



Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed  
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
Wetenschap

## Attract and Connect Population decline and the heritage in Europe

*With practical examples from Germany, the UK,  
France and the Netherlands*



# Preface



## Cover photograph

L'Abbaye St André, Meymac, features on a walking tour created to attract visitors to the Plateau de Millevaches. Photograph Jean-Luc Kokel

Large areas of the Netherlands are experiencing demographic change, as people move to urban areas. While, just a few years ago, young families were fleeing towns and cities, the reverse process is now occurring. People with good economic prospects are opting to live in urban areas, and are remaining there. As a result, areas distant from urban centres are experiencing dejuvenation and demographic ageing, leading to a fall in the number of residents and an associated decline in visitors and investment. This has direct implications for the dynamism, quality of life and economic vitality of these areas. To put it simply: these areas are in decline, in more ways than one.

This decline is also affecting the heritage. When people and businesses move away, they leave empty buildings behind. This can lead to dereliction, unsafe situations and a growing feeling of malaise. Some of the buildings threatened by such developments have heritage value, whether they be homes, shops or farms, or perhaps buildings that have played a key role in the local community: churches, schools, factories, town halls. They may be listed historic buildings, or simply buildings that have won a place in local people's hearts because of the way they were used.

Such buildings are uniquely important in terms of their history, meaning or aesthetic qualities. Furthermore, public resources have often gone into restoring and preserving them.

Economic and population decline therefore richly deserves our attention here at the Cultural Heritage Agency, as well as the attention of other parties involved in heritage management. But this trend need not only be a source of concern. The cultural heritage also offers opportunities. The very fact that

these buildings have a certain meaning and beauty means they are focal points in the local community. They may be interesting to some as locations for new activities, particularly if they are large buildings (such as churches or schools). The heritage can help revitalise an area.

The worlds of population decline and the heritage therefore have something to offer each other. However, if we look at policy, we are forced to conclude that these two worlds are to all intents and purposes still strangers. Dutch policy is not yet geared towards the opportunities and potential the heritage offers in dealing with decline. And population decline is yet to be incorporated into heritage policy.

The Cultural Heritage Agency commissioned a study of situations in other European countries that are facing economic and population decline: Germany, France and the UK. The study was entitled 'A Vision for Heritage Management and Spatial Development', and it was conducted under the auspices of the Heritage Management and Spatial Development Network. Interviews, site visits and a study of the available documentation and policy papers made it clear that there are both differences and similarities in the way links are forged between the heritage and demographic or economic decline. The projects described and the strategies of which they form part therefore make interesting and inspiring examples in the debate on how the Netherlands should tackle this issue.

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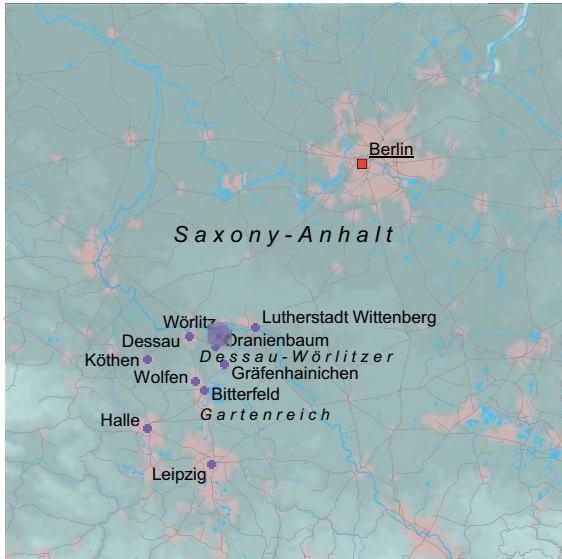
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## Overview of regions in decline

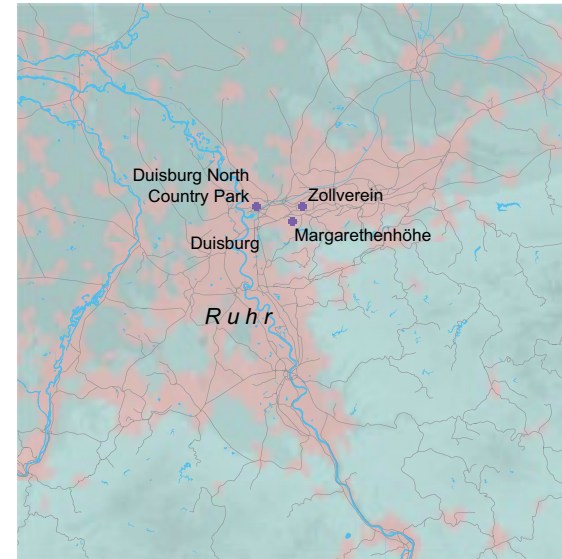


\* place mentioned in report  
 ■ capital, shown for orientation purposes  
*Emsland* region

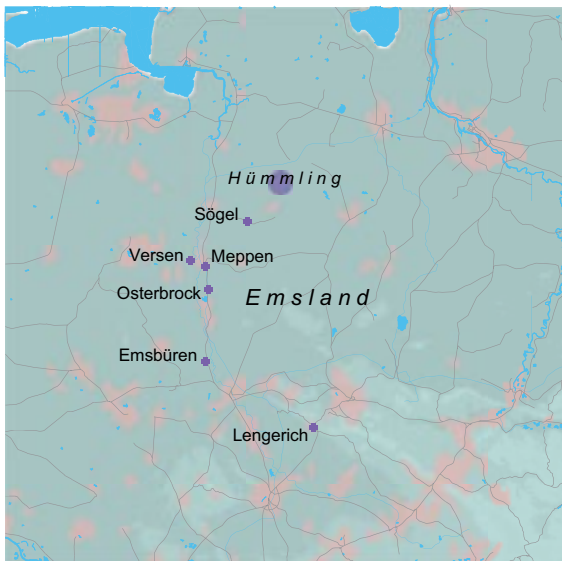
## Regions in decline in Germany and the Netherlands, detail



Regions in decline  
Saxony-Anhalt



Regions in decline  
Ruhr



Regions in decline  
Emsland



Regions in decline  
Netherlands

More Dutch examples  
of population decline  
and the heritage.

## Regions in decline in France and the United Kingdom, detail



Regions in decline  
Limousin



Regions in decline  
Nord-Pas de Calais



Regions in decline  
Cumbria

# Summary



It is only in recent years that the Netherlands has come to realise that it is experiencing a structural decline in the size of its population. Although in historical terms economic and population decline is an ever-present phenomenon – since the Roman period towns have grown, only to shrink again – recent reports caused a minor shockwave in the Netherlands. All the mechanisms of spatial planning that the Netherlands has put in place since the Second World War have been geared towards growth. Since the financial crisis of 2008, however, it has gradually become clear that restoring growth to many areas of the Netherlands is simply no longer a realistic option.

Regional authorities are considering strategies for dealing with decline. The link with the heritage is not always apparent. It is certainly there, however, and practical examples exist in the Netherlands too. In areas experiencing population loss, where the mood is sometimes sombre, heritage managed with dedication can be a source of pride and new optimism. In recent years heritage management has become more closely interwoven with spatial development. Buildings that have fallen vacant are being used for new purposes, and old landscape structures are being given a contemporary meaning, all with due regard for their cultural heritage value. As such, the knife cuts both ways: these developments provide a new basis for the management of the heritage and bring a certain uniqueness and economic value to the area in question.

In areas in decline, however, the owner or manager is more likely to move away, and the supply of potential new users is smaller. If economic and demographic problems become too great and too persistent, the heritage loses its economic basis. It then remains vacant or, if it is used at all, the incentive to maintain it reduces.

Regions in decline in the Netherlands are subject to all these trends, some of which are conflicting. This publication profiles cases in other countries where

certain regions have been experiencing decline for longer so that they can be compared with practice in the Netherlands, and perhaps serve as an example. That is why the Cultural Heritage Agency commissioned a survey of the approach taken in a number of German, French and British regions. The results of the study have been published on the Cultural Heritage Agency's website.<sup>1</sup> This publication is an abridged version of that report.

The authors spoke to administrators, professionals and enthusiastic residents and entrepreneurs involved in specific projects both in the Netherlands and abroad. They hope that this publication will provide ideas for policy in areas in decline in the Netherlands.

The study identified four potential functions for the heritage in areas in decline:

1. *As a billboard* the heritage can attract tourists, and even new residents. The policy in the Limousin region of France is a good example. Administrators have refused simply to stand by and watch the population decline. Abbeys, historic villages, interesting landscapes and other heritage features draw tourists to the region. Besides active promotion, their efforts have also included creative ways of marketing the region, such as the *Retrouvance*® walking holidays offered to tourists visiting Limousin. Another example can be found in Dessau, a town that is using its Bauhaus history to attract the interest of potential visitors. Using this heritage as a 'billboard', the authorities are attempting to fight back against decline, though this approach has not automatically led to new management for vacant heritage sites.
2. *As a seedbed* the heritage can attract pioneers, bringing new activity into areas experiencing decline. The industrial heritage is particularly suitable in this respect, as evidenced by examples from Saxony-Anhalt (Ferropolis) and Manchester (Salford Quays and the city centre). The mining structures left behind in Ferropolis and the old factory premises and warehouses in

Manchester have provided a perfect setting for new urban activities, particularly in the creative industries. The Limousin region of France has made heritage homes available on a temporary basis to people from outside the region who wish to start a business there. This role as ‘seed-bed’ links efforts to tackle population decline with a new form of heritage management. These new managers do have to publicise their efforts, however. Enthusiastic, enterprising individuals are needed who are inspired by the heritage and are keen to use it as a source of new energy and enterprise.

3. As a *totem pole* the heritage can create a bond between residents and their environment. The heritage gives residents a foundation and an identity. The redevelopment of Zollverein in the Ruhr region and the mining region of Nord-Pas de Calais, and its slag heaps, were launched in this way, for example. The closure of the mines and factories put this heritage at risk. After a time, however, people became convinced that one cannot simply allow the past to be erased. New ways of using the heritage were found, although this is not necessarily inherent in the ‘totem pole’ function. In Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz, it was found that the more rustic landscape heritage can also serve as a totem pole. The park landscape has enhanced quality of life in the region around Dessau. Residents’ pride in their heritage, their environment, binds them to their town and to the region.
4. As a *meeting place* the heritage can bring residents together. The local significance of the heritage is then enhanced, for it is literally used as a place where people can meet. This function works better if residents themselves are involved in the restoration and management. Examples include an old house on a crossroads in Oranienbaum, Germany, where Dutch artists stage exhibitions together with villagers, and a pub in Heskett Newmarket in the UK, which was saved by a cooperative of villagers and tourists. In Emsland, the non-material heritage has been found to perform a similar function. Seasonal festivals and other regional traditions have been revived with the aim of restoring social bonds, which were under threat as a result of demographic ageing.

	Heritage attracts (external focus)	Heritage connects (internal focus)
Focus on socioeconomic function	<b>SEEDBED</b>	<b>MEETING PLACE</b>
Focus on symbol function	<b>BILLBOARD</b>	<b>TOTEM POLE</b>

Successful heritage projects in areas of population decline combine several functions after a time. The heritage attracts and connects, acts as a symbol and has a socioeconomic function. Development opportunities bring the prospect of new forms of management, which in turn lead to new development opportunities.

This puts the heritage at the heart of strategies to address decline. As a billboard or seedbed, the heritage helps combat the decline. A strategy of this kind generally helps halt the process, but does not usually turn it around. That is why a comprehensive strategy for addressing population decline also includes measures to sustain quality of life.

Such a strategy prevents deterioration and preserves the value of property. But a good strategy must also have a healing social and cultural effect, because population decline has a significant impact on the collective spirit and self-esteem of residents. The heritage can serve as a meeting place and a totem pole in such a strategy.

By definition, there is little demand for property for housing, businesses and organisations in areas of economic and population decline. It is therefore wise to centre any initiatives on and around the heritage available. This prompts new forms of heritage management and increases the chances that regionally important heritage will be sustainably managed.



If the authorities deliberately support one or more of the four heritage functions and explicitly incorporating it into their policy to deal with population decline, this can provide a momentum that is lacking in more traditional, object-oriented subsidisation.

A strategy to address population decline that begins with the heritage and shows respect for local or regional history can reverse a downward spiral. This is a prerequisite for almost any direction chosen, whether it be to ameliorate the decline by attracting new people and businesses, or to accept the decline but maintain quality of life in the area.

In areas of population decline it is particularly important to connect with local initiators and investors. They tend to be the ones who are most interested in premises or areas that are close to the hearts of local residents. This provides the foundations both for heritage management and for tackling the decline.

In the examples from Germany, France and the UK, the heritage is much more than a coincidental extra. On the contrary: the heritage lies at the core of the strategy for addressing the decline. And so the projects described in this publication and the strategies of which they form part provide interesting examples for the debate on how to tackle decline in the Netherlands and in other regions.

# 1 Introduction

For almost three centuries the mining region of Nord-Pas de Calais lay at the heart of the French energy supply system. The mining companies developed the region and paternalistically provided the people there with work and a place to live. When the last mine closed in 1990 the region reached a turning point in its history. After three decades spent winding down the industry, the glory days of the industrial monoculture were finally consigned to history. What remained was a devastated landscape with a bad image, high unemployment and impoverished local authorities. Residents left in droves and many buildings were demolished.

Twenty years later, the heritage is playing a key role in the redevelopment of the area. In 2012 parts of the former mining region were granted world heritage status and the Louvre opened a branch in the town of Lens. Mine complexes are being redeveloped into cultural and economic centres, and investments are being made in the residential areas where miners and their families once lived.

Whether the heritage can reverse the economic and population decline in the region remains to be seen, but it has certainly reinvigorated Nord-Pas de Calais, attracting creative pioneers. Their initiatives have gradually spread and grown into an integrated approach involving both the authorities and civil society. It turns out that the heritage can be an important factor in dealing with decline. This can be seen in the Netherlands, too. Towns with an attractive cultural heritage like Middelburg, Appingedam and Hulst are either not in decline at all, or are not declining as fast as less attractive places in the area like Vlissingen, Delfzijl and Terneuzen.

Decline and heritage management are inextricably linked. An area in decline by definition has an excess supply of housing and other buildings. Abandoned buildings soon become derelict, even if they have heritage value. Conversely, the heritage can prove to be a trump card in efforts to improve quality of life and attract new activities. Nevertheless, decline and the heritage remain an awkward combination in practice. 'Planners are trained to shape growth,

but no thought has ever been given to the reverse trend', says architect Floris Alkemade, who worked on the redevelopment of industrial complexes in Germany. 'It is becoming a particularly interesting challenge, where finally we are being called upon to use our basic creativity again. Simply demolishing anything that is surplus to requirements has turned out to be much less easy than it first appeared, and it also overlooks the potential for a much more intelligent response.'

But heritage managers also have to adopt a new attitude, Alkemade believes. 'The heritage has always been something that lots of money goes into, but little actually comes out. We are less and less able to afford such a luxury. We have to address the issue of whether the heritage can also generate revenue.' The problem of heritage management is thus becoming part of the solution for areas in decline.

Countries like Germany, France and the UK have long had regions where the population is shrinking. This process is almost always associated with the loss of major industries or mining activities, or with rural migration as agricultural workers become redundant. This history is reflected in the nature of the heritage that falls vacant, much of which is industrial complexes and the workers' housing that goes with them, or empty village and rural homes and village amenities like shops, post offices and schools.

This publication highlights how some of these regions have made the link between economic and population decline and the heritage. The authors spoke to administrators, professionals, creative and enterprising locals, and entrepreneurs involved in specific projects both in the Netherlands and abroad, in the hope of gathering ideas for policy to deal with areas in decline in the Netherlands. The book contains a brief summary of the results of the 'Decline and the Heritage in Northwest Europe, a survey of a challenging problem' study.<sup>2</sup> This study was performed on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Cultural Heritage Agency, as an offshoot

of the Vision for Heritage Planning and Spatial Development, in which ‘redevelopment as (urban) regional challenge: focus on growth and decline’ is one of the five priorities.

Experience in other countries has shown how varied strategies for dealing with economic and population decline are, and how varied the functions that the heritage can take on in those efforts. Generally speaking, we outline four functions for the heritage in this book:

1. The heritage serves as a *billboard* when a local authority or region attempts to tackle decline by attracting new residents, or using tourism to provide an economic boost.
2. The heritage serves as a *totem pole* when it creates a bond between residents and their environment by giving them a foundation and a source of pride to replace the feeling of apathy and lack of direction that can be associated with economic and population decline.
3. The heritage serves as a *seedbed* when now, or at a later stage, it prompts new activities, when people are inspired by the ambience and potential of an empty building or by the strong identity of an area.
4. The heritage serves as a *meeting place* when it encourages residents to pull together and launch new activities, restoring the social ties in a village, neighbourhood or region.

These four functions give the heritage a role in potential strategies for dealing with population decline. As a billboard or seedbed, the heritage helps combat the decline. A strategy of this kind generally helps halt the decline, but does not usually turn it around. That is why a comprehensive strategy for addressing population decline must also include measures to sustain quality of life. Such a strategy prevents deterioration and preserves the value of property. But a good strategy also has a healing social and cultural effect, restoring the collective spirit and self-esteem of residents. The heritage can serve as a meeting place and a totem pole in such a strategy.

This publication reveals that, to exploit these potential functions to the full, one needs a comprehensive strategy for dealing with decline. There is by

definition little demand for property for housing, businesses and organisations in areas experiencing economic and population decline. Any initiatives have to focus on existing valuable heritage, thus mobilising new heritage management practices. This often turns out more expensive than new construction projects. Public budgets for restoration and management can therefore also contribute to such a strategy for tackling decline. If the authorities manage to deliberately promote one or more of the heritage functions in this way, they can create a momentum that is lacking in traditional object-based financing.



2

# Decline in perspective

## Photograph, page 12

Veenhuizen (Drenthe) has managed to find new economic functions for several buildings, including a hotel, a local brewery and a prison museum. Schutsluis (1900), Noordenveld municipality.

Photograph Cultural Heritage Agency

## Decline is nothing new

The debate on population decline really got going in the Netherlands in the early months of 2006, in response to the report 'Structural population loss, an urgent new perspective for policymakers' and other publications by Wim Derks.<sup>3</sup> These were mainly based on studies conducted in the Heerlen region. The debate was soon taken up by the Spatial Planning Agency, which issued a report on 'decline and spatial planning' in the same year.<sup>4</sup> A year later historian Steven van Schuppen was the first to identify clear implications for future developments in the landscape of the Netherlands.<sup>5</sup> Yet the severity of the problem was only slowly beginning to dawn. In 2007 readers of *De Volkskrant* daily newspaper, when asked to select important planning issues, put population decline in 54th place.<sup>6</sup>

The Netherlands is not used to population decline, and has difficulty dealing with it.<sup>7</sup> From a historical point of view, however, decline is nothing new.

The new thing about the current example of decline is that we actually want to fight it. Growth and decline go together, but thanks to the unbridled growth we have experienced since the industrial revolution, we have forgotten this fact.<sup>8</sup> Since then, the idea has emerged that incentive policies are needed for regions suffering economic decline. From around 1860 the government built railway lines to Limburg and Groningen, and in the 1970s public services like postal and telecommunications service PTT and the national statistics office CBS moved to Groningen and Heerlen respectively. Economic allocation policies became part of government policy. The same applied to cultural amenities. This was all in line with the idea that one could actively mould society. But this idea was abandoned in the mid-1980s. Resistance was too great, particularly among the institutions that were expected to relocate, and the economic spin-off from

this policy of distribution had not met expectations.<sup>9</sup> There are still examples of projects in which regions lagging behind unsuccessfully attempt to join forces with regions with better prospects of growth, like Blauwestad in Groningen, the expansion of Friesland International Business Park in Heerenveen and regional marketing campaigns like 'Twente Get Connected' and 'South Limburg – you should live there'.

The heritage sector can help raise awareness of decline. Historical research can help provide an insight into long-term processes of growth and decline. In the Late Middle Ages, for example, there was a period of population decline in Europe, caused by a combination of epidemics (plague) and agricultural crises. This led to increased competition between regions, some of which managed to survive reasonably well while others (like the uplands of Central Europe) experienced a mass exodus. A later Dutch example can be seen in the history of Enkhuizen, whose population shrank by over three-quarters between 1650 and 1850. The underlying cause was competition between the towns of the Republic, in which Amsterdam emerged as the big winner, drawing in people from the towns to the north, in particular. Enkhuizen shows that both growth and shrinkage follow a spatial pattern. As Enkhuizen's population moved away, those who remained became concentrated around the town's harbours and the main road out to the west, effectively restoring the Late Medieval plan of the town.

Another historical example of population decline is post-1840 Ireland. In 1840, Ireland had a population of eight million, the same as England. By 2013 Ireland had five million inhabitants and England fifty million. The difference is explained not so much by the potato famine that hit Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century – although starvation and emigration caused the population to shrink

dramatically – as by the earlier and more rapid industrial development of England.

Areas experiencing population decline are often areas where there has been a sharp fall in the demand for labour. The expansion of scale in farming leads to a loss of jobs in rural regions. Towns built around mining and manufacturing in the nineteenth century have seen traditional sectors decline or disappear altogether. Alternative economic activity does not always take their place. It is not even the workers who have actually been hit who cut their losses and decide to seek better opportunities elsewhere. They are often disinclined to leave their home. It is the young who choose to move away to study or work in a region with more prospects, where they settle and eventually have families of their own. Their home region thus suffers a brain drain, and demographic ageing.

So we can see that population loss is almost inevitable in regions that fall behind economically, and it remains so to this day. In the Netherlands, and all over the world, we see movement towards the most prosperous regions with the best economic prospects. This causes large-scale labour migration, which researchers have typified as ‘the new Great Migration’.<sup>10</sup> Population decline can therefore be only partially explained by changes in population profile. It is a phenomenon associated largely with economic differences.

### **No two cases of decline are ever the same**

Since the lifting of the Iron Curtain migrants from poorer European countries have been making up the demographic deficit in wealthier countries. The impact of population decline is therefore greatest in Eastern Europe. Scandinavia, the Alps region and the Netherlands, too, appear to be faring better.<sup>11</sup>

In northwestern Europe, decline is mainly a regional phenomenon. This is a new issue for Dutch spatial planners, though a number of neighbouring countries have been facing it for some time. In the United Kingdom heavy industry managed to survive, despite its gradual obsolescence, until the 1960s.

After that, structural weakness and a lack of investment led to a rapid downturn. For a long time, nothing took its place: modern industries and the services sector were concentrated in the southeast. Wallonia, the Ruhr region and a number of other old mining and industrial regions experienced a similar decline. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the same process occurred in accelerated form in eastern Germany, where after half a century of virtually no investment old industries collapsed virtually overnight.

Rural areas in northwestern Europe have also experienced periods of population loss, some of long duration. Many farming regions were at their most densely populated in the late nineteenth century. Since then there have been continuous job losses in the farming sector. In some areas, this development was offset by new economic activities, such as industrialisation and tourism, or by suburbanisation. Regions that were not suitable for such developments often experienced decades of population decline. Examples include large areas of central France, the Pyrenees, northern Scandinavia and several upland regions of the United Kingdom and Central Europe.

There are also fundamental differences between shrinking rural populations in different parts of Europe. As architect Floris Alkemade, who is working on a number of heritage projects in Germany, puts it: ‘In the Netherlands towns and cities are so close together that the areas in between them remain just as attractive as the towns and cities themselves. The same is true of Belgium. In France, Paris is the centre of gravity. But the rural area surrounding it is so large that it is no longer possible to get around it within an hour. That’s where you see all the villages dying out.’

### **Two demographic flows**

It has since become clear that economic and demographic developments in the Netherlands are becoming steadily more differentiated. The Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands refers to two demographic flows.<sup>12</sup> Young people in particular are leaving the north, east and south of the country to move to the Randstad conurbation in the west. The population

loss is greatest in southeast Limburg. Heerlen is forecast to shrink by 10 percent up to 2025. Regions like the Achterhoek in the east, the Groene Hart in the centre of the Randstad and Western Brabant appear to be heading for population decline in the short term. Provinces like Flevoland and Utrecht will continue to grow for the time being. Major differences can arise within regions, too. In Zeeland, towns and regions like Kapelle, Tholen, Middelburg and Goes are growing, while Vlissingen, Terneuzen and Sluis are forecast to shrink. The working population is also shrinking in areas that are experiencing decline. In northern Limburg the loss was brought to a halt in 2008, mainly as a result of an influx of workers from abroad. The population of the Netherlands as a whole is expected to stop growing and start shrinking somewhere between 2035 and 2040. Where population numbers are already beginning to fall, a decline in the number of households is still a rare phenomenon, though this trend is likely to set in over the coming decades.

Whereas the expansion of urban areas and their growing use of space was for a long time seen as a threat to the natural environment, landscape and open spaces, population decline is also often described in negative terms, and as a risk. A shrinking population makes it difficult to maintain a user base for amenities like schools, shops, churches and cultural institutions, all things that are already under pressure in sparsely populated rural areas. In recent years some of these problems have been exacerbated by the economic recession. The first response of many local authorities to the prospect of population loss has been to attempt to fight it by attracting new residents and businesses. Over the past few years, there has been a growing realisation in the Netherlands that it is almost impossible to counteract this development. It may even benefit the national economy if young people develop their talents in a place like a city where they have more prospects. This does however give rise to the challenge of maintaining quality of life in the areas they leave. It is a matter not so much of fighting the decline, as of managing it.<sup>13</sup>

Urban designer Christine Hahn of Heerlen city council describes the challenge of population decline very succinctly: 'Decline is about sharing the loss. That's difficult'. This encompasses both the tragedy and the indomitable spirit found

in regions in decline. It is vital to work together. Southern Limburg has grasped this very well. Local authorities and the provincial authority have formed an alliance known as 'Parkstad Limburg'. The idea behind this is that population decline can be managed better in a broader spatial context, and that local authorities need not compete, but can reinforce each other. See also chapter 6. This kind of cooperation does not yet exist in Zeeland. 'A lot of local authorities are in denial about population loss, or blame the neighbours,' says urban planner Léon Kaagman of Zeeland provincial authority. 'There is what you might call "resident cannibalism" between Vlissingen and Middelburg.' Middelburg, with its attractive cultural heritage and its jobs and amenities is drawing residents away from Vlissingen. The short distance between the two towns, and the strong maritime identity of Vlissingen, suggests regional programming might produce more stable development.

Coen Weusthuis is managing the spatial challenge of population decline in the Ems delta region, in a partnership involving Delfzijl, Loppersum and Appingedam local authorities. 'The region has a quantitative issue that could be addressed by investing in quality. First we had to get the problems in focus, with a joint analysis supported by all regional parties. Only then could we actually start filling in the planning details.'

According to Theo Hoek, a new spatial paradigm is actually emerging. The former provincial architect of Groningen province now works at the Libau heritage institute, putting together a team to help the northern authorities guide spatial developments. 'Spatial planning is currently geared to growth,' he explains. 'When you have population decline, you have to stop making plans and start learning how processes work, and whether you can influence them. What we look for is the vitality of a place. Once we find that, it can provide a vehicle for spatial developments.'

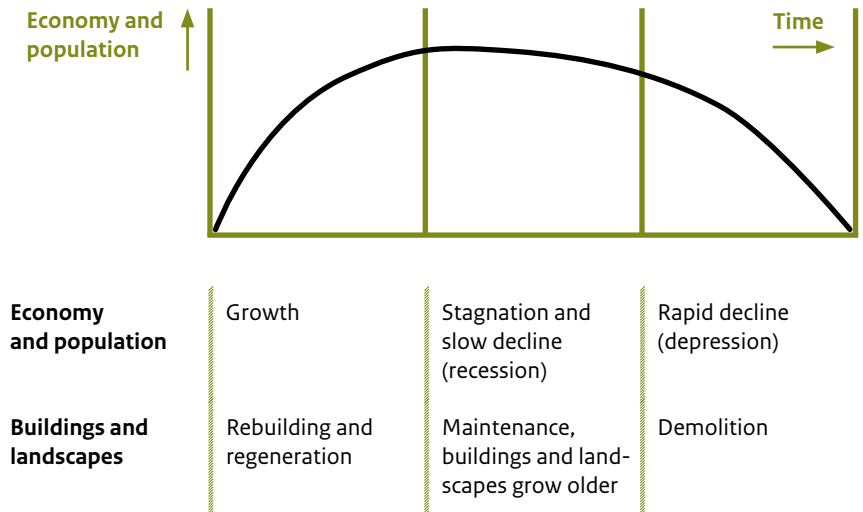
## Heritage management in areas of decline

The heritage world has been slow to join the debate on population decline, despite the fact that it has potentially major implications for heritage management. Buildings are at risk when they stand empty for long periods after losing their function. In areas of population decline there is more likelihood that an owner or manager will leave, and the supply of potential new users is smaller. If it stands vacant for too long, the heritage is robbed of the economic basis for its maintenance.

A certain degree of economic stagnation is not by definition bad for the heritage. While in the past economic growth and prosperity seemed to invite demolition and new construction, stagnation can lead to redevelopment. We can see this in the current recession: people postpone buying a new car and fix the old one up instead. In Cuba, this has been going on for fifty years, and now tourists flock to see the huge numbers of American cars from the mid-twentieth century that are still being driven around there.

In a crisis like the current one, people also put off buying a new house, and renovate their current home instead. This happened in the distant past, too. In towns and cities that suffered economic stagnation, existing buildings were fixed up rather than replaced. This gave them the chance to grow 'old'. Towns that went through this in the Early Modern era (just after the Middle Ages) became important tourist destinations in the nineteenth century (Bruges, the Zuyder Zee coastal towns).

But if the economic and demographic problems become too great and persist for too long, dilapidation sets in and buildings literally collapse after a time. One of the consequences of population decline is absence of rivalry: if the house next door becomes derelict, you will be less inclined to renovate your own house. The financial incentive to maintain your house decreases, the more property values fall, and people believe they have less chance of selling their own home. This can easily happen in areas of population decline, where supply exceeds demand. The figure below summarises these processes.



*A link between the economy and the heritage*

Source: Renes, J. (2011). *Erfgoed in interessante tijden*. Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam (inaugural lecture).

Demolition can be an option for buildings with no projected future value but not, in principle, for valuable heritage. Buildings with less historical or social value will more readily be seen as surplus to requirements and earmarked for demolition. This is the strategy being pursued by Sas van Gent in the 'Renaissance of Sas van Gent' project. One of the first actions undertaken by housing association Woongloed Zeeuws-Vlaanderen was to renovate around 40 characteristic homes on Vredestraat. Though these houses, built in 1920, were not scheduled historic buildings, the street was well loved among the local population. Surplus homes are found mainly in post-war neighbourhoods on the edges of the town, like the Witte Wijk district. Here, houses fetch less than 100,000 euros and it is also difficult to rent out property in the area. The housing association is demolishing homes there. The plots that become available are being used to create a much less densely-built neighbourhood, with new homes commissioned by private clients, a market segment that had



not previously existed in Sas van Gent. In this way, the heritage can help keep the housing market healthy.

There is thus a lot to be said for directing new functions towards highly-valued heritage, and using renovation budgets to preserve it. But once the heritage has become unusable, or has a poor market position for other reasons, a problem arises. Once dereliction appears inevitable, it can reduce quality of life in an area, rather than restoring it.

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### **Chambon-sur-Voueize: heritage management in a shrinking French village**

Someone who has first-hand experience of managing the heritage in a context of demographic decline is Cécile Creuzon, mayor of the village of Chambon-sur-Voueize in the French region of Limousin. She says the population decline in the village can be traced back to two apartment blocks that were earmarked for demolition, combined with restrictions on new building because the village has a relatively high flood risk. ‘As mayor I try to pursue a policy focused on the future of Chambon, by offering a certain quality of life. We ensure that people feel comfortable here and that it is a nice place and popular with residents. Chambon has some beautiful heritage, with the abbey church as its crown jewel, so we try to use that.’

A number of buildings could be reused and thus preserved. ‘The former courthouse is now home to a bank and a tourist office, plus two apartments on the first floor. The former police station houses a pharmacy and four homes. The old school has also undergone alterations, and now houses a media centre and two apartments.’ It is not easy. ‘We are now fighting to bring a regional nursing home to Chambon. I would like to accommodate the doctors or

the e-health centre in a former infirmary. This would mean we could reuse our heritage nicely. Architects and financial experts say it is cheaper to build something new, but what do we then do with our old buildings? If necessary we will use a municipal support fund to plug the financial gap between construction and renovation.’

The village also has a form of heritage that has very little utility value, but should nevertheless be preserved. In the old village centre many houses stand empty because they have no garden. ‘We could adopt a wilful, perhaps slightly authoritarian local policy that consisted of demolishing one in three houses to create space and gardens’, says Creuzon. ‘It will be difficult to implement such a policy, particularly because the houses are in private ownership, and because of the regulations on historic buildings. But some day we will be forced to do it because no one wants to restore the houses, with the risk that eventually they will collapse.’

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### **Experimentation and innovation**

The relationship between population decline and the heritage has another, brighter side. A side that brings promise both to the heritage and to the surrounding area. This happens if the heritage can be linked to a new, contemporary function or meaning. Historic buildings have, for example, turned out to be suitable locations for start-up companies. There are lots of affordable premises in areas of population decline, but the heritage can supply ambience, particularly if it inspires creative entrepreneurs. Historic landscapes can be combined with new ecological values and new economic drivers like leisure and tourism. One example is the village of Veenhuizen in Noordenveld local authority area, Drenthe, a former ‘re-education colony’ in a characteristic local landscape (featuring a unique open field system, known as *esdorp*) with over a hundred scheduled monuments. A large number of new economic and

cultural functions have now been attracted here, including a hotel, a craft centre, a local brewery and the National Prison Museum.

Architect Floris Alkemade says that parts of the heritage that at first sight do not have great value as monuments can in fact play a key role in reviving areas that are withering away. 'It's a matter of searching. There are huge numbers of people who are keen to set up all kinds of things, but encounter insurmountable obstacles, particularly in the start-up phase. It is a matter of organising regional developments in such a way that this kind of initiative can be more easily accommodated, and can get through the experimentation phase without the need for huge investments. In a context like this an existing building that is no longer needed but should be preserved can play a key role. There are few things that do more to stimulate creative urban life than cheap, available and inspiring spaces. The knife cuts both ways: you give existing heritage a new meaning and you create conditions that are extremely conducive to all kinds of initiatives. As soon as an initiative turns out to be a success it will grow and look for another place. As businesses come and go they create a dynamic, a kind of "pressure cooker", fostering all kinds of partnerships. 'The category of heritage whose preservation would otherwise be difficult can play this role. Precisely because it is so different, it offers different prospects. So don't focus on protecting old, dead, unused historic buildings that just cost huge amounts of money, focus instead on reinterpreting the potential uses for today. Not a one-sided focus on tourism, but a programmatic, direct approach, free of the paralysing fear of being obviously contemporary. Our heritage as a seedbed for experimentation and innovation.'

### **This is ours!**

A new meaning for the heritage need not necessarily be associated with a new use. This has become clear in former East Germany, where interest in old churches is reviving, as Uwe Holz, director of the Industry and Film Museum in Bitterfeld-Wolfen (near Dessau) explains. 'In the atheistic GDR no attention at

all was given to churches, with the exception of those that had major tourist or historical value. A current trend we see in villages in this region is for people – even though the majority of them are not religious – to become more and more interested in the local church as a popular and characteristic building. This is a surprising development. These are bottom-up initiatives, in which 10 to 15 percent of the costs are paid by the local authority, which also plays an advisory role. The rest is raised by the village community. It's about community places, and the feeling of "this is ours!"'

Lammert Prins and Peter Timmer of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands have found the same thing. They performed a cultural heritage value analysis on the village of Holwerd, as part of a plan to counter population decline there.<sup>14</sup> 'You can pinpoint crucial places in villages, characteristic buildings that locals regard as important', says Prins. 'If you invest in those you have the most chance of creating added value and providing a boost.'

The value assessment in Holwerd is in line with the new approach to spatial planning needed in the face of population decline. It is not only about buildings, villages and landscapes, but about the people who bring those buildings, villages and landscapes to life. People who remain behind in villages that are being abandoned feel lost without their community. People have a deep-seated need to connect. In areas facing heavy population loss, in particular, the heritage can help put the idea of 'we're all in it together' into practice. See also chapter 5.



3

# Dessau sample sheet

**Photograph, page 19**  
 Ferropolis, Gräfenhainichen, Dessau-Wörlitzer. Gigantic excavators not only remind us of Wörlitz's mining past, they also form the backdrop for many an open-air festival.  
 Photograph Jens Gloger

The heritage attracts and connects. It is therefore a powerful tool for tackling the deterioration caused by economic and population decline. This is demonstrated by the experiences in the former East German city of Dessau and the surrounding area. The region has a rich history, as evidenced by its diverse heritage – including royal, industrial, architectural and civic heritage. But decline has hit the region hard. Both the authorities and private-sector organisations are using the heritage to turn the negative impact of the decline around and create a promising future for Dessau. In doing so, they are drawing on the four functions identified in this report: heritage as billboard, totem pole, seedbed and meeting place.

Saxony-Anhalt was one of many principalities in the eighteenth century. It has been the source of many innovations. It was in Saxony-Anhalt that the Reformation began, when Martin Luther nailed his thesis to the church door in Wittenberg. In the eighteenth century the first English-style landscaped park in continental Europe was created in Wörlitz<sup>15</sup> and in the first half of the twentieth century Dessau and the surrounding region produced key innovations in the aircraft industry (Junkers), photography (colour film was invented in Wolfen) and architecture and design (Bauhaus).

Dessau was bombed heavily by the Allies in the Second World War. Some 80 percent of the centre was destroyed, as well as most of the city's industrial complexes. After the war, the Socialist regime rebuilt the city and its industry, but after the fall of the Berlin Wall the region's industry collapsed completely. After unification, Germany placed too much faith in an overoptimistic transformation programme. Rather than the envisaged rapid growth and modernisation of the East German economy, the effect was in fact to enhance

population decline. Saxony-Anhalt is shrinking faster than any other state in Germany, and of all the state's shrinking cities, Dessau is the most extreme example. Between 1990 and 2010 the Dessau-Rosslau conurbation lost almost a quarter of its inhabitants.

'Last century the population grew incredibly fast', says Uwe Holz, director of the Industry and Film Museum. 'Lots of immigrants came from far afield to work in the chemical industry in Bitterfeld in the 1930s. It was one of the most modern regions in the world. Now it's all gone. Companies moved to other places where production is cheaper.' Until recently Bitterfeld-Wolfen had the biggest photographic and film industry in the world. 'We experienced two disasters. The majority of the chemical industry disappeared after the fall of the Wall. Then the recent transition from analogue to digital photography was the final blow. Now almost everyone has left', says Holz.

Dessau's policy is based on acceptance of and adaptation to changing circumstances. Assuming that population decline cannot be halted, the negative developments in terms of housing and socioeconomic problems are being tackled through urban planning. The city, which is now too big, has to make to with 'less': 'less is the future'. The city is for example attempting to concentrate its urban fabric in 'islands' and has opted to create contiguous green spaces in the vacant areas in between.

Since 1989, one of the drivers behind the adaptation to population decline has been the Dessau Bauhaus Foundation. As such, it is following in the footsteps of the famous Bauhaus art and architecture academy founded there in 1925 by Walter Gropius. Industrialisation was what inspired Gropius and the group of artists and architects he gathered around himself.

The headquarters of the Bauhaus movement survived the GDR period. But Rolf Kühn, who breathed new life into the architecture centre after the fall of the Wall, found a region in tatters when he first arrived. He felt it was time for a mental and landscape revolution and saw it as his responsibility to find a response to de-industrialisation.<sup>16</sup> All his attention and efforts were focused on transforming the area to, as he puts it himself ‘create new conditions and new images’.<sup>17</sup>

The Dessau Bauhaus Foundation, which operates from the Bauhaus headquarters, acts as a ‘concept maker’ for cultural, economic and ecological prospects for the city and region. People are designing, exhibiting and studying again in the expressive black-and-white scheduled historic building built of glass, steel and concrete.

Staff at the Foundation came up with the *Industrielles Gartenreich* (‘industrial garden kingdom’) concept. Both the ‘industrial’ and ‘garden kingdom’ elements of the concept refer to illustrious periods in the history of Dessau and the surrounding region. After thoroughly researching the cultural history of the region, the Foundation developed a vision whereby the industrial landscape would be transformed into an ‘industrial garden kingdom’. The concept recounts the tale of unique heritage sites and shows how this region has been formed and deformed over the past three centuries.

The Foundation wanted to make the local population more aware of their surroundings and the changes occurring there. The integrated cultural approach is designed to help people regain their faith and pride in the region. The industrial garden kingdom is a tribute to the landscape and it shows how it is possible to deal with one’s lost industrial past. It has been called a fluid convergence of a historical model and contemporary realism:<sup>18</sup> preserving as much of the original landscape as possible, and at the same time introducing as many new elements as possible.<sup>19</sup>

The Foundation’s study of the industrial garden kingdom marked the start of a future-oriented strategy, again integrated and culturally-oriented. Sixteen projects have been implemented as part of the strategy, and they

in turn have led to more projects. Many of them use the heritage. Four examples illustrate the four potential functions of the heritage in areas of decline:

### **Bauhaus architecture: heritage as billboard**

Bauhaus buildings are the city’s most important heritage. The main examples are the headquarters and the *Meisterhäuser* (‘masters’ houses’ that Gropius designed for himself and Bauhaus teachers like Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger and Wassily Kandinsky). The Bauhaus architecture is a billboard that attracts tourists, and visitors are regularly reminded of it in the streets, which are named after people and things associated with the Bauhaus movement. The headquarters and *Meisterhäuser* have been UNESCO World Heritage sites since 1996. According to UNESCO, they are the most important monuments to the Modern movement in Europe. Two *Meisterhäuser* that had been lost in the Second World War – Gropius’ *Direktorenhaus* and Moholy-Nagy’s *Meisterhaus* – were recently reconstructed.<sup>20</sup>

The billboard function is the most direct role that heritage can play in a strategy to cope with population decline. By their very presence, these buildings attract visitors, and thus bring economic activity to other parts of the city. The only thing the city has to do is promote itself and inform people – and of course keep the heritage properly protected and maintained.

### **Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz: heritage as totem pole**

The *Gartenreich* (garden kingdom) of Dessau-Wörlitz, to the east of Dessau, was created in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was established by Prince Franz von Anhalt-Dessau, who was inspired by the spirit of the Enlightenment and Humanism. The area is a successful symbiosis of landscape, architecture and art. Spread over no fewer than 142 square kilometres, it features country houses, a range of park designs, garden figures and numerous

small, highly appealing objects interwoven into the river landscapes along the Elbe and Mulde. This *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork) is largely the work of Prince Leopold III, Friedrich Franz von Anhalt-Dessau (1740-1817) and his friend and advisor Friedrich Wilhelm von Erdmannsdorff.<sup>21</sup>

Wolfgang Savelsberg has worked as project manager at the Kulturstiftung Dessau-Wörlitz cultural foundation, which has managed the Gartenreich, since 1991. He describes the state in which he, a West German, found it back then. 'Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz was maintained with the best of intentions in the

View of a Gothic house, Gartenreich. Photograph Englandfan



Attract and Connect  
Population decline and  
the heritage in Europe

GDR period. The gardens and landscapes, including the river landscapes and river meadows, with their rare oaks, were therefore in reasonable condition. Much of the built heritage (churches, palaces and country houses), on the other hand, was in a ruinous state. This was down to the lack of specialists, renovation techniques and materials for the work that needed carrying out.' Now, the park is a World Heritage site, having been listed in 2000. There is plenty of accommodation and lots for visitors to do: concerts on the water, tours of the town, park and castles, exhibitions, guided cycling tours and walks. Historical concerts, plays and literary performances are staged in collaboration with Anhaltisches Theater Dessau.

This heritage serves as a billboard too, but it does more besides. The Gartenreich also appeals to local residents. The heritage can give people an identity, foundations, pride and direction – things that are particularly important in areas suffering population decline. Activities in the park are also designed to make people feel more connected, as they become involved as volunteers or by renting out venues. People can also opt for a natural burial here, a final resting place among nature. In this way, as well as serving as a billboard, the heritage also acts as a totem pole: a binding symbol of the region's history and future for the local community.

### **Ferropolis: heritage as seedbed**

Ferropolis is a former open-cast mine near the small town of Gräfenheinichen, ten kilometres east of Dessau. The coal mined there was used, among other things, to power the chemical industry. The mining operations left large parts of the area prone to erosion, and the dust from the quarries and fumes from the chemical factories covered everything with grime. There was virtually no green to be seen. When coal mining ceased after 1989, the pits' gigantic excavators and dredgers were left behind. The plan was to flood the area and sell the machines for scrap, erasing all reminders of this past.<sup>22</sup> However, students from Dessau Bauhaus Foundation saw potential in the 'City of Iron', and prevented the plan from being carried out. It turns out they were right.

The imposing steel excavators provided an ideal setting for cultural activities, in this place where nature and technology meet to such impressive effect. Ferropolis is now an open-air museum plus art and music arena that draws crowds from home and abroad. But that is not all.

The project's manager, Thies Schröder, is currently establishing an international platform to bring together sustainable technology experts from all over the world. He is also developing an educational programme, in collaboration with teaching institutions. This will include both scientific research and experiments involving leisure and technology in combination with education, as well as collaboration with a range of different schools. The children at the nearby Ferropolisschool, for example, recently began having technology and chemistry lessons at the Ferropolis site. The focus is on themes that raise public awareness of sustainable energy issues.

As such, the region has taken on a role in activities for which the heritage is not strictly necessary. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Ferropolis would have emerged as a centre of research and education if the excavators had been scrapped. In this case, the heritage is not only a billboard for attracting visitors, it is also a seedbed for new economic functions.

### **Ampelhaus: heritage as meeting place**

The small town of Oranienbaum, between Dessau and Ferropolis, is home to the Ampelhaus. This building, which has little in the way of grandeur, had been completely neglected for a decade, until a group of Dutch artists bought it in 2012 and named it after the traffic light (*Ampel*) at the nearby crossroads. In summer of that year the artists' Orangemann Foundation staged an exhibition on the theme of recycling, entitled *Use It Again*.

The foundation plans to organise exhibitions over the next few years centred on the themes of 'reuse', 'recycling' and 'transformation'. The artists feel a connection with these themes, which are so appropriate for an old, neglected building. They were surprised the building had stood empty for so long, because it did not prove difficult to make something attractive out of it.

'Not everything needs to be a museum piece or brand new', says architect Niek Wagemans, one of the organisers.

The Ampelhaus is now an exhibition space with an emphasis on bringing people together. Local people can meet there. Businessmen and –women can come for a beer, get into conversation with an artist working on a piece there. Orangemann hopes to continue the project with this accessible approach. 'If we think about that fantastic post office, or equally fantastic little railway station, we can think of all sorts of "sensible" things to do with them,' says Wagemans, 'but will they work? It is much more special if something comes from the local area and the people themselves. This kind of "self-discovery" is something that really can work here.

'When I had just arrived in Oranienbaum and was driving around, I saw that all the shutters were down in the evening. There was no one on the streets. I sometimes thought nothing at all was happening. We were a bit afraid that this was the case, particularly with the prospect of the exhibition. Worried about whether they would think our crazy, impractical stuff was worth the effort. But the theme of *Use It Again* turned out to be a fantastic way of getting to know the place. I had a big blue van and I would pick up all kinds of things out of containers. Word soon got around, and I started to pick up things from people's houses. Later people actually brought things to me. Or they would stop me and ask me to come with them. I discovered that the people are actually very open. Making something new from their old stuff prompted a kind of exchange. People came by more and more often, and brought new people along.'

In just a short time, the Orangemann Foundation has become familiar to local residents and other heritage developers, like the people behind Ferropolis. The Ampelhaus is an inspiring example of how a function as meeting place is healthy both for the heritage and for a village or neighbourhood community, and how it helps people to help deal with population decline.

## Four parallel functions

Dessau is like a sample sheet of different types of heritage and different ways of dealing with it: obviously historical heritage, alongside heritage that was only just saved from the wrecker's hammer and an ugly house at a crossroads. Heritage cared for by the authorities, heritage used by a foundation and heritage where private individuals turn their ideas into a reality. Urban heritage, rural heritage, industrial heritage.

In principle, all these forms of heritage can be combined using the four heritage functions. Of course some combinations will be more obvious than others. Heritage used as a billboard, for example, is likely to have undisputed historical value, while large industrial structures often need a new use in order to be preserved (and begin a second life as a 'seedbed').

While the billboard function focuses mainly on people from elsewhere, the totem pole is a beacon of local identity. And while the seedbed is used mainly by a creative class that consists largely (though not exclusively) of people from elsewhere, a meeting place is most important for the local population. The socioeconomic functions of seedbed and meeting place roles often arise from initiatives launched by people or businesses who are keen to use the heritage themselves. They will usually also undertake the restoration and management of the property, although this is not always possible without a financial contribution from the government. When heritage serves the symbolic functions as a billboard and totem pole, top-down management is often needed. This will not necessarily be associated with a new use for the heritage itself, so if it loses its function and a new one emerges, another arrangement will need to be found for its management and maintenance. This will generally require the involvement of the authorities. The following diagram shows how the four heritage functions logically relate to each other:

	Heritage attracts (external focus)	Heritage connects (internal focus)
Focus on socioeconomic function	<b>SEEDBED</b>	<b>MEETING PLACE</b>
Focus on symbol function	<b>BILLBOARD</b>	<b>TOTEM POLE</b>

The following four chapters take a closer look at the four functions of heritage, each on the basis of two German, UK or French examples and one Dutch example. No single cure-all solution is revealed. Each region seeks its own answers and develops its own strategies for using the heritage to combat or manage demographic decline. Some broad similarities can however be identified. While towns and cities attempt to make themselves more attractive with high-profile projects based on spectacular examples of the heritage, in rural areas it is more a matter of a customised approach at the level of individual houses, farms, village centres and landscape features. There, the hope is that lots of small projects together will move things in the right direction. Often local residents, associations or entrepreneurs take the lead, but sometimes it is the authorities that drive developments. In many cases there is a clear role for the authorities in stimulating regional processes, awarding or obtaining grants and supervising the quality and maintenance of historical value.





4

# Heritage as billboard

The most obvious function for the heritage in regions experiencing population decline is as a billboard. In theory the heritage gives a region, town or village its own identity which, if used cleverly in a marketing campaign, can attract outsiders to visit or even move to the region. Heritage and tourism are an extension of each other, argues British sociologist John Urry.<sup>23</sup> He believes that tourism is essentially a matter of ‘gazing at signs’: looking at the striking features of a place, like a cathedral, landscape or other sight. The heritage is one of the ‘signs’ at which tourists direct their gaze. Studies have for example shown that people tend to regard ‘old’ as beautiful. The actual age of a historic building does not even matter, particularly to people who have little grasp of history.<sup>24</sup> It is however important that the past be made visible, tangible or perceptible. In Limburg, for example, contemplative tourism at monasteries is a rapidly growing market. This involves ‘tourist activities that lead to inner peace and balance’ and which connect with ‘the purpose of life’.<sup>25</sup> The monasteries of Steijl and Wittem, for example, offer retreats, silence weekends and Zen meditation.

## Photograph, page 25

Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche, The church as centre of the village. Limousin. Photograph MairieSY

## France, Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche (Limousin): Cité Médiévale

The small town of Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche grew up around a twelfth-century collegiate church that still defines the appearance of the town. It has a history of gold trading, and in 1768 the first source of kaolin – the most important constituent of porcelain – in France was discovered here. Saint-Yrieix is in the Limousin region, some 40 kilometres from the capital Limoges. Its population

has shrunk by 8 percent over the past 22 years, to 7000 today. As one of the ten largest places in the Haute-Vienne *département*, it is a regional centre with shops and industry. It is home to the second largest printworks in France and the famous Bijou factory that produces madeleines.

The town attracts 20,000 visitors a year, most of whom come for the heritage, but also for summer events like the music festival at the church, an international watercolour fair, exhibitions and a national rally. These events are advertised

in a radius of 300 kilometres, at tourism fairs for example. The advertising campaign is run by the local authority in collaboration with the Bijou factory. The factory, which sells its product nationwide, inserts a brochure about the town in every box of madeleines. Saint-Yrieix is one of the hundred *Plus Beaux Détours de France* ('most attractive detours in France'), a network of towns with 2000 to 20,000 inhabitants which, though they lie away from the main tourist centres and routes, advertise themselves as tourist spots (with a nod to the *Plus Beaux Villages de France* network). Yet despite the collaboration with other local authorities in the area, it has proved difficult to persuade tourists to stay in the town for more than a day.

The *Cité Médiévale* (the Medieval centre) is the main billboard attraction for tourists. Visitors enter the historic centre from the car park via an imposing Medieval gateway, or from the town via symbolic gateways. This underlines the unique importance of the Medieval town, which stands slightly higher than the areas around it.

Since 2003 work has been underway to renovate and revamp the *Cité Médiévale*, with respect for its heritage. The renovations are being performed with great care and using traditional techniques. The square has been paved with local stone and all cables have now been laid underground. In 2005 Saint-Yrieix incorporated a 'ZPPAUP' into its zoning plan. This is an 'Area of Protection Architecture, Urban Design and Landscape', including a description of the qualities that are to be preserved and the regulations that apply. This status superseded the protected 500-metre zone around individual monuments or historic buildings, and has proved to be a much more appropriate and elegant way of providing protection. All activities in a ZPPAUP must be approved by the *Architecte des Bâtiments de France*.

The emphasis on the heritage does not appear to be detrimental to the industry and vigour of the town. The square remains accessible to local traffic and a number of religious buildings have been given a new function: a museum for art books and a medical centre, for example. The building immediately adjacent to the gateway has been transformed into a *Maison du Patrimoine*. The 'heritage house' presents the history of gold and kaolin mining and

provides accommodation for artists seeking inspiration in the town. These large-scale projects have been funded by all levels of government: the *commune*, the *département*, the region, the state and the European Union (under the Leader Programme).

In the centre of Saint-Yrieix the quality of the heritage and of the public spaces contrasts starkly with the many empty shops and, above all, homes. Saint-Yrieix has almost 3900 homes, 10 percent of which are vacant. The vacancies are concentrated in the centre, a situation found all over Limousin. People have moved away from town centres because of the heavy traffic and the lack of detached houses with gardens. This is particularly the case along the main thoroughfares, but it has also happened to a lesser extent in the *Cité Médiévale*, causing the atmosphere there to deteriorate. The local council is as good as powerless when it comes to vacant private properties. By investing in the public heritage it hopes to make the centre more attractive and persuade owners to renovate or sell their property. In the summer, the local council brokers the temporary letting of empty shops to craftsmen and -women, enabling them to benefit from tourism. Some of them stay on and become permanent tenants. Estate agents also attempt to target foreign buyers who might like to own a house in the centre.

The tourist infrastructure might seem a little excessive for a small town like Saint-Yrieix, but it is needed in the summer. The investments in tourism and the financial support for heritage management are evidence of the local council's ambition. It is using the heritage as a billboard to attract a growing number of tourists and to interest certain groups outside the town in its vacant homes and shops. Its efforts have not been entirely successful, however, as the population continues to shrink and a huge number of properties in the centre remain vacant.

## France, Plateau de Millevaches (Limousin): Retrouvance® walking holidays

It is no coincidence that the second example of heritage as a billboard also comes from Limousin. In contrast to the German authorities, their counterparts in France are attempting to fight regional population decline by attracting new residents and visitors. This requires an attractive billboard. And in contrast to the industrial heritage of the northern French mining region, for example, which is suitable primarily as a setting for new activities, the impressive landscape and historic villages of Limousin make an ideal billboard.

Retrouvance® is a registered trademark of the *Office Nationale des Forêts* (ONF, France's national forestry service) which applies to luxury organised walking holidays in little-known nature conservation areas. Eight routes have been set out all over the country. A group of around ten walkers spend a week trekking through the area with a guide who tells them about the local environment and culture. Their luggage is transported, all meals are provided and the walkers spend the night in *gîtes* – isolated houses in or on the edge of a wood, which were vacant and have now been given a new purpose as holiday homes. When they are not occupied by walkers, other holidaymakers can rent them. The ONF collaborated with the *Parc Naturel Régional (PNR) de Millevaches en Limousin* on the walking route. A PNR enjoys planning protection, and is also an organisation in which local councils, the *département*, the region and also various associations can work together. Local authorities were interested in the project because Millevaches had a shortage of holiday homes for medium-sized groups (ten to fifteen people). It also provided a low-cost use for empty buildings in local authority ownership. The local councils made an initial financial contribution which they will recoup as the ONF pays them a fixed rent. Other financing came from the EU (the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), the State, the region and the *départements*. The project cost a total of just over 1.5 million euros.

Using the heritage as a billboard, the ONF and PNR hope to increase the number of visitors to the region. Both the accommodation and the walking tours are steeped in history. Gilles Despeyroux, who is responsible for the project at the PNR, calls Retrouvance® Millevaches a unique walking holiday, despite the fact that it does not include any spectacular mountain-top views. 'We compensate for this by using the qualities of the area, the natural heritage in the form of marshes and heathland, and also the cultural heritage, which consists mainly of small features and characteristic local buildings. The guides focus a lot on rocks, granite, construction techniques and rural history.'

The walking tour includes the village of Clédât, abandoned since it lost its final resident in the 1960s. It is now protected by a society, whose chair sometimes comes along to tell a Retrouvance® group about the history of the 'ghost village'. In some places along the route the heritage has been restored for the project. This includes a millstream restored in collaboration with a school. The project is therefore also helping restore the heritage, and train new heritage professionals.

Thus far, five buildings in Millevaches have been redeveloped as *gîtes*. In the first year (2012), six walking holidays were organised for a total of 57 visitors. Each holiday home was rented out to other holidaymakers for an average of 65 days. The ONF expects to achieve optimum occupancy within around two years.

The heritage benefits from Retrouvance® thanks to the redevelopment and the publicity. The local economy also benefits indirectly, because 60 percent of the income goes to guides, restaurants, cleaning companies and other local businesses. 'This helps keep the local population here, albeit only a small contribution,' says Despeyroux. He hopes that the quality of the project will induce visitors to return to Millevaches and – who knows? – perhaps persuade some of them to relocate there. This is not entirely unrealistic: most of Limousin's new residents move there after a good holiday experience.<sup>26</sup>

## The Netherlands/Belgium: State-Spanish Lines

The Belgian provinces of East and West Flanders, and the Dutch province of Zeeland have been collaborating for some time in the *Krekengebied*, an area crisscrossed by streams, which straddles the national border. In recent years particular attention has been focused on one particular cross-border project, the State-Spanish Lines, an extensive system of forts, fortified towns and linear dikes that bear witness to the many centuries of conflict over access to the city and port of Antwerp. The Lines date partly from the time of the Dutch Revolt (the Eighty Years' War, 1568-1648), though building work continued into the

Kruisdijkschans redoubt, once an important defence in the war between the Dutch and the Spanish, now part of the Dutch-Spanish Lines. Photograph Ludo Goossens



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War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713). The defences provided the basis for the border between Belgium and the Netherlands, thus highlighting the character of the border region. They form an integrated whole in both historical and spatial terms, and as a landscape feature. Extensive restoration work in recent years has made them visible again.

The State-Spanish Lines support the region's identity and help the area attract visitors. They offer a recreational programme that is supported by museums, plus other cultural activities in several of the forts and villages. It is hoped this will provide an economic boost, particularly for Zeeland-Flanders, which is undergoing population decline.

However, the Lines are not sufficiently well known among residents and visitors. The tourism and leisure facilities there could also be improved. Revealing this heritage and making it accessible are therefore still key goals. In ecological terms, too, the area has great potential. A considerable number of forts and military dikes are in ecological corridors or close to the remains of streams, and could therefore be used to develop new wildlife habitats. Valorisation through leisure and tourism is one of the key challenges for the future. More will need to be done, including things that have not been done in the area before. As a recent 'marketing study' for three of the defence structures in the region describes it: '...things that lead to a balanced, border-wide tourism product that provides the opportunity to connect people and organisations. A versatile product that brings added cultural heritage, social and economic value to the border area of Flanders and the Netherlands. 'Hopefully this study will provide extra encouragement to policymakers, businesses, tourist organisations, historical societies and passionate individuals. Encouragement to follow up successfully the many efforts that have been made so far to give the forts and other defences the status they deserve.'<sup>27</sup> A shared vision of the future and sustained cross-border collaboration are certainly appropriate in this area.



5

# Heritage as totem pole

Whereas the heritage as a billboard is all about outsiders, heritage as a totem pole focuses on residents. The local heritage can give the local population an identity, foundations, pride and direction – things that are particularly important in areas suffering population decline. A unique landscape, a striking building or a regional product gives people the feeling of being ‘at home’, and represents the collective memory, harmony and security.<sup>28</sup> Geographers refer to a ‘sense of place’ or even to ‘topophilia’, love of place.<sup>29</sup> And when it comes to places, it is indeed a bit like love: difficult to put into words, but once you experience it you understand what is meant. The Italian writer Italo Calvino wrote: ‘This city that will not disappear from your mind is like a metal structure or a network of boxes in which anyone can arrange the things he wants to remember’.<sup>30</sup> The heritage can play a role in building and maintaining those metal structures – it helps anchor identity.

## Photograph, page 30

Farms like this one in Friesland (1911), Holwerd, make a vital contribution to the quality of the landscape of Dongeradeel.

Photograph Cultural Heritage Agency

The heritage in urban areas is particularly useful as a totem pole. In his study of American cities, urban planner Kevin Lynch described how for residents striking buildings often serve as an orientation and reference point.<sup>31</sup> Objects which stand out as a result of their dimensions, architecture or cultural or historic value – Lynch calls them landmarks – have an identifying effect and stick in the mind. The totem pole function of the heritage therefore also contains an important warning: be careful what you demolish, for the stories, memories and emotions associated with buildings or landscape features are independent of their value as monuments or historic buildings, as defined by historians. Demolition can exacerbate the hidden distress in areas in decline,

while a new purpose and attractive restoration work can give people confidence in the future.

## Germany, Ruhr region: Zeche Zollverein

The shrinking cities of Essen and Duisburg in the German Ruhr region have various heritage objects with which residents identify, such as the Zollverein mine complex, the Duisburg North Landscape Park and the working-class neighbourhood of Margarethenhöhe. These places not only attract tourists, they are also a source of identity for residents themselves.<sup>32</sup> But this has not

always been the case. When the coal mine ('Zeche') closed in 1986, followed several years later by the Zollverein coking plant ('Kokerei'), everyone in Essen agreed that all trace of the complex should be erased as quickly as possible. A former mine and industrial plant without a purpose, derelict and contaminated, was not worth preserving. Elsewhere in the Ruhr region, too, old industrial complexes were being razed to the ground without a second thought. As more and more old industrial complexes were lost in this way, in the early 1990s attitudes began to change, with the growing realisation that the identity of the region lay in these complexes. Zollverein is an emblematic project in this sense, says architect Floris Alkemade, who was involved in its redevelopment as part of the OMA agency. 'Old industrial buildings that had become surplus to requirements and were about to be demolished had to be interpreted as potential historic buildings that could both preserve and help develop the identity of the entire Ruhr region.'

Heritage objects like Zollverein became 'totem poles' for the Ruhr region. The remains of the mining and manufacturing industry are relics of a past that is inextricably linked with the region. They are connected to memories and residents derive their sense of 'home' ('Heimat') from them. It became clear in the 1990s that to boost this heritage value, they needed to be recognised as World Heritage. Then the latent connection would blossom into pride. Zollverein had this potential. Once the largest coal mine in Europe, its machinery is awe-inspiring, its technology marks important milestones in industrial history, and the hoist that dominates the skyline creates a fascinating and instantly recognisable image. Furthermore, a great deal of thought went into its architecture and its place within the urban fabric when it was designed, which is exceptional for a building of this kind. The plans to acquire World Heritage status for the complex was the symbolic start of its redevelopment. In 2002, little over 15 years after scores of industrial complexes had been demolished without a thought, the dream became a reality. The UNESCO nomination was based on a masterplan which gave details not only of how the complex's monumental and historic value was to be protected, but also how it might be developed in the future. For in order to maintain the

'totem pole' function of the mine complex, a new purpose had to be found – it also had to prove itself as a 'seedbed' for new activities. However, the resources were simply not available for a wholesale redevelopment of the entire site, which covers hundreds of hectares. 'We therefore opted to make the new purpose clearly visible in the most significant places,' Alkemade explains. 'We did so through small but quite essential interventions. "Urban acupuncture", we call it. That allowed us to give the entire area a new identity relatively simply.'

Zollverein was redeveloped at the initiative of the authorities in a period when the combination of industrial heritage and creative industries was not so common. A small group of experts from various government bodies established the development agency *Entwicklungsgesellschaft Zollverein*. Thanks partly to contacts with the city of Essen, North-Rhine Westphalia state and nature conservancy *Landschaftsverband Rheinland* the director was able to get the development agency up and running. The organisation managed to attract knowledge and capital from various quarters, and commissioned a masterplan.

The idea was to preserve the region's significance as an economic powerhouse, but using new forms of production: from mining to design. The heritage linked this new identity with the region's old identity that gradually developed throughout its history and helps residents of the Ruhr accept and experience the region's transition. OMA and the agency Böll & Krabel, for example, completed a careful restoration of the *Kohlenwäsche*, the gigantic hall on the site featuring staircases, pipes and conveyor belts, to prepare it for use as a museum and visitors' centre. Other institutions and businesses that have moved onto the site include a choreography centre and a design school, which have also attracted a series of small businesses and other organisations that are slowly beginning to fill the huge vacant spaces.

'The unique thing was that, in the period when the entire area was still awaiting restoration, there was already a top-notch restaurant here,' says Alkemade. 'A gutsy businessman had opted to locate his business in this former industrial setting. Instead of renting an expensive place downtown, the restaurateur wanted to be associated with the radical and surprising context of an abandoned industrial site. It was a huge success.'



Thanks to the monumental and historical heritage and the ‘buzz’ created by enterprise and artists, Zollverein has grown into an emblem of the Ruhr region’s future. It serves as an example for other industrial complexes, both in the Ruhr region and beyond.

The plan was developed at a time when the economy was flourishing. Development is currently slowing down, but Floris Alkemade does not see this as a problem. ‘The essential thing is that the complex is still there. It is not falling into disrepair, but enjoys protection and a status.’

### France, Nord-Pas de Calais: Mine site 11/19

As in the Ruhr region, the closure of the mines in northern France was not immediately followed by a rush to designate the now obsolete industrial complexes and historic buildings and find a new use for them. The mining company dealt with its heritage in a businesslike way. It sold some of the many slag heaps to companies that wanted to excavate them. A few of the former mines were sold to private individuals. The rest, including the land and the miners’ homes, were transferred to local authority ownership. This was no guarantee that they would be preserved however, because the past triggered painful memories. The chief desire was to erase all trace of it and start with a clean slate.

Management of the *après-mine* (post-mining industry) was therefore left to the local authorities. They had inherited a disastrous situation and a huge challenge. The landscape left by the mining industry – the *pays noir*, the collapsing mine shafts (that were causing subsidence and structural damage) and the rising water table – required urgent attention. The pit villages, once regarded as progressive, had not been maintained for years and both the homes and the infrastructure needed modernising. For centuries they had come second to the mines. The loss of the mines and the falling population undermined their financial basis even further. And there were differences of opinion and a lack of solidarity among local authorities.

The situation is now radically different. In 2012 UNESCO awarded the mining region World Heritage status, as a ‘living cultural landscape’. Local authorities now work together on redevelopment projects in the specially established *Mission Bassin Minier* (see chapter 8). The most characteristic structures and features are now scheduled monuments, zoning plans protect the heritage and agreements have been signed with large property owners, including Soginorpa housing association, which was established to manage the remaining sixty thousand miners’ homes. In 2011, the world-famous Louvre museum opened a branch in the heart of the region, at the site of an abandoned mine in Lens. Decline has not been reversed, but this once languishing region has now sprung back to life.

This has happened thanks to the efforts of a few pioneers who recognised the totem pole value of the area’s heritage. In 1986 mayor Marcel Caros of Loos-en-Gohelle, a suburb of Lens, purchased mine 11/19 from the mining company for one euro. 11/19 is a special site, as it is a complete assemblage with all the original working buildings, the two highest slag heaps in Europe (186 metres) and the miners’ housing in Les Provinces. From the very start, Caron intended to preserve the traces of the mining industry for posterity and to give the site back to the people. In the years that followed two associations were established there, both of them focused on the meaning of the heritage for the local population: *La Chaîne des Terrils* (‘Chain of Slag Heaps’) and *Culture Commune* (‘Communal Culture’).

*La Chaîne des Terrils* was established in 1988 by a group of volunteers who believed that improving the poor image of the *pays noir* was a process that should begin at local level. By organising guided walks over the slag heaps, focusing on the natural and industrial heritage, they hoped to make local residents appreciate this unique landscape. Since its establishment *La Chaîne des Terrils* has expanded its repertoire to include other educational and leisure activities. The number of visitors has grown to almost 23,000 a year, most of them schoolchildren and students. The association also researches the slag heaps and the environment there, and development management and protection strategies.

*Culture Commune* began in 1990 as an association for artistic and cultural development in the mining region, and since 1999 has enjoyed the status of National Theatre, albeit one without its own stage. 'The main goal of *Culture Commune* is to manage change in the mining region since the closure of the mines and to open it up to the rest of the world', says founder Chantal Lamarre. Immediately after its establishment the association began organising events on the site: a play, cultural encounters with Polish artists and, in 1991, the photo exhibition '*Archéologie de la Mine*' by Vivien Didier, who had been photographing and filming the mining region since 1983. The exhibition led to the site being listed as a historic monument in order to give it legal protection. 'Our relationship with the heritage is not at all nostalgic', explains Lamarre. 'It is a foundation on which we are building something new and different. As far as I am concerned people's culture is a fully-fledged part of history and the heritage. If the bricks don't live, they're not interesting.'

Besides these two associations, mine 11/19 is also home to a number of sustainable construction companies. The site is marketed as a 'Reference Centre for Sustainable Development'. The heritage and sustainability will soon be combined in the new *Réhafutur* project, which will refurbish a former mining engineer's house in order to develop sustainable renovation techniques.

The heritage has turned out to be a seedbed, billboard and a meeting place, but it all began with an ambition to use it to define a unique, positive identity for the beleaguered region – a totem pole, in other words. *La Chaîne des Terrils* and *Culture Commune* encouraged residents to look at the place differently and appreciate it more. The site has been rescued, its future assured and the people have taken it to their hearts. Mayor Marcel Caron has achieved what he wanted, and probably more. Mine 11/19 is now the pride of the region.

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## The slag heaps of Nord-Pas de Calais

It was not the industrial installations but the slag heaps that were the subject of the first heritage activities in the mining region of Nord-Pas de Calais. Guided walks over the slag heaps were the key to enhancing local residents' appreciation of this unique landscape, *La Chaîne des Terrils* found.

Slag heaps are huge piles of waste left by the mines, consisting of the material that remains after the coal has been separated from the unusable rock. They are rarely more than a hundred metres high. Of the 350 slag heaps that once existed, only 190 now remain. It is hoped that a hundred can be preserved. 'It is not possible to preserve them all,' explains Patrick Offe, a guide with *La Chaîne des Terrils*, 'because that would cost too much in terms of physical management, protection, safety and administration.' The slag heaps are currently used and managed in a diverse range of ways. A number have been awaiting exploitation for decades; companies that sell the rock are only allowed to excavate one heap at a time. Many of the other slag heaps are temporarily owned by EPF, *Etablissement Public Foncier Nord-Pas de Calais*, a fund set up by the French state in 1990, at the request of the region. It buys land and manages it until a project has been developed for it and another authority can take it over. Most of the slag heaps that enjoy protection do so because of sensitive natural values. The *département* of Nord-Pas de Calais has bought them or signed an agreement with the owners. These slag heaps are not generally open to the public.

The degree of protection therefore depends on the specific qualities of the heap and the goals of the owner. The Mission Basin Minier, a partnership of local authorities, focuses on this, seeking special types of use, such as nature conservation, motocross, mountain biking or economic exploitation. This should allow the slag heaps to be preserved as an assemblage, so that everyone can use them in their own way.

The two slag heaps at mine 11/19 do not have statutory protection, but La Chaîne des Terrils does look after them. They were fully opened to the public in 2008. This has proved a success, as evidenced by the growing number of walkers. Offe notes, however, that this more intensive type of use can also constitute a threat. People do not always stick to the paths, so plants disappear and erosion sets in. La Chaîne des Terrils is therefore investigating the impact of tourism. The site currently welcomes fifteen to twenty thousand visitors a year. With the opening of Louvre-Lens and the recent World Heritage label, this could grow to 80,000 a year.



### **The Netherlands: Dongeradeel**



Some years ago the Cultural Heritage Agency performed a 'cultural heritage survey' in Dongeradeel in Friesland, an area experiencing population decline, to identify opportunities afforded by the heritage, as well as risks to the heritage.<sup>33</sup> The survey focused on 'village conservation areas' in Holwerd and a number of other population centres in the municipality. The conclusion was that investing in the cultural heritage, particularly if it made a major contribution to local identity, could have a positive impact on places in the area in need of improvement. A similar effect has been demonstrated on numerous occasions in urban settings.

According to the Agency, it is therefore important not only to try and consolidate core qualities and pursue a policy of well-considered reduction, but also to think about development. The heritage strategy for Dongeradeel's village conservation areas started with their core cultural heritage features, which to a large extent determine the villages' attractiveness. This is then translated into scenarios for extensification (in locations earmarked for contraction) and development (in locations earmarked for development). In the places earmarked for contraction, room will be sought for demolition and possible thinning out (extensification) of the built fabric, taking account of the core cultural heritage qualities present. In places earmarked for development, it is a matter of strengthening cultural heritage and spatial quality, thereby also enhancing the quality of the living environment.

The cultural heritage analysis has now been embedded in broader strategies for revitalising the village centres. Village development corporations, partnerships involving the authorities, residents and businesses, are taking up these quality-based ideas on a gradually broader basis.



6

# Heritage as seedbed

Who would ever have thought that the shrinking East German city of Leipzig would become ‘the place to be’ for the German creative sector by the turn of the millennium? After German unification in 1990 the city lost tens of thousands of residents within just a few short years. The abandoned buildings left behind eventually turned out to be a boon, as creative spirits from throughout Germany came to see the city as an ideal breeding ground where they were free to experiment.<sup>34</sup> Leipzig began to grow again, thanks partly to an influx of designers, artists and performers.

## Photograph, page 36

Buntgarnwerke (former yarn factory), part of Elstar-Park. At 100,000m<sup>2</sup>, it is one of Europe’s biggest industrial monuments, and now houses several functions. Leipzig, Saxony-Anhalt. Photograph Thomas Langer

Interestingly, these ‘culturepreneurs’ used Leipzig’s history of trade fairs as a way of marketing their products. They launched new fairs, alongside the traditional Book Fair (*Buchmesse*), including the *PopUp-Messe* for the music industry and the Games Convention for the computer industry. The decline and growth of Leipzig is a good example of the local heritage functioning as a seedbed for new activities. American-Canadian urban philosopher Jane Jacobs was convinced that new premises are unattractive to creative entrepreneurs, if only because of the large overheads. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, she boldly stated: ‘New ideas need old buildings’.<sup>35</sup> Recent studies confirm the positive impact of the heritage on the development of creative industries.<sup>36</sup>

In this respect, the philosophy of German city developer Jürg Sulzer is not that crazy. In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, he remarked:<sup>37</sup> ‘Decline... I can’t bear to hear that word any more. I don’t think the fact that a few houses are vacant matters all that much. Let us instead look forward and not immediately demolish everything – you can always do that later’. Sulzer therefore called for us to

abandon the idea of *shrinking cities* in favour of *waiting cities*, ‘cities that are waiting until their hidden value is discovered’. In a long-term process like population decline it is important not to act too rash or hasty. Viewed in this light, the crisis in the Dutch construction industry also has an upside – even if it does not entirely counterbalance the downside. Local authorities, developers and builders are being forced to wait, because they simply do not have the money to replace the heritage with something new. The ‘landscapes-on-hold’<sup>38</sup> this has given rise to provide room to reconsider, and opportunities to try new things without immediately incurring high investment costs.

## England, Manchester: city centre and Salford Quays

The city of Manchester in the north of England, which currently has a population of 450,000, is a mecca for those interested in redeveloping the industrial

heritage. In the nineteenth century the city and the surrounding area grew into the world's largest centre of the textile industry. However, the rise of low-wage economies from the 1960s onwards eventually led to unemployment, economic crisis and population decline in Manchester. The loss of the textile industry left deep scars in the urban fabric. Abandoned buildings and degeneration raised dilemmas for the city council: should they restructure, demolish or build? The Castlefield district, which played a key role in the industrialisation of Manchester, was designated an Urban Heritage Park in 1982, giving it protected

Castlefield, Manchester, formerly an industrial site, now an Urban Heritage Park. Photograph Clem Rutter



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status. In many working-class districts the council opted for demolition, however. The residents were forced to leave for newly built neighbourhoods elsewhere in the city, in surrounding municipalities, or in 'new towns' in the area.<sup>39</sup> This suburbanisation process turned Manchester into a shrinking city at the centre of a region where the population was in fact fairly stable. Between 1981 and 2001 the population of Manchester fell by 9.1 percent, while neighbouring Warrington grew by 15.3 percent.

In the early 1980s no more than a thousand people lived in the centre of Manchester. The council had already drawn up plans to demolish the city's industrial heritage.<sup>40</sup> But then something entirely unexpected happened: the empty factory buildings and warehouses suddenly became popular among certain groups, including creative types, the Chinese community and the gay community. The growing alternative music scene – which earned the city the nickname of 'Madchester' – was drawn to the area, followed by record companies, studios and other creative enterprises. Chinese businessmen from Hong Kong and London also saw opportunities in Manchester, where they built one of Europe's largest Chinatowns. The gay community was attracted by Manchester's tolerant atmosphere, and a flamboyant Gay Village grew up around Canal Street. All in all, this spontaneous development gave rise to a growing demand for homes and amenities in the city centre, and the industrial heritage turned out to be an ideal seedbed. Office buildings and warehouses from the city's industrial heyday were transformed into restaurants, cafes and gyms, while property developers earned large sums redeveloping factory premises into studio flats, apartments and hotels.

The interesting thing about the redevelopment of Manchester's industrial heritage is that the city council was involved only indirectly. The revival of the centre that started in the 1980s was largely an autonomous process.<sup>41</sup> Initially the council simply allowed it to happen and cleverly incorporated it into its city marketing campaigns. In the 1990s the council was much more active, thoroughly renovating Salford Quays – the former docks in Salford, the city to the west that forms a conurbation with Manchester – in collaboration with property developers. New housing, a shopping centre and two museums were

created there. The revitalised city centre and the redevelopment of Salford Quays have improved Manchester's reputation. The British media are again full of praise about this former industrial city and the number of tourists visiting Manchester continues to grow. The population is also growing steadily, increasing by no less than 16 percent between 2000 and 2010. Manchester is now highly popular among students, creative types and young people seeking their first job, many of whom come from outside the region. Of course this is not only down to the city's industrial heritage – Manchester is also popular with foreign migrants, for example, who come to study or work there. Nevertheless, the revival of Manchester began with pioneers who were attracted to the atmosphere of the city's industrial history. The presence of buildings that offered availability, affordability and inspiration sealed the deal. Those pioneers laid new economic foundations for the management of the former factories and warehouses. To use the words of Jane Jacobs again: what merely seemed like 'old buildings' have developed into widely appreciated heritage features thanks to 'new ideas'.

### France, Limousin: logements passerelles

Limousin is a rural region of central France which, with just over 750,000 inhabitants, is one of the least densely populated parts of the country.

During the twentieth century the region lost almost a third of its population in the rural exodus. Urbanisation and the modernisation of farming were the chief factors that drove away the young working population, leading to demographic ageing and eventually a decline in population numbers, though the two world wars and the many victims they claimed also played a role.

The classic story of population decline in Limousin was exacerbated by the mountainous landscape and the unpredictable climate of the *Massif Central*, which makes the area difficult to access from the east. The impact of population decline can still be seen clearly today. Along the region's roads are many ruins that were once working farms, and many buildings stand vacant:

9 percent of houses are empty, and a further 13 percent are second homes used only occasionally.

Nevertheless, net migration in the late 1980s was again just in the positive. The Région Limousin tried to reinforce the trend and turn the tide of decline. According to Frédéric Richard, a geographer at the University of Limoges, this was entirely in line with the idea prevalent in the 1980s that it was possible to shape society. This was the era of the *grands travaux*, major construction projects like the *Pyramide du Louvre* and the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, and of the belief that a society could be created. This was successful, thanks to the innovative *politique d'accueil* ('welcome policy'). The region now grows by an average of 0.4 percent a year and serves as an inspiration to other regions in decline in France and throughout Europe.

The Région's welcome policy includes the *logements passerelles* or 'transitional homes', which support newcomers who wish to start or take over a company. These people find it difficult to find a new home and start their own company at the same time. The idea is therefore to provide them with a temporary home and professional support. The transitional homes will help people discover the area, build a network and research the market. According to Olivier Brousseau of the Région, the heritage has been used explicitly as a seedbed. 'The *logements passerelles* have also prompted the renovation and reuse of interesting old houses', he says. 'That was a deliberate policy.'

Little experience has so far been gained with the *logements passerelles*. Three municipalities are currently experimenting with transitional homes, and two of the projects are still in development. One of the houses concerned is being built in an innovative sustainable neighbourhood, while the other two are over two hundred years old. Various parties are involved in the project: the property owner or manager, an organisation that oversees the establishment or take-over of the company, and the Région, which coordinates matters and provides financial support. The tenant will undertake to rent the property for at least six months, and no more than 24 months, and to develop his or her project. In exchange, the rent will be kept low – slightly below market price – so tenants can keep on their old homes.

There has of course been no detailed evaluation of the *logements passerelles* as yet. In the village of Meyrignac-l'Église six families have used the properties over the past eighteen months; two have settled in Limousin, one has left again and three are still there. The homes have been renovated and thus saved from abandonment and dilapidation. Brousseau points out that the villages also benefit from the transitional homes. 'Several families have lived in the transitional homes in Meyrignac-l'Église.

This has led to specific, visible results, such as the fact that the school bus now stops in the village again.' Although the occupants still change regularly, the village of around fifty inhabitants can be sure of having at least one extra family, usually signifying a population increase of about 10 percent.

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### Limousin's welcome policy

The welcome policy pursued in Limousin is a three-track policy. Firstly, new residents are attracted to the area and given assistance during the initial period after their move. They are given information about opportunities in the region and support in their professional and personal development, with workshops, grants and programmes for coaching, brokerage and French language lessons. Secondly, the Région funds a Pôle Local d'Accueil (PLA, a local reception agency), where there is the local will. 'If an area does not come up with the goods itself, the project has no chance of succeeding', says Olivier Brousseau of Région Limousin. These reception agencies pay two roles: they encourage local parties (like the local council, the French employment agency and estate agents) to work together, and they welcome and assist potential and actual newcomers. To do so, they gather specific knowledge on the area, particularly the jobs and housing markets, and communicate it both to migrants and to the local population. They also offer workshops and coaching.

Thirdly, the Région Limousin has entered into a partnership with the University of Limoges to study migration trends in the region and adjust the policy accordingly. This partnership is led by Frédéric Richard.

The welcome policy has certainly enjoyed some success. According to INSEE, the French statistics office, in 2006 Limousin was the sixth most attractive region in France, up from ninth position in 1999. Between 1999 and 2006 some 13,000 people a year settled in Limousin, half of them aged between 20 and 45. A third of them came from the Île-de-France (Paris region).<sup>42</sup> In the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century, many British people moved to Limousin, at first mainly farmers but later, after the advent of cheap flights between the UK and Limoges, pensioners also came too. While the welcome policy initially focused on entrepreneurs, with the idea that they would create jobs, 'the Région gradually came to realise that pensioners have just as much value for the local economy as a shopkeeper or craftsman', Richard explains. 'When new residents move here, jobs and services follow. So we reversed our reasoning. This has implications for the heritage, because the heritage – built, non-material or natural – can make a region more attractive to new residents, thus helping to preserve or develop economic activity. We know that the heritage is a key factor in British immigrants' decision to move here, along with the fact that authentic homes are very reasonably priced here.'

However, the success must be put into perspective. Both parties, the Région and the university, admit that it has proved difficult to translate research results into policy. The 2010 census showed that Limousin had gained 30,000 inhabitants over ten years. The region could grow by an average 0.7 percent a year simply on the basis of positive net migration, but this is cut to 0.4 percent by a negative natural demographic trend.



Despite the many vacant buildings, construction continues in Limousin, with little regard for sustainability or architectural quality. None of the region's towns, except the capital Limoges, is growing, because of the competition from peripheral municipalities with their larger and cheaper homes. But village centres also have abandoned buildings, because terraced houses with no garden are no longer popular. Population growth is concentrated in suburban municipalities and along major transport routes, where the jobs are.

The rebuilding of Schaesberg castle to create a vocational training centre fits perfectly with the IBA Parkstad idea. Photograph Skylens



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## The Netherlands: IBA Parkstad

Following the example of Germany, Parkstad Limburg has opted to set up an IBA (*Internationale Bauausstellung*, or International Building Exhibition, a programme designed to spark regeneration), in a collaboration between the provincial authority and eight local authorities in the former mining region of Limburg. For a period of at least six years, from 2014, it will offer space to inspiring civic and business initiatives. As the publicity material says: 'The IBA is Parkstad's way of providing a boost for the economy, spatial developments and society. The core of the IBA is a series of high-profile, innovative projects that will transform Parkstad, which will be highlighted in an exhibition at the closing event in 2020. IBA Parkstad will be hybrid and contemporary, as befits the Parkstad challenge: more bottom-up than top-down, more entrepreneurship than government project'.<sup>43</sup> The focus will be on three themes – flexible city, energy city and recycling city – which will form the basis of Parkstad.

Parkstad's own DNA will be a key element of this. The region is not Maastricht or the 'Dutch Hills', after all; it has its own history. In 2014 a special project will link the biography of Parkstad to the development of tourism in the region. The biography will take the form of different time layers (including the Roman period, the land reclamation period, the age of the mines and the post-mining era), and their physical remains, in the form of Roman baths, castles and farms, mine shafts and pit villages. This project will be linked to the IBA.



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# Heritage as meeting place

Growth brings people closer together, creating density and activity; in this sense, growth ‘connects’. Decline, on the other hand, creates distance between people, expands space: in this sense, decline ‘disconnects’.<sup>44</sup> Fewer people in a region means some pieces of the mosaic of urban or village life are lost, thus increasing the physical and social distance between people. Areas in decline therefore need places where people can continue to come together. This applies firstly to public spaces, which need to be inviting, on an accessible scale and conducive to social interaction.<sup>45</sup> Historic squares and buildings were often built at ‘eye level’ and are therefore ideal in terms of scale and accessibility.

## **Photograph, page 42**

The beauty of the Cumbria countryside makes it easy to imagine why authentic functions can no longer keep the economy of the region going. Barn and dry-stone walls at Garsdale, Yorkshire Dales.  
*Photograph Corbis*

Shrinking towns and villages that still have such historic features are wise to cherish them and make them the focus of as many social activities as possible. They are after all ‘natural’ meeting places. Any vacant building can play this role, but the cultural heritage has the key advantage of also serving as a billboard and a totem pole. Take the village of Ossensisse in Zeeland-Flanders, which has no more than four hundred residents.<sup>46</sup> The villagers have spacious homes, and they love their village. There are no shops, nor is there a school. Yet the villagers are very fond of their village hall, where they enjoy meeting up. It is in the former parish hall beside the church, a house with ‘totem pole value’. The people of Ossensisse have insulated the building themselves, and help maintain it.

## **Germany, Emsland: Tatort Dorfmitte**

Emsland in Germany – a region in Lower Saxony that borders on the Dutch provinces of Groningen and Drenthe – is experiencing rapid demographic ageing. It is using the meeting place function of its heritage to maintain quality of life. Some villages in Emsland still have a clear ‘heart’ with some basic amenities. Many have however developed into purely residential settlements in recent years. In villages without a centre in particular – ribbon developments and *Streusiedlungen* (where the houses are randomly dispersed in the landscape) – demographic ageing has given rise to a need for new solutions. Where can elderly people go for their groceries, healthcare services or just a chat?

The villages that do still have a centre have seen a lot of building on their periphery in the past few years, and a ‘doughnut’ problem (villages without a centre) threatens to emerge.

Administrators in Emsland are not finding it easy to adapt to this new situation. After years of growth, their stock response is to fight decline by building new homes. The administrative culture is also no help: the success of local councillors in Emsland is still measured by fellow administrators, the media and residents in terms of the number of plots of land they issue during their period in office. Such a culture is disastrous for any attempt to deal with population decline effectively.

To address this problem, a number of years ago *Landkreis Emsland* – the regional administration in which all local authorities in the region are represented – *Kreisjugendring* and *Kreissenorenbeirat* (regional advisory bodies representing young people and the elderly respectively) launched a programme entitled *Tatort Dorfmitte* (which roughly translates to ‘CSI Village Centre’).<sup>47</sup> The aim of the programme is to improve the quality of village centres with the help of young and elderly volunteers. At a well-attended workshop – which attracted more than a hundred participants – scores of original ideas were put forward, dozens of which have been translated into projects on the ground. As part of the *Tatort* project, volunteers have renovated centrally-located meeting places in their village, including a ‘multi-generation square’ in Versen, a meeting space in Osterbrock and a community centre in Emsbüren.

Other projects focus more on the non-material heritage: breathing new life into local and regional traditions. Children and the elderly work together on these efforts. Examples include a spring festival in Brögbern and the potato festival in Lengerich, organised by children, their parents and grandparents at the time of the annual potato harvest. *Landkreis Emsland* supports and publicises these initiatives.

The *Landkreis* tabled the issue of population decline in 2008. At a special session of the ‘regional parliament’ it was decided that ‘demography before place’ should be adopted as a theme.<sup>48</sup> Demographics – a popular euphemism for population decline and shrinking towns and villages in Germany – should in

other words become a topical issue in towns and villages themselves. *Landkreis Emsland* acts as a source of advice and information, and an initiator of projects that respond to local demographic change.

The *Landkreis* coordinates a working party made up of people who liaise on behalf of the various towns and villages in the region. It also runs several support centres with tasks related to population decline, such as the *Senioren-servicebüro* (providing information on active ageing and ‘age-proof housing’ for elderly people) and the *Ehrenamtsservice* (which trains volunteers). The aim of the policy on population decline is to safeguard quality of life in the future, based on a saying by the ancient Greek statesman Pericles: ‘It is not a matter of predicting the future, but of being prepared for it’.

Over a period of four years, numerous projects have been launched in Emsland. Six ‘sub-themes’ have been defined: mobility, village development, amenities, housing for the elderly, active ageing and voluntary work.<sup>49</sup> Lots of projects, whether heritage-related or not, centre on some kind of encounter. *Tatort Dorfmitte* is one example. A platform to promote car-sharing (*Mitfahrportal*) in villages, is another. Or take the *Wohnen und Pflege* (‘Home and Care’) project in Vrees, in which a former farm is being converted into a place where elderly people can continue to live in the village – with the support of volunteers – rather than having to move to a care home elsewhere.

One special example is Emsland Museum at Schloss Clemenswerth. This castle, which lies in the village of Sögel, in a forested part of the region known as the Hümmling, is a great tourist attraction. Built between 1737 and 1746, it was designed by famous architect Johann Conrad Schlaun for Prince Elector and Bishop of Cologne Clamens August von Bayern, to use as accommodation on his hunting trips in the Hümmling.<sup>50</sup> The castle is notable for the eight pavilions positioned around the main building in the form of a star. The museum currently housed in the castle is famous among other things for its collection of porcelain and ceramics.

From the point of view of population decline, the museum at Schloss Clemenswerth is particularly interesting for the way in which it has responded to demographic ageing.<sup>51</sup> The museum combines the typical ‘billboard function’

of the heritage with an explicit meeting place function. Since 2010 it has been hosting special *Kunst & Kaffee* ('Art & Coffee') meetings for elderly people from the region. Guided tours are also given in the local dialect, which many of Emsland's elderly people still speak. The museum organises lots of activities for local youngsters in collaboration with schools in the area, ranging from torch-light tours in the evening to projects in which children can dress up in Baroque costumes. The museum thus hopes to give the children a sense of place, in the hope that they will later return as visitors. The measures targeting the older and younger generations in the region are beginning to bear fruit, producing a huge rise in visitors to Sögel and the surrounding area in the past few years.<sup>52</sup>

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## Relative decline in Emsland

Around 1950, the prospects for Emsland looked worse than those in the neighbouring Dutch province of Drenthe, just across the border. Since then, however, the region has undergone impressive economic and demographic development. A regional incentive programme has attracted new businesses to the region. They include controversial companies like nuclear and gas-fired power stations and the chemicals industry. But residents were willing to accept the safety and local environmental implications in exchange for a much-needed economic boost. Thanks partly to the incentive programme, the economy and the population have enjoyed an uninterrupted period of growth. So Emsland is not a typical area in decline. With 3.1 percent unemployment (in June 2012), it now has the lowest jobless rate in Lower Saxony. It is not experiencing absolute population decline, i.e. a fall in the number of inhabitants. According to population forecasts, the region is set to continue growing for the time being, and growth is forecast to level out slightly only after 2025.<sup>53</sup>

However, the story behind the statistics shows that the region is experiencing relative population decline, for its population is ageing rapidly. More and

more young people aged 18 to 25 are leaving the Emsland region to study, seek work and start a family in Oldenburg, Münster or another urban centre. The region is thus not only losing its young people, but also their children. Newcomers also tend to be older. They include a lot of Dutch people who move there because of the low house prices. Up to 2025 the under-45 age group is set to shrink by 26 percent, as the proportion of elderly people rises. Between 2005 and 2025 the number of over-80s is in fact forecast to rise by 85 percent, well above the German average. The region's demographic challenge therefore lies in ageing. This makes Emsland an especially interesting area in decline, particularly if we consider that Dutch areas in decline face a similar change in population profile.

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## England, Cumbria: The Old Crown and 'Cittaslow'

For decades, the English countryside has had a shrinking population. This is reflected in the sharp fall in the number of pubs in rural areas. Every year, hundreds of village pubs close.<sup>54</sup> But the tiny Cumbrian village of Hesketh Newmarket, with just 250 inhabitants, is a model for the cooperative pub concept. Around ten years ago The Old Crown – a pub in typically English style, with an important function as a meeting place – was threatened with closure. But instead of simply standing by and wringing their hands, the local community decided to buy shares in their beloved public house. Now The Old Crown is turning a profit again. It is run by a village cooperative with 148 shareholders, who include tourists who happened across the pub while on holiday.<sup>55</sup> Scores of English villages have now followed Hesketh Newmarket's example, and more and more pubs are surviving thanks to the social and financial capital of local residents. The fact that the villagers themselves have put money into this amenity ensures that they are motivated to use it. The roles have been reversed in the English countryside: the pub used to be the heart of the community, but now the community is the heart of the pub.

Rural population decline in the English countryside actually goes back to the Industrial Revolution. Many young people move to towns and cities, previously in order to find work, nowadays to study. Though rural areas in England have been attracting newcomers since the 1970s, these 'neo-rurals' often work and shop in a nearby town. Some of them only come at the weekend and during holidays. In areas with an attractive landscape, the demand for second homes has caused house prices to rise, putting the local population at a disadvantage. In the Yorkshire Dales, to the west of the Medieval city of York, actually prompted a somewhat draconian measure to be introduced. Houses there

Cockermouth profiles itself as Cittaslow; All Saints Church can be seen in the background. Photograph Tim Herrick



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may now only be sold to existing residents. The locals may not sell on their homes to outsiders.

As in Emsland, population decline in Cumbria is not so much a matter of an absolute fall in population numbers, as a changing composition due to ageing. Most newcomers are elderly people who retire to the countryside for a quiet life in spacious surroundings. Cumbria is also a popular tourist destination, attracting over 15 million visitors a year.<sup>56</sup> They generally come for the Lake District, the national park at the centre of the region. A regional hero, Romantic poet William Wordsworth (1770-1850), also draws lots of visitors to Cumbria. Wordsworth's birthplace is Cockermouth, some 30 kilometres from Hesketh Newmarket. This small town on the edge of the Lake District therefore attracts a lot of tourists. But it is also interesting because it profiles itself as a *Cittaslow* (literally: 'slow town'). *Cittaslow* came from the 'Slow Food' movement and is an internationally recognised trademark for rural communities that have embraced the natural environment, cultural heritage, sustainability and hospitality. In exchange for this label, the local authorities undertake to invest in their heritage. The focus is not on numbers and growth, but on quality of life.<sup>57</sup> In Cockermouth, the *Cittaslow* philosophy has for example prompted a greater focus on local produce (the 'Buy Local Campaign'), sustainability (Plastic Bag Free Town) and the cultural heritage (with historical road signs for example).

Coincidentally or not, The Old Crown makes the most of the *Cittaslow* principles. The cooperative pub uses fresh local produce in all its dishes, and its menu asks guests to be patient, 'as good food takes time'.

## The Netherlands: Pieterburen village hall

In December 2010 it was announced that the 'Wadloopcentrum', the centre for guided walking tours of the mudflats, was to move from the former Reformed Church on Hoofdstraat in Pieterburen. A number of villagers got together to turn the vacant building into a village hall. In 2011 they established a special non-profit organisation for the purpose. The next door neighbour advanced enough money to cover the costs, thus buying time to turn the villagers' dreams and ideas into an actual project plan. From the very outset it was clear that this was more than just a matter of finding an initial investment. The run-

Pieterburen village hall, a former Reformed church that residents have transformed into a community centre. Photograph Annelies Borchert



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ning of the new village hall also had to be considered. The village was too small to cover all the costs itself, so a commercial partner was sought for the upper floor of the building.

The plans and ideas were regularly presented to the rest of the village at special information meetings. The residents were so enthusiastic that the building opened as a village hall in March 2012, even before the alteration work began. All kinds of trial activities have been organised, including coffee mornings, dinners, social evenings, billiards and card games. Several larger festivities have also taken place, including Pieterburen's Got Talent, Theatre on the Water, New Year's festivities ('Nijjoarsklokje'), an event to celebrate the coronation and a summer fete.

The project plan was ready in July 2012. A fully-equipped village hall would be created on the ground floor, with an extension for a billiard room in the vestry and a hotel with nine rooms on the upper floor. The proprietors of another guest house in the village had shown an interest in running the first floor as a hotel. The board of the non-profit organisation also applied for funding and grants to buy and alter the building, and to furnish the village hall. By July 2013 the organisation had enough funding pledged to move on to the construction phase, and work begin in late 2013.<sup>58</sup>



BAUHAUS

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# From heritage project to strategy for decline

## Photograph, page 48

The iconic Bauhaus attracts many visitors every year, and functions as a billboard for Dessau. Saxony-Anhalt. Photograph Lelikron

‘We have to work with another kind of logic. It’s like the difference between a motorboat and a sailing boat. A sailing boat moves with the wind. Sailors reach their destination by adapting to the conditions. A motorboat needs fuel to get going, but can then continue fairly irrespective of the circumstances. Capital is the fuel for construction. Now capital is in short supply, the motorboat is confined to port and we shall have to respond to local conditions: connect local sources and work together on joint actions.’

These are the words of Philipp Oswalt, who has studied population decline all over the world, and has been director of Dessau Bauhaus Foundation since 2009. The foundation itself is a typical example of a ‘local source’. Since 1989 the *Industrielles Gartenreich* project has formed the basis of a series of heritage projects in Dessau and the surrounding area, as highlighted in chapter 3. Like the other examples from Germany, France and the UK, these projects have pumped energy into the area. Sometimes by giving residents and businesses renewed confidence, and sometimes by attracting new people. Often, they do both, thus also drawing on new sources for heritage management. But a series of heritage projects does not become a fully-fledged strategy for dealing with population decline just like that.

The previous chapters have made it clear that the relationship between population decline and the heritage starts with an initiative centred on a single object or complex. This might involve an organisation that uses the image of this particular heritage feature to attract tourists, for example, or for the benefit of local residents. Or it might involve a group of people who see new opportunities in vacant

heritage properties, which they use as a seedbed or a place to meet. If the project takes off, the approach will often be scaled up. Preservation and reuse of a single object can then grow into an integrated regional approach that serves a broader strategic purpose, in which heritage objects nevertheless remain key building blocks. Complexes like Zollverein, *Gartenreich* Dessau-Wörlitz and mine 11/19 in Loos-en-Gohelle arose out of a specific ambition, but now readily combine all four heritage functions distinguished in this publication.

Each of the individual heritage projects in these areas eventually became part of regional complexes organised and fostered by programme organisations, either permanent or temporary. Sometimes these organisations largely involve public authorities, as in the *Parc Naturel Régional* (PNR) in Limousin. Sometimes the private sector is also involved, as in the Euralens association established in Lens in 2009 to derive maximum benefit from the opening of the Louvre’s new museum there. World Heritage status has also proved to be a huge boost in some places, like Zeche Zollverein and mine 11/19. The official recognition of the historical importance of a place can foster both the totem pole and the billboard function, making local residents more proud of their area, and attracting the interest of visitors. In such cases, a strong regional organisation is again vital.

## Germany, Dessau: IBA Stadtumbau Saxony-Anhalt

The extreme population loss in a town like Dessau makes basic services such as infrastructure unaffordable. Homes and business premises stand empty and

soon fall into disrepair. This means priorities have to be set, says Uwe Holz of the Film and Industry Museum in Bitterfeld-Wolfen. 'Since the fall of the Berlin Wall we have had a democratic system and an elected government. But this region is struggling with a major shortage of cash. It is a matter of either repairing old roads, or repairing old school buildings, or better connections for school buses.' In search of new ways of tackling the issue, Dessau participated in various projects, including Expo 2000 in Hannover and the IBA *Stadtumbau* Saxony-Anhalt (2010). In the latter programme the German federal government challenged towns and cities throughout the state of Saxony-Anhalt participated.

*Internationale Bauausstellungen* (IBAs) are tools for plan development and knowledge generation that Germany is using to respond to radical transformation challenges. Sometimes a city or region needs a big boost to forge new pathways to development and progress. In this context, IBA *Stadtumbau* Saxony-Anhalt worked on spatial planning models and prospects that emerged from experimental regional development.

The IBA project was based on the idea that towns and cities, even if they are situated in the same state, all have unique problems and must therefore seek their own answers. Halle, for example, focused on the question of how the old Medieval town could be connected with the new Socialist development of Neustadt, and Luther's hometown Wittenberg set up seven small projects with the umbrella theme of education. The Bitterfeld-Wolfen conurbation began to redevelop itself as a network city by concentrating new connections and functions in a number of selected centres.<sup>59</sup>

Köthen, known as the birthplace of homeopathy, developed a method for urban renewal based on homeopathic principles, in a unique example of using the non-material heritage. It was first applied in Ludwigstrasse, a drab street full of empty properties. Urban planners and homeopathic doctors got together and devised a strategy whereby anamnesis (analysis of the 'history of the illness' through interviews with residents) was followed by several provocative experiments. Without first informing residents, the working party announced the demolition of two houses, closed the road to traffic by playing table tennis in the street, and set up a picnic table on the pavement together with a couple

who lived in the street, where they sat down to drink coffee. The lukewarm response indicated that there were few objections to the planned demolition and the assumed need for local amenities was much smaller than the anamnesis phase had suggested. Follow-up experiments showed that a different strategy would be more effective: break the monotony by demolishing a number of houses and achieving a little more variety in the look of the street.<sup>60</sup>

And so Saxony-Anhalt's IBA strategy splintered into a series of individual projects, some (but not all) of them connected with the heritage. A single strategy does not mean there is a single solution for all towns and cities. The added value lies elsewhere. 'The IBA was intended to bring processes and people together', says Philipp Oswald of the Bauhaus Foundation. 'Joint projects involving residents, associations and the local authority are more important than ever. It is not realistic to expect large-scale top-down solutions for areas in decline. We have to put local sources in contact with each other so they can join forces and achieve something. That was the main purpose of the IBA.'

At the same time, an organisational form like an IBA does provide an opportunity to feed local processes with outside knowledge, including at an international level. Oswald believes that the IBA *Stadtumbau* Saxony-Anhalt missed a few opportunities in that respect. 'It was too much a "closed shop". I would have opened things up much more and chosen no more than five to seven towns and cities, rather than 19. But because the IBA was associated with investment funds, politicians opted to involved as many places as possible.'

### France, Nord-Pas de Calais: Mission Bassin Minier

In the mining region of northern France, too, private initiative (*La Chaîne des Terrils, Culture Commune*) led to a new approach to the heritage and, after a time, to a need for a comprehensive regional policy. Political collaboration took the form of the *Mission Bassin Minier*, a common service that supports local authorities in areas like spatial planning, sustainability, the environment and the cultural heritage.

As to the question of whether population decline is also on the agenda, research director Vincent Froger's answer leaves no room for doubt: 'We are not pursuing any policy at all to tackle population decline. A French local authority will never acknowledge that its population is shrinking, accept the fact and pursue a policy geared towards this gradual decline. Never. I find it very courageous of the Netherlands to be considering such an approach.'

1996 was a turning point for the mining region. This was the year in which the *Conférence Permanente du Bassin Minier* was established. Though never officially labelled as such, this can be seen as the start of a regional response to population decline. The goal was to collaborate with residents to identify the region's strong and weak points and draw up a development plan. Thanks to the efforts of Jean-François Caron, son and successor of Marcel Caron, who bought mine 11/19 for one euro, thus saving it from demolition, the industrial heritage played an important role in the debate. The era of the 'tabula rasa' approach – starting with a clean slate – was over. The results of the process were published in a lengthy White Paper in 1998.

The shrinking mining region could not have saved itself without the support of the government and of Europe. The White Paper ensured that the necessary financial resources were made available. One of the consequences was the establishment in 2000 of the temporary organisation *Mission Bassin Minier* (MBM), in which local authorities could work together on the redevelopment of the region. The MBM covers the entire region, and is therefore well informed about ongoing projects, and able to play a coordinating role. Originally intended as a temporary thing, the MBM has become a vital partner in the regional development process. It played a key role in the nomination for the World Heritage List. In 2006, it set up a research team to track and analyse demographic and social developments in the region. It was found, for example, that the mining region is still a socioeconomic unit, despite the idea dominant in the 1990s that it would break up into four different regions around the urban centres of Valenciennes, Douai, Lens and Béthune. Froger believes that the heritage is one of the elements that has held the region together.

## The Netherlands: a growing movement

An IBA is also in preparation for Parkstad Limburg in the southern Netherlands. The heritage will form part of *RecycleStad*. The IBA will seek resources to enable the permanent reuse of places and buildings, reclaimed materials and even social and cultural histories.<sup>61</sup> In the 'Renaissance of Sas van Gent' Terneuzen local authority and the Woongloed Zeeuws-Vlaanderen housing association developed a strategic approach that accepts population decline as a fact. The strategy aims to use the qualities made available thanks to the abundance of vacant properties and regards history as the guiding factor, except in places where the historical structure is weak and so cannot provide strong foundations.

Such programmatic approaches combining population decline and the heritage are still scarce in the Netherlands. There are plenty of initiatives, but there is not always someone to turn it all into a cohesive narrative. Provincial authorities have an eye for population decline and the tools to manage a response, but without special programmes and forms of partnership they cannot take their approach to the next level. Both provincial and local authorities are needed, preferably with the support of central government, to combine local energies in an approach with regional significance. Without this, promising projects often get stuck at local level, perhaps having an impact on a village or neighbourhood, but failing to gain wider momentum in the region or across the entire city.

Furthermore, the grants system does not tie in with this approach. Grants are object-based. Groningen, for example, received a special grant for the restoration of scheduled monuments and historic buildings, which has been spent in its entirety on the restoration of the former De Toekomst strawboard factory in Oldambt. However, in the context of population decline, another less monumental project might have been more valuable. In Groningen, again, artist Anne Hilderink launched an initiative to establish a commune at a former monastery farm in Kloosterburen where parents with disabled children could live and work, providing facilities like a library, a playgroup, a tea shop, an artists' studio and a bakery. This is the kind of local initiative that uses the heritage as a meeting place and seedbed, and which has the potential to provide a boost for the entire northern Groningen region.

## 9 Epilogue

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The mood in regions in decline is often somewhat sombre, particularly if the decline has set in suddenly. An economic engine that was more than just a source of income has been lost. The mines, manufacturing industry, agriculture, however harsh the conditions for workers, made people what they were. The loss of these industries or a decline in farming rip the heart out of the community. 'The Louvre-Lens and tourism will not save the mining region', says *La Chaîne des Terrils* guide Patrick Offe of the Nord-Pas de Calais region. 'I am convinced of the value of these projects, but they will not be enough in themselves. It will take time. It has not even been a generation since the last mines closed.'

A strategy to address decline that begins with the heritage and has respect for local or regional history can change the mood. This is a prerequisite for almost any approach, whether it hopes to ameliorate the decline by attracting new people and businesses, or accepts the decline but seeks to maintain quality of life in the area. In areas in decline it is particularly important to seek the collaboration of local initiators and investors. And they, in particular, are likely to be especially interested in premises or areas that are loved by the local community. This provides firm foundations both for heritage management and for dealing with decline. In the German, French and UK examples described here, the heritage is much more than a coincidental extra. On the contrary: the heritage lies at the core of the strategy for decline.

# Conclusions

Analysis of heritage projects in regions of Germany, France and the UK suffering economic and population decline has revealed the following:

## The heritage can make a significant contribution to a strategy for decline:

- Decline is caused by structural economic changes. It is not always realistic to wish to halt this process, but its impact can sometimes be softened.
- In all areas in decline, the social challenge is to maintain quality of life.
- The heritage can help in this, because the heritage attracts and connects:
  - As a Billboard it can attract tourists and sometimes even new residents.
  - As a Seedbed it can offer pioneers an inspiring place to do business, thus creating new activities in areas in decline.
  - As a Totem pole the heritage can make residents feel a connection with their surroundings, and derive pride, foundations and identity from their heritage.
  - As a Meeting place the heritage can give residents a place where they can get together, thus strengthening social ties.
- Heritage projects in areas in decline generally combine several functions.
- An integrated strategy for decline that includes the heritage means the positive impact of heritage projects is not confined to the neighbourhood or village, but can radiate out to the entire city or region.

## A strategy for decline can make a significant contribution to heritage management:

- In areas in decline, factories, homes and other heritage can lose their purpose relatively quickly, and it is not always easy to find another use. Focusing on the heritage irrespective of this can raise management issues, but it can also stop premature demolition.
- The socioeconomically oriented functions of the heritage used as a *seedbed* and *meeting place* by definition require a new form of management. These are often grassroots initiatives that require financial support in their start-up phase.
- The symbolic functions of the heritage used as *billboard* or *totem pole* will not necessarily need a new form of management, though they will require a sustainable approach.
- A clever strategy for dealing with decline will prioritise the redevelopment of heritage with great social or historical value. This is preferable to reuse of less valuable buildings, or construction of new buildings.
- An investment in heritage management is generally also an investment in the quality of life and vitality of a region.

	Heritage attracts (external focus)	Heritage connects (internal focus)
Focus on socioeconomic function	<b>SEEDBED</b>	<b>MEETING PLACE</b>
Focus on symbol function	<b>BILLBOARD</b>	<b>TOTEM POLE</b>

*Résumé en français*

# Déclin démographique et patrimoine culturel en Europe du Nord-Ouest: un défi à relever

Il y a quelques années seulement que les Pays-Bas ont commencé à réaliser que certaines de ses régions allaient devoir faire face à un déclin démographique structurel. Si l'histoire nous enseigne que les variations démographiques sont un phénomène de tous temps – dès l'époque romaine, des villes ont grandi avant de se rétracter – les récentes annonces n'en ont pas moins causé une petite onde de choc dans le pays. En effet, tous les processus d'aménagement du territoire néerlandais développés depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale reposent sur la croissance. Mais assurément depuis le début de la crise financière en 2008, l'évidence s'est progressivement imposée qu'un retour de la croissance démographique n'est plus une perspective réaliste pour beaucoup de régions des Pays-Bas.

Les pouvoirs publics régionaux réfléchissent à diverses stratégies pour pallier le déclin démographique, mais ils ne prennent que très rarement en compte le patrimoine culturel. Il existe pourtant un lien très fort entre démographie et patrimoine, ce que démontrent déjà quelques exemples traités aux Pays-Bas. En effet, précisément dans les zones en déclin où l'ambiance peut parfois être morose, une gestion réfléchie du patrimoine peut entraîner un renouveau de fierté et d'optimisme. Depuis quelques années, la gestion du patrimoine culturel

s'ancre plus fortement dans le développement du territoire: des monuments vacants sont réaffectés, on apporte une signification contemporaine à d'anciennes structures paysagères, le tout dans le respect des valeurs historique et culturelle. L'on fait ainsi d'une pierre deux coups: un nouveau champ d'action s'ouvre à la gestion du patrimoine et les secteurs géographiques concernés en retirent une personnalité propre et une plus-value économique.

Mais dans une région en déclin démographique, le risque de départ d'un propriétaire ou d'un exploitant est aussi plus élevé, tandis que l'offre de nouveaux venus potentiels est réduite. Si les problèmes économiques et démographiques prennent trop d'ampleur et persistent trop longtemps, le patrimoine perd sa base économique. Les monuments restent alors vacants ou s'ils sont maintenus en activité, leur entretien en est moins régulier.

C'est la situation tendue dans laquelle se trouvent les régions néerlandaises en perte de population. Comparer les pratiques néerlandaises aux expériences de régions étrangères où le déclin démographique agit depuis plus longtemps peut être une source d'inspiration. C'est la raison pour laquelle le Service du Patrimoine

Culturel néerlandais a commandité une étude de reconnaissance sur l'approche du problème dans certaines régions allemandes, françaises et britanniques. Les résultats de cette recherche ont été publiés sur le site internet du Service du Patrimoine Culturel<sup>1</sup> sous la forme d'un rapport dont la présente publication est une version abrégée.

Les auteurs ont rencontré des élus, des professionnels et des citoyens et entrepreneurs engagés, tous impliqués dans des projets concrets aux Pays-Bas et à l'étranger. Avec cette publication, ils espèrent contribuer à l'élaboration de politiques appropriées dans les régions néerlandaises confrontées au déclin démographique.

Il est ressorti de cette recherche que le patrimoine culturel peut revêtir quatre fonctions.

1. En tant qu'*enseigne*, le patrimoine peut attirer les touristes et parfois même de nouveaux habitants. La politique menée dans le Limousin, région française où les élus ne se résignent pas devant le déclin démographique, en est un bon exemple. Les touristes viennent dans la région pour ses abbayes, ses villages historiques, ses paysages caractéristiques et autres formes de patrimoine. Le positionnement de la région sur le marché est le fruit non seulement d'une campagne active de communication, mais aussi de projets innovants tels que la randonnée Retrouvance® proposée aux touristes. Un autre exemple nous vient de la ville allemande de Dessau qui met en avant son passé de capitale du Bauhaus pour intéresser les visiteurs. L'on tente ainsi de lutter contre le déclin démographique en misant sur le patrimoine comme enseigne, mais par cette approche, une reconversion du patrimoine rendu vacant ne va pas de soi.
2. En tant que *terreau*, le patrimoine peut attirer des pionniers et avec eux de nouvelles activités pour la région en perte de population. Le patrimoine industriel se prête tout particulièrement à cette fonction, comme le montrent les exemples de Ferropolis en Saxe-Anhalt (Allemagne) ou les quartiers de Salford Quays et du centre de Manchester (Angleterre). Les installations minières abandonnées de Ferropolis ainsi que les vieilles usines et entrepôts de Manchester se sont révélés offrir un cadre idéal pour de nouvelles activités urbaines, notamment dans le monde de la création. Par ailleurs, le Limousin met temporairement des logements historiques à la disposition de personnes extérieures à la région et désireuses d'y développer une activité économique. La fonction de *terreau* allie ainsi le traitement du déclin démographique à une nouvelle forme de gestion du patrimoine. Une telle approche requiert toutefois que des exploitants se présentent, des personnes enthousiastes et entreprenantes se laissant inspirer par le patrimoine et désireuses de l'exploiter comme source d'une nouvelle énergie et d'entrepreneuriat.
3. En tant que *totem*, le patrimoine peut contribuer à l'attachement des habitants à leur pays en leur offrant des points de repère et une identité. C'est là par exemple l'origine de la renaissance du Zollverein dans la Ruhr (Allemagne) et des carreaux de mines et terrils du Nord-Pas de Calais (France). La survie de ce patrimoine fut d'abord menacée lors de la fermeture des mines et industries, mais avec le temps, la pensée que l'on ne peut faire table rase du passé a fini par l'emporter. De nouveaux modes d'exploitation ont été trouvés, bien que cela ne soit pas inhérent à la fonction de «totem». Le Royaume des Jardins (Gartenreich) de Dessau-Wörlitz démontre qu'un patrimoine plus rustique et paysager peut lui aussi jouer un rôle de totem. Ce parc paysager améliore la qualité de vie dans les environs désertés de Dessau. La fierté des habitants pour leur patrimoine, leur environnement, les retient et les connecte au lieu et à la région.
4. En tant que *place publique* (*en tant que lieu de rencontre*), le patrimoine peut créer du lien social entre les habitants. La signification locale du patrimoine est renforcée par son utilisation concrète comme lieu où les habitants peuvent se retrouver. Cette fonction a d'autant plus d'impact que les habitants s'impliquent personnellement dans la rénovation et la gestion de ce patrimoine. L'on peut citer à titre d'exemple une vieille maison située à un carrefour d'Oranienbaum, en Allemagne, où des artistes néerlandais organisent des expositions en collaboration avec les habitants du village, et un pub d'Hesket Newmarket, en Angleterre, sauvé de la faillite par une coopérative d'autotochtes et de touristes. Dans le Pays de l'Ems (Basse-Saxe, Allemagne), le patrimoine immatériel se révèle porteur d'une fonction comparable: fêtes saisonnières et autres traditions locales sont remises à l'ordre du jour dans le but de restaurer les liens sociaux mis à mal par le vieillissement de la population.

	Un patrimoine attractif (orientation externe)	Un patrimoine fédérateur (orientation interne)
Accent sur la fonction économique et sociale	<b>TERREAU</b>	<b>PLACE PUBLIQUE</b>
Accent sur la fonction symbolique	<b>ENSEIGNE</b>	<b>TOTEM</b>

Les projets réussis dans des régions en perte de population finissent par combiner différentes fonctions, car le patrimoine attire et fédère. De plus, les opportunités de développement mettent en lumière de nouvelles formes de gestion qui mènent à leur tour à de nouvelles opportunités.

Cela place le patrimoine au cœur des stratégies d'approche du déclin démographique. Comme enseigne ou terreau, le patrimoine participe d'une stratégie de lutte contre la désertification, même s'il est vrai qu'une telle stratégie conduit le plus souvent à ralentir la perte de population plutôt qu'à en inverser le cours. C'est pourquoi une stratégie intégrale de traitement du déclin démographique comprend également des mesures pour le maintien du niveau de qualité de vie, en luttant contre les dégradations et en préservant la valeur des biens immobiliers. Mais une bonne stratégie a aussi un rôle socio-culturel à jouer pour restaurer les communautés et l'amour-propre des habitants auxquels le déclin démographique peut porter atteinte de manière significative. Dans le cadre d'une telle stratégie, le patrimoine peut servir de place publique et de totem. Les besoins en hébergement pour les particuliers, les entreprises et les organismes sont par définition limités dans les zones en perte de population. C'est pourquoi il est judicieux de centrer le plus possible les initiatives qui se présentent sur et autour du patrimoine disponible. L'on mobilise ainsi un nouveau mode de gestion du patrimoine tout en augmentant les chances d'une survie durable pour le patrimoine à forte valeur locale.

Si les pouvoirs publics soutiennent de manière ciblée l'une ou plusieurs de ces quatre fonctions du patrimoine et leur accordent une place explicite dans leur politique de traitement du déclin démographique, un effet d'engrenage peut

se mettre en marche que n'entraînent pas les politiques plus traditionnelles de subventions accordées aux seuls monuments.

Une stratégie de traitement du déclin démographique qui repose sur le patrimoine et respecte l'histoire locale et régionale peut infléchir une spirale négative. Une telle approche est une condition pour la réussite de presque toutes les voies envisageables, qu'il s'agisse d'atténuer la perte de population en attirant de nouveaux habitants et de nouvelles entreprises ou d'accepter ce repli tout en voulant maintenir une bonne qualité de vie. Il est essentiel, assurément dans les zones en perte de population, de rechercher une collaboration avec des entrepreneurs et investisseurs locaux. Or justement, ces gens-là présentent souvent un intérêt accru pour les bâtiments ou les endroits chers à la population locale. Cela offre un ancrage non seulement pour la gestion du patrimoine, mais également pour le traitement du déclin démographique. Aussi dans les exemples allemands, français et anglais étudiés, le patrimoine est-il bien plus qu'un élément accessoire de la stratégie de traitement du déclin démographique, il en forme au contraire le cœur même. Les projets présentés dans ce rapport et les stratégies dans lesquelles ils s'inscrivent forment ainsi des exemples intéressants à même d'alimenter une discussion sur les politiques patrimoniales en zone de déclin démographique, aux Pays-Bas ou ailleurs.

1 Graaf, A. de, G.J. Hospers, M. Péro, H. Renes & E. Stegmeijer (2014). *Krimp en erfgoed in Noordwest-Europa; verkenning van een uitdagend probleem*. Publié en 2014 sur <http://www.cultureelerfgoed.nl>. Cette recherche a été conduite sous les auspices du groupe de recherche *Netwerk Erfgoed en Ruimte* dans le cadre du programme ministériel *Visie Erfgoed en Ruimte*.



Deutsche Zusammenfassung

# Demografischer Wandel und Kulturerbe in Europa; Kulturerbe wirbt und verbindet

Erst vor einigen Jahren setzte sich in den Niederlanden die Erkenntnis durch, dass bestimmte Teile des Landes künftig mit einem strukturellen Bevölkerungsrückgang konfrontiert werden. Freilich ist demografischer Wandel im historischen Rückblick ein Phänomen aller Zeiten: Schon seit der Römerzeit kennen wir Städte, die wachsen, stagnieren und schließlich wieder schrumpfen. Dennoch lösten die jüngsten Meldungen in den Niederlanden eine kleine Schockwelle aus. Alle raumplanerischen Mechanismen, die sich in den Niederlanden seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg entwickelt haben, sind auf Wachstum ausgerichtet. Doch nicht zuletzt nach dem Ausbruch der Finanzkrise im Jahr 2008 wurde allmählich klar, dass die Hoffnung auf eine Erholung des Wachstums für viele Gegenden in den Niederlanden illusorisch ist.

Regionale Behörden besinnen sich daher auf Strategien zum Umgang mit der Schrumpfung. Der Bezug zum Kulturerbe ist dabei jedoch lange nicht immer deutlich. Dennoch ist dieser Bezug sehr wohl vorhanden, und auch in den Niederlanden sind Praxisbeispiele zu finden. Gerade in demografisch schrumpfenden Gegenden, wo nicht selten eine gedrückte Stimmung herrscht, kann mit Hingabe bewahrtes und gepflegtes Kulturerbe lokalen Stolz und neuen

Optimismus fördern. Die Verwaltung des Kulturerbes wurde in den letzten Jahren immer stärker mit der räumlichen Entwicklung verknüpft. Verlassene Gebäude werden einem neuen Bestimmungszweck zugeführt, alte Landschaftsstrukturen erhalten eine zeitgemäße Bedeutung – alles mit Respekt für den kulturhistorischen Wert. Dieser Ansatz hat zweierlei Vorteile: Zum einen entsteht eine neue Basis für die Erhaltung und Verwaltung des Kulturerbes, zum anderen erwächst der Umgebung daraus Identität und wirtschaftlicher Wert.

Allerdings ist in Schrumpfungsräumen auch die Wahrscheinlichkeit größer, dass Eigentümer oder Verwalter das Kulturerbe verlassen, während das Angebot an potenziellen neuen Nutzern bedeutend kleiner ist. Wenn die ökonomischen und demografischen Probleme zu groß werden und zu lange anhalten, verliert das Kulturerbe seine wirtschaftliche Basis. Die Folgen sind Leerstände bzw. geringere Anreize zur Instandhaltung.

Die niederländischen Schrumpfungsräume befinden sich mitten in diesem Spannungsfeld. Erfahrungen in ausländischen Regionen, die bereits länger von demografischem Wandel geprägt sind, können mit der niederländischen Praxis

verglichen werden und hier als Vorbild dienen. Aus diesem Grund gab der *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed* (Staatliches Amt für das Kulturerbe) eine Erkundungsstudie zu den Ansätzen in einigen deutschen, französischen und britischen Regionen in Auftrag. Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie wurden auf der Website des *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed* veröffentlicht<sup>1</sup>. Der vorliegende Text enthält eine verkürzte Fassung dieses Berichts.

Die Autoren sprachen mit Behördenleitern, Experten sowie engagierten Einwohnern und Unternehmern, die an konkreten Projekten im In- und Ausland beteiligt sind. Mit der Veröffentlichung ihres Berichts hoffen sie, Ideen für die Ausrichtung der Politik in niederländischen Schrumpfsregionen einbringen zu können.

In der Studie wurden vier Funktionen herausgearbeitet, die Kulturerbe in Schrumpfsregionen haben kann.

1. Als *Aushängeschild* kann Kulturerbe touristische Besucher und unter Umständen sogar neue Einwohner in die Gegend ziehen. Die Politik in der französischen Region Limousin ist dafür ein gutes Beispiel. Hier wollen sich die Verantwortlichen nicht mit der Schrumpfung abfinden. Abteien, historische Dörfer, interessante Landschaften und andere Kulturerbestätten bringen Touristen in die Gegend. Neben einer aktiven Tourismusförderung gehören dazu auch kreative Arten des Regionalmarketings, wie beispielsweise die *Retrouvance®*-Wanderreisen, die im Limousin für Touristen angeboten werden. Ein anderes Beispiel stammt aus Dessau, das auf seine Bauhausgeschichte setzt, um potenzielle Besucher für die Stadt zu interessieren. Mit dem Kulturerbe als Aushängeschild versucht man, der Schrumpfung entgegenzuwirken, doch dieser Ansatz führt nicht automatisch zu einer neuen Nutzung frei werdenden Kulturerbes.
2. Als *Nährboden* kann Kulturerbe Pioniere anlocken und so neue Aktivitäten in die Schrumpfsregion bringen. Dafür eignet sich insbesondere industrielles Kulturerbe, wie Beispiele aus Sachsen-Anhalt (Ferropolis) und Manchester (Salford Quays und das Stadtzentrum) zeigen. Die stillgelegten Tagebauanlagen in Ferropolis und die alten Fabrikgebäude und Speicherhäuser in Manchester bieten einen ausgezeichneten Rahmen für neue städtische Aktivitäten, vor allem im kreativen Sektor. Ein weiteres Beispiel ist die

französische Region Limousin, wo Menschen von auswärts, die im Limousin ein Unternehmen beginnen wollen, vorübergehender Wohnraum in Kulturerbestätten zur Verfügung gestellt wird. Die Funktion als Nährboden verknüpft das Vorgehen gegen die Schrumpfung mit einer neuen Nutzungsform des Kulturerbes. Dafür muss es allerdings auch Interessenten geben. Es werden also begeisterte, engagierte Menschen mit Unternehmergeist gebraucht, die sich vom Kulturerbe inspirieren lassen und es als Quelle neuer Energie und Aktivitäten einsetzen wollen.

3. Als *Totempfahl* kann Kulturerbe die Einwohner an ihre Region binden, indem es ihnen Halt und Identität bietet. Dieser Ansatz wurde beispielsweise mit der Aufwertung der ehemaligen Zeche Zollverein im Ruhrgebiet und der von Abraumhalden geprägten Bergbauregion im französischen Nord-Pas de Calais verfolgt. Direkt nach der Stilllegung der Zechen und Industrieanlagen stand die weitere Existenz dieses Kulturerbes zunächst auf Messers Schneide. Nach einer Weile setzte sich jedoch die Einsicht durch, dass sich die Vergangenheit nicht ohne Weiteres auslöschen lässt. Es wurden neue Formen der Nutzung gefunden, wobei dies der Funktion als „Totempfahl“ nicht unbedingt inhärent ist. Das Beispiel des Gartenreichs Dessau-Wörlitz zeigt, dass auch eine eher rustikale und landschaftliche Kulturerbestätte als Totempfahl dienen kann. Die Parklandschaft erhöht die Lebensqualität in der Schrumpfsregion rund um Dessau. Der Stolz der Einwohner auf ihr Kulturerbe, ihre Umgebung, sorgt für Verbundenheit mit dem Ort und der Gegend.
4. Als *Begegnungsstätte* kann Kulturerbe Einwohner verbinden. Die lokale Bedeutung des Kulturerbes wird unterstrichen, indem es als Treffpunkt für die Einwohner dient. Diese Funktion kommt noch stärker zur Geltung, wenn die Einwohner auch selbst zur Instandsetzung und Verwaltung beitragen. Erfolgreiche Beispiele sind ein altes Haus an einer Kreuzung in Oranienbaum, in dem niederländische Künstler gemeinsam mit Dorfbewohnern Ausstellungen organisieren, sowie ein Pub im englischen Hesketh Newmarket, das durch eine Kooperation von Einwohnern und Touristen gerettet wurde. Im Emsland machte man die Erfahrung, dass immaterielles Kulturerbe eine ähnliche Funktion haben kann. Hier werden jahreszeitliche Feste und andere regionale Traditionen neu belebt, um so den sozialen Zusammenhang zu stärken, der durch die Vergreisung gefährdet ist.

	Kulturerbe wirbt (externe Ausrichtung)	Kulturerbe (ver)bindet (interne Ausrichtung)
Mit Nachdruck auf sozial- ökonomischer Funktion	<b>NÄHRBODEN</b>	<b>BEGEGNUNGS- STÄTTE</b>
Mit Nachdruck auf symbolischer Funktion	<b>AUSHÄNGESCHILD</b>	<b>TOTEMPF AHL</b>

Erfolgreiche Kulturerbeprojekte in Schrumpungsregionen kombinieren über kurz oder lang verschiedene Funktionen: Kulturerbe wirbt und (ver)bindet zugleich. Zudem begünstigen Entwicklungschancen neue Nutzungsformen, die wiederum zu neuen Entwicklungschancen führen.

Dies bringt das Kulturerbe mitten ins Zentrum von Schrumpungsstrategien. Als Aushängeschild oder Nährboden hat Kulturerbe eine tragende Rolle beim Vorgehen gegen die Schrumpfung. Eine solche Strategie kann die Schrumpfung zwar meistens bremsen, jedoch nicht umkehren. Deshalb umfasst eine integrale Schrumpungsstrategie auch Maßnahmen zur Erhaltung der Lebensqualität. Eine solche Strategie wirkt dem Verfall entgegen und sorgt für die Erhaltung des Immobilienwerts, doch eine gute Strategie hat auch eine soziale und kulturelle Heilungswirkung, da die Schrumpfung den Gemeinschaftssinn und das Selbstwertgefühl der Einwohner empfindlich beeinträchtigen kann. In so einer Strategie kann Kulturerbe als Begegnungsstätte und Totempfahl dienen. Der Bedarf an Wohn- und Gewerberaum ist in Schrumpungsregionen grundsätzlich gering. Daher empfiehlt es sich, aufkommende Initiativen nach Möglichkeit im vorhandenen Kulturerbe und in dessen Umkreis zu konzentrieren. Damit wird eine neue Nutzung des Kulturerbes mobilisiert und es steigen die Chancen auf einen nachhaltigen Erhalt des für die Region wertvollen Kulturerbes.

Wenn die Behörden eine oder mehrere der vier Kulturerbefunktionen gezielt unterstützen und sie konsequent in ihre Schrumpfungspolitik einbauen, kann für die Region ein Aufschwungeffekt erzielt werden, der sich bei herkömmlicher, objektbezogener Förderung nicht einstellt.

Eine Schrumpungsstrategie, die beim Kulturerbe ansetzt und Respekt für die lokale oder regionale Geschichte zeigt, kann eine negative Spirale umkehren. Dies ist eine Grundvoraussetzung für jeden Kurs, egal ob er durch Anreize zur Ansiedlung neuer Bewohner und Firmen die Schrumpfung bremsen soll oder ob er die Schrumpfung hinnimmt und dafür die Lebensqualität in dem Gebiet aufrechtzuerhalten versucht. Gerade in Schrumpungsregionen ist es wichtig, örtliche Initiatoren und Investoren vor Ort mit einzubinden, denn diese sind häufig in besonderem Maße an Gebäuden oder Orten interessiert, an denen die lokale Gemeinschaft hängt. Damit wird eine Grundlage für den Erhalt des Kulturerbes und den Umgang mit der Schrumpfung gleichermaßen geschaffen. Das Kulturerbe ist bei den beschriebenen Beispielen aus Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien daher auch viel mehr als ein zufälliger Nebenfaktor, im Gegenteil: Das Kulturerbe bildet den Kern der Schrumpungsstrategie. Damit sind die vorgestellten Projekte und die Strategien, in die sie eingebettet sind, interessante Modelle für einen Dialog über den politischen Ansatz in niederländischen und anderen Schrumpungsregionen.

- 1 Graaf, A. de, G.J. Hospers, M. Péro, H. Renes & E. Stegmeijer (2014). *Krimp en erfgoed in Noordwest-Europa; verkenning van een uitdagend probleem*. Veröffentlicht 2014 auf <http://www.cultureelerfgoed.nl>. Die Studie erfolgte im Auftrag der *Visie Erfgoed en Ruimte* unter der Schirmherrschaft des *Netwerk Erfgoed en Ruimte*.

*Nederlandse samenvatting*

# Werven en verbinden Krimp en erfgoed in Europa

Pas enkele jaren geleden drong in Nederland het besef door dat delen van het land te maken krijgen met een structurele daling van de bevolking. Weliswaar is demografische krimp in historisch perspectief een verschijnsel van alle tijden: al sinds de Romeinse tijd kennen we steden die groeien en vervolgens ook weer krimpen. Maar in Nederland veroorzaakten de recente berichten een kleine schokgolf. Alle mechanismen van ruimtelijke planning die Nederland sinds de Tweede Wereldoorlog heeft opgebouwd, zijn georiënteerd op groei. Maar zeker nadat in 2008 de financiële crisis losbrak, werd langzaam aan duidelijk dat herstel van de groei voor veel gebieden in Nederland geen reële optie meer is.

Regionale overheden bezinnen zich op strategieën om met krimp om te gaan. Het verband met erfgoed is lang niet altijd in beeld. Toch is dat verband wel degelijk aanwezig en zijn er ook in Nederland al voorbeeldpraktijken te vinden. Juist in krimpgebieden, waar de stemming nog wel eens bedrukt wil zijn, kan met toewijding beheerd erfgoed trots en nieuw optimisme bieden. Erfgoedbeheer is de afgelopen jaren sterker verweven geraakt met de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling. Vrijkomende gebouwen krijgen een nieuw gebruik. Oude landschapsstructuren krijgen een eigentijdse betekenis. Dat alles met respect voor de cultuurhistorische waarde. Het mes snijdt zo aan twee kanten: er ontstaat

een nieuwe basis voor het beheer van het erfgoed, en de omgeving ontleent er eigenheid en economische waarde aan.

Maar in krimpgebieden is ook de kans op vertrek van de eigenaar of beheerder groter en het aanbod van potentiële nieuwe gebruikers kleiner. Als de economische en demografische problemen te groot worden en te lang aanhouden, verliest het erfgoed zijn economische basis. Het staat leeg of als het wel in gebruik blijft, is de prikkel voor onderhoud kleiner.

Nederlandse krimpregio's bevinden zich midden in dit spanningsveld. Ervaringen in buitenlandse regio's waar krimp al langer aan de orde is worden vergeleken met de Nederlandse praktijk en kunnen tot voorbeeld strekken. Om die reden liet de Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed een verkennend onderzoek doen naar de aanpak in een aantal Duitse, Franse en Britse regio's. De resultaten van dit onderzoek zijn gepubliceerd op de website van de Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed.<sup>1</sup> Deze uitgave vormt een verkorte versie van dat rapport.

De auteurs spraken met bestuurders, professionals en initiatiefrijke bewoners en ondernemers die betrokken zijn bij concrete projecten in binnen- en buiten-

land. Met de publicatie hopen ze ideeën aan te dragen voor het beleid in Nederlandse krimpgebieden.

Uit het onderzoek kwamen vier functies naar voren die erfgoed in krimpgebieden kan hebben.

1. Als *uithangbord* kan erfgoed toeristische bezoekers en soms zelfs nieuwe bewoners werven. Het beleid in de Franse regio Limousin is daar een goed voorbeeld van. Bestuurders leggen zich niet neer bij de krimp. Abdijen, historische dorpen, interessante landschappen en ander erfgoed brengen toeristen het gebied in. Naast een actieve promotie, horen hier creatieve manieren bij om de regio in de markt te zetten, zoals de Retrouvance®-wandelreizen die toeristen in Limousin kunnen volgen. Een ander voorbeeld komt uit Dessau, een stad die zijn Bauhausverleden inzet om potentiële bezoekers te interesseren. Met de inzet van erfgoed als uithangbord probeert men de krimp te bestrijden, maar die aanpak leidt niet vanzelf tot een nieuw beheer voor vrijgekomen erfgoed.
2. Als *voedingsbodem* kan erfgoed pioniers werven en zo nieuwe activiteiten naar het krimpgebied toe brengen. In het bijzonder industrieel erfgoed leent zich daar goed voor. Voorbeelden uit Sachsen-Anhalt (Ferropolis) en Manchester (Salford Quays en het stadscentrum) laten dat zien. De achtergelaten mijnbouwinstallaties in Ferropolis en de oude fabrieksgebouwen en pakhuisen in Manchester bleken een uitstekende sfeer op te leveren voor nieuwe stedelijke activiteiten, vooral in de creatieve sector. Daarnaast staat de Franse regio Limousin, waar erfgoedwoningen tijdelijk beschikbaar worden gesteld voor mensen van buiten die in Limousin een bedrijf willen starten. De functie van voedingsbodem koppelt de aanpak van krimp aan een nieuw vorm van erfgoedbeheer. Die beheerder moet zich wel aandienen. Er zijn enthousiaste en ondernemende mensen voor nodig, die zich door het erfgoed laten inspireren en het willen inzetten als bron van nieuwe energie en ondernemerschap.
3. Als *totempaal* kan erfgoed bewoners aan hun omgeving binden. Bewoners ontnemen houvast en identiteit aan erfgoed. De herontwikkeling van Zollverein in het Ruhrgebied en de mijnterreinen met de steenberggen in Nord-Pas de Calais zijn bijvoorbeeld zo gestart. Direct na sluiting van de

mijnen en industrieën stond het voortbestaan van dit erfgoed op de tocht. Maar na verloop van tijd overheerste de gedachte dat het verleden zich niet zomaar laat uitwissen. Er werden nieuwe gebruiksvormen gevonden, hoewel dat niet inherent is aan de functie van 'totempaal'. In het Gartenreich Dessau-Wörlitz blijkt dat ook meer rustiek en landschappelijk erfgoed kan dienen als totempaal. Het parklandschap vergroot de leefkwaliteit in de krimpregio rond Dessau. De trots van de bewoners op hun erfgoed, hun omgeving, (ver)bindt hen met de plek en het gebied.

4. Als *ontmoetingsplaats* kan erfgoed bewoners onderling verbinden. De lokale betekenis van het erfgoed wordt dan kracht bijgezet door het letterlijk te benutten als plek waar bewoners elkaar kunnen ontmoeten. Deze functie komt nog beter uit de verf, als bewoners ook zelf bijdragen aan het herstel en beheer. Voorbeelden zijn een oud huis aan een kruispunt in het Duitse Oranienbaum waar Nederlandse kunstenaars samen met dorpsbewoners exposities organiseren, en een pub in het Engelse Hesketh Newmarket die is gered door een coöperatie van dorpsbewoners en toeristen. In het Emsland blijkt dat immaterieel erfgoed een vergelijkbare functie kan hebben. Seizoensfeesten en andere regionale tradities zijn nieuw leven ingeblazen, met het doel de sociale verbanden te herstellen die door de vergrijzing op de proef worden gesteld.

	Erfgoed werft (externe oriëntatie)	Erfgoed bindt (interne oriëntatie)
Nadruk op sociaal-economische functie	<b>VOEDINGSBODEM</b>	<b>ONTMOETINGS-PLAATS</b>
Nadruk op symboolfunctie	<b>UITHANGBORD</b>	<b>TOTEMPAAL</b>

Succesvolle erfgoedprojecten in krimpgebieden combineren na verloop van tijd verschillende functies. Erfgoed werft én bindt, heeft een symboolfunctie én een sociaal-economische functie. Ontwikkelingskansen brengen bovendien nieuwe beheervormen in beeld die op hun beurt weer leiden tot nieuwe ontwikkelingskansen.

Dat brengt erfgoed in het hart van krimpstrategieën. Als uithangbord of voedingsbodem draagt erfgoed bij aan een strategie die de krimp bestrijdt. Meestal blijkt zo'n strategie de krimp weliswaar af te vlakken, maar niet te keren. Daarom bevat een integrale krimpstrategie ook maatregelen om de kwaliteit van leven op niveau te houden.

Zo'n strategie gaat verval tegen en houdt de waarde van het onroerend goed op peil. Maar een goede strategie heeft ook sociaal en cultureel een helende werking, want krimp kan de collectiviteit en eigenwaarde bij bewoners behoorlijk aantasten. In zo'n strategie kan erfgoed dienen als ontmoetingsplaats en totempaal.

De behoefte aan huisvesting voor mensen, bedrijven en organisaties is in krimpgebieden per definitie schaars. Het is daarom verstandig om initiatieven die zich voordoen zo veel mogelijk te centreren in en rondom het beschikbare erfgoed. Daarmee wordt nieuw erfgoedbeheer gemobiliseerd en stijgen de kansen voor een duurzaam behoud van het voor de streek waardevolle erfgoed.

Als de overheden één of meer van de vier erfgoedfuncties doelgericht ondersteunen en expliciet een plek geven in hun krimpbeleid, kan er voor het gebied een vliegwieleffect optreden dat ontbreekt bij de meer traditionele, objectgerichte subsidiëring.

Een krimpstrategie die begint bij het erfgoed en respect toont voor de lokale of regionale geschiedenis, kan een negatieve spiraal ombuigen. Dat is een voorwaarde voor vrijwel elke koers, of deze nu de krimp wil verzachten door nieuwe mensen en bedrijven aan te trekken, of de krimp accepteert maar de leefbaarheid van het gebied in stand wil houden. Zeker in krimpgebieden blijkt het

essentieel om aansluiting te zoeken bij lokale initiatiefnemers en investeerders. En juist zij zijn nogal eens bovenmatig geïnteresseerd in panden of gebieden die de lokale gemeenschap in het hart heeft gesloten. Dat legt een basis onder zowel het erfgoedbeheer als de omgang met krimp. Erfgoed is in de beschreven Duitse, Franse en Engelse voorbeelden dan ook veel meer dan een toevallige bijkomstigheid. Integendeel: het erfgoed vormt de kern van de krimpstrategie. En daarmee vormen de beschreven projecten en de strategieën waarin ze ingebed zijn, interessante voorbeelden voor een gesprek over de aanpak in Nederlandse en andere krimpregio's.

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