'Visual design quality in inner-city urban space from the perspective of lay-people'

Second Version

An explorative case study in Groningen

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Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen

'Visual design quality in inner-city urban space from the perspective of lay-people'

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PREFACE

While writing this preface, it was exactly a year ago when the first steps towards this very thesis were made. In November 2011 the proposal was written, and somehow far away from the final result here, the ingredients already were there. From the very beginning I was driven by visual aspects in the field of planning. This already started in the Bachelor thesis a year ago, were I investigated the preferences of nature in the Netherlands. Driven by the interesting findings I collected there, I decided to let the visual aspects be something central in the Masterthesis as well. Also, the experience of lay-people was interesting me. The way in which planners look at phenomena became clear from college and literature, for that reason the case study in the field of the non-professionals was the ultimate chance to collect other viewpoints, and compare your theoretical knowledge with.

The process of writing this thesis did not exactly match the expectations I had from the very beginning, in particular the time needed for setting up the research, doing the case study and writing the several chapters. Actually, it was for the very first time to write a piece of work of this size, with an academic level. Without the support and encouragements of supervisor Dr. M. Abdelwahab, I would have seriously doubt the possibility to write this thesis in English.

When thinking back to the last nine months, it now almost seems unbelievable that such a long time was necessary to produce something. In particular the theoretical framework was a chapter in which trial and error occurred several times.

Without the help of a few persons, this thesis would never have been there. First, I would like to express my sincere admiration to Dr. M. Abdelwahab, for being helpful in setting up the research, providing material for the theoretical framework and discussing the quality of the work for many, many times. I certainly was not the easiest person to work with, so I would compliment here for the endless patience showed, in particular in the period when very little time could be spent on the thesis.

To conclude this preface, I would like to thank Thom and Stephan for helping me to improve the English writing towards a decent level. Also I would like to thank Ms. Navis for her time spent in giving feedback on the quality of the interviews, and be the first person to interview, in the role of a "devil's advocate". Without her help I would not have been able to enthusiastically perform the interviews.

SUMMARY

This thesis investigates the visual design in inner-cities, from the perspective of lay-people. The incentive for the research on this topic was given in by phenomena experienced during an excursion for the Master Planning, in Winschoten. The total incoherence between old and new in the city centre here, raised interest to do a research on visual design quality. How could this city be managed in such a way, that a complete incoherent mix of different styles, from different age exists? And what does it mean to lay-people? This personal interest lead to this research.

In this thesis a case study is conducted in the city of Groningen. The main question of the research is: *How is visual design quality in inner-cities experienced by lay-people?* The main objective of the research is to get insight in laypeople's view on design quality in inner-city space. The research finds it relevance in the aim to go beyond the borders of the planner's viewpoint by investigating the laypeople's viewpoints, to learn lessons for future interventions made by planners.

The theoretical background in chapter two, explores scientific theory and earlier researches with regard to the topic. Three elements are indicated to explore: a) Urban space; b) Heritage; c) Experience of laypeople. The interaction between these three elements provide the framework on which the findings of the case study will be reflected. The key concepts of visual design, heritage and experience are discussed. One of the most important lesson is that heritage is for most people a very vague concept. The experience of heritage in the visual design in an inner-city, is varying among people. Mostly the ideas of history are drawing on stories given in by nostalgia, romanticism. When it comes to the design and aesthetics in the inner-city, it can be concluded that harmony between old and new design is of great significance in developing an inner-city. Theory shows that divided opinions upon harmony exist. The important role of protectionism, by so-called "Welstandscommissies" is explained. While some people wish to see space for new, daring developments from new architects, there are on the very other side others who wish to see historical values only.

Chapter three discusses the methodology in the research. The research starts with an exploring approach. The character of the main question and objective, requires a qualitative research method. The data is preferably collected with the help of a case study approach. The explorative character of the research, allows investigation in one case, which is Groningen here. Collecting data can be executed in various ways, in this case study the choice was made to use open interviews; in depth interviews. The selection of people takes place randomly, making no differences in the kind of people asked, to remain non-biased. The findings of the interviews cannot be quantified, because of the explorative character and the randomly chosen people. The findings of the interviews are supported with a visual map. This map contains key sites of places that people chose in their interviews, places of beauty or places of ugliness; places that are for some reason controversial to them personally. These places are supported with pictures, integrated in the findings chapter.

Chapter four introduces the case study, by providing a contextual background on Groningen. The development of Dutch cities is described. With regard to the morphological composition, Dutch cities traditionally show a square, with a church nearby. Roads were constructed straight and the appearance of the city was showing status and defensive qualities. After the demolition of

city walls the quality of the oldest city parts was decreasing. This also was the occasion in Groningen. World war two placed another marker on the inner-city of Groningen, bombings destroyed a large number of historical buildings. The reconstruction with modernist buildings after world war two, made a significant change in the city's appearance. After the 1960's the visual appearance decreased again, thanks through belief in new shopping centres emerging at the borders of the city. A great contribution the quality of the inner-city was made in de mid 1970's, when cars were abandoned from the centre in favour of the pedestrians. Further interest in the spatial qualities of the inner city was found in the 1980's, when the revitalization of cities was approached in a comprehensive way. Until that time most people believed the function of shopping centre and place of social phenomena would be moved to new places at city borders.

The findings of the interviews are discussed in the following chapter. Beauty in the context of the inner city seems to be interpreted in various ways by the respondents, although every person provided a clear answer what beauty meant. The same accounts for ugliness. In general, a good preserved historical city heart, was a sign of beauty to the interviewees. Other visual elements did not deal directly with elements of beauty, like form, shape and colour, but were contributed to elements like green, clean streets, light etcetera. The visual attractiveness in general, seems to be more a case of atmosphere of the comprehensive whole, rather than the design of the space and buildings. Ugliness was found in new development which put too much contrast to the built area these developments are placed in. Generally, the Dutch layperson can be described as quite conservative. The attitude towards daring, extraordinary designs never could count on appreciation. However, when located at the city borders, or at least not in the inner city, some extraordinary buildings received very high appreciation. Quite a paradox in relation to the appreciation of the preserved historical city that was shown from the group, is the fact that the role of cityscape protection by the "Welstandscommissie" was discussed among the lay-people as being not necessary. The respondents expressed several times that good care of heritage can be achieved by the self organizing powers of the owners themselves, they seem to believe in something like good-ownership and on the other hand did not seem to like rules coming from government, telling the owners what to do and do not.

The thesis ends with conclusions, reflections and recommendations for future research. The lessons learnt from the case study, are that the practice of the experience of visual design is quite complex. The most important findings here, are that good design is very context driven: beauty only gets meaning from the lay people, in a perspective where they are constantly considering the elements of a new design in the context of the area this design will be in. In general, the image that emerges from the empirical data, shows respect for the historical traces of the past. Whereas in the theory monuments and heritage are given an important role in considering the inner city's appearance, the respondents hardly call any monuments or heritage as attractive buildings. When it comes to new interventions in historical area's lay-people seem to be more aware of their capabilities to use the historical appearance of the city as an argument to show their approving or disapproving attitudes towards new developments. People do not wish to see remarkable, extraordinary eye-catchers within the area of the historical city. Contrasts generally were not preferred by the lay-people, but some very strong contrasts between buildings were actually appreciated. A theoretical explanation for this was not found so far.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES, IMAGES AND TABLES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

The experience of historical consciousness one could experience in different inner cities, seems to be very different between several cities. The phenomena of total incoherence - the way I experienced it - in the city of Winschoten, as described in the preface, raised my interest to do a research on the visual quality in inner cities, where the image mostly is a mix of modern and traditional physical elements.

When looking at other Dutch cities, always a mix of different elements originating from different times is visible. Sometimes cities seem to be managed by shaping a set of buildings, street furniture and pavement which all look like they are originating from one period in history, while others look like a complete mix-up of buildings, material, furniture, pavements and different styles of architecture. How do lay-people experience this visual pack of different elements, and how do they attach their identity, feelings and emotions to it? This personal question of interest led to choosing this topic of research, and therefore the choice was made to conduct the research in the city of Groningen, which for the researcher is a familiar city, but at the same time unknown for its reputation on visual attractiveness among lay-people, and accordingly inviting to conduct a research. And what are the preferences of people? Do they wish to see modernistic buildings, or are they very nostalgic or even old-fashioned and not into modern, daring designs?

1.2 Research aim

The main objective of doing this research, is to get insight in laypeople's view on design quality in space in inner cities, with special interest in interventions in historical areas, in the case of Dutch cities.

1.3 Research questions

The main question of this research is:

How is visual design quality in inner-cities experienced by lay-people?

To provide an answer for this question in the conclusion, the following sub questions should help answering the main question:

- *How do lay people reflect on design quality in urban space?*
- *How do lay people reflect on interventions in historical urban space areas?*
- *Are planning policies within heritage area's following demands of lay people?*
- *What is the influence of developments over time in creating lay peoples view upon design quality in historical areas in public space?*

1.4 Research significance

1.4.1 General

A first question that rises is: why is this research necessary? The exploration of the lay-peoples view might bring interesting contributions to the mind of professionals. The aim here, is to go beyond the borders of the planners view, and investigate the view of laypeople, in order to provide planners with information on how laypeople experience places these planners are shaping, how they give meaning; and to get insight in the experience of previous developments, to learn lessons for future interventions made by planners in the Netherlands.

With the help of lay peoples view, and an exploration on their reflections on aesthetic value in public space; new, possibly surprisingly connections may be found; shining another light on aspects of inner city quality, than planners might be expecting.

Inner city quality isn't a topic of very recent interest. From 1970's on, attention was paid to it, in the case of The Netherlands. Though, still inner cities are very vulnerable, as they are seen as a marketplace, and are prey to market rules; meaning you will find shopping streets in various cities, providing a quite anonymous sense of place. Won't all cities become the same, if large stores take over small enterprises? Apart from the functions of the inner city, I prefer to look at the physical quality of the city, in order to look at the reputation a city has in the view of outsiders. In the end, such a reputation is input for further development for city-marketing, entrepreneurs etc.

1.4.2. Contribution of this research in planning
Also, for urban planners it is of importance to know how their work will be received by the lay people; representing most of the users of cities. Do the ideas of planners who create "new historical" cities work out well for their future users? And in solving incoherence in cities which seem to be suffering from incoherence, what would be the right answer for urban planners to tackle the problem, in terms of shaping the inner city, in order to get a place that the users find attractive?

These last questions may not be the main forces in this thesis, but answering the research question may lead to giving a direction of what good urban planning might be, and inspire planners and other stakeholders to make ideas for the future of their inner cities. It is at this point, where this thesis should find its relevance.

It is not specifically aimed in this thesis, to compare the both viewpoints of planners and lay-people, but only to indicate the mismatches the lay-people experience and collect these viewpoints, without putting emphasis on the planners practice arguments for placing certain buildings or designs.

This topic is not hard to link with recent news topics. Recently there was a Dutch TV program "De slag om Nederland" , in which viewers were asked to provide input for a list of their ugliest

Picture 1.1. Shopping centre "Stokhorst", Enschede, elected as
'ugliest place in the Netherlands 2011'. (Photo: V. Morskamp, 2012)

places in the Netherlands. It might not be surprising the winning place of this contest was located in a city: a shopping centre in the city of Enschede. The existence of such places nowadays, could be considered in high contrast with the reputation this country has in spatial organization. It raises the question: is there a gap between the possibilities of spatial organization and preferences of stakeholders? How otherwise would such places survive, in a country with a reputation of "planning on every single centimetre surface of land".

1.5 Philosophical background

When doing a research, it is important to realize the position you take in as a researcher. The personal background on how one believes knowledge is to be collected, interpreted and to add conclusions to this knowledge is of influence on how the research will be designed. That is why this paragraph is important: to reflect on the position of researcher, and inform the reader about the philosophical background of the research.

The position the researcher takes in here, comes closest to the "social constructivism" epistemology. In this theory of knowledge, the idea is that science and thus knowledge, is constructed through a shared set of meanings; mental constructs. Accordingly, constructivists believe there is not a single valid method for social research, but multiple- qualitative- methods are available (Meagher, 2009). In this thesis, this set of meanings, consisting out of a set of various individual meanings is very important. The idea here, as explained, is to make sense of this set of various viewpoints and meanings, to see what a "group" agrees to; to what are at the one side common thoughts, and on the other side also individual thoughts, expressions or emotions.

From this viewpoint, this research uses literature to get an overview of earlier investigations, viewpoints and thus provide material to compare the own findings with, rather than checking a theory or model. The method of doing interviews for this reason is to be expected for a non-positivist researcher who wants to collect ideas, meanings, emotions .

1.6 Research diagram

•	**Title:**	'Visual design quality in inner-city urban space from the perspective of lay-people'			
•	**Incentive for research; Phenomena**	Impressions of incoherence in a Dutch city's centre; in which a square, church and physical context (furniture, pavement) totally seemed to be mismanaged, in particular with regard to the area's historical character. Led to the question: How could this intervention in such a historical area happen, and how do laypeople (users of the place) experience these phenomena?			
•	**Research objective**	To gather insight in laypeople's view on design quality in inner-city space, with special interest in interventions in historical areas, in the case of Dutch cities. The city of Groningen is chosen as place of case study.			
•	**Relevance of research**	To go beyond the borders of the planners view, and investigate the view of laypeople, in order to make sense how laypeople experience places these planners are shaping, how they give meaning;			
•	**Main question:**	How is design quality in public space in historical area's experienced by lay people?			
•	**Sub questions:**	How do lay people reflect on design quality in urban space?	How do lay people reflect on interventions in historical urban space areas?	Are planning policies within heritage area's following demands of lay people?	What is the influence of developments over time in creating lay peoples view upon design quality in historical areas in public space?
•	**Aims**	To explore which elements are found to be important by lay people, what means beauty and ugly to them.	To explore the influence of interventions on the lay people's (changing??) experiences, to gather insight in the importance of heritage conservation	To explore the relation between "supply and demand" in cityscape developments.	To explore the role of laypeople knowing earlier appearances of public space areas, and the way it influences their reflection on the place nowadays
•	**Methods**	a) Literature review	a) Literature review	a)Literature review	- Literature review
		b)Short interviews: Qualitative, in-depth, open questions on people's experience within this topic.	b) Short interviews: Qualitative, in-depth, open questions on people's experience within this topic.	b) Short interviews: Qualitative, in-depth, open questions on people's experience within this topic.	- Short interviews; let people choose buildings which seem controversial for them, ugly, beautiful or contested any other way.
• •	**Findings Conclusion**	**Case Study : Groningen** - Why this case study - Investigate the sub questions for this city			

Table 1.1. Research diagram

1.7 Structure of thesis

In the introduction part the research topic was explained and the research question was posed. Also shown here, is how the personal interest led to doing a scientific research and through which questions the research will be conducted, and which philosophical approach is responsible for the way the research is going to be performed.

Chapter two, "Theoretical Background", the research background will be explored, meaning there will be taken a closer look on key elements on the topic of public space, visual quality, policymaking but also on the connection of lay people with these places, in which identity, emotions and feelings will be crucial issues. The theoretical framework will provide basic knowledge, specific knowledge and theories which could be compared with the research results or give meaning to these results in analysis.

Chapter three discusses, the method section: the objective will be described, and with which methods this objective should be accomplished. After that, the methods will be explained: why they should be appropriate and provide an optimal result for answering the research questions. This means criteria for the methods will be set to gather the data that is needed effectively. Also the position of the researcher will be considered again: how to deal with research ethics.

Chapter four is the case study chapter; the interview findings will be explained. After this, the results of the case study will be exposed and analyzed with using the earlier provided theoretical framework. The visual map will show controversial places.

The final chapter will show conclusions and reflections. First, in the conclusions the collection of data and results will be summarized and conclusions will be posed with the help of the provided theoretical framework. These conclusions may lead to new questions, and here is the place to make an incentive for doing new research to answer questions derived from the conclusions. The results will be linked with the findings in the theoretical framework. In the reflection part, the quality of the research will be evaluated. Did it reach the expectations? Were the results reliable enough to make conclusions? What could have been better or what went well ?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- **Introduction**
    a. Aim of theoretical background

- **Urban space in theoretical perspective**
    a. Defining urban space
    b. Design of urban space: approaches
    c. Design control in urban space

- **Urban space in the Dutch context**
    a. The morphological composition of the old city
    b. Design and revitalization of inner cities.
    c. Changes in urban space: towards public space.
    d. Revitalization of urban space in Groningen

- **The meaning of heritage within the experience of urban space**
    a. Defining heritage
    b. Embracing heritage in the development of urban space

- **People's experience of urban space**
    a. Design of urban space and identity
    b. Harmony and design
    c. The collective meaning of public space
    d. Identity and heritage
    e. Image versus identity
    f. Meaning of beauty and ugliness

- **Conclusions**

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore scientific theory with regard to the research thesis. The exploration will start within the European context, with special reference to the city of Groningen , which represents the case study in this research . The context of Groningen is discussed in chapter four, "Case Study Groningen: background".

This review is based on secondary literature that draws on theory related to the research thesis: academic books, journals and policies. In the introduction chapter of this thesis, the research question was posed:

How is visual design quality in inner-cities experienced by laypeople?

The main objective of the research, posed in the introduction, is to get insight in laypeople's view on design quality in public space in inner cities, with special interest in interventions in historical areas, in the case of Dutch cities. This objective indicates the three main topics that need to be explored in this chapter:

- Urban Space;
- Heritage;
- People's experience.

According to the research question and objective, these three subtopics could be considered as being related to each other, and therefore as being connected interdependently with each other. The interaction of these three elements together, provides a framework for this review. This framework is necessary to understand the findings in the case study chapter; why do people find certain things attractive, certain things unattractive or why is no attention paid to certain things at all? The review will start with explaining the idea of urban space. Second, the meaning of heritage within the inner city experience of people will be explored .Third, theories that explore people's experience in inner-city space will be explained. In the end, a conclusion will explain the most important findings of the theoretical framework.

2.2 Urban space in theoretical perspective

In this section urban space will be explored, to get a notion of the meaning of inner-city space. The thesis focuses on the area of the inner-city, which is part of the urban space. Simultaneously this urban space exists out of public space. The role of public space for this reason also needs to be discussed, whether it influences the built environment or the experience of visitors; it forms a central thread closely related to urban space. After this, developments in urban space will be reviewed in the European context. The role of design quality in this urban space is a central thread in this section, and will be defined and explored as well.

This section shall explore the literature on urban space, with particular interest in the development of meaning in inner-city space. The thesis focuses on the area of the inner-city; the historical heart of the city or Simultaneously this urban space exists out of public space. The role of public space for this reason also needs to be discussed, whether it influences the built environment or the experience of visitors; it forms a central thread closely related to urban

space. Subsequently, we explore the developments in urban space in the European context. This review particularly emphasizes the role of design quality.

2.2.1 Defining urban space

That 'urban' is not similar to 'city', is argued by Robson (1975, p .184). He argues that urban is the combination of physical and human aspects. Whereas the city is a geographical place, urban is the city and a certain character- images- attached to this place, like shopping streets, or slums, according to Robson (1975). *"The intangible qualities of city life"* (p.184), to a certain extent, is a definition of the urban that makes the distinction between city and urban, for many people. In other words, cities harbour urban space, but not all space in a city is urban space, according to definition posed. Also, urban space could be seen as the collection of buildings, objects and structures in a city; not only the typical urban parts, like a city centre, according to the definition used by Madanipour (1996). This broader definition is not the definition used in this thesis, where the emphasis lies on the city centre. The inner-city space is evidently defined as an urban space, as it represents the part of the city space that it is attached with typical images of city life, like shopping centres, squares, historical buildings and meeting places.

This urban space thus constitutes public space. This is the special space, where various people travel; stay and meet each other, and thus is the area, which potentially is known by many laypeople, from which opinions might be of influence in the design of such spaces. Public space could be considered as a hard to define concept. While it refers to spaces as being public, it is still open for different interpretations on what 'public' means. Public space nowadays, is nothing like public space in the Middle Ages, for instance. Nowadays the discussion about what public space should be, is not only concerned with physical space, but also with virtual public space like internet. This thesis is interested in the physical environment , and particularly the perception of people of this physical environment). Places are public when anyone can go there at anytime, with no restrictions (accessibility). In functional terms, public space could be best divided in three elements: streets, squares and parks From a sociological perspective it becomes more difficult, giving meaning to such places is for every single person differently. Peter Goheen explains how this public space is shaped, also from a sociological perspective, in his article "Public space and the geography of the modern city" (1998): *"The values attaching to public space are those with which the generality of the citizenry endows it. Citizens create meaningful public space by expressing their attitudes, asserting their claims and using it for their own purposes."*Drawing on these definitions, public space is something that best could be considered as a part of urban space ; spaces which are not exclusively claimed by individuals or groups, and in theory open to access by anyone, and become meaningful through the process of citizens using it for their own purposes.

2.2.2 Design of urban space: approaches

This section continues to question the quality of urban space and design approach to achieve this quality.

Madanipour (1996) explains how urban form can be studied with the help of a "design" approach. This approach, which has a normative character, studies the city plan, its components, and the functional and aesthetic parts. Prescriptive and descriptive approaches are within this approach. A first approach to discuss here, is the morphological approach which

considers the urban morphology. A design approach before the modern-modernist contradiction, in the period before world war two. This science studies the *"shape, form, external structure of arrangement, especially as an object of study or classification"* (Madanipour, 1996, p.53). This approach identifies ages and types of buildings and different historical components of the city. It was used by geographers, developers and architects, and offered " *opportunities for the understanding of the historical and morphological context.*" (Madanipour, p. 56) Also this approach received criticism, as it was to deterministic and ignored the economical, political and cultural context.

 With regard to the aesthetical values, the analysis of a city is explained with subjective values. In this light, the city can be seen as *"a work of art"* and therefore is an artistic creation. Accordingly, these creations of architecture are distinctive from other art, like paintings, by the fact that architecture contains a "*spatial quality*" (Madanipour, 1996, p. 43). Also, architecture becomes "*unavoidable art",* (Roth, 1993), because simply people are unable to avoid buildings in the appearance of a city. This artistic interpretation was used in many city development plans, but also has its opponents which were lacking aesthetical and emotional dimensions, according to followers of the approach of visual planning. Madanipour (1996) explains how Cullen (1971) made an influential analysis of urban space, by concentrating on personal and emotional reactions to the environment. With this analysis he uses only the visual experience of people, to understand the appearance of a city (Madanipour , 1996, p46). The theory of seeing the cityscape with the help of subjective feelings coming from its visitors differs from the approach to understand the design of urban space objectively, through its functions.

The CIAM , the International Congress for Modern Architecture, used such an approach in the 1930's. With the motto "form follows function", the aesthetical quality was depending fully on its functions. The design of a city, according to this modernist movement, was divided in four functions: dwelling, work, recreation and transportation. In the modernist view, according to Le Corbusier, in Madanipour (1996), the division between these functions would lead to better cities. This modernist design began to receive massive criticism in the 1960's. While modernist approaches were criticizing historical forms of urban space, the post-modernist reaction to modernism, embraces the historical forms of urban space again. Post- modernist approaches tried to *"extract universal principles out of the array of specific examples that old cities present"* . Modernists criticized this concept as *"breaking from the time and unacceptable in an age of motor-cars"* (Madanipour, 1996, p . 47). However, from the 1970's on a revival of interest for old cities occurred. Meanwhile, it also received criticism for not being open to the new dynamics of the contemporary city and depending too much on nostalgia.

The quality of design and aesthetics depends on the mix of approaches used in city development. All kinds of these approaches, within the field of architecture, planning and developing, can occur simultaneously. Within the field of planning the outcome depends on choosing for blueprint planning or process planning; revolution or evolution in architectural design; planned growth or organic growth, and other contrasts. However, the most important distinction in approaches, was made by the division between modernist planning and post-modernist planning. Whereas aesthetical quality was for this post-modernist approach very relevant, it was meaningless in the modernist approach, leading to buildings which nowadays are labelled as uninspired by many people.

2.2.3 Design control in urban space

Who is responsible for design in public space, is hard to answer. Movements in time made architects less responsible then in the middle ages, but made governments more responsible. In the twentieth century there was a shift in the role of planners: from blue print planning towards process management. Architects still were dealing with the design of individual objects or parts of plans, but received less artistic freedom. This shift meant a change in focus of power in design control. A tension between planners and architects always deals with the question who decides upon aesthetical values? This choice lies between freedom of expression for the architect at the one hand, and public accountability on the other hand. Design control with regard to aesthetics, has to deal with the appearance only, is what can be concluded from Punter (1990): especially the elevation of buildings is what central-governments see as their task in controlling aesthetics. He poses the following definition of what aesthetic control is*: "that aspect of the regulation of development that seeks to control the physical attributes and uses of new buildings, and the spaces between them, so as to ensure a rewarding sensuous experience for the public who use the environment thus created"* (Madanipour, 1996, p162.) Even though this design control is almost never depending on one single body, like a government or an architect, an aesthetic standard is recognizable worldwide. According to Madanipour this standardization comes from conservatism in taste, which also is fed by *"respecting the existing context (…) a safe way out of making aesthetic judgments"* (Madanipour, 1996, p. 168). One also could pose that globalization lead to a standardization of building styles and aesthetics word wide. However, according to Massey et. al. (1999), it is a mistake to *"think of societies as having their places, of different cultures being based in particular area's" (*p.110) and to think that the fact that *"everything looks the same, everywhere "* has to do with the current globalization. What we have seen as former, separated cultures, actually were not that separated at all. (Massey et. al., 1999) The authors state with this, that cities always have been interlinked. This implicates that also styles of city building were copied over the world, although in European context a "European hegemony" is visible.

2.3 The meaning of heritage within the experience of urban space

As discussed before, most cities possess heritage to a certain extent. In this section the definition of heritage and the role of heritage will be explored, with regard to the difficulties in defining the idea of heritage. With regard to the objective of the research, attention has to be paid in particular to the role of heritage in the area of urban space and the role of heritage within the experience of laypeople. In the previous section attention was paid to path dependency and coincidence in conservation practice, here the role of embracing heritage within the development of inner cities is discussed.

2.3.1 Defining heritage

After all the complete inner city could be considered as being heritage: the interdependent relations between context and physical objects; the comprehensive structure. For this reason it is relevant to learn about the role of heritage within the framework of people's experience, heritage and urban space. A short exploration of definitions for heritage is necessary. However, while this thesis does not focus on the story of buildings; the role of heritage and the stories behind are a major contribution to the creation of public opinions about the inner city. This is why it is important to consider the fact that certain objects might be value-laden for certain people. Even if these people would be asked for their opinion about the aspect of design quality this 'story of buildings' could be of influence in constructing their opinions, even though design

quality occurs to be separated from these stories. The relevance of getting a notion about the concept of heritage with regard to experience of urban space, is acknowledged by Yeoh and Kong (1996). They argue "*place is often constituted by a nesting of different but overlapping images and interpretations*" and this sense of place lies in memories which "*often are best served by anchoring it in the materiality of place*" (Yeoh and Kong, 1996, p. 52,56).

When exploring the definitions of heritage in literature, the various meanings and space it leaves for interpretation is quite remarkable. For instance, how a certain value can be attached to heritage is not easily determinable. In other words 'heritage' is not a factual label. This can be concluded from Ashworth et. al. (2007) in the book "Pluralising pasts: Heritage, identity and place in multicultural societies". To summarize the definition posed here: as soon as a person considers a certain object as heritage, it will become heritage. However, a clear definition would be useful in order to support the case study in this thesis. Apart from the fact that the idea of heritage could be vague and open for different interpretations, the search for a definition results in the consensus about what heritage is. Ashworth et al. (2007) provide an understandable definition: "to assign an object as valuable and conserve it for that reason" (Ashworth et. al., 2007, p. 112). The authors consider heritage thus as a social product; meaning that heritage does not have value intrinsically, but receives value through social processes: by people using, considering, thinking about it. Heritage also is a product of identity, according to Lowenthal (2007); it reflects the physical part of history belonging to a society, which wants to conserve the remains of their history for future generations. Ashworth as well poses that most heritage could be interpreted as being the physical remains from former societies. The role of storytelling seems to be embedded in the definition of heritage, according to both Ashworth et. al. and Lowenthal. Since various definitions and interpretations are available, it is hardly distinguishable when exactly objects will become 'heritage'. However, widespread accepted agreements upon labelling buildings with this name "heritage" are easily to be indicated. In practice, heritage is also traceable on lists like UNESCO World Heritage or lists composed by local or national government. However, not all heritage appears on such lists, and may not even be protected by any legislation.

2.3.2 Embracing heritage in the development of urban space

With regard to the objective in this research , the discussed conservation policy does not seem to be relevant from a first consideration. However, conservation policies are of major importance in shaping the context in which the framework of people's experience, heritage and urban space is embedded: not having heritage in a city, would set other conditions for giving meaning to a place, and be of influence in people's opinion about the integration of modern designs in such areas. Thus, embracing heritage within an area which develops; grows, or otherwise could be described as dynamic, is of influence in setting a visual framework, upon which appreciation given to new developments might depend differently. When having such conditions which keep nostalgic feelings alive in cities, these conditions might probably take away incentives for new, modern, architecture. The definition of nostalgia, used by Yeoh and Kong– "*Nostalgia is an attitude towards the past*
wherein elements of the past are viewed favourably, celebrated and even glorified" shows that on the other hand elements of future automatically might not be favoured nearby places in which a sense of nostalgia is highly present, as being evidences of the past - artefacts, images and texts - to remind one of how things used to be. Also, this influences ones opinion about how it not should be. The authors other statement that "*a sense of nostalgia is a yearning to return to a lost*

period and place and memory is often best served by anchoring it in the materiality of place." (1996, p.56), also strengthens the idea of letting new developments out of such areas. Furthermore, with regard to the historical background of cities, it is important to acknowledge this history exists out a mix of different societies. Massey et. al. (1999) emphasizes the importance of this history for understanding the current situation: " *a city is a focus of wider networks of social connections"* (p.109). Accordingly, all the remaining monuments of these worldwide influences, which are still there today, make up the city: *"For while the buildings certainly succeeded each other, the social forces and cultures which they represent, each still have a presence here"*. This last statement further strengthens the idea of not allowing new developments in such historical places, simply because of not wanting to touch this 'nowadays presence of history'.

Whereas nostalgic appearances in urban space are important in setting conditions for new developments, there is a difference between authenticity and nostalgia. Recently built architecture also might possess the looks of historical architecture. For this reason, the idea of 'authenticity' has to be considered. To continue with the insights of Ashworth et. al. in heritage; they explain why it is a mistake to use the word 'authenticity' as value within heritage: traces from the past never can be authentic, since a long history of adaption, restoring, change of function or even decay has produced the currently existing physical remains. The fact that decision making places a value on what possibly could be heritage and the fact that these heritage objects have the right to exist in the current situation, proves that authenticity is of non-relevance, according to Ashworth et. al. (2007). People thus should not consider heritage as some kind of living history, but only as a physical reference to history. With regard to the lay-peoples experience, discussed later in this thesis, it is important to consider buildings that people believe to be authentic, as actually being not authentic at all. Accordingly, it is relevant for the research to always try to identify processes of conservation or letting-be, which caused that the heritage objects still exist in the nowadays situation. Also, the word authentic is to be expected of importance for lay people's experiences. Hypothetically, the traces of processes of heritage conservation though may not be visible to most people, these processes might play a role in the experience of what nowadays remains of these objects. Furthermore, authenticity also is a topic of importance in policymaking, it there raises the question: to what extent can heritage objects be transformed?

2.4 Experience of urban space

In this section the focus lies on the experience of urban space. In the previous chapter the important role of heritage for the inner- city appearance was explored, the emphasis here lies on how urban space is perceived by lay-people, how design is influencing their appreciation, and how it shapes a (collective) identity. This also means the role of connecting to a city is studied: which emotions play a role, and how do people decide upon beauty and ugliness? Harmony in design is another topic which will be discussed here, closely related to the two other elements in the framework of 'people - urban space – heritage'.

2.4.1 Design of urban space and identity

Architectural design is strongly connected with a city's identity, according to Reijndorp en Haijer (2001, p8). Especially the most remarkable, eye-catching designs, are markers for a city and support and create identity for a city, they believe. Their point of view seems to be in contrast with what is likely to be expected in the case of an inner city: the place where emphasis mostly

lies on conserving historical elements, and thus quality is not depending on new, modern eye-catching designs. For the aim of the research in this thesis, it is relevant to reflect on identity from the perspective of design. The influence of design on shaping identity, can be illustrated with the book *"De binnenstadbeleving van Rotterdam", "The inner city experience in Rotterdam"* by professor in sociological psychology Wentholt (1968). In this book he explains his research on experience of citizens in the post-war new-built inner city of Rotterdam. The most important conclusions were that one the one hand people appreciated the new built part of the city for its functions of use and its traffic functions; while on the other hand the experience of the inner city was not appreciated very well. Wentholt (1968), believes a city's heart " will only beat faster" (In: Van der Cammen en De Klerk, 2006, p.263 ,)when it is enough attractive for people to use this area more often than functionally necessary. According to Van der Cammen and De Klerk, his notion was influential for many plans in later development plans in cities, in the following period. The way Rotterdam was rebuild, will be explained in the next section.

2.4.2. Harmony and design

To understand how a 'harmonious' cityscape is a multi- interpretable concept, it is important to know about the role of history in shaping the current mix of buildings and structures, as explained before. Prof. Dr. Denslagen , (2005, p. 164) believes history is a subjective truth, from a post-modern perspective, in which every individual person is allowed to formulate their own history. In his essay in which the Dutch inner city is discussed for its harmony, he refers to the danger that hides in this freedom to formulate individual stories about history: harmony is not synonymous to a harmonious, ancient society, on the contrary: this is not the case, according to Denslagen. He illustrates this mistake of cognition with buildings that are nowadays appreciated for their historical looks, but in history could have been playing roles in oppression, undemocratic control or poor working and living circumstances. From a postmodernist approach it is not problematic to romanticize these remains, according to Denslagen, but these stories behind the physical remains should not be forgotten. The idea of Denslagen seems to be connected to the earlier discussed division between historical city planners and modernist planners, in the case of the described period of city redevelopment after the second world war. Accordingly, attempts to mix different styles into a comprehensive appearance are based on romantic modernism. In the book "Romantic Modernism" (2005), Denslagen critically reflects on the practice of heritage conservation. According to Denslagen, the commissions dealing with this conservation are leaving too much space open for modern developments, instead of only protecting old cityscapes. Otherwise than his argument, the professionals believe new architecture should be given a chance to develop, even in inner cities with a historical character. In this thesis the concept of harmonious city design, and the meaning of this concept – the cognition of laypeople- is important. For this reason, the role of the "welstandscommisie", a cityscape protecting body, will be explored in the case study. Also in this case study, there how lay people reflect on giving new architecture a chance to be build in inner cities. Like explained in previous sections, the definition of heritage is not clear, and leaves space for various interpretations (Ashworth, 2005). For Denslagen's idea of only conserving the old in inner cities, and leaving no space for new developments this brings the difficulty of considering what heritage back in. To apply his idea of conserving all historical buildings, it raises the question to what extend do you have to conserve? And where to draw the line, when defining 'historical'. Denslagen answers this discussable issue, by explaining that it is all about appearance. Using new material to conserve historical buildings for that reason, is not a problem.

Vermeer (2003), professor architectural history, poses in his article "The inner city as a museum: modernism as a new acquisition" that city government never are aiming to freeze cityscapes. Mostly, they leave space available for new developments, in order to show that they are willing to be dynamic and modern. He considers the city as a, partially, living museum. He compares the fact that museums have different collections, and considers the collection of buildings in cities the same way. In this perspective, he raises the question if modernist architecture also should be added to this 'collection'. If this perspective would be interpreted by Denslagen, these modernist buildings definitely would not belong to his collection. However, Vermeer believes modernist buildings – from late 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, should also be listed and conserved for future generations. The difficulty of heritage conservation could be illustrated with these different attitudes towards history. In this case study this is also expected to be divided between the lay people in the case study, as described before it is not likely every person has the same idea of history and what should be protected or not.

Also Ashworth (2005) seems to agree to consider modern architecture as heritage, even though it might be experienced as un-historical and quite recent architecture by some people. He illustrates this with Dutch examples of after-war buildings existing majorly out of grey concrete. While already a large number of these examples are demolished in the last decades, he explains that these buildings also have to be considered as part of a (very short) history of Dutch architectural history, and for that reasons at least deserves to be conserved as an example of Dutch architecture. Demolishing all these buildings, means erasing a part of history as well. Image 2.4 and 2.5 provide an example of a demolished 'grey concrete' building; the city hall of Groningen was demolished in the early 1990's.

2.4.3 The collective meaning of public space

Stralenberg (2007) exposes in his article published in the newsletter from the Dutch heritage program "Belvedere", the role of collective meaning of public space. He states that often the design of public space is considered as a final piece in area development; leading to a limited budget available. Accordingly, this is resulting in places with very little inspiration. According to his argument these places never should have been designed as a final piece of development, as they should be seen as carrier of identity, and also often fulfil the role of landmark, like the system of canals in the city of Amsterdam do. This canal system should be considered as collective goods, since these public spaces are mostly the oldest parts of cities and fulfil this role of landmark in a very long tradition. (Stralenberg, 2007). Besides his most important argument for considering public space as a collective good, for this thesis Stralenbergs reflection on the role of visual design quality is interesting. While in this thesis the visual aspects are a central topic, it is a huge mistake according to Stralenberg to put too much pressure on this aspect, without keeping an eye on the functional aspect of that space. In practice this led to depravation: there were beautiful spaces, but no one wanted to visit it because of the absence of the functional aspect, even though they were full with green elements, furniture, inspiring colours and material etcetera. On the other hand, too much emphasis on the functional aspects of public space without regarding the visual design had the same result, proved by designs decades earlier, in what could be seen as "the functional period" – explained in the following paragraph. This period of functionality left behind spaces with monotonous furniture, not inviting anyone to get there, thus again leading to depraved areas. He concludes with the idea that always a mix

of function and design is necessary to achieve success in public space development. (Stralenberg, 2007)

Also De Rooij (2007), in this same journal *"Belvedere"*, depicts public space in the Dutch context as being depraving in many cases because of its monotonous character with too much focus on design, or on the other hand too much focus on quality, and considers it as a product of path-dependency –Further, he considers that function is always interdependent with design, as well as the other way around. In the mid 1980's, when more attention was paid to inner city development from a comprehensive approach, the importance of public space became more acknowledged; the public space became a carrier for the image of the city and also played a role in the idea of city marketing in the 1990's. Somehow, there was a negative turn at the end of last century, around the year 2000 too much focus was on safety in public space. The public space was from then on considered as being potentially dangerous, and should be protected by appropriate management. This meant lesser importance was given to the aesthetical elements of public space, according to de Rooij. This is why he believes these places need to be a melting point of both a mental approach and a physical approach: "Giving meaning to a place". Both physical meaning and mental meaning do apply value to a place; and compose an identity for this place. Also attention has to be paid to the history of a place; not to be mistaken by the fact that recent events are also part of history, like how a recent murder can stick a label to a place and changes its identity.

In her Masterthesis Planning, C. Kuiper (2011) analyses the discourse in public space in her thesis named *"Tussen functionaliteit en kwaliteit: het dilemma van de openbare ruimte in Nederland" – "In-between functionality and quality: the dilemma of public space in the Netherlands".* In a case study in the city of Groningen she pays attention to the spatial organization in the Netherlands with special regard to public space. The method she used was discourse analysis; to get an overview of different texts that are embedded in professionals view on public space. Where this thesis searches for laypeople's opinions, she was investigating "the language" of professionals like planners, architects and other developers. From her story it becomes clear that in Dutch context public space was traditionally a case of government's responsibility in Groningen, in contrast with many other Dutch cities. From the 1990's on, the city used more comprehensive approach to avoid different looking 'lumps' within one area, and invest in all elements within a place instead of looking at one particular place or element. In the 1991 this policy was formulated in the *"Master plan space for space: about the quality of the inner city in Groningen"* – originally named: "*Master plan Ruimte voor Ruimte. Over de kwaliteit van de openbare ruimte in de binnenstad van Groningen".* The idea was that quality lies in both technical quality and visual quality. According to Kuiper, there were three main rules: 1) Good design; 2) Good maintenance 3) Rules for the use. In the case of Groningen, it becomes clear that not only the aesthetical value has to be considered – like also explained by De Rooij (2007) and Van Stralenberg (2007). One of her recommendations following from her conclusions on the analysis of public space from a discourse analysis is: "Do not only give expression to "quality" from a commercial perspective, but also express in social terms"

2.4.4 Identity and heritage
In his Masterthesis "Stedelijke identiteit als succesfactor bij stadsontwikkeling" – translated: "City identity as factor of success in city development" (2009), the author and real estate master student B. Boterman investigates the role of the identity a city possesses, or at least believes it possesses it, is used in city developments. In his argument the role of heritage is discussed:

"when heritage is involved in a development plan, it should not only be a carrier of visual identity. It is also is preferable to fulfil the function of being used, besides its importance as a landmark. If these historical buildings will be used for public functions, they will receive extra meaning for the area they are in" (Boterman, 2009: 71-72) Most important conclusion, with regard to this thesis, is the idea of cities having an identity may not be ignored by developers when making new plans for the city area. In other words, they should pay attention to, and respect the contextual situation where their future design is going to be a part of. He states that developers often only have to seem eye for the representation of their own design without the context of the area it has to fit in. Another conclusion also concerns the role of designers: they should investigate in well-fitting, long term designs, instead of short term, functional buildings which provide these developers with short term benefits. This practice of "flagging" and moneymaking by architects and developers is also a topic of concern in Groningen's "Welstandscommissie" annual report on 2009, as revealed in paragraph 4.3.

Picture 2.1: An example of protected cityscape in Groningen, Lage der Aa. Photo: R. Boelens, 2009

The city should acknowledge the importance for architects and developers to not only get commercial success, but to earn also social success for these designers from showing to the citizens they are able to discover city identity and use it in their designs, and thus show respect for history, value and meaning of that area. It might not be an obvious theory to consider, but could be of importance when considering peoples emotion with regard to a city and its visual design: they way in which people consider different landscapes. Based on Darwins Habitat theory, Brian and Kellart (1993) explain how people in landscapes always search for elements that provide shelter, and give overview with the surrounding area, in short: landscapes that provides them with the highest chance of survival. Though cities show not a natural landscape, these elements of "prospect-refuge" might play a role in the visual design quality, especially when it comes to structures of buildings, streets which can be characterized as being open or closed; scare people or might invite them; darkness en light are important; and having space to ran away in case of emergency are related to this human instincts which collectively agree preferences for certain landscapes. It refers to a feeling of safety, which could play a role in the design of city and for that reason is of great influence in experience of the visual design as well.

In this reflection it is inevitable to not ignore Jane Jacobs's argument against these not-open places, where no "eyes on the street" means places become depraved and criminal activities

might take place. Yet, safety is another topic of research, it also is factor of giving appreciation to visual quality; a basic requirement of places, buildings is that they should be safe in first instance. This means, when considering requiring safety as element of visual quality in buildings and public space, there always have to be "eyes on the street", and people are able to watch from their homes, according to Jacobs. (Jacobs, 1961)

2.4.5 Image versus identity

T. Arzt (2006) evaluates Groningen as part of a set of case studies. He poses that the importance of having an identity for cities in the Netherlands has become a significant phenomenon, since the society had become more individualistic in the last decades, and the more multiform composition of cultures, religions etc. was involved. He shows there is a difference between image and identity: identity is what the city is "the unique characteristics and meanings", differently experienced by every single person, while image is what people expect this identity to be, in short. These words are never synonymous. This means a city can have a positive identity, and at the same time also have a bad image, coming from earlier events that negatively influenced this view.

There were also studies applied to Groningen when it comes to the improvement of the city's image. In 2005 the city was awarded for "Best inner city 2005"- originally "Beste binnenstad 2005"; though it was not a result of scientific research, but organized by a commercial platform for small retail. The jury chose the city of Groningen because of its 'completeness': "a nice area to go shopping, to go out, work, study and live". Most important for this thesis is the fact that Groningen also was awarded for its "authentic appearance". "Entrepreneurs, citizens and the city council together acknowledge these qualities and try to improve together the "Groningen Experience", yet is another superlative presented by the jury. Another interesting critique with regard to this thesis :"The inner-city shows authenticity, but with the inclusion of high-end, modern elements like the museum, it keeps being surprising" . (Report "Beste Binnenstad", 2005)

Arzt (2006), reveals the gap between the image of the city of Groningen and its identity. He investigates the image of the city from the perspective of its citizens and on the other hand the perspective of the visitors from other places. Interesting were the outcomes ,when these people were asked to give a grade to their appreciation of the city. People who never visited Groningen before gave an average grade of 5.6, whereas those who visited Groningen for at least once, provided an average of 7.8.

2.4.6. Meaning of beauty and ugliness

Ideas about ugly and beauty in the Dutch context, were posed by Ir. G Heins in his article *"Reflections on beauty and ugly in Dutch architecture"* (translated by author) –*"Beschouwingen over mooi en lelijk in de Nederlandse architectuur"* (2003), in which he illustrates examples of buildings that were at the same time in both a list of most ugly buildings as well in a list of most beautiful buildings. This reflected how these buildings were found to be controversial: some loved them, others hated them. Heins gives insight in how back in his study "stedebouwkunde" , city planning, 3 elements were considered as important in designing: "Utilitas, Venustas en Firmitas" inspired by Vetruvian's philosophies. Meaning, central would be the value for use, experience and future. The use of these three elements should provide the designing in cities with an objective character. According to Heins this has been a big mistake in understanding the real value of design quality. He believes experience of what beauty is, always will be "a product

of the eyes of the beholder and the cultural context he or she is in" Also he wonders if finding a building of place attractive is a matter of "beauty" or if it is affected by topics like" charisma, identity and character" He introduces the role of the Dutch "welstandscommissie" and the role this commission played since the law concerned with the quality of buildings "Woningwet 1901" was introduced in the year 1901 for the Netherlands. This commission was put up to avoid cities to get too much "ugly" architecture, in its original objectives. Further, he believes there is a gap between the demand of Dutch citizens on the one side and the objectives of designers/architects on the other side. While Dutch citizens tend to be conservative- according to Heins - in relation to new developments and designs, the architects always will try to design something new, shocking, and distinctive from existing architecture. The Dutch consumer anyhow is more charmed with historical buildings, buildings that meet feelings of nostalgia. When it comes to the connection of emotions with architecture, nostalgia is one of the most important motives, according to Heins. He concludes with explaining that it is not all about "beauty and ugly", but that these words are the labels people stick their deeper, unrevealed emotions to. When buildings receive a certain meaning by a group of people, their "value" will be increased through the collectively giving of appreciation. He recommends for further investigation of this hypothesis of collective appreciation. (Heins, 2003)

To go deeper into the meaning of emotions with regard to attractiveness in cities, a contribution can be found in the book *for Spinoza — Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*, by A. Damasio (2003). He makes a distinction between two definitions which seem closely related: emotions and experience. To summarize: emotions are reactions coming from the body; like pleasure and aversion; feelings that are hardly to be influenced by the brains, and sometimes difficult to explain. On the other side, these emotions sometimes seem to be subject to rational processes, to a certain level. In practice, this means people could be attracted to certain buildings for unexplainable reasons, without having a rational argument for its beauty. These emotions also could be collectively, like groups of people could love classical music or voices, without being able to give a rational explanation for these phenomena.

Recognition is an important feeling, which is at issue in feeling attached to monuments or other objects. In the view of Lefebvre (1991) "*monumental space offers each member of society an image of that membership and constitutes a collective mirror".* Recognition in monuments of former societies, which receive a strong feeling of attachment by members of the nowadays society, are expected to be protected against demolition or replacement by new architecture. This collective sense of attachment, then seem to work as some kind of defence. Even without touchable feelings of attachment, or belonging to a place, people can possess feelings and emotions for a place without being able to explain these feelings, but can express this feelings in emotions like anger, fear, feeling connected etc. Also nostalgic feelings for a time a person actually never has experienced, is part of this. This possibly might express fear for new developments; fear for unknown situations and outcomes. Again, this is hard to conclude when it is about emotions. In this research emotions might play a significant role an can at least indicate the experience people get from certain buildings and places, even without explanation this might indicate collective feelings, in which conclusions could be drawn. Heins (2003) makes the interesting remark "Something will become magic when it's outside the box of the rational" – *translated by author.*

In the case study, there will be reflected upon these theories about emotions and feelings. Can people translate their emotions in a logical answer to defend the feeling they get from certain buildings or places?

2.5 Conclusions

In this chapter the key concepts of visual design, heritage and experience were introduced and discussed. First , the different approaches to urban design were discussed, from which could be learned that over time several approaches were used in city planning and design control.

Attention was paid to the role of heritage within cities, in particular the experience of heritage. Accordingly, the most important lesson here is that heritage is for many people a rather vague concept. How heritage - or otherwise historical places and building - are experienced, largely depends on personal, sometimes vague ideas of history, nostalgia, and romanticism. For this reason the word "authentic" is of non-relevance for the use of heritage policies. The experience of heritage, just like beauty and ugliness, could be considered again as something in the eye of the beholder.

When it comes to the design and aesthetics of the inner city, it could be concluded that harmony between old and new designs is of great value, in particular in historical places like inner cities. Theory shows that divided opinions upon harmony exist. The important role of protectionism, by so-called "Welstandscommissies" was explained. While some people wish to see space for new, daring developments from new architects, there are on the very other side others who wish to see historical values only. In between these two extremes the major part of the lay-people is expected to be found.

To which extent the shown theories will be reflected in the case of the study in Groningen, is presented in the following chapter: "Case study Groningen". The findings discussed there, will be linked to this chapter in the end.

Structure of chapter 3: Methodology

- **Introduction**

- **Qualitative research**

- **Case study approach**

- **Interviews**
  a. Structure of interviews
  b. Criteria for interviewing lay-people
  c. Processing the interviews
  d. Representation of results
  e. Topics in interviewing

- **Visual map**

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research started with an exploring approach. Together with the theoretical framework, a case study in Groningen aims to answer the research questions, as posed in the introduction. This chapter explains methods used in the case study and takes the several advantages and disadvantages in consideration, in order to validate the methods that are used and also to give an estimation for the quality of the research methods. First, the qualitative research in general will be considered in this chapter, followed by a more specific description on how the methods will be applied in the case study.

3.2 Qualitative research

First, the question why qualitative research is required in investigating phenomena with primary data has to be answered. Qualitative research is not referring to a specific way of approaching a research, instead, it embraces different theoretical traditions of doing research, like phenomenology, ethno-methodology and symbolic interaction. (Creswell, 1996). One of the main characteristics of qualitative research is the non-directive position of the researcher. Whereas quantitative research has a directive character in relation to the object of research, the danger in doing qualitative research lies in a biased position of the researcher. To avoid a biased position of the researcher, the theoretical propositions and concepts in a method, for example an open interview, have to be explicated. Another aspect of qualitative research is the holistic and contextual character. Political, cultural, religious and several other backgrounds cause the researcher to be careful with the structuring of interview results. (Billiet and Waege, 2005). This contextual character also requires the researcher to avoid a biased position towards the several backgrounds he or she could encounter in collecting data through, for instance, interviewing. However, this biased position cannot be eliminated fully, but should be constrained by appearing to be neutral in doing the research. Because of the character of research questions in this research, in which experience is a key element, data would be preferably collected with the use of a qualitative research method.

3.3 Case study approach

This section aims to explain how the case study will be applied .The first question to answer is: why to choose a case study? The role of the case study – referring to the research questions – is to explore how lay-people experience the design quality in the inner city of Groningen. Important elements of this objective, according to the sub questions, are: how do they experience interventions in historical areas, how important is design quality to them, and how previously developments affected the sense of that place at this moment. A case study is not a method itself, it is "an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on enquiry around an instance of action". (Spencer, 2011, p. 51). In this research, the explorative character of the research questions, allows investigation on a single case. For this research is chosen to investigate the city of Groningen, as a typical Dutch city which has a considerable historical area within its borders. As described in the previous chapter, Groningen received an award for being "The Best inner city" in the year 2005, which is a good incentive to perform the case study there. Furthermore, based on place proximity and possibilities, the city of Groningen would be the optimal place to perform the case study. The case study draws on the contextual background on the city of Groningen, which is introduced in

the next chapter. In the case study primary data has to be collected with the help of an appropriate method, in this case interviewing is the best method, which will be described in the next sections.

3.4 Interviews

Why choosing interviews as a valid method? A first argument lies in the fact that more space is left for intervening opportunities to ask questions. These are, for instance, questions asking for explanation, clarification, or illustrations on what was asked previously. Using a survey to collect primary data could be beneficial, but does not allow respondents to explain experiences and brings difficulties with regard to categorizing answers in groups. In other words, "questionnaires are standardized, and not tailored to the circumstances of individuals" (Flowerdew and Martin, 2005, p.110). Interviews are mostly unstructured or semi-structured: "they take a fluid form, each interview varying according to the interests and experiences and views of the interviewees"(Flowerdew and Martin 2005, p. 110). Interviews are a more flexible source of data than surveys, for example. This makes doing interviews more time spending than using a questionnaire, which indicates one of the disadvantages of interviewing (Mortelmans, 2007). On the other hand, the researcher stays open to new approaches and new points of view on the research, which at the same time demands the researcher to carefully monitor the research, to keep close to the relevant issues for the research. This is yet another disadvantage of doing interviews, as it demands skills and explication on what the researcher wants to know from the respondents, or in other words, it demands to stay within the framework of the research. However, the method of interviewing is preferred above doing surveys, due to the qualitative nature of the primary information that needs to be gathered. Of course, surveys have the ability to gather qualitative information, according to Flowerdew and Martin (2005); Mortelmans, (2007); this method needs a very precise formulation of questions to get an answer that catches the opinion, experience or emotion the respondent intended to express. With interviewing, this process is easier, because the feedback of the respondent enables the interviewer to formulate new questions, which should help to clarify earlier answers. This aspect of feedback on new information is absent, or is hard to integrate within surveys.

3.4.1 Structure of interviews

Interviews can be performed in several ways, there is not one preferred method for all situations. Three main categories of interviews can be distinguished, according to Billiet and Waege (2005): a) Structured interviews; b) Semi- structured interviews; c) Unstructured- or in- depth interviews. Whereas structured interviews are closely related to surveys, with a standardized set of questions; unstructured interviews are influenced by the moment of the interview; they get shape from the conversation and the feedback of the interviewee. A semi- structured interview combines advantages of both structured and unstructured interviews: they provide a framework to the subjects of research and give overview for both the interviewer and the interviewee, but also leave space for clarification on answers and intervening questions. Organizing questions in a logical order and categorized in themes will guaranty overview, and save time. It also could make the interviewee more comfortable with the conversation, as he or she has an expectation on what is going to be discussed in the interview. (Billiet and Waege, 2005). Considering the described methods of interviewing, a semi- structured interview is preferred to use in the case study. First, to create order and overview in the topics in the interview. Also, drawing on the research questions and theoretical framework, a standardization of questions is favoured. Second, the involved interviewees require for the researcher an open

attitude towards their context. In particular because the interviewees are laypeople who are principally unknown to the researcher. This last point demands the researcher to tailor the interview to every individual interviewee, and requires space for intervening questions during the interview, like in an in-depth interview. This space also is an opportunity to not only collect the respondent's opinions, but also get a sense of what these people mean by their answer; to avoid letting them answer with a so-called "preferably right answer".

3.4.2. Criteria for interviewing lay-people

The case study targets at lay-people, the selection of respondents will take place at random. Selection at random is supported by the qualitative research approach, and the explorative character as well. Because of the explorative, semi-structured character of interviews the criteria for the questions and style of interviewing have to be explicated. A list of criteria, with regard to ethics, quality and style - drawing on theory from Flowerdew and Martin (2005) - describes the requirements of the interviews in the case study:

1. *Selecting people will meet no explicit criteria, preferably selection will be done random. Meaning, no difference in age, ethnicity, etc. will be of influence for the selection of people. Also this means there won't be an equilibrium in number of men/woman, for example. However, a non biased division is favoured, though no meaning will be given to differences in gender.*

2. *Because of the spontaneous (without making appointment) conversations, the interviews should take very little time from the interviewees. People must be able to be introduced into the topic, answer the list of questions and eventually give feedback or ask questions themselves all within a time limit of approximately 10-15 minutes.*

3. *For the sake of the interviewee's privacy, all of the interviews will be anonymous, unless people would like to know the results after finishing the research, they can give their names. This also means that people are free to leave certain questions unanswered - without explanation, if they don't feel like answering.*

4. *Leave space and time for feedback, and try to respond to it, with staying impartial and give – if necessary- only neutral answers when the respondents eventually ask how you - as a researcher- reflect on the topic. A distinction that is to be expected is that between citizen of Groningen/ not citizen of Groningen and divide the interviewees into 2 groups with different knowledge about the city and ability to talk about identity. The unstructured character, together with the (semi-) open questions leaves space to ask different questions to both groups, and dive deeper into the things they do wish to explain.*

5. *General rules will be: inform people about the objective of the interview; ask questions without mentioning answer, be polite when people give answers that may be repulsive or otherwise unexpected. Because the case study takes place in Dutch context, question lists will be made available in Dutch and English as well.*

6. *For the understandability of the questions, scientific slang has to be avoided, such as difficult words have to be avoided anyway.*

3.4.3 Processing the interviews

The interviews will result in a list of answers to the different questions. The full results of the interviews are available in the appendix. They are transcribed into tables, in which also labels are attached to each question. The labels apply value to the distinctive parts and help to categorize the answers. Because of the translation "problem" the translation only happens between the original answer from the respondent, like in Dutch, and the code it will be labelled

with. This means the Dutch answers won't be translated into English first before sticking labels to it. This 2-step system of coding would be too dangerous for use here, to avoid wrong interpretations, translations and misunderstanding of levels of a certain feeling (strong, weak etc.) (Flowerdew and Martin, 2005). To make conclusions from this set of interviews, qualitative text analysis will be used. This means marking important sentences, find differences, similarities, and other remarkable relations between answers given by different people. After having a comprehensive outcome from the set of interviews, these results need to be analyzed with the help of the theoretical background. Even though researchers tend to conclude in quantifying language, this is something to be aware of, according to Groats and Wang (2002) and Flowerdew and Martin (2005). The qualitative character of the case study demands a qualitative and carefully formulated conclusion. Another difficulty lies in the translation: when people express themselves in Dutch, the researcher has to be careful to choose the right words showing the same expression or sense as the Dutch interviewee intended to express. This is why both (Dutch and English) transcripts of interviews will be made available. Also, it means citations only could be used when a translation is not contested.

The messages embedded in the answers the respondents will give, need to be discovered and analyzed. With the help of qualitative text analysis, the main message must become clear from, what possible could be, a lengthy answer which includes either relevant and non-relevant information. The aim of this textual analysis is not only to filter out unnecessary information, but also brings structure to the different answers people gave, as some kind of grip for the main topics. The labels should summarize answers and stick a label to the answer people gave. As said before there is a difficulty in translating, so the translation only uses with a single conversion Dutch answer into English label. In these labels expressions, emotions and other answers could be categorized, to get structure out of the unstructured interviews. The decoding is exercised by analyzing the diversity of terms could use to express themselves in a similar way. This means, with the decoding their answer is ready for labelling into the categories.

3.4.4 Representation of results

Due to the method of taking samples at random, the representation of lay-people in the research is not a key issue. The explorative way of doing research does not put emphasis on representation of a certain group, but is still is an important issue to consider, since the question tries to answer how "lay people" think about the topic. People may not be divided in groups, meaning there can be no quantitative outcome at all. Accordingly, the case study does not intend to translate a qualitative collection of emotions, feelings, opinions resulting from the interviews into quantitative outcomes. Conclusions, for that reason, only show different findings and only can be formulated in a qualitative approach like "a sample of this group believes….", and should be related to the theoretical framework. According to Spencer "it is debatable how far case study results can be indicative of more general trends in social phenomena as by their nature they examine specific instances in detail." (Spencer, 2011, p. 50). Yin (2003), also explains "that it is a mistake to try and select a 'representative' case or set of cases, as the problem lies in the very notion of generalising to other case studies."

3.4.5. Topics in interviewing

The following topics will be used in the interviews, drawing on the research questions and theoretical framework. These topics are translated into open, or semi-open questions , resulting in a list of questions that meets the posed criteria. The lists of questions is available in both Dutch and English, and is included in the appendix 7.1 and 7.2.

Introduction/ personal: *age, place of resident, gender*

Importance of: *Heritage, Public space, coherence between old and new, protected cityscape, policy making.*

Experience: *Let interviewees give their meaning of words beauty and ugly. Let interviewees point at examples that are clear examples of these to them and explore: why?*

Developments: *Remember developments, like or dislike certain periods in the timeline of that place.*

- Which developments are wished, which not.

- How does nearby heritage affect their opinion on developments?

- How does the knowledge of previous developments affect their nowadays sense of that place?

Identity: *Feelings of connections to that place, or not. Shaping both place and identity interdependent.*

Both the English and the Dutch question lists are included in appendix 8.1 and 8.2.

3.5 Visual map

To support the results of the interviews with regard to questions about places people recall, a visual map will be made to represent these places with images. The aim of this map is to illustrate the findings of the interview, the map will not be used to analyze with the help of the theoretical framework. As shown in the question lists, the respondents are asked for buildings/areas which illustrate their opinion upon this place. This map will contain the key sites of controversy between old and new interventions, for instance. As layer, a city map of Groningen will be used. With placing markers on this map, places people mentioned will be visualized. These markers will refer to photographs of these locations, which will be included in the appendix. The pictures will be taken by the researcher or downloaded from the internet. This visual map is presented at the end of the case study chapter.

- **Introduction**

- **Urban space in the Dutch context**
    a. The morphological composition of the old city
    b. Design and revitalization of inner cities
    c. Changes in urban space: towards public space
    d. Revitalization of urban space in Groningen
    e. The role of the "Welstandscommissie"

- **Conclusion**

4. CASE STUDY GRONINGEN: BACKGROUND

4.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to introduce the case of Groningen from a theoretical perspective. In addition to the general theories and practices described in chapter two, Theoretical Background, the emphasis lies here on the Dutch case, especially on the city of Groningen. First the developments in Dutch city planning are discussed, accordingly the developments of the inner city of Groningen are discussed, especially those in the last few decades.

4.2 Urban space in the Dutch context

This section continues with the exploration of urban space. In the previous chapter the definition and broader context were explained, here the Dutch context will be studied. First the composition of Dutch cities will be explored from a historical perspective, followed by explaining developments in time, which changed the inner-city into its current appearance. In the end, attention will be paid to the case of Groningen, in which the developments will be illustrated with concrete examples, also to introduce the area of the case study which will be explained later in this thesis.

4.2.1 The morphological composition of the old city

Different from most other European countries, the Dutch city's public space was rather functional – every single square meter was worth money for salesmen - than a way to show status, like in other countries squares and streets in axis patterns were designed to impose. The reason that Dutch cities were designed for these utility reasons was also strengthened by the absence of a strong central state power. (Schimming 2003).

When looking at the appearance of urban space in inner city context, these areas are somehow very recognizable for being the oldest part of a city. The historical context cannot be ignored, to at least help explain the current spatial structures of urban space. Van der Cammen and De Klerk (2006) provide a comprehensive overview of the Dutch history with regard to spatial management in cities, in the book "Ruimtelijke Ordening – van Grachtengordel tot Vinexwijk" – translated: "Spatial management- from 'Grachtengordel' to 'Vinexwijk'". This study shows the morphology of Dutch cities around squares. A composition with a church nearby or central to the square would be a typical situation in an inner city, which a visitor is likely to find in Dutch cities. These old structures, which are nowadays still present in most cities, represent a history of developments in the area of the inner city. Accordingly, demolition and replacement by new buildings and conservation of old objects are expected to be relevant topics in such areas. This story is only valid for old cities – not recently built cities like Almere and Lelystad. Most of the current Dutch cities were founded in the Middle Ages, around 1400, with fulfilling a role of marketplace as their main function. Van der Cammen and De Klerk provide a short overview of periods in Dutch city making with paying attention to architectural styles. An important contribution to the design of the inner city, is the fact that these Dutch cities were also fulfilling the role of defence against other cities; "foreigners". As a part of this defensive character, city walls were built at the borders of – what nowadays defines- the inner city. Whereas these walls created a physical boundary for a city, it necessarily causes spatial management to remain and expand the city life within the area surrounded by these city walls, rather than using empty space on the outside of the city borders.

During the Middle Ages, city making was not a matter of governmental concern exclusively. Major influence came from so-called 'enlightened' people- or visionaries-, mostly architects , engaged with making development plans with their visionary views. During the 16th and 17th century, several ideas for ideal cities were described and illustrated in comprehensive plans of these architects. In this period, a design doctrine was emerging, which contained a typical development plan for city making. This doctrine posed criteria for separation of functions; the size of buildings, design and structure of roads and aesthetical quality. This last point is important to remember when looking at current cityscapes:, to know when the attention for aesthetic quality found its origin, and what aesthetical quality meant in that period. The archetypical style of city making is recognizable in Groningen, see image 2.1.

Aesthetical values were playing an important role, starting in the Middle Ages: in relation with the defensive character cities wanted to show their status, reflecting in the physical experience of the city. The arrangement of buildings was organized around squares, roads were constructed straight and buildings were looking massive and indestructible to show status and defensive qualities. The defensive character of Dutch cities was abandoned at the end of the 19th century. Defensive walls were demolished and for the sake of city expansion no longer attention was paid to the quality of the oldest parts of cities. This new attitude towards city making was now shifting away towards expansion in new areas on the former outside of the city. While ancient structures, buildings and functions were still left in the inner city, new neighbourhoods, and industry were arising in other places (Van der Cammen and De Klerk, 2006, p.44).


Figure 4.1: City plan of Groningen (1700), by Christ Weigelij Senioris Heraedes.

Nowadays the composition of the inner-city not only is a result of path dependency in city making with different planning paradigms mixed into the current situation; it also is important to know that some buildings and structures are still existing because of coincidence, instead of conservation policies. It is a mistake to think that all historical elements in cities are still there because of protection policies. Sometimes buildings and structures are remained untouched because of demolishing costs, or simply convenience; according to Ashworth (1996) in his essay "The conserved European city as a cultural symbol" (p.16).

To conclude this section, in the described Dutch case visual design and urban space seem to be linked together inevitably. The visual design of the inner city could be regarded as the cumulative processes of building, demolishing and reshaping , which is in an interdependent relation with the physical results of these processes. This means historical context plays an important role for the experience of design in the city.

4.2.2 Design and revitalization of inner cities

As described before, in the Dutch case new interest for inner cities was found in the 1980's. In the previous period these areas were often considered as dismissed. In urban planning practice there has been a very strong attitude towards expansion to the city borders for a long time, together with pulling away functions from the oldest part of the city. New shopping centres emerged at city borders in neighbourhoods, and thus the perspective of inner cities was becoming unimportant. This resulted in a visible lack of maintenance: no longer were incentives for maintaining physical quality found in inner city management. This aim for city expansion also resulted in social changes: the urban area in the inner city became a less inspiring place to be for visitors and citizens. When the planning concept of the "compact city" was introduced in the 1980's, the inner city received attention from planners again.

Picture 4.2.: The inner-city of Groningen after the destructions in 1948 (Photo: P. Boonstra, 1948)

The case of Groningen, draws on an interview with professor Taverne, professor in city planning and architecture, in a journal *"De musealisering van Groningen: De binnenstad in archictectuurhistorisch perspectief"* – " The becoming of a museum from Groningen: the inner city from an architectural historical perspective" (Wilkes, 1996). The professor illustrates in detail how the inner city was developing in the period after the second world war (see also picture 4.2). According to the professor, the bombing started actually after the real bombs were exploded and destroyed major parts of the city. With this statement he is targeting on the development program which was started to rebuild the destroyed inner city. During the after war period people wished to see new concepts arising on the bombed places; to avoid negative associations with the old inner city. This tendency was recognizable not only in the city of Groningen; this change towards modernism, together with an attitude to leave physical history behind, was strongly recognized in the rebuild program in Rotterdam. While nowadays historical buildings are associated with positive feelings, like romanticism, things were the other way around after world war two, according to Taverne. This resulted in the Dutch case in construction of tall buildings, following the United States, to avoid negative associations with the existing old inner city. This change after world war two, also led to a division in the Dutch planning practice, explains Vriend (1975) in the book "Links bouwen, rechts bouwen"- "Build left, build right". At one side there was a group of professionals that believed it to be self-evident to rebuild the old situation; with paying respect to the old historical architectural styles remaining from the middle ages. On the other hand there were planners and architects whom wished to see new structures, modernism and letting go historical elements. During the 1960's the inner city development was defined by commercial activities. The market was deciding the shape and function, and this meant according to Taverne, that public space was synonymous for tall buildings and car traffic. In the 1970's there started to be resistance against this market driven developments. City planning and architectural design started to be a social skill; designs and plans became verbal plans instead of visual designs. In the 1970's structure plans of Groningen, this change is visible: these plans could be described as scenarios. Some architects and city planners started to plead for bringing the visual design back into spatial planning. Also Van der Cammen and De Klerk (2008) describe this changing process from design approach to scenario approach, in which – to summarize- more attention was paid to debating and less attention was paid any longer to visionary designers. With regard to this thesis, it is important to acknowledge this path dependency: to be aware of the remains of both ancient design approaches and after war approaches, even though some of these after war modernist designs have been demolished in the last decades.

4.2.3 Changes in urban space: towards public space

In Groningen, but also in other cities in the Netherlands, an important transformation in inner city urban space was caused by the transformation to pedestrian areas. Starting in the mid-1970's in Groningen, car traffic was abandoned from the inner city, with a redevelopment of the public space in the so-called "Traffic circulation program". For this thesis this might play an important role; it changed the importance for design in public space now that no longer the traffic function did possess the area. Wentholt (1968) suggests, that cities become more alive when visitors stay longer than functionally strictly necessary, there was a potential residential function. For the experience in inner cities this development might be a major change; not only this structural change was a visual change in itself, it also caused an increased interest in design of public space. Image 2.2 shows the situation in Groningen before the Grote Markt area turned into pedestrian area. With regard to traffic developments in inner cities, in the case of Groningen it is important to keep in mind future developments and their impact for the experience of urban space. An illustrative example could be found in the development of the city tram, see image 2.3. This design, which will lead the tram through shopping streets, caused controversy among citizens and shop owners. After this development from traffic conductor towards residential area, the inner city urban space in many Dutch cities was revitalized , starting in the late 1970's. Van der Cammen and De Klerk illustrate how this Urban space was considered as "living room" and for that reason had to be transformed towards a 'cosy' place to stay (Van der Cammen and De Klerk, 2008, p.263). In city making practice, this resulted in creating walls, furniture, flowers in the streets and placing other elements to give the urban space a small-scale experience; in order to obtain a cosy appearance for its visitors. After the 1980's this concept was outdated, according to the new attitude towards the design of public

space. The new idea was to create spacious, open public space, with more respect paid to the physical context.

4.2.4 Revitalization of urban space in Groningen

In the report ' *Ruimte voor ruimte – over de kwaliteit van de binnenstad in Groningen'* ,by Gemeente Groningen in cooperation with Mecanoo Archticten   (1991,) the lack for a comprehensive design strategy with regard to the inner city of Groningen is exposed. In 1988, the equal named plan called *Ruimte voor Ruimte , Space for Space,* was the beginning of a series of plans to develop the inner city. In report of 1991,the city government indicated the inner city as   an area "disturbed in its comprehensive appearance and disintegrated" (Gemeente Groningen, 1991, p.3). Accordingly, the several demands that exist in the inner city of Groningen, like shopping, residential use, studying etc.- were being supported to long without the use of a comprehensive strategy.   The report mentions several objects like street furniture, bicycle storage, differences in pavements that caused this incomprehensive appearance in the early 1990's inner city. With introducing the" Masterplan public space", the report emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach for design of public space.   The main method applied, according to this report, was city management. In the case of Groningen this was split in 10 aspects of a 'managed city' in order to tackle this fragmentation in future. Three principal conditions are posed: 1) Plan only working if fully applied. 2) Common interest preferred above individual interest or partial interest. 3) Pedestrians and bicyclists are given priority in the existing traffic circulation in the city. The list continues with several conditions to achieve a 'stable city' (p. 12), contains seven crucial elements for city management; like – for example- pavements, furniture, parking space and art. This report could be considered as a starting point for a comprehensive strategy, which emphasizes the demand for 'quality' rather than 'functionality' concretely.

Picture 4.4 Groningen, Waagplein after demolishing old city hall. (Photographer unknown, 2006)

Picture 4.5 Groningen, Waagplein before demolishing city hall. (Photographer unknown, year unknown)

In *"De Binnenstad van Groningen: de functie van de binnenstad, is de binnenstad zelf","" The inner city of Groningen: the inner city's function, is the inner city self"*, the authors Oost and Tolner (1998) discuss the function of Groningen's inner city with regard to its function. They start with posing that, strictly, there is no necessity for even having an 'inner city' at all. They support this with providing examples of American cities that exist without having an inner city; removed and replaced with shopping malls at city borders. They believe, that at the one hand cities are very recognizable for their appearance, whereas they are at the same time quite unrecognizable for their function. In the case of Groningen's inner city, the authors seem to be convinced that this topic of function is highly discussable. With regard to the borders which define the inner city, different definitions are available, is what can be concluded from their attempt to define the inner city borders. Instead of using   'geographical borders', Oost and Tolner prefer to use 'borders defined by experience' (p .19) – of what visitors recognize as inner city. The fact that this border occurs to be a diffuse border to many people, can also be concluded from Ashworth 's point of view (Visser and Welmoed, 1997, p 131). In the book *Binnenstad Beter, een nieuw hart voor Groningen vanuit 24 gezichtspunten – A Better Inner city, a new city heart from 24 viewpoints (1997),* twenty four professionals are reviewing the implementation of the plan *Binnenstad Beter*, which could be considered as the most recent, important plan which has formed the current city's appearance. The implementation of the plan was received as being successful by Ashworth (representing one of the twenty four viewpoints), even though the multifunctional character is remained in the new situation. This is not a problem in itself, but possibly could be a threat to the city: the amount of space stays the same, while the number of functions – residential, shopping, university, festivals- puts too much pressure on this space and may lead to conflicting use of space. However, what the right solution for this problem would be - acknowledging that this problem exists- cannot be concluded from Ashworth's contemplation, but it strengthens the idea of a vague inner city borders: it could not be defined by functions of use.

4.2.5. The role of the "Welstandscommissie"

To look at the starting point for the current policy, when considering the visual appearance of Groningen's inner city, it also is important to explain the role of the so-called "Welstandscommissie". Without the existence of this commission, it would be for sure that the major part of the historical city would have disappeared, during the last 50 years, or buildings would have been transformed in such a fundamentally way, one could hardly speak of "historical" origins. The commission is part of the city council, and is charged with assessing new projects and renovations when it comes to buildings and areas protected by the protected cityscape.

First, it is important to realize that the fact that this commission even exists, means the city pays value to its attempts to invest in visual quality of the cityscape; and positions itself thus as an actor to not leave decisions according to this topic open for free market and/or individual wishes of these actors. They acknowledge with this , to a certain extent, that the city is a common thing, and not a collection of individual expressions. In short, in practice it means all buildings and space marked as protected cityscape(see also figure 4.6 "protected area") are bound to rules with regard to material, colours, shapes that are allowed to use when renovating, or in the case of newly built objects. Also of importance is the coherence that must be regarded; how do new projects or renovations fit within the context? When renovations or new projects show points of discussion, it is up to the "Welstandscommissie" to assess upon these proposals and fulfil the role of a judge in these cases.

Figure 4.6: Protected cityscapes in Groningen, the red area's are part of the protected cityscape. (Source: Welstandscommisie Gemeente Groningen, Annual Report, 2009)

In an annual report over the year 2009, the commission reflects on the fact that they are faced with a considerable shortcoming in the role they used to play. Two cases indicated there was no role for this commission as a result of formal policy coming from development plans in which

were rules embedded leaving no space for the commission to judge upon designs. Another aspect that was reviewed in this report which is of importance to connect to this research, is that the commission shows its dissatisfaction with regard to the way in which architects/developers tend to show their design proposals. Normally, these drawings or prototypes, are embedded in the contextual situation, and show how the design would be developed within the existing area; in coherence with the environment. Nowadays, concludes the report, it seems to be unnecessary and designers show their design in a "white" environment; all the spotlights are literally shining on their design. This could be an indicator for their own arrogance, or indicate they don't see the importance of coherence of their design within the environment. Both indicators are alarming, according to the commission. (Welstandscommissie Gemeente Groningen, 2010)

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter added the context specific theory, in addition to chapter two. A short overview of developments in the city of Groningen is provided. One of the most important developments described here, is the distinction between form and function. In particular, after world war two in many cities emphasis was put on functional aspects only, which changed lots of cities in this period; becoming modernist 'machines', not only in buildings but in structures and streets as well. A large amount of urban space became used for car traffic, also after world war two. Starting from the 1970's, urban space became again a place for a stay, and there was a growing consciousness for visual quality in the city: revitalizing inner cities became a national phenomenon in the Netherlands in the 1980's, when people no longer thought of inner cities like places with no future. Until that time most people believed the function of shopping centre and place of social phenomena would be moved to new places at city borders.

Structure of chapter 5: Case study Groningen: Findings

- **Introduction**
    a. List of places on the visual map
- **Appearance of the inner-city: the meaning of beauty and ugliness.**
    a. Beauty
    b. Ugliness
    c. Contrasts
- **Developments in historical perspective.**
    a. Previous appearances of the city
    b. Changes in appearance of urban space
    c. The existence of the protected cityscape
    d. Influence of protectionism in developments
- **Attitude towards new developments.**
    a. Opinions upon the city tram.
    b. Identity and the city
    c. Opinions upon the Forum project
- **Identity and the city**
    a. Defining identity
    b. Identity in the case of Groningen

5. CASE STUDY GRONINGEN: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to provide insight in the collection of explorative interviews with citizens and visitors of the city of Groningen. For an example of these interviews, see annex 8.3. With these interviews, a set of varied opinions, notions and assumptions among lay-people was collected. In the beginning of this chapter the visual map is shown, with the locations people chose as their illustration of good and bad implementation, or otherwise interesting places and buildings in the city of Groningen. The map is supported by a list with pictures of these buildings, with a short explanation, illustrated by quotes of interviewees. General information-division of age, gender etcetera - about the group of respondents can be found in annex 8.4.

In this chapter the findings of the interviewed lay-people are a central topic. The findings will be discussed and analyzed, in order to provide an explanation and give meaning through collecting differences and similarities within these findings. Second, the empirical findings will be linked with the theory, as discussed in chapter two. However, this thesis doesn't aim to check a theory, it will be useful to link the theoretical data with the empirical data, in order to make sense of the empirical findings in a scientific perspective.

The structure of this chapter draws on the order of topics in the interviews. The findings will be discussed for every single topic, accordingly the theory will be linked to these findings as well.

5.1.1. List of places on the visual map

The map in figure 5.1.1. shows the places and buildings, which were chosen by the respondents. These places correspond with the numbers on the map. The arrangement of places in this list is done randomly; it does not intent to reflect a certain degree of times these places were called by the respondents. In this section the different places are visually exposed, with pictures from others and author, all showing the actual situations.
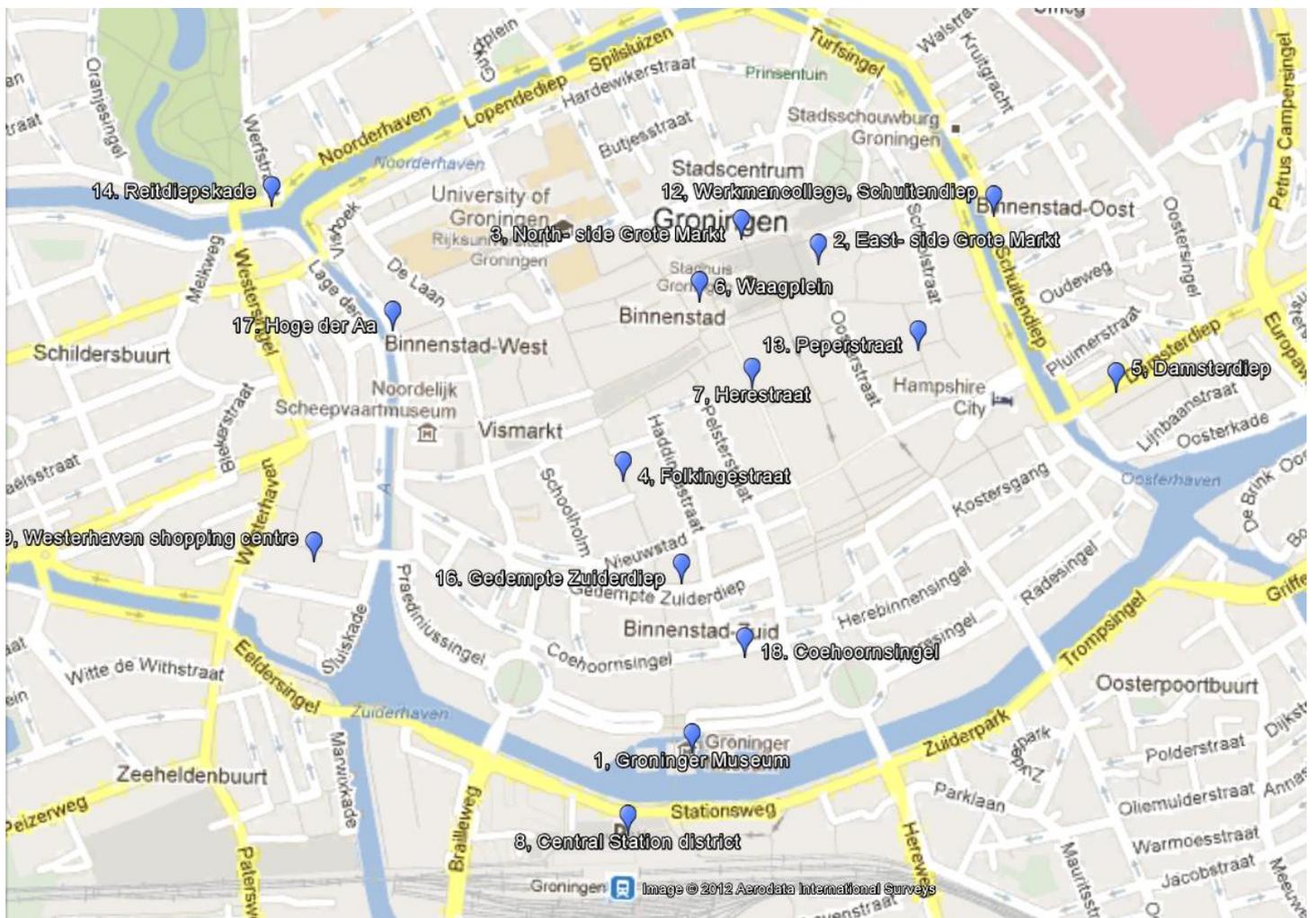
Figure 5.1: Map with places in the inner-city of Groningen, mentioned in the interviews. (Source: Google Maps, 2012)

1. Museum of Groningen	10. Gasunie gebouw (Concourslaan)
2. East-side of the Grote Markt	11. DUO gebouw (Kempkensberg)
3. North-side of the Grote Markt	12. Werkmancollege (Schuitendiep)
4. Folkingestraat	13. Peperstraat
5. Damsterdiep	14. Reitdiepkade
6. Waagplein	15. Academiegebouw
7. Herestraat	16. Gedempte Zuiderdiep
8. Stationsgebied (Trainstation district)	17. Hoge der Aa
9. Westerhaven shopping centre (Westerhaven)	18. Coehoornsingel

5.2 Appearance of the inner-city: the meaning of beauty and ugliness.

The lay-people in the interviews were first asked for their ideas about a city's appearance in general, such as their definition of beauty and ugliness, and how they experience the contrast that may be the result of a composition of both old and new designs in the city. These three topics are discussed in this section.

5.2.1 Beauty

The majority of the respondents seem to have a rather direct answer to the question about what beauty means to them, in the context of the city. Only by using examples, these people are able to illustrate their definitions of beauty. Without providing concrete examples, it was for many of the respondents hard to describe the difference between good taste and bad taste, or beauty and

ugliness. The people were asked for visual elements, within this set of possible answers the diversity was quite remarkable. Most of them called green elements - parks, trees - as an element of beauty for the city, whereas this is a quite hard to find element in the inner-city of Groningen, at least in public urban pace. Another repeatedly called aspect was "a clean city". This aspect of course is not determined by design/aesthetics, but attractiveness and for that reason also beauty is largely depending on how clean a city looks. In that way, it may be considered as a precondition for a successful design of the inner city. The most called element- a main point called by almost the entire group of respondents- is a good preservation of the historical city. Most of the respondents see the necessity of preconditions here again: only well-maintained objects are worth for preservation. To which level of maintenance this should be applied, remains unanswered by most of the interviewees. Drawing further on the words the people used to describe their meaning of beauty, also immaterial aspects of visual quality were called numerous times. Light and open streets; clear structures, were also highly influential for people's experience of the visual attractiveness. One of the respondents says: *".. it should offer everyone an embracing experience; something must be going on at a place, causing a feeling of cosiness. This requires open buildings, like the "Waag" building. The most important contribution towards beauty is largely depending on how lively this place is"* (This is not the only respondent acknowledging the high level of contextual influence on the experience of (visual) beauty. Also the other respondents call a major contribution of this experience towards the city's lively characteristics: the influence of the students presence in the city of Groningen.

The interviews show that beauty has to do with emotions, with an experience of belonging, feeling light, open and "clean", all things which do not seem to be linked directly with elements of beauty like form, colour and shape. Theory showed that different design approaches investigated in different elements, like illustrated in the theoretical background with Madanipour (1996). The most important approach, the post-modernist approach, seems to be best linked with the common viewpoints of the interviewees. This approach embraces the historical forms of urban space again, after a period of modernism in which form followed function. Not one single respondent turned out to be a follower of such an modernistic approach, although some persons wanted straight, open and walk able blocks of buildings to not get lost, and saw this as "beauty". While in the theoretical chapter the role of heritage, monuments and nostalgia were discussed, these three topics were hardly mentioned among the interviewees. Yeoh and Kong's (1996) definition of nostalgia: *"an attitude towards the past wherein elements of the past are viewed favourably, celebrated and even glorified"*, was hardly recognizable among the findings. Even when it was expected people would come with examples like the Martinitoren, none of them mentioned this very building at all, while it is the most recognizable marker for the city of Groningen. However, nostalgic feelings came to peoples mind when new interventions were discussed. For example the city tram, or Forum, caused people to come up with reasons of nostalgic origins: these new developments would destroy the "authenticity" of the city. Ashworth (2007) was discussed in the theoretical background as well, and his ideas about "authenticity" exactly show that authenticity does not exist. Traces of the past never can be authentic since a long history of adaption, restoration, demolition and decision making made them into what they are nowadays. But for certain purposes, like resistance against new developments, people can easily bring their experience of what authentic should be to their minds.

5.2.2. Ugliness

While the theoretical framework shows that new developments in the context of the historical city should not intend to pursue an artificial, historical appearance to avoid misinterpreted feelings of the past, at the same time also the average, more contrasting new-built architecture has to deal with very little interest. The tendency amongst respondents, shows that a carefully fitting in of new buildings and objects is preferred, rather than placing new, exciting or otherwise daring designs. This raises the question: what do they mean with carefully fitting in? It could entail both a copy of something historical, or be a modern design as well, which could be in synthesis with the historical context. It looks like the distinction between historical and modernistic here, could be better replaced with extraordinary on the one hand, and "conservative" on the other hand, meaning that it is not the distinction between historical looking and modernistic design which is the topic of discussion, but moderate designing, with no extraordinary details, colours which could shock the viewer, especially in the context of the historical inner-city. However, daring designs still are preferred in the city according to the most interviewees, but only when these are located in non-historical environment, for example at the borders of the city or within industrial districts. An example of such a collection of buildings can be found within the DUO offices, see picture 4.2.x

Picture 5.2: Drawing of the DUO offices (place 11 on the visual map), located outside the inner-city. (Author unknown, 2011)

Whereas a building is highly appreciated at a certain place, this same building would receive criticism if it was located in the context of an historical city centre. This contrast between old and new, almost unanimously receives criticism among the interviewees. An illustrative place to describe this contrast, can be found in the recently developed bike storage (see picture 4.2.x), also known as "city balcony" (in Dutch: Stadsbalkon), in front of the central train station – which has been restored twelve years ago. One of the respondents describes her experience of this place as following: *"First they restored the train station, with extraordinary attention paid to authentic colours and other details… and immediately in front of this station this really awful*

looking city balcony is placed. The designer of this project really deserves to be punished. The contrast between these two is way too big. Besides, this balcony doesn't even invite people to stay there, something the designers actually saw as an important function of this place. It really is a shame".

Picture 5.3: Central train station and "Stadsbalkon" bike storage (place 8 on the visual map) (Photographer unknown, 2010)

Picture 5.4:. School building of the " Werkmancollege" at the Schuitendiep (place 12 on the visual map) (Photographer unknown, 2011)

From the empirical findings in the interviews it can be argued that people dislike extraordinary designs in the context of places which they highly appreciate, like historical places, such as the illustration of the historical train station next to the new built city balcony shows. Can we conclude from this, that ugliness also is context specific? It looks like ugliness exists when both worlds, modernism and romanticism, come together. In the theoretical background Denslagen (2005) was discussed, who criticized Dutch heritage conservation for being to open towards new developments in parts of the city that should be carefully conserved. When people see the city literally as a 'museum' like described by Vermeer (2003), than anything that doesn't belong to the collection can be considered as ugliness, metaphorically speaking. The fact that most lay-people chose their examples of ugly places out of modernist buildings, recently built after world war two, also is not very surprising from the view of theory, such as Ashworth (2005) describes how in this after world war two period the Dutch architecture mainly existed out of grey-concrete, of which nowadays so very little is left behind , it actually almost becomes heritage. Heins (2003) described that the experience of ugliness also has to deal with the mismatch between designers and the lay-peoples demands. He described that Dutch citizens usually have been quite conservative when it comes to design, whereas designers always intend to be original, shocking and renewing. From the empirical data of the interviews, this statement of Heins (2003) is acknowledged, which can be best illustrated with the Groninger Museum: a very unique, striking and quite shocking design, especially in the context of the inner-city.

Picture 5.5: Groninger Museum (place 1 on the visual map)(Photo: R. Richter, 2010)

5.2.3. Contrasts

However, while contrasts between new and old designs receive criticism from almost the complete list of respondents, there are some contrasts which seem to be highly appreciated. Mainly, very strong contrasts can count on positive comments. An example of a very contrasting situation can be found on the Zuiderdiep (see picture 4.2.x) , one of the respondents mentioned this place: A building made out of glass, placed in a street with small, old houses. Also this house was placed on pillars, which made it a tower in relation with the surrounding houses in the

street. Many other respondents mentioned places, which were in high contrast with their environment, as actually very well succeeded designs. Prominently mentioned was the "Groninger museum" (see picture 4.2.x) Remarkable here are the observed differences in appreciation: most of the respondents liked the design in itself, but rejected the design because it was located at the wrong place, according to them. Others, whom also liked the design, appreciated it even more because of its very location. Only a very few respondents did not appreciate the museum's design at all, without considering it in the context of its current location.

The link with theory is hard to find, when we discuss the examples of very high contrasts leading to high appreciation. On the other hand contrasts are appreciated when they do not conflict with their context. Harmony and design was discussed in the theoretical background, with the help of Denslagen's book "Romantic Modernism" (2005). From his point of view, attempts to mix different styles into a comprehensive appearance are wrong, it brings modernism to romanticism and both worlds should remain separated. This goal of creating an incomprehensive appearance, which certainly is not the case in situations of very strong contrasts, may hypothetically be the answer to the question why some very high contrasts are appreciated, while moderate contrasts, sometimes may lead to disapproval from lay-people, in other words: things become appreciated when it is clear that it was not the aim at all to build something extraordinary next to something traditional to create a comprehensive appearance.

Picture 5.6: House of glass at the Gedempte Zuiderdiep, south side of the inner-city. (place 16 on the visual map) (Author Unknown, 2007)

Picture 5.7: "Remonstrantse kerk" wing at the Coehoornsingel. (place 18 on the visual map) (Photo: O. Oudeman, 2006)

At the very same time, there seems to be a conservative attitude with regard to design of buildings. At the one hand people don't like new architecture in area's with a historical character, and also simple designs are considered as being "dull" and uninteresting. At the other hand, there are widespread objections against daring, "obtrusive" designs. This tendency is observable among the respondents, but also is reflected in the large number of objections which were made during the referendum to survey the citizens approval for the design of the "Forum". These resistant attitudes against this extraordinary design caused a long period of uncertainty before the building activities were finally started in October 2012. Such a lengthy period of preparations may take away new incentives, according to the viewpoints of the respondents. When such new initiatives cannot count on support of citizens, this also may contribute to a – possible- process of decline in the cities appearance. When people were asked to reflect on the identity of Groningen, which is discussed later on in this chapter, one of the positive critiques turned out to be "the young and dynamic character" of the city. The described fact which reflects the objections against new developments, seems to be in contrast with the image of a young and dynamic city, which is in need of change made by new, daring developments.

In general, the image that emerges from the respondents viewpoints show very little enthusiasm for new, radical initiatives in visual design. However, there are still new developments - especially modern, striking designs – which received positive comments. Successful examples of this kind of architecture can be found in the city as well. The Gasunie building (see picture 5.7) was repeatedly mentioned among the respondents, even though it is not situated in or near what everyone would call the inner-city. Whether it also would have been appreciated if it was situated in the inner city or not, remains unclear. The fact that now it is not situated in an historical centre, probably would be a part of constructing their positive embracement of this particular building, however this is not explicitly mentioned in the conversations by any of the respondents. What might be concluded from this, is that there are possibilities for new, daring designs within the city of Groningen, but only to certain limits: such buildings at least should not be in contrast with their environment, like the Gasunie building was located in between a highroad and a park, not in between any (historical) environment of buildings at all .This finding shows that the design itself is not the only factor which decides upon the success of new developments.

Concluding from the set of interviews, it could be stated that beauty is "in the eye of the beholder"; the word beauty has different meanings for different people, because beauty is shaped by our minds. Contextual elements were very influential for the respondents, in ascribing appreciation to designs. Many of them believe that by some architects no attention is paid to the

context of new designs. Already starting in the design of new architecture, these so-called "ego tripping" architects seem to have no respect for the implementation of their design; resulting in showing their scale models within an area of "white" environment, in which the actual situation is not showed. Among the group of respondents ,a few of them mentioned this. *"I believe there was no attention paid to implementation at all here... Another example of an ego tripping architect, who only imagine to plant flags, to increase their own status. In my opinion, there are too many of this kind of architects".* This quote refers to the recently finished underground car park at the Damsterdiep, with a new office on top of it, see picture 4.2.x.

Picture 5.9:. Recently build office (place 5 on the visual map) at the Damsterdiep (Photo: "Onix", 2012)

5.3 Developments in historical perspective.

5.3.1 Previous appearances of the city

The vast majority of respondents were not able to remember, or otherwise describe, how the city's appearance has changed in the last 20-30 years. The last 10 years were somehow easier to describe for some of the persons living here, whereas others believed they could remember the last 10 years, but argued that only very little has changed. This might be clarified in two ways: firs, the changes were indeed very little and therefore not recognized. Second, the respondents do not remember the previous appearances of the city due to several reasons. This last explanation may occur when both new developments occurred and older buildings were saved, or at least noticeable buildings were saved. What may carefully be concluded from this, is that none of the respondents had feelings of regret for loosing older developments. Whereas many showed resistance against new developments, none of them demonstrated resistances against earlier new developments replacing historical buildings in the city. Of course, in fact the city always has been changing and in that way is dynamic. The next section will discuss the role of the protected cityscape more deeply, important here is to illustrate how - by estimation - half of the respondents would lay their trust in so-called 'self protecting' mechanisms, or otherwise self-organizing bodies, in order preserve a historical character within the inner city, replacing the protectionism established by the protected cityscape. Whereas a considerable part of the

inner-city disappeared after world war two, none of the respondents mentions how the replacement with modernistic buildings was a wrong choice at that time, even despite the fact that the north-side of the Grote Markt actually was mentioned several times as a place with ugly, modernistic, buildings which should be replaced soon by something more coherent. While theoretically nostalgia also could be a reason for people to love or hate historical buildings and places, the general image emerging from the interviewees ideas do not point at nostalgic experiences at all.

Picture 5.10.: East-side (place 2 on the visual map) of the Grote Markt (Photographer unknown, year unknown)

Picture 5.11: The V&D building (place 3 on the visual map) at the North-Side of the Grote Markt (Photographer unknown, 2010)

5.3.2 Changes in appearance of urban space

With regard to the developments in history, the respondents were not discussing the buildings or groups of buildings in specific; they also put emphasis on the arrangement of space in a broader framework. According to the observations, the most important requirements here are open, light spaces and the ability to walk easily. In the previous chapter the transformation in Groningen in the seventies was discussed, which caused the situation which is very accurate to the current cities appearance, from the viewpoint of urban space appearance. However, none of the respondents calls this transformation from area for transportation towards pedestrian area. Again, the question remains: do people not know about this transformation or is it of non-relevance in constructing their opinion about the urban space in the inner-city. There was only one respondent mentioning the fact that the whole inner-city was dedicated to the pedestrian, which contributed according to this person to the appreciation of the inner city. This person makes the suggestion to even reduce car traffic further in future.

Though the acknowledgement of this transformation from 'function to form' in the inner city in the seventies seems to be very little among the respondents, it was closely connected to the comprehensive revitalization of the city, which started a growing attention for the quality of design in the inner city in the nineties, such as described in the previous chapter. Removing the cars from the inner city and giving space to the pedestrians could be considered as the starting point for the later plans, like "Space for space – about the quality of the inner-city of Groningen"(Gemeente Groningen, 1991), which was an incentive for the later plan "Masterplan public space" in which a comprehensive approach for public space was introduced. One of the most-called buildings when it comes to beauty, was de Waagcomplex, which also was a project resulting from this plan. In the theoretical part about the city's revitalization attention was paid to the shift from the city as a "cosy" living room in the seventies – with flowers, small walls etc.- towards more spacious, open space with more respect to the context. (Van der Cammen and De Klerk, 2008). Remarkably, some people still call this green elements as being one of the requirements for a nice inner-city, while in fact there is hardly any green findable in the inner city. Accordingly, theory shows that the shift in inner-city management was moving to details in order to increase quality: good furniture, lights, pavements etcetera. Also here there seems to be a discrepancy between theory and the empirical data: Interviewees were not discussing the details at all, especially not those about the design of public space, when they were asked for the elements which defined beauty in an inner-city. The fact that these details were not mentioned does not necessarily mean that these are not important in the experience of lay-people, as these elements might play an unconscious role.

Picture 5.12: Herestraat in direction of the Waagplein (place 7 on the visual map) (Photographer unknown, 2006)

Picture 5.13: The Folkingestraat (place 4 on the visual map)(Photographer unknown, year unknown)

5.4 Protected cityscape

5.4.1. The existence of the protected cityscape

When the respondents are asked for their opinion about the protected cityscape, a majority is only able to say they know about the existence of this protection. However, most of them do not know the contents of this legislation. Most remarkable here is how a lot of respondents believe it is unnecessary for protecting heritage and otherwise historical buildings in the city. As discussed in the previous section, a large group believes in the power of preservation by individuals themselves, or otherwise self-protecting processes would occur. In other words, looking at the general image emerging from the respondents opinions, the role of this protected cityscape, or "Welstandscommissie" might be discussed.

5.4.2. Influence of protectionism in developments

The question that remains here, is: would the city show a different inner-city if there never would have been some kind of protectionism for heritage? One of the aims of this protectionism is of course the preservation, by restricting new developments and keeping changes to the current situation to a minimal, which achieved the actual appearance. However, a major part believes this still would be the same case even without such a body of protection. One of the respondents illustrates: *"I believe the city would have more or less developed in a same way, even without this "welstandscommissie". "When people buy an historic building, they will automatically have the intention to make it look beautiful and pay attention to the appearance of their home".* Some respondents explained they believe that without this restrictions coming from this policy, the city would have more tall buildings within the area of the inner – city.

The importance of details in design within preserving cityscapes, were barely mentioned. Only a few respondents call fences, lights or furniture as disturbing within the context. On the other hand, the people who believe that the city would not have a different appearance without the described, still see the importance of such a protection. Almost the entire group of respondents sees the importance of having a guarantee for preserving historical values. Amongst them, the case of protectionism seems to deal with the presence of buildings (preservation or demolition) instead of protection through legislation, rules with regard to details in visual appearance. Some of the respondents also see the body of protection as an obstacle for new developments: *"I seriously doubt the necessity of this policy.. the goals shouldn't be drawing on static criteria and the current cityscape, instead they should intend to guarantee the quality of the current and the future cityscape as well. Preferences, functions, citizens.. everything changes, and so does the city appearance.."*

When we link these findings about the necessity of having such a policy to the theory, a wide gap emerges. What can be concluded from the empirical data, is that many people believe in self-conserving practices resulting from "good- ownership" of the people who possess a historical building. The literature on the other hand shows that it was in particular against the extremes of individual rights to set rules for protecting the city's appearance. In the previous chapter, the role of the "welstandscommissie" in Groningen was discussed, and they saw an alarming tendency: the architects were losing touch with the environment, in making their designs, especially in the last years they tended to present their designs in a "white environment". In other words, they saw increasing interest for contextual quality of the new design. The question here is : how alarming is the fact that lay-people do not seem to recognize the importance of protected cityscape, or at least the role of the commission within this protection?

5.5 Attitude towards new developments.

Many of the respondents also do mention new developments, when they were asked about the changing appearance of the inner city. Within this framework, two projects were mentioned repeatedly. First, the project "Forum", at the East –side of the Grote Markt, which recently started with de demolition of buildings at this location. Second, the city tram project, which very recently was rejected by the city council.

Picture 5.16: Waagplein with "Goudkantoor" (place 6 on the visual map) (Photo: T. Sekuur, 2007)

5.5.1 Opinions upon the city tram.

Concluding from the major part of the interviewees viewpoints, they saw the city tram as both a threat for the city, as well as a realistic alternative for the current public transport issues in the city. Functionally, this city tram would be justified in order to solve a growing demand for public transport. But when these very same interviewees try to imagine the implementation of the tram through the city centre, they seem to have conflicting opinions. Apart from the fact that the city temporary would look like an excavation, most of the interviewees would not appreciate a tram going through the small streets. With regard to the change this tram will make for the appearance of the inner city, some respondents illustrate how this tram would disturb the cities "quiet character", and also impair the reputation of Groningen as- what some call it- a "peaceful, Northern Dutch city". A small part of the groups pronounces feelings of disappointment with regard to stopping the project. From their point of view, the city tram would be an eye-catcher, and increase the reputation of Groningen as a young, dynamic and future-oriented city. Some people do not care about it at all, since they do not need the tram personally, nor see it as disturbing for the inner cities appearance.

Taking the various viewpoints in consideration, it looks likes the majority of people have objections against this project. However, the necessity to discuss the influence of this project on the appearance of the inner-city any further is no longer at stake, since the project is no longer within the program of projects in Groningen.

Figure 5.17: How the east-side of the Grote Markt would have looked with the city tram. (Image: Lautenbag Advies, 2012)
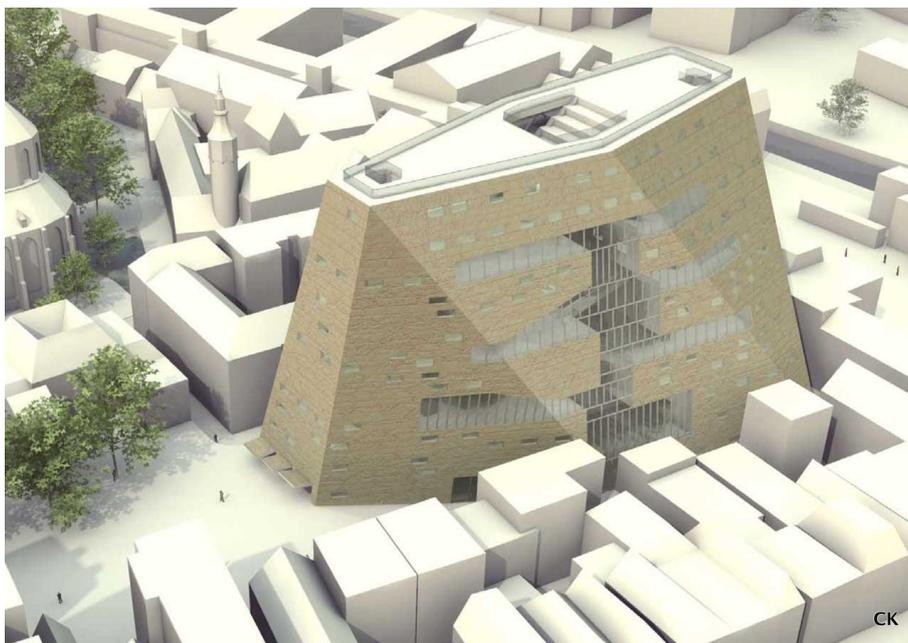
Figure 5.18: The design of the Groninger Forum (Image: NL Architects, 2008)

5.6.2 Opinions upon the Forum project

The second illustrated development here, deals with the recently started project of the new Forum. To provide space for the realization, a number of buildings recently were demolished at the east-side of the Grote Markt. With regard to the earlier exposed opinions upon this place, it is not to be expected people would regret the disappearance of these buildings. As far as people even know about this area, the Forum will replace only grey, anonymous modernistic buildings. The Forum project can count on dividing opinions within the group of respondents. Within the group, a tendency to positive or negative attitude towards this project, was not observed. Aesthetics is not the first topic mentioned here, the objections mostly were dealing with the greatness of the Forum project as well as the high costs that came which this project. With regard to the aesthetics, again the implementation of the project within the environment seems

to be of decisive importance for the negative attitude of half of the group. The main critique in this case deals with the futuristic design: in itself appreciated but not here, in the inner city. However, apart from giving this kind of comments, the respondents did not come with alternatives or a description of elements which caused this futuristic design. The overall picture of the whole project was decisive for ascribing approval for this design. Only a few of the respondents were discussing their objections a bit more specific, by demonstrating their ideas about choosing colours and form for the design of the Forum.

5.6 Identity and the city

At the end of the interviews the respondents were asked to describe their ideas about what "identity" means to them, and if they would believe a city has something like an "identity". A possible definition of identity was not handed to the respondents, in order to let them feel free to formulate their own definition. By doing so, a comprehensive set of different divergent ideas was expected to receive.

Picture 5.19: "Academiegebouw", the University of Groningen at the Broerstraat (place 15 on the visual map) (Photographer unknown, 2006)

5.6.1.Defining identity

Remarkably, almost every single respondent acknowledged that cities have their own identity. So far, they could answer the question, but it became more difficult for them to explain what identity means, and how they see it influencing their personal lives. Generally, drawing on the interview findings, for most of the people identity is about the whole of atmosphere, experience and attachment to a place. The role of a cities visual appearance in the described definition of identity is rather vague. Of course, the visual attractiveness of a city is embedded in how the image and appreciation of a city is defined, but none of the respondents put emphasis purely on visual design as a part of their explanation on identity. Furthermore, historical events and cultural aspects were not mentioned as contributions in shaping a city's identity. Drawing on the described ideas about identity in the theoretical framework, historical events might be of major

influence in shaping a city's identity, like New York received its nowadays identity largely on the events of 'nine-eleven'.

Picture 5.20: Reitdiepkade, at the Northeast side of the inner-city (place 15 at the visual map). (Photo: R. Boelens, 2010)

5.6.2 Identity in the case of Groningen

Identity also turned out to be as only definable in relation with identities of other cities. What exactly –personally- defined the identity of Groningen, was quite hard to answer for most of the respondents. Emerging from the findings, people like to put emphasis on the fact that Groningen is a city in the Northern part of the Netherlands, distinguishing itself with this position from more central situated cities. One of the respondents defines the identity of Groningen as following: *"It's difficult to explain, but in my opinion something like "typical" Groningen does exist. It's about the atmosphere, which you would immediately recognize when returning from other cities i.e. Amsterdam or Utrecht."* The elements which make this distinction from other cities, merely lies in the fact that there are students in this city, whom made the city "young, lively and dynamic", according to the major part of the respondents. Whereas the aspect of visual design was barely mentioned in giving a definition of identity in general, the respondents called the visual attractiveness of Groningen as one of the bullet points in what is shaping the identity of Groningen. They all praised the fact that much of the cities heritage was preserved, and still continues to be well-maintained, as a contribution to a "cosy", lively city paying attention for its past.

The findings about identity and visual appearance of the city, can be linked to the theory. Discussed in the theoretical background, was the idea of Reijndorp and Haijer (2001), that especially the most remarkable, eye-catching designs are markers for a city's identity: they create and support an identity. From this perspective, one would expect the Martinitower to be a prominently called building, but –discussed before- remarkably enough no one mentioned this building, not even when the people were asked for their ideas about identity and the city. On the other hand, other eye-catchers were mentioned repeatedly, like the Gasunie building and the DUO buildings, which all were deciding elements on the skyline of Groningen. But where theory

tells that identity is (partly) shaped by such markers, the identity the lay-people described was coming from very other things, generally best described as the atmosphere of the city, a role in which buildings seem to have a minor contribution compared to the people who live in the city.

In the theoretical part, the importance of acknowledging a city's identity in making plans was mentioned by Boterman (2009). With regard to future interventions in the city's appearance, this can be linked to the resistance on the city tram, for those people who believed the appearance of a tram would not fit in with their idea of "Groningen as a quiet, northern city". In other words, people seem to look at future developments not only from a perspective of visual integration, also the development should be fitting in with a cities identity, whatever that identity may mean among several citizens.

Accordingly, the reputation of the inner-city was shortly discussed in the previous chapter. The city received the title "Best inner- city of the Netherlands" in 2005. This was seven years ago, but it could be argued that the findings of the interviews still show a very positive set of meanings about the qualities of the inner-city, at least the visual attractiveness can count on very little negative comments.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter the connection between research findings, theory and research questions will be explained, aiming to answer the research questions. First, the research objective and questions are presented again. After this, a reflection will evaluate this research: first the theoretical part of the research will be considered, followed by a methodological reflection. This section attempts to make statements about the reliability and quality of both the process and results of the research. Third, the conclusion section will provide answers for the research questions accompanied with a reflection on to what extent the questions are answered. In the end, research recommendations based will be represented, drawing on eventually new questions this research might lead to.

6.2 Research objective and questions

This conclusion attempts to answer the following main question:

How is visual design quality in inner-cities experienced by lay-people?

The sub questions posed were:

- *How do lay people reflect on design quality in urban space?*
- *How do lay people reflect on interventions in historical urban space areas?*
- *Are planning policies within heritage area's following demands of lay people?*
- *What is the influence of developments over time in creating lay peoples view upon design quality in historical areas in public space?*

6.3 Reflections

6.3.1 Theoretical reflection

The research questions leave many questions open for definitions, and before doing the case study the findings of other researches and of course theory with regard to the topic had to be explored, for the researcher himself to explore the definitions, theories and with the help of this to get an overview of what might be expected from the lessons in case study. Problematic from the beginning, was the process of indicating relevant topics. It took a long time before we clearly posed that there were three main topics standing central in the thesis, each interdependently connected: human cognition, heritage (or historical buildings) and urban space. Still, the whole surface of topics with regard to the topic of visual design seemed to be not covered very well. In the end, the connection of theory with the findings shows similarities, and thus the expectations are in accordance with the findings from the case study. However, the findings show the need for new exploration: why do people have certain preferences? Why are contrasts experienced differently? Why was no one mentioning certain heritage items which would have been expected as an answer to the question of what beauty means? The difficulty here lays in drawing borders the research. The fact that the research had a qualitative character did not make this process easier.

6.3.2. Methodological reflection

Doing a research on viewpoints, opinions and emotions requires a careful process of defining: what exactly do you want to know as researcher? A first aspect of difficulty in the methodological part deals with the question how to gather this primary data. Investigating the perspective of lay-people Borders, definitions have to be defined before starting to collect data. As posed in the methodology chapter, working with qualitative data means working with abstract definitions: multi interpretable topics. In the stage of the research design and proposal the main question was not defined and posed very clear. After an exploration of literature and topics investigated by others, it slowly got shaped into its final shape. However, doing a research always are accompanied by such circular processes, in this research it meant changing the ideas and approaches with regard to the used methods several times. The initial plan was to use interviews, photography and data from archives. In the end, the major part of the research depends on the interviews. Visual data from archives would surely have been beneficial, either supporting theory or the interview findings, but it was not applied in the research for reasons of time and complexity.

6.3 Conclusions

As we stated in the beginning of this theses, and was further discussed in the methodology chapter, the findings of the case study only could be used for very carefully drawn conclusions. This section is not meant to summarize or quantify the findings from the case study. The explorative character underpins this, and is in need of describing tendencies which emerged from the case study. The conclusions will be discussed by the order of the research questions.

- *How do lay people reflect on design quality in urban space?*

The laypeople in this investigation were asked to formulate their own ideas about beauty and ugliness, to create an easy way to discuss design quality for them. What can be concluded from this part, is that design quality has very little to do with details on form, shape and colours. However, this did not mean that design quality was meaningless to the respondents, instead, they paid much attention to the coherence between designs in the inner city. In general, their starting point is the historical , traditional, city, and everything built in this area should be adapted to the style of the existing context. The most important finding here, might be that good design is very context driven: beauty only gets meaning from the lay people, in a perspective where they are constantly considering the elements of a new design in the context of the area this design will be in. Beauty for that reason is a very exchangeable concept, turned out of these findings. Beauty not only has to deal with the elements shape, colour and form, but more with the broader context , such as the structures and spaciousness in a city. Accordingly, remarkable is how people only mention elements, buildings they see, or in other words are cached by the eye. Upper store levels, for examples, were hardly mentioned, while these buildings sometimes are in very high contrast with the design – and maintenance level- of the street level shops and houses.

- *How do lay people reflect on interventions in historical urban space areas?*

In general, the image that emerges from the empirical data, shows respect for the historical traces of the past. Whereas in the theory monuments and heritage are given an important role in considering the inner city's appearance, the respondents hardly call any monuments or heritage as attractive buildings. However, not all interventions are visible to them. While we discussed

the several transformations of the inner city space, like the transformation from function to form: abandoning the car out of the inner-city, these seem not to be the topics for the lay-people. When it comes to new interventions in historical area's lay-people seem to be more aware of their capabilities to use the historical appearance of the city as an argument to show their approving or disapproving attitudes towards new developments. Two recent developments were used in this thesis to illustrate plans which were not finished yet: the Forum and the city tram. The Forum currently is under construction, since October 2012; the city tram plans were rejected by the city council in this same month. The Forum typically can be considered as a contrast increasing building, when the looks of the design are compared with the context of designs it is going to be built within. Contrasts generally were not preferred by the lay-people, but some very strong contrasts between buildings were actually appreciated. A theoretical explanation for this was not found so far. It is important to acknowledge the fact that contrast mostly did not mean the contrast between historical-modernistic, but sometimes was a contrast of ordinary-extraordinary. People do not wish to see remarkable, extraordinary eye-catchers within the area of the historical city. Located on the borders of the city, these buildings could count on appreciation. Again here, beauty turned out to be a very context specific value again. Examples like the Gasunie building and the DUO buildings illustrate how buildings can be appreciated for their design, but are contested when they would have been located in, or close to the city centre, which they are not in the real situation.

What looks like a paradox in the reflection of laypeople on interventions, is the awareness of an historical cityscape at the one hand, and the general image that emerged from the laypeople's interviews in which they carefully conclude that the role of cityscape protection might be unnecessary, on the other hand. A large part of the respondents explained that they believed in self- conservational mechanisms of owners of historical buildings, instead of using rules coming from a central body like the "Welstandscommisie" . The conclusion here might be that people do acknowledge the need for preservation, but are very trustful in the owners of the buildings, rather than the power of authorities.

- *Are planning policies within heritage area's following demands of lay people?*

The image that emerged from the set of interviews, shows divided opinions with regard to this topic. The first question to answer here is: What are the actual demands of lay-people in the inner-city area? Most of the people preferred a traditional looking, historical city heart. The current planning policies seem to follow the demands: since the 1990's the city investigated in the comprehensive qualities of the city centre. The visual attractiveness of the urban space, for instance was highly appreciated. On the other side, new developments like the city tram and the Forum were more controversial: they were, in general, a threat to the historical looking city heart. It is hard to conclude that policies follow demands or do not, since there are several demands among the lay-people. A few developments still point at unanimous disapproval, like the development of an underground car park at the Damsterdiep demonstrates. The fact that the planning policy allowed this development of such a large scale, and in high contrast with the context of buildings and context of former appearance, shows that there are mismatches between the planners and the lay-people. On the other hand, people presented their own viewpoints on the planners reputation in Groningen, and the image that emerges here shows a different message: compared to other Dutch cities, the citizens and visitors of Groningen believe that the recent developments in Groningen - and the way planners deal with the city in general –

deserves high appreciation. They see the inevitable fact that in practice a city never can do the right thing, to satisfy all stakeholders. With that idea in mind, only very little criticism against the planners practice remains. This criticism deals with the context again: the respondents prefer to see even more attention paid to the context: fitting in buildings within the historical context may even be done more carefully, when we take a look at the group of people who rejected the Forum because of its high contrast of the historical area it is placed within. Another example of this was found in the city balcony, next to the central train station. The high contrast between the very well restored train station and the eye-catching bicycle storage made people reflect on the question: how could this arrangement of two 'opposites' be possible: which planning policy intended to made this situation possible? But the story is not only about the planners practice here; a lot of 'harm' seems to come from architects, of course this indirectly is the responsibility of the planners practice as well. What can be concluded from the architects attitudes in general, is that they have a reputation amongst the lay-people of "selfish, egoistic" designers. With this, the lay-people refer to the planning of new designs in an egoistic way, meaning putting all spotlights on the new project with no attention for physical context, resulting in showing "white" context in their design proposals. This bad reputation of some architects was supported by the Welstandscommisie, , as we discussed, who saw this phenomenon of presenting in white context as something very alarming. Concluding, the planning practice seem to follow the preferences of the lay-people, in the case of Groningen, although there is very little criticism dealing with ego-tripping architecture, people will not approve such behaviour, in particular not in the historical city centre.

- *What is the influence of developments over time in creating lay peoples view upon design quality in historical areas in public space?*

The developments over time in the inner city of Groningen were not very well known among the respondents. Of course, the people had a global idea of how the city has developed to its current appearance. Barely mentioned was the transformation towards pedestrian area, which somehow was a first start for revitalizing the inner city. What can be concluded here, is that the specific context of the history of Groningen was not of very big influence in creating people's own story about the cities past. Instead, people seem to draw their viewpoints on more general ideas of how (Dutch) cities developed. In other words, not the specific story of Groningen constructs people's cognition of the city's past, general ideas of the past do so even more.

The historical area in Groningen lost buildings after bombings in world war two, in 1945. The post-war developments of modernist, grey concrete buildings formed a break with the traditional way of building. Especially this development nowadays can count on disapproving opinions. If it was up to the lay-people, the city had to be restored in the 1950's with more respect to the situation before the bombings. The fact that the modernistic , grey buildings still dominate the east and north side of the Grote Markt, also receives criticism. According to the respondents these buildings should have been replaced in the last decades already. To conclude, the developments in time, such as building cheap, modernistic buildings after world war two, to quickly reconstruct the city and provide space for families, nowadays is rejected because the motives for building in such a style are outdated. Nowadays the only physical remains remind the lay-people of bad-taste, and thus should be demolished for aesthetical reasons only. The way Ashworth (2003) reflects on this development of demolishing all traces of post-war modernism, by suggesting that some of these buildings should become heritage, as they present

a chapter out of Dutch planning history, does not get support from the interviewed laypeople at least. Having said this, it can be concluded that developments over time only have a slight influence in constructing ideas of design quality with regard to the inner-city appearance. Most influential are still the cognitive images people posses, their individual images of what is good design, drawing on images of the past they created themselves.

6.4 Research recommendations

It is important to make recommendations for new research, that will contribute to the findings presented in this thesis, because this thesis also raises new questions and shows topics which are understudied.

This thesis investigated the various aspects that played a role in the experience of lay-people. We found out that this is a quite complex practice, and sometimes opinions are drawing on emotions or unconscious processes. Also, the theory sometimes is hard to link with the empirical data. A first recommendation for new research, would be to investigate the mismatches between intentions of planners and architects, and the experience of their designs by lay-people. In this thesis the examples of such mismatches can be found, but the story of the planners and the architects remains unknown. Investigating the synthesis between lay-people and professionals will be an interesting addition, to give meaning to the findings in this thesis as well. Also important to investigate, is the role of architects, especially their views on how to implement plans in the context.

Other new researches, investigating the experience of lay-people, may pay more attention to either one of the elements identity, cognition, and emotion. In this thesis the distinction between such elements sometimes seems to be ambiguous.

Another topic, related to this thesis, which is in need of future research is how the protected cityscape can be achieved. In this thesis was shown how the lay-people believed such a policy was not important. How would this be in other cities? What are the alternatives for preservation to protected cityscapes?

Further, the meaning of contrast within planning needs further investigation. Contrast turned out to be a decisive factor in giving appreciation: high contrasts, moderate contrasts; contrasts between historical and modern; contrasts between ordinary and extraordinary. Why do these contrasts influence people's experience exactly?

Finally, not only new topics should be researched, it also would be beneficial to know what the findings of this research would look like in other cities in the Netherlands, to be able to say something about a cities reputation and be able to make a comparison between the "reputation of planning" among Dutch cities, for instance.

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8. APPENDIX

Appendix 8. 1 Interview: list of questions, Dutch

Algemeen

- Wat is uw leeftijd ?
- Wat is uw hoogst voltooide opleiding?
- Waar woont u?
  - Indien laatste antwoord is " Groningen": Hoelang woont u hier?

Uiterlijk van de binnenstad: de betekenis van aantrekkelijkheid

- Als het gaat om het uiterlijk (beeld) van de binnenstad, wat is volgens u in een notendop "aantrekkelijk" ?
- En wat "lelijkheid"?
- Kunt u een gebouw/plek noemen of aanwijzen in de Groninger binnenstad, welke naar uw mening controversieel (storend, bedenkelijk) is vanwege zijn uiterlijke kenmerken?
- Waar komt dit volgens u door?

Beschermd stadsgezicht

- Kent u het begrip "beschermd stadsgezicht"?
- Bent u hier bekend mee in het geval van Groningen?
- Wat vindt u van het belang van zo'n bescherming?
- Zou volgens u de binnenstad zonder een dergelijk beleid een ander uiterlijk (aanzicht) hebben gehad?

Ontwikkelingen in historisch perspectief

- Bent u bekend met veranderingen in het uiterlijk (aanzicht) van de binnenstad in de laatste 20-30 jaar?
- Zo ja, hoe waardeert u deze veranderingen?
- Spelen historische gebouwen (zoals monumentale panden, kerken) een rol in het toekennen van waardering aan het uiterlijk van de binnenstad in Groningen?
- In hoeverre vindt u moderne ontwerpen (gebouwen, architectuur) passend binnen een gebied met historische gebouwen?
- Kunt u een voorbeeld noemen/aanwijzen van ontwerpen (gebouwen, architectuur) die naar uw mening niet of juist wel goed ingepast zijn?

Identiteit

- Heeft een stad volgens u een "identiteit" ?
- Zoja, hoe beïnvloedt deze identiteit u persoonlijk?

- Welk cijfer zou u geven aan de visuele aantrekkelijkheid van de binnenstad van Groningen ? Toelichting niet nodig.
- Tot slot, als u nog een aanvulling heeft of iets anders kwijt wilt over het onderwerp, hoor ik het graag. Dit kan van groot belang zijn voor het onderzoek.

Appendix 8.2 Interview: list of questions, English

General

- What is your age and gender?
- Where do you live?
- If last answer was Groningen; For how long do you live here ?

Appearance of the inner-city: meaning of beauty

- When it comes to the appearance of an inner-city; according to you, what means ” beauty” there in a few words?
- And what “ugly” means here?
- Can you point at a place or building in the area of the inner city, which you believe is controversial because of its appearance?
- Can you explain why?

Protected city scape:

- Do you know about the term “protected cityscape” ?
- Are you familiar with this protected cityscape in Groningen?
- How do you think about the importance of this protected cityscape?
- Do you think the inner city of Groningen would have developed differently without this protection?

Developments in historical perspective

- Are you familiar with changes in the inner-city’s appearance for the last 20-30 years?
- If last answer was “yes”: How do you appreciate these developments in this changed cityscape?
- To what extent do historical building (like churches, monuments) play a role in giving appreciation to a city's attractiveness?
- To what extent do you believe modern buildings fit in within an historical area?

- Can you provide an example of failures in the placing of modern buildings in historical areas, or otherwise provide an example of successful placing modern buildings in historical areas?

Identity

- Do you think a city has an “identity”?
- If you do think so, how does this identity influence you personally?

- If you are asked to give a grade to the visual attractiveness of Groningen’s inner city, what would this grade be? Clarification not necessary.
- Finally, if you would have any remarks or have something to say about this topic, I would appreciate this very much. It could be of great value for the research.

Appendix 8.3 Example of interview transcription

This table shows an example of how the transcriptions of the interviews were done. Every single interview was written in full text first, and later added to this table.

Respondent 2

Question	Answer	Labels
What is your age and gender?	51, vrouw	Middle age people
What is your highest finished level of education?	Academisch	Higher education
Where do you live?	Groningen	Hometown
If the last answer was "Groningen"; for how long do you live here ?	12 jaar	Longer period
When it comes to the appearance of an inner-city; according to you, what means "beauty " here in a few words?	Je moet het gevoel hebben dat je omarmd wordt, gezelligheid plaats vindt. Waar iedereen een plek kan hebben . Bijvoorbeeld het waaggebouw, dit is een zeer open gebouw, vind ik dan ook een geslaagd voorbeeld. Het belangrijkste is toch dat er gezelligheid en levendigheid aanwezig is.	Highly depended on context:cosy, open, free for everyone to enter public space.
And what "ugly" means here?	Wanneer het de omarmdheid stoort, wanneer het een gesloten karakter heeft. En verder hou ik niet van grauwe gebouwen, grijs wordt nog steeds teveel gebruikt.	Closed character, grey buildings
Can you point at a place or building in the area of the inner city, which you believe is controversial (disturbing, ugly, own definitions may be used) because of its appearance? Can you explain why?	Wat ik een duidelijk voorbeeld vind is het Bakker Bart gebouw op het einde van de Herestraat. Dat het recent is afgebrand juichte ik zeer toe, jammer dat weer zo lelijk is terug opgebouwd. Daarnaast vind ik ook het Groninger museum een voorbeeld. Het is opzich een mooi ontwerp, maar het past niet in de omgeving, hier is het storend. Ook het stationsgebied is erg lelijk geworden. Eerst is het station gerestaureerd met de grootste aandacht voor detail en origineel kleurgebruik, en daarnaast is ere en zeer lelijk stadsbalkon voor gezet. Wie dit bedacht heeft verdient een straf. Het contrast is zo groot. Bovendien nodigt het niet uit tot een gezellig verblijf, wat in het ontwerp wel de bedoeling was van het stadsbalkon. Echt schandelijk.

Een positief voorbeeld heb ik echter ook: de Remonstrantse kerk aan de coehoornsingel. Het is op zich niet mooi, maar de nieuwe vleugel aan het kerkgebouw is erg goed geslaagd, ondanks dat deze in een andere bouwstijl dan het oorspronkelijke gebouw is geplaatst. | Provides three examples, importance of fitting in within area. Big contrast. Believes it really is a shame.
Provides one positive example: again about fitting in within area. Not beautiful in itself. |
Do you know about the term "protected cityscape"?	Jawel	Agrees
Are you familiar with it in the case of Groningen?	Alleen in mijn eigen omgeving, ik weet dat men aan de buitenkant niet teveel mag doen, en dat kleurstellingen van belang zijn. Verder weet ik het niet.	partially
How do you think about the importance of this protected cityscape?	Dit is een goede zaak. Juist voor Groningen, waar al veel is weggevaagd, met te weinig oog voor historische waarde. Zo stond bijvoorbeeld in de jaren 80 het Zuiderpark ook op de nominatie om gesloopt te worden, terwijl je dit tegenwoordig niet meer zou kunnen bedenken.	Important. Historical values.
Do you think the inner city of Groningen would have developed differently without this protection?	Ik vrees dat er veel moois en oorspronkelijks zou zijn verdwenen, ook conglomeraten van gebouwen. Maar het kan ook in kleine aanpassingen liggen. Een voorbeeld uit de woonwijk is het inpassen van terrassen op daken van oude huizen. Dit beschouw ik als een diepe kras. Juist dit soort buurtjes geven een oorspronkelijk karakter.	Many things would have disappeared. Provides an example of what still is wrong.
Are you familiar with changes in the inner-city's appearance for the last 20-30 years?	Met de laatste 10 jaar ben ik wel bekend	Last 10 years
If last answer was "yes":	Is er niet zo veel anders uit gaan zien. Recent de voltooiing van de	Not much difference. Provides

How do you appreciate these developments in this changed cityscape?	parkeergarage aan het damsterdiep, wat ik een puist van een parkeergarage vind. Vooral de entourage is erg koud. Het is er niet leefbaarder op geworden,vooral ook omdat de plek jaren een bouwput was. Het hele stadsgevoel is er weg, ik denk dat er geen mensen meer willen komen en dat dit ook invloed heeft op de ondernemers op die plek. Het lijkt op een metro achtige situatie. De antraciet muren op het plein maken het ook erg kil, onleefbaar. De functie van ontmoetingsplek is daardoor ook verdwenen.	example of incoherence. Explains factors: cold entourage. Lost function: place for meeting people.
To what extent do historical building (like churches, monuments) play a role in giving appreciation to a city's attractiveness?	Het gaat mij niet per se om de context, maar om de waarde van de omgeving: warm, veilig en leefbaar. Het punt is hoe het verder ingericht wordt; de plek moet altijd omarmen. Zo zoeken de meeste mensen een huis uit de jaren 30 omdat het een gevoel van omarming en dus thuis voelen geeft.	Not about context. Provides example of what people seem to look for. Explains feeling home.
To what extent do you believe modern buildings fit in within an historical area?	Zoals ik net al zei, het gaat om het totaal, de plek moet omarmen, fijn aanvoelen en sfeer hebben. Sfeer is vooral belangrijk.	Not about context, place has to make you feel home and have a good athmosphere
Can you provide an example of failures in the placing of modern buildings in historical areas, or otherwise example of successful placing modern buildings in historical areas?	Slecht ingepast, het Damsterdiep wat ik beschreef. Dit is een voorbeeld van weer een egotripper architect die vlaggen wil planten, zoals dit vaak het geval is. Zij verdienen echt een straf. Wat ik bijzonder goed vind ingepast is het gebouw achter het goudkantoor, het waagplein waar veel kleine winkeltjes in zijn gevestigd. Het doet enorm eer aan de omgeving en straalt sfeer en levendigheid uit. Het mooie is dat de Italiaanse architect het heeft mogen bouwen na een referendum onder de bevolking van Groningen. Dit verdient absoluut een prijs.	Provides example of bad. Architect deserves punishment. Provides example of good. Architect deserves prize.
Do you think a city has an "identity"?	Ja, dat kan haast niet anders.	Approves
If you do think so, how does this identity influence you personally?	Ingewikkeld. Groningen is een stad van de Stadjers, die er al lang wonen, en de intellectuelen, vanwege de Universiteit. Voel me verbonden met het multiculturele karakter, maar ook wel met de Stadjers die het wat minder goed hebben.	Difficult to explain. Multicultural character; also the people with lower income.
If you are asked to give a grade to the visual attractiveness of Groningen's inner city, what would this grade be? Clarification not necessary.	De stad een 7, maar bijvoorbeeld het stationsgebied verdient een 4	2 grades , one average, one for a specific place
Finally, if you would have any remarks or have something to say about this topic, I would appreciate this very much. It could be of great value for the research	Niets	-

Appendix 8.4 Data of interview set

Number of respondents (N)	39
Male/Female distribution	22 M/ 17F
Average Age	33
Dates of interviews	Between 26th July 2012 and 18th October 2012