



HOMERUSKWARTIER CENTRUM

The municipality of Almere, a town close to Amsterdam, has chosen to involve as much as possible its future inhabitants in its expansion plans. The reason behind this strategy is the aim to increase citizen participation in the creation of the built environment, as well as to diminish the city's dependency on large developers. A municipal initiative, which has been formulated around this strategy is the development of the centre of the Homeruskwartier. The area is envisioned as a higher density location (in relation to its surroundings), covered by 4-6 storey apartment buildings. It is meant to be developed only with private investors through the CPO (collective of private clients) principle.

The municipality asked architects to propose apartment buildings and to form collectives around their proposal. The role of the architect was in this way not only of a spatial designer, but also of a social activist. The design and the proposed functioning of the building itself was supposed to attract a group of interested inhabitants to it.

HYPOTHETIC CLIENTS

City Life was designed for hypothetical clients. De+ge (Ljubo Georgiev and Simon de Jong) proposed a building, which was taking into account this uncertainty. By fixing certain building parameters (construction, circulation and installations) and by leaving the rest of the building completely modifiable we created a structure which was prompt to get formed by the wishes of its inhabitants. Around these three fixed elements of the building the layout of the apartments is adaptable around these elements, to the taste and wishes of the client. This results in a dynamic building with a high variety of living experiences and representations. This aspect is being magnified by the different floor heights of each level, which broaden the choice of housing typologies. The personal wishes of the clients can further be expressed in the choice of materials and dimensions / placement of façade openings. The coherence of the building is ensured by using a second outer skin of semi-transparent panels, which can be opened.

The building contains seven apartments, a commercial space on the ground floor and a common roof garden on its top. The entrances to the houses and the garage are situated on ground floor level. The apartments are reached via a stair and an elevator.

INNOVATIVE

City Life is innovative in few ways. It allows phasing of the construction process by providing a livable, but not yet comfortable casco envelope, which is possible to be developed in subsequent stages. It allows the future inhabitants to have substantial influence on the way their home would look like, both before the building's construction, as well as also after it. It permits the harmonious coexistence of various dwelling typologies and it even tries to make the building an unity by providing its inhabitants with a common roof terrace and a spacious staircase. City Life is a project for a living building, which remains open for interventions and improvements.

The initiative did not manage, unfortunately, to attract enough interest to it. Only two groups were formed out of the more than 30 envisioned by the plan.

FACTS

location:	Almere
status:	open proposal
site:	plot 220m2, total built-up area 1.200m2
programme:	housing and commercial
client:	-
budget:	-
in cooperation with:	Simon de Jong
when:	Januari - April 2010