

Research Plan

STORY-BASED ADAPTIVE REUSE OF COUNTRY HOUSES



Drs. H.D. Riepema
4605446

Tutors:
Ir. W.L.E.C. Meijers
Dr. Ir. H. Zijlstra

2 - STORY-BASED ADAPTIVE REUSE OF COUNTRY HOUSES

Cover photos: own image

Content

0. Preface	5
1. Introduction	6
1.1. Introduction to the research plan	
1.2. Introduction to the history of country houses	
2. Theoretical Framework	8
2.1. Some important authors	
2.2. Research into story-based reuse	
3. Problem Statement	10
3.1. Problem statement	
3.2. Research questions	
4. Methodology	12
4.1. Spatial Building Typology	
4.2. Individual Research	
4.3. Design	
5. Relevance	14
6. Sources	16
Appendix: Research and Design scheme	18

4 - STORY-BASED ADAPTIVE REUSE OF COUNTRY HOUSES

0. Preface

Country houses. They have long captured the imagination of many of us, because of their usually picturesque locations and majestic appearances. But to which extent do we know the real stories of these amazing historic buildings? Or do we just see them as a nice background for our lives? These are some of the questions that played in my mind while writing this research plan.

But my personal interest in country houses as a research topic already started some time before. While studying Architectural History at Utrecht University, I had the opportunity to work on the Huis te Warmond for both my internship and thesis. In the thesis, I described the gardens around the house and their relation with

the landscape in a biographical way. This biographical way of working is based on recently developed ways of thinking about dealing with heritage, and was developed by among others Hermans, Kolen and Renes (2015). It combines different types of sources into a chronological way in order to see the longer lines in the development of our heritage, and tries to capture stories that are part of it. The research for my graduation at TU Delft, which is described in this research plan, will be a continued of my previous research, but focusses more on practical aspects; the integration of the stories behind heritage into the design process.

Delft, October 2021

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction to the research plan

This research plan describes the authors personal graduation process for the mastertrack Architecture, studio Heritage and Architecture, which is part of the masters in Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences. The graduation studio covers the subject Vacant Heritage, and focusses on real estate of the Dutch National Police. The graduation project in this studio consists of three parts; group research, individual research and an individual design. The relationship between these 3 components will be explained in this research plan, and visualised in a scheme (appendix).

The design will be based on and inspired by both the group research and the individual research. The individual research will have a more direct relationship with the individual research; the outcomes of this research will be used to make design decision, and some of the research questions are partially answered by research-by-design. The group research will be used to get a better understanding of the spatial qualities of the chosen building, and to place in the context of the other police buildings.

The group research concerns the spatial building typology (from now on referred to as SBT) of 8 police buildings, which may become, partially or completely, vacant or temporary out of use. The research builds on previous research of

the Heritage and Architecture section in the tradition of Building Analysis. Goal of this way of analysing typologies is to give space a central place when looking for new functions for existing buildings, instead of only looking at the existing functions (TU Delft Heritage and Architecture, 2021).

The individual research focusses on country houses in the Netherlands. It includes a different way of looking at heritage and adaptive reuse then the SBT research. Whereas SBT focusses almost exclusively on spatial, physical aspect of heritage on a typological base the individual research focusses mostly on non-physical aspects of heritage, and how this can be included in a redesign, based on storytelling. An overlap can be found in the fact that both in the SBT and in the individual research, there is aimed to find new ways/methods of reusing spatial heritage.

1.2. Introduction into the history of country houses

Country houses play a characteristic and important role in the Dutch (architectural) history. The development of country houses starts with castles and manors in the middle-ages. Most of these buildings had a defence function, but they were also a precondition to be part of knighthood. In the 16th century, the defence function was no longer as important as before. Therefore, some of the buildings started

changing, but still certain characteristics of the defence mechanisms remained visible. At the same time, more country houses were built or developed out of existing farmhouses, with as a main goal recreation for the nobility. During this period, most country houses were still relatively simple buildings, and were adapted frequently to the needs and wishes of the owners. This resulted in picturesque, non-symmetrical buildings with a lot of different building

More and more, country houses became, besides lucrative investments, places to show the owners wealth. The bourgeoisie started building or buying country houses, which led to some of them also taking over noble titles. In the 17th century, the architecture of the country houses slowly began to change, influence by the French architectural ideas. Additionally, the gardens around the houses started changing influenced by these new ideas. While the gardens were still highly functional in the 16th and early 17th centuries, tightly laid out formal gardens began to develop in the course of the 17th century. At the end the

17th century, this development of country houses came to a climax, when large, palace-like houses were built such as Slot Zeist (image 1), De Voorst (image 2) and Heemstede (Van Wyck, 1982, 8-9, 13-17)

During the 18th century the country houses continued to develop according to the prevailing architectural ideas. The formal gardens were perfected, and then begun to grow in size. These larger parks were increasingly divided into separate, self-contained gardens (Van Wyck, 1982, 113-118). In the 19th century, the landscape style was introduced, which changed the gardens of many the country house quite a lot. Less new country houses were built, and due to societal changes such as the industrialisation, some country houses started to decay. Some of them where sold to the new rich, those who made money in the new industries. During the 20th century, even more country houses were sold or demolished, but also first the protection started getting shape, through organisations recognizing their monumental values (Van Wyck, 1982, 519-523)



Image 1: Slot Zeist (Slot Zeist, 2021)



Image 2: Huis De Voorst (own image)

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Some important authors

A lot of research into country houses, estates and castles has been done in the last decades. One of the first authors who systematically started describing country houses and estates was H.W.M van der Wyck (1927-2001). His work still functions as one of the foundations of the research of estates, and describes the relation between houses and gardens. He describes the developments over time, based on 4 periods he distinguishes.

Lucia Albers is another important author working on estates. In her dissertation she tries to come up with evaluation method for the (cultural-historical) value of estates (Albers, 1987). She's currently working as advisor on historical parks, and wrote a lot of value assessments and analysis's of estates.

Another important, more recent research has been done by Gerdy Verschuure and is named *Welgelegen; Analyse van Hollandse buitenplaatsen in hun landschappen*. In her dissertation, Verschuure describes country house landscapes in Holland, and focusses on country houses built between 1630 and 1730.

The last person highlighted here is also an author and booster of research on estates is em. Prof. dr. Yme Kuiper. He was professor Historical estates at Groningen University, and for his farewell as professor a publication named *Huis en Habitus*,

was published (Gietman et al, 2017). This book contains texts written by several other experts. The essays written by these experts are all telling something about estates from another perspective, which makes this publication extra interesting for this research.

2.2. Research into story-based reuse

In the last years, there is a rising awareness in the Netherlands about the importance of stories behind time layers in heritage and behind heritage in general. Among others Gerdy Verschuure mentions this, and uses the terms narrative of place and heritage experience (Verschuure, 2019). She argues that attention for these things is one of the two essential elements for dealing with country houses nowadays, in the growing interconnectedness of heritage and spatial planning. She says that it is not only essential to conserve the physical structures, but also social-societal and mental aspects need to be taken in account. She herself however mostly focusses on the other essential element she mentions in her dissertation, the growing attention for structure-based protection of heritage based on ensembles of estates (Verschuure, 2019, 41).

Also research done by a group of heritage professionals, the 'Nationale Onderzoeksagenda Erfgoed en Ruimte', shows attention for the non-physical aspects of heritage and the value of the

stories behind heritage for reuse, but in a slightly different way. In their paper, the approach considering these aspects is referred to as the vector approach. In this approach, heritage functions as the guiding element that inspires stakeholders in spatial development (image 3). In the current situation and developments, a connection is sought with not only the physical aspects of heritage, but among others also the stories of major and minor events, the famous and lesser known historical persons etcetera. The authors argue that, although both in academia and beyond, research is being done, there is no fixed body of knowledge about the vector approach yet – in contrast with the other approaches they discuss, the sector and factor approach. Therefore, they say, more research is necessary (Janssen et al, 2014, 11-14, 22-23)

It's interesting to place country houses in the context of these more story-based approaches. Nowadays, most of the Dutch country houses and estates have lost their functions as (summer)houses for the nobility, as described in the introduction. Starting in the late 19th-century, and accelerated by the social changes of the twentieth century, many of them became

vacant. Some were demolished, others got a new function. But still, for many of them no permanent goal has been found, or, in some cases, new function changes are already necessary.

Due to these former owners, usually families that used the houses and estates for a long period of time, leaving their houses and estates, a lot of the stories about the buildings, estates, their use and previous users, are no longer being told. Therefore the new, usually more short-term, users are no longer familiar with these stories and backgrounds. In some cases, these stories are written down in research or other texts and therefore known by specialists, in other cases they are slowly fading away due to the people that knew them from the time they were still being told, dying.

Another major characteristic of country houses, which makes it an even more interesting case for working from this perspective, is the fact that they usually consist of a lot of time layers, with even more stories behind them.

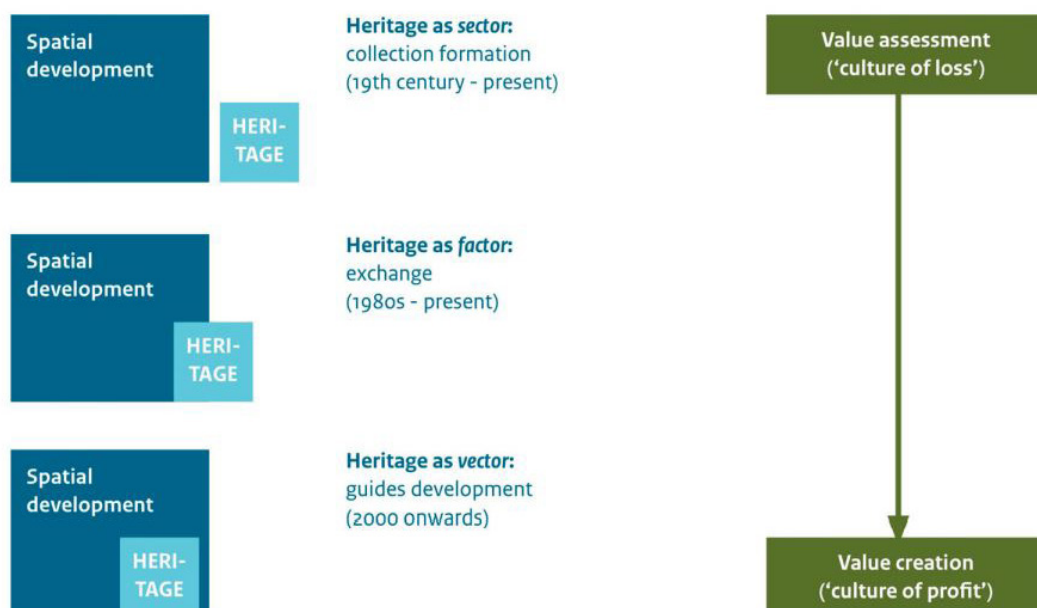


Image 3: Diagram showing the differences between the 3 heritage approaches (Janssen et al, 2014)

3. Problem Statement

3.1. Problem statement

Looking at the aforementioned points, we can conclude a few things. First, the fact that attention for the stories behind heritage is necessary in nowadays society and heritage policies (Verschuure, 2019, 41). Secondly, the need for more research into this approach (Janssen et al, 2014, 22-23). Last, the fact that this focus can be of importance especially in country houses, where many of the non-physical aspects are no longer known to today's and future users. This makes clear that it would be very helpful if architects would be able to integrate this story-based approach in the adaptive redesign of country houses. The

individual research therefore aims to find strategies that can be applied by architects involved in adaptive reuse of this category of spatial heritage to stimulate the experience of their non-physical qualities.

3.2. Research questions

The research question that will be answered during the research and design in the graduation process is: How can the architect integrate the stories behind the layers of time in Huis 't Velde in the adaptive redesign process in order to make these stories experienceable for future users?



Image 4: Timelayers visible in the interior of Huis 't Velde (own image)

The sub questions linked to this main question are:

1. Which layers of time are present in Huis 't Velde, and which stories are behind them?
2. In which ways have time layers been used in existing redesigns(case studies)?
3. Which strategies can be distinguished (in the case studies)?
4. Which spatial characteristics play a role?
5. Which strategy is the most suitable for Huis 't Velde?

These questions might change or evolve during the process, due to new findings or results. The questions obviously do not cover everything that could be researched related to the stories behind timelayers and country houses. The research will also focus only on a single building for the application, and on only a few case studies for finding the strategies (image 4). This due to the limited amount of time available for the research. Other important topics that are not particularly addressed in the process are for example the question how these stories behind time layers should be valued, and what the theoretical consequences are of emphasising certain time layers.

4. Methodology

4.1. Spatial Building Typology

During the graduation process, several (research) methods will be used. For the SBT group research, (building) analysis is the most important method (Groat and Wang, 2013). For these analysis, sources such as maps, architectural drawings and photos are used and re-drawn in such a way that they give specific information about the spatial characteristics of the police buildings involved. The sources are derived from archives, online databases and from the Atelier Politiebouwmeester. Drawings of the different buildings and

from different scales will be compared in order to come to conclusion about the spatial characteristics of the buildings.

4.2. Individual Research

For the individual research, in order to answer the questions mentioned before, some additional methods will be used. In order to answer question one, literature research will be done, combined with research into primary sources such as (architectural) drawings from the archives, and texts written by previous users and other local residents.

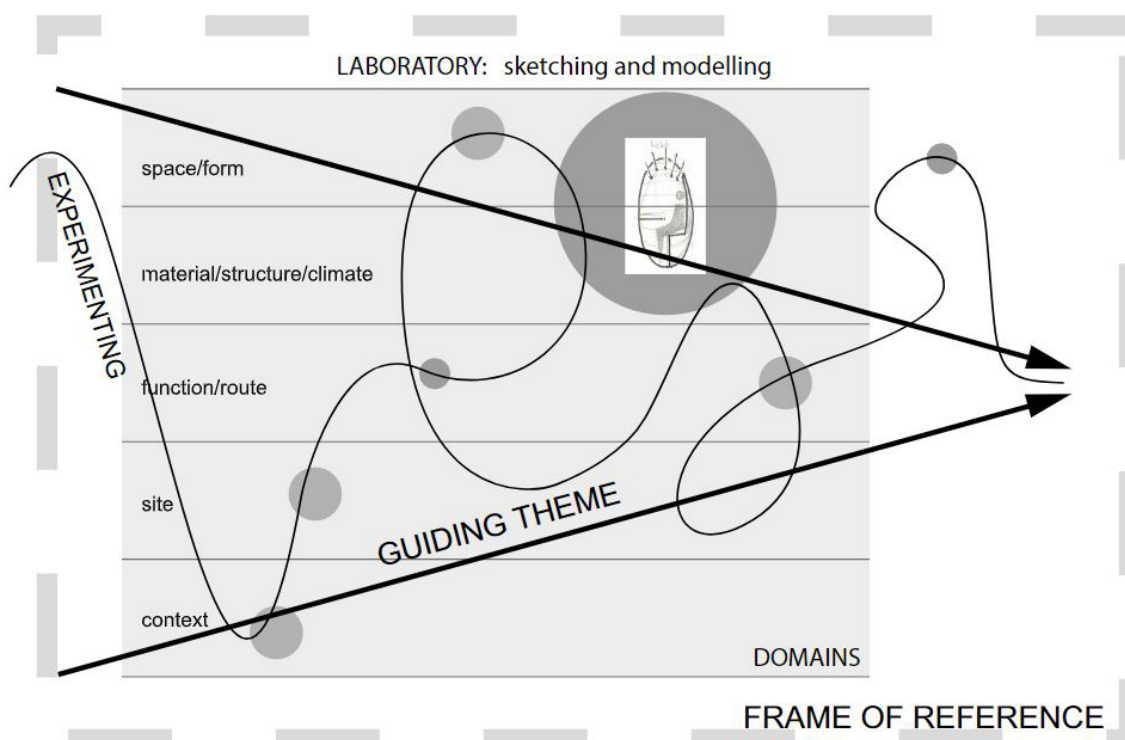


Image 5: The place of the guiding theme in the design process, as depicted by Elise van Dooren (Van Dooren, 2020)

In order to be able to answer the second and third question, several case studies will be selected. The selection will be based on the following criteria: only country houses in the Netherlands are selected. Cases spread across the country are selected so that the strategies found are not specific to one single area. The projects need to have a new function, different from housing for a single private owner, and this change has to be relatively recent. Projects with a scale comparable to Huis 't Velde are selected. Primary sources about the interventions will be used in order to determine which strategies are used in the redesigns, such as architectural drawings from archives, texts written by the architects and interviews of the architects and others involved in the design processes.

To answer question 4, the findings of the SBT research for Huis 't Velde are combined with the results of the foregoing questions, to see which spatial characteristics of the complex are important for the stories behind the time layers. The answer to question 5 will be based on the findings of the research, combined with research by design for the case of Huis 't Velde, and will be visible in the final design of the graduation process.

4.3. Design

For the design process, the stories about the Huis 't Velde function as a guiding theme (image 4) (Van Dooren, 2020). Methods such as model making, reference projects, sketching, detailing and location visits are used to develop the design (see appendix). Strategies found in the individual research will be tested and used, in a research-by-design process as described for question five of the individual research.

5. Relevance

Societal relevance

Throughout The Netherlands are a lot of country houses that are vacant or will need a new function in the near future. This points out the main societal relevance of the individual research. This research will help to find new functions and redesign options for these buildings. The research aims to include stories about country houses in the adaptive reuse process, and will therefore help to create awareness of these stories and histories among a broader public; the (future) visitors and users of country houses. The design part gives a specific reuse option for the Huis 't Velde, that can function as an example and inspiration for other country houses and estates.

The group research is relevant because of the reorganisation of the

Dutch police into a national organisation, resulting in less need for buildings. The research helps understanding the buildings that might become vacant, and functions as a starting point for (adaptive) reuse.

Academical relevance

The individual research and design will contribute to the development of a body of knowledge about the 'heritage as vector' approach, described in the theoretical framework. Knowledge considering story-based design will be combined and developed through case studies and the design. The group research fits in the Spatial Building Typology series, and will help developing knowledge about how this way of researching is useful for adaptive reuse.



Image 3: Paleis Soestdijk, one of the country houses that currently gets a new function (Paleis Soestdijk, 2021)

6. Sources

Country Houses

Albers, L. H. (1987). *Het Gewichtloze Gewogen*. Delftse Universitaire Pers.

Eliëns, F. M., & Harenberg, J. (1984). *Middeleeuwse kastelen van Gelderland*. Elmar.

Gietman, C., Moes, J., Rewijk, D., Ronnes, H., Bremmer, J. N., & Spek, T. (2017). *Huis en Habitus: Over kastelen, buitenplaatsen en notabele levensvormen*. Verloren.

Riepema, H.D. *Biografie van de ruimtelijke context van het Huis te Warmond* (Masterthesis, Utrecht University). Thesis repository. https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/1874/399102/Scriptie_Riepema_HD_klein.pdf?sequence=1.

Ter Kuile, E. H. (1958). *De Nederlandse Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst* (Deel IV, Tweede stuk: Het Kwartier van Zutfen ed.). Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf.

Wijck, H. W. M. (1982). *De Nederlandse buitenplaats*. Canaletto.

Wilczek, I. (2021). The layers of history: New architecture interventions in castle ruins. *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 10(2), 351–368. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2020.12.001>

Heritage Strategies

Hermans, D. R., Kolen, J. D. R., & Renes, H. (2015). *Landscape Biographies: Geographical, Historical and Archaeological Perspectives on the Production and Transmission of Landscapes*. Amsterdam University Press.

Janssen, J., Luiten, E., Renes, J., Rouwendal, J., Faber, O., Pen, C. J., & Stegmeijer, E. (2013). *Karakterschetsen; Nationale Onderzoeksagenda Ergoed en Ruimte. Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed*.

Janssen, J., Luiten, E., Renes, H., & Stegmeijer, E. (2017). Heritage as sector, factor and vector: conceptualizing the shifting relationship between heritage management and spatial planning. *European Planning Studies*, 25(9), 1654–1672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2017.1329410>

Lyu, F. (2019). Architecture as spatial storytelling: Mediating human knowledge of the world, humans and architecture. *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 8(3), 275–283. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2019.05.002>

Misirlisoy, D., & Günçe, K. (2016). Adaptive reuse strategies for heritage buildings: A holistic approach. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 26, 91–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2016.05.017>

Methods

Groat, L. N., & Wang, D. (2013). *Architectural Research Methods* (2de ed.). Wiley.

Van Dooren, E. (2020). *Anchoring the design process*. TU Delft.

TU Delft Heritage and Architecture. (2021). *Studio Text*. <https://brightspace.tudelft.nl/d2l/le/content/398787/viewContent/2477667/View>

Archives

Archief Zutphen

Gelders Archief

Kaartenkamer TU Delft

RCE Beeldbank

Images

Janssen, J., Luiten, E., Renes, J., Rouwendal, J., Faber, O., Pen, C. J., & Stegmeijer, E. (2013). *Karakterschetsen; Nationale Onderzoeksagenda Ergoed en Ruimte. Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed*.

Paleis Soestdijk. (2021) *Een iconisch monument in transitie*. Paleis Soestdijk. <https://www.paleissoestdijk.nl/>

Slot Zeist. (2021) *Slot Zeist; meest markante congreslocatie van Nederland!*. Slot Zeist. <https://www.slotzeist.nl/>

Van Dooren, E. (2020). *Anchoring the design process*. TU Delft.

18 - STORY-BASED ADAPTIVE REUSE OF COUNTRY HOUSES

