A vocabulary for building landscapes

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SUMMARY

In the post-war period (1944-1970) land consolidation programmes drastically transformed the Dutch historical landscape. Landscape architects contributed to this by re-designing the landscapes in such a way that they would express the “essence of the landscape” (Blerck, 1998), addressing their main characteristics, scenery and land uses. These post-war landscape plans resulted in distinctive - often even iconic – landscapes in vast parts of the Netherlands. Half a century later the designed landscapes have fully grown and turned into a new layer in the cultural biography of the landscape (Hidding et al, 2001). Politicians, policy makers, officials and designers are confronted with the question how to preserve the characteristics and values of these designed landscapes.

The objective of this paper is to identify the design elements that determine the characteristics of these post-war land consolidation landscapes. Twenty different designed landscapes were analysed using field observations, map studies, studies of the original designs and their textual explanations, literature study, and interviews with landscape architects who knew and worked with the landscape designers of the post-war land consolidation period.

The study resulted in a typology of spatial-visual elements that can be considered as the building blocks of the post-war landscape designs. The design elements were used to enhance the characteristics of the historical landscape and its scenic qualities. It appears that the generic types of design elements were adjusted to the specifics of different landscapes and the personal style of different landscape architects.

The typology of design elements with their specific local application offers a valuable contribution to the preservation of the post-war designed landscapes.
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1. TRACING THE BASIS OF LANDSCAPE PLANS IN DUTCH LAND CONSOLIDATION PROJECTS

Already in the decennium before WWII the State Forestry Department had a special unit called ‘Landschapsverzorging’. That could be translated into English as ‘Landscape care’. That unit made designs and plans for the plantings along main roads and canals. The designers in this unit were also asked to contribute to the plans for the first polders in the former Zuiderzee: Wieringermeerpolder and the Noordoostpolder. As external advisor J.T.P. Bijhouwer was consulted for a general landscape plan for the ‘new land’ of the polders as a whole, but also for designs of the new farmyards in the polder (Andela, 2008). Bijhouwer invented a new form of landscape architecture. He matched a functional and methodical approach with a great knowledge and love for the variation in the Dutch landscape. Andela (2008) describes how his ideas were formed in interaction with a series of formal and informal discussions with designers like Granpré Molière, Verhagen and Van Eesteren.

In the first years of WWII Bijhouwer not only worked on designs for the new polders, but also made landscape designs for regions at the ‘old land’, like the Land of Vollenhove. But these plans were not implemented. Bijhouwer’s ideas however must have been very influential on the designers and planners working for Landschapsverzorging. He showed that a landscape design appoints different scales. For instance a farmyard is a functional entity on a local scale. But it is also as an element that plays a vast role in the spatial-visual composition of the scenery in a landscape on the scale of a polder (Andela, 2008).

Since 1944 a small team of designers working for Landschapsverzorging had started to make landscape plans for ‘ruilverkavelingen’, land consolidation projects, in parts of the old land. For a few decades such land consolidation plans had been implemented but only aiming at the interests of agricultural development. The designers of Landschapsverzorging were keen on interlinking the consolidation plans also to the historical landscape with its natural values and cultural heritage (Andela, 2000; van Blerck, 1987; Steenhuis, 2014; de Visser, 1997).

A special collection

The original drawings of the landscape plans of Landschapsverzorging are being preserved at the Special Collections Department of the Wageningen University Library. There we can study the almost complete set of drawings for land consolidations from the period 1944 until the late seventies.

These maps were made at the drawing office of Landschapsverzorging. The maps are numbered starting with R1 (for a small project in the Province of Groningen, Balmahuizen) up to R654 (for peatlands near Amsterdam, Waterland). The R probably stands for the first character of the word ‘ruilverkaveling’.

This collection provides an overview of the development of Landschapsverzorging. De Visser (1997) describes this development in two periods. Dividing point is the adoption by the government in 1954 of a new legislation to structure the many land consolidation projects. One of the important changes in this law compared to the earlier legislation was the obligation
to make a landscape plan. Before the installation of this law there was hardly any legal basis for implementing a landscape plan in the plan process. Nevertheless the collection of landscape plans in Wageningen does point out that in the period 1944-1954 landscape plans have been made for circa 200 land consolidation projects. Do these pioneering 200 already reflect one overriding mode of operation for making landscape plans in land consolidation projects in the Netherlands as a whole? And if so, how can it be characterised? And was it successful?

200 pioneering plans
An inventory of these first 200 landscape plans points out that they have been made for areas all over the country. Some provinces like Zuid Holland and Utrecht are represented with just a few plans, others like Brabant, Overijssel and Drenthe had dozens of plans. The plans are sometimes for just small sites, like a tiny old polder, or the meadows along a stream. But a lot of the plans incorporate 1000’s of hectares of cultivated land. It is also notable that the villages are often part of the plan. The plans are drawn on a map which showed the patterns of roads and ditches, the allotment patterns and the farms and houses. Some of the landscape plans use the situation that reflects the situation before the consolidation, but often the plans are drawn on a map of the new situation or a concept plan for the reallotment. In these first years the landscape plan was often only made after the land consolidation works with a new allotment pattern, new roads and ditches had already been carried out. The designers of the landscape plan could only add trees and hedgerows after the plan of the civil engineers was already implemented. But there were also projects where Landschapsverzorging could interfere in earlier stages of the plan process (Andela, 2000; van Blereck, 1987; Steenhuis, 2014; de Visser, 1997). On their maps existing rows of trees, small forests, shrubberies or hedgerows were marked in black and white. Colour pencils were used to point out the designed elements. Different colours were used for different types of trees, shrubberies or hedgerows. If the map showed a concept for the projected reallotment, the designers of the landscape plan mark spots on the planned roads where in their opinion this road was projected too much in a straight line to relate to the landscape. The legend on the maps often also refers to parts of the landscape where extra plantings along land borders were desirable in the vision of the designers. In this way they wanted to express that these parts of the landscape were different from other zones. For instance they indicated valleys along a stream or zones along the edges of dunes. From actual excursions in the field but also virtual visits using Google Streetview to over half of these 200 areas it turns out that in a vast part of the country these landscape designs have been really carried out and are still largely recognisable. So although there was hardly any legal ground for a landscape plan in land consolidations, these early landscape plans were often very successful. Half a century later the designed landscapes have fully grown and turned into a new layer in the cultural biography of the landscape.

Narrative design approach as overarching mode of operation
Can an overarching approach be recognised in the series of 200 early landscape plans and what are the main elements of this approach? R.J. Benthem, who was head of the team of landscape plan designers, did give his vision in several articles and books. He stressed that in making landscape plans one should never use a template, but always make a design fit to the specific landscape (Benthem, 1950). The variety in the Dutch landscape was in his vision unrivalled. It was essential to build on that diversity.
This was not an easy task because the interferences that were made in the process of land consolidation were often radical. A mode of operation that would just defend the most valuable parts of the landscape as nature or heritage reserves would not suffice. A landscape plan should point at the future landscape as one renewed spatial-visual composition that expresses this essence of the landscape (Benthem, 1950). People in the landscape should be able to experience the narrative of the landscape, its history, its present, its development over the ages. In this way they wanted to keep, as Benthem said, ‘the essence of the landscape’ (van Blerck, 1997). In their landscape plans the designers wanted to express the stories of the landscape in the shape of the land. Therefore this can be indicated as a narrative design approach: making a composition of the scenery was a way of storytelling, not with words but with old and new elements of the landscape. After a first analysis of the collection of 200 early landscape plans the thesis is that this collection reflects this narrative design approach as overarching. In the series of plans many elements of a ‘vocabulary’ for this narrative designs can be recognised. This vocabulary comprises three levels. First there is a ‘sense of time’ on the scale of the Dutch landscape as a whole. Second a ‘sense of space’ on the scale of landscape ensemble, like a village historically situated between a valley and fields, or like a large polder. The third level is a ‘sense of place’ on the scale of a person experiencing the landscape walking through it.

**Sense of time: sand, sea and rivers**

Sense of time is about landscape as an ever developing interaction of natural and anthropogenic processes. Geological processes in the earth’s crust and at the surface of the earth by ice, wind and water resulted in a great variety of geomorphological phenomena. This has been starting point for landscape development in the Dutch delta. In the east the basic shape of the landscape has been formed by glaciers and sandstorms, in the west the force of the sea was predominant. The rivers Maas and Rhine have run through the middle of the country for ages flooding and eroding the land and depositing gravel, sand and clay. Natural processes react on this variety with a development of ecosystems with different specific flora and fauna. The pioneers of ‘landschapsverzorging’ had a vast amount of knowledge of nature. They knew about phytosociologic studies of vegetation, including the organisation interdependency, development, geographical distribution and classification of plant communities. Knowledge of the way soil and groundwater influences the development of natural processes was important for the choice of trees to plant in a specific region. They knew about which tree has its natural habitat in different areas in the landscape. Furthermore they were very aware of the cultural history of the landscape and of how people over the centuries coped with the effects of natural processes. These insights in the interacting processes that steer the development of a landscape formed the basis of their design (van Blerck, 1987). They reflected on a land consolidation as a next step in the development of these landscapes. This is what is meant with ‘sense of time’.

**Sense of space: seclusion of the wood versus openness of the sea**

In the 200 early landscape plans one can recognise a series of spatial-visual modules. Together they can be analysed as a vocabulary for the designers to make their compositions of the scenery in a landscape. This vocabulary was used to express the sense of space of that particular landscape. Archetypal images of ‘wood’ and ‘sea’ stand for two extremes in the sense of space. In the Dutch landscape these extremes are distinct in the delta: the woods in the east and the sea in the west.
In literature such a vocabulary was never systematically described. But the contrast between open and secluded zones in the landscape is a main theme in the landscape plans. Like scientists in chemistry invented the ‘periodic table’ of chemical elements the Dutch landscape designers maybe did make up a sceneric table. On the far left in this sceneric table they would have placed the varied forms of the absolute openness: sea, a huge field, or uncultivated land with peat or heather, a wide polder. There the human eye can see the horizon in all directions.

On the right in this system they would have located modules that resemble the opposite: forests, woods, maybe cities. From the left to the middle modules would have had more and more elements in the openness. They would resemble little isles in the open sea, for instance small forests in a wide heath, or farmyards spread over a polder. More to the middle the open space would be more filled with elements like dikes, dunes, or rows of trees, ribbons of villages. From the right to the middle the forest would have had more and bigger open spaces surrounded by woodlands. In the middle the landscape modules are divided in subspaces of different shapes. This sceneric system of spatial-visual modules was never really systematically recorded in a book or article but they can be recognised in the landscape plans. The aforementioned designation of specific areas where extra plantings were desirable, in contrast to areas that should be left as open space, is an example of how a ‘sense of space’ was expressed in the composition of the scenery of the landscape.

The early 200 point out that from the beginning in designs for the sand landscapes modules in the right side of the sceneric table were used: the wood and clearings in the wood. In contrast modules of the left side of the sceneric table were used for the different polders that make op the sea landscapes. The river landscape is a mixture of both but the spaces and seclusions reflected the long and winding rivers.

Sense of place: individual experience, inside or outside
On the scale of a person walking through the landscape the composition of the scenery can offer a variety of experiences. In many of the landscape plans the experience of entering a village for instance is indicated by making ‘green portals’. Coming from a road with no trees along it, the designer made sure that just before you reach the first house of the village hedgerows are planted: the first 25 meters only on the right side of the road and just past the first house on both sides. It is like a gesture of welcome. In villages often a field with trees makes up a common green hall. The trees form a roof over the public space. The designed scenery can give a person the feeling that he or she is inside a village, or outside in the middle of an open field. You may feel like walking outside along the edge of a space, or inside a lane of trees and hedgerows along this space. One can ‘enter’ a farmyard which is surrounded by plantings.

These are all examples of how a designer of a landscape plan can steer the experience of being inside or outside in parts of the landscape by composing the scenery. The early 200 are mostly designed in this great detail. They were made to suit perfectly which is probably one of the reasons that the designs are still present in the current landscape, more then 70 years later.
2. ELEMENTS OF THE VOCABULARY

2.1 Examples in designs for Dutch sand-landscapes

2.1.1 Sense of time
Many of the ‘early 200’ are plans made for land consolidations in southern and eastern parts of the Netherlands. The natural structure of these higher sections of the country was formed by the moraine of gigantic glaciers and by ridges of sand left behind by the sandstorms of the tundra climate during the last Ice Age. The water drains off these moraines and ridges and forms meandering systems of brooks and rivulets.

Since the Middle Ages, people have settled at the transition from high to low ground, at the spot where they could dig a well. They used the lower ground for grazing, and cultivated the higher land for arable crops. High lying dry ground and often marshy grounds farther away from villages and streams were used as large grazing fields for sheep, whose dung was mixed with heather sods. This mixture was used to fertilise the arable plots near the village.

This method of settling the sandy areas depended on the area of land that could be used for cultivation of crops. Some plots on small sand ridges were cultivated by just one or two farms, while in other places the cultivable area was so large that it could support whole villages. The most common Dutch name for these arable grounds is ‘es’, but also the words ‘enk’ and ‘akker’ are used.

After the introduction of industrial fertilisers in the 19th century the large uncultivated grounds lost their role in the method of settling. In the 20th century the cultivation of these grounds became an important part of the land consolidation projects. In the 50s large land consolidation projects were carried out for areas including the villages, valleys, arable plots and the former uncultivated grounds. For the designers it was important that the historic components of the landscape: village, es, valley along the stream and heath would still be recognisable as separate zones in the landscape, each with their own characteristics.

However before these ‘overall sand landscape consolidation’ projects were set about, dozens of smaller consolidation projects had been carried out in the 40’s and early 50’s. These projects aimed at modernising farming on the old arable plots, the es, near the villages. The allotment of many long and narrow parcels was from a time when farmers ploughed their land using harrow and ox. The modern agricultural machinery needed wider and shorter parcels.

2.1.2 Es-consolidations like ‘R039 Hooghaler en Laaghaler Essen’

After joining Benthem’s team in 1948 the designer, Harry de Vroome, used an identical approach for a series of es-consolidations in the provinces Gelderland, Overijssel and Drenthe. The historic relation between the people in the village and their ‘es’ was essential (van Blerck, 1987). Therefore public space in the villages is an integral part of the landscape plans. Of the ‘early 200’ some 40 were ‘es’-consolidations and often included more then one village and es. In total this means that as a result of the land consolidations in the early years for nearly a hundred villages a design is made for the green structure. And most of these designs are still recognisable in these villages, iconic even.

Sense of space
One of the first es-consolidations comprised two villages, Hooghalen and Laaghalen, each with their own es. Just outside the villages the es was accentuated as one open space.
surrounded by existing forests and new hedgerows and trees along the borders of the es. In this way the es was made one rather large space surrounded by a green ‘enclosure’. This gave all these esses the atmosphere of a clearing in a large forest. On the landscape plan trees were projected in the villages to strengthen them as secluded spaces, in contrast with this openness on the es.

**Sense of place**

Like in most of the es-consolidations part of the landscape plan is a design for the public space in the villages. Green entrances with trees and hedgerows along the roads make sure that after you have entered the village you move through a range of smaller spaces where ‘trees in grass’ determine the atmosphere.

Often the roads along the edge of the es have hedgerows and trees on the roadside, partially on both roadsides, partially only on the left or only on the right side of the road. You can experience walking ‘on’ the es when the roadside along the es is kept free of plantings. But a little further, often when the road makes a slight curve, in this roadside a hedgerow is designed. Then you have the feeling that you walk outside the es-space because the es is behind the hedgerow. At every curve in the road the hedgerows can switch from the left to the right roadside or hedgerows can be designed on both roadsides. This offers a concatenation of experiences of being in or outside the space of the es, or of being in a lane along the es.

Another example is the way in which a new road over the es of Hooghalen was designed. Landschaps-verzorging wanted to avoid that new roads would look like ‘fremdkörper’ in the landscape. Therefore they indicated with small circles where this road should get a slight curve to make it feel as a natural part of the historic landscape. Often, after discussing this with the civil engineers the projected roadline was adapted. In the case of Hooghalen eventually the road has been given two extra curves and the forest was extended a bit. Now the road crosses the little forest and ‘feels’ like having been there for ages. It’s like park design!
2.1.3 **Overall sand landscape consolidations like ‘R043 Rossumerveld en Lemseler Esch’**

*Sense of time*
In Noord Brabant (R050 Spoordonk), Gelderland (R080 Beltrum) and Overijssel (R043 Rossumerveld en Lemseler Esch) the land consolidation not only comprised the es and villages, but also the valleys of streams and the former heathlands. In fact these land consolidations were cultivations of large marshy, peaty or very poor grounds. This could – and in some areas did - lead to a landscape that had the appearance of a cultural tundra. The cultural and natural identity of these historic landscapes would be erased on the civil engineers’ drawing table. To avoid this the designers accentuated the differences in atmosphere of the essential historic components of the landscape: the secluded village, the es with a green enclusure, the former heathland and the valley along the stream.

*Sense of space*
The es and village were designed in the same way as in the es-consolidations (2.1.2). For the valleys and the former heathland something new had to invented. In the sixties De Vroome made landscape plans for Drenthe in which he designed the former heath lands as large open spaces as a reference to the extensive heath of former ages. In the ‘early 200’ the cultivated heathlands however were cut up into geometric patterns of new roads with a sequence of hedgerows and trees left, right, or on both sides along the new roads.
The streams in the valleys were straightened and canalised. The designers of the landscape plans tried to preserve the seclusion of the range of meadows surrounded by hedgerows and shrubberies. In these early plans a yellow line was drawn along the edges of the valleys and along the borders of the es – to indicate that these hedgerows and shrubberies should be preserved as much as possible. The legend on the plan also indicates that in these zones outlined in yellow it was recommended to plant new hedgerows and shrubberies.

**Sense of place**
All these elements of the landscape plan together make up a mosaic landscape that people nowadays call typical for Twenthe and Brabant. A person moving through this landscape experiences along his route entering and leaving hundreds of green rooms in this small-scaled chequered seemingly old landscape. On the landscape plan one can see however how many of all these hedgerows, lanes and forests are newly planted as part of the land consolidation.

2.2 **Sea**

2.2.1 **Sense of time**

In the western and northern parts of the country, the rise and fall of the sea level determined settlement patterns. Ocean currents formed large sandbanks on the seafloor in an arc roughly parallel with the present-day coastline. Over the centuries, as the sea level dropped, the leeside of these sandbanks provided sheltered areas where the sea could no longer penetrate, and turf started to grow there. As the sea level gradually rose again, tidal seawater flowed into creeks and inlets through the dune landscape. At other times, the sea swept away large areas of the dunes, including turf and peat, with devastating power. This formed an area that was left dry at low tide. The Romans were amazed that people could survive in this tidal habitat, settling around self constructed mounds to which they retreated with their livestock at high tide. You can still see these mounds, known as ‘terpen’ in Dutch, in the far north of the country. The people in the north and west of the Netherlands protected their land from the sea by constructing dikes and creating the polder landscape.

The dikes withstood the force of the sea with varying degrees of success. Sheltered in these early polders, the settlers would wait until the sea inlets and estuaries silted up with a fertile layer of clay and sediment before surrounding them by another defence line of dikes. This resulted in a concatenation of polders of various ages and soil types, with sea inlets running between them. Peat was cut in some of these polders, resulting in new waterlands. As soon as the technology became available, some of these were pumped dry, along with other sea inlets. These were the primitive predecessors of the polders of the man-made province of Flevoland in the former Zuiderzee.

Halfway the 20th century the allotment and water system of the old polders in Groningen, Friesland and the north of Holland had to be adapted to the demand of modern agriculture. A few dozen land consolidations for one single polder were carried out. For Landschapsverzorging the essence of these polder landscapes was their ‘sea’ of openness. The plots where people are living appear as little ‘isles’ in this openness.

There were also some real islands in this landscape, most of them surrounded by sea, but a few of them surrounded by new polder land after the Zuiderzee had been drained. On these former islands the contrast between the seclusion and intimacy of the villages and arable lands
on the one hand and the wide open lower parts overlooking the former sea on the other hand, was strengthened. There you can feel the wind blow.

2.2.2  **Polder consolidations ‘R001 Balmahuizen’ and ‘R165 Buitenpolder achter Kuinre’**

*Sense op space*
In many of the single polder landscape plans hardly any new plantings were proposed. It is the vast openness of the polder with curving dikes and a wide open sky above the horizon dominating the spatial composition of the landscape. One should not think that these landscape plans are so ‘minimal’ because of a lack of possibilities to plant more trees. This was a deliberate artistic choice. The openness and the horizon are essential in the narrative the designers wanted to express in these landscapes.

*Sense of place*
But moving through this wide open landscapes - ‘high’ on the dike – the sparse plantings of farmyards, bridges or sluices are like isles silhouetted against the horizon. And coming nearer
to this farmyard or sluice one enters a little world, secluded but with belvederes from ‘inside’ on the landscape outside.

2.2.3 Overall sea landscape consolidations like ‘R053 Wieringen’

**Sense of time**
Wieringen had been an island until the Afsluitdijk and the Wieringermeerpolder were realised in the 30’s of the 20th century. Like more of the isles around the Waddensea there was a pattern of embankments made of sod to keep the cattle. This pattern of embankments had already been erased in 1948 when Nico de Jonge and Harry de Vroome made the landscape design together, so after the plan for land consolidation was executed. What they found was an island with a range of hamlets and two small villages with strokes of arable land on some higher slopes, surrounded by open and lower fields. The embankments were gone and so were most of the plantings on the former island. The most important thing for the designers was probably to keep the feeling of being on an island: comfortable out of the wind and rain in a village, but when going out the feeling of walking in the open, watching the sea.

**Sense of space**
The designers decided to leave the lower parts of the island open, with a few duck decoys as the only beacons. In contrast the roads on the higher grounds were designed more secluded. Trees were placed in the public space of the villages. Green portals and gateways are designed along the last sloping parts of roads that come from the lower grounds to the hamlets. Hedgerows on both sides of roads along the borders of the higher grounds form lanes of
hedgerows. On the plan these higher grounds are outlined with a yellow line. The legend indicates that within these outlined zones placement of extra hedgerows should be stimulated.

**Sense of place**
Moving through these hedgerow lanes from time to time an opening to one side of the road. On one side they give view on a village. The embankments must have been inbetween these lanes and the villages. And there are views on the other side of the road - over the open lower grounds - at the sea or the polder. The contrast of the secluded hedgerow lanes with these views in the wide open strengthen the experience of being on an island.

2.3 River

2.3.1 Sense of time

The great rivers cut a swathe from east to west across the Netherlands, eventually discharging into the sea in the westernmost lowlands. These rivers would break their banks when there was high water, flooding the land along their usual channels and leaving behind debris that the floodwaters had swept along. Coarser sandy material was deposited close to the riverbanks, while lighter material was deposited further from the river, where the floodwaters calmed down. This resulted in a characteristic pattern of flood plains and wetlands through which the rivers flowed, with sandy embankments on both sides and an extensive hinterland with heavy clay soil. Over the course of time the rivers gradually altered their courses, creating a river landscape that is an interwoven network of flood plains, riverbanks and basins.

People settled along the riverbanks, cultivating plots of land atop the embankments and grazing their livestock on the riverbanks. The basins were still untamed marshy areas until seventy years ago. The rivers, on the other hand, were the most important transport routes for many centuries, and some of the little settlements on the riverbanks developed into important mercantile towns and cities.

Outside these cities this central part of the country was one of the more backward areas. Poverty was a reality for most of the people. Therefore programs were carried out to uplift these areas with education of the people. Hand in hand with these programs land consolidation projects for the entire river landscape were undertaken. Most of the change in the landscape was in the hinterland. They were transformed from just extensively cultivated marshy areas into prosperous modern agricultural land with new farms, new land, new farmyards along a lane, just like in the flevopolders.

Alongside with these large overall land consolidations in the center of the country some smaller consolidations were undertaken along the river Maas in Limburg. In the Maas valley gravel sand and clay was extracted resulting in large pools. A few smaller land consolidations were undertaken in such parts of the valley.
2.3.2 Stream valley consolidations like ‘R006 Mook-Middelaar’

Sense of time
One of these was ‘Mook-Middelaar’ in the North of Limburg in between the Maas and the slopes of the Nijmegen-Kleve ridge. The pool would be transformed into a recreational lake. The rest of the valley along the Maas historically had a an allotment curving with the curves along the river and these bends were traditionally planted with hedges of hawthorns. In the design this pattern of hedges was strengthened and enriched with some recreational roads along these curves with a composition of hedgerows in the roadsides that give spectacular views on the Nijmegen hills and over the valley of the Maas with the pittoresque silhouette of village Cuijk across the river. The landscape plan makes the lake play a very subordinate role in this ensemble.

Sense of space
The curving spaces in between the hedges and hedgerows highlight the influence of the river in the zone between the Maas and hills. The rows of trees along the curving roads do so too.

Sense of place
Ensembles of trees are situated in the landscape plan at special places in the valley, for instance at the mooring point of the ferry to Cuijk. Most of the trees are oaks, willows and poplars but here a few lime trees were planted. As we saw in projects described earlier in this article the recreational routes also have a concatenation of views to parts of the surrounding landscape.
2.3.3 Overall river landscape consolidations like ‘R087 Maaskant-West’

Sense of time
In the 40’s and 50’s there was a range of land consolidations to uplift the central part of the Netherlands situated in between the rivers Rhine, Waal and Maas. In all of them the subdivision of the landscape in: flood plains, historically inhabited riverbanks with the arable lands and basins, which -up until the land consolidation were marshy and hardly cultivated. It meant a great deal when these basins were cultivated. And it meant even when in later land consolidations also new farms were built in these parts of the landscape. People never lived there. It was new modern land for a modern society.

Sense of space and sense of place
The flood plains were left open in contrast with the riverbanks behind the river dike. There the villages and orchards made the atmosphere: secluded behind the dike but wide and grand when climbing the dike and watching the rivers flow through the flood plains. Only in later consolidations the roadsides in the basins were planted. Then dozens of new farmyards were built in the middle of this new land, with long straight rows of poplars as a string binding the new farmyards. But only on one roadside otherwise these poplars would give too much shadow on the crops. Every square meter productive land counted.

3. CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to identify the design elements that determine the characteristics of a narrative design approach in the ‘early 200’ landscape plans for Dutch land consolidation projects from 1944 until 1954. The study resulted in a deduction of spatial-visual elements that can be considered as building blocks of the post-war landscape designs. The design elements were used to enhance the characteristics of the historical landscape and its scenic qualities. It appears that the generic types of design elements were adjusted to the specifics of different landscapes.

It is recommended to do more research: can this narrative design approach with its arrangement of design elements work as a tool kit for future landscape design - specifically in participate planning?
REFERENCES
The (fragments of) landscape plans presented in this article are part of the Special Collections at the Library of Wageningen University and Research. Photographs and illustrations are by Hanneke Baltjes, Schokland en water BV, Rhenen


BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
Henk van Blerck studied Landscape Architecture at the Agricultural University of Wageningen in The Netherlands. After graduating in 1985 he worked as a self employed landscape architect and curator of exhibitions and manifestations.
In his work the stories and tales that people experience in the landscape and the story and message of designers in their plans for the landscape are crucial. Since april 2016 he is external PhD at Groningen University.

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