

# **Is a Music building for everyone, a Marvel?**

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## **REFLECTIVE REPORT**



## Introduction

The 'Public Buildings' studio has been commissioned to design a musicbuilding. The music building is to be designed in the Binckhorst area, in The Hague – The Netherlands. In order to realize a design, research has to be done first. In P1, we conducted a group study into music buildings that are relevant both abroad - and in the Netherlands. In addition, we have analyzed the current situation in Binckhorst and what the potential is of the area to transfer to a future and 'new' Binckhorst that will change its identity in terms of character and function as an area. Each student takes a position regarding a music building and a specific spot in Binckhorst, this is the first step towards defining a concept.

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## Method and argumentation

In order to formulate an answer to the question whether the approach has worked, a definition must first be drawn up for the method (how) and the argumentation (why). For me personally it works best to work concretely. Mainly because in a design you can quickly dive into the abstract side and not formulate or design a specific answer for what is needed. That is why the 'why' is very important to define. My Research started at this point question myself the following questions.

- Why do we need a music building?
- What makes a music building attractive?
- What is the problem in the area we encounter and why should we design specifically here (in Binckhorst)?
- After I defined the problem, as a second step I looked for methods, or the 'how'.
- How am I going to solve the problem?
- How am I going to design? How do I define a plot?
- How am I going to make the building relevant?
- How am I going to strengthen my concept through a design?

By means of a desk and field research I was able to define an answer to the questions I formulated. The answers to these questions have also been an answer or a goal for my P2 presentation in which I had to present a concrete concept.

The way of working that I have described has been effective. Mainly because I have already worked on several projects, I tried to use my previous experiences. It works well for me to write down specific points for attention, so that I can reflect on them later and evaluate whether I have actually been able to formulate both textual and graphic answers to the questions I ask myself. You get further and further along in the process where you make the switch from researching through text to researching through design. In this stage I use my intuition and the 'trial and error' method more. I try some gut feeling, reflect on this and then try to adjust it again by talking to fellow students or tutors with it. In this stage I take Zumthor as an example, as he also indicates that architecture is a craft and that you also have to practice this skill with your hands, such as study models or hand-made sketches, which in turn works together with your intuition. An evaluation or point of reflection on this principle is that you can lose yourself in the amount of studies you do. At the specified moment you no longer have a grip on what is right and wrong. I have also occasionally suffered from this, it is essential that an external person also has a grip on your project and can warn you if you stray too far from the essence of the research

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## A Music Marvel

Before I can explain what a 'Music Marvel' is to me, the Design Manifesto (see image) is first explained.

My manifesto is therefore also connecting The Hague with Binckhorst. The Musicbuilding works as a mediator or an amplifier as a metaphor. Binckhorst is being transformed for this purpose, among other things. To make an area attractive to people, this includes activities that people can do together that is accessible to everyone. The music building in my design is a hybrid building from my perspective. This means that it consists not only functions as a music building but has multiple purposes. This means that the music building is an attraction for all people in The Hague and is also the guideline or filter to make the rest of Binckhorst attractive. The building, which is intended for everyone and different functions, acts as a suction for the people in the city center and in turn causes a discharge over the rest of Binckhorst (and the edges of The Hague). The Binckhorst can also be interpreted as a playground where you have different spots that are connected to each other, or 'spaces of encounter'. The new music building thus indirectly enriches the rest of the area.

For me, the Music Marvel is a building that is accessible to everyone, that has interface with everyone with different interests. The building is therefore not only intended for a concert, but is actually an attraction for the entire area. The Music Marvel is therefore a crucial element for me in the new life of the Binckhorst.

In addition, this music building can serve as a guideline for areas such as Binckhorst, where the focus is on involving the area in the current city center by means of density, but at the same time the practical functions such as routing and circularity are not disadvantaged because the building offers space for a multifunctional program.

This is also important from a technical perspective. Sound and acoustics are an important aspect for a concert hall, for example. Multifunctional venues, such as community centers, must be adaptable enough to accommodate a wide range of concerts, theater performances, and other activities. Furthermore, many existing venues, such as theatres, music halls, and even opera houses, are required to produce acts that aren't typical of their function. As a result of this circumstance, there was a pressing need to alter the venue's acoustic settings for various types of events.

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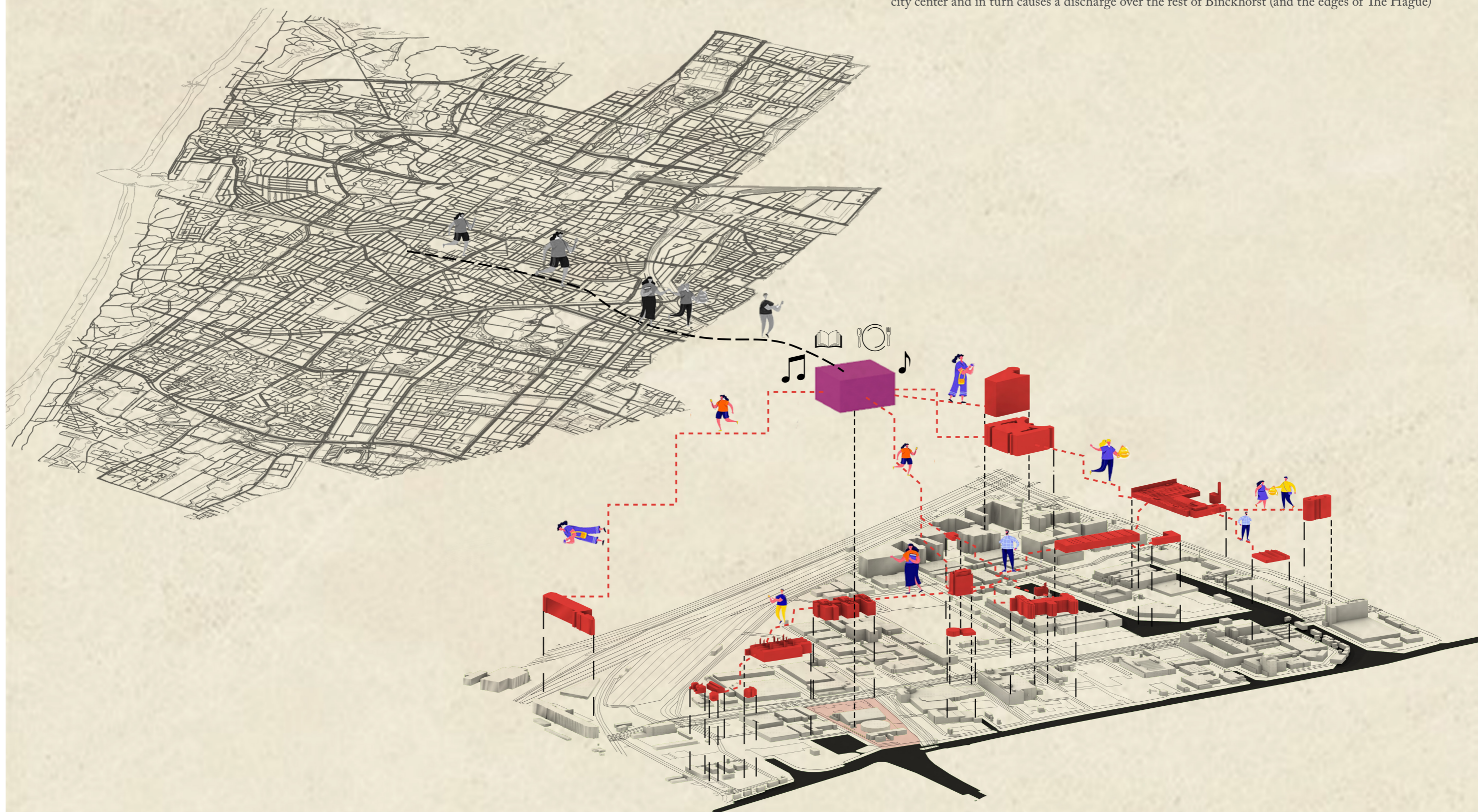
Due to the high occupancy rate in the city center of The Hague, the municipality wants to expand the city and distribute people over the other parts of The Hague.

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## Relation between the studio and design

The relationship between the graduation research and the master architecture is that by means of the competences learned on the 'MSc Architecture' we are able to form a well-thought-out and reasoned academic reflection by using architecture as a tool on a defined problem statement. The master studio Public Buildings offers the challenge to use a communal place in society to be able to provide proof through architecture on the written theories that we form in the research plan and to actually implement them on a technical level in practice.

The aim of this research is to approach music buildings (and other public buildings) in a different way as a designer, but also as a visitor or performer. In addition, it is important to understand that a music building is more than a concert hall. That the building is multifunctional and offers space for multiple programs. This can combine multiple music genres in one building, but it can also be done in a broader aspect where different functions are combined in one building. The ultimate goal of this is that the building is flexible and always adaptable in extreme cases that affects society.

Through the studies that have been done into the power of music and the mental benefits of unity, a concept has been drawn up based on the functions that will be in the building. Experiments were conducted to determine whether there is a different way of designing by means of sound, for example for clusters of functions. This means that a building is approached which deviates from a 'regular' typology that we are used to with a music building. The clusters of, for example, 'silence', 'vibrant' and 'harmonic' provide a different way of approaching. The analyzes of the case studies have helped enormously in this regard. This allowed me to draw up a different typology for my design that proves that we don't have to follow one way of designing for public buildings.

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## Concept of multiplicity

My concept actually emerged from the definition of 'multiplicity', as it were. The building is a versatile building that is basically in use 24 hours. The concept of the noise zones are also functions that can be used at different times in a day. Think of working people in the library or in a desk in the morning. At lunch or dinner in the afternoon and evening who also use the exhibition / event room. And then a concert in the evening or night. Every part of the building has a lively side throughout the day. In other words: The building can contribute to the society on different times for different people this means that the building is very dynamic and welcoming whenever you want.

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## Relevance of the project

Before we started on the studio, we had to prepare a kind of passport in the summer and send it in as a motivation letter for the Public Buildings studio. In this 'Studio Passport' I already indicated that my vision on public buildings was being changed. I wanted to anticipate extreme cases that also affect the architecture world. The pandemic in 2020 and 2021 was a great example of this. I also quote myself from the 'Studio Passport':

*"People's perceptions change over the years. People's needs and interests are also changing. As designers, we have to be flexible in thinking and design to adapt to the wishes and standards of the current eras, we have to evaluate ourselves in an innovative sense. This in turn is reflected in spaces where people come together and do activities in company, or rather: 'public buildings'. I find it interesting how we as designers, through architecture, adapt to today's society with regard to public spaces on different scales. In addition, I am looking forward to looking at solutions to somewhat bring people together in extreme cases such as the COVID19. These kinds of extreme events can lead to certain perspectives that we as designers have never thought about. My vision is therefore: limitations lead to creativity."* – Hakkican Ünsür, 08-07-2021.

With this quote I want to indicate that I wanted to realize a relevant design from the start. By creating clusters and designing a flexible floor plan by creating the circulation around the building, I have designed a relevant and dynamic music building that can anticipate extreme cases (such as a pandemic) at any moment.

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## Ethical issues and dilemma's

During the research in groups for P1, I found it difficult to take into account group members again, because partly due to COVID and individual projects I have become accustomed to 'studying alone'. This made it difficult for me to take into account the way other students work. Nevertheless, through a lot of communication, we have reached joint compromises. Then after the P1 we became more and more independent and we went in our own direction, this gave me more freedom and I could again adapt to my own rhythm and way of working. During P2 I ended up in a 'designers block' due to too many design dilemmas and a positive COVID test. I had trouble defining a design and getting my concept clear. Through a lot of pep talks from friends and family and the motivation boost I got, I ended the P2 well. After my P2 I realized that the design did not fit my vision after all. Then I changed the design in collaboration with my tutor and started again. I was unsure whether it was all smart to start over because of time. Still, this had been a good choice. Afterwards I made a better design that reflected a good translation of my ideas.

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## Contribution to the society

Nowadays it is easy to listen to music. Music apps, videos from the internet or live stream concerts. Yet as a society we tend to go to a concert. The trigger to still come together with other people has to do with the experiences and the vibe that is constructed in a certain space. In addition, it is the daytime activity that you plan with people you love. A meal before the concert, a little shopping before the concert and maybe a drink after the concert. Covering all these different public functions in one building is the greatest mental contribution to society. All these activities stress the importance of the shared nature of the experience, the interaction with others, as a source of satisfaction, according to the research of Michael Morgan for Bournemouth University.

In the problem statement, it was pointed out that The Hague is growing and Binckhorst is now starting to move into the center of the city more and more instead of a fringe area. Due to a shortage of housing and a high demand for housing, the Binckhorst area is an optimal area for optimizing the housing market in The Hague. This potential Binckhorst area can first and foremost form an 'icon' for the area with a music building. The area around this building can then be shaped and designed around the eyecatcher of the new site.

A publicly accessible building with events (such as a music building with multiple functions, or a hybrid building) also makes it possible for society to integrate in this area. This creates an interaction between Binckhorst and the rest of The Hague. The multifunctional public buildings will be reviving the area and creating interaction or circulation in Binckhorst. This will both provide an advantage for the municipality of The Hague that has to deal with a housing shortage, and will help the population of the municipality of The Hague spread over several areas of The Hague and will indirectly also benefit for the circulation in the city center and balancing the population in the city.

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Morgan. 2007. Festival Spaces and the visitor experiences