

Collective memory in Architecture

Research book



RESEARCH BOOK

Collective memory in architecture

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance

History of modern architecture witnessed multiple examples of theories written with the emphasis on site-specific architecture. The discussion very often involved other disciplines, some of them were mentioned metaphorically, but also plenty of knowledge finds its source within sociological and anthropological studies. Most of the ideas introduced by writers or researchers based on criticising modernity and standardization, which unified image of the cities that we know today. Working within the framework of international style, according to zeitgeist (spirit of the time) resulted in repetitive and schematic architecture. On the other hand, post-modernists created their theory on a reverse basis, celebrating the context and sometimes giving too literal references to the surrounding environment. The theories which were reviewed during the research stage place themselves in-between modernism and post-modernism, not being a separate style but proposing an alternative approach to the design.

§ The theme of Urban Architecture Graduation Studio is Spolia and the given site of intervention is in Brussels. Term spolia is used mainly in archaeological practice, meaning the new use for old elements or materials in new structures. Architecture appropriated this term to create its own interpretation for material (in se) and immaterial (in re) use of existing elements or ideologies. Urban Architecture studio approach investigates the idea of spolia and bricolage for a critical assessment of the given context and raising awareness about its specificity. The link with archaeology is not coincidental, because the architect, which case study is going to be conducted during the research - Alvaro Siza - when researching the site does the same thing as an archaeologist would do – uncovers the history of the place. That is why material culture studies are also an important part of the approach, allowing to find cultural importance of certain elements in space. The site is placed within Anderlecht neighbourhood and it is a block with post-industrial buildings, row houses, park and vacant spaces, which create together chaos multiplied by the high slab social housing building. The place, however, has a certain history and needs intervention, which would not be able on an urban scale. The research part questions are “what to keep?” and “what to build?” to preserve the identity of a place and also to improve its spatial quality.

My personal focus aims towards modernity and post-war architecture, which can find its explanation in the fact, that most of the developments and re-developments were conducted together with rapid technologisation at this time. The starting point triggering considerations was a theory of Kenneth Frampton written in *Towards Critical Regionalism: Six Points for Architecture of Resistance*, which introduced the criticism towards both modernists and post-modernists offering an alternative way of designing. Frampton's text, however, was based on Liana Lefaivre's and Alexander Tzonis's book *Critical regionalism: architecture and identity in a globalised world* which first introduced the term. Despite the differences and similarities, those two theories point out interesting characteristics of modern cities, which are still important today and bring in interesting points of view on architecture. Kenneth Frampton formulated six points, which together create a guideline for regional architecture. Important quote introduced by him is at the beginning of his manifesto, by Paul Riceur "how to become modern and return to sources" is an essential question of architect focusing on the context and challenges the reader to look beyond the architectural qualities of the building. By referring to regional environments such as light, topography, context, climate and tectonic form the designed architecture can gain a specific relation with a place, whereas modern architecture tends to create boundaries and introvert buildings. Heidegger put into words very well this relation:

A boundary is not that at which something stops, but as
the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that from which
something begins its presence.¹

¹ Heidegger, Martin. 2000. *Building, dwelling, thinking*.

However, Frampton underlines that the relationship with the regional environment should not come through blind copying of the vernacular solutions. The uniqueness of the design should come from the limits of the regional environment – which I perceive as one of the most important quotes from Frampton’s essay, where he points out the necessity of creative interpretation of the local patterns with being selective in terms of evaluation of the context. The architecture of critical regionalism seeks for creating a local identity within universalised culture made by the development of the technology. Another important point raised by Kenneth Frampton is about the approach of the movement, where he writes that critical regionalism does not talk about vernacular architecture, but providing an architectural design approach to the globalism. Starting from the geographical and cultural context and giving attention to modern tradition. Critical regionalism seeks for creating a local language of architecture. Those points, despite giving an impression of defining the regional approach as many as too much, leave the reader with questions about for example how can we define certain cultural region – especially when we talk about globalized world, which since the year when the manifesto came out, changed drastically in this matter and the borders are even more blurred. Another questionable thing is continuously repeated resistance, which raises uncertainty about the intentions of the author. However, to gain a better understanding of what critical regionalism is and how can modern architecture still be regional I decided to conduct a case study. The idea behind it was to extract the architect’s strategy and way of interpreting local values. The choice of Alvaro Siza’s Punt en Komma social housing in Den Haag seemed relevant for several reasons. First of all, this project – just after Bonjour Tristesse in Berlin – was one of the first projects made outside Portugal by Siza. Secondly, Siza is praised for his regional approach and his speciality is a brilliant way of referring his projects to the context and interpreting values he finds in a place, what places him among the regionalists. The confrontation of the project with Frampton’s theory was supposed to help uncover Siza’s gestures and way of looking at the site.

Critical Regionalism Revisited

Towards a Critical Regionalism 39

oase 103

Robert Smith, 2000, Seattle, USA

The idea of Critical Regionalism has been widely discussed and debated in recent years, and it is now being re-examined in a new light. In this article, I will explore the concept of Critical Regionalism and its relationship to the idea of Regionalism. I will also discuss the importance of the concept of Regionalism in the context of the current architectural discourse. The article will explore the concept of Regionalism and its relationship to the idea of Critical Regionalism. I will also discuss the importance of the concept of Regionalism in the context of the current architectural discourse. The article will explore the concept of Regionalism and its relationship to the idea of Critical Regionalism. I will also discuss the importance of the concept of Regionalism in the context of the current architectural discourse.

Fig. 1. OASE 103. Critical Regionalism Revisited.

PRIMARY RESEARCH - CASE STUDY

Punt en Komma, Den Haag

For the needs of this analysis, the term *to spoliare* is introduced.

TO SPOLIATE (v)

Use of the existing context as a tool for 'as found' strategy for the architectural projects. To spoliare refers to the architect as a bricoleur in a less literal way, meaning the strategy of designing as a stranger in a new context and interpreting elements, values and culture found in the place. Reference to the archaeological term spolia points out the necessity of involving knowledge reaching beyond architectural background in order to activate collective memory of certain place.

Through looking at both formal and informal values of a given context and interpreting it through the architect's cultural background, the spoliation of the architecture takes place. Architecture spoliated with the context can re-interpret e.g. patterns, materials, elements, typologies and takes its uniqueness from the limitations given by the local context.

Two buildings in The Hague, designed by Alvaro Siza between 1984 and 1989 were a part of the reconstruction of the area of a highly degraded part of The Hague. The area was mainly inhabited with immigrants of Islamic origin, which demanded great attention to the dwelling design which Siza gained during the SAAL program in Oporto. With the motto „Neighbourhoods and taking into account existing cultures and values of the neighbourhood”, the program of Urban Renewal started in The Hague. The residents of the area were supposed to have a crucial role in forming their new neighbourhood for the establishment of the plans for Schilderswijk. The project is a good response to the local context closing off the street and forming a continuity of building the line. The second part of the complex forms a clear urban block - referring to Dutch courtyard typology - hofje. The design process was involving future inhabitants, which was one of the common techniques used by Alvaro Siza in his projects. The project was chosen because together with the second one in Berlin (Bonjour Tristesse) these were the first projects outside Portugal commissioned by the architect.



Fig. 2. Punt en Komma, seen from Parallelweg, source: CCA

'As found' Schilderswijk

When Siza first came to visit the neighbourhood, the existing fabric was dense and - as the architect claimed - in very good shape. The idea behind urban redevelopment programme in Den Haag was to provide new living conditions relevant to modern, post-war times. Therefore, the decision was made to introduce courtyard typology instead of row houses which previously were in this area. However, Siza convinced municipal representatives not to demolish the whole area completely with pointing out the good shape of some of the buildings. One of the preserved structures in the area was the school, which serves the area until today. The specificity of the project was not only because of the foreign context of an architect, but also the residents who were mainly immigrants from Islamic countries. That factor added up another layer of complexity to the design process, which involved talks with the local community. The residents were sceptical on the beginning because they were simply used to living in the houses they had and did not want to change anything.



Fig. 3. Schilderswijk neighbourhood as Siza found it, 1979, source: Haags Gemeente Archief, ID no. 2,03391

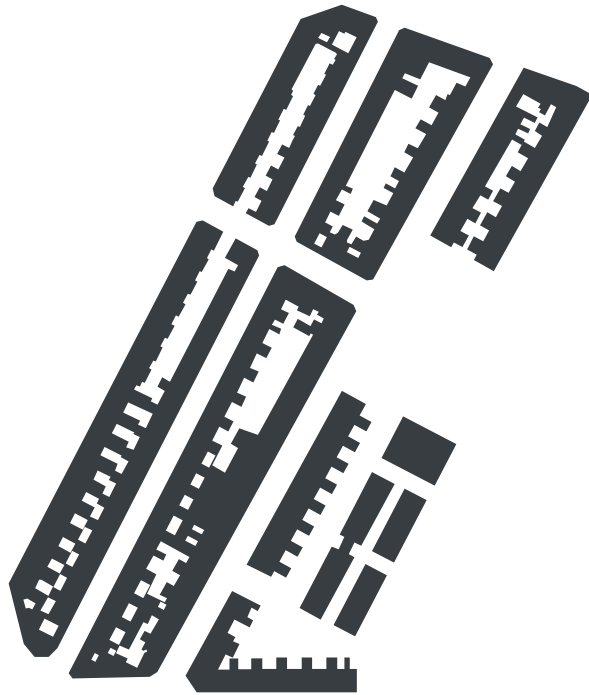


Fig. 4. Urban plan of the part of the site demolished for Urban Redevelopment programme



Fig. 5. Jacob Marisstraat 129-53, seen to the Frans Halsstraat, 1979, source: Haags Gemeente Archief, ID no. 0.30784

Urban typology

During the Urban Redevelopment programme held in The Hague, a couple of decisions were made to renovate the existing fabric. Even despite the good shape, most of the buildings were turned down and rebuilt according to the modern design agenda. Also, because of high criminal and vandalism activity in the Schilderswijk, the renewal process was thought to involve the local community in the design process to better recognize the needs of people living in the area. When Siza arrived in the Netherlands to discuss with stakeholders, the area was already in construction - however, he still could see part of the old housing blocks in the area which were still standing. Comparing to the previous urban fabric, made of row houses, the new plan involved perimeter blocks with bigger collective courtyards. That was one of the things, which were not Siza's idea, however, he was more concerned with the fact that buildings in good shape are thrown away from the area. However, for Siza the most important part was to preserve streets atmosphere and proportions - to activate the collective memory of the place, which he found something particular for the place, especially that his only achievement in conversations with municipality was to preserve the school building which is in the area until today and serves its function. Siza also used the existing rhythm of the windows in the facade to contextualize his project, however, the project did not use so rich formal expression as the traditional houses in the Netherlands did. One would say that it was mainly because of the money-saving strategy for the social housing, but also Siza insisted on having a monotonous facade with the openings marking the porches and giving the balconies and more tectonic expression inside the courtyard, which served as a patio.

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Fig. 6. Schilderswijk neighbourhood with Alvaro Siza buildings made during Urban Redevelopment / present

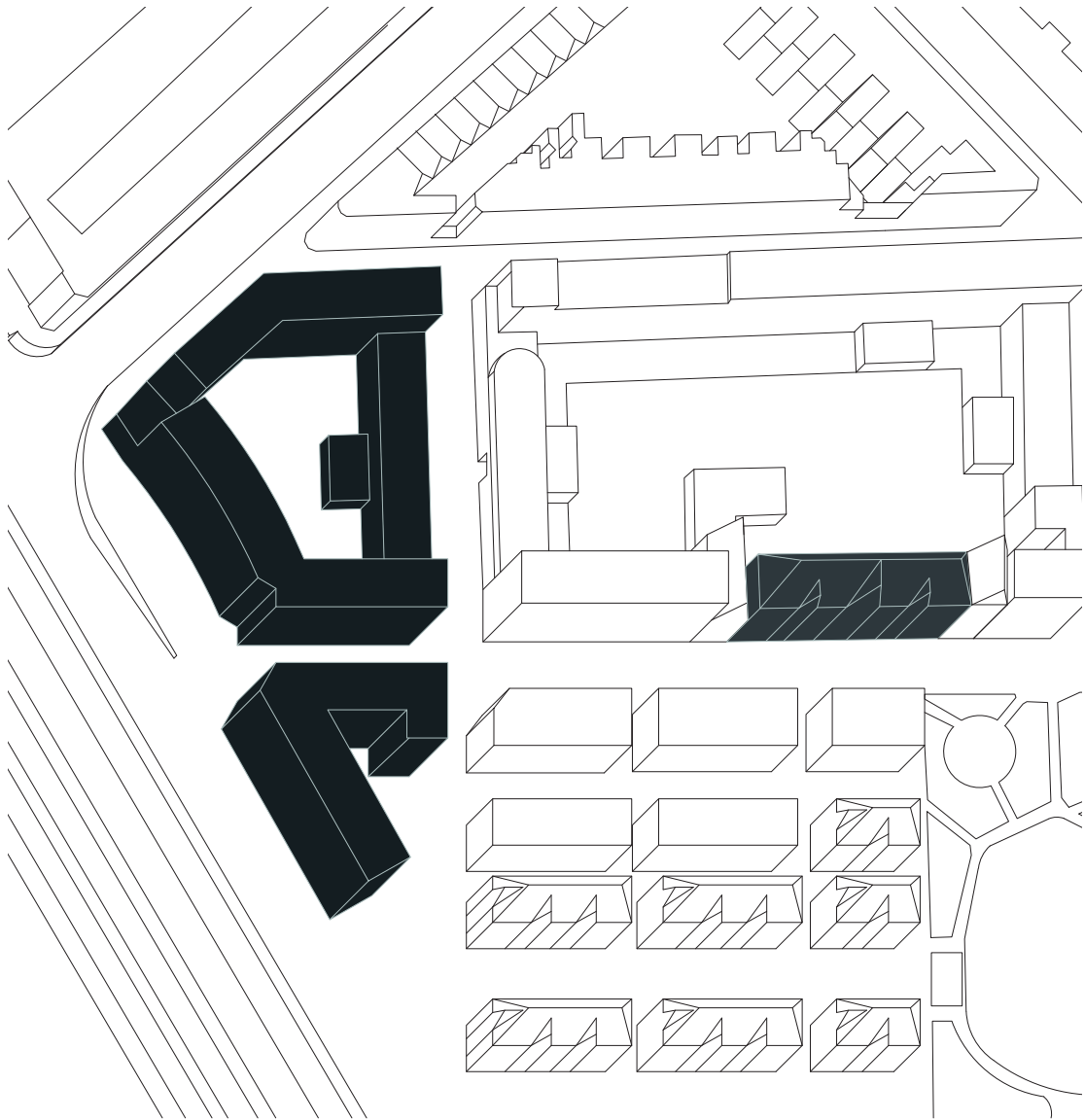
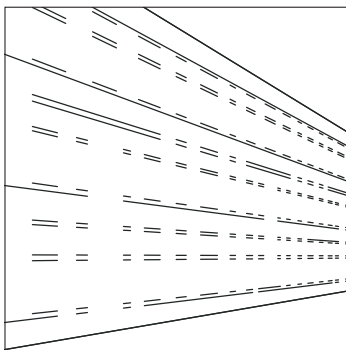


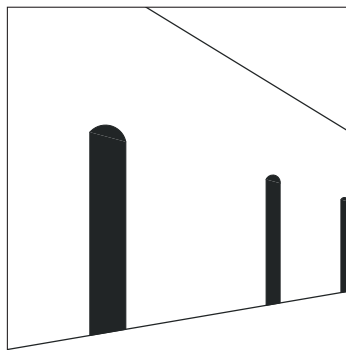
Fig. 7. Punt en Komma in relation with neighbourhood / preserved building of the school



Fig. 8. Perspective of the architect visiting the site



Horizontal articulation on facade



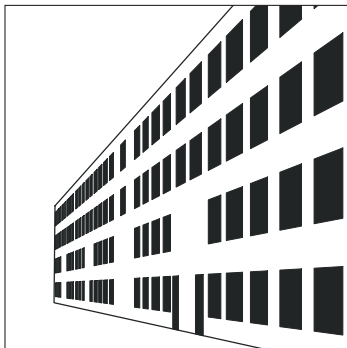
Porches rhythm on facade



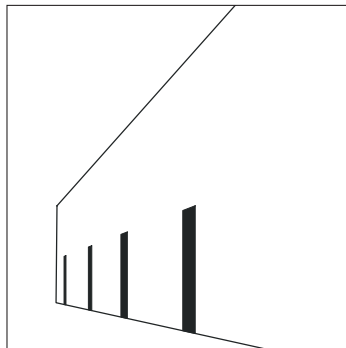
Windows shape and rhythm



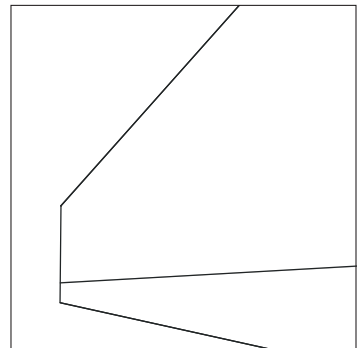
Fig. 9. Architect's interpretation



Windows shape and rhythm



Porches rhythm on facade



Horizontal articulation on facade

Haagse portiek and building typology

The thing Siza was most famous for, was his working process with the residents which had the crucial role in forming layouts of their dwellings. Despite the fact that the neighbourhood was mainly inhabited with people with an Islamic background, the layouts had to fit both Islamic and Dutch culture of living. Usually, the separation of the functions in Dutch dwellings was solved by dividing the house into two floors, where one served more as a „public” one and second was the private, containing the bedrooms. However, the dwellings formed on only one floor needed an extra solution. Siza’s response was applying three sliding walls inside the apartments, which allowed the flexible layout of the dwellings with the ability to close off certain parts of the home. The idea was sort of a compromise between the two different cultures. The idea of consulting with residents reflected also in the facade of the project. From the street side, the buildings are monotonous, with rhythm interrupted by entrances, forming rather closed form. On the courtyard side, the facade opens with balconies and gardens. This solution can be considered as a negotiation between styles of living, reflecting the process

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Fig. 10. Punt en Komma, part of the facade. Source: Author

and giving an idea of how cultural background can influence design. The regional house in The Hague consists of an access system via portico - Haagse Portiek - stairs leading to the first floor directly from the street, creating an entrance for six dwelling units. Re-use of this idea by Alvaro Siza in his projects gives a notion of Critical Regionalist or at least Regionalist approach. However, this idea can be easily explained by the building regulations which stated that the portico is the most efficient solution to the emergency of fire. Nevertheless, this gesture allows getting a notion that the building sets itself in the cultural background of dwelling the city, which was there since the 17th century. Alvaro Siza, however, not only used the idea of the local architecture but also extended it to get the other dimension of street life and provide the street-access for all dwellings, creating a place for the appropriation of the space by 8 houses. Use of the typology is important not only from the point of view of building's outcome but also collective memory - the Haagse Portiek is strongly connected with Dutch culture of dwelling and particular transition between public and private. Despite the fact that it was criticized at the beginning for being a too old fashioned solution, later the idea started to be accepted by the inhabitants.



Fig. 11. Facade rhythm variation due to Haagse Portiek typology. Source: Author

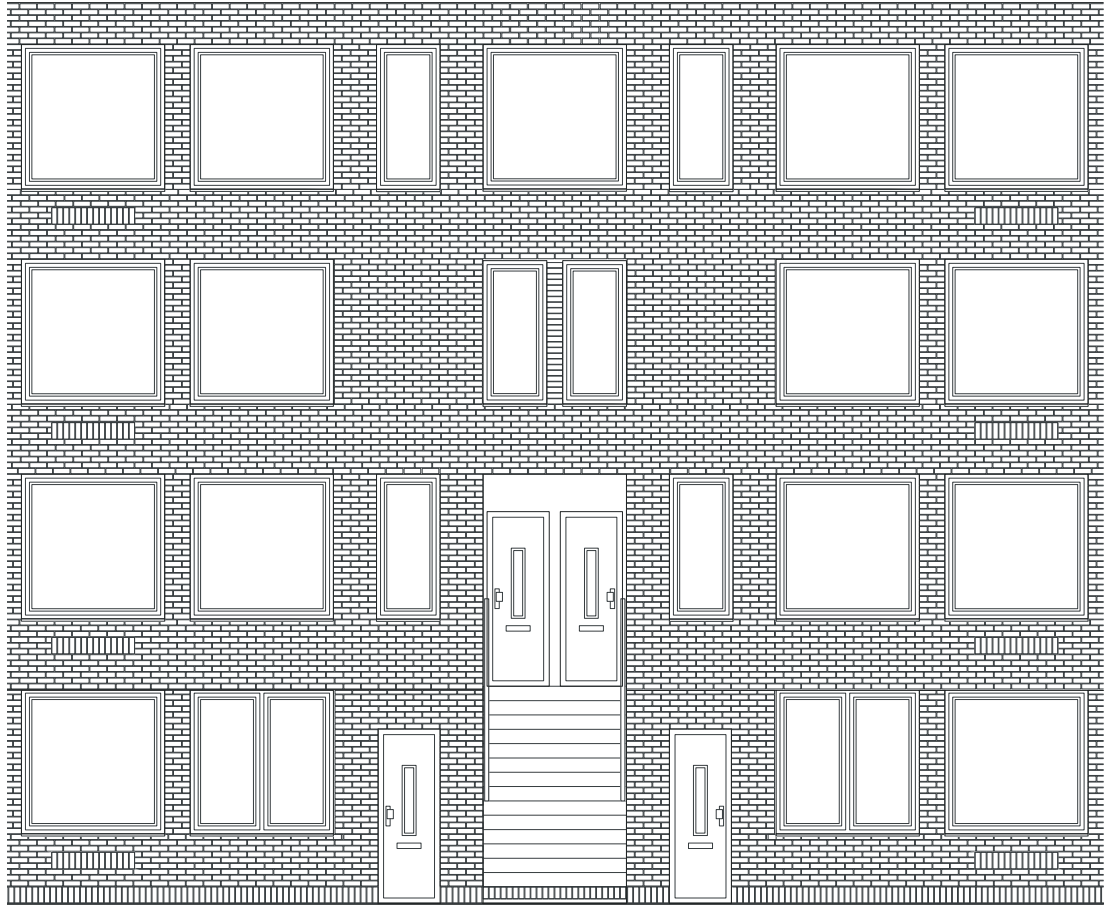


Fig. 12. Street facade. Source: Author

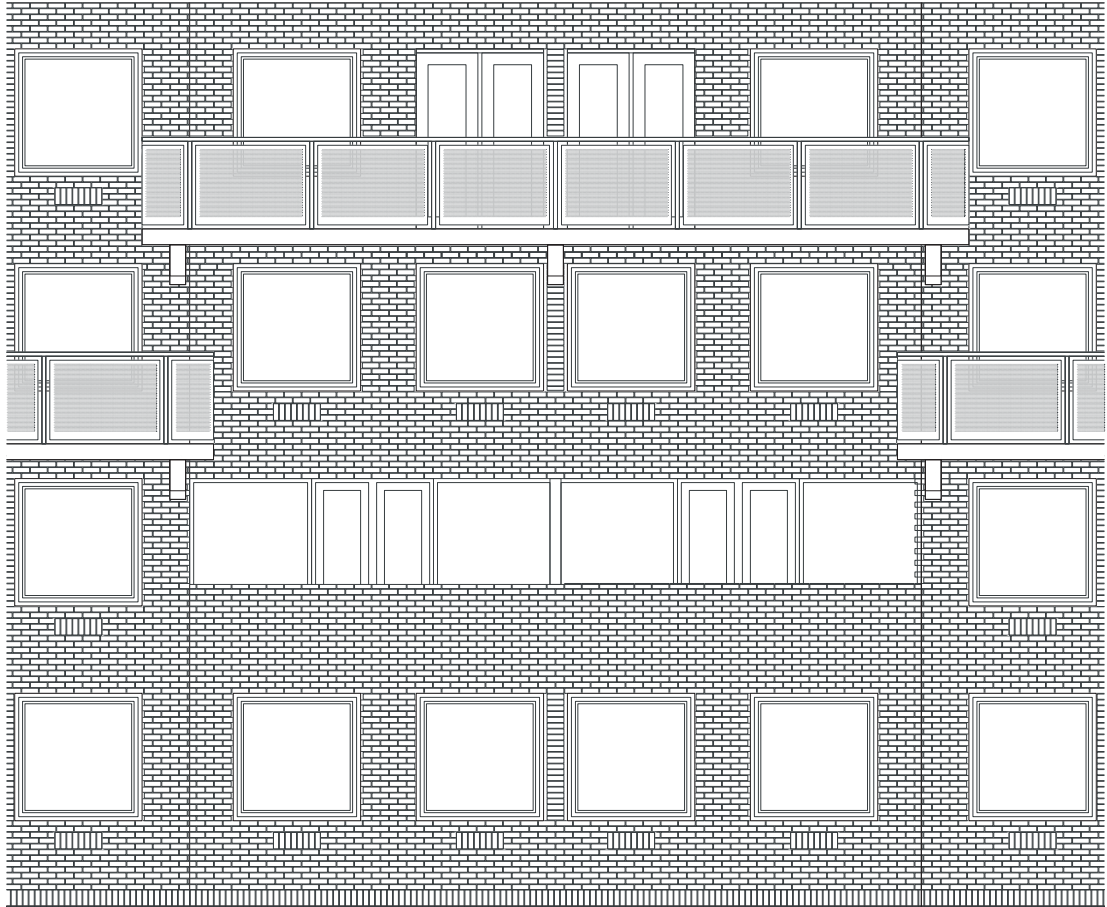


Fig. 13. Courtyard facade. Source: Author

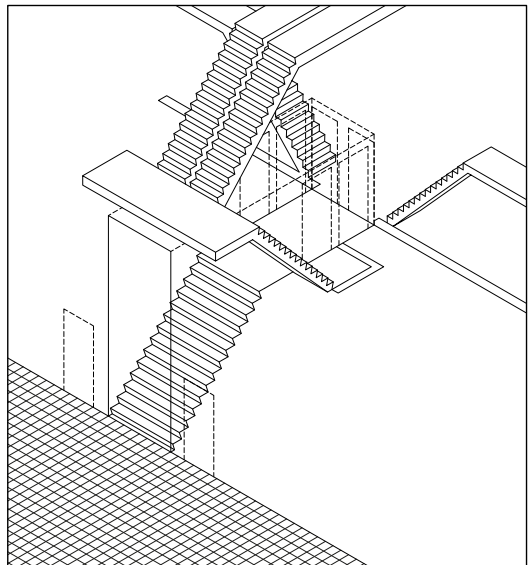
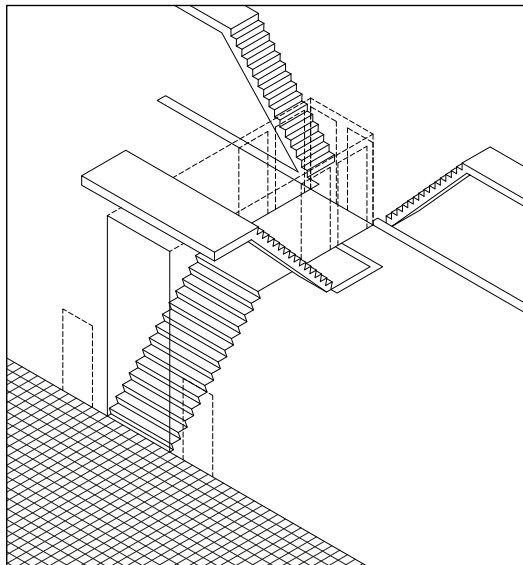
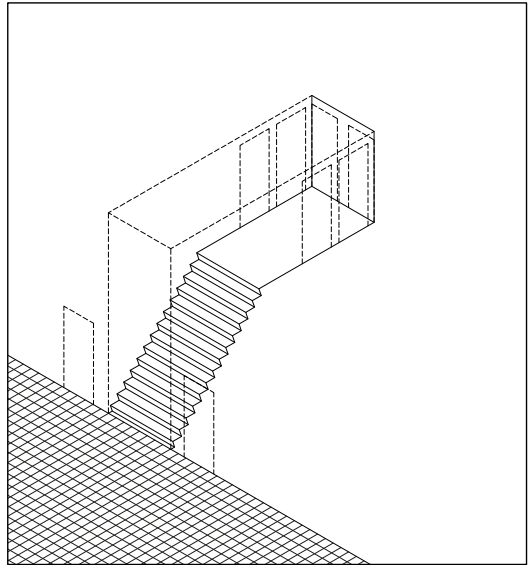
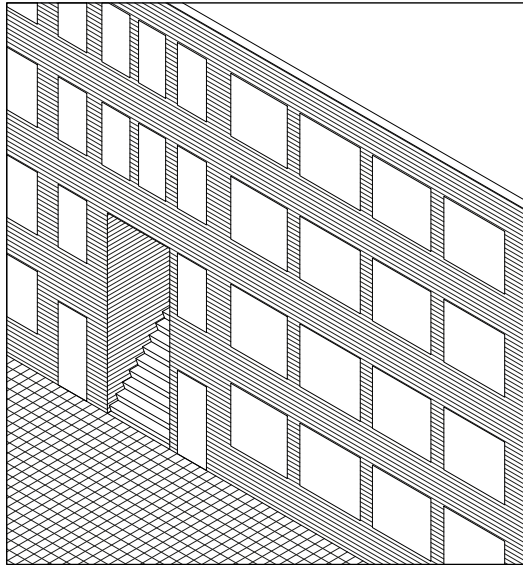


Fig. 14. Entrance distribution due to Haagse Portiek. Source: Author

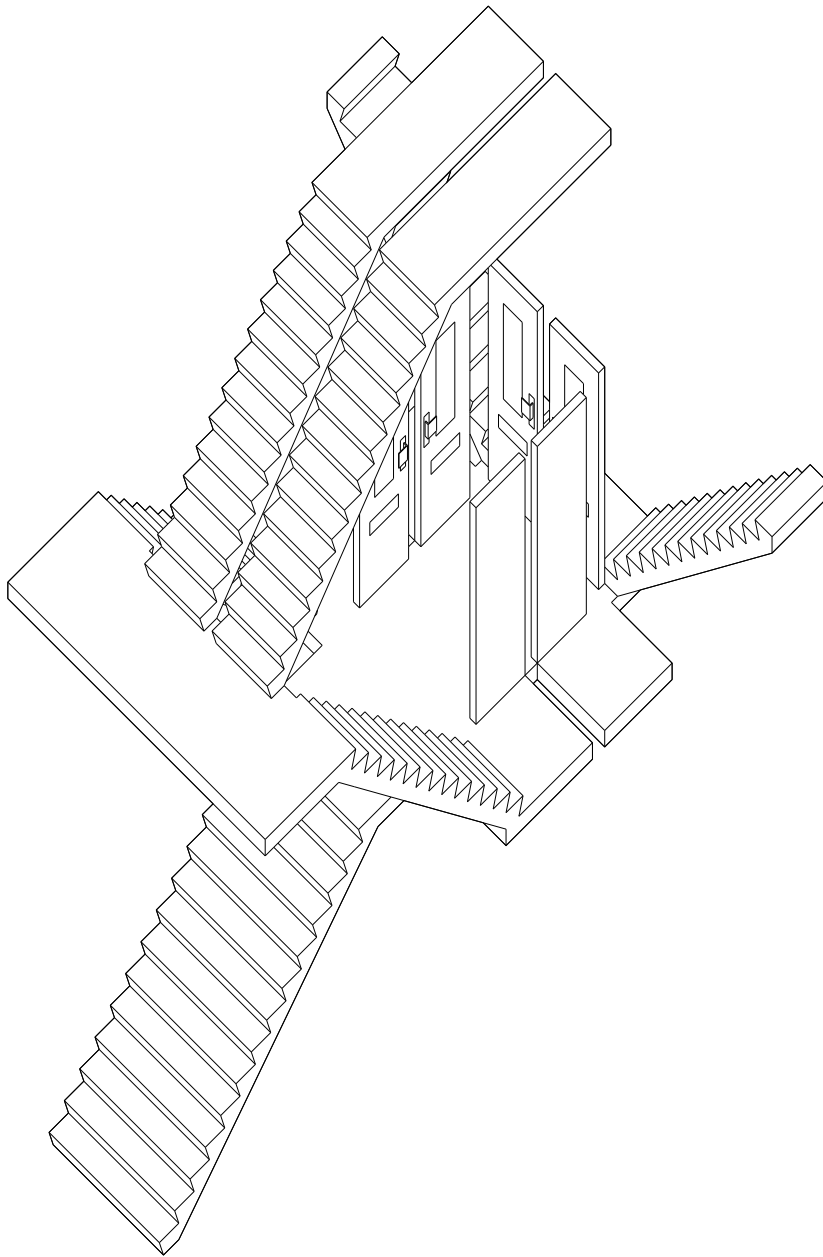


Fig. 15. Haagse portiek scheme in Punt en Komma

Corner solution

Corners of the buildings are always one of the challenges in terms of the design process for the architect. However, in Dutch context corners (Winkels) are important places in the urban fabric, usually containing commercial functions and therefore serving as spaces of activity in the residential neighbourhoods. Alvaro Siza's complex Punt en Komma has two places, where these corner solutions are designed with particular care. The reason for it is not only respect to the collective memory of the place, but also the corners became the most expressive parts of the complex in terms of materiality, where not only traditional Dutch brick appears and marks its presence with elaborate bonds and colours - which are going to be discussed later. The corners are also places, where the buildings gain a certain break in the omnipresent monotony of the facade and become the points of visible continuity of two buildings.

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Fig. 16. Picture of the corner. Source: Author.

Alvaro Siza interpreted the corner issue in a simple but still unexpected way, introducing also the materials which he is familiar with - Portuguese marble. However, those modest inserts do not interrupt or mislead someone looking at the building. Siza admits that use of white brick was not in his plan for this project, but the city insisted on using white to express the modernity of the whole project - since this was the main idea of the urban redevelopment project. In the end, white brick appeared to mark the ‚modernity‘, because Siza wanted to use local material which was brick for the project and rejected white stucco on the facade. Additionally, marking the blind wall with elaborated brick bond can be read as architect’s statement that the gesture is finished. Also, the project says at the same time, that „the corner is there” but at the same time it says „there is no corner at all”.



Fig. 17. Picture of the corner of the building. Source: Author.

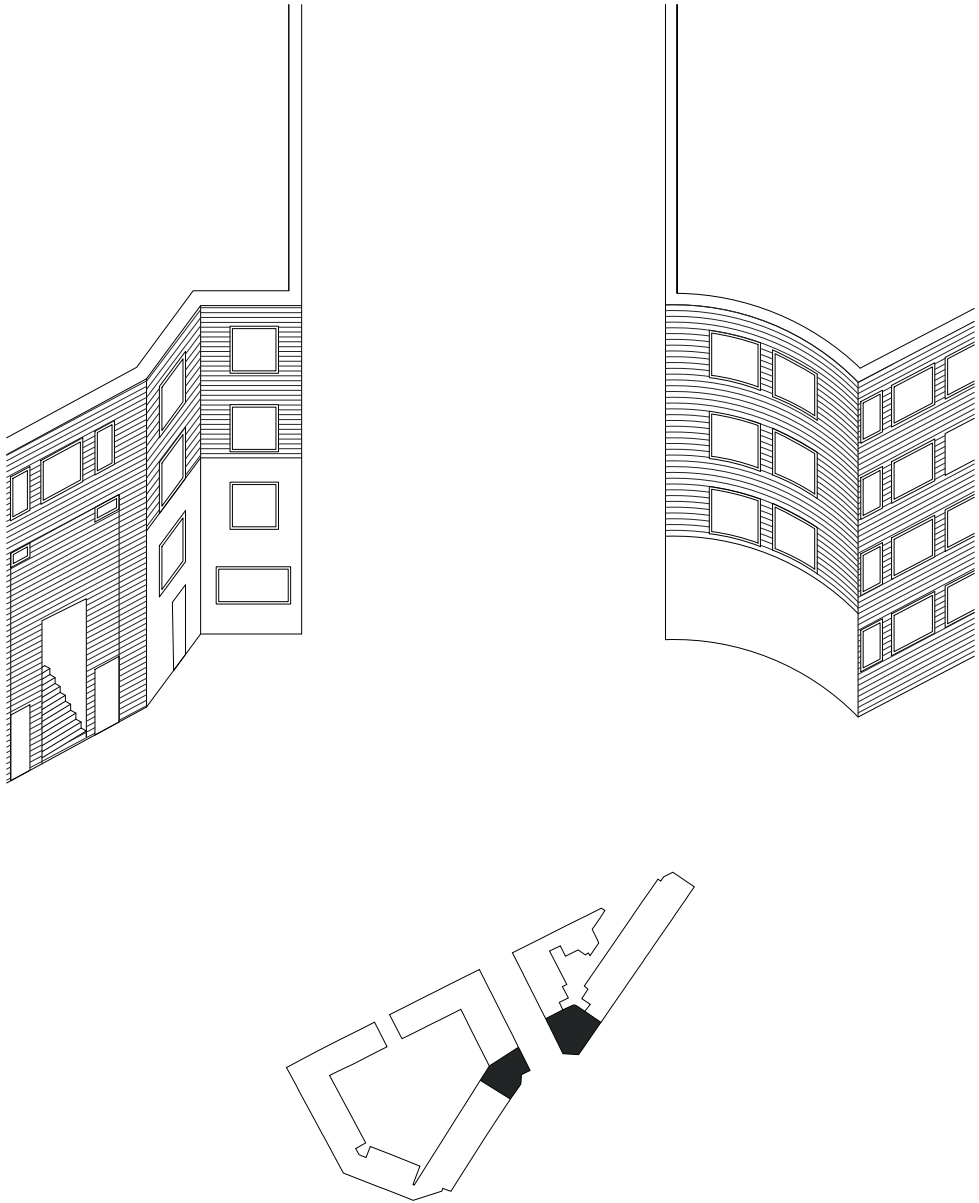


Fig. 18. Corner solution at the entrance. Source: Author.

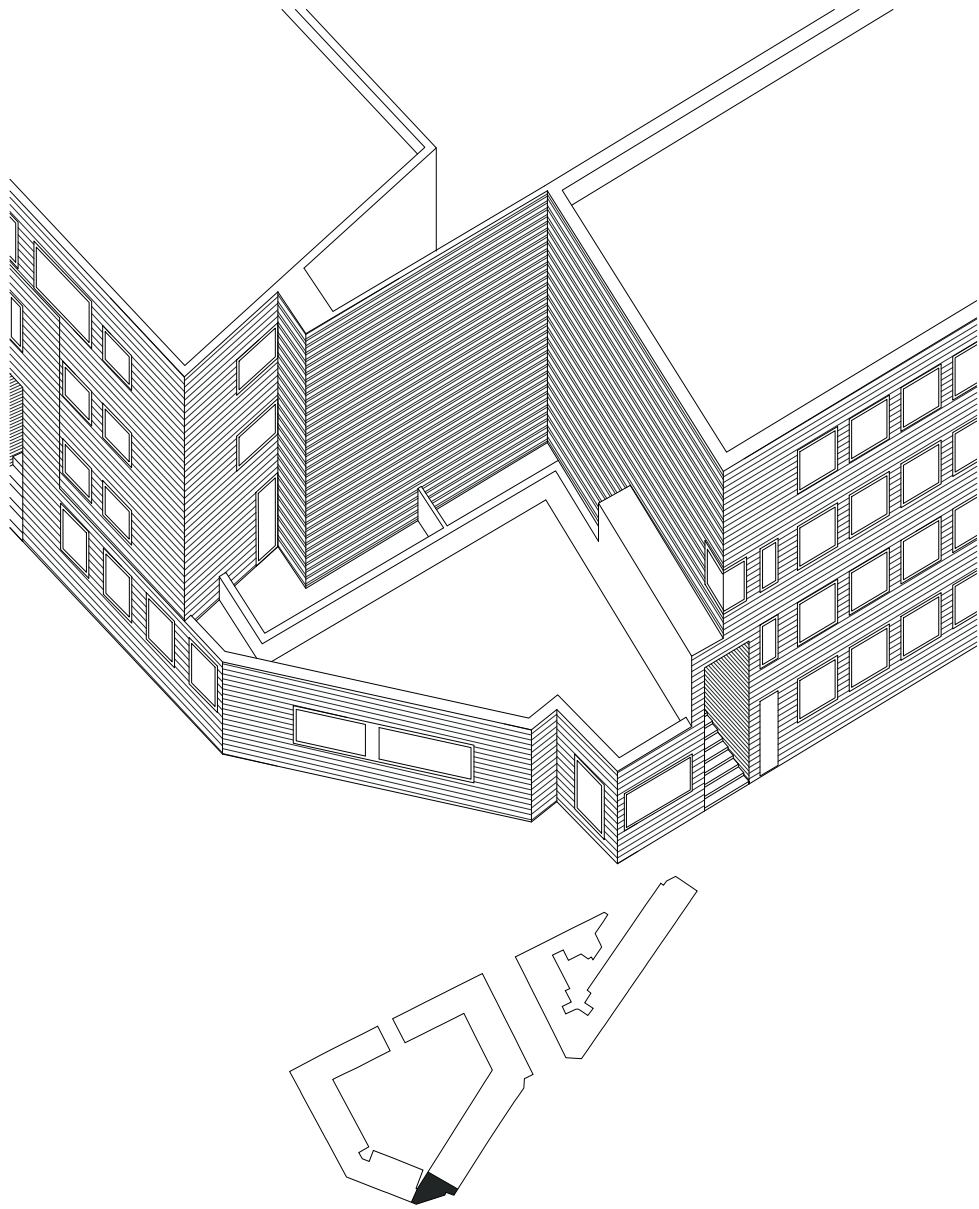


Fig. 19. Corner solution at the block's corner. Source: Author.

Conclusion and synthesis

The research started with a theoretical framework written first by Lefaivre and Tzonis and later re-interpreted by Kenneth Frampton - Critical Regionalism. The analysis of this theory was connected to a case study of Alvaro Siza's Punt en Komma social housing project in Den Haag, which is described as one of the examples of a regionalist approach to the architecture. Undoubtedly, the project and architect's strategy can be described through the idea introduced by Frampton, however, Siza's project pushes it a further than the boundary set by Critical Regionalism. Critical Regionalism: Six points for Architecture of Resistance addresses the topics strongly related to the region or particular area and proposes the architectural turn which lies between postmodern literality and modern universality. The most important factor - in my opinion - which Frampton rises is the uniqueness of the site, where he states that the relationship with the regional environment should not come through blind copying the vernacular solutions. The uniqueness of the design comes from the limits of the regional environment. Without considering the limits of regional architecture, the international style is created. The Critical Regionalism proposes to read the space through the body, whereas post-modernism uses symbols and media industry to reach it. After analyzing the Frampton's text, I came to the conclusion that he raises important issues regarding modern architecture, however, it also has its limits. Frampton addresses mainly spatial qualities which define a certain region and of course underlines the idea of being critical in terms of interpretation. When starting to analyse the case study of Alvaro Siza, the idea of Frampton seems more tactile, but also I realised that the framework of a certain theory is limiting the interpretation of the project.

Alvaro Siza's Punt en Komma in Den Haag is his first project made outside Portugal, next to the Bonjour Tristesse in Berlin - both made during Urban Renewal Programmes. The strategy of spoliating his buildings to the context is sometimes visible on a first glance or after a closer look at the building. Nevertheless, Siza shows that his work is not based on certain theory or concept, but on recreating collective memory of the place, which he found when came to the site. The project made in Den Haag shows how Alvaro Siza was sensitive to the urban fabric which he found on the place and how did he interpret it to create his structure. Of course, there was a huge amount of criticism to the buildings due to their links to vernacular architecture - whereas the demanded style was modernist, cutting off the past and looking into innovative future. At this point, I think there comes the resistance, that Frampton writes about, that Alvaro Siza stood his ground and realised the project according to his intuition and interpretation of the given space. Nevertheless, Siza does not show himself as selfish architect-dictator. He expresses his concern about the place - while fighting for preserving the school building, the reminiscence of the past of this place - and also through collaborating

with the community which was already living there. The social context is especially important in this case and Siza could show his experience gained during the SAAL project. The project outcome is a compromise between two different cultures of living within the residential neighbourhood with its memory. It is certain that Siza can be named regionalist, but I would say that he also takes his strategy further than this. Through a critical assessment of the given context and cultural values, he created a project well settled in the reality he found in a place.

It is worth to mention that Critical Regionalism is a theory written in 1983, which makes one question its contemporary relevance. Undoubtedly, it was a response to the rising dominance of post-modernist style in architecture, however – it also did not promote modernism. One of the main conclusion which can be drawn from reading *Towards Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance* is that theory positions itself between post-modernist literacy and modernist universality raised by technical advantages. Of course, referring it to today's times is not easy and detailed interpretation should take into account different circumstances. Nevertheless, the essence of this manifesto remains the same and by looking into the problem one can even spot that contemporary, globalized world has much more problems with defining identity than it was in the 1980s. Another important thing is that the theory does not promote coming back to vernacular roots, but creates a room for interpretation of these values – of course critically. The problem outlined by Frampton can still be found as an important issue of modern architecture which has to deal with the fast-growing of the cities, sustainability issues and therefore the development of technology – especially in the time when international submissions for architects are not exceptions, but in most cases everydayness. This pace of growing demands and shrinking deadlines makes it difficult for proper studying of context and ends up in standardized structures optimized to meet all demands. An important issue in the discussion about regionalism is whether today, when all boundaries are blurred, there is anything like region at all and if it is, what are its extents? Those are questions which on one hand put in doubt the relevance of Frampton's theory, but on another open up new ways of interpretation.

However, the theory of critical approach to space has its limits and that is a part where Alvaro Siza's design strategy pushes it further than just an assessment of the region. Punt en Komma project in Schilderswijk is relevant for today's times because it deals with the community from another culture living in a place – a state of affairs which is common for almost every city in the world today. Case study of Alvaro Siza's project shows how the architect both recognised the spirit of the neighbourhood, worked with 'as found' elements like typologies, scale and materiality and connected two cultures which seem to represent opposite ways of living. However, the project also shows how the designer focused on the interpretation of 'as found' things, which create a collective memory of the place. Worth noticing thing is also how did the architect inscribe culture of his origin into the design. However, the architect's approach is compared to archaeologist by Nelson Mota in his doctoral thesis "Archeology of the Ordinary" where he underlines Siza's approach to preserve the 'as found' notion of place. Back then, the idea of referring to vernacular architecture connected with a specific approach of Urban Redevelopment in Schilderswijk raised a lot of criticism, because of expectations of showing the progressive, modern way of designing neighbourhood and not coming back to the tradition. Siza, however, did not reconstruct the past literally but interpreted it in a modern way. Additionally, his approach of involving the local community into the design process gave an experimental outcome and settled the project way further than just in spatial conditions of the site, giving a response to the reality he found in a place.

In Maurilia, the traveler is invited to visit the city and, at the same time, to examine some old post cards that show it as it used to be: the same identical square with a hen in the place of the bus station, a bandstand in the place of the overpass, two young ladies with white parasols in the place of the munitions factory. If the traveler does not wish to disappoint the inhabitants, he must praise the postcard city and prefer it to the present one, though he must be careful to contain his regret at the changes within definite limits: admitting that the magnificence and prosperity of the metropolis Maurilia, when compared to the old, provincial Maurilia, cannot compensate for a certain lost grace, which, however, can be appreciated only now in the old post cards, whereas before, when that provincial Maurilia was before one's eyes, one saw absolutely nothing graceful and would see it even less today, if Maurilia had remained unchanged; and in any case the metropolis has the added attraction that, through what it has become, one can look back with nostalgia at what it was. Beware of saying to them that sometimes different cities follow one another on the same site and under the same name, born and dying without knowing one another, without communication among themselves. At times even the names of the inhabitants remain the same, and their voices' accent, and also the features of the faces; but the gods who live beneath names and above places have gone off without a word and outsiders have settled in their place. It is pointless to ask whether the new ones are better or worse than the old, since there is no connection between them, just as the old post cards do not depict Maurilia as it was, but a different city which, by chance, was called Maurilia, like this one.²

2 Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013: 30-31

EXHIBITION

P1 exhibition

The results and conclusions from this part of the research were exhibited and presented during the P1 presentation of Urban Architecture Graduation, which was held on 01 of November 2019 at the Faculty of Architecture of Delft University of Technology. Among this part of the group research on Spolia/Bricolage, there were four other groups presenting the findings on the topics of Unstable City, The Senne, Working and living, "Who's Neighbourhood?". The discussion after the presentation revealed the fact that the collective memory is triggered by elements in space, which Siza extracted perfectly during his site visits and design process. I found collective memory as one of the possible ways of developing a language for interpretation the context of a place and critical elaboration on its history.

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Fig. 20. Exhibition picture. Source: Author.



Fig. 21. Exhibition picture. Source: Author.



Fig. 22. Exhibition picture. Source: Author.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY AS A DESIGN TOOL

Introduction

Research conducted in form of the case study of Schilderswijk Social Housing Punt en Komma by Alvaro Siza with simultaneous reviewing theory of Critical Regionalism written by Kenneth Frampton gave interesting conclusions regarding the way how architect approached foreign context. One of the most important conclusions is that Siza's works compared with Rossi's Architecture of The City and Frampton's Critical Regionalism reveal architect's own way, which has a bit in common with those two and contains Siza's own methods. One of the most interesting of them is how he managed to preserve collective memory and identity of the designed area despite working within the complete urban renewal of the place. Therefore, the idea of further research on the theme of collective memory, collective history and identity appeal relevant for describing the project's idea.

The idea of collective memory is an often-cited concept in the literature about architecture and urban planning. The perspective I would like to focus on is the regionalist approach for creating the local identity of the place. One of the main questions that have arisen during literature review regards elements in space, which can trigger collective memory, about their placement and form. This question can lead to the revealing of several patterns of dwelling the space. This raises an important problem of cultural identity, which is more elaborated in the work of Liana Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis in Critical Regionalism. The problem of lacking identity and being lost in transition applies to the Anderlecht neighbourhood, where the site is located. The place, however, despite lacking continuity and being scattered both in scale and function carries a huge amount of collective memory patterns, which can be crucial in the design stage.

The research's subject is collective memory in different concepts as presented by Aldo Rossi and Christine Boyer, whose theories will be reviewed during the research stage. However, collective memory is only a definition opening further discussion regarding architecture and space, being the term connecting those two. However, collective memory is a part of the as-found situation of the place, which is bonded with elements and places creating this space. The potential for carrying collective memory's within certain objects in space could be the knowledge, which helps to set out the design strategy. One of the main questions raised is what is collective memory? Following the chosen methodology and knowledge gained in previous stages of the research, it leads to another one which is how elements in space trigger collective memory? Which is left as an open question regarding the scale – interpreting an “element” both as a space, surface, part of the building, function etc. One final question – last but not least from the perspective of an architect – is how to critically approach those patterns and interpret them into an architectural project, which can be explained within the case studies. Those questions aim to provide an answer to the architecture's potential of carrying collective memory.

One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places. The city is a locus for collective memory. This relationship between the locus and the citizenry then becomes the city's predominant image, both of architecture and of landscape and as certain artefacts become part of its memory, new ones emerge.³

³ Rossi, Aldo, and Peter Eisenman. *The architecture of the city*. MIT Press 1982: 130

Collective memory in the literature

Collective memory as the concept is relatively new and in the beginning, it was the main concern of sociology, philosophy and anthropology. Maurice Halbwachs – one of the most important sociologists, who investigated collective memory as a concept – focused on his work on the memory's relation with space and time. In his book, "On Collective Memory", released in 1976 he indicated that the society has a memory and it differs from individual memory. The individual memory is a mental skill that allows remembering and link places with certain points in time, the collective memory is shared between people within the certain community and this kind of memory is influenced by belonging to certain culture, doctrine or community.⁴ Eviatar Zerubavel in his book also mentions that collective memory does not have to be a representation of one's personal experiences, but these memories represent some group's background throughout history. The people creating a certain group does not necessarily have to live the same experience, but this kind of recollection can be passed through different generations. In contrary to history, collective memory does not focus on important events in time. According to Maurice Halbwachs, the community establishes and develops its memory according to the needs, ideas and tendencies.⁵ Therefore, collective memory leads to strengthening the bonds between people within certain community what results in creating a certain identity within the community and belonging to a certain place.

⁴ Zerubavel, Eviatar. *Social mindscapes: an invitation to cognitive sociology*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. 1977.

⁵ Halbwachs, Maurice, and Lewis A. Coser. *On collective memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2008.

The City Of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments

Christine Boyer in her book *The City of Collective Memory* stresses the concept of spatial representation of collective memory within the fabric of the city. The book was a response to the practices of historic preservation, urban design and postmodern tendencies in architecture. Boyer leads through the book by investigating changes within the perception of the city since the nineteenth century and how are those images being interpreted within contemporary concepts. The modern ideas of architecture often reach back to the history and traces of the past which were formed in specific places. However, inserted into contemporary contexts those designed fragments lose their meaning due to changing circumstances and different values. She claims that the role of history and memory should be reconsidered when they rely too directly on models or constructs, which were formulated in earlier periods of time. The crucial thing is both understanding these historical pictures in their original context and their relevance for contemporary cityscapes. An important thing which is pointed out is that these patterns cannot be transferred directly from the past without considering changes of a social, political and historical field of vision.⁶

The modernism was the time when the architecture lost the connection with the city and destroyed the visual illusion that the nineteenth century has put in, then the architects in the 1970s and 1980s did their best to restore this public realm of the city and reconstruct the sense of collectiveness and cooperation.⁷ This gesture, however, also was not the best possible solution, since it created individual and introvert buildings which were nowhere near nineteenth-century architecture, which followed constant and linear development of the style. Therefore, the city becomes scattered between various places of pictorial experiences which are not connected to each other. There was no normative design which would put it all together and bind those styles.

Since the early twentieth century, architecture has been a commodity as well as a form of publicity, but now in the triumphant culture of consumption, designer skylines and packaged environments have become vital instruments enhancing the prestige and desirability of place.⁸

⁶ Boyer, Christine. *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 2006: 2

⁷ *Ibidem*: 4

⁸ *Ibidem*: 5



Fig. 23. Paul Citroen, Metropolis, 1922. Source: <https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/objects/83984.html>

The continuity

The City of Collective Memory – as Christine Boyer claims – is mainly interested in the creation of public space, which is meaningful and imaginative. The public space in the city is often a missed part of the urban fabric and it is widely misrepresented. Referring to the eighteenth century, public space usually was an honorific place celebrating the power of the queen or king. This concept of public space was transformed through nineteenth and twentieth-century designers into a more democratic public sphere. Those events led to a reconceptualization of the public into the rich and poor due to rising protests of working-class in the nineteenth century, what had a crucial influence on the public realm we know today. The image of civic space was restructured in the twentieth century where the “public” had different negative connotations and “private” was praised for giving freedom of choice or style of living. Public space started to disappear from the city in favour of private, which was a more valued kind of space. Those changes introduced further divisions among society, which promoted introvert schemes for cities with controlled spaces for a certain group of people. The collective memory demands specific configuration of urban topography, which covers all kinds of spaces. As Christine Boyer points out:

The public realm of the City of Collective Memory should entail a continuous urban topography, a spatial structure that covers both rich and poor places, honorific and humble monuments, permanent and ephemeral forms, and should include places for public assemblage and public debate, as well as private memory walks and personal retreats.⁹

This quote reminds me of reading of Christopher Alexander’s *Book of Patterns*, where the author introduces the pattern of activity nodes, underlining the importance of the connection between different parts of the public space. “Community facilities scattered individually through the city do nothing for the life of the city.”¹⁰ The same does Christine Boyer, which claims that designers usually strive to introduce those different kinds of spaces, however, they fail to provide a connection between them or give a specific relation to the history or people living within the city, which are what this city actually represents.¹¹

9 Ibidem: 9

10 Alexander, Christopher. *The Pattern Language*. Oxford University Press. 1977: 164

11 Boyer, Christine. *The City of Collective Memory: it’s historical imagery and architectural entertainments*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 2006: 11

Writing of the history

The memory within the fabric of the city is made mainly through the architectural entertainments or architectural expressions which spectator can find in those places. ¹²The full appreciation of the city by this spectator, however, should be not only thorough functional and formal terms, but also in figurative of interpretive ways as well.¹³ The modernism did not focus on creating picturesque streets and referring to history. Its agenda was quite contrary to those practices, cutting off all the references to past architectural styles and creating the architecture on its own. However, on the other hand, post-modernists pushed this to the extreme by providing too direct answers to the context which was also a doubtful method of creating a cityscape.

Memory crisis is visible in the modern city fabric and there were a lot of efforts put to bring back this notion, revealing the true need for places allowing for this memory creation.

So today we might say that the pervasive appearance of historic districts in our Western cities, the nostalgically designed theme parks and historically coded styles of life, have tilted the scale toward a contemporary form of memory crisis. Ripping fragments of buildings or artifacts from their original context and then collecting and preserving them in nineteenth-century museums is not that distinct an act from attempts to transform our present-day cities into outdoor museums whose architectural streetscapes and spatial stratas become privileged landscapes to explore in pleasure or dismay.¹⁴

12 Ibidem: 19

13 Ibidem: 19

14 Ibidem: 131

However, this quote shows some paradox which is visible in our cities today, which points out that the memory crisis is still an untouched problem within the city fabric – however appearance of the many preservation projects and conservative approaches show that the memory is still an important value for societies within urban areas. Christine Boyer also refers to Maurice Halbwachs about the re-creation of the historical spaces:

Maurice Halbwachs drew a distinction on his writings on “Collective memory” in the 1920s, noting that where tradition ends, history begins. As long as memory stays alive within a group’s collective experience, he argued, there is no necessity to write it down or to fix it as the official story of events. But when the distance appears, conferring its distinctions and exclusions, opening a gap between the enactments of the past and the recall of the present, the history begins to be artificially recreated.¹⁵

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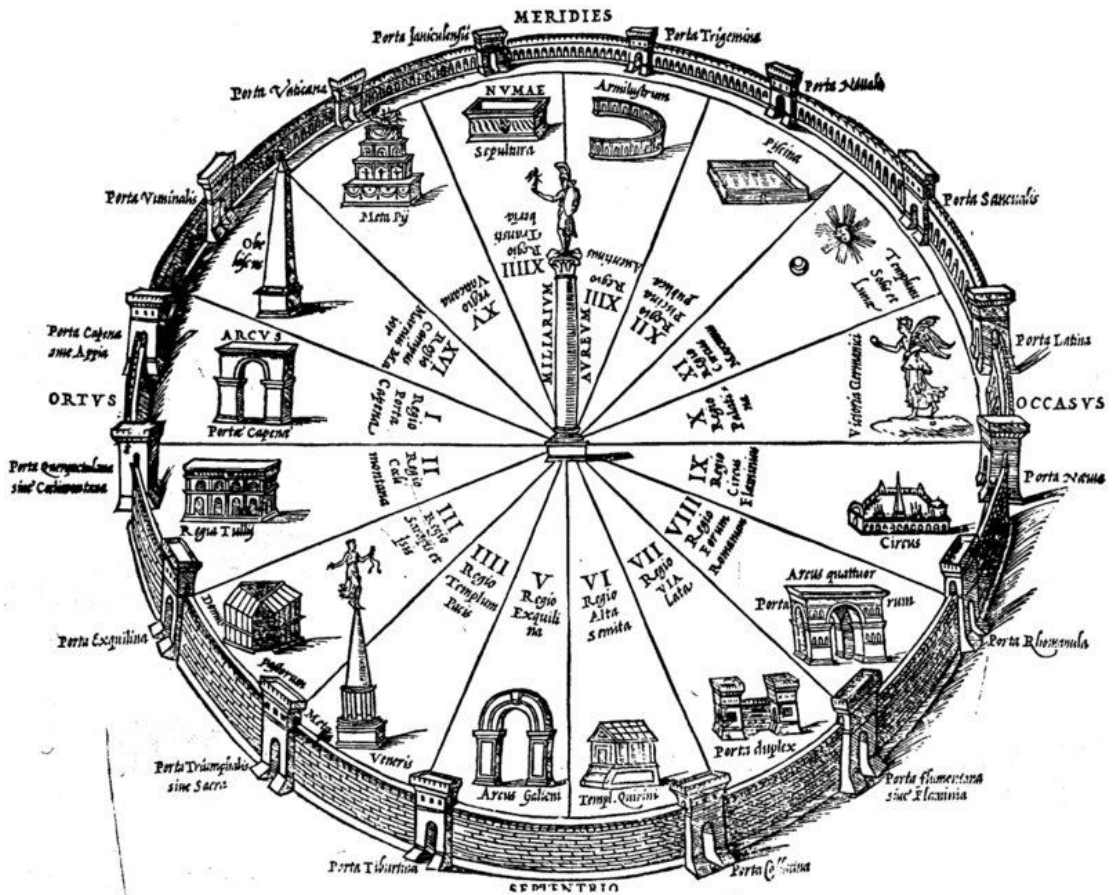


Fig. 24. Plan of Rome in the time of Augustus, ca. 1527. Source: <https://archiveofaffinities.tumblr.com/post/23953897852/rome-during-the-time-of-augustus-an-engraving>

15 Ibidem: 133

Creation of memory

This raises another important issue which is a dilemma between authentic and reconstructed history or other questions regarding conservation and preservation. Nevertheless, I think that Christine Boyer raises important issues in her book, especially when talking about the instruments of memory within the cities and contemporary forms of the City of Collective memory. An important part is also the fact that the author does not only depend on the monumental imagery of the city but also points out the ordinary places of creating a memory, which applies to the whole society and not only the specific part of it.

Treasures are to be found in the artifacts of cities, in the deep structures that configure their form. These Geddes claimed were the real reasons for preserving a city's architectural history – not because some notable person slept there or a historic event occurred in the town, but instead because these possessions revealed the city's social and physical formation.¹⁶

One of the important factors playing a role in the memory creation is public space – as pointed out before, its history and evolution within the time left the general notion as non-positive space. Especially this privatization of public space is visible within newly built neighbourhoods and districts, which still mainly refer to introvert schemes limiting the insight and providing private promenades.

The efforts of contemporary urban design and historic preservation, witnessed in the repetition of historic districts, revitalized waterfronts, recycled monumental structures, restylized public places, rebeautified Main Streets, and gentrified neighbourhoods, appearing in almost every major city of the Western world, imply that these gestures capture some popular fantasy. No matter how historically posed and trivialized these efforts may sometimes appear, these historical tableaux have established our perception of what late twentieth-century city space appears to look like. A strange sense of urbanism now invades this city of deconstruction full of inconsistencies, fractures, and voids. Homogenized historic zones protected for their architectural and scenographic value are juxtaposed and played off against areas of superdevelopment, while monumental architectural containers are designed intentionally to turn the urban privatized layers of shops, restaurants,

16 Ibidem: 221

offices and condominiums. In between and beyond lie the areas of the city left to decay, until the day when they too will be recycled and redesigned for new economic and cultural uses.¹⁷

There is a claim that reconstructing the past cannot be completely possible due to the fragmented history of some places. Always there are going to be some information missing so the complete reconstruction will also be inaccurate. The city promenade is one of the discussed examples which refers directly to the argument about the privatization of public space. In that place, there is also another layer which considers time as the parallel to space, whereas the promenade allows the full experience of the change and transition. The helpful method, in that case, becomes mapping, which allows introducing different factors on the spatial representation of a certain area. Through doing this, the map becomes a mixture of real and fictions imagery – the spectacular and the descriptive.¹⁸

Another discussed approach is the National Heritage, which points out the necessity and different strategies in the past to preserve the traditional architecture which was an image of a big amount of collective memories. This approach may seem obvious and it is indeed. However, the preservation should take into account the outdoor spaces and urban typologies as well, whereas in many cases this part is missed and heritage buildings, treated with special care, are becoming alienated parts of new urban fabrics which follow different principles. Christine Boyer's book gives a lot of complex insight into historical precedents for collective memory within the cities we know today. The most important point which she focuses about is the public space and its relation with the architecture and traditional images of the cities from the nineteenth century. The important thing is also the fact that many contemporary approaches to the preservation or showing the history of the place are missing the point due to changing circumstances and completely different dynamics of today's world. The resemblance I found within Boyer text to previous ones I have read is that she also positions herself between the modernist and post-modernist approach, which is familiar with the Kenneth Frampton's position – however, Frampton talks about the completely different scale and factors determining architecture.

17 Ibidem: 372

18 Ibidem: 206

Architecture of the city

Aldo Rossi, in his book *Architecture of The City* also refers to the collective memory as a factor defining the city. There is a lot of resemblance between his and Christine Boyer's version of defining collective memory, however, he puts it into a quite different context and provides a different perspective on this idea. Rossi also refers his points to the perception of the city and discovering certain elements – or in other words urban artifacts – which have value in the whole as well as in their own individual form. The primary elements in architecture are the means which define the city and the city is the mean which gives them significance. The most important thing, however, is the relationship between those elements – not the elements alone. The book is also a critique towards modern architecture, which breaks the subject-object relationship and erases all experiences which could be possible when experiencing the street – and in the effect – creates strong limitation to memory creation. Therefore, the Author introduces the mediating element between those two – the process of work. There are numerous typological and historical references introduced, which are not about literal and direct references to the past, but more as constructs bearing an imprint of the past and future actions which are going to happen in the place. A typology for Rossi is an instrument of measurement of time. In the effect, the history – the skeleton – and the typology – an apparatus – is the becoming the process.¹⁹

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The locus

Aldo Rossi also introduces the term locus, which is interpreted also by other writers and researchers. The locus is defined by Rossi as the element's relationship to the specific location. The locus is a component of an individual artifact, which is determined by space and time, but not only. Topography and form are introduced as equally important factors, which influence the element. However, the most important thing is the continuous successions of the ancient and more recent events happening in the place. There the texts of Christine Boyer and Aldo Rossi connect each other when speaking about the continuity. Both authors talk about the importance of the factor of time and the succession of events. For both as well it is a part of a critique of modernist approaches which break this continuity. The locus is closely related to the memory and in essence, to what makes us human and allows the remembrance of the symbolic environment, which exceeds the temporal and spatial limitations of an individual.

Buildings may be signs of events that have occurred on a specific site; and this threefold relationship of site, event, and sign becomes a characteristic of urban artifacts.²⁰

19 Rossi, Aldo, and Peter Eisenman. *The architecture of the city*. MIT Press. 1982: 5

20 *Ibidem*: 7

The collective memory

To start considerations about Rossi's idea about collective memory, there is a need to introduce the "memory" genesis which is introduced. The relationship between history and memory is marked by the use of the object – which means the time when the form still relates to its original function. When only the form remains important, the history ends up and the memory begins. History is known through the relationship between a collective memory of events, the singularity of place and the sign of place expressed in form.²¹ For instance, the process of imprinting form on the city is the urban history, but it is the succession of events which happen within this city which creates a memory. The new time of architecture then is this memory, which replaces history in a particular place. "The soul of the city" is an introduced term, which Rossi derives from French Urban Geographers and uses for describing the idea of collective memory. This soul is the city's history, character and its memory.

The city is considered to be the locus for collective memory and its relationship with attachment to the place creates the image of the city of both architecture and landscape. The collective memory is a value of the history of a certain place which helps to understand individuality and architecture of the urban structure. Therefore, the idea of the past and present exist in every city and in order to be realized, this idea should be shaped both by reality and the interpretation – explained as the idea we have of it. Also, in this book, there is also a reference to Maurice Halbwachs's text, where he states that the imagination and collective memory are the typical characteristics of urban artifacts.²²

21 Ibidem: 7

22 Ibidem: 33

Typology

The typology is introduced as an evolving element since the beginning of the history of architecture. Typology becomes independent of form and gives the possibility for memory to be carried through the history of the architectural piece and connected to the events of the city itself. Rossi has a strong belief that history can be analysed through the typologies. A typology is a basic unit and the principle which precedes the form, this notion of permanence of typology was also explained through the autonomy of the buildings. Type reacts with the technique, function or style. The house with a loggia is introduced as an example of an unchanging type of residential architecture and type of housing since antiquity. However, Rossi claims at the same time, that the typologies of houses did not change, but the way of living did change completely. Therefore, the variations on the theme around this typology allow further adjustments. Peter Eisenman mentioned this idea in the introduction to the book.



Fig. 25. Palazzo Della Ragione. Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Exterior_of_Palazzo_della_Ragione_%28Padua%29.jpg

The new time of architecture is thus that of memory, which replaces history. The individual artifact for the first time is understood within the psychological construct of collective memory. Time as collective memory leads Rossi to his particular transformation of the idea of the type. With the introduction of memory into the object, the object comes to embody both an idea of itself and a memory of a former self. Type is no longer a neutral structure found in history but rather an analytical and experimental structure which now can be used to operate on the skeleton of history; it becomes an apparatus, an instrument for analysis and measure.²³



23 Ibidem: 7

Analogous city

Rossi in his texts indicates that architecture should achieve formal autonomy in order to become meaningful and have an identity. Through separate identities, which are independent of each other, the reading of them becomes easier. Therefore also Rossi strived to put his attitude of working within a given context from a point of view of someone who is intervening. Despite this presented fragmentation of separate and independent elements, the Author is searching for the relationship between the memory and the city. The collective memory is leaving traces of past events or experiences which produce their monuments. The monuments can be interpreted as metaphors of places, events or spirits. Another observation is about the autonomous life of the buildings which supersede the primarily designed functions of them. As a proof, there are buildings of Theater at Arles or the Palazzo Della Ragione in Padua introduced as examples of autonomous structures which synchronized themselves with the process of urbanization, because they were not defined only by an original function, but because of their form which is able to accommodate different functions over time.²⁴

In almost all European cities there are large palaces, building complexes, or agglomerations that constitute whole pieces of the city and whose function now is no longer the original one. When one visits a monument of this type, for example the Palazzo Della Ragione in Padua, one is always surprised by a series of questions intimately associated with it. In particular, one is struck by the multiplicity of functions that a building of this type can contain over time and how these functions are entirely independent of the form. At the same time, it is precisely the form that impresses us; we live it and experience it, and in turn it structures the city.²⁵

24 Ibidem: 6

25 Ibidem: 29

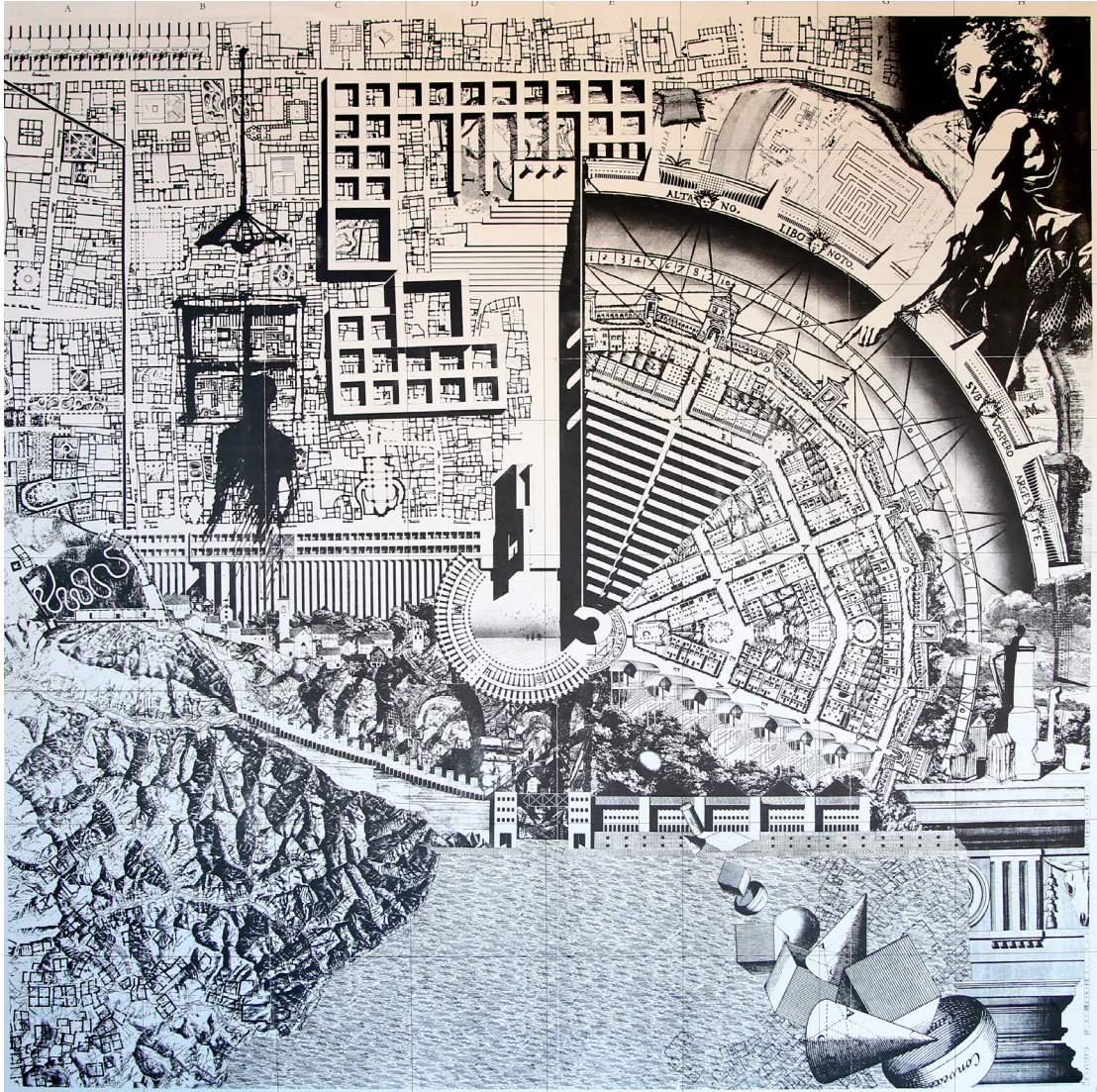


Fig. 26. Aldo Rossi. Analogous City. Collage. 1976. source: <http://website.museumofanthropocenetechology.org/cat-nr-22>

Conclusion and reflection

The human's memory usually connects certain past experiences and events with specific space which is defined by elements. In both discussed examples – Christine Boyer and Aldo Rossi – one of the main examples presented for the argument about looking for collective memory is a street and the public space. Space shared between a certain group of people can be a locus for collective memory in multiple ways. This memory can highly influence the identity of community with a particular place and therefore Boyer insists on introducing those civic areas to the urban fabric. The architectural order, monuments, symbols, preserved historical areas or elements in space can express this identity. On the other hand, one can find it in the overlapping patterns of everyday life, which can be both physical and non-physical.

Aldo Rossi sees the potential not within the buildings themselves – despite widely talking about urban artifacts and elements in space – but in the spaces between them which allow the memory to appear. The voids in the city which are creating the pattern of space which is constructing the overall skeleton of the city. Rossi's idea was about trying to find the collective memory within the city without affecting the autonomous spirit of the architecture. Therefore, the city becomes a place for intervention for an architect and the spaces around the buildings should be also taken into the design process. It also carries a lesson about the design methodology which allows to escape the modernist idea of isolated architecture and allow contemporary architecture to have expression as well as the possibility to collectively create the architecture of the street, place or public space and in a wider sense – the architecture of the city. One of the lessons from a reading of Rossi's theory is also about the creation of memory which can be influenced by autonomous architecture. The design of the building can be one of the factors deciding on its future function, but there is a proper design needed for this. However, the form of the building will always stay the same and will be influenced by the basic unit which functions within architecture – typology. What is more, Rossi draws importance of putting effort into the relation of the building with topography and form, but the most important of the locus is the relation with the past and present memories of the place.

Christine Boyer draws the importance of the distinction between the memory which is more connected to the certain nation and bigger group of people – which is mainly represented by important spaces and monuments – and the ordinary experiences of everydayness, which are inscribed into every neighbourhood and district. One of the conclusions which may be drawn from her book is that this search for border or distinction is not so successful. Nevertheless, the considerations are pointing out other important factors determining the city's character. This factor is the disappearing public space, which turns into privatised,

gated and closed areas limiting the possibility of creating collective memory. Therefore, the city becomes a collage of fragments, which need connection and continuity. However, the author also points out that the recalls to the past should be a conscious choice made critically and not just sentimental references. Due to changing circumstances and a completely different way of living, these approaches should be done with significant care.

Both authors also refer to Maurice Halbwachs's theory written in 1925, which was almost completely ignored in the post-war times in Europe. Also, it was Halbwachs's idea that the collective memory is constructed around some concept of space and only the spatial imagery is able to allow one to discover the past in the present. Aldo Rossi was one of the first who revived the idea of the collective memory through writing *The Architecture of The City* and then Christine Boyer continued and refreshed those theories by putting them into more contemporary contexts in her book *The City of Collective Memory*. Aldo Rossi and Christine Boyer both did not agree with modernism's principles. Both theories perceive the street-forming process as the linear and continuous series of events and evolution. Boyer refers to nineteenth-century to prove her argument; Rossi gives an example related to typology and the analogous city. Modernist architecture did not take into account the context and circumstances around the place, however – as Christine Boyer suggests – post-modern literacy also did not prove its point.

The most important lesson from both readings is that collective memory is everywhere and does not limit itself to the prestigious public spaces, monumental buildings or important sculptures. Despite being vast part of our national identity and memory which shapes us as people attached to certain region or country, there are many smaller memories which are imprinted into the neighbourhoods, streets and boulevards. Nevertheless, Christine Boyer is right when claiming that the public space becomes highly introvert and privatised, but there is also a positive turn within the urban design in Europe which promotes promenades and shopping streets as leading and important parts of the public realm. This recovery and extension bring the continuity of the street, which at least at one scale begins to being created collectively. However, there is still question about the architecture itself and its reaction about the possibility of carrying the collective memory and how – as Christine Boyer doubts – to recall history with simultaneous adjusting it to the present circumstances.

THE CITY AS A WORK OF ART

Until the end of nineteenth century, builders of modern industrial cities were absorbed with picture making, a practice in which the picture frame became emblematic of a closed and unified spatial order. [...] The picture frame defined narrative space as well, for there was an urban story to be told within its bounded frame.

Boyer, M. C. 2006. *The city of collective memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press: 33

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Fig. 27. Bellotto, Bernardo. *Veduta della piazza del mercato di Pirna*. Oil on canvas. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister. 1760. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

THE CITY AS A PANORAMA

But the inversions don't stop there: the stately urban square, that quiet oasis in the traditional city acting as a theatrical stage set for monumental architecture views, became transformed in the modern city into ramps, stairways, and elevators, points of exchange between public and private space.

Boyer, M. C. 2006. *The city of collective memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press: 45

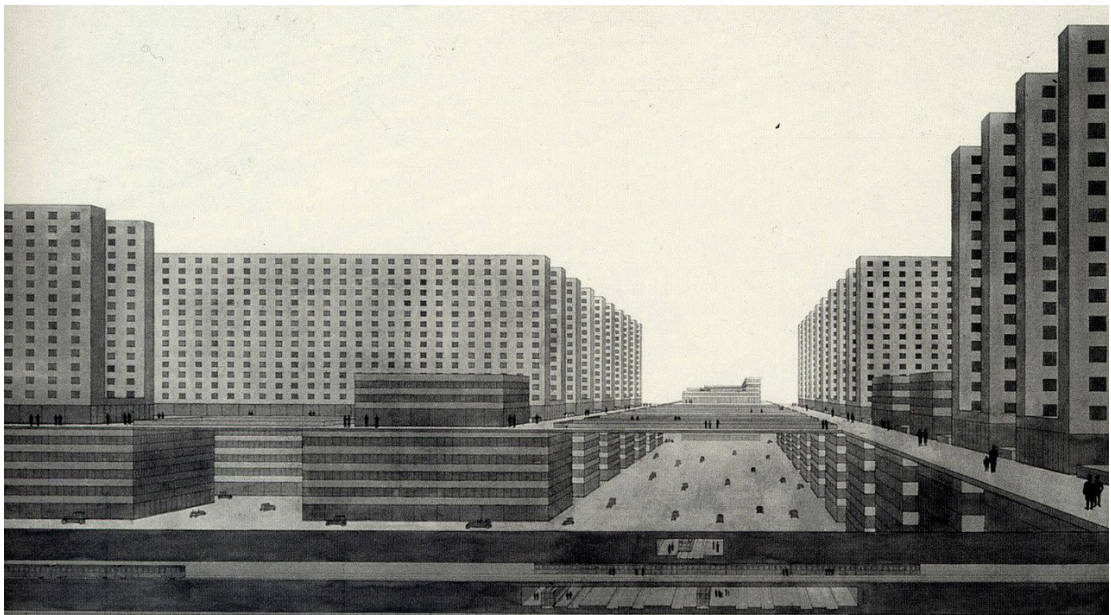


Fig. 28. Hilberseimer, Ludwig. *The Vertical City*. 1924. Source: <https://courseblogs.bard.edu/arth234s17/ludwig-hilberseimers-vertical-city/>

THE CITY OF SPECTACLE

The utopic disruptions of rational town planning, the boredom of their pure crystalline forms, produced in their wake the City of Spectacle, a city in which appropriations of historical styles and restaged scenographic allusions now become bounded nodes within an urban composition criss-crossed by highways and invisible electronic circuitry.

Boyer, M. C. 2006. The city of collective memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press: 47

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Fig. 29. Scott Brown, Denise. Las Vegas strip. 1950-1960. Source: <http://carriagetrade.org/Denise-Scott-Brown-Photographs>

INDIVIDUALITY OF URBAN ARTIFACTS

When one visits a monument of this type, for example the Palazzo Della Ragione in Padua, one is always surprised by a series of questions intimately associated with it. In particular, one is struck by the multiplicity of functions that a building of this type can contain over time and how these functions are entirely independent of the form. At the same time, it is precisely the form that impresses us; we live it and experience it, and in turn it structures the city.

Rossi, Aldo, and Peter Eisenman. *The architecture of the city*. MIT Press. 1982: 30



Fig. 30. Palazzo Della Ragione. Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Exterior_of_Palazzo_della_Ragione_%28Padua%29.jpg

DEFINING ARCHITECTURE'S CAPACITY FOR COLLECTIVE MEMORY

The complexity of definition

This part of the research paper for the project was intended to be a conclusion of the previous readings of Christine Boyer's *City of Collective Memory* and Aldo Rossi's *Architecture of the City*. The original plan for this part of the research was to extract the ideas about architecture's potential for gathering and linking people's collective memory and create the bond to the specific place at the same time. However, the definition of collective memory appeared to be much more complex than I would expect, therefore this part of the research would be a reflective essay divided into parts which define certain elements or – as Aldo Rossi would say – urban artifacts.

Another conclusion which draws out of readings of those two books is that the architecture itself works independently in other areas than the memory creation. The collective memory – as the name would suggest – is about creating the memory together, within the certain group and the same goes for architecture. The street, the courtyard, promenade and other realms existing within the city should represent this city as a whole – that is why so much importance lies on the continuity and linear development of the schemes instead of breaking up with all the rules existing within the city to create one's own architectural piece which does not respond to the character of the place.

Despite the fact that most of the examples and ideas for them came up from the reading of Rossi's and Boyer's books – which in most cases are similar – the theory of Critical Regionalism by Kenneth Frampton is still somewhere and reminds itself during the considerations about the placeless architecture. I have stated before that the theory written by Frampton does not include the crucial aspect of community and culture, but every time the solid definition and analysis of local culture and memory is done, it has to be materialized within architecture. I would say that there is the point where Critical Regionalism becomes useful to define further spatial conditions which respond to the local context. During picking the elements for defining architecture's capacity for collective memory I have also turned into Christopher Alexander's *Pattern Language and Timeless Way of Building* which should be read simultaneously. The knowledge included in those pieces of work presents systematization of the definitions used within the city's spatial framework and points out some functional nuances which decide strongly on specific space's importance.

However, the list cites singular elements which can seem detached from each other, but the idea should be read quite on the contrary. All presented definitions should be read as self-dependent elements in the city and probably the separate part of the work should be committed to the connections and transitional spaces between all those kinds of spaces or elements creating the image of the city.

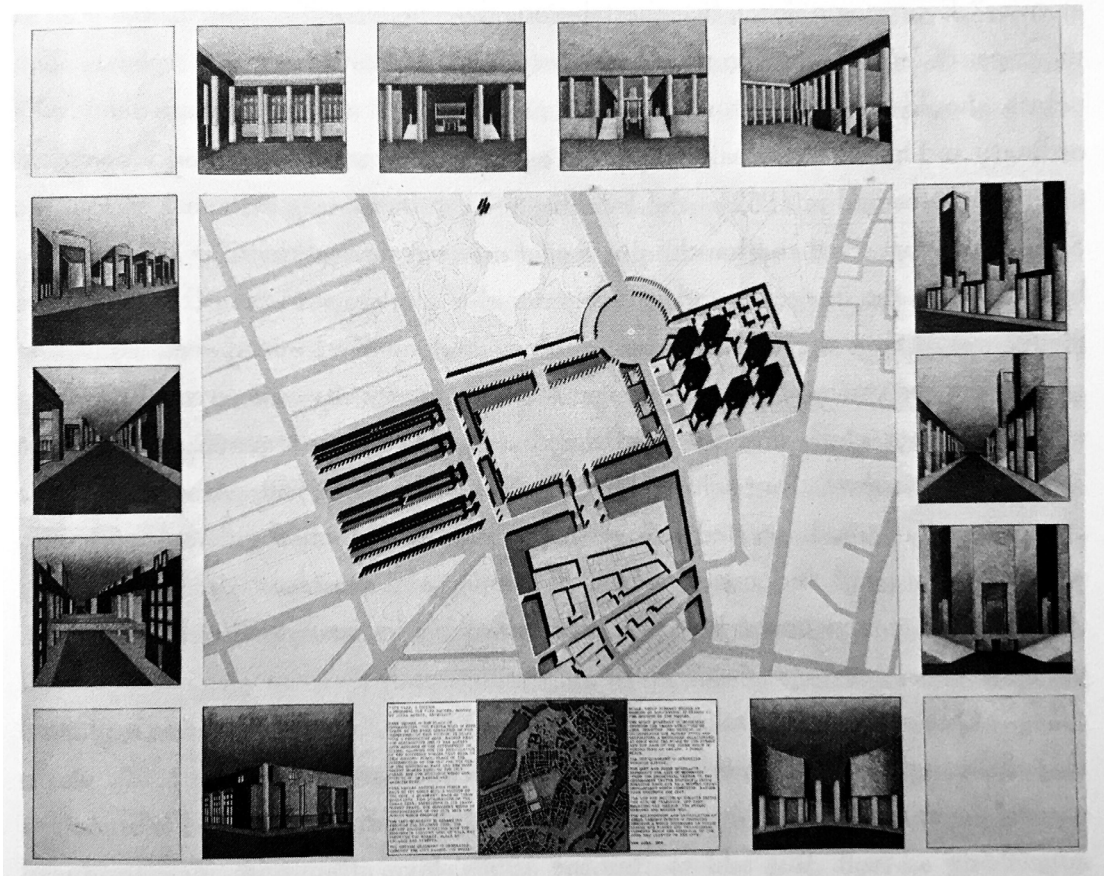


Fig. 31. Agrest, Diana. Type Wars: A Fiction. Proposal for Park Square Boston - site plan with old and new typologies defining public space. 1978. Source: Boyer, Christine. The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments. MIT Press. 1994: 55

01 Public space

The history of the public space – as Christine Boyer described – is a collective memory of itself due to various transitions and changes which strongly influenced society. Therefore it is a deep, complex theme visible within the city. However, public space in itself and all its transitions through history are a great example of how collective memory can be shaped in people's minds. This is also one of the reasons for the fact that so many writers refer to collective memory in terms of 'crisis'. Those transformations, involving the social strata left an imprint on today's image of public space that we know today. However, the public sphere of the city's infrastructure is an important part of people's memory, leaving also a lot of room for interpretation and involving a bigger scale of memorization of the city. Regarding the public space, contemporary circumstances place it within privatized, closed areas which are highly commercialized and this is one of the factors which excludes further development of the local identity within the place.

In totally remodelled districts, contrary to our expectations, we find that houses of entertainment, small theatres, unofficial money-changers and second-hand stores curiously reappear after a time. This is especially true of certain crafts, small businesses, and similar types of activity that are old-fashioned and no longer suited to the modern city. These activities are driven by an impulse acquired in the past and would quickly die if removed from their traditional locations. Certain small businesses are well patronized because, from time immemorial, they have been located at a site that marks them for public attention.²⁶

Maurice Halbwachs, in his book *On Collective Memory*, points out the necessity of placing small businesses within the gentrified areas. This aspect is also one of the talking points within the theory of Critical Regionalism, which talks about commodification leading to disappearing of vernacular within certain regions. This aspect is particularly important in considerations about suburban areas, which usually are not so commercialized due to the location of lower prestige than the city centre. Thus it may seem that the challenge when approaching the suburban areas is not so important, but these areas face the gentrification issue which always creates danger of forcing out the small businesses in favour of commercialized ones.

The public space crisis also takes into account the inconsistency within the city planning in terms of the connections between those civic areas within the city as a whole. This idea, underlined by Christine Boyer, is particularly important due to the

26 Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago University Press. 1950. Chapter 4: 4.

history of the public space itself. However, this can be also found in Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language about the importance of activity nodes.²⁷ Alexander stresses the fact that in order to have an impact on the community, public squares – activity nodes – should be scattered around the city and densified with public amenities. Additionally, the connections between those spaces should be formed more as pedestrian-friendly promenades. This is one of the conditions which allow the creation of the identification with the place and as a result – the collective memory of this area. However, there is also still an important factor determining this, which is putting the local services and shops instead of commercial big ones within those areas.

Another crucial fact within the public space network is the form of the promenade, also mentioned by Christopher Alexander in his book. The existence of this kind of street gives a possibility of public life to appear in a dynamic, linear axis connecting two different places. "Each subculture needs a centre for its public life: a place where you can go to see people and to be seen."²⁸ The vision and remembering pictures is also an important part of collective memory creation and providing places where – beside the architectural scale – there is a place to stroll for pedestrians, there is a chance that the people will start identifying themselves with those kinds of areas.

The privatization of public space is being recognized as a problem for European cities nowadays. However, there are constant approaches leading to recover the public realm within the city based on creating the boulevards and trying to recreate street life within some places. The Netherlands can be cited as one of the examples, where the public life is being created on the streets and squares and there are various scales involved. From the architectural one, which takes the figure-ground as a public space opened to the street, up to the urban morphology of the cities which are trying to be healed or restructured to become more pedestrian-friendly. The street-based urbanism is not something which designers have to invent from scratch, because the all the needed conditions are still there. The real problem is on the level of politics and the focus of the planning of the city life for the future.

²⁷ Alexander, Christopher. A Pattern Language. Oxford University Press.1977: 163-167
²⁸ Ibidem: 169

02 Shared space

The shared space – a residential quarter for example is another kind of space where collective memory can be created. It is important to notice, that the courtyard is a kind of space which rather involves smaller amount of people, creating certain community living in a place. However, Christine Boyer states that the quarter is an essential element of the city to study, because each one has its own characteristics but is still related to the whole.²⁹ The collective space, in fact, creates a buffer between public and private, and its design strongly defines the way of creating a community within a certain place. However, the important aspect is also the relation between collective and private space.

Collective space, its form and use is strongly determined by the local culture. It is another typological element defining architecture surrounding it. The built environment can respond to the character of this space, giving a possibility of having private outdoor space for inhabitants and allowing self-expression of the people living around the shared space. It is also a place where inhabitants feel comfortable and can identify themselves with the area they are living in.

The common land has two specific social functions. First, the land makes it possible for people to feel comfortable outside their buildings and their private territory, and therefore allows them to feel connected to the larger social system – though not necessarily to any specific neighbour. And second, common land acts as a meeting place for people.³⁰

²⁹ Boyer, M. C. 2006. The city of collective memory: its historical imagery and architectural entertainments. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press: 17

³⁰ Alexander, Christopher. A Pattern Language. Oxford University Press.1977: 337

03 Landmark

Landmark can be considered as the controversial element of the space or specific neighbourhood. However, referring to the collective memory one can conclude that the landmarks are also the ones which always influenced the most remembrance of certain places. Important places or buildings shape the feeling of belonging to a place. Furthermore, their presence allows people to distinguish the place among others within the city. The landmark does not necessarily refer to the volume of the building, but also to its function. Nevertheless, that is one of the types of elements in space which create the visual appearance of the city perpetrated on old photographs or paintings.

The landmark, however, is strongly related to the idea of public space and activity nodes mentioned by Christopher Alexander and this is one of the ways to tackle the importance of places when re-creating places in the city, but from the architectural scale. However, these topics are interlocking and architecture has to respond to the kind of space which is around it.

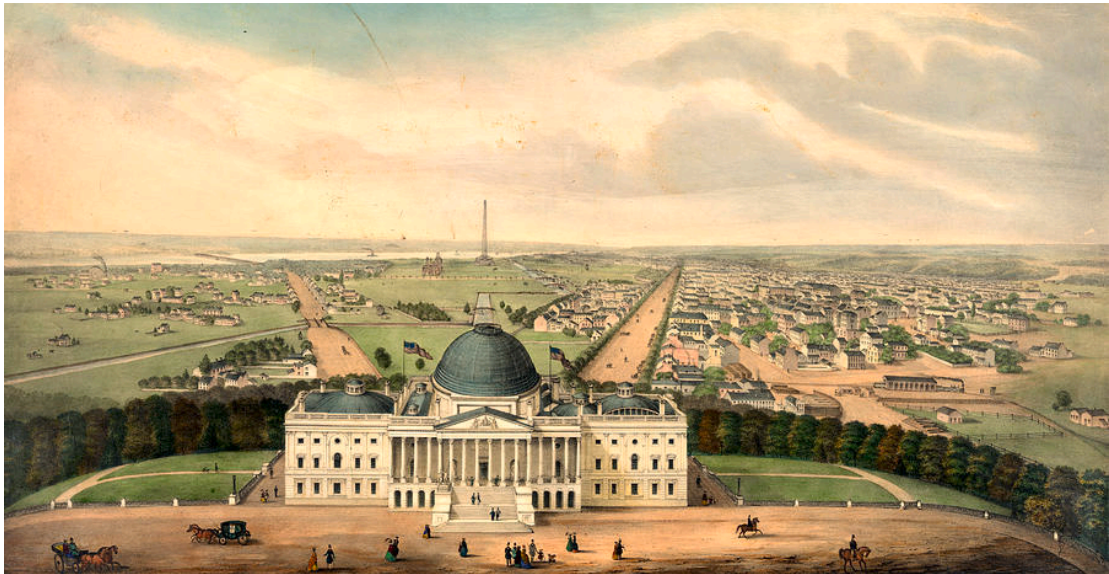


Fig. 32. Smith, Robert. View of Washington. Drawing. 1850. Source: <https://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large-5/view-of-washington-circa-1850-by-robert-pearsall-smith-litz-collection.jpg>

04 Typology

Typology, as mentioned by Aldo Rossi is one of the primary elements constituting to the creation of the architecture in the city. The type of building and its linear development is something that both Christine Boyer and Aldo Rossi bring as examples of collective creation of the street. The evolution of the typology should consider its relevance to the contemporary form of the city. In terms of creation of the memory, typology offers a wide range of interpretations and plays its part in the autonomy of the building. As Aldo Rossi describes, building's typology is one of the elements which stays bonded with the structure even if its primary function is gone. Therefore, when considering future developments of the architectural pieces within the city, the typology should be one of the most considered ones.

Christine Boyer stresses the importance of a critical approach to reconstructing the past. She also brings the importance of continuity and collective creation of the street, however – in contrast to Rossi – her approach does not consider mediating the space with modernist approaches. However, the transfer of typologies from the past to contemporary circumstances should not be done without taking into account the changing dynamics of society and other factors. Rossi claims that the typology is one of the primary elements which is only changed through the interpretation but still accommodates the same functional value.

This discourse must be extended in a manner parallel to that on typology, that is, by demonstrating how the presence of form, of architecture, predominates over questions of the functional organization, and by denying all theories that attempt to return questions of typology to the realm of the organization of buildings. The form is absolutely indifferent to the organization precisely when it exists as a typological form. I began this book by referring to the Palazzo Della Ragione in Padua, and I still cannot think of a more illustrative example.³¹

Nevertheless, typology is the aspect of the building which defines how people within certain region live and spend their time. It might be hard to tell how exactly those typological considerations apply to the globalised world, where the notion of a certain region is not visible anymore due to strong cultural mix. Therefore reconstructing of the past may seem an interesting idea applied to some kinds of places, but not useful at all in contemporary conditions. Designers have to keep their focus on elements in space which really constitute the reality happening in the area and then define which ones could be useful for interpretation in the future.

31 Rossi, Aldo, and Peter Eisenman. *The architecture of the city*. MIT Press. 1982: 174

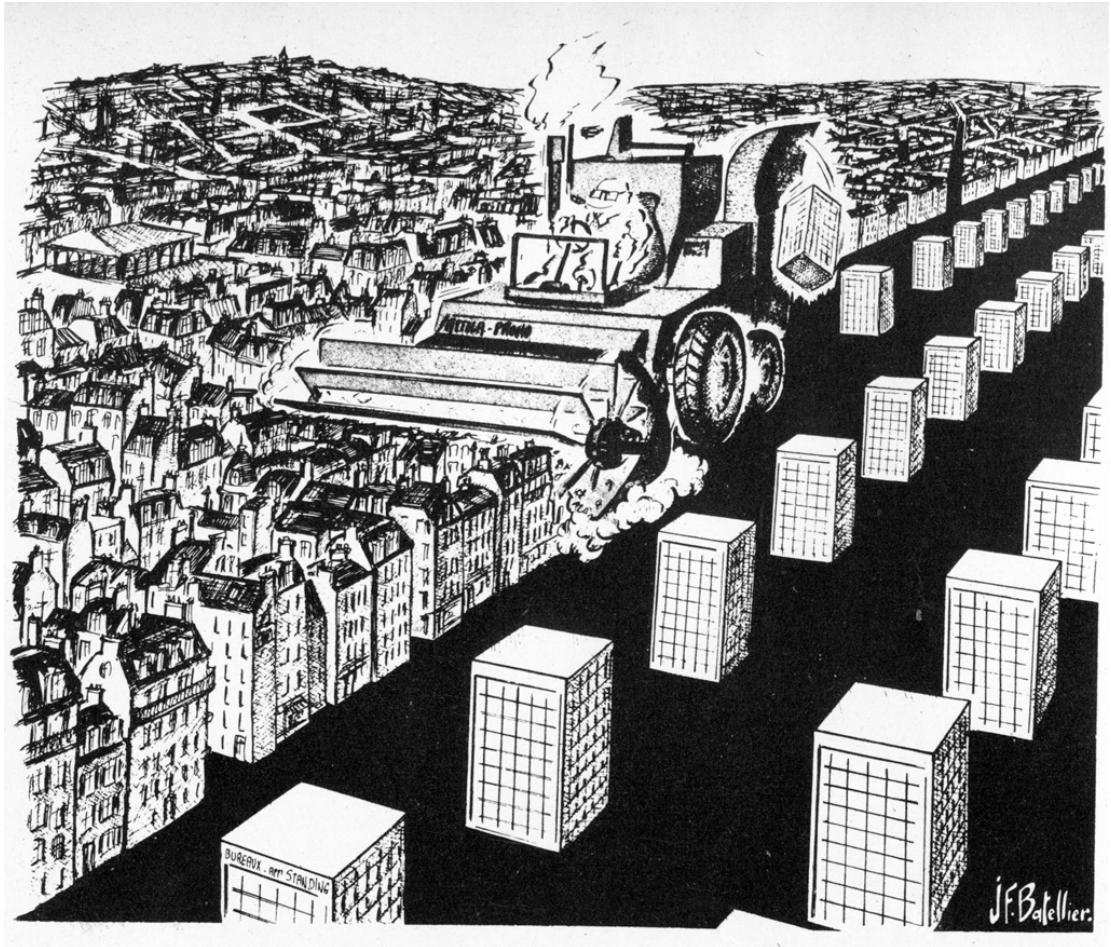


Fig. 33. Batellier, J. F. Cartoon on the process of Urban Renovation. 1979. Source: <http://arquitecturamashistoria.blogspot.com/2011/03/4-anos-del-blog-parte-2-celebramos-con.html>

COLLECTIVE MEMORY IN PROJECTS

ALVARO SIZA, BONJOUR TRISTESSE

Urban Renewal of Berlin

In spring 1977 the new initiative started for Kreuzberg in Berlin. This whole project aimed to search for Kreuzberg's specific identity with the name Strategien für Kreuzberg. Urban renewal was supposed to show an alternative way of re-creating the city as opposed to the policy which was being held at the time. One of the principles was to bring a different way of renewing the urban fabric of Berlin. The new way of city planning was supposed to involve residents which were a crucial part of the renewal policy because of the high influx of new residents to the area. Most of the old inhabitants of Kreuzberg left due to the rising dilapidation of buildings. In effect, Kreuzberg became the place for all the immigrants coming to Berlin which was the triggering factor to invert this lack of engagement into the spatial project involving their voices into the final form. The goal was to bring back the perimeter block typology and continue it within the fabric of the city, but strive not to mimic the vernacular architecture. All the premises of the project seemed promising, however, the time was running out and the new building complexes had to be done. IBA-Berlin came up with two crucial developments which were Fraenkelufer and Schlesisches Tor and for both of them, Alvaro Siza had submitted his projects. In this part of the case study, I will focus on one of them – Schlesisches Tor, which was the only one that Alvaro Siza won and executed.

Schlesisches Tor competition

After the first competition, the second one was launched in 1980 for another block in the area of Schlesisches Tor, which was the main focus of Strategien für Kreuzberg section and the block's characteristic opened an interesting perspective of the renovation of existing buildings. Alvaro Siza was among the four architects invited to this competition which were asked to focus on the mixed zone and concept of the block as a whole. One of the ideas was also to mix the housing with different functions within the block, so the architects were asked to focus on three various places of the site to provide asked functions.

The first stage revealed that all the teams approached the scale of the block in a similar way, but using slightly different means to reach the goal. Alvaro Siza was the only one who did not interpret the block as a finished and concise form and instead of filling up the gaps on the borders of the block, leaving out some passages and wide entrances to the inside of the block. However, the important fact is that Alvaro Siza on that phase started to recognise the voids within the block and his intervention strived to preserve this image of the block. Instead of filling up the perimeters of the block, Siza decided to revive the inner courtyard

and bring the function to the inside of the block. In contrast to other proposals, the entrances to the quarter were more open and welcoming than just arcades and gates, which inscribed into the principles of the urban renewal. The project took into account courtyards as devices to improve collectiveness and strengthen the bonds as well as the functional mix what was strongly supported by stakeholders and local communities.

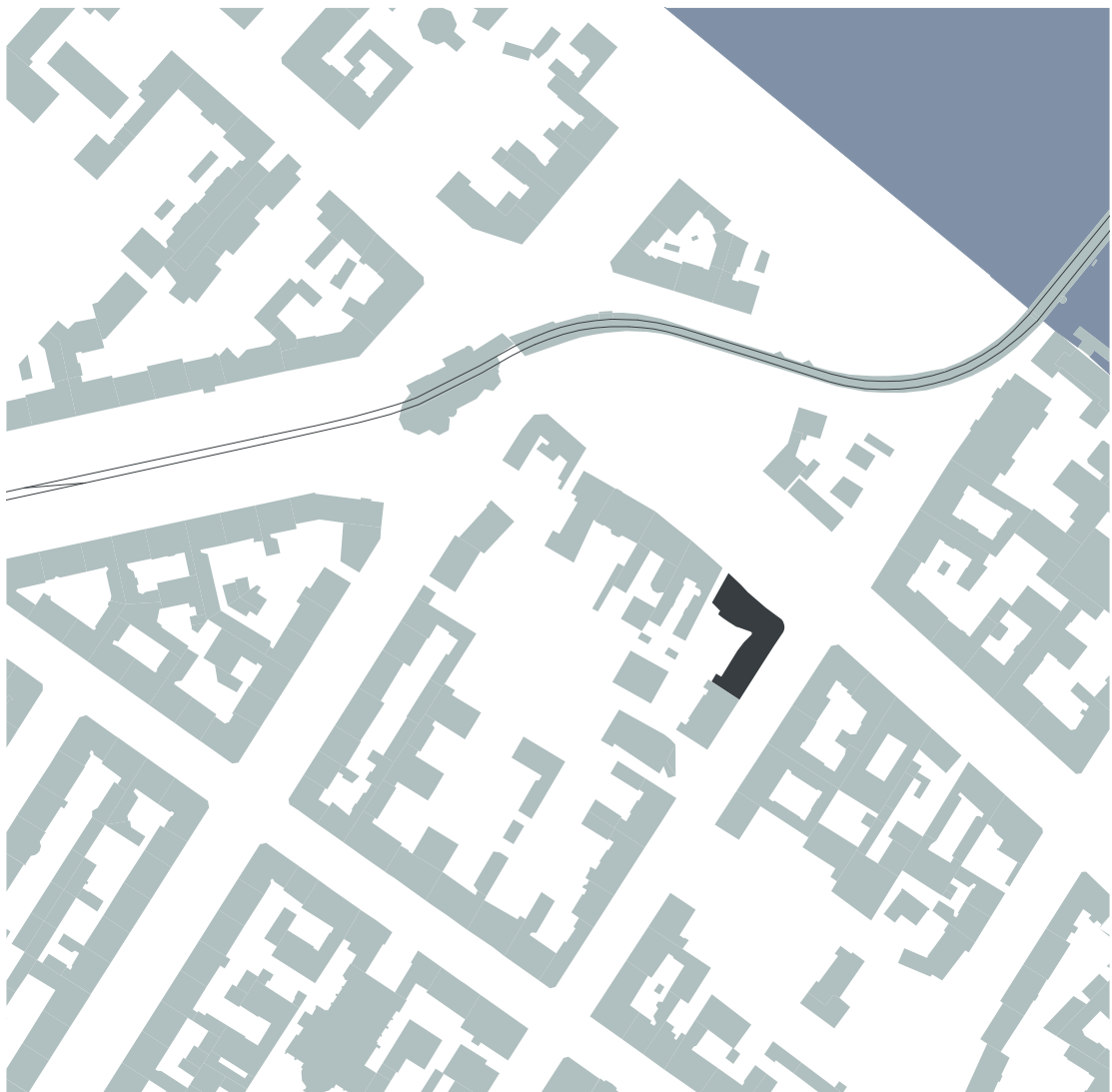


Fig. 34. Slesisches Tor area in Berlin with Bonjour Tristesse building marked, source: Author

The final choice

Alvaro Siza's proposal was selected the winner of the competition in 1980 but this decision did not come easy. Some of the jury members stood in opposition to the project, arguing that it is detached from the district's characteristic architectural features. Some of them said that the form does not fit the Kreuzberg's style and form. However, some of them also spotted that Siza in a very elaborate way reacted to the eckfragen (corner issue) which was an important feature for Kreuzberg. Thus, the final decision was not an easy choice, but the jury reached a consensus by picking it as a winning scheme but revising some parts of it in the future. In the next few years, Alvaro Siza would develop the next variations on the specific three buildings within the block, which were the corner residential building, the elderly people's club and the day-care centre. Last two schemes were not so complex, so two revised versions of the buildings allowed to reach an agreement between an architect and stakeholders. However, the corner building story is much more complex and Siza had to prepare four different versions to convince the board and push the project to the final execution.

In the primary stages, the elderly's club was located in the corner building. To reach an agreement between the sides in the project, its location was moved to the vacant plot within the block, which also met requirements which the jury concluded from other proposals as better solutions. All buildings designed by Siza in this place preserve the gap on the façade to emphasize the fragmentary character of the block. The corner block was the most problematic one as it dealt with the more important part of the block. The building's footprint did not change dramatically throughout the design process and continuous revising the design, but its proportions and the internal setting was a topic of long negotiations and decision-making processes.



Fig. 35. Different proposals for the Schlesisches Tor competition. Source: Author.

Series of compromises

The corner building – the most famous part of this Siza's project was a subject of many changes since the primary design. The evolution of the circulation, ground floor and project's scale also affected the building's final appearance from the street. Siza – famous for his interest in local communities and involving them to his projects also showed his interest in the Turkish immigrants living and appropriating this part of the block. That was expressed through the layout of the typical floor plan which gave a generous area to single dwelling unit which was around 260 m², designed to be used by large families which usually came as immigrants working in Berlin. All those units were connected by two communication cores with elevators and staircases. However, in that part, Siza met the limitation made by local law which allowed only ten per cent of the building's area to be rented to foreigners. The contractor also did not make it easier for the architect to create the aimed amount of units, saying that the twenty dwellings designed are not sufficient enough to meet the constraints made by the Urban Renewal policy and this was backed up by the cost analysis which revealed that the building will not be affordable enough to get funding. In the next version, Siza proposed three bigger and three smaller flats on the typical floor with three circulation cores, which was still not enough for the contractor.

Thus, the fourth version of the building design introduced additional floor which resulted in lowering the ceilings and designing smaller apartments but still striving to preserve the initial idea of the project. This resulted in forty-six dwellings in total which completely fulfilled all the requirements and additionally, Siza came back to the idea of two circulation cores with the hybrid of the portico and gallery what allowed this reduction. Due to the moving the elderly club – previously incorporated into the building – to the other part of the site, an additional three dwellings were introduced on the ground floor. The typical floor plan still carried a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments. It is worth noticing that the new building scheme did not have a standard flat size what meant that every dwelling on the typical floor was different – what was a result of the shape of the building and dominating meaning of the uniform façade designed by the architect. Another noticeable aspect of the project was introducing of the winter gardens within every flat – again as a result of the façade design – which allowed inhabitants to apply changes to dwelling units and extending them within the area of this place. This shows that Alvaro Siza paid particular attention to the façade design importance within the whole scheme of the building.

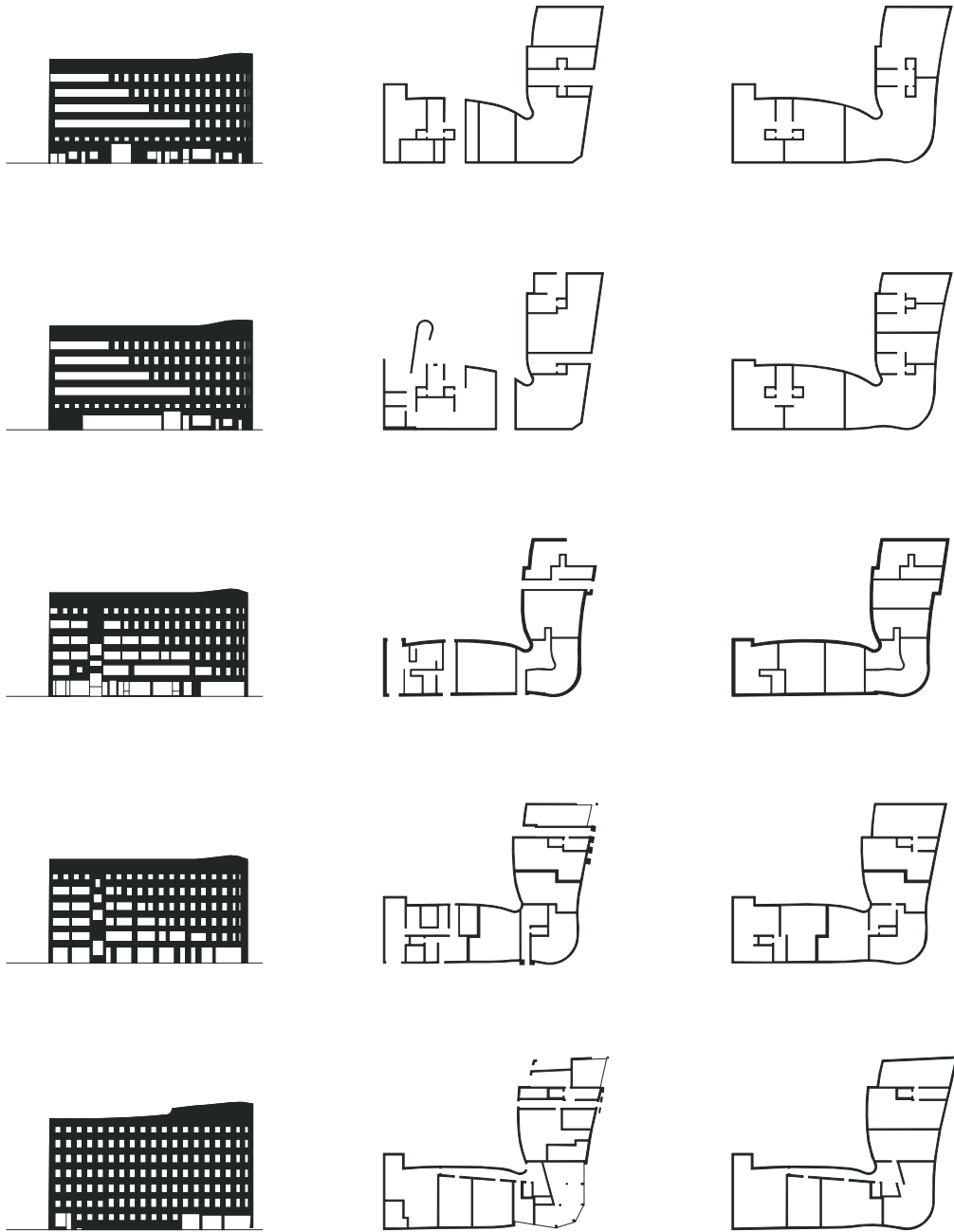


Fig. 36. Different versions of the project design. Source: Author

The Collective Memory

Defining the designer's sensitivity to the context and "as found" elements is not easy and the perception changes with every stage of the project. I would say that compared with the project done around the same time – Punt en Komma – the architect was much more limited by stakeholders and law or housing policy. However, Alvaro Siza paid particular attention to the patterns and elements he found on-site and tried to pursue it through the design of corner building in Kreuzberg which later became famous with the name Bonjour Tristesse. Nevertheless, a series of compromises made during the design process did not erase completely his primary idea and the principles can still be found within the finished structure.

First worth noticing part of the project was the fascination with fragments of the architect. As mentioned before, Siza was the only architect in the competition which did not follow the idea to close off the block completely – quite on the contrary, he wanted to emphasize the fragmentation of the place by activating the quarter from within. In the corner building, this idea is visible in one of the sides where the structure is leaving a gap between itself and the neighbouring building. This can be recognised as an approach to represent the fragmentary character of Berlin's urban fabric. Additionally, the break in building line was supposed to create a notion of the courtyard as an extension of public space. However, this gesture was clearly visible in the competition proposal and became modified and less powerful in further stages of the project. Despite being gated on the ground floor, the slit in the building became one of the points of criticism towards the architect.

Another aspect which underlines the architect's idea of his focus on the existing representation of the place was the ground floor. The corner of the block primarily was occupied by small shops managed by the Turkish community. For Alvaro Siza, it was one of the important elements found on-site and some of the worth preserving. Similarly to his previous architectural approaches, in this part, Siza also strived to preserve existing shops and social life in the ground floor. That is why his first proposals proposed building over the existing structures to leave as much as possible from the situation he found at a place. Additionally, it was a gesture which inscribed the project into the principles of the Urban Renewal which established the least possible demolitions and mixed functionality of the buildings. This decision, despite being presented with the idea of a structural solution for this case, was rejected due to high complexity and technical problems resulting from it. In the end, the third version of the project included the commercial ground floor as a place where existing shops and other commercial activities can be moved.

Another decision – though not so much connected with the collective memory but showing the architect's respect for the context – were the singular elements on the

façade being the mediators between the structure itself and surrounding buildings. That is why on one side one can spot the parts of cornice which are adjusting to the surrounding building, showing the symbolic but clear reference to the context. Another thing is the part of the façade made out of brick, which was also one of the effects of the compromise between Siza and stakeholders – because as an architect has claimed, it was supposed to be the main material – due to cutting costs of the construction. On the corner, one can spot the cantilevered porch and detached gateway of one of the entrances. The gap between the building and a context is also filled on the ground floor with a volume as an effect of discussions between Alvaro Siza and contractor. These details are working twofold – on one hand, their presence gives a tangible reference to the neighbouring buildings; on another, the building, in particular, becomes a representation of fragmentation – of the city as a whole.

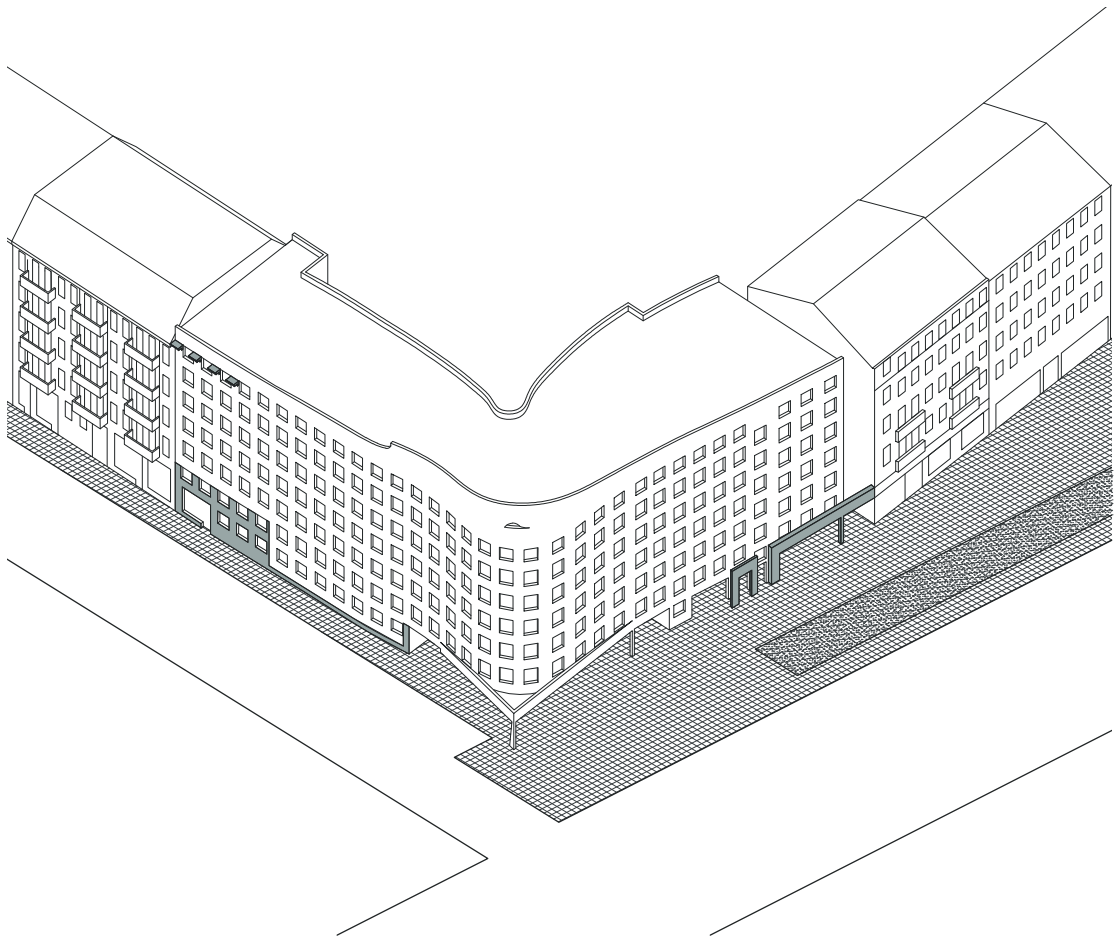


Fig. 37. Axonometric projection of the Bonjour Tristesse. Source: Author

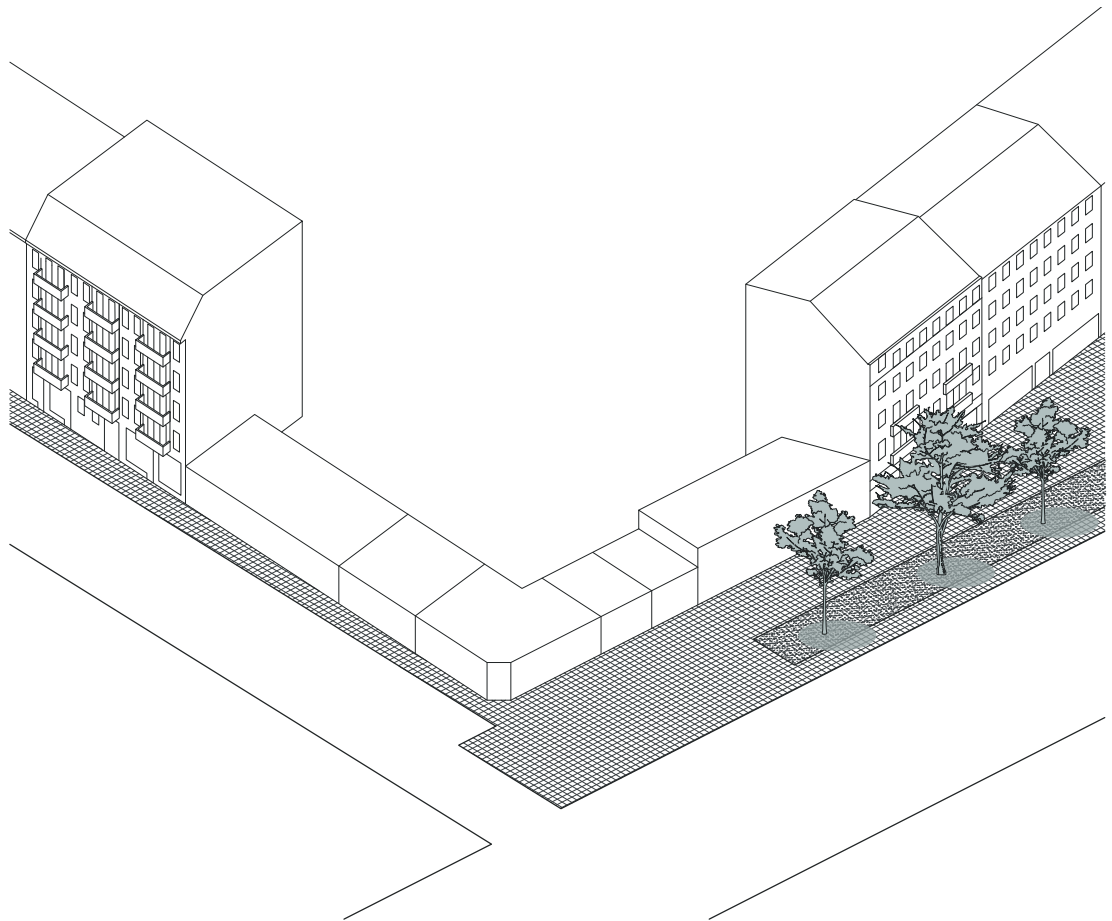


Fig. 38. Axonometric projection of the situation before the project. Source: Author

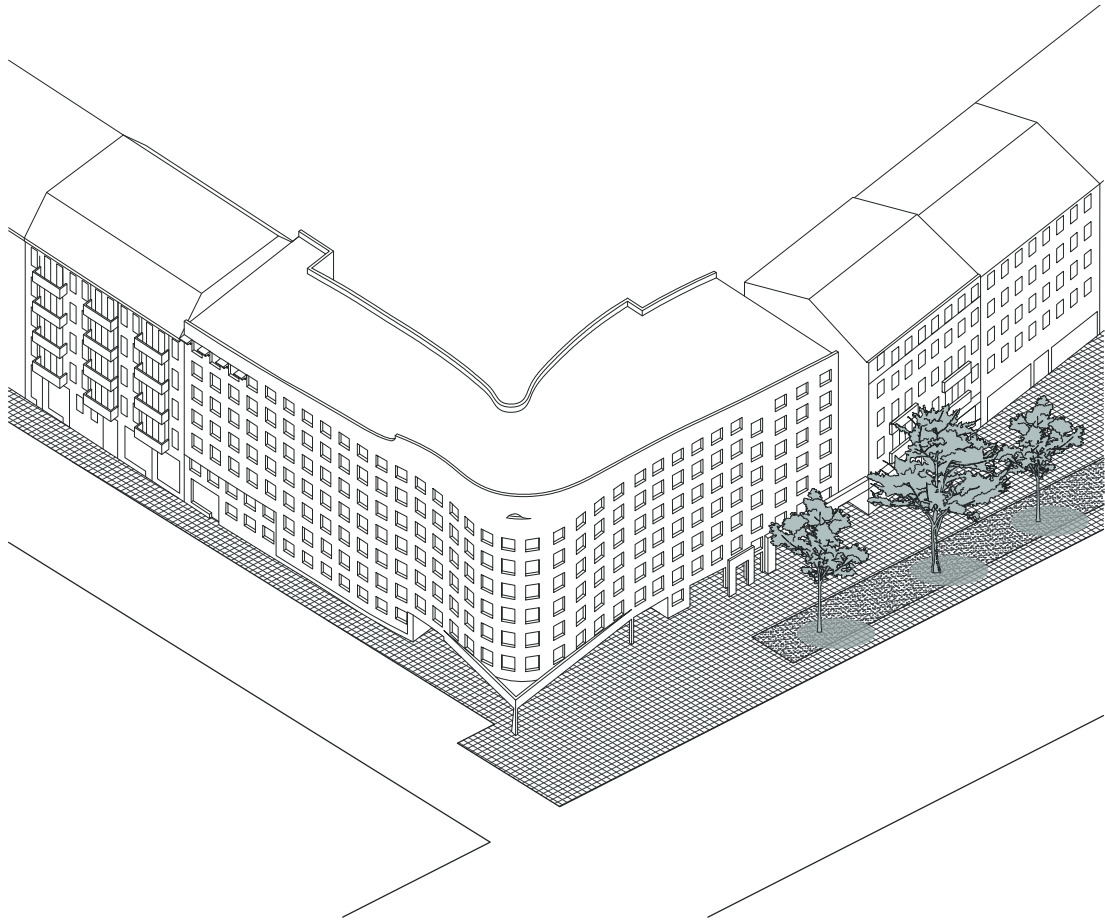


Fig. 39. Axonometric projection of the Bonjour Tristesse. Source: Author

Conclusion and reflection

Bonjour Tristesse is a building with a rich history of changes, adjustments and numerous compromises which show the architect's strive to pursuing his concept. The building itself was also heavily criticized for its principles and formal solutions and much of this critique has its own reasons behind. However, the evaluation of the final outcome of the project has to be done with an understanding of both sides of the design process. Alvaro Siza's way of designing and recognising patterns within the fabric of the city is one of a kind. Both projects in The Hague and Berlin show his sensitivity to the existing situation and interpretation of the "as found" in his building schemes. Though, the final result of the building does not express the principles as strongly as the one in The Hague does, however in the Berlin case the architect was much more limited and forced by contractors to improve the building's commercial value.

Stepping aside from the considerations about the policy and demands, the architectural idea to extract the collective memory with Bonjour Tristesse project seems to be visible even in the final result of the building. Again, Siza places himself somewhere between Critical Regionalism and Rossi's idea of Collective Memory. The project starts with a sensitive definition of what is there and basic aims for the structure, not only defined by the site itself but to the whole city of Berlin. Therefore, the block next to Schleisches Tor area becomes a pure representation of fragmentation. Next, the building places itself within the context and takes as much as possible from the plot. The façade is the determining factor dictating the internal configuration of the building and it goes a transformation from the collage of different pieces to the unified, monotonous composition which is only fragmentarily disrupted. That is why I would dare to claim that the building itself also carries the character of the city, leaving a slit and giving a straight response to the surroundings. The collective memory is represented within the buildings not only through the fragments but also through including the community into design decisions. Something Alvaro Siza is famous for becomes one of the main topics – however, later deformed completely – of his work in Berlin.

The Berlin experience must have been a really tough time for Alvaro Siza, revising his project four times and being criticised for his decisions after the construction is over. Alvaro Siza later claimed that he was ready to quit this process a few times due to lack of compromises and misunderstandings. However, later he admitted that it is a natural part of every design process by saying "The entire time, as soon as the competition was over and the negotiations for construction had begun, I was thinking: will I let it go or not? [...] there is one thing about which there can be no doubt: making a reality out of architecture always means negotiation, compromise and conflict."³² Also, Bridgette Fleck quotes him saying

Anyone who comes to terms with the hard laws of the economy will be compelled to create authentic architecture and not just some isolated piece of extravagant work. For me, the reduction of this project's quality is not, in a certain sense, a reduction. What makes the design distinctive is its capacity to take into account all these difficult conditions and to transform them into the basis of realization.³³

The final quote for this section could be Siza's response to the critique published in *Der Architekt*, which carries the important message of the meaningful work of the architect. "the author of this critique considers norms as a static whole. I think, on the contrary, one of the aspects of architectural advancement is supported by a transgression of norms. [...] This conflict should be embedded in the project."³⁴

³² Fleck, Bridgette. Alvaro Siza. E&FN Spon, London. 1995: 79.

³³ Ibidem: 85

³⁴ Siza, Alvaro and B. Cassier, Entretien Avec Alvaro Siza. op. cit: 19



Fig. 40. Bonjour Tristesse. Source: Author.



Fig. 41. Bonjour Tristesse. Source: <http://www.dreamideamachine.com/en/?p=12412>

ALDO ROSSI, GALLARATESE HOUSING

Introduction

Gallaratese Housing complex is made out of five buildings placed according to the masterplan designed by Carlo Aymonino and the same architect have designed four of those buildings in detail. Aldo Rossi was the architect appointed to design the fifth one of them and one can see how did the way of architectural expression differ in those projects. In the project of Gallaratese, Aldo Rossi shows the great example of the use of collective memory also simultaneously testing his belief in the typology as the primary unit of architecture. His approach was based on the theory that forms of architecture and ideas, which were developed in the past should be continued in order to achieve harmonious development of the city. The project of Gallaratese was also designed to later change its function, what was also one of the features mentioned by Rossi in *Architecture of the City*, where he wrote about individuality of urban artefacts and remaining of the image of architecture as a familiar one whereas the function is the dynamic component which adapts to the new situation. Of course, this idea was contradictory with the modernism's agenda, but Rossi much more preferred Neo-Rationalism in his projects than Modernism, which was refusing to refer to the historical context of the city.

Rossi's project compared with Aymonino's buildings has a much more simplistic nature. Aymonino's design is more complex, both urban and architectural. The whole masterplan is filled with four triangular piazzas and an amphitheatre. All five buildings are placed in the directions of radial axes. The buildings vary in height between six and eight storeys and have very rich tectonics due to the stepped balconies creating a very sculptural architectural form.

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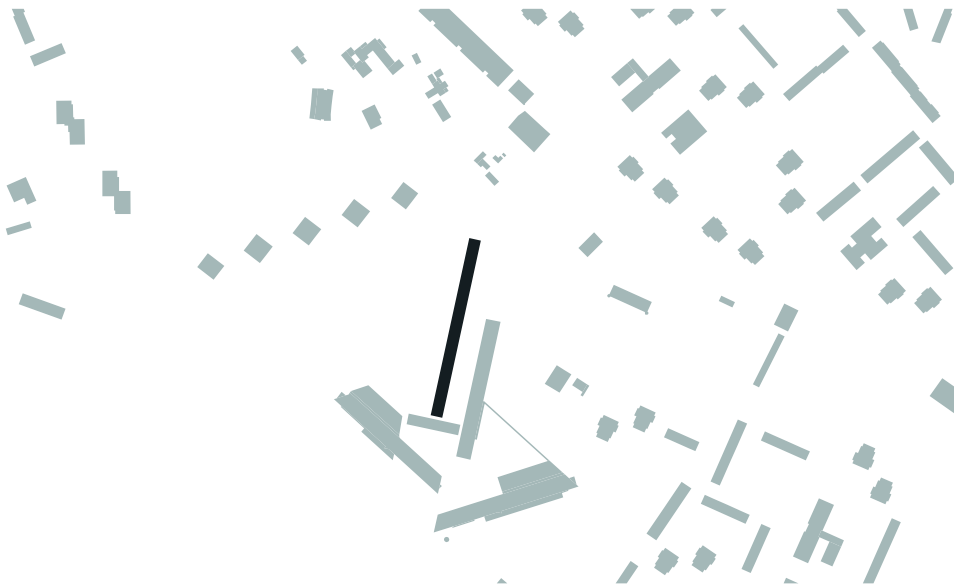


Fig. 42. Gallaratese Area with Aldo Rossi's project marked. Source: Author.

Gallaratese housing scheme

Gallaratese Housing is the only one white building joining to the Aymonino's masterplan, three-storey simple piece of architecture. The striking contrast between the styles two architects represent is much more visible in this case. Aldo Rossi's building seems like an endless line of a repetitive pattern of windows and porticoes. When approaching the building, one could notice the fact that it is divided into two parts by a gap and one part is two storeys, whereas the second – two times longer – is three-storey high.

The building consists of the open-air portico in the ground floor, which resonates with the Aymonino's buildings, but in white colour and simplified. The portico used in the building seems to refer to the style of porticoes found in Italian cities like Bologna or Milan.³⁵ This reference, despite being very interpretative, carries a lot of meaning in terms of his idea about collective memory and the general theory written in *Architecture of the City*.

The residential typology of the building is closely visible on the top floors, where the dwellings are placed. The buildings make use of open-air galleries or ballatoio – the housing typology which is very common for Milan. As Mason Andrews describes it:

As the courtyard type was the generator and the subject of study in Rossi's housing project for San Rocco, so the Gallaratese represents a similar exploration of housing typology – in this case, housing organized along corridors. The type is associated with two important and relevant models: it is a constituent part of the vocabulary of modern architecture, conceived of as an internal, raised street; and, like the courtyard house, it is traditionally one of the most widespread housing types in Lombardy. The study of the type was followed consistently.³⁶

Then it moves on to the choice by the architect, who explains:

I believe the choice of a typology in the moment of design is of decisive importance; many works of architecture are ugly because they cannot be understood in terms of a clear choice, they are, overall, without meaning.³⁷

³⁵ Arnell, Peter, Ted Brickford, Vincent Scully and Jose Rafael Moneo. Aldo Rossi, buildings and projects. New York: Rizzoli. 1985: 75

³⁶ Ibidem: 75

³⁷ Ibidem: 75



Fig. 43. Gallarate Housing. Source: <https://divisare.com/projects/340795-aldo-rossi-burcin-yildirim-gallaratese-housing-d-block>



Fig. 44. Gallarate Housing. Source: <https://divisare.com/projects/340795-aldo-rossi-burcin-yildirim-gallaratese-housing-d-block>

Through those words one could understand more why did Rossi make this particular choice for his building and how the type and typology are dominating, primary elements constituting to the continuity. However, further analysis of the building and its representation can also give another crucial conclusion – that these elements should be a subject of change and interpretation.

The floor plans show that the dwellings inside the building are different. Each one has its own private loggia, but these differences are unable to be seen from the outside. The façade is treated uniformly, one could not distinguish the proportions of the opening for the loggia from the opening being a window. Only the circulation within the building makes its presence within the façade with large openings covered with a large, steel mesh.

The façade may seem monotonous due to the choice of an architect. However, the horizontal, repetitive pattern gives a notion of a building which looks familiar yet still different than the rest among the others. By looking at the whole complex, one could draw a conclusion that Rossi's design is a lower-class housing. However, the difference comes from the fact that the Aymonino has appropriated different elements from other typologies in a literal way. On contrary, Gallaratese only shows some echoes of the past typologies; the building appropriates different patterns and elements from the widely understood context but distorts them in a way to just give a familiar notion of the image.

Therefore, the portico has vertical walls, which appear as something like a column and is followed by four oversized columns, which are in fact the structural elements of the building. The housing building is only interrupted by a single gap and elements marking the staircase, which add the rhythm to the whole building, but there is no element which would suggest that the structure itself accommodates residential function. The balconies are nowhere marked, hidden behind the same openings as all the windows in the structure. The buildings by Aymonino tries to communicate and express its function, the Rossi's one does on the contrary. The answer to the question of why did the architect choose to do so lies in his theory widely explained in the book *Architecture of the City*.

Aldo Rossi and Collective Memory

Rossi was the architect who studied a lot of the typologies like Milanese Neoclassicism, Enlightenment Architecture, works of Adolf Loos, Peter Behrens and cities like Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna.³⁸ Aldo Rossi considered these to be typologies used as examples of buildings for social class. His plan was to bring the new way of looking at the bourgeois dominated city and then, through understanding the city's typologies switch the paradigm through the misrepresentation of those typologies.

³⁸ Aureli, Pier Vittorio. *The project of autonomy: politics of architecture within and against capitalism*. New York: Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture. 2008: 57

Architecture for Rossi could not fail to be an expression of the power of the dominant class, but in making decisions for the city, the dominant class could not do other than position itself with respect to the forces antagonistic to it. Rossi's project proposed to be a new civic monument, one that by virtue of its strong critical presence immediately referred to its adversary.³⁹

Therefore, Aldo Rossi introduces in the Gallarate Housing project his method of defamiliarization. Through introducing the elements, which are familiar in relation to the wider context, but still equally strange to be interpreted again. By doing this he created a form which is autonomous in regard to the capitalistic city dominated by bourgeois class. The columns or balconies are the elements immediately resonating with the upper-class, but through distortion and defamiliarization, he invites the new interpretation of these forms. In result, the typical typology is distorted and rendered without changing its primary nature.

The Memory Creation

For Aldo Rossi, the autonomy meant that the architecture is represented through a specific language which has to be explored outside its functional needs. That is why he strived to defamiliarize architectural elements in his projects. He wrote a lot about collective memory and Gallarate can be an example of testing of this theory in practice. The city has the architectural forms which inhabitants can identify with and it goes also beyond the forms because cities express ideas of themselves that are much more than just physical forms.

Considering the fact that the city is a collection of memories inscribed into the architecture, then the Gallarate housing scheme is more a vision of memory creation for the city. Rossi expresses his unwillingness to direct appropriation of the historical typologies and patterns and tries to go beyond it. In order to achieve architecture, which does not historicize but is able to carry new memory and ideas he needed to defamiliarize the widely known patterns. By erasing the context of understanding and putting the elements which draw familiar memories, he allowed to perceive and interpret them again. It may seem, that – contrary to the Modernists – Rossi understood that defamiliarization of the architecture can be only possible with a strong reference to the past. Modernist agenda about no references to the past broke the continuity of the architecture, which is also widely discussed in his book. The project of Gallarate gives a better insight into the theory by Aldo Rossi and creates a reference to his method of perceiving collective memory. The architecture, to allow creating new memories, needs to be rooted in history and provide continuity not only in form but also on typological and ideological levels.

³⁹ Ibidem: 56

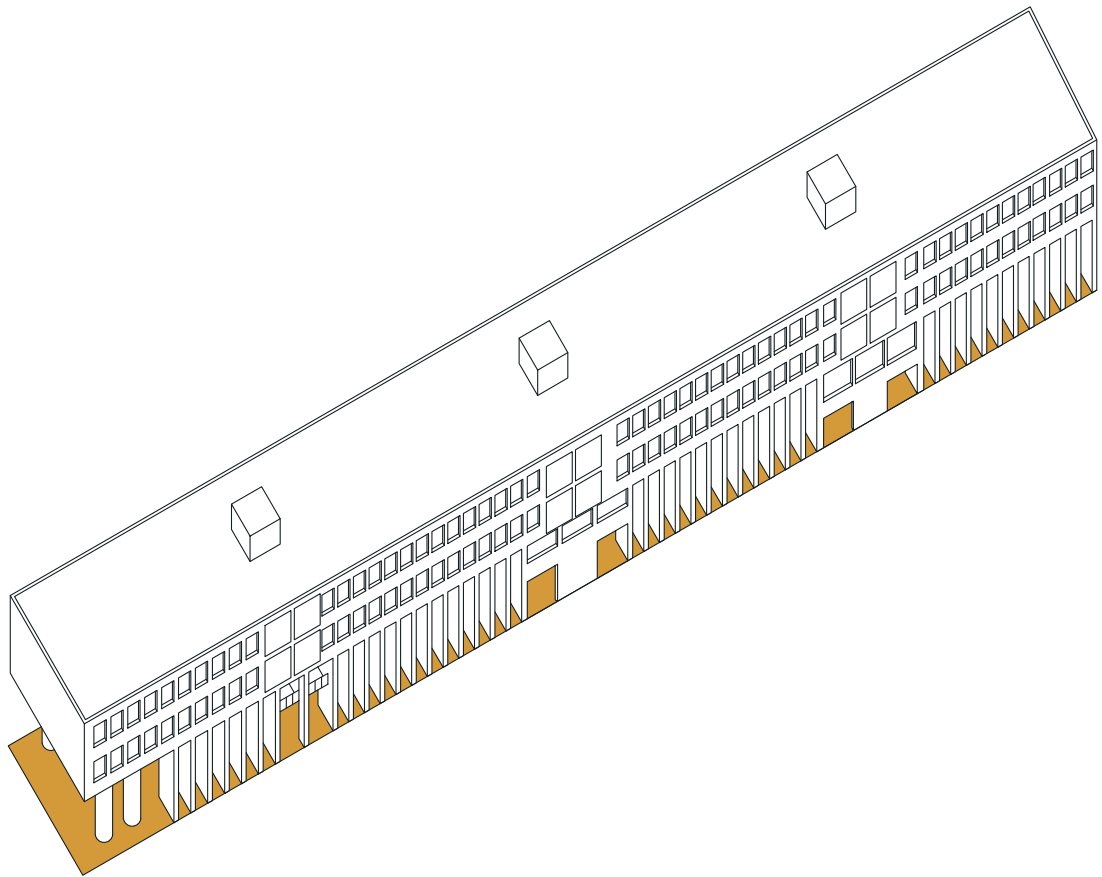


Fig. 45. Gallarate Housing axonometric projection. Source: Author

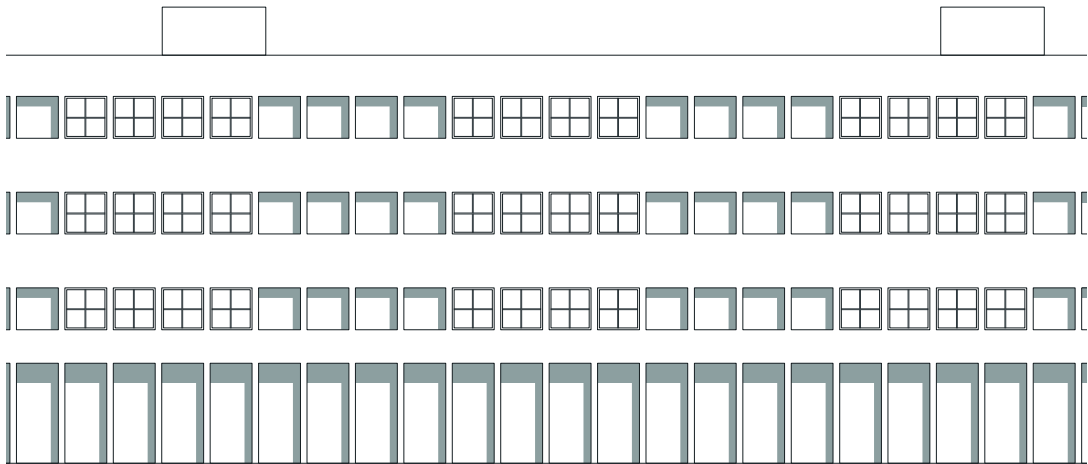
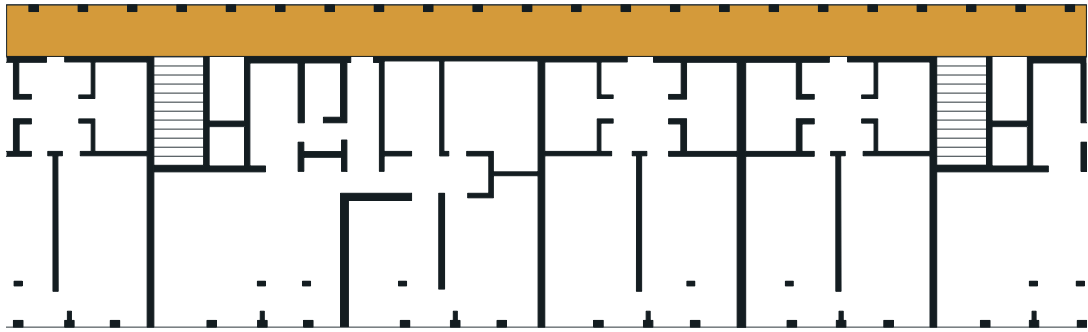


Fig. 46. Gallarate Housing first floor plan and elevation. Source: Author.

ANDERLECHT, BRUSSELS - POSITIONING

The continuity and evolution

The intervention site in Anderlecht is one of the places within the urban fabric of Brussels which was gradually losing its identity and uniqueness throughout the time. When tracing back the evolution of the place, one can spot cause and effect chain, where the disappearing of some elements affected the surroundings. The most influential part of the site was the Senne river, which supported cultivation of the industry around it. Water was important element for transporting and manufacturing – in that case – textiles, which was the dominant sector of local industry. The reasons for covering the river are not completely clear, however since its disappearance was followed by other structures around it, which took advantage from this placement. This tendency is visible not only within the site itself, but also in wider context. The comparison of aerial photographs taken from 1930 up to today's times clearly show how the memory of the place vanished because of losing of one of the strong factors.

The pictures also show another tendency visible in the place, which is the density. Urban blocks do not follow the typology of perimeter block with inner courtyard, probably because most of them are architecturally made out of townhouses, but considering the fact that a lot of industry, which did not rely on the presence of the river, was placed inside those courtyards and those buildings are mostly still in the urban fabric, one can come to the conclusion that the identity of the area is still there, but somehow hidden. Also, changes to the site itself are a consequence of authenticity and logic. Therefore, understanding the whole story behind is crucial even for the big-scale projects to position the proposal towards the site. The evolution of the place reveals the logic of changes within the urban fabric, however if one look closely, those changes are written within the site through traces of past elements. Following this scope of analysis, it would seem that the industry within the site is a closed chapter in its history, because the main factor, which made it appear is not there anymore. However, this kind of structures and functions are inscribed into the collective memory of the place, so their importance is still a significant factor for the positioning towards the site.

Brusselization

To completely assess the condition of the site it is crucial to look at the bigger picture. The city of Brussels itself is a big collection of memories, which traces and signs can be found all over the city. Definitely, one of them is Brusselization, phenomenon and name for the time period between 1960s to 1980s, which marked preparations of the city for the Expo 58.⁴⁰ Brusselization could be also

40 Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brusselization>

named an urban regeneration performed by the city of Brussels, however its specificity lies in its form. Fascination with modernist architecture and strong pursuit of modernity was followed by decisions of turning down old, historical buildings – with the most significant one – Maison de Peuple by Victor Horta, opened in 1899 and demolished in 1965.⁴¹ In place of those historic buildings and big areas in some districts, modernist skyscrapers were made, which had no connection to the existing fabric. This bold move was not the only one done during the Brussels's history and the covering of Senne river is considered to be similarly damaging to the picture of the city. However, Brusselization as a process left the city's fabric fragmented with placeless architecture, which heavily disturbed the general aesthetics of the city. Only in 1990s Brussels's authorities started to spot the problem of spatial incoherence with releasing the new law which restricted demolition in the areas of heritage. This, however led to another phenomenon called "Facadism", which was released by demolishing most of the interior and preserving the façade.

Brusselization also left its mark on the site in Anderlecht. Les Goujons building is a high-rise slab housing, which outgrows the surrounding buildings significantly. One could easily spot that its aesthetics is nowhere near the art-nouveau townhouses around. This repetitive system made of standardized elements was multiplied all over the Europe, being the part of the International Style in architecture. Interesting thing is that the building still follows somehow the shape of Senne river, which was already covered at the time when Les Goujons was built. In that case, the appearance of this building raises multiple questions of spatial coherence and memory which are contradictory. On one hand, it is certain that this kind of building provides necessary function and density. Also, it is an important artefact of history of the whole city and transformation of the site. On another – its condition, architectural value and spatial quality leaves much to be desired.

Forma Urbis Anderlaci

The aerial pictures were triggering point for considerations about the changes of the place and its identity. Outcome of those thoughts are presented on the map. The mapping of traces of the past within the area of Anderlecht, Brussels, based on Rodolfo Lanciani's *Forma Urbis Romae* (The form of City of Rome) from 1901, shows the changes of built environment between 1930 and present. Red line marks buildings and Senne river, which were gradually disappearing throughout the time. The mapping reveals how important the river was for the neighbourhood's functioning and therefore its identity.

⁴¹ Romańczyk, Katarzyna. Transforming Brussels into an international city – Reflections on 'Brusselization'. "Cities" journal. No. 29. 2012. 126-132.



Fig. 47. Aerial picture from the 1930-1935. Source: www.bruciel.brussels/#

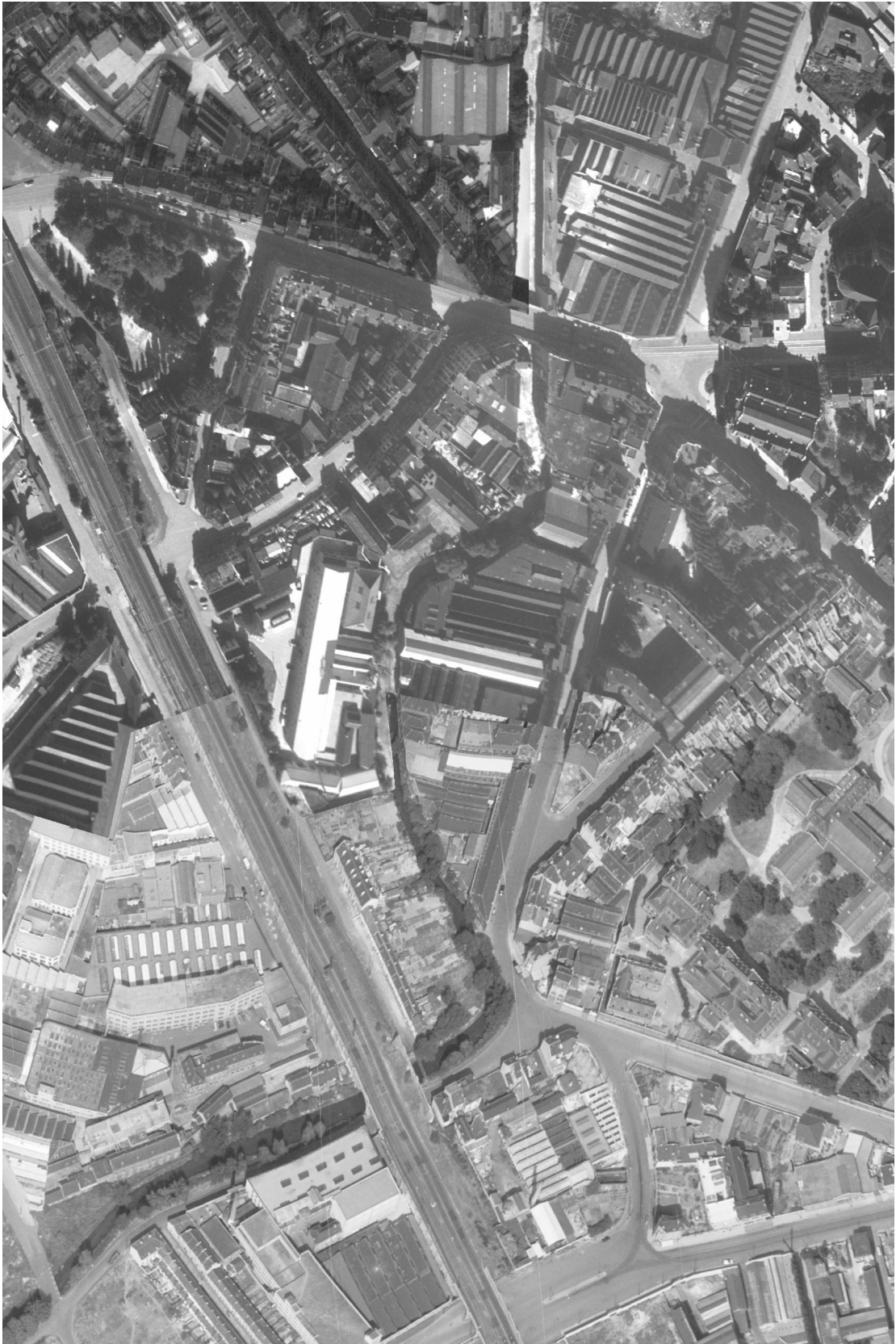


Fig. 48. Aerial picture from the 1953. Source: www.bruciel.brussels/#

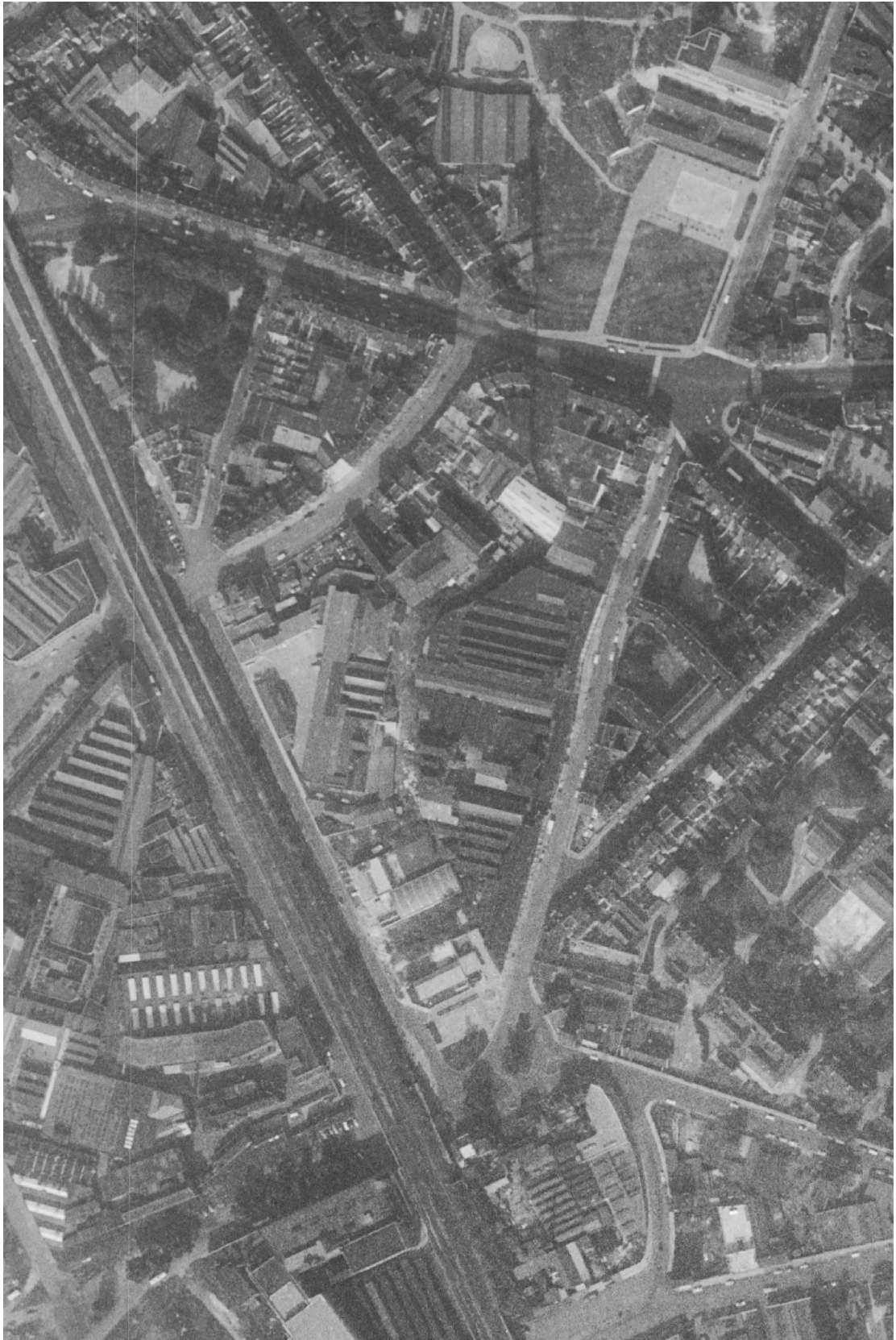


Fig. 49. Aerial picture from the 1961. Source: www.bruciel.brussels/#



Fig. 50. Aerial picture from the 1971. Source: www.bruciel.brussels/#



Fig. 51. Aerial picture from the 1987. Source: www.bruciel.brussels/#



Fig. 52. Aerial picture from the 1996. Source: www.bruciel.brussels/#



Fig. 53. Aerial picture from the 2004. Source: www.bruceiell.brussels/#



Fig. 54. Aerial picture from the 2020. Source: www.bruciel.brussels/#

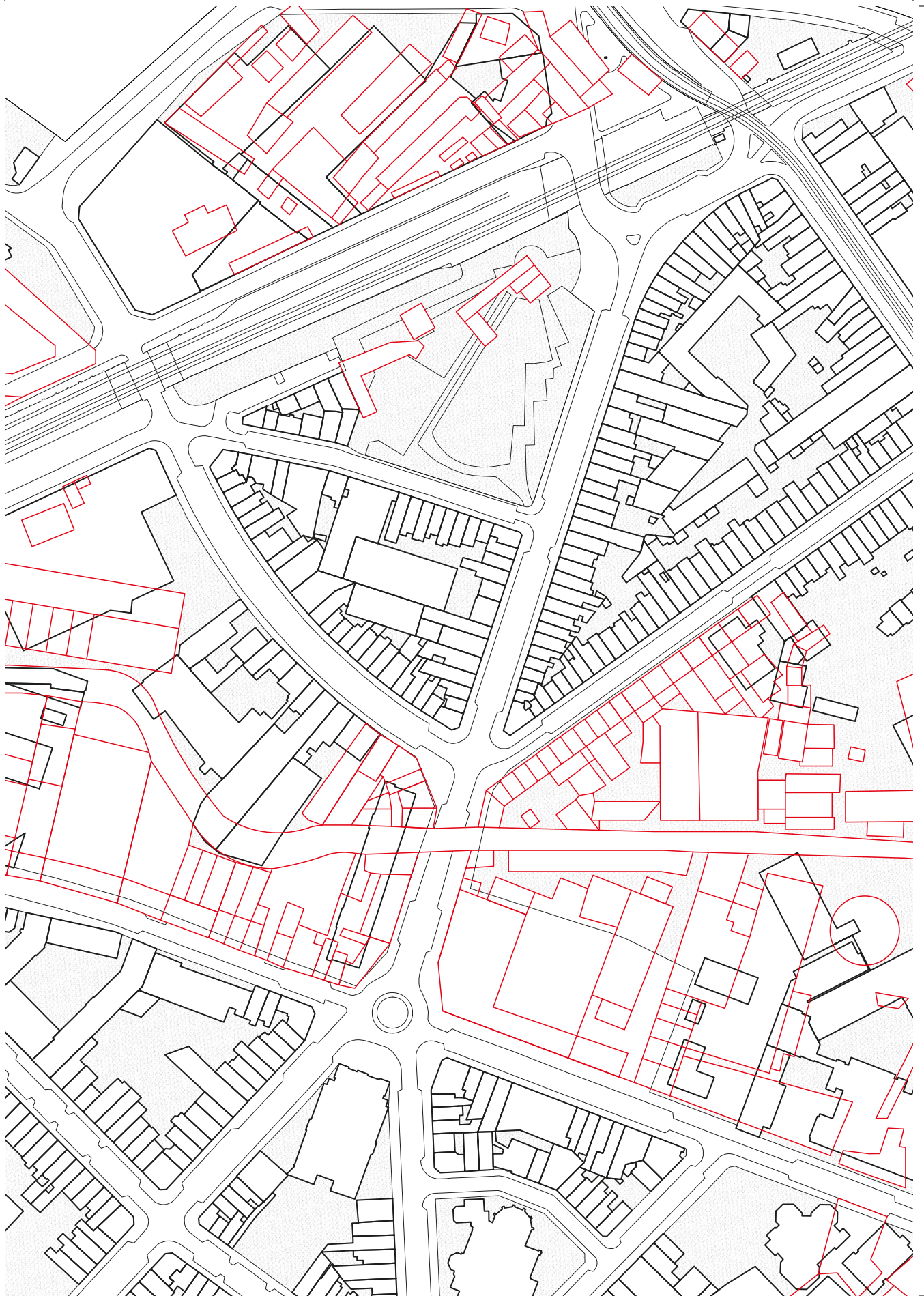












SUMMARY

The research started due to a strong concern about the identity of modern cities and its motivation was to find out how can the one's way be found in the certain spatial, climatic and cultural context. First thought, which was the triggering point for further readings, was about formal references, structures and typologies. However, the readings both with various trials and errors of analysing the given context of Brussels simultaneously, always resulted with some important factors missing. Yet the analysis of Alvaro Siza's approach and later Aldo Rossi opened the perspective on this crucial aspect, which was the subject of study during this research. Nevertheless, I am completely aware that the formal analysis promoted by e.g. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown, is also one of the ways of approaching this theme. However, when thinking about the modern city and its identity, one cannot avoid mentioning the people, the history, important ground-breaking events and ordinary everydayness. The built environment was framing those events and it was the society, which gave the importance to its placement, not the other way around. Another argument could be that this theory has to be read as a non-movement idea.

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The architect's role is to constantly observe and learn from the surroundings, which sometimes is a time-consuming action. In the times of rapid changes in habits, people migrations and quick flow of information – the architect has to keep the pace. When thinking about designing in specific context, it is crucial to look at the reality found in place. It may seem as a time-consuming action, but on the same time it helps to reveal patterns, which shape the reality, it sharpens the focus for different elements and gives opportunity to use this knowledge as a tool for critical approach to the given context. The importance of the quote by Martin Heidegger, mentioned at the beginning, now gains completely new importance. The architecture should shape its surrounding, create places and allow the collective memory to be created, because it constitutes a lot to the identity of the place, regardless the style of architecture itself. To reach this effect, one has to observe the elements, which constitute to the everyday life of the place and I could not think of a better example than Alvaro Siza's approach in that case. That is also why the idea of this paper is trying to avoid connecting itself with any of the movements in architecture – just as Kenneth Frampton stated in his text *Critical Regionalism: Six Points for Architecture of Resistance*. Despite criticising modernism for being placeless and standardized, post-modernism for being too informative and literal, modernity for being too much focused on the quantities, not qualities – it is the reality we need to function with and spot the potential in this reality, not the downsides only. All those mentioned styles of architecture – of

course with many more remaining not mentioned, but equally important – create the image of modern cities, the reality which needs to be observed and analysed.

The fact that Christine Boyer analysed Aldo Rossi's theory of collective memory in contemporary context points out the relevance of this theory in today's conditions. This work was one of the written pieces which strengthened my argument about the importance of involving sociological and anthropological studies into the architectural projects. The knowledge gained during this research seems like a good starting point not only for the master thesis, but also for the professional activity as an architect in the future. Theoretical analysis of the theories gave me an awareness about the essential definitions and introduced another layer of complexity to my own approach. The case studies done on basis of these writings allowed me to realize how this information can be translated into the spatial language of architecture. In the result, I became more critical in terms of various contexts and aspects found on-site and could start formulating my own positioning to the site of intervention for master thesis project.

Collective memory as the concept is relatively new and in the beginning, it was the main concern of sociology, philosophy and anthropology. Maurice Halbwachs – one of the most important sociologists, who investigated collective memory as a concept – focused his work on the memory's relation with space and time. In his book, "On Collective Memory", released in 1976 he indicated that the society has a memory and it differs from individual memory. The individual memory is a mental skill that allows remembering and linking places with certain points in time, the collective memory is shared between people within the certain community and this kind of memory is influenced by belonging to a certain culture, doctrine or community.⁴² Eviatar Zerubavel in his book also mentions that collective memory does not have to be a representation of one's personal experiences, but these memories represent some group's background throughout history. The people creating a certain group does not necessarily have to live the same experience, but this kind of recollection can, through different generations. In contrary to history, collective memory does not focus on important events in time. According to Maurice Halbwachs, the community establishes and develops its memory according to the needs, ideas and tendencies.⁴³ Therefore, collective memory leads to strengthening the bonds between people within certain community what results in creating a certain identity within the community and belonging to a specific place.

⁴² Zerubavel, Eviatar. *Social mindscapes: an invitation to cognitive sociology*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. 1997.

⁴³ Halbwachs, Maurice, and Lewis A. Coser. *On collective memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2008.

Christine Boyer in her book *The City of Collective Memory* stresses the concept of spatial representation of collective memory within the fabric of the city. The book was a response to the practices of historic preservation, urban design and postmodern tendencies in architecture. Boyer leads through the book by investigating changes within perception of the city since nineteenth century and how are those images being interpreted within contemporary concepts. The modern ideas of architecture often reach back to the history and traces of the past which were formed in specific places. However, inserted into contemporary contexts those designed fragments lose their meaning due to changing circumstances and different values.⁴⁴

Urban Architecture is a studio which focuses on medium-sized areas, which are somehow forgotten and ordinary. Through observing those simple situations and studying them we can aim for a situated design with a complete understanding of the place and learning how much different memories, patterns or stories are hidden within this completely mere urban block. I perceive this as the greatest lesson as a future architect, because no matter where or what I will design, it will be done for a certain community with a specific history and cultural background.

This experience and knowledge gained during anthropological studies around architectural theme only enforced my notion that architecture is a multidisciplinary profession. It also underlines the importance of cross-disciplinary research, which is not only about referring to big names or theoretical frameworks, but also about patient observing of the situation, interpreting visible patterns and referring to them in my own design.

The master thesis studio theme is “spolia” – the term referring to the archaeology, which means re-using the old elements in new structures. Architecture divides it into two sub-terms: spolia in-re (non-material) and spolia in-se (material). This thesis refers more to the spolia in-re, due to regarding on the imaginative skill of interpretation and observation. Every place has its own memory, which needs to be at least preserved or continued – but in both cases it means “re-using” the memory for the architectural intervention. The same goes for physical patterns, which are also an important part of this imaginative approach, however instead of using them literally, they are interpreted and introduced in another way. This could as well sum up the work of a designer – regarding a lot on one’s intuition and imagination. Introduced research on collective memory was conducted simultaneously with the master planning stage of the project to define the approach in bigger scale and general strategy. Further, gathered information will be used in design of the part of the masterplan.

⁴⁴ Boyer, Christine. *The City of Collective Memory: Its historical imagery and architectural entertainments*. Mass: MIT Press. 2006.

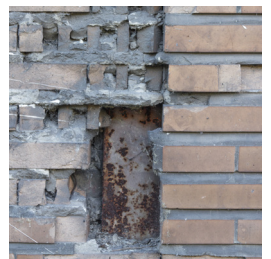
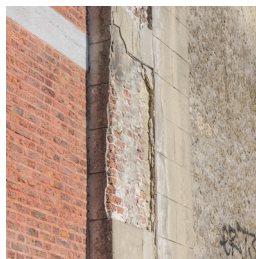
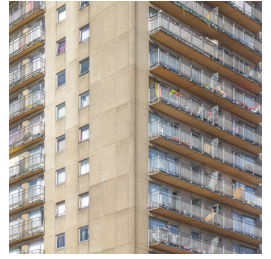
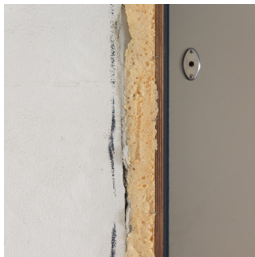
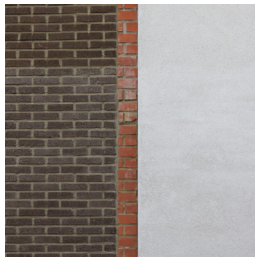
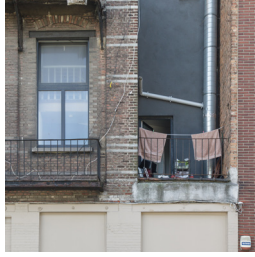


Fig. 55. Pictures from the first site visit in Anderlecht, Brussels. Source: Author.



Fig. 56. Pictures from the first site visit in Anderlecht, Brussels. Source: Author.



MASTER PLAN

The research on collective memory was a guidance during the master planning stage and helped to make decisions on what to change and what to leave as it is. The site visit resulted in defining my own perspective on the site, which was described through the mind-map. This drawing became a triggering point for evaluating the site and defining further steps of the design strategy for the master planning stage. The aim was to express the image of the Anderlecht - post-industrial, mixed and fragmented place with a rich history. Therefore, four points for an architecture of remembrance were formulated, which became the strategy for the masterplan design. It aims to celebrate the fragmentation of the block, but also to improve the spatial quality with defining the areas more precisely. The site of intervention lies somewhere between the dense urban blocks with mixed functions and loose urban fabric of industry and vacant plots. The strategy is not completely conservative; however, every demolition is considered as a bold move, which needs to have a strong argument.

Four points for architecture of remembrance

One, mind map and site visit helped to recognise the corners of the site as activity nodes for the block. Therefore, the urban plan considers street life as something that should be preserved and not interrupted. However, the corner from the City Gate side is the only one which is abandoned, with a lot of potential due to its placement in regard to other blocks in the surroundings. Also, Rue de Bassins is treated as a functioning street with its own memory and character, which is going to be preserved.

Two, the block is a collage of everything both in form and function. Industry, housing, commercial ground floors, social housing and a park mixed together within large post-industrial buildings, traditional townhouses and high-rise slab building. The site carries traces of the history of its own transition in time, different styles of buildings, irregular placement and the trace of the Senne river, once going through the site and now being only a part of the past times. The design aims to enhance the fragmentation and make the most of it. Therefore, the industrial strip is introduced to answer the productive metropolis agenda, with a new building at the end of it. Existing park is replaced with new buildings and the new park is given to Les Goujons as void connecting two opposite streets, two fragments and being one of them as well by opening a perspective and giving meaning to high rise slab building in this plot. The new buildings in the area aim to activate the park and a series of courtyards open possibilities for creating different notions of place. Les Goujons is treated as a landmark of the plot and the park underlines its presence. Additionally, the new introduced buildings correspond also both with the last fragment of the block and context of opposite buildings.

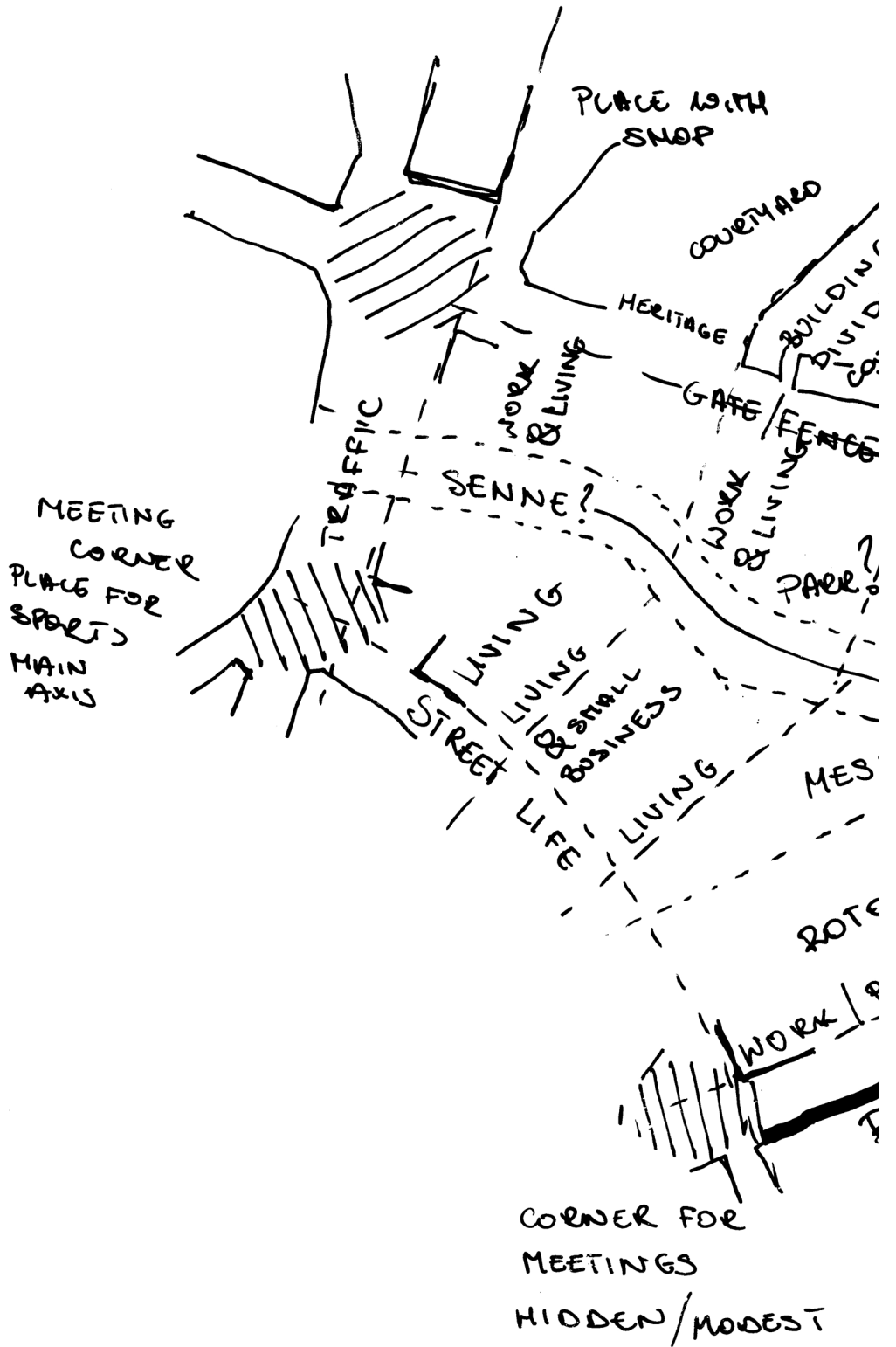
Three, the reference to the memory of the place is not only through preservation and intervention in a formal way of thinking. By introducing the craft school, the theme of the productive city and industrial past are tackled in an indirect way - not through looking at the immediate solution, but by providing an education for the future. The place, once famous for its textile industry can take advantage of the qualities forgotten in transition, but very valuable to the present.

Four, Rue des Bassins is a street with many small businesses, which are the local community's way of living, being affordable and local places having a crucial influence on collective memory. It can be seen as space, which is treated as an example of the public promenade which is not privatized – contrary to how Christine Boyer describes modern public space. Therefore, the masterplan idea was to leave the Rue de Bassins as much as it is, to let the current memory continue. However, the design takes advantage of two-sidedness of the block to write a new history of the place, parallel to the existing one.



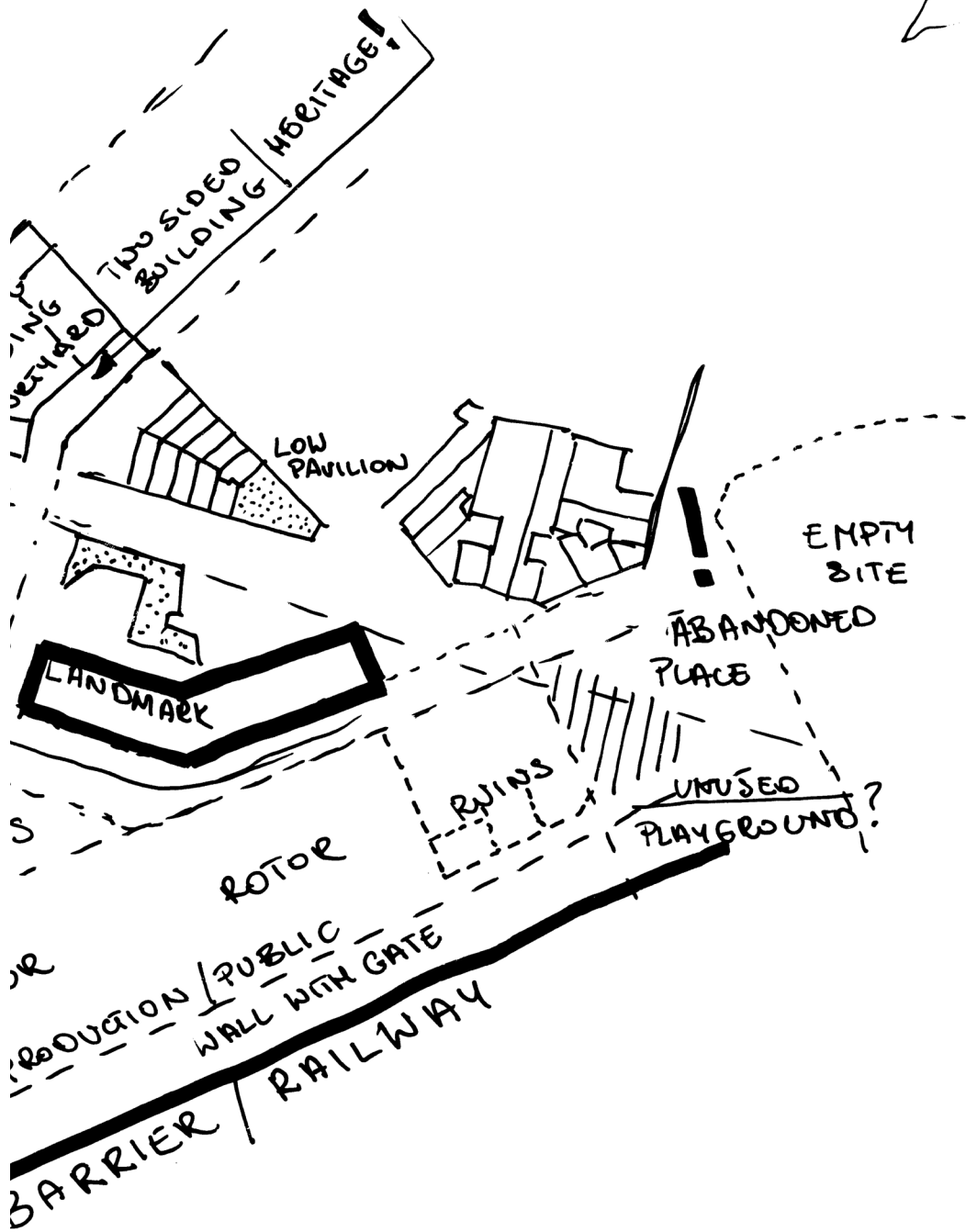
Fig. 57. Urban Plan of the site in Anderlecht. Source: Author

ROUNDAABOUT



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Fig. 58. Mental map of the site in Anderlecht. Source: Author



Strategy

The intervention starts with a definition of fragments visible on the site to form the functional blocks of buildings. Next, the process of refurbishing the old buildings would start - which can be a separate part of the design process. After this, the public spaces will be formed to connect two sides of the site. In the last stage of the intervention, new buildings are placed to activate the new vacant spaces and provide stable development of the place. Therefore, the first fragment is the industrial strip which also will work as noise insulation for the park which is the second fragment. Moved park gives again the Les Goujons its placement within the green area and allows inhabitants to overlook it. Also, the park in its new placement connects two sides of the urban block. The next fragment is about buildings which mix the working and living with long, narrow plots, reaching to the centre of the site. Last two fragments are closely related to each other, the lonely building with different typology than the rest of the site and the green passage which can be treated as buffer zone serving this building.

The proposal for the buildings is also supporting those fragments. The first building, which can be an extension of ROTOR offices is closing off the fragment, but also due to its commercial ground floor, it supports also the entrance to the park. On the other side, there is a second building which closes off the newly created public space. Its function can be a housing with workspaces and some more commercial activities on the ground floor to activate the public space. The last two buildings are filling up one of the fragments, giving not only response to the context on the other side of the street, but also its rhythm gives another meaning to the residential building at the end of the site – so this fragment is a mediator between two neighbouring ones. The function of this complex is a vocational school – preferably craft school with a library and café, which can work independently but can still serve the students of the school. This building is considered as a potential for elaborating in detail as a further development of the master thesis. The masterplan gives an opportunity not only to celebrate and express fragmentation which is a part of the collective memory of the place, but it also uses existing patterns from the area to adopt new functions. Moreover, the fact that the buildings are facing towards the outside of the site is turned to advantage to let the current story of the place expand itself and generate new, simultaneously.

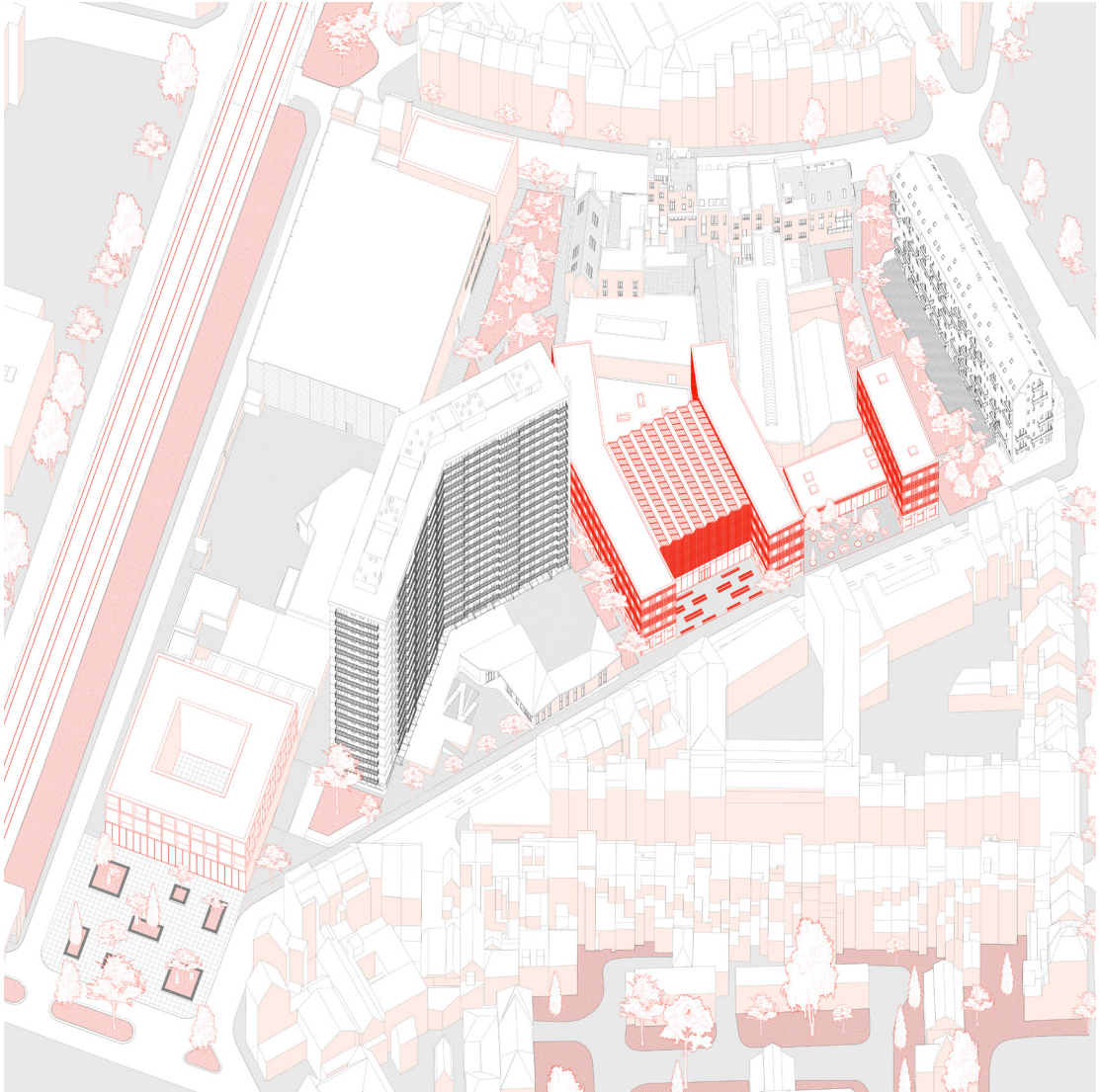
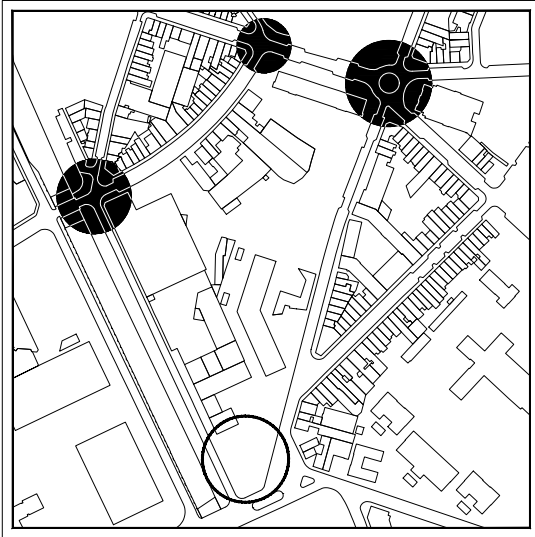
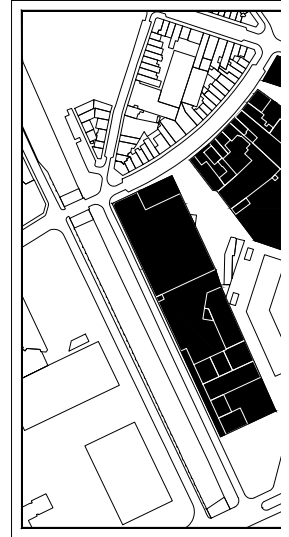


Fig. 59. Isometric projection of the site with intervention outlined. Source: Author



ACTIVITY NODES

Importance of corners in the neighbourhood for local life.



FRAGMENTATION

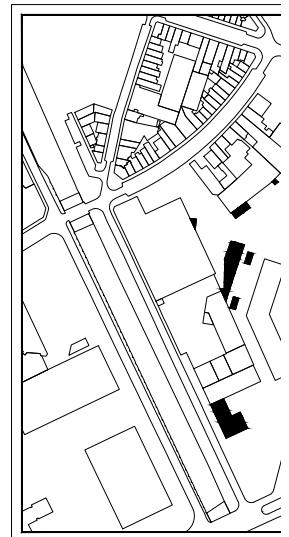
Definition of the fragmented

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LANDMARK

Les Goujons as a formal dominant of the place, which presence can contribute to the identity.



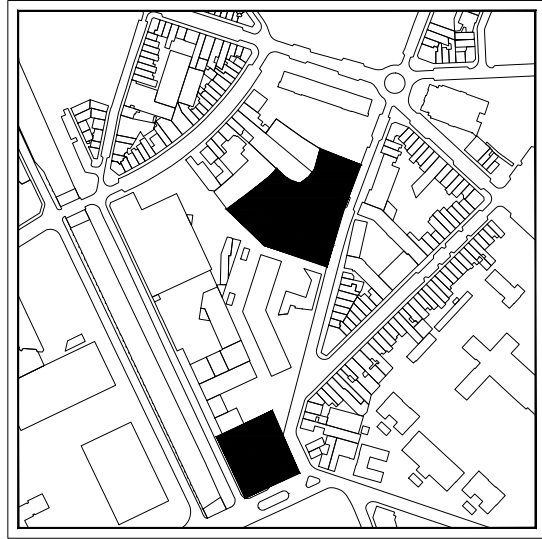
DEMOLITION

Aiming for smallest possible structures on the site.

Fig. 60. Diagrams representing the intervention on site. Source: Author.

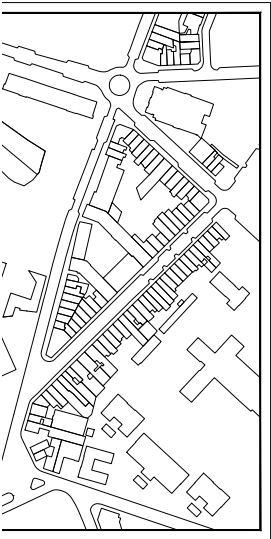


d character of the place.

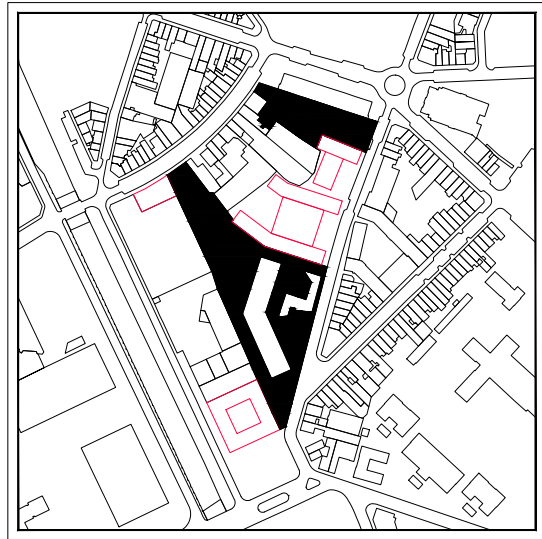


PUBLIC SPACES

Pointing out potential places of improvement for the public realm of the site - neglected corner and inaccessible park.



le intervention into existing



NEW STRUCTURES

New buildings underline new public spaces as well as created passages connecting two sides of the site.

CRAFT SCHOOL

As mentioned before, the building which is going to be elaborated as architectural design is a craft school. The choice for vocational school seems for a reasonable one, because of the industrial past of the site, which is the memory of the place. The presence of work within these urban blocks created the strong identity of Anderlecht in the past and now the aspirations to become productive metropolis give new chances to the site to become an important place for development. Additionally, considering Brussels's aspiration to become a productive city, the craft school seems like a place which tackles this issue from a different angle than just an industrial building, especially that this aspiration comes from disappearing off the craft, which very often is a precious profession. The area of the building of the school is 8500 m² and the supporting library is 1900 m² which gives the right area to place these functions inside. Two different courtyards which are framed by the existing walls as a reminiscence of this another side of the block, serve different functions. First one is for production, with an experimentation lab in the middle and its outdoor extension. This middle part connects two higher parts of the building where the function can be divided into practical and theoretical education. Another courtyard is a public one with two entrances, to emphasize the transition between public and collective.

The axonometric diagram shows the division of the program within the functional blocks to prove that the proposed program fits into the building and there is still some reserve which is taken as an opportunity to expand it or have more freedom in terms of detailed distribution of the spaces inside. The typological and functional studies were helpful in terms of understanding the demands of the program and solutions made in similar cases. With this information, it is possible to proceed with the interpretation of the typology, experiment with the function and start implementing the research on the architectural scale as well.

What is more, the site, where craft school is placed is also the place where previously the industry was part of the block, so the memory of its presence is taken as seriously as the memory and trace of the Senne river. Moreover, the opposite building, which the craft school is the formal continuation of is the secondary school, so it could be even an extension of its activity. The opposite building is also a heritage, so it is an important part of the context for the project to refer to. Project not only uses the existing conditions and memory of the place to define the newly created spaces within the block – by using the neighbouring buildings like a school or events hall, the school can also take advantage of the structures placed next to it to expand its program. This solution can contribute to the local businesses and keep them alive since they are defined also as strong factor creating the collective memory in the place.

One of the challenges of the project will be definitely working with the typology – architects like Giorgio Grassi use it on everyday basis and are recognized through the buildings placed perpendicularly to the street edge, revealing vertical as dominating direction of the façade. The way how building itself will respond to the context is going to be another challenge for the project; the detail solutions of the building connecting to the existing fabric and material choices are recognized as crucial ones for the further development of the project. The research on collective memory was helpful in terms of formulating the individual way of responding to the context, which was additionally supported by case studies and resulted with broad notion on how to position myself within the designed area. The case studies have proven that the architectural project can directly or indirectly refer to the vernacular and still be experimental in a way, which is the most important thing from my perspective.

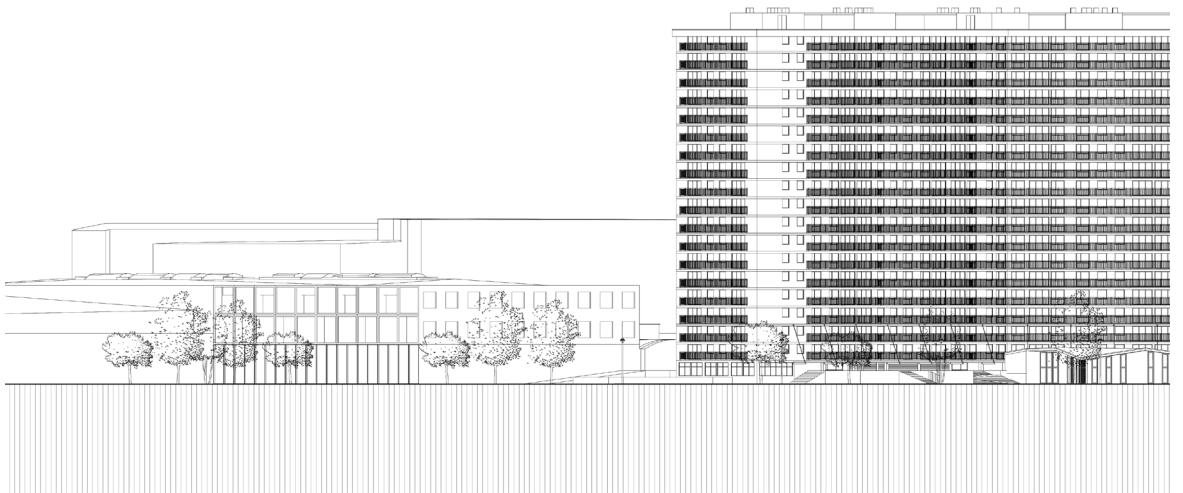
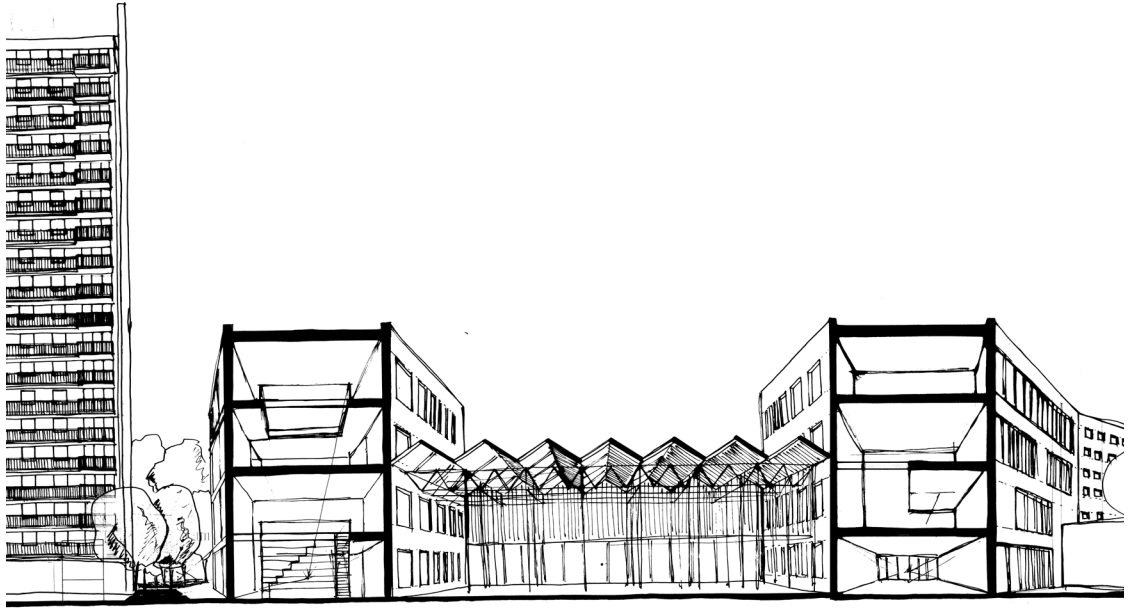
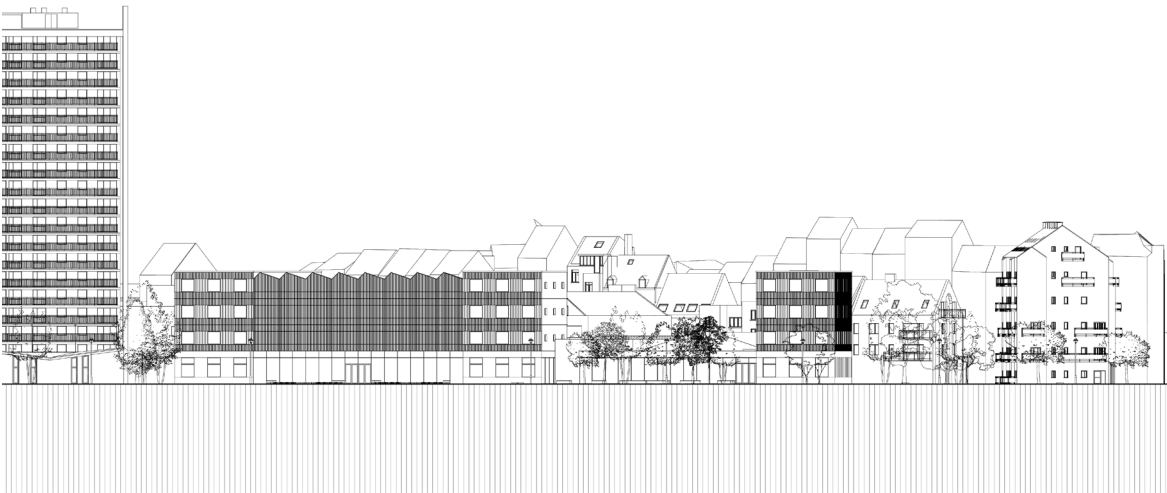
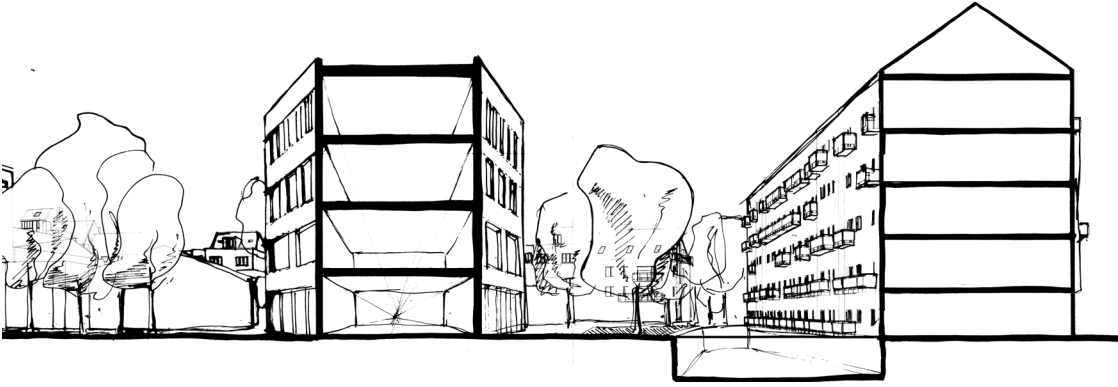


Fig. 61. Sketched perspective section through the building of the Craft School. Source: Author

Fig. 62. Elevation of the street with the urban intervention. Source: Author.



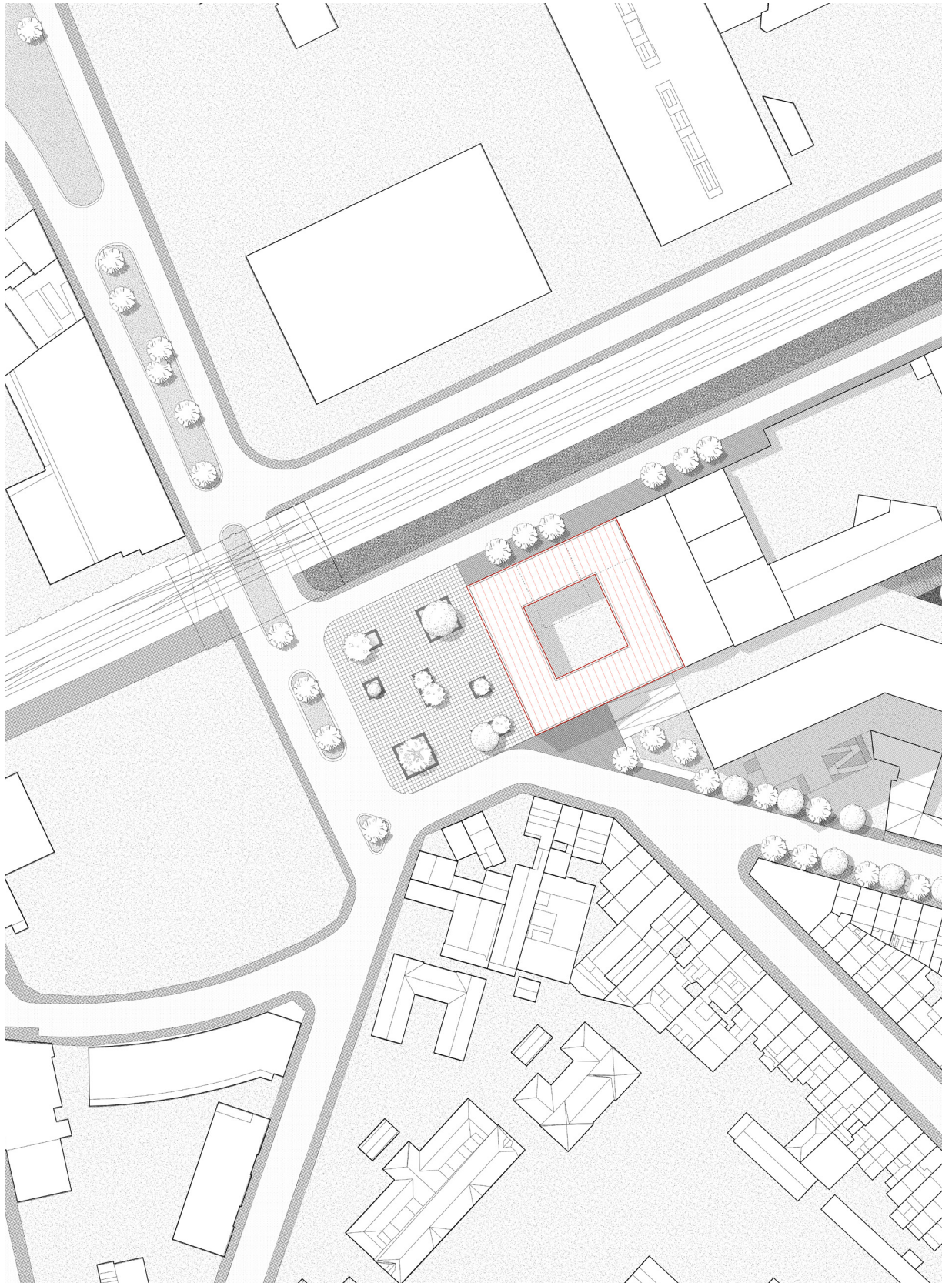
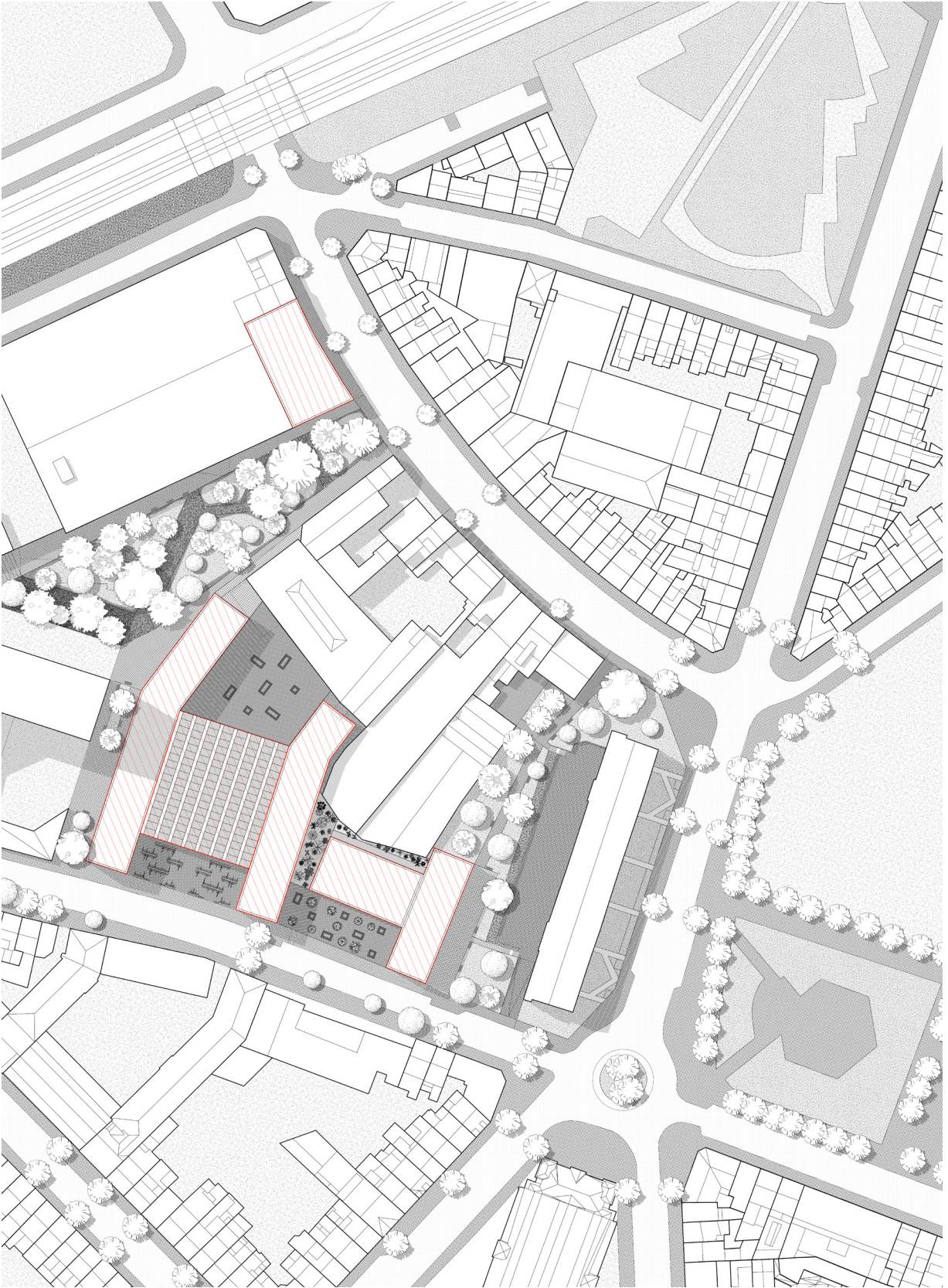


Fig. 63. Master plan with the intervention in the site. Source: Author.



FINAL THOUGHT

In effect of the changes implemented, the site is not dramatically changed, but becomes more defined and concise, which is a crucial aspect in terms of context like Anderlecht. Most of the housing blocks are introvert, focused within themselves with dense urban fabric, whereas the intervention site is fragmented and loose, what creates a completely different potential for changes and improvements. The neglected and – one would say – unfortunately placed Les Goujons building gets back its prominence due to a moved park, so finally this kind of building gets meaning in the context around the greenery. The park itself becomes a connecting fragment between two sides of the plot, which makes it more accessible for residents; from the perspective of Les Goujons building, it becomes a back garden for it and gains some social control to this space. The neglected urban corner gets back its importance with the public space and new building and now can be considered more attractive for activities, whereas the rest of the corners of the site are still working as local places for meetings which are uninterrupted. Finally, the fragmentation – the main feature of the site – is emphasized to become something defined and more positive. The proposed design is an expression of the conclusion drawn from the research about collective memory, taking patterns and proportions from the context and using it not the architecture itself, but also what is around it to generate the potential for collective memory creation.

REFLECTION - COLLECTIVE MEMORY MANIFESTO

Research-design relationship

The research on collective memory, which is an anthropological theme, supported by case studies helped me to recognize how can the existing context be a tool for architect to build his position. Usually, the as-found situation in the place is a derivative of various events and changes throughout the time, which are crucial factors determining why did those changes occur. Architecture is meant to be serving people, therefore site-specific research needs particular attention to the way in which the spaces are used and how the identity of the place is being created. The information gained during research phase was helpful in terms of sharpening focus for particular elements of urban design or architecture to define my own position towards the site. The main thought, however, was to find a personal way of site-specific design.

The craft school idea also derives from the research. The character of the project's site in Anderlecht was mixing industry and housing throughout the history. On one hand, craft school is a reference to the Brussels's ambition to become a productive city, which aims for bringing back the industry to the urban fabric. Vocational schools can provide appropriate training for the people to shape the future direction of the city. On another hand, school buildings play a great role in community. Beside of enforcing the local traditions, it becomes an important part of the neighbourhood. Therefore, it constitutes to the identity of the place. Big number of students coming to the place provide the support for local amenities and stimulate further investments in the area. However, the important conclusion drawn from the research was also about creating place for local community and bonding the architecture with the surroundings. That is why the second part of the complex was made as a library. Its presence is clearly connected with the craft school; however, its purpose is to give a new place for the local community. The library forms the public realm physically, but also makes the craft school visible within the neighbourhood.

Relation to the studio theoretical framework

Urban Architecture's studio theme is spolia and bricolage, therefore my research and design seeks for literal and non-literal connection with the idea of re-use and working with the as-found. The as found is interpreted through the memory of the site, which present state derives from numerous changes in the past. Existing context's logic and limitations are used as a tool to define architectural project together with theoretical considerations about identity and collective memory of the place. One of many architect's tasks is to refer to the existing. The architectural design can be compared to a sculpture made by a bricoleur, using only tools and

materials available at hand. However, contrary to a sculpture, the building is a continuation of some story, which was being written throughout the time, what does not necessarily apply to a sculpture. Therefore, it may seem, that the continuation of the existing and referring to it demands understanding of the processes and changes leading to the current state. All the necessary tools are available at hand – on site. The building shaped by its context – just like a sculpture – has visible marks in its form of the tool it was made with. It is only about designer's creativity and form of interpretation to use them to express his own position and so it is in Anderlecht's context.

The re-use is expressed through considerations about circularity and sustainability in the scale of the building and detail. On one hand, building's structure and appearance is not meant to directly express its function. This decision was made in order to defamiliarize the image of the school and express the typology as a primary unit of architecture. Therefore, if the function of the building stops to meet needs, its typology can become a point of interpretation to accommodate new functions. The building is made in modular way, what underlines its circular idea. Most of the structural elements are able to be dismantled and re-used further for other purpose. Therefore, the building's memory can be carried by the elements it was made with. Each façade module can be made mostly out of re-used materials what enriches building's form.

Scientific relevance

Architecture is becoming more and more multi-disciplinary profession. The forms surrounding us derive from certain typology, which becomes a subject of constant interpretation and evolution and those typologies bring immediate connotations to certain ideas. However, it is the society, which accommodate those places and give them character. If we know how to recognize the history, the memory, and the reality visible in place, how do we translate this information into architectural form? How can we use the information found in place as a tool for developing our positioning to the site? Answering these questions was possible only through involving other fields of science – in this case anthropology and sociology. Understanding social processes which contribute to creating an identity in certain areas and the connection between architecture and surrounding spaces can help to precisely answer issues of modern globalized cities both in terms of new structures and preservation of existing neighbourhoods. In terms of science, the relation between architecture and anthropology is a great source of information for future development and research. It is interesting to mix two seemingly different fields of science and see how do they fill each other up, but also to see the points of contradiction.

Relation to the wider professional, scientific, and social framework

Observation of the global tendency for constant development, striving to fulfil housing shortages and provide necessary facilities led to strong standardization and commodification of architecture and – beside their effectiveness – resulted in placeless buildings and neighbourhoods without any identity. The term “regionalism” was lost in the transition because the extents of region are understood more and more widely, without borders. Nevertheless, the need for identity with the place is still an unanswered issue of modern living areas and every intervention demands sensitivity for the existing memory – collective memory being created and continued. The architect’s task is to observe and interpret patterns of inhabitation visible on-site, to create continuity of the place. Every architectural piece is a statement of the architect’s beliefs and decisions. I believe this project and research helped me to find my own way of looking and analysing the context. The profession of the architect however demands constant following the changes, so this project is hopefully a starting point for further development in real circumstances involving more complex issues. The identity crisis in modern cities is still an unanswered issue and architecture is one of the fields which can influence its change.

Ethical considerations

Nowadays every design, which strives to have a dialogue with the context must be carefully thoughtful to find its own balance between contextual avant-garde and placeless functionalism. The form is a predominant image of the place as a whole, all the current history of the place is inscribed into the form of the building. Of course, it is a tough task to express the image of the whole in a one building. However, the building can become a record of the certain point in history. It can express the richness of its surroundings even if these surroundings are not there anymore. It can extend the existing history and become part of the future memory. It can participate in continuous story of the place and adjust itself to its rhythm. It can still allow the new history to create itself.

However, the project is always an effect of some compromises and reduction of certain values in favour of other ones. The process of interpretation of existing reality, which is described in this master thesis is constructive only if it involves experimental factor. The existing context can be understood as a tool for site-specific design up to a certain point. The most important factor of the place is that limitations imposed by the existing contribute the most to the uniqueness of the design. In that point, the architect can fall into the trap of admiration of the traditional forms of the city too much. However, there is still something to learn from those urban artifacts. One of the biggest ethical considerations were about the placement of the border between following and interpreting the context. I guess that Aldo Rossi and Alvaro Siza, which projects I am citing in my thesis also had this ethical dilemma.

The Collective Memory manifesto

1. The society creates character. All the activities, small businesses, local spaces are creating the unique character of the place. It is the local society which contributes to that the most. Architect should carefully study the character of the place before intervening into it.
2. The character creates place. Patterns of inhabitation reveal the uniqueness of the place, its strengths, and weaknesses. Both of them influence an overall image of the place. These features are the basis for interpretation, constituting to the creation of the context.
3. The architecture creates context. Every site is full of patterns of its use, every place has its own rhythm and life cycle. Formal identity of architecture stops to play a key role, the existing memory created in public and collective realm comes to the foreground. Buildings become the background of this spectacle of everydayness, framing spaces of human interaction. If the architecture strives to integrate with the surroundings, to create places – the current memory of the place would be prolonged.
4. The context creates architecture. Observation of the typologies and patterns reveals certain logic of the place, its specificity. The architect should learn from this logic and interpret it into his own work. By doing this, the building becomes a record of its context, the natural continuation of the presence with the current reality inscribed into the form of the building. The surrounding structures impose certain spatial limitations on the architecture. This tension creates potential to use those limitations as an advantage for spatial integrity of the place. The architecture must not avoid reacting to this tension in any way to become unique.
5. The typology creates form. The lifespan of the building function can finish over time. When the architecture stops to serve its primary function, the memory begins and only the form of the building survives. Therefore, the typology and the type become a predominant factor defining the future setting of the building and starts to be a structure for experimentation and interpretation of the past.
6. The form creates image. The form is a predominant image of the place as a whole, all the current history of the place is inscribed into the form of the building. However, as soon as the surroundings start to change, the form becomes a record of memory of the place, its significance weakens, but still its image is unique due to the limitations visible at certain point in time. The function, however, lasts only for definite period of time, the building serves the function as long as needed, then its typology can become a subject of interpretation. In this matter, form and function are self-dependent, but not connected.
7. Image creates memory. Imagery has a strong influence on collective memory and the individual memory, which is linked with certain places. The forms surrounding us derive from certain typology, which becomes a subject of constant interpretation and evolution.

In the case of real design problem, even our conviction that there is such a thing as fit to be achieved is curiously flimsy and insubstantial. We are searching for some kind of harmony between two intangibles: a form which we have not yet designed and a context which we cannot properly describe.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Alexander, Christopher. *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*. Cambridge [Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964: 26

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