Beauty in Dereliction
Designing with Ruins and Decay

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1 Fascination & wider social context
Fascination & wider social context

Image from: http://paradisewithworld.com/yucatan-peninsula/

Image from: http://www.opacity.us/

Image from: http://www.desktopwallpapers4.me/

Image from: http://www.opacity.us/
Le Corbusier bluntly disdained patina as a careless accumulation of dirt. [...] For Riegl, such surface stuff was not dirt but patina, a much-valued attribute of significant buildings and artistic objects.” (Cairns & Jacobs, 2014, p. 70-71)
Fascination & wider social context

Western culture:  
‘Ageing is shameful & imperfection is condemned’

Eastern cultures:  
‘Ageing, death and the deceased form an integral part of life’
Reflected in design and architecture:

Wabi - Sabi

Fascination & wider social context

Alois Riegl (1858 - 1905)

Deliberate monuments

“A work of man erected for the specific purpose of keeping particular human deeds or destinies alive and present in the consciousness of future generations.”

Unintentional monuments

“A work of man with a certain meaning and significance, assigned by modern man, instead of value from the works themselves by virtue, of their original purpose.”

Image from: http://athnccg.blogspot.nl/
Common restoration approach:
Preserve or reconstruct the monument to the original form, the form that was deliberately meant to last.

Agree!

Common restoration approach:
Also, preserve or reconstruct the monument to a former state of its history.

Agree?
“Shine a different light upon decay and imperfection in architecture by establishing a personal position towards the topic and by expressing this position in an architectural design.”
Theoretical framework & personal positioning
Finding the beauty of dereliction

Understanding beauty

Decay
Understanding beauty

Option 1:

Beauty as an aesthetic judgement about an object

Option 2:

Beauty as a property of an object
Understanding beauty

Option 1:

Beauty as an aesthetic judgement about an object

Beauty is not a property of an object...

Option 2:

Beauty as a property of an object
Understanding beauty

Option 1:
Beauty as an aesthetic judgement about an object

Option 2:
Beauty as a property of an object

Beauty is not a property of an object...

Is beauty a property of an object or not?
Beauty is not an autonomous concept, but is related with associations.

1
Association with the concept of the object

2
Association with the context of the object.
Beauty is not an autonomous concept, but is related with associations.
Theoretical framework & personal positioning

Immanuel Kant
(1724 - 1804)

Image from: http://f--f.info/?p=3567

Free beauty
An aesthetic judgement, based on personal taste only.

Dependent beauty
An aesthetic judgement, also based on a concept which determines if an object is good.
Theoretical framework & personal positioning

Image from: http://www.wallpapers13.com

Image from: http://hdimagelib.com/french+garden+wallpaper
Free beauty is:

IMPOSSIBLE / NON EXISTENT

Beauty is always dependent / associated / related to some concept
Conclusion:

If the concept of an object and the concept of its context begin to match each-other, than the object and the context increase in beauty.
Finding the beauty of dereliction

is dependent on the concept of the object & context

Decay
What is decay?

Decay:

1. To cause something to become gradually damaged, worse, or less.
2. To decline in excellence, deteriorate.
3. A gradual falling into an inferior state, progressive decline.
What is decay?

Decay:

1. To cause something to become *gradually* damaged, worse, or less.
2. To decline in excellence, deteriorate.
3. A *gradual* falling into an inferior state, *progressive* decline.

Decay is a process and can only exist in time

“Decay is the work of nature over time, it is not the result, it is the process.”
What is decay?

Decay:

1. To cause something to become gradually damaged, worse, or less.
2. To decline in excellence, deteriorate.
3. A gradual falling into an inferior state, progressive decline.

Decay is a process of declining and disappearance.

“Without growth there can be no decline, all matter and energy are constant”
Decay is:

"The work of nature over time as a transitional process of decline and growth."
The theoretical framework & personal positioning

The concept of decay

- Affecting dependent on Time

Concept of decay’s context

- = Nature

Time

- Growth

Overgrowth

- = Architecture

Time

- Decline

Ruin
Design approach for the ruin of the Asten Castle
Design approach

Unintentional monument!

Most important value:

A history of change which is revealed in the ruin its scars and imperfection

Main design approach:

Let the ruin be a ruin and celebrate its history of change, instead of trying to preserve it.

1. Unintentional monument
2. History of change as important value
3. Decay and ruin match and generate beauty

Decay & design concept
“The work of nature over time as a process of decline and growth.”
Ruin is declining

Perished ruin has declined

Decay & design concept

Ruin is declining

Perished ruin has declined

Decline

Continue the history of change

Growth

Decay & design concept

Ruin

Perished ruin
Decay & design concept

Leave as a ruin

Conditions for change
Decay & design concept

Decline Growth
Decay & design concept
Decay & design concept
Decay & design concept

2016

New Architectural design

Continue change
Program: ‘The artists ruin’
‘The artists ruin’

A highly inspirational work, exhibition and living place for artists

Program: ‘The artists ruin’

Caspar David Friedrich - Abbey in the Oakwood
http://www.taringa.net/posts/imagenes/18355484/Caspar-David-Friedrich-romanticismo-Aleman.html

Rob Voerman - Pressure
http://www.dutchartevents.com/tag/rob-voerman/

Marco Ricci - Landscape with Classical Ruins and Figures
http://www.getty.edu/

Jacob van Ruisdael - Ruins of Brederode
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Jacob_van_Ruisdael_catalog_raisonn%C3%A9,_1928
‘The artists ruin’

A highly inspirational work, exhibition and living place for artists

1. Temporary housing for artists located in the quiet and inspirational nature.
2. Workplaces for artists located at the ruin.
3. Visitable exhibitions located in and around the ruin.
Landscape design
Landscape design

Source: Google Maps
Landscape design

Source: Google Maps
Landscape design

Dense vegetation creates an enclosed and romantic scenery. The combined presence of the nature and the ruin make both the ruin and the nature more interesting.
Landscape design

Image from: http://mkuijpers.nl/kastelen/kasteel-asten/
Surrounding qualitative landscapes: a pond (1), a forest (2) and a meadow (3).
Regardless of the dense nature, the ruin is still visible from all around. In addition, the forest and pond are visible from the ruin as well.
Connecting the ruin with its surrounding landscape

1 Connecting sightlines
2 Exposition pavilions
3 Existing entrance tower
1 Visitors park entrance
2 'Anna Ceelen huis'
3 Park walking route
P Bicycle / car parking

Visitable exhibitions

Landscape design
1  Residents entrance  
2  Existing dwellings  
3  Artists’ dwellings  
4  Residents route  
P  Existing car parking
Landscape design

North pavilion

West pavilion

South pavilion
The design for the ruin
The design

Change as growth

Witness of change

Change as decline
The design

1. Atelier 33 m²
2. Atelier 43 m²
3. Decoy gardens / exposition
4. Central access square
5. Visitor’s toilet
The design

First floor

1935

Second floor
Jos de Vries  Stichting Behoud Kasteelergoed Asten  www.kasteelasten.nl
The design
The design
The design
The design

- Change as growth
- Witness of change
- Change as decline
The design
The design
The design
The design

1st level

2nd level

3rd level
The design
The design
The design

- Aluminium sliding doors minimal frame (Orama)
- Open corners when opened
- Door handle at 1100 mm height
- Balustrade at 1000 mm height
The design

Galvanized steel construction:

Foundations: See detail drawings

Columns: Galvanized steel trusses (400 x 400 mm (4 x Ø 50mm) in Z and Y axis)
         (250 x 250 mm (4 x Ø 30mm) in X axis)

Stability: Steel tension cables
The design
The design
Wisteria Sinensis Ivy

1. Has flowers in summer and loses its leaves in winter.
2. Can become of high age (oldest known is 144 years old).
3. Low demands in soil type
4. It lignifies, making it able to grow as a tree with a trunk.
5. Can reach a height of 10 meters.
6. In 10 - 15 year it will reach the top.
Decay processes:

Growth
In 10 -15 years

Decline
In 50 years

Wisteria Sinensis and overgrowth (weeds).

Castle Asten was vacant from +/- 1859 until +/- 1930 and ended up in a very advanced state of decay.

Decay processes:

After completion

After +/- 5 years

After +/- 15 years

After +/- 50 years

Gradual transition
The design

1. Concrete grass tiles
2. Wisteria ivy
3. Galvanized steel column 400x400 mm 4 x 850 mm
4. Stainless steel cable binders
5. Steel plate welded on column and bolted on foundation
6. Space for roots to grow
7. Concrete base 600 x 600 x 200 mm 4 x 175 x 175 x 200 mm
8. Metal plate preventing roots from getting between concrete base and masonry wall
9. Existing brick wall
The design

Winter
December 12:00

Temperature control: Floor heating.
No leaves, sun passes through and helps heating spaces.

Ventilation: Vegetation breaks wind for comfortable natural ventilation.

Summer
June 12:00

Temperature control: Vegetation blocks sun and keeps air inside cool.
Sliding doors can be opened to let the cool air in.
Floor cooling may help for extra cooling.

Ventilation: Vegetation breaks wind for comfortable natural ventilation.
Maximal ventilation possible by opening sliding doors.
Final words
“History is not static, the word itself indicates time and change, so honouring history by creating replicas and restoring buildings back to a certain phase of its history is not always justified. Moreover one does not necessarily honour history with such a design approach, but rather denies it by removing signs of time and change out of history and precisely these signs of age can reveal a place’s true historical story.

So, historical value can be expressed in different and better ways than by restoration and preservation.