

Togetherness in the green

Green public space as a social cohesive catalyst in shrinking mine colonies

Research by Anne-Marije van Duin

This research is about the shrinking issues in Parkstad Limburg, namely the mine-colonies within this region and it offers a strategy to cope with these issues. Millions of euros have been invested in the Parkstad region in the south of the Netherlands, to compensate the loss of jobs since the closure of the coal mines in this area in the late 60's beginning 70's. But still low employment and a shrinking and aging population combined with themigration of higher educated young people persevere. The overkill of infrastructure, paid by the government, did not put a hold to the shrinkingnumbers of households and decreasing in employment. But then how to deal with the shrinking region? Instead of fighting the shrinking process could it also be accepted with the one condition that good quality living in Parkstad is still feasible for the remainders.

When cities stop growing, we can take all sorts of measures to stimulate the city's photosynthesis with a result in mind of an expanding city. This "makeability" of a city excludes the possibility of the opposite of growth. The opposite border; becoming a vacant city. We could also except this shrinkage as a new model for city development. Would it be possible with less money, because of lower taxes income for municipalities, to design and maintain the public space? To invest in this public space to prevent it from losing a spatial and social structure and to invest in the remaining housing and amenities to ensure the good living conditions for the inhabitants of the mine colonies?

For Parkstad Limburg with its specific history the strategy of a lot of money pumping into big infrastructural and building projects is not the answer. Instead of forwarding with a lot of money rewind the process by shrinking back to a different city or multiple villages. Important for this shrinking city with an oversized jacket, that it still needs a jacket that keeps everything together and function as a city. This paper tries to find an answer what this

jacket is and how it functions focusing on the neighborhoods that have felt the pop-up and leave of the mines the most; the mine colonies. With a strategy using governmental money investing on a smaller scale in the mine colonies.



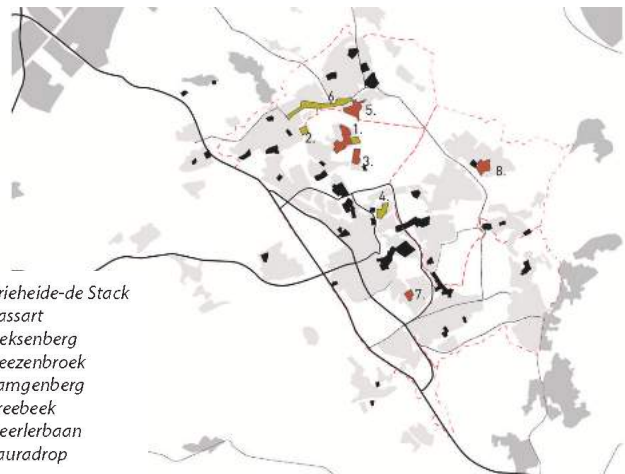
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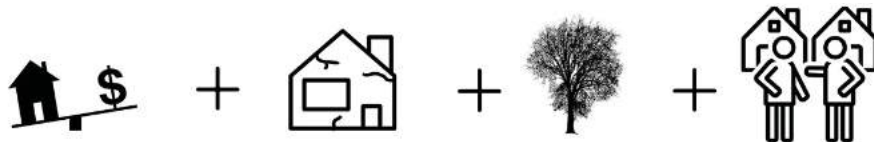
1. Vrieheide-de Stack

built 1900-1925 en 1950-1960
1546 dwellings

- owner-occupied home with high mortgage (former rental houses)
- private and public space new structure
- core with amenities



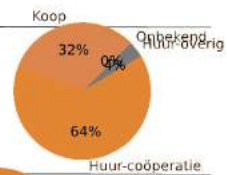
- Vrieheide-de Stack
- Passart
- Heksenberg
- Meezenbroek
- Langenberg
- Treebeek
- Heerlerbaan
- Lauradrop



2. Passart

1900-1925
1041 dwellings

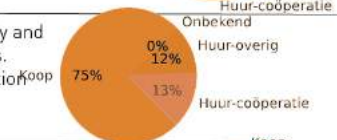
- impulse OR is needed: strength of green structure decreases
- houses and sales also need an impulse for the elderly
- population with a small budget



3. Heksenberg

1850-1900 & 1945-1960
1130 dwellings

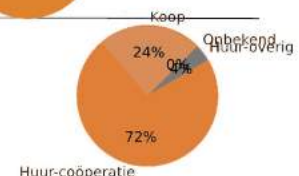
- green structure in quantity and quality important to bring quality and unity to public space in a neighborhood built in different periods.
- in addition to the dwellings with protected cityscape, also attention for the rest of the owner-occupied homes
- facilities are very limited



4. Meezenbroek

1925-1940 & 1950-1970
1520 dwellings

- green structure in quantity and quality important to bring quality and unity to public space in a neighborhood built in different periods.
- public green spaces with possibility to meet each other to strengthen social cohesion
- people are stuck in expensive housing



5. Langenberg

1900-1925 & 1950-1960
1221 dwellings

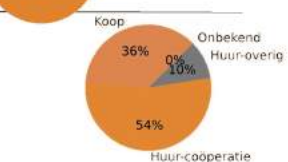
- improve owner-occupied homes sustainability, size, layout and maintenance.
- Rental properties better valued than sale.



6. Treebeek

1900-1925
1412 dwellings

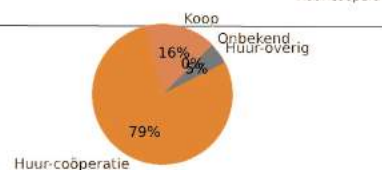
- this district works well; investments have been made in the green structure. the original layout of the neighborhood provides a good framework.
- point of attention: old population who continues to live in an old house.



7. Heerlerbaan

1950-1970
2297 dwellings

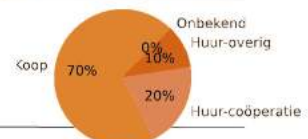
- quality of the rental properties must be improved
- quality the green structure must be improved
- and social cohesion improved with the green public space



8. Lauradorp

1900-1925 & 1950-1970
1510 dwellings

- Improving the green structure in quantity and quality
- relatively old population in owner-occupied homes
- traffic structure as a point of attention



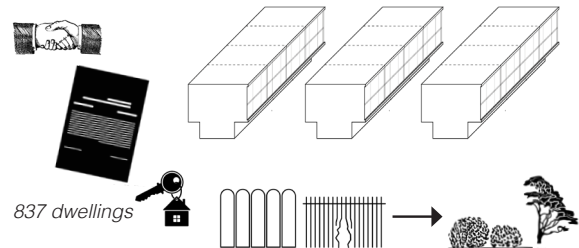
Pearls of Parkstad

from black to green



Design project by Anne-Marije van Duin

Pearls of Parkstad consists of a design for the mine colonie Vrieheide, Heerlen. And it is a 'shrinking coping' strategy for the mine colonies in the whole of Limburg Parkstad. The strategy consists of a combination of physical interventions combined with softer social interventions. The three needed interventions are first the rewinding of the privatization of the houses by buying back the houses by the municipality and making them sustainable for the elderly and the energy transition. This measure makes a difference on the sustainability of living on the scale of a household. On the neighborhood scale the green public space and amenities of the area are the other interventions. In Vrieheid, the church square, the Unesco Plantsoen and the old school along the Parkweg. The Church square will be divided into 4 areas



sportsfield, a formal garden, a secluded flower garden and an event location. Unescoplantsoen will be transformed into an allotmentgarden and the old school and surrounding area will be used as a do-it-yourself building and skate-playground. Finally the south of Vrieheide will be connected with a green corridor to the old silversand mine and Brunsummerheide by removing part of the Unolaan.



