GRADUATION PLAN

MSc 3/4 Designing for care
Colophon
Delft University of Technology
MSc3 Dutch Housing Graduation Studio 2018-2019
AR3AD133 Designing for care

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‘Beyond the building; towards age-friendly cities.’

A new social ecosystem for the aging society.
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WHY THIS GRADUATION STUDIO?

Investigate and implement the anthropological approach in architecture. Besides that, this topic, Designing for care, is highly relevant in the world we live nowadays. The number of Dutch people over 75 will be twice as much in twenty years. There will be 2.5 million elderly living in the Netherlands in 2040. The so-called ‘retirement homes’ are closed and nursing homes will become more empty\(^1\). Due to this fact we, as architects, must start to rethink the daily environment for our aging society. This is needed on different scales, so not only on building-scale but also on city-scale. What do elderly need to improve their daily life and what are their wishes? The anthropological approach of this studio is definitely something I want to continue working on in my professional career as an architect.

Habion provided three possible sites for this graduation studio. The site I chose is located in Harderwijk. Westeinde 14, 3844 DE Harderwijk. I chose this site because it suits best to my vision about elderly living. It is a plot near the center of Harderwijk which has a lot of possibilities to reconnect with its surroundings.

3 Habion is a housing corporation, specialized in elderly housing.
THE PROBLEM

Multiscale problem

The aging society causes problems on three different scales. For cities in general, for the residential housing for elderly and for people who live (elderly) and ‘work’ (healthcare organizations) inside the buildings.

The existing elderly homes as well as public spaces can not accommodate the growing numbers of elderly anymore. Due to this fact and the transitions in the elderly care policy, there is need to rethink the architecture of home and living environments for elderly. We must start to think about new concepts for a more inclusive environment for elderly.

The previous elderly homes were very introverted and loneliness became a big problem among elderly. Those old-school elderly houses are slowly disappearing in the Netherlands and people start to rethink elderly living. One of the trends nowadays is that elderly should stay at home as long as possible, but one of the complaints about this trend is that this phenomenon also causes loneliness. On the other hand, there is a development going on towards more extroverted living environments, where we start to push/motivate elderly to live together with each other in small groups. This is a shift from one extreme, the introverted elderly homes, to another, the extroverted living environments. In my opinion, it is important to find a balance between those extremes and create a place for everyone. In order to achieve this, we should start to approach this design topic from the perspective of the elderly. What do they need and what are their wishes? Start to find out what they really need and want instead of just ‘guessing’ what they need. When searching for answers on that question it is important to not only look at their dwellings, but also to look at the problem from a broader perspective, the city. Because a city that is well-equipped for people who need care and support, provides a better city for everyone.

A CITY THAT IS WELL-EQUIPPED FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED CARE AND SUPPORT, PROVIDES A BETTER CITY FOR EVERYONE.

The fast-paced society.

When we look closer to our society in general, we see another problem looming, which is the overall pace of life nowadays. According to Richard Wiseman, a British psychologist, the overall pace of life has increased by 10% worldwide since the mid-90’s. In some places, it has even increased by 20%³. During my week in Huis Assendorp in Zwolle, a transformed elderly housing, I noticed a shift to more extroverted living environments. The existing elderly homes were very introverted and loneliness became a big problem among elderly. Those old-school elderly houses are slowly disappearing in the Netherlands and people start to rethink elderly living. One of the trends nowadays is that elderly should stay at home as long as possible, but one of the complaints about this trend is that this phenomenon also causes loneliness. On the other hand, there is a development going on towards more extroverted living environments, where we start to push/motivate elderly to live together with each other in small groups. This is a shift from one extreme, the introverted elderly homes, to another, the extroverted living environments. In my opinion, it is important to find a balance between those extremes and create a place for everyone. In order to achieve this, we should start to approach this design topic from the perspective of the elderly. What do they need and what are their wishes? Start to find out what they really need and want instead of just ‘guessing’ what they need. When searching for answers on that question it is important to not only look at their dwellings, but also to look at the problem from a broader perspective, the city. Because a city that is well-equipped for people who need care and support, provides a better city for everyone.


home of Habion, I found out that this increased speed of life causes problems for elderly. They can not keep up with the speed of daily life and this results in anxiety. I spoke with a couple of elderly who told me that their lives shrink extensively because they are too afraid to go to the supermarket because they get overwhelmed and stressed by this ‘activity’. Not only the supermarket itself is too crowded, but also the route towards the grocery store was too busy.

For me it felt that many elderlies are ‘stowed away’ in elderly homes when they can no longer join the hectic pace of daily life anymore. They ‘disappear’ in those elderly homes, together with people of their own age and they are not longer part of society anymore. Everything happens between the four walls of their new ‘home’.

The fast pace of life does not only causes problems for elderly, but for all generations. Psychologist Wiseman points to technological advances as a possible explanation for our collective sense of urgency. As a result, we are left time-crunched, stressed and overwhelmed.

So what if we slow down (parts of) the city to the pace of the elderly? This might not only be a good solution for the elderly, but for citizens in general. It seems like we are all tied up in a fast paced life, but it is important to slow down every once in a while, to prevent ourselves from stressing out. Appreciate life and enjoy a slow moment.

**Healthcare in the Netherlands.**

The aging society also causes problems for the healthcare institutions. While the number of elderly in the Netherlands is growing rapidly, the Dutch government is cutting down on professional care for elderly. This contradiction also causes loneliness among elderly, because the moments with a caregiver is not only about receiving care but it is also a moment of social interaction. I often heard that some people would like to get rid of the healthcare institutions in elderly housing. But I think that we need to be realistic and accept that a lot of elderly need professional care. The only thing is that the focus in previous elderly homes was wrong. The professional caregivers focussed on the ‘taking care’-aspect instead of providing a nice living environment for elderly. This focus should be the other way around. Create a nice and well-equipped living environment for elderly where they can live as independent as possible instead of a hospitalized housing complex where the caregivers are pampering the elderly whole the time. Empower them instead of pampering them! That’s where architecture

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comes in. Architecture should support in this new way of thinking. Researcher Max-Antoine Lalande Danciger states that “Architecture defines spaces. I don’t believe architecture can define rituals, but it can set conditions for it, the same way a ski-piste doesn’t define the mountain but creates the possibility of a path from it”6. I highly agree with this statement. Architecture should support in the rituals of people instead of trying to change them. We should stop to force elderly to live in a way we think is best for them. We should start to investigate what they really want.

“ARCHITECTURE DEFINES SPACES. I DON’T BELIEVE ARCHITECTURE CAN DEFINE RITUALS, BUT IT CAN SET CONDITIONS FOR IT, THE SAME WAY A SKI-PISTE DOESN’T DEFINE THE MOUNTAIN BUT CREATES THE POSSIBILITY OF A PATH FROM IT”

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE GOAL

To find solutions for the problems who I stated before, I came up with a couple of research and design questions:

• What does a city need to empower the aging society?
• What is the best way to slow down the city to the pace of elderly?
• How can the city participate in a well-equipped living environment for elderly in need of care?
• How can you create a living environment that suits every ‘type’ of elderly?

• How can elderly become the cornerstone of society and how can architecture participate in that?
• How can architecture participate in the fact that elderly can become the most independent and the closest to their needs and wishes?
• How can architecture facilitate in the needs and wishes of different ‘types’ of elderly?

A LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR ‘EVERY TYPE’ OF ELDERLY AS CORNERSTONE OF THE AGE-FRIENDLY, MIDDLE-SIZED CITY, HARDERWIJK.

The goal of this project is to provide Harderwijk with an urban structure where elderly can dwell, live life and interact with each other but also with other target groups, because we have to get rid of hiding elderly in nursing homes, they should become part of society again! With other target groups I think for example about people who need revalidation, so create a link with the hospital which is located nearby the site.

The urban structure will provide residences but it will also become a vital network which prevents loneliness and creates a vibrant community. This new social ecosystem will put the elderly in the centre of society. Nowadays, the pace of the world is so fast that not only elderly, but people of all ages, get anxious, overwhelmed and overstimulated quite easily. They will take a step back from society due to this fast pace and that’s where loneliness kicks in. In order to make elderly part of society, it is important to slow down the city to the speed of the elderly. Make them feel comfortable and safe, in that way you will motivate vulnerable elderly to go out again. So, in order to create an inclusive environment for elderly you need to start at the urban fabric. Only a building can not solve the problem, the whole urban network around it should be upgraded as well.

ONLY A BUILDING CAN NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM, THE WHOLE URBAN NETWORK AROUND IT SHOULD BE UPGRADED AS WELL.
METHOD DESCRIPTION AND REFLECTION

The idea of my graduation project is to literally unfold the process towards a final design. My graduation project all started with the observations during my week in Huis Assendorp in Zwolle, a transformed ‘elderly home’. From those observations I will slowly move to an analytical translation which will finally lead to a couple of design tools. These design tools will be injected in my final design for the city of Harderwijk. So the fieldwork trip to Huis Assendorp Zwolle will be the base for design decisions in a later stage. During my whole graduation project I will work on three different scales: the environment, the building and the people. I used these scale distinctions not only during my observations in Huis Assendorp but I also want to implement them during my design process for my final design in Harderwijk. So, the three different scales will be an important theme during my graduation project. Besides that, I will continue with the ‘unfolding method’ which I used during my P1 presentation (image 2). This means, slowly unfolding different panels and themes throughout my design process and during the presentations.

With this graduation project I will come up with an architectural concept that will create a well-equipped living environment for Harderwijk. A place where elderly can live their life as independent as possible. I will search for answers how to make elderly part of society again and how to prevent loneliness among elderly, something which is a big problem nowadays.
LITERATURE


PLANNING

17-01: P2 Presentation
- Graduation plan, based on template;
- Site analysis;
- Masterplan of the location; neighbourhood-city scale and vision about this masterplan;
- A first conceptual idea of a building. A program for the new building and first mass studies; how to access the building?
- Where to park? First ideas about internal organization and type of living;
- A thematic research including internal organization and type of living.

P3 Presentation.
- Draft reflection;
- Plans, facades, cross-cuts (scale 1:200);
- Part of the building, plan and cross-cut;
- Facade fragment with horizontal and vertical cross-cut;
- Set up of the details.

16-05 - 29-05: P4 Presentation
- Theoretic and thematic support of research and design;
- Final reflection on architectonic and social relevance;
- Site (scale 1:5000/1:1000);
- Plan ground level (scale 1:500);
- Plans, elevations, sections (scale 1:200/1:100);
- Part of the building, plan and drawings (scale 1:50);
- Facade fragment with horizontal and vertical cross-cut (scale 1:20);
- Details (scale 1:5)

24-06 – 12-07: P5 Presentation
- Same as for P4