P5 REFLECTION

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This reflection will discuss the argumentation of proceeding research and address the choice methods of my research and design project. Furthermore, the relationship between the research and design will be addressed. Finally, some conclusions of my research and design project will be drawn. See underneath overview logical framework figure.

Studio theme & Research approach

Within the theme of context and modernity, the research and design studio Public realm Rotterdam will explore the meaning of public realm in architecture. New programs and strategies have to be developed to meet the city’s social, political and economic problems and needs in the 21st century. ¹

Located in the city triangle of Rotterdam, the site of Sint-Jacobstraat was impacted by enormous infrastructural elements. This initial site visit immediately made us aware of the crucial influence of infrastructural elements on their direct surroundings. In order to get a better understanding of how the current situation came about, we decided to go deep into the history of Rotterdam, following the question: To what

¹ MSc 3/4 studio Public Realm, Studio Public Realm, Rotterdam, Urban redevelopment in relation to the public realm: new programmes and strategies
extent did infrastructure influence the transformation of the city of Rotterdam? In order to deal with the overwhelming amount of data, we decided to analyze from different angles. Reflecting from literature study and seminar discussion, I chose the topic of ‘borders and boundaries in transition’, which refers to Richard Sennett’s idea of borders and boundaries\(^2\) to explore how do the edges affect the transformation of Rotterdam City Center and how would they shape the public life?

**Studio framework & Project’s research and design methods**

Studio Public realm Rotterdam is a research based design studio, theory and practice together form the ground on which architectural discourse and the discourse of studio Public Realm is founded.\(^3\) The studio framework allows us to form research groups, where we propose our research topics. After that, the research will lead to some principles or statements for generating urban scenario. Based on the urban scenario, the building projects will be proposed and developed.

According to the studio framework, we came up with our own research and design method. As mentioned above, the research of the project started from filed trip, where we aware of the fundamental influence of infrastructure on the surroundings. After that, we proposed our research theme, which is *Infrastructure and Transformation*. Following with four different angles’ individual research and study, we concluded common statements, which leads to our urban strategies. Finally, the urban strategy triggered two different versions of urban scenarios.

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\(^2\) See Richard Sennett, ‘Borders and Boundaries’ in: Burdett, Ricky, Deyan Sudjic, Living in the endless city, page 324-331

\(^3\) Ibid.
Research to Design

As mentioned above, the group research defined the theme of our project, which leaded to urban strategy and triggered the urban scenarios. Within my own urban scenario of “stitching fragments”, we zoomed in to the site scale for the further development. Within the urban scenario, the design method reflected on the research study and seminar essays, where four main aspects were concluded for site development. Later, in the architectural scale, by simply implementing the ideas of four aspects, the new architectural interventions were proposed.

Design conclusion

The research and design project is an example to show the consistent effects of interventions on three different scales following P2 research study and principles. On the urban scale, based on four principles of “active borders”, “reinforcing the slow network” and “program hybridity”, stronger links were established to stitch both programmatic fragmentation and infrastructural fragmentation. On the site scale, the four aspects reflected on the research bridged the large infrastructural boundaries. Zoom in to the site scale, the proposed new hybrid building blocks will trigger and bridge more public life and mutual communication to surroundings.