



## Weiterbauen on everyday architecture

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## Urban Architecture

For my graduation I have chosen the Urban Architecture studio. One of my interests within the field of architecture is how new additions to the built environment can react on and be influenced by what is already there. As the Urban Architecture studio deals with a city fabric that can be seen as a heavily 'written' *tabula scripta*, the opposite of a *tabula rasa*, and aims to see value in the existing context, I believe this studio is the right choice for me.

## Weiterbauen in Liège

The neighbourhood of Bressoux, Liège, has been chosen as the site of the Urban Architecture studio this year. Bressoux shows many layers of time and use in its present architecture, where many alterations and demolitions also resulted in a fragmented cityscape. I believe that a new addition to this context should contribute to the coherence and be inspired by the characteristics of the neighbourhood, instead of adding yet another contrast to it. I believe the attitude of 'Weiterbauen' could provide a sensible reaction to this fragmented whole.

Weiterbauen can be seen as a design attitude that is in favour of stacking epochs upon or next to another, rather than creating stark contrasts between old and new elements. It is about empathetically adapting to the existing building or context with respect, preserving the old by retaining it within the new (Niess, 2021, p. 15). Where the still very influential Venice Charter of 1964 (Gazzola et al., 1964) argues that the difference between old and new should always be recognizable, nowadays often resulting in rather harsh contrasts, Weiterbauen can be seen as a search for more subtleties in the readability of old and new.

While some extensively-researched buildings like the Alte Pinakothek by Hans Döllgast or the Neues Museum by David Chipperfield might provide useful insight in this design attitude, my research will focus mainly on a humbler, everyday expression of Weiterbauen rather than prestigious projects like museums, as this seems more fitting to the context of Bressoux. Therefore, the main research question I will try to provide an answer to is "*How can Weiterbauen be applied in the context of the everyday architecture of Bressoux?*". The research questions "*How can Weiterbauen be explained?*", "*What are different positions within the attitude of Weiterbauen and how are they expressed?*" and "*What current examples of Weiterbauen can be seen in Bressoux?*" will lead towards answering the main research question.

Researching these different takes on the attitude of Weiterbauen will help me position myself in the debate about the way architecture should deal with a context and its history. This way the research will provide a useful feeding ground for a building design that interacts with the context of Bressoux, continuing on what is already there.

More specifically, I will work on a design for a shelter for the homeless, as according to the latest counts, 500 people are homeless in Liège, of which 78 are children (Vanmeldert, 2021). The program might ask for a building that is vandal-proof, but should at the same time provide domesticity for its vulnerable users. It should offer them a sense of dignity, providing them with a worthy place in the everyday life of the city. This way the attitude of Weiterbauen might not only be architecturally interesting, but also contributes to the idea of providing a (temporary) home that is embedded in the tissue of Bressoux, rather than an institution that stands out.

## Methods and references

The first part of my research will focus on the term Weiterbauen and its position in the debate around dealing with the existing built environment and its history. Through the use of literature research, I will try to give an answer to the question "*How can Weiterbauen be explained?*". Well-known projects like the earlier mentioned Alte Pinakothek or Neues Museum may be brought in to explain the principles of Weiterbauen, but the focus will lay on written sources, mainly by architects. A list of references I intend to consult is attached in Appendix 1.

The second part consists of the analysis of a selection of architectural projects that encompasses various positions towards the attitude of Weiterbauen. The purpose of this part of the research is not to compare these different projects, but to gather a collection of inspiring examples that show a range of possibilities of Weiterbauen (a preliminary list of projects that will be analysed is attached in Appendix 1). The goal of this collection is not to be complete, but to be exemplary.

Using photos, drawings and descriptions by the architects, I will try to provide an answer to the research question "*What are different positions within the attitude of Weiterbauen and how are they expressed?*". Each of the selected projects will first be re-drawn to the scale of the brick, forcing me to conduct an in-depth study on the details of both the existing building and the Weiterbau-addition to get a better understanding of the architects' position. The drawings of the projects House Schreiber by AMUNT architekten (figure 3) and Hobbemakade by Rapp + Rapp (Appendix 2) show two of these drawings.

Subsequently, by carefully observing the projects, reading the architects' motivations and possibly conducting interviews, I aim to uncover their approaches and considerations. These will then be researched through the use of analytical drawings, highlighting project-specific underlying themes and the architects' ideologies. The type of drawing might differ per project, as I aim to find a fitting way for each project to show its



fig. 2  
Façade of Haus Schreber by AMUNT architecten (Dujardin, n.d.)

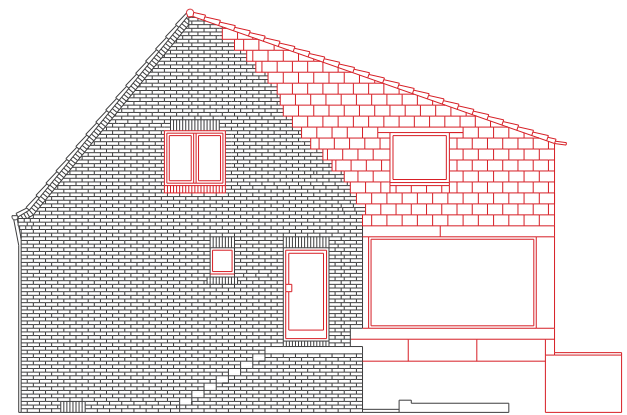


fig. 3  
Line drawing of Haus Schreber (own work, 2022)

important themes within the subject of *Weiterbauen*. A first analytical drawing of *Hobbemakade* is attached in Appendix 3, stressing the major difference between the street façade and inner façade, raising the question if *Weiterbauen* in Rapp + Rapps approach can be seen as a form of *façadism*, constructing a sort of '*Weiterbau-mask*' on the street. These drawings per project will be substantiated with literature research, placing the theme in its bigger discussion.

The third part of the research will focus on the question "*What current examples of Weiterbauen can be seen in Bressoux?*". Although I haven't defined the method and form of this part of the research, my goal is to find various already implemented takes on *Weiterbauen* in Bressoux, and to understand how *Weiterbauen* can be undertaken in a more informal way, possibly even without a 'conscious architect'.

By combining the results of these three parts of the research I will try to provide an answer to the main research question "*How can Weiterbauen be applied in the context of the everyday architecture of Bressoux?*", providing a source of inspiration for my own design for a homeless shelter that builds further upon the built context of Bressoux.

### Relevance

The fragmented neighbourhood of Bressoux is formed by alterations, demolitions and new additions, and is constantly changing. As *weiterbauen* requires an eye for detail in unraveling the built context and its past, to be able to build further upon it in the future, I believe a further understanding of this design attitude could benefit the work in the Urban Architecture studio, where a sensitivity towards past episodes, current conditions and future possibilities is required (Reinders & Vermeulen, 2022, p. 7). *Weiterbauen* demands a conscious consideration of how architecture deals with history, a responsibility that can and should not be avoided (Cramer & Breitling, 2007, p. 19-20). As the city and its landscape in general are written with traces of history (Reinders & Vermeulen, 2022, p. 7), this consideration is not only relevant in Bressoux but in the whole field of architecture. Since *Weiterbauen* is an attitude rather than a style, and can also be applied to an everyday context as I aim to set forth in this research, I believe it can enrich the debate on dealing with the existing context.

### Literature

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### Figures

- 1 Borghouts, K. (n.d.). [Photo of House Extension Mortsel]. <https://bovenbouw.be/projects/house-extension-mortsel/>
- 2 Dujardin, F. (n.d.). [Façade of Haus Schreber]. <https://divisare.com/projects/253473-amunt-filip-dujardin-schreber>
- 4 Rapp + Rapp. (2022). [Hobbemakade Housing Block]. <https://www.rappenrapp.com/project/hobbemakade-housing-block/>



# Appendix 1

## References intended to consult during the research

- Academie van Bouwkunst, Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de kunsten, & Alkemade, F. (2014). *Tabula Scripta*. <https://issuu.com/bouwkunst/docs/academie-van-bouwkunst-lectoraat-fl?e=2025838/9575137>
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- Somers, D. (2019, June 28). Plaats, tijd en monumenten. In *Het Predikheren* (pp. 272–283). Public space.
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## Preliminary list of architectural projects intended to analyse in the research

The following projects are selected to be analysed in the research, due to their various takes on Weiterbauen. They all concern a project that focusses on dwellings, but address Weiterbauen in quite different ways. Each project raises different questions; where the previously-addressed Hobbemakade is interesting for its clear distinction between Weiterbauen on the street and a contrast on the inside of the building block, Haus Schreber is an interesting example in terms of legibility of old and new. These various themes will be further determined and developed during the research.

Project name	Architect	Location	Year of completion
Haus Schreber	AMUNT architecten	Aachen, DE	2011
Hobbemakade	Rapp + Rapp	Amsterdam, NL	2011
Pension van Schoonhoven	BULK Architecten	Antwerp, BE	2018
House extension Mortsel	Bovenbouw architectuur	Mortsel, BE	2012

## Appendix 2

### Photo and line drawing of Hobbemakade by Rapp + Rapp



fig. 4  
Hobbemakade Housing block, by Rapp + Rapp (Rapp+Rapp, n.d.)



fig. 5  
Line drawing of Hobbemakade Housing block (own work, 2022)



## Appendix 2

### Analytical drawing of Hobbemakade by Rapp + Rapp

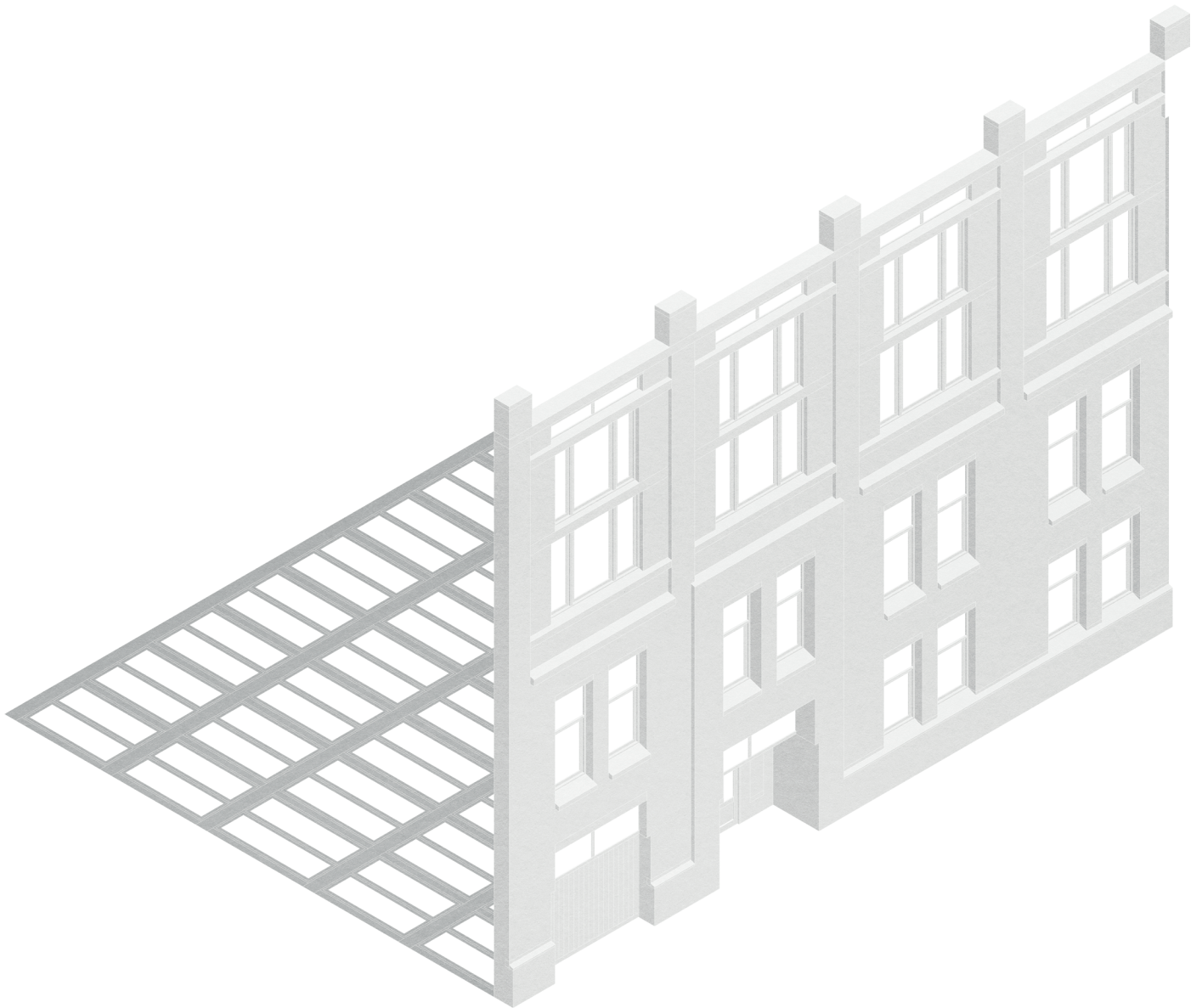


fig. 6  
Analytical drawing of Hobbemakade Housing block, by Rapp + Rapp (own work, 2023).

The street façade is depicted as a sort of 'Weiterbau-mask' with the inner façade as its casted shadow, to dramatise the great difference between the two sides of the building. It aims to stress the idea that the street façade is a representative example of Weiterbau, where the inner façade does not seem to be directly influenced by its surroundings.