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Experiencing monuments 1

Harry Ganzeboom

A study of the recognition, appreciation and viewing of monuments carried out in the centre of Utrecht by the Department of Sociological Theory and Methodology at the University of Utrecht at the request of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work.

Summary

Government Printing Office, 1982
Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work,
Rijswijk, 1982

Foreword

In the early part of 1978 the Cultural Affairs Policy Planning Division of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work (CRM) requested the Department of Sociological Theory and Methodology (TMS) at the University of Utrecht to design a study on the way in which people experience historic buildings and monuments. Behind this request was a wish to organise a more theoretically oriented investigation of how the urban population regard monuments and their care and preservation.

After a period of preparation the study was begun in May 1979. It was led by H. Ganzeboom under the supervision of R.Wippler. There were two phases of study: for the first phase 163 inhabitants of Utrecht were interviewed in June 1980; the second phase conducted in May 1981 involved a sample of about 500 inhabitants of the city. This publication deals only with the first phase; a report on the second will appear in the course of 1983.

The study was carried out with the assistance of F.Driessen (TMS), L. Dijkstra (Technological University, Eindhoven), A.Hogervorst (CRM), J. Jessurun (Department for the Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings) and P. Montfort (CRM). Two reports have been published: a detailed report* of the study and this summary, from which technical and statistical data have been omitted.

The views on the care and preservation of monuments and the conclusions drawn from the study are the responsibility of the researcher, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work or the members of the advisory Committee.
Your views would be very much welcomed.**

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* H. Ganzeboom: Beleving van Monumenten (detailed report), 156 pp, 36 tables and figures, 17 illustrations, 6 appendices.

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Monuments and their preservation

Contrary to what some people believe, monuments are not statutes or nature reserves but old buildings. The Monuments and Historic Buildings Act of 1961 defines them as buildings which are:

1. at least fifty years old and
2. of public interest because of:
   a. their beauty
   b. their importance to science and learning
   c. their ethnological value
   d. historical associations

The Act also makes provision for 'town and village conservation areas'. These are 'groups of land and property, including trees, roads, streets, squares and bridges, canals, waterways, ditches and other bodies of water which, together with one or more of the monuments belonging to the group, make up a scene which is of public interest because of its beauty or general character.' The greater part of the monuments in the Netherlands (some 42,000 in total) consists of dwelling-houses (69%) and farmhouses (13%), with churches (5%), windmills (3%) and others making up the numerically less important categories. But while dwelling-houses and farmhouses form the largest group, the most important in terms of cost are the larger buildings and particularly the churches. Table 1 shows how much money the government has spent on monuments in recent years and how this has been allocated to the different categories.

It may be noted that:

1. Government spending on monuments is increasing, but not in proportion to the increase in government spending as a whole. The amount spent on monuments increases steadily, but the amount spent in other areas increases by as much or more in relative terms. In the last few years there has even been a tendency towards a decrease in the portion of the budget allocated to monuments.

2. Most of the money still goes towards the restoration of large buildings. On the other hand, in recent years there has been a rise in the amounts spent on more everyday categories such as dwelling-houses and town and village conservation areas.

Developments in the preservation of monuments in the Netherlands

The Government Department for the Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings has been in existence for more than 100 years. Its history has been described by Tillema (1975). Over the years different views on the advantage and purpose of conservation have evolved. We review some of these below.

Approaches to restoration

Methods of restoration have long been a point of debate. There are two main schools of thought:

1. Restoration must do justice to the intentions of the original builders. After restoration a building should have regained its original appearance; in other words, it is 'restored back' (see 2 and 3).
2. Restoration must do justice to historical developments. After restoration a building should present a picture of the changes it has passed through. Particularly when a building has parts built at different periods in different styles, these should be retained in restoration.

The first of these approaches, the older of the two, is losing groun It has been much criticized because in many cases it sets an impossible goal. It is often very difficult to establish what a very old building originally looked like. In practice restoration according to this principle has on occasion led to a reliance on imagination.

The second attitude aims at reflecting historical developments and at reconstructing them in a responsible way.

But the difference between the two points of view are only relative. In both cases restoration goes hand in hand with historical and archaeological research. In both cases the avowed criterion for restoration lies in the past: in the first, at one particular point in time; in the second, as a dynamic development over a longer period. In both cases extremely accurate, and thus time consuming and costly, work is required.

There are also other approaches to restoration:
3. Some take the view that it is permissible to build on to monuments in a modern style. This is the logical consequence of the view that justice must be done to historical developments. After all those who think that a building should reveal the history of changing techniques, attitudes and functions ought to have a positive attitude to modern techniques, attitudes and functions. History never stops; it goes on today and tomorrow.
4. Another view favours a more sober approach to restoration. Historic buildings are appreciated and should therefore be preserved, but the important point is not the history of the building or whether restoration measures up to some historical standard. What matters is the quality of the building today and the functions which it can fulfil now. This view is part of the wider belief that efforts in this field should not be directed towards the preservation of carefully selected objects of cultural, architectural or historical interest. Instead they should be directed towards preserving built-up environments valued for their age by the present inhabitants

Wider definition of the term 'monument'

The 'typical' monument falls into a fairly strictly defined category of buildings. The following are almost certain to be protected:

- churches and castles built before 1850
- windmills built before 1850
- mansions, canal houses and public buildings built before 1850
- all well-preserved buildings, including public housing and smaller buildings, built before 1700.

Buildings in this category form a vast majority of the monuments in the Netherlands. The concentration on these categories have been criticized for various reasons. The critics do not want to have these buildings taken off the list, but to add other categories: in other words, they wish to widen the definition of the term 'monument'. Types of building often mentioned and not at present included are:

1 Everyday buildings. There is a growing interest in ordinary houses, farms, alms-houses, workers' housing and industrial buildings which are part of the 'history of ordinary folk'.

2 Newer buildings. At present a building must be at least 50 years old before it can be considered for protection. In practice buildings dating from the last 130 years are rarely listed. This is all the more unsatisfactory since it can be argued that Dutch architecture of the period after 1900 is better known internationally than earlier architecture. In the text books Dutch architecture is represented by 'De Stijl', the Amsterdam School and the functionalist housing projects, not by step-gables and canal houses. As a result, it is sometimes argued that the 50-year limit should be dropped from the Act. According to this view a building is worth protection because of its quality, not its age.

3 Complete areas. This is possibly the most important new development It has been realized that the aims of conservation cannot be achieved by simply protecting isolated buildings. The immediate environment also needs to be protected, and ideally the whole surrounding (urban) area of which it is a part. Hence the creation of town and village conservation areas. So protecting monuments has become a form of town planning, and an important factor in the design and lay-out of historical inner cities and villages.

4 Buildings of cultural or historical value. Together with the trends mentioned above, there are demands that the selection of monuments should be based less on aesthetic considerations and more on their intrinsic interest. The concern should not be with the surface of things but with what lies under it. Monuments should be a source of knowledge, not just a source of enjoyment.

Considerable progress has been made in all four of these areas, though perhaps not at a fast enough pace to satisfy all the critics.

There is a clear connection between these four extensions to the idea of what constitutes a monument. What they have in common is that they represent a shift of approach to conservation from that of a museum curator ('the city as a shell collection') to an active desire to preserve or give form to the historic elements in our built-up environment.

Decentralisation of administration

One development which can be expected in the near future is the decentralisation of administration. At present the care of monuments is highly centralised, and the system of licensing is operated entirely at the level of central government. Finance policy is controlled by central government, and the municipalities and provinces 'go along' with it. They have only limited opportunities for developing their own initiatives. There is now a general tendency towards decentralisation, involving delegation of various tasks of central government to the provinces and municipalities in fields such as welfare, health care and cultural affairs. The government has announced its intention of delegating its responsibilities for the preservation

of monuments to regional and local authorities (Decentralisatienota, 1980). Relevant proposals have been put forward by NIROV (Institute of Land-Use Planning and Housing) (Nijhof, 1980) and the Van de Bunt Organisation Bureau (Colthof and Van Leeuwen, 1981). They propose that monuments should be classified according to their national, regional or local (general) importance, and the level of government made responsible for their care. In the context of this study it is important to note that with such a classification different arguments could apply more at the local level than at national or international level. In particular, at the local or regional level more consideration could be given to the 'experimental value' of monuments, i.e. the value they have for the population familiar with them. This point will be discussed in the final chapter.

Arguments for and against preserving monuments

Monuments are considered, as in the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act, to be of particular aesthetic, cultural or historical value. But there are other beneficial effects to be expected from their preservation. At the time of the International Monument Year, M-75, several reports appeared which examined these positive effects at length (Nelissen, 1974; Nelissen and De Vocht, 1975). The most important are:

1. Monuments facilitate identification and orientation.
2. Monuments fulfil a need for beauty and a need for variety in the built-up environment.
3. Monuments add to the quality of life. People feel better in surroundings containing beautiful and varied buildings. Urban areas with historic buildings have a blend and density of functions to which a positive value is attached. Such inner city areas are lively; there is a lot going on.
4. Monuments make a town more welcoming: they give people the feeling of being at home and enable them to identify with the town.

5. Monuments are of tourist and recreational value: they are an incentive to visit or stroll around a place.
6. Monuments have educational value. Visitors and residents can learn from them how a place came into existence, what it looked like in the past, and what went on in those days.

There is also criticism. There are people who object in principle to the motives for preservation:
1. Preserving monuments is an expression of conservative romanticism which obscures modern reality and keeps people content with empty forms.
2. Preserving monuments obstructs the development of new economic and traffic facilities which are needed.
Most criticism is aimed not at preservation in itself but at the way in which it works.
3. Preservation is one-sided in its concentration on very old buildings and those which are symbols of past and present social elites ('churches and palaces').
4. Monuments provide enjoyment for a contemporary social elite. It is they who are interested in the historical legacy and who go to look at monuments. They can afford to live in them, and they are responsible for the private initiatives in the field.

In these last two arguments there is a link between the type of buildings protected ('churches and palaces'), the people who benefit from that protection (a cultural elite, the owners and occupiers of monuments) and the people who help to determine policy (the members of monument and restoration societies, civil servants). So it is logical that those who hold such views should urge that the elitist character of conservation be reduced by devoting greater attention to more everyday things such as ordinary houses, farmhouses, public housing and industrial buildings.

The study: the method employed

We have reviewed the various developments in monument preservation, the supposed positive effects, and the criticism both in principle and in relation to the present approach. These can be interpreted as assumptions about the way in which monuments are experienced. It is of interest to test these assumptions, irrespective of whether or not it is thought that the experimental value of monuments should somehow be taken into account in policy-making. As long as preservation is defended with arguments relating to the way monuments are experienced (variety, beauty, quality of life, feeling of being at home, recreation, education and identification) then a study of this process is appropriate.

These assumptions form the background to the study reported here. It was not concerned with people's consciously expressed attitudes to monuments and their preservation, but the effects of monuments on people. We examined three points:

1. To what extent is it true that monuments contribute to the identification of a city and what is the explanation for this?
2. To what extent is it true that people find monuments more beautiful than other buildings? When is this not true, or less true? Of whom is this not true or less true, and why are monuments found more beautiful?
3. Who goes to look at monuments? Is it true, as the critics maintain, that this kind of leisure activity is the province of a cultural elite?

Research methods

The study was carried out in the city of Utrecht The inhabitants were questioned about buildings in the historic city centre.

It is not feasible to study the experimental aspect of monuments without using a specific group of buildings. Though general

questions about visits to historic buildings could be asked without citing such examples, the answers would be too generalised to be of any use. Respondents must be confronted with buildings they know. It would hardly be possible to test whether monuments are readily recognised if the buildings selected were not located within set geographical limits.

Utrecht as a city of monuments

The centre of Utrecht was chosen as the area for the study. This choice was based on practical considerations, but it should be noted that in many respects the centre of Utrecht is typical of many old Dutch towns. It is a mediaeval city built on a river with visible remains of ancient defences in the form of moats and ramparts. Within these moats the city can be seen as it developed up to the early 19th century. There is a wealth of monuments and historic buildings: churches, alms-houses, 'kameren' (homes for the needy), canal houses and public buildings, a centuries old canal system and an intricate maze of old streets and alleys.

Utrecht has a large assortment of interesting monuments and historic buildings. The inner city not only contains some 900 monuments, but is listed in its entirety as a town conservation area. The Municipal Monuments Committee pursues an active policy aimed at preserving the city centre and at incorporating old suburbs in the town conservation area.

But the city is not a perfectly preserved monument, and in this it is also typical of many other Dutch towns. Most of the protected buildings are not in areas where 'time has stood still', but in a busy city centre which provides services for a wide surrounding area. There is heavy demand for these services, which brings the usual traffic problems. The centre has changed rapidly since the 19th century, and has been adapted to changing circumstances. Much has been sacrificed to the needs of the road traffic: parts of canal

have been filled in, and old streets have made way for wider roads. In the gaps left by demolition new buildings have arisen which often overshadow the old in size and form. The best known but not the only example is the huge Hoog-Catharijne/Vreeburg shopping, office and cultural centre. Like every Dutch town centre, Utrecht presents a broad range of 19th and 20th century architects, including neo-classical, neo-gothic, Art Deco/Jugendstil, Amsterdam School, functionalism and, most recently, buildings in an adapted style dubbed 'the new quaintness'.

Of course there are many ways in which Utrecht is unique. What other Dutch town has so many and such old churches? Where else could one find the Dom? The design of the canals, with their waterside wharves, is virtually unique. There have been many projects modelled on Hoog-Catharijne but none of them equals it in scale or conception.

None of this alters the facts that Utrecht is a good example of an old Dutch town and was thus a suitable choice for this study.

The sample

163 people living in various parts of the city were interviewed. They did not form a cross-section of the population; those with a high level of education were over-represented with a view to determining whether there was a significant correlation between education and the way in which monuments are experienced. In a cross-section of the population those with a higher level of education would be under-represented and this point could not be tested. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that the results of the study were not determined by the choice of respondents. We tested this, where possible, by looking at the differences in results between those with higher and lower levels of education, and then determining what the results would have been with a more representati sample. This comparison fulfilled our expectation that the findings

would reflect general trends in both the city's and the national population as a whole. Of course there will be differences between the city population, the national population and the group we interviewed, but not such as to distort the picture we obtained.

The interviews, held in June 1980, lasted for about an hour. Neither the interviewers nor the respondents were aware that the study was concerned with the experiencing of monuments having been given the impression that is was about the city of Utrecht in general. This was to prevent attitudes to monument preservation (or possible misconceptions about it) from influencing the reactions to the buildings shown.

The photographs

A series of 96 black and white photographs* was made of buildings in the town centre. Each respondent was shown a part of the series and asked to identify the site, and to state how beautiful or ugly he or she found it, and any other impressions it made. In addition questions were asked about sight-seeing in the centre, and social and personal background.

The series of photographs was intended to give as broad and representative a picture as possible of the inner city. The rules observed in planning the series and selecting the photographs were as follows:

1. The theme of the photograph was to be the buildings or the general street scene. People or accidental details (e.g greenery, advertisements and traffic) were not to dominate. Most of the photographs were taken on Sunday mornings in winter.
2. The series was to present a general survey of the buildings in Utrecht, with a balance between monuments and other buildings.

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* The photographs were taken by Wilbert Bouts and Paul Bröker both art history students at Utrecht, to whom we are greatly indebted.

Many types of building were represented: canal houses, public buildings, alms-houses and churches. All parts of the town centre were included.

3. Care was taken to ensure that the respondents would not be influenced by the quality of the photograph or the print. A particular effort was made to present the aesthetic qualities of modern buildings; in other words, "fair treatment" of all the buildings.

Identification of monuments

One important function which monuments can fulfil in a town is that they make it easier to identify. This is a proposition found in various publications on the useful effects of monuments.

Is this true, and what is the explanation for it?

The question of how people form an image of a town has been the subject of research since 1960 (Lynch, 1960). There is a well-established tradition of studies of so-called 'mental maps', the mental images which people have of an area. Subjects are asked to draw maps of urban environments well known to them. Analysis of these maps shows that they are constructed according to fixed principles. They present an outline image of the area in which relations are simplified and schematized into a straightforward pattern. The main features can invariably be divided into five categories: roads, districts, nodes, boundaries and recognition points.

It is easier to draw up a map of some towns than of others. They vary as to how easily they can be visualized and the extent to which people succeed in obtaining a clear picture of their structure. If so desired (and this is what underlies research into mental maps), the aim can be to make the shape of a town as recognizable as possible.

Monuments have a special place in the forming of an urban image. It is interesting to note that in the United States monuments are called 'landmarks', with the additional meaning of 'orientation point' or 'recognition point'. There has also been much research into mental maps in the Netherlands (beginning with De Jonge, 1962). The results show that monuments plan an important part in the drawings of maps. When asked to draw a map of an old Dutch town, many people will begin with the principal church, the Town Hall or some such building. Another typical element in Dutch towns, the

canals, will also feature prominently. De Jonge found that the well-known shape of the canals in Amsterdam meant that people found it relatively easy to draw a large part of the city correctly. Studies in other countries also show that the presence of water is a major structural element in the perceptual image of a town. Most people will probably have experienced how much easier it is to find the way in a strange town if there is a wide river; it functions as a point of orientation. The same is true of distinctive buildings such as churches and town halls.

One of the reasons for this is that to the stranger an urban environment may seem complex and chaotic. It cannot be taken in all at once (e.g. after looking at a map). What is needed is a point of entry to the chaos, a rule of thumb which will structure it. The features suitable for this purpose are those which are unique in the sense that they occur only once in a town. Thus large monuments and canals can be expected to make it more easy to visualize.

There is another reason why monuments, whether beside a canal or not, readily become points of identification. They are conspicuous because of their more individual appearance than modern buildings. They are also unique in that there is more to be learnt about them; there is a story behind them. These characteristics are emphasized by the names of streets and buildings which recall the history of the place. So it may be expected that monuments will be more readily identified than other buildings. Of course the fact that a street or building is a monument is not the sole or even most important factor here. There are other factors. Identification is most likely in the urban areas where people come most often. Advertisements in front of shops and buildings with a special function (town hall, theatre) also provide a fixed point. The proposition that monuments facilitate identification of a town does not imply that other factors are less important or negligible, merely that monuments have an extra effect.

Results of the study

The assumption that monuments facilitate identification was tested in two ways. In both cases the procedure was devised to eliminate the effect of such factors as the degree of familiarity with a street, the presence of advertisements, and buildings with a special function.

In the first method (linked pairs of photographs) the subjects were shown two different photographs of the same place. One showed the street as it is; the other was so taken that the significant monuments were missing. In some cases this was achieved by retouching (see Illus. 1a). When a tower rises behind a row of buildings, it can be blotted out without producing an unnatural view of the place. Where this was more difficult to do, the same effect was achieved by photographing the site from a different angle (see Illus. 1b) so that the monuments were not seen.

Only one of the photographs in each pair was shown to each group of subjects. If the presence of monuments made no difference, one would expect both photographs in each pair to be identified equally easily. However, this was not the case. Those in which the monument could be seen, or seen more clearly, were more readily identified than those in which it was not or less easily visible.

In the second method (correlation analysis) statistical techniques were used to eliminate the effects of a number of extraneous variables. The factors determining which photographs were most easily recognized proved to be:

- how often the subject passes that way;
- the length of the field of view on the photograph;
- the presence of shops and advertisements; and
- the presence of public buildings and places of entertainment.

Streets with monuments in fact turned out to be less easily identified because they are used less, tend not to present long views, and have fewer shops, advertisements, places of entertainment and public buildings. When the effects of these factors were

eliminated, it emerged that streets with monuments were indeed more readily identified than others.

This type of analysis also makes it possible to ascertain which kinds of monument are identified more readily than others. Two kinds were given special attention. The first were 'sights worth seeing', so called because they were described in the Tourist Office brochures and guides to the city. This category included the mediaeval churches. The second kind were views taken alongside canals. According to the argument put forward above, they could both be expected to aid identification, as indeed proved to be the case.

So the conclusion is that while the presence of monuments has less effect on the identification of street views than, for example, the presence of advertisements, the results are nonetheless quite clear and confirm the hypothesis that monuments contribute to the identification of a city.

Appreciation of monuments

One of the chief arguments for preserving monuments is that they are appreciated because of their beauty and because they improve the quality of the built-up environment. The criterion of 'beauty' occurs in the definition given in the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act and in other references to the value of monuments (Nelissen, 1974; Nelissen and De Vocht, 1976). In pursuing this theme, more radical arguments are often put forward concerning the beneficial effects of monuments. It is readily assumed that the welfare of a city's inhabitants largely depends on the presence of a well-preserved historic centre. We shall not go into these far-reaching claims, but content ourselves with examining whether it is true that people find monuments beautiful, whether this applies equally to all monuments, how large the difference is between monuments and other buildings, and whether this feeling is general or is stronger among certain sections of the population.

Results

Appreciation of monuments was examined in two ways. The first (open questions) consisted of putting the following questions to the subjects at the start of the interview:'Can you name two streets or buildings in the centre of Utrecht which you think particularly beautiful?','Can you name two streets or buildings in the centre of Utrecht which you think particularly ugly?' and 'Can you explain your choice?' These questions made no reference to monuments, and the choice of answer was completely free. The result was a wide variety of answers which posed many difficulties in analysis. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to summarize the answers in one sentence: all the places mentioned as beautiful were old and usually recognized as monuments; all the places mentioned as ugly were modern and seen as spoiling the historic look of the city. This summary covers 90% of the answers. The exceptions were the rare occasions when a modern building was named as beautiful, but these were always well known examples of modern architecture (e.g. the Schouwburg by Dudok and the Music Centre by Hertzberger) and the effect was cancelled out by the much higher frequency with which the same buildings were named as ugly. There were also a few cases in which older buildings were named as ugly, but without exception these were 19th century buildings in doubtful derivative or kitsch styles, and again the effect was cancelled out by the number of times the same buildings were named as beautiful. One detail worth remarking was that the choice of beautiful buildings covered a wide range in all parts of the town. The Dom complex and various canals were named equally often. The choice of ugly buildings was more specific and was concentrated in more than half the cases on the Hoog-Catharijne complex, the station and the Music Centre, i.e. the largest and most recent alteration to the historic appearance of the city.

It is less easy to discover any common thread in the reasons given for the choice. A great variety of reasons were given, some

of them difficult to interpret or merely paraphrases of 'beautiful' and 'ugly'. The most striking fact was that the choice of beautiful streets or buildings was most often accompanied by a reference to age: 'old', 'historic', 'associations' etc. The choice of ugly buildings and streets, however, was not explained on the grounds of modernity, the logical opposite, but rather with phrases such as 'does not belong there'. This suggests that it is not modernity in itself which is negatively judged but the alteration of the traditional appearance of an area.

The second method (judging photographs) was also designed to obtain an aesthetic judgement from the subjects and consisted of asking them to rank the series of photographs described above from 'very beautiful' to 'very ugly'. The characteristics of the streets and buildings shown in the photographs were then examined to establish what factors determined the ranking.

The order in which the photographs were ranked corresponded very closely to the official ranking of the buildings according to the criteria laid down in the Register of Protected Monuments and the official town conservation area description. Here again there was scarcely an exception to the rule that monuments were perceived as very beautiful and recent developments as very ugly; the ranking of the photographs corresponded very closely to the official ranking of the buildings in terms of their status as monuments. What is remarkable about this result is not so much the correspondence in itself, as the fact that it was so close. There is a striking similarity between the preferences of the experts and those of the average citizen. At the same time the most important factor in the subjects' ranking was the age of the building, not whether or not it was a monument. Clearly, it is difficult to draw a distinction between age and status as a monument. In practice virtually all monuments date

from before 1850. But the series of photographs included many post-1850 buildings of widely varying dates, and in their case the age of the building proved to be a decisive factor. There was a sharp difference between the rating given the Post Office from the 1920s and the Music Centre from the 1970s. This applied to all such comparisons. Figure 2 shows the characteristic way in which the rating relates to the age of the buildings. All buildings from before 1850 (i.e. all monuments) are found more or less equally beautiful, but after that date the older the building, the more beautiful it is found. Age is at least as significant as whether or not a building is a monument and - more important - is independent of the latter factor.

Age continues to be a factor even in comparisons between buildings which are not as old as monuments. It is valued for its own sake.

It may be wondered whether these findings apply in respect of the entire sample or relate only to people with a preference for older things, such as those with a higher level of education, who were over-represented in our study.

Are there any indications that some groups or individuals have a different set of preferences, in favour of the new or even rejecting the old?

The answer is brief: no. Not only was there a striking similarity between the taste of the respondents and that of the experts, but also between the respondents themselves. There was hardly anyone who consistently preferred modern or non-listed buildings, or even gave them an equal chance. It is certainly not the case that there is one particular group which makes a different choice between monuments and other buildings. To check this point we made a comparison between the preferences of:

- young and old people
- those with higher and lower levels of education
- those who said they never visited monuments and those who said they sometimes did
- those who said they disliked modern architecture and new buildings, and those who said they did not.

There was no difference between these groups, which shared a strong and roughly equal preference for monuments.

Why are monuments so highly valued?

The defenders of conservation not only say that monuments are highly valued; they also tells us why this is so. They point out that they differ from modern buildings in their range and variety. Modern buildings are said to be austere, lifeless and dull; monuments, on the other hand, are varied, individual and striking.

This explanation, which ascribes the value attached to monuments to the architectural and visual variety they offer, has a firm basis in psychology. There is a long and interesting tradition (going back to 1874) of studies of the value people place on variety in their surroundings. The basic premise is that in general people will prefer surroundings containing elements of interest. It has even been claimed that this is a biological need, and there is experimental evidence for this. Animal experiments have shown, for example, that on their way to food rats will make a detour if it takes them through a more visually stimulating corridor. This does not only apply to rats: in human experiments it has been found that people prefer pictures and sounds in which there is a variety of elements.

The relation between variety and appreciation is not at all straightforward. Beyond a certain point greater variety is valued less rather than more; it ceases to be pleasant and becomes chaotic and too complicated to manage. So there is an optimal level

of variety which lies between 'monotony' and 'chaos'. People prefer surroundings which allow them to experience things as they wish, to discover things for themselves, without being immediately overwhelmed by what is going on around them. So to offer optimal variety, an environment should provide plenty of opportunities for new experiences without forcing them on people. It should be possible for people to discover things at their own pace and according to their own preference.

This connection between variety and appreciation is a supposition about aesthetic values of general validity. It can be used to explain why people like buildings, but is also relevant in other fields. It has been applied extensively in research into appreciation of the arts, e.g. visual arts and music. Especially in the case of the latter, this branch of psychology - known as 'information aesthetics' - has frequently been used. Rather more closely allied to appreciation of monuments are the studies involving visual objects (paintings and drawings), as carried out by the Canadian psychologist Berlyne (1971). His example has been followed by Smets (Smets and Sente, 1979). Studies such as these are designed to answer the question of what we find beautiful. Berlyne believes that information aesthetics provides an answer to this question and to another: what is art? His theory is that art consists of objects which offer variety (information) in such a way that we never tire of looking at them. At the same time works of art are characterized by a composition, a structuring or ordering of the variety, which enables us to absorb the information gradually and according to need. The combination of order with a high degree of variety is what characterizes works of art which are generally adjusted to be beautiful.

Berlyne's theory is an extension of theories of aesthetics which go back to classical antiquity and are summarized in formulas such as 'art is order in variety'. The difference in Berlyne's approach is the attempt to measure characteristics such as order and variety in an experimental context, and to test the theory

by experience in controlled conditions.

The experimental approach has meant that most of the work in information aesthetics has been done with specially constructed objects rather than actual works of art. Berlyne (and Smets, following his example) used patterns of blocks and lines in which variety and order differed systematically. These studies confirmed the theory that a combination of order and variety is perceived as beautiful. But whether such things as paintings and buildings are looked at in the same way is a different matter. There has been a great deal of research into ways in which architecture is experienced, and this tends to confirm the work done in information aesthetics. These studies consistently show (Prak, 1979) that variety in buildings increases appreciation of them.

In the Netherlands a more specific application of Berlyne's theory was devised by the psychologist Schellekens (1976) in Eindhoven. Schellekens found that streets were most highly valued if they presented a combination of varied and stimulating elements (houses, traffic, things associated with excitement and activity) and tranquil elements (natural features such as greenery and water which are associated with quiet). Here again one may draw the conclusion that surroundings in which everyone is able to seek stimulation as they wish will be the most highly appreciated.

Information aesthetics would thus seem to yield a useful explanation of what is valued in urban surroundings. It identifies the elements necessary for a street to be perceived as beautiful. But can it also explain why monuments are rated as more beautiful than other buildings and streets? Age (listed buildings)is often associated with variety in the built-up environment. In the first Social and Cultural Report (SCP 1974), for instance, there is a section about living on new housing estates. The negative judgement

of such estates is ascribed to their low information value, which results in turn from standardization, the limited number of types of housing, economics of scale and segregation of functions. Indeed, it seems to be generally true that modern building, even when favourably viewed by professionals, can be distinguished from older building by the lack of non-functional elements such as projections and ornamentation.

There are other reasons for assuming that listed street, buildings and towns offer a particularly high degree of variety and stimulation. It is not just that there is a lot to see in such a street or town, but in a broader sense there is a lot to be learnt about it. 'Lots to see' means a multiplicity of elements, of streets which vary in shape, width and design. But 'lots to know' means the whole history and the stories associated with the growth of a town. In all kinds of ways a historic town is an endless source of variety and information in which one can satisfy one's curiosity according to taste. This applies equally to the casual visitor, who can discover a wealth of interesting and stimulating details, and someone who has known the town for years but keeps on discovering new things.

Results

The same series of 96 photographs was used to test whether old buildings are thought beautiful because of the architectural variety they offer. The questions examined were: Is it true that more varied streetviews are more highly appreciated? Is it true that monuments offer so much more variety than other buildings and streets?

The amount of variety in each photograph was determined by two methods. In the first (inventory of elements) a list was compiled of the various elements which might be shown, for example house façades (of different building materials, ornamentation, and other

aspects), and what there was to see in the street. Each photograph was divided into squares and a count made of the elements on the list. In this way the information value of each photograph was assessed: the greater the number of different elements, the greater the information value.

In the second method (comparison with example) the subjects were asked to rate all the photographs according to their correspondence to the examples shown in Figure 3a. The example on the left headed 'Lots to see' represents an object with a great deal of variety. This is represented by using a range of different letters in a mixture of upper and lower case. They are not mixed at random but are arranged in alphabetical order and according to various spatial patterns. The example on the right headed 'Little to see' represents lack of variety. Here only three letters are used, all upper case, and they are arranged in a simple pattern. These two examples served as the extremes between which the subjects were asked to score all the photographs. There was little difference between the subjects in the way they scored the series. However abstract the examples, and however indirect the link might seem to be with actual streets and buildings, each subject interpreted the relation between the examples and the photographs in the same way. More important, the results obtained with this method were highly consistent with those from the first method, the inventory of elements. Façades which were found to have many different elements by the first method were classified as 'Lots to see' by the subjects, and vice versa.

The same method (comparison with examples) was used to determine whether a view showed a high degree of order. The examples in figure 3b illustrate three ways of ordering visual information, again represented by letters:

1 linear design
2 symmetry and
3 likeness.

Here again the subjects largely agreed when comparing the photographs with these examples. Photographs judged to show a high degree of order were structured on straight lines, highly symmetrical and arranged in groups of like elements.

When we look at the relation between appreciation and the measures of variety and order (Fig. 4), we see the following:

- Views with a great deal of variety were generally found to be more beautiful than those with little variety.
- Views with a high degree of order were generally found to be less attractive than those with less order.
- The effect of variety depends on the degree of order.

When there was little order in the visual variety of photographs, they were all found to be more or less equally beautiful. In the case of highly ordered views, there proved to be a marked correlation between variety and appreciation. Highly ordered views with little variety were found to be very ugly, but the combination of highly ordered and great variety was found to be beautiful.

These results accord well with the theory of information aesthetics referred to above. Order reduces the effect of variety. The streets which people find ugly are characterized by a lack of variety and an excess of order.

When we look at the relation between whether something is classed as a monument and the measures for variety and order, we see the following:

- Streets with great variety are generally more highly appreciated than those with less, but the relation between variety and appreciation is much weaker than that between monument status/age and appreciation.
- Monuments are to some extent distinguished from other buildings by their greater variety, but the relation is much weaker than one would expect.

In other words, it is true that streets with a high degree of variety are more highly appreciated, but this is insufficient to explain the high valuation of monuments. In contrast to the premise described above, variety is not a feature which sharply divides monuments from other buildings or streets, or old buildings from new ones. There are modern and older, non-listed streets which, viewed objectively, offer just as much variety as those classed as monuments. These are rated more highly than modern streets with little variety, but still much lower than old streets classed as monuments.

If it is not variety which explains the high rating given to monuments, what is it? This question can be answered by bringing several other characteristics into the analysis. Accounting for the appreciation of monuments in terms of variety is a purely formal approach. Variety is treated as an "insubstantial' feature: the distribution of elements, regardless of what kind of elements they are. Lamp-posts and traffic lights add to the variety value just as much as sash-work in windows and shutters. Obviously, these things are not equally highly valued. They may contribute the same amount to the variety of a street, but they differ widely in their significance to the observer. Lamp-posts and traffic lights means cars and crowds, things which prompt a negative judgement. Sash-work and shutters mean transquillity and tradition, things which are judged positively. How can we take into account such associations? We drew up a list of elements in the photographs which in general produced a positive or negative reaction. These elements were then grouped into those which frequently occurred together or closely resembled each other, yielding a list of six variables which determine aesthetic judgement. Three evoke a negative reaction, and three a positive reaction.

Positive reactions are evoked by:

1. Differentiation in façades. This is found when there are many

different façades in a row of buildings, the façades or gable-lines are slanting, curved, or set back or projecting, and when the façades are highly ornamented or detailed. This 'differentiation' variable is related to and partly overlaps variety in general. But it does not include every form of variety; advertisements and shop signs are excluded. It represents variety in a traditional way, and so is not a purely abstract characteristic.

2. Use of traditional building materials such as brick, free-stone, stucco and roof tiles.
3. Points of rest in the city, in particular the canals, but also church squares and residential streets. Here there are natural elements such as water and greenery.

Negative reactions are evoked by:

4. The presence of large and small shops and offices.
5. The use of modern building materials such as concrete, glass and synthetics.
6. Traffic functions, as reflected in broad streets, the presence of traffic and associated apparatus (traffic lights, road signs), and bus routes.

Once a street has been scored on these six points, it is possible to predict accurately how beautiful or ugly it will be found. Moreover, and here we come back to the starting point, these features are so closely related to whether and to what extent streets and buildings are monuments that together they provide a satisfactory explanation for the high value put on monuments. Listed streets and buildings are appreciated for their function as resting-points, the highly differentiated façades, the use of traditional building materials, and for the absence of the typical features of modern streets - lots of shops, traffic and modern building materials.

At this point the reader may perhaps ask whether these six factors do not have a good deal in common. Isn't the use of modern building materials the same thing as the non-use of traditional building materials? Aren't resting points the opposite of shopping streets and traffic routes? Aren't the house façades along the canals always highly differentiated, and aren't they always built with traditional materials?

These are obvious questions and the results of the study show that there is something in them. There is a degree of overlapping between the features, but not as much as one might expect. On reflection this is understandable since their relative independence stems from the fact that the number of façades varies from street to street, and streets cannot always be easily classified according to function. Shops are to be found along the canals (Illus. 7) and traditional building materials and façades can be found in shop buildings. Not all the canals are free of traffic and they sometimes have parking meters (Illus.3).

In conclusion, we can say that despite some overlapping all six factors are needed to explain how the subjects rated the photographs, and thus why monuments are found to be beautiful. Figure 5 gives us a summary of these relations.

Few readers will be surprised by the six factors listed. They are after all features which generally influence everyone's judgement of a street. Nevertheless there are a few points worth making about this result.

First it shows that appreciation is not just a question of the buildings in a street, the line of façades. The element in the surroundings and the function of the area are at least as important. Restoring and cleaning the buildings alone is not enough, although this is important. The optimal effect is achieved only if this is combined with attention to the use of the street.

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Second, there is the relation between the explanation for the appreciation of monuments based on the purely formal factor 'variety' and the explanation based on more meaningful factors such as differentiation in façades, traditional and modern building materials, and shopping, traffic and resting-point functions. The purely formal explanation is inadequate. It implies that the use of variety in modern building will not produce an environment which is as highly valued as streets classed as monuments. Varied modern building is more highly valued than unvaried modern building, but it is no substitute for the qualities represented by old, and especially very old, buildings. The study shows that the traditional, the old in itself, is highly valued. This is also shown by the dominant role of the age of buildings in the evaluation of the photographs (see Fig 2).

The main conclusions as regards appreciation of monuments are thus:

- Monuments are perceived as much more beautiful than other streets and buildings, and this feeling is shared generally. There is close consonance between the official evaluation and the views of the sample, and between the individual subjects.
- In so far as there are differences between the offical classification of monuments and the evaluation of the sample, it can be stated that the latter has a stronger preference for the really old and traditional.
- The visual variety offered by monuments only partly explains why they are highly valued. While streets with more variety are more highly valued, those classed as monuments are only slightly more varied than others.
- The value placed on monuments is to an important extent due to other factors: traditional design and building materials, their function as a point of rest, the lack of modern materials and of shops and traffic. In general, streets and buildings are valued because they are old, regardless of whether or not they are monuments.

Our findings are summarized in Figure 6, in which various types of streets and buildings are ranked according to the sample's assessment.

Viewing monuments

In this study we also looked at another way of experiencing monuments: going to view them. People who are not particularly interested in monuments may recognize and appreciate them while in the city centre for other reasons, for example work or shopping. But making a special journey to see monuments takes time and trouble. It may not be much, but some effort will be involved.

We made a comparison between going to view monuments and other kinds of cultural activity such as going to the cinema, the theatre, concerts and museums. A great deal of research has been done in the Netherlands and other countries on the subject of cultural activity. A consistent conclusion in virtually all these studies is that participation in cultural activities varies widely between different groups in the population. Two points regularly emerge from these studies:

1 Participation on one type of activity goes with participation in others. People who visit museums go relatively more often to the theatre, concerts, films, etc. The correlation is quite high, which suggests that there is a strong underlying factor. This is remarkable because one would expect an element of competition between these activities: people who go to the cinema often have less time to go to the theatre. But their close relation obviously offsets the negative effect one would otherwise expect.

2 The amount of cultural activity varies greatly between those with high and low social status. Social status can be measured in terms of income, occupation or education. Culturally active people have a high income, a prestigious occupation and a high level of education. All these characteristics go with being culturally active, but the greatest differences are due to the education factor. The relation between education and cultural participation is unusually close by the social research standards.

In connection with these results it should be noted that many, not least the government providing the subsidies, are unhappy about this situation. There is a feeling that public funds are being spent on a group of people who already enjoy a rather privileged position in society. The subsidies provided for cultural bodies through different channels always seem to end up benefiting the same group. For years government objectives in this field have included 'popular education','broad dissemination of culture' and 'equality of opportunity', but there is little evidence that any of these aims are being achieved.

What is the reason for this form of social inequality? Why has it not disappeared or been considerably reduced over the years? Why is cultural participation so closely related to education, and so much less to income or occupation?

Research on the subject has produced plenty of ideas but few clear answers. One popular theory is that cultural activity confers status. People with a high social status are supposed to want to emphasize this by being seen at concerts and in the theatre. Another factor might be the nature of what is offered. The subjects dealt with in plays and films might be of particular interest to high-status goups.

These ideas are also current in the field of monument preservation. We have mentioned (p.8) the criticism that monuments are enjoyed by a contemporary social elite because preservation is focused on buildings associated with past (and present) elites.

This does not seem implausible, but this line of argument needs to be looked at critically. For one thing it does not explain why education shoud be by far the most important factor. A better explanation may perhaps be found in the theory of the French sociologist Bourdieu (1968), which links up with the ideas on appreciation of art discussed above. Bourdieu suggests that the main factor in participation is the extent to which the individual is capable of assimilating, understanding and thus enjoying what he sees and hears. A work of art presents a 'code' which the spectato

must decipher. Enjoyment of cultural activity depends on the ability to do this.

Various factors can promote this ability to 'decode' art. The most important is education, both because it is a process of sifting intellectual capacities and because it provides knowledge of culture (and thus an understanding of the 'codes'). This theory also helps to explain the tendency to participate in various activities: enjoying one art form increases the ability to enjoy others.

The question we asked was whether viewing monuments followed the same pattern as other types of cultural activity and, in particular, whether it was most popular with a highly educated elite.

Results

We have not compared the different explanations for cultural participation or systematically tested Bourdieu's theory to explain the importance of education. We have, however, made a comparison between viewing monuments and attendance at plays, films, concerts and museums. We found the following:

1 Viewing monuments is indeed associated with the other traditional cultural activity but only marginally. There is an evident link between this and other activities, but it is relatively weak.
2 We confirmed that education is the main factor determining the degree of cultural participation, but again this is less pronounced in the case of viewing monuments. Table 7 shows the wide difference between those with the lowest and highest levels of education. By weighing the data so as to be representative of the educational activities of the population as a whole, we were able to estimate what percentage of the population participates in the various cultural activities. It can be seen that viewing monuments is relatively popular, and that in the case of this activity the differences according to level of education are the smallest.

We conclude that claims that only an elite goes to view monuments are considerably exaggerated. There is a relation between this activity and educational level, but much less so than with other cultural activities.

This result does no more than pose a problem for further research: why does viewing monuments differ from other cultural activities? Can Bourdieu's theory, based on the ability to 'decode' a work of art, offer an explanation? These and other questions will be examined in further research.

Conclusions

The main results of the study may be summarized as follows:
1 Monuments are points of identification in the urban environment
2 Monuments are adjudged much more beautiful than other streets and buildings. To a small extent this is due to the greater visual variety which monuments offer, but a more important factor is the general preference for a traditional environment as such. In addition, monuments more often have functions with positive rather than negative associations.
3 Those who go to view monuments cover a wider social range than those who take part in other cultural activities. Viewing monuments is relatively popular and is not limited to a highly educated cultural elite.

These results present quite a favourable picture of the effects of monuments and their preservation. To what extent are these results generally applicable?

This study has a number of limitations:
- It only deals with the situation at one particular point in time.
- It only covers the monuments in one city.
- It was conducted among a selected group of the city's inhabitants.

This sample was not strictly representative of the national population. The selection of the sample was such that those with a high level of education would be over-represented, which led to a corresponding over-representation of young people and people with a prestigious occupation. However, it must be emphasized that this did not mean that the group included no one with a low level of education, etc. It was perfectly possible to compare those with high and low levels of education.
- The study was concerned with a limited number of aspects of the impact of monuments. We concentrated on the effects of monuments on people. We did not ask them for their views on monuments in general or their preservation, and we did not concern ourselves

with how people view government involvement in this field.

The question may be asked whether these limitations influenced the result. Would it have been different had the study been made at a different time, in a different town, with a more representative group of subjects, or if we had examined other aspects?

The answers to such questions can only be speculation, since only new research could establish the truth. But there are reasonable grounds for assuming that the result was not greatly affected by the area or sample selected. As far as the area is concerned, we would point out that our results agree reasonably well with those of studies done elsewhere where they are comparable. As regards the sample, it may be stated that comparisons within the group, for example of young with old, or the more with the less educated, revealed no consistent differences in their evaluation of monuments. So it is reasonable to assume that if the study were repeated in other places with other subjects the results would be broadly the same.

There may be little reason to attribute the favourable picture of monument preservation which emerged from the study to the choice of area or subjects, but it is a moot point whether this would still apply if other aspects were investigated. It might well be that appreciation of monuments is not the same as appreciation of preservation. The study showed that a wide social range of people goes to view monuments, but this is not necessarily incompatible with the idea that the work of preservation is limited to a closed social group or elite. In this respect a general conclusion cannot be drawn from our results, but there are limits to the number of questions that can be examined in one study. Other aspects will be discussed in the report on the second phase of this study.

Our conclusion that monuments are highly valued by all may also raise some doubts. Could this be a temporary phenomenon? Could appreciation of monuments have something to do with a passing

feeling of nostalgia? What was the position 20 years ago, and what will it be 20 years from now?

Again, these are questions which can only be answered by comparing different studies. Meanwhile, one or two observations may be made. First, the idea that appreciation of monuments may be a temporary phenomenon is based on the rather too easy assumption that it is directly related to the nostalgic sentiments currently evident in social action and reaction. The fact that at present a great deal is clearly being done to preserve monuments, and 20 years ago considerably less, does not necessarily mean that people's basic attitudes have changed. The reason might also lie in the deterioration of the environment. Those who are only happy in an environment with pure water, clean air and monuments have rather more reason to take action these days than 20 years ago. Second, the fact that monuments have come to be appreciated only recently (assuming this to be the case) does not mean that this feeling will not last. A possible explanation for this growing appreciation could be sought in the changing socio-economic circumstances. At the time of post-war reconstruction and economic growth less attention was paid to the quality of the physical environment. Now that problems have arisen and expectations are less exclusively centred on growth of income, greater attention is being given to the quality of our surroundings. Of course, this is only speculation, but it may serve as a warning against drawing the hasty conclusion that the appreciation of monuments revealed in this study is merely a temporary phenomenon. It may well prove to be of lasting significance.

The results of the study and monuments policy.

This study was designed with general and theoretical aims in mind. On the basis of the results we can make some comments on the policy to be followed in relation to our field of research. What are we to understand by 'the experiential value', and what is the function of this type of research in determining this value?

The experiential value as an argument for protecting monuments

In discussions on preservation it is sometimes suggested that the experiential value of a building should be added to the existing criteria for protection. This suggestion is often heard in the context of the decentralisation described above based on the idea that the implementation of policy should be 'closer to the people'. This means not only transferring responsibility to local authorities, but also bringing policy more closely into line with the needs and preferences of the general public. Thus it would seem logical to take into account the value people attach t· historic buildings when decisions on protection are made.

Decentralisation has been studied by the Institute of Land-Use Planning and Housing (NIROV) (Nijhoff, 1980), and the Van de Bunt Organisation Bureau has made administrative proposals (Colthof and Van Leeuwen, 1981). The main proposal is that monuments should be classified according to their international/national, regional and local importance, and the relevant level of government made responsible for their protection. In both these studies it is suggested that in the process of decentralisation more account should be taken of the experiential value of monuments, but neither says exactly how this should be done.

How could these ideas be put into practice? One possibility is to amend the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act. At present this limits protection to those buildings which are of public interest because of their beauty, their importance to science and learning, or their ethnological value. 'Experiential value could be added to this list, for example as 'of particular significance to the population', or by including a reference to a 'general feeling' to which the criteria mentioned would refer. It remains open to doubt whether such an amendment to the Act would be of any use. The introduction of experiential value as a criterion for protection would undeniably indicate a more populist policy. Two conclusions can be drawn as to the changes likely to result:

- Selection made on this basis would not facilitate the inclusion of comparatively new categories such as housing, industrial buildings and new architecture. The results of this study support the view that a list of monuments compiled according to this criterion would largely contain very old and very traditional buildings. The attention given recently to modern architecture and the importance attached to historic developments would seem to reflect the preferences of those currently in charge of selection not those of the public.
- A similar situation would apply to restoration. People react to the appearance of buildings, and it would thus be logical to conclude that the public would be equally satisfied if only façades were restored, or if a new building was designed in a quasi- or fake traditional style. The picturesque is what counts and there is little concern with whether restoration is historically accurate. The public at large has no great interest in the questions which are present of major importance in preservation: how is a particular building to be preserved; precisely which materials and style are appropriate?

This brings us to a point well worth thinking about. In the historical development of views on preservation which we have described, there are two parallel trends. They are often seen as connected, but they may also pull in different directions.
1 There is a trend towards the preservation of more everyday buildings such as ordinary houses, farms, factories and public housing.
2 This is thought of as being in response to the criticism that preservation is elitist.

The connection made between these two trends is far from inevitable indeed, it would seem to be more the case that the one exists at the expense of the other. It is reasonable to assume that the experts attach value to things that are of cultural and historical interest, while the public values things which are beautiful. Among the experts there is a growing tendency to protect

the interesting rather than the beautiful, and to concern themselves more with the reconstruction of history than with aesthetic values. This is not compatible with the desire to make the tastes of the public a criterion for protection and restoration.

In this connection we can also doubt the wisdom of proposals that the preservation of monuments be made an integral part of physical planning policy. This would change the essential character of preservation. Protection and restoration as carried out at present are approved by the public, but the changes which would result from an approach based on the experiential value of monuments would be incompatible with the objectives of preservation. This positive reception on the part of the public may be regarded as no more than a fortunate by-product which gives reason for qualification. It does not have to be made the guiding principle of protection and preservation.

If it is thought important to adapt the built-up environment according to the preference of the public, this should not apply only to historic areas. Wide differences in the appreciation of built-up surroundings, as revealed in our study, will be found everywhere, not just in historic areas. Attempts to enhance the experiential value of an environment ought to follow the same principles in both protected and more recent and unprotected areas. It is reasonable to expect that here too quiet functions and traditional design and materials will increase appreciation while traffic, shops and modern materials will diminish it. If preservation were adapted to suit the preferences of the public, it would be close to becoming a kind of welfare supervision (the aesthetics committee), with the emphasis on the outward appearance of buildings and the general lay-out of an area. These are matters which do not belong in the restricted, historical context of monument preservation but rather in the wider sphere of welfare policy.

The function of this type of research

If the experiental value of an environment is to be taken into account in policy-making, a method for determining that value will be needed. The obvious way would be to put questions to the public, using the methods adopted for this study. Municipalitie carry out public surveys for all kinds of purposes, and a questionnaire could be drawn up with such questions as 'What do you find beautiful?' ' What do you think ought to be protected?' These open questions could be supplemented by others on photographs of particular streets and buildings. Our study shows that a small group of respondents is sufficient to establish the general picture

However, we would not recommend making such a procedure standard practice. The reason is quite simple: the results of this kind of survey would be a list no different from that which would be drawn up in a couple of afternoons by a good, broadly-based monuments committee in close touch with the area for which it is responsible There are no grounds for fearing that there would be significant differences in taste between the experts and laymen. In cases where such a committee failed to arrive at a final conclusion owing to lack of knowledge of the field, the local residents could be consulted and could express their views by methods less costly than sociological research.

If experiential value is to be a criterion for protection and preservation, it is important that it be applied by the experts responsible for selection instead of being laboriously quantified in each and every case by public surveys. There will be no real discrepancy between the experts' assessment and that of the public, and even if this occasionally occurs it will be because public taste has not or not yet responded to the cultural and historical value of a building: a good reason for distrusting the public taste.

ILLUS. 1A: IDENTIFICATION OF MONUMENTS, THE OUDEGRACHT WITH AND WITHOUT THE DOM

An example of the first method of testing whether monuments are an aid in identification. The same photograph of the Oudegracht is shown twice, but in the picture on the right the Dom Tower has been obliterated, without this producing an 'unnatural' view. Neither the interviewers nor those interviewed noticed the retouching. The photo with the Dom was immediately and correctly recognized by 84% of those interviewed, the photo without the Dom by 59%.

ILLUS. 1B: IDENTIFICATION OF MONUMENTS, PAUSDAM WITH AND WITHOUT THE PAUSHUIS

An example of the second method of testing whether monuments are an aid to identification. In the first photograph the Paushuis, a notable and well-known monument with a long history, can be seen. The second photograph shows the same site but the Paushuis is not visible. The first photograph was immediately and correctly identified by 57% of those interviewed, the second by 38%.

ILLUS. 2: CLOISTER IN THE DOM

The Gothic Cloister in the Dom has a long history of restoration. It has been rebuilt twice in the last 100 years, the first time by the architect Cuypers, who made additions using various materials according to his own ideas. A further restoration, on different principles, was carried out in the 1960 s, when Cuypers additions were removed and new ornamentation added. The result was highly valued by the respondents, who chose this as the most beautiful photograph out of the series of 96. The cloister is a good illustration of the elements required for aesthetic satisfaction. It offers a wide variety of materials and

forms within a small area, and there is a great deal to be enjoyed. But it is important that this variety is kept within bounds by a strong composition based on the repetition of symmetrical elements. As a result it has immediate appeal, but also reveals new aspects after repeated viewing. Another reason for its high rating is the tranquillity which the garden offers in the heart of the city.

ILLUS. 3: LICHTEGAARD

This row of houses on the Lichtegaard is an example of the type of restoration which seems likely to become a thing of the past. If one compares this with a photograph taken 50 years ago, it is hard to recognize it as the same place. At that time there was no sash-work in the windows or shutters, and the third house from the left did not have its present ornate gable. The basis for the newly built 'historic' gable which it now has was an 18th century print by the artist Jan de Beyer. The current trend is away from this kind of radical restoration, in contradistinction to the experiential value of the row of houses shown here. This photograph was rated slightly lower than general views of the canals, but is was among the most highly rated photographs showing only house façades.

ILLUS. 4: AGNIETENSTRAAT - PALLAESKAMEREN

'Kameren' were small homes built by the rich and generous (in this case Maria van Pallaes) to house the needy. They were an early form of public housing and this example dates from the 17th century. Because of its age, it is listed as a monument, but in contrast to many larger historic buildings the 'kameren' have been somewhat neglected. They continued to be built until the end of the last century, and in Utrecht they can be found in the older suburbs as well as the city centre.

Many of the more recent examples are not protected and a substantial number have been demolished. In recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in their conservation and in the idea of their use, after restoration, as housing for single persons. They have been referred to as examples of 'monuments of ordinary folk' which have so far been neglected in monument policy. This argument is not entirely convincing. The 'kameren' are often extremely dilapidated and it would be very expensive to restore and maintain them. It is also doubtful whether restoration according to historical principles would produce housing acceptable by modern standards. As far as their outward appearancd is concerned, the simple design of this and other examples was judged to be leas attractive than larger historic buildings, although they were still favourably assessed.

ILLUS 5: LEPELENBURG - HUIS LIEVENDAL

Huis Lievendal was built when the old city fortifications were dismantled situated on the Lepelenburg defensive earth-work, it is an example of the neo-classical style in which many of the 19th century buildings along the city's canals were built. Most of these buildings are not yet listed as monuments, but it is likely that increasing numbers of them will be listed in the future. The sample found these houses, and this one in particular, very attractive. Neo-classical and neo-gothic buildings were generally valued less highly than older, officially recognized monuments, but nonetheless considerably higher than 20th-century buildings.

ILLUS 6 : VOORSTRAAT - GROOT VLEESHUIS (IN DE OSSEKOP)

The 17th-century Vleeshuis (abattoir) in baroque style is commended as a noneworthy monument. It has a long history going back to

1450 and is associalted with the interesting story of the butchers' guild. Moreover, an appropriate use for the building has been found. Nevertheless, this photograph was rated only average. This illustrates what happens when a monument is treated as a separate building and restored while nothing is done about its surroundings (modern buildings, busy traffic routes).

ILLUS 7: VISMARKT

This view of the Vismarkt (Fish Market) was highly rated, though not quite as highly as views of the canals with rather more natural features. It is a favoured subject for picture postcards and pen-and-ink drawings sold to tourists. The high rating is due to the variety provided by the large number of buildings, each presenting a different façade, which largely offsets the negative effect of the shops and traffic on this section of the canal. But there is not a high concentration of listed buildings here. The canal and the cellars under the houses (which contain archaeological remains) are protected, but most of the houses are not. In the terminology used for protected townscapes they are classified only as 'visually neutral' or'visually disturbing'. So this is a good example of a case in which the sample's response to buildings and the views of those responsible for preserving monuments diverge. The former attaches a high value to the traditionally attractive view, the 'picture postcard' aspect, while this is valued much less by the offical body concerned.

ILLUS 8: NEUDE - POST OFFICE

This post office by Crouwel (1924) is built in a style which made Dutch architects internationally known: the Amsterdam School. At present only a few examples of this style are listed as monuments. The experts on historic buildings are however beginning to show more appreciation of buildings in this style. The post office

shown here is classified as 'visually neutral' in the official description of the Protected Townscape, while more modern buildings in the vicinity are labelled 'visually disturbing'. This photograph shows the post office from its best side. A conspicuously large building, it disturbs the view of the Oudegracht because it is so out of proportion.

The sample's assessment of this building (and others in the same style) agrees with official taste, but is divided. In reply to the open questions the post office was repeatedly named as the 'most beautiful' or the 'ugliest' building in Utrecht. This photograph was rated somewhat below the middle of the scale, i.e. lower than older, officially recognized monuments and 19th-century neo-classical and neo-gothic, but considerably above modern buildings of the last 40 years.

ILLUS 9A: LUCAS BOLWERK - STADSSCHOUWBURG

The Stadsschouwburg (Municipal Theatre) was designed by the internationally renowned architect Dudok. Although it dates from 1940 it has a surprisingly modern appearance. Apart form its generally acknowledged architectural merit, it has a delightful setting, with the Lucas Bolwerk gardens on one side and the Stadsbuitengracht, the city's outer canal, on the other. It is an example of a building which in due course (after 1990) will probably be listed as a monument.

Nonetheless the citizens of Utrecht don't like it. It was quite often named as the 'ugliest' building in the city, and on average it was rated far below protected monuments and late 19th and early 20th century buildings (see ILLUS 9b).

ILLUS 9B: LUCAS BOLWERK - NOBELSTRAAT

In contrast to the theatre just round the corner, these buildings date from before 1900 but are not listed as monuments. This view was rated relatively highly and above many protected streets. The reason for this lies in the great variety of the façades. The houses are divided on the traditional pattern and the line of the façades is very uneven. The design is traditional and closer to building styles before 1850 than the neo-classical variant (see ILLUS 5)

ILLUS 10: MODERN HOUSING IN AN ADAPTED STYLE (ARENTSZSTRAAT)

These new houses have been built in the old city centre in a specially adapted style. Architects have greeted this style with mixed feelings, as shown by the name 'new quaintness' frequently used to describe it. The idea is to adapt new housing to the existing character of an area so that in scale and appearance there will be some correspondence rather than a total contrast. The devices adopted are pointed roofs, brick (over a concrete framework), small balconies and short flights of steps. Architects have criticized this as showing a lack of originality or daring, but our survey showed that this style appeals to the public. This photograph was rated considerably higher than many views of monuments or of 20th-century architecture of recognized merit.

ILLUS 11: VREEBURG, EAST FRONT

Like all the views taken in the area of the Hoog-Catharijne complex and the Vreeburg, this was given a very low rating. But this photograph does present a good range of 20th-century commercial architecture. When one looks beyond the advertising signs a large Jugendstil building is to be seen together with representative samples of architectural styles since 1940. If the viewer

is prepared to look at these buildings objectively, it has to be admitted that the claim that modern architecture is standardized and monotonous does not apply here. On the contrary, there is a great variety of forms and materials. Indeed, this is a case which refutes the theory that streets are found attractive according to the variety they offer. The respondents noted the variety present, but this did not result in a high rating. Their negative reaction is based on the presence of shops and offices, the association with traffic congestion, and the feeling that the traditional character of the place has been lost.

ILLUS 12: BREEDSTRAAT - THE COSTUME MUSEUM

Thisview is highly valued by both the public and those responsible for the care of monuments. But why is this? The idea that monuments offer so much more variety hardly applies here. Seen at this distance, these three buildings are very simple in design. The facades are comparatively free of ornamentation, and the repetition of symmetrical motifs produces little variety. In theory this should lead to a low rating. The reason that it does not is because these buildings are the prototype of traditional Dutch domestic architecture, and it has always been felt that they were eminently worthy of protection. Our survey shows that the public agrees. If future trends follow the present criticism of monument policy, it is likely that buildings such as these will be thought less important. This would lead to a divergence between the official view and the response of the public.

ILLUS 13: HOOG-CATHARIJNE - BOVEN-CLARENBURG

By a clear margin this photograph received the lowest rating of the whole series of 96. It is one of a group showing the Hoog-Catharijne shopping complex and the Vreeburg. Here again, the negative response cannot be explained on the ground of dull

or monotonous design. On the contrary, someone seeing this for the first time might perhaps gain an impression of chaos, and be unable to say exactly what was depicted. This is due to the wide variety of materials and the number of planes shown in the photograph. The extremely negative response to the photograph stems from the association with the crowds seen here at normal times, the consistently modern design, and the fact that the Hoog-Catharijne complex is the largest single change in the traditional look of the city.

ILLUS 14: NIEUWEGRACHT

The Nieuwegracht is among the most fully protected streets in Utrecht. Not only the houses but the canal wharf and bridges are protected. This photograph was given the third highest rating in the series of 96. It presents just about all the elements which were found to make streets attractive. First, there are the elements of water and greenery, together with the absence of traffic and shops. Moreover, the buildings are small in scale, clearly distinct one from another, and rich in detail. Lastly, the view possesses the natural harmony of traditional urban architecture, undisturbed by contrasting modern elements. The many elements merge to form an orderly composition based on the lines of the canal and the wharf receding into the distance.

ILLUS 15: SMAKKELAARSBRUG - CATHARIJNEBAAN

This is an example of new development in the old part of the city. The outer canal which used to be here has been filled in and replaced by a dual carriageway. The elevated passageways serve to join the old inner city with the station and the Jaarbeurs buildings behind it. Whatever one may think of the merits of such radical schemes, it must be admitted that there is a carefully thought out planning and architectural design behind the Hoog-Catharijne complex, and that a good deal of attention has been

paid to the visual aspect. This photograph taken from the Smakkelaarsbrug shows that the result can produce surprising views which might conceivably be thought 'beautiful'. At any rate, the photographers were very pleased with this picture.

This was not the case with the respondents. Like all other photographers of the Hoog-Catharijne complex, this received a low rating attributable to the obvious association with a shopping centre and road traffic, and the modern design featuring the high symmetrical use of materials such as glass and concrete.

Table 1: Government spending on the preservation of monuments from 1971 to 1982 (in millions of guilders)

	'71	'73	'75	'76	'77	'78	'79	'80	'81	'82
Total government spending on monuments	71	121	195	224	228	249	260			
As % of total government spending	0.18	0.24	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	0.25			
Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Work (CRM) restoration grants	42	49	76	83	89	97	114	114	106[2]	104[2]
Index[1]	109	100	117	116	115	117	129			
Employment subsidies via CRM	-	13	33	50	37	28	14	15		
CRM total	42	62	111	134	127	125	128	129		
Index[1]	86	100	135	147	130	119	114			
Of which for large monuments (%)			75	61	64	61	62	63		
Of which for dwelling-houses (%)			19	21	14	19	16	12		
Of which for town and village conservation areas (%)			4	11	17	15	19	19		
Others (%)			3	7	5	5	3	7		

[1] Based on index of restoration costs in 1973 = 100.

[2] Budget

(Sources: Central Office of Statistics, Department for the Preservation of Monuments and Historic Buildings, Government budget).

Figure 2: The age of streets and buildings and their rating.

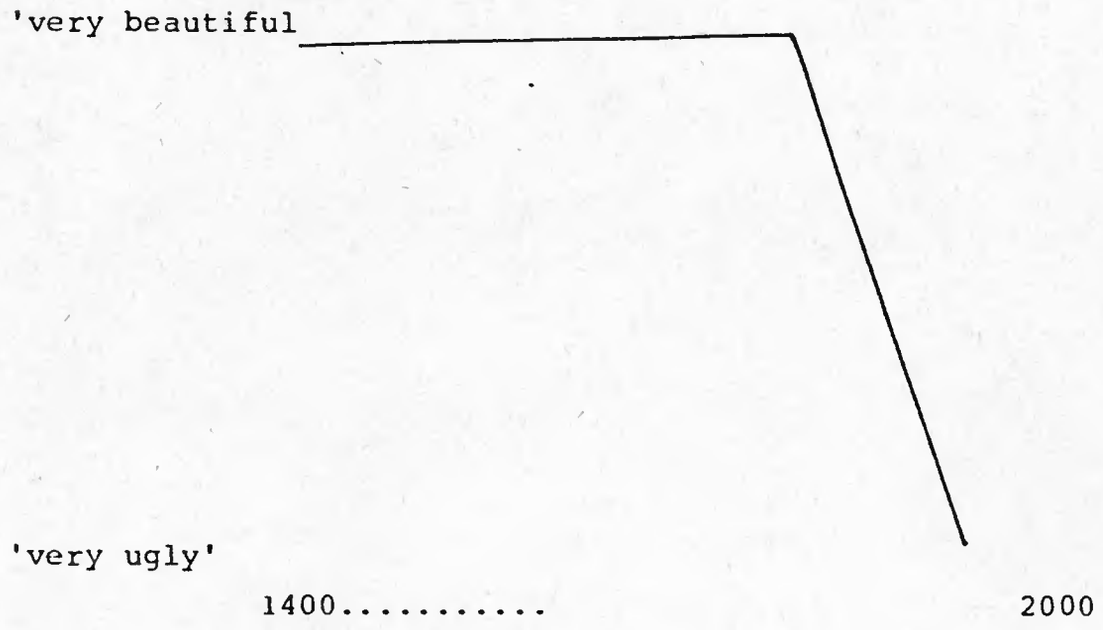

Figure 3a: Examples used in scoring street views for'variety'.

LOTS TO SEE LITTLE TO SEE

Figure 3b: Examples used in scoring street views for 'order'.

LINEAR DESIGN SYMMETRY LIKENESS

Figure 4: Rating of streets and buildings as a function of 'variety' according to 'high level of order' (+) and 'low level of order' (-).

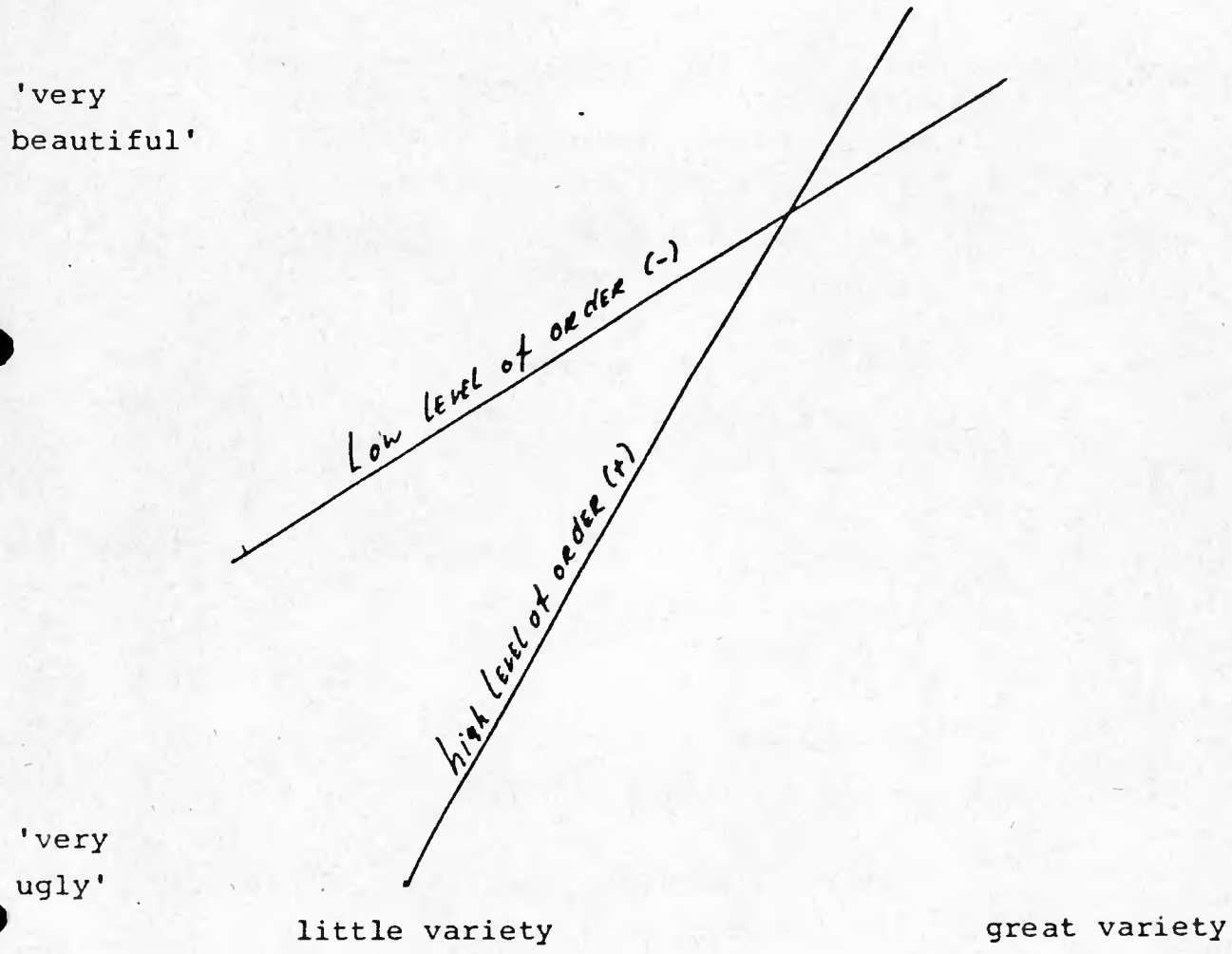

Figure 5: Factors which determine the rating given to streets and explain the rating of monuments

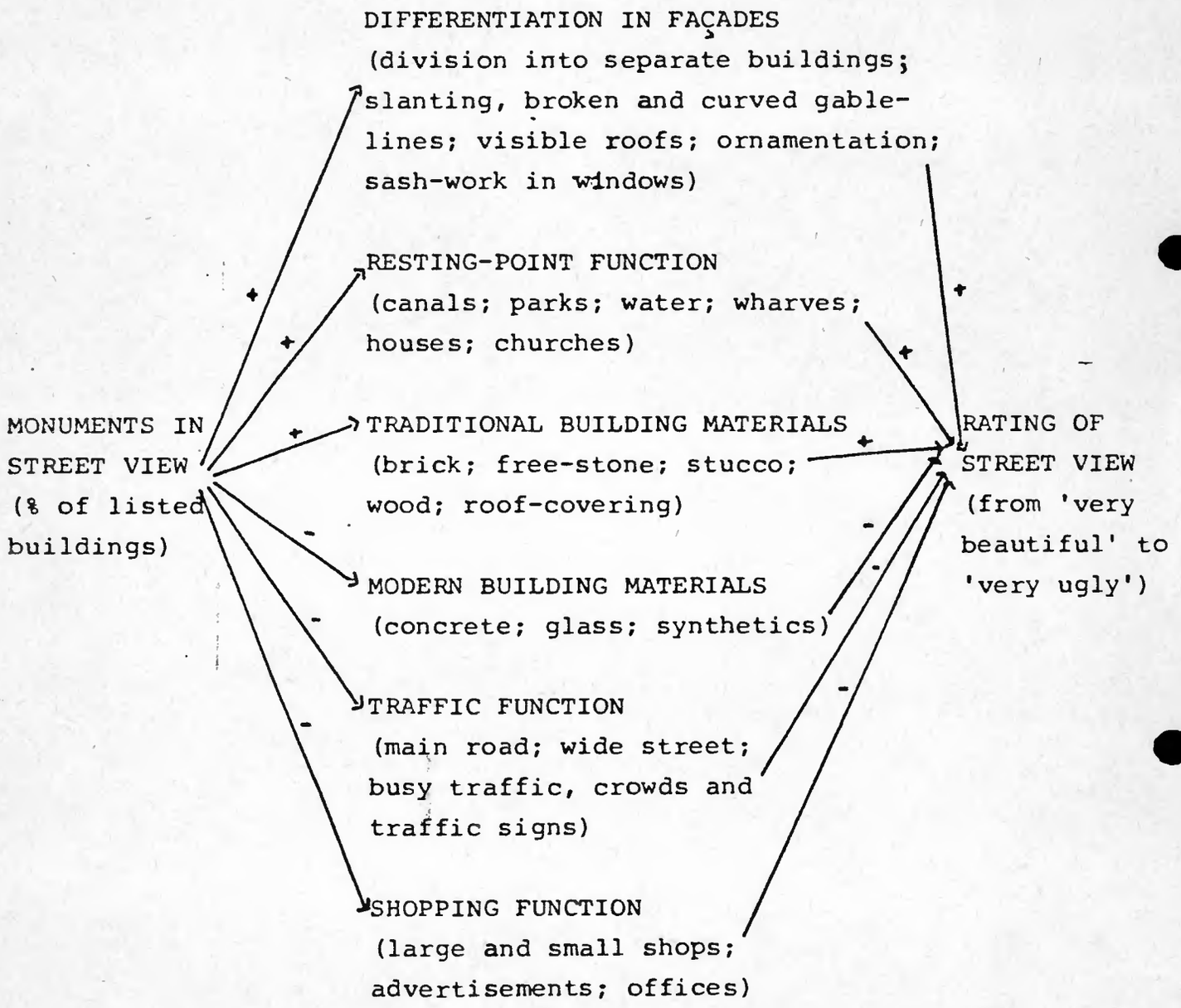

Figure 6 Rating of various types of street view

'VERY BEAUTIFUL'		ILLUS.
x----	Views of canals with historic buildings and many natural elements	1a, 14
x----	Large buildings	1b
x----	Mediaeval churches	2
x----	Canal houses without natural elements	3,7
x----	Smaller historic streets	12
x----	19th century, neo-renaissance	
x----	17th century, alms-houses	4
x----	Canals with few natural elements, 19th century Empire-style	
x----	17th century, buildings in unadapted surroundings	6
x----	Town Hall, neo-classical 19th century	
x----	19th century, neo-gothic	
x----	19th century, neo-classical stucco	5
x----	19th century, typical streets	9b
x----	Post Office, Amsterdam School, 1921	8
x----	19th century, shopping street	
x----	Stadsschouwburg (Dudok), 1940	9a
x----	Modern housing in adapted style, post 1970	10
x----	Vreeburg Music Centre (Hertzberger)	
x----	Hoog-Catharijne, large-scale new development, 1975	15
x----	Unadapted modern building 1960	
x----	Older road development scheme	
x----	Views inside Hoog-Catharijne complex	13

'VERY UGLY'

Table 7: Participation (%) in 5 types of cultural activity (N=163)

	Monuments	Museum	Theatre	Music	Film
Over all groups (weighted)	69	43	46	37	55
Lowest level of education (primary)	60	32	31	15	32
Highest level of education (university)	88	67	89	93	98