High density housing, local centre in KwaNoxolo and improve connections in Chatty River Valley – detailed proposal by Carolin Dahlgren

This individual part of the plan proposal for Bloemendal aims to show how the development in and around a node can be organised to create a safe and pleasant environment. It aims to show how Chatty River Valley can be used for both recreational purposes and as an improvement of the connection between KwaNoxolo and Booysen Park.

The project area
One part of the project area is situated next to the cross section of Mpuko Street and William Slammert Drive in KwaNoxolo. In the common plan proposal we proposed to use this site for housing development and a local centre in KwaNoxolo, in the existing plans it is set aside for a school. The site is not developed today and is a large open field in KwaNoxolo. Informal tracks are going across it, which shows that it is a place where it is many people passing every day. This makes this site to be a suitable place to locate services and trading. The area is flat and the vegetation consists of low grass. There is a supermarket right next to the site. There is also a church in an informal development in connection to the site.

Important goals in KwaNoxolo are the Sports centre in the north part of the area, the schools south of the area and Booysen Park on the other side of Chatty River Valley. This makes William Slammert Drive and Mpuko Street to be two very important roads. The speed on Mpuko Street today is very high, it is a straight road through KwaNoxolo and it is much traffic passing every day. Many of the cars drive very fast through the area even if it is common that children play in the streets.

The second part of the project area is Chatty River Valley, on the south side of William Slammert Drive. This part of the Valley is suggested in our plan proposal to be an arranged public place. Chatty River runs through the Valley and sometimes during rain season the valley gets flooded, this makes the valley unsuitable to be developed with housing. The valley can still be used many month of the year for other purposes. The vegetation in the valley consists of high bushes and small trees, which makes it difficult to overview. Many informal tracks leads through the valley, people use them when going between KwaNoxolo and Booysen Park. The tracks show that it is important to improve the connections between Booysen Park and KwaNoxolo.
The project area
An arranged public place in Chatty River Valley

I propose that Chatty River Valley is used for recreational purposes, for cropping, for sports and to connect Booysen Park and KwaNoxolo with nice and pleasant walkways. I hope that the different activities I propose to take place in the valley will attract people from both Booysen park and KwaNoxolo and that the space in the valley can be a common place for people to meet and socialise. There is a relatively large difference between the two areas, both economically and geographical, the valley is a large undeveloped space between the areas. The activities and the arranged public places can be a way for people to meet.

I reason that it is best to place the parks closest to Chatty River and the other activities closer to the slopes in the valley. If the river gets flooded the parks can be under water for a while, but the vegetables will be ruined if they are under water. The sports areas will also be closer to the slopes because the schools in KwaNoxolo will use them for school activities.

The area closest around Chatty River is proposed for a walkway and two parks with places for Braai (South African barbecue). The parks will be on both sides of the river and there will be bridges to connect the two parts of the park. I suggest that there will be possibilities for different kinds of activities; places for the children to play and places for people to sit down. I suggest that there will be planted trees that can grow high and wide, to provide shadow during hot summer days.

Parts of Chatty River Valley are proposed for cropping (growing vegetables). I suggest that these spaces are placed away from Chatty River as to avoid that they are flooded and the vegetables are ruined.

I suggest that there will be two main walkways through Chatty River Valley. The top material will be asphalt to make it possible to cycle or take the children in a pram. The main use will be for walking; cyclists will mainly use the cyclist road next to William Slammert Drive. The walkways through the valley will be illuminated during night to make the area possible to cross during night.

I propose an area in the Valley for sports; the schools can use it during daytime and local sport clubs in the evening. There should be possibilities to play football, volleyball and tennis. I suggest that there is a water tap for people to be able to drink from. There should also be benches for people to sit and watch the games. They should preferably be in the shadow of some trees. The sports fields should be illuminated to be able to be used during night as well as daytime.
Principle layout for Chatty River Valley
High density Housing in KwaNoxolo
I suggest that the area will be divided into five large blocks. The main function of the five parts will be for dwellings. A local centre will be included in two of the five parts. All five parts are possible to reach by car on four sides, but within the blocks there will be no cars allowed. This is suggested to create environments that are safe for children to play in and nice green outdoor environment that is pleasant to spend time in.

Greenery
Paths of greenery through the project area will connect Chatty River Valley to a public park east of the area. Threes along the streets will give shadow and character to the streets. Greenery in built environments are important both for environmental qualities but also for recreational purposes.

Housing
Because the project area is situated in direct connection with a central node, I propose high-density housing in the area. The house types I propose are the same as we presented in the chapter “plans concerning the area”, semi-detached houses, attached houses and imizi houses.

The imizi houses are mainly placed along the two main streets in the area and in direct connection with the centre. There will be possibilities for trading in the bottom floor of the houses close to the centre. The semi-detached houses are mainly placed in the edges of the area and the attached houses in between.

Traffic
Grid structure is proposed on the streets in the area to make it easy to orientate oneself. Grid structure provides many alternative ways to go, this make people feel safe compared to a structure where there is just one possible way to go. If something happens or if someone has a threatening behaviour there is possible to take another way and avoid confrontation.

I suggest two main streets in the area for cars, except the already existing streets surrounding the area. Most streets in the area are for cyclists and pedestrians only; they go through the five parts. This is because of my aim to keep the blocks in the area free from cars on the inside. Many of the houses have their entrance from one of these streets, but there will be possible to drive up to the entrance by car for example when moving or if someone is ill or in case of fire.

Parking
Parking is suggested in connection to the dwellings in the area, four or five parking spaces in each of the five blocks in the area. The total numbers of parking lots in the new development are 420; there will be 40 more if the parking lots for the centre are included. there will be 0.5 parking lots per household when the total amount of new apartments in the area is approximately 720 (The number of apartments depends on how large the apartments in the Imizi-houses are). Today there are not many people in Bloemendal that can afford a car, but if the number of cars would increase in the future, the parking issue can be solved by extending the space for parking lots into the semi-private space between the houses or to park the cars along the streets.
principle layout of he project area
The block
The plan shows how I suggest that the houses in a block are organised. The houses are placed in four smaller groups around a semi-public space. The houses surround a semi-private space with the front entrances facing the streets.

The semi-public space: The four groups of houses will together be organised around a semi-public space free from parking space. The latter type of space will be of a more official character and a place for spontaneous meetings. This space will also be crossed by two bicycle and walkways for people passing through. Examples of activities that can take place here are children playing, people resting on a park bench, a group of people that have come together to Braai and just looking at people passing by.

The semi-private spaces: My idea is to create small spaces that are easy to overview and shared by a smaller number of people inside the group of houses. This type of space will be of private character and will mainly be for the people living in the houses surrounding it. Activities that can take place there are small children playing, a private picnic, meetings between people living in the houses, or just resting in a comfortable chair.
One of the five large blocks
Perspective of inneryard
The inneryard
The local centre in KwaNoxolo

In line with our overall plan proposal I suggest that the local centre in KwaNoxolo will be placed in connection to the crossing of Mpuko Street and William Slammert Drive. The centre can include functions like a community centre, a Post office, a Church and other stores. A supermarket does already exist there.

Through the placement of houses a square is created where informal trading can take place. There can also be a small scene for performances or group meetings in the square. The square should have facilities like a water tap and a public toilette. I suggest that there will be a billboard where it is possible to post events, or other information that the people living in the area can be interested in.

I suggest a park in a part of the square, with benches both in the shade and in the sun. Here it will be possible to sit down and eat food that one has brought with oneself or just rest for a while. In the park there should be a small pond or a fountain it will be a nice contrast to the built environment.

I suggest that there are palms planted in the crossing of the two streets. The trees will give some shadow during the hot summer days and they will separate the square from the traffic on the streets. It is important that the square is free from cars for trading and other activities to be able to take place. I have planned for 40 parking lots in connection to the centre.

The level of the crossing of Mpuko Street and William Slammert Drive will be higher than the level on the streets, about 15-20 centimetres. The reason for this is to slow down the speed of the cars when they are passing the centre.
Perspective of the centre in KwaNoxolo