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Open-up Interstices

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OPEN-UP INTERSTICES

Progress report 13 May 2020

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Progress report 2020 May 13

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COURTYARD IN MORGENSTOND

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DESIGN PROPOSAL

Social activities
Ecological diversity
Material identity
Morphological rearrangement



RESEARCH SUMMARY



This research aims to explore the courtyards in Den Haag Zuidwest as the meantime 'open spaces' for the urban regeneration of the neighbourhood. Municipality Den Haag has issued the urban regeneration vision of Den Haag Zuidwest "Bestemming Zuidwest Gebiedsverkenning" in 2019, aiming at revitalizing the post-war neighbourhood through urban spatial densification and infrastructural improvements. The essential attention is paid to current deteriorated 1950's social housing apartment and low-income residents. 10.000 new dwellings will be added, to attract more middle-class social groups as new residents. The urban regeneration can cause remarkable changes to the existing urban fabric and the life of low-income social group. How the spatial condensation could integrate with existing highly formal and structural urban fabric that represents the area's post-war legacy? How the demolish of old buildings could secure the demands of affordable housing? and How the potential influx of middle-class residents could coexist with the existing neighbourhood that is featured by old, poverty and unemployment.

Regarding those potential challenges of large-scale urban transformation, this research proposes that the current under-used, neglected courtyards enclosed in each residential building blocks could be a mediator between old and new, between existing conditions and future potentials, and between situated local knowledge and distant urban planning. The key is to explore the particular characters of the site and initiate multiple substantial relationships between the courtyard and the surrounding urban context.

Our main research method is research by design: using design analysis and design projection as a tool to disclose those in-between courtyards. The research methodology consists of three steps. First, we will investigate the background of the neighbourhood, understanding the urban design, spatial structure and existing urban social-cultural life. Based on that, we will analyze the condition of existing courtyards, annotating their particular characteristics and current social usage and plant communities. Following the analysis, we will propose different design prototypes to a selected courtyard. The design aims at revealing the potentials of the site. The design prototypes will be presented to local residents to together imagine the potential social events and other processes could be hosted on-site and reflect upon the site's characteristics. In this way, it allows us to collect empirical experience on what kind of new process, dialogues and relationships could be initiated in the courtyard.

The research outcome is a showcase of local conditions and identities, adding valuable ingredients to the upcoming urban regeneration process. The design in this circumstances, provide an initial structure, a platform that allows local process to develop and further fill in the site. The courtyards, as the meantime 'open' spaces – the open outdoor space and space open to diverse practices, processes and identities - could provide a reference, coordination and even challenge to the municipality's planning of urban regeneration.

INTRODUCTION

DEN HAAG ZUIDWEST AND ITS URBAN DESIGN



Figure 02. Leyweg shopping center in 1960s, when the neighbourhood was just developed. (image: Hans Klok)

Den Haag Zuidwest is a post-war urban extension district in the Escamp district in the South part of Den Haag municipality. The area was developed predominantly for the residential purpose, built for working-class people as a social group largely developed in the post-war period. The whole district is constituted by three neighbourhoods: the Moerwijk, Morgenstond, Bouwlust and Vrederust. Surrounding and in-between those three neighbourhoods are large urban green area and sports field, including Zuid-Park, Overoorde, Uithof and Escamp I and Escamp II. In addition to those green recreational spaces, one could also see elongated canals with green belts on its two sides. Abundant urban green is one of the representative identities of Den Haag Zuidwest, another identity of the area is the monotonous post-war housing blocks, developed by Dutch architect Willem Dudok. The majority of building blocks in Den Haag Zuidwest are three to four stories high, with façades designed with similar elements of the porch, window frame and balcony.

The idea to develop an urban extension area of Den Haag was early started in the 1930s. Architect Willem M. Dudok, who was the external urban planner of city Den Haag, was appointed to make the plan for the extension. The plan was not adopted by the city hall until 1930 and in 1932 the construction was officially started (Valentijn, 2002). However, the initial development was halted due to the outbreak of World War II. After the war, in 1949, the extension plan was again started. The shortage of housing stock after the war accelerates the implementation of the expansion plan.

The plan of Den Haag Zuidwest follows Dudok's structural plan ('Structuurplan Groot's-Gravenhage'). The structural plan was conceived for the expansion of city centre Den Haag and some smaller surrounding municipalities including Voorburg and

Rijswijk. The structural plan was accepted by the city council in 1949. Making the structural plan, Dudok's principal idea was that the city should have a clear form distinguished from the countryside (Van de Beek & Van der Heijden, 1987). Dudok's plan applied a distinctive formal approach: the city of Den Hague is structured by an orthogonal road system taking the orientation of the coastline as the reference. The traffic system forms six quadrants of urban districts. Each quadrant is further divided into four by local streets. Each quadrant neighbourhood is equipped with own essential urban amenities such as shopping centre, school and nursery.

The unified urban pattern is designed to be penetrated by the green network, as Dudok speaks: "systematic penetration of the stone city with the green recreational areas". At the city level, for example, major parks are connected to the surrounding countryside, offering public recreational functions. The neighbourhood level still largely defined by the geometry of urban planning, while Dudok was also adopted the idea from A. Bos 'the city of the future, the future of the city', driven by a socio-cultural consideration, arguing that each residential district shall have their special characters (Van de Beek & Van der Heijden, 1987). Developed from this idea, Dudok promotes a fine-grained hierarchy structure from the neighbourhood level to the city level, which is individual housing - neighbourhood - district - municipality - city. Argued by Dudok, this transition would allow the individual community fit into the current urban structure while keeping a certain level of autonomy: "As far as traffic is concerned, my plan promotes a structural separation and, above all, leaching, not the arbitrary crossing of the residential areas" (Van de Beek & Van der Heijden, 1987).

The design of neighbourhood Moerwijk and Morgenstond represents Dudok's idea from the Structural



Figure 01. Structuurplan groot 's-Gravenhage - W.M.Dudok (1947). (Source: The Hague Municipal Archives.)

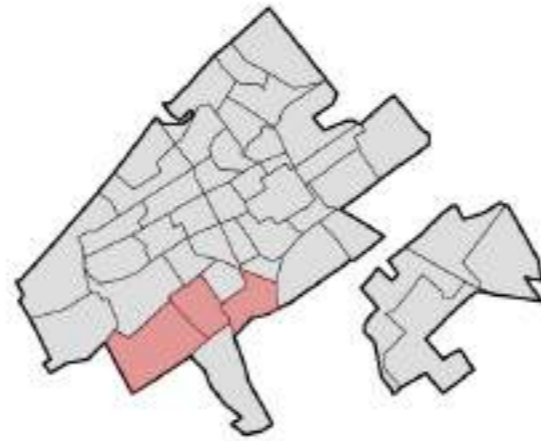


Figure 03. Three neighbourhoods of Den Haag Zuidwest in total 44 neighbourhoods of Den Haag municipality.

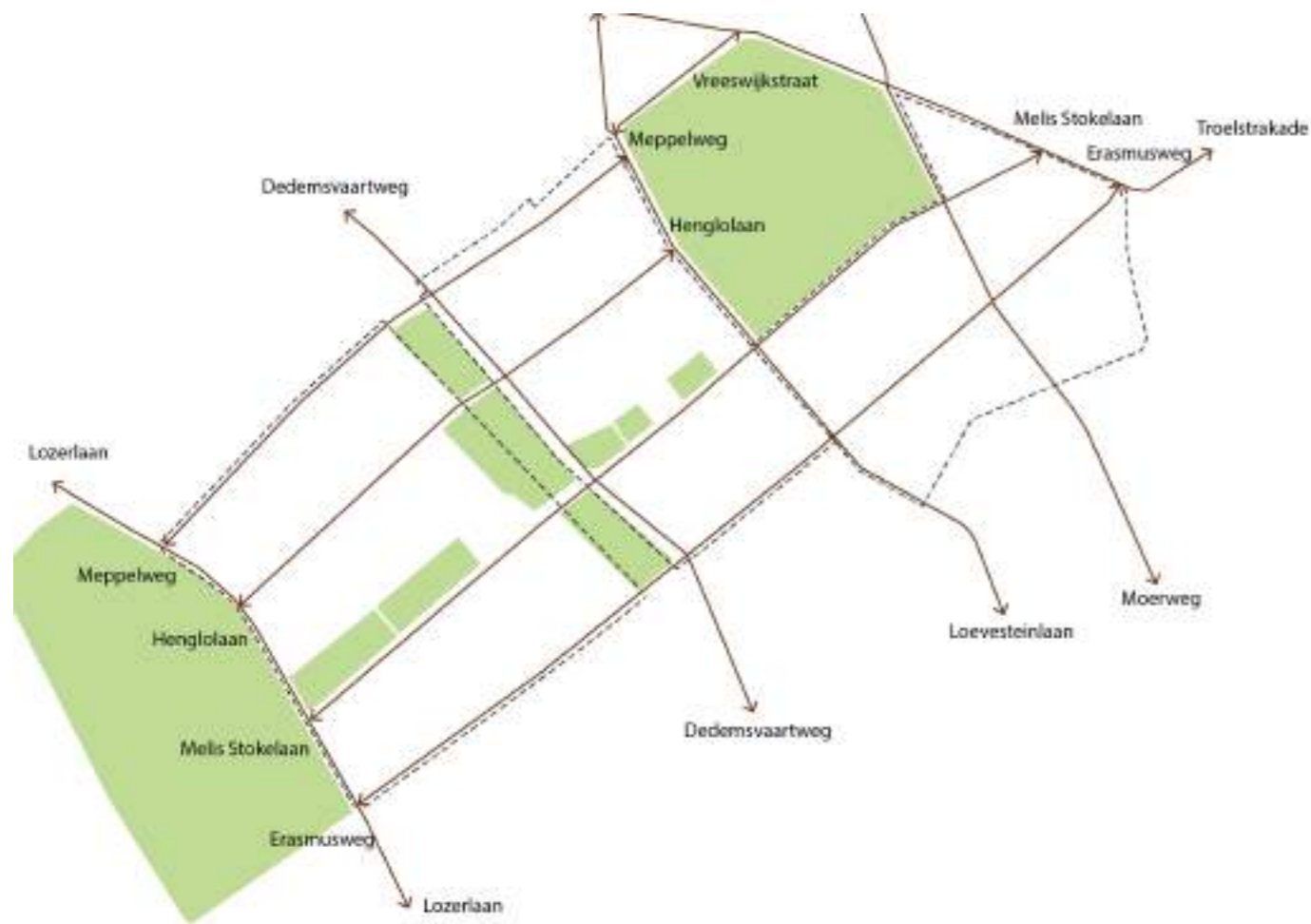


Figure 04. The urban structure of Den Haag constituted by perpendicular traffic network and green axes.

Plan. In the urban plan, we could see the long building blocks are arranged along the main traffic trunk way. In this way, these buildings prevent the city from fragmenting into self-contained residential areas. Differently, in the inner neighbourhood area, we could see the more varied layout of residential buildings, for example, duplex dwellings, courtyards and small strip-building complexes.

Development stages:

Before the current Den Haag Zuidwest was built, the area was known as Escampolder: a large extended polder land served for agricultural purpose. Before the large-scale after-war urban expansion took place, in 1932, the construction of Zuidpark and the north part of Moerwijk was already built (Valentijn, 2002). In the North part of Moerwijk follows Berlage's design in 1980, featured by the enclosed neighbourhood building blocks. After the war, Dudok designed the south part of Moerwijk and Morgenstond. Here, it is easy to identify Dudok's design language, which is featured by the strip-shaped courtyard with elongated building blocks on the two sides, with or without added building blocks on the shorter ends of the courtyard. The realized neighbourhood received many critics, mainly pointing on the monotonous layout of residential building blocks. For example, H.G. van Beusekom criticized: "endlessly long blocks along straight streets" in three or four residential layers would ignore the "value of the personality".

The Neighbourhood Bouwlust and Vrederlust was latest developed. The critical comments on Morgenstond, as well as the protest of local farmers, hindered the construction of the neighbourhood. These factors further caused Dudok to retreat from the design assignment. Alternatively, different architecture offices are invited to develop the neighbourhood separately. As a result, the layout of the residential building presents a more diverse architecture style and spatial character.

The spatial character

The orthogonal grid pattern in Dudok's Structural Plan plays the guiding role for the spatial structure of Den Haag Zuidwest. In Den Haag Zuidwest, the orthogonal grid pattern was primarily organized by the traffic system: the four main urban trunk road Erasmusweg, Melis Stokelaan, Moerweg and Henglolaan introduce long continuous lines parallel to the direction of the coast, running through the whole Den Haag Zuidwest. Perpendicular to those streets are mainly urban streets including Loevesteinlaan, Leyweg and Dedemsvaartweg. These three streets

penetrate Den Haag Zuidwest in the north-south direction and divide the three neighbourhoods: Morewijk, Morgenstond, Bouwlust and Vrederust. Other perpendicular roads are more fragmented, for example, Leyweg, Vrederustlaan and Beresteinlaan, which penetrate the inner neighbourhoods and form the grid system. The primary traffic roads further connect the area with surrounding natural recreational resources, including Voordes and Ockenburgh and the natural reserve of Scheveningen bushes (Valentijn, 2002).

Another structural element is the green network, which is also designed feeding into the grid system, forming the so-called green axis cross (Groene Assenkruis). The green network consists of the long central green zone along the Melis Stokelaan and perpendicular a north-south green axis along the Dedemsvaartweg. The north-south green axis also functions as a belt that separates the neighbourhood Bouwlust and Vrederust from Morgenstond. Although the space of green axis cross is mainly preserved for green and nature, certain urban recreational functions could be incorporated within: in the north-south axis we could see sports fields and allotment garden; while a swimming pool, a hospital, a school and sports fields are located in the east-west axis (Valentijn, 2002). Besides the green axis, the linear green system is compiled by street with extending tree lines and canals with green banks. The green network became the dominant spatial organization of the area and portrait the image of Den Haag Zuidwest.

The residential blocks in the grid system are more or less in the same height. Up to the end of the 1950s, social housing construction did not allow elevators from the government. Therefore, it is only possible to make the residential building in 3 or 4 floors high, whether or not with a half-underground floor with storage areas, or very high residential apartments. For financial reasons, the choice was often made for four layers plus a half-underground floor. The variation in the urban spatial form mainly had to come from the placement of public and special buildings, shopping squares or replacing building strips with traditional building blocks (Valentijn, 2002). However, attention was paid to ornaments at the entrances to porches, windows in end walls and to roof overhangs. the façade of schools were also decorated with artistic work. Those small details bring a certain level of variation but the general image of the built environment is fairly repetitive.



Figure 05. The elonged building blocks form the barrier from urban main street, providing a unified image.



Figure 06. As a structural element, the elonged building blocks shape the neighbourhood boundary and the inner neighbourhood is organed

THREE NEIGHBOURHOODS



Figure 07. The three neighbourhoods of Den Haag Zuidwest. From Moerwijk, Morgenstond tot he neighborhood of Bouwlust and Vrederust, it presents a transformation of urban morphology, from formalized “enclosed building blocks” to loose “free-standing building on the landscape”.

Three neighbourhoods are planned in Den Haag Zuidwest: Moerwijk, Mongenstond, Bouwlust and Vrederust. The north part was built before the Zuidwest urban expansion was commenced. Therefore, the urban morphology still follows the pattern of surrounding urban district Spoorwijk and Oostbroek-Zuid, featured by Berlage’s plan of enclosed building blocks. The south part of Moerwijk follows Dudok’s design idea, presenting a similar urban structure as Morgenstond.

The neighbourhoods Morgenstond was developed by architect Dudok and literally reflects Dudok’s assertion of the formal urban structure. The urban plan could be visibly captured by an orthogonal pattern of the urban grid, filled by elongated strips of building blocks. In particular, Morgenstond was designed into six neighbourhoods and each neighbourhood has its own neighbourhood shopping centre and schools. Over the years, these small neighbourhood shopping centres have largely turned into streets with care and services, small-scale businesses, catering and fitness centres. The only shopping centre remained is the Leyweg shopping center. The location of Leyweg shopping center is in the middle of the neighbourhood as well as the whole Zuidwest. The shopping centre ends on the east-west green axis of Den Haag Zuidwest. Following this green link, within five minutes, one could reach Zuidpark. This advantage further makes Leyweg the most vigorous part of Zuidwest and the popular destination during the weekend.

The lastly developed neighbourhood is Bouwlust and Vrederust, locating at the far-west end of Den Haag Zuidwest. This neighbourhood was not originally included in the Structural plan of City Den Haag. This might be the reason why Dudok doesn’t define a



Figure 08. the artistic work on the façade of public building.

strict city character for this Neighbourhood. Instead, the neighbourhood presents a more autonomous character. In Dudok’s plan, this neighbourhood will have a loose spatial character, marked by free-standing building blocks on the landscape. Additionally, because the residential blocks were designed by different architects, the organization of building blocks is more varied in this neighbourhood. What encloses the end of the neighbourhood is the park De Uithof. It was originally designed as a residential area like Bouwlust, but not realized. In 1972, the zoning plan defined Uithof as a natural recreational area, with natural wonder route, gardens, spots facilitates, representing a polder landscape.



Figure 9. Dudok’s plan of neighborhood Morgenstond in 1949. (Source: Den Haag municipality)

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION



Figure 10. The proportion of native or migration in demography report. From left to right shows Moerwijk, Morgenstond, and Bouwlust and Vrederust. All three neighbourhoods show a high proportion of non-western migrants.



Figure 11. The average gross annual income of three neighbourhood. From left to right, Moerwijk, Morgenstond, and Bouwlust and Vrederust rank the last 5, 8 and 7 among 44 neighbourhoods of Den Haag.

#	Characteristic	Value	Value NL	Difference	Difference NL	Score
1	% Migration background Suriname	11%	2%	9%	1%	6.81
2	% Migration background Morocco	12%	2%	10%	2%	6.59
3	% Migration background in the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba	5%	1%	4%	1%	6.44

Moerwijk

#	Characteristic	Value	Value NL	Difference	Difference NL	Score
1	% Migration background Suriname	13%	2%	11%	1%	8.28
2	% Turkey migration background	15%	2%	13%	2%	7.86
3	% Migration background Morocco	9%	2%	7%	2%	4.63

Morgenstond

#	Characteristic	Value	Value NL	Difference	Difference NL	Score
1	% Migration background Suriname	13%	2%	11%	1%	8.28
2	% Turkey migration background	15%	2%	13%	2%	7.86
3	% Migration background Morocco	9%	2%	7%	2%	4.63

Bouwlust and Vrederust

Figure 12. The characteristics of the neighborhood showing remarkable difference in comparing with the Netherlands average level. The immigration ratio in three neighborhoods are distinctive.

Southwest’s neighbourhood is characterized by “old age, demand for care, poverty and loneliness prevail”, speaks by Leo Oorschot in his article “Den Haag Zuidwest in transformation: balanceren tussen oud en nieuw” (Oorschot, 2019). The social-economic deprived neighbourhood was not the case when Den Haag Zuidwest was just constructed, but comes along years of transformation.

The original residence in the area was mainly for the family of workers. The apartment was designed as three to four rooms, hosting a family with children. In the following year, when the original residents became richer, they moved outside, finding a single-unit house with a backyard. For those families staying in the area, the children in the household have grown up and moved outside, which results in only elders left in the household (De Blanken, 2013).

At present, most of the dwellings do not meet up to the standards of a proper living condition. As a result, the area attracts more and more low-income family. In the demographic report from city Den Haag, the income level of the area ranks among the least three in the whole Den Haag municipality: in Moerwijk the average is 15000 euros per year, ranking last 5 in Den Haag neighbourhoods. In Bouwlust and Vredu-

erlust, the figure is 17500 euros, ranking the last 7 in Den Haag, and in Morgenstond around 18000 euros, ranking the last 9 in total 41 neighbourhoods.

The high proportion of social rent housing also leads to the current inhabitants lacking social cohesion (Oorschot, 2019). Comparing with the condition of private dwellings that allow a better social network, in the social rent dwellings people are more reluctant to connect with each other (Morgenstond Toelichting, Gemeente Den Haag). The demographic composition also marked by high rates of immigrants: in Morgenstond, 55.4% are non-westers and in Bouwlust and Vrederust it counts 58.6%, and in Moerwijk is even 61.4%. In 2015, the implementation of the MOE landers (in buy-to-let apartments) further attracted social allowance holders and mental health care patients (in social rental homes) as the new neighbours.

Rene Baron, the urban district director of Escamp, cautions against a sociological threat for the situation of Den Haag Zuidwest: “If we don’t watch out, a sociological disaster will happen before us: the disintegration of our society”, “The neighbourhood workers are doing their stinking best to keep things together, but that is not enough to speak of a delta plan for community development” (Dirks, 2018).



Figure 13. The balcony of a post-war residence of Morgenstond.

THE URBAN REGENERATION PLAN



DE STAD IN TRANSITIE

Met de Agenda Ruimte voor de Stad is het ruimtelijke perspectief voor Den Haag richting 2040 bepaald. Een van de opgaven uit de Agenda is het accommoderen van de groei van de stad op landbouwgrond. De stad moet met circa 4.000 inwoners per jaar. Deze opgave heeft grote ruimtelijke impact en raakt ook aan andere opgaven, zoals bereikbaarheid, energietransitie, economie en leefbaarheid. Leidend bij de verichtingsopgave is het principe: verdichten, verspreiden en verduurzamen. Naast Agenda Ruimte voor de stad is vanuit andere thema's beleid opgesteld om de transitie van de stad te ondersteunen, onder meer de Woonwiel, discussienote Hapagie Nieuwbestemming, Verkenning Schaalsprong OV, verkenning Openbare Ruimte, bestuursvernieuwing en energietransitie ambities.

Zuidwest is een van de gebieden waar door herstructurering verdicht kan worden. Middelen van versterking door herstructurering is, naast de stadsbrede verkenningen en beleid, onderzocht wat de kansen en grenzen zouden kunnen zijn voor verdichting in Zuidwest. Dit beleidsplan concludeert dat de verkenningen zijn, dat met verdichting het volgende behaald kan worden:

- versterking van de woonmarkt van Den Haag Zuidwest;
- een versnelde energietransitie van (bestaande) corporatiebezit;
- bij herstructurering van sociale woongebieden door middel van sloep en nieuwbouw, knippen op op forse verdichting met marktverruiming, naast 100% terugbrengen sociale voorraad;
- toevoegen van bijbehorend programma aan woningbouwvoorzieningen en lokale werkgelegenheid;
- heraanpak van het verkeersnetwerk met een breed geschiedend knooppunt van stedelijk voorzieningen met een regionale betekenis;
- aansluiten op de bestaande stedelijke en regionale schaalsprong Openbaar Vervoer;
- een herijking van de waarde van het groen.



In 2019, the municipality Den Haag released the urban renovation vision “Bestemming Zuidwest Gebiedsverkenning”. The overall objective is to transform Den Haag Zuidwest into an urban neighbourhood that is more attractive, self-reliant and sustainable. The key target is the social-economic issue bounding to the dominant low-income, unemployment and immigrant social groups in the area.

The major ambition in the urban regeneration plan is to develop 10,000 new dwellings in the housing stock. The new residential building will replace the current deteriorated social housing apartment from the '60s. In this way, the improved housing condition will attract middle-class social groups as new residents, turning about the economic downgrade of the area. Accompany with constructing new dwellings, the urban infrastructures will be improved. Following principles are listed in the regeneration agenda: improve the traffic connection with surrounding urban districts, enhance local attractive spots such as sports field, parks and cultural institution, adding more local service and facilitates serving for the residential function, improve the accessibility to urban green and blue, and adding small public or communal programs.

In the meantime, the regeneration plan associations with the city Den Haag's development agenda. In the city's development vision “Den Haag, stad van kansen en ambities” (The Hague, city of opportunities and ambitions), two redevelopment projects are located in the area of Zuidwest:

The first is the Leyweg / Dreven en Gaarden area. The aim is to improve the diversity, quality and accessibility of the shopping centre. Making Leyweg as the gate and activity centre of the neighbourhood. The second is the Morewijk station where the proposal includes to refurbish the station and station square and further to develop housing projects around the station square and to make the ecological connection with Erasmusweg.

Additionally, the association is made with the “Agenda Ruimte voor de Stad” (Agenda room for the city) in the following points

- Compaction around Leyweg
- Accelerate public transport towards the centre and tangent Rijswijk-Kijkduin
- Renovation of urban districts
- Transformation zone around Lozerlaan, connection to landscape park Uithof

- Strengthening green slow traffic routes
- Strengthening water connections

The opportunities and challenges together formulate three main strategies for the urban renovation plan: compacting, greening and sustainability. The first and foremost step is the densification: replacing current three to four floors residential buildings with higher and denser residential blocks. Through densification, more urban spaces could be released for improving living services, greens spaces and urban livability. The primary action of the regeneration plan are: Leyweg shopping centre and surrounding public transportation, Morewijk station and station square and develop nature park Uithof.

SAMENVATTING VOORAF

Ambitie: Den Haag Zuidwest transformeert tot een aantrekkelijk, zelfredzaam en duurzaam Haags woongebied, dat op werkgelegenheid, onderwijs, voorzieningenniveau, bereikbaarheid en opbouw van de woningvoorraad gelijk scoort aa het gemiddelde van Den Haag.

Zet in op een verdichting tenminste 10.000 marktwoningen: werken aan een gedifferentieerde wijk, versterking van voorzieningenaanbod en de noodzakelijke sociaal economische ‘kanteling’ van Zuidwest.

Combineer de verdichting met andere grootschalige opgaven zoals de schaalsprong OV, de energietransitie, de aanpak van de groen- en waterstructuur, de herstructurering van het bedrijventerrein, de inpassing van de Lozerlaan en het upgraden van het Uithofpark van een perifere stadsrand naar een betekenisvol regio park.

Bouw voort op de kenmerkende ruimtelijke opzet van Zuidwest op verschillende schaalniveaus:

- stadsdeel in de regio: versterken OV en langzaamverkeersverbindingen naar omliggende wijken
- differentiëren en betekenis/bestemming geven aan de structuur van Zuidwest: stadsstraten (draggers van vervoer, intensieve bebouwing, gemengde functies), herdefiniëren van het groen (nieuw wijkpark, toegankelijke sport- en volkstuinvoorzieningen, waterverbindingen versterken)
- versterken van buurten rondom kleinschalige publieke programma's zoals plantsoenen, pleinen en kleinschalige voorzieningclusters

Onderzoek en benut kansen om met spraakmakende events en programma's de verbetering van Zuidwest impulsen te geven (bijvoorbeeld Floriade Uithofpark, MBO campus/gezondheid, theater)

Figure 14. Den Haag municipality's urban regeneration vision of Den Haag Zuidwest. (Source: Urban planning office of Den Haag)

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE REDEVELOPMENT?



Figure 15. Notwithstanding the bare residential condition, one could still find various appropriation of the living environment, showing a desire and self-constructed identity.



Figure 16. The newly constructed private houses, built in 2000, locates in the middle of Morgenstond, near Leyweg shopping center.

The urban redevelopment agenda will bring new promise to the downgraded neighbourhoods. However, it also raises alerts on its potential social impact: re-structuring and demolishing current residential buildings would bring considerable impact on the existing vulnerable communities. The impoverished neighbours are relying on the current affordable houses. In my interview with an around 40 years old woman who lives in the neighbourhood, she said that before she moved in here, she had 10 years being homeless. These crummy apartments are important for these residents to settle down and search for development. Leo Oorschot pointed out that bringing in 1000 new apartments means the demolition of affordable housing is inevitable and in the surrounding urban district, Houtwijk, Wateringen and Oostbroek, there's little stock of affordable housing either. Will the urban redevelopment results in social gentrification? Radical urban restructure triggered by economic incentive often in opposition with the desire of local residents. The generic approach from top-down can hardly be sustainable. A sustainable urban transformation could, and might be only achieved by introducing the intervention based on fully aware the current resources and qualities.

As Oorschot proposes, every residential block has its unique characteristics, and the decision for restricting the residential blocks should respond. The restructure could be made by distributing current residents to more proper apartments. For example, to let the single people move to a smaller apartment instead of occupying an apartment with four rooms. Elder people could be advised to move to new buildings with care service. In this way, there will be more building blocks emptied for refurbishment and for accommodating new residents. The urban densification could be achieved by 10-15% by providing porch residential buildings with greenhouses on the garden side, roof constructions and extensions on the garden side during the renovation. In this way, the original building could be largely maintained, and less new constructions will be made anew. Further, young families could be attracted to those refurbished and resurrected buildings and with this manner, it could enhance the economic strength.

THE POTENTIAL OF COURTYARDS



Figure 17. A typical courtyard from Dudok's urban design – an elongated courtyard tightly enclosed by a group of residential building blocks, distinguishing the communal realm and urban realm.

Fine-grained, situated intervention would allow the process of urban regeneration accommodating both old and new. With this in mind, the research looks into bringing up local qualities and conditions with a group of often overlooked open spaces in the neighbourhood: the courtyard in-between building blocks, often present themselves as grassland with few deciduous trees and flowering shrub and sometimes pieces of play facilities.

These courtyards are designed as affiliate green spaces to fill inside a block of residential buildings, with little individual characters and significance. As the consequence, they are monotonous, neglected, and hidden behind building blocks. The local residents pass by them every day without interests to enter or to occupy them. At the same time, they are maintained as normal urban green spaces. Although some of them are bit deteriorated, where one could find pieces of trash and a hint overgrown, in general they present themselves as communal green spaces with signs of authority and regulation. This simple, purposefulness maintenance fixes the space from accomplishing their potential value in the urban environment and in urban transformation.

However, close as they are to residents' domestic life, interestingly in their half-enclosed spatial characteristics, these courtyards have the potential to initiate a series local-based processes and practices. In this way, they could bring up local conditions, characteristics and desires as something to be incorporated into the urban redevelopment plan.

For instance, a flexible structure could be provided calling for surrounding residents to participate the space with pop-up social events such as communal gathering, music events or discussion about the further of the neighbourhood. Or in other circumstances, these empty courtyards can be important habitats for urban wildlife. The open-ground and unbuilt spaces are where urban wildlife inhabits and connections between each patch of the habitats would largely diversify the exchange of species and enhance the biodiversity. Certain spontaneous ecological process could be release on these locations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE & METHODOLOGY



Figure 18. The entrance path to a courtyard, covered by overgrown plants.

Objectives:

The research aims to explore the courtyards in post-war urban district Den Haag Zuidwest as meantime spaces that reveals existing qualities of the neighbourhood and open to social initiatives, informal practices, dialogues and ideas upon the future. In this way, these courtyards could bring in valuable ingredients for urban regeneration process.

Process

The research starts with the literature study, to understand the background and characteristics of the research area. Since the geometrical form of the courtyards is highly related to the planning concept of Dudok, the initial investigation distinguishes three types of courtyards: the enclosed courtyard, the strip courtyard, and the defused courtyard. Mapping those courtyards, it distinguishes the character of three neighbourhoods: the neighbourhood Morgenstond shows more mixed types of courtyards than the other two neighbourhoods. For this reason, Morgenstond is selected as a focused area for further study.

After choosing Morgenstond as a focused area, we proceed the research with the fieldwork: we took tours in Morgenstond, visiting each courtyard and talking with local residents. In this way, it allows us to understand the local condition not only from maps but also from the perspective of inhabitants. We interviewed people we met during our site visiting with three questions: Are you live in the neighbourhood and where? What would you like to do in the open spaces during a sunny summer afternoon? And are you using the courtyards in your daily life? In total, we have conducted three rounds of site visiting. The first site-visiting was on Wednesday afternoon, the second site-visiting was on Sunday morning, and the third site-visiting was on Saturday afternoon.

In parallel with understanding the courtyard conditions from inhabitants' perspective, we also investigate the neighbourhood from a top view, to understand the urban structure and systems. We selected the social-cultural programme and the spatial condition as two topics of the desk study. Thematic maps are made as the product of the desk study.

From the site visiting, we have observed that these courtyards, although generically designed, actually have varied characteristics in terms of their usage, openness and facilitates. Some courtyards are hidden at the backside of the building while some are more exposed to the public realm. Some are deteriorated, showing pieces of trash and overgrown plants, while

others are more frequently maintained, equipped with newer furniture, and the shrubs and grass are trimmed in good shape.

Base on this observation, we produced a map distinguishing the courtyards in Morgenstond into five categories: 1) Neglected, 2) Seldomly used, 3) Used for walking through, 4) Furnished for play or stay, and 5) privately owned.

Reviewing this map, we choose to select a courtyard in the first category-the neglected courtyards-for an experimental design study. Comparing with other courtyards, the neglected courtyards are characterised by higher level of enclosure, a bit wild, obsolete environment. This combination provides an interesting setting that new processes could be raised.

We will propose a design for the selected courtyard exposing their morphological, material characteristics and potential social and ecological processes. We will deliver the experimental design to local residents and people from municipalities, to test and evaluate what kind of process could be developed in the future and what they mean to the urban regeneration process. To be as 'open' spaces, the residents invited to participate in the workshop will both from surrounding building blocks and other residents living nearby.

To stimulate people's idea on the future of this courtyard, we will organize the workshop in an interactive way. We will present separate design interventions on social, ecological, morphological and material aspects. In each aspect, we will present the design solution both with minimal intervention and maximal intervention. The design will be presented with series drawings or models and the added elements will be 'movable'. In this way, it allows residents to play with the design elements and directly see the consequence of their projection.

The input from the workshop, together with our analysis of the site, will be digested and transformed into the final design proposal. An architecture sketch will be made for the building blocks enclosing the courtyard.

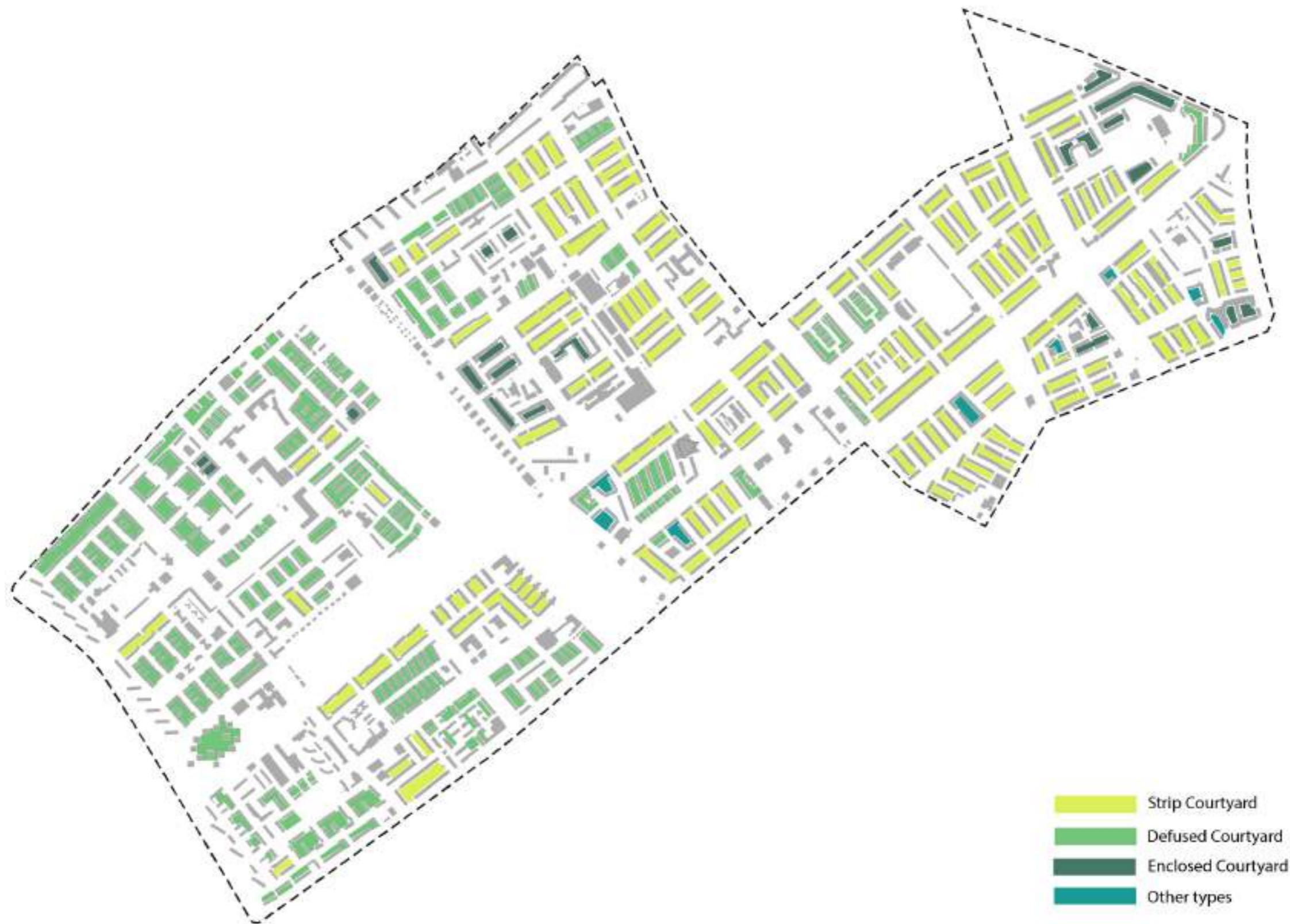


Figure 19. The courtyards in Den Haag Zuidwest could be categorized into four typologies regarding to the morphological characteristics: the strip courtyard, the defused courtyard, the enclosed courtyard and other types.

COURTYARDS IN MORGENSTOND

MAP STUDY



Figure 20. The programme and function of building blocks

Building Programme

The majority of buildings in Morgenstond serves for residential functions. In the original design, these dwellings are three to four-room apartments. The recent year renovation leads to some original buildings being demolished. In exchange, new dwellings were often designed as two-floor private houses with a back garden. Those private gardens filled up the original courtyard, making these spaces no longer accessible from the public.

In the middle of Morgenstond locates the shopping centre Leyweg, with buildings for commercial purpose in the middle and mixed-used buildings on the two sides.

At the south part of Morgenstond, there are sports fields and buildings used by sports clubs. The remarkable municipality building also locates in the Morgenstond south.

Three schools are spread in the middle of Morgenstond, and daycares could be seen on the north and south side.



Figure 21. Local social and cultural activities.

Social Activities

The map indicates cultural activities could be found in Morgenstond that are organised inside buildings.

In general, the neighbourhood is characterised as a quiet residential area instead of a vigorous urban environment. Not much cultural programme could be found. In the north part of Morgenstond locates an institutional building containing several public cultural programmes. These cultural programmes include an adult education centre, Zuid 57 (cultural activity incubator) and theatre and film house Dakota.

In the south of Morhenstond, more sports-related programme could be found, such as sports clubs and fitness centre.

Four churches could be found in the middle and in the north of the neighbourhood, which is also an important gathering place for people from the same religion.

The vital social-gathering place is in the middle of the neighbourhood - the shopping centre Leyweg. It is one of the favourable weekend destinations for the neighbourhood residents.



Figure 22. The structure of urban green spaces.

Green Open Space

There are abundant green spaces could be found in Morgenstond. Three small neighbourhood parks are evenly spreading in the whole neighbourhood: Middenveld on Exloostraat, green zone on Bentolostraat (belonging to the green axis) and Melis Stokepark next to the entrance of Leyweg shopping centre. The playground on Wapserveenstraat in the middle of the neighbourhood is also frequently used by kids, showing eye-catching vividness.

Two spacious sports field are located in the south of the area. They are the used of residents but also people in the surrounding neighbourhood. Therefore, they could be considered as the attractor of the neighbourhood.

Besides stuck green spaces, we could see a well-developed network of linear green spaces - the singels. They offer a potential for a pedestrian system that brings people close to nature quality and being slightly separated from traffic. In the meantime, they could enhance the ecological quality of the neighbourhood.



Figure 23. The height of built-up area.

Building Heights:

As the majority buildings were constructed as social housing, to avoid the need for elevators, most of the buildings are designed four-floor high, which ensures the maximum financial benefit.

Other institutional buildings, commercial buildings in the shopping centre or newly built private houses are two floors. Some blocks at the border of the neighbourhood are five to six floor high.

The high-rise building could be seen most in the south part of Morgenstond, which is also where the urban programme is more mixed.

In general, the spatial character of the built environment is monotonous, especially when seeing from the main traffic road, one's horizon is occupied by four-floor residential building blocks.

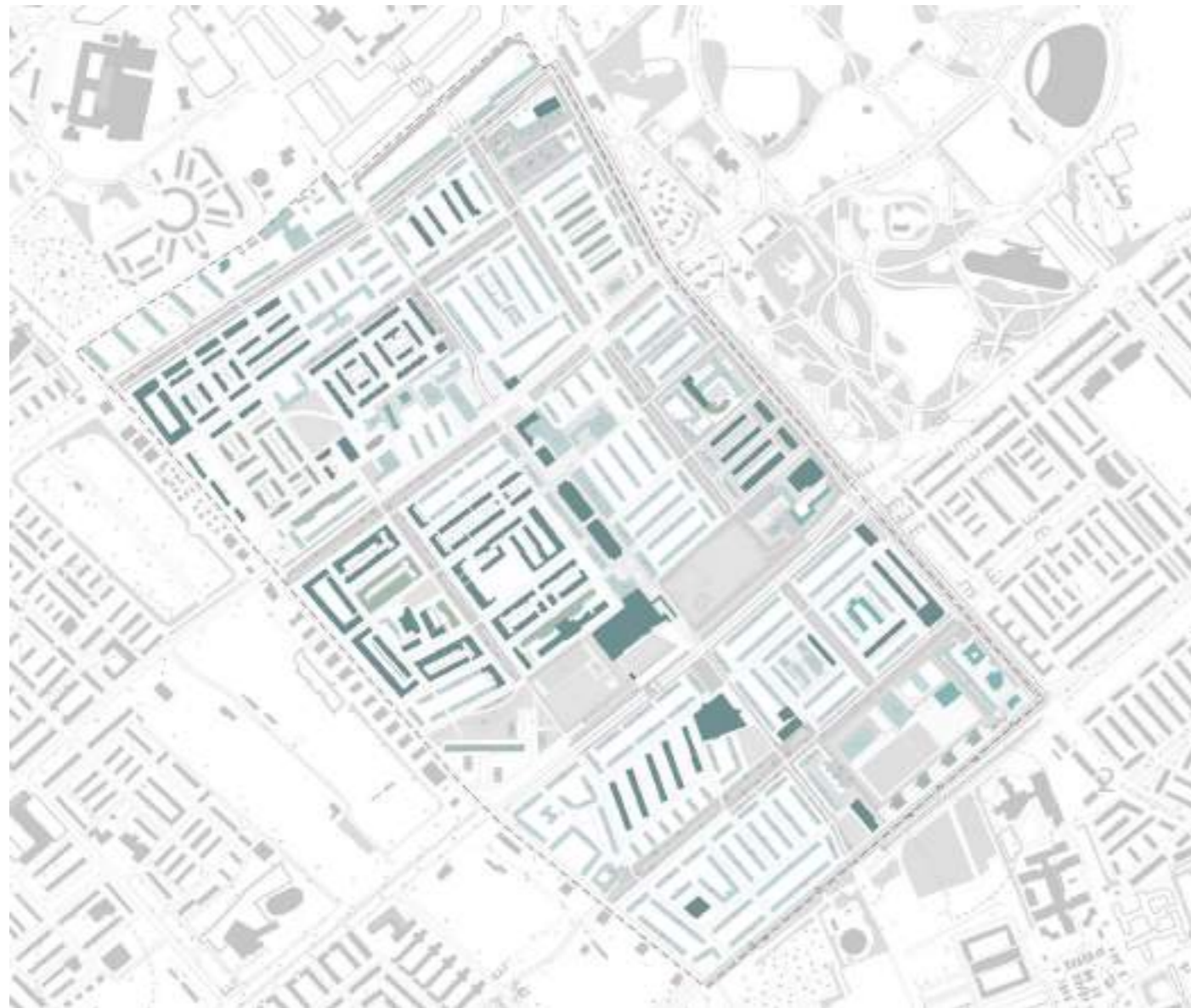


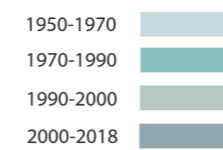
Figure 24. The construction year of existing buildings.

Building Year:

The original buildings in the neighbourhood were constructed between the 1950s and 1960s. After 50 years, the major urban renovation starts in 2000. In the map, we could see a large group of new building blocks are built between 2000 to 2009. The following years' economic crisis caused the renovation process to slow down.

Most of the new building blocks are built in the middle and north part of the neighbourhood. It might be mainly influenced by the development of the shopping centre Leyweg.

The residential building blocks adjacent to the new municipality building were also reconstructed but still kept the height of four-floors. Some building blocks near Zuidpark was replaced, but there's still a considerable amount of the original residential buildings remains, especially in the north area.



INTERVIEW NOTES

March 3 - 2020
Sitong Luo and Arjan Hebly (report)

Questions:

- 1 do you live in the neighborhood?
- 2 what do you do in the neighborhood in the outside space on a warm day in summer?
- 3 (Sometimes added the question) do you do something in the courtyards?

The afternoon was fresh, not so warm but with some sun.

Most of the people were open in listening and answering the question.

Most talks went rather quick. Most of them lasted about one minute.

An estimation of the age is made and also the color of the people. I did that to remember their stories better.

Location 1 - De La Nannostraat in Moerwijk

1 Two non-western man (30/35 years old) – one lives in DHZW and one lives in Zoetermeer
On the way to a friend with a bicycle – playing football and other sports in the Zuiderpark - DHZW is a nice and quiet area

2 Three women (two 30/35 – the older (mother) 55/65) – Muslim (maybe from Turkish or Cooed descent)
Use a playground for the children – sometimes a picnic in the Zuiderpark – cozy (gezellig) walking to the shopping Centre

Location 2 - Morgenstond – starting in the Dwingelstraat

3 Non-western man (35-40) - on a bike – before entering his portico
Cycling to the Leyweg, the big shopping Centre. For the rest nothing

4 Non-western woman with a bag with groceries

(30/35)
Swimming in the Zuiderparkbad – going with children to a playground – shopping in the shopping Centre

5 Kitty van Houten (Erasmusweg 1335 – 2542 RD Den Haag) - white woman (45/55) with an old dog
Long talk – has been two years homeless - suffers different serious illness – nothing is organized in the courtyards, she missed that, although it is so simple to organize – there was a space for collective use (tea coffe, a board play, e cetera) but it was closed down – she has played a role in making a playground in the courtyard – the football field before here house lacks a proper fence – she would love to have a little garden along the Erasmusweg (sunny side) – make a place under the balconies for children to hide – it is all to open.

6 Woman with a dog (grey playfull boxer) (45/50)
To walk around in the neighborhood – for the rest, sitting on the balcony – in the courtyard, in front of her balcony, there is in summer a little swimming pool for children – she enjoys that – she loves the quiet living here.

7 Non-western young woman (17/19)
Walking to the shopping Centre and going to the beach – does nothing specific in the neighborhood or the courtyards.

8 Older woman - Muslim (maybe from Turkish descent) (55/65)
A bit of walking through the neighborhood

9 Indonesian man, coming from Friesland (50/55) – has a scoot mobile (in a steel street storage) and a car
Is going outside, to the beach or the city center – is never in the courtyard – he saw rats there, from his balcony – they (the municipality) should regulate the parking better - he has to walk a long way to his car – ‘you can always change something in these kind of environments, because they are old neighborhoods’

10 Young mother (25-30) with a small boy (3), in front of her new house in the Coevordenstraat
No, here she doesn't let her child play – it is too dirty and there are rats, as big as a cat – because of the everlasting garbage on the street and the throwing of food from the balconies – she goes to the beach and to a playground a bit further than the Betje Wolfstraat – she came from the Laakkwartier and lived here now for one year

11 Mother (50-55) and daughter (15-20) walking hand in hand to the shopping center
They walk to the shopping center – not much more – yes, when the children (2) were small, they did more outside, like playing in the playgrounds and courtyards

12 Young lively child (8-12 – migrant background – Turkish/Moroccan) coming out of school, eating an ice cream - on the nearby playground, on the renewed Wapserveenstraat, a lot of children, with a migrant background, were playing – there was only one girl joining
With beautiful weather she goes jumping on the trampoline in her own garden or playing in two playgrounds in the neighborhood, or visit her family.



Figure 25. Local resident Kitty van Houten. She moved to the area ten years ago and before that she was two years homeless.

55 COURTYARDS WAITING TO BE 'SEEN'



Figure 26. Observing from the condition and usage of the 56 courtyards found in Morgenstond, the research distinguish five types of the courtyard: neglected courtyards, the seldom used courtyards, courtyards used for walking through, courtyards furnished for play or stay, and privately-owned courtyards.

Through the desk study and fieldwork, we found 56 courtyards in the neighbourhood Morgenstond. We conclude five types of courtyards, describing their occupation situation:

Neglected: this type of courtyard is covered by grass combing with other types of planting. most of them are closed on their two ends, hidden them from the public realm. They do not prepare proper facilities for people's usage, and they can not enter directly from the inner side.

Seldom used: this type of courtyard show incidental usage. Comparing with abandoned courtyard, they're better maintained, but some facilities are in deteriorated condition.

Used for walking through: this type of courtyard is often quite empty, however, a paved pathway could be found inside, making them used by people as part of the pedestrian system.

Furnished: this type of courtyard is newly renovated, therefore, they're equipped with play or sitting furniture in good conditions. It provides more possibilities for usage. Kids play and meet of two or three people were found during site-visiting.

Private gardens: for some newly built residential buildings, the courtyard was filled by private gardens. As a consequence, they are not open to the public

In the following analysis, it reveals the current conditions of those courtyards in regard to their morphological, social, ecological and material qualities. Observing these conditions serves the entrance point to understand what could the design initiate in these courtyards .

The spatial models of the courtyards are provided. The axonometric drawing allows us to the get a grip of the morphological characteristics of the courtyards, in terms of the scale, enclosure and geometry. The aerial photos and on-site photos provide a glimpse upon the courtyards' materiality, revealing their physical environment. Following that, we annotate each courtyard in terms of their enclosure, accessibility, existing facilities, vegetation richness and maintenance. Examining these conditions lets us review the current social usage or ecological succession within each courtyard, which describes the social and ecological conditions of these courtyards.

The analysis provide an overall of existing conditions of courtyards in Morgenstond. Based from that, it allows us to diagose the reason why there're less social engagement with these hidden open spaces of the neighbourhood.

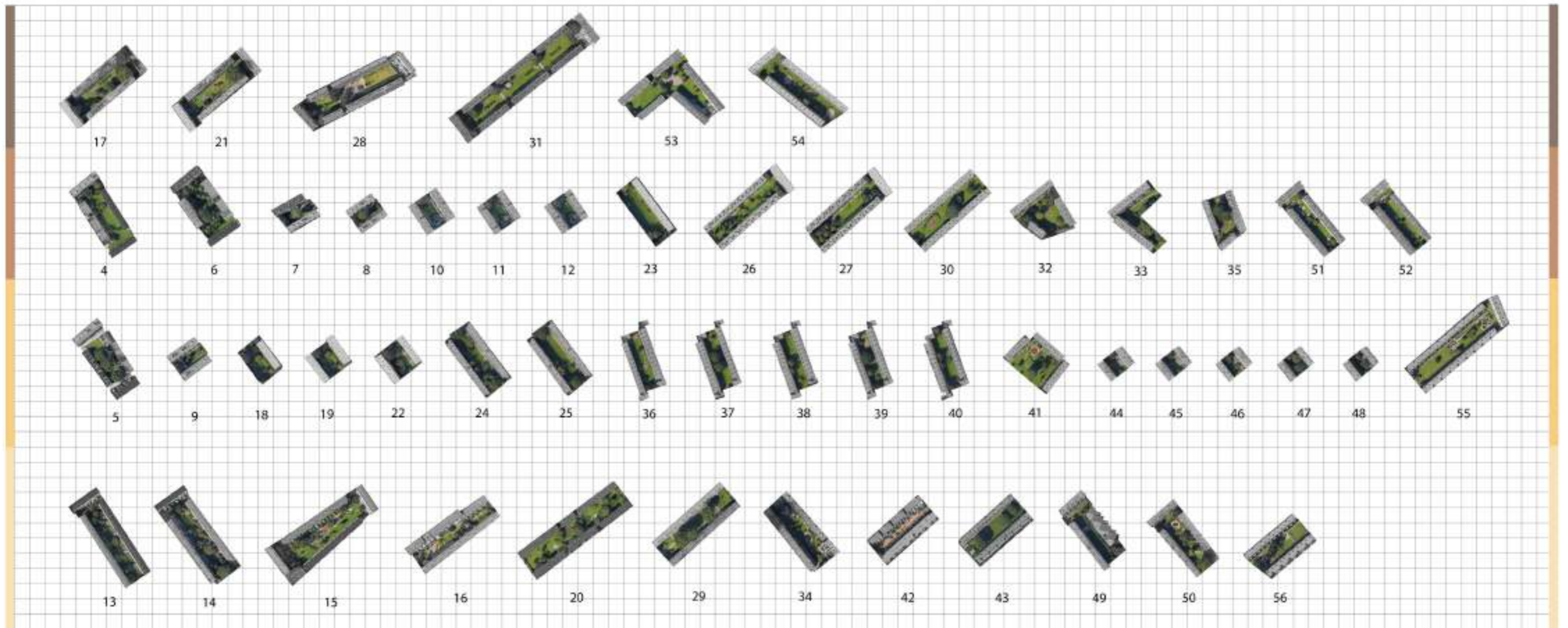











Figure 28. The aerial photo of 56 courtyards.

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Walking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building 



17. Hengelolaan - Denekampstraat



21. Denekampstraat - Fluitenbergstraat












28. Valthestraat - Bentelostraat



31. Melis Stokelaan - Coevordenstraat



Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building 



53. Ruinerwoldstraat - Leggelostraat 



54. Leggelostraat - Dedemsvaartweg 







4. Maartensdijkklaan - Raaltestraat 







   



6. Olstraat - Leyweg 

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building  



7. Meppelweg - Leyweg



8. Leyweg - Legweg



10. Meppelweg - Meppelweg





 
 









11. Meppelweg - Meppelweg



Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building  





12. Meppelweg - Meppelweg



23. Fluitenbergstraat - Dalerveenstraat



26. Dalerveenstraat - Tubergenstraat





   
  









27. Tubbergenstraat - Genemuidenstraat



Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building  



30. Melis Stokelaan - Coevordenstraat 



35. Leyweg - Keokangestraat 







32. Leggelostraat - Eeldepad 






 
 



33. Melis Stokelaan - Dedemsvaartweg 

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building 



51. Dwingelostraat - Koekangestraat 



52. Koekangestraat - Ruinerwoldstraat 







5. Raaltestraat - Olststraat 






 
 



9. Leyweg - Leyweg 

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building 



18. Hengelolaan - Lonnekerstraat





19. Hengelolaan - Lonnekerstraat









22. Lonnekerstraat - Fluitenbergstraat











24. Fluitenbergstraat - Dalerveenstraat



Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building  



25. Fluitenbergstraat - Dalerveenstraat



36. Coevordenstraat - Haveltestraat







37. Coevordenstraat - Haveltestraat






 
 



38. Coevordenstraat - Haveltestraat

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building 



39. Coevordenstraat - Haveltestraat








40. Coevordenstraat - Haveltestraat





41. Dedemsvaartweg - Eeldepad







 
 









55. Paterswoldestraat - Erasmusweg



Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building  



44. Haveltestraat - Steenwijklaan



45. Haveltestraat - Steenwijklaan







46. Haveltestraat - Steenwijklaan







   
   



47. Haveltestraat - Steenwijklaan

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Walking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building  



48. Haveltestraat - Steenwijklaan



1. Markelostraat - Kuinrestraat



2. Markelostraat - Kuinrestraat





 
 





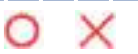


3. Markelostraat - Kuinrestraat



Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Walking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building 



13. Maartensdijklaan - Hellendoornstraat 



14. Wijhestraat - Leyweg 







15. Holtenstraat - Hengelolaan 






 
 



16. Zweeloostraat - Hengelolaan 

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Planting 
 Usage 
 Entrance from building 



20. Hengelolaan - Vledderstraat 


 
 



29. Melis Stokelaan - Coevordenstraat 







34. Zwartsluisstraat - Leyweg 







 
 



42. Ootmarsumstraat - Steenwijklaan 

Neglected 
 Seldom Used 
 Used for Wlaking Through 
 Furnished for play or stay 

Enclosure 
 Facility 
 Vegetation richness 
 Maintenance 
 Entrance from building  



43. Carelshavenstraat - Steenwijklaan 



49. Leyweg - Steenwijklaan 



50. Leyweg - Dwingelostraat 



55. Paterswoldestraat - Erasmusweg 

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF DISENGAGEMENT?

During our third site-visiting, a sunny Saturday afternoon in May, the courtyards were still quiet places in the neighbourhood. Only few of them are occasionally used by two to three children to play. In total 20 courtyards we have visited, we only found 4 courtyards with activities.

Most of courtyards are hidden from urban street life, hardly to be discovered by people passing by. It is against Dudok's idea. The architect's original idea was to introduce the courtyard as a gradient between urban and communal and as places for communal activities.

From our observation, the disengagement could be related to the following reasons:



1. circulation

Although the courtyards were designed as transitional space between public and private, in the actual situation some courtyards are almost completely hidden from the public realm.

The enclosure of courtyards is often shown in two situations: one is that the four sides of the courtyards are occupied by building blocks, but small gaps in between buildings are reserved to offer connections between inside and outside. The second situation is the shorter ends of the courtyard are left completely open, in this way, the courtyards are more able to communicate with the public realm.

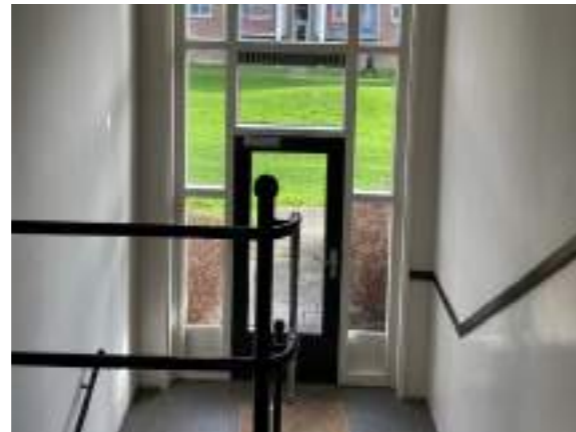
However, once examining on-site, we found that some seemingly opened courtyard, the edges are blocked by hard fences or planted bushes. Especially, some entrances from small gaps are almost blocked by overgrown shrubs.

The transition between the urban realm and communal realm disappears. As a result, those courtyards turned out to be solitary and unattractive.



2. Accessibility

Dudok designed the courtyards as communal space for residents from surrounding building blocks. However, it appears several building blocks don't have entrance their sides facing to the courtyard. The only way to enter the courtyard is from the outside urban street. It means the residents need to first expose to the urban realm to enter the courtyard. During my third visiting, I found a family is having a picnic in a courtyard. For this courtyard, a doorway is made from the building. Therefore, this family could easily bring their stuff to the courtyard. Without entrance directly from the surrounding building, the usage is discouraged.



3. Sense of ownership and connection

During our fieldwork, we found not all the courtyards are in the deteriorated situation: Some are well-refurbished with trimmed planting and play facilities. However, there still doesn't present many interests in terms of usage. The layout of these courtyards are made from the stereotyped formula, each courtyard looks a bit the same with others, they don't have each own identity. Besides, the residents are not original residents but newcomers in recent years, and most of them have a difficult social-economic status. It might already hard for them to make a living, even to say organizing communal activities. During our site-visiting on Saturday afternoon, we find many people sit on their balcony and gazing towards the courtyard, instead of coming outside and sitting beside each other.

People like spaces with a moderate level of control: where feel familiar but things connecting from other people so they feel like to explore. If the courtyard present trances of other people's occupation instead of a stereotyped image, it will encourage residents to come outside and meet in the courtyard.



EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN DENEKAMPSTRAAT

To instigate a discussion about the potential of the courtyard in the neighbourhood Morgenstond that opens to different spontaneous social-ecological process, we select two courtyards for an experimental design. These two courtyards are selected by the municipality and housing cooperation as the target of the first stage urban regeneration plan.

The experimental design tests out how new design solutions with two focused aspects: first, it explores how the design could be established by acknowledging the existing conditions of the courtyards and second, it explores if the design could offer a starting point for more dynamic processes in these usually neglected spaces.

The revitalization of the courtyards further offers a reference to the overall redevelopment process of the whole residential block. Re-engaging the courtyard and keeping them as something unchanged during the whole transformation process, these two courtyards can allow continuity between the old and the new. They can offer places to tell about the memories and identities of the neighbourhood and to accommodate new residents in the existing social context of the neighbourhood.

SITE AND SURROUNDING

CIRCULATION

Apartment building
after 1990

Highrise Building
30-50 m

Zuiderpark



Shopping Center
Leyweg1990

Catholic Church

Primary School

Apartment Building
after 1990



- Urban trunk road
- District main road
- Neighbourhood road
- - - Footpath

EXISTING SITUATION



Hengelolaan - Denekampstraat



Denekampstraat - Fluitenbergstraat



Existing situation



Existing situation

EXISTING SITUATION



Entrance: Hengelolaan - Denekampstraat



Entrance: Denekampstraat - Fluitenbergstraat



1



2



1



2



3



4



3



4

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The two courtyards are identical to each other, as a result of the generic design approach of post-war urban neighborhoods. Recognizing this remarkable feature, the design intends to introduce each courtyard completely different processes while making the ground plan similar to each other. In this way, it recalls a linkage of the two courtyards. Considering the primary school Tamarschool and the higher apartment building Loevesteinlaan sitting in the south, which own more social dynamics, the idea of the design is to open the south courtyard for public use and diverse, informal social activities. The north courtyard, differently, will be released from artificial maintenance and to let nature transform the site.



Release the courtyard for -
spontaneous ecological process

- Diversify ecological conditions
- Minimize artificial maintainance
- Restrain human access



Release the courtyard for -
diverse social engagement

- Prepare ground for appropriation
- Establish participatory activities
- Highlight public access

Two existing projects are taken as the experiment for this experimental design. the first project, about natural transformation, is the project The Garden of The Third Landscape in Saint-Nazaire, France. The garden is established in a sunken pit on the concrete roof of an abandoned submarine base. The design did not plant new species on the site, but laid different types of substrates that diversify the biotic conditions of the roof. the substrates are shaped into several mounds, in this way, adding a gradient of moisture to the growing environment. after the design was implemented, seeds spontaneously brought by wind, bird or human visitors were embedded in the garden and year by year, transform the barren concrete pit into a reserve of wild perennial grasses.

The second project is a temporary public pavilion established in the courtyard smedestræde 2 in Valby Copenhagen. The pavilion was taken the shape as a skeleton mimicing the historical buildings in the surrounding. Without the defined programme, it offers a chance for diverse public activities to take place. The Valby Local Committee organized several public activities on site in the initial stage, including urban agriculture, used product exchange, mural painting, etc. After that, a self-employer people noticed the site's 'vacant' situation and applied a temporary lease of the site for an outdoor bar during the summer. the bar is called TH Bar and quickly gained popularity among the local residents. in the sunny summer evening, the courtyard celebrates a vibrant social life in the neighbourhood.



The Garden of the Third Landscape



Pavilion Valby Smedestræde 2

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Existing morphological characters



Courtyard



Geometry



Trees



Paths



Courtyard



Geometry



Trees



Paths

Adapting new design layout



Highlighting the core



Staging the process



Accommodating existing trees



Marking the entrance



Highlighting the core



Staging the process



Accommodating existing trees

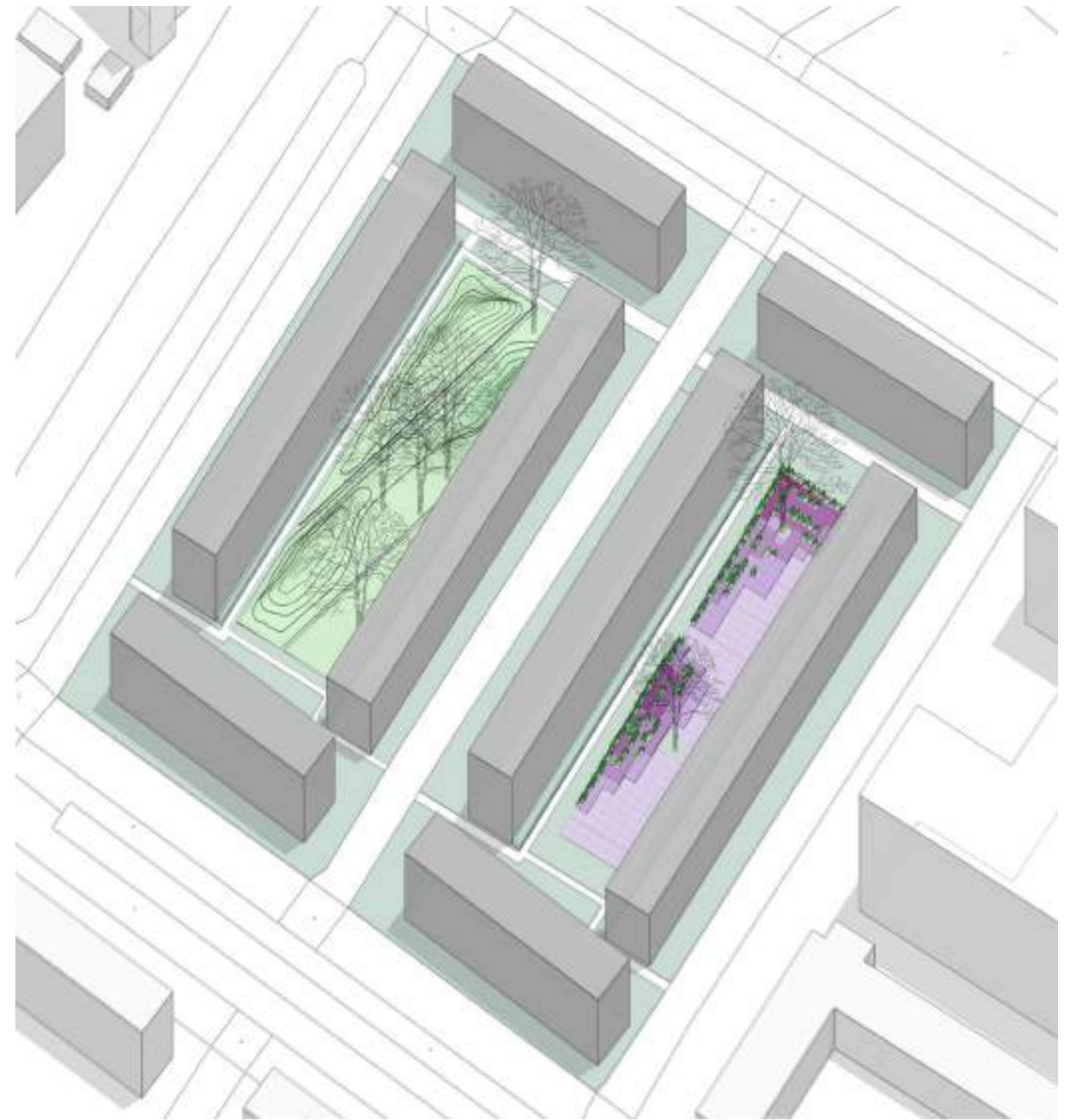


Marking the entrance

DESIGN ELABORATION



Plan Drawing



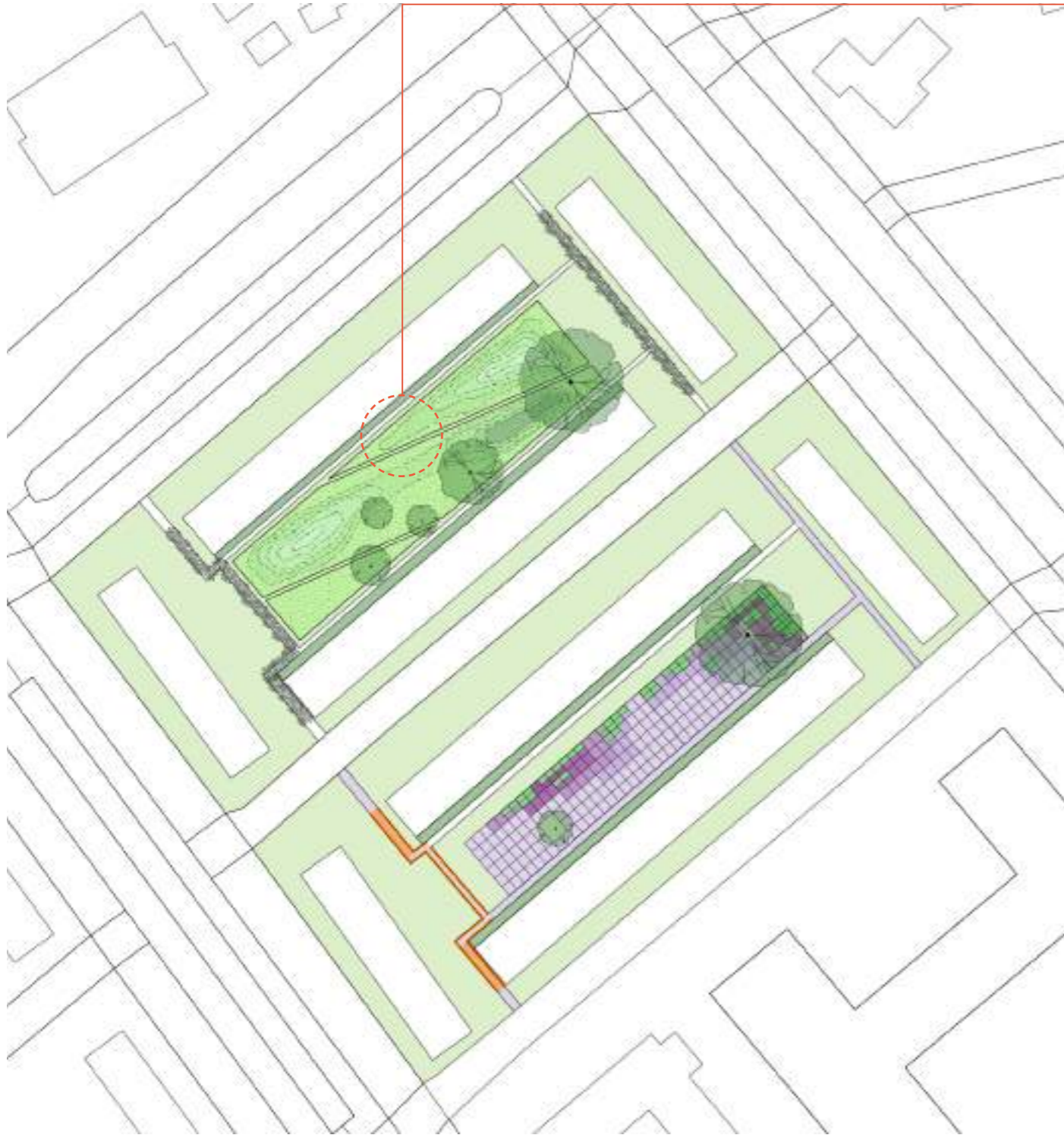
Axonometric Drawing

DESIGN ELABORATION



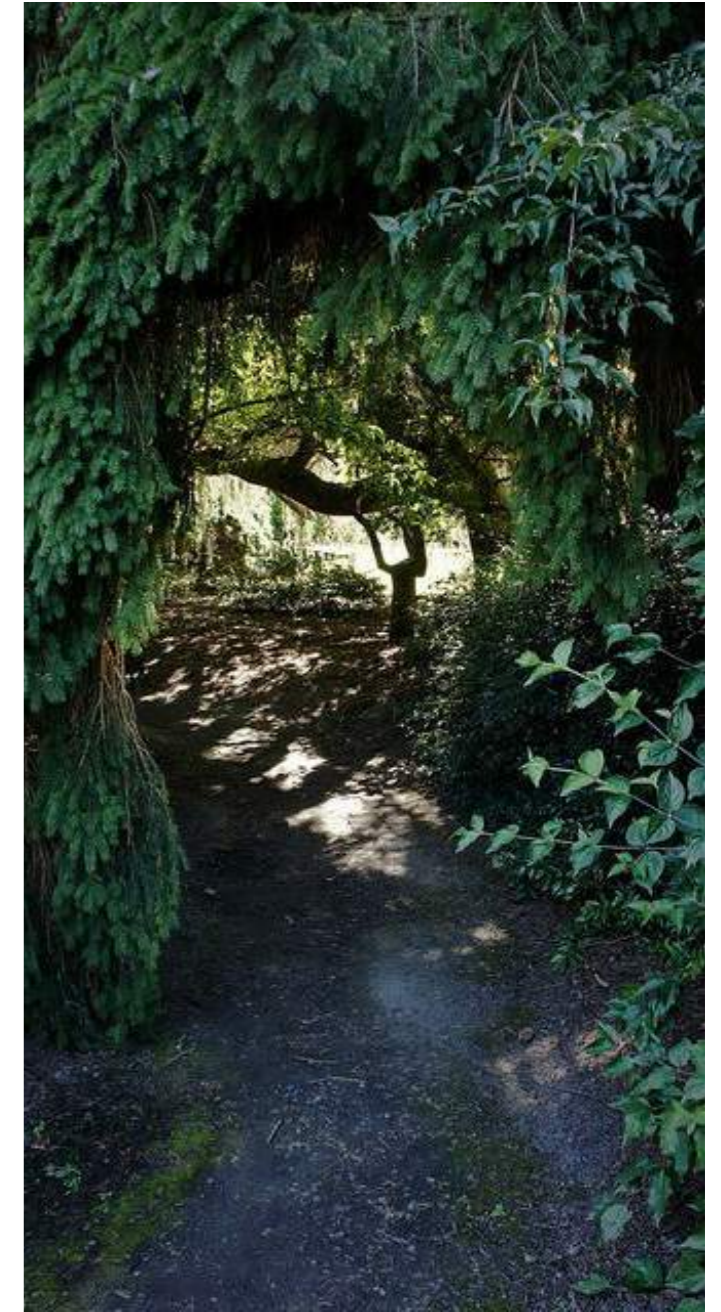
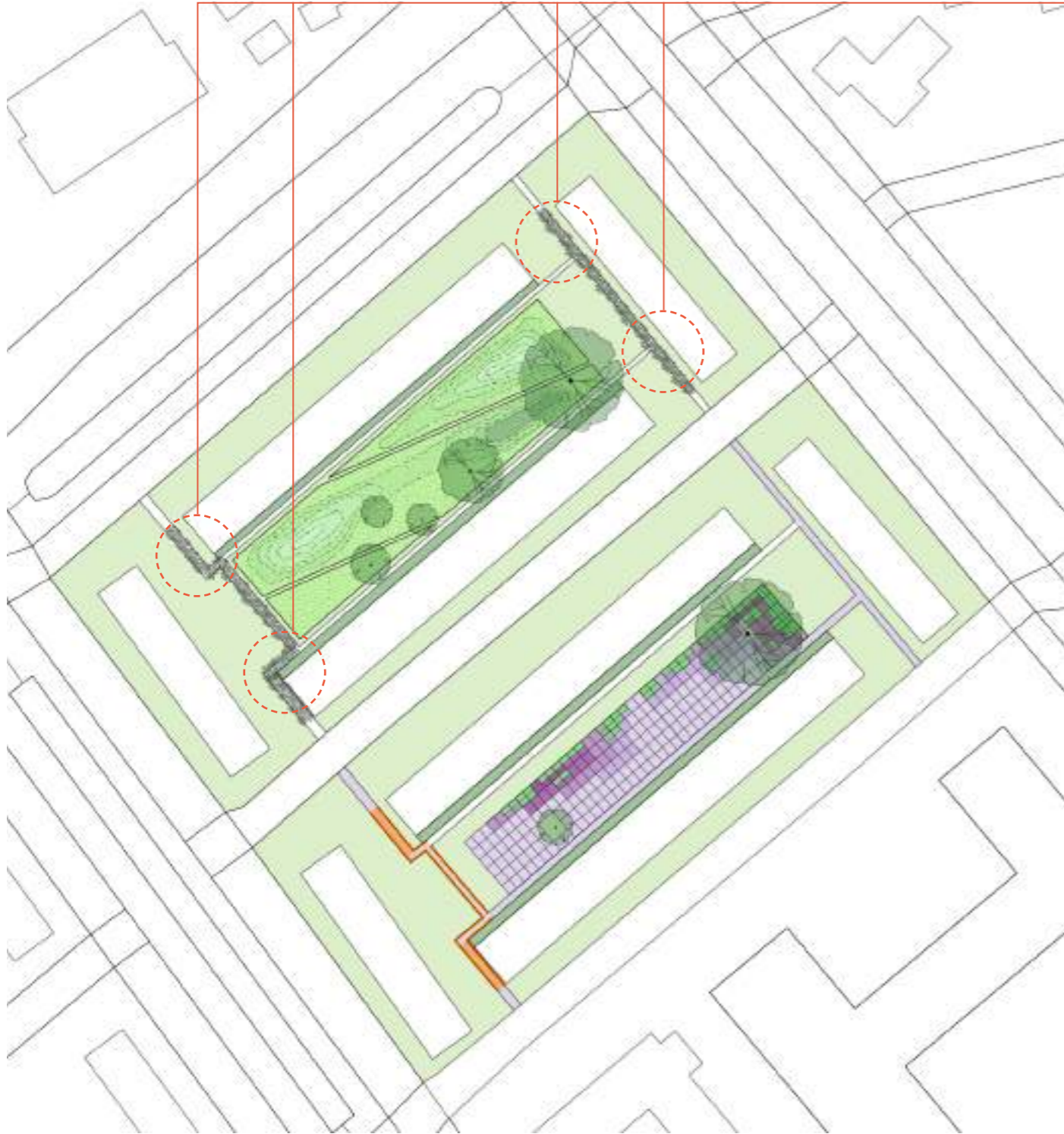
Nature meadow + shaping gradual mounds

DESIGN ELABORATION



Mowed path_setting contradiction and allowing for walking through

DESIGN ELABORATION



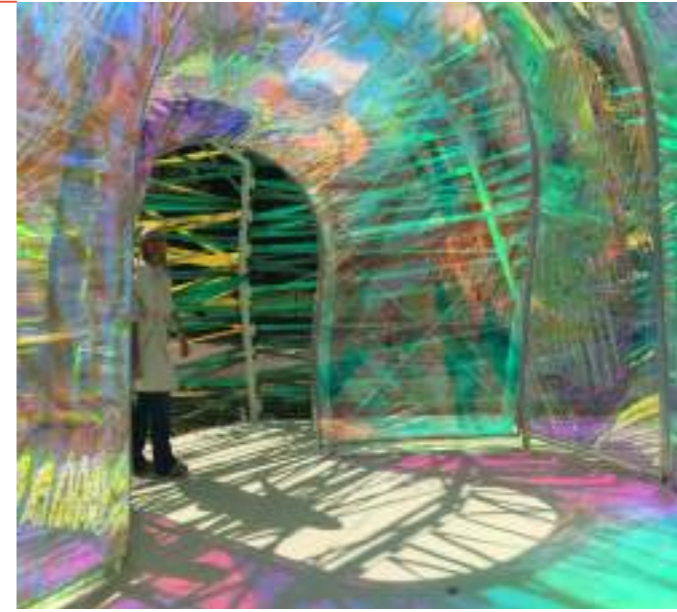
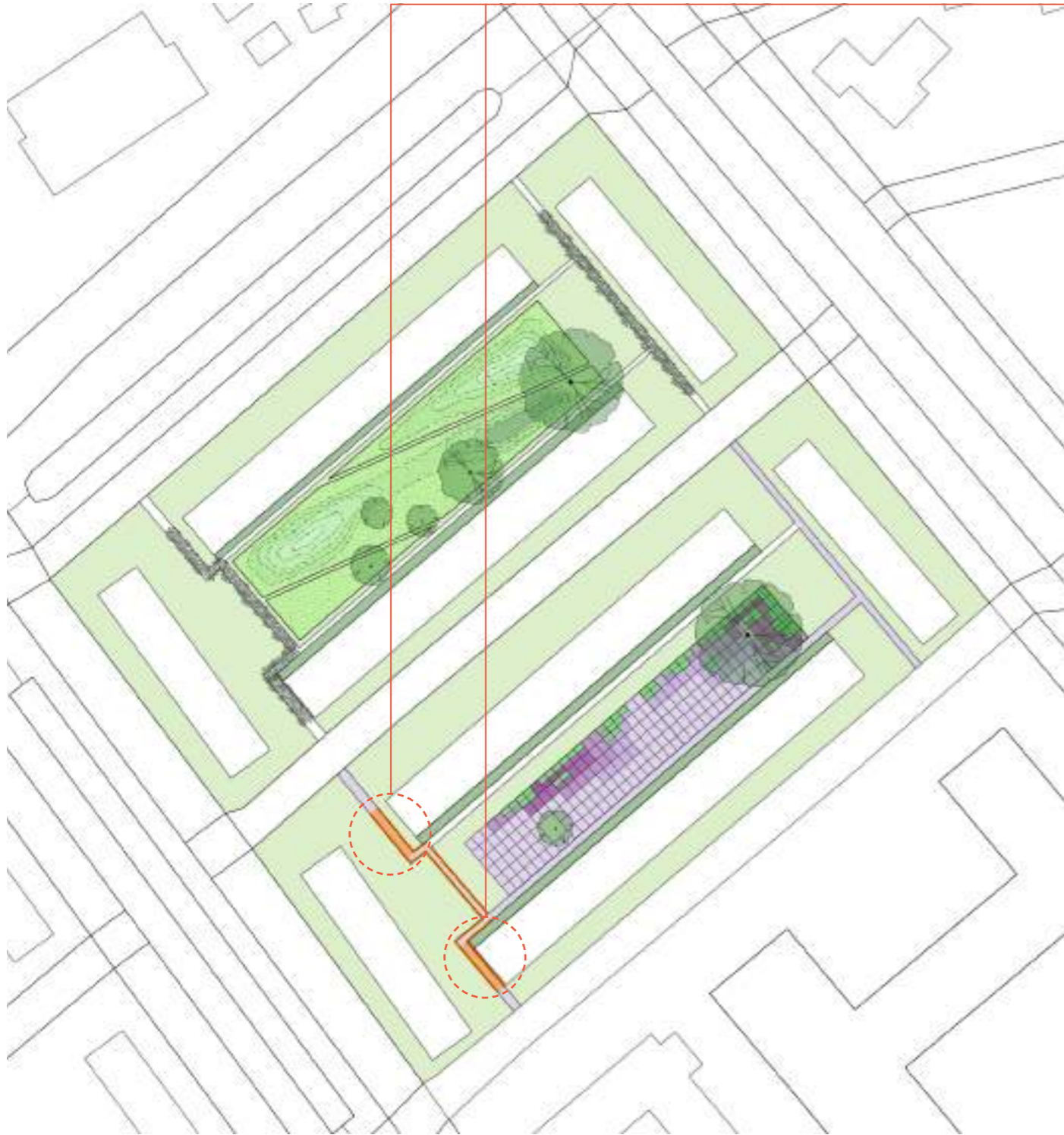
Overgrown tunnel_ enhancing the experience of entering

DESIGN ELABORATION



A flexible platform for diverse public activities

DESIGN ELABORATION



Artistic installation highlighting the entrance from the public realm

MAINTAINANCE

To transform the courtyard into a natural meadow garden, we will introduce a special maintenance guide: the meadow could be simply created by stopping mowing the area. Some wildflower seeds could also be planted to add more diversity. The invasive species need to be identified and taken out regularly to allow a balance between different species.

The meadow can be mowed once a year, in the autumn, to prevent the ecosystem from evolving and bring in more woody species. Therefore, the management does not involve intensive labor work and can be done by a group of volunteers. The action taking care of the site can also create a deeper connection between the residents and the courtyard, making the courtyard a more meaningful space in the neighborhood.

For the courtyard with grids of shipping pallets, we propose to establish a local community to initiate public events on site that call for public awareness of the courtyard. This small organization could be developed from the existing network of local cultural and communal groups and include residents of adjacent buildings. In this way, it enables synergies between the usage of the courtyard and existing social, cultural activities and invites the participation of residents from adjacent buildings. The group looks after the everyday use of the courtyard, mediating the potential conflicts between different types of usage, and between the users from the outside and the residents living in the adjacent building. With close and everyday engagement with a local group, the courtyard could become a special semi-public space in the neighborhood: it opens to the public but offers an intimate atmosphere of a communal space.



TRANSFORMATION STEPS

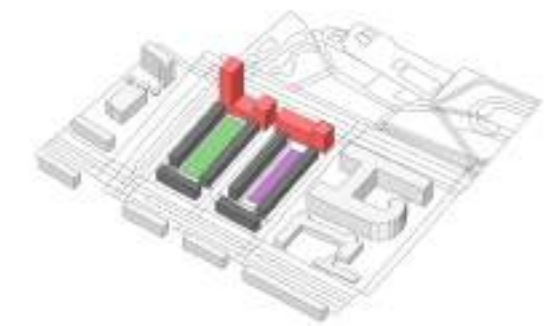


Proposed urban redevelopment image from the booklet of municipality of The Hague

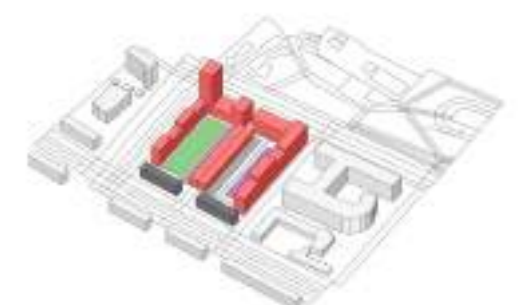
The design re-engagement of the courtyard would provide guidance for the urban redevelopment process. To test the potential effect, we sketched several scenarios of the redevelopment process. The first stage probably happens to the building blocks facing to the Zuidpark. High rise buildings are established, as shown in the rendering image we found from the municipality booklet. The second stage could be conducted to the four buildings from Haag Wonen, laying parallel to Denekampstraat. The outside building could be the higher apartments and in the middle, where used to be the Denekampstraat, could be developed into two lines of single houses with private gardens. In this way, it brings a nice gradient between the private garden and the inner court. The position of the courtyards offers a reference to the geometric character of the building blocks, therefore, allowing the layout in harmony with the rest building blocks of Morgenstond. At the final stage, the two building blocks from Vestia could join the redevelopment scheme. The outer building blocks are completed as a ring of higher buildings, enclosing the courtyards and inner single houses.



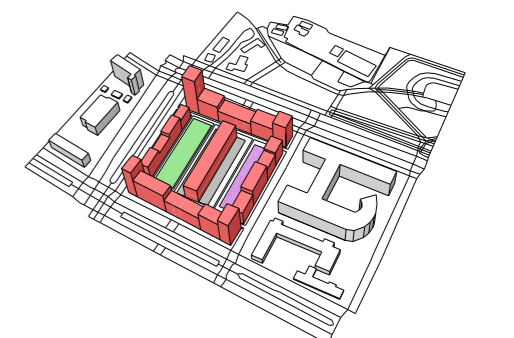
initial stage



1st redevelopment



2nd redevelopment



Final results

For the redeveloped residential block, the courtyards can be more assigned to the usage of residents of surrounding building blocks but still open to the visit of other residents of Morgenstond. In this way, it achieves an intriguing combination of the public and communal social atmosphere. Underground parking can be constructed beneath the newly constructed single houses in the middle.

Not only do the courtyards guide the urban redevelopment in the morphological aspect, but they also enable continuity in other aspects. For instance, more and more social awareness will be gained in these two courtyards. Therefore, although in the end the courtyards will be enclosed by the higher buildings, they would still be visited by other residents and would become an identity of the neighbourhood social life. In this way, it connects the new residents to the existing social context of the neighbourhood. Similarly, the natural world of the courtyard will not be developed from scratch, but it continues from the existing and fosters more diverse ecological processes. This disguised ecological niche can benefit the biodiversity of the overall natural environment of the neighborhood. Furthermore, if the courtyards can be kept untouched from the rest reconstruction work, it can also retain an image of the residential environment of Den Haag Zuidwest, as one courtyard among all other similar courtyards. So the residential environment would not be completely alien and brand-new but the traces of memory and local identity could be preserved in the urban regeneration process.

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