Humanizing Modernism?
Jaap Bakema’s Het Dorp, a Village for Disabled Citizens

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A Nation Builds a Village

Het Dorp (the Village), one of the first self-contained residential communities in the world solely for people with disabilities, was designed in the Netherlands in the 1960s by Jaap Bakema of the Rotterdam firm Van den Broek and Bakema. My own encounter with this unusual place began after a ten-minute walk up the Amsterdamseweg from the Arnhem train station, when I saw a cluster of low-slung monolithic brick buildings, topped by yellow painted fascias, in a pastoral scene of meadow and trees. The entrance to this complex turns off the main road into a parking lot edged by a few small shops, ending vehicular connection to the surrounding neighborhood (Figure 1). Initially, what struck me most were the large modernist buildings in the midst of pitched-roof residential developments. That impression shifted with the appearance of a man walking his dog from his electric wheelchair, a circle of wheelchairs by a café in the distance, and a motorized bed whizzing past, the rider reclining on her side under a blanket.

Bakema’s design for Het Dorp represented an important effort to humanize postwar architecture for a community of people with physical disabilities. Het Dorp’s atypical users and the site’s unusual terrain combined to provide an ideal opportunity to explore the local, humanized, and democratic architecture espoused by Team 10 and to respond to the new postwar society for which CIAM’s (Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne) abstract and mechanistic focus no longer seemed adequate. Designed to provide uninterrupted wheelchair access on the interior and exterior, Het Dorp represents an early example of barrier-free architecture. The inclusion of the disabled in society through the design of buildings and cities exemplified an ambition for postwar architecture to design for “human associations” instead of universal and standard formulas. The Village was simultaneously an “experiment in living” and an institution, thereby manifesting contradictory terms of belonging for the disabled in the new postwar Dutch society, conditions that were embedded in the architecture.

Het Dorp began as a nationwide cultural phenomenon. “You have awakened something within us, within the people, namely, awareness of our fellow disabled citizens—not only those who will come and live in the Village but those living in our society.” This announcement on a November afternoon in 1962 by Minister of Social Affairs Marga Klompé brought to a close the extraordinary Dutch televised fund-raiser Open Het Dorp (Open the Village). At the telethon’s conclusion, Dr. Arie Klapwijk and TV celebrity Mies Bouwman, the weary yet elated hosts, announced the final tally to a jubilant crowd: 12 million guilders had been raised (the equivalent of about 34 million euros today). The object of the telethon was to raise funds for the construction of a new residential community in Arnhem, in the eastern part of the Netherlands, that would be home to four hundred disabled people. As the broadcast commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Open Het Dorp recalled, “A people built the Village.”

The Village was the brainchild of Klapwijk, the director of the Johanna Foundation, a private secular charity founded in Arnhem in 1900 for the rehabilitation of disabled children and young adults. His work at the Johanna Foundation, and with war veterans earlier in his career, had convinced him that Dutch society had a responsibility to create places that would be accessible for patients like his, where they could live after
completing their rehabilitation. Klapwijk and his colleagues hoped the telethon would awaken the public to the idea that the physical environment plays a role in improving the quality of life for people with disabilities. Signaling a break with institutions of the past, the telethon’s sponsors presented the Village as a self-sufficient modern community where the benefits of Dutch citizenship, in the form of recognition and basic comforts, would be extended to people with physical disabilities.

At a time of social transformation Open Het Dorp extended the new medium of television to unite the nation around the inclusion of people with disabilities. Rarely has an architectural project been instilled with, and been supported by, such national affectual investment. American sociologist Irving Kenneth Zola observed that Het Dorp was “perceived as promising [the public] a kind of utopia; anything less would be regarded as a betrayal.” Van den Broek and Bakema was one of several Dutch architecture offices inspired by the telethon to pledge its professional services. According to Frans Hooykaas, an employee of Van den Broek and Bakema and Jaap Bakema’s longtime assistant, the firm’s extensive experience with large government housing and planning projects made it the clear choice to design Het Dorp. Moreover, the telethon’s emancipatory narrative aligned with Bakema’s sociospatial ideals. As the firm’s leading intellectual figure, editor of the journal Forum, and influential member of Team 10, Bakema espoused the “open society” as a humanistic ideal against a political setting that included the escalating Cold War and technocratic government building programs. His call that architecture should “arouse the needs of social justice, freedom and cooperation” closely echoed the telethon’s agenda.

Bakema himself developed the concept for Het Dorp. He presented the design in a 1966 television program titled Het Dorp van de grond (one of several broadcasts that followed up on the telethon), playing the role of architectural spokesperson (Figure 2). This visionary approach, which fused de Stijl, socialist ideology, and modern science, inspired Het Dorp advocates like Mies Bouwman.

While Het Dorp received immense press attention and left a strong cultural imprint, it has been the subject of remarkably little scholarly study. This is lamentable because Het Dorp offers a unique example of a powerful fusion of sociopolitical ambition, design ideology, and the built environment. Its design conceived of a particular user by infusing Dutch architectural rationalism with social scientific ideas. By examining this idealistic project within the framework of its context, we can better understand the limitations of architectural modernism’s role in postwar nation building. The case of Het Dorp also reveals how the built environment shaped the terms of inclusion for people with disabilities in the Netherlands.

This article revisits Het Dorp and its representation. Combining historical research, formal analysis, analysis of media archives, and interviews, I examine Het Dorp’s extraordinary union of architecture and public rhetoric, illustrating how the Village solution anticipated the new Dutch welfare state’s expanding reach by accommodating people with disabilities through a new humanizing architecture. The Village helped conceptualize a new nonuniversal subject, providing a unique architectural opportunity to counter the abstract subject of sterile modern mass housing. I explore how, at the same time, obdurate stereotypes about the disabled thwarted this effort. The story of Het Dorp elucidates conflicts between established modernist architects who belonged to CIAM and the younger generation of Team 10. Analysis of Het Dorp also contributes fresh insights into
ongoing architectural debates about democratic architecture, environmental determinism, and the user.

Democratic Architecture

The epic fund-raiser for Het Dorp was held at the new RAI Convention Center in Amsterdam and broadcast on the liberal AVRO television channel. Simulcast on radio, Open Het Dorp saturated the Dutch airwaves. Although the program was modeled on the American Muscular Dystrophy Association’s annual telethon, that term (or televisie actie, television action, as it was known) does not adequately capture Open Het Dorp’s improvisational quality. Nor does it convey the rush of public involvement, including self-organized fund-raising schemes like an impromptu auction held in the RAI auditorium, which brought donations of an Olympic gold medal, a pig, and a sailboat. In the twenty-fifth anniversary broadcast, journalist Henk van der Meijden recalled: “You could call it mass psychosis, but this was mass psychosis for a good cause. . . . That is why the entire country became one and that was a great success.”

While the show’s producers and the public alike were amazed at the wild success of the telethon, conditions were ripe for it. The event came at a pivotal moment in Dutch political, economic, and social life. The telethon both reflected and contributed to a shift in scale of “political identity and engagement” from religious, social, and parochial affiliation to the nation. The decade and a half preceding Open Het Dorp saw “massive internal migration, [during which] the Netherlands grew from a conglomerate of relatively autonomous communities into a society with larger geographic and social distances.” The country was being modernized, and the extension of rail and road networks gave the Dutch increasing mobility. National absorption in the telethon reified the new scale of Dutch civic endeavor.

With the worst deprivations past, the postwar period in Dutch society was marked by tension between tradition and renewal. After nearly two decades of fiscal sobriety, the Netherlands was transforming into a highly developed industrialized nation with unprecedented economic growth. The discovery of a huge natural gas field in the northeastern part of the country also increased wealth and mass consumerism, including widespread car and television ownership. The voluntary redistribution of wealth represented by Open Het Dorp evolved into a form of emergent national action that anticipated by half a decade the state’s extension of security to the disabled.

In Western postwar liberal states, citizenship encompasses nuances of meaning beyond belonging to a nation. Through laws, the state confers identity by recognizing groups and individuals, and shapes the degree of participation in political life. In the context of welfare state development, citizenship is characterized by the creation of social programs that involve the government directly in the well-being of the people through the provision of basic necessities, like housing and health care. Het Dorp’s rhetorical linkage of civic participation with physically accessible environments and the provision of a “constitution” to its residents rehearsed key philosophical questions of this period. Indeed, the publicity of Open Het Dorp coincided with a drawn-out parliamentary debate in the Netherlands about how far social support systems should be extended.
to receive benefits under a new social welfare system that included the General Act on Exceptional Medical Expenses (Algemene Wet Bijzondere Ziektekosten, or AWBZ) of 1968 and the 1976 Public Disability Act, which shifted support of the disabled from charity to the state, based on citizenship rather than on employment. Although this was a charitable initiative, it was sanctioned by the presence of the nation’s first female minister and thereby served as a symbolic bridge between private and state control of social assistance, and between old and new values.

Open Het Dorp resonated deeply in the context of the expanding welfare state, the escalating Cold War, and the shadow of Nazism. Humanizing architecture meant deploying it for just, egalitarian, and democratic purposes, such as a village for people with disabilities. The telethon’s emblem, a key (de sleutel), symbolized the collective compassion at the heart of the endeavor (Figure 3). The key was shaped like an abstracted human figure, arms thrust triumphantly upward to support a roof, legs fused into a blade with a heart-shaped opening. This widely reproduced image signified both disabled people’s lack of “natural” ambulation and the role of architecture and technology in addressing their needs.

A 1968 broadcast, Dialog in Het Dorp, explained that “the goal [of the Village] is to give these residents the feeling of belonging and not being an outsider of society.” The telethon’s repeated naming of “[our] fellow disabled citizens” (invalides medemensen) made care for the disabled a public responsibility. Both housing and, with the advent of social assistance laws, health care architecture played important roles in the project of inclusion. The telethon opened with a fifteen-minute documentary titled Het Dorp moet er komen (The Village must come), which showed scenes of rehabilitating youngsters intercut with flyover shots of an architectural model of a village. Largely the vision of a renowned pair of Dutch model makers hired by the documentary producers, the model showed a self-contained town comprising residential blocks clustered around a civic center of administrative, commercial, religious, and cultural buildings (Figure 4). The hypothetical village was bordered on one side by a gorge that separated it from its surroundings. Combining modern and traditional styles, this imaginary place conveyed both coziness—gezelligheid—and a vision of the future. Images like these promised a home designed for people with disabilities so they could live independent lives for the first time.

Klapwijk envisioned a community that would give the disabled “active democracy. . . . Now they can make their own decisions here in the Village about everything that happens to them.” This conception harmonized with Van den Broek and Bakema’s strategy of decentralizing large developments into nonhierarchical polycentric communities, building on the neighborhood model (wijk gedachte), a particularly influential concept in postwar Dutch design circles. The neighborhood model informed the research of Willem van Tijn and Huig Maaskant, in which Bakema assisted in the early 1940s, which developed ideas for redesigning bomb-damaged Rotterdam. Studies such as “The City of the Future, the Future of the City” and “Housing Possibilities in the New Rotterdam” used a strategy of decentralizing the city by creating smaller settlements comprising housing and a core of shared amenities, “each governed by a local neighborhood council.” This approach imagined the neighborhood as a sociospatial unit that could provide the framework for the new welfare state and its citizens.
In addressing the two main challenges of the Het Dorp project, Bakema embraced the site’s characteristics. The first challenge, common to town building during the period, was how to create community from the ground up, in contrast to the “organic” evolution of typical cities and towns. Het Dorp’s comparatively small size—the wijk, or neighborhood, model was based on thousands of residents—required scaling down and reinterpretation. Moreover, translating the neighborhood idea to the site designated for the Village proved difficult. Many of Van den Broek and Bakema’s most acclaimed town plans, like the Kennemerland Regional Plan, 1957–59 (Figure 5), and Bakema/Opbouw’s Alexanderpolder expansion of Rotterdam, were designed for polders—flat land reclaimed from the sea. Perhaps the most consequential gift of the telethon was an anonymously donated 65-acre wooded parcel adjacent to the Johanna Foundation. Ironically, given Het Dorp’s program and location in a famously flat country, this site rose 90 feet from end to end and was split by a ravine filled with mature trees. In Het Dorp van de grond, Bakema demonstrated the problem by diagramming Het Dorp’s section and master plan on a chalkboard (see Figure 2). As he outlined the ravine, he asserted, “You cannot build in that
valley. The incline is too steep. It is impossible. We are building around it.”

However, the rugged and beautiful property was uniquely disposed to house the Village in a less tangible way. In an interview, Hooykaas recounted how key backers believed that the locals’ familiarity with the patients of the Johanna Foundation fostered receptiveness to building Het Dorp there. Like other Van den Broek and Bakema projects, Het Dorp’s plan relies on the formal composition of repeated variants of a geometrical structure, each comprising a community unit. The design consists of eight buildings, constructed over several phases (Figure 6). Two clusters of long residential structures are staggered along each side of the wooded ravine. At the highest point of the site the buildings come together
at a plaza, which is surrounded by small shops and cultural buildings. Smaller buildings run roughly parallel to the Amsterdamseweg (Amsterdam Road, labeled “to Amsterdam” in Figure 6), creating a loose edge between the public side and the lower reaches of the site. The larger housing buildings, oriented perpendicular to the Amsterdamseweg, reach finger-like down to the site’s lower boundary. The composition creates scalar dynamism and formal variety throughout Het Dorp, balanced by consistency of spare details and materials. Orthogonal bends in the buildings form courtyards of varying heights that are animated by shared balconies and landscaping. The densely forested ravine bisects the site into two zones that are linked by the public plaza at the top of the ravine, a narrow wooden pedestrian/wheelchair bridge midway down the slope (Figure 7), and the road at the bottom. Het Dorp’s interlocking, disconnected, and terraced spaces are anti-panoptic. The lack of spatial hierarchy is notoriously mazelike and confusing, even for regular visitors.

The Street

Bakema’s main challenge at Het Dorp was developing a poetic strategy for wheelchair mobility on the sloped site. Because Klapwijk and his colleagues worked with patients who had physical, primarily ambulatory, disabilities, Open Het Dorp focused on wheelchair users. The creation of a wheelchair-accessible environment on the steep terrain was further complicated by a desire to minimize the use of elevators. News stories at the time had been reporting on cases in which children and elderly people had become trapped on upper floors of housing estates by power outages that rendered elevators inoperable. According to Hooykaas, this led to the view that relying too much on technology would raise the danger level for society’s most vulnerable members. Avoiding elevators for vertical circulation had an impact on Bakema’s design and affected patterns of use in unexpected ways.

“Living under the trees . . . living against the trees” was one of Bakema’s favorite natural-mystical concepts, stemming from his theosophical belief that enlightenment is available through direct experience with nature. The sloped, sylvan parcel offered an opportunity rare in the Netherlands to make architecture that would enable even wheelchair users to have such experience. Bakema’s concept required preserving both trees and ground, because substantially cutting or filling the existing terrain would destroy “the cathedral” of the tree canopy as experienced from the ravine floor. Combining Bakema’s environmental philosophy with the project’s mobility requirements, the design team translated the neighborhood concept into long, low-rise masonry buildings. The buildings follow the slope of the site downward in a zigzag configuration (Figure 8). Because they are oriented in the
direction of the slope instead of parallel to it, the structures traverse a considerable elevation change, thereby providing direct entry at different exterior points (Figure 9). In Het Dorp van de grond, Bakema explained: “We start building horizontally at the Amsterdamseweg. . . . At any given
moment, the terrain under your feet becomes deeper and we will have the opportunity to build another layer and then yet another layer.” From top to bottom, the difference in grade between the higher and lower ground adds floor levels or “streets” accessible from lower points. The stacked streets, or wegen, exploit and organize the sloping grade so that “every floor was a ground floor,” as Hooykaas put it. The plan maintains a uniform roofline across the site (Figure 10). In this way one-story structures frame intimate outdoor spaces on the upper end of the site, near the main road (Figure 11), while buildings grow to three and four stories at the lower, private end of the site (Figure 12). This realizes Bakema’s objective of creating an architecturally unobtrusive public presence for the Village.

The concept of the street as a sociospatial unit, like neighborhood and habitat, owed a debt to the growing influence of the social sciences in postwar architecture. Renewed interest in the street had inspired Alison and Peter Smithson’s “streets-in-the-air” design for Golden Lane housing, which was presented at the 1953 CIAM conference at Aix-en-Provence, where it generated a great deal of discussion. In the Netherlands, the Justus van Effenstraat housing complex in Rotterdam, designed in 1918 by Johannes van den Broek’s former partner Michiel Brinkman, was also widely emulated. Its upper-level exterior gallery reinterpreted the Dutch street tradition by providing individual entrances along a wide common space (Figure 13).

Bakema’s firm was experimenting with the street in its plan for Bochum University in Germany (Figure 14). More commonly Bakema used compositions of separate linear structures set at right angles to each other, as for Kennemerland (see Figure 5), or rectangular buildings arranged along a central spine, as for the 1965 Pampus plan for eastern Amsterdam. In order to protect Het Dorp’s residents and staff and to create uninterrupted floor planes for wheelchair movement, Bakema created a scheme that fused the segmented arrangement into continuous structures. By stacking long, unbroken streets oriented in the direction of the incline, he produced large buildings with continuous horizontal rooflines, making the “larger scale of the landscape visible or tangible.” While Peter Smithson derided Bakema’s penchant for large-building solutions as a “concept of the city as a ‘one-big-thing’ with ‘everything-connected-to-everything,’” the approach at Het Dorp was consistent with the site strategy.

The concept of the street as a unit of self-governance, replacing centralized institutional oversight, was central to the idea of an authentic village. Bakema’s design simulated a Dutch streetscape, with floors and walls finished in brick that wrapped exterior and interior (Figure 15). Bakema’s idea was that “these internal streets have recesses [that] will look as if they give access to little houses.” Living units let directly onto the streets, following a national housing tradition that rejects the common entry foyer in favor of individual...
entrances directly on a public passage (Figure 16). The pinwheel-like street resembles a scaled-down centripetal neighborhood, with units for live-in caregivers, called dogelas, for DOrps GEmeente Leidster Arnhem (village community leaders), located at the corners (see lower right in Figure 16). Midway along the street, a common room called the resto (dining room, no. 18 in Figure 16) serves as the main gathering point for meals and other activities. Strategically located curved corners accommodate the turning radius of wheelchairs and mimic road intersections. Bicycles, “scoot mobiles,” wheelchairs, kick scooters (used by young staff members), and electric recharging cable stands are located along the street. Street signs are posted on interior walls, at outside entrances, and on outdoor stanchions; many of the street names are archaic terms for ancient trades, evoking a traditional Dutch village (Figure 17). Elevator buttons identify street names, not floor numbers, and postal workers make their deliveries to mailboxes outside individual apartments on the streets (Figure 18). Occasionally the streets widen to give verdant views of terrace or landscaped courtyard through
floor-to-ceiling glass, filling the space with light. More often, laundry rooms and other utility spaces cut off visual connection to the outside, creating a drab, cramped atmosphere.

The stacked street organization not only allows wheelchair mobility on an internal horizontal level but also functions as the main social organizing unit. The influence of the street on Het Dorp’s social structure and life is profound. Care is organized by street, and until recently each had a “team leader” who managed the street staff. Resident-elected street presidents comanage the street-level (bewoners overleg) meetings of the Village council. Soon after Het Dorp’s grand opening and the enactment of universal disability insurance, disability benefits began to be pooled for each street rather than allotted to the central administration or individual clients. Villagers often live for decades in their original apartments, cementing their identification with their streets, each of which has developed distinct rules and atmosphere. Residents refer to where they live exclusively by street name, such as Stroperweg and Vogelaarweg (Poacher Way and Birdwatcher Way). Only nonresidential buildings, such as those that house staff offices, are known by name, like Dorpsbrink (Village Green).

The public interior street was an important expression of the “open society” in Dutch architecture, but Het Dorp’s wegen lacked the airy public scale found in other developments, such as Brunswick Centre in London, famously cited by Richard Sennett in The Fall of Public Man. Unlike many residential galleries, the Village street was a fully interiorized, conditioned space. Its ceiling measures 2.2 meters (7 feet 3 inches) above the floor, based on a belief that the vantage point of wheelchair users demanded a lowered ceiling to reproduce “normal” visual and spatial experience. Because the original
brick floors were too uneven for wheelchair locomotion, they were soon refinished in linoleum and thus lost the intended outdoor feeling. The streets’ great length—in some cases nearly 200 meters (about 656 feet)—intensified the sense of confinement, which worked against Het Dorp’s civic character (Figure 19).

As with other such public–private spaces, the architecture was later blamed for social problems. Ambiguity about what was public in the street and who and what activities the community should house contributed to Het Dorp’s deterioration. Internalized apartment entrances subsumed individual residences to the whole and set the residences of the disabled apart from adjacent conventional row-house developments (Figure 20). Many current Het Dorp residents feel that the binnenstraat (interior street) grants them independence because they do not need to have someone help them get ready when they want to go out of their homes. Yet it does so by diminishing the residents’ exposure to the potential hazards of public (outdoor) space. In that sense, the safeguards built into the internalized “street” undermine the autonomy of the disabled residents and act as a custodial envelope between them and the world outside the Village. On the other hand, the dark, enclosed mazelike spaces of the “street,” as well as the lack of institutional oversight, obscured drug use and self-neglect. Bakema’s belief that wheelchair users were visually deprived by their limited vantage point prompted him to...
design streets with abrupt corners, which he believed would offer the mental stimulus of “shifting vistas.” Combined with multiple exits to stairs and the outside, however, these corners make the wegen hard to regulate. Some residents and staff members believe that the visual discontinuity, porosity, and territorial ambiguity of the complex contribute to a sense of insecurity, inviting trespassers and threatening a vulnerable population whose members make easy victims for thieves and drug dealers.

Nevertheless, the “street” symbolizes the Village and its residents’ potential liberation. Official images of the Village’s streets reflect national pride in Het Dorp. For example, on the fiftieth anniversary of the game Monopoly in 1985, a new Dutch edition was produced that included two places on the board named for Het Dorp. More remarkably, official Arnhem maps represented Het Dorp’s wegen as real streets, crowding the graphic surface with their names, instead of showing building footprints. Residents’ postal addresses consist of number and “street” name, city name, and postal code, without identifying Het Dorp, emphasizing continuity with the rest of the city. Television programs have proudly presented this as evidence of the “normalness” of the Village. The narration of the 1968 television special Diaaog in Het Dorp captured the contradiction: Het Dorp is “special, and indeed also of the normal, the everyday, because the village is normal because it has houses, a restaurant, a post office, a sports arena, which can be used by everyone, not just the residents of the village. The streets have normal names.”

Figure 16 Van den Broek and Bakema, Het Dorp, Arnhem, Netherlands, 1963–65, plan of Vorstenweg (Village Servant Way) (Selwyn Goldsmith, “Het Dorp,” Architectural Review 149, no. 4 [Apr. 1971], 230).
Humanizing Technology

Dirk van den Heuvel observes that “industrial and technological innovation was key in making the Western European welfare state a reality.” Tim Armstrong notes that “modernism is . . . characterized by the desire to intervene in the body.” Disabled bodies offered an opportunity for technological intervention, framed as social progress by the contradictory terms set by the telethon. In the opening documentary, Het Dorp’s future inhabitants were presented simultaneously as gewone mensen (regular people) and invalide medeburgers (disabled fellow citizens). The media went to great lengths to depict the residents as “normal,” showing them doing familiar daily activities, like hosting coffee parties, attending council meetings, and taking smoking breaks. Always well-groomed and neatly dressed, they were portrayed in a way that emphasized the conventionality of their appearance, behavior, and aspirations. In a 1971 journal interview, project architect A. J. Van der Vet used colorful imagery to convey that Het Dorp’s residents were just like everyone else in their desire for a home: “Someone just wants to be able scratch himself without being seen and go to bed with a woman without being heard.”

W. P. Bijleveld, Het Dorp’s director from 1966 to 1978, emphasized how the Village workshop would enable residents to become regular productive members of society. Het Dorp’s “total space” of new material and behavioral circuits promised to compensate for the disabled bodies’ lack. Klapwijk put it this way: “If we can develop more means in the sense of modern technology, which would make the physically handicapped as independent as possible, . . . then we can turn ‘making people happy’ into a reality.” To tailor the buildings to the inhabitants, the design team combined and modified technologies. Residential units included open kitchen under-counters, grab bars, roll-in showers, adapted toilets, and specially mounted fixtures geared to seated, wheeled residents. Roads without curbs and entrances without thresholds, steps, or stairs created continuous access. More sophisticated features, like automatic overhead door closers and radio transmitters integrated into building surfaces, enabled
residents to manage interior environments, including curtains, lights, and television, through communication between wheelchair control consoles and architecture.

The emphasis on the wheelchair had widespread consequences. At the time, there were few if any precedents for designing for wheelchair use at an urban scale. Indeed, most wheelchairs of the day were designed for indoor use only, which meant that wheelchair users were mostly stranded inside, dependent on others to help them get around outside. Het Dorp “was a tribute to modern technology and what could be done to make life livable” for people with disabilities, as Irving Zola acknowledged. However, the price of membership in the Village was compulsory absorption into wheelchair technology that would have been unnecessary in other places. Het Dorp’s elevators are dark and poorly marked, and they are so small that each accommodates just one wheelchair at a time, which can only drive in and back out. As electric wheelchairs have gotten larger, this problem with the elevators has become more acute. Residents have to use the exterior roads to move about the complex, and
many find the existing terrain too steep for much independent locomotion. For manual wheelchairs users no amount of site manipulation can counteract the physical effort needed to propel oneself up the steep terrain. Those who could walk a little under less demanding circumstances are unable to walk at Het Dorp. Those who elsewhere would be able to use motorized scooters—the upright body position requires more strength—need wheelchairs at Het Dorp. Residents who have the muscle power for manual wheelchairs on flatter terrain need to use power wheelchairs at Het Dorp. Residence at Het Dorp shortens the period of autonomous ambulation for people with progressive disabilities. Indeed, the provision of a new—usually, power—wheelchair became an initiation rite for most residents. Zola asserted that the hills disable the residents, but it would be more accurate to say that the “street” scheme, with its ingenious exploitation of the existing terrain, is to blame. Thus, while the Village is accessible in the commonly understood sense, it is also a disabling apparatus.

Wheelchair locomotion amplifies the importance of the street as the primary social unit. In contrast with the Smithsons’ “streets-in-the-air,” Het Dorp’s stacked streets are bound to the ground to allow every floor to have at least one entry at grade. By maintaining the site’s natural incline and the ravine, the design cuts off movement perpendicular to the slope—the more gradual movement typical of road design. Consequently, connections between buildings are steeper, requiring great effort to go uphill and posing danger going down (Figure 21). These obstacles solidify the horizontal separation of the streets. One resident acknowledged that although he appreciates many qualities of the binnenstraat, their disconnectedness limits his social life. While Bakema meant for the courtyards to “create a square or living room,” and in plan they appear as the neighborhood unit, lack of vertical connection between levels prevented them from functioning as such.

Early media coverage focused on the minutiae of the inhabitants’ interactions with the architecture, such as gliding through automatic doors, operating foot-pedal faucet controls, and using modified assembly-line stations, like the specially adapted looms in Het Dorp’s workshop (Figure 22). An extended scene in the 1968 television special Dialog in Het Dorp showed an attractive young woman carefully selecting, testing, and purchasing a lipstick in downtown Arnhem and then cut to a long close-up of her face reflected in her home bathroom mirror, mounted at the precise downward angle needed for her position in her wheelchair (Figure 23). Relationships between residents and technology were depicted as seamless, when in reality continual adjustments were necessary; a Village shop was devoted to that purpose. The media images suggested that the material environment, from lipstick to automatic door opener, enrolled the residents as normal members of a modern democratic society. At the same time, media exhibition of the disabled satisfied the public’s curiosity, combining the freak show with the clinical gaze of science.

“A Real Village”

The telethon divided the populace into the benevolent public and its beneficiaries. The program’s complicated dialectic of normal and not-normal Dutch citizenry was reflected in its
visual and spatial compartmentalization. People with disabilities were largely absent from the RAI stage. Instead, the opening documentary film introduced the plight of young Dutch people with disabilities and Dr. Klapwijk's vision for them: "a customized village for small and big people who can't manage and who would be stuck in a difficult life without our village." Thus, before there was a site or a design, the telethon projected an image of a special, separate place as the answer to the nation's disability problem.

That Het Dorp was not "normal" was made plain by a few key facts. First, its genesis as a charitable initiative disclosed that it was not a regular residential community; if it had been,
it would have received public funding under the Housing Act. The gradual pace of the development of the Dutch welfare system stranded Het Dorp in the budgetary gap between mainstream housing and long-term-care housing, which wasn’t state subsidized until the passage of AWBZ several years later. In addition, the land donated for the Village was zoned for social purposes (maatschappelijke doeleinden), a designation that permitted only education- and care-related development. With the construction of regular housing forbidden, those who lived on the land were effectively constituted as wards of an institution. In this vein, media coverage omitted the fact that Het Dorp also accommodated four hundred day and live-in staff and that residents required medical services that were located off-site.

The paradox was summed up by a remarkable statement that Zola found in an early planning document: “Though, of course, formally and officially Het Dorp is a subsidized establishment for the treatment and nursing of physically handicapped persons, for the sake of its inmates, its character will avoid any resemblance, both in its architecture and in its organization, to an institute.” Het Dorp’s symbolic order depended on the social inclusion of the disabled on “normal” terms. Invoking postwar liberalism, the telethon promised that the Village would enable people with disabilities to live independently, a message that conflicted with the dependence associated with a nursing or medical institution. This contradiction was reflected in and obscured at every scale of Village representation and design. Media broadcasts insisted that Het Dorp was a “real” village, understood in terms of both its self-sufficiency (and that of its inhabitants) and its integration with surrounding Arnhem.

Het Dorp’s core consisted of a commercial cluster bordering the main road (Amsterdamseweg) on one side and a brick-paved plaza in front of the Kerkelijk Kultureel Centrum (Church and Cultural Centre) (Figure 24). A large structure housing the sheltered workshop stood near the plaza and a sports center at the periphery of the site (see Figure 6). The commercial core served, in Bakema’s terms, as “in-between” space linking public and private, new and old, and parts to the whole. It both buffered and fostered encounters between inside and outside worlds, which Bakema argued was key to living in an open, heterogeneous society. This zone included a gas station, an office of the ANWB (an organization equivalent to the American Automobile Association), a pub, a post office, a supermarket, and a hairdresser (see Figure 1). Het Dorp proponents and administrators pointed to these amenities, the Village’s central location close to downtown Arnhem, and the lack of physical enclosure separating it from the surrounding neighborhoods as indicative of the Village’s integration within the municipality. Concept diagrams show this space as mediating between valide and invalide populations, which required careful social engineering.
to overcome fear of and prejudice against the disabled, something director Bijleveld compared to integrating black and white families in U.S. residential neighborhoods. The commercial zone, which depended on customers from both Het Dorp and outside, mediated between disabled and able-bodied populations. The typical order was inverted, however, with the "familiar" located outside Het Dorp and the "other" contained within.

The Village had just a few curving internal roads, which were discontinuous from the surrounding street pattern, signaling a different order from that in neighboring areas (see Figure 6). Het Dorp's rules forbade regular car traffic and thus discouraged outsiders from entering. Moreover, the streets around Het Dorp, including the Amsterdamseweg, lacked sidewalks, so that wheelchair riders were forced into the roads. Until a pedestrian tunnel was built in 1971, the traffic on the Amsterdamseweg prevented residents from crossing to the neighborhood church and amenities on the other side. Because sidewalks without curb ramps were impassable and public buses were not designed to pick up passengers in wheelchairs, residents were dependent on special vans that carried them in the back.

Perhaps nothing belied the normalness of Het Dorp more than its enormous popularity as a domestic tourism destination. In the first decade after the Village's occupation, Dutch citizens took organized bus tours to view it, their visits culminating in a stroll along its external roads, where they could take in the sights of the residents and their special architectural environment. In a 1970 news program, Bijleveld observed with some dismay:

In the summer months, we have to deal with the arrival of buses and touring cars, filled with people. . . . It is striking to notice that many people who arrive here in these buses behave differently in this village than how they would in the course of the normal week. The fact that they consider this to be like sightseeing, like a zoo or a museum . . . bothers the residents sometimes.

Residents posted signs asking people not to be Peeping Toms. The exhibition of the disabled reinforced the division of "us" and "other" that contradicted the official rhetoric of "normalcy."

Even at the time of the telethon, some cultural commentators and members of the public voiced concerns that Het Dorp would become a ghetto. To counter this criticism, advocates and administrators argued that the level of care and physical accommodation required by the residents made it impractical for them to live elsewhere. Bijleveld denounced what he called the "fundamental contact disorder of able-bodied people," which leads them to objectify and treat disabled people as things. In reaction to this "disorder," Het Dorp emphasized internal integration, leaving external integration to be tackled separately. Anthropologist Rivke Jaffe writes that a ghetto is a "condition of urban immobility that is both cause and consequence of social difference. Bijleveld's statements reveal his lack of awareness of the relationship between the segregated, immobile world of Het Dorp and the process of objectification he decried.

Nonuniversal Users

As the title Open Het Dorp suggests, the telethon brought public visibility to people with disabilities, increasing understanding of a largely unrecognized group, most of whom lived in private homes and institutions. Before the telethon, people with disabilities had only an "interior life," as Bouwman put it. Het Dorp would make an "outdoor"—public—life possible for them. Het Dorp moet er komen was one of the first mass representations of disabled people in the Netherlands. It fixed a particular image of Het Dorp's residents in the popular imagination: young, attractive people, mostly with mobility disabilities—conditions seen as remediable by the Village.

Het Dorp's design offered an exceptional opportunity to reconsider the definition of "standard users" and their social and physical needs. Although Het Dorp was extraordinary, "village" building was part of postwar reconstruction throughout the Netherlands and the rest of Europe. During this period, the provision of housing on a vast scale proceeded too urgently to allow for much sensitivity to some aspects of design, and row upon row of housing was designed with little consideration of the preferences and needs of prospective residents. As Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault argue, the war raised doubts among architects about the adequacy of modern architecture to address the material and social needs of a democratic society and its citizens.

Some architects criticized technocratic government housing approaches and the perceived antihumanism of the tower block, which was philosophically rooted in the strict functionalism of CIAM. In response, Team 10 members, including Bakema and the Smithsons, argued for greater attention to the relationships between people and space and between the individual and the group, matters that they felt had been overlooked by CIAM. They asserted that mass housing design should respond to the individual through attention to the specific culture, identity, and meaning of a place, based on social science research. "Humanizing" architecture challenged the universal application of functionalist and rationalist values and shifted the architect's role to that of an agent for interpreting the needs of users, which would be defined by new expertise, including that of the users themselves. Consideration of users brought observation and consultation with clients into the design process. In his treatise From Doorstep to City, Bakema condemned the bureaucracy of government building...
programs for too often producing landscapes of “identical repetition.” Recent scholarship on postwar European architecture emphasizes the links among architecture, government, and industry in shaping postwar societies, and the “user” as constituted through design, research, and discourse under the welfare state is a topic of renewed interest. Architects and planners were asked to develop “progressive definitions of modern living,” which had implications for the postwar liberal subject. The category of the user contained a contradiction between individual subjectivity and human ideal or standard. The aim of postwar sociological research was to provide a more realistic conception of human needs and behaviors, countering standardized systems such as Ernst Neufert’s widely used Architects’ Data, first published in 1936. Many of Neufert’s guidelines for spatial arrangements were derived from time-motion studies of domestic and industrial tasks, which promulgated an idea of the body based on optimal efficiency of motion. In fact, Neufert changed the corporeal dimensions of his “well-proportioned man” to conform to an elaborate modular system he developed based on multiples or divisions of one-eighth of a meter; this resulted in the deformation of the human body to match the module. Architects’ Data extended a physical standard into design. According to Paul Emmons and Andreea Mihalache, it “presumed that the standardization of building elements could be predicated upon the dimensional routinization of the human activities that they accommodated.” Through standards like Neufert’s, these authors argue, the “diagrammatization of knowledge expanded to the image of the user.”

Architectural functionalism was deeply engaged in thinking about the user, particularly in health care design. Open Het Dorp coincided with an explosion in Dutch health care construction. From hospitals and clinics to old people’s homes, new typologies were developed, spurred by new government funding programs. Prominent architects like Aldo van Eyck developed these new buildings, transforming them from traditional civic monuments to edifices based on medical and psychological knowledge. For example, research led to the development of a form of senior housing based on what Noor Mens and Cor Wagenaar refer to as “precisely defined categories of occupants and types of housing tailored to their demands.” As Kenny Cupers notes, discourse about the user was predicated on the predictability and legibility of human types and needs, leading to the projection of an “anonymous client” that was the standard in housing briefs.

Bakema’s ethics of inclusion underpinned his belief in architecture’s role in building democratic societies. In Doorstep to City, he declared that the basic responsibility of the architect is to ensure that “buildings and towns are just as well formed for those who do not in the first place participate in decisions about social matters.” I believe Bakema’s interpretation of gebruikers (users) represented an antidote to the anonymous client (anonieme opdrachtgever). For Bakema, consideration of users was key to attending to “spatial experience” over pure functionality, which opened up possibilities for designing for variability in human needs and wants. The convergence of Bakema’s interest in users and Open Het Dorp’s inclusive rhetoric about disabled people required the participation of prospective residents in the design process.

From the start, a group of future residents served on several planning and design committees. Their main influence was on the design of the living units. In my interview with Hooykaas, he recounted how Bakema typically began his design process with the interior and worked outward, which was how he addressed a progression of social scales. For Bakema, the inner zone of the private was the core where living happened. From the interior he moved outward to what Hooykaas called the “bigger space of the world, from low to high, from small to big.” Most of Het Dorp’s first residents had little experience of privacy or of living in their own spaces. Bakema believed that the private nucleus would offer them an interior life—for the first time, for many.

Hospitals and nursing homes were contained spaces that presumed caregivers would do things for occupants. Housing wheelchair users in a setting where they could live independently was a new concept, one that launched Bakema and his associates into uncharted territory. Using senior homes as a basis, Bakema’s group collaborated with Klapwijk’s team of patients and physiotherapists to determine space requirements for bedroom and bathroom for a single person. They also had to consider how to accommodate residents with caregivers. After developing ideas on paper, they constructed a full-scale model of a typical unit in a shed in Arnhem, probably in the Johanna Foundation workshop. The model was integrated into Bakema’s usual design approach, which proceeded from interior outward. The result was a typical room approximately 12 by 20 feet, containing a bathroom next to the entry, a bed and living area, and a small galley kitchen (Figure 25). Large doors or windows, depending on the height from the ground, opened onto verdant courts and other views.

While Bakema’s conception of Het Dorp seems to have resisted the abstraction of the anonymous client, at the same time his design was informed by powerful stereotypes about people with disabilities. These persistent assumptions about the residents resulted in numerous oversights that were discovered almost immediately upon the opening of the first residential building. For example, neither architects nor administrators had considered that Villagers would drive cars. No parking lots were located near the residential buildings;
the only lots were next to the commercial center meant for staff and for nonresidents patronizing Het Dorp shops. Similar thinking is evident in early plan studies that explored how the residents would maneuver their wheelchairs in the small bathrooms. A gray stamp representing a small wheelchair was used in the studies to test required clearances, with the chair positioned in front of shower, sink, and toilet (see Figure 25). Graphically, the occupant of the chair was omitted. The drawing convention excluded the varied and often collective movements used to maneuver a wheelchair user’s body between the chair and architectural fixtures. These plans foreshadowed the widespread practice in architecture of reducing a person with a disability to a wheelchair—a thing whose material properties are easier to address than a human body.

By basing the unit design on an institutional precedent (senior housing) rather than a residential one, Bakema revealed his adherence to the popular understanding of the disabled. His decision contradicted his and the project’s avowed progressivism and ignored one of his basic planning principles: the mixing of different residence types. As Hans van Dijk notes, in Bakema’s architectural manifesto From Doorstep to City, he advocated using “repeatable patterns juxtaposing dwelling forms and house types so that widely differing categories of individuals could live in integration together.” His plan for Pendrecht I, designed with Opbouw and Lotte Stam-Beese, had impressed attendees of the 1949 CIAM 7 meeting with its mix of flats, two-story apartments, and single-family houses, intended to foster human diversity. By contrast, Het Dorp’s plan consisted of unvarying “small-scale, repetitive, cellular forms” that did not represent the diversity of the Village’s intended population. The presumed dependence of the users was expressed in a determinist relationship between the disabled residents’ units and the unit for the ward caregiver who lived on each street. Such thinking appeared to trump the importance of the family unit in Bakema’s scheme of giving each individual the ability “to experience a complete life at every level.” Significantly,
neither sponsors nor designers considered that residents might fall in love and marry, so initial plans did not accommodate cohabitation. Only in the later phases did the designers include a few double units for married couples and for couples with children. Hopeful couples had to have marriage certificates to qualify for these units, which were in short supply.95

The typical unit accommodated only a single bed, making it difficult for two residents to sleep together. Het Dorp’s bedroom layout epitomized prevailing attitudes about the sexuality of people with disabilities. Sociologist Irving Zola, who visited Het Dorp as a disabled participant-observer in the early 1970s, commented that “the absence of forethought on the possibility of love and marriage for the handicapped was a sign of a more basic omission in the denial of [their] sexuality altogether.”96 A eugenistic philosophy was one reason for this repression. In a television program on Het Dorp, Klapwijk referred to a study committee that cautioned resident couples against having children based on the risks that the children might inherit their disorders.97

Conclusion

Open Het Dorp created an unprecedented opportunity for realizing Team 10 concepts in making architecture for a new postwar society. The project’s premise that architectural and technological innovations would solve complex social problems continued modernism’s belief in the improvement of the human condition through design. With few formal accessible design precedents and no rules restricting the architect, Bakema’s team could do inventive work in the name of the new democratic architectural ideals. Confronting what they perceived to be the dehumanizing limitations of high modernism, Bakema and his Team 10 associates advocated comprehensive changes for architecture, not just at a stylistic level but also in its very objectives.

Het Dorp epitomized the new principles of local, humanized, and democratic architecture espoused by Bakema and other critics of CIAM after the war. As a place imbued with affect and affection by the telethon, it offered a counterpart to the narrow and arid functionalism of high modernism. Moreover, the disabled were the antithesis of the universal subject and were the objects of an antuniversalist architectural stance. Their social and material needs, combined with the specificities of Het Dorp’s unusual terrain, provided an opportunity for Bakema and his colleagues to explore architectural ideas about community and the individual that would refute CIAM’s functional and mechanistic focus.

Yet Het Dorp reveals the incompleteness of the transformative social project of postwar modernism. On the main axes of meaning that Bakema set for architecture—the relationship of democratic subject to the built environment, the relationship between human and nature, and the role of technology—the Village failed as much as it succeeded. Despite an innovative design at every scale, from the unit to the site plan, top-down decision making, limits in recognizing human diversity, and a medical and technocratic emphasis manifested contradictory meanings of liberation and diminished citizenship for Het Dorp residents.

Both utopian and pragmatic tendencies are present in Bakema’s design for the Village. The Team 10 primer asserted that utopianism is possible, but it must be achieved through construction for real situations rather than through theoretical abstractions.98 In this sense, Team 10’s departure from CIAM was one of means and degree, not of kind. Het Dorp’s paradoxical achievement demonstrates that the architecture could not escape prevailing social values about disability, nor could its impacts be separated from the social and cultural context of the institution. In that sense, the Village also offers a critique of the environmental and technological determinism that persisted in the new architectural thinking.

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Notes

1. This article is based on visits I made to Het Dorp from 2010 through 2012; interviews with Het Dorp residents, staff, and Siza Corporation executives; and research conducted at the Bakema archive at Het Nieuwe Instituut and the Open Het Dorp archive at the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision. I thank the staff at Het Nieuwe Instituut and the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision for helping me navigate the archive and for providing reproductions. I thank the residents, staff, and managers of Het Dorp for sharing their insights with me and allowing me to see how they live and work. I thank Mies Bouwman, Frans Hooykaas, Jacqueline Kool, Annemargreet Meurs, Judith Schippers, and Maarten Wijk for sharing their knowledge and recollections. I thank members of the Humanities and Social Sciences Writing Group at the University of California, Berkeley, for their constructive feedback on a previous draft. Lastly, I am grateful to Margaret Crawford for her support and invaluable comments on an earlier version of this article.


4. Marga Klompé, remarks in Open Het Dorp: 26 en 27 November 1962, twenty-fifth anniversary program, AVRO, television broadcast, 23 Nov. 1987. (All translations are either my own or by American Language Services.) The Open Het Dorp archive consists of eight recordings of separate broadcasts. One Het Dorp–related program is held at Het Nieuwe Instituut: Het Dorp van de grond, AVRO, television broadcast, 14 June 1966. Only approximately
two hours of the original broadcast were preserved, including the closing ceremony. Other portions of the original telethon, such as much of the opening documentary, Het Dorp moet er komen, are contained within subsequent programs. Since the follow-up programs repeatedly recount/produce the history of the telethon, they provide insight into how the media and the public have understood the events over time.


6. Mies Bouwman and Arie Klapwijk, remarks from 1962 telethon, shown in Open Het Dorp, twenty-fifth anniversary program.

7. Ibid. See also Zola, Missing Pieces, 9.

8. Zola, Missing Pieces, 12.

9. Frans Hooykaas, Van den Broek and Bakema employee, 1961–90, interview by author, 31 Aug. 2010, Rotterdam. While Hooykaas was trained as an architect, he worked largely as an illustrator during his time with the firm, contributing to a wide variety of projects. His position as Bakema’s assistant brought him into close contact with Bakema, whom he accompanied on his travels to Team 10 and other meetings and to teaching assignments abroad. Hooykaas was a consultant to the exhibition Open: The Work of Jaap Bakema at the 2014 Venice Biennale, which was organized by the Jaap Bakema Study Centre based at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam. Mies Bouwman, a beloved national figure and avid public supporter of Het Dorp, recounted in an interview in 2012 that she was immediately drawn to Bakema’s ability to have big ideas. She said that he understood the times they were living in and the needs of handicapped people—as she put it, “He was someone of the future.”


12. Ibid., 48.

13. Henk van der Meijden, remarks in Open Het Dorp, twenty-fifth anniversary program. He wrote something similar in a newspaper article titled “Activity center team brought outsiders into the open society,” Het Dorp van de grond, 39, 282. See also Van den Heuvel, remarks in Het Dorp van de grond.


16. Ibid., 18.


20. Henk Nijssele, the narrator, makes this statement near the beginning of the program. Dialog in Het Dorp, AVRO, television broadcast, 16 Sept. 1968.


22. According to Hooykaas and Bouwman, the model was used to help the public visualize the telethon’s goal. Its design had no relationship to the future project site, nor did it address wheelchair accessibility. Hooykaas, interview by author; Bouwman, interview by author. Thus, as far as I understand, the model provided no guidance for Van den Broek and Bakema’s design process.


27. The Netherlands is a very sparsely wooded country, with only 8 percent tree coverage. Compare this with Germany, which has 33 percent forest coverage. See Mark T. Hooker, The History of Holland (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 10.


29. Hooykaas, interview by author.

30. Ibid.


32. Hooykaas, interview by author.

33. Bakema, remarks in Het Dorp van de grond.

34. Hooykaas, interview by author.


41. Dialog in Het Dorp. Also Hooykaas, interview by author.

42. BH, Het Dorp resident, interview by author, 3 Mar. 2012, Het Dorp, Arnhem.


44. In interviews I heard many accounts of illicit drug dealing (nonresidents selling to residents) and drug and alcohol abuse, as well as burglaries, which brought outsiders into the wegen. Annemargreet Meurs, interview by author, 7 and 12 May 2010, Het Dorp, Arnhem; GJ, Het Dorp resident, interview by author, 1 Sept. 2010, Het Dorp, Arnhem; DH, Het Dorp service manager, interview by author, 13 May 2010, Het Dorp, Arnhem. DH reported that “in actuality the residents couldn’t handle it [independence]; their health was deteriorating, their living situations were deteriorating.” Activity center team leader AB observed that “there are a lot of different problems” in Het Dorp, including alcohol, drugs, and relationship problems, like in the “real world.” AB, interview by author, 13 May 2010, Het Dorp, Arnhem. Similarly, former resident Elly Oijens described Het Dorp as a hotbed of gossip, sex,
drugs, and interrelations between staff and residents. Elly Otjens, interview by author, 13 May 2010, Utrecht.


49. Arie Klapwijk, remarks in Het Dorp kwam er, AVRO, television broadcast, 27 Nov. 1967.


51. Zola, Missing Pieces, 97.

52. AD, occupational therapist, interview by author, May 13, 2010. One of AD’s main tasks is providing and adjusting wheelchairs for residents. JF, a resident for forty-two years, said that when he moved to Het Dorp in 1968, at age twenty-one, he walked inside using canes, but at Het Dorp he used a manual wheelchair outside. JF, interview by author, 10 May 2010, Het Dorp, Arnhem. According to team leader ST, some “clients” are fearful about going down the steep roads, especially those who use wheeled gurneys to move around outdoors. ST, interview by author, 12 May 2010, Het Dorp, Arnhem.


54. BH, interview by author.

55. Bakema, remarks in Het Dorp van de grond.


58. Excerpt from Het Dorp moet er komen, Mies Bouwman narrating, from Open Het Dorp, twenty-fifth anniversary program.

59. Hans Pepers, Siza Corporation director of property development, email correspondence with author, follow-up to interview, 3 May 2012; Minke Geurts, Siza Corporation manager of development, email correspondence with author; 10 Dec. 2012.

60. Zola, Missing Pieces, 156.

61. Quoted in ibid., 27. The quote is not footnoted; I presume that the translation is Zola’s.


64. Ibid.

65. W. P. Bijleveld, remarks in Open Het Dorp, 30 May 1970. See also Het Dorp na 7.5 jaar officieel geopend, AVRO, television broadcast, 30 May 1970.

66. Maarten Wijk, architect and foremost accessible design authority in the Netherlands, is a strong critic of Het Dorp for producing a ghetto of disabled people. According to him, Het Dorp set the course in the Netherlands for “efforts in the field of accessibility [which] remain incidental acts of charity.” Maarten Wijk, Skype interview by author, 15 Aug. 2012. Bouwman was defensive on this point, making it clear that from the beginning she contended with this criticism, even from her friends. Bouwman, interview by author. Het Dorp director Bijleveld’s response to this interpretation in “Het Dorp: A Village,” 64–65, also reveals the presence of this criticism. In the television program Dialog in Het Dorp, the interviewer asked several residents whether they thought Het Dorp was a ghetto, implying that this was a common critique at the time.
83. Ibid., 92.
85. Bakema, From Doorstep to City, 4.
86. Ibid., 5.
87. Zola, Missing Pieces, 32.
88. Hooykaas, interview by author.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
92. Pedret, Team 10, 64.
95. Zola, Missing Pieces, 60, 116. In my visits, I spoke to members of couples who had met at Het Dorp. Each lived in her or his own apartment. I also spoke to one widow who continued to live alone in the apartment she had inhabited with her husband.
96. Ibid., 215.
97. Dialog in Het Dorp. After 1983, units were remodeled for married couples, including those with children. Harry Dietz, Het Dorp van binnen en buiten: Ontstaan en ontwikkeling van een woonvorm voor mensen met een lichamelijke handicap in maatschappelijk perspectief (Zandaam, Netherlands: Huig, 1997), 130.