

Flemish Beguinages as World Heritage: the search for a common management



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Thesis to obtain the degree of Master of Conservation of Monuments and Sites
presented by Nena De Roey

Leuven, January 2013

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Volume I: OBJECTIVES-SYNTHESIS

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Leuven, **2013**

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*Nena De Roey
December 2012*

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I INTRODUCTION



When entering a beguinage, time seems to behave differently. These World Heritage sites present the visitor with a hint of their existence, yet one cannot imagine which stories took place within their walls. Often spanning hundreds of years of occupation, building activities and human history, the Flemish beguinages are places of high significance. Still, this significance did not end after the last beguine left her home. The Flemish beguinages continue to serve as a framework for contemporary living. Even though their religious purpose has faded away, beguinages often remained social places of silence and contemplation. In this way these ‘cities within cities’ are much more than witnesses of the past alone. Their qualities are still valued by whoever enters their gates. However, those ensembles that come across as silent and timeless places, are in fact, in need of continuous attention. Their conservation and future existence can be threatened in many ways. Nowadays a vast group of people is dedicated to conserve these historic sites. This requires continuous care and a well-considered management.

Beguinages or ‘begijnhoven’ are enclosed architectural ensembles built by Christian religious communities of beguines or ‘begijnen’. These single woman chose a pious life without taking eternal vows. Originating in the 13th century, beguinages were created mainly in what is now Belgium, the Netherlands and the North of France. These sites expanded and changed over the centuries, with a general heyday in the 17th century. Due to several circumstances, this specific way of living lost its attraction and most of the beguine communities fragmented in the 19th and 20th centuries. However, the built heritage of the beguine movement is still standing. Nowadays most of the remaining beguinages are situated in Flanders. Many of these sites are partially or completely listed as monuments, or protected in other ways. In 1998, two years after the Belgian State ratified the World Heritage Convention, thirteen representative Flemish beguinages were inscribed on the World Heritage List. This group of architectural ensembles was inscribed as a serial property.¹ From then on the beguinages of Hoogstraten, Mechelen (great beguinage), Lier, Turnhout, Sint-Truiden, Gent (small beguinage), Sint-Amandsberg, Diest, Leuven (great beguinage), Tongeren, Brugge and Kortrijk were acknowledged as World Heritage sites.

As a historian and student at the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, I was asked to continue a research started by my colleague and architect Merita Augustini-Nrecaj. She carried out this research as part of her internship at the Centre during August and September 2011. Ona Vileikis Tamayo, PhD student at the RLICC and project manager of the Silk Roads CHRIS, supported this internship. The study resulted in a paper, titled ‘*Management of Flemish Beguinages as a World Heritage Serial Property: Advantages and Difficulties*’. As Merita explains: ‘*this paper aims to understand and clarify the implementation of management plans or systems after inscription in the UNESCO World*

¹ Cf. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/855/>, last consulted December 2012.

Heritage List of the Flemish Beguinages, by focusing on three of them.² Merita visited and assessed the beguinages of Lier, Leuven and Hoogstraten. She concluded that, although the Flemish beguinages are inscribed as a serial property, they are currently not managed as such. Because of their differences, a common management system or mechanism would be difficult to implement. According to Augustini, such a cooperation could be better achieved through more informal networking. Next she also proposes the advantages of a more thorough overview for all of the 13 beguinages inscribed on the list.

1.1 Objectives, methods, scope and limitations

The starting point of this thesis, is to examine the (common) management of the thirteen Flemish beguinages inscribed on the World Heritage List. The first aim, is to give a structured overview of the current management of the thirteen discussed beguinages. An onset for such an overview is provided in the UNESCO nomination dossier, composed by Suzanne Van Aerschot in 1997.³ In order to give an update of this overview within the master thesis, focus is laid on the management of the beguinages after 1998. Among others, the following basic questions will be addressed: How are the beguinages legally protected in Flanders? Who are the owners of these sites? Who is responsible for their management? What are their functions? What is their state of conservation? What are the main problems the beguinages are facing? What is the impact of the nomination?

The second objective of this study, is to examine whether a common management for the thirteen Flemish beguinages, as demanded by the Operational Guidelines, would be feasible.⁴ Therefore, previous attempts of cooperation among the Flemish beguinages from both local and Flemish initiatives will be discussed and assessed. Also the respondents motivation and opinion on future cooperation will be examined. Afterwards, management of few World Heritage properties and some other existing networks in Flanders and abroad will be briefly examined. Finally, the thesis will present conclusions and recommendations for the future management of the beguinages.

² M. AUGUSTINI-NRECAJ, *Management of Flemish Beguinages as a World Heritage Serial Property: Advantages and Difficulties: case study: Beguinage of Lier, Leuven and Hoogstraten.*, unpublished paper, Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, Catholic University of Leuven, 2011, 1.

³ S. VAN AERSCHOT, *Béguinages Flamands: un passé bien présent, liste du patrimoine mondial, proposition d'inscription*, 1997. An overview is also given in the publication S. VAN AERSCHOT and M. HEIRMAN, *Flemish beguinages: World heritage*, Leuven, 2001.

⁴ United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, World Heritage Center, paragraphs 114, 137-139, 2012.

The thesis is divided into two main volumes. The first volume – Objectives-Synthesis – contains the actual corpus of the thesis. After a brief introduction of the subject and its context, the synthesis of the carried out research will be presented in the second chapter, followed by the conclusion. This synthesis is mainly based on the information provided in the second volume of the thesis – Analysis-Overview. The second volume gives detailed and structured overviews of the management of the thirteen different beguinages on the World Heritage List. This volume serves as background information and a reference for the observations presented in the corpus of the thesis. At the same time, the second volume is also an important output of the thesis.

In order to compose a good overview of the current management of the beguinages, information fields were drafted, which were used as a format to compose uniform files for each of the beguinages.⁵ Information gathered through literature and desktop research, was complemented with field work. Next to site visits, information was gathered through in-depth interviews. Between November 2011 and July 2012, 68 stakeholders were interviewed (Cf. *Figure 1*).⁶ This type of data-collecting served two purposes. The first purpose was to obtain as much correct information on the current management of the beguinages as possible. Often the respondents provided additional documents during the interviews as well. The second purpose was to document the respondents' opinion concerning the current management as well as the impact of the nomination. Also their motivation for future cooperation was examined. Of the 68 stakeholders, five persons were only interviewed to obtain more information concerning the Flemish heritage policy, networking or previous attempts of cooperation between the Flemish beguinages.⁷

beguinage	Interviews (persons can overlap)									
	owners	spatial planning	OE	inhabitant	vzw	museum	commercial	city	tourism	total
Hoogstraten	1		1	1	1		/			2
Lier	3						/	/	1	1
Mechelen	2	mail	1	1		/		2		6
Turnhout	1	1	3		1	1				6
Sint-Truiden	1	1	2	1	1	/				6
Tongeren	1	1	2	1		1		2		5
Dendermonde	1		1		1	1	/	1		3
Gent Ter Hoyen	3	mail	1	1	3	/	/	1		6
Gent Sint-Amandsberg	2	mail	1	1	1	/	/	1		4
Diest	mail	1	1	2		/		1	1	4
Leuven	1 + mail		1	4		/	1		mail	6
Brugge	2		1	3			1	2	mail	5
Kortrijk	2		1	2	2	/	/	1		6
<i>total</i>	19	4	16	17	10	3	2	12	2	62

Figure 1.1: overview of interviews taken from November 2011 to July 2012.

⁵ Cf. Annex 4.1.3 'Information fields for each beguinage'.

⁶ Cf. Annex 4.2.7 'Interviews' for a complete overview.

⁷ Miek Goossens, Suzanne Van Aerschot, Piet Geleyns, Karel Robijns, Peter Putseys and Karel Dendooven.

To list the stakeholders of a certain beguinage, contact information was gathered by desktop research. Furthermore Piet Geleyns, focal point for UNESCO in Flanders, provided contact information of the involved heritage consultants.⁸ Often respondents referred to other stakeholders themselves. All the listed stakeholders were first contacted by mail with the request to arrange an interview. The respondents did not receive the questions at forehand.⁹ Most of the respondents were interviewed separately, some of the interviews were held in group. In total 49 interviews were organized to question 68 stakeholders. All interviews and questions were structured in the same way, based on the composed information fields for each beguinage. However, different stakeholders were asked other types of additional questions depending on their involvement in the management of the beguinage.¹⁰ With the permission of the respondents, almost all interviews were recorded and typed out in a similar format.¹¹

The presented table (Cf. *Figure 1*) shows an overview of the interviewed stakeholders for each beguinage, divided into different categories. Often persons overlap, for instance an owner could also be an inhabitant at the same time. The table also indicates if a certain category is not relevant for the beguinage (if there is no museum or commercial function). For each beguinage at least one owner was interviewed (except for the beguinage of Diest). The same goes for the heritage consultants responsible for the beguinages. Also inhabitants form a well represented category of interviewed stakeholders. Less represented categories are persons from municipal spatial planning services or the tourism office. Overall the response of the contacted stakeholders from the municipalities and cities, was rather low. Often some basic information was shared by mail. Although efforts were made to obtain a well-balanced representation of different stakeholders involved in the management of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, some categories are underrepresented. Only few architects were interviewed, and interviews with building contractors are lacking completely. Only few persons from the cultural services of the cities or existing heritage covenants were interviewed. Using information provided in interviews as a source to write a scientific paper, has certain limitations. Even though measures were taken to ensure a certain objectivity, the interviews remain subjective. Often respondents' statements contradicted with each other on important issues.¹²

The scope of this master thesis is rather wide: assessing the complex management of thirteen architectural ensembles is a time consuming activity. Instead of focusing on few beguinages, the option was taken to assess all thirteen of the sites. This way the different management approaches could be best analyzed. As a result, the information gathered for each beguinage is not very detailed regarding some aspects. It was for example not possible

⁸ For responsibility of heritage consultants cf. 1.3.1 'Conservation of Immovable Heritage in Flanders'.

⁹ Except for one respondent who wanted to receive the questions at forehand.

¹⁰ For instance an inhabitant was asked more questions on participation and communal activities.

¹¹ Because of confidentiality these interviews were not added to the master thesis, but some of the personal opinions of the respondents are described in Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW.

¹² For instance regarding to the ownership of a church or other part of the beguinage.

to elaborate on the history of each of the beguinages.¹³ Apart from basic literature research, there was no additional archival research. Archeology policy was also not assessed in detail. Also town planning and the built context of the beguinages are only briefly assessed, mainly focusing on the buffer zones of the sites. Next technical aspects of the restorations are not included in the research, meaning architectural plans or detailed architectural descriptions are absent. General restoration projects are described, but a detailed inventory on the level of each building is not provided.

1.2 UNESCO World Heritage: policy

Since World Heritage is a vital aspect of this master thesis, it is important to introduce the subject. In 1972, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization or UNESCO adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.¹⁴ This document is the basis for the establishment of the World Heritage List. Countries that ratified the convention, can nominate properties for this World Heritage List. Nowadays, State Parties first have to propose a tentative list with properties they consider to have a World Heritage value. In 2012, at the 40th anniversary of the convention, 190 countries have ratified the convention. Currently there are 962 properties on the World Heritage List, among which 745 cultural properties, 188 natural and 29 mixed.¹⁵ Properties can be inscribed as single properties or as serial nominations. Next to national World Heritage properties, also transboundary and transnational sites spanning several countries figure on the World Heritage List. Apart from the World Heritage List, exists also a World Heritage List in Danger. Properties that figure on this list are considered to be threatened.

The World Heritage Committee, currently composed out of 21 different state parties, is responsible for the implementation of the convention and meets annually. In addition there is a general assembly every two years to approve major decisions. In 1992 the World Heritage Centre was founded within the UNESCO administration which serves as a focal point and coordinator for World Heritage matters. Finally there are three advisory bodies – non-governmental organizations – that advice the World Heritage committee in its decisions, namely, The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and finally The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM).

¹³ Although a short history of each of the beguinages is included in Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW.

¹⁴ Cf. whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext, last consulted December 2012.

¹⁵ Data from whc.unesco.org, last consulted December 2012.

1.2.1 The Operational Guidelines and management of WH properties

The Convention text from 1972 does not elaborate much on the management of World Heritage properties on a national level. In the second chapter, national responsibilities are listed. Article five states the following: *‘To ensure that effective and active measures are taken for the protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural and natural heritage situated on its territory, each State Party to this Convention shall endeavour, in so far as possible, and as appropriate for each country: (a) to adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes’.*

Besides the 1972 Convention the Operational Guidelines are an important policy instrument. These guidelines, that are regularly updated, provide procedures for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.¹⁶ Two important aspects of the guidelines are: the requirements to nominate new sites, and the monitoring of the inscribed sites. Since 1972 the guidelines have changed continuously. Important changes are for instance the requirement of a statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). To draft the OUV, a set of 10 criteria was created, among which 6 cultural and 4 natural. The property also has to meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity. This statement of OUV, which nowadays has to be added in the nomination file, will be the ‘key reference for the future effective protection and management of the property’.¹⁷ The six established criteria for cultural properties are the following:

1. *To represent a masterpiece of human creativity;*
2. *to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*
3. *to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*
4. *to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*
5. *to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*
6. *to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);*

¹⁶ The last update of these Operational Guidelines dates from July 2012 and is referred to as: *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, World Heritage Center, 2012.

¹⁷ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, paragraph 51 and 77-78, 2012.

Another aspect of the Operational Guidelines which changed over the years, are the required measures for the protection and management of World Heritage Properties.¹⁸ As part of the required protection, the exact boundary of the World Heritage property has to be defined. Furthermore, a buffer zone should be defined if necessary. When a buffer zone is not essential, this should be explained within the nomination file as well. Paragraph 104 explains the definition of a buffer zone: *‘a buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an added layer of protection to the property. This should include the immediate setting of the nominated property, important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection.’*

The required management of the World Heritage property is described as a management system.¹⁹ Paragraphs 108 to 118 describe this topic. The starting point of such a management plan or system, should be the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. The definition of a management system is rather general and flexible, depending on the context and the existing traditions of a State Party. The guidelines propose seven common elements of such a management system:

1. *a thorough shared understanding of the property by all stakeholders*
2. *a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback*
3. *the monitoring and assessment of the impacts of trends, changes, and of proposed interventions*
4. *the involvement of partners and stakeholders*
5. *the allocation of necessary resources*
6. *capacity-building*
7. *an accountable, transparent description of how the management system functions.*

Paragraph 117 discusses the responsibility of the management of World Heritage properties: *States Parties are responsible for implementing effective management activities for a World Heritage property. State Parties should do so in close collaboration with property managers, the agency with management authority and other partners, and stakeholders in property management.’* Thus UNESCO does not provide State Parties with detailed guidelines on the management of World Heritage properties. The State Parties have to ensure good management, but are free to create their own management systems. However, a vast number of existing publications discusses the management of (Cultural) World Heritage sites.²⁰ These publications are often published by organizations linked to UNESCO, such as ICCROM or ICOMOS.

¹⁸ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, paragraphs 96-119, 2012.

¹⁹ Such plans are required since 2005, UNESCO, 2005.

²⁰ See for instance B. M. FEILDEN, and J. JOKILEHTO, *Management guidelines for World cultural heritage sites*, second edition, ICCROM, Italy, 1998., O.VILEIKIS, *Management Plans for World Heritage Sites: Final*

Another aspect of the management of World Heritage properties, are the monitoring systems from UNESCO.²¹ There exist two main types of monitoring: reactive monitoring and periodic reporting. Reactive monitoring is necessary in case a specific World Heritage property is threatened. These reports could eventually lead to the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List in danger, or even its deletion of the World Heritage List. The second type of monitoring, is the periodic reporting. This system started around 2000 and consists out of recurring monitoring cycles, with reports that State Parties have to fill out themselves. Within six years all State Parties are monitored, grouped in five regions: the Arab States, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and finally Europe and North America. The format each State Party has to fill in, has two parts: a first section that concerns the general policy of a country towards the convention, and a second section with questions on the management of specific World Heritage properties. After the national reports are handed in, a global report and an action plan are composed.

Between 2001 and 2006, the first period reporting was implemented in Europe for all properties inscribed up to 1998.²² Because this concerns such a vast area, Europe was divided into five sub regions. In total 48 State Parties, spanning 244 World Heritage properties, were questioned. This led to a publication by the World Heritage Centre in 2007.²³

Some interesting conclusions were made regarding the management of these 244 World Heritage properties. For instance, as much as 42% of the assessed properties did not have a defined buffer zone.²⁴ Overall, 88% of all sites considered their management systems highly or sufficiently effective.²⁵

However, the World Heritage Centre (WHC) has many remarks regarding management issues. For instance, the need for a steering committee and site managers is expressed by the WHC. State Parties often believe that legal protection and control are the same as the management of a site. There is also much confusion on the definition of a management plan or system. Often State Parties identify other large scale or umbrella plans as management plans. Yet, according to the WHC, they cannot be considered as such.

Thus the WHC believes that the greatest threat to these World Heritage Properties, is the fact that State Parties do not realize the long-term implications of the absence of a management plan. According to the WHC, UNESCO should provide better guidelines and best practice models to help State Parties draft adequate management plans.

Report, unpublished paper, ICCROM, 2008.; B. RINGBECK, *Management Plans for World Heritage Sites: a practical guide*, German Commission for UNESCO, Bonn, 2008.; UNESCO-ICOMOS Documentation Centre, *Management Plans and the World Heritage Convention: A bibliography*, Paris, 2010.

²¹ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, chapters IV and V, 2012.

²² Thus Belgium did not participate, Cf. 1.2.4 'UNESCO and Belgium-Flanders'.

²³ M. ROSSLER (ed.) and C. MENETREY-MONCHAU, *Periodic Report and Action Plan: Europe 2005-2006*, World Heritage Reports 20, World Heritage Centre, 2007.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 57-58.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 60.

1.2.2 Serial properties

Because the topic of this master thesis concerns a serial property, attention will be given to this specific type of World Heritage. Within the Operational Guidelines (OG), in the chapter on the process for the inscription, the possible links between such properties are described.²⁶ These links can be cultural, social or functional. It is the complete series that has to be of Outstanding Universal Value. Thus the different component parts need to contribute to this OUV, but do not necessarily have OUV themselves. Paragraph 114 addresses the management of properties inscribed as a serial nomination: *'In the case of serial properties, a management system or mechanisms for ensuring the co-ordinated management of the separate components are essential and should be documented in the nomination.'* Thus concerning management, the different serial properties are regarded as one entity. This means for instance that in the case of periodic reports, one file has to be filled out for all the different components. Overall the operational guidelines do not pay much attention to the specific subject of serial properties. Once nominated, they are treated more or less the same way as single properties.

For this master thesis, it was considered useful to examine the importance of serial properties on the World Heritage List. When consulting the List on the website of the World Heritage Centre, several statistics can be easily requested.²⁷ Charts that show the inscribed properties for each region can for instance be consulted. Within these charts, the World Heritage properties are divided between natural, cultural or mixed properties. Serial properties do not figure in these statistics at all. Therefore all the 745 cultural heritage properties on the List were assessed to see whether they were either single or serial properties. This resulted in a list of 215 serial (cultural) World Heritage properties (Cf. *Annex 4.1.2*). In other words, 29 % or roughly one third of all cultural World Heritage properties are serial (Cf. *Figure 1.2*). Serial properties were inscribed from 1979 onwards. Most of the serial properties were inscribed in one phase (84%), few properties were inscribed in several phases (16%) (Cf. *Figure 1.3*).

Of these 215 inscriptions, only 8 are serial transnational properties.²⁸ Five properties among the 215 are currently inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger. Furthermore the number of components for each site was examined (Cf. *Figure 1.4*). Most of the serial properties only have few sites: 27% of the serial properties have two components, and 30% have three to five components. Thus 57% of all cultural serial properties have maximum 5 different components. Only a small percentage of serial properties have over 10 components (20%), with a record of 727 different components.²⁹

²⁶ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, 137-139, 2012.

²⁷ whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat, last consulted December 2012.

²⁸ These eight sites are: Prehistoric Rock Art Sites in the Côa Valley and Siega Verde, Struve Geodetic Arc, Stone Circles of Senegambia, Prehistoric Pile dwellings around the Alps, Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura, Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis, Frontiers of the Roman Empire and Belfries of Belgium and France.

²⁹ *Rock Art of the Mediterranean Basin on the Iberian Peninsula*, Spain, serial ID number 874, 1998.

cultural World Heritage properties	number of sites	%
single properties	531	71,3
serial properties	215	28,9
total cultural properties	745	100

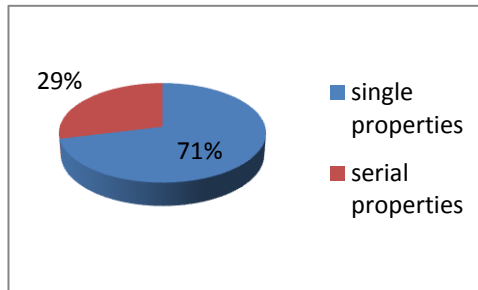


Figure 1.2: Relation of single versus serial cultural properties situation 2012.

inscribed in one phase		inscribed in several phases	Total	%	
before 2000	94	first phase before 2000	28	122	56,7
after 2000	86	first phase after 2000	7	93	43,3
total	180	total	35		
%	83,7	%	16,3		

Figure 1.3: Assessment of date of inscription of cultural serial properties situation 2012.

number of components	number of serial properties	% of all serial properties
2 sites	57	26,5
3 to 5 sites	65	30,2
6 to 10 sites	51	23,7
11 to 15 sites	19	8,8
16 to 30 sites	12	5,6
31 to 50 sites	3	1,4
over 50 sites	8	3,7
total	215	100,0

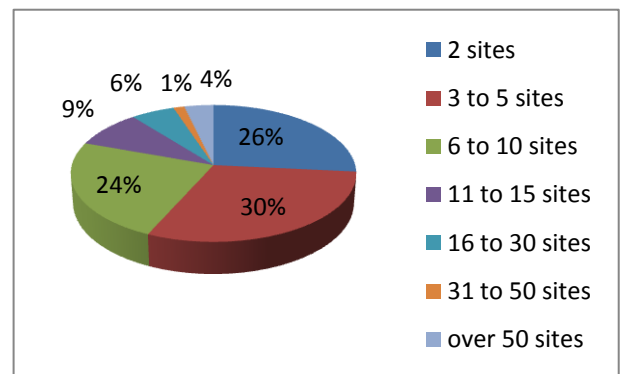


Figure 1.4: number of components of cultural serial properties, situation 2012.

1.2.3 Intangible heritage

The Flemish beguinages also bear great intangible values.³⁰ Recently the concept of heritage has broadened, including also intangible aspects of heritage next to tangible ones. This is reflected in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.³¹ Within the convention, intangible heritage is defined as following: *The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.* Currently 146 states ratified this convention. The organs of the Convention are similar to those of the World Heritage convention: an intergovernmental committee with 24 member states has to guard the implementation of the text. After ratifying this convention, State Parties have to take several measures to safeguard the intangible heritage within their country. National inventories have to be drafted to identify the intangible heritage of State Parties. Next a representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity was created to ensure safeguarding of intangible heritage on an international level. Currently, some 172 elements are inscribed. Also a list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding exists, which currently contains 27 elements. Finally programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage are selected and promoted by the committee. Programmes and projects on this register, serve as examples of best practices for other countries.

1.2.4 UNESCO and Belgium – Flanders

Because Belgium is a federalized state there are two UNESCO commissions. The Flemish UNESCO commission is currently composed out of 17 persons, with different kinds of expertise.³² Mrs Francine Chainaye is the permanent Belgian ambassador for UNESCO. Belgium also has a national division of ICOMOS which represents the two regional organizations ICOMOS Vlaanderen-Brussel and ICOMOS Wallonie-Bruxelles.³³ Together they advise UNESCO regarding new nominations or other issues. The Belgian state ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1996. Belgium was also member of the committee between 1999 and 2003. Currently, 11 Belgian properties figure on the list, which are all cultural (Cf. *Figure 1.5*). Four of the 11 properties are serial nominations, among which the Flemish beguinages. One of these serial properties is transnational. Belgium also has a tentative list, that currently contains 16 properties.³⁴ In 2009 the RLICC also received a UNESCO Chair in preventive conservation, monitoring and maintenance of monuments and sites. Currently Piet Geleyns is the focal point for UNESCO World Heritage within Flanders. Belgium did not

³⁰ Cf. Introduction 1.3.2 ‘Movable and intangible heritage policy in Flanders’.

³¹ For the complete text Cf. www.unesco.org/culture, last consulted December 2012.

³² Cf. www.unesco-vlaanderen.be, last consulted December 2012.

³³ Cf. www.belgium-icomos.org, last consulted December 2012.

³⁴ Cf. whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/state=be, last consulted December 2012.

participate to the periodic reporting in 2001-2006, because there were no properties inscribed prior to 1998. However, Belgium will participate to the second cycle of reporting in 2013. The protection and management of these 11 properties, is completely imbedded in the regional existing conservation policies.³⁵

The Belgian State also ratified the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention in 2006. Since 2008 there is a Flemish inventory of intangible heritage that currently contains 33 elements.³⁶ The production of lace in Flanders, a typical economical activity in several Flemish beguinages, was also inscribed in this Flemish inventory in 2011. Next 7 Belgian elements were inscribed on the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Cf. *Figure 1.5*). Finally the programme of ‘Ludoversiteit’ (a programme to safeguard traditional sports and games), was selected for the register of best practices. Between 2006 and 2008, and again from 2012 to 2016, Belgium was and is member of the committee of the Convention. In Flanders there has recently been much attention for the safeguarding of intangible heritage. Several expert networks are working within this field.³⁷ In 2012 a website was launched which serves as a platform for intangible heritage in Flanders.³⁸

<i>BELGIAN PROPERTIES ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST</i>		
<i>year of inscription</i>	<i>Title of property</i>	<i>Type of property</i>
1998	The Four Lifts on the Canal du Centre and their Environs, La Louvière and Le Roeulx (Hainault)	Single property
1998	La Grande-Place (Brussels)	Single property
1998	Flemish Béguinages	Serial property
1999-2005	Belfries of Belgium and France	Serial transnational property
2000	Historic Centre of Brugge	Single property
2000	Major Town Houses of the Architect Victor Horta (Brussels)	Serial property
2000	Neolithic Flint Mines at Spiennes (Mons)	Single property
2000	Notre-Dame Cathedral in Tournai	Single property
2005	Plantin-Morertus House-Workshops-Museum Complex	Single property
2009	Stoclet House	Single property
2012	Major Mining Sites of Wallonia	Serial property
<i>BELGIAN ELEMENTS ON THE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY</i>		
<i>year of inscription</i>	<i>Title of element</i>	
2008	Processional giants and dragons in Belgium and France	
2008	Carnival of Binche	
2009	Procession of the Holy Blood in Bruges	
2010	Krakelingen and Tonnekensbrand, end-of-winter bread and fire feast at Geraardsbergen	
2010	Houtem Jaarmarkt, annual winter fair and livestock market at Sint-Lievens-Houtem	
2010	Aalst carnival	
2011	Leuven age set ritual repertoire	
<i>Programmes, projects and activities for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage considered to best reflect the principles of the Convention</i>		
2011	Programme of cultivating ludodiversity: safeguarding traditional games in Flanders	

Figure 1.5: list of Belgian World Heritage properties and Intangible Cultural elements in 2012.

³⁵ Cf. next chapter for more information or P. GELEYNS, ‘UNESCO Werelderfgoed in Vlaanderen: een inleiding’, in *Monumenten, Landschappen & archeologie*, 29 (5), 2010, 6-14.

³⁶ Cf. *www.kunstenenerfgoed.be*, last consulted December 2012.

³⁷ For instance Tapis Plein vzw or het Firmament vzw.

³⁸ Cf. *www.immaterieelerfgoed.be*, last consulted December 2012.

1.3 Belgium and Flanders: heritage policy

In order to understand the management of the Flemish beguinages, it is important to provide some background information concerning the Belgian and Flemish heritage policy. This is especially relevant since Belgium is a federalized state, and thus has a rather complex legislation and policy regarding heritage matters. The brief overview that follows, only discusses the actual heritage policy (even though new legislations will probably be implemented in the near future). Emphasis is laid on the legislation and heritage policy that directly concerns the Flemish beguinages.

After several state reforms responsibility for conservation and heritage policy in Belgium was divided among different levels of government in the 1970-1980's. Concerning heritage, this had a rather drastic impact. From then on responsibility for immovable heritage was assigned to the regions. Thus in the case of the Flemish beguinages, this is the Flemish region (Vlaams Gewest). The competence for everything concerning movable and intangible heritage was assigned to the communities. For the Flemish beguinages, this means the Flemish community (Vlaamse Gemeenschap). Fortunately, the Flemish region and the Flemish community are governed by one single government: the Flemish government. Still, competences are divided between different ministers and governing bodies. Currently minister Geert Bourgeois is responsible for immovable heritage. His colleague minister Joke Schauvliege, is responsible for the movable and intangible heritage. The following subchapters describe these two Flemish heritage policies.

1.3.1 Conservation of immovable heritage in Flanders

The main idea of the Flemish conservation policy, is that the owner of a protected building or landscape is the main responsible for its conservation. The government supports and monitors these owners with advice, subsidies and legislation. This way the government tries to stimulate owners to take good care of their property. However, the initiative to do so is the responsibility of the owners themselves.³⁹

Legal protection of immovable heritage in Belgium exists since the 20th century. The first protection law dates from 1931 and concerned the protection of monuments and landscapes.⁴⁰ In 1976 the first Flemish decree was issued which also enabled the protection of architectural ensembles (village-or cityscapes). The first decree for the protection of archaeological heritage dates from 1993. Maritime heritage can be protected since 2002.

The highest protection in Flanders, is the protection of a property as monument. Not only buildings, but also streets and even historic trees can be protected as monument. When a

³⁹ *Interview with Miek Goossens* (coordinator of ICOMOS Flanders-Brussels and coordinator of Immovable Heritage West-Flanders), Bruges, 13-12-2011.

⁴⁰All legislation referred to can be found in: V. VAN RENTERGHEM and K. VAN DEN BERGHE., *Wet, Decreet-en Regelgeving, Monumenten, Stads-en Dorpsgezichten, Landschappen, Archeologie en Varend Erfgoed (officiële coördinatie)*, Brussel, 2012.

building is protected as monument also the interior elements and cultural goods are protected. The owner cannot change the building, nor carry out certain works without a required authorization. The owner of such a monument, can submit a file to apply for restoration and/or maintenance subsidies. These files, especially for restoration subsidies, have to be rather elaborate. A restoration file needs to include reports with historical research, detailed descriptions of the property, physical analysis, description of reuse and a justification of the foreseen restoration works.

Three different authorities grant part of the subsidies: the Flemish region, the province and the municipality.⁴¹ The percentage of subsidies an owner can apply for, depends on several factors. Public institutions for instance, receive more restoration subsidies as private owners. However, when an association has a special status of ‘open monuments association’, it can apply for double restoration subsidies.⁴² To receive this status, the association needs to meet several criteria – the most important one being the public accessibility of the monument – and submit a policy plan. This plan must describe the management of the monument for the next ten years: including maintenance, public accessibility, efforts to raise awareness among the public, etc. Furthermore some specific types of monuments, such as buildings used for education, windmills or ZEN-monuments (monuments without economic purpose) receive a double restoration subsidy as well. Recently it also became possible to conclude long-range subsidy agreements for large restoration projects.⁴³

Besides the protection as monument, also other types of protection exist. An architectural ensemble – for instance a row of houses – can be protected as village- or cityscape.⁴⁴ Such a protection does not include interior elements, and thus mainly concerns the façades of the buildings and the surrounding public domain. In this case, maintenance subsidies can only be granted when a revalorization plan (herwaarderingsplan) is drafted. This plan should explain the aims of the revalorization. Next the plan needs to list the heritage attributes of the protected area, and the necessary measures to revalorize the village- or cityscape. When such a plan is approved, maintenance subsidies can be granted for the works described in the plan. The plan can be valid for a period of maximum ten years.

When an area is protected as landscape, authorization is also needed to carry out works. These works can be financially supported with maintenance subsidies. The creation of steering committees for these protected landscapes is stimulated. Furthermore the owner can apply for subsidies to draft a landscape management plan. Within this plan, recurring maintenance works are described. When such a plan is approved, these works are automatically authorized for the next 27 years, and are also financed by a special landscape subsidy.

⁴¹ However, from January 2014 this system will be changed. From then on only the Flemish government grants subsidies.

⁴² Open-monumentenvereniging.

⁴³ Currently there are such agreements for the restoration of: the Gent Boekentoren, the Torens aan de Dijle (Mechelen) and Merksplas-Kolonie, Cf. www.geertbourgeois.be, last consulted October 2012.

⁴⁴ stads- of dorpsgezicht.

Next larger (cultural) landscapes can also be protected as a regional landscape, currently 17 regional landscapes exist. Another possible form of protection is the status of a landscape as an anchor place or (eventually) heritage landscape.

It is important to note, that currently a separate category of protection for World Heritage properties in Flanders or Belgium does not exist. In fact there are no legal official consequences attached to the World Heritage status of a property. Currently no priority is given regarding subsidies or other financial support. The only impact that has to be mentioned, is the law of 2009 concerning official buffer zones of World Heritage properties, that will be discussed on the next page.⁴⁵

As explained, the Flemish government is responsible for the conservation policy of immovable heritage in Flanders. The policy is embedded in the policy field of spatial planning, housing and immovable heritage.⁴⁶ The concerned minister, currently Geert Bourgeois, has final responsibility for important decisions regarding immovable heritage. The Royal Commission for Monuments and Landscapes of the Flemish region, advises the minister concerning immovable heritage matters. Next there is also a strategic advisory body for immovable heritage, composed out of experts and stakeholders.⁴⁷ The department Spatial Planning, supports the minister and determines the heritage policy. The Flemish agency for Immoveable Heritage (Agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed), situated in Brussels, implements this heritage policy. Finally, the correct observance of the regulations for the complete policy field is monitored by the agency inspection.

The Flemish agency for Immoveable Heritage aims to conduct research, compose inventories, protect and finally raise awareness regarding the Flemish immovable heritage. Besides built heritage, also archaeological heritage, landscapes and maritime heritage are considered. Therefore several thematic inventories are being drafted and continuously updated. The largest inventory is the Flemish inventory for built heritage, which currently contains over 80 000 items or relics. It is important to mention, that relics within this inventory are not necessarily protected (but off course they can be). The inventory, which is the result of a listing campaign that started in the 1970's, is nowadays accessible online.⁴⁸ Since 2009 the inventory is also used as a policy instrument, meaning there are legal consequences for properties listed on the inventory. These properties cannot be demolished without consulting the agency.⁴⁹ Next these buildings are also exempted from certain other laws, such as the law concerning energy efficiency norms (EPB).⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering van 28 mei 2004 betreffende de dossiersamenstelling van de aanvraag voor een stedenbouwkundige vergunning, art. 4 en 8 en 17 en 20, 6°. Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering van 5 juni 2009 tot aanwijzing van de instanties die over een vergunningsaanvraag advies verlenen art. 1, 1°, g.

⁴⁶ Cf. www.vlaanderen.be and www.rwo.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁴⁷ SARO, Strategische Adviesraad Ruimtelijke Ordening en Onroerend Erfgoed.

⁴⁸ Cf. inventaris.onroerenderfgoed.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁴⁹ Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering van 28 mei 2004 betreffende de dossiersamenstelling van de aanvraag voor een stedenbouwkundige vergunning, art. 4 en 8 en 17 en 20, 6°. Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering van 5 juni 2009 tot aanwijzing van de instanties die over een vergunningsaanvraag advies verlenen art. 1, 1°, g.

To better monitor the immovable heritage in Flanders there are external offices in each of the five Flemish provinces. Heritage consultants are responsible for a certain area within their province. It is their task to follow up restoration and maintenance files, give advice, and overall assist owners in the management of their property. There are consultants specialised in built heritage or landscapes. Many of these heritage professionals have a background in architecture or (art) history, and are master in conservation. The heritage consultants are supported by the Brussels agency, but work rather independent within their assigned area.

The Flemish government also supports organizations that work within the field of immovable heritage. A first example is Monument Watch Flanders (Monumentenwacht vzw), a non-profit organization specialized in preventive conservation.⁵¹ Owners of historical buildings can become member to have their buildings inspected. Monument Watch regularly inspects the concerned buildings to evaluate their physical condition. Afterwards a report is drafted with a list of maintenance works that need to be carried out, in order of priority. This method is especially valuable to assess building elements which are not easily accessible, such as steep roofs. Besides built heritage, also interiors, archeological and maritime heritage can be inspected. Recently Monument Watch can also draft long-range maintenance plans with cost estimations.

Another organization supported by the Flemish government is Herita vzw.⁵² Herita aims to raise general awareness for heritage in Flanders, and addresses a wide public. This non-profit association manages different heritage sites, represents other Flemish non-profit heritage organizations and coordinates the annual Flemish Open monuments days. During this event monuments are opened up to the public and can be freely visited.

Furthermore the Flemish government also supports CRKC, the centre for religious art and culture.⁵³ Recently a project was launched to examine the reuse of parish churches in Flanders. Finally 17 regional landscapes in Flanders are also supported by the Flemish government.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Decreet van 8 mei 2009 houdende algemene bepalingen betreffende het energiebeleid en het Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering van 19 november 2010 houdende algemene bepalingen over het energiebeleid (in werking getreden op 1 januari 2011).

⁵¹ Cf. www.monumentenwacht.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁵² Cf. www.herita.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁵³ Cf. www.crkc.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁵⁴ Cf. www.regionalelandschappen.be, last consulted December 2012.

Even though the main responsibility for immovable heritage is assigned to the Flemish government, provinces and municipalities also have certain responsibilities and can develop their own immovable heritage policy. Municipalities for instance sometimes grant subsidies for the restoration of non-protected valuable heritage in their community. They can also impose extra legislation regarding spatial planning or involve heritage professionals in municipal planning advisory bodies.⁵⁵ Most of the Flemish municipalities do not have a separate administration for conservation. Only few larger cities have monuments services: for instance Brugge, Gent, Antwerp and Mechelen have such services. In other municipalities, often persons from spatial planning follow up the building permits concerning protected buildings. Sometimes also the cities archivist or other personnel occupy themselves with these matters. Smaller municipalities can work together with other neighboring municipalities. Such partnerships currently exist for the local archeological policy, and the idea is to use the same concept for immovable heritage services.⁵⁶ Local administrations also participate to larger events such as the Open monuments days.

Immovable heritage in Flanders can also be influenced by spatial planning legislation. As said, this is a responsibility of the Flemish region and thus the Flemish government. Spatial planning is embedded in the same larger policy field as immovable heritage and housing. The responsible minister is currently Philippe Muyters. Spatial planning can determine the use of certain areas, for instance whether lands can be used for agriculture, industry, housing or recreational green spaces. Furthermore, spatial planning legislation can impose detailed building regulations.

For certain interventions in existing buildings, an owner needs to apply for building permits (which is also the case for protected buildings). Article 4.7.16 of the Flemish Codex for Spatial Planning indicates when advice of other authorities needs to be requested.⁵⁷ Regarding immovable heritage, this is the case for permits concerning (tentative) protected (archeological) monuments or situated in (tentative) protected village- or cityscapes, landscapes or archaeological reserves. Also permit requests situated within the visual field up to 50 meters of a (tentative) protected monument have to seek the advice from the agency. Moreover, when the monument is listed as World Heritage, the agency must be consulted for building permits requests situated within the complete defined buffer zone around the World Heritage property.

Land use is firstly determined by a large scale 'land use plan' for the complete region.⁵⁸ Colors indicate different types of land use. Concerning immovable heritage, one specific zone is relevant: the CHE-area or area with cultural, historical and/or aesthetic

⁵⁵ Such as the GECORO, Gemeentelijke Commissie voor Ruimtelijke Ordening.

⁵⁶ Intergemeentelijke archeologische diensten (IAD) and intergemeentelijke onroerend erfgoed diensten (IOED).

⁵⁷ Artikel 4.7.16 van de Vlaamse Codex Ruimtelijke Ordening en het besluit van de Vlaamse regering van 5 juni 2009 tot aanwijzing van de instanties die over een vergunningsaanvraag advies verlenen, Cf. www.ruimtelijkeordering.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁵⁸ Gewestplan Vlaanderen, Cf. www.agiv.be, last consulted December 2012.

importance. Spatial planning policy is also anchored in policy plans. These plans exist on different levels: from the Flemish spatial structure plan to local structure plans. Often first a description or evaluation is made of the existing spatial structure of a certain area, followed by its desired future spatial structure.

On a small scale, spatial policy can also be strengthened by the use of legal plans. In the past, these plans took the form of BPA's or special land use plans.⁵⁹ Within these plans, detailed descriptions concerning use, building regulations, traffic, etc. can be determined. Also valuable heritage elements can be described within such plans, together with the remark these elements need to be conserved. Nowadays these plans are not drafted anymore, but the existing ones are still valid. Recently a new type of legal plan was created: a RUP or spatial implementation plan.⁶⁰ A RUP is similar to a BPA and can be drafted for a whole municipality, or for a smaller region within the municipality or city.

1.3.2 Movable and intangible heritage policy in Flanders

The Flemish policy for movable and intangible heritage is imbedded in the policy field of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media.⁶¹ The concerned minister currently is Joke Schauvliege. The agency Art and Heritage (Agentschap Kunsten en Erfgoed) is responsible for the movable and intangible heritage policy in Flanders.⁶² In Flanders this is called 'cultural heritage'. However, because this creates confusion with the terminology used by UNESCO, the term will not be further used as such in this master thesis. In 2008 a new unifying decree was issued which legally determines the Flemish policy for movable and intangible heritage.⁶³ The scope of this decree is rather wide and concerns heritage in archives, museums, (heritage) libraries, depots, collections, folklore, traditions or living heritage.

Several institutions can be subsidized through this decree, and receive different types of recognition from the Flemish government. A museum can for instance be recognized, which is the case for three of the museums located within the Flemish beguinages.⁶⁴ Next the Flemish government also supports several centres of expertise, among which the CRKC, the organization for folklore in Flanders (Volkskunde Vlaanderen) and Resonant vzw, an expertise centre for musical heritage (that has an interesting webpage regarding beguine music).⁶⁵ Also the umbrella organization for local history associations 'Heemkunde Vlaanderen' is supported by the Flemish government.⁶⁶ Another important policy instrument, is FARO.⁶⁷ FARO functions as a focal point for movable and intangible heritage

⁵⁹ Bijzonder plan van aanleg.

⁶⁰ Ruimtelijk uitvoeringsplan.

⁶¹ www.cjasm.vlaanderen.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁶² www.kunstenenerfgoed.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁶³ Cultureel-erfgoeddecreet, a new decree was issued in 2012 (but is not implemented yet).

⁶⁴ The museums of Hoogstraten, Turnhout and Dendermonde are recognized.

⁶⁵ Cf. www.crkc.be, www.muzikaalerfgoed.be, www.volkskunde-vlaanderen.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁶⁶ Cf. www.heemkunde-vlaanderen.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁶⁷ Cf. www.faronet.be, last consulted December 2012.

in Flanders and supports the subsidized organizations in their working. FARO also coordinates the annual Heritage day.⁶⁸

Valuable movable and intangible heritage can be protected as 'topstuk' or masterpiece. A masterpiece is protected because of its artistic, archaeological, historic or scientific exceptional value. This protection can be valid for an entire collection or for individual elements. Protected masterpieces have to be conserved in Flanders, and can apply for restoration subsidies. Next a Flemish inventory of intangible heritage exists since 2008. Elements that are listed on this inventory, have to submit annual reports with initiatives that were taken to safeguard the element.

To stimulate the local policy for movable and intangible heritage in Flanders, the Flemish community can conclude special 'cultural heritage covenants' with municipalities or with partnerships of several municipalities. This project was started in 2000 and nowadays some 21 covenants were concluded.⁶⁹ After concluding such an arrangement, the involved municipalities receive extra subsidies to strengthen their local heritage policy. Therefore heritage cells are created, that implement the aims of the covenant.

The main aims of heritage cells are to strengthen the local policy and raise awareness for the local movable and intangible heritage of the community. Therefore the heritage cell needs to develop projects with several (local) stakeholders. Typical is for instance the creation of online databases with visual material that can be consulted by the public.⁷⁰ Next the heritage cell also has to participate in the organisation of the Heritage days. These heritage cells can combine objectives of the Flemish authorities with objectives of local authorities. Because these projects are subsidized by the Flemish community, projects cannot involve immovable heritage. Finally local cultural policy is also supported by a special focal point, LOCUS.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Erfgoeddag.

⁶⁹ G.VERCAUTEREN, *Samen werken aan cultureel erfgoed: cultureel-erfgoedconvenants in Vlaanderen*, FARO Vlaams steunpunt voor cultureel erfgoed, 2011. Also Cf. www.erfgoedcellen.be, last consulted December 2012.

⁷⁰ Beeldbanken.

⁷¹ Cf. www.locusnet.be, last consulted December 2012.

However, there are some exceptions to this division between immovable and movable/intangible heritage policy in Flanders. For instance movable items that have a clear historical bond or connection with an immovable heritage property, can be immovable by destination (onroerend door bestemming).⁷² Large movable heritage objects can also be movable with a temporary immovable character (roerend met een tijdelijk onroerend karakter).⁷³ Because in reality the relation between movable, immovable and intangible heritage is very close, it is sometimes difficult to determine the boundary or distinction between these separate policy fields.

This is also the case for the Flemish beguinages: the architecture or built heritage actually reflects the intangible values of the beguine movement. Archives still conserve many valuable historical sources, texts, documentation of traditional music, visual material, etc. Museums, churches or depots conserve pieces of (religious) art of the beguine movement, next to objects related to daily life or economic activities. Finally there are traditions such as religious processions which are still alive. Separating these different aspects is somehow abstract.

The described Flemish heritage policy is thus rather complex. Both of the Flemish agencies occupied with this policy, work in different ways and have their own traditions. Moreover, heritage policy in Flanders is also influenced by legislation from other policy fields. Church councils that manage a parish church for instance, are obliged to make an inventory of all items situated in their church.⁷⁴ Next there is for instance legislation concerning fire safety, or legislation connected to a new function located within heritage buildings.

Even though responsibility for heritage was divided, a federal scientific institution for conservation still exists: the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK), situated in Brussels.⁷⁵ Confusingly, in this case the term cultural heritage does imply both movable and immovable heritage. The KIK hosts different laboratories for scientific research on conservation. The institution also compiles an inventory of the country's artistic and cultural property, that is partly accessible online.

Finally it is important to state that the Flemish heritage field consists out of many stakeholders who are not directly related to the authorities. Owners, users, architects, historians, archeologists, city guides or volunteers in friend's associations or associations for local history often play a role in the management of valuable heritage as well.

⁷² For instance the interior of a monumental church.

⁷³ For instance fairground attractions.

⁷⁴ Decreet van 7 mei 2004 betreffende de materiële organisatie en werking van de erkende erediensten, art. 35, Cf. *Handleiding voor het opstellen van een kerkinventaris*, Centrum voor Religieuze Kunst en Cultuur vzw, uitgave 3, 2012, 6.

⁷⁵ Het Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium, www.kikirpa.be, last consulted December 2012.

1.4 Flemish beguinages

1.4.1 The beguine movement: history



Illus. 1.2: legend of the young men and the beguine, Sint-Truiden, 17th century.

Describing over eight centuries of beguine history on a few pages, is rather difficult. This complex multilayered and interesting story, deserves more attention. However, in the light of this master thesis, only a brief overview will be given in order to explain the historical significance of these sites. In the second volume of the masterthesis, a short historical explanation is included for each of the thirteen beguinages.

As said, the beguine movement originates in the 12th and 13th centuries. The exact circumstances for the beginning of the beguine movement are unclear. Probably it has to be looked at from a broader perspective of social and religious evolutions that took place. Unmarried women did not have many possibilities in

medieval society. At the same time, there was an ongoing religious revival that went back to the roots of Christianity.

It is certain, that the first women who can be described as beguines, lived alone or in small groups. They were referred to as *Mulieres religiosae* or *devotae*.⁷⁶ These women did not take eternal vows, nor did they hand over their possessions. Yet they choose a pious life, and devoted themselves to charitable works. From the late 12th century onwards, the first beguine communities originated from these small groups of women. One of the earliest communities was situated in the city of Liège. Afterwards the movement spread to the territory of the Low Countries and Western and Middle-Europe.⁷⁷ Thus the beguine movement did not have a defined founder, nor were there specific rules which determined beguine life.⁷⁸

⁷⁶M. WYNANTS (ed.), *Begijnen en begijnhoven*, Dossier bij de tentoonstelling Begijnen en begijnhoven in Antwerpen en Brabant, Algemeen rijksarchief, Brussel, 1994, 7-25.

⁷⁷ S. VAN AERSCHOT and M. HEIRMAN, *Flemish beguinages: World heritage*, Leuven, 2001, 11-53. And *Monumenten, Landschappen & archeologie*, 29 (5), 2010. (thematic publication about beguinages).

⁷⁸ Although rules of conduct were later on (from the 14th-15th century) drafted in most of the beguinages, and afterwards renewed several times.

In the 13th century these women were brought together in architectural ensembles: the beguinages. In our regions, this was stimulated because it gave the authorities more control over these independent women. Often grounds were donated and privileges granted by nobility or religious authorities. Also religious orders (mainly Dominicans and Cistercians) were involved. Beguinages were situated just outside or inside cities, often near waterways. These sites functioned as economic and religious units. Beguines had to provide for themselves, and were often active in the textile industry. In the Low Countries the beguine communities were very successful and several cities even had to built a second beguinage.

In general there was much suspicion towards the beguines, and they were even condemned as heretics by the Council of Vienna in 1312.⁷⁹ Several regions started to pursue the beguines. This happened in the German areas, France and Southern Europe, where the movement disappeared all together. Yet in the Low Countries the beguine movement survived, partly because the communities were at that time already settled in enclosed beguinages. At the end of the 14th century, approximately 100 beguinages existed in the Low Countries. Nowadays a third of this number is conserved.

However, also for the beguinages within the Low Countries difficult times arrived in the 15th and 16th centuries. Especially in the 16th century religious wars affected the beguinages: many of the sites were plundered, burned or damaged several times. Moreover, in this period there was also a moral decay of the original spiritual values of the beguine communities.

This changed in the 17th century, when the beguinages flourished due to the Catholic contra reformation. There was relative peace and spiritual revival – for instance in the beguinage of Diest with the priest Nicolaas Esschius (1507-1578) – which made the beguine way of life attractive again. The beguinage movement was also supported by the authorities and the church.⁸⁰ The beguine population reached a maximum in this heyday. During this period, the wooden architecture inside the beguinages was replaced with stone buildings and several communities also expanded their territory. Several beguinages were advocates of the baroque style, which is still visible in the architecture and art of the beguinages.

In the 18th century the beguine movement started to decline. Due to several circumstances, the beguinages attracted less interested women. The French Revolution, which resulted in French occupation in 1794, was the beginning of the end. Religious property was confiscated and the beguines could no longer waer a habit or live accordantly to their rules. In 1796 the Commissions des Hospices Civiles (or Commission of Civil Hospices) were created. These organizations were entrusted with the care for the poor and the sick, and became the owner of several beguinages.⁸¹ In some cases, the beguines could buy their property back, using straw men. After the French occupation, and even after the Belgian independence, this situation continued.

⁷⁹ Actually it was the Free Spirit sect that was condemned, but beguines were suspected to have connections with this sect.

⁸⁰ For instance the Spanish governors Albrecht and Isabella supported the beguinages.

⁸¹ These civil welfare organizations were the forerunners of the current O.C.M.W.'s, that still own several beguinages, see Figures 2.2-3.



Illus. 1.3: beguine in Sint-Amandsberg, Gent.

In the second half of the 19th century there was a small revival of the beguine movement. In the liberal city of Gent, the women who lived in the great beguinage moved into a brand new beguinage at Sint-Amandsberg in 1874. The duke Engelbertus of Arenberg largely financed the whole operation.

However, in the 20th century the decline continued. Vacant houses were rented out to non-beguines, or used for other purposes. Several beguinages were integrated in the city and lost their enclosed character. Also the two World Wars caused damage to the sites. In the meantime the beguine population declined drastically.



Illus. 1.4: beguine in O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, Gent.

Nowadays only one beguine is still alive, Marcella Pattyn. She lived in the beguinages of Sint-Amandsberg and Kortrijk, and moved to a retirement home in 2005. In the summer of 2012 she celebrated the 70th anniversary of her profession as a beguine.



Illus. 1.5: beguine museum, Turnhout.



Illus. 1.6: beguine statues at Diest.



Illus. 1.7: monumental gate, Diest.



Illus. 1.8: Chapel of the infirmary, Tongeren.



Illus. 1.9: house of the great mistress, Mechelen.



Illus. 1.10: beguinage church, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen.



Illus. 1.11: Beguine church, Turnhout.

Thus beguinages reflect centuries of beguine history. As said, beguinages were enclosed entities that often lay outside of the city fortifications. The beguinages of Hoogstraten and Kortrijk, were situated within the city center from their creation. Many beguinages were afterwards integrated into the expanding city. Nowadays the beguinage of Sint-Truiden is still located outside of the city center.

Off course, in these religious communities, churches, chapels and smaller religious elements were important. The church was often the first stone building in the beguinage. These first churches were later on altered, or completely rebuilt. Many beguinage churches date from the 17th century, and have a baroque influence. In other beguinages, the gothic churches were decorated with baroque furniture (for instance in Leuven or Sint-Truiden). The beguine church of Sint-Amandsberg, was designed by Jean Béthune in a neogothic style.

The beguines lived together in a community, yet there was a balance between communal and private life. Unlike for instance life in a monastery, beguinages had separate private beguine houses, where one or more beguines lived together. Women who could not afford to rent or build a house within the beguinage, lived together in larger buildings called convents. The great mistress, who was the head of the beguine community, lived in the most representative house, called 'groothuis' or 'kerckekamer'. If a priest was active in the beguinage, he often lived in a presbytery just outside the beguinage.



Illus. 1.12: woodwork filled in with bricks, Leuven.



Illus. 1.13: use of iron sandstone, Diest.



Illus. 1.14: presbytery, Lier.



Illus. 1.15: farm building, Sint-Truiden.



Illus. 1.16: beguinage of Hoogstraten.

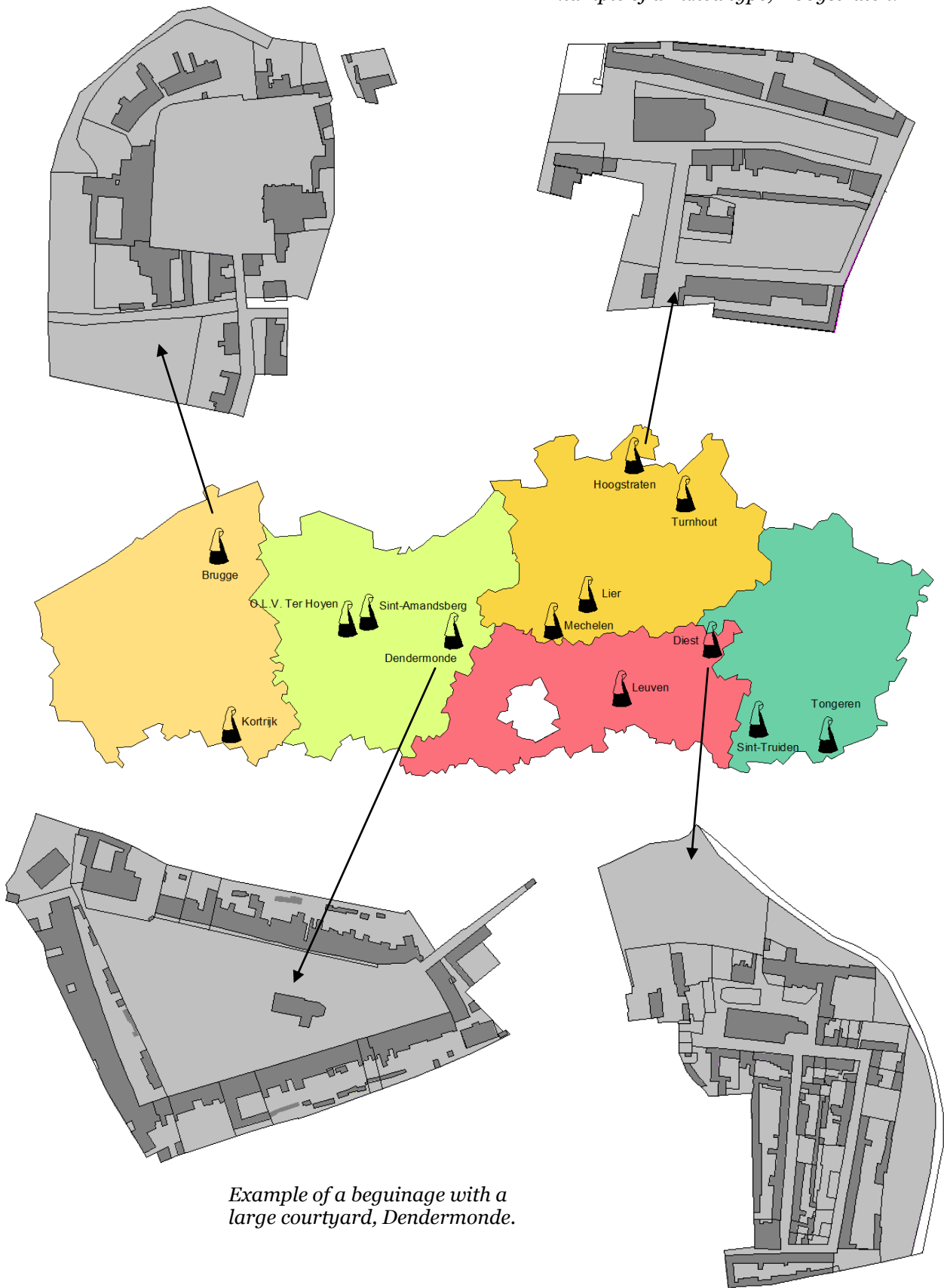
Beguine houses were first built with materials such as wood, wattle and daub. This vernacular architecture was replaced with stone buildings, mostly in the 17th century. In some cases, the wooden structure was filled in with brickwork. Besides bricks, also natural stone was used, often in local materials and styles. For example in the beguinage of Diest, iron sandstone is used. The roofs are covered with slates or tiles. In some beguinages these houses have walled front gardens. Often they also have a private garden behind the house. In the 18th and 19th centuries, interior changes were often made to chimneys, ceilings, floors, etc.

The layout of the sites differs, depending on space and historical evolution. Some beguinages have a large courtyard, with houses grouped around it. Other beguinages have multiple courtyards, or have streets in chessboard patterns. Mixed types also exist. Beguinages also had green spaces such as orchards and bleaching fields to dry linen. Sometimes these grounds were situated outside of the beguinage walls.

Besides convents, other large buildings were: gatehouses, infirmaries (often with a chapel) and tables of the holy spirit (to care for the sick and poor), houses to host novices (women who weren't professed yet) and farm buildings. Also smaller elements deserve attention, such as water pumps and small chapels.

Example of a mixed type, Brugge.

Example of a mixed type, Hoogstraten.



Example of a beguinage with a large courtyard, Dendermonde.

Example of a beguinage with different streets, Diest.

Illus. 1.17: Flemish beguinages (images are not in the same scale).



1.4.2 Flemish beguinages as World Heritage: the inscription

In 1997, one year after the Belgian State ratified the World Heritage Convention, the Flemish beguinages were proposed for nomination on the World Heritage List. The elaborate and well documented nomination file, was composed by Suzanne Van Aerschot – Van Haeverbeeck, who at that time worked for the Flemish government.⁸² The nomination file is drafted in French, one of the UNESCO languages. It is titled: '*Béguinages Flamands, un passé bien présent*'. This could be translated as 'Flemish beguinages, a past well present'. The nomination file is structured as followed: first the exact location of the beguinages is given. Next the juridical status of the sites is addressed. Afterwards a general description is given, followed by the state of conservation. Finally, a justification for inscription is given. The annexes to the nomination file, that describe the most representative cases, are also important since these were the beguinages which were eventually nominated.⁸³ The nomination file provides much detailed information on the beguinages, which is still relevant. It also provides a good basis for future monitoring and evaluation, since it describes the way these historical sites were being managed around 1997.

Thus the general part of the nomination file is based on the architecture, the history and the heritage values of all existing Flemish beguinages. The justification for inscription mentions the concentration of 26 remaining Flemish beguinages and emphasizes the value of the complete group of sites. The beguinages are proposed as a serial inscription, because they belong to the same historical-cultural group. Next the justification in the nomination file is based on three criteria: nr. 2, 4 and 6. The first two criteria (2 and 4) are treated in one chapter called 'Beguinaes: Urban development and architectural and cultural aspects'. The third criteria (6) is described in the chapter 'Beguinaes: Centres of spirituality, solidarity, femininity, and modernity'. It is interesting to note that the contemporary function and significance of the beguinages is also mentioned in this justification. Next the authenticity of the beguinages is described.

After the nomination file was submitted, an ICOMOS delegate, Regina Dughello, visited different beguinages and assessed the proposal. Together with Suzanne Van Aerschot she visited the 13 representative cases. Also the beguinages of Antwerp, Herentals and Hasselt were part of the assessment.⁸⁴ However, the ICOMOS delegate decided to keep the 13 selected beguinages for the nomination on the World Heritage list, for reasons of authenticity and integrity. Thus the proposal was approved and evaluated. Finally the 13 Flemish beguinages were inscribed on the World Heritage List as a serial cultural property, which was decided on the 22 session of the Committee in Kyoto, Japan, that took place between 30 November and 05 December 1988.

⁸² S. VAN AERSCHOT, *Béguinages Flamands: un passé bien présent, liste du patrimoine mondial, proposition d'inscription*, 1997. At that time the responsible governing body was called 'Afdeling Monumenten en Landschappen', under the direction of Edgard Goedleven.

⁸³ Nowadays there are additional requirements for nomination files, Cf. OG 2012.

⁸⁴ *Interview with Suzanne Van Aerschot*, Leuven, 15-11-2011.

In the Advisory body evaluation by ICOMOS in 1998 (and also presented on the UNESCO website), beguines and beguinages are described as following⁸⁵:

The *Béguines* were women who dedicated their lives to God without retiring from the world. In the 13th century they founded the *béguinages*, enclosed communities designed to meet their spiritual and material needs.

The Flemish *béguinages* are architectural ensembles composed of houses, churches, ancillary buildings and green spaces, with a layout of either urban or rural origin and built in styles specific to the Flemish cultural region. They are a fascinating reminder of the tradition of the *Béguines* that developed in north-western Europe in the Middle Ages.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the used criteria were changed to nr. 2, 3 and 4. Thus the final justification for inscription is the following:

Criterion 2: The Flemish *béguinages* demonstrate outstanding physical characteristics of urban and rural planning and a combination of religious and traditional architecture in styles specific to the Flemish cultural region.

Criterion 3: The *béguinages* bear exceptional witness to the cultural tradition of independent religious women in north-western Europe in the Middle Ages.

Criterion 4: The *béguinages* constitute an outstanding example of an architectural ensemble associated with a religious movement characteristic of the Middle Ages associating both secular and conventual values.

⁸⁵ Cf. whc.unesco.org/en/list/855 and whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/855.pdf, last consulted December 2012.

II SYNTHESIS



2.1 The Flemish beguinages and their management today

The first and main objective of this master thesis is to give an overview of the management of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List. Almost 15 years after these sites were inscribed as a serial World Heritage property an update on their current management is required before conclusions can be drawn regarding their common management. Therefore, emphasis is laid on the management of the thirteen heritage sites since 1998. It is interesting to examine which evolutions took place in these last 15 years. In a way the impact of the nomination on the management of the Flemish beguinages can be measured by comparing their management before and after 1998. Still, it is difficult to determine the cause of perceived changes, especially since no other Flemish beguinages (which are not inscribed on the List) were assessed.

To obtain the most objective and uniform overview as possible, information fields were drafted before the start of the research.⁸⁶ Based on the output of the data collection between November 2011 and July 2012 (interviews, desktop research, literature research), all information was layout in similar formats for each of the beguinages. This overview then provided the content for the second volume of the thesis: Analysis-Overview. After composing the files for each of the thirteen sites, the obtained data were analysed and compared. This way the differences and similarities in management between the different beguinages became clear.

In this part of the synthesis, the conclusions of the executed analysis will be discussed. First a basic overview of the protection, ownership and (current) functions of the thirteen examined beguinages will be presented. Afterwards the state of conservation of the beguinages will be discussed, together with an overview of the current maintenance and documentation. Next some shared challenges are listed, that were touched upon during the interviews. Different management plans and systems will be examined, both for the beguinages individually, as for the complete World Heritage property. Finally, some reflection is given on the impact of the nomination on the Flemish beguinages.

⁸⁶ Cf. annex 2.1.4.

2.1.1 Protection, ownership and current functions

Protection

Within the Operational Guidelines is stated that the protection and management of World Heritage properties should ensure the sustainment of their Outstanding Universal Value and authenticity at the time of inscription. State Parties should also ensure the full and effective implementation of these measures.⁸⁷ Irrespective of these UNESCO obligations, the Flemish beguinages were already valued and protected on a national level before their nomination. In the standard publication on Flemish beguinages of 2001, Suzanne Van Aerschot describes the evolution of the growing interest for the Flemish beguinages.⁸⁸ Starting from the 19th century, beguinages were valued from a romantic or folkloric point of view. Slowly they received a heritage status. Also their architectural design received much attention. Therefore it is not surprising many beguinage churches were protected soon after the first protection law was issued in 1931.

Figure 2.1 shows an up to date (situation anno 2012) overview of different types of protection of the thirteen Flemish beguinages. Several conclusions can be drawn from this overview. First of all the table shows that there are many differences concerning the historical evolution, the types, and the degree of protection between the thirteen beguinages. In most cases, the protection of the beguinage took place in several stages. Currently nine out of the thirteen beguinages are completely protected as monument, meaning also the public domain within the defined beguinage is protected.

The beguinages of Mechelen, Tongeren, Sint-Truiden and Turnhout are not completely protected as such. In the case of the beguinage of Turnhout, this protection is planned for the future. For the other three beguinages this is not the case, mostly because these sites have modern infill-architecture from the 20th century. These sites are (or will be) however, completely protected as village-or cityscapes.

Next, four of the beguinages are completely protected as landscapes, and five of the beguinages are partly protected as such (Cf. *Figure 2.1*). It is clear that after the legislation of 1976, which facilitated the protection of village-or cityscapes, no more protected landscapes were created within the Flemish beguinages. Five of the beguinages are completely situated within protected village- or cityscapes.⁸⁹

Next, spatial planning instruments can also be seen as a form of protection, since they pose restrictions on building activities and other changes within the concerned area. All thirteen sites are situated in a CHE-area. five sites are situated within a special land use plan

⁸⁷ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, 96-98, 2012.

⁸⁸ S. VAN AERSCHOT and M. HEIRMAN, *Flemish beguinages: World heritage*, Leuven, 2001, 143-171.

⁸⁹ Beguinages of Mechelen, Sint-Truiden, Tongeren, Gent Sint-Amansberg and Brugge. The table does not indicate whether the village-or cityscapes stretch beyond the boundaries of the beguinage or not. Sometimes the beguinages also border village-or cityscapes. This is indicated in the individual files for each of the beguinages in Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW.

(BPA).⁹⁰ Only one beguinage is located within a spatial implementation plan (RUP), although such plans are being prepared for three (and possible four) other beguinages.⁹¹ Finally only the beguinages of Leuven and Diest have a defined buffer zone.

Although all of the thirteen beguinages were protected in one way or another before 1998, this process did not end after they became World Heritage. Since 1998, eight more official protection orders were drafted and implemented. This process is still continuing in the beguinages of Turnhout and Mechelen. Also on the level of spatial planning and land use plans, new plans have been approved after 1998.

As indicated, there is no uniformity in the protection of the thirteen beguinages on the World Heritage List. Before – and also after – 1998 the protection of these sites was not integrated in a global plan or strategy for all the Flemish beguinages.⁹² The timing and type of protection, was mainly determined by the heritage consultants and other stakeholders themselves. Still, the fact that thirteen beguinages were inscribed on the World Heritage List, is sometimes used as an argument in official protection orders issued after 1998.⁹³

The most important consequence of this complex legal situation, is the impact a certain type of protection has on the management of a site. As explained in the introduction of this master thesis, different types of protection result in different regulations regarding maintenance and restoration subsidies. For some cases, this also entails different types of planning instruments, such as landscape management plans and revalorization plans. Furthermore, interior heritage elements of buildings situated in a village-or cityscape cannot be monitored, even though they are located in a World Heritage property.⁹⁴

Beguinages are architectural ensembles composed out of immovable heritage such as buildings and landscapes. However, the Flemish beguinages also contain movable and intangible heritage. As discussed in the introduction, there is a different policy towards movable and intangible heritage in Flanders. Some of these heritage elements are protected as masterpieces. Regarding the beguinages, this mainly concerns musical heritage. Next, three museums in the beguinages were acknowledged by the Flemish government, namely Hoogstraten, Turnhout and Dendermonde. Regarding intangible heritage, the tradition of lace making in Flanders is inscribed on the Flemish inventory of intangible heritage.⁹⁵

Finally it has to be noted, that the respondents did generally not express the need for more protection of the beguinage they were involved in. Complaints that were put forward during the interviews, were more related to the consequences of the protection of buildings or landscapes. Also the slow administrative process and the long waiting lists for subsidies were addressed. Thus these complaints concerned the lack of a good implementation of heritage policy rather than insufficient legal protection.

⁹⁰ The beguinages of Sint-Truiden, Tongeren, Dendermonde, Diest and Leuven.

⁹¹ The beguinage of Gent O.L.V. Ter Hoyen.

⁹² Even though attempts were made, cf. 2.2.1 Initiatives from the Flemish government.

⁹³ For instance the protection as village-and cityscape in Kortrijk, 2003.

⁹⁴ Which, in the case of the Great beguinage of Mechelen, lead to problems between inhabitants and the monuments services of the city of Mechelen. Cf. Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW, 855-003 Mechelen.

⁹⁵ Cf. *www.kunstenenerfgoed.be*, last consulted December 2012.

Beguinage	monument				landscape		village or city scape		indicated bufferzone	open monument association	land use plans		
	church	some buildings	all buildings	complete site	part of site	complete site	part of site	complete site			CHE area	BPA	RUP
Hoogstraten	1953			1974		1974					x		
Lier	1939			1966		1966					x		
Mechelen	1938	1985, 1977, 2001, 2002			1976		1985 (most of site)	2011 (tentative) Extension of city scape			x		
Turnhout	1936	1962, 1975		future	1962						x		
Sint-Truiden	1933	1974, 2005			1974			2005			x	1998	under preparation
Tongeren	1933	1981, 2003						1981			x	1991, 1995, 2002	under preparation for whole inner city
Dendermonde	1971		1971	1991	1942						x		
Gent Ter Hoyen				1963		1963					x	1988, 2001	2007
Gent Sint-Amandsberg				1994				1994		x	x		
Diest	1938	1938		2003	1939				x		x	1995	under preparation
Leuven	1939			1987					x		x	1989	
Brugge			1939	1996		1939		1996			x		possible in future
Kortrijk			1937	2003							x		

Figure 2.1: Protection of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, situation 2012.

Ownership

Next to the protection of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, also the ownership of these sites plays an important role in their management. *Figure 2.2* shows an overview of the different owners (situation anno 2012). The owners presented in this table are the bare legal owners of the beguinages. A distinction was made between public and private owners. It goes without saying, that also the ownership of the beguinages is rather diverse. Originally the beguinages were in most cases property of the beguine communities themselves. After the French Revolution and the secularization process, the ownership of the beguinages was and remained fragmented among different public and private owners.

This is visually expressed on the coloured maps presented in *Figure 2.3*. These maps are based on cadastral maps provided by the Flemish Immovable Heritage services.⁹⁶ The plans, which often date from 2005, indicate the boundaries of the different beguinages. Still, it is sometimes difficult to determine the exact boundaries of the sites. Historically, many beguinages were larger than the enclosed domain itself. On the other hand building blocks inside the beguinages were sometimes demolished and replaced with infill architecture, which does not belong to the beguinage anymore.⁹⁷ When parts are not situated within the beguinage walls (such as parking lots just outside of the beguinage), these areas are indicated with a dotted pattern. Both the table and the maps, are based on data collected through interviews and desktop research. Thus they might not be completely correct and have no official legitimacy.

Public ownership

After the French Revolution most of the Flemish beguinages were handed over to the civic social welfare organizations, which now have become O.C.M.W.'s.⁹⁸ Nowadays such organizations exist in all Flemish municipalities. O.C.M.W.'s are public institutions that have their own working. The core business of these organisations nowadays, is to provide social services in their community. The beguinages of Kortrijk and Turnhout are still completely property of an O.C.M.W. Also the beguinages of Lier and Diest are mainly owned by such organisations, although parts of these beguinages belong to other parties.

Church councils are another public owner.⁹⁹ These councils were established in the beginning of the 19th century, after the concordat concluded between Napoleon Bonaparte and the pope Pius VII in 1801. Their main function concerns the (religious) working of a parish church. Church councils are owner of their church, and often own other religious buildings as well. Such councils were not created in all of the Flemish beguinages.¹⁰⁰ Currently church councils only own property in three of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List: Mechelen, Lier and Hoogstraten. In the beguinages of Lier and

⁹⁶For detailed references ,Cf. sources in Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW for each of the beguinages.

⁹⁷ For instance in the beguinage of Kortrijk. See Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW.

⁹⁸ Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn.

⁹⁹ Cf. www.kerknet.be for information and legislation, last consulted December 2012.

¹⁰⁰ The reason for this, is that not all beguinages were separate parishes.

Mechelen, the church council also owns beguine houses next to religious properties. These houses were often given to the councils by the beguines themselves after they passed away. The last main public owners are local municipalities and cities. The beguinages of Hoogstraten and Brugge are completely owned by the city they are located in.¹⁰¹ Yet, in both cases the sites were given into a hereditary lease, which will be explained further in the thesis. In four other beguinages, the city owns the public domain. In some cases, the city also owns and operates some monumental buildings, such as churches or infirmaries. This is the case in the beguinages of Diest and Tongeren. Finally the province of Limburg (PCCE) owns the church and part of the public domain of the beguinage of Sint-Truiden.

Overall, six of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, are (mainly) owned by one or several public owners. These are the beguinages of Hoogstraten, Lier, Turnhout, Diest, Brugge and Kortrijk.

Private ownership

The second group of owners concerns private owners. A first category of private owners are single owners. Within this category, no distinction was made between different types of single owners (for example between commercial persons or private individual persons). In the beguinages of Mechelen, Sint-Truiden and Tongeren, most of the buildings are property of single owners. These beguinages now function as historic city quarters. One side of the courtyard of the beguinage of Dendermonde was also privatized. Next, few properties are owned by single owners in the beguinages of Lier and Diest.

The second category of private owners are non-profit organizations. These organizations have an official legal status and are bound by specific regulations. Such non commercial organizations can also own property. In Belgium these organizations exist since the 1920's.¹⁰² In the beguinage of Sint-Truiden, the movable goods of the church are for instance owned by a non-profit organization. The youth hostel located in the beguinage of Tongeren, is also owned and operated by such an organization. In East-Flanders, three non-profit organizations were established especially for the management of (part of) a beguinage in the 1920's. Both the beguinages located in Gent, are completely owned by non-profit organizations. Also part of the beguinage of Dendermonde is owned and managed by a non-profit organization. Finally the beguinage of Leuven is the only beguinage owned by a private university, namely the KU Leuven (except for the church).

Overall, about seven out of the thirteen beguinages on the World Heritage List are entirely or mainly owned by private owners: the beguinages of Mechelen, Sint-Truiden, Tongeren, Dendermonde, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, Sint-Amandsberg and Leuven.

¹⁰¹ In both cases the city bought the beguinage from the O.C.M.W.

¹⁰² Cf. *www.vsd.be*, last consulted December 2012.

Beguinage	public				private		
	city	province	Social Welfare org	Church Council	single ownership	non-profit org	university
Hoogstraten	houses, public domain			church and presbytery, (and parking space outside beguinage)			
Lier	public domain, gates		2/3 of the buildings	1/3 of the buildings, church, presbytery	3 houses		
Mechelen	public domain, 3 gardens			church, some 30 houses	most of the buildings		
Turnhout			the complete site				
Sint-Truiden	Festraetstudio, public domain	beguinage church and surrounding church yard	fomer orchard N to beguinage with retirement home		most of the houses	movable goods of the church	
Tongeren	public domain, church, chapel and infirmary				most of the houses	the former slaughterhouse, now youth hostel	
Dendermonde					the West side of the beguinage and the entrance gate	42 houses, the presbytery, the church and the public domain	
Gent Ter Hoyen						the complete site	
Gent Sint-Amandsberg						the complete site	
Diest	infirmary, chapel, some buildings (now cultural centre)		some 80 houses, the church, the public domain, the public gardens		1 house inside of the beguinage, presbytery		
Leuven			the beguinage church				whole complex except for the church, including parking lots outside of the beguinage
Brugge	The city of Brugge owns the complete site since 1972						
Kortrijk	parking lot		The complete beguinage, including movable goods, chapel and public domain				

Figure 2.2: Ownership of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, situation 2012.

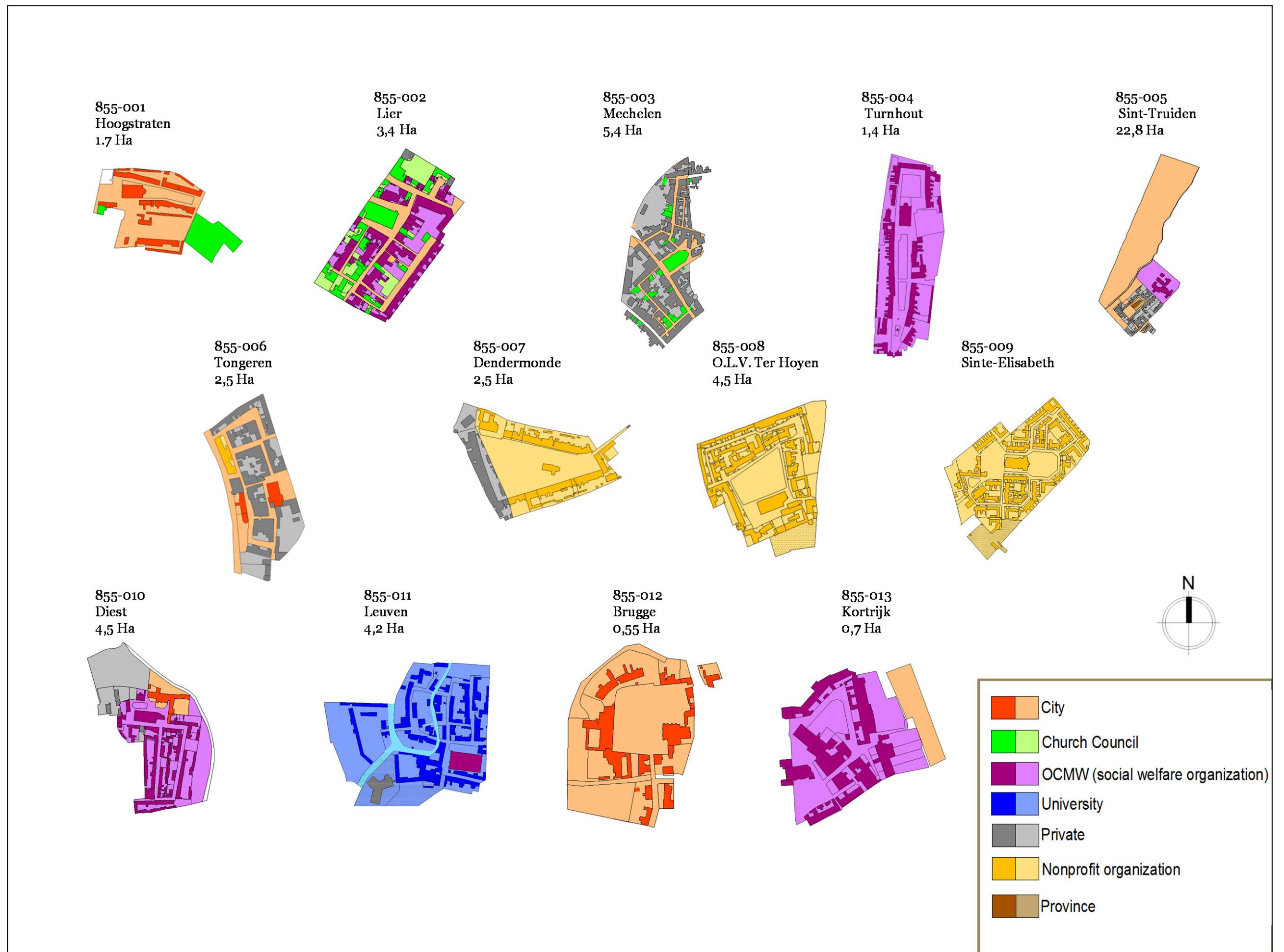


Figure 2.3: Overview ownership of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List (approximately), situation 2012. (plans not in the same scale).

Hereditary leasing

The stakeholders presented in *Figure 2.2* are the bare legal owners of the beguinages. However, in several cases parts of the beguinages were given from the legal owners to other parties in a hereditary lease.¹⁰³ This specific type of lease concerns immovable goods such as lands or property. It is an arrangement concluded between the owner and the person or organization that leases the property. For a limited period of time (between 27 and 99 years) the person who leases the property, receives the right of ownership. Therefore this person needs to pay an annual rent (although different systems exist).¹⁰⁴ Because this arrangement affects the management of a beguinage, the different hereditary leases were listed in *Figure 2.4*. Also important agreements concerning the technical responsibility for the beguinage churches were included in this table.

Many differences exist between different forms of hereditary leases in the Flemish beguinages. Both the beguinages of Hoogstraten and Brugge were integrally given into a hereditary lease by the city: to a non-profit organization in the case of Hoogstraten ('vzw Het Convent') and a congregation in the case of Brugge ('Monasterium De Wijngaard').

In other beguinages single houses and apartments are given by the owner into a hereditary lease to private persons. According to the owners, the main reason to apply this system is financial. The owners cannot completely support the restorations themselves. At the same time, leased houses still remain their property. This system was first implemented in the beguinage of Hoogstraten, where 'vzw Het Convent' gave the separate buildings into a hereditary lease to 34 families. Currently, hereditary leasing is also used in the beguinages of Turnhout, Gent (O.L.V. Ter Hoyen) and Dendermonde.

The duration and specifics of these agreements, differ from each other. Houses in Turnhout are leased for a period of 33 years, whereas this period is longer in the beguinages of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen in Gent (66 years) and Dendermonde (99 years). In the beguinages of Turnhout and Hoogstraten, the lesers are responsible for the restoration of their building themselves. In the beguinages of O.L.V. Ter hoyen in Gent and Dendermonde, houses are restored by the owner before being leased to private persons.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore in Gent (O.L.V. Ter Hoyen) a complete group of houses along the Achterstraat is leased to a social housing company. Finally, the concerned cities sometimes lease buildings or parts of the public domain in the beguinages as well. This is the case in the beguinages of Turnhout, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen and Dendermonde. In the beguinages of Lier, Mechelen and Diest the city has taken over technical responsibility of the beguinage churches, because the existing church factory could not support necessary works anymore.

¹⁰³ Erfpacht.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *www.notaris.be*, last consulted December 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Although the persons leasing the house are involved in the last stages of the restoration/renovation.

Evolution after 1998 and impact on management

Since 1998 the ownership of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List has not changed drastically. In the beguinages of Sint-Truiden, Mechelen and Diest few properties were sold to private owners. In Sint-Truiden the province sold the tower house, in Mechelen the church council sold several houses and in Diest one property within the beguinage became private. Also the process of giving houses into a hereditary lease, that already started before 1998, continued after the nomination. Overall, a certain gentrification process took place in most of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List. Respondents indicated that retail prices in the privatized beguinages did increase, attracting more fortunate inhabitants. Also the hereditary leasing process creates gentrification, although this varies from beguinage to beguinage.

Thus the ownership of these World Heritage sites is rather complex, which highly affects their management. Most social welfare organizations for instance, have their own technical team. Yet conserving protected heritage sites is not the core business of these organizations. Beguinages managed by a non-profit organization have a different character and management tradition as the beguinages managed by public institutions. Moreover, the most important factor is the amount of stakeholders involved in the management of the concerned beguinage. If a beguinage is owned and managed by one owner a uniform management is much easier to implement. On the other hand, participation of inhabitants is less active in these beguinages. Beguinages that are privatized (Mechelen, Sint-Truiden, Tongeren) often lack a coordinated management on a local level. Different owners often have limited contacts between each other. For instance in Dendermonde, the non-profit organization does not actively work together with the owners of the privatized part. This way a uniform vision on the beguinage is rather difficult to implement. Fear exists that beguinages where the houses are/will be given into a hereditary lease, will lose part of this uniformity as well. Also for the Flemish authorities and the involved heritage consultants, the ownership of the sites has many consequences. Privatized beguinages are often monitored on the level of separate houses, whereas beguinages with one owner are more likely to be viewed as a whole.

The ownership of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List also has other consequences. Public institutions and private persons can apply for different types and percentages of maintenance or restoration subsidies. Persons or organizations that concluded a hereditary lease, can also apply for subsidies. Beguinages which are completely private domain (meaning also the public domain is the property of the owner) have more responsibilities and are regarded as real 'cities within the cities'. Utilities, sewage systems, public lighting, etc. are the responsibility of the owners themselves. Concerns such as safety matters are more difficult to monitor. Also enforcing parking regulations is more difficult in these beguinages, since the police cannot intervene.

Beguinages	public				private				
	city	province	Social Welfare org	Church Council	single ownership	non-profit org	social housing assoc.	university	congregation
Hoogstraten					buildings from vzw Het Convent to 34 separate families	in 1992 for 99 years from the city to vzw Het Convent, everything except church and presbytery, secondly from church council to vzw Het convent in 1994 for 33 years the parking space outside the beguinage			
Lier	The city has taken over technical responsibility of the beguinage church from the church council				Church council and OCMW may lease few buildings in future				
Mechelen	The city has taken over technical responsibility of the beguinage church from the church council								
Turnhout	the city (TRAM 41) leases the museum				most houses ongoing/future for 33 years				
Sint-Truiden									
Tongeren									
Dendermonde	streets, museum (former infirmary and museal house), documentation center for 99 years (in 2007)				most houses in future for 99 years				
Gent Ter Hoyen	The Achterstraat for 66 years				most houses ongoing for 66 years		49 houses at the Achterstraat for 66 years (in 1999)		
Gent Sint-Amansberg									
Diest	The city has taken over technical responsibility of the beguinage church since 1988								
Leuven								beguinage church to University Parish for 99 years in 1985	
Brugge									the complete site to the Monasterium the Wijngaard for 99 y in 1934
Kortrijk									

Figure 2.4: Hereditary leasing from the owners to other stakeholders in the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, situation 2012.

Functions

The last overview presented in this part are the current functions of the different Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List. Again, this overview is based on interviews, visits and desktop research. The discussed functions mainly concern those which are actually established inside the beguinages. The overview is presented in *Figure 2.6* and *Figure 2.7*. The main functions of the sites are indicated and grouped in a couple of categories. It is important to note, that these figures present a kind of simplification of reality. Not all details could be integrated in this overview. For detailed information on specific beguinages, the texts in the second volume can be consulted. *Figure 2.7*, which is based on the same cadastral maps as *Figure 2.3*, visually expresses the different main functions in the beguinages. Sometimes one building hosts different functions, for instance an active church that is also used for cultural events. In this case the most important function is indicated on the map. Social housing or houses that are rented at low prices are indicated as housing. Thus the indicated social functions represent institutions occupied with the care for elderly or disabled persons. Smaller green spaces inside of the beguinages, such as courtyards or flower gardens, are indicated as public domain. Only few large green spaces, such as the bleaching field of Sint-Truiden or the allotment gardens in Diest, are indicated as such. Finally parking lots alongside streets are not indicated on the maps. Only separate larger parking spaces are shown.

Housing as main function

Overall, it is clear the main function of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List is housing. This is important because housing is compatible with the historic use of these sites. Furthermore, it gives the Flemish beguinages a contemporary function and significance. Finally, this has a large impact on the management of the thirteen beguinages. They are not heritage sites that exclusively function as a museum or a touristic attraction, but they are still 'active' entities where people live together.

Still, there are some variations within this function. Historically, beguinages often turned into poor neighbourhoods after the secularization process in the 20th century. Vacant beguine houses were rented out to less fortunate persons. This social aspect is still visible in certain beguinages. The 'vzw Begijnhof Sinte-Elisabeth te Sint-Amandsberg', that owns and manages the beguinage in Sint-Amandsberg, has an active policy to let out houses under the market price. The non-profit organization sees this as an important objective of their working, and aims to sustain this system in the future. Also both of the church councils that own property in the great beguinage of Mechelen and the beguinage of Lier, rent out houses at reasonable prices. The KU Leuven, owner of the great beguinage of Leuven which is now used for student accommodation, implements a system with different categories of rent prices depending on the financial situation of the students. The 'vzw Begijnhof van Dendermonde', that owns most part of the beguinage of Dendermonde, lets out houses at low

prices as well. However, in Dendermonde this situation will change after restorations will be completed and the buildings will be given into a hereditary lease.

In Flanders there is also a system of subsidized 'social housing', that supports persons who have difficulties finding a suitable home on the normal rent market. This system is currently implemented in two of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List: namely Lier and O.L.V. Ter Hoyen (Gent). In Lier these apartments and houses are owned by the social welfare organization O.C.M.W. Lier. In Gent a social housing organization called 'Sociale Huisvestingsmaatschappij Volkshaard CVBA', leased the buildings of a complete street in the beguinage for this purpose.

Finally, several beguinages provide housing at standard market prices. This is indicated on *Figure 2.6* with the term 'residential housing'. This is certainly the case for the privatized beguinages of Mechelen, Tongeren, Sint-Truiden and part of the beguinage of Dendermonde. In Mechelen and Tongeren, respondents estimated that real estate prices of houses located in the beguinage, are even higher than elsewhere in the city. In other sites, the owner rents out the houses at normal prices. This is the case for the beguinages of Diest, Lier (partially), Leuven (partially), Brugge and Kortrijk. In the beguinages of Hoogstraten, Turnhout, Gent (O.L.V. Ter Hoyen) and Dendermonde, houses are given into a hereditary lease conform to market prices.

Religious function

In the past, beguinages were places with an apparent religious purpose. Nowadays this function is less present in the Flemish beguinages. There are no beguines living inside the beguinages anymore. Only the beguinage of Brugge still hosts a religious congregation: 'Monasterium De Wijngaard'. This community of Benedictine nuns lives in the monastery constructed inside the beguinage and uses the beguine church several times a day. Other beguinages host retired priests (Dendermonde) or elderly Dominican fathers (Sint-Amandsberg).

Some beguinage churches are still actively used for religious purposes. The churches of the beguines of Lier or Leuven for instance, are often used to perform marriages. Other churches have no real religious function anymore. The beguinage church of Sint-Truiden was even desecrated. Some chapels are still used for religious masses, such as the chapel of the beguinage of Turnhout. Next to churches and larger chapels, also smaller religious elements are still present in many beguinages. Small chapels, cavalries and Maria grottos reflect the religious atmosphere in the Flemish beguinages. Finally there are traditional religious processions which are still held in several beguinages (for instance in the beguinages of Lier, Turnhout or Brugge).

Many organizations related to the beguinages were also founded from a religious point of view. The non-profit organizations that manage the beguinages of Gent and (partially) Dendermonde for instance, were founded to safeguard the beguine communities,

rather than the beguinages themselves. In origin these organizations were also ran by priests and beguines. Nowadays these organizations still kept a religious character.

Cultural and touristic function

The Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List also have an important cultural function. Currently there are museums in six out of the thirteen beguinages. In the beguinages of Hoogstraten, Dendermonde, Turnhout and Sint-Truiden (Festraetstudio) these museums are operated by the municipality. Such a museum is also planned in the beguinage of Kortrijk. In Tongeren the beguinage hosts a private museum and in Brugge the museum is operated by the sisters of the congregation. The museums of Turnhout, Hoogstraten and Dendermonde are recognized by the Flemish government and are financially supported in their working.

Other cultural functions hosted in the beguinages are documentation centers (beguinages of Dendermonde, Turnhout and Sint-Amandsberg) and Cultural Centers (beguinages of Diest and Sint-Amandsberg). Few beguinages also host different associations. Several associations for the production of lace are for instance situated in the beguinage of Lier. Also the beguinages of Diest and Sint-Amandsberg host associations. Many churches, chapels and other buildings located in the beguinages are (often temporary) used as exhibition spaces. The 'vzw Begijnhof van Dendermonde' and the 'vzw O.-L.-V. Ter Hoyen' also rent vacant houses to artists for low prices. Beguinages often form the scene for cultural events and activities. Flea markets, book markets, Christmas markets, festivals, exhibitions, concerts and other activities are held in the beguinages.

Off course, the beguinages also have a touristic function connected with this cultural one. Tourists visit the museums and exhibitions situated within the beguinages. All of the beguinages form a touristic attraction within the city. Different guided tours are organized in nearly every beguinage.

Commercial function

A less represented category of functions is the commercial use of the beguinages. In the past, beguines needed to provide for themselves. Thus many economical activities took place inside the beguinages. Often beguines worked in the textile industry. Many beguinages were also economical entities with farms, orchards or breweries. Beguines could work for other beguines or perform a paid task for the beguine community.

Nowadays the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List only have few commercial functions. Most of these functions are somehow related to tourism or cultural activities. It is difficult to draw the line between these different functions. Therefore the detailed descriptions in the second volume of the master thesis can be consulted. In the beguinages of Hoogstraten, Lier, Dendermonde, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen Gent, Sint-Amandsberg and Kortrijk, no permanent commercial activities take place.¹⁰⁶ Most of the commercial

¹⁰⁶ Small scaled selling of touristic products such as sweets, post cards and books were not regarded as commercial activities.

activities in the other beguinages concern restaurants or cafés. Six out of the thirteen beguinages, host one or several of such facilities. Often they occupy larger buildings inside of the beguinage, such as the restaurant in the infirmary of Tongeren or the Faculty Club in the infirmary in Leuven. In the beguinages of Mechelen, Tongeren and Leuven there is a hotel. Beguinages sometimes host small scaled art galleries or shops with artisanal products or books, which is the case in the beguinages of Tongeren, Diest, and Brugge.

Social function

Another current function of the beguinages is a social one. Historically, beguinages functioned as social places as well. Old, sick or poor beguines were taken care of by the community. In some cases other social institutions such as orphanages were also organized within the beguinages. Nowadays, this social engagement is still present in some of the beguinages.¹⁰⁷ Five of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List host social facilities for elderly or disabled people. In the beguinages of Turnhout, Dendermonde and O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, there are services for elderly or disabled people during daytime. In Sint-Truiden a large modern retirement home was built in the 1960's on lands of the beguinage. The beguinage of Sint-Amandsberg hosts many social services: different convents are used for the administration of social organizations or host facilities for disabled people.

Some social facilities are also intended for the inhabitants of the beguinages. The beguinages of Hoogstraten, Mechelen, Sint-Amandsberg and Leuven provide a communal space. These spaces are used for communal activities among the inhabitants. In few cases inhabitants can also rent this space for private activities such as family reunions.

Nowadays these social functions are the ones which often pose problems in the Flemish beguinages. The accessibility of the beguinages is not confirm to modern standards. Because of the heritage value and thus the protected character of most of the buildings, interventions are sometimes impossible. In the beguinage of Dendermonde the day centre for elderly people will move out of the beguinage for this reason. The topic of accessibility will however be discussed in detail within this master thesis.¹⁰⁸ In the beguinage of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen in Gent, the current social functions will move out of the beguinage after the restorations will be completed. In Sint-Truiden the modern architecture of the retirement home is not compatible with the historic beguinage.

¹⁰⁷As explained, social housing or housing for low rent, was not included in the social function indicated on *Figure 2.6*.

¹⁰⁸ Cf.2.1.3 'Accessibility and Parking'.

Parking and other functions

The last discussed main function is parking. Five out of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List have separate parking lots outside of the beguinage. In the beguinages of Hoogstraten, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen Gent, Leuven and Kortrijk, inhabitants or outsiders can rent a parking space on these private parking lots. The parking in the beguinage of Sint-Truiden is public. Next there is also a small parking space within the beguinage of Diest. In six other beguinages cars can be parked inside the site. The issue of parking is in fact one of the shared challenges of the beguinages and will be discussed further in the thesis.¹⁰⁹

Next to these groups of main functions situated in the Flemish beguinages, some other less represented functions remain untouched. The administration of the beguinage for instance, is sometimes located in one of the buildings situated in the beguinage. This is the case for the beguinages of Hoogstraten, Dendermonde, Gent O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, Sint-Amandsberg and Leuven. Also technical services of the social welfare organization or other owners are sometimes hosted inside of the beguinage. This is the case for the beguinages of Turnhout, Diest and Leuven. The beguinage of Dendermonde also hosts a small school, and is currently the only Flemish beguinage on the World Heritage List with such a function.

Beguinage	closure of gates
Hoogstraten	
Lier	22h - 7h
Mechelen	
Turnhout	22h-7h
Sint-Truiden	
Tongeren	
Dendermonde	21h-7h
Gent Ter Hoyen	22h-6h30
Gent Sint-Amandsberg	23h-6h
Diest	
Leuven	
Brugge	18h30-6h30
Kortrijk	21h-7h

Finally, it has to be noted that although several beguinages are private domain, all beguinages are open to the public. Therefore all interior spaces accessible for visitors were indicated as public domain. Visitors can freely enter the beguinages. Often signs at the entrance request a respectful attitude from whoever visits the beguinage. Some beguinages, such as the beguinage of Brugge, intentionally do not provide benches for visitors to sit for this reason. Seven out of the thirteen beguinages on the World Heritage List, still close their gates at night (Cf. *Figure 2.5*).¹¹⁰

Figure 2.5: Accessibility of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, situation 2012.

Evolution after 1998 and impact on management

It can be concluded that the functions of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List haven't changed drastically after 1998. These functions are the interplay of both a historically grown situation and current policy. In other words, the existing functions have an impact on the management of these sites. Yet on the other hand, these functions are also determined and influenced by the current management of the beguinages. In the overview of each of the thirteen beguinages presented in the second volume of this master thesis, more attention is given to this last remark.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. 2.1.3 'Accessibility and Parking'.

¹¹⁰ Off course, some beguinages cannot do this because the enclosed character of the beguinage was lost, this is the case for the beguinages of Mechelen, Sint-Truiden and Tongeren. Other beguinages do not have gate doors anymore, such as the beguinage of Leuven.

beguinages	housing			religious			cultural				
	subidized social housing	housing low rent	residential housing	active church	center for contemplation	congregation	museum	documentatio n center	associations	cultural centre	exhibition space
Hoogstraten			x	x			x				
Lier	x	x	future	x					x		x
Mechelen		x	x	x							x
Turnhout			x	x			x	x			x
Sint-Truiden			x				x				x
Tongeren			x				x				x
Dendermonde		x	future	x			x	x			
Gent Ter Hoyen	x		x	x							x
Gent Sint-Amandsberg		x		only funerals of inhabitants				x	x	x	x
Diest			x						x	x	x
Leuven		x	x	x							
Brugge			x	x	x	x	x				
Kortrijk			x	twice a year			x				x

beguinages	commercial			administrative	social		parking	
	restaurant / cafe	hotel	shop		facilities for elderly, disabled, ...	communal space	own seperate parking lot	parking inside beguinage
Hoogstraten				x		x	x	
Lier								
Mechelen	x	x				x		x
Turnhout	x				x			x
Sint-Truiden	x				x		x	x
Tongeren	x	x	x					x
Dendermonde				x	x			x
Gent Ter Hoyen				x	x		x	
Gent Sint-Amandsberg				x	x	x		x
Diest	x		x					small parking lot
Leuven	x	x		x		x	x	
Brugge			x					
Kortrijk							x	

Figure 2.6: Functions of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, situation 2012.

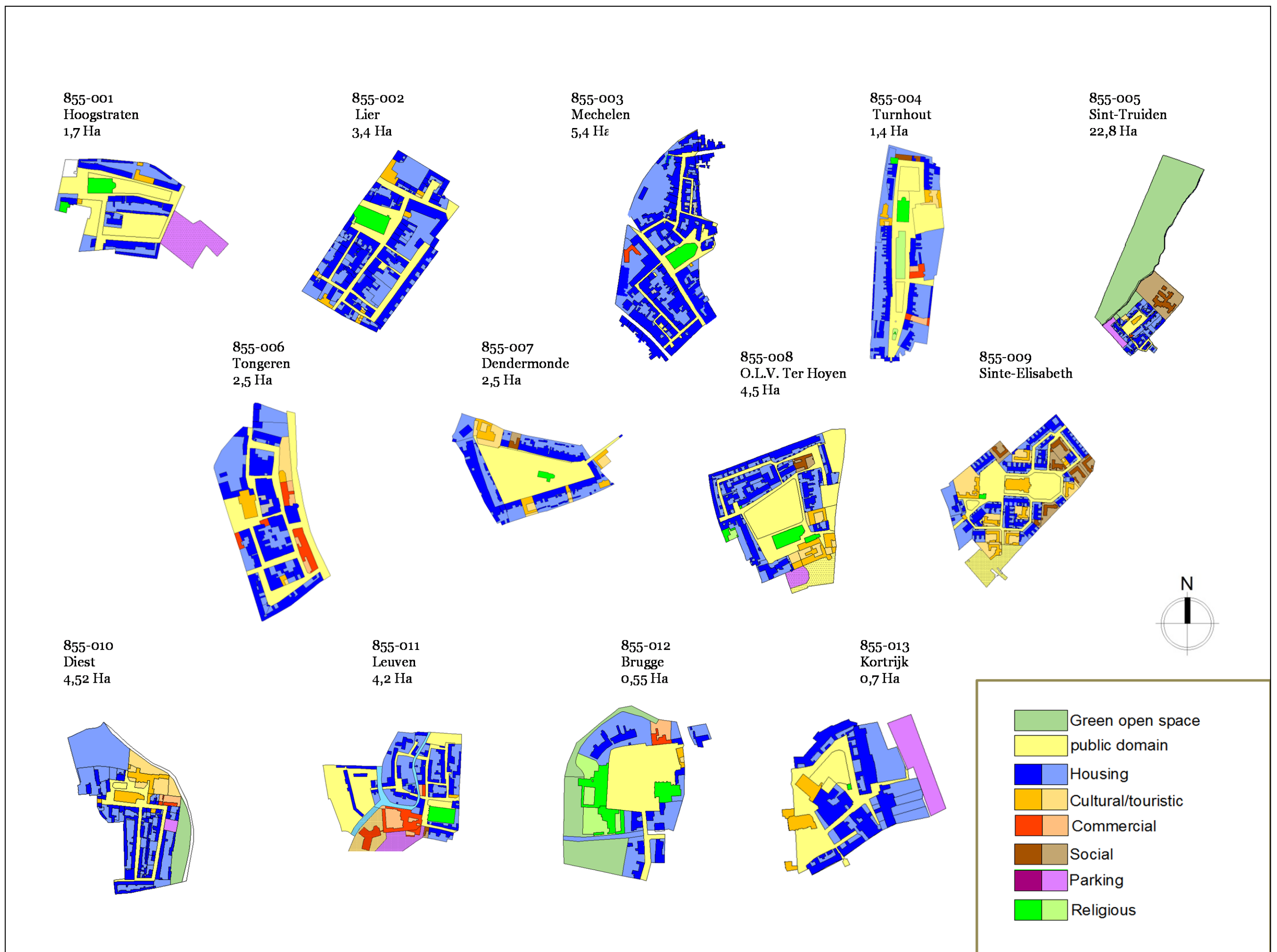


Figure 2.6: Overview of the functions of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List (approximately), situation 2012. (plans not in the same scale).

Conclusion

In this first part of the Synthesis an overview was given of three important factors in the management of the beguinages. The protection, ownership and functions of the beguinages have a large impact on their management.

One could say that the protection of the Flemish beguinages is a crucial instrument of the management and heritage policy from the level of the Flemish government. Protected buildings, landscapes, ensembles or movable and intangible heritage can be safeguarded, monitored and supported. Although all of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List are protected in one way or another, uniformity is lacking.

Next the ownership highly affects the management of the beguinages, because the owners are in fact mainly responsible for this management. Currently the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage list are property of various public and private owners. Important here is the difference between the responsibilities of owners of a complete beguinage, and the responsibilities of those who own just one building within a beguinage.

Finally, the functions of the sites also influence their management. Even though many differences between the beguinages exist, housing is currently the most important function of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List.

Overall, no drastic changes regarding protection, ownership and functions occurred after the nomination of the thirteen beguinages as a World Heritage property. Still, there are a few processes started before the nomination which continued after 1998.

2.1.2 State of conservation, maintenance and documentation

State of conservation

In 1997-98 thirteen beguinages were selected to represent the most authentic examples of all the conserved Flemish beguinages. Still, these thirteen sites are all witnesses of historical evolution. Only the beguinage of Sint-Amandsberg was completely built in few years at the end of 19th century and has not changed much. The other beguinages were damaged during wars and expanded when they were flourishing. Also after the French Revolution and the secularization process, interventions occurred in several beguinages. In some cases existing building blocks were demolished,¹¹¹ or replaced with modern architecture.¹¹² Also boundaries were adapted and walls demolished.¹¹³ Sometimes blind walls became façades open to the exterior of the beguinages.¹¹⁴ Thus nowadays the appearance of the beguinages has changed in comparison with their state in the 17th and 18th centuries. Important, is that specific for the beguinages it is not only the amount of preserved historical buildings which is relevant. Also the preserved enclosed character of the site determines its authenticity.

Different approaches to conservation and restoration

Modern restoration works at the Flemish beguinages started in the 1960's with the experimental restoration of the great beguinage of Leuven. Currently some beguinages have not completely been restored yet whereas other sites already underwent several maintenance cycles after their restoration. The beguinages of Leuven (great beguinage), Brugge and Hoogstraten already underwent a complete restoration in the past. Which does not mean, these beguinages do not face current technical problems. Other beguinages are still in the process of restoration. In some sites the complete restoration is split up in different phases. This is the case for the beguinages of Lier, Kortrijk, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen (Gent) and Dendermonde. In other beguinages such as Turnhout, Sint-Amandsberg and Diest, buildings are restored one at a time. Sometimes a restoration campaign focuses more on the same building element in several houses, such as roofs or façades. In the beguinages that are divided among different private owners, global restoration projects are absent.

Furthermore, there exist different restoration approaches which also changed over time. In some beguinages there is one master architect who guides the different architects restoring the buildings. This was the case in the beguinage of Hoogstraten (architect Herman Adriaensens) and is currently being implemented in Lier (architect Barbara Van der Wee). In the beguinages of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen (Gent) and Dendermonde, restoration works are guided by an engineering bureau (Ingenieursbureau G. Derveaux NV). In the beguinage of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen the engineering bureau cooperates with the architects Van Acker N.V.

¹¹¹For instance in the beguinages of Hoogstraten and Sint-Truiden.

¹¹²For instance in the beguinage of Kortrijk.

¹¹³For instance in the beguinages of Mechelen, Sint-Truiden and Tongeren.

¹¹⁴For instance in the beguinages of Dendermonde and Kortrijk.

In the beguinage of Turnhout the architectural bureau Atelier BVBA currently composes the preparative studies for the restoration files. Afterwards inhabitant-lesers can choose their own restoration architect. In other beguinages the complete project was or is lead by the same architects. This is the case for the beguinage of Kortrijk (architects Stoop and Pauwels), Brugge (own planning service of the city, Marc Meulemeester and Brigitte Beernaert) and Sint-Amandsberg (Hugo Deleu). This also used to be the case for the beguinage of Diest, before the concerned architect L. Bondroit retired. In Leuven there were two main restoration phases, supervised by R. Lemaire (1960's) and the architect P. Van Aerschot (1980's). In the beguinages of Mechelen, Sint-Truiden, Dendermonde (privatized part) and Tongeren many different architects are involved.

During these restorations different conservation/restoration options need to be determined. Which functions can be allowed in the beguinages? How many housing units will be installed in each building? What to do with parasitic annexes, finishing of façades, woodwork and window frames? Which materials have to be used? Can the attic be used as living space? Are new dormers an option? Besides conserving and restoring the buildings inside the beguinages they also need to be adapted to modern living standards. For instance utilities, modern kitchens and bathrooms need to be installed. Recently the question of insulation and energy efficiency also became more relevant. In the framework of this thesis, it was not possible to give an overview of all these restoration options, because they vary according to heritage consultants, architects and owners. The different historical buildings within the beguinages are also reflections of local traditional architecture and differ one from another.

However, in some beguinages there is a certain uniformity towards these restoration options. *Figure 2.10* gives an overview of different management plans in the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List.¹¹⁵ For instance in the beguinage of Hoogstraten a convention was drawn by the architect and the members of the 'vzw het Convent' in 1992, with an overview of all the valuable elements in each beguine house. Afterwards all buildings were restored in few years time. In the beguinage of Lier, a global vision was drafted in 2008. This Masterplan also defined the different restoration phases. Also in the beguinage of Dendermonde (the part owned by the 'vzw Begijnhof van Dendermonde') a Masterplan was developed in 2009. Different restoration phases were also defined by the architects Stoop and Pauwels in the beguinage of Kortrijk. The owners of the beguinage of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen in Gent based the restorations on a feasibility study from the bureau Derveaux from 1991.

In other beguinages, there currently is a systematic approach to restoration, even though these approaches were not documented in Masterplans or other files. This is the case for the beguinages of Diest, Turnhout and Leuven. Also the past restorations in the beguinage of Brugge, had a certain continuity. Off course, in beguinages where restorations are spread out over several decades, such as the beguinages of Brugge and Kortrijk, conservation or restoration approaches changed over time.

¹¹⁵ Cf. 2.1.1.4 'Management plans and systems'.

Architectural elements in need of conservation or restoration



Illus. 2.2: supported vault, beguinage church, Diest.

Attention must be given to certain architectural elements which are currently in a poor condition. The first group of buildings, concern several beguinage churches. Even though they were often the first buildings to be protected as monuments, some are currently in need of conservation and restoration.

In the nomination file from 1997, priority to their restoration was already put forward.¹¹⁶ However, 15 years later, the beguinage churches of Diest (Cf. *Illus. 2.2*), Tongeren and Mechelen (Cf. *Illus. 2.3*) are still awaiting restoration. For the churches of Diest and Mechelen, plans are made to start the works in the near future. This is not the case for the beguinage church of Tongeren.



Illus. 2.3: beguinage church, Mechelen.

Also the beguine churches of Sint-Amandsberg (roof), Lier (interior) and Turnhout (stone window frames) still partially need to be restored. In Hoogstraten the church was restored in the 1990's, but already requires new repairs of the roof.

Together with the restoration of beguine churches, their future use is also questioned. Or, to give the opinion of one of the respondents: *'How could we socially justify the use of tax payers money to restore such a monument, without a clear visions on its future function?'*¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ S. VAN AERSCHOT, *Béguinages Flamands: un passé bien présent, liste du patrimoine mondial, proposition d'inscription*, 1997, 30.

¹¹⁷ *Interview with Jan Mortier* (Immovable Heritage OE), Gent, 02-05-2012. (translation by author).



Illus. 2.4.: beguinage wall, Sint-Truiden.



Illus. 2.5: part of the beguinage wall, Kortrijk.



Illus 2.6. house in O.L.V. Ter Hoyen.

Other building elements that require special attention are the remaining beguinage walls. These walls are mainly built out of brick and range in height. Sometimes they were originally part of older city fortifications. As discussed, the enclosed character of the beguinages was and is an important feature of their authenticity. However, since these walls currently do not have a function anymore, they are often not regarded as a priority during restoration campaigns.

Nowadays beguinage walls (or parts of them) in the beguinages of Leuven, Kortrijk (Cf. *Illus. 2.5*) and Sint-Truiden (Cf. *Illus. 2.4*) are in need of conservation or restoration. In Leuven a study was started in 2006-2007 on the conservation of the beguinage wall, which has not resulted in concrete restoration plans yet. In the privatized beguinage of Tongeren the inner walls enclosing the front gardens, which are property of different private owners, also lack uniformity.

Next the state of conservation of the cobbled streets is problematic in most of the beguinages. However, this problem has more consequences regarding the accessibility of the sites, which will be discussed in a separate paragraph.¹¹⁸

Finally, several buildings in the beguinages of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen and Dendermonde (the part owned by the 'vzw Begijnhof van Dendermonde') are in a poor physical condition. Restoration works are planned for the future, but could be delayed because of several reasons (distribution of subsidies, approval of restoration files,...). In the beguinage of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen few buildings are explicitly sealed off, because of possible danger of collapse. In Dendermonde, several houses were declared unfit for human habitation.

¹¹⁸ Cf.2.1.3 'Accessibility and Parking'.

Movable and intangible heritage

Next to the conservation and restoration of built heritage of the Flemish beguinages also the conservation of movable and intangible heritage is important. Several owners pursue an active policy to restore objects such as furniture, silverwork, paintings and religious artifacts which belonged to the beguine community. In the beguinages of Turnhout and Sint-Truiden, these collections are managed by a non-profit organization. The 'vzw De Vrienden van het Begijnhof van Turnhout' also helps to raise funds. The 'vzw Vrienden van het Begijnhof van Sint-Truiden' actually owns the movable goods of the beguinage church. Another example is the beguinage of Tongeren where the city, that owns the church and the included movable goods, gives an annual support fund for the restoration works on paintings and other artifacts.

Evolution after 1998

In conclusion, it is difficult to determine how the UNESCO nomination had an impact on the conservation and restoration policy towards the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List. Throughout the interviews, the question was posed whether this policy changed after 1998.¹¹⁹ Most of the respondents, first said they did not perceive a real change. In other words, they did not treat the beguinages differently because all of a sudden they were declared World Heritage. However, several heritage consultants and other stakeholders said that for them, the UNESCO status did serve as an additional argument in discussions. This way the World Heritage status contributes in enforcing certain decisions. Therefore the policy existing prior to the nomination, was strengthened. Another observation, was that from 1998 onwards, Paris (UNESCO headquarters) is looking to the Flemish heritage policy as well. If unfortunate mistakes were made, this could entail consequences for the future of the complete World Heritage property. Also other stakeholders such as inhabitants, said it used to be easier to carry out interventions in the protected houses. In the past, interventions in several beguinages were often carried out without official permissions. This has changed, although it is not clear whether this is a direct consequence of the nomination or not. Still, a global vision on the restoration of the Flemish beguinages is absent and much depends on local circumstances.

One last observation regarding restoration is that many of the respondents did not make the difference between conservation, restoration or reconstruction. Often people spoke about restoration in general terms. Some stakeholders even used the term renovation to describe the overall restoration and renovation of the buildings. Especially for stakeholders who were not heritage professionals (such as inhabitants), a restored building is also a renovated building. They perceive the process more as turning an old uncomfortable house into a nice and comfortable house where people can live again.

¹¹⁹ This was summarized in each of the separate overviews under the chapter VI: Impact and perception of World Heritage. Cf. Volume II: OVERVIEW-ANALYSIS.

Maintenance

Next to large restoration campaigns also the day to day maintenance of heritage sites is crucial. Maintenance works consist out of painting façades, painting woodwork and window frames, replacing broken glass, maintaining green spaces and trees, cleaning gutters and monitoring the state of roofs. Also basic heating of buildings during wintertime is a form of maintenance. Preventive conservation can postpone expensive restoration works and help sustain the authenticity of historical buildings. In the case of several Flemish beguinages, heritage-linked maintenance and normal maintenance are interwoven. This means that also maintenance of heating systems, utilities etc. is concerned.

The responsible for these maintenance works, varies for each of the beguinages. Owners who rent out the houses to inhabitants have different responsibilities than owners who actually live in them. Also inhabitants or organizations that have property in a hereditary lease have different responsibilities. For instance in the beguinage of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, Gent, the non-profit organization that owns the beguinage carries out certain maintenance works. Next the communal costs for maintenance are divided among the different leasers.¹²⁰ In other beguinages there are technical services that carry out works. This is the case for the beguinages of Turnhout, Diest and Kortrijk and Leuven (where there is even a special monuments division). These services do not work exclusively for the beguinages, but also maintain other property. Maintenance of green space is sometimes put out to social employment organizations, which is the case in the beguinages of Sint-Truiden and Sint-Amandsberg.

Several beguinages use maintenance plans to list all the carried out works and foreseen works on certain buildings. *Figure 2.10* shows an overview of the different maintenance plans.¹²¹ Often buildings that were restored together in one phase, also stay together for future maintenance. The Flemish government on its part stimulates maintenance plans, such as revalorization plans for protected village-or cityscapes, or landscape management plans in protected landscapes. Such plans are being prepared for four different beguinages on the World Heritage List. The beguinage that currently has the most elaborate maintenance plan, is probably the beguinage of Hoogstraten. In cooperation with the architect Stijn Cools from Anno Architects, a thorough maintenance plan was recently developed. Again, uniform or global maintenance on the level of different buildings is absent in beguinages with different private owners, such as the beguinages of Mechelen, Sint-Truiden, Tongeren and part of Dendermonde. Private owners do not cooperate with their neighbours for maintenance works. Still, in these cases the cities, that own the public domain, can have an impact on the maintenance of the sites.

¹²⁰ This is a system of '1000'sten', Cf. Volume II: OVERVIEW-ANALYSYS, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen 855-008.

¹²¹ Cf. 2.1.4 'Management plans and systems', this is an overview of all the plans mentioned by the stakeholders during the interviews.

Flemish support and Monument Watch Flanders

As explained in the introduction of this master thesis the Flemish government grants maintenance subsidies for protected monuments and landscapes. Also village- or cityscapes with an approved revalorization plan can receive subsidies. However, these maintenance subsidies were suspended for several public institutions in 2010. This decision is regretted by many of the interviewed respondents.

The Flemish government supports a non-profit organization that helps owners with the maintenance of their heritage property: Monument Watch Flanders. *Figure 2.7* shows an overview of the beguinages where the provincial departments of Monument Watch are active. Owners of a heritage property conclude a contract and become member of the organization. Afterwards, the owners can call in staff members of Monument Watch to inspect the property and write a report on its condition.

The table shows that the Flemish beguinage on the World Heritage List actively cooperate with this organization. Almost all beguinage churches are member of Monument Watch. This cooperation is less active for the single houses inside of the beguinages. Only the beguinages of Hoogstraten, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen Gent, Diest and Leuven have regular inspections of the beguine houses. The O.C.M.W. Turnhout, owner of the beguinage of Turnhout, concluded a contract for some houses. Also in Lier the church council, that owns 1/3 of the houses, works together with Monument Watch. In the beguinages of Sint-Amandsberg, Brugge and Kortrijk there is no contract with Monument Watch to inspect the beguine houses. Owners perceive they can monitor these houses themselves. In the beguinages of Mechelen, Tongeren, Sint-Truiden and Dendermonde (privatized part), the different owners have to decide separately to become member of Monument Watch.

beguinages	cooperation with Monument Watch	
	houses	church
Hoogstraten	every 3 years	unknown
Lier	houses of the church council	yes
Mechelen	some individual owned buildings	yes
Turnhout	protected and leased houses every 2 years	yes
Sint-Truiden	unknown	every 2 years
Tongeren	unknown	yes
Dendermonde	currently no contract anymore, probably in future (vzw)	currently no contract anymore, probably in future (vzw)
Gent Ter Hoyen	yes, every year few houses	yes
Gent Sint-Amandsberg	no	every 2 years
Diest	yes, every year few houses	yes
Leuven	since 2007	since 2007
Brugge	no	yes
Kortrijk	no	yes

Figure 2.7: Cooperation with Monument Watch Flanders, situation 2012.

Documentation

During the research the presence of documentation was examined. This included the location and conservation of archives, the existence of inventories of (im)movable heritage and (scientific) publications on the history and architecture of the site. *Figure 2.8* shows an overview of these aspects. This overview was mainly based on information given by the respondents combined with desktop research.

First of all, conservation of archives is important since these documents are the sources for the history of the Flemish beguinages and thus preserve part of their intangible values. These archives are only conserved in situ in few cases. Often archives are preserved within the city archives, or spread over different locations, such as municipal archives of the city, archives of an O.C.M.W., a Church council or a non-profit organization.

Next, up to date inventories of (im)movable heritage are crucial, since they form the basis for future evaluation and monitoring. Existing inventories of movable heritage were often drafted at the occasion of exhibitions (catalogues) or added as an annex to a publication. Sometimes only part of the movable heritage was inventoried. Furthermore, artifacts can also be consulted on the online database of the KIK, the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage.¹²² These are mainly images of religious artifacts from the beguine churches, but also pictures of buildings or furniture are included in this database. Churches which are still operated by a church council, also have the obligation to make up an inventory of the belongings of the church.¹²³

For the built or immovable heritage, inventories of some kind exist for all of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List. Often inventories are created at the start of restoration works. Also inventories specific for maintenance works are used. Another type are inventories published in touristic guides or scientific monographs. The cities of Tongeren and Brugge also have online databases which describe historical houses in the city. Thus inventories can have different forms, ranging from more technical inventories with survey plans, to more descriptive inventories that discuss façades and the historical context.

All Flemish beguinages are also inventoried in the Flemish inventory for built heritage.¹²⁴ They can be consulted as ‘gehelen’ or ensembles. For some of the beguinages the given information is up to date, well illustrated and elaborate. For other sites only a brief general description with few illustrations is available. Sometimes the information also needs an update, for instance regarding the current functions of certain buildings.

Local heritage collections are in several cases digitalized and made public through online inventories. These show images of postcards, historic and recent pictures, paintings or religious artifacts. Also musical heritage of the beguine movement is documented and explained on the webpage of ‘vzw Resonant’, the expertise center for musical heritage in

¹²² Cf. *www.kikirpa.be*, last consulted December 2012.

¹²³ Cf. Introduction, 1.3.2 ‘Movable and intangible heritage policy in Flanders’.

¹²⁴ Cf. *inventaris.onroenderfgoed.be*, last consulted December 2012.

Flanders.¹²⁵ The organization ‘Kant in Vlaanderen vzw’ also documents and safeguards the art of lace making in Flanders.¹²⁶

Finally, recent scientific publications document the history and architecture of the beguinages. Often associations for local history are involved in research on the Flemish beguinages. Some recent studies were also made by students.¹²⁷ Some beguinages have good recent publications (such as Sint-Truiden, Sint-Amandsberg, Kortrijk and Leuven). Scientific research is stimulated by the Flemish agency for Immovable Heritage, that publishes a series on heritage topics called ‘Relicta’. One of these publications discusses the beguinage of Sint-Truiden. On the website of the agency, a list of publications can also be consulted.¹²⁸

beguinages	Documentation				
	archives	inventory movable	inventory immovable	online database	recent publications
Hoogstraten	municipal	no	> 1992 (updated)	erfgoedbankhoogstraten	from association for local history
Lier	O.C.M.W. Lier, church council	publication 1999 beguine church	> 2008 (Masterplan)	Erfgoedbank Kempens karakter	from association for local history
Mechelen	municipal, diocese	no	property church council, revalorization plan 2012	Beeldbank Mechelen	no
Turnhout	municipal, O.C.M.W. Turnhout	publication 1988	for houses given into hereditary lease	Erfgoedbank Noorderkempen	in preparation by member non-profit organization
Sint-Truiden	municipal, rijksarchief Hasselt	annex of 2008 publication	within 2008 publication	Erfgoedplus	Relicta monografie 2008
Tongeren	municipal	publication 1991 movable items O.C.M.W.	geheugen van Tongeren 2006-2007 (updated)	geheugen van Tongeren	2001 (local journal), 2007 (from city)
Dendermonde	municipal, abbey of Dendermonde	publication 1988	> restoration project (vzw), in guide 2006	no	guide 2006 A. Stroobants
Gent Ter Hoyen	temporary depot diocese, after restoration in situ	1990's (unpublished)	> 1991 (updated)	Beeldbank Gent	in preparation by member non-profit organisation
Gent Sint-Amandsberg	municipal, in situ	in preparation by member non-profit organisation	> restorations, not completed yet	Beeldbank Gent	2011 M.Triest/C. Vanoothehem
Diest	municipal, O.C.M.W. Diest	by O.C.M.W., catalogue 1988	by O.C.M.W., also tourism office	no	no
Leuven	university	yes	by monuments division tech. Services KULeuven	no	2000 R. Uytterhoeven
Brugge	in situ, O.C.M.W. Brugge	unknown	>1975 (updated), huizenonderzoekbrugge	Huizenonderzoek Brugge	1992 F. Bonneure, L. Verstraeten
Kortrijk	Rijksarchief Kortrijk	yes	yes (updated, digitalized)	no	2001 P. Despriet, 2000 C. Bouckaert, 2000 L. Beeckmans

Figure 2.8: Overview of existing documentation of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, situation 2012.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Cf. www.muzikaalerfgoed.be/begijnen, last consulted December 2012.

¹²⁶ Cf. www.kantinvlaanderen.be, last consulted December 2012.

¹²⁷ Since these studies were not published they are not included in the presented overview.

¹²⁸ Cf. www.onderzoeksbalans.be, last consulted December 2012.

¹²⁹ For detailed information, see Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW.

2.1.3 Shared challenges

During the interviews it became clear that several of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage list are currently facing similar challenges. In the light of their common management it seemed interesting to list some of these challenges in the master thesis. Since these issues are common to several sites, shared solutions could be beneficial for all of them. Thus future common management could focus on these subjects. Five topics will be briefly presented: financing and gentrification, accessibility and parking, energy efficiency, buffer zones, and finally participation and cooperation on a local level.

Financing and gentrification

Conserving and maintaining architectural ensembles such as beguinages is a financially challenging operation. Even though the Flemish government supports the owners of protected buildings and sites with subsidies, costs remain high. Thus the owners of the Flemish beguinages all have to find a financially viable system for the management of the sites. As said, beguinages are places that in the past often had a social character and became rather poor neighbourhoods in the 19th and 20th centuries. Recently this is changing, partially due to more and more private investment in the Flemish beguinages.

In the privatized beguinages this is rather obvious. Especially the beguinages of Mechelen and Tongeren were gentrified during the last decades. Also property within the beguinage of Sint-Truiden is seen as an investment: a building contractor recently bought several buildings and plots. Also in beguinages that are still owned by one or few stakeholders private investments are encouraged. The beguinages of Hoogstraten, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, Turnhout, Dendermonde and (in the future) Lier give buildings into a hereditary lease. This way private persons invest in the restoration of the site. Using a system of renovation tenancy agreements, the beguinage of Diest also involves private investments. Other owners raised rent prices after restoration works in order to gain more income. This occurred in the beguinages of Leuven and Kortrijk. Rent prices will also increase in Lier after restorations will be completed. This evolution has positive financial effects, reflected in needed restoration and maintenance works. At the same time, the population living inside the beguinages is changing. People living in these houses prior to restoration works often had to move out. The involvement of more wealthy persons also brings along new demands. When people invest in their home, they want to make it their own and live in a comfortable atmosphere with enough light, space and warmth. They also want to have a say on the management of the beguinage they live in.

Another problem is directly related to hereditary leasing regulations. Persons who want to sell their property for the remaining period of the lease have to pay taxes on the complete value of the property. This makes selling leases financially less attractive. Reason for this are outdated regulations of hereditary leasing, that were not written for this new type of individual hereditary leasing contracts.

The challenge is to deal with the consequences of this gentrification process. The right balance needs to be found between the historic social aspect of the beguinages, and the quest for adequate resources. Experiences with social housing projects or alternative funding could serve as examples.

Accessibility and parking

Accessibility

One of the problems often mentioned during interviews is the accessibility of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List. As said, all the beguinages are open for public (or at least during daytime). Furthermore different inhabitants live together within these sites. Unfortunately, many of the beguinages are not well accessible: meaning the cobbled streets and sidewalks are difficult to walk on. In many beguinages persons in wheelchairs can hardly enter. Also elderly people, disabled persons, or people with strollers for little children often experience difficulties. Reason for this is the poor state of the cobbled streets. The historic cobbles are not flattened enough, and the joints between the different cobbles are large. Due to traffic and works (electricity, replacing sewages) the surfaces of the streets have become uneven. Because an amount of original material was lost, there sometimes are not enough cobbles to completely cover the surface anymore.

Also the interior of buildings within the beguinages, can pose problems. Not all museums are for instance accessible for people in wheelchairs. The reuse of larger buildings (convents, infirmaries, churches, farm houses, etc.) for specific functions sometimes requires a better accessibility as well.

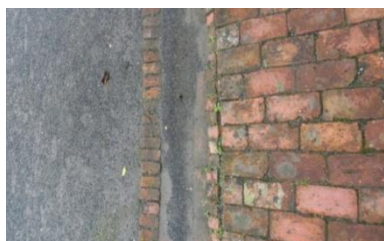
The accessibility of heritage sites is important because heritage is considered property of the community. Thus everyone should be able to discover and enjoy these sites. In the past, attention for accessibility mainly focused on facilities for certain groups of disabled people. Nowadays, the concept of Universal Design is used. This concept puts forward that buildings or sites should be accessible for as many people as possible, instead of creating separate facilities for certain groups of persons. Of course, the idea of Universal Design is difficult to implement in existing historical buildings and sites. Still, when interventions are made, this idea should be taken into account. In Flanders there are several organizations that work on the topic of accessibility. 'Enter vzw' is the Flemish expertise center for accessibility, and cooperates with other organizations and advisory bodies.¹³⁰

Flemish legislation concerning accessibility determines certain standards, but protected buildings and sites are exempt of these regulations. Still, an order from 2009 expresses the fact that in such cases, the responsible in question should consider the right balance between heritage value and accessibility.¹³¹ In 2010, the Flemish government

¹³⁰ Cf. *www.entervzw.be*, last consulted December 2012.

¹³¹ *Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering tot vaststelling van een gewestelijke stedenbouwkundige verordening met betrekking tot toegankelijkheid*, Art. 2.2.3 en Art. 35, 2009.

published a guidebook on the accessibility at heritage sites.¹³² In this publication is stated the assessment that should be taken into consideration, is how heritage sites can be made accessible to as many users as possible, without the loss of integrity and singularity of that heritage. Interventions to improve accessibility should be reversible and fit into the existing environment. When submitting a file to apply for restoration subsidies, the reuse and needed interventions need to be listed in the documentation. Possible interventions to improve accessibility have to be discussed in landscape maintenance plans. Within the publication, the Flemish beguinages are mentioned several times.¹³³ For instance different types of cobbles within the beguinage of Diest are compared one to another. However, a real statement on which approach to use in the case of the beguinage is not put forward. Thus guidelines concerning accessibility at heritage sites are rather general and open for interpretation. Each individual situation requires a different approach. Examples can be drawn from best practices.¹³⁴



Illus. 2.7: ternary sand and pavement in Hoogstraten.



Illus. 2.8: modern paving in Mechelen.



Illus. 2.9 historic cobbles in Lier.

Applied to the case of the Flemish beguinages, the search to achieve the right balance between heritage value and accessibility has proven to be rather difficult. Next to financial problems, the restoration of the streets also raises much discussion.

Almost all beguinages have cobbled streets. Only the beguinage of Hoogstraten was historically never cobbled and is now covered with ternary sand and pathways (Cf. *Illus. 2.7*). In the beguinage of Mechelen accessibility is also satisfying, because most of the street paving consists out of modern cobbles (Cf. *Illus 2.8*). Most of the other beguinages, are covered with different types of historic cobbles (such as ‘napoleonkoppen’ or ‘vossenkoppen’).

Some of the beguinages have historic comfort zones. A comfort zone is a pathway with a different pattern as the other cobbled surfaces or constructed with different materials which makes it easier to walk on. This is for instance the case in the beguinages of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen and Kortrijk.

¹³² H. VANDENBOSSCHE, ‘Onroerend Erfgoed en toegankelijkheid’, *Vioe-handleidingen 03*, Brussel, 2010.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, 39, 48.

¹³⁴ For instance this interesting case study on a specific heritage building: W. VANORMELINGEN, *Toegankelijkheid van historich erfgoed; De Notelaer*, onuitgegeven eindverhandeling, Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg, Departement Architectuur, 2011.



Illus. 2.10: streets in Dendermonde.



Illus. 2.11: Cobbles in Diest.



Illus. 2.12: Recent comfort zone in Brugge.



Illus. 2.13: Recent comfort zone in Brugge.

In the beguinage of Dendermonde the original cobbles are currently almost completely covered with red gravel and a pathway in tiles was placed in the 1960's (Cf. *Illus. 2.10*). In the beguinage of Tongeren the streets were asphalted in the 20th century. Some 15 years ago, the streets were repaved with historic cobbles again.

The historic cobbled streets do determine the character of the beguinages. Originally, most of the beguinages were not paved at all, thus the cobbles are not as old as the sites themselves. Still, they form part of the historically grown complexes. In some cases, these cobbles are actually included in the protection as monument or landscape (Cf. *Figure 2.1*). This means subsidies can be applied for restoration works. At the same time this protection also renders the issue of possible interventions to improve accessibility more difficult.

In several beguinages, files or ideas to restore or improve the pavement have been dragging along for decades. This is the case in the beguinages of Lier, Turnhout, Diest and Leuven. Often discussions are held between inhabitants, owners and heritage consultants. In the beguinage of Lier also Enter vzw and other services were involved in the discussions. This beguinage was actually appointed as a case study for a research project regarding accessibility at heritage sites in 2007. After much discussion, a consensus was achieved, but works have not started yet.

A successful project was however completed in the beguinage of Brugge in 2005-2006. After several meetings with different stakeholders, it was decided to create an accessible route through the beguinage using a comfort zone of 'platines' (Cf. *Illus. 2.12-13*). Platines are flattened natural stones which are often used in historic sites. A loop was created within the beguinage, so that less mobile people can see the whole site. Therefore one of the two entrances was made accessible. At first, the intervention was criticized by heritage professionals. Yet after a couple of years, discussion has ended.

Parking

Another issue somehow connected with the problem of accessibility is parking. Cars can disturb the view and the peaceful atmosphere of the beguinages. On the other hand, inhabitants need to park their car safely and drop off things or persons. Currently, there is no uniform policy towards traffic and parking inside of the beguinages. *Figure 2.9* shows an overview of the current situation in the thirteen sites. Six out of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List still have parked cars inside of the site. Four beguinages have private parking spaces outside of the site, where inhabitants and others can rent a parking lot. Even in beguinages where traffic and parking is not allowed or limited, the owners often have problems to enforce these regulations. Although this is a common problem among several beguinages, solutions strongly depend on local circumstances.

Beguinages	traffic		parking			
	<i>allowed</i>	<i>limited/not allowed</i>	<i>allowed</i>		<i>not allowed</i>	
			<i>only for residents</i>	<i>for all</i>	<i>parking provided</i>	<i>no parking provided</i>
Hoogstraten		x			for rent outside beguinage	
Lier		x				x
Mechelen	x			in most streets		
Turnhout		x	x			
Sint-Truiden		x	x		public parking	
Tongeren	x			on certain spots		
Dendermonde		x		x		
Gent Ter Hoyen		x			for rent outside beguinage	
Gent Sint-Amandsberg	x			x		
Diest		x			small parking on vacant plot inside beguinage	
Leuven		x			for rent outside beguinage	
Brugge		x			residents card in nearby street	
Kortrijk		x			for rent outside beguinage	

Figure 2.9: Parking at the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List (approximately), situation 2012.

Energy efficiency

Recently, the issue of energy efficiency is becoming more and more relevant. Due to economical (high costs for heating) and ecological (sustainability) motives, owners and inhabitants of the beguinages demand more attention to this subject. This demand develops parallel to the quest for better living comfort.

The concern for energy efficiency is a general evolution. In Belgium, legislation is in place which enforces owners to take certain measures when constructing or renovating a building. However, these norms, called EPB (Energie Prestatieregeling voor Bouwers) are not applied to protected buildings, nor to buildings listed in the Flemish inventory for built heritage.¹³⁵ Still, when new annexes to protected buildings are constructed, these energy efficiency norms do apply.

Most of the beguine houses were historically not well insulated: they often have thin walls. In the past, the attics were storage places where comfort was not important. Also the windows are vulnerable for energy loss. Single glazing and window frames with cracks are not optimal. However, since these protected historical windows often have high heritage value, it is impossible to simply replace them. The problem in the Flemish beguinages is that many types of windows exist, dating from different centuries.

Regarding historic window frames, a schematic guideline was recently drafted by the Flemish agency for Immovable Heritage.¹³⁶ This was spread among the different heritage consultants. Depending on the state of conservation and the heritage value of the window, adapted advice is given. Options which can be taken to improve energy efficiency are double window frames (in front or behind the original window), special energy efficient single glazing or special thinned double glazing. Double window frames behind the original frame are already used in the beguinages, for instance in the beguinage of Brugge. The other options were not mentioned during the interviews. In some beguinages, windows with little historic significance are replaced with modern double glazed windows.

The attitude of the heritage consultants towards insulation varies. Often they stated this has to be looked at case per case. It depends on roof construction whether it is possible to introduce roof insulation. When possible, insulation is often inserted between the beams and the slates, so that the original wooden construction is still visible from the inside. Also insulation between floors is disputable.

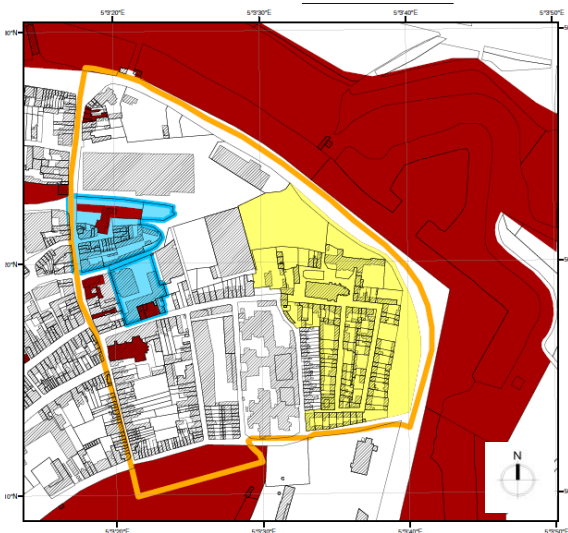
Maybe one of the problems concerning energy efficiency is the lack of transparent communication. Inhabitants often do not understand why they cannot insulate their home, while others can. They can also be better informed regarding other measures to improve energy efficiency, such as better heating systems or special insulating curtains. Even closing window shutters when the inhabitants are not there (and at night) can for instance improve the energy efficiency.

¹³⁵ Cf. www.energiesparen.be/epb/uitzonderingen, last consulted December 2012.

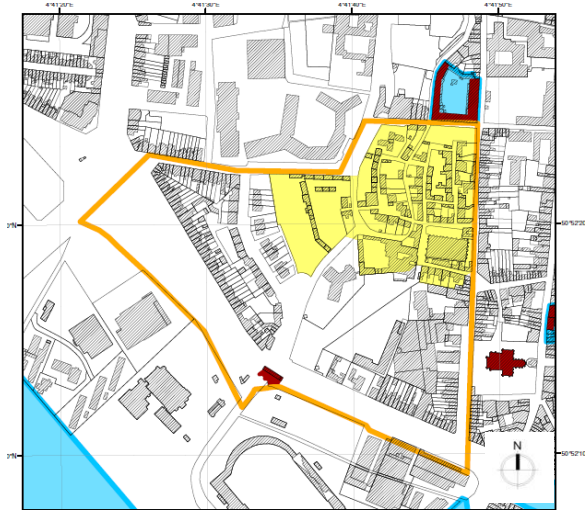
¹³⁶ *Handreiking: hoe omgaan met (historische) ramen en energiebesparing bij beschermd erfgoed? Standpunt Onroerend Erfgoed*, document for internal use, from Flemish Agency for Immovable Heritage, 2012.

Buffer zones

As shown in *Illus. 2.14-15* only the beguinages of Diest and Leuven currently have official defined buffer zones. These zones were not defined at the time of inscription, but were added in 2007 to official maps included to the UNESCO file in the light of the retrospective inventory. This means only two beguinages have a buffer zone with legal consequences.¹³⁷ The eleven other beguinages on the World Heritage List, only have indicated core zones. An exception in this case is the beguinage of Brugge, that actually lies within a larger World Heritage property (the inner city of Brugge) and thus has a rather extensive buffer.



Illus. 2.14: the beguinage of Diest and its buffer zone, scale 1:4000.



Illus. 2.15: the beguinage of Leuven and its buffer zone, scale 1:4000.

During the interviews, it became clear that many of the respondents did not know the concept of buffer zones at all. Others did not completely understand the concept. Overall, most of the different stakeholders did not think buffer zones are really lacking.¹³⁸ Often they stated that there are enough regulations and mechanisms in place to monitor the surroundings of the beguinages. According to the respondents, beguinages are part of evolving cities and they cannot be ‘frozen’ in time.¹³⁹ The beguinages are situated in historical cities which have a policy towards new developments. Some of the beguinages are also located near to other historical sites, landscapes or natural or recreational areas that serve as a kind of buffer. In the beguinage of Kortrijk for instance, a new village- or cityscape was created, among others to serve as a buffer for the protected beguinage.¹⁴⁰ Beguinages are often mentioned in municipal policy plans (such as touristic or structural plans) as important sites in the urban structure. Moreover, five out of the thirteen beguinages lie within areas with special land use plans or spatial implementation plans.

¹³⁷ Meaning the obligation to ask for advice, cf. 1.3.1 ‘Conservation of immovable heritage in Flanders’.

¹³⁸ Although some of the respondents did express the need for buffer zones.

¹³⁹ Dutch expression: ‘er een glazen stolp opzetten’.

¹⁴⁰ This was explicitly mentioned in the official protection order.



Illus. 2.16: view to concert building, Brugge.



Illus. 2.17: view to Boekentoren, Gent O.L.V. Ter Hoyen.

Still, when buffer zones are not defined, spatial policy partly depends on the involvement and awareness of local stakeholders. Since several beguinages were historically located outside or at the outskirts of cities, they nowadays still border historic city centers. Areas for possible new developments are often located just outside these city centers. New constructions might impact the view from or to the beguinages or disturb historic urban patterns. Sometimes regulations stipulated in special land use plans are not adequate to prevent disturbing constructions. This is the case in the beguinage of Sint-Truiden, where a developer plans to build apartment blocks on what was historically part of the beguinage.¹⁴¹ Most of the interviewed respondents did not know whether there was a special land use plan in place or were unaware of the exact consequences of these plans.

In Diest, a new development is situated on grounds that lie within the defined buffer zone. Therefore the plans were sent to UNESCO for approval around 2009. After evaluating the plans UNESCO asked for one building layer to be removed from a high building. Also in the beguinage of Leuven, the concerned heritage consultant gave advice on the construction of new apartment buildings within the buffer zone of the site. Thus defined buffer zones do impact policy.

In June 2011, a colloquium was held on World Heritage Cities in the 21th century in the city of Brugge.¹⁴² During the different workshops, the issue of buffer zones came up several times. The Operational Guidelines do not specify how a buffer zone should be defined or managed.¹⁴³ Specific guidelines concerning new architecture are for instance absent. One of the observations made during discussions, is that new developments within or near World Heritage properties cannot be evaluated using only criteria of proportions and possible visual impact. Also qualities and social values of new architecture must be considered. High quality architecture could become heritage in the future. A public building that serves the community and forms a landmark within the city, has a different impact than for instance an apartment building or high rise offices.

¹⁴¹ However, discussions with different parties are being held.

¹⁴² Colloquium: World Heritage Cities in the 21th century: Challenges and Opportunities for the Conservation and Management of Urban Heritage (30/05/2012 – 01/06/2012, Bruges, Belgium).

¹⁴³ Cf. Introduction 1.2.1 'The Operational Guidelines and management of WH properties' and *Operational Guidelines (...)*, paragraph 104, 2012. and G. CESARO, *Boundaries and Buffer zones as tools for protecting Integrity at World Heritage Properties: the case of Petra, Jordan*, unpublished master thesis, KU Leuven, RLICC, 2011, 89-92.

Thus, the challenge is to communicate the concept of buffer zones to all stakeholders (especially the involved municipalities and cities) and explain why they are important. Next the different zones need to be defined, depending on local circumstances and needs. Finally policy instruments need to be fine-tuned to better monitor the buffer zones.

Participation and cooperation on a local level

For each of the beguinages the involved stakeholders were listed. During the interviews, questions were also asked on how these stakeholders cooperated with each other. Special attention was given to participation of inhabitants. In conclusion, it could be said that even on a local level, participation and cooperation could be improved.

Often, there are good contacts between a couple of main stakeholders. For instance between the owner and the city, or among different owners, or with the concerned heritage consultants. These contacts are rather ad hoc and intensify during restoration or maintenance campaigns. Only few beguinages currently have regular structured meetings between different stakeholders, for instance in Lier (monthly, in the light of the Masterplan) or Diest (management commission in the light of the landscape management plan).

When the beguinages are completely privatized or managed by non-profit organizations, there is often only limited cooperation between cities and the beguinages. In several cases this has grown historically, in others this is a more recent phenomenon. For instance in the beguinage of Hoogstraten, owned by the city of Hoogstraten but given into a hereditary lease to the 'vzw Het Convent', the city only has little involvement in the beguinage.¹⁴⁴ This is also the case in the beguinages of Leuven and Turnhout. Recently cities were more involved in the managements of the beguinages in Dendermonde and Kortrijk. It also depends whether the city has monument services or not. Currently such services are in place in Mechelen, Gent and Brugge.¹⁴⁵ Especially contact between owners and the spatial planning departments of the cities are not frequent.

Also among different owners of the same beguinage, contacts are not always in place. For instance in the beguinage of Dendermonde the part owned by the non-profit organization hardly cooperates with the privatized part. They only worked together when parts of the common wall between them were collapsing. Also in the beguinage of Tongeren, which is almost completely privatized, there is only little contact among the different inhabitants-owners. Some neighbours are even in argument with each other.

Inhabitant participation to the management of the Flemish beguinages varies. In some beguinages, motivated inhabitants are involved in the management of the site, for instance in Hoogstraten or Sint-Amandsberg. Inhabitants are often gathered in (in)formal associations. Sometimes these associations actively participate in the management of the beguinage, for instance in the beguinage of Kortrijk.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Except for the beguinage church and the presbytery.

¹⁴⁵ For the cities with a beguinage on the World Heritage List.

¹⁴⁶ They maintain for instance the flower bed inside of the beguinage.

Inhabitants can also volunteer during communal activities, which is the case in many beguinages. In other beguinages contact between the management and the inhabitants is not so good, for instance in the beguinage of Dendermonde, where several inhabitants had their house declared unfit for human habitation. Also in Mechelen several inhabitants-owners filed a complaint against management decisions of the monument services of the city. Also in the beguinage of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen and Diest, inhabitant participation is rather limited.

Conclusion

Even though many differences between the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List exist, they have several shared challenges. Some of these challenges are shared by many protected sites in Flanders. Issues of energy efficiency, financing and accessibility apply to all built heritage, especially heritage buildings that are used for housing. Still, experiences and best practices could be shared among the different beguinages. This way it could be avoided that several beguinages are investing time and money on the same issues.

Other problems are rather specific for the Flemish beguinages, since these sites are a kind of cities within cities. Problems such as parking policy, accessibility of public domain, participation of inhabitants and gentrification deal with beguinages as entities where people live together. Other issues are more related to the World Heritage status of the beguinages, the challenge of buffer zones in particular. These are problems that should be considered in a global vision on the management of the different beguinages. The greatest challenge of all, is to find a vision that is shared by all stakeholders and can be enforced in all beguinages.

The analysis also made clear that several problems could be tackled by means of better communication and uniformity. Often top down communication is not transparent enough and does not reach the inhabitants of the sites themselves. It is however difficult to have a uniform communication from the heritage consultants to local stakeholders, when these consultants do not have rigid guidelines from the Flemish government themselves. Consequently the current policy towards the Flemish beguinages is fragmented.

2.1.4 Management

After discussing several aspects of the different Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, it is time to take a closer look to the actual management of these sites. More specifically, to the actual management plans and systems of the beguinages. How is the management currently anchored in these plans? Who composed these documents? Which types of plans and documents exist and which subjects do they address? Are all stakeholders acquainted with these plans? Are they implemented and evaluated? Next, an attempt to compare the management of the different sites is presented. In spite of their differences, do the beguinages have certain communalities? Or can few management ‘types’ be discerned among the sites? This comparison focuses on management on a local level. Finally, an evaluation of the overall management of the thirteen Flemish beguinages as one UNESCO property by the Flemish authorities will conclude this subchapter.

Management plans and systems

During the research, information on different plans and documents was collected.¹⁴⁷ *Figure 2.10* presents an overview of different existing or prepared plans. The table clearly shows a great variety. Still, a couple groups of types of plans can be discussed.¹⁴⁸

A first group is formed by plans related to large restoration projects. For the beguinages of Dendermonde (concerning the part owned by the non-profit organization) and O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, a feasibility study was made by the same engineering Bureau Derveaux. These studies focus on technical aspects of the restoration project. Within the studies the concerned buildings are surveyed and measured, the restoration approach is decided on and the project is divided in several phases. Next commercial aspects are addressed to determine the choice between renting, selling or leasing the houses. Finally, the documents present a financial study of the restoration. In Dendermonde this feasibility study was followed by a Masterplan (demanded by the heritage consultant). The ‘vzw Begijnhof van Dendermonde’ provided input for this Masterplan, which was then written by Bureau Derveaux.

In the beguinage of Lier a Masterplan was drafted in the light of a large restoration project as well. This plan is actually composed out of three parts: a Masterplan, a convention and operational Mastersplans for each of the subprojects. Within the Masterplan attention is given to historical analysis and research. Also an analysis of housing needs in the city of Lier is included. The complete restoration project is divided into subprojects that reflect different restoration phases. The convention determines some general restoration guidelines, with attention to the surroundings of the beguinage.

¹⁴⁷ Unfortunately, only few plans could actually be consulted.

¹⁴⁸ For detailed information on each of these plans, the second volume of the thesis can be consulted.

Beguinages	feasibility studies	Master plans	restoration plans	management plans		maintenance plans		domestic regulations	Land use plans	
				revalorization plan	other	landscape management plan	other		BPA	RUP
Hoogstraten		Convention 1992, initiators Het Convent				x	Annoo Architecten, Stijn Cools	x		
Lier		2008, Barbara Van der Wee architects and SUM	within Master plan					future		
Mechelen				is being drafted, Monuments services city of Mechelen						
Turnhout						is being drafted on initiative of OCMW Turnhout		x		
Sint-Truiden		2003, Legrand and De Visscher							1998	under preparation by OMGEVING cvba
Tongeren									1991, 1995, 2002	under preparation for whole inner city
Dendermonde *	2004, Bureau Derveaux	2009, Bureau Derveaux	within Master plan				by non-profit org.	x		
Gent Ter Hoyen	1991, Bureau Derveaux		within Feasibility study			is being drafted by city of Dendermonde		x	1988, 2001	2007
Gent Sint-Amandsberg					file for open monuments association by non-profit org.			x		
Diest						is being drafted on initiative of OCMW Diest			1995	under preparation
Leuven							by technical services KU Leuven	x	1989	
Brugge					idea for future		by city of Brugge			possible in future
Kortrijk			Stoop and Pauwels architects		masterplan for tourism in preparation by vzwEname		by OCMW Kortrijk	x		

* part owned by the 'vzw Begijnhof van Dendermonde'.

Restoration phases were also determined by the architects Stoop and Pauwels for the beguinage of Kortrijk. In Hoogstraten, a convention was drafted before the start of the restoration by the initiators of 'vzw Het Convent' and the architect Herman Adriaensens for each of the houses, including a list of important elements and a cost estimation.

These different discussed plans were drafted on the initiative of the owners of the concerned beguinages. Because of the large restoration projects, such plans were needed to structure the process, and communicate to involved stakeholders. In most cases, these plans altered in the meantime because of unexpected circumstances or new restoration approaches. Especially the restoration phases are often fine tuned after works actually start. The plans do not present long-range management plans of complete beguinages, but are aimed at managing certain projects. Still, they are often imbedded in a more general vision on the future of the beguinage.

Another group of plans are composed in order to obtain (additional) subsidies from the Flemish government. In the case of the beguinages, a revalorization plan (Mechelen), landscape management plans (Hoogstraten, Turnhout, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, Diest) and a file to be acknowledged as an open monuments association (Sint-Amandsberg) are prepared or implemented. The content of such plans was already explained in the introduction of the master thesis.¹⁴⁹ These plans were drafted on the initiative of the owners (Sint-Amandsberg, Turnhout, Gent Ter Hoyen, Diest) or the concerned city (Mechelen). Although these plans do not have to be elaborate, they do address management within a larger timeframe.

Other stakeholders adopted maintenance plans to better structure and plan the maintenance works at the concerned beguinages. These plans are often Excel files that list different tasks and costs, drafted by the technical services or stakeholders themselves. The beguinage of Hoogstraten has an elaborate maintenance plan drafted by Annoo Architecten.

Next, eight out of the thirteen Flemish beguinages have domestic regulations. These regulations apply for inhabitants of the concerned beguinages. Such regulations are a tool for the daily management of the beguinages. Often allowed functions are listed in these regulations as well as agreements concerning traffic, maintenance, safety and insurance. These regulations can be an annex to leasing contracts. This way such leasing contracts or contracts for hereditary leasing sometimes legally anchor the policy of a certain beguinage.

A next group are spatial plans. Such plans are in place in five of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List (Leuven, Tongeren, Sint-Truiden, O.L.V. Ter Hoyen and Diest). These plans were drafted specifically for the beguinage in the case of Tongeren, Leuven and Diest. In Sint-Truiden, only one street and the parking lot are situated within a BPA. The beguinage of O.L.V. Ter Hoyen in Gent is situated in a RUP that covers a vast space surrounding the beguinage. These instruments were all drafted on the initiative of the concerned cities and municipalities and they are valid until they are replaced by other plans.

The policy of a municipality or city is also anchored in sector management plans for culture, tourism or spatial planning. These plans normally span the duration of one political

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Introduction 1.3.1 'Conservation of immovable heritage in Flanders'.

period of 6 years. Often beguinages are mentioned in these documents as important historic monuments that should be preserved.

Next there is also an interesting Masterplan dating from 2003 for the beguinage of Sint-Truiden, ordered by the province of Limburg and assigned to De Visscher and Legrand. This plan gives a thorough analysis of the urban and spatial pattern and problems of the beguinage, with possible interventions to improve or 'restore' the enclosed character of the site. This plan was however not implemented.

Finally in Kortrijk vzw Ename is working on a special tourism plan to operate a museum and an experience center inside of the beguinage, while preserving its peaceful character. It was the concerned heritage consultant who pointed the O.C.M.W. Kortrijk to its responsibility to host and inform visitors. A protocol was also concluded between the city of Kortrijk as a partner in the future touristic development of the beguinage.

Thus, several plans were drafted by different stakeholders and with different purposes. All of these plans discuss management aspects of one of the thirteen beguinages. These plans were mostly initiated by stakeholders on a local level, although some types of plans are stimulated by the Flemish government. Not all of these plans are implemented or known to all stakeholders. The absence of uniform management plans for the different sites, does however not implicate the absence of a future vision for these sites. In some beguinages, a vision or policy exist without being documented. In the beguinage of Brugge for instance, a continuous policy is in place since the 1970's, even though it was never documented.

A global management plan for all of the Flemish beguinages was never drafted.¹⁵⁰

Thirteen beguinages: thirteen systems?

Defining the management of the thirteen beguinages is very complex. Therefore this part will only discuss the management of the sites on a local level. This level has many responsibilities regarding the safeguarding of the Flemish beguinages. Question is, how the management of these thirteen sites could be compared. Are there some 'types' of management, or is every beguinage managed in a completely unique manner? Two approaches or attempts for this comparison will be presented.

Stakeholders and responsibilities

Often different owners or stakeholders each contribute to the overall management of the site. Therefore, these stakeholders were listed for each of the beguinages.¹⁵¹ Next to owners, also staff members of cities, inhabitants, architects and volunteers active in associations are involved in the management of the beguinages. These stakeholders can take up different roles in the management of the site. Thus it could be an interesting point of comparison. To enable

¹⁵⁰ Even though attempts to coordinate their management on this level were made, cf. 2.2.1 'Initiatives from the Flemish government'.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Volume II ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW for lists of stakeholders for each of the beguinages.

a more schematic approach, five categories of stakeholders were selected: inhabitants, owners, local authorities, (local) organizations and finally architects/engineers. Sometimes these categories do overlap (for instance inhabitants who are also owners). Next four different main roles or responsibilities can be discerned: determine the policy, advice the policy, implement the policy, and finally fund the policy. As an example, the management of four beguinages (Turnhout, Dendermonde, Mechelen and Leuven) was compared using these criteria. Every group of stakeholders was given a weighing between 0 (least involvement) and 5 (highest involvement) for each of the responsibilities.

BEGUINAGE OF TURNHOUT	determine policy	advice policy	implement policy	fund policy
owners	5	5	4	3
inhabitants	0	2	2	3
local authorities	1	2	1	1
organisations	1	2	2	1
architects	1	2	3	0

BEGUINAGE OF DENDERMONDE	determine policy	advice policy	implement policy	fund policy
owners	5	5	2	3
inhabitants	0	1	2	3
local authorities	1	1	2	1
organisations	0	0	0	0
architects	4	4	4	0

BEGUINAGE OF MECHELEN	determine policy	advice policy	implement policy	fund policy
owners	3	3	4	5
inhabitants	3	3	4	4
local authorities	4	4	2	2
organisations	1	1	1	1
architects	0	0	4	0

BEGUINAGE OF LEUVEN	determine policy	advice policy	implement policy	fund policy
owners	5	5	4	2
inhabitants	0	1	0	2
local authorities	1	1	1	1
organisations	0	0	1	0
architects	2	4	4	0

Figure 2.11: example comparison stakeholders versus involvement.

From these tables, quick comparisons can be made regarding for instance the involvement of local authorities. Of course, the weighing is not completely objective and could be questioned. Still, great differences appear directly from such tables, for instance inhabitant involvement which is largest in the beguinage of Mechelen. However, this approach does not create ‘types’ of management, but rather gives a detailed overview of responsibilities and stakeholders.

Management structures

Another way to compare the management of the different beguinages, is to look at how the management is organized or structured. This comparison was made for the thirteen sites.

Only three beguinages have a coordinator occupied specifically with the management of the site. In the beguinages of Sint-Amansberg and O.L.V. Ter Hoyen in Gent these are paid staff members who implement the policy and run the beguinages on a daily basis. In O.L.V. Ter Hoyen, this is a part-time coordinator, in Sint-Amansberg this is a fulltime manager (directeur). In Leuven, the coordinator of the beguinage (Marc Vervenne) works voluntary, next to his professional activities. He is however supported by paid staff members who follow up administration.

Next there are beguinages with paid staff members professionally occupied with management of the site, but who also have other responsibilities. This is especially the case for beguinages managed by public administrations. In the beguinages of Turnhout, Lier, Diest, Brugge and Kortrijk this system is implemented. Often these persons are responsible

for the management of all the properties of a certain O.C.M.W. or municipality. In most cases there is a technical service to implement the policy and carry out works. In the beguinage of Kortrijk, there is also a staff member of the technical services who lives in the beguinage and functions as a janitor.

Some beguinages are completely run by volunteers. This is the case for the beguinages of Hoogstraten and (part of) Dendermonde. Also most of the church councils are operated with the help of volunteers. In Hoogstraten the non-profit organization 'vzw Het Convent' has an executive board and a management team. In Dendermonde, the non-profit organization 'vzw Begijnhof van Dendermonde' has an executive board and a more active work group within the organization. Also O.C.M.W. administrations have an executive board composed out of volunteers.

In Brugge the daily working of the beguinage is managed by the monastery 'Monasterium De Wijngaard', represented by sister Félicitas. Also in Dendermonde there is a sister – Sister Lieve – who runs the administration of the Sint-Alexius beguinage.

Finally, some beguinages do not have a structured management at all. This is the case for the beguinages of Mechelen, Tongeren, Sint-Truiden and the privatized part of Dendermonde. In these beguinages, there is no contact person who is responsible for its management. Impulses for the management of these beguinages are however given by local authorities or organizations.

Thirteen beguinages: one UNESCO property?

In order to assess the management of the Flemish beguinages, the UNESCO requirements can be used as a basis for evaluation. As discussed in the introduction, the Operational Guidelines state that the main objective of the management, should be the safeguarding of the outstanding universal value of the property. Therefore a management system should be in place. The main responsible for the management, is the concerned State Party. The requirements for such a system are the following:¹⁵²

1. *a thorough shared understanding of the property by all stakeholders*
2. *a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback*
3. *the monitoring and assessment of the impacts of trends, changes, and of proposed interventions*
4. *the involvement of partners and stakeholders*
5. *the allocation of necessary resources*
6. *capacity-building*
7. *an accountable, transparent description of how the management system functions.*

¹⁵² *Operational Guidelines (...)*, paragraphs 108-118 2012.

Implemented to the case of the Flemish beguinages, there should be a shared vision for the thirteen sites. Possible evolutions and threats to the beguinages should be taken into account. This vision should be shared by and communicated to all stakeholders. The vision should be well documented and described. Afterwards the objectives put forward in this shared vision have to be implemented and necessary resources should be provided. This process should then be evaluated, followed by a new cycle. Along the way, awareness raising and capacity building should be considered.

Still, this approach leaves open many aspects of management systems. UNESCO, for instance, does not specify the duration of one management cycle. Notions such as capacity building are very general and are open for interpretation. In the case of the Flemish beguinages, it is also difficult to base the management on the statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), since this statement was not included in the nomination file in 1997. When looking at the different criteria used for the justification of inscription, emphasis was laid on the medieval origin of the Flemish beguinages.¹⁵³ Notwithstanding most of the actual buildings only date back to the 17th and 18th centuries.

Depending on how these criteria are interpreted, the management of the Flemish beguinages could score very high or very low. According to the Operational Guidelines it is the state party who is the main responsible for the management of the World Heritage property.¹⁵⁴ In the case of the Flemish beguinages, this would be the Flemish government, since this is the highest governing body responsible for heritage in Flanders. Thus the Flemish policy regarding the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List will be assessed following the discussed UNESCO requirements.

The first requirement, is the presence of a shared vision on the management of the beguinages. In a way, there is a basic shared vision within the Flemish policy, namely that the beguinages are considered heritage, which is worthwhile conserving. At the other hand, a specific framework for this conservation is lacking. First of all, there is a division between immovable heritage policy, and policy for movable and intangible heritage. Within the Flemish policy for immovable heritage, there is no consensus on several aspects, such as parking, accessibility, or allowed functions within the Flemish beguinages.¹⁵⁵ The question is off course, in what degree the government can enforce such management decisions on local stakeholders. Still, the concerned heritage consultants can strongly influence these aspects, depending on their involvement and relation with local stakeholders.

The next step is to document and describe how the management system works. In a way, the Flemish heritage policy is explained and determined through legislation. Also policy letters and memoranda from the concerned ministers describe the overall pursued policy for

¹⁵³ Cf. Introduction 1.4.2 ‘Flemish beguinages as World Heritage: the inscription’.

¹⁵⁴ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, paragraph 117, 2012.

¹⁵⁵ Although attempts were made, cf. 2.2.1 ‘Initiatives from the Flemish government.’

the current term.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand there is no elaborate description of the aims of the Flemish government regarding the conservation of the Flemish beguinages. Neither does the government enforce this consistently on local stakeholders. Required documents to apply for restoration or maintenance subsidies or specific plans for village-or cityscapes and landscapes, could be regarded as the onset of this second step. Acknowledged museums and documentation centers also need to present a detailed document with their mission and objectives in order to receive annual subsidies.¹⁵⁷ However, these documents do not necessarily concern the global management of a certain beguinage. This is only the case for the file required to be acknowledged as an open monuments association.¹⁵⁸ On the level of spatial or urban planning, the heritage consultants advise local governments when special land use plans or spatial implementation plans for the beguinages are drafted.

Next in the cycle, is the implementation of the policy. Again, there is in fact a consistent Flemish heritage policy in place. The implementation is mainly the responsibility of the owners of the beguinages. Heritage consultants merely guide this process, and normally do not initiate it. Unless buildings are in a very poor state, the Flemish government cannot enforce owners to restore their buildings. The Flemish government does provide part of the necessary resources, although unfortunately the demand for these resources is currently much higher than the foreseen budget. This creates long waiting lists, without exception for World Heritage properties.

Finally there is monitoring and evaluation. On the level of the different beguinages, monitoring is mainly executed by the concerned heritage consultants. After restoration works are executed with the help of a restoration subsidy, a report needs to be drafted before receiving all the subsidies. The heritage consultant needs to evaluate whether carried out works observed all regulations.¹⁵⁹ Acknowledged museums also need to submit a year report. However, these evaluations are all situated on the level of single beguinages. Since a global vision on the management of the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List is absent, it cannot be monitored or evaluated.

Thus, are the Flemish beguinages managed by the Flemish government as one World Heritage property? It could be concluded, that all Flemish beguinages are in a way managed within the same legal and operational frameworks. However, this is the case for all Flemish heritage. Currently no global management for these thirteen sites on the World Heritage List is in place. Good management largely depends on the concerned heritage consultants and the involvement of local stakeholders. Consequently, only little uniformity or consistency is present in the current management of these sites.

¹⁵⁶For instance the last policy letter from the minister Geert Bourgeois: http://www.geertbourgeois.be/files/minister1/nva_images/beleid/beleidsbrief_2012_onroerend_erfgoed_zon_dertc.pdf.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. www.kunstenerfgoed.be, last consulted December 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Such a file exists only for the beguinage in Sint-Amandsberg, and is not very elaborate according to respondents (the document itself could not be consulted).

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Besluit van Vlaamse Regering van 14 december 2001 houdende vaststelling van het premiestelsel voor restauratiewerkzaamheden aan beschermde monumenten, gewijzigd bij besluiten van de Vlaamse Regering van 20 september 2002, 23 juni 2006 en 30 april 2009, 4 december 2009, 10 september 2010, 10 juni 2011, 22 juli 2011 en 29 juni 2012, Hoofdstuk II, Afd. VI, Art. 13.

2.1.5 Conclusion

Resulting from data processed in the second volume of the master thesis, some basic elements concerning the current management of the thirteen Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List were presented in this first chapter of the synthesis.

Summarizing the management of these valuable heritage sites, has proven to be difficult. A great variety in ownership, protection and management structure exist among the different beguinages. Also the implemented heritage policy, coordinated by the Flemish government, is diverse.

The beguinages have not stood still since they were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998. In the past fifteen years, existing restoration projects were continued and new projects started. More managers started to use hereditary leasing contracts as a way of alternative financing to restore the beguinages. Different plans were composed to structure the management or document agreements.

Still, no drastic changes appeared regarding ownership or functions. Also on the level of management there is currently not more continuity regarding the management of the different sites then 15 years ago.

As diverse as these sites might be, nowadays they do face several shared challenges. Some issues have become more prominent, especially regarding energy efficiency and gentrification. Also the accessibility of these historic sites is a shared challenge that has to be faced in the future. The conservation of certain building elements such as beguinage churches, is an actual problem already existing prior to the nomination.

According to the respondents, the World Heritage status of the beguinages did not have a great impact on the sites. The overall perception to the World Heritage status is rather indifferent. According to the respondents, this World Heritage status is merely a label without any return. Still, some actions were taken because of the nomination, especially for the two beguinages with a defined buffer zone. Even though the policy of the heritage consultants did not change drastically after 1998, they did use this status as an additional argument in discussions.

2.2 Cooperation between beguinages in the past and the present

Within the previous chapters – as well as in the second volume of the thesis – attention is given to the current management of each of the thirteen different beguinages. As said, these thirteen sites were however inscribed as one serial property on the World Heritage list in 1998. The Operational Guidelines state that in the case of serial properties, management systems or mechanisms for coordinated management are essential.¹⁶⁰ This thought is repeated in the ICOMOS evaluation of the nomination file of the Flemish beguinages, that draws the attention of the State Party to the need to ensure common management procedures for the different owners.¹⁶¹ Therefore, this part of the thesis will focus on the cooperation between the Flemish beguinages after their nomination. Were these obligations of common management met over the last 15 years? Do the different sites cooperate between each other at this moment? How do the respondents themselves see the future? In order to receive an answer to these research questions, information was gathered through interviews, literature and archival research.

2.2.1 Past initiatives

During the research, several initiatives came up that were taken in the past to strengthen the cooperation between the different beguinages. In order to give an overview, these initiatives were divided into two categories: local initiatives and those from the Flemish government. However, in reality they often influenced each other. *Figure 2.12* shows a table with the most important initiatives and realisations that took place between 1995 and 2012.¹⁶²

Het Platform voor Begijnhoven



Illus 2.18: logo of the Platform.

The first important local initiative, was ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’. This association aimed at bringing owners, managers and users of the different beguinages together. Its main objective was the conservation and awareness raising of the immovable, movable and intangible heritage of the beguine movement. The beguinages were regarded from a historical perspective, while respecting the uniqueness, the carrying capacity and authenticity of each individual beguinage.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, 137-139, 2012.

¹⁶¹ ICOMOS evaluation October 1998, later added to S. VAN AERSCHOT, *Béguinages Flamands: un passé bien présent, liste du patrimoine mondial, proposition d'inscription*, 1997.

¹⁶² This overview was based on information given by the respondents during interviews and documentation of the archives of VCM – Forum voor Erfgoedverenigingen and vzw Het Convent. The agency refers to the Flemish agency for Immovable Heritage and its forerunners.

¹⁶³ From persnota: 21 april 2001: Welke toekomst voor onze begijnhoven? Studiedag Dendermonde. Archives Forum voor Erfgoedverenigingen (former VCM).

year	local initiatives	initiatives Flemish government
1995	Patacon vzw: beguinage price to female artists, every two years	
1996		
1997		drafting of nomination file, Suzanne Van Aerschot
1998	October: study day in Hoogstraten from 'vzw Het Convent', start of the cooperation (all Flemish beguinages)	December: recognition of 13 representative beguinages on the World Heritage List
1999	first meetings of 'Het Platform voor begijnhoven' questionnaire to different partners project subsidies from the King Baudouin Foundation, start cooperation with VCM	uniform signposts in the 13 beguinages request of minister L. Martens and agency (E. Goedleven) to vzw Het Convent to create coöperation between beguinages
2000	several meetings of the Platform, creation of three thematic work groups project subsidies from the Flemish government (from minister of Culture Bert Anciaux)	video on the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List, initiative of agency
2001	several meetings of the Platform, also newsletters April: study day 'Welke toekomst voor onze begijnhoven', Dendermonde September: beguinage weekend (coöperation King Baudouin Foundation, also publication 'Langs Vlaamse Begijnhoven, Michiel Heirman) First ideas on legal structure of organisation Platform	publication Flemish beguinages World Heritage (Suzanne Van Aerschot, Michiel Heirman) in different languages internal nota open spaces, agency (Herman van den Bossche)
2002	Subsidies from the King Baudouin Foundation to draft statutes of the non-profit organization, first draft few meetings of the Platform, newsletter creation of a manifest for the future non-profit organisation	internal 'Sneuveldtekst voor beleidsplan', (basic text for management plan) Suzanne Van Aerschot
2003	drafting of statutes	
2004	drafting of statutes, last version	
2005		
2006		
2007	request from Flemish government to start up Platform again	few meetings agency (with different staff members and heritage consultants) topics: uniform protection, buffer zones, management request to start the Platform again
2008		few meetings agency (with different staff members and heritage consultants) topics: uniform protection, buffer zones, management
2009		
2010		thematic publication on the Flemish beguinages in magazine 'Monumenten en Landschappen'
2011		November: meeting for municipalities with World Heritage properties, Piet Geleyns, agency
2012		International colloquium on World Heritage cities, Brugge, June

Figure 2.12: Overview of different initiatives of cooperation between the Flemish beguinages (1995-2012).

In October 1998, just before the beguinages were officially inscribed on the World Heritage List, a study day was held in the beguinage of Hoogstraten by the 'vzw Het Convent'. This was the first time several owners and managers of the beguinages were brought together. They realized that in fact they hardly knew each other. Thus the idea was put forward to start up a platform assembling stakeholders from different Flemish beguinages. From the start, this platform was not restricted to the thirteen representative sites: it was ment for all Flemish beguinages that wanted to participate. After the official inscription of the Flemish beguinages in 1998, the 'vzw Het Convent' from Hoogstraten was approached by the Flemish government (minister Luc Martens and Edgar Goedleven) with the request to start up a collaboration between the different beguinages.

In 1999 the first meetings of the actual platform took place. On the first gathering in May 1999, there were representatives of fifteen different beguinages. The platform was named 'Het Plaform voor Begijnhoven'. Frans Horsten, one of the main advocates of the platform, was appointed chairmen of the association. A steering committee with representatives from seven beguinages was also formed. Notwithstanding this structure, the platform did not have a formal juridical form.¹⁶⁴ Around that time, the platform applied for subsidies from the King Baudouin Foundation.¹⁶⁵ This foundation granted subsidies to useful heritage projects. The platform was selected and received 300 000 BF per year, money which was used to pay the 'Vlaamse Contactcommissie Monumentenzorg VCM' to handle its administration and support the platform.

One of the first ideas that came up during the meetings, was to make an inventory or overview of the different beguinages. Therefore a questionnaire was sent to all the partners of the platform, with questions concerning ownership, functions and management of the sites. Some 13 questionnaires were filled in, including 9 of the beguinages on the World Heritage List. Others were the beguinages of Oudenaarde, Diksmuide, Anderlecht and Sint-Elisabeth (original great beguinage Gent).

The idea of the members of the platform was to gather every two months in a different beguinage. The host provided for the meeting space and catering. In the morning there was a meeting, and in the afternoon the host beguinage was explored. This way gatherings were held in the beguinages of Hoogstraten, Turnhout, Gent, Tongeren, Herentals and Kortrijk.

In June 2000, three work groups were created reflecting the aims of the association. The first group discussed the promotion and education/awareness raising of the beguinages. Topics such as tourist pressure, common initiatives and fund raising were addressed in these meetings. The platform wanted to give a historical correct image of the beguine movement, but also draw the attention to the current function of the beguinages. The second group gathered to discuss the topic of museums inside the beguinages. Finally the third group was called 'beguinages in practice'. This group worked on topics such as ownership, management and addressed problems.

¹⁶⁴ It was a 'feitelijke vereniging', an informal association that meets regularly without a juridical form.

¹⁶⁵ For more information on the King Baudouin Foundation Cf. www.kbs-frb.be, last consulted December 2012.

In December 2000 the platform received subsidies from the minister of Culture Bert Anciaux. These subsidies were granted for experimental and innovative projects on promotion and education of movable and intangible heritage.¹⁶⁶ This resulted in a rather active working of ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’ in the following year. Several meetings were held, and a newsletter was spread to the partners of the platform. In 2001 ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’ organized a study day in Dendermonde called ‘Which future for our beguinages?’, addressing different aspects of the working of the platform.¹⁶⁷ The preserved press text gives a good insight in the ambitions of the association. Issues of traffic safety and gentrification were for instance addressed. In September 2001, a ‘beguinage weekend’ themed ‘culture and spirituality’ was held to reach a broad public. This event was organized in collaboration with ‘Het Davidsfonds’, that also published a book for the occasion.¹⁶⁸ People could buy a ticket to enter all museums and participate to activities. In total 23 beguinages participated to this weekend, including the thirteen World Heritage sites. Some 25 000 visitors participated to the event. Another initiative supported by the platform was the ‘beguinage price’, a price for female artists handed out by Patacon vzw. Every two years such a competition was held, coordinated by Annie Mariman from the beguinage of Dendermonde.

In 2001 the first ideas were put forward to give the association a more formal structure. The choice was made to found a non-profit organization.¹⁶⁹ This organization would not take over the ownership of the beguinages, but find solutions for common problems among the beguinages. Again, the platform applied for subsidies from the King Baudouin Foundation, this time in the light of the campaign ‘management of heritage projects’. Within this application is stated that the platform at that time was working on a global vision on the management of the beguinages and the creation of long-range restoration and maintenance plans, on the specific request of the Flemish government.¹⁷⁰ The project was selected, and thus the platform could ask for legal support from a lawyer of the KU Leuven, Professor Marleen Denef. She helped the platform to draft statutes of the non-profit organization. This resulted in several versions of the statutes in the following years. The last and definite version dates from January 2004.

These statutes describe the objectives of the non-profit organization. Focus is laid on the care and future safeguarding of the beguinages. Individual and common interests have to be balanced. Each stakeholder should be able to join the platform. Therefore different categories of members were to be created, that each have different kinds of votes depending on their responsibility. The statutes also lists possible activities of the non-profit organization, such as developing a common strategy and vision on the management of the beguinages in consultation with the responsible authorities.

¹⁶⁶ Subsidies voor experimentele en vernieuwende initiatieven inzake ontsluiting van roerend en immaterieel cultureel erfgoed.

¹⁶⁷ Welke toekomst voor onze begijnhoven? 21-04-2001, Dendermonde.

¹⁶⁸ M. HEIRMAN, *Langs Vlaamse Begijnhoven*, Leuven, 2001.

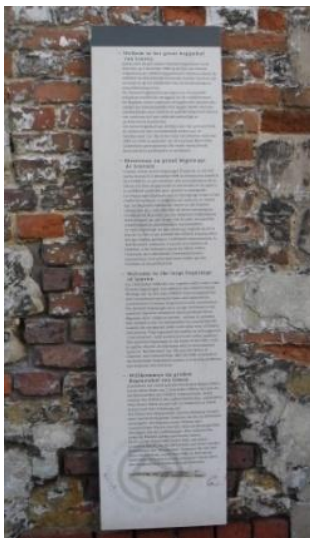
¹⁶⁹ Which was never actually founded.

¹⁷⁰ Afdeling Monumenten en Landschappen, now Flemish Agency for Immovable Heritage.

In the meantime a manifest was also drafted, which should be signed all partners before becoming member of the non-profit organization. This manifest stipulates that the organization strives to achieve a social mix of inhabitants in the beguinages and aspires to make the beguinages traffic free. A newsletter from 2002 mentions the large expectations of the Flemish government towards the platform.¹⁷¹ Also the possibility of structural financial support from the government is discussed, for instance in the form of a paid staff member. Therefore the non-profit organization should be imbedded in a larger organization.

However, this non-profit organization was eventually never founded. In the winter of 2003-04 the collaboration between the beguinages stagnated. Reason for this was the lack of funding (there were no more subsidies from the King Baudouin Foundation) and the fact that Frans Horsten retrieved himself from the project for some time because of private reasons. Also the differences between the representatives from the Flemish beguinages played a role. For some beguinages, the most motivated stakeholders were not the owners or main managers of the sites. This sometimes caused conflicts. According to Frans Horsten, some beguinages mainly joined the platform hoping that their own projects would catch more attention this way, without really supporting the common aims of the association.

Initiatives from the Flemish government



Illus 2.19: example of signpost.

Besides aforementioned local initiatives action was also undertaken by the Flemish government. These efforts mainly regarded the management and promotion of the thirteen beguinages on the World Heritage List. In 1999 - after the thirteen representative beguinages were inscribed – each of them received a uniform signpost with tourist information in four languages. The same year all thirteen beguinages were asked to give an overview of the estimated restoration and maintenance works for the next five years. At that time, subsidy applications from beguinages on the World Heritage List were still handled with priority.¹⁷²

One year later a video on the Flemish beguinages was made on behalf of the Flemish department for Monuments and Landscapes, which is now the Flemish Agency for Immovable Heritage.¹⁷³ In 2001, a well illustrated and documented publication on the Flemish beguinages followed.¹⁷⁴ Interesting, is the foreword of Edgard Goedleven, head of the former department: *“Of course the inscription on the Cultural and Natural Heritage List does not mean the end of the history of the beguinages. Now even more than in the past, the*

¹⁷¹ Het Platform voor Begijnhoven, Nieuwsbrief september 2002.

¹⁷² This is mentioned within the nomination file and also came forward during some interviews. It is however not clear whether the beguinages actually received priority or how long this lasted.

¹⁷³ E. VAN DER AUWERA en P. VERLINDEN, *Vlaamse begijnhoven: werelderfgoed*, video i.o.v. Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Brussel, 2000.

¹⁷⁴ S. VAN AERSCHOT and M. HEIRMAN, *Flemish beguinages: World heritage*, Leuven, 2001.

*international community expects Flanders to preserve the cultural and historical values and the residential qualities of these remarkable architectural ensembles by means of an efficient heritage policy. Moreover, their immaterial, symbolical and spiritual characteristics have to be protected and valorized as part of a global and integrated approach that- without prejudicing the uniqueness of these ensembles – will lead to the lasting viability of the beguinages that will in its turn assure them a future worthy of their status as World Heritage.’*¹⁷⁵ Van Goedleven was in fact one of the persons who stimulated the foundation of ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’. Probably around this time, a touristic leaflet was also composed by the Flemish government describing the different beguinages. In 2001 Herman van den Bossche also wrote a note on the open spaces of the Flemish beguinages.¹⁷⁶ Within this note, the idea to ban traffic and parked cars from the beguinages on the long run is mentioned. Van den Bossche also proposes a closer collaboration with the concerned municipalities, because of their responsibilities regarding spatial planning.

In 2002 Suzanne Van Aerschot composed a short text that could function as a base for discussions among different heritage consultants.¹⁷⁷ The idea was that after consulting ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’ a definite note could be drafted. Within this text, Suzanne addresses the need for guidelines for a coordinated Flemish policy towards the beguinages. Different aspects are treated such as the lack of a uniform protection policy, the problems listed by the platform, the issue of buffer zones and the topic of museums and education. It is not clear whether this text was actually discussed during meetings. However, such texts confirm that the intention to work out a global vision existed in the first years after the nomination.

Around 2007-08 these meetings were started up again, maybe due to specific problems or UNESCO demands. According to the reports, different heritage consultants concerned with the Flemish beguinages were brought together, including Suzanne Van Aerschot and Piet Geleyns. The issue of protection was put forward again, which probably resulted in the new protection campaign in the beguinage of Turnhout.¹⁷⁸ At that point, the idea existed to extend the representative cases on the World Heritage List, by adding the beguinage of Diksmuide.¹⁷⁹ Other points of attention were management plans and buffer zones. Apparently, UNESCO requested new maps with the exact indication of the core- and buffer zones of the World Heritage property. This brought up the question of monitoring these buffer zones. The idea was put forward to work with Flemish or regional special implementation plans (RUP), but the concerned Flemish agency for spatial planning did not agree on this. Thus, the monitoring of the buffer zones would largely depend on the goodwill of the local municipalities and cities.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ S. VAN AERSCHOT and M. HEIRMAN, *Flemish beguinages: World heritage*, Leuven, 2001, 9.

¹⁷⁶ H. VAN DEN BOSSCHE, *Begijnhoven en het werelderfgoed*, interne nota Vlaamse overheid, 2001.

¹⁷⁷ S. VAN AERSCHOT, *Vlaamse begijnhoven Werelderfgoed: sneuveltekst voor beleidsnota*, interne nota Vlaamse overheid, vermoedelijk 2002.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Volume II: ANALYSIS-OVERVIEW, 855-004 Turnhout.

¹⁷⁹ This idea was however never pursued.

¹⁸⁰ Since 2009 the obligation to consult the Flemish agency for building permits in defined buffer zones exist, cf. Introduction 1.3.1 ‘Conservation of immovable heritage in Flanders.’

In 2007 the cabinet also requested to start up ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’ again. Possibly an extra staff member could be hired within the ‘Vlaamse Contactcommissie Monumentenzorg VCM’, in order to coordinate the platform. In spite of these intentions, the platform was however never restarted.

After 2008 the meetings among heritage consultants and concerned staff members of the Flemish agency stagnated, mostly because the agency had other priorities.¹⁸¹ In 2010 a thematic issue of the magazine ‘Monumenten, Landschappen & Archeologie’ on the Flemish beguinages did appear, published by the Flemish agency.¹⁸²

Around 2007-2008, Piet Geleyns was appointed focal point for UNESCO World Heritage in Flanders. In the meantime Suzanne Van Aerschot, who had been closely involved with the Flemish beguinages, retired. For Piet Geleyns priority is now to closer involve local authorities in the management of World Heritage. Especially municipalities and cities can play an important role in the management of these sites, but were hardly consulted in the past. Therefore Piet Geleyns plans to organize regular meetings for representatives from all Flemish municipalities with World Heritage sites. A first meeting was held in November 2011.

2.2.2 Present situation

Current contacts between the Flemish beguinages

During the interviews, questions were posed on past and current contacts between the beguinages and on the respondents’ motivation for future cooperation. It has to be said, only few of the interviewed respondents still knew what the platform exactly was. Many respondents did however remember the name, and whether they participated to it or not. Since the end of the cooperation around 2003, several managers were replaced by new persons who never heard of the platform. This is especially the case for the heritage consultants and staff members of social welfare organizations and cities.

Still, several participants to the platform kept contact after it stagnated. Until recently the beguinages of Turnhout and Herentals still had close contacts because of the platform. Lieve Wouters from the Turnhout beguinage, explained that because of the meetings it became easier to contact each other afterwards.¹⁸³ Frans Horsten from the Hoogstraten beguinage also continued to play an important role.¹⁸⁴ This is connected to the issue of hereditary leasing, that was and is more and more used in different beguinages. Because Hoogstraten was the first beguinage to implement the system of giving single houses into a hereditary lease to private persons, other beguinages contacted them for inspiration. Thus managers from the beguinages of Turnhout, Lier and O.L.V. Ter Hoyen (Gent) visited

¹⁸¹ For instance the start of the campaigns to actualize the Flemish inventory for the built heritage and the internal reorganization of the agency.

¹⁸² *Monumenten, Landschappen & archeologie*, 29 (5), 2010.

¹⁸³ *Interview with Lieve Wouters* (Teamleader secretariat OCMW Turnhout), Turnhout, 29-11-2011.

¹⁸⁴ Currently (anno 2012) he is also occupied with the beguinage of Antwerp.

Hoogstraten. For this reason also the beguinages of Dendermonde and O.L.V. Ter Hoyen have contacts with each other: they both use the same formula and engineering bureau to restore and lease the houses within their beguinage.

Other contacts are more related to common types of stakeholders. For instance the technical services of different beguinages managed by social welfare organizations have contacts with each other. This is the case for the beguinages of Lier, Turnhout and Herentals. Another 'type' of coordinating stakeholders are staff members of the museums located in the beguinages. Persons responsible for the museums of Dendermonde, Turnhout, Tongeren and Kortrijk (future museum) have contacts between each other. Often they exchange newsletters or invite each other to activities.

This is also true for the different non-profit organizations and inhabitant committees active in the Flemish beguinages. They sometimes have newsletters or magazines, with articles on other beguinages. In both the beguinages of Sint-Amandsberg and O.L.V. Ter Hoyen in Gent, an inhabitant visited all the 13 beguinages on the World Heritage List and reported about it in their newsletter.¹⁸⁵ For this purpose they also interviewed stakeholders in the beguinages they visited. Some of these friends associations or inhabitant committees also organize annual visits to other beguinages. Next several beguinages have connections between each other through personal contacts. They do not actively cooperate, but simply know each other.

Only few contacts exist among the different heritage consultants responsible for the Flemish beguinages. Rudy Degraef is the only heritage consultant who follows up two beguinages on the World Heritage List (Hoogstraten and Lier).¹⁸⁶ Even heritage consultants for beguinages in the same province, who work together in the same provincial office, often have limited contact. There are for instance no provincial structural meetings for consultants following up beguinages. Still, when there are problems the heritage consultants ask for advice from their colleagues with expertise on the subject.¹⁸⁷ In 2011 an article on the restoration of the Kortrijk beguinage appeared in 'M&L' that was read by some of the respondents as well.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ *Interview with Cecile Vanoothegeem* (inhabitant and volunteer at the documentation centre of Sint-Amandsberg, Sint-Amandsberg, Gent, 21-02-2012. And *Interview with Sonja Vanoutryve* (active inhabitant), Gent, 12-04-2012.

¹⁸⁶ *Interview with Rudy Degraef* (heritage consultant province of Antwerp), Antwerp, 21-06-2012.

¹⁸⁷ For instance on landscapes or interior elements.

¹⁸⁸ MAHIEU, F., 'De restauratie van het schrijnwerk in het Kortrijkse Sint-Elisabeth Begijnhof' in *Monumenten, Landschappen & archeologie*, 30 (1), 2011, 6-19.

Motivation for future cooperation

Afterwards the respondents were questioned on their motivation for future cooperation. Answers to this question varied: some stakeholders were very enthusiastic whereas others responded negatively. For some of the respondents, such a cooperation is essential and should be organized in the future. These persons were involved in the beguinages in different ways: sometimes it was the manager or owner of the site, sometimes an inhabitant, a heritage consultant or a representative from the city. Thus, it is clear that the complex situation from the time of 'Het Platform voor begijnhoven' still exists. Not all enthusiastic persons have the same level of authority in their beguinage, nor do they represent the opinion of all the stakeholders of their beguinage.

Opinions on the interpretation of this new coordination also varied. Most of the respondents agreed it would be useful to inspire each other by exchanging experiences and ideas. Only some respondents felt the need for a global vision or framework for the management of the beguinages. According to the respondents, other issues that could benefit from cooperation were promotion and scientific research. A common promotion strategy could attract more visitors to the beguinages, and cooperation and information exchange on scientific research would only improve the understanding of the beguine movement. Still, several respondents clearly expressed the condition such meetings should actually result in concrete actions and initiatives.

Most of the respondents did not have a strong opinion on the question whether this cooperation should be held exclusively among the thirteen beguinages on the World Heritage List or not. The cooperation should not exclude other interested beguinages, but at the same time it has to stay feasible to discuss with all parties.¹⁸⁹ Also the question how this cooperation could be organized and who would be responsible, is still vague. Ideas that were put forward, was a structure similar or in cooperation with the CRKC (Center for religious art and culture), or a cooperation with 'Toerisme Vlaanderen' (coordination of tourism in Flanders) or the King Baudouin Foundation.

Also answers to the question of the possible role of the Flemish government in such a cooperation varied. Some respondents were more in favor of a bottom-up approach, whereas others saw the support of the Flemish government as an important condition. Since it was the Flemish government who put the beguinages on the World Heritage List, some respondents also felt the government should take the initiative. Yet this also leans to a more general need of the respondents for a better support of the Flemish government. Several heritage consultants did express the need for better guidelines which could lead to a global approach or vision on the Flemish beguinages.

Karel Robijns from the Flemish Agency for Immovable Heritage acknowledged the current lack of a uniform policy and clear guidelines for the heritage consultants.¹⁹⁰ According to him, both the initiative of the platform as the process to develop a common

¹⁸⁹ Which is more difficult when sitting around a table with 26 parties.

¹⁹⁰ *Interview with Karel Robijns* (coordinator at Immovable Heritage (OE), Flemish community), Brussels, 22-02-2012.

management strategy from the Flemish government should be started up again. The agency might coordinate and support the drafting of uniform management plans for all of the thirteen beguinages. It would also be a good start, if all the beguinages were obliged to work together with Monument Watch and regularly inspect their property, because these inspection reports are very consistent.

According to the respondents, foreseen problems for future cooperation are mainly the lack of time and financial resources. Many professionals and heritage consultants do not have enough time to occupy themselves with the management of the beguinages as it is. Next the great differences between the beguinages came up several times during the interviews. How can sites with different forms of ownership, management or protection work together? The beguinages are also situated in municipalities and cities with different conservation policies. Finally, few respondents were afraid such a cooperation would lead to more bureaucracy and even stricter and heavier procedures.

Other respondents did not see the benefits of such a cooperation. This was the case for respondents from the beguinages of Brugge, Gent Ter Hoyen and Sint-Amandsberg.¹⁹¹ They feel a good and continuous management of their is in place, and they do not need to change this. Nor did they want to invest a lot of time to spread their knowledge to other beguinages. Respondents from the beguinage of Mechelen, rather see the site as a historical city quarter. Therefore a comparison with the management of the other beguinages would not be useful for them. In some cases, these respondents did see the benefits of a common promotion strategy. This would benefit the beguinages without having a direct impact on their management.

Some respondents, such as Frans Horsten, Karel Dendooven or Karel Robijns are in favor to restart 'Het Platform voor Begijnhoven' again.¹⁹² They think the need for such a cooperation still exists. Confronted to the problem that not all managers and owners of the beguinages are interested in such a cooperation, both Frans Horsten and Karel Dendooven think this will not pose a real threat to the initiative. According to these respondents, these nonbelievers will automatically follow after stakeholders of some beguinages have joined the platform, because they do not want to feel left out. Horsten and Dendooven believe there is an added value to such a cooperation which will encourage participation to the network.

However, an important condition they both (independently) put forward is structural financial support. Creating a network takes time, and if there is no guarantee the project can be funded for a longer period (at least a couple of years), it is not worthwhile to restart it.

Karel Dendooven thinks this network should be imbedded in a larger experienced organization, for instance Herita vzw.¹⁹³ The platform could also be related to the BOM-netwerk.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Mainly stakeholders from the city and owners.

¹⁹² *Interview with Karel Dendooven* (director of Forum vzw), Antwerp, 11-05-2012. Since September 2012, Karel Dendooven is part of the management team of Herita vzw.

¹⁹³ This is a new heritage organization and in a way the continuation of the Vlaamse Contactcommissie Monumentenzorg, that used to handle the administration of 'Het Platform voor Begijnhoven'.

¹⁹⁴ For more information on this network see 2.3.3 'BOM-netwerk'.

2.2.3 Conclusion

Several initiatives for common management were taken over the last 15 years. Local initiatives such as ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’ focused on all Flemish beguinages. Discussed issues were mostly related to problems of owners and managers of the sites. From the start the idea was to cooperate with the responsible Flemish authorities to work out a common management. Although the platform was active for some years and had some enthusiastic advocates, real decisions on this management never followed. There was a clear vision on global management within the core of the platform, but it is not clear to what degree all partners supported this vision. Anyhow, the global vision was never implemented and the cooperation ended when the network wanted to become more formal.

From the point of the Flemish government, attempts were also made to streamline the policy towards the Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List and to promote the World Heritage property. The Flemish government also stimulated the creation of ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’, although structural financial support was not granted. Discussed issues were related to subjects such as protection, buffer zones and functions. Again, agreement on such policy was never achieved.

Currently, contacts between different beguinages still exist. However, these contacts are not structural or coordinated. Some respondents and beguinages have many contacts, whereas other beguinages or respondents have no contacts at all. The initiative depends on the motivation of the different stakeholders and their needs. When starting a new project, some beguinages do look to each other for inspiration and exchange experiences. However, not all stakeholders are this pro-active and interesting information is not communicated to all involved stakeholders. These contacts are also related to specific problems or projects and often have a temporary character.

Motivation for future cooperation is still present, both from ‘old’ and ‘new’ stakeholders. The shift in staff members can be an opportunity to develop new ideas on networking among the Flemish beguinages. Furthermore some advocates from the first platform are still motivated. However, the problems related to the first platform persist. Differences between the beguinages – including the municipalities they are located in – and their individual management traditions have to be respected and balanced with new common objectives. Motivated stakeholders do not always represent the management of the complete beguinage. A shared vision on basic aspects such as ‘who can participate’ or ‘what kind of structure should be chosen’ is still absent.

2.3 Other examples of networking and common management

In order to give good recommendations for future common management of the Flemish beguinages, inspiration can be drawn from other examples of networking and coordinated management. As said, there are 214 other serial properties on the World Heritage List (Cf. Annex 4.1.2). It would be interesting to see how these sites are being managed. Also existing networks between different World Heritage sites form interesting examples for the case of the Flemish beguinages. Besides this World Heritage perspective, existing heritage related networks can be examined as well. Before looking at these examples, some theory on networking in the field of heritage will be explained.

2.3.1 Theory of networking

In 2011 an interesting booklet was published by FARO on networking in the field of heritage.¹⁹⁵ This publication was a result of the PRISMA research, a large scaled consultation of different Flemish organizations occupied with the care for movable and intangible heritage. Within the guidebook for networking, ten steps to set up a network are discussed. These steps can also be seen as questions one should ask before starting a network.

First the target group of the network has to be defined. This also implies determining the needs and expectations of the target group. The second step consists out of expressing the mission and goals of the network. Next the degree of formality of the network has been determined. This is an important step, since there is a large difference between informal and formal networks. An informal network is more flexible and organic. A formal network has greater decision competences, with a clear structure and management.

Often networks start ad hoc, and grow out to become more formal. The American consultant Diane Zorich worked out a model to show different phases within this process. As the network becomes more formal, the investment and risks increase. At the same time also the added value of the network grows. Along the process, the network passes on from sharing knowledge to creating knowledge. After this step, the work method or structure of the network needs to be determined, followed by defining what kind of information the network needs, and how data is processed and archived. The sixth step is to consolidate the network. Within this step, it is important the network has a clear coordination (in the form of a secretariat or a contact person). The next step consists out of deciding who will be responsible and which mandates will be divided.

In the eight step, the involvement of the members of the network is stressed. A bottom-up approach is encouraged, although a kind of structure or coordination to guide the process is necessary. Van Leeuwen explains that often only a small group of people is really enthusiastic from the start: they are the so called pioneers. The largest group are people who

¹⁹⁵ J. VAN LEEUWEN and G. VERCAUTEREN, *Netwerken in erfgoedland: Werkboekje voor het weven van een prachtig web*, FARO, Brussel, 2011.

will join the network later on when they see the benefits it could have for their own organization. Thus the pioneers have to be involved and encouraged from the start, and attention must be given to convince the larger group to join the network. It is also important to bring the members together and create personal contacts through occasions such as meetings, study days, receptions and round table sessions.

In the next step the communication strategy of the network has to be developed. There are different types of communication: from newsletters, mail or social networks to telephone conversations. The last step this guidebook presents is determining the investment of each of the members to the network. This investment can be financial or logistic. Such agreements between partners are often documented in protocols.

These ten steps address some interesting issues regarding networking between different organizations, which could be used for the cooperation between the Flemish beguinages as well. In a way, 'Het Platform voor Begijnhoven' already answered some of these questions or steps. It would be good to evaluate and refine these steps when such a cooperation were to be started up again. However, the guidebook does not address the topic of common management of heritage sites. It focuses more on networking between different organizations in the field of movable and intangible heritage.

2.3.2 Management and networking: World Heritage properties

Management of World Heritage properties

When looking at the 214 other serial properties on the World Heritage List, only 4 of them have actual management plans that are publicly accessible on the UNESCO website.¹⁹⁶ The choice was made to examine the management plans of two serial properties: Kaiping Diaolou and Villages (China, listed 2006, nr. 1112) and the Australian Convict Sites (Australia, listed 2010, nr. 1306). The case of Kaiping Diaolou seemed interesting because it concerns historical buildings which are nowadays still inhabited, just as the beguinages. The case of the Australian Convict sites was chosen because the number of components (eleven) leans closely to the number of representative Flemish beguinages on the World heritage List. Furthermore, the convict sites are geographically spread over a region, just as the beguinages.¹⁹⁷ For Kaiping Diaolou and Villages one management plan from 2001 is available that concerns the four different components of the serial property. For the Australian Convict Sites management plans from 2007-2010 are available for each of the eleven components.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. www.unesco.org, properties nr. 1306, 1112, 1121 and 1223, last consulted December 2012.

¹⁹⁷ Although the scale of the regions (Flanders versus Australia) is of course different.

Kaiping Diaolou and Villages

Diaolou are multi-storied defensive village houses in Kaiping, China.¹⁹⁸ These houses were built – mostly in the beginning of the 20th century – by returning Chinese emigrants and reflect a mix between Chinese and Western styles. Nowadays these complexes are still used for housing. There still exist many Diaolou, but only four clustered villages were selected as representative cases for the nomination. The online document is an English extract of the complete management plan.¹⁹⁹ This plan was drafted by the University of Peking in 2001. First the background of the management plan is given, followed by a description and a value-analysis. Next the current situation is described and evaluated. Afterwards some general principles for management are addressed, followed by more specific protection plans and a cost estimation of the short-term goals of the plan. Finally recommendations for management and implementation are made.

Within the plan, much attention is given to the surroundings of the villages and their urban layout. The sites have four layers of protection, the first two forming the core zone and the two last layers forming the buffer zone of the sites. In the document is stated that all other plans (such as land use plans or water plans) must be conform to the regulations within the management plan. Also interesting is the creation of a Committee for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Kaiping Diaolou and villages, including different stakeholders. The management plan also addresses the protection of intangible heritage, scientific research and the creation of a data base that can be used as a long-term supervision mechanism. Also issues such as use, tourism and safety are discussed.

Australian Convict Sites

The second discussed serial property are the Australian Convict Sites.²⁰⁰ Eleven sites from all over Australia were selected to represent a vast amount of Australian convict sites established in the 18th and 19th centuries by the British Empire. Convicts were deported to these sites to perform forced labour and thus help build the colony. The different representative sites differ in size, and are now mostly used as museums. Each of these sites has its own elaborate management plan. These plans are not completely uniform, although they follow more or less the same structure. First the site is described, with attention to its history and heritage. Next the heritage values are described, and a statement of significance is given. Afterwards the conservation policy is explained, followed by its implementation. Some of the management plans also have very elaborate appendices with documentation and inventories of the different components. The management plans are not all composed by the same study bureau, managers or government.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Cf. whc.unesco.org/en/list/1112, last consulted December 2012.

¹⁹⁹ *Protection and Management Plan on Kaiping Diaolou and villages (extract)*, Urban Planning and Design Centre of Peking University, 2001.

²⁰⁰ Cf. whc.unesco.org/en/list/1306, last consulted December 2012.

²⁰¹ This also reflects their differences regarding local policy and ownership.

Since these sites are protected as ‘National Heritage Places’ they are obliged to draft a management plan according to the ‘National Heritage Management Principles’. When these plans were drafted, the nomination for inscription on the World Heritage List was prepared. In Australia World Heritage properties have a separate status and have to draft different Management Plans, as is explained in one of the Plans: *Places on the World Heritage List must be managed in accordance with the Australian World Heritage Management Principles, as set out in Schedule 5 of the EPBC Regulations 2000. These are similar to the National Heritage Management Principles, and address the objectives of management of World Heritage places, the involvement of the community, the requirements of a management plan for the place, and the processes for assessing and approving actions which are likely to have a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a property.*²⁰²

These management principles for World Heritage properties are rather general and can be compared to the requirements within the Operational Guidelines.²⁰³ Focus is laid on consultation of different stakeholders. These plans should also be revised at least every 7 years.²⁰⁴ Interesting is however the requirement of Environmental impact assessments: when interventions are planned inside or outside the World Heritage property, an assessment has to be made to see how this intervention would affect the property. Next approval must be given to carry out the intervention.²⁰⁵

Thus, in the case of the Australian Convict Sites a general overview of the management of the eleven sites is available in the form of different well documented management plans. These plans all have a similar structure and meet the same general conservation principles that were determined on a national level. However, a real shared vision on the management of the World Heritage property is not mentioned and the different plans focus on the separate components of the serial property. Still, these plans could be used as examples of management plans.

Both these examples come from properties that were recently inscribed on the World Heritage List. In both cases, the management plans were drafted before the sites were inscribed. The fact that these plans exist, does not necessarily mean the proposed management is actually implemented. Still, efforts were made to consider aspects such as buffer zones, accessibility, risk management and consultation of stakeholders. Both examined serial properties developed a vision on their future management, although in the case of the Australian Convict Sites this vision was restricted to the level of the different components. In both cases the plan had to be evaluated and revised after a period of time. Anyhow, it would be useful to examine the management of these and other serial properties more in detail.

²⁰² *Woolmers Estate, Longford, Tasmania: Conservation Management Plan*, prepared by Clive Lucas, Stapleton and Partners Pty.Ltd., Sydney, 2008, 62.

²⁰³ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, paragraphs 108-118 2012.

²⁰⁴ Cf. http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_reg/epabcr2000697/sch5.html, last consulted December 2012.

²⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, paragraph 3.

These aspects are either absent or not documented in the case of the Flemish beguinages. At the time of inscription management plans or systems were not demanded yet by the Operational Guidelines: this was only requested from 2005 onwards.²⁰⁶ Still, when looking at the recent Belgian nomination dossier of the ‘Major Mining Sites of Wallonia’, these aspects are not integrated within the nomination either.²⁰⁷ This serial property includes four former mining sites from the Walloon area and currently does not have separate management plans or an elaborate management system in place. According to the nomination file, there is a management system since all sites fall under the same legislation for fire safety and safety in mines.²⁰⁸ Next the file states that because each mining site is different they all developed a proper management system. The only part where common management is discussed in the nomination dossier, is within the chapter concerning monitoring: ‘*L’organisation de rencontres entre les gestionnaires devrait amener à un échange d’expérience et à la définition d’indicateurs clés communs.*’²⁰⁹ (organized meetings among managers have to lead to exchanging experience and defining common monitoring instruments).²¹⁰ Thus it seems as if the Belgian state has not really changed its policy regarding management plans or system towards new nominations on the World Heritage List since 1997. The idea of common management is considered, but not structurally integrated in a global management vision.

Networking between different World Heritage sites

Stichting Werelderfgoed.nl

An interesting example of cooperation between different World Heritage Sites can be found in the Netherlands. In 2000 a platform was created on the initiative of the different World Heritage sites themselves.²¹¹ Ten years later its name was changed to ‘Stichting Werelderfgoed.nl.’. Managers of the nine Dutch properties formed this cooperation to promote World Heritage within the Netherlands, to lobby for its conservation and to share their knowledge among each other. On a colloquium on World Heritage Cities held in Brugge, June 2012, Carol Westrik presented this interesting network.²¹² The network is now supported by the Dutch government, but also wants to find alternative funds themselves. The partners meet three times a year to discuss different themes, such as education or tourism. Each partner is responsible for a certain aspect of the organisation (for instance communication). ‘Stichting Werelderfgoed.nl.’ develops a strategy to introduce the concept of

²⁰⁶ O. VILEIKIS, *Management Plans for World Heritage Sites, Final Report*, unpublished internship report, ICCROM, 2008, 5.

²⁰⁷ *Proposition d’inscription de biens sur la liste du Patrimoine mondial, présentation générale*, Région Wallonne, Belgique.

²⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, 62.

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, 75.

²¹⁰ Translation by author.

²¹¹ Cf. *www.werelderfgoed.nl*, last consulted December 2012.

²¹² Colloquium: World Heritage Cities in the 21st century: Challenges and Opportunities for the Conservation and Management of Urban Heritage (30/05/2012 – 01/06/2012, Bruges, Belgium).

World Heritage into the educational system in the Netherlands. The network also organizes an annual national World Heritage Weekend. In 2013 a national World Heritage information centre will be established in the city of Amsterdam. Its main purpose is to promote the different sites to the public. The 'Stichting Werelderfgoed.nl.' will work together with the city of Amsterdam and the Dutch authorities responsible for cultural heritage to realize this centre.

ABFPM and Le Réseau des sites majeurs de Vauban

Such a national network also exists in France, called 'Association des biens Français du Patrimoine Mondial'.²¹³ Created in 2007, this association aims to share experiences on conservation, protection, safeguarding and management of heritage on a national and international level. Next the network lobbies for the different French World Heritage properties and also promotes them to the public.

Furthermore the component sites of the French serial property 'Fortifications of Vauban' are associated as well.²¹⁴ This serial World Heritage property, inscribed in 2008, consists out of 12 groups of sites and fortified buildings designed by Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707), military engineer of King Louis XIV. Located on the borders of France, these sites include complete towns, citadels, bastions, forts and batteries. In 2005 – thus even before the sites were inscribed on the World Heritage List – a network was created among representatives of the different fortified towns, called 'Le Réseau des sites majeurs de Vauban'. It was actually the network itself that composed the nomination document. The non-profit organization is sponsored by different partners, and run by its own team of staff members.

The aims of the organization are to coordinate actions between managers of the different sites, in cooperation with the national authorities. Next the network aims to be a platform to exchange experience on maintenance, restoration, conservation and tourism development. Finally the non-profit organization wants to become an international information centre on the management of fortified heritage of Vauban. Therefore a special webpage was created with online documentation.²¹⁵ Furthermore the network published several books and touristic guides on the fortifications of Vauban.

²¹³ Cf. www.assofrance-patrimoinemondial.org, last consulted December 2012 (website still under construction).

²¹⁴ Cf. whc.unesco.org/en/list/1283 and www.sites-vauban.org, last consulted December 2012.

²¹⁵ Cf. www.sites-vauban.org/Documents-en-ligne, last consulted December 2012.

2.3.3 Existing heritage related networks

Next to cooperation and networks among different World Heritage components or properties, such organisations also exist among other heritage sites. For the purpose of this master thesis, three different networks were selected. This selection is not exhaustive, since there are many networks and organisations in Flanders and the Netherlands. Such networks often focus on a specific type of heritage – such as wind mills, religious or industrial heritage – or focus on heritage within a certain area.²¹⁶ Still, the selected cases were considered to be the most similar to or relevant for the Flemish beguinages. The first example – the ‘BOM-netwerk’ – is a thematic informal network. The second presented network – ‘Fortengordels rond Antwerpen’ – is a more formal network, that also focuses on the management of heritage sites. The last example is a Dutch organisation called ‘Landelijk Hofjesberaad’, that brings together different heritage sites as well. To assess these networks, a questionnaire was composed and sent to stakeholders by mail. This information was completed with desktop research and one interview.²¹⁷

Het BOM-netwerk

The ‘BOM-netwerk’ was established in 2008, on the initiative of ‘Erfgoed Vlaanderen vzw’. BOM stands for ‘Beheer en Onderhoud van Monumenten’ or management and maintenance of monuments. This network was created when increased attention was given to the issue of preventive conservation in Flanders. The purpose of the network is to cooperate and share expertise in order to avoid different organizations working on the exact same problems at the same time.

The mission or aims of this network are threefold: to exchange information on the subject of (maintenance related) management, technical matters and practical matters. Especially the first two aspects were already discussed within the network. Ideas to develop and exchange good maintenance plans and systems were already put into practice. Also technical issues such as monitoring, conservation, climate control and cost estimation systems are part of the shared expertise within the ‘BOM-netwerk’. These issues are discussed during meetings, normally held twice a year, each time on a different location.

Currently the network has an informal character, meaning it has no official juridical structure. The network focuses on internal information exchange, and does not promote itself through a website, publications or public study days. The network does not receive any kind of subsidies, nor do the members of the network pay an annual contribution. The members only provide for location and catering during meetings. From its creation, the ‘BOM-netwerk’ has been coordinated by Peter Putseys, (former) staff member of Erfgoed Vlaanderen vzw.

²¹⁶ For instance: ‘Levende Molens’, ‘Vlaamse Vereniging voor Industriële Archeologie’ or ‘Restauratie Integratie Mechelen’.

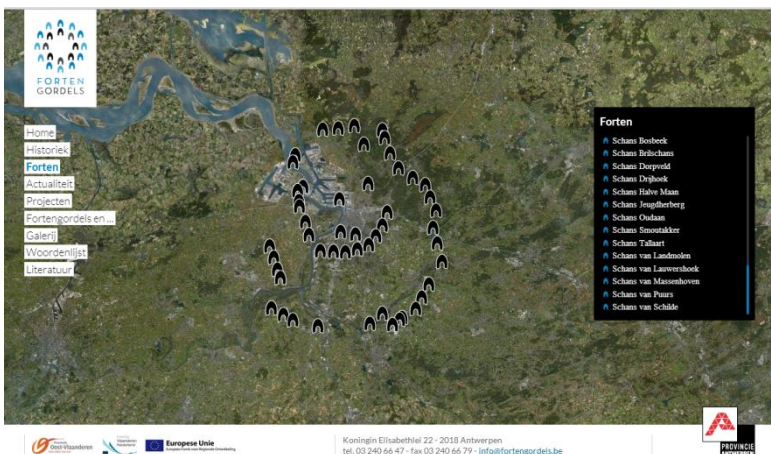
²¹⁷ Cf. Annex 4.1.6. and Cf. *Interview with Peter Putseys*, former staff member of Herita vzw and initiator of the BOM-netwerk, 21-11-2012.

Currently the network has eleven active partners:

- 'Herita vzw' (formerly Erfgoed Vlaanderen vzw)
- 'Monumentenwacht Vlaanderen' (Monument Watch Flanders)
- The city of Antwerpen and the O.L.V. Cathedral of Antwerp (UNESCO property)
- The city of Brugge (UNESCO property)
- The Sint-Baafs cathedral and the 'Vooruit vzw' in Gent
- 'Het Wetenschappelijk en Technisch Centrum voor het Bouwbedrijf WTCB' (scientific and technical center for the building industry).
- The KU Leuven
- 'Het Convent vzw' and 'Anno Architecten' from Hoogstraten
- The Castle of Hex

Thus three of the partners or members of the network, concern Flemish beguinages on the World Heritage List.²¹⁸ Especially the beguinage of Hoogstraten and 'Anno Architecten' are active partners of the network. Within the last year of it's working, the network has not been active anymore. Reason for this is the lack of people, time and resources. In the meantime the organization 'Erfgoed Vlaanderen vzw' was also integrated into a new heritage organization called 'Herita vzw'. Because of this, priority was given to other activities. Peter Putseys does hope that the network will be revived and coordinated by 'Herita vzw'.

Fortengordels rond Antwerpen



Illus. 2.20: Interactive online map of the fortifications.

The second discussed network, is called 'Fortengordels rond Antwerpen'.²¹⁹ There are two belts of fortifications in the province of Antwerp, built in the 19th and 20th centuries. The first or inner belt, is situated near the city of Antwerp. The second or outer belt, is situated further away from the city (Cf. *Illus. 2.20*).

After the Second World War, these constructions no longer served a military purpose. Nowadays some of the remaining fortifications are accessible for the public as tourist attractions. Other are reused, for instance for congress facilities, for sports facilities, for team building activities or to host social associations. The fortifications are owned by different stakeholders, although the concerned municipalities play an important role. Many of these

²¹⁸ Beguinages of Brugge, Leuven and Hoogstraten.

²¹⁹ Cf. www.fortengordels.be, last consulted December 2012.

sites are surrounded by natural or cultural landscapes, and are home to bats and other animals. Already in 2001, a study was written on the management of the inner belt, called 'Herover de fortengordel' or reconquer the belt, assigned by the province of Antwerp.²²⁰ The need for a coordination was already expressed in this document. In 2006 a note was drafted that served as a feasibility study for such a project.²²¹

In 2009, the coordination project was recognized as a strategic project in the light of the Flemish spatial structure plan.²²² Consequently from 2009 to 2012 the province of Antwerp received annual subsidies. Crucial was the creation of a global management vision or 'kaderplan' for the inner and outer belts. Conservation of the built heritage of the fortifications is not the only starting point of the network. An integral approach to the fortifications was adopted, including aspects such as the improvement of the spatial connection between the different sites and the surrounding landscape/ecological systems. Possible reuse and accessibility of the fortifications were considered as well.

In the meantime the network was created, with its own staff members and a project coordinator, currently Karen Gysen. The province of Antwerp remained the most important partner of the network, although different expert groups and steering committees exist. *Illus. 2.21* shows the diagram of the organization, with participation on different levels.

Next to Flemish subsidies, the 'Fortengordels rond Antwerpen' also received other funds. For instance through participation to several European projects, such as INTERREG IV A (Forten en Liniën in Grensbreed Perspectief) and INTERREG IV C (At Fort).

Interesting for the case of the Flemish beguinages, is the website of the project. This website gives an overview of the 36 forts and 14 redoubts of the two fortification belts, presented on an interactive map (Cf. *Illus. 2.20*). For each of these sites, some basic information is shared (history, maps, photo's, current use, accessibility). Next there is an activity calendar and a page with news. Also the project itself is presented.

This network could certainly be an inspiration for a possible cooperation between different beguinages. Especially since the sites have different owners and local forms of management. Also the integral approach with the involvement of stakeholders from different fields is interesting. Still, all of these fortifications are situated near to each other in the same province. The initiative for the network was taken by the provincial authorities, not by the sites themselves. Housing is not a present function in these fortifications.

²²⁰HEROVER DE FORTENGORDEL: Concept Vesting Antwerpen: Ruimtelijk planologische ontwikkelingsmogelijkheden van de Brialmontforten rond Antwerpen, Stramien cvba in opdracht van de Provincie Antwerpen, 2001. (source: www.provant.be, last consulted December 2012).

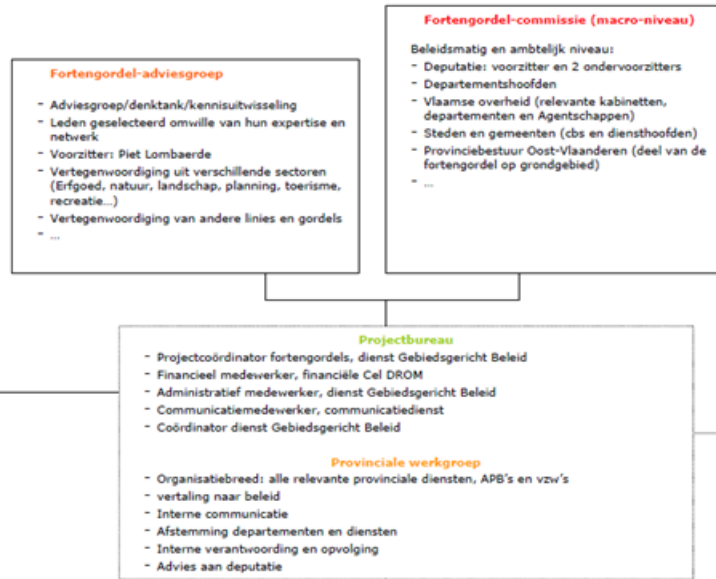
²²¹ V. DE BOCK en R. DE CEULAER, *Verkennde nota: de fortengordels als provinciaal gebiedsgericht project*, Provincie Antwerpen, 2006.

²²² Ruimtelijk structuurplan Vlaanderen.

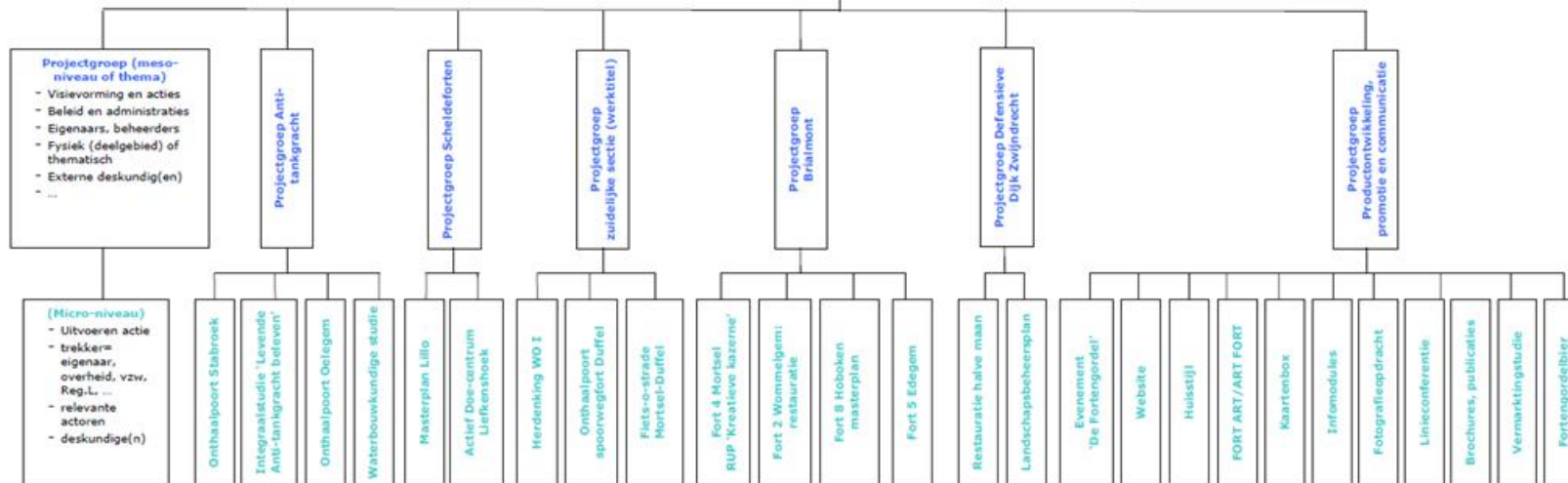
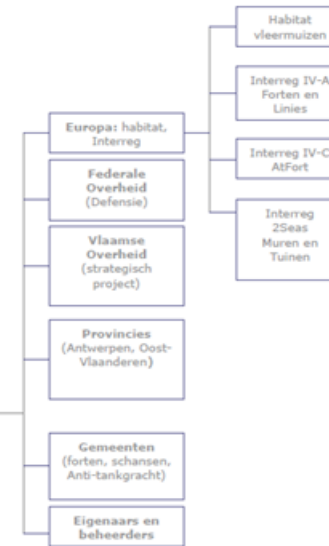
Algemene thematische expertengroepen



Dynamisch overleg



Fondsen en besluitvorming



Illus. 2.21: diagram of the organization 'Fortengordels rond Antwerpen, April 2012.

Landelijk Hofjesberaad

The last discussed network is the 'Landelijk Hofjesberaad' in the Netherlands.²²³ 'Hofjes' are small enclosed communities founded by rich benefactors. The 'hofjes' functioned as almshouses and were inhabited by poor elderly people, often women. These architectural ensembles exist since the 14th century and even nowadays new 'hofjes' are still built. In 1997 the 'Landelijk Hofjesberaad' was founded on the initiative of several managers of 'hofjes'. Before the creation of this national platform, a coordination between the 'hofjes' of the city of Amsterdam already existed. The network has a legal status of a 'stichting' or foundation. Such a foundation does not have real members and differs from a non-profit organization.

Nowadays managers of over 100 'hofjes' participate to the network, and pay an annual fee. Also few 'associations for the revaluation of cities' (verenigingen van Stadsherstel), housing corporations and owner associations participate.²²⁴ The network is not subsidized by the authorities. The mission of the network is multiple: creating a platform, offering support, lobbying for the different 'hofjes' and stimulating the expertise on the management and maintenance of the 'hofjes'. Since the start of the foundation, the 'Landelijk Hofjesberaad' has really become the representative organisation for the Dutch 'hofjes'.

A website provides information on different 'hofjes'. Twice a year a newsletter is published with up to date information on legislation, conservation and other subjects. The organization is lead by a national steering committee. There are also two meetings a year for all participants. In September 2011, the foundation helped organizing an international congress on the topic of almshouses. The 'Landelijk Hofjesberaad' is on its turn member of the 'Federatie Instandhouding Monumenten', a coordinating federation of foundations and associations concerned with conservation.²²⁵ The network also has contacts with a similar English association: the National Almshouse Association.²²⁶

One of the difficulties expressed by Daan van den Briel, current chairmen of the foundation, is the limited influence the network has on the management of the different 'hofjes'. The network can provide the owners with up to date relevant information, but eventually each owner is responsible for its own 'hofje'. The foundation cannot and does not want to enforce regulations upon its participants.

²²³ Cf. www.hofjesberaad.nl, last consulted December 2012.

²²⁴ Source: questionnaire Daan van den Briel, chairman of the 'Landelijke Hofjesberaad', 14-12-12.

²²⁵ Cf. www.fimnederland.nl, last consulted December 2012.

²²⁶ Cf. <http://almshouses.org/almshouses/>, last consulted December 2012.

2.3.4 Conclusion

If only 4 out of 215 serial cultural properties on the World Heritage List handed in a management plan or system, the case of the Flemish beguinages is thus not exceptional. Even though management plans should be part of the nomination dossier since 2005, this requirement is not always strictly followed.²²⁷ Still, this does not mean only 4 serial cultural properties have management plans: sometimes such plans are mentioned in the nomination file without presenting the complete texts.²²⁸ The cases of Kaiping Diaolou and Villages and the Australian Convict Sites show different approaches to the UNESCO requirement of management systems.

Even though (in some cases) local plans and general management of the Flemish beguinages inscribed on the World Heritage List is in place, several aspects of management plans are absent. Especially long term objectives and visions, risk preparedness, impact assessment and the evaluation of management and plans are lacking.

Examples of management plans for separate World Heritage sites surely exist. Lately attention is also given on the nomination process for (transnational) serial properties.²²⁹ Still, literature on the management of serial cultural World Heritage properties after their nomination seems to be absent. Regarding the fact that almost one third of all cultural World Heritage properties are serial, such guidebooks could be useful and necessary in the future.²³⁰ Inspiration could be drawn from existing literature on the management of natural serial World Heritage properties.²³¹

A distinction should be made between actual common management of different heritage sites, and networking among these sites. Networking among different sites can be beneficial to create a global vision on their management. Still, networks cannot enforce owners to manage their property in a certain way. Therefore a good relation between these networks and the responsible authorities is crucial.

Different types of networks were presented, including bottom-up networks such as ‘Stichting Werelderfgoed.nl.’, and top-down networks such as ‘Fortengordels rond Antwerpen’. Most of these network share the same general mission to share expertise, cooperate for the research

²²⁷ *Operational Guidelines (...)*, paragraph 132.5, 2012.

²²⁸ Cf. for instance: *Housing estates in the Berlin modern style, nomination for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List*, 2008, 131. Cf. whc.unesco.org/en/list/1239, last consulted 12/ 2012.

²²⁹ For instance an expert meeting on this matter took place from 25 to 27 February 2010 in Ittingen, Switzerland.

²³⁰ Cf. Annex 4.1.2.

²³¹ Cf. For instance B. ENGELS (ed.) and E. OHNESORGE (ed.) and A. BURMESTER (ed.) *Nominations and Management of Serial Natural World Heritage Properties: Present Situation, Challenges and Opportunities*, BfN–Scripten, 2009.

and promotion of the heritage and finally to lobby for the heritage and to represent the partners on a higher level. Some networks have a professional permanent staff and structure, others are more informal. Communication tools also overlap, common are for instance newsletters, gatherings, study days, publications and websites.

The fact such networks exist, brings hope for the Flemish beguinages. Inspiration can certainly be drawn from the discussed examples. The beguinages could for instance cooperate with other Belgian World Heritage properties to promote the general concept of World Heritage to a broad public. The creation of a common website for the Flemish beguinages, which informs interested visitors and at the same time functions as a platform for the managers of the sites themselves, would be beneficial as well. At the other hand, the presented examples also show that networking takes time, motivated participants and adequate resources.

III CONCLUSION



III.I Flemish beguinages after UNESCO

Thirteen Flemish beguinages inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1998 formed the topic of this master thesis. These valuable enclosed heritage sites were built for women with a unique religious way of life. Their architecture reflects the organization of the beguine community, combining communal and private buildings. Originating in the Middle Ages, the beguine movement only consolidated in the Low Countries. Nowadays the religious movement has faded, yet several beguinages were conserved and reused.

In spite of their rich past, this master thesis did not treat the history of the Flemish beguinages, but focussed on their actual management. Inscribed as a serial property on the World Heritage List, the management of the sites should be coordinated and documented in a management system. Consequently, one of the main research questions of the master thesis was to assess the possibility and feasibility of a coordinated or common management for the thirteen beguinages on the World Heritage List.

First, the current management of the beguinages needed to be examined. Therefore, using a standardized format, relevant information on several management aspects was gathered for each of these sites and bundled in the second volume of the thesis. Data was collected through a combination of interviews with stakeholders, sites visits and finally literature - and desktop research.

After the second volume was composed, it was possible to analyze and compare the management of the thirteen discussed beguinages within this first volume of the master thesis. The first chapter addressed the current management of the sites. The second chapter examined past and current cooperation and contact between the different beguinages. Finally the third chapter discussed management of other World Heritage properties and explored some existing networks and organizations.

The protection, ownership and current functions of the Flemish beguinages were addressed within the first subchapter. These are important factors which influence the management of the beguinages. Both regarding protection and ownership a great diversity exists among the different beguinages. This diversity mostly results from local evolutions that took place in the 19th and 20th centuries. Especially the ownership situation highly affects the management of the sites. Implementing a uniform policy is more challenging in beguinages with multiple owners. Also the existing variety of different protection regulations makes it difficult to develop a uniform management for the thirteen sites. It appears that this diverse situation hasn't changed much after the beguinages were inscribed on the World Heritage List. Also the present functions in the beguinages are diverse, yet housing is the main current function within the thirteen Flemish beguinages. Other common functions are cultural/touristic, social, religious or commercial. Overall, no drastic changes occurred in these past 15 years. Still, certain evolutions – such as hereditary leasing which was more and more used as a way of alternative financing – continued.

In the second subchapter the state of conservation, maintenance and documentation of the beguinages was put forward. It could be concluded different conservation approaches exist. There are large restoration projects with few phases for complete beguinages, more gradual restorations that frame within one conservation approach and individual restorations initiated by private owners. Some beguinages are already restored whereas others are still in the process of restoration. Also the maintenance of the beguinages varies: in some beguinages a structured maintenance planning is in place, whereas in others maintenance is the responsibility of multiple owners. Monument Watch Flanders is active in almost all beguinages, although their involvement often only concerns the beguine churches or chapels. The attitude of the heritage consultants and managers of the beguinages towards conservation did not change drastically after the beguinages were recognized as World Heritage. Still, this status is used as an additional argument to enforce certain decisions to local stakeholders. Unfortunately, some building elements are in a poor state and their conservation should be prioritized. Finally, there are several inventories documenting the heritage of specific beguinages. Still, there is no uniformity among these inventories and not all beguinages are completely documented.

The third subchapter discussed several challenges that came up during the interviews. In spite of their differences, the beguinages do share certain problems. Searching for adequate resources; dealing with the consequences of gentrification; improving the accessibility of the beguinages while preserving their historical character; banning traffic and parking from the beguinages (and providing the inhabitants with alternatives); improving energy efficiency in protected beguine houses; defining and monitoring buffer zones and finally enhancing participation and cooperation on a local level are current addressed challenges relevant in many beguinages. Thus, the beguinages would definitely benefit from a cooperation and a global vision in order to tackle these problems. The lack of transparent communication and a uniform Flemish policy towards the beguinages is an underlying problem for several of these challenges. Eventually, the greatest challenge will be to formulate a vision shared by all stakeholders and to develop the tools necessary to implement this vision in all of the beguinages.

The last subchapter analyzed the management of the beguinages focusing on the existing management plans or documents. A variety of such plans exist, which can be grouped in a couple of typologies related to restoration projects, subsidies applications, maintenance planning, daily management or spatial policy and municipal planning. These plans all concern single beguinages and do not discuss issues such as the development of a long term vision, risk preparedness or impact assessment. Nor are (most of) these plans updated or evaluated on a regular basis. Still, some existing plans are imbedded in a long-term vision on the management of the site. In some cases such visions also exist without being documented. Next, the management of the sites on a local level was compared. A comparison using the management structure of the different sites turned out to be most interesting. Afterwards the Flemish policy was assessed using the UNESCO requirements of management systems. Depending on how these criteria are interpreted the management of

the Flemish beguinages could score either very high or low. Fact is, there is no uniform or global Flemish heritage policy in place for the Flemish beguinages. The management of the beguinages is imbedded in the management of protected heritage sites in Flanders, but a separate management specific for World Heritage properties is absent.

Within the second chapter of the synthesis cooperation between the Flemish beguinages was examined. First initiatives taken over the last 15 years were discussed. From a local perspective 'Het Platform voor Begijnhoven' stimulated contact between different beguinages between 1998 and 2003. This association – encouraged by the Flemish government – brought together motivated stakeholders from several beguinages, including Flemish beguinages that were not selected as representative cases for the World Heritage List. The platform took initiatives to promote and preserve the Flemish beguinages. However, at the time this association would become a non-profit organization the cooperation stagnated. Next to this local initiative, the Flemish authorities also promoted the beguinages during the first years after the nomination. Both the platform and the Flemish government wanted to develop a global vision on the future management of the sites. However, such vision was never developed nor implemented.

Currently, various contacts between stakeholders from different beguinages exist, even though a structured coordination is absent. The respondent's motivation for future cooperation varies, although several stakeholders think such cooperation could be beneficial. Promoting the beguinages and exchanging experience are regarded as the first purposes of such cooperation. Developing a global vision and engaging in a formal organization was however not encouraged by all respondents. Some persons were in favor to restart the 'Platform voor Begijnhoven' on the condition structural financial support is granted from the Flemish authorities.

The third and last chapter of the master thesis explored the management of few other serial cultural World Heritage properties. Also existing heritage related networks were examined. It could be concluded that management of cultural serial World Heritage properties should deserve more attention, since almost one third of all cultural properties are serial. Even though management plans or systems are required within the nomination dossier since 2005, only few serial cultural WH properties have met these conditions. Also the Belgian State Party did not include such plans in the most recent serial nomination dossier (Major Mining Sites of Wallonia). The discussed examples of management plans and networking among World Heritage sites could form an inspiration for the case of the Flemish beguinages. The great differences between the beguinages do not have to be an obstacle for their cooperation, as is shown by the example of other networks with very diverse partners. Also heritage-related networks such as the 'Fortengordels rond Antwerpen' or 'Landelijk Hofjesberaad' form interesting examples.

Throughout the research the impact of the World Heritage status on the management of the Flemish beguinages was considered. It turned out there is a big gap between this international UNESCO recognition and the perception among local stakeholders. Most interviewed stakeholders do perceive the high heritage value of the Flemish beguinages, but see the World Heritage status as a rather empty label. According to the respondents the beguinages did not receive more attention, guidance or (financial) support from the authorities after their nomination. To several respondents the only concrete consequence of this nomination was the signpost placed at the entrance of the beguinage describing the World Heritage property.

A common misunderstanding regarding World Heritage is that the initiative to nominate properties for the List is (mostly) the responsibility of the State Parties themselves. Thus, it was not UNESCO that independently declared the Flemish beguinages as World Heritage. It was in fact the Belgian state that submitted the request to nominate the Flemish beguinages. Consequently, the responsibility to treat these sites as World Heritage is also in the hands of the Belgian and Flemish authorities. One of the respondents addressed this subject and regretted the limited attention from the authorities towards the beguinages.²³²

A similar thought was also articulated during the panel conversation of the last day of the colloquium on World Heritage cities held in Brugge, when one of the participants stated the following: *‘La patrimoine mondiale n’est pas la cerise sur le gâteau, mais le gâteau même’*.²³³

III.II Recommendations

Could the Flemish beguinages have a coordinated management in the future? This was the main research question of this master thesis. It is clear such coordinated management is currently not implemented, even though attempts were made over the last 15 years. Thus, in order to stimulate such coordinated management, several initiatives should be taken. In this part of the conclusion, some recommendations will be put forward that could lead to a common management of the Flemish beguinages.

- First of all *uniform guidelines and regulations* for the management of Belgian or Flemish World Heritage properties and for the Flemish beguinages in particular should be developed. This vision should be developed by the concerned Flemish agencies for immovable heritage, for spatial planning and for movable and intangible heritage. An integral approach between these different parties is crucial.

²³² Cf. *Interview with Jacques Cappuyens* (volunteer for the church council of Sint-Gummarus), Lier, 06-03-2012. *‘Als er daar dan verder niets meer mee gedaan wordt, dan is het een ballonnetje dat ergens in de lucht hangt’*.

²³³ Colloquium: World Heritage Cities in the 21th century: Challenges and Opportunities for the Conservation and Management of Urban Heritage (30/05/2012 – 01/06/2012, Bruges, Belgium).

The government should communicate this policy in a transparent way. The beguinages should be given the necessary tools to implement this vision (advice, expertise, documents (models for uniform inventories or management plans, financial support).

- Next a *local integral management approach* should be implemented in the beguinages. Especially for the beguinages which currently have no management structure such as Mechelen, Sint-Truiden and Tongeren this is crucial. A steering committee should be formed for each of the beguinages including different stakeholders. The concerned municipalities and cities could play an important role in the establishment of these committees. Such local committees could inform inhabitants and also consult their opinion. Concerned heritage consultants and other heritage professionals should be involved in these committees.
- An initiative similar to ‘Het Platform voor Begijnhoven’ to *stimulate contact between different beguinages* should be started up again. Therefore structural financial support is needed from the Flemish government or from membership fees. The beguinages should share experiences and ventilate common problems and ideas on their management to the Flemish authorities. The Flemish government could delegate certain aspects to this organisation, such as the promotion of the beguinages to a broader public.

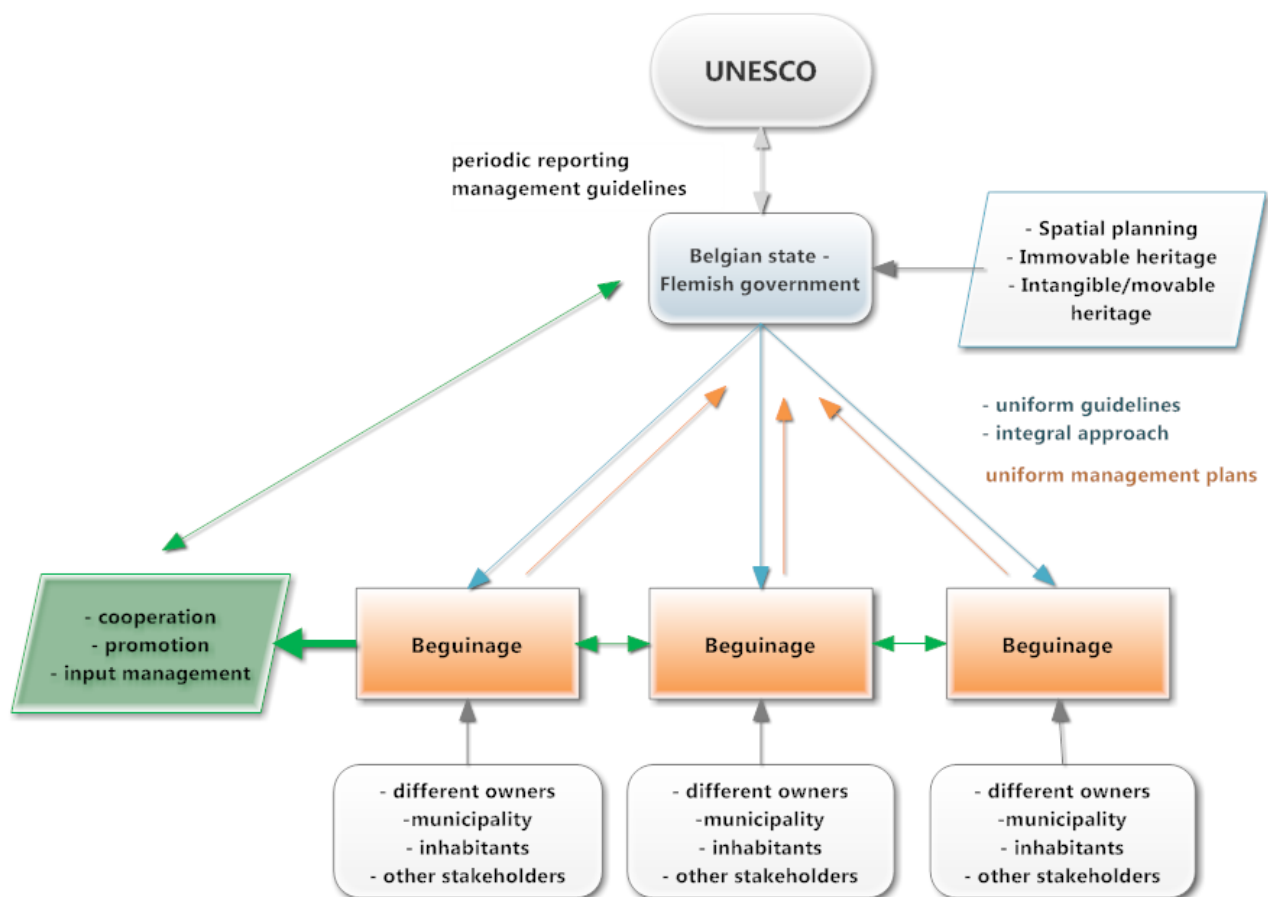


Figure 3.1: schematic representation of recommendations.

III.III Future research

Finally, there were several interesting questions that could not be answered in the light of this master thesis. In order to fully comprehend the case of the Flemish beguinages, following topics could still be examined.

- The research of this master thesis could be expanded to other Flemish beguinages that were not selected as representative cases on the World Heritage List. It would be interesting to assess whether these less authentic or intact beguinages also deal with the same problems, and if they would benefit from a coordinated management. Also the impact of the nomination could be compared using the case of these beguinages.
- Another interesting perspective, is to look past the beguinage walls and assess the relation between the beguinages and their urban surrounding. Often beguine communities owned properties outside of the beguinage walls. There are also houses outside the beguinage built for people working inside of the beguine community that still exist (for instance in Sint-Amansberg).
- Because this master thesis dealt with the management of thirteen sites, not all aspects could be surveyed in detailed. Therefore it could be interesting to examine one specific beguinage in depth.
- Finally the research on the management of other cultural serial properties could be continued. The case of the Flemish beguinages could be used as an example of such management. This research might lead to some kind of guidelines for the management of cultural serial properties on the World Heritage List.

IV ANNEXES

4.1 Work documents

4.1.1 Frequently used translations

Beheersraad:	management committee
Beheerscommissie:	management commission
Beschermingsbesluit:	official protection order
Bewonerscomité:	board of inhabitants
Bewonersraad (vergadering):	inhabitant meeting
Bewonersadviesraad:	advice board of inhabitants
BPA Bijzonder plan van aanleg:	special land use plan
Canon:	ground-rent
Dienst monumentenzorg:	monuments services of the city of ...
Dienst cultuur:	cultural services
Erfgoed consulent:	heritage consultant
Erfpacht:	hereditary leasing
<i>GECORO gemeentelijke commissie voor ruimtelijke ordening:</i>	<i>municipal commission for spatial planning</i>
Heemkundige kring:	association for local history
Herwaarderingsplan:	revalorization plan
Huurder-renovatiecontract:	renovation tenancy agreement
Huishoudelijk reglement:	domestic regulations
Kerkfabriek:	Church council
Landschapsbeheersplan:	landscape management plan
Mariagrot:	Maria grotto
Monumentenwacht:	Monument Watch
OE Onroerend Erfgoed:	Immovable Heritage
OMD Open monumentdag	Open monuments day
Onderhoudsdraaiboek:	maintenance plan
Raad van bestuur:	executive board
Ruimtelijke ordening:	spatial planning
RUP Ruimtelijk uitvoeringsplan	spatial implementation plan
Stads – of dorpsgezicht:	village - or cityscape
Stuurgroep:	steering committee

4.1.3 Information fields for each bequinage

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Basic information
 - a. name
 - b. location (map)
 - c. type of protection
 - d. Current owner(s)...
2. Short historical introduction
3. Description of the site today
 - a. Different architectural elements
 - b. Open spaces
 - c. few illustrating photos

II. FUNCTIONS

1. Different functions of the bequinage:

III. STAKEHOLDERS

1. Owner(s):
 - a. O.C.M.W.
 - b. Church council
 - c. Others:
 - i. Non-profit organization
University
 - ii. Private ownership or leasing
2. Stakeholders related to the different functions:
 - a. Residential: inhabitants
 - b. Cultural: institutions, employees
 - c. Commercial: shop keepers
 - d. Social: institutions
 - e. Religious: priests in charge
 - f. Museums/ touristic: guides, curators
3. Other stakeholders who participate in the conservation or management or daily life
 - a. Non-profit organizations like 'Friends of the bequinage of...'
 - b. Neighbourhood committees
4. Stakeholders related to the city policy
 - a. tourism office
 - b. spatial planning office
 - c. special heritage conservation office
5. Stakeholders related to management
 - a. Architects, historians,...
 - b. Maintenance team
6. Heritage consultant from Immovable Heritage

IV. MANAGEMENT

1. Management before 1998
 - a. (also based on nomination file from Suzanne van Aerschot)
2. Management between 1998 and 2011
 - a. Management plans
 - b. Restorations/conservation
 - c. Communication/coordination with:
 - i. Stakeholders, city offices, spatial planning policy, Flemish government
 - ii. Other bequines or heritage sites

- d. Evaluation:
 - i. what were strong/weak points?
 - ii. Was there enough know-how (technical, juridical,...)?
- 3. Current management
 - a. Who's responsible
 - b. What is (in general) the state of conservation of the beguinage?
 - i. In need of restoration or renovation?
 - ii. Parts in need of reuse?
 - c. How does it work:
 - i. Daily maintenance, monitoring, repairing,...
 - ii. Discussions/meetings
 - iii. Information to inhabitants/owners/visitors,...
- 4. Future plans

V. DOCUMENTATION

1. Archives, Illustrations,... are they made public?
2. Inventory: plans of the different buildings, interior, open spaces: how is this being archived/updated?
3. Publications, articles, leaflets

VI. IMPACT AND PERCEPTION OF WORLD HERITAGE

1. Impact of the nomination
 - a. What has changed since the nomination in relation with:
 - i. Policy and management
 - ii. Tourism
 - iii. budget
2. Perception of the World Heritage today
 - a. Do the stakeholders know much about their beguinage, are they well informed?
 - b. How do they perceive the value of the beguinage? Are they proud to live there?
 - c. How does the city advertise the World Heritage property?
 - i. Do they inform visitors about it? How (ex. On website, tourism office, on the site itself,...)?

VII. COORDINATION

1. What is the opinion of the different stakeholders concerning coordination?
 - a. How did they perceive coordination in the past?
 - b. Are they opposed/in favour of future coordination?
 - c. What could be the main problems/obstacles ?
 - d. What could be the main benefits?
 - e. How do they see such a coordination: what are their expectations?
 - i. Top-bottom or vica versa
 - ii. What kind of responsibilities

VIII. SOURCES

4.1.4 Example of a prepared questionnaire

- 1) Wie bent u, wat is uw functie en hoelang bent u reeds betrokken bij het beheer/werking van het begijnhof?
- 2) Hoe werkt de vzw precies en wat is de visie op het begijnhof?
- 3) Hoe zit de eigendomsstructuur van het begijnhof precies in elkaar?
 - a) kerk?
 - b) kapel?
 - c) muurtjes, wegenis en riolering, bomen,...
- 4) vragen over erfpacht:
 - a) vanaf wanneer is de vzw begonnen met erfpacht?
 - b) Hoe werd het patrimonium hiervoor beheerd? Waarom heeft men gekozen voor een systeem van erfpacht in plaats van huurders-renovatie contracten of gewone verhuur of verkoop?
 - c) Wat is de precieze rol van het ingenieursbureau Derveaux? Bestaat er een management plan of iets dergelijks?
 - d) Hoeveel fasen zijn er nog, hoe staat de planning ervoor?
 - e) Hoe zitten de contracten precies in elkaar (met privé-eigenaars en met de Volkshaard)
- 5) Hoe wordt de staat van de huizen gecontroleerd, hoe verloopt het dagelijks onderhoud?
 - a) Samenwerking met Monumentenwacht?
 - b) Schilderen gevel, schrijnwerk, dakherstelling, kuisen goten, groenonderhoud,...: wie is hiervoor verantwoordelijk? Bestaat hier een onderhoudsplan voor?
- 6) Wat zijn de functies op het begijnhof?
 - a) Wonen, religieus, cultureel/artistiek, horeca, commercieel, vrije beroepen, verenigingen,...
 - b) Waarom laten jullie deze functies (niet) toe?
 - c) Zijn er bepaalde wettelijk vastgelegde bestemmingen (BPA, RUP, ...)?
- 7) Hoe wordt het erfgoed gedocumenteerd?
 - a) Bestaat er een inventaris van het onroerende (gebouwen) en roerende (kerkschatten) patrimonium?
 - b) Waar bevindt het archief zich?
- 8) Op welke manier wordt het erfgoed ontsloten?
 - a) Hoe worden de inwoners op de hoogte gebracht van de erfgoedwaarde van het begijnhof?
 - b) Wordt er samengewerkt met bvb. de dienst toerisme voor bvb. de opmaak van een folder, monografie,...?
 - c) Vinden er rondleidingen plaats in het begijnhof?
 - d) Is de kerk of de kapel opengesteld voor het publiek?
- 9) Op welke manier wordt er samengewerkt met andere diensten van de stad Gent en van de provincie?
 - a) Structurele of ad hoc bijeenkomsten?
 - b) Problemen (bvb. toegankelijkheid, aanpassing aan modern comfort (isolatie,...), parkeerbeleid, ...)

- 10) Hoe is de sfeer op het begijnhof?
- Welke mensen wonen er (oudere mensen, jonge mensen, gezinnen, alleenstaanden,...)
 - Is er veel vraag om in het begijnhof te komen wonen? Waarom willen mensen er wonen?
 - Is er een bewonerscomité of iets dergelijks?
 - Worden de inwoners betrokken bij het beheer van het begijnhof?
 - Worden er veel activiteiten georganiseerd in het begijnhof, al dan niet door de vzw of de bewoners zelf?
 - Zijn er klachten vanwege de bewoners over bvb. sluiting van de poort 's avonds, toegankelijkheid, parkeren, energievraagstuk, sociale conflicten,...?
- 11) Wat was de impact van de nominatie tot Werelderfgoed in 1998?
- Impact op beheer, budget, perceptie, toeristen, houding van Onroerend Erfgoed en dienst Monumentenzorg...?
- 12) Vindt u dat het begijnhof momenteel goed beheerd wordt? Wat zou er beter kunnen in de toekomst? Hoe ziet u zelf de toekomst van het begijnhof?
- 13) Is er contact/samenwerking tussen het begijnhof van Ter Hoyen en andere Vlaamse Begijnhoven (vroeger en nu)?
- 14) Zou het denkt u, nuttig zijn om meer te gaan samenwerken?
- Op welk(e) vlak(ken) (ervaringen en expertise uitwisselen, gemeenschappelijke visie uitwerken, wetenschappelijk onderzoek, toerisme en ontsluiting,...)?
 - Zou dit wenselijk zijn met de 13 begijnhoven die op de Werelderfgoedlijst staan, of met alle nog bestaande begijnhoven in Vlaanderen?

4.1.5. Processing of the interviews

Name of the beguinage
<i>Date of the interview:</i>
<i>Interviewee:</i>
<i>Interviewer:</i>
<i>Location:</i>
<i>Duration of the conversation:</i>
<i>Annexes:</i>

....report....

4.1.6 Processing information on networking

QUESTIONNAIRE NETWORKING

Flemish beguinages as World Heritage: the search for a common management.

2012

Nena De Roey / Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, K.U.Leuven

Name of the network:

Name of the respondent:

Contact information:

Date:

Questions:

When was the network created?

What was the immediate cause for the creation of the network?

Who initiated the network?

What kind of juridical form does the network currently have?

Why was this option chosen?

Who is responsible for the functioning of the network?

Who participates to the network?

Is the network imbedded in a larger structure or governing body?

Do the members of the network help financing it?

Is the network subsidized by an external party (municipality, government, foundation, Europe)?

What are the objectives of the network?

Which kind of activities take place within the network to achieve these objectives?

How is the network promoted?

Which results were already achieved?

What are the main obstacles or problems of the network?

Do you now a similar network within Belgium or abroad?

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