This section describes the reflection the research and adherence to the master programme. The reflection on the methodology, the use of research methods, such as the literature study, the qualitative interviewing and expert meeting. It reflects on the tool development and relevance based on the findings of the theoretical framework and empirical research. And finally, a personal reflection on the process.

1. Reflection on the research

My initial thought when entering the research was that the municipality should do adaptive reuse. I foresaw a future in which the municipality is the progressive innovator. Pushing themselves to reach the most sustainable goals. Which would positively influence the market and also make them believe in adaptive reuse. I thought that I would be making a model showing exactly why the municipality should initiate and execute adaptive reuse. But as it turns out, there are only limited situations in which this is applicable. The municipality cannot invest in adaptive reuse, just because. Their financing comes from public money. And there are numerous stakeholders within the municipality, but also outside of the municipality that want to have a say in the matter. Owning, developing and managing accommodations is by many seen as a necessity to perform activities and achieve public goals, but it is not regarded as the core business of the municipality.

I have therefore learned while conducting the research, why processes are slow and clear decisions are sometimes missing. In my research, I have tried to define what is most necessary in the process. Which would therefore make the decision a bit more transparent and understandable, also to pursue quick decision-making. Instead of delaying the inevitable

2. Reflection on adherence to the master programme

The described research relates to the research programme of the master track ‘Management in the Built Environment’ as it analyses current real estate portfolio practices in public organisations and seeks to find solutions for issues occurring in the process of adaptive reuse. The research design herein is based on understanding (municipal) real estate management theories and relating these to practice. Where it is noted that there are several conditions in the context that influence the actual implementation of strategies. In real estate management, there is always the consideration between context and value. It is assumed that you will strive for the highest value (the best use of the building), but due to the context you are restrained with a certain outcome as the result. The structure of the research is designed in such a way that the context can be understood and used correctly.

3. Reflection on methodology

The idea of adaptive reuse within the municipal portfolio has not been widely researched and documented. With the literature study, it was therefore important to have an adequate overview of the situation in which municipal real estate management takes place. At the same time, literature regarding adaptive reuse in another sector helped to draw comparisons and make an inventory of what could be of importance. The method of qualitative interviewing was thereafter used to determine which concepts from literature are applicable to the research question in this study. Qualitative semi-structured interviewing proved to be an adequate research method, because it didn’t restrict the answers of the interviewees too much. This contributed in achieving an overall picture of what is happening in practice and analyse how proceedings within the municipal real estate department take place. It did however prove to be a rather time-consuming practice, and still one could argue that interviewing only three small and three large municipalities is rather little for generalising theories. Then the expert meeting was used to put the initial results into perspective. As the experts are experienced with advising municipalities, they were the most
suitable persons to discuss the research with.

For the intended result, I believe that these research methods were the most appropriate, because as literature on qualitative research suggests, “[…] theory is supposed to be an outcome of an investigation rather then something that precedes it” (Bryman, 2016, p. 384). There was limited theory about adaptive reuse by the local government and this research by means of a literature study, semi-structured interviews and expert meeting has sought to define new theories.

4. **Reflection on relevance and transferability**

In the introduction of the report it was suggested that further research on the process of adaptive reuse, the decision to reuse existing assets, the involved stakeholders and consequences for these stakeholders with regard to their objectives has not been studied extensively. This was argued by several authors and let to numerous articles on the factors and criteria to be considered in the decision-making process. These factors and criteria were however quite generic. Specified to determine whether the building has an adaptive reuse potential. Determining who should, in the end, execute the adaptive reuse was not really considered. Maybe this is also not that important within the private sector. But I believe that from what I have seen is that it does make a different in the public sector. Along with changing perspectives on public management, you can see shifts within the local government and the way in which things are handled. Including municipal real estate. Duijn (2009, cited in Duijn, Rijnveld, & Hulst, 2010, p. 232) also stated that, especially in the context of complex projects (which could be an adaptive reuse project), “[…] the public policy domain is often riddled with competency disputes between public policy actors, political conflicts, and ever-changing opinions of (societal) stakeholders that are amplified by the media”. Duijn et al. (2010, p. 229) continue this notion by stating that for public managers, policy-makers and politicians to cope with the uncertainty, instability and uniqueness, they need to “[…] work in a more networked fashion, making more room for deliberation” and use reflective practice to understand the knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, actions and processes that influence the projects outcome. Many of the municipalities interviewed have devised some sort of decision model that helps them account for decisions and give a quick visual overview of the situation. A similar thing can be seen in the questions ICSadviseurs receives from their clients (mainly municipalities). A tool for adaptive reuse, with the same intention could therefore be used quite well to contribute to one aspect of municipal real estate management that has not been studied extensively.

5. **Reflection on the process**

What I have learned when doing the research is that a constant re-examination of what you have done is required. Initial plans will almost always change and sticking to what you know will not help you forward. My personal challenge however has been to not dwell on constantly searching for ways to do things better. This only resulted in a whole lot of research, in which the overall line of thought can be lost. One of my personal points of improvement was to reach out to more people, not limit myself to my own work and literature study. Taking an internship has helped a lot. What I have also noticed is that doing research interviews is something that requires practice. In the beginning, it is a bit difficult to determine the tone of the conversation and also the amount of “feedback” you should give to your interviewee is difficult to determine. I did notice a difference between my first interview and my last. It is easier to perform the interview, and it is easier to be more critical at my own “interviewing skills”.

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