



# Bogerse Velden social housing, Lier

META architectuurbureau

⇒ Project file 11  
Photos: Filip Dujardin

The Bogerse Velden neighbourhood is situated within the expansion area around the city centre of Lier. Although it lies inside the ring-road, it nevertheless sits at a certain distance from the urban fabric of the city. The site falls between typical residential estates and a large-scale industrial zone. The space between the built elements is too large to be called urban. However, this openness and its location along a green belt are also assets inherent to the neighbourhood, giving it the potential for the creation of good-quality outdoor space. In its social housing brief to design thirty-three flats for rent and twenty-seven homes for sale, META architectuurbureau distances itself from the existing morphology by introducing a new density and architecture. By linking multiple units together, this social housing project forms an exceptional urban planning design and is a breath of fresh air in the context of the adjacent suburban landscape of detached houses.

The ensemble is shaped by three elements: multi-family houses, linked houses and terraced houses. It is an interplay of typologies around a common outdoor space that gives rise to interesting proportions of scale. The project also absorbs the existing qualities of the site and leaves space to make the whole easily traversable. The emphasis is on vulnerable road-users and places for children to play. This extra green area complements the 'belt' of smaller and larger parks near the site. By elevating half of each multi-family dwelling from the ground, parking spaces can be inserted beneath the buildings. This alleviates the need to include them within the encircling areas of greenery. In this way, vehicular traffic can be shifted into the background. Whereas open space is often treated with little care in social housing projects, it is here given its full worth as a collective place to spend time.

The materials and composition owe much to the De Vylder 2 House in Herentals, one of META's previous projects. This house is characterised by a rational composition in concrete, filled in with brickwork and large windows. At Bogerse Velden,

the dwellings are also composed of a small range of elements and materials, giving rise to a harmonious whole. The architecture is enriched by means of variations within this repetitiveness. Here, the interplay of typologies and the pronounced accent on volume play an important role. Each of the three basic volumes seeks the consummate form within the set preconditions. The multi-family dwellings present themselves as compact, autonomous volumes and derive a certain monumentality from their raised position. Each of the two ground-anchored housing types aims in its own way for the best orientation. The approach to their linkage and stacking avoids creating long unbroken façades. Furthermore, the redefinition of the typologies means that this ensemble is not viewed as a social housing project. Large windows, double outdoor spaces and extended balconies create a generous relationship between inside and outside. Life here is not inwardly focused, but aims for social relations and neighbourliness.

The architects at META manage to turn the strict preconditions of social housing to their advantage. Its characteristic rationality does not hinder the intended richness. Repetition is not used solely as a means of budget-friendly building, but also specifically provides added value and a clear collective identity among the various buildings. In this way, the scheme transcends the circumstances of its context and sets out new ambitions for social housing projects.

Isabelle Blancke



Situation plan

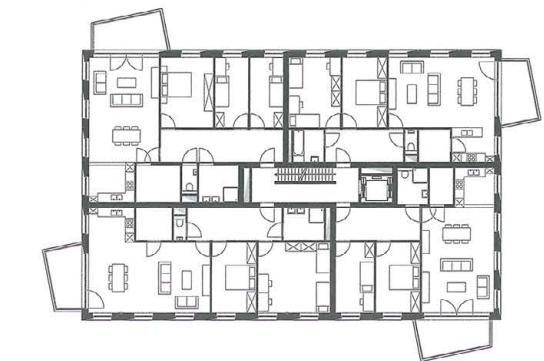
0 10 20 40m



Multi-family houses:  
Ground floor



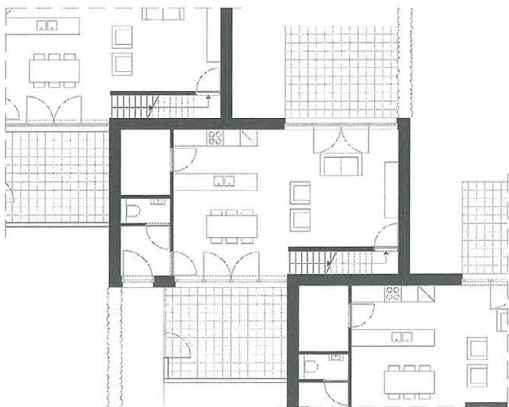
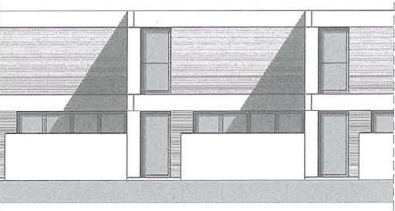
Multi-family houses:  
Level 1



0 2 4m

Linked houses:  
South-east facade  
Level 1  
Ground floor

0 1 2m



Terraced houses:  
Level 2  
Level 1  
Ground floor

0 1 2m

