

1

IGNITION

# SOCIAL MONUMENTALITY

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You can judge how bad the seventies were by looking at its uptight architecture.

A democracy of opinion polls and complacency thrives behind Biedermeier façades. We have no desire to build Biedermeier. Not now or no other time. We are tired of seeing Palladio and other historical masks. Because with architecture, we don't want to exclude everything that is disquieting.

We want architecture that has more. Architecture that bleeds, that exhausts, that whirls, and even breaks. Architecture that lights up, stings, rips, and tears under stress. Architecture has to be cavernous, fiery, smooth, hard, angular, brutal, round, delicate, colorful, obscene, lustful, dreamy, attracting, repelling, wet, dry, and throbbing. Alive or dead.

If cold, then cold as a block of ice.  
If hot, then hot as a blazing wing.

Architecture must burn

- Wolf Prix | Coop Himmelb(l)au, 1980

# 1.2 GRADUATION CONTENT

1.	IGNITION	1
1.1	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
1.2	GRADUATION CONTENT	3
1.3	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	4
1.4	INVENTORY	7
1.5	ESSAY 1   SOCIAL MONUMENTALITY	11
2.	GARDEN CITY HEIJPLAAT AND ITS UNCONVIVIAL TRUTH	18
2.1	HISTORY	19
2.2	CURRENT SITUATION	32
2.3	EVENTS	41
2.4	PRESCRIPTIVE EVENTS	55
2.5	ESSAY 2   GARDEN CITY HEIJPLAAT AND ITS CONVIVIAL FUTURE	61
3.	REDEVELOPING RELIGIOUS HERITAGE   CONFLICTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BUILDING LAW	67
3.1	INTRODUCTION	68
3.2	PURCHASE	70
3.3	GROUND LEASE	77
3.4	STATUS OF MONUMENTALITY	80
3.5	RE-PURPOSING	85
3.6	TEMPORALITIES	93
3.7	ESSAY 3   SUMMARY	97
4.	THINKING BY BEING (THERE)	104
4.1	ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT	105
4.2	CASE STUDIES	108
4.3	DESIGN PROCESS	112
4.4	ESSAY 4   CONSIDERING THE ARCHITECT AS ONE WHO MOUNTS THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE	127
5.	THE PRESCRIPTION   THE ACTUAL DESIGN	132
5.1	GENERAL	133
5.2	PRIOR TO IGNITION	
5.3	IGNITION	
5.4	POST IGNITION	
5.5	TEMPORALITIES	
5.6	URBAN RECONSTRUCTION	
5.7	DRAWINGS	
5.8	PRESCRIPTIVE EVENTS	
5.9	ESSAY 5	

# 1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## TITLE

**SOCIAL MONUMENTALITY**

## LOCATION

Zaandijkstraat 5-7, Heijplaat | Rotterdam

## POSED PROBLEMS

Design studio: a vacant church building burns down in Heijplaat. An ignition of reactions, emotions and processes are the start of a posed solution for the ruins and outhouse that are left. The possible interventions on this specific site are a possibility to restore a (former) social monumentality that was present, specifically in its former social center: the Julianakerk. Heijplaat, such as many other 'company-towns' went through a phase of heavy (classic) de-industrialization which brought the evident unemployment. Consequences are that the obviousness of the former social structures are no more. In an area such as Heijplaat this is amplified by its small scale and lack of the resilience as the garden city is completely dependent on the 'company' (RDM). There are no valuable events taking place on this site anymore.

Research studio: At the moment two churches close their doors per week in the Netherlands alone. These former places of social and spatial centrality left a hole in our cities and neighborhoods. How should these be filled up? Private laws and public laws do not make it easy to make sustainable plans for such objects, which is part of the reason that 600 churches are vacant in the Netherlands at the moment.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are answered throughout the five chapters of this graduation project.

## Booklet 5

**Main question Design Studio: How can the social monumentality of the Julianakerk be restored in a way that Heijplaat can benefit from it?**

## Booklet 2

- What is the narrative of Heijplaat as a garden city and how does this translate in its social and spatial qualities?
- What were the consequences of the bankruptcy of RDM to Heijplaat?
- What are nowadays the relevant organizations in Heijplaat? Are these organizations in any way filling or replacing the social gap? How can the existing organizations be amplified/extended towards a more resilient Heijplaat?
- From what sort of transformations and processes can the neighborhood benefit socially and spatially?

## Booklet 3

**Research Studio: What are the reasons that the vacancy of religious heritage has come to such epidemic proportions?**

- What are essential moments in private law (purchase and ground lease) in obtaining an object such as a church and what kind of research needs to be done for a feasible trajectory?
- What is the ideal game plan/process plan in terms of procedure when realizing the re-purposing of vacant religious heritage (taking into account the neighborhood, municipality and other parties)?
- Which segments of the process could use optimizations? And How?
- What are the lessons learned from the case of the redevelopment of the Julianakerk?

## Booklet 4

- In what way is the process of building influenced when 'the architect' is also the owner/developer and making plans while being on site?

## (DESIGN) ASSIGNMENT

Redevelopment and re-purposing of Julianakerk in Heijplaat, Rotterdam

## PROCESS/METHOD DESCRIPTION

**Research Studio:** As every re-zoning is different and every building is situated in its own complex environment, it is hard to have one redevelopment lead the research, therefore the Julianakerk will be a case in which the overall trajectory of a redevelopment is explored; after which each step is re-evaluated on a national/municipal/abstract level (depending on which is relevant). The research of the Julianakerk will start by looking into building contract law and property law (private law) and most segments of public law; this will result in the very concrete answers to 'what is allowed' programmatically and will also take creative interpretation to find the legal space to do so. This will mostly happen with three sources of information. Municipal documents, interviews/meetings with stakeholders, parties with relevant knowledge and case studies. This will be the basis of my research for the research studio.

**Design Studio:** At the same time I will research Heijplaat as a place, that will give me the answer to 'what is good'. The first goal of the design research will also be to find out what the programmatic completion will be. The difference between the design research and research will be to look at what I should do instead of looking what I may do. This will be mostly pointed out by field research and historic research, speaking to all stakeholders in the area and understanding the possibilities and problems. This will also consist of market research, programmatic research in relation to a possible volume, volumetric research. Specifically in relation to the object being one with certain spatial and social monumentality there will be a focus on commonalities. This will be the basis of my research for the design studio.

I make a clear division between the design and the establishment of the program. The design will follow after the programmatic research and the architectural research of the area. The documentation of this graduation is divided up in to 5 segments. Namely:

1. **IGNITION** | As the project starts off with a given location this is the segment where the object, terminology and project are described together with the initial thoughts and guiding theme.

2. **GARDEN CITY HEIJPLAAT AND ITS UNCONVIVIAL TRUTH** | This segment will answer the subquestions for the design research studio.

3. **CONFLICTS AND OPTIMALISATIONS IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BUILDING LAW CONCERNING THE RE-PURPOSING OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE** | These are the wider question in terms of law and will answer the questions of the research studio in separate essays.

4. **CONSIDERING THE ARCHITECT AS ONE WHO MOUNTS THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE** | This will be a segment that is more important than an appendix consisting of the important references, design process, case studies and an analysis of the role of the architect in this process.

5. **BIG PRESCRIPTION** | The actual architectural plans

## SOURCES

All interviews, books, papers, documents and projects that are referred to within this project have their source written at the end of their specific locations as it would be inconvenient to come back to this booklet each time.

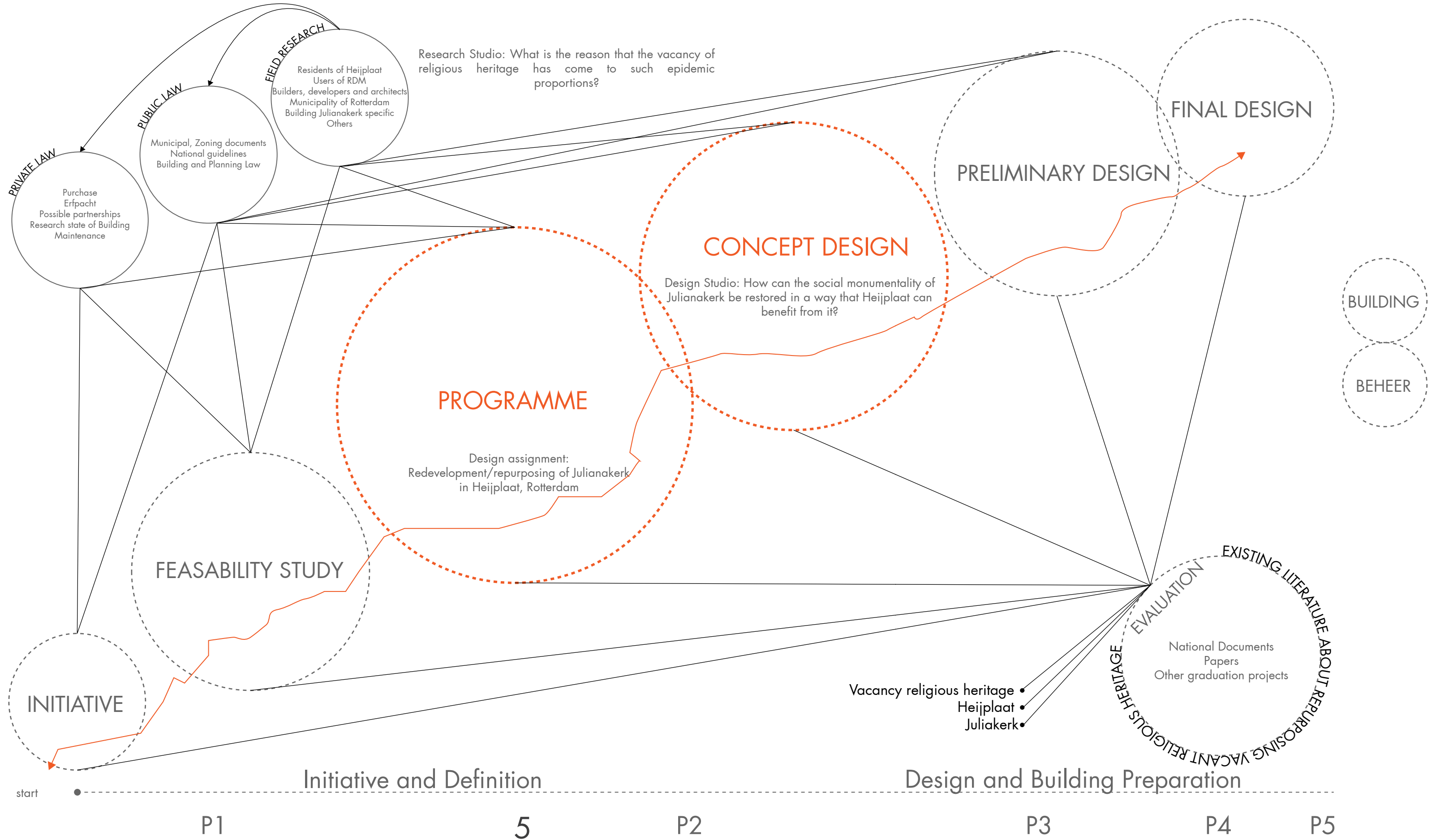
## REFLECTION/RELEVANCE

I will start with looking at Heijplaat as an isolated case in which a neighbourhood that has an existence of a hundred years closed all three of its churches in the last fifteen years. The consequences that this had for this specific neighbourhood and its conclusions are relevant as this is part of a national/global problem, not only for the legal challenges that it brings to redevelop religious heritage, but also the central role it plays in garden cities/company towns.



**TIME PLANNING**

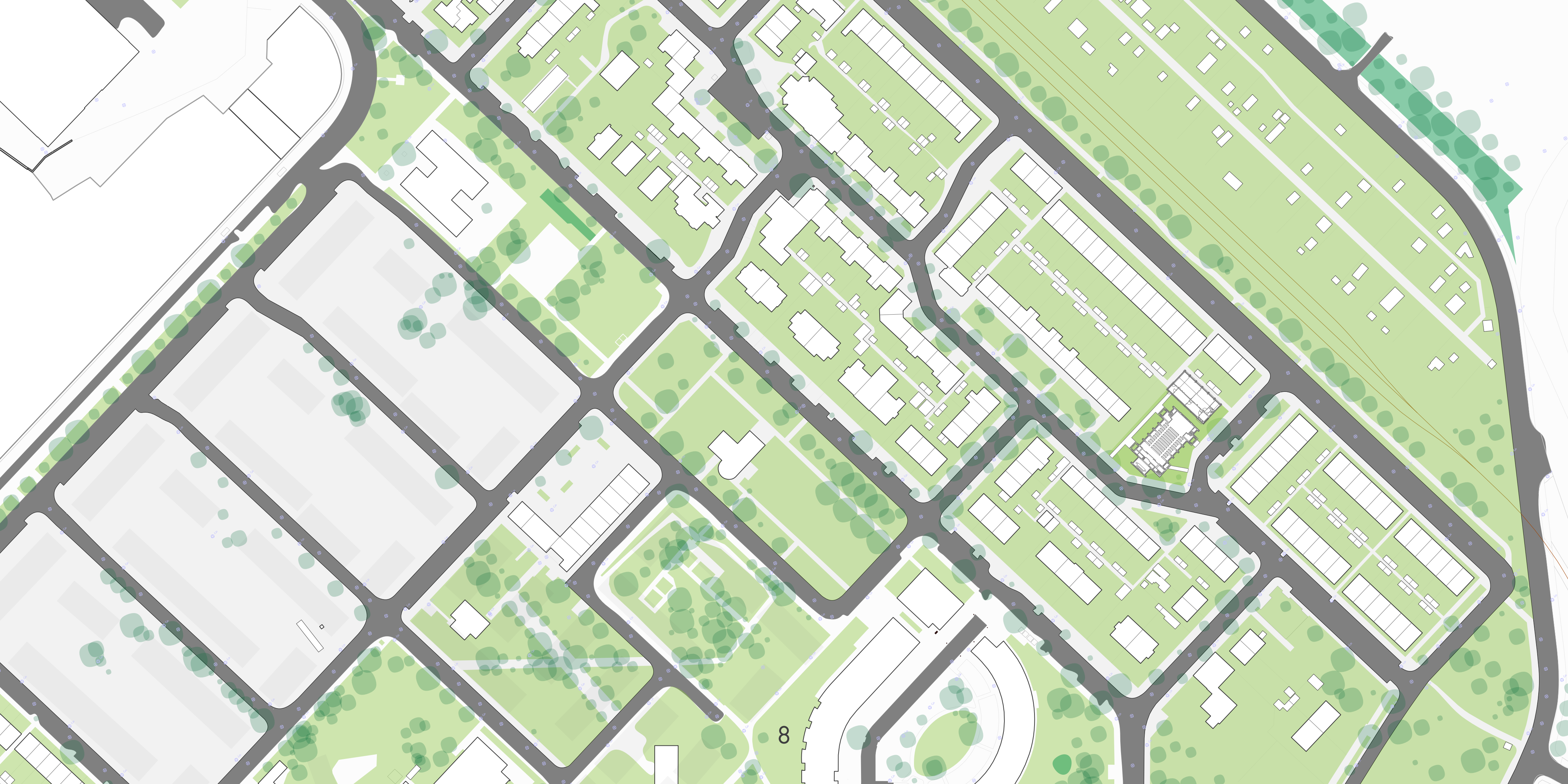
- Week 36: Collecting materials/introductions
- Week 37: Collecting materials/introductions
- Week 38: Looking for mentors/defining research questions/graduation plan
- Week 39: Looking for mentors/defining research questions/graduation plan
- Week 40: Looking for mentors/defining research questions/graduation plan
- Week 41: Looking for mentors/defining research questions/graduation plan
- Week 42: interviews/(site) research
- Week 43: interviews/(site) research
- Week 44: interviews/(site) research
- Week 45: Final draft graduation plan/interviews/(site) research
- Week 46: Final draft graduation plan/interviews/(site) research
- Week 47: P1 Fred & Monica
- Week 48: P1 Klaske & Dorina
- Week 49: Revise Plan
- Week 50: Revise Plan
- Week 51: Document
- Week 52: Document
- Week 1: Determine Programma
- Week 2: Determine Programme
- Week 3: Prepare P2
- Week 4: P2
- Week 5: Work further on determination Programme/Volumetric studies/Research
- Week 6: Work further on determination Programme/Volumetric studies/Research
- Week 7: Work further on determination Programme/Volumetric studies/Research
- Week 8: Work further on determination Programme/Volumetric studies/Research
- Week 9: First Design output
- Week 10: First Design output
- Week 11: P3
- Week 12: Work on Design/Finish research
- Week 13: Work on Design/Finish research
- Week 14: Work on Design/Finish research
- Week 15: Work on Design/Finish research
- Week 16: Work on Design/Finish research
- Week 17: Work on Design/Finish research
- Week 18: Work on Design/Finish research
- Week 19: Final Design /Finish research
- Week 20: Final Design /Finish research
- Week 21: Final Design/Finish research
- Week 22: P4
- Week 23: Finalize
- Week 24: Finalize
- Week 25: Finalize
- Week 26: Finalize
- Week 27: Finalize
- Week 28: P5



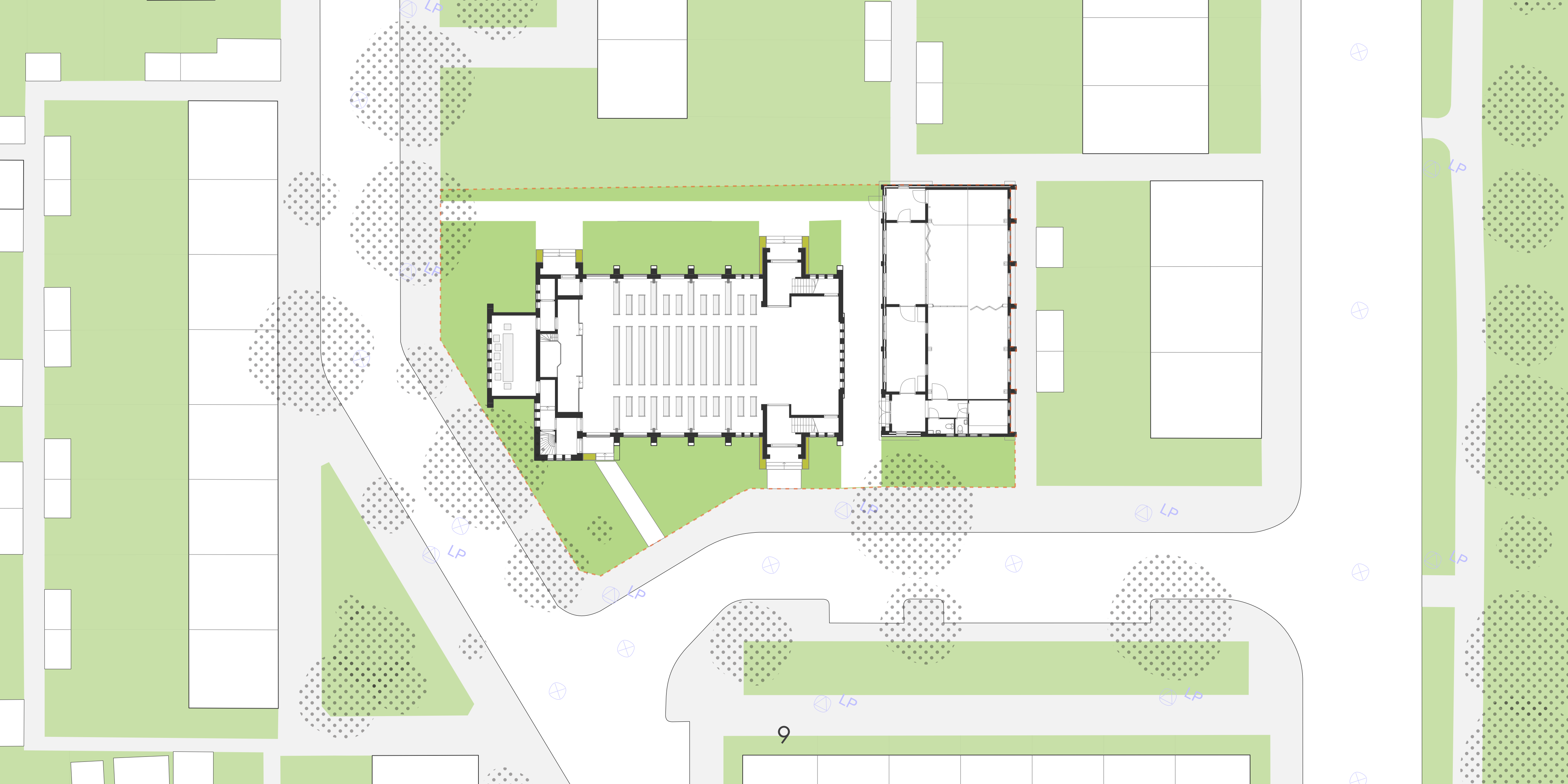
# 1.4 INVENTORY

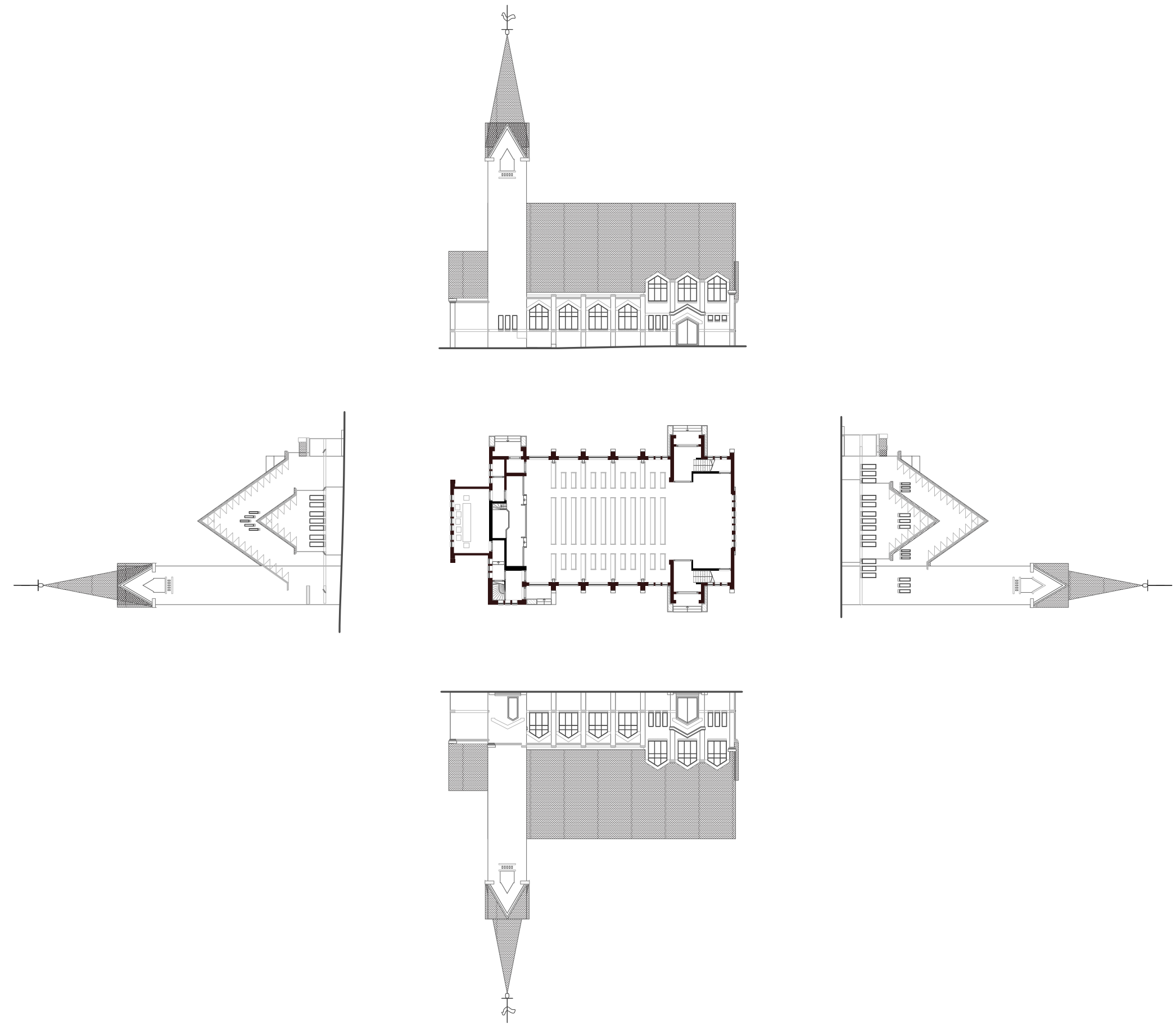
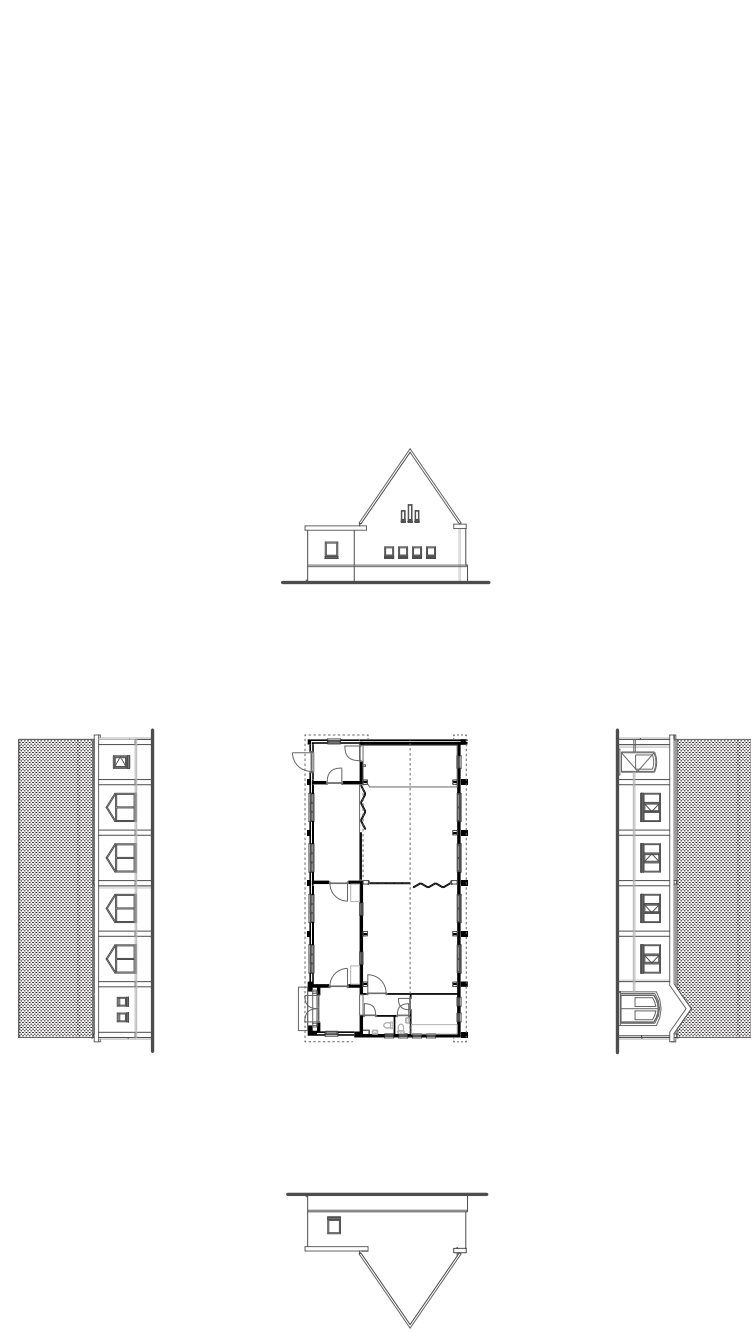






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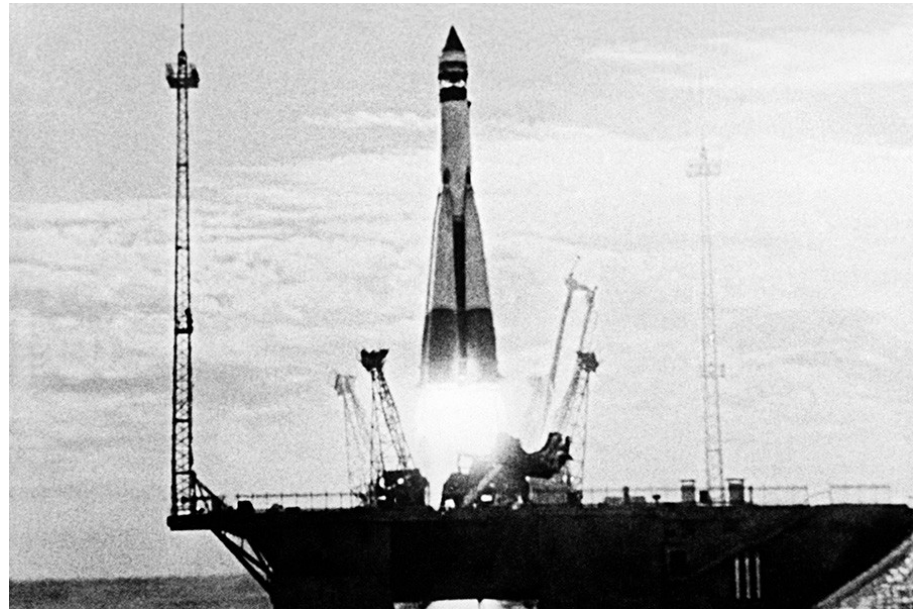


# ESSAY 1

## SOCIAL MONUMENTALITY

### 1.5.1 IGNITION | INTRODUCTION

The first artificial earth satellite was ignited into an elliptical low Earth orbit on the 4th of October 1957 by The Soviet Union; it went by the name of **Sputnik 1**. Its success was a surprise and had the consequence of triggering the Space Race with the Americans. The ignition ushered in new political, military, technological and scientific developments.



Ignition of Sputnik 1 - Soviet Union

A vacant church building burns down in the former company town Heijplaat on the 6th of August 2017; it went by the name of Julianakerk. Its physical remnants and context create a set of surprising conditions that have ignited into the start of its next life. The ignition ushered in the need to explore the spatial, contextual, legal, process-based conditions and constraints.

At the end of each chapter, in a series of five essays there will be a reflection on the different segments of this project as it includes the whole building process and not merely the architectural design. In essence it will be a guide to answer the research questions.

Design Studio: **How can the social monumentality**

**of the Julianakerk be restored in a way that Heijplaat can benefit from it?**  
Research Studio: **What is the reason for the epidemic proportions of vacancy within religious heritage (in the Netherlands)?**

#### ESSAY 1 | IGNITION

The position taken is that the building does not make man, rather man makes the building. Monumentality relates to the relevance/importance to a community. Therefore it would seem to be relevant to think more intensely about the social monumentality of a place instead of its physical monumentality or appearance. The social monumentality relates to the events taking place that are in demand which in turn have human interaction as a consequence; if positive, convivial. As the project starts off with a given location this is the segment where the 'object' and project are described together with the initial thoughts and approach. This is the introduction where the guiding theme and parameters of the projects are defined.

#### ESSAY 2 | GARDEN CITY HEIJPLAAT AND ITS UNCONVIVIAL TRUTH

The Garden City or Company Town is situated within the most turbulent industry of Europe, the harbour of Rotterdam. The 435 houses that have been built between 1914-1930 were occupied by the people working for the former shipyard known as the Rotterdamsche Droogdok Maatschappij (RDM). The people living in this bubble or intense campus were part of what made Rotterdam the biggest harbour of the world between 1962 and 2004. The area has been in a fragile state since the bankruptcy of the shipyard in 1980 with the lowest point being the closing of its supermarket and the burning of the vacant church - formerly its most social centre - in 2017. At the moment Heijplaat does not have the urban conditions to be a convivial place. This essay gives an answer to cope with these problems within its contextual constraints. The possible interventions on this specific site are therefore a

possibility to restore a former social monumentality that was present. The fact that the building used to be a church is not spatially relevant as the building was not in use for more than ten years. There is no demand for maintaining a church on this site.

#### ESSAY 3 | CONFLICTS AND OPTIMALISATIONS IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BUILDING LAW CONCERNING THE REPURPOSING OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

Despite the philosophical irrelevance whether the space was used as a church, there are formal rules and legal constraints 'in the real world' towards the fact that the project/object starts whilst being a church 'on paper'. In the same way that philosophically we are all human and are defined by the things we do and not our formal state (e.g. passports) although that same state does dictate certain legal constraints. This also means that the term monumentality has a different meaning in this chapter than in the previous ones. In order to facilitate the social monumentality of the previous chapter, this chapter will walk a parallel path to discover the programmatic possibilities. By doing this step by step with research into building contract law and property law (private law) and most segments of public law it may give a better insight to why there is an epidemic of vacant religious heritage (in the Netherlands). This will be divided into five sub-chapters (Purchase, Forms of collaboration, Ground lease, Monument status, Repurposement) which can each be considered an essay as well. This due to that some subjects are to be considered on a national level, whilst others only have a relevance on other scales.

#### ESSAY 4 | CONSIDERING THE ARCHITECT AS ONE WHO MOUNTS THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

As the ownership and (possible) redevelopment starts with the architect, instead of (one of) the classic ways of building there are or can be differences in the workflow of a project. The quality of the place can now be researched at a slow pace, without going for the first and easiest/safest (profitable) option. Specifically

looking at the design process, the role the architect plays in the building process and decision making process there are moments that may advantageously or disadvantageously influence the overall quality of the project(process). Therefore this segment specifically reflects on the alternative methods that the before-mentioned conditions 'open up' or 'close-down'. As the main tool for gathering information and decision-making have been through field research, the constant input leads to a very gradual manner of progressing and (design)decision-making.

#### ESSAY 5 | BIG PRESCRIPTION

This is the final chapter where all the previous chapters and research come together in order to form a final design for the specific place of the Julianakerk. The starting point are the ruins that are left and the outhouse (or parsonage). The sequence of events that defined the design and program are also being discussed such as the temporary designs.

Within all these essays and chapters there will one guiding theme: **monumentality**.

## 1.5.2 IGNITION | DECONSTRUCTING MONUMENTALITY

One of the frequently asked questions -besides "is this an insurance scam?"- is: "is the Julianakerk a monument?" The actual question asked in that case is surely whether the building had a legal status in which there are protective consequences for adjustments, to which the answer is a sound "no, but it was on a list to be considered as one in 2020". This question however rises a complexity of afterthoughts.

In essence when thinking about legal preservation statuses of buildings they have been appointed to structures that somehow represent an enduring value (in the broadest sense of the word) to a group of people and/or have some historic, scientific and/or cultural significance. This means that the same building can be on a different location and have no enduring value. This also means that the building may stay on the same location, but may have a different social group estimating its value as unimportant. Surely that is why - in the Netherlands - there is a hierarchy of appointing national, regional, municipal, (etc.) monuments. The simplest explanation of an monument is explained in the Oxford Dictionary.

- a. a lasting evidence, reminder, or example of someone or something notable or great
- b. a memorial stone or a building erected in remembrance of a person or event

Simply said, monuments are things (usually physical) certain people care about. As this is just a very surface-explanation of what monumentality is - in order to understand monumentality - it should be deconstructed.

### DANCING AROUND A BRICK

Let us assume that somewhere in the world someone baked the most unremarkable and normal brick that ever existed and put that brick on the most unremarkable and normal spot on earth. If we dance around that single brick, then that single brick gets additional value (positive or negative depending on the dance). If we dance in between a set of bricks, that space gets value too. This means there is already a need to make an inter-related difference within the spatial monumentality and separate that from the monumentality of that dance, which is in essence an event. We will call the latter social monumentality.

To clarify; one may dance around a certain

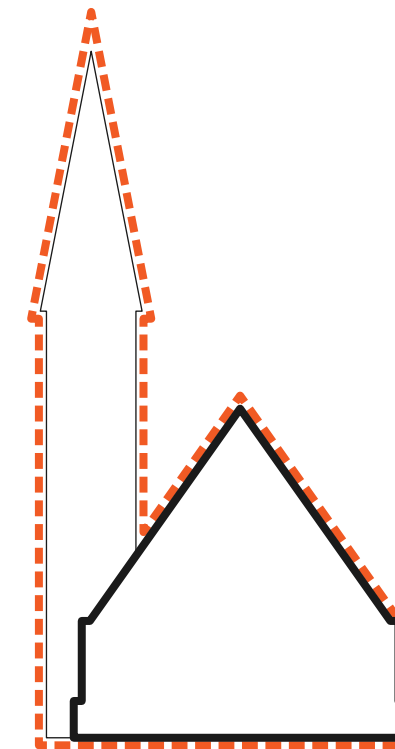
brick and not around another. Louis Kahn<sup>5</sup> describes monumentality as something enigmatic or difficult to understand and something that cannot be intentionally created. In other words it could be described that it is difficult to predict whether something will become monumental or not. This is surely true as a space only starts being valued once it is constructed and when events start to take place. For this reason the next thing that needs definition is the extent/scale/amount of monumentality. I would argue that monumentality:

1. is the sum of its spatial and social monumentality
2. has a two dimensional graph (x=time, y=monumentality) and can go from infinitely not-monumental to infinitely monumental
3. is different for every individual person
4. changes over time for individuals
5. is generally agreed upon by the sum of all individual valuations divided by the number of the individuals that valuated

Although spatial and social monumentality are to be separately valuated they surely have a relation as certain events can only take place if the spatial conditions are there. One can not have social gathering with multiple people in a small cardboard box.

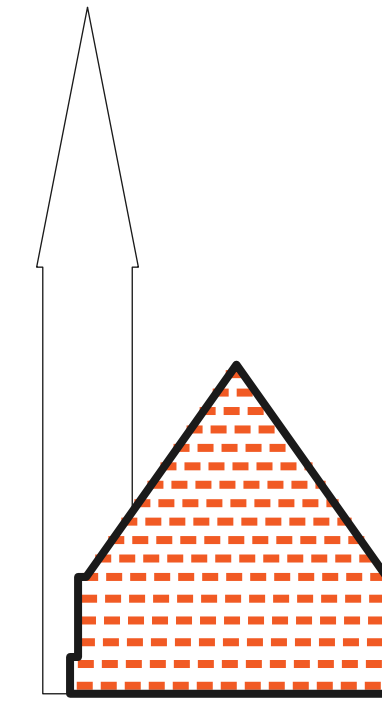
One may also compare the spatial and social monumentality to the body and mind respectively. The reality in the built environment however, is more romantic than the anatomical consequences of death or decay in an actual human body and can know revivals. 'The Ghost in the Machine' is British philosopher Gilbert Ryles' description of Rene Descartes' mind-body dualism. The phrase was introduced in Ryles book 'The Concept of the Mind'<sup>1</sup> to highlight the absurdity of dualist systems like Descartes' where mental activity carries on in parallel physical action, but where their means of interaction are unknown or, at best speculative. I would however argue that for buildings this dualist system exists partially. The ghost is the will of people to socially engage in events and can "float" around in the air and can only land if they find the right body to activate. Other than this: the interaction is more clear as certain activities need specific amounts of space, light, etc. The spatial monumentality can indeed be translated into the relevance of the form of

### Spatial Monumentality



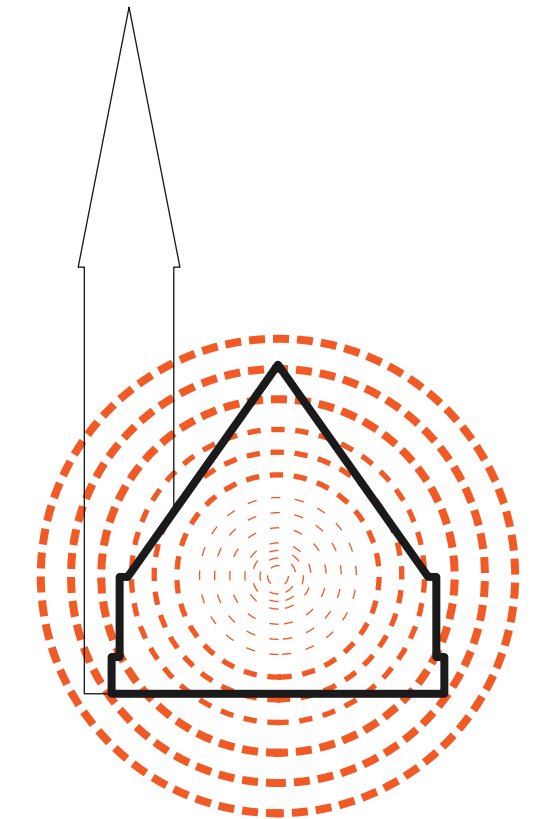
EXTERNAL  
defined by; (placement of )materials

### Spatial Monumentality



INTERNAL  
Defined by; distance and proximity  
of external materials

### Social Monumentality



INVISIBLE  
Defined by; events (things that  
happened in or around that place)



something, the social monumentality however exceeds the function. One may preserve the building, and its spatial monumentality will forever be frozen in time, but if one preserves the function (a church for example) for eternity, the social monumentality will not necessarily live on.

Somehow, on the other hand, the biggest social monuments are also often where there is a spatial/ architectural excellence. Spatial monumentality is however not dependent on its social monumentality. When its architectural monumentality exceeds its social monumentality by far, the most a place can be is what Notre Dame du Haut by Le Corbusier is. It becomes a place to visit for the purpose of visiting it, that is when you have to put a fence around your terrain and ask for an entrance fee. Therefore its architectural monumentality should not exceed its social monumentality, as then the events cannot be facilitated in the right way. One can however also argue that the amount of people going to the chapel for non-touristic reasons is higher because of how spatially monumental it is. When there are more spatial spectators than valuable events, the ghost is simply not at ease in a machine that is not the right

fit, but they are equally important for its functioning.

The main precedent to understand the monumentality of the Julianachurch is Notre Dame du Haut as its ignition knows many parallels. The story starts with a church (Notre-Dame du Bas) on the hill of the neighbouring village Ronchamp, which was completed in 1751 (Fondation le Corbusier, 1951). After the French revolution, the church and the hill were taken into possession by the French Republic. In 1799 however, the hill was bought back by people of the village of Ronchamp, taking control of their own church. In 1913 however a tragic fire took place during a lightning storm. Between 1922 and 1925 a new church was built on the hill, but this one was destroyed too during the second world war because of a bombing. "In 1950, when Corbusier was commissioned to design Ronchamp, the church reformists wanted to clear their name of the decadence and ornamental past by embracing modern art and architecture. Spatial purity was one of Corbusier's main focuses by not over complicating the program and removing the typical modern aesthetic from the design."<sup>2</sup> As it was so difficult to get material to the top of the hill, Le Corbusier re-used the debris of the destroyed church to build the new chapel.

In Dunlap's<sup>3</sup> reassessment of the development of Notre Dame-du-Haut in his 664 page thesis one can read the endless letters and commitment from the villagers of Ronchamp to build a new sacred place. The monumentality of the social is so alive that it can sustain and ignite a new space. As Ryles<sup>2</sup> puts it:

*"The body and the mind are ordinarily harnessed together, but after the death of the body the mind may continue to exist and function"*

Therefore one could state that the spatial monumentality of a place can continue as the 'bricks' are preserved although there are no events taking place around those bricks. Lewis Mumford<sup>6</sup> describes a modern monument as non-existent, which is imaginable for a place to become a social monument but not for a spatial monument. If no time passes something cannot become a social monument as it has not known any events, but I would argue that something can become a spatial monument from the very first moment. In Ronchamp,

the new chapel is a spatial monument right away and made a new start, but is building upon an existing social monumentality. The social monumentality of a place can be very ephemeral as the events have a start and stop. If a place that has little spatial value, but many valuable events until a certain point (the events stop), then it is a decision of nostalgia to keep the bricks. It is then about wanting to keep the memory of spending valuable time in or around that space and bricks.

#### INVOLUNTARY MEMORY

In *In Search of Lost Time*<sup>7</sup> (also known as *Remembrance of Things Past*), author Marcel Proust uses madeleines to contrast involuntary memory with voluntary memory. The latter designates memories retrieved by "intelligence," that is, memories produced by putting conscious effort into remembering events, people, and places. Proust's narrator laments that such memories are inevitably partial, and do not bear the "essence" of the past. The most famous instance of involuntary memory by Proust is known as the 'episode of the madeleine' where the narrator's recollections of childhood experiences is triggered by eating/smelling/feeling a madeleine whilst drinking tea. Both voluntary and involuntary memory are essential to the individual valuation of monuments as its spatiality or spatial image is the main content-keeper of monumentality.

The image of a church in the street is a combination of voluntary and involuntary memory. One may walk by the church and think of the time they were singing there voluntarily or hear the bells ring and involuntarily think of when they were attending a marriage. These religious buildings are not only usually the spatial centre points but have also always been the social connection points in society. It is therefore important to handle these objects, their function/purpose or their afterlife with care even if there is a huge vacancy. If they get demolished, and they can (as we do not need to preserve everything), this can also happen with care, by understanding what hole the next space is supposed to fill. Plainly said it is a perverse thing to preserve such a building for a longer period of time if vacant, which might be the reason that the words perverse and preserve look so much alike. It would be

the same as keeping the body of someone that died whilst knowing it won't ever be revived again. Looking at the picture or physical body of that someone, the picture has little value in comparison to a new body if that body can carry new program that the old one can't. We can also create other rituals or objects to remember, one can also find that in a statue, flower or a bird flying past, I would call that memorabilia, which is what art historian Riegl<sup>8</sup> refers to as an intentional monument. Making intentional monuments is fine, as long as existing structures are not turned into intentional monuments due to the misunderstanding of its social monumentality or a present nostalgia. So if one has to choose between keeping a reference to their memory or creating new space to facilitate a new dance, one should always choose to facilitate a new dance in order to keep an area from standing still.

Let us take the example where Zumthor designed a museum in and around the existing ruins of the Sint-Kolumba church that was destroyed in 1945. The program is humorous. There is an inception within the program as the newly build museum covers the program of a museum of religious art, a place to remember 'stuff', whilst the architecture also does the same thing. The architecture and facade cover for the spatial shock, by the use of contrasting materials and embedding of the ruins. As would be described by Tschumi<sup>9</sup>:

*"if shock cannot be produced by the succession and juxtaposition of facades and lobbies anymore, maybe it can be produced by the juxtaposition of events that take place behind these facades in the spaces."*

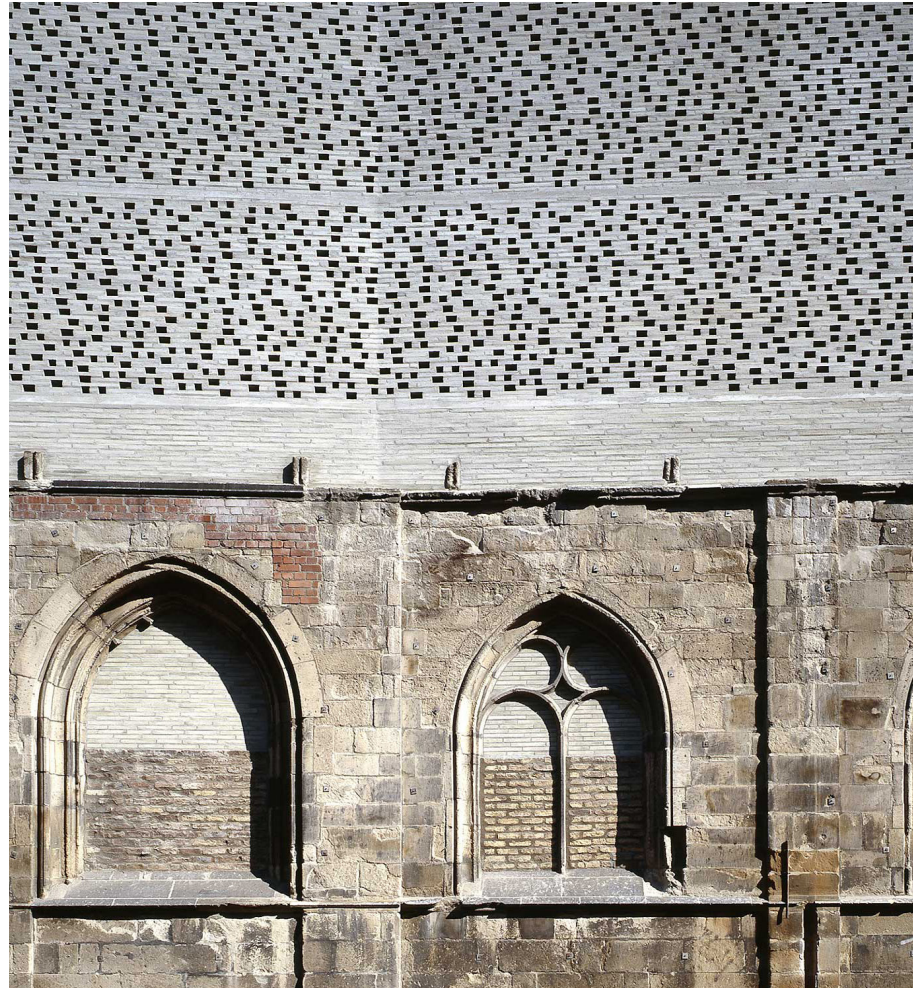
Within the new Kolumba museum, the changing events are not so much a shock, but the spatiality is. As Arjan Helby describes in his paper *Towards an Architecture of Accumulation*: "Which architectural style is to be used for the new additions? The central question is whether to have the new contrast with the old, or to look for a more harmonious union of the two. Generally speaking the decline of craftsmanship at all levels, from building industry to architectural design skills, forces us to choose the contrast model."<sup>10</sup> Zumthor did contrast, but not in a monolithic way, it also has a very high level of craftsmanship. In this way there is a visual memory (the ruins) that (involuntarily) reminds



Notre Dame du Haut - Le Corbusier



spectators of the past events whilst the new spaces can facilitate the new program or dance that is in demand.



Kolumba Art Museum - Peter Zumthor

In the case that the Kolumba museum did not remain its ruins the situation would have been different. Surely, removing a (monumental) building spatially leaves a gap within the spectators memory and perhaps urban structure if it is not replaced by 'correct considerations'. Socially however, the reason why it is an societal no-go to destroy a church is because in general it is a place where there have been very intense, spiritual, awakening, emotional events. Watching 'Wild Wild Country'<sup>11</sup> where a commune starts a small city one understands the intense connection between a community and a place or building although its the events that define the community before the space or building. But the space is the diary and the memory.

Even in the case where the events might not take place again, and there is actually no-one around who

has taken part in those events there are secondary valuations in the next generations. The follow-up is similar to the social experiment (which is actually a fable) of G.R. Stephenson where five monkeys were put in a room where a bunch of banana's are on top of a ladder. In this room, eventually a social status quo appears where no-one dares to go up the ladder anymore in anticipation of a punishment. In the Kolumba Museum there was however a chance (or budget) to integrate the ruins in a new building, serving as decoration and memorabilia. As this serves the continuation of valuable events, it is good, (but not necessary). If it would inhibit new and valuable events, this would not be good.

So although there is a moment when we stop dancing in or around the before mentioned bricks, there is an (in)voluntary urge to remember the dance although apparently those same bricks do not facilitate the current dance anymore. Essentially, when pointing at something and saying "it is a shame that it is not there anymore" it means that there is some monumental value lost, there is a spatial gap in the spectators memory and so the social event has to be remembered voluntarily. This same remembrance is a small spark or peak in terms of individual valuation.

It is therefore that Tschumi<sup>9</sup> made the advertisement that famously said that 'to really appreciate architecture one may need to commit a murder. Because it is then that there is a collective peak in valuating (appreciating or depreciating) that place.

To specifically come back to the **Julianakerk in Heijplaat**: the moment of biggest involuntary and voluntary memory was the fire. The fire is a simultaneous release of valuations as it is a very shocking event. The next day 90% of the people that were interviewed referred to past social events such as 'that one time' that they were baptized or married in the church or that they do hope that the tower can stay, speaking about what they value highly in spatial terms. This way of looking at a shocking event can be better understood by understanding transgression in architecture.



Advertisement for Architecture - Bernard Tschumi (1976)

### TRANSGRESSION

Flambée is a cooking procedure in which alcohol is added to a hot pan to create a burst of flames. Whether this happens intentionally or unintentionally is irrelevant to the process and result. The burning on its own is a spectacle. What is left behind is mysterious and different. Just like roasting an almond opens flavours that would not be there otherwise, it is surprising. Wolf Prix' (1980) manifesto is one where he expresses tiredness most of all, where he takes distance from architecture in which no valuable events take place.

"If cold, then cold as a block of ice. If hot, then hot as a blazing wing. Architecture must burn." (Prix, 1980)



Architecture must burn - Coop Himmelb(l)au

The burn indeed makes an otherwise uninteresting object interesting and can be seen as an event on its own. Zumthor makes this extremely explicit in the Brother Klaus Field Chapel in Wachendorf. The spatiality is intensified by burning the inner mold after the concrete is poured. In essence the burning is used as a tool to shock both spatially and socially as the burning is the start of the building's social existence. Clearly, this is what architecture in transgression is about.

"Transgression. an exquisitely perverse act that never lasts. and like a caress is almost impossible to resist."<sup>9</sup>

Surely a fire is not just an ordinarily shocking event (such as a murder) as it also has destruction as a consequence. The destruction and fire at the Julianakerk makes it spatially the most transparent moment of the place instead of its usual public shyness as a closed church. A church that can also be viewed as a public space with dictation.

"Architecture has always been as much about the event that



takes place in a space as about the space itself. The hall where I give a lecture might have been used for a banquet the night before; next year it could be a swimming pool. I am not being facetious: in today's world where railway stations become museums and churches become nightclubs we must come to terms with the complete interchangeability of form and function, the loss of traditional or canonical cause and effect relationships sanctified by modernism. function does not follow form, form does not follow function, or fiction for that matter. however form and function certainly interact, if only to produce a shock-effect."<sup>9</sup>

It is herefore that it is irrelevant that the Julianakerk used to be a church. If there is no demand to have churchly events, then there is no church. On the other hand, the past events on their own must be respected. If the events leave a social gap, then the gap should be filled. If the events leave a economic gap, then that should be filled up as well. Overall, the ruin, the space, the past events, the fire as an event fall within this description of Tschumi.



Brother Klaus Field Chapel - Peter Zumthor

From the moment of the fire in the Julianakerk, still many people visit the place of the burned church to see the remnants. They make pictures, are astonished, want to touch the stones, want to be in and around the space. The media likes to spend a lot of time on it also. Why? Without being too cruel about the building, it had all the spatial conditions of a barn with the addition of a bell-tower, in an area that on first hand is not one of the usual places where the masses are interested in. The church was empty for 10 years and no-body seemed to care.

The fire seemed to have evoked the collective peak in valuating the building and place, from which one can only conclude that the place is still relevant,

it still holds a social monumentality.



Fire on the 6th of August 2018 and aftermath | Julianakerk

*"architecture is never just the building. it is also the discourse about the building. it is also the representation of the building, the 'mediatization' of the building"*<sup>9</sup>

As Tschumi writes, this ongoing discourse on the Julianakerk is helpfull. Especially after the debris have been spatially cleared, it is the most fragile, naked moment for the remaining place (and perhaps Heijplaat). Therefore, whatever comes after this will be very erotic and intense in both spatial and social terms and therefore interesting to look at. One does not need to exaggerate with this, it can be done with a single tree, a coffee house, an exhibition. Temporarily it will be interesting to investigate this as it also may add valuable events and keep the social monumentality active (or add to it).

*"architecture is the ultimate erotic act. carry it to excess and it will reveal both the traces of reason and the sensual experience of space. simultaneously."*<sup>9</sup>

In this sense, even if nothing is added, one will find themselves not making an architectural movie, but an architectural porno on the place that is spatially and socially most central. This is not being said in a negative sense. This must however, be the reason I have not felt completely at ease at times. The fact of the matter is however, that the fire has ignited space to rethink the whole location.

## 1.5.A IGNITION | REHOBOTH

One should consider that the past events are context too and that certain events can have the structures relive their accumulated history. I believe in architectural ghosts and I think we should not upset them.

*"No architect can rebuild a cathedral of another epoch embodying the desires, aspirations, the love and hate of the people whose heritage it became. Therefore the images we have before us of monumental structures of the past cannot live again with the same intensity and meaning."*<sup>5</sup>

The Julianakerk was a protestant church. The essential difference between protestants and catholics is their vision on the stature of a religious building. Catholics consider the building firstly as a house of God, to which the presence of the people is inferior. In Catholic architecture the attention of the spectator has to be on the religious objects and ceremonial activities. It is therefore that most of Catholic churches are short towards the alter, but wide horizontally, hence the preference of crosses in the plans. The protestants however do not see the church as holy, but rather a place to gather to listen to God. Catholics prioratize individual religious experiences whereas Protestants put value in the collective experience.<sup>12</sup> One could say I agree more with the protestant point of view towards buildings in general: they are not holy, the things that happen inside are holy and I believe that is also what Tschumi is saying. Although secularization is widespread and a big step towards a fact-based, scientific, progressive world it is perhaps time to re-evaluate the relation with our grandfathers again as Louis Mumford mentions in the Brown Decades. This to fill the social gap that has been left behind in a different way. If anything, it was better than what there is now socially: not a lot.

*"The commonest axiom of history is that every generation revolts against its fathers and makes friends with its grandfathers"*<sup>13</sup>

In an area such as Heijplaat -which the next booklet and research will extensively unfold- this is amplified by its small scale and lack of the resilience which the garden city once had. Heijplaat, such as many other 'company-towns' went through a phase of heavy (classic) de-industrialization which brought the evident unemployment. In combination with this secularization; consequences are that the obviousness of the former



social structures are no more; this with the self-evident consequences of a lack of care for each other, social cohesion and loneliness. As the understanding of what social monumentality is, now the main question can be asked:

How can the social monumentality of the Julianachurch be restored in a way that Heijplaat can benefit from it?

To end this all by re-understanding Marcel Proust once again. In Heijplaat: the smell of making great ships will not go away. In the Julianakerk: the smell of burned materials will not go away. Every time one steps in the ruins, when the rain falls on the remnants or one touches the bricks, there will be the smell. The smell is fresh and new, not yet associated with any new events but the fire. A place with a perfume. Who will be its lover and think of her every time that smell

passes? The stone that was placed in the tower of the church upon construction in 1930 refers to Rehoboth (or Open Space), Genesis 26, verse 22.

*"Abandoning that one, Isaac moved on and dug another well. This time there was no dispute over it, so Isaac named the place Rehoboth (which means "open space"), for he said, "At last the Lord has created enough space for us to prosper in this land."<sup>14</sup>*



Stone in tower | Julianakerk

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