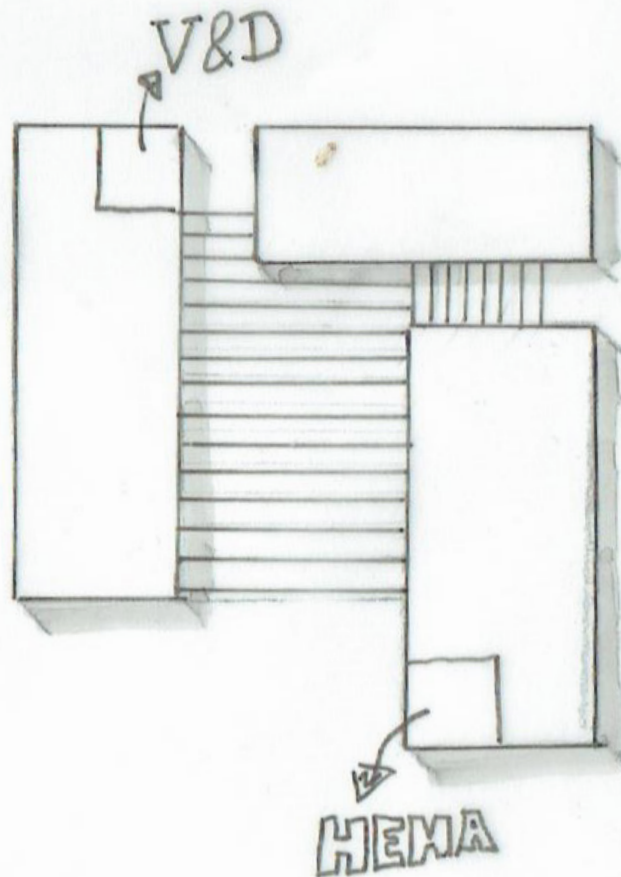


Open up the Modern Mall



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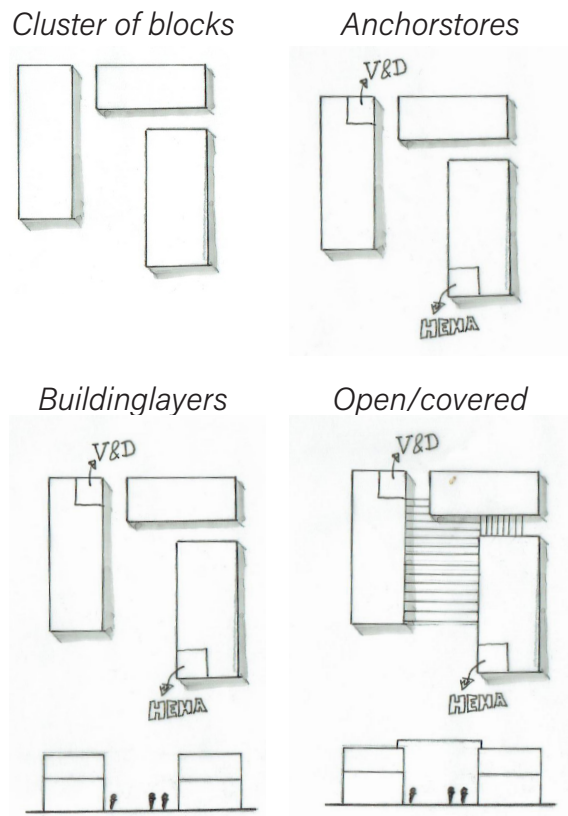
Abstract

This paper studies the Modern Malls in the Netherlands that were formed in the 1960s. The problem with these malls is that they have changed through time to keep up with the changing demands of the users, a development that has changed the once open extroverted malls into introverted closed structures. The closed structure of these malls in combination with rising vacancy and the ever-changing behaviour of the users of the mall, results that the malls in the Netherlands are struggling. By analysing the open forms introduced by Sennett, the aim is to develop an intervention method to open up the modern mall. The interventions show that the open forms relate to different scale levels depending on the intervention. The materialisation and architectural elements play an important role in the effectiveness of using open forms as intervention methods in the Modern malls in the Netherlands.

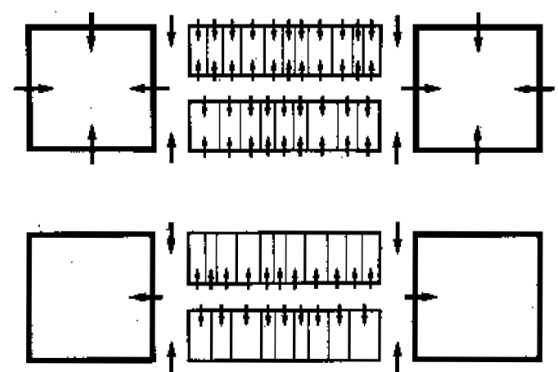
Keywords: Modern Malls, intervention methods, open forms, Richard Sennett.

Introduction

Modern malls in the Netherlands were introduced in the 1960s and were a new way of shopping in the post-war period. Inspired from the American model of a modern mall, the Dutch Modern malls were known for their structure that consisted of clusters made from several buildings (Kooijman, 1999). The building layers were limited to two or three layers and in the following decades, the malls have been adapted and changed. Many of these interventions included expansion and coverage of the mall to create an indoor space which can be closed outside of opening hours. The progression of Modern malls in the Netherlands is shown in the illustrations below. In the 1960s the mall started out as a cluster made up of several buildings, with anchor stores placed strategically in the corners or edges of the mall. (Kooijman, 1999)



Because of this phenomenon, malls have changed from an extroverted open, to an introverted closed structure. This was described already by Gruen and is shown in the illustration below (Gruen, 1973). Next to the malls having developed a closed character, rising numbers of vacant stores and the bankruptcy of an important shop, the V&D in 2016, modern malls in the Netherlands are struggling to survive in their current shape. (Sennett, 2019) proposes in his book *Building and Dwelling, ethics for the city*, a theory to open up a city by using the five open forms. Sennett introduces these forms as a solution to open up a closed city. The closed mall has similar problems as the closed city described by Sennett. This research will focus on analysing the open forms proposed by Sennett and made applicable to the situation of the mall by analysing the case study of the modern mall 'Stadshart Amstelveen'.



Scheme of an extrovert (above), and introvert (below) mall type as described by Gruen.

Schemes showing the characteristics of a modern mall in the Netherlands (author)

Research questions and aim

The introduction states the problem of the Modern mall evolving into a closed introvert structure over time, due to the need to keep up with the changing demands of the consumer/user/visitor? This leads to the central question of this research paper.

'How can a closed 20th century modern mall be opened up, improving the connection between the mall and its users?'

The research will study what a modern mall and its characteristics are, what interventions contribute to opening up a mall and lastly how to apply these methods.

The aim for this research is to analyse and study the theory of open forms by Sennett (Sennett, 2019) by testing it on a case study, the Dutch mall, Stadshart in Amstelveen. The similarities between a closed city and a closed mall will be examined and adapted to the case of the modern mall. The results will form a framework with recommendations to inform design interventions.

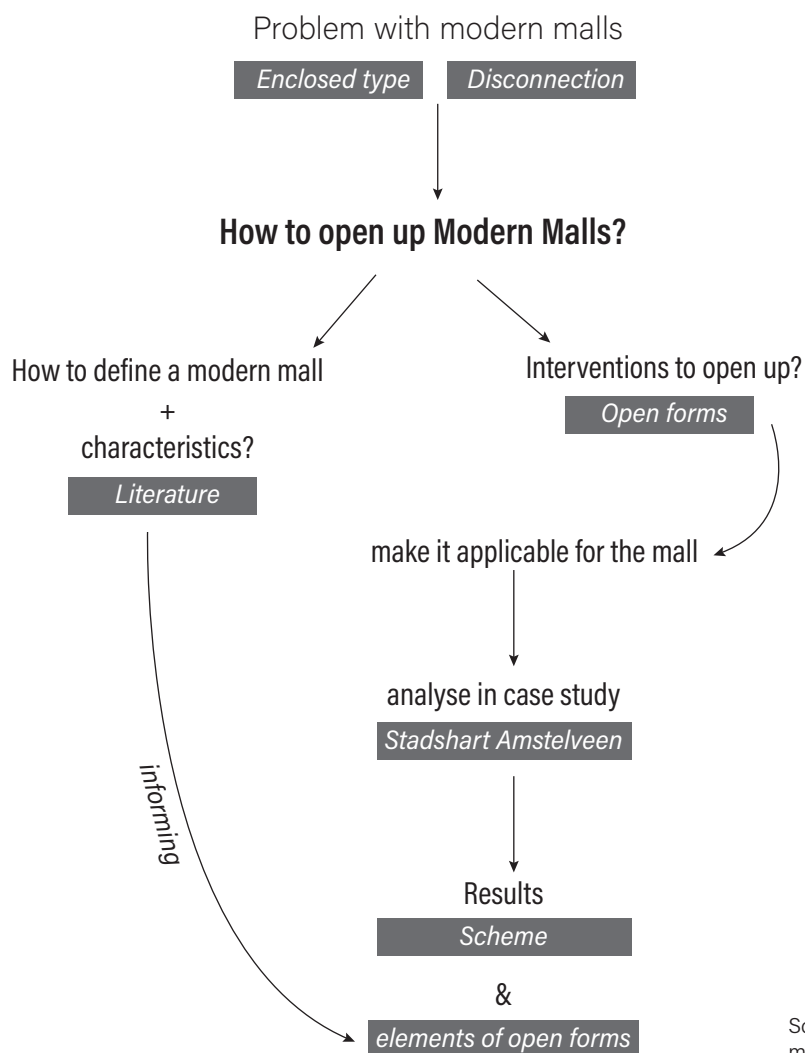
Theoretical framework

This paper presents research into malls, interventions and their effects on (improving) the functioning of a modern mall in the Netherlands. To understand the mall and its basics, literature about the mall, and its characteristics has been studied. Elements that are characteristics for malls in The Netherlands are taken from "Machine en Theater" (Kooijman, 1999). Kooijman describes the progression of shopping through history. The modern mall is one type of doing shopping. Kooijman gives characteristics relating to scale and materiality to the modern mall. To place this research into historical context, a report from Galema, "Winkelcentra categoriaal onderzoek" regarding the mall and its importance for the post-war period in the Netherlands has been studied. In this document, an explorative study to the possible monumentality of the mall is addressed. Characteristics of Dutch shopping malls are taken to address important physical elements of the mall for this research. The chosen intervention method to study for this research is the open forms by Richard Sennett (Sennett, 2019). Each of these open forms is briefly explained in the methods below, identifying the important elements for this research. The six layers of Brand address the lifespan and scale of different elements of a building (Brand, 1994). It also shows the different interactions between the users and the specific scale. These scale layers of Brand are structuring the results of the research.

Methods

The paper aims to find an answer to the question “how to open up Modern Malls in the Netherlands?”. This is shown to be a necessity because of the way the modern malls changed in appearance from an open to an enclosed type. Two main elements from this question are separated. Firstly, what is a Modern Mall, how can it be defined and what are the characteristics of a modern mall? Secondly, what interventions can be used to open a modern mall? Here the method of the Open forms by Sennett (Sennett, 2019) is used. They are made applicable to the situation of the mall and analysed in the casestudy of Stadshart Amstelveen.

The analysis on the case study results in a scheme where the open forms as interventions are related to the scale they relate to. For the different scale levels, the shearing layers of Brand are used. (Brand, 1994). Lastly, one of the open forms, the membrane, will be explored in depth further. Comparing the results of the membrane with the earlier mentioned characteristics of the mall inform which architectural element of the mall are important to address when intervening. The scheme below shows the structure of the method that this paper follows.



Scheme that shows the methods used in this paper

The Modern Mall

To study the effects on the characteristics of a modern mall the first step is to establish a common ground about what a modern mall is and what elements it consists of. (Urban Land Institute, 1957) defines a mall as: 'A group of commercial establishments, planned, developed, owned and managed as a unit, with off-street parking provided on the property (in direct ratio to the building area) and related in location, size (gross floor area) and type of shops to the trade area that the unit serves – generally an outlying of suburban territory,' (cited in Dreesmann, 1963, p. 201). In a preliminary study on the monumentality of post-war building typologies, the mall is defined as: 'The shopping mall is defined as an independent complex designed as a unit around a pedestrian area, usually as part of an expansion plan of an existing town or village center. It is a combination of stores with possibly ancillary facilities, where shopping is the main function.' (Galema, 2005) The first definition of the Urban Land Institute emphasizes the individual buildings forming a cluster, parking in the vicinity and the scale of the mall is related to the area it is serving. The Dutch definition of Galema adds to this the mix of amenities, but where shopping is the dominant function.

(Kooijman, 1999) addresses in his book the characteristics of a Modern Mall. According to Kooijman the mall consists usually out of two layers in building height, has two or more anchor stores and there is a relation between the inside and outside space of a mall.

Combining the elements of the different sources shown above, the definition of a Dutch modern mall and its characteristics can be formed as following:

'A group of buildings functioning as one unit, pedestrian focused, with nearby parking space. Related in size to the surroundings of the mall (the city/town/neighbourhood) with a limited building height compared to the surroundings and strategically placed functions/shops in certain spots and a main focus on shopping.'

Open Forms

In his book Sennett addresses five open forms as an intervention method to open up a city. Sennett describes a disconnection between the City and its users. The rigid city cannot keep up with the changing demands of its inhabitants, resulting in a closed city that is disconnected from its users. To open up the city, Sennett states that we need 'porous edges, incomplete forms and unresolved narratives.' The five open forms is a set of interventions that contribute to open up a city. The open forms are described and illustrated with an example below. The open forms are meant to open up a city, but in this research, they have been made applicable to the situation of the mall. The list below shows the original open form with an example of how it can be used in the context of the modern mall. The open forms are analysed below and illustrated how they can play a role in the context of the mall.

1) A synchronous space. This is an open space where different activities or functions are going on at the same time. In the Mall, these are the variety of functions present in a mall, more than just shopping.

2) Markers in a city are like exclamation points, an important building or structure in a city that grabs the attention of the user. In a mall these markers are the Anchor stores. Anchor stores as previously explained are strategically placed at corners of a mall to enhance the circulation between them.

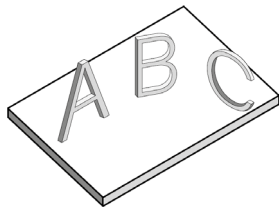
3) The membrane, consisting of a closed form, the boundary. The boundary makes up a rigid separation between two parts

of the city. The preferred open form of this membrane is the border. The border can selectively let people flow through. For the mall, the borders are the entrances, both outdoor and indoor.

4) Incomplete form, The Shell. The shell can be seen quite literally as a structure that has yet to be filled. For the mall this can be a flexible area that provides for future addition or change of an existing part.

5) Seed planning. The outcome of the previous form, the shell, depends on the context of the city. In a modern mall, the outcome can depend on the type of area or the type of users that are present in the mall.

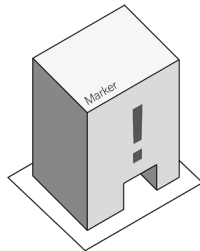
The illustrations below show the open forms and an example of the open forms in the built environment of the mall.



Synchronous spaces: multiple functions are present in the mall.



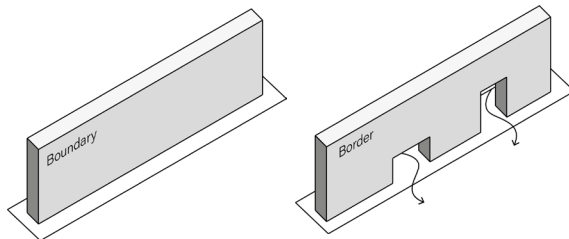
stadshartamstelveen.nl



Markers: these are the anchor stores in a mall, like the HEMA, C&A and formerly the V&D.



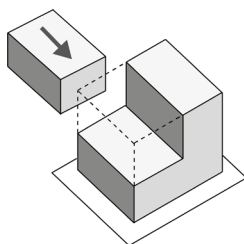
EPA



Membrane: The open form, the border is made permeable by having clear and inviting entrances to the mall.



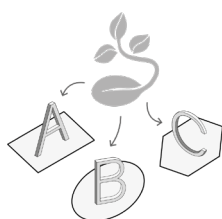
tripadvisor.nl



Incomplete form, the Shell: allowing for a future infill like the renovation of the Forum in Rotterdam.



Ossip van Duivenbode



Seed planning: the infill of an incomplete form depending on the context. In Rotterdam a park was created on the top of a former station.



rotterdam hotplein

Introduction Case study stadshart Amstelveen

Stadshart Amstelveen started out as 'Binnenhof' in the early 1960s and was a design by Van de Broek and Bakema. It was one of the earliest modern malls in the Netherlands, existing out of two main building blocks connected by a parking square in the middle. On the northwest side there was the building block 'de Zaagtand' which used to house the V&D, and on the east the remainder of the mall was made up of several smaller blocks as seen in the illustration on the right. Soon after the opening of the mall, the C&A and later the V&D build a new building on the edges respectively north and east side of the mall. In the 80s parts of the mall had been covered and in a later phase renovated as well (illustration on the right). In the 90s the idea for a big renovation came to play and after some years of planning the current structure as it is now started to take form in the early 2000s. The mall is now almost completely covered in two parts and has seven entrances spread around the edges, to make it permeable and accessible. After this big renovation, the mall changed its name as well. The urban area expanded around the mall, leading to the shopping mall no longer being at the edge of, but instead being in the heart of the city. Hence why the name Stadshart ('heart of the city') was chosen as the new name for the mall. Some functions that are combined with the mall in the current structure are a library, cinema, a square for the weekly market and a cultural centre with a music school.



The case study Stadshart, formerly known as the Binnenhof in Amstelveen in 1962. (amstelveenweb)



Binnenhof, 1960 consisting of de Zaagtand on the bottom and the cluster of blocks on the top (amstelveeninzicht)



Renovation of the covered part, 1989 (Het Parool)

Results

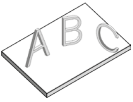
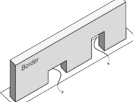

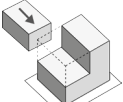








The analysis of the mall was done in two main parts, firstly the individual interventions were identified and categorized according to the open forms of Sennett. And secondly a closer look at the current situation has been made to see which of these interventions still function and are contributing to opening up the mall. An overview of the growth of the mall is shown first with notions on the type of intervention that it is.

In chronological order the interventions that can be identified with the open forms start with the addition of the C&A on the north side of the mall. The C&A is a well known clothing store present in most shopping malls in the Netherlands. This shops functions as an Anchorstore and is positioned close to the HEMA. The addition of the C&A was a new added marker that had an effect on the scale of the structure of the building itself. Because of the HEMA already being on the north side functioning as an Anchorstore the C&A didn't had a large effect on the scale of the site. Different was this effect with the addition of the V&D on the east side of the mall. Positioned all the way at the edge of the mall, the V&D in contrast to the C&A was a marker that changed the backside of the mall to an entrance square and stimulated the movement of the users in between. The renovation of 1999 physically changed the mall the most, and shaped the mall mostly as its known present day. A large set of interventions with the introduction of synchronous spaces, adding markers, creating a permeable border and providing space for infill. This set of interventions fit in with the methods of the open forms and show on different scale levels their influence. The intervention of 1999

resulted in the current drawing where the different open forms are shown with the icons in the plan of the mall.

These interventions are shown in a table on the next page. Next to the table the floorplan with the location and types of open forms are illustrated.

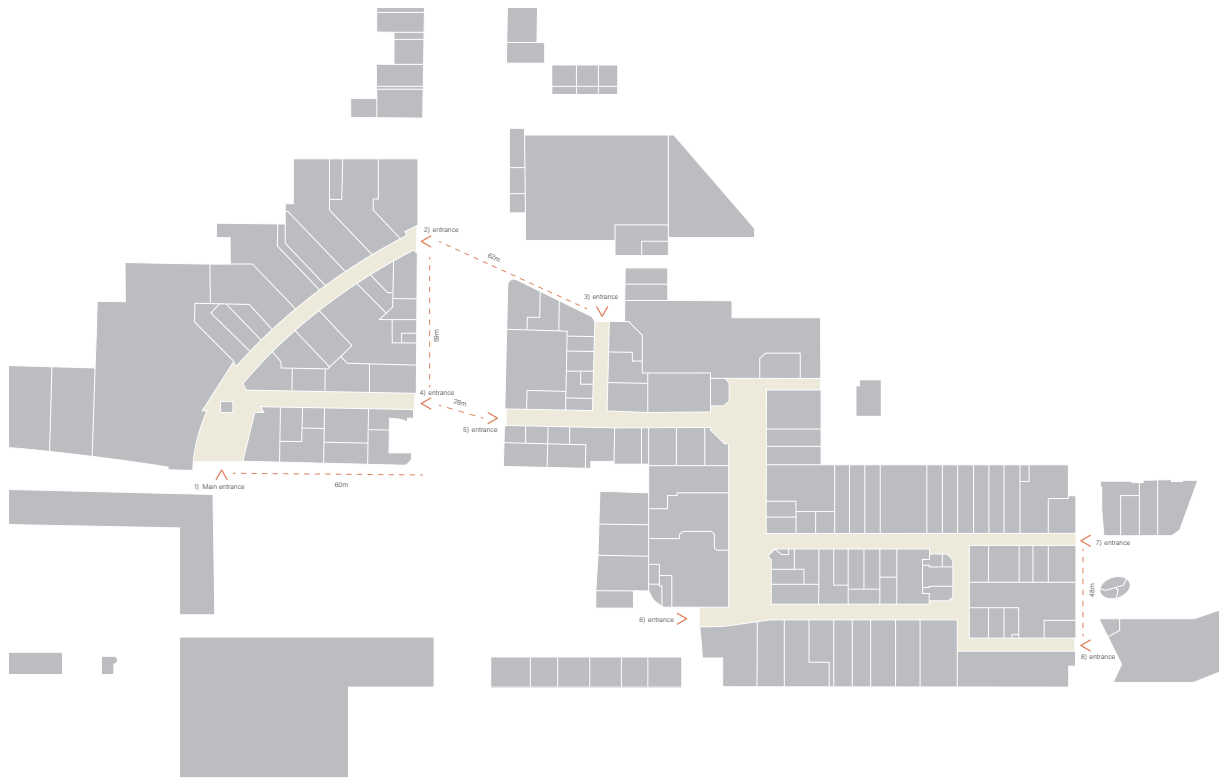
The 1999 interventions can be analysed with varying open forms and simultaneously fit in with different layers of Brand. Zooming in on one of the open forms, the membrane. In the table it shows that the membrane, the introduction of multiple entrances around the mall has an influence on the site and the skin layer. This intervention will be explored to show how the results can be analysed in more detail.

scale layer	site	structure	skin	services	space plan	stuff
<p>open forms</p>  <p>synchronous spaces</p>  <p>membrane</p>  <p>markers</p>  <p>shell type</p>  <p>seed planning</p>	<p>Renovation of 1999, adding new functions around a central square</p>  <p>Renovation of 1999, creating new connections between the different buildings</p>  <p>Renovation of 1999, creating new connections between the different buildings</p>  <p>Addition of the V&D</p>  <p>Addition of C&A</p> 				<p>Renovation of 1999, Adding new volumes in the existing structure</p>  <p>new decoration of created indoor space</p>	
						<p>indoor pavilion, space for infill, can change upon demands, flexible space</p> 

positioning of the open forms in Stadshart Amstelveen categorised in a table with their corresponding layer of Brand.



positioning of the open forms in Stadshart Amstelveen shown in the map (interpretation based on the interventions that have taken place over the years)



The introduction of eight entrances in the mall of Stadshart is an intervention related to the membrane. To be more precise it is creating a permeable border. On multiple occasions, it's possible to enter the mall. The intervention has however an architectural expression, with elements that belong to this intervention type. Looking at the pictures, shown on the next page, similarities between the different entrances can be spotted. The same logo of the mall is present on all entrances, the use of a canopy and the use of glass doors to allow for seeing into the mall. However there are also some differences. The main entrance is double the height of the smaller ones. And the other entrances seem to have their size related to the amount of people coming through. The ones at the front of the mall being slightly larger than the ones situated at the back of the mall. According to Maitland, the entrances should relate to the main entrance to wake up a sense of recognizability (Maitland, 1990). The importance of the edge, the place for the

entrances is also brought to attention by Sennett when describing the open form of the membrane, he states the following about dealing with the edges:

"when people imagine where the life of a community is to be found, they usually look for it in the centre, where planners try to intensify community life. This means neglecting the edge; the community turns inward as a result. Which is an error" (Sennett, 2019, p.222) Kooijman also addresses the importance of dealing with entrances in a mall: 'Furthermore, the mall entrance has the difficult task to pick up where the uninteresting blank walls fall short. It attracts while the blank walls reject. It invites while the walls repel and this finds its expression in the design" (Borking, 1996, p.66) The literature addresses the importance of the border and the execution of the entrances of Stadshart align with the statements about them in the literature. Resulting in permeable borders that open up this mall and enhance the connection between the mall and its users.

The eight entrances of Stadshart Amstelveen. The unity in materials and architectural elements is visible. The relation between the scale of the entrance

and the type of entrance (main or back entrance) makes the mall very clear and readable for the users.



▲ 1) Main entrance



▲ 2) entrance



▲ 3) entrance



▲ 4) entrance



▲ 5) entrance



▲ 6) entrance



▲ 7) entrance



▲ 8) entrance

Discussion and limitations

This research focused on testing the theory of the open forms on the modern mall. By testing this method on the mall it shows that this theory can be applied to other forms of closed-built structures as well. The results from analysing a mall with successful interventions such as the case study of Stadshart, will give input to the redesign of closed modern malls.

The case study of Stadshart in Amstelveen was carefully picked, as its origin represents how most modern malls in the Netherlands started. They started out as individual buildings forming a cluster with parking spaces close by. The mall was covered and expanded over the following decades. In the late 90s the mall underwent a large renovation, and these showed to be successful for the functioning of the mall. The open forms could be identified in various locations in the mall and the literature supported the elements that were present as important elements for the functioning of the border, the entrances, of the modern mall. Therefore this case study showed that open forms as intervention methods can be used when redesigning a modern mall in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

The main question of this research was how can a modern mall be opened up and enhance the connection between the mall and its users. The Modern mall has been defined as: 'A group of buildings functioning as one unit, pedestrian focused, with nearby parking space. Related in size to the surroundings of the mall (the city/town/neighbourhood) with a limited building height compared to the surroundings and strategically placed functions/shops in certain spots and a main focus on shopping.' The modern mall in the Netherlands are made up from different blocks forming a cluster, contain anchor stores at the edges, are usually two building layers high and have undergone interventions through time leading often to the covering of the mall itself, lowering the amount of entrances, decreasing the permeability and resulting often in being a closed mall. The results show that with the use of the open forms the Stadshart mall can be opened up through different interventions. Mainly the interventions regarding to the membrane, creating permeable borders, have a positive effect on opening up the mall. The permeability has improved with the introduction of entrances all around the mall. The readability of these entrances is made clear by having unity in their architectural elements and their scale that relates to the type of entrance.

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