

Reflection of Project ‘Arcadia Again’

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Studio: Designing Resilient Heritage Landscapes – Garden of Gelderland

May 10th, 2020

Firstly, I would like to reflect on the relation between my graduation project and my master track studying and also the relation between the project and the whole topic of the studio. One of the most important objects in our studio topic is the estates in the area. The most attractive thing about the estates is that all the estates consist of buildings and the surrounding cultivated landscape (garden, orangery etc.), some of them even contain a larger area in the properties. Designing and making intervention in this kind of sites is what we always learn and try to do in our track. And our studio is also under a larger project (KaDEr) led by the Heritage and Architecture department in our faculty, which tries to help the province of Gelderland to work with the heritage sites in the area. In my project topic, my aim is to help the historical estates transform to fit in the contemporary context and provide with more programs for the public, and the approaches to achieve it are in the field of landscape architecture, which are making intervention in the space, working with the layout of estates, reorganizing paths and plantings etc. In my project, I can apply all the things I learnt the last whole year, and research and design in the course of how landscape architecture projects work. After that, I am sure the outcoming will response to the larger scale of the project, to transform the historical sites to a proper situation for the public to experience the beauty of culture and nature, which I think right fits in the topic in the lab for my site, that is tourism and recreational co-use. One of the important goals of my project is to attract more visitors to experience the beauty of the historical estates.

Secondly, I want to talk about the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework. The most important points in my projects are: 1. Create a route system as a backbone to connect the estates, to revitalize the whole area as Arcadia. 2. Make some limited intervention about the estates to make them interact properly with the route and show the cultural values better. 3. Create easier access between Arcadia and cities, and between Arcadia with larger natural reserve area. 4. Revitalize some of the individual estates, strengthening their values and making some improvements. In this way, the heritage sites will be more accessible to the public and also revitalize the estates in the contemporary context. In my opinion, the values of an object depend a lot on how much people, or the public, can experience. If the precious things only keep in the dark and away from public, it is not fully used. In my eyes, the existing situation of the estates here has a lot of potentials, they spread widely, some are public but some are private. People know their existence but can not enjoy some of them. With my intervention on the landscape level, the estates will become more close to people’s recreational activities, which will bring benefits both in culture and in economy. I hope this project can provide an option to the heritage transformation projects what heritage sites can offer and benefit at the same time with some minor interventions to be more accessible to the public.

As for the relevance in the professional and scientific framework, I think the most important part is trying to apply the theories that were developed in the field of architecture in my own project

which is mostly in the field of landscape architecture. In this part I would like to give special thank both to my first mentor Eric Luiten from Landscape Architecture Department and my second mentor Hielkje Zijlstra from Heritage & Architecture Department. They both recommended the book 'Heritage-based design' by Paul Meurs, which has become my main reference to build my theoretical foundation of my project. Just this group of combination made this happen. The theories and approach from this book were mostly developed from the field of architecture, and also applied to the architecture in the urban context. However, when I read the theories, many of them could support my thought of my project and helped me to develop my own methodologies. And the approaches which are supposed to use on the intervention and transformation of historical buildings, can also guide me to do my intervention on landscape architecture. When I look back to this now, I am so excited that I think to some extent, I kind of extend the application scale of the supposed one, and it proved good as well. In addition to that, this kind of experience allows me to look to the theory in a higher level, not just to the architecture or the landscape architecture, but to regard them all as the heritage issues, which makes me see more clearly on the similarity and difference. I think this is the most precious experience, because even if I don't do the landscape architecture related jobs in the future, the abilities of transformation and generalizing and trying out can always benefit me in my life. In fact, the Architecture and landscape architecture does have a lot of relation with each other. With this successful experience this time, I am excited about more trans-disciplinary trying outs in my life. But still, I should also refer to some other books and articles to give my theoretical foundation wider support to make it more convincing.

As for the strong and weak sides of the chosen (design) methodology, I think the strongest side of the project is that if it goes well, it will produce a win-win situation, and develop a positive feedback system, that is the area attracts plenty of visitors to have good experience, and the visitors in return benefit the estates in economy. Besides, it makes interventions through different scales, making the whole system complete. Every scale level has its own design principles which lead to proper interventions. While the weak side is that, relatively, the project may not have very detailed design for individual estates. For myself, I think the most fundamental part of the project is the areal level, that is the system with the backbone of the route following one contour line. This system can hold the estates together and put them in a better platform where have more space to get better. The system will offer better access to the estates, which will bring more visitors. With some leading estates making changes firstly, as time passing by, the positive feedback system will gradually make some more estates to improve in the future. Then in the practical level, I think there are also difficulties when we have to persuade privately owned estates to join in the system and give access to who are using the route and the whole system. So I assume that the whole project should really be attractive enough. I am really looking forward to the reaction of the stakeholders.

Next I would like to reflect on all the research work of my project. Generally speaking, I think when I do the research, I always have my objectives in my mind. As a result, my analysis are all done on purpose and every research and conclusion from them are useful for my design and the final goal of the project, which I think is the good part of my research. At the same time, I also find some rooms for improvement in my research. As I mentioned above, the fundamental part of

my project is on the areal level, which means that my research starts from quite a large area and most of them are in the larger level. Consequently, I may lack some of the zoom-in analysis. At the same time, the detailed data and maps are always hard to find, after all, most part of my project are in the area without dense urbanization, which has lesser data than the urban area. Besides, which parts to zoom in also have to be considered deliberately.

Then I want to talk about the ethical issues and dilemmas. I think most of the issues in this field in my project are because that my intervention is kind of powerful in some way. In my expected situation, I want all the concerning estates in the area would come together and create their connection to the whole route system, so the concerning estates would have to more or less have some modification according to the route and attaching path system I build up. According to the theory and my design, I am sure that this project will be beneficial to the whole area and the cluster of the estates in the long term. But I admit that there may be some unexpected conflict between the whole cluster and the individual owners, like they may worry about modifying to fit for the route will harm their monumental or aesthetical values, or the system will bring too many visitors that they can not take etc. On the design aspect, this conflict becomes that how to make estates interact better with the larger system, and more important maybe, how the system can help to revitalize and improve the qualities of the individual estates. For the latter one, I was trying to achieve it in my design but I can not say it's satisfying in my design. I think it requires more trying back and forth to find out the balance on the cluster and individuals. But still I am sure the project will revitalize the cluster of estates in the long term. With money coming in, estates can improve little by little and finally find the balance between visitors, profit and maintenance. As I said before, I think the valuable things can only embody their values when they show their precious features to the public. So what I can do is to stick to my project and try to make it better and persuadable.

When I looked back at the whole project, I would say it really keeps going in the direction I want. It is getting closer and closer to my objectives. But still it has some space to improve. Besides, as my mentors picked out, the ingredients are there, they have connections and relevant to the topic, but they should be put in a logic structure to combine stronger to explain the whole process better and connect with each other better. Next time when I do the project I will pay more attention on the relations of the elements and form my whole logic, convincing and systematic structure to sell my idea and project out better.

At last, I also want to mention the crisis we are going through because of the corona virus. Working at home is always hard for me. But the pressure of deadline always push me to move forward. Luckily, I am still fond of my project and want to finish it as better as I could.