Area-based asset management by Dutch housing associations

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Abstract

Since Dutch housing associations are independent organisations which have to take their own decisions on their housing stock, many housing associations develop asset management plans to secure that their portfolio meets company goals and market demand. However, in practice decisions of housing associations are often not the direct result of these plans, but of incidents at the neighbourhood level or of emerged opportunities. Next to that, housing associations nowadays do not only focus on the quality of their own housing stock, but also on the physical, economical and social quality of the whole neighbourhood, which implies cooperation with a wide variety of local actors. Therefore, housing associations in the Netherlands are increasingly taking decisions on their housing stock on the scale of the neighbourhood, as opposed to the scale of the portfolio. In taking these decisions, they take into account the characteristics of the area and the plans and wishes of other actors present in the areas. This way of decision-making combines various planning methods, of which the rational and collaborative planning methods seem to most important. In this paper the results of a case study of a housing association working in an urban renewal neighbourhood are presented. The planning process of this housing associations will be described and explained using theories of planning.

Keywords: asset management, The Netherlands, area-based, urban renewal, housing association

Introduction

Housing associations in the Netherlands can be regarded as social enterprises that provide a wide variety of housing related services. Many housing associations in The Netherlands work with asset management plans to secure that their portfolio meets company goals and market demand. However, in practice decisions of housing associations are often not a direct result of their strategic plans, but of incidents at the neighbourhood level or of emerged opportunities. Next to that, housing associations nowadays do not only focus on the quality of their own housing stock, but also on the physical, economical and social quality of the whole neighbourhood, which implies cooperation with a wide variety of local actors. As a result housing associations in the Netherlands are increasingly employing an area-based approach towards asset management, which takes into account the characteristics of areas and the other actors present in these areas. This approach has effects on the way housing associations manage their housing stock, the way they organise decision-making and the way they interact with other actors.

In an earlier paper (van Overmeeren, 2010) I have described five planning styles which housing associations can use within area-based asset management; rational, incremental, collaborative, political and social movement style. A survey among housing associations in urban renewal areas showed that rational elements of planning still play an important role in decision-making on activities regarding the housing stock in regeneration areas, but that these rational elements are combined with elements from
other styles, of which the most important is the collaborative planning style. In this paper I will describe and explain the planning process of one housing association in one area.

**Method**

For this single case study I selected a typical case from the housing associations that participated in the survey. The case is typical because, according to the survey results, it also puts emphasis on the elements of the rational and collaborative styles.

The sources of evidence consist of documentation and interviews. I first studied among others annual reports, area visions, council meeting reports and then conducted semi-structured interviews with people from the housing associations (area manager, policy advisor and head of department), and from other actors (a civil servants, an alderman, a tenant, an area manager and a regional director of a neighbouring housing association).

**The housing association: De Alliantie**

_De Alliantie_ (The Alliance) is a large housing association with over 56,000 rental dwelling in possession. It is the result of a merger of four housing associations in 2001. Its property is spread across the regions of Amsterdam, Gooi, Amersfoort and Almere. The _Indische Buurt_ is part of the Amsterdam branch, one of the four companies of _De Alliantie_.

Since 2009 _De Alliantie_ has four social objectives: accessible housing market, strong neighborhoods, social real estate, and energy and sustainability.

The theme of strong neighborhoods is elaborated in the vision "_De Alliantie takes the district_". _De Alliantie_ itself selects priority areas that are a priority for investment in housing and neighborhood improvement. _De Alliantie_ identified 12 priority areas in which 30% of the dwellings _De Alliantie_ is located. The _Indische Buurt_ is one of the priority areas.

In these districts, _De Alliantie_ has a strong position, so they actually can influence the living environment. The contribution of _De Alliantie_ depends on local circumstances and is thus area-based. Sometimes _De Alliantie_ is partner, sometimes director. Sometimes, _De Alliantie_ focuses mainly on home improvements and new buildings, sometimes on the social position of residents. Measures can be aimed at the perspective on work, social contacts or on the housing market.

Besides priority districts, _De Alliantie_ also has key areas where it is not so much about improving the position of residents, but about improving the housing stock. There is also a number of districts from which _De Alliantie_ will depart by selling property.

_De Alliantie_ believes it is good for neighborhoods as there are living middle-income groups in a neighborhood and if there is a variety of housing and amenities. According to _De Alliantie_, residents should be the main focus, economic activity should be stimulated and housing stock should be diversified (http://www.de-alliantie.nl/smartsite.shtml?id=6372: 01/07/2011).

To monitor developments in the priority districts, _De Alliantie_ uses "Restructuring Monitor". In this model, the structure (the current state of the neighbourhood) and dynamics (how the neighborhood changes) of the area are shown in three dimensions (demography, socio-economic and living). According to this monitor the _Indische Buurt_ structure is lower than average, but the development is positive.

**area: Indische Buurt**
The neighbourhood is located east of downtown Amsterdam, within the A10 ring road, and is part of the borough of Amsterdam-East (formerly part of Zeeburg). The district is bounded on the west by the railroad. In November 1900 private developers began building the first homes east of this line. Characteristic of this development was the creation of closed blocks of four floors with pitched roofs. Each building had different detailing, colors and materials. The dwellings were deep and narrow houses with little air and light penetration.

In the period 1910-1920 homes are built by housing associations. Typical of the buildings from this period is that individual premises can hardly be distinguished by the uniformity of housing, which is much less abundant than the private housing. After this period, the construction of private housing comes back on track. There is a plan specifying the overall structure of the area and the spaces for squares and parks.

Especially the houses of the latter period were, in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century, the first to be subject of urban renewal. These houses were rapidly developed with poor foundations, with poor materials and construction methods. The houses were largely replaced by new construction of four floors, with flat roofs.

The housing stock dating from the first period was bought by the housing associations in the nineteen eighties and was, awaiting the planned demolition, given a "small repair". This property is, along with a purchase of a housing estate from the period 1910-1920 ('Madura'), central to the asset management plan. This plan includes approximately 1700 dwellings (700 Madura and 1000 “small repair”) of the approximately 11,000 homes in the Indische Buurt.

**The process: A chronology**

**Phase I: The road to the asset management plan**

In 1995 the borough (stadsdeel) of Zeeburg made agreements with the housing associations about interventions in the housing stock in the period of 1995-2004. The objective was to have a core social housing stock of 65% (was 72), an affordable stock of 25% (was 26) and an expensive stock of 10% (was 2). The interventions consist mainly of construction and, to a lesser extent, in improvement of the quality (de Dageraad, 2002).

In the build-up to the asset management plan, the developments in the central city and the borough are of interest. Before the asset management plan was published, in 2001 the Borough Council adopted an urban renewal plan for the Indische Buurt for 2001-2005.

This plan mentions three major policy changes: “from subsidizing to directing", "from the home to the neighborhood" and "from sectoral to integrated”. These three changes have affected the relationship between the borough and the housing association: the role of the housing association in her choices and actions regarding the housing becomes stronger, the borough pulls back, can (and needs to) steer less on the property level, and changes its attention to the public space and to the economic and social pillar.

Despite this change, the borough has solid policy objectives in terms of quality and diversification of the housing stock. The aim is to a differentiation of 70% social (then 93%) and 30% market (then 7%). This means the increase of about 2300 market homes in the period 2000-2009. Besides increasing the number of market homes, the aim is also an increase in the number of larger homes (1600) at the expense of the number of small dwellings (2100).

The borough has little control mechanisms to enforce the realization of this policy. An active, wilful housing association is welcome. The plan is composed, according to one respondent, "in interaction with
the borough, the administration officials and also the alderman. What kind of neighbourhood do we have in mind, how should the housing stock look like in terms of diversification? For we may say, we want 30% market, if that is not shared by the politics then you have nothing.”

Phase II: drawing up of the Asset management Plan: decisions on the stock at district level

The asset management plan was drafted by de Alliantie itself, without input from residents. An organized resident’s structure for the Indische Buurt was not available. "We have not hired an external agency. It is done completely independently. [...] First a kind of SWOT analysis has been made. Then, on that basis, we determined what we should want and that is elaborated to concrete interventions for places."

It was drafted at a time when thinking about and appreciation of urban living changed. Where in the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century often was chosen for demolition of pre-war buildings, now "conservation and restoration" was the motto. Although residential construction and technical quality of this construction is often not properly done, these buildings were seen as the strength of the Indische Buurt.

Problems that are mentioned in the plan are a one-sided level of amenities, a low popularity of the rental dwellings, the negative image and frugal housing built in the eighties and the large group of people with a weak socio-economic position. Opportunities include the location (‘quite central’), cultural diversity, making 'incubators' for new businesses, selling homes, the interest in living in an urban living environment, connections with public transport and the urban traffic network, the urban structure, architectural details and enclosed character.

A series of possible measures is reported: improving the quality of both the structure and the interior of the home; differentiation in housing type, size, price and ownership by merging of dwellings, letting with market-based rent, selling, demolition / new construction and upgrading of the housing built in the eighties. The analysis is very broad. For instance it also deals with the housing built in the eighties, the economy and the importance of ‘social cohesion, social activation, training and education’, but the operations are restricted to physical measures in the Madura and 'small repair' property.

Out of these possible measures, a series of specific measures is selected to reach the transformation objectives. Out of the target percentages of the district follow indicative target numbers (column 3 and 4 in Table @). Then the labels are assigned to the estates. This is based on the characteristics of the stock, such as the technical condition, the location in the neighborhood and the living quality of the houses.

"[A]t the very beginning, when we made the plan and thought 'we want a mix of interventions, we want to maintain and repair, we have minor interventions and major interventions, we will sell and enlarge homes’, we invented a certain ratio and now we see where we are going to do what."

Remarkably a transformation task is mentioned with the intended differentiation of the stock, but this task is qualified in the following way: "It is not important how the 1700 homes are divided across the various segments. Eventually the entire Alliantie stock in the district of Zeeburg - currently more than 3200 homes – must meet the transformation objective". In the remaining property in Zeeburg the ratio between social / market is 87% -13%, so to achieve the desired differentiation of 70-30 for all of Zeeburg, the intervention in the in the Madura and 'small repair' property is much firmer (assuming no interventions in the other property). This is reflected in table 1: after the planned interventions only 53% of the Madura and 'small repair' property is in the social sector.

**Table 1 Difference between the differentiation objective and the planned differentiation**

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One respondent qualifies the distribution of 70-30 as follows: "[I]f you can give me a formula which indicates that the objective should be 70-30, that's very nice. [...] If you believe that there should be a certain amount of market sector in such a neighborhood, then it is convenient to have a specific number in mind."

In the asset management plan targets are set at a high scale level (Zeeburg), but the interventions are limited to the Madura and ‘small repair’ property which is located in the northern part of the Indische Buurt. It is not clear what the final differentiation at the lower scale level will be.

Although clearly emphasis is on measures relating to the housing stock, also the economic pillar and public spaces are discussed. Interventions are aimed at maintaining business accommodations, creating incubators and combinations of working and living, the redevelopment of courtyards and the realization of parking spaces.

Finally attention is given to transition management in the period during the execution of the renewal, to communication and resident participation, to investments and risks, and to the organization and operation of the process.

**Phase III: Collaborating with the district of Zeeburg, the first covenant.**

In order to implement the asset management plan, in March 2002, just before the district council elections, an agreement between the district and de Alliantie is made for the period until 2005.

"[W]hen the [asset management] plan was to be adopted in 2002, our board said: ‘this is very nice, but we only do this if we can get commitment of the district that they do not only facilitate in planning permissions, but that there is also a social program to be developed’.

This agreement included a program where private owners were given a small grant to renovate, split their buildings in apartments and then sell them, a program of investments in the public space and a program of social investments.

**Phase IV: Implementing the asset management plan, decisions at project level**

In 2003 the first pilot projects were started. "That experiment was to see in what ways you could merge dwellings. The idea was that you could develop some sample floor plans that you could use again quite easily in all projects." Following this first project, a number of changes were made. It was decided to hire an architect, because more quality in the preparation phase was needed. To much things went wrong. ‘Homes that were not been surveyed correctly, we found that the renovated house was not what residents wanted and that, although all those buildings look alike, there are specific features that you need to
address. At some point you know you can merge vertically and horizontally and you can merge the fourth floor with the attic, but how can differ from project to project.”.

Also the way the residents were treated changed. The asset management plan resulted in a schedule of properties that were merged or upgraded. Employees of the housing association did house visits to ask what the residents wanted. Hence, residents were approached only individually. In one of the first projects (merger of dwellings) residents responded that they did not want so much and that the houses were fine to them as they were. They even hung posters opposing the plans. These signals led De Alliantie to decide that, despite the lack of official residents committees, with each project the residents should have had the opportunity to participate through a platform of residents. De Alliantie presented the principles that came out of the asset management plan at a residents meeting. Subsequently, staff investigated if these principles were feasible. How many households want to leave, how many would stay, what kind of homes do the remaining residents want? Then the plan was worked out further with an architect and the residents’ platform. In this way residents could influence the plan. In the words of one respondent:

"That the residents were given more voice in the planning process was also because the area manager came from community work and brought the attention for the residents needs to De Alliantie. This was also enabled by the fact that there were many people who preferred to move out and get an ‘urgency status’ and ‘moving allowance’.”

Phase V: working with other housing associations and the district, the second covenant

In 2005/2006, the approach is broadened, because de Alliantie realized that they could not do sufficient for the whole neighbourhood on its own:

"[I]f you are talking about the entire neighbourhood, we will cover only part of the neighbourhood. We know that Ymere was working with various investment. But especially that largest landlord, Eigen Haard, did not make progress very much. If Eigen Haard does not join the program now, […] you get at some point a successful part of the neighbourhood and part of the neighbourhood which continues to lag behind. And then you do not accomplish on the scale of the city and the neighbourhood what you intended. You must look beyond your own property."

Shortly after the district council elections in 2006 an offer is made to the district:

"We sat down with Ymere and Eigen Haard and said: ‘We want to continue our efforts, what do you want? […] We have 130 million, what do we have with the three of us? Then we do a bid, an offer you can not refuse’.”

In this offer, the housing associations indicated which investments they were willing to take. They demonstrate the joint commitment in the differentiation of the housing stock in the Indische Buurt and formulate their expectations of the district: "conditions to do our own work', 'principle street following house' and 'agreements on the social domain'. After lengthy negotiations, on July 11, 2007 The Covenant Vernieuwing [Renewal] Indische Buurt 2007-2010 was signed. With this agreement, the approach of the Indische Buurt expanded to the entire Indische Buurt and more emphasis was put on the social pillar.

Also in 2007 the western part of the Indische Buurt is indicated as a priority district by central government:

"[S]lowly the approach shifted much more to a neighborhood approach in which the focus was on the inhabitants and the problems of the Indische Buurt and livability was monitored to see what are our ambitions. Of course the differentiation of our property is an important prerequisite, but it went much further. It included social problems and unemployment."
In 2010 the district of Zeeburg merged with district Oost-Watergraafsmeer and the covenant ends. A new agreement is made in which the approach is continued. However, influenced by the economic (and housing) crisis, some area developments are put on hold.

The analysis

What elements of planning did de Alliantie use in the development of (planned) activities regarding the housing stock in the Indische Buurt, why does she use these and what is the performance?

Rational planning elements

1. rational activity: analysis

In the rational planning style, alternative means to set goals are compared. Principal activity is the analysis of information.

This interpretation fits especially in the phase of preparing the asset management plan. In this plan a SWOT analysis is done based on collected information. Goals (transformation target) are formulated that lead to the formulation of various interventions in the housing stock. Then these interventions are distributed across the stock.

"[T]he [drafting of the asset management plan] is a structured way to analyze and determine what you should do and how you should do it. This function has been very clear. By writing the plan, you can clearly explain why you've come to it. Doing research contributes to this. What is the position of the neighborhood, what are the strengths and weaknesses? This process ensures at least that you've thought quite well what to do and that you can better explain and motivate it."

The last sentence of the above quote indicates that the rational activity also has the function of awareness (think what to do) and to be used in communicating with others (explanation and motivation) and thus directly linked with other planning elements and styles.

2. rational actor: Policy department / specialist

In the rational planning style planners are 'experts', such as (external) consultants and policy advisors.

The policy department was involved in analysis. The asset management plan was not only drawn up by "specialists", but also by others within de Alliantie. Also at project level, experts are involved in the process, for instance the architect or an estate agent.

3. Rational knowledge: objective knowledge / facts

Technical information (for example, on the condition of the foundation) was important:

"[W]e had to do research on the foundations, which can be done in some ways. To dig pits everywhere is a bit complicated on this scale. But yet you want enough information. It was difficult in that sense. The agency that did the study was not always clear on how long the foundation would last. So we knew that we would have bad foundations at some locations. If you restore foundations you can change structures and realize the expensive part of the program there. That's more efficient. In the process it was not always easy to get a good opinion about it."

In the SWOT analysis 'statistical data, qualitative and quantitative, and technical research’ is used. Data of the municipal department of research and statistics, the AFWC (Amsterdam Federation of Housing Associations) and the land registry is used for the distribution of housing and the demographics of the
population. Information from the housing distribution system is used to a picture of the "shortcomings of the existing housing stock."

**Incremental planning elements**

1. Incremental activity: small steps and adjusting

Within the incremental style the main activities are to adapt existing strategies to changing circumstances and to repetitively put a set of small steps in the right direction.

The plan was adjusted based on new information about changed regulations. Agreements of the first covenant are followed up in the second and the third covenant agreement with modifications. The main direction and the main goal remain the same. The stock plan is reassessed once, because the quality of the foundations was not as expected. There were more buildings where the foundation, upon closer inspection, had to be restored.

2. Incremental actor: (unspecified / divers).

3. Incremental knowledge: personal experience of actors

In the incremental style knowledge is based on personal knowledge and experience of the professionals involved.

In the phase ‘implementation at project level’, for example, the expertise of the local housing market built up by the sales department is used to underpin decisions. The labelling experiments have also led to experience by the relevant actors within *de Alliantie* that has been used for other projects. Based on this experiment, for example, the option for a upgrading (instead of major renovations) disappeared.

**Political planning elements**

1. Political activity: negotiate / trade-offs

In the political style actions with respect to the housing stock are the result of a negotiation in which an exchange of resources and interests of various individuals, departments or parties is taking place.

Not everything was open and transparent. There were, for instance, agreements with the alderman for a back-up scenario for the Timorplein School which was not known by Ymere, the party that eventually invested in the school. Also, not always was acted according to the rules. Houses were taken from the regular rental system long before the reference date (*peildatum*) to make it possible to guarantee tenants a return option.

Several times in the process a 'bid' was done. The asset management plan of *de Alliantie* was used as a bid to the district. This strategy was (jointly with Ymere and Eigen Haard) repeated for the second and third covenant to come. The district negotiated intensively on the bid (and return).

It was a matter of convincing: "it was actually a sum. Look what a unique offering we do? We make an offer of 130 million guilders to invest in the neighbourhood. The plan is fully compliant with what you want with the neighbourhood". Results were also obtained by "moving along" by, for example, contributing to the funding of the social program.

"[W]hat took a lot of time and effort was to reach good agreements with the district. We said we must also learn from the lessons and just fixing up the homes does not move up the neighbourhood. […] So it needs a broad investment program. *De Alliantie* wants to invest 130 million guilders, but only if we have
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performance agreements with the district that they invest in the public space and in education. It took us about eighteen months, because you have to do with the primacy of politics.”

2. Political actor: leader (and beneficiary).

Within the political planning approach a leader works on a one-on-one basis with people which he offers benefits in exchange of support for his agenda.

Leading actors were the manager of Amsterdam East who was fully responsible for the Indische Buurt and the members of the steering committee (the alderman and fellow directors of housing associations).

3. Political knowledge: selective / strategic

Examples of selective and strategic use of knowledge were encountered little. Information was not always shared with others, e.g. on the maintenance state of buildings.

Collaborative Planning elements

1. Collaborative actor: stakeholders.

Within the asset management process of the Indische Buurt there were different phases in which stakeholders sat together to make decisions regarding the housing stock. In Phase I it was the contribution of de Alliantie in the urban renewal plan for the Indische Buurt for 2001-2005. In Phase II it was the internal group that was involved in the preparation of the asset management plan. In phase III, it was de Alliantie and the district (the first covenant). In Phase IV, it were the joint decisions in consultation with the residents’ platform and the architect. In phase V it was the cooperation in the project team and steering group under the second covenant.

2. Collaborative knowledge: Local knowledge

Local knowledge is the mixture of knowledge built up through practical experience and the frames of reference people use to filter and give meaning to that experience (Healey, 1998). There were different phases in which local knowledge was used.

Knowledge within the residents’ platforms: residents were involved in designing the floor plans and brought in their knowledge: "... what do we think of these drawings? Do we want kitchens and bedrooms in front or in the back of the house? Are there enough bedrooms, are they big enough? Is there any storage space?"

Also at the project level for example, information from the lettings department for the "current letting situation, how many houses there are temporary let is always important information. You always want to know from the management organization if there are specific management problems in the estate".

3. Collaborative activity: consultation and cooperation

Consulting with the residents (at project level) was started after protests from residents: "Then we started talking [...] to see how we could come closer together. In response [to the protests], we said: "There are no tenant committees, but in every project we need to give people opportunity to join a residents’ platform."

"We present our starting points to the residents. Then we do a residents survey to see if these are feasible. Do quite a few people like to move away, so we can merge dwellings? And what kind of households want to return? Can you provide adequate housing for them? So then you look if you can implement the starting points. And then you develop the plan further with an architect who explores different
possibilities, but also with a residents’ platform. So they will have the option to make an impact on the plan, the floor plan and you can also bring in the survey results."

Working with district and corporations was focussed on shared ambitions and visions: "Everything has its own pace. That was the idea of the covenant. We are investigating the ambitions and visions, and then we split the neighbourhood into quadrants, and everyone can work there at their own pace, as long as you know what the final Picture is. I am a passionate supporter of this kind of approach in which you have a shared viewpoint. Where do we want to go rowing. And then everyone rows at his own pace. But in the same direction, with the same final picture in his mind."

**Social movement planning**

1. Social actor: unrepresented and their 'advocate'

One of the few residents’ committees of the neighbourhood did not agree with plans for extensive renovation of their estate. This was before the "system" of residents platforms arose.

2. Social knowledge: substantive arguments, facts

Substantive arguments that support the interest of a group, and influences (intended) actions with respect to the housing stock.

Residents claimed that they lived in their house satisfactorily, and that there was no reason to renovate. Arguments of the residents were also focused on process: the need for renovation was not demonstrated, residents had no access to the plans. In a report of a meeting of a Council Committee on 10/23/2003 a resident states: "October 2002 the first rumours reached us of an upcoming, major renovation. What then followed was a quest for the plans of *de Alliantie*, to which we until today still have no access."

3. Social activity: developing alternative plans and opposing current plans

In phase IV residents hang posters and spoke to the district council.

**Assessment of the process performance**

*Feasibility of the process*

A major factor that contributed to the feasibility of the process is that there was room to respond to individual residents needs. This was made possible by the function of the area developer:

"area developers are the principal of the projects (technically), while at the same time we are responsible for participation [...] Because that is the same person, you can use it to develop your plan. So if the architect discovered good opportunities for those buildings, you keep in mind the results from the residents survey."

What also helped was the fact that the district, especially in the early years of the plan, was unpopular.

"Relatively many people of the *Indische Buurt* said 'I came here because I could get a home quicker, if I can move to a better place, I would be happy’. We also could easily say: We will succeed in suiting the plans to the people who wanted to return."

In addition, in preparing the asset management plan the labeling went rather easy because it was an autonomous, top-down exercise: "Projects emerged from these maps with all those estate numbers. In 2001, we had a session in which we decided where we maintain and repair, sell, improve, what fits where. [...] We have created labels and assigned them top-down. Practical and easy to do."
What did not contribute to the feasibility of the process, were the uncertainties about the state of the foundations. "It was not always easy to have a good opinion about them, and during the execution of the plans, if you talk about changes, it appeared that in some places on the basis of that first investigation was concluded that the foundation would hold but that later on it appeared not to be the case."

*Action potential*

The process has led to implementation of the (principles of) the plans, although delayed and in modified form.

A sense of urgency has contributed to the implementation:

"No one had doubts about the necessity that something would happen. Everyone had a sense of urgency. As we passed by to tell residents to move out they wanted compensation but agreed. While if the programs were executed in Kinkerbuurt or Pijp, which are popular neighborhoods, they would say 'what do you mean, make sure that you end the lack of maintenance" and "why would you change rents and merge dwellings, that is totally unnecessary ". So yes, that sense of urgency has helped us very much of course. The residents themselves suffered from the negative image of the *Indische Buurt*. The common denominator was, everyone thought that something had to happen. In other parts of the city that is not obvious."

The asset management plan also was seen as a collection of principles, a guiding document, rather than as a blueprint, so the implementation was flexible: "In practice you just have the basic principles and when you work them out, you look if you can anticipate the residents’ wishes. But we also always tell them ‘you live here, but you can cancel a contract within two months, and we must operate these properties for 40 years’. There are many possibilities, but the home must also be lettable and it must also fit within the principles of the whole plan. We need to develop housing for large families and in some places the restorations of foundations is necessary. So there are clear boundaries."

This flexible implementation also had financial implications, but again, flexibility was present: "We have made a separate calculation of the project at the start of the process, but in practice it does not work that way in the accounting of the housing association. At least to us for this project. You look for compensating losses, but it's not like you are accountable for it. It is not that if a project has calculated investment and revenues, and we now see that there are four homes converted to a lower rent, which must come from somewhere."

*Substantive theory*

The reason for the operations was twofold: the technical condition of a large number of houses and the socio-economic status of residents. The asset management plan responds to a loosening housing market "in which the demand for lower quality housing will decrease first".

- Problems of the *Indische Buurt* as stated in the asset management plan:
  - A shortage of good quality, spacious homes for households ‘in need of a step in their housing career’ (because they get a job and earn more, or because they get kids) so probably no spontaneous increase of the appeal of the neighborhood will occur.
  - homes have physical problems (draught, moisture, mold)
  - Public spaces (especially in NW quadrant) are scarce, sober, messy, polluted and dominated by cars
  - monotonous shops
- feelings of insecurity (compounded by poor quality of public spaces and social cohesion and by the gathering of youth)
- Lack of interaction between different resident groups
- poor architectural quality of dwelling from the eighties
- Bad image
- Lack of a landmark
- Quality of the courtyards

The measures in the asset management plan especially help to solve the problems with regard to the unvaried composition of the housing stock. The plan states: "It's not just about dealing with housing, although obviously that is the first priority of de Alliantie. The entire Indische Buurt, including public space and socio-economic structure needs renewal and strengthening. On these subjects other parties have a responsibility."

Theories that are mentioned by the respondents and in the plans or, perhaps better, ideas that respondents have about the way the district issues can be resolved:

Differentiation in price, size and ownership (in practice more expensive, larger owner-occupied homes) leads to more urban-oriented households with greater purchasing power, increasing the support for services. It also leads to the possibility of a housing career for current tenants.

"The aim is to make the neighbourhood attractive for both first-time buyers, new city dwellers (highly educated with an urban lifestyle), as "stayers" who like to continue living in the neighbourhood for a long time. An attractive residential environment with a differentiated housing market for these groups leads to a mixture of rich and the poor, who have in common that they opt for urban living. If more people have the opportunity to make a step in their housing career, it will preserve the more affluent households for the neighbourhood. This has a positive effect on support for the services and quality of life in the neighbourhood".

A respondent formulates the goal as follows: "In summary the ultimate goal is that the value of the properties is going up in line with the social advancement of the people. Then you are doing well. So you also create value." And: "If it goes well with the residents, it goes well with the neighbourhood. And if it goes well with the neighbourhood, the neighbourhood is more attractive and people from outside the district want to live there."

The documents and interviews show a fairly straightforward (simplistic) view of dealing with the problems of the district. Differentiation is the key. In an area dominated by small, cheap and low rent housing, this means transformation to a larger and more expensive (owner-occupied) housing with higher quality. In part, these homes accommodate "upwardly mobile" people from the neighbourhood itself, partly there is an influx of affluent 'new urban's. Especially the increased support for services is mentioned. This remains very general and is not an important goal of de Alliantie.

Public Interest

The public interest can be seen as the "interest of the neighborhood": facts or circumstances which are considered to be important to everyone in the neighborhood. Measures of common interest include improving the public space, a good range of services and security. Whether the interventions in the stock are in the interest of the neighborhood, is the question.
Taking into account individual interests happened mainly at the project level with the individual visits of residents where the wishes of the residents were identified and in discussions with the residents’ platforms. Individual interests (demands) were weighed against the interest of the Alliance. The residents wanted the preservation of characteristic features such as wooden panel doors, wide baseboards and ceiling moldings in the house. At first de Alliantie agreed, but just before the renovation they wanted to skip that because of budget reasons. Eventually, a compromise was reached by preserving the features in the living areas, but not in the bedrooms.

The public interest was guarded by the district. The district mayor addressed the housing associations on overdue maintenance and the way they interacted with residents. Also the district council kept an eye on the public interest. For example, dwelling from the asset management plan were taken out the regular rent system as early as three to four years before the scheduled start of renovations and rented out to foreign students. At the insistence of the council this period, according to the rules, was reduced to two years.

Human Dimension

The planning process can be subjective or objective, or whether or not pay attention to personal, psychological, ideological, political and cultural considerations.

De Alliantie researched the housing needs and living conditions of residents of estates where an intervention is planned. This happens through house visits, through which also specific, individual problems can be identified and addressed. Individual residents are offered "ample choices" like "a cheap and small apartment with only improvement of the structure or also improvement of the comfort at a slightly higher rent, buy or rent.

Next to that, there is a social plan in which the residents are given a return guarantee.

Although de Alliantie must depend on "random mutation and / or voluntary participation of residents", according to the asset management plan de Alliantie "will take a coercive stance to the merging of homes”. How they want to coerce people to move out, is unclear.

Attention is also paid to the fact that many residents are ethnic minorities. De Alliantie searched for ways to reach ethnic minorities. The house visits are an outcome of this search.

Self-reflective

The planning process should be reflective and self-critical. The approach is explicit about its own shortcomings. The results can be tested and from mistakes can be learned. It is open to criticism and counter-proposals.

The process of the Alliance provides space for reflection and criticism. By the experimental projects, the feasibility of the process is tested and modifications are done: "That experiment was to see in what ways you could merge dwellings. The idea was that you could develop some sample plans that you could use again quite easily in all projects. There was some idea of how you should do a small renovated house. But it was not like all those plans could be copied quite simple in all these buildings. So it did not work in practice."

Also the possibility to choose for upgrading (instead of renovation) was eliminated after that experiment.

Also, the process was adjusted after criticism on the resident participation. The original idea to only approach residents individually, was abandoned and residents’ platforms were introduced.

(tentative) Conclusions
Almost all elements of the examined planning styles are distinguished in the policy process in the Indische Buurt. The main planning styles that were used in the development of activities regarding the housing stock in the Indische Buurt are the rational and collaborative style. In the various stages of development different planning styles and elements are dominant.

The drafting of the asset management plan was primarily an independent, internal, rational-analytic activity that focuses on technical considerations (e.g. state of the foundations) determined where the interventions would take place. The overall choice of 'preservation and restoration' came from the potential of the district (as overflow from the center and by the characteristic facades). Although this stage is largely characterized by rational factors, there are collaborative (the various actors, not just the policy staff and political (the asset management plan as a bid) elements.

In the negotiations for the first, second and third covenant the political style is discernible. In the implementation of the covenants the political style plays less a role. Then there are many collaborative elements, like the joint management and decisionmaking on a subsidy budget.

During the implementation of projects the style shifted to incremental and collaborative. The general direction of the plan prevailed, but the interventions per estate often changed. These changes arose from demands of current residents or further technical research. This flexibility was made possible by the soft financial frameworks, the large scale (which made it possible to shift within the plan) and the putting into perspective of ('arbitrary') targets.

Influencing factors
An important factor why the process was as described above, is the context, especially the parties in the immediate vicinity of De Alliantie. The intention of De Alliantie was to develop the plan more closely with residents and with its fellow housing associations from the start. The changes in the process due to the protests at one of the first projects is a clear example of the influence of parties in the area.

If the role of the environment is that great, what is the contribution of de Alliantie. The preparation of a detailed plan forced a reaction by the environment. The use of this plan not as a blueprint, but as a guiding principle enabled de Alliantie to be open to changes and to respond to changing circumstances.

Performance
Given the criteria of Hudson, de Alliantie performs generally well in the Indische Buurt.

The underpinning of the plan (substantive theory) could be better. It is not always clear what the contributions is of a measure. This could be because the purposes are not conclusive. This is a missed opportunity because the asset management plan offered the possibility to get this clear. Also, the area-oriented approach entails that "the neighborhood" as an abstract notion becomes a goal in itself and concrete (traditional) goals such as affordability and availability to the target group are forgotten.

Valuable combinations
Out of the case some valuable combinations of planning elements can be distracted. Public opposition (of residents) can be used to build a collaborative structure (residents platforms), with the asset management plan providing the 'rational' starting point.

Consensus on goals is followed by negotiations on contributions to these goals, leading to a covenant. The negotiations are followed by cooperation to carry out the covenant.
Rational planning is also used for political planning (function of the asset management plan is to get money and commitment). The rational development of a plan to use politically (bid), as a basis for cooperation and as support of the vision.

Any style or any style element has its role, depending on the stage and situation. Styles and style elements can overcome shortcomings of other styles or a poor execution of a style.

_Flexibility within frameworks_

At several moments in the process the concept of flexibility comes up. For example, the flexibility to adapt plans after specific demands of residents. This flexibility is not unlimited. There are frameworks, such as the choice for "preservation and restoration". The question is how flexible a plan should be, how wide the boxes should be and whether there are possible exceptions (eg, despite the maintenance and recovery motto demolition and new construction).

References

