



Delft University of Technology

Urban Forestscapes

The City of Delft as a Woodland Complex

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Urban forestscapes. The city of Delft as a woodland complex

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ABSTRACT

Because the expansion of the urban forest will take place in and around existing cities, knowledge of the 'language' of the existing urban forest is indispensable. Tree language refers to the spatial relationship between tree species, planting configurations and plantations and their unique location. To understand the role of the urban forest for people and society a focus on the spatial-experiential aspect (in relation to the human body and human perception) is relevant: trees frame the space in which people move, act, experience and appreciate. Using the city of Delft as a case study, this presentation explores the notion of 'plantation' as one of the defining aspects of such a language, the others being 'species' and 'configuration'. 'Plantation' is proposed as a term to describe the wooded characteristics of areas in the urban realm, defined by a combination of characteristics of species, tree configurations and the density and morphology of the plantation. (This mosaic of plantations can be compared to a natural forest mosaic which is also determined by commonalities in species and vegetation community structure, as well as having alternations of densely wooded and less wooded areas). The research was carried out combining the databases of the municipality of Delft and TU Delft, supplemented by historical documentation and cartographic research, and validated by field work: observation at eye level, a multisensory, active interaction with the urban landscape. The research reveals an urban landscape composed of a variegated wooded mosaic of plantations, which invariably transcend neighbourhood boundaries as well as common understandings of the boundary between city and countryside. In successive density and arrangement, in Delft seven types of plantations can be distinguished, connected and separated by the long lines, the avenues that traditionally formed the connections between Delft and the countryside like spokes in a wheel.