

Research Plan

for the City Hotel design

Interior Studio, 2020
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Problem Statement

Amsterdam is famous for its attraction to tourists all over the world, which welcomes more than 4.63 million international visitors per year (Amsterdam Department for Research and Statistics, 2009). The massive people bring a large financial benefit to the city, while at the same time, disturb the daily life of local communities. In 2017, a group of Amsterdam residents protested on the Kinkerbuurt, asking to stop building new hotels for tourists (Nlimes, 2017). It is not the only contradiction between locals and tourists. The municipality demolished the famous 'I amsterdam' sign from the plaza in front of the Rijksmuseum since it drew too many people to get a selfie with it in a limited space. The tours in Red Light District also ended at the beginning of 2020 (CNN, 2019).

Such policies revealed that the tourism-oriented economy is not welcomed by local people and the coronavirus in 2020 proved its fragility. The worldwide pandemic severely affected enormous Amsterdam's industry, including hotels, museums, and theaters, which rely on the consumption from tourists. Vera Al, the spokeswoman for the deputy mayor for finance and econom-

ic affairs Victor Everhardt, said "There is no tourism, which means there is no income from tourists" (Dutchnews,2020). The overdependence on tourism makes Amsterdam's economy too homogenous to cope with the changing environment.

Since the current economic strategy is not appropriate for the city, the Amsterdam municipality decided to reconsider its development routine and use the doughnut economy model to establish a circular economy in 2020 (The Guardian, 2020). In the book Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist, British scholar Kate Raworth indicates that the well being of human society is facing two kinds of pressure: critical planetary degradation and critical human deprivation. The former refers to environmental justice including problems like climate change, while the latter regards social justice which concerns issues like housing shortage. The safe and just space of humanity lies between the rings formed by two types of pressure, which can be depicted in a doughnut-shaped diagram. This theory is a conceptual framework rather than a detailed initiative. So Raworth scaled her idea to a specific city by creating its portrait. She cooperated



Fig. 1 The chosen site at the intersection of Nieuwe Doelenstraat and Binnengasthuisstraat

with Amsterdam Doughnut Coalition, which consists of experts of various professions, like architects or scholars. They use four lenses to describe available goals for social foundation and ecological ceiling as well as for local outcomes and global impacts. This city portrait can be used for narrowing down the questions and inspiring people willing to work for sustainability.

This interdisciplinary proposal does not tell how architects could engage in this innovative way for urban development, though one of the biggest impacts on human thriving is from the built environment. The data from Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance shows that buildings count for a 25% carbon footprint of Amsterdam in 2019. In the meantime, architectures are the most direct physical link between citizens and a city. Architects have the responsibility to find a solution to intervene in contemporary problems that regard living under the new economic pattern.

Research Questions

The hotel, which functions mainly as a temporary residence, also has public parts like bars or restaurants that can serve the city. This building type has the potential to be an ideal intermediate for the citizens and the urban environment they live in, so I intend to use this architectural type to explore the way of contemporary collective living.

I chose the vacant place at the intersection of Nieuwe Doelenstraat and Binnengasthuisstraat (Fig. 1) as my design site, which is located in the southern periphery of the old Amsterdam center. This area used to be a shooting range for local civic guards, then it turned into a hospital complex and now most of it is occupied by the University of Amsterdam (UvA) while the rest by the local communities. Dutch painter Rembrandt lived in a rented house which is Café de Jaren now and created his world-famous Night Watch for civic guards. The building next to the café is the university theatre of the UvA for theatre science and performance majors.



Fig. 2 1:500 site model

The history of the site and the current facilities foster a cultural atmosphere, but the present situation has no opportunity to share it with the communities and the city. According to The Amsterdam City Portrait created by Doughnut Economics Action Lab, one of the most urgent targets of Amsterdam for the wellbeing of its residents is to establish connectivity. 13% of Amsterdamers over 19 still feel severely lonely today and there is still a lack of art and cultural activities for low-income households. The UvA campus which is scattered in Amsterdam city center has top educational resources, while in the meantime, it is not accessible for most citizens. Therefore, I propose a hotel accommodated for invited international students and scholars of the UvA, which has a lecture hall to hold public events and several studios to share the educational resources of the university for surrounding communities. This hotel will become a hub to connect different groups of people with the city.

The design will consider research questions in four aspects: environment, space, program, and construction.

Firstly, the site contains university faculties and residences, so how to harmonize a new hotel with existing

buildings requires careful consideration. Besides, next to the site is a courtyard enclosed by the library which is closed to the public according to the university's plan. It has the potential to be used for the city instead of becoming a private area. The hotel design should be able to activate the surrounding environment.

Then, it is the question about the spatial composition. In my proposal, there will be various spaces ranging from public to private and from big size to small. Each of them shall have their own character and proper relation with each other. The organization of both interior and exterior spaces will be developed simultaneously with environmental problems.

After that, a more detailed program is helpful for the design. A calculation is needed for the proper size of kinds of spaces for various activities, as well as the proportion of the public, private, and servant spaces.

Finally, how to minimize the ecological impact of the construction process of this new hotel? It is the architects' responsibility to find the materiality and method of construction to reduce carbon footprint.

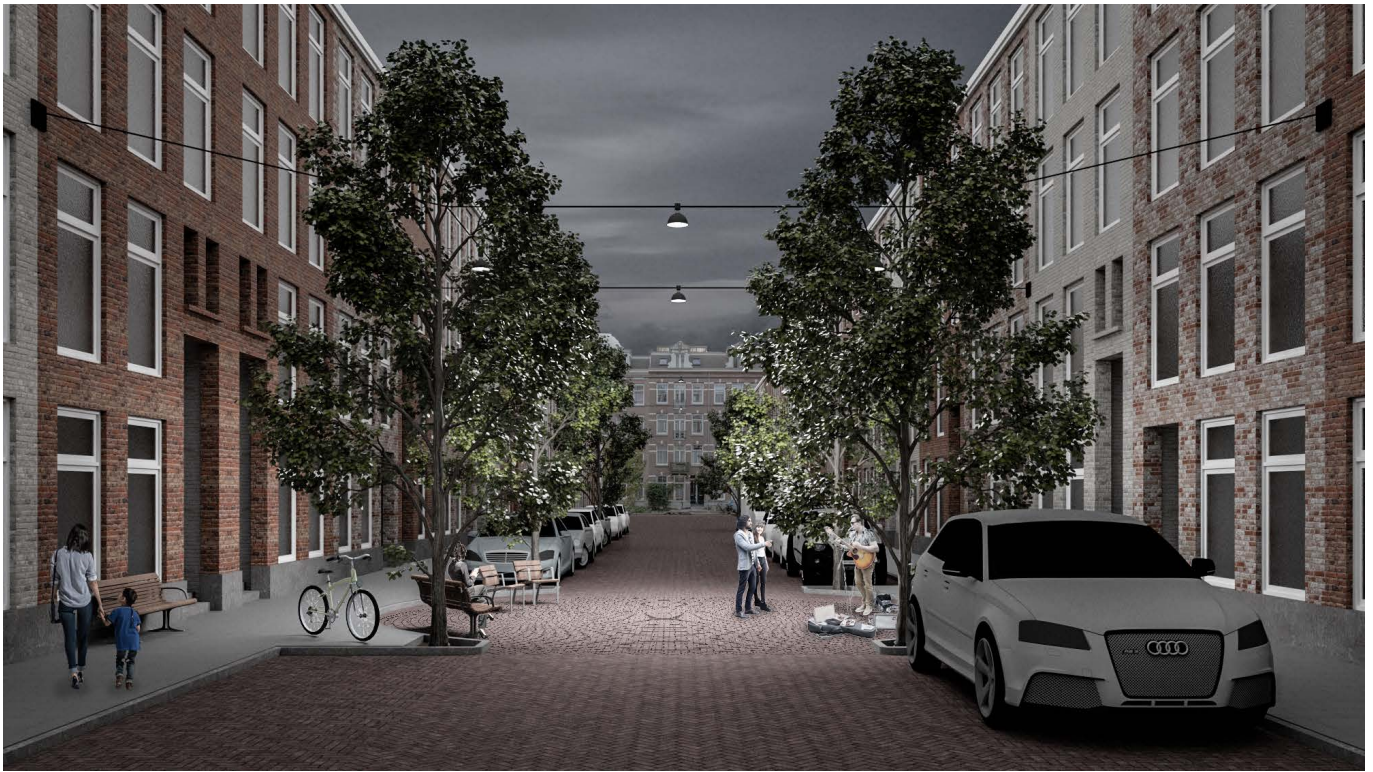


Fig. 3 The rendering of P1 preliminary design

Methodology and Methods

The primary methods will use making as the core, including test design, drawing, modeling, and other media.

Before P1, we made preliminary designs individually to find a way which can intervene in the city by doughnut economy. I chose Van Ostadestraat as the design site. After studying the elements and infrastructures on the street, including residence thresholds, idle chairs on the side of the road, the suspended streetlight, the trees, and the pavement, I proposed to repurpose and rearrange them to form a public space for local residents. The lower streetlight can intensify the lightness on the ground to define a place with the new circular pavement. This design revealed how minimal operations can architects design to establish a dialogue between the city and its residents.

In the following semester, I plan to use physical models in different scales to develop my design. The 1:500 model (Fig. 2) will help me to study building massing to deal with urban scale problems, while the 1:200 model will be used for inner spatial organization. Then, models on a bigger scale in 1:50 or 1:20 will allow me to test

materiality and construction problems. Digital models, technical drawings, and renderings are also important for the research of specific architectural problems and spatial atmosphere. All sketches should be collected in a personal journal to show the design process.

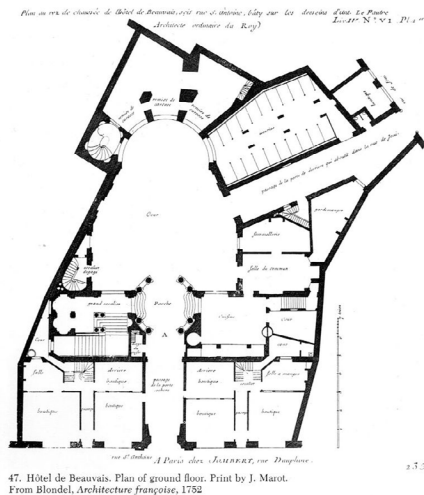
For secondary methods, I will look into historical archives, theoretical references, and case studies.

At the beginning of Msc 3, we, the group of Interiors studio students, looked into the history of Amsterdam development from the 17th century till today. My group focused on Berlage's Plan Zuid in the early 20th century, which tended to create symmetrical streets and make building facades unified to form a kind of monumentality. The social housing of this period was influenced by both the workers' cooperatives and the Amsterdam School, which has various public facilities in a community, like a school, library, and bathhouse, as well as the use of organic form. The designs in this time are admirable examples to display how facilities and residences can combine together (Fig. 3).

Then we studied various precedents of hotel typology, ranging from ancient caravanserai to modern Airb-



Fig. 4 The section of the Hôtel Lambert



47. Hôtel de Beauvais. Plan of ground floor. Print by J. Marot.
From Blondel, *Architecture française*, 1752

Fig. 5 The plan of the Hôtel de Beauvais

nb hotels. One notable model is the Hôtel Particulier in France in the 17th century. It is a private mansion for aristocrats in the city center. The symmetrical form and the set of a courtyard and a garden bring it a formality to host noble guests, which a normal residential building does not have. Among this type, one of the most striking paradigms is the Hôtel Lambert. The spatial sequence starting from a narrow threshold to the open courtyard and the grand stair is a great creation of abundant architectural experience (Fig. 4). Another case is the Hôtel de Beauvais, which provides a pathway connecting two streets (Fig. 5). This pathway goes through a courtyard with a grand staircase leading guests to the upper floors. These precedents show how architecture can merge public attributes with private residential functions

For the next stage, I will keep collecting precedents of collective living to get inspiration. More specific research on the chosen site about its history and the

current situation is needed for the comprehension of the context. I will also look into UvA's teaching plan to learn what educational resources they have and in what form it can be shared in the best way.

Theoretical Framework

The understanding of Doughnut Economy theory is the foundation of the research, which tells about how to think about a complex system and be beneficial to both local and global sustainability. This kind of sustainability asks architecture to consider its coexistence with the existing built environment. Then, around the questions of contemporary collective living, the study of design on environment, space, program, and construction will be conducted. To comprehend this new type of living and the relation between the city streets and buildings, one can learn from the theory of Italian architect Aldo Rossi in his book *The Architecture*

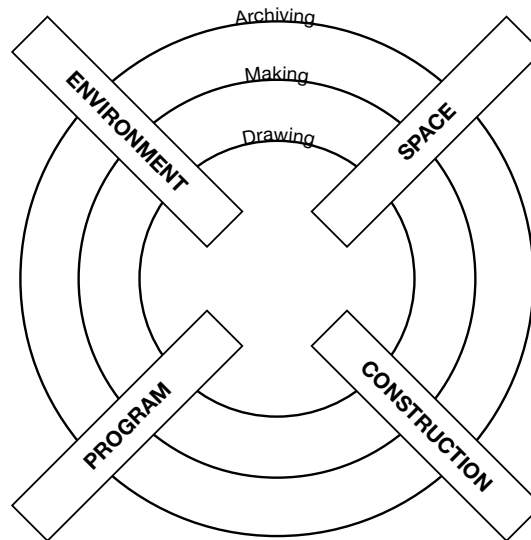


Fig. 6 Diagram of thinking

of The City. He defined two types of architecture in the city: the residential area and the primary elements. Public buildings, which get involved in the revolution of a city, are primary elements that dominate the urban fabric and character. While residential function merges with public buildings, the boundary of private and collective become vague. Colin Rowe also wrote a lot about the conflict between built solids and unbuild-figures in his book called Collage City. These classic architectural theories will deepen my understanding of architecture as a part of the city.

Argument on Relevance

The study contributes to the understanding of the development difficulties encountered by Amsterdam in the context of the existing economic model, which is overly dependent on tourism. The result, a city hotel design, will reveal how the private residential function can get involved in public affairs as well as what material and construction method is fit for the Doughnut Economy implemented by the local government.

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