



TALENT IN CONCRETE
THESISPLAN THIJS BRIENEN

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PERSONAL MOTIVATION

In my choice for the RMIT specialization I feel the urgency to reform the task for the architects of the future. In the last decades, the focus is shifted to an aesthetic design profession. The most important criterion appears to be the appearance of a building. This trend is not only recognisable in the built environment, but could be identified in all layers and corners of society. The image seems to be more important than the content.

Thinking about architecture, I see the operation of the building as the content. This is a ratio between the spatial facilitation of a functional or social need. In addition, the user (or 'human') again needs to occupy a central role in the design process. On the one hand the innovative technology and on the other hand the shape and organization should be serving the purpose of the building or space.

Within the urban fabric, the various human needs (as a space for living, working, recreation, exercise, etc.) come together. The introduction of the computer and the Internet had made a strong movement / development. In many areas in human life the practical and social exchange and communication is shifting to digital platforms. More and more fundamental needs of human beings take place in this new world.

Traditional facilities and premises (automatically) have to move for these developments. It is up to the politicians, urban planners and architects to examine how social structures again can fill the (austere) needs of the public space and 'live' encounter of human. The nuance between the imaging and content gets (in my view) with real encounter / exchange form in a fairer and sincere way.

These traditional features are often strategically and historically developed (junction) points. The resulting points are often the result of a logical accumulation of characteristics, also called the "genius loci". Within RMIT I see the role of the architect to recognize these present qualities and deploy in a quest to reform social communities.

INTRODUCTION

The studios 'Amsterdam at sea' focus on Amsterdam Old West. This area is characterized by the timber harbours in the north, the 'bretten zone' (with the werstergas factory area) as green separating axis and the Bos & Lommer districts in the south. The area offers a wide variety of urban environments, with associated opportunities and problems. From the first visit to the area, my interest is focussed on the neighborhoods of Bos & Lommer.

The red frame in the south indicates the area of Robert Scott. This neighborhood was developed in the early post-war period (years '48-'52) and was part of the general expansion plans of C. of Eesteren (AUP, 1935, Amsterdam). The neighborhood is designed by architect G.H.M. Holt as a Roman Catholic enclave. The St. Joseph church became along with some schools the social heart of this neighborhood. Until Abt. 1990, the church (and the surrounding nearby) functioned as it was originally designed. By the increasing wealth many residents moved to garden cities or better neighborhoods within the city. In the neighborhood dwellings and living space became available for the new immigrant population.

The church was purchased for demolition and new development. By revolt from the community, these plans were not accepted and implemented. Between 1996 and 2012 the church was temporarily rented and used as a climbing hall. In 2010 the church crowned as national monument and is listed in the top 100 Dutch reconstruction monuments. Now, the church is empty and can fulfill a vital and leading role in the upgrading of the district Bos & Lommer.



PROBLEM STATEMENT & QUESTION

The district Bos & Lommer is listed since 2009 as one of the 40 'vogelaarswijken' or problem areas. These districts are dealing with spatial, social and / or economic problems. The Robert Scott neighborhood is a typical area where these problems are visibly presented.

Recently (October 2010), the report Expeditie Robert Scott issued. It is a comprehensive analysis and displayed with conclusions, figures and numbers. Specific playing problems are the lack of social cohesion between the different nationalities and age groups, high crime rates and low sense of security. In addition, to find a new location for the community center (buurthuis), because rebuilding and renovation of primary school (former housing community center).

Within the structuurvisie Amsterdam in 2040, the entire area between the city center and the A10 is appointed as center expansion. Initiators for developments in the Robert Scott neighborhood area should take into account the scale at which they operate and can exert influence.

The church lost his religious function around 1990 and the between function as climbing hall degrade the technical state of the church. In climatical point of view, the church has a big warmth and insulation problem. Combining the new function with the monumental state is a big challenge.

Research Question

How can the social center of the Robert Scott neighborhood connect (again) the different user groups and improve the social cohesion in the contemporary community with functional and spatial organisation.

Sub Questions

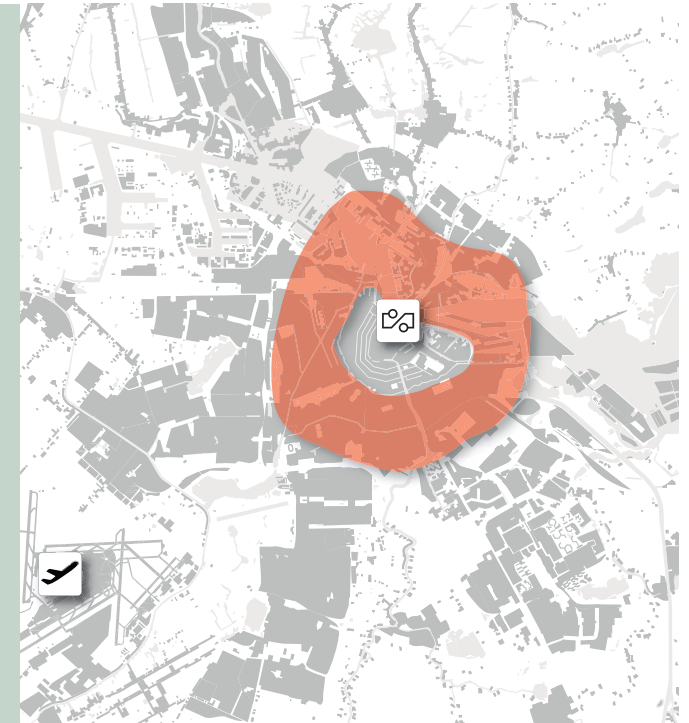
Where are differences and similarities in collective use between the different user (age) groups?

What are the existing qualities, witch can form the base to connect with the interventions?

How can I involve the (young) inhabitants in the design and build process, to create respect and interest in the developments?

What facilities or activities are offered in the surrounding neighborhood in the case of social interaction?

What are the social / societal developments for the future and how can I implement these developments in my (re)design?



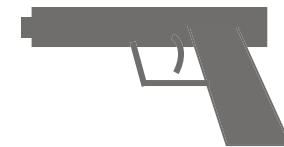
GOALS

The redesign and reuse of the church can effectively be deployed to bring the entire Robert Scott neighborhood in an upward spiral. The redevelopments allowed to be an added value on different scale levels and with different impact, but focussus primarily on upgrading the district Bos and Lommer and the Robert Scott neighborhood. The original catholic enclave is designed around a social center or heart of the neighborhood. The religion aspect of this function is in the years become dated. The common social structure is lost, but still evident in the primary, contemporary needs.

In the (re)design for the Robert Scott and the St. Joseph church, I focus on restoring these social cohesion. In addition, I aspire to provide a guide to all residents / nationalities with spatial interventions / adjustments. Inviting buildings and design of the public space will accommodate and serve to meet and work together in the neighborhood. Both the upgrading of the area as well the development of the individual will determine the choice of the function and the program.

The Robert Scott neighborhood is a very isolated urban district, with physical barriers. To create new 'life', new connections will be added. A natural created movement is one of the factors that will improve the quality of the public space. In her book, Jane Jacobs (The Dead and life in Great American Cities, 1961) explains the relevance about the generators of diversity, the primary mixed use and different aspects in use of the public space. The lack of connection with the diverse functions in the neighborhood, the conditions

of the public space and use of buildings are the aspects that will and need to be improved with efficient methods. The existing primary and secondary school will be integrated in the new heart of the enclave. Also a neighborhood center with different 'target' groups (in age) will be part of the urban plan. Around the social center, the living area's will be improved and focus more on the public space (connection with streets and squares).



Analyse methods

Besides the regular analysis methods in urban, architectural and structural / detail level, I have read during the analysis period the backgrounds of the emergence of large-scale urban development plans (AUP) and the activation of the Catholic, urban planning architect for the relevant neighborhood and church. The background of the zeitgeist (concrete and the Dutch post-war period) has been studied in the literature. The underlying principles of modernism, the large-scale planning and positive and negative results nowadays are presented in reports and books (Prachtwijken!?, 2008).

In the following process (design process starts after P1) more relevant urban developments will be researched related to social/societal improvements (Amsterdam West). In addition, also referring districts with similar type of issues (vogelaarwijken / problem areas) will be investigated in vision and approach.

In addition, the possibilities and limitations of the building (monument) and the immediate area investigated. The public space (current court and playground) and the surrounding building functions (educational buildings, vacant school, etc.) are included in the redevelopment of the Robert Scott neighborhood.

Design Methodology

During the design process I will use the 'design by research' method. The literature will be the hand-grips and leading story behind the design. To create a realistic project, it is important to understand the relevant issues in the neighborhood, district and wider society. Documentaries and articles helps to have a open and complete image about the actual issues to react on. To filter the relevant information, I use a dummy (sketch book), where I write with text and short points or small sketches.

To create a feeling with the context I changed my public transport card into a week card, which resulted in more location visits. With the OV-bike I spend a few days researching the area, the surrounding greeneries (parks), public centers, important functions, the atmosphere.. daily life.

I always design based on research results. Using realistic and relevant starting points are the direct input to make design decisions. Sketches and testing models will be used to make mass studies. The final designs will serve the functions (and initial starting points). It is very important to relate the design constantly to reality. During design processes, architects should take more into account to research the borders of their clients. I think it is our task to bring the build environment in every project on a higher level by creating bridges between the ambitious and utopian idea's and the realistic, daily circumstances.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The analyses will focus on three scale levels. In the urban scale the history development of Amsterdam will be explained, as well the relation of the west expansion, related to the city center.

On a smaller scale the researched neighborhood Robert Scott will be shown. The positive and negative characteristics will be pointed out with small diagrams.

The st. Joseph church is, together with the playground and surrounding schools, the central heart of this neighborhood. On the smallest scale the design and development of the church will be explained, as well the relation with the direct public space and the whole Robert Scott buurt.

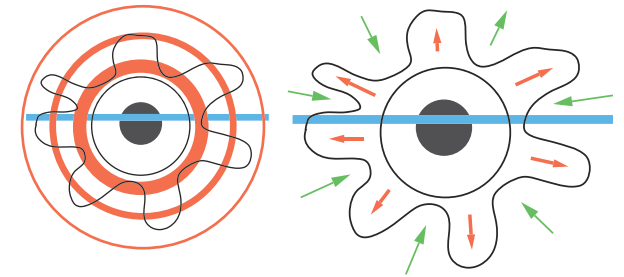
Urban scale

Amsterdam has its origins around 1200 at the location of the mouth of the Amstel River in the Sea. The construction of the dam was a transfer from seawater to inland waterways. This ensures an agglomeration of trade. The establishment of the VOC, early 17th century led to rapid growth and expansion of the city. By increasing prosperity creation of art trade started in the west of the city (Jordaan). The waterline forms again a strategic military protection of the city. This rapid increase in wealth is also called the golden age.

Late 17th century this growth ended. The city remained unchanged for almost 200 years and stabilised. After the opening (Abt 1880) of the North Sea Canal and Suez Canal came again the trade corridor, and the industrialization followed. Jan Kalff made the first realised expansion plans for

Amsterdam. Early 20th century the harbour activities moved due to scaling. Also the new main railway station made transportation by rail possible and brought new opportunities to the city. These days smaller backland cities around Amsterdam could also develop. Later on named as the 'garden villages'. Also, mixing live and work began to be seen as a quality (mainly north).

In the years 1920-1940 the first urban planned districts created the new growth of Amsterdam. The southern neighborhoods were built in the style 'amsterdamse school'. Later the AUP (Amsterdams Extension) was introduced. This was a more comprehensive guideline for the expansion of Amsterdam. During the second world war, these plans were postponed. The growth of Schiphol Airport made primarily the growth at that time. After the war major programs for social housing in the city were started. After 1960, many families moved from the city to surrounding towns by building capabilities, introduction of the car and devolution.

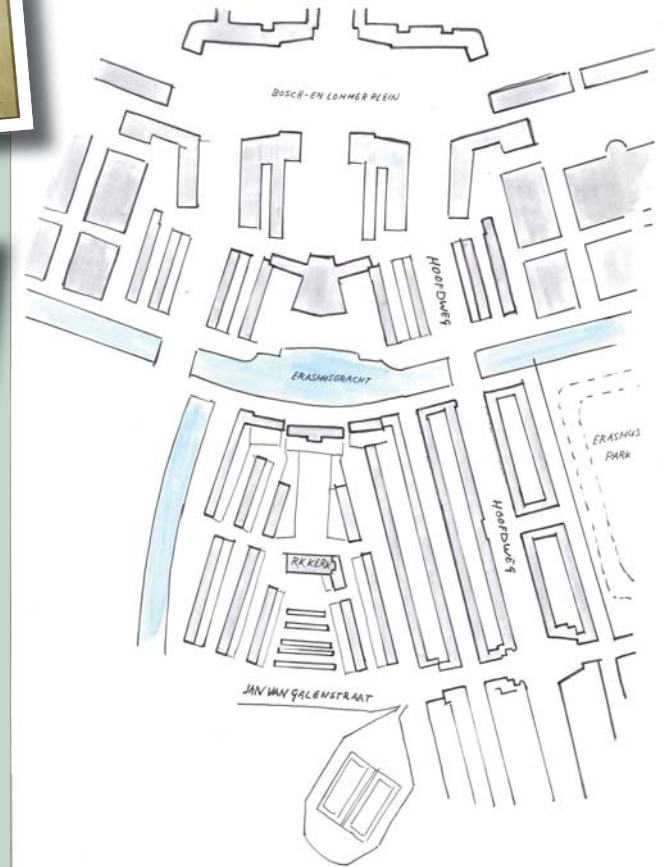
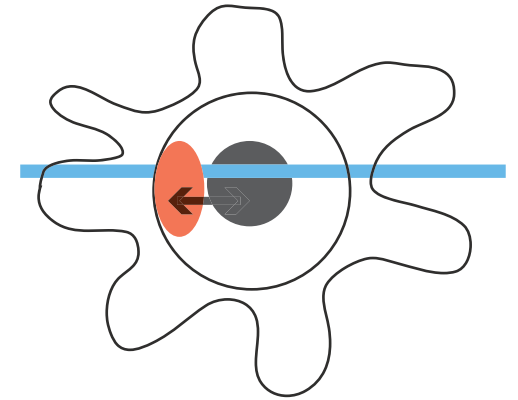


RESEARCH RESULTS

AUP

In 1935 designed C. eesteren the expansion of amsterdam. The Robert Scott neighborhood was part of the big plan. For the development of the urban plan and the design of the church, was architect GHM Holt was retained. He was an architect with a Catholic background and allowed the Catholic wishes fit into realistic plans.

In the first draft, designed by Holt, the church is introduced central to the plan. The church is surrounded by residential strips with family apartments. At the south of the church lower elderly homes are located. In this plan, the schools are still in the northern parts of the canal and forms the edge of the neighborhood. In the subsequent development, the schools are situated with the church around a large playground. The church, the monastery and the schools together create the social heart of the neighborhood.



RESEARCH RESULTS

Barriers

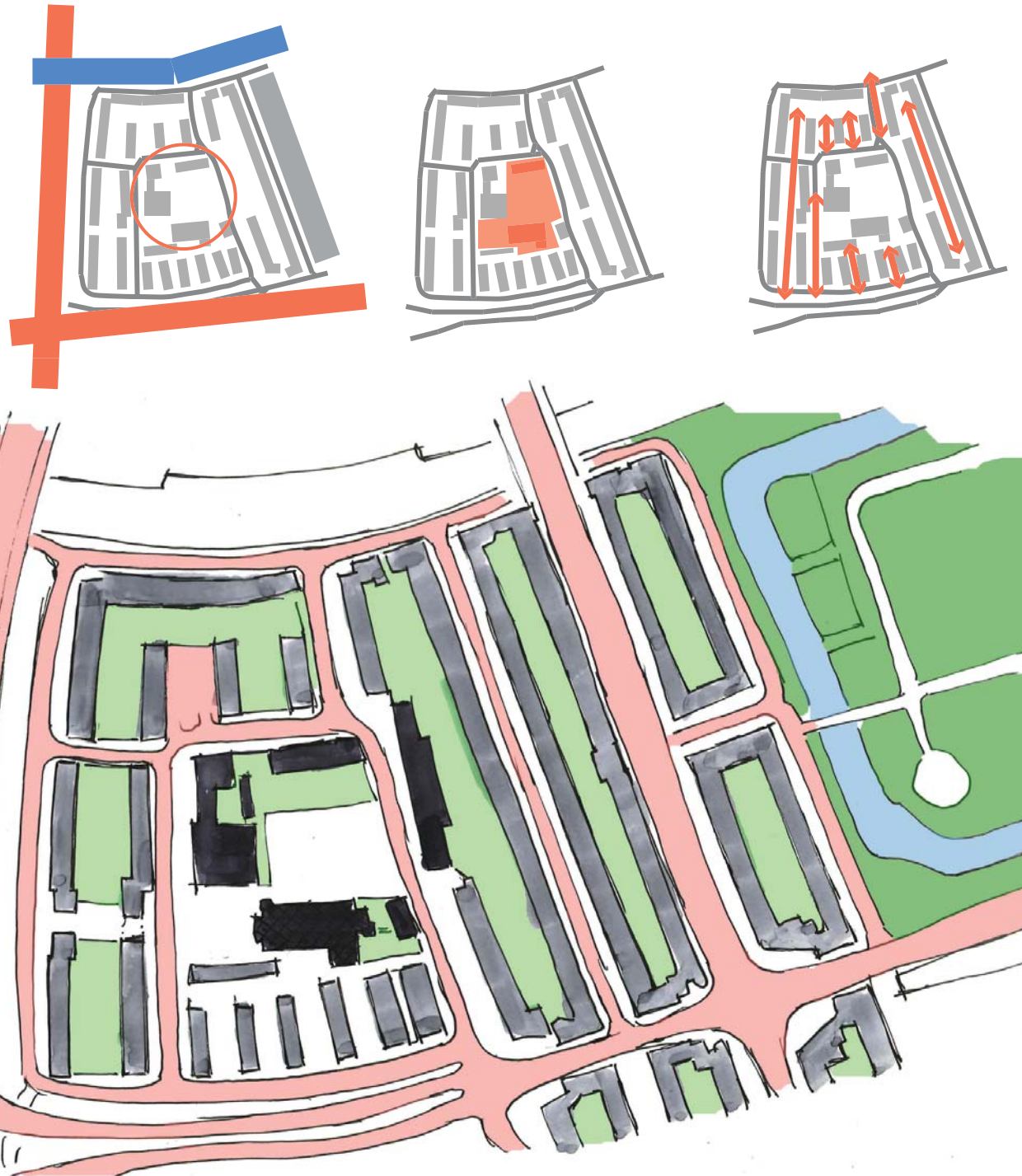
In the first diagram the location of Robert Scott is shown related to its surrounding borders. On the north side the area is bounded by the Erasmusgracht. This canal separates the field of the GAK building. This former municipal office will be reused to a mix of dwelling and work (creative agency and student housing). On the west side the area is enclosed by the nearby A10. This highway is raised and forms a large physical barrier. A tunnel similar to the Erasmus canal allows connection for cyclists and pedestrians to the new developments directly behind the ring. On the south side is the Jan van Galen street. One of the main access roads to the center of Amsterdam. The road in intensity of approximately 20,000 cars per day. This road provides the only access to the area (for cars). The Highway, located between two large blocks in the east, is a less busy road, compared to the other two. The barriers make the island an isolated district.

Center - functions

The second diagram shows the central public facilities. The southern building is the church, the northern building one of the former primary schools. In the redesign, this region forms the primary design area.

Strokes principles

One of the principles of modernism was the open construction. Light, air and space was an improvement of spatial quality. Now the intermediate gardens are closed to the public and residents. The other public space is susceptible to crime and is considered unsafe.



RESEARCH RESULTS

Church central

Besides the social heart in its function, the church and the square will also form in a spatial way the heart of the district. With a modest accent the church is a visible prestige object from the whole district.

View axes

From the southeast (intersection of Jan van Galenstraat and Highway) was previously a clear view towards the heart of the Robert Scott neighborhood. In '87 this axis was destroyed, because of the two elderly housing blocks were built over there. The view of the church is now limited to fragments between southern blocks (see section).



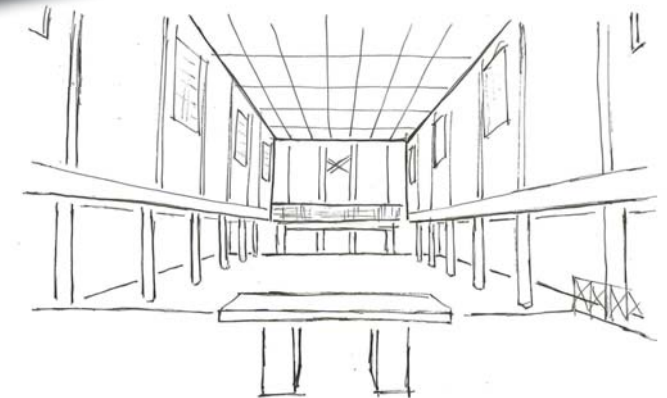
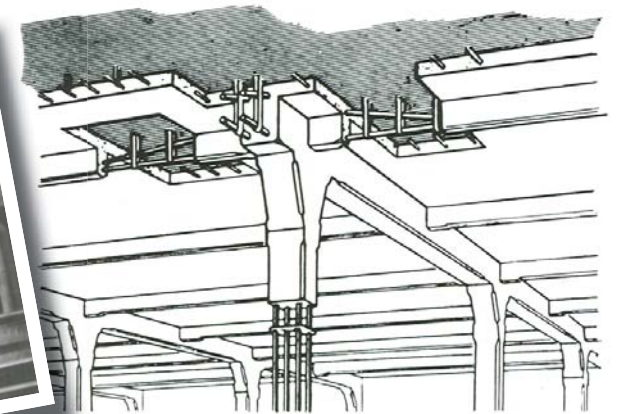
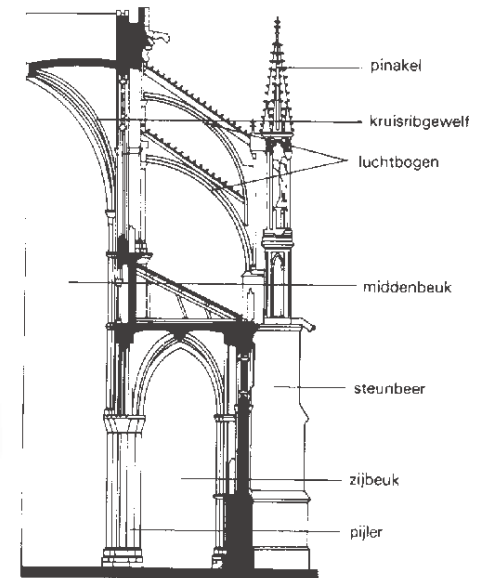
RESEARCH RESULTS

Holt played a leading role in the reconstruction time in the church development. He fits in the liturgical adaptations in a progressive way. In his first churches the 1800 years of basilica model was still loyal followed. Later, other models were also introduced, whereby the number of m³ per seat is greatly reduced, and approximately 35 per cent of the construction cost could be saved.

The St Joseph Church is an example where is clearly focussed on the main elements within the church. Holt is known for its timelessness of the sacred metaphysical system. He forms and explains the connections between the supernatural and natural building sacramentals. With sober and simple design and respect for religious values, realistic buildings could be realized.

Prevailed the social and realistic assumptions. This contrasts with the bossche school style, where a more abstract method was sought for the ideal relationship between scale and mass to create a human environment.

The st joseph church was designed between 41 and 50, due to the slowing war years. Holt had thereby been focussed on the italian barn-church model. This was developed. Most high resistance to lay on the large glass facades. The building was not sufficiently restrained and had to be neutral and secular appearance.



RESEARCH RESULTS

Organisation

With a few steps you ascend a slightly elevated access to the church. a small entrance porch leads directly into the nave of the church. The church follows the classical model Basilica. Behind in the church the baptistery is located. The choir and altar is again slightly elevated by several steps. The monastery is a simple, robust corridor connected to the church. The sacristy is directly connected with the church space and also has a private entrance.

Composition

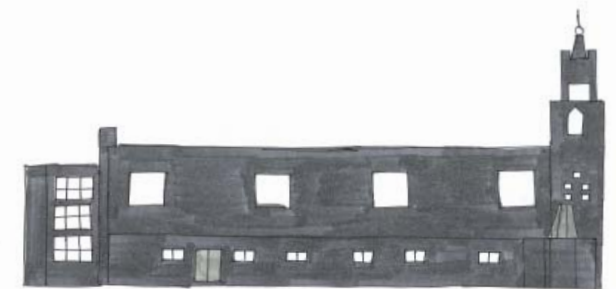
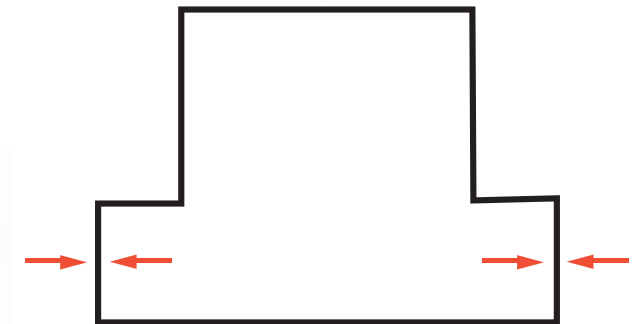
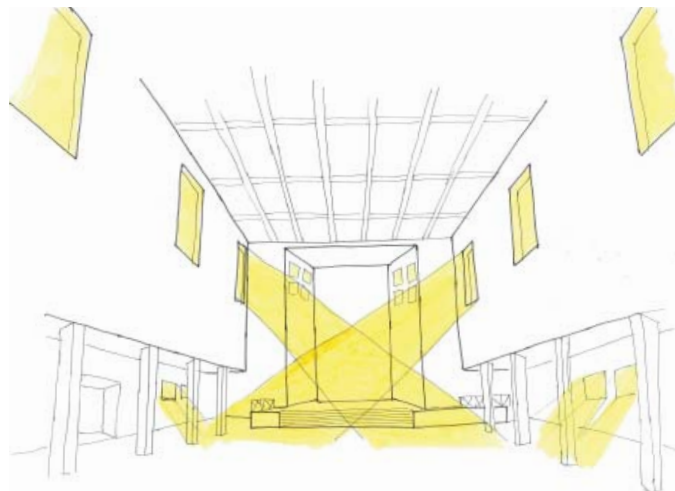
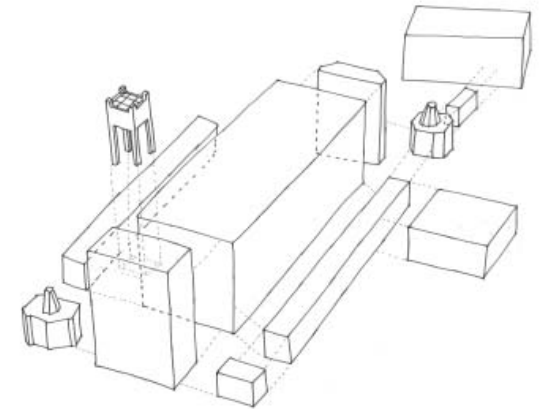
The nave is a simply designed and constructed box. Around it are the characteristic elements of the church. A high tower above the entrance of the church, the reduced aisles, the choir and the associated ancillary facilities and the sacristy the monastery. These elements are brought together in a natural composition. The building is roughly symmetrical, but has a unique sophistication in the characteristic elements.

Masses

From the Roman Catholic views, the church decided a subdued character. The facade is very closed mass observable. Yet it is striking that the church looks very light in the interior. There is no connection between the interior and the environment.

Daylight

In the fall of daylight is clearly the principle from the Gothic to recognize. These principles are explained earlier. The smaller daylight openings in the side nave are decorated with stained glass artwork.



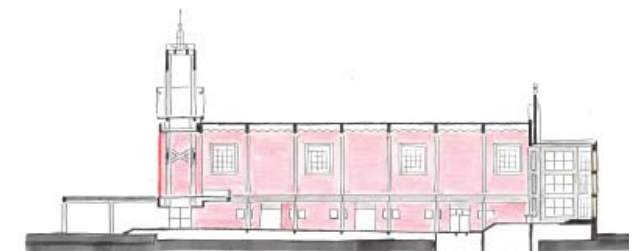
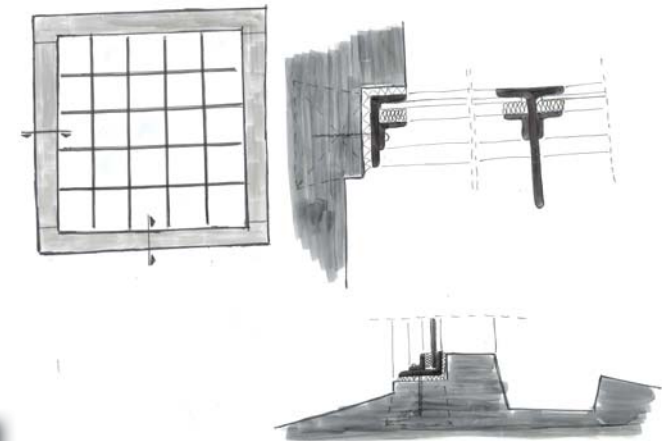
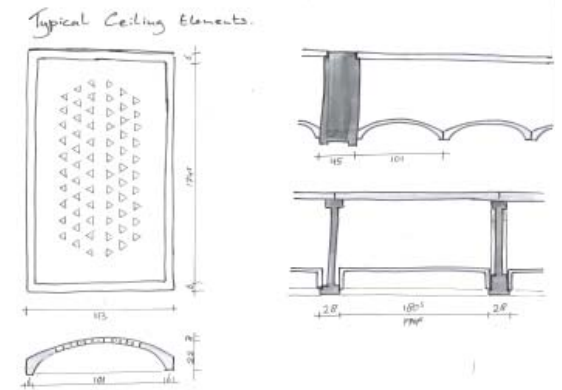
RESEARCH RESULTS

The concrete structure is totally in it held. The content and material choices between the construction are made on the basis of requested appearance. The facades on the outside consists of broken stone Limburg. In the immediate context searches the stone plinth in sophistication and playful look connection with the human scale.

The materialization of the ship consists glorified concrete slabs. The addition of the yellow color creates a warm and natural look. Also, the height difference between the natural stone plates makes a reference to blocks.

In material and expression clearly shows that the emphasis in the church is the typical assumptions within church architecture. The nave has a more sober and soothing space created. The tower is in the church decorated with four crosses, which also functional, stabilizing effect. This concrete sculpture is visible on a plain brick wall. Previously a precise fit organ is present, but is sold with the demise of the church.

In the choir is the concrete by playful stained glass artwork (created by Marius de Leeuw, 's-Hertogenbosch) lit with mainly blue and green tones. The artwork on the ceiling of the hand of Marius de Leeuw. This artistic work is a large multicolored mural made by Marius de Leeuw. This symbolizes a phoenix, the symbol of Christ, and is visible from all over the church hall.



SOCIETAL, SOCIAL & SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Designing for and invest in social shared values are not measurable and scientifically proven, as in the government investigation into the results of deprivation pronounced. However, crime rates and security data are demographical improved. Despite the unclear measurability of these social factors, it remains highly relevancy and urgency both from the political angle as the design and layout of the public space (urban planning and architecture) to draw attention to a widely accessible environment.

In my case it is important to understand the local negative aspects that influences the life quality. It is written in the reports and articles that we should not try to create a general method to improve the 'probleem wijken', but focus on the local circumstances and use the positive aspects to improve the negative ones. From the analyses I conclude that the lack of life perspective for the young age group (10-18) is a origin for their individual and collective future. School failure and unemployment youth are starting factors for many social and economical problems. In my function as talent center for youth inhabitants (and later on a bigger scale), I will create a hotbed (broeinest) where the youth can find their talent to focus on, or destiny for the future in work or goal for life.

Also fill in the vacancy of churches in the Netherlands is still a actual theme. Connect the right functions at the (from origin) monumental and important locations in the urban fabric, with the complicated technological state and bureaucratic standards is an important and very interesting theme to focus on.

Conclusion

During the design 70 years ago, the Robert Scott buurt was designed with the architectural idea's of a social heart in the center of the neighborhood. The catholic religion was the social collective binder. Also these days the need for social binders is actual and also in the future this theme will be actual.

The neighborhood will facilitate collective spaces (inside and outside) for the different age groups. The church will be a center for youth, where they can find a meaning for work or life.. their individual talent. To find their inner ambition the youth will be separated from the daily world and closed off in this center. A center with a very diverse and inspiring program will serve the visitor to search for his or her goal.

Program

Reception room
collectieve hall/livingroom
Quiet room
Meditation/Zen
Inspiration rooms/workshops
Auditorium Lecture hall
Dinner hall
Kitchen Dinner hall
Library / Study room
Lecture/magazines/discussion
Personal therapy rooms (pedagogical, psychological, social-societal worker)
Short stay
Long stay
Administration
Exposition works

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Planning & Analysis

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TIME PLANNING

Every quarter I will make a new detailed planning in time scedule. Last quarter I had to follow lectures and finish other courses also. This quarter will be focussed more only on the project. Now (week 2.1) I will make a more specified schedule, combined with the content/tasks of the overall planning, instead of project.. project.. project.

Planning Afstudeerproject Thijs Brienens			Amsterdam aan Zee 4050746		sept 2012 - juli 2013		
Week 1.1	Maandag 3 sept	Dinsdag 04	Woensdag 5	Donderdag 6	Vrijdag 7	Zaterdag 8	Zondag 9
Ochtend	History Thesis	Studio introduce	AR3Ar071 Meurs AR3Ar051 Zijlstra	Project	AR3Ar051/AR3U012 Project	Pers. activity (work)	
Middag	History Thesis	Studio	Project	Project	Project	History thesis	History thesis
Avond		Pers. Activity	Project planning maken	Pers. Activity (sports)	Pers. Activity (work)		
Week 1.2	Maandag 10	Dinsdag 11	Woensdag 12	Donderdag 13	Vrijdag 14	Zaterdag 15	Zondag 16
Ochtend	Project AR3Ar051/AR3U012	Studio excursion A'dam	AR3Ar071 Meurs Project	Project	AR3Ar051/AR3U012 Project	Pers. activity (work)	
Middag	Project	Studio	History Thesis	Project	AR3Ar051/AR3U012 Project	History thesis	History thesis
Avond	Project	Pers. Activity (work)	History Thesis	Pers. Activity (sports)			
Week 1.3	Maandag 17	Dinsdag 18	Woensdag 19	Donderdag 20	Vrijdag 21	Zaterdag 22	Zondag 23
Ochtend	Project AR3Ar051/AR3U012	Studio H. vd Zanden	AR3Ar071 Meurs Project	Project	Project	History thesis	
Middag	Project	Studio Pr Urb analysis	History Thesis	Project	Project	Pers. activity (familie dag)	Project
Avond	Project	Project	History Thesis	Pers. Activity (sports)		Pers. activity	
Week 1.4	Maandag 24	Dinsdag 25	Woensdag 26	Donderdag 27	Vrijdag 28	Zaterdag 29	Zondag 30
Ochtend	Project	Studio	AR3Ar071 Meurs AR3Ar051 Zijlstra	Project	Project	Pers. activity (work)	
Middag	Project	Studio	History Thesis	Project	Project	Project	Project
Avond	Project int. Urb analysis	Pers. Activity (work)	History Thesis	Pers. Activity (sports)			
Week 1.5	Maandag 1 okt	Dinsdag 2	Woensdag 3	Donderdag 4	Vrijdag 5	Zaterdag 6	Zondag 7
Ochtend	Project AR3Ar051/AR3U012	Studio	AR3Ar071 Meurs? Project	Project	Project	Pers. activity (work)	
Middag	AR051 (thesisplan)	Studio	History Thesis	Project	Project	Project	Project
Avond	AR051 (thesisplan)	Project	AR0532	Pers. Activity (sports)			
Week 1.6	Maandag 8	Dinsdag 9	Woensdag 10	Donderdag 11	Vrijdag 12	Zaterdag 13	Zondag 14
Ochtend	Project	Studio	AR3Ar071 Meurs Project	Project	Project	Pers. activity (work)	
Middag	Project	Studio Pr Arch analysis	History Thesis	Project	Project	Project	Project
Avond	AR051 (thesisplan)	Project	AR051 (thesisplan)	Pers. Activity (sports)			
Week 1.7	Maandag 15	Dinsdag 16	Woensdag 17	Donderdag 18	Vrijdag 19	Zaterdag 20	Zondag 21
Ochtend	Project	Studio	AR3Ar071 Meurs Project	Project	Project		
Middag	Project	Studio	Project	Project	Project	Project	Project
Avond	AR051 (thesisplan)	AR051 (thesisplan)	Project	Pers. Activity (sports)			
Week 1.8	Maandag 22	Dinsdag 23	Woensdag 24	Donderdag 25	Vrijdag 26	Zaterdag 27	Zondag 28
Ochtend	Project	Studio	AR051 (thesisplan)	Project	Project	Project	Project
Middag	Project	Studio	Draft Ar3Ar051 (thesisplan)	Project	Project	Project	Project
Avond	AR051 (thesisplan)	AR051 (thesisplan)	Project	Project			
Week 1.9	Maandag 29	Dinsdag 30	Woensdag 31	Donderdag 1 nov	Vrijdag 2	Zaterdag 3	Zondag 4
Ochtend	Project	MIDTERM PR studio	Project	Project	Project		
Middag	Project	MIDTERM PR studio	Project	Project	Project		
Avond	Project	Pers. Activity (celebrate)	AR051 (thesisplan)	AR051 (thesisplan)			
Week 1.10	Maandag 5 nov	Dinsdag 6	Woensdag 7	Donderdag 8	Vrijdag 9	Zaterdag 10	Zondag 11
Ochtend	Project	Project	Project (printshop)	REPORT P1 (hand in)			
Middag	Project	Project	Project	AR3Ar051 (hand in thesisplan)			
Avond	AR051 (thesisplan)	AR051 (thesisplan)	Pers. Activity	Pers. Activity			

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