

'Unexpected' domesticity: Housing design of OMA's IJ-plein masterplan project in Amsterdam

Martínez-Millana, Elena

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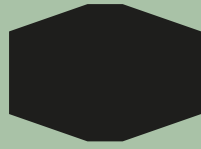
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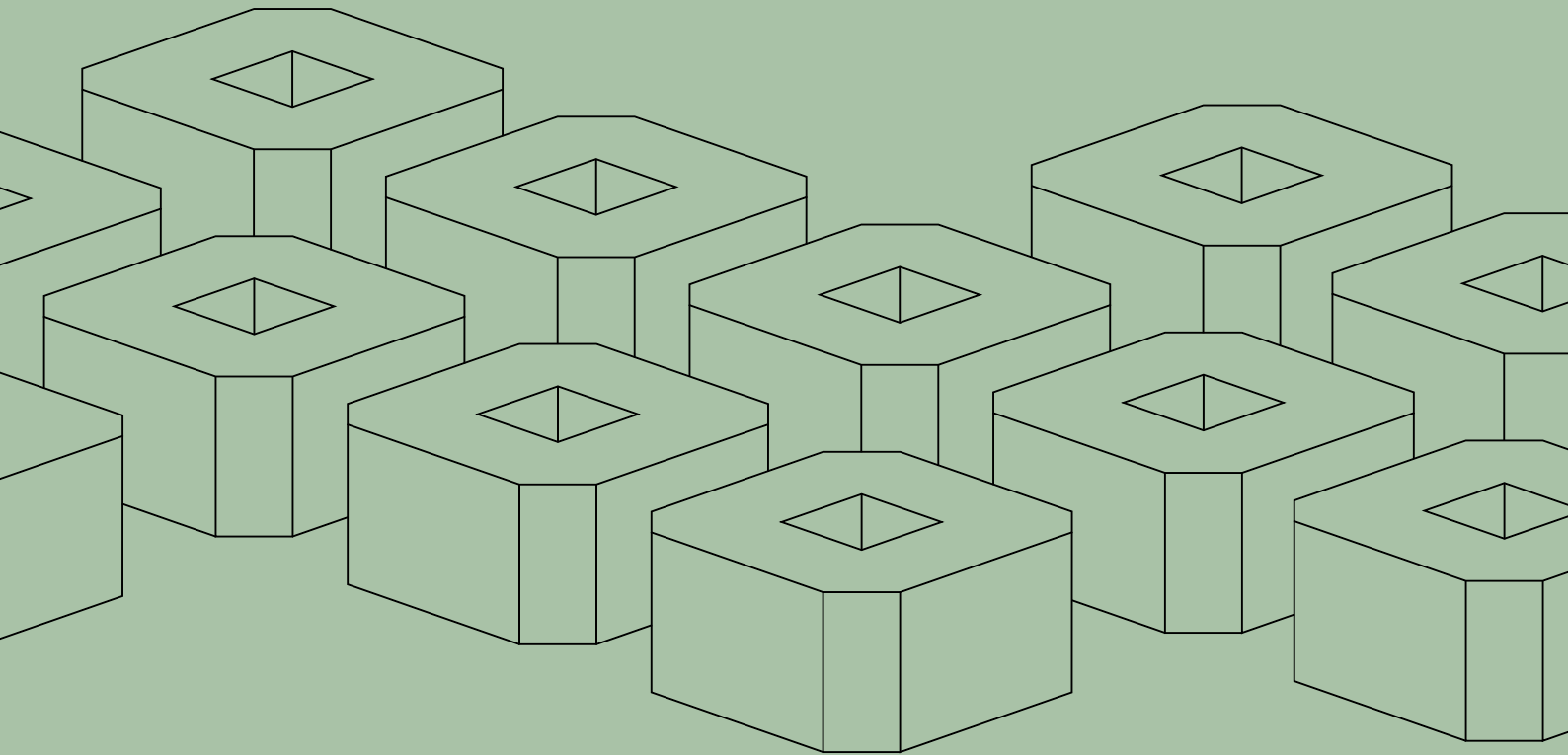
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19 WORKSHOP

“RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS
AND ARCHITECTURAL
DESIGN”

Build back better? Post-pandemic housing and residential architecture

Marie Stender (*Department of the Built Environment, Aalborg University*), **Sirid Bonderup**.

Abstract 65649

Previous pandemics have played a major role in the development of modern architecture, housing and urban planning, but what will be the long-term effects of Covid19 on our built environment and residential architecture? The pandemic reintroduced distancing, space, fresh air, hygiene and cleanliness as important dimensions of everyday life, and domestic space played a pivotal role, as most countries requested their citizens to stay home. Series of lockdowns thus severely influenced our ways of working and living, organizing and using the home, sharing spaces and delimiting private from public, relating to neighbours, local communities and surroundings etc, but will any of these changes leave lasting imprints in our everyday life and built environments? Several authors have argued that we ought to regard the pandemic as a grey swan that will likely cause radical lasting changes (Krastev 2020), that no turning to normality is possible (Zizek 2020), and that the pandemic is not to be seen as a crisis but rather as a condition (Latour 2021). OECD and other stakeholders and policymakers have also argued that we in the wake of the pandemic must find ways to ‘build back better’ – hence not just return to business as usual to restore economies and livelihoods quickly, but also in this process increase society’s sustainability and resilience (OECD, 2020). Yet, in Denmark at the time of writing, everything seems to be more or less back to normal. Based on a literature review of Covid19 effects on housing and architecture, this paper discusses what can be learnt from the pandemic, and how we may study its long-term effects on residential architecture and built environments.

“Unexpected” domesticity: The housing design of OMA’s IJ-plein masterplan project in Amsterdam.

Elena Martinez-Millana (*Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology; Departamento de Proyectos Arquitectónicos, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*)

Abstract 66050

This article focuses on the OMA’s IJ-plein master plan located on a former shipping wharf in Amsterdam North (1980-1988). Particularly in the domesticity of the different dwellings, which were designed by six other offices, including the one by Koolhaas, and were 100% for social housing. This project is considered one of the turning points of what finally culminated in the 1990s’ Super Dutch. Several authors have studied this project, particularly Bernard Leupen, author of the book “IJ-Plein. Een speurocht naar nieuwsw compositiorische mideelen” [IJ-Plein. A search for new compositional idea] (010, 1989). However, as Leupen himself pointed out, his study lacks specific issues, such as evaluating dwellings and their use. It was published immediately after the project ended. More recently, other authors have studied the project, such as Christophe Van Gerrewey in “A Weissenhofsiedlung for Amsterdam” (Anyone, 2018) or Lara Schrijver in “Stubborn Modernity, IJ-plein Amsterdam” (OASE, 2015). While these are significant contributions, they do not delve into the design of the dwellings, developing questions related to commissioning, process, or precedents. This study offers a new analysis of the project with an emphasis on housing design: not only on their novel interpretation of modern tradition at the time of their conception, but on the inherent and unexpected domesticity of their typological proposals today. For this reason, the use of these dwellings is considered in the extraordinary situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this paper, on the one hand, the existing literature has been reviewed and the original documents in the OMA archive have been studied. On the other hand, the domesticity of dwellings has been analysed, taking into account the extreme situation such as the pandemic: when 100% of daily

activities took place inside our homes. This article explores their domesticity, which limits and enables new uses in them.

Keywords: domesticity; social housing, IJ-plein; Dutch modernism, 1980's

Alternative Housing. For a Diverse and Inclusive Society

Gérald Ledent

Abstract 66246

Our societies are evolving at a rapid pace, challenging the certainties of the past. Two fundamental changes stand out, and raise questions concerning housing. First, the composition of our societies is increasingly diverse from both cultural and social points of view. Second, in the absence of external supports (either from the family realm or welfare states), a growing number of individuals are left behind.

To address these social challenges, alternative housing forms tend to depart from the quantitative design solutions of the past to address housing design from a qualitative point of view. Alternative ways of designing housing are explored in this paper, all of which find roots in history. On the one hand, housing a diverse population can be achieved by a series of means: by offering a great variety of complex housing possibilities, polyvalent dwellings where spaces can be used for various purposes and evolving housing. On the other hand, the decline in solidarity, whether in welfare state support or family bonds is one of the reasons for the resurgence of co-living projects in recent decades. Those projects tend to question the patriarchal approach to housing. By sharing childcare, cooking, and housing management as well as by making household chores visible, co-living models tend to provide a lever to empower and emancipate citizens, particularly women.

Based on a general dissatisfaction of the conventional housing market, alternative housing models tend to question traditional dwelling layouts, land tenure systems and gender divisions at home. While still marginal, they could inform future housing design for a diverse and inclusive society.

Keywords: Social changes, Housing evolutions, Diversity, Polyvalence, Growth, Co-living.

Investigation Into Spatial Planning of Residential Environments: A Critical Review on Changing Spatial Design of 'Live and Work' Residences

Ayça Arslan

Abstract 66292

This article conducts research on the spatial design of contemporary small square-meter residences designed especially in metropolitan cities that appeal to contemporary lifestyles and trends. This research is a continuation of the author's doctoral thesis, titled 'Exploration of Changing Dynamics of Small House Spatiality: From Minimized Space Usage to Dynamic Living Space', completed at Eastern Mediterranean University in April 2017, Famagusta, North Cyprus with the supervisor of Türkan Ulusu Uraz. The thesis work constitutes the reference for this research topic. The thesis study, focuses on the changing spatiality of the small house over time, an examination has been realized to today's houses which evolve from the 'minimum space usage to dynamic living spaces with maximum comfort'. The traditional small houses designed with cell-to-cell rooms for the working class with small square meters are compared with today's examples of the same square meters, which are open-plan, flexible, and multifunctional. However, the spatial organization of the houses with small square meters is caused by necessity and deprivation in traditions, today min.m2 residences have been turned into lifestyles, and trends with maximum comfort. Contemporary style small residences that serve to diversified lifestyles

“Unexpected” domesticity: The housing design of OMA’s IJ-plein masterplan project in Amsterdam

Elena Martínez-Millana ^{1,2}

¹ Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, 2628 BL Delft, The Netherlands.

² Departamento de Proyectos Arquitectónicos, Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 28040 Madrid, Spain.

Abstract

This article focuses on the IJ-plein urban plan designed and built between 1980 and 1988 and located in a former harbour area on the banks of the IJ in Amsterdam North. Specifically, it delves into some of the dwellings of this plan designed by a team led by Rem Koolhaas/ Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). This plan was duly publicised and studied during the 1980s and early 1990s, but it is notably absent in *S,M,L,XL*, and until recently, no new studies on it have emerged. The most comprehensive to date is Bernard Leupen's, published immediately after the project was completed. However, as Leupen pointed out, his study lacks a more specific evaluation of the dwellings. It has also not been done subsequently by other authors. This paper aims to advance in the study of the plan from the analysis of the domesticity of the so-called *HAT* units (*Huisvesting Alleenstaanden en Tweepersoonshuishoudens*), the dwellings for one or two persons. In particular, the *Oost III* blocks designed by OMA, which contain a relatively large number of *HAT* units. The methodology employed in this work is based on what Sarah Whiting and Robert Somol called “projective analysis”. So, the aim is to explore a “theoretical framework” to reintegrate it into the analysis of the “specific architectural practice”. As Koolhaas expressed that IJ-plein is “a unique episode that was difficult for me to fit into a theoretical framework”. This paper shows to what extent the *Oost III* project offers a “contemporary” reinterpretation of the modern tradition and explores the domesticity of the *HAT* dwellings, which limits and enables new uses in them. This analysis seems relevant, considering, among other issues, the 'unexpected' use of the dwellings in the extraordinary situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: IJ-plein; domesticity; social housing, HAT-unit; Dutch modernism, 1980's

1. Introduction

Throughout the Covid-19 crisis, housing has played a crucial role in public health. Confinement in homes has been the primary tool to restrict interaction between people. So, housing has arguably played one of the critical roles in this crisis. The pandemic has forced people to live confined to their homes for long periods, which has meant that almost 100% of activities have been carried out indoors. In most cases, these homes were not prepared for these new “unexpected” situations.

This paper aims to incorporate into the current discussion that emerged in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic the analysis of a specific project: the IJ-plein urban plan, designed by a team led by Rem Koolhaas, Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), and carried out between 1980 and 1988, on the former ADM shipyard site (*Amsterdamse Droogdok Maatschappij*), in Amsterdam North, on the banks of the IJ. Due to the mentioned circumstances, it seems appropriate to approach the study of the domesticity of the inherited city and housing with this perspective in mind. Under these circumstances, it can be said people became prisoners in their homes. So, in this master plan study, the focus is on housing.

This article is part of a more extensive investigation whose hypothesis suggests that dwellings can also be considered prisons, just as prisons can be considered dwellings. The IJ-plein urban plan is a case of great interest in exploring this critical conjecture, mainly because of its relation to Koolhaas' theoretical discourse of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as his early projects.

Therefore, with this general hypothesis in mind, the overall purpose of this research is to explore the paradoxes of the domesticity of housing architecture, its possibilities and limitations, in ordinary and extraordinary “unexpected” situations.

This plan was duly disseminated and studied throughout the 1980s. Numerous articles were published both in Dutch journals—the succession of articles published during this period in *de Architect* is a good example—and in several international ones. But the book by Bernard Leupen is undoubtedly the most comprehensive to date, and was published immediately after the project was completed (1989).¹ It is only recently that new studies on it have emerged. Notably the article published in *OASE* “OMA. The First Decade” by Lara Schrijver,² and that of Christophe Van Gerrewey.³ These two articles address critical issues raised in the documents published at the time. As Van Gerrewey pointed out, the ambition of its authors was for IJ-plein to be “a Weissenhofsiedlung for the 1980s”, and, Schrijver, indicated this as the reason given by its authors for the notable absence of the project in a book like *S,M,L,XL*,⁴ which has been so influential in the reception of its work.

These studies on IJ-plein, as Leupen himself pointed out about his own, lack a specific evaluation of the dwellings. Therefore, this paper aims to advance the study of the plan by analysing the domesticity of the so-called HAT units (*Huisvesting Alleenstaanden en Tweepersoonshuishoudens*), dwellings for one or two persons. In particular, the *Oost III* blocks designed by Koolhaas/OMA, which contain a significant high number of HAT units. This paper argues that the study of these units can generate speculative answers to the question of what it means to inhabit today, and problematise which are the terms of reference of inhabiting.

2. Methodology

The design of this research is structured in two parts. Firstly, a preliminary study is made of the theoretical framework from which Koolhaas' project is analysed and, secondly, the analysis of the specific project, showing why this case study is of great interest to analyse the concept of “unexpected” domesticity. Thus, the article is in line with those works such as the one by Hilde Heynen, who via the term “domesticity”, studied the relationship between housing and modernity, showing its tensions and

¹ Bernard Leupen, *IJ-plein Amsterdam Een speurtocht naar nieuwe compositorische middelen. Rem Koolhaas / OMA* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1989).

² Lara Schrijver, ‘Stubborn Modernity, IJ-Plein Amsterdam (1988)’, ed. Christophe Van Gerrewey and Véronique Patteuw, *OASE*, no. 94. OMA The First Decade (2015): 109–12.

³ Christophe Van Gerrewey, ‘A Weissenhofsiedlung For Amsterdam’, *Log*, no. 44 (2018): 83–92.

⁴ OMA, Rem Koolhaas, and Bruce Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, ed. Jennifer Sigler (Rotterdam: 010, 1995).

contradictions.⁵ Moreover, the design of this investigation aims to achieve a “projective” analysis, which has resounded since the beginning of the XXI century and which authors such as Sarah Whiting and Robert Somol were the first to introduce.⁶ In what is known as “projective” debate, the ideas that are put forward try to potentially reintegrate architectural practice and theory. As Lara Schrijver explains, the notion of a “projective” debate is a response to the need to look beyond material conditions and limitations which are present in the practice of architecture.^{7,8} This is why a previous, solid theoretical framework has been built, which will then be integrated into the analysis of specific architectural practice.

The analysis of the project is structured in two parts. Firstly, the IJ-plein urban plan is studied. To do so, a review of the literature in which it has been disseminated and analysed is made. These sources are mainly from the period of the design and construction of the project, throughout the 1980s. Among the numerous documents, the various articles published in national and international architectural journals,⁹ among others, are studied.¹⁰ And, apart from the Jacques Lucan book on OMA early work (1991), where, IJ-plein is well represented, are remarkably the books by Bernard Leupen in which IJ-plein is the central theme, published while he was teaching at the then Faculteit Bouwkunde (TH Delft).¹¹ Also, a review of subsequently published papers is made, and although few, they show a recent renewed interest in IJ-plein. In 2020 the *Gemeente Amsterdam* designated IJ-plein a protected urban landscape; shortly before that, in 2018, the centre *Monumenten en Archeologie* (MenA) studied the area. The accessible reports of this study are also reviewed, which provide an assessment of the historical-cultural, landscape and urbanistic values of IJ-plein.¹² Other recently published documents are also reviewed, in which authors specialised in the author's work recover this project from oblivion.

The second part analyses the area of the urban plan called *Oost III*, where the two housing blocks designed by Koolhaas/OMA are located. For this, the previous literature review is key to selecting documents that deal with *Oost III* in more detail. These are just a few. These include articles such as Dirk Jan Postel's, published in *de Architect*, “Werk in uitvoering, Woningbouw van OMA op het IJ-plein”.¹³ Also, Leupen's books, such as *IJ-plein catalogus* (1986),¹⁴ and especially *IJ-plein Amsterdam* (1989).¹⁵ The original preserved documentation, *Oost III, "Subplan East III"*, is currently being studied in the OMA archive at the Study Center of the *Het Nieuwe Instituut* in Rotterdam.¹⁶ As mentioned in the introduction, this analysis attempts to relate IJ-plein, specifically *Oost III*, to Koolhaas' discourse

⁵ Hilde Heynen, ‘Modernity and Domesticity: Tensions and Contradictions’, in *Negotiating Domesticity*, ed. Hilde Heynen and Gülsüm Baydar (Routledge, 2005), 1–29.

⁶ Robert E. Somol and Sarah M. Whiting, ‘Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism’, *Perspecta*, no. 33 (2002): 72–77.

⁷ Lara Schrijver, ‘Whatever Happened to Projective Architecture? Rethinking the Expertise of the Architect’, *FOOTPRINT*, 1 January 2009, 123–28, <https://doi.org/10.7480/footprint.3.1.704>.

⁸ According to Schrijver, “... it offered a line of demarcation, opening up the possibility to discuss the potential of architecture rather than its impotence”.

⁹ Dutch architecture journals such as *De Architect*, *Wonen-TABK*, *Archis*, and *OASE*, and international ones, such as *AA L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, *AMC Architecture Mouvement Continuité*, *Lotus International*, among others.

¹⁰ Also, national, and regional Dutch newspapers are taken into account, especially those from Amsterdam, *De Volkskrant*, *Het Parool*, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, among others.

¹¹ More documents from this period are still to be obtained, such as the book *Integratiekollege IJ-plein* (1983), and *IJ-plein dictaat* (1984), both published by the Faculteit der Bouwkunde TH Delft, where, for example, Leupen's interview with Koolhaas is transcribed “Interview met Rem Koolhaas op 6 januari 1984.”

¹² Hester Aardse, *Het IJ-Plein. Cultuurhistorische Verkenning. C 18-038 Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Monumenten en Archeologie, Gemeente Amsterdam, 2018).

¹³ Dirk Jan Postel, ‘Werk in uitvoering, Woningbouw van OMA op het IJ-plein’, *De Architect*, no. 6 (June 1988): 68–75.

¹⁴ Bernard Leupen, *IJ-plein catalogus* (Delft: Afdeling der Bouwkunde TH Delft, Stadsdeerlaad Amsterdam Noord, 1986).

¹⁵ Leupen, *IJ-Plein, Amsterdam*.

¹⁶ ‘OMAR.110621944 III. Deelplan Oost III, woningen en winkels’, in *Office for Metropolitan Architecture / Archief* (Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut, n.d.).

and works, the transfers between theory and practice. Still, it also tries to take the discussion further. By analysing the HAT units for one or two people, the aim is to advance in the line of other recent research that studies domesticity, discussing its tensions and contradictions beyond the traditional conception of housing. The Covid-19 pandemic is mentioned here in relation to the hypothesis raised, because it offers a new perspective on these issues.

3. The IJ-plein urban plan

Before analysing the specific project by Koolhaas/OMA for the Oost III sub-plan, this section briefly introduces the IJ-plein urban plan, particularly concerning Koolhaas/OMA's theoretical discourse.

As mentioned in the introduction, numerous authors studied different aspects of the IJ-plein urban plan, especially in the 1980s, when many articles were published. While many of these cannot be discussed at length here, it is worth noting that their review has been necessary to better understand the complexity of the urban plan design process and the projects assigned to different studies. If so, it might appear to be a study of IJ-plein, rather than a study of the design of Oost III.

From that decade it is worth mentioning articles published in national journals such as those by Janny Rodermond,¹⁷ Dirk Jan Postel, and Bernard Leupen in *de Architect*,¹⁸ by Wijnand Looise in *OASE*, by Ruud Brouwers in *Wonen-TABK*,¹⁹ or by Noud de Vreeze in *Archis*.²⁰ Also, those published in other European journals such as *AMC*,²¹ *AA*,²² or *Lotus*.²³ The one by Mildred F. Schmertz, in *AR*, provides a relevant American perspective.²⁴ It is also interesting to see to what extent IJ-plein was included or omitted in the monographic issues that important journals did on OMA's work in the 1980s, such as the Japanese *a+u*, which presents it in detail,²⁵ and the Spanish *Croquis*, which omits it.²⁶ Also, although limited, the dissemination made by OMA itself.²⁷

An excellent example of how these articles provide valuable insights into the design process is the article mentioned above, "Inspraak IJ-Plein" by Wijnand Looise. Looise was the 'expert' chosen by the representatives of the neighbours and future residents of IJ-plein, so he explained his perspective on the participation of these organisations in the decision-making process of the design and construction of IJ-plein. According to Looise, these organisations had been "portrayed" in a way — "if their participation is mentioned at all" — that did not do justice to their "real contribution". As Looise explains, on the one

¹⁷ Janny Rodermond, 'Bestemmingsplan ADM-Terrein Amsterdam', *De Architect*, no. 10 (Oktober 1982): 84–90; Janny Rodermond, 'IJ-Plein En Venserpolder. De Stad Als Kunstwerk of Als Banaliteit?', *De Architect*, no. 10 (Oktober 1984): 45–57.

¹⁸ Rodermond, 'Bestemmingsplan ADM-Terrein Amsterdam'; Rodermond, 'IJ-Plein En Venserpolder. De Stad Als Kunstwerk of Als Banaliteit?'; Postel, 'Werk in uitvoering, Woningbouw van OMA op het IJ-plein'.

¹⁹ Ruud Brouwers, 'Insprekers in Hogere Sferen', *Wonen-TA/BK*, no. 1 (January 1982): 7.

²⁰ Noud de Vreeze, 'Het Kwaliteitsbegrip in de Volkshuisvesting (3). Pleidooi Voor Een Zorgvuldige Beheersing van Kwaliteit En Kosten', *Archis. Architectuur Stedebouw Beeldende Kunst*, no. 1 (January 1988): 46–49.

²¹ Rem Koolhaas, Jan Voorberg, and Herman de Kovel, 'Un Plan Directeur Por Amsterdam-Nord', *AMC, Architecture Mouvement Continuité*, no. 54–55 (September 1981): 67–76; Rem Koolhaas and Jacques Lucan, 'Amsterdam-Nord. Urbanisme', *AMC, Architecture Mouvement Continuité*, no. 6 (Déembre 1984): 22–23; Rem Koolhaas and Jacques Lucan, 'Amsterdam-Nord. Logements: Grande Barre/Petite Barre', *AMC, Architecture Mouvement Continuité*, no. 6 (Déembre 1984): 16–21.

²² Rem Koolhaas and OMA, 'Aménagement d'un Quartier, Amsterdam. 1980-81', *AA L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 238 (Avril 1985): 40–45; Rem Koolhaas and OMA, 'Habitat Social et Équipements, Amsterdam Nord. 1983.', *AA L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 238 (Avril 1985): 72–19.

²³ Rem Koolhaas and Jan Voorberg, 'Waterfront A Modern Urban Village at Amsterdam-North', *Lotus International. Quarterly Architectural Review* Quarter as Urban Form, no. 36 (1982): 59–63.

²⁴ Mildred F. Schmertz, 'Low-Income Housing: A Lesson from Amsterdam. Awarding the Amsterdam Housing Prize', *Architectural Record*, January 1985, 134–43.

²⁵ Rem Koolhaas and OMA, 'Housing "IJ-PLEIN"', *A+u. Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 217 (October 1988): 46–59.

²⁶ Rem Koolhaas and Alejandro Zaera, *OMA / Rem Koolhaas (1987-1993)*, 53 (Madrid: El Croquis, 1992).

²⁷ Rem Koolhaas, and OMA, 'Amsterdam-Noord — a Planning Study 1980-81', in *OMA Projects 1978-1981*, exhibition cat., Architectural Association, London, 2 June 27 July 1981 (London: The Architectural Association, 1981), 43–44.

hand, they were said to be "incompetent", "meddlesome", "bent on destroying design", and "ultimately in charge". On the other hand, it was argued that IJ-plein demonstrated that "it is good for architects to gain self-confidence and detach themselves from the participatory process" and that OMA took participation seriously only "apparently". For Looise, "there was always a mutual influence and a fine-tuning of requirements by all involved", and he gives examples that were important for the residents' opinion-forming and evaluation of the plan. Of the most important, "perhaps more important than the drawings", he explains, were the excursions, such as, for example, the evaluation of a life-size model of a house at the R.O.L. (*Ruimtelijk Ontwikkelings Laboratorium*).²⁸

In 1980 Koolhaas/OMA began work on the study of the project area.²⁹ The method they used consisted of inserting urban fabric into the perimeter of the site, as Roberto Gargiani points out, a method of Ungers that Koolhaas knew well. Those insertions were selected from models of the International Style (the works are those of Johannes Duiker, Mart Stam, Johannes Bemardus van Loghem, Ivan Leonidov, of the Leonidovian group formed by Lavrov, Popov and Krutikov, of Le Corbusier, Ernst May, Walter Gropius, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Jaap B. Bakema, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Bertrand Goldberg). As Gargiani explains, there was also the plan by Ildefons Cerda for Barcelona, which simultaneously became a model for post-modernist urban culture; and there was the edified fabric proposed by Léon Krier for La Villette; as well as the project by Ungers for Berlin-Lichterfelde, on which Koolhaas had also worked.³⁰

As Koolhaas/OMA stated, "The site's tension lies exactly in the dichotomy between an almost village-like context and an effectively central location, between the desire to maintain a low scale for the buildings and the pressure to build".³¹ The plan was divided into two parts, separated by the former water area of the old shipyard, which was filled in. On the one hand, the eastern part, which is triangular, has an arrangement of elongated blocks, in Koolhaas's criteria of parallel bands, and the eastern part also has isolated blocks. This arrangement creates a series of streets that provides a visual connection of the area with the IJ and the centre of Amsterdam, similar to OMA's debut project for Roosevelt Island Housing Competition (1974-75) by the Urban Development Corporation of New York State, in the area of New Welfare Island, in the East River of Manhattan.

Beyond the self-references, as Gargiani points out, the result is a plan that displays certain formal qualities of the Dutch Nieuwe Zakelijkheid housing estates of the 1920s and 1930s, "indifferent to the risk of a passing lack of timeliness".^{32,33}

²⁸ Wijnand Looise, 'Inspraak IJ-Plein', *OASE*, no. 17 (1987): 35–37.

²⁹ From OMA worked on the project: Rem Koolhaas, Jan Voorberg, Herman de Kovel, Ruud Roorda, Willem-Jan Neutelings, Kees Christiaanse.

³⁰ Oswald Mathias Ungers, Hans F. Kollhoff, and Arthur Ovaska, eds., *The Urban Garden. Student Projects for the Südliche Friedrichstadt, Berlin*, Summer Academy for Architecture '78 in Berlin (Berlin, 1978); Oswald Mathias Ungers et al., *The City in the City: Berlin, a Green Archipelago* (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013).

³¹ Jacques Lucan, 'IJ-Plein. Amsterdam-North 1980-1989', in *OMA - Rem Koolhaas. Architecture 1970-1990* (New York, N.Y.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 76–85.

³² For example, as Gargiani points out, the catalogue of inexpensive materials he uses is typical of the tradition of Nieuwe Zakelijkheid housing projects, such as corrugated sheet metal in the staircases and lifts, industrial aluminium profiles in the enclosures, black bricks, etc. Moreover, the horizontal windows alternating with solid strips and the continuous terraces finished in metal and glass are a homage to the buildings built in the Netherlands between the two world wars, such as Oud's Kiethoek (1923-28) and Van Tijen, Brinkman en Van der Vlugt's Bergpolder (1933-34).

³³ Roberto Gargiani, 'Works for Rotterdam, Berlin, Amsterdam and Scheveningen, 1980', in *Rem Koolhaas/OMA: The Construction of Merveilles* (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2008), 94–102.

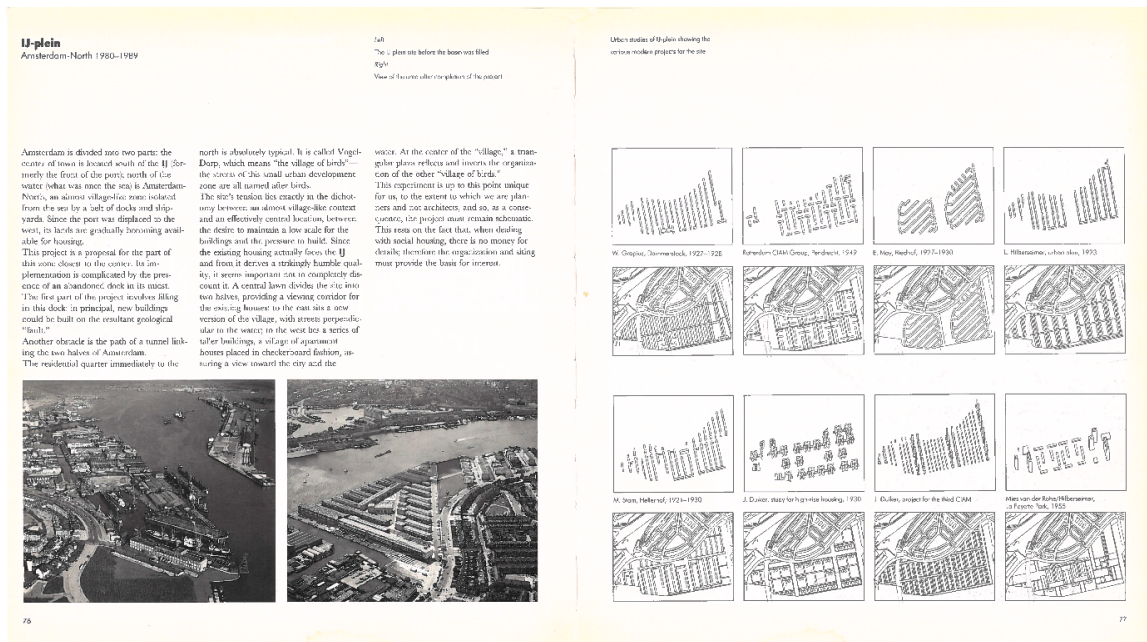


Fig.1 Some pages from Jacques Lucan's book, where he included extensive documentation of IJ-plein project. On the left page, two interesting photos: the IJ-plein site before the basin was filled, and a view of the area after completion of the project. On the right page, the urban studies of IJ-plein showing the various modern projects for the site. OMA/Rem Koolhaas. *Architecture 1970-1990*, 76-85. New York, N.Y.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991.

A special event in which the relationship between Koolhaas's theoretical discourse and IJ-plein was discussed was at the conference entitled "Hoe Modern Is de Nederlandse Architectuur?". This conference took place at the Faculteit der Bouwkunde, TU Delft, in 1990, on the occasion of Koolhaas' departure as a professor after two years.

On the one hand, Koolhaas himself, as part of his critical reflection, explained the change that occurred in the reception of the project in the 1980s, which went from being considered a "courageous" project based on modern forms of urban development to the design and concept being "outdated".³⁴

He questioned, "How is it possible that, in this very century of instability and change, in this very art that reflects society par excellence, and in this very language of architecture that prides itself on its constant transformation, the buildings of almost a century are so similar?"³⁵

According to Koolhaas, even the Oost III, which offered a "modernisation or revision" of pre-war modern architecture, had a "visual language" that had become such a "general cliché" in the Netherlands that they seriously questioned it.

Contrasting this reflection with others that took place at the same congress, such as Arie Graafland, who spoke about the intellectual context of Koolhaas's projects, one can extract some clues as to why IJ-plein was deeply rooted in the intellectual debate on modernity.³⁶

Graafland, starting with the question "what exactly does the word 'modern' mean in our time?", reflected on the modernity that Koolhaas discovered in New York. There are numerous arguments that he

³⁴ Rem Koolhaas, 'Hoe Modern Is de Nederlandse Architectuur?', in *Hoe Modern Is de Nederlandse Architectuur?*, ed. Bernard Leupen, Wouter Deen, and Christoph Grafe (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1990), 11–20.

³⁵ "Hoe kan het in godsnaam dat uitgerekend in deze eeuw die volledig bepaald wordt door instabiliteit en verandering, uitgerekend in deze kunst de bij uitstek de maatschappij reflecteert en dat uitgerekend in deze taal, die van de architectuur, die zich bij uitstek op zijn voortdurende transformatie beroemt, gebouwen over de periode van flu bijna een eeuw zo op elkaar lijken?"

³⁶ Arie Graafland, 'Bouwkunde Delft. Rem Koolhaas En de Moderniteit', in *Hoe Modern Is de Nederlandse Architectuur?*, ed. Bernard Leupen, Wouter Deen, and Christoph Grafe (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1990), 71–86.

mentioned, especially from the field of philosophy, from Marshal Berman's definition of modernity³⁷ to Michel Foucault's discussion on power, the concept of heterotopias and prisons, etc.³⁸ To delve deeper into this question from the scale of housing, here Oost III is examined.

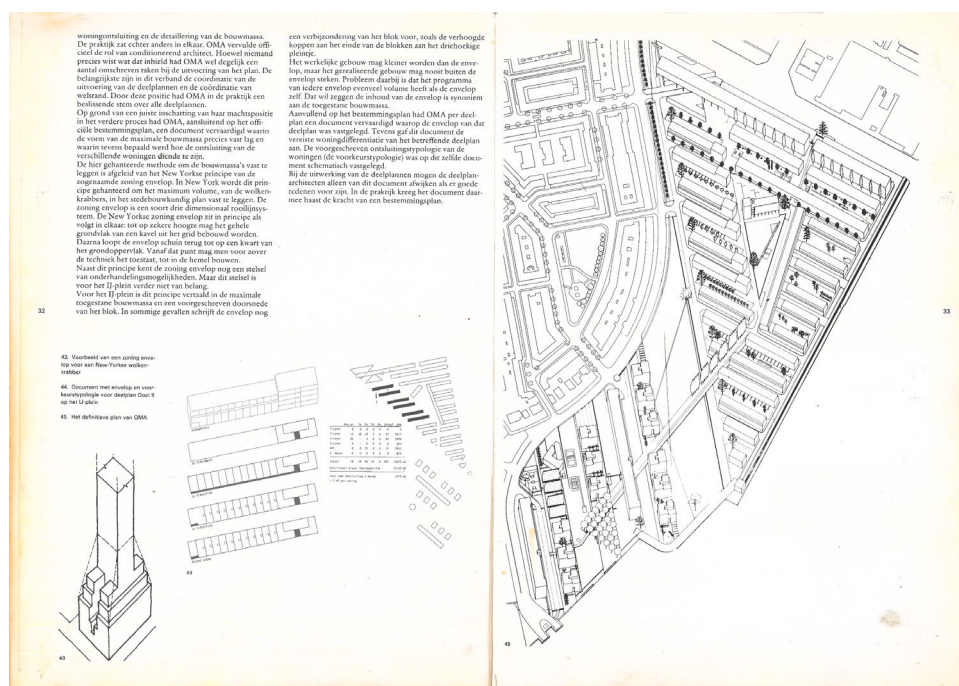


Fig. 2 Some pages of the Bernard Leupen's book about IJ-plein. On the left page, the definitive urban plan by OMA. *IJ-plein Amsterdam Een speurtocht naar nieuwe compositorische middelen.* Rem Koolhaas / OMA. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1989.

4. The Oost III

The parts of the urban plan assigned to Koolhaas/OMA were two: the *Deelplan Oost III* (Subplan East III), and *Openbare basisschool* (Public primary school).³⁹ Both are located in unique parts of the plan, occupying two of the vertices of the eastern triangle: the Oost III volumes are located at the northeastern end, while the Basisschool volumes are located at the western corner. In these parts, the programmatic bands subdividing the triangle reach their maximum and minimum extent.

The Oost III sub-plan has a strategic position in the plan, especially concerning the adjacent areas. The residential programme of Oost III is contained in two bands: the higher and longer volume, situated along Motorkanaal, forms the eastern front of the intervention, and the shorter and lower one forms, together with the other, an inner street. In addition, Oost III includes a non-residential programme on the ground floor.

Due to the position of the Oost III on the plan boundary and its proximity to the neighbouring residential neighbourhood, these other programmes are an attraction not only for the residents but for all the inhabitants of the area.

Moreover, the Oost III opens at the intersection between the two main access roads to the area: the Meeuwenlaan, which delimits the entire northern side of the plan, and the Havikslaan, whose axis extends and crosses the long residential volume, where it connects with Motorwal. To resolve this

³⁷ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

³⁸ Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison*, Collection Traduire, écrire, lire 225 (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).

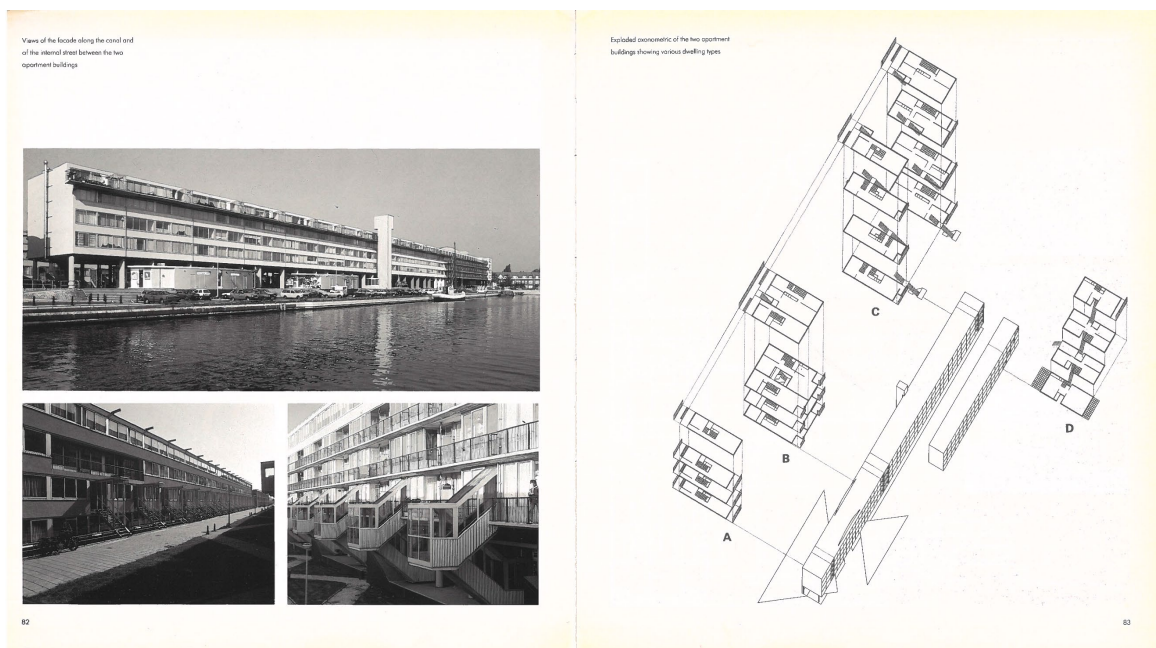
³⁹ In addition to Koolhaas/OMA, the Dutch architects who developed the projects for the various buildings in the plan were Kees de Kat at Dick Peek, Hein van Meer, Architectengroep '69 (Peter Snel, Rob Poel), Hein de Haan, Peters en Boogers, Sier van Rhijn, and Rob Budding at Ronald Wilken.

passage under the block, it has two arched metal beams in the roof to eliminate the pillars in this ground floor area, which, as Gargiani points out, recalls how Leonidov moved some elements of the structure out of the building. It would be the first of a series of structural solutions invented by OMA in order to reduce the number of supports on the ground floor.⁴⁰

This project has four clients: housing, the *Dienst Volkshuisvesting* (Department of Public Housing),⁴¹ the community centre, the *Dienst Welzijn* (Department of Social Welfare), the supermarket, *Dirk van den Broek*, and the smaller shops *Grondbedrijf*.

In this connection, it is interesting to note something that Dirk Jan Postel commented on in his article "Work in progress, OMA housing in IJ-plein", published in *Architect* in June 1988, when the construction of the Oost III was nearing completion. The urban development plan specified the dimensions, the principles of access and the differentiation of housing in each block, so the Oost III scheme was not very popular with the housing associations. As Postel explains, this was partly because in the Oost III Sub-plan, "the differentiation was determined by what remained elsewhere on IJ-plein, resulting in a relatively large number of HAT-units".⁴² Finally, as no housing association was interested, the *Dienst Volkshuisvesting* took the initiative and became the client for the Oost III housing blocks. As Leupen explains in his book, this "unusual" residential project could be realised thanks to several factors: "A rare combination of people, willpower and certainly money created additional opportunities. The extra funding included subsidies for one- and two-person and mentally handicapped housing, dual land use (residential and commercial), and dual functions (a water barrier)."^{43 44}

For all these reasons, it can be said that the Oost III sub-plan has the most significant "congestion" of the programme in the entire plan.



⁴⁰ Gargiani, 'Works for Rotterdam, Berlin, Amsterdam and Scheveningen, 1980'.

⁴¹ Originally, since its foundation in 1915, it was called *Gemeentelijke Woningdienst Amsterdam* (Municipal Housing Department), until it was changed to *Gemeentelijke Woningdienst Amsterdam* in 1965.

⁴² Postel, 'Werk in uitvoering, Woningbouw van OMA op het IJ-plein'.

⁴³ Bernard Leupen, 'De gebouwen', in *IJ-plein Amsterdam Een speurtocht naar nieuwe compositorische middelen. Rem Koolhaas / OMA* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1989), 51–64 'Daarbij moet echter worden aangetekend dat hier niet om een regulier project gaat. Een zeldzame combinatie aan mensen, wilskracht maar zeker ook aan geld heeft extra mogelijkheden geschapen. Dat geldt voor het hele IJ-plein maar zeker voor Oost III.'

⁴⁴ "Daarbij moet echter worden aangetekend dat hier niet om een regulier project gaat. Een zeldzame combinatie aan mensen, wilskracht maar zeker ook aan geld heeft extra mogelijkheden geschapen. Dat geldt voor het hele IJ-plein maar zeker voor Oost III."

Fig. 3 On the left page, views of the façade along the canal and of the internal street between the two apartment buildings. On the right page, an exploded axonometric of the two residential buildings showing various dwelling types. Lucan, J. *OMA/Rem Koolhaas. Architecture 1970-1990*, 76-85. New York, N.Y.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991.

5. The large slab (a): the individualisation of living

The long residential block (a) is 218 metres long and 15 metres wide, has four floors and is built on supports, leaving the ground floor free. This block is made up of three distinct parts, each of which is made up of a grouping of housing types with different access systems.

The non-residential programme is located totally or partially underneath the block in two triangular and two elliptical volumes. It consists of a supermarket, a community centre with a nursery, and two commercial premises. These triangular and oval volumes penetrate the rectangular volume to form a composition with a suprematist tone, as Gargiani points out, as in the "Diploma Unit 9" projects at the *Architectural Association*.⁴⁵ In addition, the entire long block project is built on a raised podium which contains the storage areas and serves as a barrier against flooding.

This project has been related to other paradigmatic projects. For example, according to Gargiani, with Mies van de Rohe's building in the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, because of the preeminent relationship between this block and the rest of the plan. Leupen, on the other hand, related it to Le Corbusier's Unités, or Ginzburg's Narkomfin, pointing out that the main difference is that while the former are determined by an ideology of collectivity, in the Oost III "the aggregation of individual activities, and the 'culture of congestion' is decisive".⁴⁶

Here we elaborate on how the design shows that conception.

The residential block (a) has a total of 168 dwellings which can be mainly classified into three types, with the North head five. There are 64 HAT units, 52 one-bedroom dwellings (units per sector and type: 28 SS-T1, 20 SC-T1, 4 SN-C1); and 52 two-bedroom dwellings (28 SS-T2, 20 SC-T2, 4 SN-C2). The width of these types is, HAT 4 m, T1 and T2 are 4.6 and 6.75 m, respectively.⁴⁷

The North sector is made up of 64 HAT units, 16 on each floor. In addition, at the North end, there are 8 one and two-bedroom dwellings, 2 per floor, one of each type (C1, C2).

The Central sector is made up of 40 dwellings, 10 on each floor. These dwellings have one and two bedrooms, 20 of each type (T1, T2).

The South sector consists of 56 dwellings, 14 on each floor. These are also one- and two-bedroom dwellings, 28 of each type.

It is evident that in this block (a), small dwellings (especially the HAT) have a significant majority presence, 116 one-bedroom and 52 two-bedroom dwellings.

⁴⁵ Gargiani, 'Works for Rotterdam, Berlin, Amsterdam and Scheveningen, 1980'.

⁴⁶ Leupen, 'De gebouwen'.

⁴⁷ The three Sectors of the large block are named South, Centre, and North. The three types are HAT, T1, T2, and those of the head North of the block, C1, C2.

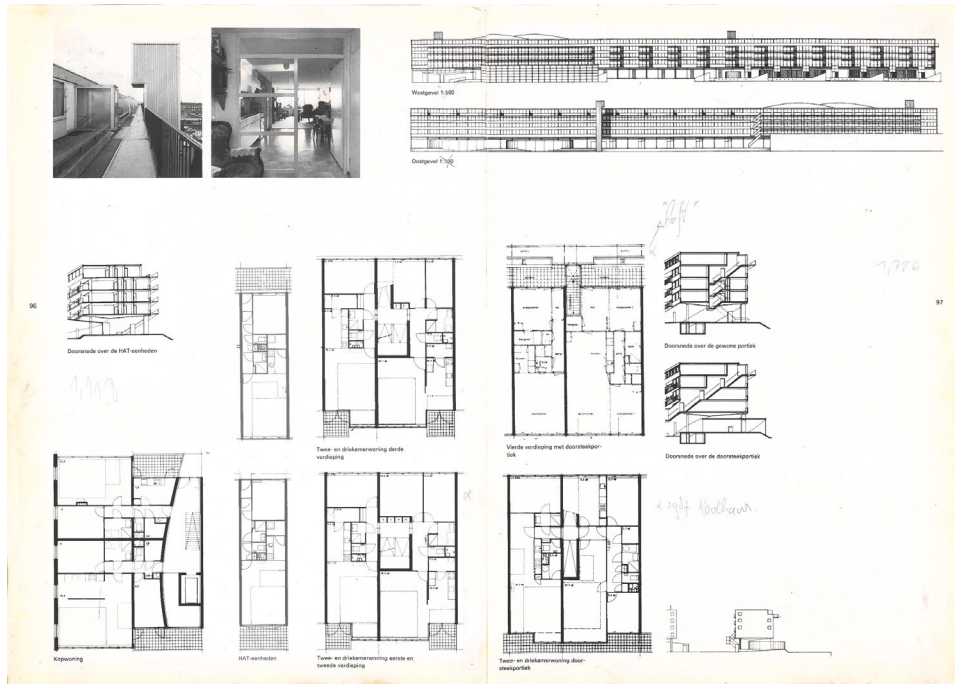


Fig. 4: Plans of the Oost III large block. See the floor plans of the different types, from left to right: the dwellings on the head of the North sector (C1, C2), the HAT units, and the dwellings from the Central and South sectors (T1, T2); the sections show the three access systems. Leupen, B. *IJ-plein Amsterdam*. Rem Koolhaas / OMA. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1989.

Another key issue in this block (a) is the systems of access to the dwellings and the circulation spaces. These access systems are different in each of the three sectors that make up the block, and how they determine the grouping or subdivision of dwellings within each sector is significant.

In the North sector, the grouping of dwellings is determined by the floor plan, with four galleries on the Northeast façade giving access to the HAT units. The vertical communication nucleus that gives access to the galleries is located at the head of the building, and it has a lift and a staircase. Unlike the others, the gallery on the fourth floor is the length of the entire block.

In the Centre sector, it is subdivided into five groups per floor, and it is the stairs that give access and vertically group 8 dwellings, two per floor, with one and two rooms. The stairs on the first three floors are two flights and are located in the centre, and on the fourth floor, there is a single flight that reaches the upper gallery.

In the southern sector, it is subdivided into seven groups per floor; as in the central sector, each one gives access to and groups vertically 8 dwellings. However, here the staircases cross the block transversally so that the landings are displaced, and each floor is entered at a different point.

Significant transparency is evident in the access systems to the flats, especially the galleries and crossways.

A lift in front of the central part of the Northeast façade connects the ground floor and the upper gallery. These two elements of communication, vertical and horizontal, show that paradoxically the three housing sectors are connected through the gallery on the fourth floor, even if each has its different access system. As Gargiani pointed out, a "street in the sky" such as the one in the Boompjes project.⁴⁸

It can be said that, through this gallery, this block has many entrances and exits.

The floors of the three main types of dwelling run from façade to façade, Northeast to Southwest, and are organised around the service core, which is located in the central area and contains the kitchen, laundry room, bathroom and toilet.⁴⁹ The HAT and T1 dwellings have their only room next to the access

⁴⁸ Gargiani, 'Works for Rotterdam, Berlin, Amsterdam and Scheveningen, 1980'.

⁴⁹ The kitchen is separated from the nucleus on the two intermediate floors of the SS-T2 dwellings. Also, it is worth mentioning that the two dwelling types at the Northern end of the block (SN-C1, SN-C2) are different from the three main types analysed here.

in the Northeast part of the nucleus and the living room in the Southwest; the T2 dwellings have the second room in the southwestern part. The three types on the first three floors have terraces on the Southwest side, and those on the fourth floor have them on the Northeast and are attached to the access gallery.

The interior of the HAT unit is organised like the other main types around the service core. However, the position of the access reduces the width of the façade and gives the corridor a considerable length. In addition, a draught-proof space at the beginning of this corridor, at the entrance, further subdivides a limited space and increases the already large number of doors. The bedroom and the living room are connected through this corridor. Half of the service core opens onto the corridor, the toilet and the bathroom, the other half onto the living room, the kitchen is open, and the laundry room is closed behind it.

According to Leupen, these housing types are a mixture of the open-plan floor plan concept developed by the *Gemeentelijke Dienst Volkshuisvesting* in Amsterdam and the New York-derived loft.⁵⁰

As Leupen explains, the loft had already been the source of inspiration in other housing projects, such as the *Boompjes* project in Rotterdam (1980-81). However, in Oost III, the stricter regulations for social housing and the requirements imposed by the subsidy provider led to a fragmentation of the interior space.

The HAT unit, being the smallest dwelling in the project, seems to be the more evident to explore its conception, assuming that it can more clearly show its possibilities and limitations.

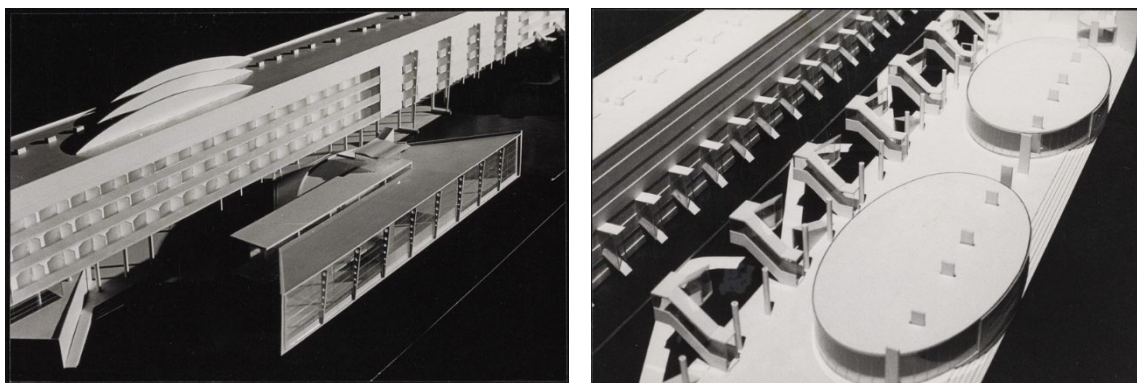


Fig.5 *Deelplan Oost III* (a) The model's photo shows the large block's northern sector, where the HAT units are located. Below them, the supermarket can be seen on the left, and the social centre is on the right, between them the road that crosses the block on the ground floor; (b) This other model photo shows the ground floor of the southern sector of the large block, the series of porches giving access to these dwellings are in the centre, and the commercial volumes are on the right. Archives: IJ-plein, Amsterdam (1980-1988). *Deelplan Oost III, woningen en winkels*. Maquettes. Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/110631716/f41.1a and f41.2a

6. The short slab (b): from individual to communal living

The short block (b) has a total of 34 dwellings, which can be classified into four types. The two main housing types are for large families, the third is for the mentally disabled, and the fourth, the exception, is a HAT unit. The organisation and design of these dwellings are based on a stacking system with a single access typology. In total, more than 50 staircases run longitudinally through the four floors of the block.

All the entrances to the dwellings are located on the first floor. They are organized through a series of porches containing stairs, 17 in total, which bridge the difference in height from the street level, as the ground floor is sunken halfway down. Each of these porches gives access to two duplex dwellings, except for the last one, the one at the North end, which gives access to the collective dwelling, and the one at the South end, which also gives access to the HAT dwelling.

⁵⁰ Leupen, 'De gebouwen'.

These porches with stairs, as Gargiani points out, are like those designed by Koolhaas and Zenghelis for their housing project on Welfare Island, now Roosevelt Island (1974-75), which create an effect similar to the brownstones lined streets of New York, the traditional 'town-houses' once built in local stone, built with new materials.⁵¹

The two main house types are both four-bedroom duplexes. The first (t1), of which there are 17 units, has the kitchen and living room on the ground floor and the bedrooms on the first floor; and the second (t2), of which there are 15 units, has the bedrooms on the first floor and the kitchen and living room on the third floor. According to Leupen, this type of housing is derived from the single-family row houses of the 'Klein Driene' district by Van den Broek and Bakema (1956-58). In particular, Leupen refers to type D since it "combines concise access with an additional spatial experience"⁵².

The collective housing for the mentally disabled spans the four floors at the north end of the block, growing on each floor through the diagonal stacking system. It has 21 rooms and communal services (kitchen, living room and dining room). The bathrooms and toilets are located in a strip parallel to the stairs. As Leupen has already pointed out, this collective dwelling looks like the materialisation of the E-1 type developed by the Standardisation Department in Stroykom RSFSR (1928-29), the programme of shared services and individual rooms, and the stairs.

Finally, the duplex stacking system of the central part is completed at the south end by a HAT dwelling located on the first floor and a storeroom located on the ground floor.

In addition, all dwellings have an outdoor space. The two duplex types have it on the west façade, the first (t1) on the ground floor, and the second (t2) on the top floor. Although divided, the terrace on the top floor is continuous throughout the block. The collective dwelling has the communal areas facing this terrace, on the top floor to the west, but here it is covered and also extends on the North façade as a singular balcony and on the first floor to the East. The HAT flat has a balcony on the south façade, which shows its singularity, as does the one on the North.

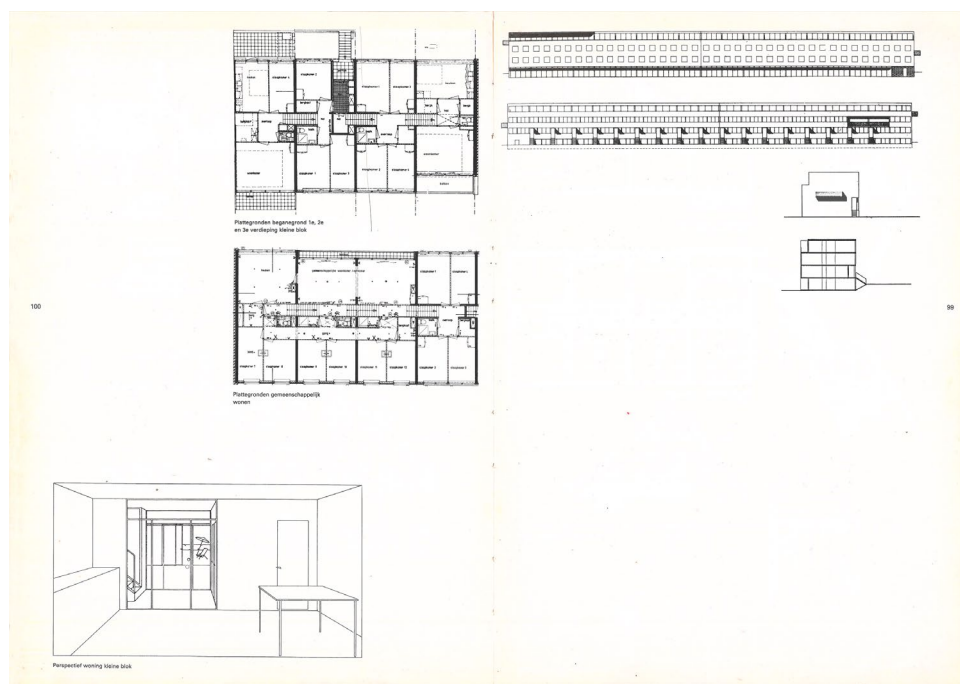


Fig. 6 Plans of the Oost III short block. On the left page, the floor plans of the communal living, and the floor plans of the maisonnettes, and an interior perspective. On the right page, the façades. *IJ-plein Amsterdam. Rem Koolhaas / OMA*. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 010, 1989.

7. Domesticity for the “unexpected”

⁵¹ Gargiani, 'Works for Rotterdam, Berlin, Amsterdam and Scheveningen, 1980'.

⁵² Leupen, 'De gebouwen'.

The Oost III project was heavily criticised even before it was completed. As mentioned in "3. IJ-plein", in the mid-1980s, Koolhaas/OMA went through a "crisis" because the design and concept had become "outdated". Hence, as mentioned in the "1. Introduction", it was neglected, both by Koolhaas himself and OMA, as well as by authors specialising in the author's work, until it has recently been "recovered". From the review of the reception of the project then, some interesting reflections on its architectural qualities emerge and also provoke others not contemplated at the time.

To show the kind of criticism that Oost III received, for example, Vreeze, in *Archis* magazine, stated, - showing the plans of various types of housing such as the T2-SS in block (a), in which the transverse staircase makes the position of the access different on each floor, "quality, in all its possible variants, must be rethought", while making a statement in favour of the political protection of public housing under the *Woningwet* (Housing Law) of 1901.⁵³ Postel, in another article published in *de Architect* with a more extensive study and with precise arguments, responded to Vreeze's criticism that for him, although "everyone can see" that the access on some floors "is not ideal", "the transparent staircase more than makes up for it".⁵⁴

Although it can be said that the project has not attracted any further criticism or interest until recently, it seems no coincidence that, in the meantime, it has appeared in several books on collective housing.

Friederike Schneider in her book *Floor Plan Atlas: Housing* (1997), states "What is new here is less the very simple structure of the apartments and maisonettes (installation core and storage rooms inside, rooms on both sides) than the access structure, which offers a new interpretation of the austerity of the modernist row (dwellings) through zigzag stairways, stairway cascades in longitudinal (centre of house) and transverse directions, and a gallery placed at an interval from the building".⁵⁵ Also, Hellmuth Sting states on his introduction to Schneider's *Atlas*, entitled "The Significance of Access", that this project provided an "unconventional type of access". As Stings explains, the case of the Koolhaas' IJ Plein dwellings is based in the "dual-path system", which is based on an "access principle" which combines the characteristics of both horizontal and vertical access units. That's why, according to Sting - "as truly expensive as it was" - the access "significantly enhanced the quality of living afforded by these buildings".⁵⁶

Leupen, too, included the Oost III project in *Housing Design: A Manual* (2011), however, not only highlighting the interest of its accesses but also the various types of housing that comprise it.⁵⁷

Two years before Koolhaas/OMA began work on the IJ-plein urban plan, *Delirious New York* (1978) was published.⁵⁸ This book was the culmination of a process of historical research on the American metropolis that Koolhaas had carried out throughout the 1970s and laid the theoretical foundations for his career as a project architect.

The construction of the Oost III began in 1986 and was completed in 1988, by the time it was finished, almost ten years had passed since the publication of *Delirious NY*. How did his theoretical discourse translate into this project for 100% social housing?

As Jacques Lucan said in an interview he did to Koolhaas on the occasion of the publication of IJ-plein in *AMC*, IJ-plein reflects "in a very singular way" Koolhaas' concerns at the time about the "culture of congestion", "jusque même dans les typologies des logements".⁵⁹

⁵³ Vreeze, 'Het Kwaliteitsbegrip in de Volkshuisvesting (3). Pleidooi Voor Een Zorgvuldige Beheersing van Kwaliteit En Kosten', 49.

⁵⁴ Postel, 'Werk in uitvoering, Woningbouw van OMA op het IJ-plein'.

⁵⁵ Friederike Schneider, 'Multi-Story Housing [1.6 Freestanding Structures: Rem Koolhaas: IJ Plein, Amsterdam]', in *Floor Plan Atlas: Housing* (Basel; Berlin; Boston: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1997), 98–99.

⁵⁶ Hellmuth von Sting, 'The Significance of Access', in *Floor Plan Atlas: Housing*, by Friederike Schneider (Basel; Berlin; Boston: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1997), XIV–XXIII.

⁵⁷ Bernard Leupen and Harald Mooij, 'OMA, IJ Plein Oost III (Amsterdam-Noord), in "Residential Building: Dwelling Access"', in *Housing Design: A Manual* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2011), 182–83.

⁵⁸ Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

⁵⁹ Rem Koolhaas and Jacques Lucan, 'Projet Pour Amsterdam-Nord. Entretien', *AMC, Architecture Mouvement Continuité*, no. 6 (Décembre 1984): 16–21.

As shown at the beginning of this section, the project's reception was critical of some of the "types" of housing, while the "access systems" to the dwellings were more praised. It can be said that because it is "social housing," evaluations seem more critical or benevolent depending on which aspects.

Over the last decades, several authors have shown how the philosopher Michel Foucault's ideas on power influenced Koolhaas's theoretical discourse and to what extent his projects explicitly display these ideas.

One of the most significant contributions is the one by Hilde Heynen and Lieven De Cauter, in "The Exodus Machine". They study the genesis, content and context of the Koolhaas project *Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture* (1972), carried out in his training phase as an architect at the AA School in London. According to them, the reference to the "voluntary prisoners" takes one back to the discourse on power by Foucault.⁶⁰

Another significant contribution is that of Hans van Dijk, published in the same year as *Delirious New York*, in the section titled "het grid als manifest", Van Dijk associates the reference Koolhaas makes to "voluntary prisoners" with Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon principle.⁶¹ This is an obvious connection, given that for Foucault, the Panopticon prison was the paradigmatic example of what he called the "disciplinary society".⁶²

From this theoretical perspective, the Oost III sub-plan, and especially the domesticity of its dwellings, problematises many questions about the conditions of contemporary dwellings.

This issue is all the more evident if, as this analysis shows, two different visions of domesticity as HAT units and collective housing for the disabled are set against each other.

Nevertheless, in this plan, and by extension throughout the plan, the HAT units are at the point of greatest "congestion", giving them greater prominence, which is anticipatory.

This contrast reflects more clearly the possibilities and limitations of the smaller unit,

What activities can be developed in a HAT unit not determined in its conception?

Considering the "unexpected" use of the dwellings in the extraordinary situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, one can better appreciate their conception, and to what extent the Oost III sub-plan offered a contemporary reinterpretation of the modern tradition, and from there one can begin to question the assessment that banished it, according to which "the design and concept had become outdated".

8. Conclusion

This article has tried to show how the Koolhaas/OMA project for the Oost III sub-plan of IJ-plein offers a contemporary reinterpretation of the tradition of modern residential architecture. The hypothesis of this article builds on a more extensive investigation that questions the boundaries between what is considered dwellings and prisons, so it explores such distinction. The theoretical framework is based on the importance of Michel Foucault's discourse on power in the 1970s, and the relationship it has with Koolhaas' theoretical discourse and his early projects. This article has offered an analysis of the Oost III from this perspective, showing that it reflects in a very unique way Koolhaas's research on 'life in the metropolis' and the 'culture of congestion' presented in *Delirious New York* (1978). In this analysis, the focus has been on the types of housing that make up the residential blocks of the Oost III, their design, and their access systems. In this analysis, the singularity of the HAT units has been shown regarding the very different housing types, ranging from one-person dwellings to collective dwellings for about twenty people. The sub-plan contains a very significant number of HAT units, and they are also located in the most "congested" area of the whole plan, in the Northern sector of the long block. The article shows that the HAT unit synthesises the paradoxes of the domesticity of housing architecture, its possibilities and limitations, in ordinary and extraordinary "unexpected" situations, such as, for example, the recent imprisonment during a pandemic. The domesticity of the HAT unit within the context of this project

⁶⁰ Hilde Heynen and Lieven De Cauter, 'The Exodus Machine', in *Exit Utopia. Architectural Provocations 1956-76*, by Martin Van Schaik and Otakar Máčel (Munich; London: Prestel, 2004), 263–76.

⁶¹ Hans Van Dijk, 'Rem Koolhaas: De Reïncarnatie van de Moderne Architectuur', *Wonen-TA/BK*, no. 11 (1978): 7–16.

⁶² Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*.

problematizes many questions of contemporary living conditions. Ultimately, one should wonder, what activities not determined in its conception can be developed in a HAT unit?

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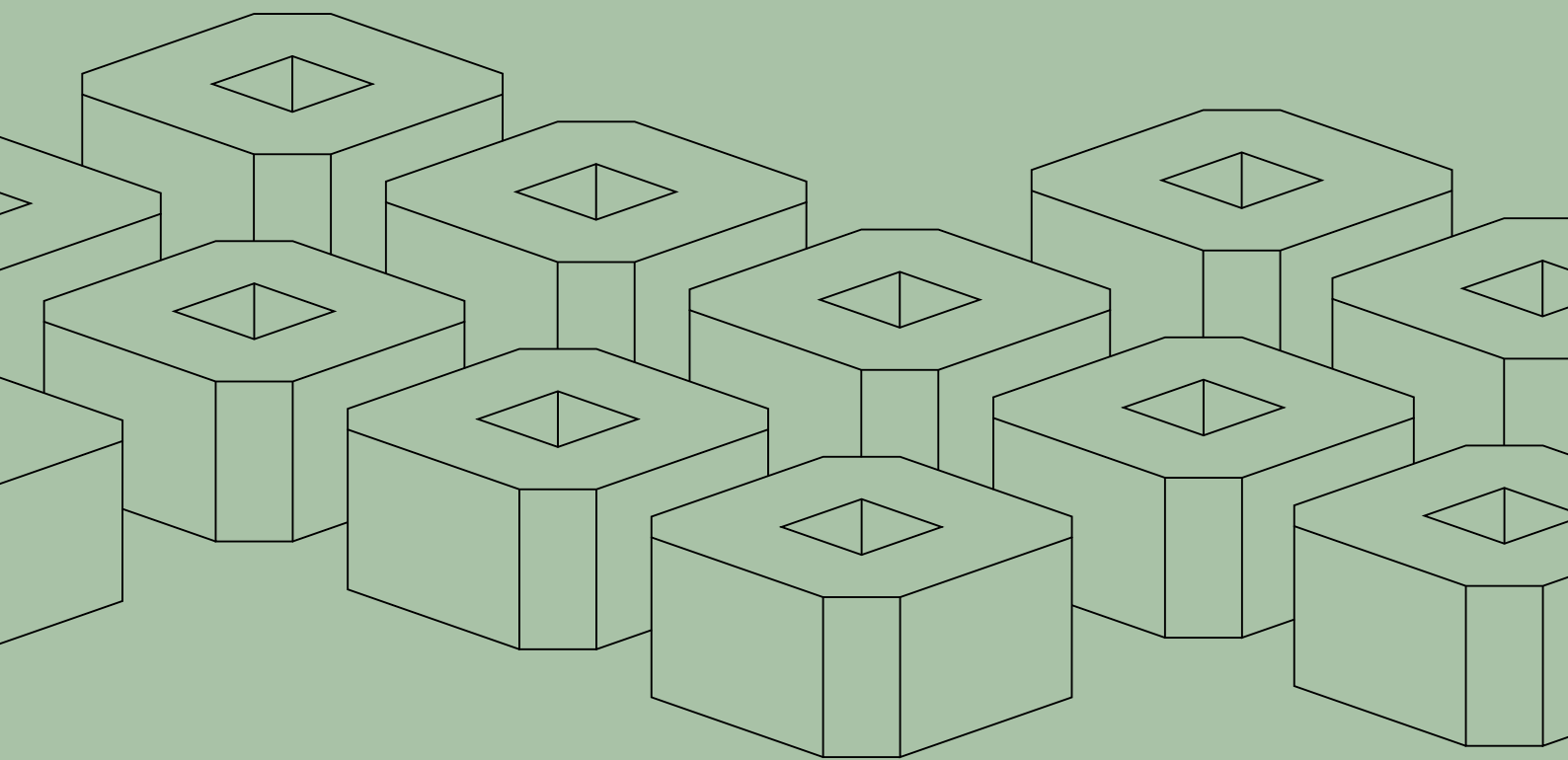
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