

# Ethnography

Groot-IJsselmonde



# Colophon

## **Author:**

Ümit Çelebi - 5257204

## **Tutors:**

Frederique van Andel

Harald Mooij

Florian Eckardt

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# Introduction

As part of the Advanced Housing studio, an ethnographic study was set up in which a number of residents of Groot-IJsselmonde were interviewed. The main aim of the research is to get a better picture of how the current residents use the housing and the neighborhood and what they like and dislike about it, so that I can take this into account in my own project. The interviews are elaborated on the housing floor plans, as well as the neighborhood features that residents felt were important to use. In doing so, the residents are located in different locations, including the neighborhoods of Tuinenhoven, Kreekhuizen and Groenenhagen in Groot-IJsselmonde (Rotterdam). The stories were set up from the residents' perspectives which resulted in this final booklet.



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# Jeroen

Target group: Single starter

Location: Kreekhuizen, Groot-IJsselmonde

I am a starter in this house of about 65 m<sup>2</sup> and have been living there for several weeks. I am still in the process of furnishing the house, but I am now fine with it. The house is spacious for me as a single person, and the rent of 600 euros, excluding the rent allowance, is reasonable, so I don't have much to complain about it, especially since before I lived in a studio of only 15 m<sup>2</sup>. I find the size of the house ideal and not too big because I am also looking at the long term. I'm not thinking about a family for now, but I want to keep that option open, so this size is acceptable. But then again, I don't plan to live there for five years.

In terms of layout, I now have a separate room for each function, so the living area is for relaxing alone or with friends coming to visit. However, the kitchen is tiny, where not much fits beside the standard appliances, and the odd dimension

on the side of the kitchen is inefficient. So I put the refrigerator in a separate room, but that is not a long-term solution. One room still needs to be completely furnished. I'm not too fond of the balcony because I feel that others can stare at me from the building behind it. The living rooms of that building block are located on my balcony side. As a result, I don't use that very often. The bedroom is now openly connected to the living room, but I would like something like a sliding door or completely closed with beams.

If I were to move, I would want to move to a ground-floor apartment, though, because, in this apartment building, there is noise pollution between neighbours quite quickly. This is also partly due to poor insulation. For the rest, the ground-level house does not need a garden or anything like that, which requires more care.

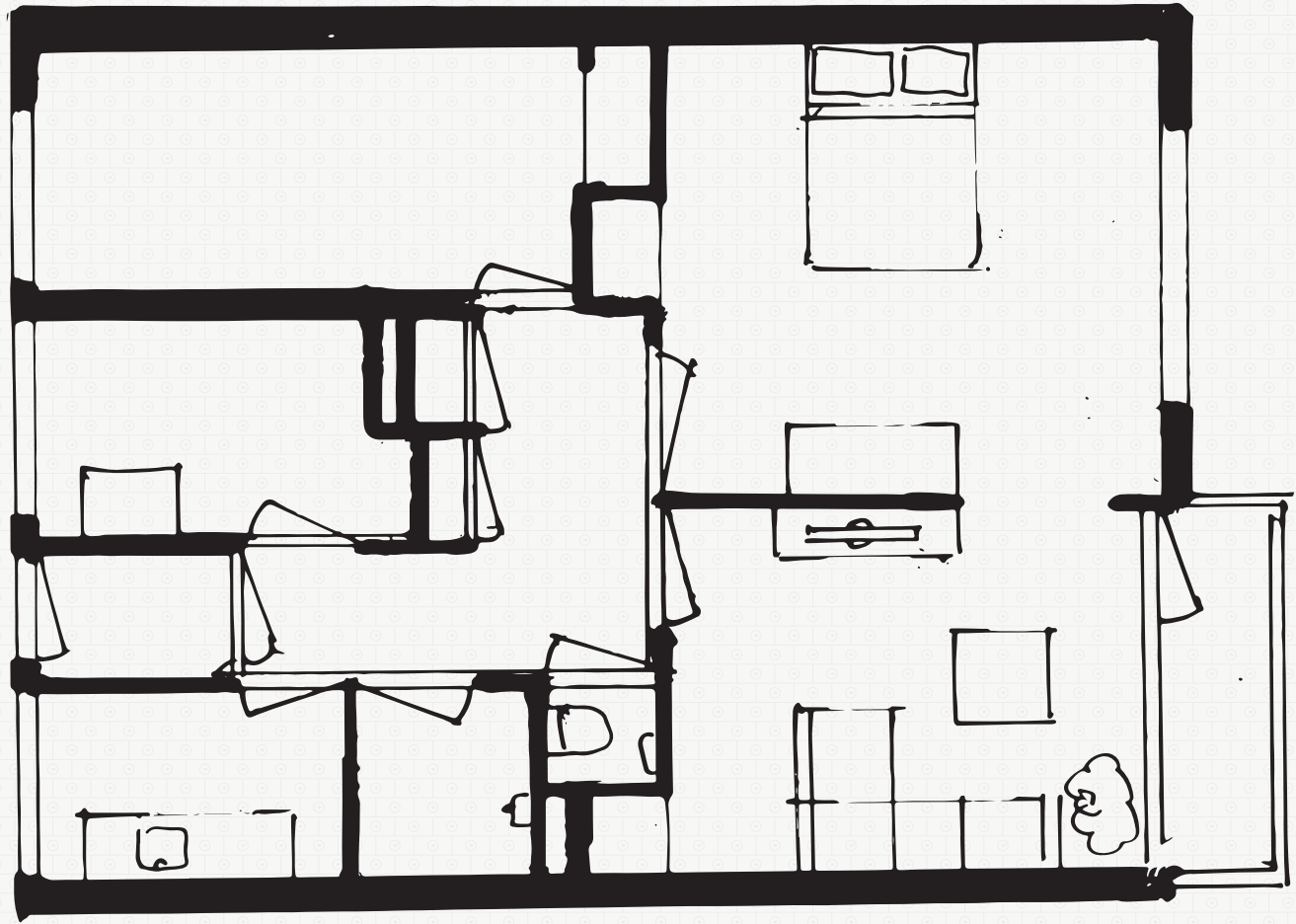


Figure 1 - Apartment of Jeroen (by author)

# Neighbourhood

Regarding amenities in the neighbourhood, I only use the shopping centre near here to run errands, which is about a 10-minute walk. Other than that, there is not much special here, just a cafe/restaurant and food bank. Otherwise, many facilities, including the gym or other stores, are located quite far away. There is only a soccer field near here, but I must also register for it. I would like to see some more stores here.

Regarding neighbourhood facilities, I'm unaware of what is in the immediate area. However, if there were something like a community centre where people get together, I wouldn't go there. In terms of public transportation, it's good to do with the bus and tram station near here. I find that it's more appropriate with eg. elderly people who are a bit lonelier.

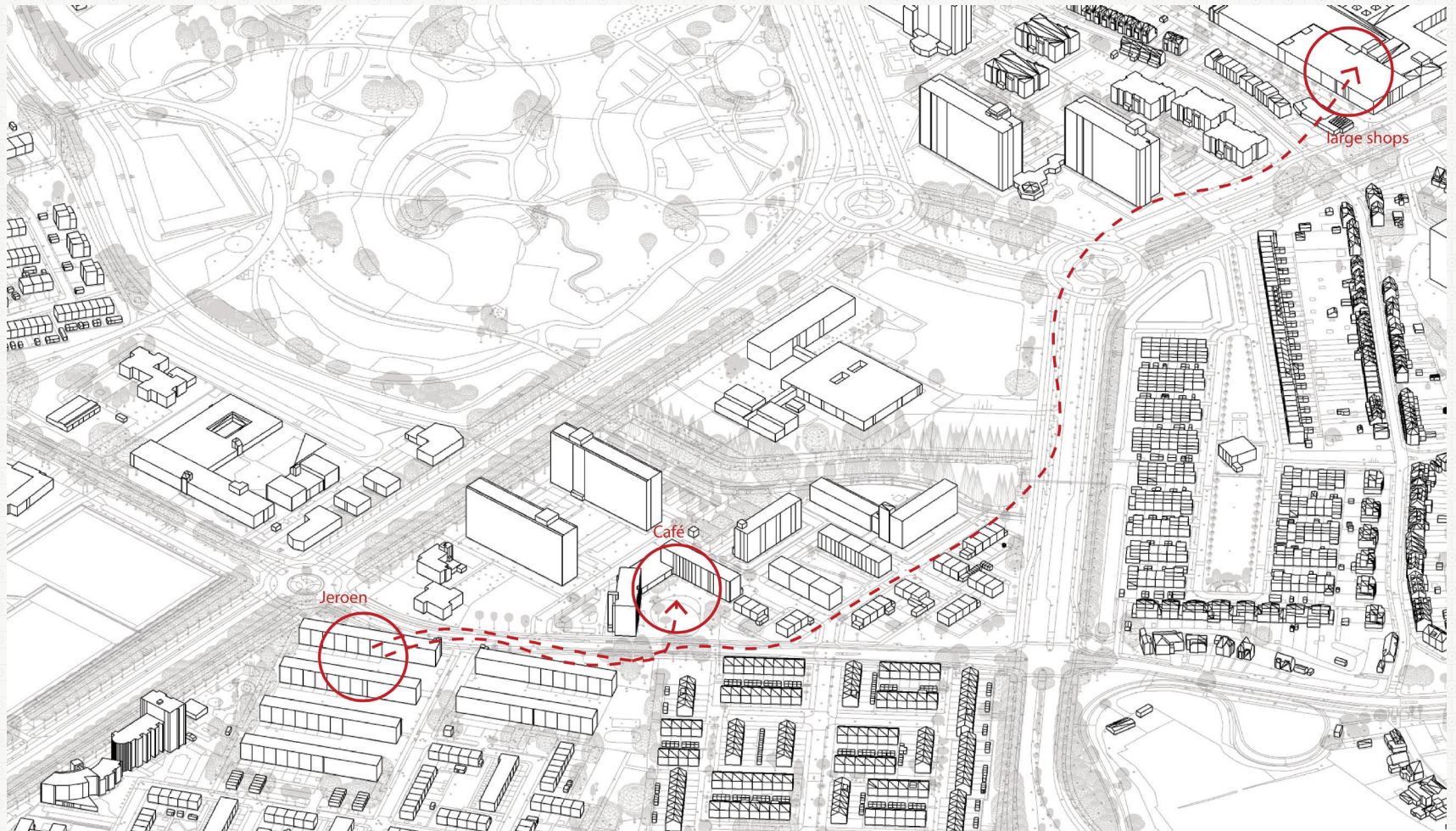


Figure 2 - Neighborhood functions of Jeroen (by author)





Figure 3 - Shopping mall Keizerswaard (by author)





Figure 5 - Apartment block (by author)



Figure 4 - Shopping block Kreekhuizen (by author)

# Leila

Target group: Migrant parent with child,  
Location: Groenenhagen, Groot-Ijsselmonde

I think every resident in this neighbourhood has decorated the homes differently. For example, I have changed the house quite a bit. The living room we are in now used to be a bedroom, and so was the dining area. There used to be a wall where the dining table now sits. Now it is an open space and the dining area and living area are connected. The living room now acts as a central point in this house with the bedrooms around it on two opposite sides and in the hallway the bathroom. From the bedrooms, we meet in the living room. Here I like the fact that the bedrooms are at a maximum distance from each other. This arrangement does not interfere with any visitors coming. This is because I do not feel we have to walk through the visitors to get from one bedroom, the living room, to the other part of the house. In fact, the visitors who come are almost exclusively next of kin that I sit with during the day.

Despite my Iranian background, I do not live like the Iranian culture but live like Dutch people. Also, in terms of lifestyle, I am now just a Dutchman, such as in terms of behaviour and dealing with people or guests. I don't have much of the Iranian culture anymore because I haven't been there for a long time. Only in terms of furnishing, I do have Persian carpets. Furthermore, I have lived in the Netherlands for 30 years, so integration is long past. I also master the language very well, although it was difficult in the beginning. I think in the beginning, the integration was easy, although I don't remember much about it because it was so long ago. I was very open to everyone and clearly aimed to build a better life. This is different with for example refugees who were forced to flee and need a very long time to accept this. Therefore, I have left my Iranian culture behind and built a whole new life here, where I now have more Dutch friends than foreign ones.



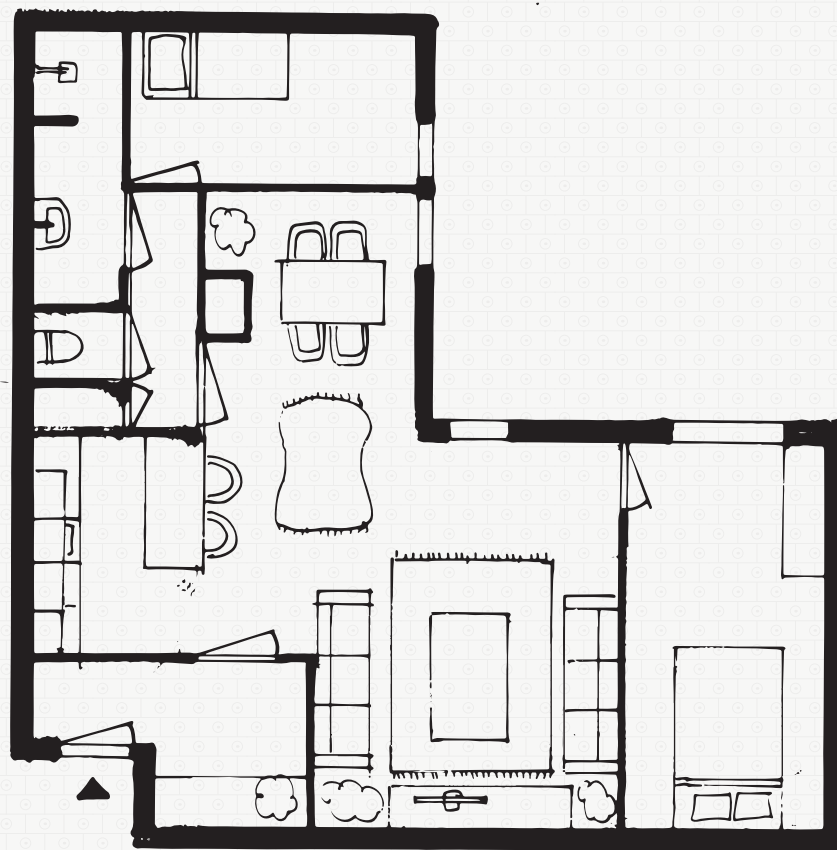


Figure 6 - Apartment of Leila (by author)

# Neighbourhood

Rotterdam is not my city because it is too crowded. I have lived in this house for four years and I have always lived in a village and I liked that because of the village feel. The advantage of this current neighbourhood is that you can go everywhere easily. However, only that advantage does not outweigh the crowds for me. These houses are also quite old and the insulation is not good, so we hear a lot from our neighbours. In this, we hear the most from our upstairs neighbours, not so much because they are crowded but because of the poor insulation. This is also reinforced by the fact that the terraces are diagonally opposite, from which a lot of noise comes when people sit there.

I have no contact at all with my neighbors and have neither the need nor the time for it. The same goes for other possible neighborhood establishments if they were to be built. I have enough family and friends who come over. I also do find it difficult to deal with certain social classes, especially low education classes. I find that when someone has had a good education, you also see it in their behavior that they are accommodating with their neighbors and they don't bother them in terms of noise or don't interfere. I think that this has not so much to do with architecture, but more the social aspect and behavior of the residents themselves. Otherwise, there are neighborhood places to get together, such as community centers or theaters where people can take dance classes.

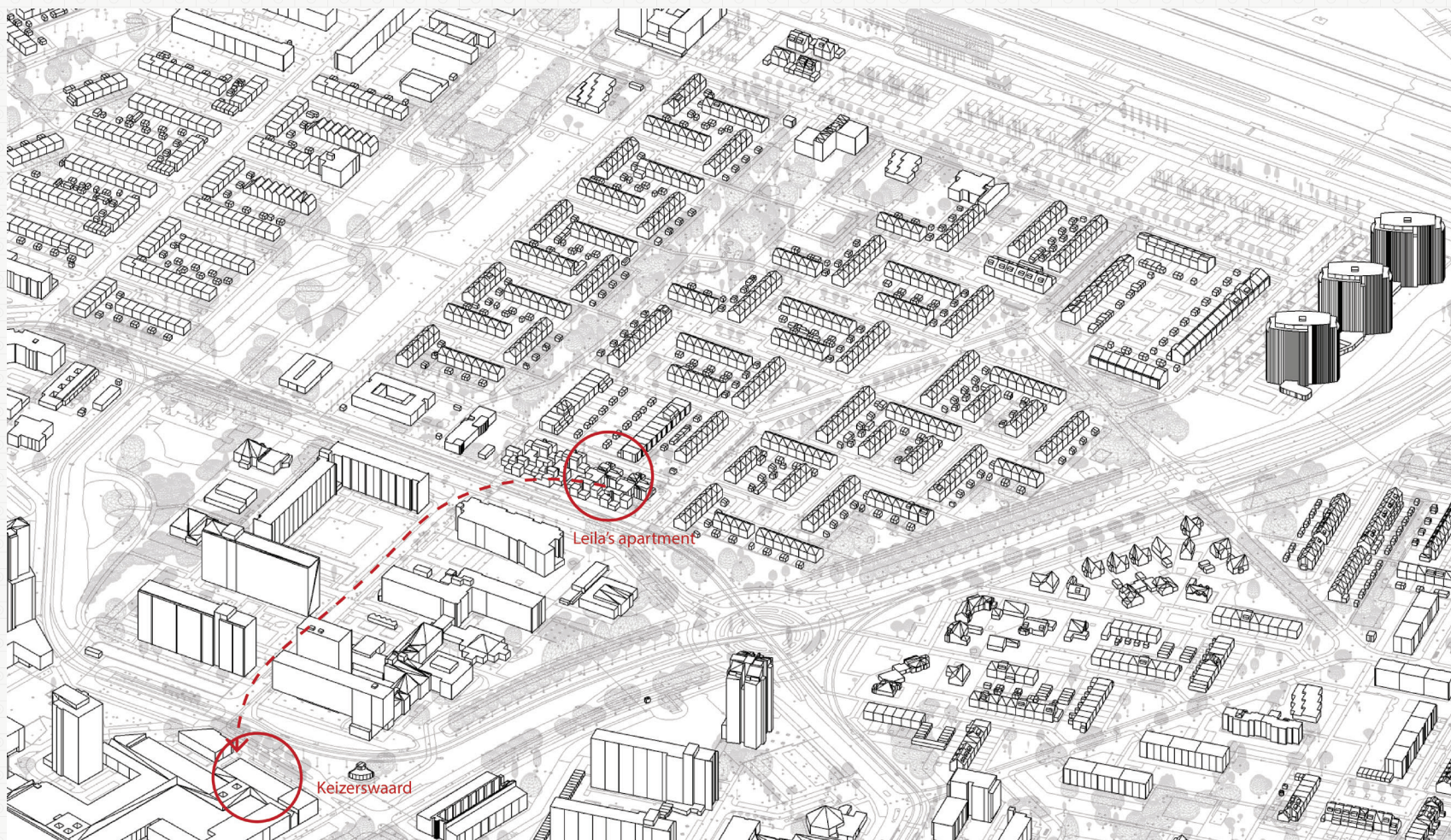


Figure 7 - Neighborhood of Leila (by author)





Figure 8 - Housing block (by author)



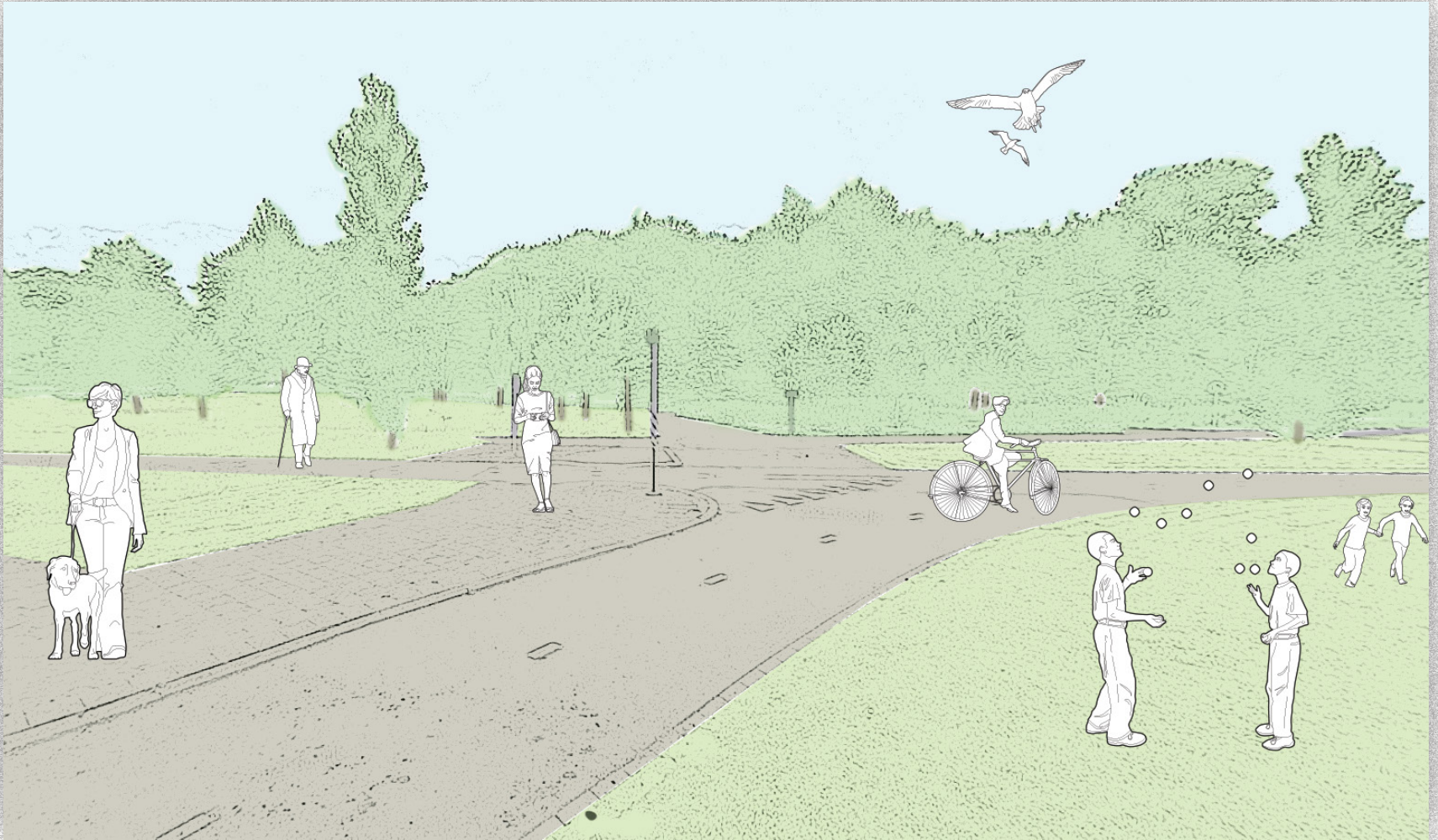


Figure 9 - The park De Twee Heuvels (by author)

# Anna

Target group: Single parent with children  
Location: Tuinenhoven, Groot-Ijsselmonde

In my house, the front garden still needs to be refurbished. Woonstad is organizing a Neighborhood Day where the neighbours can renovate their gardens together. Garbage, including garden tiles, is collected. The view of the garden becomes nicer as a result, and the housing contract requires that the garden is well maintained.

I'm happy with my house; everyone has their own space, including my children and me, and I also have a separate closet room to store clothes and stuff. The layout is pleasing; I live and relax downstairs and sleep upstairs. I could not imagine myself living any other way. In terms of size, it is fine and spacious enough. I sometimes have large family visiting and then this size is ideal. It wouldn't matter if it were on the ground floor, except perhaps when I'm old, but that's still a long way off.

My daytime activities consist of taking care of the children in the morning and taking them to school, and when I return home, I generally do household chores like cleaning or shopping. In terms of space, I live more downstairs than upstairs, so the living room is essential.

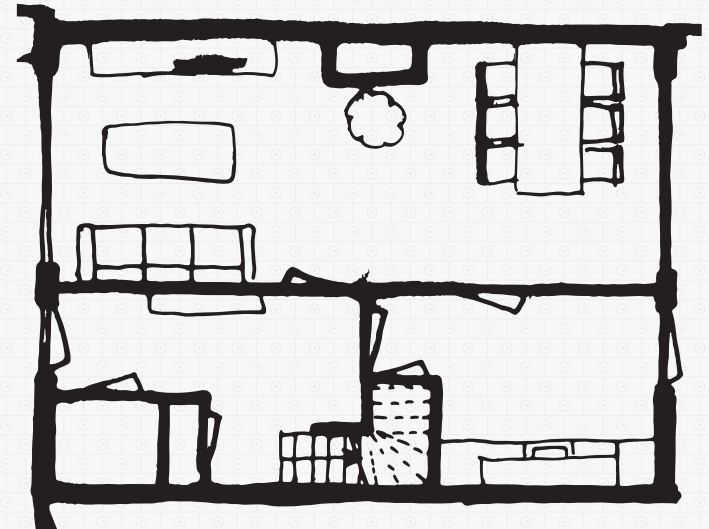


Figure 10 - Ground floor (by author)

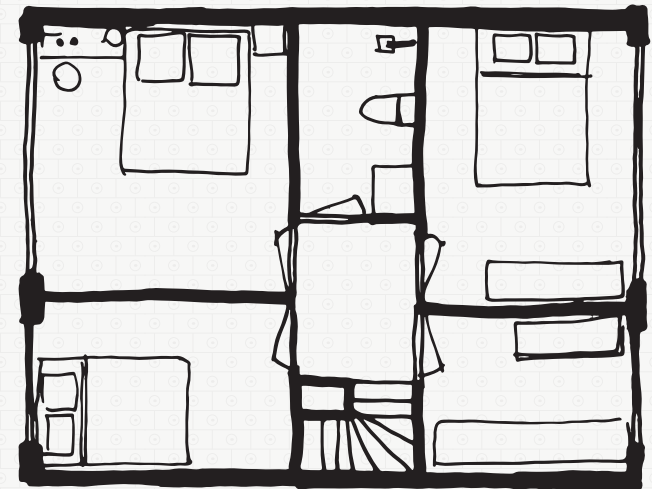


Figure 11 - First floor (by author)

There is currently a door between the hall and kitchen, but I want to close it as I prefer privacy in the kitchen and can use the wall for extra cabinets. Upstairs is pretty standard with bedroom, bathroom and storage room, but they are well spacious and good enough.

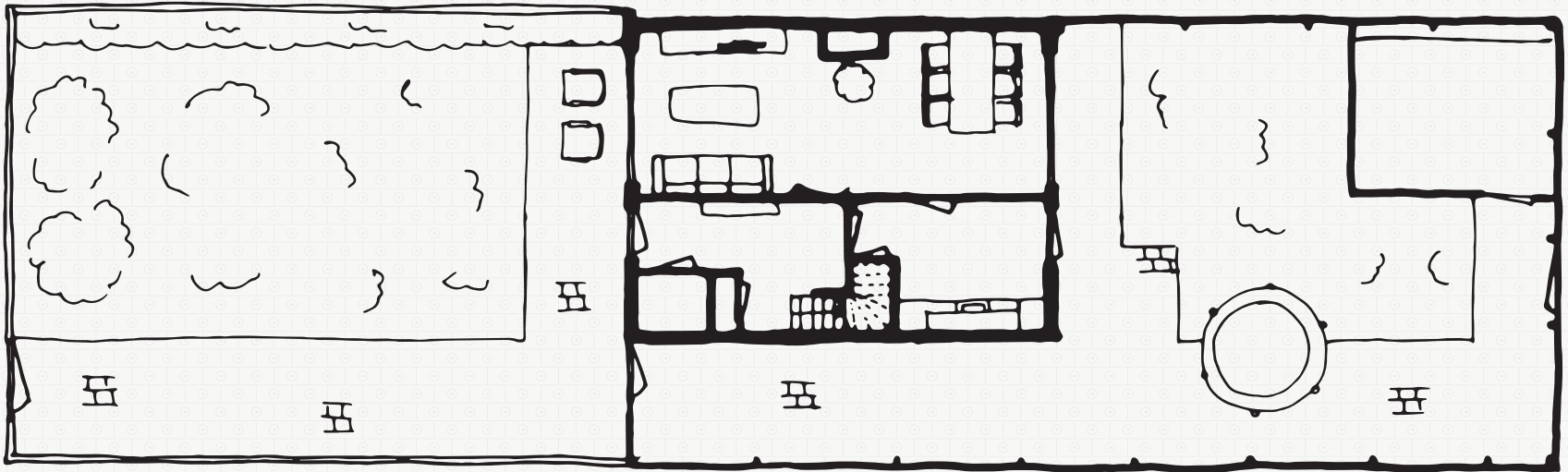


Figure 12 - Situation ground floor (by author)

# Neighbourhood

In my neighbourhood, I mainly go to the Dirk here in Prinsenplein for the day's groceries, as I find it easier to go there with the cargo bike when I want to go shopping. There is also a pharmacy and doctor, so it has much of what I need. For the more extensive or specific groceries, I sometimes go to the Keizerswaard, where I sometimes go to Action for example.

Furthermore, my children go to school nearby and soon to swimming lessons at the pool near Keizerswaard, but I have yet to discover what else there is. Furthermore, it is a very child-friendly neighbourhood; many children walk around here. Because of this, next year, I want my children to play more freely in the front yard with, for example, a trampoline so they can invite other children to jump with them.

I don't need to eat with my neighbours; I think greeting my immediate neighbours and opposite neighbours is enough. That's why I don't need community centres where neighbours are invited to, e.g. eating together. I would appreciate it if a community function was organized for children because other children from the neighbourhood and their parents also come together and chat.

In terms of public transport, things are pretty good here. There is a streetcar stop at the Prinsenplein and it stops at Feijenoord. There is also a bus that goes to the Zuidplein,. For both it's about a 5 to 10 minute walk for me, so it's not too bad.



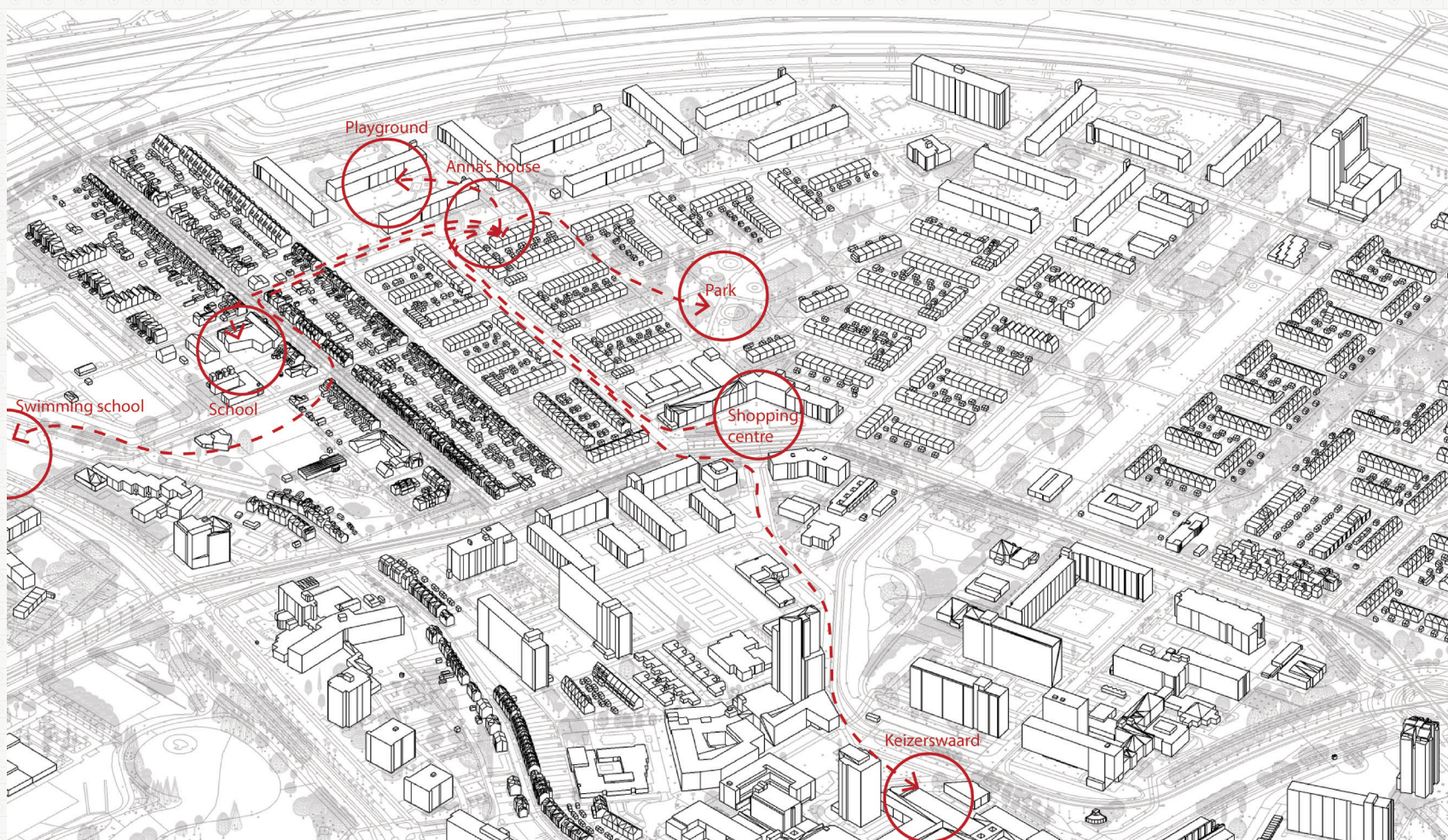


Figure 13 - Neighbourhood functions (by author)

# Alicia

Target group: Single parent with children  
Location: Tuinenhoven, Groot-IJsselmonde

I have been living alone for a year and taking care of my two children, my son and daughter. Before this, I lived with my sister for two years, who was very busy, so I am now delighted to have my place. The apartments here have recently been renovated, with the window frames replaced. However, an elevator is still missing, which is what the other building blocks here have installed.

In terms of cultural aspects of my background, I currently take nothing with me in my current home. In Curaçao, everything is different. Here in the Netherlands, we live next to and on top of each other in flats and terraced houses, but in Curaçao, we mainly live detached in country houses, although, of course, it differs where exactly you live.

I have arranged my house according to my family. The spaces I use most in my home are the living room, kitchen and bedroom. I sleep at the back next to the balcony, but I don't use the balcony. I do now have to go through the living room to my bedroom. In terms of the layout of the living room, I have separated the sitting area and dining area, I wouldn't know how else to set it up now. My one daughter sleeps in a small room on a bunk bed, which she uses for her friend to stay.



Figure 14 - Alicia's house (by author)



# Neighbourhood

My daycare now mainly revolves around my son, who is autistic. He does not talk and cannot take care of himself. I start the day by getting him ready early in the morning, including preparing food and bathing him. Then, they come to pick him up for school at 8 AM. He then comes home at about 3 o'clock. In the meantime, I clean up my house and prepare dinner. Most of my energy goes into caring for him, so I try to get enough rest during the day. In terms of contact with the neighbours, I am pretty reserved. I do like having neighbours, but I think it's okay when we live alone to have quietness.

What I would change about the neighbourhood is the look of the buildings. If I compare it to the houses in Curacao, they are much more colourful there. If there were a place where contact could be made with the neighbours, I would appreciate it and use it. If I moved to another house, it would be a single-family house, giving my son more space to use his energy. In my current home, he makes quite a bit of noise, which soon goes to the neighbours.

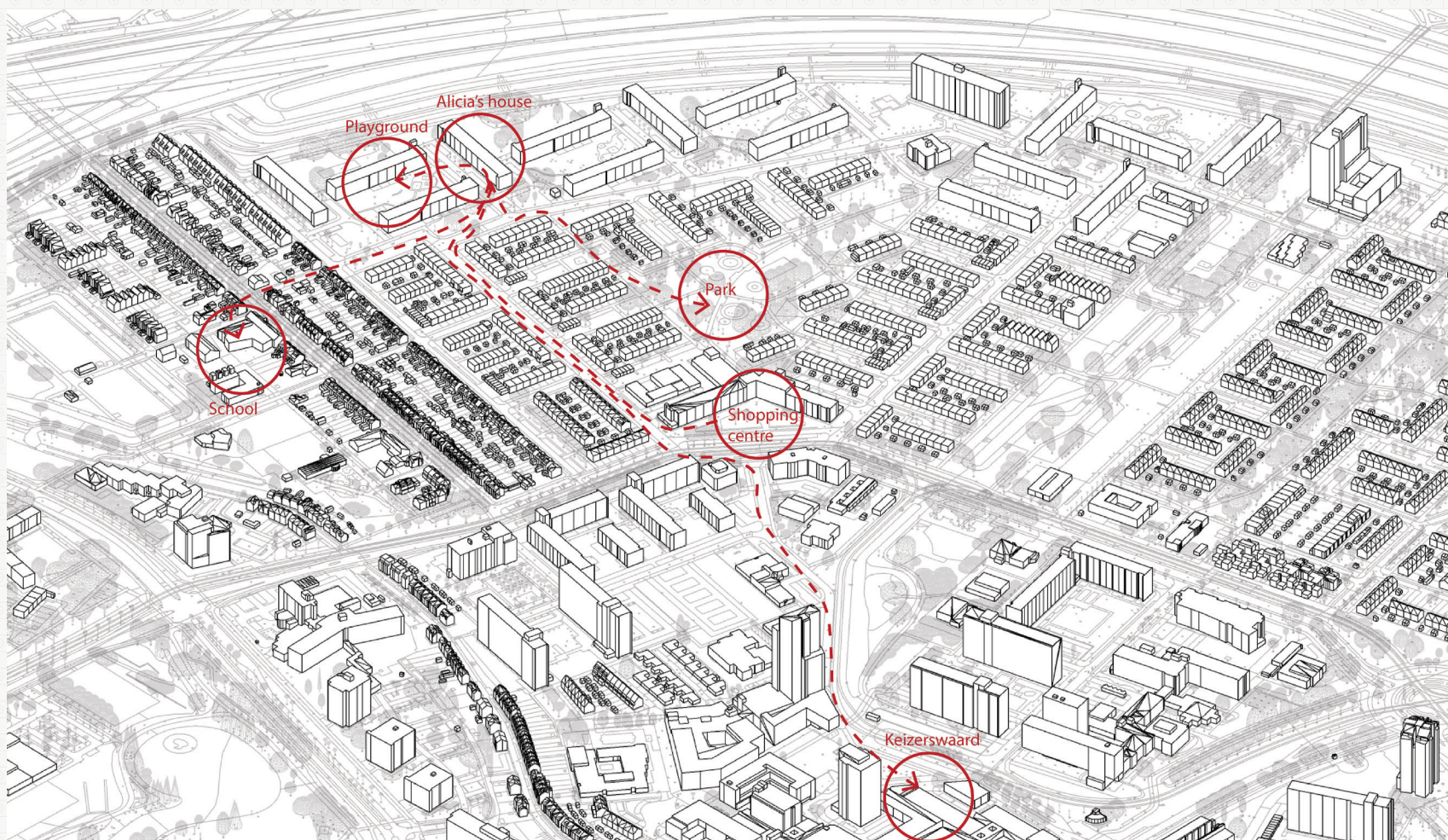


Figure 15 - Alicia's neighborhood and her used facilities (by author)





Figure 16 - Elementary school where Anna brings her children and catches up with other parents (by author)





Figure 17 - Swimming pool where Anna brings her children and catches up with other parents (by author)



Figure 18 - Front facade of Anna's house with spacious garden and open street (by author)



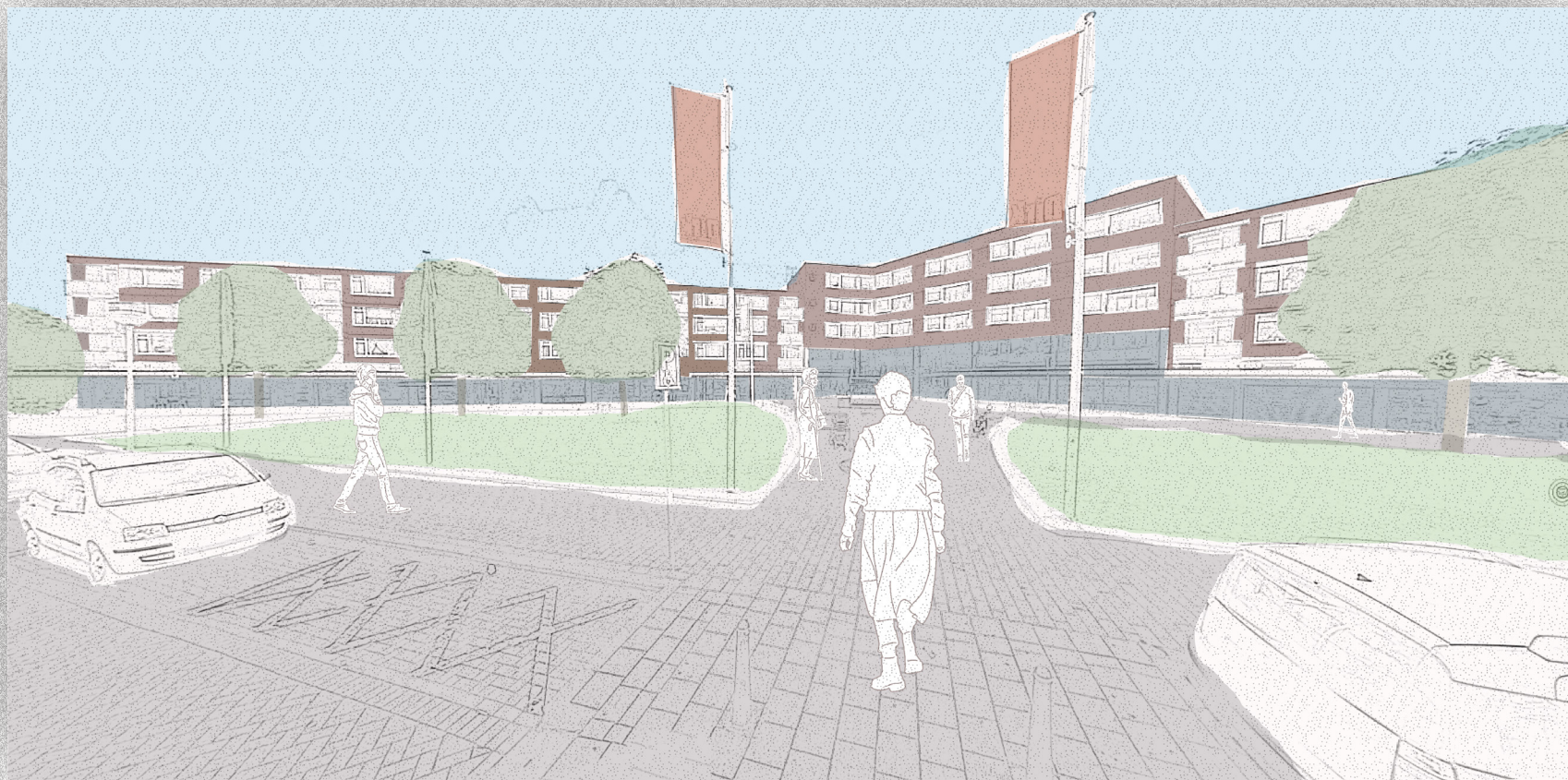


Figure 19 - Shopping centre Tuinenhoven which Anna often visits (by author)



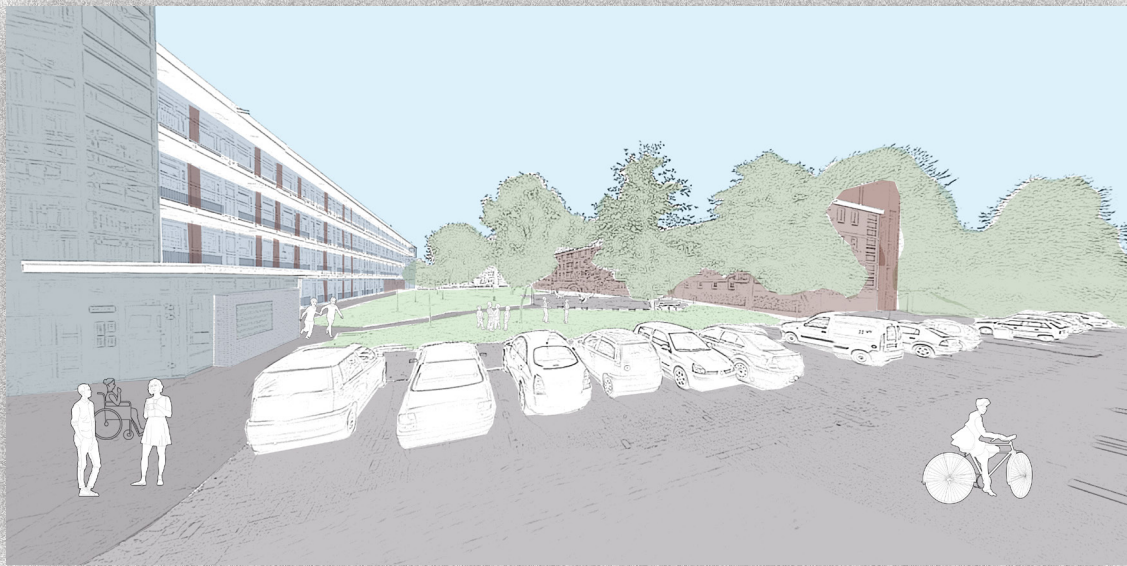


Figure 21 - Park with playground where Alicia's child sometimes plays (by author)



Figure 20 - Alicia's child pickup for school (by author)

