

What is the history of my house? An integrated approach between geology, archaeology, history and heritage studies

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What is the history of my house? In what kind of architectural style was the house (re-)built and by whom? Who were the former inhabitants of my house and what is known about them? What other historic facts are known of the house or street in which I live? On what natural and/or cultural substrate is my house built and which processes can be reconstructed? Could traces of older inhabitants of this place be found underneath my house? These questions are both practically and theoretically relevant, for inhabitants of our society and for use and knowledge in science. Who could answer such detailed questions about your own house? Of course heritage scientists, historians, archaeologists, soil scientists and geologists could answer part of these questions, but an integrated overview that summarises all relevant historical, cultural and natural data of the most special place of people in general is lacking until today.

What kind of story has the house and soil underneath my home to tell? To enable a wider public to discover the 'big' history of their private homes, we envision an integrated tool needs to be developed that 'harvests' publicly available digital data from cadastres, cultural heritage institutions and databases with a large variety of information.

The specific digital aspects that are the objective of this project is the writing of an app/program that summarises these interdisciplinary data of local circumstances retrieved from e.g. a central server. We aim specifically to get information from databases with a spatial component that can link thematic data to x,y,z coordinates. A diverse heterogeneous digital data set cannot be queried easily, therefore a sophisticated and up-to-date app or computer program needs to be developed. The end goal of this app/program should be an easy to reach overview of interdisciplinary data retrieved from a given location or any other smaller spatial scale that is feasible and stored on a central server. We present the results of a pilot conducted on these premises applied to a suburb (Diemen), near Amsterdam. The research question is whether the new tool can be therefore be considered as a spatial exploration mechanism by which to 'map' whole villages and city part histories.