



Complex projects
AMS Studio
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P4 REFLECTION
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Project Description

Zuid-Oost, lying at the edge of Amsterdam, has been labelled as the problematic neighbourhood in the city for decades for its problem of social segregation in all aspects. With series of urban regeneration and resources from the municipality, the situation has been improved a lot in recent years. Yet, Zuid-Oost is still not a very attractive area for Amsterdammers to move in except ethnic-minorities and new immigrants. Despite the appealing abundance of green in the district, other elements for a good quality of urban life are lacking when we compared to those of the centre. No good quality of public meeting space, lively neighbourhood, few choices of socio-cultural facilities, few local job opportunities and highly car dependent. All in all, Zuid-Oost is still an unsustainable neighbourhood. This leads to the aim of the AMS studio 2100 that is looking for a sustainable urban for the future.

The main goal of the project is to establish a multi-purposed market as a civic centre around public transit hub, celebrating the idea of TOD (transit-oriented development) and sustainable lifestyle, as well as bringing local job opportunities, communal interaction and socio-cultural integration.



Holendrecht Station (Top)
Holendrecht Station and its surroundings (Bottom)



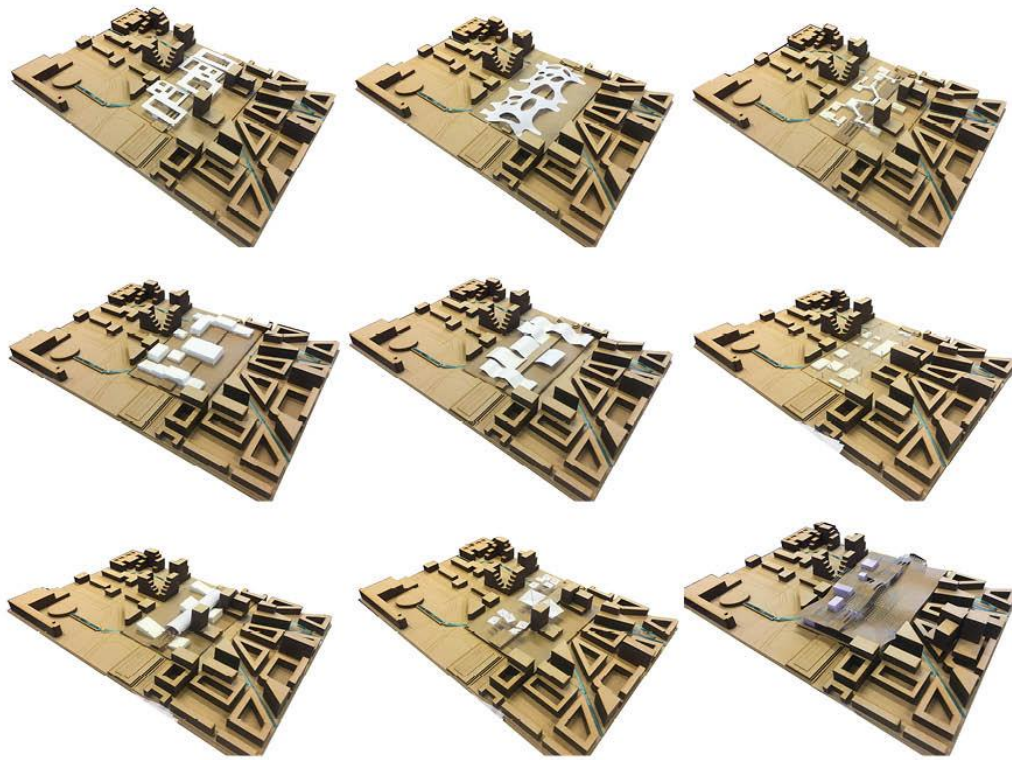
Collage

Relationship between research and design

My interest started with a fascination in the potential change in Zuid-Oost of Amsterdam. The infamous “arrival city” of immigrants in Amsterdam have lived in Zuid-Oost for half a century. Although the district was once described as the unlivable ghetto of Amsterdam, these people have worked together and heal the urban fractures with their vibrant and diverse cultures, which have constructed the uniqueness of Zuid-Oost. The presence of numerous daily markets with massive infrastructure in Zuid-Oost give a clue on how they contribute to the city development and mediate the problem of social segregation.

In the chair of Complex projects, the design outcome is based on research-based design approach, coming up with an architectural position by in-depth research to formulate design argumentations, including choice of site, building, a building program and so on. At the same time, research and design bring all ranges of discussions into architecture, understanding and reflecting social, cultural, political and environmental context and come up with a narrative to the architectural design. Different scales on each topic have to be analyzed to develop a thoroughly substantiated intervention responding to the defects and opportunities of a site.

Designing with an unfamiliar context can be challenging for me as a non-Amsterdammer and foreigner. However, all the research in the studio helps me grasp the whole picture of Zuid-Oost as much as possible. A full comprehension of the social problem, especially in Zuid-Oost and the projection of the future from these understandings, are the keys to bring a good design for the people for what they really need now and in the future.



Massing Model Study



City of Innovation Seminar - Case Study Visit (Left)
Group Sharing and Presentation (Right)

Relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the chosen method

The design studio is divided into two parts; in the first part of the MSc3 studio the main focus was on gathering general information about Zuid-Oost in a group setup. The second part of MSc3 was more personal and focused on the project location and program. Although the studio theme is about year 2100, the layers of culture and history of Zuid-Oost should still be taken into considerations. Local habits and culture have great value that should be respected and applied, especially the local markets that is unique to Zuid-Oost. The most important goal of the project should enhance the life quality of all the inhabitants in the district, rather than focusing just on one specific group.

Location and reason for the project

The northern part of Zuid-Oost i.e. Bijlmer has been undergoing large scale regenerations in the last decade and the positive changes it brings are gradually visible. Amstel III as a part of Zuid-Oost is now undergoing large changes and being transformed to a mixed used innovative business and residential district. However, there is not much plan for the southern part i.e. Gaasperdam from the municipality yet as a renewal is not as in urgent need as that in Bijlmer. The aim of the project and master planning aims to establish a vision also for Gaasperdam to synchronize with the improvement of Bijlmer and Amstel III.

The target location is Holendrecht station in Gaasperdam, the only transit station with train and metro together, next to AMC medical complex. There is currently a large vacant plot next to the station without any plans. With the existing infrastructure, and strategic location that connects multiple key areas in the area – residential area in Holendrecht, AMC student campus that is now being developed, AMC medical business park and innovative business in future Amstel III, the location of station is not inactive in playing a role in the urban context and there a great potential to stimulate urban developments, forming a vital connection between different zones across the exciting train infrastructure and catalyst for redeveloping the monotone neighbourhood around.

Compared to other parts of Amsterdam, the target site lacks clear identity. The existing train infrastructure creates a border condition between Amstel III and Holendrecht, with monofunctional use on each side which is either residential or commercial and with no interactions at all. However, locating at the cross of all new varying functional neighbourhoods in the near future, this can form a new centre of the district and function as a more socially important zone that is accessible for mainly pedestrians and bike users. This quality should form a trait in the new identity of the site and emphasizes the uniqueness of the station as a social meeting hub where people encounter.

Relationship between the project and the wider social context

Sustainable urban development is inevitably most important element of future cities as there is ongoing densification of population in the urban area.

Sustainable Mobility

Mobility is the lifeblood of cities and urban life. It drives the economies and urban growth. It stimulates trade, and businesses, connects workers to their job opportunities and people in different places. Public transportation plays an irreplaceable role in sustainable travel. Lying at the edge of Amsterdam, Zuid-Oost clearly sees a fast connection to the other parts of Amsterdam crucial. However, from research we see Zuid-Oost is a highly car-dependent city even there is already a public transit network with metro and train. One of the key reasons has to do with the walkability of the area. Whether a public transit station as a sustainable form of mobility like metro is successful or not highly depends on a convenient connection to the destinations. The most common and convenient way is to walk. Hence walkability determines the success of the station. However, the street connection between station and neighbourhood is not highly walkable and

attractive. This is because Zuid-Oost was planned and built with great influences of driving culture in the post-war period, leading to a very car-oriented built environment and related infrastructure. Compared to centre, Zuid-Oost is neither pedestrian-friendly, nor bike-friendly. Hence in my project, apart from the building design, I also proposed a new master plan for the area around existing Holendrecht station to increase walkability, ultimately bringing a walkable urban environment.

Social interaction with integration of technology

Currently in Holendrecht Gaasperdam there is a lack of well-designed public space that can meet the expected urban densification in the future. Following the vision of walkable city, TOD (Transit-oriented development) also means centre of transit hub would be a new urban hotspot and bring great potential for people to meet. In the future, it is believed a transit station would not simply about mobility but also a place for people to encounter and become a civic and social centre. A proper landmark and public space are crucial to sense of community and sense of belonging and therefore lead to mutual help between inhabitants. The multi-purposed market space aims to provide space for communal events and festivals that has been a custom among inhabitants in Zuid-Oost. Social and cultural inclusion can only be achieved with more face-to-face interactions and communications and there authentic understanding and I believe architecture and public space can contribute to it. Social engagement is another crucial to a sustainable community. The future market will almost run like an agora in the ancient Greek time. The agora was not only a market but also as a civic centre where people gather and discuss about the community issues and exchange of ideas and expressing their opinions within the community.

Talking about the future, we are also concerned with the advancement of internet technology and A.I. would reduce the face-to-face interactions in real life. The station market is a platform that embraces the newest network and display technology, but not forgetting to assist the authentic human touch which human actually needs no matter how the world evolved.

Local economy and opportunities

One of the reasons causing social segregation in Zuid-Oost is the lack of job opportunities and most of them are in the centre. People in Zuid-Oost have to spend doubled travelling time every day to other area in Amsterdam for work. According to World Inequality report 2018 by the World Inequality Lab at the Paris School of Economics, the commute time to work is one of the 5 aspects affecting social upward mobility. Local economy is another essential element of sustainability. With local job opportunities, people would have more time for further studies and choices for life that get them out of poverty. Local markets that have been existed in some parts in Zuid-Oost have proven the self-sustained life to the inhabitants, especially those with low education level and newcomer background. Therefore, Holendrecht station where currently lacks a local market and vibrant urban life is a strategic location for setting the new public market, serving the upcoming densified neighbourhood in Holendrecht, future AMC medical business park and mixed-used Amstel III innovative business district that are all under development. Forming a circular economy also means energy and carbon footprint for transporting goods is lowered with local consumption and production, which in line with the idea of establishing a sustainable city.