

REFLECTION





Figure 164: *Project render Galery (Image by author)*

ADVANCED HOUSING DESIGN - AR3AD100

Mastertrack Architecture

Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment

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PROJECT TOPIC

Design of a sustainable floodproof student housing complex in the peatland landscape of Midden-Delfland.

REFLECTION

At the start of the project, I was searching for direction with the project. During the preliminary research phase, a story was starting to form based on the thematic (group) research into sustainability and morphology. However, I was having trouble to find an architectural approach to continue this story to a concept/project.

This is where the research part of the graduation helped bring the story, and my project goals together. The project has two main topics. How to design for a flood prone/wet landscape, and how to create a space for student communities. By reviewing literature on the topic of urban concepts for student housing and student preferences and needs, different concepts emerged which steered the design of my graduation project. Similarly, by analysing projects with a close relationship with their wetland/water landscape, distinctive design concepts emerged on how architecture can embrace and also protect from a changing landscape. Combining these results with each other, created a list of design concepts that I could use with my graduation project.

The results of the research gave me a foundation to start designing the project and develop the story further. This development of the story was something that required a lot of attention for me personally. Due to my more technical background, I was prone to focus on how the project worked and how it could be realised and in doing so, losing sight of the larger story my project had to tell. Guided by my tutors I was able to create a narrative that incorporated coherent design features in all the scales.

By iterating on design ideas that did not fit the story, or adapting the story when ample evidence showed that the story was lacking, the design and narrative continually developed.

This project was in the beginning quite a struggle. I was searching for an approach to start developing my ideas about the project. What I learned, looking back on this process, is that creating a strong narrative for a project can create a metaphorical coartrack for all the design idea's to be placed on to.

Towards the final stages of my graduation I want to continue working on the building plinth and its place in the landscape. I mainly focusvsed my design attention on the top structure, because this is where the dwellings are at. Therefore, the waterproof plinth housing the school building has gotten less attention. Some steps have been taken to develop the plinth (namely the shading structures connecting the top part with the plinth and the interior gardens). However, this is not enough for this important part of the building. I also have to finish the studio booklet outlining my process and design choices.

RELATION BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE MASTER TRACK & MASTER PROGRAM

My project relates to the goals of the master track of architecture in multiple ways. It has integrated findings from theoretical and case study research. The basis of this project comes from a masterplan which aims to create a more sustainable landscape for Midden-Delfland. My project layers the sustainability by keeping old farmland productive whilst slowing (and potentially reversing) carbon emissions by the soil and in its building design.

INFLUENCE ON DESIGN AND RESEARCH

The research created a foundation of design concepts I could use in my own design for my graduation project. To that extend my research has

had a great influence on the initial stages of my design. The research was mainly influenced by the design in the initial stages of preliminary research and design. After the basic idea of what the project should entail, the research was started, and the conclusions helped continue the design to the next phase.

WORK APPROACH

Because the project started with a lack of direction, it took me some time to develop a clear structure to work from. However, when the research and design were started, I was able to make faster progress. When my research had a clear structure and a heading, it was easier to continue working on it. Similarly with the research results. This gave inspiration and a well founded direction for the project to take.

VALUE OF THE PROJECT

My project looks into some large impact issues in the Netherlands. Mainly (student) housing, sustainability, and building and maintaining communities. On the other hand, it has a very specific purpose, designing housing for future farm students at Lentiz Maasland. Overall, the project has a large value, it delves into large questions that architects face nowadays and attempts to find a well founded and realistic solution to the problems posed.

TRANSFERABILITY

Although the site of this project will take many years to change into the proposed landscape it is designed to interact with, I think the lessons learned from the research as well as the design process of the project can be informative for similar projects.

VIEW ON ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN RESEARCH

At the beginning of the graduation studio, I saw literature review and research in architecture as a cumbersome part of the process. Because of my technical bachelor I am more focused on 'solving problems' than on researching. This project was not that different. I struggled through the first parts of the research and felt really in my element when there was a basic design concept and I could start 'solving' the problems new solutions posed. However, after finding a good direction for the research, I enjoyed the process of researching and found that it could really inform the design process. Although it will probably never be my favourite part of design, during this research and design process I have learned to appreciate what research can do for a design and a design process.

