LANDSCAPE 1:1

A study of designs for leisure in the Dutch countryside

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Abstract

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The study deals with landscape design approaches concerning leisure, recreation and tourism in the countryside. Landscape designs from five periods with different planning and policy contexts between the 1920s and present time were studied. The designs represent a variety of Dutch landscapes: the coastal zone and the marine clay polders of the Zeeland Delta, the river plains of the Gelderse Poort, the peat meadow landscapes of the Venen and the sandy uplands of the Drentsche Aa Stream Valley.

The analyses revealed how landscape designers have been dealing with leisure in the context of the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes. Dominant leisure approaches were reconstructed and related to contemporary theoretical insights and to the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes. The reconstructed leisure approaches were reviewed to what extent they are still relevant and suitable in the contemporary, changing context, with new leisure demands and new landscape challenges.

The study revealed a stable design tradition of a comprehensive landscape approach and persisting conceptualisations of leisure. Recent designs show different approaches. This suggests structural changes; it is likely that landscape design for leisure in the countryside is in transition. With regard to observed continuities and changes in leisure, leisure environments and landscape design practices, the reconstructed design tradition shows that great achievements have been made, but it also displays also some apparent shortcomings. These were discussed from an academic and from a practical point of view.

Keywords: landscape architecture, landscape planning, design tradition, design theory, architectural history, leisure, recreation, Netherlands, rural landscapes, legibility, landscape identity

Acknowledgements: connecting worlds

That's it then. Now, looking back on the years the opportunity was given to me to write my dissertation, I'm somewhat overcome with melancholy. It was a real treat to be able to work on only one project instead of ten at a time. It was a pleasure to be able to read books thoroughly rather than glancing through them briefly due to a lack of time and budget. It was a challenge to solve a huge brainteaser and to find a way to compellingly convey the story. Moreover, it was a great privilege to become a scholar with the help of my tutors and colleagues. I found myself in a new world where, in the end, I decided to stay.

Still, it took quite some time to find my way in this new world and feel at ease there. The attitude, the way of dealing with a problem, the body of knowledge, and the perspective: they were all so different from what I was used to. I had to connect the world I knew with this new world. Being a practitioner and coming from the world of consultancy and contract research, I was used to focus on the applicability in practice. I learnt that autonomous research with theoretical results didn't necessarily have direct consequences for daily practices. Working simultaneously on many projects under high pressure of time, I was used to think on my feet, make quick decisions and vigorously go on to the next phase. Academic research, however, meant questioning every given or supposition, and decelerating my mind turned out to be much more useful and productive for dealing with fundamental problems. As a designer I was used to looking ahead, to appreciate what was new and to look for solutions that were not used before. I learnt to understand the merits of standing on the shoulders of predecessors and thoroughly building on past achievements. I was used to design and planning concepts, which are open and multi-interpretable, yet scientific concepts were as precise and unambiguous as possible. I was used to natural sciences and so much less to social sciences and humanities. I was introduced to a different body of knowledge and a different approach. It almost felt like learning a new language. How many times didn't I call out that I just wasn't a real scholar? Until Jaap Lengkeek was fed up and threatened to stop tutoring me since I *was* a scholar, working on my PhD at a university.

There was this other world as well. Balancing home life and a career is never easy and writing a dissertation is hardly a nine-to-five job. How many hours didn't I read and write in the evening, at night, in the weekends and on holidays? Sometimes I had so many unfinished lines of thought on my mind that I lost sight of the daily routine of a household.

When I reconstruct the origin of my thesis, several people come to mind. More than ten years ago, I started a project proposal on design for nature with Ernst and Peter (†), which turned out to be a preliminary version of this thesis' theme. It didn't work out then, much to Ernst's regret, who had become fascinated by 'pleasure landscapes'. A few years later the theme came up again in some essays I wrote with Maarten, Berdie and Norfried. With the NIROV werkgroep Landschap, the opportunity was given to me to elaborate on it with the Karavaan van Verbeelding. Frank and Harma, you shared my enthusiasm and even when it was cactus-teatime, we persisted and made a success of it.

My parents and parents-in-law: I think no one in the world will be more proud of this book than you'll be. Dear Joost, I asked so much more from you than anyone could be expected to manage. This is not the right place to tell you what it meant for me that you were there. I'll keep it for another occasion. Merrit and Hanna, last year you wrote a wish on a stone: 'Mama, we hope that your thesis will be finished soon so that you won't need to work so hard anymore'. It took me another year. You are the last people on this list, but the first to celebrate with me now that the job is done.

Content

Introduction

Landscape planning and design in the Western urbanized world include many types of activities and land uses for both public and private places, in various environments. This study focuses on leisure, recreation and tourism in the countryside. Landscape designers are confronted with new design questions, as both the nature of leisure, recreation and tourism and their social, economic and cultural position in society are changing. Leisure, recreation and tourism have become major economic activities, which add substantially to national economies and employment rates. They are among the major economic driving forces worldwide and their impact on the landscape is substantial. They may provide opportunities but pose threats as well. They can enrich the quality and characteristics of landscapes and stop deterioration, deforestation and economic decline, but they can also contribute to the degradation of the environment and the decline of long-term economic viability, social structures and cultural traditions of local landscapes and communities (UNEP 2006, Brinkhuijsen et al. 2007). This study aims to shed light on landscape design approaches concerning leisure, recreation and tourism in the countryside.

In the Netherlands the countryside is gradually changing from productive landscapes into consumptive landscapes for the benefit of citizens and tourists. Landscapes are commodified, the countryside is 'increasingly becoming a green décor for modern amusement; it is packaged, marketed and offered for consumption, the more 'authentic' the better' (Metz 2002: 181). Meanwhile leisure, recreation and tourism policy has become fragmented and neglected, and knowledge networks have run down due to decentralisation. National Advisory Boards acknowledged this problem and have recently published advices on leisure. The *Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied* (Council for the Rural Area) observed that demand and supply of leisure possibilities are no longer geared to one another, and that the national government paid little attention to leisure over the past two decades. They urgently recommended to place recreation and tourism back on the agenda and to unite them in one policy domain (RLG 2004). The *VROM-raad* (the Netherlands Council of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment) found that leisure and tourism were too often viewed merely as unrestrained space consumers, a threat to spatial quality. The Council recommended to treat leisure and tourism as sources of inspiration and co-producers of spatial quality and to make use of their economic potential as well (VROM-raad 2006).

In 2006, the importance of leisure, recreation and tourism as driving forces for landscape change and development led the Dutch Government Advisor on the Landscape to initiate a European Landscape and Leisure project. The objective of this project was to express a view on the phenomenon of leisure, recreation and tourism, and its impact on the landscape through an inventory of the current situation in Europe and research into new design models for intervention and guidance. Students from all over Europe explored the role of European landscapes in the way people spend their spare time, and the significance of landscapes for tourism and outdoor recreation. They started planning and design programmes and created new models and strategies for landscape development.

The call for more serious attention for leisure and tourism is not new. In 1994, the British Centre for the Study of Environmental Change discussed the consequences of new issues in the field of leisure and tourism in the countryside. They observed that public agencies and planning authorities saw leisure primarily as a physical, environmental problem with an economic element and that they failed to acknowledge the wider-ranging social and cultural implications of current trends.

They observed that land use planning frameworks and management were not adequate to face emerging challenges and conflicts. The issues addressed in the report Leisure Landscapes (Clark et al. 1994) are as real and relevant for landscape planning and design today as they were almost fifteen years ago.

Landscape designers are confronted with the question of how to approach the design issues related to changes in the countryside concerning leisure. The answer is not simply a response to a given programme for a given location. Designers bring in their own views and professional frames of reference, which, to a large extent, determine how they approach and handle the issues. But are these views and frames of reference relevant and suitable for the given context? This question is rarely asked, neither by landscape designers, nor by their clients. It touches upon more fundamental questions and calls for critical reflection on professional practices.

This study attempts to inspire carefully planned landscape designs for leisure and to contribute to the further development of the profession of landscape design. It is an attempt to provide more knowledge and a better understanding of the common frames of reference and views of landscape designers, and to discuss their relevancy and suitability considering the nature and complexity of contemporary design problems for leisure. In this research, landscape designs were studied to reconstruct how leisure is handled and represented in the Dutch design tradition on rural landscapes. Unlike many academic studies about landscape architecture, which mainly focus on form and style, this study examines designers' views and the ideas that are embedded in design and how they are represented in image, form and structure. Both from a theoretical and practical point of view, considering how leisure has been handled in the design tradition has brought up critical issues for design in the present and future context.

The book starts with an introduction of the subject - landscapes for leisure - and the questions landscape designers are confronted with nowadays. A recent project concerning a future leisure landscape illustrates the nature and content of the design questions in practice. In chapter 2, the research objectives and questions are formulated and the approach and methodology of the research are described.

The second part of the book, the retrospective, contains an analysis of the research material: the landscape designs that were studied. It can be read as a concise history of Dutch landscape design practices with regard to leisure in the countryside. It describes the changing leisure questions landscape designers had to deal with, their conceptual answers and how they converted these into images of future landscapes, both abstract and concrete. After an introduction into the Dutch context in chapter 3, designs from the 1920s to the present are described in chapters 4 to 8, representing successive periods in time, each with different leisure policy concepts. Each chapter contains a short characterisation of the context of both landscape planning and design, and of leisure, followed by descriptions of a range of landscape designs. The designs represent the Dutch landscape design practice for leisure in the countryside and contain both common practices and divergent approaches at that time. The designs that diverged from the common practice often turned out to be forerunners of common practices of a future period. Chapter 4 goes into the pioneer period of Dutch landscape architecture and planning from the 1920s up to the end of the 1950s. Some major planning and design concepts for leisure were developed in this period. Chapter 5 is about the 1960s, when mass recreation became a major concern in spatial policy.

Chapter 6, roughly covering the 1970s and early 1980s, is concerned with the policy concept of joint recreational use. The period of the late 1980s and 1990s, when nature was in the limelight and the concept of rambling was introduced, is described in chapter 7. Chapter 8 describes the diversification of our present time.

In the last part of this dissertation the outcomes of the study of landscape designs for leisure are related to contemporary landscape design. In chapter 9, the position and handling of leisure in the Dutch design tradition on rural landscapes is reconstructed. Design tools, concepts and ideas arisen from the design analyses are compared and interpreted. They are related to contemporary conceptualisations of leisure and to some major theoretical concepts of the Dutch design tradition on rural landscapes. Finally, chapter 10 goes deeper into the issues that emerge in the theory and practice of landscape design for leisure. It describes the major themes concerning leisure, landscape planning and design in the current context and goes into the question as to what extent the design tradition is relevant and suitable to meet today's leisure questions and those of the near future.

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Setting the scene

1.1 Leisure

Leisure, recreation and tourism are separate, yet closely related concepts with many definitions, which differ according to the chosen perspective. They comprise a wide variety of activities of variable duration in several different environments. The differences between them are often defined in time and space. Roughly, one can say that leisure and recreation activities take place relatively close to home and don't include overnight stays, whereas tourism takes place in environments other than the daily ones and includes one or more overnight stays. Yet, 'tourism and leisure are interrelated because their practices often occupy the same *shared spaces*' (Shaw and Williams 2002, p. 9). The same activity in the same space can be defined either as recreation or as tourism, depending of the origin of the person. Leisure, recreation and tourism are 'tied together in the same *time-space framework*' (Shaw and Williams 2002, p. 8).

'Tourism, recreation and leisure are generally seen as a set of interrelated and overlapping concepts. While there are many important concepts, definitions of leisure, recreation and tourism remain contested in terms of how, where, when and why they are used' (Hall & Page 2002, p. 3). They include urban, rural and natural environments; public and private domains; and indoor and outdoor activities. Moreover, the same places and landscapes are simultaneously visited and used by different groups: tourists, day trippers and residents. The Netherlands Council of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (*VROM-raad*) spoke of a 'cluster of leisure and tourism' and considered sports, entertainment, art and culture, nature and outdoor recreation as being part of this cluster (2006)[1].
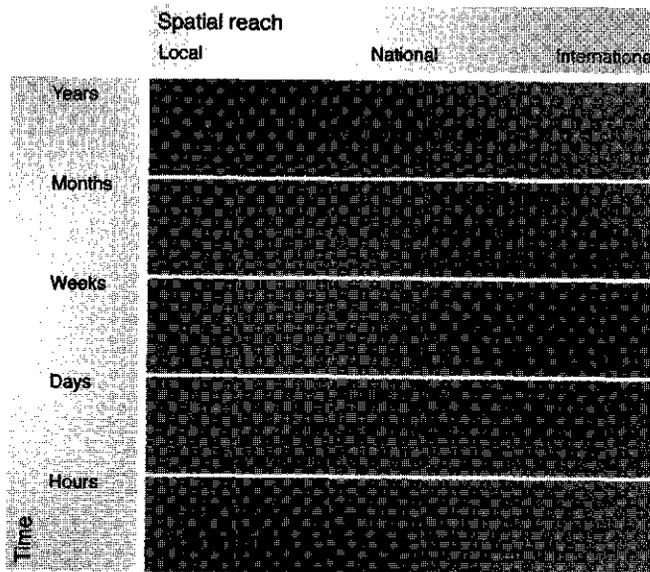
Figure 1   Temporal and spatial dimensions of the range of leisure, recreation and tourism (elaboration of a model by Bell & Ward (2000) in Shaw and Williams (2002).

Leisure, recreation and tourism are social and historical constructions, 'changing over time in nature and significance, depending on social, political, cultural or economic relations' (Lengkeek 1996, p. 109). In the industrialization era, leisure was conceptualised as the time people had, outside of the time they spent on labour. Later on, in the 18th and 19th century, the elite started to interfere with the way this spare time was spent. The working class had to be civilised; leisure became a synonym for 'sound pastime'.

The unfavourable conditions of life in the cities gave rise to the social democratic ideal of light, fresh air and healthy exercise. At the beginning of the 20th century, the elite ideal of leisure for the working and middle classes was outdoor recreation, preferably in free nature. In the 1960s, the focus shifted to freedom, due to democratisation and individualisation. The essence of leisure was defined as 'freedom from ... and freedom to ...' (Goodale and Godbey 1988). The concept of leisure as being free from everyday life can be related to the concept of different 'life worlds' (Lengkeek 1994). In this view, the essence of leisure is that it can be experienced as a life world different from the everyday life world. The growing attention to experience in the last decade produced yet another definition of leisure: 'the possibility to take part in activities in a specific environment in order to create desired experiences' (Beeho and Prentice 1997). These conceptions of leisure did not succeed each other; existing conceptions remained and persisted next to the newcomers. It is true that the dominancy of conceptions changed over time, but elements of other conceptions persisted simultaneously.

In this study leisure, recreation and tourism are considered to be closely related concepts, characterised by their joint distinction from everyday life and duties, and taking place in the landscape. They encompass a wide variety of activities and experiences of variable duration and in various environments, led by non-utilitarian motives, such as walking, cycling, horse riding, sunbathing, playing, fishing, bird watching, picking mushrooms, enjoying scenic beauty and visiting cultural heritage attractions. The people it concerns include local residents, citizens from a nearby town, day trippers and tourists. The whole of leisure, recreation and tourism will henceforth be referred to as 'leisure'[2].

The focus on leisure was chosen for several reasons. While leisure is a phenomenon of all times, its nature and importance have changed over the last decades. Consumer culture based on intensified commodity circulation has given rise to expanding leisure industries that provide an increasing and increasingly varied supply of leisure activities, which enlarges their diversity and dynamic range (Mommaas et al. 2000; Meethan 2001).

Figure 2   The study focuses on activities taking place in hte landscape, based on non-utilitarian motives

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In the Netherlands, however, a period of augmentation of spare time has come to an end. Although people don't have more spare time[3], their leisure behaviour has diversified. This has resulted in 'zap-behaviour' and attention is increasingly dispersed. At the same time, the demands made on leisure returns are high (Urry 1995; Mommaas et al. 2000). People seem to expect ever-better quality and assured leisure satisfaction.

In this context, the expected experience value of products and activities has become increasingly dominant (Schulze 1992; Jensen 1999; Pine and Gilmore 1999). Products, services and places are no longer primarily assessed and chosen for their functional value but for their symbolic and experiential value. Free time is seen less as 'spare time' than as 'ultimate experience time' (Metz 2002). In their competition to attract customers or visitors, leisure industries have introduced a more spectacular leisure supply. Theme parks provide extremely thrilling challenges with ever-higher and -faster roller coasters[4], luxurious hotels offer unforgettable overnight stays in tree houses, and popular outdoor activities like alpine skiing are replaced with more spectacular ones such as snowboarding, off-site skiing and kite skiing. At the same time, a counterpart of this process of 'spectactularisation' can be distinguished as well: new meanings can be derived from environments that represent the other side of the spectrum: modesty, deceleration, quietness and complete relaxation. These are all examples of the present tendency to intensify, multiply, accelerate or decelerate experiences on either side of the spectrum.

Leisure is also a central element in the development of identity (Deats and Lenker 1999). Nowadays, identity appears to be based on leisure and consumption rather than socio-economic standing. In the Western world, the supply of leisure rapidly expanded in the 1950s and it expanded even more when prosperity increased, and traditional social and cultural divisions faded. The former dominance of class, religion and family ties in the formation of identities has given way to an individualisation, which implies that identities and lifestyles are no longer imposed, but chosen instead (Giddens 1991; Beck 1992). Such identities are much more self-reflective. Lifestyles are formed through a package of selected practices in different life worlds; a matter of negotiated choice from multiple and diverse options. As leisure is a primary context for exploring role identities, it is a significant means of adopting lifestyles and developing one's identity.
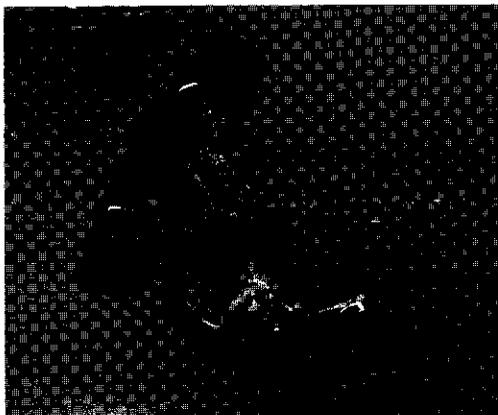
Figure 3, 4   Spectacular types of leisure and unpretentious leisure activities occur simultaneously.

Plurality and individualism have led to 'horizontalisation': the social and cultural discrimination of 'high' and 'low' culture has decreased. Its implications are far-reaching. Formerly separated leisure domains with different target groups have become competitors (Mommaas et al. 2000) in the fight for consumers' attention and money: domestic and foreign destinations, urban and rural environments, commercial and non-commercial facilities.

Leisure, after all, has become an important sector of the global economy. The tourist sector is one of the fastest growing economic sectors worldwide. It generates, directly and indirectly, 10.3% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2006 and 234.3 million jobs and the sector is still rising (WTTC 2006). In the Netherlands, tourism generates 3.5% of the GDP and 375.000 jobs, which is over 5%. Leisure represents 11.2% of the Dutch households' expenditure. Expenditure on daytrips doubled up to 11.500 million euros in the period between 1990 and 2000 (CBS 2006). With agricultural production losing its dominance in the highly urbanized countries with service- and communication-based economies, it is not surprising that leisure and tourism are considered as important economic supports of future rural economies, both in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned trends of consumption-based, experience-oriented and spectacular types of leisure, unpretentious leisure activities with less contrast to everyday life subsist as well. Activities such as walking and cycling are continuously popular. In the year 2002, 76.5 % of the Dutch went on one or more walking tours, and 67.8% made one or more bicycle trips (CBS 2003). These leisure activities take place in the same landscapes as those that are to be developed as leisure landscapes for economic reasons.

1.2 Leisure landscapes

Leisure is important in urban, peri-urban, cultural and natural areas throughout the Western world. An increasing amount of areas is seen as land- or townscapes for leisure. The term leisure landscape may evoke images of amusement parks, recreation areas, holiday resorts, places of entertainment and nightlife centres. Such environments are designed and built purely for leisure purposes. They are worlds of their own with little or no relation with place and context. Today, these types of leisure areas take up much more space than before and their number has expanded.

However, specially constructed leisure landscapes are not the only leisure landscapes; some landscapes have a character and appearance that are highly valued for their leisure qualities, such as Tuscany, the Scottish Highlands and the Provence. These landscapes have not always *been* leisure landscapes; they have *become* leisure landscapes in a physical and mental sense. They were not primarily meant for leisure, they were, however, adjusted for leisure purposes. 'Every attraction today is created. This statement may seem fatuous, especially in the face of such natural wonders as the Grand Canyon in the United States or the Giant's Causeway in Ireland. Nevertheless, in the context of modern tourism, even the most compelling places do not become true attractions until they are provided with access, lookout points, parking areas, interpretation programs and linkages with service centres' (Gunn 1997, p. 52). Some landscapes have even been completely transformed for leisure purposes, such as the Alps, and large parts of the North Sea Coast and the Mediterranean Coast. The rise of alpinism in the 19th century laid the foundation for mass tourism developments in the Alps.

Facilities such as ski slopes, resorts and mountain refuges have been built, and local people have become tourist entrepreneurs. The more the landscape was physically adjusted to leisure purposes, the more its meaning changed into a leisure landscape. A representation process took place along with all these changes. Further developments were led by leisure images; new houses were built in a traditional style and villages were made car-free in order to maintain a traditional atmosphere. The landscape was modified in order to make it more attractive and adequate for leisure purposes or commercially more interesting.

Many examples demonstrate the integration of leisure into almost every spatial domain: both historical and new city centres show an increasing resemblance to fantasy cities, festival market places, theme parks and open-air museums, industrial areas are popular avant-garde recreational tour destinations, golf residences and *landelijk wonen* ('rurban' environments) are being developed and an increasing number of farms is devoted to recreation (Sorkin 1992; Hannigan 1998; Hajer et al. 2001; Van Dam 2003). The former aim of separating work, home and leisure in time and space is overtaken by a growing diversity in lifestyle and a fragmentation of activities (Zukin 1991; Boelens 2005). Leisure is no longer restricted to areas that were specially constructed for leisure purposes, assuming it ever was.

So the term 'leisure landscape' is not restricted only to landscapes that have been exclusively constructed for leisure purposes or to the traditionally favoured picturesque or sublime landscapes: it includes almost any landscape. Leisure landscapes are not a specific *type* of landscape but a *perspective* on landscapes. Within the wide range of leisure landscapes, this study concentrates on the countryside or 'rural' landscapes, where leisure is one of the many land uses and activities. Mere urban environments and areas exclusively meant for leisure purposes are not part of this study, notwithstanding their importance as leisure environments.

All landscapes that transform into landscapes for leisure reveal similar processes of commodification[5]. This process takes place in a competitive, globalising market. Rural landscapes find themselves in competition with other rural landscapes, close nearby and far off, and with other leisure environments, fighting for visitors and revenues.

Figure 5   This study focuses on the countryside

In this competitive market, quality – and, more specific, distinctive quality - counts. In order to make areas as attractive as possible for visitors, attention is paid to activities, to environmental, social and managerial settings and to leisure experiences (Beeho and Prentice 1997). Landscapes have to facilitate leisure activities functionally and provide a setting for unique experiences. Experiential qualities have become a major competitive aspect in the process of commodification. These qualities go beyond aesthetics: a visually attractive landscape is not necessarily one that offers strong, unique and memorable experiences, nor one that matches different leisure motives.

It is clear that leisure is a serious factor in the development of landscapes, and that the transformation of landscapes into appealing environments for leisure is a pressing contemporary issue. These changes take place in all urbanized regions in north-western Europe and will change the use and meaning of the countryside. In the Netherlands, the countryside is being adjusted to meet leisure needs and wishes for two reasons: to provide green leisure environments in urbanized regions and to support rural economies. All this strengthens the function and meaning of the Dutch countryside as a leisure landscape. The predominant land use may still be agriculture; the actual character of these landscapes is plural and diverse, including nature, forestry, water management, transport, housing, work and leisure. The dominant position of agriculture is under pressure from urbanization, high land prices and increasing environmental restrictions. A survey by the Market Organisational Research Institute in 2001 showed that over 50 % of the Dutch people considered the main function of the countryside as 'the provision of quiet, space and recreation' rather than food production (Frerichs and De Wijs 2001). The Dutch National Council for Agricultural Research spoke about the transformation from 'landscapes of production' into 'landscapes of consumption' (NRLO 1998). It is obvious that such changing images of the countryside bring about different expectations of usefulness and experiential qualities. 'There is a shift from the domination of demands of agricultural efficiency to a variety of experience demands' (Jacobs 2002).

1.3 Landscape design for leisure

Adapting landscapes for leisure is a design issue. After all, landscape design involves functional as well as perceptual and imaginative aspects of space. It is this very combination of aspects that is essential for making contemporary landscapes attractive for leisure. Landscape designers have been modifying landscapes for leisure purposes for centuries, with 'pleasure' being one of the essential motives in the history of garden architecture. European Baroque and Landscape Style gardens are often seen as the progenitors of theme parks (e.g. Mosser and Teyssot 1991; Young and Riley 2002). Landscape designers have developed a rich variety of design concepts, tools, styles and images to organise space, enable leisure use and stir the imagination. Landscape designers can draw from their rich tradition of garden and landscape architecture when adjusting landscapes for leisure purposes.

However it would be unjust to assume that 'pleasure' is all landscape designers can contribute to landscapes for leisure. The actual questions exceed the local scale of gardens, parks and estates and include the regional scale with all its complexity. Landscape designers' activities were originally restricted to private gardens, manors and estates, but in the second half of the 19th century they became involved in public urban spaces and later in peri-urban and rural landscapes as well. Landscape design in the Netherlands is known for its practice of regional landscape planning and design in rural areas.

Dutch landscape designers have been redesigning existing landscapes and creating entirely new landscapes since the 1920s. They have cooperated in land reclamation and land consolidation projects and have redesigned almost every area, some even twice or thrice. A unique tradition of comprehensive landscape design for rural landscapes was built. The designs included different land uses. Leisure has been one of the aspects to have been taken into account, not only in traditional tourist landscapes but also in landscapes that were primarily seen as agricultural productive landscapes. These practices have produced a range of design concepts, tools, styles and images that can be drawn from still. What's more, they have defined our present landscapes to a considerable extent. The landscapes have been partially adjusted to leisure purposes and require further adjustment now. Clearly, it is sensible to find out how landscape design activities in recent history relate to the currently changing countryside and leisure context.

1.4 An example: observations on a new leisure landscape

A recent example of Dutch landscape design practice, Haarzuilens, will shed more light on the design questions related to the adaptation of the countryside for leisure purposes. The area of Haarzuilens, located to the west of Utrecht, is an agricultural landscape, which mainly consists of pastureland. People from the nearby suburbs of Vleuten and De Meern to some extent make use of the area for leisure purposes. With the development of Leidsche Rijn, a new urban extension of the city of Utrecht for 80.000 to 90.000 people, the area of Haarzuilens will become the new city fringe and the landscape will be adjusted for leisure purposes.

Although the expected leisure pressure on the area of Haarzuilens will be higher than in most other landscapes, the questions are similar. The issues for design are manifold and complex, including both universal questions and questions rising from trends in leisure, and in landscape planning and design. The central question is what makes a rural landscape suitable and attractive for leisure purposes? What is needed for it to meet leisure requirements? Does it merely require some adjustments of the existing landscape or is a brand new landscape needed, specially constructed for leisure purposes? The designs in this example illustrate how designers cope with the design problems for leisure landscapes today. They reveal what makes a landscape suitable and attractive as a landscape for leisure in the eyes of the designers, and how these views are represented in design; which concepts are applied, which design tools are used and with which connotations.

An elaborate leisure program for a rural landscape
The area of Haarzuilens has predominantly been an agricultural area in the transition zone between the peat lowlands in the north and west, and the river landscape of a former course of the Rhine in the south. The area has been inhabited for a long time; traces were found from the Iron Age, Roman Times and the Middle Ages. The old course of the river Rhine was the north border of the Roman Empire. The castle De Haar is a popular attraction in this area. The Dutch Tourist Board promotes the castle internationally as the 'largest and possibly most impressive castle' in the Netherlands.

As a result of urban developments, calculations predict a growing deficiency of possibilities for outdoor recreation for the present and future inhabitants of Leidsche Rijn and the western part of Utrecht. The area of Haarzuilens is pointed out as one of the main leisure areas, with a future capacity of 15.000 visitors on a busy day[6]. Apart from the castle De Haar with its park forest and golf course, the area is generally considered unsuitable for leisure purposes without special treatment. It is assumed that the area cannot take a larger number of visitors and the existing agricultural landscape is viewed to be rather unattractive for leisure. Therefore, the area of Haarzuilens has been pointed out in national and provincial policy as a part of a Strategisch Groenproject (Strategic Green Project) of about 1000 hectares, mostly consisting of woods, nature and recreation areas. A considerable spatial program has to be allocated in the area.

One planning process, a set of four designs in succession

Within the context of one Land Use Planning process, several landscape designers have been working on the area within a period of five years. Four designs for the area of Haarzuilens were made in succession: a *Raamplan* (Green Framework Plan) in 2000, an *Ontwikkelingsvisie* (View on future development) in 2003, a *Concept Landinrichtingsplan* (Concept Land Use Plan) in 2004, and a *Schetsschuit* (Sketching Barge) in 2005.

In 2000, Marcel Eekhout, Aleks Droog and Lilian Roosenboom of the Dienst Landelijk Gebied (DLG, Government Service for Land and Water Management) designed the Raamplan, a green framework plan for the environs of Utrecht with design outlines for the area of Haarzuilens (DLG 2000). When this design was made, Staatsbosbeheer (National Forest Agency) was expected to become the future manager of the area, but it turned out differently. Natuurmonumenten[7] (Society for the Preservation of Nature Preserves) purchased a 50% ownership of the castle and the adjacent areas and would become the future manager. As this Society for the Preservation of Nature Reserves had not been involved in the planning process and had different ideas about the future landscape, they asked landscape architect Michael van Gessel to make a design that illustrated their perspective. They presented their Ontwikkelingsvisie in 2003 (Van Gessel 2003). Next, all comments on the Green Framework Plan and the design outlines were processed according to formal planning procedures, and the third plan, a Concept Landirichtingsplan (DLG 2004), was made. The Concept Landinrichtingsplan, designed by landscape architect Stephan Hermens, was meant to be a detailed plan, but the designers decided to come up with a conceptual plan like the first Raamplan.

Recreatiegebied (Recreation Area)	50 ha
Recreatiebos (Recreation wood)	200 ha
Staatsbos (State Forest)	40 ha
Natuurontwikkeling (Nature development)	40 ha
Groene verbindingen (Green Connections)	15 kms

Figure 6   Formal program of new woods, nature and recreation areas in the area of Haarzuilens, which altogether covers 445 hectares (DLG 2000). An extra 117 hectares of 'Recreation Area' and 'Green Connections' were added to the program in 2004. Each label corresponds with specific objectives for leisure capacities and fixed financial investment levels.

As the realisation of the project would cover a period of almost a decade, they wanted to be able to meet unforeseen developments. However, the outline character of the plan was unfit for implementation, and an additional design effort was necessary. An informal design workshop was organised to come up with concrete ideas, conditions and suggestions as input for the future, definite Landinrichtingsplan (Land Use Plan) and implementation plans for parts of the area. This interdisciplinary workshop[8], the so-called Schetsschuit focused on cultural heritage as the basis of the area's future identity[9] (Buningh et al. 2005). The result of this fourth design effort did not consist of overall plans for the area, but of a variety of design proposals for separate sites and routes.

A suitable landscape for leisure: mono- and multi-functional concepts

Even though policy formally stated that the area should be a combination of agricultural land, nature and recreation areas, the concept of the first plan, the Raamplan, was based on a spatial and functional separation of leisure and other land uses. The concept was actually that of a mono-functional leisure area. The map shows a large park bordering the new urban extension of Leidsche Rijn, while the agricultural areas do not seem to be part of the future landscape for leisure; they have remained white on the map. The area of Haarzuilens was planned and designed to be a city park forest with a contemporary interpretation of traditional playing and sunbathing fields. In essence, the design enlarged the Castle Park, adding some contemporary elements. The edges of the area, bordering the open polders, would be transformed into natural areas with low profile recreational use. The planning concept can be characterized as a green belt: a shell of woods with leisure facilities around the city, followed by a transition zone with a more natural character and finally the remaining agricultural landscape.

That concept was discussed in the second plan, the Ontwikkelingsvisie. Both the client, the Society for the Preservation of Nature Reserves, and the landscape architect were no supporters of mono-functional areas for outdoor recreation, particularly not when layout and design had no relation at all with the existing historical landscape. In their opinion, the outdoor recreation areas from the 1970s and 1980s were 'completely invented, based on patronizing ideas how people should behave. All these recreation areas look alike, and remain dolefully empty, apart from holidays and sunny weekends' (Van Gessel 2003, p. 43). They wanted Haarzuilens to be an attractive leisure environment starting from the existing landscape features and integrating other land uses into a lively and diverse entity. 'Leisure and agriculture should be reconciled and integrated with each other. That will not happen by planning large recreation woods in the open landscape of the Green Heart and not in the least by situating these woods right by the city. That will keep the city at a distance from the surrounding countryside. It may be green, but people will have to pass a constructed, urbanized area before they will get into the real countryside' (Van Gessel 2003, p. 16).

The problem was that policy itself complicated true multi-functionality, as the program was fixed by the allocation of policy tasks with corresponding leisure capacities and financial investment levels. The escape to a different concept was found in a re-interpretation of the spatial features attached to the term 'recreation wood'. 'Recreation wood' was not necessarily to be a wood as long as it had a layout and a level of facilities that could accommodate many visitors. The leisure program could be fit into another, more open landscape. It resulted in an alternative green framework and an alternative design with only 60 hectares of the programmed 200 hectares of recreation wood. These small woods, which would be filled with leisure attractions and facilities, were primarily meant to increase the leisure capacity of the area.
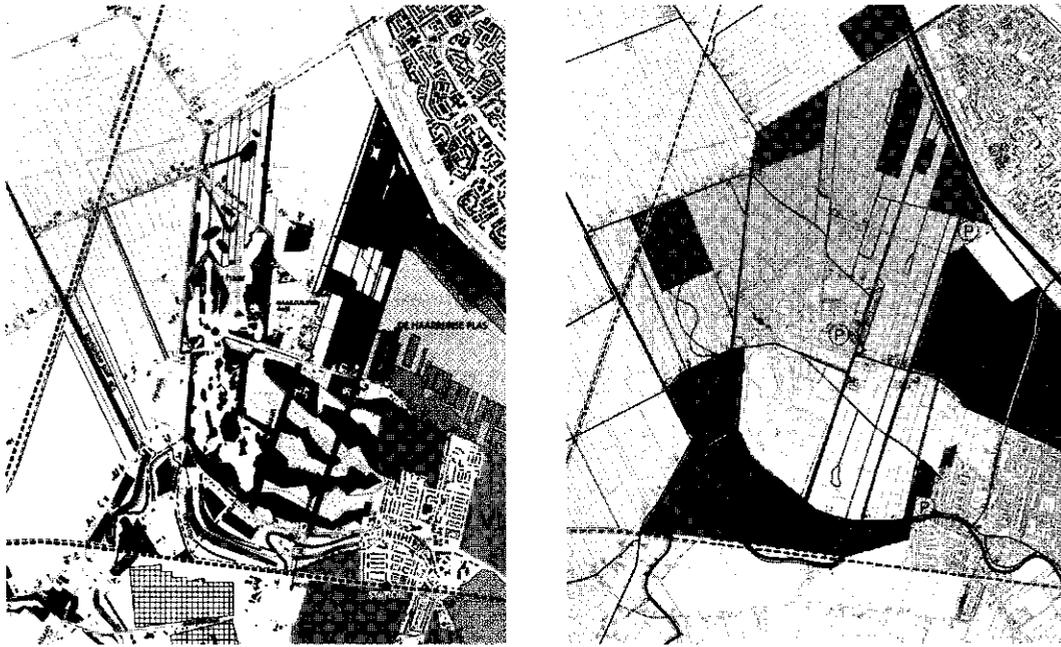
Figure 7, 8, 9   The Raamplan (left),the Ontwikkelingsvisie (right) and the Concept Landinrichtingsplan (next page).

The remaining 140 hectares were integrated with the existing agricultural landscape into a vast open leisure landscape. 'The characteristic open polder landscape will remain, up to the city centre of Vleuten' (Van Gessel 2003, p. 22).

The multifunctional concept not only implied that leisure had to find its place among other activities like agricultural production, water management and nature; the closer relation with other land uses and activities also raised the question of possible surplus values. How could activities reinforce each other and be mutually beneficial? The plan proposed some large urban-oriented farms were citizens would be able to obtain local products. The report did not enter into the question whether local farmers would be willing to participate in the proposed concept. The third plan, the Concept Landinrichtingsplan, took the revaluation of the existing landscape from the Ontwikkelingsvisie. The original proposal of new woods in the area between the city and the Castle was rejected. The green belt was replaced by a half-open park landscape where agricultural use could continue. The concept corresponded much better with the desires of the citizens of the neighbouring areas, who preferred scenic views in this particular area to a forest park. The fourth plan, the Schetsschuit, did not contain an overall concept for the area; the designers focussed on separate elements and specific sites.

Despite the high leisure pressure, most designers thought the existing landscape did not need to - or should not - be transformed into a completely new leisure landscape. Their designs were based on adjustment of the existing landscape, combining existing elements and land uses with new additions, within the existing landscape structure. If possible, the existing landscape elements were used to create an attractive landscape for leisure. However, where high pressure was foreseen and large capacities were needed, park forest with leisure facilities was introduced. The public was 'hidden' so as to maintain a rural illusion in the surrounding landscape.
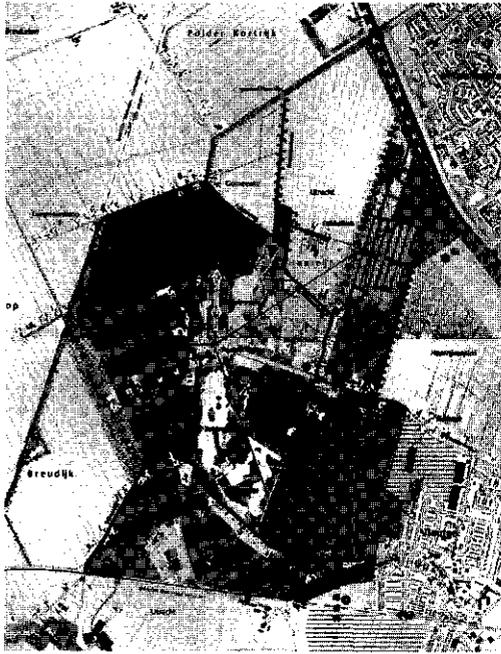
An attractive landscape for leisure: use and experience

The designers appeared to have had different opinions of what makes a landscape attractive for leisure purposes. The designers of the *Raamplan* focused merely on leisure activities and facilities. The landscape was modelled around the zoning model by proposing a different character for the distinguished areas. According to the designers, the area would thus become an attractive leisure landscape to many people with, for example, possibilities for nature oriented recreation along a path through new marshes (*de Poort naar het Groene Hart*; the Gate to the Green Heart) and a half-open landscape with picnic sites, playing grounds, sunbathing terraces, a kiosk and a training circuit, which 'make a stroll in the woods exciting and diverse' (DLG 2000, p. 34).

The landscape architect of the *Ontwikkelingsvisie*, on the other hand, took the existing landscape as a starting point. He didn't say much about the type of use or activities he had in mind, in part because he is not a supporter of too many standard facilities: 'Let life enrich it' (interview with Van Gessel in 2004). He took the position that the area was green and attractive enough as it was. 'The green background is already existing and, what is more, exceptionally authentic' (Van Gessel 2003, p. 16). The existing landscape just needed to be drastically opened up. The age-old parcel pattern was kept intact and the open polder landscape with its small landscape elements would still contrast with the intimate, wooded landscape around the castle. In Van Gessel's view, repose areas with a sufficient number of facilities had to be added to accommodate large amounts of visitors. These repose areas were integrated in small woods. The woods would merge into the existing landscape, but offer different worlds inside, surprisingly diverse and complex.

The leisure concept of the designers of the Concept Landinrichtingsplan was yet another one. Not use, but experience was chosen as the central aim and starting point. They highlighted the perceptive and imaginative aspects of design. The designers assumed that the limited range of design solutions that remained after the far-reaching standardisation in the 1970s and 1980s would not be sufficient to meet the public's high demands for unique and memorable experiences.

They took the concept of an estate as a central theme and elaborated it into a blend of ambiances, 'which express themselves in nature, landscape image, cultural heritage and leisure experience' (DLG 2004, p. 11). Special sites and elements were considered to be important for a reinforcement of the realms, for example old towers, majestic avenues or the sharp contrast between wood and open meadow landscape. They didn't think of leisure facilities as functional elements, but merely as programs or themes to enrich experiences. The designers realised that the experience value of an area would be determined, in the end, by the precise arrangement and composition of elements.

The Schetsschuit elaborated on the experience concept. The designers aimed for concrete, detailed design solutions to provide inspiration for the definitive Landinrichtingsplan and the implementation plans. They focused on the role of cultural heritage in leisure experience. Each design team focused on another spatial component of leisure. One team developed a network of paths based on linear landscape elements dating from different historical periods. Each period was a source of inspiration for a different characteristic appearance. The Late Middle Ages were to be presented by 'kerkepaden', old tracks that used to connect the hamlets with the church of Vleuten. The designers proposed to reintroduce these unpaved paths through the fields, furnished with solitary lime trees and even a little chapel. An unpaved track, parallel to an existing avenue, was to represent Feudal times. The avenue would refer to the Lord of the manor, the track to the inferior position of the peasants. In the past people did not have a choice, but now they would be free to choose the path they preferred.

The present was to be represented by the entrance road of the castle, which was to be transformed into a 'fun avenue' with contemporary follies. On busy days with fine weather the designers imagined a vivid avenue like the Ramblas in Barcelona. What once used to be the playground of the baron would be turned into a new playground for citizens. Another team designed several repose areas. They suggested a playground inspired by an early medieval farm and, at the archaeological site of an Early Medieval castle, a 'historical' brewery or an art gallery with a tea garden in 'ruin ambiance' (Buningh et al. 2005). A narrative accompanied each proposal; the history of the landscape turned out to be an inspiring source of narratives for those who knew how to find them.

Design tools
Although each designer gave priority to other aspects, all designers used zoning principles to organise the intensity of the use of the different locations and to create variety within the area. It was assumed that this would make the area appealing to groups with different motives and to give visitors the choice of crowdedness or quietness. It is obvious that all designers presumed that there would be a certain diversity of visitors, though none of them specified the nature of this diversity, nor the share of different types of visitors or visitor motives to the whole. Not only did leisure diversity seem to go without saying, it probably was not very diverse at all. The reference group in the designs seemed to be neat, white, well-educated middle-class families and elderly people. The designs and reports made no mention of, for example, non-native families looking for a place to play music and barbecue, or youths looking for adventure.

In order to accommodate large numbers of visitors, all plans attached great importance to the amelioration and intensification of route networks and the need for additional facilities like parking lots, bicycle stands, picnic benches, playgrounds and cafés. Whereas the designers of the *Raamplan* primarily focused on facilities, the designer of the *Ontwikkelingsvisie* thought the route network was the most important measure.

In general, he considered accessibility for walkers, cyclists and other visitors such as horsemen, skaters and canoeists as a primary condition for a leisure landscape. So was forcing back motorised traffic in the area.

The designers appeared to share a preference for half-open to half-enclosed landscapes. Apparently, neither very open landscapes nor dense woods were considered attractive or suitable. While extensive, nature oriented recreation was planned in the more open landscapes, intensive use was projected to take place in the park forests. Even the designer of the *Ontwikkelingsvisie*, who disputed the inseparable bond of leisure and woods, proposed small woods for intensive use.

All plans made use of special landscape features along the routes, like vistas, historical remains and open water. The workshop teams of the *Schetsschuit* took a far greater number of compositional aspects in consideration and focused on the way elements could be marked out, their height position, width, the grades of paving, and banks and plantings in order to create special passages and places. The landscape setting played different roles in the plans. Landscape was more than just a piece of green wallpaper that was easily to be exchanged for another shade of green.

The landscape setting referred to other things and was used symbolically: the contrast with busy city life, the modern estate as a democratisation of elite life, and the charming, small-scale agricultural landscapes of our grandparents' youth, the rural idyll, are just a few examples. The landscape setting was also deployed as the subject of leisure experience itself. The history of the place was elaborated upon in the designs, as a subject of interest and so were natural areas, facilitating the experience of wildlife.

A different world

All designers tried to create a world that was different from the visitors' everyday realm. In its most basic form it was just green and non-built: a literal translation of the planning concept for leisure areas.
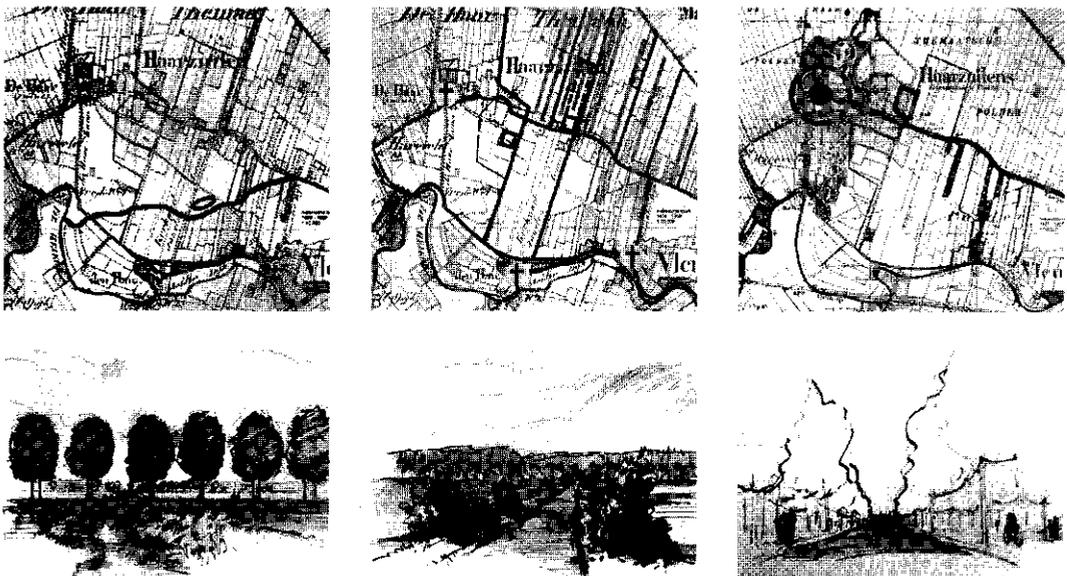
Figure 10 - 15   Illustrations from the Schetsschuit, an interdisciplinary workshop on leisure and cultural heritage. Routes referred to different historic periods: the Early Middle Ages (left), the Late Middle Ages (center), and Modern times (right).

The plans revealed elaborate references to a contrast with the everyday realm, like the rural idyll, the estate concept, the amusement park concept (Fun Avenue), historical references and references to nature and wilderness. Which references were to be applied depended on the designers' basic concept of a leisure landscape. In the *Raamplan*, which was based on a park forest concept, the green character with a distant reference to pastoral and natural landscapes was the most prominent. The woods and playgrounds were meant to be the counterpart of a city built of stone and concrete. The *Ontwikkelingsvisie* focused on the vernacular character of the authentic historical agricultural landscape, in contrast with the invented and constructed character of the city. According to the designer, leisure should also represent a feeling of freedom instead of paternalism. The *Concept Landinrichtingsplan* was based on the idea of an estate near the city, a hybrid concept with both urban and rural properties. The designers drew freely from a variety of references in order to provide a wide range of themes. Their references were based on the contrast between city and countryside, but also on the contrast between daily duties and amusement, and between the life of ordinary people and the elite who used to live in luxury manors and estates. The *Schetsschuit* designers, finally, went in search of a wide range of historical references to contrast with contemporary life.

A gap between ideas and implementation

The *Schetsschuit* workshop brought a variety of images and design solutions that were lacking in other plans. In daily practice, landscape designers are often confronted with organisations that prefer standardised solutions that fit in with their budget system and their efficient management and maintenance practices. Far-reaching standardisation is a thorn in the side of many landscape designers because it restricts their means of expression. Michael van Gessel, the landscape architect of the *Ontwikkelingsvisie*, expressed his dissatisfaction with the consequences of standardisation.'When I designed a narrow path, they told me it should be three meters wide at least. They even spoke of lighting. But I don't want a wide path. They told me it was necessary because the mowing machine requires a width of three meters.
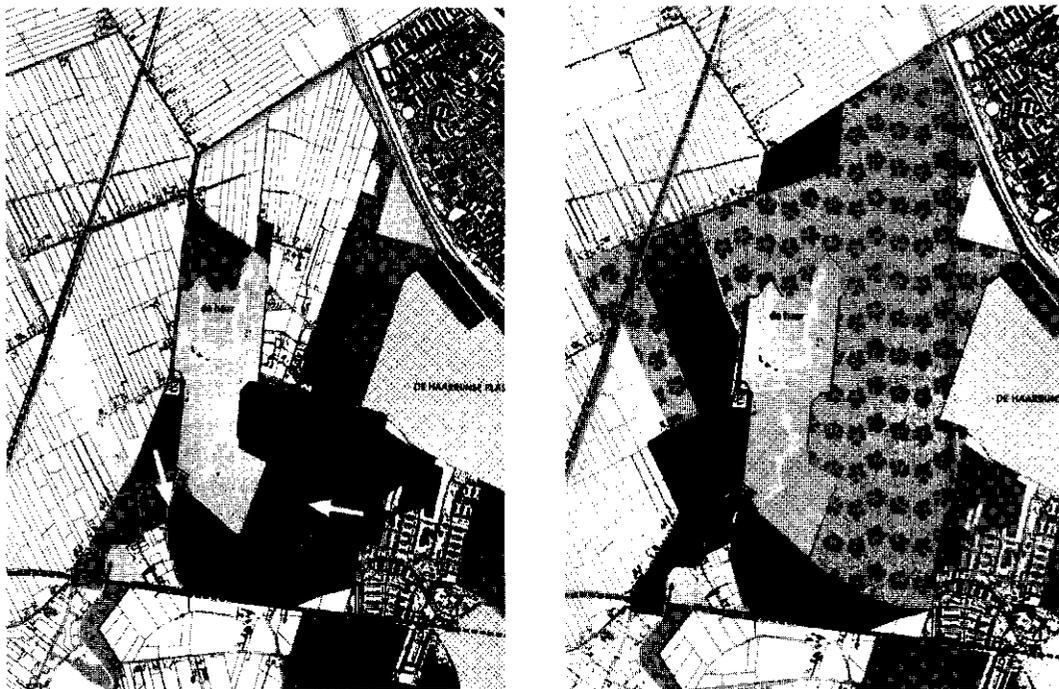
Figure 16, 17, 18   Zoning of the Raamplan (left), Ontwikkelingsvisie (right) and Concept Landinrichtingsplan (next page).

But I don't want it to be mowed at all. It shouldn't have that over-organised character of a city. If people use the path often, it will stay as it is; if not, it will grow into a small track. It required immense efforts to get things done the way I designed them' (interview with Van Gessel in 2004). Apparently, he had had clear ideal images of a leisure landscape different from everyday city realm, but he had hardly managed to realise them. The informal setting of the *Schetsschuit* workshop enabled a way of thinking and design that were free from practical constraints and conditions, but it remains to be seen which of the ideas will be taken up in the future *Landinrichtingsplan* and which will actually be realised in the end. Many design ideas will be brushed aside in the planning process and many proposals will not survive in the implementation process.

1.5 Design issues

The designs for the area of Haarzuilens show how landscape designers deal with leisure developments in the countryside. They show that different designs can be made with the same program for the same location, determined by different perspectives and choices. The contribution of the individual designers with their frames of reference and views are clearly distinguishable in the designs. However, the designs also reveal corresponding ideas, concepts and approaches. The contribution of the landscape designers is partly personal, but they also have a shared body of knowledge: their professional know-how.

The central design question in Haarzuilens – whether a mere adjustment of the existing landscape will suffice or whether a brand new landscape is in order - is not exclusively leisure-related but universal. A significant part of any design problem is to decide which elements can last and which require change or reconsideration. Knowledge and understanding of the *landscape* and the questions that arise from the program are not sufficient to make these decisions.
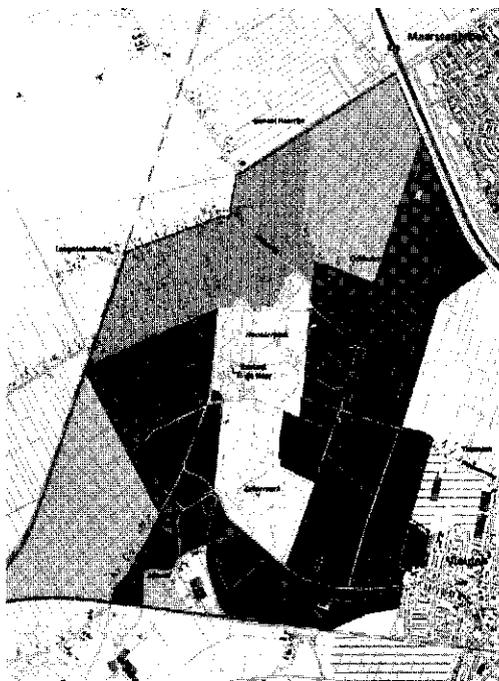
Knowledge and understanding of *landscape design practice* and its professional context are required as well. 'A design is more than simply a response to a given programme, a given location. The plan also represents universal design concepts and traditions' (Baljon 1992: 13). Landscape designers bring along their frames of reference, perspectives, motives and intentions, which might be questionable or inapplicable in the given context. Yet, landscape designers rarely question and discuss these values, which determine their perspectives and frames of reference. 'Where we seek to analyze our own cultures [...] it is essential to try to be explicitly reflective about 'our own' values' (Chandler 2002, p. 146). It is exactly this problem that will be discussed in this study.

Notes

1 Calls to integrate leisure, recreation and tourism more often in both research and policy have been made for years; especially in relation to spatial aspects of leisure and tourism (see for example Jansen-Verbeke and Dietvorst 1987, p. 362; RLG 2004; VROM-raad 2006).

2 Today, the word 'leisure' is used in Dutch idiom to indicate commercial types of leisure supplied by leisure industries, often in multifunctional complexes. It is clear that in this study the word leisure has a much more comprehensive meaning.

3 In the Netherlands, spare time decreased from an average of 49.0 hours a week in 1985 to 44.3 hours a week in 2006 (Breedveld et al. 2006). The amount of working hours differs between countries. US employees work over 200 hours more than those in the EU-15 do. Consequently, European employees have more leisure time than their US counterparts (Alesina et al. 2005). In the Netherlands, since the early 20th century yearly working hours have dropped over 50%. Currently, on average, the Dutch employee works 1338 hours on a yearly base; about 250 hours less than in the EU-15. The most important cause is the high number of Dutch employees that work part-time (CPB/SCP 2005).

4 Although some people really hunt for borderline experiences, most prefer 'convenience experiences' – safe, clean and controlled – and leisure industries willingly provide them (SCP 2004). The Dutch amusement park Efteling worked over a year on controlling the waves of their latest attraction 'The Flying Dutchman'. People should not get too wet; except on hot summer days.

5 This process is not recent. Complaints that the British countryside was 'being lost with frightening acceleration behind a screen of roadside villas, tea shacks, petrol depots and bill boards' were already made in the 1920s (Byrom 1974).

6 Visitors of the Castle are not included as the Castle is an attraction to be paid for. Leisure policy is based on free public access.

7 A non-governmental nature conservation organization set up in 1905, managing nature and landscape heritage.

8 The design teams were made up of people from the *Dienst Landelijk Gebied* (Government Service for land and Water Management), *Rijksdienst voor Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek* (Dutch National Agency for Archaeological Heritage) and the *Rijksdienst voor Monumentenzorg* (Netherlands Department for Conservation).

9 There were several reasons to pay special attention to cultural heritage. The National Belvedere policy program, initiated in 1999, aims at spatial development based on and inspired by cultural heritage. The Belvedere policy objective had not really been taken into account in the planning process for the area of Haarzuilens. Another reason was that archaeologists and historians were not used to being involved in planning and design processes and to cooperate with landscape designers. The workshop offered an opportunity to explore the chances of a collective approach.

2

Layout of the research

The preceding chapter gave an indication of the relevancy and urgency of leisure issues for landscape design. Both the object of landscape design – landscapes for leisure – and landscape design practice itself were brought up. Dealing carefully with the design issues related to landscapes for leisure calls for a critical reflection on landscape design practices. How landscape designers' perspectives and frames of references determine the nature and content of the design touches more fundamental questions. A closer look at the nature of the design process in this chapter will show that these perspectives and frames of reference play an important role. It will clarify why it is useful and necessary to study and discuss them. Subsequently, the research questions will be formulated, followed by the definition and approach of the research, both conceptually and methodologically.

2.1 The nature of design

As every designer knows through experience and as many authors have argued, it doesn't suffice at all to represent a design process as the provision of a straightforward solution to a single problem (e.g. Lawson 1980; Schön 1983; Cross et al. 1997). Design problems are usually multidimensional, designing is a very complex skill and a design process is not linear but iterative and reflective.
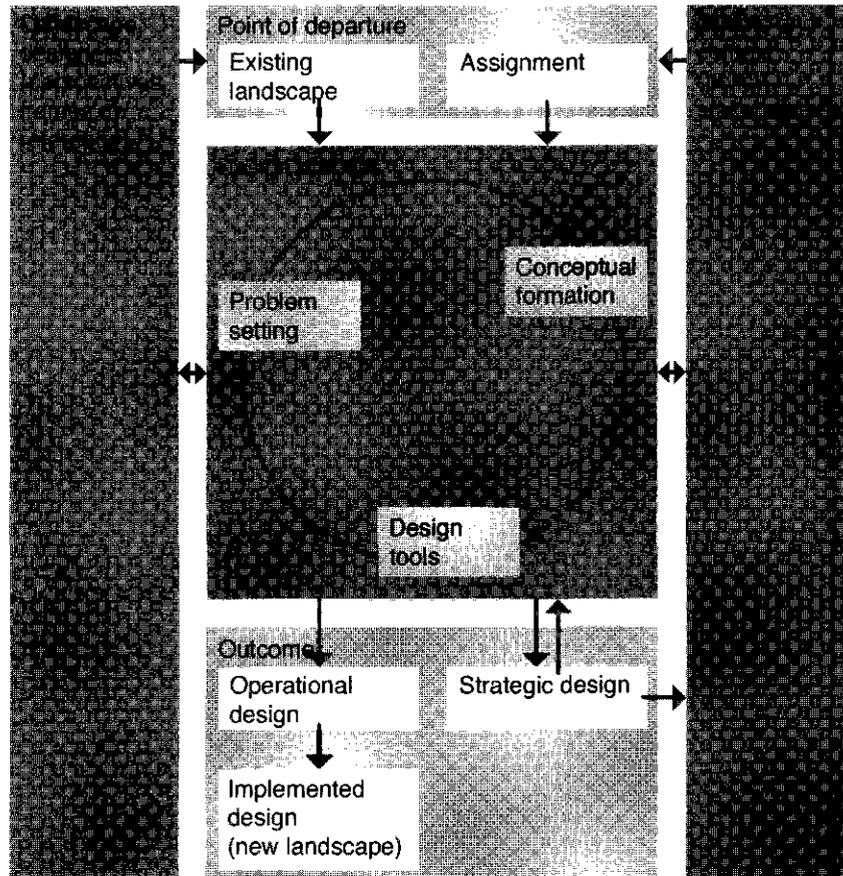
Figure 19   Scheme of a landscape design process.

As landscape designers usually work for clients, the starting point for a landscape design process will generally be an assignment. The assignment is hardly ever a simple technical problem; it is a condensation of the confrontation with new demands that are made on a site, the clients' vision, the interplay of forces between parties involved and a policy framework. The relationship between designers and their clients can be seen as part of the design problem as well, as the relation with the client co-defines the interpretation of the design problem. 'The way that designers perceive and understand problems is to some extent a function of this social relationship' (Lawson 1980, p. 66). Designers will start the assignment by looking at the possibilities and restrictions of the landscape and by interpreting the problem, 'framing' it so to speak, based on professional know-how, personal preferences and character (Schön 1983). They will critically study all relevant aspects in order to get a grip on all needs, desires and conditions. They'll interpret the problem based on their considerations and views, thus considering the claims and information, reducing the design problem to the core and formulating a feasible design question. This interpretative process, the problem setting, can be seen as the first step towards design (see also Leupen et al. 1993).

'The way designers tackle their design problems depends very strongly on the problem they see ... design is a located activity in which the designer is a major determining factor' (Dorst 2005). This shows that, apart from the assignment and the location, landscape designers' perspectives and frames of reference determine the problem setting and with that the nature and content of the design.

The problem setting is not a separate stage that precedes design but it is part of the design process itself. 'To put the problem into words is already an act of design' (Schoenmakers in S&RO 5-2006, p. 33). Design is rather an iterative, reflective process, used to frame and reframe the problem and to explore and test possible solutions on their suitability, than a technical-rational, linear process. Design practitioners are completely familiar with this process. They find problem setting and design two closely related, almost inseparable activities, which are alternately studied, tested, adapted and rejected or accepted in the iterative design process (see also Lawson 1980; Baljon 1992). 'There is no meaningful division to be found between analysis and synthesis [...] but rather a simultaneous learning about the nature of the problem and the range of possible solutions' (Lawson 1980, p. 33). Linking the existing and the future, analysis and synthesis, is the stage of conceptual formation. Concepts represent the essence of the design, the basic principles. They vary in character and may be schematic, pictorial or narrative. Concepts also vary in abstraction from general ideas, assumptions and views to planning concepts and design concepts. They are especially useful to find or apply structure in complex situations (Ekkers et al. 1990). Conceptual formation is a creative and structuring design stage, which combines reason and imagination and cannot be indicated or denominated precisely. Different concepts are applied, tested and adapted until the outcome is thought to be suitable and effective. 'An effective concept is characterised by its ability to solve major design problems. A concept is not only important for directing the design, but also in bringing the participants in the planning process (client, user, administrator, government, etc.) to a consensus and ensuring that all parties remain loyal to the design's intentions and objectives.
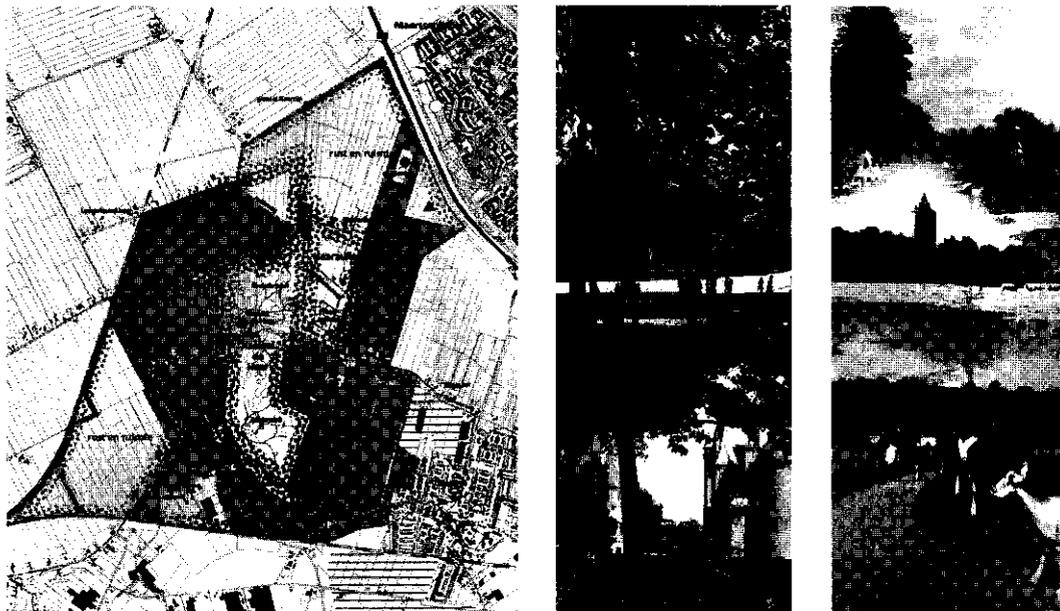
Figure 20, 21, 22   An example of a concept in one of the designs for Haarzuilens. The Concept Landinrichtingsplan for Haarzuilens used the concept of an estate to create functional and spatial coherence in the combination of the cultural historical landscape with the castle park and the future adjustments for leisure purposes. An estate unites objectives of usefulness and pleasure, and consists of farmland, woods, a country house, farmsteads and park elements; a similar programme as was imagined for the area of Haarzuilens. The estate concept also represents a hybrid of rural and urban characters. The designers used various characteristic landscape elements of an estate in their translation of the concept into design: park forest with open fields and monumental trees, vistas at the castle and follies.

In this way a strong concept can sustain the body of ideas associated with a design during the planning process' (Baljon 1992, p. 205)[1]. Design concepts are made to arrange the separate parts and provide coherence (Meeus 1984). Concepts also determine the elaboration into a design; they direct and structure the choice and application of design tools, meaning the specific elements positioned in a designed environment and their characteristics: form, composition, size and scale, material. Design tools comprise both single and composed elements (Vroom and Alexander 2006).
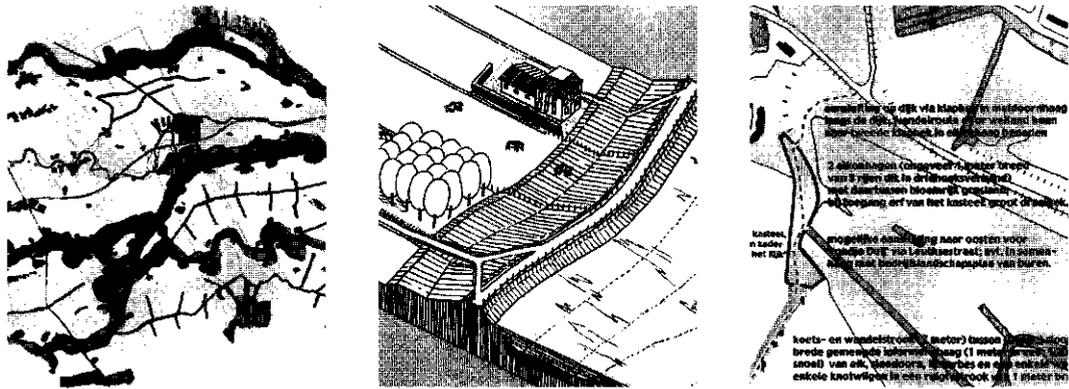
Figure 23, 24, 25   Examples of strategic designs (left and center) and operational designs (right).

A design process generally results in one or more designs that consist of a range of design tools structured by design concepts. The character of the design and its follow-up depends on the assignment. Detailed, operational designs are subsequently input for an implementation process, which will finally result in an adjusted landscape. However, designs are not always supposed to be realised just like that. That doesn't mean that such designs are illusionary plans without any practical relevance; they are best described as visions or strategies and therefore have a more abstract character than operational designs. These plans may be characterised as strategic designs. Strategic designs differ from detailed operational designs in objective, in scale and level of detail. Strategic designs are meant to explore possible futures (for example scenarios), to set the policy agenda or to function as overall general frameworks and guidelines for future unexpected and unforeseen initiatives. Successful plans of this last type act as 'terms of reference', as a temporary framework or compass (Ekkers et al. 1990). Strategic plans may be used as input for other planning processes that may, later on, lead to operational designs.

In the preceding schematic description of a design process, designing is conceptualised as a representation process. Landscape designers build up mental images or representations of a future landscape - a mindscape - based on and inspired by different sources: the assignment, the actual landscape, the social relationship between all parties involved and the professional know-how, personal preferences and character of the designer (Lawson 1980). In the process of framing and reframing, landscape and mindscape are inextricably bound together in a process of deriving and assigning meaning. They are closely related, subject to continuous change and depend on context. 'Interpretations lead to new interpretations, inevitably caught up in this circle of meaning' (Hall 1997, p. 42). The model of a representation cycle is not exclusive for design; a model of tourism transformations, for example, was based on the same principles (Ashworth and Van Dietvorst 1995).
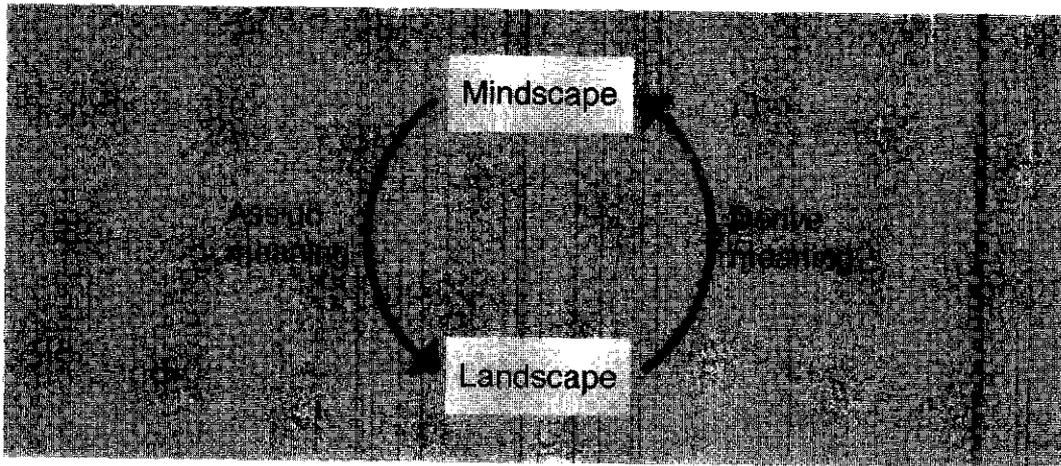
Landscape designing comprehends the transformation of mental representations into ground plans, sections and views. The explanatory texts that usually go with these graphic representations of the design can be regarded as textual representations. These graphic and textual representations can be regarded as a second level of representation, which represents the first, the mindscape. When the design is implemented and the landscape is adjusted according to the design, the graphic representations are materialised. This is a third level of representation in which the first level of representation, the designer's mindscape, is embedded. The adjusted landscape is the output of a representation process and may again be the starting point for a future representation process when new design problems arise.

2.2 Design tradition

2.2.1 Definitions

The preceding characterisation of a design process showed that design activities couldn't be done without personal interpretations. Designers' mindscapes – their perspectives and frames of reference – play an essential role in the interpretation of the design problem and the design. Clients expect designers to bring and apply their perspectives and creative skills, which is personal and individual in part. The individual part determines the characteristic signature of that particular designer, and clients may choose a specific designer because they want a design that carries that signature. But obviously designers' mindscapes hold professional knowledge and skills as well. 'The architect does not invent his language from nothing; he makes use of the language of his predecessors for his own intentions, changing it little by little, enriching it with new meanings, but meanings deduced from the old ones' (Steinmann in Steenbergen 2002, p. 21). Designers draw from a 'complex whole of written and unwritten rules and values within the landscape design discipline'. This so-called design tradition – 'the total of forms and ideas handed down' (Baljon 1992, p. 14) - consists of a blend of theory and practical know-how with regard to design tools and concepts, and underlying views of landscape design. 'Form' is used in Baljon's description in its broadest meaning of design tools, including all material representations. The 'ideas' represent what is sometimes indicated as the 'design philosophy'. The word philosophy may suggest a coherent framework of ideas, but in reality 'a design philosophy is seldom based on a solid theory or a treatise on design.

Rather, it is usually a construct comprising knowledge, tradition, experience and fragments of theories and ideas which, through interaction with the design brief, becomes operational and crystallizes' (Baljon 1992, p. 20).

There is not just one landscape design tradition; several traditions exist side by side, more or less influencing each other. Different countries have different design traditions, and different design movements develop their own tradition with a specific design style. Design traditions to some extent overlap. We can't speak of *the* design tradition; we have to speak of *a* design tradition. Design traditions grow in practice; the process of designing develops them and they are constantly reinterpreted for new situations and design problems. As a tradition grows, practices are not just replicated but they are reflected upon as well. Implicit knowledge is made explicit and design theories are deduced from it. Together with theories taken from other disciplines and the implicit empirical knowledge of the designers, they form the base for future design practices, where reinterpretation and further development will take place once more.
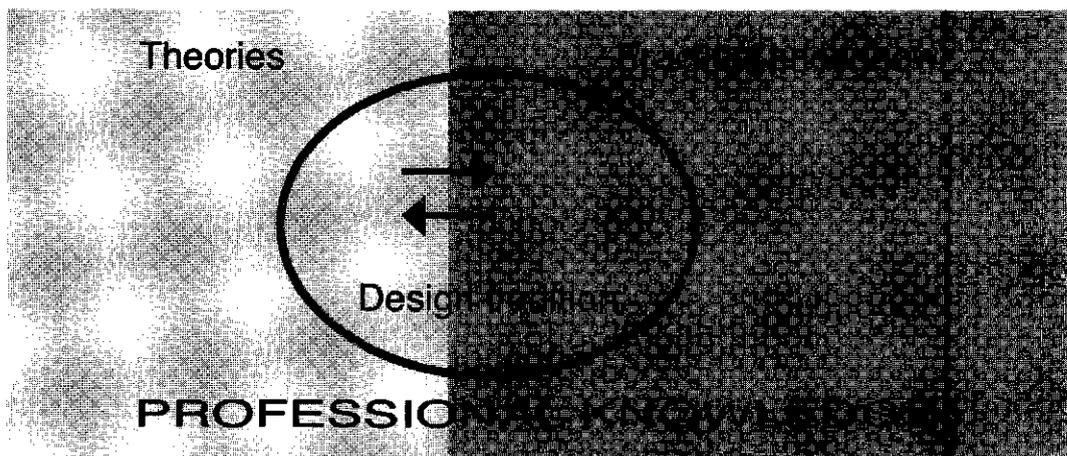
Figure 27   A design tradition is a body of knowledge based on practical know-how and theories

Historical design traditions in garden- and park architecture have been long established and a design theory has been deduced. The description and theory of modern, 20th century landscape architecture, which covers a much wider range of subjects, scales and objectives, is still limited[2]. As the landscape architecture discipline is young, so are its theoretical foundations, and they rest to a considerable extent on theories stemming from other disciplines (e.g. Swaffield 2002).

2.2.2 A Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes

In the 20th century a specific tradition of comprehensive landscape design for rural landscapes arose in the Netherlands. Characteristic for this tradition are the close relation to civil and agricultural engineering, and the far-reaching comprehensive designs at a regional scale. The latter is a consequence of the normative planning culture in the Netherlands at the time. National authorities largely determined, planned and designed the future spatial developments. The tradition was developed by the Landscape Department of the State Forest Agency in the context of land reclamations and land consolidations.

Essential for this design tradition is that landscape designers believe that rural landscapes are not landscapes for mere agricultural production but rather comprehensive, multifunctional landscapes. In their opinion landscapes have to be regarded as environments where many activities and different land uses take place, in balance and coherence with each other and with the physical circumstances of that particular area. Leisure has been one of the activities to be taken into account since the beginning of this tradition. Landscape design for leisure is therefore closely related to the 20th century tradition of landscape design for rural landscapes.

Design theory of comprehensive landscape design in rural landscapes was developed through a close collaboration between the designers of the State Forest Agency, the school of landscape architecture and the research institutes in Wageningen. This group of practitioners and researchers reflected upon design practices, applied new theories from abroad and from other disciplines, and developed new planning and design concepts (e.g. Vroom 1992; De Visser 1997; the series *Bouwen aan een levend landschap* BAHL, Building a living landscape, Informatie- en kenniscentrum NBLF 1988-1999). Their design theories are based on three basis principles: historical continuity, functionality and flexibility (Vroom 1992). Even though the designers felt and still feel strongly about development and renewal of landscapes, their designs are grounded on local and regional characteristics, both for ecological and socio-psychological reasons. A close relation between land use, vegetation and physical circumstances fits with ecosystems theories and strengthens the identity of the landscape. Historical continuity also provides an understanding of time. In 1976 Vrijlandt and Kerkstra developed a topological landscape model, the so-called *triplex landschap*, consisting of an abiotic layer, a biotic layer and an anthropogenic layer. The model explains the 'vertical relation' between physical characteristics, vegetation and human occupation and land use.

On account of the engineering context and the designers' affinity with the Modern Movement, functionality has been a major condition in this design tradition. Modern movements like De Stijl, De 8 & Opbouw and Bauhaus wanted to break with traditions in architecture and art, and rejected the use of ornaments and symbolism. Meaning should not 'transcend the characteristics of place or context (Treib 1993). The form and shape of landscape elements and materials 'should speak for themselves'. Symbolic context was deemed intrinsic and references should be functional (Vroom and Van den Toorn 2003). Aesthetic reasons alone were not enough; designs first and foremost had to be legitimised by functional reasoning.
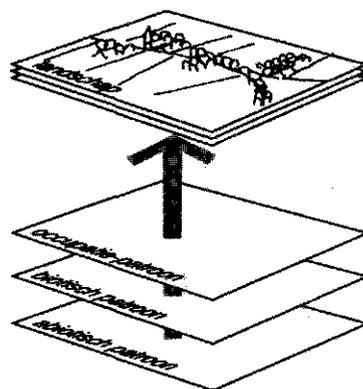
Figure 28   The triplex landscape model (Vrijlandt and Kerkstra 1976).

In addition, the logic of a certain use in relation to the physical circumstances, the origin and history of the landscape should be 'legible'. Modern designers preferred a simple layout and a pure, geometric form that was freely set in space (Vroom 2001). 'The moderns believe in hte myth of the machine, in rationality. Their aim is to shape a liveable space. Their language of beauty is the language of timeless reality (Harvey 1989 in Vroom and Van den Toorn 2003). Their designs were characterised by functionality.

As the time span of a landscape is broad and designers are confronted with uncertainty about future land uses and functionality, their designs have to be flexible. This is especially the case for the regional scale. The *cascoconcept* (framework planning concept), which was developed in the 1980s by Van Nieuwenhuijze, Vrijlandt, Kerkstra, Hamhuis and Overmars, provided a strategy to deal with uncertainty and highly dynamic land uses and at the same time provide stability for low-dynamic land uses such as nature conservation, forestry, extensive recreation and water management (see 7.1).

Leisure in the design tradition

Nonetheless, the theoretical foundation of this tradition shows many gaps. A considerable part of the Dutch design tradition in rural landscapes has yet to be subjected to scientific reflection, especially the aspect of leisure. Little is known about the practice of landscape design for leisure. We hardly know *what* has been designed. It is true that the information about individual cases has been drawn up in images such as maps, schemes and cross-sections; in textual explanations and landscapes, but there is no overview of design concepts and tools. Even less is known about the motives and intentions of the designers: *why* they designed it that way. In general, design drawings and textual explanations don't provide a lot of information about the embedded ideas. It's not easy to trace those. In the example of Haarzuilens, most ideas came out by interviewing the designers and observing them at work in a workshop. Some designers weren't even aware of their own motives until they were explicitly asked for; they took them for granted.

2.3 Aim of the research and research questions

If we want to contribute to the development of attractive future rural landscapes for leisure, and t help to further develop the discipline of landscape design and its foundations, it is necessary to look beyond the challenges, trends and demands of both leisure and landscapes. We have to ask ourselves whether or not the way landscape designers have been dealing with leisure is sensible. The objective of this study is to examine how landscape designers have been dealing with leisure in the context of the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes and to what extent these approaches are still relevant and suitable in the contemporary, changing context, with new leisure demands. It aims to provide the knowledge and understanding that are necessary to start a discussion about the leisure approaches and the design tradition's relation to leisure approaches. This study also aims to contribute to a stronger foundation of landscape design for leisure in rural landscapes.

As the aspect of leisure in the concerning design tradition has barely been examined (and the design tradition as a whole just partly), this aspect can only be reconstructed from practical knowledge; that is to say, from landscape design practices. The practices of 20th century Dutch landscape design for rural landscapes represent a rich source of information, which can be used to trace tools and ideas and to make a reconstruction.

A study of these practices will not only provide an insight in the range of concepts, tools and ideas concerning leisure used by landscape designers, it will shed light on their origin, and the motives and reasoning behind them as well. Such a historical perspective will clarify the 'know-how' and the 'know-why'. In order to expose landscape designers' approach to leisure in the countryside, 20th century practices of landscape design for the countryside have to be studied and analysed. This leads to the following research questions.

> *How did Dutch landscape designers deal with leisure in the countryside in 20th century landscape designs? What designs did they make for leisure purposes; which design concepts and tools did they apply and for what reasons? What were their ideas about leisure and the role and meaning of landscape with regard to leisure, and to what extent did the designs represent these ideas?*

Through a comparison of the outcomes of the above-mentioned analyses and a deduction of leading views, concepts and design tools, a reconstruction can be made of one or more dominant leisure approaches in landscape design. In addition to that, it can be established how these approaches relate to the general Dutch landscape design tradition concerning rural landscapes. Therefore, the second set of research questions is:

> *What are the dominant approaches - the leading ideas, design concepts and tools - concerning leisure in the countryside that emerge from the studied practices of 20th century landscape design and how are they related to the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes?*

When we know how leisure was approached in the past and how the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes relates to it, it is possible to reconsider the design approaches in the light of the present-day context. The first chapter showed that landscape designers face new questions and challenges nowadays. They have to decide what is to last and what requires change or reconsideration, not only regarding the landscape but also regarding their design tradition, which offers a reference for future design. Critical issues may arise from structural changes of the economic, social and cultural context of leisure in rural landscapes. After all, the world has changed and we don't spend our spare time the same way as our parents used to do. The planning context, which provides a strong framework for landscape design, has changed too. Existing design approaches and design solutions may not be relevant or suitable anymore. At the same time, the existing customs could be flawed anyway. They may comprehend blind spots or even be based on false ideas and assumptions. A third set of research questions arises:

> *With regard to leisure in the countryside: what are critical issues for landscape design theory and practice in the present and future context? What are the most significant characteristics and trends of leisure in the countryside and which issues require attention? To what extent does the contemporary context require reconsideration of the dominant design approaches concerning leisure in the countryside?*

The outcomes are relevant for the landscape design practice, but also for the theoretical foundation of landscape design. A study of landscape design practices and tradition will contribute to the further development of the profession of landscape design in different ways. First, it will provide a historical overview of landscape design practices concerning leisure in the countryside and thus contribute to the historiography of a field that is still poorly documented.

Second, the study will contribute to the theoretical foundation and development of contemporary landscape architecture. Theory in landscape architecture has up till now been scarce, compared to other disciplines, particularly in reference to the 20th century and the regional scale. Third, the study will provide insights that contribute to a critical approach of contemporary design issues with regard to leisure in the countryside. Finally, it will hopefully make landscape designers and their clients think carefully about designing landscapes for and together with the people that will be using them.

2.4 Research approach and methodology

The research questions correspond with a research layout that consists of three parts. The first part concerns the empirical part of selecting and studying the material to bring out the underlying design concepts, tools and ideas. As this material will be used to reconstruct the dominant leisure approaches in landscape design, it is necessary to develop a methodological device, in order to be able to deconstruct individual designs into components that allow a systematic comparative analysis and a collective use for reconstruction. In order to make the sources speak and reveal their nature and diversity, they have to be approached open-mindedly. A selective and limited point of view may obscure a clear insight and profound understanding of landscape design for leisure.
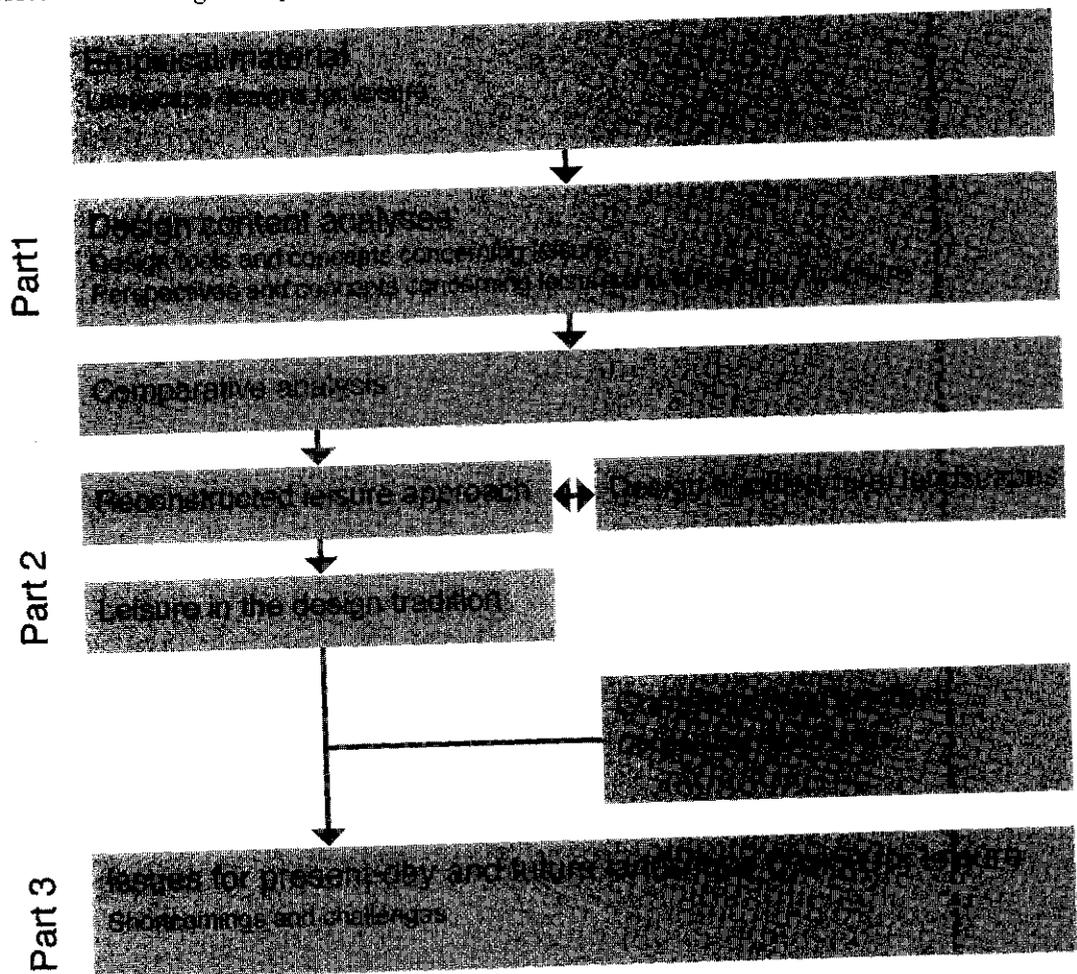
Figure 29   Research scheme

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It bears the risk of wishful thinking or theory taking over from the concepts emerging from the data (Tosh 2002). The second part comprises the comparative analysis of ideas, design concepts and tools, which rose from the first part. Dominant leisure approaches will be reconstructed and related to the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes. In the third part the reconstructed leisure approaches will be confronted with the present social, economic and cultural context of changing landscapes. In order to be able to evaluate the approaches in the light of both the current and the future challenges designers have to face, it is necessary to have a clear image of what is happening in the field of leisure and landscape change. The result of the confrontation is a range of achievements, shortcomings and challenges for landscape design, both practically and theoretically.

As this study can be characterised as interpretative, it is important to verify interpretations. Therefore the outcomes of the analyses have been checked with the designers and compared with literature on the designers and on landscape design in rural landscapes. The reconstructed leisure approaches and the issues for present-day and future landscape design were discussed several times with the group it concerned, the landscape designers, and with their clients. The most important methodological and analytical tools will be explained later. First it is necessary to define the perspective of the study.

2.4.1 Focus on designers

Whether a landscape designer did a proper job designing a landscape for leisure purposes, can only be established by studying leisure use and users' expectations, opinions and appreciation of the designed landscape. The public doesn't necessarily use and experience landscapes for leisure according to the designers' intentions. The meanings embedded in the landscape by the designers may be different from the meanings derived from the landscape by the public for varied reasons: the designer didn't consider the public's demands; people may not be able to recognize the meanings embedded by the designer; and they may derive meanings that differ from the designers' intentions. Some landscape designs are robust, ready to enable other meanings and other uses easily. Others are not and conflicts may rise. How user experiences relate to designers' intentions is certainly important and highly relevant, but goes beyond the objective of this study. First of all we should know and understand the designers' intentions. Therefore, the perspective of the landscape designer was chosen in this study.

2.4.2 Research material

Landscape designs
If a design is a graphic representation of the designer's mindscape and a designed landscape may be considered to be the materialisation of the design and the mindscape embedded in the design, both landscape and design may be used as research material. It was decided that the study should focus on the *designs*, not the *landscapes* for the following reason. The discussion on the nature of design demonstrated that a landscape design and an adjusted landscape might encompass quite a different load of representations. Material representations in adjusted landscapes do not only represent the designer's mindscape but practical, financial and power-related aspects of implementation processes as well.

After all, landscape designers aren't the only actors contributing to the spatial adjustment of landscapes for leisure purposes, so are leisure entrepreneurs and organisations, nature and forest management organisations, water boards, cultural heritage organisations, policy makers, politicians, real estate developers, farmers and other parties, both private and public. Not only would it be very difficult to unravel the original ideas of the designers from the final result of material representations in the landscape but strategic designs would be left out of consideration as well. The extended room for free thought in strategic, conceptual designs makes that these plans reveal the designers' ideals, considerations and intentions more clearly than operational plans with all their constraints and conditions. It would be a missed chance to set strategic plans aside.

Selection of designs

In order to reconstruct how leisure has been dealt with in landscape design for rural landscapes, a thorough and detailed study of just a few carefully chosen designs does not suffice. A broad, representative sample from the comprehensive material of Dutch landscape design practice for rural landscapes with a leisure component is more appropriate. Over thirty designs were selected. Correspondences and continuities that would come up by analysing, comparing and interpreting them, would point in the direction of a dominant leisure approach. Only, how can we know what relates to dominant leisure approaches and what relates to other factors? After all, landscape design problems and designs are set by the assignment, the landscape, and the nature of the planning process, the general context and the designer's background. It is not possible to eliminate other factors like in a scientific experiment to test a hypothesis. All factors have to be taken into account. If a very heterogeneous sample of landscape designs is selected that represents diversity in all factors and in different combinations, the emergence of common 'tools and ideas' will likely point to a shared leisure approach. On the other hand, if samples of landscape designs are selected which are homogeneous with regard to one factor, they may be comparable to a certain extent. Comparing several landscape designs for the same area with each other and with landscape designs for another area, for example, can provide information about the role of the factor landscape. If a selection of landscape designs is heterogeneous and at the same time contains more or less homogeneous groups of designs, it will provide the opportunity to study the problem from both points of view.

The finally selected designs represent a crosscut in time, type of plans and landscapes. They cover a period of approximately eighty years and represent five periods with different planning and policy contexts. The earliest designs date from the period before and just after World War II when landscape architecture arose from the quickly developing field of town planning, characterised as the pioneer period. The other designs cover the period from the late 1950s, when leisure became a common topic in landscape design in rural areas, up to the present. These periods were respectively characterised as the periods of mass recreation, joint recreational use, rambling and diversification. The designs are more or less equally divided over these periods. As the attention for operational and strategic plans changed over time, the two types of plans are not proportionally distributed over the whole period. Detailed, operational designs were scarcer than expected and much harder to find[3].

The selected designs cover different landscape types in order to examine how landscape characteristics determine the design. The designs are concentrated in four different areas representing a considerable part of the variety in Dutch landscapes: the coastal zone and the marine clay polders are represented in the Zeeuwse Delta, the river plains in the Gelderse Poort, the peat lowlands in the Venen and the sandy uplands in the Stream Valley of the Drentsche Aa[4].

The chosen areas are all historical, multifunctional cultural landscapes labelled as National Landscapes[5] in the latest Spatial Policy Document and they're all faced with an increasing importance of leisure.

The selection was discussed with landscape designers and researchers with thorough knowledge of Dutch landscape planning and design for rural landscapes. The selection includes a number of well-known designs, in spite of the fact that some designs have been analysed and described in literature before. The reasons to include these plans were that their leisure component was never specifically studied and that they are part of the canon of the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes. They have had a great influence on generations of landscape designers and the development of the profession.

Nature and content of the research material

The empirical material for the design analyses consisted of design drawings, explanatory texts from the accompanying reports and the designers themselves[6]. The drawings and texts provided data about the problem setting and the design tools and concepts. Design concepts were often explained in schemes. Unfortunately though, original sources were hardly ever available. Archives contained few useful data for several reasons. First, the condition of landscape design archives is tragic. Existing archives are often hardly accessible, and material is dispersed and often incomplete. Second, many designers and their clients do not recognize the value of drafts and originals, and only keep their final plans and reports for archiving. As the designers themselves were not very interested in leisure, particular data concerning their ideas about leisure – if material ever existed – was lost.

Semi-structured interviews and discussions with the designers of the plans (Annex 2) were held to compare with, and complement the data acquired from the design drawings and textual explanations. Some landscape designers have passed away, in which case old recordings and transcriptions of interviews were used. The interviews and discussions brought up new data. It's true that people's memories can be distorted and unreliable, but for this study it was the best way to get as close as possible to the original sources.

In order to reveal the underlying general views and concepts of leisure related to landscape, and to clarify their relation with the design tools and concepts, the interviews proved to be essential. To personally have professional know-how turned out to be indispensable in this search process. As hardly any written sources were available and the ideas behind the designs remained almost completely implicit in these sources, it was difficult to find the ideas and to get a hold of them. When the designers *did* make their ideas explicit, they were treated as truisms that went without saying, but more often than not they were simply not mentioned in the textual explanations of the designs. The designers themselves weren't very aware of their own ideas either. It took many interviews and discussions to disclose their ideas and to find out what ideas were commonly shared about leisure and the meaning of landscape for leisure.

Interviews with key figures (Annex 2) and additional literature such as policy documents, books and professional journals helped to come to an understanding of the designers' motives, their relation to the specific policy context and the issues spoken-of within the design discipline at the time.

2.4.3 Design analyses

In order to identify design concepts, tools and ideas and to enable a comparative analysis the material has to be studied systematically. An analytical framework is required to structure the research. Such a framework was not readily available for two reasons. First, few people have made their analytical frameworks explicit. Design critics, for example, usually do not justify their arguments when they discuss designs in professional journals. Academic researchers who made comparative analyses, however, did document their structured assessments (Steenbergen 1990; Vroom and Meeus 1990; Ekkers et al. 1990; Baljon 1992; Reh 1995; Aben and De Wit 1998; Hendriks and Stobbelaar 2003). Yet their use in other studies is limited for a second reason: frameworks are always geared to the situation and the research questions. The researchers mentioned above primarily focussed on architectural aspects: the nature of design tools, their form and composition. Their primary interest went out to the architectural treatment of topography and ascending elements. De Jong argues that this type of research 'is no longer in a position to understand the historical and present reality of garden and landscape' (De Jong 2006, p. 9). He believes that a study of landscape design is above anything else a socio-historical study, based on the view that landscape design is 'a site of contested meanings', which can only be understood and explained with approaches and methods grounded in various disciplines (e.g. Lefaivre and Tzonis 1984).

Elaborating on this view, an analytical framework that enables a study of designers' ideas should go beyond an architectural approach of design tools and the design concepts they are based on. It should include aspects that relate to the designers' views and considerations in different stages of the design process. It should cover the whole iterative process from problem setting through concept formation to concrete spatial design, and, for this study, focus on the spatial components of leisure in particular.

A range of connected aspects influences the realm of leisure, but landscape design mainly focuses on the physical and spatial aspects. Information supply, promotion, services and management for example are only relevant for landscape design as far as it concerns their spatial impact. It makes sense to examine the spatial components of leisure, as they are the primary objects of landscape planning and design. This will enable a structured study of landscape designs and a well-founded assessment of the results. A literature study on planning for leisure, recreation and tourism environments provided several, sometimes overlapping, spatial categories. Most sources defined attractions and conditional components like transportation and routing (also called access), facilities and services (Fogg 1990; Gunn 1994; Hultsman et al. 1998)[7]. Only a few sources mentioned the natural and rural landscape setting as a relevant component; the landscape setting was merely seen as an already present, *external* resource (Gunn 1994) that possibly needed some 'landscaping'[8] in addition to recreation programming. Although landscapes are becoming increasingly important in the commodification of regions as leisure products, their role and meaning for leisure and tourism are rarely questioned. Economic and social perspectives dominate in leisure studies, and the landscape setting is often reduced to green wallpaper for leisure activities and experiences. Sources on joint recreational use in rural landscapes did pay explicit attention to the landscape setting (De Vink 1981; Buro Stroband 1996). Goossen et al. also studied values concerning the use and values concerning the experience of the landscape: the first referring to recreation programming, the latter referring to the landscape setting (1997).

An implicit recognition of the importance of the landscape setting as a relevant spatial component of leisure was found in a common categorisation in recreation policy: site-bound, area-bound and route-bound outdoor recreation[9]; after all, the major condition for area-bound recreation is its setting.

The typology of spatial components that are relevant for landscape design, which was developed for this study, consists of four spatial components: attractions, facilities, routes and settings. *Attractions* are defined in this study as locations with special features that attract visitors. Attractions are not scale-bound; they may be small sites like a giant tree, a hill, a historical element or an observation post and they may cover larger areas like woods, water sports centres, a coastal area or a National Landscape. Attractions may be specially constructed for leisure purposes or they be already present in a landscape. An existing, attractive site usually doesn't become an attraction just like that. Conditional *facilities* like parking lots, benches, information signs and toilets guide visitors and provide them comfort. Other facilities like playgrounds and visitor centres can also be interpreted as attractions; they can turn any location into a leisure site. *Routes* are not scale-bound either. They provide access, both external (the way to get to a destination) and internal (the way to move around). A route doesn't necessarily need a constructed road or path; a route may also be a spontaneously chosen track in an area with free access. Like attractions, routes are often furnished with facilities like signs, car parks and benches. The *setting* is defined as the overall environment - the landscape - in which leisure takes place. It determines the realm and atmosphere, the scenery and the stage for leisure. The setting may be just a backdrop setting; it may also have strong symbolic meaning or be the very subject of leisure (see also Potteiger and Purinton 1998). Attractions, facilities, routes and setting are interconnected and may overlap. One cannot function without the other.
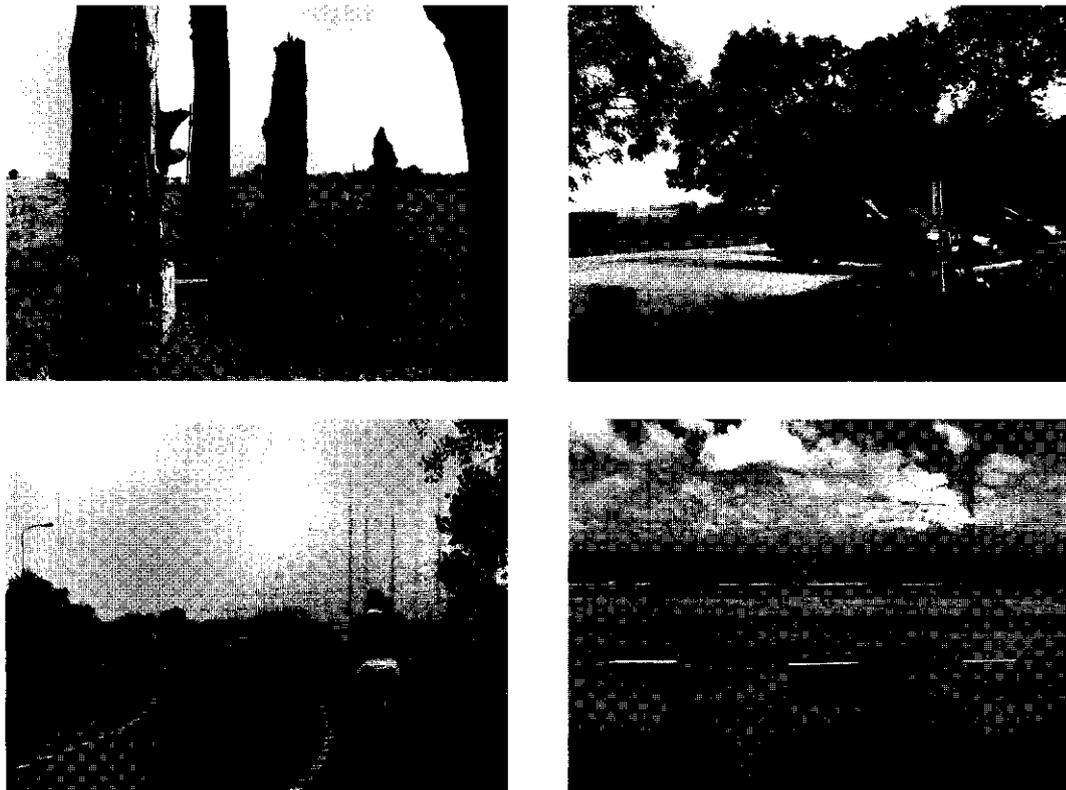
Figure 30 - 33   Illustrations of the spatial components that are objects of landscape planning and design for leisure: attractions, facilities, routes and setting.

A landscape setting, for instance, can't be enjoyed without access and landscape elements that make out the attractions are also part of the whole setting. Together, the four components form the spatial entity for leisure purposes.

An analytical framework was constructed, based on the above-mentioned criteria and components. Data about the assignment and the problem setting can be found in the reports that accompany the designs. Data about the design itself, meaning the design tools and concepts, can be extracted, with a trained eye, from the design drawing and its legend. As designers usually explain their designs on the basis of the design concepts and as the concepts are often explained in schemes, the concepts can also be read from the textual explanation in the accompanying report. Sometimes the legend and the textual explanation contain clues about general views and concepts.

A noun like contrast, and adjectives like rural, informal or natural give an indication of the character of the leisure environment that the designer has in mind. Nevertheless, most information on the general views and concepts could only be revealed by asking the question "Why?" over and over again. This forced the designers to explicate their reasons for the use of particular design tools.

2.4.4 Reconstruction of leisure approaches

In the second part of the research the dominant approaches concerning leisure in the countryside are reconstructed. Common patterns in design tools, concepts and perspectives will be deduced from the design analyses through comparison and interpretation. Major views and concepts concerning leisure, and their representation in design tools and concepts, will be compared with theoretical conceptualisations of leisure. Concepts, tools and ideas will also be related to the wider tradition of landscape design in rural landscapes in order to understand to what extent this tradition determines the way leisure is handled.
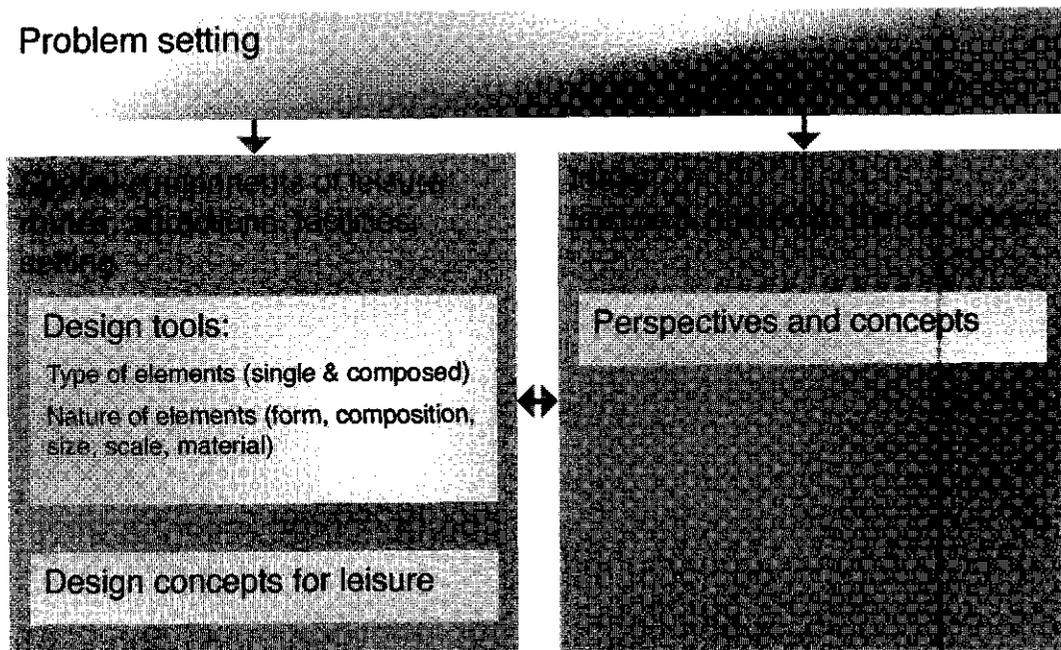
Figure 34 Framework to analyse the empirical material

When remarkable developments or continuities of leisure approaches in time came up during the course of this research, these were discussed and possible explanations were given. The outcomes were discussed with landscape design practitioners, policy makers and other parties in Dutch planning practice in workshops and debates (Brinkhuijsen et al. 2006). They confirmed most interpretations, denied some and brought up new visions. Where the group denied outcomes or disagreed with them, this has been described and discussed.

2.4.5 Evaluation of leisure approaches in the light of a changing context

In the third part of the research the dominant leisure approaches will be revised in the light of present and future challenges for landscape planning and design. Continuities and changes concerning the central themes of leisure in the countryside will be brought up. These themes will be related to the dominant leisure approaches in terms of relevancy and suitability. Critical issues concerning the themes will be brought up and discussed from an academic and from a practical point of view. Relevant themes and processes were derived from literature and from discussions with landscape designers, policy makers and other parties in the Dutch planning and design practice. These practitioners reflected on the issues that came up in workshops and interviews once more. Their views were taken into account in the discussion of the major issues.

NOTES

1 In this sense, a design concept is very different from a scientific concept. Whereas a scientific concept is defined to be as precise as possible in order to exclude different interpretations, a design concept is less defined, so that it can bind together a range of meanings and images.

2 LE:NOTRE, a European Network Project in Landscape Architecture, observes a lack of 'critical mass' for the development of functioning academic communities within the various sub-disciplines of landscape architecture in the majority of the European countries. The aim of the LE:NOTRE project is to contribute to 'documenting the current state of the art, seeking common ground and building bridges between the various parts of the discipline and the varied traditions which have developed in very different European contexts over the past decades' (www.le-notre.org).

3 The nature of many planning processes entailed that over-all strategic designs were split up into many, fragmented implementation-oriented parts that were elaborated many years later. They covered such small areas and their design problems were so small that they were lost in people's memories and in archives.

4 For a concise introduction to these landscapes see chapter 3.

5 National Landscapes 'distinguish themselves by the characteristic coherence between different landscape components such as nature (flora and fauna), relief (e.g. stream valleys and mounds), land use (e.g. agriculture, water management) and buildings (e.g. village amenity areas and forts). They tell the story of the origin and development of Dutch landscapes. National landscapes are no museums but areas where people live, work, and recreate' (LNV 2006).

6 When designs were realised, the sites have been visited. The analyses have been restricted to the designs, however, according to the chosen perspective. In case of remarkable or relevant differences between the original design and the implemented result, comments were made in the description of the design.

7 Some sources considered facilities as being a part of the services component.

8 To 'landscape' as a common verb means to 'prettify'.

9 Site-bound recreation: visiting attractions, day camping, taking part in sports and plays, watching sports, gardening, roadside recreation, sunbathing et cetera.
Area-bound recreation: rambling, hunting, 'sightseeing', guided tours in nature or towns worth seeing et cetera.
Route-bound recreation: touring by car or (motor) cycle, going on walking tours, horse riding, et cetera.
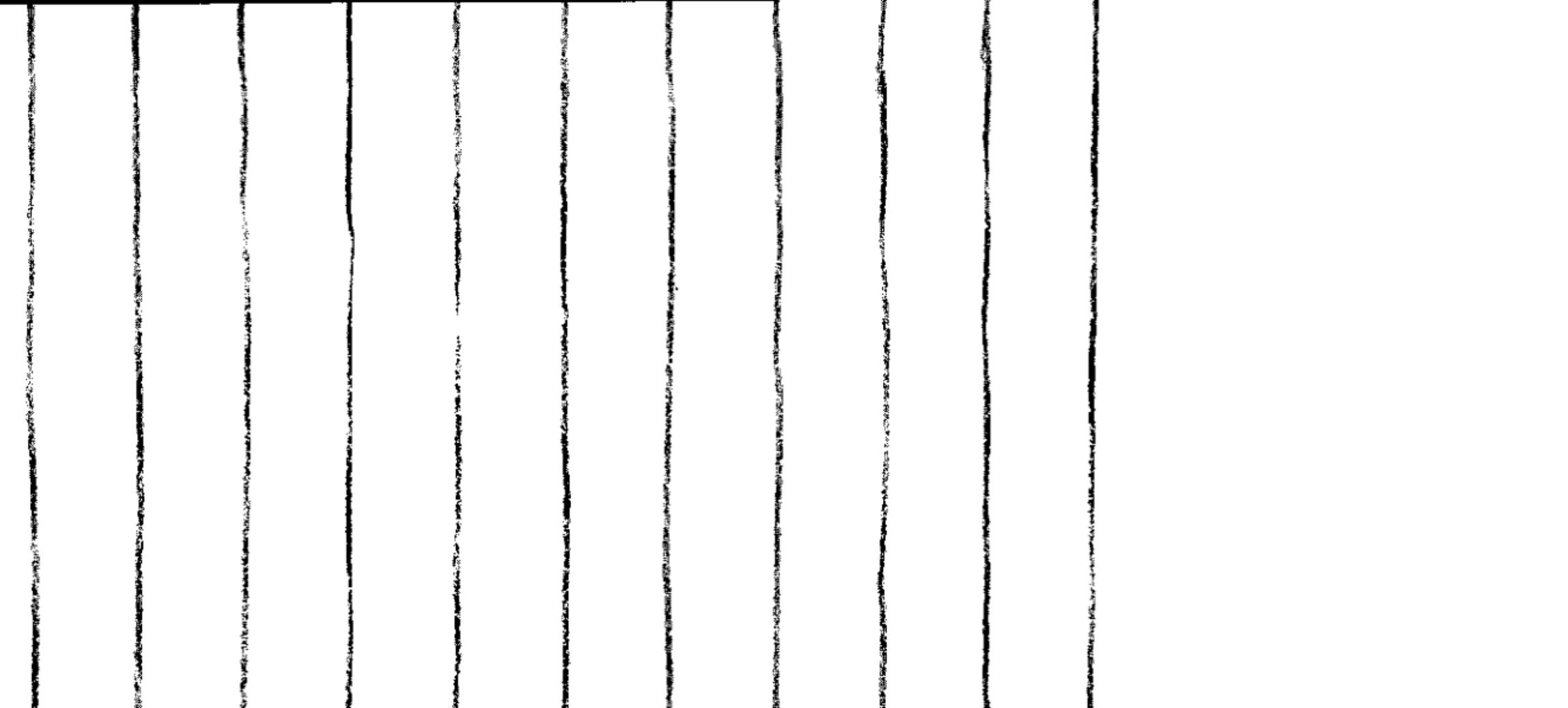
3
Landscape in the Netherlands

3.1 The Netherlands

The Netherlands are located in the lowlands of North-western Europe. Almost half of the country, the western part, lies below sea level and is protected by dikes and dunes. Water management and the fight against floods have strongly influenced the Dutch culture and landscape. Considerable areas have been reclaimed from open water. Water control is still an essential aspect of land cultivation and management. A famous saying about Dutch engineering culture is: 'God created the world, but the Dutch created the Netherlands'.

Urbanization

Due to its economically strategic position in the fertile deltas of the rivers Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt it is densely populated, highly urbanized and intensively cultivated. The Netherlands has a long history of urbanization. At the end of the 16th century, the Netherlands was the most urbanized country in Europe and it is still one of the most urbanized regions in Europe with a population density of 479/km^2 (Hall 1966). The Dutch population grew substantially from 10 million people in 1950 to 16 million people today. Today about half of the Dutch live in the western part of the country, the Randstad. In the same period, the number of houses increased from 2.2 million to 6.9 million, also caused by a decrease in the number of occupants per house (Van der Cammen and De Klerk 2003). This was the cause of extensive urbanization. As a result, the countryside has been considerably influenced by urban culture.

The Randstad area originally consisted of small towns located close to each other and surrounded by open countryside. The towns started to grow rapidly in the mid-19th century when the Netherlands further developed their industries and trading activities induced by industrial growth in the German Ruhr-area (Hall 1966)[1]. New high-density neighbourhoods for working class people were built in the open polders, bordering the old towns. Like in many European industrial cities, living conditions in these neighbourhoods and in the old city quarters were poor. Some industrialists and wealthy citizens were concerned by the unfavourable living circumstances of labourers. Inspired by the English Garden City Movement and the German *Gartensiedlungen* they set up garden villages and districts[2] with one-family houses, private gardens and public greenery. Urban entertainment like cafés, bars and dance halls were not built; these garden villages were to stimulate the forming of decent, bourgeois characters.

The introduction of tramways and railways in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century enabled the rise of commuter towns and villages for middleclass people. They were concentrated in attractive wooded areas like the coastal area, the Gooi and the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. Urban growth accelerated after World War II and resulted in many (sub-)urban extensions and new towns, which consisted mainly of single-family dwellings with small private gardens. The historical towns that once were separated evolved into a poly-nuclear metropolitan region with mutually connected urban networks and new urban-rural relationships.

From the 1930s urban extensions and recreational areas were planned together. New green areas were developed to provide the large urban concentrations of population with public spaces for outdoor recreation. The National Government invested substantially in the purchase and construction of large recreation areas, and it still does today. 'Almost 15% of former agricultural areas in the urban fringes have been transformed into parks, woods and sports fields in the period 1993-2000.

As a result traditional landscapes disappear. Characteristic landscape values like the vast openness of the peat lowlands perish. Yet, they are replaced with well accessible public green' (MNP 2005, p. 15).

Land use

Nearly 15% of the Dutch surface is built-up or used for infrastructure, twice as much as the European average (MNP 2005). About 80% of the non-built area is used for agriculture. Forests and natural areas are scarce in comparison with other European countries, because such a large part of the country is reclaimed land. Only 8% of a total area of 41.500 km² consists of woodland.
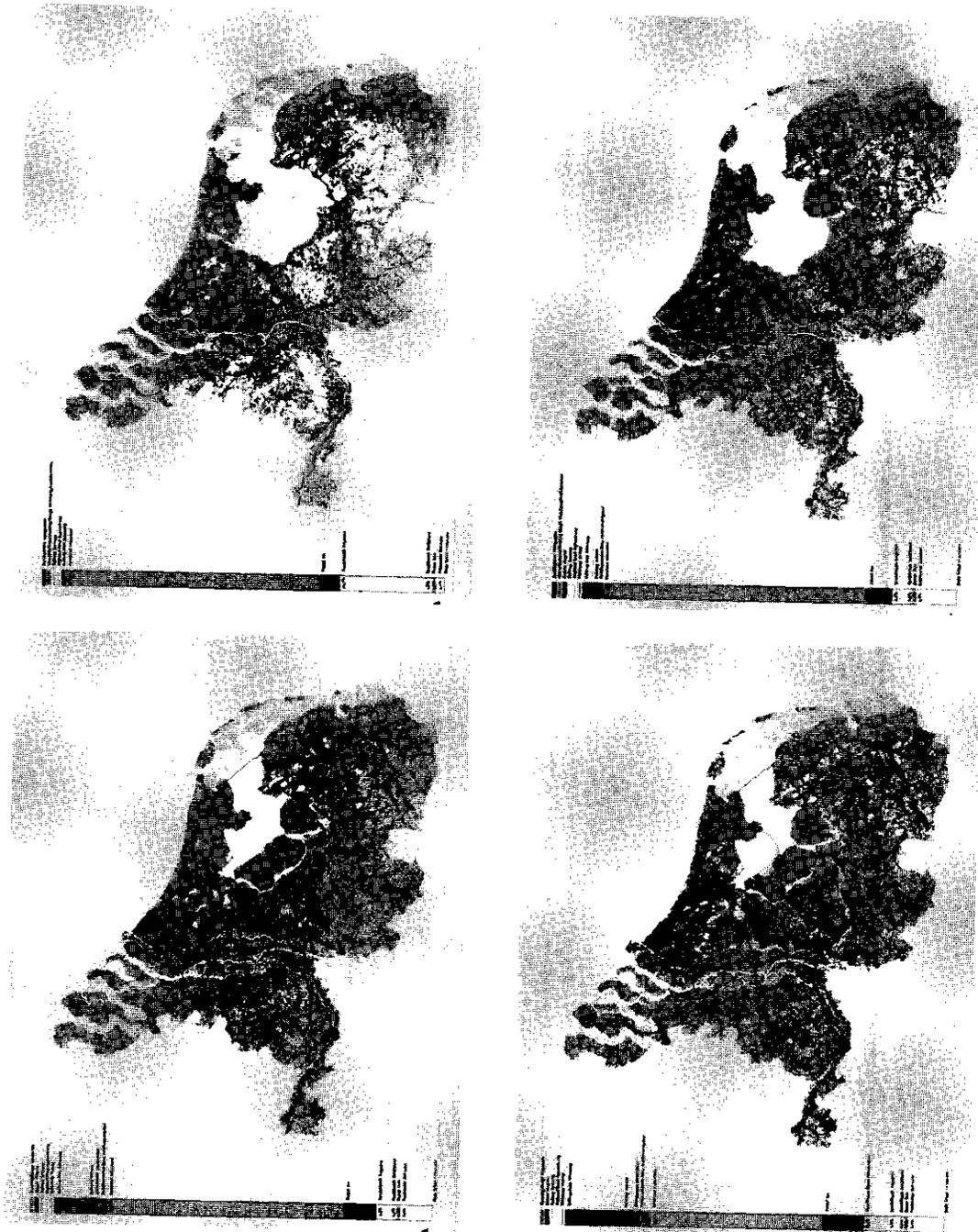
Figure 35 - 38   Change of land use in the Netherlands: 1860, 1950, 1980 and 2010 (Must stedebouw 2004).

Moreover, most natural areas are highly influenced by human intervention; they are the products and relics of former agricultural systems. Elaborate land consolidations since the 1920s have drastically transformed production conditions. Increase in scale, mechanisation and technological innovations changed small-scale mixed farming practices into large-scale, industrial-like agriculture. High land prices resulting from urban pressure led to intensive and highly productive agriculture, but, as such large investments were not achievable or desirable for all farmers, many of them chose other options. 40% of the farms have disappeared since 1980 (MNP 2005). This process has enabled some farmers to enlarge their farms, but diversification of land uses in the rural areas increased as well: up to 17%. Non-agricultural activities have appeared in the countryside and former agricultural buildings are now being used for other purposes.

Dutch leisure and tourist landscapes

In the past leisure and tourism were mostly an elitist activity. Only the elite were able to lay out gardens for pleasure and to travel. They built their summer residences along small rivers like the Vecht, in the coastal zone and at the edges of the higher sandy areas. Leisure for common people was limited. Landscape and nature were merely green backgrounds for social and amusement-oriented activities. From the end of the 19th century, nature became a popular environment for leisure activities, for example for the upcoming youth movement. Camping became a symbol of freedom and a close relation with nature (Hessels 1973). The well-off middle class were followed by the working class to popular destinations such as the North Sea Coast and the Veluwe with its large forests and small-scale half-open landscapes.

People still have a preference for water, woods and half-open landscapes. Studies showed that almost 80% of the public chose woods as their favourite landscape. Areas with heathlands and dunes scored high as well: 67% (Goossen et al. 2006). Approximately 40% of Dutch population thinks there aren't enough woods in their daily environment. The percentage is over 60% in the western and northern part of the country, where woods are scarce (RLG 2004). Foreign tourists prefer the large cities (4.725.000 tourist in 2006), but the North Sea Coast is a popular tourist destination as well (1.353.000 tourists in 2006), followed by wooded landscapes (NBT 2007).

Still, most leisure activities take place in urban environments, not in the countryside (see 10.3.1). People traditionally spend a lot of their spare time in their daily living environments, and urban environments have become more popular.

Figure 39, 40   A popular tourist landscape: South Limburg (left). People spend a lot of their spare time in their daily living environments (right).

Since the late 1980s many city centres and industrial heritage sites have been redeveloped and transformed into popular leisure areas. Some examples are the *Oude Haven* (Old Harbour area) in Rotterdam, the refurbished city centre of Den Bosch and the *Westergasfabriekpark* (Culture Park Westergasfabriek) in Amsterdam.

3.2 Dutch planning culture

Public control and regulations

Strategic spatial planning practices have a long history in the Netherlands. The initiators differed; planning of urban extensions by municipalities has been common for centuries, whereas private parties have played an important role in reclaiming land from open water since the 17th century. State interference in spatial planning started in the 19th century, when the national government decided to build roads and canals. In 1901 the Housing Act was introduced. It was meant to improve public housing and it forced local authorities to draw up extension plans, and to allocate land for public spaces such as streets, squares and canals.

In the following decades spatial planning developed rapidly. From the 1930s town planners focused their attention on large-scale urban extensions and public green structures on the regional scale. The first National Plans were introduced. State interference became much stronger when, after World War II, Dutch authorities were confronted with an enormous building task. Over 400.000 houses had been damaged or destroyed. In the post-war socio-democratic context, far-reaching top-down planning was easily accepted on account of years of crisis and war. Authorities attained a tight grip on spatial planning and organisation. It cleared the way for a normative planning culture in which far-reaching and comprehensive planning and design became customary. Dutch society got used to all kinds of regulations and strong public control (Van der Cammen and De Klerk 2003). Even though public participation became normal in the 1970s, Dutch planning is in essence still the same.

Land consolidation

A striking example of far-reaching state intervention is the land consolidation. It was introduced in the early 20th century to solve the problem of fragmentation of farmland and to improve production conditions. Although one sixth of the country would qualify for land consolidation, it was not very popular at first due to complicated rules and lack of financial means.

That changed after World War II however, when the need to recover and increase agricultural production was generally thought to be urgent. In 1954 the existing Land Consolidation Act was adjusted. This enabled expropriation of land for public interest and a double majority of farmers' votes was no longer required. Between the mid-1950s and the 1970s, more than 1.2 million (out of a total of 2 million) hectares of Dutch agricultural land were involved in land consolidation projects (Van Dijk 2003). It radically changed old, small-scale cultural landscapes into modern, large-scale agricultural production landscapes. Elaborate agricultural engineering works were carried out. Water management and infrastructure were improved; fragmented parcels were joined together and changed into large, rectangularly shaped parcels, which were easy to work with machines. The whole process from planning to realisation was controlled by the Ministry of Agriculture and its executive *Cultuurtechnische Dienst* (Agricultural Engineering Agency).

■ Gereedgekomen	612.970 ha / Completed	612.970 ha	
■ In uitvoering	522.090 ha / In execution	522.090 ha	
■ In voorbereiding	491.290 ha / In preparation	491.290 ha	
☐ Aangevraagd	649.240 ha / Applied for	649.240 ha	
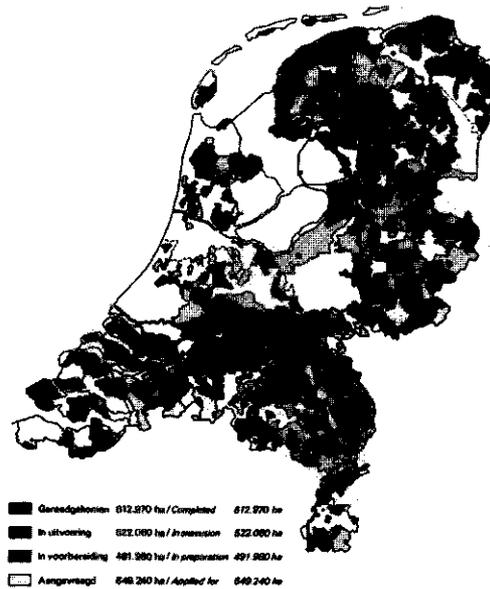
Figure 41   The greater part of the country has been involved in land consolidation (situation 1975).

Although a Landscape Plan was compulsory, the contribution of landscape designers was limited. Landscape designers of the State Forest Agency only became involved after the engineering plans were made. Their role was usually restricted to adding plantings along roads and parcel edges. Gradually the landscape designers obtained some influence and their contribution grew, though always within the dominant engineering culture. In 1985, the Land Consolidation Act was replaced with the Land Use Act, which enabled a more integrated approach. Agriculture was no longer the only reason for rearranging the landscape; a desire to develop other functions such as forestry, nature or outdoor recreation could be grounds to initiate a Land Use Project as well. The planning and realisation of Land Use Plans is still a State responsibility. Land Use Plans are made by the Government Service for Land and Water Management.

Leisure

Before World War II, leisure was primarily a local and provincial affair. Municipalities developed leisure areas such as the *Kralingse Bos* (Kralingen Park) in Rotterdam or the *Amsterdamse Bos* (Amsterdam Forest Park) in Amsterdam (see 4.4.1). From the 1930s *Gewestplannen* and *Streekplannen* (Regional Plans) directed urban and recreational developments. National authorities did not become involved until the 1940s, when a national leisure policy was formulated. From the late 1950s the national government took care of implementation as well. Large outdoor recreation areas were planned and realised and Land Consolidation projects included outdoor recreation facilities. In cooperation with municipalities and provinces *Recreatieschappen* (Recreation Boards) were set up for the management and maintenance of recreation areas. Tourism was primarily considered as an economic activity, which provided national revenues and employment. National authorities subsidised tourist organisations and provided financial facilities for tourist enterprises. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a diminishing interest in leisure policy. Because of the lengthy planning processes the realisation of large recreation areas did continue throughout this period, although slow and with difficulties.

Today, the *Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied* (Council for the Rural Area) is of the opinion that leisure demand and supply are not geared to one another, that national policy has to focus on leisure again and that new approaches are necessary (RLG 2004).

3.3 Dutch landscapes

Landscape types

The Dutch landscape is diverse. Landscape policy today distinguishes nine landscape types. Bijhouwer, the first professor in Landscape Architecture in the Netherlands, laid the foundations for this landscape typology in the 1930s and 1940s. He was impressed by the diversity of landscapes in the Netherlands and distinguished four different types of cultivation, based on the interaction between occupation and natural conditions. These represented the country's oldest cultivations. The cultivation types were refined later and other types from subsequent periods were added.

Landscape typology has always been an important guiding principle for landscape design in rural areas. Though the character of Dutch landscapes is highly influenced by urban developments, the typology does not take urban aspects into account. Landscape diversity is primarily defined by differences in agricultural cultivation in relation with natural conditions like height, relief, soils and hydrology. The typology refers to the situation at the first half of the 19th century[3].

The designs that were studied are concentrated in four areas representing a variety of Dutch landscapes. These areas are all historical, multifunctional landscapes. They're all labelled as (parts of) National Landscapes: the Zeeland Delta, the Gelderse Poort, the Venen and the Drentsche Aa Stream Valley.
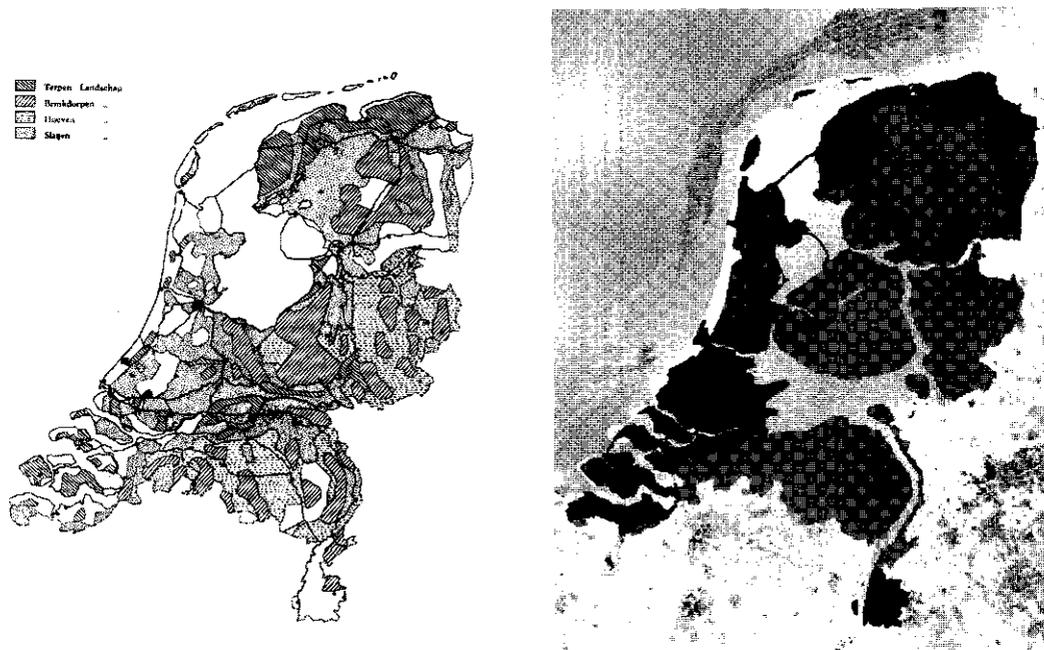
Figure 42, 43   Bijhouwer's map of Dutch landscapes (1944, left) and landscape types of the Netherlands in contemporary landscape policy (LNV, right).

The Zeeland delta: coastal zone and marine clay polders

The coastal zone mainly consists of sandy dunes that have an important water management function. As they prevent the hinterland from floods and function as freshwater reservoirs, they are highly protected. The dunes are uninhabited – apart from some sea resorts - and are labelled as natural areas. Natural dynamics have diminished over time as coastal regression has been combated by planting the dunes, building coastal defences and raising the dunes with supplementary sand. The last decades however, more natural dynamics have been tolerated and even stimulated in specific areas, by recreating tidal inlets where the sea can break through the primary dunes and penetrate coastal valleys. Where the coastal zone is wide enough, an inner coastal zone arises, sheltered from salty sea winds. Deciduous and coniferous woods, often scattered with estates and country houses, characterise this zone. Most tourist accommodations are located in this zone as well. Typical for the coastal area is the contrast between the broad views and uncultivated character of the seaside and the enclosed, intensively used character of the inner coastal zone.

The origin of the marine clay polders in the south of the Netherlands lies in the deltas of Rhine, Meuse and Scheldt. Islands grew, accreted and disappeared again with the numerous floods of this dynamic system. As the technique of building and managing dikes improved, the polder areas expanded. The region is now characterised by a mosaic of polders surrounded by remnants of former creeks and by dikes, often planted with poplars. Large water bodies with distant horizons separate the islands. After the 1953 flood these water bodies were secluded. Tidal movements ceased and with that the typical salt marshes on the banks vanished. The irregular field patterns of the older polders have mostly disappeared due to land consolidation activities. Land use has changed over time, from mixed farming up until the 19th century to primarily arable land in the present situation. As the revenues of arable produce are under pressure, crop variety has increased and non-agricultural sources of income are becoming more important, particularly in tourist areas.
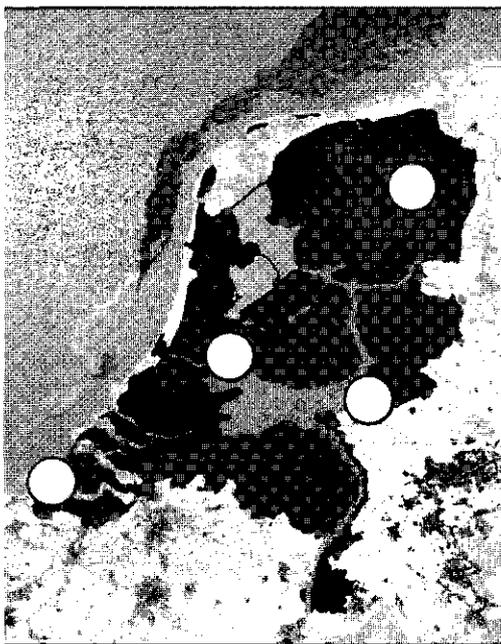
Figure 44   The landscape designs of this study are concentrated in four areas, representing different landscape types.
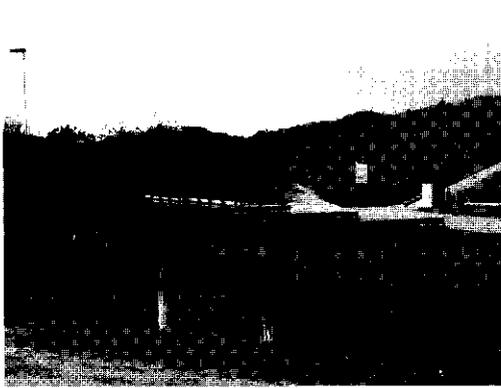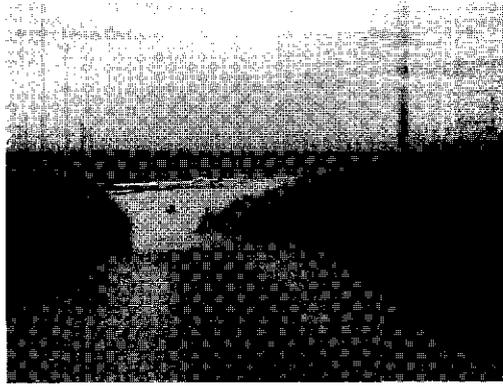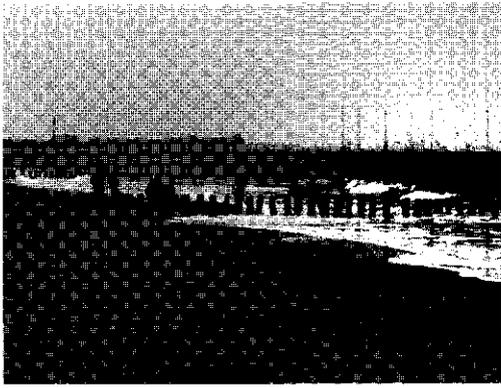
Figure 45 - 48   Images of the coastal zone
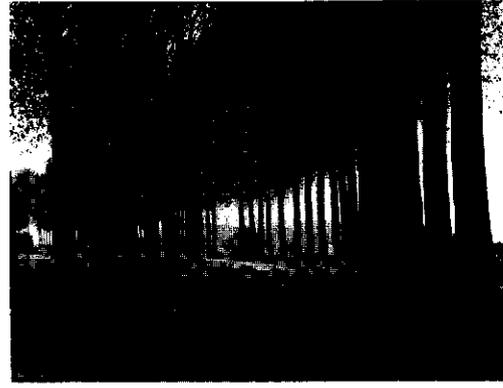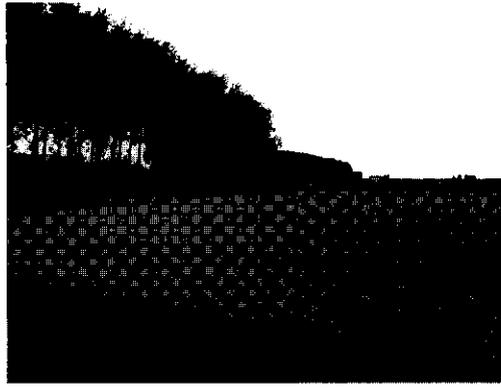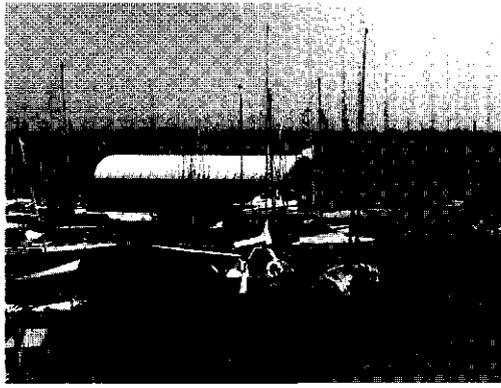
Figure 49 - 52   Images of the southwestern marine clay polders

The Gelderse Poort: river plains

Characteristic for the landscape of the large rivers is its spatial organisation parallel to the river: the floodplains are situated outside the dikes and inside, protected from river dynamics, we find the levees and former flood basins. River dynamics have been reduced since the 12th century by the building of dikes and by managing the river course and the water level. Natural dynamics have been tolerated again and were even stimulated in the floodplains since the late 1980s for both ecological and water management reasons. Areas that used to be mostly meadowland have partly and gradually changed into natural areas where alluvial forests have reappeared. Habitation has traditionally been concentrated on the natural levees due to their higher position. Land use in the levees has always been quite intensive and consists of orchards, horticulture, arable land and pastureland. The former flood basins used to be rather inaccessible marshlands. Better water management and the opening up of the areas have enabled more intensive land use from the 1960s. Thus, the clear contrast in land use intensity and spatial pattern between levees and flood basins has diminished. Yet, these areas are still relatively open, with few buildings and a rather rational, straight-lined spatial organisation. Many sand and gravel extractions located in the floodplains have been transformed into water sports areas.

The Venen: peat lowlands

This landscape is characterised as 'the typical Dutch landscape'. It is a very open landscape with narrow elongated parcels of meadowland, separated by wide ditches with a high water level. Its origin lies in medieval cultivations and occupation from river levees and sandy ridges into the vast fens between the coastal dunes and the higher areas of the Netherlands.
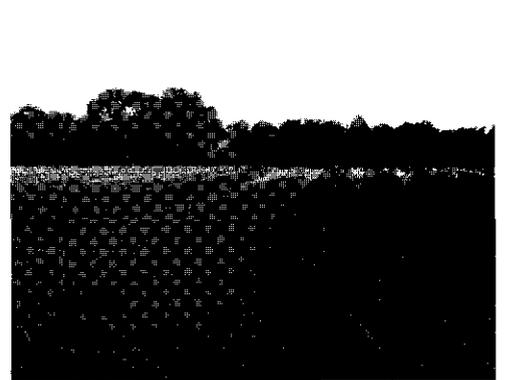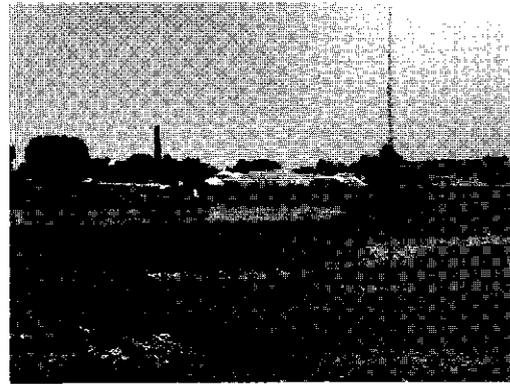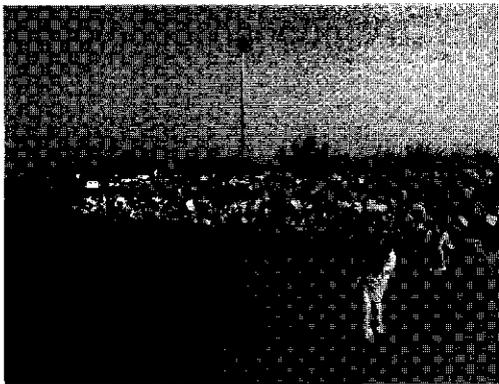
Figure 53 - 56   Images of the river plains

The spatial organisation of the landscape is characterised by a decrease in human activities from the linear *lintdorpen* (ribbon settlements) on the ridges ('the front'), up to the embankments at 'the back' of the polders. The accessibility of this landscape is low. Drainage caused a continuous lowering of the land surface, which resulted in an increasingly difficult water management problem. Despite their iconographic value as 'the typical Dutch landscape', the peat lowlands are not one of the most popular landscapes from a leisure point of view.

The Drentsche Aa Stream Valley: sandy uplands

Gently rolling plains of windborne sand deposits criss-crossed with stream valleys make up this landscape. Human habitation used to be concentrated in the transition zone between the lower valley grounds with meadows and marshes and the higher grounds with pastures, heathlands, woodland and *essen* (open fields). The typical spatial organisation existed of small-scale enclosures in the villages, clearly defined and bounded arable complexes just outside of the villages, and vast open moors further away. The moors changed drastically in the 19th century through foresting and cultivation. Land consolidation in the post-war period caused the wet areas to be drained and opened up, whilst the streams were canalised, and linear plantings like wooded banks, shelterbelts and hedges were removed. The result is a middle-scale landscape where both small-scale enclosures and vast openness have for the most part disappeared. The small size of parcels and farms led to intensive cattle breeding, causing environmental problems like over-fertilisation and groundwater pollution. Together with the problem of drought caused by comprehensive drainage, the situation asks for new strategies of water management. The small-scale areas of the sandy uplands and the areas where the meandering streams are still intact are both particularly popular landscapes for leisure and domestic tourism.

Figure 57 - 60   Images of the peat lowlands

Notes

1 Industrialization in the Netherlands took place later than for example in Britain; rapid industrialization started in the second half of the 19th century.

2 Self-sufficient Garden Cities at some distance from the city according to Ebenezer Howard's ideal were not built in the Netherlands (Van der Cammen & De Klerk 2003, Reijndorp et al. 1998). The Dutch version can be characterised as a city district with low-density housing and ample green space (Van Dam et al. 2005).

3 The first detailed maps that covered the whole country dated from 1850. They represented the landscape that was still primarily based on conditions in situ, before the introduction of artificial fertilisers.

Figure 61 - 64   Images of the sandy uplands

4

Pioneering (1920s – 1950s)

During the first decades of the 20th century Dutch society grew into separate 'zuilen' (pillars). Liberals, Protestants, Catholics and Socio-democrats each had their own organisations, institutions, schools, unions and clubs. Politically this meant that a majority could only be obtained by consultation and compromises. The Netherlands didn't take part in World War I, but they were troubled by the economic crisis caused by it. When the war was over, national authorities attempted to 'normalise' the situation by intervening in prices and industrial developments, subsidising the building of houses, financing the construction of infrastructure such as canals, harbours, railroads, roads and bridges, and reclaiming the Zuiderzee. This policy was continued in an attempt to overcome the economic recession of the 1930s. The many unemployed were set to work in these large projects. Agricultural production was problematic due to its small-scale character, but was difficult to manage by national authorities because they lacked the instruments to do so. The architects and town planners that were concerned with the development of urban and spatial planning at the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, opened up new fields of activity, more wide-ranging in scale and complexity. They exchanged ideas and perspectives at international conferences and in professional networks. They laid the foundations for the development of landscape architecture, which encompassed a much wider range of themes and scales than the traditional practice of garden design for private and public gardens and parks.

4.1 The early period of urban and regional planning

In the first decades of the 20th century most garden architects were occupied with private gardens, public gardens and parks (Deunk 2002)[1]. Their focus was mainly architectural at a local scale. Only a few garden architects were involved in larger projects. Overdijkink[2] was one of them with his advices about road plantings (Andela 2000). A group of architects and town planners, however, was actively engaged in urban development and spatial issues at a regional scale. As spatial developments were exceeding the local scale, regional plans were introduced, inspired by foreign developments like the City Planning Movement and the foundation of the Regional Planning Association in the United States, Town and Country Planning concepts in Great Britain and *Raumplanung* in Germany (Pregill and Volkman 1993; Boelens 2005). Both at conferences and in practice, the architects and town planners Hudig, Granpré Molière and Verhagen aimed to restore the relation between towns and nature in urban development plans[3]. Not only did they regard green spaces and leisure spaces as an important part of urban structures, they were also concerned about the decline of nature and the scenic beauty of rural landscapes due to urban extensions, industrialization and agricultural cultivations[4].

The people who were involved in the development of town planning were for the most part the same people who stood up for nature protection. They searched for new concepts of directed urban growth and for new spatial planning concepts, which were to interrelate town and nature at a regional scale, using the landscape as a unifying framework[5]. The *Streekplan Zuidoost-Brabant* (Regional Plan for Southeast Brabant by De Casseres 1930) and the *Gewestelijk Plan voor Utrecht-Oost* (Regional Plan for Eastern Utrecht 1934 by Granpré Molière, Verhagen & Kok) are examples of the application of these new concepts. From their urban point of view, nature was considered the ultimate space for leisure. No matter how modern their ideas about urban planning, their back-to-nature ideal was definitely romantic.

Towards a National Planning

While private persons initiated the first activities in nature conservation – the *Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurmonumenten* (Society for the Preservation of Nature Reserves) was established in 1905 – national authorities became involved the following decades. In 1932, the *Contact Commissie voor Natuur- en Landschapsbescherming* (Contact Board for the Preservation of Nature and Landscape) was established. The Board was made up of leading town planners, biologists and administrators who attempted to preserve scenic nature and landscapes. They opposed the cultivation of many 'wastelands' for the purpose of labour provision, which, as they feared, would turn the countryside into a 'culture steppe', and drew up a list of *Het voornaamste Natuurschoon in Nederland* (Main Scenic Nature in the Netherlands) in 1939. The 333 areas on the list were also very attractive from a tourist perspective and not just unprofitable from an agricultural point of view. These areas were 'visually attractive, characterised by variation, size, intimacy or mystery' (Andela 2000, p. 71). The characterisation refers to Landscape Style concepts; a remarkable appreciation for people who also adhered to the ideals of a practical and contemporary landscape. Apparently, the members of this group had two distinctly different idealised landscape images.

The developments in urban and spatial planning continued during the Second World War. A centralist, top-down planning model was developed, with the *Streekplan* (Regional Plan) as a formal planning instrument between the national and municipal level. In 1941, the *Rijksdienst voor het Nationale Plan* (Public Agency for National Planning) was established. The Public Agency developed policies to protect the areas on the List of Main Scenic Nature at a national level. In these areas, spatial developments would not be permitted just like that. In land consolidations[6] for example, a primary inventory of natural and scenic values would be required, resulting in suggestions for conservation and landscape care. These were predecessors of the later landscape plans in land consolidation projects. *Staatsbosbeheer* (the State Forest Agency) took charge of these activities and set up a department of *Natuurbescherming en Landschapsverzorging* (Nature Conservation and Landscape Care) in 1943.

4.2 Cleyndert's Natural Spaces

Hendrik Cleyndert Azn, a professional lobbyist for nature and landscape, was inspired by integrated planning concepts in the United States like the Park System (also known as Open Space System), a network of green open spaces connected by public footpaths, bridleways and cycle tracks[7]. Cleyndert encouraged speaking of recreation instead of relaxation, which he considered to be less characteristic (De Visser 1997). Recreation was assumed to be an outdoor leisure activity, more specifically the drift out of town.
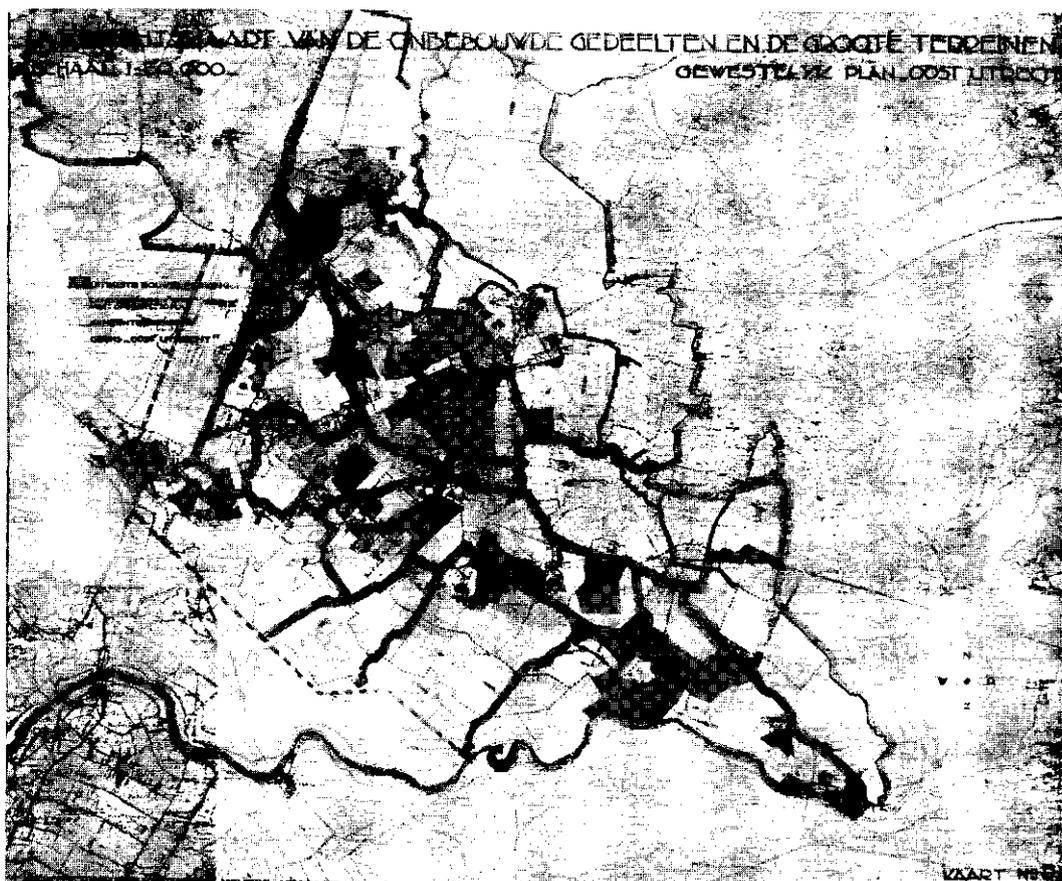
Figure 65   Gewestelijk Plan voor Oost-Utrecht (Regional Plan for Eastern Utrecht, 1934 by Granpré Molière, Verhagen and Kok).

The American park systems linked urban parks to the large National Parks by means of so-called *natuurruimten*[8] (natural spaces) and parkways. Cleyndert described how the authorities in the US tried to integrate National Parks in the concept of 'recreation', diversion in free nature, so 'citizens would learn to find the counterbalance to hectic urban life by the enjoyment of nature' (Beckers 1983, p. 22). He was inspired by the concept of natural spaces, which integrated different objectives; natural spaces were supposed to be a counterweight in an urban and industrial society, they offered a useful way of spending time to the masses who were alienated from nature, and, what's more, recreation provided an extra legitimatisation for nature conservation.

The concept of natural spaces proved useful in varied modes. The *Gewestelijk Plan voor Utrecht-Oost* (Regional Plan for Eastern Utrecht 1934 by Granpré Molière, Verhagen & Kok) for example reserved the wooded landscape of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug as a recreation area for urban society. The plan consisted of a green framework of *natuurmonumenten* (nature monuments), *natuurreservaten* (nature reserves) and *natuurbanen* (nature ways). In the nature monuments, where nature devotees were allowed to ramble[9], the interests of flora and fauna prevailed. The nature reserves were more easily accessible. The nature ways consisted of a network of 'tourist paths and roads' from which visitors could enjoy the landscape. The network was supposed to take up a large capacity of visitors and string the nature reserves together into a 'coherent scheme'[10].

The concept of natural spaces did not only provide grounds for the protection of existing natural areas, it also gave rise to ideas for creating new scenic nature areas. The Amsterdam Forest Park is an example. The integration of recreation and nature surprisingly fitted in the functional separation of housing, industry, infrastructure and recreational areas that the Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM)[11] would propagate some years later, in 1933, in the Charter of Athens. The CIAM group presumed that the demands of these four main functions of urbanism were so different from each other that they had to be spatially separated. Yet, as recreation was interpreted as an activity to take place in natural environments, the intertwining of leisure and nature was natural at the time (Beckers 1983).

4.3 Leisure in National Planning

Until the 1940s, leisure and recreation were primarily a concern of local and regional authorities. Members of Opbouw, a group of progressive Modern architects, for example, had carried out a survey on recreational habits of citizens in the 1930s for the city of Rotterdam. To the members of this group, the utility value of public green was the most important. A comprehensive photographic analysis resulted in a schematic plan of functional recreation requirements established per age group.

The Public Agency for National Planning developed the first recreational plans at a national level. The national approach of recreation was wide-ranging: nature and heritage conservation, domestic holidays, water recreation, sports and playing grounds, school gardens and allotments, green spaces and recreational paths and roads for bicycles, cars and pedestrians. Recreation related to natural areas and scenic landscapes, and was distinguished from socially oriented recreation.

The latter was thought to be in need of large areas due to its massive character (Beckers 1983). Ideas about mass recreation, which would become so dominant in the 1960s, came up, causing the first tears in the seemingly inseparable bound between nature and recreation.

4.4 Designs

4.4.1 The Amsterdam Forest Park: a brand new leisure landscape

The Amsterdam Forest Park is an area that is first and foremost meant for leisure purposes. Such areas are not the focus of this study, but this one has proven to be so influential that future developments in landscape design for leisure cannot be understood without paying attention to the Amsterdam Forest Park.

Problem setting

In the 1920s, Amsterdam was famous for its progressive approach of social housing and urban extensions. Dutch town planners were inspired by new concepts like Howard's Garden City and Wagner's Open Space Plan. The decision of the city council in 1928 to lay out a brand new forest of 895 hectares for citizens 'to come to themselves after work in the city' (De Jonge 1947 in Beckers 1983, p. 175) made quite an impression, particularly since the forest would grow four metres below sea level[12]. The reason for creating a new forest was that the surroundings of Amsterdam, which consisted of open polder land, windy, humid and full of signs of human activity, were not considered to be appropriate for recreation. Natural areas like the beach or the woods in the Gooi were too distant for most people. The Amsterdam Forest would be located directly at the city edge.

Figure 66 Scheme of recreation requirements (De 8 en Opbouw 1939).

It was meant as *Weekendgroen* (Weekend Green Space)[13] and was denominated as such in the hierarchic green structure of the later *Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan van Amsterdam* (AUP, General Extension Plan of Amsterdam 1934).

A Board consisting of professionals from various disciplines started working on the requirements, which were presented in 1931. The board formulated the intended significance of the forest as follows: 'The recreation – re-creation –which the citizen experiences in nature, lies not only in the pleasure of scenic beauty and healthy physical exercise in open air, but also in the freedom to go wherever he likes, in the contact with flora, wildlife and soil, in the beneficence of quiescence, the pureness of life one feels around and, finally, in the contrast of free arrangement of natural elements with the strictly ordered city life' (Balk 1979, p. 7). The forest was supposed to meet the diverse needs and demands of the Amsterdam population. It was meant for both nature devotees and the lovers of sports and plays. The members of the Board realised that not everyone would like natural silence, that many people would prefer sociability. For these people, a visit to the Forest would be a stimulating change of setting (Balk 1979).

The Amsterdam Forest wasn't intended to be a dense forest. In fact, it was meant to be a combination of the German *Volksparks* with their opportunities for sports and plays and the English Forest Parks. Pictures of the Amsterdam Forest as sketched by the Board in their report suggested 'a remarkable synthesis of two yet unpaired landscape types; the athletic facility with the native forest' (Berrizbeita 1999, p 188). Recreational elements - 'the social program' - were inspired by the *Hamburg Volkspark* and included a multitude of functions and facilities, like sports fields and playing grounds, a rowing course, yacht basin, riding school, luge run, and also an open air theatre, ornamental gardens and restaurants[14].

Design
Cornelis van Eesteren and Jacoba Mulder[15] and their team designed a forest park with woods (mass), lawns (open space) and water in a more or less 1:1:1 relationship to each other. Nothing would recall the old rational, rectilinear polder landscape. Yet, site features did determine the layout for pragmatic reasons. The large pond was dug in the wettest part of the polder and such a large surface of open water was necessary due to the wet conditions. Because the bank zones of the Nieuwe Meer and the Poel were highly valued for their natural values, recreational elements were limited in these areas. The composition of woods, watercourses and lawns was non-hierarchical and open-ended (Berrizbeita 1999).

The main attractions of the park were the playing facilities, cafés and, last but not least, the lawns. People were allowed to walk, sit and play on them, a novelty in the Netherlands at the time. Sports and playing facilities weren't supposed to dominate too much, to prevent the park from being no more than a backdrop setting. Recreational elements that would attract crowds were therefore clustered and concentrated in a few areas at the edges of the park and next to the elongated meadows that winded through the park, in order to create silent areas and to let the forest park character prevail. Different types of paths flared out from the main entrance roads, meeting again at the bridges and flaring out again, forming a vast non-hierarchic network. The routing of the paths was designed to go through groves, subsequently meeting open spaces and providing scenic views over softly undulating meadows along the curved edges of the woods, and finally passing along watercourses and ponds.

BOSCHPLAN AMSTERDAM
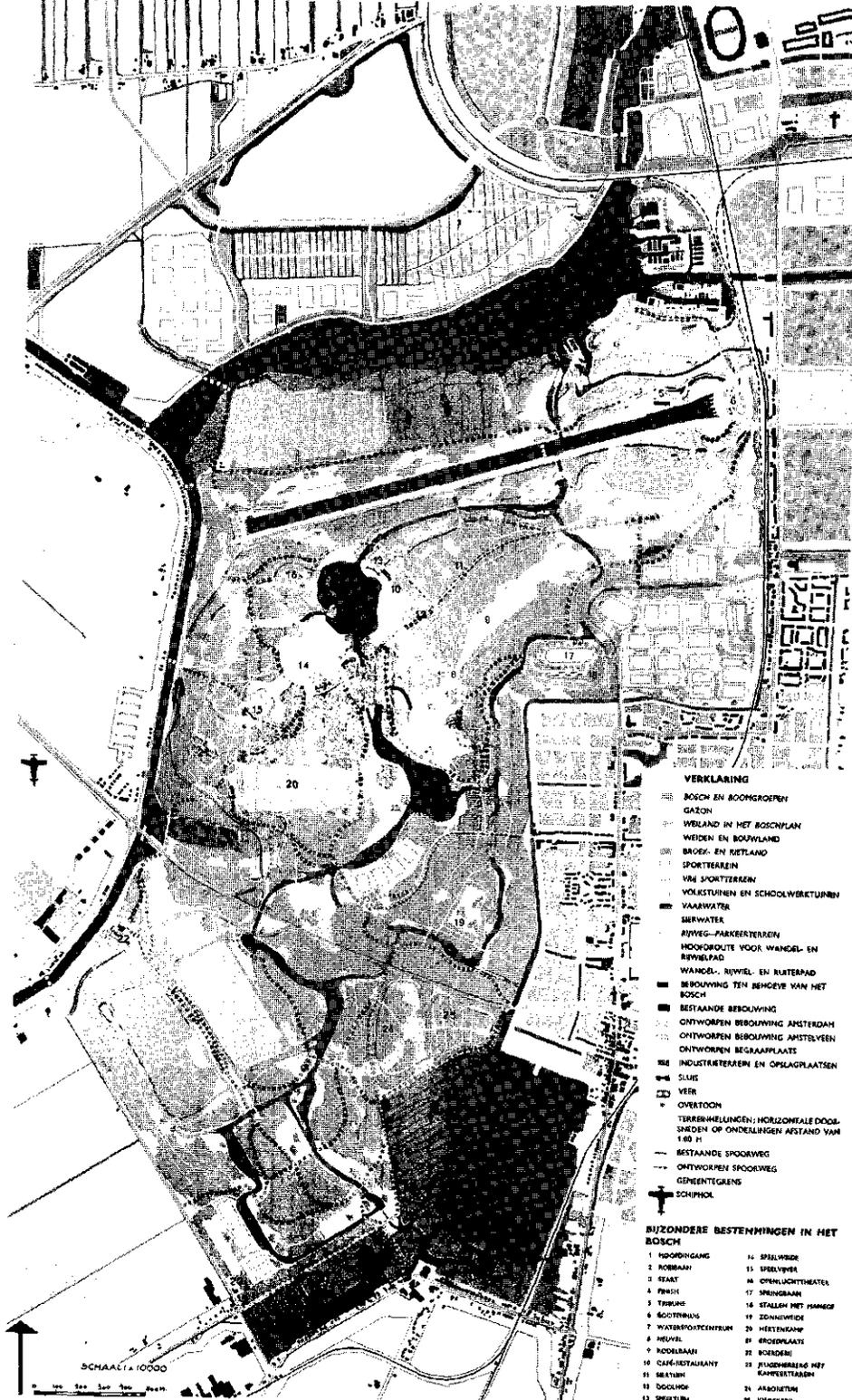
Figure 67   Design for the Amsterdam Forest Park (1934, design Van Eesteren, Mulder and others).

Van Eesteren: 'We stipulate experiences for people; we offer sequential realms in the forest, which lead to fascinating experiences' (Balk 1979, p. 47). The designers aimed for an illusion of continuity and naturalness. When they had visited some English parks, they had been struck by the visual effect of a slight relief. Relatively small differences in height, if designed carefully, enlarge spaces optically and slopes strengthen the effect of depth. The designers completely remodelled the surface level, including the slopes of the surrounding dikes, in order to create a gradual and fluid transition from the city into the park. Once inside the park, the city was invisible. Only at the top of the large hill at the centre of the park, visitors were able to see the city in the distance. They would feel far removed from daily urban life. The hill, a wish of the City Council, was given a wide base and a hollow, naturalistic slope. Mulder disliked the cone shaped hill in the Kralingen Forest Park in Rotterdam; she thought it was too artificial.

The Amsterdam Forest Park was immensely successful[16]. Town planners and designers were hugely impressed. The Amsterdam Forest Park proved that it was possible to create completely new recreation areas (Beckers 1983). Previous recreation areas, both here and abroad, had all been transformed woods and estates. The concepts and standards of the Amsterdam Forest Park gradually became the leading principles for almost all large-scale recreation areas that would be created in future decades.

Figure 68, 69   Scenic views along the path (left) and view at Amsterdam from the hill (right).

4.4.2 The new landscapes of the Zuiderzee Polders

Problem setting

In the same period that the Amsterdam Forest was decided for, urban planners were concerned about their contribution to another innovative project: the reclamation of the Zuiderzee. Civil engineers were in charge of the layout of the polder Wieringermeer, followed by agricultural engineers. The *Nederlandsch Instituut voor Volkshuisvesting en Stedebouw* (Netherlands Institute for Housing and Town Planning), lead by Hudig, opposed the one-sided technical approach (Hemel 1994)[17]. If usefulness were the only aspect to be taken into account, 20.000 hectares of landscape would be created, 'intolerable of dullness' (Hudig et al. 1928). They took up the position that large-scale reclamations were always threatened by half-heartedness and creative poverty.

The development of these new polder landscapes should therefore not be just a matter of public works and land cultivation but also a matter of urban planning and design. The institute set up a *Zuiderzee Commissie* (Zuiderzee Committee), which urged a working method that was more strongly based on town planning and for more attention to be paid to scenic beauty (Hemel 1994; De Visser 1997). In 1928, the Zuiderzee Committee published their perspective in a report called *Het toekomstig landschap der Zuiderzeepolders* (The future landscape of the Zuiderzee polders, Hudig et al. 1928). The report didn't contain design sketches or detailed regulations for the future Zuiderzee Polders. It provided a perspective on the spatial organisation and the desired landscape image. The advices of the Zuiderzee Committee resulted in the appointment of architect and town planner Granpré Molière[18] as an aesthetic consultant of the *Dienst der Zuiderzeewerken* (Zuiderzee Project Authority) and later the *Directie van de Wieringemeer* (Wieringermeer Board), which was responsible for the reclamation and cultivation of the polder.

Design

According to the authors, a new landscape should be representative of its time. The new polder landscapes should rise above the rigorous pragmatism based on the results of technical surveys of the future population, housing, traffic, water management and agriculture. Beauty and a pleasant living environment were essential too and should be taken into account. As a consequence, 'ample plantings ought to be acknowledged as actual and future demands too' (Hudig et al. 1928, p. 67). They pointed at the importance of woods for the landscape as a whole; without 'special facilities' the landscape would be large-scale and unattractive (Hemel 1994).

The Board constructed an ideal landscape image with clear, vast spaces and substantial mass elements, referring to the monumentality of the 18th century polders combined with a pictorial approach of the roads (Hemel 1994). Clearly, the authors' ideal image of natural space was woodland: they referred to the Veluwe and the Gooi. Lacking these landscapes in the vicinity of most future polders, 'new nature had to be created' (Hudig et al. 1928, p. 28). Leisure was considered a basic need; the new polders couldn't do without free 'natural space' for day trips.
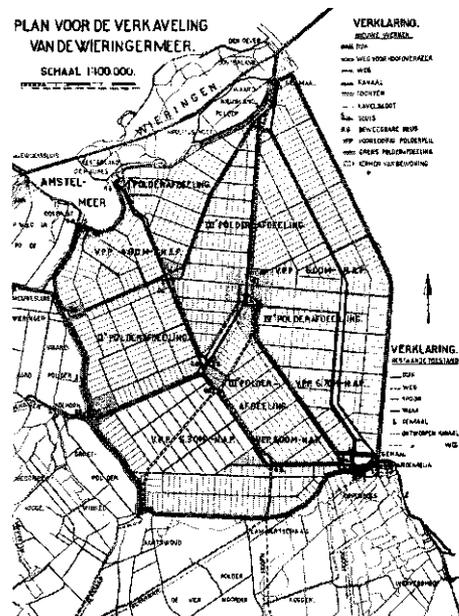
Figure 70 Alllocation plan of the Wieringermeer (1928).

Civil and agricultural engineers thought that a rural population had no need for recreational space, but the Board didn't agree and supported their case with many concrete examples. Every settlement was to have space for sports practices and for daily strolls. Walking avenues would have to be created for the latter as the authors thought the long, straight polder roads would not be attractive enough.

Although Granpré Molière was accompanied by Overdijkink of the State Forest Agency who was asked to take charge of the road plantings in the Wieringermeer and by Bijhouwer for the design of village greens and cemeteries, the designers did not exert much authority. Civil and agricultural engineers were in charge of the project and the designers were called in only after the layout of the polder had been completely established. Little space was left for the desired ample plantings. Yet, using functionality as a convincing argument, they managed to design shelterbelts for the farms.

Nature conservationists were disappointed of the new landscape of the Wieringermeer. They thought it looked more like the spectre of a 'culture steppe' than the ideal modern landscape the urban planners had fought for (Hemel, 1994). Granpré Molière wasn't very content with the result either but he argued that the Wieringermeer had been an experimental project and that mistakes and omissions were inevitable (Reh et al. 2005).

In the Noordoostpolder[19], which was designed a few years later, they got more opportunities to implement their ideals. Town planner Verhagen was appointed as an aesthetic consultant in 1937, just like his partner Granpré Molière had been for the Wieringermeer. He was asked to respond to the allocation plan and to advice about the location of the villages. In 1942, Verhagen gave a lecture on his perspective on the future landscape of the Noordoostpolder. The main axes of roads and canals were to be strengthened with plantings, thus forming different compartments. Within these compartments, the farms with the shelterbelts would be like green islands. Greenbelts were to surround the villages for shelter and for leisure purposes for the local population. Verhagen thought that plantings were highly necessary, not only for shelter but for visual and aesthetic reasons as well. 'Plantings are the tools to give form. Plantings separate compartments and vistas. They separate landscape views or, by omitting them, create visual coherence. Plantings define scale [...]
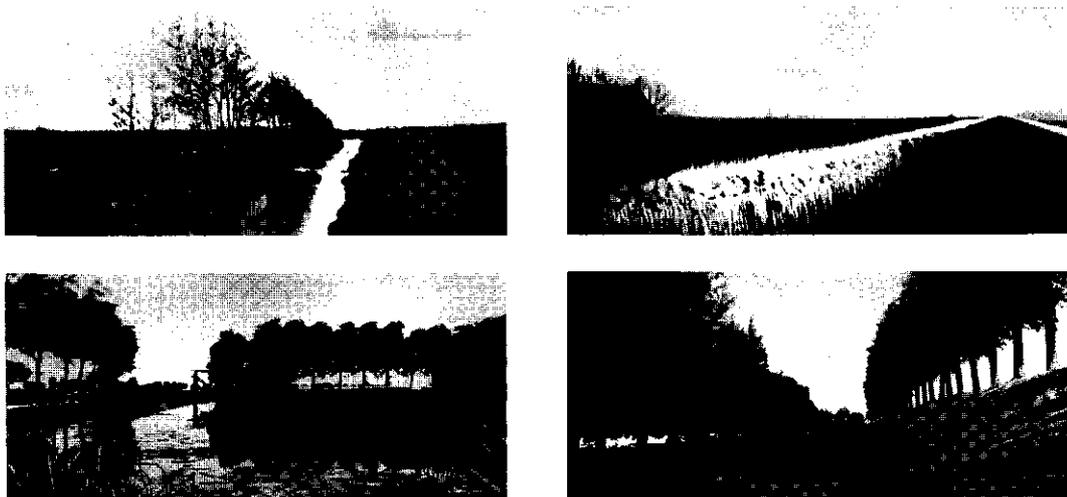
Figure 71 - 74   Pictorial (left) and monumental (right) landscapes according to Het toekomstig landschap der Zuiderzeepolders (1928, by Hudig, van Lohuizen, Suyver and Verhagen).

Plantings provide sculpture; without them a landscape would be nothing but horizon, and space would be nothing but void' (Verhagen 1942 in Steenhuis 2007, p. 346). Verhagen sketched an agricultural landscape, based on the water management, the allocation scheme and the future agricultural use. In his perspective, the local farmers' population didn't require elaborate leisure facilities. The village greenbelts would suffice. Members of the *Contactcommissie voor Natuur- en Landschapsbescherming* (Contact Board for the Preservation of Nature and Landscape) and the Board of the *Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurmonumenten* (Society for the Preservation of Nature Reserves) didn't agree with this notion. They strived for elaborate leisure facilities such as 'tourist cycle tracks', wooded hills, ponds, and 'instructive parks with ponds for swimming and ice-skating' near the villages (Steenhuis 2007). Verhagen and his superiors argued that the ideal of an Arcadian park forest landscape was an urban ideal which didn't suit in a polder that was reclaimed for agricultural production.

In 1943, the *Directie van de Wieringemeer* (Wieringermeer Board) appointed a Beplantingscommissie (Planting Committee). Verhagen was accompanied by Bijhouwer and Overdijkink, who had also worked in the Wieringermeer, and by Pouderoijen, a young town planner. The planting design of the Noordoostpolder was established in 1947.

Figure 75   Landscape plan for the Noordoostpolder (1947, by Bijhouwer, Pouderoijen and bureau Granpré Molière, Verhagen & Kok).

The design elaborated on the concept presented by Verhagen in 1942. The planted axes defined the compartments, the edges of the polder were emphasized with plantings and the farms with the shelterbelts provided the link between the large scale of the compartments and the local scale of the farms. Woods were planned at poor soils that were unsuitable for agriculture. Specific leisure facilities such as sports fields, a swimming pool and playgrounds were planned in the woods near the central village of Emmeloord.

4.4.3 Landscape reconstruction in Walcheren

Problem setting
In the Netherlands the Second World War ended in 1945. As the winter of 1944 had been one of food shortage, the recovery of agricultural production had top priority, apart from economic recovery. One of the areas that were to be reconstructed was Walcheren, an island in the Delta of the south-western part of the Netherlands. Allied forces had bombed the dikes in 1944 and the island was inundated. The ravages of war were enormous. Hardly anything of the historical small-scale landscape was left. Soils had become salty, roads and buildings were severely damaged, and trees and hedges had fallen in the water. Only the old woods of the Manteling on the higher grounds just behind the dunes were saved.

Restoring the old landscape was out of the question, all the more since the agricultural situation of the area had already been far from favourable before the war. Land reclamation had already been requested in the 1930s because of the small size of the farms and the fragmented lands. There was no need for a romantic landscape with marginal agriculture; the Netherlands wanted to be self-sufficient after the winter of starvation. Two Boards were charged with the 15.000 hectares of reconstruction: the Agricultural Board and the so-called *Snelcommissie* (Fast Board), which was requested to make a plan for reconstruction and development within an eight-month period. The assignment of the Board covered interests of water management, agricultural engineering, spatial planning and landscape design. Benthem, one of the landscape consultants of the National Forest Agency, was one of the members of the Fast Board. Bijhouwer and Overdijkink acted as the Board's advisors.

The Board dealt with the reconstruction of Walcheren in a wide-ranging manner. Reconstruction was not only supposed to be based on agriculture, but on 'recreation' and industry as well. After all, Walcheren had been a popular tourist landscape before the war. The Board pointed at 'the complex of attractions': various coastal resorts, the historical city centres of Veere and Middelburg and the old estate forests of the coastal zone. The existing Land Consolidation Act of 1924 didn't permit the necessary integrated approach of landscape reconstruction. Therefore, a special Restoration Act for Walcheren was formulated in 1947. It was a chance of a lifetime for landscape designers. They finally got the opportunity to elaborate their approach based on town planning and integrated landscape design to a regional scale.

The old landscape would never return, but not all was lost forever. The designers chose to 'bring back to live and partially recreate the natural character and scenic beauty of the island Walcheren, in former days deservedly called the *Tuin van Zeeland* (Garden of Zeeland)' (Snelcommissie 1946) due to its lush vegetation and intimate character.

Figure 76, 77   Plantings in Walcheren: before the inundation (left) and the design (right).

Figure 78   Landscape plan for Walcheren (design 1946 by Benthem, De Jonge and Bijhouwer).

They didn't aim for a modern, large-scale and rectilinear landscape but chose an approach that is called 'preservation by development' today. Verhagen characterised this approach as 'opening the door to tradition [...] without putting today's agricultural business demands at a disadvantage' (Verhagen in Steenhuis 2007, p. 330). Nico de Jonge, one of the landscape designers, would later characterise the design as 'a landscape according to the Delft School principles'. 'Our thoughts were concerned with the recovery of what was lost, shortly after the devastations of war and floods' (Boekhorst et al. 1996, p. 78). For a designer with as much affinity with a modern, functionalistic approach as De Jonge had, the Delft School, with its traditionalistic building style inspired by national brickwork architecture, didn't exactly match his ideal.

Design

The designers tried to understand the old landscape, to discover the 'hidden system' (Andela 2000). They examined the relations between climate, soil, hydrology, flora, fauna and human activities by analysing landscape patterns and discovering their coherent logic. Their research approach showed similarities to innovative town planning practices based on extensive surveys like the General Extension Plan of Amsterdam. The landscape was redesigned according to these insights and carefully anchored in the old landscape. Though the new landscape would be more open than it used to be, the former functional and spatial organisation based on differences in soil, hydrology and relief was preserved. The design consisted of dense road plantings on the higher creek ridges surrounding the basins: the open, relatively low-lying wetland areas. The designers proposed to extend the coastal forest zone with complementary forests for shelter and tourist purposes. The forests would hide tourist accommodations, which were thought to be a necessary evil (recorded interview with Benthem 2002). The proposed extension of woods was only partially accepted. Neither the massive visits of day-trippers nor the widespread growth of campsites and summer cottage areas were foreseen at the time. An extension of the coastal forests was only approved between Vlissingen and Zoutelande, where the dunes were narrow. A new 'recreation road' would connect the new coastal resort of Vlissingen with Zoutelande. The strip was reminiscent of the *natuurbanen* (nature ways) in the Regional Plan of Eastern Utrecht (see 4.2). The woods were limited in size and they were situated right up against the dunes. Agricultural land of good quality was too precious to sacrifice to other activities. The designers had to put up a strong fight for their desired plantings; every extra meter of roadside meant a loss of production area (Bijlsma 1995; recorded interview with Benthem in 2002). For the same reason, new woods for outdoor recreation around the remnants of the inundation creeks were restricted to sandy soils and small pieces of leftover grounds.

Het open landschap in de lage komgebieden met veel weiland
Hoofdzakelijk struikbeplanting langs de wegen en slooten.
Weinig boerenerven.

Walchersch landschap op de hooge ruggen met laanbeplanting langs de wegen, boomgaarden en beplante boerenerven.
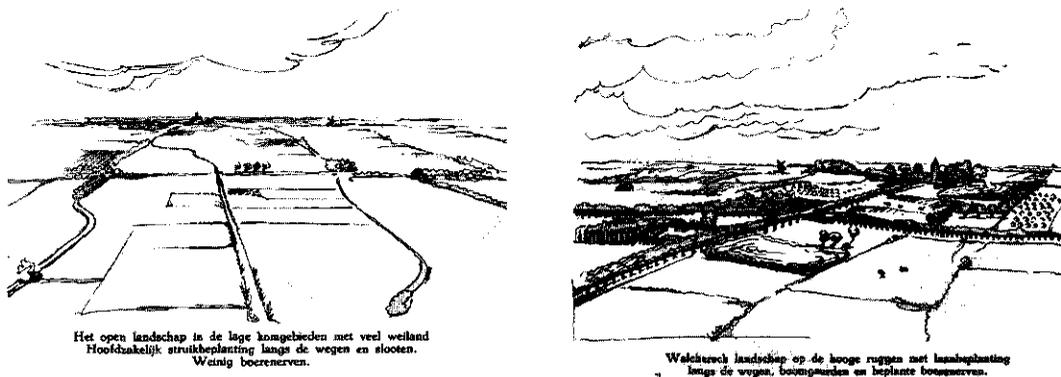
Figure 79, 80   Sketches of the envisioned contrast between the basins (left) and the creek ridges (right, Snelcommissie 1946).

Despite all restraints, the designers strived for a logical, functional *and* aesthetic landscape. The spatial organisation of plantings highlighted the main landscape structure. The spatial 'backbone' of the creek ridges was formed by planted roads and was reinforced by orchards and planted farmyards. The over-all image referred to the theatrical use of *coulissen* (wings), providing depth and sequential images along the road. Plantings were designed according to modern[20] agricultural needs, but clearly referred to the lost small-scale landscape image and they were based on ecological principles[21]. Hedges that had divided the lots in former days were replaced by dense road plantings.

Although leisure and tourism would be concentrated in the wooded coastal zone and the coastal resorts, the interior of Walcheren was supposed to have a leisure function as well. The polder was to be opened up by a network of cycle tracks and bridle paths. Main roads and country roads were designed with separate bicycle tracks and some with horse tracks. The hierarchically organised road network was extended into a series of characteristic cross-sections of roads related to the spatial structure of creek ridges, open basins and coastal zones.

The lands around the inundation creeks were to be transformed into recreational woods. Refilling the creeks with sand and reclaiming them for agricultural purposes seemed to be unprofitable. Although the size of the woods was restricted – the *Veerse Bos* (Veere Woods) covers only thirty hectares – landscape architect Nico de Jonge succeeded in giving the illusion of an entire forest park landscape. Wooded plots were carefully arranged around the creeks, enclosing a series of meadows and arable lands. Not only was a historical reference to the inundation maintained, the new woods around the creeks referred to the many estates on the island in former times as well. The straight lines of the woods deriving from the allocation pattern contrasted with the twisting banks of the creek. They revealed De Jonge's[22] preference for plain and clear lines.
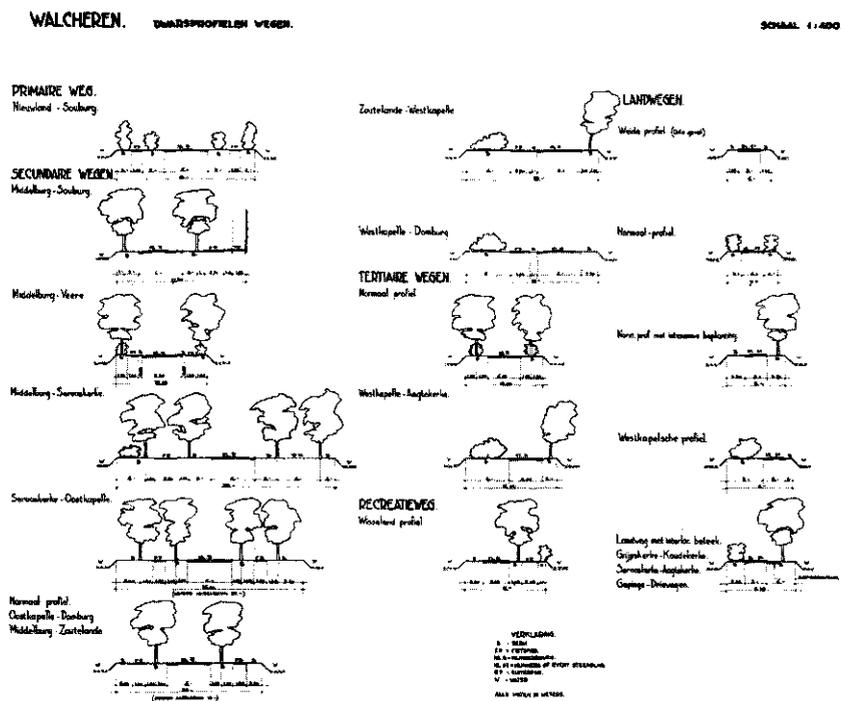
Figure 81   Road plantings were designed to emphasize and stress the main landscape components: lanes on the creek ridges in the central part of the island, hedges as windbreaks on the creek ridges at the west and north side of the island and no road plantings in the open basins (design 1946).

Even though De Jonge highly admired Baroque landscapes, the careful composition of the Veere Woods with vistas and alternating open and enclosed spaces looks almost Romantic. The design is plain and modest in its details; according to De Jonge, both individuals and society should be able to fulfil their needs themselves. Designers should confine themselves to what he called 'headline-planning'. Beauty would come on its own account (Boekhorst et al. 1996).
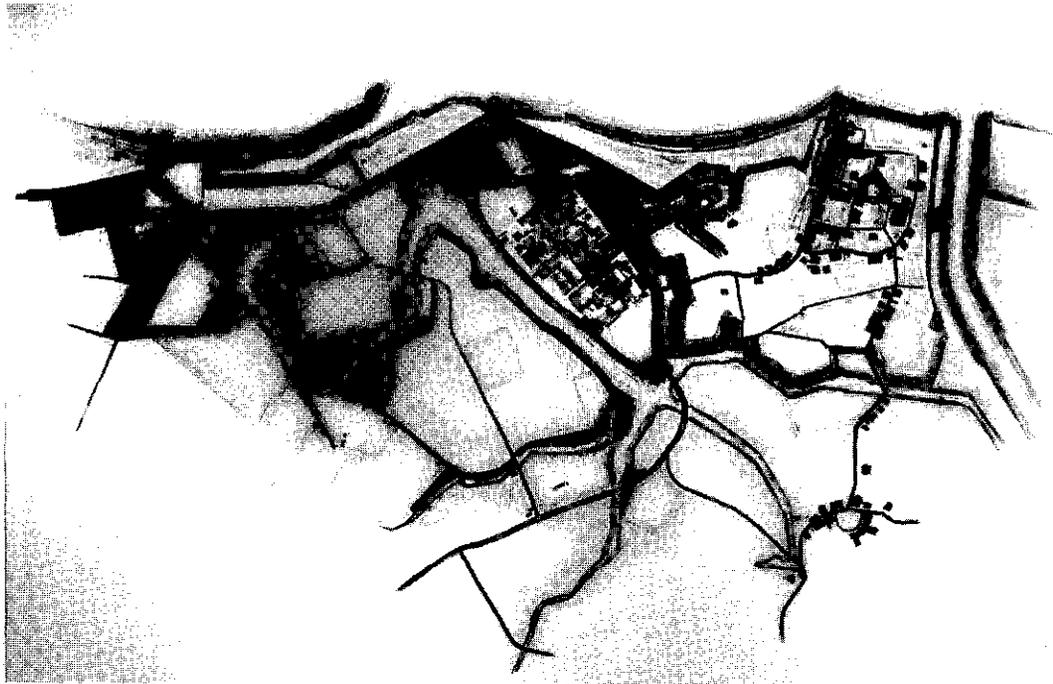
Figure 82   Veere Forest (design by De Jonge).
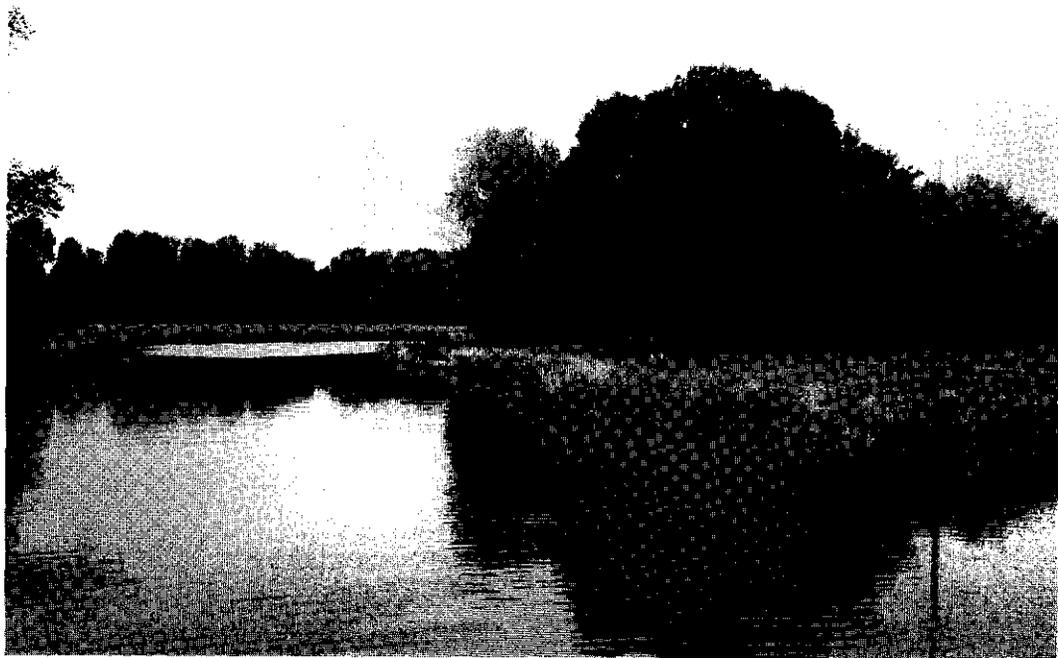
Figure 83   The Veere Forest: romantic images, despite the clear and straight lines of the design.

4.5 Review

New tasks for planning and design came up in the first decades of the 20th century, more wide-ranging in scale and complexity. Nature conservationists and town planners tried to preserve scenic nature for reasons of biodiversity and leisure; the entwining of nature and leisure was a natural one at the time. Spatial planning concepts were developed, which interrelated town and nature at a regional scale, using the landscape as a unifying framework, such as the concept of 'natural spaces' - green environments with scenic and natural qualities - as a counterweight to urban daily life, and the 'system of nature monuments, nature reserves and nature ways'.

As open polder landscapes were thought to be inappropriate and unattractive for leisure, and existing scenic natural areas were too far from the large cities, new areas were planned. An open polder was transformed into a forest park. The landscape setting was based on an ideal image of half-open woodland and consisted of woods, lawns and water in a 1:1:1 relationship to each other. The park provided a change of setting, a green illusion of continuity and naturalness in contrast with the strictly ordered daily urban life, where people were free to choose their paths and activities. It combined scenic nature for nature devotees with a range of leisure facilities for the socially oriented sports and plays enthusiasts. A network of paths offered scenic views. The forest park concept turned out to be very successful and would become the standard for recreational areas.

Planners and designers also got hold of a position in some major civil engineering projects: the new Zuiderzee Polders and the reconstruction of the island of Walcheren. Their aim was to create logical, functional *and* aesthetic landscapes. They designed comprehensive landscape structures, which organised land uses in a logical fashion. Their concepts were based on close studies of human needs and activities, climate, soil, hydrology, flora and fauna, and their coherent logic. Plantings highlighted the main landscape structure and provided form and scale to the landscape.

Leisure was considered a basic need, to be integrated in the new landscape. The designers thought that the local population couldn't do without free 'natural space' for daily strolls, such as village woods and wooded avenues. Local roads were to provide a network for bicycle trips. On the other hand, tourist accommodations and leisure facilities for large groups of people were regarded as a necessary evil and thus they were hidden in existing and new woods. The designs were plain and modest in their details, partly because of the functional and pragmatic context that was dominated by civil and agricultural engineers at the time, partly because designers were convinced that individuals and society were able to fulfil their own needs.

Leisure policy concepts	'Natuurruimten' (Natural spaces)			
Planning concepts	Recreation areas	Tourist areas	Daily recreation	
Design concepts	Forest park	Hidden in the woods	Village woods	Merged into the landscape
Routes	Network of paths offering scenic views			Network of existing roads
Attractions	Facilities and setting		Leisure facilities and landscape setting	Landscape setting
Facilities	Sports and plays	Summer cottages and campsites	Sports and plays	Very modest
Setting	Park landscape 1:1:1	Woodland	Park landscape, woodland	Everyday landscape
Leisure perspectives	Green illusion of continuity and naturalness Contrast with the strictly ordered daily urban life Free to choose one's ways and activities	Nature		Leisure as a basic need Natural space for daily strolls People are able to fill up their needs themselves
General landscape perspectives		Beauty grows by itself in pragmatic, agricultural landscapes as well Multifunctional landscape: agriculture, housing, infrastructure, leisure Integrative landscape design at a regional scale Clarify the landscape structure with plantings		

Figure 84   Scheme representing the main ideas, design concepts and tools in the pioneering period (1920s-1950s).

Notes

1 Garden architects usually had a background in horticulture and/or forestry. A separate faculty in landscape architecture was not established until 1947 under J.T.P. Bijhouwer.

2 Forester G.A. Overdijkink worked for the State Forest Agency, which had advised *Rijkswaterstaat*, the implementation service of the Ministry of Public Works and Water Management, about road plantations since 1916. Their advices were mostly functional and technical but Overdijkink included aesthetic aspects as well.

3 The concept of the 'Gartensiedlung' was closely related to these ideas. See also 3.1.

4 Their concern for nature and scenic beauty was not unique at that time. In 1911 the *Bond Heemschut* was founded after the German body 'Heimatschutz'. This federation fought for the preservation of historical buildings and townscapes, but also for the preservation of areas of natural beauty. Overdijkink was an active member and he was involved in the committee 'Road in the landscape' (Harsema et al. 1991).

The *Natuurschoonwet* (Natural Beauty Act), originating from 1928, encouraged the preservation of private estates and woods. The Act offered private landowners tax profits for opening up their lands to visitors.

5 Similar perspectives and concepts were developed by foreign architects and town planners such as the plans for *Gross Hamburg* and the *Ruhrkolenbezirk* by Schumacher in Germany, the regional plan for the Côte d' Azur and the master plan for Paris by Prost in France, and Abercrombie's regional plans in the UK (Steenhuis 2007). They exchanged ideas on international conferences such as the Congress of the International Town Planning and Garden Cities Association in Amsterdam.

6 The first land consolidation was the Ballumer Mieden on the island of Ameland in 1916. It was first of all a re-allotment process: over 10.000 tiny plots were reduced to 1226 larger ones. In 1924 the Land Consolidation Act was established. It provided the legal framework for land consolidation. Formerly it was only possible on a voluntary basis.

7 The Emerald Necklace in Boston by Frederick Law Olmsted, dating from the late 19ᵗʰ century, is a well known example of a Park System.

8 The word is a combination of 'nature' and 'open spaces' (Andela 2000).

9 Compare this with the concept of rambling in the 1980s (see chapter 7).

10 The concept resembles the policy network of the National Ecological Network (EHS) which was developed in the 1980s. The EHS was originally designed as a combination of nature, landscape and leisure as well, although it became primarily an ecological concept (see 7.1.2).

11 Prominent modern architects, among whom Le Corbusier, Giedion, Stam and Moser, organised several meetings between 1928 and 1956 about architecture and town planning. These meetings have been very influential in urban and spatial planning. The fourth meeting of CIAM (Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) in 1933 was dedicated to the Functional City.

12 The decision to create the Amsterdam Forest Park was also inspired by the idea that it would provide labour in a period of high unemployment.
13 The General Extension Plan of Amsterdam was based on comprehensive surveys. Van Lohuizen converted social data into standards for public green. A hierarchic system of three types of public green was introduced: public gardens, parks and weekend green spaces. In 1938, the city of Rotterdam published a *Groenplan* (Urban Green Plan) in 1938, which was built on these standards and on foreign studies.

14 Not all elements were realised in the end and with the passing of time, other facilities were added.

15 It seems remarkable that such a prestigious assignment as the Amsterdam Forest was not claimed by landscape architects. After all, Van Eesteren and Mulder were architects and town planners, not garden and park architects. When Van Eesteren, who worked for the Town Planning Department of the Municipality of Amsterdam at the time, was asked to design the Amsterdam Forest, he consulted J.P.T. Bijhouwer, chair of the professional association of garden architects. Bijhouwer advised him to accept the assignment, as he thought Van Eesteren would be as good as or maybe even better than the garden architects (Balk 1979, p. 46). Afterwards, Bijhouwer was very complementary about the design (Woudstra 1997).

16 The Amsterdam Forest Park is still very popular. It is appreciated for its beautiful surroundings and for the large amount of recreational facilities. The forest park receives over four million visitors a year.

17 The Netherlands had built a tradition in land reclamation. In some projects, like the Beemster, other aspects had been taken into account but the unfavourable position of agriculture in the 18ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ centuries had reduced the level of investments to a minimum 'resulting in bare, unimaginative, marginal landscapes with little attention being paid to the good rural life'(Meeus and Vroom 1986, p. 278).

18 Granpré Molière was a professor of Architecture in Delft and one of the owners of the Granpré Molière, Verhagen & Kok agency. He had been involved in the design of the garden village of Vreewijk in Rotterdam. His rather traditional architectural approach became very influential in the post-war reconstruction period.

19 The size of the Noordoostpolder was about 48.000 hectares.

20 At the time, the agricultural objectives were state-of-the art, but intensification and mechanization processes soon changed the agricultural practice drastically. Within two decades, horse and wagon were completely outdated and replaced by tractors.

21 The pioneers of landscape design were closely related to the nature conservation movement. Their designs were based on landscape ecological insights, 'plant sociology' as it was called those days. Westhoff was one of the major representatives of this school. Species were carefully selected to fit with local conditions. Before that period, planting design had been based primarily on aesthetic objectives.

22 Nico de Jonge had great affinity with the Modern Movement.
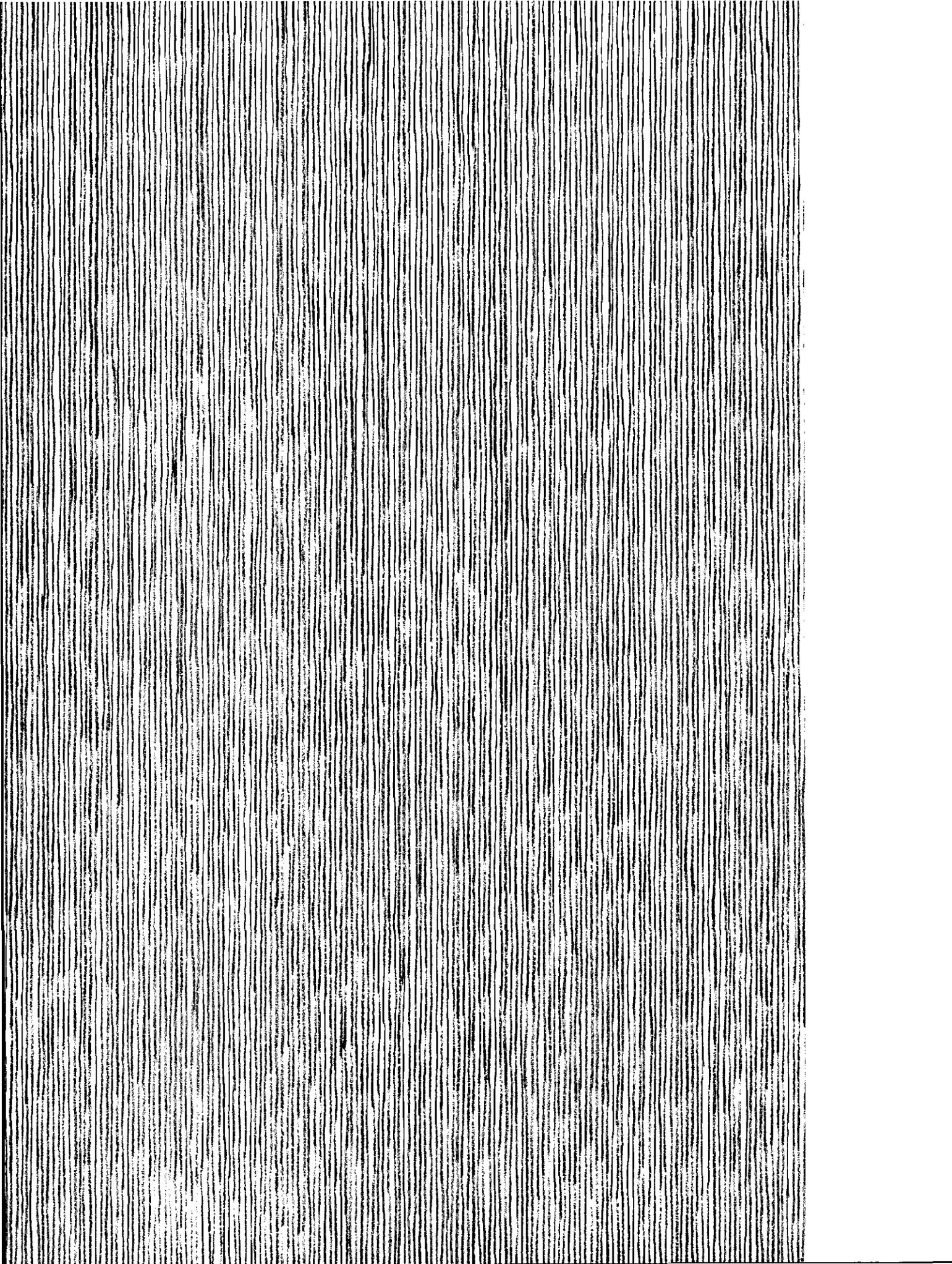
5

Mass recreation (1960s)

Hard work and simple life brought increasing prosperity in the 1950s, a trend that was boosted by the discovery of huge natural gas supplies in 1959 and that continued throughout the 1960s. A Welfare State was set up by establishing Acts on pension schemes, social security and disability insurances. The overall mood was optimistic, based on a strong belief in 'make-ability': the extent to which change was believed to be possible to be effected by the government policies. The first priority after the war was to solve the problem of housing shortage. Large quantities of public housing were built, meeting the basic needs of 'the modern family' and offering plenty of space, openness and light. The first highway in the Netherlands, between Amsterdam and Utrecht, was opened in 1954. A major engineering project was initiated: the Delta Works. The estuary in the southwest of the country would be secluded to prevent the country from future floods like the devastating one of 1953. As more space was needed for urban development and agricultural production, the reclamation of the former Zuiderzee and the cultivation of natural areas continued. Although objections against the cultivation of natural areas were already raised in the 1930s, it was not prohibited until 1961. The focus in agriculture shifted from production increase through the cultivation of natural areas to production increase through intensification.

5.1 National spatial policy concepts

In 1958 *De ontwikkeling van het westen des lands* (The development of the western part of the country, RNP) was published, a predecessor of the first *Nota inzake de Ruimtelijke Ordening van Nederland* (Policy Document on Spatial Planning, RNP 1960). The policy document was an example of an operational, top-down planning approach. At that time, national authorities determined spatial interventions and outlined a spatial 'blueprint' of the future situation. Planning concepts such as the Randstad Holland and the Green Heart were introduced. These concepts would last for over forty years. The Randstad Holland was described as a circle of cities in the western part of the country, surrounding a vast open space called the Green Heart. The open character of the Green Heart was to be preserved. Urban renewal and housing shortage led to an expansion of the cities in the western part of the country. These were planned at the outside of the circle of cities around the Green Heart (Zonneveld 1991). Another concept was the Buffer Zone. Buffer zones were open (or un-built) spaces meant to separate the expanding cities from each other. They were supposed to have an agricultural function. Yet, in the areas where urban complexes were nearing each other and agriculture was becoming less obvious, recreational use was soon considered to be more appropriate.

Figure 85   Randstad, Green Heart and buffer zones (1958).

5.2 Contemporary, pragmatic landscapes

While the Ministry of Public Works (the later Ministry of Spatial Planning) was focusing on urban development, the Ministry of Agriculture had other concerns. Land consolidation activities increased greatly during the 1950s. Dutch agriculture with its small-scale farming practices was far behind in production levels compared to other European countries and structural improvements were made to raise the output, increase its economical importance and ameliorate the conditions of rural life.

The positive results in Walcheren, which were made possible by a *lex specialis*, led to the replacement of the old *Ruilverkavelingswet* (Land Consolidation Act) in 1954. The new Land Consolidation Act enabled expropriation of land for public interests like the construction of roads, extension plans and the conservation of natural and scenic areas. A Landscape Plan became compulsory for every Land Consolidation Plan. Whether a landscape plan consisted of an all-inclusive landscape design or just 'dressing up' the landscape with plantings along roads and watercourses that had already been laid out was a point of discussion. Landscape designers disagreed on that with civil and agricultural engineers (Andela 2000). Besides, engineers dominated the consolidation planning process. They strived for rational, pragmatic landscapes, optimised for agricultural use. Landscape designers were called in only after the technical plans had been made. Their contribution was often restricted to road plantings and, sometimes, adjustments of road courses.

Most designers of the State Forest Agency, which was responsible for the landscape plans, were merely led by functionalistic images of contemporary, 'pragmatic' landscapes, which were not all that different from the engineers' concepts. They saw landscape as a continuously changing reflection of natural and cultural processes. According to the Zuiderzee Committee (see 4.4.2) landscape was not a separately added value and it should be designed comprehensively and coherently. As modern agriculture and transport demanded large dimensions and regularity, these demands should generate landscapes based on that rationality, with their own characteristic beauty. Interventions in existing landscapes should be guided very carefully. Yet, this was not to lead to undisputed conservation according to Bijhouwer, the expert on Dutch landscapes par excellence. In his opinion, a landscape that had outlived its usefulness was due for transformation.

5.3 New landscapes for leisure

In the previous chapter we saw that the planning of areas for leisure in the vicinity of large cities had become an issue in the 1930s and 1940s. The concept of the park forest was developed as the ideal setting, representing an non-urban realm where people were free to chose their activities and routes. In attractive tourist landscapes, private entrepreneurs mostly instigated leisure developments. Even in Walcheren, where tourism had been part of the formal regional planning assignment, agricultural interests had overruled most claims on space.

The increased prosperity brought about a huge increase in leisure activity. Free Saturdays[1] and expanding mobility caused a 'drift out of town'. *Bermtoerisme* (roadside recreation) was a popular pastime. Authorities were very concerned, not only because this 'mass recreation' involved so many people, but also because urban extensions, construction of infrastructure and ongoing agricultural cultivation of natural areas diminished natural space.

Favourite destinations for domestic holidays were the coastal areas and landscapes with woods, hills and heath. Amusement parks appeared, profiting from the growing popularity of family trips. Its mass character turned leisure into one of the major spatial planning tasks. The need for more leisure space was taken very seriously. 'Even if it were possible to conserve all remaining nature and recreation areas, it would not meet all demands of our urbanized society on layout and use of non-urban space' (Benthem 1967, p. 24). Policy makers observed that vast recreational spaces were crumbling and disintegrating. Moreover, the landscapes around the large cities in the west of the Netherlands were thought to be rather unattractive and unsuitable for great amounts of visitors. Large-scale recreation areas were necessary, new attractive leisure areas like the successful Amsterdam Forest Park should meet the needs of the masses[2].

The planning concept of *Elementen van Formaat* (Large Size Elements) was introduced in *De ontwikkeling van het westen des lands* (The development of the western part of the country, RNP) in 1958; large new leisure areas of approximately 1000 hectares were to arise close to the cities. Eleven locations for these so-called *Groene Sterren* (Green Stars) were designated near Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Groningen and Leeuwarden[3]. A *Structuurschets voor de ruimtelijke ontwikkelingen van de openluchtrecreatie* (Policy Document on Outdoor Recreation Spatial Development, RNP) was published in 1964. These documents structured recreational space: Large Size Elements near the cities, attractive areas for day recreation and attractive areas for weekend and holiday recreation.

The main efforts to provide extra space for leisure concentrated on new leisure areas that had the Amsterdam Forest Park as an example. The planning and design approach was function-oriented and based on comprehensive surveys. In line with Modernist thought, efforts were made to objectify needs and rationalise their supply (Beckers 1991). Visitor capacities were minutely calculated.

The leisure areas of Spaarnwoude and Twiske were developed near Amsterdam, the Brielse Meer and the first parts of the Rottemeren near Rotterdam. They were functionally and spatially isolated from their surroundings, like islands in a sea of agriculture.
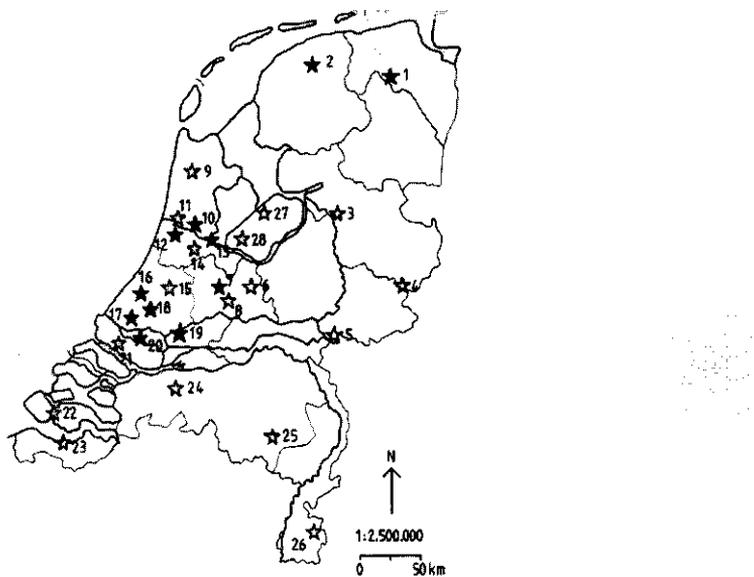
Figure 86   Spaces for leisure in the first National Spatial Policy Report (1960).

Areas like the Rottemeren and the Brielse Meer also acted as a green buffer against infrastructure or industrial areas. For the rest of the country, leisure policy was aimed at opening up the landscape and making it suitable for leisure purposes. Small works such as bicycle paths, plantings and 'modest facilities' were carried out in the context of separate, subsidised civil and agricultural engineering works (*A-II werken*) and land consolidations. In 1965, the department of Leisure and Recreation was moved from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences to the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work. This corresponded with a shifting approach of leisure from education to self-fulfilment.

5.4 Designs

5.4.1 Isolated areas for leisure in the Tielerwaard

Problem setting

Little attention was paid to leisure in rural areas at first. Land consolidation with its focus on optimisation for agricultural purposes dominated. The land consolidation program in the Tielerwaard for example was mainly concerned with the opening up of the former flood basin areas, including improved drainage and relocation of farms (Landinrichtingsdienst 1959). The large scale and dimensions[4] resulted in a rather uniform landscape, where the former extreme contrast in scale and enclosure between the levees and the basin areas had diminished.
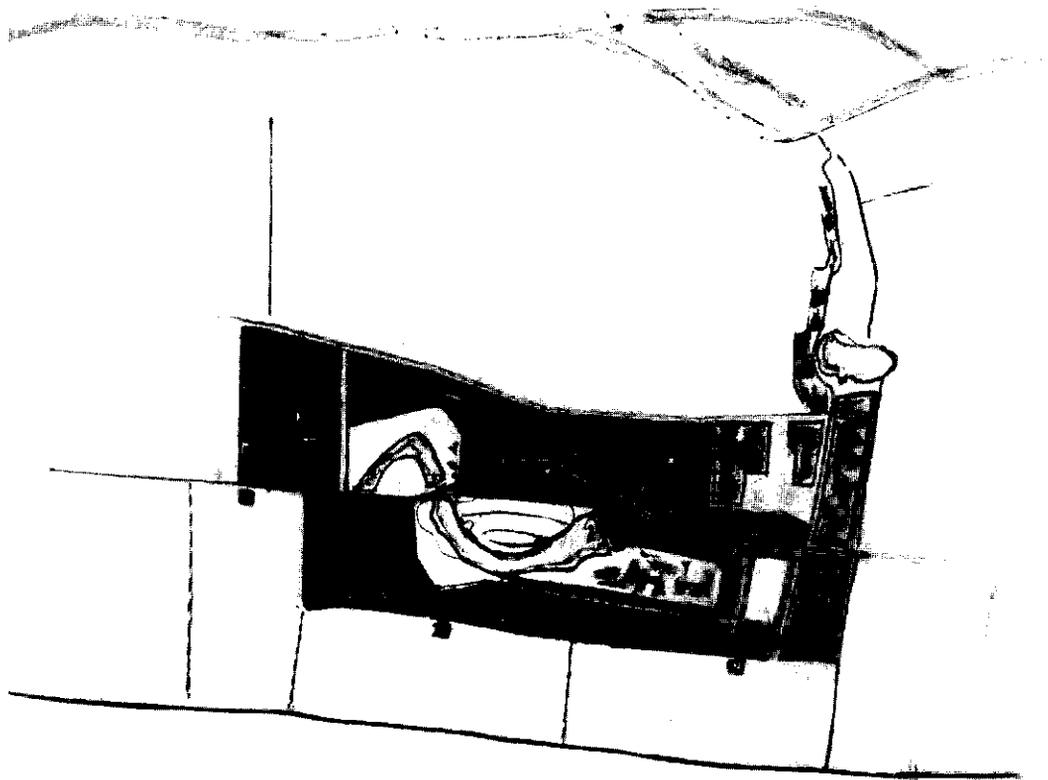
Figure 87   Early sketch for the Linge Woods (design 1965 by De Jonge).

In 1963, National Authorities were looking for a site to plant a new stretch of wood in honour of the 150 year anniversary of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Andela 2000). The western part of the Tielerwaard was located in the centre of the country and thus it was easily accessible from the Randstad. A virtue was made of necessity; sand was needed for the doubling of the highway and exploitation on site was the cheapest. The *Lingebos* (Linge Wood) was planned and designed around the pond that had resulted from quarrying. The wood also compensated for lost osier-beds in the land consolidation project. Leisure joined functional and pragmatic needs.

The project was an example of the concept of multi-purpose planning, which combined and accomplished different objectives within a wide-ranging planning task (Andela 2000). The concept was inspired by the famous Tennessee Valley project in the United States. Other examples of multi-purpose planning were the Maarsseveense Plassen and the Mookerplas.

Design

Though design style and forms were different, the main layout principles for the Linge Woods designed by Nico Roorda van Eijsinga resembled the Amsterdam Forest Park. Stretches of wood visually isolated the recreational activities from the surrounding open landscape. Playgrounds and meadows were connected into one continuous open space winding through the woods, surrounding the main attraction, a central lake. Different recreational target groups – parents with young children, campers, anglers - were separated by zoning. Both ponds and meadows were equipped with recreational facilities. A winding road with a scenic view over the central pond opened up the various parts.

At a detailed level the wood had little relation with the surrounding landscape. A special landscape element like the adjoining pond was not integrated in the design. Only the embankment that bounded the northern side of the wood provided views of the surrounding landscape. At the landscape level on the other hand, references to the character of the landscape were certainly present. The winding form of the pond in the early sketches referred to the river, which had once shaped the landscape. The overall design referred to the typical layout of *eendenkooien* (ponds used for trapping wild duck), which had been prominent landscape elements in the marshy flood basins for ages (Sijmons 2002). Ultimately, the Tielerwaard represented a shifting approach in land consolidation. Leisure had conquered its place in land consolidation projects, though isolated and separated from other functions (Oldenburger et al. 1995). Increasing financial means for leisure facilities[5] helped to pay more attention to leisure in land consolidation projects.

5.4.2 Accessible and properly equipped recreational spaces in the Venen

Problem setting

Spatial planners thought the open polder landscape around the large cities in the western part of the Netherlands was unattractive and unsuitable for leisure purposes: it was chilly, had narrow roads, wet roadsides and there was a lack of shelter. Moreover, the reception capacity of these open landscapes for leisure was considered too low. Planned buffer zones close to the cities provided spaces that could be adjusted for leisure purposes, but mainly for short visits. Areas for day and weekend trips would be necessary as well.

In 1961, the Dutch Touring Club *Algemene Nederlandse Wielrijders-Bond* (ANWB) took the initiative for a new parkway landscape, stretching from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, to offer available, accessible and properly equipped recreation spaces for people seeking diversion (Bijhouwer et al. 1961). The ANWB, which was a Tourist Association as well, was known for its plotted routes with signposts and accompanying guides.

Design

The parkway landscape was supposed to meet a capacity of half a million visitors. Landscape architects Bijhouwer and Vallen and recreation expert Zaaijer who were asked to elaborate the idea, thought that the open polder landscapes could certainly be made to suit recreational use by means of landscape care (read: planting rows of trees and hedges), but that, above all, large and dense recreation areas were needed with park forests, picnic sites, playing fields and swimming ponds. They were inspired by Lewis Mumford's ideas to reserve large rural and natural areas, open them up for recreational traffic and equip them with picnic sites: 'continuous open strips of public space twining though the landscape, making the landscape accessible for both residents and tourists' (Bijhouwer et al. 1961, p. 7). They developed a 120 km long parkway, 50 to 150 meters wide, which connected large existing and future leisure areas[6]. Little 'paradises of repose' would be located at strategic junctions.

The necessity of a parkway was underlined with pictures of the existing landscape that had 'nice roads, though only suitable for touring as they lack places for parking and picnics' (Bijhouwer et al. 1961, p. 40). Picturesque sites like the river Meije were considered to be highly vulnerable and therefore unsuitable for mass recreation.
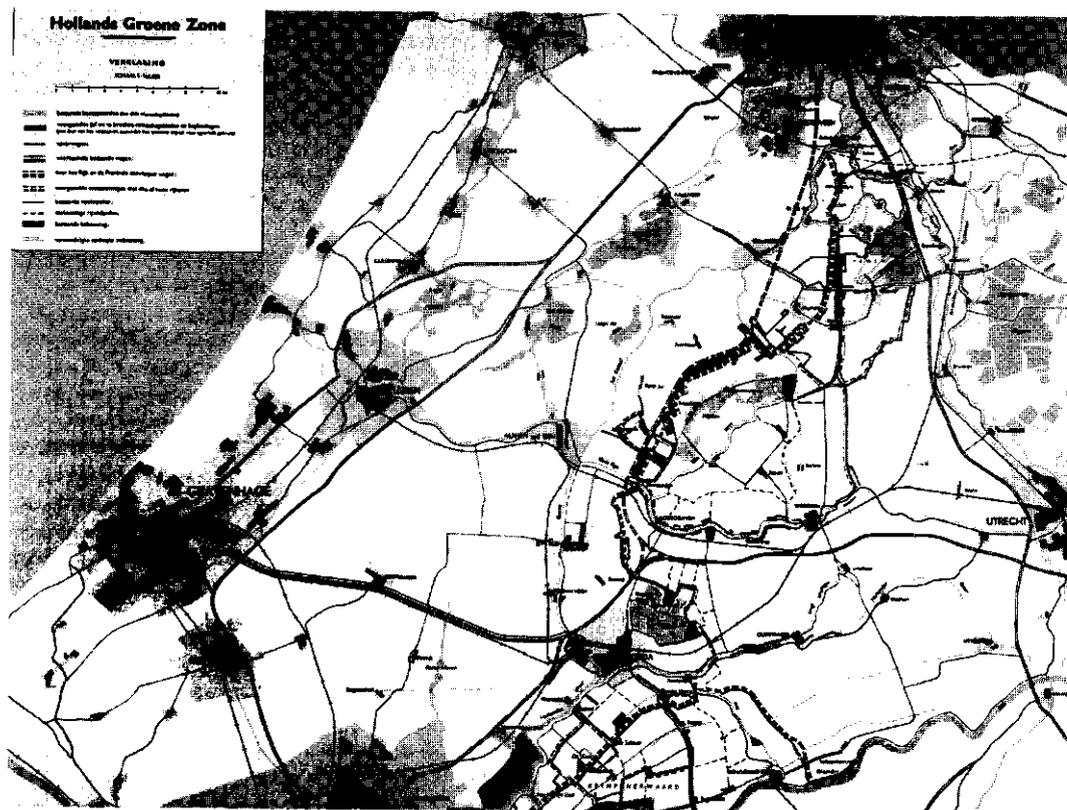
Figure 88   Hollands Groene Zone, a parkway between Amsterdam and Rotterdam (designers: Bijhouwer, Vallen, Zaaijer 1961)

The parkway was supposed to stimulate diversion at several sites and would be part of a hierarchic system of green areas, connecting urban greens with the buffer zones surrounding the cities and with large recreation areas further away from town. It would be connected to existing road networks. The parkway itself encompassed parallel roads with abundant greens where people could park and rest. The parkway design shows only a few places where the views of the surrounding open polder land could be enjoyed. In fact, the parkway design was a long, stretched park forest with recreational facilities like picnic sites and playing fields, isolated from its surroundings.

Figure 89   Vulnerable and unsuitable polder landscapes according to the authors of Hollands Groene Zone
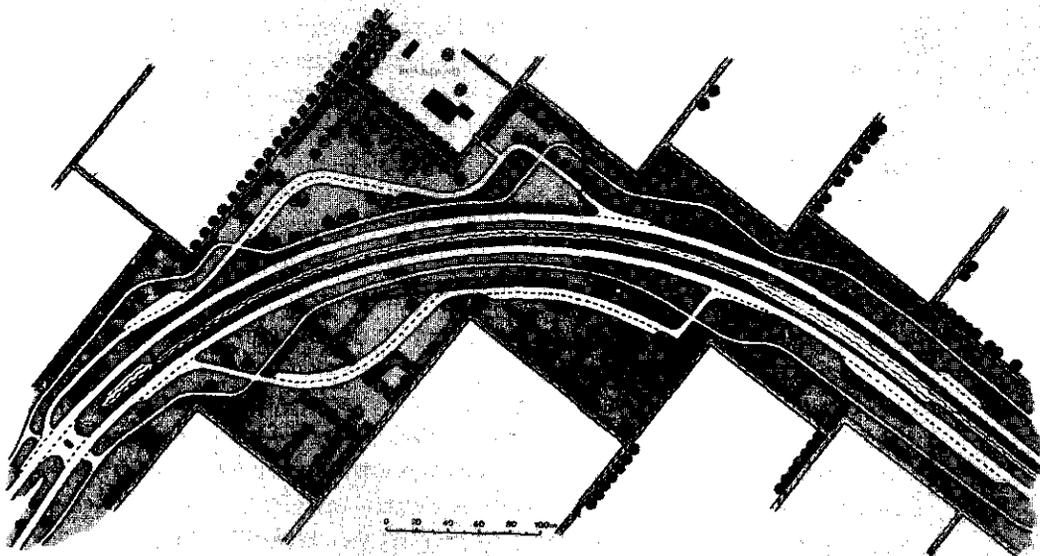
Figure 90, 91   Cross-sections of the parkway (above) and a detail of the parkway (below, 1961, design by Bijhouwer, Vallen, Zaaijer).

The designers tried to disperse recreation without giving people the feeling they were led somewhere, as that would harm the freedom of movement, which was considered to be the main principle of recreation (Andela 2000). According to Bijhouwer, 'day-trippers drifting out of town were not used to silence and solitude. They preferred to stay close to their means of transport, company and snacks' (Deunk 2002, p. 111). The plan was never realised. A parkway for mass recreation from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, through the open polder landscape with valuable areas such as the Vinkeveense Plassen, Nieuwkoopse Plassen, the Reeuwijkse Plassen and the Krimpenerwaard did not coincide with the concept of the Green Heart. The parkway concept with its direct relation between a scenic highway and recreationa facilities did, however, find its way into practice in other areas like the A50 highway along the Randmeren in the 1970s. The parkway concept was also used as one of the leading themes for the landscape design of highway A16/13 near Rotterdam in the 1980s (Van Veelen in Harsema et al. 1991).

5.4.3 Invitation to the common landscape of Oukoop-Kortrijk

Problem setting

The parkway concept of Hollands Groene Zone didn't appeal to landscape architect Hans Warnau at all. Like Bijhouwer and De Jonge, Warnau was part of a group of landscape designers whose ideas related to the Modern Movements in art and architecture like De Stijl, De 8 & Opbouw and Bauhaus. They wanted to break with traditions in architecture and art, and rejected the use of ornaments and symbolism. They preferred a simple layout and a pure, geometric form that was freely set in space (Vroom 2001). Their designs were characterised by functionality.

Warnau called the parkway concept a form of 'buistoerisme' (tube tourism), which would prohibit people from exploring the landscape on their own and feeling part of it (Brouwer and Toes 1988). In his lecture notes he wrote that 'citizens are wise and critical enough and sufficiently emancipated about country life to have them make their way wrapped up in a park zone'. He thought that the parkway was a parasitic addition to the landscape.

Figure 92   Scenic routes staging the open polder landscape.

He wrote so to Benthem at the *Cultuurtechnische Dienst*[7] (Agricultural Engineering Agency), who asked Warnau in return to make an alternative design for the recreation problem in the land consolidation of Oukoop-Kortrijk, one of the open peat lowlands (Steenhuis 2004)[8]. Roadside recreation caused serious problems in the area, especially on summer days with congestion on the narrow roads and blocked parcel entrances (Landinrichtingsdienst 1966).
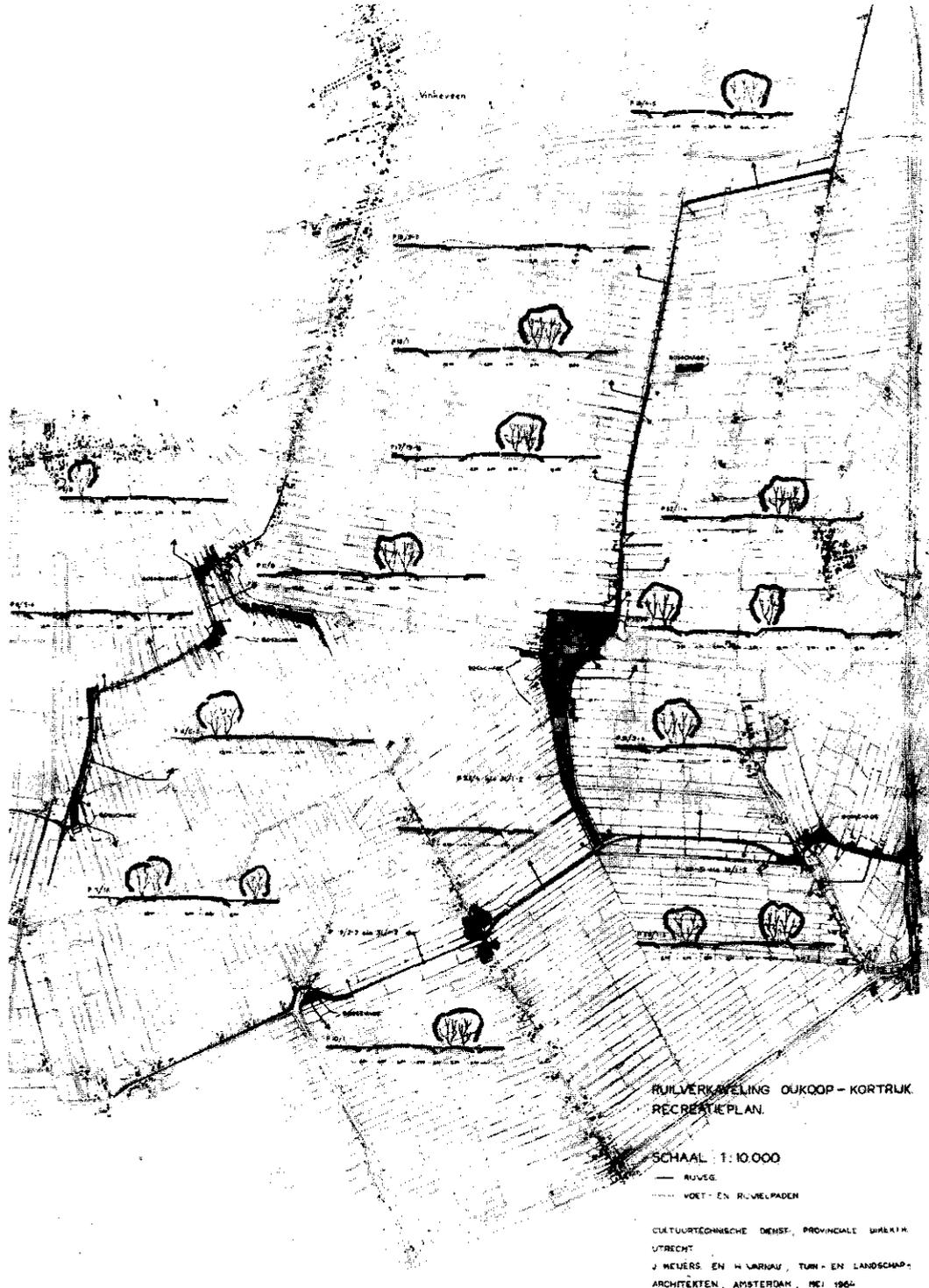
Figure 93   Separated path network (1967, design by Warnau).

In the land consolidation project 500 hectares were reserved for roads, water and woods with leisure purposes. Later, Warnau claimed to be very proud that he succeeded to design a recreational network that covered only 52 hectares, just one tenth of the available surface area. Thus, he contributed to the conservation of openness in the peat lowlands of Utrecht and Holland; 'nicely bare' as he called it.

Design

Warnau designed a recreational network for pleasure trips with small groves 'like beads on a string' instead of one main parkway that was isolated from the landscape. The groves contained recreational facilities. The network was to be connected to the cities by the existing highway and to consist mainly of new, mostly unplanted, paths and roads. Warnau chose to add a new network to the existing planted roads with the adjacent farms and the existing dikes because he wanted to stress the fact that it was a new addition to the landscape (Andela and Guinee 2006). More practical arguments were that the new network would prevent nuisance and guarantee the residents their Sunday's rest. Warnau, however, knew perfectly well that, in practice, the existing roads and the new network would function together as a whole. Formal arguments served another purpose: without recreational use the opening up of the area would have proved more difficult. The costs simply would have been too high for just agricultural purposes (De Visser 1997). The design shows openness alternating with intimacy provided by small groves along the roads and paths.
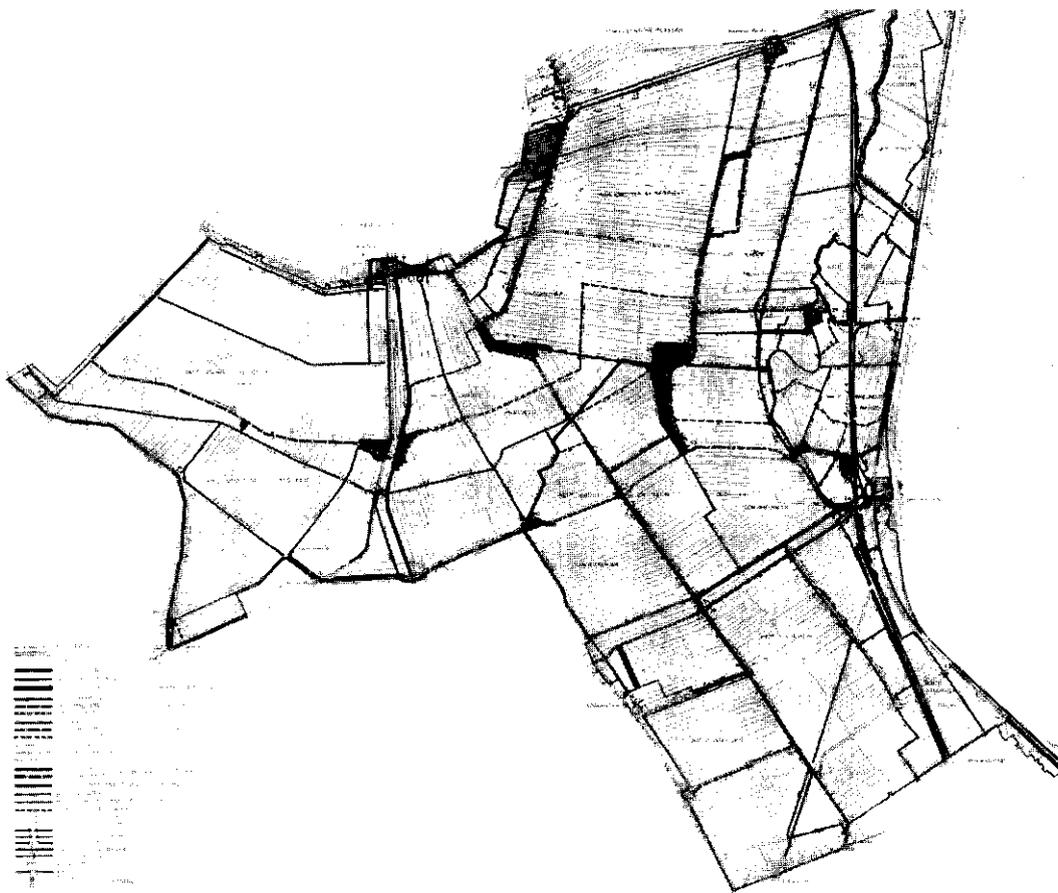
Figure 94, 95   Plan of roads and watercourses (left) and landscape plan (right) for Oukoop Kortrijk (design 1967 by Warnau).

Linear plantings carefully staged the perception of the open polder landscape. They accompanied the visitor to the recreational groves and led them along. The small groves were located where parcelling directions changed; 'errors in the land' he called these sites (Brouwer and Toes 1988). The groves would act as beacons in the open landscape and facilitate orientation. Their size related to the common parcel size, thus referring to landscape characteristics. Some of these sites were elaborated according to the *Groene Zone* concept with enclosed recreational facilities. These were places meant for picnicking, fishing, playing and sunbathing. It was roadside recreation without the spectacle of the cars driving along.

Warnau's designs were very reserved and simple, almost 'non-design' in his own words. He felt affinity with socially oriented German landscape architects like Leberecht Migge and Erwin Barth, who tried to reflect freedom by searching for minimal designs, which were reserved in their references (Warnau 1993). Landscape architect and town planner Migge saw the well-known and popular English Landscape Style as a bourgeois aesthetic ideal, inadequate for the needs of working class people in overcrowded cities. He rejected the aesthetic functionalism of the International Style and was led by a pragmatic, socially meaningful functionalism. Barth, Berlin's City Public Gardens Director and the first one to hold the chair in landscape architecture in Germany in the 1920s, fancied the idea that people should get free opportunity for active engagement in parks.
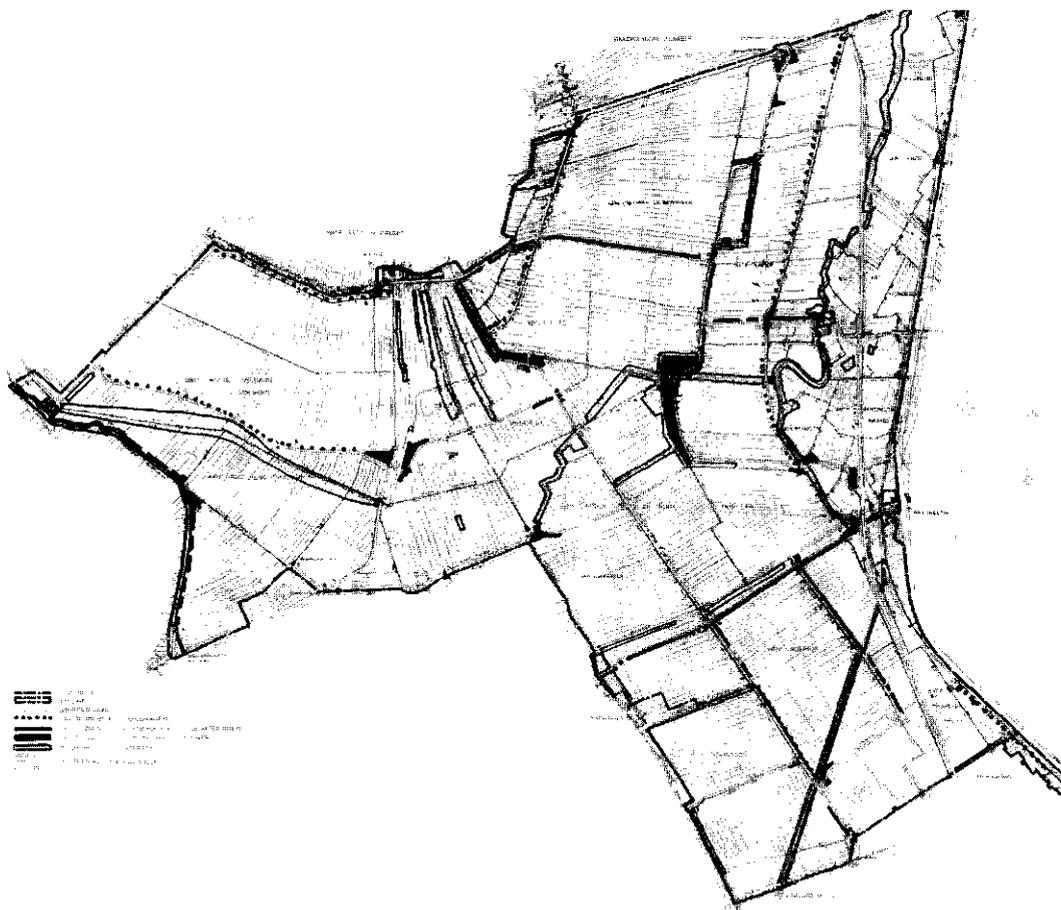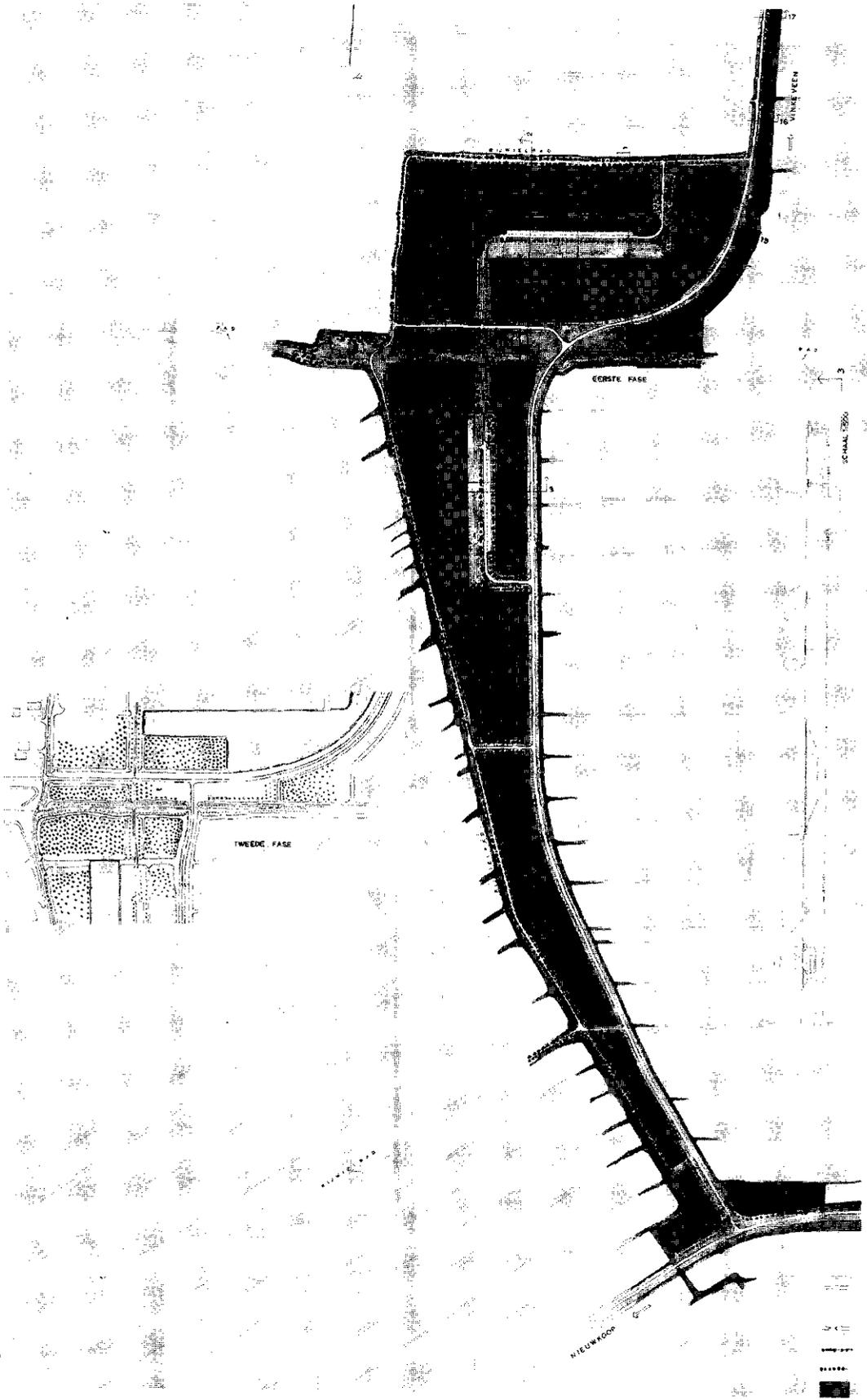
Figure 96   Bosdijk, one of the carefully designed woods with leisure facilities (design 1968 by Warnau).

Warnau's designs seem almost boring, but they were very carefully designed. The plantings were very precisely positioned; the proportions were well thought out and the designed result provided room for improvisation. The designs suggested naturally arisen, accidental places along the route and offered wide banks to sit on instead of marked playing fields. Unfortunately, financial instruments based on standardised solutions gave rise to alterations in the realisation, which countered the subtleties of Warnau's design. The woods were hollowed out to create more *'randlengte'* (edges). 'Meddling', thought Warnau (Andela 2000). The objective to create as many edges as possible was a normative translation of insights in recreational behaviour. Studies showed that people were inclined to sit down near the edges of plantings, with their back to the plantings and a good view on the open[9].

He tried to achieve 'no spectacular works but an invitation to visit the common landscape' (# archive article). People were supposed to feel immersed in the landscape. He wanted to manifest the beauty of the common landscape by contrasting its utility and its extraordinariness (Brouwer and Toes 1988; Andela 2000). In his ideas, he proved to be a Modern designer in hart and soul. 'Modern designers wanted to make transparent objects that showed how they were accomplished' (Warnau 1993, p. 34). He considered the recreational use as a new addition to the landscape, which should look like that and not give the illusion of something that had grown gradually. Both old and new should be recognisable; clearness and simplicity were to provide orientation in time and space.

5.4.4 Landscape preservation in the Drentsche Aa Stream Valley

Problem setting

Although existing landscapes in the Randstad were not considered attractive and appropriate for leisure purposes, others were certainly seen as leisure landscapes by policy makers. The small-scale enclosed picturesque landscapes of the sandy uplands for example had been very popular domestic tourist destinations for a long time. Policy makers considered these kinds of landscapes inviting and appropriate. They were threatened however. Agriculture was becoming less dependent of its traditional relation to soil, hydrology and relief. Joined with water management interventions and land consolidation, it led to increasing uniformity and impoverishment. The Drentsche Aa stream valley landscape was one of these beautiful landscapes. It was one of the last non-regulated stream systems and a very impressive one.

State Forest Agency's landscape designer Harry de Vroome[10] cared for the Drentsche Aa. He thought that well-made landscape plans could reduce a certain loss of landscape diversity but not prevent it. When the Nature Conservation Councils attempted to save small isolated parts of the Drentsche Aa stream valley by making a channel bypass, he disapproved. In his view, the physical and ecological structures were determinative for the landscape as a whole. His ambition to incorporate the landscape structure as a whole into the landscape design went far beyond embellishing engineers' plans[11]. He proposed to make a plan for the entire stream valley with the assistance of experts in natural sciences. Using his diplomatic qualities, he got support from provincial administrators and the provincial planning agency.

De Vroome proposed to set up the Drentsche Aa as a 'landscape area' where the interests of nature and landscape would prevail over agricultural interests. In such a 'landscape area' the complete natural stream system could subsist. In order to reach maximum landscape differentiation and ecological diversity, common agricultural use was to be replaced by nature-oriented management practices in 3500 hectares of the total of 30.000. Nevertheless, the main goal of preserving this valuable landscape was not to conserve it but to develop natural values and enable people to find peace and inspiration. After all, the area was very popular with day-trippers at the time.

Figure 97, 98   Gedachtenplan for the Drentsche Aa stream valley: the landscape structure (left) and the recreational structure(right) (De Vroome 1965).

Design

The *Gedachtenplan* for the Drentsche Aa stream valley provided an overall vision on the landscape structure. A map of the recreational structure accompanied the report and the sketch of the proposed landscape structure. For strategic reasons, the recreational significance of the area was stressed. Recreation had become a political topic and a spectacular map showing a wide range of opportunities for recreation would improve the feasibility of the plan.

"Stroomdallandschap Drentsche A"
Schets voor een recreatie structuurplan
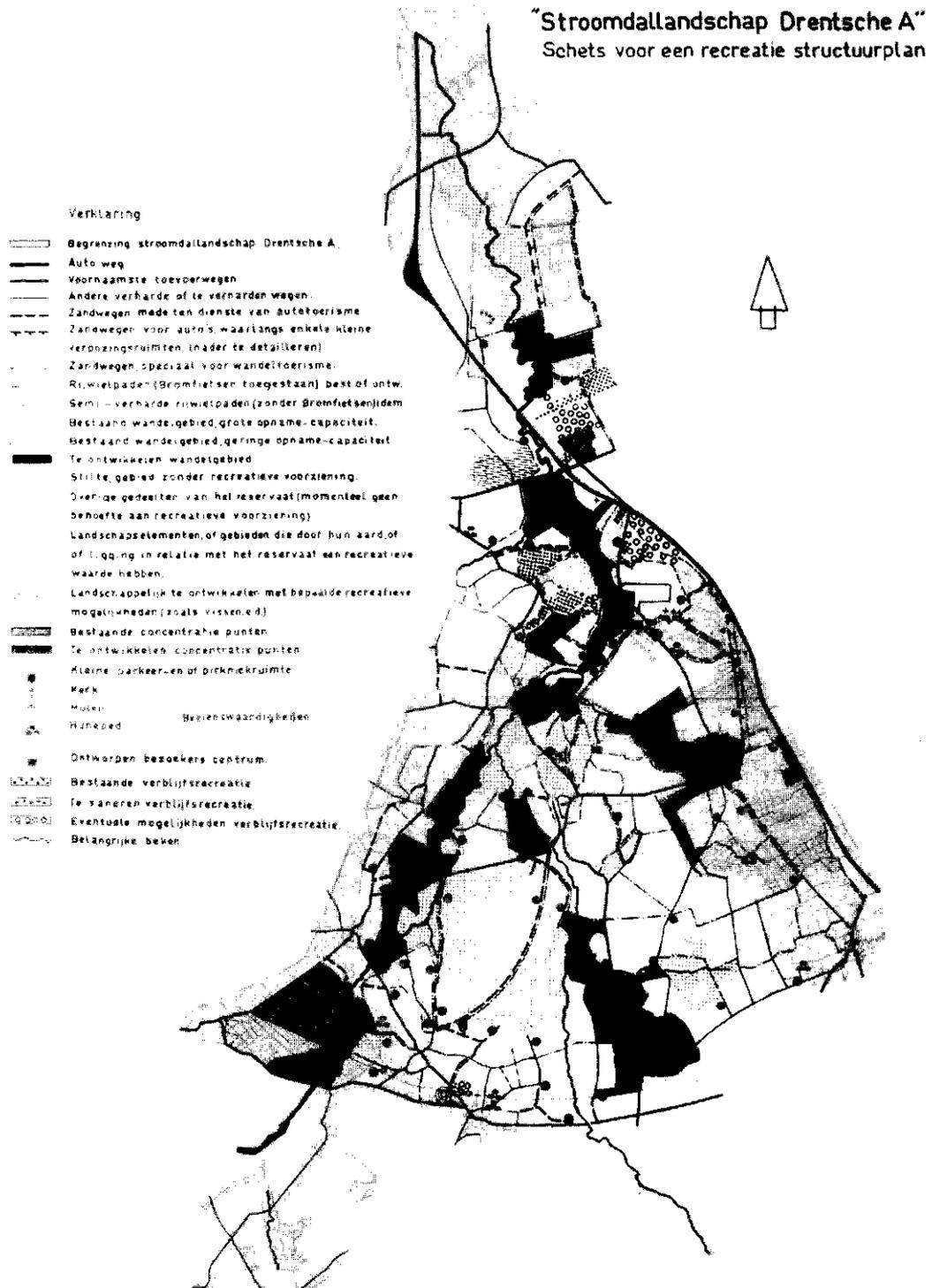
De Vroome regarded landscape as 'natural spaces' in accordance with Cleyndert's ideas: natural spaces contrasting with city life and compensating for it (Van Blerck 1987). He associated recreation with the individual experience of comprehensive natural space. The 'landscape areas' should be of major recreational interest, exactly on account of their landscape differentiation. 'Ugly is everything looking the same', he said (Van Blerck 1987, p. 33). De Vroome translated the 'natural space' concept into a network of roads and tracks for cycling, walking, horse riding, fishing and extensive pleasure rides. Large parts of the stream valleys would be developed as hiking areas. The map shows a striking number of parking and picnic sites: almost seventy (!). This was obviously an exaggeration for strategic purposes. De Vroome knew that only a few sites would be necessary in practice, as most sandy roads were owned by the State Forest Agency's. About a dozen sites have been constructed in the end.

Recreation according to Cleyndert's concept was supposed to be the enjoyment of the landscape and its special sights: the stream, mills, megalithic graves and other historical elements. De Vroome proposed to ban most holiday resorts from the area and moved them to locations at the margins of the area. He probably regarded summer cottages as a form of settlement, not as a specific type of leisure. In his landscape concept, small settlements were located in the woods or in the open farmlands, like planted islets[12]. New woods with leisure facilities near the towns of Assen and Zuidlaren, 'concentration points', would preserve the landscape from more intensive forms of recreation.

It was clear that the *Gedachtenplan* would meet serious opposition from the agricultural field. The Ministry of Agriculture and their Agricultural Engineering Agency were still striving for an increase of agricultural production and productivity. Yet, De Vroome sensed perfectly well that political concern was shifting from prosperity to well-being. He argued that a pleasant, healthy environment with natural qualities was beneficial to it and convinced provincial authorities. Agricultural parties were kept in ignorance of his plans for the time being. The *Gedachtenplan* was published only after administrative support for the vision was guaranteed. Farmers and their interest groups were furious when they were confronted with the plan (Drents Landbouwgenootschap 1967). Not only would they lose grounds, but they were also fearful of becoming a tourist attraction. They were, however, too late. In 1965, the landscape reserve *Stream Landscape Drentsche Aa* was set up by the province. 'The Drentsche Aa Stream valley had been dragged away from the gates of hell by Harry de Vroome' (interview with Van Blerck in 2005).

De Vroome elaborated the overall vision of the *Gedachtenplan* in the land consolidation projects of Vries, Rolde and Anlo, which overlapped with the stream valley area. In the original design, the existing network of sandy paths was planned to become the recreational network, with carefully selected car parks and picnic sites along the paths. 'Asphalt does no good to recreation: cities have plenty of asphalt' (De Vroome in Van Blerck 1987, p. 105). Obviously, De Vroome's ideal landscape for leisure contrasted with the city. His attempts to create a rural illusion also showed up in other designs. Streams were designed to wind where roads and streams crossed, even if the rest of the stream was to be canalised. Thus, the stream would seem natural and untouched by human interventions from the perspective of a day-tripper.

Although agricultural motives came first in land consolidation, recreational considerations were also very important. Footpaths, bicycle tracks and bridle paths were incorporated. De Vroome wanted to maintain the sandy cart tracks with their typical winding character, but many sandy paths were straightened and asphalted according to the *Drentse Rijwielpadenplan* (provincial plan for bicycle

tracks). Forty years later, landscape architect Berno Strootman would rave against these 'bicycle highways' as well (Strootman et al. 2004).

As financial means for recreation turned out to be higher than foreseen in the implementation stage and as inhabitants asked for more walking opportunities, De Vroome managed to preserve several old sandy paths by incorporating them in strolls from all villages around the *essen* (open fields) and along the stream valleys. It is not clear whether De Vroome explicitly considered these little strolls as leisure activities. Yet, the result was that the Drentsche Aa area offered leisure opportunities at different levels, to both visitors and residents.

De Vroome's approach to leisure consisted of path networks, facilities and landscape setting, in close relation to each other. The landscape was the main attraction. Routes and facilities were designed to enable landscape experience. This approach would turn into common practice when policy would change from mass tourism into joint recreational use in the following period. Plantings were located in such a way that they support and direct views from the villages, roads and paths. Villages were furnished with oak trees along the main roads and fields of trees were planted at the transition zones between village and *essen* (open fields). Recreational facilities were modest and consisted of benches and picnic tables at carefully selected sites with scenic views. Archaeological and heritage objects were secured by integrating them in areas reserved for new plantings[13]. An unsuspecting visitor would come upon them incidentally at a trip.

Although the landscape plan for Vries may suggest a comprehensive repair (Andela 2000), the term redesign seems more appropriate. The question of creation or conservation was not relevant to De Vroome; it was his job to find the best way to make new activities and elements part of a landscape that was already there. He considered the landscape a continuously changing entity. The narrative of its changes should be told and retold over and over again. The main storyline however would remain the same. In his opinion, spatial coherence between the main landscape components was the essence of the landscape, the main storyline. 'The essence of a landscape will remain legible in people's experience by composing the elements in certain coherence or by renovating an existing composition' (De Vroome in Van Blerck 1987, p. 27). Therefore, the leading principle of his plan for the landscape structure was to strengthen the main components of the existing landscape: settlements, *essen* (open fields), stream valleys, younger cultivations, moors and forests. He preserved and continued the 'heart of the landscape', specified by the main components and their mutual spatial coherence.
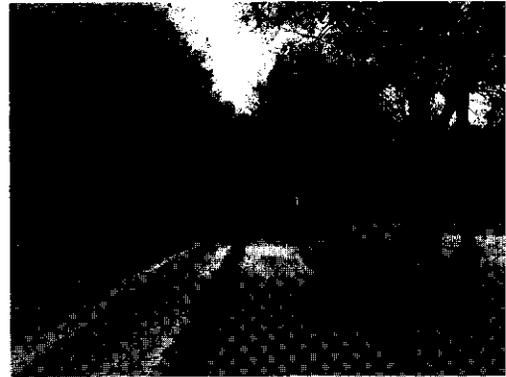
Figure 99, 100   A walk aroud the village along old paths (left) and a sandy path straightened and transformed into an asphalted bicycle track (right).

Plantings were restored or added at the edges of these main components, visually separating them. He realised that most people would not experience this structure consciously; they would not 'read the landscape' as he did. Yet, he thought his approach would contribute to their idea that Drenthe was beautiful and different from other landscapes (Van Blerck 1987). De Vroome was criticised by many of his colleagues of the State Forest Agency for his 'nostalgic' work (recorded interview with Benthem in 2003). In their opinion, new functional landscapes had to be created instead of restoring the old ones, which were based on outdated agricultural systems. But the differences between the designers may be smaller than one would think. In its essence, their landscape approach was similar, based on the main structuring components. The landscape made the principal difference, the personal approach emphasized it. De Vroome admired and respected De Jonge's work and his design for the edge of the village of Vries looks almost monumental.

Figure 101, 102   Plan of roads and watercourses (left) and landscape plan (right) for Vries (design 1966 by De Vroome).

Anyway, De Vroome's approach did prove very effective when the National Ecological Network based on the island theory of Wilson and MacArthur was developed in the 1980s. The linear landscape elements and small groves he had designed were thought to be essential links in ecological networks.

5.5 Review

In the 1950s and 1960s, outdoor recreation became a major spatial planning task due to its perceived and expected mass character. The policy concept of *Elementen van Formaat* (Large Size Elements) was introduced.

It was considered an essential part of a hierarchic system of green areas, connecting urban green areas with buffer zones and large recreation areas surrounding the cities. Many existing landscapes were assumed to be unattractive or, if they were picturesque, too vulnerable for mass recreation. The new recreation areas were meant to accommodate a large number of people. The approach was primarily functional and quantitative.

The design concept of the mass recreation areas consisted of a forest park where woods, fields and ponds provided a green backdrop setting for a number of leisure facilities. Leisure facilities, lakes and sunbathing fields were the major attractions. Like the Amsterdam Forest Park, the recreation areas were supposed to contrast with and compensate city life. The mono-functional recreation areas were functionally and visually isolated from their surroundings. Efforts were made to objectify needs and rationalise supply. Layout and facilities were standardised. On the one hand, they were based on studies of recreation behaviour; on the other hand, they were motivated by reasons of efficiency. Tourist accommodations were hidden in the woods.

Some landscape designers didn't agree with the concept of isolated, mono-functional recreation areas. While leisure policy was still based on the wish to control and discipline the population, the designers assumed that people were independent enough to find their own way and discover the attractiveness of existing landscapes by themselves. The designers chose a network of routes as their main design principle. The network enabled freedom of movement and the opportunity to experience the landscape as an attraction in itself. They sought after the contrast with the hectic modern city in order to enable people to find peace and inspiration in an age-old landscape, or the illusion of it. In order to emphasize this rural illusion, they often designated the rear sides of the landscape as areas without motorised traffic. Modest recreation facilities such as benches or small car parks were added. The layout and routing of the network and the location of facilities were chosen carefully. The designs were based on an overall vision of a coherent landscape structure, which was meant to be legible. This meant that people had to be able to orient themselves. Special landscape elements and scenic views were treated as accidental - though consciously deployed - attractions along the routes. Landscape Style *enscenering* (staging) principles were used subtly and implicitly to support and direct views. The designs were quite unpretentious and modest. The designers preferred casual beauty.

Leisure policy concepts	Mass recreation			-
Planning concepts	**Recreation areas**		**Tourist areas and concentration points**	-
	Elementen van Formaat (Large Size Elements)	*Groene Sterren* (Green Stars)		
Design concepts	Forest park, isolated in the landscape	Parkway, isolated in the landscape	Hidden in the woods	Merged into the landscape
Routes	Network of paths	Scenic road Parallel roads	Network of paths	Network of existing and new roads and paths
Attractions	Leisure facilities, lakes and ponds	Leisure facilities	Woodland setting, leisure facilities, ponds	Landscape setting Characteristic landscape elements
Facilities	Sports and plays Campsites Picnic sites Car parks	Sports and plays Picnic sites Car parks	Recreation: modest facilities such as car parks, benches, picnic sites Tourism: summer cottages, camp grounds	Small sites with some modest facilities: car parks, benches, picnic sites
Setting	Park landscape 1 :1 :1	Park landscape	Woods and groves	Everyday landscape with scenic views
Leisure perspectives	Green illusion of continuity and naturalness Contrast with the strictly ordered daily urban life Free to choose one's ways and activities	Distraction from daily life Freedom of movement Company and diversion	Shelter	Contrast with and compensation of city life Rural illusion Natural, untouched Free to explore the landscape on one's own
General landscape perspectives	Mass recreation isolated from the landscape			Beauty of the common landscape Designing the landscape as a whole Regional approach Spatial coherence Emphasizing landscape characteristics Legible landscape Orientation

Figure 103   Scheme representing the main ideas, design concepts and tools in the period of mass recreation (1960s).

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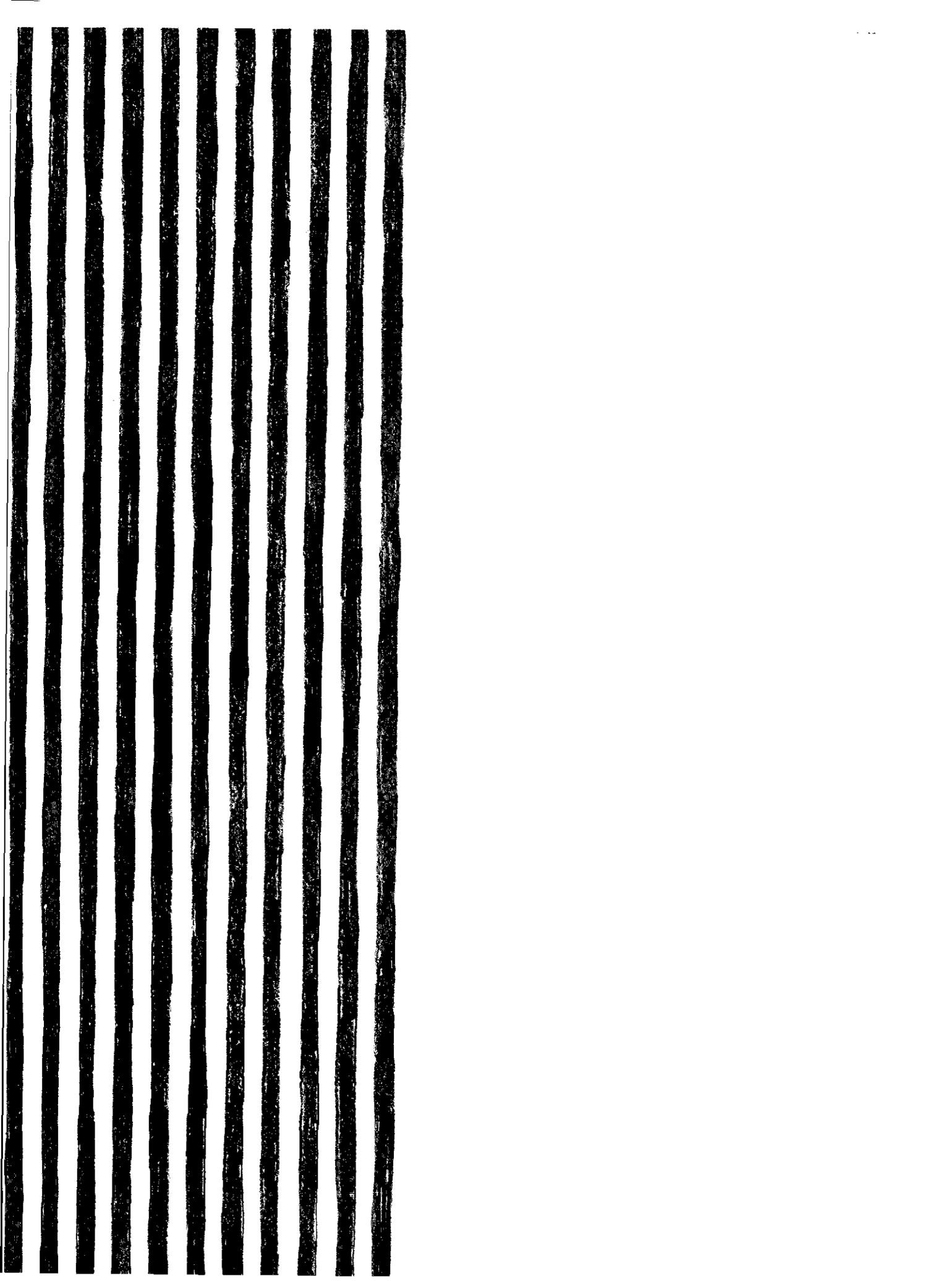
Joint recreational use (1970s – early 1980s)

The optimistic mood of the 1950s and 1960s changed at the beginning of the 1970s. Economic recession resulted in unemployment, which was enhanced by labour mechanisation and the closure of mines and other industries.

In 1972 the Club of Rome published their much-discussed report 'Limits to Growth', which related environmental issues to economic growth. With over 50.000 hectares of land a year being transformed, the drastic effects of land consolidation became clearly visible, while at the same time agricultural policy resulted in production surpluses. Side effects of the improved drainage and accelerated discharge became clear in the unusually hot year of 1976, when drought caused severe crop failure. All of this gave rise to a general concern for environmental issues, landscape and nature conservation. Environmental and ecological movements mushroomed. Radical interventions like the disappearance of the nature area De Beer in favour of the Rotterdam Port at the beginning of the 1960s could no longer be implemented just like that. After demonstrations and fierce debates in the Tweede Kamer (Dutch Lower House) in 1976, authorities decided to embark on an innovative construction of the Oosterschelde dam, an enormous Delta Works project. Tide and valuable tidal ecosystems would be preserved; the storm surge barrier would only be enclosed for safety reasons at extremely high tides.

Architects and town planners who criticised the concept of the functional city, revalued multifunctional land uses and developed urban concepts like the 'woonerf' (living street or home zone). People had become emancipated and no longer simply accepted large-scale interventions by the authorities. Socialist governments took the demonstrations and objections seriously and civil involvement came into use in planning practices.

6.1 Preservation of town and countryside

The answer of spatial policy makers to the growing notion of the importance of the environment came in 1973 with the first part of the Third Policy Document on Spatial Planning[1] (VRO). Quality, not quantity was to be the primary concern. The conceptual shift of policy could be labelled as the preservation of town and countryside. 'Dutch physical planning came under the influence of the phrase 'small is beautiful'' (Zonneveld 1991, p. 226). Inner city regeneration was developing. The more dispersed urbanization of the Second Policy Document on Spatial Planning, *gebundelde deconcentratie*[2] (clustered decentralisation, VRO 1966), was replaced in 1976 with the *stadsgewest* (metropolitan district), a spatial and economic concentration model. Green structures were proposed as complements to the urban concentrations.

The *Nota Landelijke Gebieden* (Policy Document on Rural Areas) that followed in 1977 was a clear interference of spatial policy makers with rural areas, which used to be the territory of the Ministry of Agriculture. According to the document, nature preservation should be improved and large areas of the countryside should not only be reserved for agricultural uses, but also be suitable for leisure purposes. The new strategy was to interweave functions in altered proportions. The objective was to achieve 'a new balance between economical aspects of land uses, the values of landscape perception and scientific and ecological values' (VRO 1973 in CRM 1977). 'Mutual frictions in land uses were bound by administrative consideration rules' (Bruin et al. 1987, p. 99). In 1977, an instrument for functional interweaving at the level of individual farms was introduced. It provided financial compensation for adaptations of agricultural practices in the interest of nature conservation: the *Beheersovereenkomst* (Management Arrangements)[3].

6.2 Changes in land consolidation

In the same period, preparations started for the replacement of the Land Consolidation Act with a new *Landinrichtingswet* (Land Use Act)[4] that should enable a more integrated approach and serve more purposes than agriculture. A preliminary change was the introduction of four separate advisory documents on agriculture, landscape, nature and cultural heritage, and outdoor recreation in the preparation stage. The four Advices were meant to form the basis for the *Schetsontwerp* (preliminary design), the *Voorontwerp* (Concept Land Use Plan) and the final *Landinrichtingsplan* (Land Use Plan). Though integration and interweaving was the objective, preliminary analyses and solutions were to be developed apart from each other. This approach would unfortunately lead to polarisation and long procedures in which negotiation skills turned out to be more decisive for the final result than the quality of the content and ideas. It had nothing to do with the kind of integrated plans that landscape designers were aiming for.

The new procedure of the Land Consolidation Act, with the four advices preceding the final plans, changed the characteristics of the landscape designs. The concrete, detailed designs of the old landscape plans, indicating types and forms of plantings, had formed the basis for implementation. They were replaced with more abstract indications about the spatial outcome of the desired landscape structure, such as openness, enclosure and vistas. The maps were usually accompanied by some basic design principles. These general plans were not meant as a basis for implementation; they were just the input for a long negotiation process.

Schema planvorming
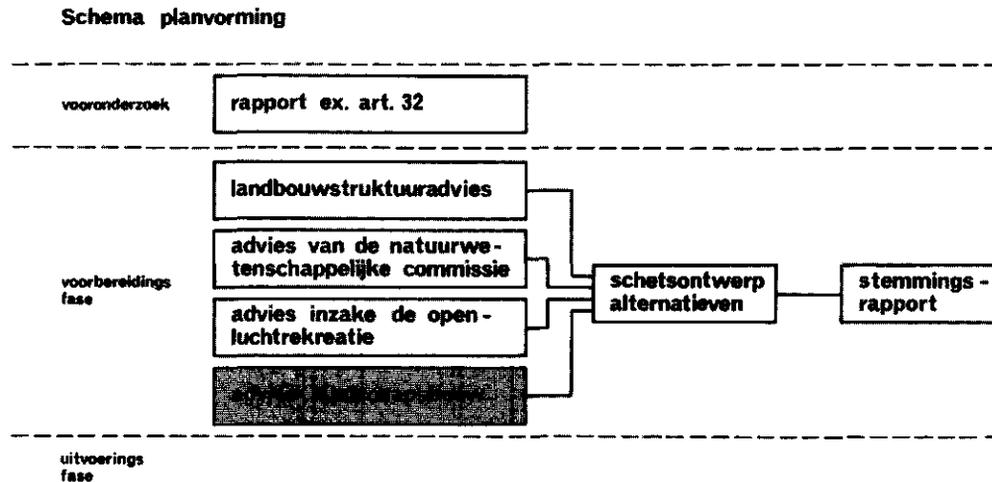
Figure 104   Organisation scheme of a land consolidation process.

The elaboration of the results of that process into detailed operational designs would usually take place many years later, fragmented into small pieces. Landscape designers were hardly involved at this stage; the final plans were drawn up by people with a background in agricultural or civil engineering.

In this period, the abstract landscape advices gave rise to a new planning instrument: the landscape structure plans. They had no legal status and were primarily made for regions without land consolidation projects. They provided an over-all framework for future landscape developments and acted as an intermediary between national and provincial policy on the one side and concrete local projects on the other. Landscape advices in land consolidation projects were often regarded as landscape structure plans too.

6.3 From landscape care to landscape creation

The ongoing professionalization in landscape architecture took advantage of research in various disciplines, and used insights in among other things the relations between land uses, soil, hydrology and ecology. This supported the designers' attempts to approach landscape design in rural areas in an integrated manner and at a regional scale. After all, the regional scale enabled the understanding of the landscape as a system with its topographical (horizontal) and topological (vertical) relations. It also supported their ambition to make over-all designs instead of just taking care of the plantings along roads and watercourses. The *Advies Landschapsbouw* (Policy Document on Landscapes and Landscape Design 1977), formulated by the landscape designers of the State Forest Agency) illustrated this ongoing ambition. The description of the landscape design practice had already been changed from 'landscape care' into 'landscape creation', being defined as 'shaping spatial functions in relation to the existing of desired landscape structure' (LNV 1977, p. 5).

'Landscape creation' aimed for the creation of functional landscapes where all projected functions and landscape elements would be maintained or developed according to their destination, in relation with environmental and human needs (LNV 1977). In line with National Spatial Policy, functions were to be integrated by interweaving.

The concept of 'landscape identity' was introduced: 'more or less lasting characteristic landscape features that distinguish one area from another, each on their own scale, and determine people's commitment to their environment' (LNV 1977, p. 22), accompanied by explicit attention to human dimensions and visual perception. Each landscape type had its own identity, which should be 'preserved or reinforced'.

Some landscape designers were more explicit than others in their attempts to promote a development-oriented approach. In his book *De angst voor het nieuwe landschap* (The fear of modern landscapes) landscape architect Han Lörzing wondered why new developments were consequently considered as threats. 'Something has gone wrong in the last twenty years. Until then, new interventions, no matter how drastic, were considered as inevitable, logic steps in spatial development. Yet, all of a sudden, those interventions arose nothing but aversion and protest' (Lörzing 1982, p. 18). He argued that a predominant focus on the relics of traditional landscapes led to a disregard of new landscapes, which were not given a chance to develop into high quality landscapes. He rejected the conservation of isolated details for its fragmented approach and preferred to concentrate on the landscape structure, the broad outlines. Like most landscape designers, he considered a landscape as a momentary reflection in a continuous process of change. He argued that the landscape patterns – and the details that were so anxiously preserved - changed in this process, while the main landscape components remained the same. By focusing on the main components that made up the landscape structure, a landscape could change and develop without losing its historical perspective. New structuring elements could be added, which would in their turn function as the future historical perspective.

Lörzing presented his strategy as an innovative one, but in fact he had just put into words what Benthem, Bijhouwer, de Vroome and others had been doing for decades. He tried to prove that the elements, which structured the traditional landscapes, were not necessarily crooked, picturesque and cosy. To him, clear and straight lines were an expression of both contemporary and old spatial organisations and shouldn't be considered boring and ugly. Precisely a simple layout of the main landscape structure would provide ample opportunities to diversify completions. All the same, discussions were made clouded by ideological arguments. Designers with a modern, functionalist attitude looked down on what they called romantic design. They regarded design in a traditional style as non-scientific, out-of-date and objectionable.

6.4 Restricted freedom

The previous chapter showed that in the 1960s the objectives of leisure policy had shifted from education and civilisation to well-being and personal development. The leading principle was freedom of choice. Leisure facilities should be accessible to everybody[5], enable a wide variety of activities, and have regard for the interests of special groups.

At the same time, the same authorities restricted freedom, because leisure and tourism were supposed to contribute to health, personal development, social purposes and economic development (Lengkeek 1996). Consumer sovereignty was obviously limited. The supply and support of both activities and facilities were determined normatively and controlled in every possible way. Though studies had proved that the fear of undesirable mass recreation behaviour was undeserved, it still influenced leisure policy.

Freedom and diversity were restricted even more by the standardisation of recreational facilities. Research on recreation patterns and behaviour had been carried out for the Policy Documents in the 1960s, and results had been translated into norms. Each type of outdoor recreation was specified with surfaces, times spent and spatial solutions for different target groups (Steenhuis 2004). Planning and implementation instruments, in particular the *PPO procedure*[6] (project development for outdoor recreation), were based on these regulations and standardised spatial solutions. To be qualified for implementation subsidies, standards had to be met. Additionally, all large recreation areas were modelled after the successful example of the Amsterdam Forest Park. The 1:1:1 formula of woods (mass), lawns (open space) and water, and the clustering of leisure facilities were copied. Unfortunately, the refined landscaping and routing, which staged movements and perceptions, were given less attention. The diversity of recreation areas, which had been a policy aspiration since the 1960s, was not fulfilled.

Figure 105   Zoning plan for Midden-Delfland (design 1978 by the Reconstruction Board).

6.5 Rediscovering the landscape

Policy documents from the 1960s distinguished different types of space for recreation: Large Size Elements for day-tripping by the urban population in the western part of the country, other regions for day trips and other regions again for weekend trips and holidays. The main focus and priority shifted from Large Size Elements in the 1960s to joint recreational use of agricultural landscapes in the 1970s. Leisure and recreation policy was elaborated upon in a separate document, the *Structuurvisie Openluchtrecreatie* (National Structure Plan on Outdoor Recreation, CRM 1977).

Joint recreational use was thought to be of the utmost importance in everyday environments in particular[7]. It asked for 'a harmonious, unpolluted environment with variation, shelter, peace and quiet' (CRM 1977, p. 39). Only if the landscape was too open, too monotonous or too rectilinear, specially created recreation areas were thought to be necessary. In Midden-Delfland, a Buffer Zone area between Rotterdam, The Hague and Delft, a special Reconstruction Act enabled the purchase of over one third of the 6600 hectares and the transformation thereof into recreation areas. These areas were located right up against the cities like green shells and they were transformed into mass recreation areas according to the familiar forest park concept. Agriculture and nature remained to be the dominant forms of land use in the central area where the old landscape was preserved.

Landscape designers had adopted a preservation-oriented attitude as well. This illustrated the shift from adapting landscapes for new developments to fitting new developments into the existing landscape. Leisure and tourism were mainly considered as threats to the landscape. Small-scale landscapes with a high diversity were attractive for outdoor recreation in particular, but too much pressure would push aside other functions (read: agriculture and nature), which were seen as the carriers of that same attractive landscape (LNV 1977). The proposed solution was to focus on extensive recreation and the spread of small-scale leisure facilities. Apparently, rural landscapes were no place for other types of leisure in the eyes of the landscape designers working for the State Forest Agency. Indeed, the large recreation areas were not their responsibility. These areas were within the province of another Ministry[8].

The change in policy resulted in a reallocation of financial means as well. An increasing part of the national budget[9] for outdoor recreation was spent on land allocation projects instead of on areas with a mere recreation designation. Policy makers had rediscovered the landscape as an environment for outdoor recreation. To be more accurate, landscape was considered to be an environment for extensive recreation, because intensive forms of recreation were unwanted and therefore these were still planned in separate recreation areas. Extensive recreation was defined as follows: 'The recreationist seeks a cultural, natural or rural environment, which provides him with satisfying experiences. He desires to enjoy this environment in peace; therefore abides alone or with a few others' (CRM 1977, p. 53). The landscape was considered as an environment that could enable historical ties and contact with nature and culture. Urban citizens were thought to be searching for 'the unspoiled, the unexpected and even for adventure' (LNV 1977, p. 54).
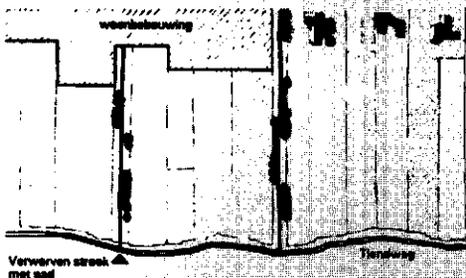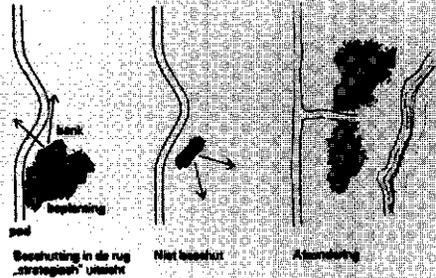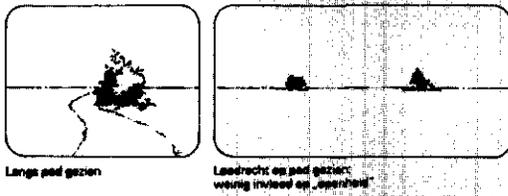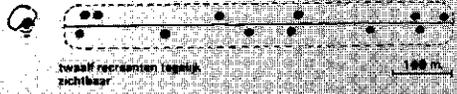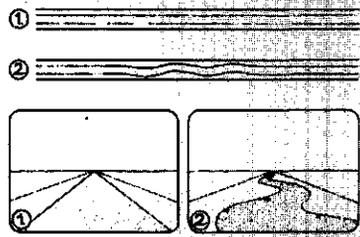
Figure 106   Design principles for joint recreational use in open polder landscapes (design 1981 by Faassen).

6.6 Designs

6.6.1 Modest adjustments in Bodegraven-noord

Problem setting

Societal attention to the conservation of what had *not* been lost was so strong that new spatial developments had to merge invisibly into the landscape or even be hidden. Recreational facilities should not disturb the idealised pristine rural image of harmony, peace and quiet and being untouched. The land consolidation project Bodegraven-Noord illustrates the modest adjustments that were common practice in those days. The area was the largest peat lowland in the Randstad with views of up to eight kilometres and had not been opened up by paved roads. Its distinctive features were the extreme openness and silence, qualities that would be affected by elaborate recreational use. Apart from the picturesque river Meije, the area was not actually very important for recreation. However, 'from the viewpoint of landscape construction, it is important that people can experience the landscape in all its facets: the farm lanes, openness, banks and water of the rivers Oude Rijn and Meije and the polder ditches' (Faassen 1981, p. 65).
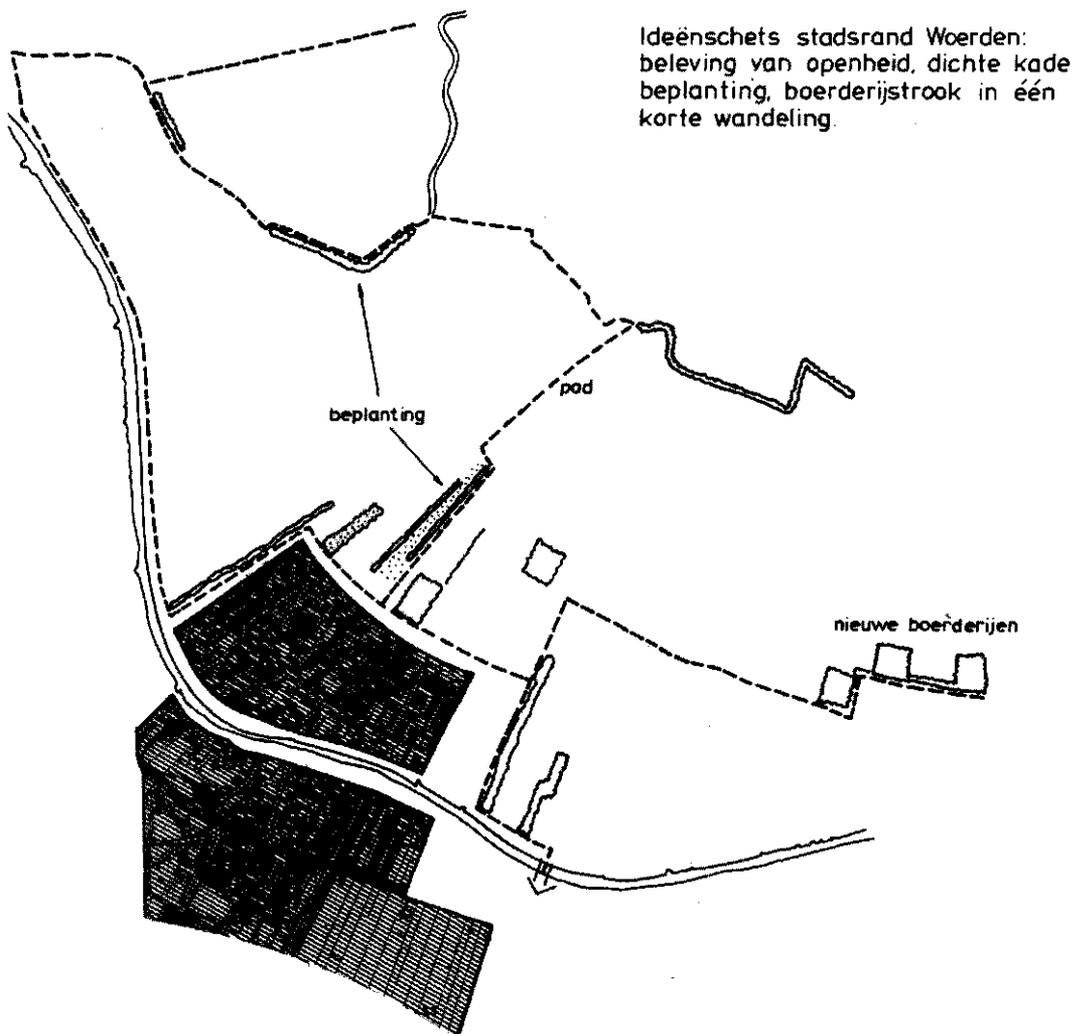
Figurre 107 Landscape advice for Bodegraven-noord (design 1981 by Faassen).

Design

Zoning based on the existing functional and spatial landscape structure would be determinative for future recreational use. The attractiveness of the central area would be determined by silence, openness and nature. Only very sparse and extensive use would be allowed there. The main adjustments consisted of strategic shortcuts between the few existing paths in order to facilitate walks and bicycle rides of various lengths from the adjacent towns.

Landscape architect Hans Faassen proposed very simple paths, not too wide or too heavily constructed, with hardly any plantings. Additional facilities like fishing banks were to be very modest and simple, just like the road adjustments along the river Meije. A new, wide road would affect the characteristic realm of the river and was not considered desirable. Faassen proposed to maintain the road profile and solved the traffic problems with incidental spots where cars would be able to pass each other (Faassen 1981).

In the meantime, a less conspicuous approach was chosen for the city edges. The strategy was amelioration and renewal instead of 'preservation and reinforcement of landscape diversity, preservation and reinforcement of landscape structure and safeguarding landscape continuity' (Faassen 1981, p. 53). Recreational facilities were mainly planned at the edges of the area. The landscape advice suggested new woods with aesthetic, recreational and biological qualities as appropriate means for realising 'better equipped and more diverse landscapes' (LNV 1977, p. 31).
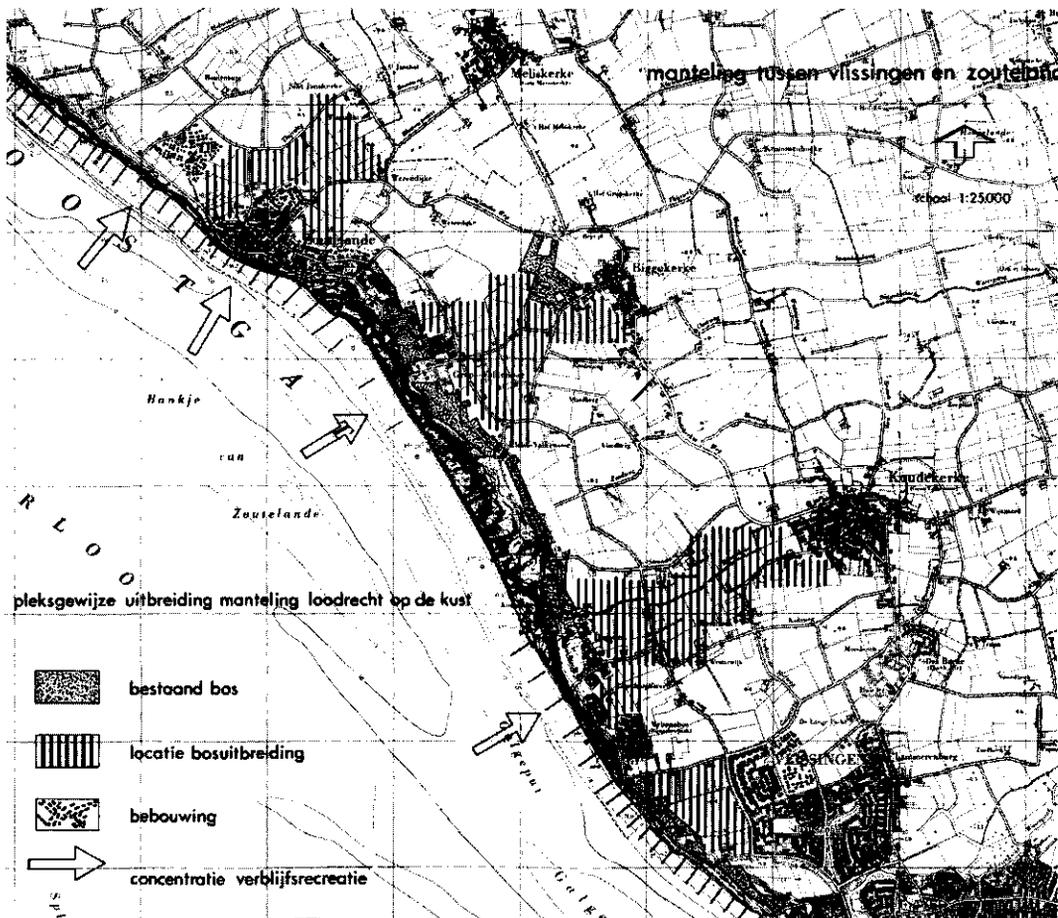
Figure 108, 109   Two alternatives for extension of coastal woods (1984, design by Bosch).

6.6.2 Persisting structures in Walcheren

Problem setting

Developments in agriculture were so drastic in the post-war period that circumstances were quickly outdated. A new land consolidation was requested for Walcheren in 1979. As the tension between agriculture and nature had also permeated in Zeeland[10], the Land Consolidation Board was put together very carefully, including nature conservation organisations, environmental organisations and the district water board. Agricultural and nature conservation organisations organised meetings and excursions from both sides in order to understand each other's positions. The strengthening of nature and landscape for recreational purposes was part of the program too, but the leisure and tourist sector's request to also take part was rejected. The tense relation between nature and agriculture dominated all discussions.

Landscape architect Jan Willem Bosch of the State Forest Agency, who drew up the landscape advice, thought the uncertainty of future developments was the biggest problem. How to design a landscape in a rapidly changing world (Bosch 1984)? Not only was further agricultural intensification to be expected, which asked for the merging of parcels and an improvement in water management, but leisure and tourism had increased spectacularly as well and the pressure on the dunes and woods of the coastal zone was too high.
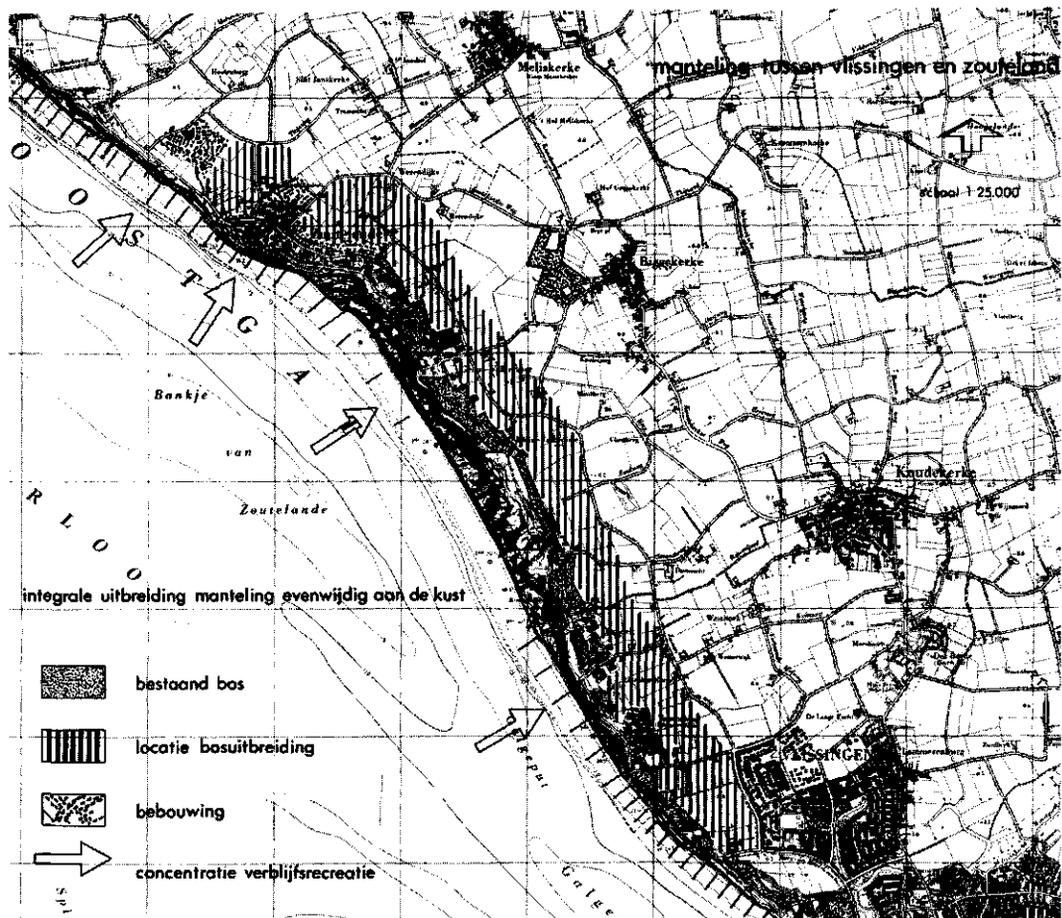
Design

Bosch aimed for a sustainable landscape structure that would enable the development of different functions while landscape diversity was 'preserved, strengthened and developed' according to his professional vocabulary. The over-all landscape structure for the island should be directive for detailed designs. The landscape structure designed by Benthem and De Jonge in the 1940s was still considered to be suitable, though adjustments were necessary in those areas - near Koudekerke for instance - where the original design proposals had not been implemented. Apparently, the designers had done well with their multifunctional and integrated approach. The multiple land uses of the coastal zone asked for zoning and an extension of the narrow strip of coastal woods.

Bosch sketched two alternative solutions for extending the coastal woods, one along the coast according to the existing linear structure and the other at right angles to the coast in order to create a spatial relation between the coast and the villages located inland. According to Bosch, the woods in the second alternative would make an attractive recreational connection between the coastal zone and the inland area, and at the same time they would serve as village woods for the local inhabitants. Intermingled leisure opportunities for tourists and local inhabitants, which De Vroome had applied implicitly about fifteen years before, were now explicitly propagated.

'All tourist accommodations have to be located in the woods' (Bosch 1984, p. 63). The attitude towards resorts had not changed since Benthem in the 1940s. A concentration of holiday resorts was proposed in order to achieve a zoning of intensively used recreation areas and quiet areas for nature. Extensions of the Manteling forest and the Veere Forest were part of the landscape design too. All together they comprised a claim of about 1000 hectares on the best agricultural soils of the island. The farmers objected, also because many of them ran popular and lucrative mini-campsites. Ample space for tourist accommodations would not be to their own advantage. More people objected that the land consolidation project favoured nature, landscape, and leisure and tourism at the cost of the farmers. Only 268 hectares were realised in the end.

The designers of the 1940s realised that, apart from the coastal zone, the inland area was attractive too, especially for bicycle trips. Recreational use of local roads was foreseen in the design. In the early 1980s, the entire island was explicitly considered to be an attractvie landscape for leisure. The improvement of the route network was one of the issues. Adjustments and extensions of road plantings were designed for reasons of landscape attractiveness, shelter, natural habitats and maintenance problems.

Figure 110,111   Historical elements became explicit leisure attractions (left). Planted dykes emhasised the history of land reclamation (right).

New footpaths, bicycle tracks and bridle paths were planned for the inland area, equipped with picnic sites and information panels at special sights like the *'vliedbergen'*: small, man-made hills stemming from the Middle Ages, which were built to escape high tides and floods. While De Vroome necessarily treated historical elements implicitly, heritage now entered the stage as an explicit leisure attraction. Bosch also paid attention to other witnesses to historical developments for reasons of 'legibility'. 'The chronology of land reclamation can be read from the pattern of dikes. [...] It is important to preserve the dikes as intact as possible and to emphasize the pattern with plantings' (Bosch 1984, p. 76).

Due to the replacement of the Land Consolidation Act with the Land Use Act in 1985, and the subsequent policy changes that had to be fit in, it took a very long time for the Land Consolidation project to be completed. So did the elaboration of the general landscape structure of the advice into concrete detailed designs. The eventual plan for the extension of the coastal woods was a combination of the two alternatives. According to Bosch, the result was neither fish nor fowl and missed the power that was necessary to provide a green structure for the growing leisure and tourist sector. 'They didn't *make* a landscape, the landscape was simply *used up*' (interview with Bosch in 2005).

6.6.3 Orientation, recognizability and identity in the Drentsche Aa

Problem setting

The area between Groningen and Assen, including the Drentsche Aa, was labelled in National Policy as an area 'with alternately agriculture, nature and other functions in smaller spatial unities' (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985, p. 57). If it was not possible to interweave weaker (read: nature) and stronger (read: agriculture) functions, they had to be spatially separated. As the State Forest Agency needed a guideline for nature management plans for its lands based on these policy objectives, a *Landschapsstructuurplan* (Landscape Structure Plan) was drawn up. The accompanying, more detailed design principles were also used in the landscape advice for the land consolidation project of Roden Norg.

A Landscape Structure Plan was meant to provide a framework for this landscape that was able to meet demands and conditions of all functions involved: in this case agriculture, nature conservation, outdoor recreation and forestry. Landscape architect Steven Slabbers, who was later accompanied by Peter Vrijlandt, observed a growing difference in dynamics between agricultural land use developments and nature development. Forest complexes had degenerated into dispersed fragments, which hardly contributed to the recognizability of the landscape structure; the characteristic linear plantings between parcels in the stream valleys were quickly disappearing; and so were the wooded banks that enclosed the *essen* (open fields).

As far as outdoor recreation was concerned, the assignment indicated that existing possibilities for extensive recreation should be preserved and ameliorated. The urbanized zone close to the city of Groningen should be developed for intensive forms of outdoor recreation, including new recreation areas and the extension of tourist accommodations.

Tourist accommodations were taboo in the Drentsche Aa stream valley reserve and should be relocated. Slabbers' interpretation of the assignment was that, first of all, recreation asked for an attractive landscape, meaning a landscape that offered orientation in time and space, recognizability and identity. 'Taking care of a recognizable spatial structure and well-cared plantings, which provide shelter and varied images are at least as important as creating more facilities like paths and shores for wind surfing' (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985, p. 78). 'Leisure has no program, but asks for an attractive landscape' (interview with Vrijlandt in 2004).

Design

Slabbers proposed to separate agriculture and nature and build a strong spatial framework, which on the long run would enable an optimal development of agriculture without affecting nature. Such a framework would provide both continuity and flexibility. The plan resembled the later framework-planning concept, which would dominate the late 1980s and early 1990s. The designers suggested that, at some locations, changing management regimes and developing new nature might raise the natural values. This was a clear opposition to national and provincial policy, which described a pure conservation strategy for the Drentsche Aa Stream valley.

Joint recreational use seemed to be interpreted as 'area bound' or 'route bound' recreation. Extensions of existing path networks with recreational purposes were planned in such a way that the landscape structure could be experienced. Local inhabitants would be served by connecting the path networks to the villages. New small plantings of bushes and trees were designed along existing paths to provide shelter and diversity, all in accordance with the main landscape structure.

Figure 112   Schematic representation of the traditional landscape (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985).

Slabbers thought the framework ought to join up with the existing landscape. He observed a clear, recognizable relation between the natural basis, the history of human habitation and the landscape image, with lots of information about landscape history. This was considered important for the orientation in time and space. 'Because the separate landscape components that form the landscape structure have kept their own identity, people can orientate themselves. They know whether they are on the plateau or in the stream valley and recognize their mutual relation' (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985, p. 51). The question whether laymen 'read landscapes' the way landscape designers do, wasn't asked. Orientation in time was considered important because 'the presence of historical patterns and elements of different ages provides a historical perspective, which contributes to a feeling of existential continuity. The present can be recognized as the result of past developments to which new interpretations can be added' (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985, p. 52). New developments were to be rooted in existing landscape patterns in such a way that they could still be recognized and that the landscape history was 'readable'. He used similar arguments as Hans Warnau had in Oukoop-Kortrijk. 'New patterns have to be related to historical patterns; not by imitation but by showing both old and new beside each other, each with its own form and nature' (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985, p. 95).

The spatial framework, which would accommodate the 'weaker' functions, consisted of the stream valleys and a network of both existing and new forests and shelterbelts at the transition zones betweenof valleys and plateaus. This would strengthen the recognizability of the main landscape components. In essence, the proposal did not differ much from De Vroome's strategy to plant edges of *essen* (open fields) and stream valleys. However, the proposals look quite rough and the size and spatial impact of the framework of Slabbers and Vrijlandt would be much larger. Vrijlandt justified their proposals as a reaction to the 'flowerpot practices' of that time (interview with Vrijlandt in 2004). Like Lörzing, he had little affinity with the craving for cosy, nostalgic landscapes and the small-scale, local design solutions that were so popular in that period. He preferred a more robust approach.
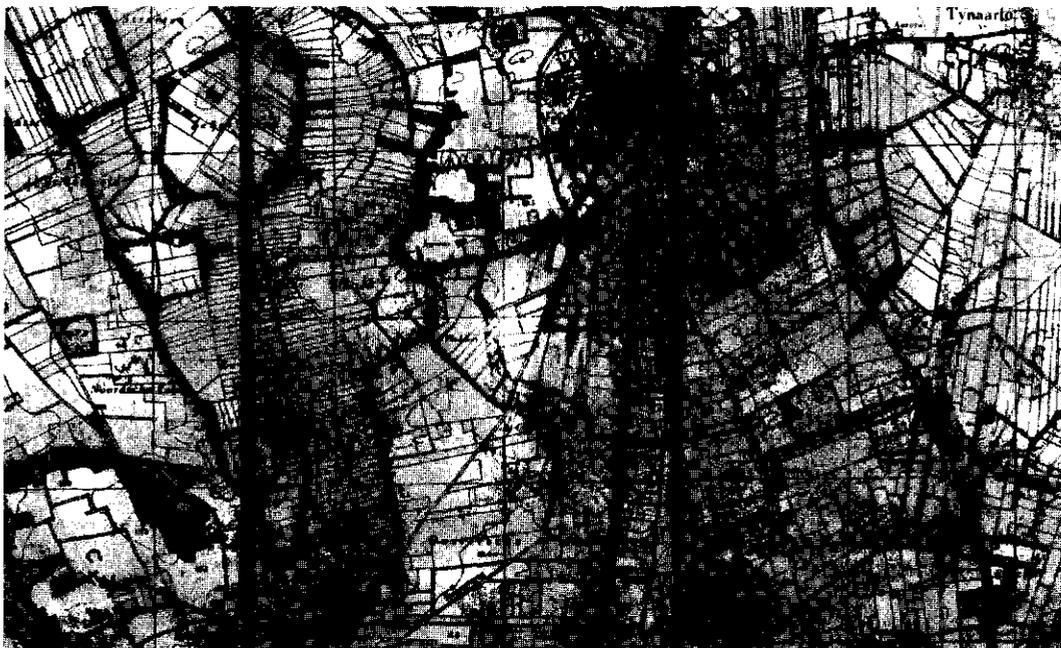
Figure 113   Sketch by Harry de Vroome. Only new additions were drawn instead of an overall image of the future situation.

Later on, Steven Slabbers would distance himself from the design, which he saw as a youthful lapse. Landscape designers at the central headquarters of the State Forest Agency in Utrecht spoke disparagingly of De Vroome as the man known for his fragmented 'stamp plans' and young Slabbers was sent to Drenthe to promote the landscape structure approach. Little by little he realised that De Vroome did indeed draw his designs in small landscape elements, but that his designs were positively based on a mental image of the overall landscape structure (interview with Slabbers in 2005). De Vroome knew this landscape extremely well. His local knowledge went far beyond the information on the 1850 topographic maps and generalised soil maps, which were then used by most landscape designers as the basis of their designs.

Slabbers paid extra attention to the transition zones between cities and villages and the countryside. He thought the town of Assen was isolated from its surroundings by the open landscape. He designed new woods to meet the recreational pressure. The woods were labelled as 'urban dispersal zones'. A network of avenues would connect the new woods with the popular small-scale 'Hänsel and Grethel' landscape of Norg. The contrast between the abstract, rational approach of the landscape structure and the sensitive description of the recreational aspects of woods was remarkable. It revealed Slabbers' great love of woods: 'Woods are especially interesting because of shelter and because they are natural environments raising all senses: change of seasons, the fresh scent of spring and rotting leaves in autumn, singing birds, paths in loose sand and paths covered with leaves and twigs' (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985, p. 89). He suggested a diversity of tree species with different colours and texture, alternation of enclosed and open parts, and a realm of unspoilt nature. Adjustments were proposed for the existing woods near the village of Norg as well. A stroll from the village into the woods was hardly possible because of the scattered summer cottages. Slabbers suggested to concentrate new summer cottage developments and to add attractive elements to the woods. The latter would attract visitors and zone the woods with both lively areas and quiet areas for nature devotees. Finally, proposals were made for the Paterswolde Lake close to the city of Groningen. Shores had to be remodelled and supplied with facilities to accommodate for the rising popularity of windsurfing.
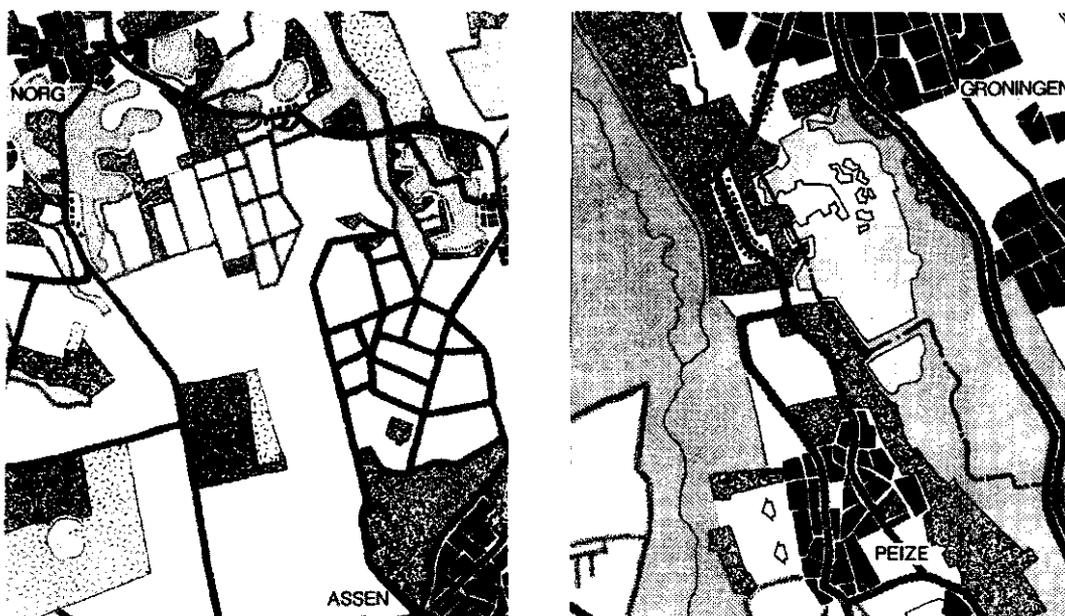
Figure 114, 115   Landscape design for the surroundings of Assen according to the common shell concept (1985, design by Slabbers and Vrijlandt).

6.7 Review

In the 1970s, the ideal of functional separation and optimisation that had dominated spatial planning and land consolidation practices was discussed and replaced with the concept of functional intertwining. A multifunctional approach of the countryside came into use. Connected to this approach, the planning concept of 'joint recreational use' was introduced; the countryside was thought to be suitable for leisure purposes as well as agricultural ones. However, the concept only applied to extensive forms of outdoor 'route-bound' recreation, which were seen as a means for self-development and for the enjoyment of the remains of an unspoilt countryside. Intensive forms of leisure, including holiday resorts, were considered a threat; they were unwanted and therefore they were planned in separate areas according to the well-known forest park concept.

The route network lined with modest, small-scale leisure facilities, which had already been applied by some designers in the previous period, became common practice. The landscape itself was seen as the principle attraction. Landscape elements that had been saved from extensive and far-reaching land consolidation practices were deployed as attractions along the routes, representing a rural illusion to contrast with the highly dynamic, modern city life. Legibility was used as an argument for paying attention to remnants of historical developments and to use them explicitly as leisure attractions; they would help people to orientate themselves in time and space. The designs were modest and simple, so as not to affect the characteristic landscape.

Yet, some landscape designers observed that conserving isolated landscape fragments proved to be very difficult. They thought it wasn't desirable either and concentrated on the main components that made up the landscape structure at the regional scale in order to 'preserve and reinforce' the identity of landscapes, rather than paying attention to vulnerable local details, which were uncertain to survive in a dynamic context. They preferred a robust landscape that could meet demands and conditions of all functions, and that could provide both continuity and flexibility. In their view, this approach would enable a landscape to change without losing its historical perspective and it would provide legibility, orientation, recognizability and identity.

Leisure policy concepts	Mass recreation	Joint recreational use
	Area-bound outdoor recreation	**Route-bound outdoor recreation**
Planning concepts	**Recreation areas**	**Intertwining**
Design concepts	Forest park	Merge into the landscape
Routes	Network of paths	Network of existing and new roads and paths
Attractions	Leisure facilities, lakes and ponds	Landscape setting
Facilities	Sports and plays Campsites Picnic sites Car parks	Small-scale: benches, picnic sites, information panels, sign posts
Setting	Park landscape 1:1:1	Attractive historic landscape
Leisure perspectives	Green illusion of continuity and naturalness Contrast with the strictly ordered daily urban life Free to choose one's ways and activities	Leisure subordinate to other land use Harmonious, peaceful, quite, and untouched rural landscape Experience the landscape: main components, landscape elements, history, unspoilt character
General landscape perspectives	Mass recreation isolated from the landscape	Comprehensive, multifunctional landscape Preservation and reinforcement of landscape structure Landscape framework Safeguarding landscape continuity Landscape identity Recognizability Legible landscape Orientation in time and space

Figure 116   Scheme representing the main ideas, design concepts and tools in the period of joint recreational use (1970s – early 1980s).

Notes

1 Not only environmental concern but also less optimistic population prognoses and the lack of adequate implementation instruments urged for a new Policy Document on Spatial Planning (Vuijsje 2002).

2 The concept of clustered decentralisation consisted of large-scale urban extensions in a limited number of new towns.

3 A Management Arrangement is an agreement between a farmer and the authorities that subsidies will be paid for carrying out specific management activities in favour of nature conservation, for example not to mow before the 1st of June or the maintenance of hedges.

4 The Land Use Act became operative in 1985.

5 Recreation was seen as a common good: 'recreatie ten algemenen nutte en voor iedereen'.

6 PPO stands for Projectontwikkeling voor openluchtrecreatie (project development for outdoor recreation).

7 The energy crisis in 1973 made people pay more attention to leisure in daily environments. Leisure facilities within and close to the towns were stimulated to reduce mobility (Van der Wal 1998).

8 Landscape designers of the State Forest Agency worked in land consolidation projects and other public works under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management. Large recreation areas were part of recreation policy and as such the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work. Designs for these areas were contracted out to private firms.

9 The Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work was responsible for the national budget for recreation.

10 The land consolidation project of Heinkenszand (1965) had encountered severe problems. The farmers in this very old, small-scale landscape that was characterised by hedges thought that they had made large concessions. They had agreed with nature conservation organisations to reserve areas for hedges and geese and to plant a new wood. In 1972 however, nature conservation organisations put the results up for discussion with the proposition to set up a regional landscape park. They thought land consolidation would threaten the nature reserve.

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7

Rambling (late 1980s-1990s)

Towards the 1980s, the optimistic attitude of the 1960s had vanished completely. Economic crisis and unemployment led to defeatism, the limits of the Welfare State came into sight. Severe cuts in public expenditure were made. The atmosphere hardened; the 'soft' 1970s were replaced by Post-Thtacherism with its 'no nonsense' attitude. Economic recovery didn't occur until the end of the 1980s. The costs of management in public green and nature areas had risen high. Small scale elements above all proved very expensive and difficult to manage. Public parks and recreation areas were economized; commercial activities were introduced to generate means and the landscape setting was simplified and economized. In fact, lack of public financial means motivated authorities to step down and incorporate private investments in all kinds of spatial developments by means of public-private partnerships. Interweaving strategies in rural areas caused problems. Huge loans and EEC agricultural policy forced many farmers to rationalisation, specialization and increase in scale. In spite of nature conservation policy, many small scale landscape elements disappeared and biodiversity decreased. Ongoing deterioration of ecological quality caused anxiety. Acidification, parching and saturation of ground water and soil with nitrogen and phosphates led to the view that a systems approach was necessary to solve environmental ad ecological problems. Economic recovery offered opportunities for National Authorities to introduce ambitious plans for large scale interventions to solve ecological and environmental problems.

7.1 The framework planning concept

Landscape planners and designers were concerned about the vulnerable position of landscape elements and the consequences for landscape image. How to design a landscape if there is no guarantee that the design means will last? 'Attempts to slow down and direct the changing of landscapes by reconstructing areas through plantings proved not very successful. [..] The tree will have disappeared long before the planter dies'[1] (De Bruin et al. 1987, p. 86).

National Authorities had increasingly transferred their responsibilities to provincial and local authorities and to private organizations by decentralisation and providing subsidies. The *Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie* (Central Board for Agricultural Engineering) had settled the division of responsibilities for purchase, construction and management of landscape elements in land consolidation projects with the *EBO-Nota Eigendom, Beheer en Onderhoud* (Policy Document on Property, Management and Maintenance) in 1983. Interweaving at the level of parcels and boundary hedges remained problematic, despite the Policy Document. What was more; the allocation of future management, maintenance and financial means meant very tight boundary conditions for design and restricted landscape designers in their practices. Additionally, agriculture developed much faster than the terms of land consolidation projects. The problems required a flexible, future-oriented planning strategy that could cope with both uncertainty and dynamics of agriculture and long-term guarantees for nature and landscape plantings at the same time.

In the same period surprising occurrences shed a different light on nature conservation. A site in the new polders that was reserved for industrial purposes developed coincidentally into a wetland[2]. The image of nature as a vulnerable source of concern proved more nuanced; nature could regenerate. Apparently, nature was able to recover and develop spontaneously if circumstances were favourable. This insight was greeted enthusiastically by a group of ecologists and landscape designers of the State Forest Agency. They had little affinity with the common approach of nature; the exclusive concern about existing natural values without any eye for development or new contingencies.

It was this group of people that developed a new planning concept for rural areas, the so-called *cascoconcept* (framework planning concept), based on the principle 'separation if necessary, interweaving if possible'. The framework planning concept spatially separated forms of land use with different rates of development, creating maximum flexibility for highly dynamic functions, which developments were difficult to predict and long-term spatial stability for functions, which needed little human dynamics. The spatial representation of the framework, the form, would depend on the landscape in question (Kerkstra and Overmars 1985; Ahern 2002). The concept was developed and applied to the sandy uplands (Kerkstra and Overmars 1985; Kerkstra and Vrijlandt 1988) within regular plan procedures. A competition for landscape development at a regional level (see also 7.1.3) offered chances to apply the concept to the river landscape (Nieuwenhuijze et al. 1986). The *Plan Ooievaar* (Return of the Black Stork) won the competition.

'The plan enhances opposite poles (agriculture and nature conservation) by making full use of the agricultural system and the ecosystem potential. Both aspects will be changed physically and functionally. The spatial differences thus caused by the zoning of the river area as a whole, will be emphasized by applying different planning principles to the 'river side' of the dike and to the 'land side' of the dike.

In the former area, river system and natural system are paramount, whereas in the latter area the system of agricultural land use will be reinforced. [...] Agriculture will be developed at the opposite pole of the system. The basin areas will be redesigned, into a clear, functional landscape where agriculture can survive far into the future. If dairy farming in this area is to remain, viable holdings have to be some 50 hectares in size; parcellation, infrastructure and drainage system need to be restructured' (De Bruin et al. 1987, p. 118). The levees would stay as they were with mixed land uses including horticulture and orchards. The floodplains would become natural areas, not by preserving existing natural values but by increasing natural processes that would create conditions for new natural values to develop. River-influence would be enlarged in the flood plains by excluding agricultural land use and by levelling minor dikes in the lower course of the river. Clay pitting and sand quarrying would compensate a decrease of flow capacity caused by new alluvial forests.

Not only would the framework planning concept become very influential in landscape planning, the shift from nature conservation to nature development would determine nature policy for the next decade.
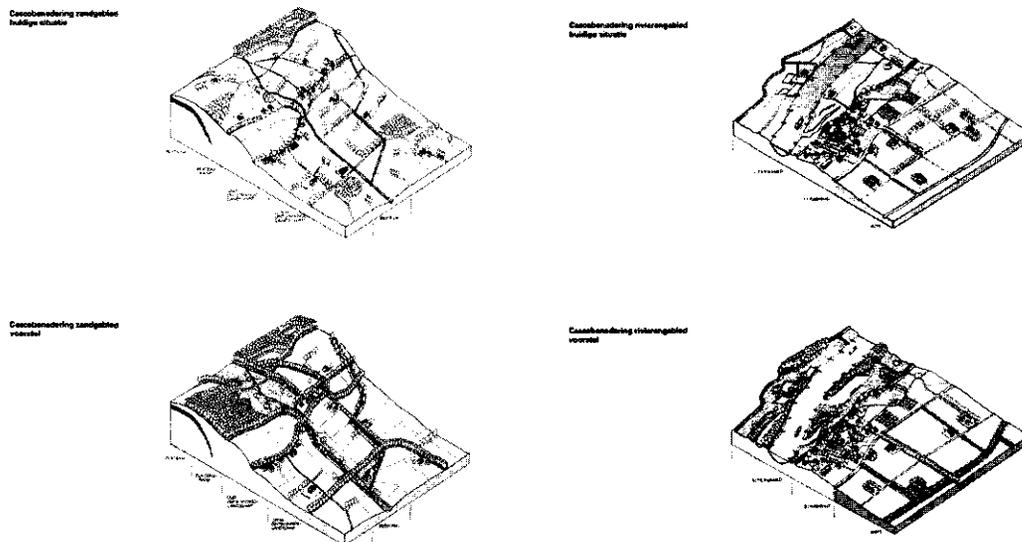
Figure 117, 118   Framework planning concept in the sandy uplands (left) and in the river areas (right).

Figure 119   Return of the black stork: framework planning concept for the river landscape (design 1985 by De Bruin, Hamhuis, Van Nieuwenhuijze, Overmars. Sijmons and Vera)

7.2 National Ecological Network

In 1988, a report on nature development was brought out by the Ministry of Agriculture, followed by the *Natuurbeleidsplan* (Policy Document on Nature) a few years later. The concept of the *Ecologische Hoofd Structuur* (National Ecological Network) was introduced. The objective was to combat ongoing fragmentation and reduction of natural areas by creating an interconnected network of nature reserves and conservation areas. The network would eventually comprise 730.000 hectares of 'central nature areas', 'nature development areas' and 'connecting zones'. The concept referred to regional green system concepts of the 1920s and 1930s like the American parkway concept, Cleyndert's *natuurruimten* (natural spaces) and the *natuurbanen* (nature ways) of Granpré Molière, Verhagen & Kok in Eastern Utrecht (Van der Wouden 1999, see 4.2). The landscape designers who were involved had a concept in mind that combined nature and recreation as the original concepts did. Ecologists got on top however and the network turned into a mere ecological objective (interview with Hazendonk in 2005).

Figure 120   National Ecological Network.

Nevertheless planners and designers enthusiastically set about to transform agricultural areas into nature, led by reference images and nature-target types. The reference images were taken from less cultivated areas elsewhere in Europe. The rivers Allier and Loire in France provided images of an untouched dynamic river system, the Bialowieza forest in Poland and Belarus was used as a reference of primeval forests, and the German Borkener Paradies and the English New Forest served as a reference for half-open woods. These ecosystems with little human intervention represented the untouched, 'wild' nature that had gone lost in the Netherlands. 'Primeval nature' was to be created where natural dynamics would have full play, referring to the wilderness before occupation. The focus on ecosystems and 'wild' nature dominated professional debate; multifunctional land uses seemed to have left the scene. Little or no attention was paid to the meaning of these areas for people. Farmers agitated because they saw their fields replaced with swamps, nettles and thistles; not only did they consider it as waste and neglect, they also felt that their grandfathers' and great-grandfathers' efforts to reclaim and cultivate the land were destroyed.
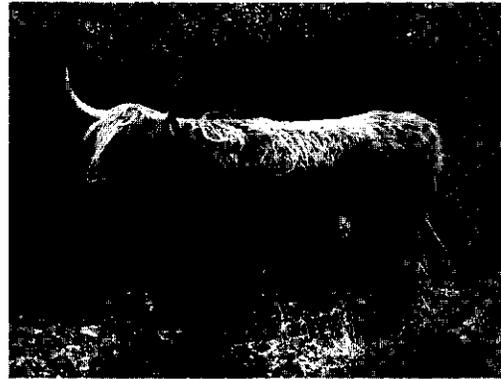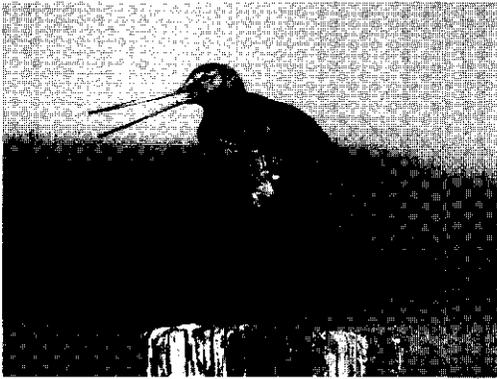
Figure 121, 122   Debates were raised about the values of 'Verkade' nature (left) and primeval nature (right).

Figure 123   Design for a sand quarry in Crailo. The rectangular forms of the ponds contrast with the irregular forms arising from natural processes (design 1999 by Vista: De Visser, Jansen, Van Gerwen and Wardenaar).

7.3 Design revival

The development of new planning concepts was no isolated case. It had to do with a general design revival. Towards the 1980s, planning had become dominated by procedures, standards and economic considerations. 'The period was characterized by a lot of talking and little design' (interview with J.M. De Jonge in 2005). Planners and designers were not satisfied with these 'bookkeeper practices'; 'decision-oriented, appointed to solving current problems, planning practices, which are almost paralyzed by initial resistance to the future' (Bruin et al. 1987, p. 102).

A variety of initiatives re-attracted attention to spatial design. In 1984 the Eo Wijers Foundation was set up to stimulate landscape design at a regional level by organizing design competitions[3]. Their first competition for the river landscape, which was won by landscape designers of the State Forest Agency with the *Plan Ooievaar* (Return of the Black Stork), turned out very successful. In the same period a group of influential planners organized the event *Nederland Nu Als Ontwerp* (The Netherlands as a design task), which consisted of a range of multidisciplinary design seminars all over the country, an exhibition and a book. Their aim was to provide an inspiring perspective of the future. 'The future is make-able; even so, it will stay uncertain' (Van der Cammen 1987, p. 7).

These efforts not only concentrated attention to the role of design in researching future prospects, they returned form and content to planning practices as well. Spatial planning shifted from operational to strategic, and spatial design was deployed as a seductive instrument in planning. A design presented by technical drawings was not enough any more. Imaginative images and language with strong storylines and metaphors like *Return of the Black Stork* (De Bruin et al. 1987; see also Hajer 1995) helped to seduce. The development of computer aided graphics enabled catchy, realistic-looking simulations of future situations. New private practices, most originating from the State Forest Agency, which had fallen apart by reorganizations and cuts, were eager to test and elaborate this role of spatial design. In rural areas, renewed attention to design expressed itself above all in long-term oriented, regional designs, as the Framework Planning Concept illustrated.

The National Ecological Network brought forth another design problem. Ecologists got divided in two camps, the camp of the 'Verkade nature'[4], which favoured the conservation and careful management of existing nature with its roots in historical agricultural systems[5] and the camp of primeval nature', which favoured the development of new nature by spontaneous processes. While the conservation of existing nature had not raised fundamental design issues, the development of new nature did. Some designers chose to design forms and patterns that referred to or even imitated natural patterns. Others chose another approach and tried to 'create conditions' and let nature develop form by itself. The latter group was searching for new means of expression that demonstrated the fact that nature development was a cultural intervention after all. Like their predecessors they preferred a contrast between old and new (see also 5.3.3 and 6.3.3).

7.4 Quality assessment

Authorities were introducing new ecological and environmental objectives. As the same time however, they were stepping down. Market parties entered the stage and got involved in spatial development, and authorities were losing control in these market-oriented spatial developments.

Spatial development policy had to be reconsidered. How to guarantee spatial quality without being directly responsible? A more strategic approach was needed. The *4e Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening* (Fourth Policy Document on Spatial Planning) introduced criteria for spatial quality (VROM 1989). New developments had to fulfil criteria of use value, future value and experiential value[6]. The *Visie landschap* and its successor the *Nota landschap* (Policy Document on Landscape) came with their own interpretation and criteria of landscape quality (LNV 1991; LNV 1992). Economic quality meant functionality; a high quality landscape should be able to enable changing land uses without affecting the landscape as a whole and make efficient use of limited space by enabling combinations of land uses; multifunctionality. Ecological quality was defined as diversity in conditions and human management, spatial coherence and sustainability. The criteria on economic and ecological value were clearly related to the framework planning concept with its flexibility for economically important forms of land use and sustainable space for nature. Finally, a landscape was considered aesthetically valuable if it had identity, provided orientation and was beautiful. The authors stated that 'diversity within unity' was essential for experiences of beauty and referred to the architect Berlage: 'a clear structure has to be recognizable in the layout of a landscape while the details have to provide diversity and surprise' (LNV 1991, p. 17).

7.5 Increasing influence of commerce

Financial considerations had played some role in the policy shift from recreation areas to joint recreational use in the 1970s, but they became a major issue in the 1980s. Public means were under pressure and the large new recreation areas proved very expensive. Yet, it was no option to require payment for public facilities. The problem was tackled by introducing commercial facilities, which generated financial means to manage and maintain the recreation areas. The Ministry of Economic Affairs promoted a market-oriented policy in leisure and tourism as well. New economic bases were needed in peripheral regions where industries had been closed down. According to the *Nota Toeristisch Beleid* (Policy Document on Tourism) in 1979, subsidies were available for provincial and local authorities to formulate *Toeristisch-recreatieve ontwikkelingsplannen, TROP's* (development plans for leisure and tourism), which were subsequently needed to acquire subsidies for the implementation of leisure and tourism infrastructure. The Department of Outdoor Recreation, which came under another Ministry[7], had not been involved and was surprised by the overwhelming success of the TROPs (Lengkeek 1996). Landscape designers were hardly involved in these plans.

7.6 Regional green structures

The increasing involvement of market parties in leisure and tourism did not mean that authorities disposed of their own interference. The Policy Documents of the late 1980s and early 1990s showed high ambitions and a new belief in make-ability. The *Nota Ruimtelijk Kader Randstadgroenstructuur* (Policy Document on the Randstad Green Structure, VROM and LNV 1985) elaborated on the concept of the Green Belt. The Randstad Green Structure was defined as 'the whole of green spaces within the urban influence of the Randstad, which can be seen as the counterpart of the urban area and for which spatial policy aims at mutual tuning of urban and rural functions' (VROM and LNV 1985).

The concept was based on an integrated approach of concentrated urbanization, preserving rural areas, and an intermediate green belt of existing and new green areas, and replaced the former policy of Large Size Elements and Green Stars. The policy document comprised an assignment for the next fifteen years of 6.400 hectares of new woods and recreation areas in the Randstad area, and concentrated on the areas around the four largest cities: The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Utrecht[8].

Other policy documents added more large-scale recreational structures: the *Toeristisch-recreatieve Basisstructuur* (national recreational and tourist structure) the *Basistoervaartnet* (national boating network), and concept of *Nederland Waterland*, which was meant to improve the conditions for water sports. Different from the Randstad Green Structure, these large spatial structures were less directive.

Figure 124   The Randstad Green Structure Plan (1985). Priority was given to new recreation areas and woods around the four largest cities.

They did not have comprehensive implementation programs and national financing like the Randstad Green Structure. These policy concepts were rather general leading frameworks for public and private initiatives at national, regional and municipal levels.

7.7 Wilderness experience

Both nature and leisure had been considered as phenomena that needed care and protection but spontaneous processes in both revealed unsuspected aspects and powers. Apparently, some people preferred less organized forms of leisure that offered discovery, surprise and adventure. Landscape architect Adriaan Geuze[9] was fascinated by spontaneous leisure activities such as sky diving, motorcross and delta kite surfing in the Rotterdam Harbour area. Citizens had discovered this area without any special publicity or facilities. 'Mass recreation has taken possession of the Maasvlakte. Families in their Opels and Nissans loaded with surf boards and bicycles self-assuredly join truck convoys. [...] This public's standard is no longer based on pre-programmed recreational facilities but on anarchy, exploration, self expression. She is capable to find and occupy places and attach her own meaning. [...] She doesn't need illusions or palliatives; she defines her own exotic culture' (Geuze 1993, p. 17).

Researchers and policy makers observed an increasing group of people looking for unregulated environments to wander aimlessly or indulge. Few areas had left where coincidence and spontaneity were still possible. The 'compact city' concept had intensified urban land use: 'the only landscapes left are measured off, with minutely directed use and appearance' (Bosch en Slabbers 1999, p. 3).

Figure 125   The nature development plan for the Blauwe Kamer gave hardly any room for leisure (design 1988 by ecologist Litjens).

Although every kind of environment might provide opportunities for 'rambling', this new concept was directly related and inextricably bound to nature; a tough type of nature that would easily regenerate and where human presence wouldn't do much harm. Rambling was defined as 'a new form of nature (recreation) where man can experience nature according to his imagination: spontaneous, wild and rugged. Visitors are challenged to use the area and can behave freely though respectful to nature. The experience is intensive; comparable to wilderness experience' (Bosch en Slabbers 1999). The concept of rambling enabled the incorporation of wilderness and the growing need for adventure in the once so neat concept of nature-oriented recreation.

7.8 Designs

7.8.1 Nature on stage, leisure in the wings

At the end of the 1980s, nature had lost its image of vulnerable underdog and turned into a challenge. Leisure on the other hand was regarded as a problem; the rambling concept was developed later. Although the need for leisure was thought to be legitimate, its consequences were often considered as a necessary evil, which affected the rural or natural character of the countryside. The early plans for new nature clearly illustrated the consequences of this dualistic attitude. The report about nature development in the flood plain of the Blauwe Kamer for example, spoke about nature-oriented recreation with severe restrictions[10]. The area would not be freely accessible and nature would only be observable from two observation posts, accompanied by a guide.

Figure 126, 127   Leisure advice for the Venen: a comprehensive route network and much attention to education in natural areas (design 1993, authors unknown; left). Landscape concept Omarmd door rivieren / Embraced by Rivers. The circles at the edges of the central lowland area refer to new woods near urban centres where recreational pressure is supposed to be absorbed (design 1994 by Jansen, Van Rijen and De Visser; right).

Knowledge and proper behaviour were not seen as natural: 'Information and education are indispensable to attain nature-friendly behaviour of visitors towards nature development areas' (Litjens 1988, p. 12).

A leisure advice for the Venen, the eastern part of the Green Heart, had a broader view on leisure and tourism but again, the authors thought that people had to be educated to experience nature. 'Nature areas open to the public have to include sufficient facilities to experience nature: marshland trails, observation posts and information panels (Werkgroep Recreatie 1993). Nature-oriented leisure activities were specified as 'varying between pure nature study and the experience of peace and quiet in a varied natural environment' (Werkgroep Recreatie 1993, annex 2).

Nature recreation hardly got a chance in the view of the landscape designers who produced the landscape advice for the same area. Although the landscape team mentioned the importance of a varied supply of leisure environments and warned for a one-sided nature approach, their design was primarily about ecological objectives at a regional scale. They rather saw new nature as a new means to strengthen landscape identity at a regional scale than as a design task at site-level. Erik Jansen, Lia van Rijen and Rik de Visser, authors of the landscape advice for the Venen, tried to strengthen the landscape structure by choosing images of different ecosystems different as reference and objective for each landscape type (Jansen et al. 1994). Their leisure concept came down to the common planning model of new woods close to urban centres and joint recreational use in the remaining areas. The future woods were supposed to absorb recreational pressure and were characterized as estate forests (ergo forest parks) with references to the adjacent landscape of the river Vecht. They would act as 'gates' to the central open area with its meadows and marshes. 'After all, the capacity for joint recreational use in the peat lowland area is limited' (Jansen et al. 1994, p. 24).
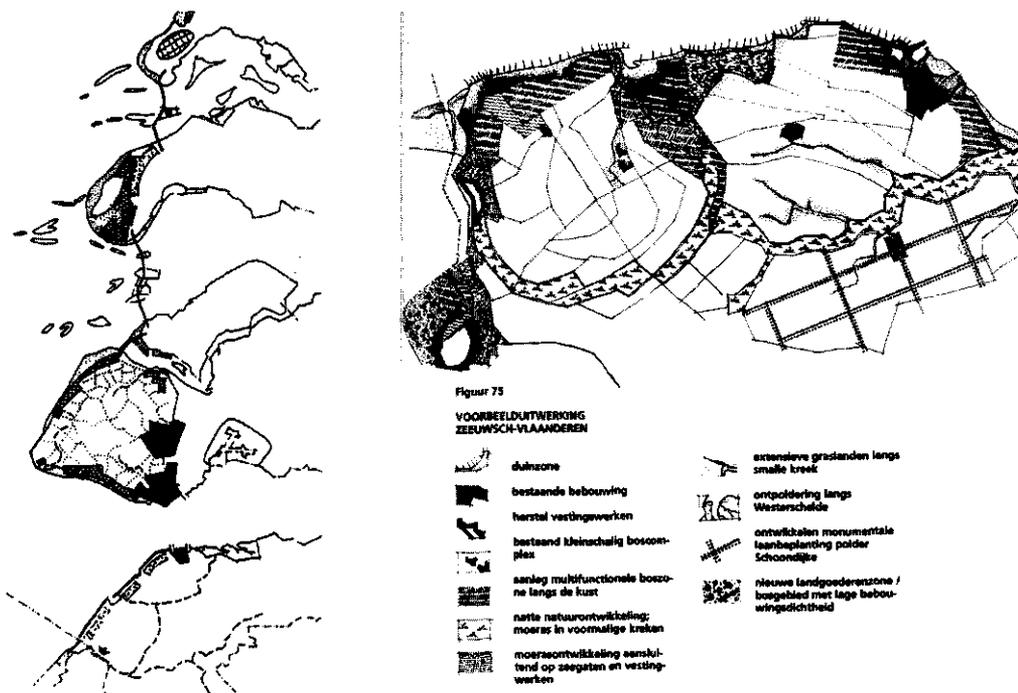

Figure 128, 129   Future development scheme for the coastal zone with sea resorts and nature areas alternating (left). Development strategy for the coastal area of Zeeland Flanders (right; design 1995 by Bosch, Slabbers and Ulijn).

The peat lowlands would be partly adjusted for leisure according to the concept, which was developed for Oukoop-Kortrijk almost thirty years earlier; a network of bicycle and footpaths with small landscape elements containing standard facilities. It is true that leisure and ecological objectives were combined in the new woods but for the marshes no reference to leisure was made at all.

In the coastal region, the situation was different. Leisure and tourism were so dominant and fast-growing that they couldn't be ignored. Landscape architects Jan Willem Bosch, Steven Slabbers and Jos Ulijn noticed a process of fragmentation, loss of imagination and endangerment of ecological and aesthetical qualities. 'As natural dynamics are restraint, the soul of the landscape is removed and the landscape loses its eloquence [..] The illusion of being remote from the city and daily worries has diminished' (Bosch et al. 1995, p. 17). The designers thought that new developments should be used to create new pictorial structures instead of locating them on the least harmful sites. They elaborated the theme, which one of them had already developed in the Landscape Advice for Walcheren in 1984 and proposed a zoning scheme for the coastal area of Walcheren and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. By enlarging the coastal zone with new forestations and upgrading sea resorts, the more quiet parts of the coastal zone could offer space for nature development, thus strengthen feelings of freedom and dissipation and diversifying the supply of leisure opportunities (Bosch et al. 1995).

7.8.2 Facilitating nature experience in the Gelderse Poort

Problem setting

The Gelderse Poort was pointed out as one of the strategic areas for nature development in the Stork plan, just like Fort Sint Andries (see 7.3.4). Most ecologists considered recreation a threat to nature; dense path networks and pleasure crafts disturbed fauna and angling demolished river bank vegetations (Helmer 1987). Research focused on rules how to prevent disturbance by visitors, 'calculating the minimum required distance between a bicycle path and a duck population' (interview with Rademakers in 2005). Ecologist Wouter Helmer still shared this view when he elaborated preliminary ideas about nature development in the flood plains, but gradually he began to regard nature development as a great opportunity to experience nature intensely. Later he put his ideas into words in a prize-winning essay. 'Without being hindered by barbwire or *No trespassing* signs we find our way between river and main dyke' (Helmer 1994, p. 50). The Dutch section of the WWF was looking for places to invest in nature areas in the Netherlands at the time and was interested in his ideas. Parts of the Millingerwaard floodplain were bought in 1991 and a public-private partnership was established with the State Forest Agency, extraction company Delgromij and the Ark Foundation, a private foundation set up by Helmer and his companions for management and research of nature development areas. The Ark Foundation arranged free access all over the area and organized guided tours. Delgromij was responsible for the extraction of sand and clay in the area. Its job was to deliver the area decently after extraction, meeting river management and nature development conditions. Delgromij needed a plan of technical measures for the extractors. The assignment spent only a few sentences on leisure objectives. They referred to indications of the Land Use Plan for recreational facilities: the regular footpaths, bicycle paths and a car park. Most ideas about recreational use were dealt with in a parallel process, separate from the design process.

Ecologist Jos Rademakers and landscape designer Adri Voorwinden who made the landscape design for Delgromij saw as their main task to illustrate the narrative of nature development and nature experience. Like many other landscape designers, they saw nature development as a new means to contribute to landscape identity. They considered nature development as just a new layer of cultural landscape intervention and wanted to show the historical development of this flood plain in their design. While many parties feared for a demolishment of historical patterns and elements, they kept to the Policy Document on Landscape.

The Policy Document paid explicit attention to geomorphologic and cultural-historical patterns and elements, which were characteristic for specific landscapes and contributed to 'landscape identity'. Nature development should have regard to natural and cultural history. Nature development should not be clearing away all historical references just like that. 'Wheeler-dealers with calculators and bulldozers have thrown themselves cheerfully into my memories like Attila's army' (Toorn 1998).

Design
A list of ecotopes[11] like alluvial forest, marshland vegetations and meadowlands gave an impression of the expected spatial distribution of open and closed areas. The setting was clearly referring to wilderness; a nature look-alike with hardly any facilities. Although full access to the floodplain was allowed, some paths were necessary. An existing dike, the access road for lorries transporting sand and clay, would connect the inland area with a bicycle track along the river and a future summer ferry. Other dikes would be removed in the long run. A stroll from the village of Millingen was planned but later deleted, as the land-owner did not want to cooperate. The planned parking lot was replaced as well.

The wild character was intensified by the presence of half-wild Galloway cattle and Konik horses and by the re-introduction of beavers. The only explicitly planned traces of human intervention were the bird watching cabin and a row of trees along the Kekerdomse Schutdam, a dike that referred to seventeenth century fight about dike maintenance duties between Kleve and Gelre. Unfortunately, the poplars along the dike have been cut down a few years ago.

Figure 130 Unlimited access was allowed in the Millingerwaard flood plain.

The spatial composition was determined by terrain level and management intensity of vegetations. Sand and clay extractions were planned in such a way that alluvial patterns from the pre-reclamation period, which were fixed in the sandy subsoil, would become visible again. The structure of the 'natural' river landscape would reappear again. 'The design of surface levels was based on ecological and landscape reasons. Some trenches will be lowered to unhide them.Those who know river system dynamics, will be able to recognize these old river arms by their micro relief and will be able to 'read' the historical development of the area. Unfortunately, commercial exploitation and river hydraulics have caused severe restrictions. Altogether, the original intentions of the design have become so obscure that the historically inspired narrative of the design is not recognizable any more' (interview with Rademakers in 2005).

The Ark Foundation proved that high biodiversity could go hand in hand with recreational use. The Millingerwaard welcomed over 100.000 visitors within a few years and only ten years later more than 400 species were counted on the former corn fields at the Millingerduin. Other attractions were added. Eight thousand year old oak trunks found in the river banks were raised up as a monument for nature recovery: 'Woodhenge'. The occupant of one of the houses in the flood plain created a Mediterranean-style tea garden. The contrast of the lovely tea garden with the rough and ragged natural environment strengthened the experience of both worlds.

Figure 131   Spatial image of the Millingerwaard, based on ecotopes (1996, design by Van der Meulen, Rademakers and Voorwinden). The Millingerwaard design was designed to show different phases in the history of water management: river arms from the period before diking, dikes illustrating the fight over protection from floods and recent extractions to provide water storage and to decrease flow resistance.

7.8.3 Facilities beyond standards in the Gelderse Poort

Problem setting

Leisure was only a secondary addition to the main objective of nature development in many plans. In the Rijnwaarden floodplains the original assignment focused on nature development in relation to river management. Leisure became part of the assignment later, probably inspired by the success of the Millingerwaard. One of the questions was a canoe route.
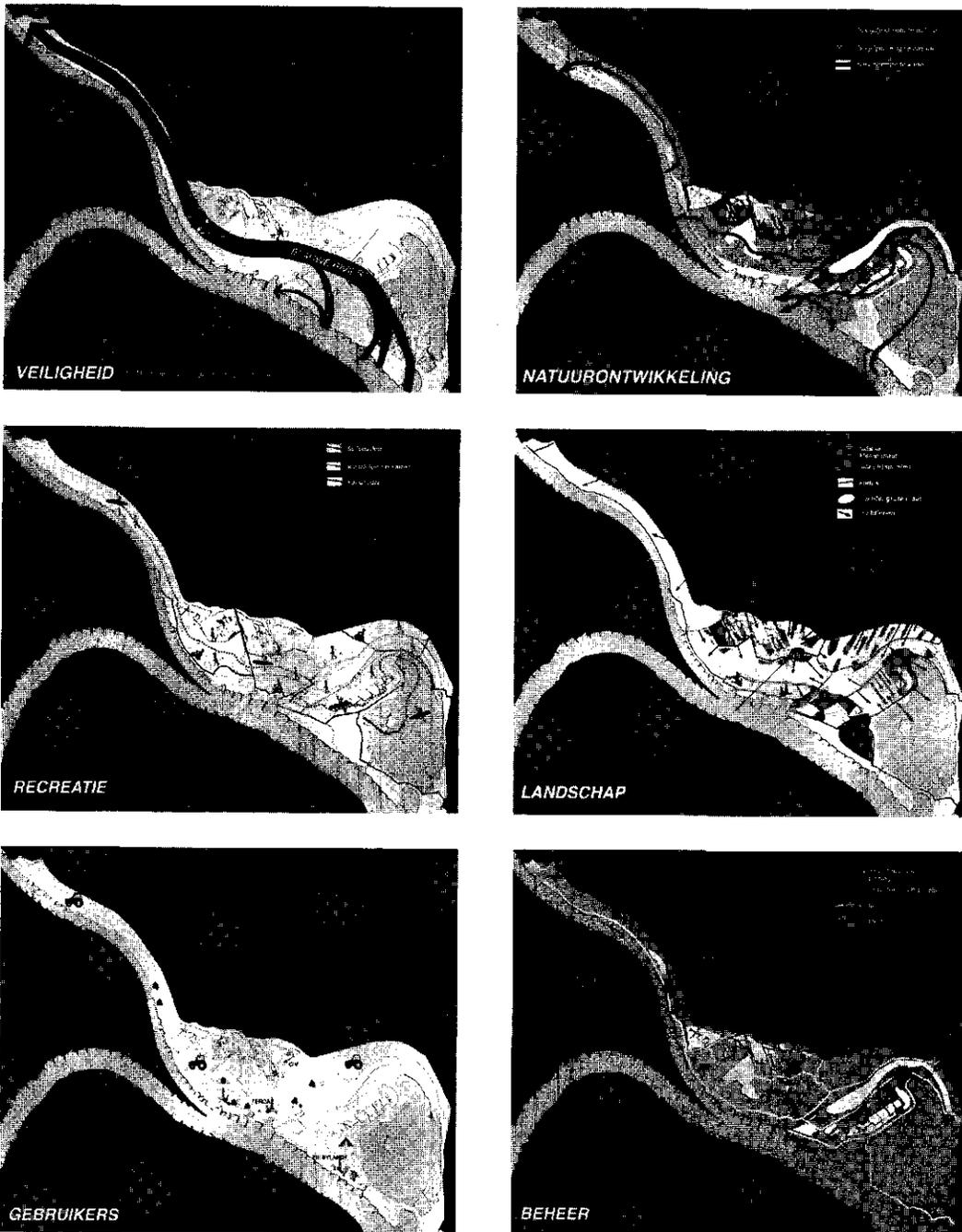

Figure 132 - 137   Thematic maps illustrate the outline of the plan (design 2001 by Vista: Van de Hulsbeek, Koek, Lintel, De Visser, Wardenaar and Wolters).

The designers didn't seem very cheerful at first: 'Fetching in visitors brings about recreational facilities. Subsequently, benches and picnic tables will be the standard equipment' (Van de Hulsbeek et al. 2001: 82). They thought human presence asked for more than just construction and civil engineering however. Objects should fit in their surroundings, their function should be readable, they should be instructive and our descendants should be proud of them. Yet, 'according to Dutch tradition, frugality and functionality should always prevail' (Van de Hulsbeek et al 2001, p. 82).

GEITENWAARD EN OUDE WAAL

Figure 138, 139   Transformation of pastureland into nature (above). The future situation would not only increase natural dynamics but water storage capacity and flow as well. The picture below shows a design principle of a channel in the alluvial forest, which could be used for canoeing.

Design

The opening up of the area was based on the idea that nature-oriented visitors should be able to experience the landscape. Some parts would be freely accessible, the so-called 'rambling nature'. Other, more vulnerable parts were labelled as 'scenic nature'. These areas would be less easily accessible and might be experienced from the paths and from a canoe. Birds could be watched from behind a screen. A path network gave access to the floodplains from the dikes and from the existing water sports area and camping. The designers proposed to build a small tow ferry across an old river arm to restore a former Roman trail and enable circuits. They proposed to cross another old river arm with a bridge instead of a culvert. It would enable the experience of the river arm as a unity. Moreover, 'a bridge indicates that water has priority and that hydraulic and ecological demands are very important here. A culvert would cover up that reference' (Van de Hulsbeek et al. 2001, p. 82). The canoe route was designed as an exciting, winding passage through the clay pits[12].

Special attractions were made up by loading entrances and high tide refuges with facilities. Landscape architect Joost Koek chose to make tailor-made designs for the standard facilities. As water levels could change up to 9 meters in this area, water dynamics were chosen as leading theme for design. All objects were based on a robust concrete stoke with NAP[13] inscriptions. Four meters high stokes would act as landmarks at strategic sites and could be equipped with information panels. Segments of stokes would recur in benches and picnic tables. The objects thus referred to features of the place and were anchored in the landscape. 'It is typical for the narrative of the place; sometimes you are under water level. It creates a legible landscape' (interview with Wolters in 2005).

Recreational facilities could only be realized if some party would be ready to manage and maintain them. Unfortunately, the client was not formally responsible for construction and management of these facilities and did not take many pains to commit other parties to implementation either.
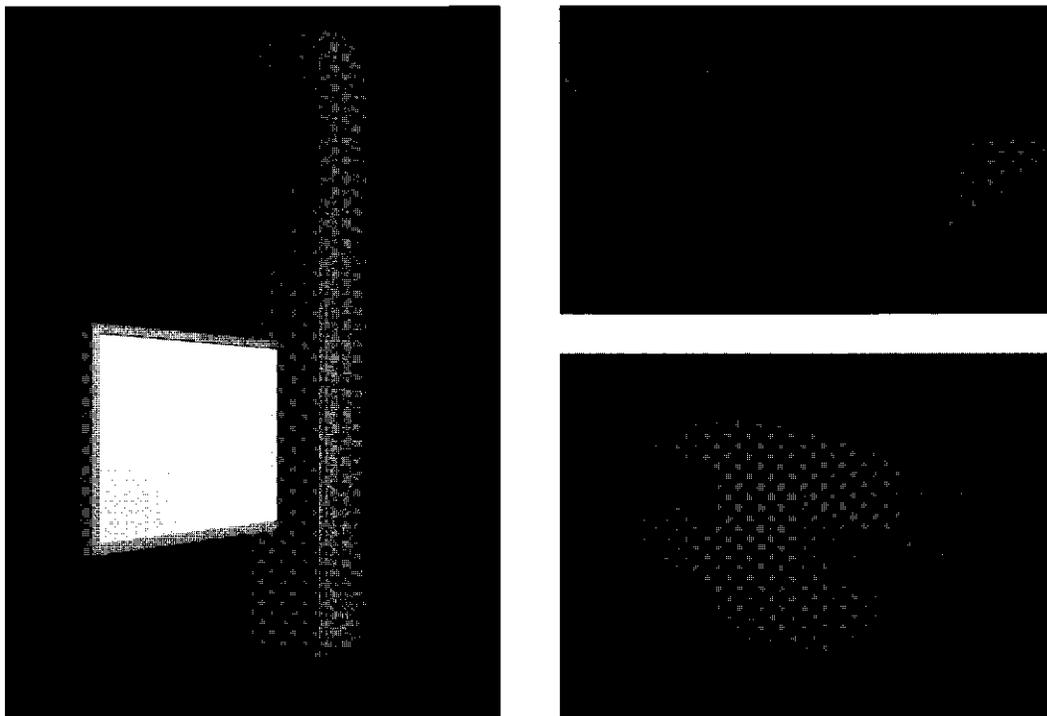

Figure 140, 141   Design proposals for recreational facilities.

7.8.4 Catering to a growing leisure diversity in the river plains

Problem setting

As the success of the concept of nature development continued, its problematic parts became clear too. Both the framework planning concept and large-scale nature development were brought into action with a top down approach. They met severe opposition from country people and townspeople. Plans could only be acceptable when all interests were carefully integrated and had public support. One way of receiving support was to enable recreational use of natural areas. Fort Sint Andries was one of the main nature development projects in the river area due to its strategic position; it was located where the rivers Meuse and Waal nearly met. An integrated plan should provide the necessary support for future developments and interventions. New measures would make use of existing landscape features in order to attach them in time and space. Five sectoral images about nature, recreation, agriculture, extraction of sand and clay and a regional inventory of people's desires were made as materials for the integrated plan.

The recreational image (Nieuwenhuijze et al. 1992) explicitly catered to other developments like nature development, urban development and sand extraction for different reasons. First, recreation was not seen as an independent activity but intertwined with the entire environment. Second, recreation was thought important for public support but not all types of recreation were economically powerful. As a result, connections with other activities were necessary. In the 1950s and 1960s this was called multi-purpose planning, in the 1980s and 1990s the expression *'werk met werk maken'* (creating works with other works) was introduced.
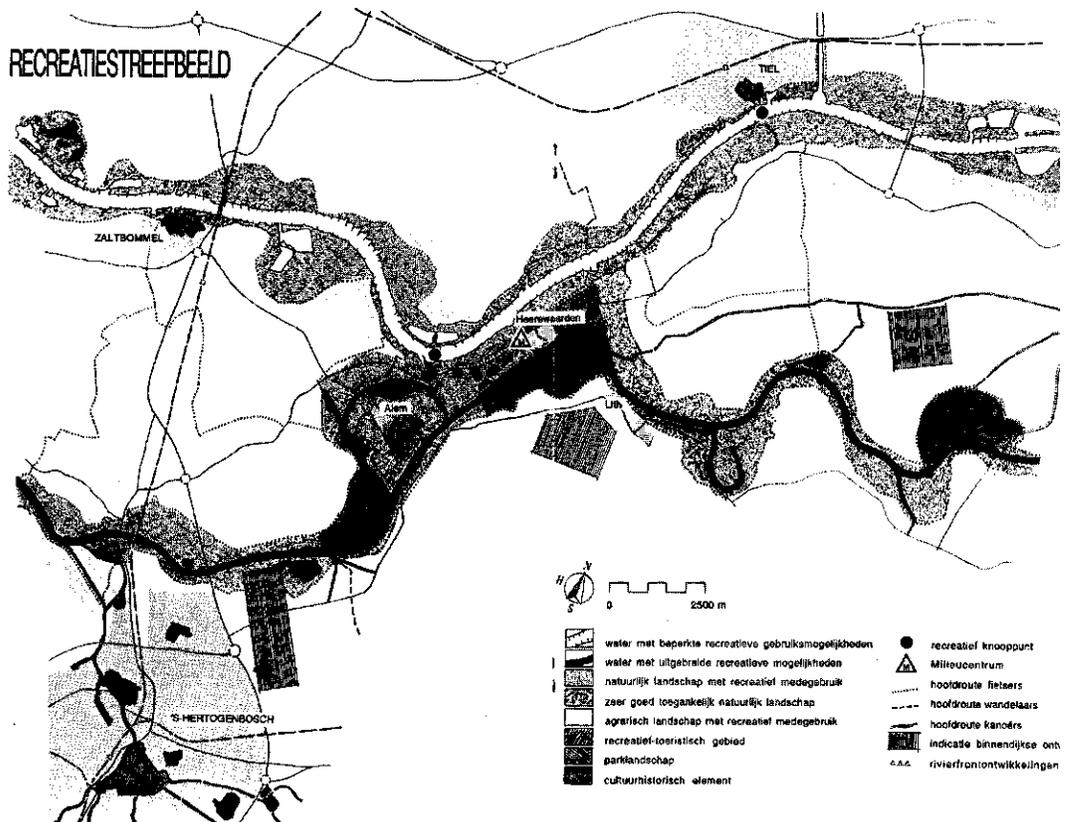

Figure 142   Recreation image (design 1992 by H+N+S: Van Nieuwenhuijze, Olthof and De Koning).

Although the objective of the project was very precise and directed to realise a vast new natural area with recreational use, landscape architects Lodewijk van Nieuwenhuijze, Berdie Olthof and Robbert de Koning set the project in a larger context regarding both content and space. They saw leisure and recreation tending to more diversity and contrast, which led to an increasing demand for culture-oriented and education-oriented recreation, for nature-oriented recreation, for physical challenges and for commercially exploited activities.
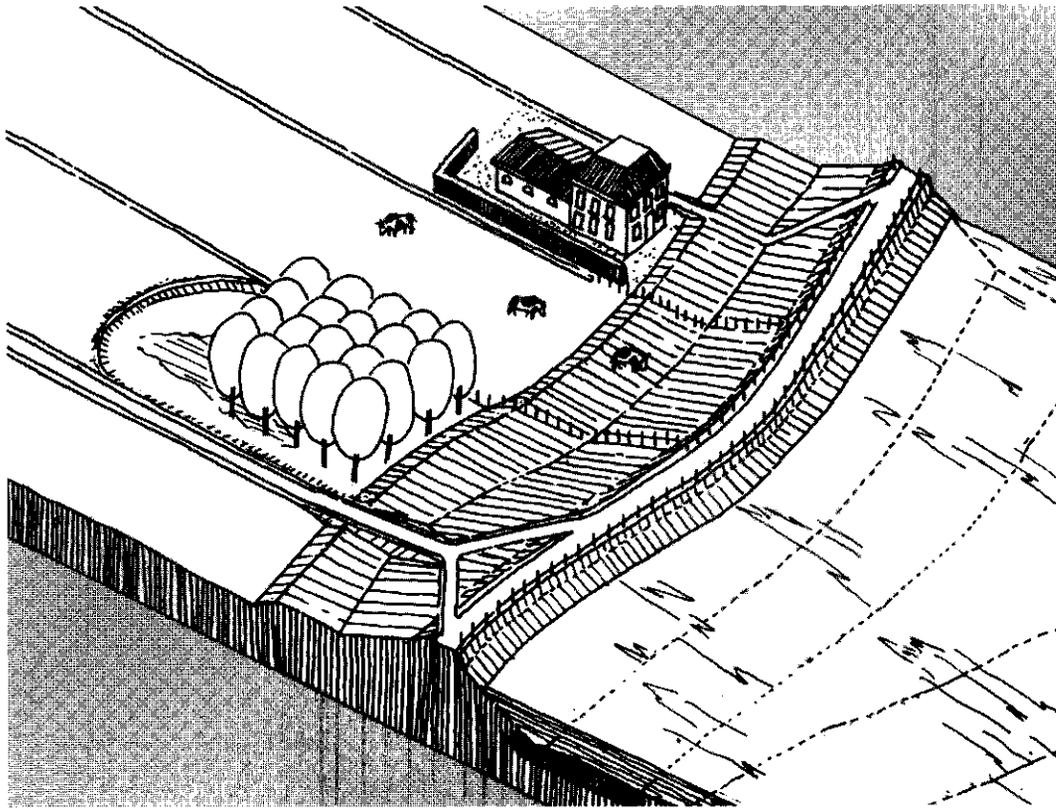

Figure 143 A design study about dike improvement took the experience of a passage on the dike as point of departure. 'One gets the feeling to float over the landscape' (Feddes and Halenbeek 1988, p. 47).
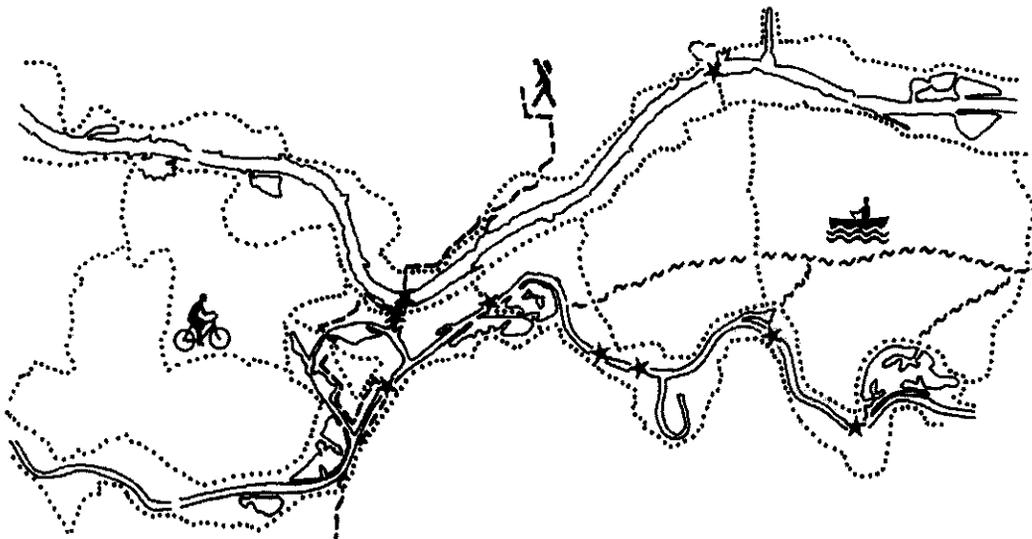

Figure 144 Design principles for routes over land and water.

The region should provide opportunities for all these different forms of leisure and recreation. The cities and historical relicts would serve culture-oriented groups, the existing water sport centres were meant for intensive, activity-oriented types of recreation where nature was nothing but a green background setting. While the latter would be market-oriented, new natural areas would serve nature-oriented groups and would be developed by authorities as public facilities.

The designers grounded their recreation zoning in an allocation of tasks between the rivers Meuse, Waal and Rhine. Each river was allocated to another 'recreation target group' (Boerwinkel 1990), just like 'natural target types' were selected for each natural area. *Nature entertainment seekers* would find entertainment and challenge at the water sport centres along the Meuse. They were classified as intensive recreation. The natural areas along the Meuse were meant for *nature enjoyers* who considered nature as a pleasant environment, which provided a temporary change from their daily environment; quiet and with fresh air. *Naturalists* were driven by the perception and study of flora and wildlife. Their objective was to obtain more knowledge of nature. This last group seemed to be regarded as the *real* nature-oriented target group. 'It is assumed that these people have a great interest in natural elements in an environment that is as natural and wild as possible' (Nieuwenhuijze et al. 1992, p. 13). They would come across this wilderness in the natural areas along the river Waal. Altogether, the plan assumed a very diverse pallet of leisure and tourism, much more diverse than general in landscape design.

Design

The route network followed the zoning principle and allocation of tasks. Differences in accessibility joined with intensity of use and extent of wilderness. The water sport areas and floodplains at the Meuse would be accessible from the dikes and the river; the flood plains on the Waal, which would be the most important natural areas, only from the dikes.

tanvoorstel recreatief medegebruik natuurgebieden in de omgeving van Alem

|	
★	voorziening voor natuurgerichte recreatie
• • • •	voetgangersroute,bestaand
⌇	voetgangersroute, nieuw
→	route voor kano/roeiboot
⬌	overdraagplaats kano

Figure 145, 146   Lay-out for the island of Alem: routes, attractiosn and facilities.

The lay-out of the route network was based on the idea that people prefer edges and scenic views. The dikes were planned to be the major routes. 'The dike works as a nature boulevard' (Bijlsma 1995, p. 96). The dikes provided continuity, enabled views upon the landscape and stressed the contrast between inside and outside. Shortcuts were added to complete the network. The floodplains were seen as attractive sites along the route and were opened up by loops or dead ends. 'Such poorly accessible areas can be mentally important in a densely populated and cultivated land like the Netherlands (Nieuwenhuijze et al. 1992, p. 19). Only those floodplains bordering cities and villages would be well accessible.
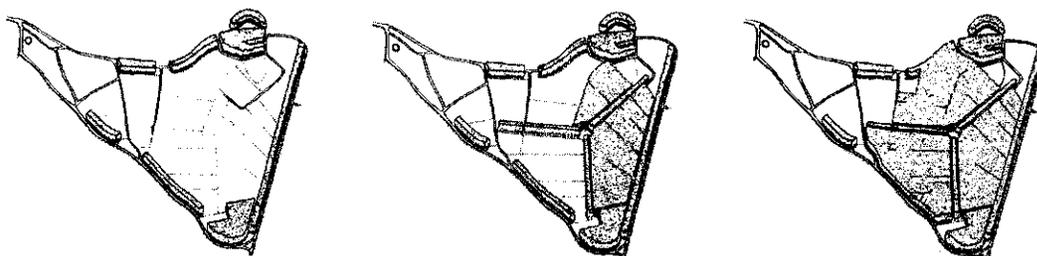

Figure 147, 148, 149   Development scheme for the park area of Fort St. Andries. The contrast between the expected target group - naturalists – and highly cultural design images referring to estates with avenues is remarkable. Other design proposals in the same plan referred to wilderness by omitting signs of human interference.


Figure 150   Design proposals for the forts of St. Andries. Not only was paid explicit attention to historical elements and did the designers try to give them new recreational meanings, their idea was explicitly based on staging principles.
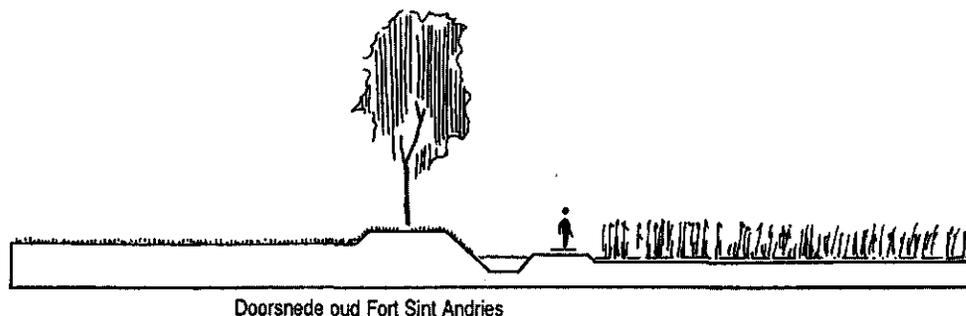

Doorsnede oud Fort Sint Andries

Figure 151, 152   Cross sections of the fort of St. Andries.

166

Attractive sites were pointed out and developed at different levels. At the highest level, the regional scale, the water sport areas and two other sites were seen as the main attractions. The water sport centres were seen as dynamic areas where a flexible approach towards continuously changing trends was necessary in contrast with more stable and lasting joint recreational use in other areas.

The designers tried to turn special sites in the landscape into attractions. A park landscape was proposed for two sites to emphasize their special position in the landscape: the location near Heerewaarden where the rivers met and the meander of Alem. They wanted to reveal the hidden qualities of places and make them accessible. The design of a framework of plantings was set up in phases due to uncertainty about developments in nature-oriented recreation. The plantings would provide space for possible future facilities like ecotourism or an education and information centre. One of the specific characteristics of this river landscape was the continuous historical process of rising and disappearing islands. The island theme was picked up by the designers and served as a reference for both the meander of Alem and the forts. The park was treated as the 'island' of Alem, surrounded by the existing dike and open natural meadows and marshlands. The woods would stress the contrast between inside and outside.

Historical forts were not erased or ignored but seen as attractions along the routes too. The designers tried to avoid a loss of landscape memory by providing the historical forts with new recreation meanings. The forts were seen as attractions at the level of the area of St. Andries and so were 'recreational junctions', which were actually existing little ferries and proposals for the re-introduction of ferries. At the same time, the coherence provided by the routes would add value to separate initiatives and might stimulate private investments.

The common observation posts for nature-oriented recreation in the flood plains were the attractions at the lowest level. The designers wanted to stress the natural character of the area and thought information panels and signposts would refer too much to human interference and harm the wilderness illusion.

The forts, which were hardly visible as the original contours had faded, were surrounded by water once again and ramparts were partly restored. The special quality of the place was stressed by an apparently simple measure; a bridge inverted the original meaning of the forts. What used to be the best defended area, the inside of the fort, turned into the best accessible. Again, the contrast between inside and outside was stressed, this time at a local scale. Visitors entering the forts would be surprised by the sudden contrast between the open surroundings and the enclosed interior.

Doorsnede nieuw fort Sint Andries

This explicit use of *escenering* (staging) principles diverged from common practice at the time in landscape design for rural areas. It would take about ten years more before the word staging would be regularly used by landscape designers in rural areas.

7.8.5 The Venen in a green metropolis

Problem setting

Although national authorities aimed at a considerable extension of natural and public green areas, private organizations had even higher ambitions. The World Wildlife Fund and the ANWB[14] aimed at a doubling of hectares. They related ecological ambitions to the wish for high-quality daily environments for citizens and positioned their claim right in the middle of the debate about the position of the Green Heart in the Randstad. They discussed the biased focus of politicians and planners on openness (read: no buildings) and claimed that the Green Heart could be much more interesting and valuable for citizens as a leisure environment. 'Now that it is still possible, we have to point out large areas for new nature. These new natural areas can be used for recreation, are not vulnerable, offer freedom and adventure and appeal to one's imagination' (Sijmons et al. 1995, p. 8).Landscape architects Dirk Sijmons, Eric Luiten, Noël van Dooren and Renée Santema thought that the Green Heart concept could only go without saying if it were possible to gain public support for the preservation of the Green Heart and for the development of new nature. In their opinion, the debate should be about the amount and kind of *investments* in nature and public green rather than about *restrictive policy*. New allies were required across existing borders between town and country, between public and private and between functions.Their approach was not only very offensive but also positioned the task of new natural areas at another level and related it to the question of urbanization.
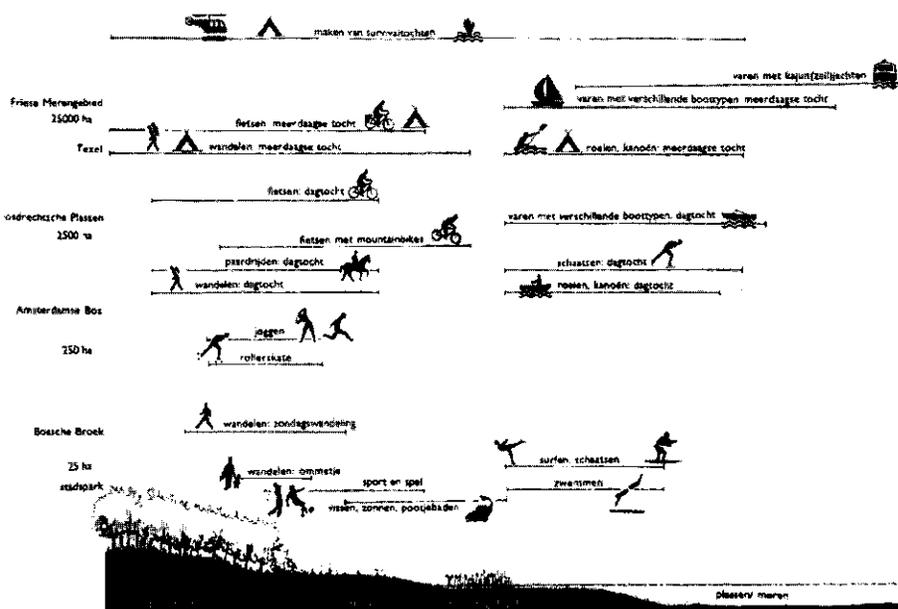
Figure 153, 154   Nature and leisure were approached in an analogous way. Ecological concepts were based on the idea that extensiveness would provide conditions for more different species and for more demanding species. Vast areas allow both leisure over beaten tracks and adventurous trips in 'wildemess'. Areas measuring over 1500 hectares did not exist in the Randstad (1995, by Sijmons, Luiten, Van Dooren and Santema).

The designers saw several reasons for the weak image of the Green Heart. First, they claimed that the Green Heart concept implicitly assumed the existence and subsistence of 'flourishing dairy farming and arable farming preserving a green and attractive countryside' (Sijmons et al. 1995, p. 19) and questioned that assumption. They were very pessimistic about the contribution of agriculture to a pleasant, attractive landscape in the future. At the same time, they thought leisure and nature were not strong enough on their own. Mono-functional recreation areas were unattractive and dull in their opinion anyway. Second, the Green Heart concept was too abstract in their opinion; too large and determined by administrative borders instead of clear physical delimitations. It would be better to invest in smaller, clearly defined and nameable green areas.

Design

Instead of the usual approach of developing urban extensions, leisure and nature separately, the designers proposed to combine leisure and nature. 'We think public support of nature will grow if it can be enjoyed nearby and is freely accessible' (Sijmons et al. 1995, p. 77). Not only would it give nature developments more support but provide an interesting environment for leisure as well. They regarded the problems on a larger scale in order to prevent 'the spectre of peripheral zones around every village without any chance of style' (Sijmons et al. 1995, p. 21) and replaced the regular paradigm of a strict separation of town and country (Randstad and Green Heart) with an urban network. Their so-called Green Metropolis was made up of a range of areas, varying from highly urban environments, suburbs and urbanized landscapes to natural areas[15]. A Green Metropolis 'is important, not only for our welfare and for nature, but also for the economic development of the Netherlands' (Sijmons et al. 1995, p. 8).
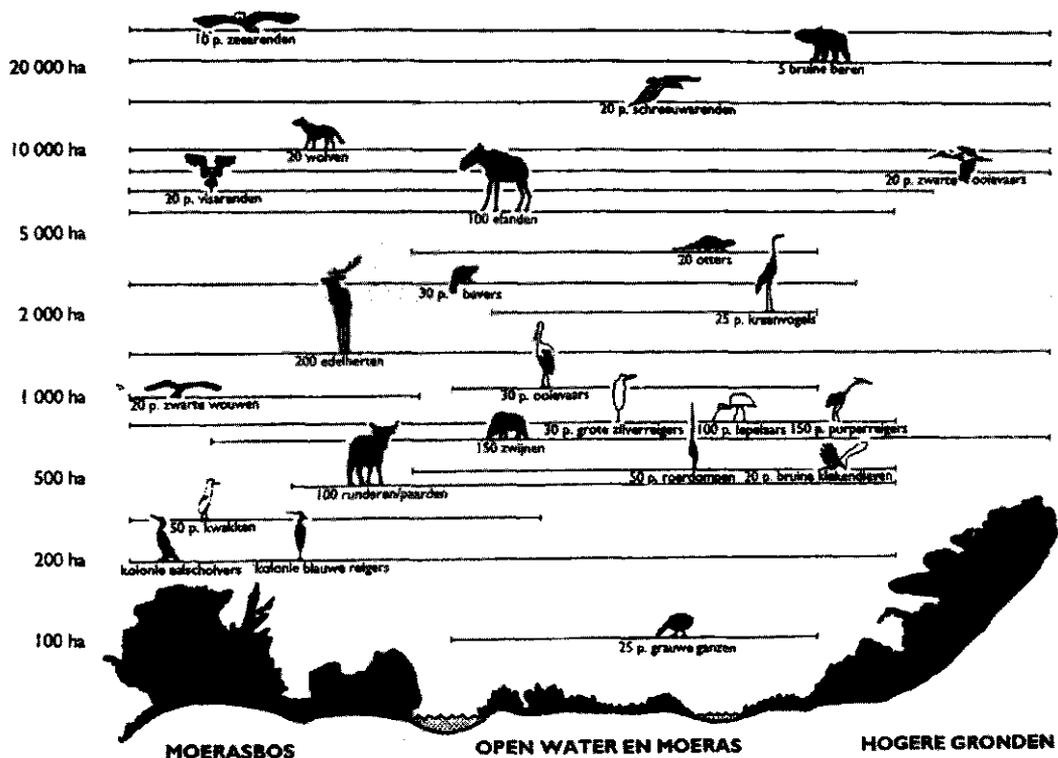
The design consisted of large natural areas interconnected with each other and with the cities. The concept elaborated on the original ideas of the National Ecological Network and Cleyndert's natural spaces[16] and finished with the negative attitude towards leisure. Leisure and nature became allies again. According to the designers, over-regulated city life asked for counterweight in leisure respect. They observed a call for more adventurous types of leisure and for freedom. Supply should go beyond programmed routes along coloured signs; the modern citizen should be given the chance to ramble, which asked for extensiveness or at least the illusion of extensiveness. Moreover, extensiveness would enable opportunities for future, yet unknown types of leisure: 'Large will keep all options open' (Sijmons et al. 1995, p. 56).

The connections between the natural areas and the cities were linked up with linear landscape elements. Thus, the routes provided attractive passages and combined recreational and ecological networks. Outdoor recreation in the daily living environment was not forgotten either. According to the designers attention should be paid to daily strolls as well. Simple, well located facilities along the recreation networks were necessary. Together they would create a hierarchic network of leisure opportunities.

Nature was not considered vulnerable but as a reflection of active forces and leisure was considered as just another differentiating force. Visitors would be invited to explore the area and to enjoy natural developments. Like the Millingerwaard, there would be no restrictions. To encounter the highlights however, one should take pains. After all, wilderness would not be wilderness if it were too cushy and comfortable.

7.9 Review

As small-scale interweaving of agriculture, nature and leisure proved problematic, landscape planners and designers developed the framework planning concept in the 1980s. The concept was based on a systems approach of landscape and landscape development processes. Nature was separated from highly dynamic agricultural development and got substantive space in the National Ecological Network, which included the development of new nature areas. Although the need for leisure was thought to be legitimate, leisure was considered as a threat for natural values. Access was only allowed with restrictions and ample information how to experience nature.

Later, the policy concept of (extensive) nature-oriented recreation was no longer restricted to 'nature study' and the 'experience of peace and quiet'. The concept was extended with 'rambling', a way of experiencing the spontaneous and adventurous character of nature (and other environments) freely. The rambling concept was again another version of extensive outdoor recreation. Around the cities, where large numbers of people were expected, the concept of the *Randstadgroenstructuur* (Randstad Green Structure), a green belt of forest parks was continued to absorb recreational pressure. Recreational facilities in these areas were exploited commercially.

In rural landscapes, the well-tried route network to open up areas was still the leading concept. The layout of the route networks was based on the idea that people prefer edges and scenic views. Historical buildings and landscape elements along the routes were used as attractions and provided with new recreation meanings. Diverse local networks were connected into supra-regional networks.

In nature areas a new design concept was introduced. Entire fields were made freely accessible. The freedom to go and act was represented by creating illusions of wilderness - spontaneous, wild and rugged - in contrast with the city, which was thought to be over-regulated and artificial. Careful zoning of different recreation 'target groups' at a regional and local level was necessary in order to diversify the supply of leisure opportunities and to create an illusion of freedom and dissipation for nature recreation. While policy makers were still focused on leisure facilities, many landscape designers preferred to avoid references to human presence like information panels and sign posts as much as possible; those would refer too much to human interference and harm the wilderness experience. They saw the wilderness setting of a nature-look-alike with (half-)wild animals as the main attraction. Landscape designers saw nature development also as a new means to strengthen landscape identity. While some used this approach merely at a regional scale, others saw it as a design task at site-level.

Leisure policy concepts	Mass recreation	Rambling	Joint recreational use
	Area-bound outdoor recreation	**Nature-oriented recreation**	Route-bound outdoor recreation
Planning concepts	***Randstadgroen-structuur* (Randstad Green Structure)**	***Cascoconcept* (framework planning concept)** **National Ecological Framework (EHS)**	Fitting in
Design concepts	Forest park, woodlands	-	Merge into the landscape
Routes	Network of paths	Marked trails Unlimited access, open up fields	Network of existing and new roads and paths Recreational junctions Routes for diverse means of transport: canoes, ATB's etc.
Attractions	Leisure facilities Landscape setting	Nature	Landscape setting Leisure areas Historic sites
Facilities	Sports and plays Campsites Picnic sites Car parks	Observation posts	Small-scale (benches, picnic sites, information panels, sign posts)
Setting	Park landscape 1:1:1	'Wilderness'	Rural landscape
Leisure perspectives	Green illusion of continuity and naturalness Contrast with the strictly ordered daily urban life Free to choose one's ways and activities	Unprogrammed leisure: anarchy, exploration, self-expression Wilderness experience Far from the city and daily worries Freedom Diversity	Freedom Diversity: 'recreation target groups'
General landscape perspectives	Mass recreation isolated from the landscape	Integrated landscape design Function combinations: *'werk met werk maken'* (multi-purpose planning) Legible landscape (natural processes for instance) Landscape identity Recognizability Orientation in time and space	

Figure 155   Scheme representing the main ideas, design concepts and tools in the period of rambling (late 1980s – 1990s).

Notes

1 A common saying in the Netherlands goes: The planter will be dead by the time the tree has grown up.

2 The *Stichting Kritisch Bosbeheer* (Corporation for critical forest management), founded in 1973 as the *Landelijke Werkgroep Kritisch Bosbeheer*, criticized the unnatural character of Dutch forests and wanted to keep from human interference as much as possible. They proposed to leave dead wood in the forest and introduced natural grazing with Heck cattle and Konik horses in the Oostvaardersplassen, a wetland that arose spontaneously from fallow grounds reserved for industrial purposes.

3 The Foundation was called after professor Leonard (Eo) Wijers, director of the National Planning Service and a great inspirator of landscape design at a regional scale. In times when many designers became entangled in the complexity of administrative and legal aspects of spatial planning, he stood up for the quality of form.

4 At the first half of the 20th century, biscuit producer Verkade added pictures to his products to be collected in albums about Dutch nature. The albums were written by the famous teacher and nature devotee Jac. P. Thijsse, one of the founding fathers of the Society for the Preservation of Nature, the first nature conservation organization in the Netherlands.

5 Landscape architect Peter Vrijlandt referred to this type of small-scale landscape and nature management when he was talking about 6practices (see 6.3.3).

6 The criteria referred to Vitruvius' three conditions for good architecture: utilitas, firmitas and venustas (functionality, durability and beauty).

7 The Department was transferred from the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Welfare to the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries in this period.

8 The assignment involved an investment of 225 million euros.

9 Geuze's fascination for people's independency and creativity resembles that of his tutor, Hans Warnau.

10 Lengkeek argued that managers of natural areas tended to bar people off their territories, whereas nature-oriented recreation was developed as a bridge between nature interet and recreation. Other authors mentioned similar tendencies (1994).

11 Ecotopes were defined as 'physically limited ecological units, whose composition and development are determined by a-biotic, biotic an anthropogenic aspects together' (Rademakers and Wolfert 1994).

12 This quasi-natural form was very remarkable as the Vista landscape designers were known for their designs with a sharp contrast between rectangular, artificial forms and natural processes (see also 7.1.3).

13 NAP (New Amsterdam Level) is the Dutch version of AMSL (Above Mean Sea Level).

14 The Dutch Touring Club.

15 Landscape planners of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries, former colleagues of the designers of H+N+S Landscape architects, published the *Visie Stadslandschappen* (Memorandum on Urban Landscapes, LNV 1995) in the same period. They noticed the rise of another type of landscape different from the well-known natural and rural landscapes. These so-called urban landscapes were defined as areas where urban processes coincided with the driving forces of natural and rural landscapes.

16 In the same year 1995, a group of landscape designers and landscape ecologists placed the societal context of the National Ecological Framework on the agenda. They too thought the spatial and rural impact of the framework was too radical to approach it as just an ecological objective. They saw the ecological program as a means of landscape transformation with a wider significance and elaborated their ideas in the Keijenberg cycle, a series of events which resulted in the book *Oorden van onthouding* (Places of abstinence) (Feddes et al. 1998).

8
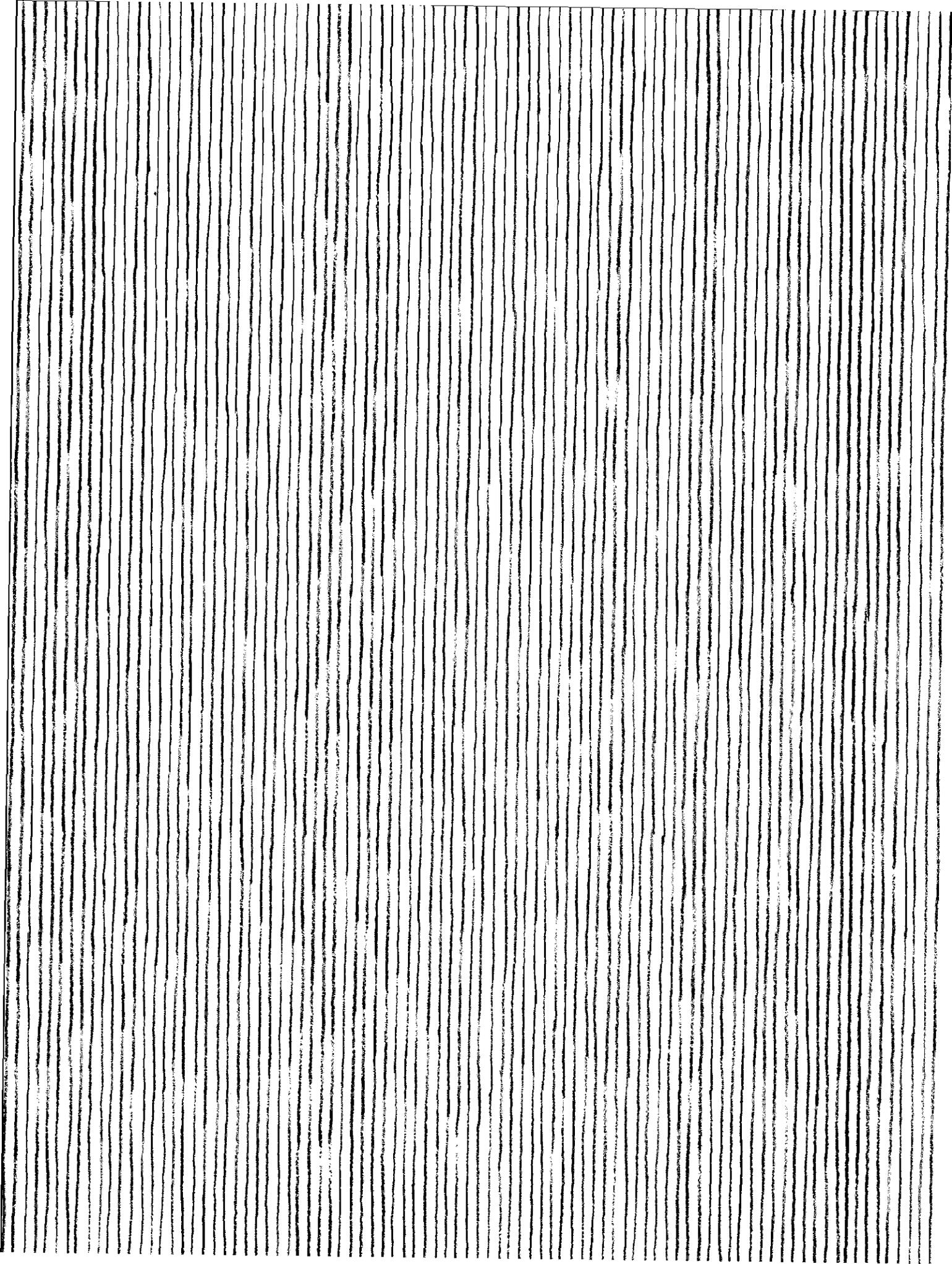
Diversification (present time)

Economic growth caused a huge increase in consumption, but it stagnated towards the end of the 1990s. There was a sense of uncertainty, heightened by issues like the multicultural society and public safety. The impacts of globalisation, and the influence of European legislation and guidelines became visible. At the same time, some of the National Authorities' responsibilities were passed on to lower authorities and private parties. A whole range of parties became involved in spatial development. Region-bound and project-bound engagements became increasingly important, although there were still traditional generic policymaking practices as well.

Today, major spatial planning tasks in rural areas are the diversification of economic bases and the changing relation between town and countryside. The network city concept seems to have succeeded the compact city concept in spatial planning policy. After decades of restrictive policy on housing development in rural areas, the door has now been carefully opened to landelijk wonen ('rurban' living). On the one hand, agriculture is developing towards agribusiness complexes, and on the other towards economic diversification. Diversification corresponds with the shifting image of rural areas; they are no longer primarily meant for agricultural production, but also for consumption in the form of new housing developments and work opportunities, and leisure and tourism play an increasingly important role in these areas. A special Reconstructiewet (Reconstruction Act) will result in large-scale spatial transformations in the sandy uplands. In those areas, the intensive livestock industry will be either removed or replaced, in order to solve environmental problems and improve future prospects for agriculture. This will make more room for other types of land use like housing, nature and outdoor recreation. Dangerously high waters and some dry summers have made it clear that water management is in need of revision as well, certainly in the light of the rise in sea level and climate change, and it will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications for spatial planning.

8.1 New regional planning approaches

The traditional top-down planning system with its sectional organisation and hierarchic levels was not geared to the problems of many regions, which were very complex and area-specific. There was an extensive and fierce opposition to large operations such as nature developments and dike reinforcements. The *Vierde Nota over de Ruimtelijke ordening* (Fourth Policy Document on Spatial Planning, VROM 1989) had already introduced a new type of planning called *Omgevingsbeleid* (Rural policy) that joined different policy levels together and integrated spatial, environmental and water management problems. The integrated regional plans brought forth by this new policy approach – diagonal policy – were organised as projects and were implementation-oriented. The *Nota Ruimte* (Policy Document on Spatial Planning, VROM 2004) elaborated on these developments, and shifted the policy emphasis from 'imposing restrictions' to 'promoting developments'. The concept of *Ontwikkelingsplanologie* (Development Planning) was introduced. Development Planning is a method that places the focus of attention on the *implementation* of spatial plans, visions and projects. Representatives of development planning are adopting an area-dedicated approach; they cooperate with other stakeholders and make strong arrangements with them; and they cohesively carry out various projects. It also means that they are starting to give centre stage to the opportunities already existing in an area, rather than letting rules and procedures be the dominant consideration in planning.

Rood-voor-groen principes (Red-with-Green Schemes), in which housing or business developments are financers or co-financers of 'green' and 'blue' landscape elements, are introduced to join formerly separated development lines, and to contribute to the implementation and reinforcement of nature, recreation, water and landscape policy.

Nowadays, authorities, non-governmental organisations, market parties and commoners initiate projects. As a result, there are many different clients, and planning processes have become more unpredictable. Moreover, planning is no longer the exclusive domain of professionals. Planning processes at a local or sub-regional level in particular embrace public collaboration, not only to obtain public support, but also to stimulate peoples' commitment and to incorporate local laymen's knowledge.

8.2 Development with quality

Landscape policy has proceeded to encourage the preservation, recovery and development of high-quality landscapes, with a growing emphasis on development. The first landscape designers in the 1920s and 1930s occupied themselves with 'landscape care'; a term that was replaced with 'landscape creation' in the 1960s and that has now turned into a 'landscape development strategy'. Current policy stresses that interventions can be used to improve the landscape, based on the assumption that landscapes are constantly changing, and that future cultural heritage and spatial quality are in the making right now. *Ontwikkelen met Kwaliteit* (Development with Quality) is the new motto; the main objective is to either preserve or develop beautiful and useful landscapes, which people can be proud of and where people feel at home. Translated to policy jargon this means 'the preservation and development of landscape identity, diversity and experience and the functional organisation of rural areas' (LNV 2002, p. 25).

Internationally rare landscapes and landscapes that are most valuable on a national scale have been designated as National Landscapes. Their protected status is not meant to be a mere conservation policy; these landscapes will not be 'locked up', although preservation of their rural character and specific nature and heritage qualities are postulated. Development with an eye for quality is thought to be the best guarantee for a sustainable preservation. These landscapes are thought to be of great importance for leisure and tourism.

Key qualities of both general and landscape-specific have been denominated as starting points and terms of reference for current planning and design. The objective is to produce an integrated landscape design directed by landscape qualities. In order to gain local support and to expand local responsibility for landscape quality improvement, national authorities stimulate and subsidise local and regional *Landschapsontwikkelingsplannen* (Landscape Development Plans). The policy strategy has raised questions from many landscape designers. In their opinion, the policy isn't very innovative. Hasn't their approach been development-oriented and integrated for decades?
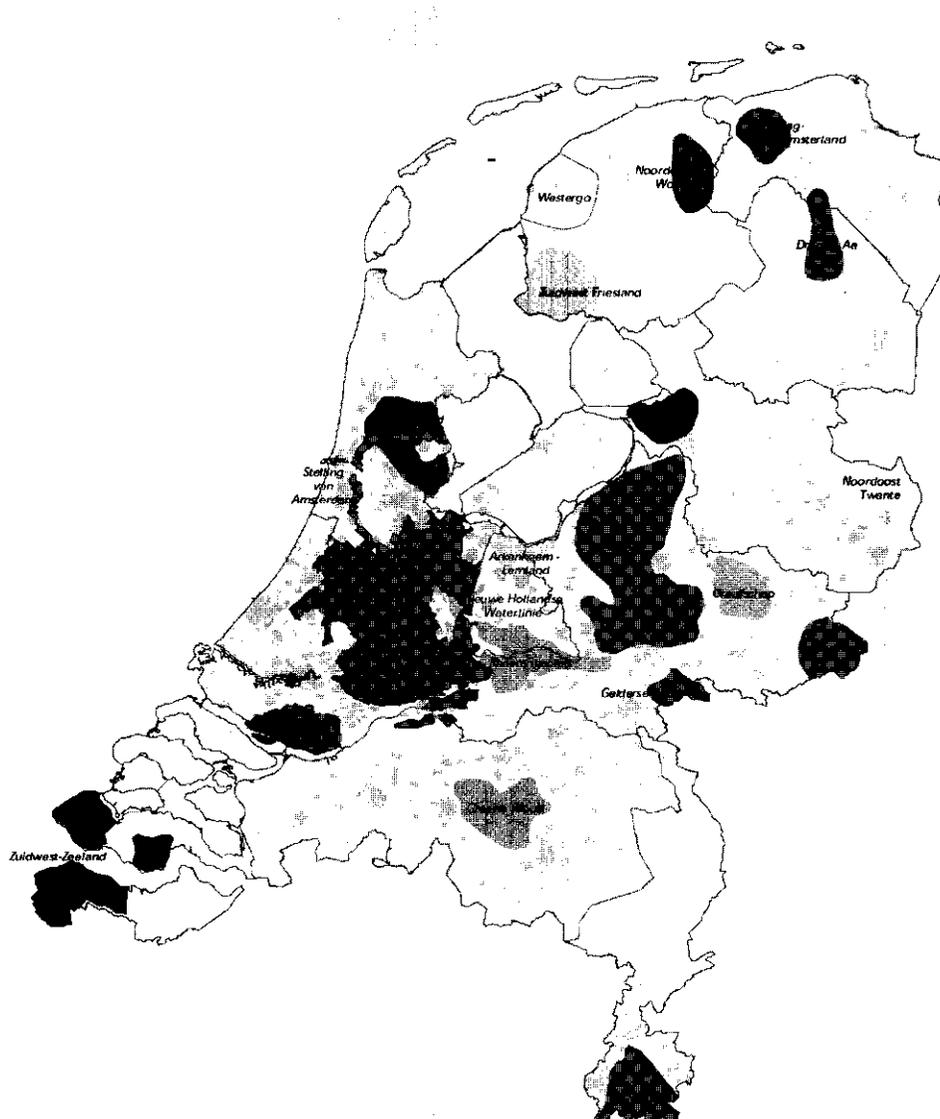
Figure 156   Protected National Landscapes in the Netherlands.

Haven't landscape qualities always been their point of departure? What's different from previous periods is that, nowadays, local parties and citizens are incorporated, and that the implementation of the plan is of major concern. A Landscape Development Plan is a type of Development Planning. This essential difference with former planning and design practices doesn't only affect the nature of the design, but also the designer's role in planning and design processes.

8.3 Cultural heritage: preservation by development

The shift from preservation to development has also touched on cultural heritage. Merely preserving separate elements hasn't turned out to be satisfactory; too often, it has deprived them of their context and meaning. In 1999, National authorities have introduced the Belvedere policy on cultural heritage. Its main objective is 'to make cultural-historical identity more directive for spatial organisation' (Feddes 1999, p. 7). The policy concept and accompanying financial means have a more active approach in mind for cultural heritage; new functions should be planned, designed and managed with respect to the historical spatial setting, and cultural history should inspire and stimulate new developments. After decades of isolated conservation or even neglect, cultural heritage has become a major representative of cultural values. Cultural heritage is assumed to provide landscapes with identity and meaning, to be a source of information and inspiration, to act as a counterbalance to globalisation and to provide aesthetic, ecological and economic value as well. Cultural heritage is 'the narrative of the man-made environment; it is the continuous story of past, present and future' (Feddes 1999, p. 17).

Of course, this policy would not have been introduced if it weren't economically beneficial. Cultural history and leisure are expected to be mutually advantageous. 'Heritage-like facilities and services for leisure and tourism will reinforce cultural-historical identity while at the same time cultural history can offer opportunities to diversify leisure and tourism supply' (Feddes 1999, p. 16). Policy makers never explicitly stated what exactly they understood by cultural-historical identity.

8.4 The come-back of leisure

In the 1980s and 1990s, nature policy was primarily focused on biodiversity and other ecological objectives. Socio-cultural aspects of nature were neglected. That changed in the year 2000, when the policy document *Natuur voor mensen, mensen voor natuur* (Nature for people, people for nature) was published. Nature preservation and development were not only important for environmental reasons; nature areas should also be accessible, enjoyable, and useful to people. The insight that public support was essential for nature preservation on the long term encouraged this change of attitude. The significance and benefit of nature and landscape for people was underlined once more in the next period with the slogan 'peace, space, quiet and darkness': the assumed values of nature and the countryside for citizens (LNV 2002). National advisory boards observed that existing outdoor recreation possibilities didn't meet the contemporary, diverse and dynamic demands of various communities. They argued that leisure supply should take advantage of the spatial dynamics of the countryside.

The *Raad voor het Landelijk Gebied* (Council for the Rural Area) thought that mono-functional recreation areas at some distance of the cities wouldn't meet contemporary demands, and pled for elaborate joint recreational use of the countryside and for more green areas in the cities (2004). Leisure and tourism could support regional economies if farmers and other entrepreneurs developed new leisure and tourism opportunities based on local and regional qualities.

National authorities introduced the policy concept of *Groen in en om de stad* (GIOS, Green areas in and around cities) to increase and improve both the quantity and quality of green areas within and close to the cities. The use of natural areas and the countryside for leisure purposes was to be intensified by improving their accessibility and attractiveness. Long-distance networks were to be extended and public access to farmland was to be stimulated. *Een platteland om van te genieten* (a countryside to enjoy) was the new policy objective (LNV 2004).

8.5 Spatial integration

Boundaries in time and space between work, home, and leisure are becoming blurred due to a fragmentation of activities and a growing diversity in lifestyles. Consumer society has facilitated the further integration and spread of leisure and tourism in our lives and environments. Commercialised entertainment has even become indispensable for the feasibility and survival of urban revitalisations (Hannigan 1998). The formation of leisure complexes and clusters like 'edu-tainment, eat-ertainment, info-tainment and retail-tainment' produces unprecedented consumptive environments (Hannigan 1998). Gentrified neighbourhoods, golf residences and marina residential developments are based on similar principles. Such environments are created or recreated into ready-made experiences.

In the perspective of post-war rural developments, the ongoing spatial integration of leisure and tourism seems to be a consistent process. The concept of mono-functional recreation areas, which were planned and constructed as isolated forest parks, appears to have been replaced with multifunctional landscape concepts where nature, agriculture, water management and housing are all part of the leisure landscape. In coastal areas, tourism is no longer restricted to the beach and the seaside resorts. The hinterland is now being remodelled as a new realm of tourist attractions. The same process can be observed in popular tourist landscapes like the Veluwe and the Drentsche Aa. Joint recreational use has spread from picturesque cultural landscapes to city fringes and natural areas.
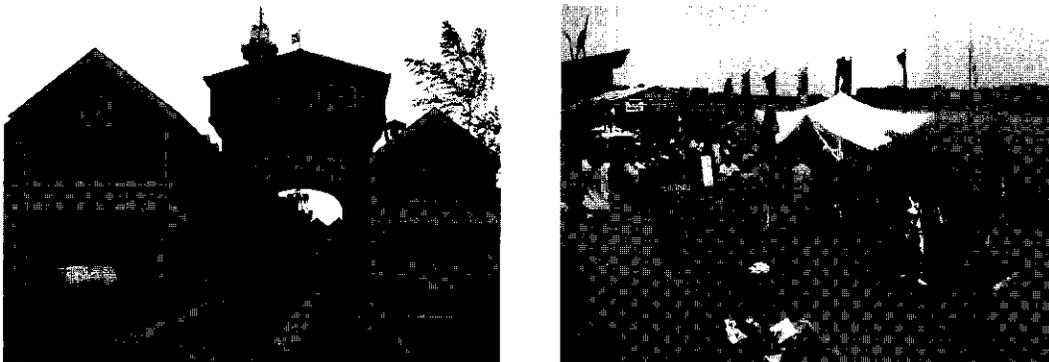

Figure 157, 158   Batavia Stad, a popular outlet shopping centre in Lelystad (left) and the Rotterdam city beach (right) are examples of created, themed, consumptive environments.

A serious improvement of the accessibility of the countryside, and the opportunity for every person to make a stroll from his or her own doorstep, have become national spatial policy objectives. Moreover, leisure and tourism are considered to be alternative economic supports for future regional economies and as contributors in the financial support for public facilities (Mommaas 2001). Leisure is no longer primarily the responsibility of the government, but it has become the realm of a wide range of suppliers, including global leisure industries, non-governmental organisations and farmers. Private entrepreneurs join forces and promote their offers as a corporate product; they are in the process of creating tourism-recreation complexes, 'embracing material practices as well as image production and interpretation' (Ashworth and Van Dietvorst 1995, p. 2). At the same time, local entrepreneurs are also in a position to co-establish public objectives. Tourist accommodation businesses in the coastal area of the province of Zeeland, for example, have to realise compensatory 'recreation nature' – that is to say accessible natural areas – if they wish to expand their businesses. In other areas new estates are being developed, which offer luxury housing and contribute to an attractive public landscape at the same time.

8.6 Designs

8.6.1 Themes and narratives in Zeeland Flanders

Problem setting
In the late 1990s, the tourist sector in Zeeland Flanders realized that the area needed an economic impulse. The area was no longer able to compete with cheap, foreign, weather-reliable destinations. Together with the authorities, the tourist sector developed a *Recreatievisie* (Recreation Perspective) that was to be the framework for developments in leisure and tourism. The perspective was based on the idea that the beach tourism product needed an upgrade, and that a diversification of the tourist product was needed, which was based on the qualities of the area as a whole. The tourist attraction of Zeeland Flanders should exceed 'sun, sea and sand' and include the cultural heritage and rural tourism of the inland area. Within the context of the implementation of this Recreation Perspective, Okra Landscape Architects were asked to redesign the accesses to the beach in 2000. These places were not easily accessible, because bicycles and motors were parked haphazardly at the foot of the dunes and on top of them. They needed to be cleared, car parks and bicycle stands were to be added, and stairs and platforms were to be remodelled.

When landscape architect Martin Knuijt and his colleagues entered into the assignment, they realised that it wouldn't be enough to just deal with the problem of the cluttered accesses. The coastal road just behind the dunes was suffering from a traffic overload and the pressure on the adjoining zone was high. If this situation would not change, and farmers along the road would continue to develop small campsites and chalets, the area would remain disorderly and of inferior quality, no matter how careful the beach accesses were designed. Moreover, coastal defence works were planned for, as the area was one of the weak links in the Dutch coastal defence. The dune, which actually was not a dune but consisted of a dyke overblown with sand, had to be raised in the near future. The designers agreed with their client that an integrated perspective on the spatial development of the coastal zone was necessary. The perspective should take coastal defence, and recreation and tourism developments into account, but other issues like mobility, nature and water management as well.

The plan could change the area from an amorphous area with fragmented land uses and activities into an area where different parts of the coastal zone would each have their own distinct character and opportunities for development, complementary to each other. Later on, the landscape designers would elaborate several components of the perspective in additional assignments: detailed designs for the connections of the main road with the beach and the accompanying facilities, a landscape plan for the former island of Cadzand, and a detailed design for an international bicycle route between Breskens and Adinkerke. Together, the designs cover a complete range, from a long-term overall development perspective on the regional scale, to its elaboration into small-scale, detailed, implementation-oriented designs.

Design

The basic principle of the integrated perspective was a change of strategy for the coastal defence: from a fixed, narrow coastline with higher dunes to a wide, dynamic coastal zone. The characteristic history of the area with its constantly changing coastline would thus revive. The new coastal zone would consist of outer en inner dunes, wet meadows, creeks and wide creek banks, and provide space for a combination of leisure and tourism activities, fresh water retention, and nature development.
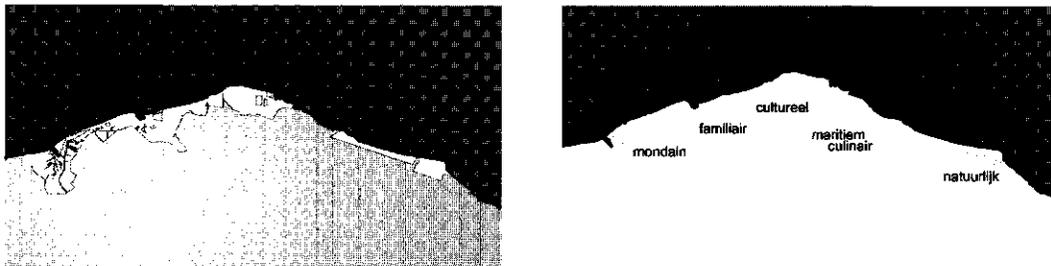

Figure 159, 160   The narrow dunes and the overblown dyke were to be broadened into a resilient coastal zone (left). Themes were to provide a guideline for future development (right).
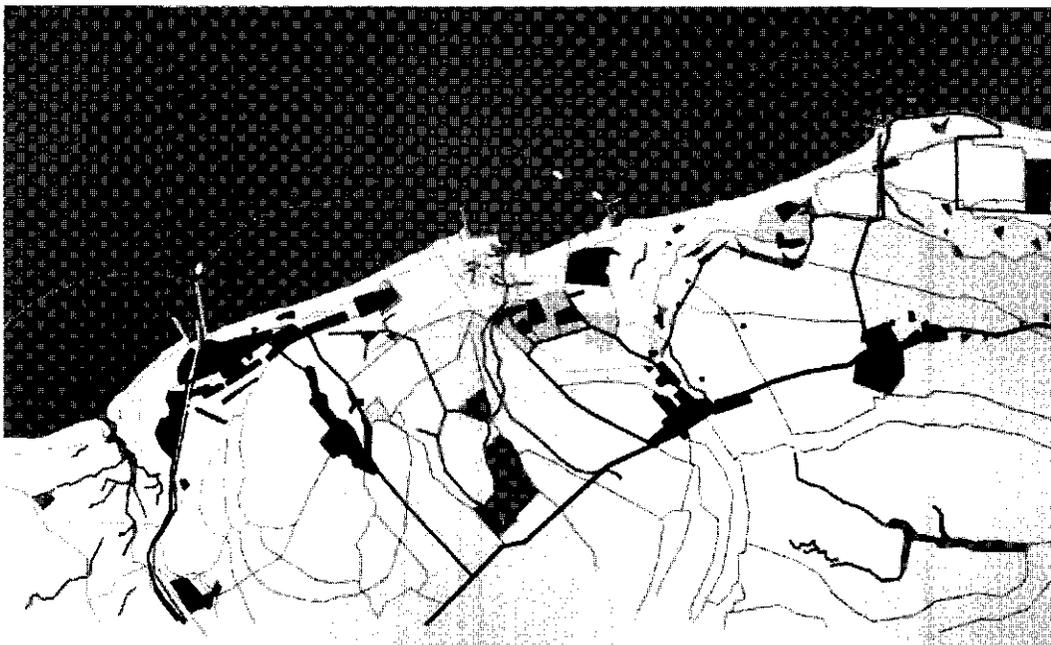

Figure 161   Overall plan for the coastal zone (left and right; 2000, design by M. Knuijt et al.).

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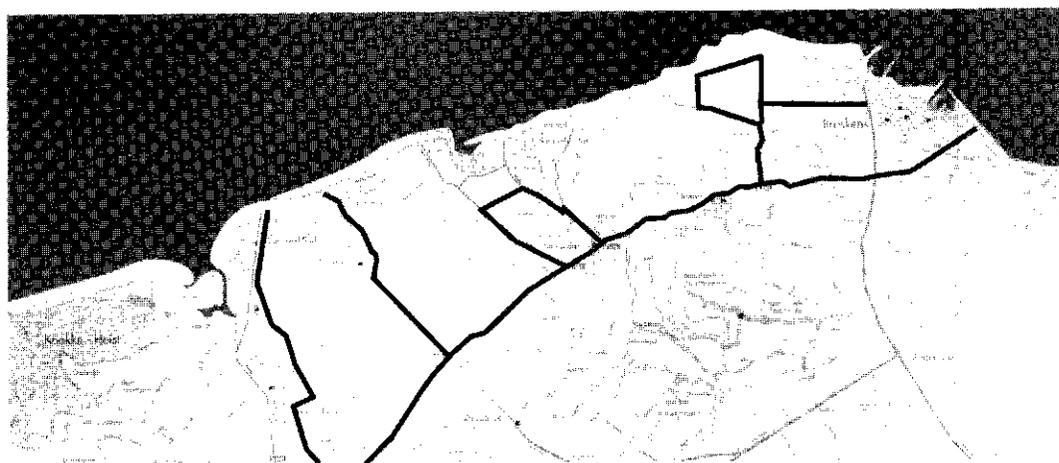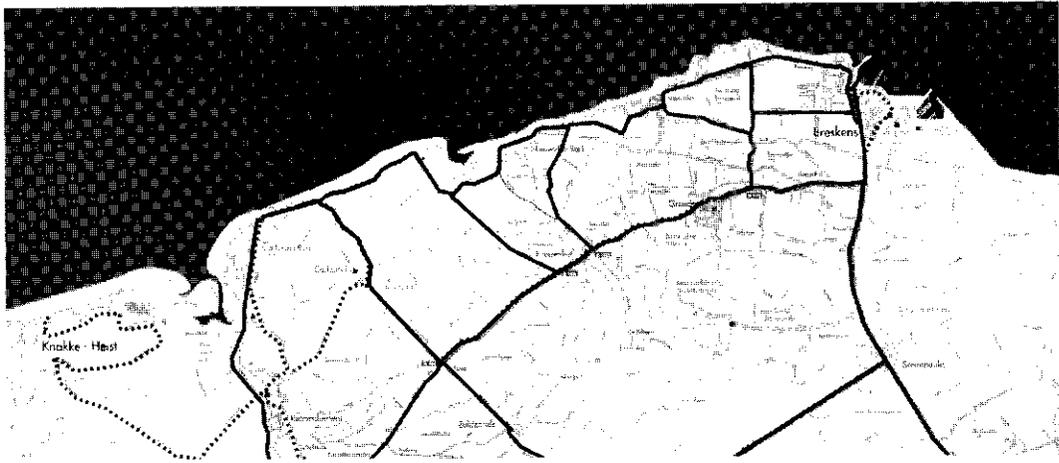
Figure 162, 163   Present (above) and future main infrastructure (below).

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The coast was carefully zoned, in order to control tourist pressure and to create different ambiences. Tourist facilities were clustered so that quiet and peaceful areas could be created where nature, landscape and water would prevail. A new road for motorized traffic was planned at a distance from the coastal zone. Coastal corridors, which consisted of a *badweg* (seaside road), a *parkeerkamer* ('car park room') and the actual access to the beach over the dunes, opened up the coastal area from the main road. Each of the coastal corridors got its own theme (sophisticated, familiar, cultural and maritime/culinary) related to the seaside resorts and their different tourist target groups. The main road and the seaside roads, which consisted of dead ends and loop roads, formed a clear and simple comb structure. Special markings, which would visually narrow the roads and slow down the traffic, distinguished the seaside roads from normal roads.

SERVICECLUSTERS

sanitair

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OPTIONEEL
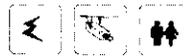
bewaking + lift

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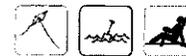
verhuur

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Figure 164, 165   Possible facilities at the *parkeerkamers* ('car park rooms'). The selection would depend on the location, the size of the car park and the nature of the target group.
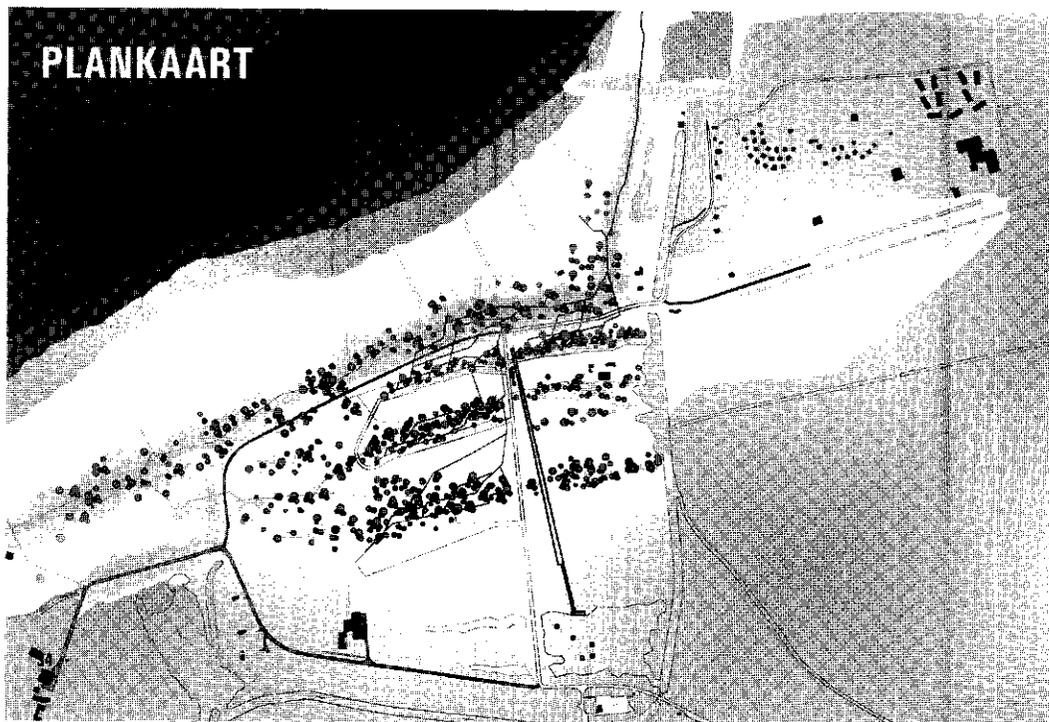
Figure 166   A design example of a seaside corridor near Groede. The extension of the coastal zone with inner dunes, wet meadows and creeks is clearly visible. Three successive car parks are situated in the dune area along the seaside road. 'People can experience the principle of dynamic coastal defence by walking to the beach: through the sequential dunes and over the outer dune onto the beach' (interview with Knuijt in 2005). An artificial ramp leads from the car parks to a bird-watching cabin on the side of the polder.

Large car parks near the dunes and the beach would replace the many dispersed, small car parks. The new car parks would be combined with a variety of other facilities, depending on the theme and the target groups. The beach accesses were designed as a narrative with a sequence of experiences along the walk from the car parks to the beach. The main accesses were marked out as a wide and twining path, visually attractive for visitors and accessible for emergency services. A look-out was designed on the top of the last dune. 'Our clients suggested putting gadgets like Miffy signposts on the top of the dunes. That was what they had seen elsewhere. But we thought it should not be like the Efteling[1]. The quality of that place is that you can enjoy peace and space. We had to come up with a way to present peace and space. When the bicycles and motorcycles would be gone, people could enjoy the view of the sea. We designed a small platform where people could sit down for a minute just beside the path' (interview with Knuijt in 2005).

Secondary accesses were designed in a modest way. Existing stairs were to be replaced with a slanting path of sand, shells or wooden boards, depending on the theme of the nearby seaside resort. 'Stairs usually disappear. The sand never stops blowing, which gives them an unjust image of overdue maintenance' (Knuijt et al 2003, p. 17). Accesses in the quiet areas between the seaside resorts were more or less hidden from view. They were to look like natural paths across the dunes.

An international long-distance coastal bicycle route from the French border to the Netherlands was one of the additional assignments. 'The assignment for the design of the Dutch part of the bicycle route between Adinkerke and Breskens is more than just the design of the route. It includes giving an impulse to the landscape.
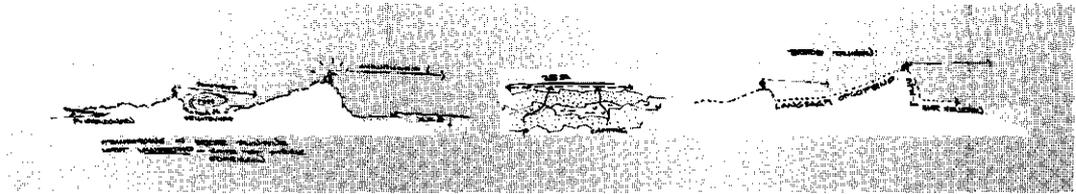


Figure 167   The route to the beach is carefully staged.

ɔrofiel badweg Groede, huidige situatie onverhard pad

'ɔekomstige situatie verharde badweg, losliggend fietspad en duinovergang
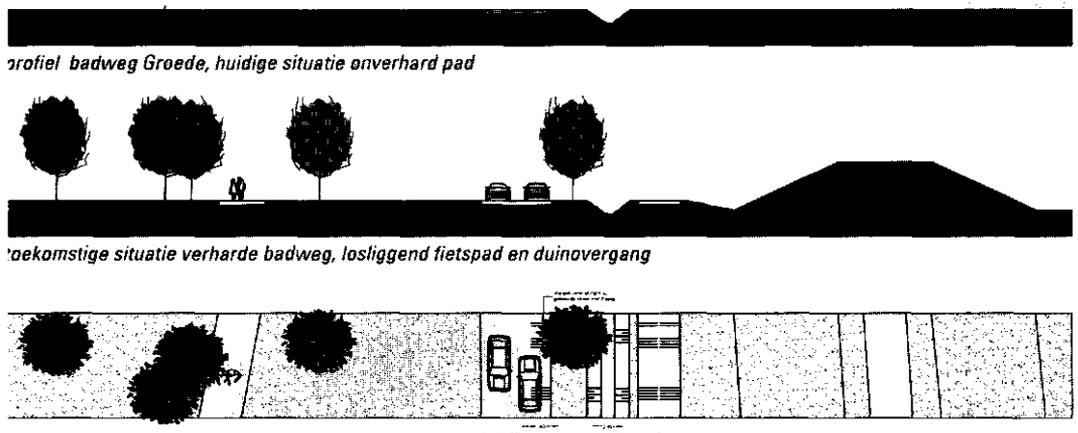
Figure 168 Cross-section of the seaside road at Groede.

Emphasizing the characteristics of western Zeeland Flanders can strengthen it. The genius of the landscape will be expressed' (Okra 2001, p. 7). The designers wished to make the landscape legible. They marked out a route along special edges and transitions in the landscape: natural borders, transitions between different landscape types and the borders of former islands. The route followed dykes and crossed polders, to enable people to experience the contrast between the edges and the interior of the many polders. A part of the route was marked out along the Zwartegatsekreek, a former creek between some of the islands of Zeeland Flanders. The creek was to be developed into a natural zone with wet meadows. The route crossed the border of the former island of Cadzand, which was visualised with a greenbelt.

Figure 169 A long-distance bicycle route as a sample sheet of the landscapes of Zeeland Flanders (2001, design by Okra Landscape Architects).

Figure 170 The landscape plan for the former island of Cadzand.

The borders of the oldest polders, which date from the 11th and 12th century, were marked with paths and pleached hedges. The edges of younger polders were visualised in the landscape by the restoration of the low dykes and by planting them with characteristic pollard willows. 'By following the landscape characteristics, the route provides an image of the changing landscape. It offers a panorama for cyclists, hikers and horsemen to enjoy (Okra 2001, p. 9).

The designers tried to make the landscape and its history legible in their design. 'People can experience a landscape in different ways, on different levels. Some are easy and superficial. Others are more complicated and require a certain knowledge and ability to read the sings in the landscape. People can take a route and enjoy scenic views of the landscape. Ok, fine. But if we make a landscape legible, there is more to experience. People can find signs and traces that tell them how the landscape is organised and how it functions. If we consistently plant avenues with trees at the borders of the polders, people can discover that there is a system behind it. If we restore an old creek, which is just a ditch now, and mark out a path alongside, we think that people on a bicycle trip will understand that these creeks are characteristic for this landscape. We can add another layer, a polder stone along the bicycle path for instance.
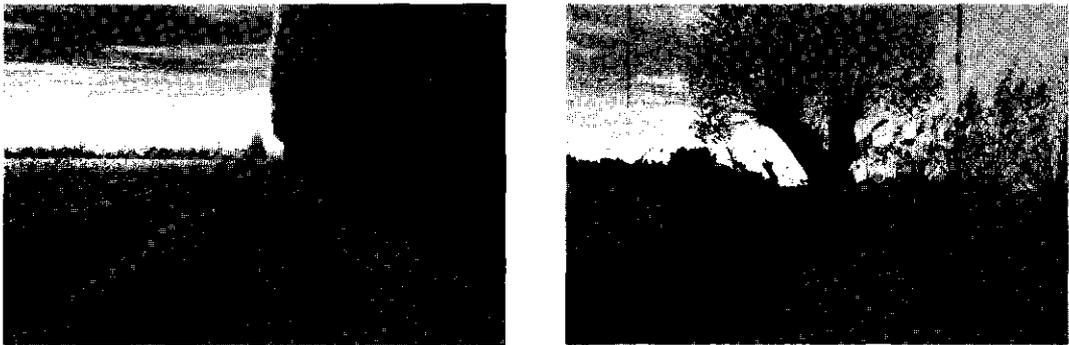

Figure 171, 172   Images of the bicycle path in the polders.
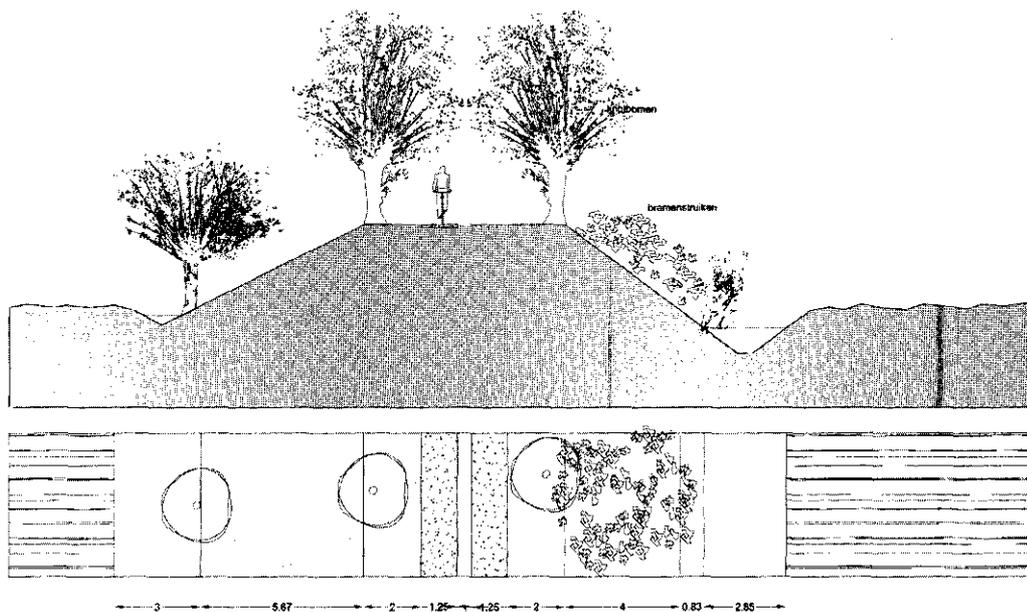
Figure 173   A cross section of a part of the bicycle path.

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People can find out that each polder has a name and when that polder was reclaimed. Not everyone will read a landscape like that, but that's ok' (interview with Knuijt in 2005). They were very careful though in their choices on how to express the narratives of the landscape. 'We want to give the landscape more depth. We keep trying to make it possible to experience the landscape without turning it into a theme park. Our client suggested placing frames with views on the church towers. I don't want to do things like that; it doesn't add anything. A place like that doesn't need a signboard. That is completely overdone in relation to the information it provides. The challenge is to find a way of giving information in such a way that it is almost invisible' (interview with Knuijt in 2005). The designers' strategy was to give people some knowledge of the coastal history of the lowlands in a natural way. An illustration of this strategy is the polder puzzle that was designed for that purpose, a play object along the route. The pieces of the puzzle represented all the polders with their names. The oldest polders were fixed and the younger polders could be moved. But their ambition went further than offering information to incidental visitors in a nice way. They found out that local people lacked knowledge of their landscape as well. Few people realised that the landscape still contained remnants of the polder system dating from the early Middle Ages. These remnants appeared to be very vulnerable. 'Farmers want to join parcels together and excavators remove an old dyke or a medieval ditch with one casual move. Ignorance led to the disappearance of many early medieval borders. They just don't know. If we can make sure that footpaths will be realised along these old borders, the history of this landscape will be embedded in people's minds and it can live on' (interview with Knuijt in 2005).

Figure 174, 175   The polder puzzle; a play object and an instrument to tell the story of the history of the landscape

8.6.2 Staged discoveries in Zeeland Flanders

Problem setting
The increased interest in cultural heritage is fully exploited to diversify the tourist product of the Dutch coastal area. Following the redevelopment of other military lines of defence[2], remnants of 16th en 17th century defence lines in the Dutch-Belgian borderland were also to be transformed into tourist attractions. The landscape designers were asked to develop a conceptual plan that could set the conditions for implementation and management. Concrete detailed designs were not part of the assignment. They consulted experts on how to manage history in their design. Landscape designers, historians and leisure experts commonly agreed that the defence lines should not be turned into a ready-made attraction, fully renovated and equipped with information panels.

Historian Ed Taverne observed that many people were interested in history in a broad context, but that only a few artefacts were left. He suggested to broaden the narrative and to present the landscape as a whole as a 'lieu de mémoire' (area of remembrance). Where the historical forms had perished, new meanings could be evoked with land-art-like operations instead of minute restoration. Leisure expert Hans Mommaas was no supporter of restoration or over-theming either. In his opinion, the defence lines should even be hardly recognizable, apart from some locations close to other mass tourist attractions, which might be themed explicitly. He thought people should be taken more seriously and that they should be challenged to use their creativity. 'His approach appeals to landscape designers; we don't like everything to be tidy and completely restored. We prefer to make special, unique places in the landscape to a predictable museum-like formula' (interview with Feddes in 2005). The lines should 'subside' into the landscape. 'Signs along the line have to be reduced to an absolute minimum out of respect to history. Visitors have to depend on mere discovery, only reserved for the diehards that are really interested. All existing indications have to be removed. Through traffic has to be rerouted and asphalt has to be removed' (Sijmons et al. 2003, p. 168).

All experts thought it was necessary to create spatial coherence in order to make sure that relics of lines and forts would be preserved in their landscape context. Sole cultural-historical value wouldn't hold up against agro-economic forces, however. Other programs were necessary to guarantee a sustainable spatial coherence.

Design

Landscape architect Yttje Feddes and her colleagues had worked on the Defence Line of Amsterdam and observed an essential difference between the two lines. The Defence Line of Amsterdam had been designed as a coherent regional structure, while the State-Spanish lines never had been. They consisted of a collection of smaller lines; each developed to defend another town and they had never been transformed into one continuous defence line. She hesitated to connect these lines into a main regional structure, and chose to use ecological and water management objectives to develop a regional landscape framework instead. This 'landscape backbone' of watercourses, marshlands and extensively managed meadowlands was to become a zone of lower dynamics, conform the framework planning concept. These activities combined perfectly well with the special position of the defence lines in the sidelines of spatial dynamics. It would connect the different defence lines, and integrate them into the landscape.

Figure 176   State-Spanish Defence Lines in Zeeland Flanders.
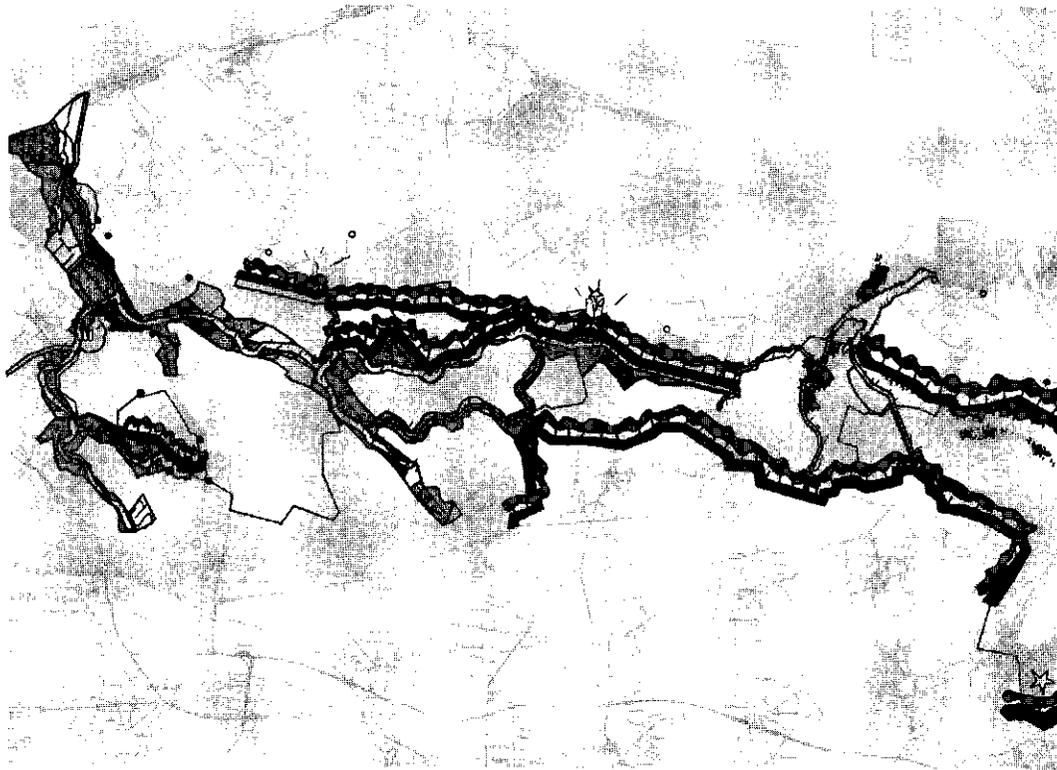
Figure 177   Conceptual plan: spatial definition of the Defence Line Zone and landscape strategy (left and right; design 2003 by H+N+S landscape architects)
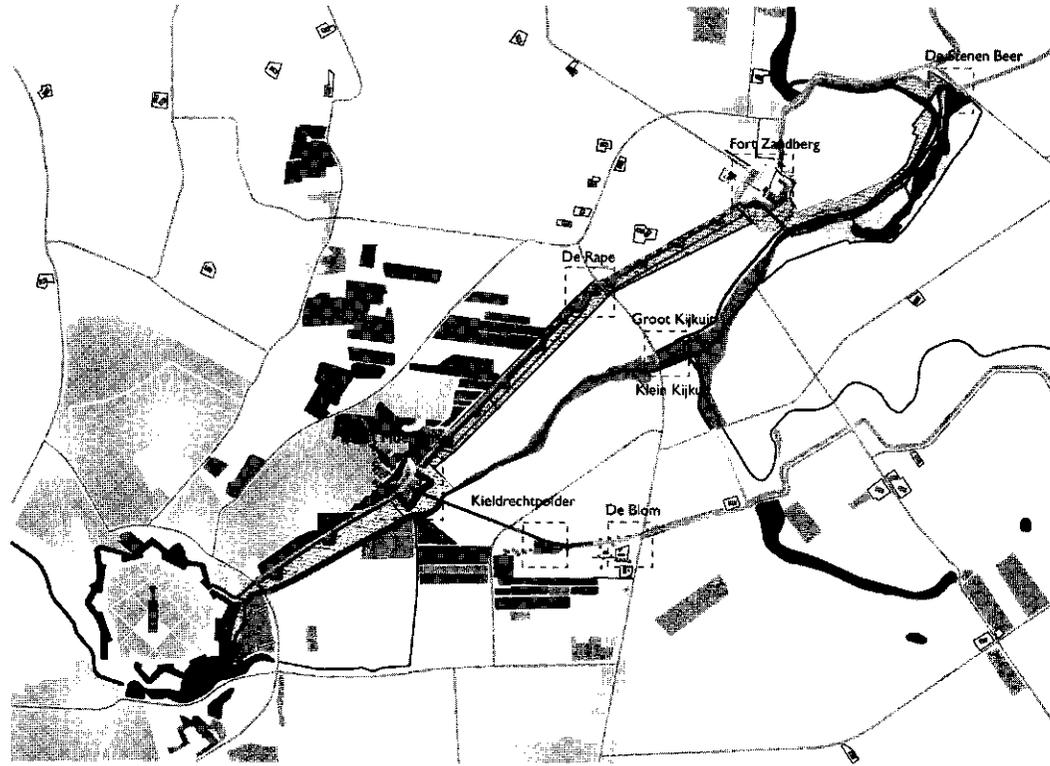
RONDWANDELING HULST ingrepen

Figure 178   Design example for a stroll near the town of Hulst.

L E V E N D E
P L A N K A A R T

extensief grondgebruik

kreken

herstel profiel dijk

natte voet

enclaves bos natuurgebied

plekken van bestaande en
verdwenen forten/schansen

rondwandeling en kniepad

zoeklocatie museum

buitendijks in 1650
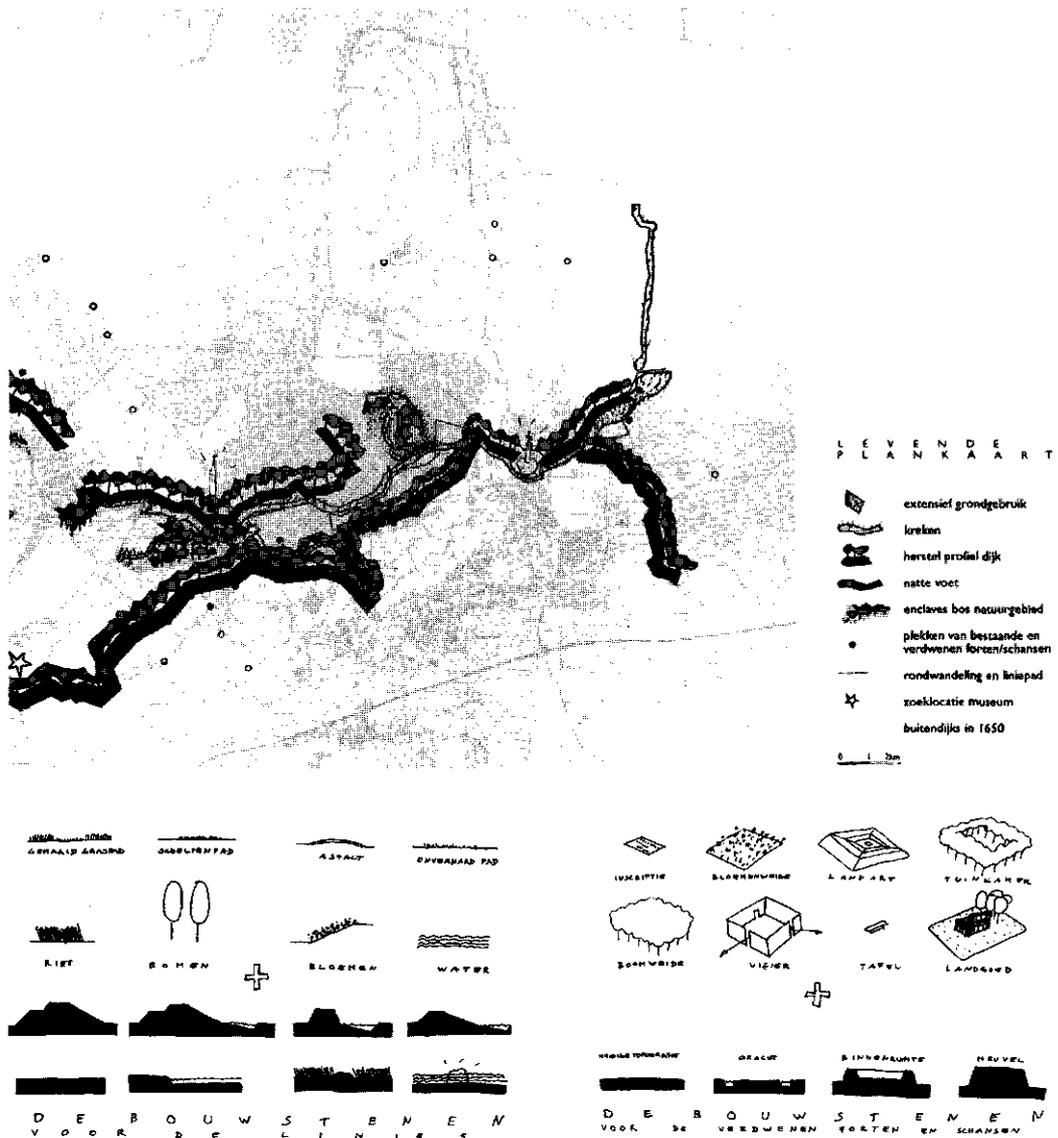
Figure 179, 180   Design principles for the forts and redoubts and for the dikes.

'Restricted land use destinations and landscape elements will give rise to an east-west orientated Defence Line Zone. Little by little, the contrast between the zone and the surrounding agricultural landscape will grow. Yet, the Defence Line Zone will only have meaning when the remnants of the military defence works are recognizable in the landscape. [...] The dikes that were made to connect forts and redoubts should also be distinguishable from other dikes' (Sijmons et al. 2003, p. 229).

A continuous trail along the Defence Line landscape, following the defence dikes and occasionally crossing the agricultural landscape in between, would connect the various parts. Strolls from the towns, and a strategically located Defence Line Museum completed the leisure program in this region. The strolls were elaborated in detail, and none of the paths were paved, in order to strengthen the contrast with local roads. 'Accessibility of the countryside is of major importance, but so is the staging of the passage. I want to enable a landscape experience along the route in a certain way; the design has to appear ordinary and fit in with an everyday environment instead of looking over-designed' (interview with Feddes in 2005).
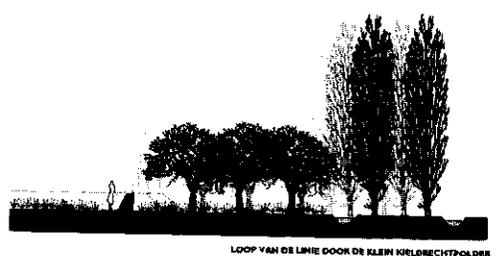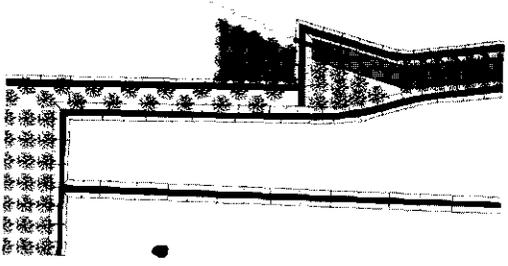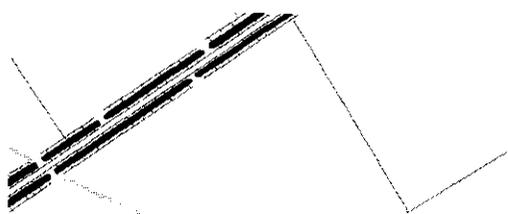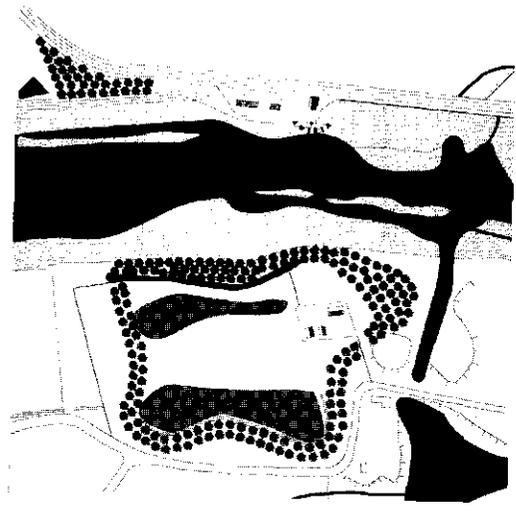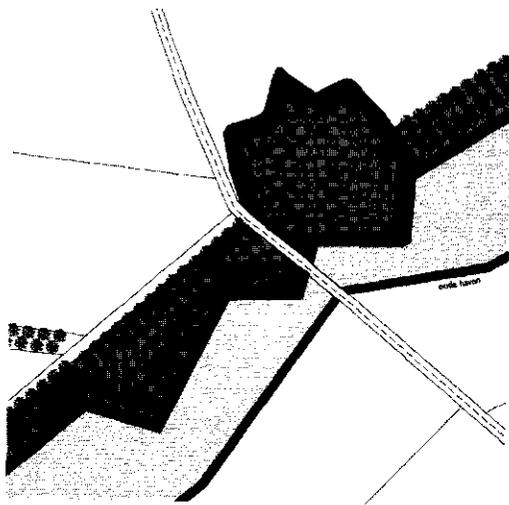
LOOP VAN DE LINIE DOOR DE KLEIN KIELDRECHTPOLDER
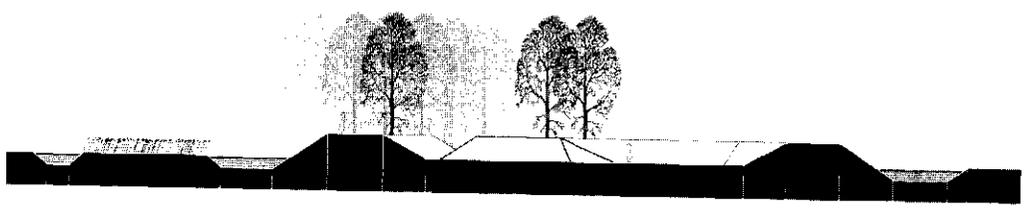
FORT DE RAPE
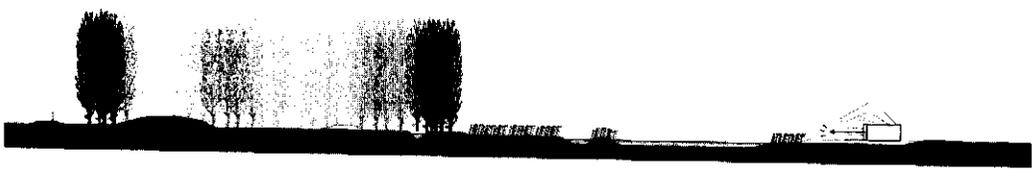
SCHANS KAAS EN BROOD EN ST. CATHARIJNENESCHANS

Figure 181 - 186   Design examples of some of the forts.

She explained 'ordinary' as designed with love and care, without many preconditions. In her opinion, that didn't exclude explicit design tools, as long as it didn't result in a park atmosphere. She was of the opinion that parks belonged to the city; this place, however, asked for a walk in the country. Parks were environments full of demarcations, rules and regulations. That would be fatal to a landscape like this one. In this landscape, spaces for outdoor recreation were found in the landscape margins. 'The unprofitable parts of the production landscape; I think that is beautiful. Margins are part of landscapes too and people need to be able to experience those margins' (interview with Feddes in 2005). It was exactly the informal facilities like tiny, narrow paths or a board over a ditch that would make these margins fun.

The designers developed general design principles for the dikes and forts. They chose to keep the defence lines inconspicuous, though the walks along them were carefully staged with scenic views and subtle details. Their proposals consisted of subtle, asymmetrical re-profiling, different types of paths, and a few added landscape elements like a reed bank or a row of trees. 'A careful observer will recognize these dikes. If not, so be it. It isn't a problem if people don't see these things' (interview with Feddes in 2005). A distinct realm was chosen for the forts. The designers tried to create a contrast between the elements and the surrounding landscape in order to make the elements more conspicuous. The forts and redoubts were to become special, exciting places, dramatised by the remodelling of the surface level and the addition of upward elements. On first sight they would merge into the landscape, patiently waiting to be discovered by visitors. Then, when visitors would come across them, they would suddenly reveal their special character. Although Feddes thought the regional structure was important and saw it as part of her job to make the underlying landscape structure legible, she thought the value of the design lay primarily in its detailed elaborations for specific sites and routes. 'That is where people will experience the landscape most. Moreover, individual parts are much easier to realise, by local authorities for example. To implement the complete design at the regional scale will prove very difficult' (interview with Feddes in 2005).
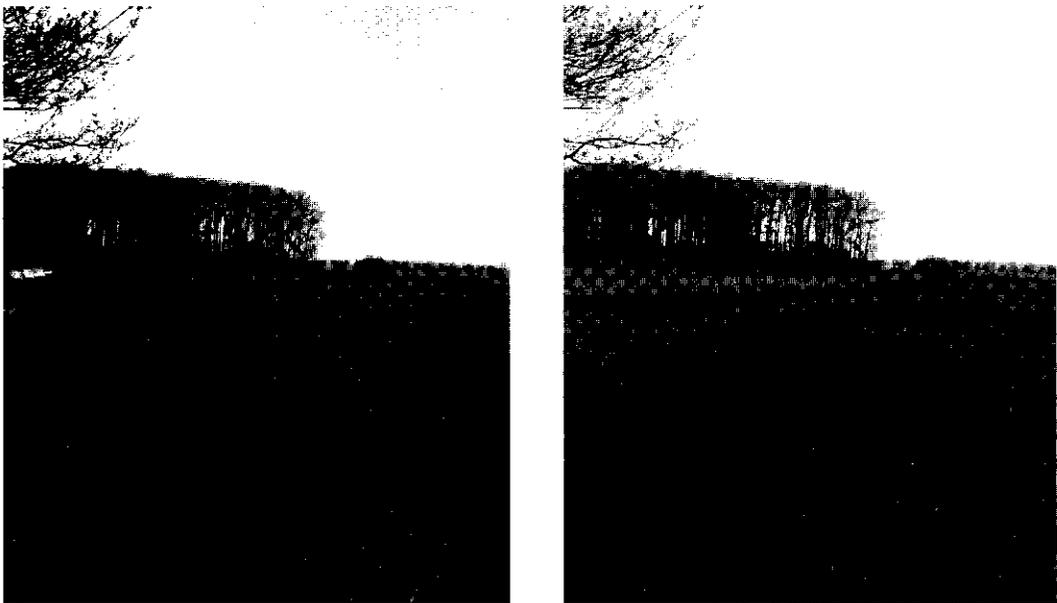

Figure 187, 188   Simulations of the future situation: a fort to be discovered by visitors and a special sight at a fort.

8.6.3 Drama returns in the Drentsche Aa

Problem setting

One of the areas that were to be declared a National Landscape was the Drentsche Aa stream valley. Attempts to have the area appointed as a National Park had failed. The main function of a National Park is nature and the area of the Drentsche Aa included a considerable agricultural area. The farmers in the area refused the status of a National Park; they thought a Park was no place for farmers (interview with Strootman in 2005). In 2002, the Drentsche Aa stream valley was declared a National Landscape. Landscape architect Berno Strootman got the assignment to make a landscape perspective. The objective of the plan was twofold. On the one hand, the plan was meant as a long-term, integrated framework for future developments, considering the interests of *boeren, burgers en buitenlui* (farmers, citizens and countrymen). On the other hand, the plan was meant to direct management and maintenance measures. The existing management program focused first of all on ecological objectives. Cultural-historical objectives and landscape objectives were hardly taken into account, which sometimes caused passionate discussions between nature developers and historically oriented people within the State Forest Agency[3].

The plan was to be based on the policy objective 'Development with quality', which meant that changes had to contribute to an improved spatial quality. The existing landscape was to be used as a starting point for a new one, with cultural history as a basis and source of inspiration. Strootman and his team started to get an idea of which landscape values and cultural-historical values determined the identity of the area. They observed that the landscape had become disorderly and fragmented, and was becoming overgrown.
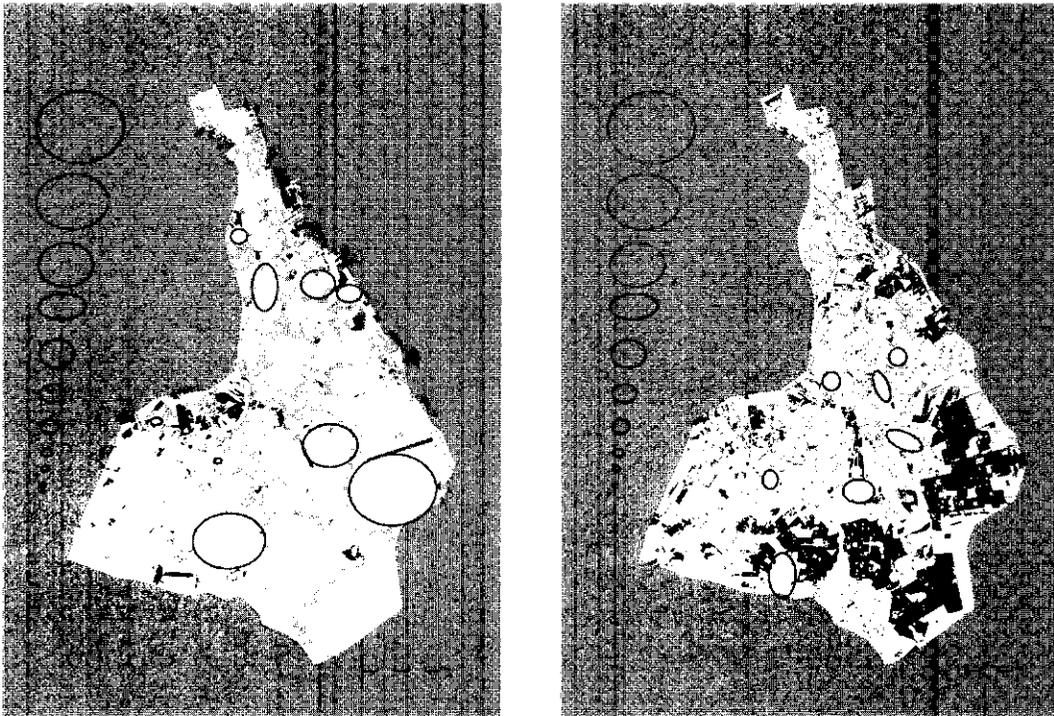
Figure 189, 190   Extremely small, enclosed spaces and vast open spaces don't exist any more (left situation 1900, right situation 2000).

Compared with the period around 1900, the increase of wooded areas added experiential value, but at the same time, the lack of panoramic views and extreme contrasts between very small, enclosed spaces and vast open spaces, meant a *loss* of experiential value.
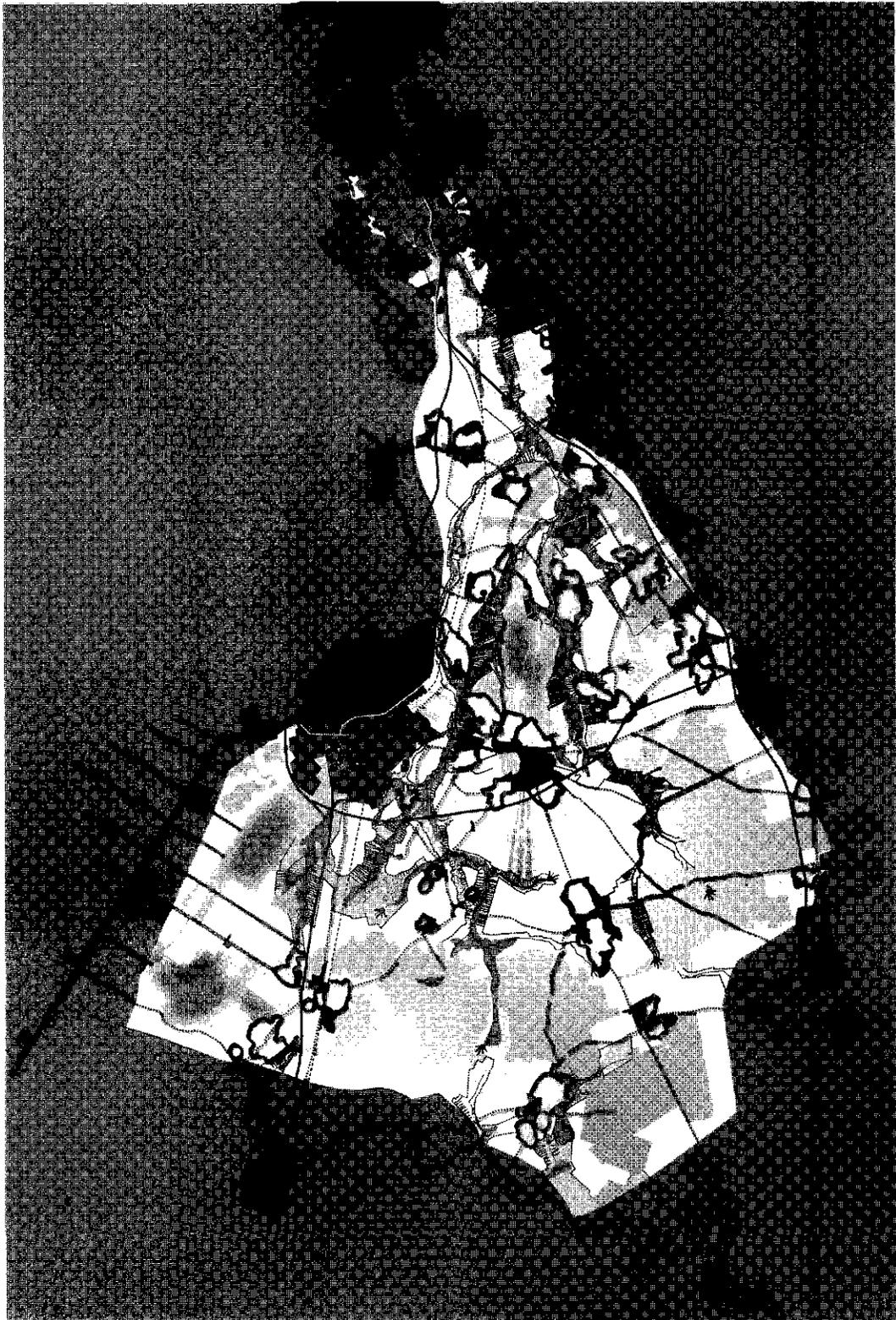
Figure 191   Landscape perspective (design 2004 by Strootman et al.)

Additionally, the main landscape components, such as the stream valleys, were not easily recognizable any more. 'All in all, it was a rather poor landscape with few exceptionalities, few details that could strike you, little structure and hardly any poetry' (interview with Strootman in 2005). For Strootman, landscape experience had everything to do with leisure, particularly in this area. After all, the National Landscape was a very popular landscape for recreation, and leisure would become more important economically. The designers decided that the landscape needed more drama. 'I don't like poor and dull landscapes. I try to give the landscape an impulse. Strong contrasts between vast openness and enclosure can do that here'. Their motive was to create a landscape that was exciting and sublime, a landscape that would evoke strong emotions. 'We wanted to play on Ohs! and Ahas!'(interview with Strootman in 2005). At the same time they didn't want to create a museum landscape that was specifically formed for leisure purposes. They aimed for an integrated landscape approach: nature management, water management, agriculture, living and leisure were to be developed in close relation with each other, all the while taking the historical context into account.

Design

The basic strategy was to strengthen the landscape structure. In order to sharpen the contrast and enhance the experiential value, they emphasized 'the recognizability and identity' of the three main landscape components: the *essen* (open fields), the stream valleys, and the *velden* (the former heath lands, which had mostly been transformed into forests and rectilinear farmlands). The stream valleys with their important natural values were regarded as the main supports of the spatial structure. The wet character of the valleys was to be brought back, and the valleys were to be opened up functionally and visually.
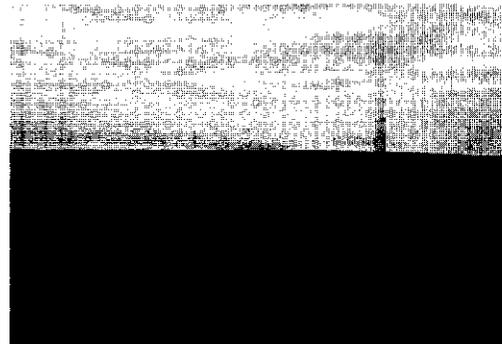
Figure 192, 193   When a forest would be replaced with heath land, an extreme panoramic view would add new qualities to the landscape.

Figure 194, 195   The designers aimed for simplicity. In their opinion the landscape didn't ask for strong, autonomous forms that had nothing to do with the context and called for attention (left). 'You should be careful with that in the countryside. I love a peaceful, rural landscape, a timeless landscape' (interview with Strootman in 2005; right).

Parts of the stream valley with only a few cultural-historical remains would be designated for nature development, while intact parts of the stream valley would be preserved, and hedges and groves were to be reconstructed. The edges of the *essen* were to be bordered with plantings. The open farmlands, woods and heath lands in the former *velden* were to represent the large scale. The designers wanted to make the forests more interesting, exciting and mysterious. They sketched images of 'special elements in a sea of nature and wilderness' (Strootman et al. 2004, p. 60): old trees, water, some carefully designed open spaces and historical elements.

Strootman and his team had suggested to cut down the *Grolloërveld* and the *Elper Noorderveld*, two of the planted forests with rather young coniferous woods for production purposes, and to create a vast open heath land anew. 'Around 1900 the largest open spaces were five times as large as they are today. There aren't any wide vistas any more. By creating openness, we might evoke strong emotions. It would be like a memory of the landscape of 1900. The convex position of the area would enable a wide panorama with views of the church towers of Grollo and Schoonloo' (interview with Strootman in 2005). The local community, however, was furious and objected against the 'people from Amsterdam who came to make their Drenthe into an open polder land.' The proposal was left out of the final plan.

According to the designers, an intricate network of paths and repose areas was essential for recreation. The design encompassed several complementary route networks next to, and across each other: old tracks, dirt roads, historic paths that used to be used for agricultural purposes or to go to church on Sundays, bicycle tracks made of gravel or asphalt, and 'bicycle highways'. Visitors should be able to choose a specific route network or make combinations.
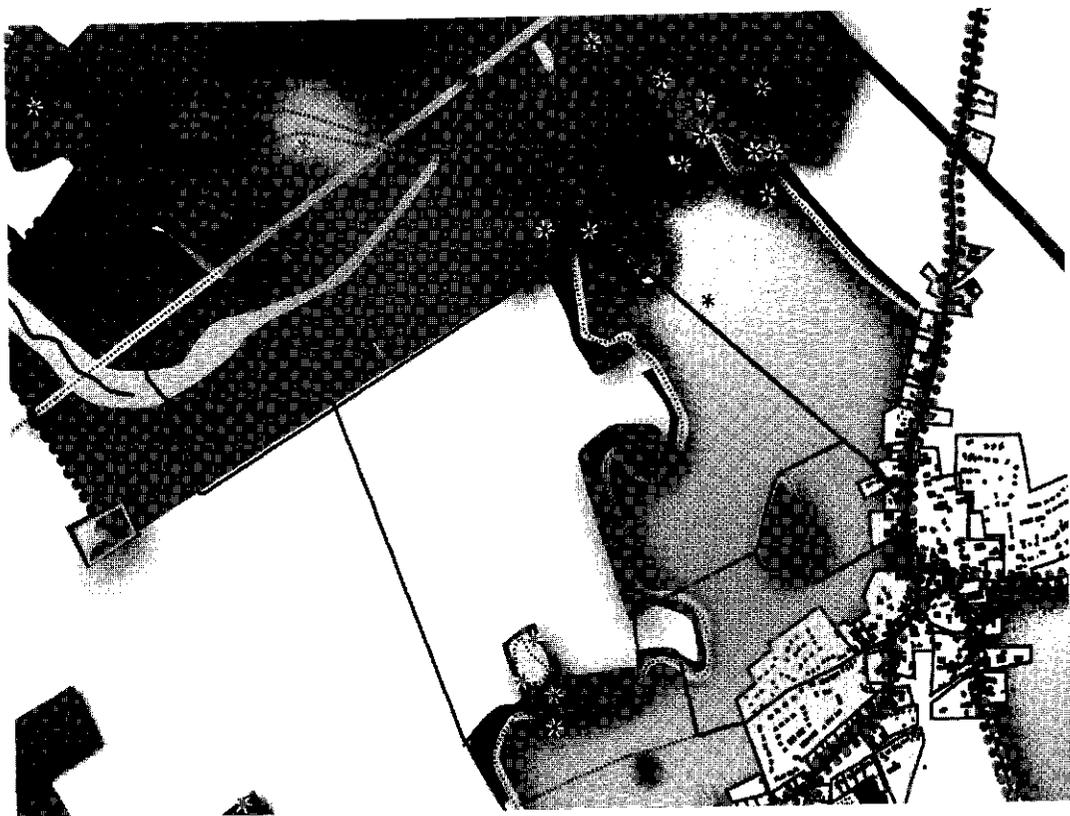
Figure 196 An example of a *rondje rond de es*: a route from the village around the open fields.

The designers preferred narrow paths that would merge into the landscape to asphalted bicycle highways. They thought the area should be characterised by simplicity and modesty. Repose areas along the routes were to be unpretentious. A simple bench would do.

Routes for daily strolls from the villages got special attention. The designers intended to improve the connection of the villages with the surrounding landscape. The routes were located alongside the plantings at the edges of the *essen*, and they were connected to the overall route network. 'You can find all kinds of attractive objects there: tumuli, megaliths, little fens and ponds. We staged them: a scenic view of the stream valley, a vista on a tumulus in the woods. It is almost like Landscape Style or classic landscape architecture (interview with Strootman in 2005).

An existing recreation mobility plan had pointed out *toegangspoorten* (entrance gates) and *knooppunten* (junctions) in the National Landscape. An entrance gate was to consist of a car park for a hundred cars, and additional facilities such as a playground, playing fields and picnic outfits. Junctions were planned to be smaller than the entrance gates, and to have less facilities. The designers didn't agree with the mobility plan, because they thought it would lead to a *verparking* (emparkment) of the landscape. It didn't match with their ideal image of the area: modest, simple, rural and a bit rough. 'Unpretentious facilities do the experience value of the landscape well.
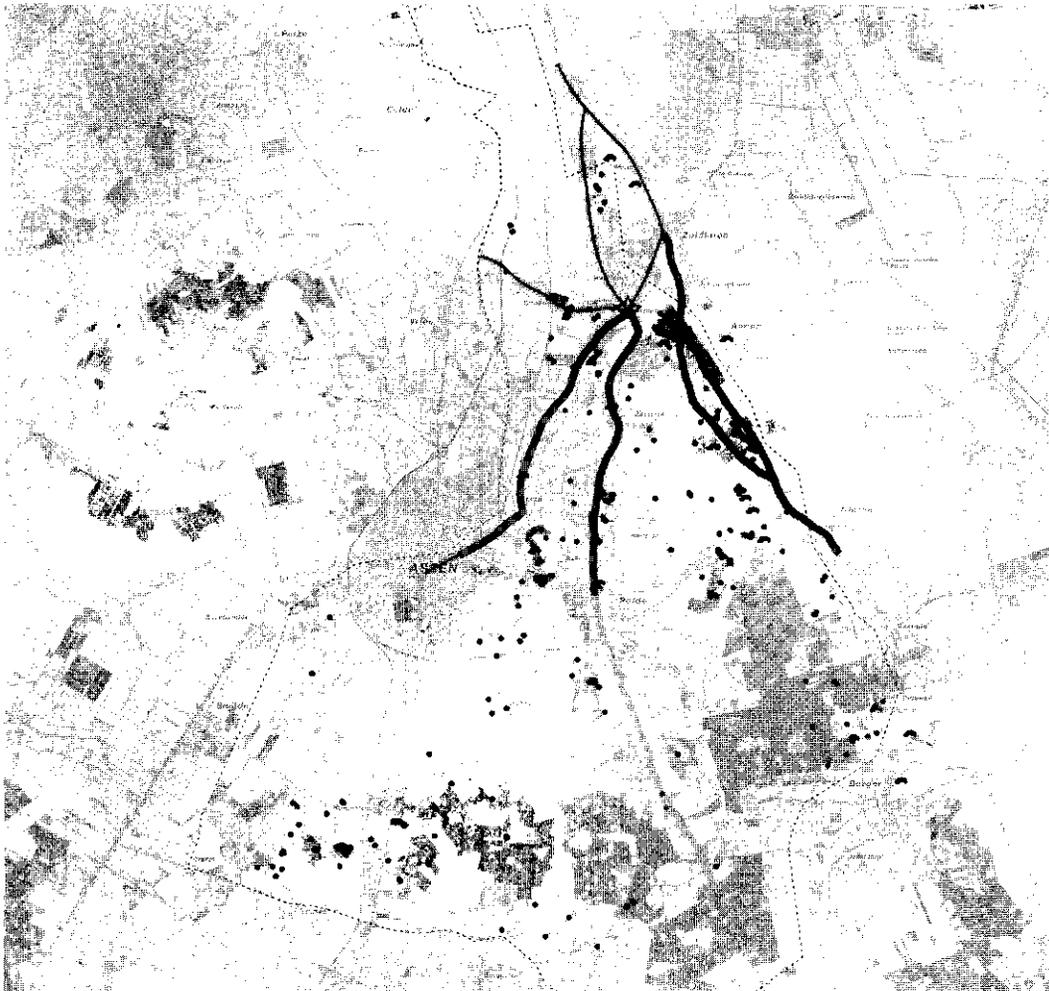
Figure 197   Archaeological remains and cultural-historical elements were used to tell the narratives of the history of the landscape.

They should be a natural part of the landscape. Simple benches, narrow paths, humble bridges and modestly designed sites with archaeological elements such as tumuli or megaliths' (Strootman et al. 2004, p. 70). The designers knew that leisure facilities were necessary, but they didn't like to emphasize them. The landscape with its special features had to be the protagonist. Belvederes, archaeological remains, historical elements and modern interpretations of historical sites were supposed to make the area more attractive.

8.6.4 Theming multivocality in the Drentsche Aa

Problem setting

Organisations in the fields of leisure and tourism, landscape management and cultural history were looking for a unifying concept to promote the province of Drenthe as a lively, historical landscape full of experiences. Their desire was to change the image of the famous megalithic graves from dusty geological and archaeological heritage, interesting to a small group of professionals and interested persons, into a leisure attraction for all (Horlings et al. 2005). The original relation between the graves and their surroundings had often perished and the graves had become *Fremdkörper*: little isolate relics in the fields. The relation between the elements and the landscape was no longer legible. It had become very difficult for visitors to get a sense of time and place, to imagine an exceptional historical narrative behind a worn pile of boulders. They were looking for a new concept that could bring the archaeological content, the qualities of the places in their landscape context, and the narratives associated with the graves together.
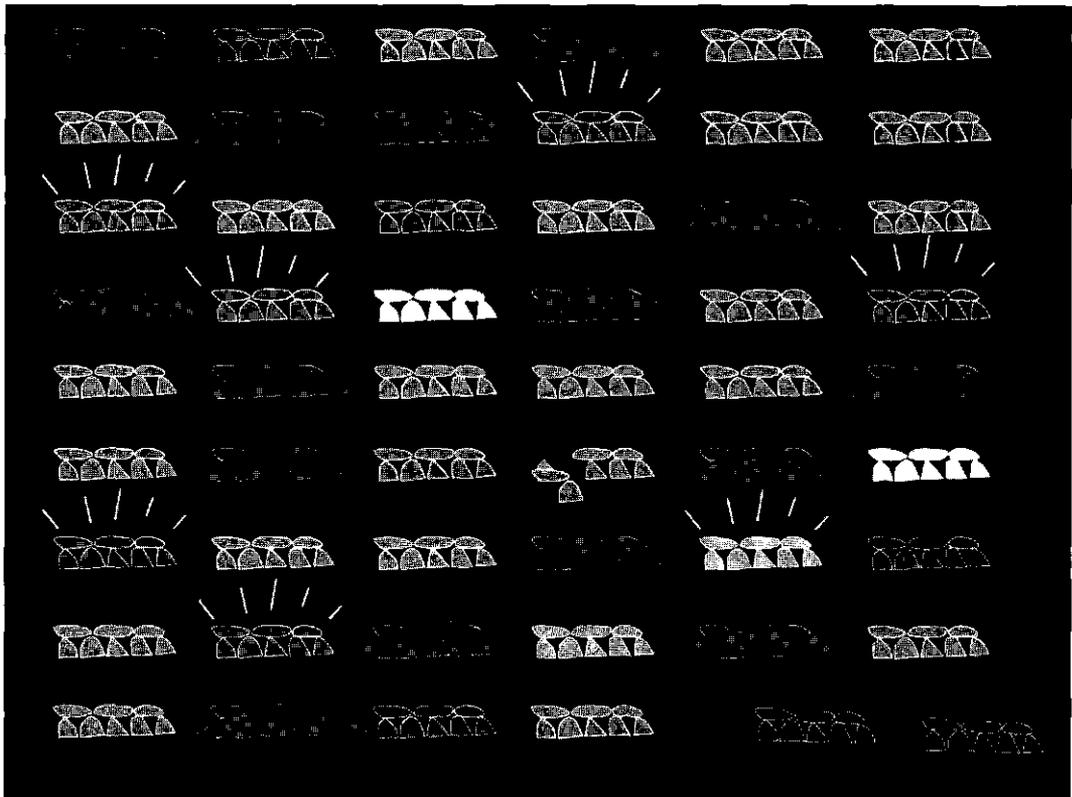
Figure 198   Design strategy for all the graves (2004, design by Horlings, De Groot, Schot, Brunt, Van Assche and Buiting).

A multidisciplinary design team was asked to develop a design strategy and elaborate detailed design proposals for two locations. One, grave number D8, was a small grave, inaccessible and hidden in the woods. The other, grave number D27, was a large grave adjacent to the future information centre for megalithic culture. The proposal for the latter gave rise to heated debates. Peace, respect, mysticism and sanctity were the key notions of the information centre. At the same time however, they aimed at 100.000 visitors a year.
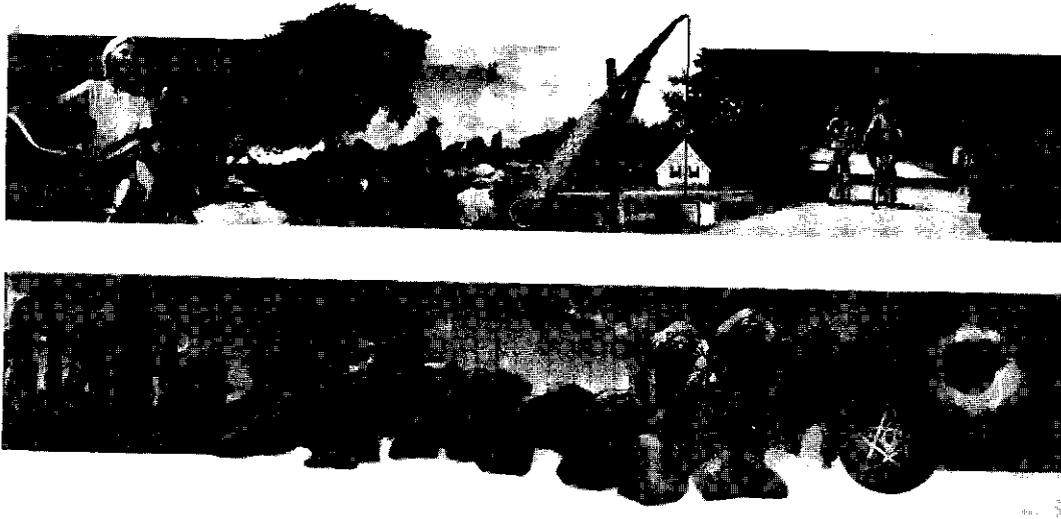
Figure 199 Two different tourist images: Drenthe as a 'nothing-wrong' landscape, and Drenthe as a place full of mystery (Kossman.De Jong 2005).
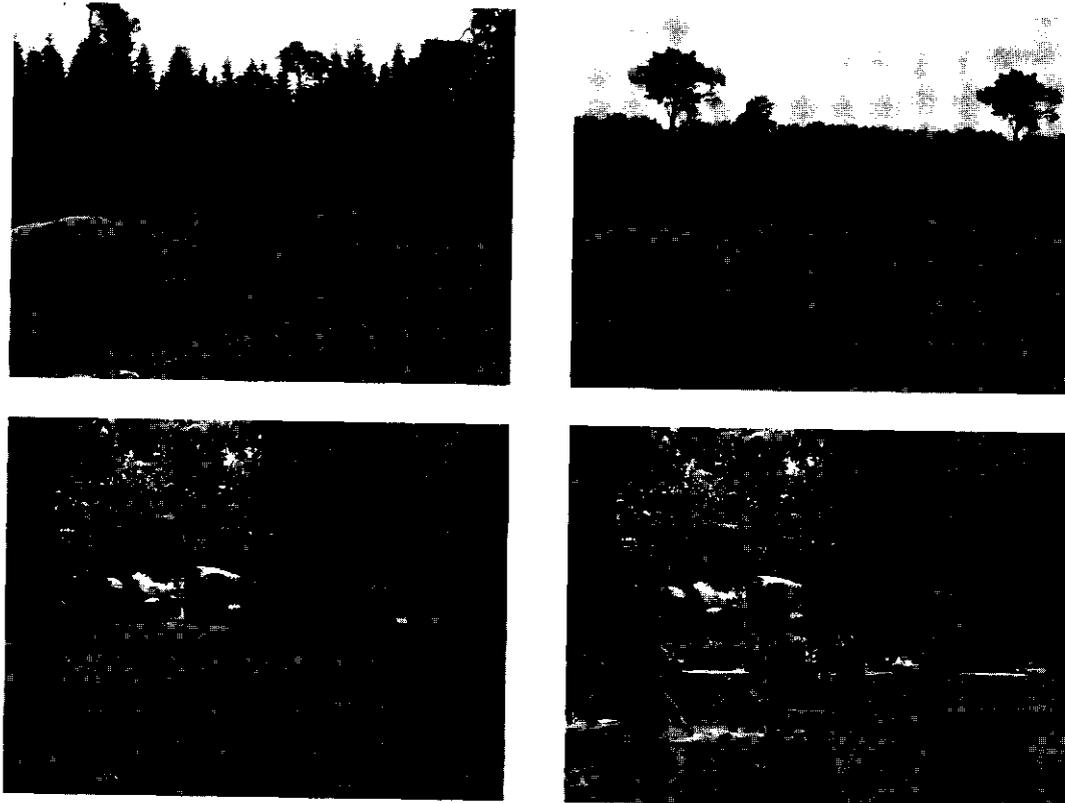
Figure 200 - 203 Design proposal for grave D8 as a staged grave in the woods and for grave D 27 as a staged grave beside the future information centre and museum.

Design

The design team[4] was confronted with apparently insolvable contradictions and dilemmas. Due to the fact that over fifty graves have been found in the region, the designers thought they didn't have to chose one approach and exclude others. They proposed a strikingly simple yet ingenious strategy that took the existence of different representations as a starting point. They formulated four types of graves, each with a different strategy: ordinary, staged, hidden and lost graves. By distinguishing different approaches and themes, each type might fulfil other needs, have a different meaning, and appeal to a different public with a specific narrative. Thus, conflicts could be avoided. *Ordinary graves* would simply be there in the landscape. They would derive meaning from their natural presence in people's daily environment. The second type consisted of *staged graves*. These graves would be dramatised and staged in their context in order to expose a specific meaning, narrative or view. This type was proposed for grave D27, the one next to the future information centre. According to existing plans, the grave wouldn't even be in sight from the museum. The designers felt that this grave should be a special one, and proposed to remove plantings, build a plinth around the grave, and transform it into the main showpiece of the museum. Grave D8 was staged differently. The team proposed to differentiate the site with colourful exotic plantings. The cultural character of the grave would be stressed in an environment lead by ecological objectives. *Hidden graves* would appeal to devotees and archaeologists. These graves would be covered up again, their locations removed from maps, and paths would no longer lead to them, providing future generations with the chance to rediscover them. To find a hidden grave would take a certain effort, and the prospect would not appeal to large groups of superficially interested people. At last, the *lost graves* would only reappear as narratives along a permanent route or as part of temporary events.

1.6.5 Local storylines in the Gelderse Poort

Problem setting

Circumstances had changed dramatically since the late 1980s, when a Land Use Project in the Ooijpolder was drawn up according to the Stork plan (see also 7.1.1). Nature and agriculture had been separated; the floodplains had been designated as natural areas to create favourable conditions for agricultural growth in the river basins. Ten years later, future prospects for agriculture were not very positive anymore, and farmers in the Ooijpolder gladly took advantage of the success of the Millingerwaard floodplain. Interweaving of functions had become a serious option again. The province of Gelderland and the municipalities involved wanted to explore the possibilities of using countryside stewardship activities as a means to establish a network of landscape elements acting as ecological connections and recreational networks; and they commissioned a Landscape Development Plan. Unlike a land use development project, which focused on public lands, the Landscape Development Plan primarily aimed at private lands for the development of new landscape elements. The main principle of the plan was that the implementation was to be done by farmers and other landowners.

Design

Landscape architect Henk van Blerck and his companions were confronted with the residents' and land users' sentiment that the landscape was no longer theirs. Villagers missed their local strolls, as paths and tracks had disappeared over the years.

They melancholically reminisced about the time of their youth, when they used to return home with arms full of orchids, and made long skating tours in the polder. This sense of belonging had perished; in their eyes, their landscape had degenerated into a meaningless landscape, now owned and managed by a handful of farmers and outsiders (Van Blerck and Van Ziel 2004). 'Paths, benches or special sites invite people to make use of the landscape; narratives will grow naturally. The landscape has become inaccessible and has lost its meanings. An inaccessible landscape is also a meaningless landscape' (interview with Van Blerck in 2005). Van Blerck was convinced that, in a densely populated country such as the Netherlands, accessible space was essential for people's well-being. 'It is important for people to stray in the landscape and in their minds. People want to be out now and then, simply go for a walk or a bicycle trip. It is a simple, though essential and universal need' (interview with Van Blerck in 2005). Over eighty years later, Cleyndert's ideas about recreation still appeared to be alive and kicking.
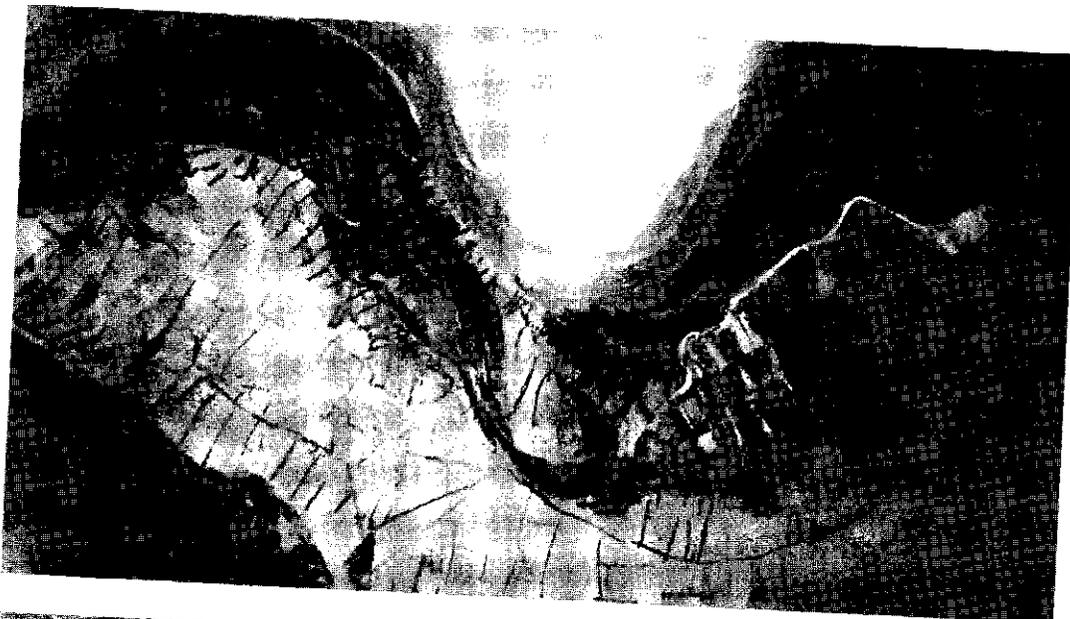
Figure 204, 205   Some of the scenario sketches.

The designers knew that a simple spatial design would not suffice, and chose a planning process that enabled residents, landowners and visitors to participate. The process started with three scenarios in order to explore possible directions for future development, based on the regional identity and regional driving forces. Different narratives represented the three scenarios: *Stork* stood for a strict spatial separation of agriculture, nature and urban developments, *Saint Anthony* for restoration of historical relics, and *Beuys* for innovation and reinterpretation. Many residents and small farmers preferred diversification and innovation 'to cater to new possibilities, markets and chances of the modern society' (Van Blerck and Van Ziel 2004, p. 57). They were positive about countryside stewardship activities, the so-called *Groene Diensten* (Green Services)[5], provided that realistic financial means for maintenance and management were guaranteed.

The next phase was the design of a conceptual landscape plan. The design should be both flexible and directive; it should enable adaptation to individual farming styles and demands at farm level, without endangering the over-all objectives of the plan. Van Blerck presented his design as a 'happy families' game, and presented a map with a landscape zoning. The game comprised one or more sets for each landscape zone. Each set consisted of a range of new, lost or reinterpreted landscape elements. Where spatial dynamics were high, owing to for example new housing extension, more substantial landscape elements would be necessary than in less dynamic areas. The design principles on the cards could be adapted to local situations. The sets were used to discuss the villagers' desires concerning their daily strolls, and to negotiate which landscape elements land owners were willing to incorporate in their lands.

Van Blerck did not strive for a readymade recreational and ecological network design with a blueprint architectonic composition. Spatial interventions were not localised, and the future image was not designed in detail. He produced design models based on storylines that referred to the actual or fictitious past and present of the sub-areas.
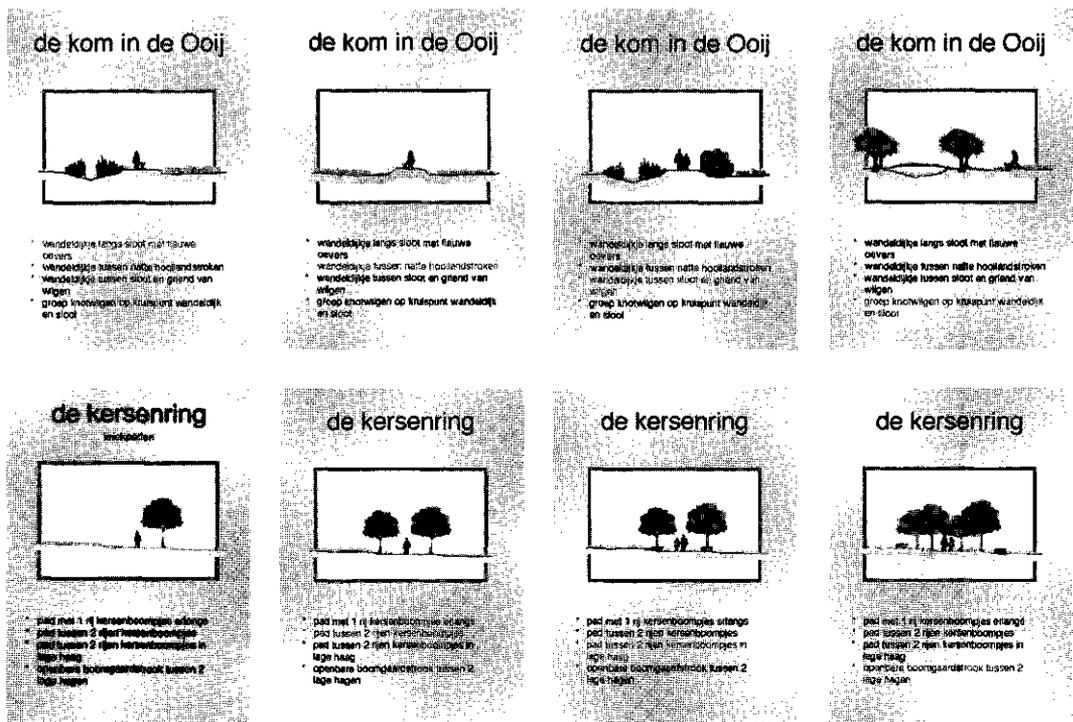
Figure 206 - 213   Two sets of cards, one showing possible solutions for the walking dykes (above) and one for the cherry trails (below).

His storylines referred to the ecological potential, local use or history: the *Vista Romana* (the reconstruction of scenic views referring to the Romans who had settled on the hills, because of their strategic position above the river basin), *stroll dikes* (trails connecting dike remnants into a new recreational network, aligned with reed), and the *cherry blossom circle* (a chain of blossom lanes referring to former orchards on a bowl-shaped slope, creating a small-scale landscape on the gradient from the wooded hills to the river basin). The stroll dikes, for example, had never existed as a network; Van Blerck thought of a possible solution for regional flooding, by planning water storage fields surrounded by embankments, which could be used as footpaths. One or two existing old trails were enough to suggest that historical relics inspired his idea. 'It doesn't matter whether it is real or not, as long as we can make the story alive' (interview with Van Blerck in 2005). The abstract, professional interpretation of the legible landscape as a landscape providing 'orientation, recognizability and identity' was replaced with a legible landscape being a landscape full of local narratives attached to its sites.

The design concerned both space and language. 'Names are important. If I had proposed a row of trees, it would have been just a landscape element like any other. A cherry trail however was something representing the genius of the place; it evoked associations' (interview with Van Blerck in 2005). These storylines and landscape elements at the local scale provided motives and became directive for the future development of a green structure at the regional scale. A rather enclosed landscape crisscrossed with footpaths, bicycle tracks and bridle paths will arise in the long run.
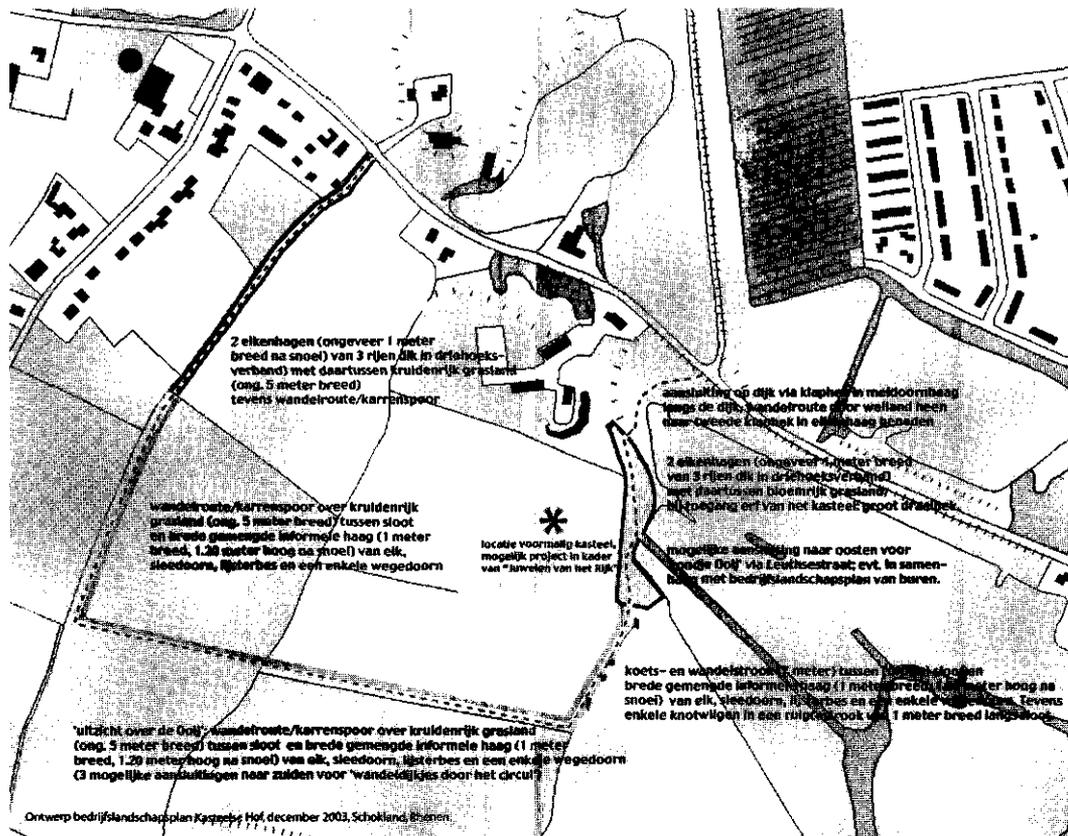
Figure 214 Detailed landscape plan with bridle paths and a route for coaches.

The third phase consisted of detailed landscape plans at individual farm level that were to be mutually linked up into a coherent network. These local landscape plans were not elaborated into detailed technical specifications. Van Blerck will determine the exact terrain modelling, and the locations of solitary trees and surprising vistas on site in the tradition of Harry de Vroome, whom he admires greatly.

8.7 Review

By the end of the 1990s, spatial planning changed into a diverse range of development and implementation strategies, with many public and private parties involved. The role of national and provincial authorities changed from exclusive instigator and executor to director and mediator. The focus on agriculture as the major contributor to rural economies shifted towards a more diverse approach. Leisure and tourism came into sight for economic reasons. At the same time, policy concepts for leisure in rural areas concentrated on 'peace, space, quiet and darkness', and improved accessibility for visitors and residents. Market parties were supposed to take care of other leisure motives and to provide a variety of – commercial - attractions. Intensive forms of outdoor recreation were still planned in green belts around the cities, and the urban environment itself regained attention as a leisure environment as well. Special attention for cultural heritage in planning processes was supposed to diversify leisure and tourism supply, and to reinforce landscape identity.

Compared to previous periods, designs from the last decade showed a growing interest in leisure as a design problem, and in the local scale, notwithstanding designers' persisting comprehensive and integrated landscape approach. They thought every development should be regarded in a wider context, and in relation with other land uses and activities.

Leisure became part of a 'total design' approach. All spatial components of leisure were included. Route networks became more heterogeneous, including public and private roads and free access. New routes were carefully marked out, and designed with explicit use of staging principles. Although the landscape setting in general was still seen as an important leisure attraction, individual sites and elements became more important. A diversity of historical landscape elements was turned into leisure attractions. The contrast with the city was no longer the one and only reference. The unpretentious and modest design approach of everyday landscapes was still an important leitmotif, but explicit and conspicuous design tools were coming into use as well. Various leisure facilities were exclusively designed for the projects. Themes and narratives were used to create special settings with references to other times and places. Some designers explicitly took different meanings and interpretations into account. Legibility was still used as a leading principle, though the content of the concept was somewhat different from previous periods. The legibility of various landscape narratives gradually became a popular base for design.

	Space for recreation		A countryside to enjoy	
Leisure policy concepts	Mass recreation		**Diversification**	
			Joint recreational use	
Planning concepts	**Green areas in and around cities (GIOS)**		**Peace, space, quiet and darkness**	
			National route Networks	**National Landscapes**
Design concepts	Forest park	Park landscape	Merge into the landscape	
Routes	Network of paths	Network of paths	Network of paths	Network of paths
Attractions	Leisure facilities Green setting	Leisure facilities Landscape setting Cultural heritage Nature		Landscape setting Cultural heritage Nature Leisure facilities
Facilities	Sports and plays Picnic sites Car parks	Sports and plays Picnic sites Car parks		Visitor centres Car parks Small-scale facilities (benches, picnic sites, information panels, sign posts)
Setting	Park landscape 1:1:1	Park landscape Bocage landscape		Rural landscape Nature
Leisure perspectives	Contrast with daily urban life and with the city	Contrast with daily life (elsewhere and 'elsewhen') Diversity		Contrast with the city Freedom Diversity Experience Drama
General landscape perspectives	Mass recreation isolated from the landscape	Mass recreation integrated with the landscape		Integrated landscape approach Legible landscape (on different levels) Landscape identity Recognizability Theming Narratives Orientation in time and space 'Exceptionalize the everyday landscape'

Figure 215 Scheme representing the main ideas, design concepts and tools in the period of diversification (present time).

Notes

1 The Efteling is the largest and most popular amusement park in the Netherlands.

2 The Dutch water defense lines were primarily based on the principle of inundation. Thanks to an ingenious water management system comprising sluices, flood canals, existing waterways and dikes, a defence line area could be completely inundated within three weeks. A seemingly shallow layer of water, about 40 centimeters deep, was enough to make the land treacherous and difficult to pass for soldiers, vehicles and horses. At the same time, it was too shallow to navigate by ship. Weak spots were strengthened with forts, bunkers and group shelters.

3 The State Forest Agency owned about 40% of the land in the area of Drentsche Aa Stream Valley.

4 The team consisted of landscape architects Harma Horlings and Karen de Groot, theatre and stage designer Marlies Schot, sociologist and storyteller Dorien Brunt, planner and anthropologist Kristof van Assche and forester Ronald Buiting. The design was made in the context of the design seminar Caravan of Experiences, organised by the Landscape Group of the NIROV, the Netherlands Institute of Housing and Planning.

5 The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality defines Green Services as 'countryside stewardship activities, such as nature and landscape management (including rural heritage), joint recreational use of land (increasing accessibility) and forms of water management. These services can be offered individually or collectively.'

leisure approaches were represented by shared ideas and commonly used concepts, tools and images. Landscape designers' representations in designs from the 1920s to the present time were analysed and described, using the spatial components of leisure: routes, attractions, facilities and setting. The designs provided an outline of the landscape design practice for leisure in the countryside. The reviews at the end of each chapter gave an overview of the concepts, tools and ideas, which were representative for that period. This chapter examines the design tools, concepts and ideas that have come up in a comparative design analysis. It relates to the second set of research questions:

What are the dominant approaches – the leading ideas, design concepts and tools – concerning leisure in the countryside that emerge from the studied practices of 20th century landscape design, and how are they related to the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes?

The outcomes of the study are valid as far as leisure in the countryside is concerned; they don't automatically apply to the whole range of leisure environments. The outcomes of the design analyses were compared, interpreted and structured by leading themes. In this way, the dominant leisure approaches could be reconstructed. Possible explanations were given for both the gradual and the radical changes that were observed. The approaches were put into perspective by relating them to contemporary theoretical concepts of leisure and landscape design. Not only ideas specifically concerned with leisure were discussed here, but more fundamental ideas regarding landscape designs in general as well. The latter proved to be at least as important as the specifically leisure-oriented ideas for

9

Reconstruction of leisure approaches

9.1 Specific leisure approaches

9.1.1 Design tools

Design tools were defined in chapter 2 as 'single or composed spatial elements, positioned in a designed environment and their characteristics (form, composition, size and scale, material)' (Vroom and Alexander 2006). For each of the spatial components of leisure - routes, attractions, facilities and setting – it will be described which tools were used, and how.

Routes

The principal measure in all designs appeared to be the opening up of the landscape. After all, accessibility is a primary condition if one wants to make use of a landscape. If they were inaccessible, landscapes would simply be merelife-sized pictures or they'd might even be meaningless to people. There has been a pressing need to open up landscapes, as over 10.000 kilometres of existing tracks and unpaved roads have disappeared over the last fifty years (HNS 1997), mostly due to land consolidation. As a result, the opportunities to use landscapes for leisure purposes were dramatically diminished. This affected both residents and visitors from elsewhere. In order to provide alternative access, routes for both daily strolls and day trips have been planned and designed since the first landscape designs for the Zuiderzee Polders in the late 1920s.

As landscapes became more important as leisure environments, strategies to open up the landscape expanded. During the period of mass recreation in the 1960s and early 1970s, networks didn't get much attention, as the policy focus was different at the time. Nevertheless, formal policy didn't keep landscape designers like Hans Warnau (5.4.3) and Harry de Vroome (see 5.4.4) from designing walking and cycling networks.

Figure 216 Loss of paths and unpaved roads in the east of the Netherlands, a dramatic loss from a leisure point of view.

The network concept was only abandoned when areas were considered to be too vulnerable. Such areas were treated as natural displays: they were to be viewed from the outside and they were inaccessible or only accessible by dead end paths. Examples of this concept are the stream valley of the Drentsche Aa (see 5.4.4) and, later, the design for the floodplains of Fort Sint Andries (see 7.8.4). As land consolidations gradually started to consider other interests besides agriculture, old existing paths were preserved and new paths for leisure purposes were constructed. New paths were also realized within the context of the Recreation and Tourism Development Plans in the 1980s. Existing road networks were expanded and missing links were filled. The range of the networks grew over time; the connection of networks into larger, supra-regional networks became a topic in the 1980s[1].

Initially the leisure networks consisted of public roads, but in the last decades other strategies were used as well. Public access was stimulated on private and semi-private land, owned by water boards, estate owners and farmers, and by providing rambling opportunities. The latter concept was based on completely unlimited access and it opened up whole fields instead of just lines. The Millingerwaard floodplain (see 7.8.2) is an example of an implementation of this concept. The current policy continues to improve the accessibility of the landscape by means of densification of public path networks, encouragement of public access on private territories and allowing free access on selected public lands[2]. The intertwining of different types of networks is supported by the concept of junctions - leisure transfer points - where people can change from one means of transport to another.
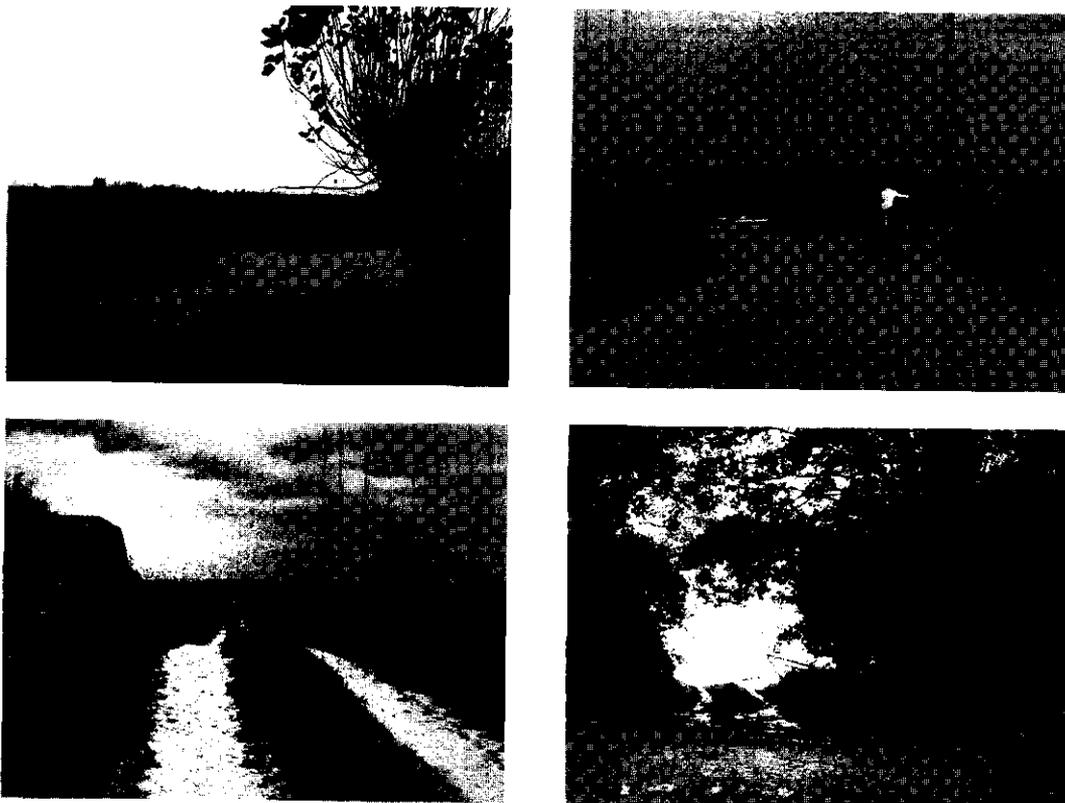
Figure 217 - 220   Examples of routes crossing the different parts of the landscape.

Landscape designers appeared to have a special interest in routes that enabled visitors to experience the structure and diversity of a landscape. Routes have been marked out right through the different parts of a landscape, like in the recent design for a bicycle track in West Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (see 8.6.1), or located at the transitions between the main parts, like designs for the Drentsche Aa stream valley (see 5.4.4 and 6.6.3) and the design for Fort Sint Andries (see 7.8.4). Both solutions were applied in all landscape types and in all periods. Design elaborations varied depending on the nature of the transitions, which varied depending on the type of landscape.

For reasons of safety and pleasure, footpaths and cycle tracks were preferably separated from roads. The 'rear side' of the landscape was usually assigned to slow traffic. Landscape designers preferred these margins in the landscape for their beauty. These footpaths and cycle tracks were thought to be ideally suited for experiencing the landscapes (see 8.6.2).

When given the opportunity, landscape designers paid attention to the exact routing, its profile, the choice of material and the relation with the surrounding landscape. In those cases where they did have this opportunity, they produced a rich diversity of realms. The recent design for the Drentsche Aa stream valley area, for instance, contained all kinds of routes, from wide, orderly and comfortable bicycle highways to rough tracks with almost untraceable places that have to be waded through (see 8.6.3). Still, routes were not always designed that carefully, due to either the circumstances or the designers' personal attitude. As observed before, people other than the designers often made elaborations. It happened that the designers themselves[3] didn't recognize them as design problems, since the works were so small and insignificant.
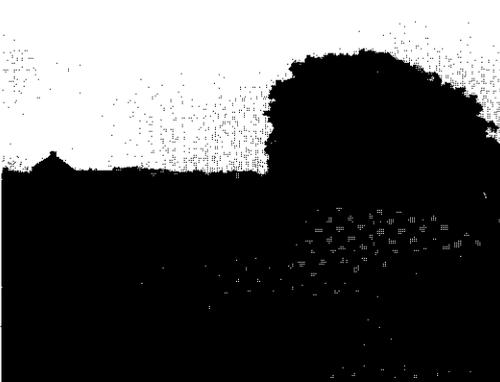
Figure 221 - 224   Examples of routes at the transition zones between the different parts of the landscape.

## Attractions and facilities

Whereas the opening up of the landscape was the primary condition for accessibility, the presence of attractions was seen as a major condition for a landscape to be a destination for leisure. A distinction was made in the landscape designs between attractions on a regional level and attractions on a local level. At a regional level, designers saw both elements and areas as leisure destinations. Some examples of the diversity of elements that were made into attractions are historic objects, the presence of animals or concentrations of recreational facilities; examples of areas are woods, natural areas, beaches and water sports centres. At a local level, landscape designers used special elements as destinations or as attractive objects along the routes[4]. In the latter case the attraction – like a scenic view - can also be interpreted as part of the setting. On the other hand a setting can be turned into an attraction with a strategically positioned bench that enables visitors to enjoy the view.

Landscape designers continued to make use of the landscape as much as possible in their attempts to design an attractive landscape for leisure. In the 1960s, Hans Warnau's en Harry de Vroome's main objectives were to invite people into the everyday landscape and enjoy its beauty. They put an emphasis on the most attractive landscape features and supplied them with benches and other facilities. Their approach was copied in the 1970s and early 1980s. Landscape identity was taken as a starting point and as an objective at the same time. Landscape features were turned into attractions themselves by emphasizing and explaining the characteristics of that specific landscape. Attractions were still quite modest in that period of joint recreational use, but in the course of time there was a growing number of opportunities to 'exceptionalise' existing elements and areas, and turn them into attractions. Designs from later periods showed that an increasing diversity of areas was being transformed into attractions and they showed a growing diversity in the nature of the attractions as well. Nature itself became an attraction in the late 1980s. The wilderness attraction exceeded the attraction of the neat scenic nature that had been seen as an ideal environment for leisure since the 1920s. Galloway cattle and Konik horses became part of the attractiveness of leisure areas. Despite the fact that designers aimed for a character of wilderness, natural areas were supplied with signboards, observation posts and visitor centres to improve them as leisure environments, whether the designers personally disliked them or not. Recent designs showed the introduction of eye-catching landscape attractions that coincided with a trend towards the extreme and spectacular, like the drama of the great silent moor that seems to be without end (see 8.6.3).

Figure 225   Leisure facilities in Harry de Vroome's landscape design for Rolde-Anloo: benches with scenic views on the Drentsche Aa stream valley.

Figure 226 Panorama Krayenhoff: design and planning perspective on the future development of the New Dutch Defence Line, a listed World Heritage Site (design 2004 by Luiten).

A growing interest in heritage and local history provided even more support for investing in landscape design for special sites that serve recreational purposes. Historical relics have become major attractions in landscape designs today. The New Dutch Defence Line was even chosen at a national level to be one of the major landscape design projects (Luiten 2004). The landscape designs for heritage sites were diverse and certainly not purely conservationist. Historical references were treated quite light-heartedly in some cases. They were rather seen as a way of giving access to landscape narratives; the nature of the narrative seemed to be of lesser importance, so long as it appealed to people's imagination (see 8.6.5). Some designers even redesigned historical elements or their context, estranging them from their common meaning and creating new places with different meanings (see 8.6.4 and 8.6.5).

Only when a landscape did not contain enough possible attractions by itself or when a landscape was considered to be unsuitable for leisure, new sites and facilities were added. A frequently used concept for a new attraction was the concentration of recreational facilities surrounded by woodlands. This concept was first developed for the Amsterdam Forest Park, it became common in the 1950s and 1960s when mass recreation was the main concern and it has subsisted until today. A specially constructed attraction like this was the common solution for areas where many visitors were expected or planned, like in city fringes. The size of these areas varied, which sometimes made the border between adjusting existent landscapes for leisure purposes and creating new landscapes rather vague. To what extent is an attraction part of the landscape as a whole; and when do we think of it as isolated from the landscape?

The nature of recreational facilities within the persistent concept of the forest park changed in time. Lawns, piers for anglers, playgrounds, picnic areas and campsites became standard equipment. Other facilities like *trimbanen* (training circuits), surf beaches, ATB trails and commercially exploited facilities such as riding schools, golf courses and canoe rentals were added in the course of time.

If possible, the new recreation areas were fitted in in such a way that they seemed to merge into the landscape. This principle was used in many landscape designs, from Hans Warnau's beads on a string in Oukoop-Kortrijk in the 1960s (see 5.4.3) up to Michael van Gessel's design for repose facilities in small woods in Haarzuilens in 2003 (see 1.4). These landscape architects had the opportunity to choose where new attractions were to be located. Warnau for example located his small recreational woodlands on 'the errors in the land', the sites where parcelling directions changed. However, sites were often chosen for different reasons, particularly at a regional level. Landscape designers involved in regional planning tried to base the arrangement of the attractions on the landscape structure.

Setting
Landscape designers encompassed all leisure components in their designs, including the setting[5]. The designers of the Amsterdam Forest Park distinguished two different groups of visitors. For people who were looking for amusement and sociability, the Park would merely provide a stimulating change of setting (see 4.4.1). A green scenery would suffice. It is not to be said that the designers didn't take this group seriously, but it may be obvious that, to them, the landscape was more than just a green backdrop setting. They regarded the setting as an essential aspect of leisure space that needed careful design treatment. This attitude matched with the needs and wishes of the other group of visitors, the nature devotees. As they would come for scenic beauty and the contact with nature, the landscape setting of the Forest Park would be the very aim of their visit.

Landscape designers did not only try to use landscape elements as attractions whenever possible. Moreover, they treated the whole landscape as a leisure attraction. The landscape was used as subject, symbol and background setting for leisure rolled into one[6]. Hans Warnau and Harry de Vroome made explicit use of this approach in the 1960s. Earlier designs like the reconstruction plan for Walcheren were based on similar ideas, though implicitly. Warnau appreciated the beauty of the vernacular, functional landscape and made it the subject of recreational experience. De Vroome even took the attractiveness of the landscape for recreation as a legitimisation to preserve and redesign the landscape of the Drentsche Aa. The use of the landscape as a subject of leisure became customary in the 1970s, when people went out to enjoy the remnants of landscapes that had almost vanished because of industrialization and urbanization. The popular image was that of a countryside where life was simple and time had stood still, a contrast with the alienating dynamics of the city. Landscape elements that referred to agricultural systems dating from the 19th century and before were preserved, while, at the same time, the landscapes were adjusted to modern agricultural uses and water management. Although landscape planners and designers in the pioneer period had stressed that contemporary, pragmatic landscapes had a certain beauty to them as well, landscape designers in the 1970s and 1980s were concerned about the attractiveness of agricultural landscapes. Land consolidations and increasing efficiency in agriculture had impoverished many landscapes. The spectre of the 'culture steppe', the fear of which had originally motivated planners and designers to get involved, seemed to become reality. These landscapes had a less attractive appearance, a decreasing biodiversity had led to a decrease in interesting flora and wildlife and many historical elements had gone. There wasn't much to experience out there. On the other hand they were not very fond of cosy, nostalgic landscapes either. The ecological offensive in the late 1980s and early 1990s provided an alternative. The wilderness setting of the nature development areas was ideal for rambling and gave an illusion of freedom.

With agricultural perspectives changing and people assiduously in search of alternative sources of income, agricultural landscapes are in the spotlights again today as landscapes for leisure. Agricultural landscapes represent various settings in recent landscape designs: the countryside as a place of 'onthaasting' (slowing down), the landscape that is full of memories and tangible witnesses of the past, a place to explore wildlife, to pick fruits and enjoy 'peace, space, quiet and darkness' or a landscape full of hidden, adventurous places. As leisure experience has become at least as important as the leisure activity, the setting has become an essential means to create the appropriate ambiance. The landscape has explicitly become subject, symbol and backdrop setting for leisure in one.

9.1.2 Contrast with daily urban life

The essence of landscape designers' conceptualisation of leisure appeared to be its contrast with daily life and duties. In that, they didn't diverge much from common interpretations of leisure. Leisure was supposed to represent the counterpart and compensation for daily urban life. This idea can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century when the elite ideal of leisure for the working and middle classes was outdoor recreation, because of the unfavourable conditions in the cities, and their concern for sound pastime instead of 'debauched situations'[7]. Therefore, recreation was regarded as a definitely urban-related phenomenon. Designers' ideas about ideal landscapes for leisure were based on the contrast with the city and urban life. With space as their primary concern, their focus was obviously on the spatial contrasts with daily urban life.

As a consequence, their ideas related directly to the twin concept of town and countryside. In the eyes of landscape planners and designers, a pronounced non-urban character was essential for leisure environments. The designs showed that their ideal landscape for leisure was based on images of cultural and natural environments 'without urban fads'. Landscape designers seemed to share common ideas of what was right and what wasn't for such non-urban environments.

Town planners in the 1920s had to deal with a drift away from the towns, caused by citizens who were looking for 'the counterbalance to hectic urban life' (Beckers 1983, p. 22). Cleyndert's natural spaces offered a planning concept that could meet the presumed needs and wishes. In this concept the representation of the countryside as 'nature' - opposite to the representation of the city as 'culture' – is clear. The concept soon became very influential in planning and design. 'Natural spaces' were basically green environments with scenic and natural qualities. Apart from the protection of existing natural areas, the concept led to planning concepts for the creation of new areas like *Elementen van Formaat* (Large Size Elements), *Groene Sterren* (Green Stars), *Randstadgroenstructuur* (Randstad Green Structure) and *Strategische Groenprojecten* (Strategic Green Projects). These areas were supposed to provide attractive areas for leisure, as the open polders of the Randstad were considered to be unsuitable.

In the context of urban and spatial planning, the non-urban qualities in these concepts usually consisted of their green and relatively un-built character. The countryside was to be preserved as an open space by restrictive policy. The concepts were based on a discourse of town and country as separate entities (Hidding et al. 2000). WWF and ANWB discussed the biased focus of politicians and planners on the openness (read: no buildings) of the Green Heart and claimed that the Green Heart could be much more interesting and valuable for citizens as a leisure environment (Sijmons et al. 1995). Landscape planners of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries brought a spatial policy for the preservation of a spatial pattern under discussion that no longer existed. The countryside had urbanized morphologically, functionally and mentally. At the same time, many urban environments had been 'ruralised' in terms of density.

Although the designers and the landscape planners at the Ministry didn't have very different ideas of what the ideal image of the countryside as a leisure environment was, their discourses differed greatly.
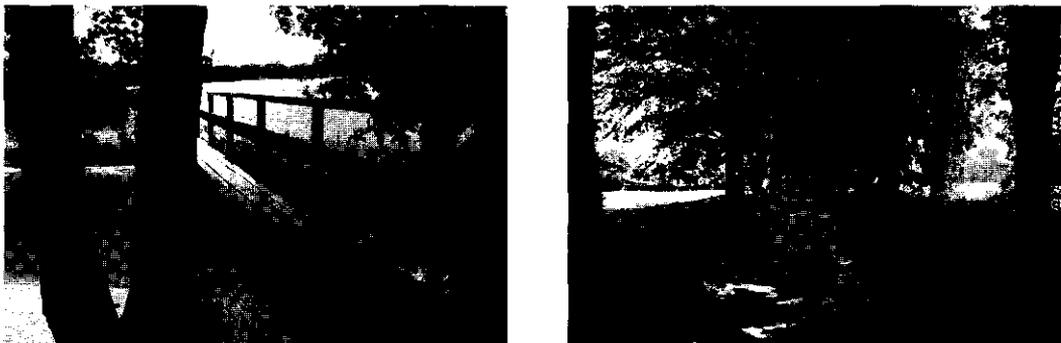
Figure 227, 228   To landscape architect Berno Strootman, the beauty of the Drentsche Aa area lied in its rural character. His plan for the Drentsche Aa area contained reference images of simple facilities in contrast to excessive design. 'Simple benches and bridges, narrow tracks and austere furnishing of the surroundings of archaeological elements will increase the experience value. The feeling to merge into the landscape will be brought about rather by cycling over a simple gravel track than over a wide asphalted path' (Strootman et al. 2004, p. 24).

Both the Green Metropolis concept of WWF and ANWB (see 7.8.5) and the *Visie Stadslandschappen* (Memorandum on Urban Landscapes 1995) were based on a discourse of town and country as locales, a set of places with specific identities and meanings (Hidding et al. 2000). 'In this discourse, 'town' and 'country' are relevant in so far as that places correspond with current images of urbanism or ruralism. 'Urban and rural' in this case are not physical-spatial categories but socio-spatial constructions; representations of ideal-typical images that people see as their desired residential or recreational environment' (Hidding et al. 2000, p. 127).

Policy makers have recently defined other qualities for the countryside: peace, space, quiet and, recently, darkness. The presumed lower dynamics of the countryside are also considered to be an important quality. Rurality is associated with slowness and stability of both humans and the landscape itself. The countryside should remain quiet, it is meant for people that are searching for a temporary change from their hectic daily environment. It needs to be quiet and have fresh air[8].

Like the policy makers, landscape designers saw the countryside as the counterpart of the city. Their translation of non-urbanity into design concepts, however, showed a lot more diversity and richness than just green, un-built space. Their designs went beyond a simple spatial pattern of 'red' and 'green'[9]. They used a range of design concepts to represent the countryside as an environment that contrasted with city life and the city itself.

The designers of the Amsterdam Forest Park mentioned 'the contrast of free arrangement of natural elements with the strictly ordered city life' (Balk 1979, p. 7). They aimed for an illusion of continuity and calmness, in contrast with the rapid growth of the city of Amsterdam. Harry de Vroome regarded rural landscapes as 'natural spaces', contrasting with and compensating for city life (Van Blerck 1987). He tried to create a rural illusion: an age-old landscape with naturally winding streams, scattered with mills and megalithic graves and accessible by traditional, sandy paths. 'Asphalt does no good to recreation; cities have plenty of asphalt' (Van Blerck 1987, p. 105).

Very simple paths were proposed for the land consolidation of Bodegraven in the peat lowlands, not too wide or too heavily constructed and with very modest and simple additional facilities. Although the area was to be opened up for visitors, the landscape designer wanted to create and preserve the illusion of an untouched, historical landscape (see 6.6.1). The landscape designers that made a plan for the future landscape of the coastal zone saw the unbridled growth of tourism as a problem: 'The illusion of being remote from the city and daily worries has diminished' (Bosch et al. 1995, p. 17). By enlarging the coastal zone with new forestations and by upgrading sea resorts, they tried to create a contrast between the busy resorts and the more quiet parts in the coastal zone, which could offer room for nature development and thus strengthen feelings of freedom and dissipation (Bosch et al. 1995).

In the St. Andries area, the landscape designers started out with a variety of recreation target groups, but mass recreation and more extensive recreation were quickly separated from each other and located in different areas (see 7.8.4). Their design for the floodplains again revealed the image of a landscape that contrasted with urban environments. 'Such poorly accessible areas can be mentally important in a densely populated and cultivated land like the Netherlands' (Nieuwenhuijze et al. 1992, p. 19). The wilderness concept, which became popular in the late 1980s and the 1990s, added new images to the non-urban approach.

Any visible human interference would disturb the illusion of untouched nature. Paths, information panels or signposts were rejected. That these facilities appeared in the design all the same, had to do with other, conflicting ideas. People had to be educated in nature-oriented recreation (see 7.8.1) and were thought to appreciate some comfort and ease. Nature development gave rise to other qualities as well. New natural areas could also 'offer freedom and adventure and appeal to one's imagination' (Sijmons et al. 1995: 8). People should be able to ramble, which asked for extensiveness or at least for the illusion of extensiveness. Apparently they thought urban environments didn't offer those opportunities[10]. Despite the rejection of the traditional spatial separation of town and country, the images were definitely based on urbanity and rurality (see 7.8.5).

Recent landscape designs showed more rural ideal images. The landscape architect of the Defence Lines for example (see 8.6.2) looked for design concepts and forms that didn't produce the atmosphere of a park. In her opinion, parks belonged to the city and the Defence Lines asked for a walk in the country. She saw parks as environments full of demarcations, rules and regulations. That would be disastrous in a landscape, just as over-design would be (interview with Feddes in 2005). Others wanted to emphasize a countryside character, which they defined as simple, a bit rough and by no means excessively designed. The area should not be tidied (see 8.6.3).

When the use of non-urban ideal images was discussed with landscape designers, it appeared that most of them weren't conscious of their own non-urban representations. They believed that it was not they but others, namely the policymakers and entrepreneurs, who maintained a romanticised image of the countryside based on an outdated contrast between town and country. They disputed their own representations. Still, when they were asked for their arguments for the use of non-urban images, they spoke about their personal ideas of what was appropriate in a landscape and what not. These images were motivated to be emphasizing the qualities of the place – landscape identity or the sense of place – but, time after time, they were also motivated to be stressing the contrast with the city. Besides, none of the designers referred in the interviews to ideas of their clients or to policy; they spoke of their personal ideas. Landscape designers' representations of rurality and nature appeared to be completely implicit and hence not open for discussion or reflection.

It's remarkable that the shift from a discourse of town and country as separate entities to a discourse of town and country as locales involved a lot of discussion and resistance in general, but not within the landscape design profession. The shift from one discourse to another was not very obvious in their designs. The new discourse was easily accepted and business went on as usual. A reason for this may be that from the very beginning landscape designers based their design concepts on *images* of rurality and nature, rather than on a simple *spatial pattern* of 'densely populated built-up areas surrounded by scarcely populated, open areas' (Hidding et al. 2000, p. 125). What they were probably looking for was exactly the illusion of rurality for an activity that was urban by nature: recreation.

Non-urban images still dominate, but recent designs showed other references than just rurality and nature as well. In these designs, historical aspects, which used to be representatives of the continuous and everlasting character of rurality, were simultaneously treated as separate, independent references. References to the past were made visible in the landscape as special attractions; 'elsewhen' became a major source of inspiration[11]. The designs in the period of diversification for the Drentsche Aa stream valley (see 8.6.3), for the Delta region (see 8.6.1 and 8.6.2) and for the Gelderse Poort (see 8.6.5) are examples of the explicit use of history and heritage as attractions.

In Haarzuilens, the designers based their designs on narratives that referred to the social conditions of former feudal systems (see 1.4). Several recent designs even showed references to urban-like environments, such as a fun avenue (see 1.4), 'car park rooms' (see 8.6.1) and statues in a museum (see 8.6.4). This diversification of references adds new layers to the common ideal images of rurality and nature.

Landscape designers usually associated rural landscapes with the vernacular and casualness. Most designers were afraid of over-design; a design that remained unnoticed as such was thought to be the best. They preferred landscape elements to be integrated in the landscape instead of being obviously separated and singled out. They aimed for simple designs that went without saying. Although deep down in their heart they dreamt of a spectacular and compelling design, they thought 'exceptionalising the everyday landscape' was usually the most convenient approach for the design of rural landscapes. Only recently a different design attitude has been introduced. The landscape designs for old forts in Fort St. Andries (see 7.8.4) and Zeeuws-Vlaanderen (see 8.6.2) showed more explicit and manifest design tools, although the unpretending and modest approach was found there as well. Enlarging the contrast with the surrounding landscape by a different treatment of the surface subtly emphasized the special character of the forts: changing management intensity, adding marshlands or a surrounding ditch. Observant visitors would notice; indifferent passers-by would not. Very pronounced designs for recreational sites were made for 'staged' megalithic graves (see 8.6.4) and for accesses to the beach in Zeeland, for instance (see 8.6.1).
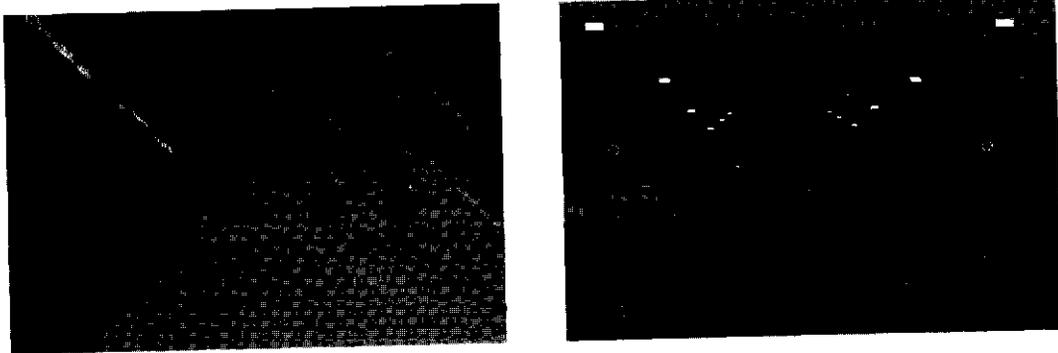
Figure 229, 230   An access to the beach in Zeeland; it is obvious that designers have been involved (2005, designers unknown).

9.1.3 Freedom

The contrast with the city and daily city life mostly had to do with image and setting. The second major conceptualisation of leisure in landscape design, on the other hand, had to do with the people. It is the concept of freedom that proved to be an essential concept in landscape design for leisure as well. In this case too, landscape designers' concept of leisure didn't differ much from common interpretations in leisure studies. The concept of freedom that landscape designers adhered to, comprehended two types of freedom. One of these types may be defined as the opportunity to choose what to do or where to go, the other one as the opportunity to give personal interpretations. Landscape designers were very clear about their intentions to offer people choices and they didn't want to direct people. In their view, leisure was about finding one's own way and attributing one's personal meaning. Yet, the designs demonstrated some ambivalence in the execution of these ideas.

The freedom of choice was particularly expressed in the design concept for routes. Networks were preferred instead of singular tracks, because those gave people the freedom to choose their way. From the early plans up to the most recent, the construction and the densification of networks have dominated. When the consumer culture intensified, the diversity of routes gradually expanded. Policy makers and managers of the Recreation Boards developed long-distance footpaths, canoe routes, ATB-trails, boot paths and other themed routes, each with its own specific target group and use. Landscape designers preferred multi-purpose tracks to far-reaching itemisation of trends and hypes. On the other hand the itemisation gave them a chance to design a variety of ambiances: rough and adventurous, pleasant and romantic, completely merged into the landscape or with show-like views on a distant landscape. By linking the routes into networks they offered people the opportunity to switch from one route to another.

The variety of attractions, facilities and settings gradually increased. In the 1950s and 1960s, the supply consisted mainly of resting places with recreational facilities. Later on, the setting of the existing rural landscape was explicitly added; in the late 1980s, new nature was introduced as a leisure setting and attraction; and from the 1990s existing and new elements were designed to provide special leisure experiences. The broadening of the design assignment in general certainly helped to create more diversity. In the 1950s and early 1960s, landscape designers were almost exclusively occupied with road plantings. They had little opportunity to take interesting landscape features into account. When public and policy attention for landscapes grew in the 1970s and 1980s, design assignments broadened and landscape designers were able to integrate all kinds of landscape elements in their designs. From the late 1980s, the assignments included new nature and water management, and recently cultural heritage has become a hot item in planning and design.

Although the diversity and supply of leisure opportunities did increase, one may question how diverse the leisure supply really was and whether it met consumer demands. After all, real freedom of choice requires both a diversity of supply and a supply that meets demands. It reminds one of the famous quote by businessman Henry Ford that people could order their car in 'any colour – as long as it's black'. In practice, leisure was supply-oriented too, and in rural landscapes it was restricted to extensive forms of recreation. As soon as the number of visitors increased, separate areas were planned and designed. Public authorities concentrated on general, basic supply, and dynamic demands were left to market parties. Public authorities, planners and designers shared this attitude. Of course, one has to keep in mind that multifunctional landscapes are just one type of environment among others, including urban environments, and not everything needs to be available everywhere. Still, recent designs illustrate that landscapes can provide a lot more opportunities than the older designs did.

Within the limits of extensive forms of recreation, planners and designers concentrated on specific types of leisure once again. The themes that occurred most often and that turned out to be unremitting in both policy and design were for people to take a break from daily life and to enjoy landscape and nature. Although the designers of the Amsterdam Forest Park took people who'd seek entertainment or amusement into account, this group was ignored in later designs for leisure in the countryside. Amusement and entertainment were associated with mass recreation and did not combine well with extensive forms of recreation. Only recently, when 'fun' became trendy, amusement and entertainment have returned in landscape design (Metz 2002; see also 1.4).

People who were looking for the unexpected and adventure weren't provided for either until the late 1980s. Boerwinkel's 'recreation target groups' for nature recreation and Geuze's observations in the Rotterdam Harbour gave designers something to hold on to and this made them pay attention to other leisure motives.

There is a clear picture of the theoretical concept of leisure motives. Lengkeek developed a range of leisure modes based on Cohen's tourist modes (Cohen 1979) and Schutz's life worlds (Elands and Lengkeek 2000). He distinguished five different modes: amusement, change, interest, rapture and dedication. The larger the contrast with the daily life-world, the more effort it takes to get into that mode and to fulfil motives.

Mode	Characteristics
Amusement	Fun, Centre-values: familiar environment, your own language, ease Temporality: a short break
Change	Escape: away from boredom or stress and drag of everyday life Relaxation Recovery: recharge the battery Context matters less
Interest	Search for interesting vistas and stories Variation derived from 'elsewhere' or 'ever' Stimulation of the imagination: not necessarily authentic, like to be informed
Rapture	Self-discovery: new awareness of own identity Unexpected: open for the unknown or unexpected Crossing borders: discovery of physical or other boundaries
Dedication	Quest for authenticity: a search for the indisputable authentic other-ness Appropriation and devotion Merge: being absorbed in a 'back-stage' world Timelessness: wish for a permanent stay

Figure 231   Five modes of leisure experience and their key characteristics (Elands and Lengkeek 2000).

When the designs were examined in light of this model, it appeared that landscape designers focussed primarily on the modes of change and interest. Policy was primarily concentrated on change; the interest mode has only recently become more important in policy. The Belvedere policy on cultural heritage considerably contributed to that. Few plans, most of them recent, refer explicitly to the modes of amusement and rapture. One may argue that, in principle, any environment may relate to any mode (Elands and Lengkeek 2000). This may be true, but it is obvious that environments offer different qualities that, to a certain extent, match well or ill with a mode. It is also obvious that landscape designers didn't have all modes in mind when they made their designs.

What the reason is for this biased preference for specific motives is an intriguing question. In other countries different aspects of leisure come to the fore. Different histories and traditions make for some distinctly different cultures that give rise to different leisure preferences. In Scandinavian countries, for example, leisure is closely related to outdoor living, in Germany to sports and activity, and in the United Kingdom to rural tourism (Bruls and Boekhold 2002).

In Southern Europe, social relations and social space characterise leisure culture, resulting in a strong food culture that brings people together to eat or drink outside of the working place or the home. Many Eastern Europeans think of leisure as a luxury, through which people can portray their wealth (Inglehart 1997). Is it the Dutch culture that determines the preference, or is it Dutch landscape? It's evident that the Dutch landscape is not as spectacular as the Alps for example, and that relatively modest motives may be more obvious. Yet, as said previously, any environment may relate to any mode. The preference may be related to persisting 19th century elitist ideals of a neat and responsible bourgeoisie whose major objective is a productive working life. In that context, leisure is not an autonomous phenomenon but rather a phenomenon that is inferior to and dedicated to work. Leisure modes, in which people get absorbed, like rapture and dedication, do not fit in with this context, and the mode of amusement does not match with Dutch Calvinist culture. Nevertheless, it sounds rather far-fetched. Is the preference related to the tendency in policy to give priority to the middle bracket so that as many people as possible can profit from what can be done with limited financial means? However, the plans showed that leisure policy never really mattered much to the landscape designers. Interviews with the designers revealed another simple explanation. In fact, they planned and designed for people like themselves: white middle-class 'Fleece and Gore-Tex people' (interview with Van Etteger in 2005) with much interest in and knowledge of the landscape. 'To be true, I just design what I like myself' (interview with Van Blerck in 2005).

The other type of freedom was being open to personal interpretations. In general, landscape designers preferred neutral, multi-interpretable spaces that enabled various uses. This attitude proved to be very persistent. Two types of space were found in the designs that were meant for spontaneous, un-programmed use. One was the empty, neutral space without specified facilities or zones. Unregulated environments without special leisure facilities enabled coincidences and spontaneity, as designers and researchers observed (Warnau 1993). Landscape designers chose to keep to the well-defined spatial program, but left these spaces as empty as possible in order to invite people to use the space as they liked (see for example 5.4.3). Such spaces provided opportunities for new, unexpected and unthought-of leisure activities (Brinkhuijsen and Knuijt 2003).

Another favourite solution of landscape designers was to preserve or design margins in the landscape. Why design a car park if it would be rarely used? A widened bank would do just as well and it wouldn't look premeditated. Incidental frays were preferred to areas that were explicitly laid out for repose (see for example 8.6.2). Why place a bench and obviously allocate the space for leisure?

Figure 232   Designers reject information panels and sign posts. People should be free to go and the landscape should speak for itself.

If a culvert could be raised a little bit, people would be able to sit on it. Unfortunately, Recreation Boards didn't like to intertwine their objectives with those of the Water Boards and sites were filled up with standard leisure furniture (Interview with Hazendonk in 2004).

Landscape designers gave several reasons to explain their preference for multi-interpretable spaces. One was their preference for simplicity, stemming from a strong and long-lasting Modernist discourse in landscape design, particularly in rural areas. Any kind of adornment was suspect and the clear line was the highest objective. Another reason was that landscape designers thought a clear space without obtrusive signs would give people the opportunity to make the landscape their own. The majority of the interviewed landscape designers explicitly mentioned their rejection of information panels. They preferred designs that left room for personal interpretation and revealed the special character of the site only at second notice. 'It is pleasant to withdraw from our over-regulated society into the landscape without being confronted with educationally sound signs from that same society' (Strootman et al. 2004, p. 64). They argued that places like amusement parks, where everything was carefully staged, controlled and purified from undesirable influences, were very pushy. Places like these left little opportunity for un-programmed activities or attributing one's personal meaning. A third argument was inspired by insights in human perception. Designers realised that they couldn't know and understand what people would do and experience. By being modest and unobtrusive, they would give room for self-expression and personal interpretations.

In urban environments, scholars in social sciences and humanities have objected to this approach. Hajer and Reijndorp, for example, argued that 'de-sign' led to the removal of signs and meanings. They thought to 're-sign' was the main design task; inviting people to set spaces with new meanings (2001). However, with regard to the temporary use of a landscape for leisure purposes, it could be argued that the approach of landscape designers is appropriate. It will probably save residents from living in a themed landscape and at the same time maintain the illusion of a vernacular, everyday landscape to visitors. This train of thought was illustrated in the design for the Drentsche Aa National Landscape. Realisation of a Recreational Mobility Plan, which comprehended quite a lot of infrastructural facilities for visitors from outside of the region, was expected to change the area into a park. This would be inconsistent with the desired image of a rural, unspoilt landscape (see 8.6.3).

Most landscape designers did realise that they couldn't know what people would experience and that not everyone would experience a situation or event alike. They hesitated to impose one directive interpretation, but at the same time they didn't really make an effort to deal with contradictory meanings or a plurality of meanings in their designs. Their efforts to provide freedom concerned activities and uses rather than meanings. Only recently did the problem of multivocality - that means 'many voices', a relativist approach that respects numerous different narratives or parallel discourses - come up in the designs. The plan for the megalithic graveyards is the most explicit one of all, because the assignment posed the different views on the graves as the central design problem.

Many authors have discussed the issue of control over images and multivocality (e.g. Urry 1995; Selwyn 1996; Potteiger and Purinton 1998; Mommaas et al. 2000). 'The idea of open landscape narratives, places with multiple stories shaped by a plurality of voices, is particularly important in the context of a growing trend to create closed narratives; theme parks, theme restaurants and malls, and gated communities.

Controlled and scripted by developers and other authorities, these places can silence or displace different voices, erase layers of history and complexity of associations, and draw distinct boundaries between them and the living, changing growing places they simulate' (Potteiger and Purnton 1998, p. 187). Most designers hesitated to be too directive. They had the tendency to leave it up to people to make their own interpretations. On the other hand, direction is inherent to landscape design. Design does make a difference; otherwise it would be pointless. Finding the balance between making and leaving has been part of the design problem in every case that was studied.

9.2 Leisure in a comprehensive landscape approach

9.2.1 Leisure-inclusive approaches

If we take a look at the specific leisure approaches as described in the preceding paragraphs, the first things to catch the eye are the functional aspects. The landscape was opened up with routes and basic facilities were added. Functionality, practicality and comfort were important criteria, after all, routes should be suitable for certain types of transport, they should provide enough space for the number of users and they should be easy to manage and maintain. Besides, most assignments focussed primarily on functional aspects. Briefs were usually formulated in terms of visitor capacities and concrete facilities: specified lengths of footpaths, cycle tracks and bridle paths, capacities of car parks and numbers of picnic areas supplied with benches and dustbins. The assignments of the designs studied paid little attention to the nature of the landscape setting and attractions, or to leisure experience.

There was more than just the aspect of functionality in the designs. Designs did represent ideas specifically related to leisure, making use of all spatial components: routes, attractions, facilities and setting. A range of design tools and concepts was applied to represent perspectives and ideas. Several landscape designers mentioned, for instance, their dislike of neatly paved, broad paths. They preferred paths that would meet the minimum standards, but still looked like unpaved tracks and thus represented an untouched, rural landscape.

But the story is more ambiguous than what has been suggested so far. Even though specific leisure approaches came up, most landscape designers did not pay much attention to leisure itself. Leisure was mostly seen as an uninteresting design theme, a mere technical problem to be taken care of by others. Only a few leading landscape designers – Warnau, De Vroome and Maas - involved themselves with leisure and its consequences for landscape planning and design. Their ideas are still implicitly followed and duplicated. Some designers who chose to cooperate with leisure experts felt rejected by their designer colleagues (interview with Voskens in 2005)[12]. They disagreed with a sector approach and only opted for full integration. They thought it was their job to design for the landscape as a whole, leisure included.

Precisely this view determined the position of leisure in landscape design for rural landscapes. A mere focus on specific leisure approaches would give a misrepresentation of landscape design for leisure in the countryside.

Leisure was often regarded to be such an integral part of human presence in rural landscapes that most design considerations were not exclusively meant for leisure. Many designers didn't think of their own designs as landscape designs for leisure. They treated landscape comprehensively as an integrated concept (see also Antrop 2007). Their leisure considerations were a natural part of landscape design anyway. 'My job is not to design for leisure but to design landscapes' (interview with Strootman in 2005). In other words: qualities of landscape design for rural areas in general were assumed to apply to leisure in particular too. Leisure experience wasn't discerned separately but considered to be a part of landscape experience in general. Landscape designers adhered to a comprehensive landscape approach. This leisure-inclusive approach provides insight in and explanation for some important rules and notions in the landscape design practice for leisure.

9.2.2 The ideal of a multifunctional landscape

Landscape design tradition

Landscape designers do not only think of a landscape as the *result* of continuous interaction between climate, relief, water, soil, flora, fauna and human action, but also as a *basis* with certain conditions for new actions and developments. Part of their job, not only in landscape planning at a regional scale but in site selection at a local scale as well, is to arrange different land uses, making use of these conditions so that they can work in balance and coherence with each other. This attitude towards landscape planning and design goes back to the 1920s, when town planners formulated their ideas about the future landscape of the Zuiderzee polders: 'It is above all in the structure that beauty must express itself, effectively considering the many interests that have to be taken into account; it is above all in the great, not in the details in the first place. Unsteady will that structure be if designed in consideration of just one single interest; a structure will derive power from collectivism, from unity' (Hudig et al. 1928, p. 10). Their idea was inspired by a biased focus on agricultural production in 19th century polders such as the Haarlemmermeer. In their opinion, a landscape should be regarded as an environment where many activities and functions could take place. Their ideal of a multifunctional approach proved to be very persistent. The radical reconstruction of rural landscapes for agricultural purposes in the 1960s strengthened landscape designers in their efforts to focus on other land uses and activities in their designs as well. As a result, they thought it was an essential part of their design task to arrange different land uses in balance and coherence with each other and with the physical circumstances. In the 1970s, the objective of landscape design was defined as 'the creation of functional landscapes where all projected functions and landscape elements would maintain or develop according to their destination, in relation with environmental values and geared to human needs' (LNV 1977, p. 22). Although the level of intertwining varied over time, landscape designers maintained their multifunctional approach throughout the 1980s and 1990s up until today. This continuity has proven to be a lot stronger than was to be expected on account of planning policy, where the balance between functional separation and intertwinement kept changing. When the policy concept of Multiple Land Use was introduced in the 1990s, many landscape designers wondered what was so innovate about it. Didn't they always work according to precisely this concept?

Leisure and the design tradition

In correspondence with the common landscape approach of landscape designers, leisure was considered to be one type of land use among others in a multifunctional whole. Many design considerations were not exclusively meant for leisure; they were a natural part of the comprehensive landscape design. For landscape designers, their comprehensive and multifunctional approach was so natural that they saw their approach as the only true one. However, this didn't mean that leisure was regarded as equal to other land uses. Dutch landscape designers treated leisure subordinate to other types of land use; leisure was treated like a lodger. That is to say, certain forms of leisure were. The dominant image of leisure in the countryside was one of extensive use by individuals or by small groups and families: walking, cycling, fishing, and enjoying nature. Thus leisure could be easily inserted in the landscape with some relatively modest - functional - adjustments.

Mass recreation and intensive forms of leisure were treated differently. They were spatially isolated from their environment and put aside, both literally and figuratively. Although several designers said that the apparent presence of intensive forms of leisure and tourism would bother extensive *recreationists*, a more weighty argument was that the *landscape* had to be protected from intensive forms of recreation. Even a multifunctional approach seemed to have its limits. They associated more intensive forms of recreation with loads of recreational facilities and this image didn't go well with their ideal image of untouched, peaceful and quiet rural landscapes (see 9.1.2). Tourist accommodations were treated as settlements or as parks. They had to be logically adjusted into the wider landscape context, but their design problem was primarily internally oriented. In the 1950s, Bijhouwer made a distinction between a garden or park design problem and a landscape design problem: 'Landscape architecture is the creation of a satisfying and liveable landscape by means of relatively few plantings in areas with a primary productive designation. A garden on the other hand is a place for satisfying use without an economic purpose' (Bijhouwer in Deunk 2002, p. 223). He reverted to the ideas of *The future landscape of the Zuiderzee polders* in the 1920s: 'It is not about the details in the first place; how to place a clump of trees or to mould yonder roadside. The arrangement of the land itself; the course of roads and canals, the place of settlements must already turn out well so that it forms the natural base for that new beauty. That is not a job for just civil and agricultural engineers.

Figure 233   The ideal image of leisure in the countryside: extensive, neat and quiet.

Only when the groundwork is laid, opportunities have been created. In the implementation phase we will have to take care of what one might call details, again and again; the grouping of farm buildings in the landscape or the planting of some elderberries by the side of a fence' (Hudig et al. 1928, p. 89). Landscape architect Rob van Leeuwen made a similar distinction when he gave his view on present and future design problems for leisure. He distinguished between technical, functional design problems - how to fit a functional program like paths and car parks in the landscape - and park design problems, which he defined as architectonic problems like staging a route.

Lately leisure has become more important in rural areas, either to help obtain public support for nature conservation and development, and cultural heritage or for economic support. Recent landscape designs illustrate these changes. Plans like the designs for leisure in Fort St. Andries (see 7.8.4) and Rijnwaarden (see 7.8.3), for recreational networks in the Landscape Development Plan for the Ooijpolder (see 8.6.5) and for the Spanish defence lines (see 8.6.2) and the coastal zone in Zeeland Flanders (8.6.1) show that leisure is back on the agenda of planners and designers, and that more efforts are being made in their designs for leisure. Leisure's subordinate position will probably change structurally and leisure may be treated more equally to other land uses.

9.2.3 Legible landscape

Landscape design tradition

Dutch design tradition for rural landscapes is a functionalist tradition above all. The basis for the functionalist approach was laid in the 1920s, when the Modern movement became renowned in architecture and spatial planning. Landscape designers in rural landscapes worked in a culture dominated by engineering, with a strong emphasis on efficiency and rationality. The functionalist movement in architecture and planning coincided with the dominant approach in the context of land consolidations and reclamations. For these landscape designers, the experience of beauty was primarily related to the recognition of a logical and functional arrangement of land uses. 'Only a landscape structure that is more or less understandable will have additional meaning and can be qualified as beautiful' (LNV 1991, p. 17). 'Pragmatic and poetic' (Whiston Spirn 1998) were inseparable to them. In order to design a clear and understandable landscape, landscape designers based their designs on the relation between soil, water and human occupation[13]. Later, Vroom observed that landscape designers especially concentrated on this relation instead of that between form and function, which was common in other design disciplines like industrial design and architecture. He argued that the reason for this was the ambiguous relation between form and function in landscapes (Vroom 1980).

In the first half of the 20th century the profession was still quite traditional, primarily based on craftsmanship[14]. The landscape design concepts that were developed for rural areas remained mostly tacit. Professionalisation and scientification of the landscape design discipline were cautiously introduced in the 1960s and not actually implemented until the 1970s. Kevin Lynch was one of the first to equip landscape designers' approach with a proper language[15]. Lynch studied the human perception of cities and how the built structure of a city influenced popular perception. He introduced the concept of 'place legibility': 'with which parts can be recognized and can be organised into a coherent pattern' (Lynch 1960, p. 3) or, in other words, the ease with which people can understand the layout of a place.

Transposed to a landscape situation, legibility was interpreted as the understanding of how the landscape worked from its manifestation based on coherence between climate, soil, water and human occupation; or 'understanding relationships between process and material, form and space' (Whiston Spirn 1998, p. 6). Apart from these so-called vertical relations, legibility also contained the horizontal relations; the ability to discern the relation between spaces.

When the results of unbridled growth and modernisation became visible in the 1970s, and landscape planners and designers tried to preserve what was left of 19th century landscape diversity, the concept of landscape identity, which had been one of the components of Lynch's legibility too, was given more esteem. The *Advies Landschapsbouw* (Policy Document on Landscapes and Landscape Design) defined landscape identity as 'more or less lasting characteristic landscape features that distinct one area from another, each on their own scale, and determine people's commitment to their environment' (LNV 1977, p. 22). The concept of landscape identity has a lot in common with one of the basic concepts in landscape design: the 'sense of place' or 'genius loci', a concept dating back as far as Roman times. The concept of genius loci refers to the local character of place: 'the meanings which are gathered by a place constitute its genius loci' (Norberg-Schulz 1980, p. 170). If the genius loci is not respected a place loses its identity. The history of landscape, its genesis and cultural history, gained importance too in that period. A landscape with signs that related to former days would enable orientation in time, in addition to orientation in space.

By the mid-1980s, the legible landscape was redefined as a landscape that offered orientation in time and space, recognisability and identity (Slabbers and Vrijlandt 1985; see also 6.6.3). A landscape framework based on the main landscape components should attribute to these criteria, provide a historical perspective and a feeling of existential continuity; 'all these processes occur so slowly that a landscape seems like an invariable quantity in the time span of a person's life' (LNV 1977, p. 13). The abovementioned criteria were reformulated in the 1990s as criteria of landscape quality in landscape policy. Beauty was added, meaning 'arranged, well looked after and with architectonic quality' (LNV 1991, p. 91). Aesthetics and architectural design had finally conquered an explicit place in spatial development and planning.

The different interpretations over time show that the concept of legibility has developed into a complex and multilayered concept. Hendriks and Stobbelaar (2003) distinguish three layers of legibility, which cover the abovementioned interpretations and the complexity of its meaning and content: superficial, geographical and existential legibility. 'Superficial' legibility refers to Lynch's legibility and is defined as the ease with which people are able to understand and memorise a situation. The central question in 'geographic' legibility is: 'Where am I?' It is defined as the extent to which landscape features enable orientation in space and time. It gives people the opportunity to experience their relation to the environment. The third layer of legibility, 'existential' legibility, enters into the formation of personal identities and people's attachment to the landscape and their sense of belonging. The question 'Who am I?' is related to both individual biography and collective history. Whiston Spirn described this interpretation and understanding of landscape as follows: 'The language of landscape is loud with dialogues, with story lines that connect a place with its dwellers' (1998, p. 17). 'Humans interpret landscape signs and elaborate upon them, reading meanings in them to tell stories' (Whiston Spirn 1998, p. 32). Narratives play an important role in existential legibility[16].

The development of the concept of the legible landscape corresponds with attempts to redefine the concept of the landscape. Older definitions focused merely on functional relationships: 'landscape is the perceptible part of earth, determined by the mutual coherence and reciprocal influence of climate, relief, water, soil, flora and fauna, as well as human action' (LNV 1977). Mental aspects gradually became more important, as illustrated by the European Landscape Convention. 'Landscape in other words is not simply another word for environment – it is created in the eyes, minds and hearts of beholders when the material, 'real' components of our environment are seen through the filters of memory and association, understanding and interpretation' (Ballester and Meyer 2002, p. 5). Tress and Tress (2001) attempted to bridge the gap in landscape research between natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. Their 'people-landscape interaction model' represents current, complex and multiple views on the concept of landscape: 'We are not only part of the landscape, but that landscape is also part of us' (Tress and Tress 2001, p. 155).

Leisure and the design tradition

Landscape designers didn't discern leisure experience from landscape experience in general. Whether a landscape was meant for residents, for regular visitors from nearby or for occasional tourists, their experience of the landscape was treated alike. Landscape designers didn't apply the concept of the legible landscape explicitly for leisure purposes but it turned out to be one of the leading concepts with regard to landscape design for leisure[17]. Superficial and geographical legibility applied to leisure too; orientation was deemed important and understanding the structure and origin of a landscape was a major attraction in the eyes of landscape designers.

A recent debate with landscape architects suggested that the content of the concept of the legible landscape has shifted towards a narrative interpretation. Landscape designers indicated that landscapes can be read in many different ways, depending on personal knowledge and the bond a person has with the area. They realised there was more than just one landscape narrative; that many narratives existed beside one another. They asked themselves whether landscape designers should add other narratives. Wasn't concentrating on orientation in space enough of a design problem?
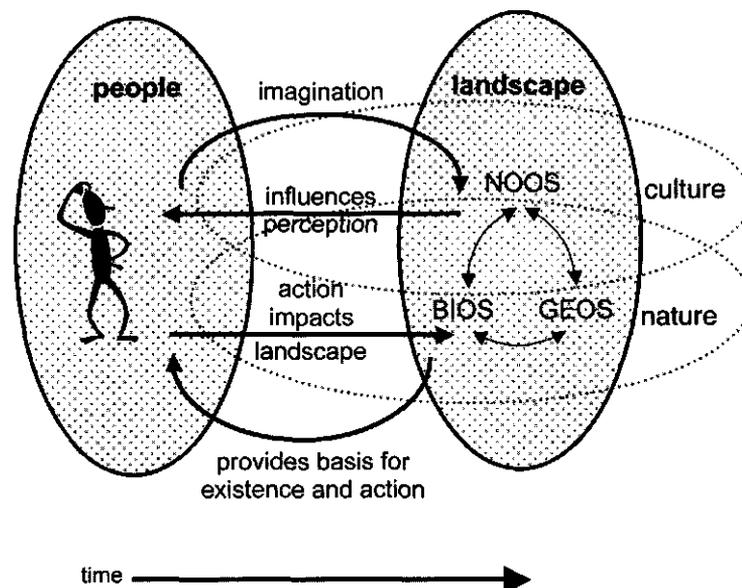

Figure 234   The people-landscape interaction model (Tress and Tress 2001).

No, they posed, certainly not from a leisure point of view. The recreational value and appreciation of a landscape will increase when several layers of meaning are open to interpretation, especially historical layers. An attractive landscape should contain visible references to its cultural history. A landscape without those references lacks identity and the opportunity for orientation in time (Brinkhuijsen et al. 2006). In their opinion, the design problem was not *if* other narratives should be incorporated, but *how*. If a landscape represents different narratives for a variety of people and every person can have his or her own narratives and emotions, then how should historical narratives be represented materially in landscape design? Should the narrative be explained obviously or should it tell its story by itself?

With the broadening of the concept of the legible landscape, its multi-interpretable character became problematic. The integration of existential legibility into the concept inevitably introduced the problem of different readings. Universal rules of perception would no longer suffice for landscape design. Designers had to deal with differences in people's ability to read the landscape, dependent on their knowledge of the area and their skills to read the signs. Some landscape designers explicitly based their design on different levels of reading the landscape and transformed the layers into their design literally. In Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, for example, special objects were placed along a bicycle track that pronouncedly narrated of the area's history. The course of the track was designed to emphasize the history of the reclamation of the area for people who were able to 'read' the signs (see also 8.6.1).

It also raised questions of the relation between generic and local narratives and of the relation between professional and laymen's contributions to the landscape. The Belvedere policy, which emphasized the meaning of cultural heritage in spatial planning and design, certainly drew attention to laymen's bond with and knowledge of the landscape[18]. However, not all landscape designers received the opportunity or took the effort to meet local narratives. Besides, not all narratives proved to be useful in landscape design. In default of useful local narratives, landscape designers easily reverted to generic or professional narratives or to personal references.

9.2.4 Contextual and integrative design

Landscape design tradition

With the legible landscape being one of the major directive concepts, the orientation in time and space has also been determinative for the design process itself. Landscape designers placed their own activities in a larger context. Most landscape designers have taken the genesis and cultural history of the landscape into account, not only recently, but already from the beginning. Of course they did not always succeed as much as they wanted. The major concern in the time of the land consolidations was to make the land suitable for modern agriculture and therefore the engineers dominated the process. Most landscape designers agreed with them that many landscapes were outdated and needed to be adjusted or rearranged, but that didn't mean that the land should be treated as a *tabula rasa*. Landscape designers regarded a landscape as a continuously changing entity, where landscape components were constantly being adapted to new needs and wishes. It put their activities in perspective; made them pay respect to things that lasted and be modest about the attributions of their own age.

They struggled for the preservation of landscape elements and patterns that were typical for the landscape. Their aim was not to preserve or restore a historical situation minutely but rather to create a new situation that referred to the old one. By integrating historical elements in a new situation, their context changes and gives rise to new meanings. To landscape designers, preservation and development are not opposites that exclude each other but two sides of the same medal.

Although landscape designers were concerned with separate elements, the overall landscape structure was taken into consideration and utilised as the primary directive for continuity in landscape development. Particularly from the 1970s and 1980s, when sustainable preservation and management of historical landscape elements was uncertain, they gave priority to the main landscape components. The tendency towards a regional design approach was a logical consequence; after all, the main components could only be identified at that scale. This process of 'up-scaling' to a regional level became the common approach in landscape design. Design problems, no matter how small, were considered in a broader context in order to find out how they interfered with other activities and problems, at the time and in the long run. Landscape designers did not content themselves with local design problems; they interfered with the selection of the sites and didn't even avoid formulating a completely different design problem.

By considering problems at a larger scale and relating them to other problems, unexpected combinations came up and alternative, more effective solutions were developed. It is exactly this attitude that led to the development of innovative concepts like the framework planning concept. The tendency towards the regional scale in order to attain a contextual approach broadened the professional realm of landscape design and it tightened the bond between landscape planning and design. In this context the essence of landscape design was defined rather in terms of providing structure and arranging functions than in terms of creating images and designing forms. Form was supposed to arise from function naturally. Unfortunately, this approach has been at the cost of detailed design, particularly since the 1970s. 'The devil is in the detail' certainly applies here. People don't experience a landscape as an overview seen from above. Their perspective is from eye level, where details count. Dimension, form, composition and use of materials matter for the way people move through a landscape and experience it. As less attention was paid to these aspects of landscape design, a design tradition that had been built up for centuries was only limitedly used. The functionalist and Modernist attitude of many landscape designers did not do much good either.

Figure 235   Standardized solutions: these areas look the same everywhere.

The pragmatic, no-nonsense context of the land consolidation projects wasn't exactly an environment for subtle design details. Landscape designers were often confronted with and restricted by standardised solutions that were primarily based on capacity norms and the demands of cheap and easy management. Furthermore, the making of detailed plans was often left to technicians who had no background in architectural design.

However, design practices are changing. Landscape design in rural landscapes is no longer the exclusive domain of the State Agencies with their rigid procedures. Landscape designers who work on assignments in rural landscapes are no longer trained in and accustomed to routines that were developed by the landscape design department of the State Forest Agency. They have various backgrounds and integrate professional experience in urban environments with the approaches that were developed for rural areas. Landscape designers continue to take the regional context into account, but today both landscape designers and their clients are paying renewed attention to the details of design. The local scale that relates to human proportions has returned in the design practice. It provides landscape designers with the possibility to employ 'their distinctive quality to manipulate spatial design across all scales' once again (Steenbergen 1990). Among the first prominent examples of local, custom-made designs in the late 1990s were dike reinforcements that showed the attention the designers gave to the experiences people would have on the dike in their detailed designs (see also 7.8.4).

Leisure and the design tradition
The contextual approach to the aspects of time and space was applied to leisure as well. Landscape designers preferred to engage themselves with the location of sites instead of just making a design for a given site. As for other activities, they also tried to find the best location for park forests, campsites, leisure attractions and facilities in relation to the broader context of the landscape as a whole. The emphasis on the landscape scale and the main landscape components was the basis for all land uses and activities, including leisure. Landscape structure, the main landscape components and land uses directed the location of routes, attractions and facilities. In the framework planning concept, extensive leisure was combined with low-dynamic land uses such as nature conservation, forestry and water management. Intensive forms of leisure were seen as highly dynamic.

The integration of characteristic historical elements in a renewed landscape provided means for orientation in time, not only in general but for leisure purposes as well. The historical elements were used as landscape attractions for leisure purposes, providing scenic and/or interesting features to make the landscape more attractive.

The lack of detailed design particularly stood out in the leisure context. Although landscape designers preferred to 'exceptionalise the common landscape', they often did not get the means and chances to do so. In combination with their unpretentious design approach in rural landscapes, little design influence at the detailed scale was left. But, as mentioned, the local scale has returned. The designs for leisure that were made in the most recent period of diversification are all illustrations of the renewed focus on detailed designs at the local scale, although the designers' efforts don't always end up in material reality yet. Pragmatism, lack of attention, and price control still dominate in many operational services.

9.3 A tradition in transition

9.3.1 A stable design tradition concerning rural landscapes

Considering the previous paragraphs, it is clear that Dutch landscape designers used the same design tools and shared many 'written and unwritten rules and values' concerning landscape design for leisure. A comparative analysis of the designs revealed a stable design tradition of a comprehensive landscape approach and persisting conceptualisations of leisure.

The close relation that existed for decades between daily practices in land consolidation projects, landscape architecture education and landscape policymaking resulted in a very strong landscape design discourse on rural landscapes. The comprehensive landscape approach, which was initiated by landscape designers like Benthem, Bijhouwer and De Jonge in the pioneer period, proved to be a solid basis in the long run. Their ideas were subsequently developed and elaborated within the landscape design department of the State Forest Service, the school of landscape architecture in Wageningen under Bijhouwer, Vroom, De Jonge and Kerkstra and, later, the research institutes in Wageningen. The people who were in charge of the landscape design department of the State Forest Service tried to stimulate cooperation of the first, self-made generation of landscape designers with the younger, professionally trained generation in order to hand down the tacit knowledge of the first generation (Van den Berg at a meeting called *Maakbaar Landschap* in 2005). Meetings of the legendary 'Grote Groep' ('Great Group') where all landscape designers of the department discussed landscape design problems, concepts and designs probably added to the continuation and foundation of the design tradition. The approaches they developed proved themselves and became common use, despite of the fact that the group eventually fell apart. Landscape designers with a different background got involved, and the context changed considerably.

9.3.2 Dominant leisure approaches

Landscape designers' approach of leisure proved to be steady as well. Both the context of the general design tradition concerning rural landscapes, and designers' ideas about leisure and the role of landscapes for leisure contributed to that. Even though spatial policy and leisure policy offered different concepts over time, landscape designers' focus and preference remained to be quite selective and constant. They focused on extensive outdoor recreation, using the legible landscape, the contrast with daily urban life, and freedom as central concepts. The designs consisted mainly of route networks with the landscape itself as the main attraction, modestly and unpretentiously designed with a minimum of facilities. At the same time, landscape designers were restricted in their range of design solutions by far-reaching standardisation. Combined with the fact that the assignments were usually quantitative and functional by nature, innovations were restricted on either side of the design process. But landscape designers themselves were responsible too. In general, they did not treat leisure as a design problem of concern. Only a few landscape designers had been truly interested in leisure behaviour and experience and their consequences for landscape planning and design. Most landscape designers were not very familiar with knowledge and theories on leisure behaviour and experience, and implicitly duplicated the concepts of their predecessors. They had taken notice of general insights in human perception, but found that they did not differ much from the basic design principles of the old tradition in garden and park design.

Apparently the tacit knowledge of those who developed the principles such a long time ago had been correct. Leisure studies in the 1970s and 1980s were primarily concerned with the conversion of leisure behaviour into rules and standardised solutions. As they obviously offered no creative challenges, landscape designers lost interest. What's more, many landscape designers who worked in rural areas didn't pay much attention to the experiential and emotional aspects of design. This was probably induced by the rational and pragmatic context of their work in rural areas and by their own functionalist attitude. In general, they were much more interested in the functional and physical-spatial aspects of landscape than in how people experienced the landscape or in meanings other than usefulness. Their curiosity went out to the functioning of the landscape system and they disregarded social and psychological aspects. In a debate about the results of this study, several designers argued that little knowledge of landscape experience and leisure was available. Somehow they had missed the extensive fields of leisure and tourism studies, environmental psychology and cultural geography. In the absence of knowledge, they fell back on their personal preferences and experiences, and made their designs for people like themselves. Leisure was not examined as a design problem the way other themes such as nature development, water management or 'rurban' residences were. They neither examined its properties and conditions nor their representation in design concepts and tools. Consequently, there was little innovation where design for leisure was concerned.

9.3.3 A perspective of structural change

The stability of both the general design tradition on rural landscapes and leisure approaches may be striking; the changes and increasing diversity that were observed in recent designs seem even more remarkable. Today the multilayered concept of a legible landscape includes narrative interpretations. Questions of multivocality have come up, leisure tends to be treated equally instead of subordinate to other land uses, and non-urban images are being accompanied by other images, referring to elsewhere and 'elsewhen'. New approaches, new concepts, new themes and a rich variety of images suggest structural changes in landscape design for leisure.

One may argue that this is not true and that the proximity prevents observation from a broader perspective and stands in the way of critical reflection; that these changes haven't gone through the sieve of time yet. Nonetheless, there are several arguments to assume that structural changes are indeed taking place and that they are taking place at different levels at the same time. First, the social, economic and cultural context of leisure is changing. The concept and approach of leisure has changed. Where the focus was previously on activities and facilities, experience is the main focus now. Diversity and dynamics are general properties of our present time. Leisure environments include almost any urban, rural and natural landscape. Leisure is considered to be one of the main economic supports of future rural economies. The image of rural landscapes has changed from landscapes of production into landscapes of consumption. Offering relaxation, space and recreation is considered to be one of the main functions of the countryside these days. Landscapes have to compete with other areas and with other domains of leisure. The economic importance of leisure brings in commoditisation processes like theming, esthetising and extremisation, while at the same time, simple leisure activities such as walking and cycling appear to be of all times and remain unremittingly popular. Leisure is used to gain public support for the preservation of cultural heritage. Shortly: leisure is back on the agenda in every way. As a result, the problems landscape designers are facing today have changed.

Second, the planning and design context of landscape design for leisure in the countryside is changing. Landscape design practices in rural areas in general are changing and this has consequences for landscape design for leisure. Traditional top-down planning approaches have turned into interactive, integrated planning processes. The orderly situation of the land consolidation projects under the direction of one authority is long gone. Today, landscape designers are confronted with various types of plans and complex alliances of local, provincial and state authorities, non-governmental organisations and private parties. The diversity of clients in rural areas has increased enormously and so have the financial resources and the motives for initiating a planning and design process. The group of landscape designers actively involved in design in rural areas has also changed. Right now, this group is very diverse. After the break-up of the landscape department of the State Forest Service and the reorganisation of the planning processes, many private companies got involved in landscape design in rural areas. Not only companies that were started by former landscape designers from the State Forest Service but also companies that had their roots in urban landscape design. Their design tradition is different and more directly related to the long-lasting tradition of garden and park architecture. Following trends in architecture and urbanism, these designers had freed themselves from Modernism much earlier (De Jong 2006). They were less driven by functionalism and minimalism than their colleagues in rural areas.

All this has led to the recent introduction of new approaches, experiments and interesting alternatives for the routines in landscape design for leisure purposes. It suggests that landscape design for leisure in the countryside is in transition. Transitions are 'structural changes that take a long time, at least one generation (20 to 50 years). In the long run, transitions appear to occur slowly, but in the short run we observe a process in fits and starts' (Dirven et al. 2002, p.10). The processes in transitions are very complex, chaotic, unpredictable and uncontrollable. They combine processes of building up new structures and breaking down old ones. Transitions are multi-phase, multi-level and multi-domain processes. In a transition process, a sequence of four phases can be distinguished: the predevelopment, the take-off, the acceleration and the stabilisation phase (Van der Brugge and De Haan 2005). In the predevelopment phase, changes are small and show little mutual relation. They can be characterised as indicators of 'something being in the air'. The existing dynamic balance does not change noticeably. In the take-off phase, incidental changes become interrelated. When they gain enough critical mass and pass barriers, systems begin to shift. The actual system change takes place in the acceleration phase. Successive changes follow each other ever faster, and permeate all domains. In the final stage the system has reached its new state and a new balance will be established.
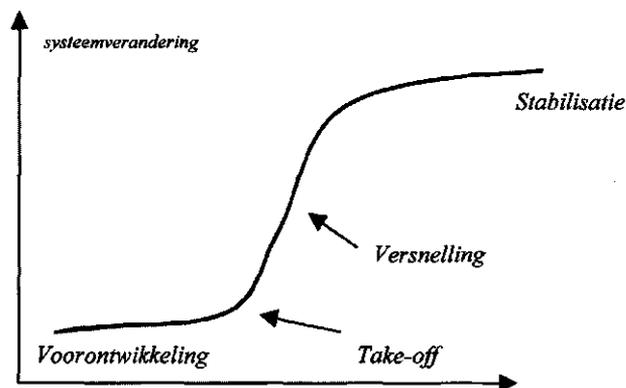

Figure 236 Different phases of transition.

It is likely that leisure approaches are somewhere in the early stages of the acceleration phase. Individual designers who introduced new ideas and diverged from mainstream practices laid the basis for change in the past. The designs from the 1980s showed some indications of changing approaches: specific attention to leisure diversity, to different needs and expectations of groups (see 7.8.4 and 7.8.5) and to detailed, tailor-made designs for recreational facilities (see 7.8.3). At the time they were incidents and not common practice. Over the last decade, both the context and the conditions of landscape design for leisure changed. Old organisational structures and planning processes disappeared; the position of leisure changed and landscape designers finally left their functionalist attitude. Recent designs showed a fundamentally changing attitude towards leisure and a diversity of new approaches and images. A clear direction, however, is not recognizable; evidently a new balance has not been found yet.

A characteristic of transition processes is that changes take place at different, intertwining levels. At the micro-level changes occur fast and frequently, with local practices and individuals diverging from mainstream practices. The meso-level concerns larger entities such as social, economic or technical subsystems. Changes at this level mean the restructuring of rules and organisations. When changes in these subsystems intertwine, they can reinforce each other and eventually cause radical and extensive change at the macro-level. Obviously changes at this level do not happen just like that, but when they do take place, they cover many domains: economy, culture, technology, organisation, environment and others.

The study showed that changes are taking place at the micro-level, in leisure and in landscape design for leisure, and at the meso-level, in the design and planning context in general: the shift to interactive, integrated planning processes, the diversity of clients and the disappearing distinction between rural and urban landscape design practices. Changes that were observed in the use and content of some design concepts and ideas appear to exceed the domain of leisure and seem to apply to the design tradition on rural landscapes in general. The broadening of the concept of the legible landscape with the layer of existential legibility and its association with narratives goes beyond leisure. Due to the Belvedere policy concept, explicit use of narratives and references other than the functionality of the object itself are widely accepted now. The concepts of the legible landscape and related concepts such as sense of place and landscape identity have come to be viewed in a different light due to general societal trends of globalisation and regionalisation. The importance and significance of regional identity and its legibility in the landscape have changed, and not only for reasons of commodification (Herngreen 2001; Herngreen et al 2002; Lefaivre and Tzonis 2003; Cusveller and Melis 2006). Belvedere also highlighted the importance of orientation in time, which is embedded in the contextual approach. The Belvedere policy of dealing with historical elements and references touches upon other issues than leisure in the countryside, such as agricultural reconstruction, water retention and nature. All these things are indicators of more comprehensive change[19].

Considering the field of landscape design for leisure in the countryside and its context, the similarities with the multi-phase, multi-level and multi-domain characteristics of a transition process are clear. After a long period of persisting practises landscape design for leisure is on the move.

Notes

1 Like other European countries, the Netherlands had a wide network of long distance footpaths before World War II. However, these paths decayed. In 1974 a new long-distance footpath was reintroduced in the new IJsselmeerpolders: the Flevospoor (Zuijdgeest 1982). At the end of the 1970s, two old ladies, inspired by the French Grandes Randonnées, initiated the Pieterpad, a long-distance footpath from the very north to the very south of the Netherlands. It was the starting point for an elaborate network of long-distance footpaths connected to the international network. At present, over 6000 kilometers of long-distance footpaths and long-distance bicycle tracks cover the country.

2 Already in 1928 the *Natuurschoonwet* (Natural Beauty Act) gave private landowners tax profits when they opened up their lands for visitors (see also 4.1.1).

3 During a workshop in 2005, all landscape designers of the *Government Service for Land and Water Management* (DLG) were asked to bring and present one of their recent landscape designs related to leisure. One alleged that she had never made a landscape design for leisure, only some bicycle tracks and footpaths. Apparently she did not take these small jobs seriously and thought they did not deserve to be mentioned as landscape designs for leisure.

4 A study on daily strolls mentioned the importance of places to rest and 'symbols, mythical or secret places' along a route. 'Powerful symbols like works of art, characteristic houses, old umbrageous trees and avenues, scenic views and animals are examples of topics that animate a stroll and provide content to the so-called place for strolling' (Burger and De Bruin 2004, p. 10).

5 The lack of importance that is often attached to the setting in leisure studies is remarkable. After all, the areas that have been very popular leisure and tourism destinations for a long time owed their popularity exactly to their landscape setting. It may be caused by the rather functional attitude towards leisure and tourism, which was preoccupied with facilities and services.

6 In the meantime, the setting in the isolated forest parks for mass recreation was first and foremost treated as a green backdrop setting. These mono-functional recreational areas were treated quite differently in many ways from the multifunctional landscape environments.

7 Beckers questioned whether the idealisation of 'back to nature' was valid. In his view it was just hypothetical (Beckers 1983).

8 It is not clear how these ideal images relate to the recent policy to allow the development of 'rurban' environments. This policy enables people to live in a rural environment or an environment that provides an illusion of rurality, but at the same time all these new developments will probably lead to a loss of the qualities attributed to the countryside.

9 'Red' and 'green' stand for built and un-built space.

10 Apart from the Amsterdam Forest Park, the interviewed landscape designers appreciated none of the large recreation areas. All criticised their dullness. They said that the areas all looked the same and didn't appeal to one's imagination.

11 Funds provided by the Belvedere policy program probably added to this interest in history.

12 In fact there were other landscape designers, apart from the above-mentioned ones, who were interested in leisure. They weren't, however, leading in the professional debate and their ideas got little attention or were even scoffed at.

13 Their approach had pragmatic reasons too; it was cheaper to continue with existing structures in land consolidations. Although he shared their ideas, Granpré Molière, aesthetic consultant of the Zuiderzee Project Authority, even advised against publication of the report, as he feared reprisals from the authorities. To speak of beauty was not done in those days and even the tiniest extra expenditure could thwart his efforts (Hemel 2004).

14 The first generation of landscape designers was autodidact. Professional training was introduced in the late 1940s.

15 Environmental psychology contributed to the professionalisation and scientification of landscape design. Insights of visual perception, for example, provided grounds for the difficult balance between order and chaos, between structure and diversity, which were topics in every landscape design.

16 Landscape policy makers were astonished by the way designers emphasized narratives and landscape history when the concept of the legible landscape was discussed in the abovementioned debate. They thought landscape designers shared a fixed, common definition, but it turned out to be changeable, diverse and contested.

17 The concept of the legible landscape matched leisure policy objectives as well. The educational value of leisure, which had been so important in the first half of the twentieth century, was not abandoned in the 1960s but redefined in terms of self-development and described as 'experiencing, appreciating and getting to know culture and nature, landscape and architecture in their mutual coherence' (RNP 1964 in Lengkeek 1996).

18 It would be interesting to examine and compare landscape designs that were made with respect to the Belvedere ideas, for their interpretation of the legible landscape concept. This research doesn't contain enough Belvedere designs to carry out a proper comparative analysis.

19 Whether the assumed transition applies to the design tradition on rural landscapes as a whole cannot be asserted on the basis of this study; that requires closer study.
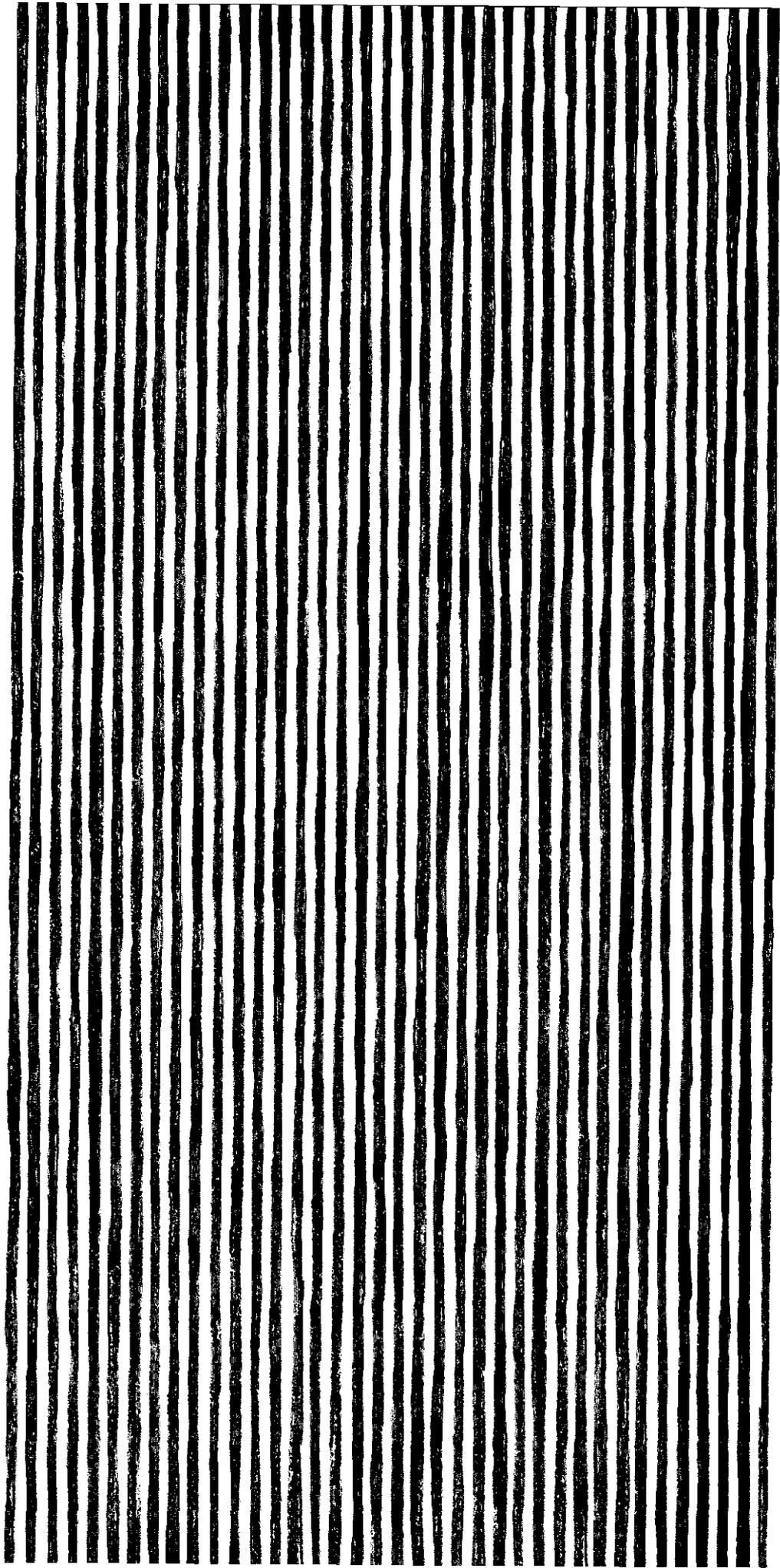
10

Questions for present-day landscape design for leisure

In the previous chapter, the dominant design approaches and recent changes in relation to leisure in the countryside were reconstructed and positioned in the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes. This chapter deals with questions for present-day and future landscape design. The research questions for this part were formulated as follows:

> With regard to leisure in the countryside: what are critical issues for landscape design theory and practice in the present and future context? What are the most significant characteristics and trends of leisure in the countryside and which issues require attention? To what extent does the contemporary context require reconsideration of the dominant design approaches concerning leisure in the countryside?

The ambition of this chapter is not to provide concrete guidelines for future landscape design. It aims to sketch a changing present and future context of landscape design for leisure in the countryside and to address issues that landscape designers and their clients should take into consideration. Some essential characteristics of the reconstructed leisure approaches and their position in the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes are discussed first. Second, continuities and changes pertaining the central themes of leisure in the countryside as well as landscape planning and design processes in general are analysed. Third, the relevancy and suitability of the approaches of the design tradition are considered in light of the themes. Which components of the landscape design tradition last, which appear to be questionable or unsuitable in the actual context and thus require *rejuvenation, transformation or abandonment? Critical issues concerning the themes are* brought up and discussed from both academic and practical points of view. What challenges for landscape design result from the themes? The chapter ends with the conclusions of this research.

10.1 Landscape designers' attitudes and approaches

10.1.1 Observations

This study started with the notion that adjustment of the countryside for leisure purposes is a pressing contemporary issue. Landscape designers have to decide what is to last and what requires change or reconsideration. After all, some pleasures are of all times and many landscapes are already very attractive, so there is no need for a complete renewal. It showed that a design problem is not only determined by the assignment and the concerned landscape. Since designers' mindscapes play an essential role in the interpretation of design problems and contribute to the nature and content of the design, their perspectives and frames of reference are parts of it as well. As a result, when one considers design problems critically, the design tradition – the views and frames of reference shared by landscape designers – should be considered as well. Some components of the design tradition will last; others appear questionable or unsuitable in the actual context. The latter components may be rejuvenated and transformed, or abandoned. In short, the design tradition should be scrutinised for its relevancy and suitability in the given context. However, landscape designers rarely do this. Nor is it possible for them to do so, given the fact that the way leisure has been dealt with in this design tradition has never been made explicit. As long as the leisure approach in the design tradition remains implicit, it cannot be discussed and examined for its relevancy and suitability. That is precisely the central problem that came up in this study. In the preceding chapters, landscape designers' perspectives and assumptions as well as their representation in design concepts and tools were revealed. Now that the dominant leisure approaches and their position in the design tradition have been reconstructed, the way for critical reconsideration and successive explorations is cleared. Its achievements and problems in relation to landscape design for leisure can be pointed out, both theoretically and practically.

The reconstruction revealed that leisure design approaches in the design tradition concerning rural landscapes proved unambiguous, persistent and stable; though weakly grounded and poorly elaborated. Only a few landscape designers have treated leisure as a serious design problem. In general, leisure was dealt with implicitly and intuitively in landscape design. Leisure was considered to be inherently integrated in landscapes. In general, the majority of landscape designers working in rural areas didn't make much of an effort to know and understand the nature of leisure behaviour, leisure motives, leisure experience, and the interaction between leisure and everyday life in rural landscapes. While the designers did display a serious interest in various functional and physical-spatial aspects of landscapes, it appears that, in general, they were less interested in the social and psychological aspects of those same landscapes. They studied properties and conditions of nature, water management and infrastructure, and their consequences for landscape planning and design in great detail. They tried to understand the mechanisms that determined the shapes and images of landscape elements and the logic of their reciprocal coherence. Design concepts and decisions were subsequently legitimised with concepts and theories originating from ecology, hydrology, civil engineering, and social history.

Leisure on the other hand, was hardly examined systematically for its properties and conditions. In consequence, designers reverted to general principles of landscape experience (without asking themselves whether landscape experience in general corresponds with leisure experience in particular) and to their personal leisure preferences (without asking themselves whether they were legitimate, given the context, and would meet other people's leisure needs and wishes). What's more, since landscape designers didn't question the nature of leisure and leisure environments as represented in their leisure conceptualisations, they neither explicated nor questioned the subsequent representation of their leisure conceptualisations in design concepts and tools. After all, they didn't evaluate their views, assumptions, design concepts and tools. It is true that recent designs show changing attitudes and approaches in landscape design, but they also show that landscape designers continue to work implicitly, intuitively and unsystematically. New issues are taken in randomly and common assumptions are not questioned. As a consequence, a theoretical foundation and development of landscape design for leisure is mostly lacking, and some critical issues with respect to contemporary leisure are still left out of consideration.

Now that leisure has grown into an important aspect of rural landscapes, it is time to regard leisure as a relevant and serious design problem. It requires a thorough and consequent study of the nature of leisure, and its demands and motives for design. The content and process of designing for leisure need to be carefully examined; together with the designers' ideas, concepts and tools; in theory and in application; in design and in use. A *contemporary, well-founded* design tradition concerning leisure in the countryside has to be developed. It is of vital importance for the development of a grown-up landscape design profession but above all for its societal relevance. A design tradition that is outdated or based on misconceived assumptions will most likely result in unattractive landscapes for leisure.

10.1.2 Towards a well-founded design tradition concerning leisure

A well-reasoned and systematic approach is necessary to develop a well-founded contemporary design tradition. Such an approach applies to designers' views and assumptions, the representation of their ideas in design concepts and tools, and the final results of their design efforts: the designed landscapes. First, landscape designers should base their designs on explicit knowledge and make their ideas and perspectives more transparent. They should make their starting points and assumptions clear. Second, they should systematically explore and evaluate the range of options they have to represent their ideas in design concept and tools. Design decisions ought to be substantiated. Finally, they should evaluate implemented designs, and adjust their ideas and designs to the insights provided by these studies. This applies to leisure in particular, but just as much for the design tradition concerning rural landscapes as a whole. Design problems in rural areas are so complex today that an intuitive, implicit and random approach simply won't suffice.

Perspectives and assumptions should be evaluated and based on intimate knowledge. As for leisure in the countryside, extensive theories and empirical studies of leisure behaviour, experience and environments are available from leisure and tourism studies, geography, environmental psychology and other disciplines (e.g. Appleton 1984; Kaplan 1987; Bourassa 1990; Henderson 1991; Tinsley 1993; Ulrich 1993; Sundstrom et al. 1996; Mannell and Kleiber 1997; Kaplan et al. 1998; Aoki 1999; Thompson 2000; Shaw 2002; Rishbeth 2004; Van den Berg et al 2007; Gobster et al. 2007;

Joye 2007a; Joye 2007b). These are useful to assess, adjust and inspire designers' ideas. In one of the debates on this study, several landscape designers argued that little knowledge was available (Brinkhuijsen et al. 2006). They didn't realise that landscape designers had passed over these disciplines for decades, that they apparently had lost their interest in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when studies of landscape experience turned out to correspond with basic design principles, and leisure studies were primarily focused on rules and standardised solutions based on average leisure behaviour. They thought that such insights didn't have much to add to the practice of landscape design. That an extensive field of new research in leisure and tourism studies, environmental psychology and cultural geography had come up in the 1980s and 1990s had slipped their attention.

Landscape designers have to take notice of this knowledge, get an idea of the continuities and changes in leisure in the present-day context, and point out the consequences for design. Educational programs should pay more attention to leisure in particular and to humanities in general. This doesn't mean that landscape designers have to become leisure experts. Intensive and systematic collaboration with experts is a proven, effective method. Together with ecologists, civil engineers and experts in cultural history, landscape designers have improved existing planning and design concepts, and developed new ones, based on concepts and theories from the other disciplines and vice versa. By consulting specialists and people with practical knowledge and cooperating with them in design processes, they will be able to come to a better understanding of leisure behaviour, motives and experiences; relate their own perspectives and assumptions to this knowledge in all its diversity; discuss them, and adjust their knowledge and perspectives.

A systematic approach is required to examine the relation between general concepts and ideas, and their representation in design concepts and tools. The broad field of contemporary landscape and urban design, and the historical tradition of garden and park architecture ought to be systematically studied for their applicability.
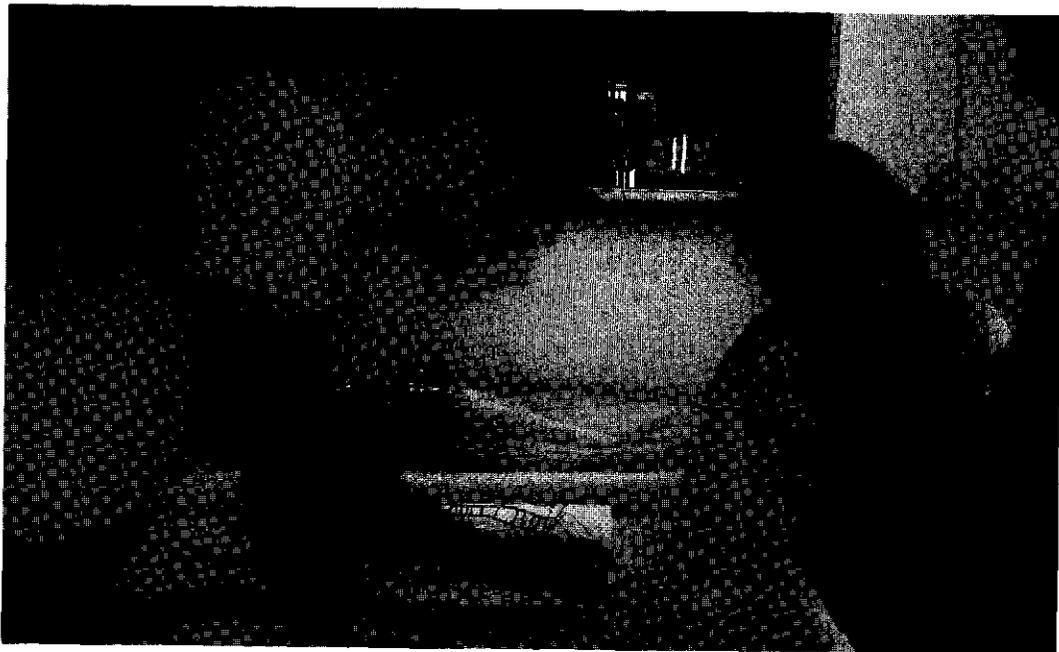

Figure 237 By means of research by design and in collaboration with leisure experts a wide range of design concepts and tools can be tested and evaluated.

The strong Modernist attitude of landscape designers designing for rural areas made them very selective in their images, forms and compositions. Design principles from the Landscape Style for instance were often ignored or rejected. 'That was a no-go area' (interview with Olthof in 2004). By means of research by design – that is the use of design as a research method – a wide range of design concepts and tools can be tested and evaluated.

The use of leisure theories and empirical knowledge can provide landscape designers with concepts and clues that can then be used to create well-functioning, attractive and inspiring leisure environments. The use of this knowledge should not *and* will not result in strict, ready-made design rules. A one-to-one conversion of abstract theoretical concepts into specific leisure environments and concrete design solutions is both undesirable and impossible. It's undesirable because a limited range of solutions doesn't add to a rich variety of routes, attractions, facilities and settings. It's impossible because general, abstract concepts such as 'freedom' or 'contrast with daily life' are complex and multi-layered concepts by nature, and can be interpreted and elaborated in many ways. The characteristics of the different modes of leisure experience (amusement, change, interest, rapture and dedication) are ambiguous as well. They too can be interpreted and elaborated in many ways, particularly because leisure experience is usually a combination of modes. To create custom-made design concepts and tools always requires creativity and artistry. Reasoning is required to evaluate different options and to make the design choices clear.

A close evaluation of implemented designs through the study of people's behaviour, experiences, motives and opinions will clarify whether design interventions work and have the intended effect. After all, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'. Post Occupancy Evaluations (POE's) of implemented designs ought to be carried out. A POE involves the systematic evaluation of opinions about designed environments that have been put into use, from the perspective of the people who use them; it provides 'an appraisal of the degree to which a designed setting satisfies and supports explicit and implicit human needs and values of those for whom a building (*or landscape: MB*) is designed' (Friedmann et al. 1978, p. 20). Successes, failures and shortcomings that come to light have to be processed; if possible, failings in designed landscapes should be resolved and lessons ought to be applied in future operational and strategic designs.

An explicit, systematic and reasoned approach as outlined here will contribute to a better-founded tradition of landscape design for leisure in the countryside. A landscape design theory concerning leisure will thus be developed, grounded on concepts and theories from social sciences and humanities. Ideas, design concepts and tools in contemporary landscape architecture for leisure in the countryside will be evaluated, discussed and adjusted to the changing context.

10.1.3 The design tradition in the contemporary context

The previous chapter showed that landscape design for leisure was firmly embedded in a strong and stable design tradition but that leisure approaches and their context are now rapidly transforming. The nature and role of designs are changing, new themes are taken on, and a multitude of new concepts and images is applied. Apparently, many landscape designers think that familiar leisure approaches no longer suffice, or at least in part they don't. It most certainly has to do with a changing social, economic and cultural context.

The present world of leisure is obviously different from that of our parents, and the landscape design practice in general is subject to change as well. Demands made on designers and designs are different from before. Landscape designers try to find answers to this new situation. At the same time they are facing the question of what aspects are *not* changing, and to what extent they can rely on well-tried solutions and elaborate upon them.

In the next paragraphs changes and continuities will be examined by means of important themes in contemporary leisure and landscape design. They were already addressed in the earlier chapters of this study: the shifting meaning, nature and approach of leisure, its ongoing spatial integration, and the dominant role of commodification. Another theme, the changing character of planning and design processes, was described briefly in chapter 8, which dealt with the present period of diversification. The achievements and shortcomings of the design tradition will be discussed in the light of these themes.

10.2 Issues on leisure

10.2.1 Diversity and dynamics versus the steady base

It was already brought up in the introduction that the nature and importance of leisure have changed over the last decades. Leisure has become more plural and diverse than ever before. Leisure behaviour is less bound to class or tradition, and distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture have faded. Significantly improved education levels have increased the demand for more complex forms of leisure, characterised by 'active exploration' rather than passive consumption (Nordin 2005). A wide range of leisure and tourism segments has emerged, such as nature, sports and adventure, health and fitness, culture, heritage, gastronomy, and spirituality. Changing values and attitudes give rise to a growing search for authenticity; there is a focus on nostalgia, people's own roots, other cultures and identity; and there is an increasing interest in spiritual and intellectual activities. Consequently, leisure dynamics have increased as well. People can and do switch from one activity to another, combining different life styles. The expanding group of seniors with lots of free time, for example, is exceedingly diverse and dynamic in their preferences and behaviour. The fixed leisure typologies that were made in the 1930s for the planning and development of leisure areas in Rotterdam (see 4.2.2) have worn out.

**Omgeving waarin fietsdagtochten plaatsvinden**
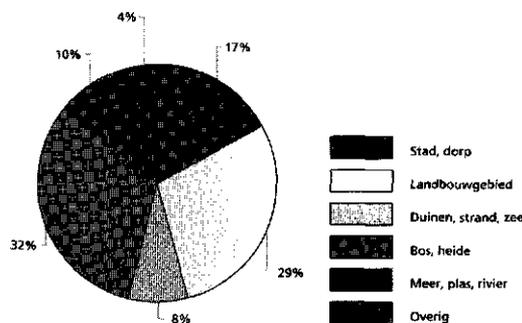
Figure 238   Daytrips ordered by type of environment (Stichting Recreatie 2004, based on CBS Statline 2003)

These developments may suggest that we are confronted with a completely new situation in the field of leisure. Although it's true that fundamental changes are taking place, a steady base of leisure activities continues to exist as well. Traditional activities like taking strolls and cycling are the two most important outdoor recreation activities (CBS 2003). In 1996, walking represented more than one third of all daytrip activities in the countryside (Bruls et al. 2002) and in 2003, the Dutch made 427 million(!) recreational bicycle trips, the majority of these trips lasting less than two hours. People of all ages enjoy walking and cycling, but seniors (50-64 years old) represent the largest share. The countryside is by far the most popular environment for bicycle trips (Stichting Recreatie 2004). These traditional activities are set out next to a diversity of contemporary options. The dimension and share of new trends are not very clear, however, as long-term datasets are not specific enough.

10.2.2 Experience

Another marked change in leisure is the emphasis on experience. Our present time seems to be characterised by increasing influence of emotions and experience-based relations (Schulze 1992; Jensen 1999). Products, services and places are primarily assessed and chosen for their symbolic and experiential value. Choices of what to buy, where to go or what to do are made on their expected experiental values. Businesses have come to sell the experiences associated to their products and services (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Leisure is no exception to this. Policy makers and leisure researchers, who used to pay attention predominantly to leisure facilities and leisure behaviour, are following the leisure and tourism industries and are joining this trend towards leisure experience. It is important to realise that experiential qualities go beyond aesthetics; a visually attractive landscape is not necessarily one that provides strong, unique and memorable experiences.

10.2.3 High quality

In a context of consumer culture, the diversity and dynamics of leisure activities are closely related to and partly caused by a rapidly growing supply of leisure products, services and environments. Expenditure on leisure commodities and goods has become an important means to demonstrate one's taste or lifestyle. It has even become a leisure activity in itself. Fun shopping is one of the most popular forms of leisure pastime. Many authors (e.g. Zukin 1991) argue that consumption increasingly determines the way we see the world: 'the ways in which material culture, people and places become objectified for the purpose of the global market' (Meethan 2001, p. 5). 'Informally-organised leisure pursuits are increasingly being converted into traded products, services and environments' (Shaw and Williams 2002, p. 15).

With more money to spend, less spare time than before and an overwhelming choice, consumers have become critical and demanding. They expect high quality, safety, comfort and unique, memorable experiences. High quality should not be confused with luxury though, it rather means consequent and carefully elaborated in order to meet customers' expectations. People on a wilderness tour for example may expect real wilderness experiences, with a feeling of being on one's own, back-to-basic facilities, a lack of artefacts and some physical effort, which, of course, has to be rewarded with face to face encounters with wild animals.

Repeated encounters with other visitors, supermarket food and the sound of chugging tractors in the background will decrease the quality of the expected experience. In the struggle for consumers' attention and expenditure, formerly separated leisure domains have now become competitors. A tendency towards evermore-spectacular experiences can be observed (ETC 2006; Mommaas et al. 2000). The extreme character can be observed on either side of the spectre, from the ultimate fierce challenge to complete relaxation. Yet 'while extreme experiences used to be special and occurred rarely, such experiences happen more often because they are intentionally created. It leads to habituation and a decreasing impact of extreme experiences' (Steg and Buijs 2004, p. 18).

10.2.4 Considering the design tradition for leisure

The reconstructed design tradition showed that landscape designers paid attention to diversity by offering freedom of choice, and creating neutral, multi-interpretable spaces with as little imposed use and meaning as possible. Their dislike of information panels turned out proverbial. Nevertheless, the diversity represented by their designs was not as wide as suggested. Freedom of choice appeared to have been narrowed down to extensive forms of outdoor recreation, while other forms were ignored, rejected or put aside. In reference to different modes of leisure experience the designers focussed almost exclusively on modes of change and interest. It's true that these modes are the ones that seem to occur most frequently in outdoor recreation (Goossen and Gerritsen 2003; Goossen and De Boer 2008), but other modes should be taken seriously as well. Not only do all modes occur in various combinations, but landscapes should also be attractive from different points of view. After all, diversity is an essential characteristic of present-day outdoor recreation. Owing to a narrowed focus, possible frictions between different activities or modes remained unnoticed and hence not an essential aspect of the design problem.

With respect to diversity and dynamics, we may conclude that the design tradition is inadequate to face emerging questions and challenges. It needs to be reconsidered and expanded. The traditional ideal images of landscapes for leisure might not be appropriate anymore. If, in addition to extensive forms of leisure, intensive forms of leisure are to be integrated with agricultural practices and other land uses, the familiar concept of a wood packed with leisure facilities will no longer be the most obvious concept.

Figure 239 Designers have to take plurality into account. Although bicycle trips are still among the most popular leisure activities, but contemporary leisure in the countryside implies more than that.

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Designers and their clients have to explicitly ask themselves which forms of leisure and recreation they should take into account and to what extent their designs are able to meet that choice. They have to consider plurality as an integrated part of the design problem.


Figure 240 - 243   In the project *Zappen door het landschap* leisure experience was explicitly taken as a point of departure. *Four different approaches* of leisure were studied for their landscape consequences: landscape with guided tours, landscape as a piece of scenery, settling the landscape and appropriating the landscape (2003, design by Okra and Alterra).

Naturally, each and every landscape or site doesn't have to offer all possible things to all possible people. Each environment has different qualities that are easier or harder to combine with different activities and different motives, and some activities don't match very well at all. Zoning is an effective organisation principle that can be applied – subtly – at a regional level, by creating different landscapes and providing different leisure opportunities within a region, or at a local level, through internal, functional and spatial organisation of routes, facilities and attractions. Dealing with different meanings is a subtler, yet also more complicated question. This topic will be discussed in the next paragraph, which brings up the question of life worlds.

When the designers did pay explicit attention to leisure, they mainly focussed on facilities. Leisure experience was only implicitly taken into account to a certain extent. With regard to experiences that are directly related to perception, few landscape designers explicitly tried to stimulate the senses with their designs (see 6.6.3 for an example). As far as narratives are concerned, the landscape setting was designed as a non-urban realm, and when designers did make detailed designs, the routes and attractions expressed a contrast with daily urban life as well. Landscape design as a whole usually referred to one dominant narrative: the history of landscape formation. Altogether, leisure experience remained rather underexposed, but recent designs showed that more attention was given to experience, and designs represented a wider variety of experiential aspects.

Where leisure experience is concerned, the design tradition doesn't have as much to offer as would be desired. There is a need for reconsideration. It's crucial that landscape designers pay more attention to the perceptive and imaginative aspects of their designs. To create a mentally, emotionally or spiritually attractive landscape asks for a landscape that does not only function well, but also stimulates the senses and the mind. Landscape designers have to pay more attention to the level of details in their designs. At a regional scale, landscape perception is an abstract concept, but at a detailed level landscape perception becomes concrete. People perceive their immediate surroundings at eye-level with their senses. Experience can be influenced by playing with material and physical stimuli: the form, size, scale, material, texture, smell, sound and composition of landscape elements. The experience of a narrow, swampy, winding path will be very different from a straight, wide paved road; the experience of trees planted in a grid pattern will be different from indiscriminately planted trees. A refined, detailed landscape design can stimulate the senses and enhance the impact and richness of the experience.

Landscape designers are able to draw from a long tradition of garden and park architecture, rich in concepts and tools for the creation of illusions, the provision of pleasure and various references to nature and culture. Design traditions concerning other leisure domains, such as theme parks, may be a source of inspiration as well. Theme park designers know perfectly well how to influence or manipulate people's behaviour and experience. These knowledges and skills can be derived from their commercial context and applied in the context of public space in the countryside. The landscape setting is an inseparable part of leisure experience, and its role can be exploited better. The landscape setting plays such an important role in leisure experience, because it is also the subject of leisure and acts as a symbol, referring to ideal images of leisure, nature and landscape. It can be background, symbol and subject of leisure in many ways. It is often intertwined with leisure attractions and facilities.

A hilly landscape, for instance, attracts cyclists looking for a sportive challenge. The hilly landscape setting is the attraction and provides the facilities for a sportive performance at the same time. A landscape setting can provide a specific ambience for leisure activities and can thus co-create special experiences.

Ideal images of nature and the countryside may not be as obvious as they seem to be. In a debate with landscape designers about the outcomes of this study, they argued that the rural images they used for leisure in the countryside were natural and legitimate, as they represented the most eye-catching and fundamental characteristic of rural landscapes in comparison with other - urban and themed - leisure environments. It is arguable that non-urban images do make sense in an urbanising context. After all, the urban-rural dichotomy is deeply rooted in society. Notwithstanding the legitimacy of their argument, the designers didn't ask themselves whether the changing relation between town and countryside in an urbanising context might lead to slightly different interpretations and expectations. A fundamental quality of leisure is contrast. When the landscape becomes part of the city and the city becomes integrated with the landscape, the quality of that contrast may alter. The contrast between town and countryside has to be thoroughly re-examined for its relevancy. An extensive body of literature on rurality (e.g. Van Dam et al. 2002; Yarwood 2005; Edensor 2006) and alternative concepts of space and urbanity (e.g. Augé 1995; Graham and Marvin 2001; Castells 2004a, 2004b) could feed this discussion and provide new perspectives.

For a long time, designers passed over other possible realms and images that might coexist. Landscape references can be broader and more diverse, as recent designs have shown. Landscapes can refer to other times and places ('elsewhen' and elsewhere). They may diversify and enrich the landscape, make them attractive for many people with different leisure motives and represent a contrast with daily life. Landscape designers shouldn't deny the position and meaning of rural landscapes as distinct from other leisure environments, but they can add other layers of meaning. The representation of narratives of local events and people in landscape designs may strengthen local identity and the orientation in time and space. The landscape would then become multi-layered and probably more attractive to a diverse public. However landscape designers have to bear in mind that not everyone 'reads' landscapes and their embedded narratives the way that they do themselves. Clients have to be aware of all this, and explicitly include these aspects in their assignments.

Landscape designers' preference for contextual design and the subsequent tendency to scale up their designs certainly added to the quality of the designs. The contextual approach placed the landscape as a whole in the foreground. With this approach they included the landscape setting in their designs. At the same time the integrated, regional approach often came at the expense of detailed design, whereas the quality of supply is determined to a large extent by the immediate, physical confrontation with the landscape. This problem was partly caused by the fragmented structure of the planning and design processes. Different people carried out different stages of a planning and design process, with little continuity in the assignments.

In order to improve the quality of design, landscape designers have to cherish their integrated approach *and* pay more attention to the elaboration of their designs. As discussed previously, the public expects environments that provide unique and memorable experiences. Landscape designers have to create landscapes that are different from others, making use of the genius loci and emphasizing it.

By paying respect to perceptive and imaginative aspects and elaborating their designs carefully up to the detailed level, they can create landscapes that catch the imagination; that is, designing in such a way that it appeals to people's fantasy, and evokes amazement, wonder and curiosity.

This is not only relevant for contemporary leisure, which focuses the attention to experience, but also for simple and popular activities such as walking and cycling. The quality of many areas in the countryside is considered rather low because of a large-scale character, bad accessibility, lack of functionality, and lack of scenic beauty (Bruls et al. 2005). Nonetheless, the countryside is a very popular environment for walking and cycling in spite of its quality. It can be so much more attractive though. We don't necessarily have to put up with boring, mediocre design solutions from the past, and landscape designers and their clients don't need to work solely demand-oriented. Landscape designers could create much more interesting landscapes for leisure. Their challenge and ambition has to be to create a highly attractive environment, no matter how insignificant the design problem may appear. Every route should be examined for its scenic qualities, each site and each program should be scrutinized for their specific opportunities. It doesn't need to be cutting-edge design: 'exceptionalising the everyday landscape' with care and creativity could reveal hidden qualities and could work as well. All of this does require clients to realise that quality takes time, tenacity and money; it requires them to offer designers the opportunity to go through all stages of a design process from the first general concept to the stage of implementation, and the time to elaborate their ideas up to the last details.

10.3 Issues on leisure environments

10.3.1 Landscapes of consumption

The ongoing spatial expansion of leisure, and its spatial and temporal integration was discussed in the introduction and in chapter 8.2.2. Leisure has become an integrated and inseparable part of our entire environment; distinctions between work and spare time, between leisure space, work space and living environment are fading. All spaces are leisure spaces, and leisure is everywhere. A process of 'enworldment' – the encompassing of all worlds in one – is taking place (Terkenli 2002). The concept of mono-functional recreation areas is being replaced with multifunctional landscape concepts in which nature, agriculture, water management and housing are likewise part of the leisure landscape. Traditional tourist landscapes like the coastal zone, the Veluwe forests and heathlands, and small-scale landscapes such as the Drentsche Aa stream valley or the rolling countryside of South-Limburg are increasingly adjusted and exploited to accommodate more visitors, and to provide a larger variety of attractions. Similar processes can be observed in other landscapes. Tourism is expanding from a formerly centralised zone into the surrounding agricultural landscape, as can be observed in the coastal zone for example.

Less attractive areas are also eyeing leisure and tourism. They are considered, because they are believed to be able to provide employment in regions where alternatives are sparse. In assiduous search of alternative supports for rural economies and rural landscapes, a general shift from landscapes for agricultural production to landscapes for consumption is kindly accepted. Leisure and tourism are regarded as a means to provide an alternative economic basis for the maintenance and management of highly valued agricultural landscapes.

The countryside is no longer the exclusive domain of extensive outdoor recreation. A growing number of commercial events, such as country fairs, countryside markets, guided history or nature tours, and sports events brings large groups of people to the countryside.

Functional and economic diversification raises questions of multiple land use. Potential combinations of leisure with other land uses like agricultural production, water management, housing and nature conservation are studied for their surplus values, also because leisure and tourism may provide public support for controversial interventions like nature development and water storage.

10.3.2 Competition and commodification

Economy-based attention to leisure and tourism in rural landscapes leads to an increase in competition. Foreign rural landscapes have become easily accessible by a dense network of highways, high-speed trains and regional airports frequently visited by low-cost airlines. Remote places that offer high-quality, diverse leisure or tourist facilities will be chosen over nearby mediocrity. Traditionally popular destinations are no longer obvious. If quality is inferior and no action is taken, decline is inevitable. Besides, stronger competition comes from even nearer. After all, most leisure activities take place in urban environments. 'Citizens prefer urban areas over the countryside, not only in general but also for outdoor recreation' (Harms 2006: 61). About two thirds of all leisure activities (including outdoor recreation, walking and cycling) take place in urban areas. If we look at leisure activities in 'green' areas the percentages are even higher: 90 %(!) of the activities take place in the city (Dagevos 2004). Public gardens, parks and park forests are evidently very popular leisure environments. City councils consider public spaces to be important marketing instruments and invest in well-designed, high-quality plazas, avenues, boulevards and parks. In such a competitive context, commodification seems almost indispensable for consumptive leisure landscapes. In pursuit of attracting as many consumers as possible, landscapes are commodified. Regional brands are developed and themes are introduced in order to exploit landscapes as major elements of the leisure and tourism industry. Tourist organisations, authorities, nature conservation organisations and private operators seek out unique selling points with the use of which one area can distinguish itself from others.

Figure 244   Leisure and tourism are are regarded as a means to provide an alternative economic basis.

Authenticity and singularity make all the difference. Characteristic landscape elements and structures that add to local or regional identity are highly valued and cherished. Still, the landscape product has to be 'sold', and the image or narrative has to be appealing, clear and convincing. Anything that doesn't fit in with the chosen theme or narrative is either ignored or cleaned up. Authenticity and identity thus are ambiguous. Their importance in the commodification of rural landscapes is great, but at the same time their significance is affected by the purification, which is carried out precisely to emphasize their value. The increase of commodification contributes to the physical, commercial and symbolic transformation of rural landscapes. Cultural heritage, nature and landscape scenery are commodified and presented to specific target groups for consumption.

10.3.3 Uniform landscapes

The problematic sides of the commodification of space have been extensively discussed in literature. According to Mommaas, landscapes are being assessed 'on their distinctive value in terms of being decorative, attractive or experience-rich environments. In a sense it is a matter of aesthetisation or 'culturalisation' of space' (2001, p. 13). Many authors argue that commodification easily leads to a condensation of meanings; that images and themes are used to represent the special characteristics of goods, services or spaces, while at the same time destroying those unique qualities through the use of stereotype formulas or programs. Environments are transformed into experience products to be consumed according to standard formats that have already proved successful elsewhere. They claim that processes of commodification, aesthetisation and theming lead to a decrease in the richness and subtle distinctions between landscapes, and to a decrease of space for non-consumptive, informal, spontaneous and unpredictable activities (e.g. Brouwer 1999; Aitchison, MacLeod et al. 2000; Meethan 2001; Mommaas 2001; Urry 1995). In a commercial context, a strong identity is a unique selling point, but for the sake of easy marketability, multilayered identity is being replaced with single-layered images. As diversity and dynamics are essential leisure qualities today, the impoverishment of landscape qualities doesn't sit well with the diverse and dynamic demand for rural areas as leisure environments. From the perspective of the demand for diverse modes of experience, single-layered images and landscape uniformity are not desirable either.

10.3.4 Life worlds

The spatial integration of leisure implies the intertwining of everyday living environments and leisure environments. People's daily environments become places where the public comes in search of unique leisure experiences. Besides, distinct leisure spaces appear, nestled within and simultaneously separated from immediate locality. Conflicts may arise, but new hybrid relations could arise as well. These processes can be observed in National Landscapes: protected areas, which are considered valuable and vulnerable for their scenery, wildlife and cultural heritage. They are 'to be enjoyed for their qualities, peace and tranquillity by many visitors' (LNV 2006). Ideal images are presented, referring to Arcadian landscapes, were time seems to have stood still. Television series about National Landscapes show images of wildlife, woods, moors and marshes; of cattle grazing in flowering meadows, murmuring brooks, picturesque old mills and farmsteads. Yet people who have lived there for generations, and make a living of the land want to hold on to their room for development. Their interest is, among other things, to be able to cater for new opportunities.

This problem is certainly recognized by authorities, which claim that these landscapes are protected, but 'that they are also 'living landscapes', home to diverse communities' (LNV 2006). Ironically enough, new residents and the leisure public demand room for development too. New 'rurban' residents are attracted by the ideal images, but at the same time they like to bring their urban comfort and way of life with them to the rural environments and, by doing so, they change the landscape. They clean up and beautify farmsteads, trim the lands with white fences that represent a middleclass dream of estate ownership and seclude the farms spatially, functionally and socially from the local communities.

A part of the leisure public expects the landscape to be adjusted to their demands of comfort, safety and intensified experience. They expect landscapes that are accessible, cleaned up, prettified and supplied with a mix of attractions and facilities. First impressions count. Local people, on the other hand, develop a sense of belonging to their living environment. This has to do with one's personal history related to that environment and with space identity, the specific qualities of that environment itself (Relph 1976). As people will get to know an area better, stay there longer or come there more often, they will attribute personal meanings to it and mentally make the area their own (Pronk et al. 1997). Visual aspects will gradually become less important and (historical) narratives will become more significant (Steg and Buijs 2004). As a result, people that are familiar with an area will give other meanings to landscapes and landscape elements than occasional visitors will. Conflicts may arise when their different life worlds meet, for example when historical elements are commoditised into heritage attractions, and other layers of meaning are smoothed out.

10.3.5 Considering the design tradition for leisure

A basic principle for landscape designers has been to consider and deal with landscapes in an integrated way. They continuously aimed for multifunctional landscapes in which a diversity of land uses and activities coexist. They have developed a variety of planning and design concepts for dealing with the combination or separation of land uses and activities. The framework planning concept is an example at the regional scale.
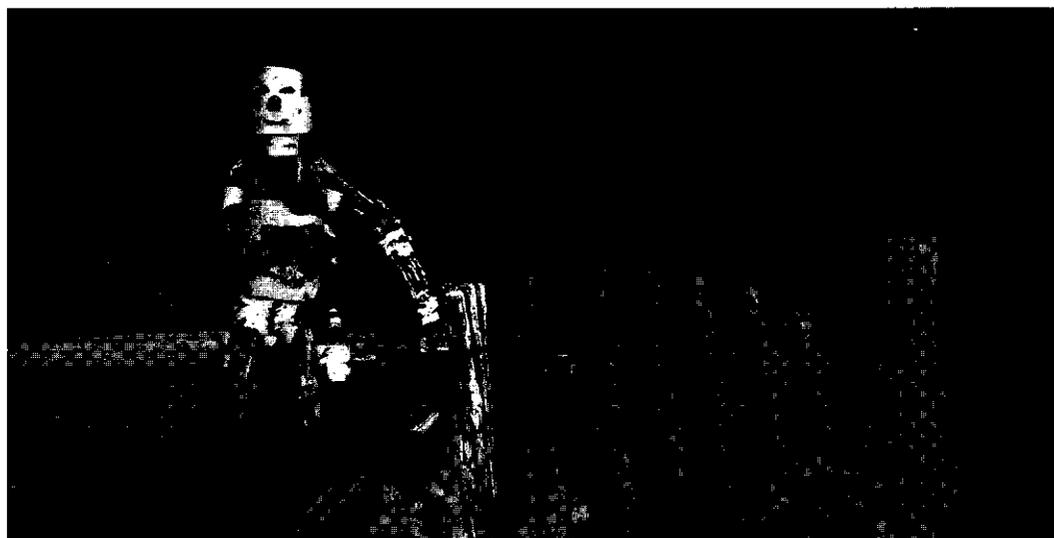

Figure 245   Feelings of belonging are expressed individually. These objects represent people's life worlds.

Zoning principles were used at different scale levels to intertwine compatible activities or land uses, and separate incompatible ones. The integrated approach provides coherence in complex situations and goes together very well with contemporary views of the countryside as a post-productive landscape. Integration is pressingly needed in the present situation of a growing number of claims on rural landscapes, such as water management, climate adaptation, 'rurban' residences and leisure.

Leisure was treated as subordinate to other land uses; it was treated as an activity that could be easily inserted. Intensive and commercial types of leisure were separated and hidden from sight; the focus was on public properties. This attitude was not unique for landscape designers; in leisure policy commerce was considered detestable as well, though inevitable for economic reasons. Dealing with commercial aspects was a neglected part of the reconstructed design tradition. Such an attitude towards leisure may be problematic in landscapes for consumption, where leisure is economically important. Far-reaching commodification and competition between landscapes are present-day trends and offer new challenges to design. As for the position of leisure in integrated landscape planning and design, designers' attitudes do require reconsideration. Leisure should be treated as a full-fletched function, equal to others. Landscape designers should examine to what extent the diverse, extensive and intensive forms of leisure can be combined with other land uses and activities, or the other way around.

Competition between landscapes and urban leisure spaces was not a part of the design tradition; they were rather seen as complementary. Nevertheless, landscape designers emphasized the contrast between urban and rural in many ways; a contrast firmly rooted in our western society. This contrast can be used to distinguish landscapes from urban leisure environments, but it won't be sufficient to meet the strong competition with urban leisure space and other landscapes. Other qualities are required as well. All the same, the design tradition did include some themes that are of interest in the present-day, commodified context, such as landscape identity and *genius loci*. They have been major concepts in landscape design. Landscape designers built their designs on area-specific, local and regional qualities. The history of landscape, its genesis and cultural history were used as guiding landscape narratives. The way local characteristics and historical features were represented in design was not necessarily susceptible to the public. Whether laymen were able to 'read' landscapes the way landscape designers do was rarely questioned.

All in all, the reconstructed design tradition concerning landscape identity and representing landscape narratives seems relevant, but not sufficient in the contemporary commodified and competitive context. Commodification and branding are common in other realms as well. City marketing and branding, for example, have been applied in urban environments since the late 1980s. High-quality architecture and public space are thought to play an important role. A study of such environments can reveal the design strategies, concepts and tools that were used, and help to develop a vision on the pros and cons of landscape commodification. Design traditions in such realms may contain useful alternative or complementary concepts and tools. Systematic research by design can shed light on the question as to what extent these design strategies, concepts and tools can be applied to rural landscapes. No matter what, high quality is a primary condition for any landscape in a competitive context, and hence also a primary demand for landscape designs.

Landscape designers have had to deal with the impoverishment of landscapes continuously. Ongoing modernisation and rationalisation made many historical landscape elements and patterns disappear. Landscape designers did their best to preserve landscape characteristics by taking structural elements and patterns as the basis for their designs. What's different between the past and the contemporary situation is that today the landscape elements aren't disappearing on a large scale, but their original meanings are.

Figure 246   The plan Holland Festival started as a study of future water management scenarios for the Randstad Holland and the Green Heart. Next, the future landscapes were elaborated into leisure themes. The former peat meadowlandscapes, which were to become natural peat bogs again in the scenario shown above, were thought to be great for safaris (2004, design H+N+S Landscape Architects).

Figure 247   Holland Festival: impression of a peat bog safari. Inspired by ancient clogs, the designed a special peat bog safari shoe.

The reconstruction showed that landscape designers primarily aimed at the physical, visual aspects of landscape. In general, they didn't really concern themselves with symbolic meanings and meanings attached to memories. The contemporary context first of all asks for a change of attitude. Symbolic meaning and – individual and collective – memories should be considered as essential properties of landscapes and landscape elements. Designers should be conscious of the meanings assigned to and derived from a landscape, by the users and by the designers themselves. These meanings ought to be made explicit; an inventory and analysis of these meanings ought to be part of the design process. The concepts of landscape identity and *genius loci* have to be interpreted broadly. They should not only include the physical aspects of landscape, but the psychological and symbolic aspects as well. The multivocal representations that constitute the *genius loci* of the place should be treated with respect. Only then will it be possible to assess existing design concepts and tools and to develop new ones by means of research by design.

The same is valid for different life worlds. Landscape design for leisure was more involved with use and facilities, and some general, abstract meanings of landscape for leisure than with local meanings, and conflicts between the life worlds of residents and the public. Some examples came up (see 5.3.3 and 8.3.6), but in general little attention was paid to this question. As leisure environments and daily living environments become more intertwined, the question becomes more urgent. Owing to different levels of connection, residents and visitors have different expectations of the same environment, and derive different meanings from it. The design tradition has no answer to this question, and this omission has to be filled. The fields of leisure and tourism studies, geography, and cultural anthropology are able to provide comprehensive literature of the problems related to the different life worlds of local residents and tourists, and of good examples of how these life worlds can coexist. Spatial solutions can be developed through research by design, when designers and experts on life world topics, and experts on leisure and tourism cooperate in multidisciplinary teams. It is a clients' job to explicitly demand designers to have regard for the different life worlds of residents and visitors.

10.4   Issues of planning and design processes

10.4.1 Clients and assignments

In the past, assignments for landscape architects to adjust rural landscapes for leisure purposes were often formulated in the context of land consolidation projects and, later, of land use projects. They were the exclusive domains of State Agencies. The leisure sections of the assignments were generally formulated in functional and quantitative terms. Clients didn't explicitly challenge landscape designers to really make an effort to create attractive landscapes for leisure. Assignments were not formulated as integrated questions; every sector provided its separate demands instead. Alternative solutions might have been brought up when activities were combined to reinforce each other, but usually these opportunities were not part of the assignments and they were left to the designers.

Today, State Agencies are no longer the dominant clients. The diversity of clients in rural areas has increased drastically, and so have the financial resources and the motives to initiate planning and design processes. The orderly situation of the land consolidation projects under the direction of one authority is now replaced with complex alliances of authorities, non-governmental organisations and private parties. Whereas the assignments used to arise from national and provincial leisure policy, today local and regional authorities develop initiatives to promote their areas for recreation and tourism, and call in designers to create settings, routes, attractions and facilities that match and intensify the areas' brands (see for example 8.3.2 and 8.3.5). They ask for design solutions that surpass the familiar. In addition to quantitative objectives (*more* routes, attractions and faculties), assignments include qualitative objectives (*more attractive* routes, attractions, facilities and settings). These qualitative objectives refer to functionality and comfort, and also touch on perceptive and imaginative aspects of leisure experience.

Another observed change is the allocation of tasks between authorities and private parties. In the land consolidation and land use projects, the possible location of routes, attractions and facilities was limited to public spaces. They were intended to be available to everyone and freely accessible. Market parties were supposed to take care of those attractions and facilities that didn't need to be freely accessible and could be exploited on a commercial basis. Today, NGO's and other organisations in charge of management and maintenance of public lands provide commercial leisure and tourist services too. At the same time, leisure operators who desire to expand their businesses engage landscape designers to make plans that include the realisation of policy objectives concerning leisure (and others) on adjoining public lands, for governmental compensation.

The shift from public parties to a mix of public and private parties means that design processes have become more complex. Designs play different roles in accordance with the stage of the plan process. It makes new demands on the attitude of landscape designers, and on their designs.
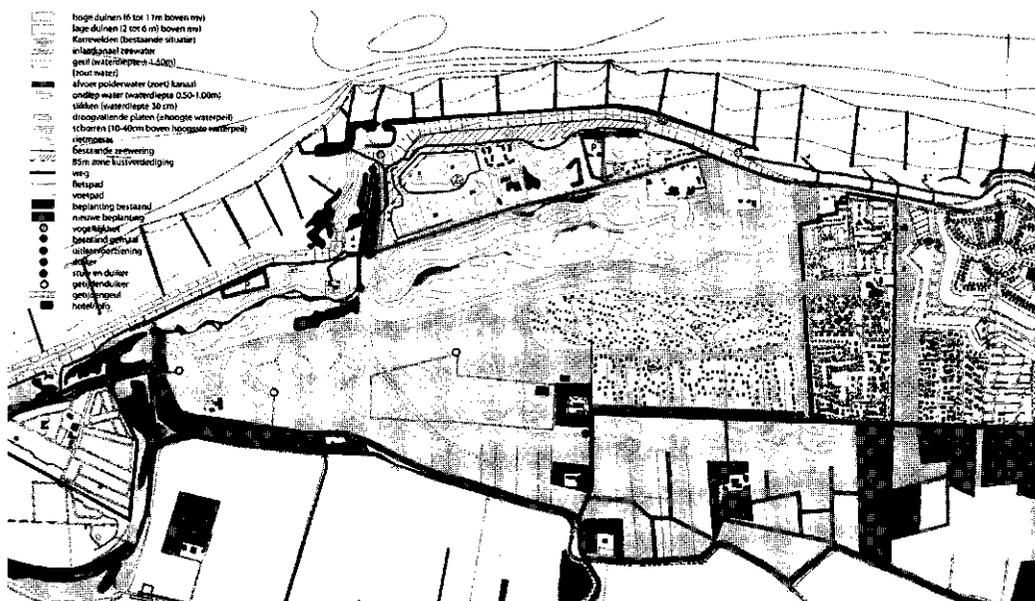

Figure 248, 249 Two recent design examples in Zeeland, which show a combination of expanding leisure and tourism business and the realisation of policy objectives on adjoining public lands (designs: left Plan Waterdunen by H+N+S landscape architects, 2006; right De Wielewaal by Bosch & Slabbers, 2005).

Designers no longer merely outline univocal images of the future; they have to shift between one attitude and another[1]. To provide optimum flexibility, they have to go back and forth between scale levels during the course of the design process; from the framework of a broad development perspective to the development of spatial principles and concrete design solutions at a local scale, and back again.

It is no longer unusual for public routes and facilities to be built on private lands. The former 'Right of Way' is re-established in a modern fashion. The owners receive financial compensation for construction, maintenance and management. As farmers and other private parties provide other conditions for management and maintenance than government-related organisations do, it makes different demands on the nature of design; the overall conceptual plan has to be flexible enough to be adapted to personal and local circumstances (see also 8.3.6). At the same time, it requires the traditional skill of designing operational plans on site in close consultation with landowners.

10.4.2 Development planning and collaborative planning

Closely related to changing assignments and implementation practices is the changing character of planning and design processes. The top-down planning approach, descending from higher to lower policy and administration levels, has been replaced with a more complex approach where public and private parties from different levels are simultaneously involved. The complexity is enhanced by the fact that it is required to scale up to the regional level since new developments often surpass the territory of a single municipality (Korthals Altes 2006). Consequently, an integral perspective on spatial developments at a regional scale becomes crucial; a perspective that offers an overall framework for diverse plans and initiatives.
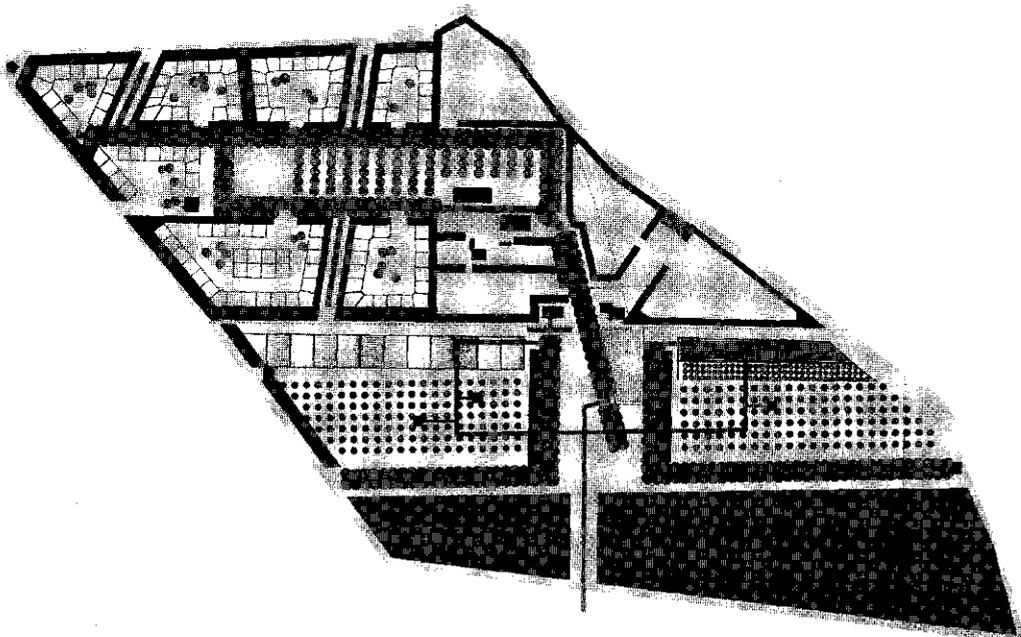
Moreover, the emphasis in spatial planning has shifted from 'posing restrictions' to 'stimulating developments'. In this so-called *Ontwikkelingsplanologie* (Development Planning; see also 8.1.1) the pith of the strategy has moved from the internal tuning of authorities to the formation of societal coalitions (WRR 1998)[2]. Many stakeholders are involved in such planning processes, which aim at regional or local custom-made solutions[3]. There is a shift from 'government' to 'governance'.
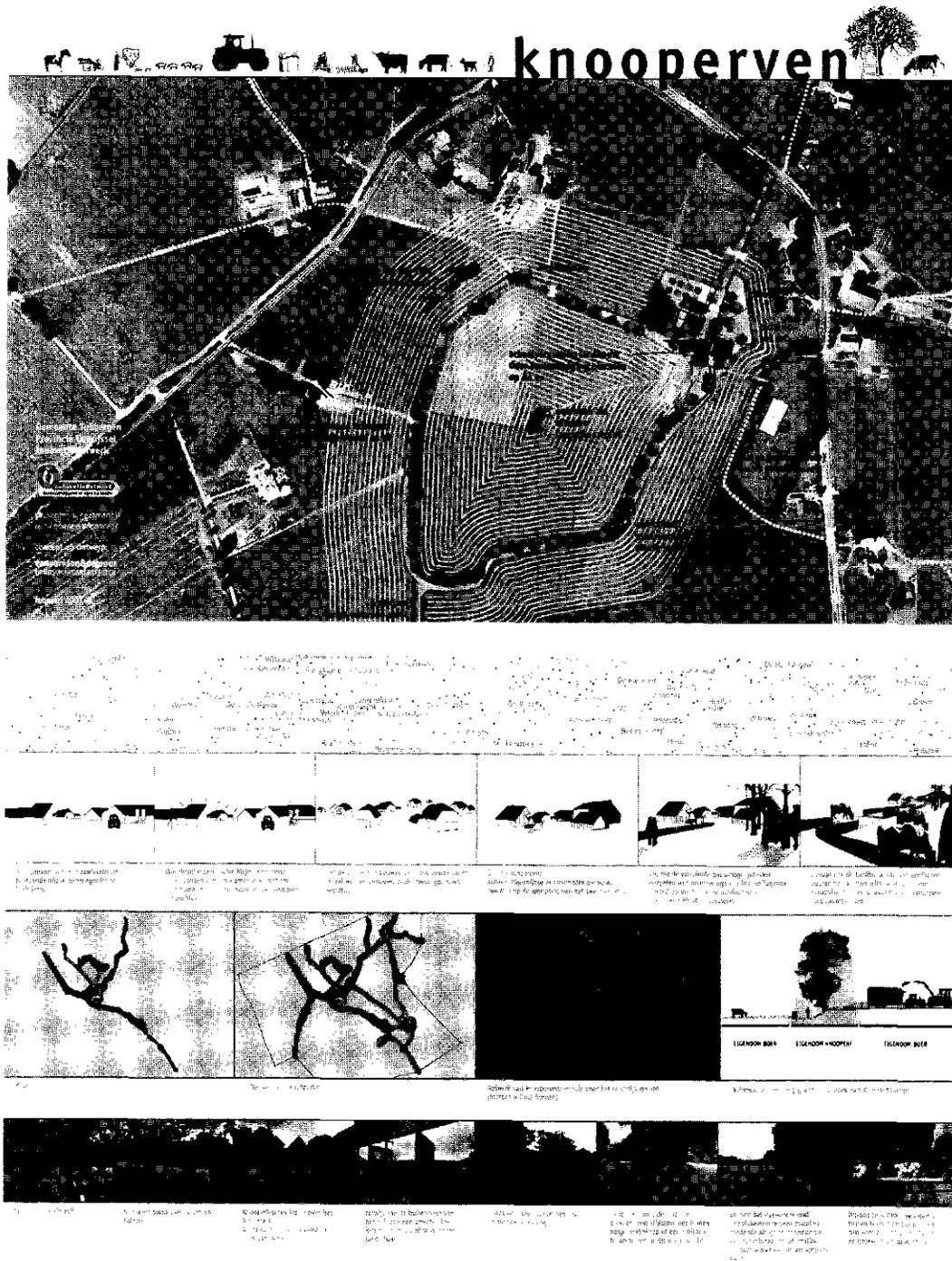
Figure 250, 251   The knooperf in Twente, an interesting design example based on age-old local concepts that creates an attractive landscape for residents and visitors. A knooperf is a former farm, where old, redundant buildings are demolished and replaced with new housing. The new residents take care of the management and maintenance of local trails and landscape elements such as hedges and wooded banks (design by Van Paridon and De Groot 2007).

In such planning processes, designs are not detailed plans for a fixed future situation but rather strategic, conceptual plans, which are meant to commit people to a collective perspective on the desired landscape character and quality in the long run. Parts of it are subsequently worked out into more detailed, operational plans.

Along with the shift to governance, planning and design processes are no longer the exclusive domains of professionals; local interest groups and laymen are also involved. Although the veiled objective of many so-called 'collaborative' or 'community' planning processes is quite often simply to gain public support, others are genuinely interactive in their layout and approach. In such projects local desires are taken seriously, laymen's knowledge is incorporated and local collaboration and commitment is stimulated. Laymen's contributions aren't restricted to having a say when the plans are presented; they participate in the stages of problem setting, design and implementation (see also 8.3.6)[4].

Collaborative planning brings up questions of plurality and multivocality in an early stage. To take multivocality seriously is a crucial condition, not only for successful planning and design *processes*, but for successful *designs* as well. Landscape designers cannot ignore laymen's representations. The necessity to pay attention to a wide diversity of meanings and interpretations is more valid than ever before.

10.4.3   Considering the design tradition for leisure

Although assignments were formulated from a sectional point of view, landscape designers did their best to combine sectional programs and comprehensive designs. Their multifunctional comprehensive landscape approach enabled them to develop integrated concepts. They gained a lot of experience with landscape perspectives at a regional scale. Design problems, no matter how small, were considered in a broader context to find out how they interacted with other activities and problems, at the time and in the long run (see 9.2.3). The habit of scaling up design problems to the regional scale and integrating them with other questions in the same area is firmly embedded in the design tradition. These are important achievements, which yield profit in relation to today's planning and design questions. They match very well with the principles of development planning. Still, the design tradition requires a substantial development in order to meet contemporary demands. Innovative function combinations need to be explored and tested.

Designers are confronted with new clients. The shift from public clients to private *and* public clients requires approaches that are flexible enough to be adapted to personal and local circumstances. Designers have to make use of all design perspectives they have worked from in the past. They now have the opportunity to connect the classic tradition of garden- and park architecture with its private clients to the 20th century tradition of public clients. Designers get the chance to design tailored solutions, geared to local circumstances and landscape management by private landowners. Time has come to discuss former restrictions, and to explore and re-explore a wide range of historical and contemporary design tools and images.

The reconstruction of the design tradition showed that landscape designers built on professional landscape knowledge and their personal preferences. Now that design and planning processes have changed, they still tend to hold on to their approach. Laymen's knowledge and interpretations are still rarely taken into account. The relations between professional and laymen's contributions to the landscape and between generic and local narratives are still rarely questioned. Not all landscape designers got the opportunity or took pains to meet local narratives. If they did, the narratives not always proved useful in landscape design. In default of useful local narratives, landscape designers easily reverted to generic or professional narratives, or to personal preferences.

If collaborative planning is to be taken seriously, landscape designers have to be critical of their design tradition. They should be willing to discuss their own presumptions and take other professional representations and those of laymen seriously. Naturally, this applies to planning and design processes in general, but it has specific implications for some leisure-related topics. When it is about local strolls for example; a landscape designer will probably lay out a route in such a way that the landscape structure can be experienced, but residents may prefer a route that connects local memories and narratives; the two do not necessarily coincide. When history is involved, professional and laymen's representations may diverge considerably. Professionals often value historical relicts different from laymen (Duineveld 2006). The same applies to residents and visitors. Different life worlds may collide when historical elements are commodified into heritage attractions and other layers of meaning are smoothed out. No longer can they take their personal preferences and experiences as the only reference point. Their attitude has to be cooperative and, to a certain extent, more subservient.

10.5 Conclusions on the design tradition: shortcomings and challenges

This study described 20th century landscape design for leisure in the Dutch countryside and disclosed a long-standing and stable design tradition, firmly embedded in the broader tradition of landscape design concerning rural landscapes. As far as leisure was concerned, the design tradition turned out to be weakly grounded and poorly elaborated. Landscape designers' ideas and perspectives remained mostly implicit. Designers dealt intuitively and randomly with the representation of general concepts and ideas in design concepts and tools, and they didn't evaluate their perspectives, assumptions and designs. Recent designs point out a change in the way they approach leisure, but landscape designers continue to work implicitly, intuitively and randomly.

Since leisure is considered to be a relevant and urgent design problem, a contemporary, well-founded design tradition concerning leisure in the countryside is essential. An explicit, reasoned and systematic approach is required. Landscape designers need to make their ideas and perspectives transparent and adjust them if necessary. Based on intimate knowledge, it should be tested whether design concepts and tools are suitable to represent abstract concepts and ideas, and design decisions have to be comprehensively underpinned. And finally, they have to assess whether designed landscapes actually function as intended. Such an approach will not result in strict design rules. Creativity and artistry are required to translate complex socio-cultural and psychological knowledge into designs.

This study shows that the design questions that arise from contemporary leisure and landscape design are abundant and complex. They pose quite a few challenges for landscape design. The reconstructed design tradition displays achievements, but also some apparent shortcomings. An essential achievement is the multifunctional, comprehensive approach of landscape design. The practice to reinterpret problems at a regional level enables landscape designers to discover mutual relations in land uses and activities. Such an approach is essential to recognize the questions brought on by the changing context, and to develop integrated concepts for landscape development. At the same time, their contextual multifunctional approach has led to shortcomings in the detailed designs, which are so important in relation to the experiential aspects of landscapes for leisure.

A marked shortcoming in the reconstructed design tradition is the approach of the landscape as an ecological, functional and economic system. Socio-cultural aspects have been neglected or underestimated. Up till now, people were too easily reduced to abstract, objective and universally applicable parts of the equation. The designers have been ignoring the symbolic meaning that a landscape represents to people and the existence of plural meanings. In short, landscape designers have been focussing mostly on the landscape and have too often forgotten the people that live and recreate in it.

Landscape designers can overcome this shortcoming by making use of extensive theoretical and empirical knowledge. They need to familiarise themselves with the specific leisure knowledge produced by leisure and tourism studies, environmental psychology, cultural geography and cultural anthropology. Furthermore, they ought to consult people with practical knowledge in order to be able to base future landscape designs on well-founded knowledge. This doesn't mean that landscape designers have to become experts in these fields. By collaborating in research by design, they can develop concepts, tools and images together, just as they have done with ecologists, hydrologists, civil engineers and cultural historians. Landscape designers can also make use of past design traditions and traditions of other fields. Design traditions dealing with themes that are new to rural landscapes, such as commodification and competition. However, above all, if landscape designers would include people in their landscape studies, and treat their needs and desires with the same passion and sensitivity as they do with other demands, they can instigate a flow of new (or renewed) design concepts, tools and images. If they were to design bespoke, detailed landscapes with the same passion and care as they plan them at a regional scale, they would be able to create landscapes for leisure that would stir people's imagination, now and in the future.

Notes

1 Based on his experiences with design contests, Henk van Blerck distinguished seven different design attitudes: the Body guard, Bob the Builder, Mister Aart (a character in the Dutch version of Sesame Street), Judas, Jules Verne, the Illusionist, and the Chameleon (Van Blerck 2005).

2 Actually, the Netherlands have got a long tradition of 'development planning' as Buitelaar and Needham demonstrated (2005); the Zuiderzee polders and large infrastructure projects such as the *HSL-Zuid* (Southern High Speed Line) are well-known examples.

3 Examples of development planning in rural areas in the Netherlands are the *Meerstad* (Lake City) and the *Blauwe Stad* (Blue City), two projects that combine housing, a new lake, recreation and nature in languishing agricultural areas in the north-east of the province of Groningen; and the *Wieringerrandmeer*, an initiative to combine new water management strategies and ecological connections with a socio-economic impulse for the former island of Wieringen and the polder Wieringermeer.

4 Some other projects which may be characterised more or less as collaborative planning in the Netherlands are, for example, *Air Hoekse Waard* (Devolder 2000), *Geest en Grond* (Geest and Ground; Venhuizen 2004) and *Boeren voor Natuur* (Farming for Nature; see Buizer 2007).

Summary

Leisure, landscape and design

While leisure, recreation and tourism are phenomena of all times, their nature and importance have changed over the last decades. They have become important economic industries and are among the major economic driving forces worldwide. Leisure and tourism industries have expanded in our consumption culture. The diversity and dynamic range of supply is enormous, but most people don't have more time to spare. As a result, demands made on leisure, recreation and tourism returns are high. People expect ever-better quality and assured leisure satisfaction. A tendency towards extreme experiences on either side of the spectrum can be observed: thrilling, spectacular challenges versus complete relaxation and serene peace. Notwithstanding these trends, unpretentious leisure activities with less contrast to everyday life subsist as well. Activities such as daily strolls and cycling-trips on Sunday afternoons are continuously popular.

The impact of leisure, recreation and tourism on the landscape are substantial. They can enliven dreary landscapes and enrich the quality and characteristics of monotonous landscapes, but they can also contribute to the degradation of the environment and the decline of long-term economic viability, social structures and cultural traditions of local landscapes and communities. In the Netherlands and other European countries the countryside is gradually changing from productive landscapes into consumptive landscapes for the benefit of citizens and tourists. Landscapes are commodified on a large scale to divert citizens and tourists, also because regions are looking for alternative economic supports. After a period of fragmentation and negligence of leisure, recreation and tourism, policymakers seem to have taken a renewed interest in the sector.

In this study leisure, recreation and tourism are considered to be closely related concepts, characterised by their joint distinction from everyday life and duties, and taking place in the landscape. They encompass a wide variety of activities and experiences of variable duration, led by non-utilitarian motives. The people it concerns include local residents, citizens from a nearby town, day-trippers and tourists. The whole cluster will henceforth be referred to as 'leisure'.

This study aims to shed light on landscape design approaches concerning leisure, recreation and tourism in the countryside. Urban environments and areas exclusively meant for leisure purposes are not part of this study, notwithstanding their importance as leisure environments. Landscape designers are confronted with new design questions concerning leisure. The answer is not simply a response to a given assignment for a given location. Designers bring in their own views and professional frames of reference, which, to a large extent, determine how they approach and handle the issues. They draw from a complex whole of written and unwritten rules and values within the landscape design discipline. This so-called design tradition consists of a blend of theory and practical know-how with regard to design tools and concepts, and underlying views of landscape design. But are these ideas, concepts and tools relevant and suitable for the given contemporary and future context? This question is rarely asked, neither by landscape designers, nor by their clients. It touches upon more fundamental questions and calls for critical reflection on professional practices.

Research

In the Netherlands, a unique tradition of comprehensive landscape design for rural landscapes has been built up since the 1920s. Leisure has been one of the aspects to be taken into account, not only in traditional tourist landscapes but also in landscapes that were primarily seen as agricultural production landscapes. These practices have produced a range of design concepts, tools, styles and images that can be drawn from still. However, the theoretical foundation of this design tradition shows many gaps. A considerable part of the Dutch design tradition in rural landscapes has yet to be subjected to scientific reflection, especially the aspect of leisure. We hardly know *what* has been designed for leisure purposes and even less is known about the motives and intentions of the designers: *why* they designed it that way.

The objective of this study is to examine how landscape designers have been dealing with leisure in the context of the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes and to what extent these approaches are still relevant and suitable in the contemporary, changing context, with new leisure demands and new landscape challenges. It aims to provide the knowledge and understanding that are necessary to start a discussion about the leisure approaches and the design tradition's relation to leisure approaches. This study also aims to help lay a stronger foundation for landscape design concerning leisure in the countryside.

The following research questions have been formulated:
How did Dutch landscape designers deal with leisure in the countryside in 20ᵗʰ century landscape designs? What designs did they make for leisure purposes; which design concepts and tools did they apply and for what reasons? What were their ideas about leisure and the role and meaning of landscapes with regard to leisure, and to what extent did the designs represent these ideas?

What are the dominant approaches - the leading ideas, design concepts and tools - concerning leisure in the countryside that emerge from the studied practices of 20ᵗʰ century landscape design and how are they related to the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes?

With regard to leisure in the countryside: what are critical issues for landscape design theory and practice in the present and future context? What are the most significant characteristics and trends of leisure in the countryside and which issues require attention? To what extent does the contemporary context require reconsideration of the dominant design approaches concerning leisure in the countryside?

The research layout consists of three parts. The first part concerns the empirical part of selecting and studying operational and strategic landscape designs to bring out the underlying design concepts, tools and ideas. A specially constructed analytical framework is based on four spatial components of leisure: attractions, facilities, routes and settings. The designs represent a variety of Dutch landscapes: the coastal zone and the marine clay polders of the Zeeland Delta, the river plains of the Gelderse Poort, the peat meadow landscapes of the Venen and the sandy uplands of the Drentsche Aa Stream Valley. They cover five periods with different planning and policy contexts: the period of pioneering (1920s – 1950s), mass recreation (1960s), joint recreational use (1970s – early 1980s), rambling (late 1980s - 1990s), and diversification (present time).

The second part comprises the comparative analysis of ideas, design concepts and tools, which rise from the design analyses of the first part. Dominant leisure approaches are reconstructed and related to contemporary theoretical insights and to the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes.

In the third part the reconstructed leisure approaches are critically reviewed from an academic and from a practical point of view. Central themes of leisure in the countryside are brought up and related to the leisure approaches in terms of relevancy and suitability.

Design tradition

The design analyses provided a range of concepts, tools and ideas, which were representative for leisure approaches in landscape design in the different periods. They revealed a stable design tradition of a comprehensive landscape approach and persisting conceptualisations of leisure. Even though spatial policy and leisure policy offered different concepts over time, landscape designers' focus and preference remained to be quite selective and constant. Their dominant image of leisure in the countryside was one of extensive use by individuals or by small groups and families: walking, cycling, fishing, and enjoying nature. Thus leisure could be easily inserted in the landscape with some relatively modest - functional - adjustments. Mass recreation and intensive forms of leisure were treated differently. They were spatially isolated from their environment and put aside, both literally and figuratively.

The principal measure in all designs for extensive use was the opening up of the landscape. Routes for both daily strolls and day trips have been planned and designed since the first landscape designs in the late 1920s. As landscapes became more important as leisure environments, strategies to open up the landscape expanded. Missing links in existing path networks were filled and the range of networks grew over time. Public access on private roads and rambling were stimulated. However, when areas were considered too vulnerable, they were inaccessible or only accessible by dead-end paths. Landscape designers appeared to have a special interest in routes that enabled visitors to experience the structure and diversity of a landscape. The 'rear side' of the landscape was usually assigned to slow traffic. Landscape designers preferred these margins in the landscape for their unpretentious beauty.

Whereas the opening up of the landscape was the primary condition for accessibility, the presence of attractions was seen as a major condition for a landscape to be a destination for leisure. Landscape designers made use of the landscape itself as much as possible in their attempts to design an attractive landscape for leisure. Landscape identity was taken as a starting point and as an objective at the same time. Landscape features were turned into attractions themselves by emphasizing and explaining the characteristics of that specific landscape, or they treated the whole landscape as a leisure attraction. New sites and facilities were added only when a landscape didn't contain enough possible attractions by itself or when a landscape was considered to be unsuitable for leisure.

The essence of landscape designers' conceptualisation of leisure appeared to be its contrast with daily life and duties. They used a range of design concepts to represent the countryside as an environment that contrasted with city life and the city itself. A popular image was that of a countryside where life was simple and time had stood still, a contrast with the alienating dynamics of the city. Rural landscapes were associated with the vernacular and casualness.

Most designers were afraid of over-design; a design that remained unnoticed as such was thought to be the best. They preferred landscape elements to be integrated in the landscape instead of being obviously separated and singled out. They aimed for simple designs that went without saying.

Another essential concept in landscape design for leisure was the concept of freedom. The concept comprehended two types of freedom: the opportunity to choose what to do or where to go, and the opportunity to come up with personal interpretations. The freedom of choice was particularly expressed in the design concept of route networks, which would enable people to choose their way. Designers devised and designed a variety of leisure attractions and facilities, but one may question how diverse the leisure supply really was and whether it offered choices that were in line with consumer demands. Planners and designers concentrated on extensive forms of recreation, and, within those parameters, even on specific types of leisure. The themes that occurred most often and that turned out to be unremitting in both policy and design, were for people to take a break from daily life, to enjoy landscapes and nature, and to be interested in it. Amusement and entertainment were associated with mass recreation and according to the designers, didn't combine well with extensive forms of recreation. People who were looking for the unexpected and more adventurous forms of leisure weren't provided for either. Several possible reasons for this biased preference for specific motives were taken into consideration. One reason appeared to be that landscape designers planned and designed for people like themselves, people with much interest in and knowledge of the landscape.

The other type of freedom was that the landscape was open to personal interpretations. In general, landscape designers preferred neutral, multi-interpretable spaces that enabled various uses. They didn't like highly controlled environments and hesitated to be too directive. The majority of the interviewed landscape designers explicitly mentioned their rejection of information panels and other obtrusive signs that pushed people to use or interpret an environment in a specific way. It didn't match with the informal image of the countryside they tried to portray either. They had the tendency to leave it up to people to form their own interpretations; and preferred to offer opportunities for un-programmed, unexpected and unthought-of activities to areas that were explicitly laid out for repose. By preserving or designing some margins in the landscape, they provided space for spontaneous use. Thus, a widened bank could turn into a playing field and a raised wall of a culvert could turn into a place to sit down. The preference for simplicity also relates to a strong and long-lasting Modernist discourse in landscape design, particularly in rural areas. Modern designers preferred a simple layout, pure, geometric forms and clear, straight lines. They rejected the use of ornaments and symbolism. Their designs were characterized by functionality. Things 'should speak for themselves'.

Even though specific leisure approaches came up, leisure was mostly regarded to be such an integral part of human presence in rural landscapes that design considerations were not exclusively meant for leisure; they were a natural part of the comprehensive landscape design. Landscape designers thought it was their job to design for the landscape as a whole, leisure included. As leisure could be easily inserted in the landscape, it was treated subordinate to other types of land use. For landscape designers, their comprehensive and multifunctional approach was so natural that they saw their approach as the only true one.

The emphasis on the landscape scale and the main landscape components was the basis for all land uses and activities, including leisure. Landscape structure, the main landscape components and land uses directed the location of routes, attractions and facilities. By considering problems at a larger scale and relating them to other problems, less attention was paid to detailed landscape design. The drawing of detailed plans was often left to technicians who had no background in architectural design.

The concept of the legible landscape turned out to be one of the leading concepts with regard to landscape design for leisure, even though it wasn't applied explicitly for leisure purposes. Landscape designers didn't discern leisure experience from landscape experience in general. Whether a landscape was meant for residents, for regular visitors from nearby or for occasional tourists, their experience of the landscape was treated alike.

Altogether, leisure approaches in the last decades matched with the Dutch design tradition concerning rural landscapes. Approaches proved unambiguous, persistent and stable, though weakly grounded and poorly elaborated. In general, leisure was dealt with implicitly and intuitively in landscape design. Leisure was considered to be inherently integrated in landscapes. In general, the majority of landscape designers working in rural areas didn't make much of an effort to know and understand the nature of leisure behaviour, leisure motives, leisure experience, and the interaction between leisure and everyday life in rural landscapes. They implicitly duplicated the concepts of their predecessors or fell back on their personal preferences and experiences, and made their designs for people like themselves. Leisure was not examined as a design problem the way other themes were. Since landscape designers didn't question the nature of leisure and leisure environments as represented in their leisure conceptualisations, they neither explicated nor questioned the subsequent representation of their leisure conceptualisations in design concepts and tools. After all, they didn't evaluate their views, assumptions, design concepts and tools.

Recent designs, however, show different approaches. An increasing diversity of approaches, concepts, themes and images can be observed. This suggests structural changes; it is likely that landscape design for leisure in the countryside is in transition. Yet, landscape designers continue to work implicitly and intuitively. New issues are taken in randomly and common assumptions are not questioned. As a consequence, a theoretical foundation and development of landscape design for leisure is mostly lacking, and some critical issues with respect to contemporary leisure are still left out of consideration.

Perspective

Now that leisure has grown into an important aspect of rural landscapes, though; it is time to think of leisure as a relevant and serious design problem. A *contemporary, well-founded* design tradition concerning leisure in the countryside has to be developed. An explicit, reasoned and systematic approach is required. Landscape designers need to make their ideas and perspectives transparent and adjust them if necessary. By collaborating with other disciplines in research by design, new concepts, tools and images can be developed together. Based on intimate theoretical and empirical knowledge, it should be tested whether design concepts and tools are suitable to represent abstract concepts and ideas, and design decisions have to be comprehensively underpinned.

And finally, they have to assess whether designed landscapes actually function as intended. Such an approach will not result in strict design rules. Creativity and artistry are required to translate complex socio-cultural and psychological knowledge into designs.

With regard to observed continuities and changes in leisure, leisure environments and landscape design practices, the reconstructed design tradition shows that great achievements have been made, but it also displays also some apparent shortcomings. An essential achievement is the multifunctional, comprehensive approach of landscape design. The practice to reinterpret problems at a regional level enables landscape designers to discover mutual relations in land uses and activities. Such an approach is essential to recognize the questions brought on by the changing context, and to develop integrated concepts for landscape development. Landscape designers should examine to what extent the diverse, extensive and intensive forms of leisure can be combined with other land uses and activities. Leisure should be treated as a full-fletched function, equal to others. At the same time, their contextual multifunctional approach has led to shortcomings in the detailed designs. In order to improve the quality of design, landscape designers have to cherish their integrated approach *and* pay more attention to the perceptive and imaginative aspects of their designs. After all, people experience a landscape one to one, at eye level. A refined, detailed landscape design can stimulate the senses and enhance the impact and richness of the experience.

Landscape designers have been focussing mostly on the landscape and have too often forgotten the people that live and recreate in it. A marked shortcoming in the reconstructed design tradition is that socio-cultural aspects have been neglected or underestimated. Symbolic meaning and – individual and collective – memories should be considered as essential properties of landscapes and landscape elements. Designers should be conscious of the meanings assigned to and derived from a landscape, by the users and by the designers themselves. The multi-vocal representations that constitute the *genius loci* of the place should be treated with respect. Only then will it be possible to assess existing design concepts and tools and to develop new ones. If collaborative planning is to be taken seriously, landscape designers should be willing to discuss their own presumptions and take other professional representations and those of laymen seriously. They can no longer take their personal preferences and experiences as the only reference point. Their attitude has to be cooperative and, to a certain extent, more subservient.

Landscape designers shouldn't deny the position and meaning of rural landscapes as distinct from other leisure environments such as urban environments or amusement parks, but they can add other layers of meaning. The changing relation between town and countryside in an urbanizing context might lead to slightly different interpretations and expectations. The representation of narratives of local events and people in landscape designs may strengthen local identity and the orientation in time and space. The landscape would then become multi-layered and probably more attractive to a diverse public. However, landscape designers have to bear in mind that not everyone 'reads' landscapes and their embedded narratives the way that they do themselves. Clients have to be aware of all this, and explicitly include these aspects in their assignments.

If landscape designers would include people in their landscape studies, and treat their needs and desires with the same passion and sensitivity as they do with other demands, they can instigate a flow of new (or renewed) design concepts, tools and images.

If they were to design bespoke, detailed landscapes with the same passion and care as they plan them at a regional scale, they would be able to create landscapes for leisure that would stir people's imagination, now and in the future. All of this does require clients to realise that quality takes time, tenacity and money; it requires them to offer designers the opportunity to go through all stages of a design process from the first general concept to the stage of implementation, and the time to elaborate their ideas up to the last details.

Samenvatting

Recreatie, landschap en ontwerp

Vrije tijd, recreatie en toerisme zijn van alle tijden, maar in onze hedendaagse samenleving zijn zij van groot belang geworden. Ze vormen één van de belangrijkste economische sectoren ter wereld. De vrijetijds- en toeristische industrie hebben een grote vlucht genomen in onze consumptiecultuur. Het aanbod is enorm, terwijl in Nederland de hoeveelheid vrije tijd van de meeste mensen niet meer toeneemt. Het gevolg is dat mensen hogere eisen gaan stellen: ze willen meer kwaliteit en zeker zijn van een unieke, gedenkwaardige ervaring. De extremen worden daardoor steeds groter, zowel het snelle hevige spektakel als de ultieme serene rust. Naast al deze ontwikkelingen bestaat er echter ook een stabiele basis. De dagelijkse wandeling en het fietstochtje op zondagmiddag blijven uiterst populair.

De invloed van vrije tijd, recreatie en toerisme op het landschap is groot. Ze kunnen tanende landschappen nieuw leven inblazen en saaie landschappen verrijken, maar ook leiden tot milieuproblemen en ontwrichting van lokale economieën, sociale structuren en culturele tradities. In Nederland en veel andere Europese landen verandert de betekenis van het platteland geleidelijk van een agrarisch productiegebied in een gebied dat vooral wordt gezien als een 'consumptielandschap' voor stedelingen en toeristen. Landschappen worden op grote schaal vermarkt om toeristen en recreanten te vermaken, maar ook omdat regio's hard op zoek zijn naar nieuwe inkomstenbronnen. Beleidsmakers lijken weer aandacht te hebben voor vrije tijd, recreatie en toerisme, na een periode van fragmentering en gebrek aan aandacht voor deze sector.

In deze studie vat ik vrije tijd, recreatie en toerisme gemakshalve samen onder één noemer omdat de begrippen nauw verwant zijn en een cluster vormen die staat voor uiteenlopende activiteiten en ervaringen zonder een nuttig doel. Of het nu gaat om lokale bewoners, stedelingen uit de regio, dagjesmensen of toeristen, voor allemaal betekenen vrije tijd, recreatie en toerisme een contrast met het dagelijks leven met zijn vele verplichtingen.

Deze studie gaat over het landschapsontwerp voor vrije tijd, recreatie en toerisme (in het vervolg betiteld als recreatie) in het landelijk gebied. Steden en grote recreatiegebieden zijn weliswaar ook belangrijke recreatieomgevingen, maar maken geen deel uit van deze studie. Landschapsontwerpers worden sinds enige tijd geconfronteerd met nieuwe ontwerpopgaven waarin recreatie een belangrijke rol speelt. De ontwerpoplossing bestaat niet simpelweg uit een combinatie van het programma van eisen met een gegeven locatie. Ontwerpers brengen ook hun persoonlijke visies, voorkeuren en beroepsmatige kennis in. Die bepalen voor een belangrijk deel hoe zij de opgaven aanpakken en tot ontwerpoplossingen komen. Ze maken gebruik van een complex geheel van geschreven en ongeschreven regels en waarden binnen de landschaparchitectuur. Deze ontwerptraditie bevat een mengsel van theorie en praktische kennis van ontwerpconcepten, ontwerpmiddelen (de ruimtelijke bouwstenen van een ontwerp en hun eigenschappen: vorm, compositie, maat en schaal, materiaal), achterliggende visies en opvattingen.

De vraag is of de ideeën, concepten en middelen van deze ontwerptraditie nog wel relevant en geschikt zijn in de huidige en toekomstige omstandigheden. Ontwerpers stellen zich deze vraag zelden en hun opdrachtgevers doorgaans ook niet. Toch gaat het om fundamentele vragen over het vak landschapsarchitectuur. Het vraagt om een kritische overweging van de ontwerppraktijk.

Onderzoek

In Nederland is vanaf de jaren twintig van de vorige eeuw in de ruilverkavelingen een bijzondere ontwerptraditie voor het landelijk gebied ontstaan. Naast landbouw, waterbeheer, bosbouw, natuur en andere functies speelde ook recreatie een rol, niet alleen in de traditionele toeristische landschappen zoals de kust en de Veluwe, maar ook in landschappen die vooral werden beschouwd als agrarische productielandschappen. Deze ontwerptraditie heeft een scala aan ontwerpconcepten, -middelen en beelden opgeleverd waaruit we kunnen putten. Er is nog maar weinig wetenschappelijk onderzoek gedaan naar de Nederlandse ontwerptraditie, zeker als het gaat om het aspect recreatie. We weten nauwelijks wat er is ontworpen voor recreatieve doeleinden, laat staan waarom de ontwerpers het op die manier hebben ontworpen; wat hun achterliggende motieven en bedoelingen waren.

Het doel van deze studie is om te onderzoeken hoe landschapsontwerpers in de afgelopen eeuw zijn omgegaan met recreatie in de context van de Nederlandse traditie van het landschapsontwerp voor het landelijk gebied en in hoeverre deze benaderingen nog relevant en geschikt zijn in de huidige veranderende omstandigheden met nieuwe recreatiebehoeften. Met dit onderzoek probeer ik ook bij te dragen aan een betere theoretische onderbouwing van het landschapsontwerp voor recreatie in het landelijk gebied.

De onderzoeksvragen zijn de volgende:
- Hoe zijn Nederlandse landschapsontwerpers in de 20e eeuw omgegaan met recreatie in het landelijk gebied? Wat hebben zij ontworpen voor recreatieve doeleinden, welke concepten en welke ontwerpmiddelen hebben ze gebruikt en waarom? Wat waren hun ideeën over recreatie en over de rol en betekenis van het landschap voor recreatie? In hoeverre kwamen deze ideeën in de ontwerpen tot uiting?
- Wat zijn de belangrijkste benaderingen – de ideeën, ontwerpconcepten en ontwerpmiddelen – die naar voren komen uit de 20e-eeuwse ontwerppraktijk en hoe verhouden zij zich tot de bredere traditie van het landschapsontwerp voor het landelijk gebied?
- Wat zijn belangrijke thema's en opgaven voor de theorie en praktijk van het landschapsontwerp voor recreatie in het landelijk gebied nu en in de toekomst? Wat zijn belangrijke karakteristieken, continuïteiten en ontwikkelingen en welke verdienen aandacht? In hoeverre is het nodig om ontwerpbenaderingen aan te passen?

De studie omvat drie delen. Het eerste deel bestaat uit het selecteren van inrichtingsplannen en ontwerpvisies en het ontrafelen van de ontwerpen en de achterliggende ideeën aan de hand van een analysekader op basis van vier ruimtelijke componenten van recreatie: attracties, voorzieningen, routes en setting. De plannen vertegenwoordigen diverse Nederlandse landschapstypen in vier gebieden: de kust en de zeekleipolders in de Zeeuwse delta, het rivierenlandschap in de Gelderse poort, het venweidelandschap in de Venen en de zandgronden in het stroomdallandschap van de Drentsche Aa. De ontwerpen beslaan vijf perioden met elk een andere plannings- en beleidscontext: pionieren (jaren twintig - vijftig), massarecreatie (jaren zestig), recreatief medegebruik (jaren zeventig - begin jaren tachtig), struinen (eind jaren tachtig - begin jaren negentig) en verbreding (eind jaren negentig tot nu). In het tweede deel van de studie heb ik de ideeën, ontwerpconcepten en –middelen uit de ontwerpanalyses in het eerste deel naast elkaar gezet en vergeleken. Ik heb de meest voorkomende benaderingen gereconstrueerd en onderzocht hoe deze zich verhouden tot de huidige wetenschappelijke inzichten en de bredere ontwerptraditie voor het landelijk gebied.

Tot slot heb ik de ontwerpbenaderingen voor recreatie in het landelijk gebied kritisch bekeken vanuit theoretisch en praktisch oogpunt. Ik heb ze afgezet tegen maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen en belangrijke thema's en aandachtspunten benoemd voor het landschapsontwerp voor recreatie.

Ontwerptraditie

De ontwerpanalyses hebben een reeks van ideeën, ontwerpconcepten en ontwerpmiddelen opgeleverd die representatief zijn voor de ontwerpbenadering van recreatie in de verschillende perioden. Hieruit is een beeld naar voren gekomen van een sterke, stabiele ontwerptraditie van een integrale benadering van het landschap en weinig veranderende ideeën over recreatie. Hoewel het ruimtelijk beleid en het recreatiebeleid door de jaren heen behoorlijk veranderden, bleven de ideeën en voorkeuren van landschapsontwerpers constant en tamelijk selectief. Hun overheersende beeld van recreatie in het landelijk gebied was dat van individuen of kleine groepen en families die extensief gebruik maken van het landschap, bijvoorbeeld door te wandelen, fietsen, van de natuur te genieten en te vissen. Op die manier was recreatie gemakkelijk inpasbaar in het landschap met een paar bescheiden (functionele) aanpassingen of toevoegingen. Massarecreatie en intensieve vormen van vrijetijdsbesteding werden ruimtelijk geïsoleerd en letterlijk en figuurlijk weggestopt.

De belangrijkste ontwerpmaatregel in alle ontwerpen voor extensief recreatief gebruik was de ontsluiting van het landschap. Gebieden toegankelijk maken voor recreatie werd gezien als een basisvoorwaarde. Al vanaf de eerste ontwerpen in de jaren twintig werden routes gepland en ontworpen voor dagtochten en voor dagelijkse ommetjes. Naarmate landschappen belangrijker werden voor recreatie namen de strategieën om die landschappen te ontsluiten toe. Er werden steeds meer en ook verschillende routenetwerken gepland en ontworpen, ontbrekende schakels werden aangevuld, er kwamen voorstellen om wegen en paden die niet voor het publiek toegankelijk waren open te stellen en het struinen deed zijn intrede. Voor kwetsbare gebieden kozen de ontwerpers andere oplossingen: die moesten ontoegankelijk zijn of alleen te betreden via een doodlopend pad. De landschapsontwerpers ontwierpen de routes zo dat recreanten de opbouw en de diversiteit van het landschap konden ervaren. Ze hadden een voorkeur voor de 'achterkanten' of 'rafelranden' van het landschap vanwege hun ongedwongen, vanzelfsprekende schoonheid en ze ontwierpen ze voor gebruik door langzaam verkeer.

De aanwezigheid van attracties werd beschouwd als de basisvoorwaarde om een gebied recreatief aantrekkelijk te maken. Landschapsontwerpers maakten daarvoor zoveel mogelijk gebruik van het landschap zelf. De identiteit van het landschap was voor hen zowel het uitgangspunt als het doel van hun ontwerp. Ze maakten van landschapselementen attracties door de karakteristieke eigenschappen te benadrukken in het ontwerp of ze behandelden het hele landschap als attractie. Alleen wanneer een landschap recreatief ongeschikt of onaantrekkelijk was of wanneer een landschap niet voldoende landschapsattracties bevatte, voegden ze andere attractieve bestemmingen of voorzieningen toe.

Voor landschapsontwerpers was de kern van recreatie het contrast met het dagelijks leven. Ze gebruikten verschillende ideeën en ontwerpoplossingen om het landelijk gebied neer te zetten als een omgeving die anders is dan de stad en het stedelijk leven. Een populair idee was dat van het platteland waar de tijd stil heeft gestaan en het leven eenvoudig is, als tegenpool van de hectische dynamiek en vervreemding van de grote stad. Het platteland werd geassocieerd met vanzelfsprekendheid, ongedwongenheid en het ontbreken van geplande structuren.

De meeste ontwerpers gaven de voorkeur aan ontwerpen die opgaan in hun omgeving in plaats van opvallende, afwijkende elementen. Ze waren huiverig voor over-design. Het beste ontwerp was een 'onzichtbaar' ontwerp. Ze streefden naar eenvoudige, vanzelfsprekende ontwerpen, een subtiele verbijzondering van het alledaagse.

Een ander centraal thema in het landschapsontwerp voor recreatie was vrijheid. Het ging om twee vormen van vrijheid: de mogelijkheid voor mensen om te kiezen en de mogelijkheid voor mensen om hun eigen betekenis aan de omgeving toe te kennen. De keuzevrijheid kwam vooral tot uiting in de routenetwerken die mensen de mogelijkheid gaven hun eigen weg te kiezen. Ontwerpers hebben in de loop der jaren allerlei recreatieve attracties en voorzieningen bedacht en ontworpen, maar dat betekende niet per se dat het aanbod aansloot bij de behoefte. Beleidsmakers, planners en ontwerpers richtten zich vooral op enkele specifieke vormen van extensieve 'openluchtrecreatie': mensen die er even tussenuit willen, willen genieten van de natuur en het landschap en er ook in geïnteresseerd zijn. Amusement en vermaak werden geassocieerd met massarecreatie en gingen volgens ontwerpers niet goed samen met 'extensieve recreatie'. Ze besteedden ook weinig aandacht aan mensen die op zoek zijn naar avontuur of onverwachte ervaringen. Deze voorkeur kwam voort uit het feit dat landschapsontwerpers leken te ontwerpen voor mensen zoals zijzelf; mensen met een bovengemiddelde interesse in en kennis van het landschap.

De vrijheid van mensen om hun eigen betekenis aan de omgeving toe te kennen kwam tot uiting in de voorkeur van ontwerpers voor neutrale ruimtes die op verschillende manieren te interpreteren en te gebruiken zijn. Ontwerpers stelden zich terughoudend op en waren bang om te veel te sturen. De meesten hadden en hebben een uitgesproken hekel aan bordjes en andere tekens die mensen opdringen om een ruimte op een bepaalde manier te gebruiken of te interpreteren. Dat paste ook niet in het ongedwongen beeld van het platteland dat ze nastreefden. Ze boden liever ruimte aan nieuwe, onverwachte en ongedachte activiteiten. Door landschapselementen net iets groter te ontwerpen dan strikt noodzakelijk boden de ontwerpers ruimte voor spontaan gebruik. Een randje van een duiker kon zo een zitplek worden, een verbrede berm op een rustige plek een speelveldje. De voorkeur van de ontwerpers voor eenvoud had overigens ook te maken met een sterke Moderne ontwerptraditie, die vooral in het landelijk gebied dominant was en lang stand hield. De Modernen hielden van klare, rechte lijnen; ornamentiek en symboliek waren verdacht. Functionaliteit stond voorop. De dingen moesten voor zichzelf spreken.

Hoewel de onderzochte ontwerpen wel ideeën, ontwerpconcepten en ontwerpmiddelen bevatten die specifiek met recreatie te maken hebben, werd recreatie toch vooral gezien als een integraal onderdeel van menselijke activiteiten in het landschap. Veel ontwerpoverwegingen waren niet speciaal bedoeld voor recreatie; ze waren vanzelfsprekend deel van een integraal, samenhangend landschapsontwerp. Ontwerpers zagen het als hun taak om het landschap als geheel te ontwerpen, inclusief recreatie. Omdat recreatie volgens hun visie gemakkelijk was in te passen in het landschap, werd het ondergeschikt gemaakt aan andere activiteiten en vormen van grondgebruik. Voor landschapsontwerpers was de samenhangende en multifunctionele benadering zo vanzelfsprekend dat ze er niet bij stil stonden.

Ontwerpers benaderden het ontwerp op de schaal van het gehele landschap en gebruikten de grote landschapseenheden als basis voor het ordenen van activiteiten en grondgebruik, inclusief recreatie. De landschapsstructuur, de grote landschapseenheden en het grondgebruik bepaalden de situering

van routes, attracties en voorzieningen. Door de ontwerpopgave naar een hoger schaalniveau te tillen, het verband met andere opgaven te zoeken en vervolgens de opgave opnieuw te definiëren, raakte het detailniveau in het ontwerp onderbelicht. De uitwerking van een ontwerp werd lang niet altijd door een landschapsontwerper gedaan, maar vaak overgelaten aan technisch medewerkers.

Een heel belangrijk thema in het landschapsontwerp voor recreatie was het 'leesbare landschap'. Dat werd overigens niet speciaal voor recreatieve doeleinden toegepast. Landschapsontwerpers maakten geen onderscheid tussen landschapsbeleving in het algemeen en landschapsbeleving vanuit het oogpunt van recreatie. Of een landschap was bedoeld voor bewoners, voor bezoekers uit de regio die er regelmatig kwamen of voor incidentele toeristen maakte niet uit voor het ontwerp.

De manier waarop het thema recreatie werd aangepakt in de afgelopen decennia paste in de traditie van het landschapsontwerp voor het landelijk gebied. De benadering bleek eenduidig en stabiel, maar ook beperkt ontwikkeld, onderbouwd en uitgewerkt. Landschapsontwerpers namen recreatie stilzwijgend mee in het ontwerp en integreerden het als vanzelf in het landschap. De meeste landschapsontwerpers die in het landelijk gebied werkten deden weinig moeite om meer te weten en te begrijpen van de aard van recreatiegedrag, recreatieve ervaringen en motieven en de wisselwerking tussen recreatie en het dagelijks leven in gebieden. Bij gebrek aan kennis over recreatiegedrag en beleving kopieerden ze simpelweg de aanpak van hun voorgangers of gingen uit van hun eigen persoonlijke voorkeuren en ervaringen en maakten ontwerpen voor mensen zoals zijzelf. Ze zagen recreatie niet als een interessante ontwerpopgave die het waard was om te onderzoeken. Dat deden ze wel bij andere opgaven zoals natuurontwikkeling, infrastructuur, waterbeheer of cultuurhistorie. Omdat ze niet nadachten over hun beeld van recreatie en recreatieomgevingen, deden ze dat ook niet over de vertaling van dat beeld in een ontwerp. Ze waren zich nauwelijks bewust van hun visies en vooronderstellingen en van de ontwerpconcepten en ontwerpmiddelen die ze toepasten en ze stelden ze daardoor ook niet ter discussie.

Recente ontwerpen laten een veranderend beeld zien. Landschapsontwerpers gebruiken tegenwoordig een grote diversiteit aan benaderingen, concepten, thema's en beelden als het gaat om recreatie. Er lijkt sprake te zijn van een structurele verandering: het landschapsontwerp voor recreatie in het landelijk gebied lijkt zich in een transitieproces te bevinden. Wat echter niet is veranderd, is dat de meeste landschapsontwerpers impliciet en intuïtief blijven werken. Ze pakken nieuwe opgaven en thema's op als het zo uitkomt en ze stellen gangbare vooronderstellingen over recreatie niet ter discussie. Als gevolg daarvan is er nog steeds geen sprake van een theoretische onderbouwing en ontwikkeling van het landschapsontwerp voor recreatie in het landelijk gebied. Belangrijke aspecten van eigentijdse recreatie krijgen nog steeds te weinig aandacht.

Perspectief
Nu de betekenis van recreatie voor het landelijk gebied toeneemt, wordt het hoog tijd om recreatie als een relevante en serieuze ontwerpopgave te zien en een eigentijdse, goed onderbouwde ontwerptraditie te ontwikkelen. Een expliciete, beredeneerde en systematische benadering is noodzakelijk. Landschapsontwerpers moeten zich bewust worden van hun ideeën en visies over recreatie, ze transparant maken en aanpassen als dat nodig is. Samen met deskundigen uit andere vakgebieden kunnen ze door ontwerpend onderzoek nieuwe ontwerpconcepten, ontwerpmiddelen en beelden ontwikkelen.

Het is nodig om de vertaling van abstracte ideeën en visies in concrete ontwerpen kritisch te toetsen en ontwerpbeslissingen gedegen te onderbouwen met behulp van theoretische en praktische kennis. Tot slot is het nodig om te onderzoeken of ontworpen landschappen werken zoals ze zijn bedoeld. Een dergelijke aanpak zal niet leiden tot vaste ontwerpregels. Er is altijd creativiteit, inspiratie en verbeeldingskracht nodig om sociaal-culturele en psychologische inzichten in de complexe werkelijkheid in ontwerpen te vertalen.

De in dit onderzoek gereconstrueerde ontwerptraditie heeft verworvenheden opgeleverd maar vertoont in het licht van de huidige ontwikkelingen op het gebied van recreatie, planning en ontwerp ook een aantal duidelijke tekortkomingen. Een belangrijke verworvenheid is de multifunctionele, integrale, contextuele benadering van het landschapsontwerp. De gewoonte om ontwerpopgaven naar een regionaal niveau te tillen en opnieuw te formuleren biedt landschapsontwerpers de mogelijkheid om onderlinge verbanden tussen verschillende activiteiten en vormen van grondgebruik te ontdekken. Een dergelijke aanpak is essentieel om de kern van de opgave te herkennen en integrale visies op de ontwikkeling van het hele landschap te formuleren. Landschapsontwerpers zouden recreatie moeten beschouwen als een volwaardige functie en zouden moeten onderzoeken in hoeverre diverse extensieve en intensieve vormen van recreatie zijn te combineren met andere activiteiten en vormen van grondgebruik. Deze integrale aanpak heeft in het verleden echter geleid tot gebrek aan aandacht voor het detailontwerp. Om de ontwerpkwaliteit te verbeteren zouden landschapsontwerpers daarom hun integrale regionale aanpak moeten koesteren en tegelijkertijd meer aandacht moeten besteden aan de uitwerking en detaillering van het ontwerp, bezien vanuit de recreant. Mensen beleven een landschap immers op ooghoogte. Een zorgvuldig gedetailleerd landschapsontwerp kan de zintuigen prikkelen en de kracht en de rijkdom van de ervaring versterken.

Landschapsontwerpers hebben zich tot nu toe vooral bezig gehouden met de fysiekruimtelijke kant van het landschap en weinig aandacht gehad voor de mensen die er leven en recreëren. Sociaal-culturele en psychologische aspecten zijn verwaarloosd of onderschat. Symbolische betekenissen en individuele of collectieve herinneringen zijn wezenlijke eigenschappen van landschappen en landschapselementen. Ontwerpers zouden zich veel meer bewust moeten zijn van de betekenissen die de gebruikers (en de ontwerpers zelf) aan het landschap toekennen. De vele betekenissen die samen de genius loci van een plek bepalen verdienen aandacht en respect. Alleen dan is het mogelijk om bestaande ontwerpconcepten en ontwerpmiddelen goed te beoordelen op hun relevantie en bruikbaarheid en geschikte nieuwe te ontwikkelen. Werkelijk participatieve planvorming is alleen mogelijk wanneer landschapsontwerpers bereid zijn hun eigen vooronderstellingen los te laten en de inbreng van andere deskundigen en van leken serieus te nemen. Ze kunnen niet langer alleen uitgaan van hun persoonlijke voorkeuren en ervaringen. Een coöperatieve en tot op zekere hoogte dienstbare houding is noodzakelijk.

De recreatieve betekenis van het landelijk gebied heeft zeker te maken met de positie van het platteland ten opzichte van de stad en de grote recreatieparken, maar de veranderende verhouding tussen stad en land in onze verstedelijkte samenleving zou kunnen leiden tot enigszins andere interpretaties en verwachtingen. Het contrast met de stad, dat in alle ontwerpen zo dominant aanwezig is, is wellicht toe aan nuancering. Landschapsontwerpers kunnen ook andere betekenislagen toevoegen. Zo kan de verbeelding van verhalen over lokale gebeurtenissen of personen in het landschapsontwerp bijdragen aan de lokale identiteit van het landschap en aan de oriëntatie in tijd en ruimte. Het landschap krijgt op die manier meer betekenislagen en wordt wellicht aantrekkelijker voor een groter publiek.

Landschapsontwerpers moeten zich echter wel realiseren dat niet iedereen landschappen en de verhalen die daarin verankerd zijn kan 'lezen' zoals zij dat kunnen. Opdrachtgevers zouden zich daar ook van bewust moeten zijn en er nadrukkelijk aandacht aan moeten besteden in hun opdrachten.

Wanneer landschapsontwerpers in hun studies en ontwerpen meer aandacht zouden besteden aan de recreatieve behoeften en wensen van mensen en er met dezelfde gevoeligheid mee zouden omgaan als ze doen met andere eisen en behoeften, dan kunnen ze een stroom van nieuwe of vernieuwde beelden en ontwerpoplossingen oproepen. Als ze op lokale schaal met net zoveel passie en aandacht ontwerpen als ze op regionale schaal doen, dan kunnen ze aantrekkelijke recreatielandschappen creëren die de verbeelding prikkelen, nu en in de toekomst. Dat vraagt wel om opdrachtgevers die beseffen dat kwaliteit tijd, vasthoudendheid en geld kost, die ontwerpers de mogelijkheid bieden om bij alle stadia van het ontwerpproces betrokken te blijven en die hen de tijd geven om hun ideeën tot in detail uit te werken en uit te voeren.

Annex 1: The designs

Chapter 1: Haarzuilens

Raamplan Groengebied Utrecht-west
Designers   M. Eekhout, A. Droog, L. Roosenboom (Dienst Landelijk Gebied)
Client   Raamplancommissie Groengebied Utrecht-West
Year   2000
Scale   1 : 25.000 / 1 : 10.000

Ontwikkelingsvisie Landgoed Haarzuilens
Designer   M. van Gessel
Client   Vereniging Natuurmonumenten
Year   2003
Scale   1: 10.000

Ontwerp Landinrichtingsplan Haarzuilens
Designers   S. Hermens (Dienst Landelijk Gebied)
Client   Landinrichtingscommissie Utrecht-West
Year   2004
Scale   1: 10.000

Schetsschuit Haarzuilens
Designers   I. de Boer, J. Boll, T. Buningh, B. Glaap, S. Hermens, L. Tummers,
              M. Veldkamp, B. de Vlieger, H. Vughts, P. Wichman, E. Luiten
              (Dienst Landelijk Gebied), A. Haytsma, M. van Loon, D. Boogert, G. Mauro,
              M. Montforts (Rijksdienst voor Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek, J. Rosbergen,
              R. Schürmann, F. Altenburg (Rijksdienst voor Monumentenzorg)
Client   Dienst Landelijk Gebied
Design   2004
Scale   1 : 5.000 / 1 : 1.000

Chapter 4: Pioneers of Dutch landscape design

Amsterdamse Bos
Designers   C. van Eesteren, J. Mulder and others (Gemeente Amsterdam)
Client   City of Amsterdam
Year   1928 – 1937
Scale   1: 10.000 / 1: 1.000

Wieringermeer
Designers   M.J. Granpré Molière, J.T.P. Bijhouwer, G.A. Overdijkink (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client   1 : 25.000
Year   1931
Scale   1:25.000

Herstelplan Walcheren

Designers	R. Benthem, N.M. de Jonge, J.T.P. Bijhouwer (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Commissie herverkaveling Walcheren
Year	1946
Scale	1:25.000

Veerse Bos

Designer	N.M. de Jonge (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Commissie herverkaveling Walcheren
Year	1967 - 1969
Scale	1:10.000

Chapter 5: Mass recreation

Landschapsplan Tielerwaard-West

Designers	N.M. de Jonge, Kipp, Wandemaker, S. van Emden, E. Brandes (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie
Year	1958
Scale:	1:20.000

Lingebos

Designer	N. M. de Jonge (later versions and final design by Van Emden, Choissy, Roorda van Eijsinga, Smelt en Wittemans Architecten en Stedebouwkundigen; later called OD 205)
Client	Staatsbosbeheer
Year	1965
Scale:	1:5.000

Hollands Groene Zone

Designers	J.T.P. Bijhouwer, J. Vallen, Zaaijer
Client	ANWB
Year	1961
Scale	1 : 100.000 / 1 5.000

Landschapsplan Oukoop-Kortrijk

Designer	H. Warnau
Client	Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie
Year	1962 - 1966
Scale	1 : 10.000

Gedachtenplan Drentsche Aa

Designer	H. de Vroome (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Natuurbeschermingsraad en Provinciale Planologische Commissie Drenthe
Year	1965
Scale	1 : 25.000

Landschapsplan Vries

Designer	H. de Vroome (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie
Year	1966
Scale	1 : 10.000

Landschapsplan Anloo

Designer	H. de Vroome (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie
Year	1972
Scale	1 : 10.000

Chapter 6: Joint recreational use

Advies Landschapsbouw Bodegraven-noord

Designer	H. Faassen, E. Brandes (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie
Year	1981
Scale	1:50.000 / 1:25.000

Landschapsstructuurplan (inclusief Advies Landschapsbouw Roden-Norg)

Designers	S. Slabbers, P. Vrijlandt (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie / Staatsbosbeheer
Year	1985
Scale	1:50.000

Advies Landschapsbouw

Designers	J.W. Bosch and G. v.d. Kooy (Staatsbosbeheer)
Client	Centrale Cultuurtechnische Commissie
Year	1984
Scale	1 : 50.000

Chapter 7: Rambling

Ooievaar

Designers	D. de Bruin, D. Hamhuis, L. van Nieuwenhuijze, W. Overmars, D. Sijmons, \ F. Vera
Client	Eo Wijers Stichting
Year	1985
Scale	1:100.000 / 1:25.000

Natuurontwikkeling in de Blauwe Kamer

Designer	G. Litjens
Client	Het Utrechts Landschap
Year	1988
Scale	1:10.000

De Venen: recreatie ... natuurlijk!!

Designers	Werkgroep Recreatie de Venen
Client	Stuurgroep de Venen
Year	1993
Scale	1 : 100.000

Omarmd door rivieren

Designers	E. Jansen, L. van Rijen, R. de Visser (Ministerie van LNV - NBLF)
Client	Stuurgroep de Venen
Year	1994
Scale	1 : 100.000

Toekomstverkenning: het landschap van de kustzone

Designers	J.W. Bosch, S. Slabbers, J.M.F. Ulijn (Bosch en Slabbers)
Client	IKC Natuurbeheer
Year	1995
Scale	1 : 1.000.000 / 1 : 250.000

Inrichtingsplan Millingerwaard

Designers	JG.M. Rademakers, A. Voorwinden (Grontmij)
Client	Delgromij
Year	1992 - 1996
Scale	1:5.000

Rijnwaardense uiterwaarden

Designers	M. van de Hulsbeek, J. Koek, H. Lintel, R. de Visser, K.J. Wardenaar, R. Wolters (Vista Landscape and Urban Design)
Client	RIZA
Year	2001
Scale	1 : 25.000 / 1 : 5.000 / 1 : 1.000 / 1 : 50

Recreatievisie Fort Sint Andries

Designers	L. van Nieuwenhuijze, B. Olthof, R. de Koning (H+N+S Landschapsarchitecten)
Client	LNV Directie Openluchtrecreatie
Year	1992
Scale	1 : 100.000 / 1: 25.000 / 1: 10.000

Groen Hart? Groene Metropool!

Designers	D. Sijmons, E. Luiten, N. van Dooren, R. Santema (H+N+S Landschapsarchitecten)

Clients	WNF / ANWB
Year	1995
Scale	1 : 100.000

Chapter 8: Diversification

Landschapsvisie Drentsche Aa

Designers	B. Strootman, V. van Dam, K. de Groot, P. Ruijzenaars, A. Vissers (Strootman Landschapsarchitecten i.a.w. Novio Consult)
Client	Staatsbosbeheer
Year	2004
Scale	1 : 25.000

Hunebedden

Designers	H. Horlings, K. de Groot, M. Schot, D. Brunt, K. van Assche, R. Buiting
Clients	Werkgroep Hunebedden / NIROV Werkgroep Landschap
Year	2004
Scale	1 : 50.000 / 1 : 1.000

Integraal Kustzonebeheer West Zeeuwsch-Vlaanderen

Designers	M. Knuijt, H. Kijne, H. de Jong, B. Stelzer, L. van der Vegt, W. Voogt (OKRA Landscape architects i.a.w. Evert-Jan Roelofsen Projectmanagement)
Client	Gemeente Oostburg
Year	2000
Scale	1 : 50.000 / 1: 25.000

Landschapsplan voormalig eiland van Cadzand

Designers	(OKRA Landscape architects i.a.w. Evert-Jan Roelofsen Projectmanagement)
Client	Gemeente Oostburg
Year	2001
Scale	1 : 25.000

Kustfietspad der Lage Landen Breskens – Adinkerke

Designers	(OKRA Landscape architects i.a.w. Evert-Jan Roelofsen Projectmanagement)
Client	Gemeente Oostburg
Year	2001-2002
Scale	1 : 25.000 / 1 : 500

Duurzame kustontsluiting : Tracé badweg, parkeerkamer en duinovergang

Designers	M. Knuijt, B. Almekinders, L. van der Vegt, T. van Dijk, S. Heijse (OKRA Landscape architects i.a.w. Evert-Jan Roelofsen Projectmanagement)
Client	Gemeente Oostburg / Sluis
Year	2002
Scale	1 : 5.000 / 1 : 1.000 / 1 : 200

Staats-Spaanse Linies

Designers	D. Sijmons, Y. Feddes, J. Raith, R. van Paridon, G. Jobse, M. Sanders, S.Hertzum (H+N+S Landscape architects i.a.w. Beek & Kooijman Cultuurhistorie and others)
Client	Provincie Zeeland
Year	2003
Scale:	1 : 100.000 / 1: 25.000 / 1: 200

Landschapsontwikkelingsplan gemeenten Groesbeek, Millingen a/d Rijn, Ubbergen

Designer	H.J.J.C.M. van Blerck (Buro Schokland i.a.w. Bureau Hemmen)
Clients	Gemeenten Groesbeek, Millingen a/d Rijn en Ubbergen
Year	2005
Scale	1 : 50.000 / 1 : 2.000 / 1 : 50

Annex 2: The people

Interviews

Roel Benthem (2003, video recording by M. Steenhuis and F. Hooijmeijer), Henk van Blerck (Buro Schokland, 2005), Jan Willem Bosch (Bosch en Slabbers, 2005), Ellen Brandes (2003, video recording by M. Steenhuis and F. Hooijmeijer) Michiel van Dongen (Ministerie van VROM, 2005), Yttje Feddes (H+N+S Landschapsarchitecten, 2005), Michael van Gessel (2004), Niek Hazendonk (Ministerie van LNV, 2005), Zef Hemel (S+RO, 2002), Harma Horlings (H+N+S Landschapsarchitecten, 2004), Klaas Kerkstra (Wageningen UR, 2006), Joost Koek (Vista Landscape and Urban Design, 2005), Martin Knuijt (Okra Landscape Architects, 2005), Eric Luiten (TU Delft, 2005, 2006), Johan Meeus (2004), Tracy Metz (2002), Hans Mommaas (Universiteit van Tilburg, 2002), Berdie Olthof (H+N+S Landschapsarchitecten, 2004), Joe Pine (Strategic Horizons, 2002), Jos Rademakers (Jos Rademakers Ecologie en Ontwikkeling, 2005), Steven Slabbers (Bosch en Slabbers, 2005), Marinke Steenhuis (2004, 2005), Berno Strootman (Strootman Landschapsarchitecten, 2005), Sim Visser (Kasteel Groeneveld, 2002), Adri Voorwinden (2005), Jan Voskens (Grontmij, 2005), Mieke Voskens-Drijver (Grontmij, 2005), Peter Vrijlandt (Wageningen UR, 2004), Meto Vroom (2005), Harry de Vroome (1986-1987, interview transcriptions by H. van Blerck), Roel Wolters (Vista Landscape and Urban Design, 2005).

Participants of workshop and debates

Marloes Berndsen (Staatsbosbeheer), Henk van Blerck (Buro Schokland), Dorien Brunt (WING), Teddy Buningh (Dienst Landelijk Gebied), Riet Dumont (Provincie Gelderland), Henk de Haan (Wageningen UR), Niek Hazendonk (Ministerie van LNV), Pat van der Jagt (Alterra), Margit Jökövi (Ruimtelijk Planbureau), Annet Kempenaar (Staatsbosbeheer), Mariëlle Kok (Grontmij), Martin Knuijt (Okra Landscape Architects), Rob van Leeuwen (RBOI), Marianne van Lith de Jeude (Hogeschool Larenstein), Eric Luiten (TU Delft), Arjan Nienhuis (TU Delft), Renée Santema (Santematuin), Wenda Stoffel, Berno Strootman (Strootman Landschapsarchitecten), Sasha Tisma (Ruimtelijk Planbureau), Michiel Veldkamp (Dienst Landelijk Gebied), Tiny Wigman (Via Natura), Annoesjka Wintjes (WING), André van der Zande (Ministerie van LNV / Wageningen UR), and the landscape designers of DLG.

Advisory group

Rien van den Berg (Dienst Landelijk Gebied), Rudi van Etteger (Ministerie van VROM until 2003, Wageningen UR from 2003), Sandra Greeuw (Ministerie van LNV / Projectbureau Belvedere), Niek Hazendonk (Ministerie van LNV), Ina Horlings (Telos).

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Curriculum vitae

Marlies Brinkhuijsen was born in Emmeloord, Noordoostpolder, on the 5th of August 1963. She completed her secondary school (Gymnasium β at the Rijksscholengemeenschap Oud-Beijerland) in 1981 and went to Wageningen University, at that time known as Landbouwhogeschool and later as Landbouwuniversiteit, to study Landscape Architecture.

After her graduation in 1988 she worked as a landscape architect and landscape planner in a wide range of working environments in the Netherlands: a small private design office (Groenplanning Maastricht, 1989-1990), a large consultancy firm (Grontmij Consulting Engineers, 1990-1998), temporary postings at local and national governments, and a research institute (Alterra, 1998-2008). She was a member of the Event Committee of the NVTL (1988-1992), the WLO Committee Theory in Practice (1995-1997), the NIROV Landscape Comittee (1996-2004) and the Program Committee of the IFLA World Conference 2008 (2005-2008). She won several prizes in landscape planning and design competitions in the Netherlands and abroad. Her expertise covers a wide range of themes in planning and design including urban-rural relations, leisure, infrastructure, river base management, nature, and gardens.

Gradually she changed from a reflective practitioner into a practical researcher, and in 2002, she started her PhD research at the Social-Spatial Analysis Chair Group at Wageningen University. Since March 2008 she works as an Assistant Professor at the Chair Group Landscape Architecture at Wageningen University.