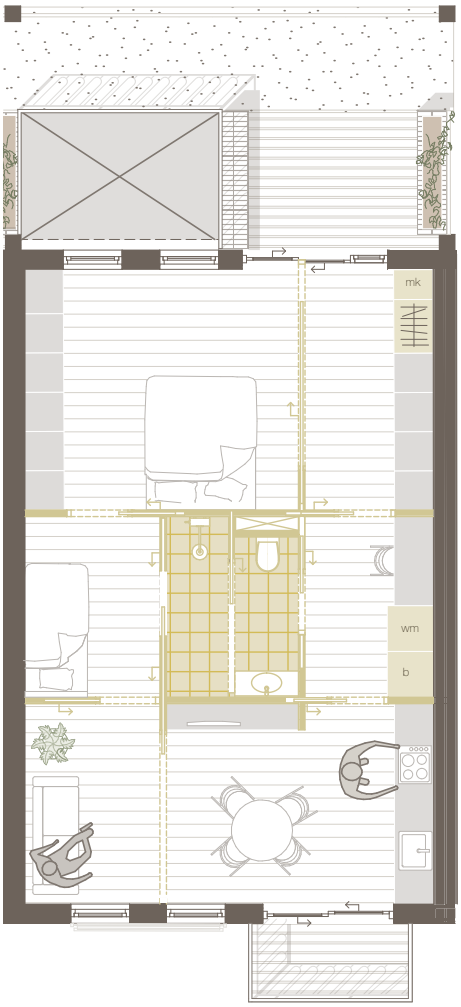


independent dwellings | visibility of everyday activity | flexible rooms

Movement embedded in everyday routines



Flexible housing typology



04.2 Discussion

This project explores how architectural design can support movement, encounter, and social interaction in a housing environment for ageing residents. While the design demonstrates how spatial strategies such as a continuous ramp, visual connections, and shared spaces can facilitate interaction, the relationship between space and social behaviour remains complex and not directly determined.

A key limitation lies in the assumption that spatial proximity automatically leads to social interaction. Spatial nudging, as introduced in §3.2, operates on the same assumption, that environmental cues translate into behavioural change. However, as Gehl (2011) argues in Life between buildings, social activities only emerge when necessary and optional activities overlap, suggesting that spatial strategies set conditions rather than outcomes. In practice, many interactions remain organised rather than spontaneous, as also observed in co-housing environments visited during this research.

Furthermore, the balance between community and privacy presents an inherent tension. While collective housing models aim to reduce loneliness and stimulate informal care (Kuyper, 2025; WHO, 2015), they can equally lead to social pressure or lack of privacy. This project addresses this through spatial gradients between public and private domains, yet their effectiveness depends heavily on user behaviour and personal preferences.

A further reflection concerns long-term community formation. Kuyper (2025) shows that collective housing only leads to positive outcomes when residents actively engage with shared spaces, raising the question whether architectural design alone is sufficient or whether additional social and organisational structures are required. In conclusion, the project demonstrates the potential of architecture to facilitate movement and encounter, but also highlights its limitations.

Architecture should be understood as a framework that enables a range of possible behaviours rather than producing them. Future research could investigate how spatial design can be combined with social strategies to create more resilient living environments for ageing populations.

04. Reflection

This graduation project began with a broad ambition: to create a design that spatially supports healthy aging across multiple scales simultaneously. That idea was present from the start, but its very breadth initially proved to be a weakness. In the early phase of the project, I wanted to address too many things at once, physical activity, social interaction, autonomy, urban integration, housing flexibility, without a single overarching concept to tie all these layers together. The result was a project that promised a lot in terms of content but remained conceptually diffuse. The turning point came when I stopped treating the concept of activation architecture as just one of many themes, but rather as the central lens through which all other principles could be interpreted. Activation, the spatial embedding of movement, mental stimulation, and informal encounters within everyday routines, gave the project the focus it needed. That insight simplified many design decisions: not every space had to do everything, but every space had to contribute to a single cohesive experience of the building as an activating environment. Still, I recognize that the tension between breadth and focus has not been fully resolved. The project touches on many themes at once, and that versatility is both a strength and a risk, a strength because it takes the complexity of healthy aging seriously, a risk because it dilutes the sharpness of the argument in some areas.

Still, I recognize that the tension between breadth and focus has not been fully resolved. The project touches on many themes at once, and that versatility is both a strength and a risk, a strength because it takes the complexity of healthy aging seriously, a risk because it dilutes the sharpness of the argument in some areas.
What I take away from this project goes beyond architectural knowledge. I have learned that design is not just about form, but also about behavior, about how space invites, activates, or, conversely, hinders people. The combination of literature review, fieldwork, interviews, and workshops has shown me how research can lead to well-founded design decisions, rather than relying on intuition. That is an approach I want to maintain: research not as preparation for the design, but as an integral part of it.

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06

appendix.

06.1 Workshops

06.1.1 Woonvormen

1.1 Autonomie als absolute voorwaarde
Wat vrijwel iedereen zegt, expliciet of impliciet:
- Eigen woning blijft heilig
- Contact moet vrijwillig zijn
- Geen gedeelde woonkamers
- Type 4 en 5 (intensieve samenwoonvormen) worden afgewezen
- “Je moet elkaar kunnen loslaten”
- Geen beklemmende woonvorm

1.2 Hofje als werkende referentie
Positieve ervaringen:
- Hofjes
- Centraal wonen
- Zichtlijnen (vide bij entree)
- Ontmoeting in semi-buitenruimte
- Collectieve tuin

Maar:
- Winter vraagt binnenontmoetingsplek
- Geluid kan spanning geven

1.3 Generatiemix: ja, maar onder voorwaarden
Positief:
- Blijf je jong en fit
- Wederkerigheid
- Leren van elkaar
- Kinderen brengen vreugde
- Studenten in huis mogelijk (mits afspraken)

Maar ook:
- Ouderen worden niet altijd begrepen
- Geluid kan storend zijn
- Overlast van kinderen

1.4 Sociale klik belangrijker dan leeftijd
Groep 3 zegt expliciet:
- Interesses belangrijker dan leeftijd
- Informele zorg ontstaat vanzelf
- Geen georganiseerde zorg nodig

1.5 Privacy is vooral akoestisch
- Groep 4 benadrukt:
- Geluid binnen is storend
- Geluid buiten (spelende kinderen) is acceptabel
- Scheiding binnen/buiten cruciaal

1.6 Gelijkvloers als transitiepunt
- Traplopen = breekpunt
- Geen verpleeghuis willen
- Geen goede tussenvorm
- Leefkwaliteit daalt sterk als mobiliteit afneemt

1.7 Zorg moet er zijn, maar niet zichtbaar
- Meningen over verpleeghuis:
- “Verschrikkelijk”
- Abrupte eindstap
- Ouder worden is onvermijdelijk

06.1.2 Woning

2.1 Samenvatting
- Alle deelnemers wonen vrij gevarieerd. Woningtypes waren een centraal wonen gebouw, 1-laags woningen, kwadrantwoningen en vrijstaande woningen.
- Deelnemers van de vrijstaande woningen benoemden vaak dat ze vonden dat ze misschien wat **te groot** woonden, maar ze **geen intentie** hadden om te verhuizen. Ze konden vaak wel genieten van de ruimte, maar kostte het ook wel moeite om het schoon te houden. Financieel gezien hadden ze totaal geen behoefte om te verhuizen, omdat de hypotheek nu erg laag was (100-200 euro p/m), en die richting de 1200 – 1500 euro p/m zou gaan als ze kleiner zouden gaan wonen. Hierdoor kozen ze er eerder voor te groot te blijven wonen.
- Deelnemer in centraal wonen complex vond het belangrijk om gemeenschappelijk groen te

benutten en te onderhouden.
- Binnen Houtwijk zijn er weinig mogelijkheden om door te verhuizen naar een geschiktere locatie. Mensen zijn gehecht aan de omgeving en kiezen er daarom liever voor om in een ongeschikter huis te blijven wonen. Daarbij zochten mensen wel graag mogelijkheden tot een centrale zorglocatie in de omgeving, waardoor het makkelijker is om in de wijk te wonen.
- Wat ook aangekaart is, is dat gemeenschappelijke ruimtes ook belangrijk waren. Groenvoorzieningen, wat als gemeenschappelijk groen als of gemeente groen kan worden gezien, vonden mensen belangrijk om in te bewegen of te onderhouden. Ook wanneer mensen het niet wouden onderhouden vonden ze het wel leuk om zien dat anderen dat voor hun deden.
- Nog interessant voor de indeling was dat toiletten soms op de begane grond waren, waarbij mensen 's nachts elke keer de trap af moesten om naar de wc te gaan. Dit vormde toch wel een probleem, vooral wanneer later de mobiliteit afneemt.

06.1.3 Thuis

3.1 Hoofdconclusies, Woningniveau

1) Gelijkvloers wonen is geen luxe, maar randvoorwaarde
- Meerdere respondenten noemen expliciet: traplopen wordt lastiger.
- Huidige woningen (3 etages) zijn "te groot met z'n tweeën".

2) Veiligheid is topprioriteit (binnen én buiten
- Inbraak en hangjongeren bij poortjes.
- Drugshandel in de buurt.
- Onveiligheidsgevoel in de avond.

3) Temperatuur & duurzaamheid = comfort + toekomstzekerheid
- Dubbel glas, vloerverwarming, isolatie, zonnepanelen worden genoemd.
- Hittebescherming is expliciet thema.

4) Tuin / eigen buitenruimte is essentieel
- Tuin wordt als eerste genoemd.
- Eigen buitenruimte (tuin of balkon) belangrijk.
- Groen in de wijk gewaardeerd, maar slecht onderhouden.

5) Indeling is belangrijker dan grootte
- Scheiding keuken/woonkamer wordt gewaardeerd.
- "Redelijke ruimtes" + voldoende bergruimte
- Berging direct bij entree wordt positief benoemd.

6) Geluidsoverlast is een grote frustratie
- Overlast van buren.
- Rust wordt expliciet genoemd

3.2 Hoofdconclusies,Buurtniveau

1) Groen wordt gewaardeerd, maar beheer faalt
- Veel groen in wijk = positief.
- Slecht onderhoud en zwerfafval = frustratie.

2) Er is een gevoel van achteruitgang in toezicht
- Geen wijkagent 's avonds.
- Overlast wordt niet opgepakt.

3) Emotionele binding aan plek
- Herinneringen, familie, lang gewoond.
- Kat wordt meerdere keren genoemd, huisdier belangrijk.

06.1.4 activiteiten & delen

4.1 Wat doen vitale ouderen écht in hun dagelijks leven?

De meeste respondenten:
- Wandelen, fietsen, sporten (4x per week sportschool, jeu de boules, voetbal)

06.1 Workshops

- Vrijwilligerswerk (BuurThuis, Rode Kruis, wijkvereniging)
- Bestuurlijk actief (duurzaamheid, projectontwikkeling, wijkberaad)
- Oppassen op kleinkinderen
- Creatief (muziek, schilderen, fotografie, 3D printen)
- Kennis delen (ex-leerkrachten, biologen, tuinman, tech-hulp)

Conclusie:
De doelgroep is geen zorggroep, maar een maatschappelijk actieve groep met expertise, tijd en netwerk.

4.2 Grootste gemis in de wijk
Geen informele ontmoetingsplek
Gemist wordt:
- Een café / restaurant
- Een koffieplek
- Een “kroegje”
- Een leesplek
- Kleinschalige culturele ruimte
- Een plek voor boekclub / presentaties
- Een reparatieplek / maakruimte
- Publieke toiletten

Ze gaan nu naar De Fred, Savornin Lohmanplein, Paagman, Dakota, etc.

4.3 Ze willen géén zorgstempel
Meerdere keren:
- “Ik ga niet gymmen voor de oudjes”
- “Ik wil niet naar een verpleeghuis”
- “Bejaardenwoningen zijn er niet meer”
- “Verpleeghuizen zijn verschrikkelijk”

Maar tegelijkertijd:
- Ze willen voorbereid zijn op de toekomst
- Ze willen gelijkvloers
- Ze willen sociaal vangnet
- Ze willen autonomie behouden

4.4 Autonomie is heilig
Wat duidelijk wordt:
- Contact is gewenst
- Generatiemix is gewenst
- Verplicht samenwonen niet
- Te intensieve collectiviteit niet

4.5 Informele wederkerigheid is cruciaal
Wat werkt:
- Computerhulp
- Tuinadvies
- Oppassen
- Kennisoverdracht
- Jongeren helpen ouderen
- Ouderen helpen jongeren

4.6 Groen is geen decor, maar actief onderdeel
In ronde 3 vooral:
- Moestuin
- Natuureducatie
- Doorlopende groenstructuur
- Verbinding tussen groengebieden
- Binnentuin met potentie (nu onderbenut

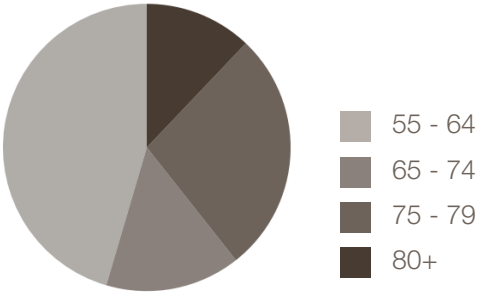
4.7 Dagelijkse beweging
Veel respondenten:
- Wandelen veel
- Fietsen veel
- Zijn actief
- Gebruiken de wijk als beweegruimte

Maar:
- Routes zijn niet altijd logisch
- Sommige plekken voelen als drempel
- Bokkefort wordt weinig gebruikt ondanks programma

4.8 Jong & oud: genuanceerde mix
Ze zeggen:
- Contact met jongeren is belangrijk
- Leren van elkaar
- Toekomst van wijk
- Maar geen lawaai

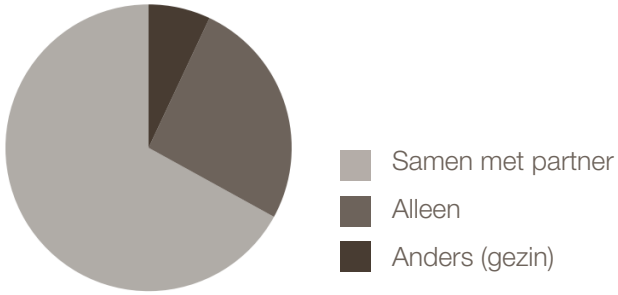
06.3 Enquete

Wat is uw leeftijd?



De meerderheid van de respondenten is tussen de 55 en 79 jaar, met een zwaartepunt in de groep 55–64 jaar. De doelgroep bestaat dus vooral uit actieve, relatief jonge senioren.

Woont u samen of alleen?

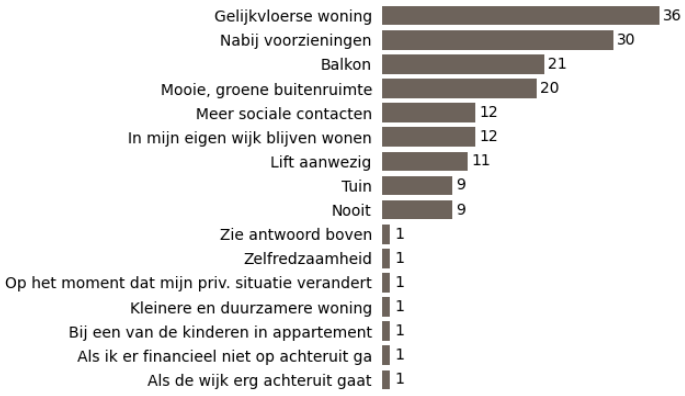


De meeste respondenten wonen samen, een kwart woont alleen. Toekomstige woonvormen moeten dus zowel geschikt zijn voor stellen als voor alleenstaanden.

Wat zou voor u een reden zijn om te gaan verhuizen?

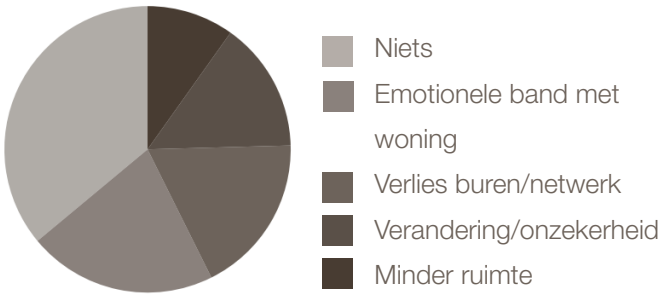
Verhuizen wordt vooral overwogen bij praktische of levensfase-gerelateerde veranderingen, zoals een te grote woning, gezondheid of verlies van een partner. Zonder duidelijke noodzaak blijft men liever wonen waar men nu woont.

Onder welke voorwaarden zou u wél willen verhuizen? (ook al bent u al verhuisd, wat was een belangrijke voorwaarden) (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)



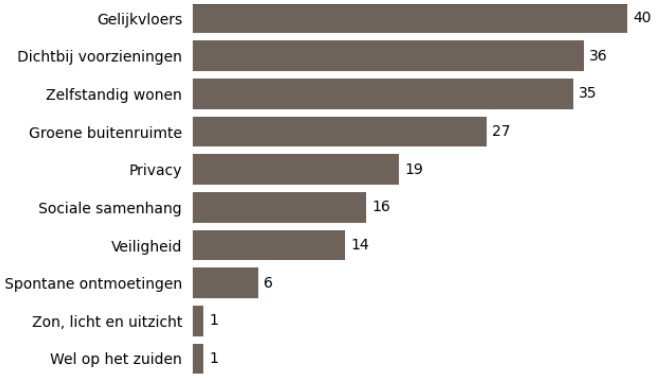
Belangrijkste voorwaarden zijn gelijkvloers wonen, nabijheid van voorzieningen en een passende, onderhoudsvriendelijke woning. Comfort en praktische bruikbaarheid staan centraal.

Wat zou u het moeilijkst vinden aan verhuizen? Of wat vond u het moeilijkst?



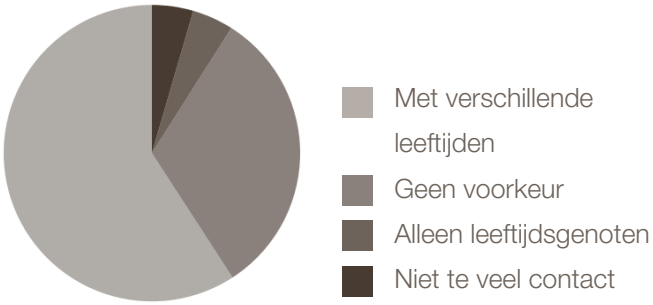
De emotionele band met de woning en het vertrouwde netwerk vormen de grootste drempel. Verhuizen betekent niet alleen een praktische, maar vooral een emotionele verandering.

Welke aspecten zijn/waren voor u het belangrijkste? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk, max. 3)



Een nieuwe woonvorm moet duidelijke meerwaarde bieden: comfort, privacy, nabijheid van voorzieningen en betaalbaarheid. Zonder kwaliteitsverbetering is er weinig verhuisbereidheid.

Met welke doelgroep zou u het liefst in een wijk/straat willen wonen?



De meeste respondenten geven de voorkeur aan een gemengde buurt met verschillende leeftijden. Een diverse, levendige omgeving wordt aantrekkelijk gevonden.

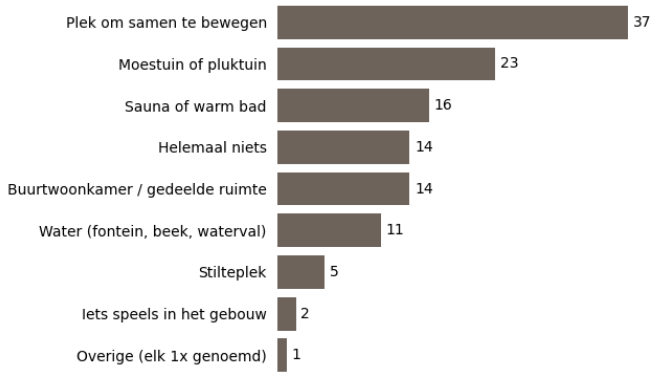
Stel: er komt een nieuwe woonvorm in uw wijk, speciaal ontworpen om prettig ouder te worden. Wat zou u over de streep trekken om daarheen te verhuizen?

Respondenten geven aan dat zij alleen willen verhuizen als een nieuwe woonvorm duidelijke meerwaarde biedt ten opzichte van hun huidige woning. Belangrijk zijn vooral:

- nabijheid van voorzieningen,
- gelijkvloers en toekomstbestendig wonen,
- een kleinere en onderhoudsvriendelijke woning
- voldoende groen of buitenruimte.
- Ook betaalbaarheid, veiligheid en privacy worden nadrukkelijk genoemd.

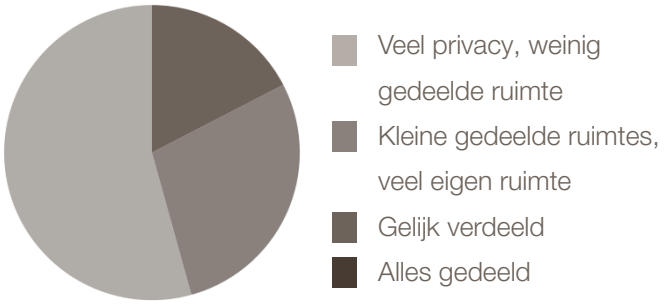
Verhuizen komt met name in beeld bij veranderende omstandigheden, zoals gezondheidsproblemen of wanneer de huidige woning te groot of bewerkelijk wordt. Tegelijkertijd is een deel van de respondenten tevreden met de huidige woonsituatie en ziet alleen aanleiding om te verhuizen als comfort en zelfstandigheid minimaal behouden blijven.

Welke van onderstaande dingen zou u aantrekkelijk vinden? Het hoeft niet realistisch te zijn. Kies vooral wat u aanspreekt — ook als u denkt: “dit is eigenlijk overdreven”. (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)



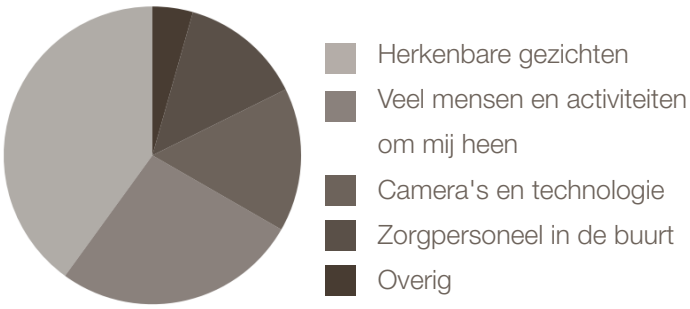
Opvallend is dat een deel van de respondenten aangeeft helemaal niets extra’s nodig te hebben (22%). Over het algemeen lijkt er vooral belangstelling voor voorzieningen die bijdragen aan beweging, ontmoeting en een groene, ontspannen leefomgeving.

Voorkeur privacy vs. gedeelde ruimtes? In en om uw woongebouw



De voorkeur gaat duidelijk uit naar veel privacy met beperkte gedeelde ruimtes. Collectiviteit is welkom, maar niet ten koste van zelfstandigheid.

Welke vorm van veiligheid zou u het meest prettig vinden?



Men voelt zich het prettigst bij sociale veiligheid: herkenbare gezichten en levendigheid in de omgeving. Technologie of zorgpersoneel wordt minder vaak als primaire veiligheidsbron genoemd.

Laatste vraag: Wat is uw favoriete plek in huis? En waarom?

Uit de antwoorden blijkt duidelijk dat de woonkamer voor de meeste mensen de favoriete plek in huis is. Dit is de ruimte waar men ontspant, leest, tv kijkt, hobby's uitoefent en samenkomt met partner, familie of vrienden. Vooral gezelligheid, comfort en samenzijn worden vaak genoemd.

Ook de keuken of eettafel speelt een belangrijke rol. Hier wordt gekookt, gegeten, gepraat en gewerkt; het is een plek waar "het meeste gebeurt" en waar ontmoeting centraal staat. Daarnaast worden de tuin, het balkon of een plek met uitzicht naar buiten gewaardeerd, vooral vanwege het licht, het groen en het gevoel van rust.

Over het geheel genomen draait de favoriete plek vooral om een combinatie van licht, uitzicht, gezelligheid en dagelijkse activiteiten, een ruimte waar men zich op zijn gemak voelt en waar het leven zich afspeelt.

06.3 Casestudies

Zeevaarders (Zijdekwartier)

Type: Multi-residential neighbourhood ensemble
Function: Five residential buildings arranged around interconnected green, car-free squares and semi-private collective courtyards
Architect: Zijdekwartier Architecten
Scale: 89 dwellings
Distributed across five buildings
Collective inner courtyards and shared green squares
Date: 2023

Meeting through galleries and courtyard landscape

1. Typology
The Zeevaarders project consists of five residential buildings arranged around interconnected green, car-free squares and shared inner courtyards.

Key typological features:
- Loose cluster of low-rise buildings
- Autovrije groene pleintjes as shared connectors
- Binnentuinen between buildings as semi-private spaces
- Poorten and wide access routes linking the buildings

This creates a new neighbourhood block typology that is neither a classic perimeter block nor a single courtyard cluster, but rather a networked ensemble of shared outdoor spaces that mediate between public street and private dwelling.

The architectural strategy embeds meeting and movement into the fabric of everyday circulation.

2. Autonomy
Autonomy is supported through:
- Individual housing units with direct access from shared routes
- Entrances located adjacent to green pleintjes and ‘stoep’ zones where residents can choose to pause or retreat
- Wide galleries and stair cores designed to be generous and inviting rather than institutional

These spatial strategies allow residents to live independently while maintaining a clear threshold between private space and the shared neighbourhood.

Unlike institutional models, there is no compulsory communal interior; residents can choose their level of engagement.

3. Social Encounter
Social encounter is explicitly designed into the spatial framework:
- Routes from street to home pass through green pleintjes and shared courtyard spaces where neighbors meet.
- Stoep zones and entry thresholds are sized to allow residents to sit, pause, and interact informally.
- Wide accessible galleries with space for plants and seating encourage casual greetings and prolonged contact.
- This aligns with Gehl’s idea of “soft edges” and “passive encounter” — social life emerges from everyday circulation and threshold spaces.

4. Movement
Movement is embedded in every transition:
- Pedestrian routes through the squares connect public street with individual homes.
- Autovrije pleintjes and green paths slow circulation, creating opportunities for incidental

stop-and-connect behaviour.
- The design of stairs and galleries encourages movement beyond simple utility, supporting social checks (visiting, stopping, watching).
- Well-designed bicycle routes and ample bicycle parking further integrate movement into daily routines.

This configuration promotes everyday, low-intensity activity integrated with social life.

5. Scale

This has spatial consequences:
- High recognisability
- Strong identity among residents
- Limited anonymity
- Fewer spontaneous interactions simply due to lower population
- The courtyard is shared by a small number of households, increasing familiarity but reducing diversity.

6. Spatial Lessons

Small-scale clustering intensifies recognition
Fewer dwellings around a shared court increase social familiarity.

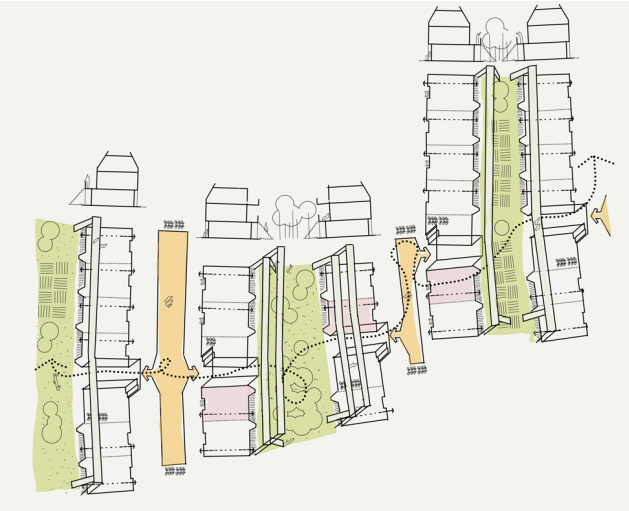
Direct dwelling-to-courtyard interfaces stimulate passive contact
Entrances and windows facing inward create everyday encounter.

Minimal programmatisation can still support collectivity
Social life can emerge through proximity rather than heavy programming.

Compact layouts reduce spatial friction
Short distances increase legibility and ease of movement.

Gallery as social element (Zijdekwartier, 2025)

'Hofje' (Zijdekwartier, 2025)



Connection buildings (Zijdekwartier, 2025)

Connection buildings (Zijdekwartier, 2025)

Spatial mechanisms Zeevaarders

SPATIAL	PRICIPLE AFFECTED		
dwelling	**autonomy**	**activation**	**social encouter**
Independent dwellings	x		
bench next to front door			x
transition zone between dwelling and garden	x		x
building			
bridges between buildings to connect them		x	x
direct living environment			
'hofjes' between buildings, care free		x	x
Small scale clustering	x		x
neighbourhood			
residential community			x

Mobius (Utrecht)

Type: Multi-generational housing project
Function: Houses and apartments arranged around a collective courtyard garden and a multi-generational residential building
Architect: KOW Architects (Landschape: RRog)
Scale: 68 dwellings (48 ground-based dwelling + 20 dwellings) Collective courtyard 3.000 m^2
Date: 2023

Housing case study: meeting through landscape & scale

1. Typology

Mobius is organised as a perimeter block with articulated gate buildings, enclosing a semi-private inner courtyard. Typologically, it can be understood as a contemporary reinterpretation of the traditional courtyard housing model, combined with cohousing principles.

Key characteristics include:

- A continuous block edge defining a protected interior world
- Controlled access through gate structures
- Collective ownership of the courtyard
- A mix of ground-based dwellings and apartments

The courtyard acts as a spatial condenser, concentrating shared life within a clearly defined interior domain while maintaining an urban street edge toward the city.

2. Autonomy

Autonomy is structurally embedded in the spatial organisation of the project. Each dwelling has its own private terrace or balcony. The apartments are accessible by lift and include single-level units suitable for ageing residents or people with reduced mobility.

The private housing unit remains fully independent from collective facilities. Shared spaces are optional rather than mandatory, and circulation does not pass through institutional corridors or collective interiors. This reinforces residential independence while allowing proximity to shared amenities.

3. Social encouter

The inner courtyard is structured through a meandering path that connects various programmed landscape zones, including:

- A communal vegetable garden
- A food forest
- A sports hill
- An open-air theatre
- A greenhouse
- A water meadow

Movement is intentionally non-linear. Paths intersect, sightlines overlap, and destinations are distributed rather than centralised. This spatial configuration increases the likelihood of incidental encounters along everyday routes.

The multi-generational building functions as a social node within this system. Positioned at an urban hinge point, it contains:

- A central kitchen on the ground floor
- Two activity rooms
- A terrace facing the courtyard

Its arched structure operates as both architectural landmark and spatial threshold. It concentrates programmed activity and acts as a recognisable social anchor.

4. Activation

Movement in Mobius is embedded in everyday life rather than separated into designated exercise facilities.

Physical activity occurs through:

- Gardening in the vegetable plots
- Harvesting in the food forest
- Walking along winding paths
- Using the sports hill
- Cooking collectively with garden produce

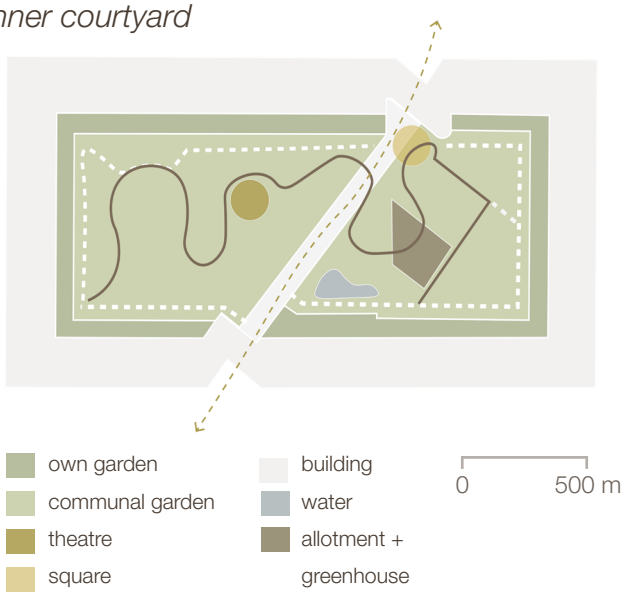
Rather than providing a discrete fitness space, movement is integrated into functional and recreational practices. This supports habitual, low-intensity activity woven into daily routines.

5. Scale

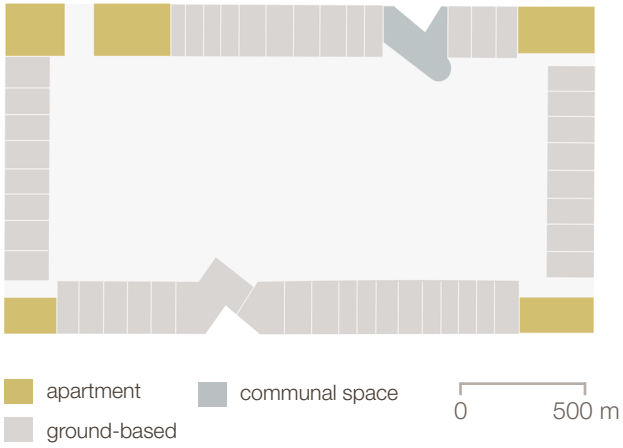
Mobius accommodates slightly over 100 residents.
This scale is significant:

- Large enough to support generational diversity
- Small enough to allow recognition and familiarity

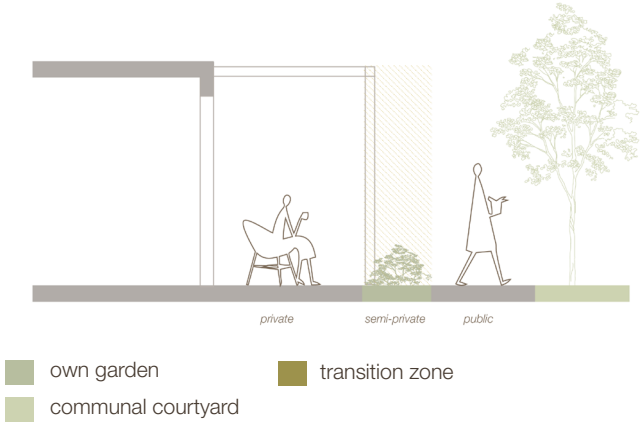
Inner courtyard



Typology



Transition zone



6. Spatial lessons

Courtyard as Social Condenser
A bounded inner world enhances safety, recognition, and collective identity.

Collective Landscape as Encounter Infrastructure
Social interaction is supported through programmatic landscape zones rather than empty green space.

Private Autonomy with Optional Collectivity
Dwellings remain fully independent while shared spaces remain accessible but non-obligatory.

Movement Through Meandering Routes
Encounters emerge along intersecting paths rather than within enclosed corridors.

Courtyard with private terrace (KOW ARCHITECTEN & RRog Landschapsarchitecten, 2024)

Courtyard with allotments (KOW ARCHITECTEN & RRog Landschapsarchitecten, 2024)

Floorplan courtyard with dwellings (KOW ARCHITECTEN & RRog Landschapsarchitecten, 2024)

Street facade (KOW ARCHITECTEN & RRog Landschapsarchitecten, 2024)

Spatial mechanisms Mobius

SPATIAL	PRICIPLE AFFECTED		
dwelling	**autonomy**	**activation**	**social encouter**
Independent dwellings	x		
private terrace within shared garden	x		x
transition zone between dwelling and garden	x		x
building			
choice between housing typologies	x		
direct living environment			
height differences in the courtyard landscape			
Multiple activities in shared garden		x	x
neighbourhood			
residential community			x

Olsrød Nursing Home (Tønsberg)

Type: Small-scale nursing home organised as clustered housing
Function: Care dwellings arranged in small-scale residential clusters connected through shared indoor streets and landscape spaces
Architect: 3RW Architects
Scale: Approximately 32–48 residents (small-scale clustered units)
Date: 2017

Housing case study: meeting through landscape & scale

1. Typology
Olsrød Nursing Home is organised as a series of small-scale residential clusters connected through shared circulation spaces and landscaped outdoor areas. Typologically, the project reinterprets institutional care housing as a neighbourhood-like structure composed of smaller domestic units.

Key characteristics include:
- Division into small residential clusters
- Shared living rooms per cluster
- Central internal circulation streets
- Direct connection to outdoor landscape spaces
- Fragmented building volumes to reduce institutional scale

Instead of one large building, the project is structured as a collection of smaller volumes. This spatial fragmentation creates a more domestic environment and improves orientation, recognisability, and social interaction. The landscape functions as connective tissue between these clusters, encouraging movement and informal encounters.

2. Autonomy
Autonomy is embedded through small-scale residential clusters. Each cluster contains private rooms combined with shared living spaces, creating a balance between independence and social proximity.

Key strategies:
- Private rooms with personal identity
- Shared kitchens and living rooms within clusters
- Short walking distances
- Clear orientation and recognisable spatial structure

Residents can choose between staying in private rooms or participating in shared spaces. This optional social interaction supports independence while preventing isolation.

3. Social encouter
Social interaction in Olsrød emerges through movement between clusters and shared spaces. Circulation areas are designed as internal streets rather than corridors, encouraging lingering and informal contact.

Key spatial strategies:
- Internal streets connecting clusters
- Shared living rooms per cluster
- Visual connections between spaces
- Landscape spaces between building volumes

The landscape is designed as a sequence of outdoor spaces rather than a single central courtyard. These spaces function as everyday meeting points during daily routines such as walking, sitting, or moving between shared facilities. By distributing shared spaces across the building, the design increases opportunities for spontaneous interaction.

4. Activation
Movement is embedded in everyday circulation rather than separated into designated activity zones.

Physical activity occurs through:
- Walking between clusters
- Moving through internal streets
- Accessing outdoor gardens
- Everyday domestic activities

The fragmented building layout encourages residents to move between spaces. This supports low-intensity movement throughout the day, particularly important for elderly residents. Rather than concentrating activity in one location, activation is distributed across the building and landscape.

5. Scale
Olsrød Nursing Home operates at a small domestic scale:
- Small residential cluster
- Limited number of residents per cluster
- Short distances
- High recognisability

The fragmented volumes further reinforce human scale and improve spatial legibility.

Olsrød Nursing Home, 3RW, 2025

6. Spatial Lessons

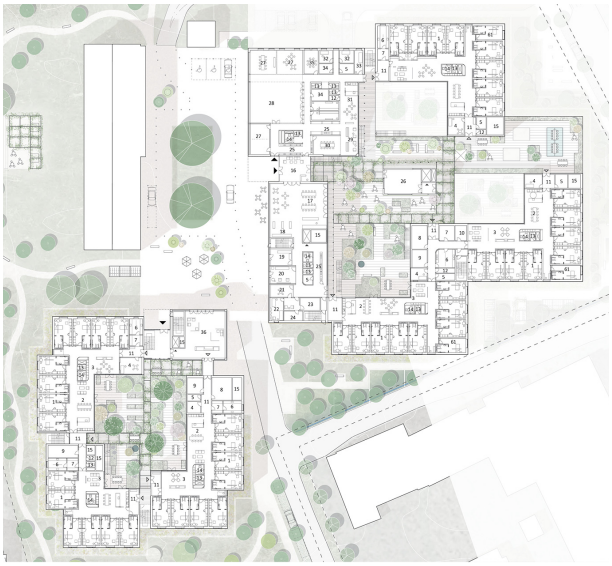
Clustered Housing as Social Framework
Small-scale clusters support familiarity and informal social contact.

Circulation as Social Street
Internal streets encourage movement and everyday encounters.

Landscape as Connecting Structure
Outdoor spaces connect clusters and stimulate movement.

Fragmentation to Reduce Institutional Scale
Multiple volumes create domestic scale and improve orientation.

Distributed Activation
Movement and activity occur across the building rather than in one central space.



Olsrød Nursing Home, 3RW, 2025

Olsrød Nursing Home, 3RW, 2025

Olsrød Nursing Home, 3RW, 2025

Olsrød Nursing Home, 3RW, 2025

Olsrød Nursing Home, 3RW, 2025

Spatial mechanisms Olsrød Nursing Home

SPATIAL	PRICIPLE AFFECTED		
dwelling	**autonomy**	**activation**	**social encouter**
Independent dwellings	x		
frontdoor next to route			x
sight on activity	x	x	x
building			
shared facilities	x		x
small clusters			x
direct living environment			
bridges between clusters	x	x	x
short walking distances	x	x	
neighbourhood			
no cars between the clusters		x	