

Reflection

Heritage & Architecture
Future of Structuralism Studio

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1. The relationship between research and design.

Compare to other design studio, chair of Heritage and Architecture sometimes have to deal with a more complex situation and keep the balance between existing architecture and interventions. And the whole process of research and design have a strong relationship among three aspects: architecture, building technology and culture value. In the transformation design of Centraal Beheer, the research plays a vital role in different stages of design.

First, research helps to define the research question. The group research were executed to analyze Centraal Beheer in the perspective of social. The research is targeted not only on the building itself but also considering the social background. The current situation can be described as following: the building was designed to make people meet as a city; the original repeat units form large open space bring both opportunities and difficulties for future programs; the key concept of inner street is not sufficient because of poor light condition and spatial requirements. This leads to the design question:” How to enlarge the concept of city in Centraal Beheer.”

During the beginning of the design, the decision was made to implant a new program for Centraal Beheer. This also related to the previous research that the building was designed to make people make. Therefore, a new VMBO education institution along with offices space that can be rent were introduced. The two main functions could benefit each other that encourage the interactions of people from different ages, different backgrounds and different business. In the larger scale, the new functions could improve the development of the city by increasing local education and local employments.

In the design process, the decisions were made by the personal position that based on the research. What is the most important value of the original design and how to interpret the existing without interrupting the high values or even add adding new value to the original building?

2. The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework.

The theme of the graduation lab focus on the renovation of Centraal Beheer which is a structuralism architecture from 1970s. Dutch structuralism architecture is an important topic within the history of architecture and also has a large social influence that reflect the certain period of Dutch society. Nowadays, most of the structuralism building are facing the problems like poor energy performance or waste of space. Some of these architectures have already been renovated or refurbished for new functions. Based on the situation of these structuralism building, it is necessary to explore the future of Centraal Beheer by researching on other structuralism buildings that from different scale, different architects, different history periods and different functions. For instance, the Amsterdam orphanage designed by Aldo van Eyck was the first case study building during the research. By studying the Amsterdam orphanage, the historical background of Structuralism philosophy, the materials and spatial quality were

explored. The idea of Aldo van Eyck:” a house must be like a small city if it’s to be a real house, a city like a large house if it’s to be a real city” helps me to form my basic awareness on Structuralism and I also applied it as the beginning of my design question.

3. The relationship between the methodical line of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework.

Within the Heritage & Architecture studio, the relationship among design, building technology and culture value have always been discussed as the basic methodical line. While dealing with Centraal Beheer as an iconic Structuralism building, the value of the original concept is the most important value that is even more valuable than the objective existing. So my starting point is to preserve the original design value and try to improve it with contemporary needs. For example, the key value of the inner street of Centraal Beheer is the duality rather than the certain space in between different units. This idea leads to enlarge the inner street in order to develop it into a left over space within the building and emphasis it with a unified interior façade.

The second part of the design looked into the adaption of the original space and elements that could be fit with a new educational function. The idea of preserving as much existing as possible leads to the use of light-weight elements that could improving the space quality while also realize the reversibility for future use.

The three aspects of the methodical line within the graduation lab helps me to form my basic awareness on the existing building. However, it also enlighten me of my personal position to treat culture value with a more creative attitude but treat building technology with a more conservative way.

4. The relationship between the project and the wider social context

As an iconic building, Centraal Beheer together with some other famous Structuralism architectures are facing the problems of poor energy performance and the waste of large floor space that leads to the difficulties of being reused. Some of them are facing the result being demolished like the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment in Den Haag. This project is aim to explore the possibilities of adaptive reuse of the Structuralism building like Centraal Beheer and provide possible solution for the society.

The design is also motivated by the situation of the social background of Apeldoorn. As an employment city, it is supported by the people who could develop their careers. For the development of the city, it could be beneficial to encourage local education combined with local employment. As a result, the program of the project aims to housing the VMBO education and offices together to explore the education and working circle within this building.