

SENIOR HOUSING TRADITIONS

Understanding the Dynamics of Senior Housing in Naaldwijk from
WWII to the Present Housing Crisis



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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the pressing issue of a housing shortage in the Netherlands, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by the elderly population of Naaldwijk, a town situated in the heart of the municipality of Westland, the Netherlands. By comparing historical and contemporary contexts, the thesis aims to provide insights into the motivations behind seniors' transitions from family homes to specialized senior housing post-World War II and the factors hindering such moves in the present day. Through case studies, the thesis delves into the evolution of senior housing and its impact on the housing crisis.

The study begins by outlining the current housing crisis, emphasizing the growing need for age-appropriate homes for seniors. It then explores a specialized senior housing type from 1947-1972, revealing the motivations driving seniors to transition, such as communal living dynamics and care provisions. Subsequently, the study examines a specialized senior center from 1972-1996, where factors like privacy and independence became cru-

cial motivations for seniors to move out of their family homes.

Examining the current housing types in the following chapter shows the contemporary challenges presenting significant barriers to seniors contemplating the move out of their family home. Exclusivity, affordability, and limited housing options hinder seniors from leaving their family homes despite the desire for community and care.

The last chapter offers a list of all found advantages to the examined case-studies, which is then relativized to the current times, leading to the recommendation to develop housing models that balance the traditional values with contemporary criteria in a nuanced manner.

In conclusion, the study underscores the complex interplay of historical and contemporary factors shaping senior housing decisions. By understanding these motivations and challenges, policymakers can develop inclusive and equitable housing solutions for the elderly, thereby addressing the pressing needs of an aging population amidst a housing crisis.

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INTRODUCTION Senior Housing Traditions

The Netherlands faces a pressing challenge: a profound housing shortage that threatens the well-being of its citizens and the stability of its housing market (Boelhouwer, 2023). This history thesis aims to create a comparison between the history of senior housing after WWII to the current housing situation in Naaldwijk, a town situated in the heart of the municipality of Westland, the Netherlands. Through the use of case-studies a better understanding of elderly-homes through different times could be attained, which could introduce new insights that could possibly help replenish the current shortage in housing.

In order to assert these new insights, the following research question will be explored: What factors motivated seniors in Naaldwijk, the Netherlands, to transition from family homes to specialized senior housing after World War II, and how do these motivations differ from contemporary factors that impede seniors from moving out of their family homes, contributing to the present housing crisis?

The findings are presented in five chapters, the first chapter delving into the current housing crisis to gain an understanding of the present challenges. The next three chapters focus on three different forms of senior housing, the aspects that define each period and the pros and cons to the different ways of living. The fifth chapter will then list all of the found ad, relativizing them to the current time, distinguishing what aspects of the historical housing could be of service in future scenarios.

Current housing crisis

In this chapter, the current housing crisis in The Netherlands will be formally introduced. First, the problem will be defined, after which the implications of the problem and the future prognosis will be mentioned.

1.1 Defining the problem

Boelhouwer (2023) outlines three primary factors contributing to the current crisis in his report *De wooncrisis in Nederland; achtergronden en oplossingen* (The housing crisis in the Netherlands; backgrounds and solutions). Firstly, he mentions the rapid population growth since 2014; which is due to the recovery of the economy after the financial crisis of 2008 and an increase in migration. Secondly, he notes the decrease in household sizes in the Netherlands, leading to heightened housing demands. Part of this reduction in household sizes is due to the recent policy aimed at reducing nursing home capacities, resulting in a surge in elderly single-person households. Lastly, the reduction in housing production adds to the housing shortage and thus the current crisis.

The combination of the growth in housing demands and the reduction in housing production resulted in an increase in housing shortage of 4,8% of the housing stock by mid-2023, equating to approximately 390.000 houses. This high of a shortage has not been seen in the Netherlands since 1970 (Boelhouwer, 2023).

1.2 Implications of the problem

As per Boelhouwer (2023) the implications of the housing shortage primarily affect middle-income households and elderly citizens of the Netherlands. Skyrocketing housing prices and low-income standards in the social renting sector disproportionately impact middle-income households. Assuming middle incomes fall within the range of 30.000 and 62.000 euros, this demographic comprises nearly 2.7 million households. Most households within this range are not eligible for social housing, which means that the people are confined to the private rental sector, where exorbitant prices often leave middle-income households with less disposable income than low-income counterparts.

Current housing crisis

Even more concerning for the middle-income households is their inability to purchase homes. In 2013, dual-income couples with average earnings came short of less than 50.000 euros in loans to buy an average house. By early 2023, this number rose to 260.000 euros, which consequently means that most middle-income households are not able to buy a house (Boelhouwer, 2023).

Due to the rising ages of the baby boom generation, the next few decades will be confronted with the consequences of an aging population. Both the need for age-appropriate homes for this group as well as the need for elderly care will grow. The current housing stock is insufficiently prepared for these specific demands.

1.3 Future prognosis

By focusing on finding a solution to the housing shortage, many other problems within the housing crisis will become less urgent, such as the 'startersproblematiek' or the 'starters problems'. However, the near-future outlook appears bleak due to the government's housing policies, which fail to stimulate the necessary increase in production. Between 2021-2022, economic headwinds led to a decrease in the issuance of building permits, with many already licensed permits facing delays or cancellation.

In search of potential solutions, Boelhouwer (2023) suggests that replenishing elderly-specific homes could alleviate pressure on healthcare and stimulate movement within the housing sector, thereby increasing the availability of suitable homes for middle-income households. One proposed option for such elderly-specific homes is clustered living arrangements, which have proven successful in Denmark.

It is evident that the current housing crisis will not resolve on its own, necessitating changes to prepare for current and future challenges.

Specialized senior housing between 1947-1972



IMAGE 1

Picture of home 'Bijldorp'
n.d., archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen

In this chapter, senior housing is researched in the specific context of the 'Rusthuis der Nederland Hervormde Gemeente' in the city of Naaldwijk. Firstly, the specific period of 1947-1972 will be defined, after which the case-study will be introduced. In order to create an appropriate comparison in chapter 5, both the advantages and the disadvantages of the senior home will be described.

2.1 Defining the period

To get a comprehensive understanding of the history of senior care in the Netherlands, a short overview of the prevailing conditions preceding WWII will be provided.

During the medieval period, the responsibility for elderly care primarily rested upon one's family. Those without familial support or financial means would become part of the group of the sick and the poor, reliant on charitable assistance (de Bruin, Heurneman, & Van der Veeke, 1997). Important to note is the fact that the scant provisions available for senior citizens were largely administered through religious

institutions, specifically, the reformed church (van der Heijden, van Nedeveen Meerkerk, & Vermeesch, 2009). During the 16th century, a new form of senior housing emerged known as 'oudeliedenhuizen' or 'old people's homes', characterized by rudimentary amenities and constrained living conditions (Van Campen & Verbeek-Oudijk, 2017). After WWII, these types of senior housing became increasingly more used because of the housing shortage, senior citizens were compelled to move out of their family homes to create more housing stock (Van der Voordt, 1998). It was not until October 1, 1947, with the enactment of the 'Noodwet Ouderdomsvoorziening' or 'Emergency Law Elderly Facilities' commonly known as 'Noodwet-Drees', that improvements in elderly care were initiated. This new law provided provision for residents aged 65 and over in case one had insufficient means of living. Soon thereafter, this emergency law was replaced by the 'Algemene ouderdoms wet' or 'Basic state pension' on January 1, 1957. The basic state pension applied to all residents aged 65 and over regardless of their wealth, providing them with a monthly basic income

Specialized senior housing between 1947-1972

2.2.1 Life at the home

On November 24, 1937, shortly after the emergence of the home, a set of regulations was formally instituted to govern the operational dynamics of the establishment. These regulations encompassed diverse facets of daily life within the facility, ranging from personal hygiene protocols to religious observances, as delineated in the 24 articles comprising the regulatory framework. The regulations required residents to keep a clean body, and it forbid drunkenness among residents, with transgression leading to punishment and removal from the home. Furthermore, the rules demanded prayer before and after dinner and demanded attendance to religious services (Wageveld, 2005).

Financial modalities within the facility were structured around the allocation of residents' pensions, with half of the pension amount being disbursed back to the residents as discretionary funds. The payments were earmarked to defray expenses associated with resident care, facility upkeep, and staff salary. Nonetheless, despite the financial contributions from residents, the Dutch Reformed diaconate encountered persistent challenges in maintaining economic stability while concurrently extending support to the needy within the community (Wageveld, 2005).

These financial concerns continued and increased due to the requisition of the home during WWII. November 12, 1944, the home was to provide shelter to 50 workers from The Hague who were to work for the Wehrmacht. Consequently, the residents were necessitated to vacate the premises temporarily, first relocating to the Keslerhuis in The Hague, and shortly after to the Emergency home Bloemendaal in The Hague (Wageveld, 2005). The bill was to be paid by the Dutch reformed diaconate and, according to an invoice by the emergency home, amounted to 62 guilder per month per patient (2 guilder per day) (Image 2).

(Pierik, 1989). This new mindset of the government creating a welfare state also increased the governments interest in the wellbeing of these elders. Life at the old people's homes began to become increasingly more pleasant.

2.2 Defining the case-study

The 'Rusthuis der Nederlands Hervormde Gemeente' or 'Rest House of the Dutch Reformed Community' was put into use from May 22, 1936, by 15 elderly people and a couple of caregivers. The rest house, colloquially 'home Bijldorp', was located in a still existing building on the Dijkweg 11 in Naaldwijk. The building was originally built in 1836, which became a notary office of Mr. Bikkers and his assistant Lagerwey. In 1898, the building was bought by Mrs. de Graaff, the sister-in-law of the now notary Lagerwey, and the building was rented to her brother-in-law. After his passing, the building was bought by the diaconate of the Dutch Reformed Community in September 1935, after which it became inhabited by the 15 senior residents (Spaargaren & Beijer, 2017).

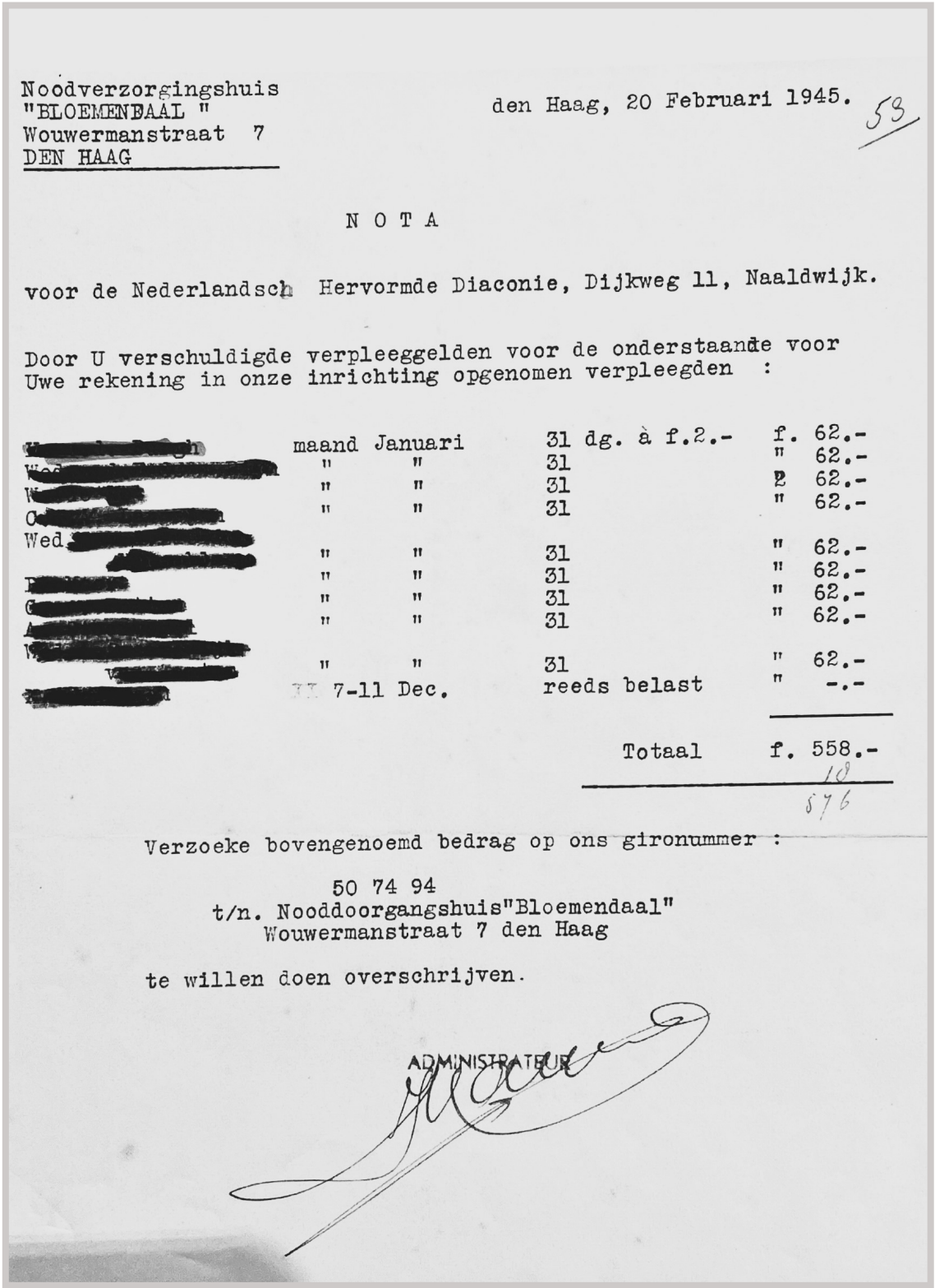


IMAGE 2

Invoice Noodverzorgingshuis 'Bloemendaal'
February 20, 1945, archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen

Specialized senior housing between 1947-1972

The facility itself was relatively modest in scale compared to current standards, while housing 15 elderly residents. Its architectural layout comprised of a communal kitchen, a communal room and 5 bedrooms on the main floor, and an additional 4 bedrooms and a dormitory on the second floor. The female residents, and the caregivers resided on the main floor, while the male residents' chambers were placed on the second floor. The dormitory was 9.50 by 4.72 meters large, amounting to almost 45 square meters that provided space for 5 male residents, visible in Image 3.

up, cooking, and cleaning together, as captured in Image 4.

Despite the modest footprint of the house, the garden area was expansively proportioned, accommodating livestock enclosures for chickens and rabbits and designated plots for cultivation. The gazebo provided an idyllic setting for leisurely pursuits and social interactions. A newspaper article by van Leeuwen (2000) notes the undoubtedly contentedness of the elderly residents as well as the satisfaction from the institutional leadership the board and leaders of the home.

As described by the current owner and resident of the house, Mrs. Schreuder, daily routines within the facility were characterized by communal engagement, with residents congregating in shared spaces such as the communal room, the corridor upstairs, the strip of green in front of the home, or in the gazebo in the garden. Chore assignments were communally distributed among residents, encompassing responsibilities ranging from garden work to domestic chores such as washing-

2.2.2 Closing of the home
Discussions regarding the establishment of a new residence for Dutch Reformed elders commenced in 1951, prompted by escalating defects in the home and financial constraints hindering necessary improvements. Importantly, the impetus for a new facility stemmed solely from the shortage of accommodation and space, rather than any dissatisfaction among residents (van Leeuwen, 2000). By 1966, the newly established Hervormde Stichting

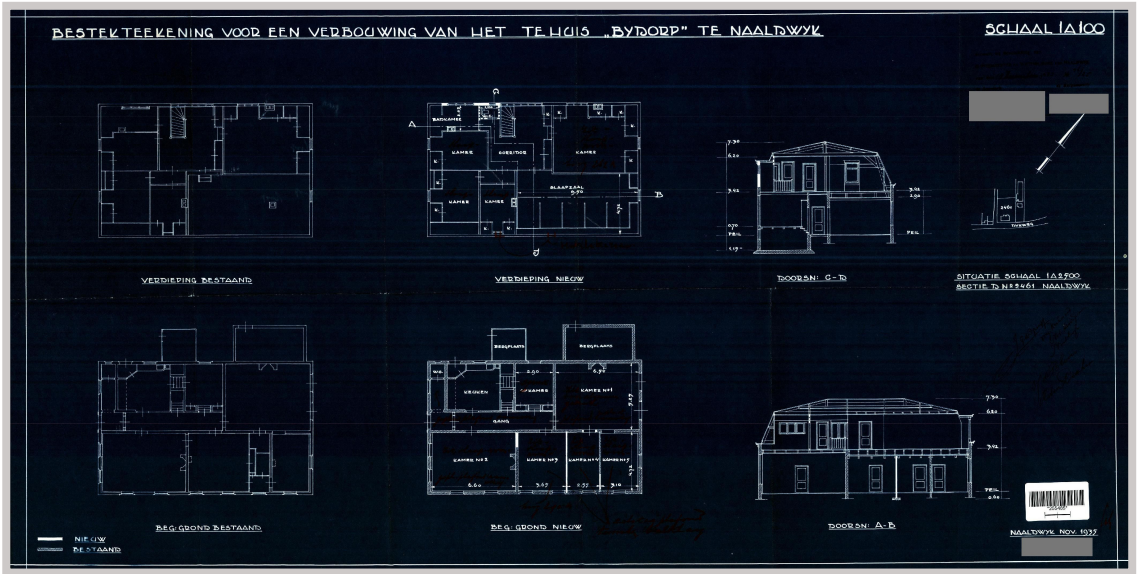


IMAGE 3

Specifications drawing for a renovation of the home 'Bijldorp' in Naaldwijk
1935, Building Archives Westland

Specialized senior housing between 1947-1972



IMAGE 4

Two elderly residents doing the washing-up
September 1968, archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen



IMAGE 5

View of the garden and the gazebo
n.d., archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen

Bejaardenzorg Naaldwijk, or Reformed Elderly Care Foundation Naaldwijk, expressed apprehension regarding municipal support for the construction of a new facility, citing the challenges faced by a neighboring town in garnering municipal acknowledgement of similar needs (Wageveld, 2005). As the shortage of accommodation became increasingly acute by the late 1960s, efforts were intensified to identify alternative housing solutions, ultimately culminating in the proposal for the 'Pijletuinenhof' (van Leeuwen, 2000).

The ownership of the building was transferred in 1973 to Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen and Mr. Schreuder, who have since utilized the residence as their family home.

2.3 Advantages of the home

Due to the intimacy of the home, elderly inhabitants were commonly perceived as constituting a cohesive familial unit, with caregivers analogously likened to parental figures overseeing the household. Each resident actively participated in the daily regimen of the domicile, fostering a sense of social cohesion therein. Moreover, the accommodation of visitors throughout the day, with the

exception of designated mealtimes, further attenuated any sentiments of isolation among residents. Notably, the modest scale of the resident population ensured sufficient attention from caregivers while concurrently nurturing a communal atmosphere.

A prominent feature of the facility was its abundant green space, a facet underscored by research elucidating the stress-alleviating properties of natural surroundings as expounded by Ulrich, Simons, Losito, Fiorito, Miles and Zelson (1991) and corroborated by Nilsson, Sangster, Gallis, Hartig, Vries, Seeland and Schipperijn (2011), who delineated the manifold benefits of greenery on human physical and mental well-being. The cultivation and maintenance of the garden were entrusted to the residents, thereby encouraging their frequent outdoor engagement.

Moreover, the financial structure of the facility adhered to a non-profit paradigm wherein half of residents' pensions were allocated for operational expenses while the remaining half constituted personal allowances, embodying a socially equitable approach

Specialized senior housing between 1947-1972



IMAGE 6

Sign board: no visitors between 11:30-13:00 and 17:00-18:00
n.d., archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen



IMAGE 7

View of the garden and a bench
n.d., archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen

the past few decades. This shortage of space resulted in some residents' rooms being situated in less-than-ideal areas of the home, notable on the second floor. Elderly residents were obliged to walk a flight of stairs multiple times a day, presenting less of a challenge for the physically able but posing significant difficulties for those with mobility issues. Moreover, the presence of stairs increased the risk of residents experiencing falls.

Although the residence did offer some single rooms, the dormitory arrangement required five men to share a room, depriving them of privacy. While there is no explicit evidence that this arrangement was viewed negatively by residents, sharing sleeping quarters is generally considered undesirable in contemporary times.

Lastly, the religious affiliation of the home, being initiated by the Reformed church, resulted in exclusivity whereby only individuals of the same faith were admitted, contributing to a lack of diversity, and leading to exclusion.

2.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, an examination of senior housing with the specific context of the home 'Bijldorp' in Naaldwijk has been undertaken. The case-study sheds light on the intimate dynamics of communal living and caregiver-resident relationships within the facility. Despite the commendable ethos of communal engagement and self-sufficiency fostered within the residence, inherent limitations, such as spatial constraints and exclusivity based on religious affiliation, underscore the complex interplay between tradition, practicality, and inclusivity in senior housing arrangements. It can be concluded that despite the clear gap between the current Dutch Building Decree and the living conditions within home 'Bijldorp', the home provided its residents with esteemed living arrangements. The advantages of the home would be of high value to take into consideration for future scenarios.

to fiscal management. This egalitarian ethos ensured accessibility to individuals across socioeconomic strata, emblematic of the charitable ethos espoused by the reformed church, which spearheaded the initiative.

The residents shared similar backgrounds, being raised in the same town, with the same religion and the same values. The religious roots of the facility brought everyone together in a shared sense of faith and culture, thus creating a form of like-mindedness.

Lastly, the resident-driven cultivation of vegetables and reading of poultry fostered a mode of sustenance marked by self-sufficiency, contributing to the facility's environmental sustainability. Its modest dimensions and shared amenities facilitated efficient resource utilization, further accentuating its environmentally conscious ethos.

2.4 Disadvantages of the home

As previously mentioned, the modest size of the residence has its advantages for the residents, but it also posed challenges. The decision to close the home was primarily due to space constraints, exacerbated by the increasing number of elderly residents over

Specialized senior housing between 1972-1996



IMAGE 8

A view of Senior Center 'Pijletuinenhof'
August 11, 1976, Historical Archives Westland

In this chapter, senior housing is researched in the specific context of the 'Pijletuinenhof' in the city of Naaldwijk. Firstly, the specific period of 1972-1996 will be defined, after which the case-study will be introduced. In order to create an appropriate comparison in chapter 5, both the advantages and the disadvantages of the senior home will be described.

3.1 Defining the period

The increase in population of elderly individuals residing in retirement homes necessitated heightened supervision and protection measures for their well-being. Consequently, the enactment of the 'Wet op de Bejaardenoorden (WBO)' or 'Law on Retirement Homes' ensued. These organizations were characterized as entities accommodating a minimum of five senior occupants, offering sustainable housing alongside comprehensive or partial care. Subsequently, both the standard of care provision and housing arrangements fell within governmental jurisdiction (Van der Voordt, 1998).

Following the implementation of the aforementioned legislation, subse-

quent years witnessed a notable surge in the occupancy rates of retirement homes. Within a decade, the number of occupied spaces surged from 73,000 to nearly 135,000 placements. As occupancy rates surges, so did government spending, prompting the adoption of the '7% rule' in 1975. This regulation delineated that a maximum of 7% of the demographic aged 65 and above could be accommodated within retirement homes. Upon its enactment, the actual percentage exceeded this threshold at 9,5%. In addition to numerical restrictions on occupancy, heightened standards for placement were instituted. Beyond the age criteria, factors such as care requirements, as well as social or psychological needs emerged as pivotal factors influencing admittance (Van der Voordt, 1998).

3.2 Defining the case-study

The Senior Center 'Pijletuinenhof' commenced its operations by accommodating the former residents of 'Bijldorp' in May 1972 (Wageveld, 2005). Its official inauguration took place on January 25, 1974, coinciding with the formal naming of the senior center, which honored the previous owner of

Specialized senior housing between 1972-1996

the land.

Situated on Verdilaan in Naaldwijk, less than 400 meters from its predecessor, 'Bijldorp', and approximately 200 meters from both the Reformed church and the city center, the construction site was strategically chosen. Initially, the facility comprised 83 single rooms and 10 couple rooms spread across four floors. Plans for an additional 46 senior flats were swiftly devised shortly after the center's establishment. In a subsequent expansion in 1989, 21 semi-detached homes were integrated into the vicinity of the senior center.

The operational framework of the senior center necessitated the employment of 50 to 60 employees engaged in caregiving, nursing, domestic chores, administration, and management duties.

3.2.1 Life at the home

Due to the diverse range of housing options available within the senior center, elderly residents in varying stages of aging and health were afforded suitable accommodations. Those requiring care were accommodated within the

main building, ensuring convenient access to shared facilities and necessary assistance, whereas residents exhibiting greater self-reliance were housed in the senior flats and semi-detached homes, situated within close proximity to the main structure. This innovative approach to elderly housing not only afforded residents enhanced privacy and autonomy but also facilitated ample opportunities for social engagement.

Compared to the previous accommodations at 'Bijldorp', the individual rooms and flats offered within the senior center boasted relative spaciousness and privacy. Single rooms measured 7.05 by 3.58 meters, providing approximately 25 square meters of personal space per occupant (Image 10). Double rooms, with dimensions of 8.06 by 6.58 meters, offered an additional 28 square meters compared to the single rooms (Image 11). Moreover, the recreation hall furnished an additional 225 square meters of communal space for residents to utilize during the day, with a subsequent expansion in 1988 adding another 58 square meters to



IMAGE 8

Senior residents drinking 'orange bitter' in the recreation hall
April 30, 1983, Historical Archives Westland

Specialized senior housing between 1972-1996

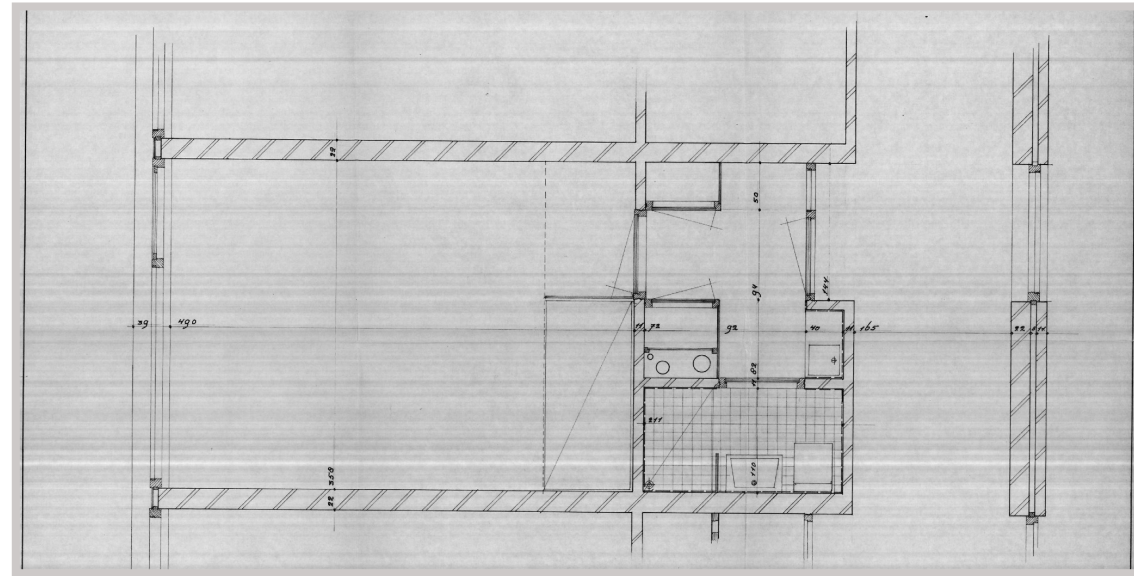


IMAGE 10

Specifications drawing for a single room in the 'Pijletuinenhof'
March 15, 1968, Building Archives Westland

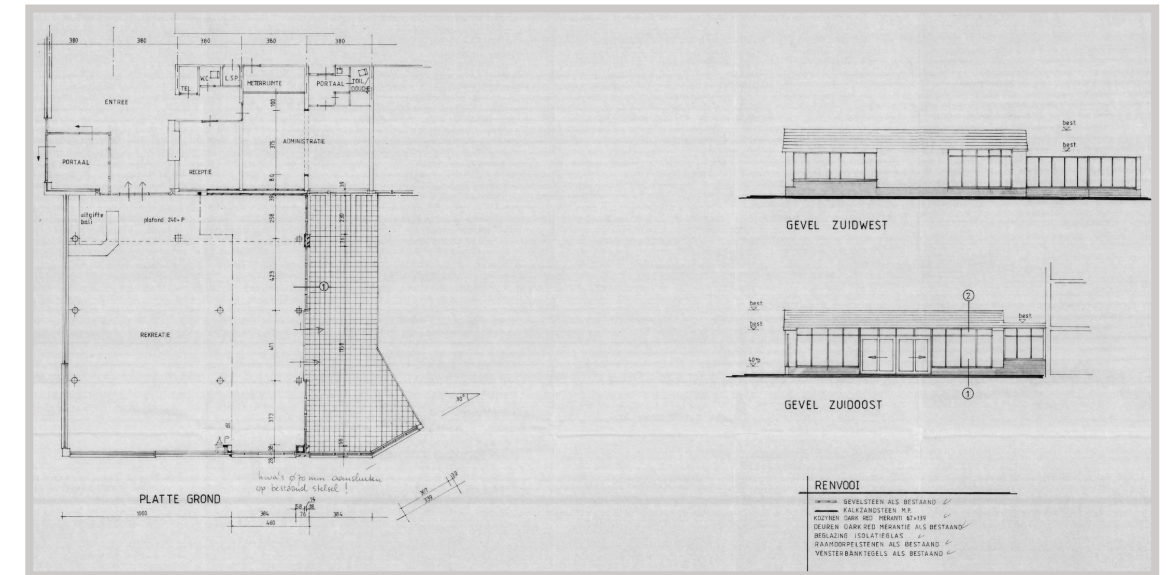


IMAGE 12

Specifications drawing for the extension of the recreation hall
November 11, 1988, Building Archives Westland

this facility (Image 12).

Life within the senior center was generally regarded as pleasant, particularly in the initial years following its establishment. Elderly individuals expressed enthusiasm about securing accommodations within the modernized senior center, recognizing the reduced domestic responsibilities and the prospect of socializing with like-minded peers (Schreuder-Fransen, personal communication, March 10, 2024). Additionally, the senior center's proximity to the church and town center was perceived as a significant advantage by its residents (Wageveld, 2005).

3.2.2 Closing of the home

Although the senior center continued to operate for several years following 1996, its original purpose underwent a notable transformation following the repeal of the WBO. Subsequent to this legislative change, admission to the senior center was restricted to individuals necessitating a specified level of care, effectively excluding healthy elderly individuals from residency until such criteria were met (Van der Voordt, 1998). Consequently, many healthy

seniors were compelled to remain in their familial residences until their care needs warranted relocation to the senior center.

Compounded by the aging infrastructure, the senior center gradually fell into disuse, culminating in its eventual abandonment and the formulation of plans for its demolition and replacement with a modernized structure. The official commencement of the building's demolition was initiated in 2021, paving the way for the construction of a new apartment complex, slated for completion this year (Vermeer, 2020).

3.3 Advantages of the home

Achieving a harmonious blend between private and communal spaces significantly contributed to the overall satisfaction of residents within the senior center. In contrast to the previous facility, 'Bijldorp', residents enjoyed notably increased opportunities for seclusion within their personal quarters whenever they desired, thus enhancing their sense of dignity and autonomy. The quality of these private accommodations was notably superior, offering substantially more space and amenities than their predecessors. Formerly

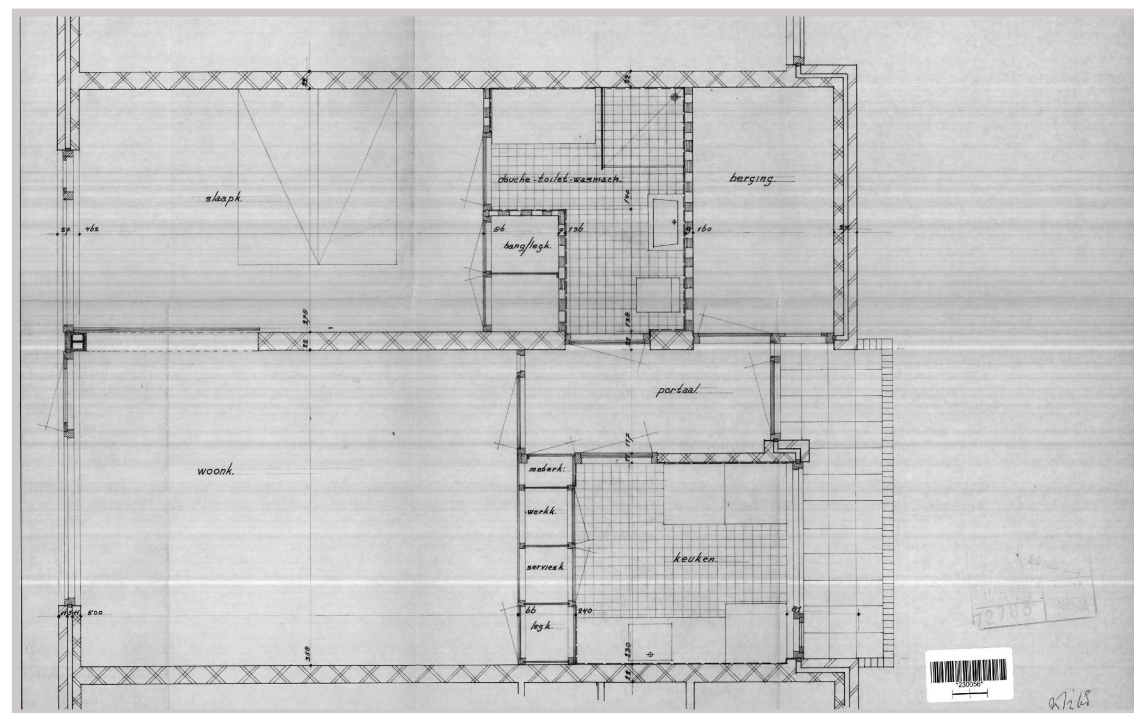


IMAGE 11

Specifications drawing for a double room in the 'Pijletuinenhof'
March 15, 1968, Building Archives Westland



IMAGE 13

Demolition of the Senior Center 'Pijletuinenhof'
Januari 6, 2022, Thierry Schut

Specialized senior housing between 1972-1996



IMAGE 14

A view of the 'Pijletuinenhof' and the Dutch Reformed Church
1971, Historical Archives Westland

shared facilities, such as bathrooms, kitchens, sleeping quarters, and living areas, were now individually allocated to each resident. Moreover, the absence of stairs facilitated accessibility throughout the premises, augmenting the overall comfort of the housing environment.

Furthermore, a relaxation of rules afforded residents the agency to determine their own mealtimes, sleep schedules, and leisure activities, promoting a greater sense of autonomy and independence. Depending on their capabilities, residents enjoyed increased latitude in organizing their daily routines, including the option to engage or refrain from social interactions with fellow residents. This shift rendered socialization a voluntary rather than an obligatory aspect of communal living. It is noteworthy that, particularly prior to the discontinuation of the WBO, individuals exhibited an inclination to opt for senior center residency due to the perceived opportunity for camaraderie with like-minded peers. Fears of social isolation often compelled individuals to choose communal living arrangements over solitary residence in familial homes.

Lastly, the substantial presence of nursing staff within the facilities significantly enhanced the level of care extended to residents, fostering a heightened sense of security and well-being among the senior populace.

3.4 Disadvantages of the home
Despite the provision of small private outdoor spaces for the senior flats and semi-detached homes, the communal outdoor areas within the senior center were notably inferior in quality compared to those of 'Bijldorp'. Consequently, residents spent less time outdoors. Furthermore, the primary outdoor space of the building was situated adjacent to the relatively bustling Verdilaan street, resulting in limited greenery and heightened noise disturbances from passing vehicles, particularly in the later stages of the senior center's existence.

Moreover, due to the increased emphasis on privacy and the larger resident population, individualized attention between residents and caregivers dwindled. Residents were afforded greater freedom to spend their time in solitary pursuits, thereby heightening the risk of loneliness and social isolation.

Specialized senior housing between 1972-1996



IMAGE 15

A view of the 'Pijletuinenhof' and the bus stop in front of the building
1979, Historical Archives Westland

on. The expansion in resident numbers also fostered a sense of anonymity, diminishing the intimacy once fostered through communal work and shared daily routines, which had been integral aspects of the previous home.

3.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, an examination of senior housing with the specific context of the 'Pijletuinenhof' in Naaldwijk has been undertaken. The case-study sheds light on the enhanced quality of private accommodations, increased autonomy for residents, and heightened levels of care provided by nursing staff. Conversely, disadvantages inherent in the senior canter model, such as compromised outdoor spaces, diminished individualized attention, and erosion of communal intimacy, underscore the complex interplay between evolving care paradigms and resident well-being. It can be concluded that the evaluation of the specialized senior housing has provided society with optimized outcomes for elderly residents, while also bringing forth new disadvantages.

Specialized senior housing between 1996-now



IMAGE 16

Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen living by herself in the old home 'Bijldorp'
August 11, 2019, Thierry Schut

In this chapter, senior housing is researched in the broader context of the multiple elderly housing options from the abolition of the WBO to current days. Firstly, the specific period of 1996-now will be defined, after which the current housing options will be introduced. The specific options researched within this chapter will exclude specialized nursing homes for those in need of care. In order to create an appropriate comparison in chapter 5, both the advantages and the disadvantages of the current housing options will be described.

4.1 Defining the period

The dissolution of the WBO precipitated a transformation in the landscape of elderly care facilities, fundamentally altering the traditional paradigm of centralized elderly homes. Instead of a single model accommodating all individuals aged 65 and above, regardless of their health, diverse housing alternatives emerged, categorized into four distinct typologies, ranging from familial residence (category one) to institutional nursing facilities (category four) (Van der Voordt, 1998). Subsequent to

the dissolution of the WBO, a discernible trend surfaced, with a growing preference among individuals to remain within their familial domiciles, driven in part by escalating housing prices and apprehensions regarding displacement from familiar environments (Boelhouwer, 2023). The shortage of suitable senior housing further exacerbated the cost escalation, precipitating a surge in the housing market. Consequently, this period is characterized not by a singular housing model but rather by a multiplicity of options, many of which inadequately meet the needs of elderly residents.

4.2 Defining the new ways of senior housing

The new policy reforms concerning elderly housing are oriented towards facilitating the prolonged residence of elderly individuals within their own homes, thereby enhancing in-home care and mitigating the necessity of relocation to nursing facilities. Paradoxically, this strategy frequently engenders a heightened frequency of transitions, potentially encompassing all four aforementioned housing typologies, spanning categories one



IMAGE 17

High tea with the residents of 'Huize Dijkwegh', a private senior center, in Naaldwijk
n.d., Huize Dijkwegh

Specialized senior housing between 1996-now

through four. Consequently, seniors may transition from familial residences (category one) to senior apartments (category two), characterized by features such as single-floor layouts and reduced spatial footprints, facilitating independent living. However, as health status deteriorates, relocation to institutions offering varying levels of care becomes imperative, progressing from intermediate care facilities (category three) to those offering more intensive caregiving (category four) (Van der Voordt, 1998).

Another housing alternative, akin to traditional elderly homes, includes a select number of private senior centers. These facilities typically furnish age-appropriate private accommodations alongside communal indoor and outdoor amenities, coupled with on-site care provisions. Unlike publicly funded alternatives, eligibility for residency is not contingent upon meeting specific health criteria. Nonetheless, the privatized nature of these facilities often renders them financially inaccessible for a significant portion of elderly individuals.

4.3 Advantages of these ways of senior housing

The three afore mentioned alternatives to housing senior residents in current times will be explained on the basis of the advantages to their occupants.

4.3.1 Staying at the family home

In the realm of housing alternatives, it is often observed that the most economically viable option for the elderly is to continue residing in their familial home. In Naaldwijk, a substantial 67% of individuals are homeowners, with a significant portion of senior residents having largely paid off their mortgages (AlleCijfers.nl, 2024), consequently resulting in relatively low housing costs. Moreover, the retention of a familiar environment, coupled with the cultivation of enduring relationships over the years, frequently contributes to an individual's sense of contentment with

their domestic setting (Nies, 2015).

An additional compelling factor favoring the continuation of residency in the family home pertains to its potential impact on the occupants' health. The concept of 'positive health' has emerged, emphasizing that individuals may experience enhanced well-being within the confines of their own dwelling as opposed to residing in institutionalized care settings such as nursing homes. This theory is based primarily on the prolongation of independence that people experience when living on their own (Nies, 2015).

Lastly, beyond the aforementioned advantages of maintaining residence in the family home, empirical evidence underscores the prevailing preference among elderly evidenced by findings indicating that 84% of individuals aged between 72-77 express a steadfast aspiration to continue living in their own homes 'until death' (Doekhie, de Veer, Rademakers, Schellevis, & Francke, 2014). It is imperative to understand that this statement does not necessarily mean that people specifically want to stay at the family home, but it does indicate that people find current alternatives to be less attractive.

4.3.2 Senior apartments

Relatively comparable to living in the family home is the option of living in a senior apartment, offering a setting conducive to enhanced well-being, particularly aligned with the concept of 'positive health'. Within this housing model, residents maintain autonomy within their individual apartments, thus retaining a sense of self-direction.

A prominent attribute of senior apartments lies in their tailored suitability to the requirements of older individuals. These residences typically feature level layouts, facilitating ease of movement for occupants, with provisions commonly made to accommodate wheelchair users. Moreover, the modest dimensions of these apartments reduce the burden of domestic

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chores, thus reducing the residents' workload. Complementing this aspect, many senior apartments are furnished with amenities and services attuned to the needs and preferences of elderly occupants, encompassing provisions such as lawn maintenance, snow clearance, and overall property upkeep.

Furthermore, senior apartments foster opportunities for community engagement and social interaction among residents, albeit contingent upon their proactive participation. The close proximity of peers of similar age fosters the cultivation of friendship and support networks, thereby mitigating the prevalent sentiments of isolation and loneliness often encountered by seniors (Van Campen & Verbeek-Oudijk, 2017).

4.3.3 Private senior centers

In contrast to conventional nursing homes, private senior centers do not require a 'Wet langdurige zorg (Wlz)' indication or 'Law on long-term care' indication, thereby enabling access to all elderly individuals. The privatized nature of these centers often results in the provision of more personalized and

individualized care for residents. Moreover, private ownership and management can foster heightened efficiency, adaptability, and innovative service delivery. Such centers frequently prioritize investments in state-of-the-art facilities, technologies, and programs tailored to meet the diverse needs of seniors. Additionally, they often exhibit a commitment to addressing seniors' preferences, such as offering culturally specific care options (Plaisier & Den Draak, 2019).

Similarly to specialized senior housing predating 1996, this housing model fosters increased social interaction among residents by providing communal spaces and accommodating similar lifestyles. Furthermore, despite residents having their own private living quarters, the reduced footprint of these spaces coupled with the provision of center-managed services and amenities alleviate domestic burdens. Private senior centers often also provide communal activities for the residents, improving the social engagement of the seniors.

Lastly, contingent upon the specific features of the senior center, com-



IMAGE 18

Impression rendering of apartment complex 'De Dirigent'
n.d., Kolpa Architecten

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munal outdoor areas as well as private outdoor spaces are often provided, promoting residents' engagement with nature and thereby enhancing their overall well-being.

4.4 Disadvantages of these ways of senior housing

The three afore mentioned alternatives to housing senior residents in current times will be explained on the basis of the advantages to their occupants.

4.4.1 Staying at the family home

An inherent contradiction often observed in the decision to remain in the family home pertains to its adverse impact on the fluidity of the housing market. As elucidated in Chapter One, the housing shortage predominantly affects middle-income households, compelling many to reside in inadequate housing arrangements due to the scarcity of available family homes. A more sustainable proposition entails the relocation of senior citizens from their family residences to specialized housing tailored to their demographic, thereby facilitating a more efficient circulation of housing stock. Essentially, the prolonged occupancy of family homes by seniors exacerbates housing market challenges for other age demographics (Boelhouwer, 2023).

Moreover, the typically expansive footprint of family homes presents challenges for elderly residents, who may struggle to maintain domestic chores and grounds upkeep as their physical capabilities diminish. This decline in physical abilities often necessitates the engagement of external assistance, incurring substantial costs for property maintenance and potential home care services. Consequently, the burden of maintaining the family home can become increasingly untenable for elderly individuals.

Additionally, the phenomenon of loneliness stemming from a dearth of social engagement is a prevalent negative consequence associated with remaining in the family home. Unlike

alternative housing models, the familial setting often exposes residents to disparate age demographics, contributing to feelings of isolation among senior citizens. This sense of seclusion may intensify as seniors experience a decline in physical mobility, rendering them increasingly housebound and further removed from social interactions.

Lastly, the absence of caregiver supervision in family homes poses safety risks for elderly individuals, potentially resulting in incidents and delayed access to assistance in times of need. The lack of immediate oversight heightens the vulnerability of seniors to injuries and exacerbates concerns regarding their overall well-being and security within the home environment.

4.4.2 Senior apartments

While the move from a family home to a senior apartment has positive effects on the housing flow, the high demand in suitable senior housing has led to high prices. In many cases, selling the family house is not lucrative enough to encompass the price of a senior apartment. Due to the high demand in senior housing, new apartment complexes are being constructed in Naaldwijk, one situated at the former senior center 'Pijletuinenhof', offering age-appropriate homes for seniors. A quick look at the brochure shows a minimum purchase price of 445.000 euro's, which provides 93 square meters of living space, and a mere 5 square meters of outdoor space (Dirigent, 2021). In comparison, a commonly seen family house within the same neighborhood, with 102 square meters of living space and 78 square meters of outside space has put up for sale for 435.000 euros (Funda, 2024). Following this comparison, this would lead to many seniors needing to take out a mortgage to be able to move into a senior apartment.

Furthermore, the often small amount of outdoor space and the lack of communal outdoor space leave the residents often inside. Furthermore, the outdoor space is oftentimes in the

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form of a balcony, therefor making cultivating greenery less doable.

4.4.3 Private senior centers
Private senior centers, akin to senior apartments, are frequently associated with elevated costs, which act as substantial barrier to entry for a wide swath of the population. Beyond basic housing expenditures, residents must contend with additional fees for care services, particularly if they lack eligibility for Wlz-indication. Consequently, the financial burden imposed by private senior centers renders them accessible primarily to those possessing the requisite financial resources. This exclusivity perpetuates a lack of diversity within these facilities, as individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often find themselves unable to afford admission.

Moreover, the profit-oriented ethos underlying private senior centers introduces the potential for neglect or

abuse within their operational frameworks. In pursuit of financial gains, management may implement cost-cutting measures that compromise staffing levels or neglect essential training protocols. This compromise in care standards underscores the precarious balance between fiscal objectives and the well-being of residents.

4.5 Conclusions
In this chapter, an examination of three current types of senior housing has been undertaken. The three types have shown a significant transformation since the dissolution of the WBO, with the period being characterized by a departure from traditional centralized homes towards multiple housing options. It can be noted that forms of senior housing are getting increasingly more exclusive, while equitable access decreases. The profit-driven motives of housing providers seem to demotivate seniors from moving out of their family homes, leading to the obstruction of the housing market.

Catalogue of recommendable housing qualities

HOUSING TYPE	Advantages
HOME BIJDORP	Intimacy Sense of community Communal space Outdoor space Affordable Like-mindedness Self-sufficiency
PIJLETUINENHOF	Private space Spaciousness Social interaction Self-direction Care / security
CURRENT HOUSING TYPES	'Positive health' Familiar environment Suitability Accessibility

IMAGE 19
List of advantages of the specialized senior housing own work

In this chapter, the advantages of the aforementioned specialized senior housing types will be highlighted. Firstly, the positive housing qualities will be catalogued, which will then be relativized to the current time in order to create a proper list of senior housing aspects that could be recommended for future scenarios.

5.1 Catalogue positive housing qualities
All aforementioned advantages of the specialized senior housing types are catalogued within Image 19.

5.2 Relativization to the current time
In reviewing the aforementioned advantages, it becomes apparent that over time, elderly individuals are increasingly prioritizing factors such as privacy, spaciousness, and comfort. Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that the emergence of these elevated standards of living does not preclude the relevance of the historical senior housing advantages.

Moreso, it seems that some of the more historical advantages have actually become part of the more exclusive housing types of our current times. For example, elements such as intimacy, communal spaces, outdoor space, and like-mindedness, are identifiable within private senior centers, now representing one of the costliest housing alternatives available. Conversely, remaining in the familial residence, albeit a more economical choice, typically lacks these historical elements, lacking the intimacy, the sense of community and the like-mindedness. It seems that all of the historical motivating factors for seniors to transition into specialized housing remain valid, albeit at a significantly higher cost. An analysis on housing affordability by Buitelaar, Claassens and Rijken has shown that apartments are generally almost 20 percent more expensive per square meter compared to single-family houses (2020). Keeping this in mind, affordability seems to emerge as the primary barrier hindering individuals from relocating from their family homes to specialized senior accommodations.

5.3 Conclusions
In this chapter, the previously found advantages of the senior housing types have been listed and relativized to the current time. It is evident that the traditional principles guiding housing preferences among seniors persist within more upscale housing options. This observation leads to the conclusion that while the overall cost of living has escalated over time, the expense associated with suitable senior accommodations such as apartments has increased to a greater extent. Because of this, seniors are forced to pay more for their desired space that meets their criteria. By moderating these contemporary criteria during the designing process, through for example reducing footprints and sharing services, it may be feasible to develop a housing model that encompasses all listed factors albeit in a more nuanced manner.

This thesis underscores a critical issue facing the Netherlands: a severe housing shortage that poses significant challenges to the populace and housing market stability. The study seeks to compare the historical context of senior housing, post-World War II, with the contemporary housing situation in Naaldwijk, aiming to glean insights to address the current shortage. By employing case studies, the research endeavors to deepen understanding of elderly housing across different eras, potentially offering solutions to the present crisis.

To guide this inquiry, the research question probes into the motivations driving seniors in Naaldwijk to transition from family homes to specialized senior housing after World War II, contrasting these motivations with contemporary factors hindering seniors from leaving their family homes, thus contributing to the ongoing housing crisis.

Through focusing on elucidating the current housing crisis, the first chapter sheds light on the fact that the need for age-appropriate homes for seni-

or citizens will grow over the next few decades, thus highlighting the need to replenish elderly-specific homes to alleviate pressure on healthcare and stimulate movement within the housing sector.

Through the exploration of different specialized senior housing types, advantages of the case studies were identified that could explain the motivation of seniors to move out of their family homes, starting with specialized senior housing between 1947-1972 examined in chapter 2.

Within this chapter it is found that factors motivating seniors to transition from family homes to specialized senior housing included a housing shortage alongside governmental interventions aimed at addressing the housing needs of the elderly population. The presence of communal spaces and comprehensive care provisions offered tangible benefits for seniors seeking support and community engagement. However, inherent disadvantages, such as space constraints and exclusivity based on religious affiliation, un-

derscored the complexities inherent in senior housing arrangements. Despite these limitations, the case study offers valuable insights into the intimate dynamics of communal living and caregiver-resident relationships, highlighting the enduring relevance of traditional values in shaping senior housing practices.

While losing this intimacy of the post war homes, the specialized senior centers of the 70s-90s, examined in chapter 3, become relatively more luxurious, adding privacy, spaciousness, and independence to the list of requirements for specialized senior housing. With these additional advantages, elderly individuals were inclined to move out of their family homes to enjoy their seniority with like-minded peers.

Chapter 4 sheds a light on contemporary factors contributing to the current housing crisis that present distinct challenges for seniors contemplating a move from family homes to specialized senior housing. Exclusivity, affordability, and limited access to suitable housing emerged as significant barriers,

exacerbated by rising housing prices and shortage of available options. Despite the enduring importance of factors like sense of community and care, many seniors find themselves unable to navigate the complexities of the current housing market, leading to a reluctance to leave their family homes. Within the ongoing search to find new appropriate housing types, it would be thus recommendable to moderate contemporary criteria in order to develop a housing model that encompasses all listed advantages in a more nuanced manner.

In conclusion, the study highlights the complex interplay of historical and contemporary factors influencing senior housing decisions in Naaldwijk. By understanding the motivations driving transitions to specialized senior housing in the past and the challenges impeding such moves in the present, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards developing more inclusive and equitable housing solutions for elderly individuals, addressing the pressing needs of an aging population amidst a housing crisis.

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Image 7:
Archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen. (n.d.). View of the garden and a bench [photo].

Image 8:
Historical Archives Westland. (August 11, 1976). A view of Senior Center 'Pijletuinenhof' [photo].

Image 9:
Historical Archives Westland. (April 30, 1983). Senior residents drinking 'orange bitter' in the recreating hall [photo].

Image 10:
Building Archives Westland. (March 15, 1968). Specifications drawing for a single room in the 'Pijletuinenhof' [drawing].

Image 11:
Building Archives Westland. (March 15, 1968). Specifications drawing for a double room in the 'Pijletuinenhof' [drawing].

Image 12:
Building Archives Westland. (November 11, 1988). Specifications drawing for the extension of the recreation hall [drawing].

Image 13:
Thierry Schut. (Januari 6, 2022). Demolition of the Senior Center 'Pijletuinenhof' [photo].

Image 14:
Historical Archives Westland. (1971). A view of the 'Pijletuinenhof' and the Dutch Reformed Church [photo].

Image 15:
Historical Archives Westland. (1979). A view of the 'Pijletuinenhof' and the bus stop in front of the building [photo].

Image 16:
Thierry Schut. (August 11, 2019). Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen still living by herself in the old home 'Bijldorp' [photo].

Image 17:
Huize Dijkwegh. (n.d.). High tea with residents of 'Huize Dijkwegh', a private senior center, in Naaldwijk [photo].

Image 18:
Kolpa Architecten. (n.d.). Impression rendering of apartment complex 'De Dirigent' [redering].

Image front page:
Zenya Smith. (May 15, 2020). A surbey on elderly loneliness in the wake of COVID-19 [photo].

Image 1:
Archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen. (n.d.). Picture of home 'Bijldorp' [photo].

Image 2:
Archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen. (February 20, 1945). Invoice Noodverzorgingshuis 'Bloemendaal' [scan].

Image 3:
Building Archives Westland. (1935). Specifications drawing for a renovation of the home 'Bijldorp' in Naaldwijk [drawing].

Image 4:
Archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen. (September, 1968). Two elderly residents doing the washing-up [photo].

Image 5:
Archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen. (n.d.). View of the garden and the gazebo [photo].

Image 6:
Archive of Mrs. Schreuder-Fransen. (n.d.). No visitors between 11:30-13:00 and 17:00-18:00 [photo].