Relation between research and design

The starting point of the studio was about making a movie about brick. This was a very helpful tool to get a grip on what the traditional production process of brick was about. The research was about the history and production process of brick. The second part of the research was how to translate this material research in a design narrative. I choose to find an abandoned brick factory and give it a new program, a Waldorfschool.

To get a to know the Site, I analyzed the location in terms of history, characteristics of the landscape and cultural structure. The location has great layering of structures; cultural as well as natural, these are the product of a number of transformations in the history of the area. The area is closed by a river and a dyke and is a floodplain area that will be partly flooded around three times a year. There is an abandoned brick factory that characterizes the industrial transformation of the site. Inspired on the characteristics of the area I formulated the first starting points for my design. In the beginning I was looking at all these cultural layers to start a narrative. The design is a Waldorf school, they teach children by working with their hands. The brick factory will be an important part of the Waldorf School that consists of a cluster of buildings. Two squares will be the connecting elements between the pavilions and will form an outside public interior.

Relation between project and wider social context

“Primarily the body, and its (move) ability to cope with certain situations determine our relation to our world. The things have a meaning to me because, first of all, I relate to them with my body”

Merleau-Ponty

First of all, today there is the question of the society where people should be excellent. There is no space for mediocrity. The role and the importance of a school are very big in the development of a child. This development raises questions about the role of the contemporary school as a physical support for the ability to learn when using the body. To get more insight in this learning with head and hand, I have investigated Craft and the anthroposophic learning method. The conclusion is that making things by hand gives people satisfaction. The Waldorf School learning method is inspired by the anthroposophic ideas of Rudolf Steiner. Anthroposophy assumes that growing up is both a physical and a mental development. The pedagogical principles of Waldorf education are focused on the development of the individual qualities of the child.

---

**Waldorf School in Meinerswijk**

The school has different departments, a kindergarten, secondary school and high school. Some of these departments share facilities, aula, workshops and gym. The urban plan was a big challenge for me. First I had the feeling that “everything” was possible. The site is very open but the brick factory is a building with a strong own character. I moved volumes for several weeks without making decisions. To find my own interpretation of making a “typical waldorf school” was a challenge. The design is a complex of buildings, every building has it’s own program. The brick factory and five new volumes form the school complex, they are connected to each other by a carefully designed public exterior. Architecturally they are connected by their roof landscape. The roof is an ordering structure where anything can happen underneath. On the ground floor the buildings will be interconnected to squares, gardens and routes around the Aula building. This will result in a continuous route through the school site.

**Relation between studio’s theme and own subject**

The focus of the chair of Interior is designing architecture of buildings on every scale. It’s about architecture in places for people. A school building is an example of a building that is used by many people but not for open public use. It has really clear opening and closing hours. There are two types of interiors in my design; the public interior that is formulated by the surrounded buildings and the interior inside the building that is private for the students and the teachers. This forces me to carefully design this relation between inside and outside. Taken this in account the public interior should be designed in a way that people can use it when the school is closed or can be closed off.

In the chair of interiors it is also about how to perceive the spaces. A child has not only a physical transformation but also a transformation in how he perceives his world around him. This is also a theme in my design. For the design of the school I explored the relations between classrooms and the surrounded landscape and the relation between the shape of the room and their identity. Also the identity of the different outside spaces was chosen considering the different user groups.

**Relation between studio’s method and own method**

The studio focuses on design by making. There is a parallel focus on different scales, urban plan, building and material. At the beginning we started thinking about a material and it’s craft, how it is made. From there we started with site and urban plan. The studio stimulates the student to think at different levels at the same time. This method helped me sometimes when I got stuck to clear the air and visualize my ideas on a different scale and reflect them on my initial plan. The studio stimulates to work with a logbook. For me it worked well as a place to capture and revisit my ideas and references. It forced me to keep ideas even when they
weren’t used or worked out. It could be used better to show my design steps. This will be a subject to work on.