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The Façade – A Reflection on the Change of the Public Sphere

On the example of the mass housing
in the Dutch cities of the 20th century

Abstract

In this contribution the façade, as the most important part of the building to communicate and to reflect socio-cultural changes, will be held against the changes of the public sphere during the 20th century. This will be done with the focus of mass housing in the Dutch cities. Directed towards the public sphere, the facade enters into a relationship, which may be physical, spatial or visual. This relationship means that new ideas about the public sphere can result in changes of the architecture of the façade and the public space which can provide a platform for the public sphere. The changes of the public sphere during the last century definitively influenced the architecture of the façade and the public space. Today the façade seems to be lost in confusion, eventually leading to various kinds of representation and less negotiation between the outer and inner world.