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ARTICLE

Web of attributes: analysing residents' appreciation of a Dutch neighbourhood from a new heritage perspective

Lidwine Spoormans[1] · **Ana Pereira Roders**[1] · **Darinka Czischke**[1] · **Wessel de Jonge**[1]

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Abstract
In the last century, the concept of what can be heritage has expanded in definition, opening to everyday architecture and living environments. More recently, the group of stakeholders to be involved in heritage assessment and management has slowly grown, with authorities acknowledging that heritage significance lies in the representation and identification for people and that people could help define it. Studying the significance of everyday residential neighbourhoods and the inclusion of individual responses creates a demand for new methods. Although in heritage studies these methods remain undefined, studies on housing preferences offer starting points for new approaches. This paper presents a significance assessment of an everyday living environment by its residents, from a new heritage perspective. By analysing individual responses, this research discusses more inclusive methods of assessing significance. A neighbourhood in the Dutch town Almere, is used as a case study. Based on a survey in diary format, residents' appreciation of their living environment is analysed using values-attributes and means-end theory. Results show that assessments of individual residents consist of chains of tangible and intangible attributes. The paper proposes a new analytical model, the 'Web of Attributes', which visualizes residents' responses and reveals the diversity and relations between the attributes best appreciated in a specific living environment. The Web of Attributes can serve as visual reporting in statements of significance, for listed and non-listed neighbourhoods. By combining theories from housing preferences and heritage significance assessment, this novel research explores narrow the gap between the assessments of heritage and everyday neighbourhoods.

Keywords Housing preferences · Citizen participation · Residential architecture · Heritage significance · Values and attributes · Means-end chains

✉ Lidwine Spoormans
L.G.K.Spoormans@tudelft.nl

Ana Pereira Roders
A.R.Pereira-Roders@tudelft.nl

Darinka Czischke
D.K.Czischke@tudelft.nl

Wessel de Jonge
W.deJonge@tudelft.nl

[1] Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands

1 Introduction

"Objects and places are not, in themselves, what is important about cultural heritage. They are important because of the meanings and uses that people attach to them and the values they represent." This statement is part of the Faro Convention (Council-of-Europe, 2005, p. 10), which is a treaty whereby many European countries agree to protect cultural heritage and the rights of citizens to access and participate in heritage management and conservation. People-centred processes are the essence of its action plan, in which 'everyone's opinion, interests and aspirations count'. The convention is a formal agreement on a broader trend, both noted in academia and practice, to acknowledge the importance of involving citizens in the definition and management of cultural heritage and its significance. More generally, citizen involvement is receiving increasing attention in project developments in the built environment, also at national level. In the Netherlands, for instance, the Environment Act [Omgevingswet] encourages the involvement of stakeholders at an early stage in the process of decision-making on a development project or activity, but also forces governments to participate through a duty of organization and motivation (BZK, 2021). At the municipal or provincial level, stakeholder participation is mandatory in the creation of an integrated Environmental Vision (pertaining to the Environment Act) in which defining heritage significance of the living environment is an important part (RCE, 2022).

1.1 New heritage definitions

Who defines the significance of heritage? Traditionally, the significance assessment of heritage was led by experts, who defined what constitutes 'heritage', what are its underlying values and how they should be conserved (De la Torre, 2002, p. 3). Due to the stronger and early role of historians, heritage significance was dominantly based on historic values and history methods. But in recent decades, the concept of what heritage is and who should be involved in the identification has started to change. The essential factor is the recognition, representation and identification of heritage by a group of people and their wish to conserve it for future generations (Howard, 2003, p. 6). According to the Faro Convention, identification of heritage by citizens and communities is key. A heritage community is defined as 'people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish (…) to sustain and transmit to future generations' (Council-of-Europe, 2005, p. 2). The plea for the inclusion of personal stories and formerly 'unheard voices' is not limited to heritage narratives. In architectural history, scholars have endeavoured to write alternatively, more inclusive, multifaceted, and polyvocal histories. And while oral history as an alternative way of writing architectural history has developed over the last half century, many experts are yet to acknowledge that those using and occupying buildings may possess spatial knowledge (Gosseye et al., 2019). An active role of citizens and other (market) parties is not a new phenomenon in architectural planning and urban transformation. Involvement and participation were already important in the 1970s, with the mode and degree of involvement being problematised by Arnstein, represented in her famous ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969). However, citizen perceptions of participation processes are not always positive, as each group—and perhaps each individual—has its own preferences and barriers. The search for ways to identify all relevant parties, involve all citizens and democratise spatial planning remains as topical as it was in the 1970s (Tan et al., 2019, pp. 161, 167).

What is defined as heritage? The Faro Convention defines cultural heritage as 'a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time' (Council-of-Europe, 2005, p. 2). Building on the wider democratic aspect advocated by the Faro Convention, Fairclough expands heritage to 'everything that we have inherited', regardless if we choose to pass it on to our successors, or not (Fairclough, 2009, p. 30). He advocates replacing the system of selecting 'special' buildings for preservation with a new concept of heritage, in which the ordinary things we inherited become central, as they are central to those who live among them (Fairclough, 2009, p. 35). Moreover, regarding 100% of our built environment as being heritage changes our perspective to a more sustainable approach of urban development (Pereira Roders & Pottgiesser, 2020). Including the everyday into heritage thinking, switches around the perspective on everyday environments that we consider ordinary but contain the aspects of things that are most important. In the words of Lefebvre (1987): 'The everyday is (therefore) the most universal and the most unique condition, the most social and the most individuated, the most obvious and the best hidden. (…) Are not the surreal, the extraordinary, the surprising, even the magical, also part of the real? Why wouldn't the concept of everydayness reveal the extraordinary in the ordinary?'.

What is the relationship between the new definitions of heritage and those who define it? Shifting our scope to everyday environments also has an emancipatory aspect, as by a more comprehensive understanding of the complex and spatial social memories of our contemporary environment, we do justice to citizens' preferences (Atkinson, 2007, p. 537). Using the term 'new heritage', also Fairclough integrates heritage as object and heritage as practice. Formerly overlooked objects like very recent buildings, intangible dimensions of heritage and the idea of 'alive' heritage, have been added to the heritage canon, often under the influence of non-expert but highly engaged groups (Fairclough, 2009, p. 30). Assuming these inclusive definitions of heritage, narrowing the gap between heritage properties and everyday neighbourhoods, creates a demand for developing new methods to reveal their significance. The Burra Charter, that was first published in 1979 and is renowned for its broader definition of cultural significance, writes that places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups and they should be provided with opportunities to contribute to and participate in the identification and understanding of cultural significance (Australia-ICOMOS, 2013, pp. 2, 8). The process for managing places of significance as proposed in the Burra Charter, starts with 'understanding significance', that is divided into the stages 'understanding the place', then 'assessing significance', reported in a 'statement of significance'.

But although the importance for citizen involvement is recognised, the way to include detailed assessments by individual citizens in assessing significance remains limited, both in theory and practice. When involving residents and other stakeholders in defining urban and architectural heritage, questions arise about what methods to apply. When asking residents about heritage significance, what do they mention? How to integrate the appreciation of residents into aggregate significance assessments? And when heritage and the everyday merge, what does that mean for the methods, and how can the two disciplines learn from each other? Moreover, referring to Atkinson (2007) and Fairclough (2009), including citizens might lead to a shift in the definition of heritage. Referring to the Burra Charter, the first step is understanding what is the significant place, before assessing what the significance is.

This study focusses on the significance assessment of an everyday living environment by its residents. It analyses Almere-Haven, a neighbourhood in the Dutch new town Almere. The neighbourhood is a suitable case for this research, as it is not listed, but can be regarded as everyday architecture and 'new heritage'. Neighbourhoods like Almere-Haven are in-between old and new and are seldom found listed as cultural heritage although generally Dutch architecture built after 1965 has recently come under attention in heritage circles (Blom et al., 2021; Somer, 2020). Their (heritage) significance is debated among experts and in the media (Heijne, 2014; Pantus, 2012; Wilke, 2018). At the same time, they are at the dawn of major energy transitions, densification and demographic change (Provoost, 2022, pp. 8–9; Reijndorp et al., 2012, pp. 327–331). The current lack of consensus about their cultural significance provides a good base for open investigation on what is significant for citizens and why, independent from the judgements or preconceptions from the experts. Studying the significant attributes of an everyday residential neighbourhood, contributes to the recognition, acknowledgement and preservation of everyday living environments and the heritage significance conveyed by its users.

This paper presents the analysis of citizen voices about their neighbourhoods, in order to contribute to more inclusive methods of assessing (heritage) significance. By combining concepts from the disciplines of heritage and housing, a new approach is proposed. It discusses the results of a diary method, which was developed to explore techniques and gain insights into more inclusive (heritage) significance assessments. The diary method concerns written and visual accounts in which residents respond about what they appreciate about their daily living environment. The results are illustrated and discussed by unravelling and analysing a selection of diary entries. A series of 'Web of Attributes' were deduced as an analytical model, clustering significant attributes, ordered by the several scales of the living environment. This approach is evaluated in the context of current methods and theories in the fields of heritage and housing. Finally, the limits and the added value of the explored method are discussed.

1.2 Values, attributes and significance

The distinction between values and attributes in relation to heritage was introduced in international policy by the Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) (UNESCO, 2011). Attributes were defined as what we value, and values as the reason(s) why a resource is valuable (Veldpaus, 2015, p. 128). Values can be the traditional historic, aesthetic or age value, but also social, economic, political, scientific or ecological values (Pereira Roders, 2007). Attributes are regarded as a part of a whole and, reciprocally, a property consists of a set of attributes that form a coherent whole and carry specific meanings (Cotte, 2021, pp. 32–35). Attributes exist in two complementary dimensions: tangible attributes that physically describe characteristics of the property and/or as bearers of associated intangible attributes. The theoretical boundary between tangible and intangible attributes is assumed to be less present in practice. On the contrary, tangible and intangible attributes can be complementary. Some scholars propose to distinguish the attribute category, attribute definition, indicator of the attribute and its value or degree of authenticity (Skounti, 2021, p. 135; Sobhani Sanjbod et al., 2016, pp. 5–6). Even if this segregation enables greater transparency on the description and assessments, it also disables further understanding on their relations. Moreover, attributes have often more than one indicator and values. For example, in a study by Sobhani Sanjbod and others to identify and locate attributes of the Amsterdam Canal Zone, an attribute is the intangible 'Port city', a

sub-attribute the 'warehouse', its indicator a 'spout gable' and its value aesthetic and economic (2016, p. 6).

Identifying and assessing the values of neighbourhoods has the interest of many disciplines, such as social sciences, engineering, health and economic sciences, and they offer research traditions and methods that could be applied by heritage experts (Spoormans & Pereira Roders, 2021). In environmental behaviour studies similar concepts are used. 'Cues' refer to tangible attributes like the size of a room, location or furnishings, providing information that guides behaviour and that has 'meaning' for people (Rapoport, 1990, pp. 56–57). In research on housing appreciation and aspirations, residents' housing preferences are studied, mostly by qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews. Also these researches apply similar concepts and provide methods and definitions that are useful to heritage significance assessments, revealing values and attributes. In his thesis, Coolen applied means-end theory studying preferences for housing attributes (2008). Means-end theory is used to explain the relationship between goods and consumers, in which a 'good' is defined as a collection of attributes. In means-end-chains, an intermediate step between values and attributes is introduced, which is the consequence. This defines how the relationship between values and attributes is established for the user. The attributes yield a consequence when the good is used and this consequence satisfies people's values and goals. For instance, having 'five rooms' (attribute) offers 'more space' (consequence) and creates 'privacy' (value) (Coolen & Hoekstra, 2001, pp. 290–291). The consequence (also called objective, effect, or quality) can relate to different types of motivations, like everyday activities (playing, sleeping, supermarket), functional reasons (cheaper, practical) or psychosocial motivations (proud, relaxing, social control). Comparing to the heritage terminology, the consequence is like the intangible attribute or the tangible attribute's meaning. Table 1 shows the comparison of terminology used by the theories discussed to describe values that people assign to something.

The applicability of the models from heritage assessment and housing appreciation will be tested on the specific case study in this paper. This involves unravelling the sequence of attribute, consequence/meaning and value to analyse heritage significance. The gradual transition from tangible to intangible attributes, as noted by Coolen and Sobhani Sanjbod, is used to classify and relate attributes, allowing for the integration of a wide range of contributions and varied stakeholders in heritage significance assessment.

Table 1 Scheme comparing the terminology used by Rapoport, Coolen and Sobhani Sanjbod

Rapoport (1990)	Coolen and Hoekstra (2001)	Sobhani Sanjbod et al. (2016)
Meaning	Value	Value
	Consequence	Attribute
		Intangible sub-attribute
Cue		Tangible sub-attribute
	Attribute	Indicator

1.3 Case study: Almere-Haven, The Netherlands

The case study for this research is Almere-Haven, the oldest core of Almere in The Netherlands, a notable city for its poly-nuclear urban layout (Brouwer, 1997, p. 136). This city has been designed 'from scratch' as one of the new towns in the IJsselmeer Polders, the largest land reclamation project of the Netherlands. Almere was developed in the context of the Dutch New Towns [Groeikernen] planning policy (1960–1985), which intended to avoid increasing congestion in the most densely populated area in the Netherlands: the Randstad. A new planning concept was introduced: 'bundled de-concentration'. Similar to the polynuclear structure of Almere as a city, also the national planning aimed at combining the best of urban and suburban qualities, a compromise between the expansion of existing cities and the de-concentration of urban sprawl. The term Groeikern (growth centre) was introduced and defined as: "a nucleus that should experience strong growth, especially for the benefit of a nearby (larger) city, in case this growth is exceptional compared to the size of the nucleus itself" (Faludi & Valk, 1990, p. 96). In a few stages, the national policy appointed 15 cities as Groeikern, of which Almere and Lelystad are the only considered 'real' new towns, as they are built on new land (Reijndorp et al., 2012, p. 76). After the post-war urban extensions that were based on the CIAM-principles, the urban plan for Almere and other new towns of the Groeikernen policy started from a very different perspective. Rejecting the repetitive and 'soulless' character of post-war neighbourhoods, Almere was envisioned to become a 'city of differences and contrast', which resulted in suburban patterns, with a quasi-natural lay-out, and irregular neighbourhood structures (Pantus, 2012, pp. 46, 94).

The studied neighbourhood in Almere-Haven (Fig. 1) represents a low-rise suburban pattern, dominant for the spatial planning of the Dutch new towns. No consensus exists

Fig. 1 Map of Almere-Haven centre district, adapted from https://www.bing.com/maps, accessed on 22 July 2020

on what are the defining characteristics of this architecture, built in the 1970s and 1980s and to what extent these are significant attributes and deserve conservation (Barzilay et al., 2018, p. 6; Pantus, 2012, pp. 12–13; Ubbink & Steeg, 2011, pp. 14–15). To prepare for a first urban renewal of the oldest neighbourhoods, the city of Almere is developing its first heritage policy, based on the integration of experts' and residents' values and perspectives. Evaluations of Almere have highlighted various perspectives e.g., how urban design concepts for new towns in the IJsselmeer polders have led to the succession of residential environments without a leitbild (Brouwer, 1997), or how the changing mobility influences demographics and Almere's former suburban character (Tzaninis & Boterman, 2018). The significance of residential neighbourhoods in the collection of Dutch new towns has been defined by experts (Reijndorp et al., 2012; Ubbink & Steeg, 2011). The citizens' perspective on the significance of similar neighbourhoods revealed different attributes than experts and their significance assessment is generally more positive (Quaedflieg & Mooij, 2013, pp. 26, 39). However, little research is available addressing the experts' or citizens' appreciation of the smaller architectural scale of 1970's and 1980's residential neighbourhoods and the various aspects of the living environments.

2 Methodology

This research adapted the method applied in 'The West London Social Resource Project' (Willats, 1974), that aimed to improve artists' communication with 'people who have little or no interest in or knowledge of visual art'. Although the context and discipline are different, and the payoff for Willats was in the social process and not in the analysis of results, the approach of involving non-experts was proven relevant. It aimed at 'helping participants get into a frame of mind' to 'reveal perceptions and attitudes towards the visual aspects of their environment'. Like Willats in the 1970s, also contemporary research uses creative participative techniques to involve (local) people in evaluating their neighbourhoods. Narrative mapping, where residents draw their life worlds as a map during an interview, provides information on e.g. daily routines, residents' habitat, favourite places and trouble spots. This technique can reveal detailed and complex knowledge of the urban environment, the 'intimate knowledge' that only residents possess (Reinders, 2013, p. 196). Collecting photos of valued places and objects is another visual method that offers local residents the opportunity to show their engagement with a place (Cooke & Buckley, 2021, p. 149). Introducing a narrative of change, both in relation to historical situations and future changes, when discussing residents' attachment and valuation is a technique for evoking what often remains implicit. The suggestion of loss of something valuable or enhancement of something bad in the environment can make it clear where the priority lies (Madgin, 2021, p. 84). Elements of these techniques are integrated and adapted to the purpose of this research.

Similar to Willats, this research used a diary to collect data, where participants were asked to answer two questions or tasks per day in a paper notebook or a digital version, over a week. The assignments in the diary included open questions, drawing tasks, indication of places on a map, recollections of history or suggestions for changes. Some questions allowed the inclusion of photographs. The diary was expected to gain some advantages over traditional interviews. This 'stand-alone' format makes the participant independent from the influence of the researcher, potentially leading to more 'authentic' opinions and expressions. The participants might develop a perception and sensitivity in observing their

environment, during the one-week process (Willats, 1974, p. 158). To overcome misinterpretation, a short interview was held at the collection of the diary to clarify unclear or complex answers.

To research a broad range of aspects in 1970–1980's residential neighbourhoods, the diary includes aspects of the urban and architectural scale. The questions in the diary relate to the living environment in concentric levels of scale, representing the daily life of the individual resident. The smallest scale is questioning places, rooms and aspects of their individual house and garden or balcony. The second concerns the 'hofje' (collective courtyard in cul-de-sac structure) or street as the direct surrounding of their home. The third level addresses the wider living environment, for which we adopt the definition by Burie (1972, pp. 19–20), that is not limited in physical terms but is defined by all urban elements that respondents experience as relevant to their living conditions. Every question inquires what the respondents appreciates (attribute) and why (value), for example 'What is your favourite spot in the house or garden and why?'. On the urban scale level, an assignment is e.g., 'List your top 3 of nice courtyards or streets, describe or add photos. What do you like or approve of in these places?'. By addressing different scale levels, questioning types of places in combination with open questions, we aim to explore what is assessed as significant by the respondents. A copy of the diary format used and record of the steps from the participants' responses, to the coding of the attributes to the integration of attributes into redesign proposals, is reported in the booklet 'Almere Stories' (Spoormans, 2021). The list of questions as asked in the diary, the corresponding scale level and the form of each question (e.g. open question, drawing assignment) is included in a table in "Appendix 1". The process design for the operation of the study, organising the preparation, distribution, collection, analysis and dissemination, is presented in "Appendix 2".

The method of the residential diary is qualitative. Regarding the significance assessment of 1970–1980's neighbourhoods by residents as a relatively new field, a single in-depth case study was selected, aiming to provide initial ideas and concepts, after which more extensive research could follow to test and confirm results (Swanborn, 1996, pp. 13, 147). The research was part of the project 'Havenhart 2.0', a preparation process for the urban renewal of Almere-Haven. Respondents are residents of Almere-Haven and were approached by encounters in public space, snowball method and two group meetings in a school class and an elderly group. From ca. 110 distributed diaries, 55 were returned and completed. Personal data collected were name, age, gender, neighbourhood, length of residence, address, household composition and tenant/owner. Some data were not completed by all respondents, notably gender, household composition and tenant/owner. The respondents represent all neighbourhoods in Almere-Haven and, when completed, show a balanced ratio of men/women and tenant/ownership. The average length of residence in Almere-Haven is 20 years but ranges widely from 1 to 43 years. In the respondents' group, a large representation of children up to 18 years of age (47%) and of elderly over the age of 65 (30%) is noted. This results in a lower representation of the age group 18–65 (23%). Although not representative of Almere-Haven's demographics, results integrate the voices of children and elderly, who are often not included in resident surveys. Because the sample is relatively small and especially because distinguishing stakeholder profiles is not the goal, the influence of personal data of respondents was not specifically explored in this research.

The responses in the diaries have been coded, using Atlas.ti software, searching for topics or opinions that are evident in the data that can include attributes, values and other relevant aspects. Three researchers have been involved in the process and codes have been discussed until agreement was reached. The procedure used inductive code development, reading the raw data with 'open vision'. During the inductive coding process, codes were

deduced from the data that have been grouped and rearranged, distinguishing categories of tangible and intangible attributes. Selections have been made based on both occurrence and salience, leading to a codebook containing definitions and examples from the data for main codes (Hennink et al., 2011, pp. 210–225). The questions in the diary are open-ended, allowing for a broad interpretation of cultural significance. An inductive approach of coding and analysis supported the primary goal of this research to understand what is significant.

After analysing and discussing significant attributes in the diary responses, the response chains of various participants were juxtaposed, and created the 'Webs of Attributes', combining and relating multiple responses. The webs in this article (Figs. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, see Sect. 3) present a selection based on frequent occurrence and prominence, with the help of the coding software showing cooccurrence and relations. Webs have been created for the environments: my home, my garden, my collective courtyard/street, my town, urban areas and green areas. They refer to the beforementioned concentric scale levels of scale, in and around the house, the neighbourhood and the wider living environment including all that is relevant to the living conditions (Burie, 1972, pp. 19–20).

3 Results

Respondents mentioned various tangible attributes, including specific locations in Almere, like the harbour boulevard (Havenkom), specific shops or market stalls, natural areas like Museumbos or Vliegerpark. Also, the proximity of the city of Amsterdam appears as an attribute that is appreciated in the living environment of Almere Haven. Stories, for example, about the origin of Almere appear as an intangible attribute in the responses. Many generic indications of places or locations are mentioned, like garden, rooms in the house, playgrounds, shopping centres or green areas. These are the most concrete tangible attributes and often form the start of the answer.

Responses soon revealed 'chains' of things to explain why someone appreciates something in the living environment. For example: "My garden is a nice place, because through the patio doors you can enter the terrace, overlooking the garden. It is a cosy place to enjoy the sun when the weather is nice." In this response, we can identify several physical attributes, like garden, patio doors, terrace. Then the link is made to intangible attributes as a cosy atmosphere and the activity of enjoying the sun and nice weather. This sequence resembles a means-end-chain (Sect. 1.2) but in an extended version. The parts of the chain are all considered attributes, although they differ in nature. The response-chains have been studied and responses by various participants have been related. While raising understanding for why respondents value a certain place, space or element, this research deduces the attributes that respondents mention in their answers. First, some key attributes are illustrated, then attributes are related and combined, explaining which attributes are important for each specific place or scale level.

3.1 Top attributes

The attributes presented here are selected from the respondents' diary entries, based on frequent occurrence and their representation of different categories. The four attribute categories distinguished are: spatial (tangible and intangible), activity (intangible), collectivity (intangible) and identity (intangible). The examples show that intangible attributes are in the majority, but they are usually related to tangible attributes and vice versa.

3.1.1 Spatial: water view

When asked for one's favourite place in and around the house, the view is the most mentioned as a spatial attribute. The view adds quality to many different rooms and is enjoyed by various residents from the living room, kitchen, bedroom or attic. Both the view from the house to one's own garden and the backward view, sitting in the garden watching the house, are mentioned. But it is especially the longer view that predominates in the respondent's answers. The possibility to look from the own plot to the wider surroundings is appreciated. The view mentioned is often focussed on nature, and on water in particular Fig. 2. People enjoy their view from both interior and exterior spaces, like the balcony, the front garden or back garden. The description of one's home was often made as 'a house on the water'.

Also, on the scale of the public space, the view is mentioned as an attribute. Here, the harbour boulevard (Havenkom) stands out, offering a view on the Gooimeer lake and the marina. Respondents often mention strolling along the boulevard and enjoying the café terraces. The water itself, the boats, tourism and the continuous activity and liveliness are mentioned as 'nice to look at'. For several residents, both the view and the boulevard atmosphere are the main reasons for choosing their apartment around the harbour area.

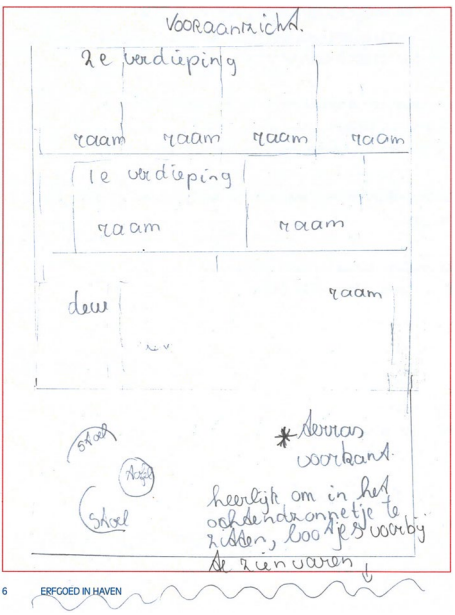


Fig. 2 House on the water, watching boats from the front terrace—water view (resp. 12)

"I prefer the front side of the house. We live on the water front. We spend most of our time in the living room and kitchen. The dining table overlooks the water." (resp 1)
"My balcony is my favourite spot, because of the wonderful view over the Gooimeer [lake]." (resp 54)
"The marina, they should never change. The boulevard, the terraces, the sociability, the pleasure yachts and the view are the strength of Almere-Haven." (resp 54)

3.1.2 Activity: outdoor recreation

Looking at activities as a reason to appreciate a certain place in the living environment, playing, walking and cycling make the top 3 preference of the residents. Off course the code 'playing' occurs in children's answers, but walking and cycling are considered the same category, all referring to recreational activities. The children's diaries are full of explanations and drawings of playgrounds. Those places are highly appreciated by children, parents and grandparents. Playing as an activity is noted as the first reason to value the playgrounds, but secondly the social aspect of meeting friends also plays a role. While playing mainly takes place in the collective courtyard or the surrounding neighbourhood, cycling or walking covers the wider living environment around Almere Fig. 3. Walking the dog, seeing birds, flying a kite, sailing, enjoying the wide view and autumn storms are mentioned as outdoor recreational activities. Many responses relate a specific area to an activity to an outdoor experience. Outdoor recreation functions as an active link between spatial, natural and social benefits like meeting or feelings of freedom and imagination.

"At 't Eksternest [natural area] I walk with the dog. There are also benches and that is cosy because you always meet people." (resp. 5)

Fig. 3 Map indicating outdoor recreation areas (resp. 16)

"We have two courtyards, one with a merry-go-round and one with a garden. It's nice that you have a lot of space and that you can imagine games to play." (group meeting school)
"The Gooimeerdijk [dike] is great for walking and cycling. Not only when the weather is nice weather but also in autumn storm! (resp 47)

3.1.3 Collectivity: with the neighbours

Social networks in neighbourhoods reveal as an important attribute, providing collective benefits. The relation between neighbours is characterised as active and focussed on getting things done. Respondents collaborate with direct neighbours in renovating the house, garden or fence, or they share responsibility for maintaining the collective courtyard or street. Many people mention the organisation of annual or seasonal parties and other activities, although some say these festivities are declining. Also, more passive relationships are mentioned, such as regular communication with neighbours or keeping an eye on each other. The lack of neighbour contact appears in some answers, often referring to former days when the social web in collective courtyards was stronger. Other respondents report new initiatives, like the 'tiny forest' of self-planted trees that functions as a resident's hangout around a campfire.

"I do have contact with my neighbours, not for fun but for practical reasons: six or seven neighbours would alarm if my curtains don't open in the morning." (group meeting elderly)
"Talking to the neighbours at the garden fence is nice. Or our children chilling out with each other" (resp 46)
"The neighbours are important; everyone pays attention to each other. We make changes to the house or garden in consultation with the neighbours." (resp. 1)
"Together we make sure the street looks neat, we borrow each other's broom. Once in a while, we organise a party." (group meeting elderly)

3.1.4 Identity: my own

The answers in the diaries reveal ownership as important. This code relates to the feeling of owning, not necessarily legal ownership. The words 'my own' are used by many respondents of all ages, as the reason why they appreciate an attribute. On the smallest scale 'my own' refers to a bed, room or 'the chair everybody knows is mine'. Children often appreciate their own (bed)room because of the rest and privacy it provides Fig. 4. Gaming, watching television or sleeping are the favourite activities. The lack of an own room, and consequently lack of privacy, is also mentioned both by children and parents. Some respondents state that they like their whole house best 'because I made it my own', which refers to ownership, appropriation and identity. Furnishings and upholstery appear in many answers and sketches, illustrating the users' interest also for movable attributes, as a way to personalise their mostly ready-made living environment. Asking about preferred houses or preferred collective courtyards in Almere-Haven, for many respondents their own house or collective courtyard is the best. This seems to express a general satisfaction with one's own living environment and can be explained as pride.

The responses vary in their complexity of chains. Some state that they appreciate their room because it is 'mine', directly relating the tangible attribute to the intangible feeling of ownership. Others include several steps in the categories, reasoning that they appreciate

Fig. 4 My room, indicated by hart. (resp. 23)

the room, because it has a comfortable bed, on which you can lie down, for relaxing or gaming, being on my own. These answers link several tangible attributes, to activities to identity.

> "My room is the best place, because that's where I can listen to loud music." (resp. 27)
> "My hanging chair is my favourite spot. Everybody knows that it is my place, I don't leave it. I like rocking in that chair. There is no view but I look at my laptop or phone." (resp. 39)
> "Our house is the most beautiful for me, because I truly feel at home." (resp. 1)
> "Everything in my garden I made myself, I am so proud of that! I work in the garden one hour a day." (resp. 5)

3.1.5 Identity: holiday feeling

Several respondents write in their diaries about the feeling being on holiday. It is a striking finding since all respondents are Almere residents. The holiday feeling is found in responses relating to several levels of scale. One couple appreciates their own house, because it feels like a holiday bungalow. On the urban scale, the harbour boulevard, the boats and terraces also generate a holiday atmosphere Fig. 5. Others relate to the abundant green or the quietude as reminding of a holiday experience. Especially older people that belong to the first inhabitants or people working in Amsterdam, characterise Almere-Haven as a holiday resort, when coming from Amsterdam. The vastness of natural spaces, the empty landscape and the silence are mentioned attributes, linked to the attribute of holiday feeling.

> "When I used to return from my job in Amsterdam and I came home, well, then I felt like as if I arrived on a holiday destination." (group meeting elderly)
> "The vast greenery of Almere Haven gives me the feeling of living in a holiday resort." (resp. 15)

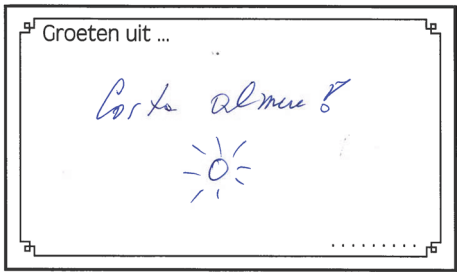


Fig. 5 Postcard expressing Holiday feeling (resp. 24)

"My neighbourhood is even more quiet than when I'm on holiday." (resp. 11)
"Lots of light, a bungalow, the atmosphere of a holiday home. What more could you want?" (resp. 2)

3.1.6 Identity: ordinariness

The qualification 'ordinary' is mentioned on all levels; from the scale of the house to the collective courtyard and especially to Almere-Haven as a whole. The attribute 'ordinary' is categorised as an identity-code and is used by respondents with negative, positive and neutral connotations. In a neutral or negative meaning, it refers to normality and similarity, lacking worth-mentioning attributes. But in some answers this same notion of ordinariness holds a positive everyday comfort. Asking for beautiful aspects of the individual house, many responses include 'nothing' or 'just a regular house' and others omit the significance of their house, preferring to write about the beauty of the garden or the view. On the scale of the collective courtyard or street, respondents mention the repetition of urban typology (all collective courtyards are the same) and housing typology Fig. 6. Speaking about Almere-Haven, comparisons are made to other cities which have specific qualities and beauty,

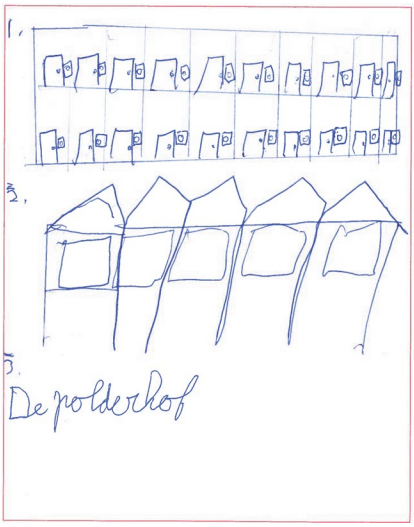


Fig. 6 Drawing expressing repetition—ordinariness (resp. 18)

contrasting to Almere-Haven. The cities referred to are old Dutch cities in the surrounding of Almere, like Amsterdam and Alkmaar.

> "There are no beautiful neighbourhoods in Almere. Alkmaar or Amsterdam of course they are beautiful. But here everything is ordinary." (resp. 6)
> "I do not like anything particular about my house. But the garden and the swing are beautiful." (group meeting school)
> "I have stairs in the hall and large cupboards. It's just a nice house." (group meeting elderly)
> "Nature and the lawn on my doorstep. That's so comfortable." (resp. 27)

3.2 Webs of attributes

Every web presents multiple chains of answers, loosely positioned from spatial attributes at the bottom, to activities and collectivity in the middle part, up to identity related qualities at the top of the web. The attributes are presented as words/codes, linked by lines that show the relation to other attributes as distilled from the diary responses. Bold fonts and lines indicate most frequently mentioned attributes and relations (see Figs. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12). The positioning of attributes was not always self-evident. Attributes sometimes overlap categories. 'Meeting others', 'organising an event' or 'playing' are both activities and collectivity related attributes (e.g. Fig. 9). In those cases, they were positioned in between. Other attributes transcend the intangible attributes categorization and bridge the character of values, such as pride, satisfaction or safety, eminently social values. They have been positioned at the top end of the web. On the lower level in the webs, we can see sequences of several tangible attributes as extended chains, with one attribute being the consequence of another. However, in some responses an attribute is directly linked to higher-level attribute, represented in the web by a long direct line from bottom to top.

Intangible attributes are most prevalent in the results, represented in the top attributes (paragraph 3.1) and visible in the webs. However, almost all intangible attributes are enabled by one or more physical attributes. For example, the intangible 'holiday feeling' is embodied by the vast green of the empty polder landscape (Fig. 10), the vineyard, the campfire (Fig. 12) and the lightness of the dwelling interior (Fig. 7). When looking at the higher levels of attributes, some codes are mentioned by many respondents, but they link back to different attributes. Privacy e.g., proves to be an important intangible attribute both in the house, relating to rooms, and around the house referring to composition of the plot and the garden (Figs. 7, 8). Quietness is mentioned as an attribute for rooms and garden but applies to the scale of the Almere-Haven landscape, too (Figs. 7, 8, 10). Beauty can be found as the end of a chain in many answers, stating 'I just think it's beautiful'. Beautiful is frequently related to (own) rooms, the garden, the green quality of natural areas and the canals in the city centre. For Almere-Haven as a whole, this code is not used. Meeting others, collectivity and social contacts are mentioned on all levels of scale, except of the house. Especially on the level of collective courtyard or street, 'meeting others' is the central attribute in the web, relating to playing, organising with the neighbours, social control and comfort (Fig. 9). Also, in the city centre and the green areas, social-led attributes are a reason for appreciation. Supplemented with 'village atmosphere', 'my own' and holiday atmosphere, these attributes in the top of the web can be regarded as the Almere-Haven identity.

The Figs. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 present the Webs of Attributes on 6 scales of the living environment: My Home, My Garden, My Hofje (=courtyard), My Town, Urban Areas, Green Spaces.

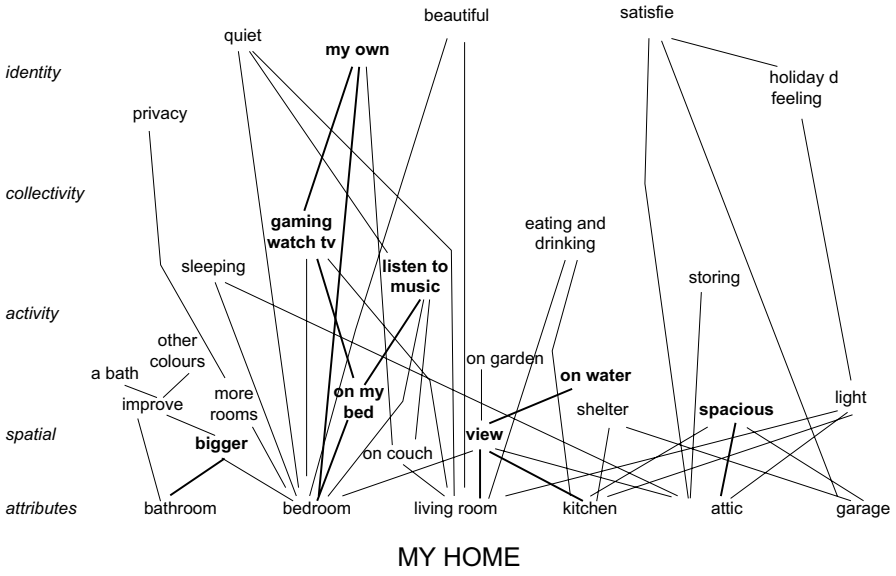


Fig. 7 Web of attributes 'my home'

Fig. 8 Web of attributes 'my garden'

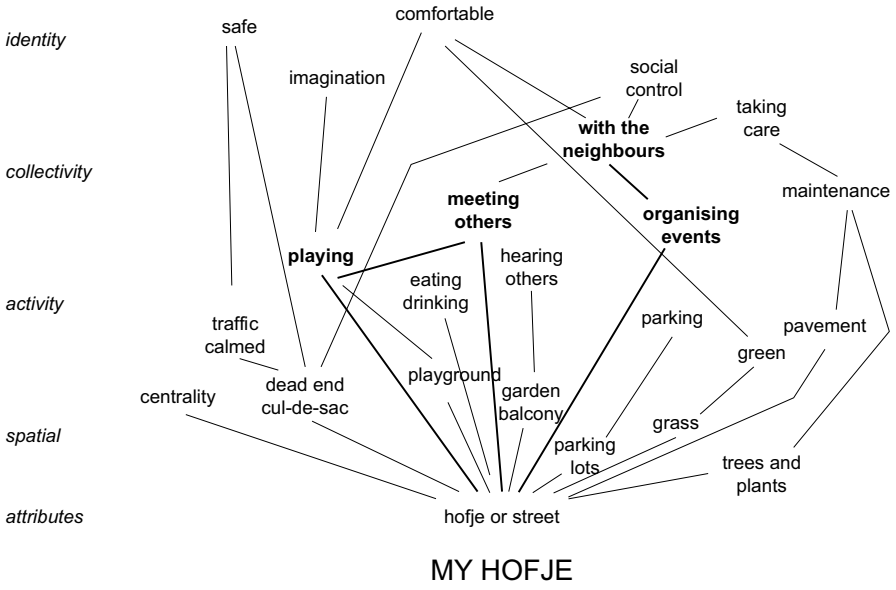


Fig. 9 Web of attributes 'My Hofje' (=courtyard)

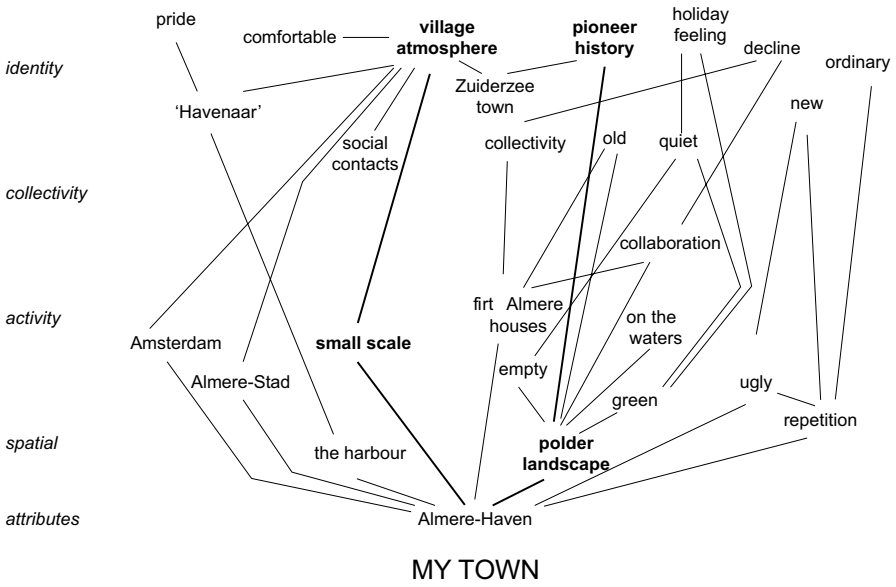


Fig. 10 Web of attributes 'my town'

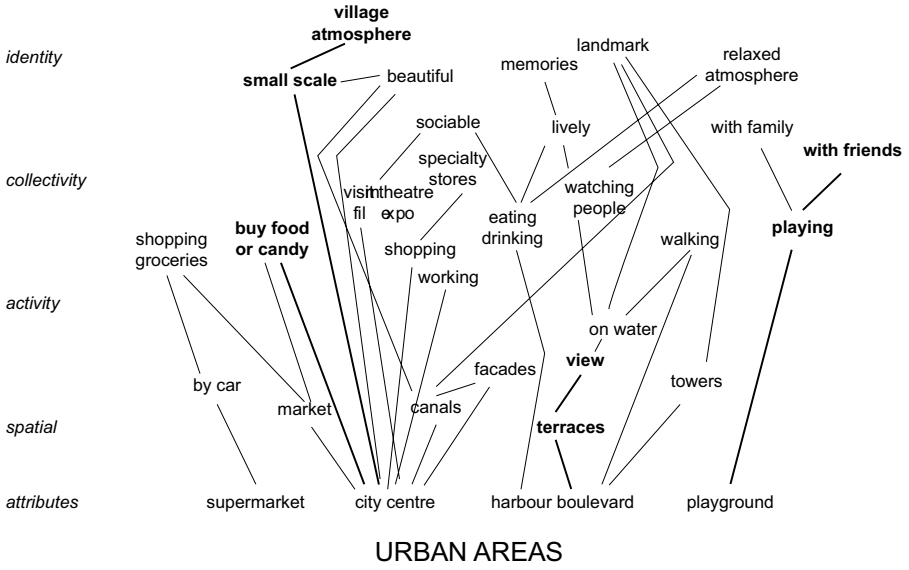


Fig. 11 Web of attributes 'urban areas'

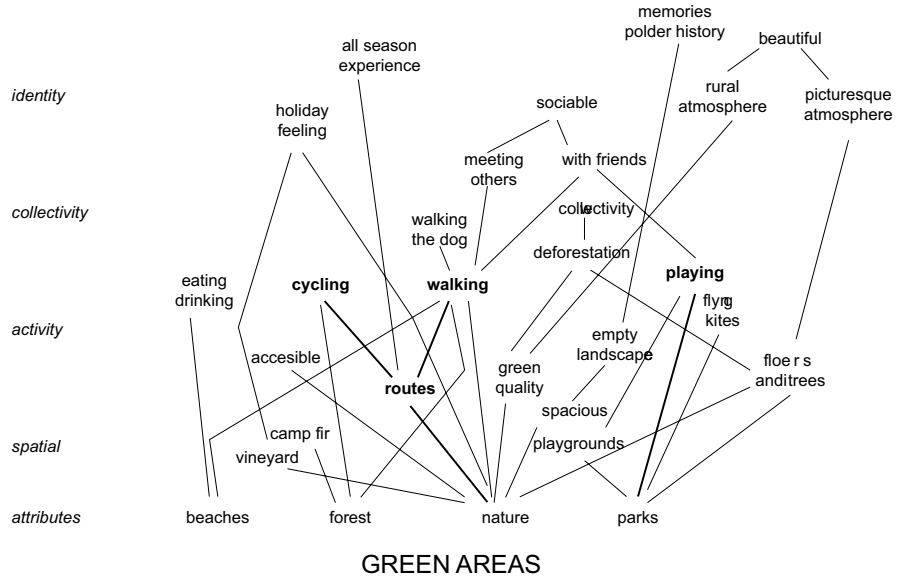


Fig. 12 Web of attributes 'green areas'

4 Discussion

This paper reported and discussed a significance assessment of an everyday living environment by its residents. The Web of Attributes is presented as a model for categorising and relating attributes of the living environment and their importance for residents, as appears from the case study Almere-Haven. It builds on existing theories from the research fields of heritage and of housing preferences. It differentiates attributes by distinguishing categories, reveals relations between the attributes, combines individual responses into aggregate assessments for a specific place and explores further application in statements of significance.

4.1 Assessments of Almere-Haven

Based on the results three main themes stand out. Social-led attributes like 'meeting others' appear to be an important characteristic for Almere-Haven. It is a central attribute in webs on all urban scales, relating to many tangible and intangible attributes. Landscape attributes, relating to greenery or water, are also omnipresent on all scales. On the small scale of the home, individual 'own' attributes play a more important role. The last two themes and many attributes in the webs are linked to Almere's suburban character. This indicates that the suburban identity that was explicitly envisioned when new town Almere was established as a beckoning alternative to the urban identity in old cities is recognised and highly valued by today's residents. Maintaining this can be a challenge with the current demand for densification, although several design studies show that by strategically adding housing, sustainability and support for neighbourhood facilities can actually improve while maintaining suburban character (KAW, 2020; Waaldijk, 2022).

The extent to which the diary method and participant sample influenced the results can be discussed. Overall, children were more likely to draw, while adults were more likely to use text and pictures. Although visual accounts need more interpretation, it seems a method to invite other groups and contributions. Results also illustrate that visual research methods applied by individual respondents in everyday environments produce a very rich and intimate description of engagement with place, including a wide range of possible conceptions of heritage (Cooke & Buckley, 2021, p. 148). Although personal profile and its influence on assessments is not the focus of the study, some observations can be made. People who have lived in Almere for a long time mention many attributes related to its genesis, such as the pioneer days and the term 'Havenaar', for typical Almere-Haven residents. Moreover, they refer more to other or previous living environments. 'Holiday feeling', for example, compares Almere to denser cities and the proximity to Amsterdam is valued for social and practical reasons. However, this is not (only) related to age group, but also to length of residence or migration to Almere, as people from various ages, backgrounds and household types migrate to Almere (Tzaninis & Boterman, 2018). Children also mention history but emphasise Almere's age, rather than its newness. They report for example that their father and grandparents also grew up in Almere in that neighbourhood, that their house looks very old, or that Almere has existed for a very long time. Interestingly, the difference between the age groups illustrates a different view of historical value and age value, the traditional domain of heritage assessment. More research with larger samples would be recommended to further investigate the relationship between personal profiles and significance assessment, as other research has indicated differences in significance assessment between household compositions (Wekker, 2016) and different life-place trajectories (Garrow, 2021).

More generally, the results contribute to the body of knowledge on the cultural significance of 1970–1980's residential neighbourhoods. It includes the resident's voices in alternative heritage narratives, enabling further comparison to expert narratives about Dutch new towns by Ubbink and Steeg (2011) and Reijndorp et al. (2012). Moreover, it provides more detailed interpretation of living environments in addition to surveys e.g. Quaedflieg and Mooij (2013). As the Dutch new towns that have been developed according to the Groeikernen policy share many characteristics regarding urban patterns, housing typologies, demographics and identity, the results of this research based on Almere-Haven, could be compared to other new towns and related neighbourhoods. In other countries in North-western Europe similar developments took place, like the New Towns in the United Kingdom and Villes Nouvelles in France. Although there are important differences in planning policy, culture and scale of the towns, they share the characteristic low-rise suburban living environment mainly existing of single-family homes. (Nio, 2016, p. 11). Further research could study other neighbourhoods and cities, in national and international contexts. Together, this can contribute to the significance assessment of the 1970–1980's residential neighbourhoods, informing future renovations without disregarding their cultural significance.

4.2 Differentiating attributes

Studying the chains of attributes in the responses, attributes were found often linked in statements of significance. In the example, 'My room is the best place, because that's where I can listen to loud music', the activity is an affordance of the room. Compared to the attribute-value distinction common in the heritage discipline, this study confirms the added value of the attribute-consequence-value chain from Means-End theory (Coolen & Hoekstra, 2001). In the responses of this research, the introduced mid-category of consequences is stretched to a chain, where many attributes were given as the consequences of each other. Some intangible attributes came closer to values as defined in value systems. The attribute 'holiday feeling' e.g., can be related to values 'unity with nature' and 'enjoying life' as defined by Schwarz (Coolen & Hoekstra, 2001, p. 22). Many attributes in the web could be interpreted as 'social values' and 'aesthetical values' (Pereira-Roders, 2007). However, the responses did not literally mention values. This may be a consequence of the diary method used, which does not allow for probing into 'why'. Previous research that did ask further questions by a method called 'laddering', shows that sometimes the chain stops without reaching the level of values, because the interviewee gets stuck at the level of attributes or consequences (Coolen & Hoekstra, 2001). Further research is needed for interpreting values and attributes in citizen responses in an integrated way, as well as the relation between values and intangible attributes.

The juxtaposition of multiple answers in the web reflects the aggregate responses on the attributes of a living environment and the complexity of the respondents' answers. Like in oral history the juxtaposition of statements will make a more realistic construction of the past (Thompson, 2003, p. 24), also in heritage identification, the multiplicity of opinions can build up into a shared narrative. Moreover, the web structure enables relations between scale levels, tangible and intangible attributes of all kinds. Also Coolen (2008) and Meesters (2009) have used graphic representations of Means-End theory to explain the relations between attributes, consequences and values. They use network representations to understand generic housing, by relating various individual meanings to one general attribute. However, the webs in this paper start from a specific architectural or urban place and aim to paint a picture of its valuable attributes. This is the essential difference in the translation of Means-End theory to its application for heritage significance assessment.

The Webs of Attributes aim to build a narrative about a certain place. By combining multiple responses in one web, for the small scale of the private home or the larger urban environment, the web represents the collective assessment of that place.

The relationships between attributes in the webs and their loose positioning confirm the absence of clear boundaries between tangible and intangible attributes, as explained by Cotte (2021). Also categorizing attributes, sub-attributes/indicators and meaning as proposed by Sobhani Sanjbod et al. (2016) and Skounti (2021) is reflected in the webs, albeit in a more irregular manner. An inductive decoding process resulted into four categories of attributes: spatial, activities, collectivity and identity. In the web of attributes the intangible attributes clearly predominate. This could be the result of the means-end chains, and the unravelling of the attribute's meaning in the responses. Almere recently drew up new valuation criteria for Post 65 heritage, adding two societal values to the traditional valuation criteria (Onclin & Koningsberger, 2021, p. 14). Experience value identifies how an object, structure or landscape is experienced and lived by people in a subjective sense. Identity value indicates the significance of the heritage role to the identity of a municipality and/or its inhabitants. The latter in particular is well represented in the results of this study, suggesting that there could be a relationship between young heritage and new, intangible categories.

4.3 Everyday heritage

Everyday living environments have been listed as heritage in the past century e.g., domestic architecture in historic cities as Venice and Amsterdam. Also younger residential neighbourhoods are sometimes considered as significant heritage but with a different legal status, like for example the selected areas from the reconstruction period (1940–1965) in the Netherlands for which local and national government work together on developments while preserving qualities (RCE, 2011). This raises the question if everything and anything could become heritage, how or why would we select objects for special treatment or protection? And what would it mean for approaches to conservation and management (Glendinning, 2013, p. 424)? However, the approach in this research is not necessarily a preparation for listing them as heritage. By understanding what the significant attributes for residents and other stakeholders are, decision-makers can decide how best to use them in future developments. That use might include preservation as often assumed for heritage, but it could also include other decisions (Fairclough, 2009, p. 33). Knowledge of where value lies creates insight into opportunities for strategic sustainable change, while maintaining significant attributes.

In this new concept of heritage, everyday aspects are included in the meaning of heritage, assessed by citizens who have been asked to indicate as attributes 'the extraordinary in the ordinary' (Lefebvre, 1987). In doing so, the difference between heritage and everyday disappears. If we zoom in, however, what appears to be an individual, subjective and contemporary attribute often turns out to have a historical explanation specific to the origins of Almere. For example, the top attribute 'my own' (see Sect. 3.1.4) related to bedroom, house, garden, etc. is specific to the Almere legacy (and other new towns) because its creation aimed to provide a suburban living environment with single-family homes and sufficient privacy for the overcrowded city of Amsterdam where many people lived in rundown, small and shared dwellings (De Liagre Böhl, 2012, pp. 20–21). The same applies to the top attribute 'water view' (see paragraph 3.1.1). As a new city on new land, water management is Almere's blueprint. At the time, the IJsselmeer polder was a heroic and innovative

water machine, in which drainage was regulated down to the smallest detail and was strongly integrated into the design of cities and the layout of forests and recreational areas (Steenbergen, 2009, p. 194). Also conceptually, living on polder land reclaimed from the sea is an historically key characteristic for the Almere landscape. These links can be made for most of the attributes, confirming that there is no clear divide between individual/contemporary/everyday heritage and collective/old/traditional heritage.

An accurate understanding, on the one hand, of what is significant about a place and, on the other hand, of how cultural heritage value is created through everyday patterns is useful for the preservation and improvement of historic and younger urban environments (Törmä & Gutierrez, 2021, p. 190). The inextricability of intangible attributes, related to e.g. social or identity aspects, and tangible attributes of the living environment is important for the development of statements of significance, as affecting one attribute could create a chain reaction to many other attributes. Referring to the stages to understand significance as stated in the Burra Charter (Australia-ICOMOS, 2013), the diary method and attribute analysis have been employed for 'understanding the place' and 'assessing significance'. The Web of Attributes could serve as visual reporting of the 'statement of significance'. It can be part of a monument description in the case of a protected monument or of an environmental vision as a basis for future developments. When policymakers, planners and designers develop urban renewal plans, they can preserve or reintroduce the attributes valued by residents and other stakeholders. Decision-makers can take into account what citizens find valuable, increasing support for urban renewal plans. The Web of Attributes can contribute to all cases that want to include citizens in processes of heritage significance assessments, in older and younger housing neighbourhoods, listed or not listed, and integrate the significance they convey to their living environments into broader statements of significance.

5 Conclusion

This paper reported and discussed a significance assessment of an everyday living environment in Almere-Haven by its residents. It revealed main attributes, 'meeting others', 'green' and 'water' as landscape elements and 'my own' indicating individual ownership, that can be regarded as important ingredients of the Almere-Haven identity. The results contribute to the knowledge about the cultural significance of residential areas in the 1970–1980s, with the perspective of residents complementing expert opinion.

The Web of Attributes is presented as a model for categorising and relating attributes of the living environment building on existing theories from the research fields of heritage and of housing preferences. It differentiates attributes by distinguishing categories, reveals relations between the attributes and combines individual responses into aggregate assessments. The Web of Attributes uses Means-End theory for application in heritage significance assessment. The novelty of this approach consists of a shift from assessing generic characteristics, to building a specific narrative about a particular place. The Web of Attributes can serve as visual reporting in statements of significance, for listed and non-listed buildings and areas.

The Web of Attributes is regarded as a model to be further developed, to assess the significance of an architectural or urban place conveyed by often unrepresented individual voices in everyday neighbourhoods. For researchers in the housing field, it shows how to research the significance of a specific existing built environment to make optimal use of its attributes, tangible and intangible. For researchers in the heritage field, it presents the opportunity to include citizens in the assessment of heritage significance, opening to new methods to assess heritage and to support a broader identification of what heritage can be.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Diary questions

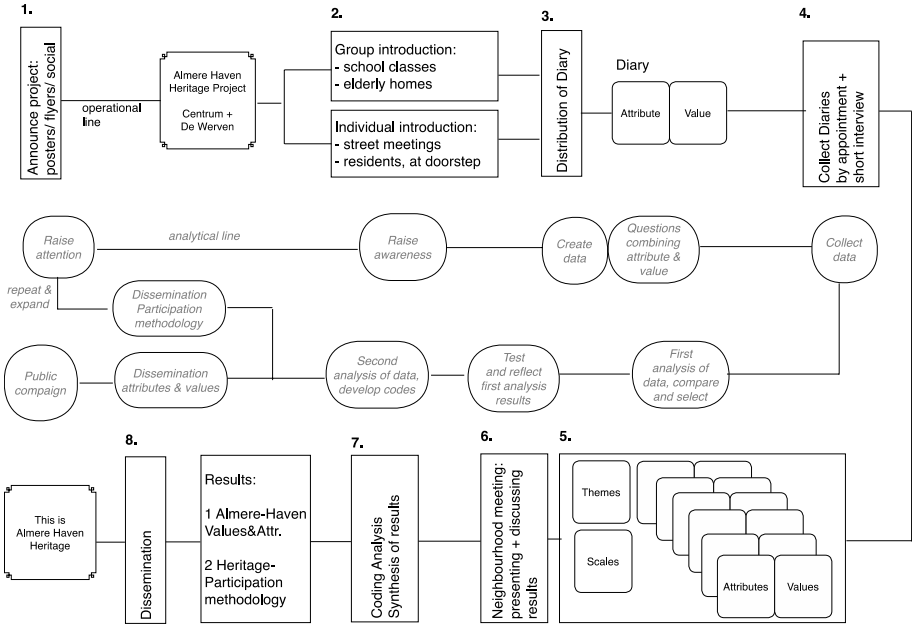
List of questions as asked in the diary, the corresponding scale level and type of question.

	Question	Scale level	Type of question
Day 1	Draw and describe your home and garden	Individual house	Description or drawing
	What is your favourite place in the house or garden, and why? Multiple answers possible. Indicate it on your drawing	Individual house	Prioritise Mark in drawing
Day 2	What is your neighbourhood? Outline it on the map	District	Mark on map
	What do you find beautiful or nice places and why? Describe them and indicate on the map	District	Mark on map
Day 3	What have you changed about your home? Draw or describe the changes	Individual house	Description or drawing
	What else would you like to change about your home? Or to the court? Or to your neighbourhood? What exactly should never be changed, why not?	Individual house/Court/ Neighbourhood	Open question
Day 4	Draw on the map your daily routes for e.g., shopping, leisure, work or school	District	Mark on map
	Which places do those routes go to? Also indicate the places on the map	District	Mark on map
Day 5	What are your top three fine courtyards or streets in your neighbourhood? Describe or take photos	Courtyard	Prioritise Photo's optional
	What do you like or like about those courtyards or streets?	Courtyard	Open question
Day 6	What do you find beautiful about the outside of your own home?	Individual house	Open question
	What are your top three beautiful homes in Almere-Haven? Why do you like them? Describe or take photos	Individual house	Prioritise Photo's optional
Day 7	What do you know about the history of your neighbourhood?	Neighbourhood	Open question
	Make a postcard of your neighbourhood. What is on your card? Fill in the name of your neighbourhood at the bottom of the card	Neighbourhood	Drawing assignment in pre-drawn frame
End	What have you discovered about your home, neighbourhood or town? What would you like to know more about?	Individual house/ Neighbourhood/ Town	Open question
	Is there anything else you want to say that was not covered in the questions?	–	Open question

	Question	Scale level	Type of question
General	Name		
	Age		
	Male/Female/Other		
	In which neighbourhood do you live in Almere Haven? De Werven/Centrum/De Hoven/De Marken/De Grienden/De Meenten/De Wierden/De Gouwen/De Velden/other		
	How long have you lived in Almere-Haven?		
	Address		
	How many adults and how many children live in the house?		
	Do you rent the property or did you buy the property?		

Appendix 2: Process design

Scheme of the process design for the operation of the study.



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Funding The researchers have received a financial contribution from PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. This concerns a contribution to fundamental research where the data are available to both parties.

Availability of data and materials The datasets used in the study cannot be made accessible because they contain information from which personal data could be retrieved.

Declarations

Ethical approval The Havenhart 2.0 project organisation (Almere municipality) agreed to the research method and approach of residents as interviewees. Respondents have signed a statement on consent to participate and consent to publish (General statement: 'The diary responses are processed anonymously in the study. Personal data will not be used or published in research findings'). The illustrations and quotes in this paper have been selected on condition that they do not contain any retrievable personal information.

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could influence the work in this article.

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