

Social Cohesion in New Town Dronten

History Thesis

Lectures on Architectural History and Theory

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Prologue

For over eighteen years, I have lived in Dronten with great pleasure. I grew up in a safe environment where I always felt at home. My childhood was filled with playing outside with all the neighbourhood kids on the grass fields and in forest right in front of my childhood home. As a young girl I already biked to school on my own, because it was just around the corner. Even when my parents separated, I was fortunate enough to have two houses, only three streets apart from each other. Having my grandparents living within walking distance completed my safe and joyful childhood.

Dronten has everything one could need: a centre with all the necessary shops, associations for every sport, a cultural/community centre with a cinema and theatre, enough primary schools, and two secondary schools for every level of education. One can even study at the agricultural college in Dronten, and to the annoyance of some locals, students can join a student association. Although, as I grew older, I realized that I was missing something in Dronten. The hustle and bustle of the city attracted me, and that made me realize it was time to leave the safe haven of Dronten.

When people ask me where I come from, and I say Dronten, my follow-up question is whether they know where it is. Usually, the answer is, "Isn't that somewhere in Drenthe or in the eastern part of the country?". Funny enough, geographically speaking, the centre of the Netherlands is located in Dronten. When I mention the music festival Lowlands and the amusement park Walibi Holland, often some bells start ringing.

I am aware that I am lucky to have grown up in such a safe and well-planned environment, and above all, that the province of Flevoland is quite unique. With its young existence of about 65 years, Dronten is one of the youngest municipalities in the Netherlands, where an entirely new society has emerged with people from all over the country. Dronten was designed and built during a time of rapid and significant developments. In the field of architecture and urban planning there were also a lot of developments going on, in an idealistic, modernist era of post-World War II reconstruction. In this thesis I will explore this period and how it influenced the design of (the municipality of) Dronten in terms of social cohesion.

With pleasure,

Thyrza Tepper

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Introduction

Halfway through the twentieth century, the Netherlands started draining the Zuiderzee in the middle of the country, to create the province Flevoland. Flevoland consists of three parts, the Noordoostpolder, Southern Flevoland and Eastern Flevoland, where among others the town Dronten is located. Nowadays, the municipality of Dronten counts over forty thousand residents, though eighty years ago this piece of land was nothing more than a stretch of seawater. Even before the land of Eastern Flevoland was fully reclaimed, designs for its layout were being made. The first concrete plans of building 'new town' Dronten started in 1958 and a few years later the first houses were built on a freshly reclaimed piece of land. In this implemented plan, municipality Dronten consists of only three towns: Dronten, Biddinghuizen and Swifterbant. Initially, however, there were other plans where the municipality of Dronten would consist of multiple small towns, in Dutch called *kernen*, around the centre Dronten. Due to changes in mobility and experiences of other projects, these plans developed.

Creating freshly reclaimed land into a municipality and multiple towns is quite a unique situation. Since this was the case in Flevoland, a new piece of land without any history, people came from all over the country to start a new living environment and community. Starting a new society gives accordingly the opportunity to do things completely different, whether the possibility exist that new residents take old habits and values with them. Therefore it is interesting to gain more insight in how issues such as social cohesion are taken into account by the planning, designing and development of a new municipality and a town such as Dronten. Based on this topic, the following research question for the thesis arises: *To what extent is social cohesion recognisable in the spatial planning and urban designs of the period 1950 until the 1980 of municipality and 'new town' Dronten?*

The main research question is divided into the following sub-questions:

1. Which aspects of urban planning and design regarding social cohesion were important in a neighbourhood during the period of 1950 until 1980?
2. What is the history of municipality Dronten?
3. How is the spatial planning and urban design of municipality and 'new town' Dronten deliberated regarding social cohesion?
4. How is social cohesion established in the new society during the first years of development of 'new town' Dronten?

The purpose of the thesis is to explore how social cohesion was considered in the spatial planning and urban designs of municipality and 'new town' Dronten during the period of 1950 until 1980. As a unique case of creating a completely new society and living environment, the research aims to provide insights into important aspects of urban planning regarding social cohesion, as well as the history of municipality Dronten and how social cohesion was established here. By answering the main research questions and sub-questions, this thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between urban planning and design, and social cohesion in the context of creating new communities. The thesis is a single case study based on an analysis of archival material and literature review about the plans and designs of municipality Dronten and the town itself. First, the thesis dives into the topic of social cohesion. Based on a literature review an image of relevant aspects of urban planning and design regarding social cohesion in a neighbourhood during the period from 1950 until 1980 will be given. In chapter two, the thesis situates the history of Dronten. Chapter three follows with a research into the first plans and designs of Eastern Flevoland, also known as municipality Dronten, and the village Dronten towards social cohesion. Chapter four describes the first development of Dronten and its community. Finally, the thesis provides a conclusion in chapter five.

Chapter 1. Social cohesion in a neighbourhood around the 50's until the 80's

The first chapter describes the definition of social cohesion and certain aspect of urban planning and design that played a role within a neighbourhood regarding social cohesion. Also, the modernistic, post-war period of 1950 until 1980 will be discovered through some important influences.

1.1 Definition of social cohesion and aspects of urban planning according to it

One of the first times the concept *social cohesion* was mentioned, was by Durkheim in his book 'The Division of Labor in Society' in 1893. Durkheim described it as social solidarity, which means that individuals feel a collective connection. Conceptual regarded as 'the glue' that holds the society together (Durkheim, 1893). Some years later in literature is social cohesion distinguished into five dimensions which often go hand-in-hand: social network based on interaction between people (1), shared values and codes of behaviour (2), place attachment (3), social control (4) and social solidarity (5) (Kearns & Forrest, 2000).

A more recent literature review of Verwey Jonker Institute (2019) defined social cohesion into five different aspects. The first is (social) equality, consisting of inclusive social services, income(in)equality and opportunity for social mobility. The second is safety, divided into objective safety, subjective safety and social control. The third aspect is social interaction, both within a group and between different groups. The fourth aspect, a living environment, is about its identity, facilitating places to meet in public space and its mobility and accessibility. The last aspect of social cohesion is commitment and trust, meaning that residents have shared values, trust in the law and politics and participation in political processes (Brock, Kwakernaak, Meere, & Boutellier, 2019).

So, while the concept social cohesion evolved over time, it always refers to feelings of the individual in a collective connection. Creating a social network and social control in a living environment where people share values, are crucial for creating a sense of community and belonging in society. To understand how a certain level of social cohesion can be achieved in a neighbourhood or city, it is important to distinguish how aspects of urban planning, such as providing inclusive social services, social control and safety, and facilitating places to meet in public space with care for its identity, mobility and accessibility, relate to it.

A factor related to the design of the physical environment is implementing social mix, for example by providing housing diversification, thereby diversifying commercial services. This allows a variety of social and economic activities to take place within close proximity, creating opportunities for interaction and exchange among residents (Kleinhaus, 2012).

Another important aspect is the role of public spaces (Brock, Kwakernaak, Meere, & Boutellier, 2019). Parks, squares or plazas, sidewalks, shopping centres or malls, schoolyards and community centres provide gathering places for residents to come together and participate in shared activities. These spaces often serve as the focal point for neighbourhood events and celebrations, fostering a sense of community, identity and pride (Francis, Giles-Corti, Wood, & Knuiman, 2012). When public space serves as gathering space for residents, providing facilities follows, such as: supermarkets, shopping facilities, churches, educational facilities, healthcare facilities, sports facilities, library, social and cultural facilities like community centres, public transport, and so on (Witten, Exeter, & Field, 2003).

Also, safety and social control in a neighbourhood contribute to a great sense of community. Whereas objective safety is determined by crime statistics, subjective safety is about the perception of social safety within a neighbourhood. Creating a safe neighbourhood includes social control and 'eyes on the street' (Brock, Kwakernaak, Meere, & Boutellier, 2019).

1.2 Post-war, modernist urban planning

The research of the thesis focuses on the period around 1950 until the late years of the 20th century, around 1980. In that time period were the plans and design of Dronten made, started the building process and took the first development of the village place. It is important to understand what kind of time it was, because the period from around 1950 to 1980 was marked by significant changes in urban planning and design. In this post-war period there was a strong focus on reconstruction and modernization, because of the damage emerged during the second world war. This led to the development of new approaches, with a focus on functionalism, rationality, and efficiency. One of the key developments during this period was the emergence of modernist urban planning, which emphasized the use of new materials and technologies, as well as the integration of different functions and activities within the urban fabric (Diefendorf, 1989).

An important influence according to modernist urban planning and architectural design was France-Swiss architect Le Corbusier (1887–1965) (Diefendorf, 1989). Le Corbusier's utopian view of modernism was very idealistic, but with a dominant top-down approach. He believed that only architecture and city planning could solve the problems in society. Together with the movement CIAM he plead for separating functions withing a city such as housing, work and leisure, connected by infrastructure. Which would lead to an in that time modern, efficient and functional city (Fitting, 2002).

However, the modernist approach to urban planning and design also faced significant criticism, particularly from social and political movements, such as journalist and urban activist Jane Jacobs (1916–2006). In her book, 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' first published in 1961, Jane Jacobs writes a critique on the urban planning practices of the mid-20th century, which emphasized large-scale redevelopment projects and urban renewal programs. Jacobs argues that the modernistic and top-down planning practices are misguided and eventually harmful to cities, as they destroy the social and economic networks that make urban neighbourhoods thrive. She advocates for a more bottom-up approach to urban planning, where cities are built around the needs and desires of their residents, rather than the visions of architects and city planners (Jacobs, 1961).

These movements called for greater participation and democracy in urban planning and design, as well as a greater focus on the needs and aspirations of local communities. This led to the emergence of alternative approaches to urban planning and design, such as participatory planning and the advocacy planning movement, which emphasized the importance of community engagement and empowerment in the planning process. These approaches sought to promote social cohesion and community identity by involving local residents in the design and development of their neighbourhoods (Fainstein, 2000).

1.3 Mixed and safe neighbourhood

Jacobs emphasizes in her book the importance of mixed-use neighbourhoods, with a diversity of building types, styles, and uses, such as residential, commercial, and cultural. This mix creates vibrant and lively neighbourhoods that are safe and inviting to people of all ages and backgrounds. To create a liveable city Jacobs distinguished four aspects that relate to social cohesion. Firstly, 'the importance of diversity', Jacobs argues that cities thrive when they are diverse, both in terms of the people who live there and the businesses and activities that take place. When people of different backgrounds and income levels share a neighbourhood, they are more likely to interact with each other and build social connections. Secondly, 'mixed-use neighbourhoods', Jacobs emphasizes the importance of neighbourhoods that have a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, and civic. The mix leads to different people who cross each other during their own rhythm and daily activities. Thirdly, 'walkability', Jacobs argues that walkable neighbourhoods are essential for building social connections. When people can easily walk from their homes to shops, parks, and other amenities, they

are more likely to interact with their neighbours and build a sense of community. Fourthly, 'small blocks and diverse building types', according to Jacobs this will create a sense of visual interest and human scale that encourages people to engage with their surroundings. Shorter blocks create more opportunities for people to walk and explore. When buildings have different heights, styles, and ages, they create a sense of visual interest that encourages people to explore and interact with their environment and creates more diversity and vitality (Jacobs, 1961).

Jane Jacobs presents her approach to observing and analysing cities, because she believed that cities were complex systems, and that to truly understand them, one needed to observe and analyse the interactions between people and their environment. Jacobs underlines the importance of 'street life' and the diverse activities that take place in public spaces (Jacobs, 1961). One of her key observations is the importance of 'eyes on the street'. She argued that a safe and vibrant city required people to be present and watching in public spaces. Jacobs believed that the presence of people walking, sitting, and talking on the streets was crucial for deterring crime and creating a sense of community. For example children playing on the street will automatically provide eyes on the street (Jacobs, 1961).

1.4 Analysing an urban environment

Another influence that pictures thoughts about urban planning in the period around 1950 until 1980 is "The Image of the City" by urbanist Kevin Lynch (1918–1984) published in 1960. The book explores how people perceive and navigate through urban environments. Lynch suggests that successful urban design should consider how people experience and use it, and that a city's identity is shaped by five key elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks (Lynch, 1960).

Lynch argues that paths, such as streets, sidewalks and other routes are the most important elements of the urban environment and that they should be designed to be legible, continuous, and coherent. Edges are boundaries or transitions between different parts of the city, such as shorelines or bridges, and should be designed to be memorable and easily recognizable. Districts are areas within the city that have a distinct character or identity, and should be clearly defined and easy to navigate through. Nodes are points of intersection or activity, such as plazas or intersections, and should be designed to be attractive and welcome people to gather and interact with each other. Landmarks are prominent physical features that help people navigate the city, such as statues or towers, and should be distinctive and memorable to function as an orientation point (Lynch, 1960).

Although Lynch's book primarily focuses on the physical elements that make a city and how people navigate through them, he does touch on the importance of social cohesion in creating a sense of community within urban environments. Lynch argues that the identity and character of a city are shaped not only by its physical form but also by the shared experiences and values of its residents. He suggests that the design of public spaces and the provision of community amenities can help foster a sense of social cohesion. For example, Lynch notes that well-designed public spaces, such as parks or plazas, can serve as gathering places where people from different backgrounds can come together and interact. He also emphasizes the importance of creating a variety of community amenities, such as libraries, schools, and community centres, that can serve as shared resources for residents (Lynch, 1960).

Chapter 2. History of Dronten

Despite the fact that Dronten currently exists no longer than 65 years, this chapter dives into its history before, during and after the reclaiming of the land.

2.1 Dronten, a new municipality in new land

The 'young polder Dronten' is a completely new municipality that was not created by merging existing ones. It was built from the muddy ground over a period of 15 years and covers an area of 35,000 hectares in the middle of the Netherlands. It has good connections and facilities, attractive residential areas, farmland, forests, lakes with beaches and fishing waters, and is primarily designed for a young population of only 13,000 people. The development of this new land took place during a time of rapid technological and societal changes, what means that adjustments were made during the design process to accommodate these changes. However, some aspects of the design reflect the time in which the plans were made (Otto, 1972). Although Dronten now is only 65 years old, the area does know a certain history. This paragraph will describe this history of Dronten.

Before draining the polder

Despite the polder being new land, it is important to note that the residents of Dronten were not the first inhabitants of the area. Due to natural changes over tens of thousands of years, the area has alternated between land and sea. During the Ice Age Flevoland was land above sea level. This is confirmed by the animal skeletons from that period that have been found. Between the period of 8300 to 1200 BCE changes in climate led to the melting of the polar ice caps and a rise in sea level. Plant life developed in the area, but there is no evidence of human presence during the Middle Stone Age. Around 5000 BCE the rise in sea level was that high that the land flooded. Because of different factors like sedimentation and peat formation, especially around the edge of the *IJsselmeerpolder*, led to a clay ground around the river. Evidence has been found of at least seven ancient settlements where hunters, fishermen, and even the first agriculture took place along the riverbanks, also known as: *the Swifterbantcultuur*. After the Swifterbant culture land flooded again and no evidence of habitation is found until around 1800–1500 BCE of *the Veluwe klokbeker cultuur*. Over the centuries, the area continued to be inhabited, but also suffered from periodic floods and storms. After this period, by the Middle Ages, the Zuiderzee had become an important shipping lane for the hanseatic trade (*Hanzehandel*) (Otto, 1972).

From sea to new land

It was not until the 20th century that plans to reclaim the Zuiderzee and create new land in the area were put into action. The Zuiderzee came to an end in 1932 when the Afsluitdijk was built by the design of Cornelis Lely. Cornelis Lely (1854–1929) was a Dutch engineer and statesman who is best known for his plans to reclaim land from the Zuiderzee, a large inlet of the North Sea in the Netherlands. Lely envisioned the creation of a new province called IJsselmeerpolder, which would be formed by reclaiming the Zuiderzee using a series of dams and dykes, especially the Afsluitdijk. This would create an area of new land, including what is now Flevoland (Otto, 1972).

Lely's plan, known as the *Zuiderzeewerken*, was first proposed in 1891, but it was not until the devastating North Sea Flood of 1916 that the Dutch government began to consider it. The flood disaster killed over 1,800 people and caused widespread damage, leading to calls for action to protect the country from future floods. Additionally, starvation during the first world war led to the need of new land, especially farmland. Lely's plan was finally approved in 1918, and the construction of the Afsluitdijk began. The dyke was 32 kilometre long and would separate the Zuiderzee from the North Sea. The dam was completed in 1932, and the Zuiderzee was transformed into a freshwater lake, now known as the IJsselmeer (Schmidt, De Canon van Dronten, 2017).

Lely's plan also called for the creation of new land through a process called *poldering*, in which water is drained from low-lying areas to create new farmland. This led to the creation of Flevoland, which was built in two phases: the Noordoostpolder, completed in 1942, and the Flevopolder (consisting of Eastern and Western Flevoland), completed in 1968 (Otto, 1972).

2.2 Establishing and first development of Flevoland

In the time just before, during, and after the Second World War, there was a need for villages that could serve as a kind of 'microcosm' for residents living in and around them. Due to the need of new land for housing and food production, the polder was initially created to make more space for agriculture and farms. A debate arose about the maximum acceptable distances for residents of the countryside to travel to the centre. The agricultural families had to live on the farms and therefore needed a car to go to the centre for facilities. Other farm workers generally did not have a car and came to work by bicycle, so a distance limit of five kilometres from the farms to a centre was set. This resulted in a plan for the Noordoostpolder of ten villages around the main centre of Emmeloord, where people from all over the Netherlands came to live. The villages had a heterogeneous composition, because the Protestant-Christian, Roman Catholic, and non-religious groups wanted a certain sovereignty within their own circles and established their own schools and community centres. Each village therefore had to have a school for each group, and for a successful school a minimum number of children is necessary, resulting in a certain distribution of residents (Wal, 1986).

Subsequently, developments within agriculture continued and the Noordoostpolder became too small. With the development of motor vehicles, such as cars, motorcycles, and mopeds, people were less bound to the village and the minimum distance to them. While the Noordoostpolder continued expanding, the reclamation of Eastern Flevoland started. The initial plans were very similar to those of the Noordoostpolder: a regional centre with ten smaller villages or cores. The centre, the village Dronten, was placed slightly to the east, because the capital of the new province of Flevoland was going to be located in the west: Lelystad. Based on the experiences in the Noordoostpolder and other current developments that took place at that time, the plan changed to establishing four smaller villages in addition to the central core of Dronten. The 1960s was a time of high housing shortages, and many people had the desire to live outside the city. Therefore, it was eventually decided to build two cores; Swifterbant and Biddinghuizen. One of the planned cores that was not established became the Larserbos, a forest with holiday homes (Wal, 1986).

± 1928



Figure 1. IJsselmeer before draining (Wal, 1986)

± 1978



Figure 2. Flevoland after draining (Wal, 1986)

Chapter 3. Spatial planning and design of Dronten regarding social cohesion

The third chapter dives into the first designs of Eastern Flevoland and the first structure plans of the core Dronten itself.

3.1 Design of the cores of Eastern Flevoland

It seemed quite logical that the plans for the third IJsselmeerpolder 'Eastern Flevoland', intended to reclaim in 1957, had similarities with the Noordoostpolder. Eastern Flevoland would cover 54.000 hectares. Right after World War II, the primary premise for the Zuiderzee polders was the need of new land for housing and with an agricultural function. Since the polder was going to be new land, much research was done to understand the need for population centres. This resulted in a division into three levels: A-cores (smallest villages), B-cores (middle-sized villages) and C-cores (largest villages). The A-core, small villages for around 1.000 to 1.500 residents, intent to function as living environment for farm workers and as site for facilitating businesses and institutions geared to day-to-day needs. The cores would be no more than 6 kilometres apart from each other. The B-core, central located and planned to have around 5.000 to 15.000 residents and would serve with facilitating businesses slightly more than just the day-to-day needs. C-cores, intent to be the city centre for over 25.000 residents complete in terms of facilities and other businesses (Rijdsdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders, 1970).

Layout the ten cores

June 2th 1950 started the initial work on the construction of the dyke around future Eastern Flevoland. However, before the land of Eastern Flevoland was fully reclaimed, the first designs for its layout were made. Initially, the plan in 1951 was to have fourteen A core villages besides one C core, Lelystad, and one B core, Dronten. The villages were intent to be 7.5 km apart from each other. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, this pattern was similar to that of the Noordoostpolder, where Emmeloord was the main village, and around it, ten smaller villages were built (Schmidt, De Canon van Dronten, 2017).

The following plan for Eastern Flevoland in 1954, shown in figure 3 and 4, included ten villages, in addition to Dronten and Lelystad, all located about 7.5 kilometres apart from each other. The ten villages that were intended at that time were called: Roggebot, Abbert, Swifterbant, Biddinghuizen, Larsen, Zeewolde, Hoophuizen, Zelhorst, Burchtkamp, and Bremerberg. The first plans showed that infrastructure had an important role in the layout, and not only agriculture but also vegetation was prioritised. A landscape with straight and logical lines, made by L.S.P. Scheffer and Cornelis van Eesteren. As shown in the image below, the village of Dronten was not located in the central part of Eastern Flevoland from the very beginning, which was a deliberate choice, because the city of Lelystad was planned in the western part of this polder. Eastern Flevoland also differs from the other two IJsselmeer polders in this regard, as the eastern part still has a strong rural character, while urbanization is taking place towards the Randstad in the western part. The ten planned villages were meant to serve as smaller population centres throughout the polder, with a focus on providing basic services to the surrounding agricultural land. The planners wanted to avoid having one dominant urban centre that would overshadow the rest of the area. So Dronten and Lelystad were chosen as the two main urban centres, because of their strategic location and accessibility. The cores were expected to reach an average amount of residents of 3.400 (Rijdsdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders, 1970).



Figure 3. Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken: village areas Eastern Flevoland, 1954 (Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken, 1954)

Layout the six cores

In 1958, the *Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken* wrote in 'Note 254' that the previously described plan with ten village centres is being reviewed. The question of how large the population will be and how many villages are needed is constantly arising. Experiences from the Wieringermeer and Noordoostpolder, the first two IJsselmeer polders, found out it has been difficult to estimate how many villages should be planned. Looking to the 'old land' is not useful since this 'new land' is planned in a different era. For example, in the old land, there is often only one dominant religion, so also only one church and one school. In the new polder villages would have three religious groups with their own church and schools. Therefore, a trend towards larger villages has been identified, partly due to developments in mobility, the increasing use of cars and the modernisation of agriculture. In this note, larger units are already being considered and the previously approved plan with a water and road network is being maintained. There are several possibilities for the villages, including building only Dronten and the two main villages, Swifterbant and Biddinghuizen. This option is rejected due to the large distances expected and the risk that these villages may develop too well, leaving no viability for later planned villages. Additionally, a lower population is expected based on experiences from the other two polders. This resulted in a land division plan as shown below (Ban, 1958).

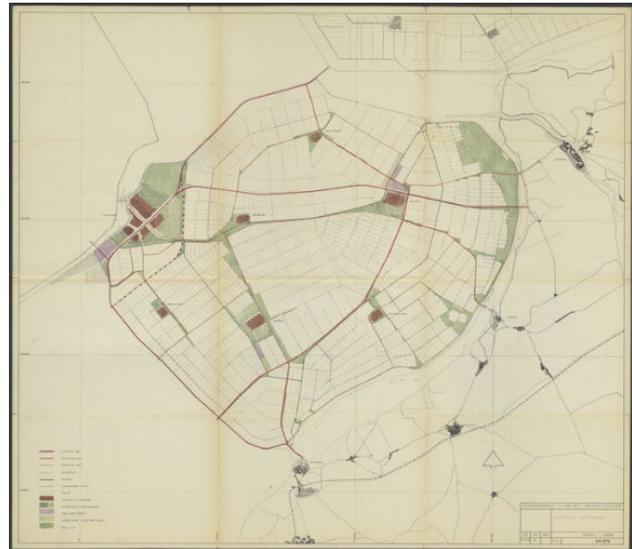


Figure 7. *Dienst Zuiderzeewerken*: subdivision plan Eastern Flevoland, 1958, scale 1:50.000 (*Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken*, 1958)

Here on the side, figure 8, is shown the 'submitted subdivision plan of Eastern Flevoland' of the *Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken* from 1958. The plan contains the following cores: Dronten, Swifterbant, Abbert, Zeewolde, Larsen, Burchtkamp, Biddinghuizen, and Lelystad. Following the subdivision plan was a plan for the allocation of farms and the determination of the size of the plots. Based on the experience of the first years of the Noordoostpolder, it was noted that there was hardly any colonization or group integration, and the 'natural' social structure was still lacking. However, an 'artificial' community life was created by people. The religious factor played a significant role in that time, and therefore, the construction of churches and community buildings had priority.

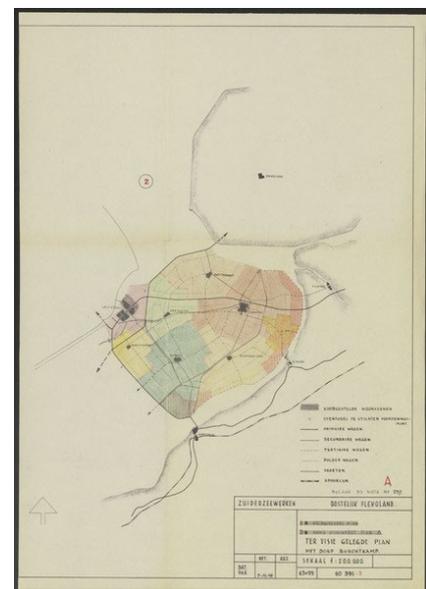


Figure 8. *Dienst Zuiderzeewerken*: 'Submitted plan', 1958 (*Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken*, 1958)

The modern farmer

It was clear that a different audience would be attracted to the 'new land' of the polders than the urban population of the 'old land'. As already mentioned before the modern farmer will inhabit these polders, and probably will have a lifestyle that is more intellectual and free. A description is given of the 'modern farmer', who should be very similar to the average Dutch person and certainly to the independent entrepreneur. This is characterized by three elements: a desire for "the good life" which requires a rising income, a desire for preservation of independence, and a growing awareness that rules (arising from a sense of social justice) must be followed (Constandse, 1964).

Involved parties

Several parties were involved in this design process. The reclamation and layout of the area was up to the *Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken*, which later merged with *Rijksdienst van de IJsselmeerpolders* and the management of Flevoland. For the plans of Eastern Flevoland, Cornelis van Eesteren was an important influence. The Dutch architect and urban planner Cornelis van Eesteren (1897–1988), who was a member of the De Stijl movement, was known for his modernistic principles, with a focus on functionality, simplicity, and rationality. Van Eesteren was closely involved in the CIAM movement, like Le Corbusier (Van Eesteren Museum, n.d.).

3.2 First design of Dronten

Meanwhile the initial plans for Eastern Flevoland, also known as the municipality of Dronten, were made, the first design for the village of Dronten were created in a structural layout plan. Under the direction of engineer J. van Tol, the structural plan for Dronten took shape in 1959. Dronten was intended to be the slightly larger B-core as the centre of the others. In addition to basic amenities, Dronten would also have other facilities to function as an independent core and serve the A-cores. However, Dronten would be connected to larger cities in the vicinity, such as Lelystad, Harderwijk, Kampen, and Zwolle, for certain additional facilities and functions.

Initially Dronten was intended to have a small amount of residents, around ten to thirteen thousand at the maximum. Although, the first structure plans of Dronten in 1959 are based on a population of around four to five thousand residents. Due to the fact Dronten was established on new land, an extensive research about the amount of residents and necessary facilities and services was done. The design process for Dronten involved collaboration between architects, urban planners, landscape architects and engineers elaborated to the *Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken*. The design was based on a combination of functional requirements and aesthetic considerations, with a focus on creating a liveable, green and attractive community (Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken, 1958).

For a successful development of a B-core, accessibility is essential. For the orientation of Dronten the polder canal and the primary connection of Zwolle–Kampen–Lelystad played an important role in this, and they already considered a possible railway at this route (which was not realized until 2012). The connection of Southern Flevoland with Harderwijk, Elburg, and the Veluwe is seen as a secondary road (Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken, 1958).

For the design of the village Dronten, shown in two schematic first structure plans in figure 9 and 10, there was much discussion about the role of the water. The location of Dronten was always planned to be on the outside of the Lage Vaart, a canal from the western part with a strong bend to the northeast. The east and north sides of the town are surrounded by the polder ring road, connecting Dronten to Swifterbant and Biddinghuizen. While the interurban roads are located around Dronten, the local roads into the centre became an important principle for its structure. From the four wind directions, roads were led directly into the centre, called: The North, The East, The South and The West. The connection of three roads in the southern corner of the centre and the location of the Lage Vaart gave Dronten an L-shape, the centre surrounded by residential buildings on both sides. At this intersection point was space planned for the town hall and a trade fair building for agricultural, with a theatre and café function adjacent to a central market square. However, in this first plan, the centre was not yet connected to the water, and the buildings were enclosed on all sides by green areas, with sports facilities, allotments, and a cemetery (Otto, 1972).



Figure 9. J. van Tol: schematic structure plan Dronten, 1959, scale 1:5.000 (Tol, 1959)

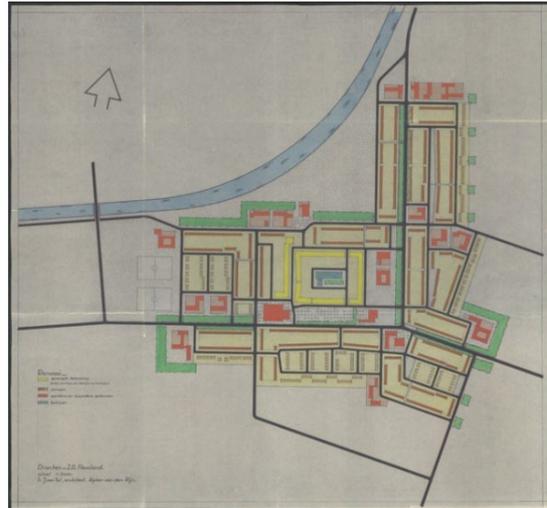


Figure 10. J. van Tol: schematic structure plan Dronten, 1959, scale 1:2.000 (Tol, 1959)

In the revision of the initial plan, shown in figure 11 and 12, the expansion of the population to about twenty thousand, with Dronten receiving the corresponding facilities, was taken into account. The centre of the village and its residential area shifted slightly to the east, creating more space for the canal and a green area around it, that was intended to become a central element. Engineer J. van Tol indicated that various elements were essential for the structural plan, like: residential neighbourhoods, a shopping centre with a market, green areas with a sports park, and industrial estates. The residential neighbourhoods now formed a shell around the rectangular centre, with a much larger proportion. Based on this plan, the first housing plans were made (Otto, 1972).



Figure 11. J. Van Tol: structure plan Dronten, 1959, scale 1:5.000 (Tol, 1959)

Not until 1965 was the above described plan revised, with the arrival of *De Meerpaal*, a multi-functional community centre, making it necessary to relocate the infrastructure in the centre. The function of *De Meerpaal* was to serve as a meeting place for residents. The architect of the building proposed it as an indoor square for pedestrians, which gave the purpose to make the design of the centre more car-free (Otto, 1972).

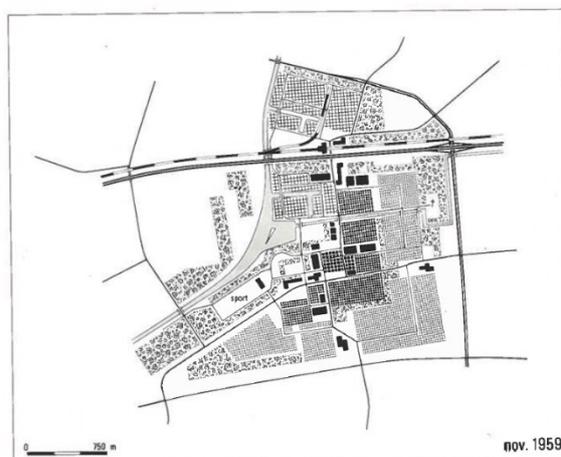


Figure 12. J. Van Tol: structuurtekening Dronten, 1959 (Otto, 1972)

3.3 Social cohesion in the design of municipality and 'new town' Dronten

Despite the fact that the plans were made during a time when social cohesion was a widely discussed value in literature about architecture and social planning, the creation of social cohesion is not directly reflected. In the design of Eastern Flevoland, much attention was given to determining the number of cores and conducting research into the number of residents these cores would have. However, the creation of social cohesion is not directly reflected in the plans of municipality Dronten. The design plans, created by those involved in the *Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken*, had a clear top-down approach. The planners and designers came together to discuss the plans and then create the design. For example, Cornelis van Eesteren is known for his focus on functionality, simplicity, and rationality, and his association with CIAM confirms his modernist approach.

The modernist simplicity and functionality are also visible in the plans. The plan for Eastern Flevoland is focused on agriculture, and the landscape has been designed accordingly. However, some have commented that the plans are too heavily based on experiences from the 'old land' while this is actually 'new land' being created. A counter-movement among urban planners argues for a more idealistic approach in which the design is created for the idealistic but down-to-earth modern farmer who will inhabit this area. According to them, this 'new land' provides an opportunity to exude more character and not be influenced too much by the urbanization of the 'old land'.

So, the ideas about social cohesion in the design did not go beyond the practical matters of how many residential areas should be created and the number of residents. Although, it is noteworthy that the plan left a lot of room for change in a time of many developments. Additionally, at a time of a strongly religious segregated society, when designing the residential cores of Eastern Flevoland, consideration was given to accommodating three different groups rather than just one, as was the case in many rural villages at that time. Each group was given their own church, school, and association buildings.

The design of the village Dronten itself has more elements to do with social cohesion, for example through focusing on a liveable, green and attractive community. The plans intent to make room for the water of the Lage Vaart, to create a port, with a green connection to the centre on Dronten. However, the layout of the village of Dronten has a clear division between living, working and recreation. This refers to the modernist period in which it was designed. According to Van Tol, various elements were essential for the plan of Dronten: residential neighbourhoods, a shopping centre with a market, green areas with a sports park, and industrial estates. These elements and the planning of *De Meerpaal*, a multi-functional community centre, were intend to serve as a meeting place for residents and create a sense of community.

Chapter 4. Social cohesion established in 'new town' Dronten

In the fourth chapter the establishing of social cohesion will be described by explaining how the society is formed and in what way the first development of the town took place.

4.1 Establishing a new society on new land

The first inhabitants who moved to 'new town' Dronten around 1958 were mainly workers for the land construction, of whom many came from the Noordoostpolder. They lived in labour camps that were set up, and already during their work breaks in the canteen first meetings about the establishment of various associations were held. In the early years, a lot of initiative from residents came to form communities and clubs for various reasons and backgrounds. The Association of Village Interests was also established, and a chairman was appointed, primarily because this person was the only one who was educated. During the meetings, they discussed topics such as allotment gardens, celebration of Sinterklaas, bus-arrangements for children, the establishment of an ice rink, playgrounds, and a swimming pool. Sports and game clubs became very important. Everything during this period was done in consultation with the *Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders*, and the Association of Village Interests had a lot of influence in the design of the town. The society at the time was strongly divided into groups, so the Association of Village Interests made sure that there was someone from each group to represent them (Ascherl, 2011).

The *polder pioneers* established a new society in Dronten. People came from all over the country, each with their own traditions and religions and many with the intention of developing a new form of society. An important difference between Eastern Flevoland and the rest of the Netherlands is that no ideology in terms of religion dominates in Flevoland. This mostly resulted in only one association for everyone. The 'de-segregation' on society in terms of religion, was from not from an ideological point of view, but because the community was too small for multiple associations of the same kind (Ascherl, 2011). The new residents, or *polder pioneers*, who settled in the first houses in Dronten around 1962 were mainly farmers and farm workers. Farmers were selected by authorities, because they could sign-up for a strict selection to qualify, in terms of educational aspects and level professionalism, for piece of land (Schmidt, De Canon van Dronten, 2017).

It was not until 1972 that the eastern part of Eastern Flevoland, excluding Lelystad, was established as the municipality of Dronten. With this change, the influence that the Association of Village Interests had in the design of the town largely disappeared (Schmidt, De Canon van Dronten, 2017).

4.2 Establishing social cohesion during the first development of 'new town' Dronten

The design of Dronten, shown in figure 13 and 14, offered space for living, working and leisure, but three are quite separates in the plans. Referring to chapter one, this can be considered typically modernistic and matches the approach architects and urban planners of that period, such as Le Corbusier, had.

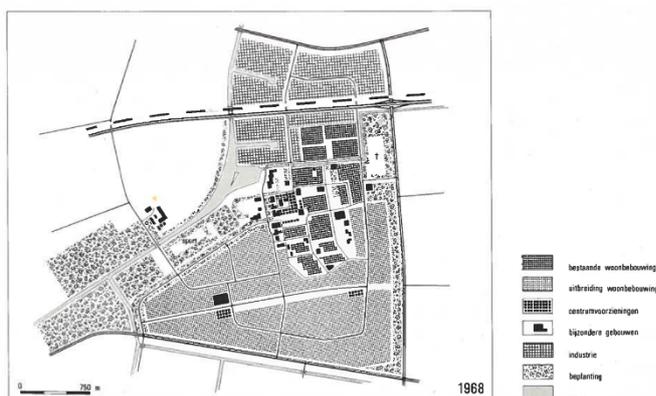


Figure 13. Plan of Dronten 1966 (Otto, 1972)



Figure 14. Plan of Dronten 18-05-1970 (*Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders*, 1970)

Living

In 1960, construction began on the first houses, shops, and office buildings, and in 1962, the first official residents settled in houses on the Lijzijde. The housing core was a popular challenge for architects, and the fantasy had plenty of room. On the Lijzijde, the houses were provided with a roof that, together with the buildings behind them, represented the waves of the sea. These so-called wave and dike houses were designed by architect Romke de Vries and built in 1959/1960. Despite the fact that the polder was still bare and empty, people wanted to live there. Where else could you get such a spacious house in those days, with a bathroom and shower? It was pure luxury, and in the beginning, you even received a 35 percent discount on rent. This was called an 'inconvenience allowance' because society was still under construction and not yet complete. The national government was ahead of the new development and more conservative with the housing itself. They built houses for different social classes. The North was built for executives, where the pastor, mayor, and doctor lived. The Lijzijde and the West were built for middle-class citizens. The houses were smaller, and their gardens were narrower. Finally, the East was for working-class citizens, where the houses were even smaller and had less space in their gardens (Schmidt, De Canon van Dronten, 2017).

According to Jane Jacobs it is important to have mixed-use within a neighbourhood, to obtain diversity and a sense of community (Jacobs, 1961). Despite the fact that the planners of Dronten intended to provide a certain mix of housing. These houses were segregated into different neighbourhoods and parts of the village.

Working

Beside the farmers industry and the centre of Dronten, is also visible in the plans that industrial areas were planned in the village. Job opportunities in Dronten included all sectors such as economic, social, industrial and agricultural sectors (Otto, 1972).

Leisure

Space for leisure and recreation was a significant principle in the design of Dronten. Right from the start of the design was room for green public space, such as forest *Het Wisentbos*, sports facilities and area's, a swimming pool, the petting zoo, the port and the water, the ice rink during the winter, manage, and so on.

The most important factor in terms of leisure, which caused for a development in the design of Dronten in 1965, was the arrival of community centre *De Meerpaal*. The building opened in the freshly reclaimed Flevopolder. De Meerpaal, designed by Dutch architect Frank van Klingereren was a multi-purpose building seen as an inside square, intended as meeting space for residents. The purpose of the building was to declutter society by providing one large, open space for a variety of activities including town council meetings, sports events, theatre performances, a restaurant, a market, and radio broadcasts without significant visual or acoustic separation. The design of community centre was meant to be a multifunctional building with a central fair function (Schmidt, Het Hart Van Dronten, 2017). The building became a symbol of a 'manageable society' which the architect believed in, characterised by its openness, transparency and tolerance. The concept of the manageable society became a paradigm of social democracy, particularly in the Netherlands, which has largely been rebuilt by people and envisioned as a large, open space where multiculturalism can thrive. However, this vision has not become a reality, and increasing diversity has instead led to a fragmented urban landscape with polarized communities. The De Meerpaal has since been renovated with visual and acoustic separation, but the idea of the Open City as a spatial representation of an open society remains relevant, albeit as a dynamic balance between integrating and disintegrating forces (Christiaanse, 2009).

De Meerpaal was built in the centre of Dronten where initially in the design of engineer J. van Tol the North-South and East-West connection was located. Van Klengeren thought it was ironic that the community centre stood literally 'in the way', which matched his philosophy of 'nuisance leads to contact' (Schmidt, Het Hart Van Dronten, 2017). A centre of meeting space was born by the built of De Meerpaal, located on the square where De Rede and Het Ruim connected, from now on the end of the traffic route for cars and the beginning of a meeting point for pedestrians. Later on, the building as a cultural centre housed a theatre, cinema, library and school for music, dance and theatre lessons (Otto, 1972).

In the late 1970's, Dronten participated in a popular Dutch television game of the NCRV called *De Dubbele Zeskamp*. The show involved teams competing in various physical and mental challenges. The Dronten team won the first prize, which was seen as a demonstration of the strong social cohesion and community spirit in the town. The fact that the team was able to work together effectively and achieve success in a competitive setting was seen as evidence of a healthy and connected community in Dronten (Griede, 2005).

The shopping centre in Dronten started with temporary shops housed in residential buildings. Later on, the first real shops with apartments above them were built on *Het Ruim*. In the beginning, cars were allowed to park in front of the shops. The central square, De Rede, originally served as a bus station and parking space, was later a location for the weekly market, fairs, and the establishment of the hotel-café-restaurant *Het Galjoen*. In 1981, the new town hall designed by Prof. Mr. M. Rood was built on one side of the square. On the other side of the square was *De Meerpaal* located.

Due to the diversity in religion, several churches were built in Dronten. The first church in Dronten was the *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk*, Dutch reformed church, which was built in 1964. This was followed by the *Gereformeerde Kerk*, reformed church, in 1965 and the *Rooms-Katholieke Kerk*, roman catholic church, in 1966. The churches played an important role in the social and cultural life of the community, and many activities and events were organized by the various church groups (Otto, 1972).

Referring to chapter one and the theory of Kevin Lynch, who cites the importance of well-designed public spaces, such as parks or plazas, that can serve as gathering places where people from different backgrounds can come together and interact (Lynch, 1960), the design of De Meerpaal and the square in front of it matches this. Also the green public spaces, sports facilities and other that were considered into the design of Dronten prove that.

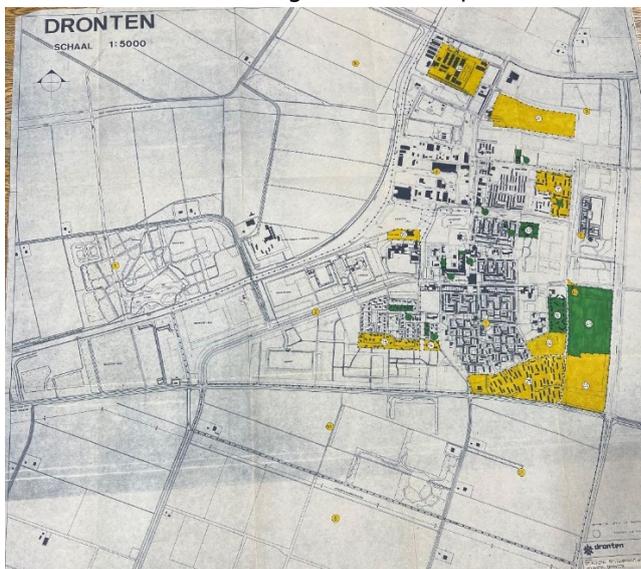


Figure 15. Plan of Dronten 15-12-1975 (Rijdsdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders, 1970)

Chapter 5. Conclusion

As a unique situation of creating a completely new society and living environment was the case in Flevoland, it is very interesting to gain more insight in how issues such as social cohesion are taken into account by the planning, designing and development of a new municipality and the town Dronten itself. Based on this topic, the following research question for the thesis have arisen: *To what extend is social cohesion recognisable in the spatial planning and urban designs of the period 1950 until the 1980 of municipality and 'new town' Dronten?*

To answer the main research question, an answer to four sub-questions is provided, of which the first was about aspects of urban planning and design regarding social cohesion in a neighbourhood during the period of 1950 until 1980. According to the first chapter the concept of social cohesion refers to individuals feelings in a collective connection. Which includes creating a social network and social control in a living environment where people share values and have trust in political processes, all of which are crucial for creating a sense of community and belonging in society. Achieving a certain level of social cohesion in a neighbourhood or city, aspects of urban planning relate to it can be distinguished. The chapter mentioned aspects as providing inclusive social services, social control and safety, facilitating places to meet in public space with care for its identity, mobility and accessibility. A factor that contribute to a sense of community is to implement social mix, by for example providing housing diversification and thereby commercial services (Kleinhans, 2012). Another important aspect, mentioned, is the role of public spaces for residents to meet each other (Brock, Kwakernaak, Meere, & Boutellier, 2019) and to strengthen this, providing facilities will follow (Witten, Exeter, & Field, 2003). Also, safety and social control in a neighbourhood contribute to a great sense of community, because it creates 'eyes on the street' (Brock, Kwakernaak, Meere, & Boutellier, 2019).

The period from around 1950 to 1980 was marked by significant changes in urban planning and design. In this post-war period was a strong focus on reconstruction and modernization, because of the damage emerged during the Second World War. This led to the development of new approaches, with a focus on functionalism, rationality, and efficiency. One important influence according to modernist urban planning and architectural design was architect Le Corbusier, an approach that also faced significant criticism (Fitting, 2002). Jacobs argues that the modernistic and top-down planning practices (established by Le Corbusier) are misguided and eventually harmful to cities, as they destroy the social and economic networks that make urban neighbourhoods thrive. She advocates for a more bottom-up approach to urban planning, where cities are built around the needs and desires of their residents, rather than the visions of architects and city planners. Jacobs emphasizes primarily the importance of mixed-use neighbourhoods, with diversity of building types, uses and ages. Jacobs believed that the presence of people walking, sitting, and talking on the streets was crucial for deterring crime and creating a sense of community (Jacobs, 1961).

More on the topic of the process of planning and designing Kevin Lynch argues that the identity and character of a city are shaped not only by its physical form but also by the shared experiences and values of its residents. He suggests that the design of public spaces and the provision of community amenities can help foster a sense of social cohesion and facilitate interaction between different groups of people (Lynch, 1960).

Although Dronten now is only 65 years old, the history about the area starts before the reclaiming period. Due to the need of new land for housing and food production after the Second World War and the flood disaster, the polder was initially created to make more space for agriculture and farms. These initial plans were similar to those of the Noordoostpolder, so much attention was given to determining the number of cores and conducting research into the number of residents these cores would have. Before the land was fully reclaimed, the first designs for the layout of Eastern Flevoland

were made. The initial plan of multiple A-core villages, one C-core, Lelystad, and one B-core, Dronten changed into establishing two smaller villages in addition to the central core Dronten. This because of experience of the Noordoostpolder and fast changes in mobility and other developments that took place. So, the design of Eastern Flevoland focused on practicalities such as determining the number of residential areas and the number of residents, rather than on social cohesion. The plan had a top-down approach with a modernist simplicity and functionality and was heavily based on experiences from the 'old land'. However, consideration was given to accommodating three different groups rather than just one when designing the residential cores. This includes also various churches and schools for every group. Nevertheless, the society was too small to establish an association for every group, so a kind of de-segregation in terms of religion took place. Also, the plan left a lot of room for change in a period of many developments.

The design of the town Dronten had more elements in regard to social cohesion, with a focus on a liveable, green, and attractive community. It had a clear division between living, working, and recreation, and the planning of De Meerpaal was intended to serve as a meeting place for residents and create a sense of community. Especially, since the arrival of the first inhabitants of Dronten a more bottom-up approach of design started. Because of the Association of Village Interests and a lot of associations that emerged arose the importance and awareness of social cohesion.

The thesis concludes that the modernistic approach ensured that the plans of municipality and 'new town' Dronten were focused on functionality in stead of a social aspect. The separation in functions of living, working and recreation is also reflected in the design of Dronten, even as in the modernist approach of for example Le Corbusier. This reflects the time in which the design process took place. According to the importance of mixed-use within a neighbourhood, to obtain diversity and a sense of community, the planners of Dronten intended to provide a certain mix of housing. Although, the houses were segregated into different neighbourhoods and parts of the village. The design of De Meerpaal and the square in front of it, the green public spaces and for example sports facilities that were considered into the design of Dronten do matches the theory of Kevin Lynch, who cites the importance of well-designed public spaces, such as parks or plazas, that can serve as gathering places where people from different backgrounds can come together and interact.

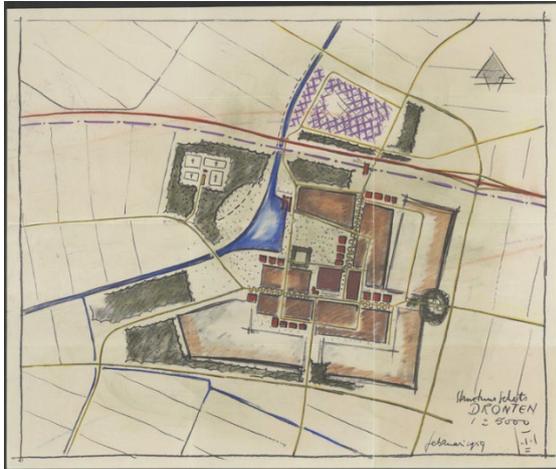
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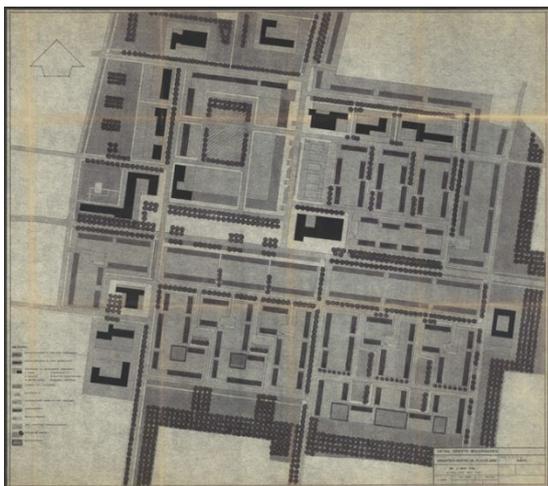
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Appendix I. Additional structure plans of Dronten

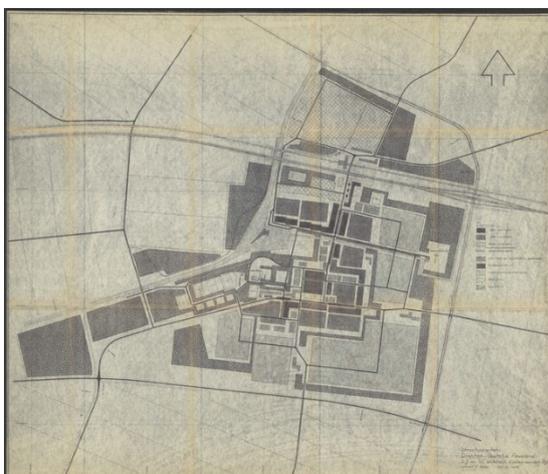
In addition to paragraph '3.2 First design of Dronten', structure plans of Dronten are shown.



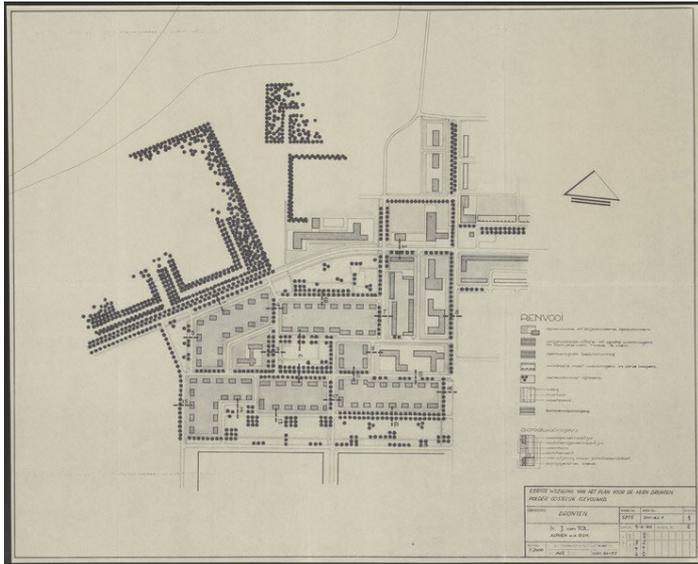
J. van Tol: schematic structure plan Dronten, 1959, scale 1:5.000



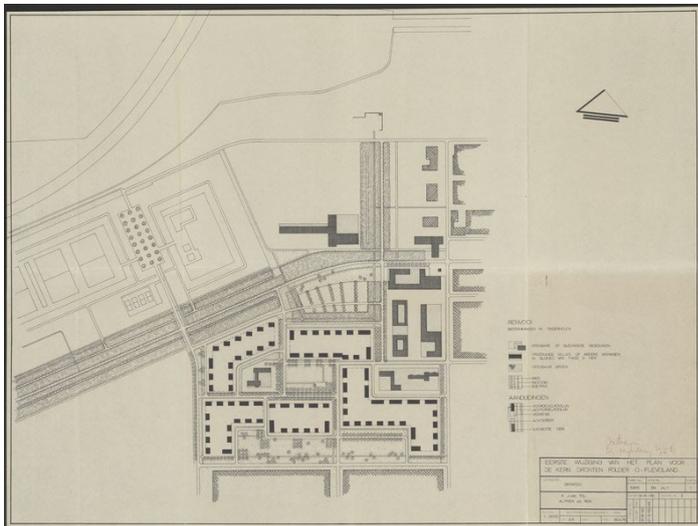
J. van Tol: fragment situational drawing Dronten, 1959, scale 1:1.000



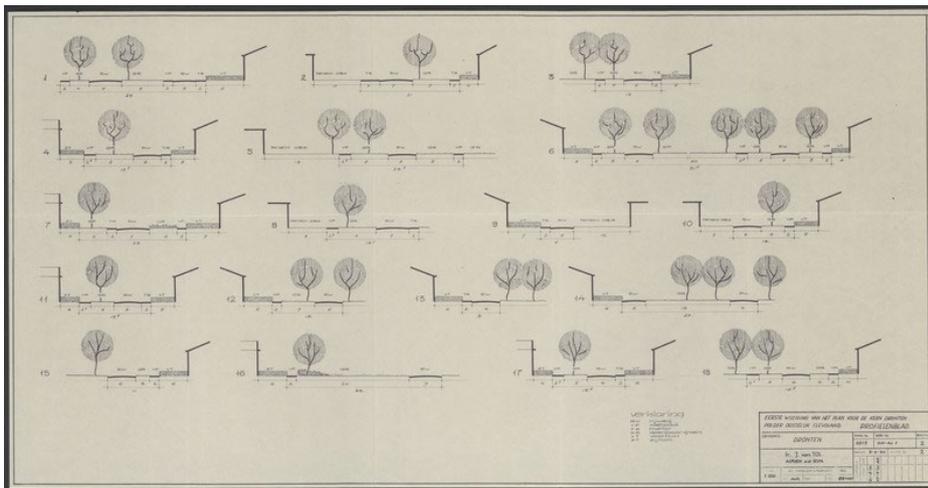
J. van Tol: structure plan Dronten, 1959, scale 1:5.000



J. van Tol: first changes of the plan of Dronthen, 1960, scale 1:2.000



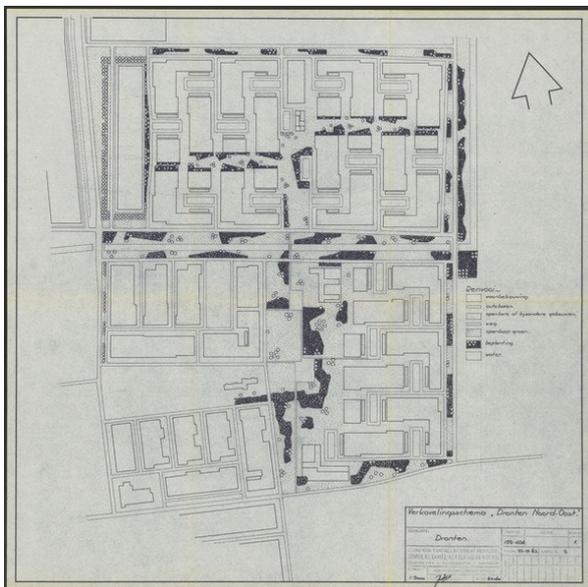
J. van Tol: first changes of the plan of Dronthen, 1960, scale 1:2.000



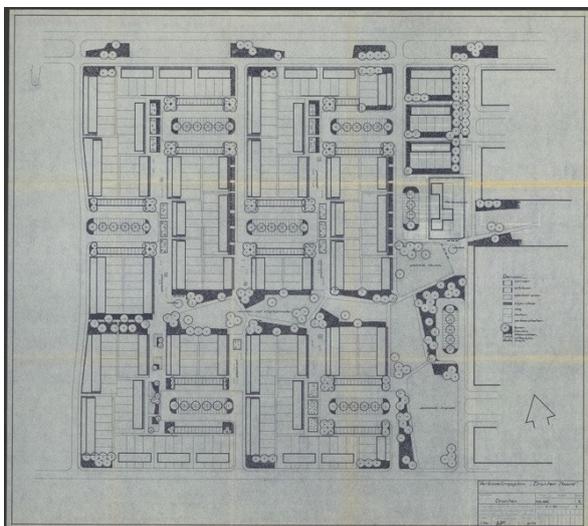
J. van Tol: first changes of the plan of Dronthen, street profile sections, 1960, scale 1:2.000



H. Warnau: central green public space Dronten, landscape architects, 1960, scale 1:2.000



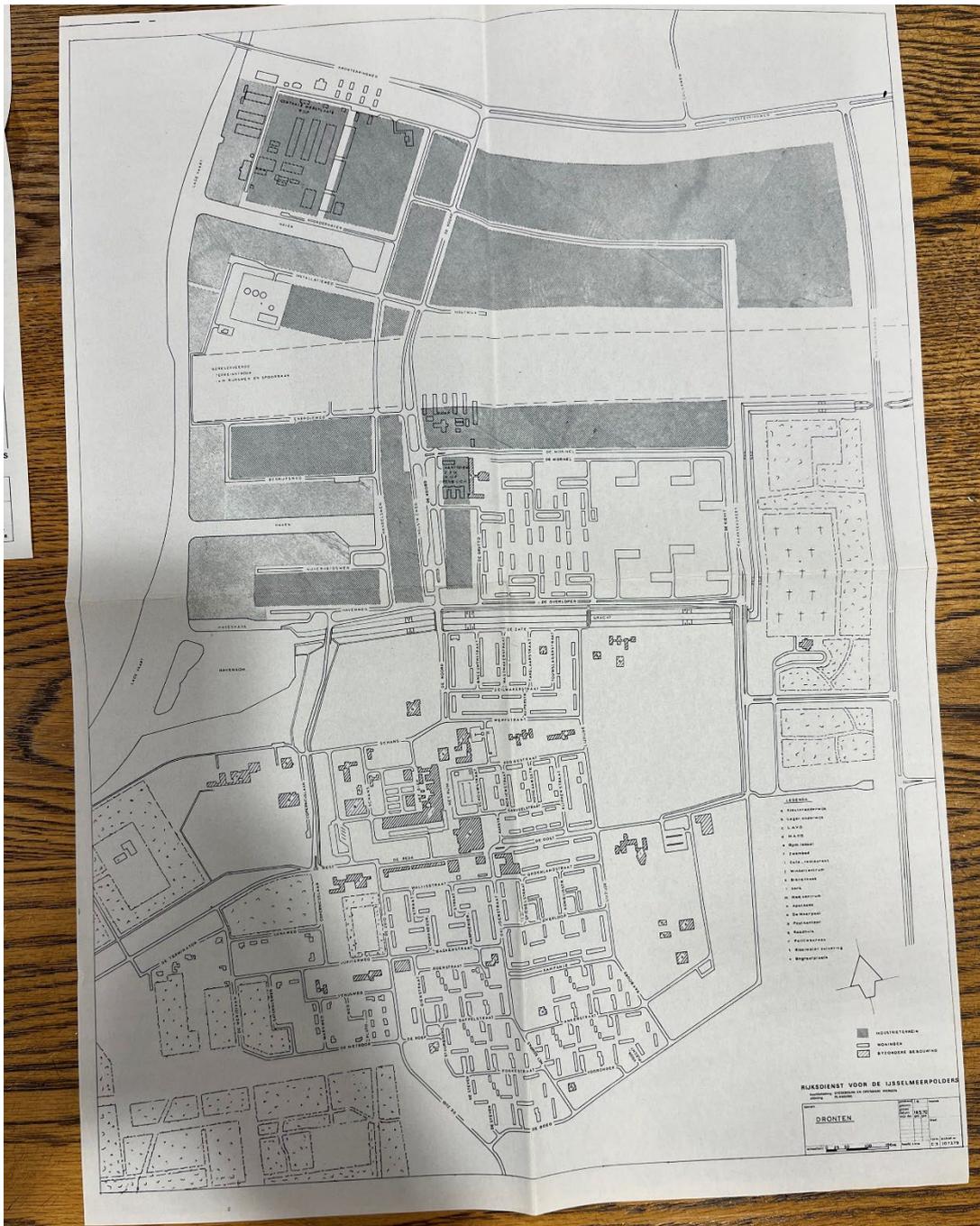
J. van Tol: subdivision plan Dronten North-East, 1963, scale 1:2.000



J. van Tol: subdivision plan Dronten North, 1964, scale 1:2.000

Appendix II. Additional structure plans of the development of Dronten

In addition to chapter 4, plans of Dronten are shown.



Het Flevolands Archief, Dronten, 18-05-1970

