

Project: Wij_land

Design Team: Space & Matter

Area: 2500 m² (Living)

Location: Amsterdam, NL



Feature:

Project - Nestled by the water on Amsterdam's Centrum-eiland, wij_land Housing pioneers a new model of urban living that brings people together through principles of sharing, diversity and sustainability. Conceived by initiators Mireille Capiou and Daniël Bakker and designed by architectural firm Space&Matter, this self-built collective of 26 varied homes and five shared spaces aspires to foster community while reducing environmental impact.

Built for and by its residents through an eight-workshop participatory design process, wij_land celebrates both individuality and collectivity. Homes range from 52 to 130 square metres to accommodate different households, while customisation of facades and floorplans gives each its unique character. Yet the project's heart lies in what residents share: cars, tools, childcare, communal spaces for gardening and gatherings. Sharing enables simplicity of living and connections across difference.

Groundbreaking in its social mission, wij_land also sets a new sustainability standard with rainwater harvesting, a ground-source heat pump system, and absence of natural gas. As an innovative not-for-profit model focused on people and planet over profit, this "mini-society" points toward a hopeful future for urban housing.

Design Team - Pushing sustainability through co-creation, Amsterdam's Space&Matter brings communities into the design process to create resilient and equitable urban environments. Founded in 2009 by Sascha Glasl, Tjeerd Haccou and Marthijn Pool, the firm has earned international recognition for innovative projects like De Ceuvel, a cleantech office park built from retired houseboats, and SWEETS Hotel, a hotel crafted out of former Amsterdam metro carriages. Blending architecture, circular development and vision-

making, Space&Matter's interdisciplinary team addresses complex spatial challenges across all scales, from buildings and neighborhoods to citywide strategies. Yet their work remains grounded in the belief that lasting change comes from people. By putting end-users at the heart of every project, they foster social cohesion while exploring inventive design responses to issues like climate resilience. Space&Matter's collection of awards affirms their role as sustainability leaders rethinking urban environments.

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