

# Space for mediation: material artefact vs immaterial processes

What challenges,  
opportunities and  
conflicts exist between  
the institutional and  
social agendas of  
stakeholders in student  
housing provision? How  
can insights gained  
from this analysis inform  
architectural practice?



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.0 METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4.0 FINDINGS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>4.1 INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>4.2 INHABITING COMMUNITY</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>5.0 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>7.0 IMAGE CREDITS</b>	<b>75</b>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the 2018 documentary 'Architecting After Politics', shown at the Rotterdam Architecture Film Festival 2020, Christopher Roth and Arno Brandlhuber explore the question: who shapes the city? (Roth & Brandlhuber, 2018). The film is densely informative, at times hard to follow even, with texts and diagrams flying across the screen simultaneously with the interviewees' speech. The cinematic essay explores the political agenda of architecture today, looking at gentrification, financial speculation, land reform, forms of communalism and distribution, use and property rights and legislation - what influences laws? What produces architecture? Who owns the land?

During the interval, a member of the audience pointed out – "But I haven't seen any architecture yet!". This remark summarises well my attitude towards architectural production – buildings are not conceived in the vacuum of the Architect's creative imagination. Rather, they are a product of a barrage of various material and immaterial processes, of which the Architect's contribution is just a fraction. As Stanford Anderson says, architecture can be better understood as an artefact – organisation of forms that are the result of many human actions that must sustain a wide range of unforeseen activities. Propositions that design can "exert a socially beneficial control" goes far beyond architecture (Anderson, 1971). As such, I am approaching the architectural project, not by starting with the design, but situating the artefact at the crossover of institutional, financial and social agendas.

Using a single architectural artefact, the Jacoba van Beierenlaan student housing complex, I aim to achieve two things. Firstly, I want to understand the material and immaterial processes that underpin the process of building. Secondly, once these are identified, I aim to explore the possibility of mediating between

## Howard Roark from Ayn Rand's Fountainhead



institutions and inhabiting community (as represented by the wavy line in the following diagram). By determining the challenges, opportunities and conflicts that exist between the institutional and social agendas of the stakeholders of the Jacoba van Beierenlaan student housing complex, I intend to develop a design brief and explore possibilities of critical engagement.

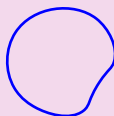
The approach of recognising the process of building as a product of actions of many authors is absolutely central to this investigation. I dismiss the notion of singular authorship, so present in architectural historicism, the magazines, cultural institutions, competitions, prizes and mainstream media. It is not only inaccurate and self-indulging but also unproductive. In contrast, through this investigation, I hope to identify ways of practicing which actively collaborate and respond to the other authors. Eventually, I aim to start creating a definition of 'architectural practice' which suits me.



Institutions /  
organisations



space for  
mediation



inhabiting  
communities







## 2.0 THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework and the methodology of this project is largely based on the work of Toragne Khonsari - a London-based practitioner, educator, researcher in Cultural and Civic Commons and the founder of Design for Cultural Commons course at London Metropolitan University (London Metropolitan University, n.a.). Her work is relevant because it acknowledges both the institutions and the community and situates the architect as a mediator in-between them.

She achieves that through active engagement and communication between different stakeholders which might result in construction of what she calls "disobedient objects". These are temporary architectures which "battle against waves of city-development, supported by capital interests moving at a high speed" by creating "agency within a locality encouraging chance encounters and organic formation of communities" (Khonsari, 2018). An example of such temporary architecture is the Common Room, which was produced in a collaboration between Clarian Housing Association, London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council (local government), Roman Road Trust (resident organisation) and students from Cass School of Architecture (Roman Road Trust, 2014).

There, the residents assisted by Khonsari (architect) were able to negotiate a piece of land from the Housing Association what allowed them to legally occupy it and build the Common Room – a temporary, outdoor structure made out of wood. The structure was used to organise events in order to bring the resident community together. Once that community was more united and able to self-coordinate, they started to use the Common Room regularly, take care of it and launch neighbourhood-oriented activities. As such, they became stewards of the negotiated land,

## Common Room (disobedient object)



exerting programmatic ownership over it.

In this example, we see an architectural artefact divorced from what it is - a material form - to what it does – a facilitator of events. The events acquire a crucial value in the development of built environment because when documented, they evidence existing “social capital” (effective functioning of groups of people) which can be used for future negotiations and collaborations with institutions (Khonsari, 2015). As I stressed in the introduction, building is a result of many human actions - there are people who commission building, people who grant permission to build, people who finance it etc. Khonsari’s method of gathering evidence of “social capital” anticipates that in the future, stakeholders with more agency than the inhabitants will make decisions about what to do with the land. She effectively ‘formalises’ the existing community to give them more agency in order to be able to participate in these future decisions.

Indeed, Khonsari acts in the capacity of the designer of the wooden structure, but by no means is that all that she does in this project – she communicates with institutions, initiates negotiations, aides coordination of resident community, involves relevant professionals and student volunteers. Her role concerns both the material and immaterial learning ecosystems required to sustain the potentially opposing ideologies.

Khonsari’s example is relevant to this investigation because it shows a way of practicing architecture which is radically different to the ‘architect single author’ we are often exposed to in the Architecture School. She acts as a mediator between the institutions and inhabiting community by assuming the approach of listening rather than prescribing and contributing to the project in multiple capacities.

Whilst it is not immediately obvious how to apply Khonsari's hands-on approach to a theoretical University project, I start by selecting a real place with real people, in order to start understanding the dynamics that exist between different actors and thus see if there is room for an artefact (maybe even a disobedient object) to emerge.







### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

I selected a single existing architectural artefact as a centre point to explore various institutional, economic and social layers that revolve around it. I chose the building that I live in - Jacoba van Beierenlaan student housing complex in Delft because it has a vibrant and strong community that I can easily tap into, since I am already part of it.

The methodology is divided into two parts: institutions and organisations (which I research through interviews with selected key representatives) and inhabiting community (which I research through an ethnographic investigation).

#### **3.1 INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS - INTERVIEWS**

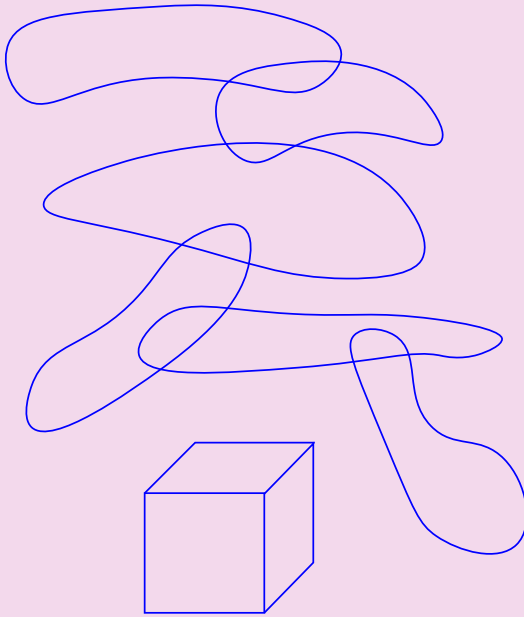
My first step was to get a decent grip on the institutional and financial processes that surround the process of building, specifically for housing, since the building I selected to analyse is a student housing complex. I realised I know little about Dutch housing policy, institutions and systems, so I attended a course in Management in the Built Environment titled Housing Policy, Management & Sustainability.

This allowed me to understand the characteristics of the housing market and thus I was able to identify the relevant stakeholders for interviews. They are: DUWO Housing Association (owner of the building and the land), Municipality of Delft, Delft University of Technology (educational institution attended by the inhabiting students) and the inhabiting student community.

#### **3.2 INHABITING COMMUNITY - ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH**

In order to better understand the inhabiting community of Jacoba van Beierenlaan, I carried out an ethnographic study composed





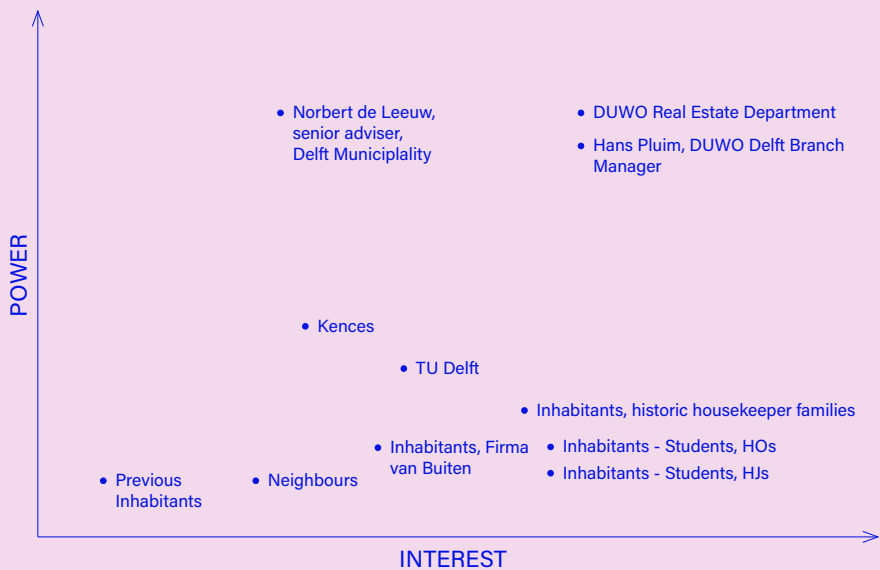
institutional  
financial  
processes and  
conflicts

exemplary  
artefact JVB



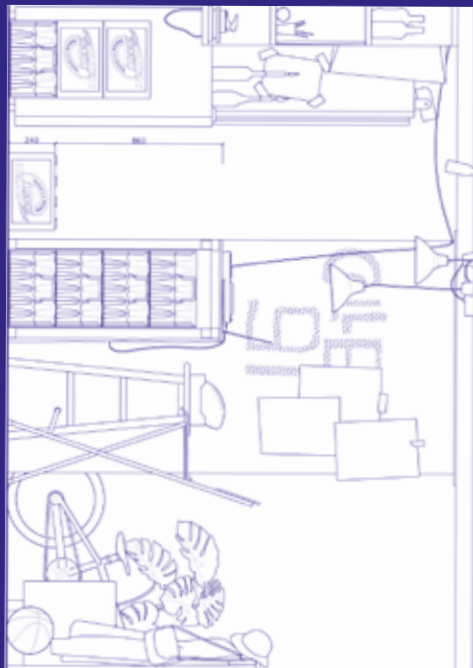
out of different components. The complex contains 32 houses, each housing a group of 16-18 people. Each house has its own identity: its own traditions, ways of organising chores, activities and atmosphere. Whilst the singular tenants inside the houses have been continually changing since the opening in 1966, the spirit of the place appears to be somehow independent from the 'individuals,' in a similar fashion to the cells inside the human body which are all replaced every 7 years. As such, this called for an appropriate research method which would encapsulate the diverse qualities. Unlike the interviews from the formal part, where an interview with one representative would reflect the opinion of the whole organisation, in the part about the inhabiting community there is no organised, unified structure that could be approached. Therefore, I felt that a more fragmented study is needed where a multiplicity of snippets is collected to understand the nature of the whole 'organism' and then get hints about what the needs might be. I was looking at the traces of everyday life in the way people are inhabiting space, adapting and performing instances of ad-hocness. Following methods have been employed:

- Photography – same shot taken in each house (frame and angle) and displayed side by side. In order to organise this photography project, I distributed leaflets around all houses which allowed me to establish contact with each house and get their telephone number.
- Photo database – leaflets containing a QR code to a Google Drive where people can upload historical photos, instances of unique solutions and the participation present in the building.
- Interviews with the current inhabitants from house numbers: 25, 39, 41, 51, 63, 67 and 91. Informal conversations about their traditions, ways of admitting new members, organisation of



cleaning and cooking, group characteristics, adaptations they made to the house and memories. Purpose here, was to try to understand how the everyday life relates to the architecture that supports it.

- Interview with a past inhabitant Jan Willem Dik, who lived at number 29 in 1986. Informal conversation about what the life at JVB used to be like in the past.
- Ethnographic drawings made from the information from the interviews, the database and my photos.



My name is Hanna Rudner and I am a Masters Architecture student at Bouwkunde. I moved into JVB last year and have been mesmerised by the place since, so I decided to do my graduation project about it.

I am documenting the everyday life using photographs, drawings and interviews. My aim is to make a book which celebrates the diversity and richness of the JVB, and contains representations of all 32 houses side by side. I would like to take a photograph of your communal space and ask a couple of questions (on Google Drive or in real life). Are you interested?

For questions / opinions / ideas  
[jvbcommunityproject@gmail.com](mailto:jvbcommunityproject@gmail.com)

Do you maybe have photos of the creative solutions and the JVB community that you would like to share?

To share and view photos, use QR code for the Google Drive



## **4.0 FINDINGS INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS**

4.1 DUWO – based on the interviews with Hans Pluim (Delft Branch Director, DUWO), Wiebe van Kempen (Data Analyst, DUWO) and Zino Willems (Manager in Planning and Control, Business Intelligence, DUWO)

### **Constraints of Housing Associations**

The most significant institutional stakeholder is the Stichting DUWO because they own the building, as well as the land of the Jacoba van Beierenlaan student housing complex. DUWO is a housing association which specialises in provision of student housing and has 33,000 dwellings in the Netherlands, of which 10,000 are located in Delft. There is a growing demand for student housing and DUWO is planning to build further 1,000-1,500 dwelling in Delft in the next 7 years, but their biggest constraint is the overwhelming unavailability of developable land.

Being a housing association makes them a very particular type of organisation – their primary task is to provide housing for those who are not able to find a home on the market. As such, they are a social housing provider and cater for people on incomes below €35,055, charging rent which is lower than €737 per month. These parameters are set in the law, which gives them licence to operate. Whilst they are not directly subsidised by the government, they benefit from Waarborgfonds Sociale Woningbouw (WSW) - a loan guarantee system unique to the Netherlands. The network of 300+ housing associations is connected which enables them to share resources and redistribute funds when necessary. The WSW has excellent credit rating (is considered low risk by the banks) which allows housing associations to benefit from favourable interest rates on loans and lower land prices (Witjes, 2020). In simple terms, benefiting from WSW is conditional on provision of housing for socially



disadvantaged people.

Housing associations used to develop a wider range of housing including high-end real estate, sometimes in partnership with private companies. However, this was put to the attention of the European Commission which is committed to preserving and promoting fair competition practice in the European Union. It ruled that WSW allows housing associations an unfair advantage and is effectively a form of state aid, which is an illegal anti-competition practice (Bakker & Crites, 2018). As such, since the Housing Act 2015, housing associations have to operate exclusively in the field of social housing. The significance of this legislation for DUWO, concerns the provision of extra facilities and amenities (de Ridder et al., 2016). They are allowed to add small features which are directly related to living (such as a laundry room or a picnic table), but additional expansions in programme (for example a supermarket or a café) are challenging.

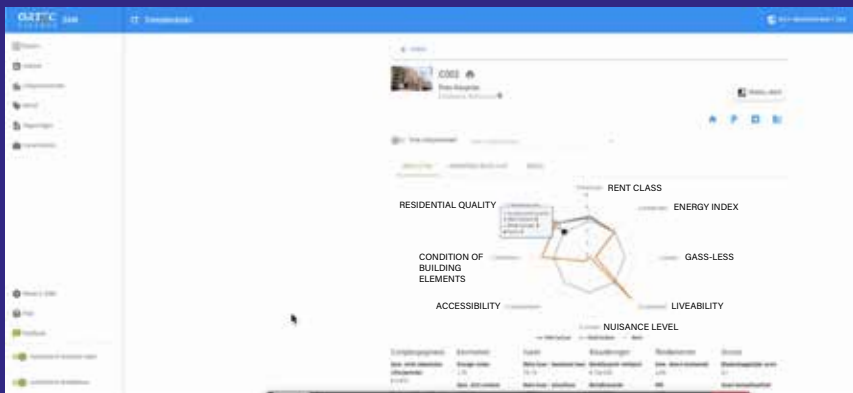
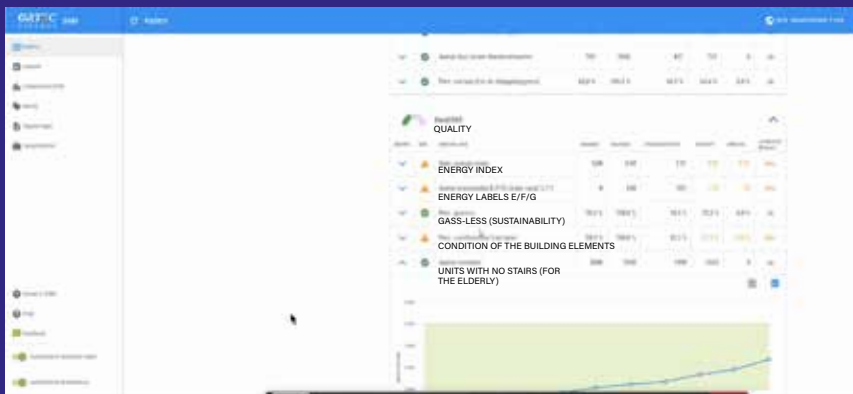
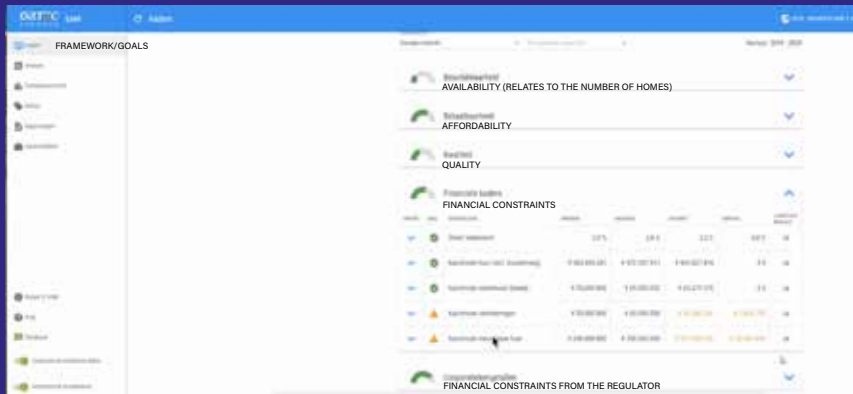
### **Importance of data**

The significance of the commitment to the affordable rent is that DUWO operates within relatively rigid financial constraints (compared to private landlords who are able to charge prices dictated by the market) which makes them very risk averse. They are therefore very careful when deciding how to allocate resources. As such, DUWO is increasingly employing data collection and analysis to help with effective asset management (deciding what to do with their existing and proposed dwellings, which can range from renovating, building, maintaining, demolishing or doing nothing).

For example, they use services of ORTEC finance – a consultancy company which develops tools for strategic asset and liability management. In the programme, data about the units (existing and proposed) is put in and the programme generates



# Interface of ORTEC's Strategic Asset Management (SAM)



calculations about the cost and future rent revenue, which then allows the project leader to evaluate different potential scenarios and make a decision about what is best. There are different goals to focus on, and they are often mutually exclusive - if you want to build more units, you have to ask more rent, which will of course undermine a goal to be more affordable.

One of the goals is 'quality' which is measured through energy index, energy labels, gas-lessness, condition of the building elements and number of units with no stairs (important for elderly tenants). The nature of the software is that all input has to be numerical so even something as subjective as 'quality' had to be conceptualised into measurable scores. This poses some questions about relying on such tools. A very specific set of variables has been chosen to quantify 'quality' which does not correspond to the not easily quantifiable qualities found in the research of the inhabitants.

Although financial calculations are the priority, DUWO also cares about maximising customer satisfaction (students in this case) and is interested in discovering their needs and opinions. "It's always a trade-off between the money and the satisfaction of the customer" said Zino Willems. The tools employed for this purpose include interviews, customer panels and satisfaction surveys. In 2020, they carried out a large-scale student survey from the inhabitants of all buildings owned by DUWO. Respondents were given 10 different categories and could score each of them a number between 1 and 10, where 1 is "very dissatisfied" and 10 is "very satisfied". The 10 aspects were the following: technical condition of the building, appearance, hygiene, location, attraction of the neighbourhood, presence of criminal activities, fire safety, services that DUWO provides, social contact with fellow residents and sustainability.

## Major survey conducted in 2020 by DUWO

Subject	Krakeelhof	Delft	DUWO
Invited	100	4658	16201
Responded	7	1007	3297
Response %	7,0%	21,6%	20,4%

As you can see, the response percentage for Krakeelhof is quite low compared to the Delft office and DUWO in total.

Subject	Average rating			Priority		
	Krakeelhof	Delft	DUWO	Krakeelhof	Delft	DUWO
Overall rating building	5,5	6,5	6,3			
The (technical) condition of the building	3,9	6,0	5,9	2,9	3,3	3,4
The appearance of the building	3,9	6,2	6,3	6,6	5,7	5,7
The hygiene of the building	4,6	6,1	5,8	4,6	3,9	3,9
The location of the building	7,6	8,0	8,0	3,3	4,0	4,2
The attraction of the neighbourhood	6,3	7,1	7,0	6,3	5,2	5,3
The presence of criminal activities	5,9	6,8	6,4	8,1	6,7	6,5
Fire safety	7,0	6,5	6,6	6,7	6,1	6,2
Services that DUWO provides	3,4	5,5	5,4	5,9	5,9	5,7
Social contact with fellow residents	8,3	5,9	6,0	3,3	6,2	6,2
Sustainability	2,9	5,0	5,2	7,4	5,8	6,2

I managed to get hold of the questions and results from that survey and discovered that out of 536 inhabitants of Jacoba van Beierenlaan, 100 were invited to participate and 7 filled it out. The overall rating that the building scored was 5.5 out of 10. This is lower than the average in Delft (6.5). The only category where JVB figured remarkably high (8.3) was social contact with fellow residents.

Whilst DUWO aspires to be more data driven, the business intelligence department has only existed for 6 months, so it is a relatively new endeavour. At the end of the day, a lot of the decisions come down to the "gut feeling" of a project leader.

### **Space and housing allowance**

Another key legislative aspect that affects the nature of spaces that DUWO is building is housing allowance (huurtoeslag). This is a payment made by the government towards the rental costs for tenants whose income is below the eligibility threshold. However, the housing allowance scheme is only available for tenants in independent housing (zelfstandige woonruimte). These studios must be self-contained and have independent entrance, toilet, bathroom and kitchen (Kamernet, n.a.). As such, DUWO has a strong preference for building studios because the rent can be cheaper for future tenants, and they bypass the additional costs for building communal spaces which do not generate direct rent income per metre squared for them.

### **Plans for Jacoba van Beierenlaan**

"We have to do something, but what we are not sure yet." Jacoba van Beierenlaan has been posing a dilemma for DUWO for a while now. The building does not fulfil contemporary requirements for sustainability, energy consumption, fire safety and has technical issues. They calculated that renovating everything that is needed is going to be more expensive than

## Interior of an independent studio built by DUWO



demolishing the whole building. In the aforementioned financial scenarios, DUWO has considered one where JVB is replaced with block of studios. Financially, there is no incentive to intervene in the building because the maintenance costs are low, and the generated rent is sufficient. This is often the case with older buildings because they do not contain expensive installations which are costly to repair. The building is also a historically significant asset because at the time when it was opened in 1966, it was considered a unique, pioneering design.

Given these difficulties, DUWO postponed the big decision for another 10 years, and initiated a temporary maintenance programme which will keep the building going in the meantime. In that time, they are hoping to come up with a really good solution. They are open to contributions and just launched a commission for a graduation project from Industrial Design department at TU Delft which will examine the future needs for living in year 2040.

To sum up, due to its unique business type, housing allowance and data collection, right now, DUWO has a strong preference for building studios (units with an independent kitchen and bathroom), and that is precisely what you see being built all over campus. The future of JVB is uncertain, but given DUWO's current building preferences and priorities, it could easily be replaced with studios.

#### 4.2 Delft Municipality – based on a talk by Norbert de Leeuw (Senior Advisor in Housing, Delft Municipality)

Research into the position of the Delft Municipality and TU Delft did not fruit in material specifically linked to Jacoba van Beierenlaan. I will summarise the general findings below, nevertheless. The main takeaways are that the City's ability of

absorb more new students is limited and the University can exert some influence over student housing through advising DUWO on its policies.

Municipality is a local governing body which is subordinate to the national government. As per national commitment to build 1,000,000 new homes before 2030, Delft municipality has an ambition to provide 15,000 new dwellings before 2040. However, Delft municipality does not actually build housing itself (this is left to the housing associations and private developers), rather it executes policy which was made on national or provincial level and is also responsible for the Zoning Plan. Therefore, the main tools that the municipality employs to 'design' architecture are policy, zoning and control over planning permits.

Compared to the rest of the Netherlands, Delft has an abnormally large proportion of people aged 20-29 (primarily students). As such, the municipality does not think that building more student housing should be a priority, and the focus should shift towards local starters, relaunchers, elderly and knowledge workers. However, the same problem as for DUWO recurs – there is very little available land and municipality itself does not own land.

#### 4.3 TU Delft – based on an interview with Prof. Robert Mudde (Vice President of Education, TU Delft)

TU Delft's role in student housing is limited strictly to advisory – they join yearly meetings of the Student Housing Advisory Council, which has been formed to allow educational institutions and student unions to contribute to DUWO's policies.

Whilst they own some land around campus, they are reluctant to release it for housing because they want to use it to expand lab

facilities and welcome start-ups.

We discussed housing students in shared apartments and in individual studios. Interestingly, Prof. Robert Mudde was strongly advocating shared houses, especially for younger students who develop social skills that way.

*"If Corona taught us anything, it is that the well-being of people is much more connected to them being part of a community rather than being on their own. I worry about the type of living where there is too little interaction, and it is too easy to go back to your own place and be isolated"*  
Prof. Robert Mudde

*"I lived in a student flat, 10 floors up, 17 people on one floor. You share everything apart from your own room. Of course, I know that has also some side effects, but I wouldn't have changed it for a minute."* Prof. Robert Mudde





## 4.2 INHABITING COMMUNITY

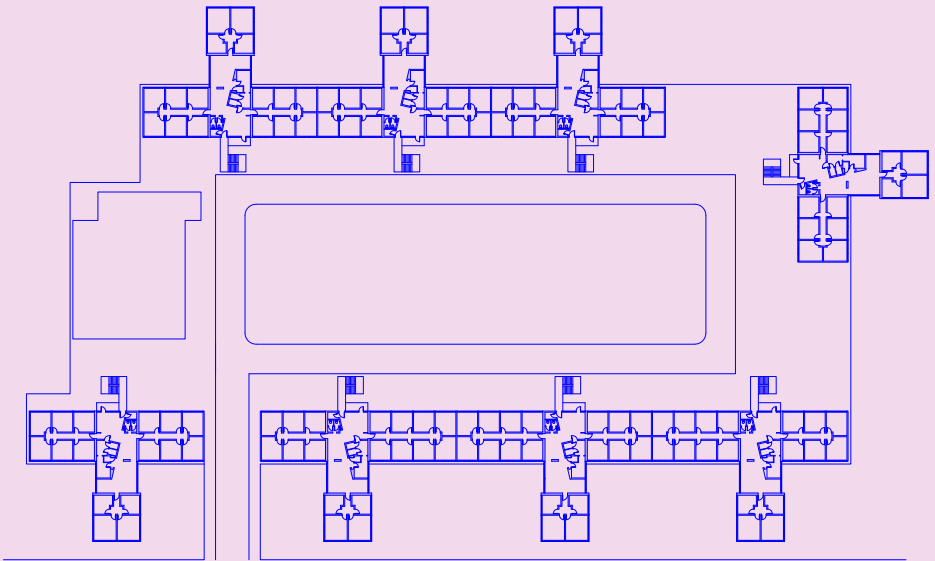
### **Community and Self-organisation**

Whilst there are 536 inhabitants living at Jacoba van Beierenlaan, the complex can be understood as an agglomeration of 32 smaller communities, made up of 16 to 18 people. I describe them as communities and not groups because they appear to display a significant significant degree of cohesion, collective decision making and collective management of shared resources.

Cooking and eating are shared activities. Houses have various (often very elaborate) systems for dividing tasks fairly. For example, at 41, students designed a spreadsheet system where it costs one "cooking point" to eat with the house and the person cooking gets a "cooking point" for each diner that joins. They usually have 12 people eating every day, so with this system every person has to cook about once every 2 weeks to avoid having negative points. It is also possible to cook with multiple people but then the points earned are divided. Often cooking, doing the groceries and cleaning up are split up, so that the people who helped preparing the meal, do not have to clear up after.

Similarly, the cleaning is divided and there are different variations for achieving that – some houses have a weekly cleaning hour for everyone, others have a rotation system with assigned tasks or cleaning teams (where older inhabitants are paired up and teach the newly admitted). Failure to participate can result in having to bake a penalty cake or buying alcohol and the finish is monitored collectively or checked by a HO (house eldest).

Houses also often have their own bank accounts and require admittance fee, where the shared funds go into anything between replacing appliances, organising activities and holiday or buying materials and equipment. There can be 'treasures' responsible for



# Eetlijst and Google food spreadsheet

Datum	Opmerking	Bedrag	Jelle	Elise	Bjorn	Isabel	Spaard	Bas	Toos	Hanna	Sam	Geert	Ira	Stijn	Axel	Ila	Britta	Wij
Totaal		€ 937,32	€ -43,68	€ -37,99	€ -24,36	€ 18,17	€ -3,24	€ -64,00	€ 4,23	€ 14,37	€ 10,08	€ -79,70	€ -18,29	€ 114,48	€ 94,61	€ -23,40	€ 39,74	
za 16-01-2021	Pasta bolo	€ 41,09	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	-3,18	
za 16-01-2021	churros	€ 4,50						-4,50					4,50					
za 16-01-2021	Brood	€ 9,98	-0,77	-0,77	-0,77	9,21		-0,77	-0,77	-0,77	-0,77	-0,77		-0,77	-0,77	-0,77	-0,77	
za 16-01-2021	Wijnhaven	€ 13,00				13,00			13,00									
vr 15-01-2021																		
do 14-01-2021																		
wo 13-01-2021	Risotto	€ 16,97	-2,37	-2,37				-2,37		-2,37	-2,37	-2,37	-4,74		-2,37			
d 12-01-2021	Noedelsoep	€ 26,62	-2,68	-2,68	-2,68	-2,68		-2,68	-2,68	-2,68	23,96		-2,68					
d 12-01-2021	boodschappen	€ 4,56		-4,56									4,56					
d 12-01-2021	Afandelen	€ 6,68											6,68				-6,68	
d 12-01-2021	Huis	€ 6,48	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	7,91	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	-0,57	
d 12-01-2021	Cleaning Stuff	€ 6,40	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	-0,43	
d 12-01-2021	Masks	€ 7,00		-1,75					-1,75	5,25				-1,75				
ma 11-01-2021	Parmigiana	€ 33,30	-3,03	-3,03	-3,03	-3,03		-3,03	-3,03	30,27	-3,03	-3,03	-3,03		-3,03			
ma 11-01-2021	Brood	€ 1,09			-1,09					1,00								
ma 11-01-2021	Zware rook	€ 26,50	-2,04	-2,04	-2,04	-2,04	26,48	-2,04	-2,04	-2,04	-2,04	-2,04		-2,04	-2,04	-2,04	-2,04	
zo 10-01-2021	Fish'n chips	€ 43,00	-5,38	-5,38	-5,38			-5,38	-5,38	37,63	-5,38	-5,38						
zo 10-01-2021	Huisbenodigheden	€ 8,22	-0,55	-0,55	7,67	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	-0,55	
zo 10-01-2021	Eten en goodies	€ 34,24	-4,89	-4,89	29,35	-4,89				-4,89	-4,89							
za 09-01-2021																		
Totaal		€ 937,32	€ -43,68	€ -37,99	€ -24,36	€ 18,17	€ -3,24	€ -64,00	€ 4,23	€ 14,37	€ 10,08	€ -79,70	€ -18,29	€ 114,48	€ 94,61	€ -23,40	€ 39,74	
Statistiek (info)			Jelle	Elise	Bjorn	Isabel	Spaard	Bas	Toos	Hanna	Sam	Geert	Ira	Stijn	Axel	Ila	Britta	Akte
Aantal keer gekookt			1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aantal keer meegewerkt			12	9	8	9	0	8	8	6	10	12	9	8	6	9	3	3
Verhouding koken/werken			0,00	0,11	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,20	0,25	0,10	0,00	0,11	0,20	0,33	0,00	1,00	0,11	
Kook gemiddeld voor (p.p.)			0	€ 3,64	0	0	0	€ 4,56	€ 3,53	€ 5,38	0	€ 2,66	€ 3,57	€ 4,06	0	€ 3,18	€ 3,98	
Gemiddeld aantal sters			9	9,00	0	0	0	12,00	11,00	8,00	0	10,00	7,00	10,00	10,07	9,91		
Kookpunten* geld			-13	-1	-8	-9	0	-4	6	6	-3	-12	-2	1	12	-7	-26	-8

Statistiek (info)			Jelle	Elise	Bjorn	Isabel	Spaard	Bas	Toos	Hanna	Sam	Geert	Ira	Stijn	Axel	Ila	Britta	Akte
Aantal keer gekookt			1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aantal keer meegewerkt			12	9	8	9	0	8	8	6	10	12	9	8	6	9	3	3
Verhouding koken/werken			0,00	0,11	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,20	0,25	0,10	0,00	0,11	0,20	0,33	0,00	1,00	0,11	
Kook gemiddeld voor (p.p.)			0	€ 3,64	0	0	0	€ 4,56	€ 3,53	€ 5,38	0	€ 2,66	€ 3,57	€ 4,06	0	€ 3,18	€ 3,98	
Gemiddeld aantal sters			9	9,00	0	0	0	12,00	11,00	8,00	0	10,00	7,00	10,00	10,07	9,91		
Kookpunten* geld			-13	-1	-8	-9	0	-4	6	6	-3	-12	-2	1	12	-7	-26	-8



the finance. Houses also get through significant quantities of beer which is supplied collectively. There are designated beer fridges and methods of keeping track on individual consumption in order to divide the costs accordingly. These can be digital (ipad) or analogue (paper and pen or clickers).

Whenever somebody leaves and frees up a room, rather than being randomly selected by DUWO, new members are admitted through the process of “instemming” organised by the houses. This involves putting an advertisement up on Kamernet or Facebook. Then, based on the message replies to the add, houses select 15-20 people and invite them over for an evening in order to meet them in person and see if they would fit well with the people who are already living there. There are multiple rounds with progressively less people left and eventually the existing inhabitants vote and select one person. What is important to note is the choice to be part of these communities is not generally made on ideological basis, in the way co-housing initiatives often attract people interested in environmental agenda or communal living. It is more to do with affordability, wanting to experience student life and being part of student fraternities and clubs.

Generally, only up to 3 people would leave at one time, what allows the houses to maintain and pass on their traditions. Therefore, it does not matter that the inhabitants continually change, the staggered renewal means that the communities never have to be built up from scratch. Traditions can be the yearly events: Huis Weekend (often organised secretly by delegated organisers), Huis Gala (dinner with old housemates), Sinterklaas (involving writing poems and exchanging gifts), Tour de Chambre (a themed drinking game organised in each room), Paasontbijt (Easter brunch with a dresscode where top half has to be formal and bottom informal), Christmas Diner (has to happen as far away from Christmas as possible), Stress Diner (a dinner announced



## Fridge wall in one of the houses







 Studentenhuis

### Jacoba van Beierenlaan

Delft - Kamer

€ 317,- Incl. G/W/E | 11 m<sup>2</sup> | Kaal

 15-02-'21 - Onbepaalde tijd

1d



 Studentenhuis

### Jacoba van Beierenlaan

Delft - Kamer

€ 310,- Incl. G/W/E | 11 m<sup>2</sup> | Gestoffeerd

 10-01-'21 - Onbepaalde tijd

19 dec '20

## Visible layers of paint when a wall chipped



Generally, every year, the houses repaint the walls of the communal space according to a chosen theme



## A Monday Huisavond themed “apres-ski”







Students ice skating on the frozen water that surrounds JVB,  
late 80s





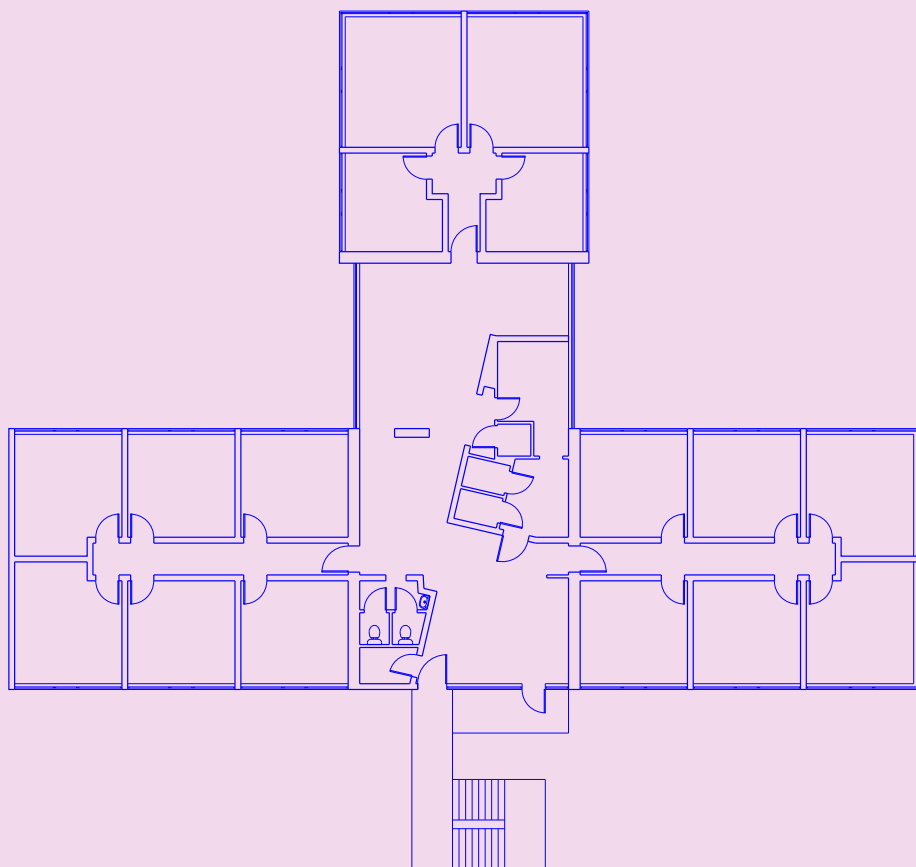
1 day in advance, in which time everyone has to find a date and organise food). There are also more regular traditions such as a weekly Huisavond which is one evening (usually Monday) when everyone is asked to join for dinner and hang out together afterwards. Often particular activities are initiated then, for example arts and crafts or sports tournaments. However, there are also very little things such as holding hands and chanting “eet smakelijk” before every meal or making a symbolic, annotated hole in the ceiling whenever a housemate vacates a room.

### **Inhabitation and Architecture**

The houses are composed out of 16-18 rooms which are divided into 3 segments of 6-8 rooms which are attached to the communal space in a T-shape. The communal space is the central part of the house and it includes a kitchen, a bar area, a common room, 2 toilets, 2 showers and a laundry room. The front door is located in the kitchen so that in order to access any of the 3 dormitory segments, one has to walk through the communal space, maximising interaction. The spaces are used for all sorts of social activities including drinking, eating, watching movies, playing board games, playing video games, exercising, studying, DJing, performing music and comedy, table tennis or darts.

The special configuration with large number of units and generous communal spaces appears to be central to support bonding and maintenance of these communities. The design is far from accidental, rather a result of the international discourse about student housing that was taking place at the time the building was originally conceived. In 1959, a group of Delft housing associations organised an international conference in collaboration with the Netherlands Student Council, the Central Student Housing Association and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. They invited contributors from various European countries to share their perspective. An interplay





## Indoor installations by students from 1995



## Celebration of Sinterklaas in 1984 which involves writing poems and exchanging gifts



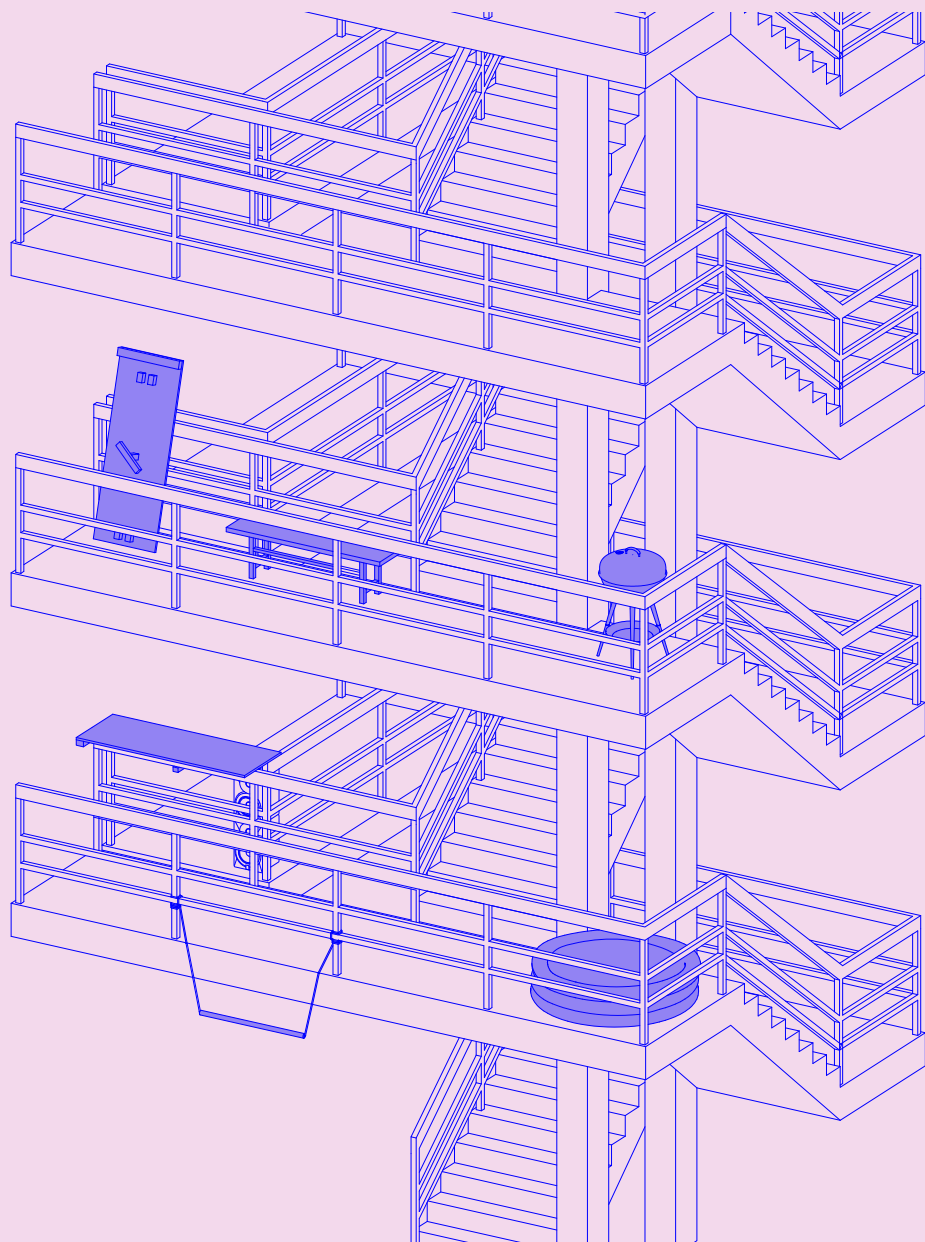
between “student, university and society” was recognised and an emphasis was put on cultivating “student life” – the personal development which takes place parallel to the formal academic training, as a result of exposure to other students, fraternities, associations, activities, parties, friendships, disputes and reconciliations. “Housing students in shared accommodation is seen as an effective remedy against isolation, a way of providing a social safety net for new students (Mooij, 2014)”.

### **Latency and Ad-hocness**

DUWO permits the inhabitants a significant autonomy over their surroundings. Traditionally, at the end of a rental period, a landlord would require the tenants to leave a house in the state they found it in (for example painting the walls white, removing furniture etc). However, at the JVB the houses are never fully vacated, and the rental contracts are individual rather than joint. Therefore, over the years, the environment acquired a high degree of latency, involving adhoc interventions and adaptations.

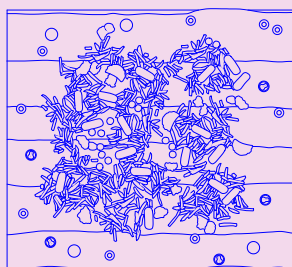
As theorised by Stanford Anderson, physical environment is an arena for possible actions which are interpreted by each user. Latent environment is the one where function and meaning are not strictly determined, what allows the inhabitants to realise unrecognised potential. Latent environment supports multiple and changing uses (Anderson, 1975). This can be seen at the JVB in the wealth of instances where the users created new meanings of their surroundings. For example, a staircase landing has been appropriated for a bar, a DJ booth, a festival, a swimming pool or a gym.

The inhabitants are also active participators in the design of their environment. There is a culture of building furniture and ‘inventions’ in adhoc fashion. That is “using an available system or dealing with an existing situation in a new way to solve a problem



quickly and efficiently" (Jencks, 2013). This can be seen in a beer crate elevation system for DJing, pallet furniture or a telephone booth made out of Saab car sawn in half. Generally, every year, the houses repaint the walls of the communal space according to a chosen theme (there is a photo of a chipped wall, where you can see all the layers of paint that have accumulated over the years).







## Shower transformed into a bath and serving as a cinema



## DJ booth built out of beer crates



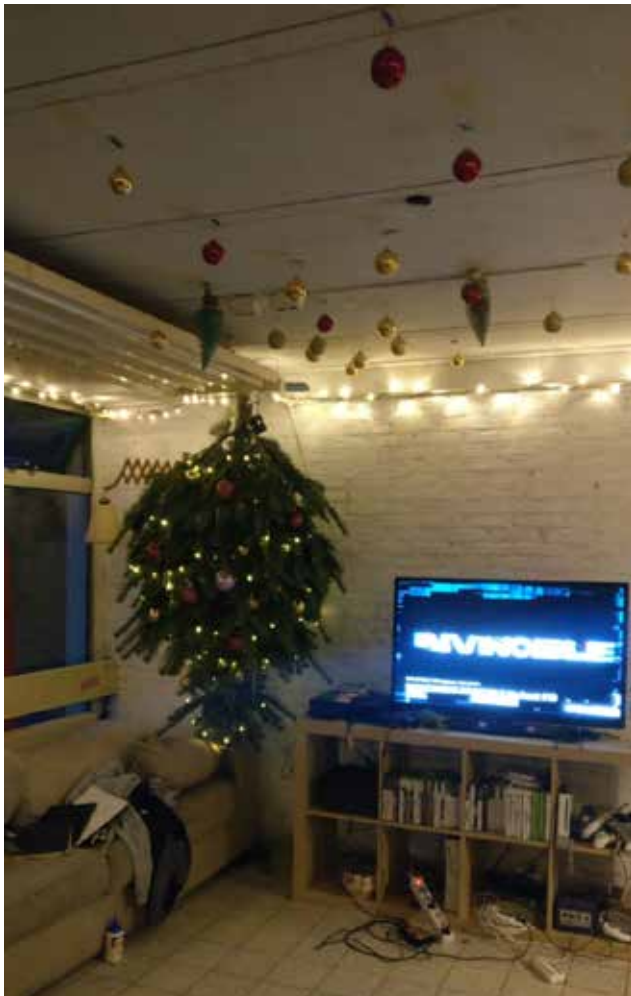
## Outdoor living room during King's Day celebrations



## Slider system showing which housemates are in



## Upside-down Christmas decorations









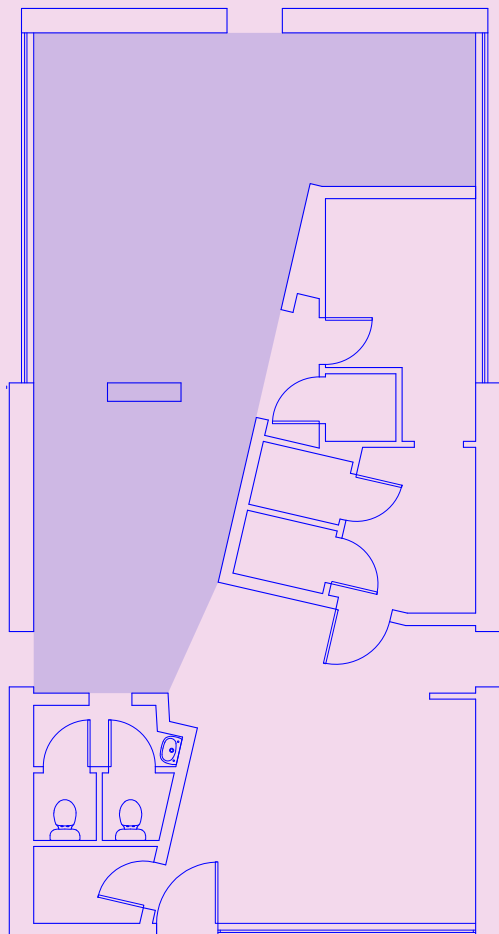
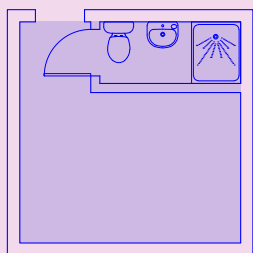
## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Having obtained a holistic overview of the social and economic context of Jacoba van Beierenlaan and the variety of intricacies in which it sits from the point of view of the different stakeholders, the research can be concluded.

Surprisingly, it unveiled a very clear and by nature architectural conflict – a conflict between a unit with communal space and a studio unit. DUWO has a strong preference for building studios because of the provision of housing allowance (huurtoeslag), survey data which shows preference for independent rooms, and the dead costs associated with building communal spaces which do not generate rent. On the other hand, the generous communal space appears to be central for interaction, participation and maintenance of the existing communities. In the next 10 year, DUWO is going to decide what to do with Jacoba van Beierenlaan but their calculations show that demolition would be cheaper than full renovation. The decision about the spatial arrangement (studio unit vs communal space) is not made by an architect; rather the business intelligence team, the real estate team, financial scenario calculation, data modelling projections and legislation. This shows the importance of the influence of the immaterial processes discussed in the paper in 'designing' architecture. Additionally, the method that DUWO uses for appraising their buildings is mostly highly quantitative and has emphasis on the financial outlook. It does not really take into consideration the qualitative indicators of social sustainability which can be seen from the ethnographic research conducted with the inhabitants. Where the community can be characterised by high degree of cohesion, self-organisation and shared activities.

As such, the hands-on research anchored in the dirty complexities of reality allowed an architectural project to emerge





in response. It is a temporary architectural act, not unlike Torange Khonsari's 'disobedient objects' discussed in Part 2. The design project is to design and build an exhibition space located in the misused parking lot of the Jacoba van Beierenlaan. However, the real contribution of this project is in the content of the exhibition. There, architectural knowledge and analysis are employed to come up with different ways to appraise the existing building (different to the numerical data collected in DUWO's surveys) which allows to start a conversation about the not easily quantifiable qualities of the spaces and the inhabiting community.

The research uncovered the nature of the pertinent discussion about the provision of student housing, which is currently taking place in Delft, which has direct implications on the way spaces are built and thus how they will be inhabited. However, the existing challenges and conflicts between the interests and objective's of different actors cannot be easily addressed by an architect as per professional accreditation. Perhaps, the canon where an architect continually designs and builds new structures is not appropriate for the environmental crisis, we found ourselves in and there is room to come up with new roles and tools to use architectural knowledge to make significant contributions to the build environment in other ways.







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