High Voltage Media Centre

How a High Voltage Laboratory will be transformed into a modern Media Centre while maintaining its relation to its history

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An overview of the area Arnhems Buiten. With highlighted the building of choice for the future continuation of the design studio.

Source: TCN (adapted by author)
Arnhems Buiten

Living and working in a park environment Arnhems Buiten, previously known as Kema-terrein or Business Park Arnhem, is located on the Utrechtseweg on the border of the municipalities of Arnhem en Renkum. The terrain is divided into four subareas: Den Brink, Mariendaal, De Hes en Rosande. They are characterized by Monuments, art, rare trees and lawns.

It is an alternating area of 55 ha on an ice reef going into the river Rijn with unique height differences.

(source: http://www.arnhem.nl)
Personal motivation

Background
My personal fascination with architecture started only in the end of high school. The fascination of fabricating started much earlier, as far back as kindergarten. Continuously I was creating a multitude of buildings, cars, marble alleys with paper, Lego or K’nex. Of course this started out with simple wooden block but pretty soon these wooden blocks turned in to Lego, K’nex, scaled models, the garden and my own room. During the period I was raised my family moved in to a different house every few years. My own house is already the 7th dwelling I’m living in during my live. In all these houses my family and I did quite sever constructive and changing works. Like I mentioned before my fascination started out much wider than just architecture, making new things and understanding how things are fabricated is still a general interest of mine.

Architecture
So why architecture? Architecture enables the designer to have a big impact on the world and lifes of people. It is a product which will last for decades. But there is another (and perhaps bigger) reason for me to pick architecture out of all the design and fabrication faculties. Architecture isintangible, I couldn’t understand what makes great architecture and I wanted to know! During the last few years there was a constant (naive) search for the perfect building. For this search it was important to be educated as by many different “chairs” of architecture. All these different views on architecture help one to find its own way through the maze of possible solutions. The further the study is progressed the more the notion arose a perfect building does not exist. It is however possible to make exciting, impressive, supporting, functional and world changing buildings.

Reality
Next to my architecture studies I’m also working at an architecture firm for three years now. It is really nice to see how the theory relates to the reality of an architect (and also how it sometimes doesn’t). Over these years I probably learned completely different things than I did on my faculty but they are just as valuable. Besides all the hurdles of reality, I also gained a renewed appreciation for my studies. At the faculty it is possible to go more extreme than most architects can do in reality, for this reason I try to push my projects over the years further and further. By trying to push the projects not only edges are found, but more important personal discoveries are made. In this personal quest how far you can take your ideas in to reality I found so far the edges are really far away, for almost everything is a solution as long as you are open to everything. It is nice to combine this realization of wild ideas with the hard reality of budgets, failing constructors and permits you encounter in reality.

The studio
In my opinion old buildings have qualities new builds can’t posses. They have history, a story and often there is more/other craftsmanship compared to the modern building style. Adding to this the future design assignment which will for a great deal consists of renovating and redeveloping the building stock, the choice of KEMA was the only logical one for me. The assignment is becoming more and more relevant due to the economic situation, the future shrinkage of the population but also buildings are fabricated in such a way it becomes easier to redevelop them. When the choice for KEMA was clear and justified for myself I still had to choose between the KEMA and the Social housing in The Hague. In Southwest of The Hague neighborhoods are degrading and this is the case for more neighborhoods in urban Dutch cities. In this studio there will be a research how to revitalize these areas. This is a real question for the housing stock in the Netherlands and can have major impact on cities. Although there is a great challenge in redeveloping social housing I picked the KEMA area. Arnhem’s Buiten is the current name of the former industrial area of the KEMA company in Arnhem. The KEMA company is testing electrical equipment on small and big scale. This industrial area is on the edge of the Veluwe and the buildings stand together in a park where the relation to the Veluwe is noticeable. The buildings were made for a function and don’t relate to other functions very well, there used to house explosions with thousands of liters of oil in some of the buildings. Because of the great and impressive buildings with their own and original history I choose the KEMA area! For my graduation project I really would like to work with these buildings, in my eyes it is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Hopefully it is more focused on the building and the search for a new function for this building, where the challenge of the other project in my eyes consists more out of social research and somewhat urban challenge of the social housing. When an architect can work with these one of a kind constructions, he will have a better view on how to handle unique constructions and learns how to research for a new function in all buildings in my opinion. It is great to use a space for a function it wasn’t meant for. In most cases a collision will happen between space and function, this collision is the most interesting part of redevelopment for me.

Building
After the studio started the analysis was the first part of the course. Within this analysis started on a big urban scale and zoomed in each few weeks. In order to zoom in a building needed to be selected. The selection of this building was done by personal preference. Personally the impressive inside hall of the High voltage laboratory appealed to me because of it big open inner space. Dealing with and the making of such an open space has been a personal challenge for a few years. How to deal with such a big open space and find the balance between impressive space and nice details. These open spaces impress me the most and this is a perfect opportunity to investigate why and how to create one of my own. It was a no brainer to pick this building, even more by its central location in the park and the opportunities it gives.

Program
From a personal point of view the program of a building should make sense but should also be personally appealing for the architect. At the moment of writing this thesis plan the analysis of this project has been finished already, from this analysis a new masterplan was generated. In this masterplan it became clear the building should have a public function and should be able to connect both sides of the building to each other, so far the reasoning. Next came the personal preference of the architect. A function which is becoming more and more public throughout the years is the library (Dijkstra e.a., 2010), this function also related in a nice way to the laboratory function in the past. Both of the functions are about discovering and learning. A quick research showed that Arnhem is still using a library bus. With all the new media the place of reading is becoming more and more important (Dijkstra e.a., 2010) so a library would be a legalised function. But looking in to this function I came across the DOK Centre in DeLft, here multiple functions are combined and this would be a more interesting challenge for a graduation project. So a media Centre is the final function of the graduation project.

LEGO was one of the initiators for my technical ambition.
Nowadays architecture is a inspiration for LEGO.
Source: www.flickdriver.com
Subject and Context

KEMA
The studio is called after the company who build the industrial buildings it is going to research and redevelop. This area bought by development company TCN in 2005 possesses some strong 1930’s industrial brick buildings in a unique setting. Despite these seemingly positive qualities in the area the users are moving out to new offices and the old buildings are becoming vacant. Kema had their company here since 1931. Over the years KEMA grew and added buildings. Now the old buildings don’t meet the demands of the KEMA anymore and the company moved out of the area and sold the property to investment company TCN in 2005. TCN is now researching the possibilities to regenerate this area.

Arnhems Buiten
KEMA used to be the owner of the fenced area and the buildings on it. This is no longer the case, KEMA is moving its activity to new laboratories to another part of the site. Nowadays the area is called Arnhem’s Buiten, also known as Business Park Arnhem. Arnhem’s Buiten is a collective term for 4 different areas next to each other and with some internal connections. The 4 areas are Mariendal, Den Brink, De Hes and Rosande. The top 2 area’s used to house the KEMA company with all their supporting facilities and are developed from 1931. De Hes and Rosande are a bit younger. In the 80’s KEMA needed new buildings and build them on the bottom 2 area’s. A big part of the original buildings on Den Brink became empty and vacant when KEMA moved out. Due to their specific (functional) shape and spaces for big scale testing they are not able fit new functions without an intervention. Some buildings were suitable for offices and new tenants were found. In the last decades some new buildings came on the site but they are not really contributing to the original buildings, they seem unrelated in shape and function.

Currently Mariendal is undergoing major changes, the old KEMA buildings are being demolished and a new designed headquarter of Tennet is being constructed. Den Brink is becoming even more vacant in the upcoming years. New buildings for KEMA, built on De Hes, will be responsible for this shift. For the Den Brink area a new master plan is wanted. This area has some unique qualities compared to the 3 other area’s but is not yet friendly and attractive to use. Over the years the different areas are used by the same company but for a visitor they feel like 4 different areas, to cohesion between these areas isn’t clear. The 4 areas are connected to each other by bridges and tunnels, here the practical connection becomes visible. The connection between the different parts was purely functional, this was necessary because of the borders around the site. Although Arnhem’s Buiten is still enclosed by different borders the entrances are now open and public can use the park for leisure or to use the cafeteria.
Most companies on the terrain have a connection to the original function of the area, several energy related companies choose this location to settle. For the future Arnhem and TCN would like to emphasize this energy theme to attract more new tenants. In 2005 TCN bought the whole of Arnhem’s Buiten (all 4 areas). Together with the municipality of Arnhem they want to make a mix of dwelling and business on Den Brink and all related to energy.

TCN
TCN describes themselves as: “TCN is a developer of comfortable, functional and sustainable urban environments. By generating cooperation, involvement and openness TCN creates innovative solutions for the future.”(www.tcn.nl, 2012)

TCN is a big company which is mainly successful with their business parks with a theme. An example of such a park is the media park in Hilversum. A lot of company’s who are related to television find their place here. The same concept TCN wants to organize in Arnhem’s Buiten. The concept for Arnhem’s Buiten will be Energy and all related companies.

Arnhem green/energy city
The city in the East of the Netherlands is one of the greenest cities in the country(Municipality Arnhem, 2012). The location next to the river Rijn and on the edge of “De Hooge Veluwe”, Netherlands oldest and biggest natural green, give qualities to Arnhem like height differences and a strong connection to this green. The city has won several prices for its green city and nice inner city, further the city is known for art and fashion.

Arnhem is also part of a bigger region of the “Stadregio” (city region) Arnhem Nijmegen”. The focus of such a region is to develop transport, economic growth, public space and dwellings. The region tries to bind people to the region. Since 2005 nearly 24,000 dwellings are built to coop with the shortage, for the future decade a same number is wished. Within Arnhem the prognosis is that this growth will slow down and from 2030/2040 will decline. For this reason the focus of the city will go to quality instead of quantity of dwellings.
### Division

Zooming in to scale of Arnhem’s Buiten it is visible that the different qualities which are unique for the location of Arnhem come together. Within the area is a height difference of 35 meter and a real integration of the green in to build area. This combination makes Arnhem’s Buiten such a unique ‘industrial’ area.

Although TCN looks at the areas as a whole(TCN, 2012), in reality it consists out of four separate parts (see below) formed by several cuts through the fabric. Railways and car streets cut through Arnhem’s Buiten. By cutting through they become boundaries which are dividing the area.

In history another reason can be found. KEMA started their company on Mariendal and Den Brink. Over the years they expanded here in the same style until the 1960’s. After this the company expanded to de Hes and Rosande, in these areas another building typology was used.

### Den Brink

It is perfectly possible to look at the Den Brink area as a separate part of the KEMA area. It has the clearest entrance, a central location. Despite of this prominent position there is not a clear direct connection to the other three areas due to the traffic borders, but also due to fences and green on the edges.

Den Brink is the place where it all started for the KEMA company.

This is the part with the most history embedded in its location. The Story of the KEMA company can be seen best in this part of Arnhems Buiten. The specific buildings are a referral to the old industrial function and to the 1930’s till 1970’s. The area developed over the years but still is experienced as a green industrial area like it was designed in the beginning(1937). With its own ambiance, function and architecture it is able to distinguish itself in a positive way from the other three areas. This is emphasized by the fences surrounding the whole area and the poor (visible) connections to the rest of Arnhems Buiten and the surrounding urban fabric.

### High Voltage Laboratory

The red highlighted building on the map is the High voltage laboratory (1937) (Vredeberg, 2003), this building will be the final subject of this graduation. Together with the other buildings in the red cloud this was part of the testing facilities of KEMA. The buildings is centered around a big open space (hall) where testing of electrical equipment took place. In this open space it still noticeable that some big scale activities took place here, this is a quality which needs to be preserved for sure. Next to this main hall is a second smaller hall. It still is a nice space but is less impressive that the main space and they are at the moment not connected. The building has clear different elements to it. The smaller spaces around the main hall are on a human scale but in the middle the buildings is completely out of scale.

This is noticeable in the North-West facade. The facade on the South-East however is on normal human scale, this also due to the height difference. The ground level is about 4 meter higher in the South-East.

### English landscape

All buildings on this site are placed in an English landscape design. This means the territory reflects its terrain and landscape and scenario’s change dynamically from closed to open spaces. The most important elements are emphasized with an open view towards them. The testing buildings are placed on the lowest level of the terrain so it is visible from everywhere. The buildings respect this design, it follows the landscape while sometimes hiding themselves behind the trees. All the old buildings are with at least on facade directed to an open zone in the area. Often this open area gives a preview of the building after which it gets hidden again behind green before reaching the entrance.

### Location

This location has some things going for it, but there are also some negative aspects. From a positive point of view the location is well connected to the Hoge Veluwe, the Randstad and to the backland of Germany. Arnhem could be a gateway for the Randstad and the German Ruhr-area. This connection is not only by car but also train, water and even electrical (transport lines). So for company’s focusing on both the Netherlands and Germany or the link between them Arnhem could be a good place to settle.

For company’s who are dealing cutting edge technology, have strong connections to university’s and want fast connection to whole Europe or the world Arnhem isn’t the best place to settle. Big airports, Universities, and a big part of the working class is located in the Randstad.
Problem statement

Vacant
The area of Den Brink is becoming more and more vacant. Most of the current centers are moving out to new offices in the three other areas of Arnhems Buiten. This is mainly the result of the KEMA company expanding and updating, because of this growth they need newer and bigger buildings. Some of the buildings are suited for office spaces but most buildings are designed for a specific function and cannot house other functions without a big intervention. It is a pity that the area with (in my opinion) a lot of qualities is becoming vacant. This area should be the face of whole Arnhems Buiten and could be a real selling point to attract new companies. A slow start has been made with attracting new users but so far more buildings are becoming empty.

Enclave
Through time KEMA did all of the work and research themselves. Also maintenance, workshop, mail and the other services for the whole company was done by and part of the KEMA company. As a result KEMA didn’t need other company’s in their surroundings, it was a little village on its own. No other companies could get in to this area. The Area of Den Brink has been a no access zone for decades. In the future the area is planned to have a more public character. Enclosed and framed might be good for a business park with a strong character of its own, but when the plans are to incorporate new functions it becomes more complicated. Should the park in that case be public? Semipublic? what should happen to it? How is it possible to make this combination? Is it possible?
A part of the value for this business park is the separation from its direct surrounding. This makes the park a park, it isn’t only the greenery. The borders of Den Brink are designed as a border and are part of the English landscape design which was made in 1938. When these borders are taken out the English landscape design needs to be adjusted. At the same time this separation makes it a challenge to come up with a function which can operate in this park if the separation is maintained. Together with this border the architecture in the area is strongly connected. This connection emphaizes the outlines of the park. To maintain this quality the ensemble of buildings need to be respected. The buildings need to stay architectural connected, when this connection is lost the park will loose quality as a whole.

Image
The KEMA and the ground where the buildings stand on have had some bad publicity over time. From 1956 till 1972 KEMA has buried light radio active material on the site. The even buried radioactive material from other companies like TNO research(www.geschiedenis24.nl, 2012). Through time KEMA did all of the work and research themselves. Also maintenance, workshop, mail and the other services for the whole company was done by and part of the KEMA company. As a result KEMA didn’t need other company’s in their surroundings, it was a little village on its own. No other companies could get in to this area. The Area of Den Brink has been a no access zone for decades. In the future the area is planned to have a more public character. Enclosed and framed might be good for a business park with a strong character of its own, but when the plans are to incorporate new functions it becomes more complicated. Should the park in that case be public? Semipublic? what should happen to it? How is it possible to make this combination? Is it possible?
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Specific function
So far the area had a real specific user, this user was the owner of the whole park and could develop it like they thought was best or most functional. For the future it is not preferable to change this structure of the area to radical. There is not a lot attention spend on the routing for people wondering around and enjoying the site. There is an asphalt connection between all the buildings which is meant for all different transport. Pedestrians or bicycles don’t have their own routing. Although the routing is mainly functional the landscape is adjusted in such a way nice views are discovered going through the park. Maintaining this quality for the different users will be the challenge.
The buildings had a even more specific function, these buildings were designed for different testing facilities. Because of this the buildings are hard to redevelop and interventions are nessecary to make the interior of the buildings suitable for a new function.

Update
The buildings on the site are structural in good condition. They are solid, over dimensioned and stabel. The masonry is in good condition a part from some ‘repaired’ parts. The old buildings fit nice together in the context, for the older buildings this is a bit less of a truth. The younger buildings separate themselves from the area due to their different building style. Although these buildings are younger and have more technical quality’s there are as well no longer up to date. Nowadays the demands for a building are much higher than this. People want healthy working spaces with good insulation and lighting. The old buildings on Den Brink don’t have any isolation and even cavity walls are not common in all buildings. The test buildings have mainly ventilation for the machines but even this is sometimes not present. So in order to work with these buildings they need to be updated to the current standard, and perhaps even more than this making ENERGY efficient buildings.

Media Centre
Written media are loosing ground to the digital media, therefor it is nessecary to revisit the library concept (Dijkstra e.a., 2010). A integration with other function and specialisation of spaces could contribute to succesfull continuation of the the information center concept.
What the requiredments for these new spaces are is still under investigation and research is still needed. Dok Delft is a nice example how different functions are mixed together in 1 (redeveloped) building. The national library association is busy formulating their vision on this aspect (Procesbureau Bibliotheekvernieuwing, 2011).
Regenerating the area of Arnhems Buiten. Contributing to the redevelopment of Den Brink and the area of Arnhems Buiten by transforming Den Brink in to a public area. (The historical) qualities present in this area can and should be available for the general public. Arnhem doesn’t expect big growth in the coming decade so quality of life in Arnhem should be improved to retain the inhabitants. In the new masterplan of the Den Brink area the focus is on an attractive public area.

Within this framework of a public area the High Voltage Laboratory should be redeveloped in to a public building. A building which is able to connect to the different ambiances on both sides of the building (as found in the analysis). Looking to the history of the building it would be nice to use the theme of experiments and discovery for this new function.

A media Centre would fulfill this function. This is a newer version of the former library. This buildings with big open spaces in the middle is perfect for creating such a place. In the past big tests have been done here (Vredeberg, J., 2003) which could give the building additional ambience. In addition to books other culture and media actors are now incorporated in this function in order to attract more people and to let people meet in the real world. With its different internal ambiances it is possible to relate these to the outside.

The media Centre should attract people to the site and provide a place where people can meet, read, discover and experience. These functions should use, and contribute to, the qualities in the (new) park. With this new combination people will want to spend their free time here.

The beauty of this exercise is to make a place where people would like to spend their free time, not only a purely functional space. In order to do so the space needs to be spectacular and intimate at the same time, a great challenge!

This new function should bring a new impulse for the area. With this new impulse the “Brand” of Arnhems Buiten can be further developed. Den Brink will become a vibrant public area where society’s demands meet the historical story of the area. The story will become an additional layer on top of the natural and architectural qualities present in the area. With this combination it will be possible for the area to attract locals, users and even new tenants and in this way the area will be used again, expanding the life of the park with a new chapter.

By opening up the Den brink to public and adapting the functionality to the new user group, the values in the area will be used and appreciated more. People from the neighborhood can spend their free time here wondering, relaxing or shopping with the benefits of a park and awareness of history. A more specific function should be able to attract people from further away as well. When Den Brink is an attractive place to spend free time, the surrounding business areas of Arnhems Buiten benefit from this as well. In this way Den Brink can serve people on different scale levels.

Professionals from the surrounding offices can spend their lunch breaks here. Den Brink will be able to attract specific businesses because of the additional qualities of the appreciated park next to the offices.

Serving the local needs of neighborhoods surrounding Arnhems Buiten should be the basis for this new park. A new media Centre will be one of the facilities this park is providing. The media Centre is a new version of the older library principle. For this specific function a research needs to be done how this facility is probable to develop in the coming decade. These buildings should make the link between urban and park ambience and at the same time give room for urban meeting places and opportunities for silence and relaxation.

This media Centre will stimulate people in the future to keep using this Centre. In this Centre there will be a lot more to discover than just books. On the internet people will find if they know what they are looking for but in a media Centre they are tempted to discover much more IN REAL LIVE! People will find information they weren’t looking for but is attractive.

Furthermore will this Centre be a place where people want to be and spend their free time to discover or do their study. By creating different spaces for different use people can find in this building an experience, it is not only the information but also the way of discovering this information what will give this building its value.

By answering all the (sub) questions it should be possible to regenerate this park to be an attractive public space and redevelop this building in to a spectacular Centre which is focused on discovering and experiencing information!
Research

Initiation
In this design course with a given site containing multiple buildings, the designer must be able to get it head around the given facts. To fully understand it is necessary to do a research on different scales. The given facts differ from the history to adored future function, and from urban coherence till building detail. The research will be in this project the starting point of the design. From this research a challenge will slowly arise and will be specified as the research continues. A broad research is used to frame the design task, when the design task becomes clear the research can concentrate more effectively on this goal.

In the second phase a building is chosen which will be redesigned. In this case the building is the High Voltage Laboratory, additional research is done for this building. After all a function for the building needs be formulated in this is where the designing starts.

The design
The function for the building is the first big design decision. After this decision a further research in to this functions needs to be done. The design challenge will be formulated by the research. On the moment of writing the public function and media center functions are decided. Now the design will start to take over the research. As soon as decisions are made this has consequences for the research. When the decision is taken to make a media center a new research should be done in to the current and future development of a media center. Library’s and media centers are heavily under debate at the moment due to the information technologies spreading over the globe. Next to this references need to be looked at and spatial requirements need to be developed.

During this additional research it is possible unforeseen input for the design project will come to the surface. This input can adjust the direction of the design but can also be an additional layer of the design.

Another possibility is the facts learned from the initial research will remain or even find their way back to the design process. Some originally discovered values can also be an additional layer of the design. All these discoveries should serve a concept which is formulated at an early stage of the design process (this doesn’t mean this is fixed).

Result
In the final phase the objective is set, the goal is clear and here is where the design really comes in. As an architect you are designing to reach these objectives. You are testing, shuffling, shaping, reshaping to make the design as close to the set demands as possible, all of this to make the media center as fitting to the concept as possible.

It is often about balance and choices between different wishes/demands. There is no optimal result, everything has pro’s and cons which the designer needs to handle. By trial and error different possibilities are discovered, learning from each trial the design gets more articulated. Research can be advised, but most of the knowledge should be available, now the designer needs to translate all this knowledge in to the design. In case different options come up the concept should be able to legit the choice for a certain option.

Research
This way of academic research is called research by design or study by design (Jong, T.M., 2002).

Study by Design – elsewhere called Inquiry by Design or Research by Design - tries to generate knowledge and new insights by studying transformations of a design or design interventions in an existing situation. Generally, this type of study also features a strong exploratory characteristic. (Jong, T.M., 2002, pp504)

What is research?
Research is typically defined as systematic investigation on a subject that generally leads to the production of explicit knowledge adding to the existing body of knowledge about the subject. Problems with research by design: nontraditional results (non-textual) that are the outcome of research by design have the following limitations:

- Incommensurability with traditional results
- Experimental content: it goes against the notion of generalizability or at least transferability of research
- Lack of shared definition of scientific criteria
(Source: Research by design or design by research, (based on Biggs and Buchler (2008)) by Roberto Rocco on Jun 03, 2009)

Study by design is the ultimate challenge, ever-changing boundaries and one to be expected anywhere, at any design institution. However, by definition, it entails that one must reach beyond the known scientific domain and methods, at the risk of being considered unscientific. However, if that risk is not taken, no ways are to be found into an unknown territory. Characteristic for this type of study is generating knowledge and understanding by studying the effects of actively and systematically varying of both design solutions and their context. (Jong, T.M. 2002).

Above is shown research by design is different from the traditional research done in University’s, for this faculty it gives researchers the opportunity to dive in to the unknown and gain the knowledge along the way.

Design
Design is influenced by research
Design influences what is researched
Design influence each other

Research
Research influences Design
Proposal
Execution
Presentation
Sketching
Research
Research
Research
Research

Thesis plan AR3U012
9
Relevance

Social relevance

It will be interesting to see how a fenced area will be reconnected to the urban fabric of Arnhem. Can this former industrial area gain a new meaning for the population of Arnhem? The surrounding neighborhood is a socially involved neighborhood so this should be taken in account. Making changes to such a neighborhood can have big consequences for the coherence. New people and function are added to the fabric of the current neighborhood which is apparently working well at the moment. For the design this group of people needs to be included in the development of the area.

Another aspect of the social relevance will be about the continuation/preservation of the story of the site. The KEMA has been part of Arnhem’s story for over 75 years now. It also is part of the lives of people working for the company and the development of the neighborhood. From these studies can be learned how to recycle these values in a positive way for the future without loosing the story.

What should the area represent in the future and how does this relate to its history? The area represents a part of Arnhem’s history, at the same time this story fits perfectly in the future vision of the city. In this way Arnhem as a city can recycle the ‘energy’ image of this location. By taking an loaded area a future plan can get more weight and fundamentation for future exploitation.

Last but not least it will be interesting how a former negatively loaded industrial area can be turned in an area which people appreciate and makes their lives better. Making this from a restricted industrial area in to a public area is already an improvement. Next to this Arnhem’s Buiten will be used to improve the lives of the local inhabitant be reconnecting them to history and the green qualities available.

The combination of the park and this media center could be the answer for outdoor spending of free time.

On the building level it will be very interesting to see if architecture is stronger than the contemporary way of spreading information. People need certain spaces to be able feel comfortable to read/study/relax/discover etc.

The architecture of such a public building is for a great deal about people, where do they want to meet and when do they want privacy and intimacy for their own personal experience.

Also on this level the continuation of the story is strong element. The building not refers to its old function but is even continuing this function in a new way. Especially for people who have experienced the old function this will be a valuable aspect of the design.

Academic relevance

The Rmit studio is in itself already relevant for the future of the Dutch building stock. More buildings are becoming vacant and Rmit studies show how to handle these building and deal with their stories.

Industries are moving to other countries with lower wages and consequently the old industrial buildings in the Netherlands are becoming vacant. These buildings on the other hand represent a part of (architectural) history, have aesthetic value and are part of the urban fabric. How to handle these objects is an interesting question for the future.

For the future this project can be a reference how to handle vacant industrial buildings, it can even be a precedent for industrial ensembles or industrial parks. These buildings have specific functions and need an approach how to handle these specified spaces, the execution is different for every buildings but experience with this approach will give an insight in when this might be a good way to attack such a design task.

At the same time it is interesting to see if it is possible to use the “brand” ‘Arnhem’s Buiten’ to make the site more popular. Can architecture use this (historical) branding to promote itself and is this a value? Does this have consequences for the architecture?

The building will shift from private to public use. This project will also show in which way a building can be adapted without losing the connection to the historical story of the building.

Finally Arnhem wants their building stock to change from quantitative to qualitative. With a shrinking population for several cities in the Netherlands this is an interesting research which may have value for other shrinking cities in the future. In this investigation the existing buildings stock of a city is used to generate new qualities, no new building need to be build which has several advantages. New buildings rarely have the unique qualities that old do possess, old buildings already have a story (which can be improved) were new buildings are just starting with a blank page, and possibly this is more friendly for the environment.

Next to all of this an additional research is necessary for the development of a media center. The library is under a lot of pressure and needs to change to a media center by collaboration with other functions to maintain its relevance. It is probable this is a trend which will continue for the coming years so the design need to be able to anticipate to these changes. Researching future changes and gaining experience how to deal with is valuable knowledge. Does the building need to become flexible to anticipate on future function changes or does strong architecture make it possible for this function to survive? Strong architecture can for sure make a difference here (Barbieri, 1996), but research needs to show how this will look in detail.

This kind of knowledge can be used en several buildings which may lose their function.
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</table>
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Images

pg1. - http://78.108.130.74/willemsmit/index.php
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