

Shifting to a new approach

The Winkelcentrum is an essential part of the city centre of Etten-Leur. A key element for the urban, social and ecological future development of the municipality that was not conceived at all under these principles.



'Sale Ends Today' is a public work by the artist Banksy in which he makes a biting comment on contemporary consumerism, which, he implies, rivals the zeal of religious devotion.

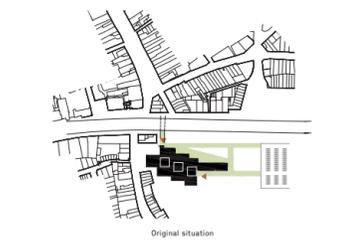
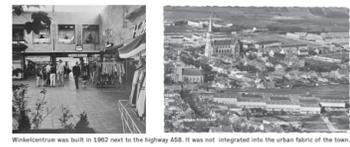
Sales are the exemplification of a model that degrades both the retailer and the consumer by promoting dynamics that also end up degrading urban life and the environment.

In our view, neither architecture nor commerce are the main problems in this site, but rather the deformation of both under the impulse of consumerism that has led to an unsustainable urban, social and ecological situation.

Our proposal is an approach on how the transition from a "consumption-based" urban model to a "living-based" one can be driven by urban and architectural strategies.



Contemporary heritage



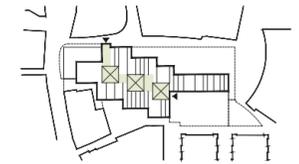
The Winkelcentrum was the first of its kind in the area. In terms of use but also in terms of morphology. Despite being an architecture that had little to do with its immediate surroundings, we soon noticed that it had some well-intentioned decisions in its original architecture design.



Over the years, several modifications and extensions were made to the original building, completing its volume with more square meters of commercial space and more linear meters of shop windows.

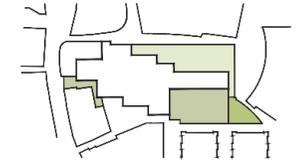
Recycling

Identifying the original architecture and revealing its qualities



The original building is outdated in terms of architecture and use, but it already has a place in the collective memory of Etten-Leur. We believe it can be renovated to integrate it to the future development.

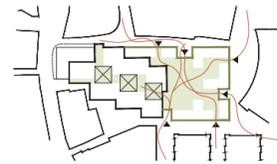
Considering the additions as areas of opportunity



The different extensions of the building did not add any urban or architectural value to the original situation. In order to reconfigure and densify the site while at the same time enhancing the original building, we decided to take the later additions as an opportunity space where the new architecture could take a place.

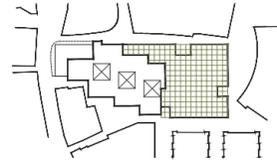
Adding

Redefining the perimeter to improve its urban integration



The existing perimeter of the building was not defined by the urban flows or taking into account the public space. By replacing the later additions, we adjust some critical relationships with the existing fabric while creating new entrances and emphasizing them with the resulting volumes.

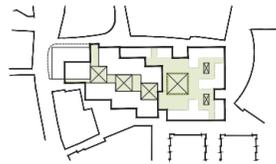
Structural grid to articulate the extension



A structural grid of 7,00m x 7,00m defines the template of the extension. The concrete structure (which can be prefabricated) with high load capacity slabs makes possible to accommodate a secondary structure that will divide and organize the double-height of the main structure. This will allow the programmed spaces to be installed completely independent of the superstructure.

Public and green

A new covered public multi-purpose space



We firstly believe that the central condition of the building must be translated into a truly effective public space that can accommodate the activities and needs of an urban facility of a future development.

Greenfronts instead of storefronts



Taking advantage of the direct contact with the ground, we propose to remove part of the pavement creating more drained areas and allowing vegetation to develop on and beyond the site. Going further, we propose that greenery should also occupy linear metres of façade, promoting more biodiversity and less consumerism.

Growing

Increasing density in urban centres is desirable both to optimise services and as a way of reducing the ecological footprint of sprawl. It is even more desirable when the site has already been anthropised in the heart of the urban centre with very low density.

In our view, this increase in density should prioritise typological diversity, inclusivity and adaptability.

The proper scale

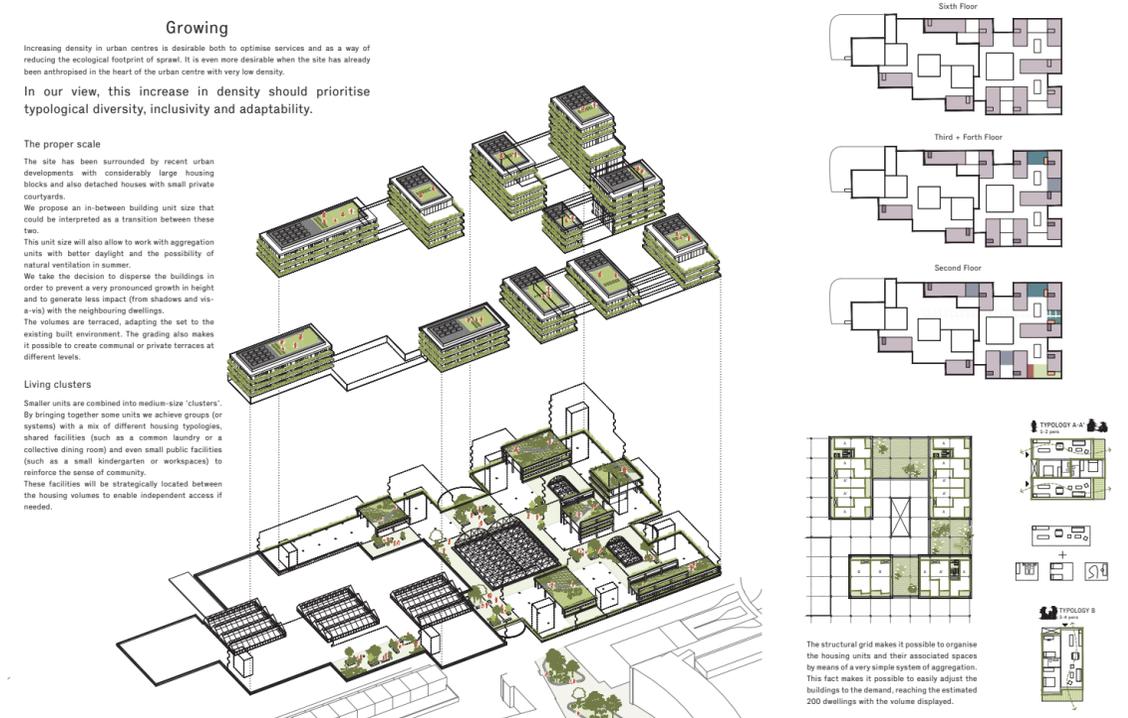
The site has been surrounded by recent urban developments with considerably large housing blocks and also detached houses with small private courtyards. We propose an in-between building unit size that could be interpreted as a transition between these two.

This unit size will also allow to work with aggregation units with better daylight and the possibility of natural ventilation in summer. We take the decision to disperse the buildings in order to prevent a very pronounced growth in height and to generate less impact (from shadows and view) with the neighbouring dwellings. The volumes are terraced, adapting the set to the existing built environment. The grading also makes it possible to create communal or private terraces at different levels.

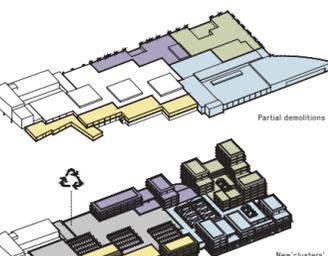
Living clusters

Smaller units are combined into medium-size 'clusters'. By bringing together some units we achieve groups (or systems) with a mix of different housing typologies, shared facilities (such as a common laundry or a collective dining room) and even small public facilities (such as a small kindergarten or workspaces) to reinforce the sense of community.

These facilities will be strategically located between the housing volumes to enable independent access if needed.

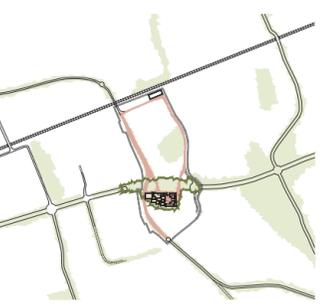


Step by step



The proposal takes into account the ambition of the development and therefore considers the possibility of dividing it into different groups. Each 'cluster' could function autonomously, so they could be built separately. This fact also favours the possibility of diversifying the developers, achieving a more heterogeneous city.

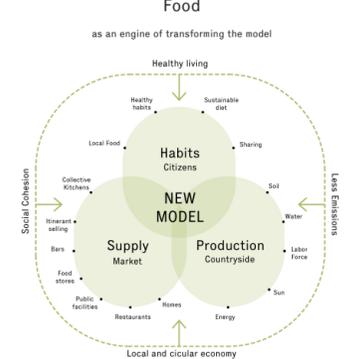
From highway to greenway



The proposal would clearly have a local impact in the city centre, but we believe it could have a greater scale impact if the discontinuity of the green in the site can be successfully bridged. In our view, future urban developments should preferably take place, as in the case of the Winkelcentrum, in areas that meet 2 conditions:

The starting point of our proposal is based on these three reflections

Three numbered reflections: 1. A new connected urban centre (shopping centre absorbed into town centre), 2. Reprogramming a monofunctional site (monofunctionality replaced by sustainable living model), 3. An ecological transition (anthropization of centre replaced by biodiversity and environmental impact).



The global food-system is responsible for almost 30% of greenhouse gas emissions. This includes emissions from land use, agriculture, animal feed, transport, packaging and waste. Drastic shifts in the dominant socio-economic models are needed if we want to achieve a real transition from a "consumption-based" model to a "living-based" model.

