

### Colophon

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Tutor Catja Edens

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## **ABSTRACT**

Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel emerges as a significant figure in Dutch architectural history, reshaping urban living discourse in the post-war era. This study explores her focus on gender-inclusive design, intersecting with transformative societal shifts and architectural innovations. Through case studies and socio-cultural analysis, it investigates the prevailing context during Hartsuyker-Curjel's emphasis on gender-inclusive designs in the 1980s. Grounded in historical frameworks and supported by literature, the research reveals the dynamic interplay between societal perceptions of gender roles and architectural works. Hartsuyker-Curjel's projects, the Geindriedorp and Borssenburgplein developments, exemplify her commitment to inclusivity and innovation. The 'Burgerziekenhuis voor Vrouwen' project stands as a testament to community-driven initiatives promoting gender equality. This thesis raises questions about the appearance of underrepresentation of the BVV project in professional discourse, urging further investigation into systemic biases within the architectural profession. Overall, Hartsuyker-Curjel's work invites reflection on architecture's broader role in shaping societal values and fostering diversity, serving as a catalyst for creating more humane and sustainable built environments.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Dutch architectural history, Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel emerges as a significant figure who reshaped the discourse on urban living in the post-war era. Of German heritage, her architectural journey intersected with a transformative period in Dutch society marked by post-war reconstruction and social reforms.

Upon completing her studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, Hartsuyker-Curjel migrated to the Netherlands with her husband, Enrico Hartsuyker, in 1953. Their arrival coincided with a period of reconstruction following World War II, with social housing emerging as a focal point of governmental policy (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). Their own experiences in social housing underscored disparities between existing architectural norms and their vision for cohesive urban communities (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008).

Hartsuyker-Curjel and her husband established an architectural firm in 1960, marking the onset of a career characterized by innovative (urban) designs (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). Notable among their contributions was the creation of Biopolis, a sustainable urban model challenging prevailing notions of spatial segregation.

However, Hartsuyker-Curjel's architectural pursuits went beyond innovation; they mirrored the broader societal shifts occurring within Dutch society. The growing discontent with conventional housing practices prompted governmental initiatives, such as the designation of 'experimental' housing projects, which provided additional funding for innovative designs (Barzilay et al., 2019). Hartsuyker-Curjel's projects, benefiting from such initiatives, demonstrated the existent spirit of experimentation and critique that characterized Dutch architectural discourse.

As the 1980s unfolded, societal critiques extended beyond architectural norms to encompass broader gender dynamics and family structures (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). In response, Hartsuyker-Curjel's engagement with the national foundation "Vrouwen Bouwen en Wonen" (Women Build and Live - VBW) signaled a departure from traditional architectural hierarchies towards gender-inclusive design. This focus prompts further examination into the interplay of architectural practice, gender roles, and societal emancipation within the Dutch context.

The central question of this thesis is: What was the prevailing social, cultural, and professional context during Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel's focus on genderinclusive designs during the 1980s? Preliminary analysis suggests that Hartsuyker-Curjel's emphasis on gender-inclusive designs was influenced by a combination of evolving societal perceptions regarding gender roles and shifting architectural frameworks within the Netherlands.

The research is supported by literature that provide insight in to this socio-cultural context. In recent decades, scholarly research into the intersection of architecture, gender studies, and societal dynamics has generated a lot of insights into the ways in which built environments reflect and shape cultural norms and identities (Bijker & Bijsterveld, 2000). For example, works by Dolores Hayden (1976, 1982, 1984) and feminist collective Matrix's publication (1984) challenge traditional notions of gender roles in architecture and highlight the ways in which societal biases shape the built environment. These international works broaden the understanding of the global discourse on gender roles in architecture and urban design. Van Moorsel's Contact en Controle (1992) delves into Dutch public housing policies since 1946 and their implicit reinforcement of gendered ideologies,

shedding light on institutional factors that may have influenced Hartsuyker-Curjel's architectural practice. This provides a deeper understanding of how architectural interventions intersect with societal norms and power structures. Renou's study Bouwen in haar perspectief (1988) explores the consequences of social change on the built environment, highlighting the evolving dynamics of urban spaces in response to shifting societal values. These works further contextualize the societal and professional dynamics at play in the Netherlands during Hartsuyker-Curjel's career.

Articles written by Hartsuyker-Curjel herself are also highly relevant as they contributed to the discourse on gender-inclusive architecture and urban planning.

Literature exists regarding the architectural endeavors of Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel, particularly the comprehensive monograph by van Moorsel and Segaar-Höweler (2008) on the works of the Hartsuyker couple. However, monographs often focus solely on the contributions of the architect, inadvertently detaching her from the broader architectural discourse (Lange & Pérez-Morena, 2020). This thesis aims to provide a broader context for Hartsuyker-Curjel's contributions.

This research delves into three case studies, each pivotal in Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel's career, where she engages with gender-inclusive designs or feminist projects. Additionally, it explores the socio-cultural and professional contexts surrounding these case studies. The first case study comprises Hartsuyker-Curjel's two studies on floorplans, published in an article in the magazine BOUW (1983). These studies represent some of her earliest efforts to advocate for non-hierarchical floorplans as an alternative to traditional social housing designs. The second case study encompasses the projects Geindriedorp (1984-1986) and Borssenburgplein (1985-1987), which are realizations of the

aforementioned studies. The final case study explores the 'Burgerziekenhuis voor Vrouwen' project, an ambitious initiative aimed at creating a work and living center exclusively for women in Amsterdam-East.

Fig. 1 Architect Luzia
Hartsuyker-Curjel behind the
drawing board. (Bogaerts,
1987)



i sumte, een tevendige bru ute souder platoud west to un uen zone de voor lames van de de italiaanse, zuid-hanse en spac den leven ous, hoe een bruten het ware tevens een trumen kan tgaan in deze steden is niet een jeven naar een lege openheid, r van de vorspronkelijke nateur inte, verbokkeld en versneden ouvenuanas, maar vaar een u ougeving, welke wel defelijk ? je vouingen gevorunt is. us terdam kent dit welgevor mole den feen statische ontweeting id, enaar zij zijn seen doel nie p ear výten doa hum richtring h u de verder jelegen doel (alat er i val namelités is). nt Mederland (inhertraupt de no pese en woord-amerikaanse echts wernife goede pleinen in her ble lup jeschiedenis, in tegen de lateinse landen-de mode idie tid heeft is evenceus in

# 2. STUDIES 'UNDEFINED LIVING'

This chapter delves into the historical context of public housing in the Netherlands, focusing on the period from 1901 to 1980. It then discusses architect Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel's innovative housing designs, more specifically her studies presented in the article "Ongedifinieerd wonen voorziet in méér behoeften" [Undefined living meets more needs] in the magazine BOUW (1983), which proposed alternatives to traditional housing layouts. These designs aimed to address evolving societal needs and advocate for gender-inclusive and adaptable housing solutions.

## 2.1 CONTEXTUALIZING THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1901, the Dutch government enacted The Housing Act, marking the initial phase of state regulation for public housing in the Netherlands (Beekers, 2012). Its goal was to prevent the construction and occupancy of substandard and unhealthy homes while promoting the development of high-quality housing. This legislative milestone is considered significant for the subsequent evolution of public housing in the Netherlands (Casciato et al., 1980).

During and after World War I, many municipalities prioritized public housing politically, laying the groundwork for the qualitative housing construction principles (de Vreeze, 1993). Post-World War II, the urgent need for housing led to a focus on producing homes efficiently and in large numbers, with less emphasis on their quality (Beekers, 2012; van Eldonk & Fassbinder, 1990). The period from 1968 till 1989 was typed to be a period of diversification of housing production (de Vreeze, 1993). The 1960s brought prosperity and progress to the Netherlands (Zanden & Lof, 1997). This prosperity led to an increased demand for living space (Barzilay et al., 2018). Criticism arose regarding the rigid uniformity and largescale of the housing stock, the approach to housing was too quantitive and architects had

very little influence (de Vreeze, 1993; van Eldonk & Fassbinder, 1990). As the housing crisis diminished in various regions, attention gradually shifted towards enhancing the quality of housing, surpassing the previous exclusive emphasis on quantity (Barzilay et al., 2018).

This era also saw a growing critique on rigid Modernist architecture and urban planning. In articles published in the architecture magazine Forum, architect Aldo van Eyck emphasized the importance of the 'human scale' in architectural design (Ligtelijn, 1999). Forum was an architecture

Fig. 2 The Zonnetrap, Rotterdam. (Unknown photographer, 1970). Archive: Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut, HART d143



magazine by the architecture society Architectura et Amicitia (A et A). This emphasis on a structuralist approach gained traction, particularly due to the influence of Forum architects within Dutch architecture schools (Barzilay et al., 2018).

To promote the prioritization of quality and renewed housing, Minister Schut of Housing and Regional Planning initiated the Experimental Housing program in 1968 (de Vreeze, 1993; de Vletter, 2004). The goal of this initiative was to promote innovations that helped improve the quality of housing. The focus would be to design according the 'strong variation of personal circumstances and preferences of people' (Barzilay et al., 2018). Once a month an advisory committee came together to review plans. The reviewed dwellings could exhibit various experimental characteristics related to the home, housing design, or living environment. Plans that were suffienct got a predicate Experimental Housing and were eligible for additional government funding (Barzilay et al., 2018; de Vreeze, 1993).

The Hartsuyker couple, known for their experimental housing approaches, benefited from this program, as seen in the Zonnetrap project in Rotterdam (figure 2). The floorplans but also the method of stacking of the apartments and the integration of different functions in the building were praised by the advisory committee (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008).

The Experimental Housing program came to an end in april 1980, influenced by economic factors and shifting priorities. However, its impact on architectural innovation and housing quality endured beyond its official end. A new foundation was established, the Stuurgroep Experimenten Volkshuisvesting (SEV) [Housing Experiments Steering Committee]. Instead of solely subsidizing design plans, greater emphasis was placed on policyrelated themes within housing provision (Barzilay et al., 2018).

## 2.2 AANALYSIS OF THE 'UNDEFINED LIVING' ARTICLE

In 1983, Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel introduced two floorplan studies in the weekly magazine Bouw, proposing alternatives to the traditional hierarchical layouts commonly found in social housing (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983).

In the article Hartsuyker-Curjel acknowledges that the housing discussion involves financial feasibility, technical aspects, and the influence of interest rates. However, she also emphasizes the importance of challenging other aspects. In the article, she discusses two significant dimensions.

Firstly, she introduces an emotional dimension concerning housing (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983). According to her perspective, the residential environment, whether consciously acknowledged or not, profoundly impacts human lives. Hartsuyker-Curjel suggests that human functioning is intrinsically driven by universally experienced impulses. Essential necessities such as food, air, light, and warmth are crucial for human well-being, she argues. Additionally, humans require spatial movement and the marking of territories, not only for safety but also as a manifestation of possession. Historically, these impulses have significantly influenced the architectural form of houses and the design of living environments. However, she observes that in contemporary times, this influence has become marginal. (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983).

One example illustrating how living environments shape people's lives is the case of the foundation Goed Wonen. The foundation Goed Wonen (1946-1968) played a crucial role in the postwar thinking about housing and subsequently in the design of the standard traditional house (van Moorsel, 1992). The foundation aimed to improve housing culture by teaching people how to better furnish their homes,

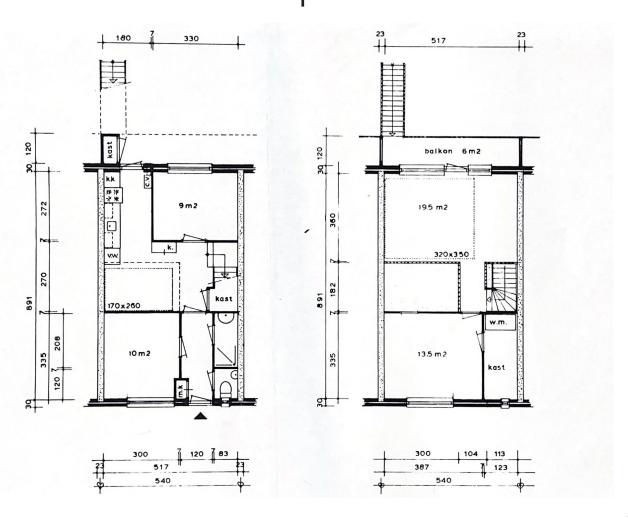
combining modern design with traditional family-mindedness. The consequent was the determination of the spatial position of woman, men and children in the standard traditional house (van Moorsel, 1992). However, societal changes, such as the evolving role of women in the 1980s, also necessitate reflections in housing design (Renoù, 1988).

This societal change aspect is the second significant dimension she introduces (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983). From her interpretation, social and political conditions traditionally held substantial sway over the design

and development of residential spaces, encompassing homes, living environments, and landscapes. However, Hartsuyker-Curjel contends that societal changes over the past century, spanning material and social dimensions, have reshaped daily life. These changes, as she describes them, include shifts in family structures, the demographic trend toward an aging population, the emergence of single-parent families, rising unemployment rates, the redefinition of work-life balance, and the advancement of women's rights (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983).

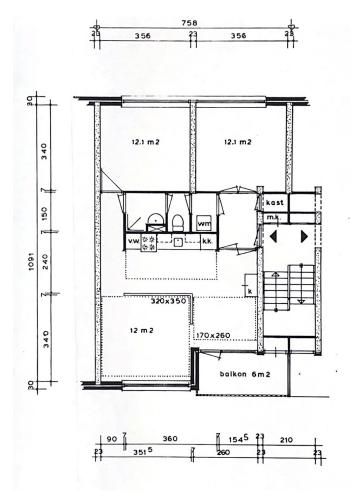
Hartsuyker-Curjel argues that despite these profound

Fig. 3 Floorplans 'Other Four Room House' (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983, p. 75)



societal shifts, they are not adequately reflected in the design and planning of residential spaces. Housing continues to be designed and constructed with a standardized approach, tailored primarily to meet the needs of "standard" families residing in typical homes within conventional neighborhoods. This standardized approach to housing design is critiqued by Hartsuyker-Curjel, who advocates for a more flexible and adaptive approach to housing design that can accommodate the evolving and diverse needs of contemporary society (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983).

Fig. 4 Floorplan 'Other Three Room Apartment' (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983, p. 75)



"De vrees voor een langere (en daardoor duurdere) planvoorbereiding doet menig opdrachtgever dermate schrikken, dat hij aan de oude programma's vasthoudt. De bewonder wordt de dupe. Het woningtekort dwingt hem, in een huis te gaan wonen, dat de maatschappij van jaren geleden vertegenwoordigt." [The fear of a longer (and therefore more expensive) planning preparation frightens many clients to such an extent that they cling to outdated programs. The tenant becomes the victim. The housing shortage forces him to live in a house that represents the society of years ago.] (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983, p. 74)

The evolving composition of households is also a topic discussed in the book 'Making Space' by the feminist collective Matrix (1984). They relate typical British floorplans to the oppression of women in society. By analyzing time-sequential floor plans, they discuss the dominant theme: the privatization of family life. Standard houses primarily accommodated the nuclear family, the dominant household form, with minimal privacy within the family.

#### **FLOORPLANS**

The floorplans she introduces are intended to present a different approach to housing: a framework that allows for social change and development (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983).

The first floor plan, named the "Other Four-Room House," is a design for a two-story house (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983). The floorplans are depicted in figure 3. Notably, she positioned the kitchen, bathroom, and dining area on the ground floor (she calls this the 'care area'). By this intervention, Hartsuyker-Curjel created a center of care in the house, where residents have the possibility to come together. As a result, there is more space on the first floor compared to standard traditional houses. This additional space gave way for the living

room situated on the first floor. The dining table is visible from the living room through a loft, which provides a sense of connection with the dining area visible through a loft, but also introduces a level of social control. The room on the ground floor near the entrance could function as a bedroom but also as an office or as a room to be rented to someone. Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel (2008) note that an overall undefined design is not yet evident in this floor plan. However, they find the second floor plan more promising.

The second floor plan, named the "Other Three-Room Apartment," features three equally sized rooms (12 square meters each), with the 'care area' situated in the center of the apartment, depicted in figure 4. Hartsuyker-Curjel's concept was that each room could function as a bedroom or sitting room, accommodating users with various household compositions (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983). These compositions can include small families, three adults with individual rooms sharing communal facilities, or a couple with an office space. An important aspect is that this accommodation could happen without major renovations to the apartment. Hartsuyker-Curjel mentions that by implementing only one housing type, a socially diverse population composition can still be created within the same residential block (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1983). This floor plan can accommodate the rapid changes of living and living habits.

## 2.3 INSIGHTS FROM ADDITIONAL ARTICLES AND INTERVIEWS

The studies ignited significant media attention, particularly the 'Other Three-Room Apartment', which sparked discussions due to its versatility (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). In these (news) articles, Hartsuyker-Curjel had the opportunity to further elaborate on her ideas regarding floorplans and broader concepts of

living. In an interview published in the feminist magazine Opzij (d'Anacona & van Schendelen, 1983), Hartsuyker-Curjel discussed the challenges she faced living in a public housing apartment in Watergraafsmeer. She shared her philosophy that life is movement, and for movement, one needs space. However, such space is lacking in public housing units where each room is predefined, limiting the possibility of other activities. This imposition of a specific way of living is something Hartsuyker-Curjel aims to avoid in her designs. She advocates for homes to be flexible and adaptable, where if necessary, the conventional model could also fit. Another example is an article in the women's magazine Viva (Merx, 1985). Hartsuyker-Curjel pointed out that men and women have different uses of the home; while men are often away working, women engage in various working tasks at home, making their use of space more dynamic. However, homes are typically designed by men, resulting in static living spaces (Merx, 1985). And according to her philosophy, a static life is not a fulfilling life. In the article, insights from architect Auke Mulder of the Amsterdam Housing Authority are also presented. Mulder indicates that evaluation studies conducted by the authority reveal a growing demand for a more flexible approach to housing (Merx, 1985). However, Mulder notes that housing associations, as the principal stakeholders, exhibit a degree of reluctance towards such approaches. Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel has been nominated several times but without success (Merx, 1985), indicating the challenges faced in implementing innovative housing designs within the current institutional framework. Overall, these discussions and interviews highlight Hartsuyker-Curjel's advocacy for flexible and adaptable housing designs.

In conclusion, the findings of this chapter highlight several social, cultural and professional aspects of the time. There was a growing awareness of the necessity for

#### 2. Studies 'Undefined living'

more inclusive and adaptable housing designs capable of accommodating diverse household compositions and lifestyles. This awareness was spurred by shifting family structures, such as the rise of single-parent families, and the evolving roles of women in society. Concurrently, there was a noticeable shift towards innovative and experimental approaches to housing design, exemplified by initiatives like the Experimental Housing program.

Despite these progressive movements, there existed a notable reluctance among clients and stakeholders. This reluctance could have stemmed from various factors, including concerns about the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of implementing non-traditional housing designs, as well as resistance to deviating from conventional norms and practices. Additionally, biases and stereotypes may have made it harder for gender-inclusive designs and arrangements that challenged traditional gender roles to become widely accepted.

greaton ser jeggen, a ge hijd, met uitjoudering van sel ue landen joals India en juid I praktisch zeen goed voorbeele u plain heeft geproduceerd. Chandigarh (India) is dat we ein had krunen vorden, een ope bleven. Bragilia, de vie uve hoofdstad va rasilie, geven de planners gadeeltel voerde plannen weinig broop. de stadsuitheidin sen van je he llen nanwelijks po fin sen om tot bit city-centrum werdt gemaakt, jo e mérine steden in Sugeland, is me tenidelijk geen goede vun weten t Herdam heeft velis waar de tije elle zich getreet heeft on tinkkel en levendig en foed prototype en voopcentrum; maar een verg enhan von statische outwoel et met gedadet en zal het ook z runen worden. ambeu heeft men getracht, be arktylein weer leven in te blager

# 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF IDEALS

## **Borssenburgplein & Geindriedorp**

This chapter explores the subsequent developments following the introduction of the 'other floorplans'. Beginning with the establishment of the Women Build and Live Foundation in 1983 and events following the article. The chapter then delves into two projects developed based on the 'other floorplans': Geindriedorp and Borssenburgplein. Through resident evaluations and expert critiques, insight is gained into the challenges and successes of implementing gender inclusive, flexible housing designs during the 1980s.

## 3.1 OUTCOMES AND POST-ARTICLE DEVELOPMENTS

In 1983, the Stichting Vrouwen Bouwen en Wonen [Women Build and Live Foundation] (VBW) was established. Their primary objective was to enhance women's influence in the fields of construction and housing (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). They aimed to instigate emancipation-oriented changes in policy and practice concerning public housing and spatial planning, while also shedding light on the relationship between patriarchal oppression and the built environment. Through publications, workshops, and thematic events, they sought to raise awareness on issues relating to housing and women's emancipation (Jansen et al., 1983).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the article discussing the studies garnered significant media attention. This attention led to the creation of a 1:1 model of the 'Other three-room apartment' in the 'Ruimtelijk Ontwikkelings Laboratorium' (ROL) [Spatial Development Laboratory] by Amsterdam's municipal office for housing (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). These laboratories represented a novel communication approach between technicians and residents developed during the 1980s (Mota, 2019). The Amsterdam municipal office for housing devised a system using modular plywood components and methods to incorporate window frames and doors, seen in figure 5. Additionally, household appliances

and furniture were provided to simulate a more realistic experience (Mota, 2019). These 1:1 dwelling models facilitated the collection of feedback and evaluation of future dwellers.

To further foster discussion within the municipal office for housing, a thematic afternoon was organized on April 26, 1984, by the Women's Consultation. This consultation comprised female employees of the Amsterdam municipal housing office. The focus of this thematic afternoon was on adopting a womanfriendly approach to housing floor plans (Back et al., 1984). Central to the discussions were the floor plans presented by Hartsuyker-Curjel and the 1:1 model. Hartsuyker-Curjel was invited to deliver a lecture on her floor plans, discussing the viewpoints expressed in her previously published article.

During her lecture, Hartsuyker-Curjel addressed encountering resistance from clients unsure about how to utilize certain spaces within her designs (Back et al., 1984). This uncertainty partly arose from the lack of defined rooms in her designs. Furthermore, she shared insights gained from numerous discussions with resident groups, which were integrated into the

Fig. 5 Spatial Development Laboratory in the High German Synagogue Complex, Amsterdam (Unknown photographer, 1968)



floor plans. As a result of the thematic afternoon, the Women's Consultation formulated action points, including the construction of a housing project featuring alternative floor plans (van Hintum et al., 1989).

The Vrouwen Advies Commissie (VAC) [Women's Advisory Committee] evaluated the design of the 'Other Three Room Apartment' and rejected it (van Hintum et al., 1989). According to the committee's assessment, while the spacious design creates a welcoming impression and they recognize potential for personal layout adjustments, several criticisms

Fig. 6 Hartsuyker-Curjel and a scale model of the 'Other Three Room Apartment' (Unknown photographer, 1984).



were highlighted. For example, the committee pointed out the presence of numerous doors between the shower, toilet, and laundry area, which they argued consume excessive space. They also noted the absence of a designated area in the laundry room for a laundry basket. Despite the kitchen's spaciousness, the committee found it lacking in convenient spaces for temporarily placing items. Additionally, they emphasized the insufficient storage spaces in the dwelling for items such as a vacuum cleaner and ironing board. Furthermore, the committee expressed concerns about the small size of the rooms, particularly when the dwelling is shared by multiple occupants (van Hintum et al., 1989).

#### **3.2 GEINDRIEDORP**

In 1984 and 1985, Harsuyker-Curjel had the opportunity to realize her studies through two projects in Amsterdam: the development of homes in Geindriedorp and social housing units at Borssenburgplein.

Geindriedorp was the final phase of the Gaasperdam neighborhood to be built. In 1984, Hartsuyker-Curjel seized the opportunity to realize her 'Other Four-Room House' concept (van Hintum et al., 1989). She collaborated with a project developer whom her firm had worked with previously, and who was willing to collaborate on this project.

For this project, four variants were derived from the 'Other Four Room House' design. This approach aimed to mitigate the risk of unsold homes by offering diverse options to potential buyers (Stichting Experimenten Volkshuisvesting, 1989). Variant 1 retained the original layout, depicted in Figure 7. Variant 2 featured a more hierarchical layout with a large living space on the ground floor and three different sized rooms upstairs, creating a clear hierarchy among them, depicted in Figure 8. Ultimately, 18 units of variant 1 were sold, along with 4 units of variant 2 (van Hintum et al., 1989). The dwellings were completed in 1986.

Fig. 7 Variant 1 dwelling Geindriedorp (van Hintum et al., 1989, p. 19)

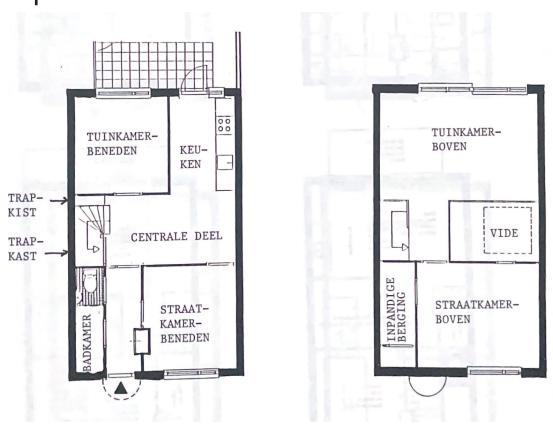
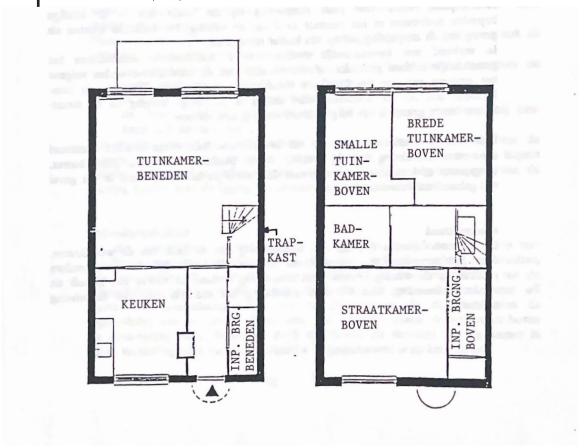


Fig. 8 Variant 2 dwelling Geindriedorp (van Hintum et al., 1989, p. 38)



#### **3.3 BORSSENBURGPLEIN**

As mentioned in section 2.3, the Amsterdam Housing Authority had repeatedly nominated Hartsuyker-Curjel as the architect for various housing projects (Merx, 1985). By 1985, Hartsuyker-Curjel was entrusted with the Borssenburgplein project. This project provided the opportunity to create the 'Other Three Room Apartment'. However, modifications to the floor plan were necessary to accommodate the 54 dwellings on the site, requiring a narrower and deeper configuration. Thus, the dwellings at Borssenburgplein are 7.0m wide and 13.4m deep instead of the original 7.6m wide and 11.5m deep (van Hintum et al., 1989). A total of 38 apartments were developed, including 2-, 3-, and 4-room apartments along with one HATapartment catering to single and double households (Stichting Experimenten Volkshuisvesting, 1989). The five-story building comprises four staircases and a fourth-floor gallery, as illustrated in Figures 9, 10, and 11 showcasing Borssenburgplein's floor plans. Unlike the housing in Geindrieberg, prospective Borssenburgplein residents were involved in the design process (van Hintum et al., 1989). Two types of flexibility were implemented in this project. User flexibility through non-hierarchical room areas and adaptability flexibility. Particularly in social housing, this adaptability is of great value due to the generally limited living space and therefore restricted usability (van Hintum et al., 1989). In the floor plans, the movable walls are indicated by the dashed line. Notably, these features were designed with flexibility in mind, ensuring that living room requirements such as sufficient power outlets, telephone, and television cables were provisioned. The movable walls are operable by residents through a click system, enhancing the adaptability and functionality of the living spaces. The project was completed in 1987 and were managed by Woonbedrijf Amstel.

#### 3.4 EVALUTATION WORKING GROUP '2DUIZEND

The working group '2duizend' and the Amsterdam municipal office for housing conducted an evaluation research on behalf of housing company Amstel and SEV regarding the Borssenburgplein and Geindriedorp projects (van Hintum, 1990). This evaluation aimed to address three research questions: Do the dwellings meet the needs of various household types? What are the technical and financial prerequisites for flexible housing projects in the social rental sector? And should the current technical and social management program in the social rental sector be adjusted for flexible housing projects? The latter two questions are relevant only to the project at Borssenburgplein.

During the evaluation by residents of the dwellings in Geindriedorp, there was a notable difference in the assessment of flexibility between variant 1 and 2 (van Hintum et al., 1989). In variant 1, replicating the original study's layout, residents feel they have the choice to perform various functions in multiple areas within the house, providing them with flexibility in usability. This flexibility contrasts with variant 2, characterized by a more hierarchical layout, where residents perceive the room sizes as restrictive, leading to a lack of usability flexibility in their homes. Another notable observation is that residents of variant 1 miss having a large communal room in their dwelling, while residents of variant 2 miss larger additional rooms (Stichting Experimenten Volkshuisvesting, 1989). When dwellings have one or more extra rooms compared to the number of occupants, the dwelling is perceived as flexible. Additionally, the provision level is mentioned as a critical point. The provisions are not tailored to flexible use, despite the existing need for it (van Hintum et al., 1989).

Residents of the apartments at Borssenburgplein express satisfaction with the versatility they have to engage in various activities across different spaces (van Hintum et al., 1989). They value the uniformity in room sizes, yet they also raise concerns about the absence of a sufficiently large communal area in this project. Despite the prior consideration of technical amenities in each room, residents still perceive limitations in usability flexibility, primarily concerning the number of power outlets and the placement of ceiling light points. However, residents positively acknowledge the adaptability of the walls and are actively seeking additional ways to customize their homes without significantly altering the structure, such as using curtains, sliding doors, or room dividers (van Hintum et al., 1989).

While residents appreciate certain design elements such as room versatility and uniform sizes, concerns persist regarding the adequacy of communal spaces and technical provisions. It appears that having a certain amount of additional space contributes to increased flexibility in the dwelling, as evidenced by the residents' feedback.

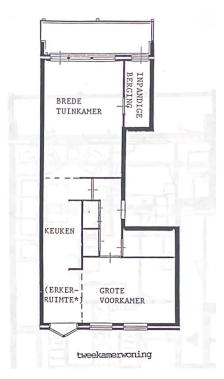
#### **3.4 CRITIQUES REGARDING FLEXIBILITY**

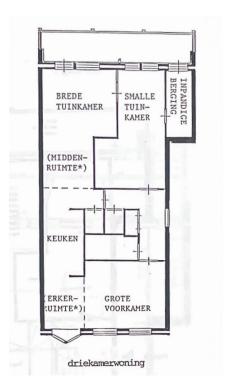
Not everyone agreed with the conclusions reached in the evaluation report. In the journal 'Architectuur/ Bouwen,' Tom Maas (1991) criticizes the outcomes of the research and advocates for improved methods of shaping housing floor plans to achieve equality. He argues that, based on the research into residents' usage patterns, it must be concluded that non-traditional

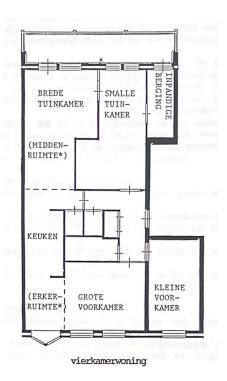
Fig. 9 The two room apartment at Borssenburgplein (van Hintum et al., 1989, p. 69)

Fig. 10 The three room apartment at Borssenburgplein (van Hintum et al., 1989, p. 69)

Fig. 11 The four room apartment at Borssenburgplein (van Hintum et al., 1989, p. 68)







homes are just as restrictive as traditional ones. Maas particularly critiques the daylight access, noting that the homes' narrow and elongated design generates dark areas (Maas, 1991). He regards the recommendation for increased living space as a compromise, suggesting that a more luxurious, larger home with more installations may offer enhanced possibilities but falls short of embodying a truly distinctive living environment (Maas, 1991). Maas also mentions that while the researchers stated that especially women pay attention to alternative ways of living, he believes they overlook the "three-quarters of a century of modern 'male' architecture.

Flexible housing was not a novel concept in the Netherlands during the 1980s. In 1990, the book 'Flexible Fixation' was published (van Eldonk & Fassbinder, 1990). The authors discuss how discussions about flexibility primarily occurred among architects. However, during that decade, these ideas also started to permeate other spheres, including investors, governments, construction companies, and the industry as a whole (van Eldonk & Fassbinder, 1990). While the book mentions a significant number of (male) architects, including her husband, Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel is notably absent from its pages.

Despite general reluctance among clients and stakeholders, in the 1980s, Hartsuyker-Curjel had the opportunity to realize her gender-inclusive designs in the innovative housing projects Geindriedorp and Borssenburgplein, showcasing flexible designs. Geindriedorp offered variants of the 'Other Four Room House' concept, providing diverse options for buyers. While some units were sold successfully, evaluations highlighted concerns about space utilization and room hierarchy. Meanwhile, Borssenburgplein, featuring the 'Other Three Room Apartment' design, incorporated movable walls for adaptability. Residents appreciated the versatility but raised issues about communal spaces and technical provisions.

These projects underscored the ongoing challenge of balancing flexibility and usability in housing design, contributing to discussions on creating inclusive and functional living environments. Additionally, it became evident that not everyone agreed on the value of Hartsuyker-Curjel's designs, highlighting the diverse perspectives and ongoing debates within the field.

Fig. 12 Apartment complex Borssenburgplein (Unknown Photographer, n.d.).



wan greaton that beach jeggen, de je hýd, met nitjoudening van sele ue trusten joals India en juid f praktisch zéen goed voorbeeld plain heeft geproduceerd. Chandigarh (India) is dat wo ein had kunnen vorden, een ope leven. Magilia, de vie uve hoofdstad va asilie, geven de planners godeeltel voerde plannen weinig broop. de stadsuitbreidin sen van je hee llen nanveligks po fin gen om tot u een plein te komen op - waar in city-centrum werdt gemaakt, zo nière steden in Sugeland, is un tenidelijk seen goede vun weten t Herdam heeft velis waar de tije elle zich geheet heeft ontinkkel en levendig en foed prototype en boopcentrum; maar een verp nham von statische outwoel et met gestacht en zal het ook z unen worden. ambeu heeft men getracht, be anktolem were lever in to bloom.

# 4. BURGERZIEKENHUIS VOOR VROUWEN

Around the same time as the completion of the apartments at Borssenburgplein and the housing units in Geindriedorp, the 'Burgerziekenhuis Voor Vrouwen' (BVV) project was initiated in 1985. Local resident Anna Lont spearheaded this ambitious plan (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). In Amsterdam-East, a plot of land measuring 22,000 square meters became available as the former Burgerziekenhuis [Civil hospital] was set to relocate to a new location in Almere by 1990 (van de Scheur et al., 1988). The goal was to convert the civil hospital building into a work and living center exclusively for women. The project was unique and exemplified the ideals of the women's movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). The BVV also aimed to serve as a model for other initiatives where women are involved in shaping their own living and working situations (van de Scheur et al., 1988).

The BVV project group set several requirements for the plan: Fifty to sixty percent of the available space should be allocated for women's initiatives, ensuring affordability of the renovated or constructed residential and business spaces, equal involvement of women and girls in planning and execution, and the remaining developments on the premises should not be hostile to women. Three key priorities for BVV were: social safety, employment opportunities for black and white women and girls, and promoting the expertise of the women involved in the project. Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel, along with urban planner Henriëtte van Eys, was enlisted as an expert (van de Scheur et al., 1988). Hartsuyker-Curjel was chosen for her "original vision on evolving housing needs and her designs tailored to flexible housing layouts and residential buildings for communal living" (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). Hartsuyker-Curjel produced the initial sketches for the renovation.

## 4.1 URBAN DESIGN PLAN & DISCUSSION ON SOCIAL SAFETY

The topic of social safety emerged as a high priority during the discussions surrounding the design of the urban development plan in 1987 and 1988. BVV played a significant role in the process of selecting a designer and expressed a preference for a woman "with knowledge of the issues surrounding social safety" (van de Scheur et al., 1988). Architect Francine Houben from the architecture firm Mecano was chosen. Several urban design sketches were created, primarily by Houben, with BVV also contributing a sketch. Originally, the hospital building site was an open layout, but over the years, the area had become densely developed into a closed block. Houben aimed to reinstate the original open structure with her design (de Koningk, 1988).

The 'open' models, characterized by a public courtyard surrounded by detached blocks of houses, garnered the most attention, as depicted in Figure 15. However,

Fig. 13 Linneausstraat 89, Burgerziekenhuis (Warffemius, 1987).



#### 4. Burgerziekenhuis voor Vrouwen

due to concerns about social safety, BVV expressed a preference for a 'more closed' model, featuring a lockable courtyard and contiguous blocks of houses, as depicted in Figure 16. Eventually, the majority of the planning team opted for the open model (van de Scheur et al., 1988), sparking a discussion about safety (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008).

The theme of social safety had previously gained national attention through the conference "Buiten Gewoon Veilig" organized by the VBW foundation in 1987 (de Jong, 1987). Key concerns included visibility, vibrancy, and adequate street lighting (Hajonides, 1987).

Hartsuyker-Curjel expressed her thoughts on this debate in an article in the magazine Klinker (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1988). She identifies two trends in the context of the discussion on the quality of public space. The first trend, as identified by Hartsuyker-Curjel, is the lack of urban design context in new buildings. Clients seek unique projects, and designers position themselves as unique artists. The result, according to Hartsuyker-Curjel, is a lack of spatial quality for people to inhabit. The second trend recognized by Hartsuyker-Curjel is the attention given to the theme of social safety. She describes guidelines being developed for the design of public spaces, where

Fig. 14 Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel with the coordination group of BVV by photographer Edwin Boering (van de Scheur et al., 1988, p. 11).



these guidelines are intended to ensure social safety. Hartsuyker-Curjel rejects the first trend and is critical of the second. She appreciates the focus on the quality of public space but believes that social safety is not the only aspect of improvement. Hartsuyker-Curjel writes:

"De gebruiker van de openbare ruimte wil zich niet alleen veilig voelen, maar ook gestimuleerd. Hij wil spontane contacten kunnen leggen, zich vrij kunnen bewegen. Als hij zich opgenomen voelt in een gevarieerde, geritmiseerde omgeving die rekening houdt met de stedenbouwkundige context, met de omliggende gebouwen en de menselijke maat; als deze openbare ruimte verbindingsgebied en niet verdeelgebied is, ja dan krijgt deze openbare ruimte een kwaliteit die het verblijven erin tot een belevenis maakt." [The user of public space not only wants to feel safe but also stimulated. They want to be able to make spontaneous contacts and move freely. If they feel integrated into a diverse, rhythmized environment that takes into account the urban context, surrounding buildings, and human scale; if this public space serves as a connecting area rather than a dividing one, then this public space attains a quality that turns staying in it into an experience.] (Hartsuyker-Curjel, 1988, p. 9).

In a later article, she adds that she agreed to the strong emphasis on social safety by the BVV, but she wouldn't do so again (Kuperus & van der Ploeg, 1989). Hartsuyker-Curjel argues that the focus on social safety has marginalized other aspects that determine the quality of the living environment. BVV reacted to the plans presented to them rather than taking the initiative themselves, resulting in a design lacking in relational qualities to the neighborhood (Kuperus & van der Ploeg, 1989).

#### **4.2 THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS**

The BVV eventually acquired a portion of the Burgerziekenhuis building located on Domselaerstraat (Gemeente Amsterdam, n.d.).

Fig. 15 Open model urban plan for the Burgerziekenhuis (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008, p. 52).

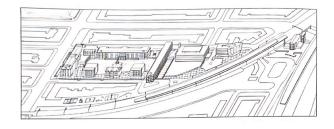
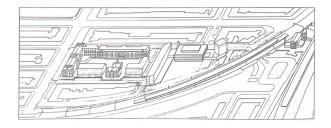


Fig. 16 Closed model urban plan for the Burgerziekenhuis (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008, p. 52).



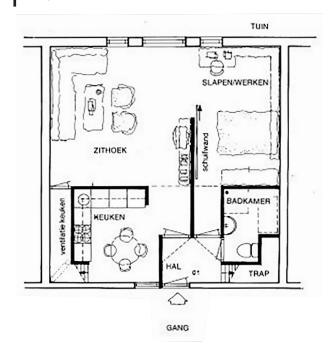
The renovation resulted in the creation of 20 small residences, some emphasizing living spaces while others focused on a combination of living and working areas. Additionally, two living spaces were designated for communal living groups, along with 30 spaces designated for businesses (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008; van de Scheur & van Westrienen, 1993).

A café was also included for residents, workers, and the local community. Figure 17 illustrates the layout of the live-work residences, intended for women looking to start home-based businesses. The height of these spaces allowed for the construction of mezzanines, serving as storage areas or additional workspace for businesses, and in residential units, potentially used as sleeping areas.

Similar to the urban design plan, the transformation didn't fully realize its ideals. The aim was to have living and working spaces in close proximity to foster cohesion. However, the fire department required the installation of partition walls between the residences and businesses (Segaar-Höweler & van Moorsel, 2008). In the floorplans in figure 18 these partition walls are visible, designed with a wavy pattern to maintain spatial integrity in the narrowed corridors.

In an interview in the magazine De Gepakte Stad (Karsten, 1988), Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel emphasizes the significance of the BVV project in breaking down the separation between living and working spaces. She particularly stresses the importance of this for women and advocates for creating spatial conditions conducive to this integration. Additionally, she highlights the BVV project's specific focus on including women from ethnic minorities, acknowledging their often

Fig. 17 Floorplan Residential-Workplace Dwelling (Burgerziekenhuis Domselaerstraat Amsterdam, z.d.)



overlooked presence (Karsten, 1988). In this article, she also indicates her recognition of the challenges faced by the initiators of the BVV project. These challenges mirror those experienced by Hartsuyker-Curjel herself in gaining attention for her alternative approach to design.

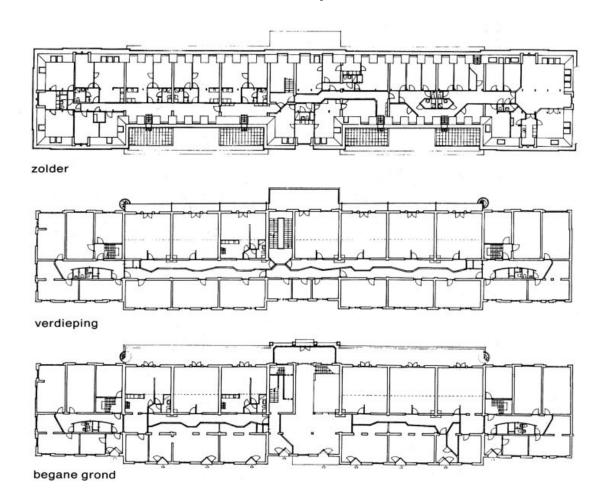
In September 1992, the entire Burgerziekenhuis complex was officially inaugurated, encompassing the Stadskantoor Oost on Linneausstraat, the artist center De Garage on Oetewalerstraat, and the Business Center and residences for Women on Domselearstraat ('Burgerziekenhuis geen vrouwen-idylle', 1992). Following its completion, many self-employed women within the complex were provided with their own business spaces. While women from these businesses are given priority for the residences within the complex, they are not exclusively allocated to them ('Burgerziekenhuis geen vrouwen-idylle', 1992). However, not all entrepreneurs within the complex see the advantage of the feminist principle. Some report that customers assume they "suddenly became very feminist" or that they "dislike men" (Vinckx, 1992). Additionally, it appears that not many entrepreneurs are interested in residing within the complex. There are also questions raised about the strict requirement that no men are allowed to live in the complex (Vinckx, 1992).

The BVV-project, initiated in 1985, aimed to repurpose a former hospital into a unique living and working space exclusively for women, reflecting the ideals of the women's movement. The project emphasized social safety and inclusivity, but faced challenges in balancing these goals with practical considerations. Despite debates over urban design plans and compromises in the transformation process, the BVV complex was completed in 1992, providing residential and business spaces tailored to women's needs, with Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel contributing her original vision and expertise to the project.

While conducting research, it became apparent that apart from newspaper articles, the biography of the Hartsuyker couple, and published works by the BVV project group, there appears to be limited coverage of this project in professional journals. If indeed this assumption holds true, the absence of discussion raises questions. Why weren't other architects writing about the project? One might consider the factors contributing to this assumed lack of discourse within academic and industry circles. Was it due to the project's unconventional nature? Or perhaps there were systemic barriers hindering its recognition and spread among professionals?

The BVV project remains a significant example of community-driven initiatives shaping urban spaces and promoting gender equality, and it played a role in the discussion surrounding women's living and working arrangements. Hartsuyker-Curjel's decision to participate in the BVV project aligns with her broader advocacy for inclusivity. This reflects her dedication to creating spaces and opportunities that embrace diverse identities, including those related to gender and ethnicity.

Fig. 18 Floorplans for the transformation Burgerziekenhuis Voor Vrouwen (Burgerziekenhuis Domselaerstraat Amsterdam, z.d.)



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## 5. CONCLUSION

Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel's architectural work has had an impact on societal values, gender roles, and the development of urban living spaces. Her journey from challenging traditional hierarchical layouts to advocating for gender-inclusive and adaptable designs reflects a significant period in Dutch architectural history, where architects struggled with the complexities of post-war reconstruction, shifting societal norms, and the search for more human-centric built environments.

In this thesis, the central research question addresses the prevailing social, cultural, and professional context during Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel's emphasis on genderinclusive designs throughout the 1980s.

The historical context outlined provides a critical framework for understanding Hartsuyker-Curjel's architectural work. The period following World War II was characterized by rapid urbanization, social reforms, and a growing awareness of the need for quality housing that caters to diverse societal needs. Initiatives such as the Experimental Housing program signaled a departure from conventional designs towards more innovative approaches, reflecting a broader reassessment of standardized housing construction methods. Hartsuyker-Curjel's designs the 'Other Four-Room House' and 'Other Three-Room Apartment' challenged prevailing norms by introducing flexible and adaptable living spaces. These designs were not just about rearranging floor plans but represented a fundamental reimagining of how spaces can facilitate diverse lifestyles, family compositions, and individual needs.

Her projects in the 1980s, the Geindriedorp and Borssenburgplein developments, exemplified her dedication to realizing gender-inclusive designs in practical contexts. These projects underscored the ongoing dilemma of balancing flexibility and usability in housing design, while igniting discussions on inclusivity and functionality.

The BVV project is a significant illustration of community-driven initiatives shaping urban spaces while promoting gender equality. It has contributed to the discourse on the living and working conditions of women. Hartsuyker-Curjel's involvement in the project underscores her commitment to inclusivity, highlighting her dedication to creating spaces and opportunities that embrace diverse identities, including those based on gender and ethnicity.

Questions raised regarding the appearance of limited coverage of the BVV project in professional journals are valuable starting points for future research. Investigating the factors contributing to this lack of discourse could reveal underlying systemic barriers or biases within the architectural profession and academia of that era.

Overall, the prevailing social, cultural, and professional context during Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel's focus on gender-inclusive designs was characterized by a growing awareness of the need for more inclusive and adaptable housing designs. This context encompassed changing family structures, societal critiques of conventional housing practices, cultural shifts in architectural thinking, and professional engagements that influenced her vision for gender-inclusive architecture and urban planning. Hartsuyker-Curjel's architectural contributions invites us to reflect on the broader role of architecture in shaping societal values and promoting diversity. Her work serves as a catalyst for ongoing conversations and actions aimed at creating more humane, gender-inclusive, and sustainable built environments.

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### **FIGURES**

- **Fig. 1** Bogaerts, R. (1987). *Architecte Luzia Hartsuyker-Curjel achter de tekentafel*. [Photograph]. https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/fotocollectie/ad6217b2-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84?searchKey=61dd79d3615d480bed7250984f9b0dca
- **Fig. 2** Unknow photographer. (1970). *E. Hartsuyker en L. Hartsuyker-Curjel. Interieur van bejaardencomplex Zonnetrap in Rotterdam, 1970*. [Photograph]. Het Nieuwe Instituut. https://nieuweinstituut.nl/articles/internationale-vrouwendag-2020
- **Fig. 5** Unknow photographer. (1968). *Jonas Daniël Meijerplein 2-4; het Ruimtelijk Ontwikkelings Laboratorium in het Hoogduits Synagogecomplex.* [Photograph]. Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief. <a href="https://archief.amsterdam/beeldbank/detail/02c8c454-b69f-37d7-8478-2d07ba9365ce/media/a0bd1478-75dd-5994-bcfc-306c92183886?mode=detail&view=horizontal&q=Ruimtelijk%20Ontwikkelings%20Laboratorium&rows=1&pa-ge=58
- **Fig. 6** Unknow photographer. (1984). *Mevrouw Lucia Hartsuijker-Curjel, architecte met de door haar ontworpen vrouwvriendelijke drie-kamerwoning.* [Photograph]. Algemeen Dagblad. https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?query=&coll=ddd&resultscoll=dddtitel&page=1&identifier=KBPERS01:003022005:mpeg21:p00051&cql%5B%5D=%28date+\_gte\_+%2205-05-1984%22%29&cql%5B%5D=%28date+\_lte\_+%2206-05-1984%22%29
- **Fig. 12** Unknow photographer. (n.d.). *Borssenburgplein. Ontworpen door Hartsuy-ker-Curjel.* [Photograph]. Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief. <a href="https://archief.amster-dam/beeldbank/detail/a0b5e9a4-e42c-9e3b-c607-e0f657168b89/media/934876">https://archief.amster-dam/beeldbank/detail/a0b5e9a4-e42c-9e3b-c607-e0f657168b89/media/934876</a> 3a-f46c-9237-f4d1-1f3ca6a68b01?mode=detail&view=horizontal&q=Borssenburg-plein&rows=1&page=20
- **Fig. 13** Warffemius, J. C. (1987). *Linnaeusstraat 89, Burgerziekenhuis*. [Photograph]. Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief. https://archief.amsterdam/beeldbank/detail/1cec-febe-1632-39c9-46db-b49d6860a03c/media/6bac7342-07d8-78da-8d7b-254aefe-9750b?mode=detail&view=horizontal&q=Burgerziekenhuis&rows=1&page=135

### **ARCHIVE**

Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam, Hartsuyker, E. (Enrico / Hendrik) en Hartsuyker-Curjel, L. (Luzia) / Archief, nummer toegang HART



