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Uncollected Built Memories

Filipa van der Laan

April 2023

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Uncollected Built Memories

Spatial conditions for guest workers in the Netherlands
(1940s - 1990s)

AR2A011 Architectural History Thesis
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Abstract

This thesis contributes to shedding light on the significance of investigating and archiving the housing conditions of guest workers after the Second World War in the Netherlands from the 1940s to the 1990s. It is a topic that has not been sufficiently addressed in architectural and urban studies. The economic boom after the Second World War resulted in a lot of job vacancies, as there were too many jobs for the population at that time. As a result, employers went to look for workers elsewhere. It caused a large influx of migration in the Netherlands, which was mainly motivated by the aspect of temporality, as these guest workers received contracts for two years. The guest workers were housed into two categories, the 'casa' housing, and the large-scale collective housing. Both typologies made sure that the guest workers were under strict supervision and isolated in their social and physical environment. Due to the temporality aspect, the housing was poorly built and inflexible for possible future needs of guest workers. The poor living conditions of guest workers led to the formation of independent organisations, such as the Aktiekomitee Pro Gastarbeiders, which was founded in 1969. This organisation defended the housing rights of guest workers. However, it lost its support and subsidies at the beginning of the 1990s. As a result, it led to a weaker position for migrants in society. Sadly, today's migrants do not have independent organisations to speak out about their problems. The research used to support this argument is done through archival research gathered from the Gelders Archief and Stadsarchief Rotterdam, as well as investigating historical newspapers. The absence of guest workers in the historical narrative of post-war housing in the Netherlands is indicative of a larger issue surrounding housing for current migrants. Collecting the historical documentation of the typology of temporary housing for guest workers is fundamental to understanding the social history of migration in the Netherlands.

Keywords

Guest workers, housing, The Netherlands, migrants, Aktiekomitee Pro Gastarbeiders, Nelly Soetens, Casa d'Italia, Kamp Waalhaven

Introduction

“Scabies in Venlo: Indescribable deplorable state in pension houses for guest workers,” was the title of an article published in the *Limburgsch Dagblad* in 1969.¹ Similarly, in 2020, the Dutch newspaper NRC published an article titled “They [referring to migrant workers] live with eleven people in one house and the municipality has no insight into it.”² Astonishingly, these articles are almost 50 years apart. Yet, both address the bad living conditions in which guest workers and migrant workers had to live in the Netherlands.

Until the late 1950s, more people left the Netherlands than people who settled. Almost half a million people left for countries like Canada, Australia and the United States of America from 1946 to 1969.³ When the economic boom started after the Second World War, the existing workforce was not enough. In addition, the retirement age and working hours lowered.⁴ Moreover, married women were not allowed to be employed until 1956 when the law “legal incapacity” was abolished.⁵ As a result, companies decided together with the government to look for workers around the Mediterranean Sea, as there was high unemployment there. As a result, in 1949, the Netherlands had its first treaty with Italy for the recruitment of guest workers in the coal mines of Limburg. As many Dutch mine workers went to Germany, as they would receive a higher salary. In 1960, the Netherlands and Italy had a recruitment agreement for all sectors, which became a model for all future recruitment of labour. After the Italians, other guest workers from different countries came, such as Spanish, Greek, Portuguese, Turks, and Moroccans.⁶ Many of these guest workers had to live in bad conditions, some were living in a room filled with twelve beds and without heating.⁷ Consequently, organisations arose to take action and help the guest workers with better work and living conditions. This was the case of the *Aktiekomitee Pro Gastarbeiders* (Action Committee Pro Guest Workers), referred to as AKPG. It was active in Rotterdam and was led by Nelly Soetens from 1969 until 1992. AKPG focused on providing better housing and working conditions, as well as integration into the Dutch culture, and teaching the Dutch language to guest workers and their respective families.⁸

The issue of the housing conditions of the guest workers in the period after the Second World War in the Netherlands has been insufficiently discussed in architectural and urban studies. For the first time being, only one dissertation has been found concerning urban studies: “Urbanism and social change: learning from forgotten histories of city making,” written by Els Vervloesem in 2019.⁹ On the other hand, the social history of the guest workers has been largely documented. Professor of Global Labour and Migration History, Leo Lucassen, has extensively written about this issue, including *The Encyclopedia of European Migration and Minorities and Vijf Eeuwen Migratie: een verhaal van winnaars en verliezers* (Five Centuries of Migration: a story of winners and losers).¹⁰ In addition, the work of Marlou Schrover has great significance in documenting the conditions the guest workers had to live in. Nevertheless, neither of these examples writes about the exact physical conditions the guest worker had to live in. Not once has a floor plan been shown.

¹ Unless indicated, all quotes from Dutch are translated by the author. “Schurft in Venlo: Onbeschrijfelijke wantoestanden in pensions voor gastarbeiders,” *Limburgsch dagblad*, November 19, 1969, 21. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: March 15, 2023)

² Bram Endedijk, Sam de Voogt and Mark Middel, “Ze wonen met elf man in één huis en de gemeente heeft er geen zicht op,” NRC, November 18, 2020, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2020/11/18/onbewoond-nee-hier-zitten-arbeidsmigranten-a4020599>

³ Marlou Schrover, Marijke van Faassen, “Invisibility and selectivity. Introduction to the special issue on Dutch overseas migration in the nineteenth and twentieth century,” *The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 7, no.2 (June 2010): 18-19

⁴ Geertje van Os, *Ik kwam met een koffer van karton: Spanjaarden in Zuidoost-Brabant 1961-2006* (Alphen aan de Maas: Uitgeverij Veerhuis, 2006), 11.

⁵ Ivo Samkalden, Minister of Justice, “Vaststelling van Boek 1 van het nieuwe Burgerlijk Wetboek, met uitzondering van de titels 9, 10 en 12”, *Zitting 1956-1957-3767*, Nota van wijzingen, no. 6. Den Haag, 1956.

⁶ Roel P.W. Jennissen, “De instroom van buitenlandse arbeiders en de migratiegeschiedenis van Nederland na 1945” *Justiële verkenningen* 39, no. 6 (October 2013): 15

⁷ Nelly Soetens, *Akpg aktiekomitee pro gastarbeiders* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij Douane, 2012), 17-18

⁸ Soetens, *Akpg aktiekomitee pro gastarbeiders*, 5

⁹ Els Vervloesem, “Stedenbouw en sociale verandering: leren van vergeten geschiedenissen van stad maken” (PhD diss., Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, 2019)

¹⁰ “Leo Lucassen,” Universiteit Leiden, accessed March 1, 2023, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/staffmembers/leo-lucassen#tab-1>

Therefore, this thesis focuses on the housing situation of guest workers from the late-1940s to the beginning of the 1990s in the Netherlands. The research covers the period from the first arrival of the guest worker until the last year that the AKPG was active, specifically focusing on how architecture was involved in the housing conditions of the guest workers. Firstly, explores the situation for the guest workers and related policies, such as the duration of stay and family reunification. The second chapter presents an analysis of two housing typologies: the “casa” and the large-scale collective housing typology. Finally, the third chapter investigates the role of activist organisations and their role in voicing the poor living conditions of guest workers.

To answer these questions, this architectural thesis gathers primary and secondary sources of information. Primary sources used in this thesis are archival materials from the Stadsarchief Rotterdam, such as pictures, newspaper articles, and letters. They are mainly used for documenting the principal findings included in chapters two and three. Concerning the secondary sources, the primary sources form the base of information, and the secondary sources clarify the context. The works written by Lucassen and Vervloesem contribute to shedding light on the living situation of guest workers. Whereas Vervloesem’s dissertation focuses on the guest workers in Rotterdam, and where the first group of Spanish workers were housed. Lucassen positions the role of the guest worker in the broader context of migration in the Netherlands through history. In addition, the book *AKPG Aktie Komitee Pro Gastarbeiders* is written by Nelly Soetens, and it elaborates on her experience of seeing the poor living situation of the guest workers and how she started the AKPG organisation. Furthermore, Soetens taught Dutch to migrants, and she actively promoted learning the Dutch language as a way to integrate to Dutch society. She wrote multiple books, such as *ABC cursus voor volwassenen*. It was the first universal book to teach illiterate adults, no matter their background.

Those sources contribute to documenting the experiences of guest workers, mainly through newspaper articles and documentation of the AKPG, as well as interviews from secondary sources. However, all information that is preserved in the name of the archive was provided by the employer. There was no archive to be found from the guest workers themselves. Thus, it would be interesting for further studies to focus on housing for guest workers per city, and to find and interview guest workers from different nationalities.

The housing conditions of guest workers in the Netherlands are still a contemporary problem. However, architects are rarely in the discussion. Guest workers and their lack of (housing) rights remain invisible in architectural and urban studies, even though they are visibly a big part of the workforce that makes academia possible. Understanding the current situation requires critical knowledge from the past, and it is of great importance when talking about post-war housing that these stories are not forgotten.

Chapter 1

Contextual history of a guest worker in the Netherlands from the 1950s to 1980s

After the Second World War, the Netherlands experienced a lack of workforce in factories and mines. The migration dynamics in the Netherlands, as well as in the rest of Europe were caused by three specific phenomena, following researchers Jennissen, van der Gaag and van Wissen:

Three specific phenomena largely affected international migration patterns in Europe in the second half of the 20th century. Labour shortages in Northern and Western Europe, European decolonisation, and the rise and subsequent collapse of the communist bloc in Central and Eastern Europe all had significant impacts.¹¹

The post-war economic growth was not only occurring in the Netherlands but in most of Northern and Western Europe from the 1950s until the economic recession of 1973-1974. The Netherlands struggled with the reconstruction in the 1950s by combating the housing shortage and promoting industrial development. Moreover, 100.000 houses were destroyed during the Second World War. Couples were waiting to get married, as they were not allowed to live together if they were not wedded. Consequently, a baby boom was expected. Around 300.000 people moved to the Netherlands from the former Dutch Indies, which is Indonesia today.¹² Housing became the key social and political issue, and the shortage was the most important issue in Dutch elections for decades after the war.¹³ With 10 million people, the Netherlands was considered already “te vol” (too full). The first public notion which mentioned that the Netherlands was “too full” was by former queen Juliana in her queen’s speech in 1950, as she said: “Rapid population growth and the limited availability of land continue to demand vigorous promotion of emigration.”¹⁴ Hence, the support of the Dutch government to finance and encourage the emigration of 400.000 Dutch people to go to countries like Australia or Canada.¹⁵ Labour shortages were dominant in industries such as mining, steel industry, shipbuilding, and the textile industry after the Second World War, and especially mining and the steel industry were key sectors to the post-war reconstruction. Employers found it difficult to employ Dutch people to work in their factories because Dutch families did not want to move to regions with labour shortages, as there were no family houses.¹⁶ Consequently, it led to a high demand for workers which could not be fulfilled by the Dutch labour force.¹⁷

Initially, in the late 1940s companies were recruiting male workers in Mediterranean countries, as there was high unemployment there.¹⁸ At first, the recruitment of foreign migrant workers was poorly regulated by the government. Employers would travel to the South of Europe to attract workers. They would go by bus with a chauffeur and a doctor to pass by many villages. In addition, they would look for unemployed men that were used to work in tough conditions. If the men passed the health check, the employer could start the process of bringing them to the Netherlands.¹⁹ It is important to note that the guest worker recruitment program ran from the late 1940s until the mid-

¹¹ Roel Jennissen, Nicole van der Gaag, Leo van Wissen, “Searching for similar international migration trends across countries in Europe,” *Genus* 62, no. 2 (April-June 2006): 37.

¹² Marlou Schrover, “Urban Migration Histories,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the Governance of Migration and Diversity in Cities*, ed. Tiziana Caponio, Peter Scholten, Ricard Zapata-Barrero (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 23.

¹³ Janneke Jansen, “Bepaalde huisvesting. Een geschiedenis van opvang en huisvesting van immigranten in Nederland, 1945-1995” (PhD diss., Universiteit Leiden, 2006), 65.

¹⁴ “Troonrede spreekt over de gevolgen van de internationale spanningen,” *Volkskrant*, September 19, 1950, Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 10, 2023).

¹⁵ Schrover, and van Faassen, “Invisibility and selectivity,” 18.

¹⁶ Schrover, “Urban Migration Histories,” 23.

¹⁷ Jennissen, van der Gaag, van Wissen, “Searching for similar international migration trends across countries in Europe,” 37.

¹⁸ Schrover, “Urban Migration Histories,” 24.

¹⁹ Nadia Bouras, “Het land van herkomst: perspectieven op verbondenheid met Marokko 1960-2010” (PhD diss., Universiteit Leiden, 2012), 41.

1970s. The first treaty of the Netherlands was with Italy concerning mining in 1949, and in 1960 for all sectors. It was followed by treaties with Spain (1961), Greece (1962), Portugal (1963), Turkey (1964) and Morocco (1969).²⁰ Curiously, the Dutch policymakers originally called the guest male worker “international commuters,” which emphasised the temporariness of the guest worker. It was related to the fact that Dutch trade unions opposed the recruitment in fear that the guest worker would not leave the country if there was an economic recession. Authorities would actively guarantee that these fears were heard and implemented, therefore, the restriction on family reunification, and the differentiation according to origin in housing policies emphasized the temporality of the migrant workers.²¹ The guest worker would receive a permit for two years and could be sent back if they were not needed. In addition, their contract could be extended. Nevertheless, recruitment was pricey and time-consuming, which resulted in nomination arrangements. As Bouras mentions:

This [referring to nomination arrangement] meant that employers could bring over relatives of employees they already employed. This often happened at the initiative of the employees, but it was also in the interest of the employers. This way they knew for sure that the new employees were reliable.²²

The guest worker migration after the Second World War was mostly working-class men, not married or left their families behind, and their migration was arranged by treaties between countries of origin and settlement.²³ Nonetheless, there was much spontaneous migration as people were attracted to job opportunities. The spontaneous guest workers would go to the police to ask for a residence permit, which they got under the condition that they had to pay 600 guilders as a deposit for their return trip if they ended up being unemployed. Spontaneous migration was attractive for the employer, as it could evade lengthy and expensive recruitment procedures, as well as avoid the responsibility to provide accommodation.²⁴

Employers had a particular interest to ensure that foreign workers remain employed as long as possible, as it took time and money to train the guest workers.²⁵ From 1961, several wives of guest workers followed them from their home countries to The Netherlands. The women wanted to work to earn money and to be close to their partners. At that time, most of the married women of the home country of the guest workers were in the Netherlands illegally, since wives were only allowed to arrive on a tourist visa. The Dutch government wanted to send these women back home, and the employers would even put pressure on the government against deportation. Hence, the interest of the employer was to make the Netherlands attractive to Spanish workers. The event that caused the commotion happened in 1962, as twenty Spanish wives of guest workers were going to be deported. They were working illegally in the city of Utrecht, and they had arrived with a tourist visa. They would work to

²⁰ Schrover, “Urban Migration Histories,” 33.

²¹ Schrover, “Urban Migration Histories,” 24.

²² Bouras, quote is translated by the author, “Het land van herkomst: perspectieven op verbondenheid met Marokko 1960-2010”, 42.

²³ Schrover, “Urban Migration Histories,” 25.

²⁴ Bouras, “Het land van herkomst: perspectieven op verbondenheid met Marokko 1960-2010”, 43.

²⁵ Leo Lucassen and Jan Lucassen, *Vijf eeuwen migratie: een verhaal van winnaars en verliezers*, (Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Uitgeverij Atlas Contact, 2018), 132.

earn money to return to Spain, even when their visa was expired. As a result, a compromise came, the Spanish guest worker would have to work for at least two years before they could bring their wife to the Netherlands.²⁶ In November 1963 the law changed, and wives could come if their husbands had been working for a year. The women could stay indefinitely if they were childless. The effect was disastrous, as women would leave their children behind in Spain with their grandparents, close family, and in religious institutions. Some of these children were separated from their brothers and sisters. As Mrs Fernandes said:

We were not living with our children for four years ... I returned one summer, and my son said to me 'I do not love you, go back [to the Netherlands]' ... this was very difficult for me, and I feel very guilty ... we left for three months and in the end, we stayed in the Netherlands for thirty years.²⁷

The family reunification policy that is currently known in the Netherlands, was achieved by wives of Spanish guest workers. Nevertheless, after family reunification was allowed, the Justice Department became worried about the high amount of people who came unregulated to the Netherlands. In 1967, the government wanted to reduce the influx of spontaneous guest workers. It introduced the provisional residence permit (MVV) for citizens who were not part of the European Economic Community (EEC).²⁸ From that moment, spontaneous migrants were called "illegal migrants."²⁹ Moreover, the rights between an EEC and a non-EEC citizen were distinct. For example, Italian guest workers could bring their families to the Netherlands, but guest workers from Spain, Turkey, and Morocco not. It resulted in a decrease in labour migration. Consequently, people voiced against these regulations as they were deemed too discriminatory, and this is displayed in some newspapers:

There is even legal discrimination: in the *Vreemdelingenwet* [foreigner law] (articles 17, 18, 19 and 21) it is very clear that any foreigner who does not have a permanent residence permit may be obliged to report periodically. Furthermore, his freedom of movement can be restricted ... and any foreigner that is considered 'undesirable' may be deported across the border.³⁰

In 1975, the government decided to change this law. It gave the possibility for guest workers who seemed 'illegal' after 1967 to legalise themselves. In general, the constant change of rules made guest workers less likely to move out of the Netherlands, as they were not sure if they were allowed to come back. Consequently, guest workers became people with permanent resident permits, and they were allowed to bring their families to the Netherlands. In addition, the oil crisis of the 1980s caused a large amount of unemployment in the Netherlands. Many of the guest workers who were

²⁶ "Visum verstreken: Vrouwen van Spaanse gastarbeiders uitgewezen," *Het Parool*, September 25, 1962, 7, Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 11, 2023).

²⁷ Mr and Mrs Fernandes, "The Netherlands is full," interviewed in the television program *Andere Tijden*, January 14, 2003. Translated by the author from Spanish.

²⁸ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Vijf eeuwen migratie: een verhaal van winnaars en verliezers*, 140.

²⁹ Vervloesem, "Stedenbouw en sociale verandering: leren van vergeten geschiedenissen van stad maken", 244.

³⁰ Kees Wiese, "Nieuwe druiven der gramschap," *Nieuwsblad van het noorden*, November 5, 1969, 4. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 14, 2023).

working in factories got fired and received unemployment benefits. These guest workers were mostly of Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds. Three of the ten Moroccan guest workers who arrived in the Netherlands in 1964-1973 returned to Morocco. However, sixty-five per cent of Italian guest workers went back to Italy, and eighty per cent of the Spanish guest workers went back to Spain.³¹ Italy was part of the EEC, and the Italian guest workers benefited from the free movement of workers. In addition, many Spanish guest workers returned to Spain when democracy returned after the death of dictator Franco. However, Spain entered the EEC in 1986, and it can be stated that many Spanish guest workers stayed in the Netherlands for political reasons.

With the economic crisis of the 1980s and the relocation of companies - such as factories - to other countries, some of these factory workers in the Netherlands were no longer needed. The relationship between work and migration was diluted in favour of a new social policy based on categorizing the country's minorities into ethnic groups, who needed different services depending on the cultures they came from. Work, migration, and social rights have not returned to the country's political discussion since the elimination of the figure of the guest worker. Since then, migration has become a debate on the differences in rights depending on the migrant's country of origin, a vision that continues to this day.

³¹ Lucassen and Lucassen, *Vijf eeuwen migratie: een verhaal van winnaars en verliezers*, 167.

Chapter 2

The living conditions of guest workers seen through typologies

Casa system – Casa d'Italia, Arnhem

The housing provided by employees for the guest workers is categorised into two forms: the “casa” system and the large-scale collective housing. The casa system consisted of transforming a typical Dutch mansion into a pension. In addition, a couple, consisting of a married couple, would live in the pension to accommodate and feed the guest workers. Simultaneously, the couple had to keep an eye out to watch over the guest workers. Casa d'Italia is a fascinating example, as it was well documented in the city archive and promoted in newspaper articles. Casa d'Italia was founded in 1956 and was located in Kastanjelaan 49 in Arnhem (Figure 1). It was an old mansion built in 1888 (Figure 2).³² The architect of the mansion is unknown, as the archive of Arnhem does not have documentation of mansions from that era.

As the name of the pension already indicates, the guest workers who stayed were Italian. Furthermore, they were all young men, mostly unmarried, all employed by the same company: the textile firm Algemene Kunstzijde Unie (AKU, General Artificial Silk Union) in Arnhem and Ede, (Figure 3). AKU merged with Koninklijke Zout Organon (Royal Salt Organon) in 1969 and is currently known as Akzo Nobel. AKU followed the same recruiting strategy as other companies at that time, recruiting young male workers from Italy and Spain. AKU already had the intention from the start to house the guest workers together, as in 1956 some guest workers disappeared from the mines of Limburg and spent their money on dancing.³³ This is why the AKU accommodated the sleeping arrangement for them, so they would not have the chance to spend the money elsewhere.

The company housed the guest workers per nationality, and Casa d'Italia was the first house from AKU. In its beginning it accommodated fifteen young Italian men. AKU did not want to make the mistake to serve the Italians Dutch food. As there were strikes of Italian guestworkers - who were working for the steel factory in IJmuiden- who were complaining about the bad quality of food.³⁴ AKU started looking for a Dutch-Italian married couple who could serve as the host. It was able to find the host couple through the local protestant church and simultaneously wanted the church to undertake religious care for the guest workers.³⁵ Romana van Maanen-Brida (Figure 4), who was born in Italy, was appointed to be a caretaker, and moved in with her husband and son. Van Maanen-Brida and her husband were even addressed as madre or mami, and padre or papi.

Van Maanen-Brida would be responsible for cooking for the guest workers (Figure 5). She would cook Italian food, and she could spend however she wanted, as the AKU would pay for these costs. As van Maanen-Brida states in the local Arnhem newspaper in 1956:

I worked in a kindergarten in Italy and men are all big kids at heart ... If a man has fun and gets good food - after all, his love goes through the stomach - then he is already satisfied. The Italian AKU workers will – we have no doubt – be more than happy with their new home, which will be imbued with an Italian spirit.³⁶

³² Inge van der Hoeven and Marlou Schrover, “Een zorgzame of bemoeizuchtige werkgever? De AKU en haar Italianen,” *Jaarboek Gelre*, (2013): 188.

³³ Idem.

³⁴ “Negen ontslagen Italianen naar huis vertrokken,” *Algemeen dagblad*, October 7, 1961. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 15, 2023).

³⁵ van der Hoeven and Schrover, “Een zorgzame of bemoeizuchtige werkgever? De AKU en haar Italianen,” 188.

³⁶ “Italiaanse gastvrouw voor Italiaanse gastarbeiders,” *Arnhemsche Courant*, September 21, 1956, 11. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: March 20, 2023).



Figure 1. Aerial picture of Casa d'Italia taken by the Royal Air Force on September 14 in 1944 and adapted by the author. Casa d'Italia is located in the Spijkerkwartier of Arnhem and is characterised by large mansions (white circle). More specifically, it is situated on the second street on the east side of the Musispark.

Source: RAF, Wageningen University & Research.



Figure 2. Casa d'Italia seen from the street side, ca. 1965. It is the white mansion with a balcony and two dormers. The mansion is blended with the surrounding houses, as it is not visible from the exterior that guest workers live there. Source: Gelders Archief, no. 3044 – 293.



Figure 3. Italian guest workers working at AKU ca. 1960.
Source: Gelders Archief, no. 3044 – 149.



Figure 4. Well-dressed Italian guest workers posing in front of Casa d'Italia with Romana van Maanen-Brida ca. 1964.
Source: Gelders Archief, no. 3044 – 155.



Figure 5. Romana van Maanen-Brida cooking in Casa de Pauw. Casa de Pauw was also a pension by AKU, and it would host fifty Italian and ten Spanish guest workers, date unknown.
Source: Gelders Archief, no. 3044 – 213.

In 1956, Casa d'Italia was hosting thirty people, fifteen inside the house, and fifteen in a barrack outside in the garden. The mansion was expanded a year later and could house forty people. Casa d'Italia consisted of three floors and a barrack in the garden. The ground floor consisted of a reception room, kitchen, dining room, and recreation room (Figure 6). In addition, the barrack was situated in the garden. Sadly, there are no drawings to be found in the archive of the spatial layout of the barrack. The ground floor of the mansion does not necessarily show that forty-three inhabitants were living there. The van Maanen-Brida family lived on the first floor (Figure 7). It is not clear from the archival plans how the family used to live in that space, but the assumption is that two rooms were used for sleeping, and one room was used as the living room of the family. Curiously, the bathroom does indicate the number of guest workers living there. Surprisingly, there is only one shower located in the building. The second floor consists of four sleeping rooms which would house fifteen guest workers, and they would sleep in bunk beds (Figure 8). Lastly, the third floor, the attic, was remodelled in 1957 and housed ten guest workers (Figure 9). They were sleeping in normal beds. The set-up of the house reflects how AKU wanted to keep an eye on the guest workers. If they wanted to leave the house unnoticed, they would have to pass through the floor of the family. For the AKU it was very important to have a good reputation, and it found that to control the guest workers, it was best to do it in a casa system. As there were employees to check on the guest workers, and they were able to notify the employer if something was not as desired. An example is seen through relationships between Dutch women and Italian men, as Schrover states:

Dutch girls thought the Italian workers were attractive, and hung around the house, whereupon the padre interfered...it was very normal that four to five girls would stroll up and down in front of Casa d'Italia.³⁷

This control over men and their girlfriends was done through strict rules within the housing structure. The reception room on the ground floor of Casa d'Italia was the only room where girlfriends were allowed, and the husband (*padre*) of van Maanen-Brida would be in the room to keep an eye on the couple.³⁸ The only exception was when girlfriends could come through organized dance nights at the casa. The reason for this strictness was due to the morale of the church, as it was - and to a certain extent nowadays - considered a sin to have intimate relationships before marriage. The control of the *padre* was to make sure that there were no scandals between guest workers and local women. As the AKU wanted to have a good reputation relating to the morale at that time.

AKU had built more casas in Arnhem for their workers, but not all of them had success. For example, in other casas there were more complaints about the hosts and food. In addition, AKU decided to centralize the workers in one building to reduce the costs of the guest workers. Casa d'Italia and other casas moved to Casa de Pauw - which used to be a hotel - in 1962. Casa de Pauw existed until 1973, three years before the AKU factory in Arnhem closed due to the oil crisis. In general, the casa system ended when factories closed and did not provide any more housing. Moreover, workers started to look for housing elsewhere when they were just married or were joined by their wives.³⁹

³⁷ Combination of two sources. Schrover, "Urban Migration Histories," 25. Van der Hoeven and Schrover, "Een zorgzame of bemoeizuchtige werkgever? De AKU en haar Italianen," 195

³⁸ Van der Hoeven and Schrover, "Een zorgzame of bemoeizuchtige werkgever? De AKU en haar Italianen," 195

³⁹ Schrover, "Urban Migration Histories," 27

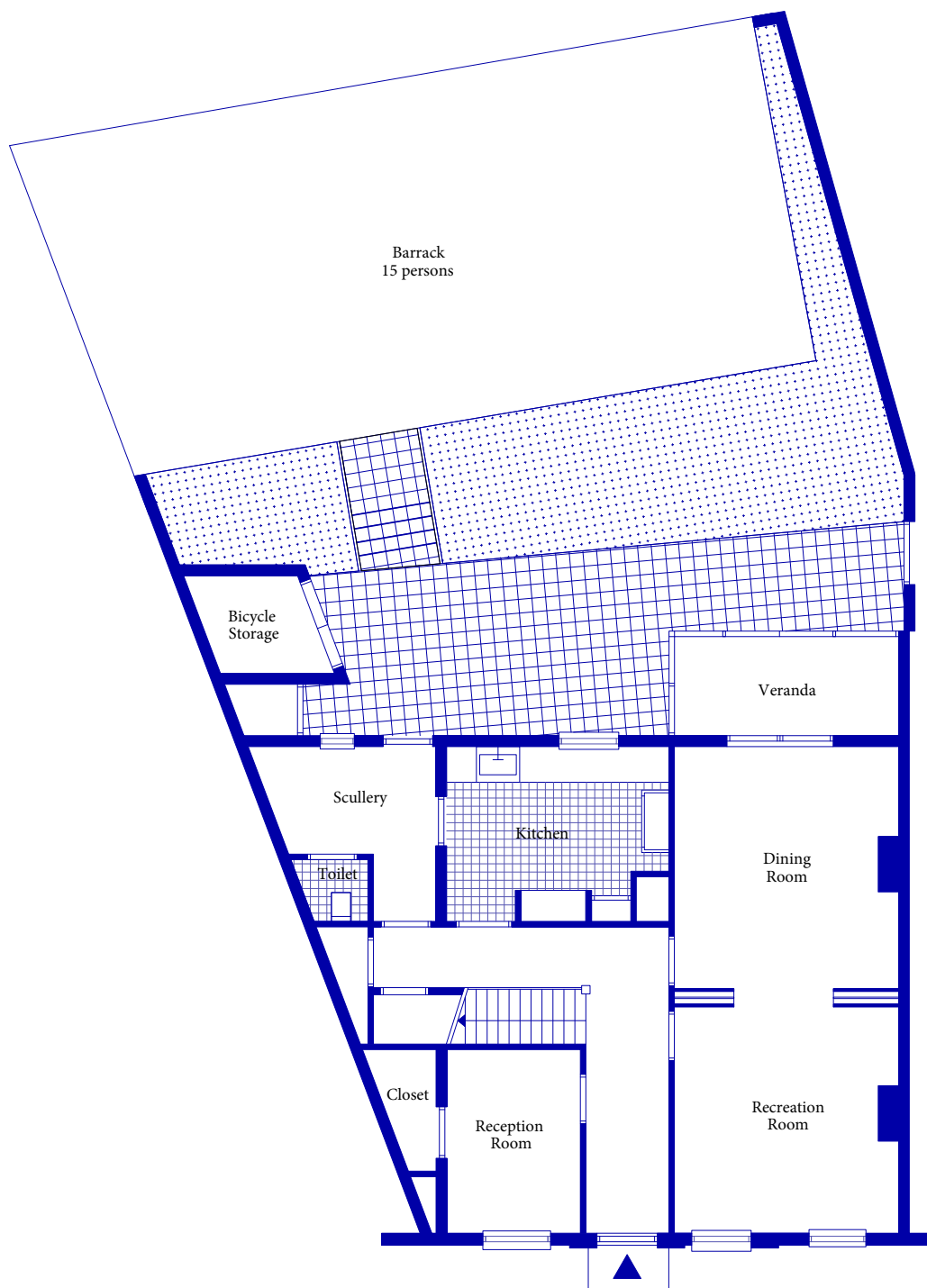


Figure 6. The ground floor of Casa d'Italia is based on plans from 1957 and 1977. Redrawn plans by author .

Source: Gelders Archief no. 314-1749 and no. 2635-1019 (see Appendix 1 and 2 for original drawings).

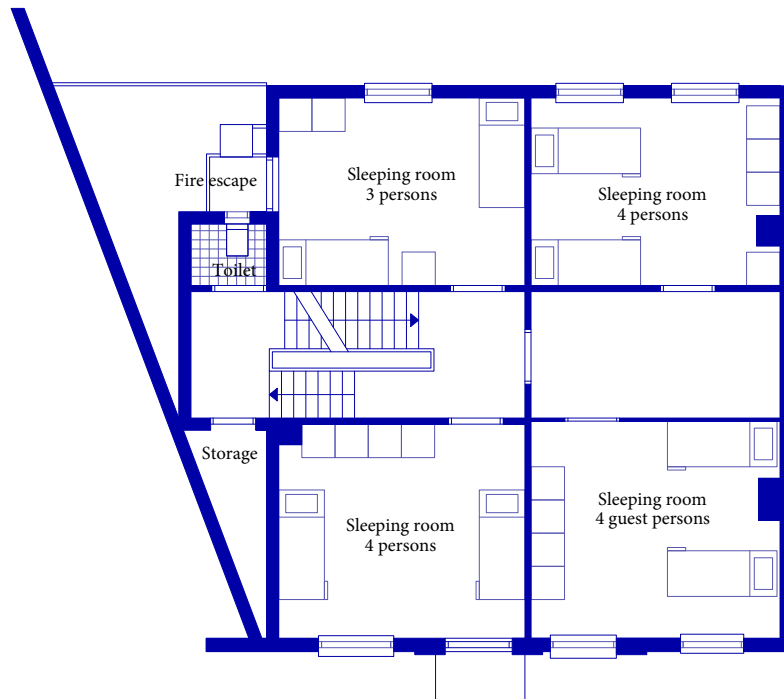


Figure 8. The second floor of Casa d'Italia is based on plans from 1957. Redrawn by author, furniture is an estimation of the author and not based on the original drawing. Source: Gelders Archief no. 2635-1019 (see Appendix 1 for original drawing).

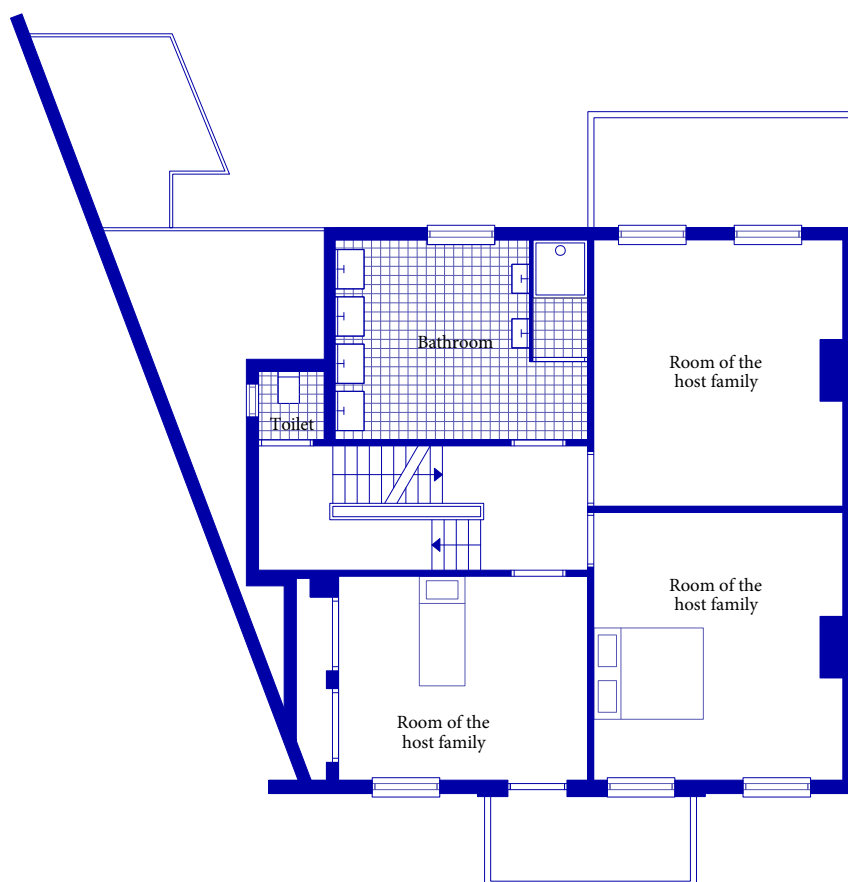


Figure 7. The first floor of Casa d'Italia is based on plans from 1957. Redrawn by author, furniture is an estimation of the author and not based on the original drawing. Source: Gelders Archief no. 2635-1019 (see Appendix 1 for original drawing).

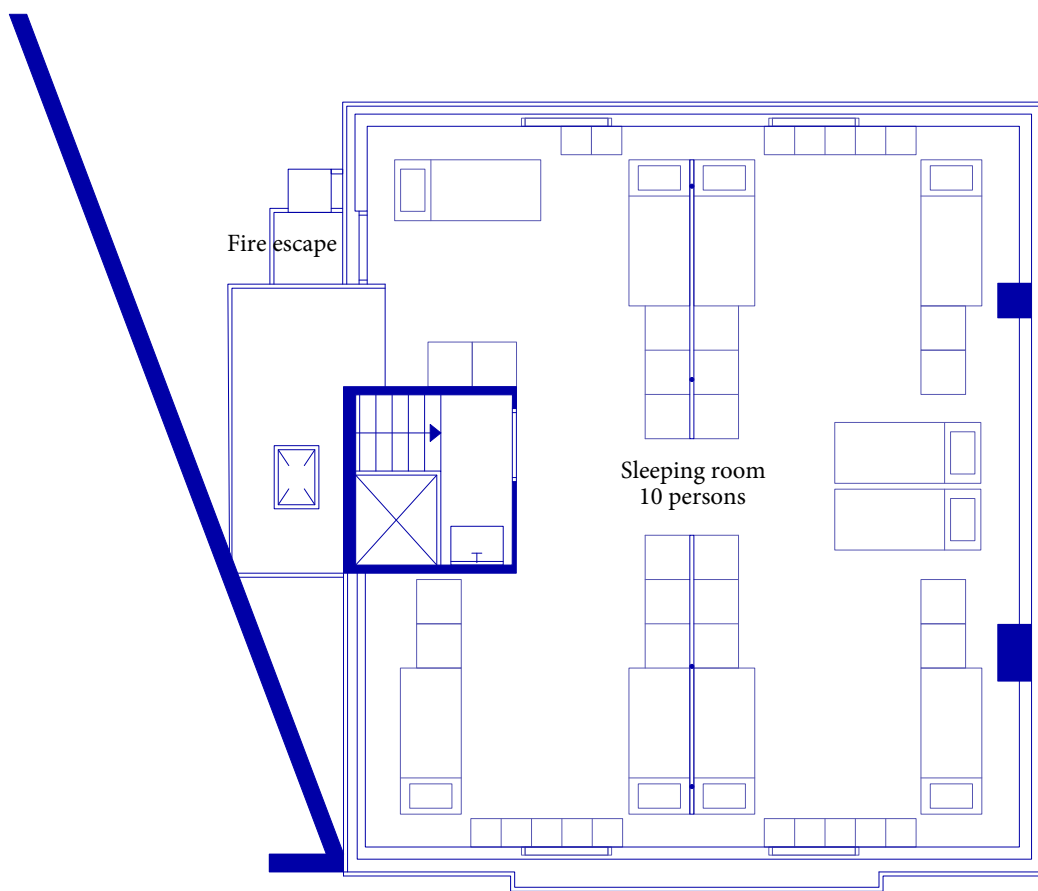


Figure 9. Third floor of Casa d'Italia, based on plans from 1957.
Redrawn by author. Source: Gelders Archief no. 2635-1019
(see Appendix 1 for original drawing).

Large-scale collective housing – Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven, Rotterdam

The large-scale collective housing took various forms. In general, the housing was owned and built by the company or the municipality. Furthermore, it was meant to host many people, these large-scale housing complexes could host at least more than one hundred people. The collective housing took various forms, from hosting workers on large passenger ships, such as Arosa Sun and Casa Marina for the Koninklijke Hoogovens in IJmuiden or building a small village such as El Prado and El Pinar by Philips in Eindhoven. The typology is usually located in a desolated part of the city. It was usually on industrial terrains with not many neighbouring housings. The examples of Koninklijke Hoogovens in IJmuiden, the villages of Philips in Eindhoven, and the Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven were located on industrial terrains. The Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven was seen as a solution to house many guest workers. As the newspaper *Telegraaf* claimed in 1961, with the headline “Very high demand for workers:”

Rotterdam wants to attract Spanish construction workers ... and experienced Spanish workers are very favourable ... Housing for the construction workers has already been arranged: the municipality has set its sights on the barracks of the old submarine base at the Waalhaven. ... The number of construction workers in Rotterdam is falling, due to the economical way of issuing building permits. The purpose of attracting Spanish workers is to break the vicious circle... Attracting Spanish guest workers is an initiative developed by the employers' organisations, the municipal council, and the Regional Employment Office in Rotterdam.⁴⁰

As stated in the newspaper article, Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven used to be a German submarine base, built during the Second World War (Figure 10). After the war, it was owned by the Dutch navy, and they sold it to the municipality to convert it into the Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven. In 1962 the municipality started to remodel the navy base to be able to house so many workers.⁴¹ The architect was from the municipality of Rotterdam, named Kuyvenhoven. There were two phases, the first phase was the transformation of the navy base, which could house around 280 persons (Figure 11). The second phase consisted of building five pavilions and built to house 320 persons.⁴² This would make Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven able to house around 600 persons.

The first group of guest workers who arrived at Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven were Spanish and were working for various construction companies, but all of them were part of Stichting Aantrekking Buitenlandse Bouwvakarbeiders, referred to as SABBA. They were mostly carpenters and were schooled in Spain. Furthermore, they came from Galicia, specifically La Coruña and Ourense, and half of them were married.⁴³ The second group who arrived were working for the municipality and were working for Gemeentelijk Energie Bedrijf (Municipality Energy Company), GEB and Rotterdams Electric Trambedrijf (Rotterdam's Electrical Tram Company), RET.

⁴⁰ “Vraag naar arbeiders zeer groot,” *De Telegraaf*, September 8, 1961, 21. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: March 22, 2023).

⁴¹ Vervloesem, “Stedenbouw en sociale verandering: leren van vergeten geschiedenissen van stad maken”, 254-255.

⁴² Stadsarchief Rotterdam, “Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven 806,” archive 1. Letter to the city council by the mayor and secretary in 1962.

⁴³ “Spanjaarden donderdag in Waalhaven,” *Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, January 1, 1962, 15. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: March 22, 2023).



Figure 10. Areal picture of Waalhavenkamp taken by the Royal Air Force on September 8 in 1945 and adapted by the author. The camp is seen in the centre of the image, between the docks and the neighbourhood of Charlois (white circle).

Source: RAF, Wageningen University & Research.



Figure 11. Waalhavenkamp is seen from the outside, date unknown.

Source: Personal collection of Hans Orsel. Retrieved from Els Vervloesem's "Stedenbouw en sociale verandering: leren van vergeten geschiedenissen van stad maken," 258.

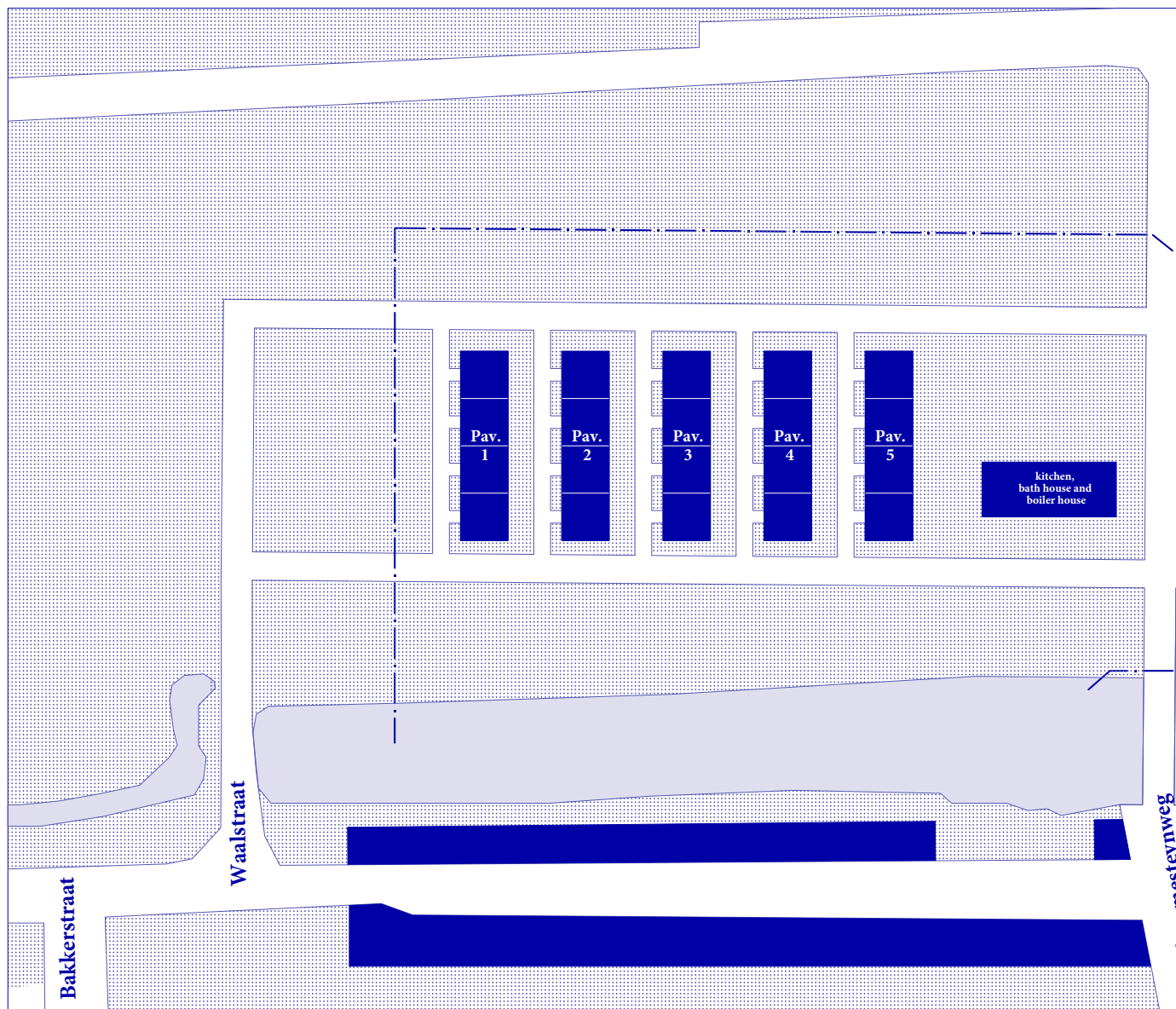
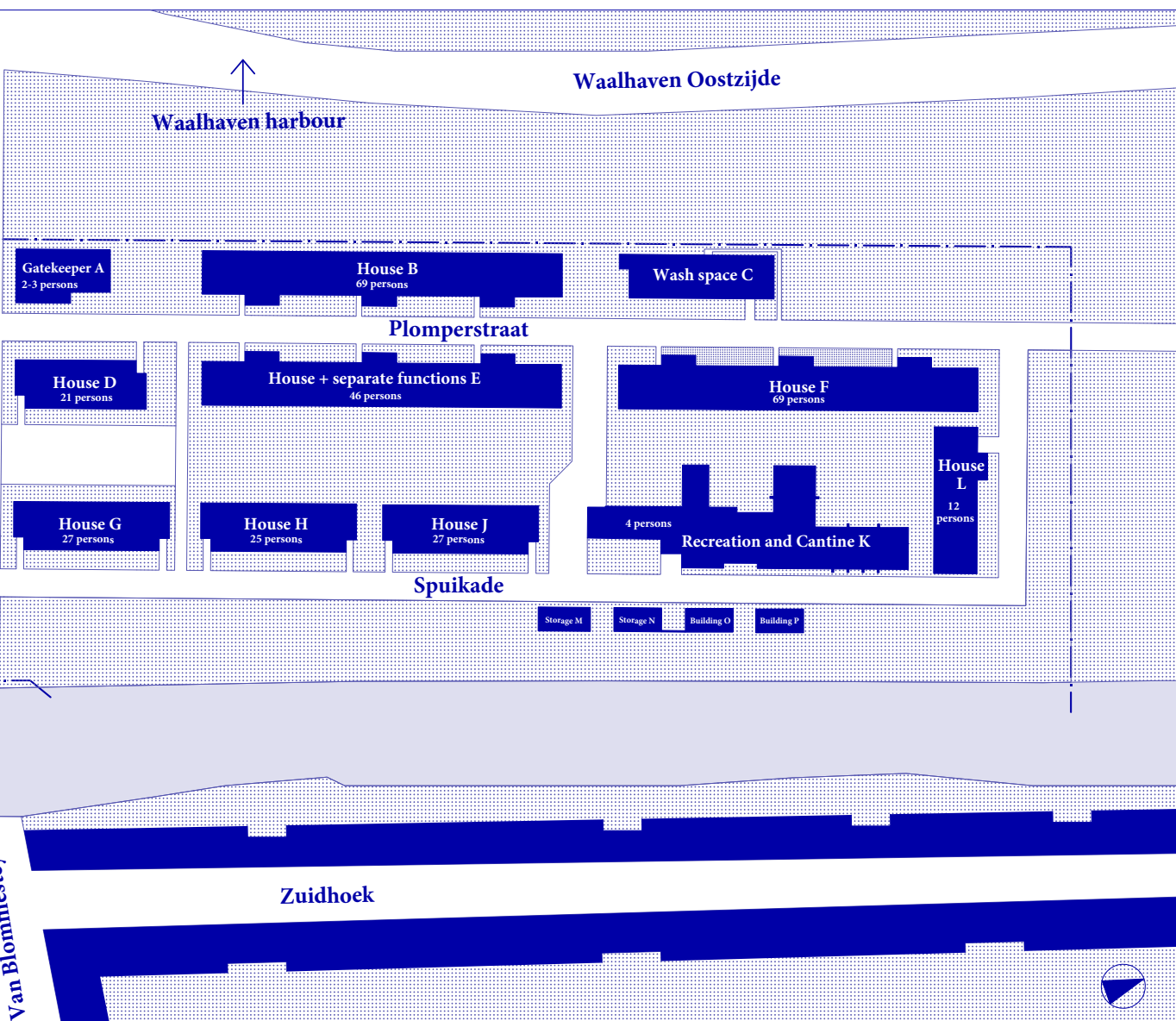


Figure 12: Drawing of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp ca.1964, made by the author.

Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. B3-62-1961 and P5-23-1947 (see Appendix 3 and 4 for original drawings)



The Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp was isolated and fenced off (Figure 12). On the east side of the camp, there is housing from the neighbourhood Oud-Charlois. The buildings that have numbers are related to the original structures of the submarine base from the first building phase. The buildings numbered one to six are related to the second building phase. Furthermore, buildings B, D, E, F, G, H, and J were used for housing the guest workers.

To understand the housing conditions of the guest workers, building B is analysed. The building has three housing units, and every housing unit housed twenty-three persons (Figure 13). The sleeping rooms consisted of seven or nine persons and the room had bunk beds. In addition, they shared a living room, one shower, and four toilets. The curious aspect is that the house has two doors, one entrance door and one door to access the bathroom. It was probably meant for people who could wash immediately after work. The unit had a living room but not a kitchen, which made people always go to building K for a meal. To conclude, the housing design had not much privacy, and people had to share a small living room. For any other amenity, they had to leave their house to go to the main building, which was always controlled by staff.

Building K included communal spaces, such as a writing room, reading room, billiard room, canteen, theatre, and cinema hall (Figure 14). In the city archive, only one picture can be found from the interior of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp (Figure 15). This picture was taken in 1962, and is probably a propaganda picture of the camp, as no other picture can be found after that date.

Building C was designated for the washing of clothes and showers. The staff of the Waalhavenkamp were situated in building A, K and L. Curiously, in building A slept the gatekeeper with his son. The gatekeeper would strictly keep watch on who entered and who left. In this building that served as a home and an office, there were two bedrooms, one living room, a shower, a toilet, and a kitchen (Figure 16). The kitchen was in direct contact with the office of the gatekeeper. It meant that the gatekeeper could easily access the gate and keep watch if something were to happen. Els Vervloesem interviewed the son of the gatekeeper Hans O in 2009:

The camp was completely closed off. There was a fence around it and a doorman with a bell... It was carefully watched who went in and out. Also by my father. Because of the women who came in, he didn't want to hear that. "That's what gets me into the biggest problem," he said.⁴⁴

The guest workers had to follow the strict rules listed as house rules (Figure 17). Some examples are that lying on the bed without night clothes was forbidden, the administrator was allowed to check personal closets, and the guest worker must leave the room if a female camp worker was in the living room or bedroom. In addition, if a guest worker wanted to bring a visitor, they had to ask for permission. The camp was also responsible for leisure activities, as it organized twice a year a dance or theatre performance. Next to that, every week movies were shown, one week it would be a North American movie and another week a Spanish movie.⁴⁵ The strict rules made sure that the guest workers were under strict supervision and control, and were simultaneously isolated from everyday activities, such as going to the supermarket or going to the movies. The intention was probably to make it more likely that the guest workers stayed obedient, due to a lack of communication with the 'outside world.'

The guest workers were quite upset with the strictness and demanded some flexibility within these rules. They were not only upset by some of the rules but also concerning the quality of the food. Quite soon after arrival protests emerged concerning the quality of the food as four hundred

⁴⁴ Interview between Els Vervloesem and Hans O on November 9, 2009, in "Urbanism and social change: learning from forgotten histories of city making", 261.

⁴⁵ Vervloesem, "Stedenbouw en sociale verandering: leren van vergeten geschiedenissen van stad maken", 265.

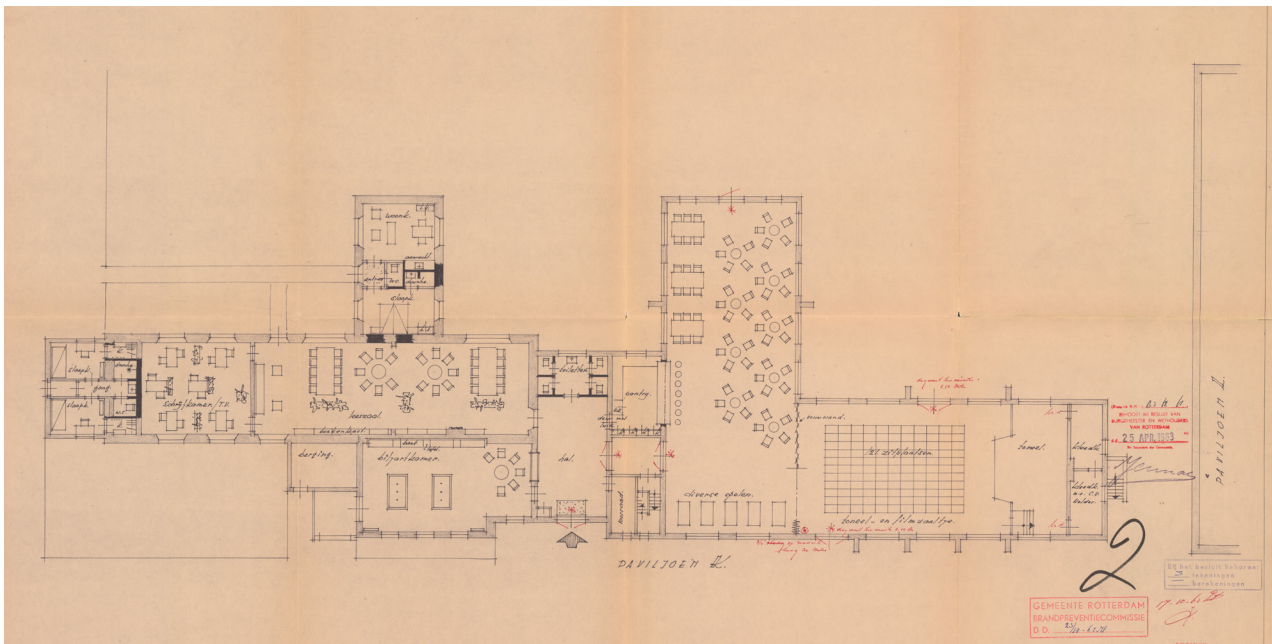
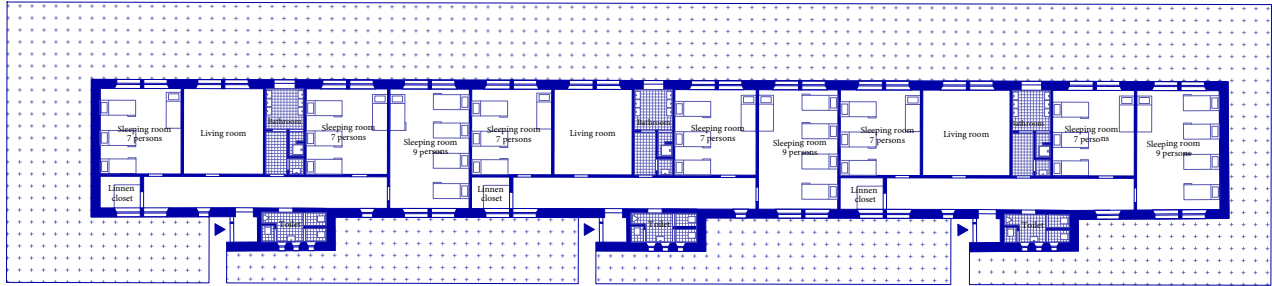




Figure 15. Spanish guest workers enjoying a game in building K of Waalhavenkamp in 1962. Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. 4121-6183. Photograph by Ary Groeneveld.

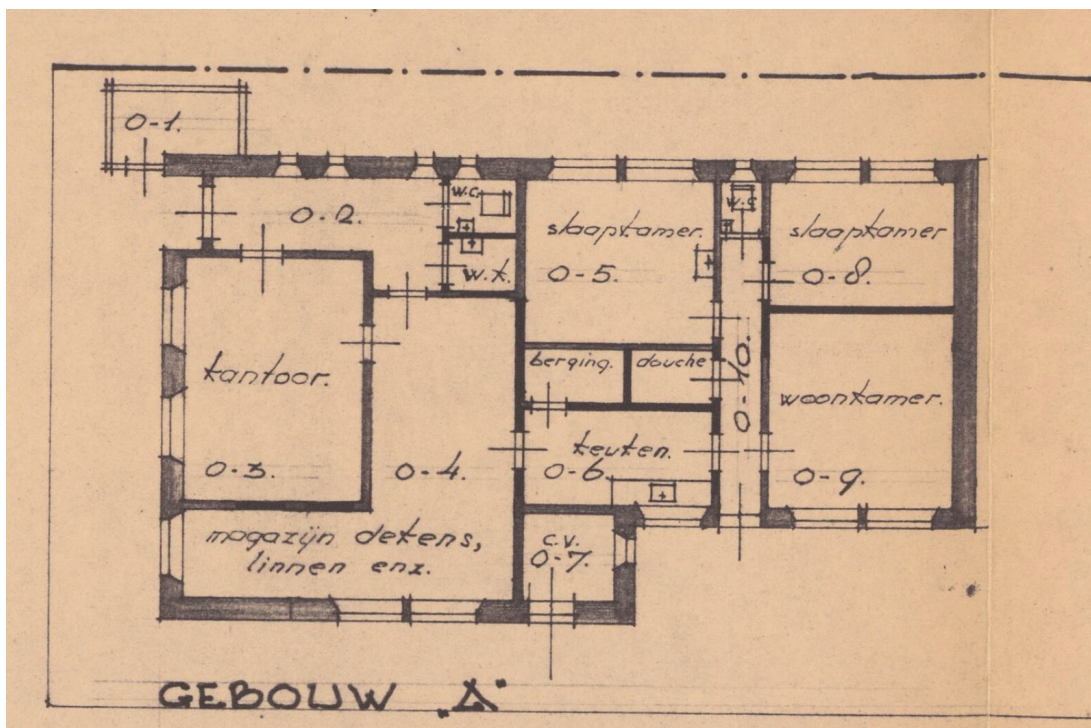


Figure 16. Drawing of building A of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp and it housed the gatekeeper and his office. It was drawn by the Department of the Built Environment in 1962. Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. B3-62-1961 (see Appendix 3 for original drawing)

HUISREGELS

Nu u bewoner bent geworden van dit woonoord, lijkt het mij goed u een inzicht te geven in de daarin geldende huisregels. Deze huisregels hebben ten doel het verblijf in dit woonoord voor u zo aangenaam mogelijk te maken. U wordt daarom verzocht overeenkomstig deze huisregels te handelen en voorts alles te doen wat een prettige sfeer tussen u, de leiding en uw medebewoners kan bevorderen.

Huisvesting:

1. De kamers en andere door u te gebruiken vertrekken moeten netjes worden bewoond;
2. De kamers moeten behoorlijk zijn opgeruimd.
3. In de slaapkamers mag niet worden gerookt.
4. Op de bedden liggen anders dan in nachtkleding is niet toegestaan.
5. Op zaterdag en zondag moeten door de bewoners zelf de bedden worden opgemaakt en de kamers worden schoongehouden. Op de overige dagen gebeurt dit door het woonoordpersoneel.
6. Elk der bewoners heeft een kast te zijner beschikking. De Directie stelt zich niet aansprakelijk voor zoekgeraakte eigendommen van de bewoners, zodat ieder wordt aangeraden om zijn kast steeds af te sluiten.
7. De beheerder is bevoegd de kasten op een behoorlijk gebruik te controleren. Hiertoe dienen de kasten op zijn verzoek in uw bijzijn te worden geopend.
8. Papier en afval moet in de daarvoor bestemde vuilnisemmer worden gedeponiseerd, en niet achteloos op het terrein worden geworpen. Verontreiniging van de toiletten dient te worden vermeden.
9. Om de bewoners een behoorlijke nachtrust te laten genieten, moet na 23 uur op de woon- en slaapkamers zoveel mogelijk stilte in acht worden genomen.
10. Bij verblijf van de werksters in de woon- of slaapvertrekken dienen de bewoners deze vertrekken te verlaten.
11. Bezoekers mogen alleen met toestemming van de beheerder worden ontvangen in de kantine en andere recreatieruimten.
12. De Directie of haar gemachtigde behoudt zich het recht voor, personen de toegang tot het woonoord te weigeren.
13. Bewoners die schade toebrengen aan gebouwen of inventaris, of breuk veroorzaken, worden de herstellkosten in rekening gebracht.
14. Het medenemen naar elders van inventarisgoederen, het woonoord toebehorende, is niet toegestaan.
15. Het houden van dieren in het woonoord kan om hygienische redenen niet worden toegestaan.
16. Rijwielen en bromfietsen mogen alleen in de daarvoor bestemde ruimten worden gestald.

Brandgevaar

Figure 17. House rules of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp, date unknown. Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, "Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven 806," archive 5.

workers struck for a day. This happened on September 10 in 1962, nine months after arrival. The rapport mentions that there were already meeting about the quality and that it only had gotten worse. Muñoz García, a representative of the workers, stated that the food was spoiled and that they even saw worms crawling out. Others said that it was important to have good food to perform well at work. The employer van der Valk, director of GEB, denied these claims and mentioned that the food workers got in Spain was also not always great.⁴⁶ As Nelly Soetens mentioned: “The meals were hard to eat for the Spanish... after the strikes, attempts were made to make the meals more Spanish. Sadly, it never became tasty food.”⁴⁷

The reputation of the Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp had gotten worse by the year. As only eighty Spanish workers were living in the camp in 1968.⁴⁸ Almost all the workers from SABBA had left the camp, and there were only small groups of RET and GEB. Other Rotterdam companies had recruited workers from the former Yugoslavia. As 360 workers started living in the camp in 1968. The Yugoslavians were separated from the Spanish and had a separate kitchen. When the Yugoslavians left, the municipality had the intention to transform the camp into housing for forty Surinamese transfer families in 1974.⁴⁹ The neighbours of Charlois were upset with the idea to transform it into housing for Surinamese and they were afraid that it would turn into a ghetto. The resident’s committee of Charlois wanted to have a better solution for the Surinamese, as they should live in normal housing as the rest of Rotterdam.⁵⁰ Moreover, the neighbours wanted to transform it into a cultural centre, including a nursery, service centre, and housing for disabled people.⁵¹ It got accepted and Surinamese people lived there from 1975 until 1981, the housing conditions were bad as they were too small, and not well built for families. In 1981, the municipality wanted to transform it into an emergency shelter.⁵² Currently, the buildings of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp have been demolished. The area did continue to be an industrial terrain, where some commercial buildings are located (Figure 18). Comparing it to the mansion where Casa d’Italia used to be located. The mansion has not been demolished, due to it being a ‘historical’ building, which is more protected in the Dutch preservation discourse (Figure 19).

Both typologies have some similarities, the control of the employer was present in all aspects of the daily lives of guest workers. They controlled their physical and social environment. In the case of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven, they were physically isolated, as there was no intention of integration with the local citizens. As a result, the isolated typology remained a present character of the location, as other intentions of housing - such as the housing of Surinamese families - failed as well. This was also because of the poor housing conditions. Casa d’Italia had strict rules, however, the location of the house made it possible for the workers to interact with the local citizens. In general, the intention of temporality in housing was also the Achilles heel, as it was not flexible if the guest worker had other wishes over time. For example, reuniting their families, as when wives and children came was a need to have a house or apartment with privacy and multiple rooms. Concerning the fact that family reunification became possible, the guest workers’ housing complex for single men became obsolete.

⁴⁶ Stadsarchief Rotterdam, “Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven 806,” archive 2. Rapport of the meeting made by GEB concerning the difficulties of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven, September 10, 1962.

⁴⁷ Soetens, Akpg aktiekomitee pro gastarbeiders, 13.

⁴⁸ Stadsarchief Rotterdam, “Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven 806,” archive 5. Letter concerning the housing of foreign guest workers in camp Waalhaven, 1968.

⁴⁹ Vervloesem, “Stedenbouw en sociale verandering: leren van vergeten geschiedenissen van stad maken”, 271.

⁵⁰ “Geen Surinamers in kamp – wel in normale straten,” *Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, June 20, 1974, 25. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: March 23, 2023).

⁵¹ “Charlois tegen Surinamers in leeg woonoord,” *NRC Handelsblad*, June 7, 1974, 12. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: March 23, 2023).

⁵² “Woonoord Waalhaven krijgt nieuwe bestemming,” *Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, May 7, 1981. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: March 23, 2023).

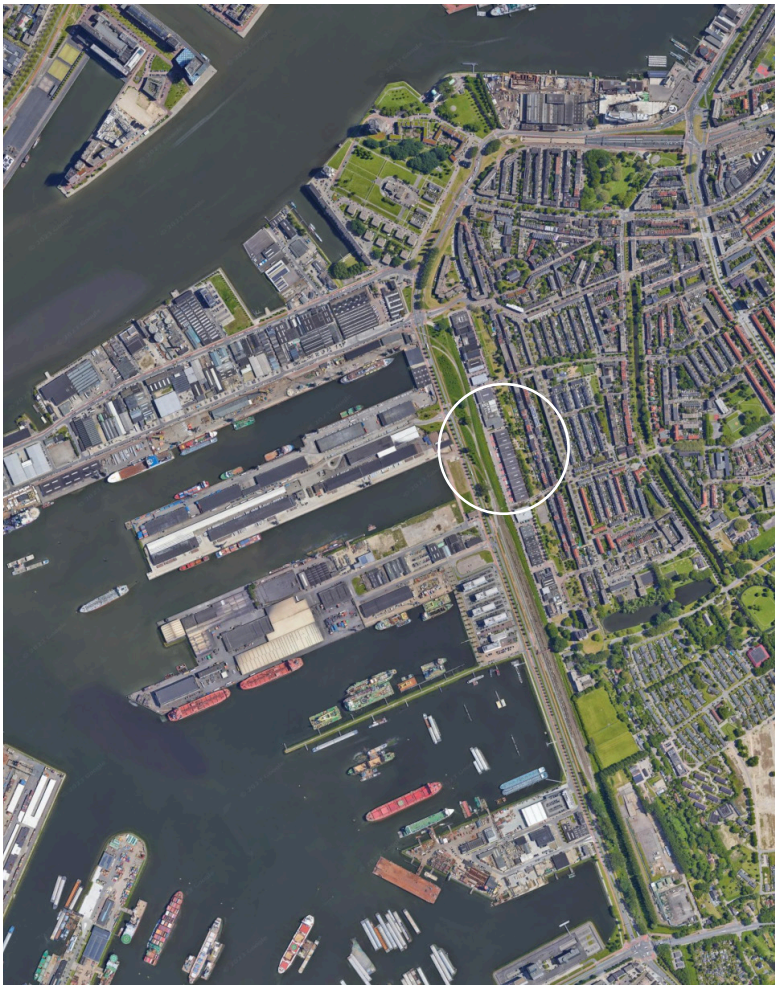


Figure 18. The satellite picture of the location where Waalhavenkamp used to be and adapted by the author (white circle). The structure of the urban fabric stayed the same. Nevertheless, Waalhavenkamp has since been demolished and turned into an industrial estate.
Source: Google Earth (Accessed April 17, 2023).



Figure 19. The satellite picture of the location where Casa d'Italia used to be and adapted by the author (white circle). The mansion has not been demolished, and it is currently a practice focused on care for people with disabilities.
Source: Google Earth (Accessed April 17, 2023).

Chapter 3

Organisations: activism and education as a response to the living and work conditions of guest workers

Organisations related to guest workers existed in multiple forms. Some examples were connected to the employer, but also to religious institutions and the municipality. Many of these organisations were not always in favour of the rights of guest workers. On the contrary, these organisations were created to carry out a substitute social support of inferior quality to those Dutch workers enjoyed. The poor living conditions of guest workers were the principal factor in why independent people began to raise awareness and mobilise. Consequently, counter-organisations began to appear and demanded changes and improvements for the social situation of migrant workers. One important example is the Aktiekomitee Pro Gastarbeiders (Action Committee Pro Guest Workers), referred to as AKPG. It was the first independent organisation in the Netherlands whose intention was to improve the situation for foreign workers.⁵³

Nelly Soetens founded AKPG on October 28 in 1969 (Figure 20). It was founded by Soetens and her ex-partner.⁵⁴ In 1962, Soetens was teaching Spanish and she was approached by the Ministry of Social Affairs to teach Dutch to Spanish guest workers in Kamp Waalhaven in Rotterdam. She would give class twice a week during the evenings and divided the class into groups by education level. Soetens not only taught them Dutch, but she started to notice the exploitation that the guest workers had to endure. As Soetens said in the newspaper *Trouw* in 1993:

My eyes only really opened when I saw the guest workers in Waalhavenkamp. I saw how those people were exploited and how they were exploited. For example, I was forbidden to tell [by the organisation of Waalhavenkamp] them [the guest workers] that they were entitled to unemployment benefits if they were fired.⁵⁵

Furthermore, she realized what the actual housing conditions were for guest workers outside the camp, who were situated in pensions in the centre of Rotterdam. As Soetens stated:

I allowed my ex-partner to convince me that my solidarity with the guest workers from a foreign country was urgently necessary ... which is why Aktiekomitee Pro Gastarbeiders was born in October 1969... in the autumn of 1969, there appeared an article about the bad housing conditions for foreigners in Utrecht ... prior, in 1964, a few Spanish workers and I had exposed the overfull pensions for Italian and Spanish guest workers.⁵⁶

Accordingly, the Stichting Hulp Buitenlandse Werknemers (Foreign Employees Assistance Foundation) - whose task it was to supervise the quality of the accommodations - announced that the pensions were in good condition. However, the foundation had never entered a pension.⁵⁷ Soetens and her husband wanted to see the housing conditions and managed through some Spanish workers

⁵³ Henny de Lange, "Nel Soetens stopt na 24 jaar strijd pro gastarbeiders," *Trouw*, March 16, 1993, 2. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 12, 2023).

⁵⁴ Stadsarchief Rotterdam, "Aktie Komitee Pro Gastarbeiders 1452," archive 37. Raport titled "hoe krijg je een cirkel van vijanden" (how to get a circle of enemies), unknown date.

⁵⁵ de Lange, "Nel Soetens."

⁵⁶ Soetens, Akpg aktiekomitee pro gastarbeiders, 17.

⁵⁷ Idem.



Figure 20. Nelly Soetens in front of the AKPG, date unknown.
Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. P-021643. Photograph by Jan van der Meijde.

at Waalhavenkamp addresses of pensions. They visited a total of forty-nine pensions and created a list to check the houses (Figure 21). Some examples of the housing conditions were that there was no heating, no cleaning, no kitchen, and no ventilation.⁵⁸

Soetens went multiple times to the newspaper to address the poor housing conditions of the guest workers. An example is the newspaper article in 1972 with the headline “Pension Conflict Averted” (Figure 22). Nineteen Moroccan guest workers were living in a pension, and four to five men had to share a room. There were bedbugs and rats in the pension. The landlord wanted to kick them out when he heard that the guest workers wanted to go to the Rental Advisory Committee with the encouragement of AKPG. In the end, the disagreement was solved by the police. The rental prices were lowered, and it was promised to keep the pension in a more hygienic state.⁵⁹

The sequence of publications of Soetens in the newspaper showed the public the poor housing conditions of guest workers. Soetens appealed to the higher court arguing that guest workers living in pensions deserved housing rights, since rent protection, contrary to what happened with the Dutch inhabitants, was not possible for guest workers living in a pension. In addition, they could not go to Rental Advisory Committee if their rent was raised, sudden eviction, and if their landlord refused visitors.⁶⁰ Soetens won the case in 1974, and from that year on guest workers had housing rights. As an article in *De Waarheid* in 1972 states:

A large influx of foreign workers has been attracted to our country by capitalists. Who, on one hand, wanted to increase their investment profits by employing cheap labour, and on the other hand, believed that the foreigners would not dare to stand up for their rights. After all, a guest worker is vulnerable and provides for his family through his work and often his entire family in his home country. Therefore, he risks quite a bit when he defies a game of blackmail from the bosses. Thus, he is exposed to the grossest exploitation, both working in the company and finding shelter.⁶¹

The AKPG did not only defend the right of the guest workers but also provided educational services. Soetens noticed that a lot of miscommunications existed between the guest workers and the Dutch speakers. An example was medical isolation, as the guest workers were not able to explain to a doctor what their health complaint was. Soetens addressed the language issue with the municipality. She was able to convince the municipality and she got her first subsidy in July 1970. The subsidy allowed her to get an office for the AKPG, which was an old shop on the Jacobusstraat in Rotterdam. Soetens would teach Dutch at night to guest workers in a nearby school. She had already developed a teaching method when she taught the Spanish guest workers in Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp, it was named *Holandes para Españoles* (Dutch for Spanish). She adapted this book for all backgrounds of guest workers, and it was titled *Nederlands voor Buitenlanders* (Dutch for foreigners). Not all workers

⁵⁸ Stadsarchief Rotterdam, “Aktie Komitee Pro Gastarbeiders 1452,” archive 37. Document concerning the list of “zwarte prijzen,” unknown date.

⁵⁹ “Pensioenconflict Bezwoeren,” *Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, October 10, 1972, 19. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 12, 2023).

⁶⁰ “Ook gastarbeider recht op huurbescherming,” *Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, May 5, 1974, 7. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 12, 2023).

⁶¹ “Beeldspraak,” *De Waarheid*, October 11, 1972, 3. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl (Accessed: April 12, 2023).

AKTIEKOMITEE PRO GASTARBEIDERS

LIJST VAN ZWARTE PRIJZEN (p.pers, p. week)

onhygiënisch) - mate van onhygiëne is aangegeven met 1 of 2 kruisen.
 vol - wordt aangegeven met kruisen. 3 kruisen is overvol, p.kamer.
 brandbl. - betekent aanwezigheid van brandblusapparaat

adres: onhyg. vol brandbl. prijs opmerkingen:

Graaf Florisstraat 24	x	xx	ja	25,-	ventilatie tussenkamers door gat in muur naar andere kamers, kontr.pens.
Putselaan 6	xx	xx	ja	20,-	tussenkamer-keuken, zolderhok m.2 bedden zonder kast, veel kamers zonder lamp, geen douche
Paarlstraat 13 en 15	x	xxx	ja	75,-	wordt opgeknapt m.eten kontr.pensioen
Paarlstraat 19,23,29,31	xx	xxx	ja	20,-	bijna geen kasten, geen veruusting, op zolder
Bloemkuiperstraat 2				25,-	hokken, slecht licht
Van Brakelstraat 39	x	x	neen	22,50	
Martinus Steynstr.4	xx	xxx	neen	70,-	kontrakt.pensioen m.eten
Martinus Steynstr.106a	x	x	ja	25,-	wordt niet schoongemaakt geen keuken, nooit schoon badgedeelte
Gaffelstraat 2	xx	xxx	ja	20,-	1 kapotte douche v.18 pers., minikeuken v.12 pers., zeer vuile keuken
Noordsingel 143	x		neen	100,-	p.mnd.
Bejonetstraat 117	xx	xxx	ja	65,-	kapotte plafonds, kontr. m.eten pensions, 1 kamer m. erg slechte ventilatie, weinig kasten
Zwaardecroonstr.45	xx	xx	ja	70,-	straalkachels gehuurd; p.mnd. wordt verbouwd
Fabriekstraat 45b	xx	xxx	neen	22,50	weinig licht, geen ventilatie en kamers
De Costastraat 16b	x	xxx	neen	25,-	keuken=hoek v.kamer
Van Dosterzeestr.56	x	xx	neen	27,50	weinig kastruimte
Josephstraat 82ab	xx	xx	neen	20,-	erg slechte douche, op oververwarme zolder
De la Reyestraat 66	xx	xxx	ja	22,50	2 wc's v.19 pers.
Josephlaan 47-49		xx	ja	25,-	ijskoud, beneden geblindseerd, gevaarlijke stapelbedden, weinig kasten
Pieretstraat 55b	x	xxx	neen	22,50 en 20,-	minikeuken
Bergselaan 208	xx	xxx	neen	22,50	zeer veruualoosd
Heemraadssingel 185	x	xxx	ja	22,50	moeten geen bezoek ontvangen
's-Gravendijkwal 51c	x	xxx	neen	25,-	zolderkamers
Willebrordusstr. 61	x	xx	ja	22,50	brandtrap afgesloten wil huurverhoging
Klein Coolstraat 9	x	xx	neen	22,50	zolderkamer zonder ventilatie
Klein Coolstraat 19b	xx	xxx	neen	25,-	geen verwarming, bijna geen kasten, 6 bedden in tussenkamer
De Vliegerstraat 53b	x	xx	ja	20,-	1 douche voor 20 pers.

Figure 21. List of “black prices” of pensions for guest workers by Aktiekomitee Pro Gastarbeiders, unknown date. The housing was checked by hygiene, fullness, availability of a fire extinguisher, and price. Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, “Aktie Komitee Pro Gastarbeiders 1452,” archive 37. Photograph by the author, 2023.



Figure 22. The article “Pension Conflict Averted,” addressed the poor housing conditions of Moroccan guest workers living in a pension in Rotterdam. Source: *Het Vrije Volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, 1972. Retrieved from www.delpher.nl.

had gone to primary education, and some were illiterate. An assumption is that it was because of their background, as when they were young, their family needed money, so they had to work instead of going to school. Therefore, Soetens wrote the *ABC cursus voor volwassenen* (ABC course for adults) in 1970 (Figure 23). As some guest workers could not read, Soetens used a method to apply drawings to display the meaning of the word (Figure 24). This was a way to universally communicate the words to any background of the guest workers.

AKPG grew through the years into a big organisation. The municipality gave the AKPG more space in the Jacobusstraat and they were able to expand their location to teach Dutch.⁶² The AKPG became an organisation where people could find support, no matter their background. As they could learn Dutch, get fiscal help, and find community. Nevertheless, AKPG was dependent on subsidies to stay active. In 1992 the subsidies stopped, and AKPG had to close its doors. The main reason for the municipality of Rotterdam to withdraw the subsidy was that the working method of AKPG no longer fitted within the local minority policy. The municipality found it too 'chaotic' and informal, but for Soetens that was the consequence of the low subsidy budget, as she was not able to pay the salaries for more employees.⁶³ The disappearance of independent organisations like the AKPG was disastrous. It not only gave support to newcomers by teaching them the local language but also helped them defend their rights (Figure 25). Hence, they might not know what rights they have, as many of these people come from vulnerable situations.

Nowadays, migrants coming to the Netherlands to work face similar problems with housing and their rights. In 2022, an article in the NRC newspaper showed the poor housing conditions the migrant workers had to live in. In this article, labour inspection checked the housing of some migrant workers who have a job in the Netherlands and are housed in Germany. As the article states:

The inspectors came across a laundry list of violations. Too low wages, employees being fired without a reason, high rent, fire-hazardous and mouldy homes... In one of the houses the beds were double-used; the night worker crawled into the bed of someone who had the morning shift.⁶⁴

Not only do these migrants have poor housing conditions, but they also seem to have almost no controlled labour laws. An example in the article was a woman with a Romanian background, who had an annual contract, but she did not receive holiday pay and no health insurance. Her children were living with her mother in Romania, and she wanted her children to be with her, but the employment agency did not allow her.⁶⁵

The migrant worker of today has comparable problems as the guest workers after the Second World War. Soetens fought to improve labour rights, and at the same time developed alternative ways for education, to rapidly improve the social conditions of migrants. These days, few organizations compare to AKPG, and today migrants lack similar support from independent organisations. The AKPG was a bridge between the migrant society and the government. However, the AKPG was consciously dismantled by the municipality. This means that today's migrant workers, with the knowledge of the government, are in vulnerable conditions similar to those who suffered as the first generation of guest workers who arrived in the Netherlands.

⁶² Soetens, Akpg aktiekomitee pro gastarbeiders, 85.

⁶³ de Lange, "Nel Soetens."

⁶⁴ Martin Kuiper, "Arbeidsmigranten werd 2.100 euro en een mooie woning beloofd, maar de praktijk viel tegen," NRC, October 26, 2022, <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2022/10/26/arbeidsmigranten-werd-2100-euro-en-een-mooie-woning-beloofd-maar-de-praktijk-viel-tegen-a4146376>.

⁶⁵ Idem.



Figure 23 (left). The Cover of the booklet ABC cursus voor volwassenen was made to help illiterate adults with the Dutch language. Source: AKPG, 1970.

Figure 24 (right). Example of the use of drawings to illustrate the significance of Dutch words in the booklet ABC cursus voor volwassenen. Source: *Exhibition Brieven uit Spanje* in Stedelijk Museum Breda, 2020. Photograph by Elena Prado.

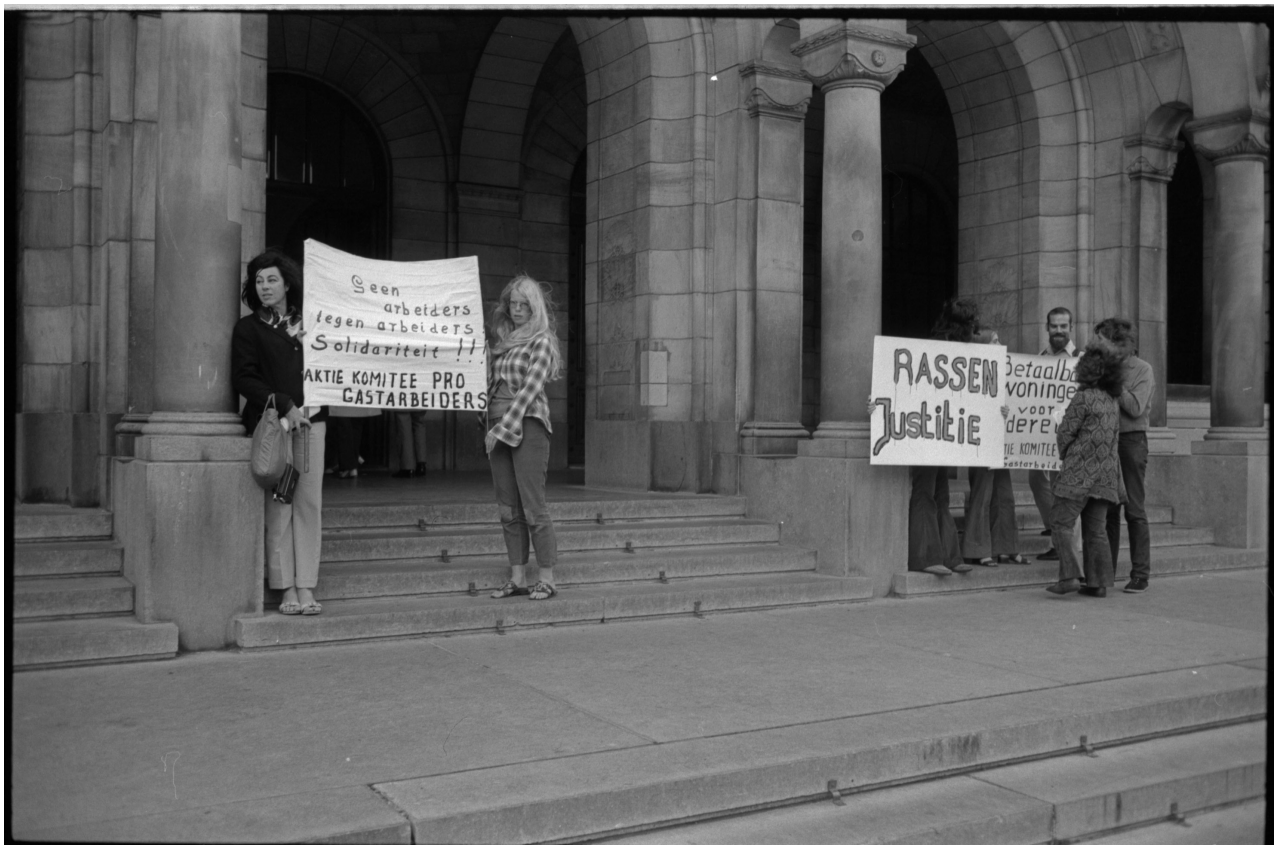


Figure 25. Nelly Soetens and a member of AKPG were protesting in front of the city hall of the municipality of Rotterdam in 1972. Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. 23657-7-17A. Photograph by Ary Groeneveld

Conclusion

The present thesis addresses the lack of awareness of housing relating to guest workers after the Second World War in the Netherlands within the academia of the Built Environment. The absence of guest workers within the historical narrative of post-war housing in the Netherlands demonstrates a wider problem addressing housing related to today's migration. If there is no historical framework regarding the issue of 'housing temporary labour migrants,' it makes it more difficult to argue and defend the right to good housing for people. Moreover, the perspective on the gained and lost (housing) rights.

At first, the narrative of the temporal guest workers was positioned in the contextual history of the Netherlands. A conclusion was related to the economic situation of the country. When there were many job vacancies, guest workers were welcomed with open arms, especially by factory owners. Nevertheless, the guest workers were mistrusted by the Dutch government and worker's associations, as they were afraid the guest workers would not return to their home country. Therefore, when an economic crisis occurred – causing companies to close and move to other countries - the migrant worker was prevented from reaching the Netherlands. Simultaneously, the principal idea of having a temporal guest worker did not work, as other aspects arose, such as family reunification and the social rights of the workers as a resident in the Netherlands. Due to the Dutch policy's resistance to migrants in the mid-1970s, laws arose that risked migrants losing their right to return to the Netherlands if they left to their home countries. It caused large groups of migrants to stay in the Netherlands, and due to the crisis of the 1980s, a lot of them depended on unemployment benefits. From the 1980s, these migrants started to be labelled as 'ethnic minorities.'

Regarding the physical context of the guest workers, it can be stated that the government and employer actively made sure that the guest workers were under strict supervision in their physical and social environment. In the cases of Casa d'Italia and Verzorgingscentrum Waalhavenkamp, both had employees and guest workers living together to make sure that the guest workers followed the rules imposed by the employer. Nevertheless, Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven was more isolated in its physical and social environment than Casa d'Italia, as it was located in an isolated part of the city of Rotterdam. However, the specific type of housing designed for guest workers was not intended for a long-term stay. This is also a reason why the housing was poorly built and inflexible for possible future needs of guest workers. The concept of temporality justified the housing conditions for the guest workers for many years, as there was a distinguishment between housing for permanent residents and temporal residents.

The poor living conditions of guest workers ignited awareness in Dutch society. One important example is AKPG, which was founded by Nelly Soetens. It defended the (housing) rights of guest workers. In addition, the isolated character of guest workers was not only in its physical context but also social, as guest workers were not able to speak the Dutch language. Consequently, Soetens

recognised this pattern and advocated for migrants to learn the Dutch language so they understand and defend their own rights. Unfortunately, the AKPG lost the support of the municipality in the 1990s and lost its subsidies. AKPG had to close its doors and it caused a big loss for the local community. The migrants lost their independent support. Sadly, today's migrants do not have their own independent organisations to speak about their problems and rights. As a result, it leads the migrants to a weaker position in society.

Collecting the historical documentation of the typology of temporary housing for guest workers is fundamental to understand the social history of migration in the Netherlands. These documents are not protected and are not valued within the historical architecture narrative of post-war housing in the Netherlands. Many of these documents are currently being destroyed in the municipal archives, as many of these houses were demolished. This is a big loss, and it is urgent to change the perception in regard to maintaining the memory of the temporarily built migrant housing.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

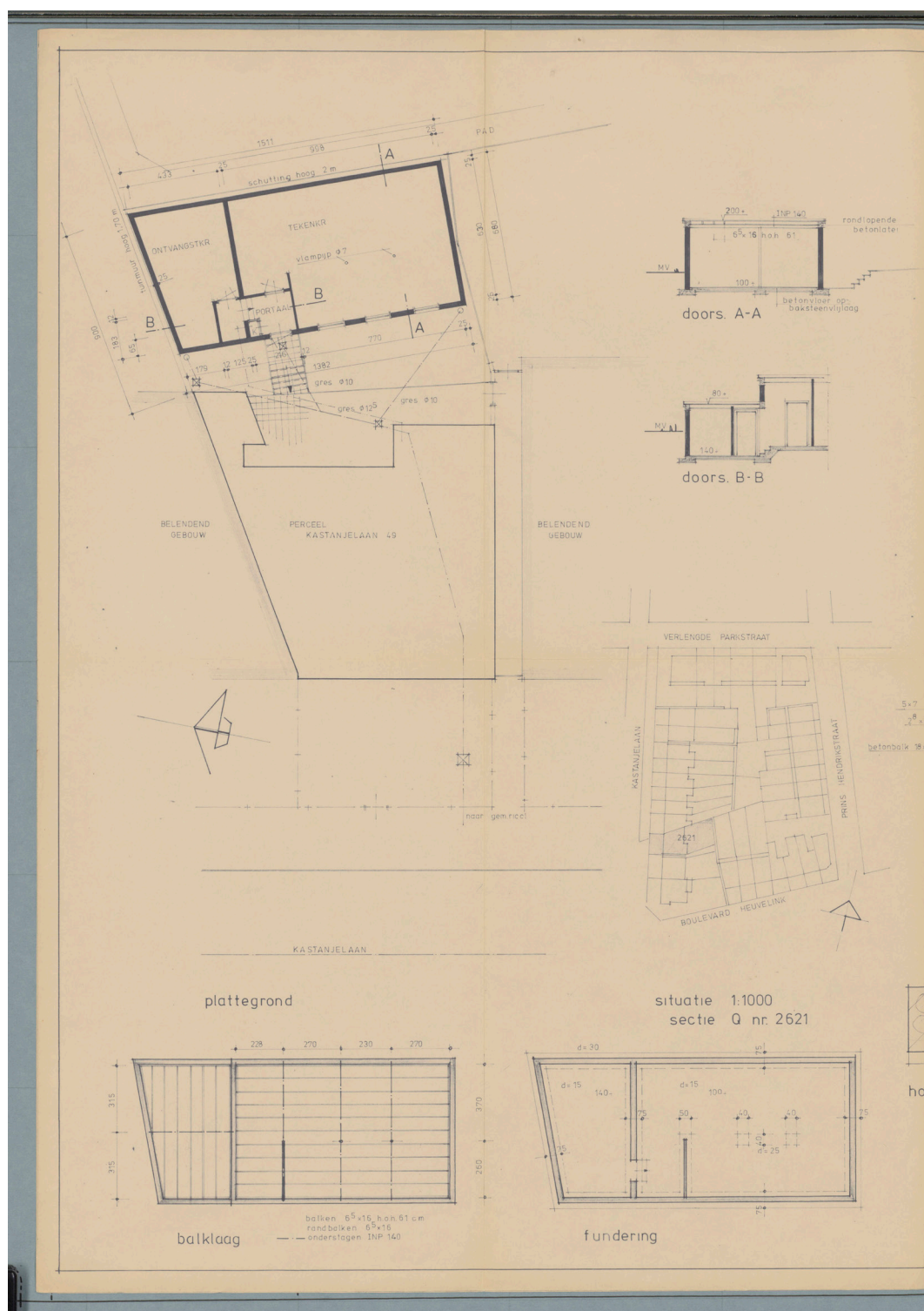
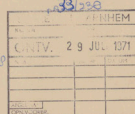
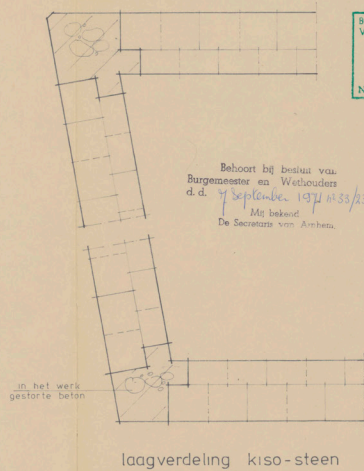
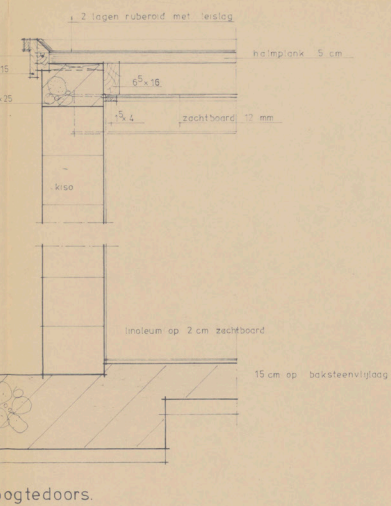
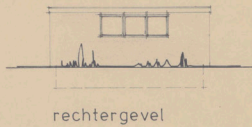
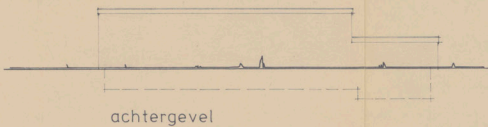
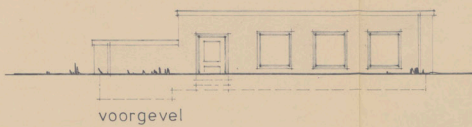


Figure A1. Scan of the building renovation in 1971.
Source: Gelders Archief. no. 314-1749.



KANTOORRUIMTE KASTANJELAAN 49

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Appendix 2

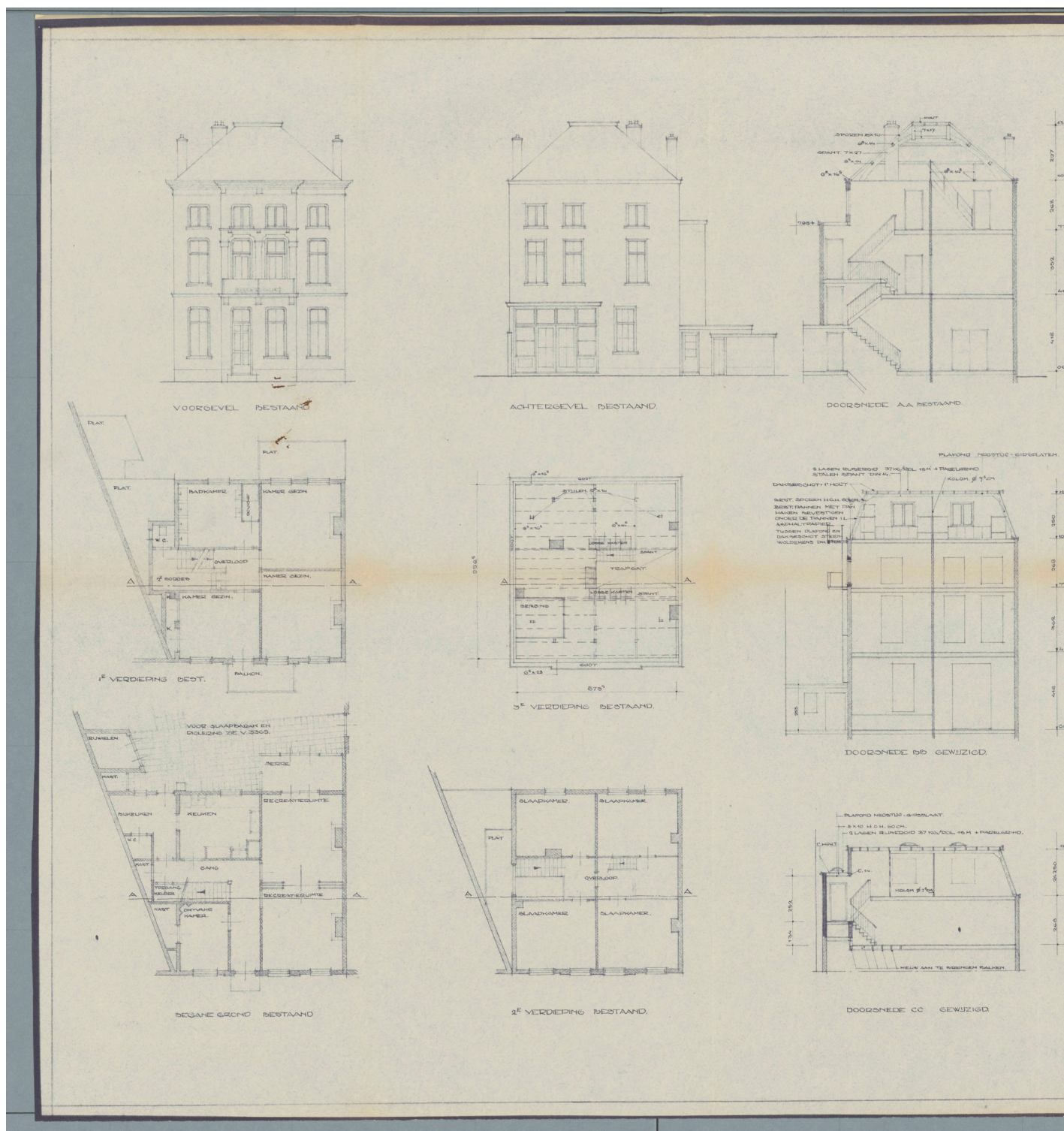
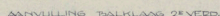
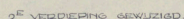
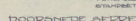
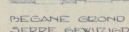
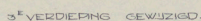
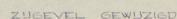
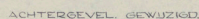
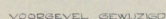


Figure A2. Scan of the building drawings of the remodelling of the roof construction of 1957.

Source: Gelders Archief. no. 2635-1019.



Mij bekend
in Secretaris van Aankomst

Mij bekend
te Secretaris van Aankomst

21. HALL 1957

21. 根據 1953

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ARNHEM

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SLAAPZAAL OP ZOLDER +
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Appendix 3

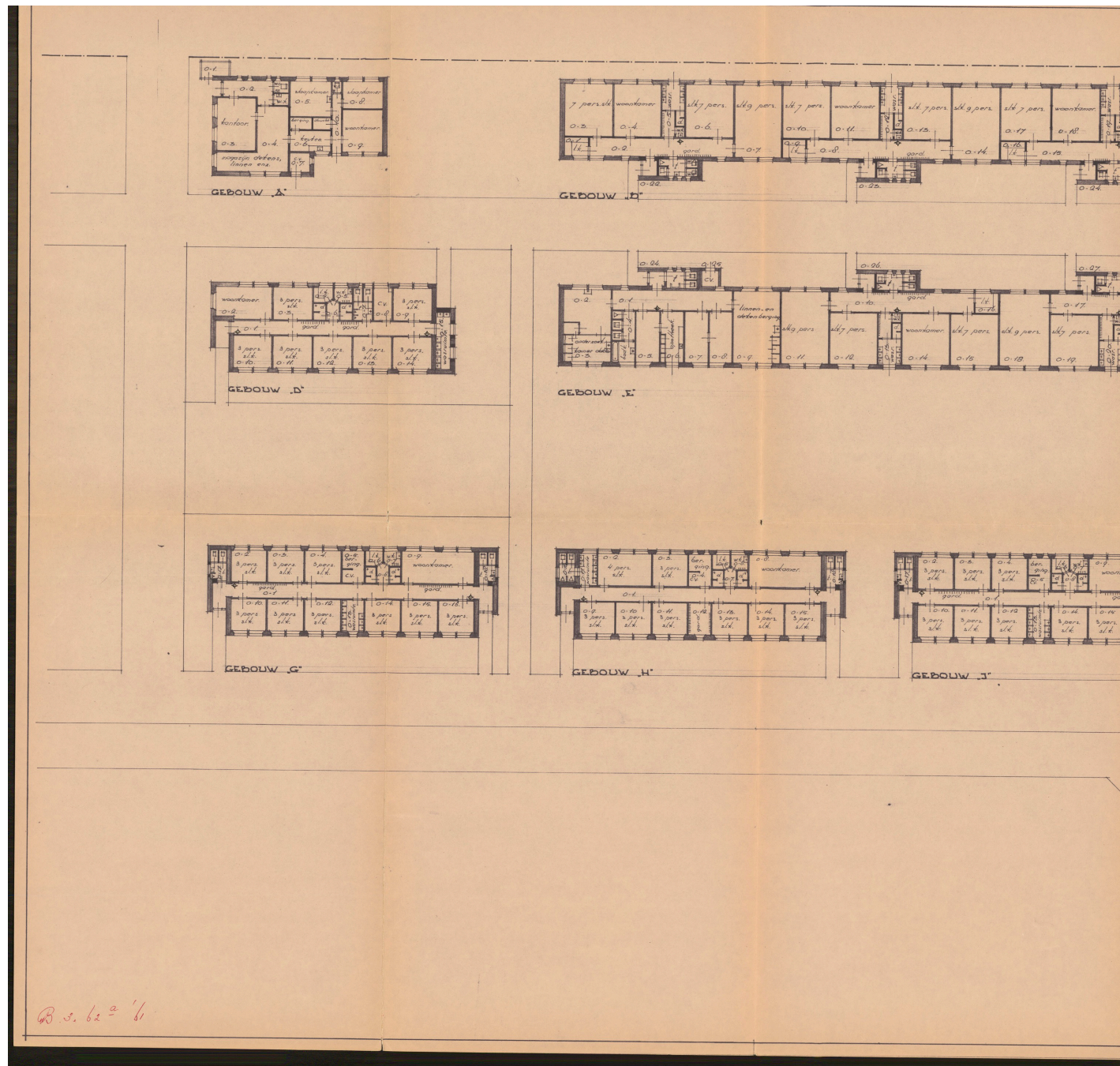
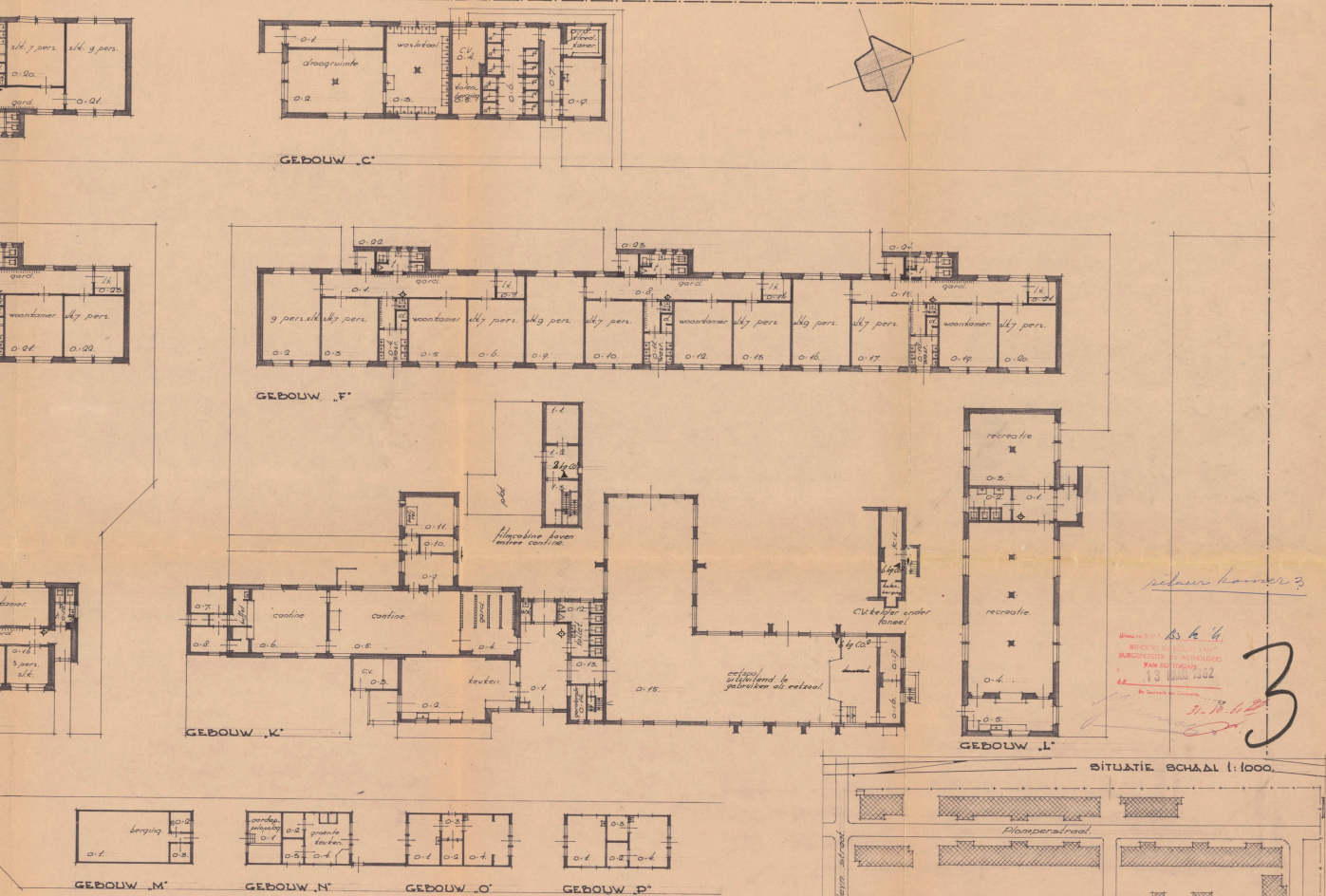


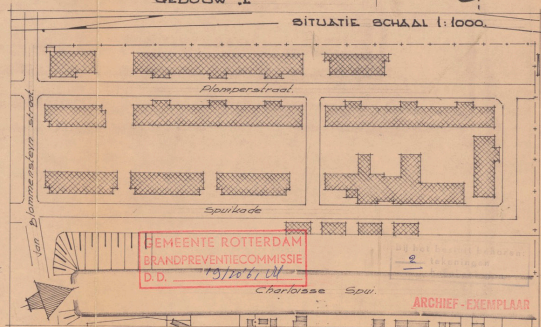
Figure A3. Scan of the building drawings of Verzorgingscentrum Waalhaven from 1961.
Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. B3-62-1961.



ritsleur kamer 3

Uitsluitend te gebruiken voor het
BUREAU VAN ROTTERDAM
13 JAN 1962

3



GEMEENTE ROTTERDAM
BRANDPREVENTIECOMMISSIE
D.D. 19/12/61

ARCHIEF-EXEMPLAAR

- tervoel
- slaapkamer 2 x 2,5 m
 - toilet
 - slaapkamer
 - garderobe
 - douche
 - badkamer
 - werkruimte
 - centrale verwarming
 - personen
 - badkamer
 - wasruimte
 - bestaand metaalwerk
 - nieuw
 - vloerbedekking met 3% rubberlaag lang en smal
 - behuizing in baksteen 12" dik
 - brandblus apparaat
- naar gegevens de voorstellen*

GEMEENTEWERKEN ROTTERDAM			
VERZORGINGSCENTRUM WAALHAVEN.			
BESTEKTEKENING 2-1-1-1			
TE MAKEN TOESTAND.			
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Appendix 4

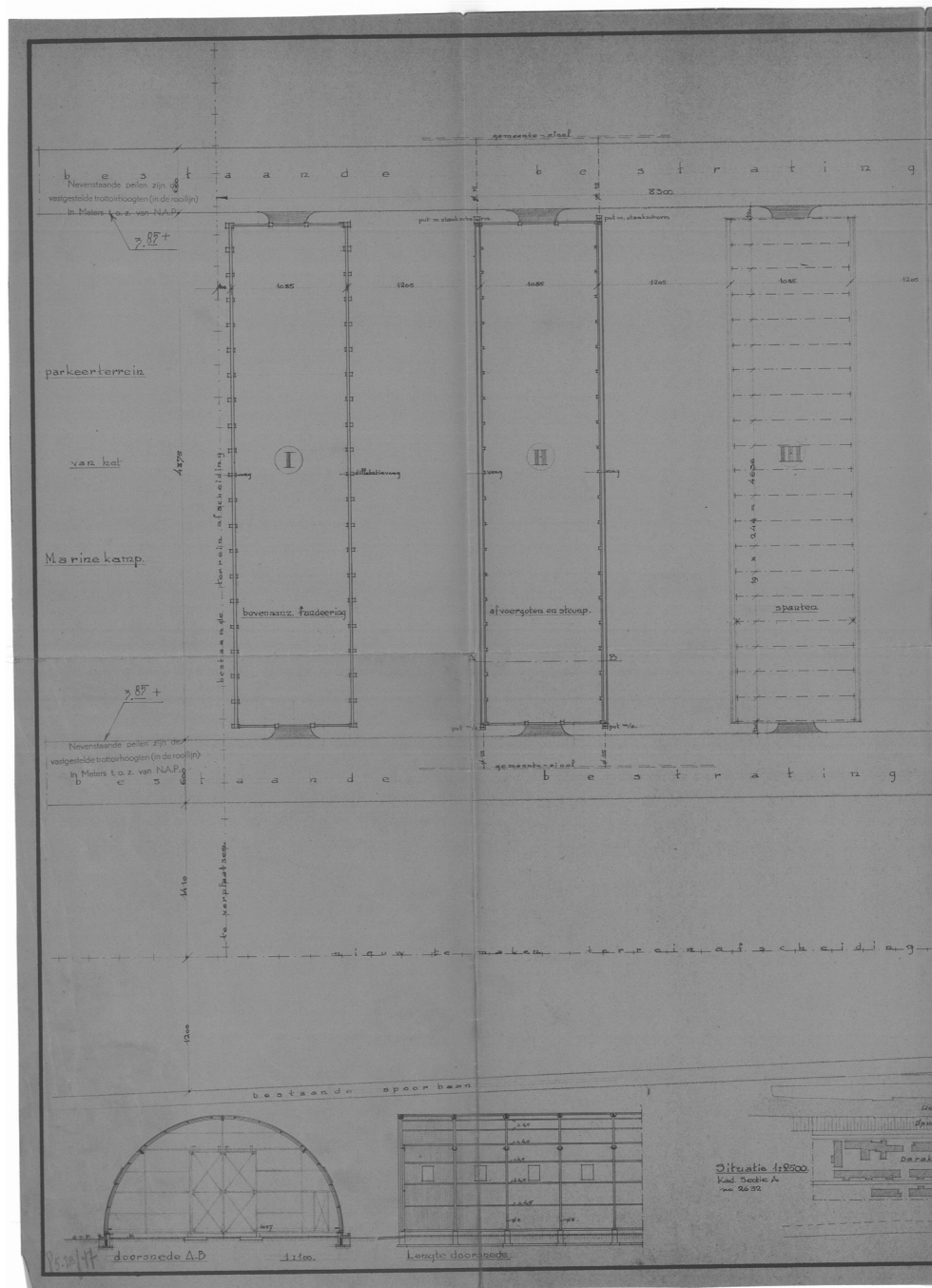
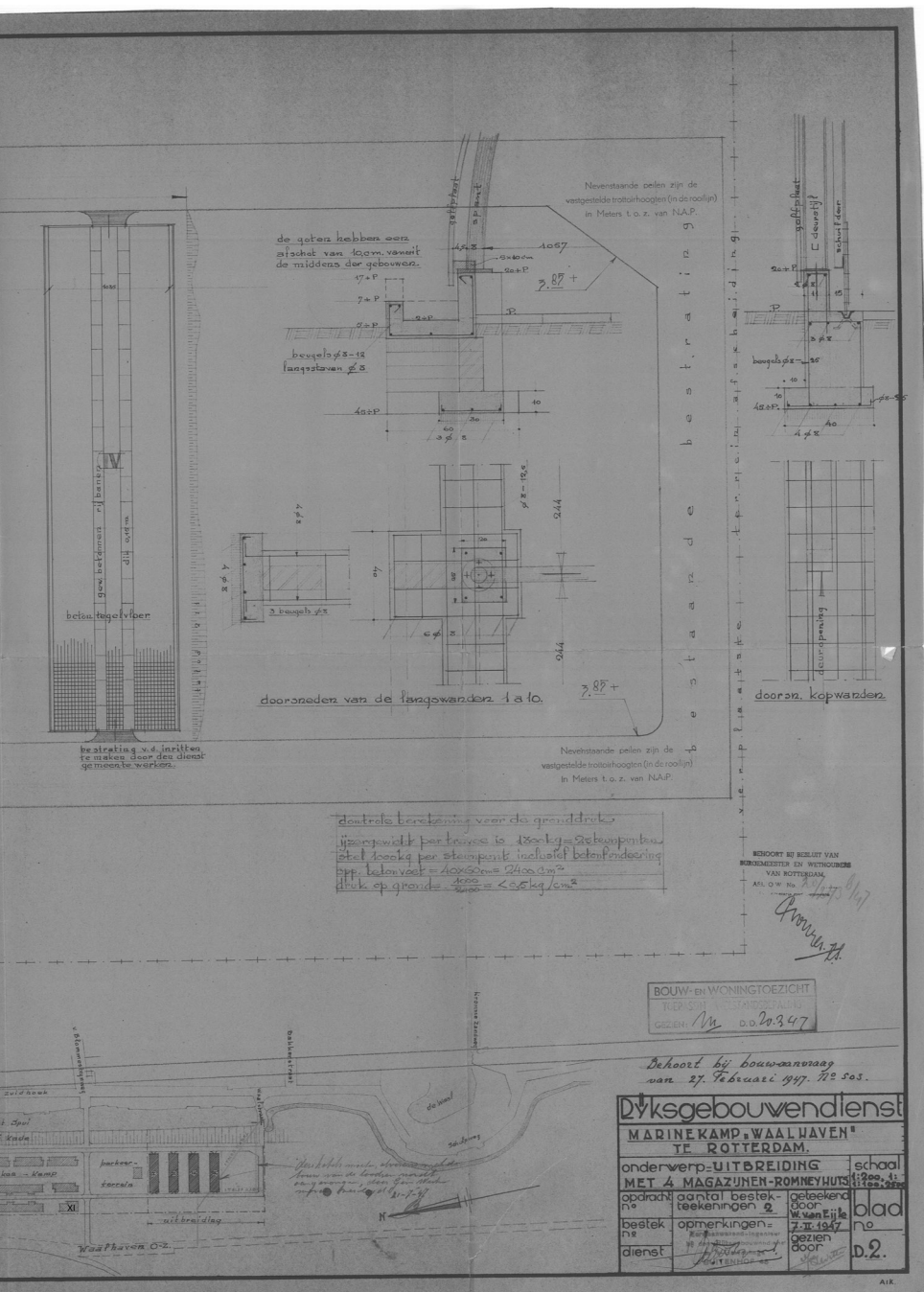


Figure A4. Scan of the building drawings of Marinekamp Waalhaven in Rotterdam from 1947.
Source: Stadsarchief Rotterdam, no. P5-23-1947.



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<p>Filipa van der Laan</p> <p>April 2023</p>
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