



Weiterbauen on everyday architecture

AR3A010
research plan
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"With sufficient empathy and eclectic thinking, there is always a way to get around the inherited building. As such, Weiterbauen also opens a door to the future. By not aestheticizing the past, more room is left for further accumulation, beyond the contradiction between old and new."

(Somers, 2019, p. 280)

Relevance/problem statement

With this research, I would like to dive into the subject of 'Weiterbauen', a term used in 1934 by the Swiss faction of the modern movement (the ABC group within CIAM) to mark a move away from its strategy of cultural *tabula rasa* (Cisar, 2006, p. 16). Weiterbauen can be seen as a design attitude that is in favour of stacking epochs upon or next to one another, rather than creating stark contrasts between old and new elements. It is about empathetically adapting to the existing building or context with respect and preserving the old by retaining it within the new (Niess, 2021, p. 15).

The neighbourhood of Bressoux in Liège – the location of the Urban Architecture studio's upcoming design proposals – shows many layers of time and use in its present architecture, as was touched upon in the group research. Bressoux can thus be seen as a *tabula scripta* on which new designs may continue. The conscious consideration of how architecture deals with history is a responsibility that can and should not be avoided (Cramer & Breitling, 2007, p. 19-20), and I believe a further understanding of the attitude of Weiterbauen will help me position myself in this debate. Furthermore, it will also provide a useful feeding ground for a design that interacts with the existing context of Bressoux, continuing on what is already there. Therefore, my preliminary main research question would be: *"How can Weiterbauen be applied in a context like Bressoux?"* I will try to answer this question during the course of a two-fold research.

Structure and methodology

The first part of my research will focus on the term Weiterbauen and its position in the debate around dealing with the existing built environment and its history. I will try to answer the question *"How can Weiterbauen be defined?"* through the use of literature research and possibly interviews with architects that engage in the practice of Weiterbauen. Well-known architectural projects like the Alte Pinakothek in Munich by Hans Döllgast or the Neues Museum in Berlin by David Chipperfield may be brought in as examples to explain the principles of Weiterbauen. As positions on the exact meaning of the term may differ, this part of the research will lead to composing my own definition of Weiterbauen, based on the addressed perspectives.

The second part, being the main body of the research, will consist of the analysis of a wide selection of architectural projects that follow the previously established definition of Weiterbauen. The purpose of this part of the research is not to compare these different projects, but to gather a collection of inspiring examples that show how Weiterbauen can provide a dynamic interaction between old and new.

Each individual project will be treated in a similar way, using photos, drawings and descriptions by the architects as a basis for the analysis. Parts of the projects where the particular take on Weiterbauen is most interesting will be re-drawn, focussing on the distinction between the previously existing parts and the new additions of the projects. Although the type of drawing might differ per project as some are best explained with a section and others with a façade drawing, the common focus is clarifying the interaction between the existing context and the new addition. I will use the drawings below as a reference for the analytical drawings, showing two methods of emphasising the relationship between old and new, but will later determine the most fitting drawing type per project.

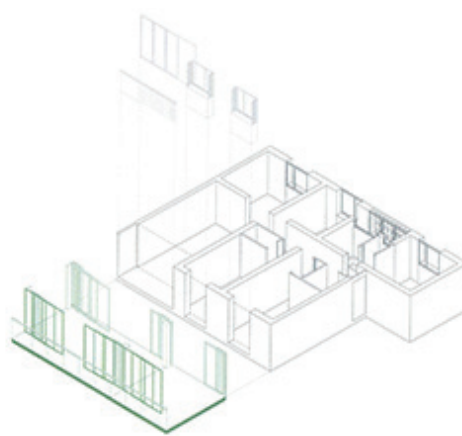


fig. 2
Line drawing of a façade of the Alte Pinakothek by Hans Döllgast, using different textures and shades of black to show a distinction between old and new (Studio Adam Caruso, 2012).

fig. 3
Axonometric line drawing of an apartment extension of Quartier du Grand Parc by Lacaton & Vassal Architects, using an exploded view and different line colours to show the distinction between the existing structure and the addition (Lacaton & Vassal Architects, 2020).

Avoiding the in-depth analysis of already extensively-researched buildings like the earlier mentioned Alte Pinakothek, the second part of my research will focus on buildings that are part of everyday architecture, and do not necessarily have value in terms of heritage conservation. In this part I will try to answer the question *"How can Weiterbauen be applied in the context of everyday architecture?"*. This focus on a humbler expression of Weiterbauen rather than prestigious projects like museums seems more fitting to the context of Bressoux, providing a path towards answering the main research question and creating a useful basis of inspiration for the design of an architectural intervention in Bressoux. Two examples of projects I would include in the research, Pension van Schoonhoven and Haus Schreiber (figures 4 and 5), are already shown below, but my aim is to continue to expand the collection with inspiring projects during the course of the research.

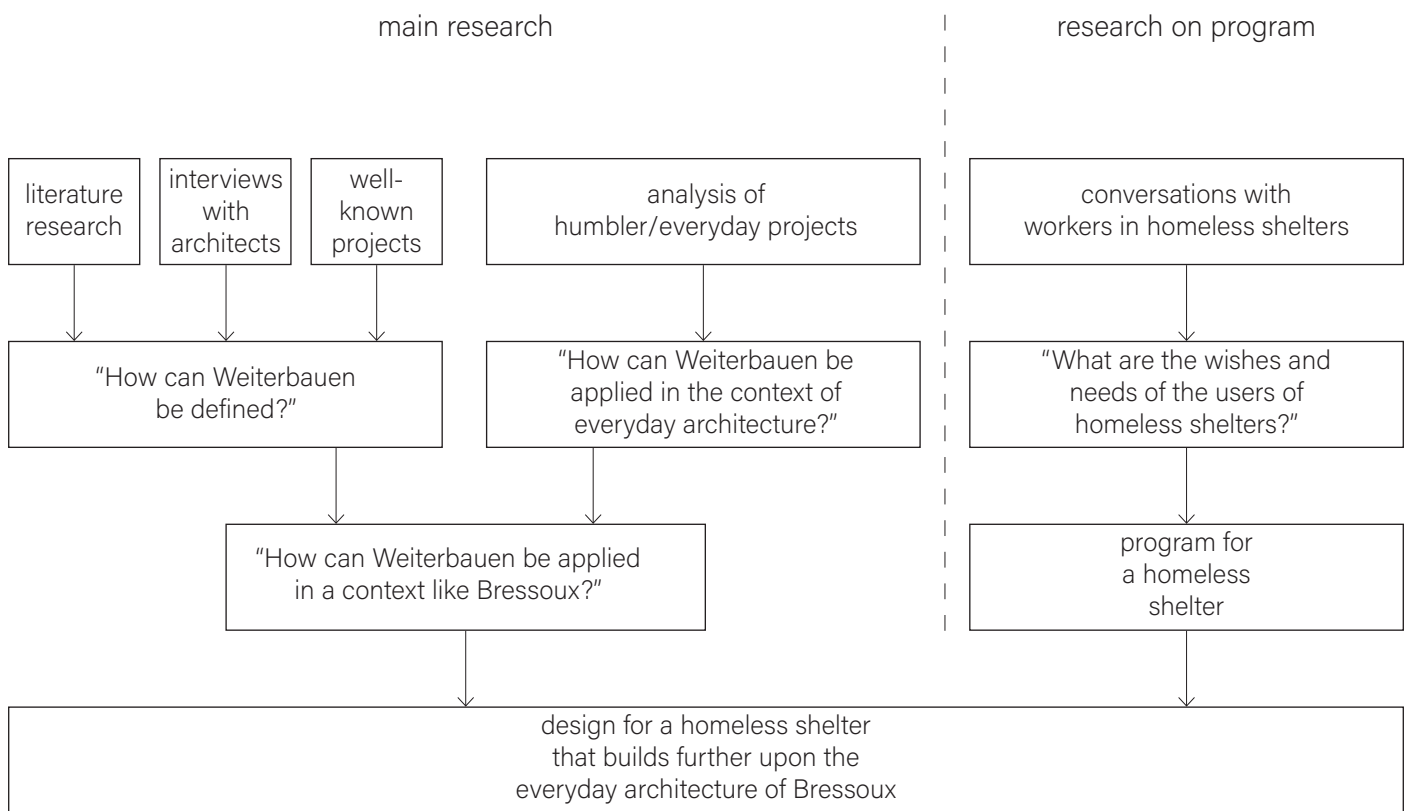


fig. 4
Pension van Schoonhoven by BULK Architecten, a shelter for the homeless in Antwerp, relating to its 19th century neighbouring buildings in terms of material and rhythm (Claeskens, n.d.)



fig. 5
Haus Schreiber by AMUNT, a house extension in Aachen, where the annex relates to the original structure but is easily recognizable, stacking epochs next to one another (Dujardin, n.d.)

To clarify the envisioned structure of the research, I have included a diagram of the research design (figure 6). As I will also develop a program for the architectural intervention in Bressoux while conducting this research, that trajectory is included in the diagram as well and is explained briefly on the next page.



Parallel research on the program

At the same time as the main research on *Weiterbauen*, I will develop a program for my architectural intervention in Bressoux. I would like to establish a possible program for a homeless shelter as, according to the latest counts, 500 people are homeless in Liège, of which 78 are children (Vanmeldert, 2021). Although some inhabitants of Liège open their houses to homeless people, an organized approach to the problem seems to be missing. To develop an understanding of the needs and wishes of such organisations, I plan to interview workers at homeless shelters and ask them about specific wishes and demands. By having a conversation with workers in multiple homeless shelters, both in the Netherlands and in Belgium, I expect to be able to develop a more well-informed program for my design in Bressoux. As this trajectory will run parallel to my main research, I included it in the research design diagram on the previous page. As the diagram shows, I am not certain yet at which point the two trajectories might interact, but I expect them both to inform my later design for a homeless shelter that builds further upon the everyday architecture of Bressoux.

Literature

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Figures

- 1 Borghouts, K. (n.d.). [Photo of House Extension Mortsel]. <https://bovenbouw.be/projects/house-extension-mortsel/>
- 2 Studio Adam Caruso. (2012). [Re-drawing of façade Alte Pinakothek]. <https://caruso.arch.ethz.ch/project/112>
- 3 Lacaton & Vassal Architects. (2020). [Diagram of apartment extension].
- 4 Claeskens, N. (n.d.). [Façade of Pension van Schoonhoven]. <https://bulkarchitecten.be/en/catalogue/public/pension-van-schoonhoven>
- 5 Dujardin, F. (n.d.). [Façade of Haus Schreber]. <https://divisare.com/projects/253473-amunt-filip-dujardin-schreber>

Future references

Studied references that are not directly used in this document but will probably be used in the research are included in the following list.

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