

Reflection Paper

TU Delft Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment

Dwelling Graduation Studio:

Designing for Health and Care, towards a healthy and inclusive living environment

Bugra Atciyurt

5248035

08-05-2023

Tutors:

Birgit Jürgenhake

Frederique van Aniel

Lex van Deudekom

1. The relationship between graduation project topic, master track (AR) and master programme (MSc AUBS)

The Dutch healthcare is under pressure and the studio 'Designing for Health & Care' gives the perfect opportunity to find new possibilities to future-proof our care. Dementia is a growing problem and can result into problems in the future. Approaching and solving this problem in time can raise awareness, inspire more designers and be helpful for society.

In relation to the Dwelling Graduation Studio: Designing for Health and Care in an inclusive environment, I made a strategy to transform existing neighborhoods into a dementia-friendly and inclusive living environment. The goal is to think forward before we face problems and reduce the pressure on the Dutch healthcare. The theme Health and care is addressed by making a neighborhood strategy and the design of two buildings which will assist and add value to people with dementia and their caregivers. The Architectural design is also in relation with the master track Architecture.

2. How did your research influence your design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

The research acted as a foundation for the design project. The first step was to understand who to design for. Various target groups are involved and each have their own needs and wishes. These needs and wishes are used to make a spatial program for additional facilities in an existing neighborhood. The micro-scale and macro-scale guidelines are both utilized to solve the problems of aging in place on different scales. The micro-scale principles are used to design two dementia-friendly public buildings which are a part of the macro-scale strategy. Dementia-friendly interventions on neighborhood level are made with the use of a tier list. The items on the list are divided into tiers or categories, with the top tier containing the most important items, and the lower tiers containing items of lesser urgency or value. This was a helpful tool for decision-making and making the planning for a dementia-friendly spoorwijk in 5 years.

3. How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

My first approach to find a topic for my graduation, was to search for a problem. When I started with the studio I had no idea what topic to choose. It was important for me to find a topic that we can benefit from. This search led to the topic of aging in place with dementia and the future problems we will face.

While there is plenty of information available on micro-scale design concepts, there are limited research and reference projects on dementia-friendly neighborhoods (macro-scale). Current studies merely state a few ideas and provide small examples. This resulted in a lack of literature and projects to analyze as a case study or reference project. The approach here was to make an overview of micro-scale principles and use these as a foundation and act as a starting point to find possibilities to implement these on a larger (neighborhood) scale. The design project makes use of both the micro-scale and macro-scale principles. The used methodology is a combination of literature study, a case study and interviews with caregivers. These methods assisted me in gaining a better knowledge of the target groups and developing design guidelines.

4. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

Studies about dementia-friendly architecture have been done before. However, studies focusing on upscaling the dementia-friendly design principles to apply in neighborhood context are rare. Current solutions are not perfect, which offers an opportunity to find or improve with this research. For this reason, this study focuses on dementia friendly solutions for current Dutch neighborhoods to allow people with dementia to live in their own homes for as long as possible. As the dementia problem in the Netherlands grows, the relevance and value of this study will increase.

The information gained during my research, fieldwork, interviews and observations made me realize the importance and urgency of the subject. The lack of studies and examples about dementia-friendly neighborhoods made it difficult for me to get a grip on the subject. This made me change my approach which resulted in finding existing dementia-friendly solutions first. These findings are used to find new solutions which can be implemented on a larger scale. With my research, a new strategy is developed to make a neighborhood dementia-friendly in 5 years. The lack of strategies, designs and studies also gave me a lot of motivation to work on this project.

Three target groups are involved with dementia and the main target group is the people with dementia. While the whole design and strategy revolves around this group, it is not possible to interview them due to ethical reasons. This makes it difficult to really understand their wishes and needs. This lack of information is compensated with literature study and interviews with caregivers. This study can be further developed by doing more observations on people with dementia and making persona's of their character behaviour.

5. How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

The result of the graduation project is a strategy to make neighborhoods dementia-friendly in 5 years. The micro-scale and macro-scale principles gained from research are combined to make this strategy in an existing neighborhood in the Netherlands. The used guidelines, tier lists and strategy can be transferrable and implemented in other neighborhoods. A sidenote here is to make an analysis and overview of the opportunities in the neighborhoods. Not every neighborhood is the same and has different opportunities. Factors like population, building period, typologies, existing facilities and density must be taken into account. The designed buildings are context related and correspond with location, plot, material use and other design choices. These designs are less likely to be transferrable, but the approach can be. The time constraint resulted in a lack of analysis of various Dutch neighborhoods from different time periods. The project only focuses on Spoorwijk in Den Haag and transformed this neighborhood.

6. Personal reflection

Looking back at the entire process and the designed products for the graduation, I am glad I chose this studio. The studio caught my interest after doing the Health & Care dwelling studio in MSc2, which resulted in my interest to continue on this path.

Finding my topic didn't take long and it motivated me a lot, because there are not much solutions or studies done before. During the research and concept phase I had difficulties to find a proper solution to solve my problem. It took me a few weeks to understand that there is no golden solution. My tutors advised me to visit the project location and look for possibilities and opportunities in the neighborhood. They asked me to act like a specialist who has to give the municipality a fictional advise. Going back to the neighborhood and looking at it from this angle helped me a lot. This made me realize that the answer is to utilize a collection of solutions on various scales.

During the design process I had no real difficulties. The idea was to design several buildings in the neighborhood, but the tutors rather wanted quality over quantity. This made me take a step back and choose two public buildings to focus on and design. The feedback on the design proces was very useful, which made me more satisfied. My technical background also made it easier on the building technology part.

The graduation process was not very smooth for me and had its ups and downs. Still, I am very happy with the result. I learned a lot about dementia, the wishes and needs of the target groups and dementia-friendly design on several scales.