Personal information

<table>
<thead>
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Studio

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name / Theme</th>
<th>Complex Projects</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Tanner Merkeley</td>
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Argumentation of choice of the studio

I chose the studio because it allowed me to develop a project that would go through all the different possible scales. Starting with research, followed by a problems statement and a urban strategy. This developed further in a urban plan, building and building-program.

Graduation project

Title of the graduation project

Goal

Location: Chicago. IL

The posed problem:

The rise of Chicago in the 19th and early 20th century was based on its interesting geographical position at the edge of the frontier, linking the inner continent, the fertile lands of the Mississippi called breadbasket, to the East and Europe. In Chicago, many Us railway lines cross, it is situated at the great lakes and open land was available in abundance. These factors made it a prime place for freight industries, trade and manufacturing. Many of the western neighborhoods (the focus area of the project) grew from rural areas to fully developed suburban areas within few decades, manufacturing attracted hundred thousands of working class residents, many of the immigrants.

However, in the late 20th century, most manufacturing in the US went overseas, due to cheap labor. This resulted in a dramatic decline of jobs in of many of the midwest cities, resulting in unemployment and poverty. Chicago is a prime example of this development. The city ever since struggled to develop a strategy for redevelopment. Although the “Loop” developed into a vibrant business center, the western and southern neighborhoods are still awaiting their rebirth. Meanwhile they suffer from poverty, criminality, unemployment and physical decline.

During our excursion to Chicago we visited a number of architectural offices which presented smaller and larger schemes for Chicago. All these schemes had in common that they focused on the needs of middle class residents, ignoring the working class residents of the western and southern neighborhoods. In my opinion this heavily violates ethical measures and in fact will not solve the structural problems of Chicago.
The western and southern neighborhoods cover an area of more than 40 square kilometers and house about half of Chicago's population. These communities remain with dim prospects, the schemes we were presented focused on the lucky few who live in the city center or the richer northern neighborhoods.

Public funds to regenerate these Western and Southern neighborhoods in Chicago are limited. This is because a big portion of the tax money is raised locally, with the constraint that it can only be re-invested in that same neighborhood. Therefore, the poor southern and western neighborhoods end up with much lower public funds, contributing to the decline. This, in combination with the strong ideology of self-determination in the US, led to the conclusion that the only way to help these struggling, working class communities is to provide them with the means rebuild their neighborhoods themselves. This meant we had to focus our research on finding new job opportunities for the working class communities which could provide them the money to build a better South-West Chicago.

Quickly we realized that most of the unemployment of South-West Chicago was caused by the decline of the manufacturing jobs in the late 20th century. But, recent economic and technological developments have created an opportunity to bring the manufacturing industry, although updated, back to the US. We decided to seize this opportunity and focus our research on the industrial districts of Chicago, to make them competitive again.

Strategy

Chicago has many industrial districts within its city limits. However, many of them face structural problems like inefficient land use, declined infrastructure and toxic ground. During the master plan phase my group focused on the redevelopment of these industrial districts. Our goal was to create the ideal conditions for new business activity to arise. Simultaneously we developed a new model for the industrial area which could lead to an improvement of the living conditions of the surrounding neighborhoods. While this work was initially focused on a chain of industrial districts along the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal, we later zoomed in on an area which lies within the area the studio mainly focuses on, the intersection of the Sanitary and Shipping Canal and the proposed Lime Line. This spot is highly interesting due to its position in between four industrial districts, the availability of land, its proximity to an airport and two mayor infrastructure projects (Lime Line and a high speed train line) which in the future (probably) will cross the site.

On this site we will propose an urban strategy that is not determined by set conditions, but has the ability to grow organically when times change. The first phase will be the development of a manufacturing campus that will give the incentive for further development and turn the existing industrial zone into a competitive manufacturing machine.
## Process

### Method description

The process will consist out of two parts. The first part has taken place from September 2014, and consists out of a broad general research book. This book contains general information of Chicago to get a good grip on the context. This, together with the trip to Chicago resulted in a urban strategy which focused on the reinvigoration of Chicago’s industrial corridors, keeping in mind the quality of life of the surrounding neighborhoods. The next step is the development of a small urban intervention, keeping in mind the broader urban strategy.

The second part, which starts now, is the development of a building within this urban intervention.

## Literature and general practical preference


Reflection

Relevance
A common strategy to deal with deteriorating neighborhoods in Europe is to gentrify. The result usually is that the people living in these neighborhoods are being chased out of the communities. I think it is important to recognize the reason behind deteriorating neighborhoods and try to solve the problem at the root. In our case we've tried to solve the problems of unemployment and poverty by offering jobs in an achievable range, so there can be a future again for these communities.

Time planning

Time planning
01 Sept – 09 Oct 2014: PROJECT INITIATION - Initial Research and development of areas to be researched further. Begin work on the Research Book

10 – 24 Oct 2014: CHICAGO FIELD TRIP – Site visits, workshops, interviews, etc

24-31 Oct 2014: P1 PRESENTATION – Organising insights acquired through research and the field trip into a clear narrative. Framing a stream of focus for the coming period (Urban Design)


01 Dec 2014 – 23 Jan 2015: MASTERPLAN – Identification of an area within the urban plan for more detailed design.

05 Dec 2014: MASTERPLAN PRESENTATION – Informal presentation of urban plan masterplan to students and tutors of Chicago Studio

12 Dec 2014: MASTERPLAN EXHIBITION

14 Dec 2014 – 23 Jan 2015: BUILDING FORMULATION – background research and initial design of a specific building within the masterplan.

23 Jan 2015: P2 PRESENTATION – Presentation of all work to this point. Background
research, urban plan, masterplan and building formulation.

25 Jan – 06 March 2015: SCHEMATIC DESIGN: Implement strategy outlined at P2. Finalise conceptual strategy (factor of the future), continue development of the design (planning, massing, envelope), develop structural system and material research / selection.

06 March – 17 April 2015: DESIGN DEVELOPMENT: Development of structural, environmental envelope systems. Finalisation of materials and façade (approximately 1:50 scale)

06 April – 17 April 2015: P3 PRESENTATION PERIOD

17 April – 22 May 2015: DETAIL DESIGN: Finalise building details. Prepare P4 Presentation (models, drawings, renders, etc)

11 May – 22 May 2015: P4 PRESENTATION PERIOD – Presentation of whole project from background research, urban plan, masterplan, building design and detailing.

22 May – XXXX 2015: PRESENTATION DEVELOPMENT – Develop presentation further for P5 (models, drawings, renders, animations, etc)

XXXX: P5 PRESENTATION – Public presentation of project.