Common Ground in Superdiversity

Enhancing public familiarity through urban design

Eva Geleynse I 2026

Colophon

Common Ground in Superdiversity

A3 report

Eva Geleynse | 5262291

The Neighborhood lab 2026

First mentor | Tess Broekmans

Second mentor | Reinout Kleinhans

Delegate from the board of examiners | Yawei Chen

TU Delft

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All images, diagrams, graphics are created by the author unless stated otherwise.

TU Delft
BK Bouwkunde

Personal motivation

My fascination lies in the everyday lives of residents and the social networks they create. I am particularly interested in how the design of public space can influence social connections and foster ‘public familiarity’. This is especially relevant in dynamic neighborhoods, where a diversity of lifestyles and cultural backgrounds meet. In these neighborhoods, the physical environment can either act as a barrier or as a catalyst for intercultural meetings. What drives me is the question how urban design can actively encourage these spontaneous encounters, strengthen the social fabric and bridge the gaps between different social groups.

This interest comes from the fact that I was raised in The Hague, where my circle of friends represented a wide range of cultures. Growing up, I was told that some neighborhoods were unsafe to walk or cycle through alone. This made me avoid some neighborhoods and made me uncomfortable visiting places there. I found it unfortunate that I had this barrier for myself, because the neighborhoods also have a lot to offer due to all the different cultures. An example is the Haagse Markt, one of the biggest markets of Europe, which I had never been to until I started this project. Through this research, I aim to challenge these personal boundaries and use my professional knowledge to investigate these perceived barriers.



Fig 1. Neighborhood where I grew up, produced by Makelaarskantoor Kimmel & Co B.V., 2025, edited by author



Fig 2. The Hague market

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I want to thank my first mentor, Tess Broekmans, for all the support she gave throughout this project. Whenever I thought things were impossible, she guided me through the challenges, always leaving me with new motivation and enthusiasm after our meetings. She also helped gratefully with creating a coherent story and letting me kill my darlings. I am also grateful for her help in shaping a coherent story and giving me the push I needed to ‘kill my darlings’.

Although we met less frequently, my second mentor, Reinout Kleinhans, also played a big role in getting the project to the level that it is currently at. He consistently asked the right questions to ensure I fully understood the terminology and the core of the project.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Tess Broekmans and Rients Dijkstra for the time and effort they put into guiding me and my fellow graduation students of the Neighborhood Lab. By organizing interesting cluster meetings, excursions and making it possible to visit various design firms throughout the process, they made this year incredibly valuable.

Additionally, I would like to thank my fellow students for the chance to brainstorm about each other’s projects, for all the pleasant coffee breaks, and above all, for making the last couple of years really enjoyable.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for believing in me and supporting me throughout these six years of studying, making it possible to finish my studies in such a great way.

Abstract

Keywords: Superdiversity, Public Familiarity, Urban Design, Spatial Interventions, Public Space, Schilderswijk

This research addresses the critical issue that superdiversity is often still treated as a threat to be managed, rather than an opportunity for improvement. To shift this perspective, this research asks: How can urban design interventions enhance public familiarity in a neighborhood with superdiversity? Through an iterative process of research by design, literature review, interviews, and site observation, this research explores how urban design can enhance the conditions to build public familiarity.

A framework of five principles is established: Mixed-Use, Routine Integration, Lifecycle-Proof, Inviting, and Sense of Ownership. First, integrating ‘mixed-use’, ‘routine integration’, and ‘lifecycle-proof’ design creates reasons to go outside, establishes intuitive pedestrian flows, and ensures a cross-generational human presence. Second, ‘inviting’ and ‘sense of ownership’ actively encourage people to linger. These principles build public familiarity by generating repeated encounters and encouraging prolonged stays.

These principles were translated into concrete spatial interventions within the specific context of the Schilderswijk, applied across three scales: the ensemble, the pocket, and the district. This research shows that all five spatial principles are essential by successfully balancing movement and lingering across the three scales. Certain spatial interventions influence multiple principles across different scales, while other interventions are strictly necessary to fulfill a principle at one specific scale. A fundamental catalyst for this transformation is reducing car dominance to free up public space, which must then be designed with a delicate balance of physical openness and programmatic clarity. In conclusion, this research demonstrates that by designing across three spatial scales using the five principles of public familiarity, the well-being of a superdiverse neighborhood like the Schilderswijk can be significantly improved.

In a political climate marked by budget constraints and a lack of political will for large-scale reconstruction, this research offers a strategy of small-scale, gradual interventions. Finally, this research demonstrates that by moving away from threat-based management, urban design can effectively utilize this framework to unlock the true social value of superdiverse communities.

Table of contents

Personal motivation 4

Acknowledgements 6

Abstract 8

Introduction 12

1 Context 14

Location choice 16
Migration and the urban renewal 18
Consequences of superdiversity 20
Problem Statement 22

2 Approach 24

Public familiarity 26
The role of urbanism 27
Methodology 28
Ethical reflection 30
AI usage statement 31

3 Framework of five principles 32

Mixed use 34
Routine integration 36
Lifecycle-proof 38
Inviting 40
Sense of ownership 42
Conclusion 44

4 Design 46

Different sales of public space 48
Public spaces in the Schilderswijk 50
Stakeholders 51

Ensemble 52

Current situation 54
Participation process 56
Option 1 57
Option 2 60
Conclusion 62

Pocket 66

Current situation 68
Design floorplan 70
Street differentiation 72
New street profile 74
Preservation of historic buildings 76
New social function 78
Emphasizing the diagonal street 82
Appropriate places for lifecycles 84
Design of the corner with villa 86
Conclusion 90

District 94

Current situation 96
Five streets approach 98
Design floorplan 100
Functions shopping street 102
Street profile shopping street 104
Street profile gathering space 106
Conclusion 108

Conclusion of design 112

General interventions 114
Conclusion 116

5 Conclusion and discussion 118

Conclusion 120
Discussion 126
Personal reflection 130

6 References 134

7 Appendix 136

Introduction

Nowadays, many cities in Europe deal with increasing cultural and economic diversity, as urban centers become global hubs for migration (Uyterlinde et al., 2023). However, research shows that this rising diversity often leads to a decline in social cohesion in these cities (Aelbrecht, 2022 and Uyterlinde et al., 2023) Cities in the Netherlands are no exception, they are characterized by segregation and fragmented social communities. This lack of interaction between different groups has serious consequences: when residents stop meeting one another, it leads to less trust and understanding, lower levels of self-reliance and more loneliness (Mantingh et al., 2021).

The Hague is a city with a deep history in diversity, historically shaped by the physical distinction between sand and peat. Wealthier residents lived on the sandbanks, while poorer groups settled on the peat soils (RCE, 1994 and Kruythoff et al., 1997). Since the 1950s, this social landscape has expanded with a diversity in migration backgrounds. While migration was initially temporary, since the 1980s, immigrants began to settle permanently and bring their families (Jennissen et al., 2022 and Kruythoff et al., 1997). Today, migration still is a popular topic, as 59.2% of The Hague's population has a migration background (Cijfers in Den Haag, 2025).

This shows that The Hague is a city defined by superdiversity. This concept describes 'diversity within diversity', where neighborhoods are diverse across multiple levels, including background, religion, gender, age, language, and education (Uyterlinde et al., 2023 and Meissner et al., 2022). This superdiversity and social cohesion is mostly visible on the neighborhood level, where neighbors encounter each other in front gardens, apartment galleries or shopping streets. This is why this project focuses on a superdiverse neighborhood in the Hague, the Schilderswijk.

In this context, the concept of public familiarity offers a valuable lens. Jacobs (1961) argues that "sidewalk life" and its inherent safety bear directly on issues of segregation and discrimination. While not an automatic fix, designing without this lens makes it much harder to overcome these social problems (Jacobs,1961). Public familiarity focuses on fostering "light contacts" throughout the neighborhood, allowing residents to socially assess and recognize one another (Uyterlinde et al., 2023). This project aims to manifest public familiarity within the Schilderswijk by designing new urban interventions.



Fig 3. Social cohesion compared to the average for the Netherlands

01 Context

Location choice

The Schilderswijk is a notably superdiverse neighborhood, known for having the most nationalities in the Netherlands. As shown in figure 4, the area has a very high percentage of low-income households, and the neighborhood has been frequently reported in the newspapers about the problems that are occurring. These factors in combination with the convenient location near the city center and the train stations make it a very interesting case study for researching.

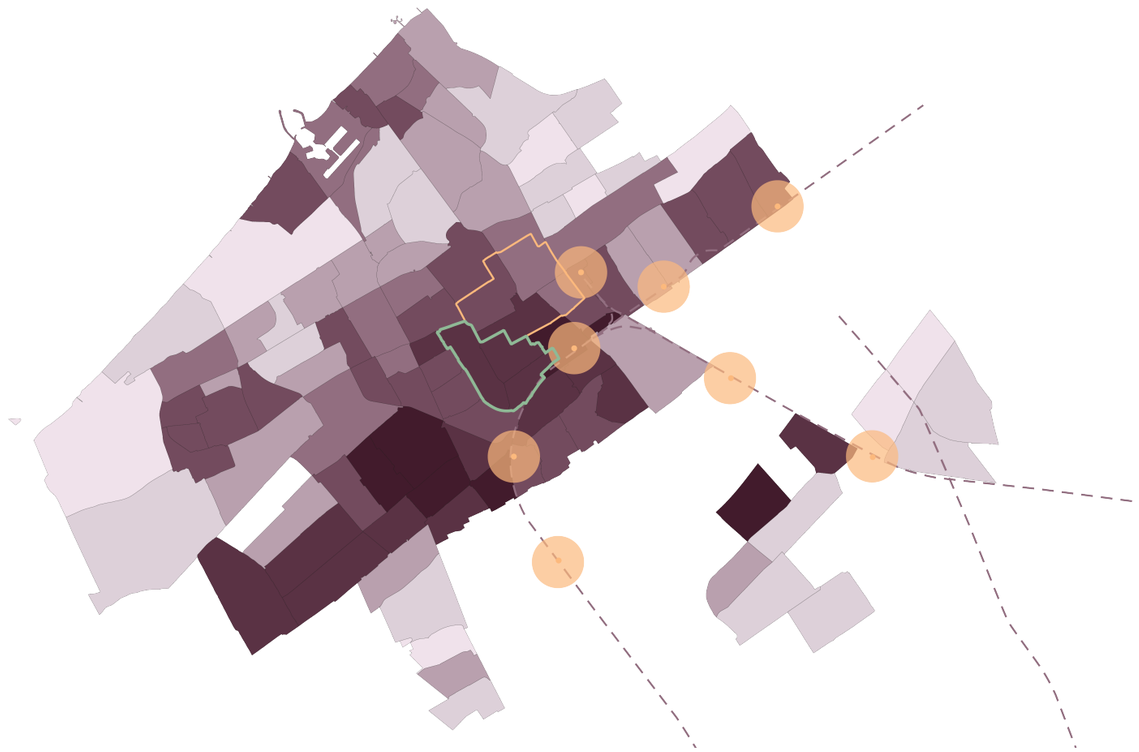


Fig 4. The Hague income, trainstations and location choice

Due to the scale of the Schilderswijk, analyzing the entire neighborhood exceeded the scope of this thesis. Therefore, a specific sub-area was strategically selected as a focus area. This section was chosen because a high concentration of diverse elements overlap, including a busy transit street, commercial shopping plinths, pocket parks, and a highly varied architectural fabric. This combination of characteristics makes it an interesting focus area.

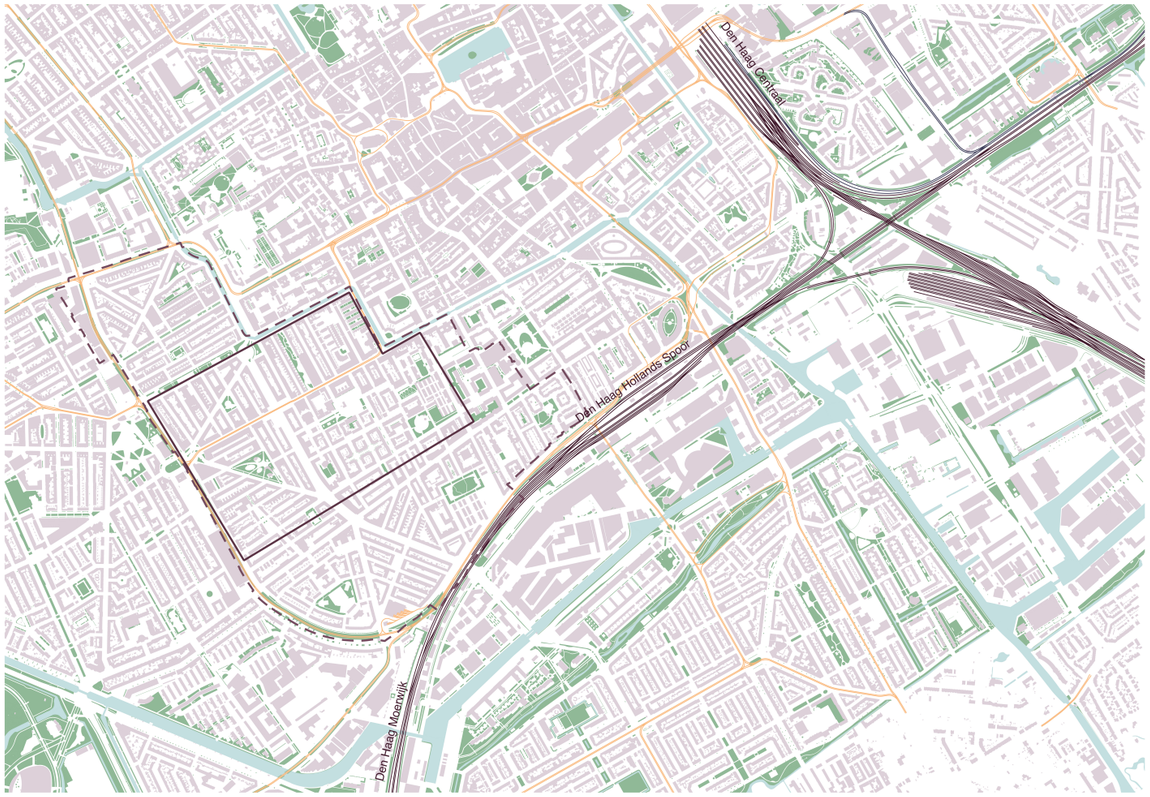


Fig 5. Location choice

Migration and urban renewal

Immigrants formerly came in large groups from specific locations, they nowadays come in smaller groups from all over the world (Jennissen et al., 2022). The immigrants can be categorized in four groups of migrants by their reason of moving: Postcolonial, labor, family or postindustrial reasons (Jennissen et al., 2022).

The built environment can be summarized into two eras: the building of the neighborhood and the urban renewal. This timeline reveals that previous urban planning has been done for an monocultured neighborhood instead of the already existing superdiverse neighborhood.

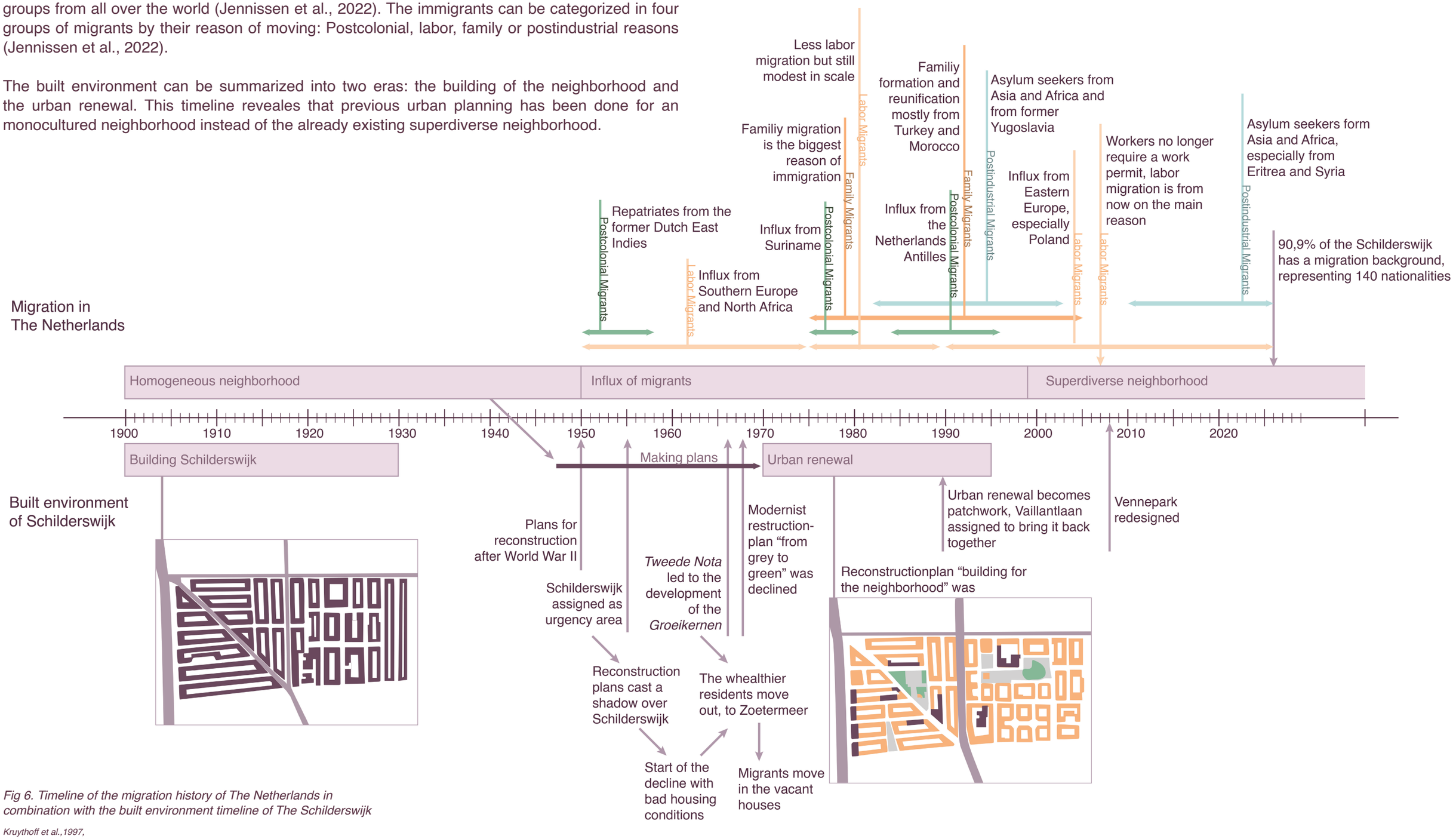


Fig 6. Timeline of the migration history of The Netherlands in combination with the built environment timeline of The Schilderswijk

Kruythoff et al.,1997,
Jennissen et al., 2022,
Reijndorp & Ravestein, 1996

More information on migration and the urban renewal in Appendix 1-5

Consequences of superdiversity

The Hague has a long history of diversity due to the landscape and migration, it is still a highly common topic, as discussed in the introduction. And where immigrants formerly came in large groups from specific locations, they nowadays come in smaller groups from all over the world (Jennissen et al.,2022). So, the background, religion, language, level of education, ages etc. is even more diverse than before (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023). The Hague can be called a superdiverse city. This superdiversity has different consequences, leading to threats and opportunities (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023 and Gemeente Den Haag, 2025).

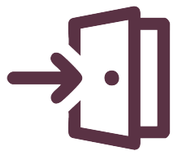
Threats



Less social cohesion

People feel less safe and connected a the neighborhood of superdiversity. There is less mutual trust.

Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023



Withdraw from public space

With superdiversity, people feel less trust and look for the people they already know and withdraw from public space. This results in less people on the streets, and makes it harder to buid up public familiarity.

Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023



Feelings of Loss

The immigrants have feelings of loss due to homesickness to their home country, however, at the same time, people who already live in the neighborhood see their neighborhood change and feel loss because the public facilities change, for example their favorite shop.

Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023



Shortterm stay

When people tend to stay for a shorter time in a neighborhood, it is more difficult to build up public familiarity in a neighborhood.

Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023
Gemeente Den Haag, 2025



Language barrier

When people have a different language, it is more difficult to understand them, and it is more diffiult to asses them.

Gemeente Den Haag, 2025
GGZ, 2026



Low chances for youth

Some children and youth grow up in a vulnarable environment, this means that they have to think about poverty, addiction, education at an early age, while they cannot rely on a social network.

Gemeente Den Haag, 2025

Oppertunities



Richer and more realistic understanding of society

Helps to reduce the ‘we / they’ thinking

By using the concept of superdiversity, it is shown as the reality and not as a problem. It offers a new perspective.

Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023
Meissner, F. et al., 2022



Strong communities and solidarity to each other

The immigrants search for people with the same culture and form strong communities, these can be used as a startingpoint to improve the public familiarity.

Gemeente Den Haag, 2025
Haag Wonen, 2026



People take a lot of initiative

A superdiverse neighborhood contains people that are willing to take a lot of initiative. This is very good starting point to improve the public familiarity.

Gemeente Den Haag, 2025
Haag Wonen, 2026

Problem statement

The municipal analysis indicates low levels of self-reliance among residents of The Schilderswijk, and low chances for youth in the neighborhood. The people also suffer with, for example, language deficits and low income (Municipality The Hague, 2025). In addition, the livability index classifies the overall quality of life in the neighborhood as weak and even parts insufficient (Leefbaarometer, 2025).

Historically, the neighborhood has struggled with these socio-economic issues for decades (Reijndorp & Ravestein, 1996). While the era of the Urban Renewal represented a major effort to address these challenges, the spatial interventions of that time were designed for a monocultural society. Since the 1980s, however, the reality of The Schilderswijk has been one of superdiversity. The persisting socio-economic problems demonstrate that the Urban Renewal project did not succeed in its attempt to combat segregation.

A critical issue is that this superdiversity often still is treated as a threat to be managed, rather than an opportunity for improvement. The challenge of this project is to shift this perspective by redesigning the neighborhood through urban interventions that embrace superdiversity as an asset, specifically by enhancing public familiarity to bridge the gaps between residents.

Research question

How can urban design interventions enhance the public familiarity in a neighborhood with superdiversity?

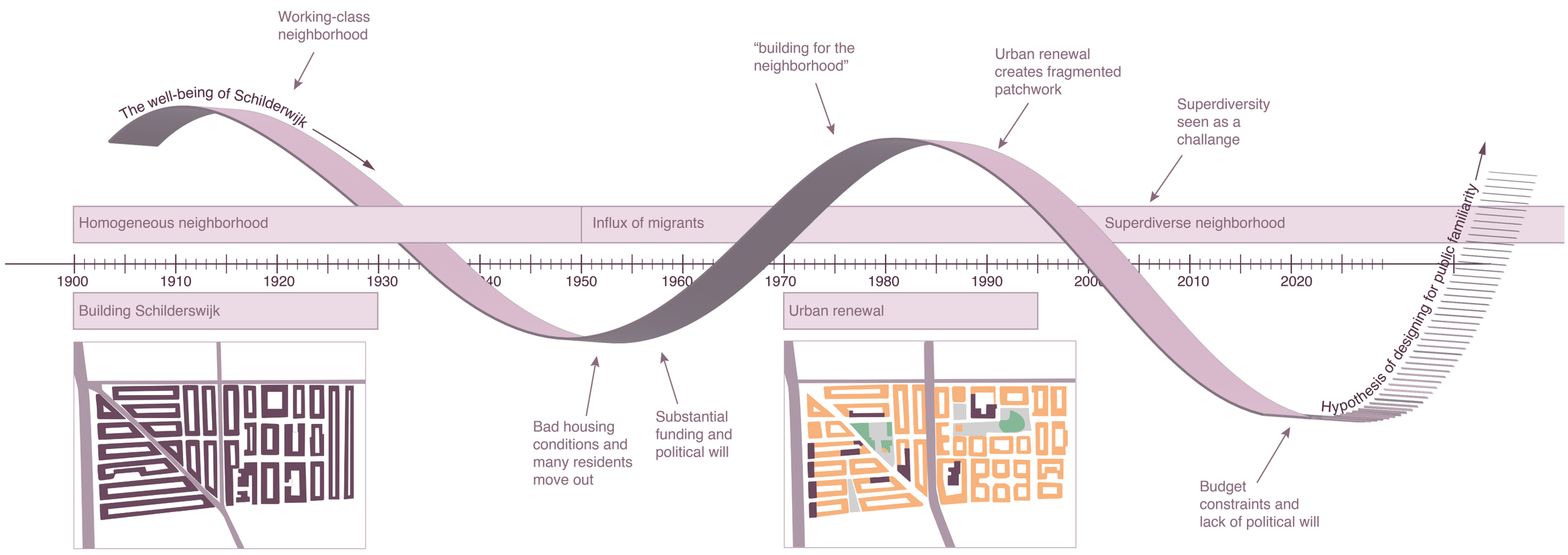


Fig 7. Context of hypothesis

02 Approach

Public familiarity

As stated in the introduction, this project will focus on public familiarity. This concept describes **light, repeating contacts in a neighborhood that residents build up within the built environment** (Uyterlinde et al, 2023). These ‘light contacts’ are the people in the neighborhood you see passing by; you may not necessarily know their names, but you recognize them and perceive their intentions as good.

This network of light contacts is what creates an ‘open city’. Such a city provides space for spontaneous markings, activities and grassroots initiatives from its residents (Sennett, 2017). High levels of public familiarity allow people to assess and recognize those around them, fostering a greater sense of security (Uyterlinde et al, 2023). While these encounters may seem negligible individuals; however, the sum of these moments create a network of respect and trust (Jacobs, 1961). It provides a foundation for good social cohesion (Mantingh et al., 2021). Jacobs (1961) argues that the sidewalk life and its safety bear directly on issues of segregation and racial discrimination. While not an automatic fix, designing without this lens makes it much harder to overcome these social problems (Jacobs, 1961).

In the context of the superdiverse city, looking through the lens of public familiarity is especially crucial. It offers the possibility to cross bridges between the already existing strong, often closed-off communities, as these light contacts in the neighborhood are not based on agreement and homogeneity (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023).

By focusing on this lens, design becomes inherently spatial, as spontaneous meetings to build up public familiarity are happening, for example in the streets, at building thresholds or at the supermarket (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023).

The role of urbanism

This chapter explains the role of urbanism through the framework of Crul and Lelie (2025). This framework identifies five mechanisms that influence the success of a superdiverse neighborhood. By looking at these mechanisms, it can be better understand how spatial design supports the daily practice of living together, giving a perspective of the role of urbanism.
The five mechanisms are defined as follows:

1. People with negative opinions about superdiversity often do not put this into practice in their daily lives. Out of self-protection and the desire to feel at home, they choose to act pragmatically, prioritizing shared functional goals and practical self-interest over ideology.

2. Even residents who are positive about diversity can experience a sense of uncertainty or discomfort about whether they truly belong when a neighborhood changes. Overcoming this threshold largely depends on individual agency and having low-threshold environments where different groups can naturally cross paths without pressure.

3. Connecting people creates a chain reaction. When individuals meet, they often involve others in the encounter, bringing together groups that otherwise would not have connected.

4. Public characters, such as primary school teachers, community leaders, or youth workers, are essential for guiding and positively influencing the practice of living together. These people have key roles in the neighborhood because of their ability to de-escalate conflicts, connect groups, and call people out on their behavior.

5. The layout and design of the built environment is crucial. It is the place where pleasant, small-scale and meaningful interethnic contact can actually take place.

For this research, the framework serves to define the exact scope of the spatial interventions. While the first four mechanisms focus strictly on the psychology, behavior, and social networks of the residents, it is the fifth mechanism, of the built environment, that defines the domain of the urban designer.

Therefore, the scope of this project is explicitly limited to the physical and spatial conditions of the neighborhood. Urbanism is presented here not as a standalone solution to all social challenges, but as a supporting layer that provides the physical canvas to facilitate these broader social processes.

Methodology

This research employs a multi-method approach to develop urban design interventions that enhance public familiarity in a superdiverse neighborhood. Rather than following a linear sequence, the methodology was conducted through an iterative process, where literature review, empirical fieldwork, and spatial design continuously informed and reshaped one another simultaneously.

Research by Design

This method played a key role in the research, as the study did not begin with a literature review followed by a design based solely on those results. Instead, design was employed as a research methodology from the very beginning. This methodology utilizes tools such as GIS data collection, spatial mapping, sketching, and 3D modeling. The combination of these elements makes it possible to visualize how theoretical concepts can be translated spatially, revealing new urban realities while encouraging out-of-the-box thinking. Ultimately, this method provided deep insights into how the five principles can be effectively materialized into spatial interventions.

Literature review

The literature review serves to establish the theoretical foundation of the research and outline existing knowledge on the topic. It analyzes the historical timeline of migration in relation to the urban structure of the Netherlands, mapping the arrival of specific demographic groups and their underlying reasons for immigration. This historical perspective is essential to comprehending the intersection of migration and superdiversity. Furthermore, this method identifies key spatial indicators that influence public familiarity, contributing to the formulation of the five core design principles. Sources were gathered across various time periods and from diverse media, including academic literature, articles, journals, and policy reports.

Site observation

On-site observations were conducted to analyze the specific empirical context of the Schilderswijk. Unstructured observations help to bridge the gap between theory and reality by analyzing how public spaces function in daily life. This method was crucial for mapping spatial characteristics, diagnosing structural strengths and weaknesses, and understanding urban pedestrian and cyclist flows within the study area. This contributed, together with literature review to the framework of five principles.

Interviews

Various qualitative interview methods were conducted to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and socio-spatial characteristics of the neighborhood. The interviews aimed to uncover how the public realm is currently utilized and to understand the everyday vision and needs of the residents.

Short Street Interviews: This method was utilized to gather spontaneous, first-hand perspectives directly from daily users and residents regarding their perceptions and experiences of the neighborhood.

Stakeholder Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were held with stakeholders, including representatives from the municipality, housing corporation ‘Haag Wonen’, community centers, and a Social Psychiatric Nurse. These stakeholders possess a macro-level view of the district and often represent the aggregated opinions of numerous residents. As active parties with different interests in the area, their insights provided valuable qualitative data for the research.

Walk-Along Interviews: This mobile interviewing method implies that there is a conversation while walking through the physical environment. Moving through the neighborhood allowed specific spatial conditions to trigger highly contextual discussion. This was conducted with the municipal urban designer, enabling the instant identification of real-life physical examples of the discussion.

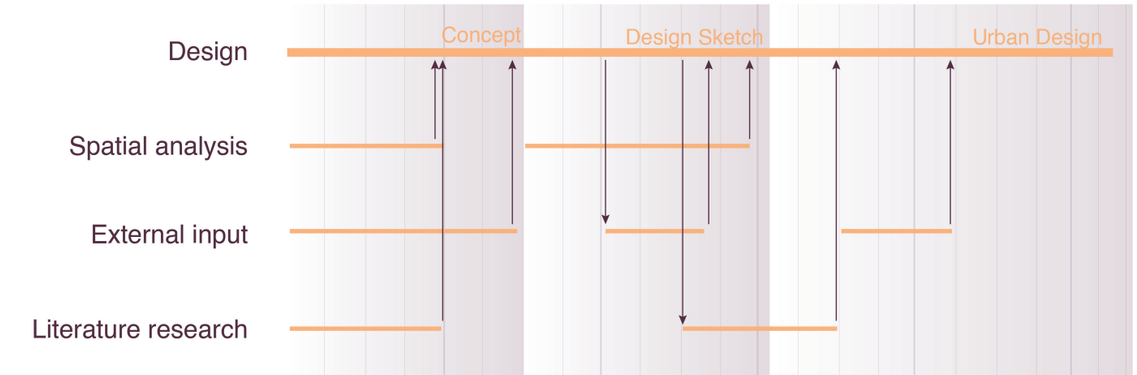


Fig 8. Iterative process of this research

More information on methods in Appendix 6

Ethical reflection

This research complies with the TU Delft's Guidelines on ethical standards. As the data used in this research is open data from the municipality or the government, these datasets are anonymous and reliable. The interviews are used to get an impression of the neighborhood and how residents experience it. Fieldwork observations aim for the same purpose; this method also allows a method without collecting sensitive data. Regarding the interviews and street conversations, no audio or video recordings was made; data is collected only through handwritten, anonymous notes. So, no name, address, age, background or other sensitive informative will be notated. As this is not needed to achieve the purpose. The questions that will be asked are about the surroundings, public space and the facilities of the neighborhood and no personal questions. While observing, the focus will be on how the space is used and not who the space is using.

Furthermore, as an urban designer, I recognize a degree of bias in my research, because my professional and personal background inevitably influence my analysis and design choices. Being born and raised in The Hague is both an advantage and a disadvantage. While my lifelong familiarity with the city provides deep contextual knowledge, growing up in a different neighborhood gives me a different lens than those who live within the Schilderswijk itself. To reduce this potential bias, I did street conversations and interviewed organizations who know a lot about the neighborhood, such as the municipality and housing corporation. By combining my observations with census data and the analysis of the municipality, the risk of subjective over-interpretation is minimized. Lastly, by meeting up with my mentors and peer students every week, the risk of having a tunnel vision is also being reduced, as they can kept me objective and on track.

AI usage statement

Throughout this project, artificial intelligence (AI) was used for several different purposes. First, ChatGPT was used to generate two scene impressions, offering a fast visualization of design interventions. This process involved using original photographs taken by the author as base images, accompanied by specific prompts, for instance, requesting the visualization of a makerspace on the ground floor. Whenever an impression was generated with AI, it is explicitly mentioned in the image description.

Secondly, Gemini served as a brainstorming tool to generate ideas for titles and specific terminology, such as the naming of the five spatial principles and the main title of the project. From the generated options, a critical selection was consistently made to ensure the chosen terms accurately reflected the essence of the research.

Lastly, Gemini was primarily used as a proofreading tool to review and enhance written text. Drafted paragraphs were submitted with prompts to check for grammar, improve the flow, and find suitable synonyms. The outputs were always critically evaluated to ensure they aligned with the author's personal writing style, meaning AI-generated text was never adopted blindly.

In conclusion, AI functioned strictly as an assistive tool to refine and elevate the quality of the project, rather than as a primary source for generating new information.

03 Framework of five principles

Principles to enhance the conditions for public familiarity

This chapter introduces a framework consisting of five core principles aimed at enhancing the conditions for public familiarity in a superdiverse neighborhood. This framework was synthesized by analyzing and comparing existing urban theories. Furthermore, empirical insights gathered from interviews with the Municipality of The Hague, housing corporation ‘Haag Wonen’, and community centers ‘Stagehuis’ and ‘De Mussen’ were integrated to define these principles.

Mixed use

As established in the previous chapter, enhancing public familiarity requires residents to repeatedly encounter one another, fostering light contacts. Mixed use is an important factor in creating these repeating contacts. This principle means a variety of functions and amenities within a reachable area (Uyterlinde et al, 2023).

The concept of public familiarity aligns closely with what Jane Jacobs (1961) calls ‘sidewalk life’, meaning the complex web of casual public contact that forms the basis of a safe and social neighborhood. She argues that for a vibrant sidewalk life to emerge, it is crucial to have ‘eyes on the street’ and a continuous human presence. This ensures that residents have something to look at, while the people on the street themselves provide a natural form of surveillance (Jacobs, 1961). This presence is generated by spreading multiple amenities throughout the neighborhood (Jacobs, 1961). Mixed use ensures there is always a reason for people to go outdoors.

Furthermore, Crul and Lelie (2025) explain that the built environment has a big influence on making a society work in a superdiverse district. A good built environment is achieved, among other things, by creating public spaces with functions (Crul and Lelie, 2025). Therefore, it is not just the buildings in the neighborhood that need to accommodate multiple functions, but the public spaces as well. This is because different people will use the public space for multiple reasons, ensuring that residents encounter one another in the same space, which fosters public familiarity.

As explained in the chapter of ‘the role of urbanism’, public characters are vital to a successful superdiverse neighborhood (Crul and Lelie, 2025). They are familiar faces and are often considered reliable and help foster a positive perception of superdiversity. These public characters are often storeowners, school directors or bartenders for example. Mixed use is essential, because these social and commercial functions allow these professions to exist in the first place (Jacobs, 1961). By providing these spaces, mixed use creates the spatial layer for public characters to anchor themselves.

Neighborhoods need to align with the daily routines and routes of the residents. Mixed use achieves this by integrating a mixture of residential, work, social and commercial functions. This combination ensures that routines of different schedules are combined (Jacobs J., 1961). By combining these routines, people are more likely to run into each other repeatedly. The next principle (Routine integration) will also elaborate on this further.



Potention of Schilderswijk



Fig 10. Mixed use area in the Schilderswijk: the Hobbema shopping street

Reference of mixed use



Fig 9. Reference for mixed use area in The Hague, produced by DAVL Studio, 2017

Routine integration

The second principle is routine integration, which focuses on creating an intuitive flow that naturally leads people to meeting places. Rather than visiting a location specifically for social interaction, residents encounter one another because space is seamlessly connected to their daily routines (Uyterlinde et al., 2023). Where mixed use provides the destinations, this principle elaborates on how the routes between those functions can be optimized for social contact.

When public familiarity is desired, repeating contact is necessary (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023). To achieve this repetition factor, it is important to engage with people's daily routines. An integration of these routines ensures that people from different backgrounds and social circles cross paths. These overlapping activities act as catalysts for incidental encounters (Uyterlinde et al., 2023). When these incidental encounters happen day after day on the same routes, strangers gradually transform into familiar faces, which directly builds public familiarity.

Effective routine integration prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists over car-based infrastructure. This is because these way of transport are slower and therefore longer for people to register and recognize each other. So, pedestrian and bicycle-oriented routes offer a higher chance of meeting and repeating contact compared to a car-oriented transit (Mantingh I. et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in order to bring people from different backgrounds together, it is important for elements to recur regularly, such as a market, so that they become part of a routine (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023). Because people tend to visit the market at similar times each week, it structures their behavior in a way that guarantees repeated visual contact with the same fellow residents. This predictable repetition lowers barriers to casual conversation over time, fostering more positive interactions between diverse groups and ultimately strengthening public familiarity in a superdiverse neighborhood. However, for these positive interactions to truly land, residents must first overcome their 'belonging uncertainty' (as described in chapter 2).



Potention of Schilderswijk

Fig 11. Routines of lingering and passing through are combined in one public space, Hobbemaplein

Reference of routine integration



Fig 12. Pedestrian route within a Barcelona superblock

Lifecycle-proof

This principle emphasizes the importance of integrating not only routines but also lifecycles within public space. By designing for various lifecycles, one inherently designs for different routines. Certain stages of life bring specific needs and social patterns (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023). For instance, schools and daycare centers serve as natural gathering spots for parents, yet the familiarity built in these locations is often lost once children move to a different school or phase of life. Therefore, it is important to connect different stages, ensuring that integration between people of various ages can take place and social ties remain resilient over time (Uyterlinde M. et al, 2023).

This focus on lifecycles creates a common goal that goes beyond ethnic background or religion. Crul and Lelie (2025) explain, achieving a successful, superdiverse society depends on focusing on common goals of residents. In public space, these common goals manifest as shared needs within specific lifecycles, such as parents from diverse backgrounds all needing a safe play environment for their children and having questions for each other about parenthood. Through these shared lifecycle experiences, the likelihood of meeting people outside the normal social circle increases, thereby enhancing public familiarity.

Furthermore, a public space designed for different lifecycles ensures a consistent human presence throughout the day. This is because age groups utilize public spaces at different times of the day, for example: seniors on their daily walk, children and parents after school and youth in the evening. As discussed in the chapter on mixed use, this continuous presence increases ‘eyes on the street’, fostering more contact on the streets and higher levels of public familiarity (Jacobs, 1961).

Designing for different lifecycles requires spatial clarity (Bakker, 2026). Environments that lack a clear distinction in how they should be used often fail to reach their full potential. Bakker (2026) explains in an interview with James that creating dedicated spaces on a square, for instance, areas specifically designed for girls, undermines neither the public character of a place nor the possibility for interaction. On the contrary, these defined spaces are essential for drawing specific groups into the public realm who might otherwise remain at home (Bakker, 2026). By clustering these different dedicated places for each lifecycle, a shared space is created. This constant visual presence allows different generations to observe each other daily, facilitating public familiarity through simple physical visibility.

Potention of Schilderswijk



Fig 13. Different generations and cultural groups sharing space in the Van der Vennepark

Reference of life-cycle proof design



Fig 14. Reference of a lifecycle-proof design, DriehoeksPARK, Rotterdam, produced by Urban Synergy, 2026

Inviting

While the previous principles focus on facilitating repeated encounters, this principle addresses the desire for people to prolong their stay in public spaces. The more time residents spend in public space, the higher the probability of meaningful interaction, which enhances public familiarity (Bakker, 2026). Bakker describes this as creating an environment where people linger because they enjoy the space, rather than because they have to. This can be achieved by designing an inviting place.

Inviting means that a place is attractive and has a good appearance. An inviting place shows that a neighborhood is doing well and this gives a safe feeling to its residents and visitors (Uyterlinde et al., 2023). This perceived safety encourages people to repeatedly include these spaces in their daily routines, ensuring a continuous human presence (Jacobs, 1961). This constant presence of people and ‘eyes on the street’ enlarges the possibilities of residents to daily see and recognize each other and build up familiarity.

An important part of creating an attractive space is maintenance, this shows that a neighborhood is doing well (Uyterlinde et al., 2023). The following principle (Sense of ownership) is to ensure that people take care of maintenance themselves, rather than relying solely on the municipality.

Furthermore, Inviting can be divided into three categories: characterful texture, pleasant climate and active frontage. Creating a characterful texture can be achieved by mingling buildings by age and conditions in the neighborhood (Jacobs, 1961). It also requires visual intricacy and uniqueness. If a public space can be fully understood at one glance and is indistinguishable from other places, it lacks the interest needed to draw people back (Jacobs, 1961 and Sennett, 2017). When people do not return, it is difficult to create repeated encounters, which are needed to build up public familiarity.

The second category for inviting is pleasant climate. This can be achieved by working with factors like greenery, wind, rain and shade/sunny side (Mantingh et al., 2021). A comfortable public space directly influences how long people stay. For example, a comfortable temperature and a shelter for the wind helps to create a place where people sit down and want to linger. This way their presence is extended and increases the chance for visual contact and meetings. Greenery and water can help lower the temperatures in a neighborhood and more directly create shade from the sun. When vegetation has multiple colors and a gradient in green, this is also more appealing than just a tree on grass, but also reduces stress (Mantingh et al., 2021). When people are more relaxed, they are more open to encounters and more present to their surroundings, which is needed for public familiarity.

Lastly, people mostly experience the ground floor of building blocks, so these should have active frontage, creating an inviting and attractive place (Mantingh et al., 2021). An active plinth is created by an open façade with a function that is open most hours of the day. This can be a residential building with public rooms on the front or a social or commercial function. This encourages visual interaction between indoor and outdoors, which helps with creating the ‘eyes on the street’ that are needed for a “sidewalk-life”, as Jacobs, 1961 describes. This also helps to build up public familiarity.

Potention of Schilderswijk



Fig 15. A long tree-lined avenue with a unique architectural landmark in the background

Reference of inviting



Fig 16. Reference of an inviting place, De Groene Kaap, Rotterdam

Sense of ownership

The last principle for enhancing public familiarity is the need for Sense of ownership. This principle suggests that when residents feel a sense of responsibility for “their” part of the neighborhood, there is a greater commitment to maintenance. As discussed in the chapter on inviting, maintenance is an important factor in creating an attractive neighborhood. Encouraging residents to care for their surroundings themselves, rather than relying solely on the municipality, fosters a deeper connection to the place. A well-maintained and inviting appearance draws people to the street, ensuring a continuous human presence. This presence provides the “eyes on the street” (Jacobs, 1961) necessary for the sidewalk contact and safety. And, when residents feel safe on the streets, they spend more time outdoors, which increases the likelihood of leading to the repeated incidental contacts that enhance public familiarity (Jacobs, 1961).

Furthermore, spatial clarity is essential. It is important to clearly distinguish between private and public realms so that residents understand the extent to which they can appropriate and care for a place (Jacobs, 1961; Mantingh et al., 2021). Designing clear threshold zones between private and public spaces helps foster a sense of community by creating a gradient of belonging (Mantingh et al., 2021). People want to choose whether they are staying in their private home or looking for contact outside (Jacobs, 1961) and a threshold zone allows residents this. Having this choice improves the quality of life while also fostering better relationships between neighbors. Because, when people can withdraw from public space when wanted, they are more easily reconnecting with others (Mantingh et al., 2021) This threshold zone also allows households without a front garden to linger around their house, which engages visual contact and casual greetings with passing neighbors, fostering public familiarity.

Lastly, involving residents in the design and decision-making process is important to foster an initial sense of ownership (Bakker, 2026). Because they are allowed to give their opinion and help decide in this participatory process, residents already connect with each other before a neighborhood is built or before design interventions are even realized. But more importantly, the residents have a shared responsibility for maintaining ‘their’ public space. So, this part of the process is crucial for giving residents a sense of ownership.



Potention of Schilderswijk



Fig 17. Appropriatied spaces by residents in the Schilderswijk

Reference of sense of ownership



Fig 18. Reference of a well-used threshold zone in Amsterdam

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates how the framework functions to build public familiarity through two main mechanisms: generating repeated encounters and encouraging prolonged stays.

The first mechanism, repeated encounters, is driven by combining mixed use, routine integration, and lifecycle-proof design. Implementing a mix of functions in buildings and in public space provides residents with a reason to go outside and offering public characters a spatial layer to anchor themselves. Routine integration ensures an intuitive flow for these encounters by combining daily routes and routines, prioritizing pedestrians and cyclists, and introducing recurring elements. Finally, a lifecycle-proof approach guarantees that these encounters span across generations. By identifying common goals and creating spatial clarity through dedicated spaces for different age groups, a continuous human presence is maintained throughout the day.

While the first three principles ensure that people repeatedly cross paths, the final two principles, inviting and sense of ownership, are essential for the second mechanism: encouraging people to prolong their stay in the public realm. An inviting environment relies on good maintenance, alongside a pleasant climate, a characterful texture, and active frontages. The final principle, sense of ownership, ensures that this maintenance is naturally taken up by the residents themselves. This is achieved by creating spatial clarity through threshold zones and actively involving residents in the design process.

Finally, this chapter concludes that designing for mixed use, routine integration, and lifecycle-proof spaces generates the necessary repeated contacts. Simultaneously, designing an inviting environment with a sense of ownership ensures that residents spend more time in public spaces. Both mechanisms, frequent encounters and prolonged stays, are the fundamental principles required to successfully enhance public familiarity in a superdiverse neighborhood.

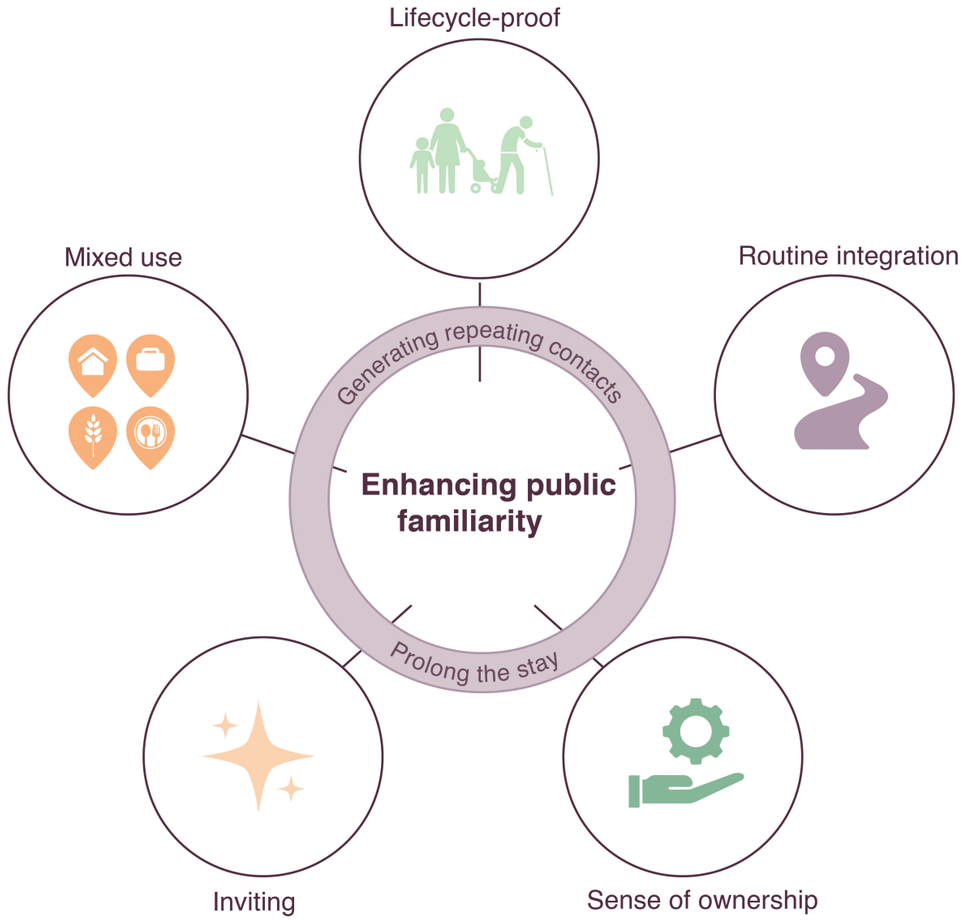


Fig 19. Framework for enhancing the conditions for public familiarities

04 Design

Different scales of public space

The primary goal of this chapter is to ‘test’ the developed hypothesis and framework by translating them into concrete spatial designs. This chapter demonstrates how theoretical principles can be spatially applied within a specific context: the superdiverse neighborhood of the Schilderswijk.

Through site observations and interviews, it became clear that the public spaces of a neighborhood can be divided into three distinct spatial scales: the District, the Ensemble, and the Pocket. Each of these scales represents a different layer of public familiarity, ranging from large infrastructure to the courtyard of a housing block.

The distinction between these scales lies primarily in the spatial reach of where people come from to use the public space, and the differing social dynamics they facilitate. These scales are explained on the next page and further in this chapter, moving from the micro to the macro level.

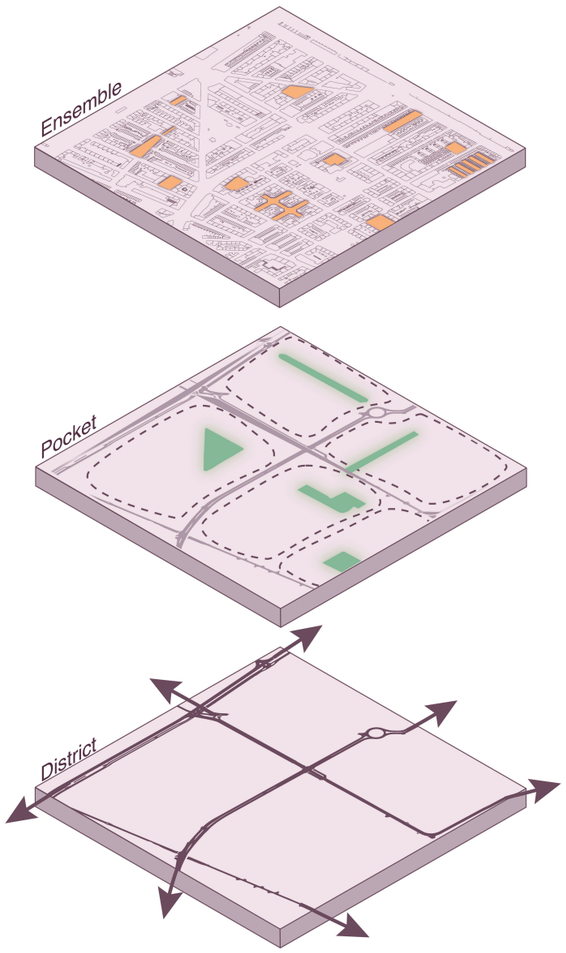


Fig 20. Different scales of public familiarity

Ensemble

The Ensemble operates at the most local level. This scale has the reach of a cluster of several housing blocks and their adjacent streets. Therefore, the people who use this public space mostly come from immediate surrounding residences. At this scale, the primary focus is on building familiarity among neighbors.

The interactions here are frequent, recognizable, and low-threshold, such as greeting each other at the front door or brief chats while taking out the trash. This daily recognition between neighbors fosters an informal social control and mutual willingness to look out for one another when something happens in the block or the street.

Pocket

The reach of the Pocket covers multiple streets, usually centering around a square or a small park. For example, during the interview with Stagehuis, it was explained that many residents view the Schilderswijk as a collection of “islands.” Each island has its own public space, and children generally stick to playing on their “own” square.

A key dynamic at this scale is that children from all the surrounding streets gather at this central public space after school, allowing them to naturally get to know one another. This shared space also fosters familiarity among mothers picking up their children and elderly residents who walk the same daily route.

District

This is the largest scale with the widest spatial reach. At this level, residents cross the boundaries of their own pockets, traveling from across the entire Schilderswijk (and sometimes even from outside the city) to access these spaces. Examples include major commercial shopping streets, the local market, or central urban squares.

The interactions here are more anonymous, mainly fleeting and functional. However, public familiarity can still be established through routine micro-encounters, such as recognizing familiar faces in the local supermarket. Through the repeated, passive presence of all the diverse groups in the same central places, residents become familiar with the overall diversity of the neighborhood.

Public spaces in the Schilderswijk

This map illustrates how the public spaces in the Schilderswijk are categorized across the three scales. For each scale, a specific study area has been designated for a spatial redesign.

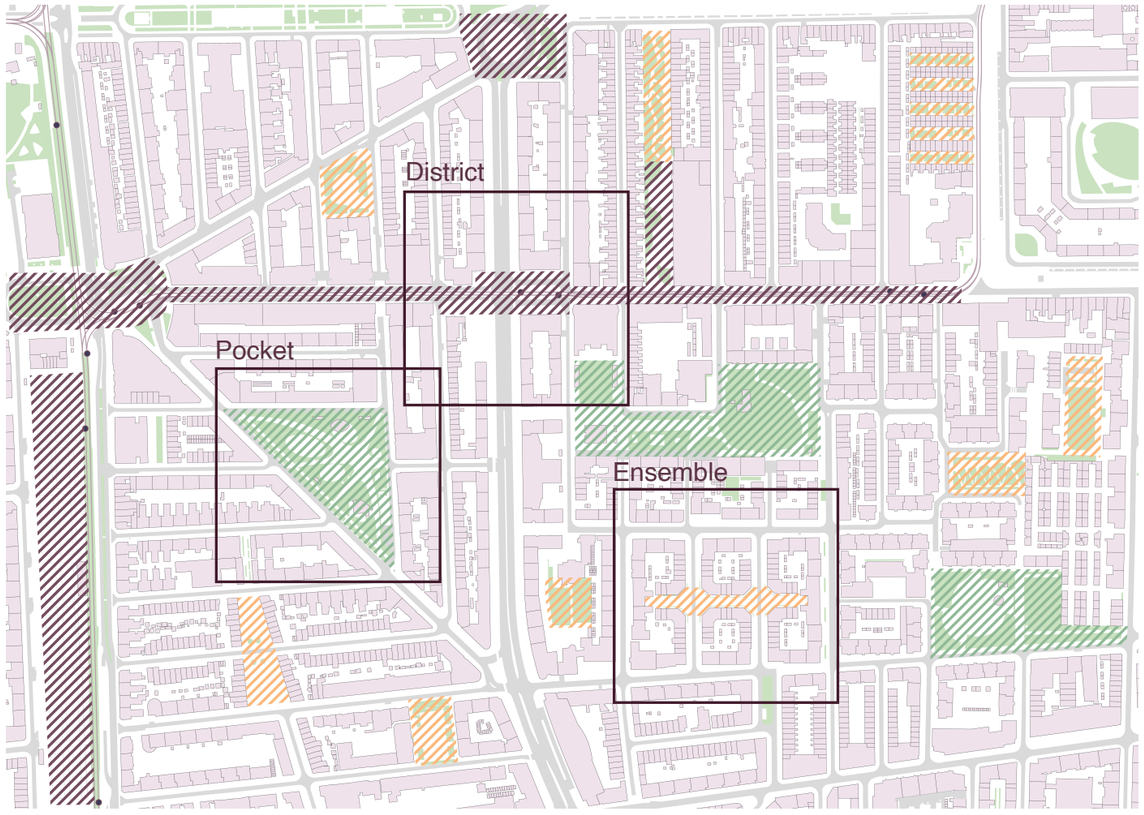


Fig 21. Different scales of public familiarity in the Schilderswijk

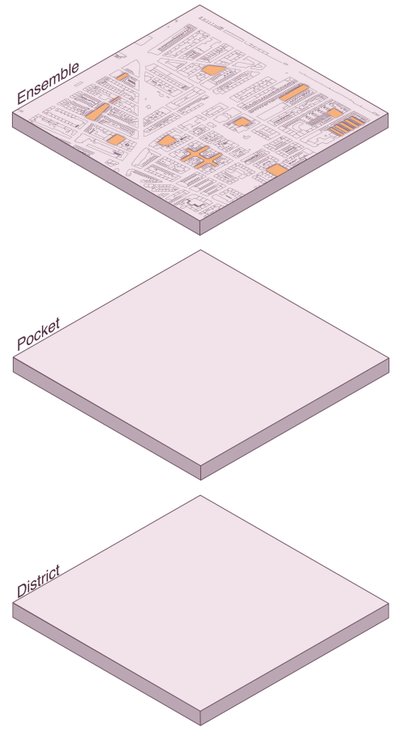
Stakeholders

Different stakeholders own the public spaces across each of these three scales. In the Schilderswijk, the main stakeholders are the municipality and the housing corporation Haag Wonen. This is because social housing makes up 80% of the neighborhood, and Haag Wonen owns 90% of those properties.

Generally, the municipality owns public spaces like streets and squares, whereas Haag Wonen owns the buildings and inner courtyards. While this might suggest that Haag Wonen is the primary stakeholder at the Ensemble scale, the street is actually where much of the public familiarity is built, meaning the municipality plays also a vital role here.

At the Pocket scale, the municipality is the key stakeholder since it owns the central squares. However, if any adjustments are needed for the surrounding buildings, the housing corporation becomes essential. Lastly, at the District level, both are major stakeholders: the municipality is responsible for the infrastructure and the policies behind shopping streets, while Haag Wonen owns many of the retail spaces within those shopping streets.

Ensemble



Current situation



Fig 23. Current floorplan

The typology of the building blocks does not match the potential of the car-free street



Fig 22. Image 1 of current situation

Storage rooms create closed facades facing the public space



Fig 24. Image 2 of current situation

Courtyards that are unutilized or even used as ‘dumping grounds’



Fig 25. Image 3 of current situation

Participation process

First, sense of ownership is an important principle for the smaller scale, because this is where people look out for their street and gardens. To achieve this ownership, it is important to involve residents in the design and decision-making process. This gives them the first feeling of ownership, because they are allowed to give their opinion and help decide. Furthermore, they know best what the neighborhood needs and which initiatives already exist and could potentially be continued. For example, the Schilderswijk had the urban oasis ‘Spinozahof’, this bottom-up initiative created a beautiful courtyard garden with a social function for the neighborhood. This initiative is now continuing to help housing corporation Haag Wonen design a community garden for a renovation project in the Schilderswijk with a large courtyard garden.

Since this is an important part of enhancing public familiarity and project did not have the resources to initiate a codesign process, this scale is not designed in detail. However, there are two design options, which can operate as a starting conversation in such a codesign to work together with the residents to find a solution for this area.

Option 1

Publicly open ensemble

This design is inspired by the current situation, originally built during the urban renewal period. Essentially, it is an attempt to make the original urban renewal design work effectively. However, this requires a fundamental shift in spatial focus: from the internal courtyards outward to the street. The central street is transformed into a common playing area for the six adjacent blocks, establishing a publicly open ensemble.

As Mantingh et al. (2021) explain, a neighborhood requires clear spatial differentiation. It must be instantly readable at a glance which spaces are public, semi-public, or strictly private. On this scale, building public familiarity is primarily about getting to know one’s neighbors. If there is no spatial differentiation, all areas bleed into a generic, anonymous public space, which is highly undesirable for local encounters.

Building blocks play a vital role in resolving this. In this design, the underutilized inner courtyards are fully privatized and given back to the residents to be used as larger private gardens or practical storage spaces. Simultaneously, the design makes use of the central blocks that are already built at an angle. This existing shape naturally creates a square where residents can come together. By raising the road surface here not only forces cars to drive slowly, but also visually connects the area, making the square feel like one continuous space. The threshold zone, which was previously hidden in the unused courtyard, is explicitly relocated to the public street.

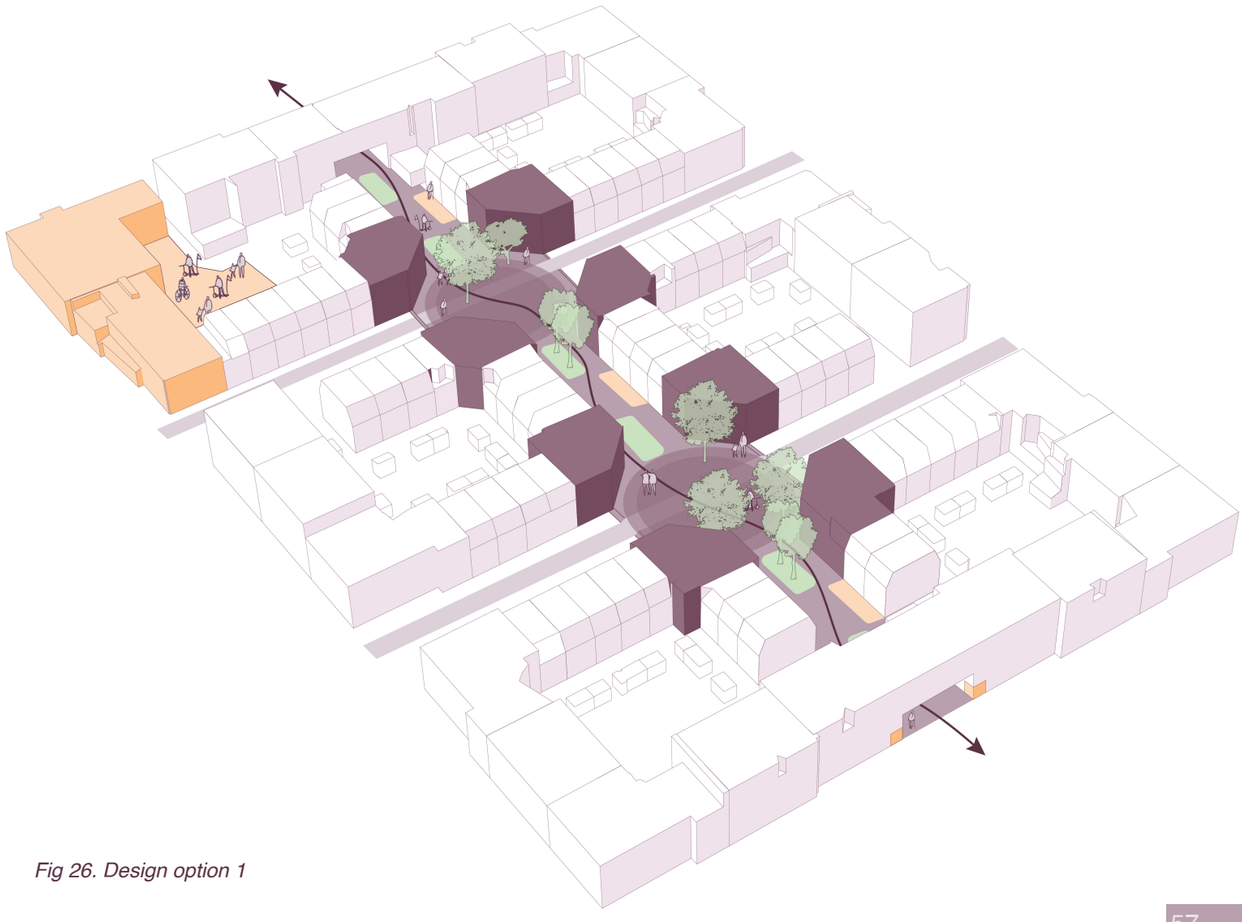


Fig 26. Design option 1



Fig 27. Reference shared building blocks, LeMedi, Rotterdam, produced by GEURST & SCHULZE ARCHITECTEN, 2025



Fig 28. Common room instead of storage, Image generated by OpenAI, (2026), via ChatGPT

By making the courtyards strictly private and relocating social life to the center street, the ‘common ground’ is rightfully returned to the public realm. This sharp distinction directly fosters a sense of ownership, making it clear what is private and what is public. Furthermore, emphasizing the middle street and closing off the courtyards supports routine integration. As social life and playing children are moved to a publicly open zone, the daily routines of neighbors naturally intersect with passing pedestrians. Ultimately, this ensures more visual contact between residents and guarantees a continuous, vibrant human presence on the street.

However, to get people to come outside to this street, it needs to be more inviting. This can be achieved by adding more greenery on the street, creating a more pleasant climate to sit and play. It also helps to create a clearer threshold zone for the directly adjacent households to appropriate. By personalizing the space in front of their homes, residents naturally bring life to the sidewalk, increasing human presence and visually signaling to others that this street is a safe, shared environment.

Lastly, ensuring an inviting, shared street within this ensemble requires an active frontage. In the current situation, the angled central building blocks feature storage rooms facing the street, resulting in a completely closed facade. This should be changed into a common room, with open windows. This could be a shared kitchen, for example, open toilettes, a playroom or a room to keep playground equipment. This shared programming not only activates the facade but also perfectly facilitates routine integration, as the daily activities of the residents within the six blocks naturally intersect in these common facilities.

Option 2

Collective ensemble

This design is inspired by the urban typologies of the 1930s. This option connects two building blocks by enclosing a single, collective courtyard. In contrast to the publicly open street in Option 1, this layout is semi-open and designed collectively for the directly adjacent residents.

As established in Option 1, a neighborhood requires clear spatial differentiation, and building blocks play a crucial role in defining this. In this option, the physical enclosure of the courtyard makes it instantly clear that this shared space is semi-private (Mantingh et al., 2021). Consequently, while residents might develop less familiarity with the wider neighborhood compared to Option 1, they will cultivate a much stronger bond with the residents sharing their specific block.

Mantingh et al. (2021) emphasize that the transition from the street to the front door is a critical micro-route where public familiarity can be effectively promoted. In this semi-open design, routine integration primarily takes place among the residents of the shared block as they use this daily pathway. To ensure this integration occurs naturally, it is vital to establish a logical route through the courtyard. By designing each courtyard with two entrances, the space functions as a continuous walking route rather than a dead end. As residents repeatedly use this logical pathway to commute to and from their homes, the likelihood of encounters and visual contact significantly increases.

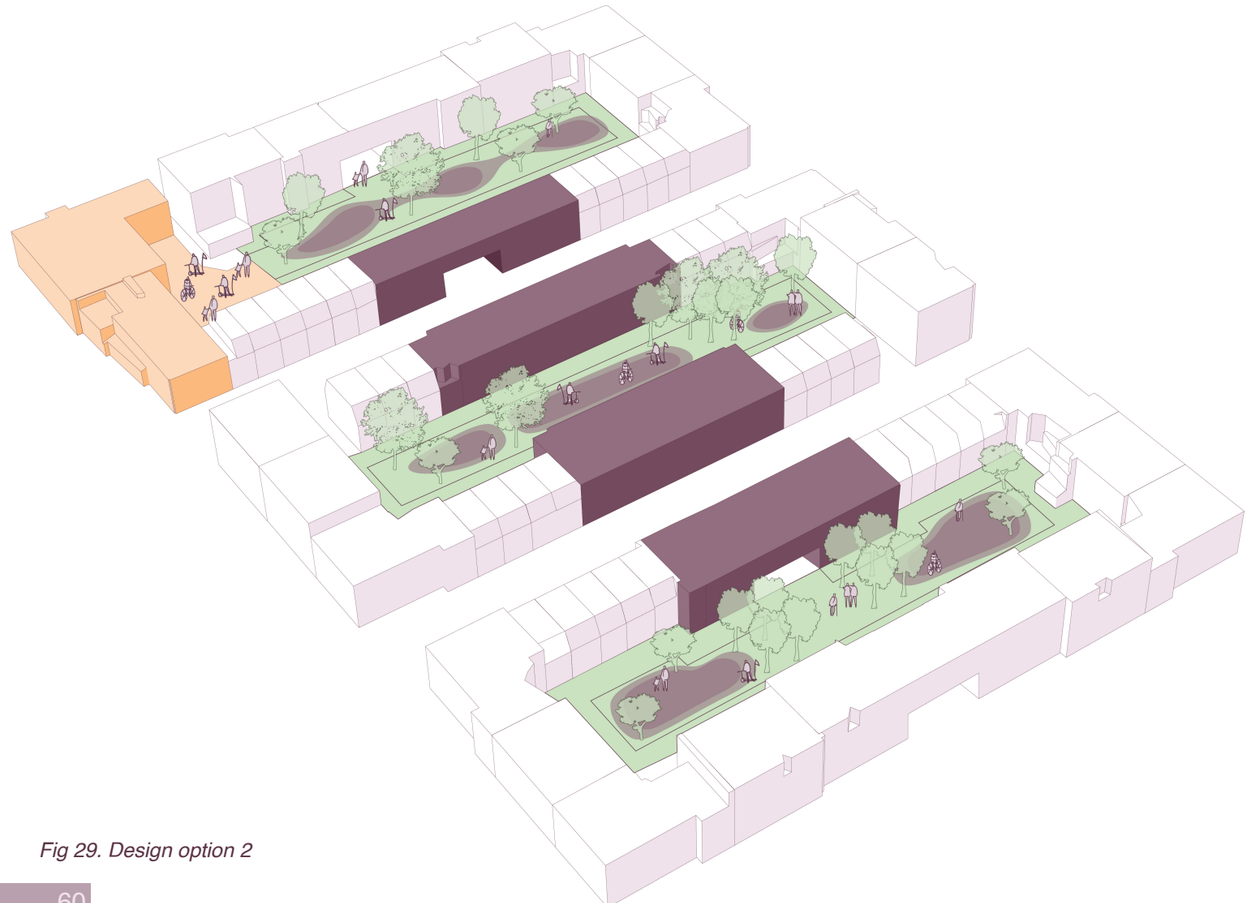


Fig 29. Design option 2

To make this courtyard more inviting than the current courtyards, the gardens are a part of the courtyard, with just small fences. These gardens will function as the threshold zone for residents to appropriate. This intervention also leaves room for adding lots of greenery. Another factor to take into account when creating an inviting place is solar radiation and wind. Because of the closed building block, these courtyards provide a pleasant space sheltered from the wind, complete with multiple places to sit in the sun.



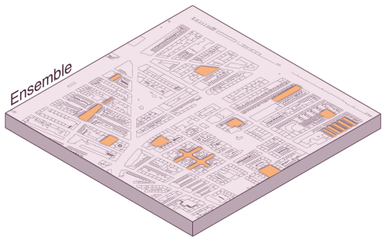
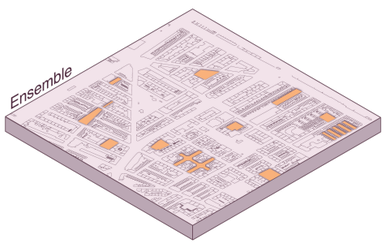
Fig 31. Reference courtyard garden, De Groene Kaap, Rotterdam



Fig 30. Reference courtyard garden, PoortMeesters, Delft

Conclusion on ensemble level

The first row of the table summarizes the specific interventions applied in the design, while the second row translates these into general interventions. The darker the color of an applied intervention, the more principles it emphasizes.

	Mixed use	Routine integration	Lifecycle-proof	Inviting	Sense of ownership
 *Applied interventions*	Changing the storage rooms into shared rooms with open facades	Option 1 Underutilized inner courtyards are fully privatized Using the existing urban structure to create a shared square Raising the road surface Changing the storage rooms into shared rooms with open facades Option 2 Designing each courtyard with two entrances	No specific interventions at this scale	Option 1 Raising the road surface Add greenery on the street Add play equipment street Relocating the threshold zone to the public street Changing the storage rooms into shared rooms with open facades Option 2 Gardens are integrated into the courtyard with small fences Physical enclosure of the courtyard for shelter against the wind Positioning seating areas to optimize solar exposure	Two design options as a starting conversation Option 1 Underutilized inner courtyards are fully privatized Using the existing urban structure to create a shared square Raising the road surface Relocating the threshold zone to the public street Option 2 Physical enclosure of the courtyard Gardens are integrated into the courtyard with small fences
 *General interventions*	No general interventions at this scale	• Optimizing the micro-route from the street to the front door, pedestrian focussed • Creating active and transparent ground-floor facades	No general interventions at this scale	• Add more greenery • Create threshold zones • Desinging based on solar radiation and wind • Creating active and transparent ground-floor facades	• Participatory process, facilitating bottom-up community initiatives • Creating clear differentiation of public, semi-public and private zones • Emphasizing a threshold zone

Conclusion on ensemble level

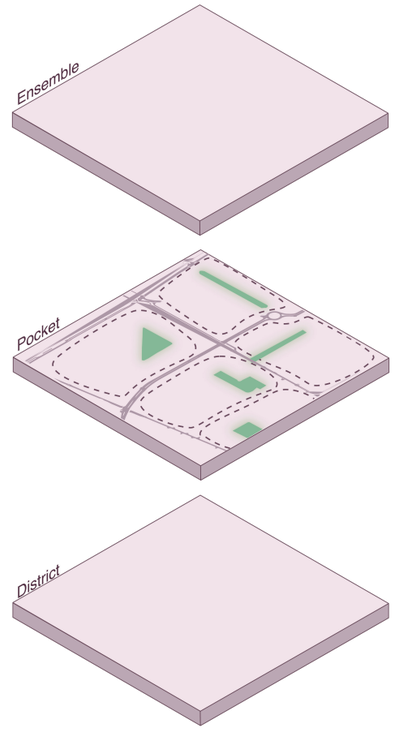
The table indicates that no specific interventions for lifecycle-proof design were applied at this scale, alongside only a single intervention for mixed use. This suggests that these two principles are less prominent and important on this smaller scale.

Furthermore, only a few interventions contribute to just a single principle. Most interventions serve multiple principles simultaneously. This highlights a significant opportunity on the ensemble scale to design synergistically, addressing multiple principles at once rather than tackling them one by one.

The table shows, for example, that modifying just one corner of the facade of each block can contribute to three different principles, thereby having a substantial impact on enhancing the conditions for public familiarity. This multiplier effect is also evident in the raising of the road surface. In conclusion, these two examples demonstrate that spatial design gestures do not have to be massive to generate an impact.

Finally, this chapter presents two contrasting design options: a publicly open street and a collective courtyard. The general interventions demonstrate that both spatial layouts can achieve the same overarching goals. For example, the critical task of creating a clear threshold zone can be solved either by integrating low-fenced gardens or by dedicating space for residents on the street. Since both solutions are effective, it highlights the necessity of involving residents in a co-design process. Allowing them to shape their own environment is the most effective way to foster a genuine sense of ownership, a principle that is vital on the ensemble scale.

Pocket



Current situation

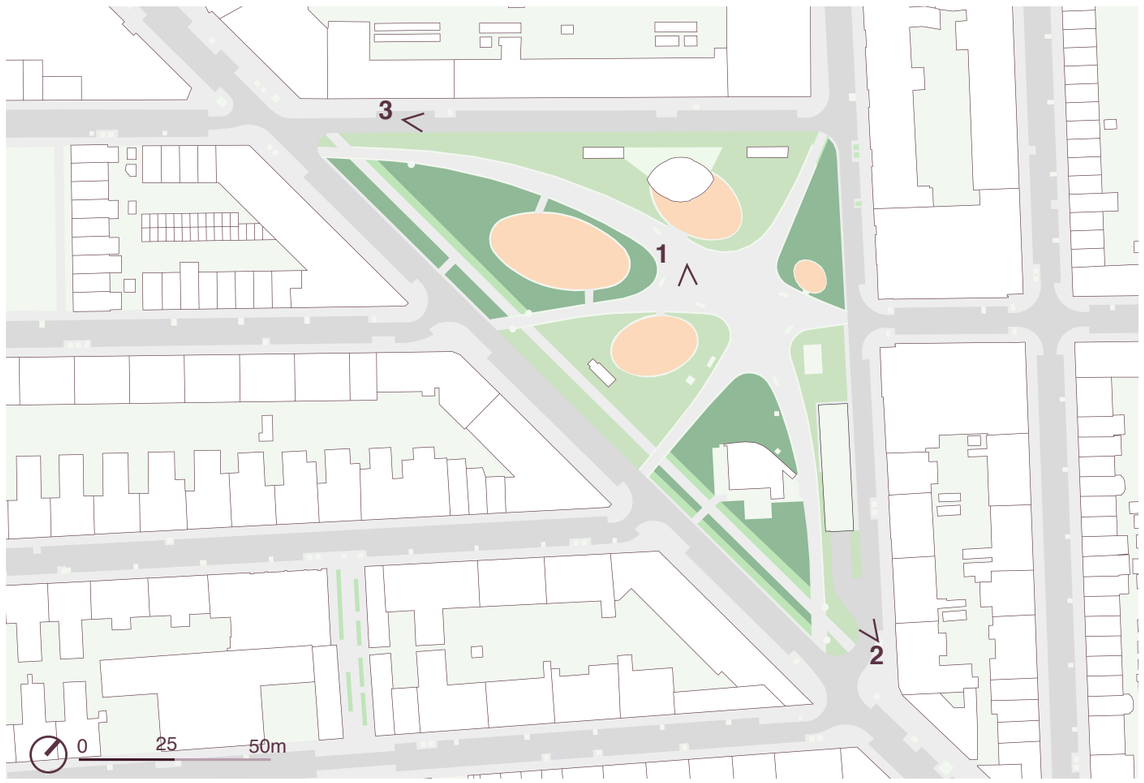


Fig 33. Current floorplan

The square is divided in two parts by the Siza Villa, which has a large, closed facade



Fig 32. Image 1 of current situation

The Siza Villa is enclosed by greenery and the entrance to the parking garage, giving it an uninviting appearance



Fig 34. Image 2 of current situation

The square is completely surrounded by high fences and car-oriented roads



Fig 35. Image 3 of current situation

Design
Floorplan



Fig 36. Design floorplan

Street differentiation

Mantingh et al. (2021) explain that a neighborhood needs to be differentiated, into public, semi-public and private realms. On the pocket scale, it is also important that the roads are differentiated, so that hierarchy emerges in the street network, as the Municipality of The Hague explained in a walkalong interview through the Schilderswijk. The neighborhood has few sightlines and is separated into fragmented building blocks, looking like stamps on a map. This layout creates disconnected spaces where cars can easily dominate the streets. This even results in children not being allowed to cycle in the neighborhood (Interview community center, de Mussen). And, as established in chapter 3, to achieve routine integration, focusing on walking and cycling is necessary for repeating contact.

This differentiation is achieved by creating a car-free street on the north- and west sides of the public space and extending the public space, this creates the focus on walking and cycling. On the other hand, the more public road is the diagonal street where cars are still allowed. This road is emphasized by adding extra building layers (topping up) to create a clear differentiation. These interventions help to navigate pedestrians and cyclists through the neighborhood and encourage residents to incorporate these slow-traffic routes into their daily routines.

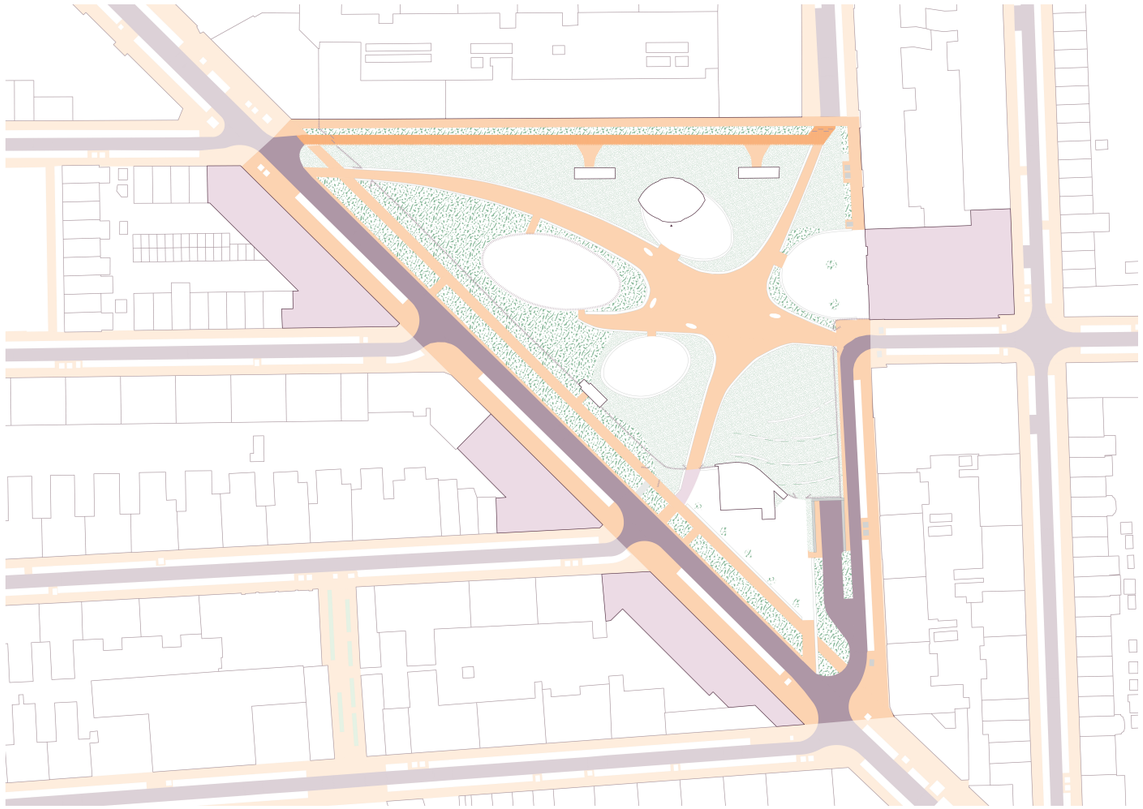


Fig 37. Differentiation of streets

New street profile

To create a clear hierarchy, two streets have also been made car-free. So, as explained before, this is an important intervention to achieve routine integration. In addition, this also ensures an inviting public space with a pleasant climate. A pleasant climate takes solar radiation into account, because places in the sun are utilized the most in neighborhoods (Mantingh et al., 2021). The roads that have been chosen to change are on the sunny side, so this is enhancing the attractiveness of the public space.

Another factor for an inviting pleasant climate is greenery, because this makes the place more comfortable. By only allowing pedestrians and cyclists to the road, less space is required and this allows the park to enlarge and therefore add more vegetation.



Fig 38. Small bridge in public space, produces by AJ-landskap, n.d.

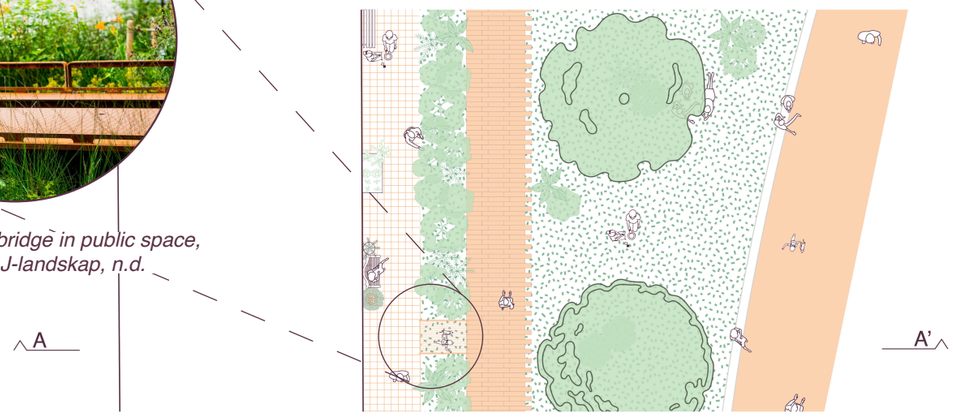




Fig 39. Section AA'

The public space currently is surrounded by high fences, which gives an unattractive view. Street interviews revealed that the function of these fences is keeping the children safe from running away and cars. This car-free street allows the fences to be removed. Fences can provide cover (Franke et al. 2015), but this can be achieved by a higher set of greenery as well in combination with lower fences on the side of the diagonal street.

Enlarging the street and removing the fences also helps with creating a sense of ownership. The people directly living next to the public space are the 'eyes on the street' that are needed, as explained in chapter 3. People can recognize faces up to 25 meters (Mantingh et al., 2021), so the people adjacent to the square can appropriate and maintain the public space naturally up to this radius of 25 meters. By enlarging the space and removing the fences, this space is more attractive to maintain and appropriate.

To encourage this even more, creating a threshold zone is important. This ensures differentiation of public to private spaces as Mantingh et al. (2021) mentioned for a good neighborhood. This threshold zone should not be too small, because it would not provide a seating area. But on the other hand, it should not be too big, because people would see it as their front garden, and then the tendency arises too to shield it (Mantingh et al., 2021). In the design, a threshold zone is created by adding a buffer of vegetation, where a small bridge occasionally crosses the green area leading to the park. This creates a sidewalk for residents to appropriate.

However, it would be a rich addition if the municipality provided a participatory process in the co-design of the public space as well, thereby already letting the residents take ownership. Furthermore, to make a threshold zone work, the room on the street side inside a household is very important, this should be a public function, like a living room or kitchen.

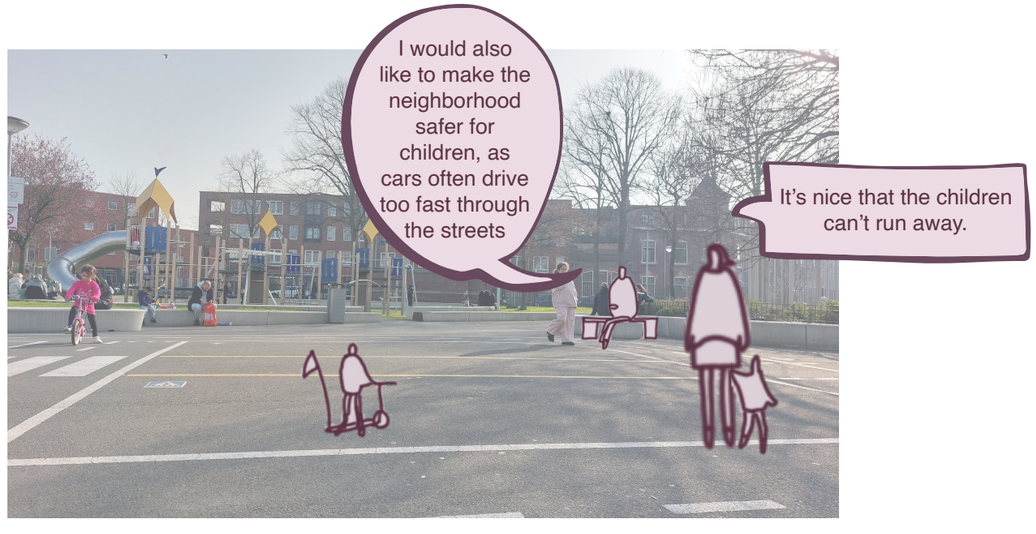


Fig 40. Streetinterviews

Preservation of historic buildings

As established in chapter 3, creating a characterful texture is important for an inviting neighborhood. This can be achieved by mingling buildings in the neighborhood (Jacobs J., 1961). This means that the buildings in a neighborhood should be different in age and conditions. These older buildings have lots of character, but, as Jacobs (1961) explains, are also in a different economic yield. Rent for older buildings is lower, so people with a more modest income can live there, or entrepreneurs can set up new initiatives (Jacobs, 1961). So, this helps with creating a mixture of people and functions in the neighborhood. It is important that the mingle of buildings should be close-grained (Jacobs, 1961). This combination of different buildings thereby can also help by creating a balance in mixed use, between larger commercial companies and smaller initiatives.

Furthermore, Sennett (2017) explains that a neighborhood should have random markings. This makes a place remarkable and characterful; it makes the neighborhood matter. He explains that this is very context specific. So, these markings also help create a characterful texture that is unique and intricate. In the Schilderswijk, many buildings were demolished after the urban renewal, so to keep a characterful texture in this neighborhood, the buildings from before the renewal are kept in the design.

To create a good flow from the streets to the home, it is essential to provide multiple potential walking routes (Mantingh et al., 2021). Jacobs (1961) described this as the principle of short blocks, meaning the spatial opportunity to turn corners frequently. So, building blocks play a big role in routine integration and attractiveness. It is beneficial when the route to people's front door is as much as possible through the public realm. This way, the residents walk their daily routines in the public realm, which fosters encounters and visual contact. The historic buildings of the Schilderswijk have front doors on the side of the square, instead of most gallery flats where the entrance is on the back or side. These buildings are located mainly on the car-free street, making it even more encouraging for people to encounter one another. The historic front doors on the street also have an open facade, which creates active frontage. In addition to the residential active frontage, the buildings on the diagonal street have shops on the ground floor, ensuring a different kind of activity.



Fig 41. Historical buildings adjacent to the public space



Fig 42. Buildingyears of the Schilderswijk

New social function



Fig 43. Impression of new function directly next to the public space, Image generated by OpenAI, (2026), via ChatGPT

For enhancing public familiarity, mixed use is an important aspect of the neighborhood. While analyzing public spaces in The Hague and Amsterdam, it was noticeable that at a well-functioning public space, there is a social function directly next or onto the square. So, this new function is logically located on the car-free street. Examples from these references include a school, cafe, or community center for example. And, when doing fieldwork in the Schilderswijk and from the research of Franke et al. (2014) it turned out that the Schilderswijk already has lots of commercial shops and companies, so there is opportunity for social functions. Adding a social function is crucial to balance this mixed use; while commercial shops attract quick, transactional visits, social functions invite longer, non-commercial stays. This diversification of functions ensures that the public space becomes a meeting place for different groups of people throughout the day, rather than just a transit zone for shoppers. Furthermore, the analysis of the Municipality The Hague (2025) and the research of Franke et al. (2014) have stated that the Schilderswijk is known for having lots of local initiatives. A good opportunity for a new function could be a maker space, to enhance these initiatives.

In the interview with community center ‘Stagehuis’ in the Schilderswijk, they explained that they helped to co-design the public square in front of their building. The surrounding residents and people in contact with Stagehuis are pleased with how the design turned out. This shows the possibilities and the importance of a social function directly on a public square. And it also contributes to a sense of ownership in the neighborhood.

This new facility also contributes to active frontage for the inviting neighborhood (Jacobs, 1961). It is important to note that the building has an open facade and is not tucked away inside an old house, as is currently the case with the neighborhood organization on the public space. It would also be better if this facility is open during the evening as well, ensuring an active frontage and a continuous human presence throughout the entire day (Jacobs, 1961).



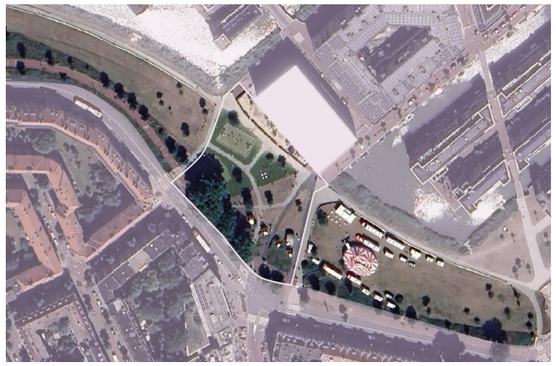
Driehoekspark o.b.a. Rodeplein, Rotterdam



Teniersplantsoen, Den Haag



Barentzplein, Amsterdam



Houthavenpark, Amsterdam



Simon de Beauvoirpark, Brussel



Van der Vennepark, Den Haag

Fig 44. Reference projects with amenities right on the square





Fig 45. Current facilities around Van der Vennepark

- Residential buildings
- Shops and Horeca
- Education
- Culture and community centers
- Religious
- Other
- Shoppingstreet

0 50 100m

Emphasizing the diagonal street



Fig 46. Impression of the empassized street (Van der Vennestraat)



Fig 47. Van Der Vennestraat, view from Hobbemaplein toward Vaillantlaan, from Haags Gemeentearchief, 1930, edited by author

In the design, the differentiation discussed at the beginning of this chapter is achieved by emphasizing the diagonal street by adding extra building layers (topping up) to the adjacent structures. By looking at the history of this place, it appeared that the diagonal street (Van der Vennerstraat) was an important route in the street network of the Hague, with a tram going from train station Hollands Spoor to Pluivierstraat. By topping the buildings, this route becomes important again and gives the opportunity to make other streets pedestrian- and bicycle-only zones.

Topping the buildings also highlights the square. This is important for creating an inviting neighborhood with characterful texture, because landmarks make a place worthy and recognizable (Sennett, 2017). When people recognize certain streets or landmarks, they tend to choose that route more often and ensure a repeated human presence on the street Morand fosters public familiarity. Adding extra building layers will give this part of the neighborhood intricacy and a new appearance.

Appropriate places for lifecycles

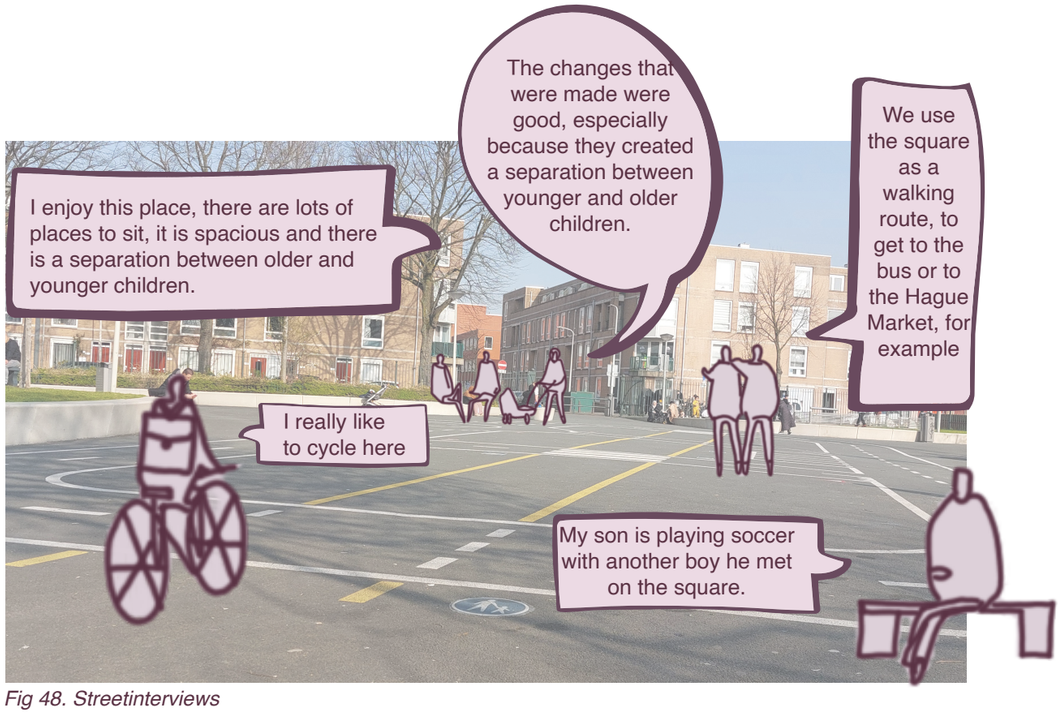


Fig 48. Streetinterviews



Fig 49. Different age groups appropriating their dedicated public space

As established in chapter 3, designing different lifecycles requires spatial clarity. Defined spaces are essential for drawing specific groups into the public realm and by clustering these dedicated places for each lifecycle, a balanced shared space is created (Bakker, 2026). If the square is all for everybody, one age group or ethnicity group would appropriate the space. While talking to people on the street and the community center ‘Stagehuis’, it was confirmed that ages should be separated. Designing for lifecycles is very important in the Schilderswijk, because research has shown that people live in small houses with large number of people in a family. Public space for these different lifecycles is extra important in this case.

The interviews on the street also showed that the public space is already separating age groups of youth: Children up to 4 years, children 4-8 years and older children. However, some groups should receive more attention. The mothers have lots of places to sit down on the white edges and watch the children, although more picnic tables are added to the design in case, they want to bring their own food. Additionally, girls require a separate place, as they often feel unwelcome at most designed places (Bakker, 2026). Girls need back coverage and the ability to maintain an overview from a higher place (Bakker, 2026). This is implemented in the design behind the villa on the public space (Siza house), which has a largely blind façade and therefore can operate as spatial backing.
.

To elaborate on that, designing for lifecycles also means creating different functions in the public space and creating the complexity that is needed to bring people back. The public space is already rich in functions: sports field, multiple playgrounds, a toy lending center with toilet, place to bike around and sitting edges. However, a good public space also has places for own interpretation (Bakker, 2026). So, in the design are open spaces with grass created. People can lie down under a tree on a hot summer day or play soccer with friends.

Additionally, different routines are integrated, because there are walking routes through the public spaces. This way, people that are just passing through to go to the market, for example, will see people staying and this visual contact is good for the public familiarity.

And it is important that the recipe used in one public space, for example having a petting zoo, cannot be copied on other locations in the same district. As Franke et al. (2014) point out in their analysis of the Schilderswijk, if all the squares serve the same function, the district will not work properly.

Design of the corner with villa



Fig 50. Wall with upward vegetation, produced by ChartierDalix, 2022

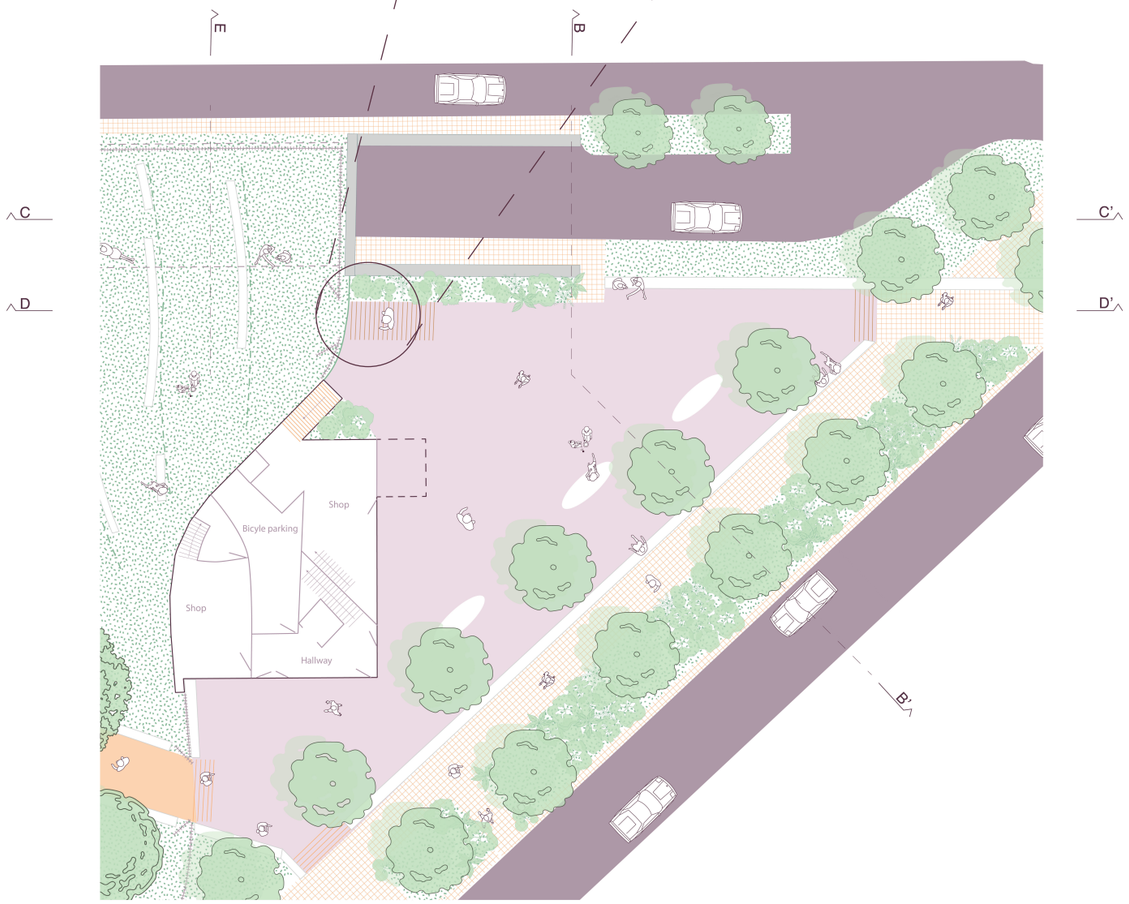


Fig 51. Floorplan of corner with Siza Villa

This corner has an uninviting and unsafe appearance, because the Siza villa is half a level down and surrounded by greenery. It is also not clearly visible what the function of the building is when walking past. Jacobs (1961) explains that sidewalk safety and sidewalk life have lots in common, as explained in chapter 3. So, when a place feels unsafe, there is also no contact. To improve this space into a more inviting place, the greenery will be replaced with a square that can be overlooked, with higher quality vegetation on the sides. And, the space will be lowered to the half level in its entirety, so the villa has a better connection with the public space. This gives the opportunity to allow the villa to also be an active frontage, instead of a vision blocker.

The villa on the public space (Siza house) is a combination of two residences and two shops. One of the shops is closed and the other one is a hairdresser, so for enhancing public familiarity this should get full use as function, so that it can contribute to mixed use. And, because this side of the public space is quite disconnected from the other side, the Siza villa and the new function should both separately contribute to mixed use.

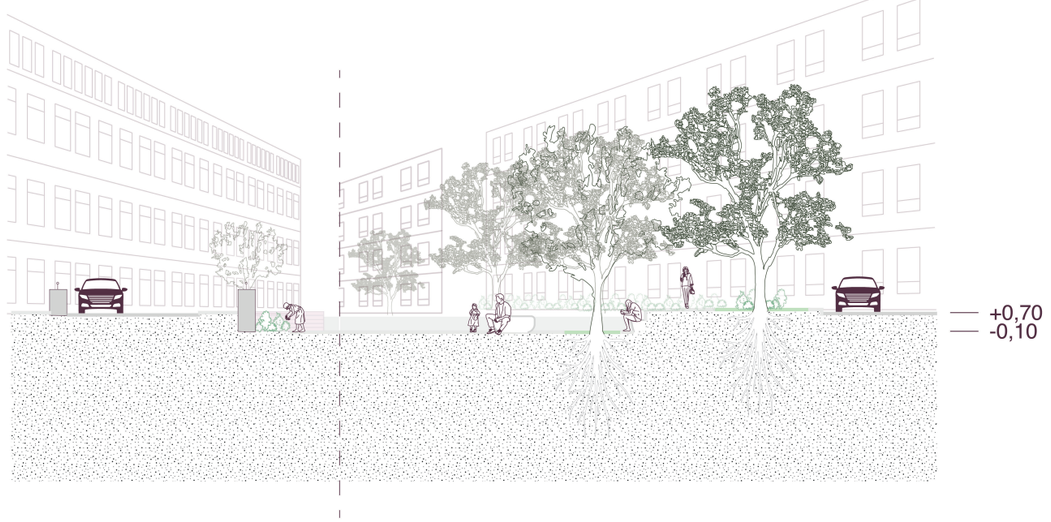


Fig 52. Section BB'

0 5 10m

0 5 10m

Underneath the public space is a residential parking garage located. This parking entrance acts as a physical barrier for residents to enter the public space and contributes to a car-centered environment, so this is contradicting to routine integration. The design covers up this entrance to a large extent, with a grass hill. This creates more greenery for an inviting public space, a higher place for girls to overlook the public space and a more pedestrian focused public space.



Fig 53. Wall with sticking out vegetation, produced by ChartierDalix, 2022

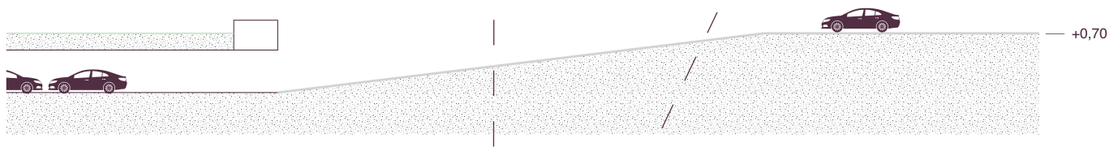


Fig 54. Section CC current situation

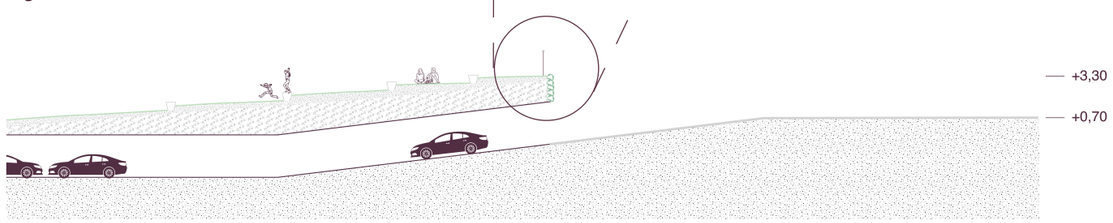


Fig 55. Section CC new situation

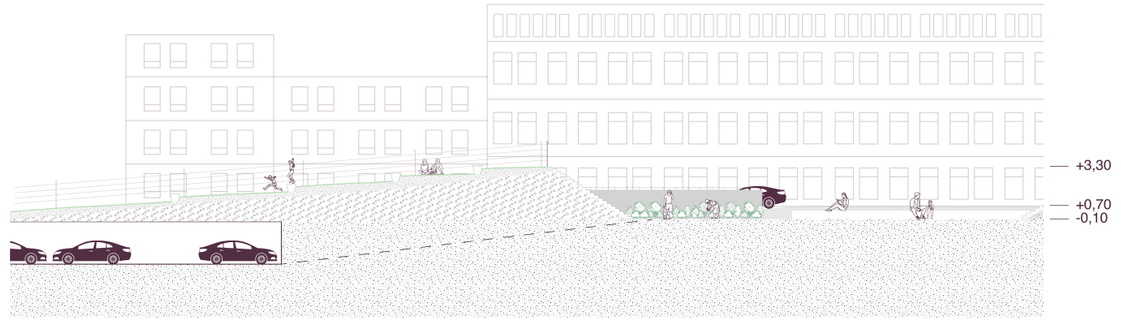


Fig 56. Section DD'

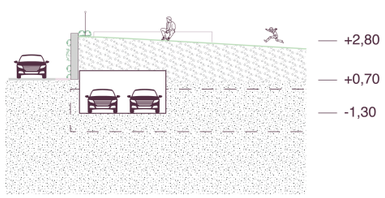
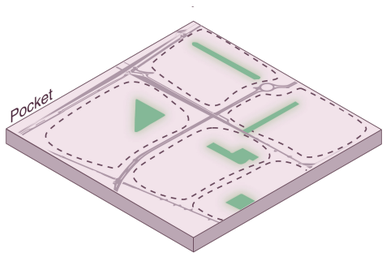
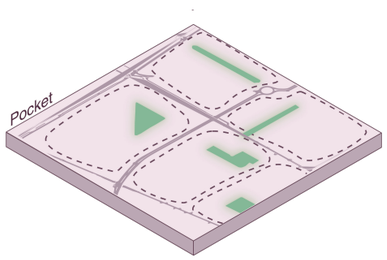


Fig 57. Section EE'

Conclusion on pocket level

The first row of the table summarizes the specific interventions applied in the design, while the second row translates these into general interventions. The darker the color of an applied intervention, the more principles it emphasizes.

	Mixed use	Routine integration	Lifecycle-proof	Inviting	Sense of ownership
 *Applied interventions*	Preservation of historic buildings for a balance in functions Maker space directly adjacent to the public space Observation place with spatial backing and utilizeng the Siza Villa Places free for interpretation Siza Villa functioning as an open, public facility	Car-free streets Emphasizing main road by topping adjacent buildings Building blocks with front doors facing the car-free street Integrating pedestrian pathways with lingering places Cover up the parking garage	Adding more picknicktables Observation place with spatial backing and utilizeng the Siza Villa Cover up the parking entrance Places free for interpretation	Expanding public space on the sun-exposed side Adding a buffer of vegetation Replacing high fences with low fencing, integrated with dense vegetation Preservation of historic buildings and adding building layers to create landmarks Shops and residents on the ground floor Maker space directly adjacent to the public space Lowering the corner of the public space Upgrading corner greenery to improve visibility and spatial quality. Cover up the parking entrance	Removing and replacing the fences Creating a threshold zone by adding a buffer of vegetation Participatory process Ground-floor living rooms facing the street Front doors facing the car-free street Maker space directly adjacent to the public space
 *General interventions*	• Combination of commercial and social places • Combination of large and small companies • Different functions on the public space	• Street differentiation with a focus on pedestrian and cycling infrastructure	• Creating dedicated spaces for different lifecycles within the public realm • Providing open spaces for free interpretation	• Designing based on solar orientation • Add more greenery • Minimizing the use of fences • Make places remarkable and unique • Creating open facades and lively ground-floor functions	• Social function directly adjacent to the public space • Create a threshold zone • Participatory process • Seamless spatial connection between the building blocks and public space

Conclusion on pocket level

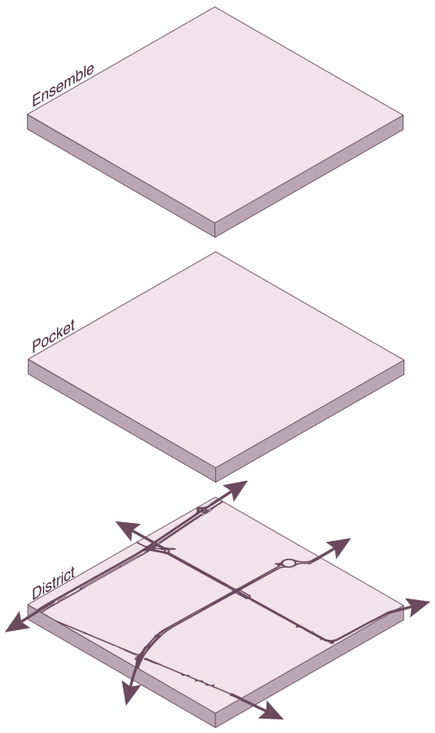
From this overview, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, what stands out is that mixed use interventions often contribute to several principles at once. In contrast, creating an inviting place requires a combination of many different, specific interventions. Ultimately, the best spatial interventions are the ones that manage to contribute to multiple principles simultaneously.

Furthermore, the decision to create a car-free street acts as a crucial catalyst. This intervention is necessary to free up the physical space required to make many of the other design choices possible.

It is also clear that softening hard boundaries is essential for enhancing public familiarity. Hard spatial lines, such as high fences and car-dominated streets, need to be replaced by softer transitions to encourage social contact. Additionally, spatial clarity through differentiation appears in multiple design interventions, proving that clearly defining spaces is highly important for fostering public familiarity.

Lastly, it can be concluded that to truly enhance public familiarity on the pocket scale, all five principles must actively influence the design.

District



Current situation

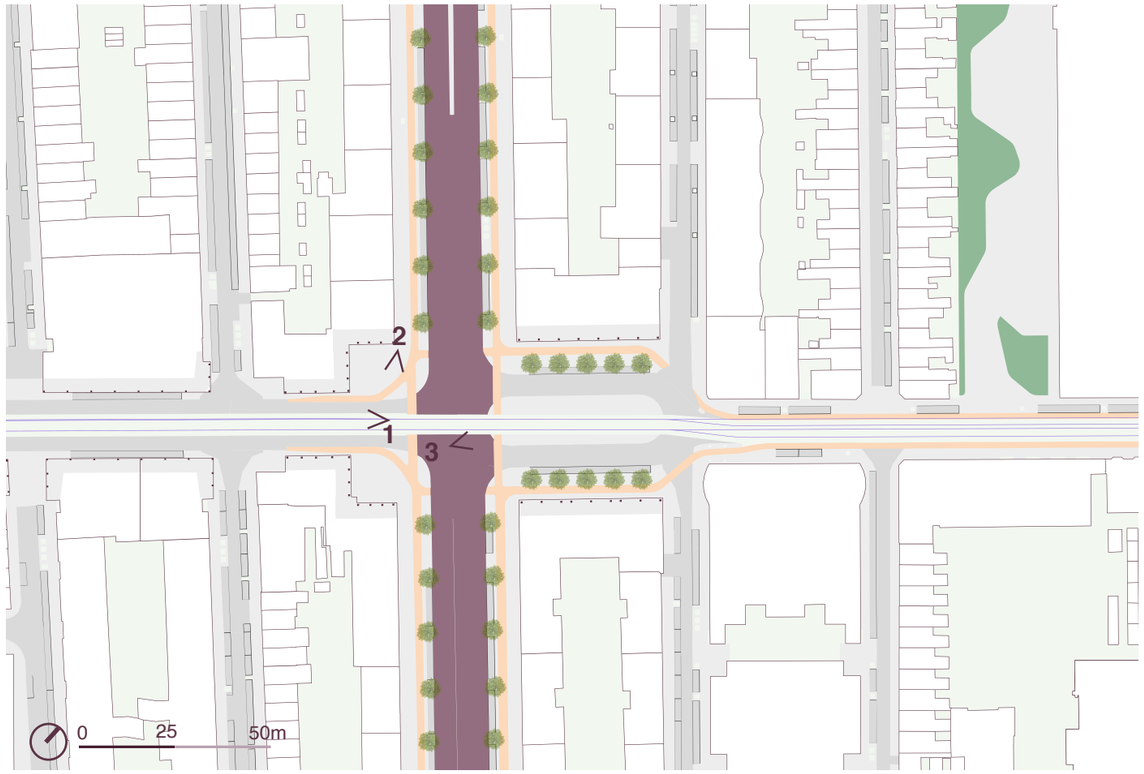


Fig 59. Current floorplan

A shopping street lacking greenery, optimized for fast traffic



Fig 58. Image 1 of current situation

Public space functioning as a parking area



Fig 60. Image 2 of current situation

The busy Vaillantlaan acts as a border between the shopping street and the tram stop, a space designed around the continuous movement of people



Fig 61. Image 3 of current situation

Five streets approach

> “The Hague is allocating 7 million euros to make five shopping streets in the Schilderswijk and Transvaal more attractive. The goal is to turn the area into the city’s ‘third center’.”
>
> *Van Bree, Omroep West, 2025*



Fig 62. Approach to five shopping streets

Franke et al. (2014) explain the importance of routine integration on a bigger scale. By focusing on intersections, routes, and connecting roads, a neighborhood can become integrated into the wider urban network. While talking to the municipality of The Hague and community center ‘De Mussen’, it became clear that the Schilderswijk is an island in The Hague. Lots of people live in their own bubble and do not know what the lifestyles of other citizens in The Hague. There is a big opportunity on this bigger scale on routine integration to make the superdiverse neighborhood and city a bigger success.

Hobbemastraat is an important key factor in this, it is part of the ‘five streets approach’ (vijfstratenaanpak) of the municipality of The Hague. This urban strategy addresses five shopping streets within the Schilderswijk and Transvaal, with Haagse Markt (the largest outdoor market in Europe) as center point. The idea of the approach is that these streets become the new center of the Hague, together with the historical center and Scheveningen.

Design
Floorplan

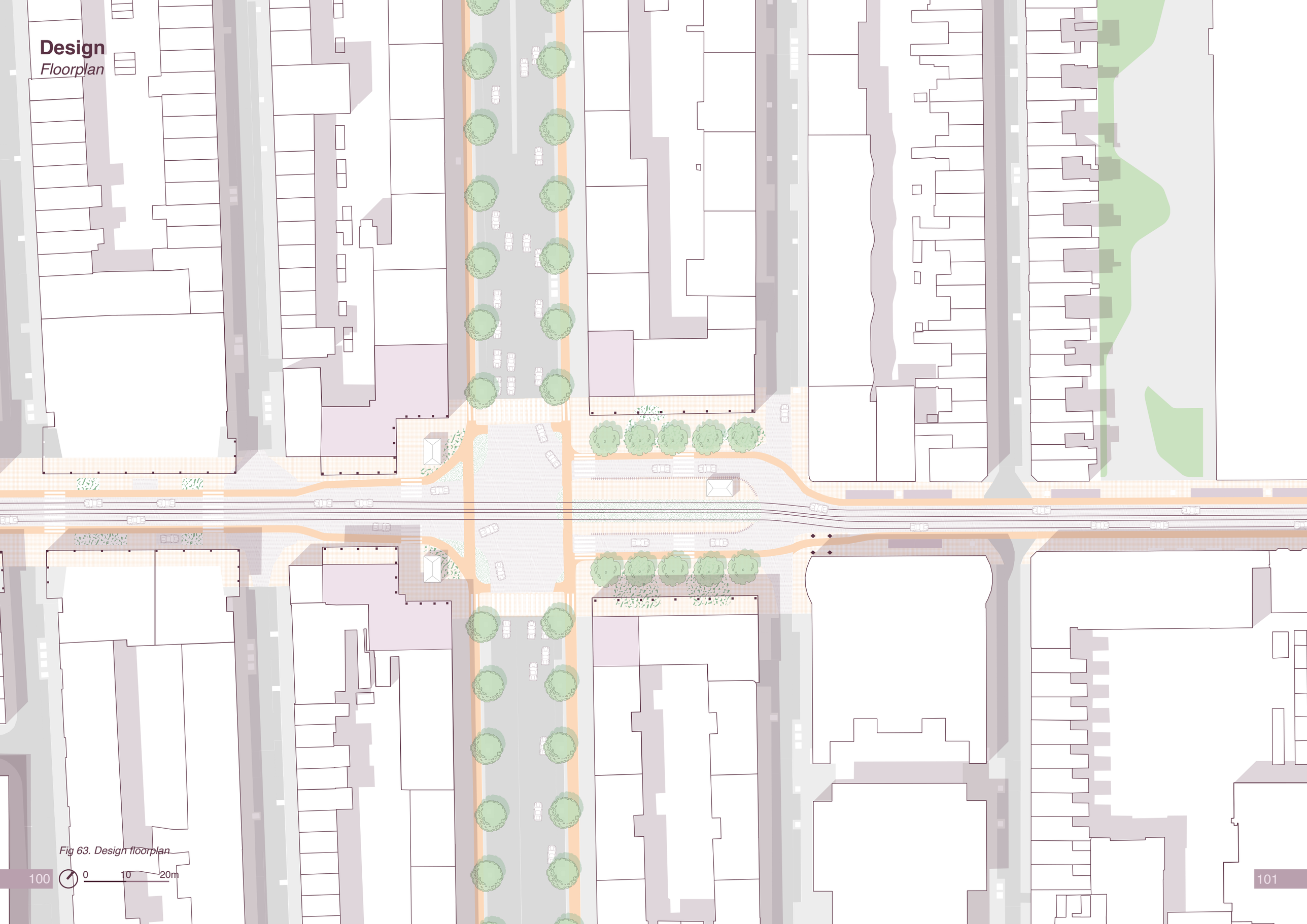


Fig 63. Design floorplan

Functions shopping street

Functions must be a combination between commercial and social. To start a mixed-use area in a place where there is nothing, Jacobs (1961) explains only big commercial companies will survive. So, building up a neighborhood from scratch commercial functions helps the functions to start. When there is enough density to keep companies running, there is room for lots more little commercial shops and social projects. The Schilderswijk already has lots of different functions in the neighborhood, which can be categorized into eight groups.

Every category adds a different value to public familiarity. Daily groceries are a good addition because they are an important part of people's daily routines. Shops, on the other hand, are more for occasional visits, but they do encourage people to linger on the street longer, which in turn increases the chances of encounters. Furthermore, cafes and social functions are places where people really do stay longer. Combining the functions of passing by and destinations will integrate lots of routines and has a great mixed use.

Facilities Hobbemastraat	Average opening times
Daily groceries and take away	8-22
Hospitality industry and leisure	12-00
Retail and commercial	9-18
Social services	9-18
Services by appointment	9-17
Public and social functions	Varies by day
Periodic megadynamic	Specific days
Other	

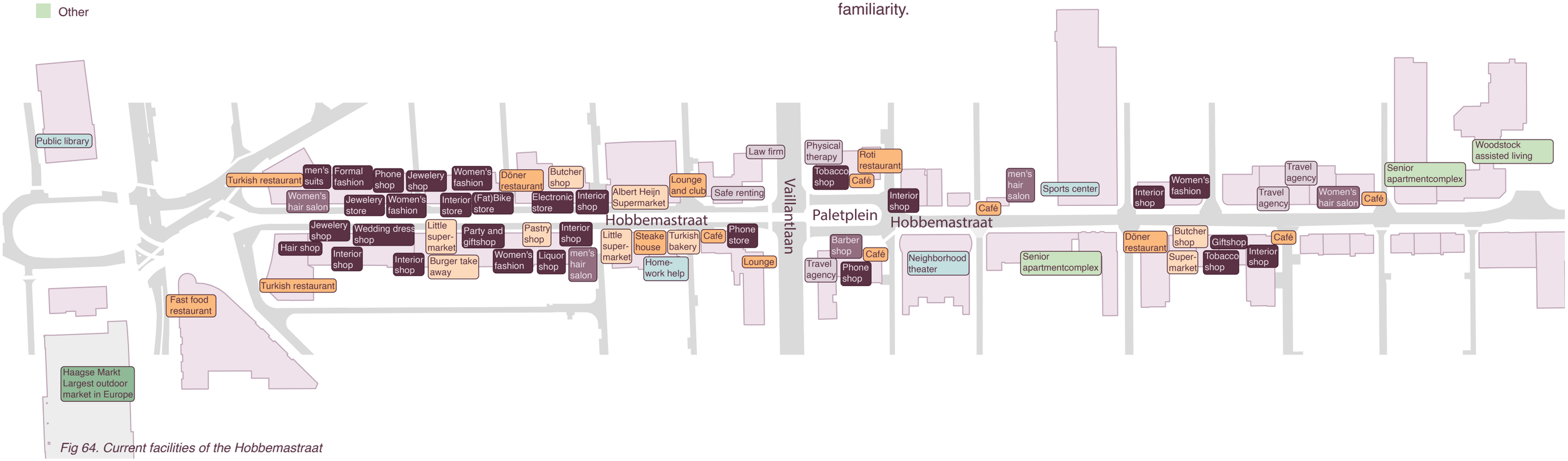


Fig 64. Current facilities of the Hobbemastraat

Analysis functions of Hobbemastraat

The functions should not be too far apart and should also be easily accessible, to achieve mixed use and routine integration (Jacobs, 1961). It seems that the functions are not too far apart and continuously on the street. But if looked closely at opening times and category of functions. It appears that the commercial cafes and restaurants are on the left side of Vaillantlaan, where the social public facilities are on the right. Because these functions provide the only evening activity in the area, physically and visually connecting them across the intersection is essential. In the current situation the Vaillantlaan acts as a barrier that disconnects these functions, so in the design Hobbemastraat is emphasized. This is achieved by using continuous street material and adding destinations in public space, mainly at Paletplein.

In the middle, on the Paletplein, services that operate primarily by appointment are in the majority. These functions add too little value to public familiarity, because appointments do not spontaneously ensure encounters and their facades are mostly closed off. Paletplein should be a public space where people enjoy the sun, linger around and have a pleasant place to wait for the tram. Taking that into account, makes it desirable to add other functions to this public space. This intervention directly fosters routine integration, because the services on appointment are now creating a gap in the Hobbema route towards Haagse Markt.

Functions on district level not only help achieve a mixed-use area and integrate routines, but it can also help with an inviting neighborhood and sense of ownership. The mix of opening times ensures active frontage. Especially hospitality industry and leisure ensure lots of eyes on the street. For an inviting street, it is important that the store owners work together, and therefore have a sense of ownership. When the store owners do not collaborate into keeping the streets clean and vibrant, the streets will miss lots of opportunities. Empty shopping streets are anything but good for public familiarity.

Street profile shopping street

Hobbemastraat

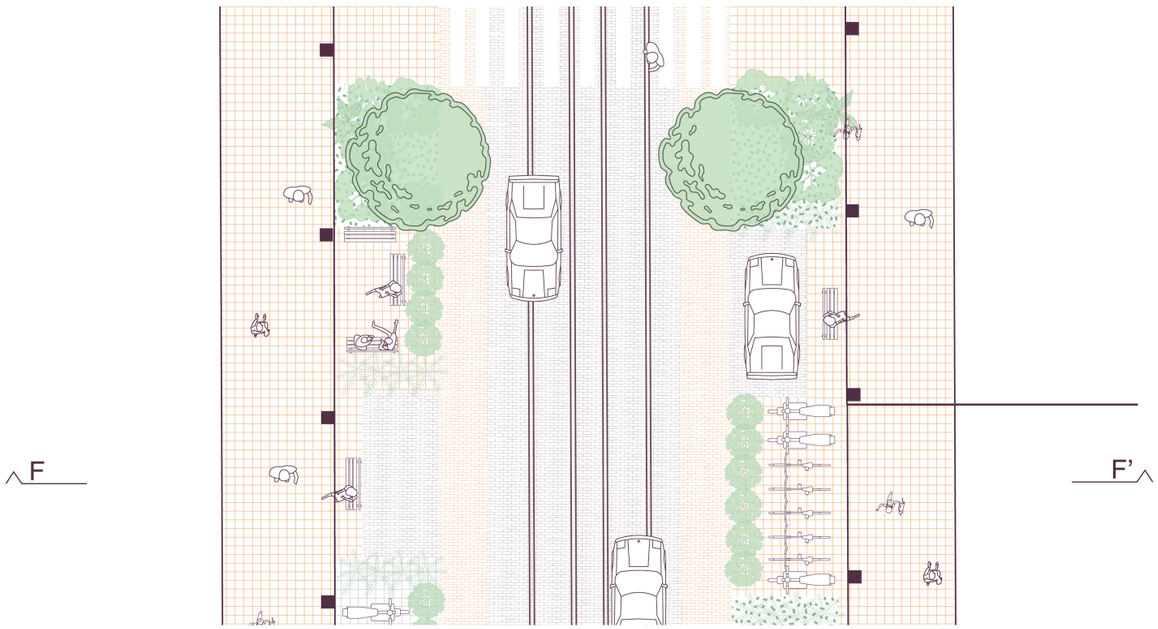




Fig 65. Section FF’

It is important, as established in chapter three, that a neighborhood should be pedestrian and bicycle focused. The Schilderswijk, however, is very car oriented, because almost the whole neighborhood was rebuilt during the urban renewal of the 1980s. The first thing that will help is changing the street material from asphalt to paving stones. This ensures that cars drive slower, and the street becomes safer to cross. To make it even more pedestrian-friendly, crosswalks have been added.

Furthermore, in the design the cars are restricted to sharing the same lanes as buses and trams. The space this intervention creates will be taken up by cycling lanes and widening the sidewalk. The parking spaces are also removed and this creates extra space for sitting, loading zones, greenery and bicycle parking. Extra space is important for achieving routine integration, because, as Mantingh et al. (2021) note, when people meet on the sidewalk, stepping aside must be possible so that other pedestrians can pass uninterrupted. These extra spaces have lots of potential to create a pleasant climate. Especially greenery makes a more pleasant climate, because it intricates the road and creates shelter for pedestrians.

0 5 10m

Street profile gathering space

Paletplein

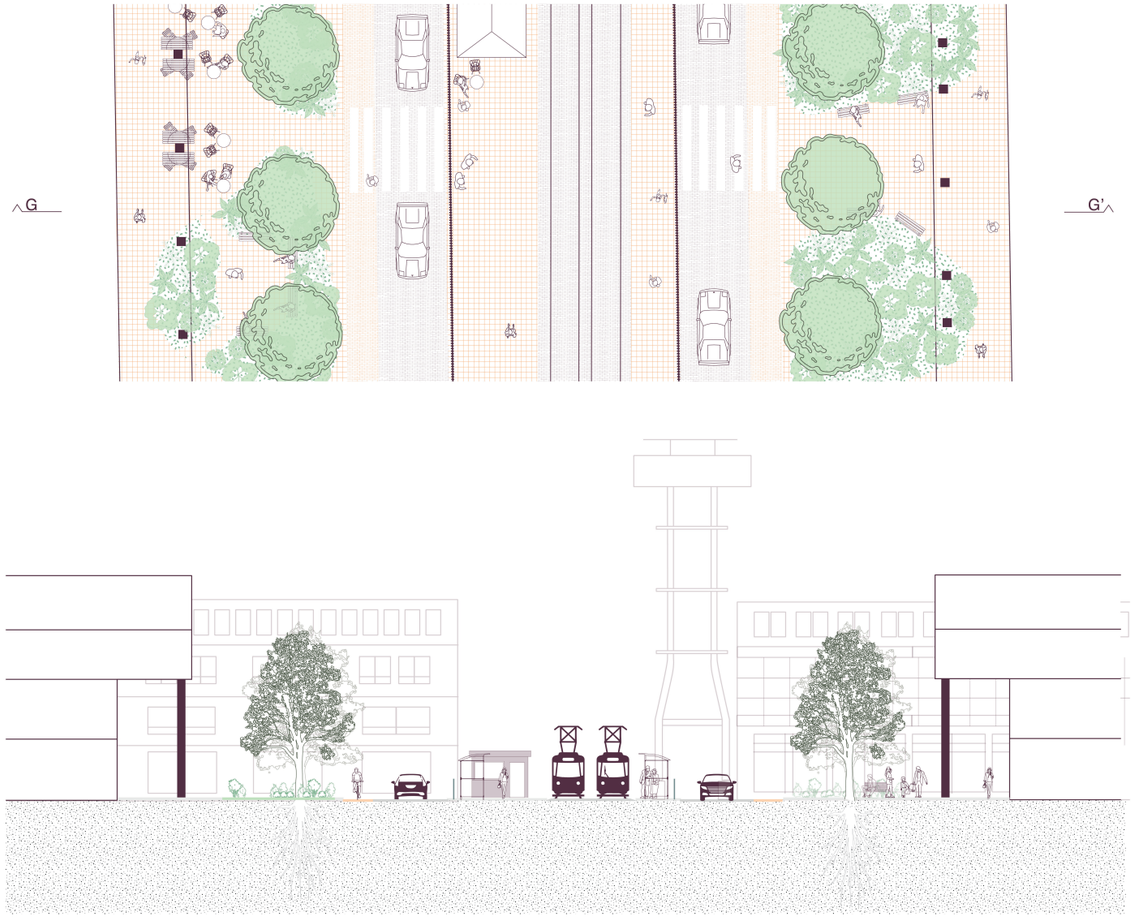


Fig 66. Section GG'

A good built environment is achieved, among other things, by creating public spaces with functions (Crul and Lelie, 2025). So, not only the buildings in the neighborhood need to have multiple functions, the public spaces as well. Paletplein is designed as a place to stay, whereas Hobbemastraat is a place to pass by. This Paletplein is wider, has already bigger sidewalks and has a tram stop. A good neighborhood is easily accessible by public transport, so this tram stop is important for the neighborhood (Bakker, 2026). During the interview with the community center 'De Mussen' was explained that most of the people from the Schilderswijk use public transport. So, already lots of people use Paletplein, this is a big opportunity to get people to stay longer and create a higher level of public familiarity.

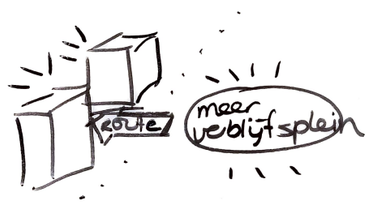


Fig 67. Concept of gathering space

0 5 10m



Fig 68. Impression of gathering space

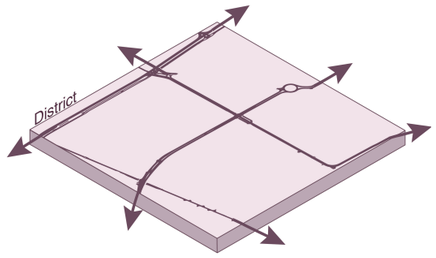
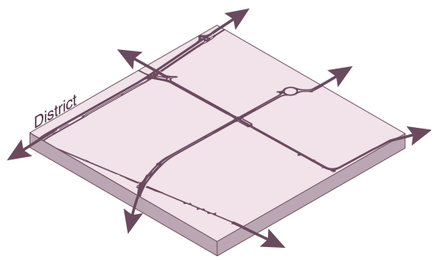
To get people to stay longer, Paletplein should be more inviting. New functions, as explained in the chapter of 'functions shopping street', create an active frontage. Furthermore, an inviting place, as established in chapter 3, should have pleasant climate and characterful texture. To achieve this, multiple interventions are designed for this public space. The first one is giving the sidewalks more space by only having one car lane, instead of two. A cycle lane is added to make the street more cycle-proof. The same material is applied as with the shopping street, to slow down the cars and create continuity. The sidewalks now can have a big terrace for people to enjoy the sun and vegetation is added. This greenery creates a buffer between the road and the sidewalk, so lingering is encouraged. A pleasant climate is created by taking advantage of solar radiation and making places out of the wind (Mantingh et al., 2021).

Furthermore, little kiosks are added on the public space, two on the left side of Vaillantlaan and one at the tram stop. The tram stop should be a coffee kiosk, for people to take their drink onto the tram and encourage people to come earlier to the tram stop. But it can also be used for people that do not use the tram. The two kiosks on the left side should be an addition to the shopping street, such as a greengrocer or a nut shop. These kiosks bring the gathering space and shopping street closer to each other.

The Schilderswijk is known for having lots of arcades on Vaillantlaan and Hobbemastraat, which should be preserved. This gives the neighborhood landmarks, intricacy and recognizability. This can also be described as characterful texture, as established in chapter 3. However, the corners of the arcades on the left sides give lots of shadow, resulting in a dark corner. This is currently used as parking spaces with only tiles. On each side a kiosk is added to utilize the space and create a clearer sidewalk. The dark spots are solved by expanding the functions up to the pillars, this also creates more active frontage. In the plan of Jo Coenen, the designer of Vaillantlaan, the higher buildings with arcades were supposed to be the gate to Hobbemastraat. By expanding the ground floor everywhere except for the arcade above the sidewalk of Hobbemastraat, the gate is more clearly emphasized.

Conclusion on district level

The first row of the table summarizes the specific interventions applied in the design, while the second row translates these into general interventions. The darker the color of an applied intervention, the more principles it emphasizes.

	Mixed use	Routine integration	Lifecycle-proof	Inviting	Sense of ownership
 *Applied interventions*	Integrating six different functional categories Introducing a gathering space Add new functions, mainly at the gathering space Add small kiosks	Add new functions, mainly at the gathering space Using continuous street material Adding pedestrian crosswalks Restricting cars to shared transit lanes Replacing parking spaces with seating, loading zones, greenery, and bicycle parking Integrating dedicated cycle lanes Add small kiosks	No specific interventions at this scale	Introducing a gathering space Add new functions, mainly at the gathering space Restricting cars to shared transit lanes Replacing parking spaces with seating, loading zones, greenery, and bicycle parking Equipping sidewalks with sun-exposed terraces and greenery Add small kiosks Extending active ground-floor functions to the arcade pillars Preservation of historic buildings	Encouraging store owners to collaboratively maintain and activate the street
 *General interventions*	• Combining commercial and social spaces • Integrating transit-oriented and destination-oriented functions • Providing all-day public functions	• Create open functions throughout the whole day • Focus on pedestrian and cycling infrastructure • Providing spatial widenings to facilitate spontaneous encounters	No general interventions at this scale	• Create open functions throughout the whole day • Enhancing spatial intricacy • Providing spatial widenings to facilitate spontaneous encounters • Implementing green buffers between the street and sidewalks • Designing based on solar orientation and wind • Creating unique and remarkable spatial landmarks	• Fostering stakeholder collaboration

Conclusion on district level

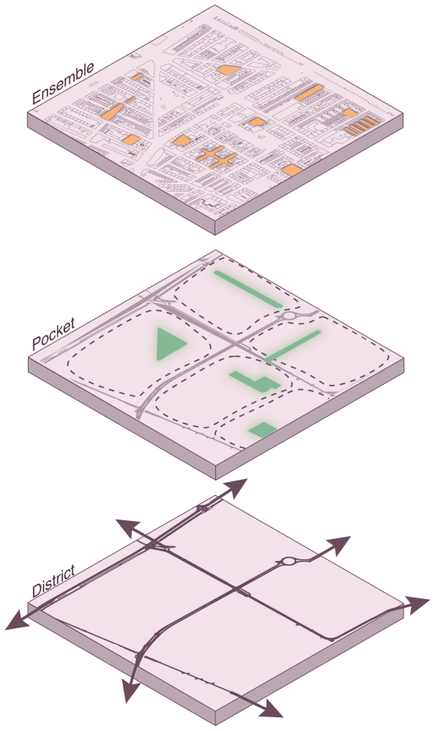
What stands out from the table is that no specific interventions for lifecycle-proof design were applied at this scale, alongside only a single intervention for creating a sense of ownership. This indicates that these two principles are less prominent at the larger district level.

Furthermore, two interventions contributed to three principles simultaneously: introducing new functions to the gathering space and adding small kiosks. At the district scale, it is crucial to strike a balance between commercial and social functions to actively encourage people to prolong their stay.
Changing the street profile is also a fundamental step. Restricting cars to shared transit lanes acts as a vital catalyst, freeing up the physical space needed to create wider sidewalks and making multiple other interventions possible.

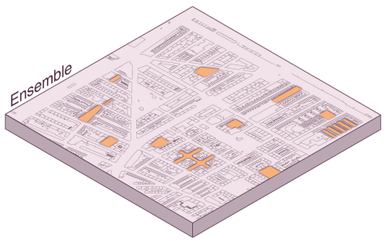
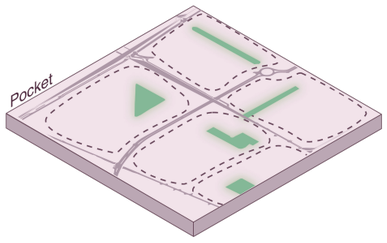
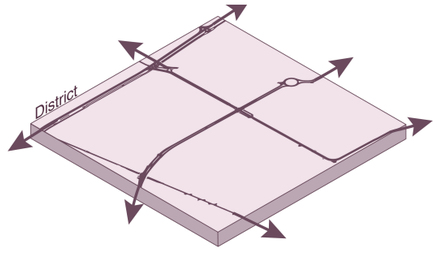
To successfully achieve an inviting and mixed-use environment, solving traffic issues alone is insufficient. To truly integrate different parts of the district, complementary functions (both social and commercial destinations) must be physically linked together through a continuous street, with inviting active frontage.

Lastly, the interventions at the district level serve a much larger urban goal: breaking the isolation of the Schilderswijk, which currently functions as an ‘island’ within The Hague. By focusing on the main structure through upgrading public transport nodes like Paletplein and aligning with the municipality’s approach for the Hobbemastraat shopping street, routine integration extends beyond the neighborhood boundaries, reconnecting the district with the wider city.

Conclusion of design



General interventions

	Mixed use	Routine integration	Lifecycle-proof	Inviting	Sense of ownership
	No general interventions at this scale	• Optimizing the micro-route from the street to the front door, pedestrian focussed • Creating active and transparent ground-floor facades	No general interventions at this scale	• Add more greenery • Create threshold zones • Desinging based on solar radiation and wind • Creating active and transparent ground-floor facades	• Participatory process, facilitating bottom-up community initiatives • Creating clear differentiation of public, semi-public and private zones • Emphasizing a threshold zone
	• Combination of commercial and social places • Combination of large and small companies • Different functions on the public space	• Street differentiation with a focus on pedestrian and cycling infrastructure	• Creating dedicated spaces for different lifecycles within the public realm • Providing open spaces for free interpretation	• Designing based on solar orientation • Add more greenery • Minimizing the use of fences • Make places remarkable and unique • Creating open facades and lively ground-floor functions	• Social function directly adjacent to the public space • Create a threshold zone • Participatory process • Seamless spatial connection between the building blocks and public space
	• Combining commercial and social spaces • Integrating transit-oriented and destination-oriented functions • Providing all-day public functions	• Create open functions throughout the whole day • Focus on pedestrian and cycling infrastructure • Providing spatial widenings to facilitate spontaneous encounters	No general interventions at this scale	• Create open functions throughout the whole day • Enhancing spatial intricacy • Providing spatial widenings to facilitate spontaneous encounters • Implementing green buffers between the street and sidewalks • Designing based on solar orientation and wind • Creating unique and remarkable spatial landmarks	• Fostering stakeholder collaboration

Conclusion

When synthesizing the findings and comparing all scales, several findings emerge. First, it becomes clear that certain spatial interventions act as strategies for all principles. Across every scale, prioritizing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure while reducing car dominance acts as a crucial catalyst, fundamentally freeing up the physical space required for other design interventions. Additionally, achieving spatial clarity through the distinct differentiation of space is essential at all levels to successfully foster public familiarity.

In addition to these overarching interventions, several specific principles require the same general interventions across all scales. ‘Inviting’ environments consistently rely on the focus on creating a pleasant microclimate through greenery and solar optimization. Similarly, the spatial approach to ‘mixed use’ remains consistent: it requires combining social and commercial spaces while balancing transit- and destination-oriented functions. For the Schilderswijk specifically, the interventions highlight a critical need for adding social destinations that encourage residents to prolong their stay.

However, these interventions that are similar throughout the scales are not more important than others, because all general interventions together foster public familiarity. Furthermore, other principles and interventions are highly scale dependent. A ‘lifecycle-proof’ neighborhood must be deeply integrated into the pocket scale, as this is the only level where dedicated, safe spaces for different age groups can be effectively realized.

Finally, the ‘sense of ownership’ reveals a fascinating transition across the spatial hierarchy. As the urban scale increases from the pocket to the district level, the nature of ownership fundamentally shifts from private, individual appropriation to collective responsibility.

05 Conclusion and discussion

Conclusion

The main question of this research was: **How can urban design interventions enhance the public familiarity in a neighborhood with superdiversity?** The main research question is answered by synthesizing the conclusions and insights from the previous chapters.

The framework builds public familiarity through two main mechanisms: generating repeated encounters and encouraging prolonged stays. First, integrating ‘mixed-use’, ‘routine integration’, and ‘lifecycle-proof’ design creates reasons to go outside, establishes intuitive pedestrian flows, and ensures a continuous, cross-generational human presence. Second, the principles of ‘inviting’ and ‘sense of ownership’ actively encourage people to linger. By providing maintained, characterful, pleasant, and active environments, in combination with clear differentiation and threshold zones through resident co-design, spaces are naturally appropriated. Finally, combining frequent encounters with prolonged stays is essential for successfully enhancing public familiarity in superdiverse neighborhoods.

The second chapter explained how these five principles can be translated into spatial interventions and which principles are prominent to which scale.

At the ensemble scale, lifecycle-proof and mixed-use principles are less prominent. Instead, designing synergistically with the other three principles creates large opportunities: small spatial gestures, such as modifying a facade or raising a road, create a multiplier effect that addresses multiple principles simultaneously. Furthermore, contrasting spatial layouts, like an open street versus a collective courtyard, can both successfully achieve key goals, such as creating clear threshold zones. Because multiple spatial solutions are effective, involving residents in a co-design process is essential. This participatory approach is the most powerful way to foster a genuine sense of ownership.

At the pocket scale, all five principles are prominent. While creating inviting spaces requires many specific interventions, mixed-use interventions are highly efficient, often contributing to several principles simultaneously. Additionally, creating a car-free street acts as a catalyst, freeing up necessary physical space for other interventions. Finally, a fascinating spatial paradox emerges: designing on the pocket scale demands physical permeability, softening hard boundaries for visual contact, paired with programmatic clarity, ensuring clearly defined spaces for specific lifecycles.

At the district scale, lifecycle-proof design and sense of ownership are less prominent. Instead, success relies on balancing commercial and social functions through synergistic interventions. Restricting cars acts as a vital catalyst to free up space. This reclaimed area provides essential room for wider sidewalks and gathering spots. However, it must be paired with continuous active frontages to physically link complementary destinations. Finally, these interventions aim to break the Schilderswijk’s isolation. By upgrading transit nodes like Paletplein and aligning with the vision for Hobbemastraat, routine integration extends beyond neighborhood borders, reconnecting the district to the wider city

Across all scales, certain spatial interventions act as strategies for all principles, specifically designing for pedestrians and cyclists, and ensuring spatial clarity. A key finding is that reducing car dominance acts as a crucial catalyst for these improvements. Furthermore, cross-scale interventions are required for specific principles: ‘inviting’ environments consistently rely on creating pleasant microclimates, while ‘mixed use’ demands combining social and commercial spaces and balance

transit and destination functions. However, these recurring interventions are not inherently more important than others, as all general interventions are needed to foster public familiarity. Lastly, other principles are highly scale-dependent and must be deeply integrated into the specific level where they can be realized, such as ‘lifecycle-proof’ design. Finally, the ‘sense of ownership’ reveals a transition from interventions that foster private appropriation on the smaller scale to a collective responsibility on the bigger scale.

Main conclusion

So, the final conclusion of this thesis is that **all five principles are essential for enhancing public familiarity within the specific context of a superdiverse neighborhood**. Together, the principles ensure that people experience repeated contact while simultaneously encouraging them to prolong their stay. Although the outcome of public familiarity shifts across scales, ranging from knowing each other within a building block to more anonymous encounters in a shopping street, spatial interventions can successfully foster this familiarity at every level. The interventions at ensemble scale lean heavily toward fostering lingering, whereas the district scale focuses more on encounters through movement. Ultimately, however, **every scale requires a combination of principles that facilitate both passing by and lingering**. The pocket scale emerges as the most interesting level for public familiarity, as it is the only scale where all five principles can be fully translated spatially

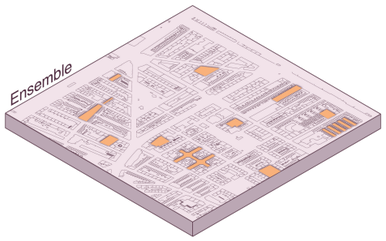
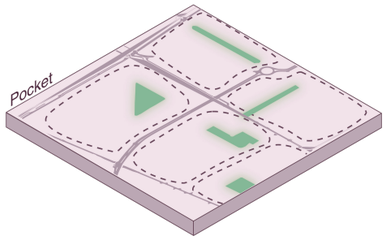
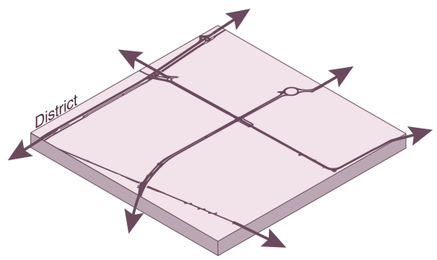
Furthermore, **certain spatial interventions influence multiple principles across different scales**. This synergistic approach should be actively pursued in the design process, as it creates a multiplier effect that addresses multiple principles simultaneously. Alternatively, **the role of interventions may shift depending on the scale**; for instance, stimulating a ‘sense of ownership’ requires a different approach as the scale increases, from private appropriation to collective responsibility. In addition, **other interventions are strictly necessary to fulfill a principle at one specific scale**. For example, beginning with a participation process is essential for achieving a sense of ownership at the ensemble level, just as dedicating specific spaces to age groups is required to achieve lifecycle-proof design at the pocket level.

In the building process, it is also **crucial to recognize and prioritize interventions that act as catalysts for others**. Across all scales, the most important spatial catalyst is reducing car dominance, which frees up the fundamental space needed for other interventions. Additionally, **some spatial interventions reveal an urban paradox**: they require a delicate balance between physical softness and programmatic strictness. Hard physical barriers, like high fences, must be removed to allow for visual contact, but spaces have spatial clarity to prevent one group appropriating the whole area.

Furthermore, when applying ‘mixed use’, merely solving traffic issues or adding shops is insufficient. **There must always be a carefully designed balance** between commercial and social destinations, physically connected by a continuous active frontage, to actively draw people into the street and encourage them to stay.

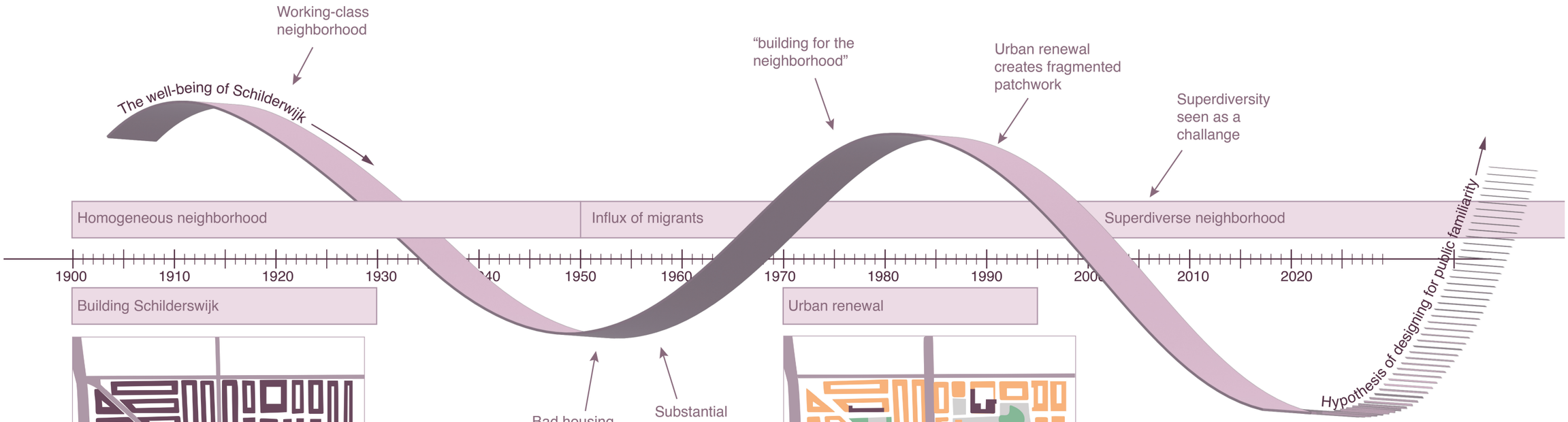
Finally, at the district scale, the goal of public familiarity extends beyond the internal dynamics of the neighborhood. By upgrading public transport nodes and connecting active frontages, **routine integration can reach beyond the neighborhood boundaries**, successfully re-integrating the district with the fabric of the city.

Conclusion

	Mixed use	Routine integration	Lifecycle-proof	Inviting	Sense of ownership
	No general interventions at this scale	Focuses on the route from the street to home	No general interventions at this scale	Faciltates lingering	Private ownership
	Contributes to many other principles	Ensures a presence of people	Necessary to fulfill this principle	Faciltates lingering	
	Provides all day activity	Connects the neighborhood with the city	No general interventions at this scale	Faciltates lingering	Collective ownership

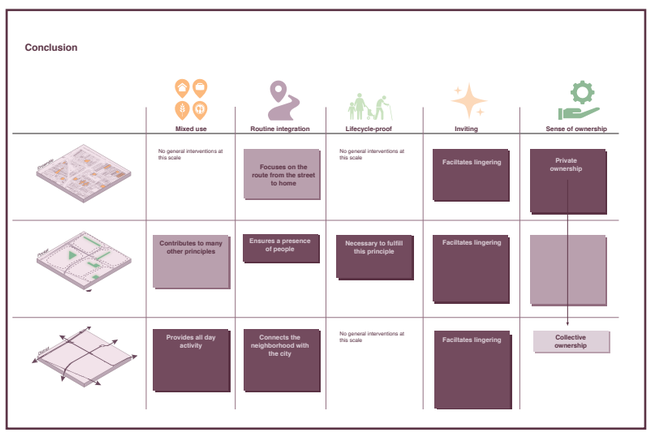
Conclusion

In a political climate marked by budget constraints, a lack of political will for large-scale reconstruction, and a tendency to view superdiversity as a threat to be managed rather than an asset, this approach proposes small-scale interventions that can be implemented gradually over time. In conclusion, this research demonstrates that by designing across three spatial scales using the five principles of public familiarity, the well-being of a superdiverse neighborhood like the Schilderswijk can be significantly improved.









Discussion

Limitations

Concept

The core concept of this thesis focuses on enhancing the conditions for public familiarity through urban design. However, a fundamental limitation is that urban design cannot force people to encounter one another, linger, or even use public space; it can only optimize the physical environment, creating the conditions in the hope of positively influencing human behavior

Furthermore, this thesis is built on the hypothesis that superdiversity is a valuable opportunity. Yet, this diversity also presents distinct complications. For instance, the neighborhood faces significant language barriers, meaning that familiarity often relies almost entirely on visual contact. Turning these passive visual interactions into meaningful encounters or strong social cohesion remains a major challenge. To elaborate, the Schilderswijk is a low-income neighborhood where many residents live in a constant 'survival mode' due to chronic socioeconomic stress. Individuals in this survival mode lack the mental space to engage with their surroundings. Consequently, making eye contact or opening up to casual encounters is much less common, making it harder to build public familiarity.

This reality also impacts the participatory framework of the project, which leans strongly on co-design and fostering a sense of ownership among residents. Reaching these vulnerable groups is difficult due to their survival status and the language barriers. Additionally, participatory processes often attract the same small group of residents, leading to a one-sided perspective. To mitigate this, future projects could implement a more diverse and active advisory board (klankbordgroep) to ensure a richer representation of the community.

Additionally, several proposed interventions aimed at enhancing public familiarity may cause negative secondary effects. For example, creating inclusive public spaces for all ages can result in late-night nuisance, just as introducing active social functions in residential areas can disrupt the peace and privacy of direct neighbors. These potential conflicts are critical trade-offs that must be acknowledged in the design phase.

Lastly, this framework idealizes the notion that residents will naturally take up the maintenance of their public spaces. In reality, the municipality and housing corporations retain a vital responsibility for the neighborhood's well-being and upkeep. A dedicated management policy is essential for maintaining the newly introduced green infrastructure. Moreover, the municipality and housing corporations must actively supervise the programming of the commercial strips, ensuring that new shops and facilities contribute to social cohesion rather than purely commercial interests.

Methods

A primary limitation of the literature review is that academic sources predominantly document successful urban projects where, for example, mixed-use developments thrived, while projects resulting in failure, social friction, or public disturbances are rarely published. Consequently, the gathered literature may present an idealized view of what these spatial principles can realistically achieve.

A methodological limitation during the interviews was the potential for confirmation bias, as the conversations were often implicitly directed toward validating a certain outcome. Additionally, for ethical reasons, interviews were not audio recorded. This reliance on handwritten notes and memory introduced a higher degree of subjective interpretation during data analysis.

The fieldwork also faced communication constraints, due to language barriers in the Schilderswijk. Spontaneous street interviews were limited to residents speaking Dutch or English, leaving non-Western speaking demographics underrepresented. Furthermore, while institutional stakeholders were interviewed, the study lacked perspectives from key informal figures, such as local business owners, supermarket managers, or elementary school principals.

The methodology of site observations has different limitations. First, fieldwork was strictly conducted during daytime hours, missing the shifts in spatial use and user groups that occur after dark, only interviews brought in this information. Second, observations consisted of a couple of separate visits rather than multiple prolonged presence. Lastly, empirical data collection was focused on the pocket scale, meaning insights for the ensemble and district scales rely more heavily on secondary data.

Furthermore, with site observation the 'observer effect' could have happened. The visible presence of a researcher by taking photographs and mapping with a notebook, signaled that research was being conducted. The effect could be that this visibility may have influenced the natural behavior of residents in the public realm, which could potentially affect the reliability of the observations.

A limitation of Research by Design is its inherent subjectivity, because the designer functions as the primary research instrument. The translation of theoretical principles into spatial drawings relies on personal interpretation, architectural background, and intuition. This introduces a risk of designer bias, meaning other planners might interpret the same data differently and propose alternative spatial interventions.

Time

Due to the fixed timeline of this thesis, there was no time to organize a formal participation process where residents could co-design and give valuable input. Consequently, the project lacks the deep, lived experiences of the community. Residents possess unique, contextual knowledge regarding where specific spatial problems persist, and which public spaces already successfully foster public familiarity. Without this direct collaboration, the framework risks overlooking the everyday realities of the people who actually use these spaces daily.

Furthermore, because of time restrictions, only the pocket scale was analyzed and designed in great detail with a lot of data about spatial utilization. If there had been more time, full street interviews and extensive site observations would have been done for all three scales. This created a bit of an imbalance in the empirical backing of the scales. While the pocket scale is heavily grounded in fieldwork, the spatial proposals for the ensemble and district scales are based on briefer site observations, resulting in a less detailed design.

Despite these limitations, the core ambition of the thesis remains intact. These limitations should not be seen as obstacles, but rather as an invitation for further research.

Discussion

Implications

This thesis demonstrates how the conditions for public familiarity can be enhanced within the Schilderswijk, offering valuable insights that extend beyond this specific case. The developed ‘general interventions’ can serve as a structural guideline for other superdiverse neighborhoods, while the ‘applied interventions’ act as concrete illustrative examples. They must be used as examples, because these spatial solutions cannot simply be replicated one-to-one. Future projects must carefully analyze the socio-spatial context of the specific neighborhood through participatory processes, street interviews, and observations.

Nevertheless, the five principles are universally applicable. Since post-WWII urban renewal is a widespread structural phenomenon rather than a challenge unique to The Hague. As numerous cities are facing similar spatial effects, they can utilize this framework as a guide for developments. Furthermore, urban areas globally are dealing with social challenges such as loneliness, depression and low social cohesion, issues that can be reduced by fostering encounters. Consequently, this framework is valuable not only for existing neighborhoods but also for guiding the design of new urban developments. As cities worldwide experience rising cultural and economic diversity, superdiversity may eventually become the urban norm. Regardless of demographic shifts, enhancing casual encounters and public familiarity remains fundamentally beneficial for the social fabric of any community.

While public familiarity might appear to be an isolated social concept primarily linked to themes like social cohesion and third places, this research highlights a profound synergy with broader sustainable urban design concepts. For instance, the interventions aimed at creating an ‘inviting’ environment rely on incorporating urban greenery. This not only enhances the social realm but simultaneously boosts local biodiversity and strengthens climate resilience. Moreover, the framework of this project seamlessly aligns with the ‘15-minute city’ model. Through the principles of mixed-use and routine integration, which prioritize pedestrian and cycling infrastructure alongside mixing local facilities within a short range, social vitality and sustainable mobility are promoted simultaneously.

In the end, this thesis suggests that urban planning needs to change its perspective. Superdiversity should no longer be seen as a challenge that needs to be managed by the government. Instead, it is a valuable opportunity for urban design. By stopping threat-based management and focusing on what diversity can bring, urban design can unlock the real social value of these communities.

Further research

To build upon the framework developed in this project, future research could first look into scaling up from the neighborhood level to the city level. Additionally, future research could connect the topic to other professional fields to create a multidisciplinary approach.

As briefly touched upon at the district scale, shopping streets influence the connection between a district and the wider city. Further research could continue to investigate the importance of routine integration for breaking the isolation of the Schilderswijk. Currently, there is still a lot of misunderstanding and segregation between the Schilderswijk and the city, but also between other neighborhoods towards the Schilderswijk. Therefore, it would be valuable to study how public familiarity functions at a city-wide scale using the same urban design framework.

Another important direction is the temporal phasing and management of the proposed interventions. As discussed in the conclusion, transforming the car-oriented environment is an example of a catalyst that unlocks other interventions. Future research could explore this specific step-by-step transformation in detail, mapping out exactly how to transition away from a car-oriented design. Additionally, because the remaining interventions likely require a similar sequential approach, further studies could map all the interventions out on a clear timeline, showing how they can be executed over time in close cooperation with the municipality and housing corporations.

In the proposed designs, lots of greenery was added to make the public realm more inviting. Future research could take this a step further by collaborating with landscape architects to create a design focusing on biodiversity and climate-adaptivity for the neighborhood. This research could analyze which native plants and tree species will thrive if global temperatures rise by 1.5°C, and explore how designing for specific local wildlife can improve the overall biodiversity of the district.

Finally, the built environment is just one part of creating a successful superdiverse neighborhood. Future research should be conducted in collaboration with sociologists to investigate how the other four social mechanisms that influence a superdiverse society (as explained in chapter 2) can be addressed, and how they can be facilitated through urban design.

Personal reflection

Personal Growth

When starting this project, I was a bit intimidated by the scale and timespan of a master's thesis. However, it turned out to be a highly rewarding experience to finally research a subject that I am fully passionate about and was able to choose myself. Positioned within the MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences (AUBS) program, and specifically the Urbanism track, this project allowed me to bridge the gap between abstract social challenges and spatial design. Initially, I was skeptical about how this could be translated into a concrete urban planning project, rather than a purely social or psychological study. I was also worried that by touching upon the theme of the multicultural city, I would be forced to make generalized statements about what specific cultural demographics want in public space.

Through this project, however, I learned how to frame my interests and concerns into a tangible spatial design with framework. This is because the framework does not focus on combining the competing interests of dozens of different nationalities, but rather on creating a universal 'common ground'. This common ground is built on casual encounters, a shared human need that transcends cultural background.

This project also forced me to step out of my comfort zone. As I explained in my personal motivation, growing up in The Hague, I rarely visited the Schilderswijk and had labeled it as a dangerous and uninviting neighborhood. However, this research allowed me to truly appreciate the area. I witnessed firsthand the immense amount of love and effort that local residents and stakeholders put into improving the neighborhood's image. They see the real opportunities within this community and, above all, believe in its people.

Furthermore, this project allowed me to learn new methods. In previous projects, time constraints usually limited my fieldwork to brief street interviews, leaving no room for in-depth conversations with stakeholders. During this thesis, however, my excitement grew with every new conversation, as each stakeholder possessed new knowledge about the neighborhood. It was fascinating to compare their differing interests and gather multi-layered insights.

Methods

This brings me to a deeper reflection on my methods. The core methodology of this study was Research by Design, which was continuously alternated with other research methods. The literature helped me find the right academic terminology, which simultaneously clarified what physical conditions needed to be mapped during spatial analysis. And throughout the process of sketching, modeling, and analyzing site observations, a clear need for deeper theoretical backing emerged.

While I had identified my five core principles in a general sense, I needed a more precise understanding of their exact impact on public familiarity. To discover how to influence these principles spatially, the process became a continuous, dynamic loop where literature directly informed the design choices, and design iterations revealed new gaps in the literature.

Similarly, site observations were used to select the right focus locations, revealing the unique characteristics of the Schilderswijk and its public spaces. A key breakthrough occurred through this continuous alternation between designing and observing: the discovery of the different spatial scales of public familiarity. This multi-scalar perspective was an essential finding that would have remained hidden if the research process had been strictly linear.

Another important insight emerged directly through modeling and sketching. When I started designing at the pocket scale, my initial instinct was to radically restructure multiple building blocks, mirroring the heavy-handed approach of historical urban renewal. Testing various design options through sketching, however, revealed alternative ways to achieve the same objectives. For instance, to establish a clear street hierarchy, the modeling process made it clear that emphasizing the existing diagonal street would have a massive positive impact on the experience of the public space. Instead of demolishing and rebuilding an entire neighborhood structure, this goal could be achieved far more efficiently by building up the layers of that single street. Ultimately, this constant process of modeling and sketching proved to be an important tool for discovering design solutions.

Furthermore, interviewing diverse stakeholders was valuable for gaining multi-layered insights of the neighborhood. Conversations with the housing corporation initially confirmed my problem statement and clarified their institutional role. Next, Stagehuis highlighted the immense power of community participation, temporarily giving the impression that public familiarity could be fully achieved through citizen initiatives alone. However, speaking with a Social Psychiatric Nurse brought back a crucial reality check. He could explain the severe impacts of low incomes and language barriers: deep isolation among residents. Finally, the interview with the municipality bridged these social realities back to the built environment, highlighting spatial problems as well as successful urban assets. In conclusion, combining the insights of community centers, urban planners, a housing corporation, and healthcare professionals provided a rich, balanced understanding of the Schilderswijk socio-spatial dynamics.

Adjustments

Looking back, I would have preferred to conduct more extensive interviews with the municipality. While the walk-along interview provided valuable spatial insights, the continuous movement and environmental distractions inherently limited the ability to go into great detail with discussions. To prevent this, I would have organized a semi-structured sit-down interview to complement the walk-along fieldwork, allowing me to really push through and ask more follow-up questions.

Reflecting further on my process, I would have preferred to start designing sooner at the ensemble and district scales. Because I focused heavily on the pocket scale first, I had less opportunity to actively test, observe, and ask targeted questions about these other urban scales during my fieldwork and stakeholder interviews. I also would have started earlier on finding and writing theoretical backing for the framework and fully understanding their influence on public familiarity.

Additionally, I realize that I could have been bolder with some of my design choices. While I pushed myself to do so, I found it challenging to fully commit to radical interventions, particularly regarding the programmatic functions injected into the neighborhood and the input of the green infrastructure.

Finally, even though navigating this long, independent graduation process on my own was challenging, I am proud of the research I conducted and have genuinely enjoyed uncovering the social potential of urban interventions within the Schilderswijk to enhance public familiarity.

06

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Fig 1 Makelaarskantoor Kimmel & Co B.V., 2025, https://www.kimmel.nl/object/fahrenheitstraat-357/68b994819fbe7a30f671de9a

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Fig 27 GEURST & SCHULZE ARCHITECTEN. (2025, September 2). *Le Medi Rotterdam.* https://www.geurst-schulze.nl/woningbouw/le-medi-rotterdam/

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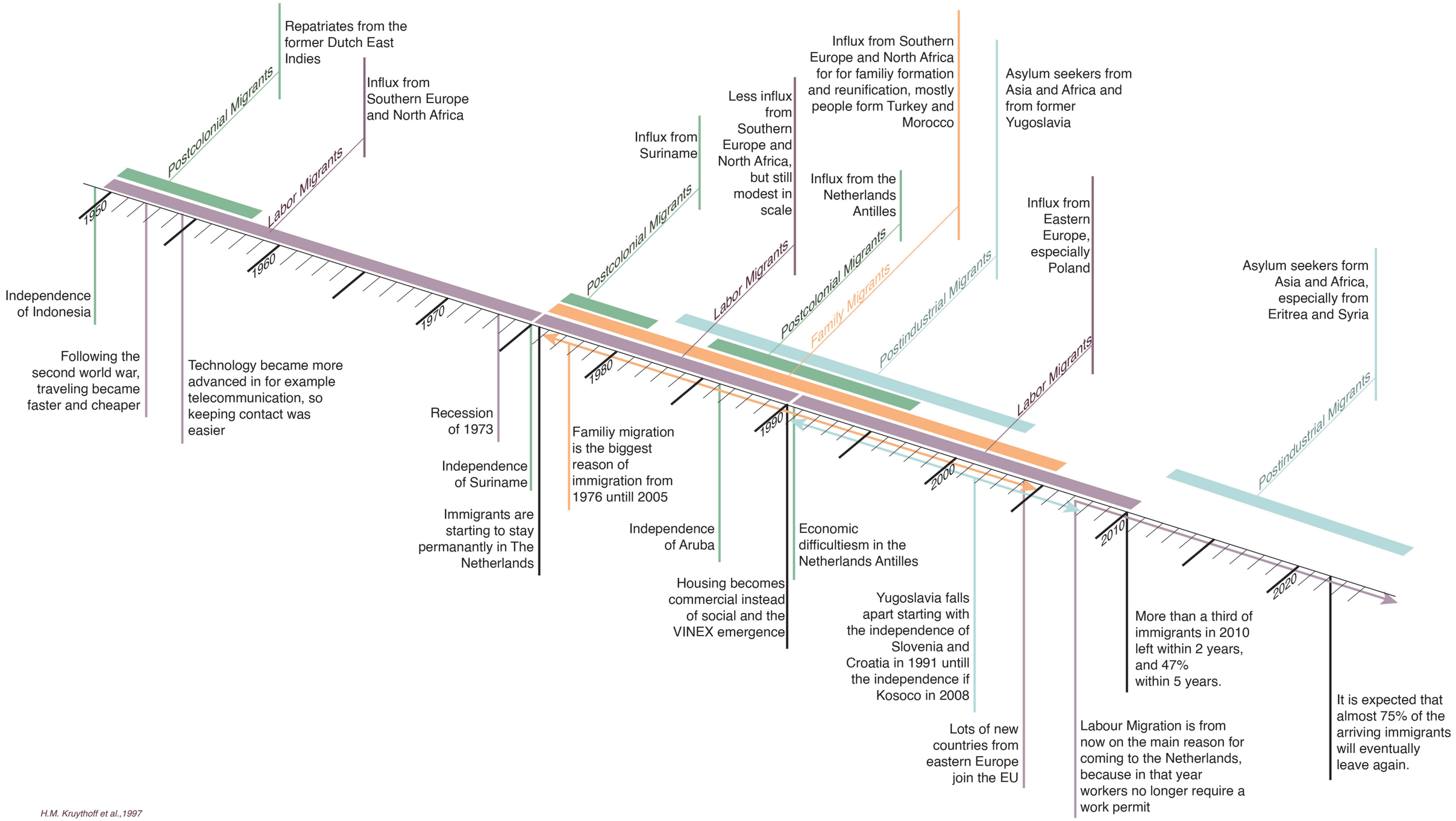
07

Appendix

1. Migration timeline

This timeline shows that immigrants formerly came in large groups from specific locations, they nowadays come in smaller groups from all over the world (Jennissen et al., 2022). The immigrants can be categorized in four groups of migrants by their reason of moving: Postcolonial, labor, family or postindustrial reasons (Jennissen et al., 2022).



H.M. Kruythoff et al.,1997
Jennissen et al., 2022

2. Migration timeline seperated

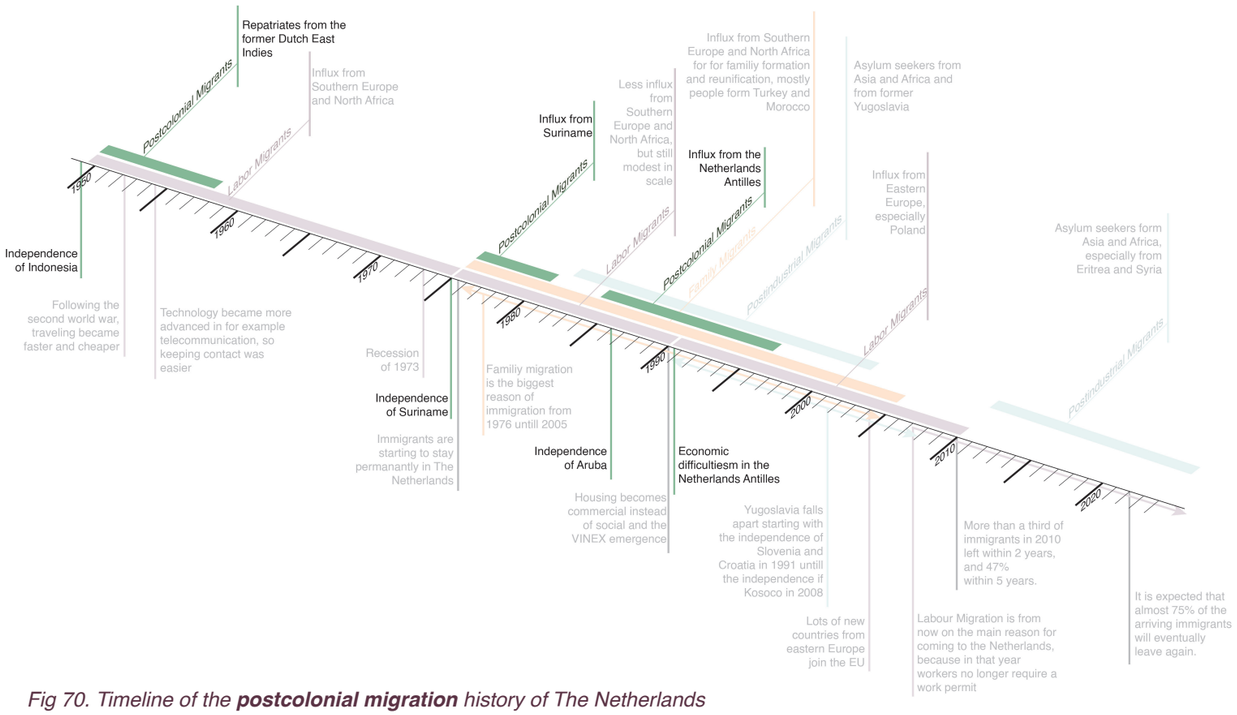


*Fig 70. Timeline of the **postcolonial migration** history of The Netherlands*

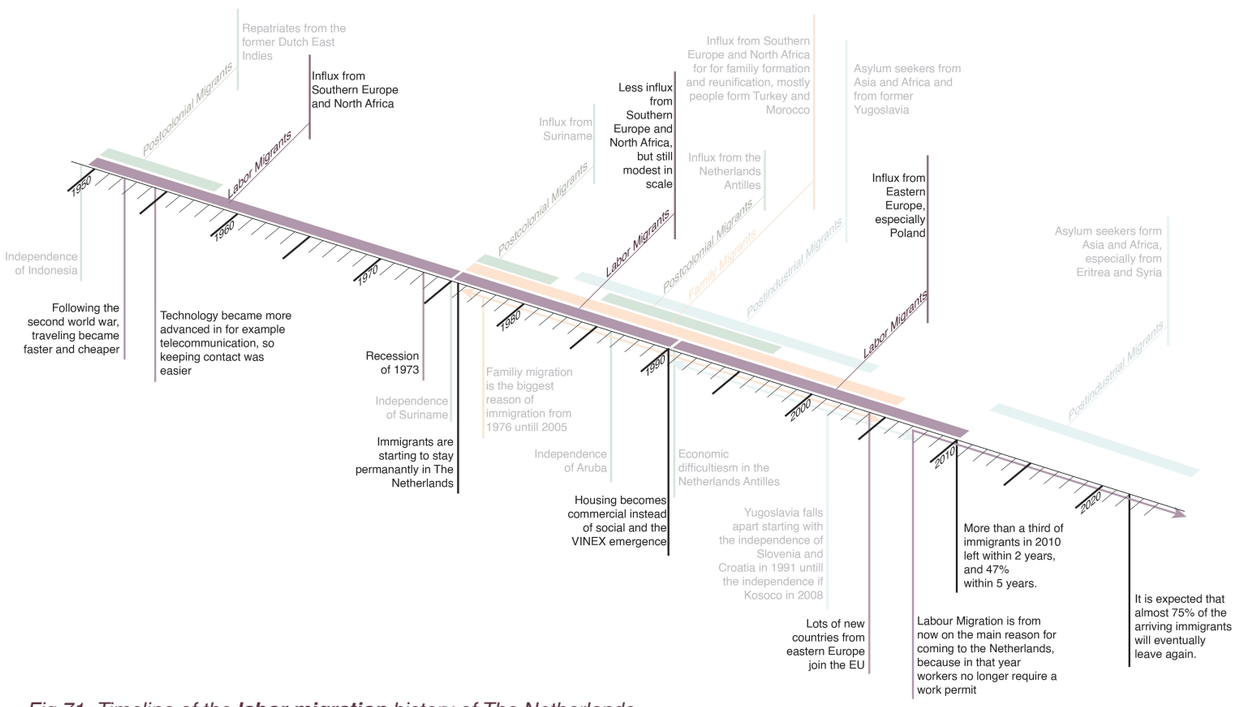


*Fig 71. Timeline of the **labor migration** history of The Netherlands*

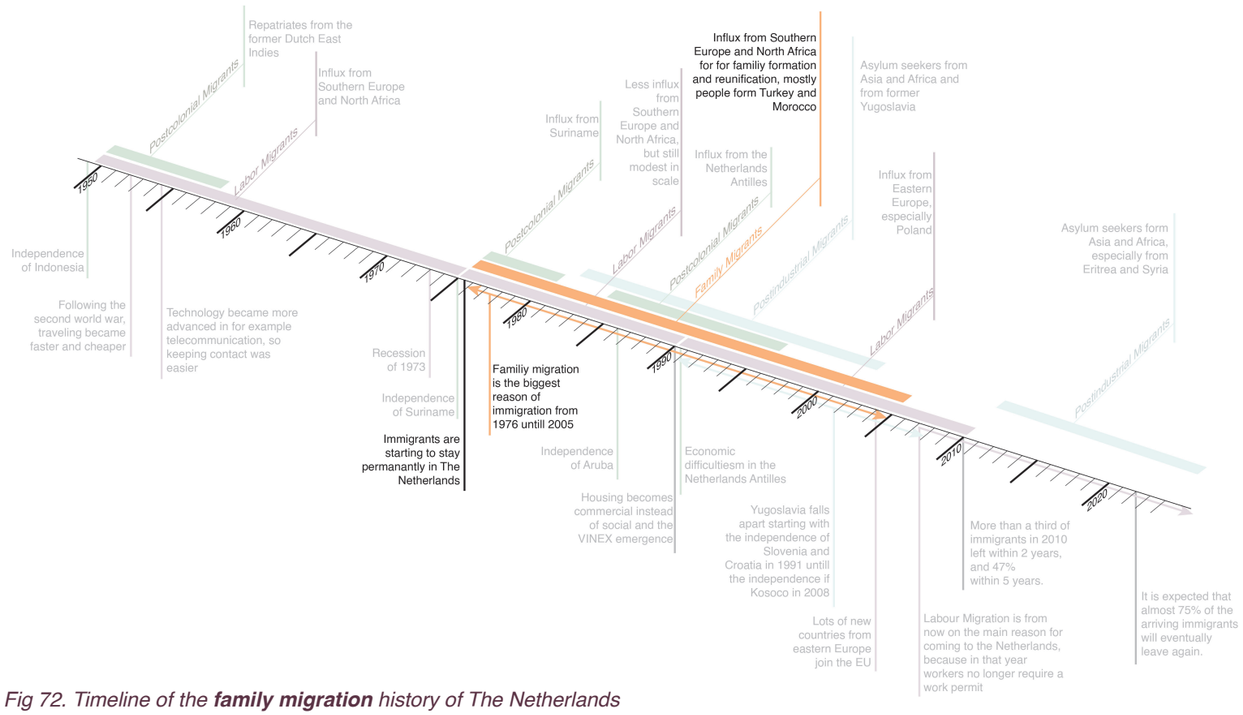


*Fig 72. Timeline of the **family migration** history of The Netherlands*

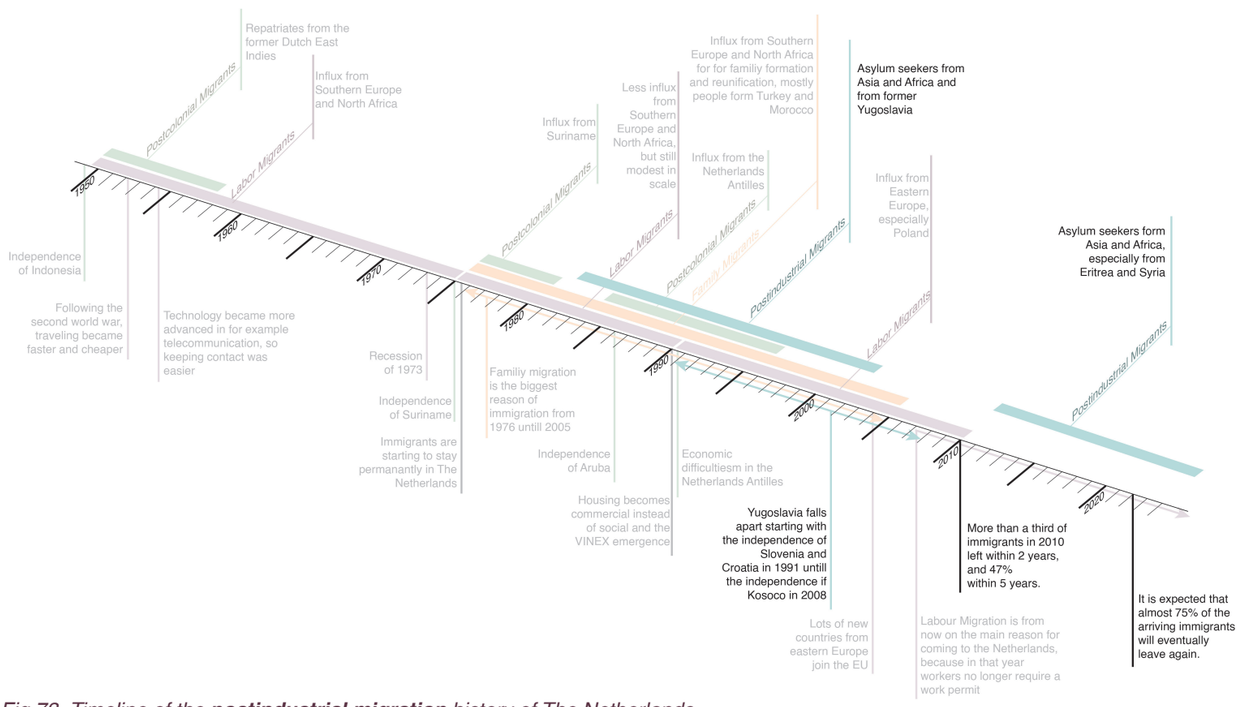


*Fig 73. Timeline of the **postindustrial migration** history of The Netherlands*

3. Migration in The Hague

The amount of people living in The Hague with a migration background has been growing as shown below. The Schilderswijk is one of the neighborhoods where most of the migrants are living, resuting in a superdiverse neighborhood.

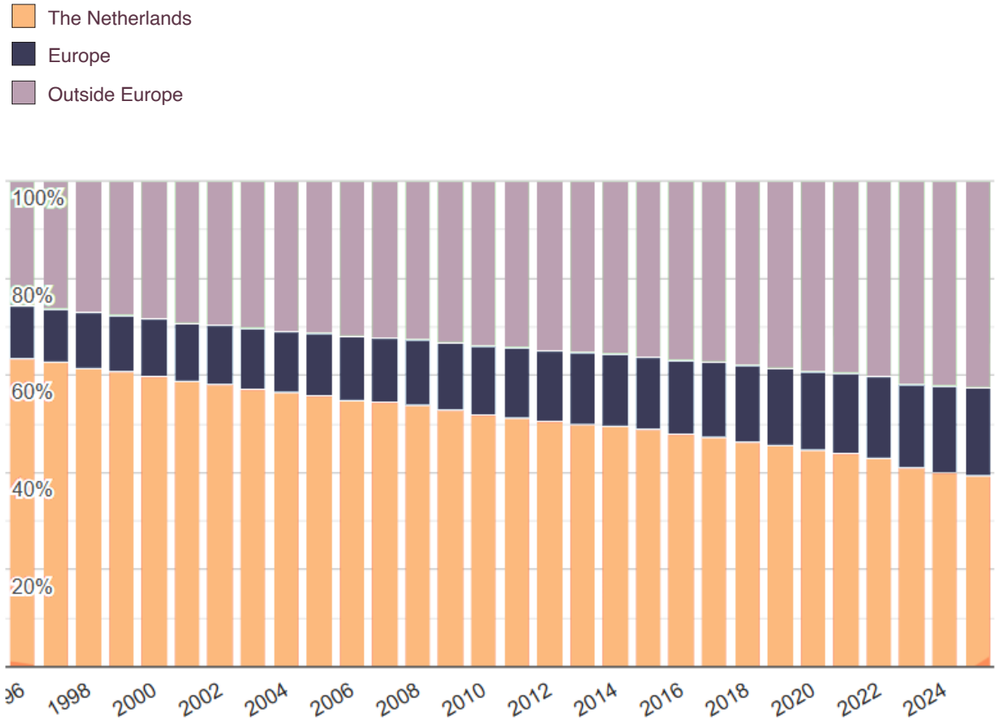


Fig 74. Migration background The Hague, AlleCijfers, 2025

4. Migration in The Schilderswijk

90,9% of The Schilderswijk has a migration background
Den Haag in Cijfers, 2024

The neigborhood counts 140 nationalitities
Haag Wonen, 2026

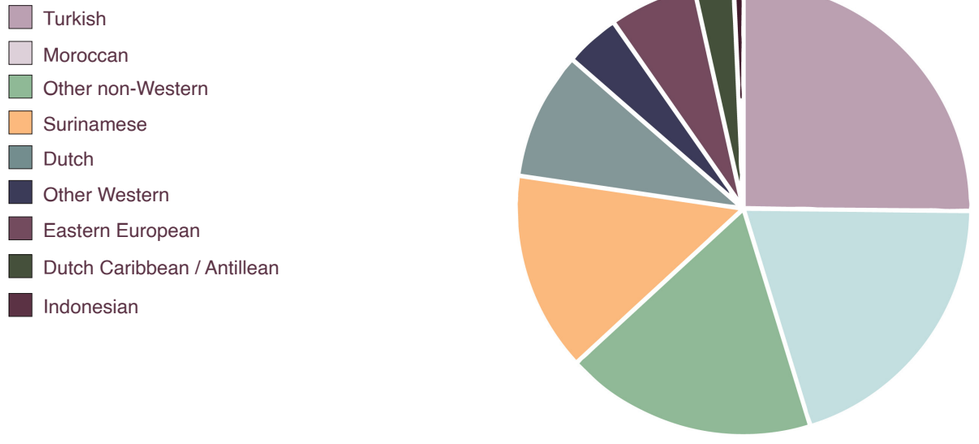


Fig 75. % population by ethnic background, *Den Haag in Cijfers*, 2024

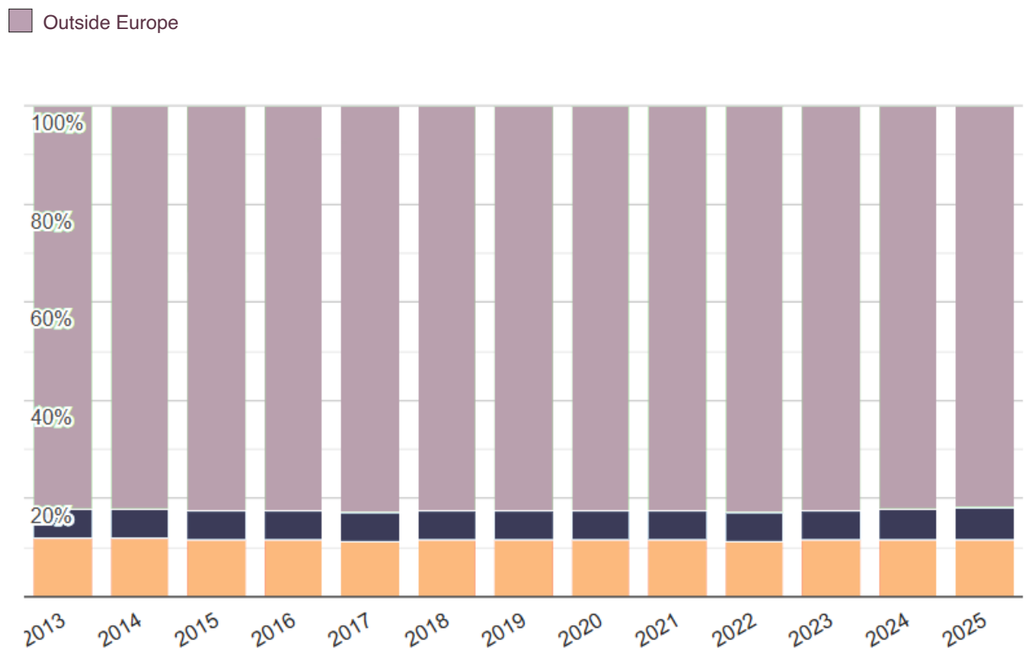
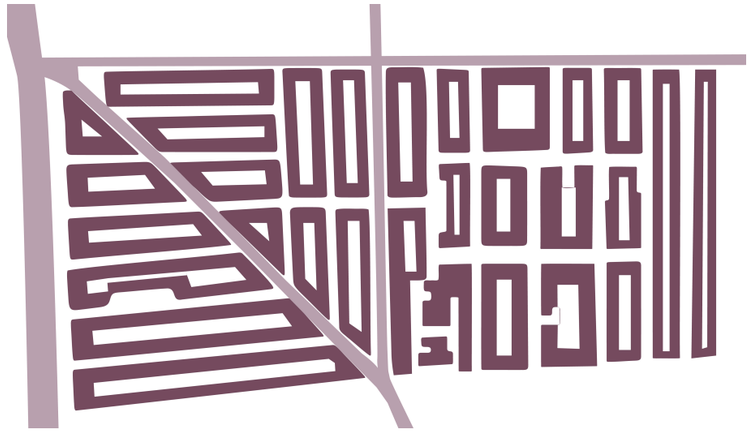
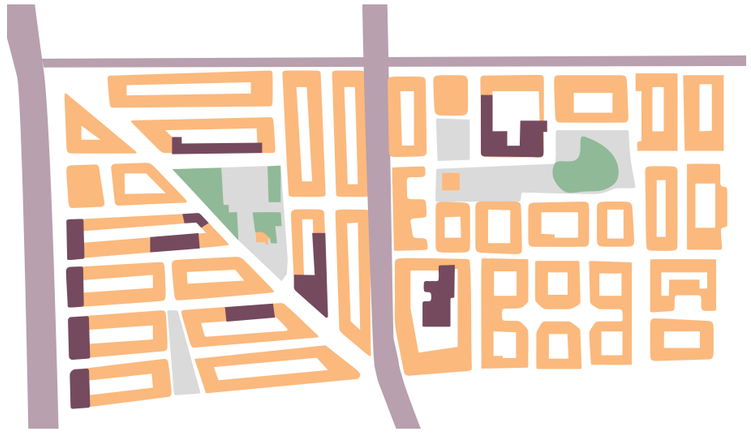


Fig 76. Migration background The Schilderswijk-Noord, AlleCijfers, 2025

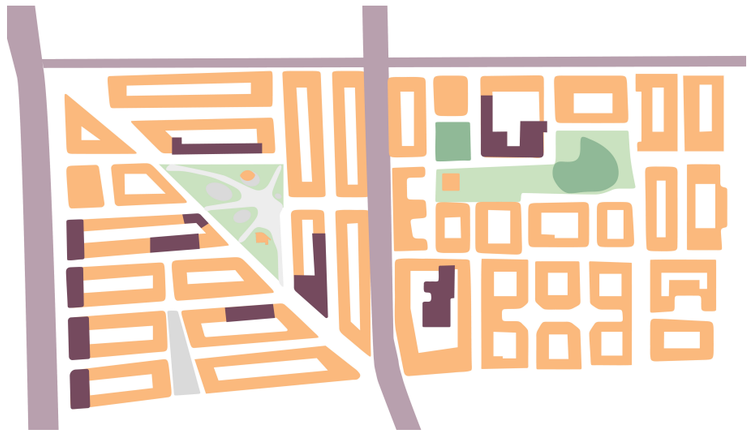
5. Urban renewal timeline



Situation before the Urban Renewal



The Urban Renewal



Current situation

6. Methods

Sub goals	Methodology	Methods used		Why this method?	Insights
History of The Hague on superdiversity	Literature Review	- Literature research - Census data (AlleCijfers and Cijfers in Den Haag)		Literature describes the history and the census data shows the history in graphs and shows the situation nowadays.	This shows the historic timeline of migration and the urban structure. Which group came in what year and their reasons to immigrate to the Netherlands. To understand the connection of migration and superdiversity.
Design framework for public familiarity	Literature Review and empirical research	- Literature research - References - Interviews - Site observation		Helps to understand what has already been said or discovered about the topic. To make the conditions specific for the context, empirical research is combined	Framework of principles
Spatial analysis	Research by Design	- GIS data - Census data (Cijfers in Den Haag) - Mapping - Sketching - Modeling - Interview with municipalty/association - Walk-along interview - Soft mapping (as Jan Rothuizen for example) - Site observation		The spatial analysis helps to visualize what the current situation of the neighborhood is. Observation help to understand how space is used in real life, I did unstructured observations. Sketching, modeling and mapping help to analyse data, gain new insights and draw conclusions	Indicate how the neighborhood is used, what the characteristics of the neighborhood are, strengths and weaknesses, structure Established different scales of public space
Vision of residents (social conditions)	Short interviews on the street	- Census data (AlleCijfers and Cijfers in Den Haag) - Short interviews on the street - Interview with municipalty/association		Making the connection with people who live or work on he location. Participation, bottemup approach, no sensitive data.	Indicate strengths and weaknesses, vision of the residents
Design,	Research by Design	- Mapping - Sketching - Modeling - AI input - Scenario Thinking - References		Most of the methods is to think outside of the box and to create visuals to convey the design. References is to see what is already working and to know what is realistic.	Creating an urban design
Stakeholder review	Interviews	- Interview with municipalty/association		To know the political situation the neighborhood has to deal with and to connect to it. To get insights on who has interest in the project and who is needed to hypothetically realise the project.	Become more realistic in designing and connect to the existing stakeholders.

Table of subgoals and how to approach and achieve these

7. Spatial analysis

7a. Scope

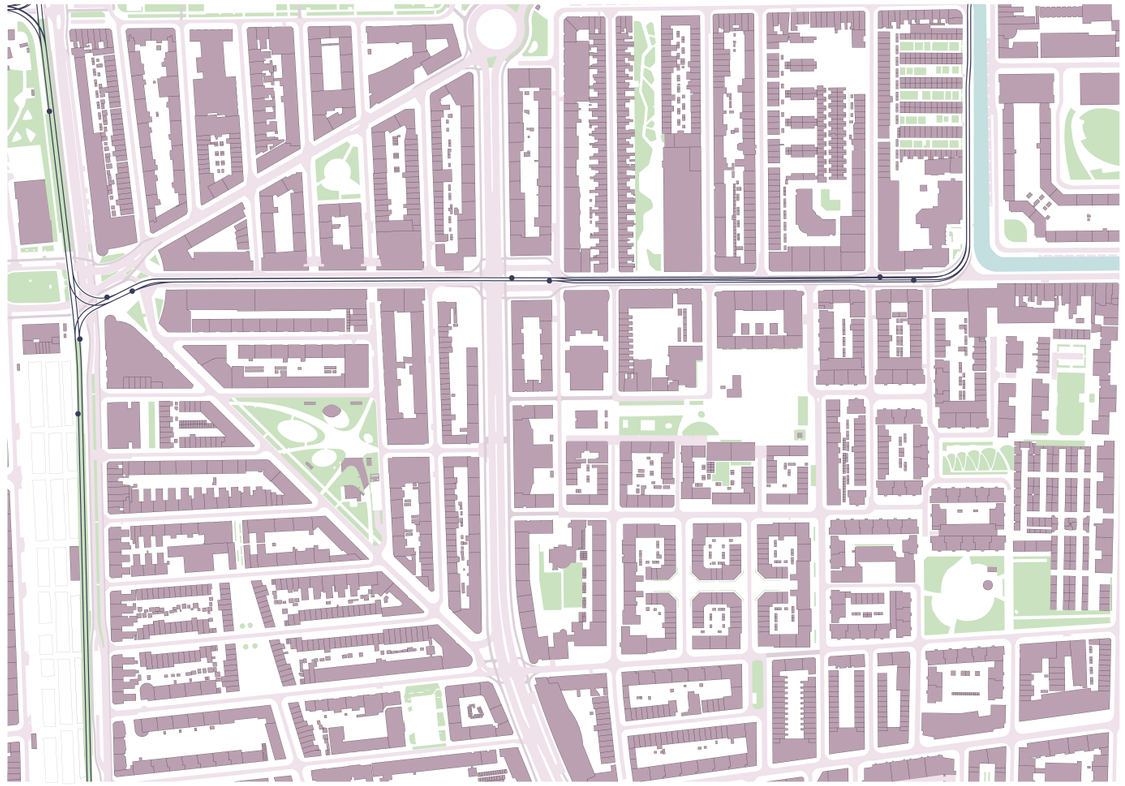


Fig 77. Location choice

- Residential housing
- Water
- Vegetation
- Trainrail
- Roads
- Bicycle roads

0 50 100m

7b. Buildingstyles

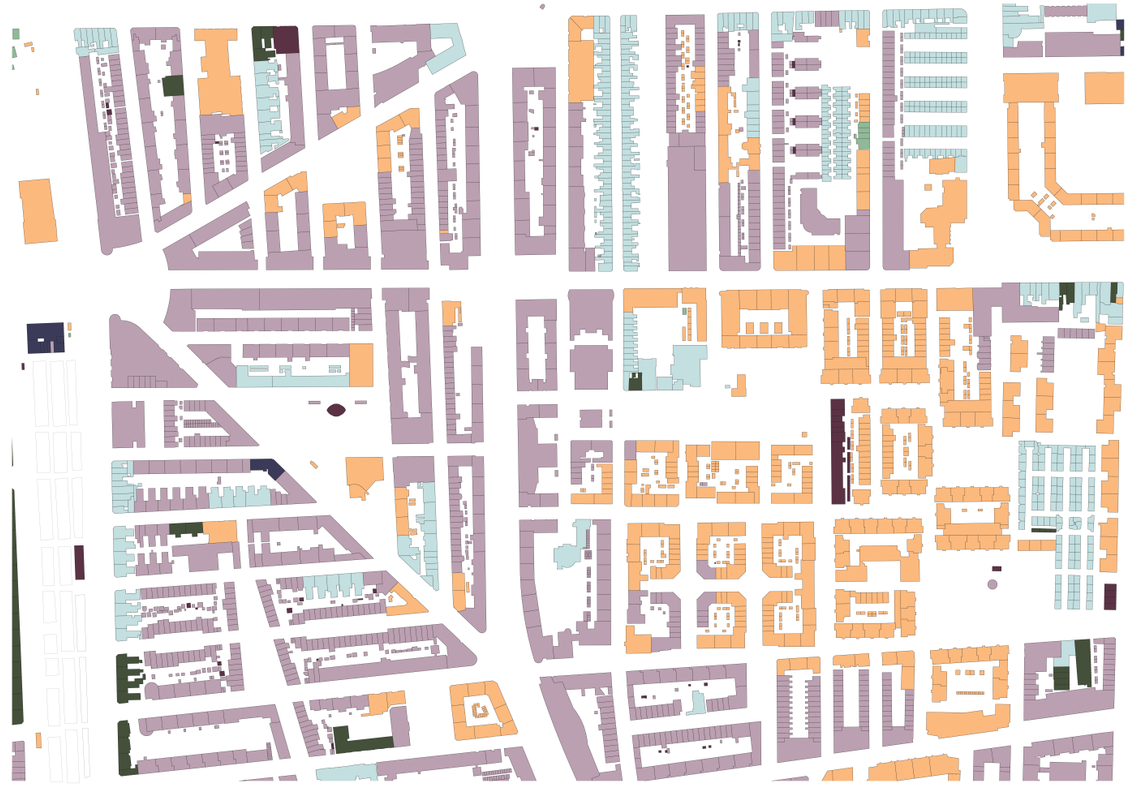


Fig 78. Buildingyears of The Schilderswijk

- - 1910
- 1910 - 1930
- 1930 -1950
- 1950 - 1970
- 1970 -1990
- 1990 - 2010
- 2010 - 2025



Fig 79. Pictures taken in The Schilderswijk, different buildingstyles

0 50 100m

7c. Housing association



Fig 80. Housing associations

- Privately owned
- Haag Wonen
- Hof Wonen
- Steadion
- Arcade Wonen

The Schilderswijk is for 80% social housing, 90% of which is owned by the housing association ‘Haag Wonen’. This high concentration of social rent makes the neighborhood largely resistant to gentrification.

0 50 100m

7d. Public facilitites



Fig 82. Public facilities of The Schilderswijk

- Residential housing
- Shops and Horeca
- Education
- Culture and community centers
- Religious
- Other
- Shoppingstreet
- Program cluster
- Border



Fig 81. Pictures taken in The Schilderswijk, different public facitities

0 50 100m

7e. Public spaces

Fig 83. Parks and playgrounds

- Playground
- Sport
- Park
- Petting zoo
- Big public space
- Vegetation

0 50 100m

7f. Livability

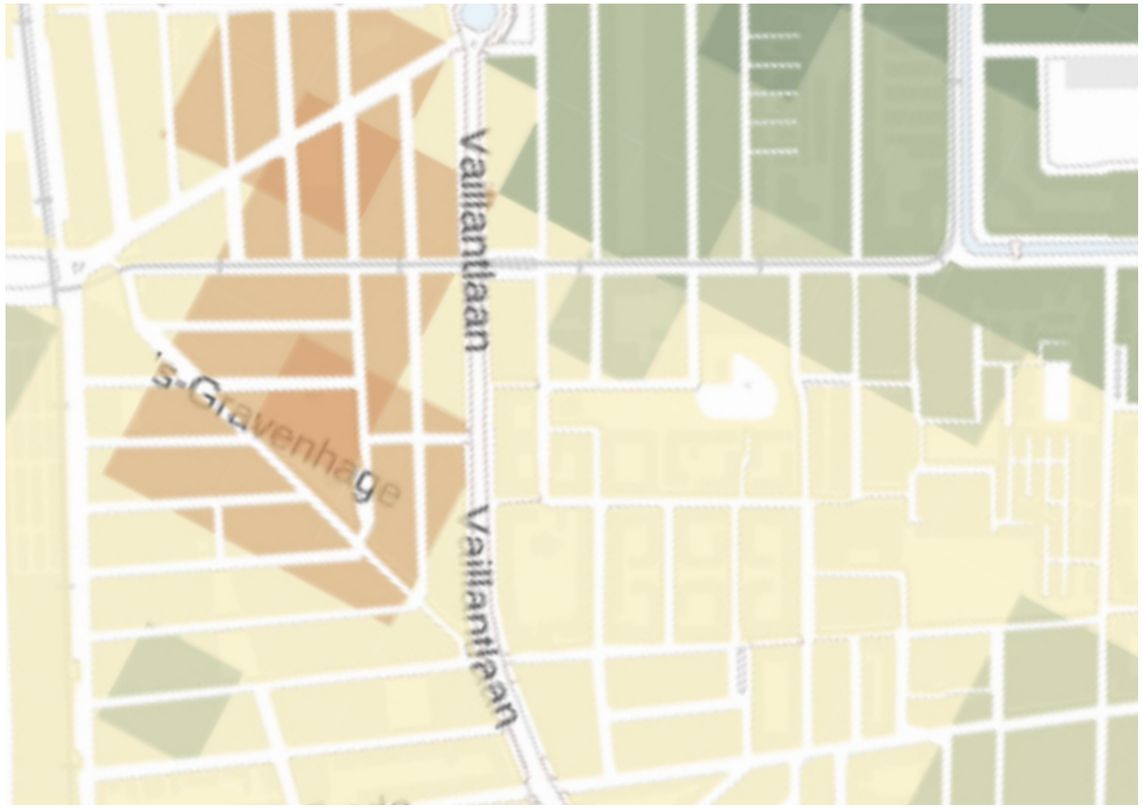


Fig 84. Housing associations of The Schilderswijk

Livibility index
municipality boundaries 2024

- Very insufficient
- More than insufficient
- Insufficient
- Weak
- Sufficient
- More than sufficient
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

This is an index based on many characteristics from the built environ-ment, such as type of public facilities, safety, noise, and social cohesion. This means that it is an indication on the expected livability in the neighborhood.

The neighborhood scores bad on this indicator: most of the neighborhood has a weak livability index and some places even insufficient or more than insufficient.

0 50 100m

8. A good city according to Jane Jacobs

Jane Jacobs (1961) has written that architecture and urban design play a big role in social interaction and a cities diversity. She describes that first of all a city has the ability to have a diversity of ingredients for use. It offers the amount of people that are needed to let a mixture of use succeed, if there are too little people living close to a facility or activity it loose the small, the various and the personal. However, this does not mean that every city automatically generates diversity (Jacobs, 1961). She describes four ingredients to create urban vitality. All four are necessary, if one is missing the special potential is frustrated. These are the four ingredients according to Jacobs:



Mixed uses

The distruct must serve more than two primary functions. These functions must serve people on different times of the day and for different activities.



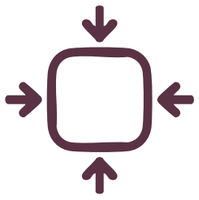
Short Blocks

The streets and blocks must provide multiple options to turn corners and choose routes.



Varied Buildings

The neighborhood must mingle buildings, this means in style, but also in condition, especially many old buildings these provide another option in the economy.



Compact Development

Dense concentration of people is important to keep the diversity. This can be for any reason, including residential reasons.

The principles for diversity in The Schilderswijk

When chosing the location, the principles of Jane Jacobs were the decisive factor. As the Schilderswijk meets all requirements for a diversive vibrant nieghborhood, where Laakkwartier did not. This shows that the neighborhood The Schilderswijk has a lot of spatial potential.



Mixed uses

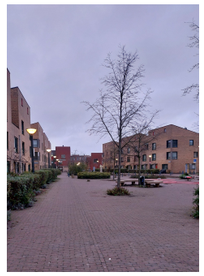
As seen in the chapter before, the neighborhood has multiple functions and serve multiple times a day and different purposes.





Short Blocks

Most of the streets consist of short blocks, especially the streets from the urban renewal. The neighborhood also has a diagonal structure that allows for short blocks.

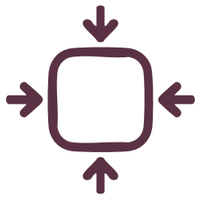




Varied Buildings

The neighborhood has monumental parts from the 1910s, as well as buildings from the urban renewal from 1980s and later. All looking very different.





Compact Development

Many buildings in the neighborhood are three to four stories high, furthermore counts the neighborhood around 30.000 inhabitants.

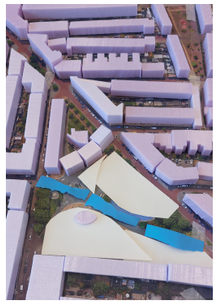


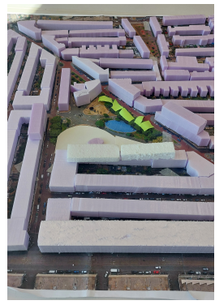
9. Model research

Models

Option 1: Building on the corner

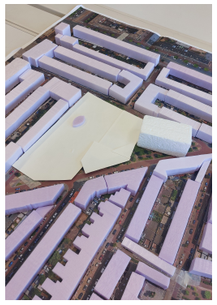












Option 2: Enhancing the buildings around the square









Option 3: Volumes in the park

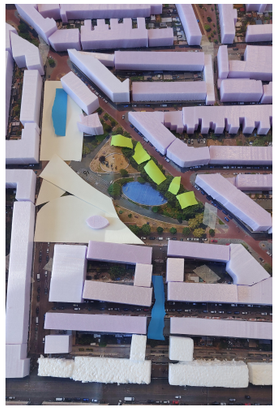






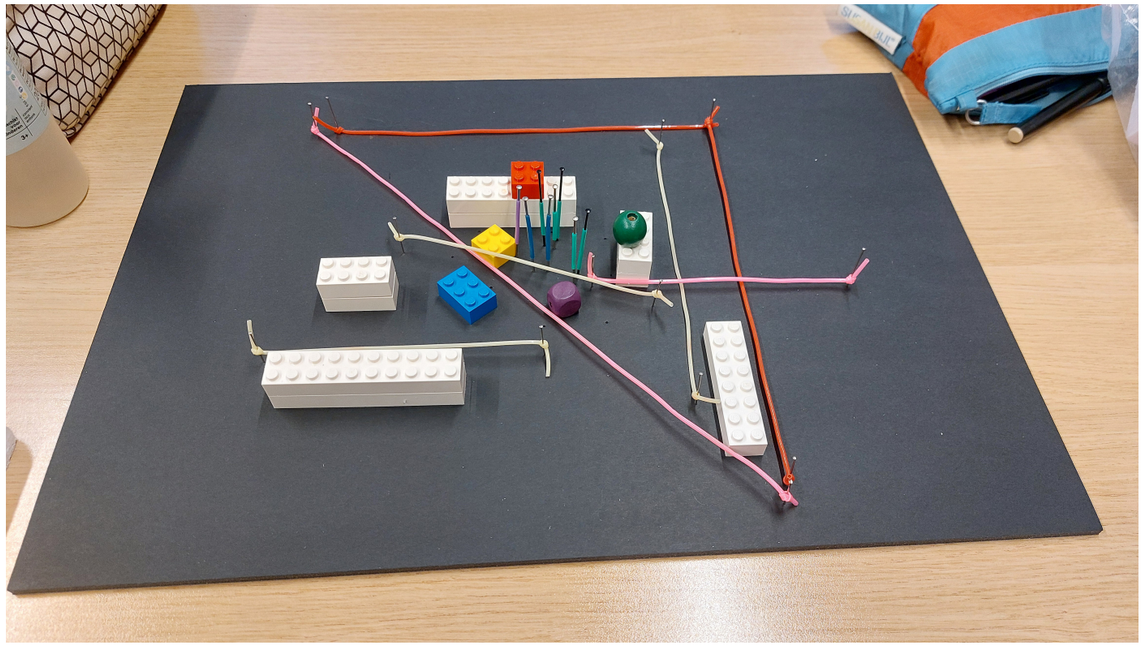
Option 4: Other (against the concept)







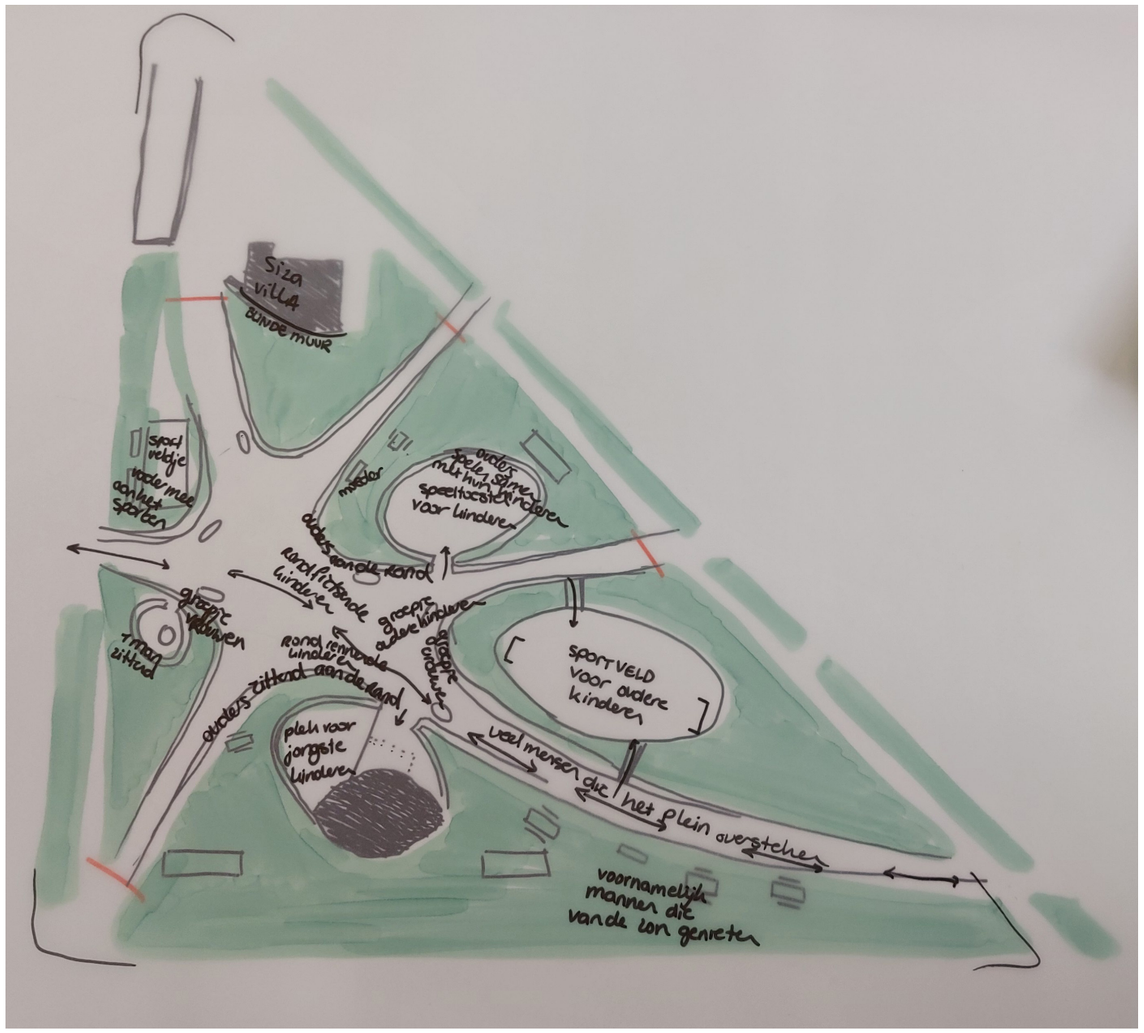
10. Concept model of the Pocket scale



11. Streetinterviews on Van der Venneplein

Questions:

a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
b) What do you use the square for?
c) How could the square be improved?
d) What function do you think is missing in the neighborhood?





1. Mom of two childern together with her mom and friend



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, it's very nice for the children.
b) What do you use the square for?
The children can play and we enjoy the sun. The mother and her friend come to sit down and look around.
c) How could the square be improved?
Nothing needs to change, except for the rat infestation. It's great that the gates are closed for the children, and the ones that are open are fine too.
d) What function do you think is missing in the neighborhood?
The mother doesn't really think anything is missing, and the older mother would like to see more places where women can meet up.

2. Mom of one child, knows the other women on the square



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, there are lots of places to sit and it is spacious. There is a separation between older and younger children.
b) What do you use the square for?
Mainly so that the children can play. Also for picnics with other mothers, when we bring food for the children.
c) How could the square be improved?
There is a rat infestation, which is very annoying. There should be more toys available to borrow, and it should be open more often.
d) What function do you think is missing in the neighborhood?
Sports for women only, there is only one of those in The Hague. Also more parking spaces.

3. Father of a boy who is playing soccer, he sits next to another man



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
No, my father-in-law has a shop and my son went to play soccer, so that's why we are at the square. The square is good because there is space for different ages.
b) What do you use the square for?
He is enjoying the sun and taking a break from work, and his son is playing soccer with another boy he met in the square.
c) How could the square be improved?
The square could be tidier/cleaner.

4. Two mom of two small children



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, for the children. It's nice that the gates are closed so that the children can't run away.
b) What do you use the square for?
Mainly so that the children can play. At 4 p.m., it's always very busy in the square when school finishes. It's mainly women with children who come here.
c) How could the square be improved?
There is a rat infestation and mice, and she had even heard there might be a snake. There should be more toys available to borrow.

5. Older boys on their way to the soccer field



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, it's a good square.
b) What do you use the square for?
To play soccer with friends. Other friends who aren't here now also often come by.
c) How could the square be improved?
The soccer field should be made of artificial turf.

6. Mom of three children, lives her whole life in the Schilderswijk



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, the children really enjoy it.
b) What do you use the square for?
She uses the square to cross the street; the elementary school is on Vaillantlaan, so it is close by. The square is also used to let the children play. Her children cycle and run across the square. She does not go there for picnics because of the rat infestation and because it is very busy and there is no space, especially in the summer.
c) How could the square be improved?
She grew up in the neighborhood and the changes made to the square in 2012 were good, especially because they created a separation between younger and older children.
d) What function do you think is missing in the neighborhood?
Coffee restaurants would be very nice. She would also like to make the neighborhood safer for children, as cars often drive too fast through the streets with a speed limit of 30 km/h. There are also many people sitting outside at the bars. A larger petting zoo or several would be very nice, as the one at Teniersplantsoen is very enjoyable for children.

7. Older children meeting each other on the square



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, some of them live nearby and others don't.
b) What do you use the square for?
To chat with each other and play tag or ball games together. One of the boys also really enjoys cycling across the square.
c) How could the square be improved?
The soccer field should have artificial turf and they should add a basketball hoop so that the field can be used for multiple sports. One of the girls had a little brother who fell off a playground structure, so she would put a fence around the equipment for older children so that the little ones can't fall.
d) What function do you think is missing in the neighborhood?
More supermarkets, shops, and candy stores.

8. Two seniors walking to the bus on their way to the shopping mall Leyweg.



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, when the gates are open we walk through the square, and otherwise we walk around it.
b) What do you use the square for?
As a walking route, to get to the bus or to the Hague Market, for example.
d) What function do you think is missing in the neighborhood?
We actually have everything here. For shopping, we go to the Leyweg or the city center every Tuesday. They enjoy themselves in the city.

9. Father of a small child



a) Do you visit the square often and do you enjoy it?
Yes, for the children
b) What do you use the square for?
For the children to play after school.
c) How could the square be improved?
There should be someone from 'het Haagse Hopje' to manage the square. That way, there would be more playground equipment and the public toilets could be managed.
d) What function do you think is missing in the neighborhood?
Actually, nothing is missing, except for more parking spaces. There are many activities in the neighborhood, such as renting a soccer hall, but you have to be able to find them.

12. Walk along interview





Common Ground in Superdiversity