RECAPTURING
the COMMUNITY
TOWARDS A NEW SPATIAL LIVING MODEL IN NEWARK

Graduation Thesis
Urban Asymmetries Epicenter New York
Chris Karelse 1141082
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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDIO

Before you lies the review of a graduation project conducted within the realm of the design studio ‘Urban Asymmetries’. The main subject on which this studio tries to engage is the study of uneven development within the urban area. Being a studio that balances between the urban and the architectural scales, the subject of uneven development is being analyzed mainly on the spatial implications. However, within the ‘Urban Asymmetries’ graduation studio focus is also put on the political and economic tendencies that shape the present urban environment. Through research the impact of political visions and economic models on the layout of the direct living environment of the average citizen is being thoroughly evaluated and counter proposed.

The graduation work done within the realm of the ‘Urban Asymmetries’ studio has a particular setup. Before actually moving to an individual counter proposal to current conditions, thorough research and analysis within a group of students was being executed. This group work eventually led to the definition of a general notion of the urban processes going on within the present society and an urban strategy that tries to counteract on these processes. Within this framework the individual design project eventually took shape.

I hereby would like to thank my fellow student for all the energy they have put into the whole trajectory. And of course I owe my teachers many gratitude for guiding me through the difficulties I encountered during the conduct of my graduation project.

Teachers: Participating students

Tahl Kaminer          Chris Karelse
Huib Plomp            Jasper Hilkhuijsen
Heidi Sohn            Stephan van Berkel
Miguel Robles-Duran   Hyeri Park
                       Sven Hoogerheide
                       Dorus Meurs
                       Edwin Franken
                       Michael Daane Bolier
                       Rik Thijs

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INTRODUCTION to the METROPOLITAN CONTEXT

As urban context for the graduation project, the metropolitan region of the city of New York was chosen. Some 10 km to the west of the urban core area of this metropolitan region, Manhattan, lies the city of Newark, an independent municipality with a population of around 280,000 inhabitants.

The city of Newark can be considered as being part of the extensive suburban area around New York’s urban core area of Manhattan. Urban condition in Newark and Manhattan are expected to differ enormously, an assumption that makes the study of the Newark area a relevant subject for the concept of uneven urban development.

Reasons for selecting Newark as urban context for the graduation design is the close relation to the city of New York itself, and the full imbedding within its metropolitan area. While being an independent municipality with a limited population, city data can interpreted more easily. Also the comparison with the city of New York itself can be analyzed more clearly, which clarifies the subject of uneven urban development to a large extent.
Being a flourishing city in the beginning of the 20th century, the city of Newark was a true competitor for the New York municipality. During the first half of the 20th century Newark failed to expand, thereby getting more and more trouble maintaining a financially stable position. During the 1960’s Newark eventually started to cease being the flourishing city it once was, when most industries left to city in search for cheaper production locations elsewhere.

The povering city met its downfall finally in 1967, when severe riots devastated large parts of the city and especially the city’s image among its population. The result was a major outflow of middle class families to suburban areas, soon followed by the departure of companies.

A rapidly worsening situation evolved in which unemployment, poverty and detioriation continued to grow. While the city of New York started to flourish once again and became famous for its vibrant city life, it attracted new businesses and upper middle class residents with the Manhattan area as focus point.

Since the 1967 riots, a situation has developed in which the city of Newark has become an underdeveloping urban area within the metropolitan context of a booming New York region.
GROUPWORK
**DIALECTICS**

With a group of nine students, an extensive analysis was undertaken in order to understand the conditions that shape the current urban context in Newark. This analysis is executed much more comprehensive as well as in (historical) time as in various disciplines.

Five so-called metatopics were given by the teachers as layers of research that together construct a full image of the complexity of a city, the city of Newark in this case.

**POLITICS**
**LABOUR**
**CLASS**
**MORPHOLOGY**
**TYPOLOGY**

The historical starting point for the analysis was the year in which the United States gained its independence from the British, in the year 1776. Four time frames (1776-1870, 1870-1929, 1929-1960 and 1960-2009) were formulated according to major events or important changes in the complexity.

The result is a vast amount of drawings and other material about the topics over time. In order to organise our findings sets of conclusional sheets are made, vertically as well as horizontally. Together these enabled us to formulate a super conclusion that catapulted us towards the strategic framework in which the individual projects are based.
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The newly established political and economical framework that was created after the independence of the United States from Great Britain in 1776 proved very beneficial for the pre-war landowner's elite. The first new immigrants were attracted by the promises of a plot of land, encouraging the image of the Americas being the land of the free, with unlimited possibilities for each and every new American. In this period the agricultural use of the first settlers was soon to be replaced. The rise of factories was quickly eliminating craftsmen who were producing high quality, hand-made goods. Labor conditions shifted from self-sufficiency based on land property to organized factory work. Rural workers and immigrants were transformed in large teams of unskilled labour producing a large quantity of lower quality goods at lower prices. At the same time the relation of production shifted, due to technological advances, from a horizontal to a vertical relationship. The employee was merely seen as a 'worker' before a 'person'. In 1811, the commissions plan was presented; superimposing a grid system on existing plots and over the empty lands that still were to be developed the plan completely neglected existing topological patterns as well as existing urban fabric. The plan was solely serving the political interests of the elite. A strong polarization was taking place also in a typological sense. The rich were living on the light, spacious street level, while the poor were stored -together with the excretions of their upper neighbours- in the dark cellars of the building. Significant for the relations between the classes are the spatial movements. The concentration of poorest people was constantly pushed away by the bourgeoisie that was trying to get away from the polluted city centres and was trying to get rid of slums.
The chaotic and uncoordinated growth of Manhattan in the beginning of this period resulted in a potentially explosive situation with its mixture of ethnicities, classes and functions. This together with an increasing congestion of infrastructure could threaten future investments (in terms of speculation) within the city. The elite realised that it in order to secure its own economic power it needed to reorganize and regain their grip on the city: the Greater City of New York was founded in 1898.

On the other side of the Hudson ideas of consolidation were not that strong. Cities were still functioning more as competitive entities than as whole in which the one strengthens the other. The filling in of the earlier laid out grid was going at high speed, as the industrial city was growing explosively. What used to be small villages grew out to be independent cities, with lot's of industries and an extensive infrastructural network.

The mid 19th century until the start of the 20th showed an era of struggle, but also an era of little change. Several initiatives were deployed to improve the living conditions of the poor, but built reality only slightly changed. Together with the established ideas of Taylorism and the early ideas of Fordism an important shift took place in the way the elite, as factory magnates, used their means of production to make sure this surplus was reinvested in the economy and in that sense would lead to more profit: the rise of mass production.

The rise of mass productions caused a further polarisation in the division between proletariat and bourgeoisie. To stand strong against occasional high unemployment rates and even more important to fight the terrible working conditions in the factories unions were formed.
On October 24, 1929 the NYSE stock market crashed heralding the great depression that run until 1939. In the first terms of Roosevelts presidency a set of domestic policies were introduced to reorganize and revive the broken down economy and aimed to prevent the whole disintegration of the financial. These governmental policies where coined as the New-deal and mark the start of Keynesian years in US history.

Under Danzig the inner city of Newark became victim of large scale slum clearance under the Title One program, focused on providing private companies with free land in order to attract more private investment to the inner cities, the white middle class massively moved to suburban areas outside of Newark, leaving the city with insufficient income. Redlined areas were receiving no investment at all, turning many of them in deteriorating neighbourhoods.

Mass consumerism society finds its origins here: cheaply mass-produced dwelling with all kinds of appliance for those who could afford it. At the same time Newark gained its nickname 'The Black Capital' by hosting many southern Afro-Americans in large housing blocks financed by federal money.

While New York expanded through earlier annexation, Newark failed in history to do so. Annexation failed in earlier stages and housing shortage was becoming more intense within the city. The higher class already started to move out of the city, through sub-urbanisation, escaping the dense area's within city limits. This resulted in a decrease of tax money for the city of Newark.

What Newark was trying to do, and was eventually a mistake was the zoning principle by rationalizing economic activities. This allowed and promised the wealthy in suburbs to keep out the poor and factories and other business that might lowering property values in the downtown area. This situation resulted that slums were being formed in central ward caused by the presence of homeless, crime and unemployment.
Starting in the 1970's the defunct models of Keynesian economics where being abandoned. The key mechanism of Keynesian economic regulation and centralized planning were supplanted by the pursuit of unregulated economic growth and the adaption of decentralized planning models. An immediate effect was the abandonment of the lower income groups as the market focused more on the middle and upper income groups. With the ongoing polarization of society and stimulation of the white flight, inner city population declined, leading towards a situation of limited financial resources.

Within the neo-liberal system, the role of the local government is reduced to zoning and providing tax benefits to encourage private developers. The creation of the Urban Enterprise zone can be seen as an example, where the local government tries to encourage private parties to invest in the inner city areas. The intended 'trickle-down-effect' does not happen; instead areas outside these centralities fall into dilapidation, due to lack of investment. It is in these areas where the NHA and a range of CDC's is operating, attracted by lower property values and availability of land.

What can be seen in Newark is the typical de-industrialization of the city. The new American economy transferred throughout the 80s into a model based more on providing services in the financial or insurance sector. Newark was never able to adapt to this new condition. Leaving the city in a state of decay with high unemployment and poverty rates.

In Newark the African American population had very quickly become the majority, and found itself concentrated in sub-standard housing projects and struggling with unemployment and political disenfranchisement. Their feeling of powerless- ness and 2nd rang citizenship was the feeding base of the 1967 Newark riots.
The cutbacks in government spending in social programs spawned a new sort of phenomenon in society. That of the grassroots organization.

The riots of '67, and the fact that Newark was the nation's first city with a black mayor, has put its stigma on the city of a black power stronghold. Together with the high crime rates and poverty in the city, this never really changed.

Redlining played a key role by setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy concerning neighborhood decay: by making mortgage financing difficult to obtain, it reduced demand for properties, thus causing their values to fall and encouraging owners to "milk" their buildings by postponing repairs, cutting services, and even not paying taxes in order to earn a profit under the new conditions.

The areas that were redlined would eventually deteriorate to such a low level that these areas would be cleared and redeveloped into a more economical viable middle class or business center.

The development of new infrastructural works like the light rail, monorail, and PATH systems could facilitate the polarization of society, by offering fast commuter possibilities. The Urban Enterprise Zone (1984) intended to benefit by encouraging employment within the Zone by reducing 31/2% sales tax rate and actually it was nominal optimization of slums clearance inner city area. Continually, municipality developed positive cultural facilities along the riverside such as The New Jersey Performing Arts Centre (1997), stadium and the Prudential Centre (2007). These projects don't have much positive impact on street levels. These 'positive' developments are going continued with 'Green projects' such as the waterfront plan. In the iron bound district first case of this project and it will be expanded along the river line up to north ward..
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With the establishment of the neoliberal doctrines from 1968 onwards the private sector increased a lot in power, while the government was retreating from the concept of the welfare state. The direct result was that socially important matters were left more and more to the devices of the private market.

Within the housing supply the results were straightforward. Where the government used to take on the role of providing affordable housing in large quantities for the social-economic weaker classes of American society, this role was now left to private housing developers. Result was a general decline in affordable housing and the upscaling of the affordable housing market in such a way that many people could no longer afford to live in these houses.

On the other hand the American Dream ideal of a detached house with a private lot became the definite standard for U.S. dwellings, since such a housing model is the most profitable for housing contractors to build.
Of course the large shortage of affordable housing is also noted by the private market. People that are no longer eligible for affordable housing programs, become an easy victim for private companies to enlarge consuming markets, thereby upscaling the production and eventually their profits.

Unwilling to deviate from the market doctrine of the detached house, new housing typologies were invented to solve both the needs for more affordable forms of housing and maintaining the American Dream ideals. One of the most common new housing typology became known as the ‘Bayonne Box’ and institutes a detached house including carport, but proportioned in such a way that the plot stays quit narrow in order to be able to build large quantities on the acquired piece of land.

Due to this housing layout this type of housing still takes quite a large som of money to acquire, but as a result of the lack of affordable alternatives, lots of social-economic weak families are left with no other options, thereby encouraged to acquire a house that is actually to expensive to support. An interesting notion however, is that parts of the house can quite easily be subrented, thereby strengthening the financial position of the house owner.

This group of people, that is quit large, has been forced into a very vulnerable financial position, since a loss of job or the moving of subrenters can lead to individual bankruptcy.
Also on the urban layout the neoliberal tendencies have had huge consequences. With the retreat of government as important financer and developer, city councils were becoming increasingly dependant on attracting private capital to their cities in order to realise some degree of urban development. This context has led to the development of cities according to a 'gateway model', in which certain parts of the city are being promoted for private capital investment by providing legislative advantages to companies and superb infrastructural facilities. Mainly due to these infrastructural improvements, the upgraded inner city areas are mainly facilitating residents of neighbouring suburban areas, rather then providing employment opportunities and improved living environments for the inner city residents.

Within the city of Newark these urban strategies were first implemented in the 1970’s with the construction of the gateway center, the Liberty Airport and Newark Harbour, all directly connected with the freeway and train systems.

In 1984 the gateway concept got a new dimension with the creation of the Urban Enterprise zone, which is an area that extends over 1/3rd over the municipality’s grounds and grants tax benefits to companies willing to invest in the area.
The creation of the Urban Enterprise Zone has led to better investment opportunities for private companies throughout large parts of the city. Though the effects on the living conditions of extended areas throughout the city can be regarded as bad.

Speculation has been made very attractive on all grounds belonging to or neighbouring on the Urban Enterprise Zone areas. Large parts of land are being sold up by companies that have nothing but one objective: to gain financial profit on the long term run. Since the forming of empty plots or temporal programs as parking spaces are part of the strategy of many of these companies, in order to have as less maintenance costs as possible, many of the acquired lands stay vacant or minimally used. The impact of such tendencies on the comprehensiveness the urban fabric are devastating.
The continuous process of acquiring lands within the Urban Enterprise Zone, creating urban wasteland by forming vacant land and temporal programs, and eventually making profit through urban development projects is also an expanding process through space. Once the core areas are fully developed the surrounding areas become attractive for further development, and the speculative pressure on the fringe zones are rising, creating new urban wastelands.

This process is defined as the EXCLUSION - EXPANSION dialectics. These dialectics state that exclusion of certain parts of the city by acquirement of land for private development is followed by a continuous process of expanding urban wastelands, that are thereby becoming potential subject to further exclusion.

The exclusion - expansion dialectics can also be explained as an gentrification process, in which lower class residents are deliberately excluded from certain areas, to be gradually replaced by upper class residents and program.
NORTHWARD ANALYSIS

The appointed site in which all the student projects were to be located is the Northward, which is located just north of the downtown.

On this site a more specific analysis was made to understand in which urban conditions the different projects have to be implemented. A lot of research has been done about the demographic layout of the northward, and how these demographics relate to the previously described urban processes going on in the city of Newark.

Apart from this demographic research, focus has been put on the notion of community organisation within the northward as possible core of resistance against the logics of the exclusion - expansion dialectics.

RECAPTURING the community
SOUTH WATERFRONT AREA

The southeastern area of the Northward is part of the grounds assigned to the Urban Enterprise Zone. It is here that the existing urban fabric has fallen or will soon fall victim to the earlier mentioned exclusion-expansion dialectics. This is the area in which we as a group decided to operate.

In addition to the exclusion - expansion process there is also another reason which makes the south waterfront area an interesting urban area for speculative purposes. Plans have been made by the city council to develop the whole river waterfront into a vibrant urban fabric. This plan only speeds up the process of exclusion - expansion.
Zoomed in, the southern part, around the highway is most subject to the exclusion-expansion dialectic. Briefly the build-up from east to west; the river, industry (a remnant from the industrial era that is largely in decline), the mc carter highway with highway bounded facilities around it, and in the west a residential strip.

Demographics show that the former vibrant communities once present in the southern waterfront area have now almost completely disappeared. Only in the upper northern parts, just south of the cemetery there are some remnants of a residents’ community, though it is especially the ‘non-normative families’: households that do not match the nuclear family concept. These households, such as single mothers, singles and mixed minorities, are all typical examples of the social-economic weaker classes that are in an extremely vulnerable position in regard to their direct living conditions.
demographics

Amount of males vs females (% male)

- A: 523 - 524 (50%)
- B: 1913 - 1774 (52%)
- C: 673 - 992 (40%)
- D: 709 - 688 (51%)
- E: 801 - 730 (52%)
- F: 395 - 377 (51%)

Newark: 135,337 - 143,643 (49%)

Average age of males and females

- A: 29 - 28
- B: 49 - 51
- C: 21 - 21
- D: 28 - 29
- E: 28 - 29
- F: 26 - 29

Newark: 31 - 31

Age

- % of population under 5 years old: 10% - 21% - 64% - 5%
- % of population from 5 to 18 years old: 5% - 14% - 48% - 33%
- % of population from 18 to 65 years old: 4% - 10% - 64% - 2%
- % of population above 65 years old: 9% - 21% - 65% - 5%

Households

- % single mother households
  - A: 22% - 19% - 35%
  - B: 34% - 16% - 26%
  - C: 35% - 13% - 21%
  - D: 20% - 25% - 47%
  - E: 21% - 24% - 44%
  - F: 19% - 21% - 35%

Newark: 22% - 15% - 31%

% married with children

- A: 3.5
- B: 3.5
- C: 3.9
- D: 3.7
- E: 3.8
- F: 3.8

Newark: 3.4

Average family size

Ethnicity

- % afro-american
  - A: 17% - 5% - 72%
  - B: 43% - 17% - 35%
  - C: 30% - 35% - 39%
  - D: 6% - 5% - 88%
  - E: 7% - 5% - 85%
  - F: 27% - 2% - 70%

- % white
  - A: 54% - 14% - 30%
  - B: 46% - 22% - 32%
  - C: 57% - 23% - 20%
  - D: 55% - 26% - 19%
  - E: 53% - 25% - 22%
  - F: 54% - 24% - 22%

Source: Urban mapping Neighbourhood boundary data 2007
www.bls.gov
URBAN STRATEGY

Our main goal is to supply the spatial means to build up a more sustainable community. To do this, we focused on three key principles inspired by the reconstruction and rebuilding of Los Angeles just after the Rodney king riots.

KEY PRINCIPLES - Self determination (politics): Local and community control over economic, political decisions affecting the community.
- Sustainability (spatial): Conservation and improvement of a community’s resource base to improve the quality of life for this and future generation.
- Community-based co-operative economics (social-economical): New economics structures and institutions should support local ownership and control; should broaden the industrial and commercial base to provide for greater community self-reliance; and should recycle profits back into the community. These economic structures should promote co-operative, community-based forms of entrepreneurship which sustain and strengthen the community.
- Sureness (politics): Local and community control over economic and political policy and decision that will affect the community.
- Permanence (spatial): Conservation and improvement of a community’s resource base (its natural wealth of people, animals, land and environmental systems) to improve the quality of life for this and future generation.
- Corporatism (social-economical): New economics structures and institutions should support local ownership and control; should broaden the industrial and commercial base to provide for greater community self-reliance; and should recycle profits back into the community. These economic structures should promote co-operative, community-based forms of entrepreneurship which sustain and strengthen the community.
URBAN ANALYSIS

In the northern part of the South Waterfront area, one can clearly recognize the process of exclusion - expansion going on. Triggered by the upgrading of a local road into a highway, all adjacent plots become very valuable for speculative purposes. The development of program alien to the direct neighbourhood needs starts to speed up. These programs are often primarily targeted at commuters passing by on the highway, which are usually middle class residents of surrounding suburbs, and thereby initiates the forming of an exclusion zone, in which former residents and users are gradually been sold out or evicted.

In the blocks more removed from the highway, the speculative process does not yet reach a full extend, but the effects of an expanding exclusion zone are pressing. This means that although ground prices are not yet rising, plots rapidly become available for other programs then the original residential neighbourhood program. Stakeholders looking for opportunities to develop large programmatic needs are stimulated to acquire and develop large tracts of land, thereby changing the whole layout of the urban area.

These ‘fringe zones’ of the exclusion - expansion dialectics are often occupied by affordable housing companies and a range of governmental institutions, very dependable on the availability of large and affordable tracts of land.
While large parts of the original neighbourhood are gradually been transformed into an urban wasteland, where parking lots and temporal programs dominate the urban fabric, the community sense starts to vanish away. This encourages residents with a sufficient amount of financial means to leave the neighbourhood as soon as suitable new housing is found.

It is no wonder that those residents that are in the most vulnerable financial position, caused by reasons explained before, are the ones that are left behind. These residents are simply in no position to move and are thereby also ones that are ultimate harmed. Often found in a worsened financial position, these people become disattached from every community sense and fall victim to a detoriating living environment, where crime rates rise.

When we look at the situation of the norther part of the South Wtarefront area, the spatial impacts of this process of this eroded community becomes immediately clear. Large numbers of land are left vacant, large numbers of housing become foreclosed, creating an ultimate urban wasteland.
the ROLE of the ARCHITECT

Within these urban conditions, created for a large extent by political, sociological and economic tendencies, what can an architect really do?

Architecture can be best defined as the art of translating these political, social and economical tendencies from macro level to the micro level of daily life. This is done by developing new dwelling typologies for example, but also by creating new routing systems within a building and facilitating specific programs in order to encourage certain types of social behaviour or the notion of community sense.

Another important role of the architect is to express through the designing of a building the possibility of change, whether it be on a social, spatial or purely technological basis. It is essentially this meaning of architecture as symbolism that can prepare people’s mind for a changing context.

Having described the fundamental problems that the current U.S. housing market creates for large parts of U.S. society, my effort as architect will therefore primarily be focused on the creation of a new living model that is able to symbolize a change in American society on a larger scale.
The problem i would like to address in designing a new living model is a general one:
The socio-economic weaker classes of U.S. society are increasingly being marginalized, while these classes are constantly growing in number. The current economic crisis resulting from mismanagement of financial resources is only stimulating this tendency. The general belief of U.S. society in the individual responsibility for success results in a general neglect of the socio-economic weaker persons. Unwilling to provide these people with a long-term solution to their needs, such as housing, large public and private institutions only seem to care about short-term satisfaction of the housing problem. Cost-efficiency is thereby the motive, instead of matching housing supply to corresponding housing needs. The ultimate result is a large proportion of the U.S. population being unrecognized as crucial part of the U.S. society and being without any prospect of any long-term improvement of their current living condition.

The way i would like to address this general problem is to design a dwelling complex that conveys a way of living that is very different from the current dominant housing model of the detached single family house with a private piece of land.

The building should therefore express itself as a large urban object, accommodating different types of lower class households. As a large programmatic addition, the building can reclaim some grounds for the community and put a stop to the ongoing exclusion process in the area.
DESIGN BRIEF

The design intervention proposed has as goal to provide parts of the social-economic weaker classes with a suitable and protected living environment. In addition to these more tangible goals, the intervention should also symbolize the recognition of the social-economic weaker classes as a participating part of U.S. society.

In order to achieve these goals, three design conditions have been defined:

- creation of affordable housing.

Being a dwelling complex for the social-economic weaker classes, affordability is a crucial condition within the design. The design intervention should provide a truly affordable housing solution, without binding residents to a loan they cannot afford.

- development of a sustainable living condition.

When providing people that are dealing with a vulnerable financial position, extra efforts have to be made in order to secure that the provided housing is there to stay for a reasonable period of time. It would help creating a solid basis for residents to participate with society without the worries of having to move one day.

- enhancement of a community framework.

Community sense is a vital element to people’s lifes. Except from providing an extra basis for social security, a community framework all contributes to the sustainability of the living environment.
CREATING a COOPERATIVE

Transforming a dwelling complex into a working community is a hard and complex thing to do. As a basic concept, the neighbourhood model is used, in which different scales of social interaction and participation are enhanced.

At the base of the building is room for amenities that have a neighbourhoodwide impact. These amenities are accessible for any person walking by. For the residents of the dwellings above, these amenities can provide a social platform for contact between institutions and resident’s communities. Also there are opportunities for personal development of the residents created. And by having the amenities in the base of the building, a transition is created between the resident’s community and the public domain.

The accessibility of the dwellings is arranged by an internal corridor that discloses all the dwellings situated within the dwelling complex. It hereby functions as an interior street that is only accessible for residents of the dwelling complex, thereby enhancing the social bond between the different residents. Additional advantage is the possibility to sustaining a sheltered climate within the building, making the adjacent dwellings more affordable.

Outdoor galleries that are connected to the inner corridor add complexity to the routing system of the dwelling complex. Every gallery leads towards a select number of dwellings, thereby functioning as semi-public spaces in which all residents living along one gallery have the opportunity to actually develop a notion of a shared living environment. Besides this, the gallery also enables possibilities for exposing community life to the outer urban environment.
RECAPTURING the community

GRADUATION THESIS
Chris Karelse 1141082
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ROUTING SYSTEM

COMMON SPACES
OWNERSHIP MODEL

One can wonder if the spatial matters as described before truly enough for creating a resident’s cooperative. There are examples of dwelling complexes that did not match the vision of a vibrant community intended beforehand.

This is why apart from spatial implementations, some jurisdictional elements should be included in the architectural approach. A model of ownership can provide the extra encouragement for residents to actively participate in the intended cooperative.

The best way to accomplish a notion of a cooperative in which residents are more likely to relate to, is to reward active participation within the community by offering residents some advantages. Examples can be the introduction of a monthly contribution, which can be labour (building maintenance, nursing) or a financial compensation instead. Also the installation of a board of inhabitants in which residents can take a lead, encourages active participation within the cooperative.

A same model can be drawn up for the amenities on ground level, which would be joined into a business association.

Delegates from both the board of inhabitants as the business association have a seat in the board of the cooperative itself. Within this board the building owner is invited to discuss important matters with both the residents and business association. These matters can range from maintenance issues to the selection of new residents and amenities.
STAKEHOLDERS

It is of the most importance to develop such a cooperative with financial partners that are open to these kind of initiatives. The building owner should in some way have an affiliation or interest in kickstarting a new cooperative, will there ever be a change of developing such a large scaled project.

When all current landowners within the northern part of the South waterfront area are analyzed, some institutions seem to have some affiliation with the goals pursued by this design intervention. These stakeholders are the municipality itself, the New Jersey School Development Authority (N.J.S.D.A.) and the Newark Housing Authority (N.H.A.). The municipality is of course benefitted by the installation of healthy residential communities within its city borders, but does not have large financial buffers. The N.H.A. is interested in building affordable housing, but seems to be acting on profit basis only. The N.J.S.D.A. is mostly interested in building schools within the state of New Jersey, however tries to shape these schools according to the idea of community schools:

“Ideally, community schools are planned by and for the community, and offer programs that remove barriers to learning and offer programs that offer enrichment to children and adults of all ages. It is not unusual for community-based agencies, parents, business leaders, and other community and school partners to be invited by the district to plan the design and the programming aspects of the school.”

The N.J.S.D.A. clearly has some goals that overlap quit easily with the goals the designed intervention stands for. Now since the N.J.S.D.A. has over twenty billion dollars to spend an a yearly basis, this organisation seems to be very likely to bear the financial loads of such a project, making it a very suitable partner.
URBAN CONTEXT

The site that has been selected for the design projet belongs to the city of Newark and lies adjacent to a N.J.S.D.A. potential school site. From the programs that are encouraged by the N.J.S.D.A. itself, the ones that serve a broader community then just the future school itself have been selected for implementation on plots owned by the city of Newark, thereby keeping a strong relation to the future school. Based on rough calculations, these programs are distributed over the site, whereby the most common amenities are located on the southern part of the site, where connections to some other community based developments can be made.

Parts of the actual program has been set back from the road in order to create an open urban space that can serve as future central focus point for both the planned school development as well as the proposed intervention. Furthermore some additional urban space is hereby created in order to host some car parking facilities and relaxation spaces.

On top of this neighbourhood programs two dwelling slabs are planned. By lifting these blocks an additional storey, some future expansion space is created.

The structure beneath the dwelling slabs itself is made out of concrete and lifts the dwelling slabs two storeys from ground level. This structure is totally paid for by the developer of the ground floor area, thereby saving on foundation costs for the dwellings themselves. The dwelling slabs themselves are constructed totally according to the wood light frame method, allowing for a maximum of 4 storeys. The stapling of dwellings and neighbourhood amenities also contributes to the sustainability of the whole complex, since bail outs by private developers are now made much more difficult.
BUILDING SET-UP
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLINT

The lower parts of the building complex, directly accessible from street level, make the transition from the resident’s cooperative and the public domain. Interaction between residents and external users of the neighbourhood amenities offered in the plint are desirable, not only so that residents can benefit from these amenities by developing personal skills, but also by transforming this ground floor program into a platform in which different institutions and communities, as well as residents living above can share knowledge and keep in contact.

For this purpose, the entrances of both neighbourhood amenities as the dwelling slabs on top are combined in overdimensioned entrance lobbies. Within these lobbies, all people moving in and out of the building are taken together. The transparity of the interior of the entrance lobbies makes sure that residents can actually see what is happening inside the amenities adjacent to the lobbies.
RECAPTURING the community

GRADUATION THESIS

Chris Karelse 1141082

April 15th, 2010
THE INNER CORRIDOR

Within the dwelling slab, a covered corridor provides for the necessary accessibility to the dwellings. Since this corridor is meant not only as routing space, but also as space where residents can interact with each other. To encourage the use of the corridor as place of interaction, much effort has been put in to create a pleasant walking route. The corridor is extra wide and is two storeys in height, so that the idea of routing space only can be minimized. Wide skylights take care of the accessibility of light throughout the whole corridor.

In order to transform this corridor as the true heart of the cooperative, some facilities have been placed directly adjacent to the corridor. A kindergarten area and meeting space provide a platform for the residents to engage on common affairs and work together. Along the corridor is also ample space for independent shops / ateliers, so that the central corridor can truly function as the main routing and gathering space within the building.
All dwellings inside the building have an entrance point in the corridor. With the alteration in the corridor itself, opportunities for a range of dwelling layouts have been created. While all dwellings located within the building are relatively compact and basic, the corridor with connecting rooftop square provides extra possibilities for claiming parts of the corridor space for personal usage. Also, the areas of the corridor and rooftop square be used for playing area for children.
In addition to and connected with the inner corridor area are several outdoor galleries. These galleries are located in such a way that each gallery attaches to a number of 6 - 10 dwellings, not only providing access to the dwellings themselves, but also to some facilities that can be shared by this select number of residents. A shared kitchen area and study room in combination with a shared balcony should encourage the select number of residents to build up a closer bonds, thereby forming the core elements of the co-operative.

The galleries themselves are 2 meters wide, and do not only provide for routing space, but also function as outdoor area of the dwellings. For this reason the dwelling facades are set back a little, in order to stimulate appropriation of parts of these galleries for private uses. These appropriated spaces can be used for drying the laundry, or placing some furniture outside.

The balustrades are designed in such a way that closed and more transparent areas are formed, thereby creating an interesting and altering image of the facades. The closed parts are always situated in front of a dwelling, and formed by a reservoirs that can be filled up with plants, in order to provide for the possibility of a personal touch in front of the individual dwellings.
ADJUSTABLE LIVING CONDITIONS

Through the combined system of inner corridor and outdoor galleries, all dwellings are connected via two different ways. This opens up possibilities for adjustable use of the dwelling. Parts of the dwelling can for example be closed off by an extra wall and be subrented to new or other residents of the cooperative. In this way some degree of financial flexibility is introduced for the residents. The notion of subrenting parts of the dwelling to other parties can be traced back to the bayonne box typology, in which the opportunity for subrenting in order to relieve the financial pressure is also commonly used.

The difference is that in the case of the Bayonne Box, the building owner is usually very dependant on the extra income made from subrenting, thereby constantly being in a vulnerable financial position, while in the proposed building cooperative residents have been made much less vulnerable since the housing offered is more affordable. The possibility of subrent can been seen as a way to add some extra financial relief in hard times.