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HERITAGE AS PART OF THE PALIMPSEST

Rethinking heritage at risk in London through an approach that is driven
by the context

RESEARCH ESSAY

HERITAGE AS PART OF THE PALIMPSEST

Establishing a context-driven approach for dealing with heritage by precedent research

KEYWORDS

Heritage, Heritage at Risk, Context, Palimpsest, London, Royal London Hospital, Former Outpatient Department.

Figure 2: Essay in scheme
Image by author

Introduction

The city of London is built in layers, where parts are added since the first Roman settlements, but also taken away over time.[1] The result is that an urban fabric arises that consists of objects, elements, layers and memories from the past.[2] They form a stratification of various times, which can be seen as a palimpsest.

The palimpsest in London is considered an asset, because it creates a varied and unique city. Specific objects that are of great importance for the palimpsest in London are listed to ensure they remain. Objects, in this case, vary in scale and can entail buildings and structures, places of worship, archaeology, parks and gardens, battlefields and conservation areas.[3] The process of listing is organised and monitored by both Historic England, an organisation that establishes the listing criteria and oversees the way the objects are treated, and by local authorities who mainly follow the guidelines of Historic England.[4]

Besides, Historic England distinguishes certain objects as heritage at risk, which they define as "historic buildings and sites at risk of being lost through neglect, decay or deterioration".[5] Every year, a compendium of these objects is published, with a short overview of the condition of the structure, the priority of intervention and a description of why the object is at risk.[6] In the past years, the number of heritage objects at risk in London is stable around 750 and it does not seem to diminish.

In the catalogue, it becomes clear that the objects are treated individually. For instance, the leaking roof of 38, Glengall Road in Peckham is reported, or the structural movement and lack of maintenance of St. Peter's Church Hall.[7] However, a more urgent threat, besides these technical problems, is the fact that the objects are empty, underused, left-overs of previous urban fabric, that is mostly also cut off from the surroundings. In this paper, this is defined as a lost connection to the context.

Hence, it becomes clear that there is a discrepancy. On the one hand solutions that are sought to elongate the duration of the objects consider the object itself and immediate repairs. On the other hand, it becomes clear that a lot of the heritage at risk is not connected to the context and this problem is in most cases not consciously handled by the approach of Historic England.

Therefore, this research aims to investigate in what way a context-driven approach can contribute to making heritage that lost connection to the surroundings an integral part of the current palimpsest again. The aim is to contribute to the field of dealing with heritage with adding a context-driven approach that focusses on the complete palimpsest. Such an approach is neither explored nor executed to its potential in the past. Since the amount of heritage at risk does not seem to diminish, a new way of thinking about and dealing with heritage can ensure the heterogeneity in the

palimpsest to remain longer.

This paper will contribute to the first establishment of the approach. It aims to find out what role precedent research can play in establishing a context-driven approach for dealing with heritage. By providing a theoretical background on previous dealings with heritage in context and discussing the complementary precedents first, it then offers tools for establishing new connections with the urban context.

As a field of research, the Royal London Hospital area in Whitechapel, Tower Hamlets is chosen. Tower Hamlets is one of the boroughs with the most heritage objects at risk (figure 1). The Royal London Hospital area represents different scales of objects at risk: from the whole area, to the relatively small housing on Mount Terrace.[8] Other than that, the future of the area is bureaucratically discussed. This is best reflected in the Former Outpatient Department, that is now empty and has a Certificate of Immunity (COI).[9] This means that Historic England guarantees that the building will not be listed until October 2022. However, the London Hospital Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan of the council of Tower Hamlets show a completely different direction. The documents state that the building is essential to preserve the identity of the area.[10]

The contradictory status of the Former Outpatient Department of being listed and at risk as an important part of the area and, at the same time, not being listed - even the opposite of that

with the Certificate of Immunity - or at risk as a building, combined with the fact that it is empty, a left-over of previous times and cut off from the surroundings and therefore not connected to the context, results in the fact that this building will the specific area of investigation.

In order to establish an approach to connect buildings like the Former Outpatient Department to the current context with the help of previous examples, representative precedents in the history of dealing with heritage will be selected. Therefore, a concise overview will first be given of the history of dealing with heritage and the terms that are used. The four phases, based on the writings of Mrinalini Rajagopalan, supplemented with the view of others, will be discussed.[11] Subsequently, precedents will be selected that both represent the four phases in dealing with heritage, and that have similar conditions as the Former Outpatient Department. After that, the definition of context in this paper will be discussed, that starts from the idea of Aldo Rossi.[12] In the next section, the previous will be combined and it will be explained in what cases and with what tools connections to the context are made by the precedents. After that, the usage of the tools as an approach to connect to the context will be discussed by means of a critical reflection. Lastly, final considerations concerning the relevance and contribution of this approach to the field of dealing with heritage will be adressed (see in scheme in figure 2).

1. This ties in with the archaeological view on the city, as De Sola-Morales Rubio discusses in 'From Contrast to Analogy: Developments in the Concept of Architectural Intervention', p. 620. Reality cannot be seen as a whole, since it appears as an overlapping of different layers. It is a system of interweaving languages.
2. Ungers et al., 'Cities Within the City: Proposals by the Sommer Akademie for Berlin'; Rowe and Koetter, 'Collage City and the Reconquest of Time'; Crysler, 'Introduction: Time's Arrows: Spaces of the Past'.
3. Historic England, 'Heritage at Risk Register 2021. London and South East', p. III–IV.
4. On a national level, three kinds of listing exist. Grade I is given to the most important objects that are outstanding and of the highest significance (around 3% of all listed objects). Grade II* listed objects are also important and are more than of special interest (around 7% of all listed objects). The largest group of listed objects has the grade II listing (around 90%), which means that the object is of special interest and that it should be preserved. See Historic England, 'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment'.
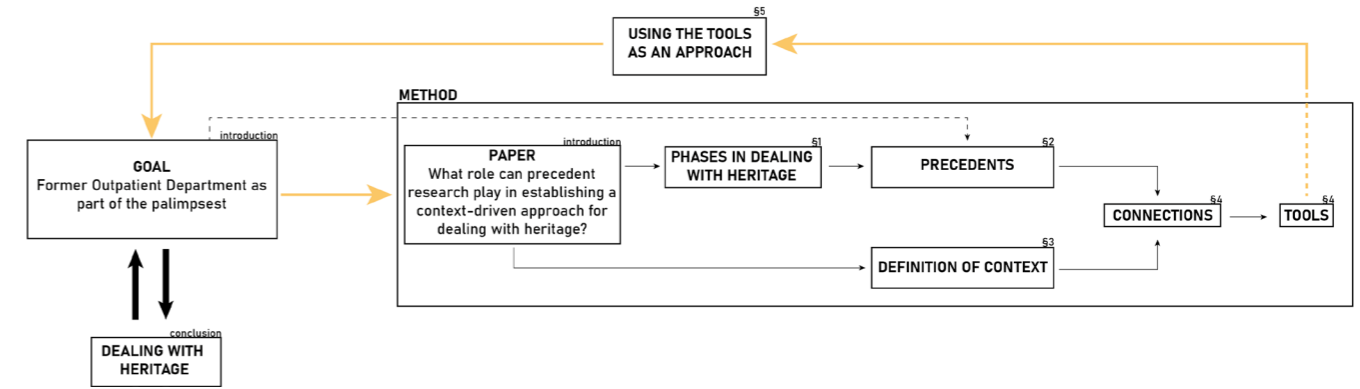
The determination of certain objects as listed and thus as heritage will in this research be determined by the responsible organisations. Although the definition of heritage of these institution spark many questions, it falls outside the scope of this research.
5. Historic England, op. cit. (note 3), p. IV.
6. Ibid., see entries from p. 1 and forward, organised per borough.
7. Ibid., p. 101, 102.
8. See Tower Hamlets, 'London Hospital Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan' for an analysis of the area, its assets and things that the Borough Council values in the area.
9. See https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/apply-for-listing/ for Certificate of Immunity (COI) description.
10. Tower Hamlets, op. cit. (note 8), see specifically page 24, 25, 28–30.
11. Rajagopalan, 'Preservation and Modernity: Competing Perspectives, Contested Histories and the Question of Authenticity'.
12. Rossi, 'The Architecture of the City'.

Figure 1: Heritage at risk in London per borough
Scale 1:200.000, image by author, based on data of Historic England

• Listed object at risk

The four historic phases of dealing with heritage and associated definitions

The history of dealing with heritage knows four phases in which approaches differed and various terms are used. As Pereira Roders shows, numerous names can be given to 'dealing with heritage', of which the most common are preservation, conservation, renovation and restoration. The last two are part of a large collection of other terms starting with re-.[13] In research, these terms are often used in a confounding way: an author may speak of 'preservation theory' to refer to all approaches of dealing with heritage over time, while another uses 'conservation theory' to describe the same process.[14] In both cases, the term 'preservation' or 'conservation' is not applicable for all time periods and projects. Other terms, like the words that start with re-, imply specific actions and are often not applicable for every project. Therefore, this paper will use 'dealing with heritage' as a term to describe all processes that concern touching, thinking and working with heritage in a general way, while at the same time using suitable specific definitions when needed.[15]

The eighteenth century marks the beginning of consciously dealing with heritage. From here, a process starts of defining an appropriate approach, that ranges radically in viewpoints, both between countries and within nations as Jukka Jokilehto shows.[16] Despite these differences, the start of the discipline until the second World War, is described by Rajagopalan as a phase that is driven by celebrating and emphasizing nation and empire.[17] This is done by focussing almost solely on the present material and keeping it, while also bringing a building back to its 'supposed' original state.[18] The architects mainly concentrate on churches and a handful of castles, although the scope is slightly broadened towards the end of the phase. The result of this view is that the buildings, mostly churches, become monuments that stand out from the surroundings and are therefore not part of the palimpsest. Influential ideas for this period are written down by the philosophical Alois Riegl on different values in heritage, and the more practical Cambridge Camden Society and later Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and John Ruskin.[19]

The approach towards dealing with heritage changed after the world wars and so the post-war approach arose.[20] This shift was mainly caused by the changed circumstances: cities and buildings were destroyed during the wars and needed action. In this period, dealing with heritage became urgent and the scale enlarged significantly. Another changed condition was the professionalisation of the field. The discussions since the birth of the discipline lead to the first conferences and charters, like the Athens Charter in 1931 and Venice Charter of 1964.[21] Other than that, organisations were founded, like UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) in 1945 that focussed on monuments and ICOM (International Council of Museums) in 1946 for museums.[22] These organisations were also concerned with the definition of heritage. Whereas in the previous phase, mainly churches were subject to the discussion, more typologies were added to listings, organised both on national and global level.[23] The definitions of heritage were based on aesthetic and historic value, almost exclusively from a western perspective.[24]

The approach towards heritage can be connected to the architectural modernist ideas of the time, as De Sola-Morales Rubio shows.[25] The idea of starting over after the wars created the urge to make a contrast between the new and the old and thus to show boundaries between layers of the palimpsest. This is for instance visible in the ideas of the CIAM. The result is that buildings were preserved, but in the process often frozen in time.

The third phase, starting from the late 1970's, differs from the former because it alters the amount and scope of objects that were considered as heritage.[26] The idea arises that there are multiple linear notions of history and that the importance of certain objects should not only defined by taste or aesthetic, but also by local values, community and context.[27] In a way, the boundaries within the palimpsest are softened. As a result, new charters were written to include the new views and the way
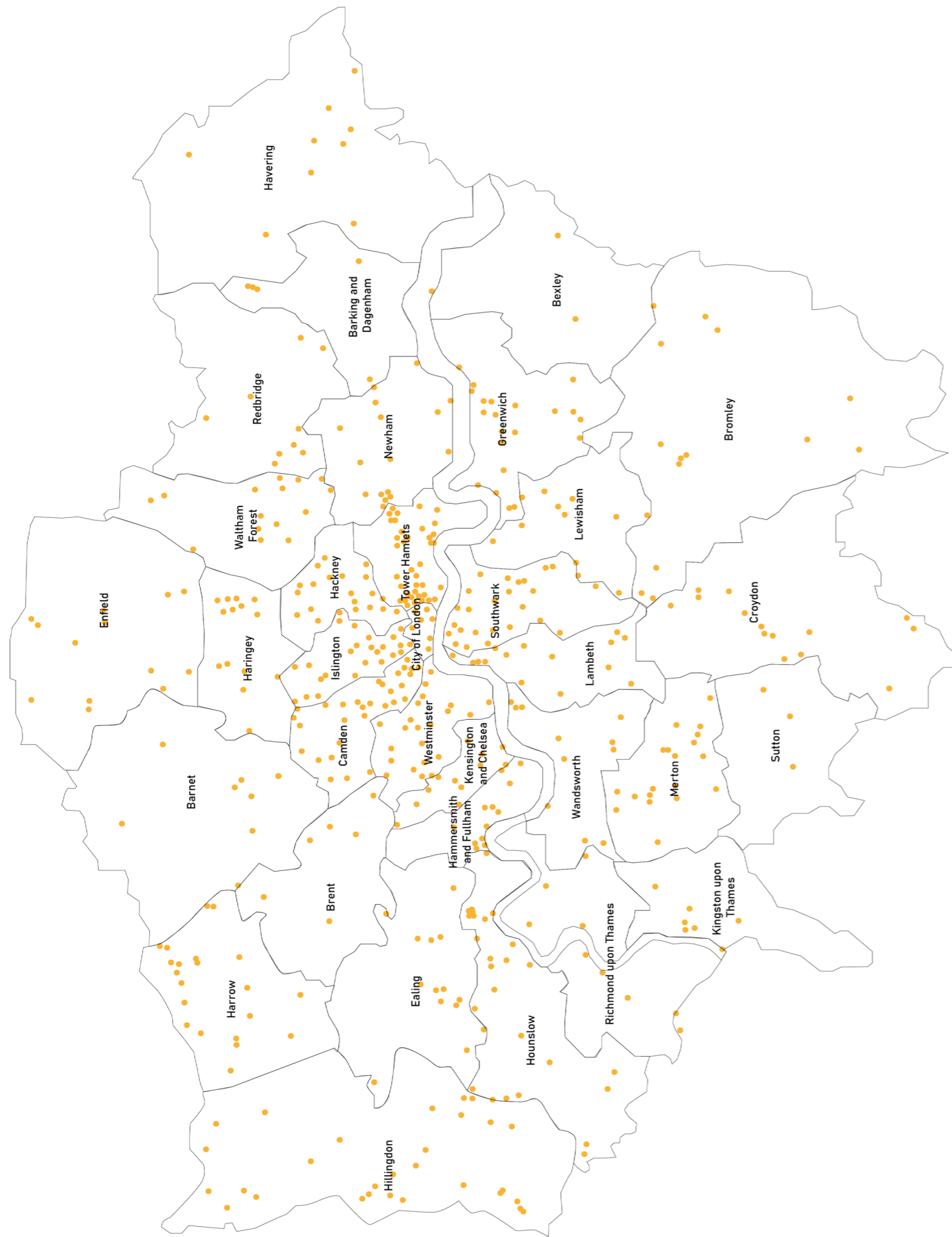
[13]. Pereira Roders, 'Re-Architecture: Lifespan Rehabilitation of Built Heritage', appendix 0. In this appendix almost 50 re-words are mentioned.
[14]. For example, in her work, Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 11) speaks of 'preservation' while Poulios, in his 'Discussing Strategy in Heritage Conservation: Living Heritage Approach as an Example of Strategic Innovation' labels roughly the same phases as conservation theory.
[15]. See glossary for definitions of the specific terms used in this paper.
[16]. Jokilehto, 'A History of Architectural Conservation: The Contribution of English, French, German and Italian Thoughts towards an International Approach to the Conservation of Cultural Property', p. 230–372.
[17]. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 11), p. 310–313.
[18]. Poulios, op. cit. (note 14), p. 17–18.

[19]. Stanley Price, Kirby Talley Jr., and Melucco Vaccaro, Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage. For the most important ideas of Riegl see p. 69–83, of Viollet-le-Duc see p. 314–318 and Ruskin see p. 322–323. For a discussion on the ideas of the Cambridge Camden Society see Jokilehto, op. cit. (note 16), p. 295–98.
[20]. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 11), p. 313–317.
[21]. 'Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments'; ICOMOS, 'The Venice Charter: International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites'.
[22]. Jokilehto, op. cit. (note 16), p. 409–421. ICOMOS, op. cit. (note 21).
[23]. Poulios, op. cit. (note 14), p. 17–18; Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 11), p. 313–17.
[24]. De Sola-Morales Rubio, op. cit. (note 1), p. 232; About the western

they should be dealt with.[28] Although the scope of what is considered heritage is wider than in the previous phase, Rajagopalan does not describe a different approach of dealing with it.[29] This is in contrast to Ioannis Poulios, who states that the approach is also expanded.[30] He sees that more stakeholders are included in the discussion on how to deal with the new heritage sites in the values-based approach, however, the professionals still decide and the goal of the interventions to preserve does not change in this phase.

At the same time, heritage also becomes more commodified.[33] The importance of tourism

and its financial implications grows in importance for the way heritage is dealt with. This effect grew, among others, because of the increased globalisation. While the world became more connected, it became easier to access heritage sites, to share insights and to connect to other disciplines.

The result is that the approaches towards heritage are scattered at the moment. On the one hand, it became clear from the past that local communities need to be involved, while at the same time processes of globalisation and tourism result in approaches of large scale with substantial financial interests.

Each phase in the history of dealing with heritage has its own views and approaches, due to change circumstances and opinions. Although connecting to the context is never a fundamental idea in dealing with heritage, the diversity of approaches gives opportunity to find a large variety of (unconscious) connections to establish an approach to connect to context consciously.

The approach of dealing with heritage changes again in the last two decades in several, scattered ways that can sometimes contradict. Firstly, the local communities that were only partly involved in the previous phase, become more engaged. The idea arises that heritage should be considered as living, in which especially local stakeholders take an active place in the conservation process.[31] This approach is also embedded in the international guidelines for dealing with heritage with the new documents of ICCROM.[32]

Selecting precedents

Based on the phases in dealing with heritage, representative precedents will be chosen to establish an approach to connect to context. Since the Former Outpatient Department is the area of investigation, the precedents have roughly similar characteristics and conditions as this building. Deviations are highlighted in figure 3, and are often caused by boundaries given in the phase of dealing with heritage to the precedents.

The selected precedent for the first phase is the restoration with own interpretation of architects Smike and Burton of the Temple Church in London from 1840-1843. The precedent shows that the architects only looked at the object, while adding on new materials to restore the building in an improving manner.[34] For the second phase, another church is taken as precedent. The St. Andrew Holborn church in the City of London, originally designed by Christopher Wren using medieval remains, was heavily damaged in 1941 during the Blitz, but the previous design was carefully replicated. The preservation was driven by aesthetics, as Derrick shows "… while exact replications of Wren interiors would be costly, their beauty could and should be recreated."[35] Both projects inherit the ideas of the first two phases perfectly.

The third phase is represented by two museum buildings. The first is Tate Modern in London by Herzog and De Meuron, that is housed in a former industry hall. The notion of heritage is in this project widened with industrial buildings, which is why it fits the phase in dealing with heritage.

Other than that, the extension of the National Gallery in London by Venturi and Scott Brown is taken as a precedent, since the way this building was established fits the new way of working that Poulios describes.[36] More stakeholders were involved in the realisation of the project.

The last phase is represented by four projects that all portray different aspects of the last scattered phase in dealing with heritage. The COOP Interpretation Centre and Incubator by Bogdan and Van Broeck was realized with cooperation of different stakeholders in a former industrial building. This idea of working with the local community is also used in the Plumstead Centre in London by Hawkins\Brown. The Utrecht Central Library in the former post office of the city by Zecc Architecten and Rijnboutt provides a building for local people, but also includes the touristic aspect of this phase. The central hall of the building is used as an important landmark for the city. Lastly, Bailgate Court in Lincoln by Jonathan Hendry Architects provides another perspective on the phase, by using the heritage to increase income of the intervention by using the old building to creating luxurious apartments.[37]

All eight precedents reflect phases of dealing with heritage and share characteristics with the Former Outpatient Department. An elaborate description of the precedents, supported with images is provided in appendix 1. It will now be researched how these precedents connect to the context. Before being able to do so, context, as being used in this paper, needs to be defined.

perspective in this phase of heritage approaches, see Byrne, 'Western Hegemony in Archaeological Heritage Management'.
25. De Sola-Morales Rubio, op. cit. (note 1), p. 232.
26. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 11), p. 317. Poulios, op. cit. (note 14), p. 18–21
27. de la Torre, Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage: Research Report; Sullivan, 'Local Involvement and Traditional Practices in the World Heritage System'; Earl, Building Conservation Philosophy (Third Edition), p. 119–32.
28. One of the most important charters that were written in this regard

is the Burra Charter, see ICOMOS Australia, 'Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance'.
29. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 11), p. 317.
30. Poulios, op. cit. (note 14), p. 18–21.
31. Ibid., p. 21–30; see also Wijesuriya, 'Guest Editorial'.
32. ICCROM, 'Promoting People-Centered Approaches to Conservation: Living Heritage'.
33. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 11), p. 318.

34. Mordaunt Crook, 'The Restoration of the Temple Church: Ecclesiology and Recrimination'.
35. Derrick, 'The Post-War Reconstruction of Wren's City Churches', p. 30.
36. Poulios, op. cit. (note 14), p. 18–21.
37. More information on all precedents, as well as images and drawings can be found in appendix 1.
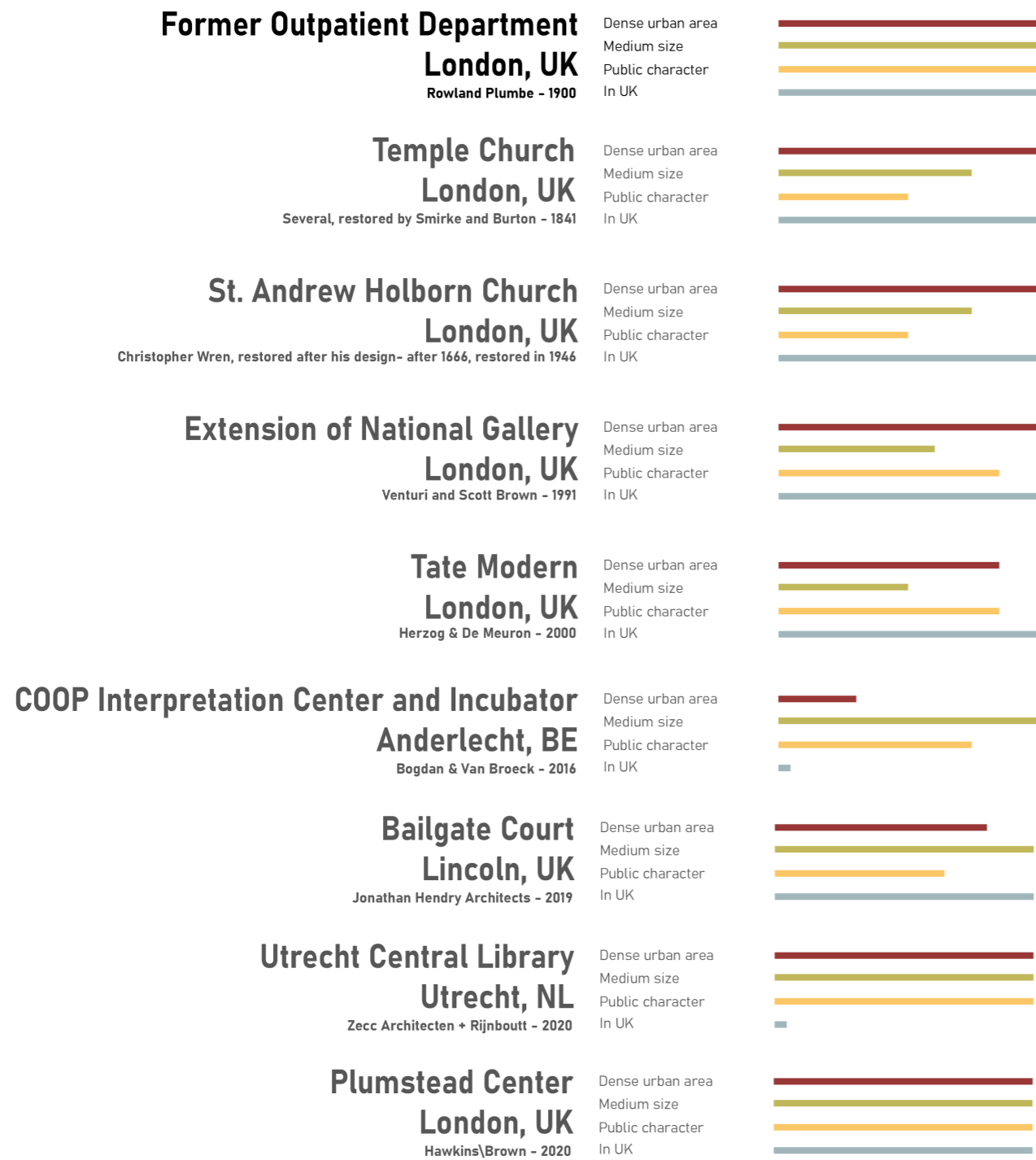
Former Outpatient Department
London, UK
Rowland Plumbe – 1900

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

Temple Church
London, UK
Several, restored by Smirke and Burton – 1841

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

St. Andrew Holborn Church
London, UK
Christopher Wren, restored after his design– after 1666, restored in 1946

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

Extension of National Gallery
London, UK
Venturi and Scott Brown – 1991

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

Tate Modern
London, UK
Herzog & De Meuron – 2000

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

COOP Interpretation Center and Incubator
Anderlecht, BE
Bogdan & Van Broeck – 2016

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

Bailgate Court
Lincoln, UK
Jonathan Hendry Architects – 2019

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

Utrecht Central Library
Utrecht, NL
Zecc Architecten + Rijnboutt – 2020

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

Plumstead Center
London, UK
Hawkins\Brown – 2020

Dense urban area
Medium size
Public character
In UK

Figure 3: comparing the conditions and characteristics of the precedents to the Former Outpatient Department
Image by author

Defining context with the ideas of Rossi

In 'The Architecture of the City' Aldo Rossi discusses a way to understand the city and which is fundamental for the way context is seen in this research. He states that an object has a form and type.[38] The form can stay the same, while the type can simultaniously be viewed differently because of different lenses. Rossi explains, while using real estate as an example, the different perspectives that the same object has from these angles. As a result, "successive syntheses, causing certain elementary facts to come to light, ultimately encompass more general facts."[39] Rossi concludes that when all these general facts are combined, "it becomes capable of providing us with a fairly complete knowledge of the city."[40]

This paper sees the complete context as the sum of facts that arise by looking from different perspectives to an object. But which perspectives are these in the case of dealing with heritage? In their discussion on the way heritage should be seen, Brown and Maudlin state that:
"…all buildings are incomplete and subject to change, as the occupants constantly alter and adapt their surroundings, in response to changing cultural, economic, social and technological conditions and, increasingly, ecological concerns."[41]

Based on this idea, different contexts arise, as can be seen in figure 4. The complete context is formed by intangible context and tangible context, which can then be subdivided in more specific parts, based on the concerns that Brown and Maudlin outline. These context include several areas, which are described in figure 4. To connect to the context means to connect to all specific contexts, since the context as a whole means the combination of all the separate elements. This sum of layers in the present represents the complete palimpsest.

CONTEXT	Intangible context	Socio-cultural context	People, ethnicities, relations, culture, religion, identity
		Economical context	Employment, housing, affordability, profit, income
		Use context	Uses, functions, patters
		Historical context	Previous structures, qualities, uses, events
	Tangible context	Infrastructural context	Modes of transportation, routing, circulation, networks
		Material context	Colour, rhythm, building materials, finishes
		Ecological context	Nature, environment, sustainability, materials

Figure 4: definition of context
Image by author

38. Rossi, op. cit. (note 12), p. 20–23.
39. Ibid., p. 23.
40. Ibid., p. 23.
41. Brown and Maudlin, 'Concepts of Vernacular Architecture', p. 354.

Although the context was never a starting point in dealing with heritage in the past, mostly unconscious connections arise with all parts of context, however, not one precedent refers to all contexts in their approach. This becomes clear when looking at figure 5, in which each connection to context is highlighted. In what way this connection is established becomes clear when looking at figure 6. The concrete implementations of the connections, resulting tools and how they are visible in the precedents is shown in the appendix. This is done with the small table of made connections on the right top, as well as the concrete implementation of them highlighted in the images.

The two oldest precedents, Temple Church (see appendix 1.1) and St. Andrew Holborn Church (see appendix 1.2) from the first two phases in dealing with heritage, only connect to a part of the intangible context, in the form of use and historical context, both in a similar way. By dealing with the church, it could be assured that the existing use can continue. Both handlings of the churches refer to the historical context by bringing back a previous version of the building, and in the case of the Temple Church, going beyond this by also wanting to improve the historical context with contemporary insights.

In the third phase, connections to the tangible context arise as well and overall more connections are being made. Both the Extension of the National Gallery (appendix 1.3) and Tate Modern (appendix 1.4) consider the infrastructural surroundings, by placing new entrances and

improving the circulation within the building to fit the infrastructural situation outside. In the case of the extension of the National Gallery, the material context is also considered in choosing similar materials to the surroundings.[42] Tate Modern, however, connects to the ecological context by introducing green that was missing. Besides the material context, the intangible context is also touched in the approaches by creating meeting spaces and places for expression of culture to connect to the socio-cultural context. Lastly, while the Extension ensures the continuation of uses, Tate Modern connects to the economical context with creating new workspaces in the area.

In the last phase, approaches of connecting to the context become more diverse and in general, more connections are being made to both tangible and intangible context. The least connections are made in the case of the COOP Interpretation Centre and Incubator (appendix 1.5), however, the approaches to connect differ from the previous precedents. In contrast to before, the use context is addressed by placing a missing use in the context into the building, a place to gather, while the historical context is also touched by reinstating a previous use of industrial workspace. The material context is addressed by trying to disturb the old materials in a minimal way with the introduction of the new, thin steel. Lastly, sustainable design in used for the first time in this intervention, which is visible in all connections to ecological context in the other precedents of the fourth phase.

Other than the sustainable intervention to connect to the ecological context, Bailgate

court (appendix 1.6) connects to the same context in a different way. The ecological context is also addressed by maintaining and protecting the existing green and the material context by using similar materials to the surroundings in the interventions. The historical context is addressed by remaking the backside of the building that used to exist and the use context is addressed by placing a use in the building that was already there in the surroundings. Lastly, Bailgate Court also addresses the economical context by making luxurious apartments that make the project profitable.

The last two precedents of the fourth phase, Utrecht Central Library (appendix 1.7) and Plumstead Centre (appendix 1.8), create connections often in similar ways, that also arose earlier. They connect to the socio-cultural context by creating meeting spaces. The use context is addressed by placing a missing use of the context in the building: a library in Utrecht and in the case of the Plumstead Centre a sports accommodation (besides the already existing library). The precedents relate to the infrastructural context by creating new entrances that connect to the surrounding infrastructure, while the circulation of the Utrecht Library is also adjusted to that. The connection to the infrastructural context with these two approaches was also one of the starting points of the design.[43] The material context and ecological context is addressed in a similar way as Bailgate Court. The two projects differ when looking at the economical and historical context. The economical context is referred to by Utrecht Central Library by

creating employment and a place to shop, whereas the historical context is treated by the Plumstead Centre in the form of reinstating the underused function of the library to the original level.

From this analysis, it appears that the further one goes back in history, fewer connections to context are made. The connections that are made also concern similar relations: the historical and use context is touched upon in the precedent, whereas all the other contexts are hardly addressed. Later, precedents connect to more aspects of the context with a larger variety of tools to achieve the connection. Whereas in previous phases only the intangible context was considered, the tangible context is also addressed in the last phase. Over time, aspects of the context like the economical and infrastructural are taken into account. Other than that, the case of the Utrecht Central Library shows that connections are made more consciously than before, as the connection to the infrastructural context shows.

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42. See Earl, Building Conservation Philosophy (Third Edition), 116, for a discussion on material choices for the Extension of the National Gallery.

43. See https://www.archdaily.com/943774/utrecht-central-library-and-post-office-zecc-architecten-plus-rijnboutt

Figure 5: established connections to the context of the precedents
Image by author

Figure 6: overview of tools that are being used to establish connections to context
Image by author

Figure 7: architectural toolkit to connect to the context
Image by author

By looking into the precedents from all phases, a collection of tools arise of at least two tools per context to establish a connection (see figure 5). In this way, it provides the starting point for an approach of dealing with heritage that starts from the context. Before implementing the tools and therefore using this context-based approach, it is important to discuss several points of consideration that were found when implementing this approach to the Former Outpatient Department.

The first point to consider is that the amount of tools from this precedent research is limited. On one hand, when working with this context-based approach situations, buildings and mindsets can differ from the research case of the Former Outpatient Department and therefore it can come to light that the present tools are not sufficient. So, more tools can and will arise while working in practice. This was clearly visible when the tools were applied at the Former Outpatient Department: in the design process, more tools were established even though the precedent research was set up for this building (see figure 8 for the new tools after design). On the other hand, the approach in this paper is established by looking into only eight precedents of which the choice is selective. As a result, this research does not formulate all possible tools. Consequently, it is wise to consider that more tools will arise from connecting other projects to the context and studying other precedents.

A second point to take into account is that the tools that are established in this precedent research are generic. It is visible in the precedents that the overall actions are similar, but the way they are executed can differ. This can depend on the difference between projects and the different contexts that these buildings are in. For example, both the COOP Interpretation centre and the Plumstead Centre use the tool 'placing a missing use from the context', but in the case of the COOP Interpretation centre, this means placing

a café, while in the Plumstead centre this means introducing place to sport (see appendix 1.5 and 1.8). In a way, the implementation of the tools remain specific and different to each project, while the tool itself stays more generic.

Because of this nature of the tools, it remains vital to always keep the context in mind. For example, Tate Modern and the Plumstead Centre use corresponding tools, but the way they are implemented in the design has to be different due to the surroundings. A meeting space for Tate Modern is created by an internationally oriented and iconic museumspace, while the meeting space in the Plumstead centre is focussed on creating intimate sport and working spaces for residents (see appendix 1.4 and 1.8). With specifying the tool to the project, it is a thread to lose oneself in the object again, similar to the previous approaches of dealing with heritage that only focus on the heritage object. Therefore, the connection that needs to be established always needs to be kept in mind.

Another point of consideration in this approach is the fact that the implementation of some of the tools can bring radical changes to the listed building, that would not have arisen while working with previous ways of dealing with heritage. For example, an intervention that is needed to connect to a certain context can contradict with valuable assets of the building that would have remained in previous approaches of dealing with heritage. The precedents do not show such a radical change, since the context-driven approach was not the starting point. However, while working on the Former Outpatient Department, situations where more radical changes had to be made occured. As a result, it needs to be reconsidered what can be done with a listed object, to make it more open to change. Often, this more radical intervention will be the way to make sure the building can become an integral part of the palimpsest again.
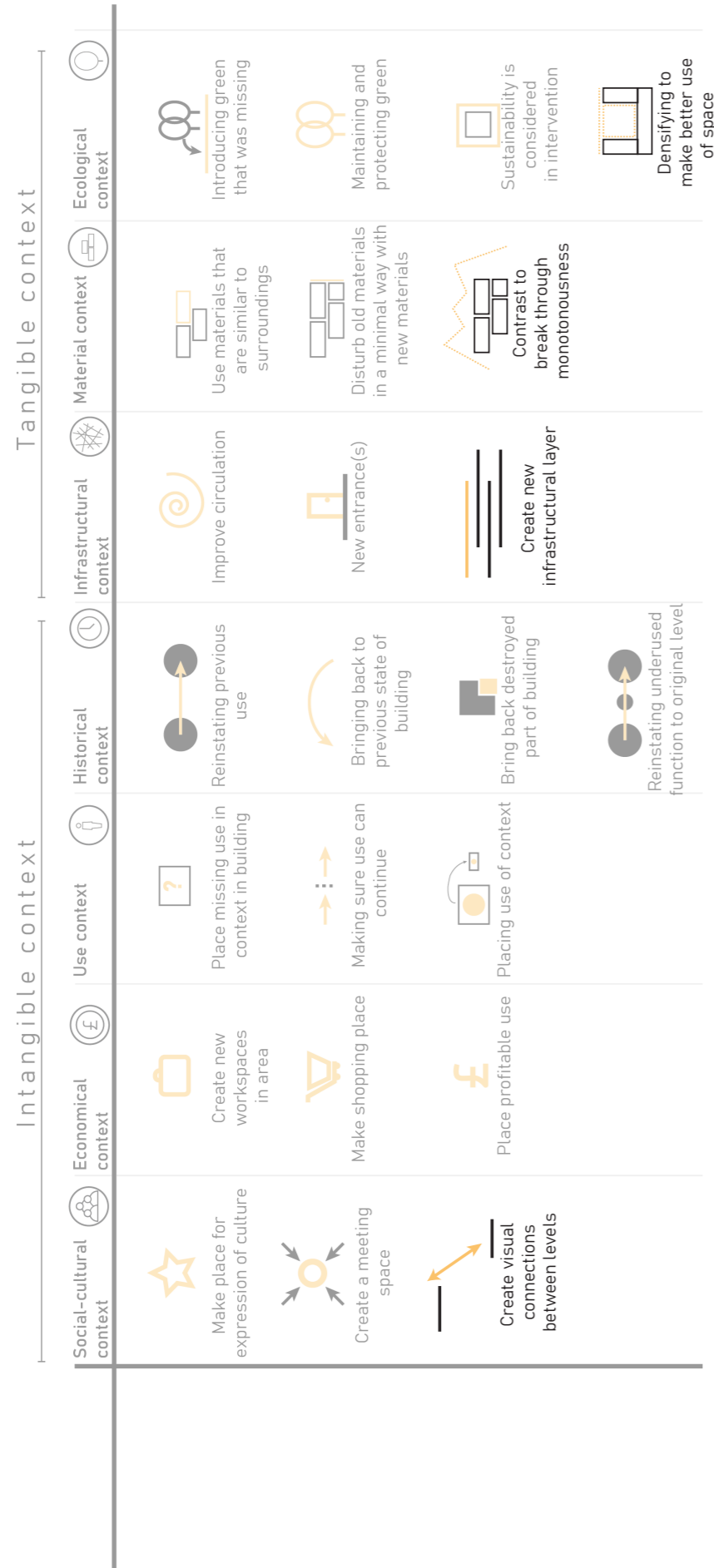
Figure 8: architectural toolkit with new tools (highlighted) found while working on design project
Image by author

Conclusions

While previous dealings of heritage focus on the heritage object itself, this research aims to investigate in what way heritage can become an integral part of the current palimpsest by developing and exploring a new context-driven approach. This paper aims to establish this approach by examining precedents from previous phases in dealing with heritage and the role they can play in establishing such a context driven approach. After clearly defining context as the sum of layers that can be found in the city and selecting relevant precedents from each phase, it becomes clear that the precedents made connections to the context, although often unconsciously. By analysing the way the connections were made, tools could be extracted that together form the first set up of a context-driven approach for dealing with heritage. Such an approach has not yet been established and could therefore be a contribution to the field on dealing with the heritage objects.

When the approach was used to address the empty Former Outpatient Department two things became clear. On one hand, there are still some points of considerations. The tools that are found in this research are not complete, due to limited precedent research and new tools that can be found when working on different projects in different situations with the context-driven approach (figure 8). Other than that, the tools can

be described as generic, while their implementation can differ and is therefore more specific to the project. The different contexts of objects can call for either contrasting or conforming applications of the same tool. In making this decision, it is important to keep the to be established connection to context in mind to not lose oneself in the object as in previous phases of dealing with heritage. Lastly, it is important to be aware that more radical choices often will have to be made to accommodate connections.

However, dealing with heritage from the context-driven perspective can bring new angles and ways to get hold on working with heritage. By using the tools to make the building an integral part of the context again, this layer of the palimpsest will not forfeit. Above that, the long-term continuity of existence of this layer is higher than the previous approaches. Since the building, after the intervention, plays an important role in social, economic, functional, historical, infrastructural, material and ecological processes around the building, not taking care of the edifice would have significant unwanted consequences on all these levels. It creates engagement of participation in taking care of the building in the future in all these aspects. In this way it can include heritage in the palimpsest, instead of heritage that only exists within it. It can create heritage that is actively part of the palimpsest.

Glossery

Palimpsest
The idea that the city consist of superimposed multiple layers over time. Eventually, these layers change: parts of these layers disappear, get rebuild or get new functions. Therefore, the city as we find it today is changed over time but still bears visible traces of its earlier forms.

Context
The sum of relations an object has to the socio-cultural, economical, use, historical, infrastructural, material and ecological surroundings.

Heritage
In this research, the definition of Historic England is used, that defines heritage as "all inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility." In contrast to Historic England, heritage in this research is only concerned with its material manifestations.

Heritage at risk
This research starts from the definition given by Historic England: "historic buildings and sites at risk of being lost through neglect, decay or deterioration." In this research, the definition is elaborated with the risk of being disconnected from the context.

Preservation
Keeping a structure from destruction, by holding onto as much as possible original material and therefore often freezing an object in time.

Conservation
A process where the current value of the object is increased in the process of keeping it by keeping as much as possible original material to facilitate this.

Renovation
Improving a broken, damaged or outdated structure to make it into good shape again.

Restoration
Repairing a building while only keeping materials from the most important time in the objects history and therefore leaving things out that are not from that time.

44. Historic England, 'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment'.
45. Historic England, op. cit. (note 8), IV. See pages IV-VIII for the criteria per site type
46. Based on definition by https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/preservation
47. Based on definition by https://www.merriam-webster.com/

dictionary/conservation
48. All definitions are based on the definition given in the Merriam Webster dictionary. See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/renovation
49. Based on definition by https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/restoration

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1.1 Temple Church – several (unknown) architects, restored by Smirke and Burton, 1841, London, UK

The Temple Church, originally build between the tenth and thirteenth century, in the City of London was restored by Smirke and Burton between 1840 and 1843 (tool: making sure use can continue). A lot of original material was demolished and replaced to fit the ideas of the architects on the supposed original state of high gothic to make the church a monument that makes a great impression (tool: bringing back to a previous (in this case imagined) state of the building). Contemporary materials were introduced to achieve this that were not used in the original building, like iron cramps in the construction of the new bell turret.

Social-cultural context	Economical context	Use context	Historical context	Infrastructural context	Material context	Ecological context
		→ ⋮ →	↶			

Making sure use can continue

Bringing back to previous state of building
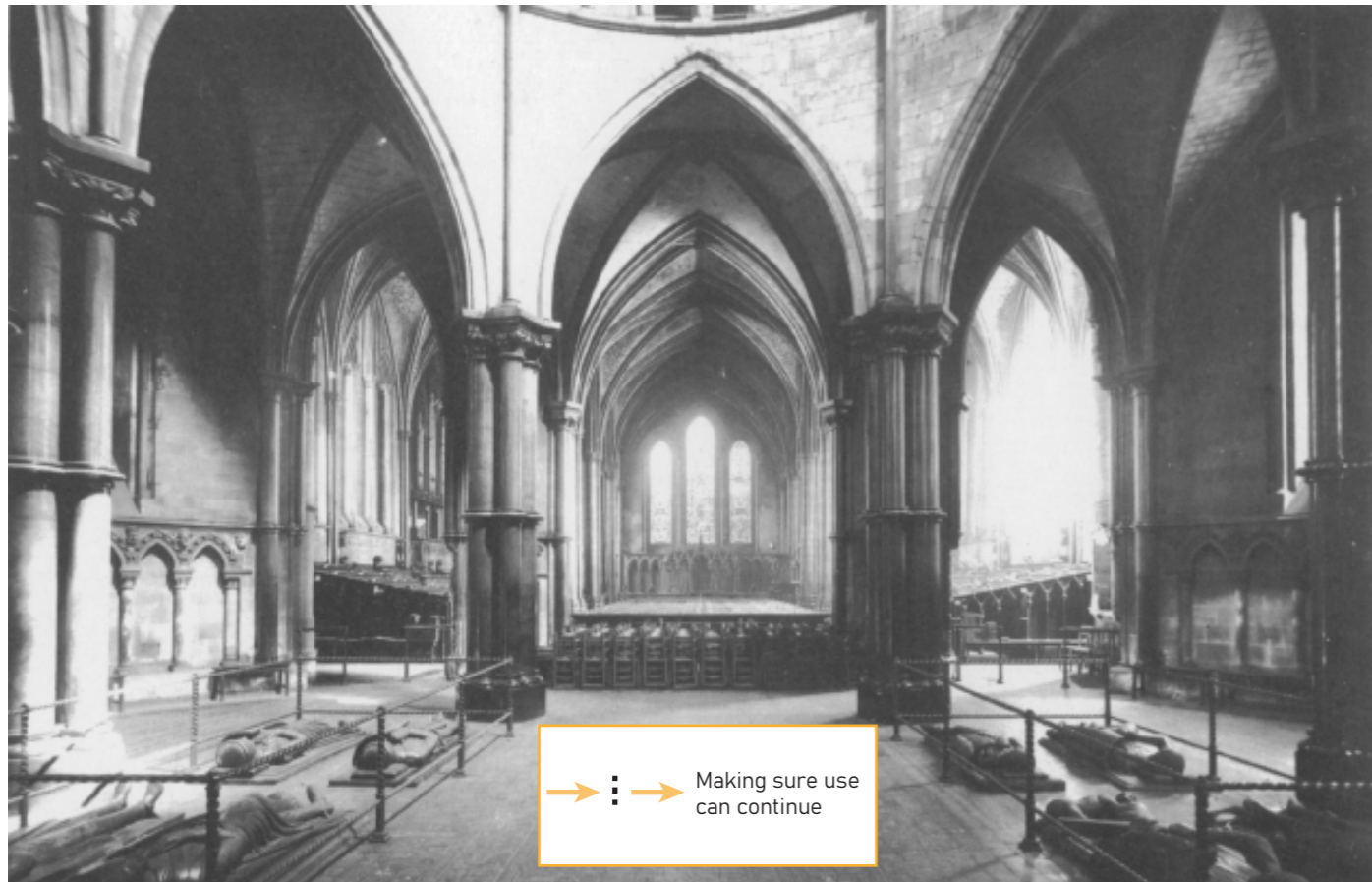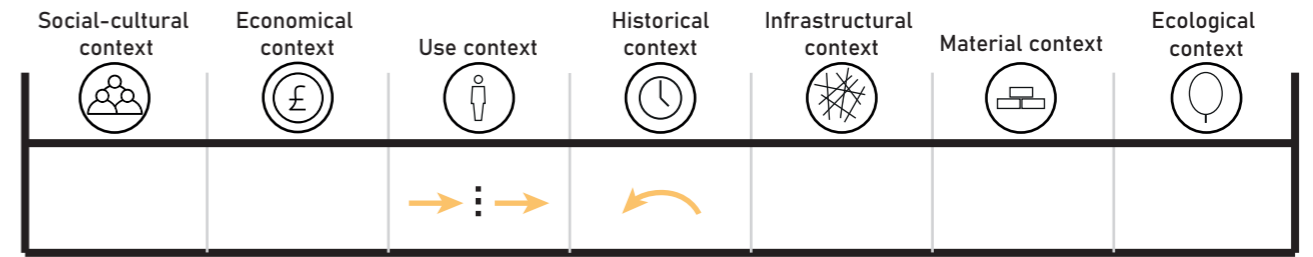
New interior of Temple Church
N.B.R. Photograph, after restoration and before Blitz

New added bell turret, seen from exterior
N.B.R. Photograph, 1927.

1.2 St. Andrew Holborn Church – Christopher Wren (after 1666), restored after his design (1946), London, UK

This church located in the City of London had medieval origins, but was mainly designed by Christopher Wren after the Great Fire of London in 1666. The church was damaged during the Blitz in 1941 and only the exterior walls and the towers were left. After the war, the design of Wren was carefully replicated (tool: make sure use can continue (the church use stayed) and driven by aesthetics (tool: bring back to previous state of building). Shortly after the war, in 1950, this building was Grade I listed.

Social-cultural context	Economical context	Use context	Historical context	Infrastructural context	Material context	Ecological context
		→ ⋮ →	↶			

Bringing back to previous state of building

Making sure use can continue

Interior of St. Andrew Holborn Church
Photographer unknown, 2014

Exterior of the church after the Blitz (above) and after restoration (below)
Above: photographer unknown, 1943. Below: Elisa Rolle, 2013.

1.3 Extension of National Gallery – Venturi and Scott Brown, 1991, London, UK

After a long discussion between neo-Modernists and traditionalists, Venturi Scott-Brown designed the National Gallery Sainsbury Wing extension that was realised in 1991 (tools: make sure use can continue, improve circulation, make place for expression of culture, new entrances, create meeting space. The intervention itself solved mainly space- and infrastructural issues in the existing building).

The building deals with heritage in the way that a relation is made with the existing iconic building. This relation is expressed by the echoing facade in shape and material choise, that is contextual, creative and restained at the same time (tool: use materials that are similar to surroundings). The building became the outcome of compromises between the new ideas of the time and the old building.

Social-cultural context	Economical context	Use context	Historical context	Infrastructural context	Material context	Ecological context

Use materials that are similar to surroundings

Making sure use can continue

Improve circulation

Make place for expression of culture

New entrance(s)

Create a meeting space
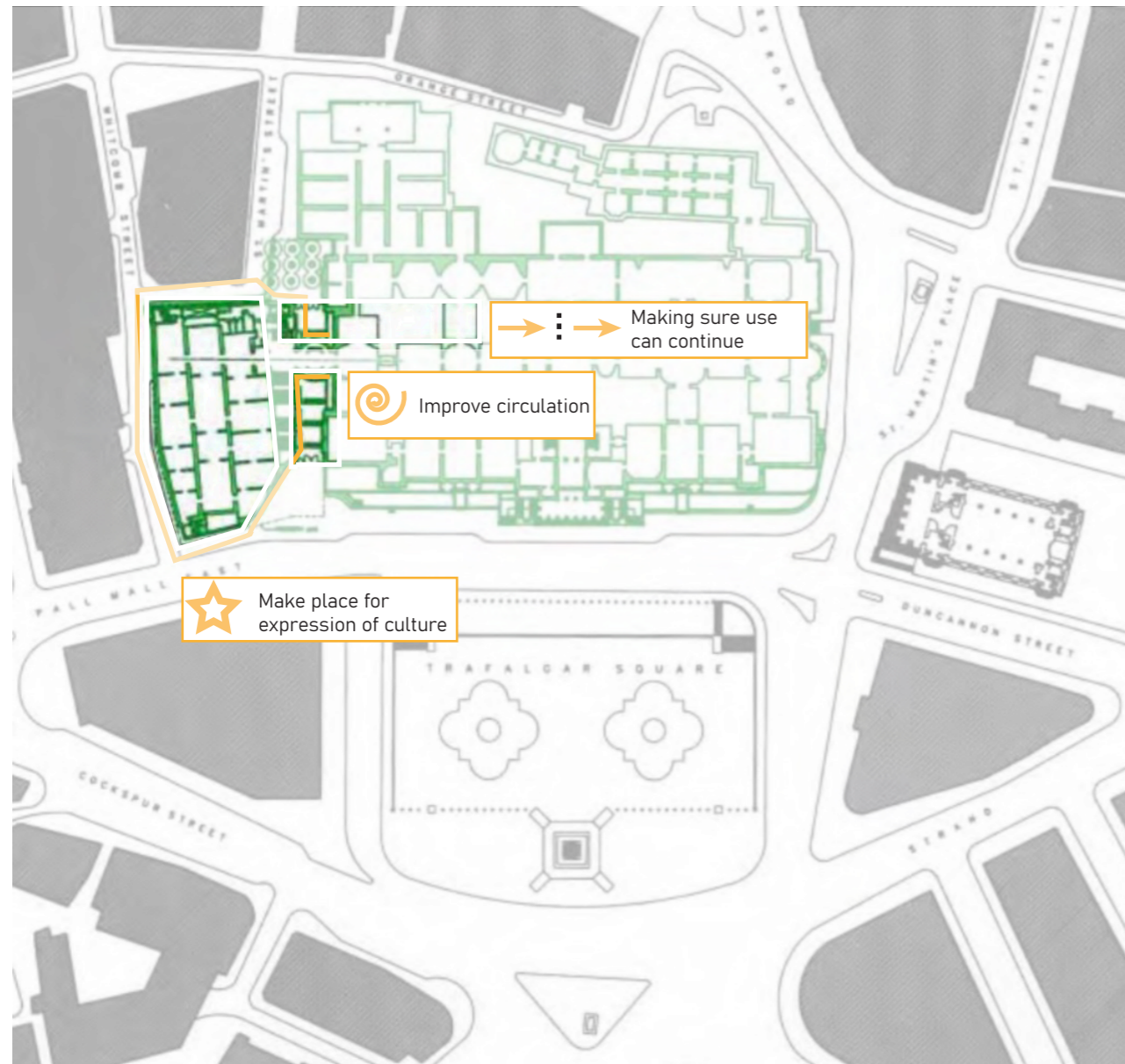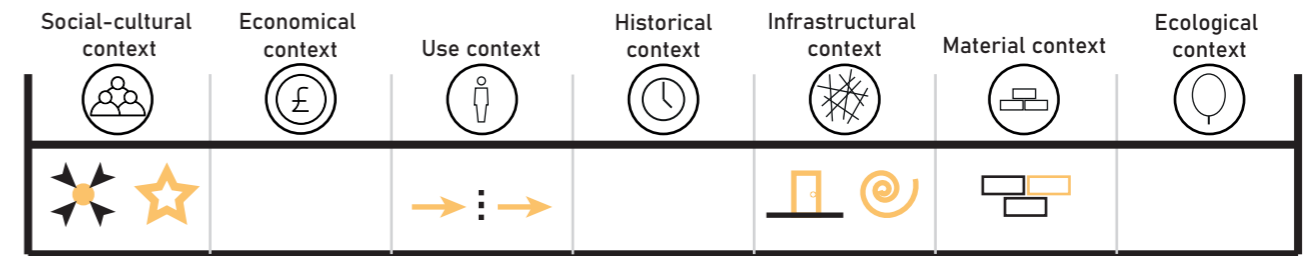
Plan for Extention of National Gallery
Image by Ventury Scott Brown, highlight by author

Sainsbury wing
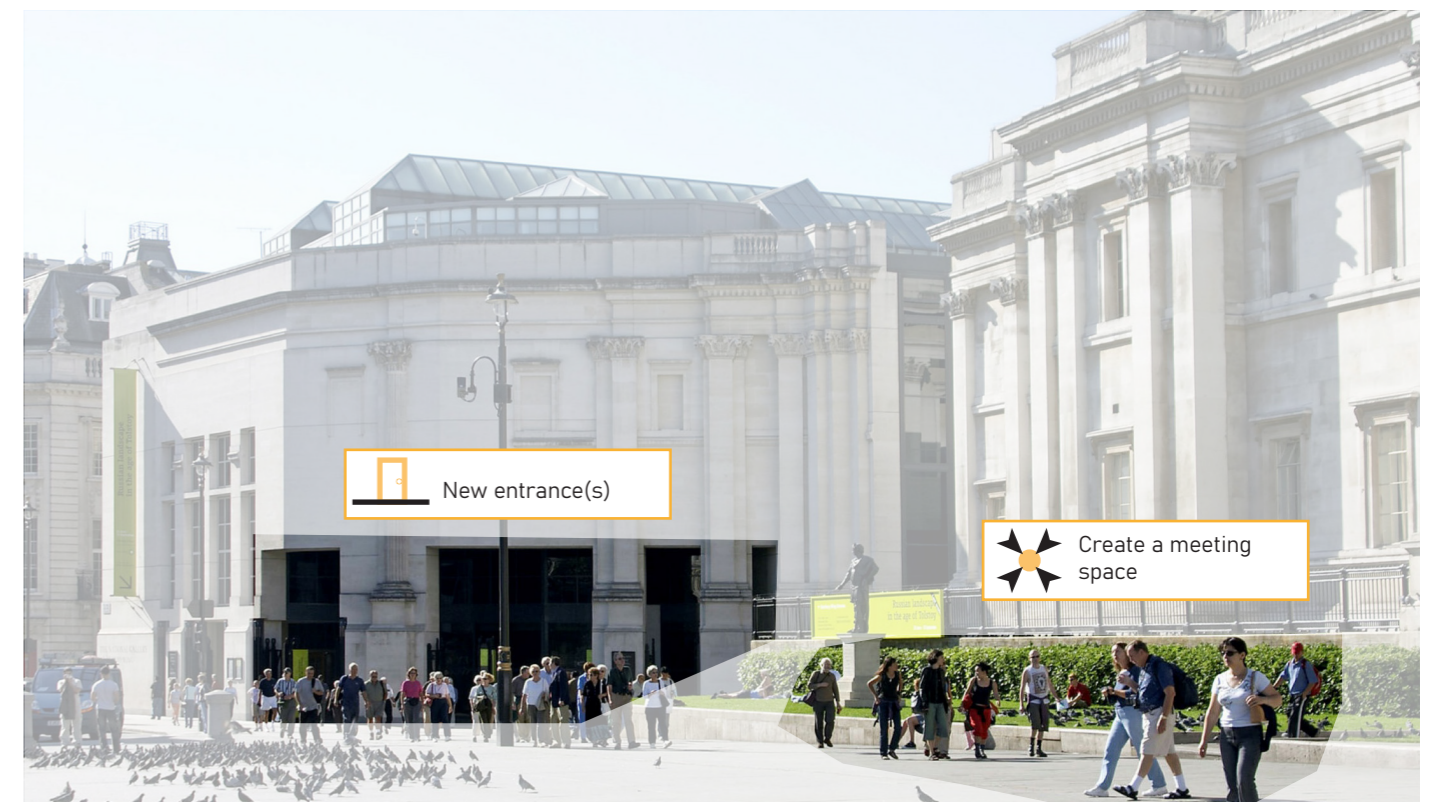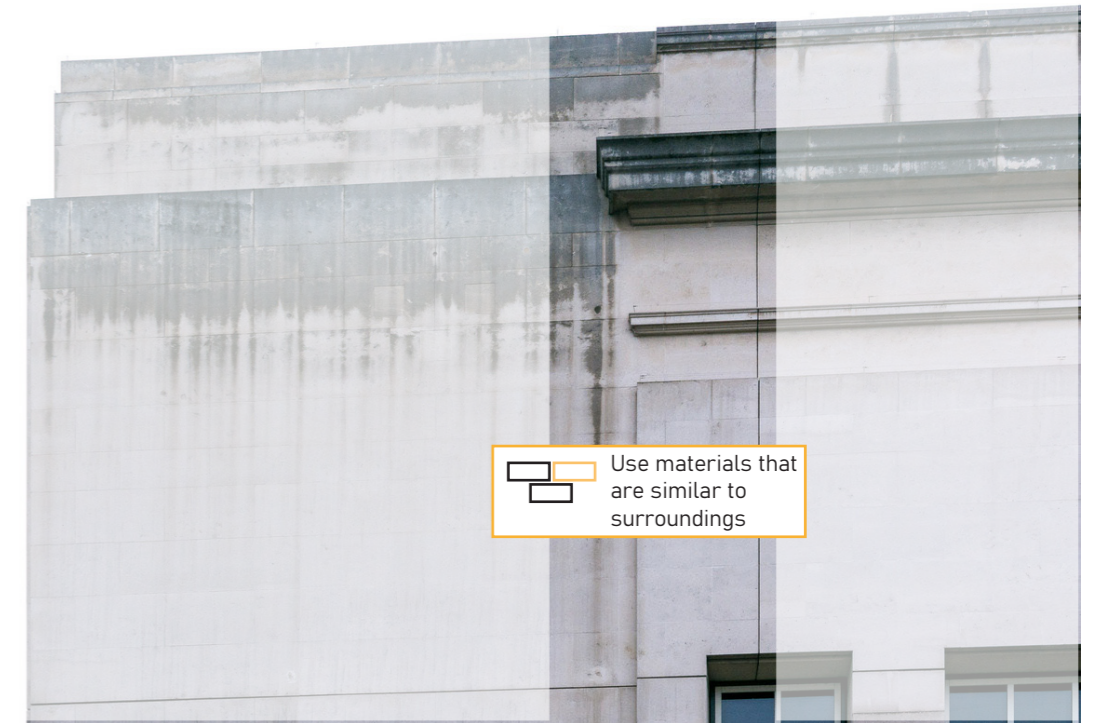
Detail of connection between old and new (above) and exterior view (below)
Both pictures by Valentino Danilo Matteis

1.4 Tate Modern – Herzog & De Meuron, 2000, London, UK

After 20 years of vacancy, the Power Station designed by Giles Gilbert Scott in the 1940's along the Thames was redesigned as a museum by Herzog & de Meuron (tools: make place for expression of culture, create new workspace in area (with introduction of museum use)). The original industrial feeling of the building was kept by leaving the volume intact and also keeping the main large turbine hall that is characteristic for the building. The public character (tool: create meeting space) was brought into the building by creating a park around the building (tool: introduce green that was missing) and emphasizing the entrances. The building gives a new character and revitalisation to the neighborhood surrounding it while connecting to it infrastructurally (tools: new entrances, improve circulation).

Social-cultural context	Economical context	Use context	Historical context	Infrastructural context	Material context	Ecological context

Create a meeting space

Create new workspaces in area

Exterior view of Tate Modern
Photograph of 2013
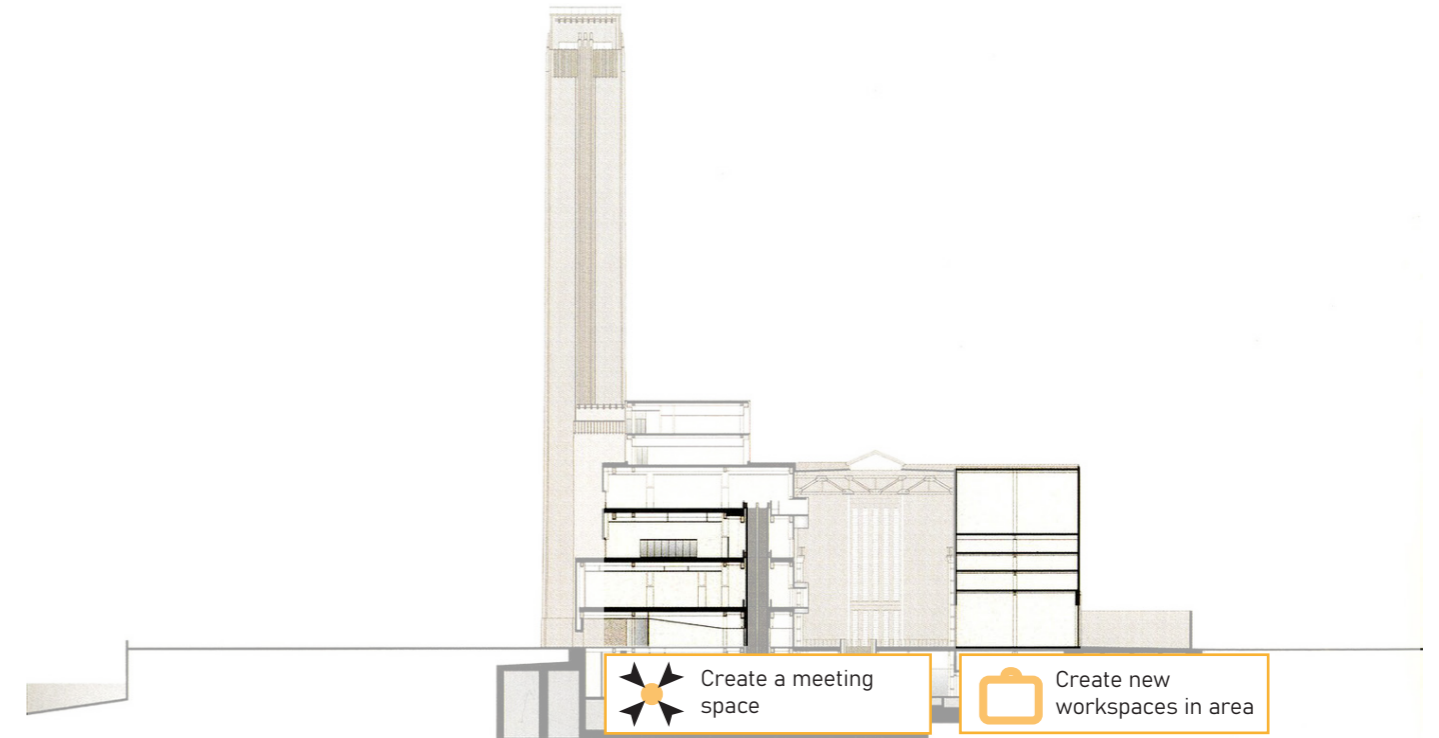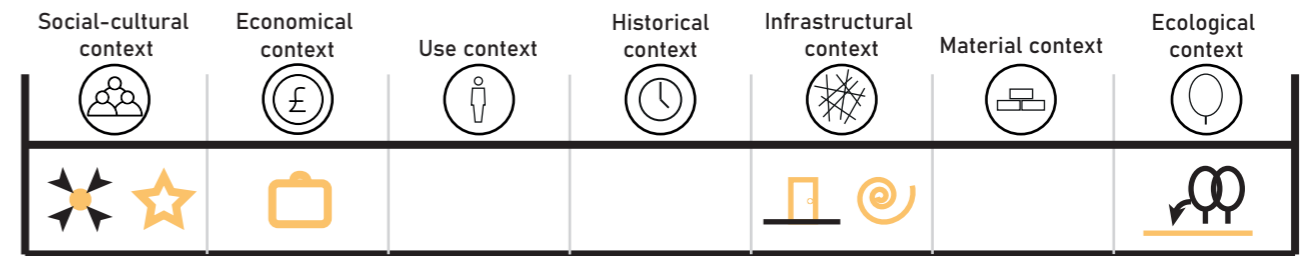
Introducing green that was missing
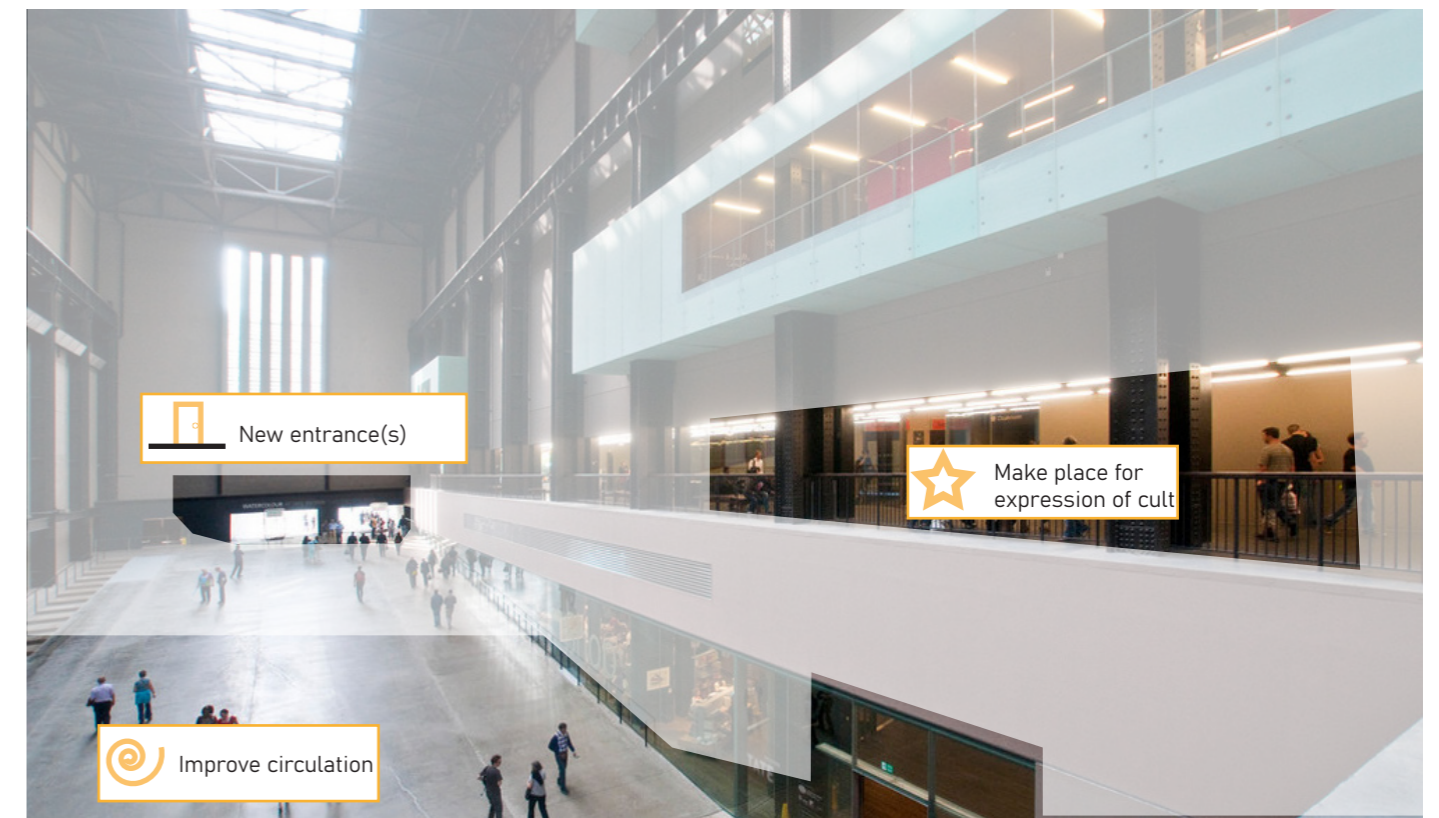
New entrance(s)

Make place for expression of cult

Improve circulation

Section of Tate Modern (above) and interior view on turbine hall (below)
Above: Herzog & de Meuron, Below: picture by Darrell Godliman

1.5 COOP Interpretation Center and Incubator – Bogdan & Van Broeck, 2016, Anderlecht, BE

This former warehouse in a to be developed area was transformed, after it has been empty for a long time, into a creative industrial workspace (tool: reinstate previous use) with a commercial public function on the roof extension (tool: place missing use in context in building). The old building was used as a shell, in which seperate insulated boxes were created to split up the space (tool: sustainable intervention). The new additions have been made in materials that differ from the original building. They are light and still respect the old warehouse (tool: disturb old materials in minimal way with new materials).
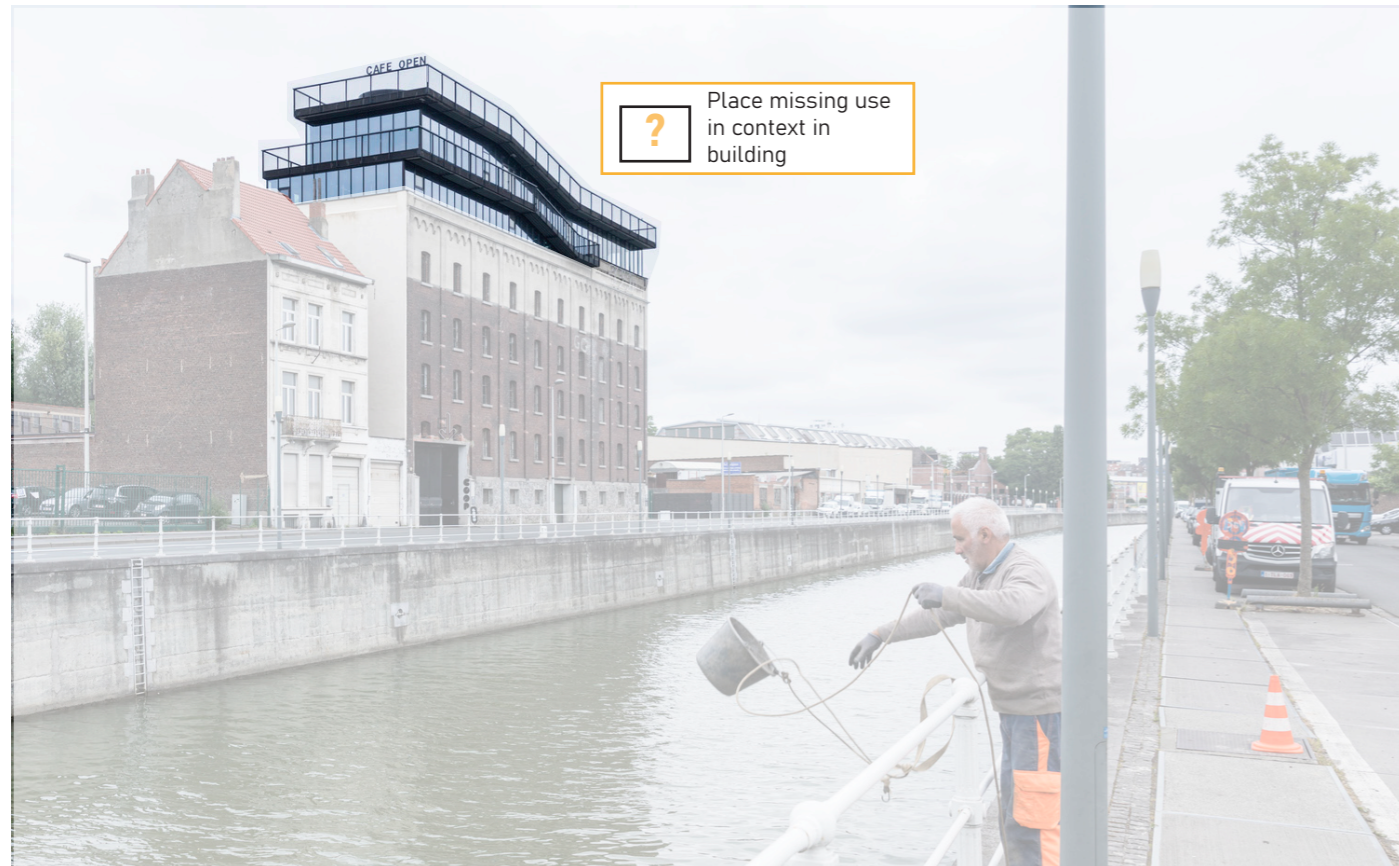
Place missing use in context in building
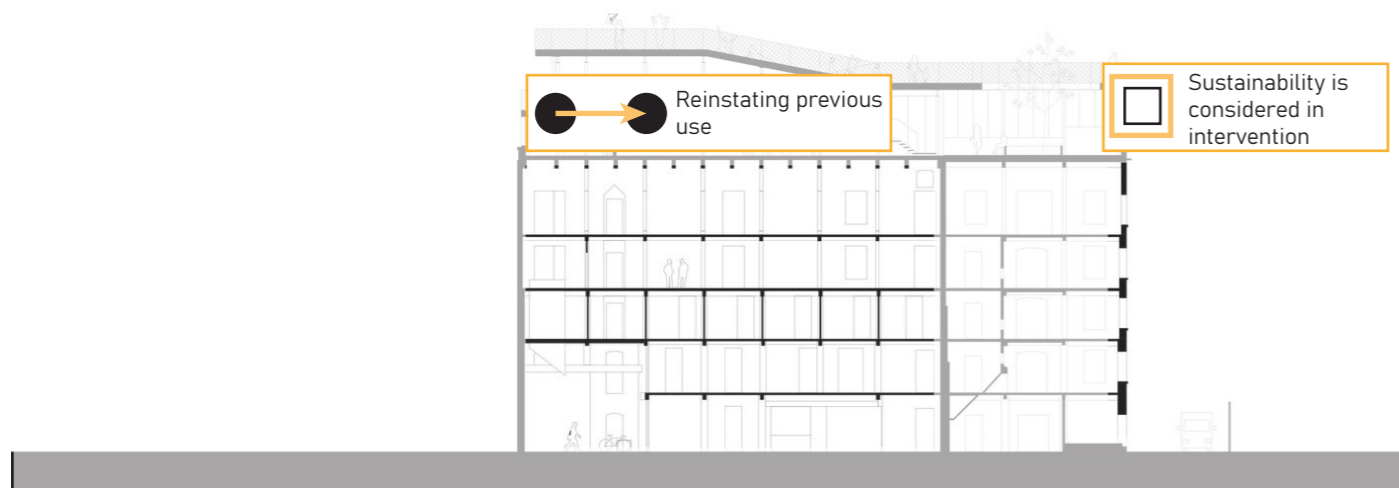
Reinstating previous use

Sustainability is considered in intervention

Exterior of building (above) and section (below)
Both images by architect
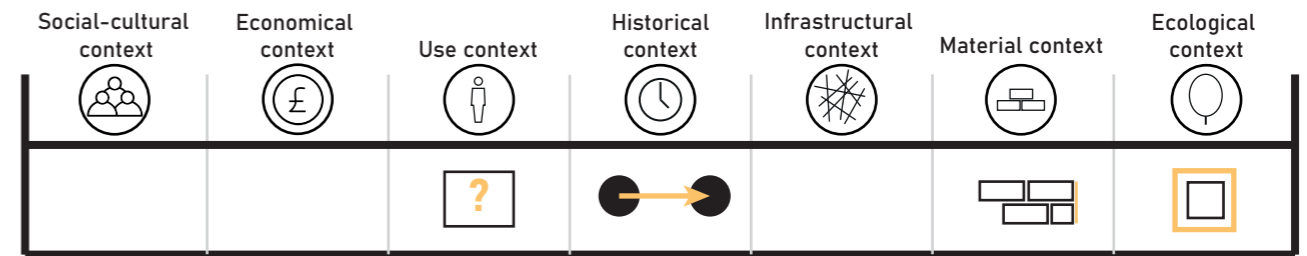
Disturb old materials in a minimal way with new materials

Old vs new material use
Image by architect

1.6 Bailgate Court – Jonathan Hendry Architects, 2019, Lincoln, UK

Bailgate Court was built in 1776 as the Lincoln County Hospital. Over time, the use changed and untill the mid-1990's the building was used as Lincoln's Theological College. Although the building is Grade II listed, it remained unused after the Theological College left. In 2019 the building was transformed into luxurious housing (tools: place profitable use, place use of context)and a new backside (tool: bring back destroyed part of building), that faces the streets of Lincoln was build with carefully chosen material (tools: use materials that are similar to surroundings, sustainable intervention). Besides, the garden that was designed for the hospital still remains in the current design (tool: maintain and protect green)

Social-cultural context	Economical context	Use context	Historical context	Infrastructural context	Material context	Ecological context
	£		▪			♔ ▫
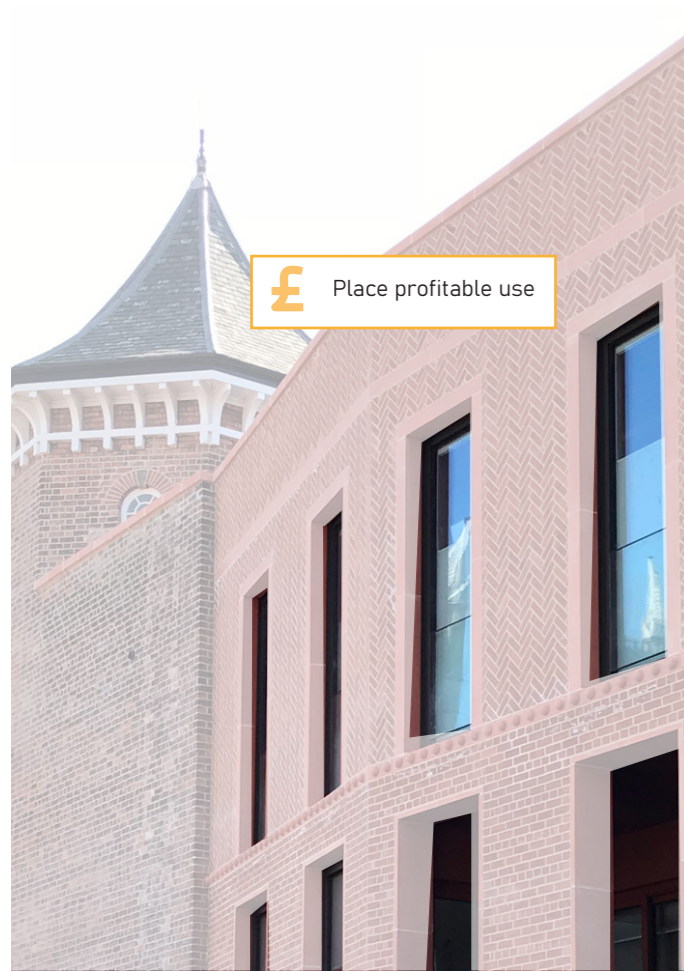
Place profitable use

Sustainability is considered in intervention

Placing use of context

Use materials that are similar to surroundings

Front facade of new and old
Images by architect
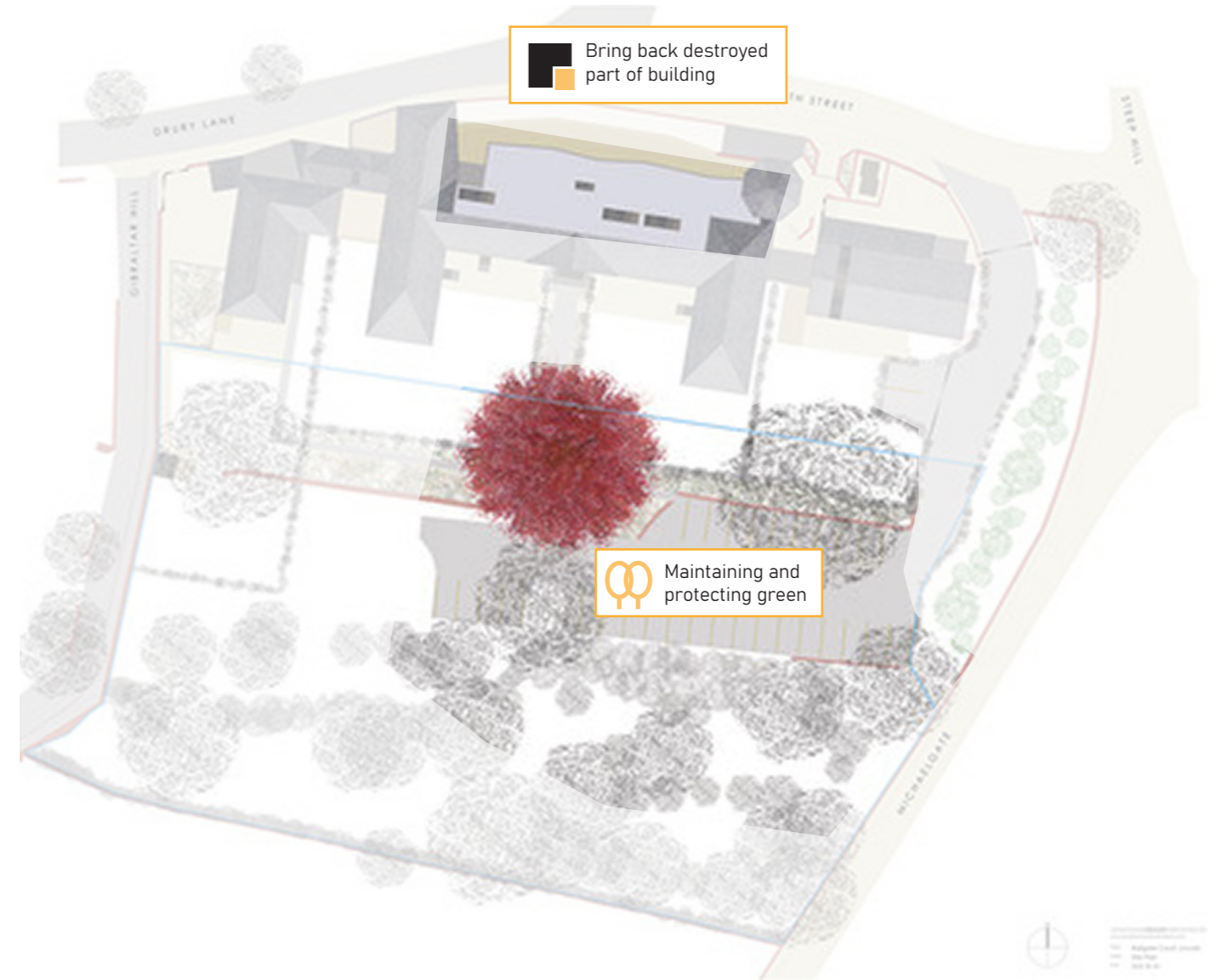
Bring back destroyed part of building

Maintaining and protecting green

Site plan, showing the original building and its new extension in the surroundings
Drawing by architect

1.7 Utrecht Central Library – Zecc Architecten + Rijnboutt, 2020, Utrecht, NL

After the former Post Office of Utrecht ran out of use, the library was considered as a suited use for the building (tools: place missing use, create new workspace) A characterizing aspect of the building is the central hall, which is opened up to the public with the use of library (tool: create meeting space). While paying attention to the surroundings, new routings have been placed in the building to engage the interior with the exterior of the building (tools: improve circulation and new entrances). Other than that, an extension was built to enlarge the space of the library and to place retail (tools: new entrances, use materials that are similar to surroundings, make shopping place, sustainable intervention).

Social-cultural context	Economical context	Use context	Historical context	Infrastructural context	Material context	Ecological context

New entrance(s)

Make shopping place

Create a meeting space

Improve circulation

Place missing use in context in building

Sustainability is considered in intervention

Use materials that are similar to surroundings

Create new workspaces in area

Images Utrecht Central Library
Photographs by Kees Hummel
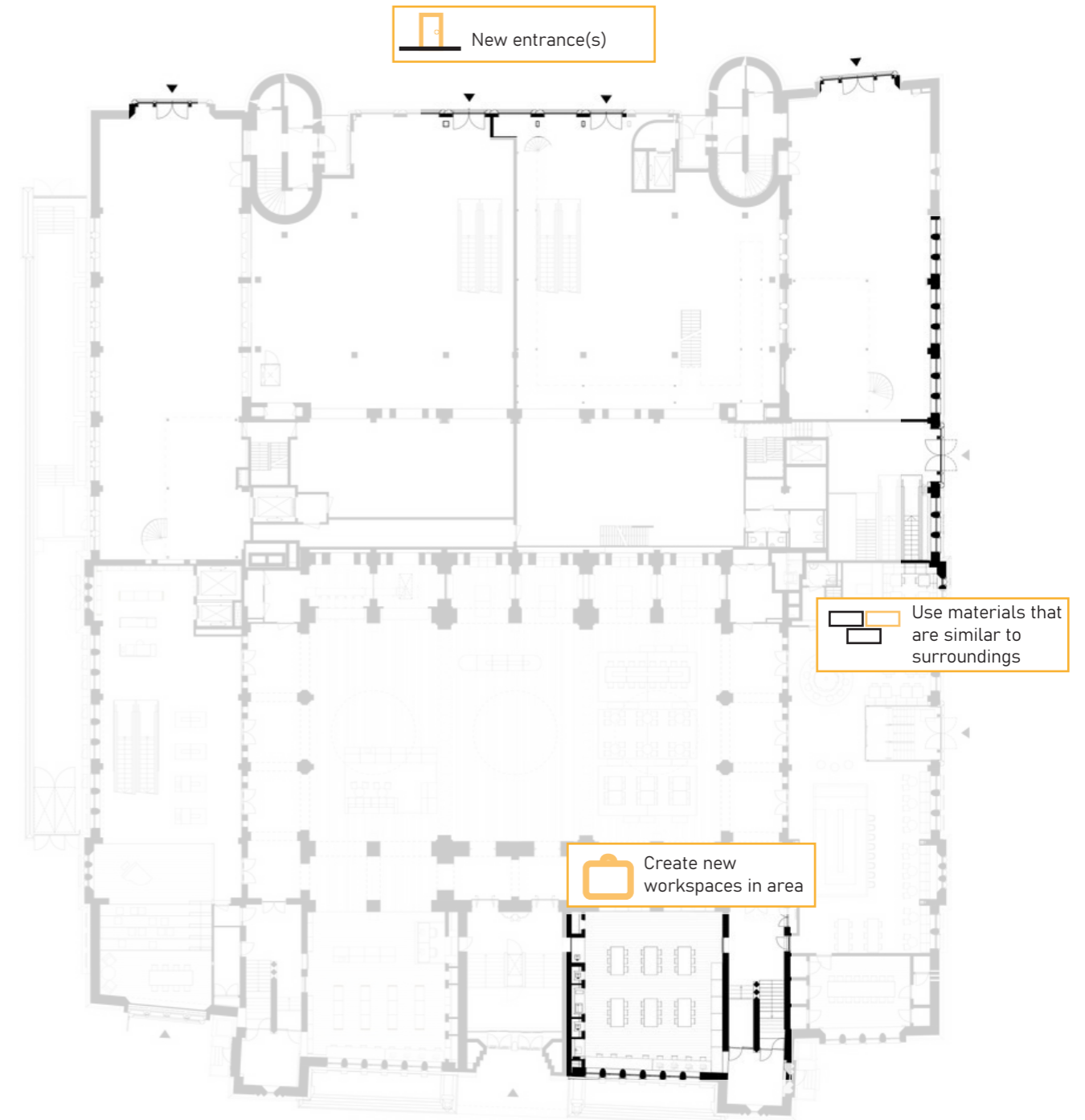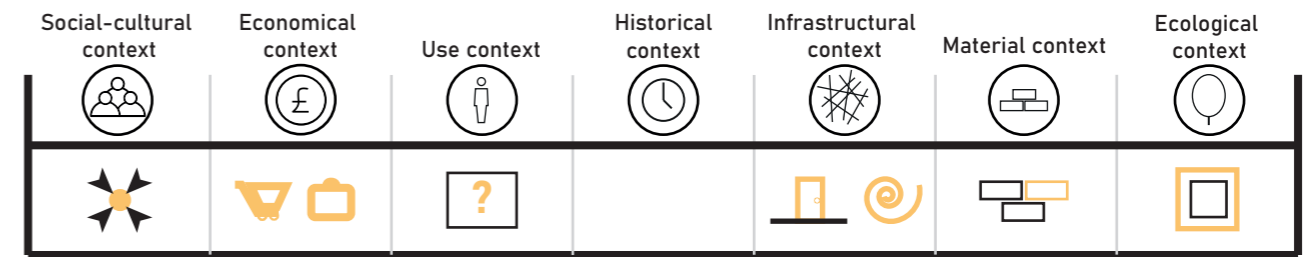
Ground floor plan
Drawing by architects

1.8 Plumstead Center – Hawkins\Brown, 2020, London, UK

The Plumstead Center used to be an under-used library on Plumstead High Street in the borough of Greenwich in London. In 2020, the library was updated by Hawkins\Brown and to make the place more lively (tools: reinstating underused function to original level, create meeting place), the programme is elaborated by including sports facilities (tool: place missing use in context in building). The existing library was listed as a Grade II Listed building and therefore, as much as possible material was kept. The extension with new functions echos the material that is used in the old parts (tools: use materials that are similar to surroundings, sustainable intervention). In the whole, the building aims to be open to the public (tool: new entrance).

Use materials that are similar to surroundings

New entrance(s)

Create a meeting space

Sustainability is considered in intervention
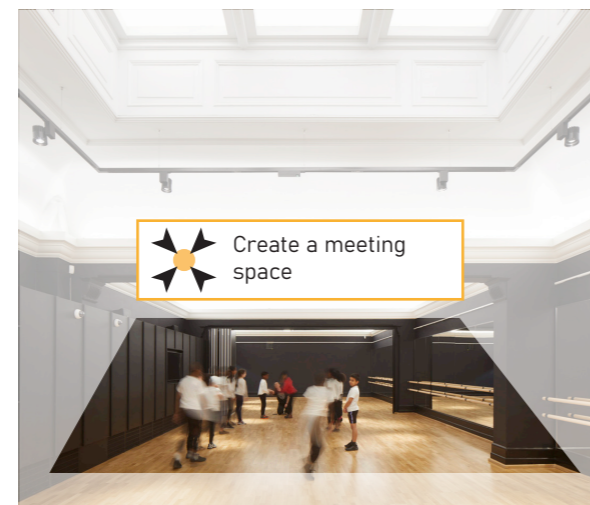
Plumstead centre exterior and interior
Images by architect

Social-cultural context
Economical context
Use context
Historical context
Infrastructural context
Material context
Ecological context

Reinstating underused function to original level

Place missing use in context in building
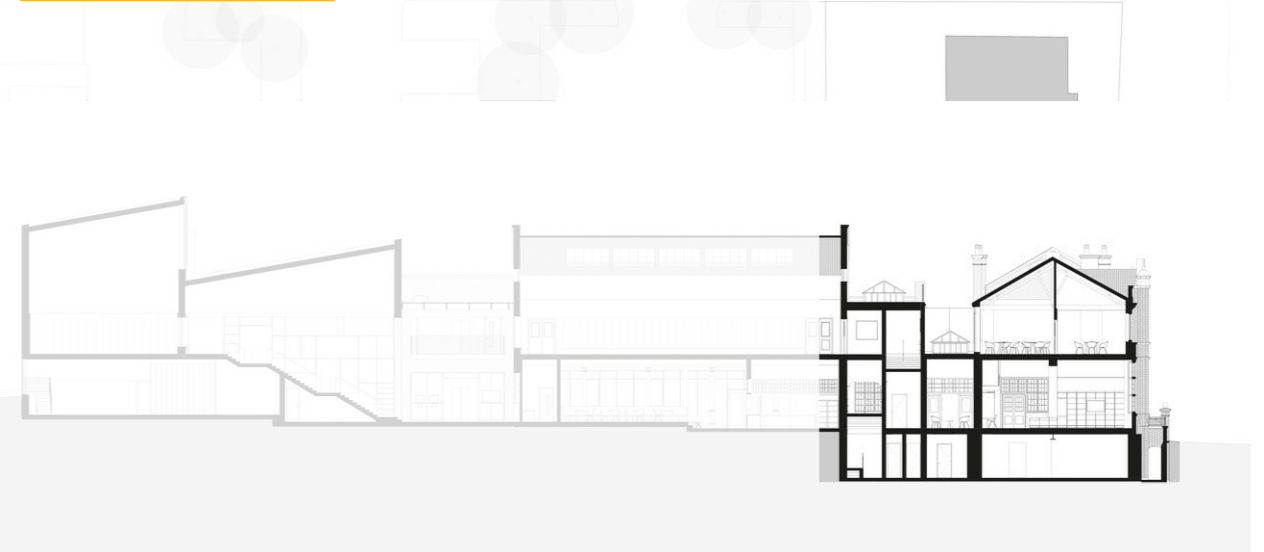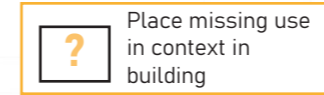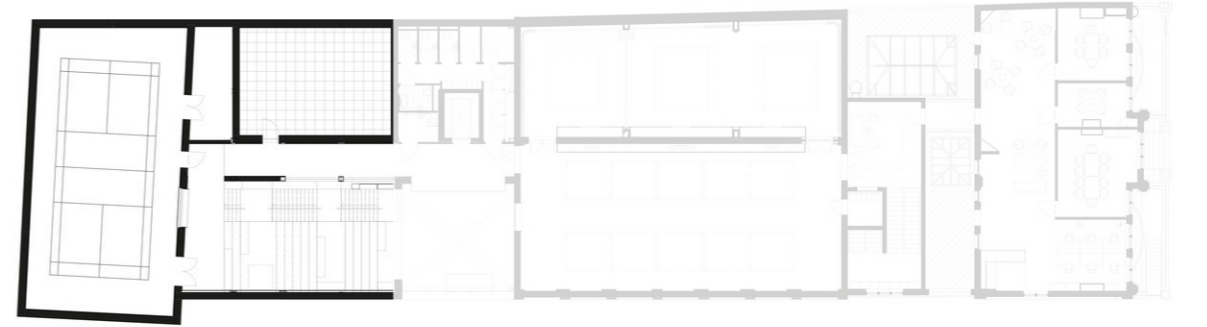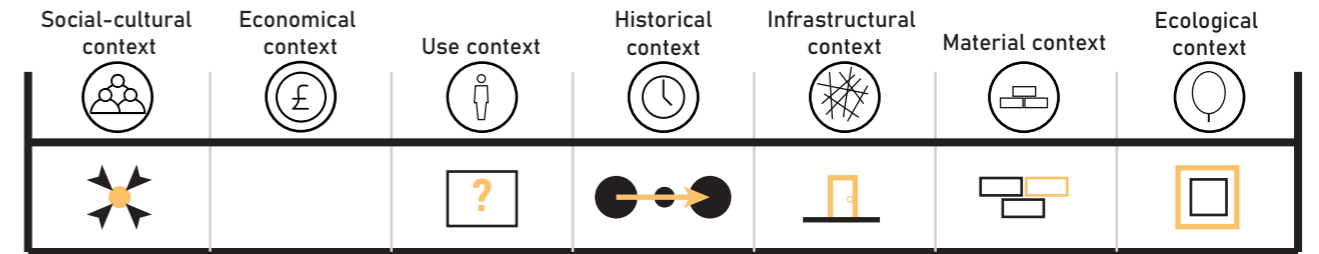
Drawings Plumstead Centre (from top to bottom: first floor, ground floor, section)
Drawings by architects

REFLECTION

Evaluation of my approach of dealing with heritage

In my graduation project I aimed to contribute to the contemporary field of working with heritage, by taking the context as a starting point. In my theoretical research I saw that heritage (in all forms) was often treated as a free-standing, isolated object, while the (often unexploited) potential to keep it was repeatedly in re-integrating it in its urban fabric. This is not acknowledged in the current practice and the amount of heritage that needs action is still growing. My goal was therefore to work with heritage from the new angle of the surrounding instead of the object itself.

While the discrepancy between the potential of heritage and the object-based approaches is clearly visible, an approach (the how) that starts from the context had not yet been defined. In my research I developed a first set up to a context-driven approach for dealing with heritage . After that I applied the approach to my design project that is my field of research: the Royal London Hospital and more specifically, the Former Outpatient Department. In the design process, I used the tools I found in my precedent research, and this made me able to improve and reflect on the approach I developed in my research.

In contemplation, this approach of working with heritage with a context-driven approach contributes to creating heritage that is part of the palimpsest: the layering of the city. By using the tools to connect to each context and implementing them in a responsive or opposing way informed by the context, my object of research (the Former Outpatient Department) wove in with the layers of time in the city. As a result of this approach, a heterogeneous city, the focus of the studio, is safeguarded.

The development and implementation of the new context-based approach, however, had traps and obstacles. First of all, in the process I sometimes caught myself – subconsciously at times - automatically going back to looking at the object from itself, since this is the most common way to work with heritage and a way I have been using before. It can be said that finding the way to connect a building to the context was a process rather than an easy method that I could just apply, since it needed to be developed. Therefore, it was crucial for me to be constantly aware of the paradigms that exist in working with heritage.

Secondly, in my research I tried to find generic tools to connect to the context that would be applicable for majority of heritage at risk at first. Later, in my design process, I discovered that these tools had to be specified to the situation of my case study. In other words, the generic tool that I found in research can take many forms in practice, and it is therefore difficult to establish a rigid applicable method to connect to context. The tools should be seen as an approach in which the general actions are the same, but the implementation different. The result of my research and design is therefore not a rigid method, but an instrumentarium to asses and get grip on heritage that is at risk of being lost. This instrumentarium is transferable to other projects, although it is currently not developed to its full potential. This is because of the limited amount of researched case studies, that all cover buildings in similar scale and surroundings. A further development of the instrumentarium could be part of future research.

Lastly, I discovered that sometimes more radical design choices have to be made in the building with the tools to connect to the context. Decisions that contradict with certain values of the building and that would not have been made in previous ways of dealing with heritage, but that are sometimes no longer serving for the context. This can be seen as one of the ethical issues I encountered both during my research and design process: one has to choose between a characterizing asset of the building or the ambition to make it a useful and integrated part of the city fabric and life. Because of this, I argue that more in-between options should be possible with listed objects. After all, a clear argumentation for the design choices that argues for the intervention's relevance in achieving an integrated building in the palimpsest should be convincing to explore more possibilities in the current strict rules. In this way, heritage can be more open to change, which results in the fact that the essence of the object can endure longer.

Feedback in the design process

These reflections ty in with the feedback that was given by my mentors. In the beginning I did not always see that responding to context can also mean 'creating contrast' instead of 'conformation'. This lead to the realisation that radical choices had to be made. My curtsy towards finding conforming design decisions comes from my background of approaching heritage from an object-based perspective. I tend to approach these buildings with care and I tend to keep as much as possible.

With the feedback of my tutors I came to realise that this view and my goals do not always align. In my work, I need to seek a balance between keeping the essence of the building and making the needed adjustments.

This had a great influence on my plans with the Former Outpatient Department. Although I did my research with precedents and implemented the generic tools in my design that I describe in my paper, the result was that the connection to the context was not as expressed as it could be. After the feedback of my mentors I realised that the generic tools, as I found in my paper, always need to be more specifically implied. So, after P2,5 and the workshop week I realised that more radical choices needed to be made and my plans for the building altered with more articulation on what I was adding to the building (the structures in the large and smaller atria and the rooftop extension.

Learning from my project

To conclude, while working on my graduation project, I learned from my work in both a subject specific and personal way. First of all, the subject specific things I learned. In my search of diminishing the amount of heritage at risk, I found out that a lot of projects are time-consuming because they are all focussed on the object itself and therefore specific to the project. In the beginning, I was heavily focussed on trying to find one method, one solution for all projects. While working on my project I discovered that some general guidelines can be formulated (the tools of connecting to the different contexts in my research), but that their implementation will always be specific to the project. I came to realise that the uniqueness of each object is also the strength of heritage and should not be neglected with generalized tools.

That being said, I learned from working with my project that current practices in heritage hold onto values that do not contribute making it part of the palimpsest, but rather making it isolated. I came to realize this through the research into previous ways of working with heritage. Methods of the 1950's are still often applied in London by Historic England, on which many agree that they are too narrow, strict and should not be applied any more. Besides, the bureaucratic systems I fell into when working with the Former Outpatient Department showed me that the start of isolating heritage can also be found here. Borough councils and Historic England contradicted in plans with the future of the Royal London Hospital. Because of the latter, I came to realise that it will be rather difficult to change current practice, however, it makes sense to keep on trying.

From another angle, the personal, I also learned from my project. In the design process I wish things to be always clear, structured and logical. However, this does not always lead to results that I want and in a way, these wishes limit me in discovering the full potential of my work. From my previous design projects, I was already somewhat aware of this, since the feedback at the end of the project always could be brought back to this idea. The disadvantage was that previous projects were already finished, and I was never able to work with this feedback and it fell to the back of my mind. The difference in my graduation project is that I was now able to work with it. I discovered that I can try things out without knowing where it will end and that having more questions at the end than at the start of the day is also a result of a workday. In the end, the new insights gave me a more open view towards my project but also towards the field of dealing with heritage in general.

GRADUATION PLAN

Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Sophie Koopman
Student number	4462793

Studio		
Name / Theme	Architectural Design Crossovers	
Main mentor	Ir. A. van der Meij	Architecture
Second mentor	Ir. J. D. Fokkinga	Building Technology
Third mentor	Dr. Ir. R. Cavallo	Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The studio offers me the possibility to combine design in architecture with architectural history and the conservation of buildings (in which I specialized myself during my second master Arts and Culture at Leiden University), while working in the city of London and establishing my own program.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Heritage as part of the Palimpsest Rethinking heritage at risk in London through an approach that starts from the context
Goal	
Location:	The Royal London Hospital area, Whitechapel, London
The posed problem,	The city of London contains a lot of heritage. Some of these objects are classified by Historic England as at risk: they are in a state that they are almost lost through neglect, decay or deterioration. In London, the largest amount of heritage at risk can be found in the borough Tower Hamlets. After researching these locations, it became clear that a lot of the sites are at risk because they are not connected to their context anymore (for example, the building is vacant, the only object left from past times, or boundaries were created over time). However, the approach of dealing with these objects

	always centers around the object itself, as current practice of dealing with heritage and literature study show. The disconnect with the context, while at the same time dealing with the heritage only considering the object itself creates a discrepancy. This is where my research starts.
research questions and	Therefore, the main question in my research is: In what way can heritage that lost connection to its surroundings and is therefore at risk of disappearing, interact again with its new urban context? Sub questions are: - What is context? And how can it be defined? - When is heritage not connected to its context and therefore at risk? - Why and how do these objects become disconnected? - What architectural interventions can be made to reconnect the heritage at risk to its current context? - How were connections to the context made previously in dealing with heritage?
design assignment in which this results.	The design assignment is to develop architectural tools to reconnect the heritage at risk of multiple scales to the context. These architectural tools are developed while looking at the at risk conservation area the Royal London Hospital, as well as some individual at risk buildings within, and their social-cultural, economic, infrastructural, ecological, material and functional context.

Process

Method description

The main question of this research will be answered by first looking into the sub questions and by using the appointed location in London as field of research. First, it will be explored what context is by literary readings. Then, via cataloguing, cartographical analysis, typo-morphological analysis and archival research it will be researched in what way heritage-at-risk sites or buildings lose the connection to the context. Then, methods to reconnect the object to the context again are explored, by studying precedents where a strong connection is present (although maybe not as a starting point in the design process), analyzing the way the object was once related to its context in morphological analysis and field work (photography, interviews, drawing, notes). The context will be treated as consisting of separate parts (social-cultural, economic, infrastructural, material, ecological, functional etc.) to make it more defined how responses to context can happen. This will result in defined architectural tools, by which the objects can be connected to the context again.

Literature and general practical preference

My most important literary references are discussing the way buildings were conserved in the past and the present. In this way, I can determine what the role of the context was in the conservation process. My key works are, in chronological order:

- Jokilehto, Jukka. (September 1986). A History of Architectural Conservation: The Contribution of English, French, German and Italian Thoughts towards an International Approach to the Conservation of Cultural Property. D. Phil Thesis, The University of York, England.
- Stanley Price, N., Kirby Talley Jr, M., Melucco Vaccaro, A. (1996). "Historical and Philisophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage." (The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles)
- Rajagopalan, Mrinalini. 2011. "Preservation and Modernity: Competing Perspectives, Contested Histories and the Question of Authenticity". in Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns and Hilde Heynen, eds., The Handbook of Architectural Theory (Sage Publications).
- Poulios, Ioannis (2014). "Discussing strategy in heritage conservation: Living heritage approach as an example of strategic innovation". *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development, Vol. 4 No.1*, p. 16-34.

In my approach of looking at heritage from the context, I follow the ideas of Rossi in defining context, as stated in:

- Rossi, Aldo. 1982. "The Architecture of the City". In *Urban Design Ecologies* edited by McGrath, B. (2013): 16-26

The most important precedents that show examples of how to connect a similar building to its context (although this was not the starting point in the design process):

- Bailgate Court, Jonathan Hendry Architects, 2019 - Lincoln, United Kingdom
- Utrecht Central Library & Post Office, Zecc Architecten + Rijnboutt, 2020 - Utrecht, The Netherlands
- COOP Interpretation Center & Incubator, BOGDAN & VAN BROECK, 2016 - Anderlecht, Belgium

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

   The conservation of heritage contributes to the heterogeneity of the city in cultural, material, aesthetic and ecological way and creates a palimpsest. As the heterogeneity of the city is the main topic of my studio, making heritage an active part of its palimpsest again is an important part. The question of how to deal with heritage is not only a topic that concerns heterogeneous city London: almost all places in the world question how to deal with it and it has been asked already for a long time (since the beginning of the 19th century). The growing amount of heritage at risk and the individualistic approaches that are mostly needed and debated on every time, show that the architecture has not yet found a conclusive answer.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

   Previous ways of dealing with heritage at risk, as described in theories of the past to deal with it, did not result in less heritage at risk, neither are all preserved objects part of the current city. This research contributes to the professional and scientific world that a different approach can result in heritage that does not simply continues to exist, but that can be used effectively in the current city. In this way, it also has a social impact for the surrounding inhabitants. This approach also provides a way to keep objects out of risk on the long term and a way to integrate multiple objects at the same time in the city, because the same context may be applicable for other objects as well. In this way, heritage is seen as an asset rather than a nuisance and can improve the palimpsest of the city.

RESEARCH PLAN

ADAPTING HERITAGE TO THE CURRENT PALIMPSEST
From an object-based view on heritage at risk to an approach based on contextualizing it
01-11-2021

KEYWORDS
Heritage at risk, architectural preservation, context, London

INTRODUCTION

The city arises as a palimpsest, meaning that the current urban fabric consists of objects, elements, layers and memories from the past.[1] Because of time, some objects disappear and others change constantly in form, nature, materiality and meaning.[2] This creates differences and therefore variety and identity in the city.[3] The layered city as a palimpsest is also a concept that describes London: since the first Roman settlements, the city has been adding layers to its palimpsest.[4]

Over the years, centuries and eras, some urban objects run out of time. This happens in different ways. For instance, the technical specifications or function of the object itself can become outdated. Other than that, the aesthetics of the artifact can become dissatisfactory or the cultural norms change. What remains is a problem in the meaning of the object, a loss of relevance and value or a change in its use. This will over time cause objects to disappear.

However, in the last century, certain objects that need to be kept are protected and marked as heritage. The definition of heritage and its protection is executed by organisations that range from international to local scale.[5] They work on preservation, restoration and countless other re-processes to make sure the heritage continues to exist in the palimpsest of the city.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem is that, in practice, keeping material heritage requires a highly individual approach, which is expensive and time consuming. This is excellently put into words by De Sola-Morales Rubio: "… it is not possible today to formulate an aesthetic system with sufficient validity to make it applicable beyond the individual circumstances."[6] It is therefore impossible to keep up with the increasing amount of heritage objects and their individual approach in elongating their duration.

This problem is clearly visible in London as well. Historic England listed over 10.000 objects (see image 1), that they group in the categories of buildings, structures, places of worship, parks, and conservation areas, in the city in order to protect them.[7] Nevertheless, they also mark around 7,5% of these listed objects as at risk of getting lost (see image 2).[8] This means that more than 750 objects in London await an action to elongate their duration in order to be saved from disappearance due to the influences of time, a number of objects that Historic England scarcly can keep up with.

[1.] Ungers et al., 'Cities Within the City: Proposals by the Sommer Akademie for Berlin'; Rowe and Koetter, 'Collage City and the Reconquest of Time'; Crysler, 'Introduction: Time's Arrows: Spaces of the Past'.
[2.] This ties in with the archaeological view on the city, as De Sola-Morales Rubio discusses in 'From Contrast to Analogy: Developments in the Concept of Architectural Intervention', p. 620. Reality cannot be seen as a whole, since it appears as an overlapping of different layers. It is a system of interweaving languages.
[3.] Rossi, 'The Architecture of the City'.
[4.] See the website layersoflondon.org for various maps that can be combined and show the layers of the city.
[5.] The determination of certain objects as heritage will in this research be determined by the responsible organisations. Although the definition of these institution spark many questions, it falls outside the scope of this research.

[6.] De Sola-Morales Rubio, op. cit. (note 2), 235.
[7.] Historic England is the coordinating organisation in charge of heritage in Great Britain. See Historic England, 'Heritage at Risk Register 2020. London and South East'.
[8.] See glossary for criteria
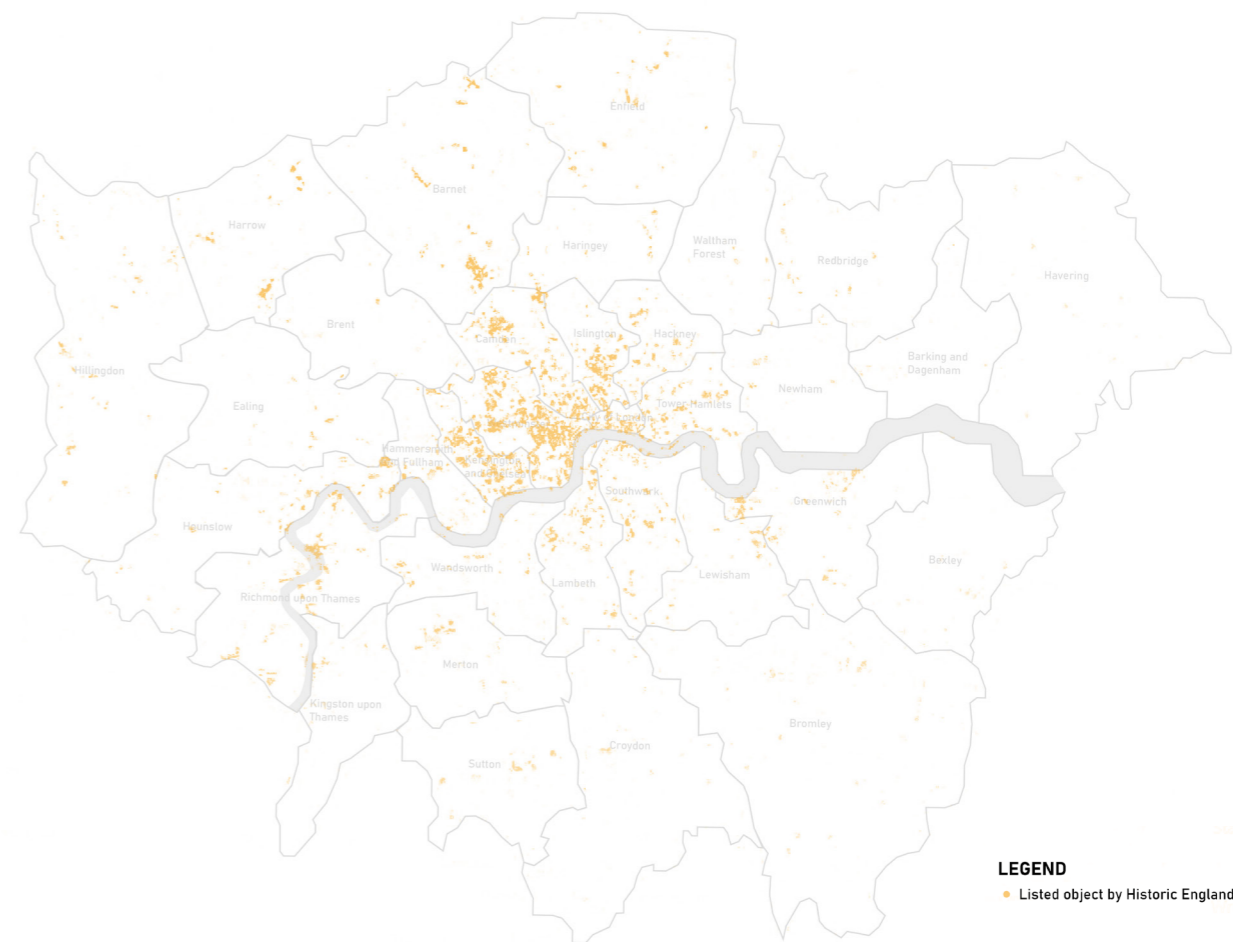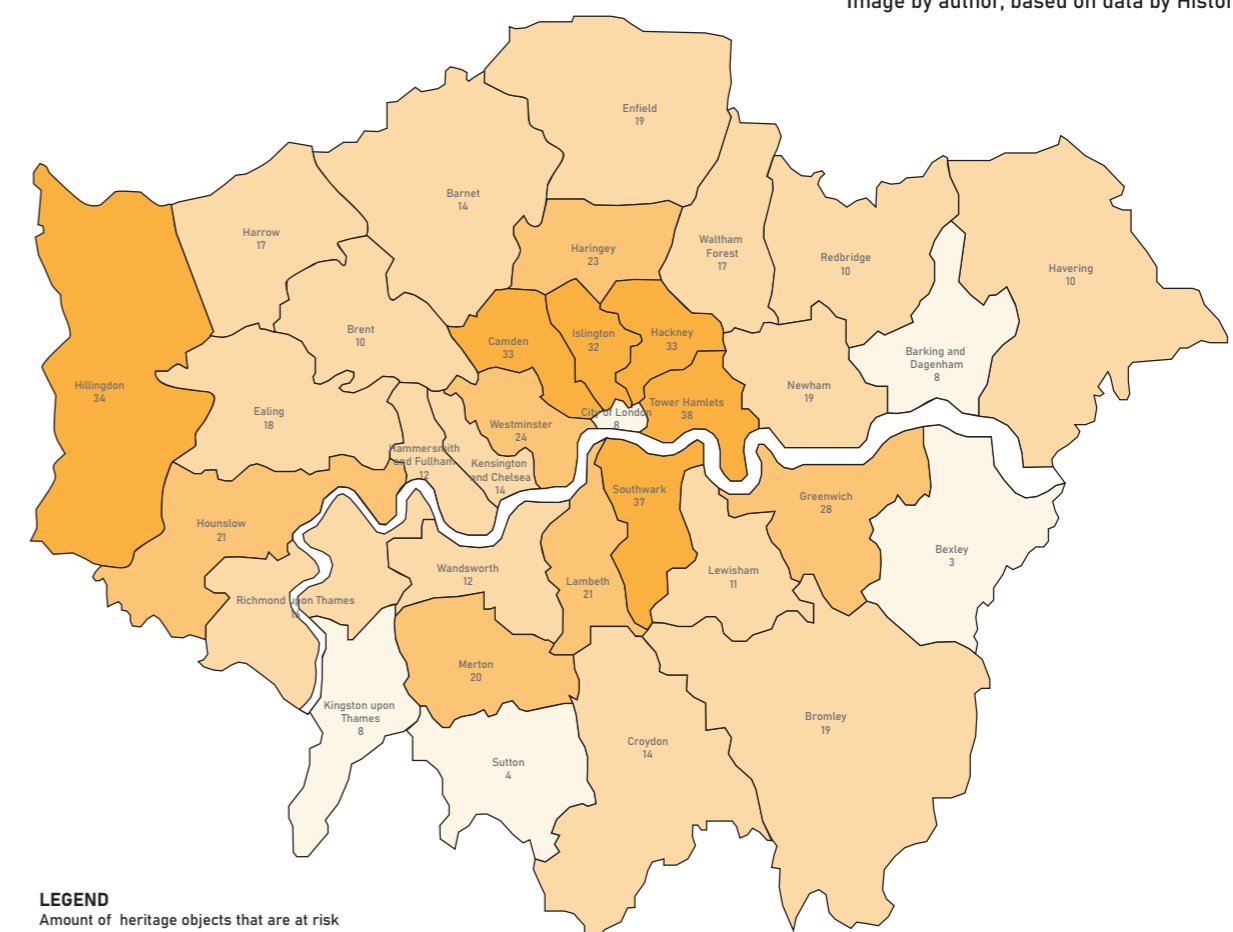
LEGEND
Amount of heritage objects that are at risk

| 0-9 | 10-19 | 20-29 | 30+ |

Scale: 1:200.000

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, POSITIONING AND HYPOTHESIS

In the past, different approaches arose in order to maintain heritage objects. Preservation theory shows four defined periods since its origination in the 19th century, as described by Mrinalini Rajagopalan.[9] The first period focussed on intertwining heritage with nation and empire.[10] The second period, as Sola-Morales Rubio states, emphasizes the differences between new and old and therefore isolated heritage by judging it purely aesthetically or from its historical value.[11] The third postmodern phase enlarged the definitions of heritage to also include natural, indigenous and historic places of cultural significance.[12] Other than that, the cultural value of heritage was determined also by context rather than only by aesthetics, something that was argued by Rossi.[13] Nowadays, preservation is seen in the perspective of globalisation, in which multiple parties are involved, with attention to commodification and authenticity. Heritage is defined as continuing and living by among others Lowenthal.[14]

However, an universal position on dealing with heritage has not yet been found, as Rajagopalan concludes. The discipline still asks the same questions nowadays as the early preservation theorist did more than a century ago, among others "… What practices would best ensure the posterity of monuments for the future?"[15] Other than that, it appears that the main focus in preserving has always been the object and its embedded history. In this way, the often radically changed surroundings (both in material and immaterial way) is easily neglected.

This object-based view in preservation theory is also deeply rooted in the approaching of heritage by Historic England. Not only is it object based, it also fixes the building in a certain time, mostly the time that the building was listed, by constantly wanting to bring the building back to that specific state, as Brown and Maudlin argue.[16] While discussing the steps that can be taken to save heritage at risk, only technical solutions are taken into account, with some rare exceptions. For example, an empty deteriorating building is discussed only by its historical significance and ways of repairing its leaking roof. However, the building will still be vacant and unused and it is likely that because of this, the building will be at risk again soon.

The result of this object-based view in preserving is that the duration of the object is lengthened, but often in a specific frozen time. This approach won't change the fact that many listed objects are situated in a changed urban fabric and that they are actually at risk because of this. My hypothesis is that, by looking the other way around in comparison to the most previous preservation approaches – from the context instead of the object – I will be able to make the object an impactful part of the city again. In this way, I intend to demonstrate that heritage at risk should be seen as an opportunity for the city instead of a problem. Other than that, this research will add onto Historic England's idea of heritage at risk: not only can a building be at risk because of neglect, decay or deterioration, but also because it is no longer connected to its context.

This research will therefore combine elements of the postmodern and globalised preservation theory. It will continue on the postmodern preservation ideas of Rossi by seeing an object in its context and changing its typology to connect its form to its surroundings.[17] However, it will be supplemented with the multidisciplinary approach and the view on heritage as living thing from the globalised preservation theories. Besides the ideas of Rossi that are already translated to heritage, more general ideas on creating meaningful context in architectural theory will be looked at, but from the perspective of preserving heritage.[18]

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Since the goal of this research is to find a long term way to preserve more heritage by giving it back to its contemporary context, I ask myself the main question:

In what way can heritage that lost connection to its surroundings and is therefore at risk of disappearing, interact again with its new urban context?

In order to answer this question, I need to answer the following questions first:

1. When is heritage disconnected to its context and therefore at risk?
What are the indications for a disconnection? Why and when did the object become disconnected? Who was involved in this?
2. What architectural interventions can be made to reconnect the heritage at risk to its current context?
Which architectural theories discuss creating a coherent urban context? What does the current context of the heritage object look like? Which connections can the heritage at risk make?
3. What can this approach of dealing with heritage from its context mean for preservation of heritage beyond this individual project?

RELEVANCE

Previous ways of dealing with heritage at risk, as described in past preservation theories, did not result in less heritage at risk, neither are all preserved objects part of the current city. This research shows that a different approach can result in heritage that does not simply continues to exist, but that can be used effectively in the current city. It also provides an aproach for keeping objects out of risk on the long term and a way to integrate multiple objects at the same time in the city, because the same context may be applicable for other objects as well. In this way, heritage can improve the palimpsest of the city.

METHODOLOGICAL POSITIONING AND DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS

The main question in this research will be answered by investigating the sub questions first. Each sub question requires separate methods and they will therefore be individually discussed. In terms of methodological positioning, both the main and sub questions have in common that, since the heritage on which this research focusses is materialized, the methodology is mainly morphological. Besides, all questions have in common that London is used as field of research.

Sub question one will use several methods in order to determine when heritage is disconnected to its context and therefore at risk. First of all, heritage at risk as determined by Historic England will be listed per borough and this results in a zoom-in on the region with the most heritage at risk: Tower Hamlets. From here, it will be determined which of these are at risk because they are not connected to their context anymore by cataloguing. Other than that, typo-morphological analysis and archival research will be conducted to find out why and when the object became disconnected and who was involved in this in order to elaborate on indications of disconnected heritage at risk.

In determining possible architectural interventions to reconnect heritage at risk to its urban fabric in the second sub question, literary research will be conducted to find out how coherent urban context is created. In order to reconnect the object to its context, the new urban fabric of the object needs to be understood. This will be done by cartography, both current and past situations, analysing precedents and field work (photography, drawing, notes). It will result in knowledge of the context, after which the method of designing, as well as methods that will be developed in the future, will be used to integrate heritage at risk in its surroundings.

The last sub question will reflect on the contribution of the used method in this research for preservation theory via literary research. By comparing previous preservation theory with the findings of this research and other precedents using both similar and different methods, it will be discussed what this approach can mean for dealing with heritage beyond an individual project in London.

9. Rajagopalan, 'Preservation and Modernity: Competing Perspectives, Contested Histories and the Question of Authenticity'.
10. Rajagopalan, 310-313; See also Mozas, 'Remediate, Reuse, Recycle. Re-Processes as Atonement';
11. De Sola-Morales Rubio, op. cit. (note 2), 233.
12. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 9), 317.
13. Rossi, op. cit. (note 3)
14. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 9), 318–21; Crysler, op. cit. (note 1). For a recent work on how to deal with heritage in this continuing and living tradition, see Lowenthal, The Past Is a Foreign Country - Revised. He argues in part IV of the book that it is not that bad to bring new functions and additions to improve the past, because this is what will preserve objects from the disappearing.
15. Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 9), 321.
16. Brown and Maudlin, 'Concepts of Vernacular Architecture', 348
17. Rossi, 'The Architecture of the City', 18–20.
18. This section is still under development. I will start by looking at Ungers et al., op. cit. (note 1) that could bring the idea of enhancing

properties of the context with heritage; Rowe and Koetter, op. cit. (note 1) could be seen as consciously creating differences with heritage in context to create collages; De Sola-Morales Rubio, in 'Weak Architecture' inspires to see heritage as weak architecture to make sure that the object can be seen and used in multiple ways;

Fascination: Heritage & Architectural Preservation

Problem Statement

It is impossible to keep up with preserving the growing amount of heritage at risk of getting lost

Theoretical framework and Glossary

Preservation theories of the past (four phases), resulting in an object-based approach in which
the changed surroundings are neglected. Historic England follows these preservation theories

Positioning and hypothesis

Heritage should be kept by making it an impactful part of the city again. This can be
done by shifting from an object-based approach to a context-based approach in heritage

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can heritage that lost connection to its surroundings and is therefore at risk
of dissapearing, interact again with its new urban context?

Relevance

Deminishing amount of heritage at risk and create heritage that is part of the city

RESEARCH

SUBQUESTION 1	SUBQUESTION 2	SUBQUESTION 3
When is heritage disconnected to its context and therefore at risk?	What architectural interventions can be made to reconnect the heritage at risk to its context?	What can my approach of re-contextualizing heritage mean for dealing with heritage beyond this individual project?

Defining, finding indications of disconnected HAR

Research essay

Design Project

Designing

Context analysis

TBD

Field work

THEORETICAL

APPLIED:
IN LONDON

GRADUATION PROCESS

Finding disconnected HAR in London

BIBLIOGRAPHY   Rossi (2013), Historic England (2020), Jallon   Rossi (2013), Rowe and Koetter (1975),   Rajagopalan (2011), Lowenthal (2015), De
                et. al. (2017)   De Sola-Morales Rubio (1987), Ungers   Sola-Morales Rubio (1985), Mozas (2012),
                                                                 (1978)
                                                                 Study of precedents

IMAGE 3
Research diagram
Image by author

1

Define problem
from fascination

2

Discuss history
of the problem
with theoretical
framework

3

Take position
and hypothesis
on problem
from theoretical
framework

4

Define research
question

5

Methodology on
research: from
sub questions

6

Three phases
on timeline of
graduation, with
a theoretical
and applied
perspective

7

Phase one
narrows down
by answering
sub question 1

8

Phase two will
focus on one
project with
the chosen
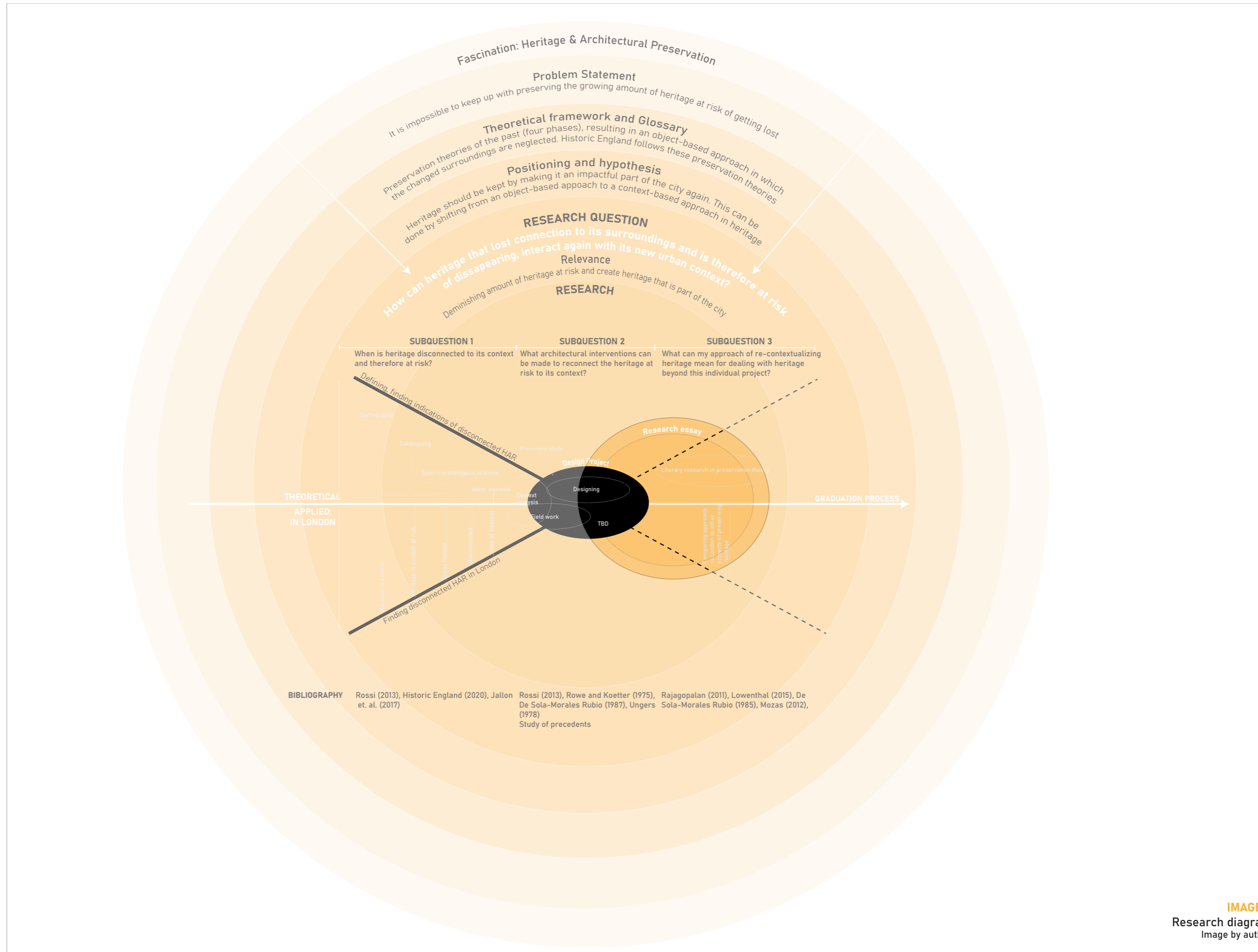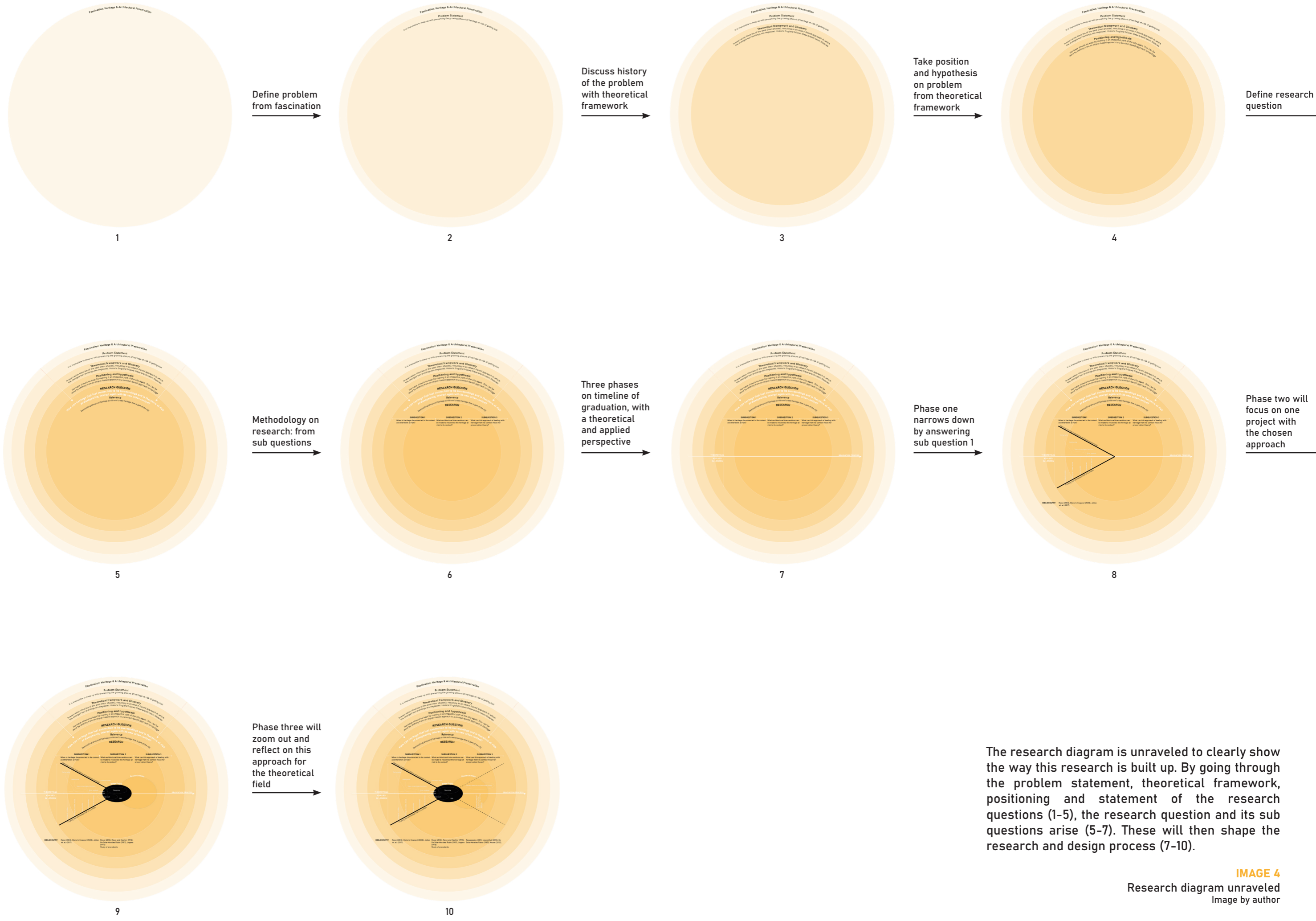approach

9

Phase three will
zoom out and
reflect on this
approach for
the theoretical
field

10

The research diagram is unraveled to clearly show the way this research is built up. By going through the problem statement, theoretical framework, positioning and statement of the research questions (1–5), the research question and its sub questions arise (5–7). These will then shape the research and design process (7–10).

IMAGE 4

Research diagram unraveled
Image by author

PERSONAL GLOSSARY

Palimpsest
The idea that the city consist of superimposed multiple layers over time. Eventually, these layers change: parts of these layers disappear, get rebuild or get new functions. Therefore, the city as we find it today is changed over time but still bears visible traces of its earlier forms.[19]

Artifact/object
Material thing in the city that can have any size.

Context
Relationships that arise between the object and its physical, social, economic, aesthetic, functional, cultural and material surroundings.

Heritage
In this research, the definition of Historic England is used, that defines heritage as "all inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility."[20] In contrast to Historic England, heritage in this research is only concerned with its material manifestations.

Heritage at risk
This research starts from the definition given by Historic England: "historic buildings and sites at risk of being lost through neglect, decay or deterioration."[21] In this research, the definition is elaborated with the risk of being disconnected from its surroundings.

[19] The definition of palimpsest derives from the definition given in the Merriam Webster Dictionary, See: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/palimpsest
[20] Rajagopalan, op. cit. (note 9).
[21] Historic England, op. cit. (note 7), IV. See pages IV-VIII for the criteria per site type

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Preservation theory:
Rajagopalan, Mrinalini. 2011. "Preservation and Modernity: Competing Perspectives, Contested Histories and the Question of Authenticity". in Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns and Hilde Heynen, eds., The Handbook of Architectural Theory (Sage Publications).
Rajagopalan discusses the history of preservation theory in its four phases. She concludes by stating that the paradoxes in preservation remained the same since the first ideas on the field were formed: defining heritage and its authenticity and what to do with it in the future still remains the centre of the discussion.

De Sola-Morales Rubio, Ignasi. 1985. " From Contrast to Analogy: Developments in the Concept of Architectural Intervention". In Kate Nesbitt, eds., Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: an anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995 (Princeton Architectural Press, New York).
The text focusses on relations between old and new architecture and how this has changed over time.

Mozas, J. (2012). "Remediate, Reuse, Recycle. Re-processes as atonement." a & t: RECLAIM Remediate Reuse Recycle, 39–40, 4–23. (discuss the three authors below in the annotated bibliography)
Mozas provides an overview on how we deal with heritage in the past and now. He also critiques this and proposes another way to deal with heritage while looking at case studies.

Integrating heritage at risk in its surroundings:
Lowenthal, David. 2015. "The past is a foreign Country – Revisited". (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge). Chapters 10, 11, 12 and epilogue.
Part IV of the book, Remaking the past, discusses contemporary notions on saving (with preservation and replication), replacing (with restoring and re-enacting) and improving the past in which context is also included

Rossi, Aldo. 1982. "The Architecture of the City". In Urban Design Ecologies edited by McGrath, B. (2013): 16-26
Rossi discusses several highly relevant notions in his text. First, he discusses the changes buildings can experience over time and how this changes the type (not the form per se). The idea of type can be seen from different perspectives to generate more knowledge (different contexts). Lastly, he discusses the role of morphological analysis in defining this knowledge.

Ungers, Oswald Mathias, Rem Koolhaas, Peter Riemann, Hans Kollhoff, and Artur Ovaska. 1978. "Cities Within the City: Proposals By the Sommer Akademie for Berlin." Lotus International 19 82–97.
Ungers et al. discuss how to determine outstanding characteristics and importance of places and how to enhance their properties.

Rowe, Colin, and Fred Koetter. 1975. "Collage City and the Reconquest of Time." Architectural Review (942): 86–90.
The idea of a collage in the city that connects some levels, but leaves other things different can also be applied to this research.

De Sola-Morales Rubio, Ignasi. 1987. "Weak Architecture". In Hays, K. Michael eds, Architecure Theory since 1968 (The MIT Press, Cambridge and London), p 614-623.
Due to multiple times in architecture, the author calls for weak architecture: things that can be seen as multiple ways and that don't have to be essential, a recollection of architecture after it has been seen.

Precedents (to be elaborated):

o   Postkantoor in Utrecht (Rijnboutt)
o   Architecture Building at TU Delft
o   Caixa Forum in Madrid (Herzog et De Meuron)
o   Newport Street Gallery in London (Caruso St. John)
o   Palais de Tokyo in Paris (Lacaton & Vassal)

Methods of analysis:
Jallon, B., Napolitano, U. and Boutté, F. 2017. "Paris Haussmann: A Model's Relevance." (PARK BOOKS, Zürich).
The book shows a systematic way of making catalogues of urban context in order to compare elements.

Historic England. 2020. Heritage at Risk Register 2020, London and South East.