

Iulia Moldovan

Referent: Erik de Jong

Mentor: Remy Kroese

Master of Interior Architecture

Thesis

Maastricht Academy of Architecture

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences



2023

From street to house

A pledge about and for the in between

CONTENT

Preface	Story of grandma	4
Introduction		6
Chapter I	Defining transitional zones	
	The public	9
	The private	12
	The in between	18
Chapter II	Functional sense	
	The five basic principles	23
	Characteristics	28
	Design	32
Chapter III	Extension of the house	
	Appropriation	37
	Quality	40
	Ownership	43
Chapter IV	Creation of privacy	
	Behavior	47
	Contact	50
	Safety	55
Conclusion		58
Bibliography		60

Preface

My parents, grandparents and I were walking the streets of de Blaak neighborhood, in Tilburg. Looking to the right, or looking to the left there were beautiful houses, most of which own a back garden as well as a front garden. The front garden, being positioned in front of the house, allows for everyone to look, and admire. As we were walking down the streets, grandma began to walk slower and slower, admiring the front garden of a particular house. All of a sudden, she changes direction and walks towards the private zone of the property, closer and closer to the entrance door.

"You are not allowed to go there" says mom on a low but slightly angry voice.

"Why?" asks grandma, looking very surprised. "There is no fence here. I am just looking at the garden. Not going to ring the doorbell."

"That is private property," answers mom. "Come back here and let's continue our walk."

Grandma joins mom and I, so we try to catch up with dad and grandpa as they haven't stopped from walking at all. We walk for two minutes, and grandma is behind again. This time she stops in front of a window, places her hands on each side of the hip (like she is really interested and wants to spend time analyzing) and looks inside the owner's house.

"Mom, you're not allowed to stop and stare inside someone's house." says mom. Again, on a low but slightly angry voice.

Looking angry this time, grandma replies "but there is no curtain. I can see perfectly inside."

Mom takes a few steps back, pulls grandma's right hand, making her walk a bit faster and not allowing her to stop again. So we continue our walk.

Introduction

Coming from a Romanian background, a country where residential privacy is most valued (whether in the shapes of gates, high fences, closed curtains, or rollers), I found it very interesting how different are the Dutch houses in that regard.

The preface depicts the conversation from last summer when my grandparents came to visit us in the Netherlands. This dialogue, along with my grandmother's curious behavior, have made me interested in the topic of the in between. The in between being either a front garden or a facade garden. The aspect of the in between alongside the behavior around it.

Throughout my thesis I will explore what the meaning and the value of the in between is from three perspectives. The theoretical perspective based on the first chapter; the architectural perspective based on the second chapter and the inhabitant's perspective based on the third and fourth chapter.

To do this I will present my thoughts, observations, and analyses alongside concepts of philosophers such as Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl, Machiel J. van Dorst and urban psychologist - Sander van der Ham. Jane Jacobs comes up with the concept 'eyes on the street', claiming that human presence is vital in a healthy neighborhood where surveilled streets contribute to a safe and lively public space. Jan Gehl goes on talking about the life that takes place between buildings. The type of social outdoor activities that people can create as a consequence of the architecture already existing. He presents ideas on how to use the public space in order to create meaningful and attractive streets and neighborhoods. Machiel J. van Dorst is an advocate for social interaction and how that can take place in the context of public or private space. He introduces ideas with the goal being on social growth. Sander van der Ham alongside with Erik van Ulden and Daniel Heussen have produced the book *De stoep*. A book based on Dutch culture where they describe the in between(s) and give examples of Dutch references as case studies for the reader to learn from.

By looking into these references, I plan to find out first of all, if I can make people aware of the in between and second off all, how can I motivate people to spend time in the in between.

I see my thesis as being a manual for the architect on how to design the in between and for the inhabitant how to appropriate it and get ownership over it. My wish is to make people more aware of the in between. For front gardens already existent - to be used more and for the houses facing the public sidewalk - to create that in between, (that facade garden), that nonexistent (in most cases) extension of the house. The goal of my thesis is to make people realize that spending time and appropriating the front of the house, will create lively streets, which in return will improve the image of the cities. Small and simple topic as it may seem, complex and challenging as it's proved to be during my research into the subject.



Fig. 1

Defining transitional zones

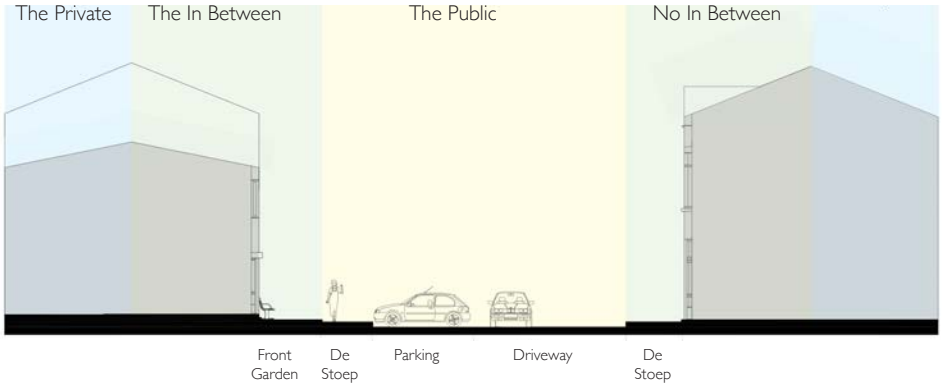


Fig. 2 Section of the existing situation in Meester Ulrichweg - Maastricht showcasing the common transition situation from private to public.

The Public

Throughout this chapter I will refer to the public space in relation to the sidewalks.

In my opinion, the sidewalk is an undervalued element of the urban form. At the moment, not much happens on the sidewalk, besides for walking, therefore not much thought goes into the design of it. Especially as a way of creating invitation and opportunity for a function other than passing by.

From my research on this topic, I have deduced that the public territory is interwoven with the concepts of contact and ownership. Contact that can make a space feel either public or private as a consequence of the ownership taken over the space. A sense of control and responsibility taken over a piece of land.

The public area within the city refers to its streets. A public space is accessible by everyone, for everyone at any time. Streets are often considered as being public, meaning inclusive of all urban residents or all people who use city sidewalks. But that is not entirely true.

From my perspective, it can be argued that the publicness very much depends on the action that takes place on the sidewalk. If I walk it is public, but if I stop, then it can feel private. I don't even need to sit down, stopping and standing is enough to make the space on the sidewalk feel private. That is because I am being noticed from inside. That is the condition that makes it private. The feeling of being uncomfortable by the gaze of the owner 'questioning' me if that is 'my place' to stand and look.

It has happened that I stopped for a few seconds to look at a facade, not even taking a photo of it, and the owner of the house having noticed me, has stopped on the other side of the window, staring, and waiting to see what I was doing. As he was purposely trying to make me uncomfortable and cause me to leave. At that point I was standing on public ground/sidewalk, but because I was only looking at the private property, the public has turned into a sort of private. It did not feel as I was allowed to stand there. It was about the observer and the observed. A potential sense of loitering was detected by the owner. The term loitering is explained as obstructing or unreasonably interfering with the free passage of pedestrians.¹ But at what point and in what context does standing on public space becomes loitering? As stated by John Lofland, sidewalks are simultaneously public and parochial. Open to all and yet a space over which a group of people feels ownership.²

1. Lofland John, p. 189

2. Ditto, p.6

The word parochial comes from Latin 'parochial' and is explained as having a limited or narrow outlook or scope.³ The sidewalk is about the public property and the private property owner's exercising significant control over it. It is about interest, negotiation and sometimes even conflict.

Sidewalks are different everywhere. They differ on location, dimension, demographics and association with different uses and buildings. They have the purpose of safety and creating a means of socialization. By having the sidewalk, an allocated space between the driveway and the house where the motion is realized by walking, and a much safer environment is guaranteed. A safe space for movement on different trajectories. A place where passing by the sidewalk, encounters can take place. Relationships that can be made through contact and interaction with one another. On the topic of creating contact, John Lofland describes the four types of public relationships that exist within the sidewalk.⁴ The fleeting relationship (people interacting momentarily), the routinized relationship (meeting regularly), quasi primary relationship (with emotions in play), and intimate secondary relationships (interacting for longer period and becoming familiar). All these relationships can happen on the sidewalk, some between strangers and some between neighbors. Anthony Vidler also states that streets and sidewalks are sites of interaction, encounter and the support of strangers, for each other.⁵ By using part of the sidewalk, appropriating part of it, and creating contact, the concept of place making takes place. Place making is an action that comes from turning a public space into a private place. By creating quality places that invite people to stay and support interaction as well as wellbeing.

On the topic of publicness, from my own experience, while walking by Kalfstraat (posh street in Maastricht), a private owner noticing me walking more than two times on his street, to close his curtains as a way of protecting his private environment. Him probably thinking that I was trying to look inside his house.

It has also happened that as I was walking by Jekerschans (also posh street in Maastricht), one owner came outside after me asking why I stopped and took photo of her house's facade. These are just two examples of how walking on public domain had a nonpublic outcome.

In the beginning of doing my field research I used to be afraid of what people might think or may do when they would see me stopping, taking photo, drawing, or measuring their house facades. I was very nervous and scared to talk to the people owning those houses as to why I was doing this and that. But luckily, once I started talking with more and more people and seeing that they were okay with me being there (once they knew the reason), I became more confident in doing this kind of research. And I began to like it. The lovely people I have come across, the stories I have heard have really made this project much more powerful for me personally.



Fig. 3

The Private

Private is the opposite of public. When public is open to everyone, private is open to certain people depending on context. As in the previous chapter I was discussing the public in relation to the sidewalks, in this chapter I will be discussing the private in relation to privately owned residences.

Residential environments are usually built in accordance with economic considerations as well as established traditions. In the Netherlands for example is most common type of residence is the row terraced house. With a thicker wall separating the owner from its neighbors. That is because from the 18th century Dutch city houses developed into a collective dwelling as a consequence of the growth of the population and lack of dwelling in the city. The facades played an important role in the design of the house. Each house, each facade, another owner; but in harmony with the street-scape.

The facades are an interface between outside and inside. A face to the public as an informant of nonverbal communication. Being visible by the public, they become a representational element. Representing the function of the building, as well as the richness of the owner culturally and professionally. The brick element of the exterior is seen by everyone as a means of construction, and the glass element offers visual into the interior while communicating information about the owner. In my opinion the facade helps identify certain characteristic aspect of the owner by what objects are placed in the window or in front of the house. The front of the house also being part of the facade. whether it is a front garden or a facade garden. It is a place where people select what objects to place in the window and who enters the private space through the door. The exposed part of the facade is 'open' to all passersby by facing the public street. The facades having the power to offer information about the owner if the passerby has eyes to notice and ears to listen.

When I first visited Netherlands, I thought that all houses looked the same. Generalizing by saying bricks over bricks, big windows and pitched roofs with narrow dormers integrated into the roof-line. They may have looked identical then, but now as I look closer it is so far from the truth. It is true that in most cases it is not allowed to change the appearance of the facade. By that I mean changing the construction materials, size of windows or color of the facade without asking

permission from the town hall. But what makes them so unique from each other it is the way they are appropriated depending on the owner's choices. Almost each facade within the city has a big window on the ground floor where different objects are placed. I have seen toys being placed there, pots with plants, sculptures or even a sign saying 'home' (to inform everyone passing by that inside that residence is a home). Observing these different objects, I started to knock on doors and ask the owners what each object symbolizes to different owners or why they choose to place them there. Some said that they have it for a long time from a person they love, others said the objects are simply funny, but they also remind the owner of a happy past time from 20 years ago, or others said that they use a big vase or sometimes a large object to create privacy inside as they don't like to use the curtains.

Privacy is a very interesting subject when it comes to residences in the Netherlands. It is very generalized when reading topics such as *Why the Dutch never put curtain over their windows?*⁶ It is true that many Dutch residences do not own or use their curtains by blocking view of the interior. However, within the city of Maastricht many houses do use the curtains. While others use the window foil on part of the window to create privacy within the residence. Of course, it depends on the owner's preferences and the location of the house within the city. For example, Mariaberg is a low-income neighborhood within Maastricht where privacy is valued on a greater scale as a consequence of burglaries and thefts that happen there. Reason why most houses own either shutters or foil to cover the windows.

My favorite encounter when trying to find out reason on the window displayed objects was with an older lady from De Heeg.

A neighborhood twenty minutes driving distance from the city center. I noticed in her window seven paper models of different cities which made me intrigued. Therefore, I went and knocked on her front door. We started talking and then she invited me into her house. We sat down and she started telling me where she has the models from and what exactly they represent. She told me that they are actually postcards from her sister, some dating back to twenty-two years ago. And each paper model represented a different location with a different letter from her dear sister. She then told me about her life, showing me photos from when she was younger, and her husband was still alive and

even gave me one of the paper models to have as memory of her. On my way to leave she told me how much she appreciated me asking about the paper models as no one has asked her once in the twenty-four years she lived there. (I have had the paper model she gave me at all my presentations during this year, as a reminder of how delightful people can be with each other, even as strangers).



Fig. 4

The experience really changed my perspective on my project for the better making me aware of the little things that can mean so much, the little questions that bring joy and especially how important contact is - it being planned or unplanned.

As residences are built based on established traditions, in the Netherlands terraced houses within the city have similar floor plan principles. In most cases, city residences have the ground floor; first floor and the second floor (part of the attic). Within the ground floor there is the entrance hallway, small bathroom, living room, dining room, kitchen, and a small garden outside.

On the first floor is usually a bigger bathroom, a bedroom and guest room. And on the second floor is usually a small office or a deposit place for different things. Of course, this is not true in all cases, but in most that I have read about and visited. The ground floor offers areas for socializing, while the first floor offers quieter area meant for sleeping, it being more private.

In most cases the living room is closer to the facade, facing the street, being followed by the dining room and then the kitchen.

The living room is a pleasant environment where interaction between family or friends takes place. The arrangement of the furniture, decoration within the space and the private activities occurring, help create an environment where people choose to stay.

However, I am arguing whether the living room is a private area or is actually also public. When having no curtains, the interior is visible from the outside, therefore being part of the transition zone. The way I see it, the objects within the living room are more carefully selected and displayed as they are visible by strangers as well.

This makes the living room private in terms of accessibility and in most cases, public in term of visibility. It has happened quite often, when passing by different houses, to be able to see the interior of the living room as well. As someone coming from a different culture, it's very intriguing to want to look inside if there are no curtains (e.g. grandma's behaviour). And by being able to see inside, to me the living room becomes visually public.

I also find it contradicting when I look inside someone's house through the window (as I have visual accessibility), but at the same time I am told that I am not allowed or not supposed to. I understand that stopping and looking inside is not acceptable, but only walking by and looking does not seem intruding or loitering at all. Especially when curtains don't stand in the way. The owners want to get sun, to see outside and at the same time they want to be seen as well as they don't have anything to hide.⁷

From my experience so far, the public versus private relationship within Dutch residences is intertwined. At times they are separate - depending on the activity: waking by is public and being inside watching television is private. But they can also become more complex: stopping on the street and looking inside is considered private, while being inside and talking to someone through the open window is public.



Fig. 5

The In Between

Since 1990s, in the Netherlands, people`s need for meeting outside the house grew more and more.⁸ Outdoor cafe, restaurants and other meeting places started to rise. Residents became pedestrians, prioritizing talking, walking, sitting, meeting, and experiencing over driving. The user experience has been shifted.

However, the way I see it, nowadays most people don`t spend time in front of the house as much as they used to. In one of my interviews, it was said that nowadays, often in the Netherlands, spending time in front of the house it`s considered as 'trashy'. Reason why most houses don`t have a transition zone on the sidewalk. Therefore, the contact with the street is done from the inside. An appropriate term would be the house as a diorama.⁹ One of the basic principles in relation to the transition zones presented in the book *De Stoep* that I will present in greater detail in the next chapter. Simply put, it represents the window with no curtain where the living room is visually accessible from the outside but where there is no contact whatsoever.

However, I have discovered two areas where making use of the in between is considered a blessing. The Heerderweg and the Ravelijn. In these areas, community is formed by the residents where the architecture of row houses is considered a privilege by making distance not a problem, and contact easier to be had.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

The in between can represent either the front garden (transition zone next to the sidewalk) or the facade garden (transition zone on the sidewalk). Part of the sidewalk connecting the public and the private.

The in between is about the space from street to house.

A blurred layer where the public and the private meet each other.

A front garden is a fixed transition zone, where the facade garden

is not. The facade garden can be permanent, or it can be temporary.

Depending on the private owner. The inhabitant can use the transition zone or choose not to. It is a voluntary activity.

It is a pity that not everyone is aware that creating a facade garden is allowed on any street, in front of any facade connected to the sidewalk.

The only rule is that 120 cm of the width of the sidewalk must be left untouched, for the passerby to have enough space.¹⁰ With maximum of 45 cm of the public sidewalk being available for appropriation and private ownership in order to create that facade garden.

Creating a place to sit and watch the children play, or simply place a bench and watch the people pass you by. Some may not notice you, some may just glance at you, but others may salute you.

And that is how contact is established. Whether you may only see the people, hear their conversation, or meet them personally.

According to Jan Gehl, there are three types of outdoor activities that take place on the sidewalk. The necessary activities such as going somewhere, activities that need to happen under any circumstance.

The optional activities such as going for a walk or sunbathing, activities that depend whether the weather is favorable. And the social activities such as greeting or seeing other people, activities that depend on the presence of others in public spaces.¹¹ From my perspective, by making

use of the in between, both optional activity and social activity are intertwined. Choosing to sit in the front garden or the transition zone depends on the weather condition as well as on the wish, the time, and the place available of the inhabitant. Here it is also about the quality of the outdoor activity, whether it encourages to sit or not.

Once you do choose to place a bench and sit down, the social activity inevitably comes into play. An actual conversation doesn't need to take place, the passive contact is enough (seeing or hearing).

And consequently, connection is established. A spontaneous but meaningful way to make the residential areas more attractive.

10. Gemeente Maastricht, Website

11. Gehl Jan, p. 9-13

On Heerderweg and Ravelijn the transition zone creates an extra layer where people express their personality, they're likes and situation. The in between within these streets creates a way of communicating more easily and spontaneously. When I wonder these streets, walking, taking photos, talking to people, and researching, the in between becomes an inter-mediator between the public and the private.

From a subjective point of view, I feel that Heerderweg and Ravelijn are lively streets where contact and communities are established.

Even when people are not physically there, maybe because of the weather, it still feels like the street has more life and ownership over it than on the streets where the in between does not exist.

And by not existing I refer that no personal object is placed in front of the facade, and the space suggests that no activity takes place there.

From my talk with an owner from Heerderweg, I have found out that it does make it more easily for him to place a bench in front of his house if his neighbors does it as well. And that is how it started over ten years ago. One owner placing a bench on the sidewalk in front of his house, becoming social with strangers as well as neighbors.

Consequently, neighbors following his example of creating more transition zones down the street where contact now takes place at each house within the street. Even when I was there talking with one owner, five minutes later, other owners came outside to see what we were talking about and follow in the conversation.

I have found out that with over ten benches placed on the sidewalk in front of each residence, a few strangers have taken a sit on some of the benches. Interestingly enough, it was usually students from different countries that did that. As the benches were physically and visually accessible by everyone, students with different cultural backgrounds did not realize that they were actually part of the private property. However, coming from a different culture myself, I have never taken a sit on a bench facing its back on a private property (only intentionally with the purpose of testing to see what happens if I do sit on a private bench).

From my perspective those benches nonverbally imply a sense of privacy with sitting being allowed only if given permission by the private owner of the bench.



Fig. 8

Functional sense

The five basic principles

As the title suggests, this sub-chapter is about the five basic principles of different types of in between(s). Principles introduced in the book *De Stoep* by Erik van Ulden, Daniel Heussen and Sander van der Ham. Within most cities there is public, semipublic, and private spaces. The five basic principles explain the different divisions that can exist between the three types of zones. Each differing in degrees of distances, heights, and functions.

The first basic principle is that of houses with curtains closed. Where no visual or any other type of contact takes place whatsoever. No transition zone available or any personal items displayed within the facade. There is only public and private. With the private being closed off from the public eye.

Although, based on one out of many website statements, Dutch don't like to use curtains.¹² I believe that this statement is not entirely true. It is an exaggeration because of the generalization by referring to the whole population of the Netherlands. Many houses that I have walked by in Maastricht have curtains, or closed curtains, or the window rollers, the window foil or a high fence blocking the view of the outside as well as of the inside. This depending on location or on the privacy that the owner wishes to achieve.

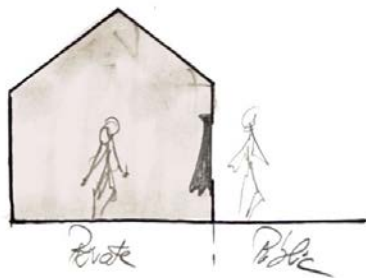


Fig. 9

The second basic principle is that of a house as a diorama. Where there is a sort of transition zone, but happening only from the inside. An open curtain that allows for visual contact to be made. A regulated type of contact depending on the wish of the resident. It is not regulated only by a curtain; it can also be a physical object displayed in the window such as a vase with flowers or different objects that may or may not say something about the owner. There is public, transition zone from the inside, and private. Most houses in the Netherlands have this basic principle applied to their residences. The visual contact is prioritized, instead of the physical or verbal contact. The owner being inside, the facade becomes a separating wall between himself and the stranger. By having the wall as an inter-mediator, it makes contact more difficult to be had. For example, on one occasion, I was walking on Heerderweg street in Maastricht. As I stopped and took a photo of one of the houses, the owner (being inside) noticed that I was standing in front of his facade and looked at me wondering what I was doing. So, in that moment I could have done two things: first was to just leave when I saw he noticed me, or second was to ask him through the window to come outside to talk. And that is what I did, I made a hand gesture as to ask him to come outside to talk. And he did come outside. However, if he would have been outside in the first place, then the conversation would have been much more easily initiated and maybe we would have talked longer if we had a bench to sit on if the transition zone would have been there.

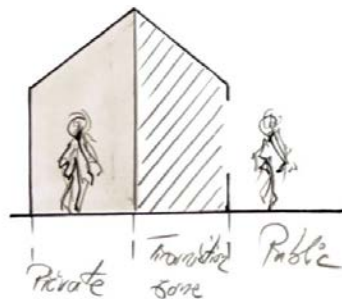


Fig. 10

The third basic principle is the transition zone on the sidewalk. This principle makes me excited. Most houses that don't have a front garden, can create their own facade garden by extending it from the private (as is the second principle), to the public. Creating the in between on the sidewalk. This can be done by adding a bench, a chair, a doormat, a small table, a flowerpot. Anything showing a zone on the public domain, such as the sidewalk, but appropriated and owned. Showing that is not public, and more importantly, showing that it belongs to someone. In most cases the objects are place next to the owners' facade, indicating the notion of privacy. The objects placed in the in between are still visually and physically accessible by everyone, but sitting on the bench or chair feels uncomfortable, as if privacy is being violated. Similar to the situation of sitting on a bench attached to the facade of an another house than your own (the situation mentioned above that happened in Heerderweg). And very often by doing that, the owner of the bench will come outside to see who sits on their bench and ask why they stopped and stood there. I have tested this theory myself, and in most cases, the owners came outside and questioned me. They had either come outside (if they were home) or they would have just stood by the door and waited for me to explain why I decided to sit on their bench. And I find this very intriguing. This kind of behavior: Similar to the behavior of not using curtains (as they don't have anything to hide) but at the same time not being welcomed to look inside.

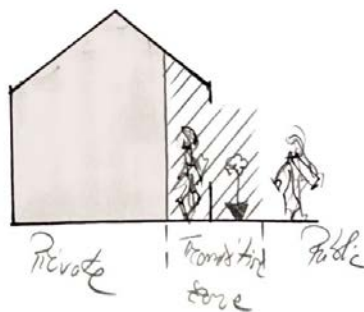


Fig. 11

The fourth basic principle is the transition zone next to the sidewalk. Usually, 2.5 m in distance from street to facade. This principle is also common in the Netherlands. Many houses have this transition zone named - a front garden. Typically, it exists withing the city streets as well as smaller towns as well. It does not have more the five meters depth and is commonly used as a vegetation area in front of the house or as a petrification area in front of the house (depending on the owner). You can recognize this basic principle if you see a gate or low fence and one or two personal objects within the space. The front garden is not approachable in terms of access to the public, but it is accessible in terms of visibility. As the view of the front garden is not blocked by height. In this principle, the land of the transition zone (the front garden) is owned by the owner and 'is seen as a safe piece of space', although most people choose not to use the place for themselves. To spend time there. I believe that reasons for not spending time in the front garden are: not seeing other people doing it (it is not seen as normal), the location of the house within the context of the city (it is not a safe neighborhood), or the orientation of the house (facing shadow most of the time).

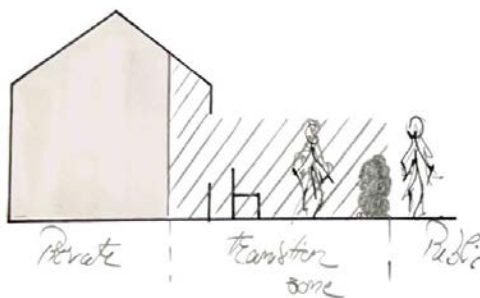


Fig. 12

The fifth basic principle is the large front garden. This principle is not so common within the residences of the city. Commonly, this type of transition zone is deeper than 5 meters in depth and is screened off by a high fence. The physical as well as visual contact is deprived from the public person. I have seen few of these types of front gardens within the city streets. Where privacy is very much valued by the owner and doesn't want to let anything for the public eye in sight. As a consequence, the function and the effect is similar to that of the first basic principle. No visual or physical contact with the public, unless desired by the owner. Any contact of the front garden or the inside being excluded. Owners having this large front garden are missing opportunities of contact and connection with other people. I believe this basic principle could have a positive outcome only if part of it could be shared with other owners. Only if opportunity for socialization would exist.

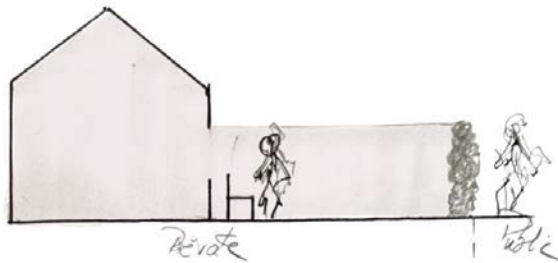


Fig. 13

I will explain in later chapters why I believe more streets of Maastricht (and not only) should adopt the idea of creating a transition zone.

Characteristics of the transition zones

How exactly can the in between be created? For the house that has front garden already, the in between is already there but the function may not be there. Nowadays, many houses with front gardens exist, but have no real purpose. No bench, no chair; just a division from public to private. My opinion is that front gardens, them being paved with tiles or full of greenery, should be used by people themselves as well. Human presence is vital. One person bringing a chair or a bench and having coffee in the morning from time to time, would encourage other people to do so. Based on an interview I conducted in Mariaberg (neighborhood in Maastricht), a man would sometimes spend time in his front garden reading a book or the newspaper. Not long after, his neighbor's kid would start selling lemonade later in the day for people walking by. This is a kind of action generated by another action. A person following the lead of another person. The 'one plus one is three - at least' concept observed by Dutch architect Frank van Klingeren.¹³

What is important to know is that the design of the in between is dictated according to the typology of the street. What I mean by this, facade gardens as well as front gardens are dependent of the width of the sidewalk and the orientation of the street. The architect follows the language of the street as each space requires its own design and implementation. Some of the best tools to follow when designing the in between, is that it has to resemble a demarcation of what is already on the sidewalk.

Width of the sidewalk, orientation, traffic, noise, neighborhood, as well as the will of the owner. These are the primordial aspects to be considered and analyzed before adding the facade garden or making use of the front garden.

Characteristics of the in between can create the space physically, can create contact within the space and can create invitation for contact. Some characteristics of the facade/front gardens to create the space would be:

- type of stone texture for the pavement;
- height of stone/fence;
- appropriation as furniture;
- appropriation as objects;
- vegetation.

These characteristics make up the in between. They each have a specific purpose and should be applied depending on the context. For example, changing the tile pavement shows a clear difference of threshold through material and color. Height shows a clear threshold through altitude and movement. Appropriation through furniture shows ownership and occupancy, while appropriation with objects shows ownership through attachment. And lastly, vegetation helps aesthetically improve the aspect of the transition zone through natural greenery. About 50% of people who decorate their sidewalks do so with plants.¹⁴

All five are a means through creating the space of the in between, it being a front garden or a facade garden. All represent a different aspect and should be applied in unity and not be divided unless necessary. For the pavement defines threshold visually, height defined threshold physically, furniture and objects show ownership and vegetation represents natural beauty of a space.

Some characteristics of the facade/front gardens to create the contact would be:

- no walls;
- low speeds;
- one level;
- short distances;
- orientation towards others.

Contact is possible and easier engaged with when there are no boundaries between people. These are characteristics for architects to consider when designing in order to prevent isolation within space. Lower speed can be realized when placing objects in the in between. By doing this, people will look at the object and without noticing they will lower their speed as the brain processes it. Appropriating the area so that people become interested in the objects, slow their speed to admire it and have time to perceive it. Contact is inevitable while people talking, listening and being on the same level. By people facing each other on the street, communication becomes effortless in a way as it is natural to face each other when speaking. For the transition zones to function in creating contact, a gradual transition between public and private spaces greatly assists people in participating in or keeping close contact with life and events in the public space.¹⁵

14. Ulden van Eric, p.192

15. Gehl Jan, p.114

Some characteristics of the facade/front gardens to create the invitation would be:

- standing;
- sitting;
- acting;

Creating invitation is about designing a smooth transition between public and private. It is a gradual transition from indoors out, reason why in between(s) are usually attached or connected to the facades, to the private. By being able to first see and later act, it creates the desire to participate. The transition from seeing to acting makes it easier for people to assess what is happening and leave time to decide on whether to engage or not.

Standing can be for a short or long period of time. It can be either stopping or staying. Standing to talk to someone for a short time is when you meet or greet a person and is independent of time and space. Meaning it can happen at any time and in any place because it is only stopping.

Standing for a while usually happens when waiting for someone and the process of staying takes place. When doing that finding a good spot from where you can enjoy the surrounding is crucial.

Sitting is usually a stay of duration. They can be for eating, reading, knitting, playing chess, sunbathing, or watching people. Usually is preferable for the weather conditions to be favorable. Sitting locations are more carefully chosen as opposed to standing locations. Weather, orientation, and view are elements taken into consideration when sitting. There are also two types of seating, in terms of furniture, not as an act. Primary seating such as benches and chairs. And secondary seating such as stairs, steps, low walls.¹⁶

Acting such as seeing, hearing, talking, and doing, are all part of having contact and creating invitation to contact within transition zones.

Invitation to have somewhere to go - a destination, and invitation to have something to do - a purpose. A closer study of front yard activities has proven that in many instances there are subtle combinations of purpose, and that gardening serves as a pretext for being outdoors.¹⁷ These characteristics create quality within the in between and a pleasant place in every respect.

Once the space is there, it's much easier for people to start making use of it. The motivation and attitude towards social interaction is formed by physical preconditions.¹⁸

16. Gehl Jan, p.159

17. Ditto, p.134

18. Quist J, Wido, p.52-53

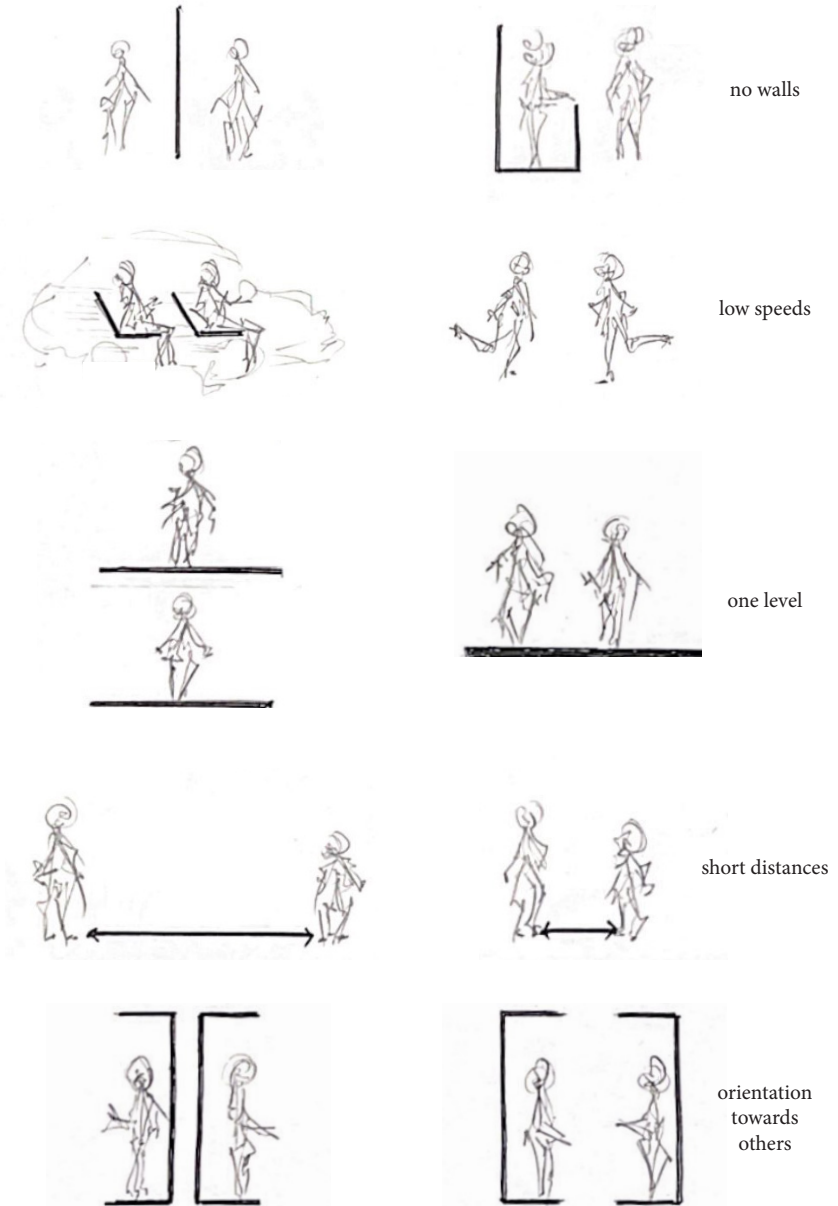


Fig. 14

Whether is it for the individual to be solitary while reading a book or for the individual to create contact with others, the space can now exist and be designed for purpose.

Design

Sidewalks were simply a division between house and the driveway. A raised footpath along the facade separated from the roadway by a stone band.¹⁹

They appeared in order for pedestrians to have a safe place to move around and improve the traffic flow.

As car traffic flow is continuously increasing, the quality of the street life is at the same time decreasing. People spending less time in the street talking to each other on the sidewalk or the front gardens. Today in the Netherlands, the front garden being the new and often only form of transition zone. And even the front garden very often being used for displaying vegetation or hollow petrification, instead of a space for occupancy and contact. From my perspective, many front gardens are a missed opportunity to enhancing the street life. No benches or chairs, which show not human occupancy, but a lot of petrification, which shows artificial lack of personality.

The sidewalk can be more than just a traffic space that takes you from one side of the street to the other. In today's time our social interactions take place mostly in our living rooms (only with acquaintances or by appointment) or in specially designed places such as squares and parks. This has led the chances of spontaneous encounters to decrease, with citizens not having the courage to make use of the sidewalk themselves. At the moment, the public space being space mainly used for traffic and nothing else.

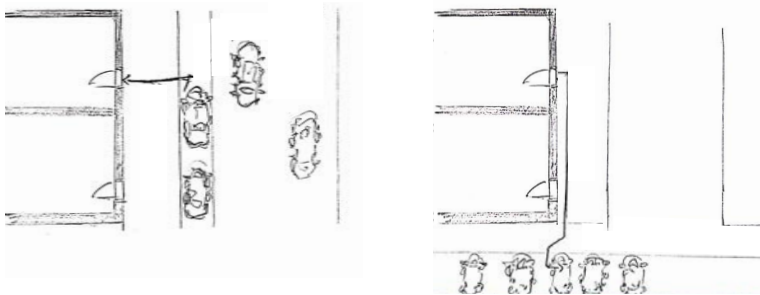
A sidewalk's liveliness can have a calming effect on our well-being. Has the power to create a safer residential environment, better public health, to increase privacy within the private domain, to exclude isolation and increase connection within local residents.

During this sub-chapter I will reflect on a fraction of my anatomical model as a way of creating the in between and the extension of it (a shared space) from the architectural point of view. Transition zones (the in between) move in the field of tension between the planned city of designers and the lived city of residents.²⁰ That makes it somewhat challenging to manage the line between what I am to design - as an interior architect, and what is to be designed/appropriated - for the owner. It is important to keep in mind that the owners might change. Then the architecture of the space is better to be flexible in order for the other resident to be able to design/appropriate it after his/her wish. Also as important is that there are not places everywhere created. Spaces that have no function, but they are free for the owners to

decide whether they would have a function or not. Leaving space for the owner to design is key in creating a successful in between where ownership and identification of personality can occur.

As part of my anatomical model I have chosen a street called Meester Ulrichweg - in Mariaberg. In my opinion, on this street, the in between is a must as no socialization nor privacy occur there. (See fig.1) Cars are parked on one side of the street and the traffic flow is quite intense. As a solution to creating the ideal street I have decided to not allow car traffic anymore. By parking further away from the residence, people would have to walk and therefore, the experience of getting home would be much different than just parking in front of your house and getting inside. When cars are parked at the end of the street (or further away) pedestrian traffic replaces vehicular traffic.²¹ The sense of movement and perceptions is changed, it is heightened. That way we have the time to look around us and observe. We should no longer think in terms of kilometers but in terms of steps.²²

Sketches of journey from parking space to house. Fig. 15



When car is parked in front of the house there is no experience. The individual has time to perceive only his in between.

When car is parked away from the house there is experience. The individual while walking has time to perceive his neighbour's in between, as well as his.

As the cars are not included in the street anymore, that leaves space for creating an extension of the in between. A shared raised beds garden within the middle of the street where every resident has ownership of one raised bed to take care off and nourish.

The communal garden offers opportunity to act and create contact easier. It is supposed to generate contact within the people, so that they become familiar with each other without having to worry about how, where and under what circumstances would contact take place.

21. Gehl Jan, p.126

22. Laven Jeroen, p.34

The garden does not force contact, but it has the power to substantially enrich the life between the buildings. It takes into consideration the notion of ownership, shared ownership, appropriation, quality, contact and safety all together. It is an invitation to act and see the garden as a pretext for being outdoors. A closer study of front garden activities suggests that in many instances there are subtle combinations of purpose, and that gardening serves as a pretext for being outdoors.²³ As an example, on some streets within Blauwedorp, planting vegetation with neighbors has become recently a normality once the Mijngroenemaastricht organization has started it. Following my discussion with Fritz and Marion (two owners of such green spaces) I have found out that in the beginning people were a little bit reticent to taking care of the small green space as they were not used to having one, but today they are very proud about owning one. Once the connections are created, it is likely that people find it easier to talk to each other the next time, share what they grow and bring the conversation also into the in between.



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

As you can see in the images of fig. 16 and 17, the raised garden spaces are showcasing color, respect, care and the aspect of ownership that takes place in some areas within Blauwedorp. When talking to Fritz I have discovered that it also has the sentiment of proudness and self-satisfaction as the plants are so beautifully taken care of by the residents. As for the in between the most important aspect I consider is the balance between what I design as an interior architect, and what I leave for the owner to design as an owner of the residence.

The fine thread where architecture suggests a sort of appropriation of the space but at the same time it doesn't force it, so that the owner feels like he does not have options. Creating borders within the space but not so much filling them. Leaving that up to the owner to decide upon to details of soil and flowers to be added. Another example is by having the standard dimensions of a doormat (50 cm x 75 cm) pressed into the ground, as a physical indication of the need for a doormat as a way of appropriation of the space.

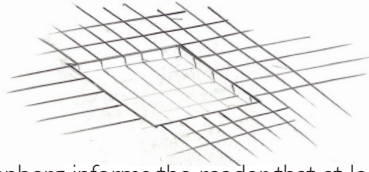


Fig. 18

In his book, Karssenberg informs the reader that at least two meters is preferred in order to use side of the sidewalk as well. He goes on stating that the in between has an important social function where 80% of informal contact between neighbors takes place there.²⁴ When designing the in between I refer to six 'ingredients'. The width of the stoep, the placement of bench/chair, trees, bicycles, vegetation/ flower pots, and lamp posts. These elements, in my opinion are crucial when thinking about resigning a 'good' in between.



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

A beautiful observation of an in between within Mariaberg at a three day distance. On the 17th of April - in the process of appropriation, and on the 20th of April - at the end of the process, with painted ready chairs and cleaned walking surfaces.

24. Laven Jeroen, p.32

Chapter III

Extension of the house

Appropriation

By appropriating a space, we claim and personalize it in a practical as well as in an emotional way. Practical by physically occupying the space with a chair or bench - to read, drink, people watch or chat. And emotional way by having the feeling of home extended, the sentiment of safety and responsibility are met.

Physically appropriating a space can be done by changing the floor tiles (where it shows a clear demarcation between spaces), by bringing furniture within the space (chair or bench to have a place to sit), and also by bringing personal objects into the in between (a toy, doormat, pillow or plants that indirectly inform the passerby of ownership). Appropriating is a way of personalizing a space and revealing identity expressions of the owner. It is not just a place, it is a place of storytelling, making the passerby curious about the resident. It is an indirect communication with the stranger that shows occupancy and sentiment over an outdoor piece of land.

Appropriation can be a mean to create contact. By placing personal objects strangers may ask you questions about a specific object like what it means to you for example (what I did as research in order to learn about the possessor of that object).

While doing primary research for the thesis and literally knocking from door to door to people's houses, I have come to realize that most people place symbolic objects within the transition zone, them being displayed in the window or in facade garden. Those objects have a story and emotional attachment to the owner.

To some people the appropriation can change from time to time. Placing objects depending on season or furniture depending on resistance. The longer you live there, the appropriation differs as something is taken away or simply just added.²⁵ The objects creating a visible control over owned space.

By physically or emotionally appropriating the front garden or facade garden, the process of extending the house takes place. But what kind of space is it? Which room is extended? From my perspective the extension embodies the living room. An outdoor living room. Where there is room for either being solitary or being social, and people that are walking by being the actual entertainment. It is an exposed space to the public but at the same time is still a personal one by the feeling that it embodies to the owner.

25. Ulden van Eric, p.143

Each transition zone is designed through appropriation according to the owners' preferences. Doing that, the extension of the house inhabits the feeling of home and the feeling of safety. Placing personal objects adds attachment within visually public space. It adds quality and therefore helps the transition from space into place of the in between. The bench, the chair, the entrance, and the window become a bunch of places from where the identity of the owner can be identified. The facade garden and front garden becoming a meeting place, not just simply space.

Appropriation is also a way of diminishing the boundary between public and private. Through appropriation the transition between home and street is softened.²⁶ And doing that differs from street to street, as orientation, context and owners all vary from one to the other. However, placing a fence or low hedge, in my opinion, has the opposite effect. Instead, it creates a distinct separation where contact is more difficult to be had, the transition zone has become completely private and turned into personal territory.



Fig. 21

Quality

The quality of a place has the power over people to make them stay. Not just stopping and standing, but spending time in a place by staying. It is a quality without a name. Christopher Alexander explains this term as being objective, precise and full of character.²⁷ In my opinion, these are exactly the reasons why this quality is subjective. It is never twice the same and is experienced differently by each person.

The character within a space is embodied and lived in a unique way based on each individual's background and circumstances.

Every space or building has its own given 'character by certain patterns of events that keep on happening there.'²⁸

The quality of a space is dictated by events, not by objects, as opposed to appropriation. Everyday patterns of events that create a harmonious or not atmosphere. Patterns that may be dead or alive. Dead if they are kept locked and trapped, and alive if they let us loose and free.

For example, if the front garden or the facade garden is being used frequently, the pattern is alive because events take place there.

However, if the front garden or the facade garden is not being used, the pattern is dead because no events take place there.

This quality is not made, but generated (indirectly) by ordinary actions of people.²⁹ The living patterns within a street result in life as an entirety. Words cannot describe the quality as it differs from space to space, from context to context. Quality in my opinion is subjective as it can be sensed by everyone in a different way. For example, just by sitting in my front garden the quality I experience is very different than that of a person passing by. The passerby can see the quality of the space, but he cannot experience it the same way as he is not sitting down next to me. He doesn't feel protected by sitting on the bench with his back against the wall, and warm from being sun kissed while doing sudoku. The quality that he may be experiencing is that of stroller or a 'witness'. A momentary quality.

To create quality within the front garden or/and facade garden, we have to make the in between alive. To create a vibrant, peaceful, and harmonious environment where people feel they want to spend time there. From spaces, to generate places. Space must be turned into place by creating inviting places to stay that support interaction and wellbeing.³⁰ This is, what is called place-making.

27. Alexander Christopher, p.ix

28. Ditto, p.x

29. Ditto, p.xi

30. Karssenberg Hans, p.26

It comes from the community and is a subjective concept where people develop a deep emotional attachment over a space that they own. A quality so strong that has the ability to turn a space into a place.

Quality reflects also on the relationship between the man and his environment. Both complement each other as well as create one another. Quality in our own lives is the same quality in our surroundings.³¹ The relationship between a person and a place is subjective as well as interwoven. It depends on context, location, culture, and personality. Sitting in my facade garden for example. I sit on a chair, watching the world go by, seeing a stranger that reminds me of my best friend, and later talk with my neighbor from 1st floor about doing groceries together. The location, action and contact are interwoven. By sitting in any other place, other than in my facade garden, I wouldn't have remembered about my best friends and I wouldn't have met with my neighbor. When I think of this example, I can't separate what I was doing from the place that I was doing it from. The place and its context have influenced my action, contact and my thoughts. The location and the action form a unit where the space supports the kind of action. It is a pattern of events in space where the quality of being alive, invites this quality to come to life in us.³² Thus, creating the quality to make me stay.

31. Alexander Christopher; p.53

32. Ditto, p.111



Fig. 22

Ownership

Ownership refers to the possession of a property. Man dominates his environment more than any other living thing. His environment being the land that one owns, that one claims.

It is an effort of will, whether the individual wants or not to take ownership of something. It is not mandatory, and it is not automatic. Attributes need to be fulfilled in order for ownership to take place and be recognized. Ownership happens through the process of exchange. Exchange of services, money, or goods.

Ownership can be of various types. It can be self-ownership, public ownership, shared ownership, corporate ownership and so on. Throughout the chapter I will refer mostly to the private ownership, as it is the most important in relation to the in between of front or facade gardens. One can take ownership of objects as well as land. But how can one do that?

There are three characteristics of all owned property: value, bound and control. As objects as well as land are both properties, the attributes apply to both categories.

First characteristic is related to the concept of value.

Monetary or sentimental value towards a space or object.

Second characteristic is that of a bound. A boundary recognizable to others, so that the sovereignty exercised by the owner can be located with precision. This can be a physical or imaginary bound. A border or an object that simply informs the stranger of the ownership.

Objects by their nature have the qualities of discernible boundaries and admit readability to individual control.³³ As objects are placed in the front garden or the facade garden, they are consequently selected by the owner and separated from others, ultimately helping identify the owner's preferences. A way of appropriation within the space is recognized as a claim over a piece of land.

A conquest visible to the stranger:

The third characteristic is that of control. Authority of a space where the owner's control is total. As a consequence of control, responsibility and protection over one's space occurs. The land or object belongs to the owner. A sovereign authority in the sense that the owner can do no wrong in respect to what he totally owns.

When we talk about front gardens, ownership is usually more visible to the stranger, as opposed to ownership over a facade garden.

Front gardens are owned pieces of land through monetary means.

33. LeFevre Robert, p.54

Space bought and monthly paid by the owner over which he has the authority to design as he wishes.

But in regard to facade gardens, can a private owner take ownership of public space? Yes, he can. By having the wish to possess and follow these three attributes; objects and land can become the subject of ownership. In this case the facade gardens are owned through appropriation and control. For example, by placing a bench on the public sidewalk in front of your house, ownership takes place. The bench in front of your house, next to the facade, with some flowers to the left and to the right, indicates to the passerby that the space has quality through the actions suggested by the objects placed there. Bound, appropriation and control.

Can the ownership take place if the owner is not present? Yes, it can. Even when the owner is not physically present within the space, the ownership still takes place. As presented in the example above, the objects within the land express the belonging to someone else, thus respect from the stranger comes into place. From the photograph, we can see the sense of ownership over public space. The public ground is embodied within the facade garden, therefore from public the piece of land becomes owned semipublic.

The morality arising from private property is based upon respect for the property owned by another when the owner is absent.³⁴

When the in between is created by the placement of a bench, that space is respected by not being used by a stranger.

However, based on cultural differences, environment can be differently approached. For example, in Romania we also have benches in front of the private house, but it can be used by anyone. It is not only for the owner. By benches not being placed next to the facade, with the sidewalk in between the house and the bench, a level of ownership is lost. Therefore, strangers are welcomed to use the bench and no permission needs to be requested.

A few weeks ago, I did an experiment as to what happens if I do sit on someone's bench and how do I feel when I do it. Based on the experiences so far experimented within Maastricht, sitting on someone's bench feels intrusive. For me it creates an uncomfortable feeling. Like you don't belong there. Especially when the owner or the owner's neighbor comes outside to ask me if nothing is wrong with me, while wondering why I am using the bench.



Fig. 23

Creation of privacy

Behavior

Sidewalks are places where people display individual and group identities. It is a space where open interactions and accidental encounters take place every day. Life within sidewalks may differ from culture to culture, city to city, neighborhood to neighborhood and even from street to street. This is due to environmental behavior that people embody based on backgrounds, contexts and origins.

Environmental psychology plays an interesting role when talking about sidewalk behavior. The term is described in the book *Public Places and Private Space* by Albert Mehrabian, and it refers to how spaces (public or private) are inhabited and experienced by individuals. How the feelings and emotions of people determine the behavior and reactions towards environments. Reason why some environments affect different people in different ways.³⁵

As a general statement, people's reactions to environments are either to approach or to avoid. Depending on the past experiences, cultural differences, or sophistication of dealing with places. We are all unique, with distinctive past experiences which cause us triggers in different ways.

An example on this is precisely my grandmother's behavior when being on private property without even realizing. Seeing the front garden had made her intrigued, causing her to walk further and further away into the private domain. By being curious she engaged in a form of approach. She acted based on her feelings when deciding to explore and trying to become more intimate with the space. Environments cause feelings in us that in turn cause us to behave in certain ways, regardless of how we should behave.³⁶

When talking about sidewalks and the behavior they imply, it's worth to mention the self-reinforcing process. This process was brought up in the book *Life between Buildings* by Jan Gehl and it refers to people influencing each other in doing something specific. Dutch architect Frank van Klingeren came up with the concept 'one plus one is three - at least'.³⁷ Meaning that when one or two are doing something, it is very likely that others will join as well. Something happens because something happens. For example, as I mentioned in an earlier chapter, once two neighbors created a transition zone within the street, others were quick to follow as well. However, it can also be that nothing happens because nothing happens. Kids not playing outside with each other, because other kids don't do it either.

35. Mehrabian Albert, p.4

36. Ditto, p.8

37. Gehl Jan, p.173

Not spending time in the front garden because no one else does it and you might feel embarrassed. But the good news that this concept discloses is that once you start to spend time in the front garden it is more than possible that others will join. The situation on Heerderweg is the best example.

Once having the wish to create and use the facade garden it is important to mention the edge-effect. Dutch sociologist Derk de Jonge discovered based on primary research an analysis, that people tend to be drawn to edges. Events growing from the edge towards the middle of public spaces. This offers a sense of safety (by being approached frontally) and best opportunity of surveying it. Reason why most benches within transition zones are placed against their facades, keeping distance from public by not interfering with the flow of the street as well making it easy to watch and react. If the edge fails, then the space never becomes lively.³⁸

Placing the bench against the facade has other psychological effects as well. It is discussed in the book *De Stoep* that when having objects or people in front of the window, people passing by automatically walk further away from the facade and closer to the public driveway, as well as the sense of movement being modified. As you can see fig. 24 and fig. 25 as sketch representation of the behavior described. People tending to slow the walking speed, leaving time to look and admire the objects placed there. To become engaged with what is outside displayed, instead of what is inside, through the windows. As a result of this, the privacy of the private owner is achieved. If something is in front of the house, people tend to look less inside.³⁹ The sense of privacy is enhanced by making use of the in between. It being a front or facade garden. Of course, if we are talking about front gardens (fixed transition zones), the privacy is more or less resulted from the distance of the front garden. But if we are talking about facade gardens, where space and distance is limited, then placing furniture in the in between is ideal in order to create better privacy within the home.

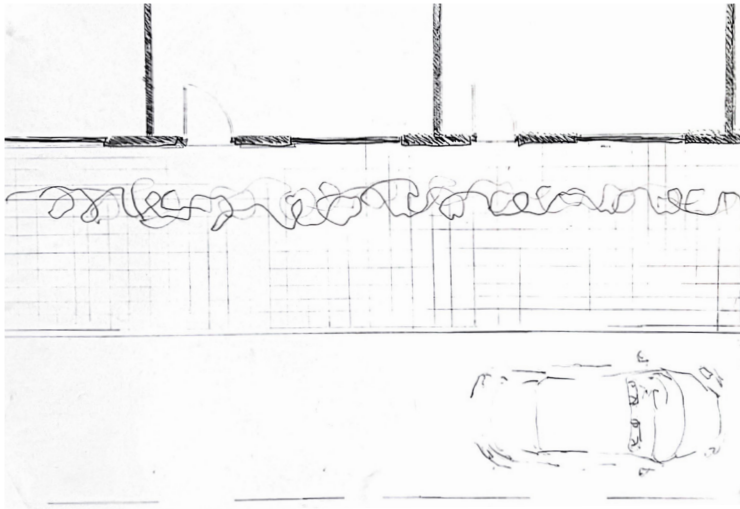


Fig. 24

Representation of how people walk in relation to the facade with non existent in between

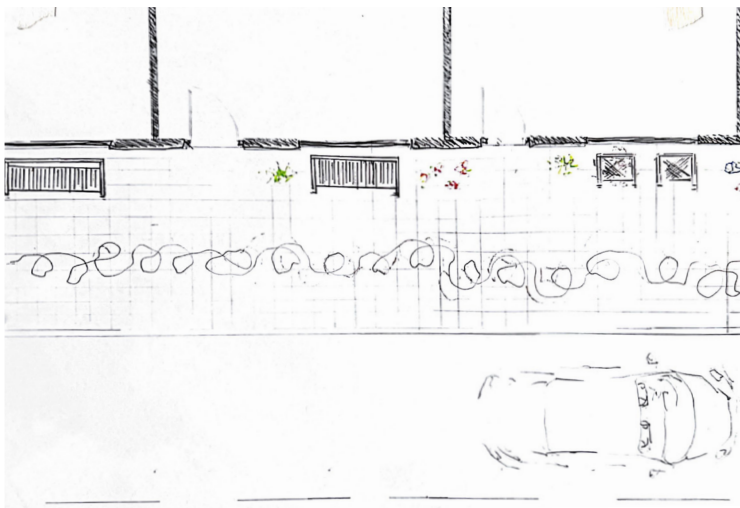


Fig. 25

Representation of how people walk in relation to the facade with existent in between

Contact

Contact is as important as having that transition zone.

Having contact with people does not necessarily mean that a verbal engagement has to take place. Seeing people, recognizing, smiling, and talking to them are all a way of interacting and creating that social contact that streets need nowadays. And the transition zone can be used as a mean to create that contact. By sitting on your bench in your transition zone and seeing people, you create the visual contact. By sitting on your bench, the next day, or the day after, and you see that same person again walking past you, without even realizing, the term 'public familiarity' takes place. This term was brought up by sociologists and is presented in the book *De Stoeper* as an action of recognition and identification.⁴⁰

The level of interaction may depend as well. The typical city dweller behavior is:

- observing each other;
- eye contact;
- exchanging smiles;
- passing greetings;
- chatting about the weather;
- overhearing conversations of others;

Contact and social interaction are not a must when living in a residential area. As not all neighbors talk to each other, and not all strangers engage with the residents of a particular neighborhood. But it is encouraged. According to Jane Jacobs, engaging with neighbors and strangers passing by our streets is one of the keys to creating a lively neighborhood. Having the transition zone is not sufficient in creating the contact and engagement most streets are missing nowadays. A functional transition zone is not just that allocate space in front of the house designed by the architect, but it is mostly about the people. We, as residents, making use of the space by creating contact and keeping that contact going. Of course, it is up to each individual when and how much time he's going to spend in front of the house. Because the transition zone starts with the owner (weather he or she want to spend time in front of the house), and it ends with the owner (weather he or she continue practicing the social function of the transition zone).

As mentioned in first chapter, using the transition zone is an optional and well as a social activity as it depends on the time available, the weather, and the contact. As spending time in front of your house is always an optional activity, in my opinion it doesn't always have to be a social activity. There may be times when people are not walking pass your house, or cars are not driving by, but that doesn't mean that you cannot sit and spent time there. Reading, for example in front of your house is an optional activity, but not a social one. And that is perfectly fine. That is why I believe that having the transition zone in front of your house is for everybody. Whether you are an extrovert and like to spend time and meet new people, or whether you are an introvert, like myself, and you prefer spending time more by yourself. There is no pressure to make contact in the transition zone, but a place of comfort and leisure.

We need places that make contact possible. Especially nowadays when we prioritize texting as a method of communication and calling as a method of talking.

But where is most convenient to create the in between other than the place closest to the house?

The zone of contact can be either in front of the house or the back of the house.

By having the zone of contact in the back of the house, it means that there is access and contact between the individuals as the meeting was previously planned. The contact is not spontaneous, but a planned gathering. However, when contact takes place in front of the house, the interaction is (almost all the time) spontaneous whether with neighbors or strangers.

Having the transition zone in front of the house offers an easier way of interacting with people. As the interaction occurs once, it is very likely to occur again. Then becoming a habit. But if the transition zone is not there, then contact is much less likely to happen. As an example, on Elizabeth Strouwenlaan (street in Mariaberg) there are series of terraced houses with a front garden in the middle, and series of terraced houses with no front garden to the left and to the right. Based on the dialogue I had with people living in the houses with the front garden, I found out that the relationship between people with the front gardens was so much different.

Having the front garden and spending time there, allows them meet more often, and create relationships. Contact being much better, living life in those houses being much easier. One lady I talked to told me that she doesn't really know her neighbors with no front garden. They only see and greet each other when going to the car or coming back to the house. But don't spend time talking. She also told me a bit of what is going on in the life of both her neighbors to the left and to the right with the front gardens. Based on contact, she knew that her neighbor's husband passed away not long ago and told me not go to her house that day as she was having a bad day. And her neighbor to the right was at work, but during summer is usually in the front garden reading, before going to work.

Transition zones on the sidewalk or next to the sidewalk help create contact which consequently helps create safety. Safety within the neighbors taking care of each other. Even just to tell me to not bother her neighbor.

As part of my anatomical project and as a way of combining the theoria and anatomia, I did an experiment where I built a bench. I call it a 'Romanian bench' as I used my grandparent's bench as inspiration in terms of idea on how to be built and dimensions. This bench is made of one wooden pallet taken from the Blauwe Loper construction site as a way of up-cycling and re-purposing material in the form of a social activity. Reason why I am sharing this is because the whole process is related to the subject of contact. Without contact there would (possibly) be a bench but (pretty sure) there would not be a purpose to that bench. There was contact when I went and talked to the people on the construction site to see if it's possible to get a wooden pallet. There was contact when I asked a stranger to drive me and my wooden pallet to university as the wooden pallet was too heavy. And most definitely there was contact between me and Moon, the person living at house 22 on Meester Ulrichweg, the place where my bench remained for 2 weeks to see if people use it or not. Once I built the bench and I took it on Meester Ulrichweg where I met the boyfriend of the person living at house 20 who was coming to see his girlfriend. I explained a bit about my project and little experiment and asked if possible, to leave my bench there. His girlfriend came downstairs, I explained again the situation and she put me in contact with her neighbor (house 22) as she would be home much more often.

Later that night Moon texted me and we talked about her making use of the bench if she wanted. She was more than happy to have the bench there and glad that I chose her facade to place my bench there. The bench was used while it was there and will continue to be used even after the end of my project as the bench will then belong to Moon, as part of the facade garden of house 22. The bench will have an owner and a purpose, and the residence will have a functional in between.

Without contact Moon would not have known that she could use that bench and most probably would not have used it as she would have no idea where it came from. Contact not only helped create purpose for the bench but also helped create a connection between two complete strangers.



Fig. 26

Safety

Safety is the goal within neighborhoods. A safe environment and a lively street where contact is established is a place that people want to return to. Everybody wants to feel safe in their own home as well as on their own street and in their own neighborhood.

Safety as well as privacy are the outcome of a 'good' in between.

By 'good' in between I mean a place/ a room that contributes to the feeling of being home, the sense of home, that is an extension of the house and offers sufficient privacy.

But what does safety have to do with the in between?

Contact in the transition zone may be fleeting, after a while it may be casual and later it can reach to everyday encounters. The social network is created where people help each other and keep an eye on each other. By doing this, they become familiar with each other and therefore a sense of safety is born. Safe to see each other, talk to each other and create friendships. The sense of safety can be reached through the concept Eyes in the street.⁴¹

The sense of safety can be reached also through the location of the in between. When the transition zone is next to one's property, by leaning against his own facade, it feels safer to interact with others. The location offers protection, closer as possible to the private but with the view of the public. The edge effect where you are less exposed but making it easier to watch and react to others. In my opinion, that is the reason why most benches within transition zones have the back facing the facade, and the seating facing the street. A personal, appropriated space that becomes private and safe. Van Dorst comes up with the prospect of refuge theory.⁴² He talks about people needing a safe place (open environment) in order to interact with the environment from there. And the transition zone is exactly that place. A safe scene next to his/her property where he feels protected and as a consequence feels safer to interact with other people.

Sense of safety is also gained through appropriation. Feeling of safety through colonizing the space by placing personal belongings in the in between. Even though they are visible by strangers passing by, they also offer security to the private owner once he sees them and recognizes them as his. The resident marks his territory and creates the function of a safe place, not a gated one. Safety within the street and the in between can also be created through the use of lamps.

41. Jacobs Jane, p. 34-35

42. Ulden van Eric, p. 11

Lamps have the power to increase the feeling of safety once it gets darker outside. If the street is illuminated, not only does it show occupancy, but it also has the power to create a vandal-proof environment.⁴³

Burglaries being less likely to happen. Especially in Mariaberg where the case of vandalism is probable to take place more often than in other places of Maastricht.

Cars on the other hand, create a more unsafe environment for the children. Unsafe to play. Cars also stand in the way of having good visibility of the street. Them being parked in the street or just driven by. Being able to see what is going on creates an element of invitation, and as a consequence, it creates the desire to participate. If kids are playing on the street, closer to the windows, it is more likely that it generates others to join in. By having kids playing on the street and having the in between being used, the question of safety of public space is answered.



Fig. 27

Conclusion

Throughout my research I have analyzed the in between through primary as well as secondary sources.

Primary sources - by talking to people while visiting streets of Maastricht and using the knowledge I gained from that as a learning tool to either apply in a similar way or realize what needs to be changed and adapted.

Secondary sources - by reading books on theories, philosophies, and case studies that other people have come up with, and seeing how/if they apply or not in the context of my research.

Using the primary and the secondary means have been both equally significant in my process especially when shifting from an objective to a subjective perspective or vice versa.

As a way of concluding, I would like to reflect on the main questions I had at the beginning of my project. The meaning and the value of the in between being that of a safe piece of personal space. An outdoor, exposed to the public eye space, that has the power of becoming a secure and gezellig place to the private owner through appropriation and ownership. The theoretical part has helped me conclude that the in between is private (ownership over the piece of space), it is semiprivate (feeling of privacy), and public (by it being visually accessible by everyone), all at the same time. The architectural part has helped me realize that sometimes it is alright for the designer/architect to not design everything that makes up a space, but to allow the resident the 'room' to add his/her personality as well. The owner's chapters (third and fourth) are what the in between is all about - the owner. He/she is ultimately the one that the space depends on. How he/she should live in/with that space, and as an effect, to gain friendships, privacy, and security from there.

A way of motivating people to spend time in the in between was that of creating shared outdoor spaces where activities as a community can occur. An invitation to become social and productive at the same time. It is more of a source of stimulating experience that makes it easier for people to create contact by sharing the experience of gardening in common and then later take to conversation to the in between. Contact at modest level can take place. As the in between is a semi private space in public eye - it being a logical place to meet.

Trying to answer my question if I can make people aware of the in between, I dare to answer YES, I can. Whether through my project, my thesis or me going and physically telling people about it. I have made people living on Meester Ulrichweg aware by talking to them about it and by bringing my bench over there. I tried to create a consciousness in them when sitting on that bench, of what they manage to actually accomplish. Appropriation, contact, ownership and privacy.



Fig. 28



Fig. 29

I have precisely described the value and meaning of the in between as a physical, functional and successful place. In the introduction I have presented what my aim is - to make people aware that spending time in the in between is beneficial to both the resident/neighbor and the city. To liberate people of the preconceived idea that spending time in front of the house being seen as 'trashy'. Creating an environment where people feel free to spend time outside with the neighbors, share spaces and conversations together. An ideal street where my grandma would be at liberty to walk where she wanted, with transition zones being much smoother and prudence from culture being much reduced.

Bibliography

Books:

Alexander, C. (1979) *The Timeless Way of Building*, Oxford University Press

Gehl, J. (2011) *Life Between Buildings - Using public space*, Island Press Washington

Jacobs, J. (2009), *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Published by Vintage Books New York

Karssenberg, H. (2016), *The City at Eye Level - Second and extended version*, Eburon Academic publishers Delft

Laven J., Ham van S., Veelders S. & Karssenberg H., (2017), *The City at Eye Level - In the Netherlands*, Uitgeverij Blauwdruk, Wageningen, the Netherlands

LeFevre, R. (1966) *The Philosophy of Ownership*, Ludwig van Mises Institute 1980

Lofland J. (2009) *Sidewalks - Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space*, The MIT Press

Marcus C. C. (1986), *Housing as if People Mattered - Site Design Guidelines for Medium Density Family Housing*, the Regents of the University of California

Mehrabian A. (1980), *Public Places and Private Spaces: The Psychology of Work, Play, and Living Environments*, Basic Books

Quist J.W., (2012), *Transforming Housing Heritage*, Delftdigitalpress.com

Ulder van E., Heussen D., & Ham van S., (2015), *De Stoep - Encounters between house and street*, (01 edition) NAI publishers Rotterdam

Websites:

Brokke K. (April 14, 2020) 'We have nothing to hide' - Why Dutch people don't mind you peering into their homes
<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/dutch-windows/index.html>

Gemeente Maastricht, Geveltuinaanleggen
<https://www.gemeentemaastricht.nl/wonen-en-verhuizen/geveltuin-aanleggen>

Kapoor M. (April 22, 2021) Why do the Dutch Never put Curtains over their Windows?
<https://medium.com/the-collector/why-do-the-dutch-never-put-curtains-over-their-windows-e232b4640e8>

Karsenberg H. & Laven J. (2017) The City at Eye Level in the Netherland
<https://thecityateyelevel.com/stories/publicspace-and-placemaking-in-nl/>

Imagery

All images and drawings have been either taken/sketched by the author:

Fig.1 Image edited in photoshop, loc. Kalfstraat - Maastricht

Fig.2 Section situation with demarcation on type of spaces, loc. Meester Ulrichweg - Maastricht

Fig.3 The public, loc. Heerderweg - Maastricht

Fig.4. The contact, Image taken inside Marianne`s house, loc. Meendaal - Maastricht

Fig.5 The private, loc. Elisabeth Strouvenlaan - Maastricht

Fig.6 The in between, loc. Heerderweg - Maastricht

Fig.7 The in between, loc. Ravelijnstraat

Fig.8 The in between, loc. Ravelijnstraat

Fig.9 - Fig. 13 Sketches explaining the five basic principles

Fig.14 Sketches explaining spatial characteristics when designing

Fig.15 Sketches applying for having no cars on the street

Fig.16 - Fig. 17 Raised garden beds, loc. Gebroeders Moorsweg - Maastricht

Fig.18 Sketch explaining doormat detail

Fig.19 - Fig.20 Appropriation, loc. Gildenweg - Maastricht

Fig.21 Appropriation, loc. Ravelijnstraat - Maastricht

Fig.22 Quality, loc. Heerderweg - Maastricht

Fig.23 Ownership, background edited in Photoshop, loc. Sint Bernardusstraat - Maastricht

Fig.24 - Fig. 25 Sketches explaining behaviour

Fig.26 Contact, background edited in Photoshop, loc. Meester Ulrichweg - Maastricht

Fig.27 Safety, loc. Kalfstraat - Maastricht

Fig.28 - Fig.29 Awareness for the in between, loc. Meester Ulrichweg - Maastricht

