

The image and social significance of Het Schip

Understanding the causes of changing perceptions and appreciation of Amsterdam School building Het Schip through history



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Abstract

This thesis investigates the evolving perception and appreciation of *Het Schip*, an icon of the Amsterdam School designed by Michel de Klerk, from its completion in 1921 to the present day. As a social housing complex and national monument, Het Schip has a unique relationship between architectural expression, social ideals, and historical reinterpretation. The research explores how various stakeholders—including architects, critics, residents, policymakers, and the public—have shaped and reshaped the building’s significance over time. Four core themes structure the analysis: the historical context and theoretical foundations of the Amsterdam School; the early reception and critique of Het Schip countering modernism; the impact of renovation and restoration efforts; and the evolving symbolic image of the building as a monument to social cohesion, craftsmanship, and beauty. Methodologically, the thesis combines historical analysis with qualitative insights drawn from archival research and interviews with museum staff. The study concludes that the lasting image of Het Schip stems not only from its architectural richness but also from its social legacy. As a testament to the values of dignity, collectivity, and artistic ambition in public housing, Het Schip can be seen as an example for contemporary social housing projects on the future of socially responsible design.

Introduction

The Amsterdam School, an architectural movement that flourished in the early 20th century in Amsterdam, has been the subject of both admiration and critique. Its rich ornamentation, expressive forms, and emphasis on social housing set it apart from other contemporary movements, particularly De Stijl and functionalism. Michel de Klerk's Spaarndammerplantsoen block 3, more commonly known as Het Schip, stands as one of the most iconic examples of this movement, embodying both its artistic ambitions and its social democratic ideals. The block's main function is a residential social housing block. Initially it also served partly as a post office and school building, which later transformed into a museum.

Over time, perceptions of Het Schip have evolved, shaped by changing architectural discourses, social positions and restoration efforts. This thesis investigates how different stakeholders—including architects, critics, residents, the public and policymakers—have interpreted Het Schip from its completion to the present day, focusing on the shifting discourse surrounding its architectural and social significance. The central research question guiding this thesis is: *How has the perception and appreciation of Het Schip changed over time, and what factors have influenced these shifts?* The research is structured around four main themes: the architectural and theoretical debates surrounding the Amsterdam School, the social reception of Het Schip among its residents and critics, the impact of restoration efforts on its evolving status as a national monument, and the image that Het Schip stands for.

In order to contextualize this research within the existing academic discourse, this thesis builds upon several key works. Vladimir Stissi's *Amsterdam (2007), the mecca of public housing: social housing* describes the main characters (architects and administrators) and their ideas, as well as the administrative, intellectual and architectural climate in which the complex was created. Arie Keppler writes about Amsterdam's housing policy during the early 20th century. In his work *Gemeentelijke woningbouw (1913)*, he often addressed the intersection of architecture, social policy, and urban development, where he advocated innovative housing solutions that catered to the needs of the working class, emphasizing the importance of integrating aesthetic considerations with functionality. Nancy Stieber, an American historian, has also written about the Amsterdam School and its role in early 20th-century urban and social housing developments during the late nineties. She explains the concept of pillarization as a lens to explain why Amsterdam's built environment is so diverse, with contrasting architectural styles coexisting in different districts. She shows how housing projects like Het Schip were not just architectural statements but also reflections of the political and ideological struggles of the time. Wim de Wit's work *The Amsterdam school; Dutch expressionist architecture (1983)*, featuring also Maristella Casciato and Helen Searing delves into the social, political, and economic contexts that influenced the architects of the Amsterdam School and

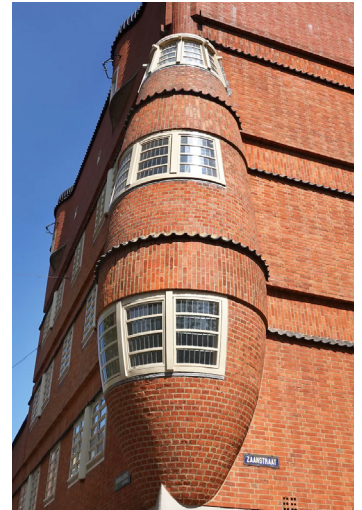


Figure 1. Curved brickwork (Van Dam, 2022)

focuses on Michel de Klerk's ambitions with Het Schip. *A Work of Art in Brick* (2018) contains a great collection of histories and controversies concerning Het Schip, where the genesis and life cycle of the building are brought into focus by several important architects, critics and policy makers. It gives a few insights into the lived experience of the residents and describes in great detail how the renovations and restorations were performed and the challenges that were faced along the way. Suzanne Frank has described how residents perceived Het Schip moving in after the completion in her book *Michel de Klerk's Design for Amsterdam's Spaarndammerbuurt (1914-1920)* (1971).

While previous academic attention has been paid to the architectural qualities and historical context of the Amsterdam School, and to Het Schip in particular, much of it has focused either on its stylistic contributions or on isolated aspects such as urban planning or preservation practices. However, there is still no clear overview into how the building's perception and appreciation have evolved over time, especially from the perspectives of different stakeholders such as residents, policymakers, and the broader public. This gap is particularly relevant in light of ongoing debates about the role of beauty, identity, and collectivity in contemporary social housing. By examining the shifting narratives and lived experiences surrounding Het Schip across multiple time periods, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of how architectural heritage interacts with social and cultural change.

Methodologically, this research employs a combination of historical analysis and qualitative study. Additionally, interviews with staff and the founder at Museum Het Schip provide insight into the building's history and how restoration has influenced public and institutional narratives. This interdisciplinary approach, integrating architectural history, social perspectives, and preservation studies, will allow for a nuanced understanding of Het Schip's evolving significance.

The structure of this thesis is built out of four chapters. Chapter 1 is historical background for the Amsterdam School and its theory, situating Het Schip within the larger architectural context and sociopolitical climate in Amsterdam. Chapter 2 is the analysis of the early reception of Het Schip, taking into account the initial criticisms and controversies surrounding its design and functionality. It traces the social feelings of residents and critics through time and explains how people's appreciation towards the building has evolved as a reaction to architectural and societal development. Chapter 3 explores how the effect that renovation and restoration efforts have had on the perceptions and the submissive role that Het Schip had to take up. Chapter 4 describes what Het Schip stands for and what the strength of its image is. Lastly, the conclusion pulls all the expansive findings together, and gives a clear answer to the research question, suggesting taking Het Schip as an example for modern design of social housing.



Figure 2
Het Schip from Hembrugstraat. From Collectie Stadsarchief Amsterdam:album,
by C. Schorteldoek 1990. Stadsarchief Amsterdam

C1 Het Schip in its sociopolitical and historical context

1.1 History and ideals of the Amsterdam School

The Amsterdam School style emerged as an architectural movement in the early 20th century, deeply rooted in the socio-political climate of the Netherlands (Stieber, 1998). It was influenced by the social democratic ideals that sought to improve the living conditions of the working class through artful and dignified housing. The movement can be seen as a reaction to the rationalism of architects like H.P. Berlage, who advocated for functionalism and structural integrity without excessive ornamentation.

The rise of the Amsterdam School was facilitated by the *Woningwet* (Housing Act) of 1901, which allowed municipalities to finance and oversee social housing projects (Casciato, 1996). This legal system enabled architects to experiment with designs that went beyond mere functionality, incorporating expressive and artistic elements into working-class housing. Essentially, the Amsterdam School attempted to create an integrated piece of art through urban design, architecture, and interior design. The movement was popularized because of its clear brickwork, curved forms, and elaborate ornamentation (Heijdra & Roegholt, 2023). It went beyond aesthetics; it was a manifestation of social democratic ideologies as embodied in architecture. The architects thought that decently designed housing for workers would raise their social standing and improve their standard of living (Van Diemen et al., 2018). Michel de Klerk, the movement's leading figure and the architect of Het Schip, was a firm social democrat and famously thought that workers deserved 'palaces' after decades of unsatisfying living (Heijdra & Roegholt, 2023).

The style received a lot of allure for its beauty and design principles internationally, where it was often seen as an urban form (Van Diemen et al., 2018). The three blocks at the Spaarndammerplantsoen of which Het Schip was the third, were designed as cohesive, sculptural urban environments, giving them the appearance of an urban form rather than an individual architectural style. Countries that were interested in solutions for social housing projects during the 1920s, saw Het Schip as an example. From Italy, it was M. Casciato who often brought her students to Het Schip to show how the Dutch designed their social housing. B. Taut spread the inspiration he took up further to Germany. The Amsterdam School even reached Japan; S. Horiguchi was moved by the design of Het Schip after a visit in 1923 and published a book about the style and inspired fellow Japanese architects (Roegholt, 2025).



Figure 3. Michel de Klerk 1915.
Photograph: Nieuwe Instituut



Figure 4. *Sien-so*, by architect Sutemi Horiguchi Japan (1926). Source: Collection Horiguchi Architecture Archives

1.2 Society and politics in Amsterdam influencing the Amsterdam School

One of the defining features of Amsterdam's urban and architectural growth during the early 20th century was pillarization (*verzuiling*), a sociopolitical system where Dutch society was divided on ideological and religious grounds. Housing associations were founded and categorized according to the pillars. The pillarization effect ensured that the social housing scene of Amsterdam was competitive to show that their ideals created the best and most valued housing complexes for the people (Stissi, 2007). Het Schip was designed for housing association Eigen Haard, which was part of the social democratic pillar.

Despite the challenge of a divided society due to pillarization, the Amsterdam School thrived within the social democratic pillar, supported by director of the Housing Authority, Arie Keppler (1876-1941), who supervised all the activities of the housing associations and was capable of breaking the conventions of bourgeois taste and give the city new energy in a collective spirit (Stieber, 1998). The municipality's vision extended beyond providing shelter; it sought to create holistic communities where workers could live with dignity (Smit, 2001). Het Schip is an example of how architectural beauty and craftsmanship combined with high quality apartments was used as a symbol for the socialist pillar to strive for social betterment. The city's aesthetic committee, dominated by young architects from the Amsterdam School, influenced the approval of housing designs, ensuring that municipal projects corresponded to the movement's artistic and social ideals (Stieber, 1998).

After the death of de Klerk in 1923, it was said that the movement lost its soul. Economic conditions in the 1930s led to a more cautious subsidy policy and an emphasis on cost-saving in social housing projects (Beekers, 2012). The period of the *gesamtkunstwerk* for the Amsterdam School, which was also the strength in the image of Het Schip, was over.¹

¹Gesamtkunstwerk (German for "total work of art") refers to the integration of architecture, interior design, and decorative arts into a unified aesthetic vision. In the Amsterdam School, this concept was central—buildings were conceived holistically, with custom furniture, stained glass, and wrought iron designed to complement the expressive brickwork and sculptural forms.

C2 Appreciation and criticism

2.1 Debates between the critics: expressionism vs. modernism

De Klerk's work was often valued by architects and critics during his period, including W. Kromhout, who referred to Het Schip as mix of architectural and urban constituents which was admired during the 1920s (Heijdra & Roegholt, 2023). *De Telegraaf*, H. Hoste (1916) stated that De Klerk had gone beyond the boundary of urban design and architecture, where he had brought urban design to a new type of collective art. In spatial art in architecture, the interior space was the basis on which the building was created, with design evolving in an inside-out manner. The appreciation was mostly worded around the strength of the *gesamtkunstwerk* and the rich ornamentation which was seen as a form of collective art. This expressive and decorative style also drew skepticism.

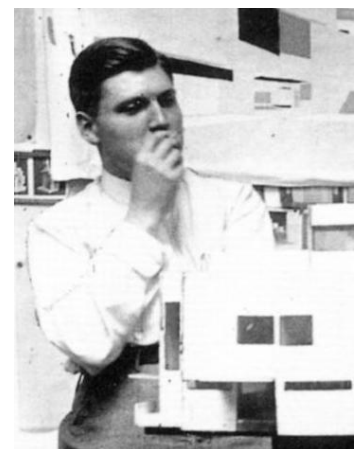
Other critics criticized Amsterdam School architects for taking more time to design imaginative facades and at the expense of effective elements of domestic architecture. The perception that the worker was entitled not only to a housing space, but “palaces” was overridden by people interested in functional as opposed to artistic potential. The 1920s and 1930s saw an intensifying debate between proponents of the Amsterdam School and advocates of modernist functionalism.

Critics were architects like J.F. Staal, who in 1925 asked whether architecture could continue to be a form of collective art in a world increasingly dominated by industrialization and mass media (Van Diemen et al., 2018). H.P. Berlage argued that architecture should prioritize plasticism and structural clarity, whereas De Klerk and his followers emphasized stylistic expression and craftsmanship. The emergence of CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) and the rise of functionalist ideals led to a decline in appreciation for the Amsterdam School's decorative approach (Stieber, 1998). By the mid-20th century, modernist critics like Bruno Zevi condemned the movement's 'ambivalent pragmatism,' arguing that it disrupted the unity of the modernist movement (Casciato, 1996).

2.2 Arrival of the modernist ideals

During the 1930s economic recession, contractors such as van Staaij were searching for cheaper ways of construction, so they decided to make all the floorplans equal. This resulted in the Amsterdam School movement being accused of *schortjesarchitectuur*, a term used to criticize the architects for only designing the facades. They no longer were able—or, more accurately, allowed—to connect the outside to the inside and make the architecture an integrated masterpiece (Roegholt, 2025). The arrival of Het Nieuwe Bouwen with proponents like Van Eesteren (1897-1988), who was the head urban planner at the municipality of Amsterdam, visioned modern urban planning for the city with the principles 'light, air and space.'² He criticized the Amsterdam

Figure 5. Cornelis van Eesteren.
Source: Wikipedia



²Het Nieuwe Bouwen ('The New Way of Building') was a Dutch modernist architectural movement of the 1920s–1930s, emphasizing functionality, transparency, and the use of new materials like concrete, steel, and glass. It stood in contrast to the expressive ornamentation of the Amsterdam School.

School buildings even more for not applying these principles. The buildings were described as ‘dark’ for having little windows. However, these windows weren’t small, they were just subdivided. By advocating his opinion, the residents started to believe in what he said and be less satisfied with their apartments. Another proponent was J.J.P Oud, who claimed that architecture shouldn’t be decorative and social housing surely should be affordable. The appreciation for the Amsterdam School, as well as Het Schip had strongly declined.



Figure 6. Het Schip subdivided window (Van Geffen-Lammers, n.d., as cited in Van Diemen et al., 2018).

2.3 Het Schip and its residents

The complex was a Valhalla for the workers that were used to the very bad housing conditions before the initiation of the Woningwet. All of a sudden they were offered a spacious apartment with light inside and brick walls, which was a huge difference to the previous slums. The residents of Het Schip have expressed deep appreciation for the building, often describing it as more than just a place to live, but as an inspiring and uplifting environment. Some early residents were enchanted by its fairy-tale-like appearance, particularly in the moonlight, reinforcing a sense of pride and wonder in their surroundings. Others emphasized the joy of returning home to a space built not just for function, but for beauty and homely happiness (Van Diemen et al., 2018). Despite initial hesitations about the modern design—such as brighter interiors and increased ventilation—many residents grew to appreciate the high-quality features, distinctive architecture, and sense of community created by the design.

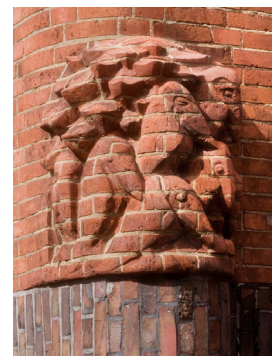


Figure 7. Het Schip subdivided window (Wansing, 2018).

The various and creative ornamentations in brickwork, stone and wood show references to things that people knew. Even the shape of the block itself; a Ship, to which it has to thank its name, referred to the harbor close by

(Roegholt, 2025). All these elements contributed to recognition and character in the complex.

Today, new residents receive guidelines on maintaining the building's monumental values, highlighting a renewed appreciation for its historical significance. Current residents still quote what the early residents mentioned. The feeling of living in a space that is designed for you, from a perspective of dignity and quality, makes for a homely feeling and a connection to the place. Various residents have said to keep discovering new things within their own building complex that they lived in for years. It does not bore (Ruijvekamp, 2015).



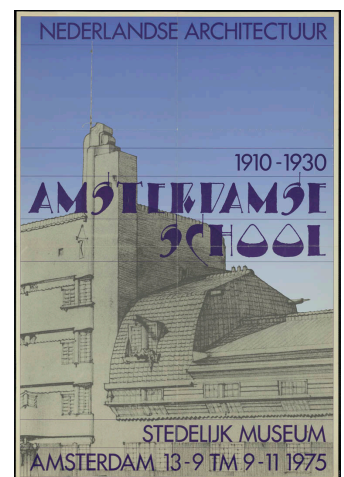
Figure 8. Windmill ornamentation (2015). Wendingen.

2.4 Revival of public appreciation: The discovery of de Klerk's archive

An important instance that helped revive interest in the Amsterdam School was the discovery of Michel de Klerk's drawings and sketches. De Klerk was of Jewish descent, as was his wife (Bock, Johannisse & Stissi, 1997). During World War II, his wife Lea, who owned a large archive of his drawings and building plans after her husband's death, was concerned that they might be seized or destroyed by the Germans. She sold the drawings to the Academy of Architecture and they hid them in the Muiderpoort (Het Nieuwe Instituut, z.d.). Sadly, she and their son Edo were subsequently deported and killed in a concentration camp. Their eldest son Joost survived.

The sketches weren't rediscovered until 1970. It marked a boost in the appreciation of the architectural heritage of the Amsterdam School and Het Schip. The discovery of the sketches opened to students, architects, and historians a significant window on the aesthetic and technical qualities of the movement. The rediscovery had an important contribution towards the new academic and public enthusiasm about the Amsterdam School and Het Schip.

In order to further spread the enthusiasm, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam organized a dedicated exhibition on the Amsterdam School in 1975. Archival correspondence from that period indicates that public interest in the exhibition was unexpectedly high, leading to an extension of its duration (de Wilde, 1975). The widespread attention the exhibition received couldn't match the growing recognition of the movement's importance in architectural history. The discovery of the original documents and drawings, further facilitated the academic and cultural reassessment of iconic Amsterdam School buildings, including Het Schip.



Efforts to institutionalize the legacy of the Amsterdam School started with the establishment of Museum Het Schip, in the former post office space of the complex, which later also included the old school building. Founded by

Figure 9. Exhibition poster Amsterdamse School in Stedelijk Museum 1975 featuring Het Schip (Crouwel, 1975)

Alice Roegholt in 2001, the museum has since evolved into a major cultural institution, attracting a steady stream of Dutch and international visitors. Beyond preserving the architectural and artistic legacy of the Amsterdam School, the museum plays an important role in sharing knowledge through exhibitions, research initiatives and media outreach. It remains a key tool for the ongoing study and promotion of one of the most distinctive architectural movements of the early 20th century in Europe.

C3 Het Schip as submissive towards the changing societal norms

3.1 Early renovations and the impact of societal changes

Het Schip has been subject to evolving societal norms that have directly influenced its renovations and preservation efforts. Over the decades, shifting views on social housing, monument conservation, and modern living standards have shaped the way Het Schip has been maintained and restored. The initial decades after Het Schip's construction (1921-1952) saw modifications as a response to functional needs rather than by efforts to preserve its architectural integrity (Van Diemen et al., 2018). As social housing standards evolved, modifications were made to improve the building's durability and to fit modern expectations. However, during these years, there was little official recognition of Het Schip's monumental value, leading to inconsistent and sometimes detrimental interventions. The perception of Het Schip was still shifting from merely a functional housing block to an architectural masterpiece worth preserving.

3.2 The 1980s renovations: Functional needs vs. Historical preservation

The renovations and restoration efforts between 1979 and 1980 have an infamous reputation. While the complex was made a national monument in 1974, the prevailing restoration philosophy during that time called for functional renewal at the cost of historical accuracy. Even though it had the monument status, there wasn't the awareness around the importance of correct restoration, nor proper research done and there was no sufficient budget to do it right (Roegholt, 2025). The renovations focused to bring the building interiors up to the level of modern social housing but did so at the cost of much of the original detail. Due to these events the renovations later got a reputation that it did not deserve. For that time period, they tried the best they could for the knowledge and resources that were available. Even one major catastrophic adjustment was prevented. There was a plan to destroy the iconic tower, since there was not enough money to restore it. Luckily, J. Schaefer, alderman in Amsterdam, was able to save it from destruction by taking it out of the art budget.

One of the significant modifications made, were the remodeling of apartments; 102 units were condensed into 83, combining smaller apartments into larger ones to satisfy new housing requirements. This was necessary since it was no longer the standard in society to live in a family setting. There were also living spaces need for individuals or couples (Huisman, Cieraard & Gaillard, 2000). Additionally, all the original interior elements were removed, including fixtures, doors, and partition walls. Connected to the social democratic ideals was that architects wanted to shape the way the workers lived inside of their house. They were able to have influence through their designs; the kitchens were deliberately designed to discourage prolonged use as living spaces, reflecting the architects' ideas about proper domestic life. While some residents embraced this, others struggled to adapt, leading to mixed initial reactions.

All these modifications were consistent with the general 1980s trend towards giving comfort and efficiency priority over historical integrity. Although the building continued to be a social housing complex, the changes signified a shift from the ideological and artistic ideal of the Amsterdam School toward a more pragmatic vision of housing. People no longer wanted to be told how they should live inside of their homes and wanted to pick their own furniture. The most criticized aspect of the 1980s renovations, however, was the restoration of the exterior. The application of incorrectly colored bricks and inappropriate mixes of mortar ended up disrupting Het Schip's visual coherence (Van Diemen et al., 2018). These mistakes had been made by lack of proper historical research and putting cost-cutting measures ahead of accuracy. Subsequently, the 1980s renovations would come under fire as a sweeping departure from Het Schip's original artistic cohesion.

3.3 The 2017 restoration: A shift towards historical authenticity

By the beginning of the 21st century, there was greater recognition of the requirement for historically accurate restorations. The 2017 restoration brought change in Het Schip's preservation, with a shift in the broader culture towards preserving architectural heritage in a manner respectful of its original use and meaning. The philosophy of this restoration was correcting the mistakes of the 1980s but balancing historical correctness and contemporary standards of living.

The restoration team used a method based on research that went in-depth into historical documents, original materials, and restoration building methods (Kappers, L. & Schlotter, A., 2015). This philosophy was closer to a restoration



Figure 10. Restoration with wrong bricks. From Collectie Bureau Monumentenzorg: negatiefvellen, by H. van Gool 1990. Stadsarchief Amsterdam

philosophy like that of Viollet-le-Duc, who felt one should restore a building to what it was originally meant to be, not just preserve later modifications.

On the interior, the restoration aimed find the correct balance to respect the historic integrity of the apartments without compromising on modern comfort. An important reason for that is the change of the societal values revolving sustainability. While the original apartments lacked modern insulation and heating systems, contemporary restoration efforts aimed to integrate sustainable solutions without compromising the building's historical integrity (Van Diemen et al., 2018). This reflects a broader change in the understanding of heritage conservation, where adaptation to modern needs is seen as a necessity rather than a compromise.

C4 Changing image of Het Schip

4.1 Het Schip as a Symbol of the Working Class and Socialism

Het Schip being owned by social democratic housing association Eigen Haard, housed mind-like residents that were member of the association. This meant that the feeling of a community was stronger, since it was known that all the neighbors share the same values. The communal aspects strengthened social bonds, making Het Schip not just a collection of residences, but a vibrant, cohesive neighborhood. The role of 'communal art' played an important role to make residents feel like a respected individual within a framework of mind-like residents. De Klerk designed dozens of ornaments, each being different from each other. This shaped the individuals' connection to their home, with each having an own piece of art to admire and recognize (de Wit, 1983). A resident expressed in 1923 that it is a wonderful feeling to come home into a joyful and homely atmosphere after a long day at work (Frank, 1971). This sentiment highlights how, beyond its architectural significance, Het Schip has served as a cherished and emotionally meaningful home for its residents.

A notable change is the evolving perception of social housing itself. The original purpose of Het Schip was to provide high-quality housing for low-income workers, embodying socialist ideals of dignity and beauty for all. Today, however, the 'worker' is no longer there. The residents no longer need to be part of a housing association in order to get a house. Yet, the main purpose for what the building was designed; creating a socially uplifting environment for the less affluent, is still the same. People visiting Het Schip nowadays are often surprised to know that it is built to be social housing and still is today. The image of Het Schip is so strong since it still serves its main purpose. If the complex would have been sold to the free market, it would have lost its value (Roegholt, 2025).

4.2 Image of Craftsmanship and Artistic Integrity

Het Schip has always been regarded as a masterpiece of craftsmanship, distinguishing itself from mass-produced social housing projects of later decades. De Klerk was deeply invested in materiality, paying meticulous attention to brickwork, mortar composition, and decorative elements. The Amsterdam School, in general, prioritized artisanal techniques over industrial standardization, which later became a defining characteristic of its architectural language (de Wit, 1983).

We have seen that this emphasis on craftsmanship was a major point of contention in architectural discourse, where proponents said the handcrafted details were essential in elevating working-class housing into an art form, but opponents claimed it disrupted the unity of the modernist movement.

In contemporary discourse, the image of Het Schip as a pinnacle of craftsmanship has been revived. The recent restoration efforts have further highlighted the building's artisanal qualities, ensuring that new interventions respect its original materiality. This renewed focus aligns with broader architectural trends that seek to reintegrate craft into modern design, countering decades of industrialized construction practices. In 2019, after the renovation of the complex was completed, it was awarded the Amsterdamse Nieuwbouwprijs (Amsterdam New Construction Prize) for its excellent restoration efforts (AmsterdamWoont, 2019).

4.3 Contemporary Image

In recent years, Het Schip has come to be appreciated not just as an architectural monument but as a symbol of collectivity and the enduring importance of beauty in social housing. As urban developments increasingly prioritize efficiency and density, Het Schip serves as a counterpoint, demonstrating that housing can be both functional and aesthetically enriching. Beyond purely its artistic conception, beauty can be functional in a way that it serves as a cohesion force between the residents and the building but also between residents themselves.

The notion of communal art, central to the Amsterdam School, has gained new relevance in contemporary urban discourse. Public interest in collective living models, sustainable urban planning, and neighborhood identity that are rising themes in contemporary housing projects, has led to a renewed appreciation of Het Schip's design principles. The complex's central meeting house, shared courtyards, and sculptural elements all reinforce a sense of community, aligning with modern discussions on urban inclusivity and social cohesion.

Furthermore, the beauty of Het Schip has remained an integral part of its identity. Its distinctive form, expressive brickwork, and dynamic facades continue to captivate architects and urban planners worldwide. The magic behind the design of Het Schip is that it speaks to everyone's imagination. Art can be interpreted in many different ways.

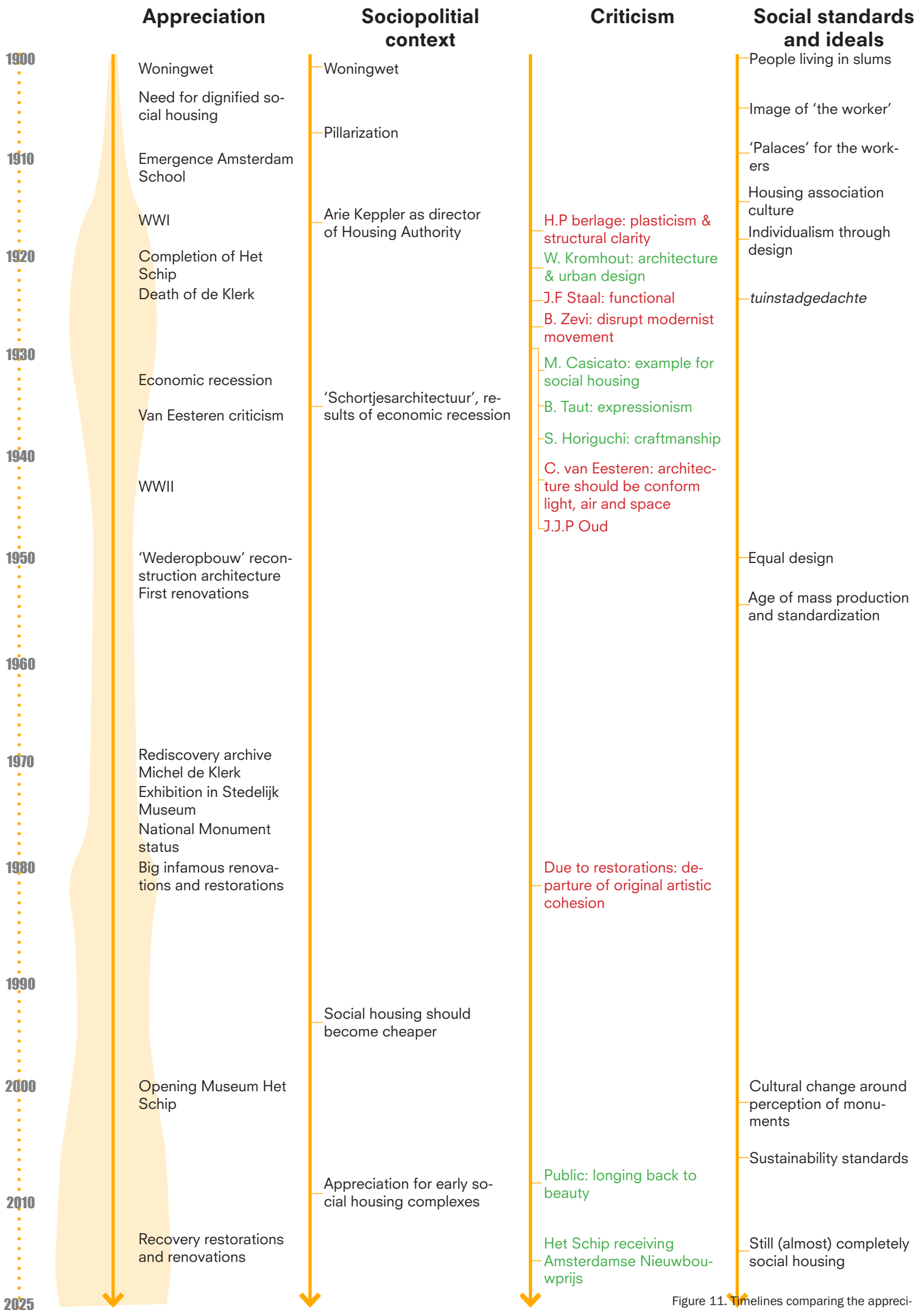


Figure 11. Timelines comparing the appreciation, sociopolitical context, criticism, social standard & ideals. Created by the Author

Conclusion

By analyzing the causes of change of different perceptions and the evolution of appreciation for Het Schip, this thesis has revealed a deeper understanding of how architectural meaning is constructed and reconstructed over time. For a clear overview of time and instances, figure 11 can be of help. It has shown how many different factors are connected to each other and shape these perceptions. Socio-political climates, social standards and ideals are responsible for having major impact on the perceptions and appreciation. Beauty and craftsmanship have always been properties for what Het Schip has been valued for and is strongly part of its image. Everybody knows about the curvy brickwork and splendid details. However, the strength of the image is thanks to its function as a social housing complex.

It is because of its beauty, Het Schip received a lot of allure, already early on. Proponents of the architecture were mostly coming from abroad, where they found inspiration for the design of social housing and the craftsmanship for details by visiting Het Schip. Opponents gave criticism for deviating from the modernist movement. There was a clear difference between the Dutch and the international perspectives. Nonetheless, if it had to rely solely on its beauty, the appreciation for the building would not have been the same. In order to secure the strong image Het Schip has today, Arie Keppler had a prominent position where he strongly stood up for socialist ideals within social housing. Together with an aesthetic committee comprised of Amsterdam school architects, this assured popularity and a strong increase of more buildings following their ideals. The importance of publicity came clear once again in the '70s, when the rediscovery of the archive of de Klerk led to exhibitions, subsequently leading to more recognition and appreciation. Museum Het Schip also has great contribution to contemporary recognition, being responsible for spreading a lot of knowledge around Het Schip and the Amsterdam School.

A functional monument will always be submissive towards its changing environment and age. Criticism coming from van Eesteren convinced residents their apartments lacked quality and thus being less satisfied. Renovations, which were the results of the need for more modern housing spaces connected to legislation and society standards, led to various changes in perceptions, good and bad. Appreciation gets a setback when it is noticed that the building's original status has been violated. On the other hand, Het Schip was also praised a lot after its reconstructive restorations in 2017. Restoration efforts are now part of the perception and the total image of Het Schip.

In contrast to the prevailing modernist ethos of minimalism, Het Schip stands as a testament to the idea that architecture can be both socially responsible and artistically ambitious. Changes in society have set a new standard for efficiency and taken away the opportunities to design artful buildings, specifically social housing. There is much complaint about everything seeming 'the same' and

we have all once heard or said ‘why can’t we just design beautiful buildings again.’ We are searching to find individualism and recognition within the larger building, to feel connected and at home. This is what de Klerk understood very well when designing Het Schip. It was a complex for mind-like social democrats, but he treated them as individuals. Floorplans were different, details not the same, various shapes of windows. Everyone had something for their own to be proud of. Perhaps we can translate the craftsmanship and beauty of Het Schip to a method that uses design as a tool to nurture individuals within a larger frame and connects them to a space. This method can be of inspiration for the design of modern day (social) housing projects, in order to create spaces that people feel connected to and have appreciation for.

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