

EXPLORE THE SECLUSION

REFLECTION PAPER

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TU Delft
Faculty of Architecture
Heritage and Architecture
'Revitalising Heritage'

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1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

The relationship between research and design is mainly based on the results of the analysis. In the first semester the focus was on the analysis of the heritage on the site of Hembrug. It is necessary to research the context of Hembrug on different scales in order to get grip on the cultural values of this area. The analysis started on a broader level and kept zooming in to smaller scales. The historical context gave a clear overview of how the site was used, what the different time layers are and how it developed into the situation of how it is today. The research in historical context gave several outcomes. For this specific graduation project one of the most important outcomes of the historical research was the fact that the ensemble, named Head of the Cape, wasn't actively used until World War II. From that point several bunkers were built and used by the Germans. Afterwards, around the 1950s, several buildings were built which still exist. One of the buildings was used as workplaces where ammunition was assembled. This knowledge was very useful for the process of developing a graduation plan on the field of design on urban scale and building scale.

Designing with heritage gives the opportunity to give new life to old buildings. In this specific case the buildings are vacant, which provides freedom regarding the choice of function when transforming the building. Designing with heritage also gives the opportunity to make a statement. Many vacant industrial sites are revived by artists, squatters, painters, et cetera; the creative industry. As soon as the site is revived, suddenly there's a lot of potential to transform the area and turn it into a vibrant area. Investors recognize this occurrence and are interested. However, after transforming the area, the ground is worth a lot of money which can't be afforded by the initiators anymore (the creative industry) and they are forced to leave. This occurrence of gentrification is happening a lot. By providing and preserving space to live and work for the creative industry, a statement is made; the initiators who revive a vacant industrial site time after time must not be forgotten and should get more credit for their creativity, dedication and purposes.

Furthermore, researching the context on an urban level provided information, values and design guidelines for the wider context of the area. The site of Hembrug has gone through several time layers where interventions were realized. Since the area got revived by the creative industry, a new volume which provides space for the new function (housing) will continue this timeline of different time layers. A new time has come, a new function will be introduced to the area and a new volume will be added to the former ammunition factory. Researching and analyzing the site on a wider view, from an urban level, gave as an outcome a design starting point of creating a contrasting new volume. Creating a contrasting volume will attract visitors as the materiality differs from the brick material which is the general material within the site of Hembrug.

Also, doing research to the context on building level resulted in knowledge regarding determining the cultural values within the buildings. An example will be given. The concrete materiality of the ceiling of the curved saw tooth roofs had a specific pattern. This pattern exists out of vertical lines which are the result of the formwork which was used back in the days when the building was realized. This specific pattern visualizes the building method which was used to build the curved concrete works. Therefore, this ceiling has been marked as a high cultural value. This conclusion of doing research on building level leads to a design starting point, where these ceilings should be preserved as they tell and show a part of the story of the building.



Figure 1. Site of Hembrug. The ensemble 'Head of the Cape' is highlighted.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR GRADUATION TOPIC, THE STUDIO TOPIC, YOUR MASTER TRACK AND YOUR MASTER PROGRAMME.

The graduation project is part of the chair Heritage and Architecture. The studio topic is related to 'Revitalizing Heritage', more specific; transforming the former military terrain of Hembrug. As an architecture student the challenge is to find a balance between preserving existing elements of the site and redesign elements in order to suit the purpose of the transformation. As soon as I analyzed the area on different levels, the cultural values were visualized and interpreted and the theme of my narrative was formulated, I started looking in what my position is between the balance of preserving and redesigning. I came to the conclusion that redesigning can be interpreted in many ways. My first interpretation of redesigning was 'adding'. I decided to make a small de-tour and introduce a literary research to determine the possibilities, chances and options of redesigning. Doing so, I got new knowledge about redesigning. Not only adding is an option to show a new time layer of a site. Removing elements can also be an option. Spaces get a new interpretation and the result can be very clear, readable and layered. This research was done briefly before P2. But, elaborating on this literary research and with the feedback of P2 the design got improved.

Within the studio of Heritage and Architecture, a few aspects are important to get a grip on. The task for the student is to find a balance between the cultural values, the design and the technology. Finding this balance was a challenging task. In relation to the cultural values, in the beginning I approached the project with velvet gloves on. Everything was important, each element had its own value and I wanted to use everything, preserve everything and do minimal changes. However, during the first semester and after the feedback of P1 and P2, I came to the conclusion that there are more methodologies than just using velvet gloves. The literary research also taught me that interventions can be done in a more rational way without losing the cultural values of the site and its buildings. Moreover, the cultural values of the heritage can be expressed more by designing juxtaposition, or designing an insertion. Even slicing into an existing volume can result in a design which preserves the cultural values of the building and transforming it to suit the requirements of the transformation goals. This process of learning, doing a few steps back resulted in doing more steps forward in the process of designing with heritage. The new volume is located on a more logical spot, the connection between the old and new gets developed and the contrasting volume gets improved including the program with its specific requirements.

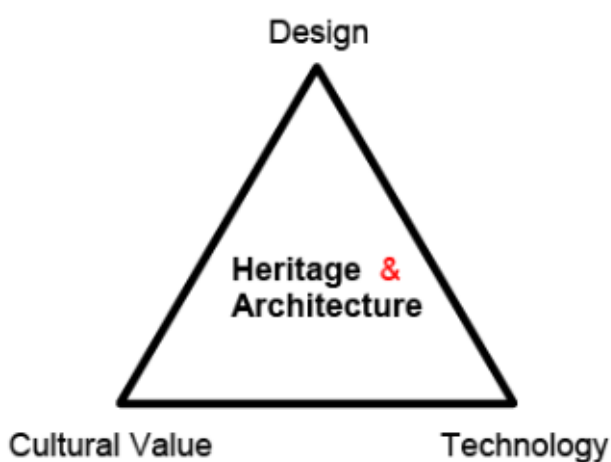


Figure 2. Kuipers, M., & De Jonge, W. Designing from Heritage, Strategies for Conservation and Conversion. (Delft: TU Delft - Heritage & Architecture, 2017), 11.



Figure 3. Addition of new volume before P2. Own image.

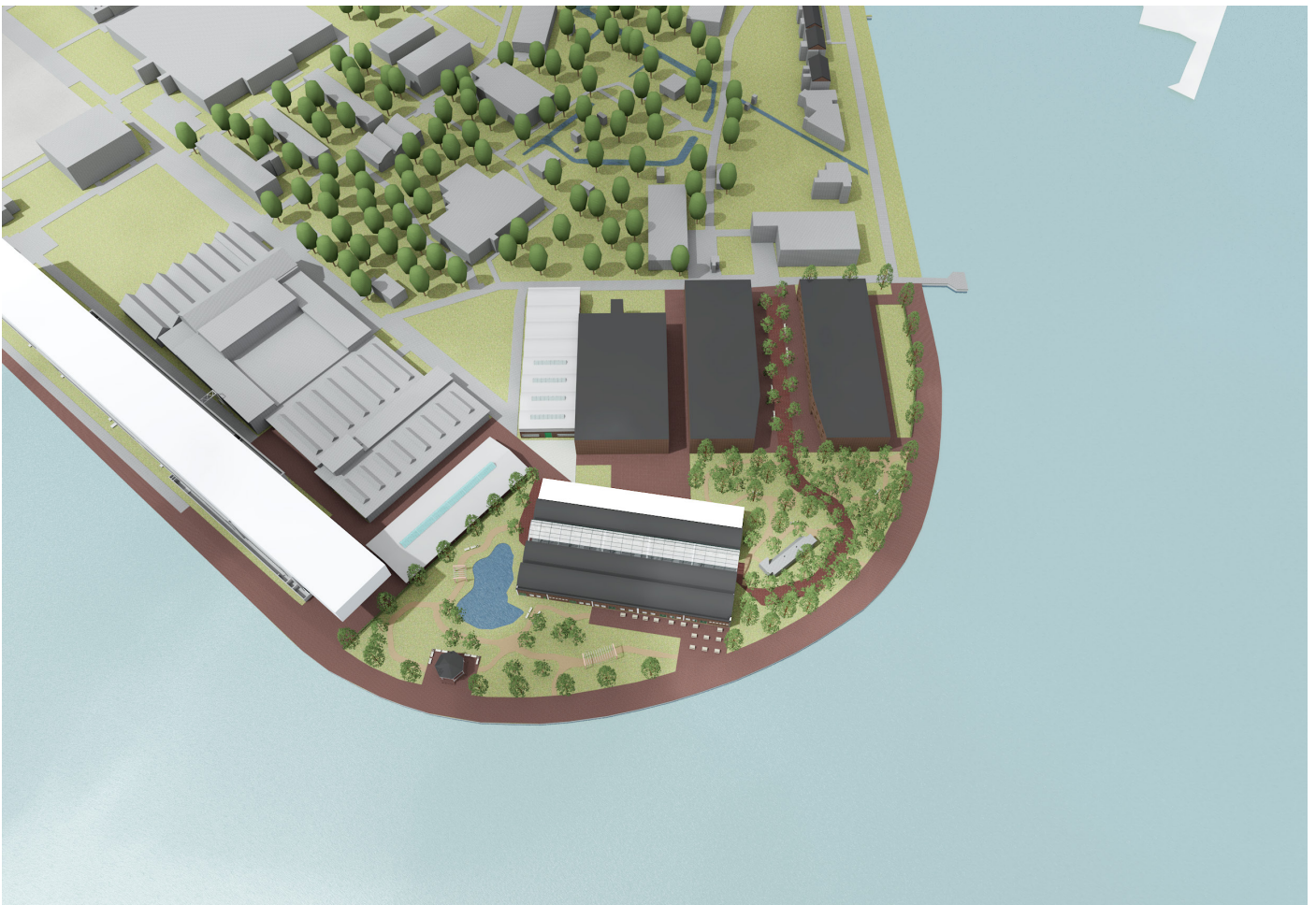


Figure 4. Addition of new volume before P3. Own image.

3. ELABORATION ON RESEARCH METHOD AND APPROACH CHOSEN BY THE STUDENT IN RELATION TO THE GRADUATION STUDIO METHODOLOGICAL LINE OF INQUIRY, REFLECTING THEREBY UPON THE SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE OF THE WORK.

The three before mentioned topics of cultural value, design and technology, which formulates the main aspects of the chair of Heritage and Architecture, have to be taken into account when graduating within this studio. The starting of the research process was analyzing the existing context from a historical point of view, from urban point of view and from a building point of view. Also included was the literary research regarding my own point of interest which was making a statement against the occurrence of gentrification and literary research regarding the theme of the new function within the building: artist housing. The analysis brought me several new aspects of knowledge which were formulated into the cultural value of the area of Hembrug, the Head of the Cape and its buildings (Ammunition factory, Projectile workshop and the Commander Bunker).

Two theories are relevant for the research on cultural value. Both their purposes are to determine the value of elements on different scales and levels. The first theory is a framework formulated by Stewart Brand. Brand's framework makes the observer aware of the integral physical coherence of a building. Being aware of the different elements of the building and its site, plus its coherence formulates a clear overview of the cultural values of heritage. The second theory comes from Alois Riegl. Riegl spoke about heritage as it is a sacred relic of the past. These two theories have been combined to one matrix which was used to determine the different cultural values and to value each element differently regarding its importance. Again, it is important to find a balance within cultural value, technology and design.

As stated before, the different approaches to research this graduation project exists out of historical research, in order to determine the cultural values of this project, literary research and mapping. The results of these cultural values are categorized into three different levels: historical level, urban level and building level. To find coherence in the graduation plan, it was for me important to keep switching between these levels. When making choices, I tried to find a relevance to more than just one of these levels and to connect different cultural values without neglecting the choice to design a new time layer. This was difficult, in my opinion it is all about finding the right balance to make it work. For example, when adding a new volume to the existing, the new volume shouldn't outrange the existing building. If that happens, the main focus of the visitor will be on the new volume and its story. On the other hand, if the new volume is minimal, the visitor will barely notice it and will focus mainly on the existing building. Finding the right balance will result in two time layers, connecting to each other, where the visitor will ponder why there is such a big contrast between the two volumes. This will result in expressing the fact that the whole site of Hembrug went through different time layers.

	RIEGL +	AGE value	HISTORICAL value	INTENTINAL COMMEMORATIVE value	NON INTENDED COMMEMORATIVE value	USE value	NEW-NESS value	(relative) ART value	RARITY value [+]	OTHER relevant values [+]
BRAND +										
SURROUNDINGS / SETTING [+]										
SITE										
SKIN (exterior)										
STRUCTURE										
SPACE PLAN										
SURFACES (interior) [+]										
SERVICES										
STUFF										
SPIRIT of PLACE [+]										

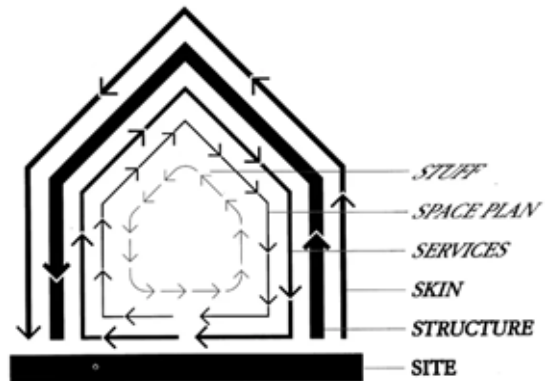


Figure 5 & Figure 6. Kuipers, M., & De Jonge, W. Designing from Heritage, Strategies for Conservation and Conversion. (Delft: TU Delft - Heritage & Architecture, 2017), 33 & 87.

4. ELABORATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADUATION PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORK, TOUCHING UPON THE TRANSFERABILITY OF THE PROJECT RESULTS.

Gentrification is a well-known term within the field of architecture. There are different perspectives, arguments and discussions about this topic. I don't necessarily agree or disagree with the fact that it happens, or its methodology of how the occurrence of gentrification come about. But what I do think is that the victims of this occurrence are the creative industry. I disagree with the fact that these initiators who kept reviving vacant industrial areas time after time have to move away from the sites, the sites they gave new life to. Maybe it's a logic result of the capitalistic world we live in. As soon as an area has potential to become a vibrant area, and thus the ground starts becoming worth a lot of money, investors will buy the ground, build many new buildings which are too expensive for the creative industry. More credit should be given to the initiators of the site, who were there in the first place and saw the real potential of the site, who were dedicated to make something out of barely nothing. Use the stuff and site just as it is there, without a lot of money.

In my opinion the Head of the Cape suits best to provide houses and workplaces for this creative industry. It has an important location, at the water, but not directly connected to the main road. The analysis which was done at the start of the graduation project resulted in knowledge about the workplaces within the Head of the Cape, its use and its development. A clear conclusion was the fact that this ensemble hasn't been used for a very long time and only in the 1950s starting to develop into workplaces. But even then, this ensemble was quite secluded in comparison with the rest of the area of Hembrug which had a much higher density of buildings and people. Giving the artists a place to live and work, on a unique spot within Hembrug, contributes to make a statement against the standardization of the gentrification process.



Figure 7. Overview of functions within the Head of the Cape. Own image.

5. DISCUSS THE ETHICAL ISSUES AND DILEMMAS YOU MAY HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN DOING THE RESEARCH, ELABORATING THE DESIGN AND POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS IN PRACTICE.

As stated before, dealing with heritage within the Chair of Heritage and Architecture is mainly about finding a balance between technology, cultural value and design. The design comes with a narrative, a personal interest or a wider social problem. Finding a balance between these aspects is extremely difficult and this is something I have encountered several times during my process of graduating. The first quarter of the graduation study was mainly analyzing and researching the existing content in order to get a grip on the cultural values of the site of Hembrug. Within this research I found difficulties with determining what has value and what not. I started to research the area with my velvet gloves on which resulted in a way to broad result of cultural values. In my early opinion of this process basically everything had cultural value. After collecting all the information, facts and knowledge on different scales and levels, the determination of the cultural value was improving. Primary and secondary interests could be divided more which resulted in a clearer overview of what is important, what is less important and what is not important. Having feedback from my tutors also helped me improving this aspect.

Another issue which I encountered lies in the elaboration of the design. As explained before, I want to add a new volume to an existing building in order to create a contrast between the historical time layer and the new time layer. Designing a new volume is something I've done before. Designing with an existing building was new for me (I've done Complex Projects in MSc1 and Public Building in MSc2). But what made it very difficult for me was the connection between the old and the new. It felt that I had to knit two worlds to each other. On one hand I want to create a contrast between the different time layers, on the other hand there has to be coherence between the two worlds; the difficulty of finding the right balance. After having feedback of my main tutor, I did more research to the options of what it means to create a contrast and how the two worlds can be connected to be experienced as one new world with a timeline of stories.

What I did in order to improve this balance was making a list with requirements for the different functions within my ensemble and within my main building. From there each building and part of the ensemble could work and be stable on its own. From there I had to decide in what aspect there should be a contrast and in what aspect there should be coherence. So, I made a list with different themes, such as materiality, shape, building height, building method, rhythm, order and composition and architectural experiences. Then the experiment started; coherence in composition, contrast in materiality and test how that works out. Then I tried to combine and separate two other themes. Over and over again, until I thought there was a right balance between adding a new contrasting volume and preserving the original building.

I am sure that I'm still in the learning process of finding the right balance. Not only within the combination of the old and new design, but also in the aspects of design, cultural value and technology. My personal interest also lies in finding the right balance; not only within the field of architecture, but also in the social aspects of life. For instance, this graduation project asks so much time and effort that I also encountered challenges in maintaining a social life, also in this aspect I have improved.

In my opinion everything we do, we work on, we realize, we think about, we formulate an opinion about, formulating a position within heritage, it is all about finding the right balance.

Spectrum of transformation approaches



Spectrum of transformation approaches



Figure 8. Transformation of my position with designing with heritage and determining the cultural value of heritage. Own image.