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LIVING WITH COMMONS
Deepened spatiality of injustice amidst COVID-19

1. Why 'New Heritage'

Questions breed thoughts, breed questions, and more thoughts. There cannot be an answer before, probably not ever after. But through holistic dialogue among stakeholders, I hope the attempt and may be courage, in recognizing the complexity can reward us with hints of the intricacies of such dichromatic architecture –
[1] NEW | HERITAGE

In the industrialization of building, its over power had made the architect as craftsman redundant. When the sudden intervention of a new ability of prefabricated masses abruptly solved the unsolvable housing demand, the solution came at a price. The modern architect left the stage.
[2] ARCHITECTURE ELIMINATED ARCHITECT?

Value of every invention lies in what it makes unnecessary, in the elimination of redundant processes. If the regime of design discussion among architects had been eliminated, whom we should put on the table to seek the bridge for the future of those remaining masses? I reckon the residents get the validation about the past to be remembered and which they remember.
[3] FORM FOLLOWS FORM - MEMORY OF MEMORY

In the era of mass production, those prefabricated public housing almost became a global solution in housing shortage in the 1960s and 70s. The rectangular buildings from ranges of housing projects feel incredibly familiar that the generic nature of every neighbourhood had become part of a larger story. They have transcended nations and political systems as the by product of universal response to a globally felt urgency. At a poetic level, the prefabricated panels had been representing our collective ideology. Whilst the demolition of buildings stipulates an ideological cleansing, a foreclosure of the historical chapter still leaves the major issue unresolved. Afterall, there should be a time to rethink their definition to the 'contemporary' regionally, if not globally.
[4] REGIONAL ISSUE TO UNIVERSAL IDEOLOGY

While some may see 'heritage' as a tangible inheritance that should be physically respected, the concept of 'new' and 'heritage' has been surprisingly developed and transformed into something less architectural along with the process of the graduation project. Intrigued by the 'spatiality' of injustice from the beginning, I have discovered that the space with historical value does not necessarily lie on the physical arrangement of the commons, but the concept and intention behind. So when the rationale of the construction of commons and mixed use is good, however with poor quality, renovation or partial demolition may be inevitable to reactivate the embedded good. Instead of insisting on nostalgia, a new revolution, a new normal might be a better way to allow the continuation of the 'spatial heritage' in the form of ideology.
[5] NEW CONTINUES HERITAGE / HERITAGE BREEDS NEW
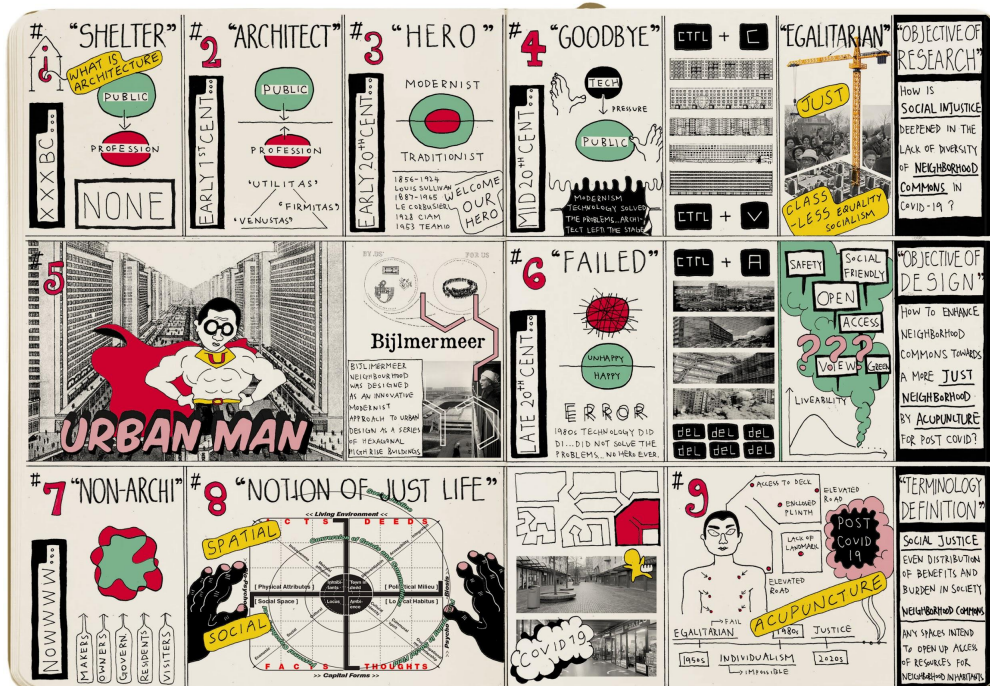
'After architects left, what was inherited?'

2. Research and Design

2.1. Collective

Research and design is formulated into two parts, collective and individual. The collective parts focus on researching the values and attributes of case studies and the development of corresponding research methods, data collection and interpretation. It answers the question of 'what are the existing attributes and corresponding values constituting the neighborhood commons in Bijlmerplein?' A matrix of values and attributes in the form of a dendrogram expresses the relativity of each attribute and the corresponding potential and challenges of the existing situation. Discovery of main values and attributes of respective neighborhoods were selected for the development of design tools for the next stage.
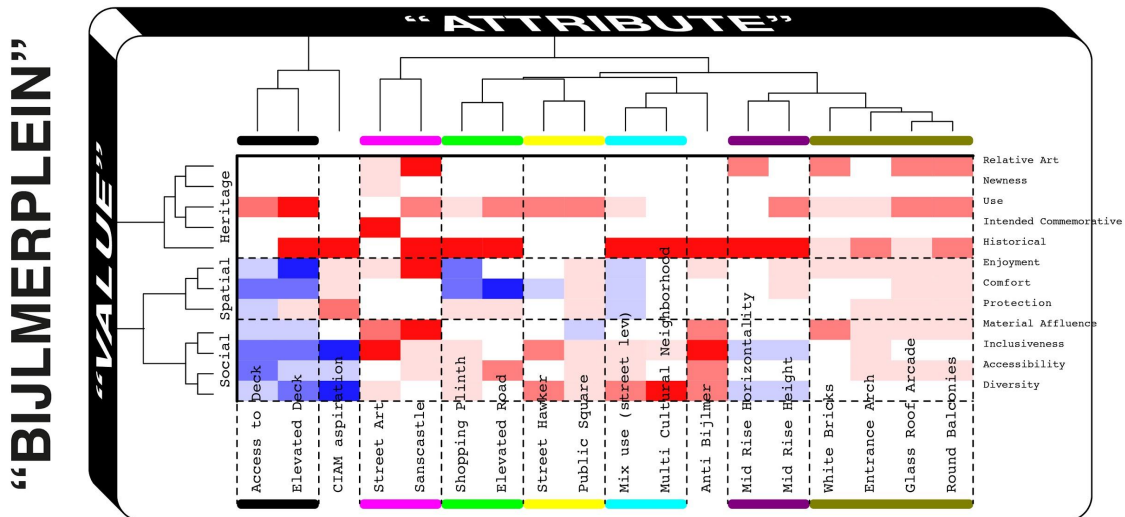
Attribute-Value Matrix
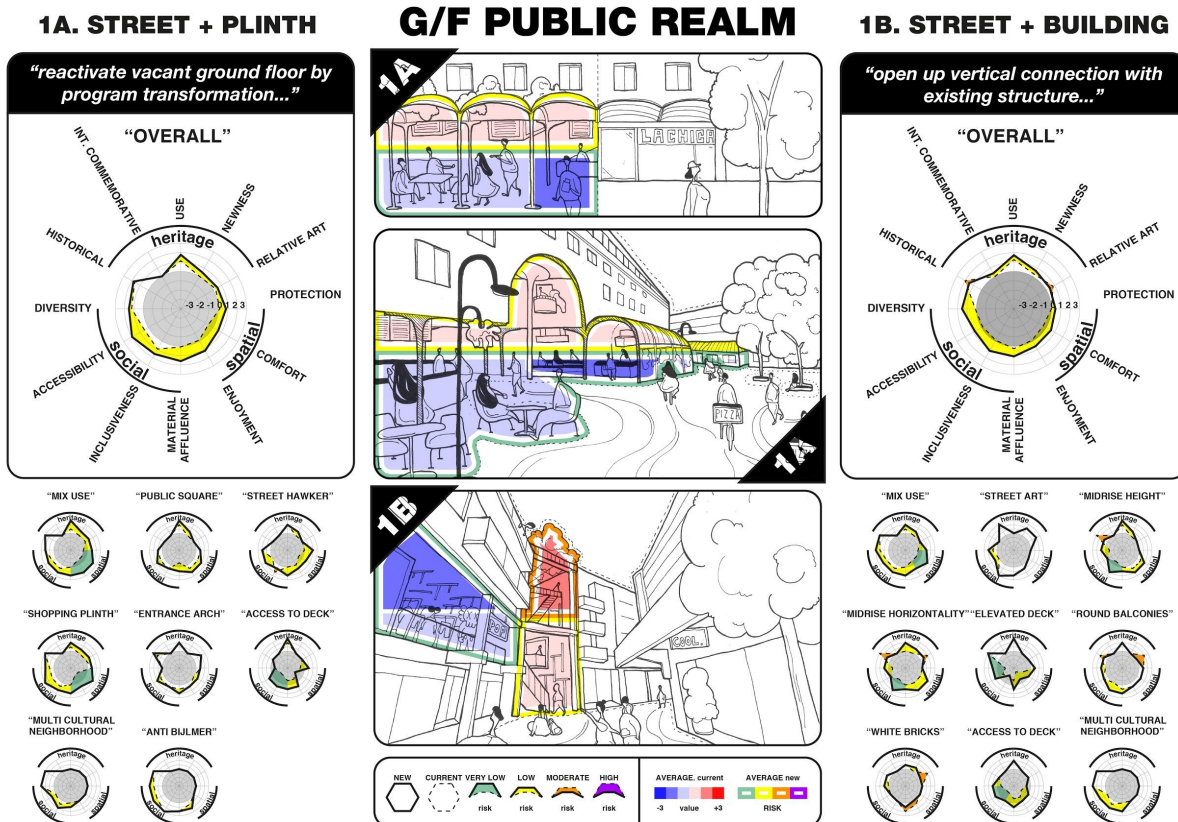
Value-based scenario toolkit example

2.2.1 Individual Research

Bringing the collective code book about values and attributes, and a set of value-based scenario toolkit for 70s/ 80s residential neighbourhoods to the individual part, a more in depth research in cluster scale was conducted. In response to the key findings and potentials of the existing from the collective part, the individual part further explored the change of those attributes amidst the pandemic for a more holistic understanding of 'how is social injustice deepened in the lack of diversity of neighborhood commons amidst the crisis of pandemic'.

Site observation of the current form of neighborhood commons was conducted to respond to the hypothesis of 'deepened injustice' and feeds to the understanding about the existing key attributes during the pandemic. Design tools of a catalogue of design abstractions from the neighbourhood commons and illustrations of pandemic related commons will be synthesized as a conclusion of the analysis. Meanwhile, value-based tool box from the collective part has remained as the evaluation tool supporting the design abstraction catalogue.

ABSTRACTION of
SYMBOL to TECTONIC to SOCIAL

Design abstraction catalogue

2.2.2 Individual Design

Urban strategies

Based on the above attribute-value research, a question based on 'spatiality of injustice' deepened by the malfunctioning of the shopping plinth has set the foundation for the speculation of the possible intervention of the Bijlmerplein cluster as an urban product.

The above attribute-value research identified the current neighborhood commons and extracted the potential ones as the base of the design. In response to the question based on 'spatiality of injustice', a set of strategies of interventions corresponding to the neighborhood commons at Bijlmerplein cluster 7 was explored in a form of 'acupuncture'. Regarding the existing attributes of the neighbourhood commons, the initial urban design anticipated the way of enhancement that would positively impact on its spatial, social and heritage value. In addition to the existing, the newly introduced interventions have to respond to the standard of the 'new normal' to optimize its distribution of common goods in preparation for any next possible pandemic.

Initial urban design outcomes

In response to the possible social injustice deepend in the form of poor commons amidst the pandemic, the design was aimed to recreate a more just neighborhood by a set of interventions to improve the three major problematic commons:

1.   Ground floor public realm
2.   Shopping plinth and deck
3.   Access to deck

The acupuncture approach allows redesigning in a spectrum of scale addressing specific challenges identified in the synthesis of data collection from different stakeholders. Collection of interventions are expected to be implemented separately regarding the needs and level of urgency to address respective commons. Instead of a radical insertion of a total new physical entity, various interventions are specifically contextualised in different scales and forms of commons to optimize the values of the preserved surrounding attributes.
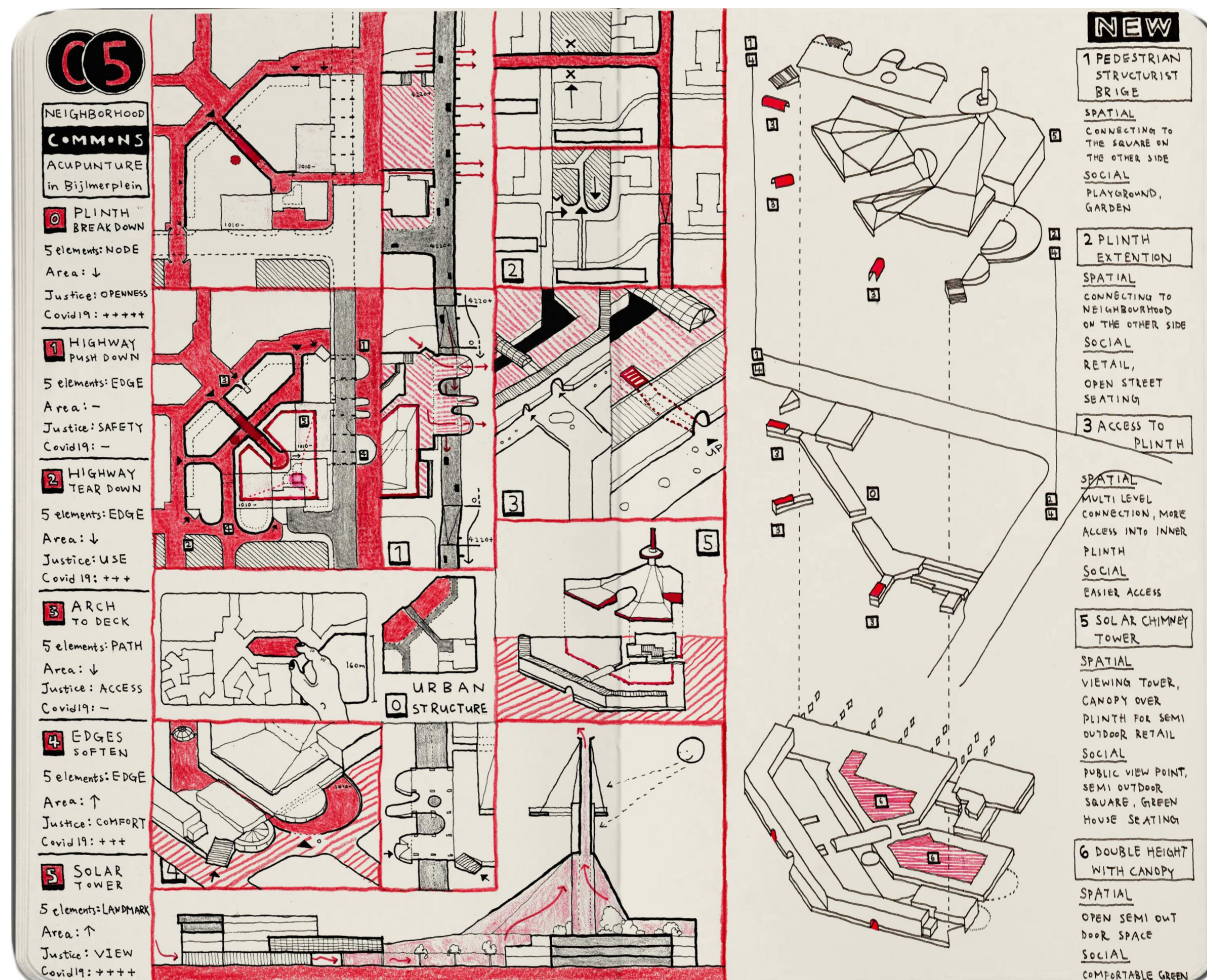
Urban redesign framework

Architectural intervention focus

Regarding the level of importance and urgency of the different scenarios of urban redesign, the focus of the project is narrowed down to resolve the malfunctioning between the deck and plinth. Therefore, driven by 'research by design' in the previous stage, an architectural intervention of an 'Exhibition, Production, Socialization' (EPS) Venue with a 24-7 semi open space is further explored as the catalyst of the social reactivation for the post covid future. Meanwhile, the rest of the urban scale renovations remain conceptual as a supportive connection between the EPS Venue and the surrounding neighbourhood.
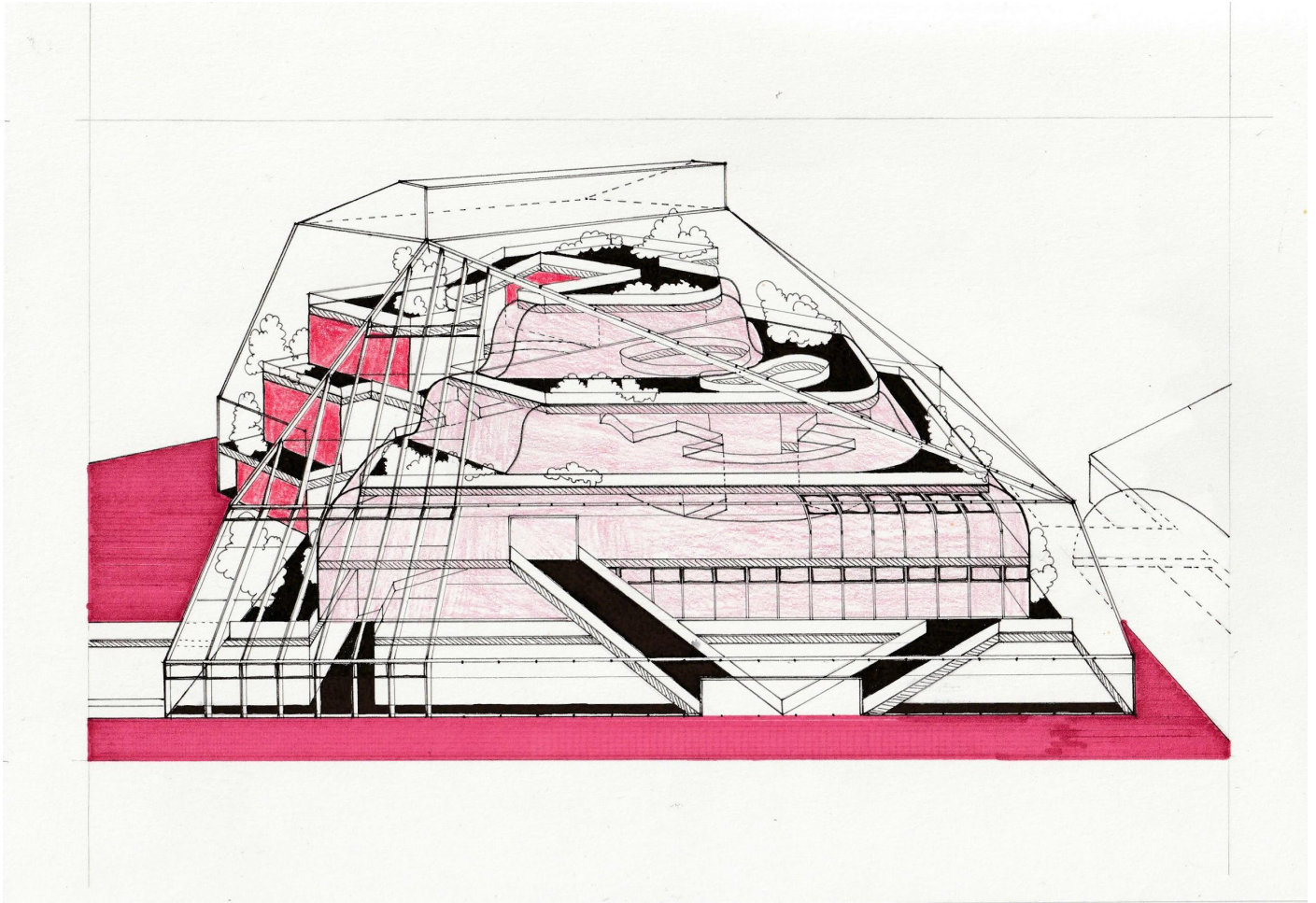
EPS (Exhibition, Production, Socialization) Venue

3. Research method

3.1. Collective

The collective research began from interviewing various stakeholders and digital platforms, literature data collection to get a general understanding of the neighborhood. Such a broad research method with a totally open mind in the beginning of the project helps us to interpret the context in an unbiased manner. Any insight regarding the values and attributes of the context has set various directions for further research.

Being triggered by the collected keywords, scenario designs in response to different topics serve as a brainstorming exercise for the possible 'new heritage' intervention. Meanwhile, to assess the potential of those intervention ideas, a system of impact assessment is set as the feedback guide for the entire design process. This serves as a solid 'value' and 'attribute' base for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions in individual aspects. Hence, a conclusion of research by design could be drawn by the comparison of the assessment of before and after.
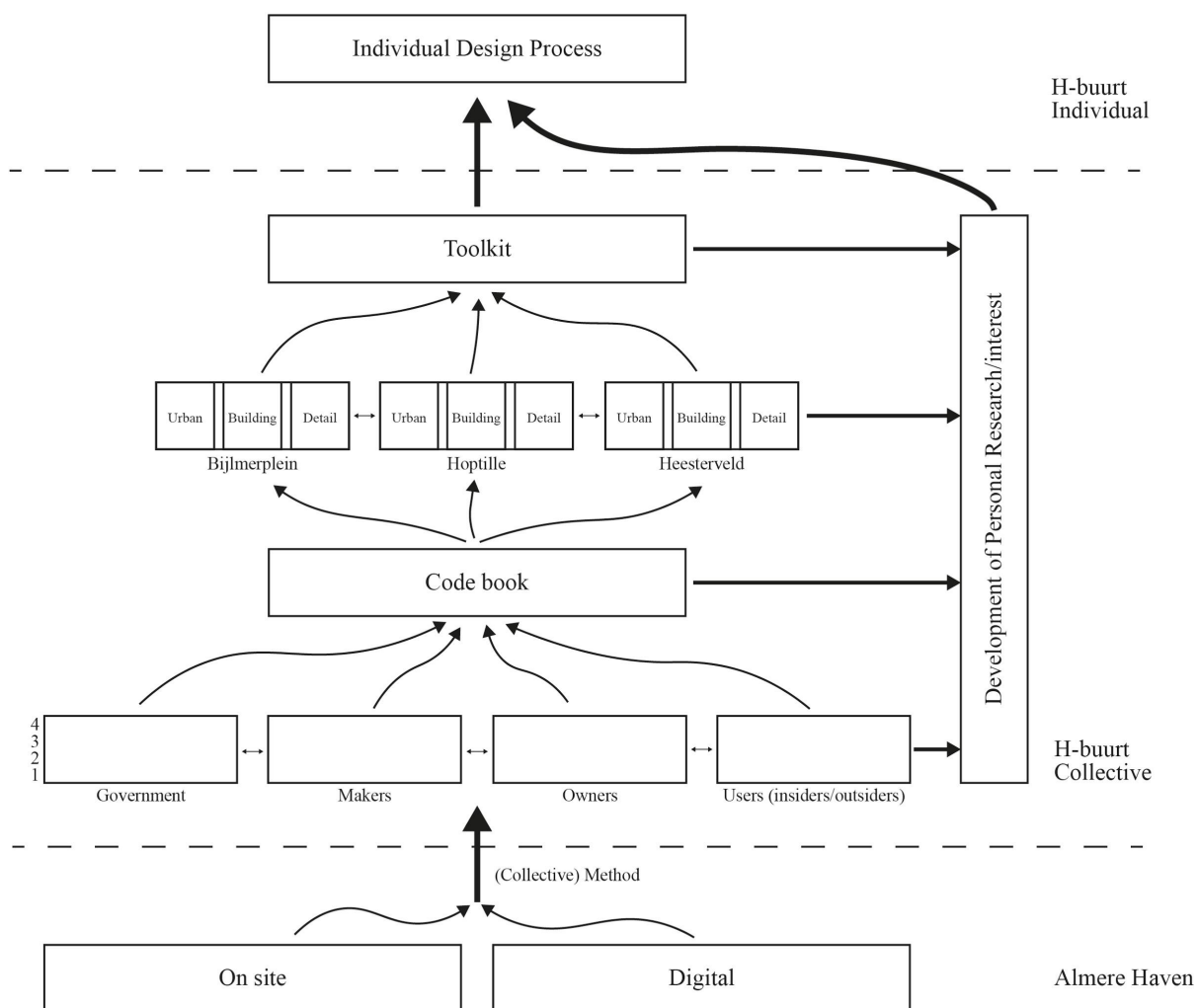
Collective

3.2 Individual Research

Parallel to the site research, setting the project in the context of covid-19, it is of essence to research about the spatial-pandemic relationship. For the primary research, site observation by photography contributes to the understanding of the human scale experience in the situation under covid. Aside from documentation of architectural discovery, human behaviour and covid-related spatial impacts constitute the discourse of the 'deepened' socio-spatial injustice with the support of the photos from the past. Followed by the first person experience in the site is the catalogue of design abstractions as the relevant architectural and covid-related elements to be respected throughout the design process. A series of provocative collage in the combination of those on-site photos and supporting graphics also serves as a visual stimulation for the potential resolution for the captured existing.

In addition to the covid impacts discovered in the site, a broader picture of the covid-19 impact on everyday living and the structure of the city, and more importantly, the speculation of the post-covid future, is collected by ranges of scientific reports, socio-spatial analysis about 'during covid' and 'reopening' by Gehl. Desk study integrating the general knowledge of the pandemic, and very probably, more pandemic in the possible future, has indicated the urge to take those 'pandemic precautions' into consideration in a sustainable design. Spatial-health related design strategies are then extracted into the abstraction catalogue.

Physical Attributes	Social Space	Inhabitants	Locus

Material Affluence

Furnishings & Landscape

Metrics
seating. lighting. tree. pavement.
sidewalk width.

Stationary Activity Mapping

Metrics
postures.
01 standing
02 public sitting
03 commercial sitting
04 informal sitting
05 lying down
06 multiple movement

activities.
01 waiting for transportation
02 comsuming f & b
03 commercial activity
04 conversing
05 cultural activity
06 recreation, play, exercise

Program

Metrics
cultural. social. economic.

Age Gender Race Tally

Metrics
kids. young adults. adults. seniors.
male. female. Caucasian. Asian.
Latino. African.

Demography

Metrics
neighbourhood population.

People Moving Count

Metrics
walking. running. supported. car-
ried. rolling. biking.

Macro-trends

Metrics
social media data.

Social Capital

Inclusiveness

12 Quality Criteria

Metrics
protection.
01 against traffic
02 against crime
03 against unpleasant sensory

comfort.
04 invitations for walking
05 invitation for standing/ staying
06 invitation for sitting
07 invitation for seeing
08 invitation for hearing/ talking
09 invitation for play/ recreation

enjoyment.
10 dimensioned of human scale
11 positive aspects of climate
12 aesthetic quality

Building Facade Activation + Entries

Metrics
Building facade activation rating
number of entries per meter

Accessibility

Urban connectivity

Metrics
network connectivity within 500
meters diameter.

Methods
● Observational Survey
● On-site Snapshots
● Desktop Research
● Archive Drawings Documentation

Tools
■ Rating Matrix
■ Quantitative Analysis
■ Snapshot Illustration
■ Analytic Architectural Drawing

Hypothesis about neighborhood commons

1. LACK	2. DIVERSITY	3. PANDEMIC
? boolean	? what	? how

Research

A.	'Current' Neighborhood Commons	B.	'Past' Neighborhood Commons
physical attributes - permanent / covid-driven	+ level of social activities	physical attributes - permanent / temporary	+ level of social activities

Analysis -> Design Tool

Answer (1)	Answer (2)	Answer (3)
if quality of A is poor or B > A: ... 1 is True	if quality of A is poor or B > A: ... enhancement needed	covid-driven attributes of A could be referenced
A and B are potential neighborhood commons	good quality A and B could be referenced	level of social activities of A should be reflected
potential neighborhood commons	alteration / enhancement	more pandemic-proof for 'new normal'

"RESEARCH"

" FRAMEWORK "

Reference to social justice indicators from J. Max Bond Centre

Diversity	Accessibility	Inclusiveness	Material Affluence
01 Equity Designing for equity in the public realm examines how the public space increases the overall amount of accessible open space for the neighbourhood	**04 Access** Designing for access measures whether the public space can be easily and safely entered without physical obstruction, and if access to amenities changed or increased	**07 Ownership** Designing for ownership measures how the public space promotes one's belief that the space belongs to their neighbourhood and an individual sense of stewardship for the public space activities	**10 Beauty** Designing for beauty measures whether the public space elevated the physical aesthetics of the neighborhood
02 Choice Designing for choice examines whether users have multiple options and flexibility for what they do in the public space and how they con-figure the public space for different activities	**05 Connectivity** Designing for connectivity measures if the public space is sufficiently connected to varied modes of transportation and amenities	**08 Participation** Designing for participation examine how people use the public space and frequency of use. It examines whether area residents are engaged in the public space's design, pr-gramming and upkeep	**11 Creative innovation** Designing for creative innovation examines whether the public space deploys unique and creative solu-tions to address the deficit of active open space in neighborhood
03 Diversity Designing for diversity measures whether the public space offers a range of program options that re-flect the cultures of its users. It measures whether the public space attracts a diverse user population	**06 Health/Wellness** Designing for health and wellness measures if the public space provides active and passive outdoor activities that help improve human health conditions	**09 Inclusion/Belonging** Designing for inclusion and belong-ing looks at how the public space improves one's sence of being ac-cepted regardless of difference and a feeling of safety	

"SOCIAL VALUE"

Reference to 12 quality criteria from Ghel

Protection	Comfort		Enjoyment
01 Against traffic	04 Invitations for walking	07 Invitation for seeing	10 Dimensioned of human scale
02 Against crime	05 Invitation for standing/ staying	08 Invitation for hearing/ talking	11 Positive aspects of climate
03 Against unpleasant sensory	06 Invitation for sitting	09 Invitation for play/ recreation	12 Aesthetic quality

"SPATIAL VALUE"

Reference to Alois Riegl

Historical	Intentional Commemorative	Newness	Use	Relative Art

"HERITAGE VALUE"

Individual

4. Wider relevance

'Non-styled architecture' as an unpurified solution to spatiality of injustice

Never conflict can be avoided, nor can we fully rely on the social system itself in changing incrementally as a consequence of continued pressure for justice. The goal of this research and graduation design is not to seek a solution to the social injustice embedded in the neighbourhood. As explained in the theoretical framework about the notion of just life, the role of architecture in the entire system is limited, however, has set a spatial foundation as the acts and the casual facts in an individual's life. While housing policy on economics and ownerships indeed might play a more effective role in the change of the system, which has also been more discussed and progressed, the impact from the uneven distribution of the commons has been overlooked. Thus, this research attempts to translate the constituents of social justice in the form of spatial metrics to suggest another lens to replant neighborhood justice in the form of commons. The specific acupuncture in the identified neighborhood commons will be anticipated as a catalyst for more even distribution of social resources.

As Saskia Sassen, a Dutch-American sociologist raised a query about 'who owns the city' in an era of plutocracy, public officials have acknowledged the fact that the socially vulnerable populations are being displaced by an urban development machine indifferent to creating an inclusive city (Foster and Iaione, 2016). In the introduction chapter, it has been claimed that the elimination of architects in the design process has led to the 'non-styled architecture' in the 70s/80s. While witnessing the failure of the arrogant heroism of architects in the modern movement, we have also learnt that architects are no god to a solution to egalitarianism. And hence, in response to the question of Saskia Sassen, the 'non-architect' who can justify the value and design of the neighborhood and the city, should be the residents and other heterogeneous groups of users. Through this research, a holistic perspective has always been emphasized in the evaluation of the neighbourhood, as the foundation of the aim of the design. As a result, the acupuncture design is totally responsive to the general opinions, and more importantly the needs and perceptions of the residents. In addition with the bottom up neighbourhood observation survey, this research aims to suggest a form of research, hence a humble design which is inspired by those 'non architects' for their own justice. After half a century, learning from the catastrophe brought by the domination of abstract, instrumental reason with grand architecture concepts over humans and nature, it is aimed that this research can explore the possibility of a heterodoxical unpurified solution regarding the contextualised spatiality of injustice by the means of neighborhood commons.

'Pandemic proof' commons to prepare for the next apocalypse

Throughout the past year combating covid-19 with no vaccine or cure available yet for the pandemic, physical space, has been serving as one of the agencies to fight and control the spread. Particularly for the commons, where most ranges of people encounter one another, the good ones have been providing intrinsic benefits for the public, while the malfunctioning ones have either worsened the social segregation or escalated the spread of virus. Therefore, the way that cities and neighborhood commons leveraging the public realm and living environment has casted a far reaching socio-spatial consequence, at the same time set the reference models for future pandemic proof design. The arrogance of 'urban man' might be the reason for the catastrophe in the past century. A contextualised heterodoxical solution could be the way out for the existing commons, however, the global health issue will be one of the significant challenges in the coming century, which urges additional attention to the health risk in a spatial design. Hence, this project has set its context on the available studies on the spatial precautions and social behaviour in response to the pandemic. Parallel to the articulation of existing values and attributes, speculation of being able to facilitate public interest in a low risk, healthy environment, even during the next pandemic is another main research objective in this thesis.

5. Possible Ethical issues

The position of this research lays on the doubt of the architect's heroism in current days. Therefore, to seek the justification of the neighborhood, perspectives and opinions from residents, any kinds of users, the government, housing corporation, and the makers themselves are equally collected to gain a holistic view. However, research methods in the form of street interviews of strangers in the neighborhood, particularly hanging in the semi-private commons on the deck may raise an ethical concern. The interviews with the makers and academicians should also be handled very carefully as some of their opinions could be very personal, which might be not so objectively representative in a perspective of architecture. Besides, regarding ethnographic observations at the squares, although it is a public area, photographs and surveying notes might be too obvious that catching weird stares from the surrounding people. And to avoid the privacy conflicts, cameras are always directing slightly upward and further away from any specific person.

In addition to the issues with the research methods, the outcome of the graduation design could also be ethically controversial. Due to the closing down of stores, and the partial lockdown, the observation and the interview acquired might be myopic. Literature about the current COVID-19 situation may not be well founded based on the instant data collection and quick analysis. Hence, the design result in the aim of creating a more pandemic-proof intervention might be lack of social evidence.