

Reinventing the Countryside

Landscape as Destination Through Cultivation
& Productive Inhabitation

The Case of the Heers Castle Ruins

Master Thesis in Interior Architecture
Adaptive Reuse

Hasselt University

Thesis tutor:
Joshua Kempen

María Cristina Feijóo
2024 · 2025

Hasselt · Belgium



Acknowledgments

Koenraad Van Cleempoel and Bie Plevoets, the knowledge acquired in their classes and in their book were fundamental not only for this process, but also for my growth as an architect.

Joshua Kempen - my thesis tutor, thank you for being a great guide, patience and sharing your knowledge.

Thanks to all the teachers of the Adaptive reuse master for their teachings.

To my family, you are everything, thank you for being my support, my strength and my inspiration. Noah, Chris, Samo, Nico, here and there, thank you for your presence and love.

To my friends and colleagues, thank you for your support and companionship in the process. Laurens, thank you for being part of this.

Abstract

The ruins of Heers Castle are located in a small commune in the dry Haspengouw region. The local economy is primarily based on agriculture, particularly the cultivation of fruit trees such as pears and apples. Although Heers is considered a prosperous municipality, it is currently experiencing a decline in its young population. At the same time, the number of residents over the age of 65 is expected to increase significantly in the coming years, presenting both economic and territorial challenges. Furthermore, the number of active farmers is steadily decreasing—a trend not unique to Heers but also evident in municipalities like Kortemark (Belgium) and Roden (The Netherlands). This phenomenon is already producing visible consequences and is likely to become even more pronounced in the near future.

In addition, Heers, like many small municipalities, is gradually losing its distinctive identity due to various factors, including “lintbebouwing” (ribbon development), a response to contemporary demands for urban sprawl and densification. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen the identity of Heers to ensure its essence endures over time. While densification may bring certain benefits, preserving and integrating the municipality’s history, character, and soul remains essential.

This research aims to propose a new model rural areas as landscapes shaped by both residential presence and agricultural activity, using the ruins of Heers Castle and its surrounding environment as a catalyst. The project envisions a revitalized community that reflects Heers’ identity, reactivates agriculture as a fundamental element, and attracts new generations by fostering the transmission of ancestral agricultural knowledge. This intergenerational exchange would, in turn, help preserve and reactivate both the tangible and intangible heritage of the village.

The methodology for this research involves a multi-layered and experiential approach. The first step is to conduct repeated site visits at different times of day and across seasons, in order to observe and understand the site's dynamics, challenges, and potential. These visits will include photographic documentation and the observation of agricultural and food-related practices. In parallel, the research will include a comprehensive review and reinterpretation of academic literature—such as scholarly articles, doctoral theses, and official government documents—to better understand the broader context of agriculture, the Belgian countryside, and its emerging opportunities.

Visual tools such as graphs and diagrams will be used to illustrate key ideas, along with the use of visual archives including historical photographs and site-specific images.

Finally, some of the reference projects will be visited to learn first-hand about their spatial, social and environmental dynamics. The other benchmark projects will be studied and understood through diagrams. From the understanding of these, important strategies will be extracted and reinterpreted based on the needs of the project. These strategies will contribute to the development of a theoretical and practical proposal that proposes a new model for the field based on knowledge of the context and lived experience.

Index:

1.	Introduction:	9
1.1.	Context: Haspengouw region, Heers, The Ruin of the Castle of Heers, the History and volunteering.	
1.2.	Current problems - Aging population and lack of young people. - Decrease in the number of farmers. - Small villages are losing character over time – villageness.	
1.3.	Research Question and Objectives	
1.4.	Methodology	
2.	Analysis of the Rural Territory	15
2.1	County of Loon, The ruin of the Heers Castle, agriculture in the past, crops, and evolution of the agricultural landscape with images.	
2.2	Countryside structure and characteristics. What is a countryside as a new destination through cultivation and productive inhabitation.	
2.3.	Landscape structure, definition and importance. Map of current agriculture in the Castle of Heers, types of crops, land use. Visual documentation: photographs and analysis of actual farming.	29
3.	Agriculture + Community Building through villageness - human scale + housing	
3.1.	Importance of rituals in traditional agriculture and relationship with community- Food.	
3.2.	Ancestral practices and their possible reinterpretation today. Changes in agricultural practices connected with ecology.	
3.3.	Relationship between community, villageness and agricultural. Sustainability. Circular economy, production, consumption, participation, education, and pleasure, ruin.	

4.	Strategies of this Projects	55
4.1	Study cases: agriculture + architectural project + materials. Examples of Successful projects. Benchmarked strategies	
	- Ferme du Chaudron by 51n4e - BKRK Bakery by BC architects - OMLOOP ! by Hé Architects - ECO VILLAGE by Nordarchitects - SUMMACUMFEMMER, Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Architects	69
5.	Proposal of a new landscape as a destination through cultivation and productive inhabitation. Lessons of case studies.	
5.1.	Lessons from case studies. Strategies to create a new model of countryside.	
5.2.	Adaptation of best practices to the ruins of Heers Castle. Creation of a proposal for a new countryside model. Project.	85
6.	Conclusions.	

CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction:

1.1. Context: Haspengouw region, Heers, The Ruin of the Castle of Heers, the History and volunteering.

Heers is located in Haspengouw Seco, in the southern part of the Limburg province. Its neighboring municipalities include Sint-Truiden and Borgloon to the north, Tongeren to the east, and Gingelom to the west. The ruins of Heers Castle are situated within the municipality of Heers, which is composed of 12 small villages, separated by the valleys of the Herk streams and their tributaries. These waterways shape the natural structure of the region's undulating landscape. The southern boundary of Heers borders the Walloon region. This area is highly fertile, making agriculture a fundamental part of its economy. The landscape is primarily characterized by arable land and fruit orchards, which define its agricultural identity. Meadows are relatively scarce, but the impressive and winding landscapes create a striking palette of colors due to the variety of crops cultivated in the region.

According to the Ruimtelijke Herontwikkelingsstudie Kasteel van Heers, the ruins of Heers Castle are of significant architectural and historical value. Originally built in the 14th century, the castle was inhabited for over 400 years, enduring multiple phases of destruction, bombardment, damage, and reconstruction. Over the centuries, ownership of the castle changed hands several times. However, despite these transformations, the castle grounds have undergone few drastic modifications and remain largely recognizable in their historic layout and structure, as they have existed since at least the mid-17th century. The present area and land use closely resemble that recorded in 1830. The exterior appearance of the castle and its farm dates back to the construction periods of the 16th and 17th centuries. Subsequently, during the 18th century, the buildings underwent valuable adaptations to accommodate changing lifestyles, followed by a restoration carried out by the Desmaisières family. Despite these interventions, the architectural essence of the complex has remained virtually intact.¹

The castle is a protected monument, but years of neglect and lack of maintenance have left it in a deplorable state. Currently, several organizations are working to prevent further deterioration. The Vlaamse Erfgoedkuis nv (VLEK), commissioned by the Flemish agency Inspectie RWO, has conducted a study on the redevelopment of the site. Additionally, organizations like Herita are making efforts to revive this ruin.²

A Ruin That Attracts Volunteers:

Herita is dedicated to managing and restoring historical sites in Flanders, including the ruins of Heers Castle. Their work relies on the support of volunteers who contribute to the restoration, creating a connection between people and the site's material heritage.³ By visiting the site, I was able to understand that Herita's main goal is to restore the ruin's architectural value and eventually reactivate it as a tourist destination.⁴ However, this research seeks to highlight that the true treasure and strength of these efforts lie in building a community and fostering a sense of belonging to the place.

The presence of volunteers willing to learn, build, and share construction techniques creates a sense of ownership and helps shape the site's character and identity.⁵ Restoring this ruin will take time—perhaps even generations—but the process itself is just as valuable. Establishing a routine, a meeting space, and a connection between people of different ages is what truly revitalizes the site's intangible heritage through the Heers Castle Ruin.⁶

1.2. Current problems

- Aging population and lack of young people
- Decrease in the number of farmers
- Small villages are losing character over time –
"Dorpelijkheid" villageness

- The municipality of Heers is experiencing a decline in its young population, a trend that will become even more pronounced in the coming years, with significant economic and territorial consequences. A spatial redevelopment study of Heers Castle conducted by IDEA Consultant & Erfgoed & Visie bvba projects that the proportion of residents over 65 years old will rise from the current 22.4% to 26.9% by 2035, as outlined in the 2023-2027 plan for the Haspengouw region.⁷

This demographic shift is also evident when walking through the municipality, where older adults and young children are the most common demographics.

- The ruins of Heers Castle are situated in a rural landscape where numerous farmers cultivate fruit, cereals, vegetables, and other crops, preserving traditional agricultural practices that have sustained the municipality for generations. However, agriculture in the region faces increasing challenges and a gradual decline. Decades ago, Lofvers and Musclb warned that intensified global competition was putting small farms at risk, accelerating agricultural transformation.⁸ The Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI) predicted as early as 2004 that the number of farmers in the Netherlands and Belgium would drop from 90,000 to 75,000, accompanied by a reduction in arable land, affecting land use and distribution.⁹ More recently, Beckers et al. (2020) highlighted that urbanization has further intensified these challenges.¹⁰ In addition to globalization, increasingly strict environmental regulations have introduced new policies impacting farm management. As a result, many Belgian farmers struggle to find successors upon reaching retirement age, with succession rates in most cases falling below 30%.¹¹ This trend is particularly evident in the country's less fertile areas, such as the sandy soils of the north (Campine and Sand) and the shallow soils of the south (Condroz, Fagne-Famenne, and Ardennes), where the number of farmers has declined significantly. Nationally, the number of farmers decreased by 70% between 1980 and 2015.¹²

- Over time, Heers, like many other municipalities and towns, has undergone significant transformations, including the gradual loss of its unique character and identity. New urban

typologies have emerged, often disregarding the historical and contextual essence of the area. Additionally, some roads have disappeared, taking with them key elements of the landscape. Pedestrian activity is also diminishing, partly due to “Lintbebouwing” (ribbon development) and the transformation of winding roads into large avenues, which encourage car use over walking. In response to contemporary demands for urban expansion and densification, it is crucial to reinforce Heers’ identity to ensure that its essence endures over time. While densification can offer benefits, preserving and integrating the history, character, and soul of the commune is essential. This issue has been explored in various publications, including the work of Bouwmeester Erik Wieërs, who refers to it using the term “Dorpelijkheid.”¹³ This Dutch word has no direct textual translation but is meant to represent the rural counterpart of “urbanity.” In English, I translate this concept as “Villageness,” emphasizing the need “to ensure that the densification of village centers aligns with the preservation and reinforcement of their character and identity.”¹⁴ It serves as a call to action for designers, artists, developers, and architects to reconsider the essence of “Villageness” in contemporary urban planning.

1.3. Research Question and Objectives

“How can the ruin of the Castle of Heers be a catalyst for the proposal of a new model of the countryside, functioning as a cultivated and inhabited landscape using agriculture as its core.”

This research aims to redefine the countryside as a cultivated and inhabited landscape, using the ruins of Heers Castle and its surroundings as a catalyst. The project envisions a community where housing and shared spaces not only reflect the identity of Heers but also revive agriculture by engaging new generations. Through the transmission of ancestral knowledge, this initiative seeks to create a dynamic exchange between generations, ensuring the continuity of both the material and immaterial heritage of the village.

1.4. Methodology

The methodology of this research is designed to analyze the current issues faced by the Heers community, using an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses history, landscape structure, the relationship between agriculture and the community, as well as consulting relevant references. The first step is to define and identify the problems found on-site, in order to find ways to address them. The starting point will be an analysis of Heers' rural territory, referencing its past up to the present day. Since the castle is the oldest structure on the site, this will help us understand how agriculture functioned and how the village structure grew alongside it. Additionally, we will examine the typological function of the housing to understand the village's layout, which will inform future improvements toward a more controlled way of living and the creation of a more compact inhabited landscape model.

Then, on a more human scale, the research will analyze how agriculture operates and how we can build community through it, focusing on the specific characteristics of this place to preserve its character and personality, based on the concept of "villageness." This will guide us in finding the right program for the site. Subsequently, with the help of studies from specific references, we will develop strategies that can be applied to this project. These case studies focus on how to build community through adaptive reuse, knowledge and practice transfer, local agriculture, housing quality, and site development.

CHAPTER 2

2. Analysis of the Rural Territory

- 2.1 County of Loon, The ruin of the Heers Castle, agriculture in the past, crops and evolution of the agricultural landscape with images.

The experience of arriving in Heers, from the city of Hasselt, was striking as we passed numerous castles that appeared one after another across the landscape. As explained by the guide from Herita during our visit to the castle, this area—now known as Limburg—was once the “County of Loon,” home to one of the highest concentrations of castles in Western Europe.¹⁵ This rural region has always had (and still has) immense potential. These castles likely served as sources of employment for the local population, sustained by the agricultural activity and the lands surrounding them. This highlights the importance of agriculture in both the past, present, and future of the community. Today, most of these castles are privately owned, though some are open to the public and are now used for hospitality, care centers, etc. A more community-centered perspective, rooted in the context of the area, is now necessary.

The ruin of the Heers castle is a unique case compared to other castles in the area, as the urban fabric of the town of Heers begins with this ruin. According to the guide from Herita, who provided us with a tour, the church was built later, around the castle, and the houses were placed after that. This information is verified in the old maps that follow. As shown by these maps, the castle has always been closely linked to farming and agriculture. It is also interesting to note that the oldest building on the site is the barn, where farmers would store the food and grain harvested around the castle. This barn is a key part of the history and character of the site. The land around it is quite fertile. In the following images (Figure 1 - 4), we can see the changes that have occurred over time.



Figure 1. Vallaret-Kaart, a topographic map of Heers, Belgium (1745-1748).



Figure 2. Ferraris Kaart, a topographic map of Heers, Belgium (1777).



Figure 3. Topografische Kaart Vandermaelen, a topographic map of Heers, Belgium (1846-1854)

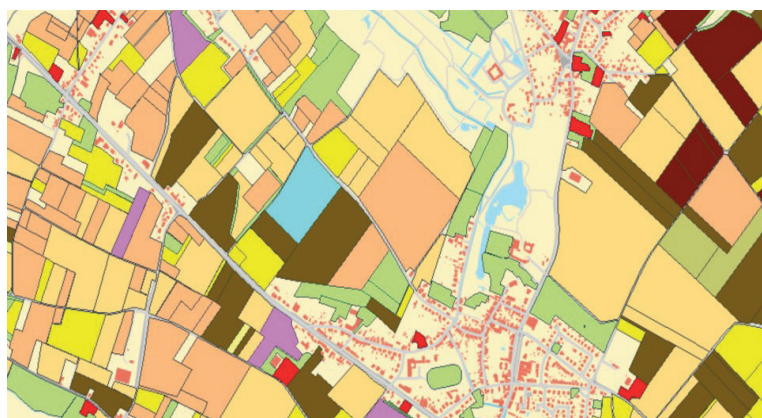


Figure 4. Landbouwgebruikspcelen ALV, 2009.

In the ruins of Heers castle, we can see from the old maps, Figure 1 - 4, how crops were a fundamental part of the castle environment. The ruin of Heers castle serves as a key point from which vast cultivated areas - mainly apples, fruits and nuts - spread out, as clearly shown by the different. However, these crops appear as strictly delimited and fragmented areas.¹⁶

As Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musclb discuss in *The Countryside*, the rural landscape is primarily understood as a uniquely admirable space, where only bicycle paths or walking routes have been activated—always from outside the cultivated fields, as these remain private. Cultivated land, once a place of labor and community, has become a distant landscape, a setting for contemplation, yet inaccessible for direct experience. Their recommendation is not necessarily to make these areas entirely open to public access, but rather to rethink them as spaces within the public domain—places where inhabiting and cultivating coexist.¹⁷

Today, we perceive the countryside as a landscape to be admired, but what if we were to experience it more intimately? Perhaps this disconnection has led us to view cultivated land merely as a place of transit, a territory detached from our daily lives. However, creating ways for people to inhabit the countryside, engage in food production, and rediscover their connection to the land could be a means of reconnecting generations. It could also open our minds to the essential value of returning to our roots and the ancestral wisdom embedded in these practices. Encouraging young people to rediscover ancient agricultural traditions is not just an act of memory but also a way of envisioning the future of agriculture from a renewed perspective—one where inhabiting and cultivating once again become part of the same gesture.

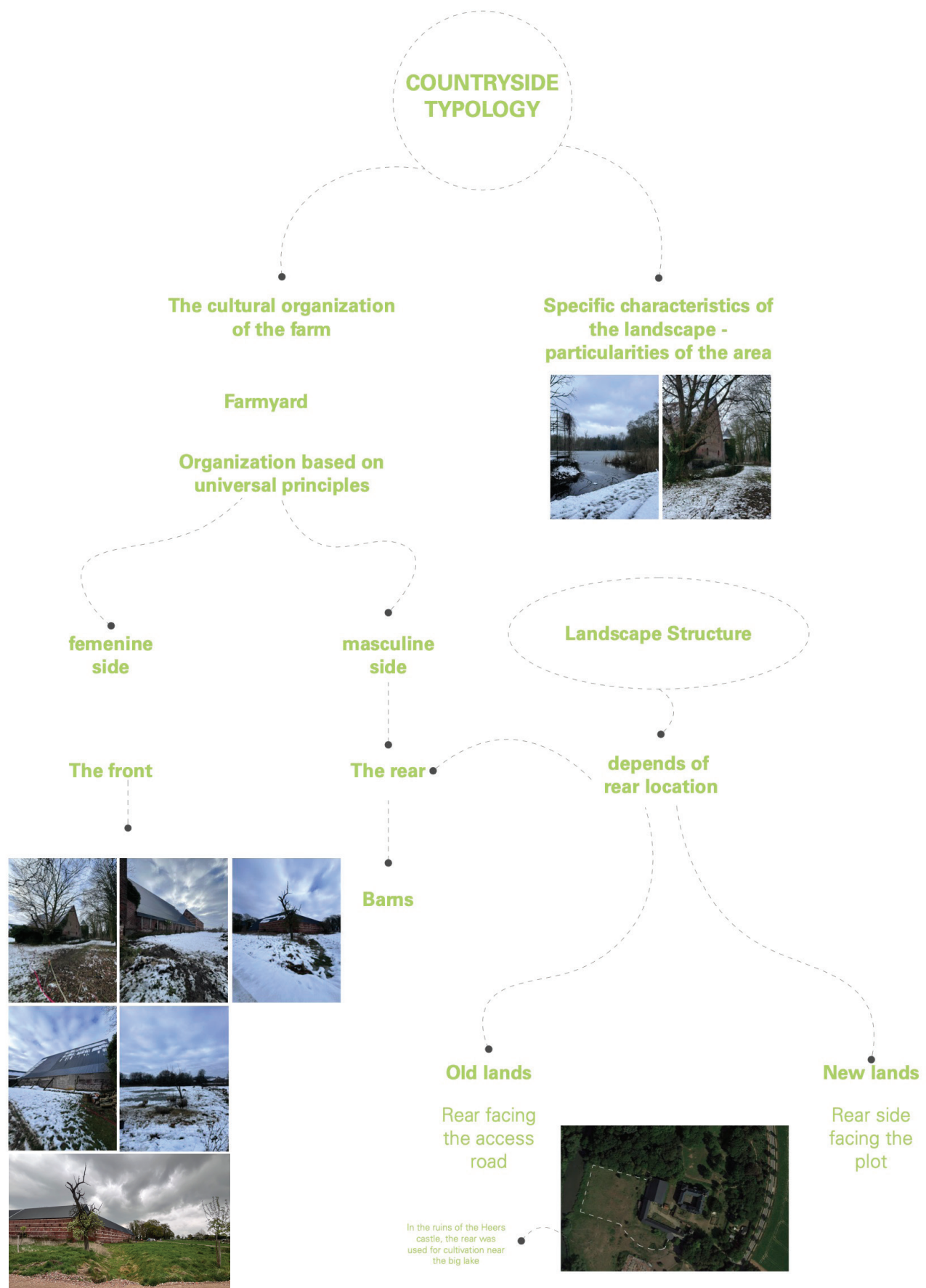


Figure 6. Interpretation of the Countryside Typology. Based on Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musclb, "The Countryside," OASE 63 (2004): 45–58.

2.2 Countryside structure and characteristics. What is a countryside as a new destination through cultivation and productive inhabitation.

Definitions:

The countryside: land not in towns, cities, or industrial area which is either used for farming or left in its natural condition.¹⁸

Het platteland: In de landelijke wijk- en buurtindeling wordt jaarlijks de stedelijkheid van buurten vastgesteld. De niet stedelijke buurten of gemeenten worden als platteland beschouwd.¹⁹

The following data is based on the article *The Countryside* by Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musclb, which examines the characteristics of the countryside and its specific structure.²⁰

Its distinctive composition includes rivers, woodlands, moors, avenues, and streams. In pastoral landscapes, some generic elements can be identified, such as farmyards, farmhouses, paths, small woodlands, and farmyard borders. According to the article, the interaction between these generic elements and the landscape defines the character of the countryside and the area. Similarly, the relationship between farms, farmyards, and access roads determines the typology of the rural environment we encounter. Figure 6 illustrates the factors that influence the identification of a specific typology.

According to universal agricultural principles, crops have both a feminine and a masculine aspect. Feminine crops are low-growing plants such as vegetables, tubers, potatoes, carrots, leeks, and Brussels sprouts, among others, as they are associated with nourishment and rootedness. Cereals like wheat and barley also fall into this category. Masculine crops, on the other hand, are primarily tall or structural plants, including fruit trees such as pear and apple trees, as well as hops. This distinction is essential for understanding the structure and form of the countryside.

Countryside as a new destination landscape through cultivation & productive inhabitation.

The countryside, understood as a place both inhabited and cultivated, is an environment that ideally integrates various functions while keeping agriculture at its heart and fostering a sense of community. The countryside holds vast potential; therefore, we can see it not only as a place to visit but also as a place to live, produce, experience food production, learn, and even find enjoyment. I believe that the ability to visualize and actively participate in producing our own food could be the key to a new model of rural life. Surely, if we inspire younger generations to experience a new way of living in the countryside, it could open doors for future generations to carry on the agricultural legacy.



Figure 7. Crops in relation to Heers Castle. Map of current agriculture.

2.3. Landscape structure, definition and importance.
Map of current agriculture in the Castle of Heers,
types of crops, land use. Visual documentation:
photographs and analysis of actual farming
Practices.

In figure 7, we can see the structure and the relation with the ruins of Heers castle. Landscape structure. According to Ulrich Walz, this term refers to the pattern of the landscape, which can be determined by the type of land use, structure, size, shape and distribution of individual elements within the landscape.²¹ Additionally, it is defined by the delineation of these elements, known as patches, which include land cover—the physical characteristics of the land, such as vegetation or built structures—and land use, which refers to the economic and functional aspects of the land.²²

It is important to understand the structure of the landscape to identify its key elements—fields, forests, water bodies, and built environments—and analyze how they interact with one another. By examining current land use patterns, patches, and connectivity, we can recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the existing rural landscape.

Crops were located at the back and side of the castle, towards the barn and stables. This indicates that the organization of the ancient lands was maintained, the male crops located at the rear, the back and the female part on the side of the site, facing the entrance of the castle. The castle, which has a green area of 20 hectares, has now lost the function of cultivation, but even so the existing land around it should remain fertile as in ancient times.

The landscape structure of the Heers Castle ruins consists of four main zones: lake, park, arable land, and forest. The large lake occupies approximately 40-45% of the total natural area. The park, featuring a dense tree canopy (species to be identified), enhances the site's natural character. The arable land extends to the rear and sides, leading towards the stables.

In addition to these natural areas, the built environment includes the castle, the old barn, and the stables. There is also the entrance house, which originally functioned as a surveillance post.

Photographic record of the landscape around the ruins of Heers castle in winter.



Figure 8. Barn of the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 9. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers towards the barn.



Figure 10. Entrance of stables of the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 11. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 12. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the lake



Figure 13. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the castle entrance.



Figure 15. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the park.



Figure 14. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers, posterior part of the castle towards the lake .



Photographic record of the landscape around the ruins of Heers castle in spring.



Figure 16. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 17. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers towards the church.



Figure 18. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the lake.



Figure 19. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 20. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 21. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 22. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers towards the church.



Figure 23. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the entrance.



Figure 24. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the stable.



Figure 25. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the stable.



Figure 26. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards entrance.

Photographic record of neighborhoods around the ruins of Heers castle in spring.



Figure 27. Potato cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 28. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 29. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 30. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 31. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 32. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 33. Apple cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 34. Apple cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 35. Strawberry cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 36. Strawberry cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 37. Apple cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle.



Figure 38. Crops and paths with visitors around the ruins of the Castle of Heers.

CHAPTER 3

3. Fruticulture + Community Building through villageness - human scale + housing

- 3.1. Importance of rituals through images in traditional agriculture/fruticulture and relationship with community and food.
- 3.2. Ancestral practices and their possible reinterpretation today. Changes in fruticultural practices connected with ecology.
- 3.3. Relationship between community, villageness and agricultural Sustainability. Circular economy, production, consumption, participation, education and pleasure, ruin.

3.1. Importance of rituals through images in traditional agriculture and relationship with community and food.



Figure 39. Blossom Blessing. Photograph by Eddy Leclère, originally published as Bloesemzegening in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw.²³



Figure 40. Field Chapel. Photograph by Hilde Hendricx, Tourism Sint-Truiden. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw.²⁴

The information in this chapter regarding well-known rituals was drawn from the book *Sappig Verteld*, which presents some of the most commemorative and meaningful rituals related to agriculture and fruit growing. These practices are shown to be deeply connected with the local community, as well as the tangible and intangible heritage of the region.²⁵

In the Haspengouw region, experienced farmers have long practiced certain rituals and held beliefs rooted in faith, aimed at ensuring a good harvest. Many of these customs are closely tied to the Catholic Church, though over time they have gradually faded due to the influence of modern customs and changing belief systems.

Some of the most well-known rituals include:

- The Consecration of the Flower: This ritual takes place in April and involves blessing the blossoms of the fruit trees, invoking protection and fertility for the crops. It is associated with the feast of St. Mark on April 25. A procession is held to the church of Güvelingen, a tradition that has been celebrated since 1951.
- Palm Sunday: Celebrated on the second Sunday before Easter, this ritual includes the blessing of palm branches. Traditionally, fruit growers place the blessed branches at the corners of their orchards or in strategic spots around the farm to protect the land.
- The Days of the Cross: This celebration, now gradually disappearing, used to take place on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day. During this time, people would walk in processions through the fields and visit the region's chapels, offering prayers to bless the fruits of the earth.



Figure 41. Chapel in the countryside, Haspengouw region. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.



Figure 42. Apple blossom, Haspengouw region. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.

These rituals are part of a rich agricultural heritage that is still remembered in the region today. When visiting the area around Sint-Truiden, for example, you may still see signs of these beliefs. One example is a cross adorned with flowers—a symbol of blessing and protection for the harvest.

From my perspective, these acts hold great symbolic and spiritual strength and deserve to be preserved. Faith is one of the elements that deeply connects fruit growers to the land—perhaps one of the reasons why this region is so richly blessed with beautiful apple and pear orchards.

Much of the historical information and descriptions of these rituals were drawn from Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, a publication that explores the cultural and agricultural traditions of the region.²⁶

Overtime, these traditional rituals have evolved into more contemporary celebrations, such as:

- Blossom Festivals and Events: In spring, when the trees begin to bloom, the region transforms into a stunning natural spectacle that attracts many visitors. Cycling routes and hiking trails are organized to enjoy the blossoming landscapes, along with local events featuring regional product markets and cultural activities.



Figure 43. BelOrta Bloesembar event, Sint-Truiden. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.



Figure 44. Hot air balloon at the BelOrta Bloesembar event, Sint-Truiden. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.

I had the chance to experience one of these events organized by the BelOrta company in St. Truiden, called BelOrta Bloesembar. This pop-up venue, set up in the middle of the countryside, includes both indoor and outdoor spaces where visitors can admire the blossoms, enjoy breathtaking sunsets, and take part in activities like blossom balloon flights. Local products made from fruits—such as beers and syrups—are also featured. The following images show the atmosphere of the event.

- Harvest Fairs: In autumn, after the fruit is harvested, fairs are held where farmers sell their products directly to the public. These fairs are typically accompanied by music, traditional dances, and tastings of local delicacies.

3.2. Ancestral practices and their possible reinterpretation today. Changes in fruticultural practices connected with ecology.

The Haspengouw region, including Heers, is a blessed and fertile land. Many farmers took up fruit cultivation from 1920 onwards, according to Sappig Verteld. Some combined it with agriculture, while others combined it with livestock farming. However, mixing farming with cattle ranching is not considered ideal, as cows like the taste of the fruit and tend to damage the trees, causing losses. For this reason, many have chosen to focus on fruit, legumes and cereals.²⁷

Agricultural and fruit-growing practices have always been closely linked to the seasons and climate, as the processes of planting, harvesting, care, and maintenance depend on them.

This research aims to reveal these practices through a series of old photographs, taking us on a journey into the past to explore their evolution.

ANCIENT PRACTICES:

Sowing: A lot of hard work, teamwork and specialty to properly sow the seeds.



Figure 45. Jhon Topham, A ploughing demonstration with the new Melotte tractor, 1936, Topfoto, https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3032967.



Figure 46. Jhon Topham, A farm worker using a hand harrow in a large field, 1935, Topfoto, https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3029900.



Figure 47. Planting strawberries (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 30.

ANCIENT PRACTICES:

Fruit harvesting: A practice that combined community, family and lots of fruit baskets.



Figure 48. Group photo of the pickers at Argenteau in 1954-55. Photograph by Joseph Smets. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.



Figure 49. Picking high-stemmed trees. Photograph by CAG – The People. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 42.



Figure 50. Students from the Agricultural and Horticultural School visit a cherry orchard under Mr. Cosemans's (PCCE) guidance. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 21.



Figure 51. Sorting, bagging and weighing apples. Photograph by Theo Broers. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.



Figure 52. Cherry picking in Moelingen. Photograph by Theo Broers. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p.62.

ANCIENT PRACTICES:

Fruit harvesting: A practice that combined community, family and lots of fruit baskets.



Figure 53. Small tunnels over strawberries are being placed. Photograph from the Boerenbond archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 30.



Figure 54. Rest break during strawberry picking at Pierre Vrancken's in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Photograph by Pierre Vrancken. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.



Figure 55. Mechanical cherry-picking. Photograph by Robert Bamps. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 34.



Figure 56. Picking low trunk from a picking rack. Photograph from the Farmer's Union archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.



Figure 57. Intervention by destruction of Golden (Haspengouw Auctionshire). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 34.

ANCIENT PRACTICES:

Fruit classification: It was a demanding practice: they couldn't afford to sell fruit in poor condition or with an unappealing appearance, as this would compromise its perceived quality and risk losing customers. Imperfect or bruised fruits were set aside for other uses—such as making jam, syrup, or sharing with the family. This domestic stage was not solitary: family members played an active role, and friends often came by to help, turning the harvest into a collective effort that strengthened community bonds. Over time, the process became increasingly standardized, with careful attention to factors like size, color, and shape. The fruit had to look perfect to meet commercial expectations.



Figure 58. Sorting pears. Photograph from the Boerenbond archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 68.



Figure 59. Unloading cherries (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 42.



Figure 60. Sorting apples with a reading belt and perforated board to determine the diameter (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 68.



Figure 61. Sorting fruit at the Sint-Truiden fruit auction (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.



Figure 62. Inspection of the Fruit (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.

ANCIENT PRACTICES:

Fruit distribution:



Figure 63. Sint-Truidense Fruit Auction Christmas Auction 1958 (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.



Figure 64. Weighing and loading fruit baskets in the meadow of Dr. Schepens (PCCE). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.



Figure 65. Men loading apples for export to France, Belgium, and Germany, 1936. Source: https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3032220#links.

ANCIENT TECHNIQUES · Against the rain

For every farmer and fruit grower, the weather is one of their greatest allies, but at the same time, it can also be their enemy. Therefore, years ago, they had to find ways to predict it or scare away the hailstorms that could destroy their fruit and crops. In the book *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw*, it is mentioned that fruit growers and farmers had a system according to testimonies from some of them, such as Luc Bels, a fruit grower. Their methods ranged from scaring away starlings with two lids to building a radar to detect hailstorms in the area, so they could protect their crops. The radar would send a signal to their phones, allowing them to decide whether to fire hail cannons to scare off the starlings. The system's success rate varied, not always successful, but it managed to drive away hailstorms four out of seven times.



Figure 66. Hail cannon (Karel Vaes). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as *Veldkapel* in *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw*, p. 44.

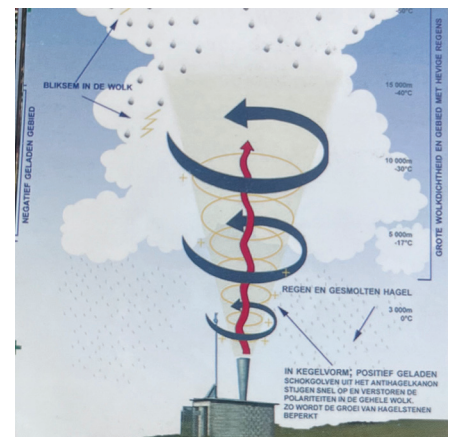


Figure 67. Principle of the shock wave of a hail cannon (www.inopower.be). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as *Veldkapel* in *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw*, p. 44.

ANCIENT ADVICES:

Fruit growers' mandate

This document outlines a set of guidelines, tips, and key principles for fruit growers — a valuable starting point for anyone wishing to enter the trade or become part of the guild.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR FRUITS GROWERS

The Belgian fruit growing attracted thousands of visitors to the World Exhibition in Brussels. All were full of admiration for the fine varieties and beautiful stands. The standardizations, packaging and types of fruit had their share in the success.

Among the many wall inscriptions we particularly noticed: "The ten commandments for the fruit grower." We will include them below because they are applicable to all crops and our readers will undoubtedly derive some benefit from them.

1. As bvarieties you should plant those approved by the region.
2. Do not plant the tree too close together. They need air and light.
3. Away with the "alternate year", but then in a time manner. Well fertilized and not one-sided.
4. He who leans his trees each year Will notice it in his harvest.
5. If you are not a good fruit grower, water the trees in time.
6. Pick with care and do not bruise fruit. Pick out what can rot.
7. Never deliver saleable waste as good merchandise.
8. If you want to get better prices, pack in crates, not in bales.
9. From now on, a lot of sorting in required for anyone who still wants to go to the market.
10. For the market and for the "mine" packaging must be fair.

TIEN GEBODEN VOOR DE FRUITKWEEKERS

De Belgische fruitweek lokte duizenden bezoekers naar de Wereldtentoonstelling te Brussel. Allen stonden vol bewondering voor de fijne variëteiten en mooie standen. De standaardisatie's, verpakkingen en fruitsoorten hadden ruimschoots hun deel in 't succes.

Onder de vele wandschriften merkten we vooral op : « De tien geboden voor den fruitkweeker ». We laten ze hieronder volgen omdat ze toepasselijk zijn op al de teelten en onze lezers er ongetwijfeld eenig nut zullen uit trekken.

1. Als variëteiten plant ge best
De goedgekeurden van 't gewest.
2. Plant de boomen niet te dicht
Zij behoeven lucht en licht.
3. Weg met het « beurtjaar », maar dan tijdig
Goed gemest en niet eenzijdig.
4. Wie zijn boomen sleunt elk jaar
Wordt dit aan zijn oogst gewaar.
5. Zoo g'een flinke fruitman zijt
Sproei de boomen dan op tijd.
6. Pluk met zorg en kwets geen fruit.
Wat kan rotten, raap er uit.
7. Lever nooit verkoopens-klaar
D'afval onder goede waar.
8. Wilt ge beter prijzen halen
Pak in kisten, niet in balen.
9. *Flink sorteeren moet voortaan
Wie nog naar de markt wil gaan.*
10. *Voor de markt en voor de « mijn »
Moet verpakking eerlijk zijn.*

Figure 71. Ten commandments for the fruit grower (H. Ickx and G. Ickx, practical tips on fruit growing, 1943). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 69.

ANCIENT LEGACY:

Food and fruits:



Figure 72. Apple club (photo archive Farmer's Union, KADOC). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 122.



Figure 73. Trudo factory in the 1940s (familie Boden). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 120.



Figure 74. Cover of a recipe book for preserving fruit (CAG). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 122.

ANCIENT LEGACY:

Food and fruits:

Fruit cultivation in Haspengouw also led to the development of local gastronomy. Fruits that could not be sold due to their appearance or bruising were not discarded — instead, they were repurposed for making syrups. Additionally, the need to preserve fruit for the winter months gave rise to homemade fruit preserves.

This practice often took place on rural farms, where the architectural characteristics of the houses — such as their tiled roofs and single-lock systems — allowed steam to escape during the cooking process. In the Borgloon region, this work eventually became a salaried profession, and both Borgloon and neighboring Heers proudly embraced the title *strooplekkers* (syrup cookers). However, with the rise of industrial food production and the increasing popularity of chocolate and jam, many of these small syrup producers were forced to close. The last major syrup factory in Borgloon shut down in the late 1980s.

Fortunately, some families have preserved these traditions. In Vrolingen, syrup production has been passed down through generations and continues to this day. Other products such as jams, applesauce, and fruit juices have also been developed. Companies like Fancy Fruit are helping to keep the tradition alive by producing pure, additive-free regional products, all based on traditional recipes from Haspengouw.

Today, both artisanal and industrial production coexist, offering a wide variety of goods including syrups, jams, preserved fruits, cakes, juices from oranges, tomatoes, and grapes, pickled vegetables, cider, and even innovative products like fruit-based gins and liqueurs — a renewed and delicious expression of local heritage.³¹

FROM OLD PRACTICES TO CURRENT PRACTICES.

Harvest times · Changes in agricultural - fruit growing practices related to ecology. - New models

Agriculture and fruit growing have significantly developed over time in terms of technology and the machinery used in their processes. However, they will always depend on the environment, the seasons, and the climate—factors that connect the past with the present. They are part of the circle of life: beginnings and endings, blossoming, care, harvesting, and maintenance.

According to information provided by the camp guide in Sint-Truiden during a visit in April 2025, fruit trees in the Haspengouw region usually bloom in April, but everything depends on the weather conditions; the nighttime temperatures in March determine when the trees will flower.³² Frost, hail, or unseasonably high temperatures for that time of year can all affect the flowering periods. The flowering stage lasts between 10 and 12 days. The order of blooming starts with cherry trees, followed by pear trees, and ends with apple trees, whose flowers are delicate and beautifully pink.

We could summarize the seasonal process and fruit development as follows:

Seasonal Process:

- Spring: Soil preparation, sowing, flowering of cherry, apple, and pear trees.
- Summer: Crop care, irrigation, pest control. Fruit development, ripening of tomatoes and cucumbers.
- Autumn: Main harvest of fruits and crops: apples, pears, plums, grapes, potatoes, beets, corn.
- Winter: Resting period, maintenance, crop protection. Preparation for the next cycle.

Each fruit, in turn, has its own timeline for each process, which allows us to enjoy different foods throughout the year. Fruits are classified into hard fruits and soft fruits, each with its specific harvesting period, depending on climate, season, and processing requirements.

Hard Fruits:

Pears are harvested until early September, and their buds remain on the trees until around September 20th. Apples are harvested during September and October. Some early varieties, such as Belgica, are picked starting in August, while certain late varieties are harvested as late as early November.

Soft Fruits:

This group includes plums, cherries, sour cherries, apricots, peaches, strawberries, currants, and raspberries. Cherries are harvested between May and July, with July being the peak harvest month in Sint-Truiden. Plums are picked from mid-July until the end of September. Currants and raspberries are traditionally grown in the Borgloon area, which serves as a major production hub. They are harvested from early June until November.

Strawberries are mainly grown in southern Limburg. Those cultivated in glass greenhouses are harvested starting in March, while those grown in plastic tunnels are ready in May. From June to July, producers harvest strawberries outdoors. The season then continues with late harvests, including strawberries grown in heated greenhouses, which are picked until the end of the year.

One of the most interesting things when visiting the fields of Haspengouw is discovering that many fruit growers are now focusing on producing more organic and higher quality crops. To achieve this, they have started using techniques that are better for the environment — like using bees to help pollinate their plants.

According to an explanation by Visit Sint-Truiden and [deblauwevogel.be](https://www.deblauwevogel.be), found in the apple fields of Sint-Truiden, fruit growers all over Haspengouw, including the municipality of Heers, are now paying a lot of attention to pollination, because it is key to growing good fruit. Bees are excellent pollinators and the best choice for fruit growing.³³

That's why many fruit farmers now rent entire bee colonies from beekeepers during the spring. Just a few hives are enough to pollinate an entire orchard. This method is relatively new, but it's also one of the most environmentally friendly. It helps keep the fruit as natural as possible while also supporting the local ecosystem.

Photographic research findings

The use of these images to reflect the passage of time in Haspengouw — particularly in agricultural and fruit-growing practices — seeks to explore their evolution. By learning from these traditions, we can identify what worked well and find ways to replicate or reinterpret them in meaningful ways, aiming to shape positive strategies for a new model of countryside living.

One of the most important insights that emerged from the research is the involvement of the community in every stage of the process: planting, harvesting, and caring for the fruit. Some families have preserved this legacy across generations, demonstrating its value and productivity on many different scales. This closeness between people and agriculture fostered a strong sense of ownership, identity, and respect — not just for the food itself, but for the entire process behind it.

Moreover, the thoughtful use of natural resources — wind, sun, and climate — in the time before large-scale industrialization invites us to consider more sustainable, environmentally respectful solutions moving forward.

- 3.3. Relationship between community, villageness and agricultural sustainability. Circular economy, production, consumption, participation, education and pleasure.

Agriculture and Fruit Cultivation: The Identity of Heers

Agriculture and fruit cultivation are economic and productive activities that define the character of Heers. This area is blessed with fertile land where the growth of fruit trees occurs naturally and thrives. Fruit cultivation represents both tangible and intangible heritage, connecting to the region's gastronomic traditions and its cherished and recognized landscape. Heers boasts a marvelous landscape, adorned with various colors due to the diversity of surrounding crops.

The ruins of Heers Castle are set in a privileged landscape, featuring a large lake and surrounding forest, as well as abundant cultivable land. Historically, multiple crops were cultivated around the castle, particularly on its sides and rear, making it an ideal site to catalyze a new model of countryside living.

Why Is a New Countryside Model Necessary?

Currently, agricultural and fruit cultivation processes have become increasingly industrialized, focusing on mass production and exportation. This shift towards large-scale, industrial systems has gradually eroded the artisanal nature of these practices, the community's role in them, and the interest of younger generations.

Reflecting on historical images of fruit growers in Haspengouw, we gain insight into past practices. Previously, the community actively participated in processes like harvesting, where families, friends, and neighbors collaborated. This communal involvement fostered stronger connections between people and the cultivation process.

Consequently, more individuals engaged in agriculture and fruit cultivation, with generations of families dedicating themselves to these practices. Unfortunately, globalization, technological advancements, and shifting mindsets have led to a decline in young farmers, risking the loss of these traditions.

Today, the contemporary notion of connecting with the countryside often involves tourism—cycling tours, motorbike rides, or running through fields. However, this perspective remains distant from the actual agricultural activities. During my personal exploration of Heers' fields, I admired the beauty of their colors, textures, and various stages of growth. I encountered people enjoying Vespa rides, groups of cyclists, and motorcyclists; few were walking, but the experience provided a broader understanding of the area's dynamics. As described in the article *The Countryside*, we perceive the countryside as more distant than ever.³⁴

Reimagining the Countryside

I believe it's time to change our perception of the countryside and its surroundings. The ruins of Heers Castle present a significant opportunity, offering ample space for cultivation and community engagement.

Agriculture and fruit cultivation could serve as the starting point—a place where the community actively participates in these economic and productive processes. Not only experts but also residents and visitors should engage with cultivation, learning about food origins and developing an appreciation for this often-underestimated yet essential practice. Agriculture demands admiration, study, care, and passion. If given the chance to experience it, people might be inspired, attracting younger generations to these practices.

Envisioning the countryside as a productive space for habitation and cultivation, self-sustainable space, we could grow and harvest

our food while producing goods for local consumption and visitors, fostering a circular economy. This model integrates production, consumption, participation, education, and enjoyment within a community framework, enhancing Heers' identity as a fruit-producing municipality.

In a changing world, growing our food becomes increasingly appealing—more organic, healthier, connected to our roots, and less reliant on large industries. Experiences like the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the need for self-sufficiency and food preservation, making this approach not only profitable but also environmentally friendly.

Inspiration from Ferme du Chaudron

Projects like Ferme du Chaudron, an architectural initiative by 51N4E for non-profit organizations within the food system transition movement, exemplify this model. Located near Brussels on the banks of the Neerpede pond, this project reimagines traditional farming by integrating community involvement in cultivation, animal care, and education. It features workshops for youth, a grocery store, and a restaurant where harvested produce is used in cooking. Such initiatives underscore the importance of community participation in agricultural processes, attracting both locals and visitors seeking a deeper connection with nature.

This new concept of self-cultivation and circular economy may initially seem intimidating to some farmers and fruit growers, as it involves managing production independently, without relying on large intermediary companies to sell their products. However, today there are various initiatives that support more direct connections between farmers and consumers. One example is Crowdfarming,³⁵ a collective of small-scale farmers who have come together to promote sustainable and regenerative agriculture. They offer alternatives such as tree adoptions and seasonal fruit subscriptions, aiming for fairer prices

and a direct farm-to-table model, while also fostering biodiversity and ecological balance. This approach encourages consumers to shift their perception of fruit quality—valuing taste, authenticity, and natural growth over superficial perfection. Such a model aligns well with the vision for a new type of farm at the ruins of Heers Castle, where producers actively participate in circular economic practices.

Integrating Intergenerational Housing

Considering the countryside as both a cultivated and inhabited space is fundamental. The ruins of Heers Castle offer significant potential for developing intergenerational housing, which could help address challenges such as the anticipated rise in residents over the age of 65. Creating shared living spaces for people of different age groups encourages the exchange of knowledge, mutual support, and a stronger sense of community. When combined with communal kitchens—where culinary knowledge can be shared—these elements further reinforce social bonds.

A strong example of this approach is the project by NORD Architects called Ecovillage, an innovative housing scheme that combines micro-living, co-living, and eco-living. In this project, intergenerational housing and shared spaces help to foster a sense of community. Although the project is still in progress, it has already shown promising results.³⁶

In Heers, this approach aligns with current efforts to densify village centers, as explored in publications including the work of Bouwmeester Erik Wieërs, who refers to it using the term “Dorpelijkheid” or “villageness.”³⁷ This concept demonstrates the feasibility of living in compact yet high-quality spaces.

Reviving Agricultural Rituals

Exploring the rituals and events surrounding fruit cultivation could enrich the countryside experience. Incorporating these traditions and creating new celebrations encourage community interaction and the development of new customs. Such initiatives not only engage residents but also attract visitors, contributing to the preservation of intangible heritage and the adaptive reuse of tangible heritage like the ruins of Heers Castle.

Preserving the Ruin, and Reusing the Ruin

As Bie Plevoets and Koenraad Van Cleempoel note in their book *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage*, “ruins are not simply a trace of tragic memory, but also become a sign to transmit a specific message to the future.”³⁸

The ruin of Heers Castle has reached its current state through a combination of natural processes, human neglect, and deliberate destruction. However, it is not merely an architectural or landscape object. In this context, the ruin serves a dual purpose: it is a social integrator. For the local community, it is a gathering place—a symbol that brings people together through shared work and connection.

This site, rich with history and potential, should be understood as a space of transmission. Therefore, the approach of this thesis is to preserve the essential qualities of the castle in its current form, while reusing it for communal activities focused on the exchange of knowledge. This includes maintaining its palimpsest, spolia, and most importantly, its *genius loci*—its unique spirit of place. The layers of its history are revealed in every fragment.

The proposed intervention uses the castle not just as a historic artifact, but as a catalyst for community. It seeks to strengthen both tangible and intangible heritage. Through the revitalization of its stables—spaces that once housed workers and daily life—it gives voice to the castle’s lesser-told stories. These laborers were essential to the life of the castle and the productivity of Heers. Without them, neither the castle nor the region would have thrived.

The aim is to restore to the municipality of Heers a part of its identity and its history. The project connects ideas of circularity with agriculture and fruit cultivation—central to the daily life of the community—and also with the surrounding landscape. In this way, the ruin does not merely help us remember and admire the past; it helps us reconcile the past with the present, and to envision the future. The enduring presence of the Heers Castle ruins represents a powerful opportunity for the town.

CHAPTER 4

4. STRATEGIES OF THIS PROJECTS

4.1 Study cases: agriculture + architectural project + materials.
Examples of Successful projects.
Benchmarked strategies

- Ferme du Chaudron by 51n4e
- BKRK Bakery by BC architects
- OMLOOP ! by Hé Architects
- ECO VILLAGE by Nordarchitects
- SUMMACUMFEMMER, Summacumfemmer
+ Büro Juliane Architects

Note: The benchmark strategies presented in each project are the strategies to be taken into account for the project, resolved in chapter 5 of this research.

LA FERME DU CHAUDRON

Architects: 51n4e

Client: Non-profit organizations (ASBL) within the framework of the food system transition movement.

Location: Brussels, Belgium.
Rue du Chaudron 20/30, 1070 Anderlecht.
Located on the banks of the large Neerpede pond.

Classification: Open Public Structures.

Constructed surface: 1186.40 m²

Land surface: 4946.70 m²

Year: 2018.

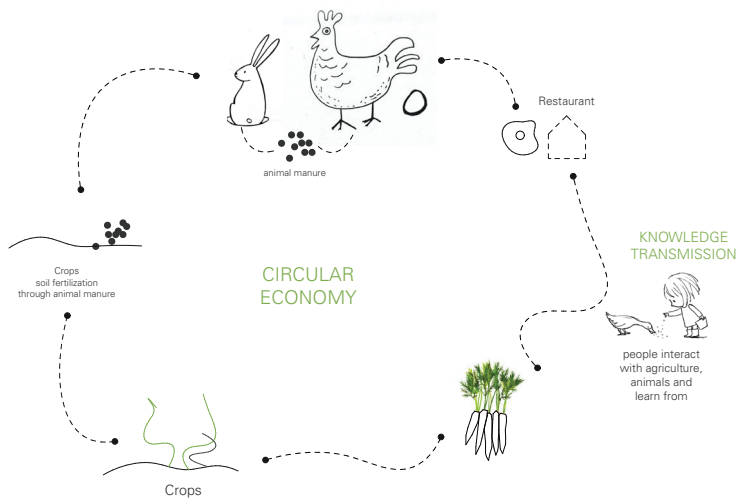


Figure 75. Diagram reinterpreting strategies from the Ferme du Chaudron case study for the thesis project: spatiality and shared distribution spaces for the community. Created by the author.

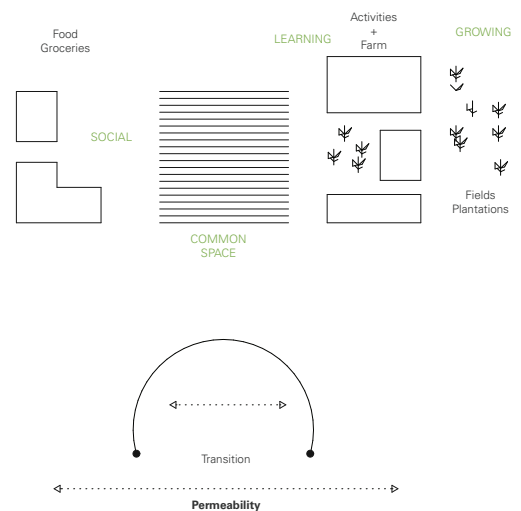


Figure 76. Diagram reinterpreting strategies from the Ferme du Chaudron case study for the thesis project: circular economy system focused on food production. Created by the author.

La Ferme du Chaudron, a project by the architectural firm 51N4E, located near Brussels (Belgium), serves as a reference for redefining the concept of a farm. The project seamlessly integrates architecture and agriculture, creating a harmonious relationship between the built environment and the land.

What makes this project unique is the open access it provides to cultivated areas. It highlights the importance of involving visitors in the farming process, allowing agricultural experts to share their knowledge and experience. It also creates an educational space for both adults and children, where visitors can learn traditional techniques and witness how the food they eat is grown.

This approach raises awareness about the magic of farming, the importance of caring for the land, and the value of returning to ancestral practices. Ferme du Chaudron succeeds in blending productivity, architecture, and design with the joy of food, the effort of farming, and the human connection to the land. Additionally, the project generates a circular economy effect, ensuring that resources are reused and reintegrated efficiently into the ecosystem. In short, it reimagines what the “countryside” near the city can be.

From my personal experience visiting the place, I could feel how you feel in an oasis after the city. This perception starts with the Gewestelijk Pedepark, where the large lake and the forest bring life and a completely different impression compared to the dense urban fabric of Brussels. The farm is not just a collection of buildings organized around circular farming. It is also a community. The people who live and inhabit the site have access to a very different kind of space, starting with its architecture, the direct connection to the lagoon, the fields and the small farm.

LA FERME DU CHAUDRON



Figure 77. Photograph from Lake Neeredeppe facing the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.



Figure 78. Photograph of the external oven at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.



Figure 79. Photograph of the agricultural crops at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.



Figure 80. Photograph from the arch, central distribution space at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.



Figure 81. Photograph of one of the buildings at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.



Figure 82. Photograph of the small animal farm at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.

Benchmarked strategies

1. Permeability in the spatial layout: it helps to integrate architecture, agriculture and people. Intermediate spaces that adapt to different uses depending on the seasons and uses.

2. Circular economy model, contributes to ecology.

3. Change of perception towards agriculture, creates more proximity and interest for people.

4. Community building.

It is a project that connects agriculture, architecture and people. As a visitor, you can watch the crops grow, the kitchen in operation, the small grocery store and, at the same time, taste what is produced. The closeness and care given to the animals is admirable: each one has a name and is considered part of the farm family. They are also essential partners in food production, not only because of what they contribute directly, but also through their manure, which enriches the soil.

The circular economy is truly embodied in this project. Animal manure is used to fertilize crops. Leftover seeds and fruit peels from the kitchen are also reintegrated. What grows is then harvested and reused in the kitchen, along with produce such as eggs from the small farm's chickens. The arched roof structure connecting the two wings creates a permeable and functional space.

ECO VILLAGE ·

An innovative housing scheme combining
micro-living, co-living and eco-living

Architects:	NORDArchitects
Collaborators:	Raplus Architekten
Location:	Hannover, Germany
Client:	Eco Village e.G
Classification:	Urban development and housing
Project surface:	1.8 km ²
Year:	2019.

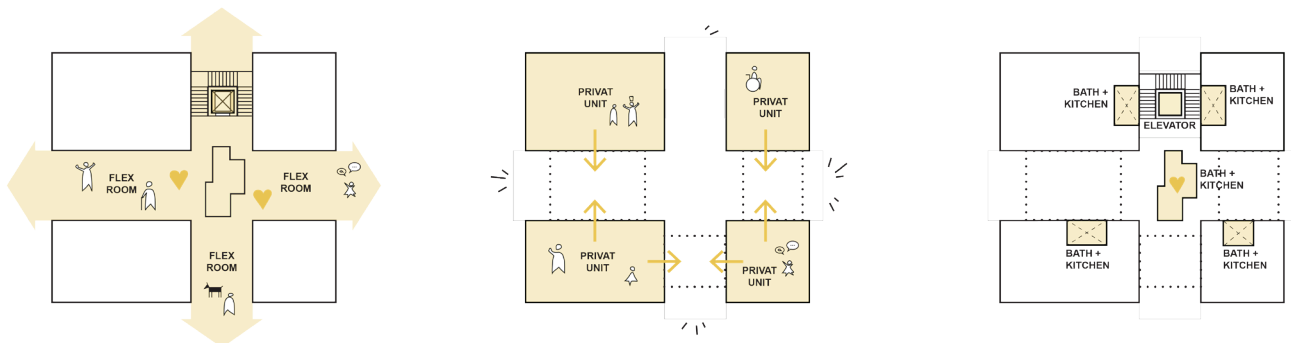


Figure 83. Diagram produced by NORD Architects illustrating the typologies and common spaces of the ECOVILLAGE project.
Source: <https://www.nordarchitects.dk/projects/eco-village/>.



Figure 84. Model produced by NORD Architects illustrating the typologies and common spaces of the ECOVILLAGE project. Source: <https://www.nordarchitects.dk/projects/eco-village/>.

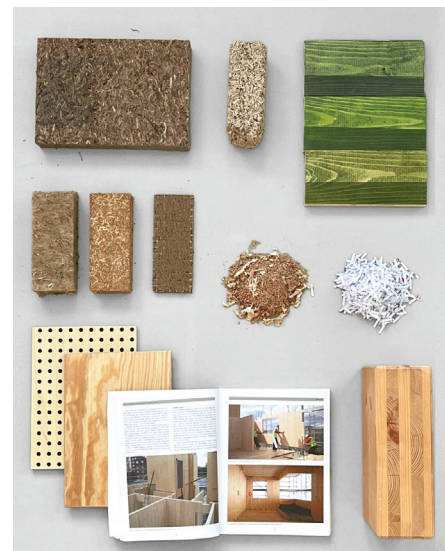


Figure 85. Material palette used for the ECOVILLAGE project by NORD Architects, illustrating the typologies and common spaces of the project. Source: <https://www.nordarchitects.dk/projects/eco-village/>.

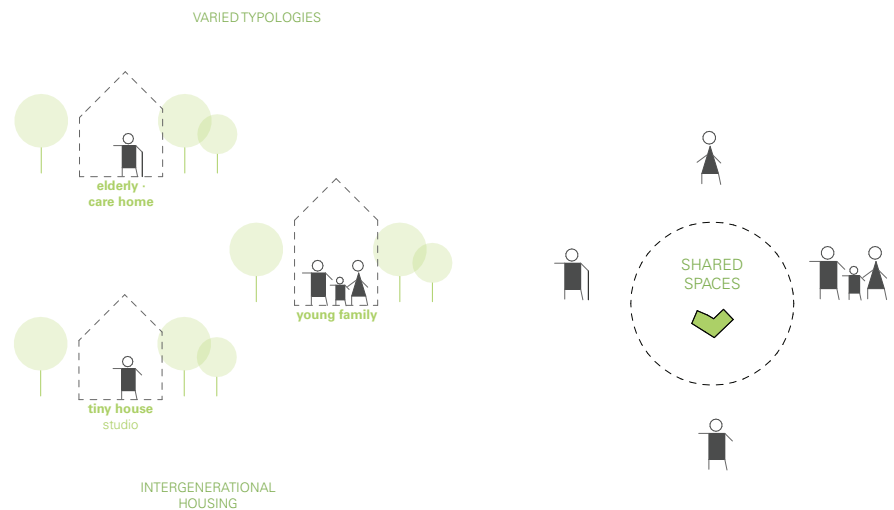


Figure 86. Summary diagram of NORD Architects' strategy reinterpreted for the thesis project: intergenerational housing. Created by the author.

Benchmarked strategies

1. Intergenerational housing.
2. Shared social and community spaces.
3. Use of environmentally-friendly materials

Eco House and Eco Village focus on ecology to create a new concept of living, centered on climate neutrality and shared social spaces.

What makes this project especially interesting is that, beyond integrating elements that improve energy efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions, it also uses sustainable and recycled materials, such as paper insulation and timber for structural frames. It includes easy-access composting, rainwater collection systems, and solar panels.

Another fundamental aspect is the promotion of local biodiversity through the creation of green, recreational spaces, as well as social sustainability—combining cooperative housing, public housing for families, senior housing, and homes for young people. Residents also have access to shared living spaces, which naturally encourages intergenerational living and a sense of community.

OMLOOP ! · Reconsideration of a typical flemish country house

Architects: Hé Architects

Location: Belgium

Classification: Adaptive Reuse · Country house

Project surface:

Year: 2019.



Figure 87. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.



Figure 88. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.



Figure 89. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.



Figure 90. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.

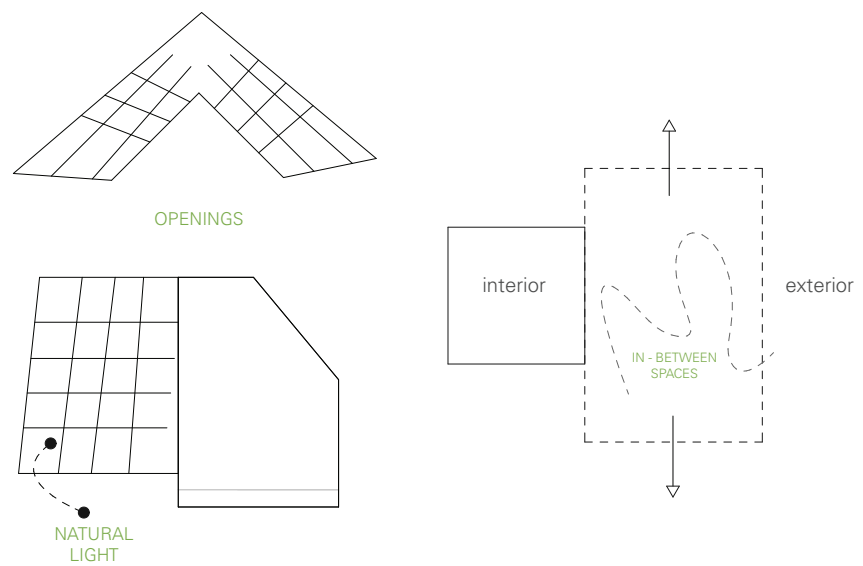


Figure 91. Strategy diagram based on the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture: intermediate spaces, new roof structure, and openings. Materiality reinterpreted and diagram created by the author.

Benchmarked strategies

1. Intermediate spaces.
2. New roof structure + openings.
3. Materiality - Use of rammed earth.

This project serves as a reference for how to approach the renovation of an existing house in the countryside. It successfully gives a second life to the traditional gable roof by reinterpreting it through a new wooden structure with a transparent finish. This intervention creates intermediate spaces that both illuminate the interior and visually extend the overall volume. The use of materials that harmonize with the natural surroundings is essential to preserving the rural atmosphere.

BKRK BAKERY

Architects: BC Architects & studies

Collaborators: Superette Gent

Structure: Util structuurstudies

Location: Bokrijk, Belgium

Client: Provincie Limburg

Classification: Renovation of a heritage barn.

Budget 450.000€.

Project surface: 190 m2.

Year: 2015.



Figure 92. Exterior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by Thomas Noceto. Sourced from <https://bc-as.org/projects/bkrk-bakery>.



Figure 93. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by Luc Daelemans. Sourced from <https://bc-as.org/projects/bkrk-bakery>.



Figure 94. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by the author, showing the materiality and construction system.



Figure 95. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by the author, showing the materiality and construction system.



Figure 96. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by the author, showing the materiality and construction system.

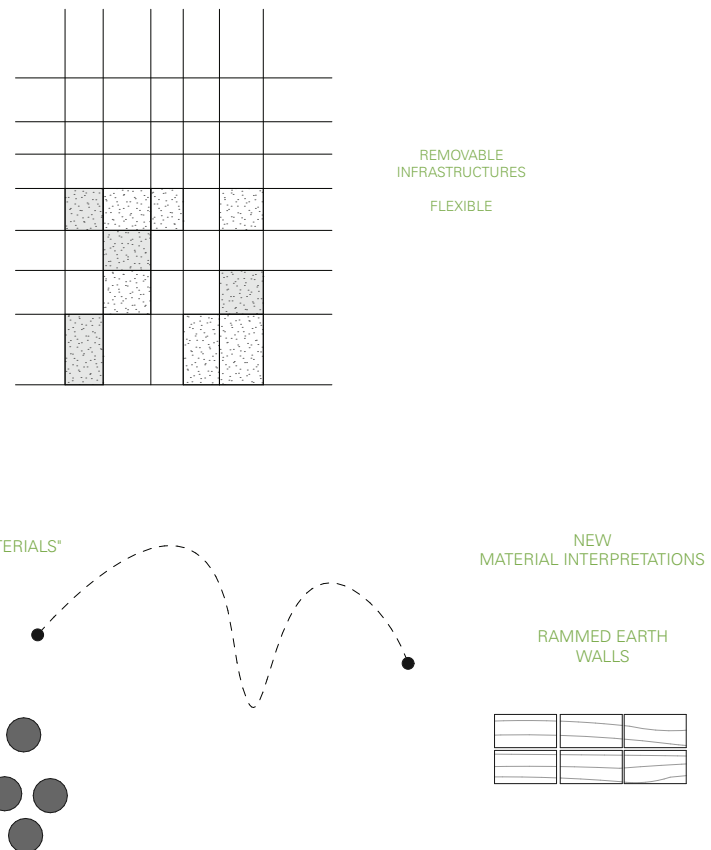


Figure 97. Diagram based on the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, created by the author, showing how "as found" materials are used in the intervention.

Benchmarked strategies

1. Incorporation of traditional and vernacular building techniques.
2. The use of materials 'as found', reinterpreted through contemporary design.

This project serves as a reference for how craftsmanship can be used as a tool to create a compact and authentic architectural work that tells the story of its place. The firm, BC architects & studies, revives traditional construction techniques and blends them with contemporary design, reinterpreting the architecture and achieving a solid and distinctive finish.

The use of local, existing, and natural materials creates an atmosphere that resonates deeply with the site. For the roof, reed thatch and poplar decking are used; the wall infills between the oak posts and beams are made of hempcrete, externally plastered with lime.

Inside, most of the finishes are done with earth, highlighting the vernacular character of the architecture. This project emphasizes the importance of using local and site-specific materials to reinterpret the way we practice architecture.

San Riemo ·

Architects: Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Architects

Collaborators: Anne Femmer, Juliane Greb, Petter Krag, Florian Summa

Location: Munich, Germany

Client: Kooperative Grossstadt

Classification: Cooperative housing

Year: 2020.



Figure 98. San Riemo housing project. Architects: Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb. Collaborators: Anne Femmer, Juliane Greb, Petter Krag, Florian Summa. Location: Munich, Germany. Client: Kooperative Grossstadt. Year: 2020.



Figure 99. San Riemo housing project – Floor Plans. Architects: Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb. Collaborators: Anne Femmer, Juliane Greb, Petter Krag, Florian Summa. Location: Munich, Germany. Client: Kooperative Grossstadt. Year: 2020.



Figure 100. San Riemo housing project – Collage. Architects: Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb. Collaborators: Anne Femmer, Juliane Greb, Petter Krag, Florian Summa. Location: Munich, Germany. Client: Kooperative Grossstadt. Year: 2020.

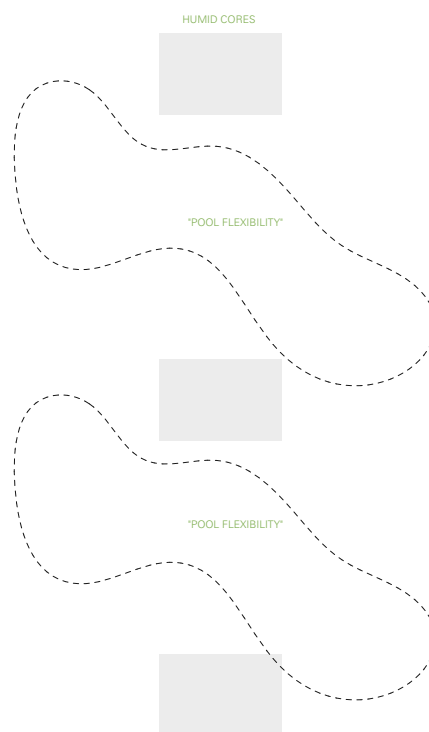


Figure 101. Interpretation of flexibility and core layout concepts from the San Riemo housing project. Drawing and collage by the author, based on ideas from Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb, San Riemo, 2020.

Benchmarked strategies

1. Fixed wetted cores to bathroom and kitchen.
2. Spatial flexibility around the cores.

San Riemo is a project that seeks flexibility and comfort in a collective housing. Creating cores in which stores the humid spaces such as bathrooms and kitchens.

Around it, small bubbles are formed that form flexible spaces, which can change amicably with time and the expansion of the function. This project is a reference, helping us to find a solution for circularity and flexibility in a new housing model, a little more dense but no less functional.

CHAPTER 5

5. Proposal of a new landscape as a destination through cultivation and productive inhabitation. Lessons of case studies.

- 5.1. Lessons of case studies. Strategies to create a new model of countryside.
- 5.2. Adaptation of best practices to the ruins of Heers Castle. Creation of a proposal for a new countryside model. Project.

Strategies applicable to the project



Figure 102. Summary of strategies taken from the five reference projects. Diagram created by the author.³⁹

5.1. Lessons of case studies. Strategies to create a new model of countryside.

This is a multidisciplinary proposal and, as such, five key projects, selected based on the specific needs of the proposal, were used as references.

Chapter 4 highlights important reference points drawn from these reference projects, which are summarized in Figure 102. From these, six basic strategies were identified that should be translated and implemented according to the characteristics, needs and proposed program for the Heers Castle ruins in order to develop a sound and relevant proposal for this new model of rural living.

Circularity and a New Perception of Agriculture and People

A shift in perception toward agriculture fosters greater connection and interest among people. The circular economy model contributes meaningfully to ecological sustainability. These two strategies were inspired by the project La Ferme du Chaudron, a real-life example of how creating a welcoming and flexible space can bring people closer to food processes—from production to consumption.

This project not only integrates the full production cycle, but also emphasizes education, teaching essential practices to people across generations. It uses initiatives such as events that combine recreation with community-building.

These same strategies could be directly applied to the ruins of Heers Castle, making use of the space, its closeness to nature, and the existing volunteer community both within the castle and in the surrounding area. At the same time, this approach would attract people from different generations to take part in a new model of countryside living—where circularity, productive activity, recreation, housing, and learning coexist in one place. This creates a sense of community and reconnects people with farming and agriculture.

Intergenerational housing

The Ecovillage project shows us how integrating multiple generations in one place is fundamental to building community and fostering knowledge exchange.

This strategy plays a key role in our project, as the goal of creating a new countryside model also involves fostering circularity in terms of self-awareness and intergenerational feedback.

Older adults often hold valuable knowledge about traditional agricultural practices, cooking, and childcare. Meanwhile, younger people bring energy, passion, curiosity, and a strong desire to explore the world. Together, they can offer each other companionship, but also become allies in daily tasks—an essential element in creating a strong community atmosphere.

This is a strategy that could be implemented in the ruins of Heers Castle, especially in the design of the dwellings: a way of living where each day offers the chance to learn something from one another.

Spatial flexibility around the cores · Core-Based Flexibility for Circular Living

San Riemo is an inspiring project that explores the use of core units to organize the “wet areas” of a home—such as bathrooms and kitchens—as fixed, centralized elements. This core-based approach enables greater flexibility in the overall layout, which is a strategy worth considering when envisioning a new model of countryside living.

The stables within the ruins of Heers Castle are considered suitable spaces for proposing new dwellings. This core strategy aligns well with the overall circular concept of the project, offering a practical and adaptable architectural solution.

In the context of these dwellings, circularity is especially expressed through spatial flexibility. By maintaining fixed cores and allowing the surrounding space—the “fluid zone”—to adapt over time, the dwellings can evolve to meet changing needs and accommodate different generations.

Additionally, these core units can be placed on the ground floor, where shared, community-oriented programs could be implemented,

reinforcing the idea of communal living and learning.

Intermediate spaces

The OMLOOP! project is an excellent reference for demonstrating how a countryside home can remain flexible through the use of in-between spaces.

It employs strategies like roof openings and the use of glass to create areas that retain heat during colder seasons. At the same time, it incorporates locally sourced materials to blur the boundary between indoors and outdoors during warmer months.

This strategy will be applied to the communal areas at the center of the proposed housing program—spaces designed to work with natural elements in order to create warmer, well-ventilated environments within the core of the dwellings.

The creation of semi-outdoor spaces is also essential for designing buildings that are both environmentally friendly and welcoming for their inhabitants.

The use of materials “As found”, reinterpreted through contemporary design

The BKRK Bakery is a strong example of how “as found” materials can be integrated into a project using improved techniques. This approach contributes to recovering the identity and character of a place.

This strategy will be applied in the project as a way to reclaim both the tangible and intangible heritage of the site. The use of brick, wood, earth, and mycelium for certain insulation techniques will help preserve the soul of the building, while also translating the principle of circularity into the construction process itself.

Materials such as rammed earth, mycelium, straw, and brick, among others, will be used.

5.2. Adaptation of best practices to the ruins of Heers Castle. Creation of a proposal for a new countryside model. Project.

After reviewing the needs, potential, case studies, and visiting the site on several occasions, it has been possible to gather enough information to define the best strategies for implementing meaningful practices in the search for a deeper understanding and new approach to the countryside.

In Chapter 3.3, several important connections are made between key aspects of this proposal: community, dwelling, circular economy, production, consumption, participation, education, and pleasure. Agriculture also stands out as a fundamental part of the legacy and identity of the municipality of Heers.

The ruins of Heers Castle offer the perfect setting to apply these strategies and values, where the role of community becomes central. A new countryside model means the countryside is no longer seen as a distant, untouchable, or idealized place viewed from afar. Instead, the proposal is rooted in closeness—learning through shared knowledge, through touching, planting, and connecting directly with the food we consume. At the same time, it is grounded in a circular vision—where things are reused, recycled, and regenerated.

Agriculture and fruit farming play a vital role when thinking about circular economy. Our lives are always dependent on food and its processes. What could be more essential than learning to grow our own food and becoming self-sufficient in a way that respects the land and the environment? Moreover, producing additional goods from that harvest—accessible not only to local residents but also to visitors—can strengthen this model. The community is at the heart of

these practices, supported by spaces like shared kitchens that allow residents to exchange knowledge, stories, and moments.

The master plan for this new countryside model in the ruins of Heers Castle is not only focused on food production. It also incorporates practices such as the cultivation of mycelium—not only as a food source, but also as a construction material, to be used in insulation and as surface finishes in different parts of the proposal.

Reusing materials is another key aspect of circularity. Working with “as found” materials—such as earth, brick, and tile—means reinterpreting them in ways that respect and emphasize the personality of the ruins and the intervention itself.

This countryside model does not only explore circularity through economy and food—it also embraces flexibility in housing. Inhabiting the countryside must go hand in hand with teaching people that it’s possible to live more compactly and more flexibly at the same time. Flexibility is a form of circularity—we can think of it in terms of time, but also space. If we create housing that is well-built, functional, and long-lasting, with the capacity to grow and change according to evolving needs, we’ll be laying the foundation for responsibly and intelligently densifying rural areas.

This could be the beginning of creating catalyst points to reconnect us with the countryside—to inhabit it, to cultivate it, and to make it thrive.

New proposal ·

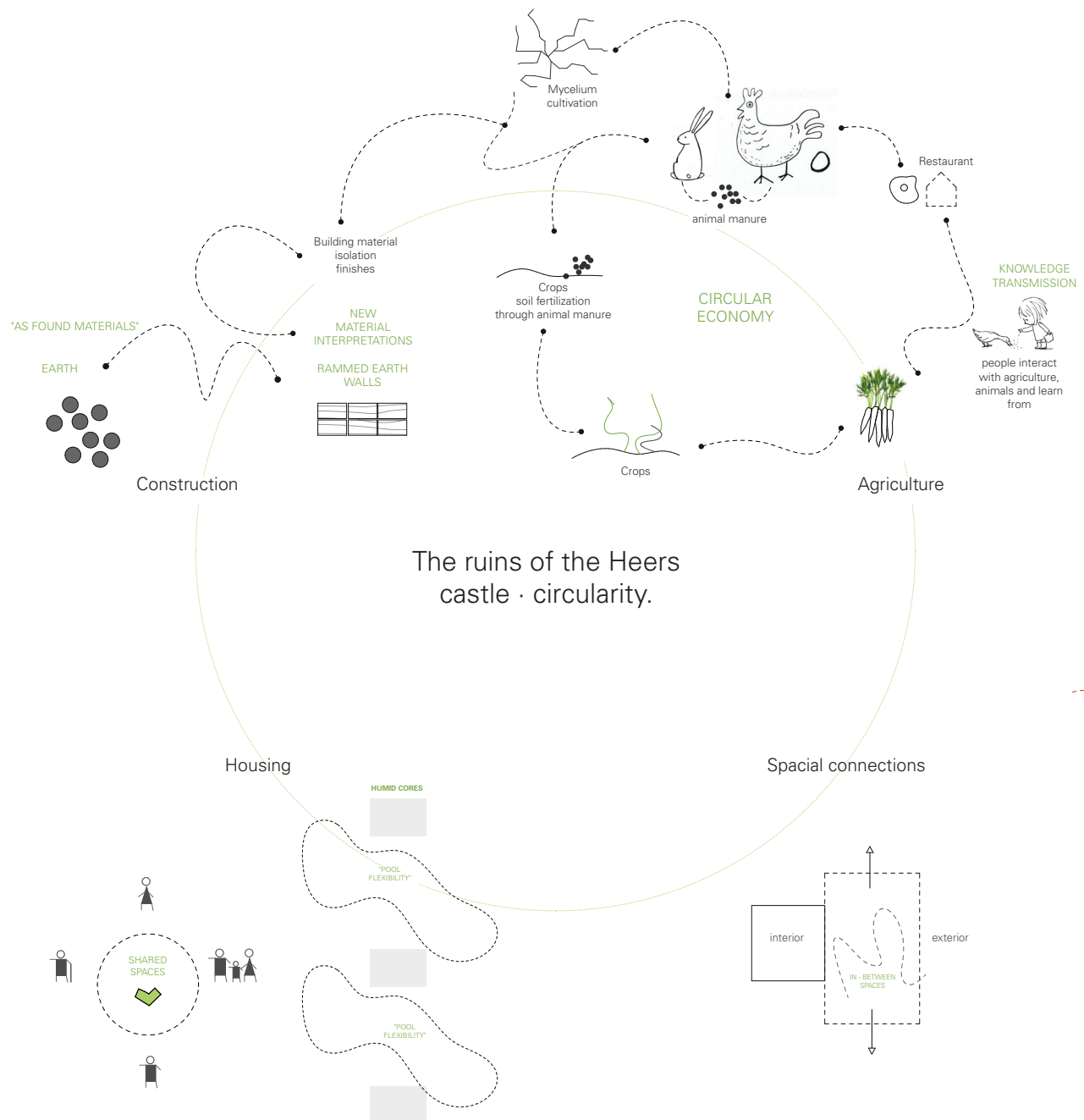


Figure 103. New circularity proposal for a new countryside model. Author's diagram.

New proposal ·



Creation of more urban connections connecting the ruins of Heers castle with other important points and internal connections between key points.



Figure 104. New urban proposal for a new model of countryside. Diagram by the author.

New proposal · Master plan

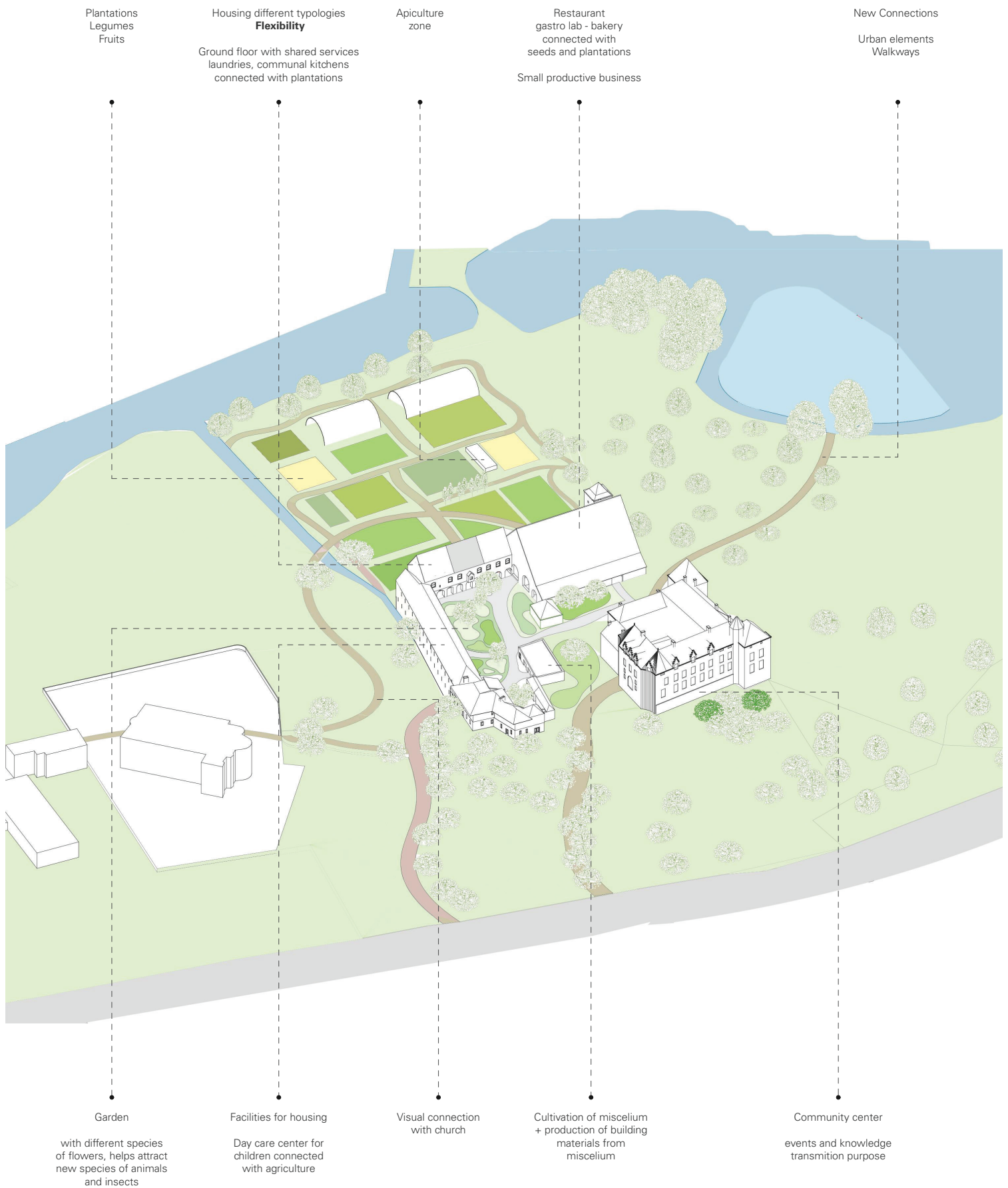


Figure 105. Master plan proposal Diagram by the author.

New proposal

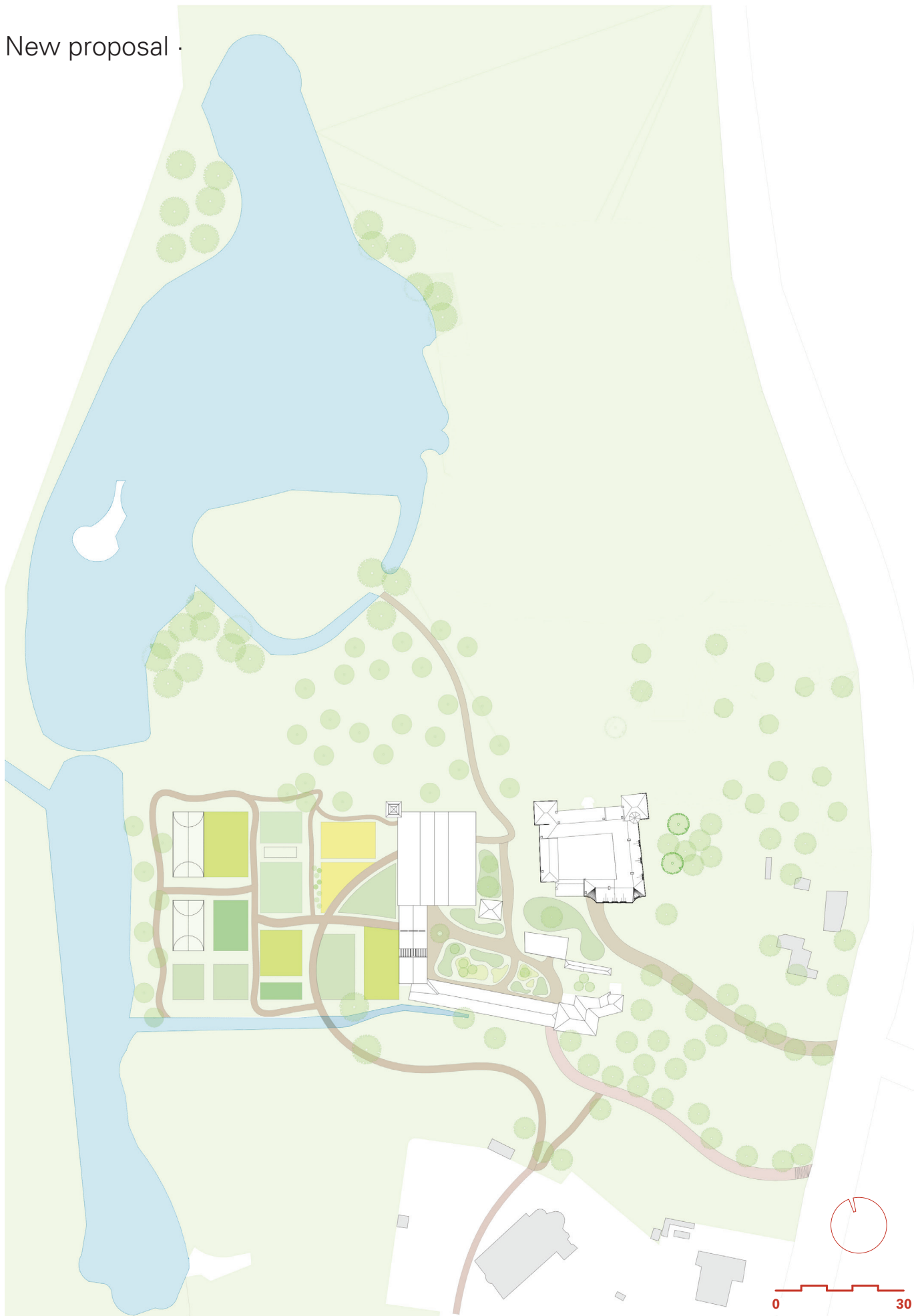


Figure 106. New proposal site. Author's diagram.



Figure 107. Current state of stables - housing intervention zone. Frontal facade from courtyard.



Figure 108. Current state of stables - housing intervention zone. Exterior facade from park.



Figure 109. Current state of the stables - interior photographs show the structure and materiality of the arches.

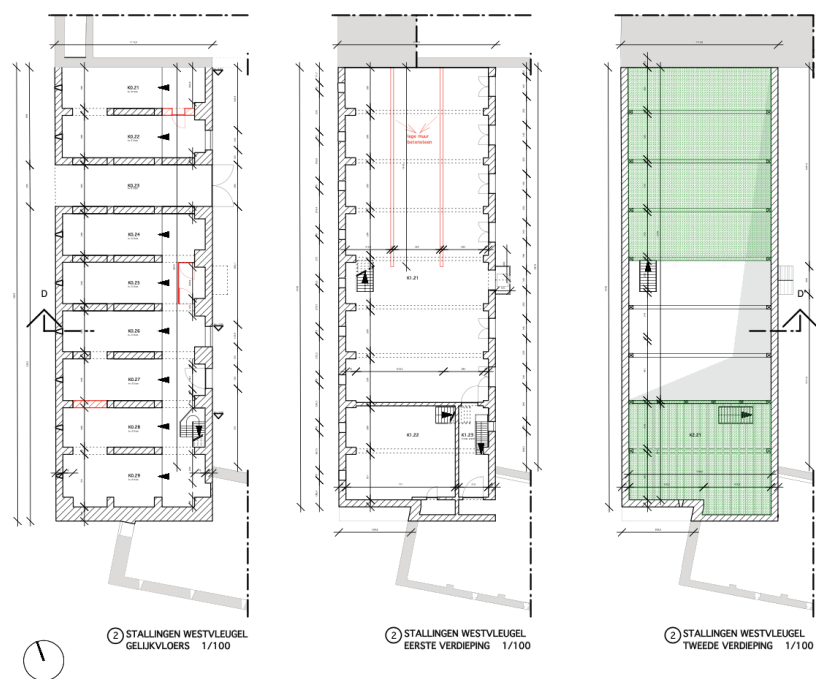


Figure 110. Current state of Wing 2 of the stables. Image from Erfgoed & Visie BVBA, Boswachterswoning.

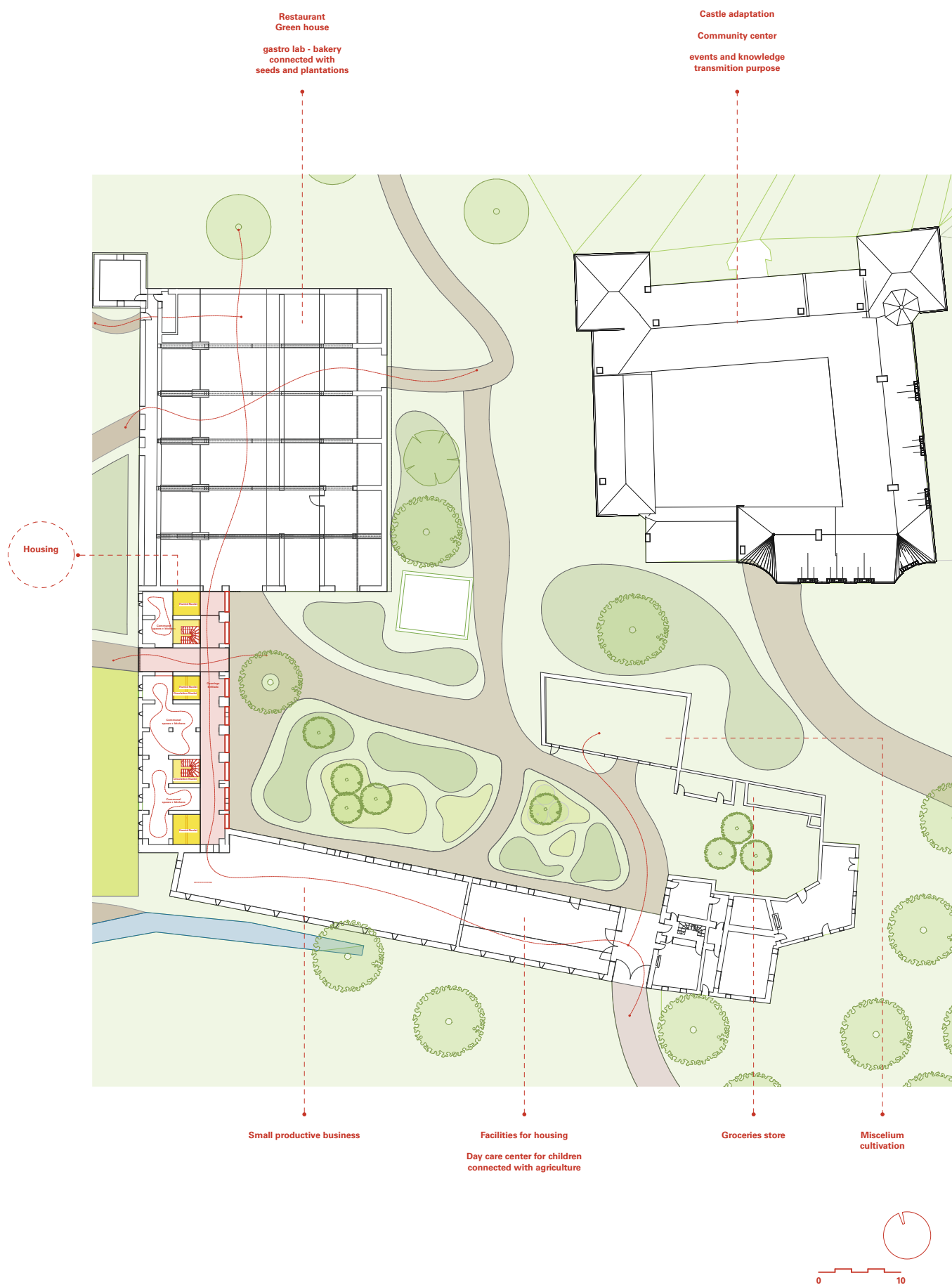
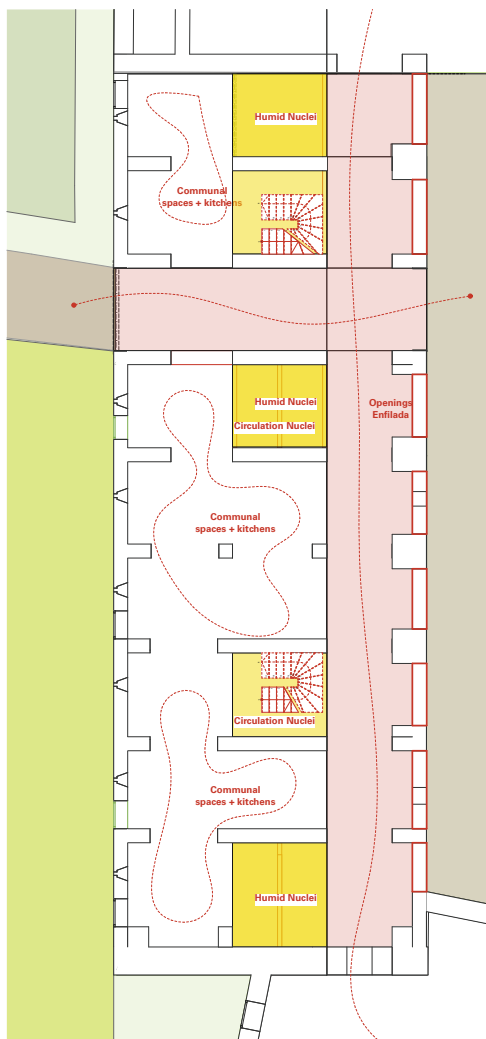
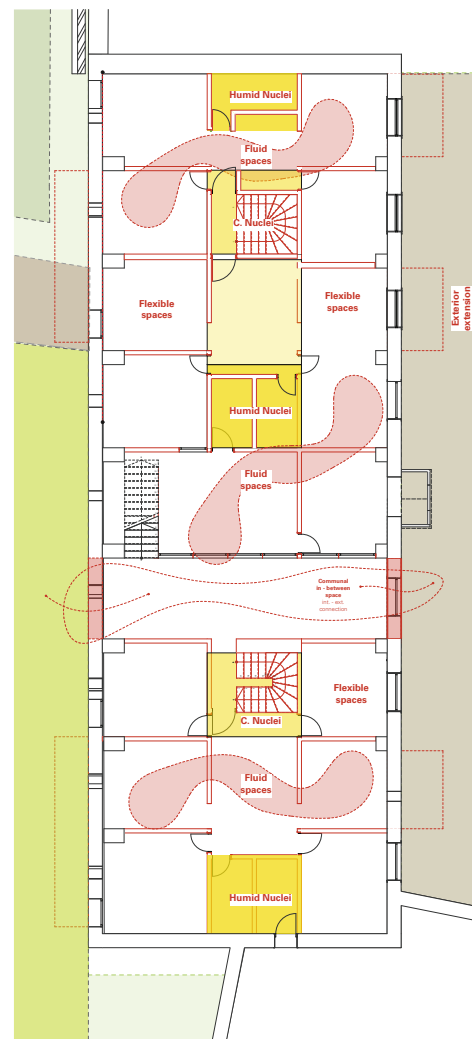


Figure 111. New proposal site- Ground floor and connections. Author's diagram.



Stables - Ground floor housing



Stables - First floor housing



Figure 112. New proposal site - Conceptual plan of the housing development. Ground floor + community spaces and arched opening - enfilade. Author's diagram.

Figure 113. New proposal site - Conceptual plan of the housing development. First floor + fluid spaces and nuclei. Author's diagram.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

After researching the challenges facing the municipality of Heers—such as the decline in the number of farmers, an aging population, a lack of younger generations, and the gradual loss of character in its small villages—alongside the urgent need for rural densification, this thesis aimed to explore how the ruins of Heers Castle could act as a catalyst for a new countryside model. One that reimagines the rural landscape not as a distant or untouchable space, but as a living, permeable place—one that can be inhabited, cultivated, and shared.

The research was approached through a multi-layered methodology, including several site visits at different times of day and across seasons. These visits allowed for direct observation of the site's rhythms, challenges, and potential. Photography, field notes, and documentation of agricultural and food-related practices formed part of this experiential process. Visiting both the ruins and the wider Haspengouw region was key to understanding the cultural importance of agriculture, fruit farming, rituals, and the character of the landscape.

In addition to site analysis, the research was supported by academic sources on ancestral agricultural practices, as well as by the study of five case studies—three of which were visited in person. These visits were incredibly enriching, not only for the development of this thesis, but also for expanding my architectural perspective and knowledge on adaptive reuse and circular strategies in architecture. Scientific articles and published research also played a crucial role in building a solid and informed foundation for this work. Altogether, the methodology supported the development of a proposal that is both theoretical and practical, rooted in contextual knowledge and lived experience.

This process revealed the complexity of designing a new countryside model—where many layers overlap: community, ecology, history, architecture, and the sensitive approach to heritage, both tangible and intangible. Being physically present, observing, and engaging with the

place proved essential. Another key realization was the importance of looking to the past—not just as a reference, but as a feedback mechanism. It offers insight for reviving valuable practices and also points to what needs to evolve. Intergenerational knowledge transfer is vital for this revival. The research also highlighted circularity and flexibility as fundamental concepts for shaping a new countryside model—concepts that must be explored across disciplines: economic, ecological, architectural, and social.

This project proposes an approach that could be carefully replicated to help revitalize rural areas, reimagining the countryside as a space that is inhabited, cultivated, and dynamic—where circular systems are woven into everyday life. The reuse of ruins or heritage buildings as community catalysts adds another layer of meaning. The countryside can be a space for innovation and productivity, not just for contemplation.

Creating a new model of the countryside as an inhabited and cultivated landscape is possible. It's a real approach that can offer solutions to many of the challenges mentioned. Of course, it depends on many factors—like politics, public-private cooperation, and social engagement. But by looking at the ruins of Heers Castle as a catalyst, we can see a powerful opportunity to reconnect material and immaterial heritage in this small and fortunate municipality. Reviving old practices and translating them into contemporary ways of living can attract younger generations. While it may seem utopian, if approached as a circular process—integrating productivity, recreation, and housing in the same place—it becomes a far more tangible possibility. The site already holds all the qualities needed to make this real.

To cultivate not only food but also community is a potential solution for a society that too often prefers to look away rather than face the problems ahead. Reimagining dwellings as more compact, yet fully livable and adaptable spaces is key to building this new model.

Laying a table with what has been planted and harvested is a timeless

act—of the past, the present, and the future. Bringing people closer to the process of food cultivation, in my view, is one of the most direct and powerful ways to spark awareness and interest in agricultural and fruit-growing practices. These are not just tasks—they are rituals, events, and beliefs that can invite others into a deeper connection with their roots.

This approach can be further developed and connected with other disciplines like ecology, urbanism, policy, and climate solutions. The possibilities are wide and meaningful.

Finally, I would like to close with a quote that beautifully encapsulates the position this research takes toward both the ruin and the surrounding landscape:

“Regeneration is implemented not only through the restoration and reuse of historical buildings but also through the preservation and reactivation of intangible aspects, such as traditions, craftsmanship, or local narratives, and through the restoration and upgrading of the natural landscape.”⁴⁰

Footnotes:

¹ Most of this information is obtained from the study Ruimtelijke Herontwikkelingsstudie Kasteel van Heers, conducted by IDEA Consultant and Erfgoed & Visie bvba (2015). IDEA Consultant & Erfgoed & Visie bvba, Ruimtelijke Herontwikkelingsstudie Kasteel van Heers, 2015. Paraphrased from Ruimtelijke Herontwikkelingsstudie Kasteel van Heers (Brussels: Vlaams Agentschap Inspectie RWO, with contributions by THV: Erfgoed & Visie bvba and Idea Consult, n.d.).

² Ibid.

³ Herita, "Heers Castle," Herita, accessed March 20, 2025, <https://www.herita.be/en/heers-castle>.

⁴ Personal observations on visit to Heers Castle Ruin, February 20, 2025.

⁵ Personal observations on visit to Heers Castle Ruin, February 20, 2025.

⁶ Personal observations on visit to Heers Castle Ruin, February 20, 2025.

⁷ Paraphrased from Ruimtelijke Herontwikkelingsstudie Kasteel van Heers (Brussels: Vlaams Agentschap Inspectie RWO, with contributions by THV: Erfgoed & Visie bvba and IDEA Consult, n.d.), projection from the 2023–2027 regional development plan for Haspengouw.

⁸ Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musclb, *The Countryside*, OASE 63 (2004): 9.

⁹ Agricultural Economics Research Institute (LEI), *Agricultural Outlook in the Netherlands and Belgium*, 2004.

¹⁰ Veronique Beckers, L. Poelmans, A. Van Rompaey, and N. Dendoncker, "The Impact of Urbanization on Agricultural Dynamics: A Case Study in Belgium," *Journal of Land Use Science* 15, no. 5 (2020): 626–643, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1747423X.2020.1769211>.

¹¹ Beckers et al., "The Impact of Urbanization on Agricultural Dynamics," 634.

¹² Beckers et al., "The Impact of Urbanization on Agricultural Dynamics," 636.

¹³ Erik Wieërs, *Dorpelijkheid: Rethinking the Rural in Urban Development* (Antwerp: [Publisher], Year), 4.

¹⁴ De Cleene et al., "Dorpelijkheid: The Rural Counterpart of Urbanity," *Journal of Urban and Rural Studies* 10, no. 2 (2022): 4.

¹⁵ Guide from Herita, explanation given during a site visit to Heers Castle, February 2025.

¹⁶ The historical map Topografische Kaart Vandermaelen (1846–1854) was obtained from the Agriculture layer on GeoPunt Vlaanderen. See GeoPunt, Agriculture Layer, Digital Flanders, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

¹⁷ Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musclb, *The Countryside*, OASE 63 (2004): 9.

¹⁸ Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, s.v. "countryside" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

¹⁹ Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), "Platteland: In de landelijke wijk- en buurtindeling wordt jaarlijks de stedelijkheid van buurten vastgesteld. De niet stedelijke buurten of gemeenten worden als platteland beschouwd," accessed March 27, 2025, <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/achtergrond/2009/27/helft-van-alle-buurten-is-platteland/platteland#:~:text=In%20de%20landelijke%20wijk%2D%20en,gemeenten%20worden%20als%20platteland%20beschouwd>.

²⁰ Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musclb, *The Countryside*, OASE 63 (2004): 9.

²¹ Ulrich Walz, "Landscape Structure, Landscape Metrics, and Biodi-

versity" (2011), 5.

²²Roy Haines-Young, "Land Use and Land Cover," in *The SAGE Handbook of Environmental Change*, ed. John A. Matthews et al. (London: SAGE, 2009), 179.

²³Eddy Leclère, "Bloesemzegening," in *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw* (Sint-Truiden: Regionaal Landschap Haspengouw en Voeren, 2010), 56.

²⁴Hilde Hendricx, "Veldkapel," in *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw* (Sint-Truiden: Regionaal Landschap Haspengouw en Voeren, 2010), 56.

²⁵Paraphrased from *Sappig Verteld: Verhalen over fruit en erfgoed in Haspengouw en Voeren* (Zoutleeuw: Erfgoedcel Zuidwest and Regionaal Landschap Haspengouw en Voeren, 2021).

²⁶Paraphrased from *Sappig Verteld: Verhalen over fruit en erfgoed in Haspengouw en Voeren* (Zoutleeuw: Erfgoedcel Zuidwest and Regionaal Landschap Haspengouw en Voeren, 2021).

²⁷Paraphrased from *Sappig Verteld: Verhalen over fruit en erfgoed in Haspengouw en Voeren* (Zoutleeuw: Erfgoedcel Zuidwest and Regionaal Landschap Haspengouw en Voeren, 2021), 19.

²⁸Michel Derwael, in *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw* (Borgloon: Fruitbedrijf Jacobs, 2022), 72.

²⁹Jean Moors, in *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw*, 72.

³⁰Paraphrased from the testimony of Joseph Smets in *Sappig Verteld: Verhalen over fruit en erfgoed in Haspengouw en Voeren* (Zoutleeuw: Erfgoedcel Zuidwest and Regionaal Landschap Haspengouw en Voeren, 2021), 72.

³¹Interpretation based on *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw*, section "Fruitige fierheid"

³²Field guide at the camp in Sint-Truiden, conversation during visit, April 2025.

³³Visit Sint-Truiden and deblauwevogel.be, "Pollination and Fruit Growing in Haspengouw," informational signboard in the apple fields of Sint-Truiden, accessed April 2025.

³⁴Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musch, *The Countryside*, OASE 63 (2004).

³⁵Crowdfarming, "What Is Crowdfarming?" accessed April 17, 2025, <https://www.crowdfarming.com/en>.

³⁶NORD Architects, *Ecovillage Project Description*, accessed April 16, 2025, <https://www.nordarchitects.dk/projects/ecovillage>.

³⁷Erik Wieërs, *Dorpelijkheid: Architectuur en Leefkwaliteit in Dorpskernen* (Antwerp: Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2021).

³⁸Bie Plevoets and Koenraad Van Cleempoel, *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage: Concepts and Cases of an Emerging Discipline* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 96.

³⁹Diagram by the author, based on analysis of the five reference projects discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰Bie Plevoets and Koenraad Van Cleempoel, *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage: Concepts and Cases of an Emerging Discipline* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 3.

Figures:

Figure 1. Topografische Kaart Vandermaelen, a topographic map of Heers, Belgium (1846–1854), obtained from the Agriculture layer on GeoPunt Vlaanderen. Source: GeoPunt, Agriculture Layer, Digital Flan-

ders, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Figure 2. Vallaret-Kaart, a topographic map of Heers, Belgium (1745–1748), obtained from the Agriculture layer on GeoPunt Vlaanderen. Source: GeoPunt, Agriculture Layer, Digital Flanders, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Figure 3. Ferraris Kaart, a topographic map of Heers, Belgium (1777), obtained from the Agriculture layer on GeoPunt Vlaanderen. Source: GeoPunt, Agriculture Layer, Digital Flanders, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Figure 4. Landbouwgebruikspercelen ALV, 2009, a land use map of Heers, Belgium, obtained from the Agriculture layer on GeoPunt Vlaanderen. Source: GeoPunt, Agriculture Layer, Digital Flanders, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Figure 5. Landbouwgebruikspercelen LV, 2023, a land use map of Heers, Belgium, obtained from the Agriculture layer on GeoPunt Vlaanderen. Source: GeoPunt, Agriculture Layer, Digital Flanders, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Figure 6. Cristina Feijoo, Interpretation of the Countryside Typology. Based on Willemijn Lofvers and Marcel Musclb, “The Countryside,” OASE 63 (2004): 45–58.

Figure 7. Crops in relation to Heers castle. Agricultural land use map of Heers, Belgium, created by María Cristina Feijoo. This map is based on the Landbouwgebruikspercelen LV, 2023, obtained from the Agriculture layer on GeoPunt Vlaanderen. Source: GeoPunt, Agriculture Layer, Digital Flanders, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Figure 8. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle. 2025.

Figure 9. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers towards the barn. 2025.

Figure 10. Entrance of stables of the ruins of Heers castle. 2025.

Figure 11. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle. 2025.

Figure 12. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the lake. 2025.

Figure 13. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the castle entrance. 2025.

Figure 14. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers, posterior part of the castle towards the lake. 2025.

Figure 15. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the park. 2025.

Figure 16. Landscape of the ruins of Heers Castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 17. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers towards the church. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 18. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the lake. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 19. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 20. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 21. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 22. Landscape of the ruins of the castle of Heers towards the church. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 23. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the entrance. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 24. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the stable. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 25. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards the stable. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 26. Landscape of the ruins of Heers castle towards entrance. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 27. Potato cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 28. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 29. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 30. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 31. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 32. Cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 33. Apple cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 34. Apple cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 35. Strawberry cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 36. Strawberry cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 37. Apple cultivation around the ruins of Heers castle. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 38. Crops and paths with visitors around the ruins of the Castle of Heers. Photograph by the author. 2025.

Figure 39. Blossom Blessing. Photograph by Eddy Leclère, originally published as Bloesemzegening in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw.²⁰

Figure 40. Field Chapel. Photograph by Hilde Hendricx, Tourism Sint-Truiden. Originally published as Veldkapel in *Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw.*²¹

Figure 41. Chapel in the countryside, Haspengouw region. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.

Figure 42. Apple blossom, Haspengouw region. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.

Figure 43. BelOrta Bloesembar event, Sint-Truiden. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.

Figure 44. Hot air balloon at the BelOrta Bloesembar event, Sint-Truiden. Photograph taken by the author, April 2025.

Figure 45. Jhon Topham, A ploughing demonstration with the new Melotte tractor, 1936, Topfoto, https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3032967.

Figure 46. Jhon Topham, A farm worker using a hand harrow in a large field, 1935, Topfoto, https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3029900.

Figure 47. Planting strawberries (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 30.

Figure 48. Group photo of the pickers at Argenteau in 1954–55. Photograph by Joseph Smets. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.

Figure 49. Picking high-stemmed trees. Photograph by CAG – The People. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel

in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 42.

Figure 50. Students from the Agricultural and Horticultural School visit a cherry orchard under Mr. Cosemans's (PCCE) guidance. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 21.

Figure 51. Group photo of the pickers at Argenteau in 1954–55. Photograph by Joseph Smets. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.

Figure 52. Cherry picking in Moelingen. Photograph by Theo Broers. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.

Figure 53. Small tunnels over strawberries are being placed. Photograph from the Boerenbond archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 30.

Figure 54. Rest break during strawberry picking at Pierre Vrancken's in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Photograph by Pierre Vrancken. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.

Figure 55. Mechanical cherry-picking. Photograph by Robert Bamps. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 34.

Figure 56. Picking low trunk from a picking rack. Photograph from the Farmer's Union archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.

Figure 57. Intervention by destruction of Golden (Haspengouw Auctionshire). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 34.

Figure 58. Sorting pears. Photograph from the Boerenbond archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 68.

Figure 59. Unloading cherries (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 42.

Figure 60. Sorting apples with a reading belt and perforated board to determine the diameter (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 68.

Figure 61. Sorting fruit at the Sint-Truiden fruit auction (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.

Figure 62. Inspection of the Fruit (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.

Figure 63. Sint-Truidense Fruit Auction Christmas Auction 1958 (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.

Figure 64. Weighing and loading fruit baskets in the meadow of Dr. Schepens (PCCE). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in

Haspengouw, p. 58.

Figure 65. Men loading apples for export to France, Belgium, and Germany, 1936. Source: https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3032220#links.

Figure 66. Hail cannon (Karel Vaes). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 44.

Figure 67. Principle of the shock wave of a hail cannon (www.inopower.be). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 44.

Figure 68. Sorting cherries at Paul Gielen (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 72.

Figure 69. Placing fruit in the cooling installations (photo archive Farmer's Union, KADOC). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 72.

Figure 70. Model sketch for a fruit shed (J. Hiemeleers, Fruitteelt, 1947). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 72.

Figure 71. Ten commandments for the fruit grower (H. Ickx and G. Ickx, practical tips on fruit growing, 1943). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 69.

Figure 72. Apple club (photo archive Farmer's Union, KADOC). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 122.

Figure 73. Trudo factory in the 1940s (familie Boden). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 120.

Figure 74. Cover of a recipe book for preserving fruit (CAG). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 122.

Figure 75. Diagram reinterpreting strategies from the Ferme du Chaudron case study for the thesis project: spatiality and shared distribution spaces for the community. Created by the author.

Figure 76. Diagram reinterpreting strategies from the Ferme du Chaudron case study for the thesis project: circular economy system focused on food production. Created by the author.

Figure 77. Photograph from Lake Neerdedepe facing the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.

Figure 78. Photograph of the external oven at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.

Figure 79. Photograph of the agricultural crops at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.

Figure 80. Photograph from the arch, central distribution space at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.

Figure 81. Photograph of one of the buildings at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.

Figure 82. Photograph of the small animal farm at the Ferme du Chaudron project, Brussels, April 2025. Photo by the author.

Figure 83. Diagram produced by NORD Architects illustrating the typologies and common spaces of the ECOVILLAGE project. Source: <https://www.nordarchitects.dk/projects/eco-village/>.

Figure 84. Model produced by NORD Architects illustrating the typologies and common spaces of the ECOVILLAGE project. Source: <https://www.nordarchitects.dk/projects/eco-village/>.

Figure 85. Material palette used for the ECOVILLAGE project by NORD Architects, illustrating the typologies and common spaces of the project. Source: <https://www.nordarchitects.dk/projects/eco-village/>.

Figure 86. Summary diagram of NORD Architects' strategy reinterpreted for the thesis project: intergenerational housing. Created by the author.

Figure 87. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.

Figure 88. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.

Figure 89. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.

Figure 90. Photograph of the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture, sourced from their website <https://he-architectuur.be/omloop>. Photo by Tim Van de Velde.

Figure 91. Strategy diagram based on the OMLOOP! project by the architecture office Hé Architecture: intermediate spaces, new roof structure, and openings. Materiality reinterpreted and diagram created by the author.

Figure 92. Exterior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by Thomas Noceto. Sourced from <https://bc-as.org/projects/bkrk-bakery>.

Figure 93. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by Luc Daelemans. Sourced from <https://bc-as.org/projects/bkrk-bakery>.

Figure 94. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by the author, showing the materiality and construction system.

Figure 95. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by the author, showing the materiality and construction system.

Figure 96. Interior photograph of the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, taken by the author, showing the materiality and construction system.

Figure 97. Diagram based on the BKRK Bakery project by BC architects & studies, created by the author, showing how "as found" materials are used in the intervention.

Figure 98. San Riemo housing project. Architects: Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb. Collaborators: Anne Femmer, Juliane Greb, Petter Krag, Florian Summa. Location: Munich, Germany. Client: Kooperative Grossstadt. Year: 2020.

Figure 99. San Riemo housing project – Floor Plans. Architects: Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb. Collaborators: Anne Femmer, Juliane Greb, Petter Krag, Florian Summa. Location: Munich, Germany. Client: Kooperative Grossstadt. Year: 2020.

Figure 100. San Riemo housing project – Collage. Architects: Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb. Collaborators: Anne Femmer, Juliane Greb, Petter Krag, Florian Summa. Location: Munich, Germany. Client: Kooperative Grossstadt. Year: 2020.

Figure 101. Interpretation of flexibility and core layout concepts from the San Riemo housing project. Drawing and collage by the author, based on ideas from Summacumfemmer + Büro Juliane Greb, San Riemo, 2020.

Figure 102. Summary of strategies taken from the five reference projects. Diagram created by the author.³³

Figure 103. New urban proposal for a new model of countryside. Diagram by the author.

Figure 104. New urban proposal for a new model of countryside. Diagram by the author.

Figure 105. Master plan proposal Diagram by the author.

Figure 106. New proposal site. Author's diagram.

Figure 107. Current state of stables - housing intervention zone. Frontal facade from courtyard.

Figure 108. Current state of stables - housing intervention zone. Exterior facade from park.

Figure 109. Current state of the stables - interior photographs show the structure and materiality of the arches.

Figure 110. Current state of Wing 2 of the stables. Image from Erfgoed & Visie BVBA, Boswachterswoning.

Figure 111. New proposal site. Ground floor and connections. Author's diagram.

Figure 112. New proposal site - Conceptual plan of the housing development. Ground floor + community spaces and arched opening - enfilade. Author's diagram.

Figure 113. New proposal site - Conceptual plan of the housing development. First floor + fluid spaces and nuclei. Author's diagram.

Bibliography:

De Cleene, M., Luyten, M., Verstraeten, T., & Shaikh, N. (2022). *Dorpelijkheid: Drie artistiek-documentaire verkenningen over dorpelijkheid*. Atelier Bouwmeester. <https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/dorpelijkheid-drie-artistiek-documentaire-verkenningen-over-dorpelijkheid>

IDEA Consultant & Erfgoed & Visie bvba. (2015). *Ruimtelijke herontwikkelingsstudie Kasteel van Heers*.

Lofvers, W., & Musclb, M. (2004). The transformation of agriculture in the countryside. In *OASE: The Countryside* (No. 63). NAI Publishers. <https://www.oasejournal.nl/en/Issues/63/TheCountryside#002>

GeoPunt. Topografische Kaart Vandermaelen (1846–1854). Agriculture Layer. Digital Flanders. Accessed March 24, 2025. <https://www.geopunt.be/>.

Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary. "Countryside." Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. "Platteland." Last modified July 3, 2009. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/achtergrond/2009/27/helft-van-alle-buurtten-is-platteland/platteland#:~:text=In%20de%20landelijke%20wijk%2D%20en,gemeenten%20worden%20als%20platteland%20beschouwd.>

Topham, Jhon. A ploughing demonstration with the new Melotte tractor. 1936. Topfoto. https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3032967.

Topham, Jhon. A farm worker using a hand harrow in a large field.

1935. Topfoto. https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3029900.

Planting strawberries (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 30.

Group photo of the pickers at Argenteau in 1954–55. Photograph by Joseph Smets. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.

Picking high-stemmed trees. Photograph by CAG – The People. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 42.

Students from the Agricultural and Horticultural School visit a cherry orchard under Mr. Cosemans's (PCCE) guidance. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 21.

Sorting, bagging and weighing apples. Photograph by Theo Broers. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.

Cherry picking in Moelingen. Photograph by Theo Broers. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.

Small tunnels over strawberries are being placed. Photograph from the Boerenbond archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 30.

Rest break during strawberry picking at Pierre Vrancken's in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Photograph by Pierre Vrancken. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.

Mechanical cherry-picking. Photograph by Robert Bamps. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 34.

Picking low trunk from a picking rack. Photograph from the Farmer's Union archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 62.

Intervention by destruction of Golden (Haspengouw Auctionshire). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 34.

Sorting pears. Photograph from the Boerenbond archive, KADOC. Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 68.

Unloading cherries (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 42.

Sorting apples with a reading belt and perforated board to determine the diameter (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 68.

Sorting fruit at the Sint-Truiden fruit auction (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.

Inspection of the Fruit (Belgian Fruit Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.

Sint-Truidense Fruit Auction Christmas Auction 1958 (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 70.

Weighing and loading fruit baskets in the meadow of Dr. Schepens (PCCE). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 58.

Men loading apples for export to France, Belgium, and Germany, 1936. Source: https://www.europeana.eu/es/item/2024904/https___www_topfoto_co_uk_asset_3032220#links.

Hail cannon (Karel Vaes). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 44.

Principle of the shock wave of a hail cannon (www.inopower.be). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 44.

Sorting cherries at Paul Gielen (Haspengouw Auction). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 72.

Apple club (photo archive Farmer's Union, KADOC). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 122.

Trudo factory in the 1940s (familie Boden). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, pp. 120, 122.

Cover of a recipe book for preserving fruit (CAG). Title translated from Dutch. Originally published as Veldkapel in Sappig Verteld: Het verhaal achter de fruitteelt in Haspengouw, p. 122.

