# P4 GRADUATION PLAN:
## ARCHITECTURE

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### Studio
**Studio:** DESIGN AS POLITICS [WWW.DESIGNASPOLITICS.NL]

### Teachers
- **Design Mentor:** Salomon E. Frausto
- **Building Technology Mentor:** Bas Gremmen
- **Research Mentor:** Wouter Vanstiphout

### Project Title
“Fever in Rotterdam; Timmerhuis”

## PRODUCT

### Problem Statement:
Contemporary buildings, strongly affected by the indubitable city branding that is experienced globally, tend to bow to the neoliberal environment that aids the development of their rarefied functions along with the globally controlled financial system that provides the elements for their manifestation. Under these circumstances, iconic architecture has become the new convention, unable though to counterpoise the needs of the masses, but instead leaning to the side of the corporations and the private interests. Our main point is not a mere arraignment of the current state of things or a lese majesty over starchitect’s production, but an in depth involvement to the out of boundaries principles that have come to characterized our future profession, where buildings are rendered by their edacity for financial profits.

My hypothesis investigates the ways in which public space is affected by capital flows and financial oriented decisions in the context of neoliberal or conservative political systems in the Western world, focusing in the Netherlands. All these assumptions take form through the investigation of the new Rotterdam city council (aka Timmerhuis) that is currently under construction.

### Goal:
The goal of the architectural project is bifocal.

On the one hand, the design focuses on the urban aspects of the area surrounding the building, proposing a new ground plan for the first level (BG) of the building, which manages to connect to the urban matrix and evolve the networking processes among the citizens and the residences.

Higher up, the rest levels of the edifice are bound to the development of customary housing units, initially focusing on ZZP'er immigrant, low income tenants, providing them with the opportunity to partly develop their working space, turning the building into a hybrid social housing district.

## PROCESS

### Method description:
During these months, various methods of analysis where incorporated for the development of the project. Research-wise, since the triggering argument of this year's studio was “MONEY”, the initial weeks were spent into breaking down the financial principles and try to connect the dots to the architectural or design aspects that share common ground. From that point on, aided by literature and personal interviews, we revealed the relation among the specific project through diagrammatic relations. Furthermore, typology analysis was used to develop further critic on the current project and present a historical relation to aspects such as housing and urban environment.

This process provided a powerful basis for the future design development, which in turn, starting with an analysis of the local urban status, moved through various knowing maps to the scale of the building. Sketches and initial ideas set the aims for the design, which was also affected by the principles of urban recycling and creative reuse – building technology terms that strengthen the arguments of the design decisions.
Literature and general practical preference:

a. Books:


De Vreeze, N [2001] *65 miljoen woningen; 100 jaar woningwet en wooncultuur in Nederlands*, Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Uitgeverij 010.


Hoeckstra, J. [June 2013] *Social housing in the Netherlands; the development of the Dutch social housing model*, Delft, the Netherlands: TU Delft.


b. Magazines:
Aravena, A. 2013, “Archidea; South America edition”, Roto Smeets GrafiServices; Utrecht, #47

Musiatowicz 2008, HYBRIDS I; High-Rise Mixed-Use Buildings, “a+t #31”, s.l

Nelson, I. J., n.d, *Inequality in America; the case for post industrial capitalism*, “Research in Social Stratification and Mobility”, Volume 18, s.l

c. Articles / Reports:
Beth A. [1990], *Information as an Economic Commodity*, American Economic Review, 80(2), s.l


Gruis, V. & Nieboer, N 2006, social housing investment without public finance; the Dutch case, OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies, Delft University of Technology: Delft


Reitano, E [June 2012], *European Economy; the housing market in the Netherlands*, EU economic papers, #457, s.l


Vanstiphout, W. [22 Nov. 2012], *the end of the perpetuum mobile, or; the self destruction machine* [English edition], design as politics (DaP): Schieblock, Rotterdam.


[Anon] [July 2013] Doortimmerd; onderzoek naar de ontwikkeling van het Timmerhuis, Rekenkamer Rotterdam, s.l


d. dissertations:
Panagos, T., [Summer 2013], *Do it yourself or ask for state aid; the Role of Public Interventions in the Success of Rotterdam’s ‘Klushuizen’ Approach*, Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam.

e. Websites
[All sources accessed between September and November 2013]:


03. General principles & info, 2013, [online], available at: http://www.bng.nl>
04. Sustainable principles, guidelines and score for the building, 2013, [online], available at: <http://www.breeam.org>
06. David Harvey, “Unraveling Capital’s Contradictions”; 2013, interview available at: <http://www.youtube.com>
10. Architectural diagrams, mailing lists and related partners for further investigation, 2013, [online], available at: <http://www.oma.eu>
12. Photo updates and further references, 2013, [online], available at: <http://www.skyscrapercity.com>

f. movies / documentaries
Inside Job, 2010 [documentary], Directed by Charles Ferguson, USA: Sony pictures classics
Hands over the city (original title: Le Mani Sulla Città), 1963 [film], Directed by Francesco Rosi, Italy, France: Galatea Films

REFLECTION

Relevance:

Aspect 1;
For the current project, research and design do not simply share certain features; instead they are rather integrated into one another, to the point that they become indistinguishable. In order to better illustrate this statement, an analytical diagram was created and can be found attached in this email.

Aspect 2;
Since this year’s studio thematic was mostly financially driven, Timmerhuis was chosen as a case study in order to illustrate the research aspects of the first semesters. Besides being contemporary (the building is currently under construction) and thus connected to the most recent financial information, it is also a hybrid owning building that clashes together private and public organization from an economical or business-oriented point of view.

Aspect 3;
Not much to comment here; the student followed the methodology of the studio, building knowledge and experience through workshops. A rather disappointing consequence however – although not really applicable to the current examination format – was the mishandling of the opportunity to develop the system, or method, through which the project would actually happen, in the Netherlands political and juridical network. This aspect obviously would consume a lot of time devoted to architectural design, which is naturally the purpose of the project.

Aspect 4;
The “New Timmerhuis” impact in the field of architecture besides its obvious building technology aspects – rendered especially through the suggestions of reusing the urban waste material in order to create something new and get benefited from that improving the social status of the various groups of people – encompasses another transcendent effect; it distinctly separates itself from contemporary “iconic” architecture, shifting the focus on the agents of space, the communities and the people that compose them. It dissolves the architectural “god syndrome”, transforming the architect to a civil servant, that set the needs of the people as the number one design principle in his portfolio.

Overall, the project is an example of how architecture can respond to these times of financial recession and economic hardships for a grant majority of the population; especially the middle classes that tend to constantly lose power, overshadowed by the global events we have been experiencing since 2008. A subtle but yet powerful project that introduces multiple alternatives in the decision-making principles and the way in which
public money are manipulated, from the perspective of the European well-fare state that was introduced after World War II and especially during the 1960's and 1970's.

“Timmerhuia” boosted my insight on the actual, non-academic features that form a project in the actual market, relating it to almost every social aspect and making it vulnerable to the aggressive funds; nonetheless, it also revealed a hidden architectural arsenal that might be of great use for the architecture practitioners during an era filled both with uncertainty and hope for the future to come.