Heritage Management and Spatial Planning;

the case of Stolwijkersluis

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1. Introduction

The national culture of the Netherlands is difficult to define, but when we look at history you could say that Dutch culture has always been characterized by a continuing process of cultivating and building to make living in the low-lands possible (Sijmons, 2002). Spatial planning therefore can also be defined as the culture of making. As a result of this 'making' in order to meet the demands of population growth, lifestyle has become more urban and mobile (Antrop, 2005). Changes have become a common property of landscape. This is often seen as a threat "because current changes are characterized by the loss of diversity, coherence and identity of the existing landscapes" (Antrop, 2005). As a reaction to the growing concern on this modernization and the effects on the quality of the environment, there is a re-found valuation of traditions, the 'genius loci' or identity of places and cultural history (Sijmons, 2002).

This is of interest for spatial planning in the Netherlands as its primary goal is to enhance quality of life, which is linked to concepts like sustainability, liveability and the quality of the spatial environment (Van der Valk, 2002). Since the eighties objectives for nature became part of the notion of 'quality of life' besides physical aspects and public health. Goals for spatial development, nature, water and environment were recorded in policy documents. But there is no comprising policy for landscape development and heritage management (Hidding et al, 2001). In the meantime there has been an increasing interest for cultural historical aspects of landscapes and their contribution to the quality of the environment (Vervloet et al., 2003). This interest does no longer only include select groups of (learned) people, but regards a wider group of people that are interested in historical matters. Landscapes are a source for tourism and an increasing amount of people support social movements which revolve round landscape and nature (Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004; Jacobs, 2002; Hidding et al., 2001).

Over the past few decades academics and policy-makers became aware that in order to achieve sustainable landscapes, something had to be done with the conflict between preservation of heritage and development of future landscapes. The problem was that designing disciplines were oriented at the future without paying attention to the past, while historians only had interest in preservation of relics of the past without looking at the future. The attempts to integrate cultural history and spatial planning has become known as 'cultural planning' (Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004; Vervloet et al., 2003). Cultural planning can be defined as "an approach in which the historical aspects of cultural landscapes have to be connected with other functions and interests by means of integral planning associated with a large circle of involved disciplines, institutions and citizens" (Vervloet et al., 2003).

The link between heritage management and spatial planning has been recorded in formal documents at the European and national level. The European Landscape Convention in 2000 emphasizes historical values in landscape management (Antrop, 2005; Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004; Fairclough, 2002). In the Netherlands intentions for cooperation between policy, cultural history and spatial planning were formalized in 1999 in the policy document Belvedere Memorandum. The goal of the Belvedere Memorandum is to bridge the gap between

spatial policy and policy on the management and reinforcement of cultural heritage. The Belvedere-motto is "preservation through development", which means that the focus is on the continuous development of cultural heritage, rather than replacement by new elements or severe restriction on the use of objects (Vervloet et al., 2003). Even though cultural history is part of the agenda of policy-makers and planners, this does not automatically guarantee implementation, because spatial planning is always about weighing of different interests and history is only one of them (Hidding et al., 2001).

2. Perspectives on cultural planning

So how can integration of cultural history and spatial planning be realized? This is a complex problem that can be approached in different ways. First, there is the fragmented character of the historical disciplines. Cultural history in the Netherlands is subdivided by the disciplines archaeology, historical geography, and architectural history. These separate disciplines have their own knowledge bases, rules, values, languages, etc. (Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004; Bloemers & Wijnen, 2001; Hidding et al, 2001). Integration of historical disciplines, the so-called 'internal integration', is needed. Second, knowledge from historical disciplines and planning and architectural disciplines has to be combined to be able to connect past, present and future. This is called 'external integration' (Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004; Vervloet et al., 2003; Bloemers & Wijnen, 2001; Belvedere Memorandum, 1999).

A complication is determining how historical elements are to be integrated in planning and design. This can not be done objectively as historical objects and landscapes are not just physical manifestations, but are perceived by people in different ways. The European Landscape Convention (2000) defines landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004; Fairclough, 2002). The reference to the perception of the landscape by people shows that landscape has the character of a social construct. Hidding et al. (2001) explain this by viewing landscapes as stories that sometimes apply to large groups of people (e.g. a well-known image of a city or region) and sometimes as stories of individuals that result from the relation they have with their environment. Landscapes can also present themselves in diverse ways when people are travelling from one place to another. According to Bloemers & Van der Valk (2004) personal histories and the history of social relationships are beginning to gain the upper hand over collective, authorized history.

Choices regarding future landscapes, the balance between preservation and development and issues of selection and valuation of historic elements will therefore always be subjective and intersubjective (Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004; During et al., 2001; Hidding et al., 2001). In everyday practice of implementation of environmental policy, it is not so much 'objectively' formulated values that count, but rather money, procedures and political support. During et al. (2001) call this the world of rightness, which revolves round making right decisions in stead of pure rational decisions. Jacobs (2004) refers to "the powerscape", which is produced in society as a system of norms and objectives that can take the form of laws, rules and (government) plans, but also customs and traditions. In relation to "the powerscape" he subdivides two other forms of perceiving landscape. "Matterscape" is the landscape in physical reality and "mindscape" is the landscape produced by imagination and meaning-giving processes in the minds of individuals.

Because of these different manifestations and perceptions of the landscape, knowledge exchange is not only needed between different relevant academic disciplines, but should also include society and government policy. Integrating 'local' knowledge is essential, not only to create a sound base of knowledge, but also as frame of reference to decide on selection and valuation of historical elements (Hidding et al., 2001). Landscapes or regions seem to be a good meeting ground for integration, as cultural history is about "the story of the cultural land" and thus also about the continuing story of spatial development in past, present and future (During et al., 2001; Hidding et al., 2001; Belvedere Memorandum, 1999).

When seeing landscapes as the outcomes of interactions between natural and cultural forces and continuing change, a paradoxal solution to the preservation of heritage emerges, according to Sijmons (2002). Change in the context of the densely populated Netherlands and present-day technical abilities can imply rapid urbanization and irreparable damage to the historical landscape. To prevent this we have to see the existing landscape as a more or less normative starting point instead of a changing outcome. Antrop (2005) thinks that preservation in the changing context of society mainly is about controlling the functionality of historical landscapes and elements. Considering the Belvedere-motto "preservation through development" Sijmons (2002) has suggested four design strategies that are alternatives between ignoring heritage in planning on the one hand and canonizing it on the other.
- Modernizing: as long as historical values are not in the way of the desired development, preservation is possible.

- Regionalizing: regional identity and topographical diversity are important factors for development, this applies for 'old' elements as well as 'new' elements.
- Marketing: the attractiveness of the landscape is most important as landscapes get more and more meaning as 'consumption landscape' instead of 'production landscape'. Historical elements can be preserved when they render profits, for example through recreation.
- 'Musealising': central attention for cultural history and little attention for the culture of making; historical motives to preserve are more important than economic motives.

The above shows that integrating cultural history and planning is a complex problem which can be approached in different ways. According to Vervloet et al (2003) practical projects should be the context to sort out how solutions can be found. During et al (2001) suggest 'action-research', because this method enables us to learn more by taking actively part of the system that is being researched. Often other parties, like inhabitants and policy-makers, participate in this kind of research in order to collectively form opinions and to create new knowledge through the combination of 'local' and 'expert' knowledge. The following will describe the case of Stolwijkersluis, which is about the creation of a vision for an area that contains diverse historical values and is affected by urban pressure. 'Action-research' was applied to design an integral vision for the future of the Stolwijker sluice and its environment.

3. Stolwijkersluis: cultural link between city and countryside

Stolwijkersluis is the name of the monumental sluice that is situated in the neighbourhood of Stolwijkersluis. It has a unique position between the historical centre of the city of Gouda and the open landscape of the polder Krimpenerwaard. It is situated in the 'Green Heart' of the Netherlands, which can be described as the central park of the urbanized western part of the country (Van der Valk, 2002).

The sluice is a national monument that, together with the 'peat cultivation landscape' of the polder behind and the historical neighbourhood of Stolwijkersluis forms a historical valuable ensemble. The sluice has been constructed in 1800 for the benefit of an intended but failed peatery. The sluice has not functioned for approximately 20 years and despite its status as national monument it has fallen into decay ever since (Van Dam & Van den Brink, 2004; Van den Brink, 2003). The water board and municipality wish to decide on the future of the sluice as it is now a weak point in the flood defence system. Besides that a new pumping station is required at the same location to control water level in the polder behind the dike. Decisions on the future of the sluice need to be made on short term, which means choosing between a form of restoration on the one hand or demolition on the other.

At the same time the environment of the sluice and neighbourhood is subject of a lot of discussion, because of a planned bypass around the city of Gouda. The bypass will enclose the neighbourhood and the small polder between the city and the road. It is not hard to understand the concerns of inhabitants of Stolwijkersluis and environmental groups that this development gives opportunity for further urbanization. However, the presence of the city and its effects on the surrounding landscape can also pose opportunities. Because of its unique position between the city and rural landscape the environment of the sluice has a large potential to enhance the quality of life for inhabitants of the city of Gouda as well as the inhabitants of Stolwijkersluis. There are plans for the development of a nature-oriented recreation area in the polder behind the sluice. When the latter can be realized, there is no longer an immediate threat of building projects. Moreover the city of Gouda wishes to improve possibilities for water recreation in the city. Linking this to possibilities for water recreation in Stolwijkersluis might mean an impulse for a revaluation of the village centre of Stolwijkersluis. These developments and the wish to do something about the problem of the sluice gave occasion for an integral approach to the future of sluice and environment.

Last year Wageningen University initiated a project that is aimed at designing a masterplan for the integral development of the environment of the Stolwijker sluice. The historical values in this landscape are starting point as well as inspiration for the planning process. For the university it was a good occasion to link science and practice and to try out 'cultural planning' like we described in the first part of this paper. Starting points were the preservation and consolidation of the open character of the 'peat cultivation landscape' behind the dike, the restoration of the sluice in order to make it functional again for boats and the construction of a small harbour for passing travellers. This was predetermined in consultation with local governors that are involved in the project. Ultimately the goal is to produce a feasible and widely supported plan.

4. Designing history and future of Stolwijkersluis

As stated earlier, cultural planning is about combining 'expert' knowledge of historic and designing disciplines as well as 'local' knowledge of inhabitants, social organizations and administrators. The project Stolwijkersluis acted on this principle by organizing interactive sessions where participants were stimulated to share their thoughts about the future development of the area. Besides that, a steering committee consisting of local authorities (that also co-financed the project together with Belvedere money) and an advising committee consisting of social organizations to reflect on proceedings were installed. The sessions and the contact with the committees did not only function as platforms for combining and creating knowledge, but had an important function in obtaining mutual understanding and support.

The interactive sessions were aimed at inhabitants of Stolwijkersluis, representatives of local authorities and representatives of local organizations with interests in nature, landscape, recreation and history. The series of sessions started with a session that was aimed at sharing diverse stories and perceptions of the project area. Perceptions on historical aspects of the landscape were given extra attention. Here a lot of work was done to create so-called 'unifying concepts' (Bloemers & Van der Valk, 2004) to integrate different perceptions of the landscape and to help integrate 'local' and 'expert' knowledge. It became clear here that inhabitants were mainly interested in the whole presence of the landscape, rather than separate elements. This phenomenon, experiencing landscapes in a holistic way and giving separate elements meaning from their place in the whole, is quite common (cf. Antrop, 2005; Bloemers and Van der Valk, 2004; Hidding et al., 2001). The sluice initially did not seem to be very interesting for the inhabitants. This probably had to do with the neglected state of the construction and its invisibility in the present situation. Visible history appeals much more to the imagination of people than invisible relics (cf. Van den Brink, 2003; Hidding et al, 2001).

Results of the first session, a list of collectively defined values in the project area, were the basis for the second session. Here a select group was invited representing an intersection of relevant organizations and inhabitants. The participants were divided in transdisciplinary groups[1] to design development strategies for the project area. Landscape architects were present as one of the participating disciplines. After this session the architects used the development strategies to create two alternative designs. These were presented at the final public session where comments of the participants on both designs were gathered. This resulted in insight in widely supported options for development and options that could not count on support.

The last meeting provided a lot of information to the project team, but did not show the separate opinions of the inhabitants. Presenting two alternative designs logically provoked a lot of criticism and disconnected remarks. This probably also had to do with the short time frame and the large number of participants, which gave no room for careful and open discussion. That is why another meeting with inhabitants of Stolwijkersluis was organized where concerns and new ideas were discussed again. This resulted in better understanding and solid instructions for the design of the plan. Now the architects and planners could draw a draft version of the masterplan. This concept was well received by involved parties.

But how did integration of cultural history in this process take place? First through the people that were participating in the interactive sessions and the committees. But parallel to the sessions disciplinary and multidisciplinary research on historical elements took place as well. The sluice, that was starting point for the project, has been researched by civil engineers to test the state of the construction. One of them is also an expert in architectural history of hydraulic constructions. He determined the historical values of the construction. The sluice however is not the only historical element in the project area. The history of the project area regards the cultivation of the land that started in the middle ages from a base along the river that is now the neighbourhood Stolwijkersluis. This story is still visible in the present landscape. Several archaeological findings have been recorded. Moreover there are architectural objects that no longer exist, but still strike the imagination, like a windmill and a court house that gave status to the neighbourhood Stolwijkersluis and connected the polder to the city with a ferry. Historical values were investigated by an interdisciplinary group of planning and design students that executed a so-called 'cultural historical review'. They did this by researching archives, literature and by interviewing archaeologists, amateur historians and professional historians.[2] The research findings were communicated in the interactive sessions in order to provide a basic knowledge level for all participants. This way participants had equal opportunity to decide on the selection and use of historical aspects in the design of

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[1] Transdisciplinary: In trans-disciplinary research academics from various fields collaborate closely with non-academics in order to achieve certain research objectives and to develop new knowledge, usually negotiated knowledge such as common definitions of problems, the identification of facts an d the development of strategies (Tress and Tress, 2004).
[2] Bakker et al., 2005

development strategies. The 'cultural historical review' was also used by the architects, who have carefully weighed the findings in their design task.

An important aspect turned out to be the functionality of historical elements in the development strategy. The elements, that were selected to be used in the design, function as landmarks which as a coherent whole strengthens the identity of this specific area and tells us something about the identity and history of the region as well. The functionality of the historical elements in the design mainly has a social purpose to connect the city and the countryside and to connect past, present and future. Especially the connection of the city and the polder has been decisive for support in the city, because of the city's needs for accessible green spaces and the lack of water recreation routes from north to south. The lesson that can be learned is that pure historical motives to redevelop historical elements are not sufficient. Landscape and separate elements have to get a social or economical function to create support for restoration both in politics and society. Considering Sijmons' (2002) scenario's for 'preservation through development' we can place the design of Stolwijkersluis in the scenario's 'Marketing' as well as 'Regionalizing'. Historical elements and the landscape as a whole function as attractive places of interest which will convince people to spend time and money in Gouda. At the same time the contents of the design, which are oriented at the relation between city and countryside, reflect the regional identity of Gouda and its surroundings. Or as one of the inhabitants of Gouda remarked, referring to the visibility of the history of water management and cultivation: "it is Holland in a nutshell!".

5. Discussion

Ultimately, the goal of the project was to produce a feasible and widely supported plan, which means that research had to be oriented at the world of 'rightness' as described earlier (During et al., 2001). Research had to be focused on decisions that were appropriate for the local context and were supported both politically and socially. It looks like the project has achieved this goal. As was predicted in the first part of the paper, the weighing of alternatives was the result of intersubjective negotiation. When we look at the matter objectively, integration of the different sorts of knowledge and valuation of historical elements in the landscape and the landscape as a holistic phenomenon could have been done more systematically and thorough. The involved architects could have been included earlier in order to be part of the creation of 'unifying concepts' in the early stages of the project. Professional historians could have been involved more, for example through meetings with the involved planners, architects and amateur historians. Instead it was assumed that integration would take place naturally through participation of different disciplines in the interactive sessions and the capability of the project team to connect separate research findings.

But would the outcome have been different? Probably not. The inventory of historical elements resulted in a few major starting points for design. These appealed to all participants because of their potential to enhance the attractiveness of the project area as public space for the city of Gouda. More detailed and concerted knowledge would not necessarily have changed the underlying ideas of the design. Maybe in-depth transdisciplinary research on the history of Stolwijkersluis becomes more relevant later on, for example when an information centre is desired, telling the story of "the culture of making" in Stolwijkersluis.

An important outcome of the process is a transition in thinking on the values of the project area. Before the start of the project, the area seemed to be a forgotten appendix of the city of Gouda, at least in the eyes of inhabitants of the neighbourhood Stolwijkersluis who had felt neglected ever since the area became part of the municipality of Gouda some forty years ago. But during the planning process more and more attention and appreciation seemed to develop for the landscape of Stolwijkersluis. Step by step a growing belief emerged that the sluice and its environment can be developed into an attractive and accessible landscape that connects city and countryside. Although implementation is still uncertain, in our view designing the masterplan Stolwijkersluis has become a successful example of linking past and future in spatial development.

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