

Graduation Plan

Personal information	
Name	Mara An Kopp
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Vacant Heritage – Adapting 20 th century Heritage	
Main mentor	Hielkje Zijlstra	
Second mentor	Frank Koopman	Third mentor: Joana Dos Santos Gonçalves
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>In my eyes, the design assignment of today is not a white sheet of paper. This is inspired by the book of Rewriting Architecture (Boer et al., 2021), where they speak about tabula scripta, instead of tabula rasa – which has been a long-embedded comfort zone of architects. The existing context of heritage should not feel restrictive anymore. Heritage contains of values and attributes, held by people and communities, and can strengthen the underpinning of certain design decisions during the process. Therefore, heritage is a catalysator for urban development.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The collective memory
Goal	
Location:	Former Vroom & Dreesmann Leiden, Aalmarkt
The posed problem,	<p>The research trigger is the intriguing last paragraph of the written tribute to the Vroom & Dreesmann by Hondelink (2016): “The memory remains. [...] The name V&D is embedded and will live on in the collective memory of generations of Dutchmen”.</p> <p>The context of the design topic is the vacant former department store of the Vroom & Dreesmann Leiden. The V&D Leiden is appointed as a national monument by the Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed, even before it became vacant. As described in this document, the significance of the V&D Leiden as (cultural) heritage is only supported by the description of physical attributes of the object. However, the significance of heritage lies not in the objects and places themselves but is defined by the collection of values and attributes that form part of the identity and sense of place, held by people and communities. Sense of place can be linked to (both tangible and intangible) values and attributes, which “shape communities and their identities as collective memory”.</p> <p>Therefore, this thesis argues that both notions of sense of place and (digital) collective memory are underexposed in assessing values of the V&D Leiden, which implies a shortcoming on the values assessment. This phenomenon has a negative impact on the foundation of the reasons underlying heritage preservation.</p>
research questions and	<p>How can (digital) collective memory be used as a tool to create a sense of place in the design towards the adaptive reuse of a vacant heritage building - the former V&D Leiden?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What (tangible and intangible) values and attributes form part of the (digital) collective memory of the V&D?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the role of 'sense of place' in the design towards adaptive reuse? - How do the 10+1 actions of Rewriting Architecture affect the design concept of sense of place?
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The aim of the studio is designing for adaptive reuse of vacant heritage buildings of the Vroom & Dreesmann department stores. It is important to access (intangible and tangible) values, because they can be described by the justifications (why) on 'what' (attributes) are the reasons underlying heritage preservation. The value assessment will formulate the starting points for the redesign of the V&D Leiden.</p> <p>The design potential of this research hypothesis is that heritage preservation forms part of the collective memory. Collective memory has the possibility to sustain and strengthen (and even form) a sense of place held by people. The relationship between those two notions (collective memory and sense of place) can provide a new understanding of assessing values of heritage buildings, can lead to a new approach towards social and cultural evaluation, and can function as a mechanism to expose new potentials for adaptive reuse. So, bringing both notions into the synthesis of research and design can lead to a meaningful place-making tool for the design. It is therefore the aim of the research to investigate how (digital) collective memory can be used as a tool to create a sense of place in the design towards the adaptive reuse of the vacant heritage building of the former V&D Leiden department store.</p>

Process

Method description

The methods used are linked to the sub questions of the research.

Method | Literature review (framing theoretical framework)

A literature review on the key concepts ((digital) collective memory, sense of place, adaptive reuse) is the foundation of the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework is to position this research in a broader context of existing theories and models while evaluating, comparing, and selecting the most relevant ones for this specific research.

Methods on (digital) collective memory

- Value assessment | The focus point of the value assessment is to examine the cultural significance of the building, that is defined by the collection of (intangible and tangible) values and attributes.
- (Interpretative) historical research | The interpretation on second-hand data (representations of history) can give insights in the historical (and social) context and events of the V&D history. The data for this interpretive historical research contains of partially historical photographs which can give information on the transformations over time. When relating these with the archive drawings of the building, a more elaborated understanding of the (stages of the) building can be collected. The other part of the data is the recollective evidence of the interview with Beno Vroom.
- Thematic analysis (content analysis) | Social media have "hugely reshaped interactions between people and (public) space" and have diversified the relationship between memory and place. [...] Social media could be seen as repository of collective memory. One of this digital platform, like Instagram, could contribute to a new understanding of the collective memory of place, and could enrich the understanding of the sense of place.
 - o Thematic analysis is a form of observational research which is about the representations of events of places, related to the topic of the V&D (Leiden), reproduced by people. People are studied indirectly via communications they have produced. For this research, Instagram is used as the communication tool to

investigate. These representations are reproduced in the collection of photographs, shared by hashtags in relation to the topic. So, the first stage of content analysis is the coding of quantitative data. This is done by coding the hashtags (quantitative data). Then, a more thematic analysis is done, which is a form of content analysis. These are representations that keep occurring in the communication. This can lead to the identification of themes. The data for this analysis is provided by the descriptive information about these photographs (caption of Instagram post, comments on post).

Methods on sense of place

- Literature review | The literature review is used as a method for conducting research on the key concepts of sense of place and adaptive reuse. The data for this method is mainly (digital) scientific journals and books. The conducted research will be related to the context and the problem statement of the research.
- Site analysis | "Site analysis is the process of investigating and analyzing different dimensions of the place (social, historical, geographical)". (Epperson, 2020) As explained in the theoretical framework, the sense of place is formed by cognitive factors and physical characteristics. In the method of site analysis, the physical characteristics will be investigated through the identity of the place: circulation, (historical) routes (what are the routes people take?), (historical) objects/artifacts, atmospheres, typologies, demographics, and public-private. The key observations and analyses will be expressed in visual analysis diagrams, as they relate to the physical characteristics of the place.

Methods on adaptive reuse

- Experimental research | The 10+1 actions of Rewriting Architecture are used as simulations to enrich the possibilities for adaptive reuse. The method is about testing different design concepts of sense of place in relations to a selection of different design actions.

Literature and general practical preference

- Bullen, P. (2007, februari). Adaptive reuse and sustainability of commercial buildings. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235264539_Adaptive_reuse_and_sustainability_of_commercial_buildings
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Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

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2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework?

The focus point of the H&A lab (Adapting 20th century Heritage) is the development of sustainable heritage, because of the increasing importance of adaptive re-use projects. Due to different crises, there is a high vacancy rate of buildings for which a new functional use needs to be found (Course manual). As indicated by Bullen (2007), previous studies have shown that "adaptation is gaining recognition as an effective strategy to improve the sustainability of existing buildings". While observing the term of sustainability, the social dimension within the Venn diagram 'Three dimensions of sustainability' is linked to the individual research topic: *Adaptive re-use of heritage buildings has "an impact on community well-being, sense of place, and therefore social sustainability because people feel a stronger sense of connection with their surroundings through heritage"* (Love and Bullen, 2011). So, heritage buildings are these indicators that form a sense of place. "In the context of cultural globalization and the main aspect striving for sustainable communities and sustainable historic environment, the loss of sense of place in communities became a factor of vital concern". (Gražulevičiūtė, 2006) Therefore, the research thesis on the two notions (collective memory and sense of place) is relevant in the field of social sustainability, and relating disciplines such as (social, environmental, ecological) psychology and sociology in relation to architecture.

Also, this thesis into a more people-based value assessment is in line with the development on 'what is heritage?'. Until recent times, the extensive influence of experts dominated the heritage field when it came to heritage identification, justification, and preservation. (De la Torre, 2002). Nevertheless, the concept of what is heritage has evolved and expanded, and more groups, for example, citizens and communities, have a share in it. (De la Torre, 2002). The influence of our digital age can inform the understanding of values and attributes, held by people and communities.