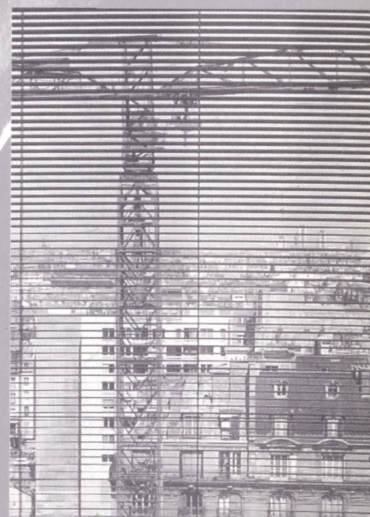


Urban renewal in transition



INTEGRALE STADSVERNIEUWING 16

Paul Stouten

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Preface

Urban renewal in transition consists revised and enlarged version of two papers. The first paper 'urban renewal and restructuring: between economic and social renewal' had been presented at the conference 'Labour on the move and transitions in the building process', organized by the Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning (University College of London), Les Archives du Monde du Travail and European Federation of Building and Woodworkers; Roubaix, 1993.

The second is also a combination of a lecture at the University of Strathclyde Glasgow and a paper presented at the seminar 'The town as place for new urban communities' at the City Chambers; Glasgow, 1994.

Urban renewal and restructuring; economic versus social renewal in Rotterdam

1

During the mid- 1980s the central government of the Netherlands started to develop new approaches towards a transition from socialized to privatized housing and planning policy that will stimulate private investments. Important reasons for this fundamental change of policy were the economic recession at the end of the '70s and growing rift between 'socialized costs' of the welfare state and the availability of government revenues. However a dramatic growth of inhabitants that are dependent on unemployment benefits occur at the same time. Decline of net wages and rise of rents caused an increase of central government housing expenditures.

At the end of the '80s the new approaches of housing policy arrive at a decision in the national parliament. The memorandum 'Housing in the '90s' was the main basis in the decision making (TK, 1988/1991). There has been a change from general construction subsidies in social housing towards market rents with some individualized (assistance) subsidies for the least well-off and a shift from publicly let housing to housing in the market sector and stimulation of owner-occupation.

A few years later a memorandum about the future of urban renewal is published by the ministry of VROM (VROM; 1991). This memorandum is an attempt to define the end of urban renewal especially in financial terms. According to the central government in the year of 2005 they have finished with it. Local governments mainly of the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and the Hague argue that they have got halfway through the programme and the most difficult half is straight in front of them. Just in the period that fundamental changes occur various approaches and strategies are put on the agenda of politicians and other participants in urban planning.

The last two decades shows various approaches of urban renewal. Building for the neighbourhood started after a period which was dominated by planning of traffic schemes to allow access to people from the suburban areas into the new city centres. In Rotterdam and in other cities thousands of houses in the adjacent areas were put on demolition programmes. At the beginning of the '70s urban renewal became an issue in local politics.

Urban renewal was mainly seen as a housing problem. Pressure from tenants against decline of the old districts prevented demolition of complete districts. In Rotterdam in 1974 social democrats obtained the majority in the municipal council. They supported the demands of the tenants organization. Building for the neighbourhood was the leading motive. After a few experimental years more integral programmes were necessary.



Crooswijk, Rotterdam

In the '80s urban renewal is confronted with new fundamental changes. Central government policies aims to realize cutbacks and became less involved in housing and urban renewal programmes. Decentralization, deregulation and privatization are the new items.

At first the situation puts the urban renewal in a wider perspective. Not only building for the neighbourhood but changes in the total city were the matter. Not only housing but other urban functions like industries, employment get more attention. Urban renewal and restructuring processes are

more and more dependent of initiatives of market interests. But upgrading of some city areas for instance caused by revitalization projects may be accompanied by downgrading of other areas. And will this economic renewal also mean social renewal? Besides those ambitious projects there still is an urban renewal programme in the old districts to be finished; an incomplected past.

Urban renewal and socialization of housing

In Rotterdam in the '70s the urban renewal approach was mainly seen as a housing problem. Not only the bad conditions of the housing stock was seen as a problem but also the fact that certain groups had no possibilities to improve their housing situation. Most of the tenants in these districts are low income households.

The 'Building for the neighbourhood' approach meant the beginning of a period in which the local government stimulates new methods and experiments. Local authorities developed a planningmodel in which, to a certain extent, conflicting interests are lead towards a consensus. Representatives of the local government, tenants organizations and a few years later of housing associations decide about planning at the district level. These representatives were members of a 'projectgroup'. The model meant a break with the blueprint

planning in the 1960s and shortened the decision making process including a high degree of tenants participation. Technical arguments were directly related to social consequences because local authorities, architects, housing associations discussed plans for new housing improvement with tenants organizations and come into close contact with the problems in that district. In case of access to new and improved houses, the 'original' inhabitants is given priority. Till at the end of 1980s houses in urban renewal districts were only built in the social sector. The new and improved houses had to be affordable for the inhabitants of the same district. The rent level is lower than in other parts of the city. The floorplan of the dwellings

Table 1: Housing tenures in Rotterdam and the Netherlands (perc.)

	Rotterdam				Netherlands	
Year	1976	1980	1984	1990	1975	1990
Social rented	35.7	46.8	49.7	57.7	41	42
Private rented	56.3	37	35.7	26.5	20	13
Owner occupation	8	16.2	14.7	16.4	39	45

Source: 'Statistisch overzicht Volkshuisvesting Rotterdam 1987 en 1990'

is related to the demands of the tenants. A lot of experiments are realized in developing quality related to new forms of living. So in the planning and decision making process tenants had a say.

Between 1976-1990 housing tenures changed dramatically also comparing with the tenure division of the Netherlands (table 1). In the programme of new built housing in the urban renewal districts the social sector was dominant. And since 1975 the local government bought a great part of the private rented sector in these districts because the improvement of this part of the housing stock by the private owners seemed unsuccessful.

Till 1990 the social rented sector increased with 22%, the owner-occupied sector with 8% and at the same time the private rented sector decreased with 30%. The division and changes in housing tenures is very different compare to the division on the national level. Many houses in the prewar social sector are replaced by new ones or are improved. In 1992 the number of nearly 60.000 dwellings is completed. The local policy was concentrated on socialization of housing provision. At least may groups could improve their housing conditions. Until the end of the 1980s there were possibilities to realize 'user quality' (Stouten, 1987) and besides modernization of prewar parts of the housing stock was an important product that meets the need criteria (BSW Rotterdam, 1986:128).

However, during the end of 1980s the conditions for urban renewal are changed fundamentally. Though a bit more than half of the

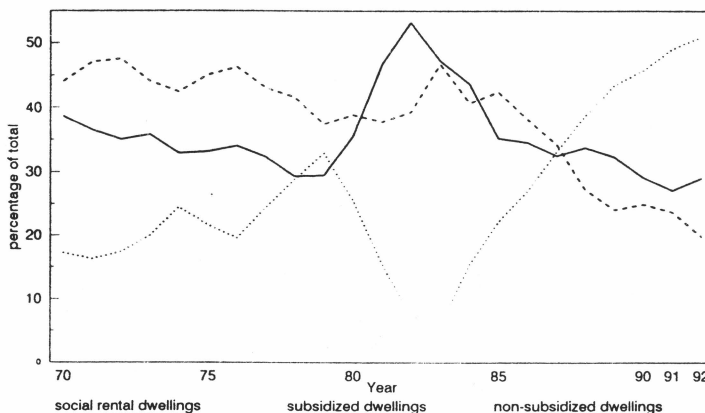
programme is realized the projectgroups are abolished and a new organization was set up. The main aims of this new organization is to organize the maintenance of the district and to provide solutions to such problem as a malfunctioning residential environment. Despite this changes of organization the discussion about the future of urban renewal is concentrated on financial limits, quality of houses and environment related to expenditures, affordability changing access to housing tenures of different socio-economic groups, availability of required housing, household preferences and also changes in income, unemployment and changes in household composition.

Planning and housing policies towards privatization

The new policies are presented in the 'Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening' (MVROM, 1989) and the 'Nota Volkshuisvesting in de negentiger jaren' (TK, 1988/1989).

The future policy for urban renewal has been published in 'Beleid stadsvernieuwing in de toekomst - Belstato' (MVROM, 1991). In planning, housing provision and urban renewal strong state intervention is over in particular in consideration of the changes of financing, subsidies, building programme, housing expenditures and responsibilities between central local government and housing associations. Some changes are already started in the

Figure 1: Houses constructed, by type of financing as a percentage of the total

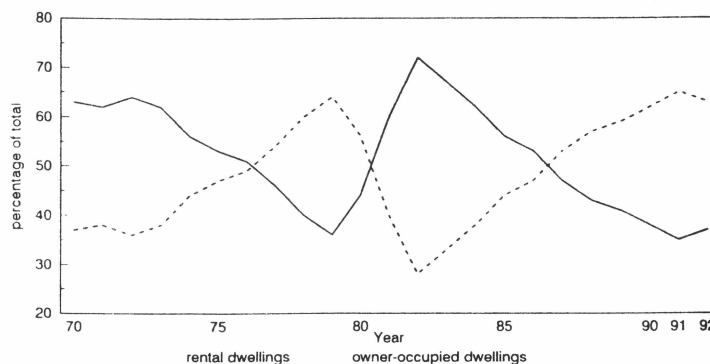


Source: CBS, Housing statistics

mid-1980s (figure 1). Since 1988 state loans for the financing of the social sector are abolished. Financial means has to be provided by the market. But not only the social sector itself gets more and more privatized, also the division of tenures in the building programme is moved in that direction. Absolutely and relatively the production of public housing in the rental sector has decreased and home ownership is stimulated. The central government aims to increase the tenure of owner occupation from 45% to 55% in the year of 2000. The non-subsidized sector in the building programme will increase till 44% in the mid of the '90s. This is remarkable because since WW II the average was 17% with a highest percentage of 33% of the building programme. In 1990 62% was realized in the sale sector and in 1975 it was 46.7% of the realization of the programme (figure 2). Beside a substantial rise in the building programme the central go-

vernment wants to sell 10.000 social rented houses a year to the present-day tenants. As yet the results of this operation is not successful. Housing associations and tenants organisations and some advisement boards of the central government like SER (social-economic advisory board) and RAVO (advisory board of housing policies) pointed at the disadvantages (SCP, 1990). The main objection is that the best parts of the social housing stock will be sold and therefore the average quality level will decline and maintenance problems increase.

Figure 2: Houses constructed, by tenure status as a percentage of the total



Source: CBS, Housing statistics

The positions of the parties in the social sector central government, local government, housing associations and tenants will be changed because of the new housing policy in the '90s. The most important aspects are the decentralization and self-supporting of housing associations. The exploitation risks are moved from the central government to the housing associations. The financial position of nonprofit housing associations becomes an even more important factor in maintaining and improving housing. Housing associations are almost forced to choose between rather conflicting tasks. On one side, they want to be committed to the tenants by realizing good housing affordable by the lower income groups, while, on the other hand, they have to play the part of a landlord to keep management costs balanced. Housing associations in a bad financial situation get into problems and will hardly take initiatives to improve housing conditions. Whether this measures will give more latitude for policies on the local level is rather ambiguous. Steering measures by the central government are limits on the quota for social housing in the building programme and the general rent trend which will be consequently high. Higher than the rise in income. Basic principle in the rent setting is that between certain limits tenants and landlords can agree on changing the rent. At last in 2005 related to the financial selfsupporting of the social rental sector the rent has to cover the real costs; realization of social housing without object subsidies. Since mid- 1980s the decline of subsidies and extra rises of rents of new built houses is started.

Uncertain is the position of the tenants. They have to pay a greater part of their income for housing; also caused by unfavourable subject subsidies conditions. Since 1984 all kind of cut backs are realized on the subject subsidies. Despite those cuts on subsidies the state expenditures for those purposes continue to rise. The developments in income are the most important factor. More than 60% of the households who receive a subject subsidie have a minimum income. Between 1981 and 1986 the amount of minimum income households who use this subsidy is two and half times more. But also a general rise of rents is cause to this development. Between 1981 and 1989 the housing expenditures for tenants are risen more than the increase of the income; exactly 29% (SCP, 1991:190). In the same period the income and housing expenditures ratio for owner occupiers is decreased. This different development is caused by the rent setting of the central government - rent increases more than the increase in income - and decrease of the expenditures for owner occupiers because of declining interest levels. Lower incomes, especially tenants, pay relatively a greater part of their income on housing expenditures than higher incomes do. From 1981 till 1989 the amount of lower incomes with a high housing expenditures quote are increased with 13% to 51% (SCP, 1992:190).

The withdrawal of the government from large parts of the housing sector and a decrease of financial costs for the government are the main issues in future policy. Nevertheless there is not a total reduction of state expenditures. Home owners not only receive direct subsidies but also less visible support through tax-relief. The two aids for owner occupiers, the direct and tax-related subsidies, cost the

state more than 6,2 thousand million in 1990. That is three times more than in 1977. Shifting the emphasis from the social rental housing to home-ownership may have unexpected consequences. Unpredictable reactions and initiatives of investors and building contractors will lead towards a reorganization and marginalization of the social sector. Housing will only be built if investors are willing to take the risk and owners dare to take initiatives. Rises and declines on the market are dependent of three variables: The development of purchasing power, building costs and, especially the interest rate on mortgages. Growing interest rates immediately cause a decline of the demand. Rising house prices (as well in the stock as new built housing) will present the bill to the government (tax-relief). Last year the prizes in the sale sector increase with 8%; mainly caused by increase of rents and decrease of interest rates. It is questionable whether the market allows an increase of quality. Especially if quality is used to reach a lower price in an environment in which the government only defines a minimum level. The central government considers that the 'consumer' is powerful enough to in-



Social housing, Schilderswijk, The Hague, HTV architects

fluence quality. Lower income households can hardly improve their housing situation. Only a limited memory is necessary to understand what may happen. Some ten years ago, many owners bought a house in urban renewal districts. Many of them had no alternative, because they had no access to the social rental sector in spite of low incomes (Van den Ham/Stouten, 1987:37). The prices of those badly maintained homes rose. The incomes of the households seem insufficient to bear the costs associated with appropriate maintenance of the property. With the recession, home owners getting unemployed have found that the effect of falling incomes is increased by the fall in local house prices. Any attempt to move in search of work therefore means selling their home at a loss (Van den Ham/Stouten, 1988:246). Other regularly run into debts claimed by the mortgage bank. (1) There is a growing social selectivity in the distribution of advantages of state expenditures. The top income ten percent gets four times as much of the public financial means for housing as the lowest ten percent (SCP, 1981). Figures from 1983 and 1987, indicate that this situation has not changed (Pommer E.J. et al., 1990). So housing opportunities become more dependent of the individuals' ability to pay. It seems certain that low income households will get little access to reasonable quality housing and that the opportunities for the rich will improve. One indication for this is the cost/income ratio. It is remarkable that tenants get less subsidies if their income grows, while for home-owners the opposite is the case. Against the background of a policy promoting home-ownership, developments in the field of rents and subsidies seems to have a special meaning. By increasing the ratio between rents of the housing stock since the 1980s and by cutting state expenditures, the housing policy aims at a reduction of the differences in price of the rented and the owner occupied sectors.



Social housing, Schilderswijk, The Hague, arch.
V. Yanovshchinsky

Urban renewal and restructuring; the future of Rotterdam

At last in 2005 the central government will finish his financial support to urban renewal. The intention is to stimulate private investors to participate in building projects and so-called 'Public Private Partnerships'. Besides development of business centres there are two other general trends in urban renewal and restructuring to be recognized. The first trend is the enlargement of scale; regional planning and development is becoming more important. Secondly there is une-

qual development in cities besides districts which attract high investments, there are districts with areas and lack of investments. In Rotterdam the stimulation of economic renewal gets a higher priority. Planning in cooperation with market interests like pension funds, banks is on the agenda of discussion. The city of Rotterdam wants to compete on the international level. Measures are taken to restructure old waterfronts and industrial locations into luxury apartments and business centres. Arguments in relation to urban renewal are (Stouten, 1992):

- The original urban renewal strategy was in many respects successful. A large part of the housing stock has been improved. Means (organization and financial) can now be channelled in other directions.
- Austerity policies of the central government, force local authorities to look for new possibilities for continuing the urban development process. It seems unavoidable to build for other household categories and to cooperate with private investors.
- Supported by the planning policies and because of the developing of a European market, it is necessary to create internationally competitive settlements.
- Since 1975, in Rotterdams' local government democrats are dominant. One of the main issues is the 'right of say' for tenants. However, the opposition of these politicians against dealing with market parties about housing provision, is disappearing.

Till 1988 in Rotterdam the urban renewal strategy of the local authorities was an effort to stop unequal developments between districts. But building for the neighbourhood is displaced by building with 'residential differentiation'. The local policy is aimed to attract people from outside the local boundaries. For that they want to offer a qualitatively good potential of housing districts (B&W Rotterdam 1988). At the same time the local government intends to create internationally attractive office locations. Between 1974-1984 housing production was much higher than office building. Since 1984 it is the opposite. Last year the surface of offices added to the supply is two times more than that of housing. Between 1984-1992 the total amount of office surface is increased with 26% (COS, 1992). Between 1982-1992 the non occupied offices is totally increased from 4% till 7.2%. The non-occupancy is relatively more in the city centre. About the creation of (inter)national competitive urban settlements is a rather artificial competition going on. The competition between locations is not only between cities but occurs also between locations inside one city. In absolute terms the rents of the 'toplocations' in the Randstad are the lowest in the world. The characteristics of the office market is one that is dominated by demand and transition; "one moves when the paper in the rooms is getting dirty" (Lie, 1991). The planning of so-called toplocations shows a small interest of investors. This lack of interest is remarkable because generally spoken there is an increasing interest of those investors in the city and

the region of Rotterdam. One of the reasons of this lack of interest is that the landprices and rents show to less differentiation. This leveling of landprices is caused by a certain equability in development of the dutch cities. So there are no real toplocations like in Paris, London or Brussels (Lie, 1991). Besides the fact that a lot of cities offer a lot of equal locations the level of the landprices is that low that profit for investors seems to small (Rosemann, 1992:33). In Rotterdam and Amsterdam the local government has to invest a lot of money to make their locations suitable.

The preceding paragraph shows the dramatic change in policy and the conflicts between the privatization of housing provision and the original aims in which housing provision is considered by the government as a 'merit good'. In the 1980s the two main issues of the central government are:

- Decentralization: the risks of realization and financing of the housing programme are for the local government and mainly for the housing associations and no longer for the central government.
- Privatization: stimulation, by the central government, of the owner occupied sector and a greater importance of this sector is housing provision and covering the housing costs by minimize the subsidies and make tenants pay a larger part of the housing costs.

Since 1988 in the urban renewal programme the improvement of the environment gets more attention. But the improvement and new built housing in the social sector decline. Between 1980 and 1986 3600 social houses were built annually. Between 1986 and 1992 this number is dropped to 2400 (B&W Rotterdam, 1993:12). According to the programme of urban renewal districts in the period 1993-1996 annually 1300 houses will be realized in the social rental sector. But less than the half of this are accessible because of lower rents. Between 1990 and 1993 the social sector (with lower rents) will be dropped with nearly 60%. In the meantime the programme for modernization in the prewar social sector dropped from 1988 to 1992 with nearly 40% and according to the programme 1993-1996 with 86%. These declines are the results of the central governments' policy. The housing in the market sector increase; from 14% in the period 1985-1989 to 40% at the beginning 1990s. Also in the original urban renewal districts housing in the market sector and shifts from the social to the market sector are planned. Precisely the sector with a lot of uncertainties are increased (Klerk, 1989:38). Uncertainties are caused by environmental requirements, conflicts about destination (par example offices instead of housing) and financial risks. In 1992 only 35% (106 dwellings) of the special programme for the market sector housing is realized. The main cause is the lack of initiative by private investors. But also uncertainty for tenants because of affordability is

a major problem. During the last 8 years, the drop in purchasing power is around 10 to 15% mainly as a result of rising housing expenditures. More and more people have problems to pay the rent and energy costs. Until now 9.000 households participate in a local project aiming at the reduction of the extent and severity of these problems (Commissie Sociale Vernieuwing, 1989:17). There is a difference for low income groups in these districts between new built and modernized housing. Lower income households have easier access to improved houses than to the newly built ones because of the lower rents.

But by the new rentsetting these differences will be less and in the future programmes improvement is marginalized. The decrease of the modernization programme is in contrast with the amount of not modernized houses (table 2). The contrast is even more in the private rented and sale sector built before 1946.

Economic versus social renewal

In the Rotterdam region (Rijnmond), between 1970-1982 the employment rate declined with 15% (Laurier et al., 1987:93). The labour-market shows a tendency towards segmentation. In the highest segment (higher and middle management and technical professionals) and the second (new skilled employees) an acute shortage exists. The labourmarket for the highest group has international characteristics. In the third segment (low skilled workers), a relatively large offer exists and demand, dependent of the conjunctural situation, shows a temporarily character. Those in the lowest segment, have relatively no opportunities on the labourmarket (Laurier et al., 1987:95). In the urban renewal districts nearly 9.000 business are settled, offering a job to 80.000 people. That is 33% of the total employment in Rotterdam. Of the total workforce, 75.000 people live

Table 2: Condition of the housing stock of Rotterdam 1-1-1993

Year of realization	Before 1946		1946 - 1967		Na 1967	Total
(Not) modernized	not mod.	mod.	not mod.	mod.		
social rented	21.500	32.000	22.000	24.500	59.500	159.500
private rented	33.500	5.000	16.000	3.000	13.500	71.000
sale	17.500	2.500	11.000		14.500	45.500
Total	72.500	39.500	76.500	87.500	87.500	276.000

Source: (B&W Rotterdam, 1993)

in the Rotterdam region. The number of unemployed people has been risen dramatically; 14.500 in 1978 and 45.000 in 1992. Around 33% are unemployed for longer than three years. The percentage of unemployed in the urban renewal districts can be as high as 40%. In these districts it seems that segregation gets a new dimension. Especially in the older districts social problems are manifold. The intention of the local government is to keep a undivided city is under pressure. They have presented a programme in which not only economic renewal but the link of economic changes with the solutions of social problems is an important target; the so-called 'social renewal'.

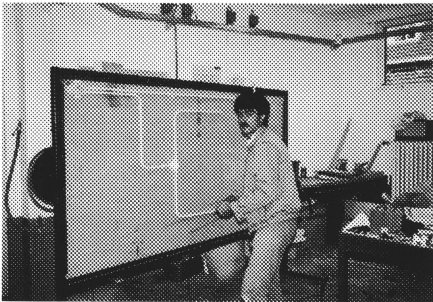
The position of urban renewal areas on the housing market has changed. For instance single-person and two-person households with low incomes (mostly starters) depend on cheaper housing. They formerly started in these areas. But as a result of urban renewal these districts have not only become higher in quality but tenants will also be burdened with high housing expenditures. For this type of households these districts are increasingly unaffordable and inaccessible (Van Erkel, 1991:343). Though higher incomes are less represented in urban renewal districts, in large and middle sized cities, the amount of higher incomes is increased between 1983 and 1987; in 1983 11% in the highest income echelons against 20% in the Netherlands and 15% in 1987 against 20% in the Netherlands. In the four larger cities this increase is stronger than over the average of the total city (Rigo, 1990:62). But still there is a growth absolutely and relatively of households who have a minimum wage; 38% of Rotterdam households is at that level. That will increase to 40% in 2000 (C.O.S., 1992). Segregation can be a problem if the concentrations of certain districts is caused by filtering processes on the housing market. There is a lot of pressure from groups like starters living alone with minimum income, single-parent family, traditional immigrant families, on the less popular part of the housing stock. Concentrations of immigrants exist in five districts where two-third of the immigrants and one-third of the total population of Rotterdam live (Bestuursdienst Rotterdam, 1993). In some areas 40% of the population is immigrant. Concentration of minimum income is 45% the average in urban renewal districts with in some areas more than 50%. The problems of unemployment are concentrated in the lower echelons and ethnic minority groups. Though a concentration exists, the dominance is not so strong that you can determine them as a ghetto (Brand, A. et al, 1992, 250). In a research of the living conditions of 840 households who get social benefits at a minimum level, the housing expenditures quote for the tenants living alone is 38% and for households with children 24%. Both are higher compare with national figures (SCP, 1992:32). The report 'Minima zonder marge' figures are shown that nearly 50% of these 80.000 households regularly run into debts (Oude Engberink, G., 1987). Families with children and immigrants are over represented in the group. They often live in the urban renewal

districts and pay relatively high rents. Poverty not only means a lack of money but also isolation.

The urban renewal districts have a more heterogenous population in which different groups fight for social provisions, like housing, public space and services. The 'different' tenants live more at cross-purposes than that they clash (Anderiesen, G. et al; 1992). The population exists not only of unemployed and other minimum households to such extent that the situation has similarities with American ghettos. But the results of the research exclude not the possibility of that on a lower district level; some streets, one street; a few blocs. But when the mass unemployment persists situation like in other countries are at the danger (Brand et al, 1992).



Job training



Job training

In Rotterdam training of those who finished schools is lower than in most regions of the Netherlands. So, in the future a high level of unemployment is likely. Programmes based on active labour market policy, stimulating the participation of women, ethnic groups and long term unemployment seems necessary to break down the persistent paradox; between different labour categories and also divisions between employed and unemployed. One line of action in the fight against unemployment is training and education. Recently more energy is invested in this approach. A combined effort is made by the local government and the unemployment bureau. Special attention is given to the opportunities for those out of work for already more than two years. This is done by stimulating education, offering work, experience projects, coordinating the administration, and improving help and support. Especially the combination of education and paid work experience is seen as very important. Many of the unemployed do not like abstract education and prefer a regular, paid and meaningful job. The programme to improve the qualifications of the unemployed through education and paid work experience is supported by the central government. A growing amount of financial means is being made available for projects in this field. Those projects

can either be initiated from the top (the local bureaucracy) or the bottom (the inhabitants of the urban renewal districts, or their district based organizations). In Rotterdam in 1992, 370 million guilders are spend to fight unemployment. In 1992, 250 of the 3.700 participants are succeeded in getting a regular job; 15% of all unemployed participate in these programmes.

Conclusions

During the last few years urban renewal is confronted with a reduction of financial means and control of building programmes by the government. The days of strong state intervention in housing are over. The market rules the programme. In Rotterdam the new concepts like 'revitalization' are mainly restricted to the derelict harbour locations. It concerns other tenures and job locations than those in the urban renewal districts. The aims and the strategy 'building for the neighbourhood' are developed in a period in which improvement of housing conditions had priority.

With 'Vernieuwing van de stadsvernieuwing' the local government attempts to look for strategies according to the changing of conditions. Residential differentiation, district-maintenance programmes and more attention to quality of public space are new issues (B&W Rotterdam, 1988). But since 1980 various urban problems have rapidly increased as a result of the economic crisis. Urban renewal is confronted with far reaching problems related to industry, social provision, unemployment etc. The change in economic structure cause a change in demand for labour qualifications. A problem is the growing gap between the demand for highly skilled labour and the supply of mainly low-educated people. Important social questions are that more than 45.000 people are unemployed. So revitalization should include even those who are not 'vitalized'. If economic renewal only mean development of new locations for offices, gentrification close to central districts and areas with particular amenities, filtering down processes occur. Than residential revitalization is only the bright side of a process of increasing polarization (Musterd et al, 1991).

Next to unemployment affordability problems in new built and improved housing in the other districts is still a matter of conflict. Conditions for housing provision have changed on the local and central level. The accessibility of housing is especially for lower incomes a problem. Today the good and affordable part of the housing stock decrease as a result of urban renewal and demolition. The half of the accessible houses is in a bad condition. The good and cheap part is mainly the result of modernization and new built houses in the social sector in realized in the urban renewal districts. Strong rise of rents in the near future will undo these results.

The central government want to define the end of urban renewal away in 2005. A definition that is mainly argued in financial terms. But looking at the economic and social aspects, urban renewal still will be a matter of conflict. Because more and more problems have to be solved. Though the first half of urban renewal has been a success. The mere consideration of the housing aspect and the condition of the housing stock reveals that still a multiplication of the half has to be done.

Notes

- 1) The government sometimes gave financial guarantees for individual mortgages. From 1979 until 1987 in Rotterdam, expenses in relation with those guarantees stand total up to more than 90 million guilders; within the period 1982-1984 a peak of more than 20 million each year (B&W Rotterdam, 1989:33).

Urban renewal in the Netherlands; urban design and urban life in transition¹

2

Introduction

Twenty years of urban renewal, twenty years of housing related to urban design experiments. Urban renewal has been a political issue since the late 1960s. Functions within the urban structure were subject to many changes and to restructuring. In the urban renewal districts transitions in urban structure and functions involved changes in the social infrastructure.

Over the past twenty years there has been a transition from social housing to private housing in the Netherlands, but until the late 1980s particularly the big cities were the exception. It was here that local authorities set up a strategy for the improvement of housing and living conditions in urban renewal districts with social housing. Rotterdam and Amsterdam were the first cities to do so, The Hague following a few years later. The approach of local policies was based on a coalition between local authorities, tenants' organizations and housing associations, called 'Building for the Neighbourhood', which is part of a unique strategy in the history of housing and planning, characterized by a considerable degree of government intervention. Initially, the main issue was the realisation of houses. In a later stage, when a break between urban renewal and urban design as well as a gap between concept and reality with regard to conditions had become manifest, the need for urban design was clearly felt. Besides the problem of developing new design tools adapted to urban renewal, over the past few years new problems have arisen as a result of changes in housing and planning policies of privatisation.

In order to understand the consequences of these changes in the approach to urban renewal we must not only look at the quality of housing and the environment in accordance with the criteria of building techniques but also at the process of realisation. In addition to the physical process and products, social relationships and changes in urban life are also important criteria. Urban renewal involves more than merely (re)building houses.

¹ Translation: L. Leys



the Dapperbuurt, Amsterdam

This paper outlines the transitions in the conceptions of urban design in relation to urban renewal strategies as well as changes in urban life. They will be considered in connection with changes in population and with the residential function of urban renewal districts. A short introduction dealing with conditions is necessary to explain these transitions as well as the significance of the results.

Urban renewal: from government control to market control

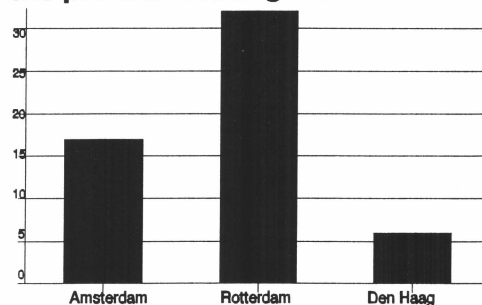
Over the last two decades various approaches to urban renewal have been developed. A period in which urban planning had been dominated by traffic schemes allowing access from suburban areas into new city centres came to an end in the 1960s. Thousands of houses in adjacent areas in the outskirts of the city were listed for demolition. In the early 70s urban renewal became an issue in local politics, particularly in the big cities. In the 1970s urban renewal was mainly considered a housing problem, its main purpose being the improvement of housing conditions of residents in those specific areas. Consequently, not only the poor state of the housing stock was looked upon as a problem, but also the affordability of new and

modernized houses. Local authorities in The Hague, Amsterdam and Rotterdam bought large parts of the housing stock in urban renewal districts. Rotterdam purchased most, mainly from private landlords (figure 1). During the years of 1974-1993 over 56,000 dwellings — approximately 34% of the housing stock in these districts — and 9,923 businesses were bought. (see figure 1).

Tenants in urban renewal districts had priority in moving to new or modernized houses. Distribution and the rents were settled beforehand, enabling active participation of the tenants and their organizations in the planning and decision-making processes. Until the end of the 1980s houses in urban renewal districts had been built only in the social sector.

However, in the late 1980s conditions for urban renewal and design changed fundamentally. New policies were presented in 'The Fourth Memorandum on Physical Planning' and in the 'Memorandum on Housing in the Nineties' (MVRM 1988 and 1989 respectively). Their objective was to develop new approaches to an increase in the provision of privatized housing and to a planning policy which was to boost private investments. According to government circles an increasing differentiation in housing and life-styles required a more flexible and market-oriented approach. However, differentiation in housing and life-style depends on several variables relating to accessibility and affordability. This raises the question whether the market will be sufficiently flexible to integrate in their approach differences in social structure and changes in the structure of households. Over the past few years there has been a switch from collective building grants for social housing to free-market rents with a number of individualized subsidies (related to a household) for lower income groups, as well as a conversion from public housing development into housing projects realized in the market sector and the stimulation of owner-occupied housing. A separate Memorandum on the policy of the future for urban renewal was an attempt to set the end of urban renewal in the year 2005, especially with regard to the financial aspects (MVRM, 1991). The local governments of The Hague, Amsterdam and Rotterdam have argued that they have only gone half-way through the programme and that withdrawal and austerity measures would jeopardise the continuity of the programme. The objective of the central government was to cut expenditure on housing and to reduce their involvement in housing and urban renewal programmes. Besides privatisation, the new goals were decentralisation and deregulation. As from 1988 state loans financing the social housing sector have been abandoned and the financial means have to be raised from the capital market.

Figure 1: Houses bought by the local government of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague; as percentage of the pre war housing stock



Source: Investeren in vernieuwing, The Hague 1994

As a result of decentralization measures, the risks of exploitation shifted from the central government to the housing associations. However, if the latter are in a weak financial position they will hardly initiate the improvement of housing conditions; the position of tenants is also uncertain. Privatisation measures do not only mean an increase in the privatisation of the social sector itself — the social sector serving as a tenure during the transition — but will also result in tenants having to pay more so as to cover higher housing costs and to make up for the reduction of subsidies.

Particularly in the first year, urban design in its various approaches to urban renewal was based on a tradition that has been developed since the Second World War. Social housing and the design tools, as well as the financial, legal and administrative support by the government made design and planning relatively stable. However, for designs now facing the social aspects of urban renewal assignments, new approaches are needed. The disappearance of a solid element in planning such as housing provision in which social housing is the main issue, will have fundamental effects on urban design and planning.

Transitions in urban life are also important criteria that may lead to new possibilities of housing. The question is, however, whether decentralization of authority and growing dependence on free-market initiatives will create lasting and sustainable planning and design. Another question is: to what extent should this be based on criteria relating to need? On the one hand less control resulting from a decrease in the significance of the public sector would imply a greater need for urban design and planning. On the other hand, due to decentralization combined with government cuts and withdrawals, local authorities will take fewer initiatives to develop schemes and integral approaches. In post-war housing districts, for instance, housing associations have been waiting to see which way the cat jumps (Flier et al, 1992).

Urban life in transition: changes in population and in residential function

The economic and social prospects of the big cities in the Netherlands have changed, and changes in population were partly caused by extensive urban renewal programmes. Some trends, however, had little to do with these programmes, but were more closely related to general developments. From the 1960s onwards immigration and migration have shown such different aspects that, as records show, this has resulted in significant changes in the structure of the population. Consequently, the residential function of the big cities has also changed. This section will first describe demographic

developments - lifecycles and structure of households, trends of ethnic immigration and the socio-economic prospects of inhabitants in urban renewal districts. In conclusion the section will indicate who have benefited from the urban renewal projects.

Approximately half the population in the big cities consists of unemployed single-parent families, poor elderly people and ethnic groups, categories that often overlap one another. Over the past twenty years there have been three demographic changes in the urban population, viz.: suburbanization in the 1970s with a outmigration of families, fewer persons per average household, and considerable groups of immigrants. As a result a new form of household has become an important factor in the structure of the population: the single household. From 1981 to 1990 this percentage increased from 18 to 23, whereas between 1981 and 1985 the number of married couples in the large cities decreased by approximately 13 per cent. In large parts of the big cities single households have become a dominating factor (Jobse et al, 1992, 48). In The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam a number of differences may be noticed. For instance, in comparison with the other cities there are more single households and fewer married couples with children in Amsterdam (Gramberg et al, 1992, 32 and Kempen et al, 1991), the single households usually consisting of young people earning low incomes; mostly students.

Table 1: Division of household structure in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague on 1-1-1983 and 1-1-1989

	Single / unmarried couples		Married couples no chil- dren		Families with chil- dren		Single pa- rent		Total
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.
Amsterdam									
1983	231.316	58,6	62.123	15,7	67.039	17,0	34.466	8,7	394.944
1989	288.805	66,6	55.097	12,7	53.184	12,3	36.585	8,4	733.671
Rotterdam									
1983	136.508	48,6	57.759	20,5	65.222	23,2	21.641	7,7	281.140
1989	173.904	55,2	55.601	17,7	58.681	18,6	26.723	8,5	314.909
Den Haag									
1983	121.495	52,0	43.747	18,7	50.251	21,5	17.959	7,7	233.452
1989	147.460	58,7	40.044	16,0	42.572	16,9	20.956	8,4	251.032

Source: NexPRI; Bureaus voor Statistiek vier grote gemeenten

Compare to Rotterdam, Amsterdam has less family households. In The Hague the high percentage of singles is caused by the relative high amount of elderly (table 1).

This demographic change is most obvious in the inner cities where it started, but to a lesser extent it has spread out into the peripheral districts and into the suburbs (Rohde et al, 1990; 57). As a dominant group these single households have replaced family households. In Rotterdam, for instance, this meant that in 1971 the fall in the average number of persons per household caused an increase from 56 to 70 per cent in single households and the households of couples without children (Dieleman, 1990; 157). A research carried out in Dutch cities with a population of over 30,000 shows the following results. In urban renewal districts inhabitants aged 18 to 34 are well represented as compared with districts in other Dutch cities (SCP, 1992; 209 and 210) (table 2).

Table 2: Age of inhabitants in- and outside urban renewal districts, 1991 (as percentage of the total population older than 5 years) and 1983-1991 (1983 = 100)

	6-7 years	18-24 years	25-34 years	35-54 years	55-64 years	65 +
1991						
Urban renewal districts (= 100%)	12	15	25	26	8	15
Not-urban renewal districts (= 100%)	16	12	18	31	10	13
Index 1983-1991 (1983 = 100%)						
Urban renewal districts	92	98	118	118	64	84
Not-urban renewal districts	80	91	104	111	109	104
Total	82	92	105	111	105	102

Source: SCP (AVO '83, '91)

In the past most districts have seen an increase in the ageing population, whereas today the number of elderly people is that of the national average. Between 1983 and 1991 there was a decrease particularly in the number of people in the age-bracket 55-64. During the 1980s the development of the ageing population and that of the younger population was reversed, and the last few years have shown a growing middle-aged population (Hoogvliet et al, 1989). Not only the number of persons in the age-bracket 18-34 increased, but also the number in the age-bracket 35-53. This latter group probably comprised those who moved into these districts in the 1960s and 70s, where they could benefit from the urban renewal programme and so improve their living conditions in the district.

Since the mid-1980s the population in urban areas has been increasing, and, as compared with 1994, it will have reached a growth of approximately 10% in 2006. This rise is the result of a sharp increase in birth rates and a larger positive balance of migration. A sharp increase is expected to occur in the population aged 35-54 and 0-14, as a result of a substantial migration from abroad, and the young age structure of the present (second and third generations of the) ethnic minority groups (Smit, 1994). This leads us to a second significant change in the functions of large cities in general and of urban renewal districts in particular: the rapid growth in the number of immigrants in the late 80s (Table 3).

This increase in the foreign population was not only the immediate result of immigration, but was mainly due to increasing birth figures because the second generation of immigrants had reached the age to start a family (Jobse et al, 1992; 52). In the big cities about 20 per cent of the population are ethnic minorities, and in the urban renewal districts in The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam it is almost 30 per cent, in some districts even rising above 40 per cent.

Table 3: Foreigners and ethnic groups as percentage of the total population in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, 1-1-1994 and 1-1-1990

	Total population	Foreigners as % of the total		Turky and Morocco as % of the total		Ethnic minorities
	1-1-'94	1-1-'94	1-1-'90	1-1-'94	1-1-'90	as % 1990
Amsterdam	724.096	17,1	14,5	8,5	7,7	23,1
Rotterdam	598.221	13,4	11,8	7,8	7,4	18,7
The Hague	445.279	12,5	10,9	6,3	6,1	18,9

Source: COS Rotterdam. Van Amersfoort 1991²

The percentage of the workforce that is currently unemployed is one indicator of the socio-economic situation: in Rotterdam and Amsterdam it was 17 per cent in 1989 as compared with the national average of 10 per cent. Unemployment in urban renewal districts may rise to as much as 40 per cent. The position of urban renewal areas on the housing market has changed. Single households and two-person households in the low-income groups (mostly starters), for instance, need cheaper housing; they are also the former residents of these areas. Besides the improvement of the quality of these districts, the consequence of urban renewal was the increase in rents to be borne by the tenants, which makes these districts increasingly unaffordable and inaccessible to these households (Van Erkel, 1991:343). Although there are only few higher income groups in urban renewal districts, their number rose in the large and medium-sized cities between 1983 and 1987: in 1983 it was 11 per cent in

² Van Amersfoort '91: Ethnic minorities; foreigners and persons with Surinam passport and Dutch citizens who are born at Surinam or Antilles and those who have a Surinam mother



Bloemhof, Rotterdam



New bazar: shops of ethnic entrepreneurs, Schilderswijk, The Hague

the highest income groups against 20 per cent in the rest of the country and in 1987 15 per cent as compared with a national 20 per cent, the four largest cities showing a sharper increase than the average for all cities (Rigo, 1990:62). Yet there is still an absolute as well as relative growth in the number of households with minimum wages: in Rotterdam this goes for 38 per cent of the households. It is expected that this will have increased to 40 per cent in the year 2000 (C.O.S., 1992).

Concentration in particular districts as a result of filtering processes on the housing market may cause problems of segregation. Groups such as starters in single households earning minimum wages, single-parent families, and traditional immigrant families cause a lot of pressure on the less popular part of the housing stock. In some areas the immigrant population amounts to 40 per cent. There is a concentration of minimum wage earners in urban renewal districts, the average being 45 per cent and in some areas over 50 per cent. Although there is a concentration of unemployment problems in the lower-income and ethnic minority groups in some districts, it is not large enough to label them as ghettos (Brand, A. et al, 1992, 250). In urban renewal districts the population is more

heterogeneous with different groups fighting for social provisions, such as housing, public space and public services. As the population comprises so many unemployed people as well as minimum wage earners the situation is almost similar to that in American ghettos and research does not exclude the possibility that this may occur on a lower level in the district: a few streets, one street, some blocks. If mass unemployment continues, however, a situation like that in other countries may arise (Brand et al, 1992).

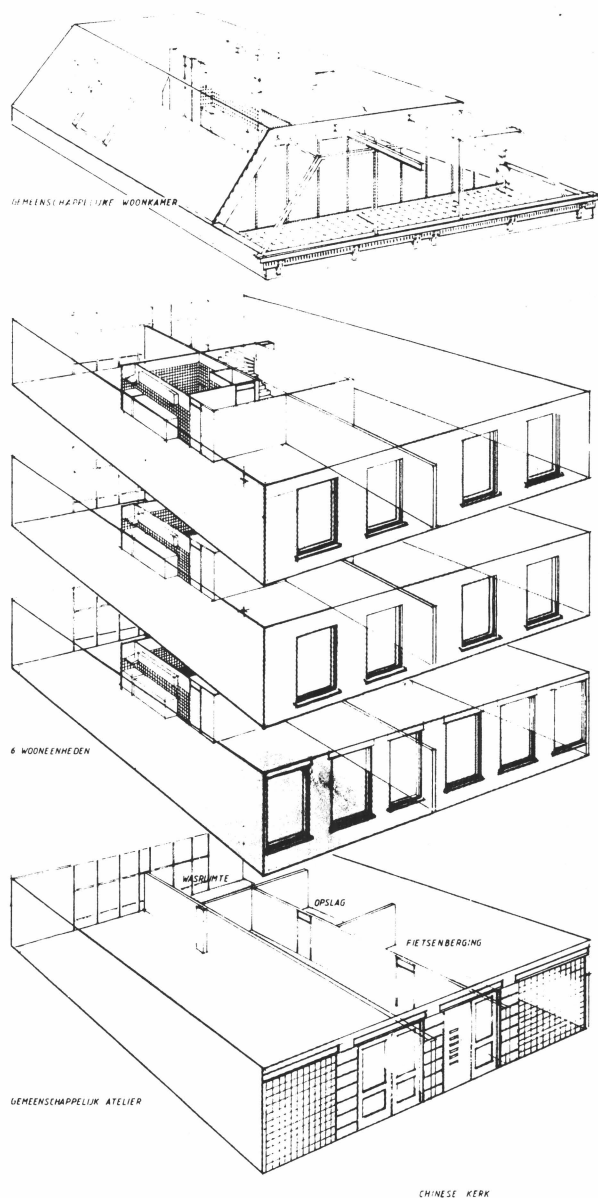
In most places the privatisation of the welfare state has affected the less wealthy families and has brought about a greater need for neighbourhood networks and self-help.

Character and function of the urban renewal districts where the programme was started in the mid-1970s have changed; they are no longer part of a transition zone. The number of removals and in particular migration to other districts have decreased; the popula-

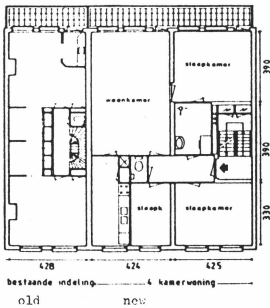
tion is more stable and so is the number of foreigners. The programme has almost been completed and as a consequence it is not at all easy to move into the district coming from outside areas. Turkish and Moroccan immigrants have moved to newly-built or modernized houses. Some ten years ago segregation began to develop, Dutch people moving to newly-built houses on the one hand, and on the other hand households from Mediterranean countries occupying the old housing stock. Over the past few years this segregation has been less severe (Andriessen, 1989; 177).

Nevertheless, changes in the structure of the population cannot be considered a reliable indication to answer the question 'Who have benefited from the urban renewal programme?' Figures of households living in modernized and new houses reveal that families with children have benefited considerably from modernization; this result has probably some connection with the high percentage of ethnic groups that have more households with children than the 'original' ones. Single-parent families as well as single households are increasingly occupying newly-built houses. Elderly people are also well represented in such houses, which is probably the result of access criteria prioritizing those living longest in a certain district. Therefore, there were fewer immigrants, usually large families, who could occupy these houses, particularly in the first projects (SCP, 1992; 211). In addition, the higher costs for bigger houses suitable for families, were an important factor when opting for modernized instead of newly-built houses.

Particularly in the large cities modernization was important. As in newly-built houses many experiments in modernization have been realized in the development of qualities based on criteria of needs and of new ways of living.



Modernization: conversion of a chinese church into six dwellings with communal facilities; WBS architecten, Rotterdam



Modernization, Oude Noorden, Rotterdam



Modernization, Oude Noorden, Rotterdam

In spite of their large number, the low income groups have not benefited more than the higher income groups from the urban renewal in the Dutch cities (with a population of over 30,000). The programmes have benefited all income groups, the middle groups slightly more than the lower and higher income groups. In most cases physical improvement has not made neighbourhoods more attractive to the original population, mostly Dutch families with standard incomes or less. The number of these families has fallen sharply in spite of urban renewal (Jobse et al, 1992; 54). The fact that in urban renewal districts the number of families with children and the number of elderly people have decreased and that it is precisely these categories that benefit most from urban renewal, is a reasonable argument that this decline cannot merely be caused by the urban renewal process (SCP 1992; 211).

As from the 1960s the most important change has been the rise in housing demands for single households, single-parent families and ethnic minorities whose families still are the main component; within this category the number of immigrants is of importance. However, this category comprises a growing number of older one-parent families, alternative households and one - two-person households. The main reason for the increasing number of elderly people is that they live on their own and longer than before. The difficulty as regards single and two-person households is that their numbers can hardly be caught in statistics. New types of households result in spatial differentiation of their various forms (Jobse et al, 1992; 59). In the categories of single and two-person households there is a shift from those having little money but a lot of spare time towards those

with a lot of money and little spare time. A decrease in the average number of persons per household will cause an increase in the demand for houses with fewer rooms. On the other hand the average use of accommodation is increasing both with regard to the number of rooms and in square metres (PPD, 1987; 13). These demands depend on the incomes of the various households.

The demand of single and two-person households shows a gradation which is linked to the distance between housing and urban services. The growth of the two groups, however, will cause an increase in the demand for houses in an urban environment, which raises the question: 'To what extent?'. The fact is that young single persons prefer urban facilities and an urban environment, but predicting the number of two-person households is rather risky. Research carried out in Amsterdam revealed the preferences of two groups: less than 50% for urban facilities and more than 50% preferring suburban facilities (PPD, 1987; 14). Urban and suburban preferences show that, more than before, household characteristics are less clear in their differentiation, the impact not only being linked with demographic and socio-economic characteristics, but also with life-styles (Machielse, 1989; 155). Formulating preferences is one step, but the next one is confronting the real possibilities and conditions. A growing demand for affordable housing due to an increase in households with low earnings caused by structural unemployment and an ageing population cannot be ignored. That can also mean that more people demand a house with lower quality (and lower housing expenditures). The rising number of small households will require building houses with two bedrooms. Differences in demand will arise because segregation is expected between two-person households with a double income and families having only one. Demands as to the size of living rooms, location, tenure, types of housing and environment are important variables depending on household income(s) and socio-economic prospects.

Urban renewal; urban design in transition and urban restructuring

In the large cities narrow oblong building blocks, based on previous patterns of ditches and to a smaller degree the result of planning an overall urban structure, dominated the lay-out of districts realised around the turn of the century. Grand blocks of houses, such as those in the town of Vienna in the 1920s, are an exception. In Rotterdam Brinkman once realised such a project: one large block of buildings divided into two inner courts provided with all kinds of community-based facilities. As compared with Vienna or Berlin (Risselada, 1991; 18) the development of building blocks in the Netherlands has been slower. People believed in the tradition of smaller and closed building blocks characterized by a difference between the public



Rottekwartier, Oude Noorden, Rotterdam, arch. Abma - Hazewinkel - Dirks
Newly built social housing

street front and a more private court. By means of small and closed blocks differences in scale and between main and small streets could be realized; differences in height and profile of the streets were important means to mark this significance.

In the late 1960s new urban plans were developed for the inner cities. In fact, the so-called rehabilitation was only meant to postpone demolition temporarily. The government aimed at securing continuity in the use of building capacity by replacing the old housing stock. Traffic schemes enabling suburban citizens to reach the new city centres dominated urban design. Thousands of houses in inner cities and on the outskirts were listed for demolition. Parts of the demolition programmes and plans were realised, but many of these areas had to wait for several years before reconstruction started. The demolition of complete districts was prevented thanks to the pressure from tenants' organisations that opposed decline and demolition. Shifts in political power also resulted in support for tenants' organisations.

In the 1970s the urban renewal approach in Rotterdam was mainly considered a housing problem, not only the bad state of the housing stock but also the fact that certain groups had no possibilities of improving their housing conditions. Most tenants in these districts had low incomes. The 'Building-for-the-Neighbourhood' approach was the beginning of a period in which the local government stimulated new methods and experiments. Local authorities developed a planning model, which, to a certain extent, served as a guideline to lead conflicting interests to a consensus. Representatives of the local govern-



Plan, Rottekwartier

Large innercourt with playgrounds, Rottekwartier, Oude Noorden, Rotterdam

ment, tenants organisations, after some years joined by housing associations, made decisions about planning on district level. These representatives were members of a 'project group'. The model was a break with the blueprint planning of the 1960s and shortened the decision-making process which now included considerable participation by tenants. The direct relation between technical arguments and social consequences could be made, because local authorities, architects and housing associations discussed plans for new improvements on housing with tenants' organisations, and were thus directly confronted with the problems in the district concerned. 'Original' inhabitants were given priority when it came to moving into new and improved houses.

The first houses in urban renewal programmes were realised as large projects on previous industrial locations and in areas which had been demolished in the late 1960s. In those days urban design as it was practised in the suburbs was also applied in renewal districts. For instance, the cattle market in Rotterdam was restructured together with a housing project based on a meandering lay-out which had been realised as part of an expansion scheme for Amsterdam (Westrik, 1991; 35). Other projects, too, largely resemble schemes for expansions. A few years later adjoining locations and new large locations within urban renewal districts became available. A whole new infrastructure was developed along with plans for urban blocks with new types and patterns of houses. Variations in closed building blocks, strips, slabs, towers, urban villas and a number of super-blocks were realised. The existing infrastructure, such as harbours, railway tracks and roads determined the size of the blocks.

Yet, most housing realised within the inner city areas have three of four storeys and parcelled out roofs, dominated in an urban area by old housing in closed blocks. The approach was tailored to a district, and the usual option was to maintain the urban structure. There are, however, also districts in which more open or half open blocks have been realised, even though their old structure was one in closed blocks. During the initial years of urban renewal, urban design concentrated almost entirely on the level of a block, sometimes including adjacent streets in the argumentation. The consequence of maintaining the structure is that planning has to aim at the stages of small streams of buildings, of which important conditions are: rehousing the inhabitants, the transfer of businesses and shops, obtaining and expropriating private properties, land prices as well as character and size of the available locations (Stouten, 1979; 167).



Oude Noorden, Rotterdam
Larger innercourt



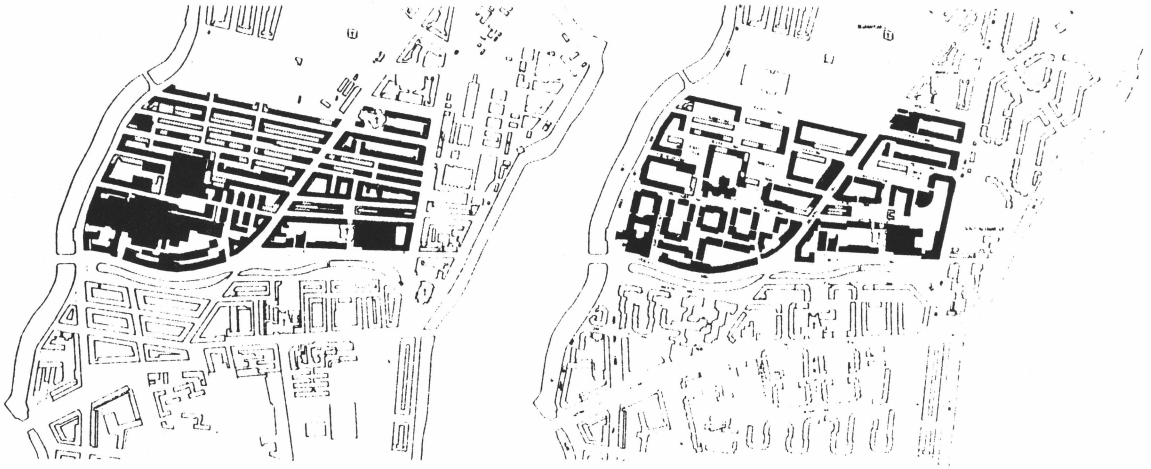
Crooswijk, Rotterdam
Small backyards before urban renewal

Building within old building lines would sometimes be greatly preferred because pipelines and cables had been renewed a few years before. Usually, however, designing one closed block by combining two old ones may result in varying urban forms not only providing better quality of the floor plan, but also of the environment, for instance larger inner courts. Possibilities such as these have been realized in old urban structures. From 1974 till 1984 changes most frequently occurred in inner courts, giving them a more public character; this was the result of functional changes which concerned the realization of storage facilities and sometimes of parking space, and also in the case of galleries giving access to houses (Fortuyn, 1885; 38). Through joining small blocks of buildings, larger inner courts and several of the above functions could be realized. When small insertions were made in old urban structures adaptations were made as to daylight

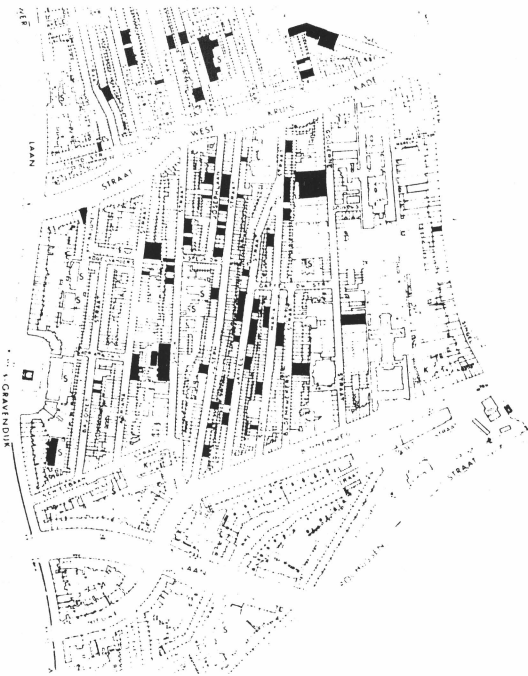
access and profile of the street. Adjustments such as these were realized by correcting the building lines and situating the top storey in the back of the building. Playgrounds in blocks were realized by scattering or removing blocks and also by splitting up long urban blocks, after which better daylight access could often be achieved by situating the new blocks at a particular angle to the old building blocks. The use of many different blocks during the first years of urban renewal has resulted in an incoherent urban structure that looks like patchwork, a design method of putting one block after another, mainly due to lack of urban design and planning. Making a design for a whole district was either not considered at all or was hardly developed. In those days improvement of public space was only incidental, and parking problems were not solved but passed on to adjoining blocks or districts.

There are examples of the complete scope of options which closed building blocks can provide. Large-scale housing estates are masked by small-scale architecture. The division of estates was strengthened by the use of different materials and colours and by changing the direction of building lines. A number of new elements in these urban renewal districts were, for instance, blind walls caused by storage space, and balconies on street level. However, most elements continued the tradition of urban design which, until then, had been applied in suburban settlements. The same applies to corners practically without any finish and to the largely blind walls at the end of buildings. It is often said that, at first, only the architecture and design of suburbs were applied in urban renewal districts, which, however, was not a matter of anti-urban architecture, but an attempt to find a new, lively and less authoritarian city. In the second place people were not familiar with the conditions and possibilities regarding high density building of 75 to 90 houses per ha (Hebly, 1994). High density had to be realized for low-rise housing, which, in accordance with building regulations needed no lift. Besides, the demand for low-rise buildings usually came from tenants who participated in the design process, because lifts would undoubtedly push up the rents.

The persistent designing of closed blocks cannot only be explained by the wish to realize insertions in the old urban structure, for closed blocks have specific qualities and therefore support the argument that they should be used. Experiments to change the old structure into more open blocks have revealed the necessity for urban planning and design. Types of houses were required which would provide more possibilities for social control and for preservation of the environment. Experiments have shown that social problems ranging from littering and vandalism to the neglect of children are connected with the design and lay-out of new housing in inner city areas. Social control and maintenance were made possible by designing closed blocks where houses could be reached via closed porches.



Oud Crooswijk, Rotterdam, before and after urban renewal



Oude Westen, Rotterdam, before and after urban renewal

The argument for closed blocks in existing urban structures was also used to execute urban renewal processes in several stages, another important aspect being urban management during the realization. In addition, closed blocks make it possible to integrate different functions, for instance, combining a school and houses.

However, the difference is that in old blocks schools and playgrounds were situated in the inner courts, whereas in new blocks schools, schoolyards and playgrounds were situated more publicly beside a square or street. Adequate solutions were developed and provided for design problems such as the realisation of corner houses. An element relatively new in urban renewal districts was the parking facility. Early concepts integrating parking places, pavements and roads have been realized. It turned out that the aim of realizing more liveable surroundings in side streets by means of so-called 'woonerven' (protected residential precincts) in actual fact provided more parking space for cars than walking space for pedestrians. The parking function badly combined with other functions, and after the above experiments parking was usually strictly separated from other functions. Parking space was not only provided alongside a road, for instance after the profile of a street had been broadened, but also in small and separate parking lots and car parks. In the beginning parking space was sometimes combined with green inner courts, which, in most cases, were actually too small to provide a solution; also, residents now had the problem of having cars and traffic outside as well as inside their blocks. Over the past decade really closed blocks have been preferred to bring about a higher quality of the residential environment. Car parks have been realized in order to solve the problems of parking, as well as small garages in semi-underground basements, and terraces were often laid out on the roofs of these garages. If garages are partly built beneath street level, the function of these streets will be maintained and the inner courts will remain private. Private garages could be combined with community greens.

The projects realized in the 1970s were a combination of a great many service facilities with housing, and was accomplished through an extremely complex solution consisting of inner corridors, overhead



Combination school + houses and playground + public space, Oude Westen, Rotterdam



overhead bridges and alternative fire escapes, Schilderswijk, The Hague



restoring building lines, Schilderswijk, The Hague

bridges and alternative fire-escapes interconnecting a number of exits.

After a few years a number of adaptations were made and some of the alternative fire-escapes had to be pulled down, and as a result a great many new railings and fences were necessary. Nowadays these projects still require regular maintenance, although projects of a less complex character and integrating fewer functions will cause fewer problems. In some districts roads were constructed which cut right through the existing urban structure; after services and facilities,

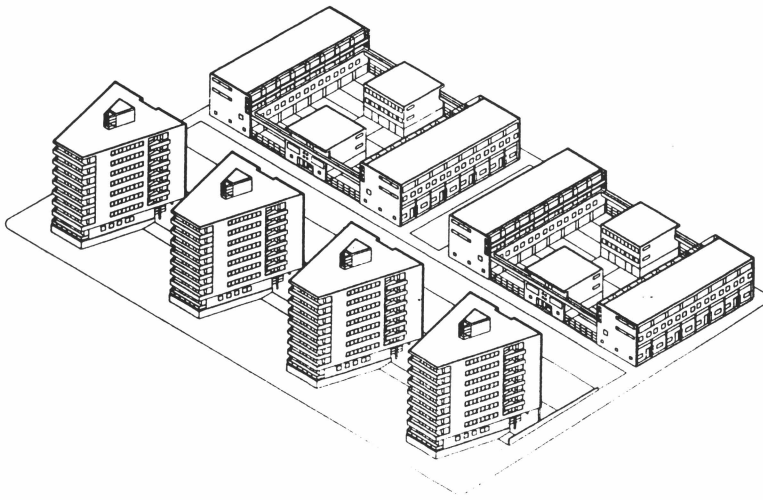
such as community centres, schools and new squares, had been constructed on these traverse roads, new public spaces attributed considerably to the improvement of the environment. Urban design no longer merely aims at restoring building lines, which is illustrated by experiments that have been developed over the past few years. These experiments are examples of single, curved strips of urban housing. Urban villas may also renew urban design and provide more spacious urban structures. Experiments such as these show interesting solutions with new intermediate forms, which integrate with the old structure.

In the last few years new typological planning with regard to strategies in urban design and urban renewal have been discussed. In The Hague not only the lack of coherence was criticized, but also the 1970 patchwork designs. These two motives resulted in one overall design for two avenues which are to traverse the urban renewal district. Approximately 1,100 houses, 24,000 square metres of shops and business premises will be demolished for an avenue of 1,100

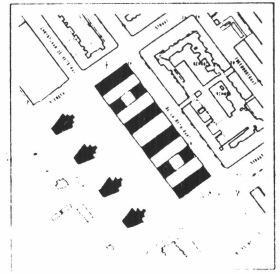
metres, with 1,000 new houses, 10,000 square metres of surface area for businesses, 400 covered parking lots as well as two schools. The profile of the street, being 22 metres, will be broadened to 32 and 27 metres, with the object of getting away from patchwork. This plan, with its new urban dimensions together with the option for closed blocks raises two kinds of problems. Firstly, there are doubts about the actual feasibility of the plan, in view of the intended profile of the street and the traffic situation, to enhance the grandness of the avenue.



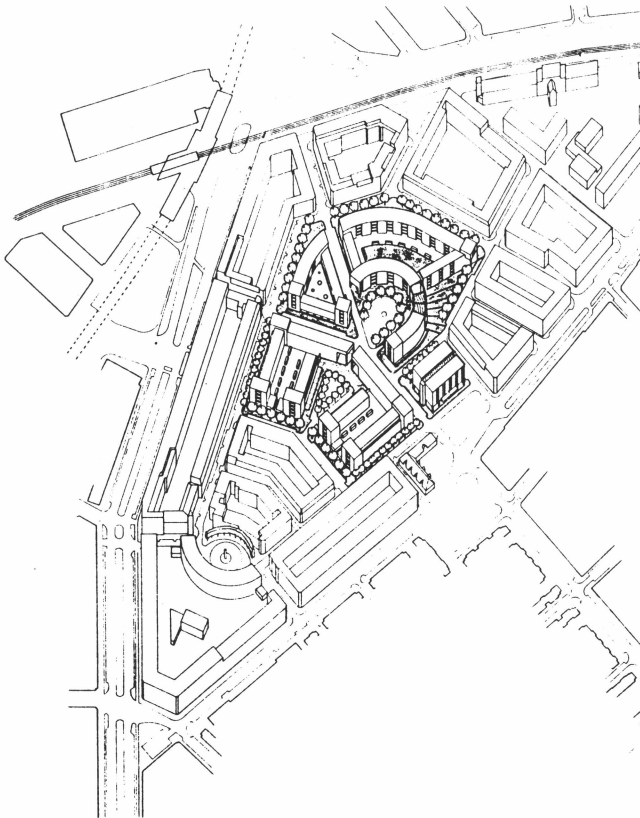
Vaillantlaan, Schilderswijk, The Hague



Urban Villas, Afrikaanderwijk, Rotterdam, arch. DKV



Plan Afrikaanderplein, Rotterdam



curved strips, Bloemhof, Rotterdam, arch. Groosman Partners

Secondly, there will be the problem of blocks having court yards as wide as 12 to 15 metres (Hebly, 1994; 59), and another problem will be the flexibility of the floor plans, as architects are obliged to select from a catalogue of over 600 drawings of facade elements, joints, etc. These projects, and especially the last one, are a tough confrontation with urban design and with the maintenance of housing forms in the future, both from a technical and a social point of view. Other key issues for urban design are designing on a larger scale than current assignments and the position of urban design in relation to urban planning. New methods of supervision and management of coherence will have to be developed. Strategies comprising socio-economic and demographic measures as well as specific research activities and alternatives are required to display the potentials of these districts.

The modernization of old houses, too, became an argument that attention should be paid to the coherence of the urban structure; a relation which at first had been considered of minor importance. Improving the quality mainly involved the improvement of technical building aspects and floor plans. Roofs were replaced by a kind of wooden containers to limit the loss in the number of houses when, as a result of modern standards of quality, modernization resulted in larger houses. In situations where outdoor space was lacking, balconies were placed against facades. In the 1980s more attention was paid to environmental qualities, for instance, when modernized and newly-built houses were combined in one block. Today, balconies on the street side are no longer allowed, and storage space on the first floor is avoided as much as possible. Instead of placing wooden boxes on the roofs, loggias or top storeys were sometimes removed to improve the access of light.

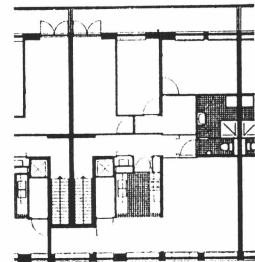
From the beginning of urban renewal a more or less (in)formal device: the so-called 'Plan of Approach', has been used for purposes of planning, programming, realization, participation, and for the development of strategies related to (changes in) conditions. This 'Plan of Approach' mainly aims at dealing with urban renewal problems on the level of a neighbourhood. On the basis of socio-economic, demographic and morphological analyses as well as those referring to technical building and living conditions, the strategies for and changes in urban structure have been assessed and developed. In fact, this process-related way of planning replaces previous hierarchical procedures and planning documents such as the memorandum of objectives, the city and subsequently the zoning plan. Sometimes the 'Plan of Approach' is applied as a supplement to the procedures of the zoning plan. The 'Plan of Approach' is also a useful supplement because it may enhance the flexibility in planning

Changing conditions and the realization of quality

Conditions in the process of realizing quality have changed, and have affected new housing, improvements in the existing housing stock and the environment. Decentralization measures have changed the position of the parties dealing with these processes as well as the relationship between central and local governments. The relationship between tenants, housing associations and the local government was formalized in the urban renewal districts in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Before the design process was started, houses with fixed rents were allotted to (future) tenants. During the process there would be meetings at which tenants could decide on the plans. Architects were commissioned by tenants and the housing associations together. Tenants' private interests were combined in organizations, and with the position of the tenants thus legalized more attention was paid to 'user quality' in the big cities.

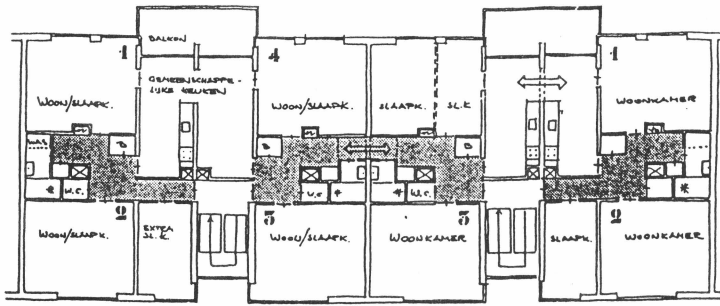


Hoefkade, Schilderswijk, The Hague, arch. Siza



plan 'Punt Komma',
arch. Siza

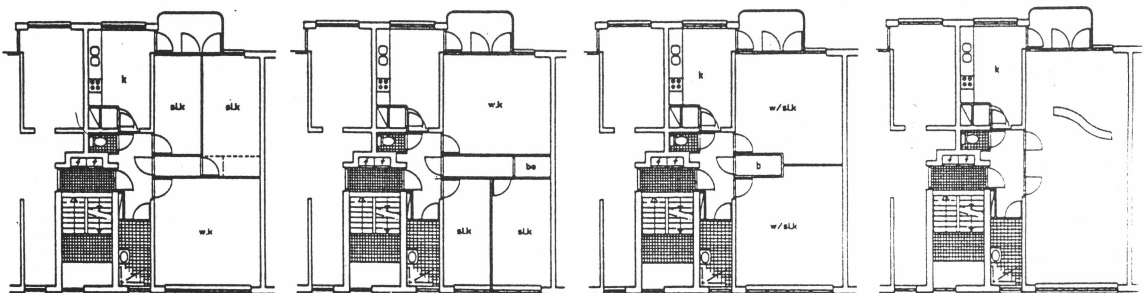
Sizes of new houses corresponded with that of households. As a consequence the plans were complex and there were many different types of houses: one plan would comprise big and small ones. Due to high density most of them had four storeys, and stacked housing necessitated the construction of lifts which increased rents. There was no direct relation between building costs and rents, and as a consequence there were fewer problems in the design process. The increase in building costs as a result of allocation and market



Flexible housing, Wittenbachstraat, Dapperbuurt, Amsterdam, CASA Architects

conditions were not borne by the tenants, and so constant quality was maintained. Local authorities developed particular methods to obtain great improvements. New concepts as to floor plans and the environment were developed, which was the result of realizing housing projects in which immigrants, most of them of Turkish and Moroccan origin, had participated. The main demand of immigrants was

that floor plans should have separate corridors so that women could go to the kitchen without having to pass through the living room if there were visitors. Consequently, there were either various separate rooms or they could be separated by means of sliding doors. These experiments resulted in floor plans with a certain flexibility in the functions of rooms. The experiments were also interesting for alternative households. The environmental demands of the immigrants, concerning public space, facilities and services, also played a more important role in the discussions. Specific demands of ethnic groups referred to green areas, such as parks, and to strict separation between public and private spaces. Another new issue, not only interesting for immigrants but for other categories as well, were houses providing possibilities of running small-scale businesses and so a combination of living and working (Top, M. et al; 1991, and Dutrieux, R. et al; 1992). Dynamic changes in households now determine the requirements for housing. The diversity of types of households is growing, but in their turn these various forms of shared accommodation were subject to changes developing even faster. This is how ideas about and experiments with flexible housing with residents participating has become important (Eldonk en Fassbinder, 1990; 74). The development of types of housing and the renewal in



"WONEN-STRAAT"

"WONEN-TUIN"

"G2"

"LOFT"

Flexible Housing, 'Tabak', Zeeheldenbuurt, The Hague, CASA Architects

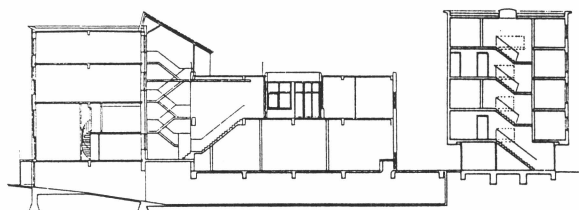
the typology of housing is an ongoing process. More variation in quality and more houses directly accessible from the street have become new assignments for research and experimental developments in new housing types, for which growing individuality is another important factor. Examples are blocks with single storey apartments on top of maisonettes and houses having floor plans suited to house two or more adults who are more or less self-supporting.

New housing was also realized for elderly persons, of which the 'Jan van de Ploeghuis' in Rotterdam may serve as a prototype for other projects. It comprises 79 houses and there are communal rooms, a winter garden as well as services and facilities, such as a service centre with a kitchen. It has two basic floor plans, one for houses with their own facilities, the other one for two houses sharing a kitchen (Meyden van der, J. et al, 1990; 27). Other examples of experiments with new forms of housing in relation to new types of households are the reconstruction of former offices, factories or stores, and usually integrating small businesses and shops.

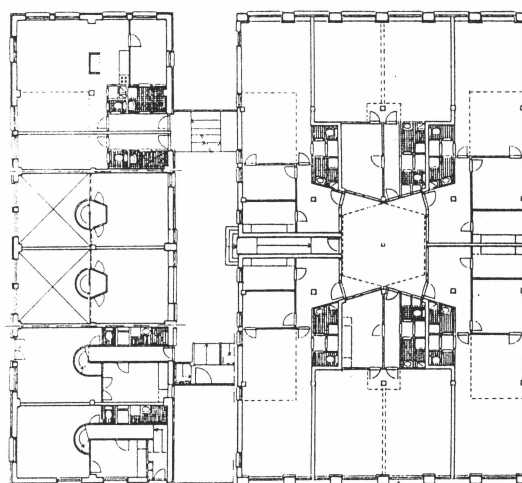
Sometimes squatters took the initiative and after their situation had been legalized, they became the occupiers and used the new facilities, shops, etc. Self-help is an important aspect in modernizing buildings such as these, in which the management of the buildings has to be agreed upon by housing associations and local authorities.

Till the end of the 1980s 'user quality' could be realized (Stouten, P. 1987); in addition modernization of parts of the pre-war housing stock was an important aspect to meet the criteria as to housing needs (BSW Rotterdam, 1986: 128; B & W Rotterdam, 1993). In the late 80s, however, conditions for urban renewal changed dramatically. In Rotterdam just over 50 per cent of the programme had been realized. Project groups were abolished and a new organization was set up, its main objectives being the maintenance of a district, and providing solutions to such problems as an inadequate residential environment. This was meant to stimulate participation of private investors in building projects, and was therefore called Public Private Partnership.

Urban renewal and restructuring processes increasingly depended on the market taking initiatives in experiments with housing forms and their environment, which were usually taken by local governments.



Levantkade 10, KNSM island, Amsterdam, CASA Architects



Levantkade 10, KNSM island, Amsterdam, CASA Architects



Conversion of warf-office into 20 dwellings, 8 ateliers and 300sqm for small enterprices in combination with 16 new build dwellings, Levantkade, Amsterdam, CASA Architects



Levantkade 10 KNSM eiland, Amsterdam, CASA Architects

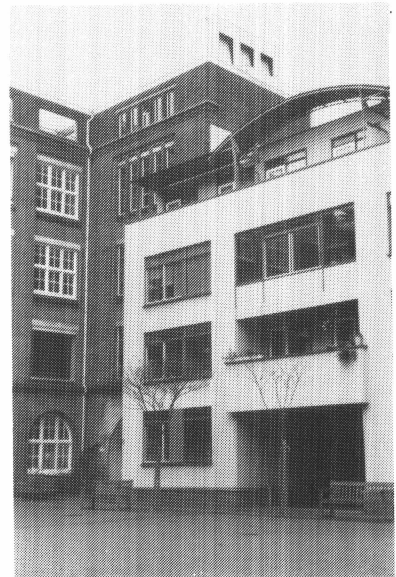


Conversion entrepot buildings, Kop van Zuid Rotterdam, into 107 dwellings and small enterprises, arch. Cepezed

The problem was, however, if building in accordance with free-market principles would take the risks and initiatives to continue the experiments that had been developed a decade before. Developing new planning tools and determining new typologies in housing was another point. In Amsterdam, for instance, the local authorities started analyzing floor plans related to the number of household categories, which resulted in reducing a group of 14 housing plans to three basic and slightly varying floor plans to be realized in several tenures (BWA, 1991).

Conclusions

Over the past two decades several methods have been developed to improve the urban structure and the housing stock. Their results show the restrictions and possibilities of the available planning and urban design tools. Apart from developing the tools for urban renewal, a change in last year's policy has caused new problems, and, consequently conditions have changed dramatically. How far can the future be planned? What methods are required? Until the end of the 1960s such questions had never been asked. It is on housing that many urban design-related tools have been developed successfully. The positions of local authorities have sometimes been contradictory. Local authorities became involved in urban planning and design at a time when the government withdrew from housing issues. However, new planning and design methods with various participants meant much more government investment in the infrastructure than formerly, in order to stimulate private initiatives to participate in urban plans. There is hardly any experience in urban design as a capable guideline, but it can create conditions in



Conversion of furniture factory into dwellings and small enterprises, Pander complex

which various market interests could be lured into participating in prestigious projects. Yet in a few revitalisation projects in Amsterdam and Rotterdam a considerable part of the plans (almost 50%) has been realized in the social housing sector, whose execution might otherwise have been uncertain. The social sector is an important factor in taking initiatives and risks, whereas the private sector may be following cautiously and avoid risks as much as possible.

Twenty years of experiments in urban renewal and design have revealed many design and management problems. Important aspects were also that planning and design could be adapted during the development and execution of experiments. Management is an issue during as well as after the execution. Hierarchical procedures of formulating objectives of master plans and land-use plans seem to have been completely revised. For this reason twenty years of experiments in urban renewal districts are worth considering. They show that not only strategies for measures based on socio-economic and demographic purposes are necessary, but also investigation of the potentials of urban settlements. It is obvious that, instead of hierarchy in procedures, they have to be characterized by processes with many possibilities for feedback. To a certain extent urban design, just like demographic and socio-economic aspects, is an independent factor. Urban plans which include analysis on a larger scale and entity than the assignment itself are important; not as a pretension to build the future exactly, but rather to serve as one of the criteria for checking possible solutions and for research purposes. In this way a certain coherence may be achieved.

Not only building techniques should be considered for the purpose of reaching sustainable and durable solutions, but also the relations with social aspects and population dynamics. Experiments involving participation have shown interesting results, although they may sometimes appear to be exaggerated because traditions and cultures seem to have been invented. Buruma, for instance, concludes: 'The more a society is changing, the more traditions are re-emerging, incorporated, degenerated, concocted to relax effects of disorientation' (Buruma, 1993).

Inventing traditions may easily result in intensifying cultural differences, but they cannot be ignored as such. Culture bears less resemblance to an old oak and more to a large city with constant rebuilding and demolition (Buruma, 1993). So, special public Turkish baths may be built, whereas young Turkish people — the so-called 'second generation' — like to visit a sauna. And a specially designed floor plan for ethnic minorities, for instance, also proves to have a more universal quality that is suitable for alternative households. There is no doubt that the special projects for elderly persons are worth considering and are becoming increasingly popular. After twenty years of urban renewal there is not only the issue of executing plans and designs, but also one of requirements of sustainable settlements in relation to design, maintenance and management.

Apart from the quality of the floor plan, environmental qualities and amenities now form a more integral whole. In spite of or rather because of the necessary flexibility, urban design in the allotments of inner cities has to be realized in such a way that they can be adapted to socio-economic and demographic changes. Over the last two decades experiments in the social housing sector have proved that urban renewal has been an important catalyst in this field. Therefore it cannot be regarded as a massive 'Utopia on trial' but rather an ongoing process of 'trial and error' with interesting results and the implementation of experiments.

New urban designs were the result of the transition of solutions from suburban to inner city areas, strengthened and accompanied by transitions in urban life which have greatly supported the revaluation of the city.

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URBAN RENEWAL IN TRANSITION

In the nineties cities are very different from the city of just twenty years ago. Urban renewal and restructuring summarize several dynamics. Some of them are a result of (local) policies and some are relatively distinctive of local processes.

In the Netherlands and certainly in the bigger cities there had been a strong involvement of local politics in improving and realizing new qualities of urban structure, housing and residential environment.

Special methods were developed to rehabilitate those districts. The design of housing and urban structures was related to social aspects: urban design as well as urban life in transition.

Not only economic change but also the dimension of population and social changes are central to the study of urban renewal and restructuring processes.

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