

The Braak and Rhenish Complex

Active workshop and presentation - report

Date	3 rd and 15 th of December 2011
Present	Cyril Carton – Virgini Ryckeboer See attendees list
Location	P.J. Olivier Art Center en Municipality
Points	Contents of the workshop and presentation Results of the survey Opinions on the proposals Working points

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Content of the workshop at the P.J. Oliver Art Centre (3rd of December)

On December the 3rd 2011 we organized an active workshop for the local community. Everybody in Stellenbosch was invited. On one hand the purpose of the workshop was to spread the knowledge of our work already done and proposals to the community and on the other hand to search for the views and opinions of the community.

First we introduced the framework of our work. We revealed the object of research, the problems and the different questions. Thereafter, the proposals and possible solutions were introduced. Using displays at A1 size, visitors could then actively express their views and ideas on the proposals. At the end of the workshop there was time for an open discussion. In conclusion, every attendee was given a survey where a few questions were asked.

Conclusion of the survey¹

The Braak is currently defined as a moderate place. On the one hand the green square suffers several negative points such as the lack of a clearly defined function, a shortage of clean public toilets, the feeling of unsafety and alcohol abuse that in consequence is associated with segregation and pollution. On the other hand the central square has a lot of potential. The historic buildings, its central location, the grass and its historical value make sure that the square has it what it takes to be better utilized. The proposal named 'Breakthrough' was positive rated.

Content of the presentation at the municipality (15th of December)

On December 15th 2011 we organized a presentation for our colleagues of the municipality of Stellenbosch. On one hand the purpose of the presentation was to spread the knowledge of our work already done and proposals to the colleagues we worked with almost every day during our stay. On the other hand we wanted to search for the views and opinions of our colleagues. After the presentation there was time for a discussion. At this presentation we did not hand out a survey.

Remarks at the discussion after the presentation at the municipality

The public space as a place of interaction

The public space is a place of interaction, a place where space, people, buildings and time are intertwined. Public space needs to encourage and strengthen this interaction. The texture of public space is of great importance here. The texture of the Braak, here grass, provides a specific use, namely resting and sleeping. On a stone surface, one will not lay down and it is more user friendly. In the municipality's eyes, the historical value of the grass has not to be a problem: heritage should be dynamic to survive. As an example, the Greenmarket Square in Cape Town is cited.

The way land is used, defines the integration and sense of place. Interaction between buildings and the square are important. The walls and the streets should not act as borders. Terraces may serve as

¹ The resume of the survey is attached to the document below. See *Appendix*.

a link between the square and the buildings. The crazy but not unrealistic idea to build a restaurant in one of the churches is suggested.

Another South-African example similar to the Braak is cited in which offices are placed underground so that the monuments on the ground surface may be retained. The trees should be remained to ensure shade.

The function of the Braak and the Rhenish Complex

The Braak and the Rhenish complex should be re-used in order to maintain. The new function must therefore create work opportunity. This is possible on the basis of the proposed markets, but also by the maintenance of the Braak and Rhenish Complex.

Linking the Braak, the Rhenish Complex and the garden of Vorgelegen is conceived as positive. Another possibility is to make the link with Market Road. In this way the interaction in public space will be enhanced and everyone can enjoy multiple and not just one part of Stellenbosch.

The proposals are approved. A mixture of all the proposals seems to have the most chance of success. An amphitheatre for various theatre groups in Stellenbosch is proposed to be eventually integrated into the master plan. In the mixture of the various proposals 'diversifying' is of great importance. The grass has a certain value, but at the same time it is necessary to create the ability combining all the various operations, not only by adapting the texture, but also through opening the area for the people.

Transport

Parking lots are very important in Stellenbosch. The parking spaces at the Braak and the Rhenish complex have to be addressed, but there are other parking lots in Stellenbosch, near the town hall.

There is no public transport in Stellenbosch. There are ideas for parking to be constructed in a circle around the town. Buses and shuttles would connect the centre and push forward a bicycle network in the centre. Buses driving around the Braak are not seen as a good idea. The municipality is working on a project where one would incubate student buses with several stops in the town.

The part of the Market Road between Kruithuis and the Rhenish Complex can be closed.

Other

The *Meulsloot* is a major player at the area of the Braak and the Rhenish Complex. Water acts as a magnet for visitors and tourists, but also plays a unifying factor between the various public areas.

The problems surrounding the Braak and the Rhenish complex are deeper rooted than the lack of function of these spaces. The heritage policy itself has difficulties. "Take it to a higher level" is said. The heritage policy of Stellenbosch is also incorporated in the thesis.

Conclusion after the workshop and the presentation: working points

- 1) Cleanliness: the space must be cleaned up, public toilets and more 'attractive' bins should be installed.
- 2) Finding an appropriate function. That is currently the biggest problem: because the central green square has no well-defined and clear function, its potentials are not exploited at will. The new function must create work opportunity. A combination of the proposals could lead to the best results.
- 3) Public space is a place of interaction. Linking the different areas and adjusting the texture to this fact will enhance the heritage benefit.
- 4) Not only the Rhenish Complex and the Braak have to be addressed, but also the heritage policy of Stellenbosch itself should be revised.

Appendix

Summary of the survey

At the workshop the attendees received a survey. The survey was a document of 6 pages where the attendees were asked different questions concerning the Braak and the Rhenish complex. The results put in green are seen or felt as positive to the Braak or the Rhenish complex. In orange it is seen as moderate and in red as negative. The underlined results are the most prominent or most common.²

Information about the attendees

- 1) **53%** of the attendees were *inhabitants* of Stellenbosch.
- 2) **40%** of the attendees were between 19 and 30 years old.
- 3) **64%** of the attendees thought there were less than 8 monuments on the Braak.
- 4) **69%** of the attendees are here weekly. 31% of the attendees attend once a week the Braak and Rhenish complex. 12,5% of the attendees have never been there.

The Braak and the Rhenish complex

- 1) Reasons to come to the Braak and the Rhenish complex:
 - a. **20%** of attendees come to the Braak to cross the square.
 - b. **15%** of attendees come to the Braak to shop.
 - c. **10%** of attendees come to the Braak to work.
- 2) The Rhenish complex and the Braak is:
 - a. Not a place **to raise children**.
 - b. No place **to avoid**.
 - c. No place **to get something to drink**.
 - d. No place **to go to church**.
 - e. A place **to walk**.
 - f. A place **to visit**.
 - g. A place **to cross the square**.
- 3) What makes Stellenbosch Stellenbosch?
 - a. **47%** of the attendees choose the university.
 - b. **47%** of the attendees choose the historic buildings.
 - c. **33%** of those present choose the feeling.
 - d. additions:
 - i. The mountains, the ability to walk everywhere, Stellenbosch is small enough to live and big enough to find work, Cape Dutch building style.

The function of the Braak and Rhenish complex

- 1) What does (or does not) satisfy on the Braak and Rhenish complex?
 - a. Does not: **education**.
 - b. Does: **historic buildings**.
 - c. Does: **open space**.
 - d. Does: **central square**.

² The results of the survey were evaluated via Microsoft Office Excel.

- e. **70%** of the attendees agree that the Braak does not satisfy.
 - i. They rate moderate: *overall value, quality of the environment, the Braak as green square, religion.*
 - f. **41%** of the attendees think the Braak does not satisfy at all.
 - i. They rate below a moderate score: *safety, traffic, economic development, quiet moments, culture and shopping.*
- 2) Is the Braak used as it should?
- a. Well in terms of
 - i. open space.
 - ii. green square.
 - iii. religion.
 - b. Not good in terms of
 - i. toilets.
 - ii. safety.
 - iii. alcohol abuse.
 - iv. solidarity.
- 3) What are the problems on the Braak?
- a. **87%** of the attendees think of **lack of function**.
 - b. **53%** of the attendees think of **toilets**.
 - c. **53%** of the attendees think of **unsafety**.
 - d. **47%** of the attendees think of **alcohol**.
 - e. **47%** of the attendees think of **pollution**.
- 4) Safety
- a. **87%** of the attendees feel *safer during daytime*. The rest has no opinion.
- 5) Statement: the Braak is:
- a. Not isolated.
 - b. Only moderate attractive, developed and safe.
 - c. Rather dangerous.
 - d. **83%** of the attendees rate the Braak bad to moderate. **20%** of the attendees rate the Braak as bad.
- 6) Score of the Braak
- a. **60%** of the attendees give the Braak a moderate score. The rest of the opinions is divided.
 - b. Reasons:
 - i. *Bad condition, sidewalk could be kept cleaner, control, historical, surrounding mountains*
 - ii. *It is a nice area but not properly utilised and not safe at night*
 - iii. *It is good but could be better*
 - iv. *Most important available open space in centre of Stellenbosch*
 - v. *Aesthetics; good use-education, gatherings*
 - vi. *Much potential but not fully put to use*
 - vii. *Nothing there at Die Braak*
 - viii. *Important cultural centre for town has potential for more activities*
 - ix. *It is a good area for education, church and the market place but it is unkept and untidy (sic).*
 - x. *Potential not realized*

- 7) The unique contribution of the Braak and Rhenish complex to Stellenbosch
- a. **87%** of the attendees think they have a unique contribution to the town.
 - b. **80%** of the attendees think because of the *historic value*.
 - c. **47%** of the attendees think because of the *green square*.
 - d. Other:
 - i. *Cultural landscape*
 - ii. *Peaceful feeling*
 - iii. *At this moment not a place to relax, but it can be in short term (sic)*.
 - iv. *Education*
- 8) The different sectors in Stellenbosch:
- a. Sectors with a right amount. The attendees think there are enough:
 - i. **business, cafés and bars, restaurants, shops, supermarkets, hotels, B&B's.**
 - b. Sectors the attendees think there are too few:
 - i. **Housing, public toilets, public transport, bicycles, 'conservationists'**
 - c. Sectors the attendees think there are too many:
 - i. **Homeless people, cars.**
 - d. In per cent:
 - i. **87%** of the attendees think the amount of business is sufficient.
 - ii. **80%** of the attendees think the HoReCa³ is sufficient.
 - iii. **63%** of the attendees think the amount of trade⁴ is sufficient.
 - iv. **60%** think the infrastructure is inadequate (like toilets, public transport, cycling, homeless people,...).
 - v. **47%** of the attendees think there are too few houses.
 - e. Opinions:
 - i. *Town bearing capacity exceeded with current services & infrastructure (sic)*.
 - ii. *Poor mix of shops*
- 9) The Braak should use the open space for:
- a. *Festivals: 34% of the attendees*
 - b. *Active recreation (sports, feasts,...): 26% of the attendees.*

Transport

- 1) Transport: how did the attendees reach the workshop?
 - a. **63%** of the attendees came by *car*.
 - b. 25% of the attendees came by bike.
- 2) Is Stellenbosch in need of parking lots?
 - a. **45% of the attendees think not.** 18% think the town does, 36% has no opinion.
 - b. Opinions:
 - i. *Parking attracts parkers!*
 - ii. *keep the current amount*
 - iii. *fine as it is*
 - iv. *go underground with the cars*
- 3) The cars circling around the Braak:
 - a. **47%** of the attendees does not bother
 - b. **40%** of the attendees do bother

³ Hotels, Restaurants, Cafés

⁴ Trade: shops, supermarkets,...

- c. Opinion: *the Braak needs a safe public parking lot*
- 4) Should some streets be closed for cars?
 - a. **49%** of the attendees should not close streets for cars. 21% do, the other 30% does not give an opinion.
 - b. The Blomstreet is the only street where 33% of the attendees should close the street, 33% should not close the street and 33% does not have an opinion.
 - c. The other streets should not be closed.
 - d. Opinions:
 - i. traffic calming, not exclusion
 - ii. *A balance should be maintained*
 - iii. *Dorpstraat one way*
 - iv. Checkers?
- 5) Do the streets act like boundaries to the Braak?
 - a. **53%** of the attendees think they do.
 - b. 40% has no opinion.
 - c. Opinion: but they should

The needs of the Braak

- 1) What are the needs?
 - a. **30%** of the attendees think there should be toilets
 - b. **23%** of the attendees think there should be cafés
 - c. **16%** of the attendees think there should be a market
 - d. Opinion: a welcoming feeling
- 2) The municipality and its tasks:
 - a. **23%** of the attendees think protecting historic buildings and sites.
 - b. **21%** of the attendees think financial support
 - c. **14%** of the attendees think safety
- 3) The municipality has land use policy with certain restrictions
 - a. **87%** of the attendees think this is good
- 4) These restrictions should be:
 - a. More strict: **57%** of the attendees.
 - b. Stay the same: **36%** of the attendees.
- 5) Are these restrictions important?
 - a. **100%** of the attendees think so.
- 6) Are there other areas that need new life or research?
 - a. 23% of the attendees recommends Birdstreet
 - b. 18% of the attendees recommends Pleinstreet
 - c. Suggestions:
 - i. Whole historic core: *Ryneveld, Andringa, Die Laan*
 - ii. *Rustenburg, St. Idas Valley*
 - iii. *Business Core Cloetesville*
 - iv. *Eersterivier: Hangbrug (Vergelegen): Die Boord*

Opinions on the displays at the workshop

At the workshop for the local community the attendees were able to give their thoughts and opinions via A1-size displays. On these displays the proposals could be seen and a few statements were made. Via post-its the attendees could write down their opinion and stick it on the displays.⁵

Positive opinions on the Braak and Rhenish complex

- *Beautiful views*
- *Central location*
- *After a hard day's work, walking across the Braak and seeing the mountains is breath taking*
- *People using the park to sit and play in is positive*
- *People sitting on grass currently is positive*
- *Historic value!*
- *Public outdoor room*

Negative opinions on the Braak and Rhenish complex

- *Public drinking at night*
- *Without a purpose ...*
- *Too many vagabonds*
- *... in evenings as a drinking, (sic).*
- *Racing course*
- *Under utilized*
- *Under valued*
- *No purpose*
- *No plan*
- *No vision*
- *Only one group of people! Stellenbosch is already very segregated*

Opinions on the different proposals

- *Should make it a place for students, families, kids. Everyone!*
- *Should not be a def (sic)... ... but a place for all groups, classes, races etc.*
- *Views towards the mountains should be preserved*
- *Families picnicking*
- *Sitting together playing games (youth groups)*
- *A lot of NGO's use sport to bring the community together and to help children*
- *Target the Braak as a place for games days etc.*

⁵ Here, the opinions are put in italic and cited verbatim. When coloured in red then it was regarded as negative, in green regarded as positive, in orange or yellow regarded as moderate.

Opinions on the displays

The proposals that were made only show a selection of pictures of some examples. They do not represent all the possibilities but only show what we have in mind. Therefor these proposals are not binding or final. little coloured dots they could rate the proposals. Green dots meant they liked it, red they did not like it and yellow they rated it good nor bad, let's say moderate. The more green dots, the more the attendees liked something. The more red dots, the less they liked a proposal. The opinions of the attendees are put in italic and cited verbatim.

- 1) Display 1: Are there enough bars, restaurants,... on or next to the Braak?
 - a. *meer koffiehuse en bistro's – langs Rynse kerk, langs Checkers. Nie studentesuiipplekke nie (sic)!*
 - b. *more places are needed which open in the night to make the place safer (sic) (2 green dots)*
 - c. *to make the area better perhaps places like terrace which is often full of drunk students should be moved (sic)*
 - d. *we need commercial functions like Rust & Vrede, Durbanville: ceramic studies, gift shops, florist (like Okkasi), nursery and tea garden, spilling over into Voorgelegen site (sic).*
 - e. *there are a lof of bars around the Braak (sic). A lot of negative elements picknic and party around the Braak in the evenings, especially weekends (sic). If the Braak became "up-market" with security, it would be safe and properly used*

- 2) Display 2: tourism office on the Braak



Tourism office, Houthulst (Belgium)



Illinois (USA)



Rubens house, Antwerp (Belgium)



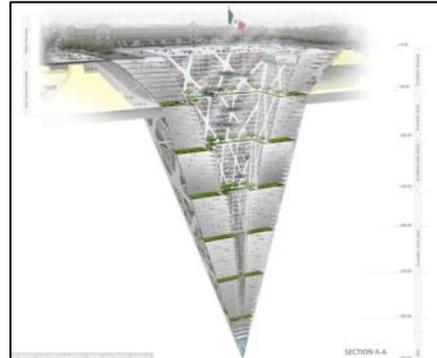
House, Zenkaya (South-Africa)

- a. *I like the idea possibly suggested in the PJ Olivier [...] opp. the Kruithuis or where the African curio's are (sic).*
- b. **As in Houthulst:**
 - i. 1 green dot, 2 yellow dots, 4 red dots
- c. **As in Illinois:**

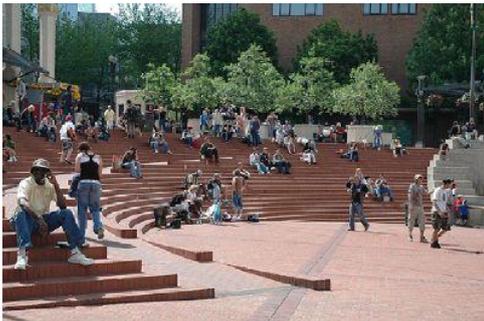
- i. 11 green dots, 1 yellow dot, 1 red dot
- d. **As in Antwerp:**
 - i. 3 green dots, 1 yellow dot, 4 red dots
- e. **As in Zenkaya:**
 - i. 2 green dots, 2 yellow dots, 1 red dot

3) Display 3: Extreme architecture on the Braak

- a. Yellow dots : 1
- b. Green dots: 3



4) Display 4: Pavements on the Braak



Portland, USA



Stellenbosch University, South Africa



Vancouver, Canada



Sienna, Italy

- a. **As in Portland, USA:**
 - i. 3 yellow dots, 4 green dots
 - ii. *Goed, maar ook gras en sekuriteitswagte*
- b. **As in Stellenbosch, library:**
 - i. 3 red dots, 2 green dots
- c. **As in Vancouver:**
 - i. *good idea if you have theatre shape in the park also*

- ii. *Ja, maar nie arbitrere paadjies nie – moet betekenis hê*
- iii. *Maybe keep a large section open where a market or a show can take place*
- iv. 7 green dots, 2 yellow dots

d. **As in Sienna:**

- i. 8 red dots, 1 yellow dots

5) Display 5: The Braak, where do you think off?

- a. *Green space which is needed: 2 green dots*
- b. *Historical value, green space (needs attention)*
- c. *That should be the hub of the town*
- d. *Place with purpose*
- e. *Potensiaal om 'n lewendige plek te wees*
- f. *Center focal point for town: 2 green dots*

6) Display 6: Markets: park on the Braak



Place du Tertre, Paris, France



Cannes, France



Gamla Stan, Sweden



Omaha, USA

- a. **As in Place du Tertre:** 7 green dots, 2 yellow dots
- b. **As in Cannes:** 7 green dots, 1 red dots
- c. **As in Gamla Stan:** 2 green dots, 3 yellow dots, 3 red dots
- d. **As in Omaha:** 2 green dots, 2 yellow dots, 3 red dots

7) Display 7: Masterplan

a. 15 green dots, 2 yellow dots

