

AJ

NEWS/End of diploma funding fear

Ball in presidential court

BUILDINGS/Dutch housing

PRACTICE/Disabled access

REVIEW/Heinz Gallery preview



BUILDING FEATURE

6 'Forum' ideas have influenced the work of Lucien Lafour (Abattoirterrein Amsterdam, Lucien Lafour and Rikkert Wijk).
 7 Carel Weeber's Venserpolder, Amsterdam, 1980-82. Popular among architects in the 1980s, Weeber's housing schemes lack a sense of urban space.
 8 Zwanenburgwal Canal, a recent scheme by Paul de Ley, who used to work with van Eyck.



8



6

similar date in Britain, such as the Peabody Trust, have always been marginal.

Cheap and cheerful

The associations are funded primarily by central government, with local subsidies for difficult work such as urban renewal or renovation of historic buildings. A typical social dwelling costs £44 000, and the rent of £140-160 per month represents about 50 per cent of the real cost. Space standards are generous — although recently reduced, they are still above Parker Morris — and the standard of building rigorously controlled. Social housing accounts for 50 per cent of Amsterdam's stock, with only 7 per cent being owner-occupied, compared with 45 per cent nationally. Although most people aspire to owner-occupation, public housing does not carry the social stigma that besets it here, and many children's names are put on waiting lists as soon as they are



7



9 The Black Madonna: cynical use of prefabricated construction rather than rationalism? Carel Weeber, The Hague, 1982-85.

10 Wagenaarstraat, by Duinker and van der Torre — young architects whose work shows the influence of 'Forum'.
11 Duinker and van der Torre's infill housing at Wagenaarstraat (top) and Tweede van Swindenstraat (bottom) shows a concern for flexibility. The former uses sliding doors to separate living spaces round a central service core, the latter pushes service spaces to the sides.

Key to 11 (top)

- 1 Hall
- 2 Corridor
- 3 Living room
- 4 Bedroom
- 5 Kitchen

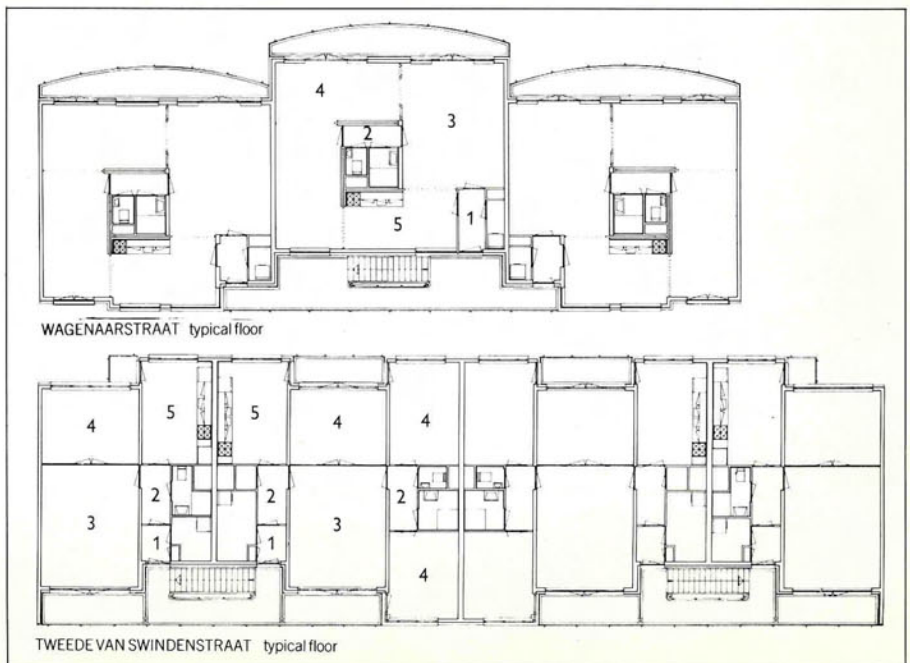
Key to 11 (bottom)

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Hall
- 3 Living room
- 4 Bedroom
- 5 Kitchen

16 years old. I was told that some will wait 10 or even 20 years for their preferred development, and happily these frequently coincide with those regarded as being of 'architectural' quality. There appears to be little resistance to living in overtly 'modern' designs, and aesthetic control is exercised by a local committee ('Welstan') of reputable architects who advise the relevant authority: Theo Bosch, for example, who practises from Amsterdam, is chairman of the panel in The Hague.

Since its inception, social housing has consistently received the attention of leading architects. Many of the finest projects of the Amsterdam School, such as De Klerk's 'Eigen Haard' ('Our Hearth') and Kramer and De Klerk's 'De Dageraad' ('The Dawn'), were built for housing associations, as were many seminal Modernist schemes such as Oud's Kiefhoek and Van Tijen, Brinkman and Van der Vlugt's gallery-access Bergpolderflat in Rotterdam. More recently, the *Forum* group, led by Aldo van Eyck (AR February 1990 pp31-97), developed many of its ideas around the celebration of the necessities of daily life, in a manner which recalls the spirit of seventeenth century genre paintings — and, one might add, the eminently habitable sills, built-in furniture and welcoming front-door bench of Rietveld's Schroeder House.

Although the *Forum* group mounted a sustained and vigorous critique of industrialised mass housing, the Netherlands developed its share of system-built schemes, and Bijlmermeer in southern Amsterdam offers a particularly heroic example, replete with *soleil, espace* and typically luxuriant native *verdure*, but no longer with tenants — the vacancy level has reached 20 per cent. *Forum* ideas, by contrast, are exemplified in the redevelopment of the Nieuwmarkt area in the historic core of Amsterdam (AR



10

11