Beyond the Architect: Reassessing the Client's input in the Design of the Hubertus House


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ABSTRACT

Key words: Aldo van Eyck, Hubertus House, Humane architecture, Post-war architecture, Client input

This thesis investigates the influence of client Addie van Roijen-Wortmann on the final design of the Hubertus House in Amsterdam, designed by Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck. While Van Eyck has been widely discussed and acknowledged within architectural discourse, the specific role of Van Roijen-Wortmann as client in shaping the final design of the Hubertus House has received little attention. This study addresses this research gap by asking the question: *How did the input provided by client Addie van Roijen-Wortmann influence the final design of the Hubertus House?*
The research is based on the analysis of primary historical documents, publications by and about Van Eyck and Van Roijen-Wortmann, as well as secondary literature in which scholars reflect on the Hubertus House. By tracing the client's expectations and investigating how Aldo van Eyck translated these into architectural form during the design process, the study reveals the extent to which Van Roijen-Wortmann's input shaped the architecture of the Hubertus House.

The findings of this thesis show that Van Roijen-Wortmann had a clear vision for the building that would simultaneously express protection and openness, reflect democratic values and a non-hierarchical structure, provide a warm and affectionate atmosphere, ease the fear of thresholds ('drempelvrees'), and balance freedom with security. The research demonstrates that these principles were actively integrated by Van Eyck into the final design. His architectural language and decisions closely aligned with her vision, indicating a good collaborative process.

The conclusion of this thesis is that the Hubertus House was not solely the product of Aldo van Eyck's architectural vision, but also rather the result of a meaningful collaboration between architect and client. Van Roijen-Wortmann's input had a clear and lasting impact on both the form and function of the building, challenging conventional notions of architectural authorship.

Although this thesis examines a single case study, it points to the broader need for further research into the role of clients in architectural history. Future studies might compare similar collaborations between architects and clients from the 1970s to better understand how such client-architect relationships typically functioned during that era.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Located in the center of Amsterdam, the Hubertushouse stands out in the classical streetscape of the Plantage Middenlaan with its colorful, transparent, and multifaceted appearance. This is especially striking when considering that behind these distinctive façades, the building once provided shelter to a highly vulnerable group. The Hubertushouse offered a safe space for unmarried mothers and their children in need of assistance.[1]

The unique character of the building is the work of architect Aldo van Eyck. In 1973, Van Eyck was commissioned by the Hubertus Association, with Addie van Roijen-Wortmann playing a key role as the client. Van Eyck faced a challenging design task. Addie van Roijen-Wortmann envisioned a building that was both "closed yet open''. This requirement was closely tied to the needs of the residents. The mothers staying in the facility were there because they could no longer live in their own homes due to personal circumstances and required assistance to reintegrate into society. The building needed to provide a sense of security and protection while also reminding its residents of the effort required to regain independence.[2]

Research gap

While the role of Aldo van Eyck in shaping the Hubertushouse has been extensively discussed, the extent of the client's influence on the design has received comparatively little attention. While the client is mentioned in the book dedicated to the Hubertus House[3], most research primarily focuses on the role of Aldo van Eyck. In these studies, certain design principles are attributed to Aldo van Eyck, while they may have actually originated from the client. By re-examining the input of the client, a more nuanced understanding can be gained of which ideas came from Van Eyck and which originated from the client, Van Roijen-Wortmann, in the design of the Hubertus House.

Research structure

Van Eyck and Addie van Roijen-Wortmann worked closely together throughout the project, ultimately leading to the completion of the Hubertus House. She also had a specific vision for the building, but to what extent did her influence shape Van Eyck's design principles? And in what ways did Van Eyck incorporate her expectations into his architectural vision?

To explore these questions, this History Thesis investigates the following research question:

How did the input provided by client Addie van Roijen-Wortmann influence the final design of the Hubertushuis?

In order to answer the research question, preliminary research will be conducted based on several sub-questions. These sub-questions are as follows:

1. What type of building is the Hubertus House?
2. What was the reaction of the public and critics to the Hubertus House at the time?
3. Which input did Addie van Roijen-Wortmann provide for the design of the Hubertus House?
4. How did Aldo van Eyck incorporate this input into his design for the Hubertus House?
5. What was the audience's recognition of Addie van Roijen-Wortmann?

Methodology

Following this introduction, a literature review will establish the theoretical framework of the thesis, outlining its scope and key concepts. This first chapter will explore the notion of 'moederhuizen' (mother houses) and position the Hubertus House within this specific building typology. It also provides an overview of the building itself, introducing both the client, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann, and the architect, Aldo van Eyck. Additionally, it reflects on the societal perception of this building type at the time and includes a personal reflection on its architectural and cultural significance.
By conducting archival research, forgotten or overlooked materials are re-examined for a new perspective, contributing new insights that help to bridge the current research gap regarding the client's influence on the design.

01 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 568
02 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 29
03 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986)

The second chapter builds upon this (societal) context by investigating the public reception of the Hubertus House at the time of its construction. This is explored through an analysis of newspaper and magazine articles, responses from local residents, and reactions from the broader public, including those within the architectural community. The aim is to assess whether, and how, the building received recognition and how it was perceived more broadly.

Chapter three shifts focus to the role of the client in the design process. It examines the nature of Addie van Roijen-Wortmann's input and centers around the question: *What abstract expectations did she contribute to the design process?* This chapter highlights her involvement and explores the ways in which she actively shaped the design vision.

In chapter four, the thesis places the Hubertus House within architectural history by exploring how Aldo van Eyck responded to and incorporated the client's input in his design. The central question here is: *How did Aldo van Eyck incorporate this input into his design for the Hubertus House?* This section also considers interpretations of the building by other scholars to understand how this client-architect relationship has been historically contextualized.

Chapter five investigates how Addie van Roijen-Wortmann has been acknowledged in contemporary architectural discourse. Through an analysis of recent media and scholarly sources, the chapter addresses the question: *What was the audience's recognition of Addie van Roijen-Wortmann?* It explores the extent to which her role has been made visible, or overlooked, in contemporary narratives about the project.

Finally, the thesis concludes by synthesizing the findings to answer the central research question, evaluating the significance of the client's influence on the final design of the Hubertus House.

[02] Hubertus House

CHAPTER 1

A Home with a Purpose: The Hubertus House in Context

Although this thesis focuses on the client of the Hubertus House, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann, it is important to first gain a clear understanding of the building itself. Only with that understanding can we better assess where Van Roijen-Wortmann's input came from, what her contribution was, and why it may or may not have been significant.
To provide this context, this chapter begins by examining the history of the Hubertus Association and the Hubertus House. It explores the building's original functions and situates it within a broader architectural and social history. To understand how the Hubertus House came to look and function the way it does, the work of its architect, Aldo van Eyck, is briefly introduced.
With this information, the chapter concludes by answering the question: *"What type of building is the Hubertus House?"*

[03] Plantage Middenlaan 29, partially 37 (1975)

1.1 History of the Hubertus Association

The Hubertus Association was founded on the initiative of a Catholic priest named Hubertus van Nispen tot Sevenaar (1836-1897). Hubertus van Nispen was a pioneer in the field of social work in the Netherlands. In 1985 he founded the ST. Hubertus Association in Amsterdam with the aim of '*rescuing Roman-Catholic fallen woman and girls who are in moral danger.*'[4]

[04] 25th anniversary. Group portrait of staff and children. Hubertus House, Amsterdam (10-04-1923)

The association was first located in a building on Prinsengracht 196 in Amsterdam. This building was called a 'transit house' (name: R.K. Doorgangshuis). In 1926 the association moved to Plantage Middenlaan 33. In 1939 an extension was made to the building on Plantage Kerklaan 27. This building is located around the corner of the street and shares the courtyard with Plantage Middenlaan 33, which allowed the association to spread over two buildings. The building to the right of Plantage Middenlaan 33, number 35 was purchased around 1950 and put into use by the association.[5] The adjacent building, Plantage Middenlaan 31 from 1882 designed by Isaac Gosschalk, housed a synagogue and from 1926 a créche. In 1943 the créche was closed and the building became available to the Hubertus association.[6]

1.2 History of the type 'Transit house'

The Hubertus association was not the only and first association that managed a 'transit house'. The first example of a 'transit house' in the Netherlands was the 'Beth Palet' home. This home was started by widow Palthe who opened her home to four girls and their children in 1880. This marks the start of the period of unmarried mother care in the Netherlands.[7]
Barbara Wiemann has, conducted research into 'transit homes'

[05] '*The little ones during the meal*' Hubertus House, Amsterdam (1920)

04 bron Strauven Francis (1998) P. 569
05 bron Plantage Middenlaan 33-35 (2018)
06 bronPlantage Middenlaan 31 (2020)
07 Wiemann, B.J.L (1988). P.5

in her article: *The rise and decline of unmarried mother care in the Netherlands (1880-1985).* She states that in a 'transit house' care was provided to unmarried mothers who were alone during their pregnancy and motherhood or had become isolated because of it. Part of the reason that mothers were admitted to a 'transit house' and could no longer receive sufficient support from their immediate environment was an increase in the taboo surrounding unmarried motherhood. This increase occurred gradually between 1881 and 1991.[8]
An example of another 'transit house' was the Moederheil, founded in 1915 in Breda. This home was known as the largest Dutch 'transit' house for unmarried mothers until the 1960's.
The home was founded from the Roman Catholic association for the protection of girls. The objectives of the association stated that: *"The unmarried mother has sinned against God and against Society."* [9]

[06] One of the mothers from the documentary (11-2004)

1.3 Distance Mothers
In the 19070s, there was still a big taboo about 'living' in a transit house. Nowadays it is known that women came to the home to give birth to their child, and then left the transit house without the child. The child remained in the transit house, where they were offered for adoption. Children could wait here for months or years until they were adopted.[10]

Today, there is more awareness of how the mothers who ended up in transit houses actually felt. The 2004 NPO documentary Afstandsmoeders (Distancing Mothers) explores the phenomenon in depth. The term refers to mothers who gave up their children after giving birth in a transit house. In the documentary, the mothers share their own experiences. It becomes clear that many of them did not want to give up their child but were pressured to do so by their environment and the staff of the transit house.

After giving birth, the baby would be taken away from the mother as quickly as possible to prevent any emotional bonding. Within hours, the mother would find herself outside on the street, empty-handed, without her child. The documentary also repeatedly emphasizes how all responsibility for the pregnancy was placed entirely on the woman. The man who had impregnated her was completely free of obligation—he could go wherever he pleased and did not have to take responsibility or bear the shame of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. The mother, however, had to carry all of these burdens alone.[11]


[07] A lively street scene in front of the Hubertus House

08 Wiemann, B.J.L (1988). P.5
09 Moederheil. (n.d.)
10 idem
11 Afstandsmoeders (2004)

1.4 From 'R.k. Doorgangshuis' to Mothers house

In March 1973, Aldo van Eyck was commissioned by the Hubertus association to design a building for the renovation of the Hubertus House. This was done under the supervision of the director of the Hubertus association, Mrs. Addie van Roijen-Wortmann. The assignment states: '*...to design a new accommodation where the activities of residents and employees can take place optimally.'* The assignment involved merging a new building section on the original site of Plantage Middenlaan 31 with the buildings Plantage Middenlaan 33 and 35 that were to be restored.[12]

The new Hubertus House would no longer be known as 'transit house' but now as a 'Mother House'. This unofficial name change is not explicitly mentioned but seems to coincide with the new building being put into use. This can be seen in newspaper articles around that time that discuss the new Hubertus House. In an edition of the Parool (07-05-1979) the headline of the newspaper article in question reads: The '*Mother House provocatively original*'.[13]

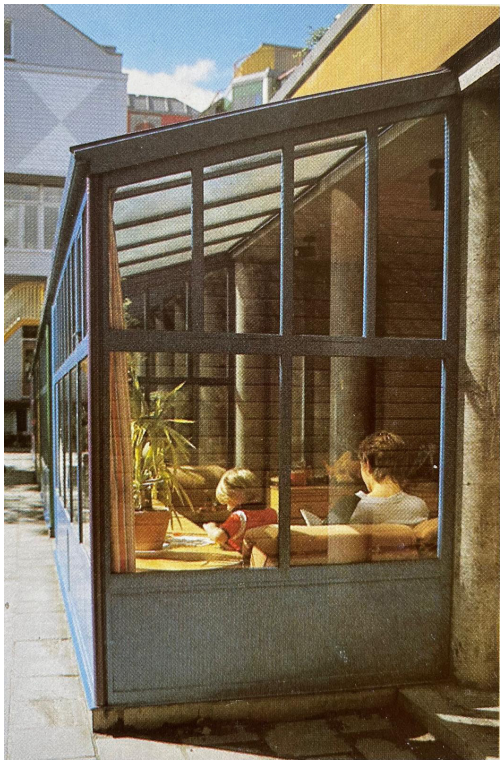
This unofficial name change also has to do with the changes in the working views of the Hubertus Association. Client Addie van Roijen-Wortmann contributed to the book: Aldo van Eyck, Hubertus Huis and talks about this change: *'In contrast to the atmosphere that used to prevail at Hubertus, when everything was taken care of and there were a thousand and one rules, we opted for maximum freedom.'* [14]

In transit houses mothers were separated from their (newborn) child, but the Mother House (Hubertus House) was seen more as a social rehabilitation centre where the mothers not only received temporary shelter but also assistance and counselling. Here the aim of the association was to act as a 'second' parent and thus temporarily help the mothers with the care of the children. On average, the mothers would spend six months in the Mother House before they could return to society independently with their children. The Hubertushuis had room for 20 mothers. In addition, there was also a 'total créche'. Here, not only the children of the resident mothers were cared for, but also children from outside. In the 'total créche', the care for the children could be taken care of entirely by the Hubertus association, because the children could be there not only during the day but also at night.[15]

1.5 Blijf-van-mijn-lijf-huis (Shelter for Battered Women)

A type of facility often confused with a 'mother house' is the 'Blijf-van-mijn-lijf-huis' (literally, Dont-touch-my-body-house), a shelter for battered women. The first of these was established in 1974 in Amsterdam. These shelters also accommodate mothers with children, but the key difference is that they are intended for women (and their children) in immediate danger, often fleeing abusive partners or family members.Because these shelters serve as places of refuge, their locations are typically kept secret for safety reasons.[16]

[08]Social entrance to the Hubertus House



[09] Hubertus House, with its homely character

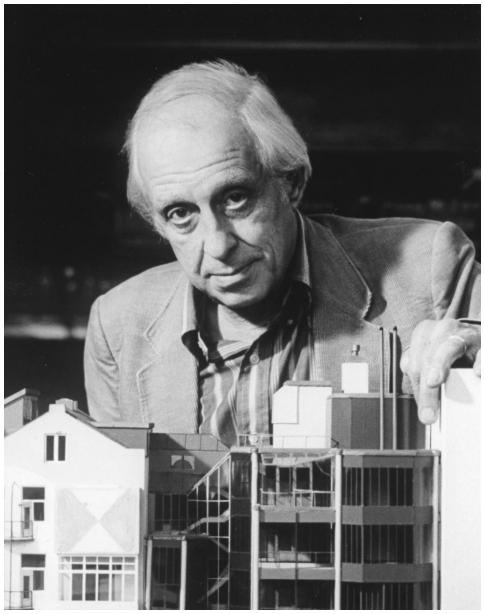
12 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 29
13 Salomons, I. (07-05-1979).
14 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 28
15 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 569
16 Atria (26-07-2024)

1.6 Architect: Aldo van Eyck

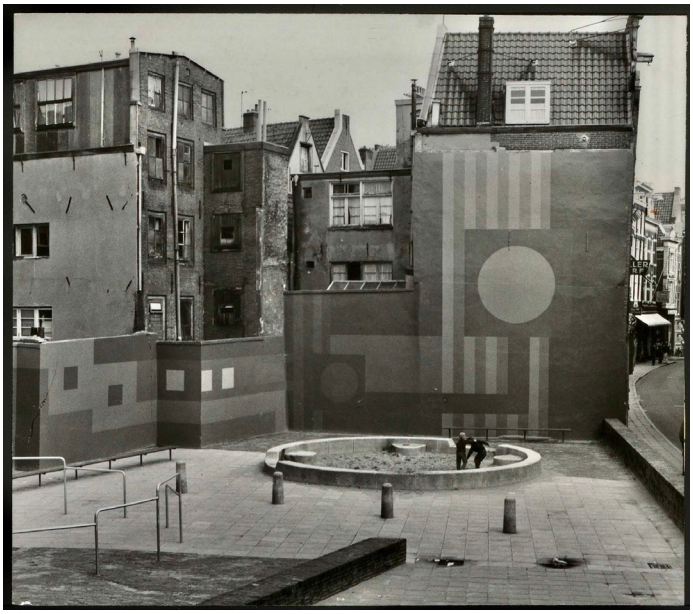
After completion the new building for the Hubertus Association immediately stood out from its surroundings due to its vibrant colors and unique facades. This striking contrast with the older, more traditional buildings surrounding it was the result of the vision of architect Aldo van Eyck. Born in 1916 and active until his death in 1999, Van Eyck was a prominent Dutch architect known for his human-centered approach to architecture. He was part of the post-war architectural movement in the Netherlands but was also one of its most critical voices. Van Eyck argued that architecture had become too focused on solving functional problems and had lost its connection to meaning. He believed that architecture should not only serve a function but also convey human values and emotional depth.

To achieve this, Van Eyck introduced new ideas into architectural thinking. He developed concepts such as identity, reciprocity, twin phenomena, the realm of the in-between, configuration, counterform, place, and occasion.[17]

Van Eyck explored these notions throughout his career. One of his most well-known projects is the Burgerweeshuis (Amsterdam Orphanage, 1960), where his human-scale design and sensitivity to children's needs became widely recognized. Although the Burgerweeshuis served a different user group, orphans, it shares important parallels with the Hubertus House, especially in its attention to scale, intimacy, and the everyday lives of its residents.[18]



[10] A.van Eyck with a model of the Hubertus House, Amsterdam (1970)



[11] Playground Zeedijk, Amsterdamfor which architect Aldo van Eyck and painter Joost van Roojen received the Sikkens Prize in 1961.

Another relevant example is Van Eyck's design of over 700 playgrounds for the city of Amsterdam between 1947 and 1978. He believed that play elements should stimulate children's imagination, and he often tested his designs together with his own children. These playgrounds reflect Van Eyck's deep affinity with designing for children and his commitment to architecture that supports human experience.[19] In both the orphanage and the playgrounds, as well as in the Hubertus House, Van Eyck worked from the perspective of the user, shaping space not from abstract theory but from real, lived needs.

1.7 Social Context

Aldo van Eyck designed the Hubertus House during a period of major social change in the Netherlands. In the 1970s, the country experienced the rise of the second feminist wave. This movement, led by various action groups, focused on issues such as the abolition of legal discrimination against women, access to abortion, childcare, and women's labor rights.[20]

17 Strauven, F. (1998). P. 11
18 idem
19 Van der Bergen, M. (2002).
20 De Vries, P. (n.d.).

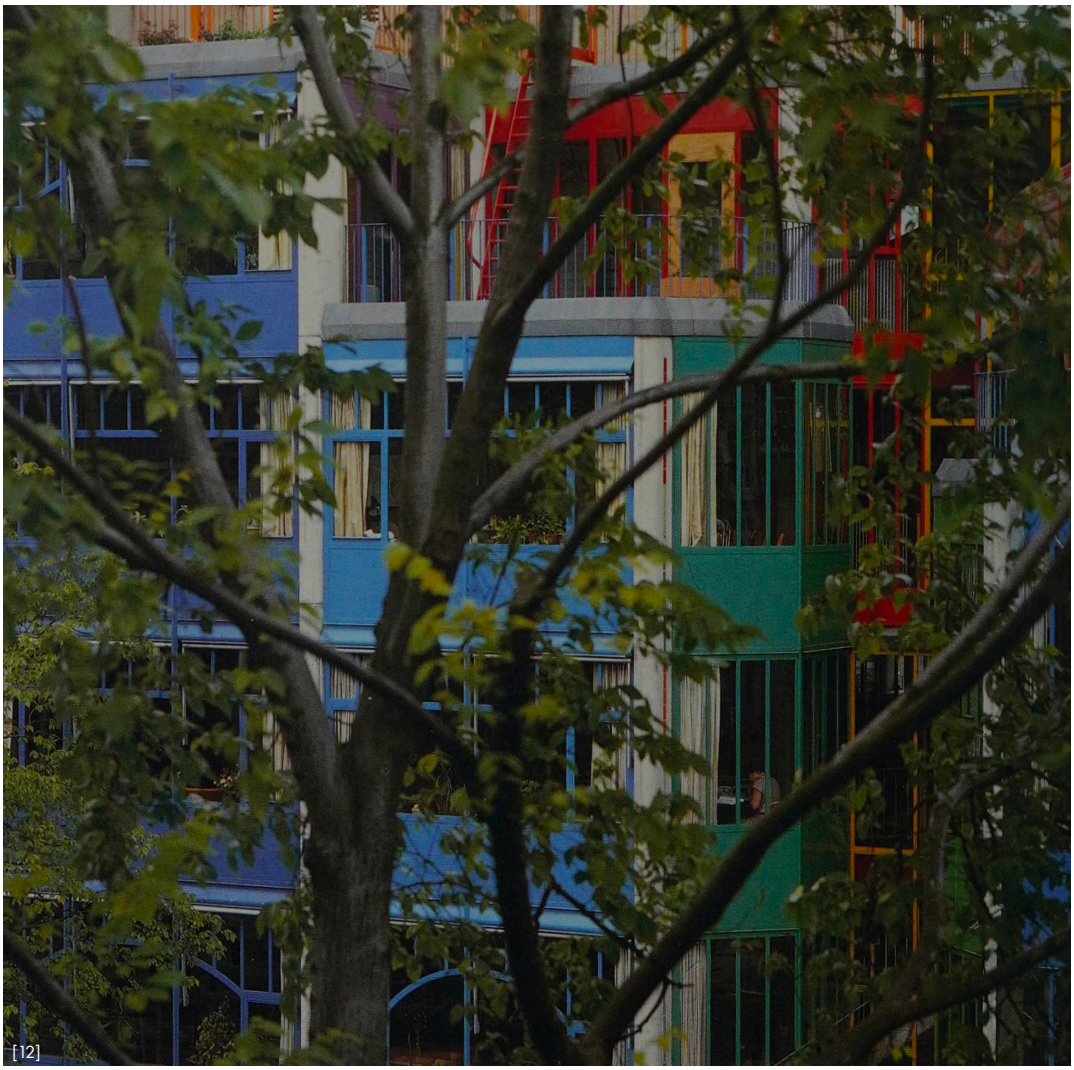
With the Hubertus House, Van Eyck responded not only to the needs and vision of the client but also to these broader societal developments of the time. He designed a building that provided a clear alternative to traditional male- and family-oriented architecture, a space where women could find support and safety. The bold design of the Hubertus House, combined with its vulnerable and often stigmatized user group, was not universally accepted. It challenged social norms and provoked debate.

That's way the next chapter will explore how the public responded to the Hubertus House, and how the building was received both architecturally and socially.

What type of building is the Hubertus House?
In relation to the sub-question "*What type of building is the Hubertus House?*", it now is clear that the Hubertus House was a mother house. It provided shelter for women, whether pregnant or already with children, offering them support and guidance. They would live there for a limited period of time, and with the help of the Hubertus Association, they could eventually reintegrate into society independently.

This type of mother house can be seen as a successor and improvement of the earlier 'transit' houses. The key difference is that in transit houses, mothers were often forced to give up their children, whereas in mother houses, the intent was to keep mother and child together, offering support to both. The architecture of transit houses reflected the temporary and detached nature of the stay, while the architecture of mother houses was explicitly designed to foster cohabitation and support. Later, the Blijf-van-mijn-lijf-huizen emerged as a different type of facility. The main distinction between these and mother houses is that the shelters are hidden and focus primarily on protection from violence, rather than on parenting support alone.

[12] Plantage Middenlaan 27 - 37, front facades. At numbers 33 - 35 the Mother House of architect Aldo van Eyck



[12]

Chapter 2
Breaking Stigma or Provoking Debate? Responses to the Hubertus House

Van Roijen played a crucial role in shaping the final design of the Hubertus House to ensure it functioned as she envisioned. She strongly believed the building should embody an open character—one that visibly reflected a democratic structure of living and working. More than just a shelter, the Hubertus House was meant to give its residents a recognizable face, helping to break the stigma surrounding single mothers.[21]

These ambitions demonstrate Van Roijen's vision, but they also raise the question of whether these goals were ultimately achieved once the building was completed. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the sub-question: *What was the reaction of the public and critics to the Hubertus House?*

2.1 Newspaper Articles

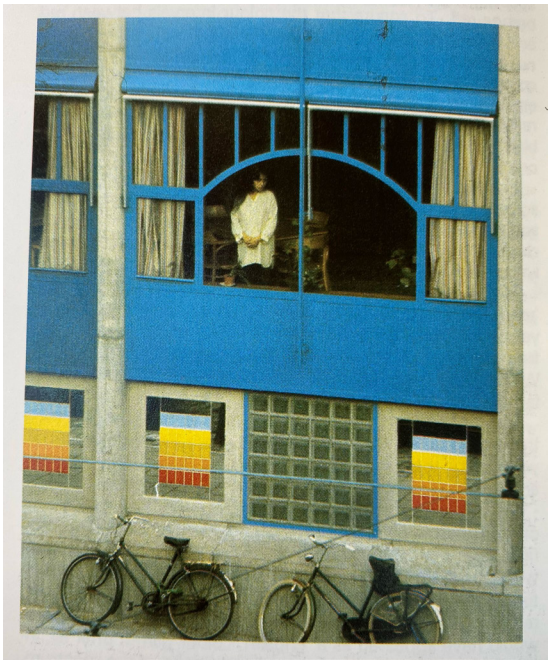
Newspaper coverage surrounding the completion of the Hubertus House generally painted a positive picture. A 1979 article in newspaper Het Parool, titled: *The 'Mother's House' Provocatively Original*, praised the design: *'The building, as it stands now, feels very relaxed. It is rare to see a newly constructed building that immediately has a sense of atmosphere. The layout is based on a detailed vision of how the space will be used.'*

The article also highlights aspects such as the facade colors, spatial organization, and the playful character of the building. Although the article is largely positive, it focuses primarily on the architectural qualities of the Hubertus House rather than its social implications. Notably, it describes the target group as '*eighty children with a single parent*', an odd phrasing, given that both Van Roijen-Wortmann and Van Eyck explicitly referred to the home's residents as vulnerable, unmarried mothers.[22]

Beyond articles discussing the architecture, several newspapers announced the publication of a book on the Hubertus House, while others referred to it as an architectural landmark.[22]

Some articles, however, expressed more cautious criticism. One example is the article '*Vertrouwen op de regenboog'*, published in NRC Handelsblad in May 1979, when the building was still under construction. This article mainly criticizes the extensive use of color: "*I am not advocating a return to colorless architecture, but my objection here is that too much reliance has been placed on color to define the building's image.*"[23]

Van Roijen-Wortmann, however, countered this argument in the 1986 book Aldo van Eyck, Hubertus House, stating that the building was about far more than its colorful appearance: "*The colors of the new Hubertus House are, of course, a story in themselves. On the one hand, I get irritated by the fuss that's always made about them, as if the house was just an ordinary building that happened to have been painted in 12 different colors.*"[24]



[13] Woman visible from the street

2.2 Reactions from Local Residents

Criticism also emerged from local neighbours, particularly concerning the building's distinctive and vibrant colors. Van Roijen recounted an interaction between Van Eyck and a neighbour:"*One of the local residents came up to him and said: 'I wouldn't bother if I were you. We're getting up a petition. That house of yours is going to be grey, and that's that.'*"[25]
This discontent is also briefly mentioned in Architectural Review in the article Street Urchin: Mother's House, Amsterdam, by Aldo van Eyck, which notes: "*The building has been aptly nicknamed the 'parrot cage' by residents of the neighborhood, and some have questioned the decision to draw so much attention to an already stigmatized group.*"[26]

21 McCarter, R. (2015). P.2
22 Salomons, I. (07-05-1979).
22 Ippel, M. (20-05-1989). & Het Parool. (04-02-1989).
23 Dijk, van H. (20-04-1979).
24 & 25 Van Eyck, A et al,. (1986). P. 35
26 Buchanan, P. (1982)

Van Roijen had a firm stance on whether or not such a group should be made more visible. She argued that the stigma surrounding single mothers needed to be dismantled, and that could only be done through openness and honesty about their need for support. She rejected the idea that their struggles should be hidden, stating: "*Anyone in financial difficulties can go to a bank, which is easily recognizable as such from the outside. Why should someone who is in another kind of difficulty have to seek help in a building that does its best to be as unobtrusive as possible?*"[27]

This statement highlights how thoroughly Van Roijen considered the architectural expression of the Hubertus House and whether it aligned with her original vision. By defending the building's design and challenging societal norms, she positioned herself as a strong advocate for the architectural and social principles behind the project.

2.3 Building for the users

Beyond the criticism from local residents regarding the building's appearance, we must remind ourselves of the original objective behind Van Roijen's commission to Van Eyck: "*To produce a design for new accommodation providing the greatest possible scope for the activities of residents and staff.*"[28]

The most crucial aspect of the renovation was to ensure that the old Hubertus House would become a comfortable and supportive home for both its residents and staff. And it can be stated with full confidence that this goal was achieved. Beyond the opinions of architectural critics, this is also evident in magazines from that time.
The title of one such article, written before the renovation, speaks volumes: "*More expensive than the Hilton, as filthy as a pigsty.*" This article exposed the alarming state of the Hubertus House before its renovation. Cockroaches crawled across the floors, mothers discarded garbage bags in the hallways, they lacked heating, had no space to receive visitors, and, as a result, felt no sense of responsibility to keep the space clean. This article painted a deeply negative and critical picture of the Hubertus House and it's residents.[29]
However, a second article, titled "*Where can she go?*", published after Aldo van Eyck's renovation, presents a striking contrast. Rather than focusing extensively on the architecture of the new Hubertus House, this article primarily addresses the stigma surrounding single mothers residing there. Unlike the earlier report, which harshly criticized the living conditions, this piece offers a much more positive and compassionate portrayal of the mothers. It humanizes them, shedding light on their struggles and working to break the taboo that surrounded them.[30]
Despite being published less than a decade apart, the difference in tone between these two articles is profound. The renovation of the Hubertus House and Van Roijen-Wortmann's vision transformed not only the building itself but also the way the media, and by extension, society, viewed its residents. It is therefore undeniable that Van Roijen-Wortmann's initiative to create a welcoming and dignified space for the mothers had an enormously positive impact on their lives.

[14] Article: 'More expensive than Hilton, as dirty as a pigsty.'

[15] Article: 'Where can she go to?'

27 Van Eyck, A et al,. (1986). P. 36
28 Van Eyck, A et al,. (1986). P. 29
29 Aken, van G. (between 1973-1977). P. 20
30 Henderiks, R. (between 1973-1977). P. 36

2.4 Recognition

Aldo van Eyck received both national and international recognition for the Hubertus House. Several books on Van Eyck discuss and highlight the project, such as *Aldo van Eyck* (2014) by Robert McCarter and *Aldo van Eyck: Works compiled* (1999) by Vincent Ligtelijn. These publications primarily repeat what Van Eyck himself expressed in his own writings about the Hubertus House.

Francis Strauven's book *The Shape of Relativity* (1999), however, offers a own perspective on the architecture of the Hubertus House. Rather than simply echoing Van Eyck's words, Strauven presents his own architectural interpretation and appreciation. He notes that while the building stands out due to its vivid colours among its grey 19th-century neighbours, it does not impose itself. On the contrary, he states that it integrates harmoniously into the urban fabric and even makes a fundamental contribution to the streetscape. [31]

Strauven argues that the Hubertus House exemplifies how modern architecture can engage meaningfully with the diverse and historic cityscape. He states that functionalism does not need to reduce urban diversity to a monotonous uniformity, a critique Van Eyck himself often voiced against mainstream modernism. By returning to its origins and learning to "speak the language of the city," Van Eyck's architecture not only fits within its context but also enriches it with new meaning. Strauven thus emphasizes the building's modernist roots while adopting a convincingly positive tone in his analysis.[32]

Another author who reflects on the Hubertus House with a slightly more cautious, yet still appreciative tone is Peter Buchanan in his article: *Street Urchin: Mothers' House, Amsterdam, by Aldo van Eyck*. The article begins with an essay titled *Modern Action,* in which Buchanan discusses how architectural movements and buildings have evolved from or turned away from Modernism. He then offers a detailed examination of the Hubertus House, arguing that the project can be seen as a continuation of the Modern Movement rather than a direct part of it. Still, Buchanan acknowledges that with the Hubertus House, Van Eyck was *'reassessing his roots in Modernism.'*[33]

Like Strauven, Buchanan praises the striking façades of the building. He notes that façades such as those of the Hubertus House, recessed and fragmented, can sometimes lack the strength to contribute meaningfully to the street. However, he believes that Van Eyck managed to counter this with bold color choices, resulting in a building that adds value to its urban setting of the street.

Buchanan also discusses Van Eyck's view that architecture's function is to enclose space, but he emphasizes that Van Eyck believed modern architecture should break open that enclosure. This openness, he argues, enables new relationships to happen between previously isolated activities within a building. Buchanan sees the way Van Eyck applied this principle, especially in a building designed for a vulnerable group, as an example of what good modern architecture should aspire to. He regards this principle of 'breaking open' while still enclosing as one of modernism's most significant contributions, one 'that should not be forgotten.' [34]

[16]The colorful Hubertus House with adjacent buildings in neutral colors (author's picture).

31 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 581
32 idem
33 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982).
34 idem

Where Strauven speaks with confident enthusiasm, Buchanan acknowledges the friction the building might provoke in others. He writes: *'Looked at the pages of a magazine, the Mothers' House may be easy to dismiss as inelegant. Visiting it and spending time there ... well, it grows on you. Perhaps it is not an ugly duckling, and in time we will learn to see it as a swan.'* [34] With this, Buchanan invites readers to reconsider their initial judgments of the building, offering a subtle yet thorough reflection.

It is therefore clear that the Hubertus House received notable praise in the above-mentioned publications and articles. While it may not be one of Van Eyck's most widely known projects, this may be partly due to the building's inaccessibility to the general public, as it was designed specifically for a vulnerable group.

More recently, the Hubertus House has again been recognized, this time through the exhibition Safe Spaces, '*Recht op ruimte in de stad'* (Right to Space in the City), held at Arcam between 2006 and 2021. The exhibition explored how design can contribute to visibility, acceptance, and protection through the appropriation of urban spaces. The Hubertus House played a prominent role, with a replica of its architecture used as part of the exhibition setting. The exhibition featured '*inspiring historical Amsterdam-based projects'* that gave voice or space to marginalized groups. The inclusion of the Hubertus House highlights its enduring value as a meaningful place for disadvantaged women, recognized even decades after its completion.[35]

[17] Exhibition 'Safe Spaces' with replica's of the facades of the Hubertus House

[18]

For a building that holds a significant place in Dutch architectural history, it is remarkable that it hasn't received formal recognition in the form of an award. In 1980, the Hubertus House came close when it was nominated for the Merkelbach Prize (now the Amsterdam Architecture Prize). However, the jury ultimately chose the newly constructed Amsterdam metro system instead. One of the jury members, renowned architect Herman Hertzberger, strongly disagreed with this decision and wrote a plea because of this. As a result, the Hubertus House was granted an honorable mention, an implicit acknowledgment of its architectural value. [36]

2.5 Monument Status

Despite not receiving an architectural award, the Hubertus House was officially designated a municipal monument by the city of Amsterdam in 2001. This makes it one of the youngest protected monuments in the city. The municipality justified its decision with the following statement: "*The architect has achieved a reasonably good result given the commission. Both the building mass and the proportions of the facade, as well as the detailing, can be considered fairly well executed. The*

34 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982).
35 Safe Spaces (2006 – 2021).
36 Salomons, I. (19-02-1980).

integration of the building within its surroundings (Plantage Middenlaan) is particularly well done. We consider the property at Plantage Middenlaan 33 to be of such aesthetic and urban significance that inclusion in the Municipal Monument List is warranted."[37] This designation demonstrates that, despite the lack of awards, the Hubertus House has been acknowledged for its architectural merit and granted a degree of protection.

Conclusion

Looking back at the sub-question: "*What was the reaction of the public and critics to the Hubertus House?*", it can be said that, despite praise from the client, users, architect, and architectural critics, the general public was less enthusiastic. There were doubts about the building's appearance and concerns that its striking design might actually draw unwanted attention to the mothers living there.

Personally, I believe this criticism was largely rooted in the strong societal taboos surrounding the building's target group. Had the Hubertus House been designed for a different demographic, it might have been received more positively by the public. Nevertheless, it remains a fact that architectural critics, though unfortunately few in number, notably Francis Strauven and Peter Buchanan, were positive in their writings. They recognized the Hubertus House as a thoughtful response to the modernist architecture in the Netherlands at the time.

The Hubertus House is a clear example of architecture shaped by a human-centered design approach, something Aldo van Eyck deeply valued and which stood in contrast to the modernist movement of that era. I believe the following quote from Addie van Roijen-Wortmann captures the essence and significance of the Hubertus House beautifully: "*For once in their lives, a group of people who are in so many ways right at the bottom of the social ladder are living in a truly fantastic house.*" [38]

Now that we have a better understanding of what kind of building the Hubertus House was, and how the public reacted to it, the next chapter will delve deeper into how its distinctive architecture came into being. The focus will be specifically on the beginning of the design process: the input provided by the client, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann, during the early stages of Aldo van Eyck's design work. This will help us better understand the extent of her influence on the final architectural expression of the building.

37 De Haan, K-B. (n.d.).
38 Van Eyck, A et al,. (1986). P. 35

[19]

CHAPTER 3
Client input for the designproces

"To say that architecture is the outcome of a collective effort is to state the obvious." This is the opening sentence of the article Commissioning Architecture from the magazine OASE. This article discusses the role of clients in architecture, emphasizing that architecture, such as a building, is not solely the work of a single architect.

Nevertheless, the role and influence of the client in the design process are often underrepresented. The architect is typically the one presenting and explaining their design, either for professional reasons or to contribute to public discourse. The authors of Commissioning Architecture argue that this creates an imbalance in architectural discourse and documentation, stating that this may help explain why architectural history tends to be biased: *'Those who choose to work in silence produce no quotable reference material.'*[39]

Throughout his career, Aldo van Eyck actively shared his opinions and vision on architecture. He proudly explained the design of the Hubertushuis on multiple occasions. However, the role of the client, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann, has often been overlooked, likely due to the limited sources available where she discusses the Hubertus House. One exception is the book Aldo van Eyck, Hubertushuis (1986), which she co-authored with Aldo van Eyck, Herman Hertzberger, and Francis Strauven. In this book, Van Roijen-Wortmann extensively describes her experiences during the design process with Van Eyck and shares her views on the architectural appearance of the Hubertus House. Outside of this book, her perspective and vision on the project have been scarcely documented or researched. Apart from her professional contribution to the Hubertushuis and her work within the Hubertus Association, little information is available about Van Roijen-Wortmann's personal life.

This chapter focuses on the sub-question: *'What input did Addie van Roijen-Wortmann provide for the design of the Hubertus House?'*

By investigating Van Roijen-Wortmann's influence on the design of the Hubertushouse, her contribution to the architectural design becomes visible. This will also clarify Van Roijen's architectural expectations, which will later help in answering the main research question.

3.1 Start collaboration Van Eyck and Van Roijen-Wortmann

When Aldo van Eyck was commissioned to design the Hubertushuis in 1973, the assignment came from the director of the Hubertus Association, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann. Original notes from the board meeting on February 14, 1973, reveal that a new construction committee was established within the Hubertus Association to oversee the renovation and construction of the buildings. Van Roijen was part of this new construction committee and acted as the link and main contact person between Van Eyck and his team and the committee of the Hubertus Association.[40]

One of the reasons the new construction committee chose Van Eyck was his prior experience designing a building for children, the Amsterdam Orphanage. However, even more significant was the connection the committee felt with Van Eyck, like Van Roijen-Wortmann said: "*He was very quick to pick up the way we approached our work.*"[41]

3.2 The Role of the Client in the Design of the Hubertus House

A client is generally expected to provide input in the form of a program of requirements, which outlines both concrete and abstract expectations for a building. Concrete requirements often include specifics such as the building's size and designated functions. However, more abstract expectations also come into play, questions about how the building should function and what it should achieve. These aspects are often more challenging to define, as they are less about measurable data and more about creating a particular atmosphere or experience.[42]

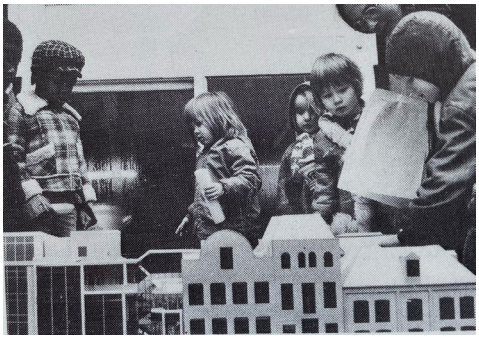
39 Maaskant, M. (2010)
40 Hubertusvereniging (1973, 14 februari).
41 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 30
42 Cuff, D. (1992). P. 22

Aldo van Eyck is widely praised for the design principles he implemented in the Hubertus House. However, a crucial question arises: was he solely responsible for these principles, or can they be traced back to the input provided by the client, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann?

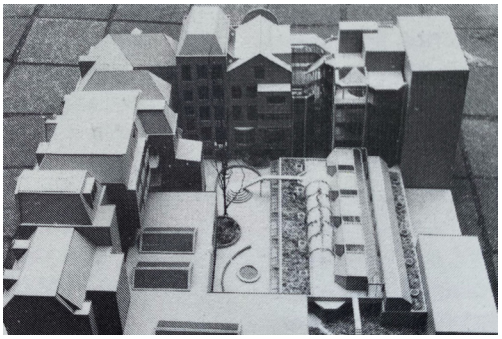
Like any client, Van Roijen put forward concrete demands for the design of the Hubertus House. These included the number of bedrooms for the mothers, the requirement that children's living groups be located on the ground floor around the courtyard, and the need for baby units to be separate from the mothers' quarters so that infants could stay even when their mothers were no longer at the Hubertus House. She also insisted that the mothers should have a communal living space but also private rooms where they could retreat and receive visitors. While these are just a few examples, they demonstrate the careful thought Van Roijen put into the project's functional and spatial requirements.[42]

Beyond these concrete demands, Van Roijen also articulated abstract expectations for the new Hubertus House. She described the project as a 'dual assignment', not only because it involved both new construction and renovation, but also because it needed to balance two seemingly opposing qualities. On one hand, the building had to reflect the association's democratic and non-hierarchical structure; on the other, it had to provide a safe and protective environment for those seeking refuge.[43]

She envisioned the Hubertus House as a place with a 'warm and affectionate' atmosphere, where mothers and young children could feel protected and safe, a space they could enter 'without fear or hesitation (a.k.a. drempelvrees),' offering both freedom and security. Furthermore, she wanted the architecture to encourage communication, preventing residents and staff from becoming isolated from one another. This reveals that she was not only thinking about the needs of the mothers but also about the staff working at the Hubertus House. Finally, she envisioned a building that felt welcoming, cheerful, and homely for its residents. Van Eyck was deeply drawn to these ideas and embraced the project enthusiastically. The assignment aligned perfectly with his personal interest in human-centered design, specifically tailored to the needs of the user.[44]



[20] Children and a model of the Hubertus House



[21] Model of the new Hubertus House

[22]

Conclusion

Reflecting on the sub-question: "*What input did Addie van Roijen-Wortmann provide for the design of the Hubertus House?*", it can be said that, beyond offering a list of concrete requirements, Van Roijen-Wortmann had already given considerable thought to how she wanted the building to function well before the design process began. She had a clear vision and, although she did not yet know what the building would look like, she was determined to make it the best possible place for mothers and children.

The next chapter builds on Van Roijen-Wortmann's input and explores whether and how this input was used by Aldo van Eyck during the design process of the Hubertus House. This will later allow to conclude what her contributions were to the design of the Hubertus House.

42 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 30
43 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 31
44 idem

[23]

Chapter 4
Integrating Client Input into Architectural Design

To fully grasp the extent of Van Roijen's influence on the design of the Hubertus House, it is insufficient to only identify her contributions. The essential next step is to analyze whether and how Aldo van Eyck integrated her input into his architectural decisions. If her contributions were disregarded in the final design, their impact would be negligible. That's why, this chapter investigates how Van Eyck translated Van Roijen's ideas into spatial and material expressions within the Hubertus House on the basis of the following question: *How did Aldo van Eyck incorporate this input into his design for the Hubertus House?*

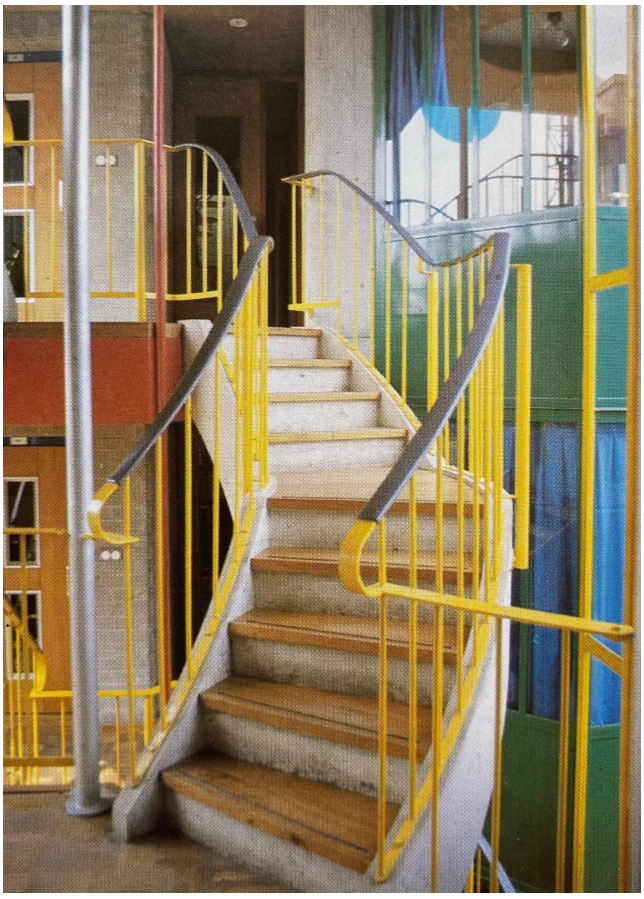
This analysis is structured around six key themes identified in Chapter 3, which shows Van Roijen's aspirations for the project. These themes include: democratic and non-hierarchical structures, a safe and protective environment for those seeking refuge, a warm and affectionate atmosphere (welcoming, cheerful, and homely), an accessible and non-intimidating environment (overcoming 'drempelvrees'), a balance between freedom and security, and stimulate communication. These principles not only shaped the building's spatial organization but also reinforced its social function.

4.1 Democratic and Non-Hierarchical Structure

Van Eyck sought to embody the principle of equality through various architectural strategies. One important approach was the spatial distribution of functions. Workspaces, such as administrative offices, meeting rooms, and communal areas, were deliberately integrated into both the old and new sections of the building without distinction. This ensured that no hierarchy was imposed between the original and extended parts of the structure.[45]

Francis Strauven emphasizes how the design of the staircase further reinforces this non-hierarchical concept. Serving as a central connector between the two building sections, the staircase does not dictate a main entrance but rather allows movement between spaces in a fluid manner. By situating the main entrance within the original structure, visitors must first pass through the older part of the building before reaching the new extension, reinforcing a sense of continuity and unity. Additionally, the spiral form of the staircase acts as a symbolic representation of interconnectedness within the Hubertus House and within the Hubertus Association. [45]

Peter Buchanan highlights another crucial aspect: the role of color in establishing an balanced atmosphere. The carefully considered color scheme was applied consistently throughout both the original and newly constructed areas, preventing any visual or material distinction between them. By ensuring aesthetic cohesion, Van Eyck underscored the building's democratic werk ethos, where no space was rendered subordinate to another.[46]

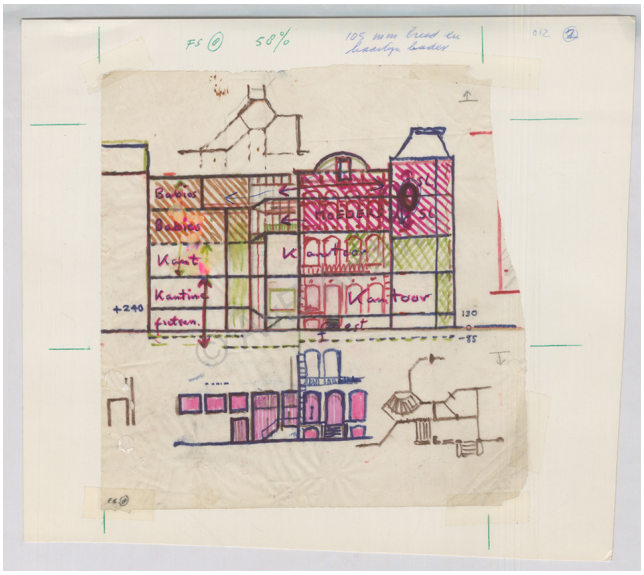


[24] Part of the spiral staircase in Hubertus House

44 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 573
45 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 571
46 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982).

Beyond these elements, the placement of different functional spaces played a critical role in reinforcing non-hierarchical values. The staff offices, for example, were distributed across both the old and new sections, ensuring that no particular area was designated as a superior administrative zone. This division is already evident in one of Aldo van Eyck's design sketches, which he made while designing the Hubertus House, which can be seen in the adjacent image. Furthermore, the decision to house mothers on the upper floors meant that they would regularly pass by staff workspaces and communal areas, subtly reinforcing a sense of equality rather than separation.

However, while the building reflects the democratic ideals of the association, a form of hierarchy was still present, one dictated by privacy rather than status. The transition from public to private spaces was carefully designed to establish a difference in accessibility, ensuring that residents could experience both communal engagement and personal retreat. [47]



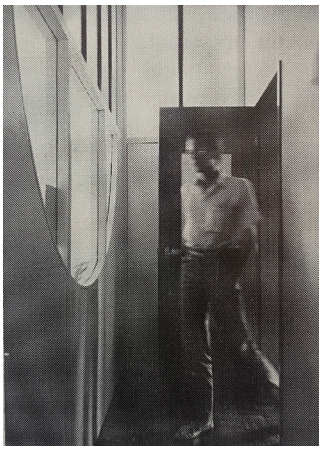
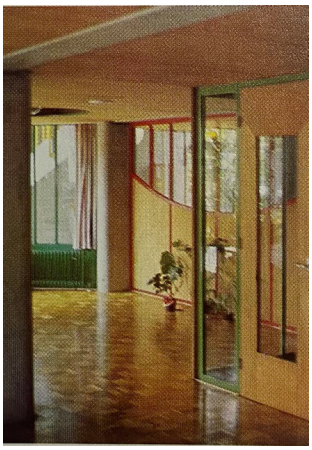
[25]Drawing by Van Eyck showing the distribution of functions.

4.2 A Safe and Protective Environment for Those Seeking Refuge

Strauven notes a clear contrast between the front of the building, with its transparent stairwell, and the low-rise rear wing. This rear section housed five 'houses' where the children slept. These spaces were designed with a more intimate and homely character.[48] As Buchanan explains, the children's bedrooms were situated '*snugly protective to the back wall.*' By tucking these bedrooms away on the ground floor, partially hidden from view, it can be interpreted that the children experienced a strong sense of safety and enclosure.[49]


[26] One of the children's bedrooms in the five houses

Another aspect that contributed to an environment perceived as safe and secure was the careful balance between transparency and enclosure throughout the building. Buchanan highlights the design for the offices for staff such as the social worker and psychologist, where small glass openings allowed discreet visual connections to the corridor. These openings were intentionally limited in size and thoughtfully positioned so that the person inside the room could anticipate the presence of someone walking by. As a result, these visual encounters were not suddenly, but subtle. [50]



[27]&[28]Van Eyck plays with glass in walls to create special views

What is not yet mentioned is the fact that the placement of the mothers' rooms on the upper floors was a deliberate design choice that enhanced both privacy and security. By physically distancing their living quarters from the street, Van Eyck provided a protective barrier against potential external threats. Given that many of the women residing at Hubertus House may have experienced precarious or unsafe situations, ensuring that their private spaces were inaccessible to outsiders contributed to a

47 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 572
48 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 575
49 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982).
50 idem

sense of safety and stability. The controlled access to residential areas further reinforced this protective environment, ensuring that neither the mothers nor their children were exposed to external risks.

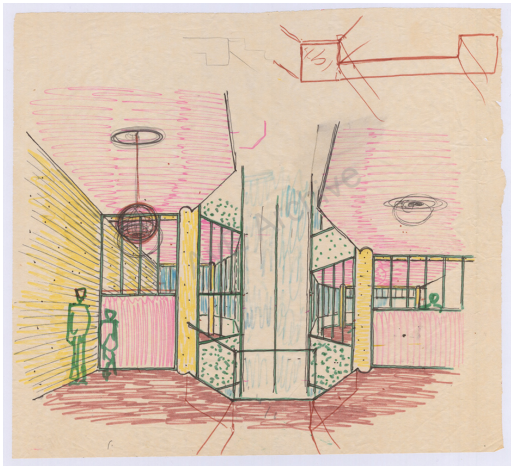
4.3 A Warm and Affectionate Atmosphere (Welcoming, Cheerful, and Homely)

The use of color played a significant role in shaping the experience of the Hubertus House. Strauven notes that the vibrancy and clarity of the colours contribute to an uplifting atmosphere. The colors were applied in a non-hierarchical manner, ensuring that no single colour dominated the visual composition. This created a dynamic yet balanced aesthetic, where each color functioned as an equal component of the whole. The external facade read as a total spectrum of the rainbow, provided both individual distinction and collective harmony.[51]

Buchanan further observes that Van Eyck strategically employed warm colors for interior spaces while using cooler tones for the exterior. This contrast enhanced the sense of domestic comfort within the building. Additionally, through careful use of transparency and enclosure, Van Eyck fostered what Buchanan describes as a '*sense of secure enclosure, even cosiness.*' This effect was further reinforced through details such as window heights and the arrangement of mullions, which shaped how spaces were perceived and interacted with.

The decision to locate the mothers' private rooms in the attic was another deliberate move aimed at fostering a sense of comfort. Van Eyck envisioned the attic's spatial configuration as an intimate and protective retreat, offering the residents a space where they could feel both sheltered and independent. [52]

[29]Sketch by Van Eyck, colour use in the facades



[30] Sketch by Van Eyck, connection old with new

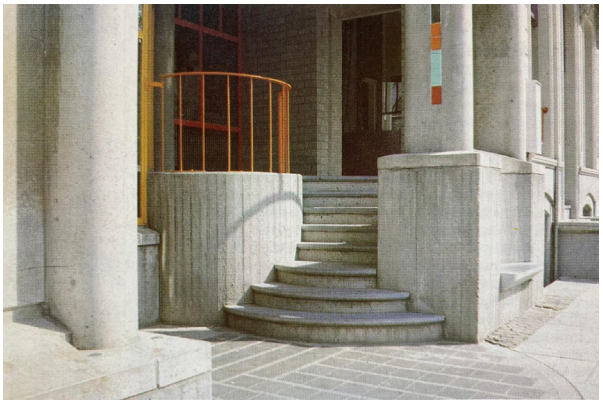
[31] Sketch by Van Eyck, interior doors

4.4 Overcoming 'Drempelvrees' (Fear of Crossing a Threshold)

Although explicit references to how the Hubertus House addresses '*drempelvrees*': the anxiety or hesitation associated with crossing thresholds, are limited, several subtle design choices suggest a clear intention to create an inviting and accessible environment. The entrance area, for example, was carefully conceived to avoid imposing physical or visual boundaries. Rather than aligning parallel with the street, the building's façade gently recedes, softening the divide between public and private space. This architectural gesture gives the impression that the building 'welcomes' rather than confronts visitors.[53]

Van Eyck himself talked about another design intention, explaining that he intentionally set the entrance several meters back from the official building line (rooilijn). By doing so, he created a transitional zone, neither fully public nor fully private, which serves to soften the typically sharp boundary between street and home. He poetically described this recessed entrance as "*a small tightrope dance on the building line.*"[54] This in-between space can be understood as an architectural expression of hospitality, offering a gentle threshold that reduces the psychological resistance often associated with entering institutional spaces. In a sense, Van Eyck quite literally 'softens' the threshold, not only through spatial arrangement but through the careful shaping of atmosphere.

51 Strauven Francis (1998) P. 581
52Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982).
53 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 58
54 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 60



[32] The entrance lies several meters back from the building line.

[33]Transitional zone, inside and outside at the same time

[34] View to the street

4.5 Freedom and Security (geborgenheid)

At first, it may seem paradoxical for a building to simultaneously evoke a sense of freedom and a sense of security. While freedom is often associated with the ability to move and act without restriction, security (in dutch: geborgenheid), relates to feelings of being at home, protected, and emotionally supported. How, then, can these two seemingly opposing qualities coexist within a single architectural space?

Van Eyck provides a compelling explanation: each floor of the building is connected to the outside world in a unique way, for example through roof terraces, bay windows, and voids, ensuring that the exterior continuously interacts with the interior. As a result, the outside world remains visualy and spatially present throughout the building, even as you move within it. This constant dialogue between inside and outside enables residents to remain visually connected to both their home and the broader urban context. According to Van Eyck, this dual connection fosters a simultaneous sense of security, or 'geborgenheid' and openness, cultivating both emotional security and a feeling of engagement with the larger environment.[54]

Buchanan offers a concrete example of how the building supports both freedom and security. He identifies the kitchen as the social heart of the Hubertus House, a space where mothers, children, and staff can come and go as they please. The freedom to participate in this communal hub on one's own terms reflects an important architectural principle: when the individual is given a choice within a collective setting, a balance emerges between personal autonomy and a shared sense of belonging. A second example Buchanan describes the main staircase, located in the central glass stairwell. This staircase winds from the ground floor all the way to the top of the building. Notably, it follows a spatial narrative: along the lower floors, facing the street, it aligns with the public side of the building, providing access to shared workspaces. However, as the stairs ascend beyond these areas, they subtly shift toward the rear, aligning with the garden-facing side, which represents the more private domain of the building. Through this carefully spatial transition, Van Eyck establishes an appropriate hierarchy of privacy, offering a nuanced architectural response to the need for both openness and enclosure.[55]

[35] The social hart, canteen with kitchen visible from the street

[36] Entrance to the Hubertus House

01 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 58
01 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982)

4.6 Communication

Encouraging interaction among residents, staff, and visitors was an essential yet complex architectural challenge. Buchanan identifies the cafeteria as the social hub of the building, a space where all groups: mothers, staff, and guests, could come together. This highlights the fundamental relationship between spatial design and social interaction: before communication can happen, architecture must first enable encounters.[56]

Moreover, visibility was a key factor in the building's design. Many rooms and corridors were designed in an open way, with windows and sightlines that allowed people to see each other without being intrusive. This reduced the feeling of being alone or unseen and made it easier for spontaneous conversations to happen. While it remains unclear whether transparency explicitly encouraged communication, it is evident that Van Eyck designed the building to encourage interaction rather than isolation. Similarly, the open character of the staircase fostered chance encounters, promoting informal interactions. While not clearly documented, it is reasonable to infer that this architectural element contributed to the overall communicative atmosphere of the Hubertus House.

Conclusion

Reflecting on the sub-question: '*How did Aldo van Eyck incorporate this input into his design for the Hubertus House?*' it can be said that the evidence presented by Van Eyck's design choices, as well as analyses by Buchanan and Strauven, demonstrates that Van Roijen's input was not only acknowledged but actively translated into architectural form. Van Eyck did not only accomodate her requests at a minimal level; rather, he expanded upon them, incorporating his own design solutions to enrich the building's social and spatial dynamics. The Hubertus House thus stands as a example to a collaborative design process, where client aspirations and architectural vision come together to create a space that is both functional and human-centered.

[37] The transparent staircase offers a view into the building block

01 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982)

[38]

Chapter 5
Behind the Vision: Public Recognition of Addie van Roijen-Wortmann

The previous chapters have demonstrated that the Hubertus House was recognized for its architectural expression, designed by Aldo van Eyck. It also became evident that Van Eyck actively built upon the ideas and principles provided by Addie van Roijen-Wortmann, ensuring that her vision would be reflected in the final design. Building on these findings, this chapter will examine how 20th-century researchers have interpreted and discussed Van Roijen-Wortmann's role in the design process of the Hubertus House. This is done following the sub-question: *What was the audience's recognition of Addie van Roijen-Wortmann?*


[39] the Hubertus House under construction (11-1987)

5.1 Overlooking the Client's Influence

In later years, books, interviews, and research extensively celebrated Van Eyck's architectural achievements with the Hubertus House.

For instance, Shweta Joshi describes Van Eyck's vision: "*As mentioned by Van Eyck, the Hubertus House was about equality, and he envisioned an open yet protective house and environment.*" However, while this statement credits Van Eyck with the idea of an "open yet protective" building, it fails to acknowledge that the client had already formulated this contradiction as a key part of the design brief. [57]


[40] the Hubertus House under construction (11-1987)

Peter Clarke, on the other hand, does acknowledge the collaboration between the architect and the client, stating: "*In this project, Van Eyck was able to work in close consultation with both the staff and the clients of the Hubertus Association. This organization, founded in the nineteenth century to support 'fallen women,' had evolved by the 1970s into an institution that provided unmarried mothers with shelter and protection on the basis of equality.*" [58]
Nevertheless, while Clarke recognizes the close collaboration, he does not explore how this dynamic shaped the architectural expression of the building. Yet even here, although the client's role is occasionally acknowledged, little attention has been paid to how her ideas were translated into the architectural design of the Hubertus House.

In the article Street urchin: *Mothers' House, Amsterdam,* the role of the client does receive slightly more careful attention. For instance, the writer calls the programme: *'sufficiently explicit and progressive that the task is to find a form that complement it.'* Which can be read as a nice compliment. [59]

57 Joshi, S.D. (14-06-2022). P.16
58 Clarke,P.D.E. (09-1985). P.11
59 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982).

On the contradictions of the design principles: 'open-welcoming' and 'closed¬-private-sheltering', the writer tells us that Van Eyck and the client sought a 'delicate balance'. Which highlights that this took place in consultation and collaboration, rather than that the concepts would be the idea of specifically one or specifically the other. [60]

5.2 The Absence of Van Roijen-Wortmann in Contemporary Media

The lack of recognition for Van Roijen-Wortmann's influence is also evident in contemporary newspaper articles. The 1979 Het Parool article titled "*Het 'Moederhuis' provocerend origineel*" fails to mention the client at all, let alone her role in shaping the design. Instead, it focuses primarily on the building's appearance while barely addressing its significance for the women who lived there. [61]

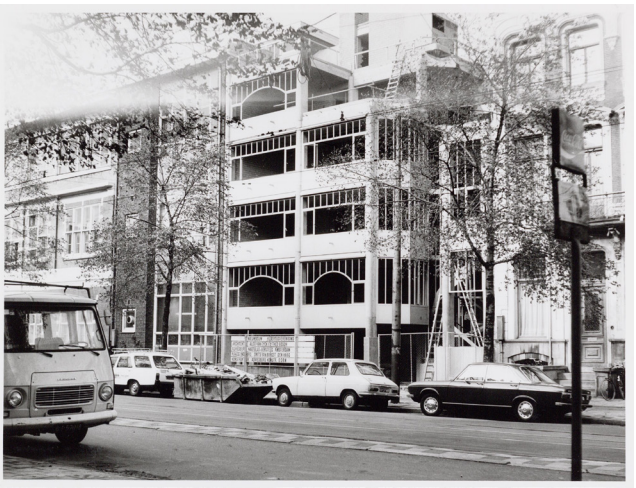
One of the few articles that does mention her is "*Aldo van Eyck: Eenheid van Tegendelen,*" published in De Waarheid in 1983: "*The design assignment was twofold: new construction and renovation. Given its function, the house had to be both 'open' and 'closed' at the same time. Furthermore, the equality that defines the association (which has no hierarchical structure) needed to be reflected in the architecture. These requirements led the association to Van Eyck.*"[62]
While many sources attribute the concept of duality, of openness and enclosure, to Van Eyck, this article correctly identifies it as an idea that originated from Van Roijen-Wortmann.
A similar recognition of her role can be found in *the Guide to Modern Architecture in Amsterdam* (1996), which highlights that Van Eyck not only collaborated closely with Van Roijen but also with other members of the Hubertus House staff: "*...and in this project, he was able to work in close consultation with both the staff and clients of the Hubertus Association.*" [63]

The positive collaboration is also reflected in the board meeting notes. The notes from December 11, 1974, state that after Van Eyck had completed discussions with various groups, the association considered the conversations to be very positive. [64]

Furthermore, the colaboration was not limited to just Van Eyck and Van Roijen. Van Eyck actively sought input from the staff. Van Roijen noted: "*Van Eyck once told me that he had the distinct impression that the ideas came from the group itself. During the design stage, he was constantly asking the staff for their opinion on certain details.*" [65]

[41] the Hubertus House under construction (11-1987)


[42] the Hubertus House under construction (11-1987)


[43] the Hubertus House under construction (11-1987)

60 Buchanan, P. (01-03-1982).
61 Salomons, I. (07-05-1979).
62De waarheid (03-05-1983)
63 Groenendijk, P. et all. (1996)
64 Hubertusvereniging (1973, 14 februari)
65 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 29

5.3 More Than Just Input

Beyond the standard expectations of a client, Addie van Roijen made a significant contribution to the design of the Hubertushuis. The distinction between conventional client expectations and those of an '*excellent client*' is described by Dana Cuff in Architecture: *The Story of Practice* (1992). Cuff identifies three key characteristics that define an outstanding client. [66]

The first characteristic, according to Cuff, is that excellent clients are not only demanding and steadfast but also open-minded and flexible.[67] Aldo van Eyck acknowledged this quality in Van Roijen, stating that she had a clear vision—"a deeply considered idea', and the ability to see it realized. He further noted that she skilfully delegated while ensuring that the association's vision remained intact throughout the process. [68]

Van Roijen herself emphasized the importance of a client knowing precisely what they want, remarking, '*That is their strength.*' However, she also highlighted the extensive discussions she had with Van Eyck. She recalled that when she raised functional objections and substantated them convincingly, she was often able to sway Van Eyck's opinion. These accounts indicate that Van Roijen not only had a strong sense of purpose but was also actively engaged in the design process through critical dialogue with the architect. [69]

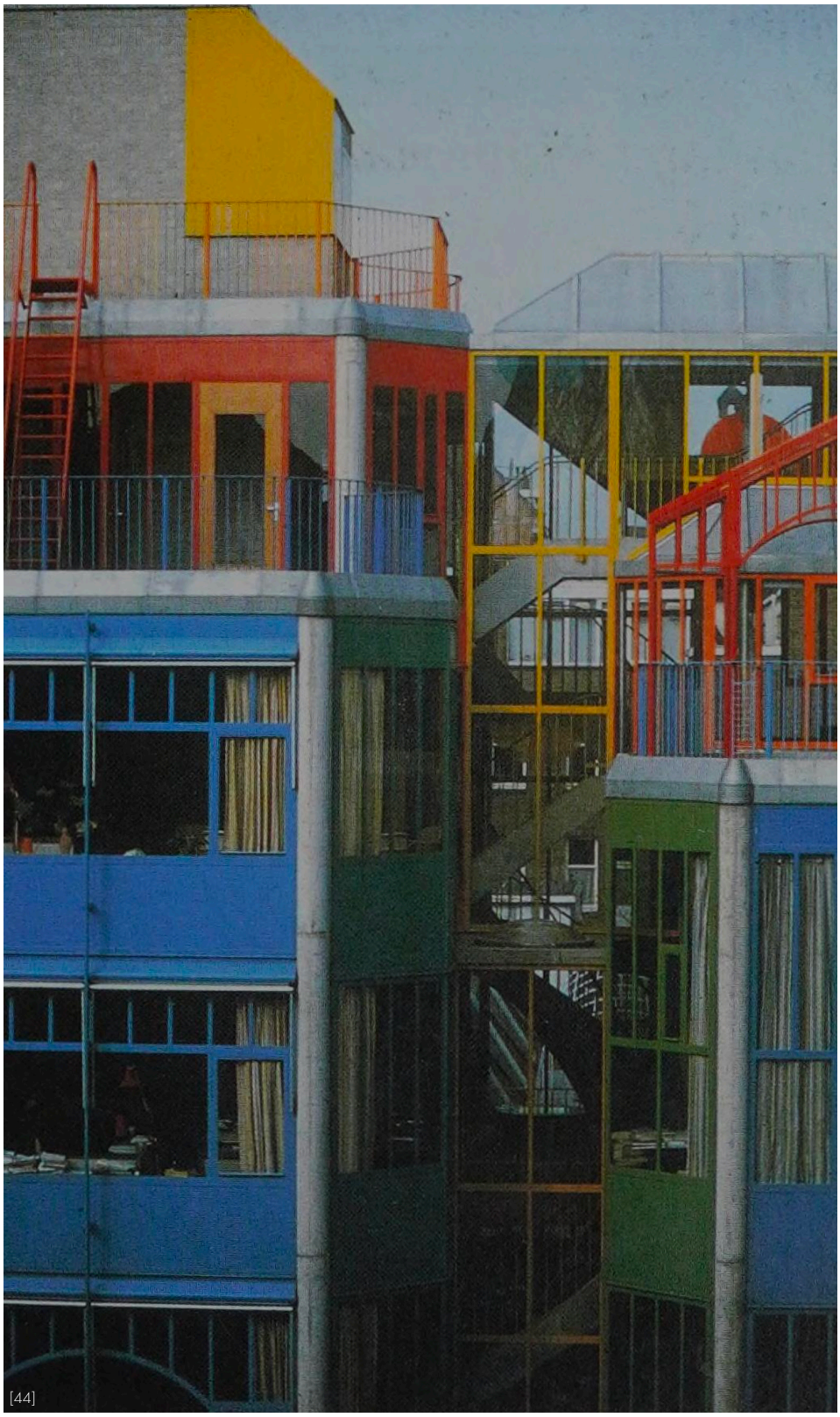
The second characteristic Cuff outlines is that an excellent client must have a clear set of values, be open to advice, and be willing to adjust the budget if necessary.[70] Van Eyck remarked that Van Roijen understood the essence of the project and was acutely aware of what she and her team considered to be the fundamental design principles. [71] While there is no direct evidence indicating that Van Roijen was willing to expand the budget, she was aware of its constraints. She acknowledged that one of the greatest challenges was during construction financial limitation, stating: '*Simply building already costs so much time and money, let alone building well!'* This remark demonstrates her recognition of budgetary pressures while also underscoring the challenges of achieving high-quality architecture within those constraints. [72]
Finally, Cuff asserts that an excellent client is "*curious about architecture in the way that architects themselves perceive it.*"[73] Van Roijen's deep appreciation for architecture is evident in her remark:'*As long as we get a real architect, I kept thinking, one who can build something truly special, then it will surely be a good house.*' [74] Her collaboration with Van Eyck was not just functional; she found it inspiring to discuss the work and mission of Hubertus with him. Van Eyck, in turn, acknowledged that Van Roijen understood her role well and '*was not intending to take the architect's seat.*' [75]

Of course, much of what we know about this collaboration comes from their retrospective writings. These accounts, written years after the fact, may emphasize the positive aspects of the process. They reflect pride, and perhaps a desire to preserve the memory of a successful partnership. To fully understand what happened, it would be valuable to look at additional primary sources, xletters, notes, and documents from the time, which could reveal more about the nature of their conversations and how decisions were made. But even without those, it's clear that the Hubertus House would not have taken the shape it did without the dedication and clarity of vision that Van Roijen brought to the table.

5.4 Conclusion

Despite everything she contributed, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann's role in shaping the Hubertus House has often gone unnoticed. While Van Eyck is rightly praised for his innovative design, it is important to remember that many of the core ideas behind the building, its openness, its sense of protection, its focus on a warm and kind atmosphere, were rooted in the vision of the client. What made this project so special wasn't just the talent of the architect, but the strength of the collaboration between two people who both believed deeply in what the building could be. A more balanced view of history would not only celebrate the design itself but also recognize the partnership that made it possible.

65 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 29
66 Cuff, D. (1992). P. 232
67 Idem
68 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 38
69 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 28
70 Cuff, D. (1992). P. 232
71 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 38
72Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 32
73 Cuff, D. (1992). P. 23
74 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 29
75 Van Eyck, A. et al., (1986). P. 38



[44]

Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer the research question: *How did the input provided by client Addie van Roijen-Wortmann influence the final design of the Hubertus House?*

Archival research, including analyses of primary historical sources, was combined with secondary sources in order to arrive at an answer to the research question. The analysis of historical sources, architectural critiques and project documentation has shown that Van Roijen-Wortmann had a significant influence on the final architecture of the Hubertus House. Her input for the design process was not limited to functional requirements; she had a clear vision of how she wanted the building to function. For example, she wanted a building that would simultaneously express protection and openness, reflect the democratic values of the association and the non-hierarchical structure, provide a warm and affectionate atmosphere, ease the fear of thresholds ('drempelvrees'), and balance freedom with security. The research has shown that Aldo van Eyck implemented this vision in the design of the Hubertus House.

Five core insights underpin these findings. First, the Hubertus House is understood as a 'mother house', a typology that builds on the preceding 'transit' houses. Second, although architectural critics were mostly positive about the architecture of the Hubertus House, the building was received with more criticism from the surrounding neighbourhood. This is likely due to the stigmas surrounding the mothers of the Hubertus House. Third, Van Roijen-Wortmann's input did not only concern practical requirements, but also included a set of abstract ambitions that influenced the final architecture of the building. Fourth, it has become clear that Van Eyck did not merely use her input during the design process and later express it in the architecture of the building, but that he also builts upon it. This is visible in elements such as the colour palette, circulation logic, and spatial composition. Fifth, although it has been shown that Van Roijen-Wortmann's input was highly valuable to the design process, she receives limited recognition in architectural historiography, often overshadowed by Van Eyck's reputation.

All in all, these findings show that the Hubertus House is the result of a successful collaboration. Van Eyck worked with Van Roijen-Wortmann's input and combined it with his own values. The result is a building that materialises shared ideals. The Hubertus House is thus not only an example of the humane architecture for which it is known, but also an example in which the client made a valuable contribution to the ideological and spatial dimensions of design. This research challenges dominant narratives of architectural authorship and calls for broader recognition of the co-creative roles clients can play, particularly those, like Van Roijen-Wortmann, who approach architecture with social purpose and visionary clarity.

Discussion

Validity of the Research

This thesis investigated to what extent Addie van Roijen-Wortmann influenced the design of the Hubertus House. As methodology, archival research of primary historical sources was chosen, as well as publications and secondary sources. By focusing on first-hand accounts from both Van Roijen-Wortmann and Van Eyck and combining these with scholars such as Strauven and Buchanan, the study achieved strong internal validity. However, the external validity remains limited. The Hubertus House was a singular project in terms of programme, historical moment, and the nature of the collaboration. While the findings may resonate with broader discussions on client-architect relations, they cannot be uncritically generalised across other cases.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the lack of private archival material from the client's side limited insight into specific aspects of the design process. As a result, there is no clear picture of how the client experienced the process at the time, or how she spoke about it during that period. Although there are several reflections by both the client and the architect, all of these were written retrospectively, which may be coloured by pride or hindsight.
In addition, this thesis focused on a single case in order to establish clear boundaries. However, it could offer more insight to compare multiple projects by Aldo van Eyck and his various clients. That way, it could be examined whether the role and relationship with Van Roijen-Wortmann was truly exceptional.

Implications

This thesis shows that it is important to reconsider the role of the client not only within architectural projects, but also within the architectural history of the Netherlands. When clients such as Addie van Roijen-Wortmann remain outside the frame, our understanding of authorship and agency in the built environment will remain incomplete.

Suggestions for Future Research

To build upon this research and add further depth, future research could be conducted. This could include looking at other projects by Aldo van Eyck and his other client-architect relations, and by conducting a comparative study it could be examined whether the collaboration with Addie van Roijen-Wortmann represents an exceptional case. Additionally, further archival research into other women-led architectural commissions in the 1970s and 1980s could help identify patterns in client-architect relationships. Finally, a deeper exploration of the intellectual and ideological climate of the 1970s could help to further develop the theoretical framework.

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Foreground image: Jan Jansen, Aldo van Eyck, Addie van Roijen-Wortmann.
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