

COL-  
LECTIVE

WHY  
WE  
NEED

SUMMERSCHOOL  
2021

AFFOR-  
DABLE

INDE-  
PENDENT SCHOOL  
FOR THE CITY

HOUSING

IN ROTTERDAM



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# LET'S BE R€AL!

*Let's Be R€AL! was a two-week Summer School, exploring new strategies for collective affordable housing in Rotterdam. The programme took place from 19 – 30 July 2021 and was organized by the Independent School for the City in collaboration with architect Alfredo Brillembourg and experience designer Tessa Steenkamp.*

## TAKING BACK HOUSING!

While city centres all over the world are increasingly popular for living, working and tourism, housing has become scarce and real estate prices have skyrocketed. In Rotterdam, like in many other cities, it has become extremely difficult to find an affordable place to live. Although coming from a long tradition of rent controlled social housing in the Netherlands, the neo-liberal policy of recent years has left housing corporations paralyzed and has curtailed their possibilities to invest. This has led to a structural shortage of affordable housing, especially in city centres.

People who are seeking to build a life in the city and who are looking for long term housing solutions, are often forced to rent or buy for top marked prices, which is only within reach for the lucky few. Others find their houses on the city's fringes or in neighbouring towns. These processes of so-called gentrification and segregation are often described as a law of nature, but in reality, they are the result of deliberate policy-changes that turned the act of buying a home into an investment opportunity. At the same time, the differences between insiders and outsiders (often the younger generation) on both the private housing market as well as in the social housing system, is growing. Rapidly increasing prices have made it more and more difficult for first-time buyers to find a

house, while the waiting list for social housing is getting longer every year. Most extremely this becomes clear by the number of young people that became homeless for economic reasons, which has tripled between 2009 and 2019.

Meanwhile, buildings owned by investors or public entities are sometimes kept vacant awaiting their value to increase. While the Netherlands used to have a rich culture of squatting as a means to fight value speculation and taking back vacant space for housing, the act of squatting has become illegal as of 2010. An array of 'anti-squatting' companies now rent these empty buildings to small groups of users, to prevent potential squatting. This does not only lead to a very inefficient use of the available space in times of scarcity, but is also the opposite of what creates a vibrant city; anti-squat renters are not invited to invest in a building or their neighbourhood, their rental agreements can be ended anytime, and they are often not allowed to organise social activities in the building.

## SUMMER SCHOOL

This Summer School aimed to set an example for major cities worldwide and to propose an array of solutions from different perspectives. The focus of the Summer School was not on the aesthetics of a building, but was aimed at the development of new strategies and organisation models for housing. We have done so by means of a collective effort, while specifically focusing on existing, vacant property. The Rotterdam based collective 'City in the Making' (Stad in de Maak) functioned as our external client. Using their ambition and requirements as a real-life case study, we looked at new models of ownership and new methods of collective city making. By combining organisational, legal and social perspectives with design interventions, we aimed to come up with a pragmatic method to create more affordable housing for a former elementary school in the Rotterdam neighbourhood of Spangen.

Based on the mission statement of Stad in de Maak, we developed strategies for a social alternative for the current anti-squat companies that have evolved over time as the predominant (for 90% of owners, the municipality included) model for the management of temporary vacant property in the Netherlands. These companies have quickly come to the forefront of money grabbing entrepreneurship after the anti-squat laws (Wet Kraken en Leegstand) were activated in 2010, which by accident and/or purpose coincided with the financial crisis. The anti-squat business model is in fact a 'protection mechanism' against squatting, and as such actually – a surveillance system. The people living in these buildings on super tight temporary tenancy, are not seen as tenants with the usual tenant protection, but guards (against squatting) that do not earn any income but have to pay for the privilege of living/guarding.

Many of these property cowboys have become rich overnight. That in itself is not a problem, but as a system it has become one of the motors behind our current precarious housing situation and it prevents value space from being used in its full potential. We therefore believe it should quickly be replaced by a

more inclusive and social model, that functions better and creates a certain dignity and self-management power for the temporary tenants. That's why in this Summerschool we tried to develop a business model that uses the language of entrepreneurs and decision makers (they have to be convinced of the financial, legal and political feasibility), while at the same time it had to be a feasible 'alternative' in which we show that vacant management can be done better: more social, more inclusive, more problem solving oriented, more fun!

The Summer School resulted in this booklet as a next step in taking back housing. It starts with a conclusion of our research in the form of a manifesto on the need to use vacant space for collective, affordable housing. Afterwards it gives an overview of different models that were used, altered, and mixed to eventually create various alternative strategies for housing. Together it forms an 'unsolicited bid book' that can be used by City in the Making and the School to convince policy makers – by using the Right to Challenge – that the management of temporary vacant buildings can be done better and less expensive by the temporary tenants themselves.



Pictures by Maarten Laupman



# MANIFESTO

As the result of a conscious political decision to liberalize the housing market some 3 decades ago, the production of housing is nowadays mainly controlled by large commercial parties. The neoliberal policy has left housing corporations paralyzed, privatized and curtailed in their possibilities to invest. This has led to a structural shortage of affordable housing, especially in the city centres. As a result, the costs of housing have skyrocketed. While city centres all over the world have become increasingly popular for living, working and tourism, housing has become scarce and real estate prices have become unreal. Also, in the city of Rotterdam – until a few years ago known as a haven for cheap spaces to live and work – real estate has become too expensive for people with modest or even middle incomes.

Within the current housing market that is ruled by the highest bidders, many smaller parties are trying to realize new types of projects: housing cooperatives, do-it-yourselfers, former squatters, and developing architects all try to gain development rights and a place at the table. These projects radically challenge conventional planning methods, not merely having profit as a goal. However, there are many obstacles to overcome, mostly in the institutional unwillingness or inability to deal with non-professionals or with a not-for-profit approach.

We should remember that the Netherlands has built its reputation in the 20th Century as a country providing high quality and beautifully designed rent controlled social housing. This tradition has recently been forgotten. Both the structures to design and realise it as well as the culture and mentality to value its meaning, have been lost. Social housing – or affordable rentals – are now regarded to be for losers. The practice of income related rent

(passende verhuur) is a disaster that causes many people to get stuck in their current home. While initially developed to solve the deadlock of the housing market 10 years ago, it has caused less opportunities and freedom of choice for everyone.

The growing housing prices lead to growing inequality and a growing gap between the haves and have nots. You can work all day long, day in and day out, but if you own a house, it will make more money than you do with that work. This is what we learn from, for instance, Thomas Piketty.

The increase in value of our houses is the pillar under many households. Our economy is based on the idea of real estate as an object of speculation, but housing is a human right and firmly anchored in the constitution of The Netherlands. The laws of the market are seen as a force of nature, but in fact it is something we can influence: we can decide what our housing market looks like, or whether it should be a market at all. Should housing even be a commodity that can be speculated with? And should something that is so crucial for society, be left to the whims of some?

A holistic and societal re-evaluating of housing policies is needed. Affordable housing can only be guaranteed by democratizing the housing market and by involving all necessary parties. Municipalities will have to realise that land value is key if they want to provide enough opportunities for smaller parties entering that market. A residual land value determination based on market values, makes it impossible for these parties to become a player. High land value might be financially beneficial on the short-term but will hurt communities on the long run, pushing us even further back from a solution.

Therefore, communities, collectives and individuals need to act! We have a responsibility to invest in obtaining and sharing knowledge on housing. We need to embed this knowledge to politicise the right to housing, improve access to housing, change financial legislation and taxation, unionise the practice of



Collage made of newspaper articles and titles about the Tweebosbuurt



housing, and equitably legalize the occupation of vacant dwellings. In Rotterdam and other cities where the municipality can be pressured to facilitate it, DIY initiatives in the form of housing cooperatives, sustainable temporary rent practices and squatting represent an channel for systemic change. We need to educate people on the diversity of existing housing typologies and collectively come up with new strategies to question the status quo.

As you are reading this, we have taken that first step in Rotterdam. Through theoretical and practical research, we have come up with 10 statements in order to provide for collective and affordable housing for all:

### **1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A RIGHT; EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE THE POSSIBILITY TO ACCESS IT.**

The United Nations identifies adequate housing as a fundamental human right, defining it as “the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity.” People should be able to choose whether they want to live in a big or small house and how much of their income they want to spend on it. Let people take this decision in their own hands and create an unequal playing field for those who need it.

### **2. VALUE IS NOT JUST FINANCIAL PROFIT**

The notion of value should not be regarded as an economic principle; it is the utility and use that expresses value. As such, value should also include social, cultural, and environmental dimensions that are difficult to quantify in monetary terms. Next to this, it is just as important to value a house as a home – a place to live in.

### **3. USE GOVERNMENTALLY OWNED LAND AND BUILDINGS AS A LAUNCHING PAD FOR NEW INITIATIVES.**

Land prices for new community-inspired non-profit initiatives, such as cooperatives and City in the Making, require their own moderate and standardized determination. The current way of working with residual land value is completely connected to the real estate market, while these initiatives are not. Now the land price depends on the potential profit of the future owner, while cooperative living cannot compete with these market prices. This doesn't mean that new initiatives need to be 'subsidies', but it's a matter of choice: more profit on the land now, or a long-term exploitation that also serves a social purpose.

### **4. INVOLVE ALL THE AFFECTED PARTIES.**

It is important that all the affected parties get a seat at the table, no matter how formal or informal their roles are. Nothing about us, without us. This also means to be transparent and to provide people with information. Involve all necessary parties when plans are made for the management, changes, or maintenance of a house. Talk to the residents, but also to the surrounding community and allow them to have access to open data, involve them in plans on an early stage, and explain why policy is made in the way it is. Then people will give care and value back to the city.

### **5. A SOCIAL COMMUNITY DRIVEN APPROACH SHOULD BE CENTRAL**

The development of housing should be based on a social and communal approach: no one should be left out. A community represents a social collective with mutual interest where personal interests are considered. A community brings value to its members, that does not have to be expressed in financial gain. Housing corporations should go back to their

origin and put the community first. Bringing back a social way of thinking as an integral approach is the only way forward that could result in collectivity as a model for housing.

### **6. COMMONS AND COLLECTIVISATION CONTRIBUTE A STRONGER AND MORE RESILIENT SOCIETY**

Individualization in a neoliberal society sucks in many ways. Commons and collectivisation empower inhabitants to build their own environment. Commons include the aspect of sharing, which inspires a collective approach to life. The individualization of society is being brought to a standstill when possibilities for a collective approach are created and bring back the focus on inclusion. This forms the basis of an actual society.

### **7. FOCUS ON THE HOUSE USER, RATHER THAN THE HOUSE BUILDER**

The building of the house only comprises a small and short part of its overall lifespan. This initial process and the actors in the building process have a huge influence on the use of a house, whereas the future resident(s) will be using it for generations to come. The decision-making process that leads to the development of housing should therefore include future inhabitants. Long term use and flexibility should be above short-term gain.

### **8. IT'S TIME TO DIG OURSELVES OUT OF THE HOLE WE DUG**

The current crisis is a result of deliberate political decisions in previous years and generations. We've lost all grip on rent and house prices, pushing them to bizarre heights. The government must take immediate action to regain its grip on escalating prices. An important step in this regard is making the social rental sector widely accessible again and abolishing the landlord tax on social housing. The free rental sector must also be regulated.

### **9. PEOPLE: HAVE COURAGE, BEND THE RULES!**

Apply the rules, but make sure to bent them as far as possible. If bending the rules is not possible, get involved and do everything in your power to make new ones!

### **10. HOUSING CONCERNS US ALL, TOP DOWN OR BOTTOM UP.**

As architect John F. C. Turner says in his book 'Freedom to Build' (1972): “Housing is not a noun, housing is a verb”. It implies action and agency. That's why we need new models for collective affordable housing in Rotterdam. Make it happen.

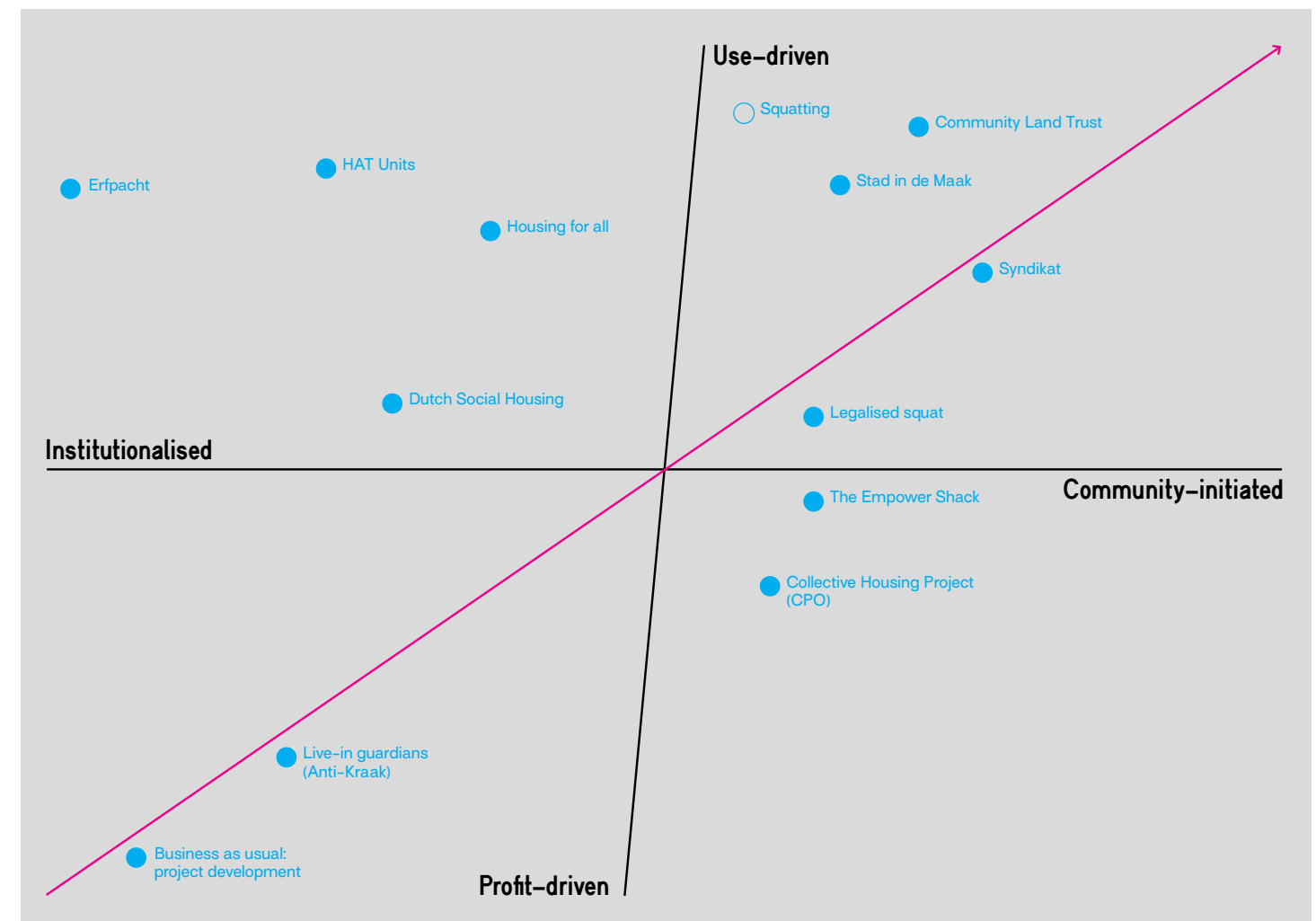
# HOUSING MODELS

## INTRODUCTION

Part of the housing crisis is in its uniformity: privatisation and optimisation of the housing market has left us with a limited offer of housing models. House seekers can choose between buying a house and renting privately or socially. The first two are mainly targeted at the wealthy inhabitants of a city: requiring deep pockets or proof of a substantial salary, the latter requires a good place on the waiting list. The system leaves a huge gap between either ends – those who earn a bit too much for being eligible for social housing, while not being able to afford to buy or rent privately.

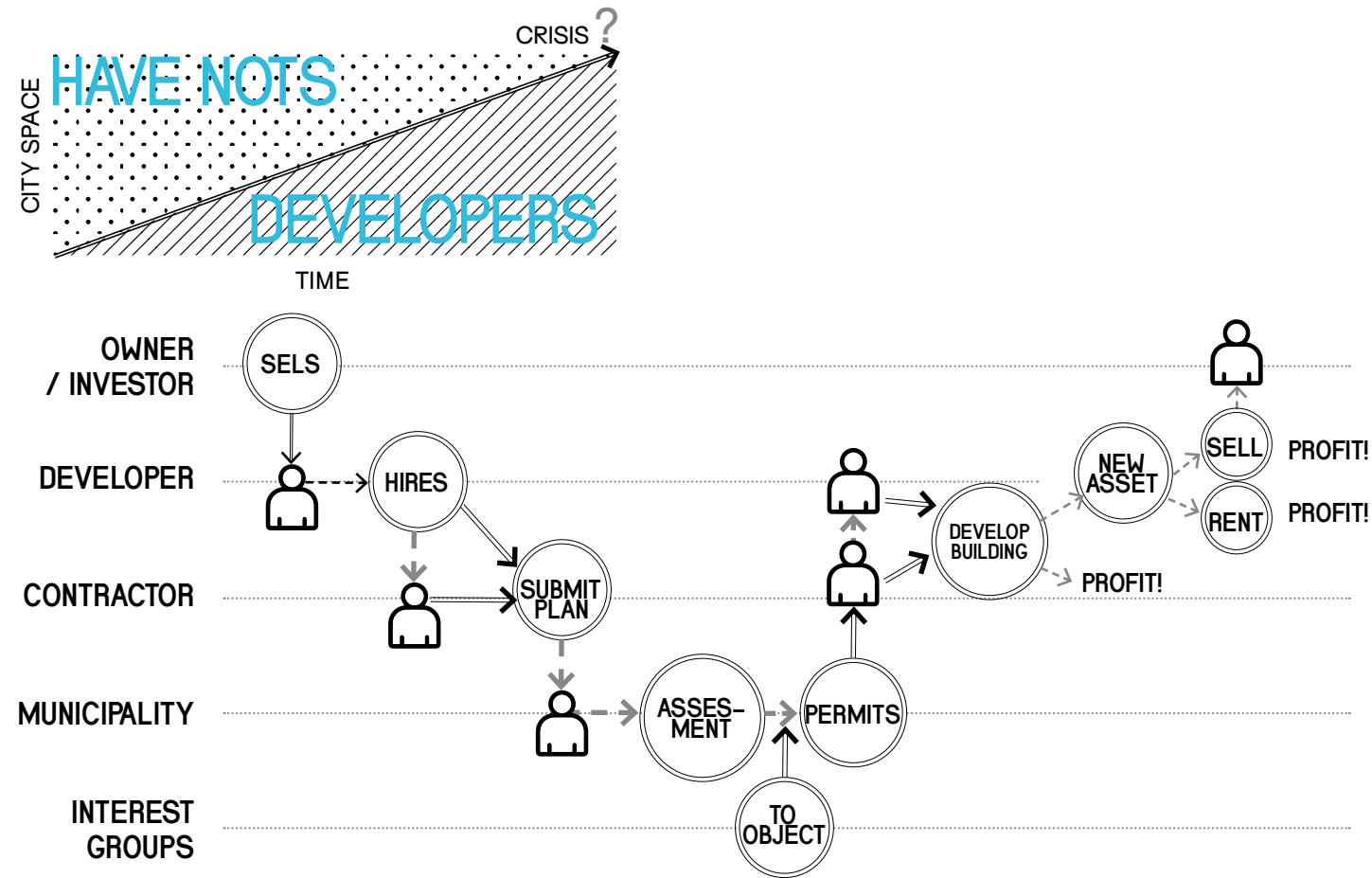
During the Summer School we mapped out relevant historical and currently available housing models from 'profit-driven' to 'use-driven' on the vertical axis, and from 'institutionalised' to 'community-initiated' horizontally. Where most currently existing housing models were found to match both the 'profit-driven' and 'institutionalised' characteristics, some models we studied emerged on the other ends of the picture.

Some examples of alternative housing models were visited by the participants, others were presented by guest lecturers René Boer and Teun van de Ende. These models were used as an inspiration for working on the case studies, to be found in the next chapter. Aspirational elements from working with communities, or working in a use-driven manner, were mixed, matched, and adopted to create new forms of living together and providing housing for those who currently miss the boat.





# BUSINESS AS USUAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



## BUSINESS AS USUAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

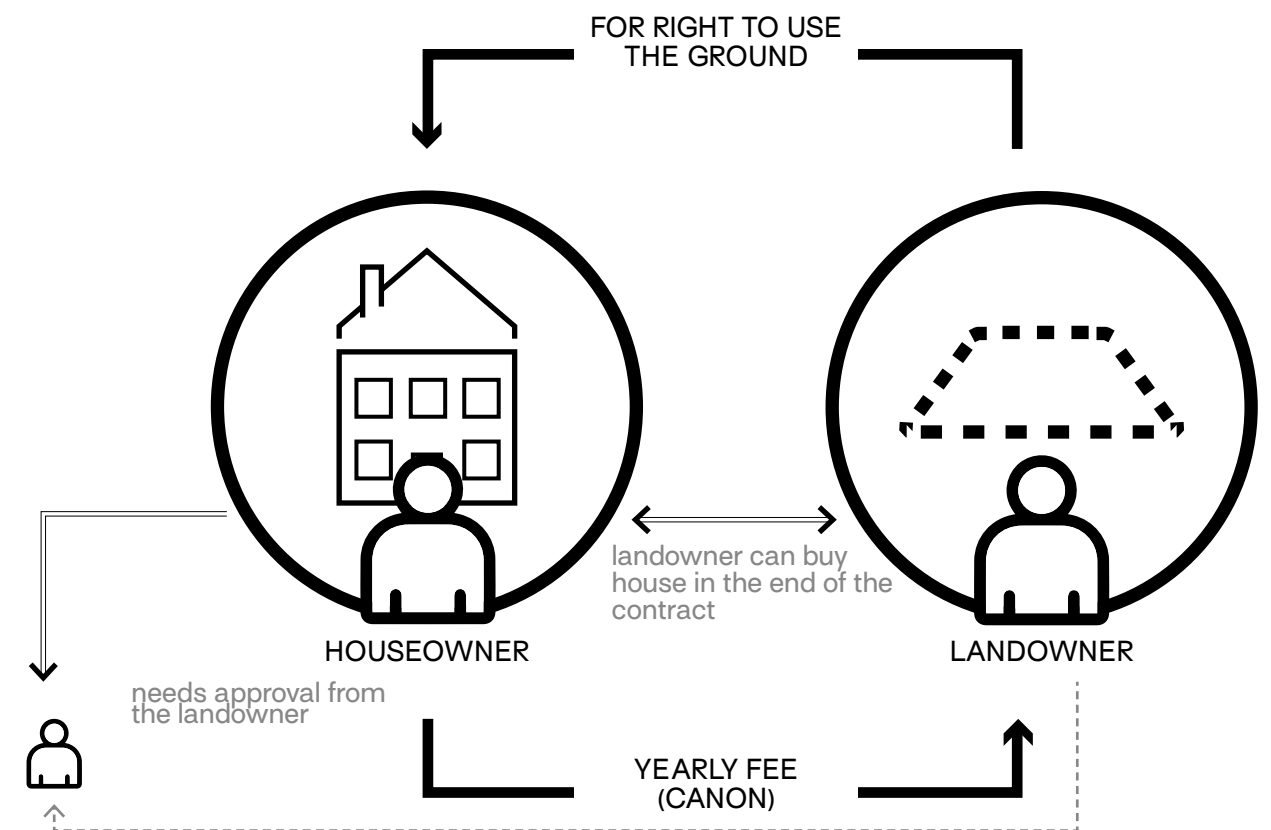
This model describes the current situation in which a project developer is involved to create new real estate and in which the emphasis is on housing as a financial asset. The developers and their activities vary in scale. Project developers buy land or property to realise a building concept. They find investors to finance deals, they obtain the necessary permits and public approval from municipalities, and build the project with contractors. Finally, they sell or rent out the newly created building to make a profit.

A project developer has several functions: investor (in the whole process of real estate development and realisation), client (carrying the financial risk up to the sale or renting

stage), creative market insider (investigating possibilities to create real estate and turning user demand in concepts), manager (directing all involved parties within requirements of time and money), and initiator (starting up development and creating demand).

Some developers try to expand their activities in order to tap into new possibilities to commodify housing and make profits. So they involve themselves in all parts of the real estate value chain. Their overall procedural presence implies that the project developer is a spider in the real estate web. It also implies that a developer takes the biggest risks out of all involved parties, as they are highly involved in all stages. In the Netherlands, project developers usually make the biggest profits (between 8-20%) of all parties in the building process. Is this justifiable?

# ERFPACHT



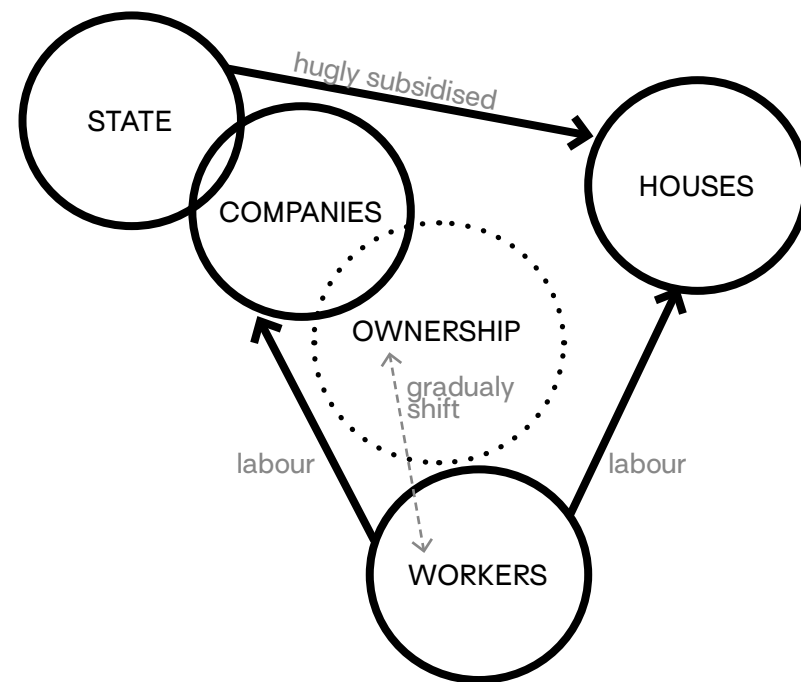
## ERFPACHT

Erfpacht is a long term ground lease construction which is also known as ground rent or leasehold. This act involves two stakeholders: The house owner and the land owner. The first is only owner of the building and signs a lease for the right to use the ground. The owner of the house, pays the land owner a fee (canon in Dutch) for the use of the land. This can be a monthly or annual fee or it can be bought one-off.

Erfpacht is one of the oldest case studies looked at and thus, over the past decades has become very institutionalised. Many large cities in the Netherlands have a ground lease system. This is arguably a huge strength of the system, which makes it legally very interesting. Furthermore, it is a user driven system,

the homeowner can rent out his house or sell (with confirmation of the landowner), while the landowner receives the rent. Opponents of the system see this as a shortfall as the landowner cannot speculate on the land value. Therefore, lots of erfpacht contracts have ended over recent years.

# HOUSING FOR ALL



## HOUSING FOR ALL

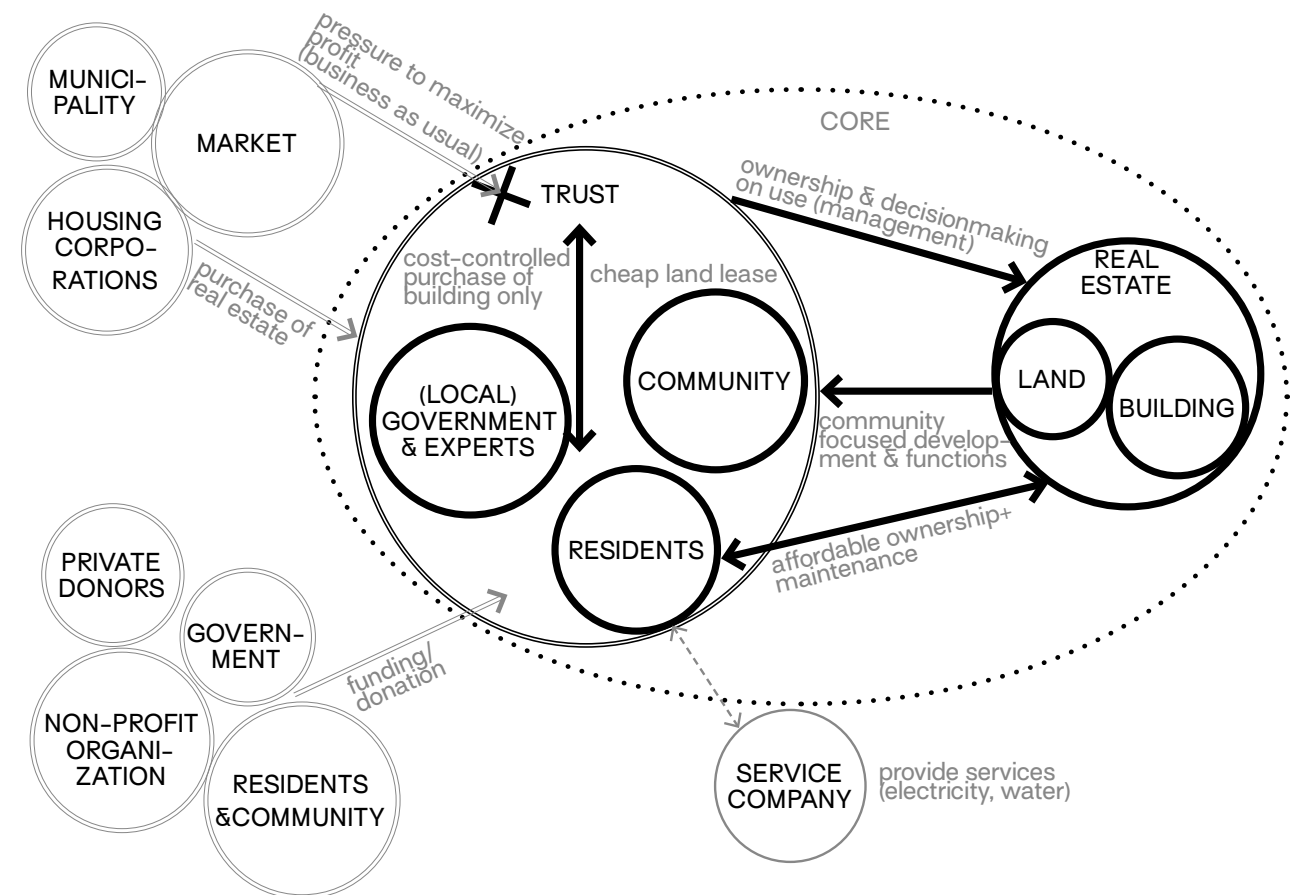
Necessitated by the devastation of the urban housing stock after the Second World War and a significant migration of population into towns, the state directed its socialist aspirations at allotting every family acceptable living space by setting up a major construction of mass housing. Heavily subsidized housing, usually in the form of high-rise apartment buildings, was foreseen by urban planners to be the most desirable and egalitarian way to house the population.

The stakeholders in the model of Housing for all were mainly represented by the state and the companies that employed people in the need of affordable housing. The state was the initiator and offered high subsidies to the companies that became the owner and offered the apartments to its workers for a symbolic rent.

The societal organisation of Yugoslavia was at the time based on an idea of “self-management”, which meant that decision-making was devolved to the workers, who through unions and assemblies would resource the public service, and realise the political aims of the federation of unified inter-ethnic states of Yugoslavia. In the housing discourse, the latter means that the state ownership was transformed to social ownership.

In practice however, self-management only truly occurred at an institutional level, without widespread stakeholder participation. As the history evolved, Yugoslavia fell apart in the 1990's and apartments ended in the private ownership of its at-the-time inhabitants (bought under a controversial law for a symbolic price).

# COMMUNITY LAND TRUST



## COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

In a community land trust, residents join forces to take the future development of their neighborhood in their own hands. It is a non-profit organization consisting of residents, members of the broader community and external experts, which is governed democratically. The acquisition of property happens by donations, subsidies and community foundations.

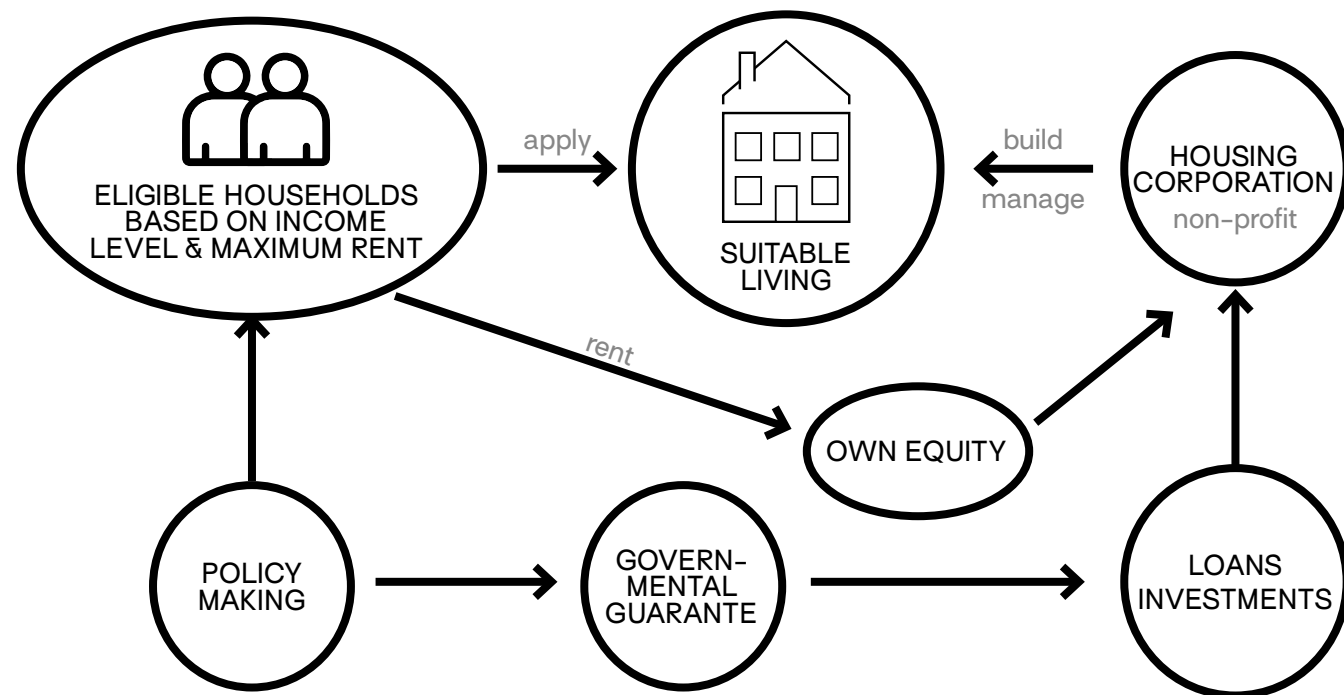
In a land trust a real estate property is split up in the building and the land on which it stands. All the land is owned by the trust while the structures on top are privately bought or rented. New residents buy or rent the building from the owner while leasing the land for an annual fee from the trust. The lease is on a long term basis and can be renewed by the user and inherited by the offspring. The selling price of the houses is set by the CLT avoiding high rises and keeping

the market dynamics out. The collected rent is used by the trust for its operations.

Next to providing affordable housing, a land trust is also used to introduce community amenities such as public spaces, facilities and commercial functions. The democratic organization ensures the developments benefit the local community. A CLT is an effective way to deal with rising property prices, vacancy and a lack of communal space within a specified geographical area. It diversifies and stabilizes neighborhoods and in doing so is a means to counter gentrification. This principle can be located between private and public housing. A trust still needs public money but the properties are rehabilitated, maintained and developed by the trust within an environment of participation and inclusion.



# DUTCH SOCIAL HOUSING



## DUTCH SOCIAL HOUSING

In the Netherlands, social housing organizations are made responsible for adequate and affordable housing since the beginning of the 20th century. These organisations are semi-private, non-profit enterprises ensuring housing while pursuing social goals within a strict framework of national laws and regulations.

The main goal is to ensure an adequate supply of affordable, good-quality homes for low-income households.

Housing benefits (rent subsidies) are being granted by the government to this target group. Secondly, social housing organizations also provide housing solutions to lower middle income groups who are unable to find suitable housing on the rental market.

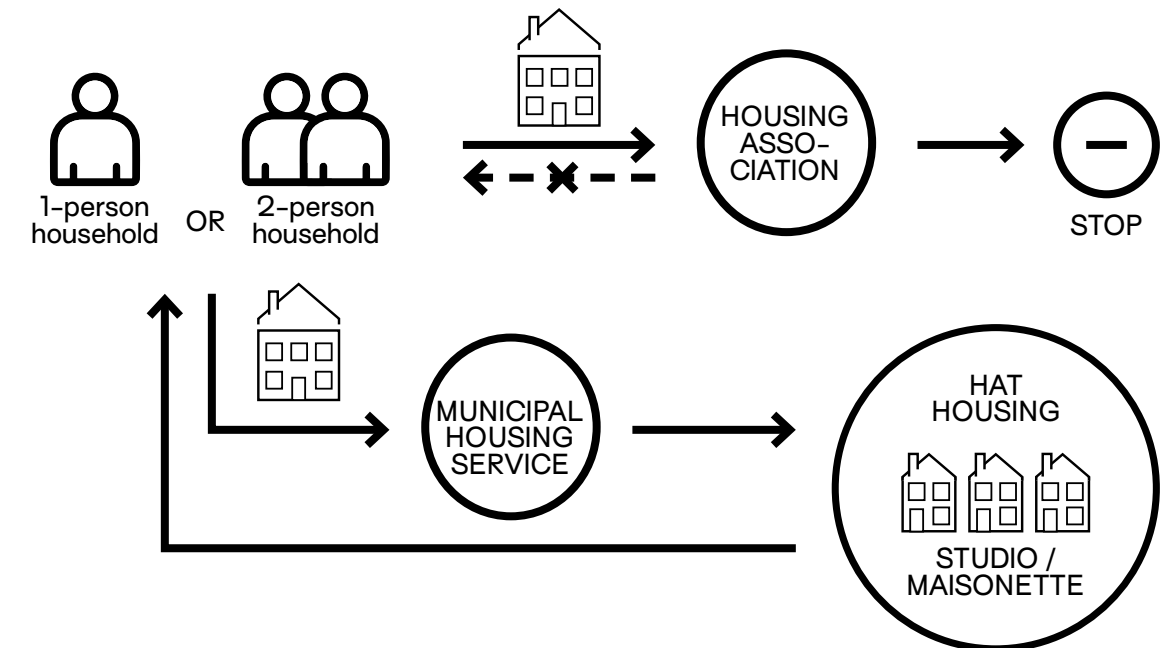
All social dwellings are allocated on the basis of national and local rules. Social housing organisations are required to let 80 per cent of their properties to households with

an income below a set income threshold or to households with a set care requirement. Social housing organisations are also engaged in keeping communities liveable and safe.

The financial capital for housing is provided by social housing organisations' own equity and loans and further investments. The collective assets of all social housing organisations are used as a collateral for financiers through a sectoral guarantee fund. The financing is further backed up by the Dutch state and municipalities which act as guarantors of last resort. This results in more favourable financing terms and counter-cyclical investments.

The Dutch social housing sector is a closed system where all revenues have to be reinvested. Essentially, it acts as a revolving fund with the aim to provide affordable housing to those who are in actual need of it.

# HAT



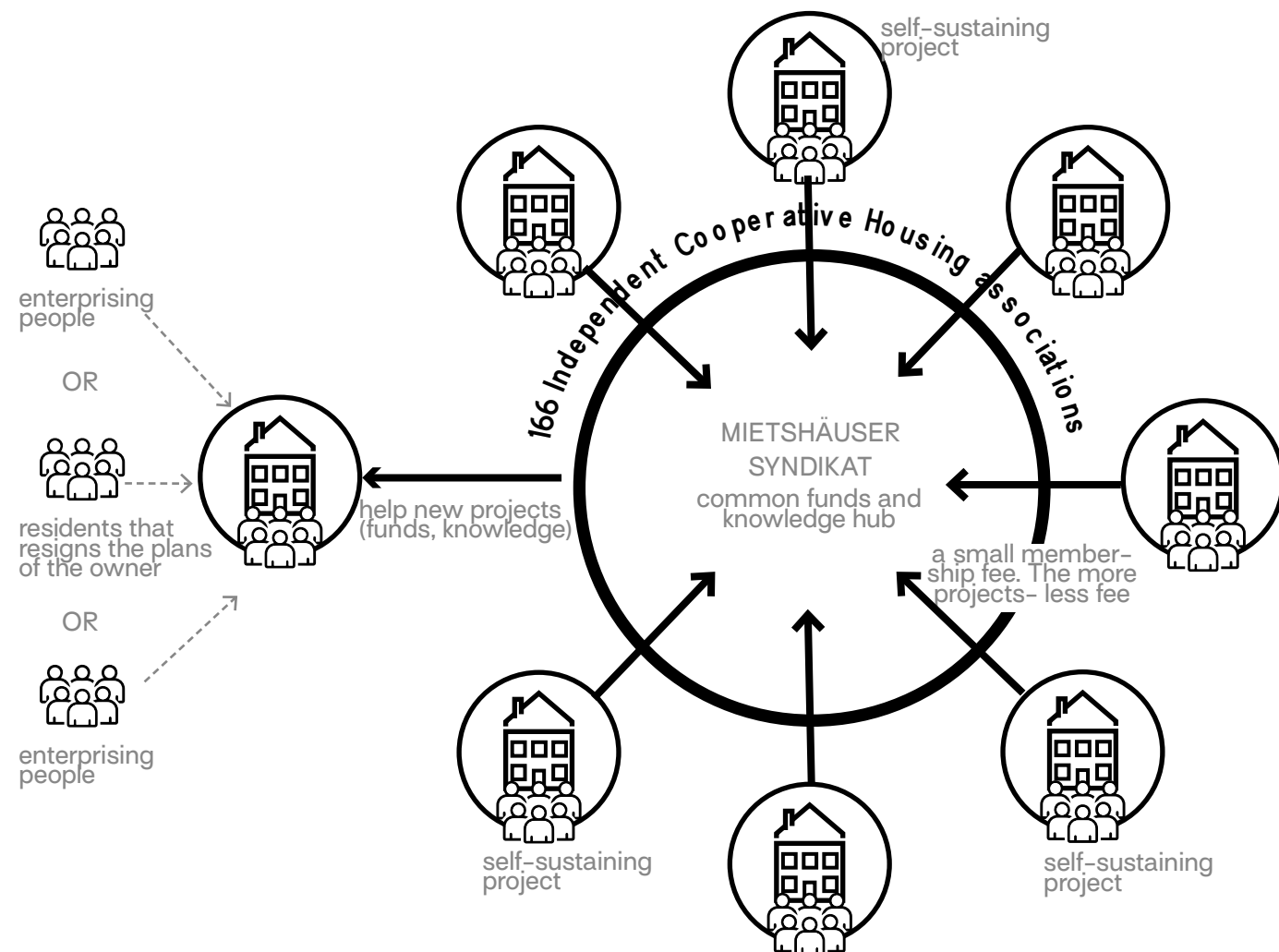
## HAT

HAT in Dutch means 'Housing for single and double person households' (Huisvesting alleenstaanden en tweepersoonshuishoudens)

Marcel van Dam, state secretary for housing for the socialist party PvdA, initiated the HAT housing in 1975 with a decree to establish a subsidiary ruling for housing associations to build small scale houses for 1 or 2 person households. 77000 HAT houses have been built all over the Netherlands between 1975-1995.

HAT housing was an answer to the roaring housing shortage in the 1970's for mainly young people, students and young couples. This was one of the reasons why the squatter movement in those years grew rapidly. HAT housing was incorporated by housing associations in larger social housing projects, mostly as studio's with a combined living/kitchenette/bedroom.

# THE MIETSHÄUSER SYNDIKAT



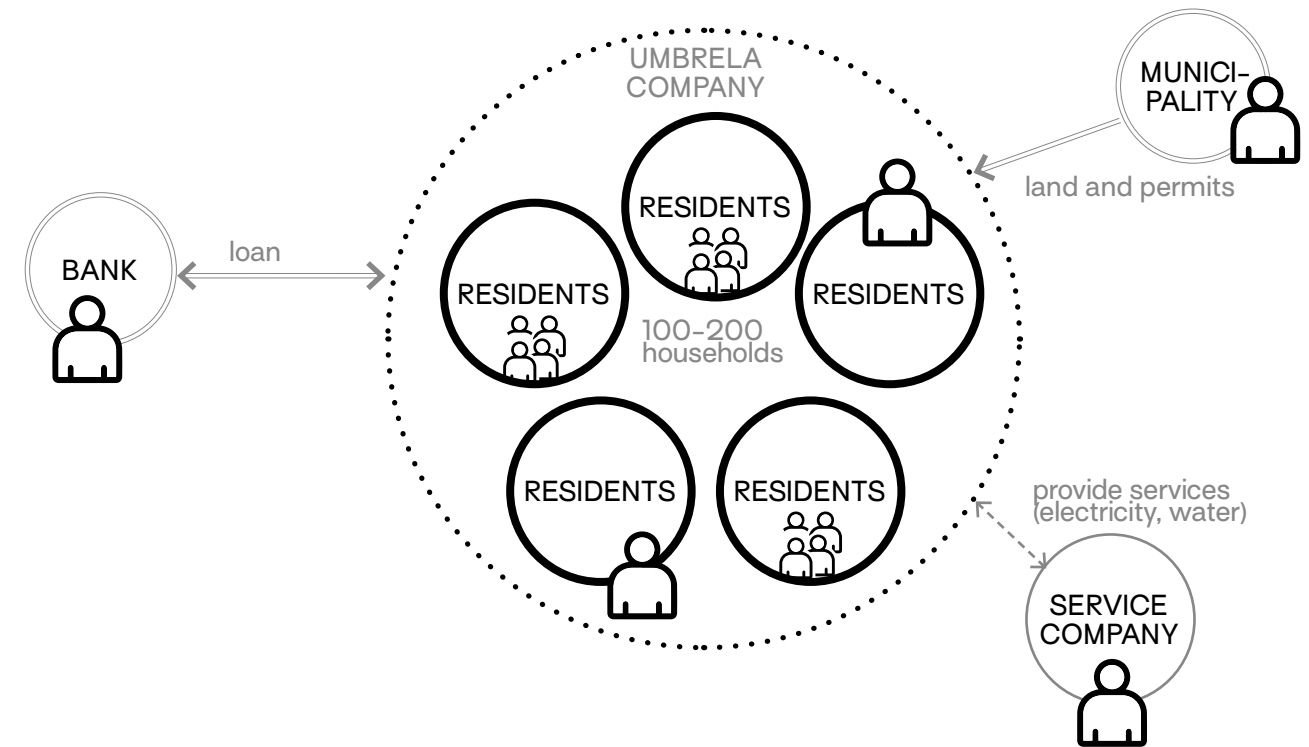
## THE MIETSHÄUSER SYNDIKAT

The Mietshäuser Syndikat is a union of cooperative housing associations in Germany. At the time of writing, the union consists of 166 different associations. One can join the union by forming a group of people and starting a new association. All of them live -partly- collectively, affordably and independently. The radical aspect of the union is that real estate is taken out of the market and not treated as a commodity but as a means to live well.

The strength of the union is in its size. If a new group joins the union can provide the necessary financial backing, knowledge and

knowhow, and finally, fiscal support. This also means that older associations maintain a steady influx of possible new inhabitants. For years, the monthly rent of the union has been 25 cents per square meter. However, in recent years the union decided to raise the rent in order to prevent people becoming trapped in the system. Some members have been unable to leave as they could not cope with housing prices outside the controlled rent system. Still, it's a perfect example of a distributive and regenerative system, always adapting and changing when necessary, functioning on the scale of a housing union.

# HOUSING COOPERATIONS



## HOUSING COOPERATIONS

Historically, cooperatives have flourished when the government and the market fail, which is exactly what we can see nowadays. At such times, people organize themselves to suit their interests and needs. In a housing cooperation, future residents have a voice in the design and maintenance process. The cooperation takes care of the execution of the housing and bank loan.

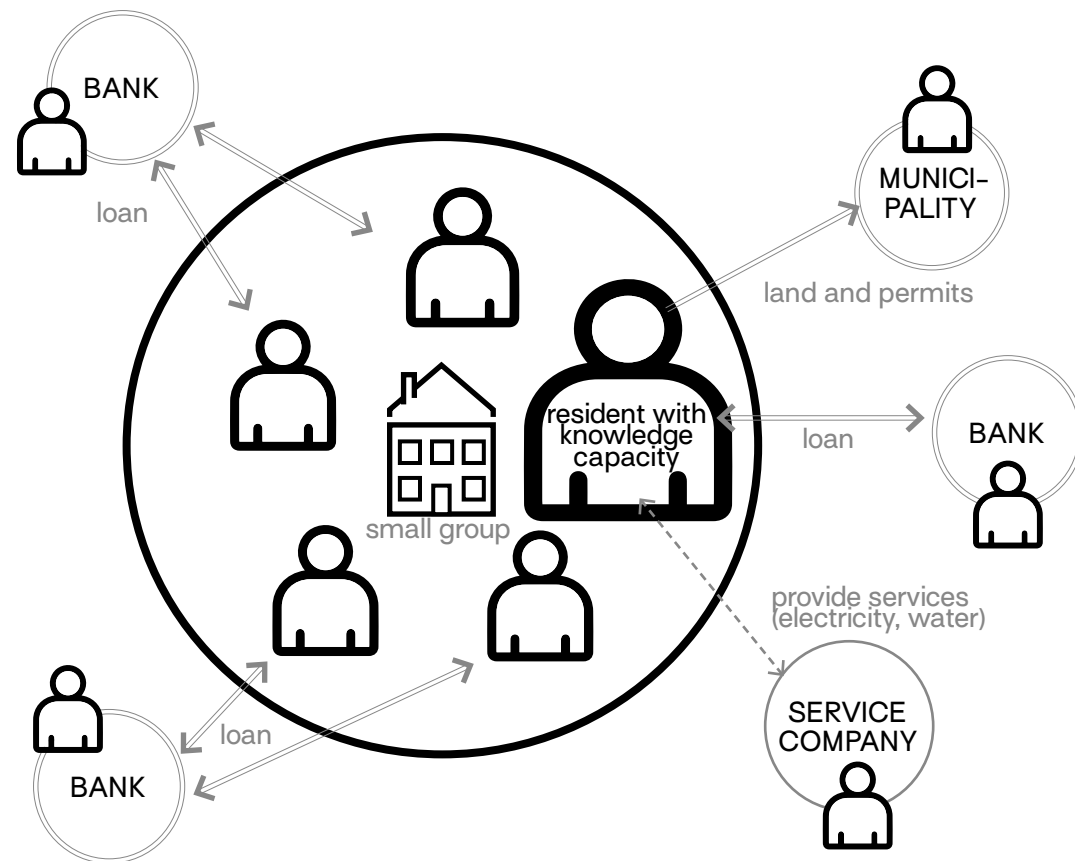
In the case of Het Rotterdams Woongenootschap members pay entrance fees based on the size of unit they want, which is around € 300 per m<sup>2</sup>. This deposit makes them a co-owner of the cooperation, as a share. Members can withdraw their deposits

in case they decide to leave the project. As soon as the house is finished members will pay a rental fee (20-30% lower than the market price). This is since cooperation members don't own their apartments. Houses are owned by the organisation. All members together govern the whole cooperation. Together they have a decisive voice.

In current Dutch economic conditions, this model is feasible with a minimum critical mass of 100-200 homes. Unfortunately, in Rotterdam collectives have to play according to market rules to acquire land or a building. As a result, they are unable to compete on value speculations and struggle to implement their projects.



# COLLECTIVE-PRIVATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



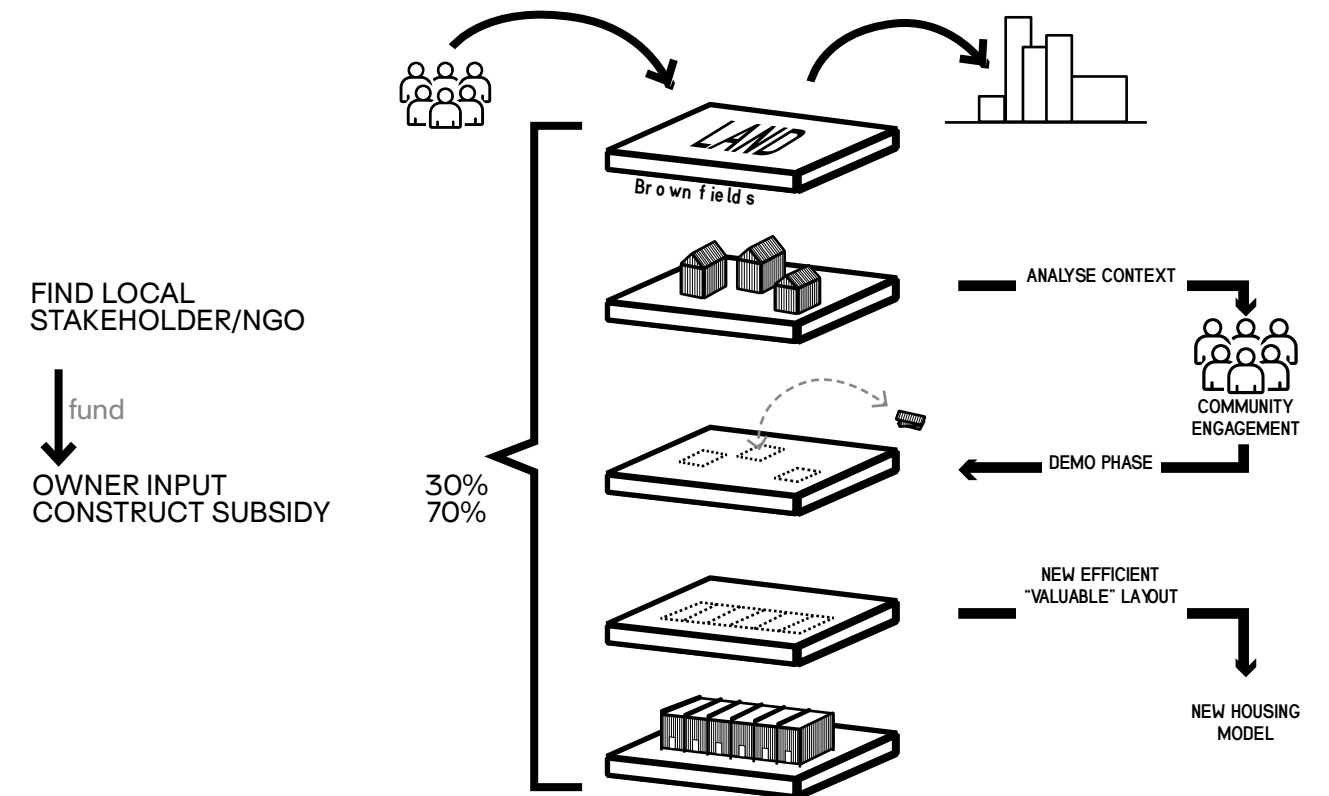
## COLLECTIVE-PRIVATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

In a collective-private housing development (CPO), residents will implement together a small-middle size housing project. Quite often, they have architects or other professionals with the knowledge capacity to lead the organisation and the construction. They can delegate mediation of the construction process to companies like Urbannerdam.

In a collective project, residents own their units when the project is realised. Each of

them separately takes care of financing their apartment, which becomes their own property. On the one hand, it offers inhabitants a way to realize their dream home in an affordable way without middle men, and it offers them the ownership of a property. On the other hand, it makes collective houses vulnerable to the market in case anyone decides to sell an apartment. There is no one recipe on how to secure collective houses from speculation. These projects keep experimenting with "exit" rules.

# THE EMPOWER SHACK



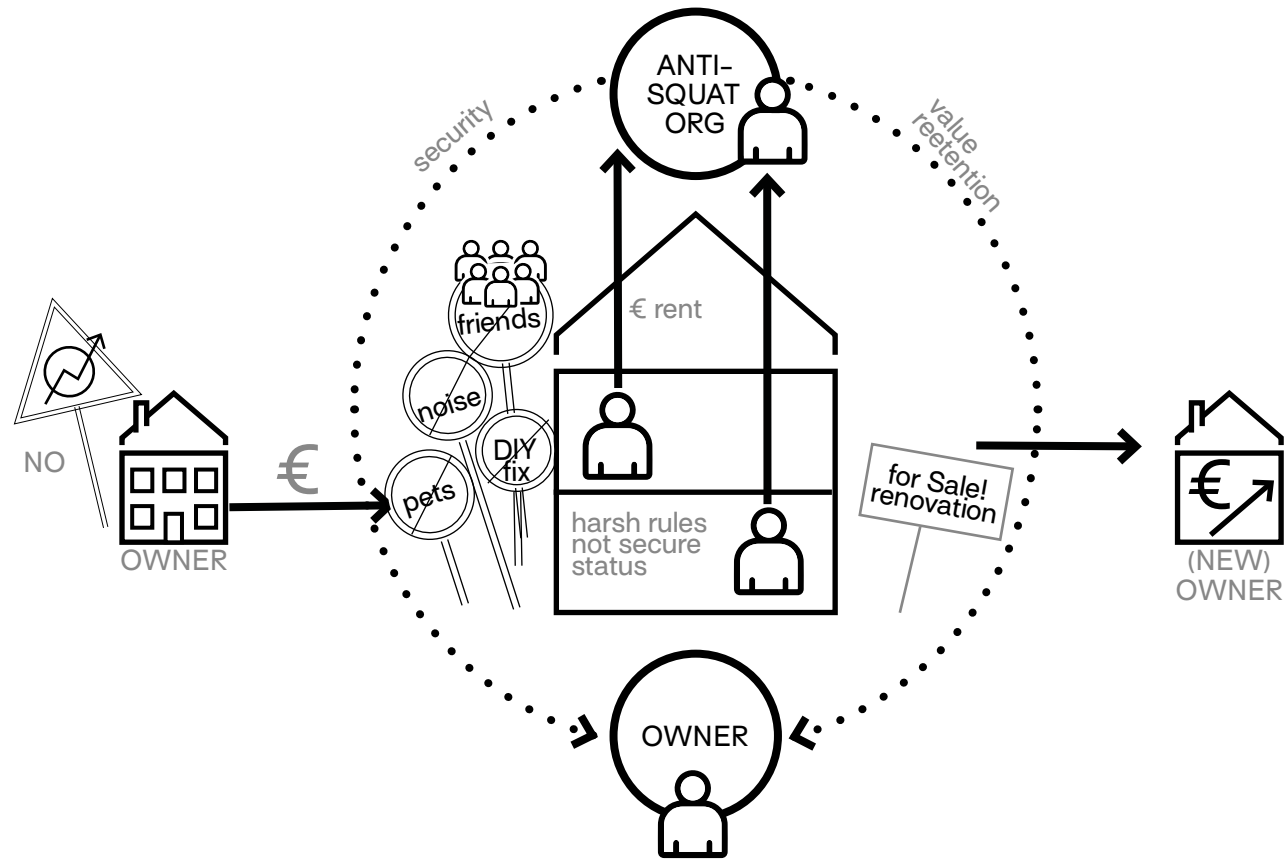
## THE EMPOWER SHACK

The Empower Shack is an interdisciplinary post apartheid housing development in South Africa of 73 units, housing 280 people. It was directed by the Urban Think Tank and NGO Ikhayalami, in collaboration with the BT-Section (Site C) community of Khayelitsha, Cape Town and associated local and international partners.

Through innovative design and organisational models the project aims to upgrade informal settlements through the development, implementation and evaluation of four core components: a two-story housing prototype, a participatory spatial planning process, integrated urban systems and economic solutions. The Empower Shack uses land more efficiently which enables residents to remain at the same site and keeps community ties intact. Community members who live in

the Empower Shack's become long-term stakeholders in the project. Micro-financing schemes are also built into the planning tools, so residents can take out small, ethical loans when building an Empower Shack or adding another storey. The building units are priced to meet meaningful financial contributions from recipients by designing generous but robust living spaces and service cores that meet building code obligations through fit-for-purpose bridge contracts. The units are available in six sizes ranging between 38-square-metres and 84-square-metres, and are priced accordingly, with a mean construction price of ZAR 160,000 (£9,494). This price corresponds with a subsidy offered by the government in a lump sum to households that qualify. Residents currently pay a net average of 14 per cent of the construction cost through a micro-finance programme, based on the footprint of the shack and household affordability assessments.

# ANTI SQUAT

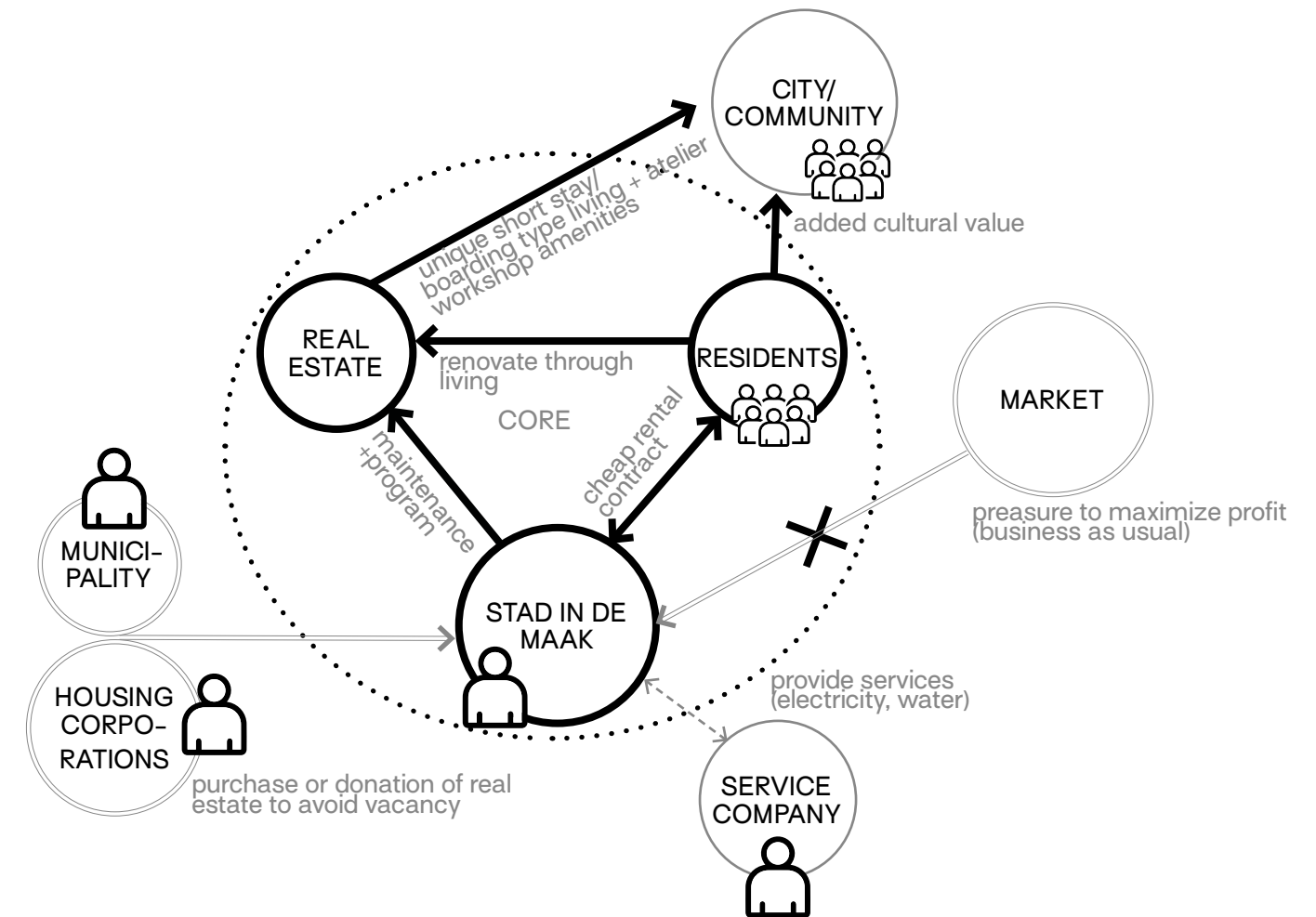


## ANTI SQUAT

Anti-squatting or property guardianship is the practice of temporary reusing empty properties to prevent squatting. The anti-squatting practice consists of three major actors: a property owner, an anti-squatting agency (ASA) and a temporary property guardian. The practice is based on asset value retention and risk prevention, and is therefore owner centred. ASA function as building administrators, who facilitate inhabitants with unique and unconventional spaces for a low fee and provide owners with security against squatting and negligence. Inhabitants provide the actual value for the property and the other actors through their presence and their monthly rent fee.

An often heard criticism on anti-squatting stems from the legal position of inhabitants. Dutch law does not recognize guardians as renters, but rather as borrowers. This semantic difference means that the rights of guardians are determined through vacancy law instead of rental law. As such, restrictions are set so that guardians cannot make changes or improvements to the property, cannot go on vacation without notice and ASA workers can enter the property without permission of a guardian at all times. Guardians need to be flexible and nomadic as the eviction notice period is two weeks to a month without a guarantee on new housing. Overall, the practices of ASAs are seen as controversial and provide a strain on the rental market.

# CITY IN THE MAKING / STAD IN DE MAAK



## CITY IN THE MAKING / STAD IN DE MAAK

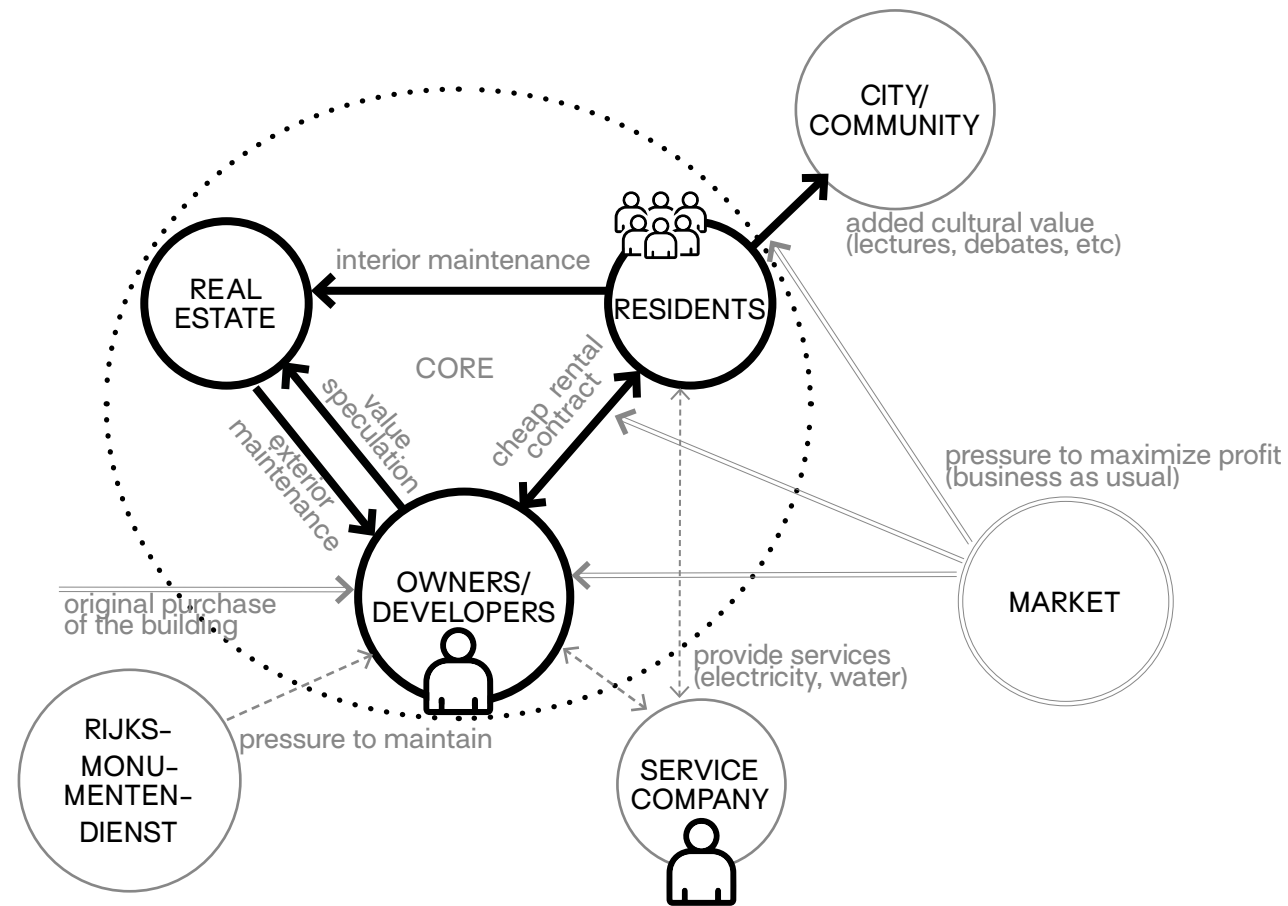
Stad in de Maak operates similarly to an anti-squat company, where they temporarily use otherwise vacant property to prevent loss of value. The big difference is that Stad in de Maak does not manage property for profit, but for social gain. They rent out part of the property for the lowest rent they can ask and emphasize collective use of space through a 1/3-2/3 model, in which 1/3 of the property is used collectively and 2/3 is used privately.

Right now, Stad in de Maak is only able to get their hands on property on a temporary basis. They are not able to acquire property in the traditional way by buying because the market

is too overheated. However, they are looking for a more permanent situation in which to develop their activities. The value they add to the community is twofold: Firstly they typically provide a unique short-stay/lodging renting arrangement and secondly, the collective spaces in the properties they manage is used for cultural functions that also add value for the community.



# LEGALIZED SQUAT



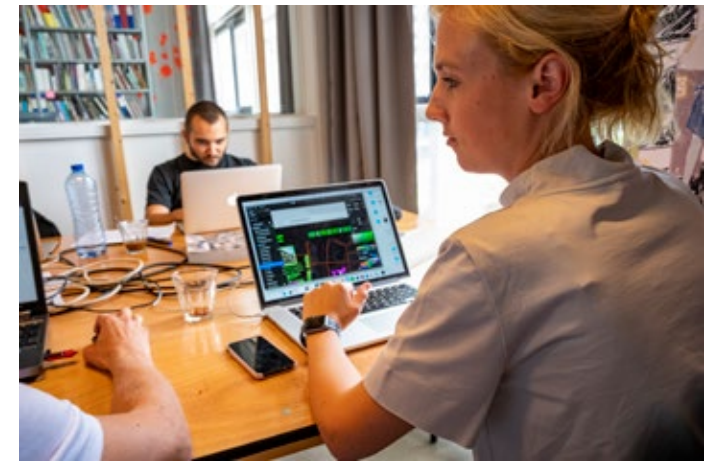
## LEGALIZED SQUATS,

Legalized squats, such as The Poortgebouw have a long history within the squatting movement. The Poortgebouw now has become a communal living arrangement with renters who pay rent to an owner. The current contract is very favorable, mainly because the maintenance of the building is split between inside and outside. The inside maintenance is done by the commune of inhabitants themselves, but the monumental outside of the building (which is marked as national heritage) is to be maintained by the owner. The inhabitants provide a lot of value to the city, through hosting debates, lectures

and concerts etc. They have been doing this for such a long time that the Poortgebouw is notorious around Rotterdam.

The National Heritage Department (RCE) forces the owners to maintain the building, after several long court cases started by the inhabitants. The owners are pressured by market forces and the costs of the long overdue maintenance to turn a profit on the building and change the function into something more profitable than just housing this commune. This threatens the current system and therefore the cultural values that could be gained by the city.





Pictures by Maarten Laupman



# DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

In order to test various alternative development strategies for collective affordable housing, we used a former elementary school in Spangen as our testcase. Four strategies were tested: Maximum Commoning (with an emphasis on collective and common spaces and processes), Power to the Coop (using the energy cooperation to create synthesis between the schools and the surrounding block), L-€€G platform (to take out the anti-squat company and create transparency in vacancy management) and Squatting (taking possession of a space without consent of the owner).

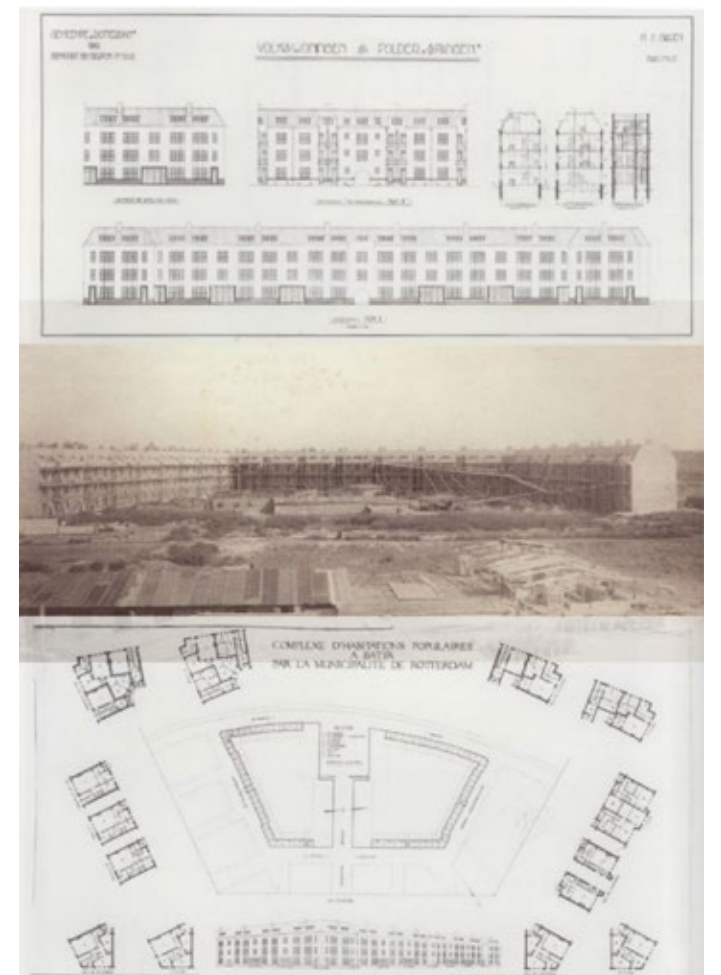
Spangen is a neighbourhood in the west of Rotterdam, near the border with Schiedam. It is one of the poorest neighbourhoods of Rotterdam with a little less than 10.000 inhabitants. The design and some of the architecture in Spangen is world famous. The symmetrical and monumental urban plan was drawn in 1913 by architect Pieter Verhagen under supervision of H.P. Berlage. The social housing blocks were designed by famous architects at the time such as J.J.P. Oud, Michiel Brinkman, Buskens, Kruithof en Meischke.

Oud developed his idea of a metropolitan architecture that reflected the collective entity rather than the individual apartment, creating street-long facades with special volumetric compositions and details on the corner. These were the esthetical innovations Oud introduced to shape large-scale mass housing. The blocks consisted of apartments with a living room, two bedrooms and a toilet on the two lower floors and a slightly larger maisonette on the two top floors. Theo van Doesburg advised on the colours of the woodwork and designed the stained-glass windows above the entrée doors.

Brinkman's Justus van Effen block (1922) was experimental in that it introduced collective facilities like the bath and washing house, and the influential and revolutionary elevated gallery road which gave the baker and the milkman access to the second storey. The establishment of the municipal housing



Spangen 1934



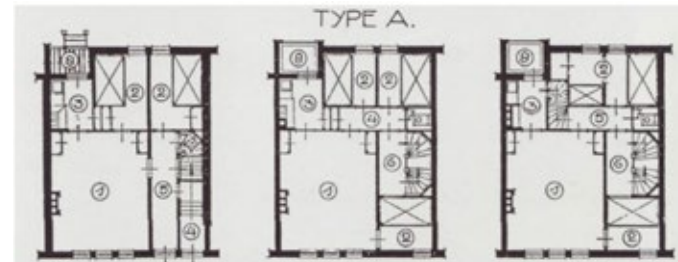
Facade drawings of the complexes by J.J.P. Oud around 1920, a view from the inner courtyard of the construction site (1920) and an overview map of the J.J.P. Oud built complexes.



department in 1917 was a sign that affordable housing by the market was seriously lagging behind, causing unacceptable housing shortages. The government, though unwillingly, felt obliged to jump in. In the Rotterdam elections of 1919 (the first in which also women could vote) the socialist party was victorious. This meant the new socialist government gave green light to develop the much-needed mass housing. In the polder Spangen they aimed to build a modern, hygienic, esthetical, and harmonious urban quarter, to be built both by the municipal housing department as by the housing corporations (woningbouwverenigingen).

At that time, decent and respectable social housing for (harbour) workers was the subject of ambition of both architects and the city government. This showed in the quality of the housing, but also in the urban design of the overall plan, the design of the public squares and the streets. The centre piece of the symmetrical urban design of Spangen was the soccer stadium The Castle, for the Sparta soccer club. Built in 1916, it is the oldest in the Netherlands.

Inside the large housing blocks often collective facilities were placed, mainly schools but also the community facility. From 1890–1915, it was a habit in Rotterdam to build schools in the centre of closed building blocks. The advantages of this location were threefold: the school had a quiet location, away from the noise of the street; this provided a safe location for small children to go to school and play in the secluded play yard. But also, the land was cheaper, and the architecture didn't need to be elaborate because the buildings remained out of sight. The reasons to save money were in this case probably more important since Spangen was going to be a workers' neighbourhood and high costs and investments should be avoided. Spangen was the last area where this solution to locate school buildings was chosen; in later neigh-



Corner of Spaansebocht – Bilderdijkstraat (1920). The municipal housing by J.J.P. Oud is characterized by a decorative concrete line in the plinth and a symmetrical facade with backsets and an emphasis on the corners.

bourhoods schools were placed on corners, squares and other prominent places to create meaningful urban compositions.

In the housing block between Bilderdijkstraat and Potgieterstraat two elementary schools were located. They were designed in 1919 by architects of the municipal Department of Public Works, while the perimeter block was designed by J.J.P. Oud (southern part) and Meischke & Schmidt (northern part), both also in 1919. The perimeter block was hugely affected by the urban renewal of the 1980s in which period the quality of living and the amenities of the apartments improved (bathrooms), but the architecture was badly damaged and is almost unrecognizable. Many apartments were renovated, however with no respect for the characteristics and beauty of the original architecture. The schools, however, are largely in their original state and have been named of heritage value by the municipality.

During the 1980's up to the 2000's Spangen was a dilapidated area, crime and drugs ridden and with a bad image. Spangen has 85% immigrant background and the majority has a low income. The experimental approach of the Wallisblock was a turning point in

2005. The approximately 75 small and badly maintained apartments in the Wallisblock (in the east of Spangen) were given away for free on condition that the residents themselves would renovate and invest in them. This attracted a new crowd to Spangen and despite/thanks to its gentrification effects, had a positive influence. The same goes for the meticulous restoration of the Justus van Effen block in 2012 which undid the damage done to the block by the urban renewal.

For a number of years now, the two primary schools have been empty and are managed by the anti-squatting company Camelot, the vacant property manager that was discredited for abuse. The summer school of the Independent School for the City has been looking into the possibilities of achieving better vacancy management with a much greater positive impact for the residents of the schools and for those of the surrounding housing block. There are plenty!

#### Sources:

Steenhuis/Urban Fabric, Spangen–Rotterdam, cultuurhistorische verkenning, 2009. Available at: [https://issuu.com/stadsontwikkeling/docs/gebied-sonderzoek\\_spangen\\_website\\_02-2012](https://issuu.com/stadsontwikkeling/docs/gebied-sonderzoek_spangen_website_02-2012)

<https://nieuws.top010.nl/spangen-architect-oud.htm>





# MAXIMUM COM- MONING

Maximum Commons:  
De Progressie  
التقدم  
Coöperatie Postep  
Go na Fesi

## WHY MAXIMUM COMMONING

Besides market violence that makes housing and living impossible, we live in an atomised society. People live in their identical, individualised houses, mostly alone, mostly lonely.

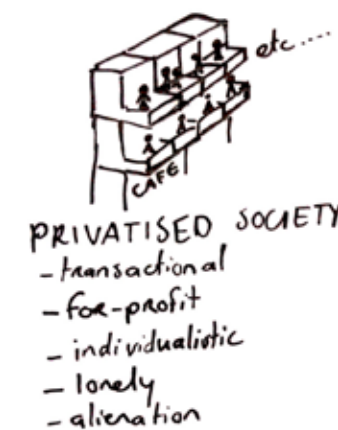
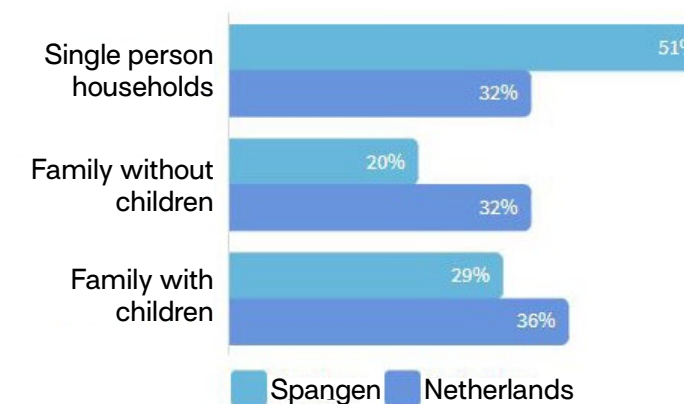


Illustration: T. van der Pijl

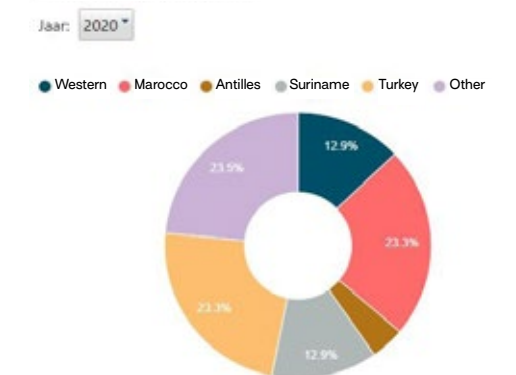
Meeting and sharing time with the friends you do have is dominated by profit making institutions and 6 euro expresso's. Life for many is alienating because of the architecture of their houses and the economy.

The commons offers an alternative. Life is shared with people you know and love. It provides an opportunity to become a resilient and welcoming community, that is self-reliant and self-governing. Maximum commoning makes sure that a maximum of people in the wider community get to live the life they want. Together with those around them, and with respect for the world as a whole.

## WHO?



### Migration background

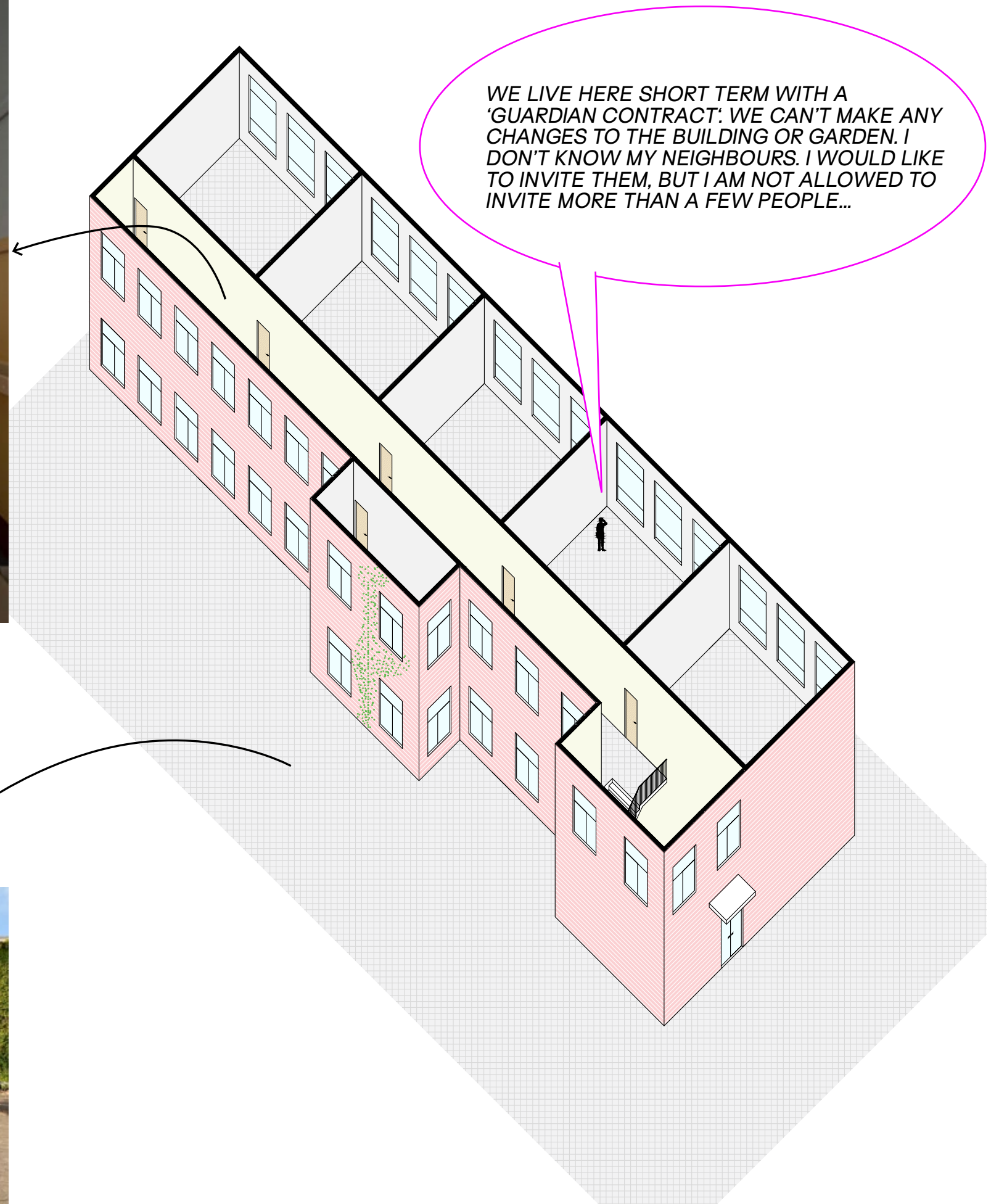
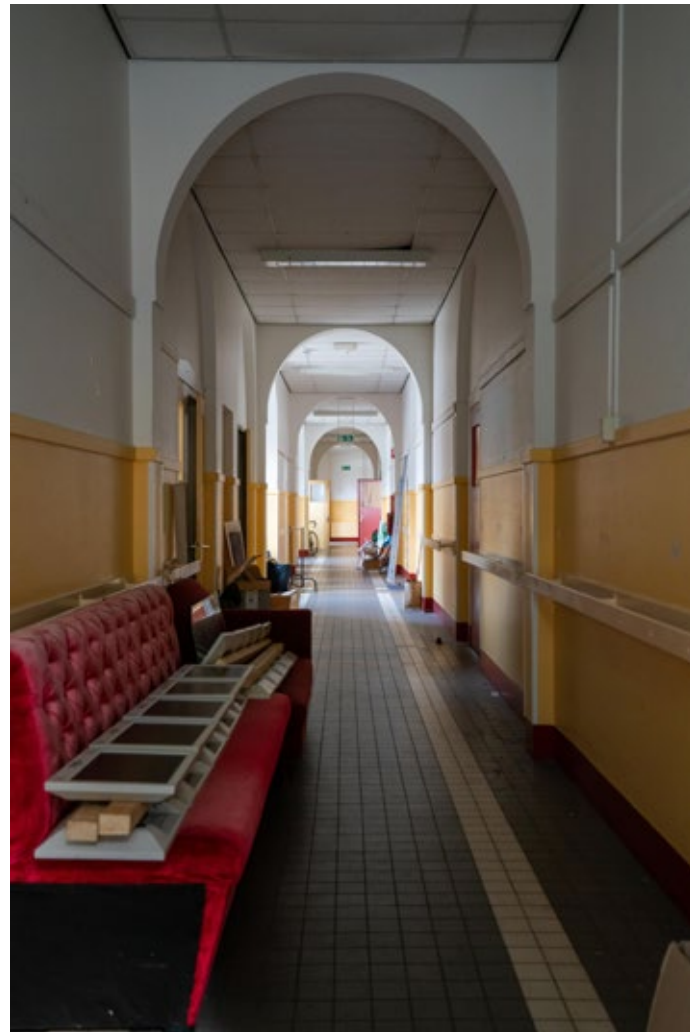


Bevolking in buurt Spangen: inwoners met een migratie-achtergrond worden onderverdeeld in Westers en enkele niet Westerse landen op grond van hun geboorteland of dat van hun ouders.

There are a lot of single person households in Spangen. The percentage of people with a 'migration background' is around 80%. This group contains people with all kinds of different nationalities, also some are first, while others are second or third generation. This means the housing block is superdiverse!

# WHERE?

The double story school building with it's royal spaces, in the middle of a city block, is a hidden gem in the city. Will it be turned into exclusive lofts or can we come up with a better idea?



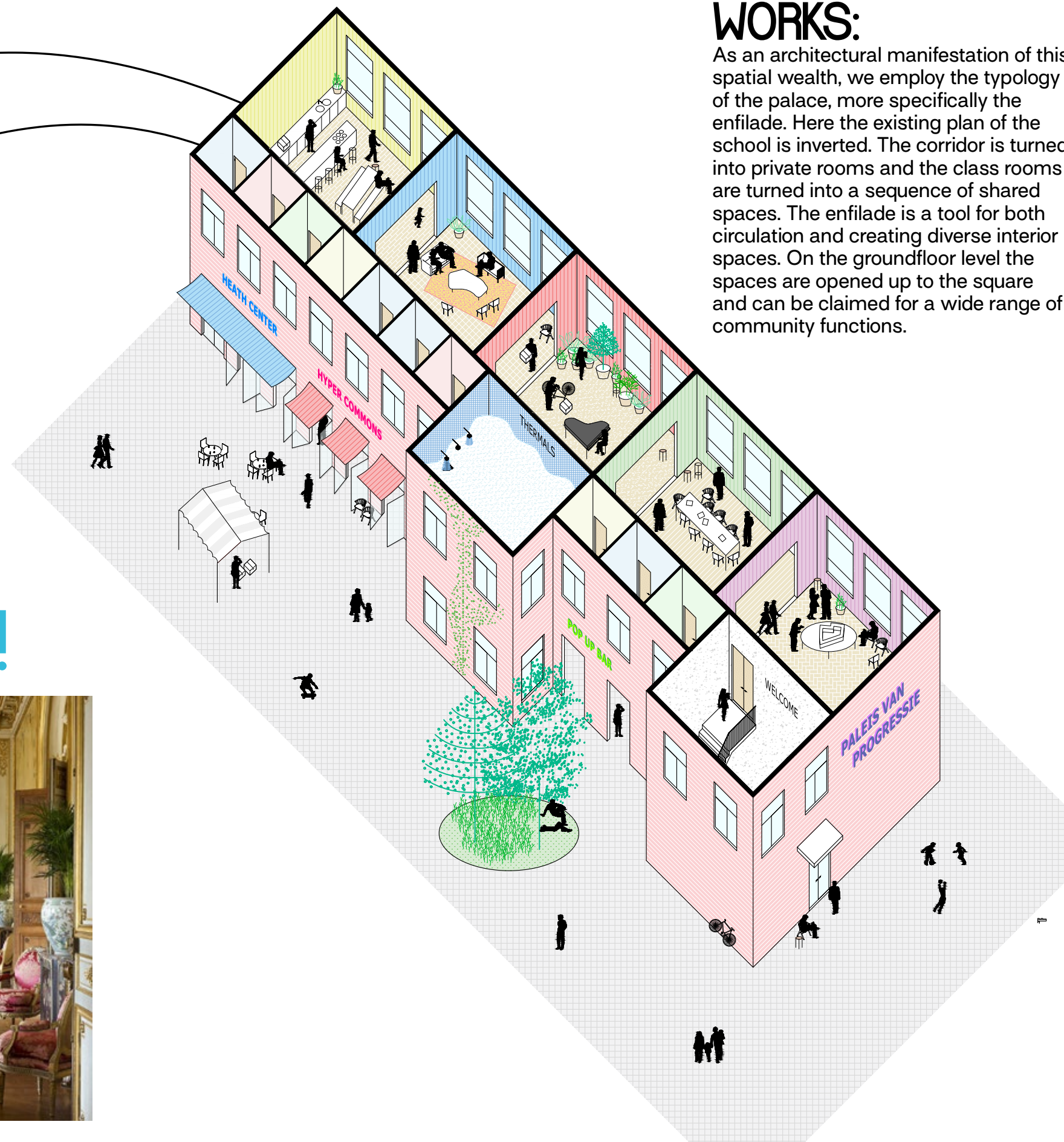
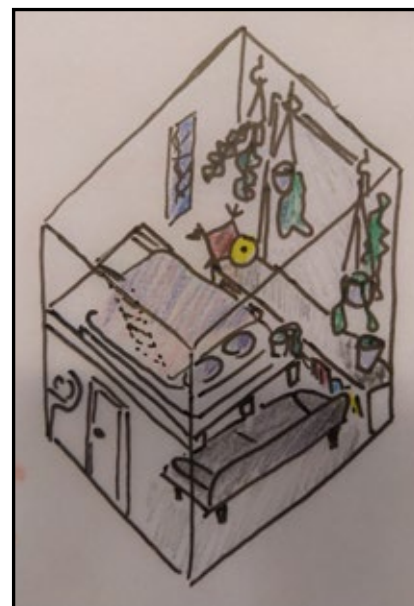


# WHAT? AFFORDABLE HOUSING!



Who said affordable housing could only take place in minimal dwellings? By sharing space and reducing the private space to its minimum the tenants can live as a king in the collective parts of 'het Paleis van Progressie'.

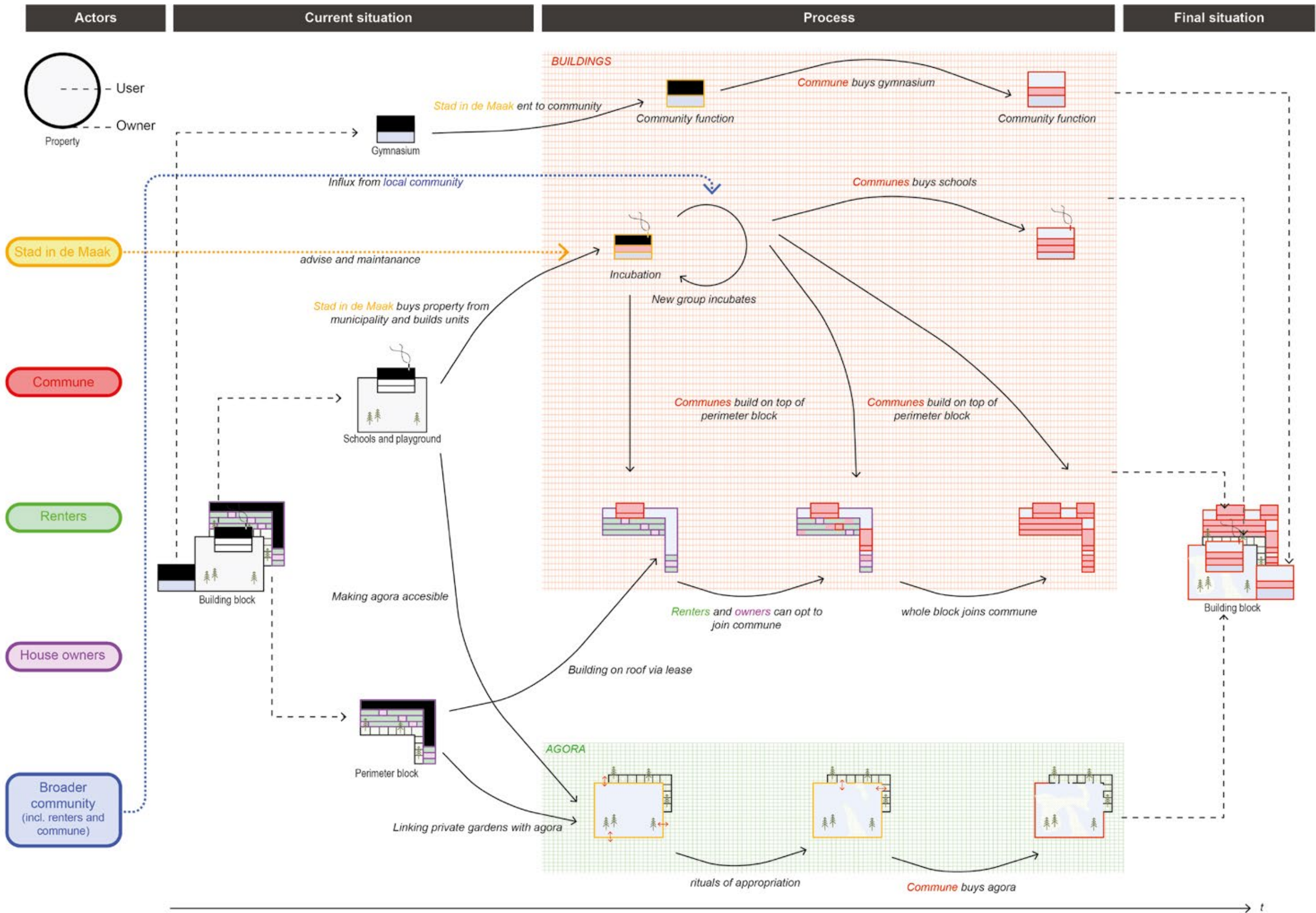
Maximum communing and minimal compromises.



## THIS IS HOW IT WORKS:

As an architectural manifestation of this spatial wealth, we employ the typology of the palace, more specifically the enfilade. Here the existing plan of the school is inverted. The corridor is turned into private rooms and the class rooms are turned into a sequence of shared spaces. The enfilade is a tool for both circulation and creating diverse interior spaces. On the ground floor level the spaces are opened up to the square and can be claimed for a wide range of community functions.







1. To start things of, Stad in de Maak purchases the schools and gymnasium with a bank loan. The upper floors of the schools are turned into an enfilade typology. This allows the residents of the ground floors to move up, and make space for community functions.



STAD IN DE MAAK FACILITATES THE (TEMPORARY) LIVING COMMUNITY ON THE FIRST FLOORS OF THE SCHOOLS



The tenants pay a rent similar to the social housing rate, which goes partly to Stad in de Maak (for guidance and payment for the loan) and partly to a collective fund. The fund is used for the tenants to apply for a loan to construct their own collective housing project on top of the perimeter block. The right to use the roofs is obtained via a long term lease contract (similar to a community land trust) paid to the owners of the block. While building the housing on top, a green roof is implemented which is financially supported by a municipal subsidy. During the period of saving up to apply for a loan the tenants conceptualize their project with guidance of Stad in de Maak.



2. Assuming tenants previously lived in a typical private residence, the palace has an extreme share of collective space. Allowing them to see how far they want to push their own project or whether they want to do this kind of collective living at all. This incubation phase makes the step to collective housing smaller and allow participants to step out, avoiding a failed project. When the project on the roof is finished the tenants move out and a new group moves in to start shaping their project. In that sense it is a laboratory for city making where every group will have its own outcome. The ideas conceptualized here can be implemented all over the city.







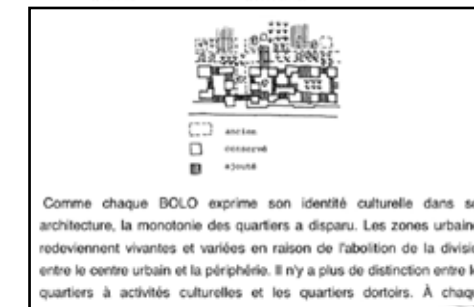
3. The ground floors of the schools are opened up for the broader community. Here we offer a wide range of community spaces, from rooms for specific cultural groups to a big shared kitchen. The gymnasium has a community function which can be kept, but will be exploited by Stad in de Maak. These community spaces will be made accessible via the central square. The gates will be opened up also allowing passage to go through, putting it on the mental map. Over time inhabitants of the perimeter block can choose to open up their garden to the square. The square is conceptualized as an agora which is a social, political and commercial space. Here we want to provide spaces that can be appropriated by different cultures from the neighbourhood.

COMMUNE DE PROGRESSIE BUILDS THEIR NEW HOME ON THE ROOF. WHEN THEY MOVE, A NEW COMMUNE CAN MOVE IN DE PROGRESSIE!



4. The location on the roof which will get built up gradually is a prominent place in the neighbourhood, like a billboard on top of a store. The roof is accessible for everyone and has a share of open spaces functioning as a public park but also as a showroom for the collective housing projects.

Over time house owners can choose to join the commune or the commune can buy their apartments. In the last phase there is a story added to the schools and gymnasium. When all the housing is realized Stad in de Maak sells their buildings, which serves as capital for new projects in Rotterdam.





# RITUALS OF APPROPRIATION

A sense of community is established by rituals. The ritual refer to historic urban rituals or build on an identity that is already there.

## CLAIMING THE PLAYGROUND

As an initiation ritual to open up the agora the neighbourhood is invited to remove the tiles of the courtyard. Doing so the sand underneath will become visible turning it into a beach. This practice was and is employed in French rebellions as a symbolic way to claim the public realm. In later stages people can choose to open up the fences of their private gardens, put down furniture and decorate the space turning the playground into a collective garden. With this bottom up initiative residents claims the agora themselves while creating a sense of community.

## URBAN TRAIL

All around the world processions and promenades are organized as a reflection of the complexity of urban communities. In medieval Venice a procession throughout the city connected all the diverse islands of the archipelago. In carnivals different groups (neighbourhoods, cultures, associations,...) dress up to emphasize their identity and at the same time express their unity. It is an act of simultaneous celebrating diversity and collectively. We introduce an urban trial to as a modern version of a procession. In the trail the community can have an exploratory run along all the cultural groups, on the roofs, courtyards and through the communes.

## SPARTA ROTTERDAM

The architecture of the palace/castle is already present in Spangen. The urban plan of Spangen is centred around the local football stadium of Sparta Rotterdam. Boulevards connect the whole neighbourhood to the stadium which is in fact a small castle. In this way Spangen is the Versailles of Rotterdam. Football clubs often have a strong embedment in a neighbourhood but in not many cases it architecturally reflected in the urban fabric. As an urban strategy we aim to build upon the plan of courtyards, palaces and boulevards in which the conversion of the school is a first step. The inner area of the perimeter blocks will be made accessible creating a network of courtyards through Spangen. By building on top of the flat roofs with the micro-utopias the monotonic social housing estates get an image resembling a palace with a variety of small towers and domes on top.



Sous les pavés, la plage



Claiming street, Leefstraat, Ghent



Urban trail



Procession, Venice



Zinnekes Parade, Brussels



Urban plan of Spangen organized around football stadium

## SPARTAANS GEDICHT

Vroeger of later  
ga je dood  
Dat staat als een paal  
boven water  
Zo oud als Sparta  
word je nooit

En als je gaat  
is het je tijd geweest  
Dat is een ding  
dat zeker is

Zo niet  
ofter een hemel is  
maar alster een is  
dan zal je zien  
dat de Hemelpoort — of  
brok in ons keel —  
verdacht veel weg heeft  
van het Kasteel

Poem Jules Deelder



# POWER TO THE CO-OP

## ENERGY COOPER- ATIVES AS EMANCI- PATOR AND LIBERATOR

Over the last decades, the changing climate has become more and more apparent. It is a problem that will define this current generation. A climate emergency has been called out and action is demanded from governmental institutions, private companies, and individuals.

The EU has set a mandate for 2030 to cut greenhouse emissions by 40%, create a 32% share of renewable energy, and improve energy efficiency by 32.5%. In the long term the EU aims to be climate neutral by 2050. This means the municipality of Rotterdam has a huge challenge ahead.

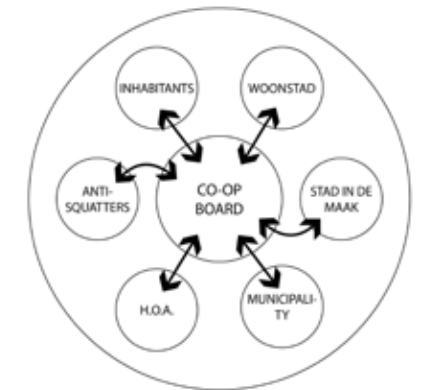
Their entire housing stock needs to adapt to use green energy and become more sustainable, so that the use of fossil fuels can be stopped. This means large scale implementation of pv panels, heat pumps, wind turbines, insulation of housing, and getting off the gas. is necessary.

What makes this process more complex is the dispersed land ownership in Rotterdam. This practice has led to more intermediate stakeholders. These stakeholders are housing

companies, housing owner associations (H.O.A.), anti-squatting companies, insurance companies, etc; which makes housing stock energy transition more complex.

At the same time, Rotterdam's current trajectory of urban renewal leads to a crazy tendency of growing inequality in terms of housing, energy and networks. In its current path of massive urban renewal Rotterdam not only abuses natural resources, but also ruins communities and displaces people. Resulting in a city-wide gentrification. The inhabitants of the city should be seen as the most important stakeholders, however they are often ignored. In other words, substantial cracks start to emerge in this city's social foundation.

Therefore the city of Rotterdam needs a radical new approach on how it involves all stakeholders, to tackle these pressing issues in a more social and environmentally friendly way. Creating a cooperative is a means to create such a new approach and that's what we propose.

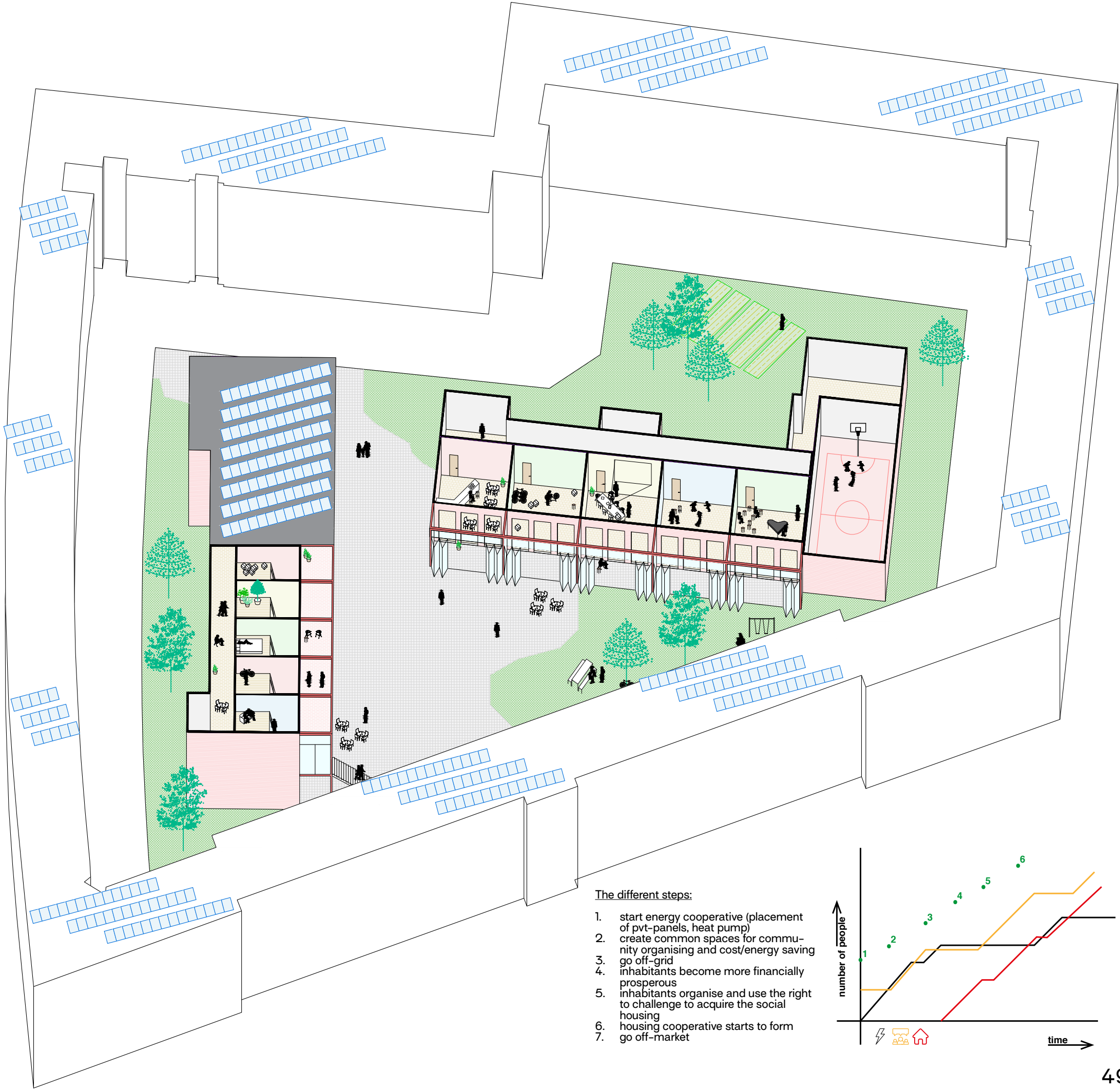


Let's take the case of the Rotterdam housing block with the two school buildings as an example. The stakeholders involved are the municipality, housing company Woonstad, H.O.A., the inhabitants, and a group of anti-squatters living in the school building. 'Stad in de maak' will be involved as an adviser, and will facilitate the communal function in the school building.

What do these stakeholders have in common? The need to create more sustainable housing. So the first step would be to create an "Energy Co-op" on the scale of the

block, so that the transition can be made more democratic. Firstly, this allows for community organising, so that the solution fits the community for which it is intended to help. Furthermore, as lots of subsidies can be obtained to finance the energy transition on either a European or national level, this is financially the best step to make. There is strength in numbers. Finally, Woonstad can financially step in, as they have trouble organizing the energy transition by themselves. The cooperative is led by a board of representatives from every stakeholder, so that decisions can be made collectively and democratically. The board makes decisions based on consensus.

The start of the energy cooperative will instigate a series of steps that will transform the development of the building block and the school buildings. There is a strong interaction between the technical and/or environmental aspects on the one hand and the social foundation on the other hand. Over time, developments on the technical side lead to a stronger social foundation which leads to more developments until the block in its entirety is off the grid. As the block goes off grid the community will strengthen and the inhabitants will grow more financially capable. Slowly they will start to reorganise themselves and use the right to challenge to acquire the social housing they inhabit. Down the road the energy cooperative will become a housing cooperative. The block becomes independent and goes off the market.





## Energy Usage

Households	Division (%)	Number of households	Usage Elec kwh	Usage heat m3	Usage heat GJ
Single	41	75,35	151454	109188	3341
Single parent	16	21,6	72144	27000	826
2 person	16	21,6	72144	27000	826
2 person + children	25	33,75	139050	42188	1291
other	2	2,7	9018	3375	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>443810</b>	<b>208750</b>	<b>6388</b>

Added inhabitants of schools

While the initial investment is quite substantial, European and national subsidies can be obtained, for instance through the EFSI, ESIF, EIPP or UIA programs. The planned solar+thermal panels, heat pump, aquifer and a Lacaton&Vassal type expansion to the school buildings are estimated to cost a total of €2.7 million. After these changes the block is fully self-sufficient and self-sustained in terms of energy and heat. The block saves a combined €262.000 per year on utility bills. This means the intervention pays for itself in ~10 years. These calculations were done with current use in mind and without possible lowered energy and heat requirements through communal organizing of functions or more awareness.

The roof surface allows for placement of about 1750 PVT panels, which in addition to supplying heat, generate energy at a 10% higher rate than traditional panels. One panel generates 290 kWh of electricity and 3,7 GJ of heat. Combined they can generate more than enough heat and energy for the whole block's inhabitants, with plenty to spare for the communal functions.

Both the heat and energy is supplied through the PVT-panels and saved through an aquifer and an array of batteries. An individual living in the block only pays maintenance fees and would save about €1500 per year. This can be used to individually build up a small amount of capital that can be used to collectively buy out their homes from Woonstad and form a new housing cooperative.

## Max Yield per Year

Electric Yield PVT kWh	Thermal Yield PVT GJ
144500	1850
361250	4625
<b>505750</b>	<b>6475</b>

## Saving

gas price	0,79 per m3 (2021)
electricity price	0,22 per kwh (2021)
total cost block gas	164912,5 euro per year
total cost block electric	97638,09 euro per year
<b>Savings per year</b>	<b>262550,59 euro per year</b>

## Built up savings per household

Year	Savings
1	1500 €
2	3000 €
3	4500 €
4	6000 €
5	7500 €
6	9000 €
7	10500 €
8	12000 €
9	13500 €
10	15000 €
11	16500 €
12	18000 €
13	19500 €
14	21000 €
15	22500 €
16	24000 €



For the common spaces of the cooperative we offer the following functions as examples:

## Technical:

The energy cooperative houses all the machinery here. Energy is and heat is collected and delivered to the block through these machines.

## Laundry-bar:

An option for households to organise, facilitate chance encounters and lower bills. This communal washroom is a place for people to do laundry, but also discuss the comings and goings of the co-operative while having a cup of tea.

## Wi-Fi room - workspace

A co-working space could provide the inhabitants of the block with high-quality Wi-Fi connections and free usage of the internet. This could also help people cut on their phone bills.

## Daycare:

As it stands, the playground of the school buildings is a lost opportunity. The neighborhood has a huge problem with children playing on the streets. The courtyard of this block could be used by the children living in the peripheral housing block, while concerned parents could still have oversight.

## Bakery:

A big oven could be fired and collectively used. In the mornings they could make bread, in the evenings pizza. The oven could be operated by a professional baker, but also by people themselves. The heat from the oven could provide a cosy space in cold winters.

## Meeting room:

Flexibly used as the WiFi-room/workspace, this room is where the board of the energy co-op meets and discusses their plans. Other types of community organising also take place here.



# L€€G PLAT FORM

## INTRODUC- TION

Report vacancies! We need more transparency and new spaces of opportunity in the city!

### The situation

In many cities, people are looking for affordable housing and work space. At the same time, countless spaces are empty – whether old or new, whether residential or commercial, whether central or remote, whether private or in the hands of the city. But there is no overview.

### The solution

With L€€G, we can exchange information together. Vacancies can be entered directly and easily by all users on the site. This gradually creates a collective and freely accessible data and space pool, independent of urban information channels. In addition, registered users of the vacancy detector can exchange information on vacant buildings and ideas on how to deal with them constructively – turning the listed vacant spaces into short-term livable and work spaces before the sites are demolished and/or developed.

### The funding

L€€G is supported by user fees and donations, municipal and national subsidies, and grants.

If you are interested in promoting the topic in your city (but also taking on the corresponding responsibility for regular quality assurance and participation in the financing!), please contact us at: [info@leeg.nl](mailto:info@leeg.nl)

### The critic

L€€G is a much sought-after critical voice in the vacancy debate. Journalists often ask for statements and interviews. Any media reports

are documented here, but it is also criticized: some owners feel they are being pilloried. Owners are free to explain why their property is empty.

Activists criticize that the entries on L€€G could help speculators to sell real estate. While this cannot be completely ruled out, most of the reported vacancies are properties that have fallen out of the market or public use, and in many cases they are vacant because investments or public funding are not expected to yield any returns. Or they are empty because they are already objects of speculation by means of demolition or project development. In addition, speculators, brokers and investors find out more about vacancies from other sources. To do this, they use exclusive networks, “real estate gatherings” and contacts to politics. L€€G, on the other hand, acts more as a platform that lists vacant properties from the public and private for individuals looking for short-term rentals outside of the market. We seek to eliminate the Anti-Squatting Agencies, and provide more transparency and rights for individuals renting vacant properties for a short-term duration before the building is either demolished or developed.



Check out L€€G here →



## EXISTING SITUATION

Currently, the anti-squatting practice consists of three primary actors. A property owner, an Anti-Squatting Agency (ASA) and a temporary inhabitant (known as a property guardian, for legal reasons). The practice is based on asset value retainment and risk prevention, and is therefore owner centered. ASAs function as building administrators. They facilitate inhabitants with unique and unconventional spaces for a low fee to ensure protection of properties for owners. The agencies provide small technical maintenance on the building and sometimes provide other realtor services. ASAs pay owners a fee (usually equaling any mortgage- or interest fees of the owner) and obtain rent (part rent, part administrative fees) from their property guardians. The property guardians provide the actual value for the property and the other actors, but receive little agency or sense of ownership in return. ASAs have jumped in a gap in the housing market by providing a solution for vacant properties. However, as for-profit companies, their main goal is to create a profit via their

services. These services are conditioned in such a way that Dutch housing legislation is purposefully circumvented. ASAs maintain that they do not rent out properties, but rather employ security guards to prevent squatting and vandalism. This means that the temporary inhabitants are not legally recognized as renters, but rather as 'borrowers', and thus have less rights than renters. The contracts the ASAs provide are notoriously precarious. For example, owners and ASAs can terminate contracts with only two weeks' notice and rights pertaining to protection of tenure cannot be claimed.

## NEW SITUATION

The current practices in providing temporary housing are a strain on the Dutch rental market and create uncertainties for all current and future users. In the temporary housing market ASAs are middle men that preferably are left out of the equation. Furthermore, there is a lack of locational information and information on the status of temporary vacant properties in Rotterdam, for both owners and prospective users.

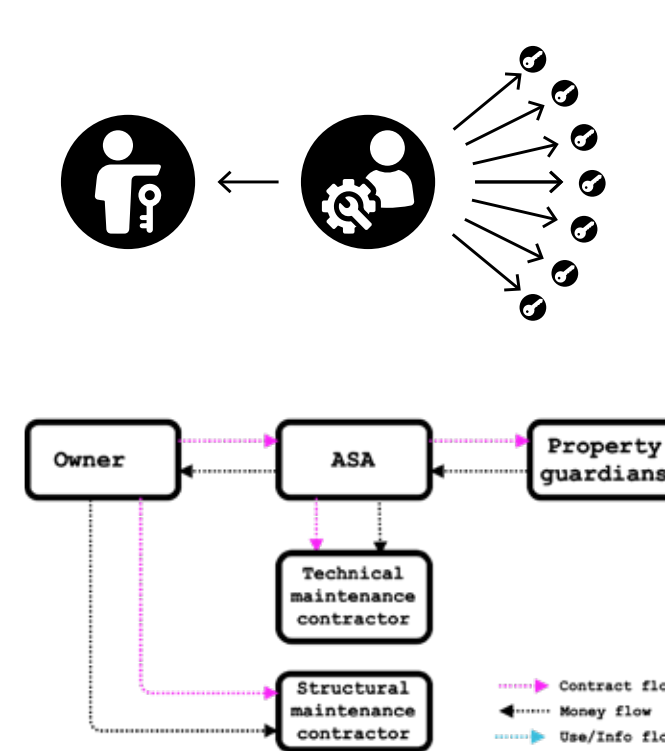


Figure 1. Existing Situation

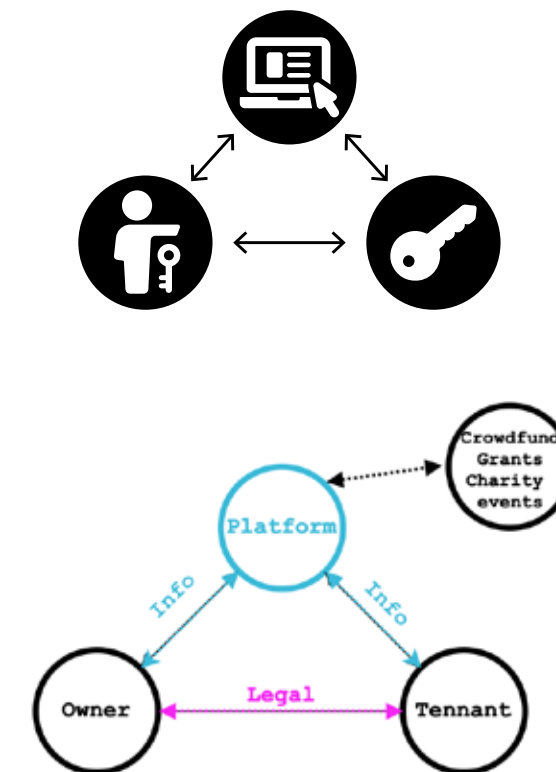
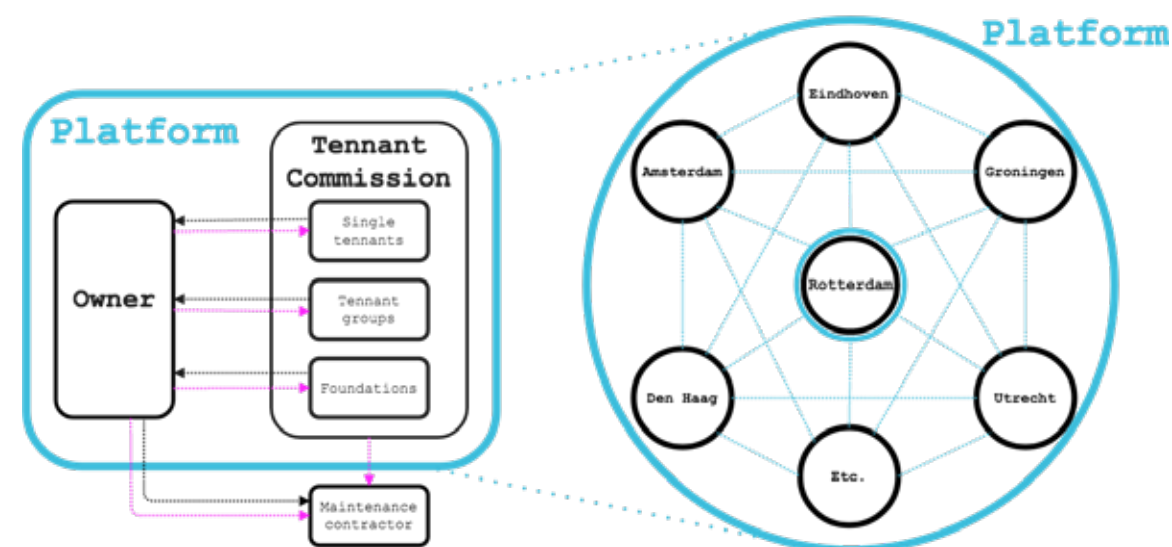


Figure 2. New Situation

## THE NETWORK

After visiting the leerstandsmelder website for Germany, we were interested in adopting the same approach as them in developing a database reliant on reporting vacant public and private properties in the city of Rotterdam. Our site is now run by local-users in

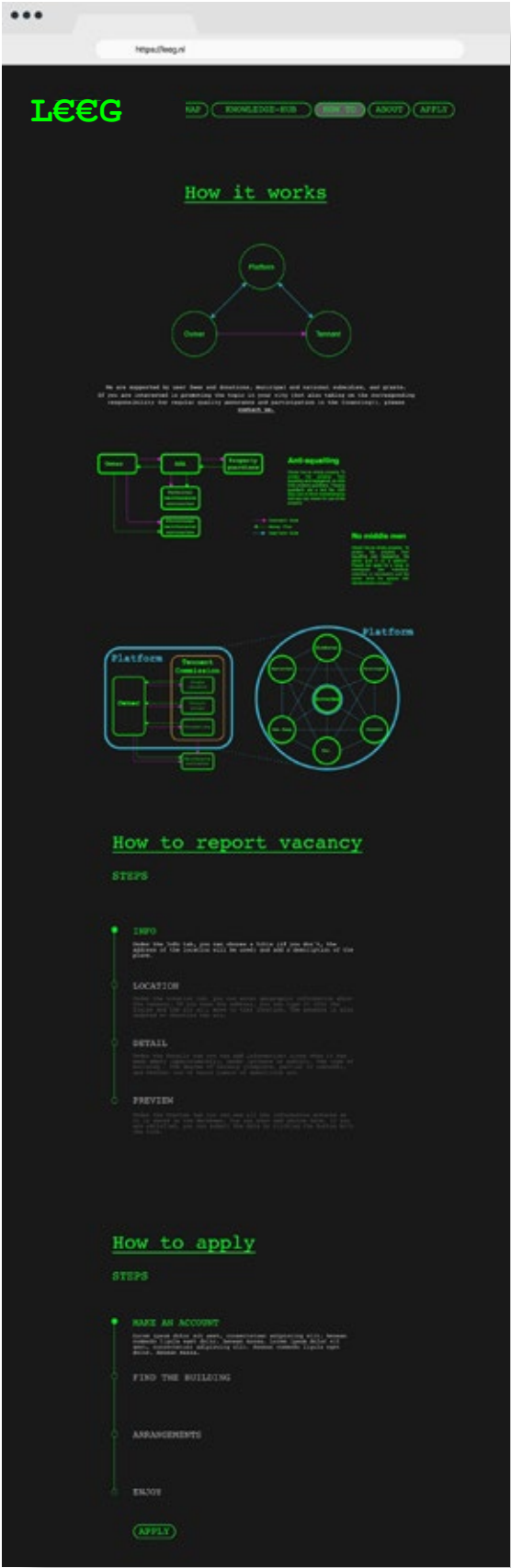
Rotterdam. Individuals prepare listing in their local municipalities. In addition to managing and moderating the local vacancy detectors, L€€G whether or not the building is truly vacant. The website uses a time-stamp chat forum to provide communication networks for individuals to report and confirm unoccupied properties.





# VACANCY MANAGED

## STEP BY STEP



### STEP 0 - OVERVIEW

**LEE** homepage shows an overview map of The Netherlands, pinning vacant buildings from the local to municipalities and private individuals. Each pinned location is filtered:

- Empty Buildings:  
States the duration of property's short-term rental occupancy, and the remaining time it will exist until it will be developed.  
x Short  $\leq 1$ years  
x Mid  $\leq 5$  years  
x Long  $\leq 10$ years
- Program  
x Housing – short-terms rentals  
x Active Inside – individual office or workspace  
x Active Public Space– community initiative spaces operated by the surrounding community
- Vocational  
x School (maintenance) – will provide the structural maintenance to the buildings, while giving students hands-on skills in learning how to fix structures.

This is the regional vacancy map with a list of the newest entries in Rotterdam. Under Recent Entries – entries when created are time-stamped, an image will must be provided. Each entry will have a comment section open for discussion for use of the property. You will click on one of the entries and you will be redirected to the respective report of the selected vacant building.

### STEP 1 - REPORT VACANCY

On this page you can register a new property as empty. You can navigate by clicking on the tabs, with the next / previous buttons or by sliding left or right.

#### Report vacancy → Info

Under the Info tab, you can choose a title (if you don't, the address of the location will be used) and add a description of the place.

#### Report vacancy → Location

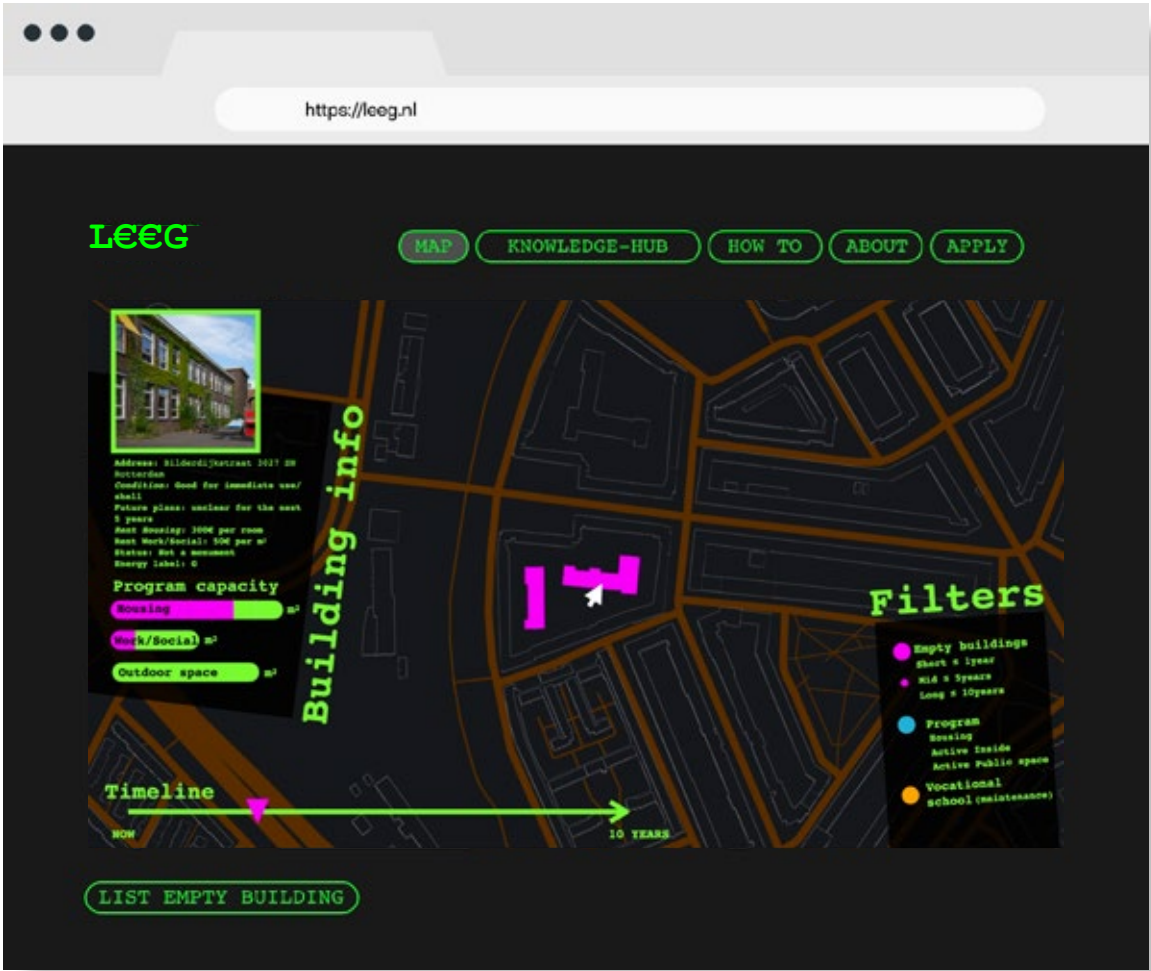
Under the Location tab, you can enter geographic information about the vacancy. If you know the address, you can type it into the fields and the pin will move to that location. The geodata is also updated by dragging the pin.

#### Report vacancy → Details

Under the Details tab you can add information: since when it has been empty (approximately); owner (private or public); the type of building; the degree of vacancy (complete, partial or unknown); and whether you've heard rumors of demolition are.

#### Report vacancy → Preview

Under the Preview tab you can see all the information entered as it is saved in the database. You can also add photos here. If you are satisfied, you can submit the data by clicking the button with the tick.



## STEP 2 – REGISTER VACANT PROPERTY

### Government / Private Owners

For vacant properties that would like to register, please provide:

- Proof of ownership
- Valid Netherlands/EU/Non-EU identification document
- Condition report
- Name/Contact information
- What the property is permitted use – i.e., living, work, office, retail, events
- Preferred monthly fees
- Proof of insurance for the building

### Tenant:

In order to rent one of the vacant properties, please provide:

- Name/Contact information
- Valid Netherlands/EU/Non-EU identification document
- Statement of who you are
- How long you plan to rent one of the list properties
- What you intend to use the property for – i.e., living, work, office, retail, events
- Preferred monthly fees
- Valid tenant insurance

## STEP 3 – RULES FOR EVERYONE

Under this session, you will find some useful information regarding contracts, requirements, responsibilities, DOs and DONTs, etc. For example:

- Provides template short term lease contracts;
- FAQs for tenants and property owner rights;
- Responsibilities both tenants and landlords have after finalizing the lease agreement;
- Connecting internal and external community members with resources i.e., events; advocacy groups; specialized organizations, etc.

## STEP 4 – MAINTENANCE

Property Maintenance will be in collaboration between **LEEG** and minor technical repairs done by the local vocational school(s) nearest to the listed rental site. We at **LEEG** believe in outsourcing maintenance to students learning construction, electrical, plumbing, etc., a chance to learn onsite with their members and engage in repairing the buildings in the community. For any internal maintenance in the tenants unit, please check the agreement you have signed with the landlord.

The screenshot shows the LEEG website interface for Step 2 of the registration process. The URL bar displays 'https://leeg.nl'. The navigation menu includes 'MAP', 'KNOWLEDGE-HUB', 'HOW TO', 'ABOUT', and 'APPLY'. A progress bar indicates four steps, with Step 2 currently active. The main content area is titled 'APPLICATION FORM' and contains the following fields: 'E-mail', 'Name:', 'Last name:', and a 'Next step' button.

The screenshot shows the LEEG website interface for the 'Legal' section. The URL bar displays 'https://leeg.nl'. The navigation menu includes 'MAP', 'KNOWLEDGE-HUB', 'HOW TO', 'ABOUT', and 'APPLY'. Below the navigation menu, there are links for 'Guides', 'Legal', 'Case studies', and 'FAQ'. The main content area features three cards: 'Contract example', 'Responsibilities', and 'Arrangements'. Each card has a 'MORE >>>' link. At the bottom, there is a 'LOAD MORE' button.



# RULES FOR EVERYONE

As mentioned in Step 3, there are rules for everyone joining this network of vacancy management. Here are some basic rule as an example:

Government:

- Must provide tenants a minimum of a 2 month notice when lease is terminated for any contract under 2 years; 6 months notice for any contract between 2 to 6 years; and a year notice for any contract between 7 to 10 years.
- Owners must disclose existing structural and internal issues on premises of property before a lease agreement is signed.
- Owners must list a timeline of when the building will be redeveloped or demolished in the lease agreement.
- Owner shall be responsible for any major structural maintenance and improvements i.e. facade; electrical; plumbing; windows, gas; etc..
- Units can not rent at market rate. All units are considered “transitional dwellings” meaning buildings and units listed on **LEEG** charge only utilities costs for each tenant.

Private Owners:

- Must provide tenants a minimum of a 2 month notice when lease is terminated for any contract under 2 years; 6 months notice for any contract between 2 to 6 years; and a year notice for any contract between 7 to 10 years.
- Owners must disclose existing structural and internal issues on premises of property before a lease agreement is signed.
- Owners must list when the building will be redeveloped or demolished.
- Owner shall be responsible for any major

structural maintenance and improvements i.e. facade; electrical; plumbing; windows, gas; etc.

- Private owners will be contacted if their property has been listed on **LEEG**, owners must approve of the listing before it can be rented for the short-term.

Tenants:

- Tenants are not allowed to make any structural modifications and improvements that are not removable.
- Tenants should maintain the unit in the same condition from when they signed their lease.
- The Tenant are allowed to make cosmetic improvements in their rented units i.e. painting walls; hang artwork; building shelving units and loft spaces.
- Whenever any damage occurs or threatens to occur in, on or about the Subjects, including damage or threatened damage to pipes, cables, tubes, drains, sewers, systems and equipment, the Tenant must immediately advise the Landlord accordingly, in writing.
- Unless the Landlord has given prior written consent, the Tenant is not entitled to let or sublet any third party any rights to use them, in whole or in part, this to include the letting of rooms and the provision of guest house facilities and giving up the tenancy.
- Any consent given by the Landlord allow tenant to sublet their unit, must registered the sub-tenant onto **LEEG** before any agreement will be approved.

# FINANCE IS IMPORTANT

**LEEG** is supported by user fees and donations, municipal and national subsidies, and grants.

**LEEG**’ s services are provided by grants from local municipalities, and donations from patrons of the site. We are a non-profit service aiming to provide a feasible solution in short-term affordable housing in vacant buildings. We do not collect a percentage of rent for our services, tenant(s) rental fees will go directly to the landlord covering basic utility fees. Each rental agreement is priced outside of the rental market.

Expenses			
	Monthly	Annual	note
Website Maintenance Costs			
Domain		15	
Website Hosting	15	180	
Content			User generated
General Updates		1000	30 €/h
Design Updates			
Tech Support	50	600	
Security		100	
Tracking and Analytics			
Marketing	10	120	
Human resources			
Contact person	960	11520	4 h/week
Outsource			
Bookkeeping		1000	4 h/week
Lawyer		2400	80 €/h
Annual total		16935	

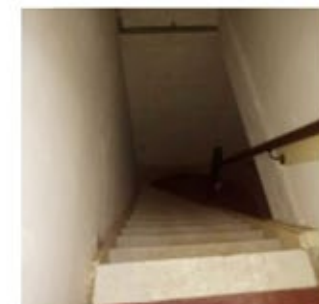
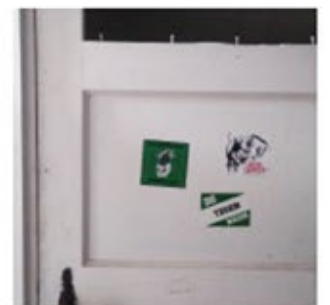
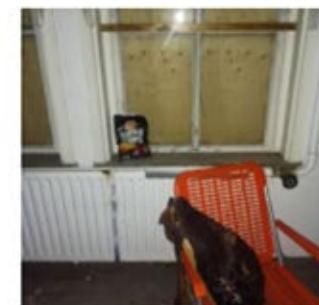
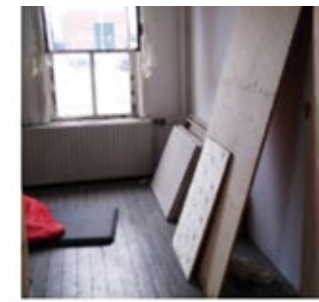
Income		
start-up flow		
Start Grant	100000	<a href="https://citylab010.nl">https://citylab010.nl</a>
Annual flow		
Anual Grant	15000	
Crowdfund	3000	
Charity events	7000	
Annual total	25000	

# SQUAT TING

## INTRODUC- TION

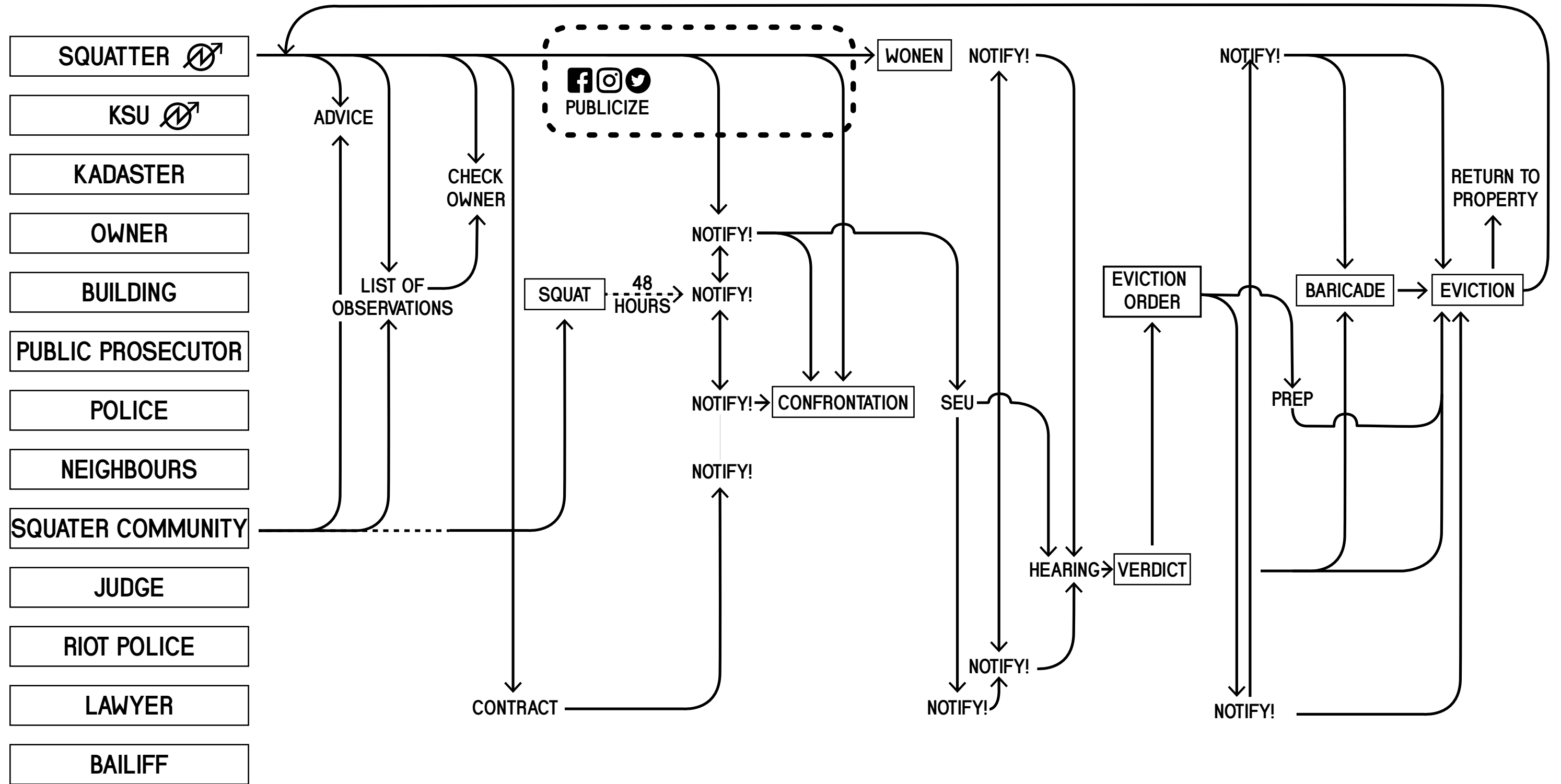
While criminalised in the Netherlands in October 2010, squatting is still an important strategy for creating affordable living spaces as long as real estate vacancy coexist with a shortage of housing. In the book *squatting the grey city* (2018) about the history of squatting in Rotterdam, E.T.C. Dee describes squatting as 'the occupation of land or buildings without the permission of someone who has the rights on paper to the property'. According to the author this is something people do for a variety of reasons, all over the world. 'Primarily people take space so as to have somewhere to live but squatting also provides land and freedom for an unimaginable variety of activities.'

The current squatting movement in the Netherlands has its origins in the 1960s, when the country was suffering a housing shortage whilst at the same time many properties stood derelict for reasons of speculation and to drive up market prices. While squatting has become more difficult nowadays, due to strict legislation that made it illegal to do so, squatting is still a way for various groups within society to find a roof over their head. During the Squatting Info Hour Rotterdam (Kraakspreekuur, KSU), people can learn everything about squatting a house and how it works now that it has been criminalized. The image on the next page shows the various steps that one might take when squatting empty property.





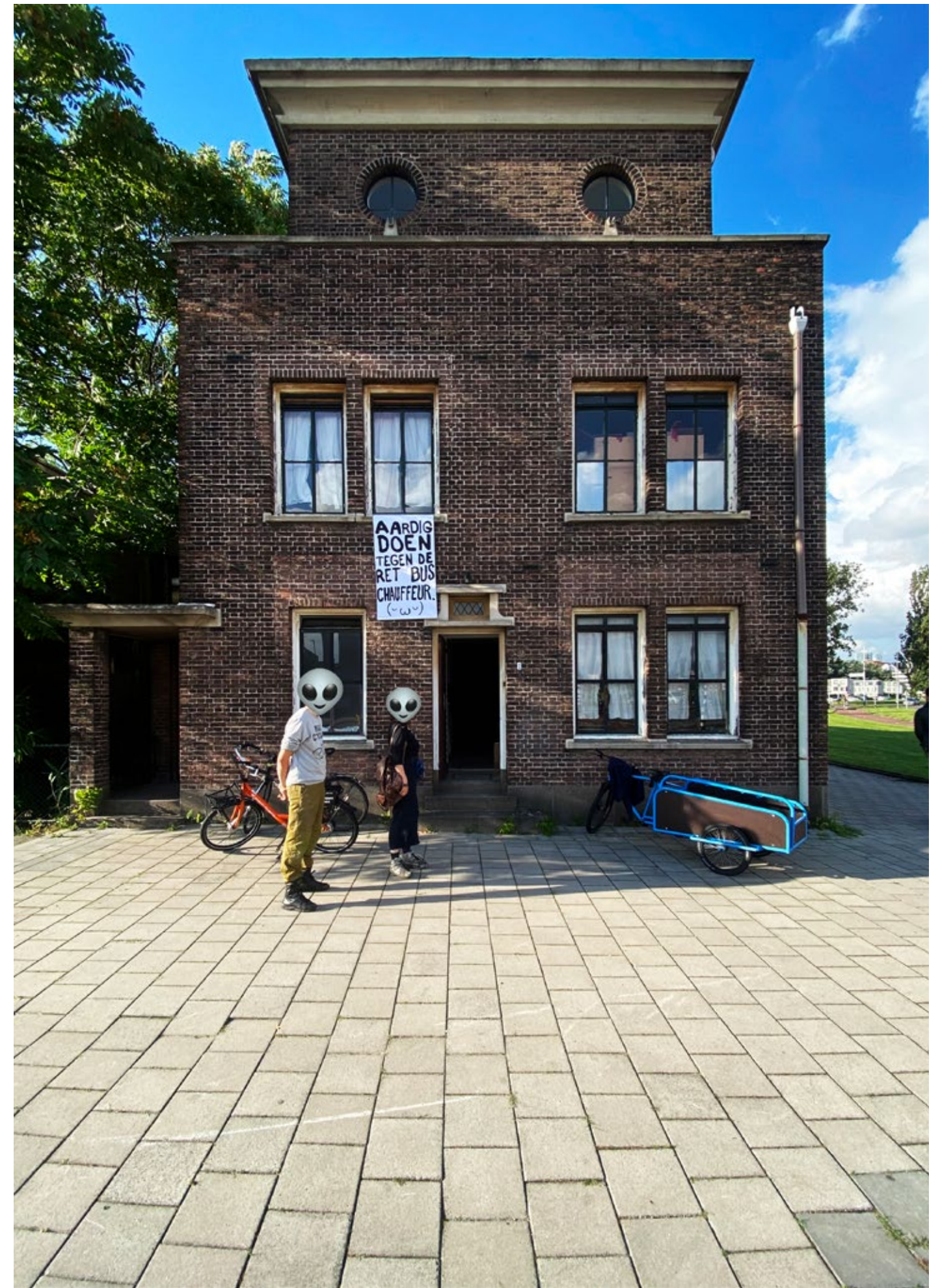
# SQUAT LIFE CYCLE DIAGRAM







The squatted location – the house of a former tram depot in Rotterdam charlois

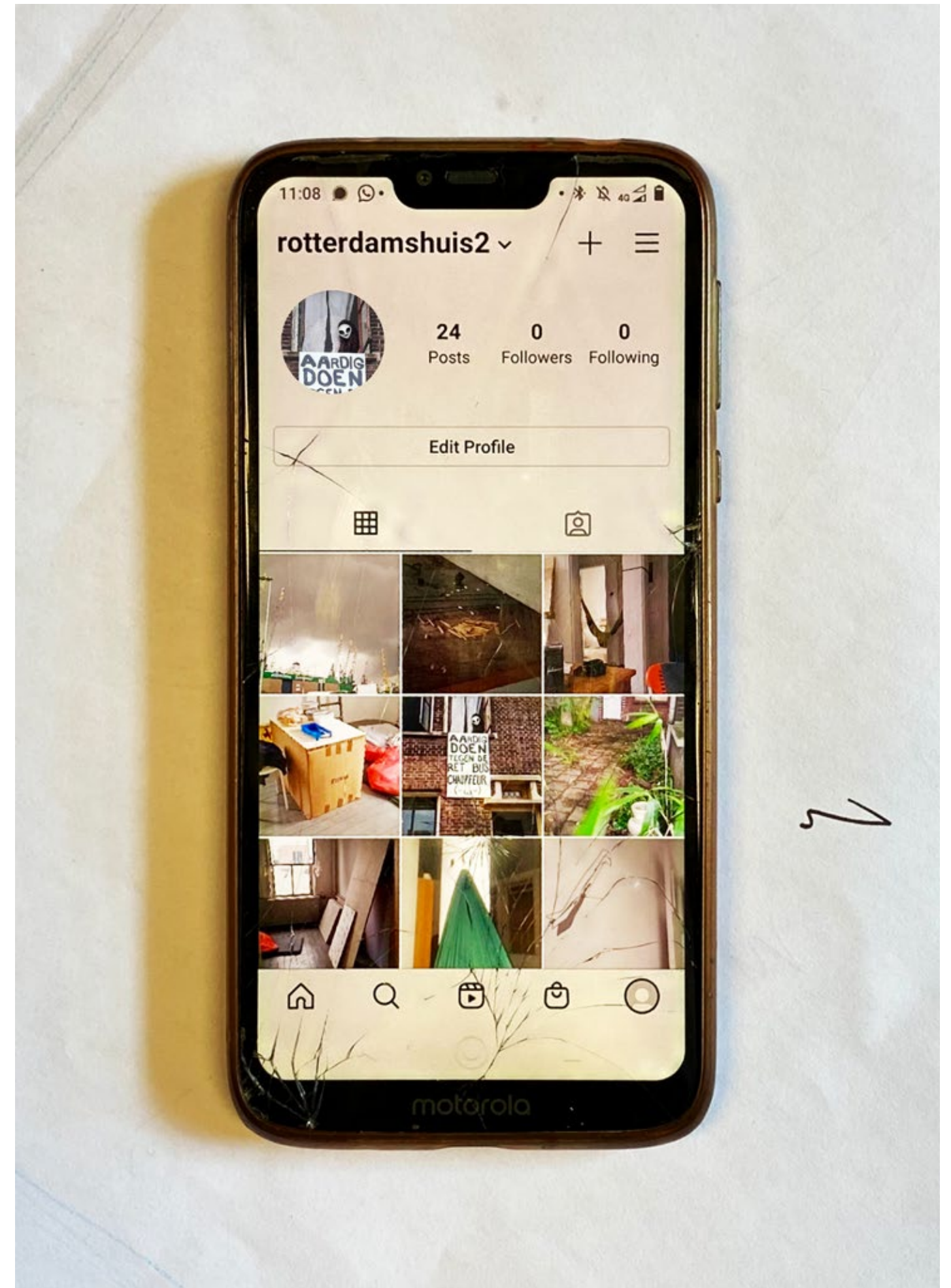


The squatted location – the house of a former tram depot in Rotterdam charlois





Fixing the plumbing



Posting proof of living on social media



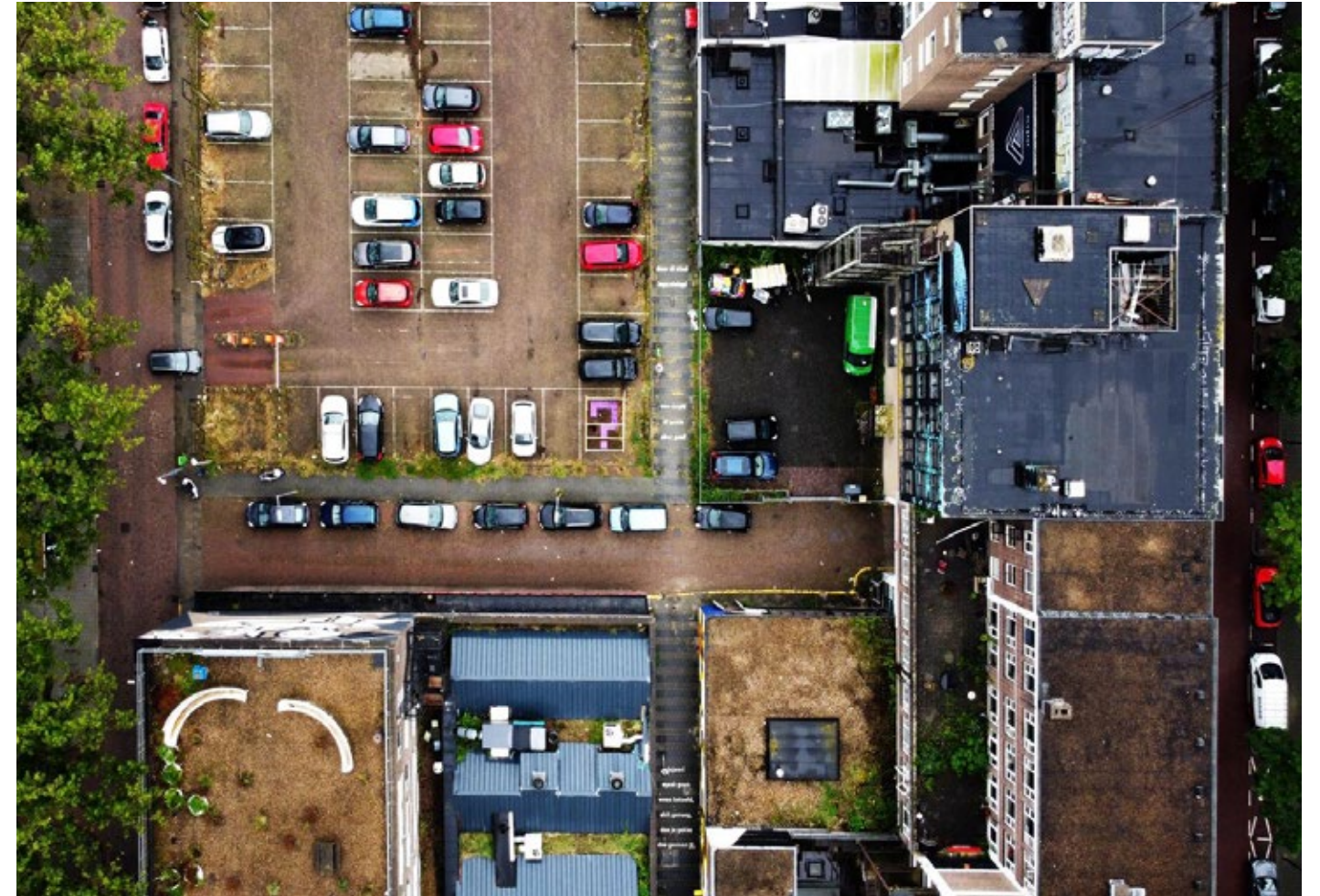








# BUILDING A STATE MENT

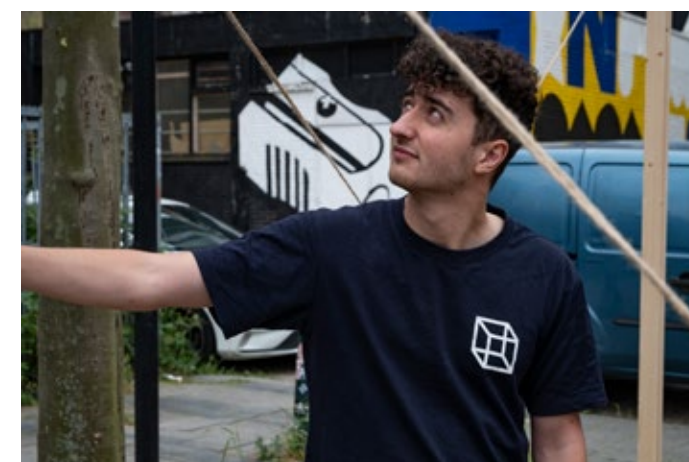




# SQUAT A LOT!

While city centres all over the world are increasingly popular for living, working and tourism, housing has become scarce and real estate prices have skyrocketed. Although coming from a long tradition of rent controlled social housing in the Netherlands, the neo-liberal policy of recent years has left housing corporations paralyzed and has curtailed their possibilities to invest. This has led to a structural shortage of affordable housing, especially in city centres. Since 2013, when house prices reached their lowest point due to the financial crisis, the average in the Netherlands has now risen by 63,5 percent (CBS, 2021). Also, in Rotterdam it has become extremely difficult to find an affordable place to live. Average rental prices increased from € 11,82 per square meter in 2013 to € 15,58 in 2021, while buying a house has become 10,8% more expensive within the last year, leading to an average house price of 285,000 euros.

The cheapest square meters in the city have become the parking lots. These public spaces of 12,5 m<sup>2</sup> (2,5m x 5m) can be used for only €115,20 a year – or in other words: €9,60 a month. Squat a Lot! questions the fact that cheap parking is more important than affordable housing and aims to show what can be done instead. The floorplan shows how this space could be turned into a small apartment of two floors. When applying this to the many ten thousand of parking places in the city this could really make a difference.





# ABOUT THE INDE- PENDENT SCHOOL FOR THE CITY

The Independent School for the City is a post-graduate educational institute based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. It was initiated by Crimson Historians and Urbanists and ZUS (Zones Urbaines Sensibles) in 2018 and is rooted in their practices of combining a critical and activist approach to the city with effecting real change through architectural and planning projects.

The School aims to be a sanctuary, a learning community, open to everyone who is involved with the city. Participants of the school are already qualified and/or have a track record in one of the relevant disciplines. It is not a design course, but a school for 'urbanism' in the broadest sense. Borrowing from various disciplines, such as sociology, economics, history, anthropology, as well as urban planning and architecture, the school brings together different skills and thoughts that helps to understand and improve the city.

The Independent School for the City is a school in, of, and for the city. It believes that strategies for the city – architectural and economic, spatial and social – should be based on real, first-hand, empirical research. Empirical because the reality of the city offers interesting conflicts and unpredictable synergies to learn from and build upon.

Being based in Rotterdam, the school sees this city as a test case for major cities all around the world. It is the perfect place to explore the spatial challenges that cities face. The perfect place to analyse and learn to understand them and subsequently formulate ideas to make cities better. To think about the spatial, cultural and social aspects of migration, the necessary adaptation to climate change, the reinvention of democracy, and the consequences of economic growth and/or recession.

The Independent School for the City is independent and autonomous and from that position can be more critical, experiment more, and reach a different audience than the established institutions and accredited schools. Its research is rooted in the different disciplines teachers and participants have been schooled in. It will not be constrained by the formalities of academia or disciplinary boundaries. Participants and teachers form one team in which the advanced and less experienced will inform each other and contribute to the research. Research that is not necessarily solution-oriented or focused on final designs, and may not come to design as such, but will lead to a text, a film, an exhibition or an action.

Our approach is open-minded but critical, inclusive but discerning, flexible but precise. This offers the participants and their international team of teachers the full intellectual freedom to research the city in the broadest sense. It will give us the chance to have seemingly coincidental encounters with parts or aspects of the city where clashes of various kinds take place, where otherwise invisible realities reveal themselves. These are, we believe, the instances that can teach us fundamental things about the city in all its complexity





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