A grammar of urban fabrics

A toolbox of implicit building rules in the Netherlands

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Structure

- Introduction research
- Elements of the urban grammar
- 8 cases: 4 types of fabric, 2 examples per type
  - 1. Villages
  - 2. Suburban areas
  - 3. Urban areas
  - 4. Inner cities
- Comparison: implicit rules
- Conclusions
Introduction research

- Research 'The fundamentals of urbanism'
- 4 publications planned, 3 published

2002
The design of the city plan

2006
The design of the public space

2008
Urbanistic rules for building

2013
The programme of the city
Introduction research

- Core of the research: 'layers' of urbanism
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- Making the given terrain
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  - Making the given terrain
  - Suitable for usage by people
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- Making the given terrain
- Suitable for usage by people
- By dividing the city plan in public and private
Introduction research

- Core of the research: 'layers' of urbanism
- Making the given terrain
- Suitable for usage by people
- By dividing the city plan in public and private,
- Designing the public space
Introduction research

- Core of the research: 'layers' of urbanism
- Making the given terrain
- Suitable for usage by people
- By dividing the city plan in public and private,
- Designing the public space
- And making regulations for buildings
Elements of the urban grammar

A. City plan and main structure

- usage
- buildings
- public space
- city plan
- terrain
Elements of the urban grammar

A. City plan and main structure
B. Parcelling plan and block type
Elements of the urban grammar

A. City plan and main structure
B. Parcelling plan and block type
C. Building type

usage
buildings
public space
city plan
terrain
Elements of the urban grammar

A. City plan and main structure
B. Parcelling plan and block type
C. Building type
D. Density
Elements of the urban grammar

A. City plan and main structure
B. Parcelling plan and block type
C. Building type
D. Density
E. Public-private transition and street scene
Elements of the urban grammar

A. City plan and main structure
B. Parcelling plan and block type
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- Linguistic grammar
  - e.g. relationship between verb-subject-object
  - differs per language
Elements of the urban grammar

A. City plan and main structure
B. Parcelling plan and block type
C. Building type
D. Density
E. Public-private transition and street scene

- Linguistic grammar
  - e.g. relationship between verb-subject-object
    - differs per language
- 'Urban grammar'
  - relationship between A-E
    - differs per fabric type
8 cases

1. Villages
   - Gees (±1200)
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   - Rotterdam Vreewijk (1913)
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3. Urban areas
   - Rotterdam Heemraadssingel (1887)
8 cases

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- Rotterdam Vreewijk (1913)
- The Hague Ypenburg (1997)

3. Urban areas
- Rotterdam Heemraadssingel (1887)
- The Hague Vaillantlaan (1988)
8 cases

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4. Inner cities
   - Groningen Boteringestraat (±1040)
8 cases

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   - Rotterdam Weena (1991)
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Comparison: implicit rules
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Conclusions

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- This knowledge is necessary for a contextual as well as for a contrasting design.
Conclusions

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- When an urban design has to be made within the context of an existing city or village, it is essential that the urban designer understands the grammar of this context.
- This knowledge is necessary for a contextual as well as for a contrasting design.
- It is even important for a design without any context, because in that case the designer has to build his own grammar, based on existing rules.
Conclusions

- The relationships that form the 'urban grammar' form a toolbox of implicit rules
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  - By measuring public and private space and determining the main axis
    → city plan
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  - By combining these elements → starting points for new designs