



The modern mall: an undetached box?

A research on the spatial relation between the modern mall and the post-war neighbourhood

Research Plan

H&A Graduation studio
The Modern Mall

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Figure of the front page: Shopping mall Schalkwijk (Stephan Koeckhoven, 2023)

H&A Graduation studio

20th Century Heritage

The Modern Mall

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Introduction

In the heritage studio 'The Modern Mall', the future of modern malls is questioned. Many malls in the Netherlands are facing problems regarding vacancies and disrepair (H&A studio, 2022). Within this studio, intervention concepts will be tested on a design case. Prior to this design phase, research will be done on an aspect of the modern mall. This research focuses on the context of the modern mall and in particular the post-war neighbourhood. Most modern malls know their origin after the Second World War (Kooijman, 1999). The post-war neighbourhood will be studied, to investigate possible strategies for the modern mall.

After the Second World War, the housing shortage was very high due to the war damage and the already existing shortage before the war. Integral planning arose, in which all facets of spatial planning are studied (Galema & van Hoogstraten, 2005). With the following text, W.F. Geyl introduced the neighbourhood spirit (*wijkgedachte*) in his book 'We and the neighbourhood movement' (*Wij en de wijkgedachte*) inspired by the thoughts of ir. A Bos, director of the public housing service of Rotterdam:

'Is your residence providing you and your family everything you need for a good life? Are there safe playgrounds for your kids close to your home? (...) Are the allotments or sports fields nearby? Is there a building for shows, the choral society, courses and celebrations? The neighbourhood movement leads you the way to the improvement of your neighbourhood' (Geyl, 1946, p. 2).

After the Second World War, a lot of neighbourhoods were built according to the neighbourhood spirit (Harbers et al, 2009). The neighbourhood spirit can be defined as the urban theory for the layout of cities in which the decentralization of the big city is most important. Stable and healthy social communities were needed in a changing world of anonymity, moral degeneration and tantalizing amusement, that would serve as a buffer against the dangers of the modern city (Bos, 1946). Bos (1946) framed a schematic layout of the city, which is subdivided into city districts, neighbourhoods and neighbourhood districts.

Within the context of the post-war neighbourhood, the modern mall is addressed. The peculiarity of the modern mall is in the undisturbed space for shopping it offered. This was possible with the separation of housing and shopping functions, the unity of the mall, the accessibility for pedestrians only and the separation of the supply of goods and shopping (Kooijman, 1999). According to Fledderus (1955) the malls can be divided into three categories based on their size, the city centre has its city mall, the neighbourhood has its neighbourhood mall and the smaller district has its district mall (figure1).

All the types of malls had to comply with the needs at their scale level. Neighbourhood malls, for example, could sell articles for which you wouldn't go to the city mall. In this way, the neighbourhood could function by itself with all the providing facilities (Fledderus, 1955). The focus of this research will be on the neighbourhood mall.

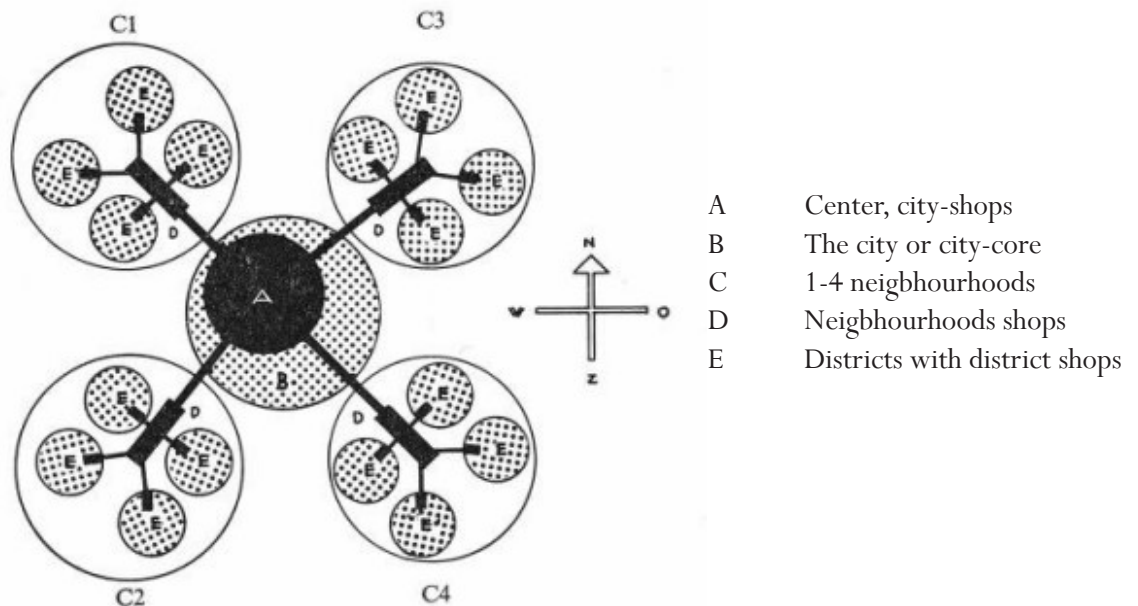


Figure 1: Theoretical representation of a city (Fledderus, 1955)

Problem statement

Although Bos (1946) repeatedly mentioned in his book 'the city of the future, the future of the city' that the central facilities within a neighbourhood, including the mall, should encourage social interaction, he didn't give any practical tools for how this could be achieved. It can be questioned how much is reflected of the neighbourhood spirit in the neighbourhood mall. Van der Heijde (2020), Founder of the Office of Urban planning, wrote that in real life the mall only served as a centre for retail and the societal function hardly ever developed.

The mall was a recipe for success by its functional aspects. By covering the mall and adding big parking lots next to the mall (figure 2), undisturbed shopping was made easier. This was followed by architectural adjustments like relocating the window stores to the inside and diminishing the number of entrances. This resulted in closed façades. With the closed façades, the emphasis was put even more on the monofunctionally of shopping. With all these adjustments, the mall transformed from an extrovert to an introvert typology. The architecture of the mall was getting a less independent meaning and interior architecture gets more important (Kooijman, 1999).

Kooijman wrote that the mall is leading the urban structure instead of the other way around. Especially the American malls from the eighties and nineties had barely anything or nothing to do with their environment. Figure 3 gives an example of an introvert mall, the Mall of America.

The problem can be summarized as the overall development in which the modern mall got detached from the environment, resulting in an introvert building type.



Figure 2: car oriented environment of the mall the Bogaart (Mobiliteit Rijswijk, 1976)

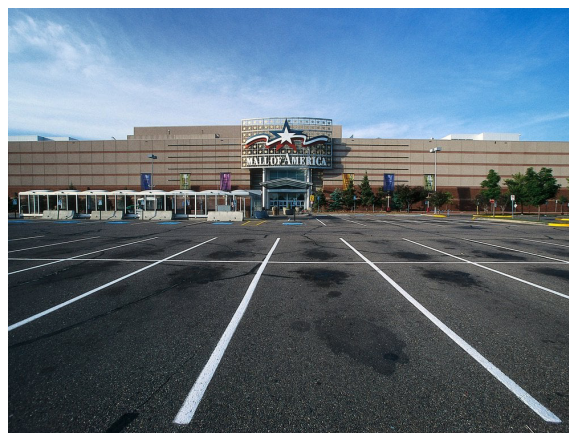


Figure 3: Mall of America (LOOK, 2017)

Research questions

The main research question is:

What are the spatial relations¹ of three cases between the post-war neighbourhood and the modern mall?

The sub-questions to conclude the main answer are:

- Which spatial elements² do the post-war neighbourhood of the three cases consist of?
- Which values can be assigned to the modern mall of the three cases?
- How is the neighbourhood spirit visible in the post-war neighbourhood of the three case studies over time?

Relevance

The academic relevance of this research consists of the link between the post-war neighbourhood and the modern mall. Although there is already a lot of separate information about the modern mall and the post-war neighbourhood, there isn't any research to be found on the connection between them. Also, this research presents a way how of doing research on the spatial connection between a building and its context, by linking the spatial elements of the context to the values of a building.

In terms of the heritage aspect of the studio, the spatial elements of the post-war neighbourhood and the modern malls aren't appreciated most of the time. Post-war neighbourhoods are being demolished and whole new construction plans are being made. Modern malls are also getting (partly) demolished or renovated. By mapping the spatial aspects of the neighbourhood and assigning values to the modern malls, the qualities of the modern mall and the post-war neighbourhood can be recognized and stronger connections can be made (Lörzing et al, 2009).

Improving aspects of the mall and its connection to the neighbourhood, could finally contribute to the improvement of the living environment. That's something which could be valuable for the post-war neighbourhood. On the list of power neighbourhoods³ (Vogelaar, 2007), 28 out of 40 are post-war neighbourhoods (Lörzing & Harbers, 2009). Complex problems including a high unemployment rate, poor integration and participation, a degraded living environment, criminal activities, unsafety, health disadvantages and the absence of social networks co-exist with each other in these neighbourhoods (Vogelaar, 2007).

¹ The spatial relation is defined as how the modern mall is situated in the environment in relation to different spatial elements (Douma, 2011).

² Spatial elements are physical elements that shape an urban environment. Elaboration will follow in the methodology (Douma, 2011).

³ A powerneighbourhood is the designation of a neighbourhood with social and economic problems on the list of Vogelaar (2007), minister of 'Housing, Neighbourhoods and Integration.

Historical background

The foundations of the principles of the post-war neighbourhood had already been laid before the second world war with the ideas of Ebenezer Howard about the garden city and also later with the General expansion plan (*Algemeen Uitbereidings Plan, AUP*) of Amsterdam by Cornelis van Eesteren (Blom et al, 2004).

The ideas of Ebenezer Howard were a reaction to the poor living standards in the big cities during the industrial revolution in England. His ideas were summarized in the garden city model. The city should work as a self-functioning society in a rural setting, where the industry could move to. It should be placed outside the city with a maximum of 32,000 residents to enhance the participation of the residents (Korthals Altes, 2004). Howard also formed his ideas spatially (figure 4): ‘Six magnificent boulevards (...) traverse the city from centre to circumference’ and ‘In the centre is a circular space (...) laid out as a beautiful and well-watered garden; and surrounding this garden, each standing on its own ample grounds, are the larger public buildings – town hall, principle concert and lecture hall, theatre, library, museum, picture-gallery and hospital’ (Howard, 1902, p. 22). By centralizing the public facilities, and making them accessible and attractive, Howard tries to stimulate the use of them and thereby stimulate social interaction (Korthals Altes, 2004).

The ideas of Howard were later used for the *AUP* by Cornelis van Eesteren when more housing was needed in Amsterdam and the rest of the Netherlands. The *AUP* of Amsterdam served as a structure plan for expansions of the city, creating a place of ‘light, air and space’. Opposite to the traditional cities, green and water were the structural elements, instead of the buildings. The functions of dwelling, working, infrastructure and recreating were separated. The construction of the expansion of Amsterdam, *de westelijke tuinsteden* (the Western gardencities) started before the war but was only finished in the sixties (Rijksdienst voor het cultureel erfgoed, 2016). After the war, the housing shortage had only increased and more plans for the expansions of cities were made. Building on the previously described thoughts, the theory of the neighbourhood spirit arose (Blom et al., 2004).

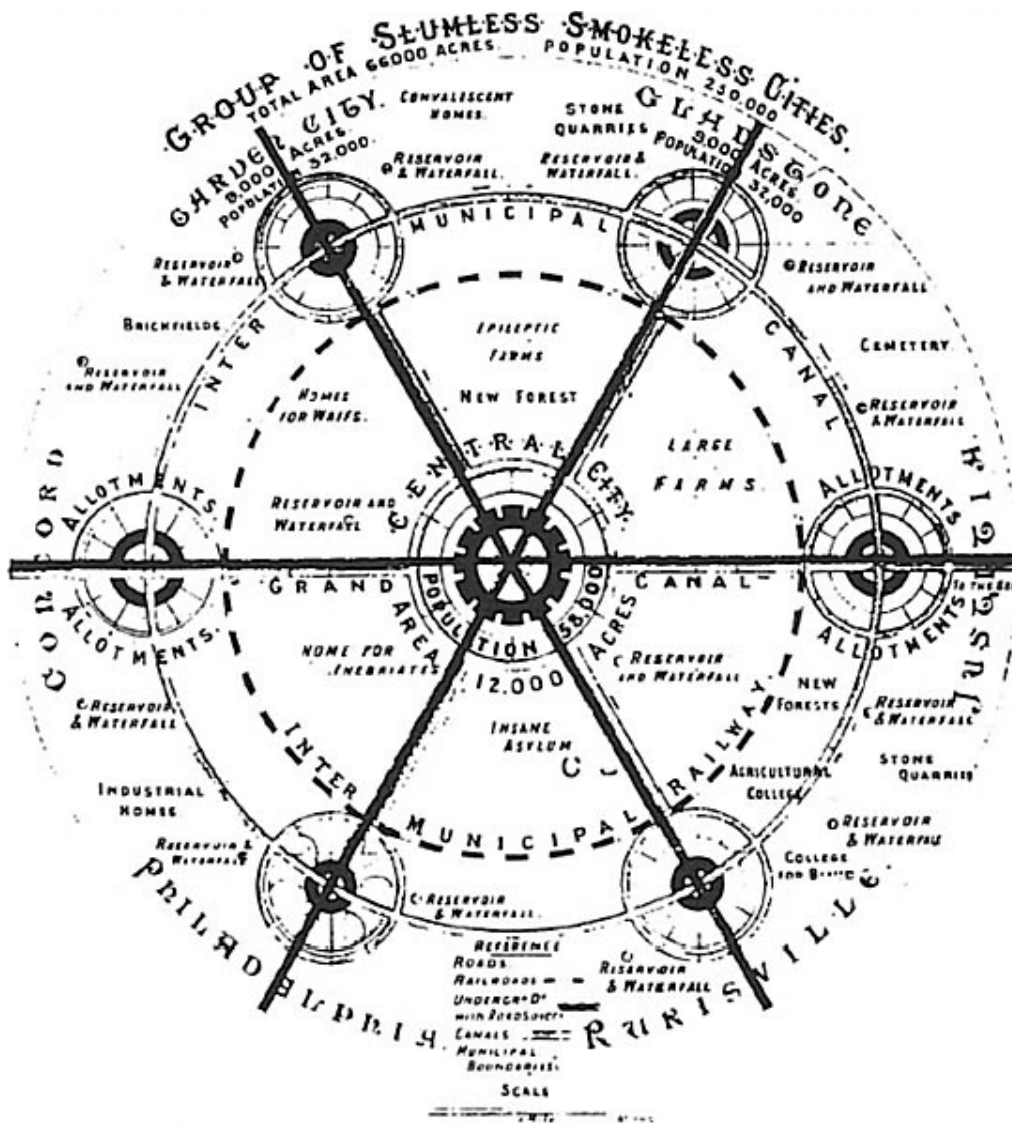


Figure 4: Garden city model (Howard, 1902)

Theoretical framework

Spatial elements

There are different ways to analyze the urban structure⁴. Kevin Lynch (1960) analyses the city by structuring the city into five elements. These elements contribute to a mental image people can make of the city, based on their experience (Lynch, 1960). The elements are:

- Paths: channels along which users move
- Edges: boundaries between two regions
- Districts: city areas with some common character in physical characteristics
- Nodes: strategic spots in a city from which a user can travel
- Landmarks: defined physical objects, seen from different angles and distances

These elements can be used to analyse the structure of the post-war neighbourhood. Lynch (1960) mainly focuses on the ‘legibility’ of the city, meaning the ease by which a city can be organized into a pattern. This pattern gives an abstract representation of the city, enabling to display the essence of the organisation of the city. Since Lynch mainly focuses on analysing cities, there has been also looked at how neighbourhoods are analysed. Figure 5 shows which elements Blom et al. (2004) are using to analyse the post-war neighbourhood compared to Lynch (1960). There has been chosen to use the elements of Lynch complemented with the element ‘allotments’ of Blom et al. (2004), since this element zooms in more on the architectural typology within the neighbourhood. A relation between the post-war neighbourhood and the modern mall can also be found within this element. The ‘urban model’ is not conceived as one element, it consists of the elements ‘paths’, ‘edges’ and ‘allotments’. Even though it can be useful to look at it, to see what the relation of the modern mall is within the bigger picture of the neighbourhood.

	Lynch (1960)	Blom et al. (2004)	examples of the elements
Spatial elements	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Infrastructure</i>	<i>streets, walkways, transit lines, canals, railroads</i>
	<i>Edges</i>		<i>shores, railroad cuts, walls, edges of development</i>
	<i>Districts</i>		<i>neighbourhoods, city center</i>
	<i>Nodes</i>		<i>junctions, crossings</i>
	<i>Landmarks</i>		<i>signs, towers</i>
		<i>Allotments</i>	<i>closed block, strips, stamps, free composition, courts</i>
		<i>(Urban model)</i>	<i>orth.grid, axle cross, centric structure, linear structure</i>

Figure 5: Comparison of the spatial elements of Lynch and Blom et al. (own image, 2023)

⁴ The urban structure is conceived as the arrangement of spatial elements of a city (Douma, 2011)

Value assessment

The core of heritage conservation in architecture and urbanism is the assessment of values (Spoormans & Roders, 2020). In 1903, Alois Riegl compiled a system of heritage values to indicate the appreciation of historic buildings for conservation. Although the practice of conservation has shifted more towards regeneration in the past hundred years, reconstruction and adaptive reuse, the heritage values of Riegl (1903) still offer a framework for coping with heritage buildings (Kuipers & de Jonge, 2017). In the book 'Designing from heritage' by Marieke Kuipers and Wessel de Jonge (2017), there are four steps to take a position on how to cope with heritage buildings:

- Chrono mapping: mapping the basic information about the building
- Value mapping: identification of typical features of the heritage building
- Differentiating levels of significance (qualitative interpretation of the values)
- Taking a position: taking a position based on step one to three about the opportunities for possible interventions of the heritage building.

Steps one to three will be included in the research plan. Step four will not be used since that step is more focused on designing, which is out of the scope of the research.

The value mapping done by Marieke Kuipers and Wessel de Jonge (2017) is based on the values of Riegl (1903), only they are adding three values to it (figure 6). Another categorisation of values is made by Ana Peirara Roders (2007) (figure 7). The biggest difference between them is the allocation to the layers of Brand (1994) for the value assessment of Kuipers and de Jonge (2017). For this research, the value assessment according to the categorisation of Roders (2007) will be chosen. The allocation into the layers of Brand (1994) is irrelevant to this research. The spatial relation between the mall with the environment stands alone on the layers of Brand (1994).

Veldpaus and Roders (2015) are assigning the values to attributes or objects. They are dividing the attributes into tangible and intangible, moveable and immovable. Since this research focuses on the spatial relation, based on elements which are tangible, the intangible attributes will not be included in the research.

BRAND +	RIEGL +	AGE value	HISTORICAL value	INTENTINAL COMMEMORATIVE value	NON INTENDED COMMEMORATIVE value	USE value	NEW-NESS value	(relative) ART value	RARITY value [+]	OTHER relevant values [+]
SURROUNDINGS / SETTING [+]										
SITE										
SKIN (exterior)										
STRUCTURE										
SPACE PLAN										
SURFACES (interior) [+]										
SERVICES										
STUFF										
SPIRIT of PLACE [+]										

Figure 6: Heritage values (Kuipers & de Jonge, 2017)

<p>Ecological</p> <p>spiritual essential existential</p>	<p>Social</p> <p>spiritual emotional (ind.) emotional (col.)</p>	<p>Economic</p> <p>use non-use entertainment</p>
<p>Age</p> <p>Spiritual essential existential</p>	<p>Values</p> <p>other</p>	<p>Political</p> <p>educational managment entertainment symbolic</p>
<p>Scientific</p> <p>workmanship technological conceptual</p>	<p>Aesthetical</p> <p>artistic notable conceptual evidential</p>	<p>Historic</p> <p>educational historic-artistic historic-conceptual symoblic archaeological</p>

Figure 7 : Heritage values (Pereira Roders, 2007)

Methodology

The research will consist of an analysis of different post-war neighbourhoods. As case studies, the modern malls 'Leyweg' in Morgenstond (Den Haag), 'Plein 1953' in Pendrecht (Rotterdam) and 'Shopping Centre Schalkwijk' (figure 8 to 10) will be analysed. These malls are chosen based on their neighbourhoods which belong to the list of power neighbourhoods as mentioned in the relevance. The second criterion was that the neighbourhood is constructed in the post-war period. With these case studies, a comparative analysis of the spatial relation of the modern mall in the post-war neighbourhood can be made. In the following section, the methods for the four sub-questions will be explained.

The first sub-question '*Which spatial elements does the post-war neighbourhood consist of?*' will be answered by a spatial analysis of the three post-war neighbourhoods of the case studies. This will be done on the larger scale of the neighbourhood to see large-scale connections. The analysis will be also done on the scale of the direct surrounding of the malls to have a more detailed view of the spatial elements that directly border the malls. The three case studies will be analysed, as already mentioned in the theoretical framework, based on the following elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, landmarks, allotments as well as the urban grid.

For the second sub-question '*Which values can be assigned for the modern mall?*' the first three steps of the method of Kuipers and de Jonge (2017) will be done for the three case studies. For the value assessment in step two, the values of Roders (2007) will be used. Only tangible aspects of the mall will be included in the research for defining the values. They will be obtained through the literature review and site visits which are done in the first step.

The third sub-question '*How is the neighbourhood spirit visible in the post-war neighbourhood over time?*' will be answered by looking at architectural elements and functions within the mall and its site that are stimulating social contact. Furthermore, site visits will be done to analyse what kind of social interactions are taking place at the different malls and their sites.

The main question '*What are the spatial relations of three cases between the post-war neighbourhood and the modern mall?*' will be answered by combining the outcomes of the first and second question. There will be an attempt to link the values of the malls to the spatial elements of the neighbourhoods. The answer to the third sub-question will provide insight into the social aspect of the mall and the post-war neighbourhood. These social aspects will also be linked to the spatial layout of the neighbourhoods for answering the main question.

The output of the research will consist of a list with certain elements of the malls which certain spatial elements of the post-war neighbourhoods connect with.



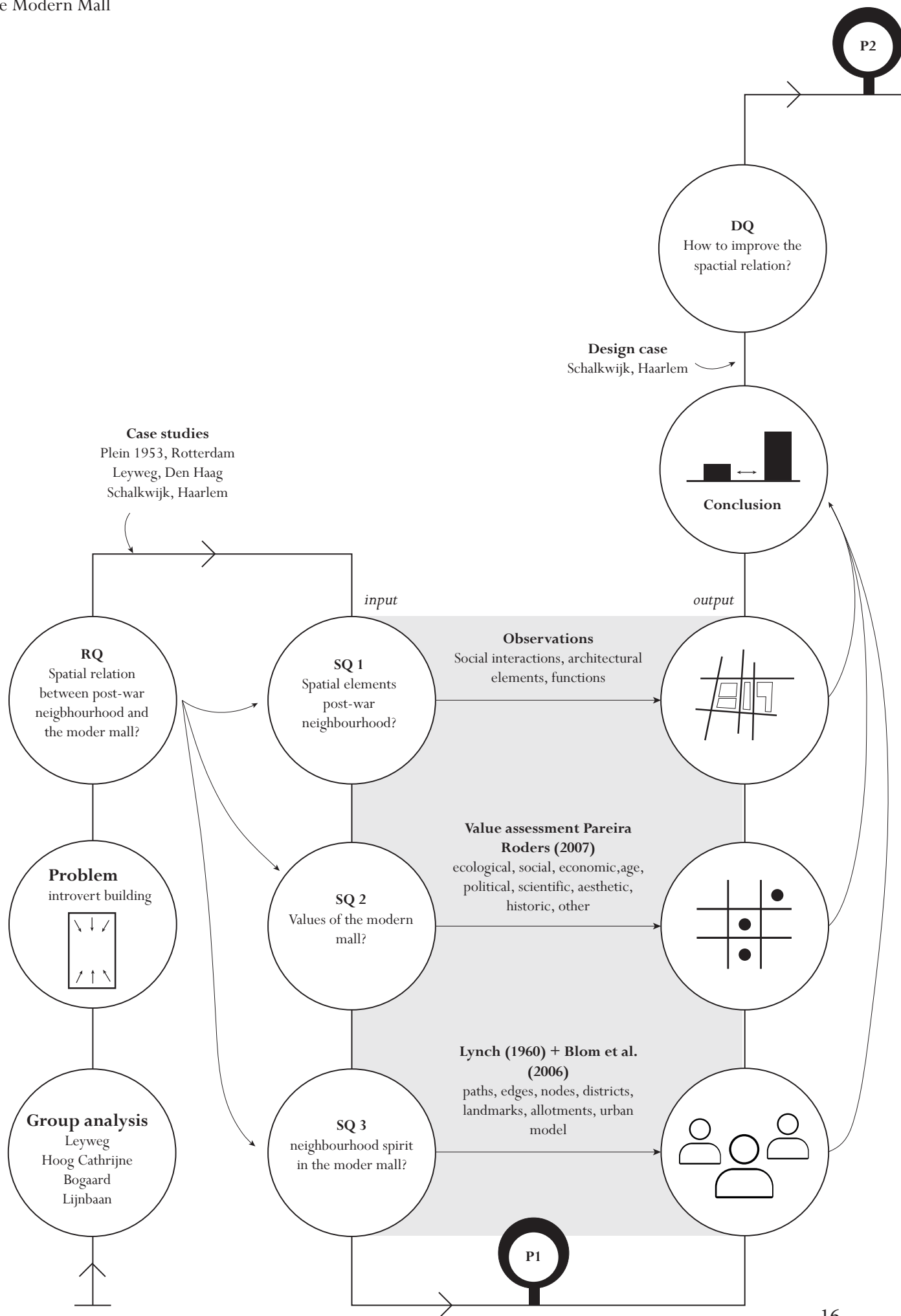
Figure 8: Leyweg (Haags archief, 1966)

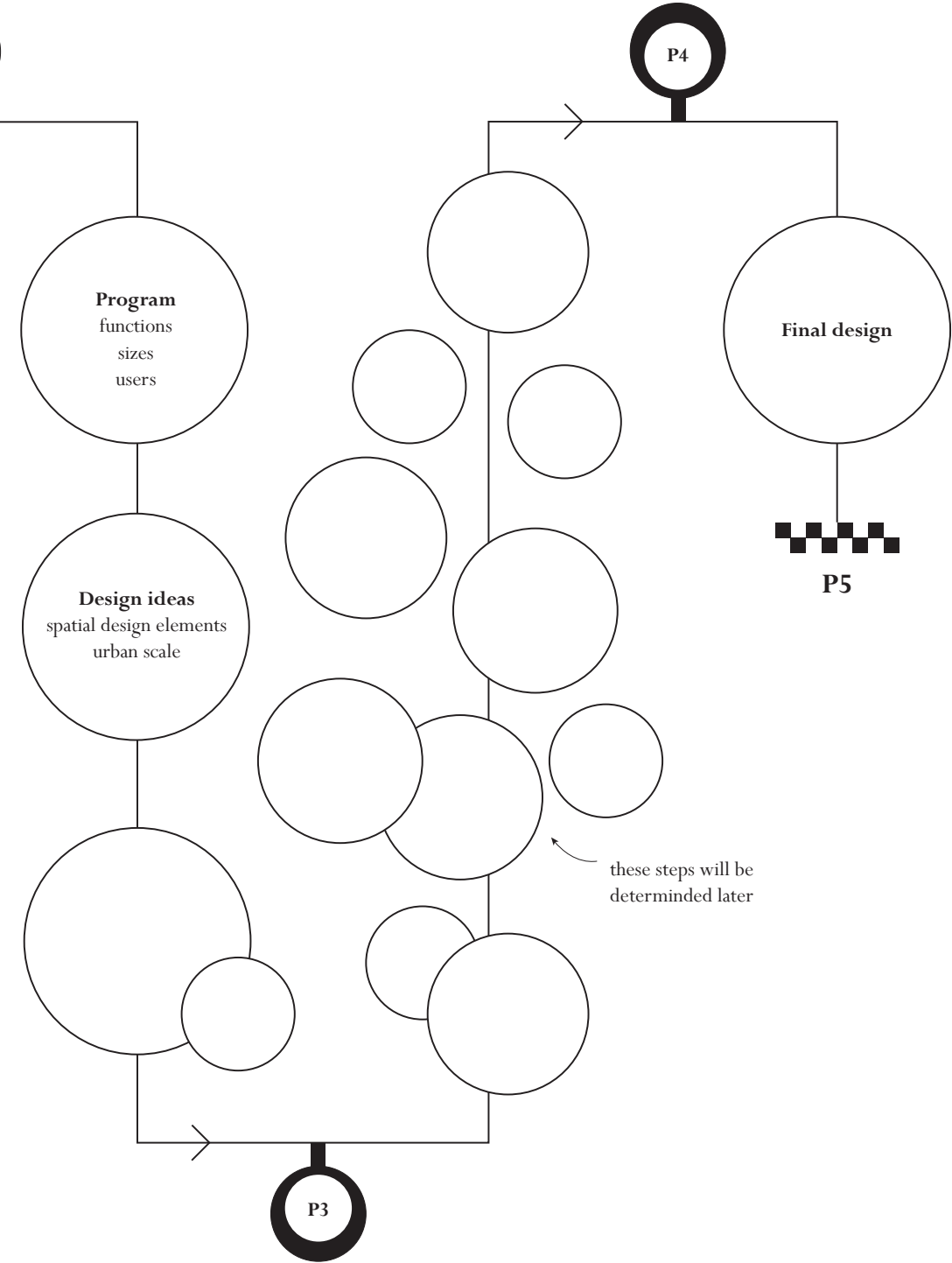


Figure 9: Plein 1953 (fototechnische dienst Rotterdam, 1966)



Figure 10: Schalkwijk (Noord-Hollands Archief, 1978)





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Figures

Figure 1: Fledderus, R.H. (1955). Theoretical representation of a city [image]. Over winkels. Van Holkema & Warendorf N.V., Amsterdam.

Figure 2: Mobiliteit Rijswijk (1976). Bouwen voor de auto [image]. Rijswijk: bereikbaar, leefbaar, veilig. Mobiliteitsprogramma Rijswijk 2040.

Figure 3: Look (2017). Developers are breathing new life into indoor shopping malls [image]. Consulted from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/transformation-american-shopping-mall-180964837/> on 13-4-2023.

Figure 4: Howard, E. (1902). Garden city model [image]. Garden cities of tomorrow. Swan Sonnenschein & Co Ltd.

Figure 5: own image.

Figure 6: Kuipers, M., Jonge, W. de (2017). Heritage values [image]. Designing from heritage. Delft University of Technology.

Figure 7: Pereira Roders, A. (2007). Value assesment [image]. Re-architecture: lifespan rehabilitation of built heritage. Technical university of Eindhoven.

Figure 8: Haags archief (1966). Winkelcentrum Leyweg in de jaren 60 [image]. Consulted from <https://twitter.com/GemeenteDenHaag/status/1406522382152568835> on 12-4-2023.

Figure 9: Fototechnische dienst Rotterdam (1966). Plein 1953 te Pendrecht. Consulted from <https://twitter.com/GemeenteDenHaag/status/1406522382152568835> on 12-4-2023.

Figure 10: Noord-Hollands Archief (1978). Winkelcentrum Schalkwijk in 1978 [image]. Consulted from <https://indebuurt.nl/haarlem/toen-in/herken-jij-het-nog-9-x-schalkwijk-door-de-jaren-heen-~93573/#slide-5> on 12-4-2023.