

Summary & Reflection

Rethinking Roosenberg

Nature and dementia

Technical University of Delft

Faculty of Architecture

MSC4 Graduation studio

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In Belgium lies the old town of Waasmunster. Waasmunster has been for around 800 years a central place for the nuns of the Catholic order, the Maria-sisters of Fransiscus. In 1975 a new monastery was build just outside of the town by the monk and architect Hans van der Laan. The monastery lies on top of a hill and is surrounded by a beautiful and wide varied forest.

With the decrease of the accession of nuns and the remainder of only 3 of the 12 initial nuns living in the abbey, is the monastery ready for a new use. The project focuses on the re-use and extension of the building as a care centre for people with dementia. The graduation studio asks for a careful and subtle approach for the re-use of the monastery. The extension asks for a respond on the rigorous architecture of the Bossche school and the surrounding in which the new building lays. Three major researches has been done and a few smaller researches within the design process and the main researches.

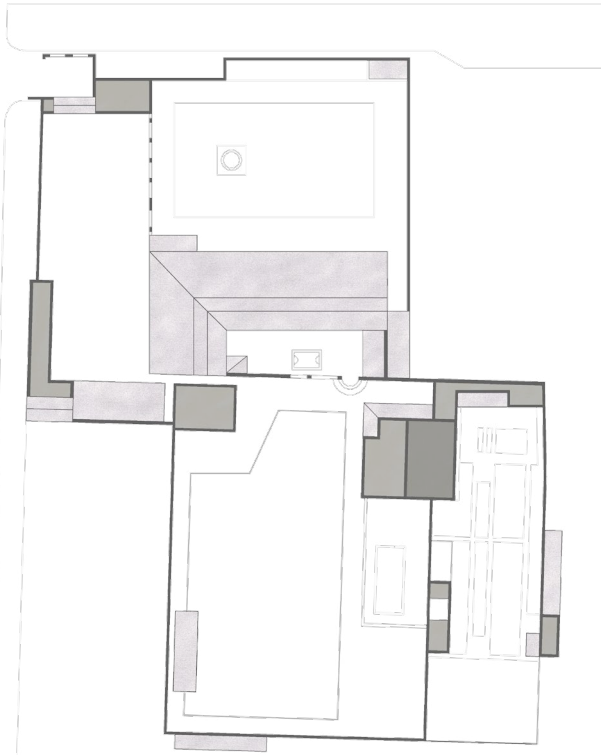


Surrounding Roosenberg

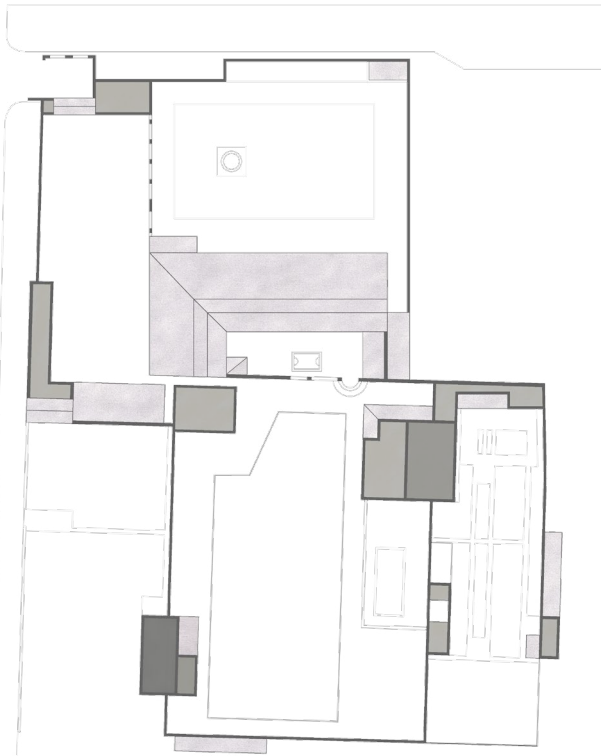
The first research that was conducted was mandatory made by the studio. As the monastery was designed by van der Laan, research needed to be done towards the way he thought about Architecture. Fortunately van der Laan spread his thoughts through a course, which was given in the town Den Bosch in the Netherlands. He taught his pupils about the plastical number: a design tool for proportion, which is relatable to the golden ratio. For a better understanding of his thoughts I was assigned to design a one person care home on the site of the Jan de Jong house. Jan de Jong was one of the pupils of van der Laan and known as one of the people who understood the theories of van der Laan the best. De Jong designed his home and its surroundings in through the plastical number and the ideas of the cella, the court and the domain. These three themes are a grading and locating system for spaces.



Proportions plastical number

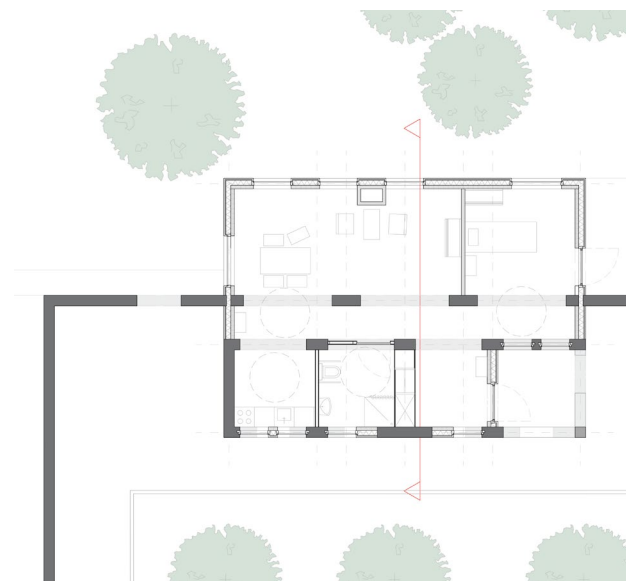


Site Jan de Jong



Site Jan de Jong, with one person care home

In this research I learned designing with the tools van der Laan taught in de Bossche school. Thus understanding the way he designs and preparing me for the task of designing a building next to Roosenberg. A flaw of this research was the difference of the sites. Where Roosenberg is situated in a forest, the site of de Jong is a scattering of small buildings making it more of a city. If I needed to do the project all over again, I would have only researched the site of Jan de Jong for the way he worked with the heritage of van der Laan and designed with this knowledge a one-person care home in rural area. The other part of this research was to design a one-person care home with the requirements given by the Belgium authorities. This part of the research was a good way to be introduced to the difficulties for designing for a disabled person.



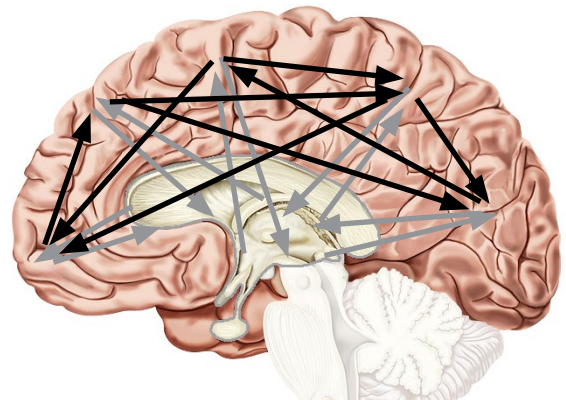
One person care home

The first research is a good example of the methodical line of approach used by the studio: researching by trying to put the given information and problems in different solutions. For example: researching through models, sketching different room plans all within the boundaries of the given information. This kind of method speaks to me however; I also need to have theoretical research as background, to also understand why certain intuitive decisions are made. This also gives me the possibility to be more creative (thinking outside the box) and makes it possible to design on different levels at the same time. The method I use can be best explained as mathematical problem. A difficult mathematical problem can be solved by applying a formula, sometimes it can be solved by even more than one formula. I see the formula as an aid where the other sees it as the solution. By understanding how the formula is built you will have to understand the basics. Which enables you to solve the problem in different ways and also gives the opportunity to use the same knowledge for different problems. A flaw within myself I find to be that I tend to forget, to connect all the different small basic elements to solve the problem. Organizing the different ideas in a fashion where you see them next to each other and prioritize them might

solve this problem. Detaching yourself from the project and explaining to others also makes you find the essence of what you want to achieve.

The two other main researches are more theoretical researches. The first theoretical research is part of the studio specific research course. The intent was to conduct research in a different way than a normal literature study, by doing fieldwork. By going in the field you will examine and test the literature. Or by doing the fieldwork first understanding your findings by applying it to literature. The second possibility didn't fit in my way of researching, so I choose the first one. I researched the topic of Dementia with the three different main questions:

1. Memory: how does a person remember?



A brain remembering

2. Dementia: what is it?



The brain forgetting with dementia

3. Age: how is the brain/ memory formed?



The brain learning

By putting these questions together I got a good view on the users of my building. After the literature research I tested my finding with a person with dementia and was able to say that the research was correct. Though one aspect was missing and that was the interaction of a person with dementia: it was hard to converse, because the story halfway through was forgotten. After the delivery of the project I find that it might also have been interesting and would have pulled me out of my comfort zone, when I would have turned the proses around and started with the interview. An interesting finding for my design where the calmness and the flashbacks that nature gives to people with dementia but also to healthy people.



Mevrouw Jansen and her family

Another finding let me to a second research, which I named: home is... . Home is a place where you feel at ease and save. But what happens if you don't recognise your home anymore. To become at ease you have to be in a surrounding where you feel save. The home you remember when you are having dementia is the one from your youth. This research helped me to refine the room of the person with dementia and the living room where they come together.



Inside design for oner person care home, at the Jan de Jong house

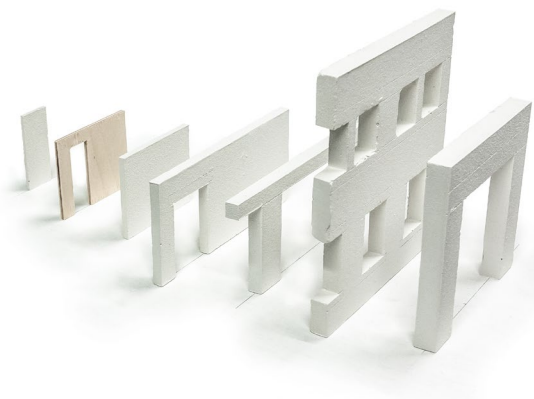


Inside of a residents room during P2

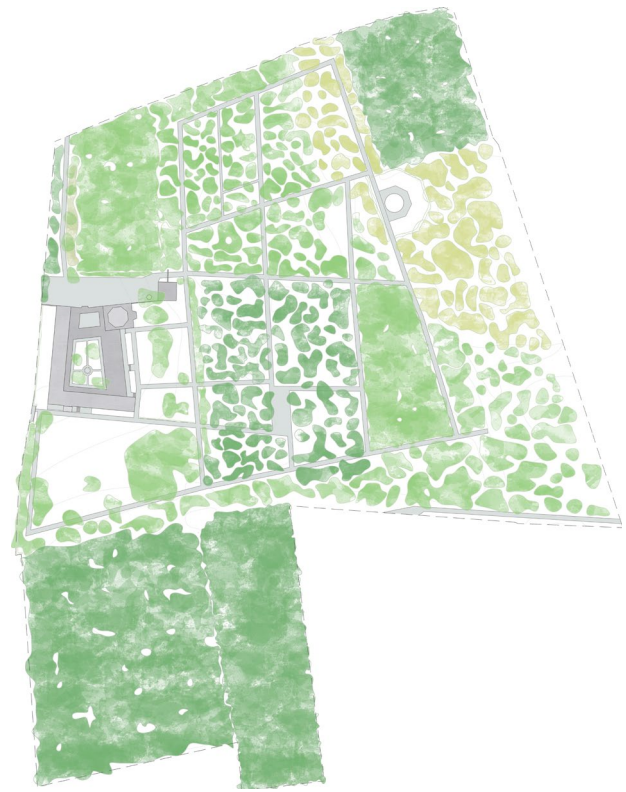
Besides those two literature studies I conducted several other smaller studies in the research about: Waasmunster, Roosenberg itself, walking in nature, the use of wood, the benefits of a swimming pool, trees, enclosed gardens, etc. These subjects were mostly researched as a support for the design process.



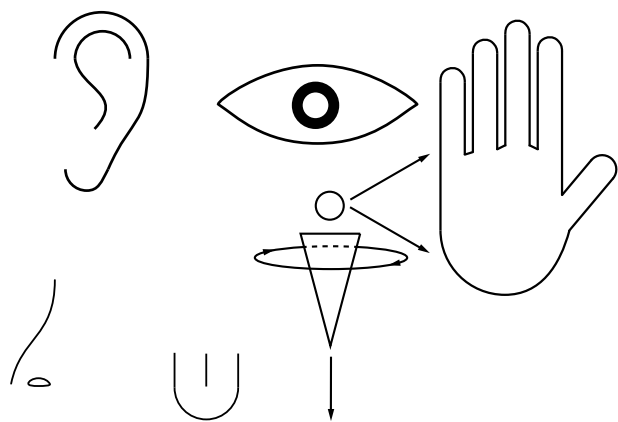
Searching for designing with the senses



The walls of Roosenberg (analyses)



Where does which sort of tree stand



Searching for designing with the senses



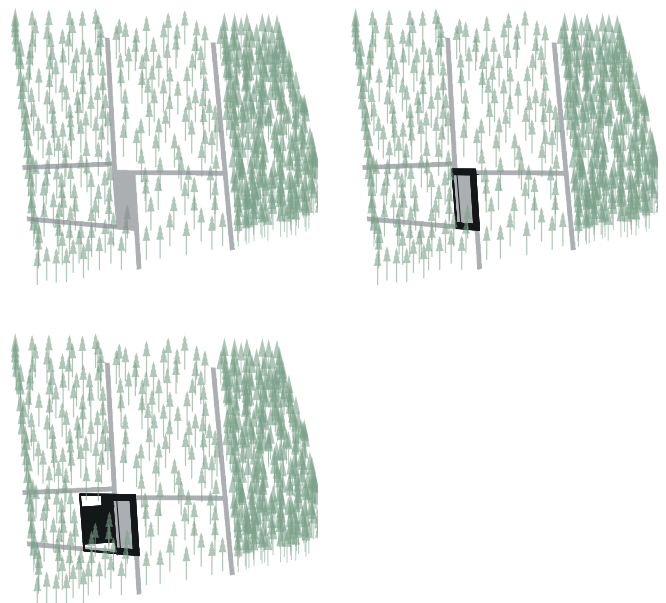
Walking in nature needs facilities for people with dementia

As the site and monastery were a given, I analysed them thoroughly. Before the start of the project I got hold of the plans of Roosenberg itself and found a way to extract the contours of the site. Together with another student, also before the start of the studio, I went to the monastery to get know to the building and its site and to talk to the nuns. By doing so I was able to understand the quietness and serenity of the building. I also was intrigued by the forest, which houses the site. The third time I was there I thoroughly researched the trees that were standing on the plot. By processing this into drawing I was able to see where which trees stood and was able to see where the forest was to dense to build. Together with this knowledge and the theory of van der Laan about, the domain, the court and the cella, I positioned my new building.

A question of the studio is, how to position yourself towards the monastery in idiom. An important question which I forgot to take with me in the first semester. Roosenberg is the only building on the site and dominates its surrounding. After researching the place where I wanted to build, I decided to reference Roosenberg when entering the building. This grew from a simple cloister colonnade with an enclosed garden, to a bigger building which is entered trough a forecourt and vestibule. This is in a same matter as happens in the abbey. The part of the building that speaks to Roosenberg is the inner part of the building and is surrounded by a forest of residential rooms. This inner building is designed with the plastical number and its proportions. The walls of Roosenberg also have their own meaning, which I included in the way the inner building is constructed.

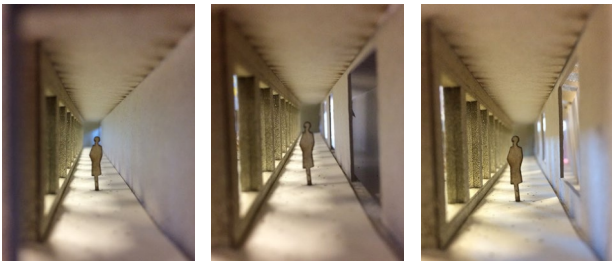


Three different domains



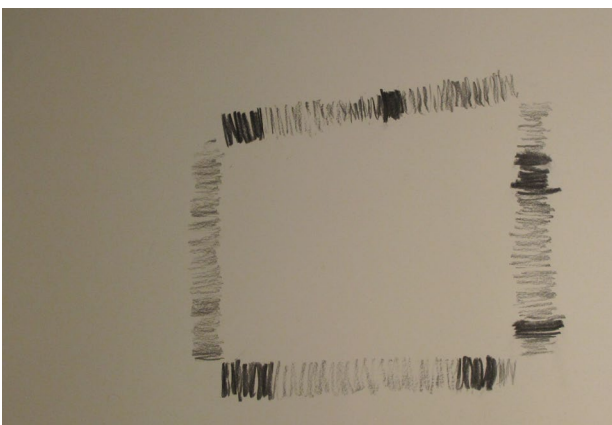
Diagrams of the new building

The outer building finds its reference in the forest instead of the monastery. Wood is used as cladding and the rural theme of half-timbered houses is used. Research was also conducted in how this should look. The connection between the two different building parts found itself by trying different possibilities in model.



Research on the cloyster colonnade

An important aspect of the project, which I didn't research yet, is how the monastery should change to inhabit the new users. At the moment the building lacks the comfortable aspect that a care centre for people with dementia should have. Noise is one of the main problems, but in the overall picture, I want to keep the atmosphere that lives in the abbey. So how can the building be made liveable.



Noise chart of the hallway in Roosenberg



Try-out of the facades

P4 delay. Just before the scheduled P4 presentation, I noticed that I didn't have the time to research all the different aspects of how I wanted the building to be. After a conversation with my tutors I decided that I would delay my P4 with 2 months to be able to finish my project in the fashion I wanted it to be. This extra time gave me the opportunity to research my wooden facade and design it to the smallest detail. To research the materials I would use for my swimming pool and to design the landscape in and around my buildings. In the last days before my P4 I also spoke with a landscape architect, which gave me the opportunity to review my building from a different perspective. In this time I had the possibility to make form all the different aspects of my design a whole.



Different design for the gardens



Facade studie with different sizes of planks



Swimmingpool research