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Over the centuries country houses, landed estates and castles have played a big part in shaping the landscape of the Netherlands. Historical estate landscapes, which often define the visual character of the region in which they are located, can be found all over the country. In recent decades much has been written about individual country houses, landed estates and castles, but rarely in conjunction with one another or in relation to their significance in terms of landscape. There are some exceptions, however. Henri van der Wyck, in the revised edition of his doctoral thesis, *De Nederlandse buitenplaats. Aspecten van ontwikkeling, bescherming en herstel* (1974, 1983), called for research into and protection of estate landscapes. In so doing he was the first to use the term, which he defined as: 'The landscape whose character is defined by a number of country estates'. With his famous atlases of the Veluwe and Twente regions, complete with historical and self-drawn maps, Van der Wyck set the tone for research into estate landscapes in the Netherlands.

In 1967 Frans Maas assumed the post of professor of landscape architecture at Delft Institute of Technology with an inaugural lecture entitled 'From gazebo to caravan. The contribution of the country estate to landscape formation'. In his lecture he put country estates metaphorically on the map as landscape-forming elements, adding that historical examples could serve as inspiration for new forms of housing, recreation and nature development. Maas was also the first to put estate landscapes literally on the map, with a landscape types map onto which he projected the locations of historical Dutch country estates and castles in order draw attention to their interrelatedness. In *De buitenplaatsen historisch-geografisch gezien* (1976), Pim van Tent took a more geographical approach. He demonstrated that a logical connection exists between choice of location and natural substratum, accessibility and availability of land, which in turn gives rise to landscape zones of country houses and landed estates. More recent writings on this topic include Ben Olde Meierink's article 'Buitenplaatslandschappen' (estate landscapes) in *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* (2017).

In these publications, individual country houses are examined not only in combination with their immediate surroundings (garden, park, landscape), but also at the regional level, as landscape architecture ensembles of several country houses, landed estates and castles together with their spatial context. So the focus here is on networks of country houses, landed estates and castles that together make up a landscape zone. In this thematic issue

of the Bulletin we use the term 'estate landscapes' or the plural form 'country houses landscapes' to refer to this phenomenon. There are also related terms like 'landed estate zones', 'landed estate landscapes', 'country estate networks' or 'country estate biotopes', that introduce nuances and emphasize the differences between country house estate and landed estate or the unity of house, garden and park. To avoid confusion, we use the following definition: 'Estate landscapes are landscapes whose character is defined by historical castles, country houses (including their gardens and parks) and landed estates'. In other words, it is an inclusive definition intended to indicate the coherence or the unity of the component parts, whether they be buildings, gardens and parks, woods or farming areas.

Why a thematic issue devoted to estate landscapes? Firstly because this is a rapidly developing and increasingly important field of research. A situation report on the state of research from the perspective of different disciplines is therefore relevant. It can stimulate theorizing and discussion with respect to how we might better understand the historical estate landscape and how we might strengthen the link between research, policy and design. Beyond that there is the fact that estate landscapes are under enormous pressure from climate change and urbanization – along with associated challenges relating to water, nature, energy, farming, recreation and tourism. These challenges have such huge spatial consequences and are so complex that a regional perspective is necessary in order to achieve coherent solutions. At that level, based on the existing landscape structure, spatial strategies can be developed for the protection of the estate landscape and the addition of new qualities. That 'helicopter view' is also necessary as a commonly agreed basis on which owners, governments, experts and other stakeholders can work together to create future-proof estate landscapes.





The aim of this thematic issue is to promote further research into estate landscapes and to that end it presents recent findings drawn from the Dutch academic and practical field. Five wide-ranging contributions underscore the fact that estate landscape research, policy and design calls for an interdisciplinary approach in which different perspectives complement and reinforce one another. By way of introduction, Hans Renes presents an overview of the historical evolution of the term ‘country estate’ and of estate landscapes in the Netherlands from a historical-geographical perspective. Next, Hanneke Ronnes summarizes the historiography of research into estate landscapes and offers a few suggestions for future research. Elyze Storms-Smeets takes the Gelders Arcadië estate landscape as the inspiration for a socio-geographic approach to understanding estate landscapes. Paul Thissen sketches the growth of government involvement in country house and landed estates in Gelderland. Finally, Steffen Nijhuis introduces a regional design approach in which the historical layering and landscape structure serve as a basis for enhancing the resilience and adaptability of estate landscapes.

We wish you much reading enjoyment and inspiration.

ON BEHALF OF THE EDITORS:

STEFFEN NIJHUIS, CHRISTIAN BERTRAM AND KEES SOMER



ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN THE NETHERLANDS

'VAST SWATHES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE
WERE COVERED WITH COUNTRY HOUSES'

HANS RENES

THE COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATE: AN INTRODUCTION

In the extensive literature on country house estates it is the individual houses and gardens that receive by far the most attention. In the last decade this has been supplemented by growing interest in the relation between country houses and their surroundings. This article aims to go a step further and to focus on the concept of the 'estate landscape'.¹ It is a relatively new concept and not so easy to define.

The Nederlandse Kastelenstichting (Dutch Castles Foundation) defines a country house as: 'every residence, often with garden and park and outbuildings, established by the owner with a view to spending varying periods of time in the countryside', adding that: 'The aim of this establishment was to enable the users to enjoy peace and quiet and the rural surroundings. At the same time it served as a status symbol and offered the possibility of presiding over any industrial, agricultural and forestry activities connected with the estate.'² What is missing from this definition is the investment motivation. In Amsterdam, just as previously in Venice, high-risk investments in trade and shipping gradually made way for more secure investments in property and (in Amsterdam) in shares.³

Defined in this way, country houses constitute a link between town and country. The initiative lay with a town dweller keen to spend part of the year outside the town. This means that, formally speaking, we cannot use the term 'country house' for houses in rural areas that were the occupants' main residence, such as the manor houses that were at the centre of landed estates and were occupied all year long.⁴ Yet the dividing line is not always clear, especially after more and more houses built originally as country retreats came to be permanently occupied over the course of the nineteenth century. This was facilitated by greater physical comfort (heating) and faster transport connections. Perhaps we are defeating our own purpose if the term 'country house' can no longer be applied to those houses. The definition could also encompass the many ex-urban allotment-style complexes whose owners occasionally spend more than a day there. In practice they are not referred to as 'country houses', but the borderline is nevertheless blurred (fig. 1).

Nowadays 'country house' is the generic term for a rural residence with landscaped garden, but it only started to be used in the course of the eighteenth century and did not become a standard expression until the nineteenth century.⁵ Up until then, many different

terms had been in use for the permanent or occasional rural residences of city dwellers. Martin van den Broeke describes a tour of Zuid-Beveland in 1774 during which the travellers visited a succession of acquaintances in their summer residences, which were variously referred to by terms like *lusthof*, *lustplaats*, *landhoeve*, *lusthoeve*, *zomerverblijfplaats*, *hofstede*, *hoeve*, *huis* and even *boerenhoeve*.⁶ Many of those terms convey the attraction that the seemingly uncomplicated rural life held for city dwellers. At the same time they make life more difficult for historians: the different terms overlap, and their meanings changed over time. The objects themselves were extremely diverse: in size alone they ranged from the vast country estates of the Stadholders, comparable to foreign stately homes, to the modest gardens of the lower middle classes.⁷ For example, a term like 'hofstede' (lit. homestead), could apply equally to a farmhouse with a *herenkamer* ('elegant quarters' – a dedicated 'room' for the landowner and his family) and to a large country house.⁸

A country house could be part of a landed estate that also comprised agricultural land and woods. Such landed estates commanded an income that safeguarded their continued existence. By contrast, a country house was first and foremost a 'place of consumption' and while it usually generated some income, additional funds were always needed. The owner of a country house depended on income from other sources, such as commerce, industry, mining, colonial exploitation or considerable inherited wealth.⁹ In practice the transition from country house to landed estate was fluid because many country houses, for instance along the Vecht, had begun life as a farmhouse to which a *herenkamer* or a manor house had been added. Alongside the resulting country house, the farm continued to operate and to provide income.

Country houses can be seen as individual objects, comprising a house with adjoining gardens. They can also be described in relation to their wider context, as part of a landed estate or in conjunction with the surrounding landscape. In the latter case we might look, for example, at avenues and visual axes. In the international literature the term used for this is 'estate landscape',¹⁰ which corresponds to the Dutch term 'country house landscape' or, in the terminology used by the provinces of Utrecht and Zuid-Holland, 'country house biotope'.¹¹

However, none of these terms does justice to the situation, encountered nowhere more sublimely than in the Netherlands, of a landscape characterized by a continuous series of country houses.¹² This is why I prefer to refer to such a landscape – the theme of this essay – in the plural in Dutch, literally 'estates landscape'.¹³ This can be defined as a series of adjacent

◀ 1. Section of Amsterdam street plan by J. Blaeu, 1649. It shows the modest middle-class gardens just outside the city fortifications. They came about when one of the typical strip-shaped meadows was subdivided, creating a central lane flanked by gardens (Utrecht University Library)



2. Map of Walcheren by D.W.C. and A. Hattinga (1749-1750) (Zeeuws Archief)

country house estates that together form a landscape-architectural ensemble.¹⁴ Within such a series the individual country house or landed estate may be linked by roads and visual axes, or have a common origin. I will discuss a few examples below.

Growing interest in such ‘estate landscapes’ has spawned a plethora of new terms. The province of Utrecht talks about a country house estate zone, Zuid-Holland about a landed estate zone (somewhat confusing since in many cases it refers to country houses). Because the country houses in such zones usually lie along a road or water, the term ‘belt of country estates’ is particularly apt.¹⁵ Yet another term is ‘country house estates network’, introduced by the landscape architect Dominique Blom.¹⁶

Such ribbons have also been recognized in the past, when they were referred to as *lustwarande* (plea-

sure grounds),¹⁷ or, alluding to the pastoral ideal landscape of the ancient Greeks, as Arcadia.¹⁸ The term *lustwarande* is interesting. The term *warande* has been used since the late Middle Ages to refer to game parks, which is to say, private hunting grounds. More specifically, a *warande* (warren) was a game reserve where smaller animals, like rabbits, were kept. Such hunting grounds were characterized by a varied, ‘park-like’ landscape that also had aesthetic value.¹⁹ To judge from an early instance of the term *lustwarande* – in the eighteenth-century book series *Tegenwoordige Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden* (Current state of the United Netherlands), where it referred to the environs of the Honselaarsdijk country house estate near Naaldwijk – it would appear that the association with hunting still existed.²⁰

With all these terms we need to remember that the

areas concerned have a longer history and that country houses simply add a new layer to a landscape that was already cultivated. In many cases it is the older agricultural layer that wins out in the end when farms outlive the country houses. The Beemster Polder acquired World Heritage status based on the original agricultural layout that is still clearly visible. Here the estate landscape represented a short-lived historical phase that barely rated a mention in the nomination for World Heritage status.²¹

The rest of this article focuses on two periods, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, characterized by geometric garden designs and by a preference for flat land, and the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, characterized by landscape gardens and a preference for the more undulating sandy areas.

FROM COUNTRY HOUSE TO ESTATE LANDSCAPE

Quite a lot has been written about the possible reasons for building country houses in particular locations. Some country houses have their origins in an older family property, perhaps consisting of a medieval castle or manor house, or just a farm. Others were built by the owner of an adjoining industrial enterprise. Just outside Utrecht, for example, Rotsoord stood next to a brickworks and Zijdebalen beside a silk factory. In the case of city dwellers' country houses, the distance the owner was prepared to travel between their rural and urban residences was an important factor.²² Concentrations of country houses tended to arise wherever an attractive landscape coincided with easy accessibility from a nearby town.

That not every town or city gave rise to a lot of country houses had to do with the nature of the urban population concerned: the chief prerequisite was a reasonably large elite with sufficient financial resources to be able to afford a country house. Another requirement was the existence of a social milieu in which the members of this elite encouraged one another to buy or build a house in the countryside. In other countries there were similar concentrations around important urban centres of trade and industry as well as around the large courts of early modern centralist states.

The Dutch provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht occupy a singular position, both nationally and internationally, owing to the large number of country house estates (fig. 2). Prosperity was certainly not fairly distributed among the inhabitants of these northern provinces, but even so, the group of people able to afford a country house was exceptionally large. Roel Mulder has produced an overview of the proportion of country house owners per income bracket in 1742. Of the Amsterdammers with an annual income between 4000 and 7000 guilders, over a quarter already owned a country house, for those with an income

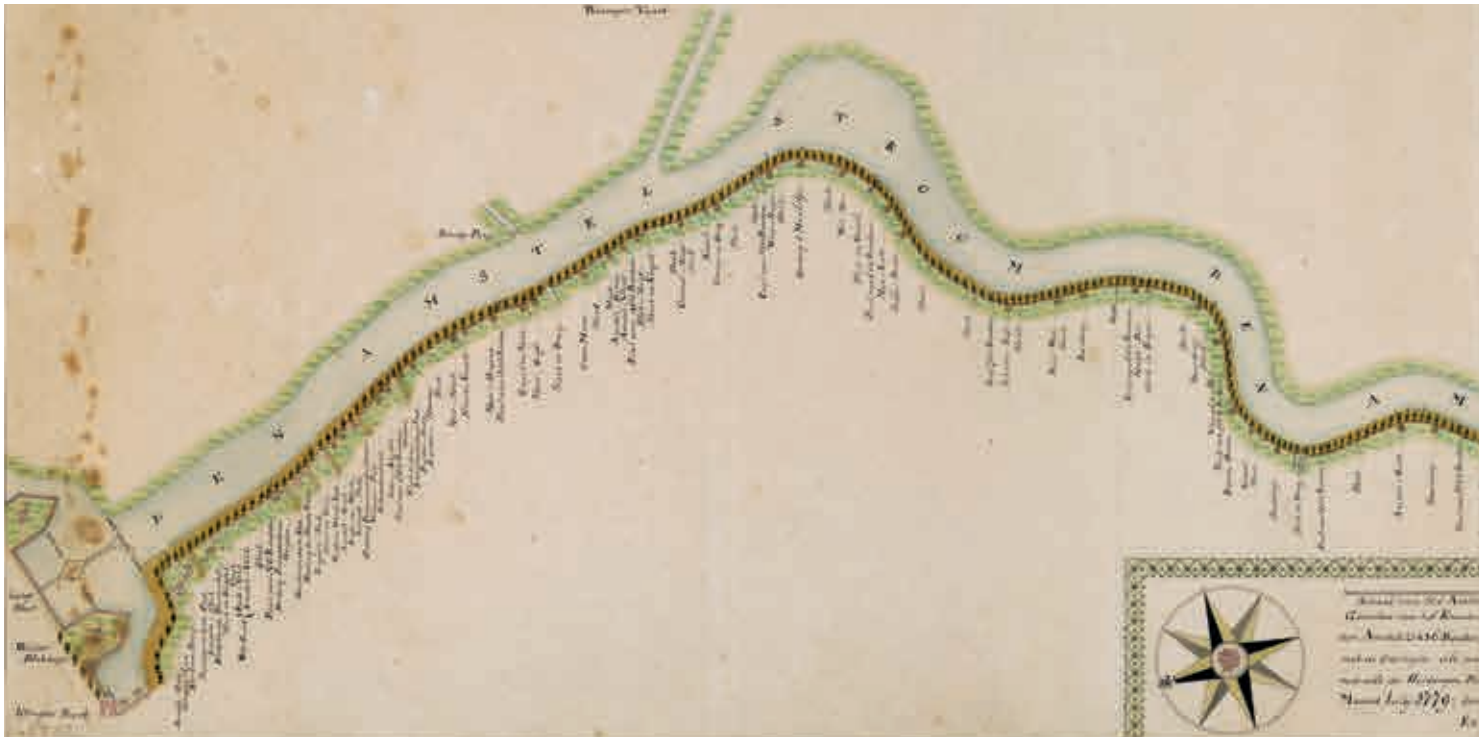
above 7000 guilders the figure was two thirds (fig. 3).²³ The country houses themselves were relatively modest, especially in comparison with those in France and later in England.²⁴ On the island of Walcheren alone there were over fifty country houses in around 1680, a number that had grown to over 130 by the middle of the eighteenth century. Most belonged to residents of the cities of Middelburg, Vlissingen and, to a lesser degree, Veere.²⁵ Marc Glaudemans estimated, based on a cartographic study, that at the beginning of the eighteenth century there were over five hundred country houses around Amsterdam.²⁶ He provided the following breakdown:

• Immediate vicinity of Amsterdam	100
• Watergraafsmeer	130
• Haarlem and its surroundings	105
• Amstel, Gein, Angstel, Vecht, Bijlmermeer	150
• 's-Graveland	26
Total	511

Owing to the preference for accessibility by water, the requirement for a reasonable distance from the city, and the attractiveness of 'border' zones like the inner edge of the dunes where the flat farming land bordered the hunting grounds in the uncultivated dunes, the numerous country houses were concentrated in several ribbons. As far as is known, the ribbons of country houses in the low-lying parts of the Netherlands are unique in the world.

Many such ribbons began with a small number of houses with gardens, to which more and more were added over time. One could argue that country house owners are like modern-day tourists who explain their reasons for visiting a Spanish coastal resort by saying that they are attracted by the beach, the weather or even the beautiful landscape, when they are actually drawn by the presence of other tourists. Diaries kept by country house owners reveal the endless to and fro of intensive interaction among local country house owning city dwellers. Besides, the concentration of country houses and landed estates was not without practical advantages. The presence of other country houses increased the high aesthetic value of the landscape. And it was also easier to find competent household staff.²⁷

Yet this is not the whole story either. In several instances concentrations of country houses can be traced back to family connections, to the deliberate development of country estate landscapes or, in a few cases, to the unifying effects of the activities of a single



3. Map of Amsteldijk with country houses, between the Utrechtse Poort and the Groote Loopveld (now Ouderkerkerlaan) by E. Florijn, 1779 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

garden designer.²⁸ I look at a few of these in the following sections.

Contemporary observers had already noted the phenomenon of the country estate landscape. In the eighteenth century there was a market for picture books with titles like *Verscheide gesigten van de vermaarde rievier de buyten Amstel* [Various views of the famous outer Amstel river] (one of the earliest, published in late 1715), *De zegepralende Vecht* [The triumphal Vecht] (1719), *Het verheerlykt Watergraefs- of Diemer-Meer* [The sublime Watergraaf or Diemer Lake] (1725)²⁹ and *Amstel's Lustwarande, Rhynlants fraaiste gezichten* [Amstel's pleasure grounds, Rhineland's finest views] (1732). An excellent example is *Het zegenpralant Kennemerlant* [Triumphal Kennemerland] (c. 1730), containing a general map and engravings of the individual country estates, 'all drawn from life down to the smallest detail and with utmost attentiveness by H. De Leth in the year 1728, and without omitting the merest dot on any building or garden decoration'.³⁰ Christian Bertram made an interesting observation in relation to today's province of Noord-Holland, noting that such picture books only appeared after the country houses and accompanying gardens had been rebuilt on a large scale in the period 1700-1730.³¹

In the twentieth century country house estates became the object of historical research. Since then a great many historical publications have appeared, most of which are devoted to a single estate. Nevertheless, even early on a few authors ventured onto the

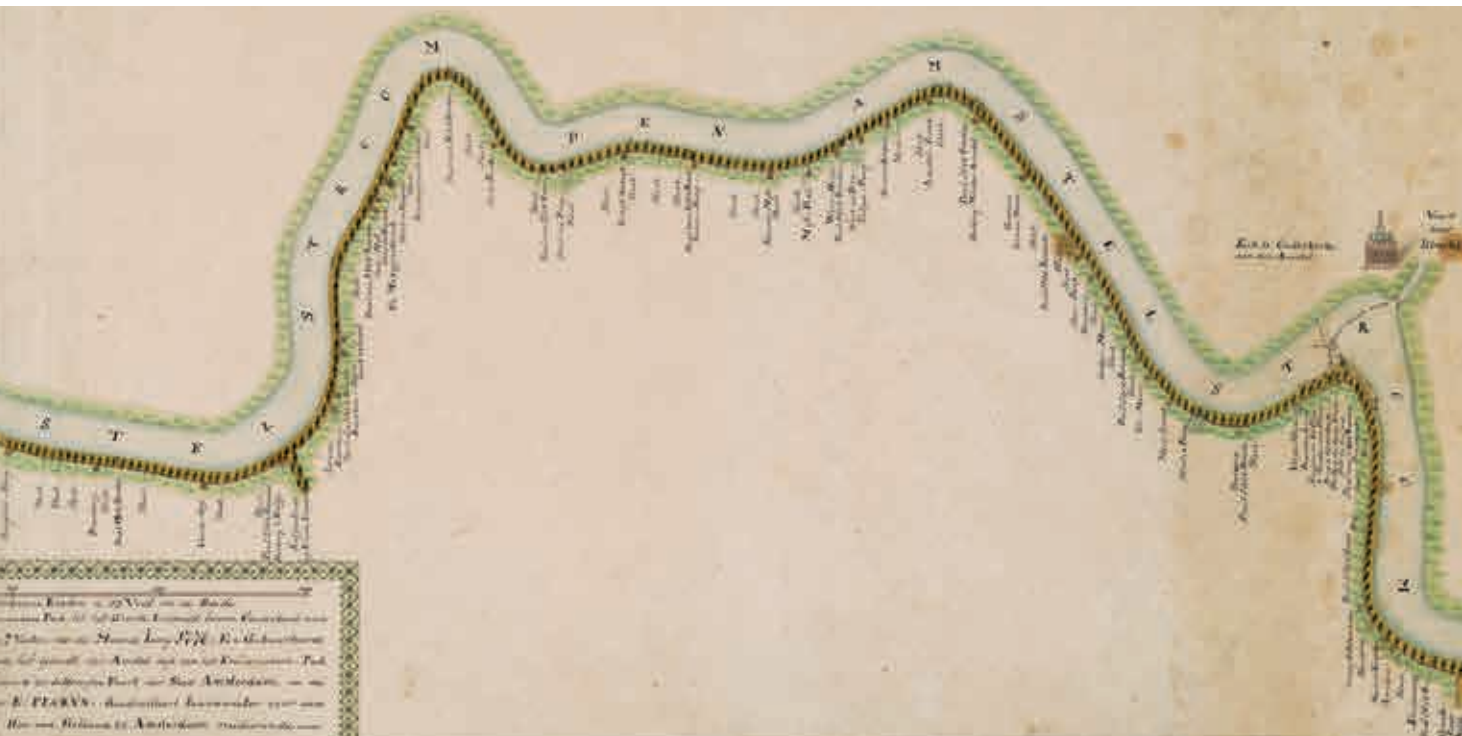
regional scale. One such is Remmet van Luttermvelt who wrote about the country houses lining the river Vecht and about the Stichtse Lustwarande.³²

Interest in the regional approach appears to have increased during the 1970s.³³ An important pioneer was Henri van der Wyck whose 1970s maps accentuated the linear and planar elements of the various country house estates in the area. In 1977 he published maps of the Stichtse Lustwarande and Kennemerland, followed two years later by a similar map of the eastern Veluwezoom.³⁴ The maps reveal that the country house estates in these regions formed an almost continuous area and that various individual country houses were linked by avenues. As such, Van der Wyck went further than earlier authors by thinking not in terms of areas with a large number of country house estates, but in terms of a coherent whole. This thematic issue of the Bulletin is much indebted to Van der Wyck.

In the following sections several Dutch estate landscapes from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are described.

ESTATE LANDSCAPES FROM THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Although there were certainly predecessors, the heyday of the country house estates we see today in the Netherlands began in the seventeenth century.³⁵ A number of these estates have their origins in medieval castles or knights' manors, sometimes because the



aristocratic owners moved with their times, sometimes also because urban grandees were looking not just for a place in the country but also for noble status and allure.³⁶ Nevertheless, the seventeenth-century country houses were also a new phenomenon. They were, as the name suggests, houses built by the urban elite out of a need to spend part of their time in the countryside. These country houses were scattered across the country, but a few areas were particularly popular (fig. 4).

Most country houses were situated along navigable waterways, within a thirty kilometre radius of a town or city.³⁷ That made it possible to move from town house to country house within the space of a day. The banks of these waterways were usually lined by many country houses, which no doubt simplified the task of cultivating the necessary social contacts. Important waterways included rivers like the Amstel and the Vecht. For Amsterdam the IJ, an inlet that continued as far inland as Velzen and Beverwijk, was also important. The combined effects of the impoldering of the IJ (the IJ polders, c. 1872), urbanization and new infrastructure rendered the original orientation of the country houses around Velzen completely unrecognizable.³⁸

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the natural waterways were supplemented by a network of barge canals. One ran from Amsterdam along the Watergraafsmeer to Diemerbrug where it branched into canals to Muiden and via the river Gaasp to Weesp.

Another route to the Vecht ran via the Amstel to Ouderkerk and from there via the Holendrecht river to Abcoude, and then over the Angstel and via the Nieuwe Wetering to Nieuwersluis on the Vecht.³⁹ The distribution of country houses indicates that this last connection was the most important. The river Vecht itself was incorporated into the network of barge canals with the construction of a towpath in the years 1626-1628 (figs. 5 and 6).⁴⁰

It should be noted that the literature places undue emphasis on water transport. For short distances in particular, coaches were also used. A map of the country houses around Leiden, for example, clearly shows that they stood along roads as well as along the Oude Rijn (where Leiderdorp was described by a foreign traveller in 1660 as having 'more palaces than farmhouses') and the barge canals.⁴¹ Some of the country houses around The Hague were built along the river Vliet, but here, too, many were built along rural roads, especially after the main roads leading out of the city had been paved in the course of the seventeenth century.⁴² In Zeeland the journey from town to country house appears to have been primarily over land. The preference, of course, was for roads that were passable for most of year thanks to their siting on dikes and alluvial ridges.⁴³

The large seventeenth-century reclamation projects were financed by the same merchants and patricians who also built country houses. The investors were allotted farmland in the new polders and so were



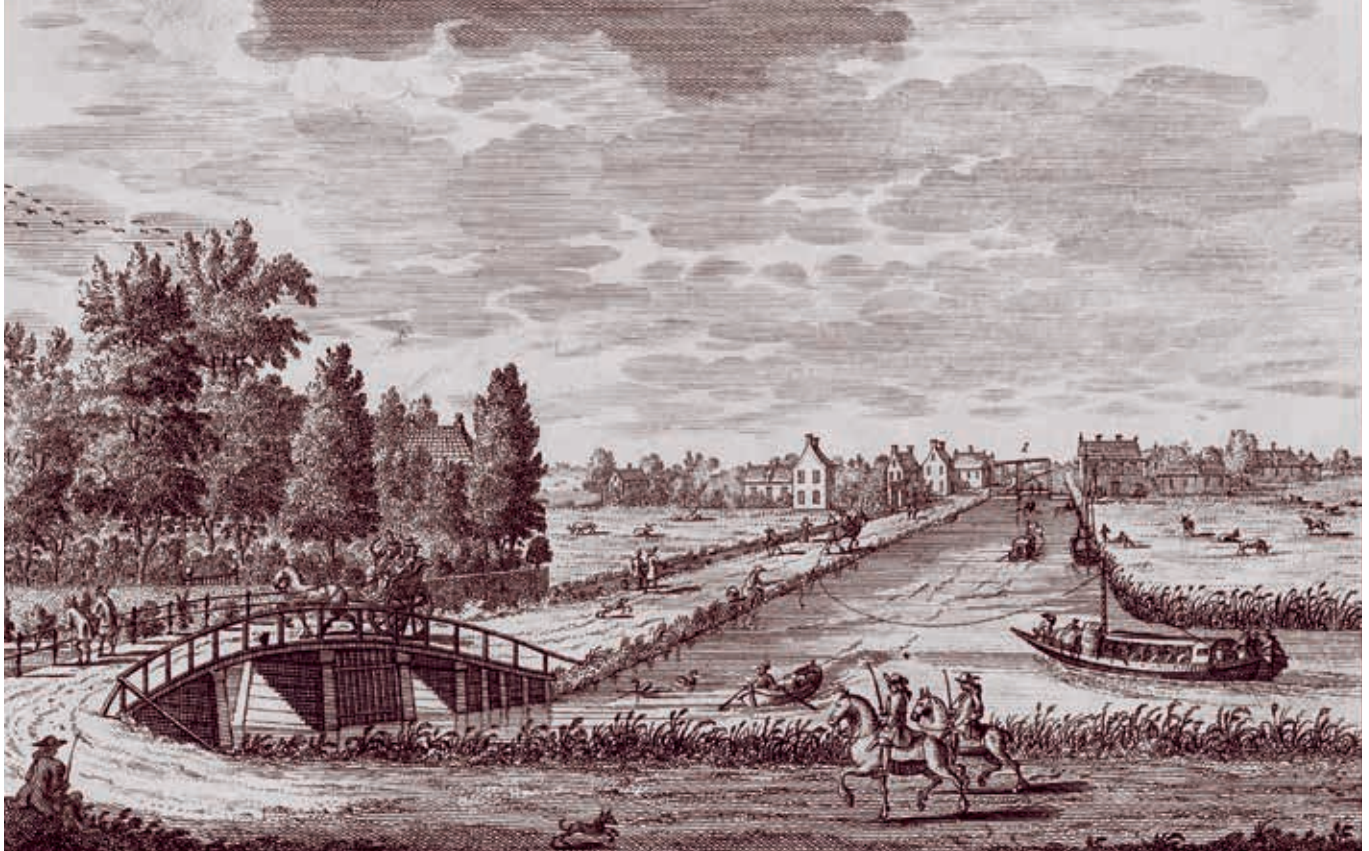
in a position to augment the farmhouse with a *herenkamer* and later a manor house.

Finally there were the edges of the higher sandy grounds, such as the dunes and the glacial ridge of the Gooi and the Veluwe. Although these higher areas themselves were deemed less attractive than the rich peat and clay landscapes, they did offer opportunities for hunting, a pleasurable form of networking comparable to the game of golf today. On the edge of both the Gooi ('s-Graveland) and the dunes (Elswout, Groenendaal) sand was mined.⁴⁴ This yielded income, a flat piece of land and a water connection (a canal was needed to transport the sand) and thus a good basis for a country house estate.

The growing number of country house estates also demonstrates the size and wealth of the urban elites. In the province of Holland, Amsterdam was far and away the wealthiest city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and that was reflected in the enormous number of country houses within easy reach of this city.⁴⁵ There was a second large concentration around the administrative centre of The Hague. Substantial numbers of country house were also to be found around cities like Haarlem,⁴⁶ Leiden,⁴⁷ Delft, Rotterdam,⁴⁸ and Dordrecht.⁴⁹ The various estate landscapes overlapped. Amsterdam's influence reached as far as Utrecht and the country houses around Haarlem were within Amsterdam's sphere of influence. Interestingly, many of the country houses in Heemstede, close to Haarlem, were originally built by locals, but in the 1630s were bought by Amsterdammers and later combined to create larger country house estates.⁵⁰ In Zuid-Holland the influence of The Hague and Delft merged in Westland.⁵¹

Along the river Vecht, too, the affluent Amsterdam elite edged out that of Utrecht, even as far as the gates of Utrecht.⁵² Utrecht's upper classes subsequently turned their attention to the eastern side of the city, around De Bilt for example, where a number of former monastery landholdings had become available. The Sint-Laurens abbey in Oostbroek, founded in 1121, had owned a substantial number of largely contiguous parcels of land, which were worked by a network of monastery farms (*uithoven*). When the the monastery of Our Lady (better known as the Vrouwenklooster) was split off from the abbey, several of the outlying farms went with it. After the Reformation the monasteries had been closed down and their possessions turned over to the States of Utrecht. Between 1640 and 1680 they sold most of the buildings and lands to

4. Map of a section of Noord-Kennemerland by H. De Leth, 1728. The country houses around Velsen lay in an arc along the western end of the IJ (Wijkermeer) and were all linked to that lake by a short canal (Noord-Hollands Archief)



5. View from the Watergraafsmeer Ringdijk looking east to the Diemerbrug by D. Stopendaal, 1725 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)



6. The construction of barge canals in low-lying parts of the Netherlands began around 1630. By 1665 they formed an interconnected network (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)



7. Country houses on the northern side of Utrecht that had their origins in former monasteries and accompanying farms, marked on the manuscript-topographic map of c. 1840. The coloured area in the middle is today's Utrecht Science Park (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)



the regional elite who over time transformed the huge farms and parcels of land into country house estates. Sint-Laurens gave rise to the landed estate of Oostbroek, the Vrouwenklooster to 't Klooster, also known as Koelenberg. The outlying farms formed the nucleus of estates like Houdringe, Beerschoten and Vollenhoven in De Bilt and Nienoord near Bunnik (fig. 7).⁵³

Comparable developments occurred around Arnhem, where the local elite managed to acquire the lands of the Mariëborn monastery and to establish a series of country houses on it.⁵⁴ In Zeeland the church-owned estates were disposed of with even greater dispatch, between 1576 and 1578, and there too we find several country estates on former ecclesiastical lands.⁵⁵

There are a few known cases in which a group of contiguous country house estates were developed in

parallel. One of the finest, albeit unfinished, examples of such a planned country house estate landscape is along the road from Utrecht to Amersfoort, the 'wegh der weegen' or 'road of roads'. Its designer was the architect of Amsterdam's town hall, Jacob van Campen, who had evidently been influenced by Italian treatises. Everard Meyster even compared the road to the Via Appia near Rome. Construction, probably at the initiative of the City of Amersfoort, began in 1647 but did not really get going until 1652, by which time the original plan for the road had been supplemented with plots for country houses. The road and the country house plots, seventeen on either side, were marked out on the ground. The road was to be as much as sixty metres wide and its verges were to be planted by the owners of the adjoining land (fig. 8). The project was not a great success; in the end just a few houses were built.⁵⁶



8. The Amersfoortsewég in the second edition of the Nieuwe kaart van den Lande van Utrecht, by B. du Roy, 1743 (Utrecht University Library)

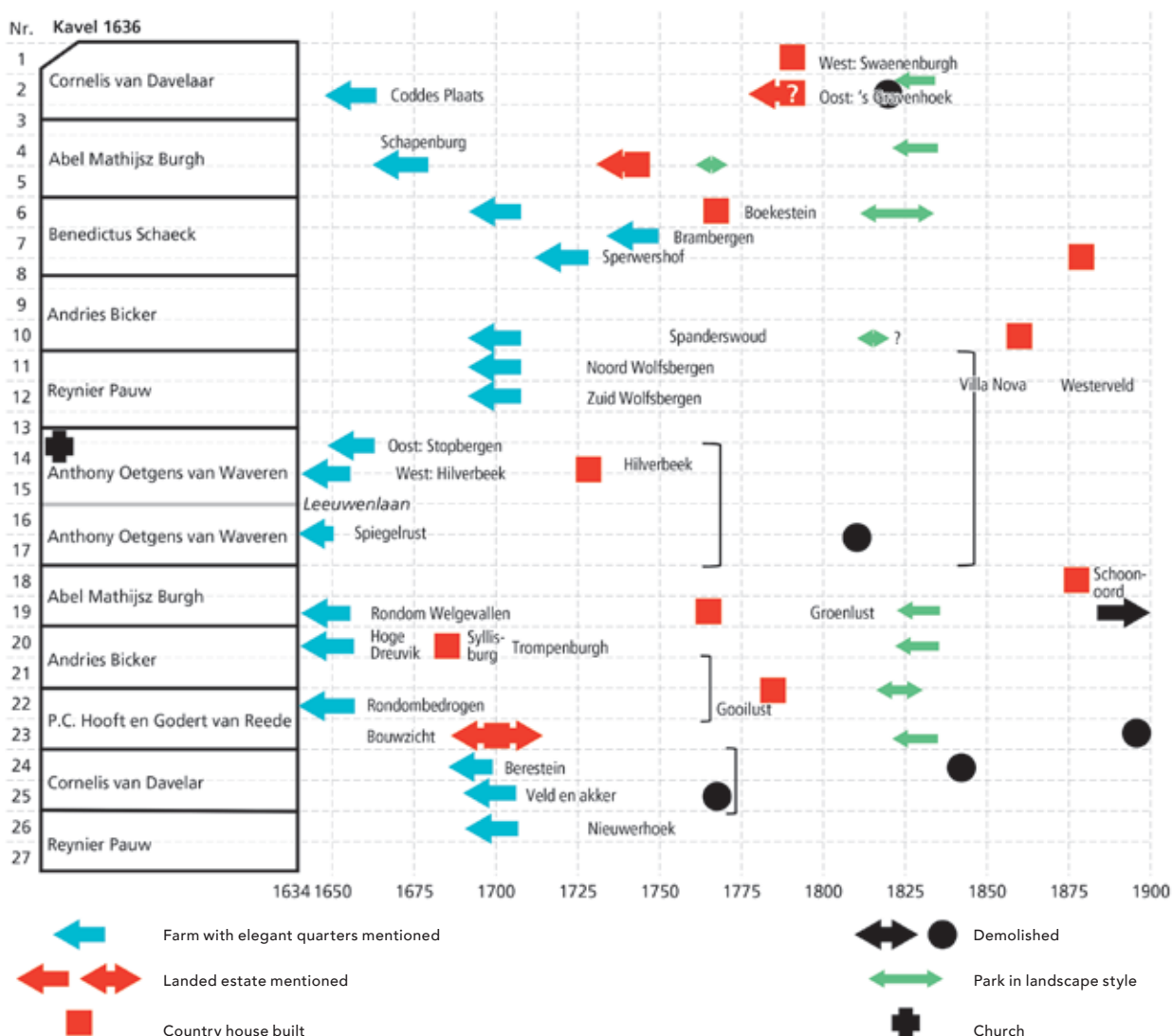
Another interesting example of planned development is 's-Graveland, on the western side of the Gooi. In 1625 the States General granted a number of Amsterdam patricians a patent to mine sand here. In 1634 the area was divided into 27 plots, which were raffled among the participants. The sand mining took off a few years later, after the construction of a canal, the 's-Gravelandsevaart (1638), which enabled the sand to be transported to Amsterdam. The canal had two branches: a southern one through Horstermeer, used primarily for transporting sand, and a northern branch connecting with the Vecht at Uitermeer. A canal boat service to Amsterdam opened on the latter as early as 1644.⁵⁷ Most of the sand would have been removed in the early years, but the area was never fully exploited.⁵⁸

The removal of sand left behind a flat landscape suitable for farming but also for the layout of geometrical gardens. Most plots reappear later as country house estates. As with the impoldering, we may well

wonder whether this was not the intention all along. If we draw up a timeline of the development of this area it becomes clear that the first 'manors', often farms with a *herenkamer*, appeared soon after the cessation of sand mining (fig. 9).⁵⁹ It would appear that the sand miners had plans early on, if not from the outset, to prepare the area for farming, with farms-plus-*herenkamers*, once the sand mining had finished (fig. 10). The construction of genuine manor houses started much later and over an extended period of time.

The best known estate landscape in the Netherlands is that bordering the river Vecht (fig. 11). Interestingly, although it was an Amsterdam affair, construction of this string of country houses started on the northern side of the city of Utrecht. The hides and leather merchant Jan Jacobsz. Bal (1541-1624) had purchased the Gouden Hoeff farm in Maarssen as early as 1608. Later, in an allusion to his trade, Bal styled himself Huydecoper ('hide buyer'). In the four following decades he and his son Joan (1625-1704) bought up

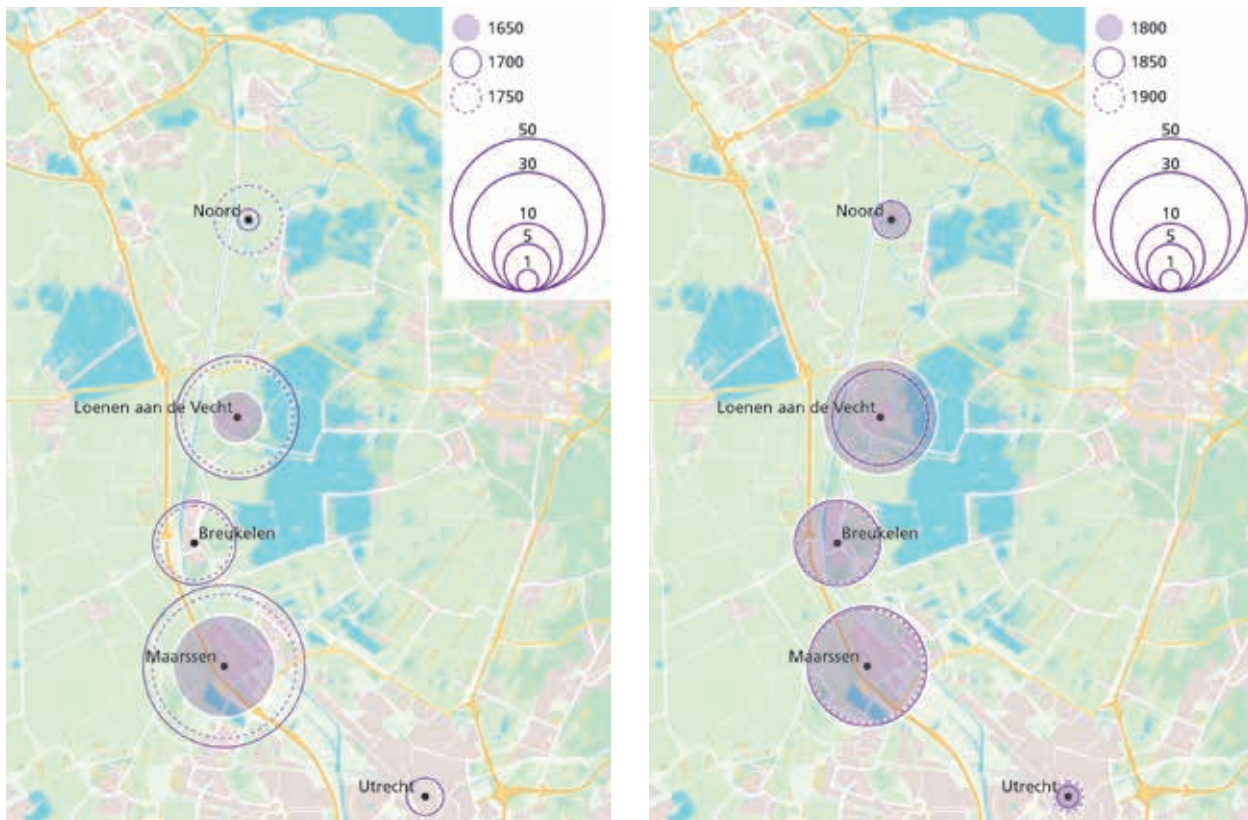
9. The development of 's-Graveland country houses in timelines (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)





10. Brambergen in 's-Graveland is still a fine example of a farm with *herenkamer*, 1963 (photo G.J. Dukker, Cultural Heritage Agency)

11. Development of country house estates along the Vecht (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)





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CROONENESTADT POOLDER

Hollandische Wateringen Honderde Molen

Wegingse Weiningse

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Poolde

Poolde

Poolde

Poolde

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en AMYERBAEM.
AMEN der LUSTHOVEN
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M. A. I. O. R. I. A. M. A. I. O. R. E. N. A.
T. I. I. P. C. O.

1700



◀ 12. Map of Loenen showing an unbroken line of country house estates, copper engraving by C.C. van Bloemswaardt, 1727 (Utrecht University Library)

more land in this area. In 1629, the son, who later called himself Joan Huydecoper van Maarsveen, expanded the Gouden Hoeff into the Goudestein country house estate. A lot of the land bought by the Huydecopers was subsequently subdivided and sold in lots for the construction of country houses. The succession of country houses built on this land enhanced the prestige of the existing estates.⁶⁰

Starting from the oldest nucleus at Maarsse, the ribbon of country house estates along the Vecht was extended and densified. The highest density, consisting of an unbroken series of country house estates, occurred in Maarsse, Breukelen and Loenen. Further north the construction of country houses started later, was less compact, and the houses tended to be demolished sooner, an indication that concentration served to reinforce and perpetuate itself (fig. 12).

With respect to drained lakes like the Beemster, the Watergraafsmeer and the Purmer, it is often assumed that the construction of country houses commenced soon after reclamation or was even part of the reclamation planning.⁶¹ But that was certainly not true in every case. In the Beemster construction began fairly quickly and by 1640, a generation after reclamation (1618-1621), there were already 52 ‘manors’, of which twenty were year-round residences and the rest were occupied only in the summer months. That number remained stable until the middle of the eighteenth century. In the course of the subsequent eighty years all the country houses disappeared.⁶²

In other polders, construction was slower to take

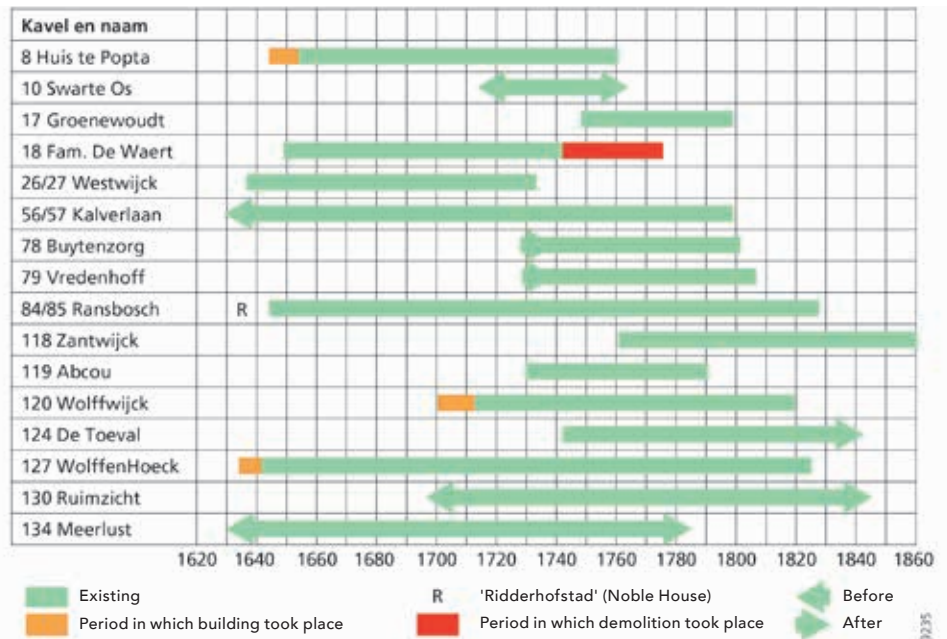
off. In the Watergraafsmeer, drained in 1629, manors and country houses were built during the seventeenth century, but the big breakthrough did not occur until after 1700. Glaudemans notes that ‘at a certain moment’ there were 50 manors, 31 country houses and 52 (mostly public) pleasure gardens, of which only 14 dated from before 1700 and only three of those from before 1651.⁶³

It recently became possible to chart a gradual development in the Purmer as well (fig. 13).⁶⁴ In the years immediately after the draining of the Purmer lake in 1622, two country houses and a *ridderhofstad* were built, although there were probably already a few farmhouses with *herenkamers*. By 1700 there were eight country houses, after which the number gradually grew until the peak of 14 was reached in the middle of the eighteenth century. There followed a gradual decline until by the middle of the nineteenth century just one remained.

In Zeeland the best-known country house estates were on Walcheren. An unbroken series of estates developed along the inner edge of the dunes. They continued in an arc via Middelburg to Vlissingen.⁶⁵ On the island of Schouwen-Duiveland country houses were built by the urban elite of Zierikzee, with a notable concentration around Noordgouwe, a village which at its high point boasted over thirty country houses and was accordingly once dubbed the Noord-Gouws Arcadia (fig. 14). Here, too, the concentration grew stronger over time: the seven remaining country estates lie in close proximity to one another.⁶⁶

In the various representative areas discussed above, we repeatedly see a growth in the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. After a high point in the middle of the eighteenth century

13. The country house estates in the Purmer polder in time-lines (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)





14. The country house estates around Noordgouwe (Ton Markus, Faculty of Geosciences Utrecht)

there follows a long period of decline and demolition. Particularly large numbers of country houses were demolished at the beginning of the nineteenth century after which agriculture reclaimed the polders and the riverbanks.⁶⁷

ESTATE LANDSCAPES OF THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

By the time country house construction picked up again in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, landscape preferences had changed. The undulating sandy areas, long viewed rather negatively, were now regarded as attractive. They were also easier to lay out in the landscape style, which was the predominant type of garden design in the nineteenth century. A family like the Huydecopers, previously encountered in the Vecht region, had invested in country houses near Zeist at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁶⁸ In this period, the new owners of country houses still came from the big cities. In the southern part of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug they were bankers, industrialists and ex-colonials.⁶⁹

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the accessibility of this area and the southern part of the Veluwezoom was improved by railway lines, later supplemented with a dense network of tramways and with highways. The construction of the railway line from Amsterdam to Arnhem via Utrecht and Drieber-

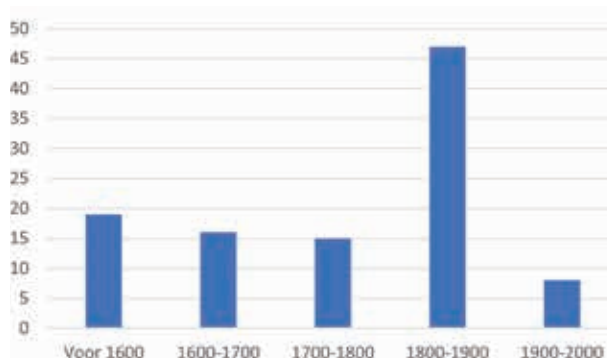
gen-Zeist created the possibility of daily travel to and from Amsterdam. In a short space of time an unbroken series of country houses and landed estates sprang up on southern edge of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, before long dubbed the Stichtse Lustwarande. A similar series was located on the southern Veluwezoom (fig. 15). This area was already home to medieval castles, partly connected with hunting in the Veluwe, partly with the local nobility. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some of the castles had been converted into country houses and new country houses had been built. In the nineteenth century a dense and in some places an unbroken succession of country houses and landed estates emerged here.

The sandy landscapes also offered new possibilities. For a long time the extensive heathlands had been essential for farming on sandy soils, as pasture for the cattle and sheep that provided the manure and sods with which the fertility of the farmlands was gradually improved. With the arrival of alternative fertilizers, like Chilean nitrate, the agricultural sector's demand for heathlands began to decline in the nineteenth century. Municipalities started to sell off pieces of heath and farmers' organizations (*marken*) worked towards the distribution of the heathlands. However, the farmers had neither the fertilizer nor the money to develop or afforest their new land. In these circumstances wealthy city dwellers were able to buy large tracts of land for a modest price and in so doing acquire large landholder status.

THE DECLINE OF ESTATE LANDSCAPES

Most of the literature on country houses pertains to the periods of creation, growth and heyday. The gradual disappearance of estate landscapes has received much less attention. This is certainly true of the question why some of these landscapes survived better than others. Yet this phase, too, has its own distinct geography. Of the estate landscapes that developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, quite a few remain in parts of the Vecht region and 's-Graveland,

15. Landed estates and country house estates of the Zuidelijke Veluwezoom, based on Storms-Smeets 2011



for example, whereas those in the polders and in Zeeland have all but vanished.

The reasons for these differences are still unclear. Explanations have been advanced for each individual country house and for each estate landscape, such as the disappearance of the Stadholder's court in 1795 in relation to the area around The Hague.⁷⁰ Many country estates located on the edge of cities were swallowed up by urban expansion schemes once Dutch cities started to grow again around 1860. The results were not always negative; many country estates were integrated into urban development plans as municipal parks. One example concerns the surviving country estates along the river Amstel. They no longer form a continuous estate landscape, but the biggest gaps had already opened up before the middle of the nineteenth century.

Another reason that is sometimes advanced is the changing fashion in garden design: the switch from geometric to landscape style triggered a corresponding shift in preference from the flat and prosperous farming areas to the wilder landscapes of the glacial ridges.⁷¹ That was certainly an important factor for the new country houses and landed estates, but it does not adequately explain the various developments in the old estate landscapes. We need to remember that the landscape style was introduced to the Netherlands as early as 1770 and for the first fifty years was adopted chiefly in existing, often geometrically designed country house estates. Ponds were dug and the resulting spoil was used to create hills. In 's-Graveland there is a certain irony in this: the estate landscape once formed by levelling the outskirts of the Gooi to produce a flat landscape, was now being dug up again in order to create an undulating landscape. As a result, the country house estates were once again logically aligned with the Gooi, which became a popular place to live in the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, the general tendency to demolish indicates that we should not focus too much on the motives of individual groups of owners but look instead for more structural changes. The worsening economic situation in the Dutch Republic in the final decades of the eighteenth century was certainly one of the main causes. By the same token, the second half of the eighteenth century was a period of prosperity in agriculture, which increased the competition for land.

It would be interesting to chart the chronology of demolition more precisely. There is an impression that the demolition of country houses in Zeeland was already well advanced in the second half of the eighteenth century, whereas around cities like Amsterdam and The Hague, which hung onto their prosperity a little longer, there was still a lot of demolition in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The high point

of the demolition of country house estates in the Beemster and along the Vecht was in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The same held for the Purmer, but there the demolition had already started in the eighteenth century.⁷² In Kennermerland the small-scale country house culture disappeared to make way in part for much bigger estates. It is possible that the competition from farming on the fertile clay soils of the polders and Zeeland was somewhat stronger than in the peat regions.

More of the nineteenth-century estates appear to have survived. The financial crisis of the 1930s may have put an end to the construction of new country houses, but the existing ones, and especially the accompanying landscape style parks, were highly valued by lovers of both culture and nature. *Natuurmonumenten* (the Dutch Society for the Preservation of Nature Monuments), *Staatsbosbeheer* (the National Forest Service), and provincial landscape organizations, in particular those of Gelderland and Utrecht, acted as a safety net when private owners could no longer cope on their own. The leafy park-like surroundings also made it attractive to 'subdivide' former country house estates for the construction of villas. This put the *Stichtse Lustwarande* and the southern *Veluwezoom* within the reach of the upper middle class, without unduly disrupting the green character of the area. Later on the country house estates became popular with companies wanting to convey an aura of prestige. The repercussions were not always benign: if the company failed, the estate was poorly maintained, if it prospered, more and more of the park was gobbled up by new buildings and car parks. The same occurred with country house estates that were turned into healthcare facilities.⁷³

CONCLUSION

In the past the Netherlands possessed several areas with a high density of country house estates. By drawing up detailed timelines for several of these estate landscapes, it has been possible to demonstrate that many concentrations of country house estates evolved gradually rather than according to any plan. In many cases this was a cumulative process: new country houses were attracted by the presence of older ones. There are, however, examples of groups of country house estates that exhibited coherence from the outset, the best example being the construction of the *Amersfoortseweg* with adjoining plots already earmarked for country house development. Important estate landscapes originated in the seventeenth century and reached their high point in the middle of the eighteenth century. The most extensive estate landscape formed a wide circle around Amsterdam, others around the other big cities and on *Walcheren*. Most

were readily accessible by water, but overland transport was more important than often assumed. After the middle of the eighteenth century there followed a long period of decline, with large-scale demolition concentrated around 1800. Subsequently, new estate landscapes evolved but, in this instance, mainly on the periphery of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and the southern Veluwe and accessed by railway lines and highways.

It is mainly the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century estate landscapes that are of international importance. Some are still clearly discernible. The finest examples are that along the Vecht and that of 's-Graveland.

Estate landscapes call for a regional approach, which has gradually been taking shape in recent years. The interest in – and protection of – country house estates has undergone an evolution that has seen more

and more attention being paid to the major clusters. Whereas attention was initially directed at the houses, since the 1970s onwards there has been a growing interest in the accompanying gardens and parks. Even then Van der Wijck was already writing about the need to look further – at the country house estates in their surroundings and at groups of country house estates. It took until the twenty-first century for this to filter through into policies for country house biotopes and country house zones respectively. The term 'estates landscapes', which has been steadily gaining currency in recent years, makes it clear that research and protection need to go a step further by focusing on cohesive groups of country house estates, which should be viewed as a single landscape ensemble.⁷⁴ It is these cohesive estate landscapes rather than individual country house estates that are the repositories of landscape quality.

NOTES

- 1 The quotation in the title comes from J. Huizinga, *Nederland's beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw. Een schets*, Haarlem 1941, 174.
- 2 www.kastelen.nl/kastelen-nieuws-nks.php under 15-11-2019 (accessed 22 July 2021).
- 3 Y. Kuiper, 'Onderzoek naar de buitenplaats in de Gouden Eeuw. Een vogelvluchtperspectief', in: Y.B. Kuiper and B. Olde Meierink (eds.), *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw. De rijkdom van het buitenleven in de Republiek*, Hilversum 2015, 12-41, 17; F. Vogelzang, 'Buitenplaatsen als exportproduct? Een relatie tussen Italië, de Zuidelijke Nederlanden en de Republiek', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 16 (2014) 47, 3-8; F. Vogelzang, 'Het nuttige en het aangename. Buitenplaatsen als investering?', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 17 (2015), 48, 3-8. Nevertheless, the role of investment in agricultural land needs to be fully investigated: most country house estates in the Northern Provinces were built in the period 1650-1750, when such investments were actually less lucrative because of the low prices for agricultural products.
- 4 Vogelzang 2014 (note 3).
- 5 M. van den Broeke (ed.), *Buitenplaatsen in het Westland. Met smaak en tot voordeel aangelegd*, Heemstede 2018, 14-15.
- 6 M. van den Broeke with S. den Haan, *Buitenplaatsen in Noordgouwe. Hofsteden, lusthoven en landhuizen*, Delft 2014, 12.
- 7 J.D.H. Harten, 'Stedelijke invloeden op het Hollandse landschap in de 16de, 17de en 18de eeuw', *Holland* 10 (1978), 114-134, 118-119.
- 8 M. van den Broeke, *'Het pryeeel van Zeeland'. Buitenplaatsen op Walcheren 1600-1820*, Hilversum 2016, 27-28. Christian Bertram uses the term 'hofstede' for a house with garden outside the town centre. He regards the term 'country house' as more specific: a 'hofstede' that is used by a city dweller as a summer residence that is designed for recreation. C. Bertram, 'Groenendaal als cultuurhistorische schatkamer. Buitenplaatsen tussen Heemstede en De Glip, 1600-1913', in: *Groenendaal, van buitenplaats tot wandelbos*, Heemstede 2013, 69-119, 70.
- 9 Raw materials extraction, for example, included sand mining, which features elsewhere in this article. Along the Oude Rijn there was also a connection between country houses and clay extraction: G. van Oosterom, 'Deftig wonen aan de Oude Rijn. De rol van kleiwinning op de ontwikkeling van een vergeten buitenplaatslandschap', *Het Nederlands Landschap. Tijdschrift voor Landschapsgeschiedenis* 34 (2016) 1, 12-21.
- 10 J. Finch and K. Giles, *Estate landscapes. Design, improvement and power in the post-medieval landscape*, Woodbridge 2007; J. Finch, K. Dyrmann and M. Frausing (eds.), *Estate landscapes in northern Europe*, Aarhus 2019, 13-14.
- 11 G.A. Verschuure-Stuip, 'De buitenplaats-biotop of landgoedbiotop. Nieuwe allianties in de bescherming van buitenplaatsen en landgoederen (Zuid-Holland en Utrecht)', *Vitruvius* no. 33 (2015), 18-23. In both provinces the biotope is an instrument for protecting coherent estate landscapes.
- 12 H. Ronnes, *Bij nader inzien, de Nederlandse buitenplaatsen. Tussen herinnering, vergetelheid en ongemak*, Groningen 2019, 4-5.
- 13 Van der Wyck used the singular form, although the plural has recently been gaining traction in Dutch scholarship. See for example: B. Olde Meierink, 'Buitenplaatslandschappen', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 19 (2017) 58, 22-29; S. Nijhuis, 'GIS-toepassingen in onderzoek naar buitenplaatsenlandschappen', *Bulletin KNOB* 115 (2016) 3, 147-164; G. Verschuure-Stuip with H. Renes, 'Hollandse buitenplaatsenlandschappen. Buitenplaatsen en hun relatie met het landschap (1609-1672)', in: Kuiper and Olde Meierink 2015 (note 3), 42-65.
- 14 Verschuure-Stuip and Renes 2015 (note 13), 50. A country houses landscape differs from a landed estates landscape because the latter, in which house and garden are surrounded by the estate's farms, fields and woods, is by its very nature distributed across the landscape. Whereas in a country houses landscape the sense of coherence is chiefly evoked by the unbroken succession of houses and gardens, in a landed estates landscape that role is fulfilled by the parks, woods and estate farms.
- 15 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13).
- 16 D. Blom, 'Buiten in een stadslandschap. "Welk een moed om op zoo groote schaal bosch en park aan te leggen"', in: *Buitenplaatsen. Jaarboek Monumentenzorg 1998*, Zwolle/Zeist 1998, 84-95.
- 17 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13); F. Vogelzang, 'De zoektocht naar de Stichtse Lustwarande', *Oud-Utrecht* 94 (2021) 4, 9-13. The wandering clergyman Jacobus Craandijk applied the term *lustwarande* to the area around Wassenaar, to Walcheren and to the southern Utrechtse Heuvelrug; J. Craandijk, *Wandelingen door Nederland met pen en potlood*, vols. 5, Haarlem 1880, and 6, Haarlem 1882.
- 18 E. Storms-Smeets (ed.), *Gelders Arcadië. Atlas van een buitenplaatsenlandschap, Utrecht 2011*; A. Loosjes Pz., *Hollands Arkadia, of Wandelingen in de Omstreeken van Haarlem*, Haarlem 1805; R.J. Ligthelm, *De Kralingse buitenplaatsen van de 16e tot de 21e eeuw. Een vergeten Arcadië*, Woudrichem 2020; C. Bertram, *Noord-Hollands Arcadia. Ruim 400 Noord-Hollandse buitenplaatsen in tekeningen, prenten en kaarten uit de*

- Provinciale Atlas Noord-Holland*, Alphen aan den Rijn 2005; M. Glaudemans, *Amsterdams Arcadia. De ontdekking van het achterland*, Nijmegen 2000.
- 19 H. Renes, 'Wildparken. Landschappen van jacht en wildbeheer in internationaal perspectief', in: Y. Kuiper et al. (eds.), *De jacht. Een cultuurgeschiedenis van jager, dier en landschap*, Hilversum 2021, 216-246.
- 20 Jan de Marre used the term *lustwaranden* in 1740 for the environment of Batavia; A. Zuiderweg, "'Lustwaranden van aanminnelijken zwier". Bataviase thuynen', *Cascade* 19 (2010) 1, 23-34. A few years later the *Tegenwoordige Staat* described the surroundings of Honse-laarsdijk as follows: 'The *Lustwaranden* around this Hof are very fair. As well as a large game preserve, aviary and orange-ry, there are fine avenues and woods [Dreeven en Lustbosschen]...'; *Tegenwoordige Staat der Verenigde Nederlanden* 6 (1746), 595. In the latter description the hunting landscapes are still mentioned first, but in Batavia the description applies mainly to the gardens around the city.
- 21 whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/899.pdf.
- 22 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13).
- 23 R. Mulder, *Op afbraak. De sloop van buitenplaatsen in de periode 1780-1830*, Utrecht 2006 (PhD thesis Language and Cultural Studies), 9.
- 24 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 74.
- 25 Van den Broeke 2016 (note 8), 34, 400.
- 26 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 184. Today there are still 552 officially recognized country house estates remaining: R.W.C. Dessing, *De Amsterdamse buitenplaatsen. Een vergeten stadsgeschiedenis*, Utrecht 2015, 7.
- 27 A study of the oldest land register of Amby, a village near Maastricht with a series of country houses, revealed that a striking number of gardeners lived in the village: H. Renes, 'De terrassen aan de oostzijde van Maastricht. Mens en landschap in Amby, Heer en Heugem', in: G.D. Majoor et al. (eds.), *Natuurlijk Maastricht. Compacte stad in een weids landschap*, Maastricht 2020, 98-115.
- 28 See for example R. van der Laarse, 'Amsterdam en Oranje. De politieke cultuur van kasteel en buitenplaats in Hollands Gouden Eeuw', in: Kuiper and Olde Meierink 2015 (note 3), 68-95. For clusters of country houses dominated by a single architect, see E. van der Laan-Meijer, *Het handschrift van L.P. Roodbaard. Ontwerpprincipes van Noord-Nederlandse landschapsparken tot 1850*, in preparation.
- 29 Bertram 2005 (note 18), 7.
- 30 H. de Leth (drawings) and M. Brouërius van Nidek (text), *Het zegenpralant Kennemerlant, vertoont in veele heerelyke gezichten van deszelfs voornaemste lustplaezen, adelyke huizen, dorp- en stede-gebouwen*, Amsterdam 1629.
- 31 Bertram 2005 (note 18), 7.
- 32 R. van Luttervelt, *De buitenplaatsen aan de Vecht*, Lochem 1948; R. van Luttervelt, *De Stichtse Lustwarande*, Amsterdam 1949.
- 33 H. Tromp and J. Six, *De buitenplaatsen van 's-Graveland*, Zeist 1975.
- 34 H.W.M. van der Wyck, 'Voorstellen tot inventarisatie en classificatie ter bescherming van buitenplaatsen en historische landschappen', *Groen* 33 (1977) 2, 41-50; H.W.M. van der Wyck, 'Het historische landschap van de oostelijke Veluwezoom en Rosendaal', in G.G.[L.] Steur et al. (eds.), *Acht zwerfstenen uit het Gelders landschap*, Arnhem 1979, 71-116, esp. 72 (map) and 76 (the term 'buitenplaatsenlandschap'). The map was part of a never completed atlas.
- 35 Predecessors include the concentrations of mini-estates around the bishop of Utrecht's centre of power: J. van Doesburg et al., 'Kastelen in middeleeuwse veenontginningen', *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 2 (2017) 4, 212-230. See also Vogelzang 2014 (note 3) and R. Meischke, 'Buitenverblijven van Amsterdammers voor 1625', *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 70 (1978), 82-106.
- 36 R.E. de Bruin, 'Leven als een edelman. Kasteelbezit van Utrechtse burgers en patriciërs, 1600-1850', *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht*, 2009, 67-108.
- 37 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 58.
- 38 J. van Geest and R. Sierksma (eds.), *Verloren Uitzicht. Bloei en teloorgang van het Wijkermeer*, Amsterdam 2002.
- 39 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 91.
- 40 J. Schuyf, 'De Huydecopers als projectontwikkelaars in Maarssen', in: J.E. Abrahamse et al. (eds.), *Het landschap beschreven*, Hilversum 2021, 169-176, 171.
- 41 H. Rijken, *De Leidse Lustwarande; de geschiedenis van de tuinkunst op kastelen en buitenplaatsen rond Leiden, 1600-1800*, Leiden 2005; S. Schama, *Overvloed en onbehagen. De Nederlandse cultuur in de Gouden Eeuw*, Amsterdam 1988, 298.
- 42 Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 21.
- 43 Van den Broeke and Den Haan 2014 (note 6), 10-11.
- 44 A.G. van der Steur, 'De afzanding van de Hollandse binnenduinen in de 17e eeuw', *Contactblad Regionale en Locale Geschiedenis* 1 (1968) 58-62; Bertram 2013 (note 8), 69-73.
- 45 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18); Ronnes 2019 (note 12), 20.
- 46 A. Neuteboom, *De Haarlemse buitenplaats in het stadsbeeld, toen en nu* (MA thesis VU, Amsterdam 2019)
- 47 Rijken 2005 (note 43).
- 48 R.J. Ligthelm, *De Kralingse buitenplaatsen van de 16e tot de 21e eeuw. Een vergeten Arcadië?*, Woudrichem 2020.
- 49 C.J. van Rossum, 'De voornaemste vermaaken der Dordtenaaren'. Een studie naar de opkomst en neergang van de buitenverblijven op het Eiland van Dordrecht (1600-1832), *Beneden-Leeuwen* 2017.
- 50 Bertram 2013 (note 8), 75-77, 79, 82.
- 51 Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 22.
- The map of Kruius (1712) shows some one hundred country houses in Westland, fifty of which are mentioned by name: Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 35.
- 52 De Bruin 2009 (note 37).
- 53 J.D.H. Harten, 'Landhuizen en buitenplaatsen', in: J.D.H. Harten et al. (eds.), *De tuin van Utrecht. Geschiedenis en waarden van het landschap in het land-inrichtingsgebied Groenraven-Oost*, Utrecht 1992, 43-68; H.M. van den Berg, 'De plaats waarop gij woont had gewijde bestemming. Buitenplaatsen op het terrein van middeleeuwse kloosters', in: W. Denslagen et al. (eds.), *Bouwkunst. Studies in vriendschap voor Kees Peeters*, Amsterdam 1993, 63-75; H.M.J. Tromp, *Buitenplaatsen bij De Bilt. Vollenhoven, Houdringe en Beerschoten*, Zeist 1980; H. Renes, 'De Uithof vóór De Uithof', *Oud-Utrecht* 84 (2011), 35-39. In addition to the named estates, Sandwijck in De Bilt was founded on land that had belonged to the Oostbroek abbey: H.M.J. Tromp, *Sandwijck bij De Bilt*, Zeist 1980.
- 54 E. Storms-Smeets, 'Gelders Arcadië. Landgoederen en buitenplaatsen', in: Storms-Smeets 2011 (note 18), 32-39, 33.
- 55 Van den Broeke 2016 (note 8), 60-67; H.M. van den Berg 1993 (note 57).
- 56 J.E. Abrahamse, "'Wegh der weegen." Ontwerp en aanleg van de Amersfoortseweg. Een zeventiende-eeuws landinrichtingsproject door Jacob van Campen', *Flehite, Historisch Jaarboek voor Amersfoort en Omstreken* 7 (2006), 73-97; J.E. Abrahamse and R. Blijdenstijn, *Wegh der weegen. De ontwikkeling van de Amersfoortseweg 1647-2010*, Utrecht/Amsterdam 2010; J.E. Abrahamse, 'A Roman road in the Dutch Republic. Jacob van Campen's "Via Appia" in the countryside of Utrecht', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 70 (2011) 4, 442-465.
- 57 Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13); J.D.H. Harten, 'De genese van het Gooise cultuurlandschap', *K.N.A.G. Geografisch Tijdschrift* 10 (1976), 93-116; J.D.H. Harten, 'De Nederlandse buitenplaatsen', *Historisch-Geografisch Tijdschrift* 16 (1998), 178-187; U.M. Mehrrens, *'s-Graveland en zijn buitenplaatsen*, Zeist 1985.
- 58 J.L. Kloosterhuis, 'Zandaafgraving in het Gooi', *Boor en Spade* 8 (1955), 126-131.
- 59 Regarding the problems surrounding the term 'hofstede', see note 8. In 's-Graveland we assume that the 'hofsteden' from the first phase of construction were farms with *herenkamers*.
- 60 Schuyf 2021 (note 42); J. Simonis, J. Kottman and H. van Bemmel (eds.), *Elsenburg, de verdwenen buitenplaats. Het ontstaan van het buitenleven aan de Vecht*, Hilversum 2020.
- 61 Van der Laarse 2015 (note 29), 80.
- 62 K. Bossaers, 'Buitenplaatsen in de Beemster', *De Nieuwe Schouwshuit. Tijdschrift van het Historisch Genootschap Beemster* 6 (November 2008), 17-20. A number of 'plaijsirhuijsen' (pleasure houses) were already listed in the 1633 land tax regis-

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- 63 Glaudemans 2000 (note 18), 81-90.
- 64 H. Renes, 'Water en buitenplaatsen', in: C. Gietman et al. (eds.), *Huis en habitus; over kastelen, buitenplaatsen en notabele levensvormen*, Hilversum 2017, 98-113. The information on the Purmer is based on the book *Buitenplaatsen in de Purmer. Investeren en buiten leven in een Noord-Hollandse polder*, by C. Boschma-Aarnoudse, Wormerveer 2015.
- 65 Van den Broeke 2016 (note 8), with a general map showing 139 country houses on the inside cover.
- 66 Van den Broeke and Den Haan 2014 (note 6); M. van den Broeke, 'Buitenplaatsen in Noordgouwe, 1820-1940. Notabele levensvormen van het Zierikzeese patriciaat', in: C. Gietman et al. (eds.), *Huis en habitus. Over kastelen, buitenplaatsen en notabele levensvormen*, Hilversum 2017, 269-283.
- 67 Mulder 2006 (note 23); R. Mulder, 'Herfsttij der buitenplaatsen', *Jaarboekje van het Oudheidkundig Genootschap 'Niftarlake'* (2006), 39-56.
- 68 R. Blijdenstein [Blijdenstijn], 'Negen-tiende- en vroeg twintigste-eeuws tuin-stijlen in zuid-oost Utrecht', in: K.M. Veenland-Heineman (eds.), *Tuin & park. Historische buitenplaatsen in de provincie Utrecht*, Utrecht 1992, 43-58.
- 69 Vogelzang 2021 (note 17), 11.
- 70 Van den Broeke 2018 (note 5), 41-44.
- 71 See for example Olde Meierink 2017 (note 13).
- 72 Mulder 2006 (note 23).
- 73 See, for example, Bertram 2005 (note 18), 8-9.
- 74 G. Verschuure-Stuip, *Welgelegen. Analyse van Hollandse buitenplaatsen in hun landschappen (1630-1730)*, Delft 2019, 41-60.

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ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN THE NETHERLANDS

'VAST SWATHES OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WERE COVERED WITH COUNTRY HOUSES'

HANS RENES

In the past, country house research was mainly concerned with individual houses and gardens. Yet, as early as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so many country houses were being built around the major cities that they came to define the landscape. Genuine estate landscapes took shape along several rivers (Amstel, Vecht), along the inner edge of coastal dunes, and on newly reclaimed land. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the rivers were augmented with a network of barge canals and soon they too were lined by a belt of country houses. The greatest density of country houses was to be found around Amsterdam, but other big cities in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland had their fair share as well. Access was mostly by water, but in some areas, especially in Zeeland, country roads performed this role. The majority of country houses were built on or next to a farm, which generally continued to exist and, in many cases, survived the country house.

In a few areas, the evolving density of country houses has been traced in a detailed chronological record. In most cases it reveals progressive growth towards a high point in the first half of the eighteenth century, after which a gradual decline sets in. However, in a number of areas growth was much more rapid, in particular along the River Vecht.

Sustained growth was followed by decline. In the final decade of the eighteenth century and the first

decade of the nineteenth, large numbers of country houses were demolished and in many instances the land reverted to agriculture production. It appears that the decline set in earlier in Zeeland than in Holland, but regional differences in decline are not yet entirely clear.

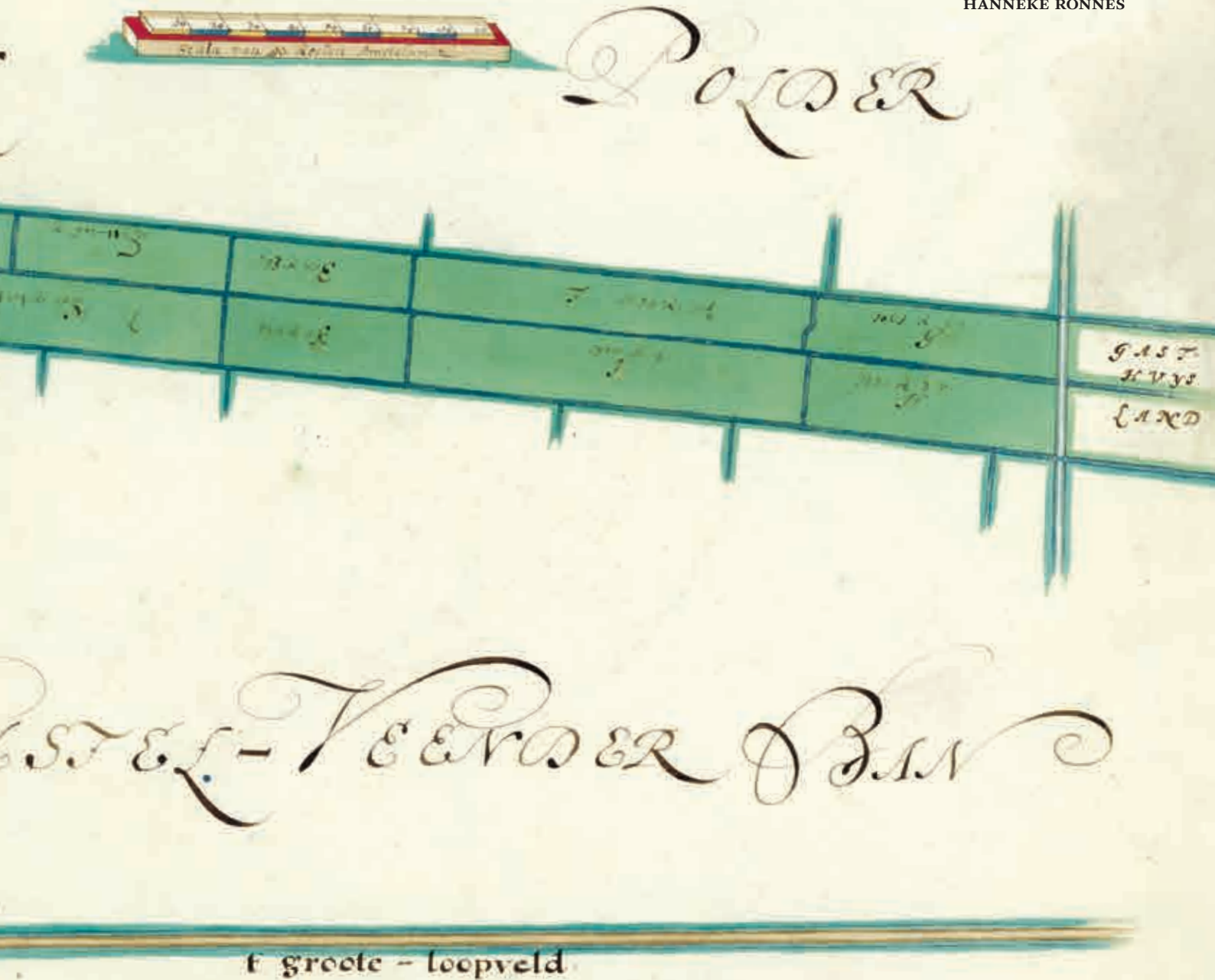
The second quarter of the nineteenth century saw the construction of a new generation of country houses, especially in the undulating sandy areas of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and the southern part of the Veluwezoom, where railway lines provided access. The owners of this new crop of country houses laid out their gardens in the English landscape style. They also bought up vast, neighbouring heathlands from local councils or farmers and planted them with trees. As a result, these country houses are quite different in character from those of the earlier period.

In the past the concentrations of country houses dominated the landscape and even today, wherever they have survived to a substantial degree they continue to represent an important landscape quality. As such, protection and management should not be confined to individual country houses but should extend to groups of country houses and their interrelationships (in the form of visual axes, for example). In recent years, a number of provinces have already set a good example by formulating policies for country house biotopes and linear estate landscapes.

DUTCH RESEARCH INTO THE COUNTRY HOUSE AND ITS LANDSCAPE

CURRENT STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP
AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

HANNEKE RONNES



1. 'Groot Kostverloren aan de Amstel' country estate in Amstelveen. Below, fourteen parcels of hospice land and above, the inn Het Kalfje and the Grote Loopveld. Drawing by Johannes Leupenius. Orientation: south at top. Map book of Amsterdam hospices, 1676 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Buizen Velder Polder

It is one of the signs – together with the wider range of periods and topics being studied and the growing number of PhD theses – that country house research has come of age. Although this wider focus is not new, it is clearly gaining momentum. The University of Groningen, Delft University of Technology and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam regularly publish books on the country house landscape; added to this are publications from various foundations and associations, such as In Arcadië and the Gelders Genootschap, that conduct research into the country house and the landscape.

ANTECEDENTS

Henri van der Wyck, writing with an eye to the future protection of historical country house estates, was one of the first to focus explicitly on the (disappearing) landscape around this type of heritage. From the 1970s onward he promoted the study of the ‘ensemble’ of architecture, interior and park, which expanded to include the nature areas of which the country house was an ‘extension’. It was Van der Wyck who coined the term (in Dutch) ‘country house landscape’, which he regarded as the landscape ‘defined by a number of country houses’, but also as ‘the decor against which the country houses stand out and in which they appeared to best advantage’.³ An early (1976) article by Pim van Tent focusing on the landscape examined which factors had influenced the emergence of clusters of country houses, such as those along the river Vecht.⁴ This geographical approach attracted few followers until after the 1996 publication of a much-cited article by Hans Renes about the interrelatedness of the country house and the surrounding landscape.⁵ This and other articles by Renes on the subject, as well as his research into the concept of ‘landscape biography’ introduced by Jan Kolen, have contributed greatly to the current popularity of the landscape-focused approach to the country house.⁶

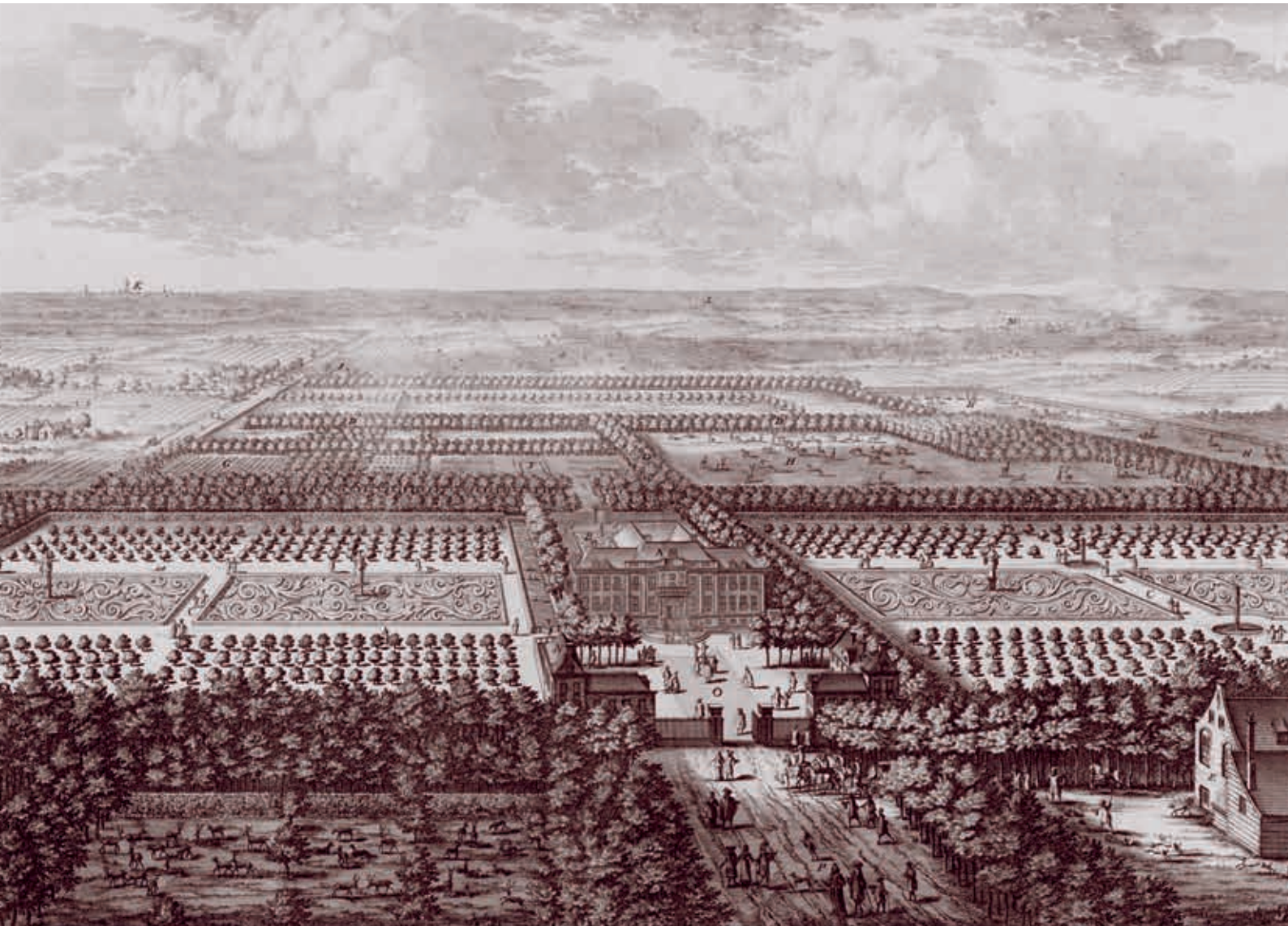
The popularity of the landscape perspective in country house research cannot be explained solely from a (historical) geographical perspective. The discipline of archaeology, where landscape studies gained in importance from the 1980s onwards, also played a role. In the Netherlands, the Dutch archaeologist Hans Janssen was an early proponent of an ‘integrated approach’ focusing on the interdisciplinary study of the castle, including its economic, social and political history, and researching not just the main fortress but also the immediate surroundings of the castle.⁷ In England the archaeologists David Austin, Oliver Creighton and Matthew Johnson encouraged research into the ‘elite landscape’. Austin set the tone with two lectures in the 1980s and ‘90s. In the first he stressed the symbiosis between castles and their immediate

(social, economic, landscape) surroundings, and the influence of a pre-existing landscape on the choice of location for a castle.⁸ The second lecture was even more groundbreaking. In it Austin expounded his thesis that different actors – farmer, servant or owner – perceived and experienced the physical landscape differently.⁹ Almost twenty years later, Creighton elaborated on Austin’s first lecture in particular, in *Castles and landscapes. Power, community and fortification in medieval England* and *Designs upon the land. Elite landscapes of the Middle Ages* and in a historiographical article.¹⁰ But it was primarily Matthew Johnson who, with his book *Behind the Castle Gate*, pushed Dutch castle studies for a while beyond the ‘gatehouse’ and into the landscape.¹¹

TOPOGRAPHY AND LOCATION FACTORS

The topographical location of the country house had already been the key focus of Van der Wyck’s regional atlases of Overijssel and the Veluwe.¹² This type of research was subsequently followed up in a series of twenty-first century polder atlases containing reconstructions of the historical landscape, including country houses and country house clusters.¹³ The strength of these publications lies in large part in the visual representation of the geographical distribution of country houses and their location in relation to one another and to other (cultural or natural) landscape elements (fig. 1).¹⁴ These atlases are in some respects reminiscent of the traditional regional studies that inventoried and described the typical country house areas, such as two early and fine examples by Heimerick Tromp and Jacob Six: *De buitenplaatsen aan de Vecht van Remmet van Lutternvelt* and *De buitenplaatsen van 's-Graveland*.¹⁵ In 2017 Ben Olde Meierink called these kinds of clusters ‘country house biotopes’, claiming that they were often deliberately created as utopian Gesamtkunstwerke, or total works of art, and discerning an affinity with the early ‘villa parks’.¹⁶ Comparable with these country house biotopes are the various ‘landed estate zones’ currently being identified, such as the Stichtse Lustwarande, the Lustwarande in Friesland and Groningen, the Gelders Arcadia landed estate zone and those of Wassenaar-Voorschoten-Leidschendam-Voorburg. In Olde Meierink’s study of the country house biotope, historical research and conceptualization were key; with landed estate zones, however, the focus is on areas that function administratively and legally as a protected townscape (Wassenaar), are instrumental in the tourism sector (Friesland and Groningen) or are expected to ‘enhance’ the (re)development of the country houses and the country house zones (Gelders Arcadia).¹⁷

A second landscape approach that is currently proving popular, looks at what factors informed the choice



2. Bird's eye view of Soestdijk showing, in addition to 'het lusthuis' (country house) and the formal gardens, the 'boswagter's huys' (forester's house), the 'moestuijn' (kitchen garden), the 'weg na de kalk-ovens' (road to the lime kilns), several farms and the city of Utrecht. Bastiaen Stopendael, 1675-1693 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

of a specific location for a castle or country house. These 'location factors' recently received attention in the PhD theses of Diana Spiekhout, *Het middeleeuwse kastelenlandschap van het Oversticht*, and Gerdy Verschuure, *Welgelegen. Analyse van Hollandse buitenplaatsen in hun landschappen*.¹⁸ These studies turned up a lot of new information and, in part thanks to them, the analysis of location factors already has a firm place at the beginning of monographs of individual castles and country houses. For the non-geographer, the results of this kind of research can seem fairly physical – and paradoxically enough also somewhat obvious (country houses are located on waterways). The danger with this approach is that it risks losing sight of the human being as actor (and so also of the mental, social and cultural landscape).

PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

One topic that is receiving significantly more attention in the present century is the study of farming enterprises on or near the country house estate. There is a certain inevitability to the way the art-historical approach to (the aesthetic quality of) house and garden has dominated country house research. But it ignores the significance of the productive landscape of (tenant) farms and coppice woodland, and of the agricultural landscape beyond the estate boundaries (fig. 2). One of the earliest publications on this topic was *Landgoederen en landschap in de Graafschap* by Piet van Cruyningen.¹⁹ According to Van Cruyningen, country house owners in the Graafschap in Gelderland played a pioneering role in the modernization of farming in the nineteenth century: they experimented with

manure, planted coniferous forests and took the lead in moorland reclamation projects following the distribution of common wasteland. In the twentieth century, by contrast, they curbed modern agricultural practices like forest clearance, with the result that the landscape in the Graafschap still displays traces of the historical country house landscape. Martin van den Broeke's PhD thesis (2016) was innovative on two counts. Firstly, in presenting a typology of country houses on the island of Walcheren based on different levels of scale (small country houses on the urban periphery, medium complexes further away from the city, and large country houses in the most rural areas). Secondly, in emphasizing the ongoing importance of the productive landscape for the country house owner.²⁰ Van den Broeke convincingly rebuts the widely accepted notion that country house estates were purely for pleasure. The Zeeland country house also featured in a study of the de-urbanization of the Dutch Republic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Paul Brusse and Wijnand Mijnhardt, who claimed that during this period countless country houses made way for agricultural businesses.²¹ Yme Kuiper developed this idea in his contribution to the European collection *Estate landscapes* in which he outlined a cyclical pattern in Dutch country house estates: the country house with a significant agrarian component (until c. 1700), the country house estate focused purely on pleasure (until 1750) and country house estates in turn replaced by farms (after 1750).²²

The study of roads and railways connecting country houses with one another or with towns and villages, or running through them, is another fruitful and relatively new landscape perspective. Jaap Evert Abrahamse's *Wegh der Weegen*, considers the eponymous, perfectly straight seventeenth-century road between Amersfoort and Utrecht and the country house estates that were intended to line it, but few of which were ever realized.²³ Unlike the studies of well-known country house zones like the Beemster or Watergraafsmeer, here it is the *failure* of a reclamation-cum-country house development project that is of interest. Peter Bijster and Theo Spek researched the (equally straight) king's roads built or planned in the Veluwe under Stadholder-King William III. These roads, which were intended to connect his own current and future landed estates, also facilitated his frequent hunting parties.²⁴ Bijster and Spek's study raises the wider question of the precise extent of the Stadholder-King's ambitions in the Veluwe where he owned a great deal of land. Was William III planning to create a royal landscape comparable to that of Louis XIV around Paris?²⁵ Frans Krabbendam's study of the impact of the development of the Dutch railway network on country houses has yielded the most detailed picture to date of the clash

between the old and modern worlds.²⁶ While some country house owners hoped to profit from the development of the railways based on increasing tourism and the construction of the famous private stations, others were worried about a disrupted view or the location of the line. Country house owners regularly attempted to influence the exact route of the railway track in order to ensure that it would not run through their estate. This did sometimes occur and led to expropriation proceedings and the break-up of the estate into smaller parcels of land that were subsequently used for villa developments (fig. 3).

MINDSCAPES AND LANDSCAPES OF MEMORY

A very different type of research reconstructs the political-ideological country house landscape.²⁷ Mark Claudemans argues in his PhD thesis that the country houses around Amsterdam bear the traces of classical ideas of the ideal city and an encircling Arcadia.²⁸ Responding to studies by Johan Huizinga and Peter Burke of the typical urban country house found in the province of Holland, Rob van der Laarse and Yme Kuiper analysed mental landscapes rather than the physical environment.²⁹ Both discerned a divide between urban, bourgeois country houses (around Amsterdam) – possibly the result of the gradual 'aristocratization' of the regent class – and noble and stadholder landscapes (in The Hague and in the east of the country).

The decline of the bourgeois-urban country house began earlier than that of the noble landed estate, but by the beginning of the twentieth century both were experiencing hard times. Several landscape-focused studies discuss attempts to preserve landed estates at the beginning of that century and the *Nachleben* of the country house: what happened to this heritage when the owner was forced to sell the estate or large parts of it? Wybren Verstegen researched the 1928 *Natuurschoonwet* (Nature Conservation Act), whose objective was not so much the preservation of the landed estates themselves as the natural values they represented. The Act played a role in the opening of landed estates to the public – one of the conditions for securing a grant – and gave a vital impetus to the conservation of parts of the country house landscape, especially in the east of the country.³⁰ In his study of the Eerde estate, Michiel Purmer describes the complexity of the democratization of the landscape: is it possible to continue to honour the wishes of the former owner, as expressed at the handover of the estate to *Natuurmonumenten*, decades later?³¹ What function should a landed estate have today, who gets to decide that, and what are the consequences of the almost inevitable financial stringency when it is managed by an association?

In the twentieth century many landed estates were



3. The railway line in Arnhem with view of Sonsbeek. Album Staats Evers, 1865 (Gelders Archief)

swallowed up by creeping suburban development or infrastructure while others became municipal parks, as Sandra den Dulk shows in her PhD thesis *Verlangen naar groene wandelingen*.³² Elyze Storm-Smeets describes this process in detail with respect to Arnhem in her article 'From elite to public landscapes'. The Arnhem city council bought up several landed estates, including Klarenbeek, transforming a former nobleman's private property into a public space in one of the finest municipal parks in the Netherlands.³³ What the country house estate and the municipal park have in common are walks, a subject on which Erik de Jong has written extensively.³⁴ The main focus of these publications is not on the physical landscape, but on the interpretation and experience of the landscape under the influence of Romanticism, the scientific revolution, aesthetics, and treatises on health and hygiene. While contemporary landscape studies often promise to consider the mental landscape or mind-landscape, they rarely deliver. By contrast, in De Jong's

writings the interaction between the (natural and cultural) physical landscape and the ideological landscape occupies centre stage.³⁵ In his analysis of the eighteenth-century enthusiasm for 'Arcadias' (descriptions and topographical representations of the landscape, including castles, ruins and country houses), he demonstrates that the physical landscape carried both religious and enlightened connotations and aroused a feeling of pride in one's own country that foreshadowed the formation of the nation state in the nineteenth century.³⁶ In two recent interesting articles, David Koren drew attention to the still recognizable plantation landscape complete with country houses on Curaçao and to the future of this cultural heritage. Koren believes that the mental landscape should take precedence in the process of awarding World or local heritage status: instead of the architectural history of the houses it is the cultural or memory landscape that should be prioritized.³⁷ In Delft Steffen Nijhuis argues for a spatial design approach, loosely

based on Fernand Braudel, with attention to both the physical and the mental landscape.³⁸ Nijhuis distinguishes several layers in the historical landscape – sometimes with the aid of GIS technology – that lay bare the estate landscape and its evolution: the physical environment, human activities and cultural, institutional and conceptual ideas. The concept of layers and their interrelationships forms the basis for an area-based, landscape[*-focused*] approach to the design and protection of estate landscapes.

It is absolutely crucial to discuss and theorize the issue of how to interpret the historical estate landscape and how we want to use it, interpret it or transform it in future. *Kasteel en landschap in Limburg*, one of the early landscape publications, reveals just how wide a gulf there is between research and design.³⁹ The solid research in the first part of this collection is followed by a final chapter featuring concrete designs by a variety of practices, which have little or nothing to do with the historical-geographical knowledge of the previous chapters, let alone with the mental landscape.

OUTLOOK

The main task for future researchers of the estate landscape is to find a methodological and theoretical foundation, and to venture beyond a description of the landscape based on form and function. It is remarkable, given its success in the Netherlands, that the landscape biography approach has found few adherents in the field of country house landscape research; the examples can be counted on the fingers of one hand.⁴⁰ The emphasis that this approach puts on the nature-culture relationship (a defining feature of the country house estate), on the individuals who have shaped the landscape (owner, architect, staff and gardeners, walkers), on the mental landscape (based on

classic ideals, biblical connotations or the specific link between an actor and the country house), on forgotten or overwritten phases or layers (such as periods between construction phases), and on a critical analysis of the current design task (restoration or new interpretations), make the landscape biography an pressing or at least useful addition to country house studies.

Equally curious is the almost total absence of leading theoreticians in the fields of geography and archaeology in studies of the country house landscape. Nor is there any trace of the pivotal geographical debates about ‘space’, whether it be Henri Lefebvre’s groundbreaking publications on social space or Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory and Bruno Latour’s elaboration of that theory. Even the less theoretically top-heavy scholars are absent from current landscape studies. Denis Cosgrove’s influential perspective on landscape as text, for example, appears to have no followers at all. Nor has the subsequent, more performative approach to landscape found an audience. Twenty years ago Matthew Johnson was already transposing this last approach into the study of ‘the elite landscape’, which he regards as a place where the ‘identities of men and women were “played out”’.⁴¹ Operating in-between the disciplines of geography, landscape architecture, archaeology, history and art history, the country house study in general, and that of the country house landscape in particular, cuts a somewhat methodologically and theoretically isolated figure, and perhaps that explains the lack of method and theory in many studies. The country house research field is maturing, not least thanks to the growing interest in the wider (physical, political, cultural and social) landscape of which any given country house is or once was a part. But there is enough room, and perhaps also need, for further development.

NOTES

- 1 With thanks to Steffen Nijhuis and Michiel Purmer.
- 2 Although it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between research into the country house landscape and research into gardens, in this article I am primarily interested in the landscape, and so I do not consider research into the country house garden.
- 3 H. van der Wyck, *De Nederlandse buitenplaats. Aspecten van ontwikkeling, bescherming en herstel*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1983, 519, 531 (based on his 1974 PhD thesis).
- 4 W.J. van Tent, ‘De buitenplaatsen historisch-geografisch gezien’, in: *Jaarboekje Nederlandse Kastelenstichting*, n.p. 1976, 41-54.
- 5 H. Renes, ‘Kastelen in het landschap’, in: W.M.H. Hupperetz et al. (eds.), *Middeleeuwse kastelen in Limburg. Verschijningsvormen van het kasteel, zijn adellijke bewoners en hun personeel*, Venlo 1996, 61-76.
- 6 J. Kolen, *De biografie van het landschap. Drie essays over landschap, geschiedenis en erfgoed*, PhD thesis, Vrije Universiteit 2005; J. Kolen, H. Renes and R. Hermans (eds.), *Landscape biographies. Geographical, historical and archaeological perspectives on the production and transmission of landscapes*, Amsterdam 2015.
- 7 He did this quite explicitly in: H.L. Janssen, ‘Archaeology of the medieval castle in the Netherlands. Results and prospects for future research’, in: J.C. Besteman et al. (eds.), *Medieval archaeology in the Netherlands*, Assen 1989, 219-264 (paraphrased here 256-259). See also: H.L. Janssen, *Het kasteel centraal. Een integrale benadering van een materieel object*, Utrecht 1992, 20-21.
- 8 D. Austin, ‘The castle and the landscape. Annual lecture to the Society for Landscape Studies, May 1984’, *Landscape History* 6 (1984) 1, 69-81.
- 9 D. Austin, ‘Private and public. An archaeological consideration of things’,

- in: H. Hundsbichler et al. (eds.), *Die Vielfalt der Dinge. Neue Wege zur Analyse mittelalterlicher Sachkultur. Internationaler Kongress, Krems an der Donau, 4. bis 7. Oktober 1994. Gedenkschrift in memoriam Harry Kühnel*, Vienna 1998, 163-206. Tadhg O'Keefe argued in a similar vein that there are as many country houses or castles as there are observers ('Concepts of "castle" and the construction of identity in medieval and post-medieval Ireland', 34 (2001) 1, 69-88.
- 10 O.H. Creighton, *Castles and landscapes. Power, community and fortification in medieval England*, London-Oakville 2002; O.H. Creighton and R.A. Higham, 'Castle studies and the "landscape" agenda', *Landscape History* 26 (2004) 1, 5-18; O.H. Creighton, *Designs upon the land. Elite landscapes of the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge 2009.
 - 11 M. Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate. From Medieval to Renaissance*, London 2002.
 - 12 H. van der Wyck, *Overrijsselse buitenplaatsen*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1983, and *Atlas Gelderse buitenplaatsen. De Veluwe*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1988.
 - 13 See for example C.M. Steenbergen et al., *De Polderatlas van Nederland. Pantheon der Lage Landen*, Bussum 2009; W. Reh, C.M. Steenbergen and D. Aten, *Zee van land. De droogmakerij als atlas van de Hollandse landschaps-architectuur*, Wormer 2007.
 - 14 Another example is Annerie van Daatselaar's dissertation in which she meticulously reconstructs the manor house landscape attached to Doorwerth castle as it existed in different periods (A. van Daatselaar, *Getekend. Perspectief op de beleving van de kasteelnederzetting op basis van landschapsbiografisch onderzoek naar de heerlijkheid Doorwerth in de periode 1601-1965*, Master's dissertation Groningen University 2020).
 - 15 R. van Lutternvelt, *De buitenplaatsen aan de Vecht*, De Bilt 1943 and Heimerick Tromp and Jacob Six, *De Buitenplaatsen van 's-Graveland: Een verkenning*, Zeist 1975. Van Lutternvelt's PhD thesis deviates somewhat from the other publications in this genre: by comparing country house architecture with the urban architecture in Amsterdam, this study clearly goes further than simple description. The inventories of castles and country houses in different provinces, such as those by B. Olde Meierink (ed.), *Kastelen en ridderhofsteden in Utrecht*, Utrecht 1995; W. Hupperetz, B. Olde Meierink and R. Rommes, *Kastelen in Limburg. Burchten en landhuizen (1000-1800)*, Utrecht 2005, also take a regional approach, albeit one based on current provincial boundaries rather than historical country house zones.
 - 16 B. Olde Meierink, 'Buitenplaatslandschappen', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 19 (2017) 58, 22-29.
 - 17 E. Storm-Smeets, 'Het ontstaan van Gelders Arcadië. Landgoederenzone van de Veluwezoom', *Gelders Erfgoed* (2012) 1, 14-17 (quoted here 17).
 - 18 D. Spiekhout, *Het middeleeuwse kastelenlandschap van het Oversticht. De ontwikkeling van bisschoppelijke burchten, adellijke huizen en versterkingen in relatie tot het landschap en de samenleving in Noordoost-Nederland tussen 1050 en 1450*, PhD thesis, Groningen University 2020; G. Verschuure, *Welgelegen, Analyse van Hollandse buitenplaatsen in hun landschappen (1630-1730)*, PhD thesis, TU Delft 2019.
 - 19 P. van Cruyningen, *Landgoederen en landschap in de Graafschap*, Utrecht 2005.
 - 20 M. van den Broeke, *Het pryeeel van Zeeland. Buitenplaatsen op Walcheren 1600-1820*, Hilversum 2016. See also other studies by Van den Broeke.
 - 21 P. Brusse and W. Mijnhardt (eds.), *Towards a new template for Dutch history. De-urbanization and the balance between town and countryside*, Zwolle 2011.
 - 22 Y. Kuiper, 'Country houses and estates in Dutch urban and rural history, 1600-1900', in: J. Finch, K. Dyrmann and M. Frausing (eds.), *Estate landscapes in northern Europe*, Aarhus 2019, 193-230. See also Gerrit van Oosterom's forthcoming PhD thesis (*Boerderij en buitenplaats in Amstellands Arcadia. De relatie tussen landbouw en vermaak op de Hollandse buitenplaats in de lange achttiende eeuw (1670-1830)*, Groningen University) on this phase during which country house estates around Amsterdam reverted to agricultural use.
 - 23 J.E. Abrahamse, *Wegh der Weegen. Ontwerp, aanleg en ontwikkeling van de Amersfoortseweg 1647-2010*, Amsterdam 2011.
 - 24 P. Bijster and T. Spek, 'Snelwegen voor de koning. Onderzoek naar koningswegen op de Veluwe voor Willem III (1650-1702)', *Het Nederlands landschap. Tijdschrift voor landschapsgechiedenis* (2019) 3, 35-45.
 - 25 H. Ronnes and M. Haverman, 'A reappraisal of the architectural legacy of King-Stadholder William III and Queen Mary II. Taste, passion and frenzy', *The Court Historian* 25 (2020) 2, 158-177.
 - 26 F.A.J. Krabbendam, *Sporen door landgoederen. Een nieuwe realiteit. Spoorwegen, landgoederen en landgoedeigenaren in Midden- en Oost-Nederland (1832-1917)*, Master's dissertation University of Groningen 2020.
 - 27 The PhD thesis of Willemieke Ottens (still to be published), attempts to combine these two approaches. In her study of the Leuvenus and Bannink landed estates she looks at both political-social developments and the physical country house landscape (W. Ottens, *Leuvenus en de Bannink. Landgoederen in de twintigste eeuw*, PhD thesis University of Groningen).
 - 28 M.K.T.M. Glaudemans, *Amsterdam arcadia. De ontdekking van het achterland*, Nijmegen 2000.
 - 29 J. Huizinga, *Nederland's beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw*, Haarlem 1941; P. Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam. A Study of seventeenth-century Elites*, London 1974; R. van der Laarse, 'Amsterdam en Oranje. De politieke cultuur van kasteel en buitenplaats in Hollands Gouden Eeuw', in: Y. Kuiper, B. Olde Meierink and E. Storms-Smeets (eds.), *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw. De rijkdom van het buitenleven in de Republiek*, Hilversum 2015, 66-95. Y. Kuiper, 'The rise of the country house in the Dutch Republic. Beyond Johan Huizinga's narrative of Dutch civilisation in the 17th century', in: J. Stobart and A. Hann (eds.), *Material culture and consumption*, Swindon 2016, 11-23; Y. Kuiper, 'Onderzoek naar de buitenplaats in de Gouden Eeuw. Een vogelvluchtperspectief', in: Kuiper, Olde Meierink and Storms-Smeets 2015, 12-41.
 - 30 W. Verstegen, *Vrije wandeling. Het parlement, de fiscus en de bescherming van het particuliere Nederlandse Natuurschoon. De Natuurschoonwet tussen 1924 en 1995*, Groningen 2017, 129.
 - 31 M. Purmer, *Het landschap bewaard. Landschap en erfgoed bij Natuurmonumenten*, Hilversum 2018; M. Purmer, 'Valbijl of vangnet? Natuurmonumenten, de adel en de verwerving van landgoederen en buitenplaatsen, 1905-1980', *Virtus* 27 (2020), 9-32. See also: E. van der Laan-Meijer and M. Purmer, *Landgoed De Braak. Twee eeuwen cultuur- en natuurbeleving*, Gorredijk, 2020.
 - 32 S. den Dulk, *Verlangen naar groene wandelingen. De wording van het stadspark in Nederland 1600-1940*, PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam 2021. In his master's dissertation, *Het museale buiten. Over de zoektocht naar authenticiteit in het arcadische landschap rond Kasteel Groeneveld in de twintigste eeuw*, University of Groningen 2020, Martijn Noordermeer reveals the gradual process that saw Groeneveld largely swallowed up Baarn, Master's dissertation University of Groningen 2020.
 - 33 E. Storm-Smeets, 'From elite to public landscapes. The case of the Klarenbeek estate in Arnhem, 1880-1950', *Virtus* 23 (2016), 147-168.
 - 34 E.A. de Jong, 'Taking Fresh Air, 1600-1750. Walking in Holland in the Early Modern Period', in: M. Conan (eds.), *Performance and appropriation. Profane rituals in gardens and landscapes*, Washington 2007, 19-40. De Jong also made an important contribution to the analysis of the restoration and design history of country house estate landscapes. For example, together with Christian Bertram, *Landscapes of the imagination. Designing the European*.

- Tradition of garden and landscape architecture/Landschappen van verbeelding. Ontwerpen aan de traditie van de West-Europese tuin- en landschapsarchitectuur*, Rotterdam 2008, and his overviews (also with Christian Bertram) of the work of Michael van Gessel, e.g.: *Michael van Gessel. Landscape architect*, Rotterdam 2008, and 'Natuurlijke Verwantschap. Over tuin- en landschapsarchitectuur', in: I. Baan et al. (eds.), *Perspectief. Maakbare geschiedenis*, Rotterdam 2007, 18-46.
- 35 In De Jong's work Donna Haraway's criticism of the supposed binary opposition between nature and culture never seems far away.
- 36 De Jong 2007 (note 34), 34-36. Ben Olde Meierink, too, points to eighteenth-century interest in country house estate biotopes as reflected in prints, engravings and Arcadias: Olde Meierink 2017 (note 16), 26-27.
- 37 D. Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang. Uiteenlopende waarden en betekenissen van het Curaçaose plantagelandschap', *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 5 (2020) 3, 131-151; D. Koren, 'Slavernijverleden werpt schaduw vooruit. Werelderfgoedstatus voor plantagesysteem West-Curaçao?', *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 5 (2020) 3, 152-168.
- 38 S. Nijhuis, 'Landschappelijke authenticiteit. Het landschap als levend systeem, geschiedenis en ruimtelijke beleving', *Bulletin KNOB* 119 (2020) 4, 32-37; S. Nijhuis, 'GIS-based landscape design research. Stourhead landscape garden as a case study', *Architecture and the built environment* (2015) 13; S. Nijhuis, P. Thissen, E. Storms-Smeets, *Resilient estate landscapes Gelderland. Past – present – future* (to be published Autumn 2022).
- 39 F. Hoebens and T. Oberndorff (eds.), *Kasteel en landschap in Limburg*, Utrecht 2013.
- 40 For example: R. van Immerseel and P. Verhoeff, *Statig Beetsterzwaag. Parklandschap rond een Fries dorp*, Utrecht 2016; Y. Kuiper, *Dekema State Jelsum. Biografie van een landgoed*, Gorredijk 2020; H. Ronnes, 'The quiet authors of an early modern palatial landscape. Transformation without reconstruction at King William's Het Loo', in: Kolen, Renes and Hermans 2015 (note 6), 205-233.
- 41 Johnson 2002 (note 11), 3.

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DUTCH RESEARCH INTO THE COUNTRY HOUSE AND ITS LANDSCAPE CURRENT STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP AND OUTLOOK

HANNEKE RONNES

One of the unmistakable trends in current country house research is the growing interest in the landscape context of country houses. The unquestioned emphasis on the main house and the garden is increasingly giving way to an approach that includes or focuses on the wider setting: village, nature, town, infrastructure, farms, churches, and other country houses. This article sketches the rise of this approach and offers an overview of the various perspectives. Among the aspects covered by landscape studies are country house

regions, choice of location, the productive landscape, infrastructure, the political landscape and the mental landscape. Although this growing interest in the landscape setting is one of the most important recent developments in country house research, most of these studies are predominantly descriptive. This article calls for the establishment of a firmer methodological and theoretical underpinning – a task to which it is to be hoped that future researchers will devote themselves.

THE SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE ESTATE LANDSCAPE IN GELDERS ARCADIA

ELYZE STORMS-SMEETS



▲ 1. View of the front of Zypendaal country house, artist unknown, 1736 (Brantsen van de Zyp Stichting, Arnhem)

INTRODUCTION

The southern edge of the Veluwe around Arnhem (Veluwezoom) boasts a great many landed and country house estates that together form a landscape known as Gelders Arcadia.¹ The well-known landed and country house estates in this zone are Rosendaal,



2. The Sonsbeek estate lies in the valley of the Jansbeek, a short distance from the city of Arnhem (photo MVOTV, 2021)

Middachten, Sonsbeek, Doorwerth, Zypendaal, Laag-Wolfheze, Oranje Nassau's Oord and Mariëndaal. Geometrical networks of allées, large-scale landscape parks, farmsteads, stately homes, fields, pastures and woodlands are all part of this landscape (fig. 1).

The name Gelders Arcadia was inspired by an 1820 publication by the Arnhem writer Isaac Anne Nijhoff (1795-1863), *Geldersch Arkadia of Wandeling over Biljoen en Beekhuizen*. Of Baron van Spaen, the owner of Biljoen and Beekhuizen, he wrote: 'He wanted them to discover, in his valleys, surrounded by wooded hills, watered by fast-flowing brooks – in his Gelders Arcadia – a distant imitation of the ancients' Vale of Tempe.' Widening his view, Nijhoff remarked that: 'The surroundings of the city of Arnhem [are] more than any other part of our Fatherland, filled with large and distinguished landed estates and country houses which, in expanse and fine grounds, surpass all others in this kingdom.'²

Unlike country house landscapes elsewhere in the country, which were mostly created during the seven-

teenth and eighteenth centuries, the country and landed estates of Gelders Arcadia could boast a long ancestry in feudal landscape management. In this we also have one of the unique aspects of this particular estate landscape: almost the entire chronology of Dutch country house and estate development is visible here. The construction of castles and manors (c. 500-1600), the construction of 'pleasure houses' in the countryside for town regents (c. 1600-1800), and the creation of villa-like country houses for a new elite of returning Dutch East India colonists and bankers, industrialists and lawyers from the west of the country (c. 1800-1940) have all left their mark here.³ All in all, from the Middle Ages into the twentieth century, some one hundred country house and landed estates were established and laid out (fig. 2). Each development phase is distinguished by a shift in the kind of owners, landownership, functions, societal significance, architecture and landscape architecture, and location. This article adopts a social, historical and geographical perspective in examining the reasons why

medieval castellans, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century townsmen, nineteenth-century artists and twentieth-century parvenus persistently chose this area in which to realize their wide-ranging ambitions.

**DIFFERENT TIMES, DIFFERENT OWNERS,
DIFFERENT MOTIVES**

Over the centuries, the Veluwezoom, on the edge of the glacial ridge landscape of the Veluwe and the rivers Rhine and IJssel, held a special attraction for the well-to-do. Landed estates were established here when circumstances were favourable: in times of economic prosperity and peace, coupled with the presence or emergence of a powerful elite and the availability of land. The creation of a new landed estate and the construction of a castle or manor house was a major undertaking, usually attended by lavish use of natural resources such as timber and stone. The choice of location must accordingly be seen as a key consideration.

Any analysis that explained the choice of location primarily on the basis of physical and geographical factors, such as which type of landscape offered the best defences or had the best substratum for the construction of a stone house, would fall short. For while these certainly played a role, it was alongside a great variety of landscape, economic, political and societal motives. In addition, the researcher must always ask themselves what motivated the owner to invest in the construction of such an edifice and in the creation of a very large landholding. In his seminal *Life in the English Country House*, Mark Girouard wrote that we should see castles and manor houses as ‘power houses’, as the houses of the ruling class. And that ‘when a new man bought an estate and built on it, the kind of house which he built showed exactly what level of power he was aiming at’.⁴ Likewise, the kind of

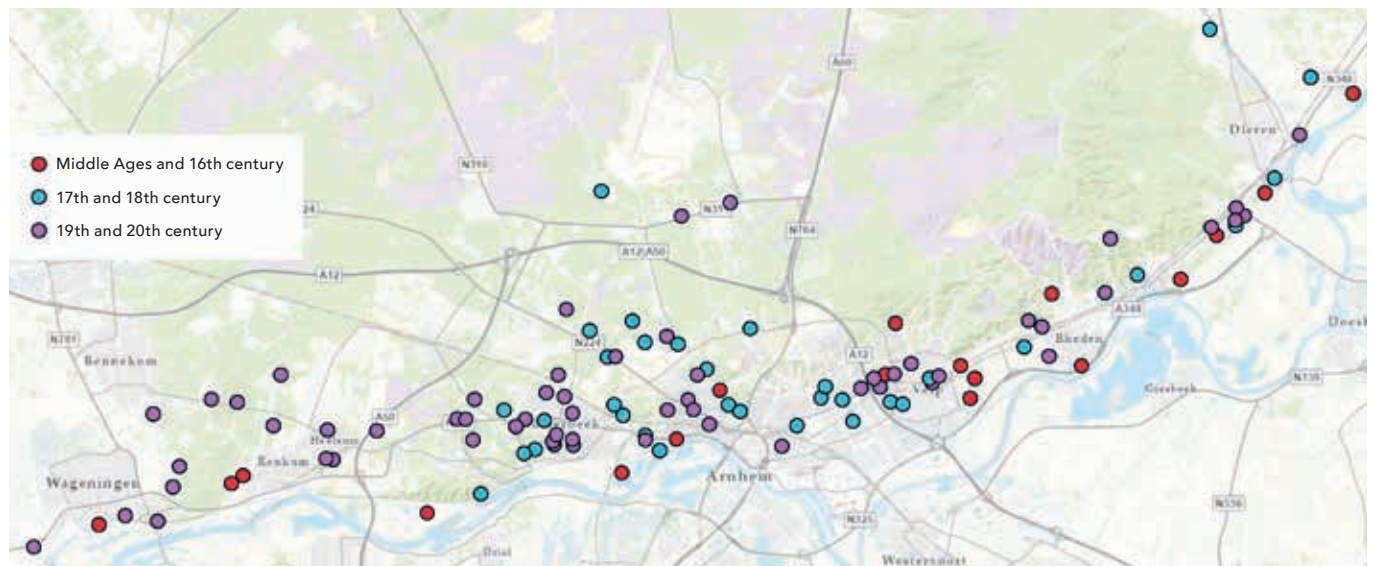
landed estate he created and its location reflected his motives, ambitions and means. Every function imposed its own demands on the location. We therefore need to ask ourselves for what purpose the building and accompanying land were used. This pertains specifically to landed and country estates as coherent ensembles, in which the political, social, economic and societal context plays a major role. This geographical analysis is consequently also a socio-historical analysis. The considerations of a nobleman building a castle in the fourteenth century differed from those of an ex-colonist contemplating the construction of a new country house at the end of the nineteenth century. One apparent constant was that new landed and country estates were generally built by the newly rich – by new elites – whereas the old elite kept investing in ancestral property. The chronological distribution patterns of new country houses are consequently often in part related to the rise of the newly wealthy (often referred to as ‘nouveaux riches’).

How should we conceive the centuries-long social and spatial transformation process that eventually resulted in the estate zone of Gelders Arcadia?

**TRANSFORMATION OF CASTLES INTO
COUNTRY RESIDENCES**

The earliest landed and country house estates in the Veluwezoom had their origins in medieval and sixteenth-century castles. The fifteen or so landed estates that emerged in the Middle Ages were spread across the transition between the Veluwe glacial ridge and the Rhine and IJssel rivers, with the heart of the estate, the castle, located close to a river. Examples of this are the castles Wageningen, Grunsfoort, Doorwerth, Biljoen, Middachten and Gelderse Toren. Particularly locations near older blind river arms were popular.

3. Chronological survey of the Gelders Arcadia estate based on the development periods (author)



fertilizing the fields. The manor also owned several watermills along with the castle village of Doorwerth (which vanished after the Second World War) and Heelsum Church, located in the Heelsum stream valley.⁶ In short, this was a vast, multifunctional landholding with a variety of economic, social and recreational functions.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the castles, which had lost their military function, were often radically remodelled. The surrounding landscape was embellished with networks of allées and geometrically laid out gardens with orangeries, ponds and garden ornaments. Hunting landscapes were also created, such as the famous Hof te Dieren game preserve and the king's roads owned by the Stadholder's family.⁷ The presence of the Stadholder's family in the area would no doubt have encouraged families like Schellart van Obbendorf at Doorwerth, Van Spaen at Biljoen, Van Arnhem at Rosendael and Van Reede at Middachten to convert their castles into country houses.⁸

If we look at Rosendael, we find that the topographical prints and maps from around 1800 reveal large-scale geometrical gardens created by owner and garden enthusiast Jan van Arnhem. The castle was surrounded by over forty hectares of gardens, laid out with allées, parterres, fountains, grottos, garden rooms, waterfalls, fish ponds, springs, a watermill, a star wood and even a 'king's cottage' for when the king

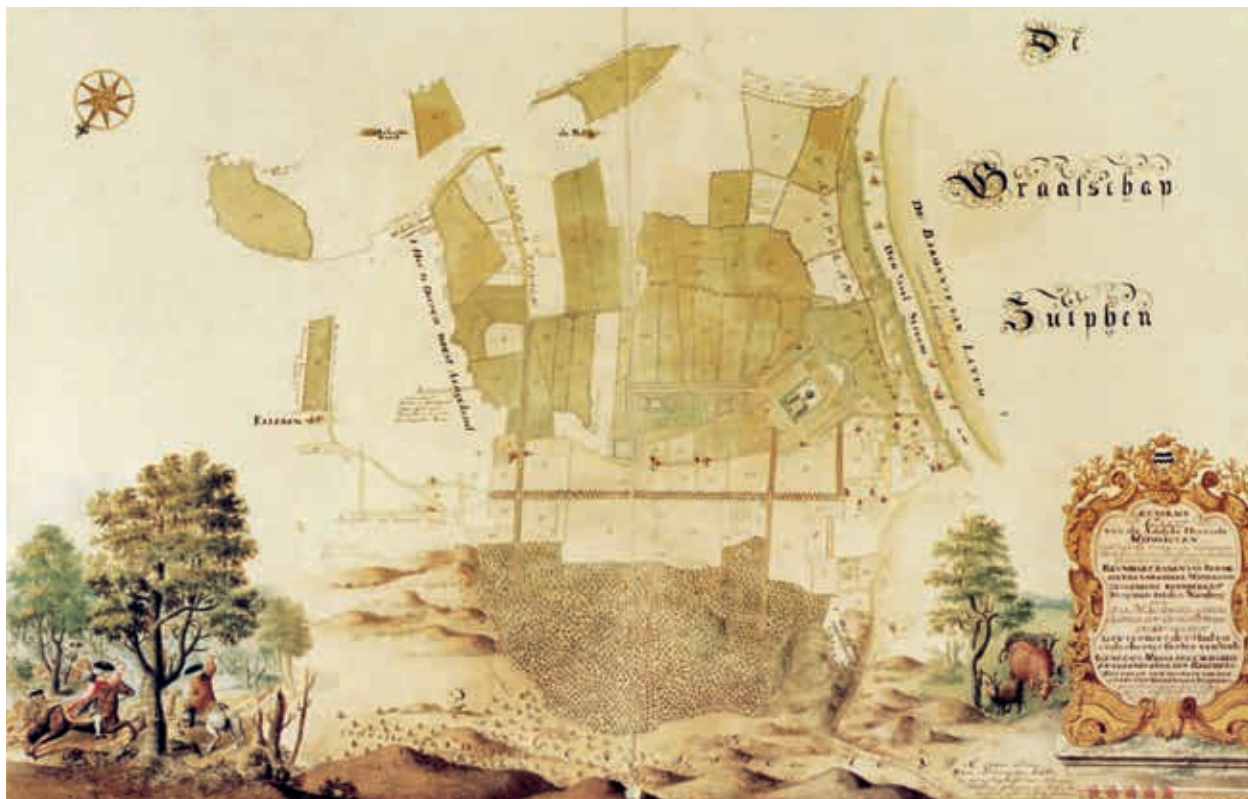
came to stay.⁹ In the gardens beauty was consciously combined with practicality: the fish ponds, for example, were exquisitely incorporated into the formal design. At Middachten, too, formal gardens were laid out when the house belonged to Godard van Reede, Earl of Athlone and a friend of William III.¹⁰ They can be seen on Barend Elshoff's 1729 manuscript map (fig. 4). The map shows the entire estate, from the IJssel to the Veluwe. The drawings in the bottom corners of the map underpin the importance of a multifunctional landscape with cattle on the river pastures on the right, and hunting on the Veluwe on the left.

Unlike Rosendael and Middachten, many of the country estates with medieval origins did not withstand the ravages of time. The aforementioned Gulden Spijcker, located on an island in the Jansbeek near Arnhem, was in a dilapidated state at the end of the eighteenth century. The house was demolished, and the land sold to the mayor of Arnhem, G. Pronck, who added it to the grounds of the Sonsbeek estate in 1779.¹¹

REGENT COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATES

Pronck was one of the many city residents who chose to invest in land outside the city. Just as castles were being turned into country houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so Arnhem's city regents were also busy establishing new landed and country estates. The purchase of land and the construction of a

5. Overview map of the Middachten estate, B. Elshof, 1729 (Collectie Kasteel Middachten)



country house was seen as a good investment. It was also a way of showing off their newly acquired status, wealth and taste as well as offering an escape from their busy city life. Initially the new country houses served as a summer retreat – the first house on Zypendaal was called a ‘speelhuysken’ (lit. ‘play house’). The distance from the city needed to be short and easy to traverse, which was why many country houses stood along the main thoroughfares around Arnhem. The roads leading to Utrecht and Zutphen were especially popular, with both the upper route on higher land and the lower route at the foot of the glacial ridge ensuring Arnhem’s elite of an expeditious journey back to the city. Examples of this kind of new country house are Hartenstein and Hemelse Berg along the highway in Oosterbeek, and De Brink (Ruyven), Klingelbeek and Hoogstede along the Utrechtseweg in Arnhem.¹²

Distance from the city was not the only criterion for the location of a country house; equally crucial was the question of whether there was land for sale for the construction of new country houses. Together these factors resulted in a semicircular pattern of distribution around the city of Arnhem, with a few outliers along the roads to the west and to the east. Sometimes a regent was able to take advantage of the sale of existing private land, as in the case of Pronck. However, regent families also bought up former monastic properties around Arnhem in order to turn them into new country house estates. Following the confiscation of many monastic properties in this region around 1580 as a result of the Reformation, they were placed under the administration of the States of the Veluwe. From 1640 onwards some of this land was sold, a process that played out in other parts of the country as well. Many former monastic lands were bought by wealthy individuals, including members of the city elite, such as the families Everwijn, Brantsen and Tulleken. The former Mariënborn monastic property to the west of Arnhem spawned five private estates: Warnsborn (1640), Boschveld (1651), Lichtenbeek (1651), Den Brink (Ruyven, c. 1693) and Mariëndaal (1735). Compared with uncultivated land, the former monastic lands were highly attractive: they were well situated, close to a stream and a short distance from the city, and they were for the most part cultivated, with farmland, ponds, watermills and roads.¹³ Their location and cultivated state consequently made monastic lands suitable for the next stage of the cultivation process and were the basis for the formation of an estate landscape.

Regent country house estates often covered a few hundred hectares. The new owners built a luxurious summer residence on their estate, together with outbuildings like coach houses, orangeries for exotic

plants, gardeners’ dwellings and gazebos. They had parks laid out with geometrical gardens and oak and beech avenues leading onto the heathlands. Existing spring-fed streams, originally used to power watermills, were dug out and used to create ponds, fountains and cascades.

A fine example of a regent country house is Zypendaal (figs. 5 and 6). The agrarian estate ‘De Syp’, which certainly existed already in the sixteenth century, was sold in 1649 to the then mayor of Arnhem, Abraham Tulleken (?-1651), and his wife Gerhardina Everwijn (1608-?).¹⁴ In 1650 the couple built a new *spijker* or small country house, which they used as their country residence.¹⁵ The house stood at the foot of the Bickberg hill, in the valley of the Jansbeek. The grounds were at that stage still very modest. Then, in 1743, via a combination of sale and inheritance, the property ended up in the hands of Hendrik Willem Brantsen (1704-1786) and his wife Johanna Elisabeth de Vree. She and her sister Hester Henriëtte, married to Hendrik Willem’s brother Johan, brought with them a substantial amount of money: their inheritance from their father included shares in two Surinam sugar plantations ‘of which one is called Wayampibo, and the other Vossenburch, as well as the timber plantation Onverwacht in Tempati *creecq*’.¹⁶

What Zypendaal looked like in around 1750, under Willem Brantsen’s ownership, can be seen in Willem Leenen’s cartographic survey. It shows the old ‘speelhuysken’ of 1650, surrounded by geometrically laid out gardens, ponds, allées and orchards (fig. 6). The Brantsen family even had three hundred-metre long terraces constructed, parallel to the baroque ponds, for walks in the park.¹⁷

Over the centuries, the Brantsens, like other regents, owned various country houses in the area for varying lengths of time, in addition to their main residence in Arnhem. Around Arnhem these were (apart from Zypendaal): Hulkestein, Gulden Bodem, Mariëndaal, Den Brink (Klein Mariëndaal) and Lichtenbeek. Near Rheden, the Rhederoord and Rhederhof estates, and on the other side of the IJssel the Wielbergen estate (Angerlo). Although the recreational aspect dominated, the Arnhem regents’ estates had economic functions as well, such as farming and forestry. The regents bought up surrounding uncultivated land (heath) and had it planted with woods. As such, they were also preparing the land for future users of this region and contributing to the attractiveness and gradual formation of the estate landscape that would later be called Gelders Arcadia.

Before describing the next step in the development of this area, I will briefly summarize the characteristics of the regent country house estates. They were located in the vicinity of the city, close to thorough-



6. Map of Zypendaal estate, W. Leenen, 1753 (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

fares. The estates often had their origins in the purchase of former agricultural or monastic properties and in some cases in the development of uncultivated lands (heath). The owners were Arnhem city regents who also owned a house in the city. The new country estates were between fifty and two hundred hectares in size. In their capacity as country residences the focus was on the aesthetic landscape, but all such properties also supported economic activities like farming, pasturage and forestry.

NEW RICHES, NEW COUNTRY HOUSES

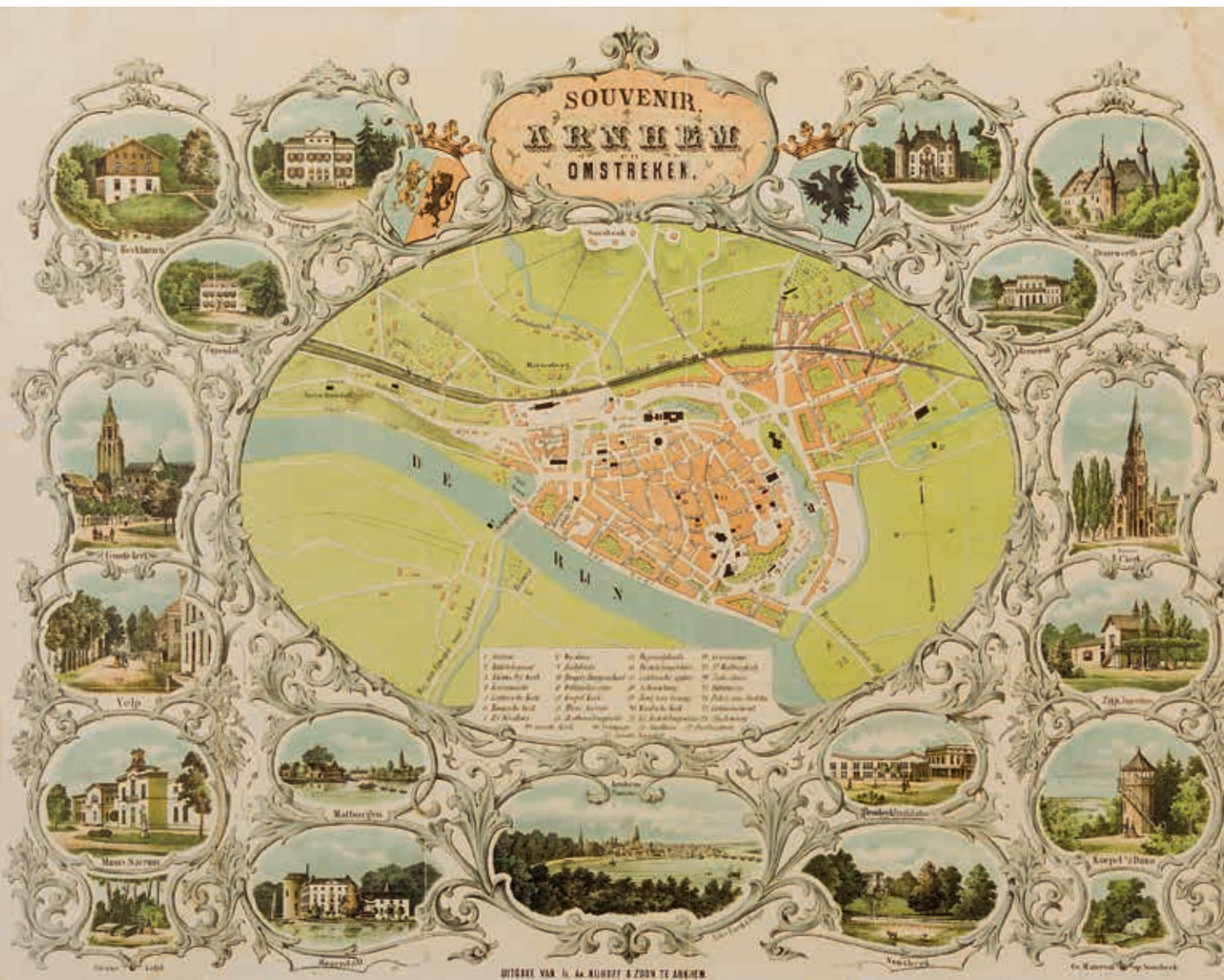
At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Veluwezoom boasted some sixty country houses and landed estates. In the nineteenth century interest in this much-loved landscape grew, thanks in part to the artists who settled around the village Oosterbeek.

Artists like Johannes and Gerard Bilders, Frederik

Hendrik Hendriks and Anton Mauve came to the Veluwezoom to capture the natural scenery and fine vistas on canvas.¹⁸ Their paintings depicted the romantic landscapes of landed estates and the unspoilt landscape of still uncultivated 'wastelands'.

An artists' colony sprang up in Oosterbeek, generating a rich cultural life that was especially vibrant between 1840 and 1900. Supported by wealthy patrons and members of the landed gentry like C.P. van Eeghen, C.P.E. Robidé van der Aa and J. Knepelhout, the work of these painters of the Veluwezoom contributed to the region's fame (fig. 7).¹⁹

In this way the owners of landed estates and the artists worked together to advertise the attractions of Gelders Arcadia, which in turn led to other wealthy individuals becoming interested in settling in the region. This interest was further stimulated by the many tourist maps, walking guides and odes lauding



7. 'Souvenir Arnhem en Omstreken', street plan of the city of Arnhem with eighteen pictures in cartouches. Many of these depict country estates, such as Biljoen, Bronbeek, De Oorsprong, Zypendaal, Rosendaal and Sonsbeek. By Van Emrik & Binger, published by I.A. Nijhoff & Zoon, 1868 (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

the beauty of the Veluwezoom. The end result of all this 'marketing' was the construction of villa districts and the creation of new country houses and landed estates. The first was often at the expense of the older landed estates like those of Klarenbeek and Sonsbeek.²⁰ The subdivision into smaller parcels of land coincided with the rise of a new elite in the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, the new country house builders were no longer local nobility or regents, but newly wealthy people like lawyers, bankers, architects and developers from the western part of the country and returning colonists. For this group the land was not their primary source of income. Almost forty new country houses and landed estates, spread across the entire zone, were created, including Belmonte, Villa Sanoer, Hinkeloord, De Dorschkamp, Quaden-

oord, Bato's Wijk, Pietersberg, Rosorum, Bronbeek, Hofstetten and Rhederhof.

Looking at Gelders Arcadia as a whole, the new estates were located in areas that had previously had very few country houses. Places like Wageningen, Oosterbeek and Ellecom saw a strong increase in country estates. An important factor in the expansion of Gelders Arcadia was the expansion of the Dutch railway network, including the new railway connection between Utrecht and Arnhem in 1843-1845. The improved transport options facilitated the construction of country houses (whether or not permanently occupied) in park-like settings further away from the city of Arnhem. This greater distance between country house and city was also related to the increasing scarcity of land close to



8. Bronbeek estate resulted from the sale of part of an older landed estate, 't Lange Water (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

Arnhem. Many new country estates were established on previously uncultivated lands. Examples include 't Heuvelink and Vrijland on Koningsweg to the north of the city. So in addition to better infrastructure, the availability of land was another reason why Gelders Arcadia expanded to cover an ever greater area.

But even in the historical core of Gelders Arcadia, time did not stand still. Here new country houses arose as a result of the sale of some or all of their land by impoverished noble families or regents.²¹

A few new country houses, like Heidestein in Heelsum, originated from the sale of grounds belonging to the Doorwerth manor in the nineteenth century. The fragmentation and sale of an existing estate was also the genesis of Bronbeek, between Arnhem and Velp (fig. 8). Around 1820 the 't Lange Water estate was sold

off in sections. The northern section was bought by the Amsterdam rentier Hermen Steijgerwalt, who built a new country house on a slope of the Paasberg as well as a park with ornamental plants and a kitchen garden. An excavated spring-fed stream was dammed to create waterfalls, ponds and a fountain.

After 1900 very few new country houses were established. Those that were, like De Kamp, the Leemkuil, Huize Eekland and Laag-Wolfheze, were built on the remaining available sites, often on previously uncultivated land on the glacial ridge massif. New country houses were generally smaller than existing ones and very rarely did they amount to a landed estate. For these owners the country houses functioned as semi-permanent residences in the countryside. Interestingly, 'nature', such as Wolfheze Heath, was



9. Manor house in Gooi manor house style on the Langenberg estate, Heelsum. Picture postcard, 1950-1960 (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

TABLE 1. Typology of country and landed estates in the Gelders Arcadia estate landscape. The description reflects the situation at the time of creation and at the first transformation. Each country house/landed estate underwent successive changes in the style of house and park, use, et cetera. As a result, today's landscape is highly layered with structures and elements from many periods and styles.

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD	MAIN CLIENTS	LOCATION
Middle Ages and sixteenth century	High and low nobility, counts/dukes	Close to river or stream, spread along the edge of the Veluwe.
1600-1800	Regent families from Arnhem	Close to Arnhem, along roads out of the city (Amsterdamseweg, Utrechtseweg, Rijksstraatweg).
1800-1940	Returning colonials, new elite like bankers and industrialists (mainly from the western part of country), occasionally nobility.	Spread out along the Veluwezoom, close to new rail and tram lines, but also existing roads, as in Oosterbeek, Wageningen and Ellecom. From 1900: located higher on the glacial ridge.

expressly incorporated as an aesthetic element. On the De Kamp or Langenberg estate, an area that was originally part of the domains of Doorwerth castle, a country house in the Gooi country house style was built in around 1920, surrounded by a then-fashionable heather garden with conifers and a pond (fig. 9).²²

During the Second World War the construction of new country houses came to an abrupt end. The period from 1940 to 1945 accordingly marks a break in Dutch country house and estate history. Indeed, in the Veluwezoom the war even spelt the end for several country houses and landed estates. In September 1944, as part of Operation Market Garden, the allied forces launched the Battle of Arnhem. For two months there was heavy fighting in and around the city. The impact on the once so Arcadian landscape of landed estates and castles was devastating. De Duno, Belmonte, Hemelse Berg, Bato's Wijk and De Oorsprong were completely destroyed.²³ Other estates suffered significant damage.

LANDSCAPE IN A STATE OF FLUX

If we look at Gelders Arcadia through the ages we find similar patterns of creation, use and design of country house and landed estates in different periods (Table 1). Our analysis then allows us to consider Gelders Arcadia – at a higher level of abstraction – as a country house estate landscape. As far as the similar patterns are concerned, new country houses were generally built by new elites, each with different desires, prospects and ambitions. That was reflected in the characteristic structure, design and layout of the new properties. Conversely, the motives of the respective elites in designing their country life in the Veluwezoom differ from one period to another.

With respect to economic exploitation, it is noticeable that the scale of the landholdings decreased in successive periods: land continued to be a good investment, but its importance as a source of income for the owner steadily decreased. Originally medieval landed estates like Doorwerth and Middachten were characterized by landholdings ranging from 500 to 1500 hectares and comprising different types of landscape (from

ARCHITECTURE	LANDSCAPE	EXAMPLES
Defensible castles (inc. Gothic and Renaissance). From c. 1600 converted into country houses.	Very large estate reaching from river (washlands) via farming lands and location of main house and outbuildings, to higher land with heath, forest, sheep drifts and hunting grounds. Geometric park (Renaissance), ponds and networks of allées. Watermills (mainly grain). along spring-fed streams.	Biljoen (1067), Middachten (1190), Gelderse Toren (twelfth century?), Doorwerth (1260), Rosendael (1314)
Baroque, Dutch classicism, French Louis styles.	Large estates with profitable farmland and at their core a temporary country home. Often arising from former monastic property. Geometric park (Baroque and Rococo), ponds, networks of allées and hunting grounds. From late eighteenth century landscape park with cascades. Watermills (mainly grain and paper) along spring-fed streams (often dismantled in nineteenth century and replaced by cascades).	Klarenbeek (1615), Zypendaal (1649), Boschveld (c. 1650), Warnsborn (1650), Lichtenbeek (1651), Rhederoord (1657; 1743), Hemelse Berg (1735), Sonsbeek (1742), Hartenstein (1779), Duno (1794)
Neoclassicism, neo-renaissance, neo-Gothic, eclecticism, chalet style. From 1900: new historicizing style, cottage style, English country house style and Gooi country house style.	Relatively small properties, geared to recreational use and enjoyment of nature. Mixture of utility and beauty. Principally (romantic) landscape style and mixed garden style.	Sterrenberg (1801), Bronbeek (1820), Keijenberg (c. 1820), Valkenberg (1834), Pietersberg (1836), Belmonte (1843), Bato's Wijk (1845), Rhederhof (1850), Hinkeloord (1855), Villa Sanoer (1887), Dorskamp (1906), De Leemkuil (1909), The Hillock (1918), Laag-Wolfheze (1919), Varenheuvel (1938).

wet land in the floodplains of rivers Rhine and IJssel to dry land on the edge of the Veluwe) and a variety of functions. This differs markedly from early twentieth-century country house estates like De Kamp and Laag-Wolfheze, where the heath was no longer a vital part of an agrarian system. So although the country house and landed estates were established for both economic and aesthetic purposes in every period, the imperative to 'live from the land' diminished; the practical aspect was less obviously apparent. On the other hand one could also say that the joys of country life and domestic amenity acquired a greater significance in the choice of location and the design of country house and landed estates.

Another factor that influenced when and where new country house and landed estates were built was the availability of land. The actual moment when individual country houses were resold will often have been a matter of chance. But here, too, there are sometimes commonalities to be found between various country houses: the release of monastic lands or the sale of large landed estates and their subsequent division into smaller units could be a common starting point for the next generation of country houses.

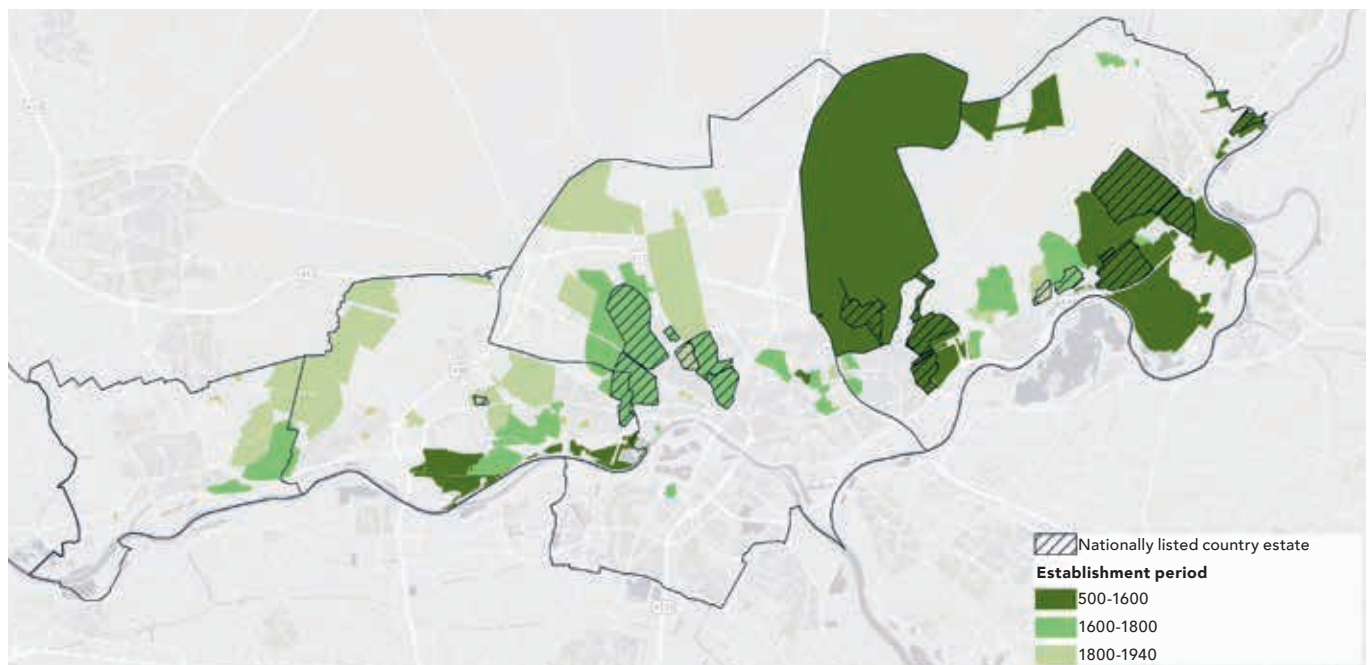
Finally, a third aspect cannot go unmentioned: the influence of transport routes on the location of country houses and landed estates. In the nineteenth century the railway network was of particular importance. In the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century it was along these lines that the historical country house nucleus around Arnhem expanded dramatically. At a somewhat more abstract level you could say that for the estate landscape of

Gelders Arcadia, each successive act of cultivation increased the attractiveness of an estate for the next transformation. The progressive cultivation of the surroundings of Arnhem accelerated in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century thanks to the re-evaluation of the hilly and lushly vegetated area in landscape garden design. The appeal of the old core of Gelders Arcadia close to Arnhem was so great that more distant areas were able to profit from it as soon as they became more accessible.

PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN ESTATE LANDSCAPE: THE GELDERS ARCADIA PROJECT

The socio-geographic analysis of Gelders Arcadia and the resulting area- and ensemble-oriented approach formed the basis for the Gelders Arcadia project, launched in 2007. It entails a collaboration between heritage organisation Gelders Genootschap, the municipalities of Arnhem, Renkum, Rheden, Rozendaal and Wageningen, the province of Gelderland and the private and institutional estate owners. Greatly anticipating the introduction of the Environmental Act (scheduled for 2023), the project has provided insight into both the individual ensembles of country house and accompanying grounds, and the overarching regional characteristics and qualities of the estate landscape as a whole (fig. 10). A mere fifteen of the over one hundred estates that make up Gelders Arcadia are listed as national monuments, although it should be noted that many structures of high cultural-historical value, such as king's roads and distinct areas like old forests, arable fields and wastelands, do not qualify for protection. This is why it was important to survey and

10. Establishment period of country estates, with present-day nationally listed estates (author)



analyse structures like avenues, king's highways, springs and sight lines that extend beyond estate and municipal boundaries.

The results of the geographical analysis of Gelders Arcadia produced, among other things, the following three approaches: awareness of the entire collection of over 100 country houses and landed estates (and not just the nationally listed estates as in the past); a focus on country houses and landed estates as coherent heritage ensembles, including understanding of the societal, economic, landscape and political factors that contributed to their development and design; and the realization that country estates, thanks to their large number and individual size and values, are fundamental to the character of the living environment, in the past as well as in the present and the future.

These three approaches acquired concrete form in

a cartographic survey of the entire estate landscape of Gelders Arcadia including all the wholly and partially surviving heritage ensembles, and in their embedding in municipal and provincial policy. The twofold analysis of individual country houses on the one hand, and the country house landscape at regional level on the other, has formed the basis for discussions with government authorities, owners and other stakeholders aimed at formulating possible solutions to contemporary challenges and problems. Thinking on two levels of scale led to an improvement in municipal and provincial policy and formed the basis for better cooperation at local and regional levels. 'Gelders Arcadia' is now a 'learning case' within the international Inno-castle project, a collaboration between partners from the Netherlands, Belgium, Romania, the United Kingdom and Spain.²⁴

NOTES

- 1 This article refers to both landed estates and country houses. A country house is literally a house 'outside' the city, in the countryside. Here the owners were able to relax and to receive guests. Most country houses were used as a summer residence. A country house could be part of a larger landed estate: a very extensive landholding with economically important areas like woods, farmland and pasture.
- 2 I.A. Nijhoff, *Geldersch Arkadia, of wandeling over Biljoen en Beekhuizen*, Arnhem 1820, 1.
- 3 The Second World War signified a break in Dutch country house history. There was one final phase involving the creation of new 'Natuurschoonwet' estates after 1950, although they were mainly concentrated on the Veluwe Massif north of the Veluwezoom. This last phase is not dealt with here.
- 4 M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House. A Social and Architectural History*, London 1978, 2.
- 5 J. Jas et al. (eds.), *Kastelen in Gelderland*, Utrecht 2013.
- 6 S. Zeefat and E. Storms-Smeets, *Landgoed Doorwerth. Cultuurhistorische analyse en waardstelling*, Gelders Genootschap report, Arnhem 2021.
- 7 Manorial rights, such as the hunting rights that were linked to noble landed estates dating from the Middle Ages, remained of great importance to the owners for a very long time. To learn more about hunting on Dutch landed estates: C. Gietman et al., *De jacht. Een cultuurgeschiedenis van jager, dier en landschap*, Hilversum 2021.
- 8 B. Olde Meierink and E. Storms-Smeets, 'Transformatie en nieuwbouw. Adellijke en burgerlijke buitenplaatsen in Gelderland (1609-1672)', in: Y. Kuiper and B. Olde Meierink (eds.), *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw. De rijkdom van het buitenleven in de Republiek*, Hilversum 2015, 180-207.
- 9 C. van der Genugten, 'De Koningsberg op Rosendaal, deel 1', *Ambt & Heerlijkheid* 62 (2016), 28-30.
- 10 D. Koper-Mosterd and H. Tromp, 'De tuinen en het park van Middachten', in: T. Hoekstra (ed.), *Middachten. Huis en Heerlijkheid*, Utrecht 2000, 11.
- 11 G.A. Kuyk, 'De geschiedenis van het landgoed Sonsbeek bij Arnhem', *Bijdragen en mededeelingen der Vereeniging Gelre*, vol. xvii, Arnhem 1906, 85-119.
- 12 J. Vredenberg, 'Landgoederen en buitenplaatsen', in: F. Keveling Buisman and I. Jacobs, *Arnhem van 1700 tot 1900*, Utrecht 2009, 49-51.
- 13 Olde Meierink and Storms 2015 (note 8), 203-205.
- 14 A. Markus, *Arnhem omstreeks het midden der vorige eeuw. Met geschiedkundige aantekeningen, platen en kaarten*, Arnhem 1907, 482. The name 'De Syp' was most probably related to natural water sources (in Dutch 'sijpelen' means to trickle). A 1667 map by I. van Geelkercken identifies the southern sources as De Sijp. GA, 0306 *Commanderij van St. Jan te Arnhem*, no. 207: Delineatie ofte landt carte en oik de specificatie van nieuwe aengemaekte landen in den Kattenpoel in 't jaar 1667, door I. van Geelkercken.
- 15 Olde Meierink and Storms-Smeets 2015 (note 8), 200; C.J.M. Schulte, "'De Soete Ruste van een aangenaam Buijtenleven'. De familie Brantsen en haar buitenplaats Zypendaal in Arnhem', *Arnhem de Genoeglijkste* 29, Arnhem 2009, 138-157.
- 16 GA 0452 *Familie Brantsen*, inv. no. 59, *Magescheid tussen de kinderen van Mr. Johan Brantsen en wijlen Hester Henriette de Vree. In duplo*, 1765. Wayampibo was sold in 1822, but Vossenburg and Onverwacht remained the property of a large number of shareholders and the Brantsen family (of Zypendaal and Rhederoord), certainly until the end of the nineteenth century. See also: H.E. Lamur, *The production of sugar and the reproduction of slaves at Vossenburg, Suriname, 1705-1863*, Amsterdam 1987; B. Koene, *De mensen van Vossenburg en Wayampibo. Twee Surinaamse plantages in de slaventijd*, Hilversum 2019.
- 17 E. Storms-Smeets, 'Vergeten erfgoed. De unieke terrassen van landgoed Zypendaal', in: T. Hermans et al. (eds.), *'De Laghende Vallei'. Recent onderzoek op het gebied van kastelen en buitenplaatsen in Gelderland* (Nederlandse Kastelenstudies vol. 3), Zwolle 2020, 235-263.
- 18 D. van Veelen, J. Kapelle and U. Anema, *De schilders van de Veluwezoom*, Zwolle 2019; E. Storms-Smeets (ed.), *Gelders Arcadië. Atlas van een buitenplaatsenlandschap*, Utrecht 2011.
- 19 Van Veelen, Kapelle and Anema 2011 (note 19).
- 20 A.G. Schulte and C.J.M. Schulte-van Wersch, *Monumentaal groen. Kleine cultuurgeschiedenis van de Arnhemse parken*, Utrecht 1999; E. Storms-Smeets, 'From elite to public landscapes. The case of the Klarenbeek estate in Arnhem, 1880-1950', 7 (2016), 147-167.
- 21 Rising wages, the high cost of upkeep, declining incomes and inheritance taxes landed many country house estate owners in financial difficulties. Impoverished families sold off parts of their estate in order to keep their head above water. Although that usually proved to be no more than a postponement of the inevitable and eventually many private landed estates were sold to city councils, nature organizations,

- property developers and educational institutions.
- 22 Storms-Smeets 2011 (note 19) 146.
- 23 H. Timmerman, '1940-1945: oorlog aan de Veluwezoom', in: E. Storms-Smeets 2011 (note 19), 82-93; E. Storms-Smeets, 'Oorlog in Arcadië. Kastelen, buitenplaatsen en landgoederen in Gelderland, 1940-1945', in: T. Hermans et al. (eds.), *'Hier wonen wij! Is het niet prachtig!' Recent onderzoek op het gebied van kastelen en buitenplaatsen* (Nederlandse kastelenstudies vol. 2), Zwolle 2020, 199-207.
- 24 See also P. Thissen, 'Buitenplaatslandschappen in Gelderland. Interventies van overheden in verleden en heden', *Bulletin KNOB* 120 (2021) 4, 47-61.

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THE SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE ESTATE LANDSCAPE IN GELDERS ARCADIA

ELYZE STORMS-SMEETS

For many centuries, the landscape and cultural history of the Netherlands have been influenced by the rural estates of large landowners. Their country houses with gardens, parks and farmland formed an important combination of practical aspects of economic management and aesthetic landscaping. Many castles or country houses were linked to large landholdings of several hundred, sometimes even thousands of hectares, as in the case of the Veluwezoom in the Province of Gelderland. Since the late Middle Ages this area, now known as Gelders Arcadia, has been popular with the landed elite, whose ranks have included noble families, stadtholders, city regents and bankers. The undulating landscape, the rivers and brooks and the fertile land was ideally suited to the creation of the desired combination of productive and aesthetic landscapes.

One of the special aspects of the Gelders Arcadia estate zone is that it represents nearly every stage in the development of the Dutch country estate, from the emergence of castles and lordships (c. 500-1600), to the foundation of small country retreats by town regents (c. 1600-1800), and the creation of villa-like country estates for a new elite of bankers, industrialists and lawyers (c. 1800-1940). The historic country houses and landed estates are manifestations of their time and therefore very diverse, ranging from transformed noble castles with large landholdings to the rural retreats of town regents to villa-like country houses for the newly wealthy. Not only the architecture of the house and park, but also the use, the anchoring in the cultural landscape and the social significance underwent development.

A historical-geographical approach was used to analyse location and distribution patterns and to investigate the size, character and functions of country estates in each period from an economic, political, societal and social perspective. It appears that the majority of new country houses and estates were created by a new elite of the newly rich, whereas the old elite continued to invest in their ancestral properties.

The motivation to invest in the establishment of a country seat differed per period. The landed and country estates featured both economic and aesthetic landscapes, although the former were less prominent in later periods.

This socio-historical-geographical approach has given us a better understanding of the various processes of estate creation, transformation and adaptation through time – knowledge that can also be used to reach well-founded decisions in the 21st century. The geographical approach for Gelders Arcadia has resulted in improved spatial policies through: 1. Attention to the entirety of country estates (rather than only those with listed status); 2. A focus on the country estate as a cohesive heritage ensemble, including an understanding of the social, economic, landscape and political factors that contributed to its development and design; 3. Recognition that the estates, thanks to their large number and individual sizes and qualities, have formed and will continue to form an important basis for the character of the living environment.



ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN GELDERLAND

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS,
PAST AND PRESENT

PAUL THISSEN

INTRODUCTION

Country house estate landscapes are often perceived as timeless places of relaxation and good taste.¹ But underlying all that beauty are the painstaking efforts of owners to maintain these landscapes, and the government interventions that have facilitated that maintenance since the beginning of the twentieth century.

The province of Gelderland has the highest number of country house estates protected under the

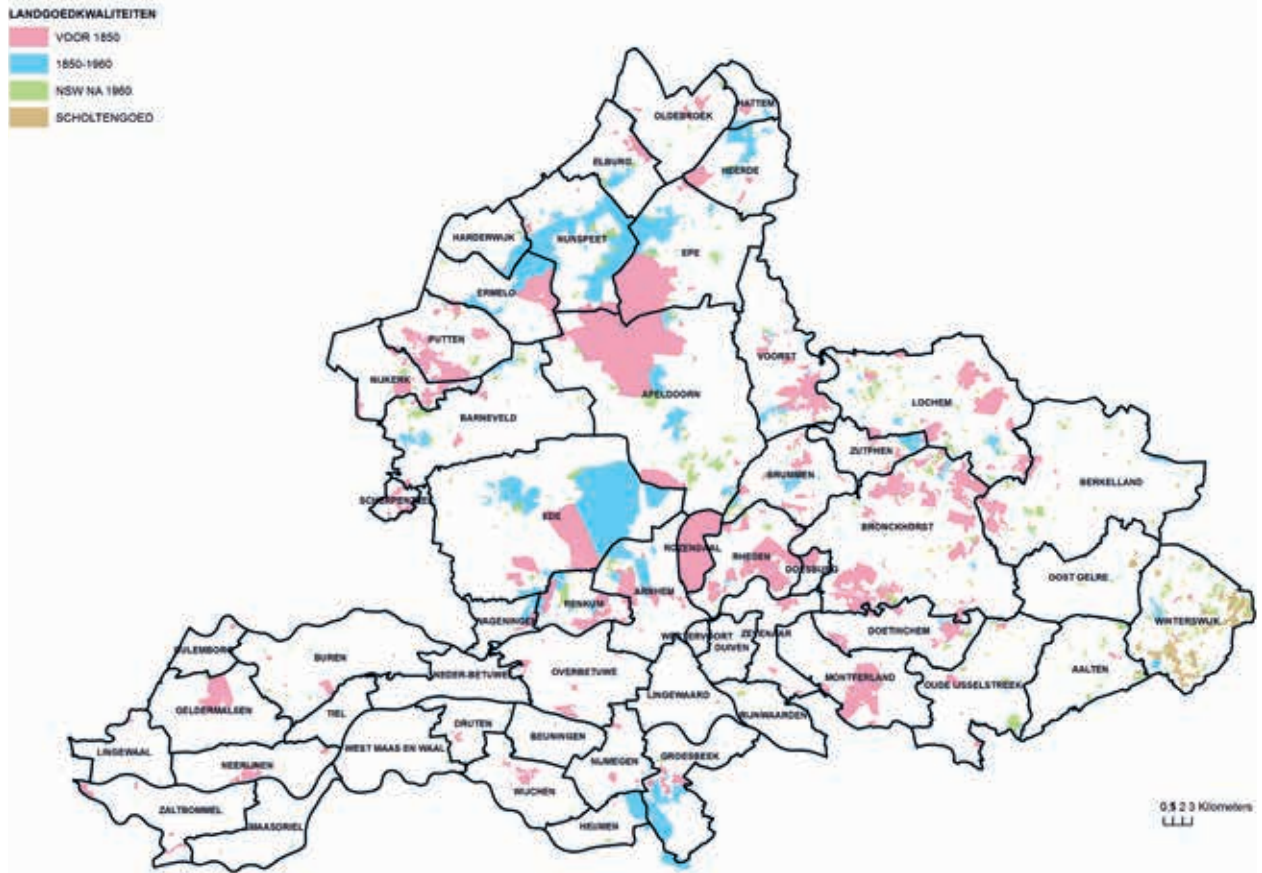
Heritage Act (119 out of 552), which are concentrated in estate landscapes.² These estate landscapes, which are vitally important for Gelderland, comprise areas of high cultural-historical, landscape, ecological and recreational tourism value. Henri van der Wyck (1927-2001), one of the first people in the Netherlands to recognize the coherence within and between country house estates, suggested that this characteristic should be the basis for new policy. Within Gelderland he identified estate landscapes in the southern Veluwezoom, centred around Arnhem, and in the Graafschap achter Zutphen (figs. 1 and 2).³

▲ 1. De Wiersse bij Vorden landed estate is a link in the estate landscape around the Baakse Beek (photo MVO TV)





2. Middachten castle and estate near De Steeg, seen from the IJsseldal looking towards the woodland areas of the Veluwe. Middachten, together with nearby estates like Avegoor, Hof te Dieren, Rhederoord and Valkenberg, is an unspoiled part of the Gelders Arcadië estate landscape Gelders Arcadië (photo MVO TV)



3. Preliminary map of estate qualities in Gelderland. The oldest and most important estates are in a band running from Wageningen across the municipalities of Renkum, Arnhem, Rozendaal and Rheden (collectively known as the southern Veluwezoom or Gelders Arcadië), the municipalities of Brummen and Voorst (southern IJssel valley) and, on the other side of the IJssel into the municipalities of Lochem, Zutphen and Bronckhorst (Graafschap) (Elyze Storms-Smeets, Gelders Genootschap for the Province of Gelderland, 2019)

He regarded the southern Veluwezoom as one of the most significant estate landscapes in the Netherlands.⁴

What makes these landscapes so special? The estate landscapes make for an attractive live/work environment and offer a good range of recreational tourism options, high quality nature and landscape, and a relatively intact cultural-historical landscape.⁵ At the request of the provincial government, Gelders Genootschap produced a provisional map of the surviving historical landscape qualities, which turn out to cover a much greater area than that of the legally protected estate ensembles (fig. 3).

This article provides a short historical overview of government involvement in the preservation of historical castles, country house estates and landed estates in Gelderland and of the zones in which they appear in clusters. Government involvement is not confined to the provincial level but encompasses both national laws and regulations and local government interventions. What was the background to these interventions, which government bodies were and are involved, and what can we learn from it?

ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN AN INCREASINGLY URBANIZED COUNTRY

The relation between government authorities and country house or landed estates has a long history. The cohort of leading figures in the Netherlands government and the cohort of country house and landed estate owners was virtually well into the Batavian-French period (1795-1813). In Gelderland this situation persisted into the first half of the twentieth century. The nobility and patricians dominated public administration and also owned many castles, country houses and landed estates. This gave them authority over the sale, subdivision and accessibility of such estates. At a higher level of scale that naturally also affected the survival and the attractiveness of the estate landscapes as a whole.⁶

Around the turn of the twentieth century people all over the country started to become concerned about the damage that urbanization was inflicting on nature and the landscape. That concern extended to the degradation and disappearance of estate landscapes; country houses and landed estates were susceptible to subdivision for the construction of upmarket residen-

tial districts ('villa parks') and other urban developments, fragmentation by the construction of infrastructure, and closure because of the influx of visitors.⁷ What worried the public was not so much the loss of the cultural values of the estate landscapes, as the disappearance of accessible and attractive green areas close to the city. But why were these private landowners so keen to dispose of their beautiful estates around 1900? It was mainly to do with high taxes and rising wages. Inheritance tax was raised at the end of the nineteenth century and again in 1911. In addition, landowners had to pay more in wealth taxes as the market value of their estate rose.⁸

To appease the landowners, the government amended the Personal Income Tax Act in 1896, granting landowners who opened their estates to the public a modest tax benefit.⁹ This nationwide measure also extended to the numerous country house estates in Gelderland.

One private initiative aimed at supporting the preservation of country house and landed estates was the foundation in 1905 of the Vereeniging tot behoud van

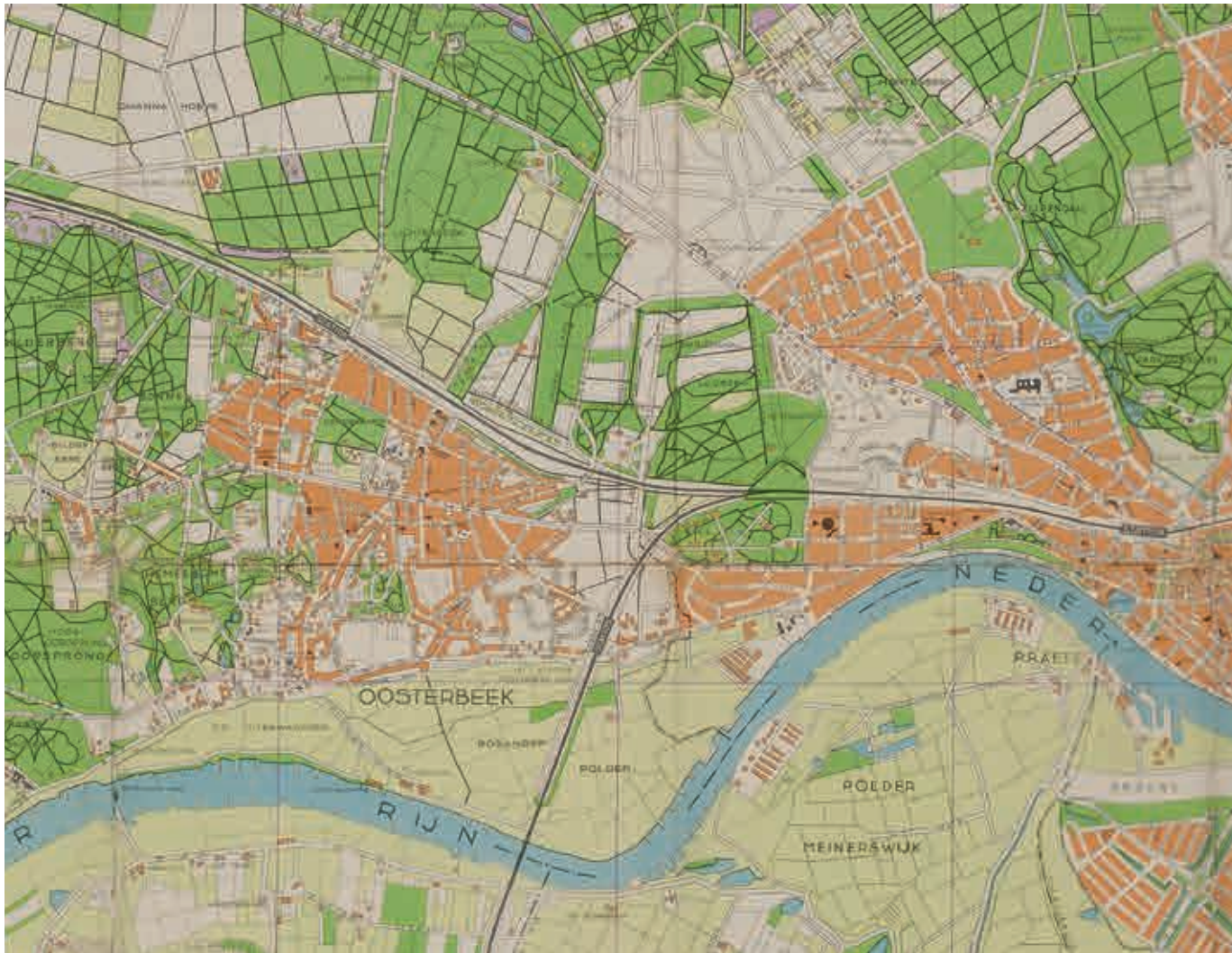
Natuurmonumenten, or Natuurmonumenten for short (Dutch Society for Nature Conservation). This is usually seen as marking the start of an ecologically motivated nature conservancy movement. But the mainspring was just as much the aspiration to preserve natural-cultural landscapes, including estate landscapes, based on cultural-historical and aesthetic considerations.¹⁰ This also stemmed from the fact that the owners of country house and landed estates had close ties with Natuurmonumenten.¹¹

ARNHEM AND NIJMEGEN: COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATES FOR THE CITY

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century Gelderland estate landscapes in the vicinity of the two largest cities, Arnhem and Nijmegen, fell prey to villa park development. To prevent further demolition and subdivision and to safeguard long-term recreational possibilities for the expanding city, Arnhem's city council proceeded to purchase two landed estates: Klarenbeek (1886) and Sonsbeek (1899) (fig. 4). In so doing it killed two birds with one stone: in



4. Klarenbeek estate in 1913. The city of Arnhem bought Klarenbeek to preserve part of it as a walking park for the city; the other part was re-developed for housing (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)



5. The green wedges in the urban fabric of Arnhem owe their existence to the preservation of historical country estates, in some cases as a result of being purchased by the municipality (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

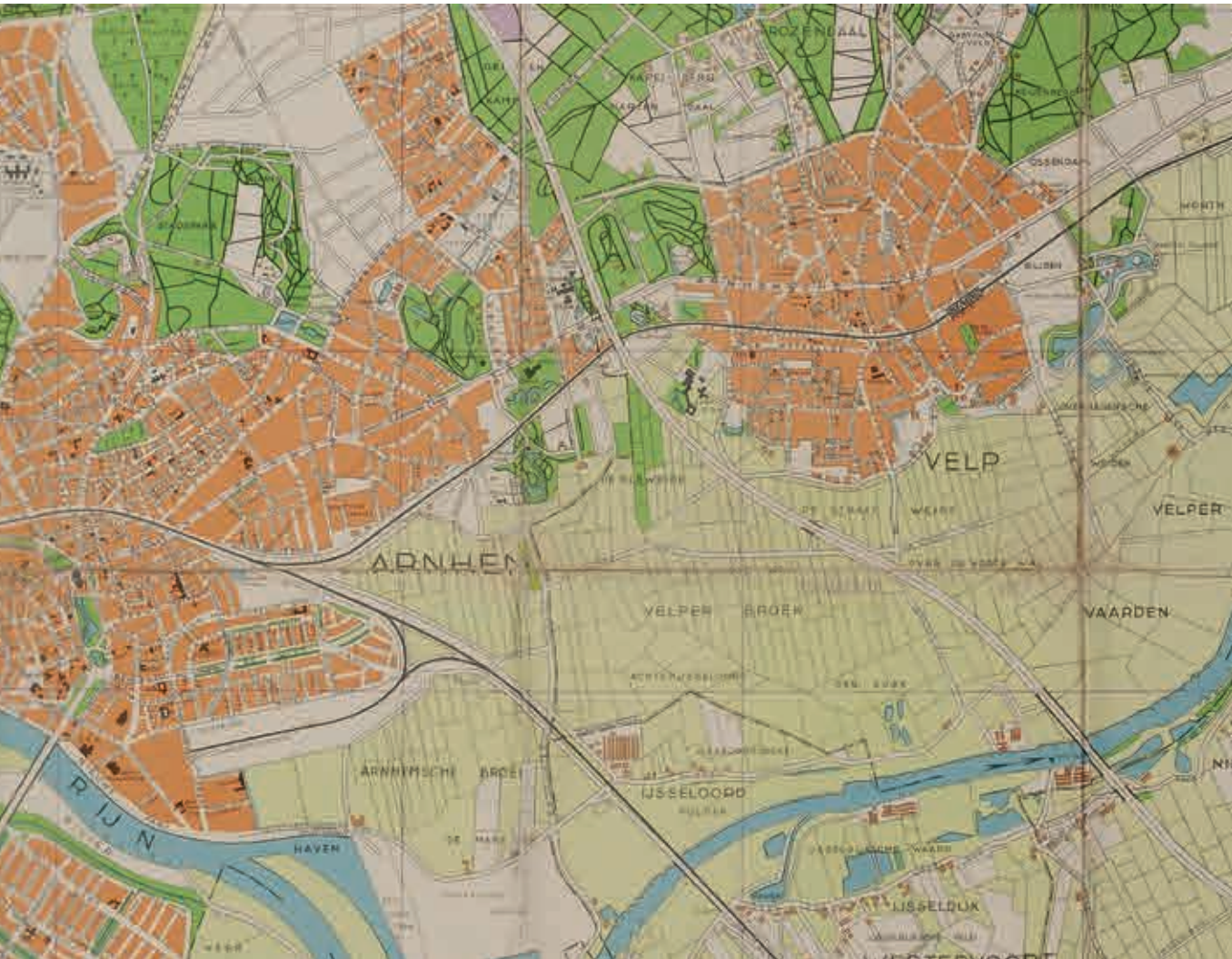
- ▶ 6. Mariënbosch, an old country estate purchased by the municipality of Nijmegen in the 1920s and turned into a woodland walking area for the expanding city (photo Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed)

both cases one section of the grounds was developed as a residential area while another section was set aside for walkers. The public walking parks enjoyed the beautifully laid out grounds of the previously private parks, with their alternating and attractive vistas, well-cared-for paths and centuries-old trees. In 1925, the city took over the management of Sonsbeek's neighbouring estate, Zypendaal, which it subsequently purchased in 1930 (fig. 5).¹²

In the 1920s Nijmegen's city council bought up land in order to safeguard a green zone of country house estates and woods from subdivision for urban expansion. Local nobleman and politician, Marinus van der Goes van Naters (1900-2005) played a crucial role. Via his extensive network of contacts among regional and national politicians, administrators, estate owners and nature conservationists, including the members of the Nijmeegsche Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurschoon

(a local conservation organization founded in 1925), he managed to persuade the council to buy up country house and landed estates on the glacial ridge in what was then the urban periphery. The council acquired Mariënbosch and adjoining grounds for a 'wood with footpaths' (fig. 6), followed by the Vier Perken woods and the Brakkenstein estate.¹³ And when Gelders Landschap wanted to acquire the Heerlijkheid Beek and the Bronhuize estates in the then municipality of Ubbergen near Nijmegen, the Nijmeegsche Vereniging tot Behoud van Natuurschoon was able to help out.

Shortly after the Second World War, Van der Goes van Naters also ensured that the nearby, previously German, Wylerberg estate was permanently incorporated into Dutch territory. Thanks to its acquisition by Staatsbosbeheer (which manages forests and nature reserves) it has remained intact and accessible.¹⁴ The





7. Castle Biljoen in Velp. Together with Beekhuizen it was a prestigious private landed estate. Natuurmonumenten acquired Beekhuizen early on; Biljoen was acquired much later by Geldersch Landschap (photo Henk Monster)

end result was the preservation of the estate landscape on the glacial ridge in Beek-Ubbergen and the adjoining section of the (former) municipality of Groesbeek.

NATUURSCHOONWET 1928

After the First World War many landed estates disappeared due to financial and economic causes. In 1926, before the government started getting involved, Natuurmonumenten and the Dutch motoring organization ANWB organized an ‘emergency meeting’. The boards and higher echelons of both organizations included many private landowners. Partly in response to public concern, the government swung into action and in 1928 the parliament approved the *Natuurschoonwet* (NSW, Nature Conservation Act). The NSW offered (and still offers) private estate owners an opportunity to secure a tax benefit in exchange for maintaining their slice of ‘natural beauty’ and opening it to the public. This benefited both society and the private landowner. But what exactly does the act regulate with respect to ‘natural beauty’, ‘tax benefit’ and ‘maintenance’? Natural beauty refers to the aesthetic quality associated with the formal features of landed and country house estates. The taxation benefits relate to wealth and inheritance. Conservation of natural beauty amounts to an obligation to maintain the estate and open it to walkers for a period of at least 25 years.¹⁵ After the act had come into effect many estate owners applied to take part. In the eastern part of the Netherlands, up to the early 1940s, some five hundred landed estates were brought under the purview of the

legislation, 62 per cent of which were in Gelderland and Overijssel. The vast majority were owned by the nobility.¹⁶

THE ‘SAFETY NET’ OF NATUURMONUMENTEN AND GELDERSCH LANDSCHAP

In the first decades of the twentieth century *Natuurmonumenten* was successful in promoting government measures to protect publicly accessible areas of natural beauty. From 1911 onwards, however, the organization was itself active in Gelderland, buying up properties with high natural and landscape values, many of them landed estates. Their success can be partly attributed to the overlap between its own networks and those of the landowning nobles in this province. Long-standing personal relations were more likely to lead to a transfer of ownership. Even so, the former landowners must have had mixed feelings about selling their properties: however relieved they might have been to leave the upkeep to *Natuurmonumenten*, that did not diminish the pain of having to sell.¹⁷

Natuurmonumenten’s first purchase was the Hagenau estate and the Carolinaberg (municipality of Rheden), part of the family of Orange’s former estate around the Hof te Dieren. In 1919 *Natuurmonumenten* bought the nearby Rhederoord country house and the surrounding park designed by the celebrated German landscape architect Eduard Petzold (1815-1891). The organization also bought up a whole series of other properties in the Veluwezoom east of Arnhem. In addi-



8. Warnsborn estate near Arnhem was expropriated, along with its land, in around 1930 to prevent it being subdivided for the construction of villas (photo C. Gouwenaar)

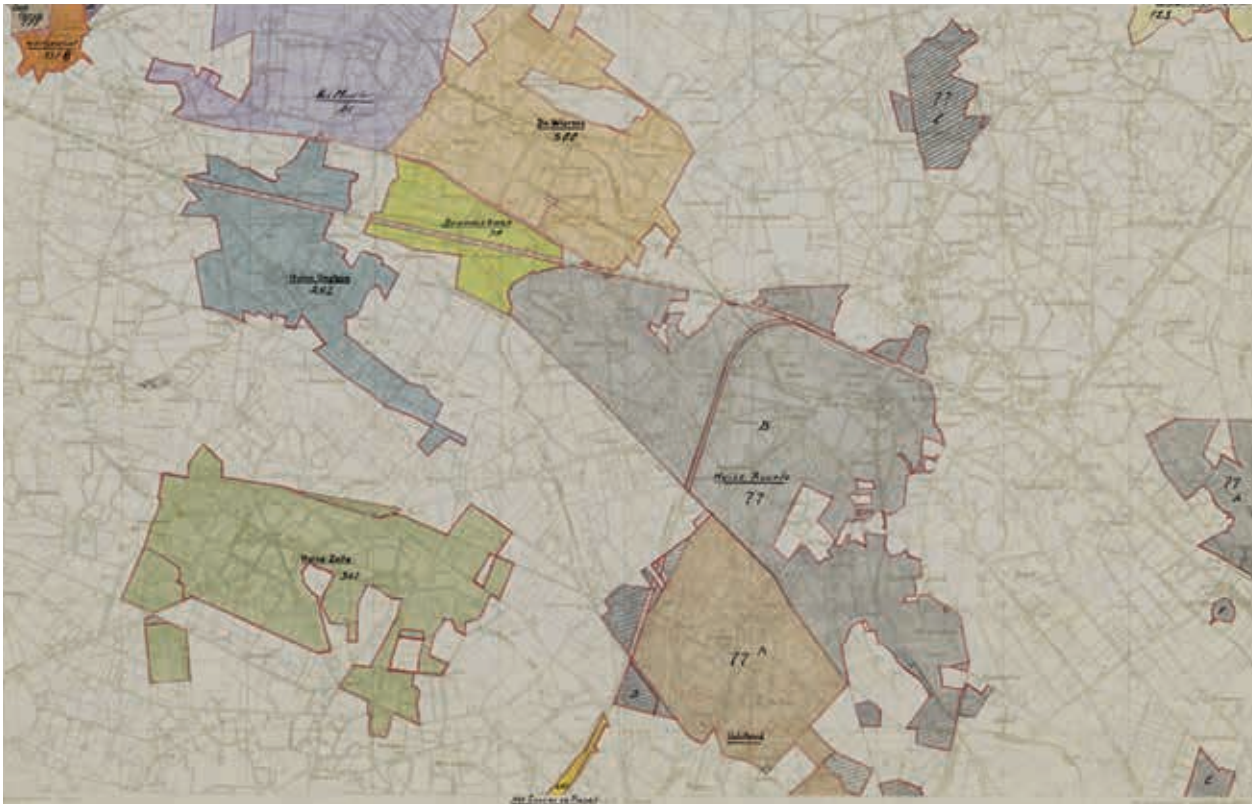
tion to stately homes with designed landscapes like Beekhuizen, split off from the Biljoen landed estate, it also acquired the accompanying heathlands and woods (fig. 7). In these early years Natuurmonumenten was interested in both the cultural and the ecological merits of the lands it was buying. At the end of the 1930s it merged all these properties to create Nationaal Park Veluwezoom.¹⁸

Natuurmonumenten's acquisition of landed estates and nature areas may have been a success in the Veluwezoom, but in the Province as a whole it was not easy for a national organization to make acquisitions. This did not escape the keen eye of one of the association's driving forces, the Amsterdammer Pieter van Tienhoven (1875-1953). He was perfectly at home in the world of estate owners, noble or otherwise, and realized that in many places Natuurmonumenten lacked the appropriate networks and reputation to acquire properties.¹⁹ To ensure the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of green areas elsewhere in the province, he championed the creation of a provincial landscape organization that could assume that task. To this end, Van Tienhoven contacted the King's Commissioner for the Province of Gelderland, Schelto van Heemstra (1879-1960). In 1929, Van Heemstra established the Geldersch Landschap foundation, followed in 1940 by the Vrienden der Geldersche Kasteelen foundation, nowadays known collectively as Geldersch Landschap & Kasteelen (GLK). For landowners who were having difficulty maintaining their property, these foundations, overseen by a familiar and

trusted regional board, acted as a safety net, a function that GLK continued to fulfil after the war.²⁰

One of Geldersch Landschap's first achievements, in 1930, was the preservation of the centuries-old landed estates of Warnsborn and Vijverberg near Arnhem (fig. 8). Threatened with demolition to make way for upmarket residential developments, the estates were saved by the combined efforts of the city council, Geldersch Landschap, the King's Commissioner and the State. What Geldersch Landschap would not have been able to achieve alone, this alliance was able to accomplish: expropriation for the benefit of preservation.²¹ This was crucial to preserving the estate landscapes to the north of the centre of Arnhem.

Let us pause briefly to summarize the interaction between private initiatives and government involvement for the preservation and public opening of country houses and landed estates from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War. During this period the essentially private but government-supported Natuurmonumenten and Geldersch Landschap organizations and local councils achieved success through the purchase of landed properties. The national government, which had previously hindered rather than encouraged the preservation of contiguous green areas changed tack in 1928 with the *Natuurschoonwet*. In this way, even without the concept of 'estate landscapes' with its strong cultural-historical connotations, significant portions of culturally and historically important estates were preserved for



9. NSW landed estates in part of the estate landscape of De Graafschap c. 1950, plotted by Staatsbosbeheer (Beeldbank vU Amsterdam)

future generations as a ‘byproduct’ of the opening up of ‘areas of natural beauty’.

Increasing government support for country houses and landed estates

The Natuurschoonwet continued to serve its purpose after the war as well. Many private landowners, despite the increasingly mild fiscal climate, ended up in financial difficulties, whereupon they either availed themselves of the provisions of the Act or opted to sell to a provincial landscape organization, or to Natuurmonumenten and, to a lesser extent, Staatsbosbeheer. By 1950, a total of 667 landed estates fell under Natuurschoonwet, of which almost half were in Gelderland. These ‘NSW’ estates had a combined surface area of around 90,000 hectares. Again, almost half of this was in Gelderland, close to eight per cent of the total area of the province (fig. 9).²²

During the major post-war land consolidation and development operations, the State and the provinces spared the estate landscapes to a certain extent for the sake of natural beauty and heritage management. From the 1960s onwards a series of related land consolidations were carried out in the Graafschap landed estates zone resulting in a drastic reduction in water levels. So as not to disrupt the stream structure in this landscape, a diversion was dug from the upper course

of the Baakse Beek to the Veengoot.²³ The estates themselves were for the most part kept out of the land consolidation blocks. The Graafschap estate landscape escaped relatively untouched, managing to retain its essential character and the many visually defining planting elements.²⁴ The contrast in landscape compared with the surrounding farming areas became even greater because of the scale enlargement effected by land consolidation, due in part to the razing of the planting structures that had been so crucial to the perception of the landscape. Another major drawback of land consolidation was the sharp decrease in the supply of river water and seepage. Cultural-historical elements like drainage systems, ponds and lakes, and seepage-dependent vegetation suffered greatly from this.²⁵

While it is true that governments expanded the grants system designed to help landowners, those same governments were also pressing ahead with urbanization. The construction of new and the widening of existing roads, the construction of residential areas and the rezoning of country houses so that they could be turned into offices resulted in fragmentation and disruption of the estate landscapes. In the southern Veluwezoom, in Arnhem and Renkum in particular, that inevitably impacted the estate landscape, even though it retained a recognizable regional character.²⁶

From the 1960s onwards private landowners were faced with a new problem. The rapid rise in wages meant that staff became virtually unaffordable. This in turn led to the neglect of stately homes, gardens, parks and the networks of allées. On the other hand, the grant schemes available to estate owners for nature, forestry, farming and heritage were expanded. One side effect of this was that the owners became more and more dependent on government support.²⁷ While many country houses and landed estates managed to survive, the lack of adequate maintenance meant that the networks of allées disintegrated and the fine detailing of most gardens and parks disappeared.

COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN SPATIAL POLICY

In Gelderland, the emergence of spatial planning at a national level, which reached a milestone in 1965 with the *Wet op de Ruimtelijke Ordening* (WRO, Spatial Planning Act), resulted in regional plans that took account of the qualities of estate zones. The initial goal was to protect recreationally attractive natural areas from large-scale damage. One example is *Streekplan Veluwe*, which singled out estate zones on the area's south-eastern flank. The main focus of this plan was on the conservation of cultural and natural values; interrelated areas were protected against supra-local cut-throughs like motorways.²⁸

In 2005 the concept of 'valued landscapes' was introduced into spatial policy. In areas such as those around Hummelo and Keppel/Slangenburg, the Graafschap, the Veluwe Massif (southern edge) and the southern IJssel valley, this value derived from the presence of historical landed estates and country houses. For these landscapes a list of core qualities was drawn up, which were supposed to inform spatial development and provide a framework for municipal policy.

This policy was scaled up in *Omgevingsvisie Gelderland 2015* and carried forward under the name *Nationale Landschappen* (national landscapes). These policies are still in force. The core qualities associated with historical estates are of particular importance in relation to *Nationaal Landschap Veluwe* (southern and south-eastern flank) and *Nationaal Landschap De Graafschap*.²⁹

In parallel with this, provincial government policy accorded nature greater weight in the 1990s with the introduction of regulations designed to facilitate not just preservation, but also nature development. Many landed estates were incorporated into the *Ecologische Hoofdstructuur* (EHS, National Ecological Network) introduced in 1990.³⁰ While this resulted in a strong emphasis on nature development, spatial-cultural aspects of the estate landscapes received rather less

attention. This focus on ecological values had already been reflected in *Natuurmonumenten's* purchase, layout and management of properties, where the ecological aspect was paramount.³¹

Meanwhile, GLK continued to act as a safety net for private landowners wanting to sell their property. In 1989 over half of GLK's properties were landed estates and country houses. The province continued to support the foundation via co-financing of the purchase costs.³² The aim was to prevent fragmentation and demolition, to safeguard heritage and to expand the national ecological network. On many of its properties, the GLK helped to preserve and repair the distinctive cultural-historical character while also enhancing the ecological values. These properties contribute significantly to the current estate landscapes on the flanks of the Veluwe, in the Graafschap and in the Rijk van Nijmegen.

In the early 1970s, thanks in part to input from the *Stichting tot Behoud van Particuliere Historische Buitenplaatsen* (PHB, Foundation for the Preservation of Private Historical Estates), the national government acknowledged the 'ensemble value' of many privately owned estates. This led to the designation, under the *Monumentenwet* (now *Erfgoedwet*), of 552 'Complexes of protected historical country estates', 119 of which were in Gelderland. These enjoy spatial planning protection and are eligible for government grants. Since 1983 owners have been able to apply for a grant covering 80 per cent of the costs of restoration; ten years later there was also a government grant for engaging expert landscape gardeners. The latter were required to carry out their work on the basis of historical research, which resulted in more attention being paid to the cultural-historical value of green infrastructure.³³ These arrangements were later replaced by others with the same goal.

In summary, we can say that after the Second World War up until the new millennium, the national government adopted more and more measures pertaining to the survival of estate landscapes. The disposition of private country houses and landed estates under the *Natuurschoonwet* and the acquisition of properties by the GLK foundation continued unabated but sweeping changes to the countryside also called for new measures. Landed estates needed to be excluded from any future large-scale land consolidation and to be given a place in future planning at the regional level. At the same time, recognition of the cultural value of landed estates and country houses resulted in new grants schemes for the restoration of buildings as well as the accompanying historical garden, park and landscape design. Generally speaking, there was evidence of greater recognition for the quality and significance of estate landscapes, but also of a fragmented government policy.



10. The reconstruction of the provincial highway provided the opportunity to enhance the designed landscape in the heart of the Hof te Dieren estate in the municipality of Rheden (photo MVO TV)

2000-2020: LARGER SCALE, INTEGRATED APPROACH

Over the past twenty years a more integrated approach to landed estates and country houses has been gaining ground. Housing, recreation and tourism income came to be regarded as social needs that could be catered to with the help of landed estates and country houses, whether privately owned or not.

Three projects proved to be of crucial importance here: research into estate landscapes in Gelderland from 2007 onwards, the Year of the Historic Country House Estate in 2012, and the evaluation of the Natuurschoonwet in 2014.

In 2007, at the behest of the province and municipalities of Gelderland, the Gelders Genootschap, an independent advisory organization for spatial quality, started to research estate landscapes at the regional level. It focused on two such landscapes: Gelders Arcadië, encompassing the five municipalities of the southern Veluwezoom, and ‘Langs IJssel and Berkel’, encompassing the six municipalities in the southern IJssel valley and the Graafschap.³⁴ One of the findings of these two studies was that the protection and preservation of individual country houses and landed estates benefits from a regional vision, in short, from thinking in terms of estate landscapes.

The Year of the Historic Country House Estate 2012 prompted a social cost-benefit analysis that demonstrated that the presence of high concentrations of grand country house estates (estate landscapes or

estate zones) delivered many more benefits than costs.³⁵ The greatest benefits were generated by housing, recreation and tourism. These findings helped to focus attention on estate landscapes within the provincial heritage programme, which has since expanded its efforts in this area. More grants and low-interest loans have been made available for tackling the backlog in the restoration of buildings on protected estates. According to Monumentenmonitor Gelderland, which keeps track of such things, there has been a gradual decrease in the restoration backlog for this category. And a start has been made in making up the huge arrears in the maintenance of green and blue heritage. When it comes to the restoration of gardens, parks, networks of allées and water features, research into earlier designs has become a best practice, together with re-design based on knowledge of the qualities and desired functions.

Finally, an evaluation of the Natuurschoonwet in 2014 concluded that it can still make a significant contribution to the preservation of country houses and landed estates.³⁶

TOWARDS AN AREA-BASED AND TASK-ORIENTED APPROACH

During the past fifteen years the formulation of core qualities to inform spatial planning has played an important role in regional policy. In the southern Veluwezoom (Gelders Arcadië) and the Achterhoek in

particular, historical country house and landed estates represent just such a core quality. Concentrations of these properties fall into the Nationaal Landschappen area category. It is crucial that the core values represented by the country houses and landed estates and their clusters remain intact when attempting to solve spatial issues. What spatial issues are these? *Omgevingsvisie Gaaf Gelderland* (Environmental vision for an unspoiled Gelderland) identifies seven key issues or tasks, including energy transition, climate adaptation and accommodating urban development.³⁷ In tackling these issues the previously formulated core qualities must be taken into account – for example, by creating quality guidelines for provincial roads: where these run through estate landscapes they should contribute to the qualities of these landscapes. One example of this approach is the reconstruction of the N348 near the Hof te Dieren estate in the municipality of Rheden (fig. 10).

Gelderland has also launched a project aimed at reformulating – with the help of municipalities – the spatial and landscape qualities of all the constituent areas of the province. Eleven regional guides are being prepared as an aid to working with the core qualities that are embedded in the environmental ordinance.

The policy for tackling the big spatial issues in the province of Gelderland while also respecting the core qualities of the estate landscapes and where possible enhancing them, requires additional external expertise and supra-regional collaboration. To this end the province has entered into a long-term collaboration with Delft University of Technology in the form of the project *Karakteristiek en Duurzaam Erfgoed Gelderland* (KaDeR, Characteristic and Sustainable Heritage

Gelderland), in which heritage owners and the organizations that make up the Gelderse Erfgoedalliantie (Gelderland Heritage Alliance) are closely involved. In the practice-based Living Labs, experience is gained, and results shared, leading to initiatives that are still ongoing. One of these is geared to linking the qualities of the Gelders Arcadië estate landscape with recreational tourism development. A second is aimed at the cautious implementation of climate adaptation measures in the Baakse Beek landed estate zone in the Achterhoek (fig. 11). The theme of a third initiative is what form ‘steering with qualities’ might acquire under the *Omgevingswet*. Apart from countering spatial fragmentation, it should entail identifying the core qualities and development aims, and then formulating appropriate design principles. This initiative is extremely important in areas with a lot of stately homes and landed estates. Provincial policy in Gelderland is chiefly focused on supporting municipalities so that they are able to guide developments on and around country houses and landed estates.³⁸

International collaboration takes place within the context of the Interreg Europe Programme. Gelderland, for example, is a partner in the project *INNOVATING policy instruments for historic CASTLES, manors and estates* (Innocastle).³⁹

The province’s grants schemes make it possible to conduct thorough research prior to actual investment, to formulate concrete steps for solving spatial issues in ‘task programmes’, to include sustainability measures from the outset in restoration projects, and to restore rather than simply maintaining historical green elements.

A more area-based approach to the preservation

11. Core qualities of the Baakse Beek estate zone in the municipality of Bronckhorst, formulated with an eye to water-related challenges (Bosch & Slabbers for the Rijn en IJssel water board, 2020)



and development of estate landscapes (in this context usually called 'estate zones') may also help to counteract the sometimes contradictory regulations. Regulations targeting a single aspect, say nature or farming, can have a counterproductive effect on landed estates. Landowners in estate zones are effectively steered in different directions, as Piet van Cruyningen demonstrated in the case of the Graafschap in 2015.⁴⁰ To the extent that this falls within its remit, the province endeavours to mitigate this by appointing an estate account holder whose task is to help owners by combining forces.

The province expects that this new approach will result in a more consistent policy at the larger scale and that heritage and spatial tasks will be more closely aligned. One example is the approach to the water system in the Baakse Beek area. Instead of being dealt with individually, country houses and landed estates were involved in water management and nature devel-

opment at the level of estate landscapes. Gelders Arcadië is a regional *belevingsgebied* (experience-rich area) in which the experience of the estate landscape is paramount.

In summary we can conclude that there has been a shift in government policy in the present century. Country houses and landed estates are no longer regarded as discrete entities, nor as mere repositories of timeless values like natural beauty and cultural history, nor as purely recreational areas. Viewed now as larger, regional entities, they are expected to help solve such pressing issues as adapting to climate change, increasing biodiversity and making farming sustainable. Accordingly, the government now finances not just worthwhile cultural-historical preservation, but also the activation of the problem-solving capacity of estate landscapes. In that respect, too, estate landscapes are crown jewels capable of making a real contribution to the solution of social issues.⁴¹

NOTES

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ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN GELDERLAND. GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS, PAST AND PRESENT

PAUL THISSEN

The Province of Gelderland has long boasted a large number of country houses and landed estates, which over time coalesced into estate landscapes around the historical capitals of the Duchy of Guelders quarters of Nijmegen, Arnhem and Zutphen.

Rapidly increasing urbanization from the end of the nineteenth century onwards threatened the coherence and accessibility of these landscapes. Gelderland's largest cities, Arnhem and Nijmegen, watched in dismay as many country houses and landed estates fell victim to subdivision and development. In response they started to buy up portions of that estate landscape to ensure that they would remain available to city dwellers. In addition, the 'safety net' provided by newly established nature and landscape organizations, in particular Natuurmonumenten and Geldersch Landschap & Kasteelen, also contributed to preservation and permanent accessibility by offering landed families the opportunity to keep their estate intact, albeit no longer under their ownership.

Similar motives – the need to preserve attractive, accessible walking areas for the increasingly urbanized society – underpinned the government's introduction of the Nature Conservation Act in 1928. The Act was invoked more frequently in Gelderland than in any other province. It promoted the opening up of private prop-

erties as well as the preservation of the cultural value of the kind of 'natural beauty' to be found on landed estates.

After the Second World War, in addition to resorting to the Nature Conservation Act, the owners of country houses and landed estates could avail themselves of an increasing variety of grants aimed at preserving (publicly accessible) nature, landscape and heritage, although the emphasis was firmly on nature. Estate landscapes like the Veluwezoom and the County of Zutphen were eventually safeguarded by a patchwork of different government regulations.

In the twenty-first century, government policy shifted towards providing financial support for both public and private contributions to nature, landscape and heritage by country houses and landed estates. This in turn has stimulated interest in estate landscapes. Instead of individual heritage-listed estates, the focus is now on areas with multiple country house and landed estates where there are spatial tasks waiting to be fulfilled: not just the preservation of natural beauty for outdoor recreation, but also spatial articulation, climate change adaptation, increased biodiversity and sustainable agriculture. Interest in design, both past and present, has burgeoned thanks to this development.

Climate change and urbanization have substantial ramifications for the management and protection of cultural-historical landscapes. This is especially true for historical estate landscapes. Issues of concern include an excess or conversely a shortage of water and a threat to the once so carefully chosen vegetation as a result of rising temperatures. Climate change pressures are compounded by increasing urbanization and the associated recreational needs. As coherent spatial entities, these landscapes are also susceptible to fragmentation as a result of urbanization, change of ownership, change of function and so on. Such challenges call for a design approach that deals sensitively with historically valuable landscape characteristics. In seeking to safeguard the spatial quality of estate landscapes a balance needs to be struck between utility value (economic exploitation), amenity value (identity and familiarity), and future value (ecological sustainability).¹ Such is the complexity of the task that a regional perspective is required in order to fully comprehend the coherence and systemic relations between individual country estates and to develop a common basis for collaboration.

This article introduces just such a regional design approach for future-proofing estate landscapes. Based on the principle of ‘preservation through development’, existing historical landscape structures and any proposed spatial development would be included in a participative process of collaboration and co-creation involving owners, experts, policy advisers and others. Spatial design would be used at different levels of scale as a means of discovering development strategies for landscape formation in a given context. At the same time, the design would help to highlight solutions for rendering estate landscapes future-proof.

1. Bird's eye view of a historical estate landscape around the Western Lake in the Chinese city of Hangzhou, anonymous, 1760. A World Heritage site since 2011, this estate landscape is famous for its historical gardens, pavilions and pagodas (Historical Atlas of Hangzhou)



FUTURE-PROOFING ESTATE LANDSCAPES

A REGIONAL DESIGN APPROACH FOR HISTORICAL
COUNTRY ESTATES IN A
LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

STEFFEN NIJHUIS



ESTATE LANDSCAPES

In estate landscapes the character of the landscape is defined by various historical castles, country houses (including their gardens and parks) and landed estates.² When, as so often, they are situated close together they form landscape zones that determine the appearance and identity of an entire region. Estate landscapes occur the world over. Fine examples are to be found in Belgium, Germany, England, Italy, France, Denmark, Portugal and Spain.³ Splendid estate landscapes also exist outside Europe, for example in Russia, Japan and China (fig.1). In the Netherlands, estate landscapes occur in several parts of the country: around the cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht and The Hague, and in the provinces of Gelderland,

Overijssel, Groningen and Friesland, as shown by Hans Renes in his contribution to this thematic issue.⁴

For centuries estate landscapes were the preserve of the nobility, regents and the wealthy middle class, for whom landownership was a basis for power and income.⁵ An estate landscape is the product of the interaction of people with their domain in a specific socio-cultural context. In that respect estate landscapes are an expression of the motives and ideals of the owners in combination with the spatial, functional and economic possibilities offered by the land in question. As such the estate landscape is an important cultural expression, occasionally with emblematic significance (fig.2).⁶ So there is a direct connection between the estates and the landscapes they form. The

2. Bird's eye view of seventeenth-century Honselersdijk, where the garden mirrored the polder landscape in a supreme expression of control over water and nature, A. Bega and A. Blooteling, c. 1680 (private collection)





3. Estate landscapes represent enormous economic value in terms of nature and culture, but also in terms of possibilities for tourism, recreation, farming and forestry (photo Leontine Lamers)

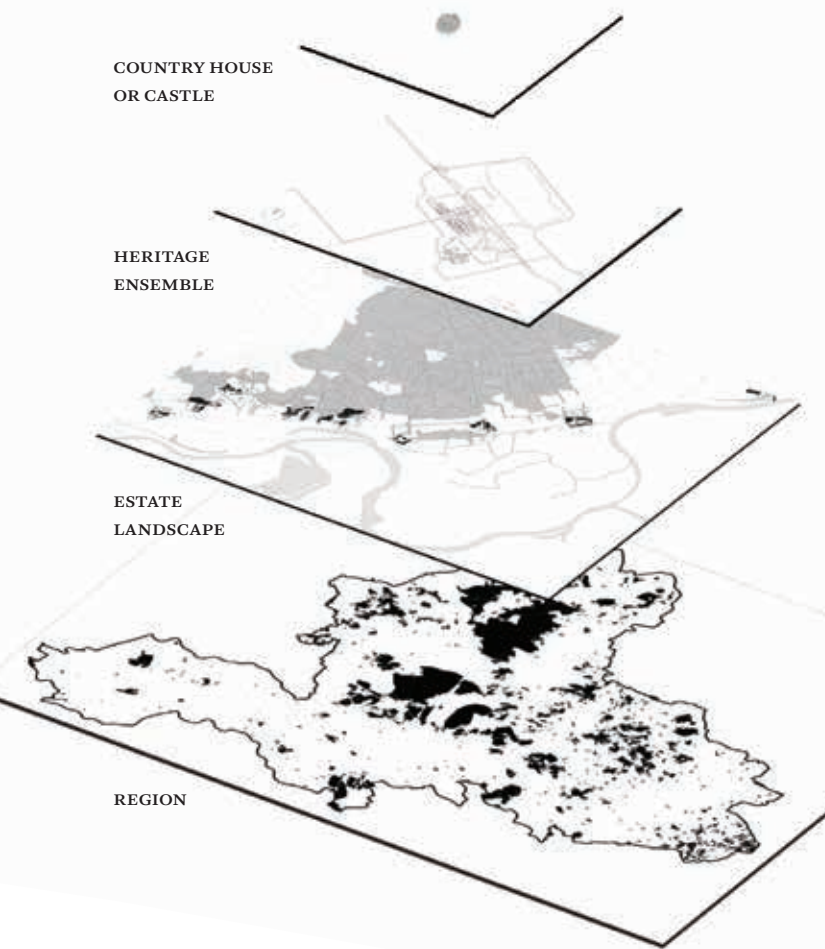
landscape context and available sites were key factors in the choice of location and decisive for land use and the landscape architecture design of the gardens and parks.⁷ Water and road networks were used or built to connect the countryside with urban centres, thereby allowing the nobility and gentry to travel easily between the city and their country retreats.

Today these estate landscapes represent major heritage values in the form of grand buildings, gardens and other landscape elements. In addition, they often constitute a concentration of valuable nature. Far more than in any other landscapes, the traditional agrarian cultural landscapes in these zones have managed to retain their identity. Owing to their cultural-historical significance and natural beauty estate landscapes offer ample opportunities for tourism, recreation and sport. And that means they are also of great economic value (fig. 3).⁸

The Netherlands can boast a long tradition of preserving and protecting castles, country houses and

landed estates. Since the 1930s the focus of this practice has been on the building as heritage object and not on the building in its landscape context.⁹ However, to ensure sustainable preservation and development it is vital to understand these castles, country houses and landed estates in their landscape context. In historical estate landscapes the buildings, gardens, parks and other elements are effectively interwoven with the landscape. 'They are part of the whole from which they derive their picturesque effect, which they in turn give back to the whole,' is how Henri van der Wyck paraphrased the view of the nineteenth-century landscape architect Fürst Pückler-Muskau.¹⁰

The estate landscape is a holistic system that we can only understand by looking at different spatial scales and their interrelationships: individual country houses with their gardens, parks and grounds constitute a country or landed estate, several such estates form an estate landscape, and several estate landscapes together form a region (fig. 4).¹¹ Historical



4. The estate landscape as scalar continuum (Steffen Nijhuis and Elyze Storms-Smeets)

castles, country houses and landed estates are part of a scalar continuum in which relations are shaped by the attachment, connection and embedding of a specific place or location within the wider context. These relations can be analysed on several levels of scale.

THE ANALYSIS OF ESTATE LANDSCAPES IN SPACE AND TIME

Over the course of time many different approaches to understanding estate landscapes have been devised. They include socio-geographic, cultural-historical and landscape architecture perspectives, as Hanneke Ronnes explains elsewhere in this issue.¹² The estate landscape is a multi-scalar relational structure that connects and influences spatial, ecological, functional and social aspects.

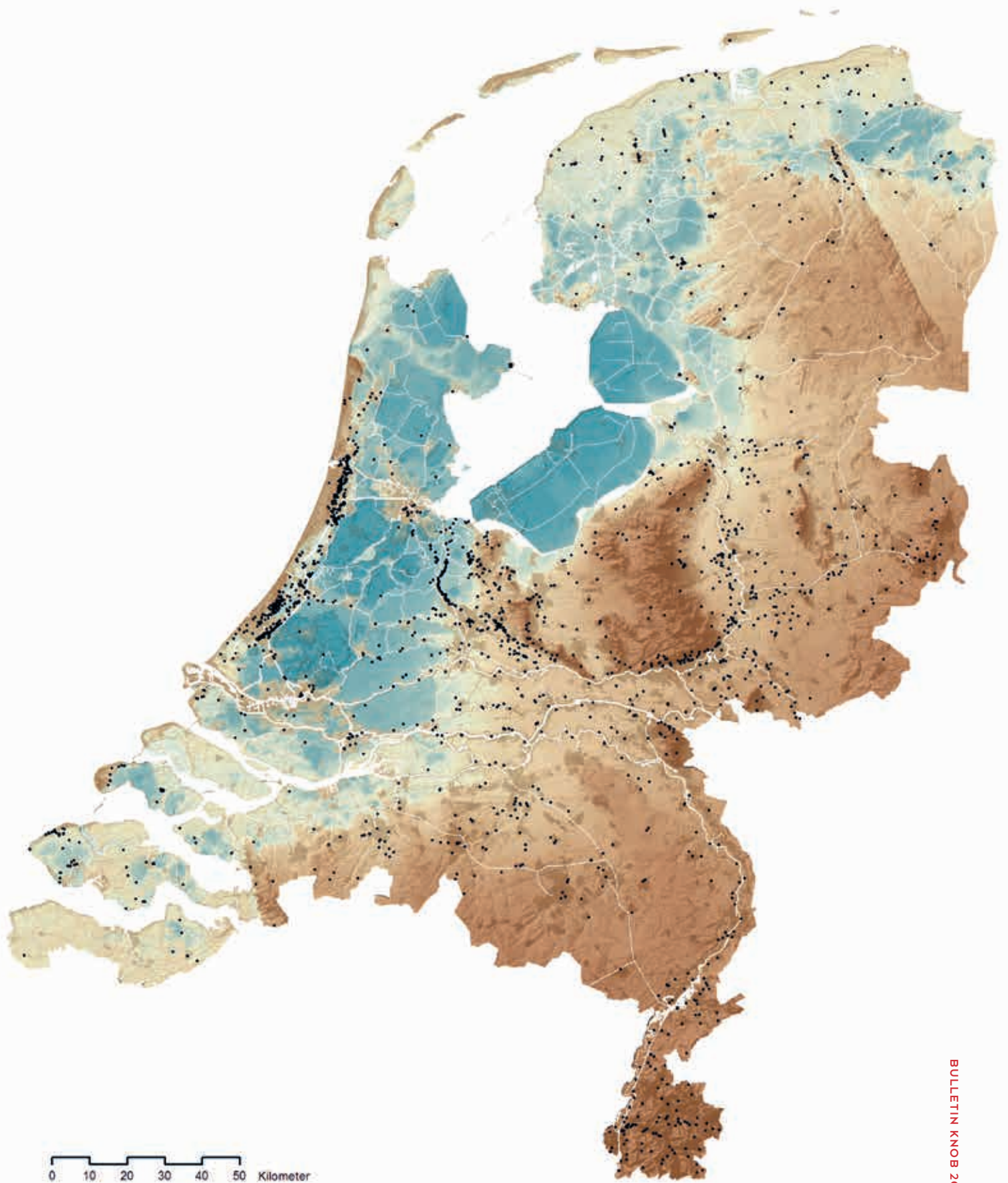
In order to analyse such a complex system and the relationships embedded in it, it is useful to separate the different functional and structural aspects and connections into layers.¹³ That said, we need to be mindful of the danger of becoming deterministic and of thereby losing sight of other important matters. The

aim is to understand individual layers that influence one another to some degree and whose mutual relationships can change over time. In short, the separation into layers should not be seen as a hierarchical and immutable arrangement.

Let us look at these layers in more detail. The estate landscape and its genesis can be researched by examining the following three layers and their interrelationships: the physical environment, or the 'hardware'; human modifications of or interventions in this, or the 'software'; and the cultural, institutional and conceptual ideas, or the 'orgware'.¹⁴ Physical environment refers to the natural context: topographic relief, water, soil, geomorphological structure, climate, and related ecosystems. This first layer encompasses possibilities for farming and forestry and is the basis for the utilization of the landscape. As is clearly visible on a map of the Netherlands, estate landscapes tend to be found in transition areas between high and low ground and connected to glacial ridges, dunes, riverbanks and sandy outcrops (fig. 5). Important location factors, apart from the availability of land, were favourable soil conditions (not too wet, not too dry and stable enough to build on) and access to sufficient water, along with natural watercourses such as rivers and streams.

The logic of the estate landscape cannot be understood without considering human modifications of the natural context: the second layer. Think, for example, of major reclamation schemes like the Beemster Polder, which were created for farming, but also for the construction of country houses as a refuge from the city.¹⁵ Or of the barge canals and railway lines that rendered the country houses and landed estates accessible from the surrounding cities. Over the course of history, the cultivation of the natural landscape for living, working, food production, water supply and recreation has resulted in a succession of sometimes far-reaching, irreversible changes. It is here that the third layer of cultural, spiritual and religious views (encompassing the state of science and technology, organizational forms, political movements, design concepts and aesthetic ideals) plays an important role since those views largely determine how we interact with the natural context.

Time is an essential factor in understanding estate landscapes. Over the centuries the estate landscapes have undergone spatial transformations arising from changes and modifications prompted by necessity or by the obligation to continue to satisfy whatever was required of them (fig. 6). Some structures, patterns and forms were retained, others were developed further or replaced by new ones. The end result is a rich historical and typological layering.¹⁶ In that respect an estate landscape is so rich in meaning that it can be 'read' as a biography, or as a palimpsest illustrating the most



5. The choice of location for country estates is closely related to the underlying landscape, transport networks and landownership. Especially popular were transition from low to high in combination with glacial ridges, dunes, riverbanks and sandy outcrops. Key considerations included a favourable location in terms of soil conditions and an adequate water supply, as well as natural watercourses like rivers and streams (blue is below sea level, brown above) (Steffen Nijhuis, TU Delft)



6. Maintenance activities on De Wiersse. Climate change has consequences for [affects] the maintenance and management of gardens and will eventually lead to changes in, for example, the choice of plant species (photo Leontine Lamers)

important activities that have contributed to its formation.¹⁷ Knowledge of these historical traces is one of the starting points for new transformations: the addition of new functions that make the estate landscape future-proof.¹⁸

Ecological, socio-cultural and economic processes come together in the physical space and give it shape. Estate landscapes are the outcome of those processes. The landscape structure is the physical foundation formed by the interrelated supporting elements without which the landscape cannot function.¹⁹ By conducting a multi-scalar analysis of the layering of an estate landscape and correlating the resulting data, the landscape structure and associated landscape patterns and elements that have determined its character are laid bare. In an ever-changing environment, the landscape structure is a solid basis for the preservation of local characteristics on the one hand, and on

the other for the creation of conditions for the introduction of coherence and the addition of spatial qualities in tackling the previously outlined challenges.

TOWARDS A LANDSCAPE-FOCUSED, REGIONAL APPROACH

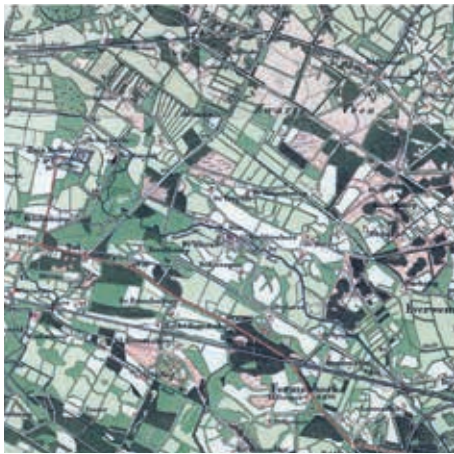
Climate change, spatial fragmentation, increasing recreational pressure and changes of function cause problems that compromise the layering and legibility of the estate landscape and pose a threat to its coherence and cultural identity. Indeed, a lack of awareness of landscape resilience increases the risk of damage and loss of capital.²⁰ Avoiding this outcome requires a careful approach in the form of a regional spatial strategy based on in-depth knowledge of the landscape and its development over time. This calls for 'management of change', focused on creating resilient estate landscapes in which the past continues to play

▼ DE WIERSSE

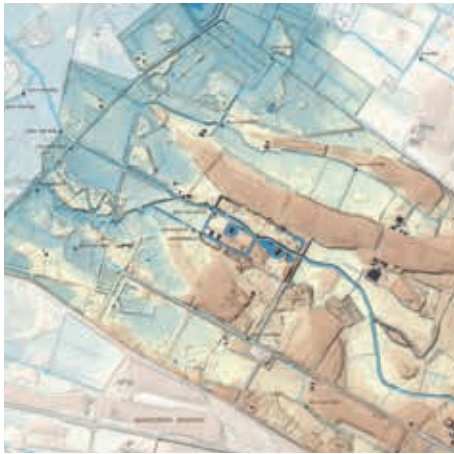
Situation
ca. 2018



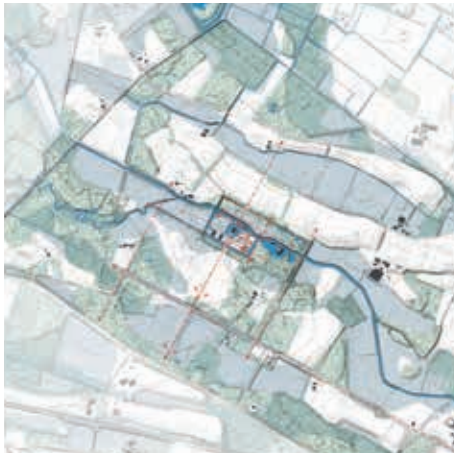
Situation
ca. 1900



Altitude
and water



Spatial
structure



ROSENDAL ▼



7. Comparison between the De Wiersse estate along the Baakse Beek near Vorden and the spatial development and landscape location of Rosendael on the glacial ridge near Arnhem and: (1) situation c. 2018, (2) situation c. 1900, (3) altitude and water, (4) spatial structure (Steffen Nijhuis and Michiel Pouderoijen based on data from Topografische Dienst Kadaster and Rijkswaterstaat)

an important role.²¹ It also entails a ‘vertical approach’ that takes advantage of variations in the soil and water system when siting and designing changes and adding new functions.²² The diversity and identity of the estate landscape is in large part a reflection of the diversity of the physical substratum (fig. 7).²³ An estate landscape in the fluvial region, with its clay deposits, levees and river dunes, looks quite different from one on the sandy glacial ridges.

It is high time we started respecting this landscape logic in spatial developments related to climate, nature, water management and agriculture. In this approach, the natural substratum guides the land use, which follows the structure of elevation, soil and water. For example, a shortage or excess of water might be tackled by storing water in natural concavities such as stream valleys. Cultural-historical elements like *rabatbossen* (lines of trees planted on the ridges between ditches) and water meadows can play a role in water retention and simultaneously acquire a new relevance.²⁴ Old streams and springs can once again be the vehicles of biodiversity and spatial variety, while also providing scope for natural vitality in the water system.

THE PROCESS: NEW FORMS OF COLLABORATION

A regional approach also means striking a new balance in the relation between experts, citizens and governments. This calls for a process that is not confined to the domain of landscape experts, but which seeks the active involvement of landowners, administrators, the business world and other stakeholders.²⁵ The idea is that the participation of all these parties in strategic planning, design and decision making will enhance the resilience and adaptability of historical estate landscapes; not just in a physical sense, but socio-economically as well. Resilience is defined as a system’s ability to react to change or disruption without any alteration to the primary condition.²⁶ Adaptability is the degree to which certain practices, processes or structures can be modified to suit changing social, economic or ecological circumstances. Modifications can be spontaneous or pre-planned, carried out in response to or in anticipation of such changes. This implies a shared understanding of how the landscape system works on the part of all participants. It also requires a forward-looking, proactive approach in which the interaction between citizens, businesses, experts and government is pivotal.

In practical terms this can be achieved by setting up ‘living labs’ (or ‘communities of practice’). Here the focus is on collaborative thinking and on the generation and implementation of sustainable solutions on different levels of scale. This process is supported by a combination of research, design, engagement and

imagination.²⁷ A ‘living lab’ can work with both an area [regional] and a shared approach. Citizens, academics, designers, entrepreneurs and policy makers work together on an existing situation, defined by geographic and institutional boundaries.²⁸ The experience of experimenting responsibly together, of monitoring outcomes and learning from mistakes, gives rise to an informal space in which everyone is equal. And this is consistent with the social and political circumstances that are required in order to arrive at solutions on a policy and practical level. Successful examples of this approach can be found in Gelderland, Zuid-Holland and Utrecht. In Gelderland, the province, the Rhine and IJssel water boards, landowners, conservationists and farmers work collaboratively on challenges relating to the Baakse Beek estate landscape.²⁹ The end result is that historical structures are preserved and developed further in the interests of sustainable water management, biodiversity and recreation, while there is also scope for local modifications to meet the needs of individual landowners.

In a landscape-based spatial strategy, content is linked to a process aimed at promoting socio-ecological inclusivity, diversity and flexibility – preconditions for the emergence and continued existence of a resilient system.³⁰ This approach effectively creates conditions for change and guides it in positive directions through the development of robust landscape structures that connect spatial levels of scale and provides scope for individual elaboration at the local level. Spatial quality is key to striking a balance between identity, familiarity, economic exploitation and ecological sustainability. Moreover, multifunctionality, accessibility, heritage and biodiversity are just a few of the ecological, economic, social and cultural interests that need to be promoted. Adopting a landscape-based spatial approach to the challenges facing the estate landscape can contribute to integrated sectoral activities and lead to coordinated sustainable outcomes that profit everyone. It is a design-focused and transdisciplinary approach that guides, harmonizes and shapes change by:

- taking the regional landscape structure and associated processes as basis (vertical approach), and the natural landscape as guiding principle in the design of spatial transformations of estate landscapes at all levels of scale;
- creating and regenerating living ecological and social systems; (bio)diversity, cultural history and multifunctionality as the basis for socio-ecologically inclusive and water-sensitive estate landscapes;
- developing resilient and adaptive spatial frameworks; robust landscape structures for

the coherent development of the region (long-term strategy) while adopting an enabling and flexible approach for local projects (short-term intervention);

- pursuing a design-focused, multidimensional approach; knowledge-based spatial design as an integrated approach involving owners, academics, entrepreneurs, professionals and government officials.

THE ROLE OF DESIGN AS RESEARCH

What is the role of the design in such an approach? The spatial designer applies their intellectual and design skills to conceptualization and form-making. They draw on knowledge from other disciplines, such as cultural history, ecology and water management, which they translate spatially and integrate into their design. 'Designing is an activity the aim of which is to visually represent an innovative solution, a novelty in the designer's conceptual world, to a given task or problem.'³¹ Definitions like this, which refer to a process or action, are dominated by verbs like find, produce and translate.³² Designing consequently acts as an intellectual tool for structured thought and action aimed at generating ideas and exploring possible solutions. This method is termed 'design as research'.³³ Targeted searching in a process where thinking and producing go hand in hand is central to this approach. Research and design mechanisms are combined with imagination, creativity and innovation. During the process a conscious or unconscious synthesis occurs, which crystallizes in a visual form – through drawing, charting or modelling things using analogue or digital means.³⁴

Design as research is a powerful research method for addressing complex spatial tasks in an integrated and creative manner. Its application to estate landscapes is not about opposing change or locking up the existing landscape, but about creating landscape qualities through well-designed new developments. It involves a structured design process in which important aspects are highlighted and design briefs are translated spatially and given concrete form. Spatial design is used to explore possible solutions from a variety of perspectives. But also, via design as research, to come up with, and immediately visualize new solutions.

Several co-creative sessions are organized together with owners, regional and local governments, landscape designers, experts, students and other stakeholders. Design outcomes provide a context for conversations and observations about the importance of certain landscape structures and elements and make it possible to discuss solutions and measures in terms of their spatial qualities.

Spatial design helps with the identification of problems confronting estate landscapes and with the postulation of possible solutions. It does this by clarifying these solutions with drawings and by sketching the context in which they could be realized. In that sense the design as research process identifies how stakeholders feel about future developments at different levels of scale. Visualizing ideas and design briefs and locating them in the space in question makes it possible to reveal the possibilities and limitations and to formulate questions that require further investigation. In this context, design as research is deployed as a systematic search for potential solutions to a spatial problem. But the research also reveals which landscape structures and elements ought, from a cultural-historical perspective for example, to be preserved.

THREE KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Design is not a linear process. It passes through various cycles of conceptualization, representation and evaluation. During this process three kinds of knowledge may be acquired: project-based, form-related and conceptual.³⁵ Project-based knowledge generated by the design relate to the site and to the integrated solutions being proposed for it. For example, in the estate landscape around Baakse Beek in Gelderland, design as research helped participants to understand the systemic relations between individual country estates, to increase the retention capacity of the water system, to reactivate historical landscape elements, and to stimulate the ecosystem and the spatial experience within the landscape. Seemingly contradictory agendas, such as water management and heritage protection, turn out to have the capacity to be mutually reinforcing.

Form-related knowledge concerns visual communication and materialization of the design: how it can be made. Spatial design entails exploring possibilities and analysing solutions. Design principles, which is to say basic concepts or rules that explain or prescribe how something happens or works, are key here. Examples include design principles for sustainable water management, nature-based solutions and historical ecology. These design principles can be derived from field research, a study of precedents, and conversations with experts in the fields of heritage, water and ecology. By means of design explorations and 'draw and calculate' procedures, the options offered by the design principles are contextualized and tested in the estate landscape.

Thirdly, design as research can generate conceptual knowledge. This consists of creative, intuitive and speculative ideas that are translated into spatial terms to sketch an inviting vision for the stakeholders. It can serve as a basis for connecting local projects and evaluating their long-term contribution to regional



8. Speculative design of the regional spatial and ecological cohesion of an estate landscape in which ecology, water management, heritage and forestry coincide (Yangjiao Wang, graduation work, Landscape Architecture, TU Delft)

coherence. It can also be used to clarify a specific context in which both systemic solutions for the estate landscape as a whole and the development of individual country estates are explored.

In other words, design as research is not about producing designs that can or should be realized immediately. Design as research can bring people together and enhance their understanding of the spatial coherence between country estates, which may eventually lead to a concrete design task. It can reveal the potential of integrated development in which historical structures at different levels of scale go hand in hand with innovative contextual solutions for water, ecology, recreation and farming (fig. 8). For this, knowledge of the landscape system is indispensable; it must be the starting point for new transformations aimed at making the estate landscape future-proof.

CONCLUSION

To achieve future-proof estate landscapes it is necessary to put castles, country estates and landed estates in a regional perspective. Take the periodic droughts that are having an adverse effect on estate gardens and parks: that problem can only be solved by a regional approach because the water system is a regional system. Tourism, too, demands more than any individual estate is able to facilitate. What is needed is a supra-local approach that connects interesting places via attractive routes and ensures a dispersal of visitors.

Such tasks call for a landscape-based regional design approach that deals sensitively with historically valuable landscape features while also enhancing the spatial quality by shaping changes. This strategy can be used for understanding historical castles, country houses and landed estates as a coherent whole and within their social and ecological context. It is a form of knowledge-driven spatial design in which knowledge of the vertical and horizontal integrity (the structure) of the estate landscape serves as a basis for its preservation and development. In this approach knowledge of landscape heritage and spatial planning reinforce one another. New tasks involving water, nature, heritage, recreation and farming are seen not as a threat, but as an opportunity to strengthen the structure of the estate landscape and to add spatial qualities related to identity, experience, use and sustainability.

Design as research on a local and regional scale is used for the spatial exploration and visualization of development strategies, principles and potential integrated solutions. This occurs in a participatory process where stakeholders collectively weigh up the pros and cons, learn together and co-create. Owing to the combination of content, involvement and process, the landscape-based regional design approach becomes a powerful methodology for increasing the resilience and adaptability of the estate landscape and in so doing making this landscape future-proof.

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FUTURE-PROOFING ESTATE LANDSCAPES

A REGIONAL DESIGN APPROACH FOR HISTORICAL COUNTRY ESTATES IN A LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

STEFFEN NIJHUIS

Climate change and urbanization have substantial ramifications for the management and protection of cultural-historical landscapes. This is especially true for historical estate landscapes – landscapes whose character is defined by several historical castles, country houses (along with their gardens and parks), and landed estates – where climate change adaptation constitutes a major task. Issues of concern include an excess or shortage of water and changes to vegetation as a result of rising temperatures. That pressure is compounded by increasing urbanization and the associated recreational needs. These landscapes are also susceptible to spatial fragmentation due to urbanization, changes in ownership, changes in function, and so on. Combatting these pressures calls for a future-oriented design approach that deals sensitively with historically valuable landscape characteristics. It involves safeguarding the spatial quality of estate landscapes by striking a new balance between utility value (economic exploitation), amenity value (identity and familiarity), and future value (ecological sustainability). Such is the complexity of the task that a regional perspective is required in order to fully comprehend the cohesion and systemic relations between individual country estates and to develop a common basis for collaboration.

This article proposes a landscape-based regional de-

sign approach aimed at understanding and designing future-proof estate landscapes. It details a preservation-through-development strategy based on spatial development in sympathy with historical landscapes structures in a process of meaningful stakeholder involvement. Key to this process is collaboration and co-creation with owners, experts, policy advisers and others. Design-based research is employed as a method for addressing the complex spatial tasks facing estate landscapes in an integrated and creative manner. Spatial design, at every level of scale, becomes an instrument for working out development strategies and principles for context-specific landscape formation. But also for highlighting possible solutions that can contribute to the protection and development of historical estate landscapes. In other words, this is not about opposing change or locking up the existing landscape, but about creating new landscape qualities through well-designed new developments. This coincides with a collaborative process in which stakeholders jointly weigh the pros and cons, learn and come up with solutions. The combination of substance, involvement and process makes the landscape-based regional design approach a powerful method for increasing the resilience and adaptability of the estate landscape and in so doing making this landscape future-proof.

