

Reflection Paper P4



Project title: A Film in Amstersterdam

Studio: Complex Projects
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Introduction

The site of the project is at the Junction of the Gooiseweg and Ring road A10 (highway), two important roads in the infrastructure network of Amsterdam and the Netherlands. Surrounding the junction different Neighbourhoods are located. Residential neighbourhoods like Betondorp and Duivendrecht. Green area's like Sporting facility Drieburg. Business districts with a focus on logistics existing mainly out of warehouses. Each neighbourhood with its own identity strongly fractured without any connection because of the two roads crossing the site.

Amsterdam is growing rapidly starting from the city centre now expanding outwards. Currently towards the ring road in the near future the city will expand over the ring road.

Because of this, the ring road will be located in the new expanded city centre. A highway is a type of road which is designed without any relation with the urban context. A boulevard is designed in strong relation with the urban context. By downgrading the highway into a boulevard space comes available to connect both sides of the new boulevard again.

This project is about designing a building which has a strong relation with the new boulevard and is able to connect the different neighbourhoods surrounding the junction giving them a value to be strong enough to survive the future, but letting them keep their own identity.

Research Question: *The loss of infrastructural function, how to fill this space and let it fit into the urban fabric.*

Ambition: *Connecting the site in different scales and forms. From the scale of the city to the direct surroundings. From physical to mental.*

Intervention: *Media Park Amsterdam, with a focus on public broadcasting*

The relationship between research and design

My research during this project is divisible in three subjects. The three subjects formed a frame work to design with: mobility, context, media.

Mobility

My research started with a fascination for mobility, especially the car. A vehicle which plays an important role in the life of common Dutch people. The car occupies a lot of public space, public space which is part of the urban fabric. The relationship between cars and the urban fabric played an important role during the research.

Because Amsterdam is rapidly growing it needs to expand and densify. As several periods in history show, Amsterdam didn't had enough land to grow. A clear example in history of Amsterdam dealing with grow, is the former walls around Amsterdam. It shows how Amsterdam dealt with big structures which had a big impact on the city while losing its function. Until the 19th century a wall was located around Amsterdam. There wasn't enough space inside the walls, so the city expanded over it wall. At the same time, the wall started to lose its function because of technical improvement of canons. In the 19th century the wall was demolished. First parks, later on houses where build on the site of the former walls. This because the spaces needed to be used. As a result, the connection between the two sides was much stronger.

The case study shows a comparable situation to the current one about the highway. A case study where I could learn things from and used during the design. The wall for a long time was there to defend the people inside it, as the highway is an important mobility structure for people in Amsterdam. But in time, the wall started to be a barrier between the two sides of the city. As the highway started to disconnect the two sides of the city instead of connecting. The wall was demolished because it lost its function. On the location of the wall the urban fabric of the two sides was expanded with the result that the two sides where connected. The start of the design was by trying to connect the two sides by expanding the urban fabric. During the design all kinds of urban fabrics where tried out. Finally, a combination between park and urban fabric is designed, as at the site of the former walls.

Context

The grid of the design was found by a research into the context of the site. A finding by researching was that the context exists out of different neighbourhoods with their own identity. Some of the neighbourhoods are of a small scale the design is of a big scale. It showed me that the difference in scale had to be treated with care so the surroundings didn't lose their identity.

In the final design the urban grids are not connected physically but connected by sight. The design is in the middle of the different neighbourhoods connecting them central in a round shape from where sights to all the neighbourhoods connecting central.

The research in the Msc 3 mainly focused on infrastructure and the context, on mobility of the site in different scales. During the design first an afford was made to connect all by mobility, physical. Something that looked like a logical outcome of the research. After a lot of design investigation, the conclusion was made that connecting all physical was not the right solution. Something new was introduced, connecting by sight. A solution which in the end made it possible to come up with a design which meet all requirements.

Reflecting, it was this step which cost me a lot of time, but when it was made the design could finely by done.

Media

Research into media with a focus on television and movies showed me that the goal of media is to show different worlds and life's. By being informative or entertaining. It tells stories about past, current or future situations. Stories which can be fictional or non-fictional.

In the past traditional media existed. Media which was top-down organised. In the last decades new media emerged. Media which was often bottom-up organised. Traditional media in the beginning was mostly government funded. But during the last decades more ways of funding emerged, like advertisement or viewer payed.

My research was mainly focusing on Public broadcast channels. They play an important role in our society because most people get their information or entertainment from it. Interesting is that public broadcast channels are in between all these dualities. Started as traditional media but slowly transforming into other forms. It's this searching for a new identity which formed a frame for the program and the design. During the design it was a search for finding a building with a structure which is always able to adapt to a new and different future, to a new identity. The final design is structured in such a way that all primary functions, like the base construction, climate, and routing are all grouped together so that the building forms big open spaces which can be filled in the way the current situation is asking for.

Reflecting, out of the research strong requirements for the program of the building came. Or better to say, the requirement was that the building had to be suited for adapting to a new identity of media. This requirement was a red line through the design process. The outcome of the design is a building which is structured in a way to suite this requirement best.

The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject chosen within this framework

The graduation studio, Amsterdam Mid – City, has the aim to design for Amsterdam in 2050. The task is to critically investigate the city in different scale. From the scale of the city to a specific site. The site had to be investigated in three main themes, Mobility, Health and energy.

As a student you are asked to first do a critical research about city and come up with a solution in the form of a design. Starting the project, I formed a critical statement towards the current state of mobility. Cars have a big impact on our city, in different scales. It's disconnecting in the scale of the city, context and direct surroundings. Mobility formed a reason for my design. To redesign infrastructure where connections can be made again in different scales. Connecting was the tool used during the whole design process.

Designing in 2050. Amsterdam is in rapid transition towards the future. The city is expanding and getting denser. The effect is that the city in all scales is transforming, the identity of neighbourhoods is shifting, neighbourhoods who were ones for the worker class are transforming into neighbourhoods for the rich. The whole city and the society are transforming into a new one. This also has its effects on other things, as the public broadcast channels. It's the transformation of our society now and in the future, which grabbed my attention. In the project the transformation was an important base for the design. Connecting by sight in the form of a tv studio which shows the transformation of the city is the final outcome.

Reflecting, the red line during the design process was the relation between old and new, small and big. How to design a future megastructure, from the biggest scale to the smallest scale. A future megastructure in the context of old monumental low dense neighbourhoods.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen

Complex project is based on a methodical approach of Research based design. The studio is organised in two phases which can again can be split into two phases. The first phase (Msc3) is about research. Research which leads to a design during the second phase (Msc4).

First, I investigated the city and the site in a broad way. By researching the site broad I was able to choose a topic of my interest. A topic in which the site is currently lacking so a problem statement could be formed around it. For me the problem was found in infrastructure. The site of Amstel, located on the periphery of the city, is well connected in a large scale, but disconnected in a small scale. The infrastructure forms a lot of barriers between different parts of the site. Because of this, detours have to be taken to travel from one part to another.

In the next research phase, by narrowing down the research with a problem statement deeper research could be done into a specific theme which led into a and site and program. During the process my interest grew in the highway. It plays an important role in the city, with positive but also, negative effects. By narrowing down the research into the highway a first solution was formed, by downgrading the highway into a boulevard space comes available for a design which could connect the different neighbourhoods.

Out of the solution a brief for a design emerged. A big plot came available, to create a destination on a place which was always a place to travel through. A program where there is a big demand for in Amsterdam now and in the future but until now there was no space for because it is so big. And it had to be able to work as a catalyst for its surroundings. The program which met these criteria is a television studio. All of this was pitched during the p2 presentation.

The transition from research into design is done by creating a concept from where a design can be made. A concept which had to be the red line through all design choices made. The concept is about connecting. Connecting in different scales. Connecting in different forms. Connecting by infrastructure, connecting by sight, connecting by mind.

Out of the concept a metaphor erupted. A metaphor which made a clear vision of how to build the building what was important or less important during the design. The metaphor used was that of a film roll, most clear based on the program of the building, television / movie studio. The film roll functions as a centre from where all different neighbourhoods are connected by sight.

Reflecting, it was it is the concept of the film roll which combined all different researches into one design strategy. For instance, a film is telling about movement (mobility), all frames of the film roll together tell a story because the film roll is moving. In the design it's the building which forms frames that are not moving, the movement of people makes the building come to life.

The film roll the strategies where all design choices could be made around, from the big scale, of the context and the shape of the building, to a specific detail of the building. A detail which shows different layers of facades, with different transparencies, which the interior in different opacities.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context

The concept of this building is to connect. Connect in the broadest sense of the word.

Infrastructure is used for physical connection. With the city getting denser and further and further expanding infrastructure will play a bigger and bigger role in our society. It's crucial during periods of rapid growth to not only build new buildings but also keep investigating the infrastructure if it is still suited for future scenarios. Out of my research showed that near urban fabric the design infrastructure in relation with it. To design them both equal. In this way they can provide from each other. Because they both need each other, without infrastructure no urban fabric without urban fabric no infrastructure.

Film and television is about the way we experience worlds. It tells stories about the past current and future, fictional and non-fictional, informative or entertaining. It's a way of connecting different worlds and people. Not a hard (straight in the face) way but in an observation way. Currently public broadcasting channels all around the world are having difficulties with their identity, sometimes they are forced to find them sometimes they are willing to find them. As in Switzerland currently there was a public vote what should happen with it.

Together with broadcast channels who are finding their new identity. A lot of neighbourhoods in Amsterdam are in fast transition of identity. Betondorp for instance is well known neighbourhood for its strong identity. With the densification of Amsterdam houses becomes more expensive because of this, original residents of former worker districts are forced out of their houses and neighbourhoods. Because of this neighbourhoods lose their identity. This project is about connecting this neighbourhoods while keeping them as they are, letting them have their identity. The film roll captures the identities of the public broadcast channel and of the different neighbourhoods in frames connecting them and telling a story of a city and a society in transition.