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heritage position on
The Future of Structuralism

Centraal Beheer

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Track: Heritage & Architecture

Theme: The future of Structuralism – Centraal Beheer

Title: minimal interventions, big change

Tutors: Lidy Meijers, Frank Koopman, Ivan Nevzgodin

One of the graduation studios at the chair of Heritage and Architecture this year is The Future of Structuralism. A studio that focusses on the structuralist buildings Centraal Beheer by Herman Hertzberger and the Faculty of Humanities by Joop van Stigt. The students were free to choose the building for their graduation project, I chose Centraal Beheer.

For this graduation project, we used several methods of researching and analyzing the building. One of the first things we did was visiting the site to get a general feeling of the building, later we built a 1 to 50 model, then we did an analysis of the building through a specific theme 'unit', using drawings, photos, the model we built, and descriptive text. However, I would like to use the analytical method of the cultural value matrix (Figure 1) to discuss my heritage position.

The matrix offers a framework to assess the cultural value of different aspects of a building. The categories on the left are based on Steward Brand's shearing layers from his book *How Buildings Learn* (Figure 2), with the additions of

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

Figure 1: cultural value matrix from *Designing from Heritage*.

surrounding/setting, surfaces (interior), and spirit of place. The categories on the top are based on the dialectic heritage values by Alois Riegl, with the additions of rarity value and other relevant values. The matrix allows you to assess different types of values of the different elements of a building by filling in the boxes with text, symbols, sketches, or other images. By using this matrix, you can be sure you do not miss any layer of the building or any type of value it could have. But does it really help? During the group analysis of Centraal Beheer by Hertzberger, the building I will redesign for my graduation project, we already noticed that the matrix needed some adjusting, Kuipers and De Jonge even suggest to do so. Some value categories were not applicable at all (like intentional commemorative value) and an extra category was needed for the specific style the building belonged to and is an icon of (structuralism value).

As described above, the matrix is loosely based on the shearing layers of Steward Brand as described in his book *How Buildings Learn*. These layers are not directly related to cultural value or heritage, but they are defined by the lifespan of elements in a building, in order of lifespan, from longest to shortest: site, structure, skin, services, space plan, stuff ¹. Alois Riegl is considered to be one of the first to have developed a set of heritage values. In his *The Modern Cult Of*

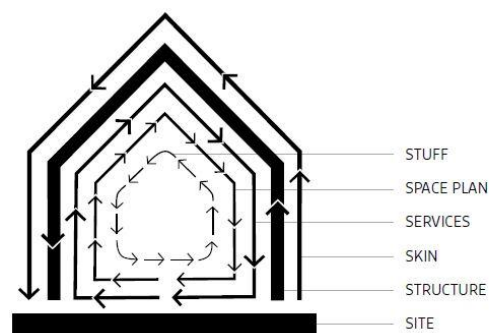


Figure 2: Steward Brand's shearing layers from *How Building Learn*.

¹ Brand, S. (1995). *How buildings learn: What happens after they're built*. Penguin.

Aspects ↓	Dimensions →	Artistic	Historic	Social	Scientific
	Form and design				
	Materials and substance				
	Use and function				
	Tradition, techniques, and workmanship				
	Location and setting				
	Spirit and feeling				

Figure 3: Nara grid based on the Nara Document on Authenticity.

Monuments he explains different ways in which a monument could be appreciated or valued². In 1994 ICOMOS (International Council On Monuments and Sites) published the Nara document on authenticity, in which several aspects of a heritage building are mentioned along with four values: artistic, historic, social, and scientific³. Later these aspects and values were combined into the Nara grid (Figure 3), which shows some similarities to the cultural value matrix. However, according to Kuipers and De Jonge, this grid is more appropriate for classical conservation, and it is not so much design oriented. The current intervention practice needs a tool that is more visual and encompasses more aspects than authenticity alone. This recently led to the development of the cultural value matrix, presented in the book *Designing from Heritage*⁴.

Throughout history monuments and old buildings have always been deemed valuable. They can create a local identity, be a landmark, or create a bridge to the past. The way in which the cultural value of these buildings should be assessed however, has been a subject of discussion. In the nineteenth century this discussion mainly revolved around the concepts of conservation and restoration. In this

paragraph I will discuss the general viewpoints of John Ruskin and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, two gentlemen representing the notions of conservation and restoration respectively.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) was one of the driving forces behind the Arts and Crafts movement and a founding member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Monuments (SPAB, 1877). In 1849 he wrote the book *The Lamp of Memory* in which Ruskin explains seven principles of architecture that he thinks should form the base of architecture practice. One of the seven principles concerns monument preservation. He strongly advocates for the preservation of architecture, calling restoration “the most total destruction which a building can suffer”.⁵ Ruskin argues that once something is gone, it is impossible to bring it back. Restoring a building can never bring it back to the exact state it was in before, and it would be lying to suggest so. The source value of the original material is most important. Sometimes, however, restoration is a necessity in order to preserve the building. In that case, the restoration should be done honestly, showing the original elements and the new ones as clearly different. Nonetheless, according to John Ruskin it is best to take care of monuments

² Riegl, A. (1903). *The modern cult of monuments: its essence and its development*.

³ ICOMOS (1994). *The Nara document on authenticity*.

⁴ Kuipers, M. & Jonge, W. de (2017). *Designing from Heritage: Strategies for Conservation and Conversion*. Delft: TU Delft – Heritage & Architecture, p. 87

⁵ Ruskin, J. (1849). *The lamp of memory*. In: Staniforth, S. (eds.), *Historical perspectives on preventive conservation* (p. 2). Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute.

by conservatively repairing small defects, so that restoration will not be needed.

Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879) was a contemporary of Ruskin, but he had completely different views on monuments and what to do with them. The image value, the idea behind the building, was the most important value. He strove for the “recreation of a stylistic unity based on scientific research and documentation”.⁶ Restoring the image was more important than truth or genuineness to Viollet-le-Duc, creating images of the past that might not ever have existed in a particular point in time: “Restaurer un édifice, ce n’est pas l’entretenir, le réparer ou le refaire, c’est le rétablir dans un état complet qui peut n’avoir jamais existé à un moment donné.”⁷ (To restore a building is not to maintain it, repair it or remake it: it is to re-establish it in a complete state which may never have existed at any given moment.). So on the one hand Viollet-le-Duc strove for scientific exactness in his restoration work, but he also thinks that more modern materials or techniques could be applied in order to be more efficient. This creates an interesting paradox in his work of science and exactness versus interpretation and fantasy.

Both Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc valued monuments highly, but had very different ideas as to how to deal with them. But their ideas mainly concerned the (existing) building and not the possibility that the function or the building requirements might change in the future. However, adaptation of monuments to present needs is necessary, since monuments are often still in use, which helps also with the upkeep of the building. The current architectural heritage practice aligns more with Ruskin’s approach, valuing authenticity and honesty, and being more conservative and honest in the modifications that are made to monuments. Also an

important concept today is to keep as much as is possible of a building intact, in case future generations might value the building differently. However the discussion of what is truly valuable in monuments remains relevant, and what should be kept or restored is still a question asked today. So the cultural value matrix could be a good tool that can help architects with mapping and prioritizing valuable elements of a building, but it is up to the architect how to use and adapt the matrix and turn it into a good design.

As I discussed earlier, the cultural value matrix, developed by the cultural value chair of the Heritage and Architecture studio, is based on several value sets and a long history of different assessment methods. In the previous chapter I explained two contrasting viewpoints on heritage buildings: preservation and restoration. In today’s architecture practice both of these viewpoints are exercised and I can understand the appreciation of both the source value and the image value. Personally I tend more towards a preservative and honest approach, keeping all that I can and changing only what is necessary. I think it is important to be honest in the interventions you make in heritage buildings, meaning that the intervention should be subtle, but clearly different from the original building. A good example for this approach would be the Neues Museum by David Chipperfield (figures 4 and 5). The original idea or ideal is interesting and important, but should not be reconstructed if it has disappeared. That would be like lying. In her lecture on material culture, Eireen Schreurs explained that buildings are material culture, they are materialization of culture.⁸ Culture is not something that can be made or demolished

⁶ Kuipers, M. & Jonge, W. de (2017). *Designing from Heritage: Strategies for Conservation and Conversion*. Delft: TU Delft – Heritage & Architecture, p. 67

⁷ Viollet-le-Duc, E. (1858). *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XI au XVI siècle*, VIII. Paris: A. Morel. (p. 14)

⁸ Schreurs, E. lecture on Material Culture (15-03-2018)

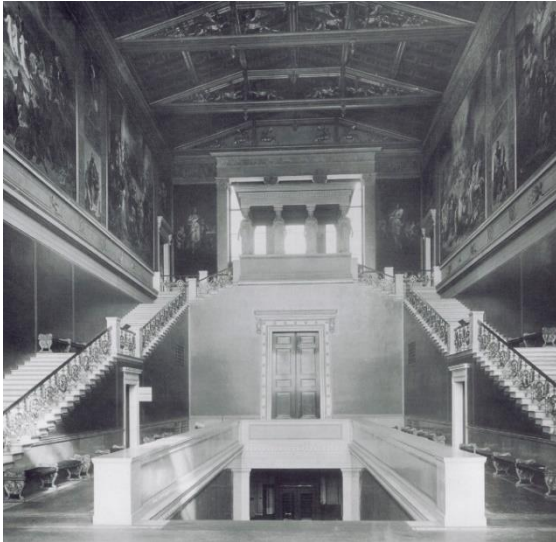


Figure 4: central staircase of the Neues Museum in Berlin before the bombing during WWII

by one person, it is the result of a group of people creating it together. So heritage buildings, being a part of our culture, should not be demolished by one person. On the contrary, it should be treasured and preserved for future generations to come. These future generations might value the building differently, so that is another reason the keep as much as possible as demolishing as little as necessary.

For my graduation project, I am making a design for the structuralist building Centraal Beheer by Herman Hertzberger. Structuralism was an architectural movement/style in which open-endedness and flexibility were very important. However, as we have analyzed several transformations of structuralist buildings in the Netherlands, it proves to be very difficult to change these types of buildings. This poses the paradox of intended flexibility and the inability to change. Structuralism is recognized as an important architectural movement in The Netherlands and buildings within this style should be preserved. Transformations of these buildings are necessary, to make them meet today's building requirements and to be pleasant

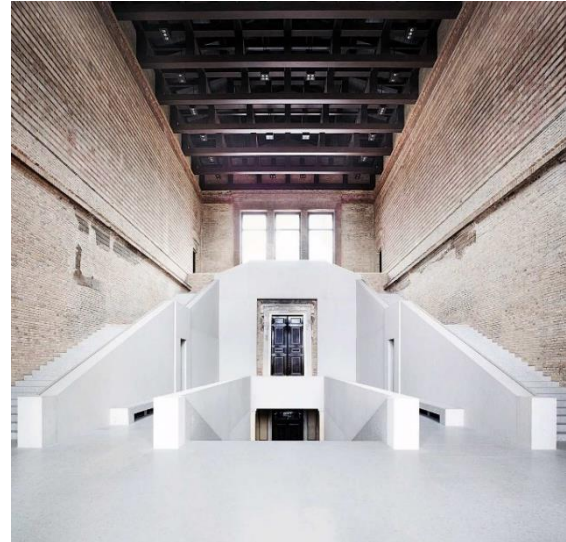


Figure 5: central staircase of the Neues Museum after Chipperfield's restoration

and functional environments for people to use. The dilemma of what to keep and what to demolish arises. If you keep everything the building cannot be used, but it will stay true to its original structuralist design. If you demolish parts of the building, it can be modified and used, but it will lose parts of its original design. The Heritage & Architecture studio says: keep as much as you can, and change as much as necessary. But what is necessary? Jorge Meija mentioned in his lecture that, contrary to other research fields, in architecture new theories or new knowledge can co-exist with the previous ones⁹. The one does not exclude the other. This seems to apply to cultural value as well. Architecture and heritage are for a substantial part subjective. They are subject to the opinion of the people working and researching in these fields, and since there are many people, there are many opinions. Since heritage buildings often are valuable to large groups of people or communities, it is important to strive to a somewhat general method of assessing its cultural value. However, it is also important to keep in mind that there is not one true method, but multiple that can co-exist.

⁹ Meija, J. lecture Methods of architectural exploration, evaluation and discovery (22-02-2018)

The cultural value matrix is a tool made for architects to identify all the valuable parts of a (heritage) building. It offers guidelines for the analysis and for the design process, but value assessing remains an objective affair and the matrix and objective tool. There are no set guidelines as to what is deemed valuable and what not. Like said above, this would be virtually impossible, since there are so many opinions. So one issue that remains is how you decide what is valuable and what is not. This is decision you have to make yourself when filling in the matrix, based on your knowledge of history, architecture, the location, the local culture etcetera. The cultural value matrix is based on the cultural value set of Alois Riegl, the shearing layers of Steward Brand, and a long history of different ways of assessing the value of heritage buildings, including John Ruskin's preservation ideas and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc's restoration ideas. The matrix is embedded in tradition of assessing the value of buildings, and because you are valuing an existing building, you are automatically going to be more conservative in the interventions you make.

In my design approach towards Centraal Beheer I intend to be very conservative. The design will be mainly focused on restoration and renovation. My aim is to demolish as little as possible and add only the necessary to make the building comfortable and usable. These additions should be reversible as much as possible, as to leave the building intact. I think this approach is appropriate, because Centraal Beheer is such an important building, not only as an icon of structuralism, but also as an early manifestation of the ideas of Herman Hertzberger and as a landmark in the city of Apeldoorn. On the other hand, buildings from the 1970's are not a rare occurrence in the Netherlands, so the physical materials of the building are not very valuable. The most important element of Centraal Beheer is its design, the ideas that were expressed in the building. These ideas will (most likely) still be perceptible when walking through the building when some things are added or taken away. The design will be a balance of showing and enhancing Hertzberger's ideas and additions to make the building comfortable and usable for now and for the future.

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