

'Modernizing History'

A Study after the use of Contemporary Architecture on Museums, Government Buildings and Churches in the Netherlands



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ABSTRACT

Numbers have shown that more and more monuments in the Netherlands are falling into disuse and start to lose their impact on society, with almost fifty churches having to close their doors every year. However, an increasing use of contemporary architecture might be a solution to this problem. The aim of this study was to determine to what extent contemporary architecture is used for renovating national monuments in the Netherlands and whether these contemporary renovations might indicate which role national monuments have in a highly modernizing Dutch society. An analysis of twelve case studies, divided into three different categories; 1) museums 2) government buildings and 3) churches, has shown that the extent to which contemporary architecture is used on buildings indeed indicates which role the monument has for society as it seemed that the more extensively contemporary architecture is used on monuments, the less strongly their mnemonic function for society is. Museums are at the top of this spectrum and subject to the most unconventional designs creating international attractions and churches are the least renovated with modest designs, indicating that people are not ready to transform these iconic landmarks. However, as these contemporary renovations might indeed diminish their intentional and historic mnemonic function and further research could examine whether they create new and 'modern monuments'. In the case of churches, further research should be undertaken to investigate whether the use of contemporary architecture on churches might be an indication of the presupposed and still existing role of religion in society.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2016, a visit to the Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken in Groningen introduced me for the first time to the insertion of contemporary architecture into historical buildings. The Stichting is situated in the Remonstrantse Kerk, built in 1882-1883, and renovated in 2006 by Japanese architect Moriko Kira. She designed a glass extension adjacent to the neo-classical façade of the old church, which makes it possible for the church to hold religious services and be used as an office space by the Stichting. It was intriguing for me to see how old and new could go hand-in-hand so the historical building could still be used in contemporary society.

Two years later, I came across a similar case of the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada. The Neo-Romanesque museum from 1912 was extended in 2007 with a hypermodern structure. Architect Michael Lee-Chin created a controversial and almost futuristic design called the 'Crystal', a structure which makes it look like glass and aluminum spikes are sticking out of the original building and which, in my view, completely overshadows the historical building.

With both pictures in mind, I became curious about the situation in the Netherlands regarding the use of contemporary architecture on historical buildings. As there are many more examples of highly contrasting architectural styles abroad – take the Military Museum in Dresden and the Union of Romanian Architects headquarters in Bucharest – fewer cases are found in the Netherlands.

Therefore, this thesis examines, through the use of case studies, to what extent contemporary architecture is used on twelve national monuments in the Netherlands in the 21st century and how these renovations express the way society thinks about monuments. The group of national monuments is specifically chosen as they are a clearly demarcated group and enjoy the highest status within Dutch heritage preservation, unlike 'normal' monuments, making it interesting to see how the most significant historical heritage is preserved in the Netherlands. The twelve monuments used are divided into three different categories; 1) museums 2) government buildings and 3) churches, because the buildings in each category are differently subject to contemporary architecture, with museums as experimental playgrounds and churches being extremely reluctant with regard to the use of contemporary renovations. This distinction will thus highlight how monuments in various domains (cultural, political and religious) each have different roles in and for society. With regard to the category of churches, it is even more

interesting to see what their role they have in this post-secular society as the last decades saw a rising number of vacant churches, thereby also indicating to what extent religion (in the shape of buildings) may still have an impact on society.

This has led to the following research question: *to what extent is contemporary architecture used for renovating museums, government buildings and churches in the Netherlands in the 21st century and do they symbolize society's attitude towards monuments?* The answer considers social, cultural, political and economic factors, because the results could indicate what role historical heritage plays in this rapidly modernizing society by looking at the extent to which these buildings are subject to modernization and contemporary renovations; do we still value their historicity or have they completely lost their meaning for society and in return are being used as tools for experimenting with contemporary architecture? If these renovations indeed provide a solution to the problem of vacancy or disuse of historical monuments, the results of thesis could then be used as an example for other monuments who suffer the same problem.

To answer the research question, the following sub-questions have been formed:

Chapter 1: What is heritage?

Chapter 2: What is a monument?

Chapter 3: How are historical museums modernized in the Netherlands?

Chapter 4: How are government buildings modernized in the Netherlands?

Chapter 5: How are churches modernized in the Netherlands?

These sub-questions will be answered in each chapter. They are chosen, because it is useful to first create a theoretical background and contextual framework before moving straight to the case studies. It may seem unnecessary to define heritage, but this is done to get a better understanding of how and why heritage has gained its significance for society, making it easier to understand how monuments function within this framework and why we deal with them the way we currently do. This critical study will also provide a background for the situation in the Netherlands and which international developments might have influenced the Dutch preservation of monuments. The twelve case studies will provide physical evidence of this conception of monuments.

1.1. Summary

The first chapter of this research begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of this research and looks at how 'heritage' and 'contemporary architecture' are defined. This critical heritage study functions as a theoretical background and will indicate how and which role historical buildings have acquired since the rise of heritage preservation in the 19th century. A brief history of the use of contemporary architecture will provide a background of how this building style has been implemented into national and international legislation and, as will be seen, developments which have occurred in Western Europe regarding heritage preservation have had their influence on the Dutch way of preserving heritage. The results of this part will be derived mainly from qualitative literature study. Various definitions (Harvey, 2008; Holtorf, 1996; Smith, 2006; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996) will be analyzed, interpreted and afterwards applied to the case studies in chapter 3, 4 and 5. Besides these scholarly articles, the Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments (1931) and the Venice Charter (1964) by ICOMOS are used to provide a brief history of the use of contemporary architecture on historical buildings for Europe and the Netherlands specifically.

The conceptual framework will be further demarcated in chapter 2, in which a central component of heritage, namely monuments, will be defined and interpreted according to literature study (Choay, 2001; van Swigchem, 1966). A similar structure like chapter 1 is applied, because first a brief history of the meaning of the word monument will be given. Through this 'transition', it can be seen how the concept of what a monument is has changed over time and through the case studies, the definition of a monument in the 21st century will be discovered. After a brief history, the second part will look deeper into the discourse produced by the Dutch government and what a monument is according to Dutch law. The main sources which are analyzed, compared and interpreted here are the *Monumentenwet* from 1961 and 1988 and the currently used *Erfgoedwet* from 2016.

In the last section of this thesis, chapter 3, 4 and 5 will examine twelve case studies of national monuments in the Netherlands which have underwent a contemporary renovation in the 21st century. These chapters will illustrate how and why these renovations are carried out by looking at building reports by, and interviews with architects, developers and other parties involved. As told before, the twelve case studies are divided into three categories. The three

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museums used are Museum de Fundatie (Zwolle), Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam) and the Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven). The three government buildings are the City Hall (Groningen), Drents Archief (Assen) and the Stadskwartier (Deventer). At last, the following six churches will be analyzed; Broerekerk (Bolsward), Keyserkerk (Middenbeemster), Hervormde Kerk (Groesbeek), St. Annakerk (Breda), Hervormde Kerk (Klein Wetsinge) and the Broerenkerk (Zwolle).

At the end of the thesis, an answer will be given to the research question and the obtained data will be summarized. A discussion will follow in which further research is suggested and remaining questions will be posed.

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Image 1: Royal Ontario Museum in Canada (upper). The Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken in Groningen (left). The Union of Romanian Architects headquarters in Bucharest (right) and the Military Museum in Dresden (bottom).

1. THE MAKING OF HERITAGE

The overarching topic of this thesis concerns Dutch national heritage, but what does the term 'heritage' actually mean? This, and the following two chapters will provide a theoretical framework including definitions, a brief history and the regulation of these concepts in both Europe and the Netherlands and the emergence of contemporary architecture within heritage preservation.

Heritage is a rather ambiguous term, because within heritage studies, there exists no universal definition. First used in the 12th century, 'heritage' is derived from the Old French *heriter* (derived from the Latin *heres* "heir" and *hērēditās* "inheritance") meaning "to inherit" or "heir". Initially, this word was associated with familial and juridical structures as objects that were inherited and passed down within families, but the modern definition of heritage has changed over time. Since the beginning of academic attention on heritage, many believe this started after the publication of David Lowenthal's book *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985), many scholars (Hardy M. , 2008; Harvey, 2008; Johnson & Thomas, 1995; Smith, 2006; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996) have challenged themselves with defining this term. Smith (2006, p. 11), for example, sees heritage as "not so much a 'thing' as a set of values and meanings. 'Heritage' is therefore ultimately a cultural practice, involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understandings". This notion of heritage as a social construct is supported by Harvey (2008, p. 19), who defines the concept as follows; "heritage is about the process by which people use the past – a 'discursive construction' with material consequences. As a human condition therefore, it is omnipresent, interwoven within the power dynamics of any society and intimately bound up with identity construction at both communal and personal levels" and Tunbridge & Ashworth (1996) who see heritage as a "contemporary product shaped from history". What all these definitions imply, is that heritage is not a clearly demarcated object or subject in itself, but a social construct through which people embed the past in their present day lives. As a social construct, this means that heritage has been with us from the beginning of humankind, because every generation and every civilization is built upon the heritage of their predecessors. This is a continuous process through which heritage "can be found, interpreted, given meanings, classified, presented, conserved and lost again, and again, and again within any age" (Harvey, p. 23). As a social and cultural construct, heritage is the perfect medium for people to create their own collective memory and thus a collective

past and shared identity (Habshawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 263). Scholar in archeology and social anthropology, Holtorf (1996; 2002, p. 2.0) has built further on this notion and understands heritage as “a vehicle (often, but not only, a site) where cultural memory and various phenomena of history of culture reside. Cultural memory comprises the collective understandings of the past as they are held by a people in any given social and historical context”. Cultural memory, according to Jan Assmann (Assmann, 1992, p. 19), implies two other concepts namely *memory culture* and *references to the past*, which may or may not coincide. On the one hand there is *memory culture*, which is the way memory is used to ensure the continuity of culture by preserving, with the help of cultural mnemonics, its collective knowledge from one generation to the next, making it possible for later generations to reconstruct their cultural identity. These cultural mnemonics could be historical buildings which recall a memory about, for example, a war or a historical figure. On the other hand, these cultural mnemonics create a shared history through *references to the past*. A building or site which refers to a certain event or important figure creates a memory which is shared by a group of people. This shared memory creates a shared past and thus a collective identity in which people all belong to the same cultural, religious or political group (Assmann, 1992, pp. 30-34). This cultural memory is constantly changing, because it depends on the social and mental conditions of an individual or group of how the past is constructed and thus remembered. As interpretations of the past constantly change, the memory about it will also change. In this way, historical buildings or sites were not always understood in the same way, but would have been interpreted in different ways by people in different time periods. For instance, the recent debate about Confederate statues and memorials in the United States are the perfect example of how the meaning of a monument has changed over time. Some of these memorials are over fifty years old, but it wasn't until 2015, after a white man killed black church-goers in a church in South Carolina, that people demanded the removal of these 'racist' memorials dedicated to the Confederacy as they are an offensive reminder of America's history of slavery and racial oppression. On the other side, defenders of these memorials state that by removing these memorials, a part of history will be erased, however shameful it may be. In this situation, it is clearly seen how a monument could evoke different memories at different times by different people. The same goes for the case studies used in this thesis. In each era, a building is looked upon differently and thus used for different purposes or renovated in different ways.

As there are many more definitions to explore, this thesis will build further on the ones provided by Harvey (2008), Smith (2006) and Tunbridge & Ashworth (1996) combined. Therefore, heritage could be defined a social and cultural construct, shaped by embedding the past in the present to express contemporary values and beliefs held by an individual, community or country. The next chapter will further explore how this works by looking at how monuments are embedded in Dutch society and how contemporary renovations symbolize society's attitude towards monuments.

1.1. Contemporary Architecture

As this thesis is concerned with renovated monuments in contemporary architecture, it may be important to first define this new building style. Prior to this, a distinction has to be made between contemporary and modernism/modernistic to avoid confusion, as many people may think that the latter means the same as contemporary, but there is actually a fundamental difference. Modernism describes a movement, emerging in the first half the 20th century until the mid-20th century, which deliberately rejected the styles of the past in which artists were not free to choose the styles they had to work with. Modernist architects aspired innovation and experimentation in forms, materials and techniques to reflect a new and modern society, because 'traditional' forms of art were seen as outdated and holding back progress in a highly advanced society. Elements or styles which are 'modernistic' are then referring to the characteristic style of this movement. Contemporary architecture, on the other hand, could be perceived as similar to modernism, with the use of modern and innovative designs and materials, but it is not defined as a movement, school of thought or linked to a particular time period.

Contemporary architecture can simply be described as the present-day building style and because it is not a movement or school of thought, it is difficult to define its fundamental core or characteristics. However, it can be argued that contemporary architecture desires to create things that are different from what was done in the past to make something new and distinct. It is ever-changing and eclectic, because contemporary architects borrow styles from all different eras to distance themselves from what has become standard to encourage creativity and innovation. This leads to the use of advanced technology, modern building materials and constructions with especially curved and free-flowing lines and forms in contrast to the

particular square ‘traditional’ buildings (*image 2*). They often re-use and modernize¹ old buildings to create something new and ‘contemporary’, as we will see in the next chapters.



Image 2: Examples of contemporary architecture in the Netherlands. From left to right: the EYE Museum in Amsterdam and shopping center 'The Blob' in Eindhoven.

The use of contemporary architecture is a 21st century phenomenon, but the first regulations regarding the use of modern elements and materials on historical buildings were written down in the early-20th century. Ever since mankind created buildings and sites, people had, and still have, the tendency to put their own mark on them through the use of what, in their view, is seen as modern architecture. However, since the 1920's and the rise of modernism, this practice started to manifest itself in charters and guidelines. The first charter was put up in 1931 during the 'First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments' in Athens. It was called the *Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments*² and drawn up after the need to establish international organizations for restoration and protection of historical sites which resulted, for example, in the founding of UNESCO in 1945. The charter, also called 'Carta Del Restauro (Restoration Charter)' existed of seven resolutions of which number 5 is the most relevant for this research:

Resolution 5. Modern techniques and materials may be used in restoration work (Athens Charter, 1931).

This new method of renovating meant that alterations had to be recognizable and distinct from the historical structure, so that the historical aspect and character of the restored monument is kept intact. After the Second World War, during the post-war reconstruction period (1945-

¹ Modernization is the process of injecting a contemporary construction into the fabric of an old building.

² Documented by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

<https://www.icomos.org/en/167-the-athens-charter-for-the-restoration-of-historic-monuments> (accessed July 4, 2018)

1965)³, many cities and buildings had to be rebuilt and again the need to establish an international guide for restoration and conservation was felt throughout the world. During the ‘Second International Congress of Architects and Specialists of Historic Buildings’ in Venice in 1964, the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*⁴, or simply the Venice Charter was produced. The charter consists of 16 articles regarding internationally accepted practices of conservation regarding architecture and sites. These practices are based on a call for authenticity and the importance of maintaining the historical and physical context of a site; “the common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognized. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity”⁵. This call for authenticity was a reaction to the devastation caused to cities after the Second World War and a call for continuity in the post-war urban cities (Starn, 2002, p. 8). These 16 principles should be agreed upon on an international basis, with each country being responsible for applying this practice within the framework of its own culture and abilities. Fifty years later and the charter is still the most influential conservation document, as Starn (2002) calls it the ‘canonical text of modern’ heritage practices. However, in fifty years, a lot has changed, both politically and economic, and two articles (9 and 12), which imply the use of modern materials and designs on historical monuments, have been highly criticized.

Article 9. The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp. The restoration in any case must be preceded and followed by an archaeological and historical study of the monument (ICOMOS, 1964).

³ As this period cannot be precisely demarcated and because it is different for each country, the Cultural Heritage Agency acknowledges the period between 1945 and 1965.

⁴ Adopted by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1965. http://www.international.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf (accessed July 4, 2018).

⁵ As stated in the introduction of the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (1964).

Article 12. Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence (ICOMOS, 1964).

The criticism is especially focused on the contradictory notions of *harmoniously* and *distinguishable*, because, at first hand, it may seem difficult to harmoniously combine contemporary architecture with a historical building, as new additions have to be distinguishable from the original structure, and simultaneously preserve the aesthetic and historical value and character of a monument. These principles are beneficial for contemporary architects, but heritage professionals, on the contrary, argued that the charter favors the use of modernistic styles and designs and prevents the use of traditionalistic architecture, because every addition or alteration must bear a contemporary stamp. In his chapter 'The Dominance of Modernist Ideology in the Charter of Venice', Younés (2008) has written that the Charter was built upon the Modernist biases of its creators and that;

The Charter's abhorrence of restoration and reconstruction – with its implicit fear of "false history" – reflects the Modernist theory of historical determinism, rather than the idea of a living architectural tradition. Major advances over the last 40 years in traditional design fluency and building crafts skills have undercut and outmoded many of the assumptions implicit in the Venice Charter. As a result, many now believe that visual harmony, aesthetic balance and the essential character of a place are of greater importance than abstract Modernist theories.

This argument by Younés is supported by many experts, like Semes (2008) who wrote in his essay 'Updating the Venice Charter Forty Years on' that "the Charters and Standards guiding professionals should prohibit – instead of encouraging or requiring – new development that displays unnecessary contrast with the historic fabric.", adding that "modernist architects have plenty of opportunities for exhibiting their theories and sensibilities elsewhere – they should leave historic settings alone". The latter comes across as overly dogmatic as it leaves no room for progression and chances are that without the use of contemporary architecture, some historical buildings won't be able to compete with the high standards of society. Besides these opposing critics, there are also people who support, or vote for a rewriting of the charter, as it still is a practical and useful guide for restoring heritage. In this case, I would like to quote John Ruskin (1819-1900) and his essay *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1889) in which he wrote

seven principles – sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory and obedience – of what ‘good’ architecture must meet. For him, a restoration in the sense of bringing buildings back to their alleged ‘original’ state, means the deterioration and destruction of heritage:

It [restoration] means the most total destruction which a building can suffer: a destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture.” (Ruskin, 1889, p. 252).

He sees every element and every alteration as a physical remaining of the past which needs to be protected for the artisanal and aesthetic values it contains.

I must not leave the truth unstated, that it is again no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us [...] What we have ourselves built, we are at liberty to throw down; but what other men gave their strength and wealth and life to accomplish, their right over does not pass away with their death; still less is the right to the use of what they have left vested in us only. (Ruskin, 1889, p. 197)

Many modern writers reject Ruskin, as through Ruskin they rebel against the Victorian culture, but in their book ‘Ruskin and Modernism’, Cianci and Nicholls (2001) see in Ruskin an incipient modernism, both in his ideas and style. What Ruskin states is that every added element or any renovation that has been done on a building is inherent to its fabric and essential to highlight the historical development of a building. The same goes for contemporary renovations which can be used by future generations as frameworks to symbolize and express current developments, values, beliefs or traditions. In summary, there is of course something to say for all parties involved, but it can be argued that notions like those of Semes, and probably many others who argue that historical heritage has to be left untouched, are becoming outdated. Heritage, through the ages, has been exposed to the effects of lived times. Buildings are sometimes forgotten, secularized or disused and therefore, a modernization with the use of modern materials and designs may sometimes become inevitable, besides the fact that it is

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a waste to demolish these significant survivors of the past. It is indeed the case that some architects are taking the modernization principles of the Venice charter extremely literal by trying to create the biggest contrast as possible, creating alterations which overshadow the original building rather than complementing it. However, we live in a society in which technology has never evolved so quickly. People are always looking for something new, innovative and creative and especially vacant monument, such as many churches, are the perfect tools for experimenting with new types of architecture. It then becomes a moral issue of how to interpret these articles and how we want heritage to be passed on.

1.2. Dutch Heritage

The developments that have occurred on a European level are reflected on Dutch heritage preservation, where heritage also came under national attention at the end of the 19th century. In 1873, the Dutch lawyer and politician Victor de Stuers (1843-1916) published an article called 'Holland op zijn smalst' in *De Gids*, in which he criticized the way the Government and other authorities managed historical heritage the national art collection: "with a few exceptions, the love and respect for our heritage by our authorities is as good as gone"⁶ (De Stuers, 1873, p. 328). The Government reacted immediately upon this indictment and established the department *Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Arts & Sciences) by the Ministry of the Interior in 1875. The department provided subsidies and grants for the restoration of monuments and it can be seen as the beginning and foundation of the national heritage preservation as we know it today. In 1903, a national committee was established to create an inventory and description of all the monuments present in the Netherlands, of which De Stuers became chair and Jan Kalf (1873-1954) as secretary. Kalf became interested in the renovation of monuments, with a particular interest in contemporary architecture and he rejected the, in his opinion, rather outdated practice of renovating by the government whereby buildings were renovated back to their alleged original state, removing any 'unoriginal' addition or extension. A good example of this 19th century restoration practice is the Múnsterkerk in Roermond. The church dates back to the 13th century, but during a renovation in 1863, Pierre Cuypers asked for the removal of some 17th century elements. He added four new towers in the style of what he thought the original church would have looked like (Verbrugge & Teunissen, 2018). Kalf

⁶ All quotes are originally in Dutch and translated by myself.

argued that this practice disregarded the historical development of a building and in 1917, together with the *Nederlandsche Oudheidkundige Bond* (National Archeological Association), he established the *Grondbeginselen en voorschriften voor het behoud, de herstelling en de uitbreiding van oude bouwwerken* (Principles and regulations regarding the preservation, restoration and expansion of historical buildings). These basic principles were concerned with the consolidation of monuments in the state they were found, implying that they should not be restored back to how they might have looked in a distant past. If a monument requires to be expanded or if lost elements have to be replaced, according to these principles, contemporary architecture must be used instead of historically correct replacements (Verbrugge & Teunissen, 2018). These principles can be seen as precursors to the international use of contemporary architecture, because around fifteen years later, principles of this kind would be included in the Charter of Athens and fifty years later in the Venice Charter. Despite the criticism, Kalf argued that contemporary architecture also deserved a chance to develop and contemporary architects needed to get their freedom in their work, ideas which made him esteemed in the architectural world (de Jong, 1979-2008). As a result, these principles and the critique from Kalf on the current practice of restoration has led to the establishing of the *Rijksbureau voor de Monumentenzorg* in 1918, from which Kalf became the director until 1939. One of the earliest examples of Kalf's new renovation practice is of the 14th century gothic Sint Nicolaaskerk in IJsselstein. Around 1532, Italian architect Pasqualini designed and added a new tower in renaissance style to the gothic church. After a fire in 1919, contemporary architect De Klerk designed a new addition on top of the church tower in style of the Amsterdamse School which was highly criticized by the public. He died even before the renovation started and despite the huge amount of criticism, people agreed to carry out his design out of piety. The church forms a harmonious interaction of three different architectural styles; gothic, Renaissance and Amsterdamse School (*image 3*). This illustrates that in every time period, people use new architectural styles to put their own mark on a building, resulting in eclectic buildings with different architectural elements.

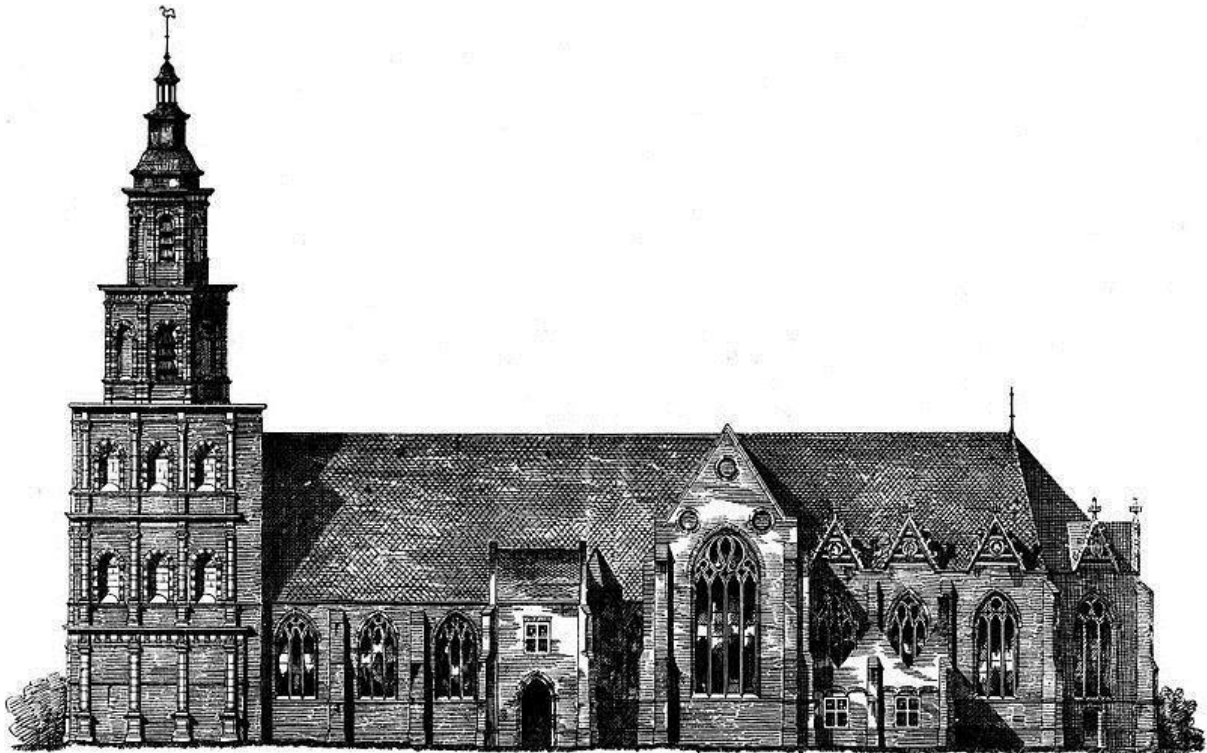


Image 3: The Hervormde Kerk in IJsselstein. (Top) Church as it would have look liked before the fire in 1911. (Left) The church tower after the fire. (Right) The tower after the renovation by Michel de Klerk in 1926 in contemporary style (Amsterdamse School).

2. DEFINING THE MONUMENT

The following chapter will go deeper into the definition, history and use of a central component of heritage, namely monuments. Before moving on to the Dutch discourse, a general history and critical study will be formed concerning the definition and change in meaning of the word.

The word 'monument' was first used around the late-13th century and derived from the Latin word *monumentum* meaning 'something that reminds', itself derived from *moneo* (to remind) and *monere* (to recall), thus calling upon memory. This memory is evoked by emotions and feelings that one gets when visiting or thinking about a monument. Based on this definition, a monument could be defined as "any artifact erected by a community of individuals to commemorate or to recall for future generations individuals, events, sacrifices, practices or beliefs" (Choay, 2001, p. 6). Through active memory, a building or site is able to recall the past and bring it to life as if it were present. This past could in return be used as a tool for creating a collective identity between ethnic, religious or national communities. This notion of a monument as a mnemonic tool has gradually diminished in Western societies and has attained other meanings, starting in the 17th century. Particularly in the 18th century, the mnemonic function of monuments shifted towards aesthetic and political values and they started to signify power, greatness and beauty, as French archeologist and architectural theorist Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849) stated that a monument referred to "an edifice, constructed either to perpetuate the memory of memorable things, or conceived, erected or placed in such a way as to become an instrument of embellishment and magnificence in cities"⁷. Developments like the French Revolution (1789-1799) initiated the rise of nation-states in the 18th- and the birth of nationalism across Europe in the 19th century (Rich, 1970). Nationalism, through which countries try to develop and maintain a national identity through shared characteristics like culture, language or religion, built further on this notion of monuments as grand and beautiful objects. These new nation-states wanted to define their own traditions, culture and identity through i.e. architecture, which represented a country's technological developments, wealth or aesthetics (Bandarin & van Oers, 2012). As Hans Pohlsander argued in his book 'National Monuments and Nationalism in 19th Century Germany' (2008) that "no century in modern European history has built monuments with more

⁷ *Dictionnaire d'architecture*, v. 2, Paris, year IX.

enthusiasm than the 19th. Of the hundreds of monuments erected, those which sprang from a nation-wide initiative and addressed themselves to a nation, rather than part of a nation, we may call national monuments". In the same way did new imperialism in the 19th- and early-20th centuries influence the way monuments would express a nation's identity. The new nation-states wanted to expand their empire by conquering overseas territories and 'civilizing missions', because European imperialists saw themselves as the representatives of technological, cultural and intellectual progress which they expressed through magnificent cathedrals, palaces and statuary, being "physical representations of national identity and European taste and achievement" (Smith, 2006, p. 18). As an example, in 1904, architect John P. Seddon (1827-1906) planned on building the 'Imperial Monument Halls and Tower' adjacent to Westminster Abbey, London. Even though it was never built, it was designed to be the tallest tower in the United Kingdom and the architects aspired to create a grand and expensive monument to "form a worthy center to the metropolis of the Empire 'upon which the sun never sets'" (Bremner, 2004, p. 253). So, these monuments became political tools and ways to express the power and prestige of a nation. They were the important political and cultural centers in towns and cities in the 19th century (Johnson N. , 1995).

The diminishing of the memorial function of a monument could be explained by many reasons, such as the rise of printing. Memory no longer had to be solemnly attached to physical objects like buildings or sites, but one could acquire knowledge and recall memory by the information that was given in a book, as they became increasingly commonplace. French author Charles Perrault (1628-1703) witnessed this change and mentioned: "today ... one learns practically nothing by heart, because one ordinarily owns the books that one reads, to which one can have access as needed, and from which one can cite passages more accurately by copying them than by entrusting memory, as one did before"⁸. In this sense, books became the instruments in which the past was better accumulated and preserved than in physical monuments, which became the 'silent witnesses' of history (van Swigchem, 1966). Besides printing, other developments have caused the mnemonic function of a monument to diminish, such as the rise of photography as a new way to preserve the past, because photographs could capture the past in a more visual and stimulating way than books can. People wouldn't need to visit a site or building as events, important figures or buildings could be preserved through pictures,

⁸ *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, v. 1, Paris (1688), p.63.

which are accessible for everybody through books and the internet. What developments like these did to monuments, was to virtually downgrade them to being physical objects for authenticating the visual replicas seen and written about in books, pictures and in the media (Choay, 2001). Within the tourism industry, they are advertised as important historical attractions and tourists will visit them only to have seen them in person, but probably not because of their historical, cultural or political value. They become items on a checklist of attractions one must have seen in their lives such as the Colosseum in Rome, one of the seven UNESCO world wonders or the Eiffel tower in Paris, downgrading them even more to mere tourist attractions. Only the interested public will visit them for their intentional function. The notion of monuments as authentication tools is also visible in UNESCO's definition of a monument, established in 1972 during the World Heritage Convention. Here, a monument was defined as: 'architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science'⁹. History books have told us about cave man created beautiful cave paintings, how the Egyptians build pyramids or how Da Vinci painted the Sistine Chapel and these monuments are kept, protected and preserved as physical representations of these events. What has to be said here, is that there is a huge distinction between how the 'public' and 'heritage experts' perceive and understand monuments. In her book 'Uses of Heritage', Smith (2006, pp. 11-21) calls this distinction the 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (AHD). In the AHD, the proper care of heritage is reliant on the power and knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts, like architects and archeologists who have the ability to claim professional expertise over material culture and who took the role in identifying, protecting and caring for these places. They are the ones who truly understand these monuments and their intrinsic value. In this discourse, non-experts like tourists are mere visitors who have no knowledge or expertise and who needs to be educated about the value and meaning of historic buildings and monuments. This notion further distances people from truly understanding the value of these pieces of history, making them mere tourist attractions as it are only the experts who apparently understand and have the ability to comprehend their value. As caretakers of heritage, these experts are also the ones who can influence how people see the past as they are the ones who educate the public

⁹ Adopted by the General Conference at its seventeenth session in Paris, 16 November 1972. <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf> (accessed July 27, 2018).

about them. That is also what is happening now with contemporary renovations. It are contemporary architects and state agencies who decide how monuments are renovated, sometimes leaving little to no room for 'unqualified' parties.

But, what role do monuments then still have for this highly modernized societies? As Choay has mentioned in her book that the mnemonic function of monuments has diminished, this may be questioned because some monuments still rely upon this function and it maybe has become an underlying feature of the building. This is especially the case with war memorials or cemeteries which rely upon the living emotions of people of how victims or events are remembered. It is important here to make a distinction between 'normal' and 'historical' monuments. A 'normal' monument is something which was *a priori* set up to be a monument, such as a memorial, whilst a 'historical' monument is initially not constructed to be so, but was *a posteriori* assigned as such for its beauty or national importance, like a cathedral or palace (Choay, 2001). It is easier for a historical monument to lose its mnemonic and memorial function, because they were never intended as such. Monuments such as war memorials or war cemeteries will always keep this function and that is why historical monuments are easier 'forgotten' or disused. A historical cathedral or palace might recall a memory about its grandeur and prestige in the past, but this feeling quickly fades away and a picture is taken as proof that one has visited the site or because of its beauty. This could be due to the fact that these buildings represent a period in time which is so out of reach and different from current society, that, because they are taken out of their context, they are losing their historical message. There are no longer *Lakenhallen* (Cloth Hall) or *Waaghuizen* (Weigh House) making it difficult for people to identify or connect with these buildings, thus making it easier to use contemporary architecture on them to regain their meaning for society in accordance with modern standards and values. On the other hand, the fact that they no longer exist in society also enhances the idea of preserving them as physical representations of how it might have looked like in the past. In return to Holtorf (2002), this is also what he argued when he mentioned about cultural memory and how historical buildings are understood differently in every time period. This can also be applied to monuments as their meaning for society changes over time. In the next chapters, the twelve renovated national monuments will indicate what meaning monuments have in today's society.

2.1. Dutch Monuments

As De Stuers has brought heritage under Dutch national attention in the 19th century, so did the legislative protection of monuments began during this time. In 1875, the establishing of the department *Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Arts & Sciences) by the Ministry of the Interior, marked the beginning of the protection of monuments by the Dutch Government. The mid-20th century saw the first legislative protection of monuments, with the establishing of the *Wet houdende voorziening in het belang van het Behoud van Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst*, or simply the *Monumentenwet*, in 1961. This law has attracted a lot of criticism, especially during the 1970's and 80's with changing opinions about the centralistic role of the Government, so it was soon replaced by a revised *Monumentenwet* in 1988. In this law, according to Article 1.b., a monument can be defined as; 'objects or sites which are of national importance for their aesthetics, scientific or cultural-historical value'. This definition explains a monument as something that is important for a country as a whole, a province or a local community, because of its aesthetics and/or cultural-historical and scientific significance. To give an example, the Beemster Polder in Noord-Holland is a cultural landscape created by the draining of Lake Beemster in 1612, in order to combat flooding and develop new agricultural land. The whole area was added on UNESCO's World Heritage List, because "the creation of the Beemster Polder marks a major step forward in the interrelationship between humankind and water at a crucial period of social and economic expansion"¹⁰, thus being important for its cultural-historical and also scientific value. The area is also known for its typical bell-jar farms or *stolpboerderijen*, characterized by a raised roof that evolves into a pyramid shape, thus being of importance for its aesthetical and architectural value. A monument can thus show us what was seen as 'beautiful' at that time or what the technological and scientific advances were during the date of construction. After 1989, the *Monumentenwet 1988* was altered many times, because it needed to be adjusted to the demands of its time and it wasn't until 2016 that it was replaced by the currently used *Erfgoedwet*. This new law determines what heritage is, how heritage has to be dealt with and how the conservation and preservation of heritage has to be supervised. The *Erfgoedwet* also determines when a building is considered a

¹⁰ Criterion 5 to put the Beemster Polder on UNESCO's Heritage List. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/899> (accessed July 4, 2018).

monument, distinguishing them in three major categories: national, provincial or municipal monuments. Monuments which are protected by the *Erfgoedwet* are called 'national monuments'. They are assigned by the Cultural Heritage Agency on behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. These buildings, recognizable by the well-known monument shields, enjoy the highest status within monument preservation and are listed in the register of national monuments. The Netherlands has approximately 61.965 national monuments, with the biggest group being residential homes. The list of national monuments is currently complete and the Government and Cultural Heritage Agency are now focused on the maintenance and structural improvement of this list. Buildings are only added on exceptional basis and they have to meet some strict criteria in order to become a national monument. The State also protects city- and townscapes, which are monumental ensembles consisting of multiple buildings or sites, like a whole city district or village. The individual buildings in a protected town- or cityscape ensemble do not necessarily have the status of being a national monument. Municipal- and provincial monuments are buildings which are assigned by, and of importance for the province or municipality only. Currently, only the provinces of Noord-Holland and Drenthe have provincial monuments. What the transition to the new *Erfgoedwet* has brought with it, in my view, is a change in the definition of what a monument actually is. According to Article 1.1 in the *Erfgoedwet*, a monument is defined as 'immovable property forming part of cultural heritage', with 'cultural heritage' meaning:

Tangible and intangible resources inherited from the past, created in the course of time by people or arising from the interaction between man and the environment that people, irrespective of the ownership thereof, identify as a reflection and expression of continuously evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, and that offer a frame of reference to them and to future generations;

This definition shows similarities with the before mentioned definitions of heritage (Tunbridge & Ashworth; Smith; Harvey), because heritage can be seen as a social construct through which the past is embedded in the present, but it is somewhat in conflict with the before mentioned definitions of a monument. These definitions of a monument namely state that today they are mere physical replicas while the definition according to article 1.1. implies that they are expression of continuously evolving values, beliefs and traditions which could offer as a framework for future generations. The difference between the definition from the

Monumentenwet 1988 and the *Erfgoedwet*, lies in the fact that, initially, a monument was important mainly because of its aesthetics, cultural-historical and/or scientific meaning, but with this new definition, a building or site is also important because of its meaning for, and influence on society and how it expresses constantly developing values, beliefs and traditions in the past, present and future. In each time period, people add their own values and beliefs to these buildings by adding new architectural elements or changing their function, so they could serve as a reference frame for future generations, like Ruskin also argued in his *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. A monument is not something absolute and self-contained, but part of a bigger and broader context (Meihuizen, 2012). The idea that monuments are social constructs through which the past is embedded in the present to express society's values and beliefs is also mentioned in the previous chapter in the definitions of Smith (2006), Harvey (2008) and Tunbridge & Ashworth (1996), but it seems contrary to the ideas of Choay (2001) who sees monuments as mere authentications tools and whose ideas better comply with the definition of a monument from the *Monumentenwet 1988* which identified monuments as objects which represent past advancements or aesthetics. It has to be seen from the following three chapters which meaning monuments truly have for Dutch society and if they are indeed mere physical objects of a long gone past or whether they still obtain their importance for society.

3. MUSEUMS

The following part of this thesis is concerned with the use of contemporary architecture on three museums in Zwolle, Amsterdam and Eindhoven. According to a survey in 2016 by Statistics Netherlands (CBS), the Netherlands had approximately 694¹¹ museums which have attracted over 33 million visitors, with one in four coming from abroad. They are important sources of income and a key factor for the Dutch economy and tourism industry, like the world famous Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. A study from Booz & Company (2013) has shown that before its renovation in 2013, the museum provided a contribution of €145 million to the gross domestic product (GDP) and after its renovation, this number increased with €90 million to €235 million a year. Numbers like these point out how important museums are politically, culturally and economic as, for example, around three quarters of the incoming visitors have indicated that they only visited Amsterdam for the Rijksmuseum. Contemporary renovations can have a positive effect on these numbers by creating iconic structures which attract even more visitors.

Between 1990 and 2015, a real ‘building boom’ has caused Dutch museums to invest over €1.5 billion in major contemporary renovations and extensions. These projects are a result of the transformation that museums have undergone in the past 25 years. As told before, after the new *Monumentenwet* in 1988, a decentralization of power caused an empowerment of local and provincial heritage institutions, like museums, libraries and archives. This withdrawing of the government led to a comprehensive catch-up operation in terms of managing and preserving museum collections. The *Deltaplan voor Cultuurbehoud* (Delta Plan for Cultural Preservation), a state subsidy policy made available between 1990 and 1998, was set up to provide financial support for these renovations and resulted in the improvement and renovation of hundreds of depots and museum buildings. The autonomisation also caused museums to focus more on society and the public as they now had to provide their own sources of income. Thus, museums underwent a transformation from being an inward oriented institution only focused on their art collection, to a place more involved with their audience

¹¹ The data was gathered in collaboration with the Museumvereniging, the Cultural Heritage Agency and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
[file:///C:/Users/annebel/Downloads/2017EP46%20Museum%20in%20Nederland%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/annebel/Downloads/2017EP46%20Museum%20in%20Nederland%20(1).pdf) (accessed June 19, 2018).

(Kok, 2017). But, to attract more visitors, a lot of museums had to invest in the expansion of their building to accommodate growing collections and number of visitors and to keep up with museums' changing role in society.

Besides political developments, the 'building boom' from the 1990's was also heavily influenced by and a reaction to architectural developments elsewhere in Europe. Post-modern and iconic structures like the Centre Pompidou (1976), Louvre (1989) and the Tate Modern (1995) emerged in European cities such as Paris and London. Dutch museums saw how these contemporary renovations positively affected the growing number of incoming tourists, because buildings with national and international allure like these create a favorable climate for people to visit a city or province and they add something extra to how the art within the museum is experienced (Faché, 2011). This resulted in a rising number of newly built structures or renovations on already existing buildings in the Netherlands. In 1990, former director Frans Haks asked Italian architect Alessandro Mendini to design a new accommodation for the Groninger Museum in Groningen. He created an iconic and post-modernist museum which opened its doors in 1994 and still stands proudly in the Groninger canals as the most visited museum in the province. Director Haks has transformed the former provincial museum into an institution with national and international allure, as Dutch architect Wiel Arets mentioned in an interview in the *Volkskrant* (1999): "at first, not a lot of people came to this city, but nowadays everybody does. Not for the city, not for the collection, but for the building". The first year after its opening, the museum had over 360.000 visitors, a major achievement, as the museum currently has an estimated number of around 200.000 visitors a year. That renovations on museums have a positive effect on the number of visitors is also visible in a study from *The Art Newspaper* (2016) on 500 museums worldwide, which revealed that museums which expanded or were renovated between 2007 and 2014, attracted 14 percent more visitors than non-renovated museums. Even though many museums experienced a modest drop in the number of visitors after the sheen of newness has worn off, numbers like these indicate what a contemporary renovation can do to revitalize a museum and the city in which it is located in (Halperin, 2016).

3.1. Museum de Fundatie, Zwolle

Museum de Fundatie¹² is a museum for visual arts in Zwolle, Overijssel. It was built between 1838 and 1841 as a Palace of Justice by the architect Eduard Louis de Coninck from The Hague. He chose a neo-classical style with double symmetry, a monumental entrance and a typical colonnade, because he wanted the court building to symbolize the grandeur and unity in the legislation of the new kingdom (*image 5*). The design and location of the museum were carefully chosen as it is built slightly offside from the enclosed medieval facades of the city center giving it, together with the neoclassical style, a solitaire character. A park behind the museum makes it a link between two worlds: the one with the inward-oriented medieval fortress city with its compact and static character and the other a 19th century park with an outward-oriented and dynamic character (Bierman Henket Architecten, 2010). The museum has undergone many renovations, starting in 1977 when architect Arne Mastenbroek redesigned the building to accommodate the National Department for Town and Country Planning. This renovation left the exterior intact so the building could be kept as a historical monument for Zwolle. Masterbroek only added a mezzanine between the high courtrooms to provide more space. In 2005, architect Gunnar Daan has been tasked to further convert the building into a museum for modern and contemporary art called Museum de Fundatie, which already had a location in Heino, Overijssel. Around 2010, director Ralph Keuning asked Bierman Henket Architecten, specialized in applying modern architecture on historical buildings, to do a feasibility study for an expansion of a thousand square meter, because the museum was no longer able to accommodate the growing number of visitors and art collections and most of all, the static design of the building from 1838 didn't match the younger target group the museum had in mind (San, 2013). Keuning asked for an expansion *next* to the building, but Henket chose a construction that was added *on top* of the building, so that its symmetrical and solitary character would stay intact. His final design was an elliptical shaped construction on top of the building, nicknamed 'The Cloud' (*image 6*) which was finished in 2013. This new construction is supported by eight columns which run straight through the existing building, each resting on their own foundation, so it stands separate from the original structure and could be removed at any time without damaging the building.

¹² Monument number: 41563.

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The elliptical and flowing shape of 'The Cloud' enhances the symmetry of the rectangular and static court building, both on the inside as well as on the outside, because the rectangular museum halls downstairs are in contrast with the flowing open spaces in the volume upstairs: "Just like the Palace of Justice connects the two worlds horizontally, so does Henke connects the classical and static building with the flowing dynamic of the contemporary addition" (Bierman Henket Architecten, 2010). The original central entrance hall has been carried through as an atrium with a glass passageway where the two worlds, classical and contemporary and rectangular and elliptical, are seamlessly coming together (*image 4*).

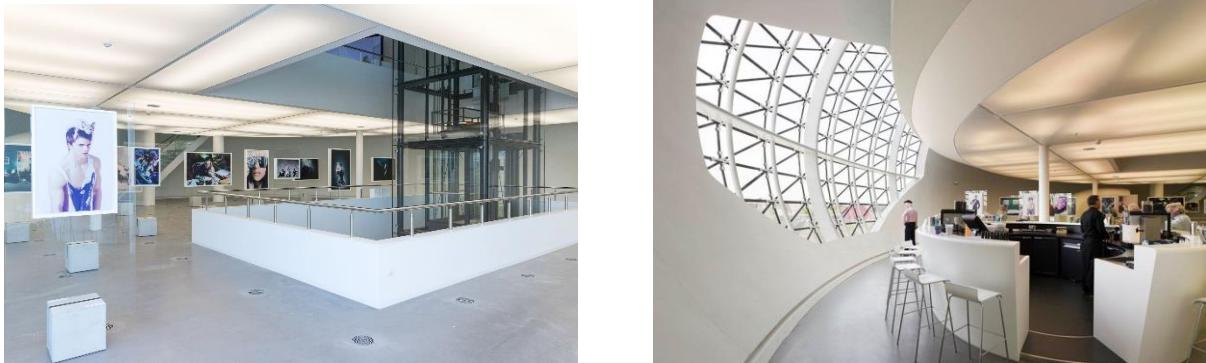


Image 4: the interior of Museum de Fundatie. Left: the rectangular halls of the former Palace of Justice. Right: the flowing lines of the inside of the 'Cloud'.

The outside of the expansion is covered with 55.000 three-dimensional ceramic white-blue tiles, made by Koninklijke Tichelaar in Makkum, to make it look like it is lifted like a cloud, floating above the originally neoclassical building. The architects from Henket Bierman worked closely together with the Cultural Heritage Agency (CHA) and the municipality of Zwolle. Even though this new addition changed the appearance of the monument enormously, all the parties involved were enthusiastic and the CHA stated that this new contemporary construction seem to align itself in a natural way with the historical building. Under the motto 'Preservation through Development' (Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed, 2013), the museum is brought back to its glory, creating a new dynamic and meaning for both the city of Zwolle, its inhabitants and visitors as Keuning now calls the museums "not just an investment in an icon, but in the whole province". The museum hopes to convey their passion of contemporary and visual art to a wider audience and this, in my view, is achieved by 'The Cloud', which invites people inside as it is a piece of visual art itself.

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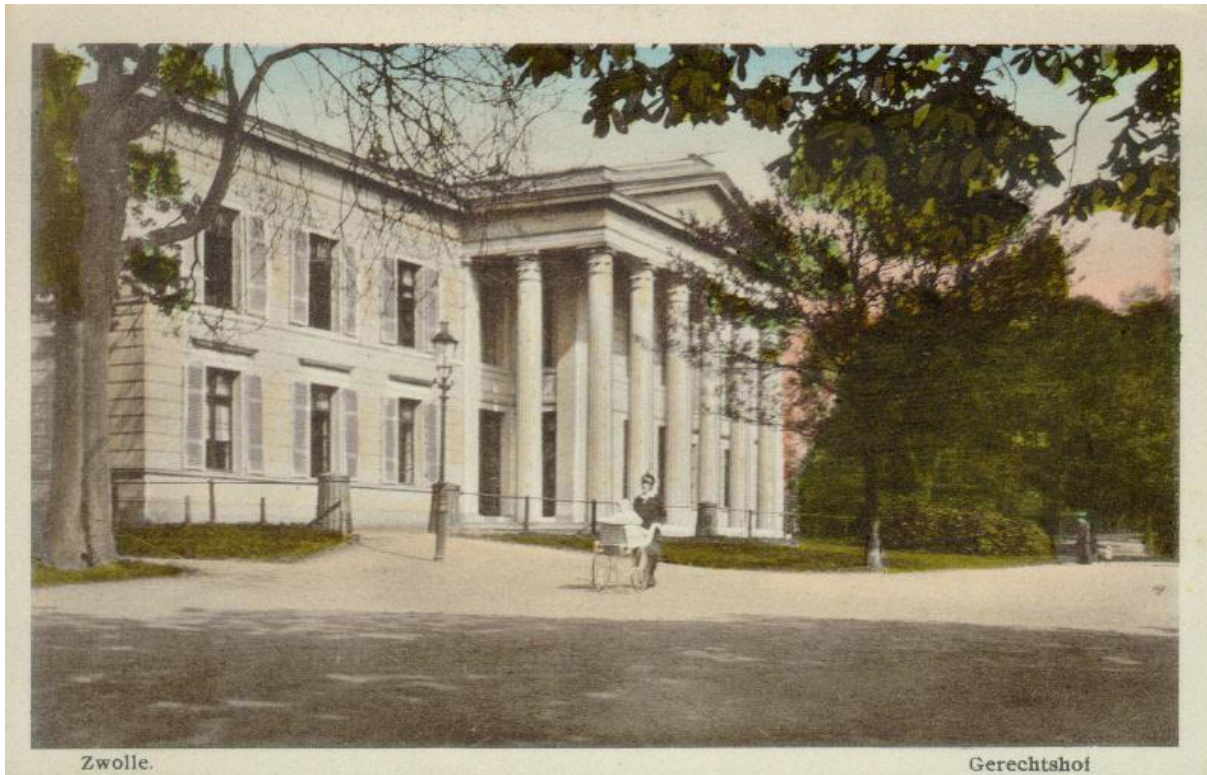


Image 5: Postcard of the Palace of Justice in 1910.



Image 6: Museum de Fundatie after the renovation in 2013, with the iconic 'Cloud'.

3.2. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

The Stedelijk Museum¹³ was founded in 1874 by a group of citizens in Amsterdam who wanted a place devoted to modern art. Initially, the collection was displayed in the Rijksmuseum but moved in 1895 to the current building in style of the Renaissance Revival, designed by Adriaan Weissman (*image 7*). In 2003, the museum had to close its door for a major renovation and expansion, because it lacked space and the original building could no longer fulfill the necessary standards of its time. After a long period of financial and structural problems, the renovated museum, including a new contemporary wing nicknamed 'De Badkuip' (The Bath Tub), finally reopened its doors in 2012 (*image 8*). Architect Mels Crouwel, from Bentheim Crouwel Architecten, took on the challenge and created a massive kind of canopy which serves as the new entrance (the former entrance was at the back of the museum in the Paulus Potterstraat, which meant that the museum always had its back turned to the square) for the museum. Crouwel deliberately chose this bathtub-shaped design, working as a forecourt, to link and extend the famous Museums Square into the building to make it more accessible and open to the public. The Bath Tub creates a distinctive contrast on the outside, while the museum has a completely seamless transition from old to new on the inside, so visitors can't tell in which part of the museum they are. In this way, contemporary and historical go hand-in-hand without one dominating the other. Crouwel took the Stedelijk Museum from Willem Sandberg (1945-1963), the former director who made the museum internationally known, as a starting point for his expansion and renovation.

Sandberg removed the interior from all decoration and painted the walls white, creating a neutral background for the displayed art. Our design for the exterior of the museum is based on the left-over architecture from the 19th century, with the addition of 21st-century technology, painted in Sandberg's color white (2012).

In this way, the use of contemporary architecture could create a continuation of the past by using original and historical elements, the like the color white, to incorporate them in a contemporary design.

¹³ Monument number: 505840.



Image 7: the Stedelijk Museum, seen from its former entrance on the Paulus Potterstraat in 1895.



Image 8: the iconic new 'Bath Tub' created by Benthem Crouwel in 2012.

3.3. Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

The Van Abbemuseum¹⁴ was founded in 1936 by the private art collector and cigar manufacturer Henri van Abbe. With this museum, he wanted to create a space in which people would be introduced to, and enjoy modern art without distraction from the outside. This was achieved by creating a symmetrical building of galleries in traditionalistic style, characterized by an enclosed brick façade, a typical bell tower above the entrance and light coming in only through the roof (*image 9*). Around the 1990's, the building became too small for modern demands and architect Abel Cahen was chosen to design a new expansion. He chose to create a box-like design on top the museum, meaning the demolishing of the iconic bell tower by Kropholler and a destruction or the original building. The Municipality and inhabitants of Zwolle, together with the *Stichting Behoud het Van Abbe* and the *Cuypers Genootschap* heavily objected this plan and prevailed it to happen by declaring the building a national monument. In an interview in *Trouw* (1993), Henri van Abbe himself stated; “our biggest objection is that Eindhoven doesn't get the chance to get old. Everything that had the potential to become characteristic, has vanished. The inhabitants of Eindhoven will therefore always feel themselves displaced in their own city”. Even though the '90's saw a rise of contemporary and modern structures, it was not tolerated that this resulted in the damaging or demolishing of original structures. However, Cahen got a second chance and designed an expansion behind the original building which opened its doors in 2003 (*image 10*). At first sight, the extension, covered in grey natural stone, forms a strong contrast with the original red bricked building, but the new extension actually honors the original traditionalistic style. The contemporary design has straight en rectangular lines, an enclosed façade and a couple of light sources like the glass windows in the roof. The big tower resembles, in its own way, the characteristic bell-tower from the original building. Through this design, Cahen wanted to give his own and contemporary interpretation of Kropholler's traditionalistic building, while still respecting the traditional design (van den Bergen, 2003).

¹⁴ Monument number: 507030.

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Image 9: The traditionalistic Van Abbemuseum as designed by Kropholler, around 1970.



Image 10: the new extension by Cahen in grey limestone and according to contemporary interpretations of traditionalism.

4. GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

This chapter is focused on the contemporary renovation of three (former) governmental buildings in the Netherlands. The case studies used for this part are the Groningen City Hall, Stadhuiskwartier in Deventer and the Drents Archief in Assen. In contrast with the before mentioned museums, these buildings have a less radical and futuristic design, as they still have to symbolize the political authority and status of the government.

A government building, according to Dutch law, is a building under government ownership and in which government institutions are located, such as city halls, courthouses or embassies. The Drents Archief cannot officially be called a government building, but it was the former location of the *Rijksarchief in Drenthe* (National Archives), which, until the end of the 20th century, was the term for government agencies who managed the national and provincial archives. It is currently owned by the *Rijksvastgoedbedrijf* (RVB), the real estate organization of the Dutch government responsible for managing and renovating properties used by the State.

Contemporary renovations on government buildings are carried out for many reasons; to make them more open and accessible to the public, to provide more space, but the fundamental tenet for most renovations is sustainability. The Dutch government fulfills an important function given the sustainability of the real estate industry and increased sustainable preservation of its immovable properties, both in new constructions as with renovations. The use of contemporary architecture seems inextricably linked with the future of our planet and contemporary renovations can significantly contribute to tackling climate change through the use of ecological building materials and techniques such as green roofs or solar panels (Maywald & Riesser, 2016). The same goes for the following case studies, as sustainability for the Drents Archief meant an efficient re-use of the original monumental building. The Municipality of Groningen wants to make their city hall more sustainable by focusing on climate control and energy-efficiency and the Stadhuiskwartier in Deventer is now one of the most sustainable government buildings in the Netherlands by using natural sources, such as sunlight and rainwater, greenery and other sustainable measures.

4.1. City Hall, Groningen

The city hall¹⁵ in the middle of the city center of Groningen is a building from 1810 in Dutch Baroque. It was designed by Jacob Otten Husly and located on the site of the former city hall, which was demolished in 1775 (*image 11*). They started building the current city hall in 1793, but due to a lack of money and an invasion of the French, the project was delayed until 1810, when it was finally ready for use. It was renovated and expanded in 1962 by architect Jo Vegter who made a white marble extension which was connected with the city hall by an enclosed walkway. It was demolished after criticism from the inhabitants of Groningen and the *Monumentenzorg*, arguing it degraded the historical character of the grand city hall. In 2016, the city council decided that the buildings needs a new upgrade, because it is outdated, suffered from a lack of maintenance and an increasing number of council members makes the current council hall too small. There were three proposals for the renovation: 1) a simple renovation 2) a glass extension on the back of the building or 3) a glass attic overlooking the Grote Markt. According to a survey (Daalman & van der Werff, 2017) held in 2016 amongst 11.000 inhabitants of Groningen, this plan caused a polarization of opinions on the basis of two conceptions; people who think that modern elements and historical buildings can go hand in hand and people who state that its historical character should stay intact.

“Buitenkant mag niets aan veranderd worden, alleen restaureren”

“Oud en nieuw en duurzaam kan prima samengaan zonder dat het karakter van het gebouw (in/extern) aangetast raakt”

In September 2017, the city council finally decided that they were going for number 3, designed by Happel Cornelisse Verhoeven Architecten (*image 12*). By creating a glass attic, the council hall could be relocated to the attic, creating more open space on the lower levels and in this way, the city council wants to make the historical building more inviting and easily accessible to the public. Renovations are starting in 2019, even though the majority is afraid the national monument will lose its historical character, but it was agreed that the original façade is kept intact. It seems that not Groningen is not ready for contemporary architecture inserted on their beloved historical city center.

¹⁵ Monument number: 18466.

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Image 11: the front-side of the city hall as designed by Jacob Otten Husly in 1810.



Image 12: the design by Happel Cornelisse Verhoeven Architecten with a glass roof over the attic. The renovation will start in 2019.

4.2. Drents Archief, Assen

The Drents Archief¹⁶ was built between 1897-1901 to function as the National Archives and Provincial museum of Drenthe. It was built on the grounds of the former monastery Maria in Campis and the old cloister walls of the monastery are still visible. The Archief is built in the shape of a former early Dutch renaissance church with a heavy corner tower (*image 13*). It has faced a couple of renovations between 1990 and 2010 when Zecc Architecten was selected to design the new extension in the shape of a new contemporary entrance pavilion, which opened its doors in 2012 (*image 14*). The objective for this renovation was to make the original enclosed building and archive material more accessible and inviting to the general public. The building now consists of four different architectural styles; the walls from the medieval cloister, the main building from 1900 inspired by medieval architecture, a study hall from 1980 and the contemporary entrance from 2012. The new extension serves as a ‘futuristic time machine’, because the entrance marks the beginning of a time line in which the different architectural and historical layers of the building are enfolded, walking from the present up to the medieval parts of the building;

“It successfully marks the beginning of the future and connects the present with the rich history of Drenthe”¹⁷.

The architects renovated the building with respect to its history; the medieval cloister walls were kept unchanged and the historical elements and original structures from the 1900’s and 1980’s were restored back to their original state. This case study is the perfect example of how buildings are used differently in various time period, as argued by Holtorf (2002, p. 2.0) and how people add their own stamp on buildings, seen through the various historical elements and buildings styles. Contemporary architecture in this way can connect the past with the present without changing its original character. After its renovation, visitors mentioned that the exceptional architecture leaves a remarkable impression because of the subtle mix of contemporary and monumental.

¹⁶ Monument number: 469357.

¹⁷ The Drents Archief was nominated for the ‘NRP Gulden Feniks’, a price awarded for the promotion of re-using empty buildings.

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Image 13: the former entrance of the Drents Archief.



Image 14: the new entrance pavilion designed by Zecc Architects in 2012.

4.3. Stadhuiskwartier, Deventer

The Deventer City Hall¹⁸ is a classicist building from the end of the Dutch Golden Age (17th century) in the hanseatic city of Deventer. It consists of the former town hall and the Wanthuis (also known as a cloth hall), which were combined in 1693-1694 by architect Jacobus Roman into the current city hall (*image 15*). The building is part of the ‘top 100 Dutch heritage sites’, a list of national monuments in the Netherlands, established in 1990 by the *Monumentenzorg*.

In 2009, plans were made for a renovation and extension of the historical city hall and architects from Neutelings Riedijk Architects designed a construction which attracted a lot of criticism, because the Deventenaren were concerned that the building would affect the historical cityscape. They got a new change in 2013 and the renewed city halls with a contemporary construction opened its doors in April 2016. Architects Willem Jan Neutelings and Michiel Riedijk expanded and combined the above mentioned national monument (together with the Landshuis¹⁹ and the former Burgemeestershuis) with a new contemporary construction into the currently known ‘Stadhuiskwartier’, which serves as a meeting place and cultural center for the inhabitants of Deventer (*image 16*). This contemporary expansion has brought new life into the Grote Kerkhof and connects contemporary with historical by creating a circular passageway through which people can walk through both the old and new buildings. It is designed according to the historical Deventer urban planning with gardens and courtyards connected through little paths, alleys and passageways, because the new construction has a front building behind which is an open courtyard situated around the former Burgemeestershuis beyond which is the main building. The horizontal lines of the façade are similar to those of the adjacent buildings; “the building presents itself as a contemporary palazzo with a classical constructed façade”. The Stadskwartier won the audience award for BNA Best Building of the Year 2017, the category ‘Identity & Icon value’ and the Abe Bonnema architecture price in 2017, because, according to the expert jury, architect Riedijk has outdone himself with this design. The way he built this contemporary construction into the historical inner-city, while still focusing on the historical urban context, is outstanding.

¹⁸ Monument number: 12556.

¹⁹ Monument number: 12555.

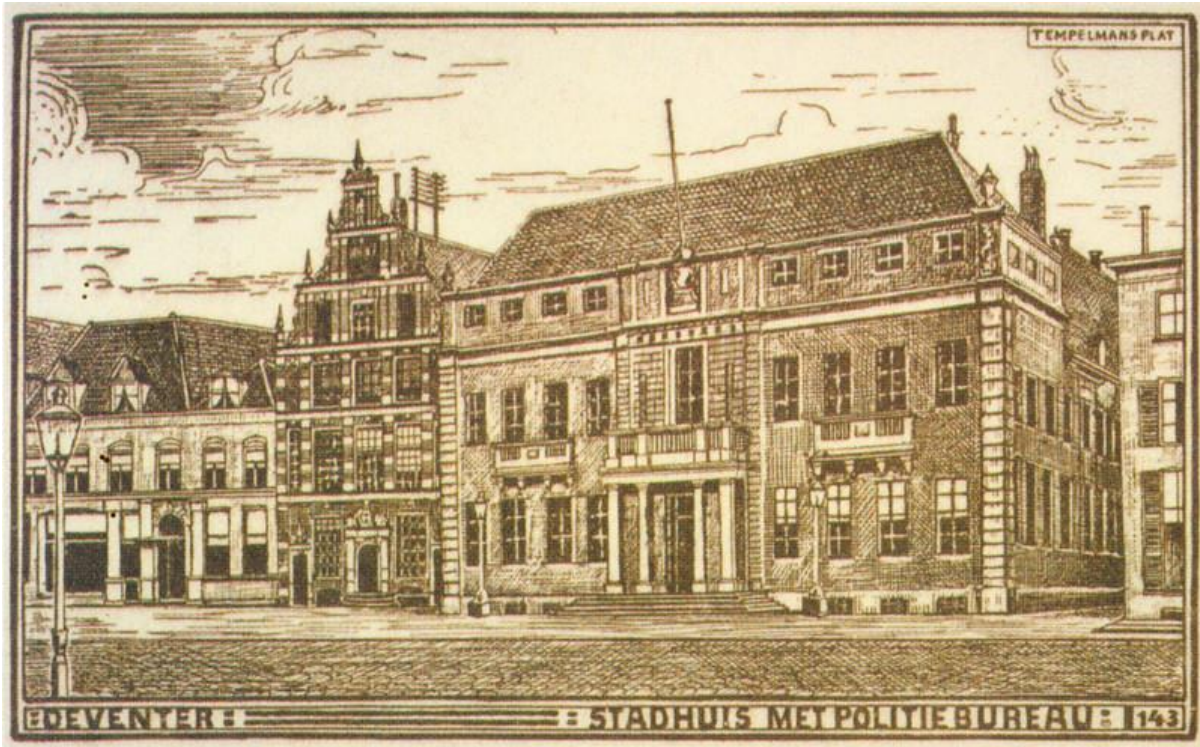


Image 15: the original city hall with the former police station on the Grote Kerkhof, around 1920.



Image 16: the new Stadhuiskwartier with on the right the former city hall and police station and the left the contemporary construction by Neutelings and Riedijk from 2016.

5. RELIGIOUS CASE STUDIES

Since the 1960's, the process of secularization has caused a decline in church membership in the Netherlands. Together with other processes, like migration, the religious landscape of the Netherlands has changed tremendously in the last decades. The outcome of the first population census in 1849 showed that over 95 percent of the Dutch population belonged to a Christian denomination (Dutch Reformed, Catholic and Protestant Church) and that almost everybody went to church services on a regular basis – which is at least once a month (Van der Bie, 2009). A survey from the *Centraal Bureau van de Statistiek* (CBS) in 2010 showed that the number of people who did not belong to a Christian denomination went down to 50 percent in 2015. Furthermore, over 77.2 percent of the Dutch population seldom or never attend a church service anymore, a number which dropped enormously in the last fifty years (Schmeets, 2016).

As a consequence, churches in the Netherlands have to close their doors. The loss of church members, income and the ageing of volunteers are major problems for many churches. These large and historical buildings are becoming too expensive to maintain or unessential for a local community when only a handful of people attend service. Since 2008, the 'Year of Religious Heritage', numbers are circulating, showing that every week two churches and one monastery have to close their doors, which comes down to 100 churches a year. Simon Kadijk, director of church insurance company Donatus, questions these numbers and states that around 50 churches are closing their doors a year (Hulsman, 2014). A significant number, because what will happen to all these historical buildings?

When a church has to close its doors, that doesn't mean the building can't be used anymore, as repurposing could offer the ultimate solution. In 1990, the reusing of a monument was considered to be a demanding task, because "whenever disuse threatens a building, it is remarkable to even find a new function for it, so one cannot start to make demands regarding the integral preservation and restoration of the interior and decoration" (Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg, 1990, p. 34). This attitude has changed tremendously as reusing has become a common solution to the problem of empty churches. For the simple reason that churches have a high social and communal importance and amenity value, many municipalities, together with church congregations, volunteers and other organizations, are

looking for alternatives for their beloved churches. Since they are no longer used for religious functions, they are exploited for public functions such as exhibition or conference rooms, concert halls or restaurants. Micky Bosschert, founder of Reliplan – an organization specialized in the repurposing of religious heritage – mentioned in an interview in *Trouw* (2016) that the demand of empty churches is overpowering its supply and that in 25 years, they have given over 900 churches a new public function such as dental practices, yoga centers or museums. However, as many churches are over a hundred years old, they were not built with the facilities required for today's society, because they lack restrooms, kitchens or spaces suited for non-religious activities. Most renovations that are then done on these buildings are interior renovations or modest expansions on the outside. This attitude could be explained, on the one hand, because human beings are by their very nature conservative and churches are buildings which have played an important role in society for a long time. They are present in practically every village or city district with its tower rising as a beacon above the rooftops (Post, 2010). They are vital landmarks in the Dutch landscape, like the medieval churches on *terpen* (mounds) in Friesland and Groningen. Director of Marketing Groningen, Hans Pooll once said in an interview in *Trouw* (2016) that;

The churches stand proud on a mound, in an open polder landscape which has remained fairly untouched. The churches each tell a story about the people and the region. They form the décor and are stages for festivals and other cultural events. They make the area appealing to cycle, walk or sail through. I cannot imagine the Groninger landscape without these churches.

These buildings have been designed and built with above-average attention, vigor and care as a sacred house of worship and meeting place for a community (Veldpaus, 2010). They were built in the center of a village as places for people to come together, pray, celebrate life or commemorate death. A church is the heart of the community. Ever since it was built, its sacred and spiritual atmosphere and aura is derived from its religious purpose and the emotional and individual memories attached to it. No matter what function it will get, a church will always preserve this sacred and spiritual character and it will always refer to its religious past, even when it lost its religious function. As Kroesen (2010) calls this the 'sacred sediment'. That is why it may almost feel as blasphemy to change their appearance. On the other hand, functional and technological demands are changing rapidly, which means that more often, architects

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have to assign temporary functions to existing buildings. This also means that more frequently, the focus has to be on the interior of a building instead of the exterior and that architects have to build flexible designs which can be altered in the future, resulting in 'pop-up' constructions within churches.

5.1. Broerekerk, Bolsward

The Broerekerk²⁰ is a pseudo-basilica in Gothic style and the oldest monument in Bolsward, Friesland. It was built in the 13th century – around 1281 – as a monastic church for the Franciscans until it was closed, confiscated and handed over to the Protestants in 1572. By 1870, the church lost its religious function and was used as an exposition room for farming equipment and a storage room for the village's fire engines. There were even plans to break down to church, but this caused a nationwide controversy due to the church's importance for the community. It was restored between 1903 and 1907 by Eduard Cuypers, family of the famous Pierre Cuypers, designer of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Even though the church was once again for religious purposes, a fire in 1980 destroyed the wooden arched roof and its interior, leaving the church as a ruin with an open church hall (*image 17*). The community tried to consolidate and preserve the ruin, but the weather did not work in the church's favor. It needed a radical renovation in order to prevent it from further decay. Jelle de Jong, from De Jong Architecten, took on this challenge and in 2006, he created a distinct glass covered ceiling in a shape similar to the original barrel vaulted ceiling (*image 18*). His task was to give the church back its communal function, while the unique character of the monument stayed intact. The renovated church was nominated in 2008 for 'Building of the Year', but lost to the Station Amsterdam Bijlmer ArenA. Now, even though the church has a tumultuous history with fires and plans to tear it down, it still stands proudly as the oldest monument in the village of Bolsward as a true icon for the city. De Jong's distinct design has made the church visible again and it could be used by the inhabitants of Bolsward as a venue for weddings, special events and especially photoshoots, because of its characteristic and romantic interior. Unfortunately, due to a manufacturing defect, the roof needs to be renovated again as a couple of glass panels have broken down. Hans Broekhoven, chairman of the *Stichting tot Behoud van Monumenten in de Gemeente Súdwest-Fryslân*, stresses the importance of this restoration during an interview in the local newspaper Groot Sneek (2017); "the Broerekerk has a strong regional and communal function in Bolsward and the surrounding area. Without financial donations for the restoration of the barreled ceiling, we can no longer accommodate cultural events in the future".

²⁰ Monument number: 9801.



Image 17: the interior of the Broerekerk after the fire, around 1981.

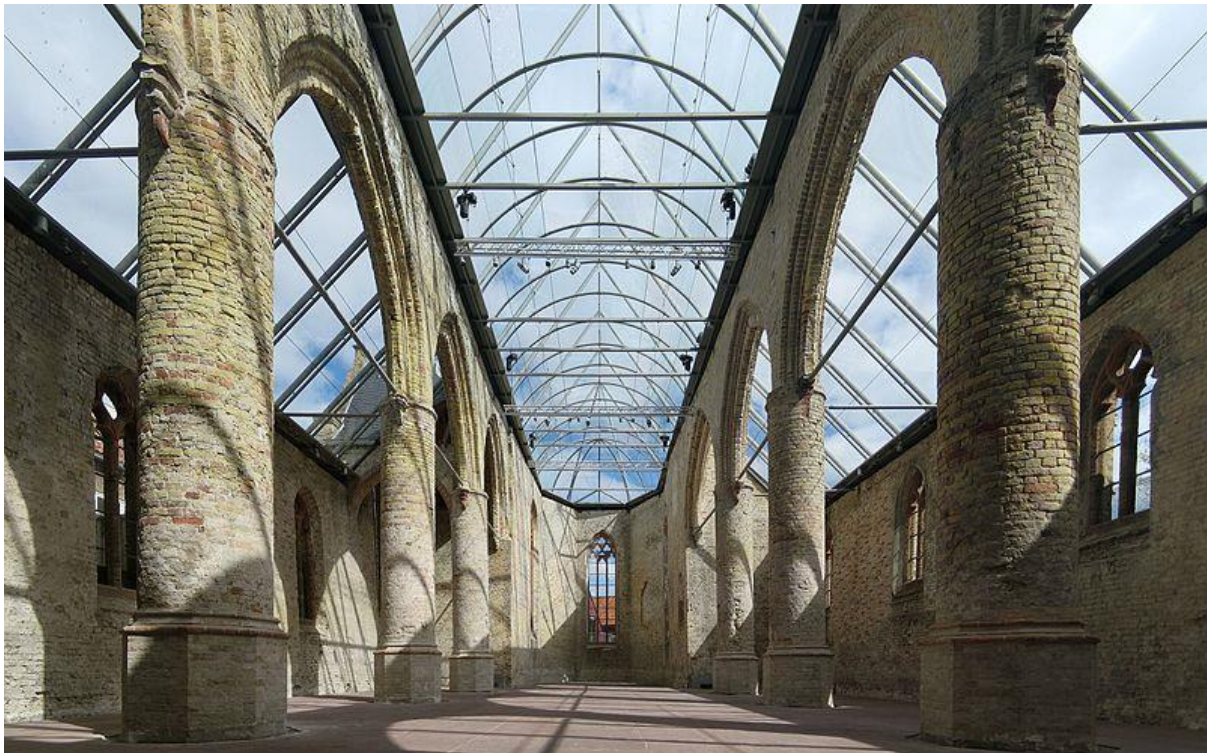


Image 18: the interior of the church after the renovation by Jelle de Jong with its iconic glass roof.

5.2. Keyserkerk, Middenbeemster

In the middle of the UNESCO World Heritage polder 'De Beemster', Noord-Holland, stands the Hervormde Kerk (or Keyserkerk)²¹ as one of the oldest buildings in Beemster. It is built in Renaissance style, similar to how the Beemster Polder is laid out in accordance with classical and Renaissance planning. The layout of the church is one of the earliest examples of protestant church building in Holland, characterized by its elongated and rectangular shape (*image 19*). The church was built in three stages between 1618 and 1626 by the famous 17th century architect Hendrik de Keyser. During the 19th century, a couple of restorations, like the displacing of the pulpit and the removal of the stained glass windows, took place within the church and between 1954 and 1959, the interior was restored back to its 17th century state.

As with so many other churches, the Hervormde Kerk also lacked modern facilities like a restroom, kitchen and enough space to accommodate the whole community. So, in 2012, the Keyserkerk was extended with the 'Keyserin', a multifunctional annex with three floors which provides the church with supporting facilities like a foyer, kitchen, toilets and an office- and youth center, designed by Hubert Jan Henket, from Bierman Henket Architecten (*image 20*). This new addition gave the church back to the community as a place where the inhabitants of Middenbeemster could come together. Besides still providing religious services, the church is also used for art exhibitions, concerts and meetings. Henket created a modest design so it wouldn't take all the attention away from the historical monument. The exterior of the Keyserin is sober, modest and plays a subordinate role – it is 'sunken' into the mound – with respect to the monumental Keyserkerk. It even looks like the new annex is withdrawing itself in the shadows of the church. The architectural style refers to the local Beemster architecture with strict lines and the annex follows the silhouette of the old church, but still carries with it its own contemporary materialization and detailing, because the Cultural Heritage Agency requested a contemporary design distinct from the historical structure. The interior of the annex also refers to the modest interior of the church with the same use of colors, an open 'church hall' and a balcony in the front looking out onto this open space. In this way, contemporary architecture could be used, with respect to the historical character of the original structure, to connect the past with the present again.

²¹ Monument number: 8818.

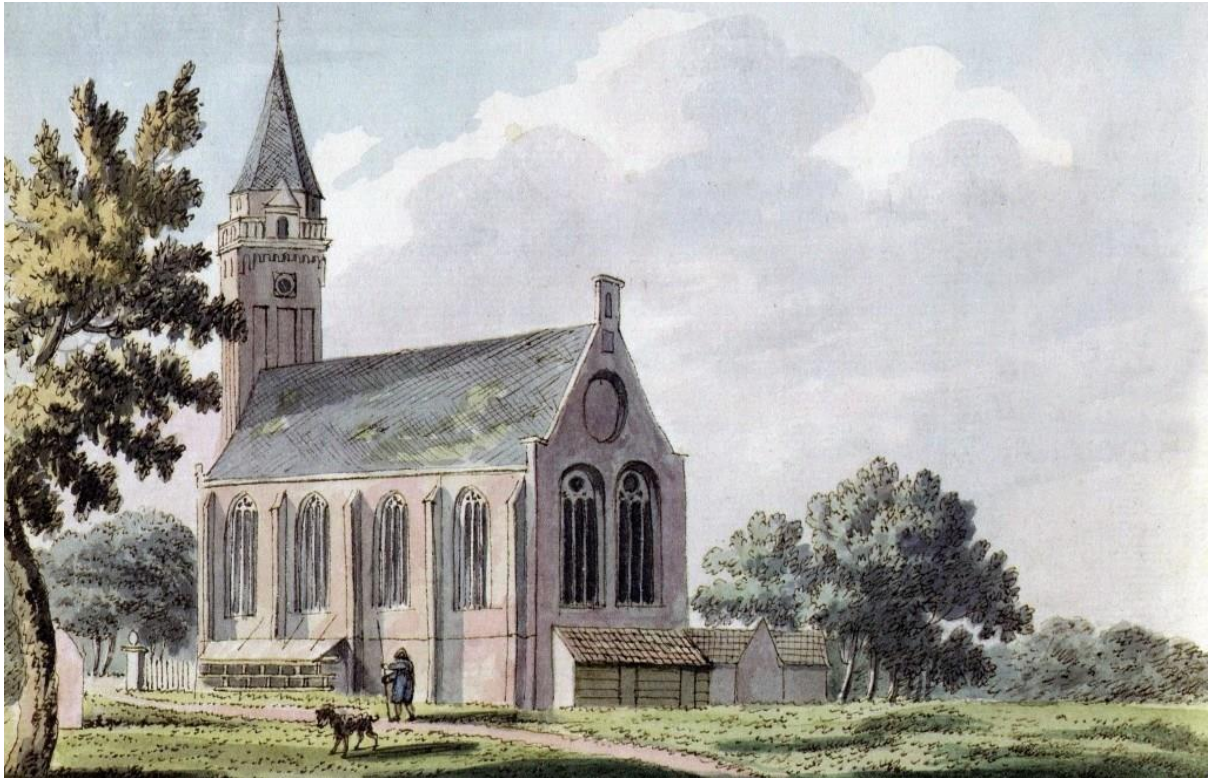


Image 19: a water-colored drawing of the Keyserkerk by H. Tavenier in 1794.



Image 20: the new extension of the Keyserkerk, called the 'Keyserin' and designed by Hubert Jan Henket in 2012.

5.3. Protestantse Kerk, Groesbeek

The Hervormde Kerk²² in Groesbeek was built in the 15th century as a gothic parish church, devoted to saint Cosmas and Damianus. The tower probably dates back to the 14th century. In 1798, at the time of the Batavian Republic, the military occupied church was hit by a storm, causing the roof to collapse and the tower and church to be separated (*image 21*). The church was restored back to its original state in 1953 by adding a new nave in pseudo-gothic shape (Driessen, 2012).

By 2015, the church board decided that they needed to change their position in society in order to still be of importance for the people in the community. They aspired to be the social and communal center of the village, instead of only providing religious services. This could only be made possible by extending the church, creating more space for the community to host cultural and social events. Architects from Groosman and Finbarr McComb Architect were responsible for this project and they designed a transparent glass pavilion that also functions as an entrance (*image 22*). In this way, the normally closed building opens up to the outside, connecting the community and the surrounding landscape with the church. The pavilion welcomes people to come in and once inside, a beautiful view is offered on the surrounding landscape. They deliberately wanted to create a strong contrast between the historical building and the contemporary extension, but on the inside, it seamlessly connects with the old church. Aside from the strong architectural contrast, the extension was kept modest in size so it wouldn't detract all the attention away from the old church and the large elegant windows from the old church were taken as inspiration for the glass extension. In this way, as with the before mentioned cases, contemporary architecture is used while still honoring the historical church so it could maintain its position in society.

*“The new extension, which has its own character, symbolizes the new step
the church is taking in its history” – Finbarr McComb*

²² Monument number: 18171.



Image 21: the Hervormde Kerk without its nave, before it was restored between 1952 and 1954.



Image 22: the new glass extension designed by Groosman and Finbarr McComb Architect in 2015.

5.4. St. Annakerk, Breda

The St. Anna's church²³ in Breda is a neo-gothic cruciform basilica built in 1905 by Joseph Cuypers (*image 23*). It is one of the best examples of a neo-gothic 'overgangskerk', a building style using both Romanesque and neo-gothic features, also known as the Romanesque revival.

In 1997, plans were made to tear down the church, but Oomen architects prevented this to happen. They transformed the church, now called *Annastede*, in 2002 into an office building (*image 24*). A 2500m² glass and transparent construction was made within the nave of the church. One of the criteria for this renovation was to work with respect for the original building, leaving the interior and exterior fully intact. That is why the contemporary construction is reversible and separate from the original structure of the church so it could be removed whenever needed. The architects chose glass as the main material so the structure and details of the interior, such as the stained-glass windows, are clearly visible. Developer De Bonth van Hulten stated; "the repurposing of the church into an office space is designed in such a way that the daylight, the decorations and the stained-glass windows are fully experienced. The historical monuments is, as far as possible, left untouched to form a vessel for the new office. In this way, a clear contrast was made with the contemporary office space" (Heijnen, 2003). Fifteen years after the renovation and due to inconvenient aspects like temperature fluctuations, acoustics and its design, the church needs to be renovated again. The original structure includes large open spaces, which doesn't suit the current demand anymore, because people are looking for small and temporary spaces they can rent for pop-up offices or small local businesses. This new renovation is also done with respect for the original building and alteration from 2002. Organization BOEi, specialized in the repurposing and renovating of cultural heritage, will be in charge of this new renovation as John van Steenderen, manager in maintenance and management, argued; "the original construction from 2002 is kept intact. We are going to add new spaces and place extra walls which fit in with respect for the historical building. We are not going to lay new bricks or break things down". As historical structures are not that flexible when it comes to changing its interior, contemporary architecture lends itself perfectly for temporary reusing's and adjustments to the demands of the time.

²³ Monument number: 10191.

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Image 24: Interior of the St. Annakerk in 1973.

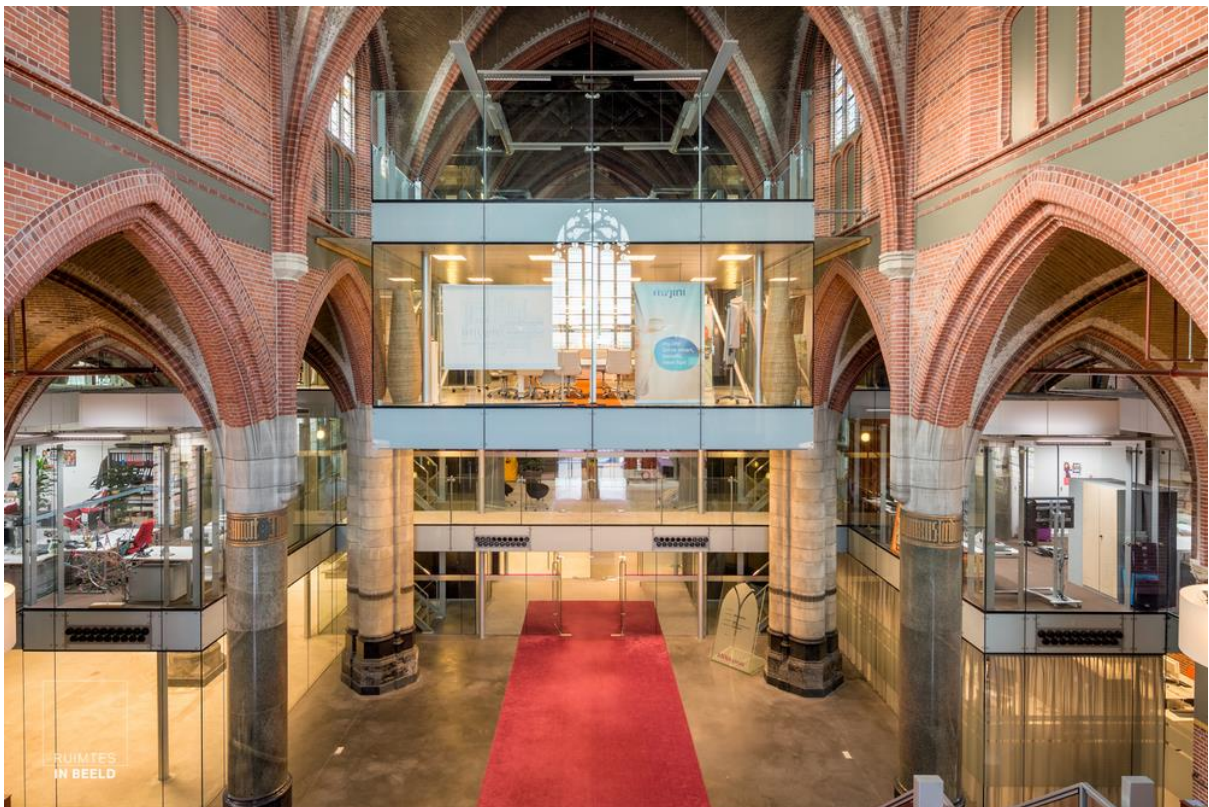


Image 23: the interior of the Annastede after the renovation in 2002 by Oomen architects.

5.5. Hervormde Kerk, Klein Wetsinge

The Hervormde Kerk²⁴ in Klein Wetsinge, Groningen, was built in 1840 by P.M. Kruizinga for the Reformed municipalities of Sauwerd and Wetsinge (*image 25*). It is built in a neoclassical style in the place of the former dilapidated and demolished medieval churches of the two municipalities. The church was assigned a national monument, because of its architectural- and cultural historical interest, being a perfect example of a simple single-nave church, shared by two ecclesial communities and because of the intactness of the interior and exterior.

Between 2011 and 2014, the church was renovated and repurposed by the Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken (SOGK) under the instructions of Jelle de Jong Architecten. During the development of the design, two things were paramount; the conservation of the national monument and the interaction between the church and the village with its surrounding Reitdiepgebied and agriculture. Keeping this in mind, Jelle de Jong chose to create an installation in the front of the nave which serves both as a meeting room for the community and a catering facility, using biological products from the local farmers (*image 26*). For people to enjoy the beautiful surroundings of the Reitdiepgebied, de Jong created a glass viewpoint at the back of the church roof, giving it the name 'Gateway to the Reitdiepgebied'. The glass roof attracted a lot of criticism, because it was said to be a violation of the roof and its typical closeness. The church is now registered on the list of 'Bijzondere Locaties Groningen' – an organization looking after five special monumental buildings in Groningen, and it was nominated for 'Building of the Year' in 2016. Although they did not win this price, they did end up as the winner of the category 'Livability and Social Cohesion', exactly what the SOGK had in mind while repurposing the church. The church won, because even though there was a declining of church attendance and membership, the church served a new connecting factor between residents of the village and region, church-goers and non-church goers and young and old, like the church did a hundred years ago. Being of importance for the community, it continues to contribute to the local and regional identity as a beacon for the future.²⁵

²⁴ Monument number: 510816.

²⁵ Description of the church for the submission of 'Building of the Year' 2016.

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Image 25: the interior of the Hervormde Kerk before its renovation.



Image 26: the interior of the church with the new contemporary meeting room and catering facility after the renovation by Jelle de Jong between 2011 and 2014.

5.6. Broerenkerk, Zwolle

The Broerenkerk²⁶ in Zwolle, together with the Broerenklooster, was built in 1465 by the Dominicans. The monastery was closed in 1580 and the church was handed over and used by the Protestants in 1640. The church lost its religious function and was restored in 1983 until 1988. During this renovation, some spectacular ceiling paintings were discovered (*image 27*).

Up till 2010, the church was used cultural events such as art exhibitions and concerts. Bookstore Waanders was located in the city center of Zwolle for many years, but were hit hard by the economic crises. Owner Wim Waanders wanted to give his visitors a new experience and create a new meeting place for people, something which he found in the Broerenkerk and which already was the function of the church in 1465. But, he had to wait because a bookstore in a church was still a bridge too far for the city council and the Zwollenaren argued that the church belonged to the community, because they used of for all kinds of events. In 2005, when former bookshop Selexyz settled in the Dominicanenkerk in Maastricht, Waanders could finally start building his dream (Lamers, 2013). Led by architects Jos Burger and Wouter Keijzer from Bureau BK, the church was converted in 2013 into bookstore *Waanders in de Broeren*. Waanders requested an extra 600 m² floor area, which had to be placed in de side wings of the church, between the original pillars, to enhance the longitudinal axis of the nave and make the 19th century Scheuer-organ a real eye-catcher. Burger and Keijzer created a three-layered installation, separate from the original structure, leaving the church and its original structure unaffected when the installation has to be removed (*image 28*). The modest and sober colors and materials together with the wooden furniture are consistent with the original colors of the church. All the historical elements such as the organ and the medieval frescoes, which can be seen from the upper level of the installation, are kept and restored. The adding of new stained-glass windows show respect for the church, but add a contemporary mark to it. The success of their design, in their own words, lies in the fact that they didn't compete with the monument itself.

With its new function the city of Zwolle maintains this unique cultural heritage site. – Bureau BK

²⁶ Monument number: 41549.

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Image 27: Interior of the Broerenkerk in 1992 with the restored frescoes.



Image 28: the new interior of the church with bookstore 'Waanders in de Broeren' after the renovation in 2013.

6. MODERNIZING HISTORY

This study has tried to answer the question to what extent contemporary architecture is used for renovating museums, government buildings and churches in the Netherlands in the 21st century and whether these renovations can symbolize the role of a monument in society.

A critical study of heritage and monuments has determined heritage as a social construct through which people embed the past in the present. Monuments, being part of heritage, intended to evoke a living memory about something which has happened in the past, but as a result of developments like the rise of nationalism in the 18th century, they started to denote aesthetical and political values and were used as political tools to signify power, beauty or the technological advancements of a country. With the rise of books and photography, monuments were further downgraded to being physical attestations of what one read about in books and on the internet. Some scholars even suggested that they have lost their mnemonic power completely and are now reduced to mere tourist attractions. The Dutch legal definition of a monument is in contrast with the latter conception, but similar to the before mentioned definitions of heritage, because in the *Erfgoedwet* from 2016, a monument is a construct, created by people over time, which reflects and expresses society's beliefs and values.

The analysis of twelve renovated national monuments in the Netherlands has shown that the extent to which contemporary architecture is used on buildings indeed indicates which role the monument has for society as it seemed that the more extensively contemporary architecture is used on monuments, the less strongly their mnemonic function for society is. This is especially the case for museums, which are used as playgrounds for experimenting with contemporary architecture. The innovative and unconventional designs of the three case studies (an egg, immense grey structure and a bath tub) have only enhanced the touristic value of the monument, downgrading them, like Choay (2001) argued, to being touristic attractions.

Government buildings on the other hand were subject to less extravagant designs. These buildings have to express professionalism as they are the political centers of a town or city and have to emanate this political authority. The design chosen are modest and done with more respect to the historicity of its urban surroundings and most people were afraid here that contemporary architecture might damage the historical character. It can be concluded here

that, as political centers, they still have a strong connection with society and contemporary architecture is therefore used to a lesser extent.

The case studies of the churches have shown that these buildings are at the end of the renovation-spectrum and are the least subject to contemporary renovations. As the problem of church vacancy is rising, more and more churches are renovated and reused. The focal point for these renovations was the community, as churches have a high social and communal value. Every renovation was done to give the village its community center back, as churches have always fulfilled this communal role. What was apparent here, was the fact that many churches are renovated on the inside, while fewer churches are renovated on the outside, with modest design not taking away the attention from the old church, indicating that people are not ready to change the characteristic appearance of these important landmarks.

6.1. Discussion

As a lot of buildings were in the process of being forgotten or disused, these findings suggest that the use of contemporary architecture is rather ambiguous, as it can be used to both reconnect the past with the present by giving monuments back their communal function (with churches as the best example), but also to further degrade them to tourist attractions because of their iconic appearance, like museums. The results have shown that the more modest the design, the more it allows for a contemporary continuation of the past, by restoring and maintaining the historical elements and structures of a building in combination with contemporary elements. As museums are places to showcase art, they are the perfect tools and experimental playgrounds for architects to create their own piece of art. It sometimes seems that the unconventional designs are almost chosen for the sake of impressing the world, rather than focusing on the historical structure and intention of a building and how that can be the focal point. That is way visitor reviews showed that the new contemporary renovations or expansions became the real attraction, instead of the museum itself, almost forgetting the historicity of the building.

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“The new addition is absolutely beautiful and so unique, that this alone is the reason to visit the museum”²⁷.

Churches on the other hand, were renovated the least, which could be a result of various reasons, such as the current generation who maintain a church. Most churches are still managed and preserved by local volunteers, whom are mostly 60+ years old. These conservative generations were grown up with religion and their beloved local church has played an important role in their lives. They are not keen to transform these buildings into futuristic looking tourist attractions. Even though people beforehand oppose the use of contemporary architecture on their community churches, in the end, they all got used to it and even start to appreciate the contemporary designs. I suspect that in the future, when the older generations are no longer there to manage their churches and younger generations are taking over, more and more churches will become subject to these renovations as they feel less connected to them than previous generations have. Religious heritage will always remain a sensitive subject, especially when religion still has its impact on society, but when we can let go of the idea that we can only preserve our heritage in its ‘original’ state and start to think about how we can re-use these buildings by giving them a new function, we can only go forward and let these monuments still play a role in our lives. Like Van Swigchem (1966, p. 67) already mentioned in the 1960’s: “the issue isn’t whether these historical buildings will exactly stay the way they are, but if they, with their spatial design and detail, could still play a role in the lives of each generation to come”. So, instead of letting these buildings become ruins of a forgotten time or physical replicas of pictures in history books, let them play a role for society again, in whatever shape or size they are turned into. As Museum de Fundatie was renovated under the motto ‘preservation through development’, let other monuments in the future also be preserved by modernizing their history.

In the end, several questions remain unanswered at present. As contemporary renovations might indeed reduce their intentional and historic mnemonic function, they do present these buildings as new and almost modern monuments. They serve as new icons for a community,

²⁷ Visitor review about the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven from TripAdvisor (January 28, 2018). https://www.tripadvisor.nl/Attraction_Review-g188582-d319468-Reviews-Van_Abbemuseum-Eindhoven_North_Brabant_Province.html (accessed January 29, 2018).

city or even for the whole country. Further research might explore this new notion of 'modern monuments' and examine the social, cultural and political influence on society.

Regarding the churches, as the number of vacant churches will only rise, further research should be undertaken to investigate whether the extent to which contemporary renovations are used on churches might be an indication of the role of religion in society. A lot of churches are reused for public functions, but does the fact that these buildings are preserved, instead of demolished, might mean that religion is still present in this post-secular society?

Further research could also be conducted to examine the role of contemporary renovations, especially on churches, within the Authorized Heritage Discourse by Smith (2006) and how this discourse might lead to a negative modernization of history in which monuments are being renovated for the sake of renovation and to serve political meanings instead of serving the interests of the community. Churches have always fulfilled the role of community center and seen as buildings 'owned' by the community. Contemporary architects may sometimes seem to cross this line by performing renovations which are not agreed upon by the community. Again, it are the heritage experts who influence the way important buildings like these are being preserved despite what the 'non-experts' might want or think.

But, time will tell whether in fifty years society is left without anything historical or old and hypermodern structures dominate city skylines, or whether the rapid modernization of society will only reinforce the need to preserve and restore what has been inherited from the past. In the lead-up to that time, it is important to both enjoy what was given to us from the past and embrace new developments as the past won't stop after a renovation, but the future will only begin.

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