Research Plan

AR3A010 (2023/24 Q1)

In Between Learning Spaces

**Public Building
Graduation Studio**

Savvina Megalovasili
5859034

November 2023

Research Introduction

This research aims to explore ways to develop a new approach to educational buildings. How can the architect reimagine university spaces by focusing on the contemporary changes to educational practices? How could a campus be perceived as an active part of the city? How can the citizens relate to the university as a public space and integral part of the urban fabric? In order to approach the idea of a public campus, one needs to think about conditions such as ownership, privacy, accessibility, porosity and publicness. Thus this research attempts an investigation of the notion of collective spaces as a new typology that is in between public and private[1]. Thinking of a constellation of public, private and collective spaces, it is essential for this research to examine how the transition between these spaces is realized. The initial research developed during the first studio sessions, in which we explored the Central Innovation District of The Hague, directed my interest into a more focused documentation of the limits where the public space extends, existing patterns of space division, how private spaces are defined on the existing buildings and what is the influence this relationship exerts to the urban layer of the city.

Research Topics

1. Redefining learning spaces for contemporary practices

This research concerning learning spaces will revolve around two axes: one that is defined by the quest for an evolved spatial approach to post-compulsory education facilities and another that is defined by the investigation of new relations between these facilities and the city.
The concept of learning spaces has evolved significantly over the years, reflecting changes in pedagogical approaches and the broader societal shifts that have redefined education. J. Boys argues that the traditional classroom model is no longer adequate for preparing students for the challenges of the 21st century[2]. Contemporary pedagogy is characterized by a shift from passive, teacher-centered learning to active, student-centered learning. Learning is increasingly seen as a collaborative, dynamic, and experiential process, thus it requires new spatial scenarios.[3]
The first universities that were founded centuries ago were quite integrated into the urban fabric. Looking at Oxford, it is quite evident how the colleges are interwoven with the city blocks and they are an integral part of everyday life. During the 1950s campuses in the U.S. were being developed outside the city area and that influenced the university approach in Europe as well.[4] Today with the ever increasing number of students and the need for expansion, many institutions have turned to cities and vertical configurations to address the issues. This research's purpose is to explore how learning spaces could be integrated into the city center of The Hague, relate to the public and become an inclusive hub of innovation and continuous learning.

2. Collective spaces and their edges

The attempt to integrate the future campus with the city will challenge the idea of openness and acces

1 Avermaete, T., Hooimeijer F., & Schrijver L. Stedelijke formatie & collectieve ruimten, Oase 71, Rotterdam: NAi Uitgevers, 2006
2 Boys J., Towards Creative Learning Spaces: Re-Thinking the Architecture of Post-Compulsory Education, Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2011.
3 den Heijer, A.C., Campus of the Future: Managing a Matter of Solid, Liquid and Gas (Delft University of Technology, 2021.
4Technische Universiteit Delft. Universiteit en stad. OverHolland : Architectonische Studies voor de Hollandse Stad. V18/19. Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2016.

sibility. In order to achieve the creation of a public campus and at the same time preserve the spatial needs for the educational purposes the dipole of public and private emerges.

The Nolli map is a primary example of documenting the relation between the public and the private domain in the city, using two colors to describe this binary division of urban spaces and buildings. In terms of accessibility, the city experience appears as a continuous journey, until hard barriers of property and privacy are encountered. However, the actual conditions of the city cannot rely upon this dipole to be described. The notion of spatial gradient is introduced, which describes the transition between public and private and brings forward this new hybrid private-public spaces. Manuel de Solà-Morales introduces the notion of collective space, as a typology that responds to the contemporary city functions. "Collective spaces are not strictly public or private, but both simultaneously. These are public spaces that are used for private activities, or private spaces that allow for collective use, and they include the whole spectrum in between."[5] Access is essential for the development of collective spaces, since they consist of different levels of permeability and are defined by various boundaries. Proximity is more related to accessibility rather than the actual physical distance.[6] The goal is to investigate how the future campus can be connected to the city through a network of collective (learning) spaces both on the ground floor level and vertically.

This thesis will further investigate the edges that the coexistence of public, private and collective spaces form. These edges can be more or less penetrable, enabling connection or closeness. These transitions between spaces can be described as barriers, boundaries, borders or thresholds. In order to facilitate this research, a set of characteristics will be attributed to each of these typologies of edges.[7] Through the design phase, the thesis will focus on how these transitional moments are experienced and how these different typologies of edges are spatially manifested.
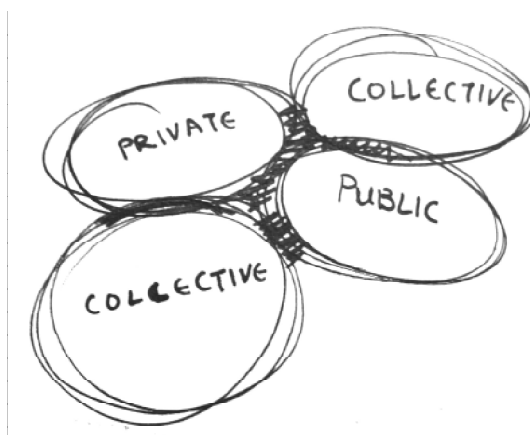
Publi-private-collective diagram
Student's own work

Methodology

In order for this thesis to be developed it is necessary to approach the topics in question through a set of research methods. Throughout the research process, it is crucial to maintain a reflexive and iterative approach, allowing for adjustments and refinements as new insights emerge.

<u>Literature review</u>
A comprehensive literature review as a tool to identify existing knowledge and theories about new approaches to learning spaces as well as a historic overview of the typology, so that past spatial

5 de Solà-Morales M., Public and Collective Space: The Urbanization of the Private Domain as a New Challenge, Oase 33, Rotterdam: NAi Uitgevers, 1992
6 Scheerlinck, K. Collective Spaces Streetscape Territories Notebook. Vol. 2. LUCA School of Arts; Brussels, 2013.
7 Sendra P., & Sennett R. Designing Disorder: Experiments and Disruptions in the City, London New York: Verso, 2022.

elements and relations can be reevaluated and adapted to contemporary practice. Furthermore, it is essential to construct a theoretical framework based on literature in order to better define the notions of barriers, boundaries, borders and thresholds.

Site Analysis

The research may encompass both qualitative and quantitative data, including an extended site analysis that documents how the existing buildings integrate with the public space and how they define the edges between public and private use. When investigating the conditions of the site area it is important to assess possibilities for reuse or re-purpose whole buildings or parts of them.

Case studies

Several case studies that integrate learning spaces and city functions will be analyzed and compared. Design paradigms that look at the transition between public, collective and private spaces will also be studied to later inform the design choices.

Design Agenda

As stated in the studio brief we are asked to develop an urban capacity plan for the central station area of The Hague that will highlight the potential developments and new relations in the site and a new hybrid building for lifelong learning. The first step towards this proposal would be to fully assess existing infrastructures, buildings and public spaces, determine possible reuse of spaces and potential relations and connections that have not been facilitated until now. A system of collective spaces on multiple levels connected to the ground floor and expanding on the surrounding buildings can offer a new perception of the area as an entity, and not a concentration of objects. The idea of an open campus will foster a stronger relation with the community and the new building will become part of the new urban constellation.

Bibliography

Avermaete, T., Hooimeijer F., & Schrijver L. Stedelijke formatie & collectieve ruimten, Oase 71, Rotterdam: NAi Uitgevers, 2006.

Boys J., Towards Creative Learning Spaces: Re-Thinking the Architecture of Post-Compulsory Education, Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2011.

de Solà-Morales M., Public and Collective Space: The Urbanization of the Private Domain as a New Challenge, Oase 33, Rotterdam: NAi Uitgevers, 1992

 den Heijer A.C., Campus of the Future: Managing a Matter of Solid, Liquid and Gas (Delft University of Technology, 2021.

Technische Universiteit Delft. Universiteit en stad. OverHolland : Architectonische Studies voor de Hollandse Stad. 18/19. Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2016.

Scheerlinck, K. Collective Spaces Streetscape Territories Notebook. Vol. 2. LUCA School of Arts; Brussels, 2013.

Sendra P., & Sennett R. Designing Disorder: Experiments and Disruptions in the City, London New York: Verso, 2022.

Appendix

Barrier
The purpose of the barrier is to block, to disrupt.
The barrier is resistant, but it can also be porous.
The barrier is visible.
The barrier can be fragmented.

Boundary
The boundary indicates a limit or extent.
The boundary establishes closure.
The boundary can be manipulated.

Border
The border is a separating line between places or states.
The border is an edge where different forces interact.
The border is continuous.
The border exerts influence to both sides, establishing
 an ambiguous zone.
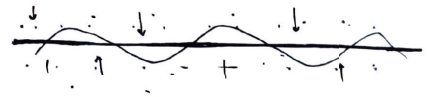
Threshold
The threshold indicates a beginning or a change.
The threshold is a transformational zone.
The threshold has spatial presence.
The threshold is not disruptive, but transitional