

Research Plan

From Church to Religious art museum

Curative reuse of sacred architecture

Tiffany Lin (Ian Neng Lin)
5626617

AR3AH115 Graduation Studio
Revitalising Heritage (2022/23)

Table of contents

Introduction	4
General Problem	6
Specific Problem	8
Research Question	10
Theoretical Framework	12
Methodology	14
Relevance	16
Time Plan	18
List of Figures	20
Bibliography	21

Front cover: Het Steiger in disused condition for the public except for the church community.
By author [Photograph]

Introduction

Cultural heritage, Sacred Architecture And Social Sustainability In The Netherlands

Through generations and civilizations, the concepts of sustainability have been around us without acknowledging it by its own global label. Sustainability gained recognition for its many applications across various fields and beyond, characterizing it as a common human objective that considers both the demands of the present without jeopardizing those of future generations. As a result, the idea also incorporates the preservation of the interconnected cultures of nature and human settlements, with heritage architecture serving as one of the most significant by-products across time and place.

Meanwhile, the expanding definition of cultural heritage in architecture grew into global importance. This was included during the World Heritage Convention, as well as closely associated with the environmental issue that was consciously directed to the Brutland report ("Our common future") in 1987. It is seen that sustainability is a necessity for cultural significance. Cultural heritage in architecture, both tangible and intangible properties, need sustainability more than ever for modernity and its future. As the world is expanding into generic cities of independent and self-sufficient volumes, social cooperation, however, became optional. In 2022, the Netherlands' sustainability of People remains the lowest among the other two pillars, which are Planet and Profit.¹ Further analysis of the problems revealed that the incompleteness of social sustainability was also attributable to the late inclusion of such objectives in the global heritage doctrine as late as 2002, as represented in the Budapest statement.² Finally, in 2015, heritage architecture was formally included to the list of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), indicating the relevance of history in the sustainability agenda that had been overlooked.

As a result of the lack of attention paid to social equity, less active forms of participation are being incorporated in response to the future of adapting heritage architecture, par-

ticularly church architecture. Today, we see churches as one of the 'discarded' heritage due to their antiques basis and the sedentary position that conflicts with the dynamic change of urban and social development. As a result of the cultural revolution of the 1960s, The Netherlands is one of the world's most secularized nations, and in 2020, accounted for one-fifth of all churches as vacant and abandoned.³ In addition, countless religious buildings are either demolished outright or converted into non-religious structures including residences, cultural hubs, retail establishments, and museums. These recent resolutions indicated an approach attempting to transform churches to be economically productive and that supplements the previously leapt social gap. However, perhaps more importantly, it requires to be maintained through equal participatory distribution in the process of governance and decision by which the environment is regularly replanned. The increase of public responsibility in both physical and mental adaptations, therefore, encapsulates what it means to convert church architecture back into a people-centered space again.

*"We must set out the fundamental...typology of signs... a typological order of buildings and public spaces is the organizational core around which society, and its institutions, builds its reality."*⁴

Instead of modifying church space with rapid intervention to demonstrate its use in the here and now, a worthwhile design model of adaptive reuse via participation can sustain transformation. The diverse potential for participatory purposes might vary from being a social right to becoming a powerful motivator and enabler of sustainability-oriented heritage practices, with significant and long-term outcomes.⁵ Sacred architecture may return to the city as a symbolic sign and figurative meaning rather than merely a physical legacy.

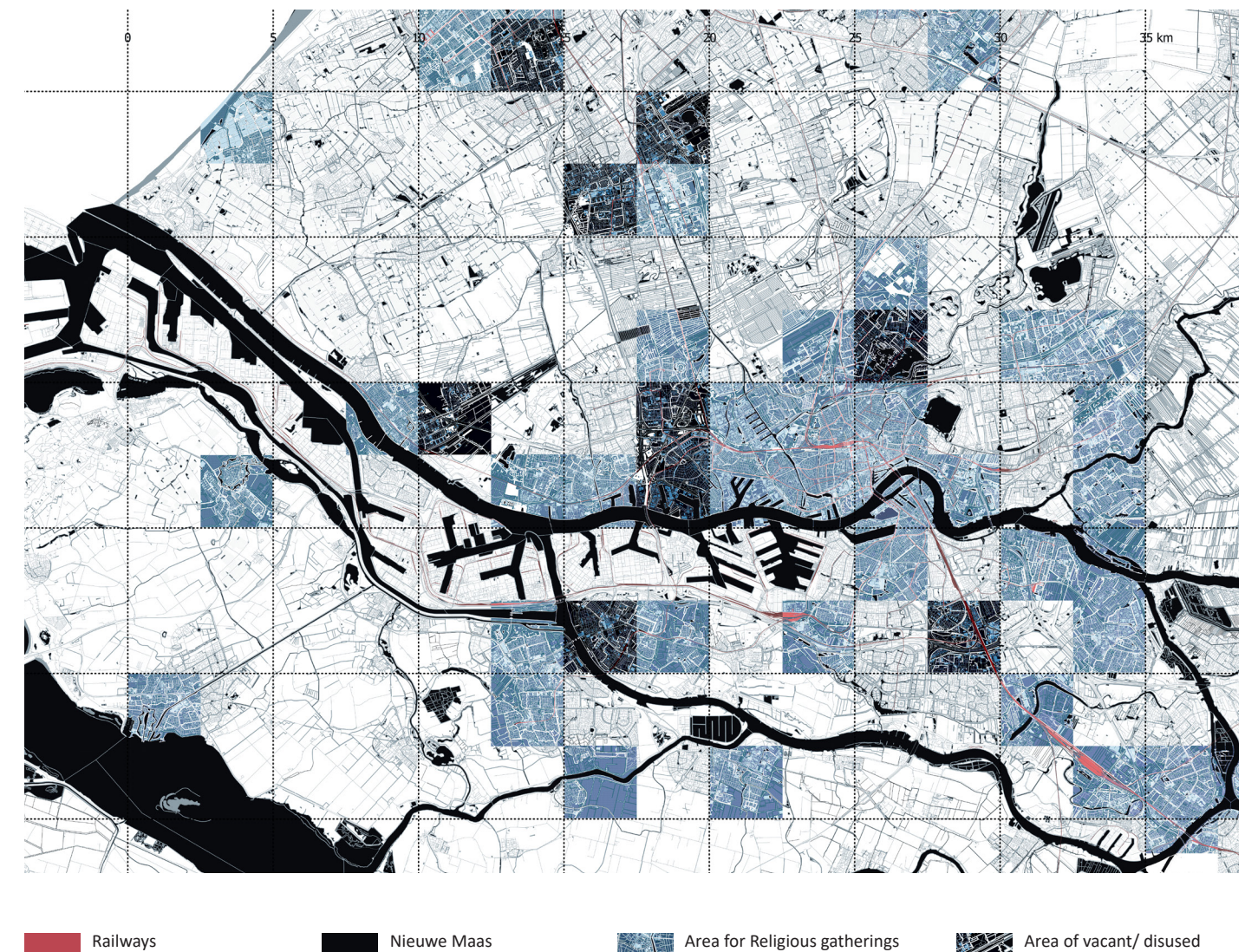


Fig. 1: Church distribution and disused churches in the Netherlands.
Image by author

General Problem

How Will Sacred Architecture Live In Secular Horizons?

The question of whether the values of universal architecture and heritage architecture can coexist without conflict is undoubtedly a topic of discussion. Generalized cities have evolved into the fundamental form of globalization, which is the driving force behind the world's economic, political, and social situations. Additionally, generic cities in both developed and developing countries have homogeneous precincts arranged in independent, orderly tiers rather than hierarchical concentration, which was formerly essential to historic cities.⁶ Rotterdam, which previously had an urban sense of historic hierarchy with churches but was decimated by bombing in 1940, is an example of a Dutch city that made a deliberate decision not to restore the original architectural elements. As it was assumed that large-scale generic architectural functions could satisfy modern needs.

Rotterdam then was freed from the cycle of urban hierarchical dependency and transformed the city centre devoid of most of its own distinct past. However, with the belief in function diversity and infrastructure accessibility, all architecture is built with priori assumption of preprogramming spaces.⁷ Rotterdam as a result became a mono dimension, meanwhile asking all future architecture adaptations to be specifically featured with function to prove political significance since the new planning. Intentional redevelopments in heritage architecture, therefore, are consistently maintained and modernized.

By reducing the complexity of these existing historic character to meet the needs of current urbanization and population increase, sacred architecture unfortunate-

ly is also placed in a position that requires urgent adaptation. The hierarchy of historic spaces in churches, which formerly had a distinctive architectural quality and prestige through time, has been incorporated with contemporary purposes that are thought to add secular value and are, thus, determined by economic factors. Leon Krier reacted to the modern adaptation of heritage entities, metaphorizing this current state as a 'fast fashion':

"A built and protected world which took many generations to build... , was, however solid – or potentially permanent- adapted and transformed according to incidental needs. To destroy such cities and buildings after having used them so successfully and for so long would seem as absurd and superfluous as to destroy a cup after having tasted from it." ⁸

Currently, the adaptive reuse strategy for sacred architecture is a system of a holistic approach. One would analyze the existing fabric in seeking the present heritage value and present need. To go about overcoming these challenges, however, it is also important to understand the potential of churches as a stable symbolic focus even in a secular city. In this problem statement, I argue that a holistic strategy is insufficient to achieve the long-term goal of sustaining churches as heritage architecture. The maintenance of this current method is still heavily reliant on certain parties such as investors. In addition, these resolutions derived from commercial pressure created a great deal of ambiguity in addressing future urbanization and societal complexity from proposed adaptive reuse.



Fig. 2: Rotterdam with the church Het Steiger in 1957 (Top) and in 2022 (Bottom).
Top: Rotterdam City Archives L-5979 [Photograph]
Bottom: Image by author

Specific Problem

The Absence Of Participation In Church Architecture

The social sustainability of sacred architecture was frosted in the time of the past. During the active periods, churches played a significant part in the enhancement of quality of life and living through sustainable production and consumption from religious impact. In the past, historic societies have pursued a definition of sustainability that takes into account ecological, social, and economic concerns because of the virtuous involvement of religious activities. Therefore, user involvement fosters the balance between the cultural form of space and function, allowing church architecture to maintain its value in its own right.

However, in today's society, harmony achieved by user interaction is no longer valued as highly as the optimal use of all necessities. The demands and expectations of religious communities are typically disregarded in adaptive churches since wider audiences' economic interests are more important. Reflected in the generic city of Rotterdam, human figures are immediately identified into specific characters - like road users, recreationists or shoppers - due to the preprogramming spaces.⁹ This is a problem of unequal social distribution as the city is strictly segre-

gating different actors to locate in specific spaces. Inadequate public freedom therefore is left for unintentional interaction which was important for social and public life in historic city.

For sacred architecture in Rotterdam, Het Steiger is a clear example in addressing this issue. Situated in the city center of Rotterdam, with a post war appearance however inheriting the practice since 17th century. One may notice the contradiction of 'shoppers' paying little attention to approach Het Steiger despite its aesthetic and symbolic strength, illustrating once again that "codes dictate behavior".¹⁰ As a result, research into human perceptions of heritage value is required in order to avoid pure manipulation of functionality and to properly spread the diversity of experiences that allow public participation and engagement.

"If our attitude to history and culture has to change, it must first of all get away from teaching culture and political history as a series of apocalyptic breaks, as a series of points of no return..."¹¹



Fig. 3: 'Shoppers' walking pass Het Steiger on the opposite side of the canal (top), Het Steiger restricted access due to absence of public visits (bottom)
Image by author

Research Question

How to re-introduce the heritage value from religious spaces (Het Steiger) that create dialogues with the contemporary city of Rotterdam?

With difficulties ranging from the overall scope of the Netherlands to the specific city of Rotterdam, architects are being urged to redirect their focus to the essential meaning of current sacred architecture. Due to the added delicacy of cultural properties therein, sacred architecture should not be viewed as yet another entity for rapid preprogramming during the adaptive reuse process. This formed the foundations of my inquiry:

How to re-introduce the continuity of heritage value from religious spaces (Het Steiger) that create dialogues with the contemporary city of Rotterdam?

Through the theme of architecture seek answers to these sub-questions:

Firstly, social sustainability is a fundamental core to the city of Rotterdam, where heritage values are disconnected from society. As churches are one of the few

vestiges of Rotterdam's past, how can perceptions of their historical value allow involvement in re-functioned religious architecture from both local groups and the general public?

Secondly, with adaptive reuse decisions influenced by current supply and demand, the search for acceptable utility for architectural and cultural legacies became critical. In a city of logic and practicality, how can the values and appropriateness of re-functioned religious architecture be re-evaluated?

Finally, adaptive reuse in sacred architecture must thrive in the midst of Rotterdam's unending urbanization. Meanwhile, the transformation of spaces must be conclusive in order to keep additional harm to a minimum. What are the implications of adaptative reuse on sacred architecture throughout the design process?



Fig. 4: Rotterdam map
Image by author

Theoretical framework

To develop the theoretical aspects of comprehending the suitability of values in adaptive heritage architecture, key authors who have written on structures similar to those under consideration will be explored. The theoretical framework will be categorized into three groups. Each group will be a different aspect of adaptive reuse in sacred architecture.

The first group is the topic of participation in adaptive reuse design and management. This is a top-bottom approach that will draw from the literature already in existence on heritage adaptation in architecture. Including the holistic viewpoint of decision-makers (the designers) and users (the public and the community). As a means of resolving this issue, recent existing interviews with various stakeholders, including local government agencies and neighborhood associations, are being combined with relevant information. Using current methods that are taught through academic research and particular recommendations as practical guidance.

The second group of studies focuses on human perception and behaviors in relation to historical value, partic-

ularly in sacred architecture, as part of integrating the value evaluation of architecture. Theoretical studies will be based on the work of individuals such as Mircea Eliade (1959)¹², Kevin Lynch (1972)¹³, and Rem Koolhaas (1995)¹⁴. As part of the bottom-up research, human perception of heritage value will be investigated over time (for example in 1860s, 1940s and 2022), with the goal of concluding the possibility of perception towards church values in order to build feasible spatial compositions in adaptive reuse.

The third set of research investigates the contemporary manifesto of functionality in Rotterdam. The composition of space, materials, and proportions is provided by studying the architectural attributes of the city's primary functional axis. This, in combination with the study of Het Steiger and smaller case studies that illustrate functionalistic architecture in Rotterdam, will assist establish how functionality might be provided effectively while also integrating with current function typology.

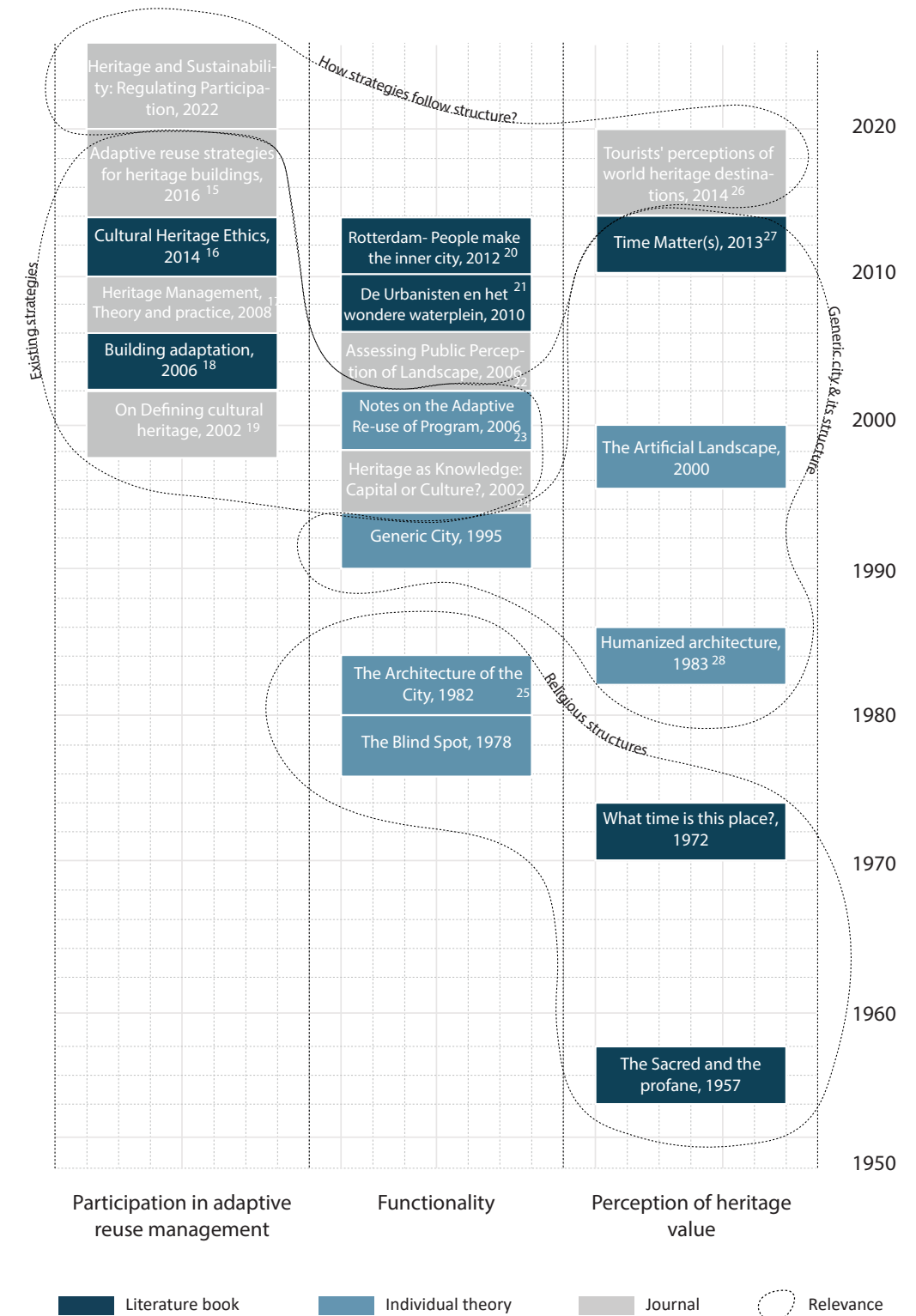


Fig. 5: Theoretical framework of the project

Methodology

Top down and bottom up

The general research methodology for determining shared value appropriateness uses top-down and bottom-up approaches to look for relationships between the roles of users and decision-makers in the adaptive process of church design.

A top-to-bottom method demonstrates a holistic system of adaptive reuse in heritage architecture as the beginning phase. Focusing on the idea of participation, social sustainability management and functionality in Het Steiger, as well as including the ABC studies of case studies, starting with “Architecture Management, Building, and Context” and moving on to “Architecture Details, Building Comfort, and Constructions.”

Possible methods: Typological research, comparative research, hermeneutic research

To better understand what values are acceptable for projects involving adaptive reuse in churches and other heritage architecture, the bottom-up design method is user-centered research that investigates how people’s perceptions of historical values in architecture have changed through time. In an attempt to seek for the sociocultural foundations of current heritage architecture, the conclusion can help demonstrate how, even in a generic city, people’s attitudes and behaviors toward crucial advocates serve as drivers of successful sustainable design outcomes.

Possible methods: Archival research, typological research, hermeneutic research, local interviews (or related projects)

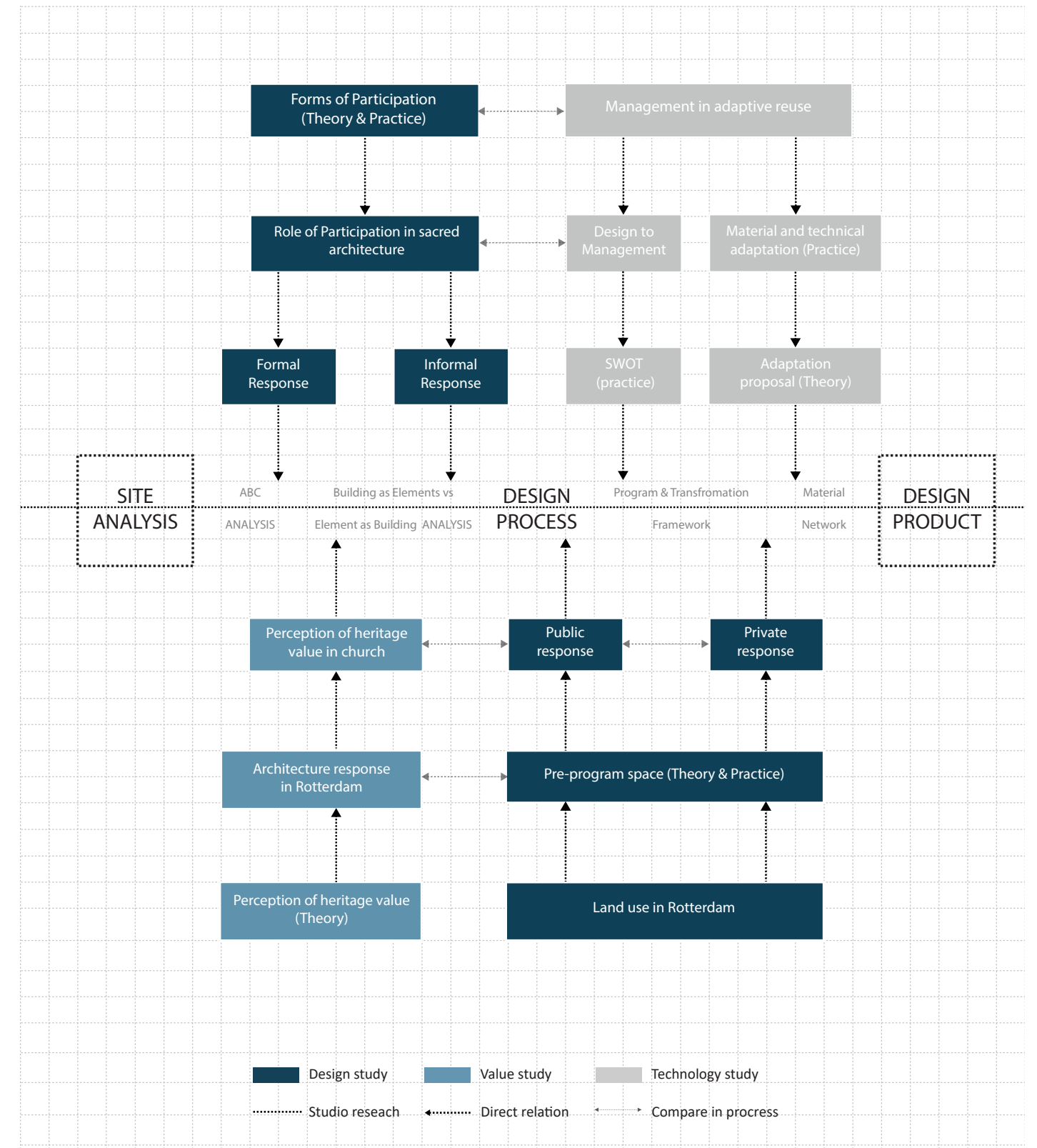


Fig. 6: Methodology framework of the project

Relevance

‘Places we want to keep’ and ‘Places we want to stay’

Churches are among the most well-preserved examples of cultural heritage. They are indeed one of the places we want to keep. Are they, however, the places we wanted to stay, encounter, and interact with? Moreover, who are ‘we’ to position in heritage architecture?

The meaning of cultural heritage originated from symbolic commemoration and a representation of evolving social cohesion, denoting culture as ‘growing’ and ‘cultivation’ (“cultura” in Latin). However, the occurrence of heritage, which means inheriting objects from ancestors, was a word of the latter times due to the focus on ‘heirs’ (“heres” in Latin) instead; demonstrating on the state of monarchic ownership of the inheritance. Therefore, cultural heritage started upon a close relationship to the identity of a more limited and particular group of people. Compared to modern times of destruction and national conflicts, cultural heritage nonetheless became a scarce existence for mankind. Core concepts of The Hague conventions in 1954 expressed cultural heritage based on post-war concerns to reduce potential sources of inter-nation conflicts (ref). In 1970, UNESCO conventions identify cultural heritage as ‘cultural property’ with nationalistic and statist systems of interest. The scale of ‘we’, therefore, is derived from an individual or collective group of attachment, into the personas who defined such attachment as the pride of local history.

In this way, preservation evolved as a natural response to heritage mass, in order to maintain a feeling of sacredness and relevance. It is also the way that has been passed down in Europe since 1500.²⁹ As a consequence, intellectuals such as archaeologists and historians could preserve both the physical appearance and the values of past objects in order to learn as much as possible. However, there comes a moment when the past becomes unimportant when deciding whether a certain tradition is worth keeping. The present worth of preservation became highly contingent on the amount to which certain groups of interest or experts needed to continually convince and remind the next generation.

Adaptive reuse of heritage structures, on the other hand, is becoming more visible to global standards. Recent

studies revealed ICOMOS and UNESCO suggestions for include adaptive reuse as an alternate method for conserving and preserving heritage buildings. However, little information is provided on the implications of design technique and management.

For places we wanted to stay, they are rather easily perceived, particularly by the general population. There is less effort to teach the future about generic usage and values of this area with the support of political underpinnings, making it simpler to incorporate into an urban habitual basis. The movement of, for example, efficiency, events, technology, and so on serves as a carrier for people. And, in the case of heritage building, the movement of people occurs just briefly, at a place with specific historical implications. As a result, despite our desire to appreciate the attractiveness, churches have become less prevalent as a location we wish to linger.

Starting with sacred architecture and its associated culture, the survival of cultural heritage architecture remains questionable. Can we, however, retain history as a place to stay in order to sustainably keep a place? Both heritage and generic city require recollection, and in order to do so, they must be both mnemonic and mnemonic, that is, they must have the ability to maintain memory as well as an actor to facilitate memory. (ref) In the hope of foreseeing the future, a long-term view is required to ensure the commitment and validity of the past through adaptive reuse, beginning with churches.

Over the ground from which all vestiges of the past had been taken away, he walked like a man lost.... “But when did it all go?” He was shocked to see how a place too could change... People didn’t really change very much, he thought, they only decayed. They were not like this place, which had not only changed beyond recognition, but gained new vigor in the process. As the contrast struck him he could not help wondering: “And what about me? What will I be like in the end?”

Fig. 7: Phrases from *Reflections in a Glass Door: Memory and Melancholy in the Personal Writings of Natsume Soseki* by Marvin Marcus and Natsume Sōseki³⁰

Time plan

P1	September -- November 2022
	Interim presentation
	Site analysis
	Research Plan
P2	January 2023

With the general research methodology mentioned in the previous pages, the strategy for organising the research is demonstrated on Fig.8. The project’s final product is made up of the results of the research phase and another result from the design phase. The ultimate answer to the research question will be determined by the combination of both. The research phase will comprise both a top-down strategy focusing on design management with participation and a bottom-up approach focused on user-centered research.

Simultaneously, the investigation into Het Steiger

will begin with the gathering of facts and comprehension of the issue as the introductory phase. Following that, the scale of context, building, and details will be investigated in accordance with the studio guidelines. The research phase, on the other hand, will be finished by quarter 4 in order to reflect the entire product prior to the final stage of completion.

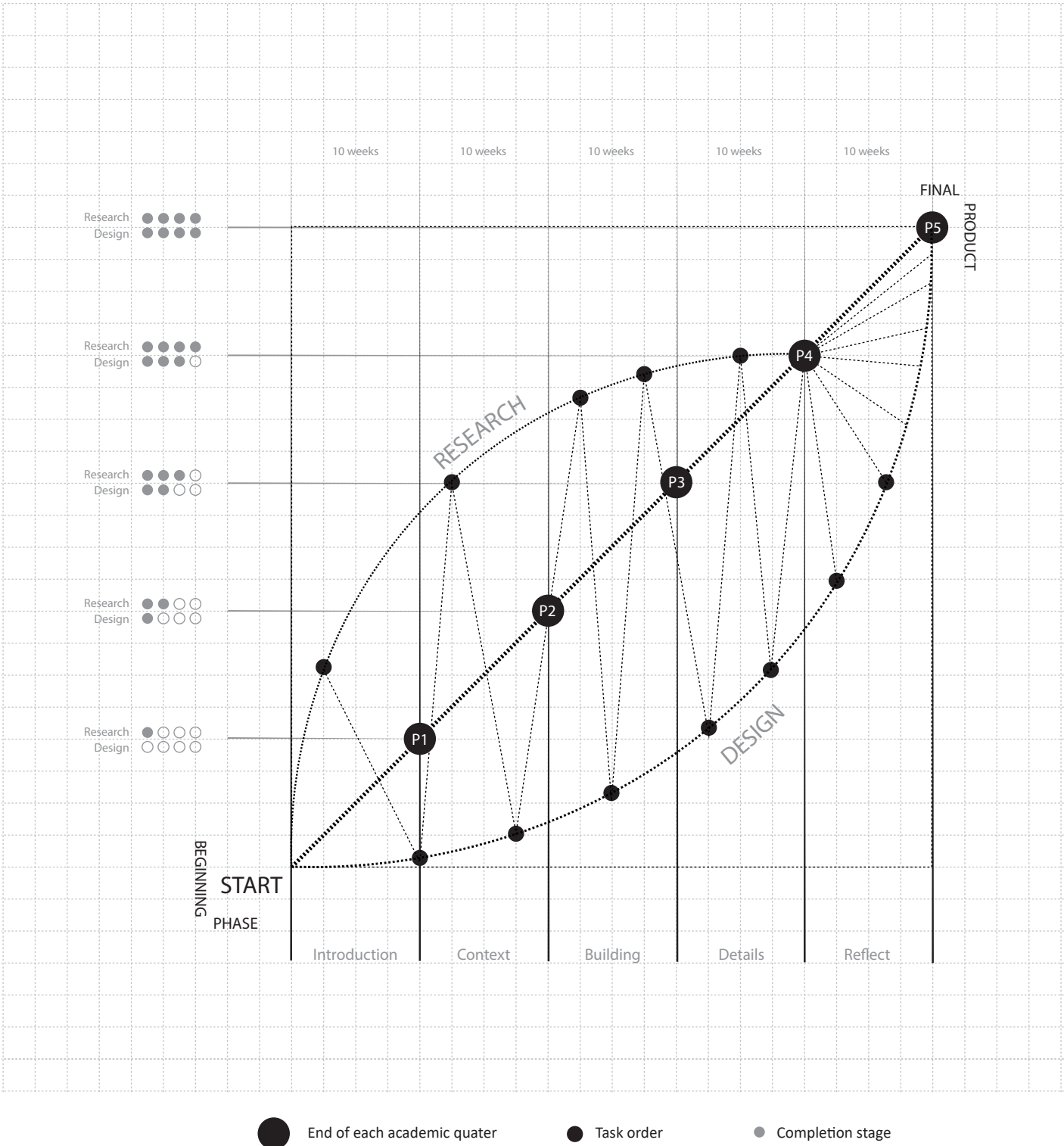


Fig. 8: Time plan of the project

List of Figures (I)

Front cover: Het Steiger in disused condition for the public except for the church community.

Fig. 1: Church distribution and disused churches in the Netherlands.

Fig. 2: Rotterdam with the church Het Steiger in 1957 (Top) and in 2022 (Bottom).

Fig. 3: ‘Shoppers’ walking pass Het Steiger on the opposite side of the canal (top), Het Steiger restricted access due to absence of public visits (bottom).

Fig. 4: Rotterdam map

Fig. 5: Theoretical framwork of the project

Fig. 6: Methodology framework of the project

Fig. 7: Phrases from Reflections in a Glass Door: Memory and Melancholy in the Personal Writings of Natsume Soseki

Fig. 8: Time plan of the project

Bibliography

- 1 The Arcadis Sustainable Cities Index (2022). Prosperity beyond profit
- 2 Rosetti, I., Cabral, C., Pereira Roders, A., Jacobs, M., & Albuquerque, R. (2022). Heritage and Sustainability: Regulating Participation. *Sustainability*, 14, 1674.
- 3 Dias, C., & Beaumont, J. (2008). The changing religious landscape of Europe - edited by Hans Knippenberg. *The Geographical Journal*, 174(1), 88–89.
- 4 Krier, L. (1978). *Urban transformations: ‘the blind spot’*. Archipress.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Koolhaas, R., Mau, B., Sigler, J., & Werlemann, H. (1995). Generic City. In *S, M, L XL: Office for Metropolitan Architecture*, Rem Koolhaas, and Bruce Mau (pp. 1248–1264). essay, Monacelli Press.
- 7 Ibelings, H., & Geuze, A. (2000). Accelerating Darwin. In *The artificial landscape: Contemporary Architecture, urbanism, and Landscape Architecture in the Netherlands* (pp. 254–256). essay, NAI Publishers.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Eliade, M. (1957). *The sacred and the profane*.
- 13 Lynch, K. (1998). *What Time is the place?* MIT Press.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Misirlisoy, D., & Günçe, K. (2016). Adaptive reuse strategies for heritage buildings: A holistic approach. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 26, 91–98.
- 16 Sandis, C. (2014). *Cultural Heritage Ethics: Between theory and practice*. Open Book Publishers.
- 17 Schofield, J. (2008). Heritage management, theory and practice.
- 18 Douglas, J. (2015). *Building adaptation*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- 19 Blake, J. (2000). On Defining the Cultural Heritage. *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 49(1), 61–85.
- 20 Tillie, N. (2012). *Rotterdam - people make the inner city densification*. Gemeente Rotterdam ... et al.
- 21 Boer, F., Jorritsma, J., & Peijpe, D. van. (2010). *De urbanisten en het wondere waterplein*. Uitgeverij 010.
- 22 Scott, A. (2006). Assessing public perception of landscape: Past, Present Andfuture Perspectives. *CABI Reviews*, 2006.
- 23 McMorrough, J. (2006). Notes on the Adaptive Re-use of Program. *PRAXIS: Journal of Writing + Building*, 8, 102–110.
- 24 Graham, B. (2002). Heritage as Knowledge: Capital or Culture? *Urban Studies*, 39(5/6), 1003–1017.
- 25 Rossi, A. (2007). *The architecture of the city*. MIT Press.
- 26 Remoaldo, P. C., Ribeiro, J. C., Vareiro, L., & Santos, J. F. (2014). Tourists’ perceptions of world heritage destinations: The case of Guimarães (Portugal). *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 14(4), 206–218.
- 27 Swan, P., & Marshall, L. (2015). *Time matters*. Prim-Ed Publishing.
- 28 Gray, C. B. (1983). Humanized architecture. *Ekistics*, 50(301), 284–287.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Natsume Sōseki, & Marcus, M. (2010). Reflections in a glass door: Memory and melancholy in the personal writings of Natsume Sōseki. Univ. of Hawai‘i Press.

Tiffany Lin (Ian Neng Lin)
5626617

AR3AH115 Graduation Studio Revitalising Heritage (2022/23)
Technische Universiteit Delft