

TU Delft

Suffragism and Housing Design:

The Impact of the Feminist Transfer of Knowledge Between the USA
and the Netherlands on Single's Dwelling in the Early 20th Century

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Abstract

Spaces are often tied to either implicit or explicit gender biases. For centuries, in both the Netherland's and the USA's history, the public realm was envisioned as a space for men while the domestic spaces of a home were predominantly associated with women. However, at the turn of the twentieth century, this dichotomy began to be challenged. Due to the demands of World War I, women started occupying a more tangible portion of the paid workforce. Additionally, with the rights won through the women's suffrage movement they became a relevant patron of architecture as well, in their fight for living independently from their families or male partners. With the rise of this so-called *pink-collar* working class, a much needed housing typology finally began to develop. It provided living arrangements for independent women without the strict rules and regulations of a "Young Women's Home", an all women housing arrangement where symbolic house *mothers* raised their *daughters* in the traditional ideas of women and domesticity. From Hull House, founded in Chicago, Illinois in 1889, to Het Nieuwe Huis, built in 1928 Amsterdam, the Netherlands, there is a clear exchange of profound thoughts from influential women, joined together over the fight for global peace and women's rights of that period. Feminist activists such as Aletta H. Jacobs, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Jane Addams all contributed largely to the American-Dutch intellectual pipeline that made many of these changes come to fruition, working tirelessly to promote women's evolving role in society.

Dwelling design was a place defined by its relationship to domesticity, but these spaces had to adapt to the paradigm shift brought about in the early 1900s. This research paper investigates the effect these women and their activism had on the USA's and the Netherlands' dwelling architecture, focusing on the impact that single women had on the spatial and programmatic aspects of housing. This study is based on compiled plans and images of both Hull House and Het Nieuwe Huis, literary research from Dutch and USA newspapers, and letters sent between Jacobs, Gilman, and Addams. Additionally, through contemporary architectural and gender theorists, these ideological drivers and how they manifest themselves in the architecture become clear. This discussion also identifies how designing for women altered the traditional expectations of women in the public realm and the way they were viewed in society. It solidifies social values into the built environment and in order to design consciously and considerately, for contemporary as well as future use, it's crucial to understand how societal movements have altered design in the past so that one can predict the requirements of the next generation of architecture and the people who inhabit it.

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Introduction

Women are vastly underrepresented as being critical players in history, never receiving proper recognition for their work. However, they have been key influencers in social and academic advancements for centuries, including architectural ones. The professional field of architecture has always been dominated by men. Women have had to fight to be included and considered legitimate colleagues within the paid profession since the last decades of the 19th century and this is still entirely true today. According to influential architectural historian Karen Burns, at the turn of the 21st century women made up almost half of the enrollment of top USA architecture universities but less than ten percent of registered architects in the USA.¹ One hundred years prior, those numbers were exponentially smaller with only thirty-nine women having completed formal four-year architecture degrees in the United States.² This statistic is astonishing, and a clear indication of the gender-based discrimination within architecture both in history and today. The progress that has been achieved in the last century is a direct result of key women activists who used their voices throughout history to promote women's rights in society. A trio, who are connected through a complex and seemingly coincidental network, shared critical ideas regarding women's suffrage as well as economic and social independence through an American-Dutch intellectual pipeline. These women, Aletta H. Jacobs, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Jane Addams, bonded together over mutual beliefs and created remarkable global changes for women and society as a whole.

Architecturally, it remains underexplored how these discussions influenced dwelling design. Spaces are embedded with gendered associations. In the early 20th century, the public realm was seen as a space for men while women were confined to the home.³ Due in large part to the suffragist movement, this association began to be challenged. Women won the right to vote in the Netherlands in 1919 after a decades long battle that was officially brought before the Dutch parliament by Aletta H. Jacobs in 1883, and denied.⁴ In the USA, the right to vote was won by women in 1920, just one year later than in the Netherlands. From there, the world comprised of heteronormative family homes saw a spike in women striving to live independently and this

1 Karen Burns, "Women in Architecture." ArchitectureAU, October 3, 2011. <https://architectureau.com/articles/women-in-architecture/>.

2 Despina Stratigakos. "Building on the Past: A History of Women in Architecture." University at Buffalo, School of Architecture and Planning, May 5, 2014. <http://archplan.buffalo.edu/news/2014/womeninarchitecture.html#:~:text=%20In%201900%2C%20only%20thirty%2D,architects%20in%20the%20United%20States.>

3 Sally McMurry, "Women in the American Vernacular Landscape," *Material Culture* 20, no. 1 (1988): 33–49. <http://www.jstor.org/stble/29763818>.

4 Blanca Rodríguez-Ruiz, Ruth Rubio Marin *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe: Voting to become citizens*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2012, International Studies in Sociology and Social Anthropology, 122, <http://hdl.handle.net/1814/22704>

resulted in the creation of new dwelling typologies for people living alone.⁵ Additionally, it produced employable women with expert knowledge of domestic practices: a most desired skill set for housing design and to improve the quality of dwelling spaces. However, seen in the centennial statistic presented earlier, the battle in the workplace for women was far from over.

These effects of the suffragist movement directly raises a handful of questions: What were the connections between these women that enabled them to bond together and produce international impact? How did the architecture of single women dwellings embody the ideologies discussed by Addams, Gilman, and Jacobs? How did the gendered association of public and domestic space change with the shifting social paradigm? This research addresses these questions. By comparing the spatial and programmatic characteristics of single women's dwelling design, it is shown how spaces begin to evolve due the societal changes of the time. This study also contributes to the current conversation about how to define gendered space in architecture, questioning gender binaries and associations to public and private space. It adds to the global research regarding the architectural influences of under-recognized women and focuses on the direct impact of the suffragist movement on singles dwelling in the USA and the Netherlands.

This research is structured chronologically, addressing influences in a temporal context. The content begins with Catherine Beecher's book *The American Woman's Home* (1869) as an example of women taking control of the domestic space in order to gain autonomy.⁶ Beecher's proposal for the home also acts as a control from which other designs can be compared to and developed from. This first chapter explains the necessary cultural context regarding gender and domestic expectations in the mid-19th century, and illustrates how Addams, Gilman, and Jacobs came to be connected and how they built momentum for the suffragist movement later on. In parallel, this research looks at Jane Addams' Hull House (1889) in Chicago, Illinois, USA and highlights the evolution between Beecher's designs characteristics and Addams' tenement house. The second chapter further analyzes how Addams', Gilman's, and Jacobs' interactions between 1895 and 1930 led to the ideologies found in *Het Nieuwe Huis* (The New House) in Amsterdam in 1928, the Netherlands. Chapter two also addresses key events such as Aletta H. Jacobs' travel to the USA in 1905, Gilman's and Addams' individual trips to Europe in 1900, 1904, and 1913, and the International Congress of Women held in The Hague in 1915 as places where significant ideological exchanges took place.

5 Andrea J. Merrett, "From Separate Spheres to Gendered Spaces: The Historiography of Women and Gender in 19th Century and Early 20th Century America," UC Berkeley: The Proceedings of Spaces of History / Histories of Space: Emerging Approaches to the Study of the Built Environment, (2010): <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8dd143rj>

6 Catharine Esther Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home: or, Principles of Domestic Science: being a guide to the formation and maintenance of economical, healthful, beautiful, and Christian homes*. [New York: J.B. Ford and company; Boston: H.A. Brown & co.; etc., et, 1869] Web.. <https://lccn.loc.gov/07035680>.

This research will utilize a variety of sources from different archives. Primary sources begin with Beecher's *The American Woman's Home* and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Women and Economics* and *The Home: Its Work and Influence*. Newspapers regarding Jane Addams and Charlotte Perkins Gilman are also included, accessed on the *Newspapers.com* archive and the Dutch media digital archive called *Delpher* respectively. Additionally, there is a comparison of the letters between the three studied activists, gathered from the Atria Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History digital archive and the Jane Addams Papers Project digital archive. The final primary source is an analysis of photographs, including images from Chicagology archive and images published by Dorothee Oorthuys in her book from 2014, *Het Nieuwe Huis: Architect Barend van den Nieuwen Amstel*. As secondary sources, the research references UC, Berkley associated "From Separate Spheres to Gendered Spaces" by Andrea J. Merrett and Sally McMurry's "Women in the American Vernacular Landscape" from Penn State University. These two pieces allow for a cross-disciplinary argument between architecture history and gender theory to be made, which complements the historical materials from these women activists.

This study is situated within certain limits as well. The referenced texts are predominantly in English which produces results skewed toward a USA perspective. This also means that additional information written in Dutch could be overlooked in the analysis. The case studies located within the USA are based in the Midwestern region too, prioritizing this location over others. New York tenement houses and other west-coast projects aren't included because the disconnection between them and the three activists studied. Additionally, this study focuses on an exchange of ideas between the USA and the Netherlands, not considering influences from other countries that are involved in the school of thought. There are many opportunities for the research of other international figures who are responsible for, and grew from, the historical events discussed in this text as well. Ultimately, this study shows how designs for women and design by women try to relieve the burden of domestic responsibilities, first by strict structuring and education of skills and then with collective effort. It also highlights how women integrated flexibility and community into their designs, and how men and women prioritized rigid and fluid spaces differently. Lastly, this research shows how even though there are more women in architecture today than there was in 1900, there are still systematic inequalities that are limiting our evolution as a society despite years of women proving they equally have valuable knowledge to add to the field.

Chapter 1: The Foundations of Feminism in The Progressive Era, Pre 1900

In 1869, New York based Catharine Beecher, and her well known sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, published *The American Woman's Home*, “a guide to the formation and maintenance of economical, healthful, beautiful...homes”. The book, complete with plans and diagrams of the proposed American home, aimed to help the image of women in society by educating them in the roles of housewife and caregiver. Beecher believed, if women mastered home and domestic skills, they would be able to command more authority within their space. The text covers close to forty topics, discussed in depth, about things ranging from home decoration, making clothes, and the care of yards or gardens, to climate control and ventilation. Catharine Beecher's argument was, “women are not trained for [the duties of the family] as men are trained for their trades and professions”, and that the key to success for women was by gaining excellence in the domestic craft.⁷ With this in mind, Beecher developed plans for a modest home, representing an ideal life in the 19th century, geared towards efficiency and the empowerment of women linked to the household.

The proposal was meant to be achievable and liberating, and with the passage of time, has been titled “domestic feminism”. Catharine Beecher is even considered the most prominent woman house planner of the 1800s. However, it is important to note, the agency that was granted from this approach of mastering the demands of the home and family was constrained within the confines of the domestic space. Beecher, a widow who then dedicated her life to education, was against women's suffrage and believed the women's place was in the home. Her proposal enforced stereotypes, solidifying women into a “highly restrictive role”.⁸ When comparing the proposal to later examples of women focused architecture though, it is clear how Beecher's home was a necessary step in order to make visible, efficient, and give prominence to domestic work. Her ideas, although confined to the heteronormative house, introduced concrete examples of flexible space, social space, and the balancing of childcare with household responsibilities. The design also emphasized use over style, going into great detail when looking at workspaces, dangerous space, and time consuming tasks. These characteristics are all themes that begin to embed themselves in the architecture of women prioritized designs, and even if unintentional by Beecher, became symbolic of the effect of the suffragist movement on dwelling.

These symbols can begin to be seen in the images included within Beecher's text. In the print of the front of the proposed home, the environment depicts a picturesque plot of land next to a river and surrounded by greenery, as if to say *who wouldn't want to live here in this beautiful natural escape* (fig. 1). The parents are both outside with their children implying that the planned layout and skills from *The American Woman's Home* are all you need to create the perfect routine in order for your family to flourish. Complete with the sun shining and a cross above the door, it

7 Beecher, *The American Woman's Home*, 2-3

8 McMurry, “Women in the American Vernacular Landscape”, 35

very strongly resembles the American Dream and sells the idea of the nuclear family. In plan (fig. 2), a few things are immediately clear. The core and kitchen is the most detailed part of the home and divides the space into two duplicate rooms with large conservatories and front porch spaces. The program of both sides are vague, suggesting multiple uses for both rooms. The movable screen also points towards ideas of flexibility and privacy in the plan. The centralized kitchen opens to both main rooms, giving a mother the ability to keep an eye on her children while preparing meals. The sliding doors in the kitchen create a secondary boundary between the circulation space and more dangerous cooking spaces as well. This internal cooking space also allows for there to be a singular heat source for both cooking and heating the home. Overall, the plan prioritizes child safety and domestic efficiency while also reflecting the societal norm of having separate social spaces for males and females. Lastly, in the organizational diagram of the kitchen (fig. 3), Beecher zooms into where she believes requires the most structure out of anywhere in the home. The exposed shelves imply the importance of quickly identifying and accessing things rather than hiding them in more aesthetically pleasing cabinets. The rigid organization also prioritizes speed in order to optimize time spent in the kitchen. Most importantly though, this diagram demonstrates expert user knowledge that a male designer would not have been able to show because of the gender roles in the mid-to-late 19th century.



Figure 1. Exterior & Site Perspective: Catherine Beecher, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: J.B. Ford and company, 1869)

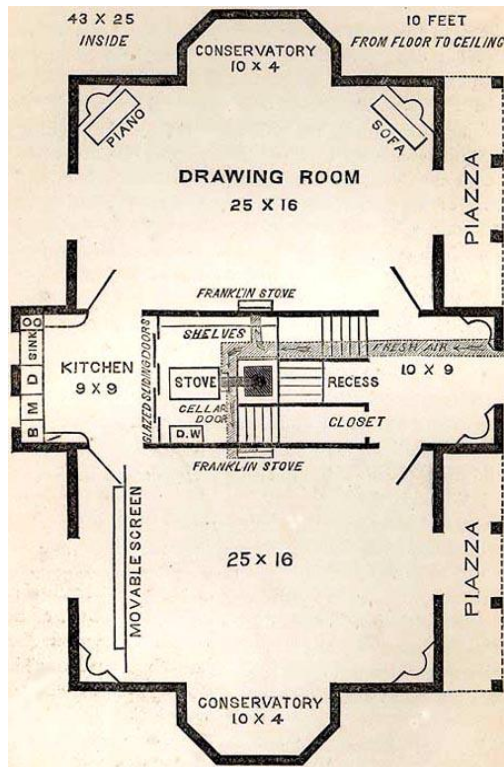


Figure 2.

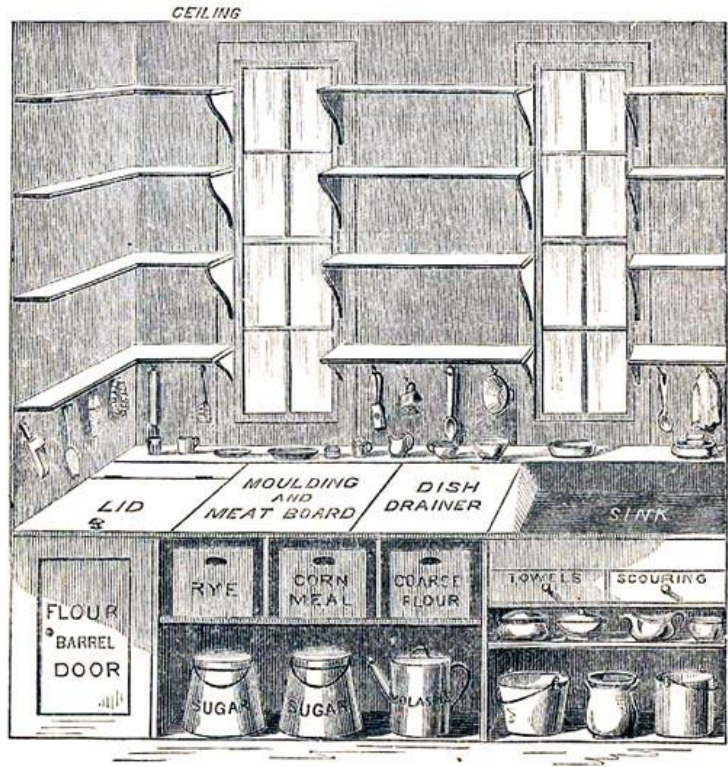


Figure 3.

Figure 2. First Floor Plan: Catherine Beecher, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: J.B. Ford and company, 1869)

Figure 3. Kitchen Diagram: Catherine Beecher, *The American Woman's Home* (New York: J.B. Ford and company, 1869)

Two decades after the publication of *The American Woman's Home*, Hull House was established in Chicago, Illinois by Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in 1889. It became the first social settlement house in the USA. Addams found inspiration in the work of an English tutor and social worker named Arnold Toynbee who crafted Toynbee Hall. Addams visited this hall during a trip she took to Italy, Spain, France, The Netherlands, and England a year earlier in 1888. There she saw first hand how a single individual could affect the lives of people living in impoverished communities, and felt a calling to create a Toynbee hall of her own in America.⁹ Addams, who never married, dedicated her life to the betterment of others and was fueled by: “the double mission to provide a space for college educated women and to do outreach in a lower-class community heavily populated with new immigrants”.¹⁰ First the home was opened as a kindergarten to help families in need, but as more women came to Hull House for work and

9 “Jane Addams.” Chicagology, July 29, 2017. <https://chicagology.com/biographies/janeaddams/>.

10 Merrett, “From Separate Spheres to Gendered Spaces”, 10

assistance, the facilities expanded to include a nursery, adult education classes, social clubs, and a community kitchen. The home provided a much needed alternative for single women housing as well. Up to this point in history, women had few options when it came to living on their own. Single housing was restricted to working men and provided unbearable conditions. The most common options for women were *moral homes* that adopted a family structure of their own, run by *house mothers* who trained their *daughters* in traditional domestic roles. These homes provided an option for young women between leaving their parents and childhood home and living with a spouse, but did not assist women and teach them skills to live independently.¹¹ Hull house was different. It was an organization founded by women, for women. It focused on providing resources to help women gain autonomy and show that their capabilities were not confined to the home. Through education, community outreach, and social activism, what started as a single house grew to fill a full city block and, through decades of selfless service, attracted global attention and kick-started the progressive era in the USA.

In her book published in 1910, *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Jane Addams recalls her life experiences relating to the settlement house, discussing the work she did and the people she encountered. Through her perspective, the reader gets a better understanding of Addams ideologies and long term motivations. From caring for mistreated children and protecting domestically abused wives, to giving immigrant women the resources and courage necessary to explore and assimilate into crazy Chicago city life, Addams primary drive was the betterment of her community. Additionally, she used the facility to build a positive reputation for the power and ability of women; a foundation that later assists her other life accomplishments and fight for women's suffrage.¹²

When investigating how Hull House's design facilitated this use, similar architectural characteristics are seen as in *The American Woman's Home*. Upon first glance, comparing Beecher's proposal to an image of the Halsted-Gilpen corner of Hull House (fig. 4) can reveal many differences. No longer is the building situated in nature. Jane Addams is responding to the need of impoverished immigrants in an urban context. This also provided a built symbol of women into the public realm, rather than tucked away in suburban or rural places. Additionally, the scale of Hull House is significantly larger because the livable space was no longer focused on a singular family, but the collection of individuals. Due to this brick is used as an easy and accessible building material, filling any available space with structures throughout the decades Hull House's expansion. These factors do however, echo something very similar to Beecher's kitchen diagram, which is function over style. Addams isn't concerned with building a luxury community, so why should the architecture bother with aesthetic appeal over functional use?

11 Nina Harkrader, "All the Single Ladies: Women-Only Buildings in Early 20th-Century New York," Women at the Center. New-York Historical Society Museum & Library, May 10, 2019, <https://womenatthecenter.nyhistory.org/all-the-single-ladies-women-only-buildings-in-early-20th-century-new-york/>.

12 Jane Addams, *Twenty Years At Hull-House: With Autobiographical Notes*. New York: Macmillan, 1912.



Figure 4. Halsted-Gilpin corner of Hull House: “Jane Addams”, *Hull House*, 1893, Photograph, Chicagology, <https://chicagology.com/biographies/janeaddams/>.

Turning your attention towards the plan of Hull House (fig. 5), a few design similarities to Beecher’s home stand out. Firstly, the presence and organization of the courtyard and playground space relates to Beecher’s ideas on child safety and observation. The playground is partially enclosed by the buildings with a fence completing the boundary between the interior space and the street. This ensures eyes are always on the children’s play area and ready to react if necessary. The quadrangle is reminiscent of the Dutch *hoffes* or courtyards as well, spaces traditionally inhabited by women living alone. Many of the buildings enclosing these formal *hoffes* of Amsterdam are still home to women living alone today.¹³ Through time, the idea of courtyards was duplicated and used to keep children safe and in a clean environment away from under kept streets and hazardous canals, under the watchful eyes of many surrounding mothers. In these ways, *hoffes* reflect the ideas of safe community life, care of the sick, and the gathering of single women: the first few services provided by Jane Addams at Hull House. Addams experienced these women centric designs during her vast travel from Rome to London in 1888. She found inspiration to establish Hull House and was sure to implement the ideas she had seen in Europe to the bustling streets of Chicago. Additionally, a quadrangle is formally a type of university space. By integrating it into the design, the space illustrates Addams goal of providing education for the women, even within the architecture. She aimed to create a space that felt legitimate in its intentions and able to meet a variety of needs. Due to this, implementation of this court is multifunctional. It gives residents a space to gather and socialize, a space intended for women to exchange ideas and build relationships, gaining empowerment through a group. It also provides

direct access to a centralized dining room from more places in the block. This is the second similarity between Beecher's home and Hull House. It shows the importance of a meal space in the larger plan and further integrates community into the design.

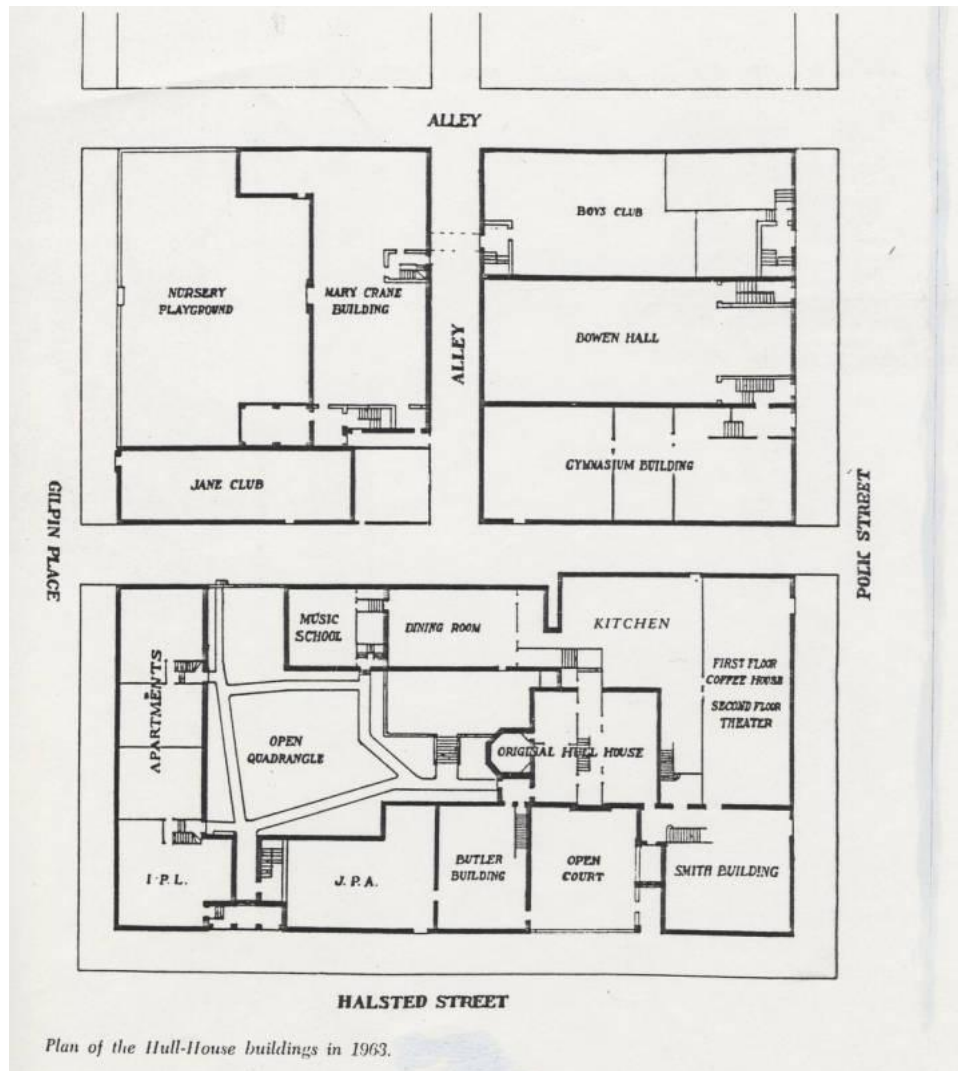


Figure 5. Plan of Hull House in West Side Chicago: *Hull-House Building Complex Plan, 1963*, Photograph, University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard J. Daley Library, https://collections.carli.illinois.edu/digital/collection/uic_7sh/id/3492

Communal facilities designed for women are important because of their scarcity in history. Additionally, these facilities altered women-centric spaces outside of the traditional, heteronormative home - integrating women into the public realm.¹⁴ The auditorium (fig. 6) acts as an example of a much further integration of shared space into dwelling planning, giving the community a flexible space for collective use that can change with the tenant's needs. This

flexibility is something Addams was known for too. In her obituary she is described as being, “rather like her house... constantly rearranging her furniture and adding modern touches. There is nothing static about it. But she is loyal. She is not ready to throw out her old mahogany on the impulse of the moment”.¹⁵

The dining room (fig. 7), featuring some of this “old mahogany”, illustrates how meals were a group experience. Placed centrally in the group of structures that made up Hull House, it removed the domestic responsibility of cooking from the tenants while still providing the social value of a shared meal and quality time with the people they interact with on a daily basis. It also allowed other aspects of the lives of tenants to be prioritized over meal prep. This once again shows how the integration of more flexibility into the life of the user through group living can ease the burdens of everyday responsibilities. Furthermore, the existence of these physical spaces meant for women to gather created a supportive community that was able to mutually assist each other, producing collaborations that would have unlikely happened without the collective spaces of Hull House.¹⁶ As a whole, it shows how ideologies evolved from the family to a collection of individuals in the time between Catharine Beecher and Jane Addams, and how the different application of similar design choices produce symbols of women activism in architecture.



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

Figure 6. Interior of Hull House Auditorium: “Jane Addams”, *Auditorium*, 1893, Photograph, Chicagology, <https://chicagology.com/biographies/janeaddams/>.

Figure 7. Interior of Hull House Dining Room: “Jane Addams”, *Dining Hall*, 1893, Photograph, Chicagology, <https://chicagology.com/biographies/janeaddams/>.

15 Alice Cogan. “Jane Addams Called the Only Saint America Has Ever Produced.” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 22, 1935. 17
<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/3702509/jane-addams-and-hull-house-may-22nd/>.

16 Merrett, “From Separate Spheres to Gendered Spaces.” 11

Hull House brought together more than just the social reforming women of Chicago though. Jane Addams' work also attracted the attention of Connecticut born Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935), the great-niece of Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Gilman grew up close to her family and was greatly influenced by her great-aunts' social activism and progressive ideas.¹⁷ These ideas would be the foundation for Addams and Gilman's relationship. The two ended up meeting at the beginning of 1894, again in 1895 when Addams extended an invitation to Gilman to spend a few months at Hull House, and whenever Gilman was in Chicago for lectures as well after that. The two activists had strong thoughts on the harm of such rigid gender roles on children in the USA and they both believed, much like Beecher, that the key to promoting women's roles in society was through education. For years they discussed the issues of child labor, fair wage, the abolishment of prostitution, and economic independence for women. Gilman even credits Addams for her intellectual support and contribution to Gilman's book published in 1898 *Women and Economics*. Their ideologies begin to differ when it comes to their modes and strength of activism, but they stayed connected throughout their lives producing works inspired by the start of the USA women's rights movement by at the 1848 Seneca Falls convention.¹⁸

In Catharine Perkins Gilman's 1898 book *Women and Economics*, she writes very academically, anticipating future discussions regarding gender as a social construct, and domestic responsibilities resulting from them. One main theme is the economic worth of household labor. Gilman writes that motherhood and the duties of the home are undervalued as they allow for the men to leave the home and produce wealth. Without the women, the man wouldn't be able to maintain this role and so the importance of home life needs to be respected and seen for its worth. Furthermore, "human work is woman's as well as man's" and any reason for people to disagree is due to backless norms and stereotypes that claim women are inferior. These claims have long term dangers as well, because when "civilization is confined to one sex, it inevitably exaggerates sex-distinction". Gilman argues, the brain can't be male or female. It is part of any body, regardless of sex or even species. For there to be such segregation between men and women, boys and girls, is not only detrimental to development, but scientifically unfounded.¹⁹

The ideas and evidence discussed in *Women and Economics* quickly gained international fame. Gilman toured around the USA, giving lectures on her book and other studies, frequently stopping at Hull House. She became well known for her thoughts on raising children and

17 Elizabeth J. Greene, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman," Learning to Give, <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/charlotte-perkins-gilman>

18 Robert Thornton Grimm, "Forerunners for a Domestic Revolution: Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and the Ideology of Childhood, 1900-1916." *Illinois Historical Journal* 90, no. 1 (1997): 47-64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40193109>.

19 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* 1898. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998. <https://n11lib.org/book/1183089/cf3953>.

women's rights, in addition to her other written works. In 1899, she traveled to London and attended the first International Woman Suffrage Conference hosted by Aletta H. Jacobs, from the Netherlands. There Jacobs and Gilman met and, moved by the topics of her book, Jacobs translated *Women and Economics* to Dutch in 1900 so the messages from Gilman could be read by the women of the Netherlands. Jacobs had made incredible strides regarding the progress of women in Dutch society in the previous decades. She was the first woman to graduate from a Dutch university in 1874, the first woman to become a doctor in the Netherlands in 1879, and opened the world's first birth control clinic.²⁰ By joining together to discuss thoughts and share ideas with Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jacobs had unknowingly completed a link of three women activists whose impact would spread far wider than just across the Atlantic. As a group, Addams, Gilman, and Jacobs formed a foundation for the suffragist movement to gain the momentum it needed to succeed. Over the course of the next three decades, the trio influenced ideologies that impact not only systems of housing and dwelling, but also the way gender and space is related and the role of women in society.

20 Laura York, "Jacobs, Aletta (1854-1929): Women in World History: A Biographical Encyclopedia," Encyclopedia.com, March 1, 2022, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/jacobs-aletta-1854-1929>.

Chapter 2: The Momentum of Suffragism, Post 1900

Within the first decade of the 1900s, Gilman's *Women and Economics* had spread globally and been translated into six European languages. Starting with Aletta H. Jacobs' Dutch translation in 1900, it was then published in German, Italian, Russian, Hungarian, and Polish respectively. As Gilman's work extended around the world, her ideas were shared with activists, suffragists, and women of varying cultures, helping them challenge the uses and gendered definitions of public and private space.²¹ Gilman had a profound effect on the authors of these translations as well. Each translation contains a preface, discussing their relationship to Gilman and her work. In Aletta H. Jacobs' text, she touches on her impressions of Gilman and how she immediately stood out as a leader amongst the "women's movement" when they met in 1899. Jacobs also notes that *Women and Economics*, although from an USA perspective, "with just slight alterations... [is] also applicable for most European countries".²² This support helped the ideas of Gilman spread and with its success solidified Jacobs and Gilman's relationship all while strengthening and interconnecting feminist causes throughout the Western world.

In the wake of this success, Charlotte Perkins Gilman published *The Home: It's Work and Influence* in 1903, diving further into the concept of a home. Her message developed from the inequality of sexes and devalued domestic work to the way these gendered norms manifested themselves in dwelling spaces along with the human right to a healthy home. Her goal in this book was, "to maintain and improve the home...not with the intention of robbing us of one essential element of home life - rather of saving us from conditions not only unessential, but gravely detrimental to home life".²³ Gilman was gaining traction for women activism and with each piece she published, her argument developed and her ideas reached more people around the globe. Her dedication to progressive reform was not alone though. 1903 was also the year Aletta H. Jacobs left her medical practice to focus on women's suffrage and became chairwomen of *Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht* (Association for Women's Suffrage) leading the charge for women suffragism in The Netherlands. Jacobs also traveled to The USA in 1905 where she was finally able to meet Jane Addams and witness her work at Hull House, something she had only been able to hear about from Charlotte Perkins Gilman or read about on her own.

21 Harriet Feinberg, "How Did Eight Translations of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's WOMEN AND ECONOMICS Transmit Feminist Thought across National Boundaries in the Years before World War I?" Alexander Street. <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/c/1009672099>.

22 Aletta Jacobs, English translation of preface to *De economische toestand der vrouw: Een studie over de economische verhouding tusschen mannen en vrouwen als een factor in de sociale evolutie*. [The economic situation of women: A study of the economic relationship between men and women as a factor in social evolution] (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1900). Preface translated by Claire Whitner, <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1009730231>

23 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Delphi Classics. *The Home: It's Work and Influence*. Book. Included in *Complete Works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 1840–2004*. East Sussex, UK: Delphi Classics, 2015. <https://n1lib.org/book/12016164/100665>.

Jacobs ultimately ended up donating a large portion of her collection of feminist texts to a library near Hull House as well, raising funds and awareness for the suffragist movement.²⁴

In 1904, Gilman began a lecture tour, traveling to Germany and speaking at the Berlin Congress of the International Council of Women, attended by Aletta H. Jacobs as well. After great success there, Gilman immediately planned another tour, visiting Manchester, England; Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Germany; Austria; and Hungary.²⁵ She spoke in Amsterdam on March 8th, 1905, at an event hosted by Aletta H. Jacobs titled “The Home and the World”. In a story called “The House of the Future”, a small local paper described the meeting as “an interesting talk, in which she set out her ideas about the family, the equality of man and woman, [and] the education of children”. The audience is described as predominantly women, packed into a room much smaller than required, but eager to listen nonetheless. Gilman’s points, often humorous, illustrated instances when men must complete tasks normalized as womanly, such as sailors cooking and cleaning as a part of life on a ship. Men are clearly able to complete these tasks sufficiently so why keep them strongly associated with women’s work? Additionally, by confining women to the tasks and spaces of the home, social evolution is being crippled. “The woman's mind cannot develop in the kitchen, and therefore it is of the utmost importance to the generations to come, who will populate the world and have to raise the standard of living, that the mothers should no longer be their husbands' housekeepers but in society freely developing intelligent women, who are equal to the man”. If mothers are responsible for raising and educating their children, they need to have the education and knowledge themselves to do so. Children, “should be brought up by trained persons trained for their task”.²⁶

One main point of Gilman’s argument is that women belong in the public realm. She is making this argument by speaking in a variety of public places as well. Through a well spoken, comedic but persuasive speech, she is showing the attendees first hand the positive, enjoyable, and knowledgeable interactions that women can have outside of the home. The exchange of ideas they had that night could be the new norm for women if they stand together and challenge the status quo. Another paradigm shift is also occurring. Women are no longer argued as equal as men and therefore deserving of being considered legitimacy in public society. Now the position has changed to women being different than men, knowledgeable of different skills and holding alternative values. It’s due to these qualities that women need to be utilized in political and academic disciplines, outside of domestic work and life. Women provide a complementary perspective that’s been under utilized, limiting societies development as a whole.

24 Inge de Wilde, "JACOBS, Aletta Henriette," (1988), SocialHistory.org, June 25, 2018, <http://hdl.handle.net/10622/A825F219-D2D7-44A6-B63C-7014A9F2386A>.

25 Mary Ellen Ellsworth, “Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Connecticut Feminist Prophet,” Connecticut Explored, Winter 2011-2012, <https://www.ctexplored.org/charlotte-perkins-gilman-a-connecticut-feminist-prophet/>.

26 “Het nieuws van den dag: kleine courant”. Het Huisgezin der Toekomst. Amsterdam, 09-03-1905, p. 6. Accessed on Delpher on 09-02-2022, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010163427:mpeg21:p006>.

Gilman completed her lecture tour in Europe and returned to the USA. After a few years, she took on a new project, a magazine called *The Forerunner* which ran from 1909 to 1916. In this monthly subscription that she owned, wrote and published, Gilman shared her thoughts on the home and family, focusing on the child, child-parent relationships, and the interests of the child as a motivation for women to pursue life outside of the home.²⁷ Gilman includes a one act play titled *Something to Vote For* in this text. She highlights ways women could intervene with politics, for the safety and betterment of their children, if only they were able to vote. "We are all helpless together unless we wake up to the danger and protect ourselves. That's what the ballot is for, ladies - to protect our homes! To protect our children! ... I'm willing to vote now! I'm glad to vote now! I've got something to vote for!"²⁸ While the subjects of Gilman's discussions are within the traditional realm of womanhood, such as childcare and homelife, she doesn't let that confine her to dwelling space. She uses the authority she has with these topics to build a school of thought that promotes the idea of women. Taking her great-aunt Catharine Beecher's approach one step further, Gilman started her platform surrounding skills, education and the home. She was then able to build legitimacy, bond women together, and start pushing for women in public space. Gilman is making the statement that women need to be in these public conversations for the sake of the home, the foundation of our private lives, and to provide a knowledge base that has been missed in a society dominated by men.

As World War I erupted in Europe, many women suffragists' focus were drawn to pacifist movements as well. Aletta H. Jacobs was quick to call together the groups of women activists from around the world that she had met over her decades of trailblazing work. In February of 1915, Jacobs sent the first of many letters to Jane Addams. Jacobs had officially extended an invitation to Addams on behalf of all Dutch women, to join the International Congress of Women, taking place just over six months after the start of WWI (Fig. 8). Jane Addams chaired the discussions as president with Aletta H. Jacobs as second in command. The congress met in April and May of 1915 and was attended by 1,100 women from 12 different countries, despite escalating global conflicts.²⁹ Many suffragist groups from around the western world gathered in the Hague. The women from the International Woman Suffrage Conference where Jacobs had met Gilman in 1899, the National American Woman Suffrage Association which Jane Addams was vice-president of, and many more, joined forces with the goal of using their decades of activist experience to bring an end to the war. They discussed the establishment of a neutral board of countries to mediate and help negotiate for peace, and the meeting ended with the formation of the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace. After the congress,

27 Grimm, "Forerunners for a Domestic Revolution" 47-64

28 Charlotte Perkis Gilman, *Something To Vote For*, Play in *The Forerunner*, Vol 2 No 6, (1911), 143 - 153, Accessed through University of Michigan on Hathi Trust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015011381897&view=1up&seq=4>

29 Aletta Henriëtte Jacobs To The International Committee Of Women For Permanent Peace, July, 1915

this committee returned home to promote this idea in their own countries and persuade people of their cause.³⁰

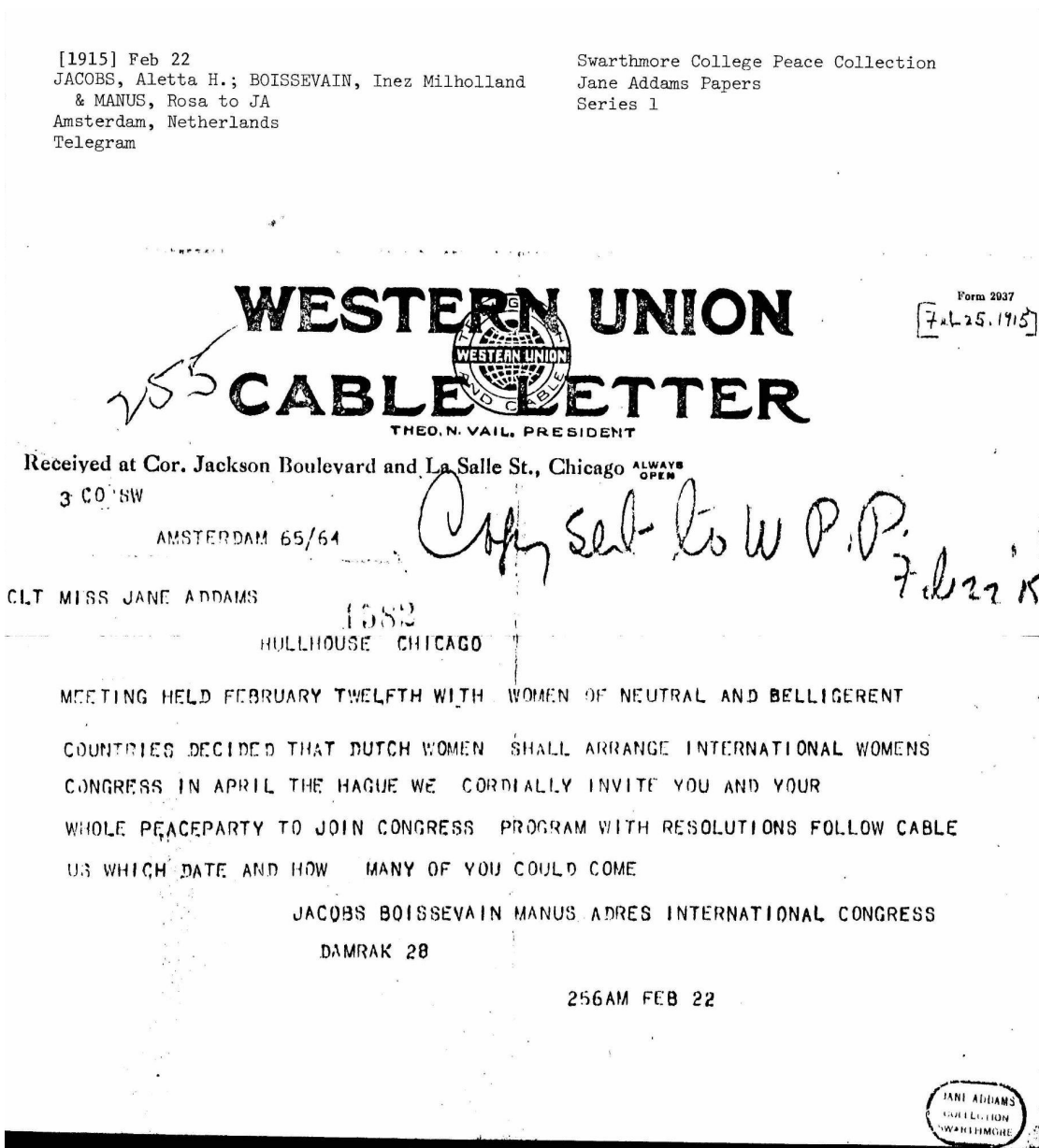


Figure 8: Aletta H. Jacobs Inviting Jane Addams to The Hague: *Meeting Held February Twelfth*, February 22, 1915, Jane Addams Paper Projects, Western Union Cable Letter, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, <https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/7913>.

30 Aletta H. Jacobs, *To the Members of the Committee*, Letter, Amsterdam, July 1915, Ramapo, Jane Addams Paper Projects, Digital Archive, <https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/10588>

Jane Addams returned to the USA from the International Congress of Women and continued to raise public support for peace. As other women around the world did the same, the growing consensus of foreign leaders was that they would more seriously consider participating if the USA president Woodrow Wilson committed to joining the board of belligerent and neutral nations. Addams, who was no stranger to the political world due to her persistent social reform effort, worked tirelessly to meet President Wilson to discuss this opportunity.³¹ Though initially unsuccessful, Addams was able to arrange a meeting at The White House for Aletta H. Jacobs to speak on behalf of the committee in mid September, 1915. Woodrow Wilson wrote to Jane Addams after the meeting saying, “it gave me great pleasure to meet so interesting a women”, but President Wilson did not believe now was time for negotiation.³² While not the outcome Jacobs and Addams were hoping for, this interaction does firmly connect the two women to the office of the president of the USA, legitimizing the two activist roles in global history even further. They are an continued example of the force, organization, and contribution that women could have if integrated into public spaces through suffragism and gender equality.

The USA entered World War I soon after and Jacobs feared the momentum for suffragism was lost in America. While the war did sway public attention away from the women suffragist movement, in many ways it provided women the last stepping stones they needed on the road to winning the right to vote. Filling in where necessary due to the number of young men sent overseas, the number of women in the workforce increased. They were able to demonstrate a reality where work and home life could be balanced, even under such extreme and stressful circumstances as a war. By holding together the country on the home front, women proved they were “they were just as patriotic and deserving of citizenship as men”.³³ Women contributed so strongly to the war effort that when the conflict was over and foreign freedoms secured, women had direct evidence when pointing out the hypocrisy of it all. How can the USA fight for the rights of others and claim they’re free when half of the population is unable to vote and be fairly represented by their government?

31 Jane Addams to Aletta H. Jacobs, July 17, 1915, Letter, Ramapo, Jane Addams Paper Projects, Digital Archive, <https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/items/show/10691>.

32 President Wilson to Jane Addams about Jacobs, September 15, 1915, on Atria, Letter https://collectie.atria.nl/viewer/469583?back=/archives/item/440072-papers-aletta-henriette-jacobs-1871-1974?anchor=file_469583&open=custom_bottom_Archives#page=1&viewer=picture&o=custom_bottom_Archives&n=0&q=.

33 Amanda Onion, Missy Sullivan and Matt Mullen, “Women’s Suffrage,” History.com, March 9th, 2022, <https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/the-fight-for-womens-suffrage>.

34 “Women’s Suffrage in the Netherlands,” Atria: Institute on gender equality and women's history, <https://institute-genderequality.org/news-publications/international-national/womens-voting-rights/womens-suffrage-in-the-netherlands/>

Women won the right to vote in the Netherlands before the USA; first the right to run for elected positions in 1917, and then the right to vote in these elections themselves in 1919.³⁴ In the USA, the fight for women's suffrage ended with the 19th amendment, ratified in 1920.³⁵ In both cases, the women activists Addams, Gilman, and Jacobs were critical in securing this victory and establishing a place for women in the public realm. Regarding singles housing, this historic event marks the beginning of a steady increase of both men and women living alone in the USA, from 1920 to 2000 when this percentage levels out.³⁶ In the Netherlands, housing had been facing a complete overhaul due to the Housing Act of 1902. This act aimed to counteract the poor living conditions prompted by industrialization and the rapid increase of workers drawn into the city. However, when WWI began, building stopped. As a result, after the war there was an immediate housing shortage and the increase in single tenants only added to this.³⁷ This combination of new tenant demands and insufficient housing supply created the conditions for a new type of dwelling to be developed.

Nicknamed the gateway to Amsterdam's Old South, The New House stands as a hybrid of architecture styles and ideas. Designed by Dutch architect Barend van den Nieuwen Amstel, this apartment building is strictly for singles and integrates public functions with cooperative living spaces and private sleeping rooms. It is styled in the Amsterdam School of architecture, bringing together large brick facades with large rounded corners, an aesthetic that was modern and reflective of its time and location in 1920's Amsterdam (Fig 9). The building is not only unique because it is reserved for lone tenants, but also because of how it was established. In the face of constrictive single living options, Anna Kruys, a single 40-year-old woman, placed an ad in a local newspaper inquiring if other individuals were interested in finding a new housing solution. Close to 50 men and women responded to Kruys and in 1918 the Coöperatieve Woonvereniging Het Nieuwe Huis was formed.³⁸ Ten years later, the members were finally able to move into the building which consisted 188 apartments of varying sizes, and collective spaces such as a restaurant, library, post office, roof terraces, and shared bathrooms on each floor. The private

35 "Women's Suffrage in the Progressive Era," Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/progressive-era-to-1920/women-suffrage-in-progressive-era/>

36 Rose M. Kreider and Jonathan Vespa, "The historic rise of living alone and fall of boarders in the United States: 1850–2010," April 30, 2015, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2015/demo/SEHSD-WP2015-11.pdf>

37 Arie Keppler, "Housing in the Netherlands." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 190 (1937): 205–13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1019709>.

38 Lex Boon, "100 jaar Het Nieuwe Huis: 'Een relatie is hier niet verboden, hoor'," *Het Parool*, April 24, 2018, shorturl.at/qvGNT

39 "Het Nieuwe Huis, eerste wooncoöperatie van Amsterdam," *Architectuurwijzer*, March 22, 2018, <https://architectuurwijzer.be/het-nieuwe-huis-eerste-wooncooperatie-van-amsterdam/>.

sleeping rooms range from bare single rooms with small kitchenettes to three roomed units with private bathrooms for longer term residents, creating long term benefits for continuous living and participation in the community.³⁹ Overall, the establishment of this building created the opportunity for single men and women to break away from the traditional norms of life in the 1900's, allowing individual dwelling to be accessible to people who wanted something different.



Figure 9: Facade and Entry to The New House: Dorothee Oorthuys, *Het Nieuwe Huis* (2014), Photograph, 80, Stokerkade, Amsterdam.

The significance of The New House in this research is that it demonstrates how the ideas from Addams and Gilman about cooperative living and relief through the shared responsibility of domestic tasks were translated by Jacobs and implemented overseas in the Netherlands. It also shows how this redistribution of domestic responsibilities provided autonomy to the influx of single individuals, and how this idea was able to be absorbed into Dutch society, manifesting itself in the architecture of singles dwelling. A clear example of this is the cooperative restaurant in the lobby of The New House (Fig 10). The private sleeping rooms for tenants came with small spaces for cooking essentials but, similarly to Hull House, the domestic burden of daily meal preparation was relieved by the communal approach provided by the centralized kitchen. This restaurant, like the post office and library, was also open to the public, challenging the barriers between women and stereotypes of public and private space. The clusters of tables with seating for four to eight people also promote neighborly interaction. It allows residents the flexibility to use the space in a way that works for them, eating in large groups or small pairings while still interacting and seeing with the people they live with regularly. The mixing of programs into one large space also produced a monument for the freedom of women from domestic responsibilities and the liberation from the private space of heteronormative homes.



Interieur Cooperatief Cafe Restaurant.



Interieur in het Cooperatief Cafe Restaurant.



Wandchilderingen interieur Restaurant.



Wandchilderingen interieur Restaurant.

Figure 10: Cooperative Restaurant in The New House: Annual Report 1927-1928 of ACW, Found in Dorothee Oorthuys, *Het Nieuwe Huis* (2014), Photograph, 89, Stokerkade, Amsterdam. The image of five doorways (Fig. 11) is another explicit example of the way architecture in The New House embodied the evolving ideas of single living. It shows a balance between individual space and social interaction by providing tenants with their own doors and authority over their independent apartments, while also grouping these individuals into small clusters or social families. These coincidental interactions that are produced from this organization help develop relationships between the residents as well, integrating a strong sense of community into the space.



Figure 11: Cluster of Five Apartment Entrances in The New House: Dorothee Oorthuys, *Het Nieuwe Huis* (2014), Photograph, 129, Stokerkade, Amsterdam.

Conclusion

Aletta H. Jacobs, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Jane Addams dedicated their lives to a number of facets of social reform. From child labor activism, to pacifism and women suffrage, these three women were able to connect from across the Atlantic through a complex network of events and utilize each other's knowledge and resources to promote their mutual causes. Their tireless work legitimized the voices of women around the globe, and played critical roles in women's fight for the right to vote and the evolution of strict and traditional gender roles. As these women activists challenged the status quo, they influenced political and social changes that embedded characteristics in the built environment. Architecture is a strong reflection of the ideologies of an era. This research shows how Addams, Gilman, and Jacobs were able to share ideas of flexibility, women in public space, and the elimination of domestic tasks through cooperative design, manifesting these ideas in a new single dwelling typology.

From Addams's global travels, she was inspired to use her experiences to give back to her Chicago community. In the creation of Hull House, she created a symbol of a space for women in the public realm. This symbol brought together countless women, inspiring conversations and collaborations that would go on to produce additional changes around the world. The collaboration between Gilman and Addams is one relationship that would have never happened were it not for Hull House and Addams's selfless service. Gilman was able to bring their message to a larger stage through the publication of her books, and through their success, reached international audiences. Had it not been for Addams and Gilman's conversations at Hull House that inspired *Women and Economics*, it would have been unlikely that Aletta Jacobs would have joined together to complete the trio. From this important connection, these ideas of cooperative function and breaking away from strict ideas of domesticity and gender were able to be integrated into Dutch society, creating an international push for the progressive changes. While World War I drew political attention away from women's suffrage, the conflict gave women the opportunity to prove their capability of expanding outside of the domestic space. Women filled the vacancies left in the workforce by men sent to fight and they balanced the chaos of home responsibilities with the stresses of a nation at war. Additionally, between 1900 and 1920, women proved time and time again that their perspective and expertise, being different from men, is vital for full political and social growth. Through numerous women led organizations, they bonded together, illustrating the strength and determination of their causes and finally, by the 1920's, their contributions were recognized and women won the right to vote. With the freedoms brought by this victory, more women began to seize their independence and the demand for new housing options produced a dwelling arrangement conducive to single women eager to claim their autonomy. In an evolution from Hull House to The New House, cooperative functions became a symbol of women-centric design and through mixed private and public organizations, an architecture formed that assisted women in challenging the gendered norms of spaces.

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