

Reflection

February 2016 I started with the graduation studio AE (Architectural engineering). It would last for a year, which was split into two semesters. The first semester was the part, which in the research should be done, and the last semester/second part was the designing phase.

At first the research phase was starting and unfolding cheap living units fascinated me. So I started to do research about them and gain knowledge about this subject. The AE studio is about a technical fascination combined with your architectural ambition. In this part the moving unfolding part of the subject would fill the desire to combine those two aspects. However I wanted it to be for starters so they could buy a piece of ground, place their unfolding living unit upon there, and start to design and to build their first house in parts because of their low starting salary. After discussing this with my tutors and doing my P1 the research was stuck and it happens to be the case this idea was not possible. The unfolding connections were simply too expensive for starters and there wouldn't be any money left to build a house. After this P1 and the first part of the research semester we had to find a new subject, which would have a solid story. After discussing the story came up to design a house in the in-between spaces in the canal belt of Amsterdam. The idea to do a good research about this subject was to make a database of existing small houses and how they were built. With the "how they were built" I mean the usage in the houses, the materials, choices in design and so on. Twelve case studies were found to put into the database. The database was put into the research paper as an appendix to complete the paper. After this paper was completed it was supposed to help in the design semester to make choices in the design. An interesting discovery about the case studies was that there were a lot in London and Tokyo because of the big population on a relatively small piece of ground. These two cities are also old cities like Amsterdam, which explained the created in-between spaces in them.

But the graduation studio is AE so a technical fascination is a starting point of the architectural choices. Therefore technical research is the main point of the research paper. This is mostly connection types, kind of insulation, construction materials and smart technical solutions to solve the design problems. Interesting is how these case studies found solutions for usage. For example a lot of unfolding furniture was used to complete these designs.

But did this database method work for my design? I think this is a complicated question to answer. The "how" and "why" I did it are simple to explain. A lot of research is done by case studies and they have been proven useful to design with knowledge gain from them. For me the question "did it work" is more relevant to reflect on my research and design semester. I gain a lot of information through this method of doing research but I think I didn't use a lot in my own design. This I didn't do because every small house is very specific, with their own specific boundaries, and own specific issues. So in summary I got a great base knowledge about how to design small houses but, every case is specific why design would have other solutions.