A shopping mall for the future

Adapting a Dutch sixties shopping mall to user's contemporary needs

- Eva Maarleveld

Amsterdamse Poort (Archive of Amsterdam, June 1991)

Research Plan fall 2022
Heritage & Architecture
Adapting 20th century Heritage: The Modern Mall
Eva Maarleveld 4584686
4 November 2022

Abstract

The mall was initially conceived as a community centre where people could converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social interaction. Nowadays, one lives generally in a consumer society where leisure is predominantly used to acquire goods or services. These might not reflect the complexity of users' contemporary needs in functions such as shopping malls. A sign of this mismatch is that Dutch sixties malls face issues such as vacancy and deterioration. There is an opportunity for them to be adapted and redesigned to match socio-economic values. This research aims to determine if the Dutch sixties shopping mall typology is suitable for the contemporary needs of the users. If otherwise, a values-based redesign strategy will be developed with the users' participation, which can be replicated to some extent for other cases in other contexts.

Keywords: shopping mall, cultural heritage, historical values, socio-economic values, redesign strategies, contemporary needs of users

Table of content

1. Introduction

Many wonder if there is a bright future for the typical Dutch shopping malls, as the Netherlands has the fastest-growing rate of internet purchases in Europe (Eurostat, 2021). With the appearance of the coronavirus in 2020, which meant that the stores were not allowed to receive customers physically for a certain period, the numbers for online shopping went up even more (Volkskrant, 2021). However, are these the main reasons for the decline of the 'historic' sixties shopping mall, or do the contemporary needs of the users no longer fit the modern shopping mall? The mall was initially conceived as a community centre where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social interaction (Feinberg, 1991). Nowadays, it is generally a consumer society where leisure is predominantly used to acquire goods or services (Frączkiewicz, 2013).

This research investigates how to adapt and redesign the sixties shopping mall and its typology to the contemporary needs of the users. Despite the casual use of the term 'users' throughout society to represent all of the varying individuals who are likely to interact with a building, users are diverse and heterogeneous (Massanari, 2010). As Hugh Mackay et al. (2000: 738) argue, 'users are not a monolithic or straightforward group, but are complex and fragmented in nature, and are attributed with varying significance'. In this research, users can be seen as the people who visit the mall for various reasons. Although generally liked, users point out various problems with the mall and state that this mall is in decay and in need of a significant renovation (Buvelot, 2017).

Image 2: Initial American mall where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social interaction (Southdale center, Minneapolis (1956)

2. Problem statement and research questions

The shopping centre took off in the Nether-lands in the 1960s. Similar to shopping in the United States with background music and no problems with the Dutch weather, it gave shop-ping some glamour. This postwar typology was characterised by a pattern of building blocks with a system of streets and squares. It is an enclosed pedestrian space, free from cars and public transport, with shops on the ground floor and residential apartments on the levels above (Kooijman, 1999). Unity in the design prevent-ed a cluttered, shabby appearance and was characterised by continuous canopies, which also offered shelter from the rain (Galema & van Hoogstraten, 2005). This business-like and sleek architecture, combined with cold mate-rials such as concrete, glass, polished natural stone, steel and prefabricated elements, was of-ten little appreciated by later generations. This concept nowadays mainly stands for problems (Galema & van Hoogstraten, 2005).

Next to the architectural problems, the mall in its current form embodies problems with program-ming. The shopping facilities from the 1960s and 1970s no longer meet the users' needs (Buvelot, 2017). It mainly focuses on serving the consumer in buying goods. However, now-adays, the user must be offered more than just everyday products but an experience while visit-ing and in practice, resulting in a mismatch with the needs of actual users (Walsum, 2010).

Many shopping centres were already hit hard when consumers became more aware of their expenses during the financial crisis of 2008. Subsequently, online shopping developed into an increasingly capable opponent. The corona crisis further strengthened this online devel-opment, in addition to the ban or limitation of physical store visits (Volkskrant, 2021). The re-sult is shopping malls with a high vacancy rate, a low consumer traffic level and deteriorating in some manner, also known as the 'dead malls' (Hudson & O'Connell, 2009).

Image 3: Lijnbaan, a pattern of building blocks with a system of streets and squares, free from cars (Archive of Rotterdam, 1955)

Undeniably, built heritage gets obsolete, degraded, outdated, and old-fashioned. New buildings are constructed to satisfy the needs and wishes of all users, to the loss of the under-use of the existing building stock (Pereira Roders, 2007). Designing with the needs and preferences in mind of those interacting with them is an obvious way to ensure their successful adoption, meaning enhancing preservation and economic sustainability. However, despite a profound desire to understand users and their needs, 'the communication between the creators and users of environments often remains uncomfortably remote'. While many designers agree on the problem, integrating their needs is an ongoing debate within the interface design world (Massanari, 2010).

The following main question arose from the necessity of preserving our heritage, in combination with adapting it to the contemporary needs of the users:
"How can the Dutch sixties shopping mall be adapted to the users and their contemporary needs without losing its historical value?"

In order to answer this question, the following sub-questions will elaborate:
• Which are the historic, social, and economic values of a shopping mall?
• What are users' contemporary needs, and how do they differ from the past?
• Which redesign strategies can fulfil the users' contemporary needs?

This research aims to determine if the Dutch sixties shopping mall typology is suitable for the contemporary needs of the users. If so, a redesign guideline can be created, which can be helpful for multiple cases in the future for them to implement the contemporary needs of their users in their existing typology. From a broader perspective, the aim is to learn and gain knowledge and tools for the broader issues: vacancy and obsolescence of shopping malls and revitalising historical architectural typologies.
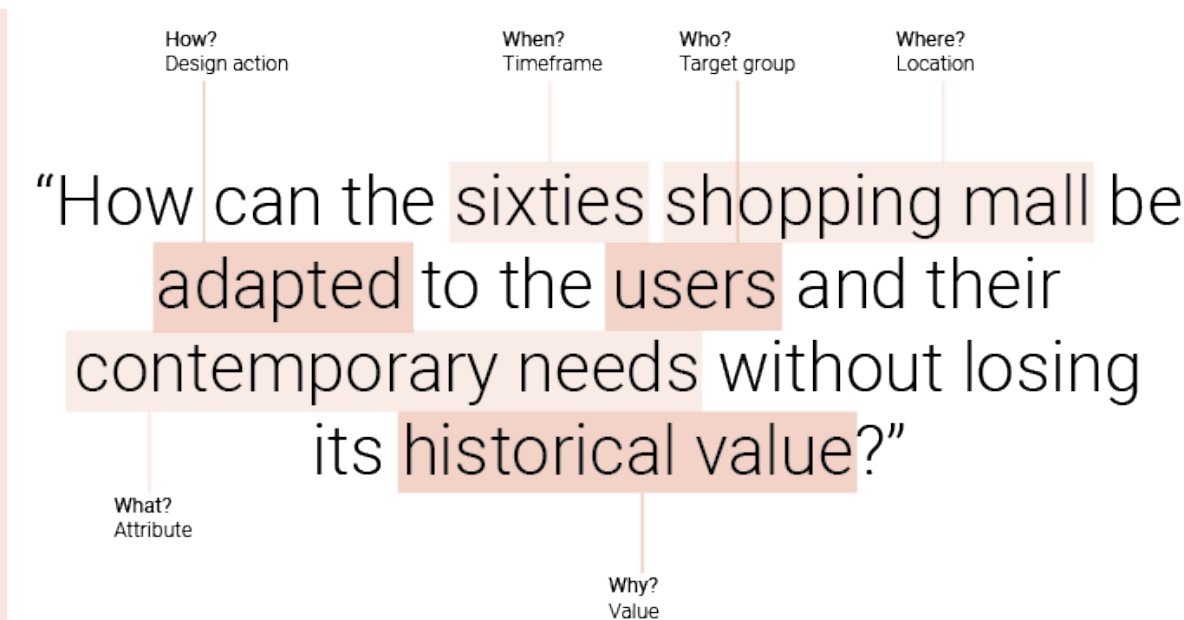

Figure 1: Coding main question (own work, 2022)

3. Theoretical framework

The conservation community uses the concept of cultural significance when addressing the range of values ascribed to a cultural heritage asset and justifying its designated status (Pereira Roders & Tarrafa Silva, 2012). In 2007, Pereira Roders defined eight primary values: social, economic, political, historical, aesthetical, scientific, age and ecological values; and varied secondary values (table 1 & 2). This research focuses on implementing the users' needs in the typical Dutch sixties shopping mall. Therefore, this research will focus on the historic values, the typology of the Dutch sixties shopping mall, and the socio-economic values, meaning the direct use and non-use combined with the collective sense of place attachment (communal value).

The value framework of Pereira Roders will tell 'why' the shopping mall is valuable. Another theory used in this research is the attributes taxonomy by Veldpaus (2015). This taxonomy will tell 'what' is important about the shopping mall, therefore, what makes it valuable. The attributes can be split up into tangible and intangible (Figure 2). Tangible attributes can either directly represent a cultural value or represent an intangible attribute, that is the reason that value is attached to the tangible attribute (Veldpaus, 2015).

The attribute chart of Veldpaus (2015) can be combined with the values chart of Pereira Roders (2007) in a chart (figure 3) that will form the basis for approaching the case studies. Coding the cultural significance of the case study by distinguishing values (the reasons to conserve the resources) and attributes (resources to be conserved) will form a solid starting point which will help create different strategies for the redesign.

ECOLOGICAL	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC
SPIRITUAL ESSENTIAL EXISTENTIAL	SPIRITUAL EMOTIONAL (IND.) EMOTIONAL (COL.) ALLEGORICAL	USE NON-USE ENTERTAINMENT ALLEGORICAL
[COE,1975]	[SPAB,1877]	[COE,1966]
AGE	**VALUES**	**POLITICAL**
SPIRITUAL ESSENTIAL EXISTENTIAL	OTHER	EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT ENTERTAINMENT SYMBOLIC
[SPAB,1877]	[1877-2005]	[ICOMOS,1967]
SCIENTIFIC	**AESTHETICAL**	**HISTORIC**
WORKMANSHIP TECHNOLOGICAL CONCEPTUAL	ARTISTIC NOTABLE CONCEPTUAL EVIDENTIAL	EDUCATIONAL HISTORIC-ARTISTIC HISTORIC-CONCEPTUAL SYMBOLIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL
[RIBA,1904]	[SPAB,1877]	[SPAB,1877]

Table 1: Value framework (Pereira Roders, 2007; Speckens, 2010; Tarrafa and Pereira Roders, 2011)

	Secondary Values	References
Social	Spiritual	beliefs, myths, religions (organized or not), legends, stories, testimonial of past generations;
	Emotional, individual	memory and personal life experiences;
	Emotional, collective	notions related with cultural identity, motivation and pride, sense of "place attachment" and communal value.
	Allegorical	objects/places representative of some social hierarchy/status;
Economic	Use	the function and utility of the asset, original or attributed;
	Non-use	the asset's expired function, which has it value on the past, and should be remained by its existence (of materials), option (to make some use of it or not) and bequest value (for future generations);
	Entertainment	the role that might be have for contemporaneous market, mainly for tourism industry;
	Allegorical	oriented to publicizing financially property;
Political	Educational	the education role that heritage assets may play, using it for political targets (e. g. birth-nations myths, glorification of political leaders, etc.);
	Management	made part of strategies and policies (past or present);
	Entertainment	it is part of strategies for dissemination of cultural awareness, explored for political targets;
	Symbolic	emblematic, power, authority and prosperous perceptions stem from the heritage asset;
Historic	Educational	heritage asset as a potential to gain knowledge about the past in the future through;
	Historic-artistic	quality of an object to be part of a few or unique testimonial of historic stylistic or artistic movements, which are now part of the history;
	Historic-conceptual	quality of an object to be part of a few or unique testimonial that retains conceptual signs (architectural, urban planning, etc.), which are now part of history;
	Symbolic	fact that the object has been part/related with an important event in the past;
	Archaeological	connected with Ancient civilizations;
Aesthetical	Artistic	original product of creativity and imagination;
	Notable	product of a creator, holding his signature;
	Conceptual	integral materialization of conceptual intentions (imply a conceptual background);
	Evidential	authentic exemplar of a decade, part of the History of Art or Architecture;
Scientific	Workmanship	original result of human labour, craftsmanship;
	Technological	skilfulness on techniques and materials, representing an outstanding quality of work;
	Conceptual	integral materialization of conceptual intentions (imply a conceptual background);
Age	Workmanship	craftsmanship value oriented towards the production period;
	Maturity	piece of memory, reflecting the passage/lives of past generations;
	Existential	marks of the time passage (patine) presents on the forms, components and materials;
Ecological	Spiritual	harmony between the building and its environment (natural and artificial);
	Essential	identification of ecological ideologies on its design and construction;
	Existential	manufactured resources which can either be reused, reprocessed or recycled;

(Primary values)

Table 2: The cultural values (ICOMOS Australia, 1999; Manson, 2002; Pereira Roders, 2007; English Heritage, 2008)

Next to the values and attributes framework, the concept of shearing layers by Stewart Brand (1994) will form a base for this research. Brand distinguishes six general-purpose layers for a building: Site, Structure, Skin, Services, Space Plan and Stuff (Brand 1994, pp. 12-13). They are all factors which influence the value of a building. He also estimates a life cycle for change in each of these layers that varies from one day to eternity. Seeing a building as being composed of interrelated layers offers perspectives on estimating the impact of related interventions on its physical condition (Kuipers & de Jonge, 2017).
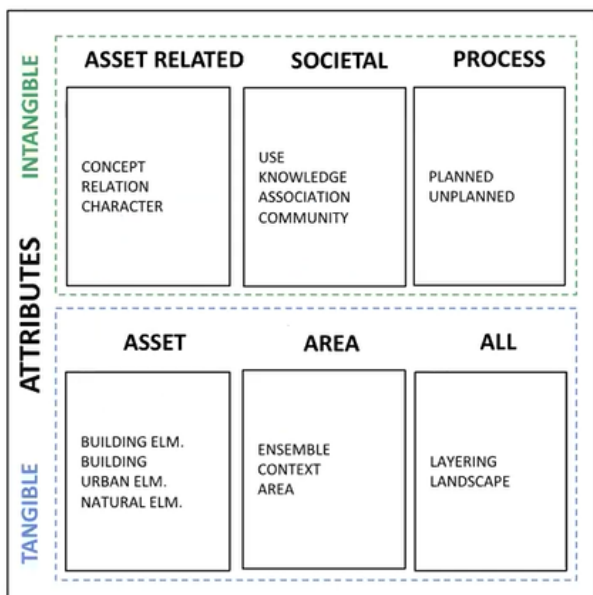

Figure 2: Attributes chart (Veldpaus, 2015; Gustcoven, 2016)

VALUES / ATTRIBUTES	Historic	Age	Aesthetical	Scientific	Political	Ecological	Social	Economic	Other
Tangible — Asset									
Built element									
Building									
Urban element									
Natural element									
Area									
Ensemble									
Context									
Area									
All									
Landcape									
Layering									
Intangible — Relation									
Character									
Relation									
Concept									
Societal									
Use									
Knowledge									
Association									
Community									
Process									
Planned									
Unplanned									

Figure 3: Taxonomies of the cultural meaning of heritage: values and attributes. (Tarrafa Pereira da Silva, A. M., & Pereira Roders, A., 2021)

4.　Research methodology

The research will be structured into three sub-domains: the historic and socio-economic values will express *why* it is important to preserve the mall. Users' needs can be translated into the attributes, and express *what* it is about the shopping mall that makes it valuable. Last are the redesign strategies that help create possible manners on *how* to tackle the interventions in the shopping mall. Figure 4 gives an overview of how the three subdomains will be examined, tested, and related to each other and what the outcome will supposedly be.

The historic and socio-economic values will be explored in different manners. For the historic values, historical research is sought in which literature and the archive are consulted. Relevant literature on Victor Gruen and Van den Broek en Bakema will clarify what the conception of the design of the shopping centres was in the sixties. This literature review, combined with visual material, such as pictures, from the archive, will reveal historical values that will later be essential for the research. For the socio-economic values, data is reviewed based on digitised news arti-

cles from Delpher, a newspaper archive. News articles are a valuable source that can show how the shopping centre positions itself in society and what the users' opinions are about this. Images from the archive, next to images of the fieldwork, will validate the textual data previously found related to socio-economic values.

In the second part of this research, the users' needs will be examined. A distinction will be made between contemporary needs and past needs. The past needs can be studied similarly to the historical values found earlier: with historical research based on literature and photos from the archive. The contemporary needs of the users will be explored based on qualitative (concepts, thoughts and experiences) and quantitative (theories and hypotheses) sources. Firstly, an innovative data source, social media, will be used. Today, social media can reframe our understanding and experience of heritage very well. It can provide extensive data for researchers to perform real-time analytics on what places and attributes people value in the historic urban landscapes they live or visit, enough to
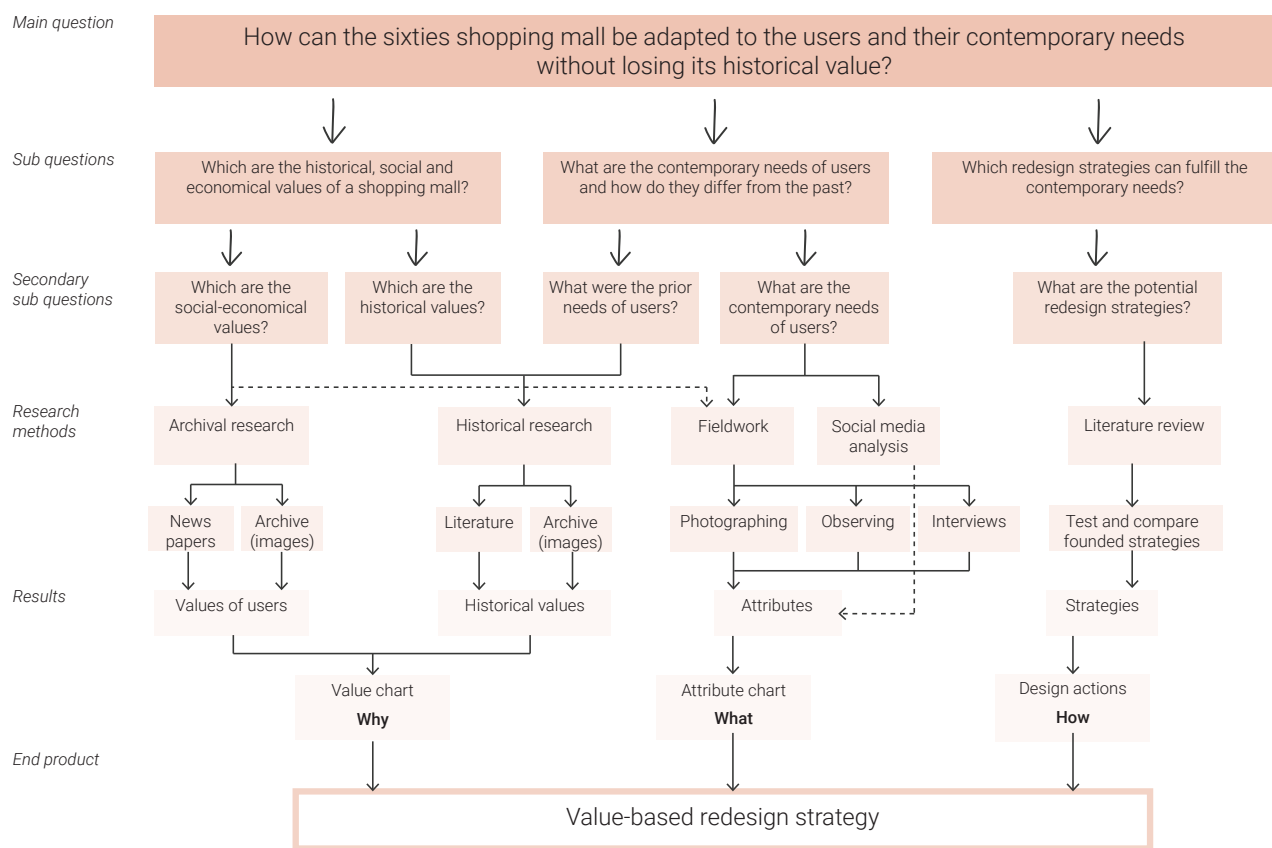

Figure 4: Flowchart of research methodology (own drawing, 2022)

share with their social network (Pereira Roders et al., 2019). Google reviews and hashtags on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter reflect the user's direct opinion and experience.

In addition to social media, actual fieldwork will take place. Participant observation enables researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. It provides the context for development interview guides and provides researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasps how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities (Kawulich, 2005).

Next to photographing and observing the users, they will be interviewed to find out what they appreciate about the mall, along with what they miss. This semi-structured interview will be based on several presented propositions, giving the respondents and interviewer space to deviate (Figure 5). These sources, observing, interviewing, and social media, are effective on their own but intend to confirm or deny each other, which will improve the validity of the research. The established values and needs of users from the literature, archive, interviews, observations and social media can be classified in a value and attributes chart. Coding these values and attributes expresses why and what about the mall is valuable and forms the basis for approaching the case studies and their possible redesign strategies.

The third part consists of an investigation into possible redesign strategies. Based on literature reviews on 'Rewriting Architecture: 10+1 Actions for an Adaptive Architecture' (2021), 'How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built' (1995), and 'Make it Anew' (2018), different redesign strategies can be explored. These books show approaches, each a way of thinking and acting, to add value to complex situations with subtle, precise and sometimes radical interventions. Based on this literature and the previously researched values and attributes, one or more appropriate strategies that apply to the case studies can be chosen.
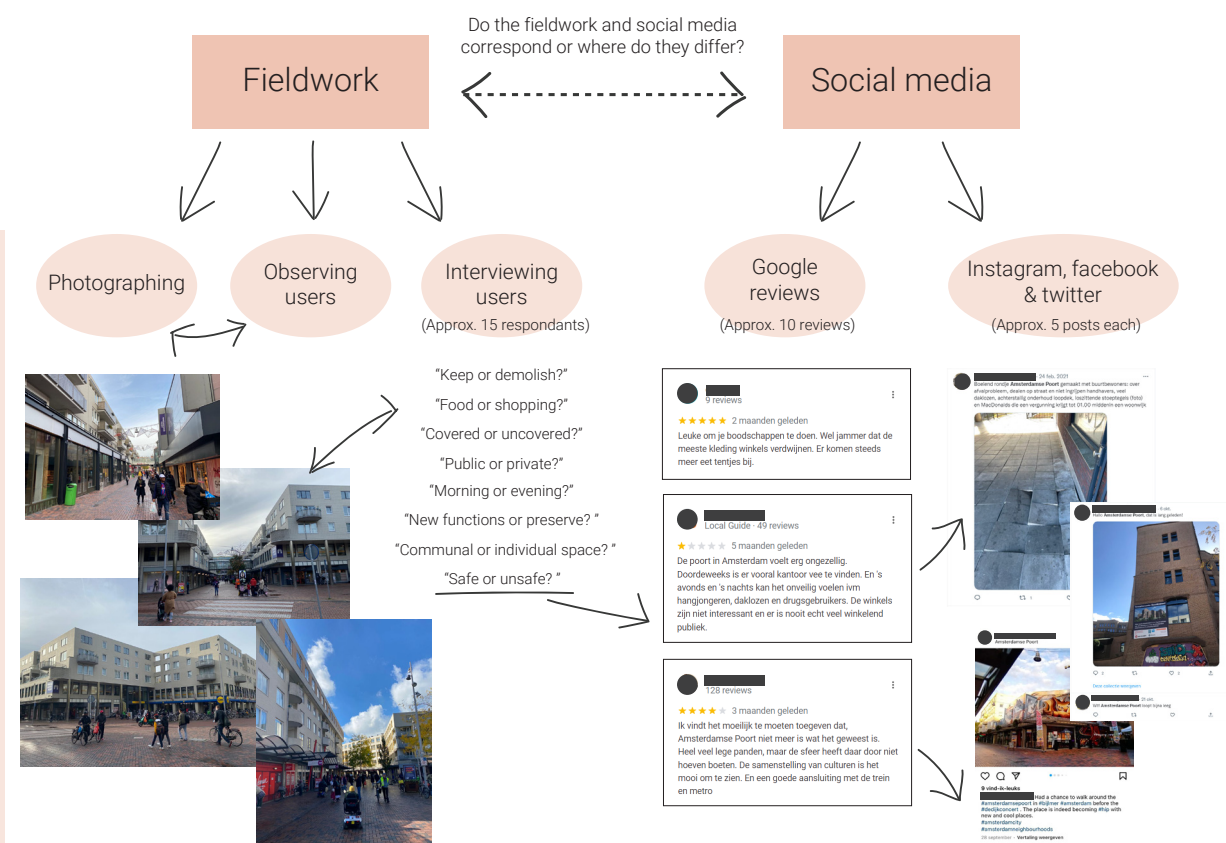

Figure 5: Combining research methods for the Amsterdamse Poort (own drawing, 2022)

There are still limitations to these research methods. Drawbacks of qualitative interviews include reliance on respondents' accuracy and intensity in terms of time, expense, and possible emotional strain. As Esterberg (2002) puts it, "If you want to know about what people actually do, rather than what they say they do, you should probably use observation". However, participant observation is conducted by a biased human who serves as the instrument for data collection; the researcher must understand how his/her gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation (Kawulich, 2005). Although the role of social media in providing new techniques for community engagement has been acknowledged, its usage is still minimal and not fully explored within the context of urban cultural heritage conservation. One will have to take this in account with the validity of the results (Pereira Roders et al., 2019).

5.   Case studies

In order to test the theoretical framework and sample the methodology, three case studies are presented in this paragraph. Each of them has its values that present which one is the most suitable for further research.

The Westfield mall shows that the renovation has positively contributed to the socio-economic values of the mall. However, there are hardly any traces of the old historic shopping centre 'Leidsenhage'. The Amsterdamse Poort shows the opposite. Although the original typologies, such as the pattern of building blocks, the system of streets and squares, the materials, and courtyards, are still there, social safety and livability have not always been appropriate here. Images 4 and 5 show that the original structure of the canopy remains the same. However, a completely different atmosphere appears. The Lijnbaan is an example of a shopping mall where several interventions have been done over the years. However, the original understanding of its architecture is still clearly visible. In addition, the Lijnbaan is still the busiest shopping centre in Rotterdam, and the percentage of vacancies here is still far below the national average (Retailtrends, 2022).

Using these case studies and analysing and comparing them will help better understand how it should and should not be. The values and attributes framework (Pereira Roders, 2007; Veldpaus, 2015) will help uncover these matters. Out of the three case studies, the Amsterdamse Poort will fit best in this design by research due to its low socio-economic value and its status of decay.

Image 4: Amsterdamse Poort (Archive of Amsterdam, June 1991)

Image 5: Amsterdamse Poort (own photo, October 2022)

6. Relevance

Our heritage is our inheritance, what the past has conceded to us, what we value in the present and what we choose to preserve for future generations (UNESCO, 2012). It is essential to protect our heritage as it adds character and distinctiveness to the place, region or community and provides a sense of identity. Heritage, tangible as well as intangible, has a positive influence on many aspects of the way a community develops (Pereira Roders, 2007). Much research has already been done on the importance of heritage and the corresponding cultural values. Although these individual researches are relevant to include in a redesign for the shopping mall, a link is missing. The link between the redesign of an existing shopping mall with its historical values, and the socio-economic values. Combining these values and prioritising both in the redesign can give it back its cultural significance.

Trade has accompanied humanity from the beginning of time. For a long time, the shopping centre not only functioned as a retail program but also formed the heart of a city or district and had an important social function. There were open markets where people came to exchange goods without using money. Additionally, while trading, people were chatting and spreading technical knowledge and culture (Frączkiewicz, 2016). The mall was initially conceived as a community centre where people would converge for shopping, cultural activity, and social interaction (Feinberg, 1991). However, online shopping, home delivery and digitalized services have changed the retail landscape significantly (Syllabus, 2022).

To restore the cultural and social significance of the shopping mall, new needs must be matched, and the Dutch sixties shopping centres will have to adapt and be redesigned to increase their socio-economic values again. For the social relevance of this research, valuable conclusions about the current state of affairs will be drawn, it will be tested whether a particular method works, and this will lead to recommendations for solving the problem. Additionally, this research will contribute to raising awareness within our society and bringing back the cultural significance of the Dutch sixties shopping mall.

7. Bibliographical reference

Alkemade, F., Iersel, V. M., Ouburg, J., Bow-Wow, A., Dicke, A., Boer, R. & Chester, A. (2021, 2 February). Rewriting Architecture: 10+1 Actions for an Adaptive Architecture. Valiz.

Brand, S. (1994, 1 October). How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built (Reprint). Penguin Books.

Buvelot B. (2017). Slimme winkelcentra kennen de wijk. Rooilijn, 3(40). https://adoc.pub/winkelcentra-kennen-dewijk.html

Eerenbeemt, M. V. D. (2021, March 18). Luxe of leegstand? Veel winkelcentra staan voor een zware keuze. de Volkskrant. Consulted from https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/luxe-of-leegstand-veel-winkelcentra-staan-voor-een-zware-keuze~b7fdb4f0/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

Esterberg, K. G. (2002). Qualitative methods in social research. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Eurostat. (2021, February 17). Online shopping even more popular in 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/productseurostat-news/-/ddn-20210217-1

Feinberg, R. A., & Meoli, J. (1991). A brief history of the mall. NA - Advances in Consumer Research, NA-Advances in Consumer Research Volume 18 | 1991, 426–427. https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7196/volumes/v18/NA-18

Frączkiewicz, M. (2016). The cultural role of the malls. Academia.eu. https://www.academia.edu/44715854/The_cultural_role_of_the_malls

Galema, W. & van Hoogstraten, D. (2005, March). Winkelcentra - categoriaal onderzoek wederopbouw. https://adoc.pub/winkelcentra-categoriaal-onderzoek-wederopbouw.html

Hudson, K., & O'Connell, V. (2009, May 23). Recession Turns Malls Into Ghost Towns. WSJ. https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB124294047987244803

Kawulich, B. (2005, May). View of Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method | Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research. Forum Qualitative Social Research. https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/466/996

Kooijman, D. (1999). Machine en theater : ontwerpconcepten van winkelgebouwen. Uitgeverij 010. Consulted from https://pure.tue.nl/ws/files/1404144/Metis130059.pdf

Kuipers, M. C. & de Jonge, W. (2017). Designing from Heritage: Strategies for Conservation and Conversion. Consulted from https://repository.tudelft.nl/islandora/object/uuid:dd8fdf31-67f2-47e1-bd9c-d22c4498d277?collection=research

Massanari, A. L. (2010). Designing for imaginary friends: information architecture, personas and the politics of user-centered design. New Media & Society, 12(3), 401–416.

Pereira Roders, A. (2007), "Re-architecture: lifespan rehabilitation of built heritage", PhD, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, Eindhoven.

Pereira Roders, A., & Tarrafa Silva, A. (2012, January). Cultural Heritage Management and Heritage (Impact) Assessments. Department of Built Environment, Eindhoven University of Technology. Consulted from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323783537_Cultural_Heritage_Management_and_Heritage_Impact_Assessments

Pereira Roders, A., Ginzarly, M., & Teller, J. (2019, March). Mapping historic urban landscape values through social media. Consulted from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1296207418300724?casa_token=CnN11fUMNLkAAAAA:DeaRjbf1VddKCz4TmIGiecCnqy-CWRsZ6YNg3A2uSc3fxmHK9dwY6_7Y8hu11ReTgsLXBpkxuwLg

Retailtrends. (2022, 30 January). Rotterdam trekt miljoenen extra winkelbezoekers. Consulted from https://retailtrends.nl/news/55380/rotterdam-trekt-miljoenen-extra-winkelbezoekers

Syllabus. (2022). Adapting 20th century Heritage: Msc 3+4 The Modern Mall. Consulted from https://www.tudelft.nl/onderwijs/opleidingen/masters/aubs/msc-architecture-urbanism-and-building-sciences/master-tracks/architecture/programme/studios/heritage-architecture

UNESCO. (2012, 22 November). Preserving our heritage. UNESCO. https://en.unesco.org/content/preserving-our-heritage

van Es, E. (2016). View of Van den Broek and Bakema: two types of functionalists. Architecture and Planning Education at Technical College of Delft in Post-war Society. Consulted from https://journals.open.tudelft.nl/iphs/article/view/1339/1371
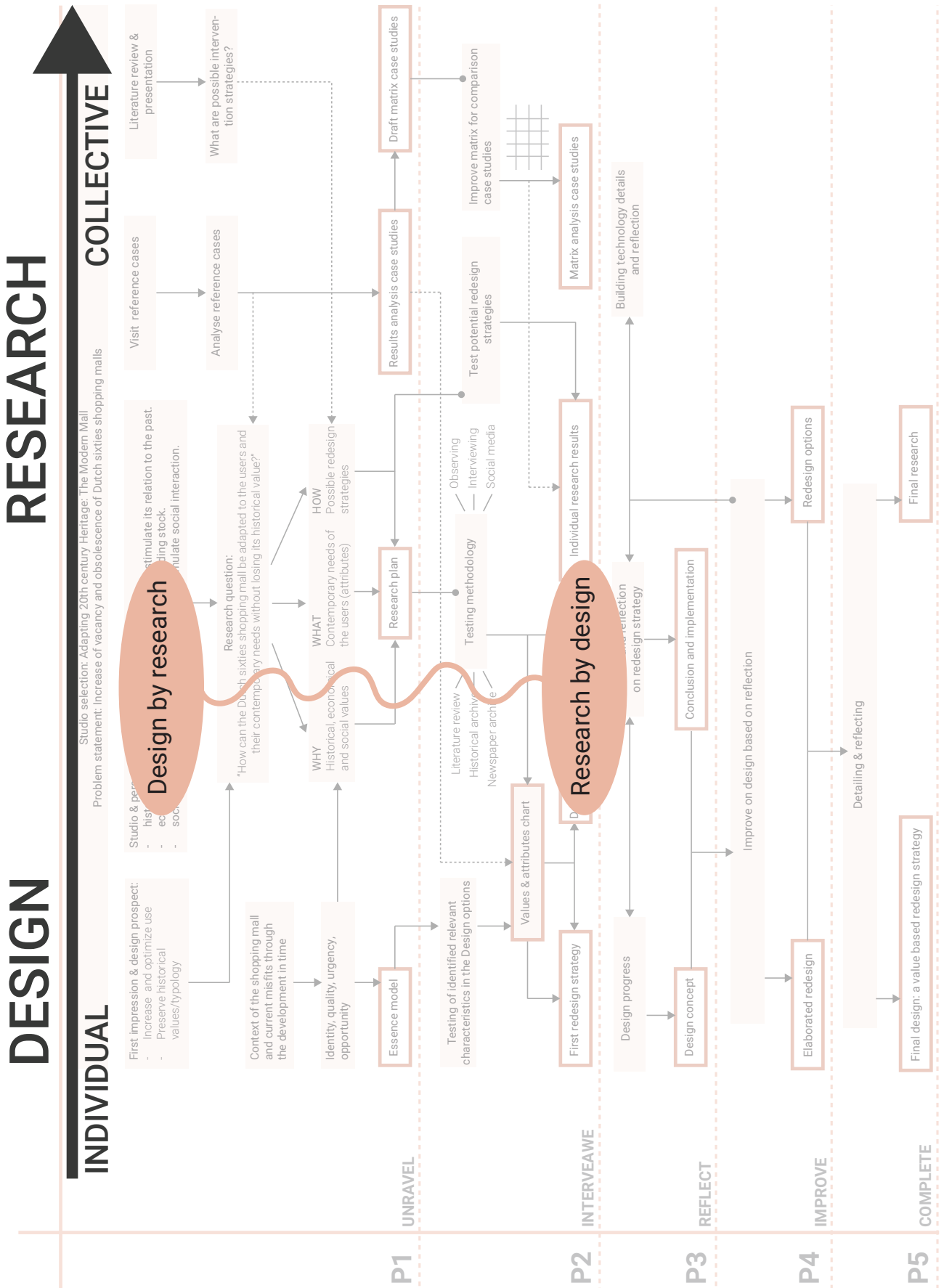
Veldpaus, L. (2015). Historic urban landscapes: framing the integration of urban and heritage planning in multilevel governance. Eindhoven, The Netherlands: Eindhoven University of Technology. Consulted from: http://repository.tue.nl/798291
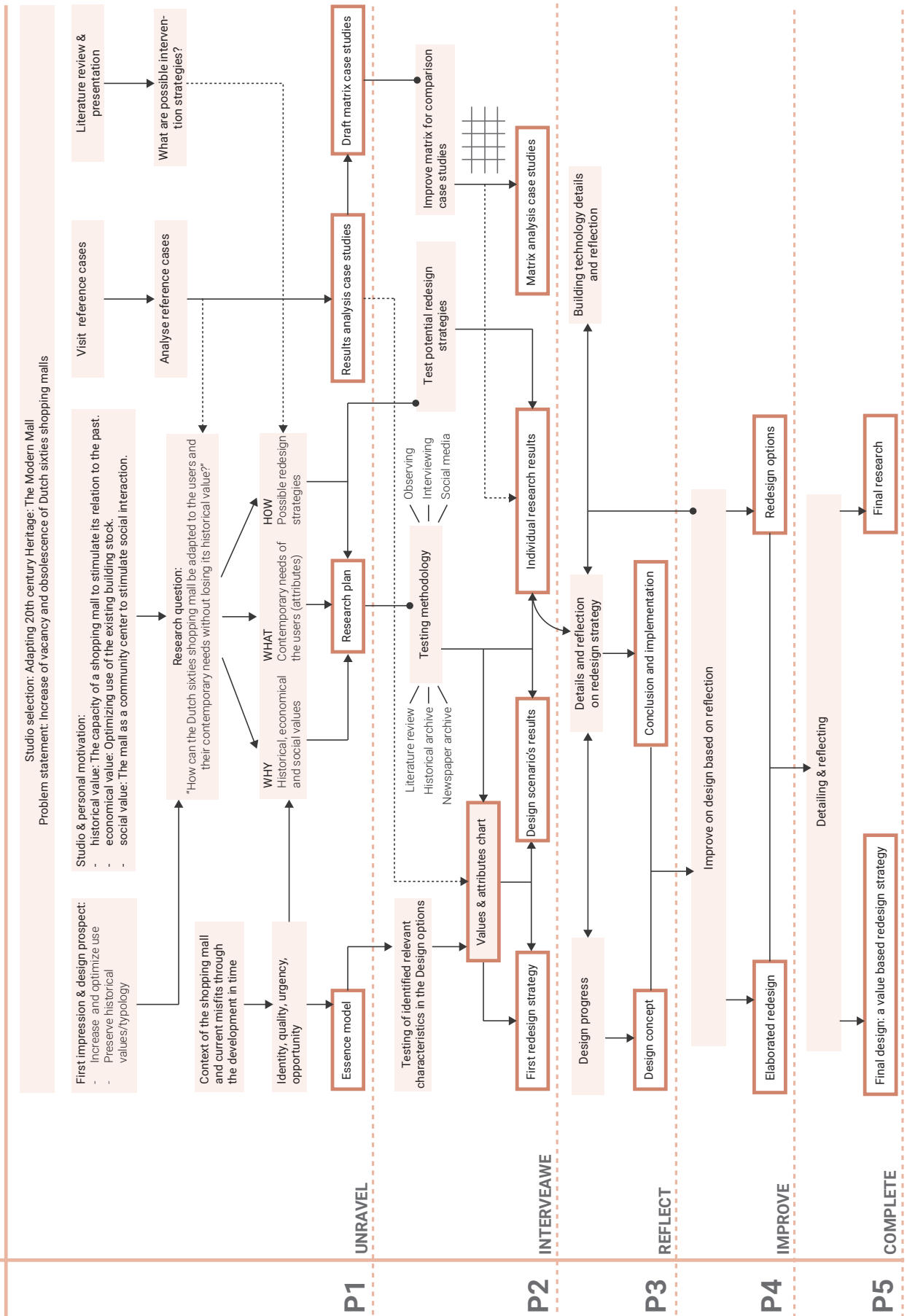
8. Appendix

Appendix 1: Research plan structure diagram

Appendix 2: Simplified esearch plan structure diagram