in SEARCH of ARCHITECTURAL TOOLS for GENTRIPUNCTURE

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FOREWORD

Following the search for a topic for our theme research we examine some architectural magazines. In one way or another, our attention fell to gentripuncture. Because it is fascinating how to improve disadvantage areas true architecture. In this case, how to come up with architectural tools for improvements. Because problem areas are embedded in a social context. The impulse to act in a certain way comes from somewhere. This can be both political governance, socio-cultural or socio-economic factors. These all have their influence on public space and vice versa.

The topic gentripuncture is even more interesting to us now than then it was in the beginning. Because it is something that is very much spoken of in Dutch media, upgrading problem areas, that got a serious start in 2007 when minister for Housing, Communities and Integration Ella Vogelaar started the project ‘Vogelaarwijken’ (Vogelaar districts) that focused on Dutch problem areas. Also interesting is to see what effect that has on architects and their way of designing.

We want thank our tutors Olv Klein, Paul Kuitenbrouwer and Nelson Mota for their tutoring.

Here before you is the final result of our research. On behalf of the Technical University of Technology Faculty of Architecture. For our graduation project.
For our theme research we searched for a theme that not only touched the architectural/theoretical and technical part of the body of architecture, but also the sociological side. Today there is a lot of large scale neighborhood renewal going on, to improve problem neighborhoods (residential and living environment) and increasing opportunities for residents. Here is tried to transform socio-homogeneous neighborhoods into social diverse neighborhoods by means of correcting or change the social fabric by upgrading the problem neighborhood. “The problems in such neighborhoods occur simultaneously, these problems are: unemploy-ment, violence, crime, addiction and health problems such as obesity and higher mortality, including increased infant mortality. The Netherlands has a large number of these neighborhoods, particularly post-war neighborhoods, which are mostly characterized as problem neighborhoods. The reason mainly postwar neighborhoods are problem areas is being sought in the low range of the home typologies in these neighborhoods.”

There are different neighborhood renewal/urban restructuring strategies that are used in the Netherlands, one of them is gentrification. Gentrification focus on a larger scale and can be considered as an integral process. The definition of gentrification can be recognized in the Dutch urban restructuring strategies as well. The restructuring strategies focus on replacing low rent-price, low-quality houses by homes aided for higher and middle income owner occupiers.

Gentrification is a phenomenon that is best known in the United States. It represents a process of upgrading of a neighbor-hood. This process was first described in these terms in Britain. Gentrification is now widely studied, described and criticized. The development of an unwanted to a desirable neighborhood, is known. In some countries, the phenomenon has a major impact on current residents. In particular, where legislation on spatial planning and housing strong market oriented. In countries where there is more regulation, as in the Netherlands, for example, by the Tenancy rent control which is regulated, gentrification has less effect on the population of the district that already resides in the district. It is this group of tenants - who already lived nearby before the neighborhood gentrified and is in extreme cases the victim. They are the ones who are forced, often for economic reasons to leave. This displacement aspect is not manifest in the Dutch context, because social housing are protected by the government, so the chance of displacement is very small. Movements occur, for example due to renovations, but people move elsewhere for economic reasons to get a home for the same rent they use to pay and usually benefit there to their feelings. Moreover, often a return guarantee in districts where it is restructured is granted, allowing residents to return to their old, in eventually an improved district. Gentrification in the Dutch context describes mainly the more or less spontaneous process of growing in demand of for instance safety in an area.

About gentrification has long been debated. From the definition of the causes and consequences. First and foremost a physical, but often social change in the area occurs. About the consequences are different opinions. A predominantly positive approach from policy documents, but also academics to a (very) critical look at the effects of gentrification. Overall conclusion of gentrification is that by using the process, problem areas that are declining are tied to get stabilized because of social or functional instability. By injecting different class or function(s) into a neighborhood, gentrification tries to shift the balance in the social-class that lives there, and reduces suburbanization. Because of that balance houses get improved or even demolished and new build houses come for them in the place which results in higher quality of living and less empty housing.

acupuncture; “Acupuncture is an ancient form of Chinese medicine involving the insertion of solid filiform acupuncture needles into the skin at specific points on the body to achieve a therapeutic effect.” Gentrification does the same. It concentrates on specific points in the urban tissue, it tries to recognize energy streams on district scale and puncture at specific points where organic development gets blocked. Gentrification is an accelerator instead of a total solution.

Problem statement

As described above gentrification proved to be a bad answer to the social problems that occurred in the lower class areas. Gentrification created displacement of the other (lower) class instead of creating social cohesion.

“The Kolenkit district performs many years in the wrong lists: it is the blackest district, poorest district, highest unemployment, lowest score on the quality of life and worst performing schools. The presence of non-western foreigners and the living-environment quality seems to have a highly negative relationship (-.70).”

In statistics, a perfect negative relationship is represented by the value -1.00, while a 0.00 indicates no relationship, so -0.70 is a high relationship. This relationship is negative, so it means that when the number of non-western foreigners increases the living-environment quality decreases, and vice versa. This coherence is influenced by many underlying dimensions. Many foreigners live in physical degenerated districts, in districts with a high residential density and much nuisance. Due to the different bad lists of Kolenkit the neighborhood was the symbol of the Dutch disadvantaged area and is therefore stigmatized. There is much to talk about segregation in the Kolenkit. Do you accept it or fight against it? The open structure of the original AUP in the Kolenkit is replaced by an offensive urbanism based on the pre-war city. Not based on how the originally AUP plan was meant. Parks and gardens are fenced, open blocks structures are replaced by closed building blocks. The result is a fragmented public space, and closed indoor gardens. Leading to a decrease of the public space and leads to further segregation.

It is not contested that the segregation and pauperization in the Kolenkit increases if you do nothing. In such areas one often sees the theory of gentrification into practice: a way...
1.0 INTRODUCTION GENTRIPUNCTURE

The relation between nature and buildings is unstable. In comparison to Jan van Schaffelaarplattsoen, the nature in the area contributes rarely to any structuring of the area. The nature usually following slavishly the infrastructure, or function as residual space, they strengthen the vagueness. The green strip along the station square is used as introduction and filler element that represent the fakeness of the green in the area. Both ditches and the lawns and the trees are represented and form a green carpet without remarkable qualities for the public spaces. The rest of the green qualities are hidden on the tops of the towers or behind the thick walls of a building block and is not publicly accessible. This development strengthens the introvert character of the area. Through this planning strategy the possibility of the involvement of nature in public spaces and thereby increasing the quality of spaces is largely unused. It mostly remains with the potting of green in oversized vases. Rudy Uytenhaak argues that “densification causes the automatic loss of natural quality”. 7

For our graduation design course we want to try to contribute to the solution of these problems. We think that a form of gentripuncture could be impulse to a solution for these problems. Our goal is to try to contribute to a working example for the both areas by puncturing the urban tissue and add a quality to the neighborhood. Therefore the question is:

“How can gentripuncture create a social cohesion between different classes in a neighborhood?”

This main question consists of different aspects that can be divided into the following subquestions:

1. How does gentripuncture influence the existing urban fabric?
   To be able to make an statement about this question the projects will be researched on how they relate to the existing fabric.

2. What are the architectural tools that contribute to a social cohesion between the different classes in a neighborhood?
   To understand how architectural tools can contribute to social cohesion, the historical context have to be considered. Project with different backgrounds will be analyzed in order to be able to distinguish architectural tools.

Project matrix

In search for precedents we came up with a number of criteria:

1. The first criteria was that the project should introduce in any way a different class in an existing area, and should have a certain impact on the context;
2. The project should be different from each other, in context and in building form;
3. The project should be an attempt to upgrade the area and its surroundings.

Underneath follows a short introduction of the projects to be followed by the analysis itself where the projects will be treated more elaborate.

Grubbehoeve is a high gallery flat in a park-like landscape in the Bijlmermeer and is part of a project called; “Buy Your Own Blijmer”. Grubbehoeve has being entirely renovated. Changing the building from a monotone block into a mixed functional block.

The buildings along the Zaandammerplein in have being renovated in 2004. Parts of the buildings where restored in its original form. New housing types where created and along the social rental houses, houses for the private sector where created. The square in between the buildings was upgraded.

With the theming of a Mediterranean feeling in the Rotterdam housing Le Medi, pretend policy planners and an atmosphere to realize that the new urban middle attracts. The complex consist out of different housing types surrounded by courtyards which are not public.

4 http://www.advancedhealingarts.ca/acupuncture
5 http://www.investopedia.com/terms/n/negative-correlation.asp#axzz2DkF0M5L
7 UYTCNIHA, R. 2008. Steden vol ruimte: kwaliteiten van dichtheid, Rotterdam, Uitgeverij 010, p. 8
The project have in common that they introduce a new class to the area and attempt to improve the existing area, but they all use different strategies to accomplish that. The vary in building type, strategy and context. This is done to retrieve as much different architectural tools as possible for our research.

Research method

The project will be researched on four main aspects:
1. Context;
2. Housing;
3. Access.

These aspects gives us input in what tools are used to contribute to a social cohesion in the neighborhood. By looking at the context we try to understand how the procedure infected the building block and it’s relation to the area and public space. Because of that we are able to distillate tools from that part. The housing type and access gives us information about in what way they are used to create social cohesion in the neighborhood.

Before the conclusion the different precedents will be compared with one another by the early three mentioned aspects. This will be done to understand what the results are of the different strategies.
2. CASE STUDY: BIJLMER GRUBBEHOEVE

Project ‘Buy Your Own Bijlmer Grubbehoeve’

The Bijlmermeer is built with high gallery flats in the park-like landscape with a strict separation of living, working, traffic and recreation. This spatial concept turned out not to work. The un-graspable scale and monotonous flats caused that the individual was disappearing and that both the flats and the public spaces were not controllable.

The project “Buy Your Own Bijlmer (KJEB) was created in the late 90s in protest against the poor quality of maintenance and the lack of confidence in the official planners in the Bijlmer. The message was: “We do it ourselves.” This message was in 2000 picked up by the authorities responsible for the renewal of the Bijlmer. The choice fell upon the high-rise apartment Grubbehoeve, with 319 houses was part of the renewal area. Preserving the original qualities of the high-rise concept in this part of the Bijlmermeer (the Bijlmer Museum) was the most important. Finally, half of the flat converted into owner-occupied homes and other Part renovated in the social rented sector. The essence of this project is that people have a home at a fair price. They could buy it themselves could develop under the supervision of the Association KJEB with the main goal: control of management, organization and future of the Bijlmer and the flat Grubbehoeve. For the corporation, the project was a means to increase the binding with the neighborhood, and upgrading the impoverished area.
2.1 OLD CONTEXT: BIJLMER GRUBBEHOEVE

facade park side

facade courtyard side

Grubbehoeve

courtyard side

park side

ROC
Cultural Educational Centre Ganzenhoef

Bijlmer flat Grunder

50m
In the period from 2005 till 2008 the flat ‘Grubbehoeve’ is renovated. Bijlmer Flat Grunder was demolished, around the area of grubbehoeve are many mansions built mostly low-rise, such as family homes and apartments. Besides Grubbehoeve, in 2003 the Cultural Educational Centre Ganzenhoef has been built and in 2007 The Kandelaar, a striking residential building with a number of church halls.
2.2 OLD DWELLING: BIJLMER GRUBBEHOEVE

- Storey apartment
- New dwelling ground and first floor
- Collective space
2.2 NEW DWELLING: BIJLME GRUBBEHOEVE

New dwelling ground and first floor

storey apartment

collective storage space

collective space
Operation Grubbehoeve is part of ‘Operation renewal Bijlmermeer’, which began with a quarter vacant dwellings. In order to make it more livable, had to be better managed and more rented. The base of the building with storage was mostly unsafe. The square footage should be used more effectively. In order to increase social control, replacing the storage for residential and business premises. Ultimately, the goal was that the whole flat will exist of owner-occupied houses. But through the housing crisis there arise a mix of forced sale and rent.
The bottom two layers of the flat (plinth) were completely renovated. The houses have been delivered empty. Inside a number of determined conditions, the buyer may do with his property what he wants. Balcony can be converted into a serre or increasing the living room. Walls without bearing function can be demolished. Kitchen can be pulled to the living room, WC in the bathroom, at least at the 4-bedroom house. The rest of the plinth is completely designed for homes and workspaces. On the south side frontiers all work and collective spaces directly to the park. The new through room (doorzonwoningen) on the 1st floor have their own front door of the court and are partly linked to a workspace on the ground floor. On the ground floor there is a lot of glass implemented in the plinth, which creates involvement with the outside environment.
2.2 DWELLING: OLD & NEW BIJLMER GRUBBEHOEVE

facade park side

facade side courtyard

existing storey apartment

facade park side

facade side courtyard

new storey apartment

balcony can be converted into a serre or increasing the living room
Each staircase has now a collective (bicycle) storage behind glass.

The presence of a collective space is maintained. Plus point was that the apartment was already part of the Bijlmer Museum and entire demolition was therefore excluded.
2.3 OLD ACCESS: BIJLMER GRUBBEHOEVE
2.3 NEW ACCESS: BIJLME GRUBBEHOEVE
2.3 OLD ACCESS: BIJLMER GRUBBEHOEVE
The stairwells are bright, large and set with lots of glass, to create larger social control.
The apartments on the first floor have the front door at ground level and are partly linked to a workspace on the ground floor. In this way, the ground floor are integrated with the ground level, both houses and shops have an entrance that leads to this. "There are all functions and doors now. Previously there were only doors storage, but now there's reuring and social control ".
3. CASE STUDY: ZAANDAMMERPLEIN

Zaandammerplein

The complex was built in the period 1922-1928 by the designs of architect K.P.C. De Basel. It is a national monument. Objectives at the start of the project were:

1. Improve quality of dwellings;
2. Implementation during occupation; empty homes with a new inner package;
3. Achieve diversity in housing types;
4. Activating attic.

Throughout the project, the facades restoration and repair performed on the airframe, with all blocks in the same way as much as possible. At The stairwells have the windows again rods obtained and can be opened. The entrance doors are in its original form restored with new mailboxes and lighting. The façade had being renovated. The approach of the houses differed phase.

The project includes both social rent and free rent sector. The work is performed in phases per block, so the residents were given the opportunity to move to an already finished house instead of moving elsewhere, and reduce the displacement of dwellers. Due to the phasing it was possible to implement improvements during the process.
The building surrounds with two other buildings the central square. The square functions as a playground for children living in its area, there is a grass field and a small playground. Within the building blocks there are semi-public courtyards filled with a small park where dwellers can meet each other. However the central square contains a playground, there are not much benches and places where people can meet.
In the current situation the square is activated, there have become different islands where people can sit and meet each other and different islands of playgrounds where children can play. They added a playground building that functions as part of the islands playgrounds and meeting spaces in the square. With the addition of broad stairs the building becomes part of the playground and thereby a play object. The far cantilevered canopy above the entrance becomes a balcony which offers a view of the square and the surrounding buildings. In comparison to the old situation, the dwellers got a second meeting space which is publically accessible for everyone. And because of the orientation of the floorplans (wich you can see on the next page) the square becomes part of the living room, where parents can watch their children play. The trees surrounding the square accentuate the space but at the same time they keep the open character of the square.
3.2 OLD DWELLING: ZAANDAMMERPLEIN
The building is a monotone blocks with little variety. But the housing types are more or less the same, workers’ housing. The attic functioned as storage space. And the quality of the houses was very low in present day concepts of quality.
In the new situation you can see that the building is renovated and at some points floor plans are combined to create more space for diversity in housing types and offered it to the free rental sector, in order to practice influence on population composition in not only the area but also in the block. They activated the attic by adding skylights and adding it (the attic) to the floor beneath it, creating a family home. They improved the quality of the dwellings by improving the insulation (double glass, walls), ventilation in the dwellings and reducing the noise between the dwellings.
In the early 70’s the door that gave access to the staircases was taken out to strengthen a more open character of the buildings, where it was easier for neighbors to visit each other, but they had no door. The staircase gave all the way access to the closed storage spaces in the attic.
In the new situation the attic had being cutoff the staircase because it became part of the floor beneath it. The build the door in the old state it was before they took it out, thereby creating more safety and making the staircase part of the dwellings, not of the public space. They added light to the entrances in order to create more visibility at night creating thereby more safety. The windows at the staircase can be opened to ventilate the space.
Project The Wallisblok, “the chore dwellings”

The project Wallisblok, “the Poetic Freedom” is a residential block in Spangen in Rotterdam. In large part this block consisted of pre-war homes in a very poor level of maintenance. The municipality of Rotterdam was looking for an opportunity to renovating this part of the block to give an impulse to the improvement of the whole district. The result should be good, and is an important impulse for the district. The appearance of the block in the neighborhood, where it still explicitly part of it, is great. The variety and the different space questions are solved by the rear facades to introduce more flexibility, which also gave the opportunity to a highly energy efficient facade, resulting in low energy consumption. The project is more than an example project. It is the first project that is baptized as gentripuncture. The jury of the innovation prize hopes that the trend will put through a much broader approach to disadvantaged neighborhoods with gentrification, a neighborhood upgrading socially, culturally and economically. This renovation project won prices like the innovation prize in 2009 and the idea behind the project: “Buyers are usually more involved in their neighborhood,” has led to the crowning of the project with the Job Dura price with the theme “Safe Area”, they get 32,000 euro reward
The courtyard was first a grass field, with all its own garden, which was not maintained what was in poor condition.

Pre-war homes in a very bad condition. 'Not' been sold and by a collective of self handymen (new residents) renovated. By horizontal and vertical expansion are different forms of living achieved: apartments, houses and townhouses commuting.
4.1 NEW CONTEXT: WALLISBLOK IN SPANGEN

After renovation, it consisted of 39 modern townhouses around a large courtyard. This courtyard offers residents the chance for their children to play outdoor safe and supervised.

The transformation of the complex as a whole is impressive, but also the different realized townhouses. Most of the buyers consists thirties, many of them perfectly fit into the profile of the municipalities so firmly embraced creative class.
The structural state of the back was so bad that it had to be completely replaced. This offered the opportunity to expand living space, individual facade layouts and terraces to apply on any floor. There are a number of homes with extensive roof-mounted and equipped with roof terraces. It also enable the buyers decide whether they wanted to have the house bare then themselves for the reduction or to ensure that they did do this.
At the rear is a new wall mounted with a readable format, plus additional surface. Facade front Wallisblok is unchanged, only new windows installed.
4.2 OLD DWELLING: WALLISBLOK IN SPANGEN

Appartement C

Appartement C

Appartement B

Appartement A
4 apartments become spacious and flexible one-family house
4.2 OLD DWELLING: WALLISBLOK IN SPANGEN
4 apartments become spacious house
4.2 NEW DWELLING: WALLISBLOK IN SPANGEN
Each house has two doors, in the current situation, through door 1 you enter apartment 2, 3 and 4, through door 1 you enter the apartment on the ground floor. The stairs are narrow and placed one above the other.
In the new situation, the stairs are more open, all the staircases are renovated and moved. The use of two doors has been preserved.
Mediterreanean feeling for sale

In the Rotterdam Bospolder-Tussendijken that has the necessary urban problems, the project Le Medi is built in 2007 by architect Geurst en Schulze, according to the ad on the website an oasis of peace and security in the middle of the bustling city. The building tried to make a residential block with characteristics of Mediterranean dwellings that are in complete harmony with the contemporary needs of housing users in terms of both individuality and the design and interpretation of residential wishes. The project consists of 96 owner-occupied homes with patios, outdoor spaces and a collective central square. A ring enclosing the inner area of buildings, which is only through gates accessible. The outside world must stay outside. An important theme in the planning of Le Medi is the attempt to live in a city center and keep the problems of the area outside, and so to attract new residents, particularly according to the developer 'creative and culture oriented citizens of Rotterdam'. 1 (www.lemedi.nl 2006)
For location of Le Med is specifically chosen for the Schippersbuurt Area, with a total of 450 apartments. This area was then, as a whole of Bospolder-Tussendijken, at the beginning of a major restructuring. The houses in the Schippersbuurtd were demolished in 2002.
Respecting the historic building perimeter blocks in Bospolder, Le Medi styled as a closed block. The physical appearance of the building conflicts with the surroundings, with its colored and mosaic like brick structures making you think of the Mediterranean architecture. In the courtyard is made use of different Mediterranean elements such as water, gardens and pergolas. The wall surrounding the project (on four sides) emphasize the closed character of the building.
5.2 NEW DWELLING: LE MEDI
The old block is monotone in terms of housing typologies, filled with mostly portico two chamber housing. The quality of the housing is outdated.
The new blocks however have a variety in housing, but the rental prices and purchase price are high considering the area. And in comparison to the area the housing is more luxurious.

The outdoor spaces at rear of the house are lifted and the main living room are on the first floor.

On the ground floor it is also possible to situate a workspace, studio, extra room or kitchen.
5.2 NEW DWELLING: LE MEDI

- Entrance apartment through garage
- Front door
- Patio
- Garage
- Sidewalk street
The access to the housing is been done in phases; from outside (public) through the walls in the courtyards (semi-public) through the front yards in to the housing (private). This phasing from public to private is often used in Mediterranean architecture. Due to that, the building blocks closed character is strengthened.
In this last chapter there will be a conclusion held per project as a summary to summarize the information. After the summary the research questions will be ownserd.

Through the influence of residents are the appearance and the original concept of the high-rise flat preserved. The renovation of Grubbehoeve covers mainly the plinth. The storey's above are only renovated. Some homes are merged. Before the renovation, the inhabitants came inside on the first floor. On the ground floor was only space for the collective spaces and storerooms. That has changed radically. The storages are useful for replacing spaces; including business real estate, homes for sale, cafes and collective spaces. Each staircase has is now a collective (bicycle) storage behind glass. On the dwellings on the storeys has changed a little, “There was not the bottleneck. The problem was in the connection between the ground and the apartments.”1 The stairwells and entrance are radically renovated. that is clearly visible. “The stairwells are bright, large and glass designed to create a greater social control. The apartments on the first floor have the front door at ground level. In this way, the ground floor are integrated with the ground level, both houses and shops have an entrance that leads to this.”2 There are all functions and entrances to houses now. Previously there were only doors storage, but now there's rearing and social control. Another plus point is that the project is part of the sitting tenants, but also people from other parts of the Bijlmer, have put the step to buy the apartment. Therefore, tenants, which could potentially move, managed to hold. And attract residents from elsewhere who were interested to buy home shared improvements. For a part of Grubbehoeve is therefore the purpose of repositioning and upgrading the flat realized. Because the corporation's offered the houses for the cost price. Therefore also residents of lower and middle income had the opportunity to buy a apartment at a very reasonable price.

The buildings surrounding the Zaandammerplein have no remarkable changes considering the outside. The changes concentrate on the interior of the building and public space. The building’s interior has been improved, dwellings have being combined and the staircase is closed off and is no longer publicly accessible. The attic has been activated by converting it to a part of a dwelling unit, and is no longer a storage room. The square has been activated by improving the square and adding meeting spaces and playgrounds icelands.

In Spangen 96 houses of the Wallisblok have been transformed into 36 new homes. The owners transformed the entire building keeping the outer façade intact. The municipality formed into 36 new homes. The owners transformed the entire approximately € 35,000 per dwelling. The municipality has calculated that demolition and new construction approximately three tonnes had been cheaper. On the other hand, a typical block fitting in the urban tissue is retained and upgraded. The ‘chore dwellings’ attract now mainly by young starters in the neighbourhood. Wallis block than other blocks in its area because it delivers divers housing and the courtyard of the block is activated and transformed from separated private gardens to a semi-public garden.

Le Medi tries to provide the qualities of living in a city center without getting much of the problems of the surroundings. The project focuses on the dwellings and dwellers within the block, and ignores the rest of its surroundings. The limitation and restriction of access contribute to the lusting of living in the inner city at your and at the same time to keep the burden of the surroundings (the problem area) out. This strategy is in the interest of the residents of Le Medi.

Following the summary an answer will be formulated on the research questions:

*How does gentripuncture influence the existing urban fabric?*

The influence of gentripuncture on the existing urban fabric of the chosen projects differ per project, and sometimes stays with the change of population composition in the neighborhood at small scale by transforming/ demolishing a cheap and old building block in a more expensive one. Projects as Le Medi and Wallisblok show that.

The projects Grubbehoeve and Zaandammerplein do not focus only on the change of the population composition, but also on the public space. Both projects integrate a new class in the area not only at area scale, but also at building scale. Both projects integrate different social classes in one building block.

**What are the architectural tools that contribute to a social cohesion between the different classes in a neighborhood?**

All projects have in common that they use diversity of housing types as a strategy apart from the fact that one project focusses more or only on the change of population, they use it all, so we can conclude that diversity in housing types is an architectural tool. The difference is that two of the four projects do it within the building block.

At Zaandammerplein they transform monotone building blocks in housing type in to diverse ones by changing floor plans and creating diversity. At Grubbehoeve they go a step further, they combine different functions within the building, they not only focused at diversity of housing types, but also on functions, by activating the plinth of the building and there by connecting the building to the public space. Also on the first and second floor the combined different functions with living. But also the quality of the housing plays an important part in terms of ventilation, daylight, noise and insulation.

Courtyards are also used in projects Le Medi and Wallisblock, but function as semi-public spaces, creating spaces where a certain group of dwellers meet, which is a missed opportunity to truly connect to the area.

Le Medi is almost closed becoming an Mediterranean alien, due to the form language and façade of the building and the

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1 Heuvel, van den Irma, evaluation report, project koop je eigen bijlmer in grubbehoeve amsterdam zuidoost (2001 Amsterdam)
2 Heuvel, van den Irma, evaluation report, project koop je eigen bijlmer in grubbehoeve amsterdam zuidoost (2001 Amsterdam)
strong phasing from public to private. It is introvert in such a way that it becomes gets an excluding character as seen in the (live style) gated communities, to lock out all the problems of the area.

Wallisblock does it the other way around, they let the outer façade of the building intact to the impression that it is part of the existing area, and express the diversity of housing in the courtyard. So the physical appearance of the building is proves to be very important.

Also the access to the building proves to be important, looking at Grubbehoeve they opened up the entrance to the staircase by adding storey high windows to create more social control and safety. Also some particular houses gain access from ground level creating again more interaction with its surroundings. At Zaandammerplein more safety is created by closing the staircase from the public space and adding lights to the entrances.

At Zaandammerplein they used an phased planning strategy for the renewal process in such a way to keep the number of movement (displacement) as small as possible.

How can gentripuncture create a social cohesion between different classes in a neighborhood?

The research shows that some project focusses on the short term, by quickly inserting a different class in an disadvantaged area. Changing the population composition is not always the best guarantee for gentrified areas, Le Medi for instance shows that.

Gentripuncture focusses on the long term of improving a neighborhood, of course because of its scale it is hardly to compare to gentrification, where whole parts of cities change. But if you really want to puncture the urban tissue you should be able to understand the problems of that neighborhood. And therefore it is insufficient to just focus on building scale and population composition, rather one should focus on the surroundings of the project, trying to create a physical connection with its surroundings. The projects Grubbehoeve en Zaandammerplein shows that best, they are truly a reaction to the problems of the area but also of the building.

Gentrification can only create social cohesion between different classes when the context of the project is seriously taken in to consideration. All project have in common that the area lacks diversity in housing, all of the projects give answer to that problem. But the project areas have more problems than only the lack of diversity.

In the field of architecture no one can solve social problems as these with one simple building, but we can try to give a neighborhood a boost and try to inspire people by creating social cohesion. Isn’t that what architecture is all about?
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