Reflection P4 Presentation

PROJECT DATA
Theme: MSc3&4 Architecture & Dwelling [Q1-Q2 2012-2013]
At Home In The City I Amsterdam
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Theme research: Dwelling within the new history (in co-operation with Myrthe van Voskuiljen & Vijoletta Petrak)
Individual research: Cohousing
Design project: Zero-commute housing through cohousing
Teachers: Olv Klijn (main teacher), Ype Cuperus (Building Technology), Karel Vollers (external examiner)

RELATION RESEARCH & DESIGN
For this studio we did research in how existing buildings can be transformed into residential buildings. This research was done in order to understand how to re-use existing buildings for dwelling programs and use this knowledge to enrich the new building stock. Re-using existing buildings is a way of sustainability. On the Ronetteterrein I will use another form of sustainability in my design. My goal is to design an energy-neutral building.

The Ronetteterrein is part of the industrial area Overamstel. This industrial area has 9 till 17 hours function, which leads to a ‘dead’ and empty area after office hours. This industrial zone is not attractive as a living zone for families, because there are no facilities in the near surroundings of the site. Therefore: families, who do want to live on the Ronetteterrein, spill a lot of time on commuting. The new residential building(s) on the Ronetteterrein should function as zero-commute housing.

One way to be able to reduce the amount of commutes is to use the idea of cohousing. “Cohousing is a project where each household has a private residence, but also shares extensive common facilities with the larger group, such as a kitchen and dining hall, children’s playrooms, workshops, guest rooms, and laundry facilities.” (McCamant & Durett, 1988, p. 10).
A cohousing project is targeted for all households and these different households can learn and benefit from each other. Some common facilities in cohousing project, such as a day care and a shop can reduce the amount of commutes. An example of a cohousing project is shown in figure 1.

Fig. 1 Common facilities in Trudeslund in Denmark
Cohousing is introduced in the seventies and eighties and is based on the idea of collectivity, in which cluster rooms play an important role. Nowadays people live more on their own (due to the individualism) and therefore these cluster rooms are not used anymore. That is the reason why the idea of cohousing needs to be upgraded to the way how we now want to live.

Another way to design a zero-commute building is to combine living and working activities in one building.

**DESIGN**

In my design I would like to integrate cohousing and living and working activities in one building as a solution to reduce the amount of commutes for families with children. I will use a modern version of cohousing (as is shown in figure 2) in my design, in which common facilities in cluster rooms will be used again. Therefore I will combine dwellings with five common facilities: workspaces, day care, guest rooms, fitness room and multifunctional room.

Each group of seven dwellings is clustered around a cluster corridor. These seven dwellings are a mix of different households. The mix of different households promotes the contact between different generations and increases the collectivity in the building. Besides that it is also important that this modern version of cohousing is energy-neutral, because all new buildings in 2020 should be energy-neutral.

![Fig. 2 Scheme of modern version of cohousing](image)

**RESEARCH METHOD**

In my graduation plan I have mentioned that I wanted to do my research on three ways: historical-theoretical research, morphological research and typological research. For the historical research it is important to investigate the trend of making zero-commute housing by combining working and living activities. Theoretical research uses literature sources to define words like ‘zero-commute housing’ and ‘cohousing’.

Morphological research is done by projecting case studies on the Ronetteterrein to get a good idea of the scale of the site and what kind of program it can contain. The goal of typological research is to define different typologies and to investigate how they are used in case studies.
During my design process I have used all these three methods to investigate how to combine zero-commute housing and cohousing.

**RELATION DESIGN & WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT**

Families with children spill a lot of time on commuting, which results in families with children, who have a lack of spare time. This new way of organizing zero-commute housing through cohousing can solve the lack of time for families with children. This mixing of generations can provide more social communities in which both generations can support, learn and benefit from each other.

Besides that these new kind of residential buildings can be a small step in solving the congestion problems. This can be explained by the fact that this new kind of residential building decreases the amount of commutes, because people work and live in the same building and there are several common facilities in the building.