

Reflection Report

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As introduction to this reflection report the theme of the research will be repeated shortly. For project of the van Gendthallen the context was the lead for the main theme of the project. While Amsterdam is growing the Oostelijke Eilanden have remained vacant for a long time. When we look at current events concerning this area in Amsterdam we see new plans for this area where the architectural office of Urhahn planned a development of the area around the van Gendthallen to be a working and living environment. Introducing middle and higher income households into the area, with a possible interest in leisure in their living environment. Looking at the current situation of the Oostelijke Eilanden it can be seen that most housing in the area is social housing with low investments in leisure in the direct environment. People living in these buildings are most likely in the lower income segment of society.

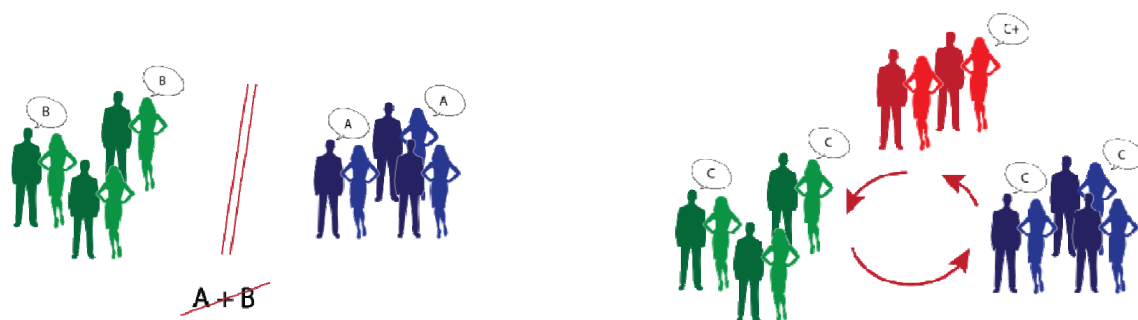


The contrast between these groups is present and can form problems to the further development of the area when these groups don't mix. Therefore the theme of this project is closely related to establish this connection between both groups. To research this problem the question sounds, "How can the characteristics of heritage buildings be used to create a "welcoming building" and thereby enhance the use of its direct environment for both local residents as visitors."

Relation between project and wider social context

This brings us directly to the point how the project is related to the wider social context. Social mixing is a topic widely described in the academic world with multiple theories why people mix and why they don't. One of the reasons why social mixing does not happen may lay in the fragmentation of the area (Boelsums, 2012). This might occur when new developments take place in an environment where parts are left out. This can cause a fragmentation, especially when there are barriers between the locations. When looking back at the situation of the van Gendthallen, we see how the social housing area is surrounded by new developments. This fragmentation can have negative effects on the residents and their living area, like a spatial inequality and a deprivation of the area. This fragmentation must therefore be prevented in the new developments in Amsterdam.

Looking at other authors social mixing is also described by the similarities between multiple people. Van Kempen and Bolt for example (2009) describe the social coherence between groups not as a product of living in close proximity to one and other, but rather their lifestyle. It is not likely for a group of people to develop a social relationship when they have different characteristics. Therefore it's important that a common ground is found between groups to prevent fragmentation and stimulate creating a social mix.



That the point where the van Gendthallen come in to play. The van Gendthallen are a huge complex of halls which have enough space to house a function which is able to find this common ground between. For this design sport was found as function. Since sports know no language, only common rules the barrier to participate is low, encouraging the people to participate and thereby mix.

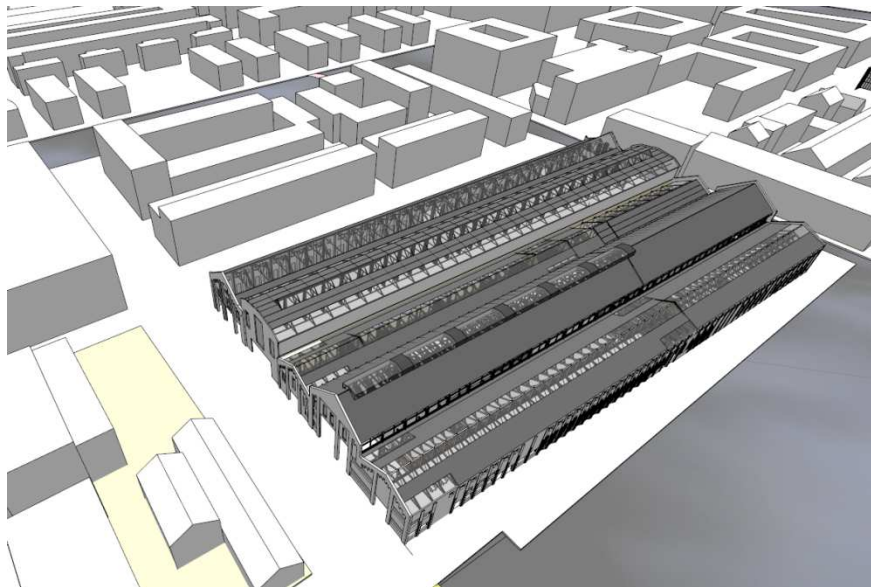
By transforming this complex into an area of sport and leisure, I am convinced that the van Gendthallen may form an example for forming a bridge between different groups and thereby helping the prevention of fragmentation in a city and forming new social networks.

Relation between theme and subject case study within this framework

Looking at the projects theme concerning on the creation of a social mix with sports as a binding factor in creating this mix the area of Park Spoor Noord in Antwerp became a topic for a case study for this project. Before the park was created the areas surrounding the park were in a deprived state. Now the park is created it can be conceived as a garden for the surrounding neighbourhoods and as a park for the city. Where it first formed a barrier between the different neighbourhoods in the North with the rest of Antwerp the area is not interpreted as a transition zone between different parts of the city, as a collective territory, a social and free space for multiple groups of the society (Vlaams Architectuur Instituut, n.d.).



1 Park Spoor Noord



2 Van Gendhallen

As case study I focussed on the WDT Loodsen inside this park since these for the hart in the park concerning sports. Thereby I focussed mainly on the connection of the building of its surrounding environment. There is only one difference between the environments of both buildings. The WDT loodsen are situated in the middle of a park, where the van Gendhallen are situated in a dense urban environment. Therefore one may say this building is not a good example to research the connection of the building with its environment.

The WDT loodsen on the other hand have a program simulate to the theme found for the problem in the direct environment of the van Gendhallen, which is a neighbourhood sports hall which is free for use. To let people use these facilities the connection needs to be highly accessible for people to make us of them.

Further researching the building seemed very well connected to the environment, by opening up the building and making the physical connection to the park. These elements are needed for the van Gendhallen and thereby formed a good case for the theme of research. The fact that the reference project was situated in a park did not affect the applicability of the findings but formed a source for further research on the van Gendhallen.

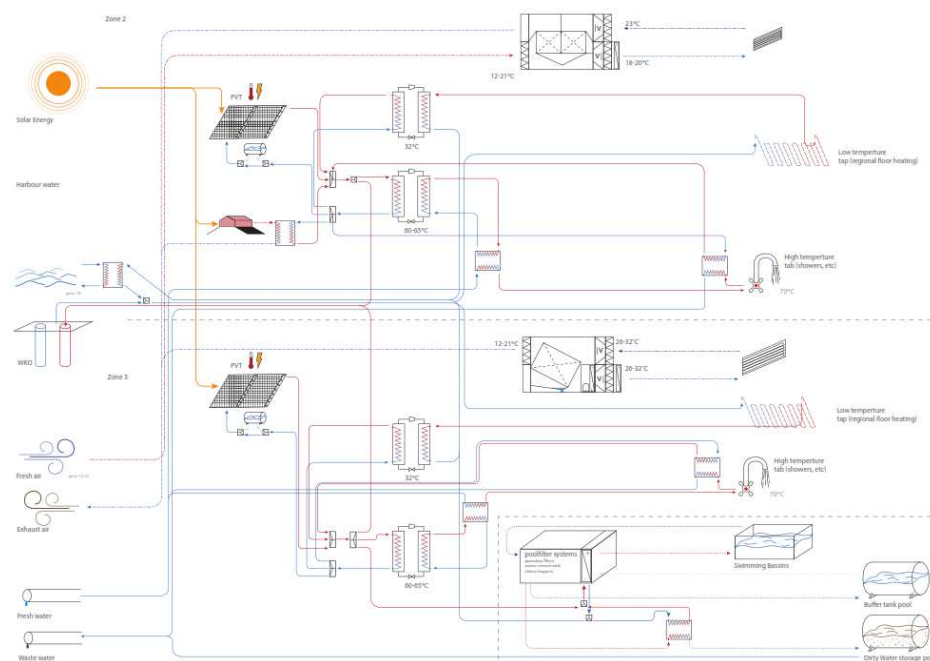
The only downside is that the WDT loodsen was only one of the few cases I looked at. The fact that the WDT loodsen where researched, my view was mainly focussed on this project, resulting in a narrowed view on the welcoming building aspects of the van Gendthallen.

Relation between research and design

The relation between research and design is hard to define in some cases of the design. Looking at the final conclusion of the research report the elements which define a welcoming building are mostly found in the transition to the activity, the visual relation with the activity and the close proximity of the activity to the users. All these elements show a great relation between building and its surrounding environment.

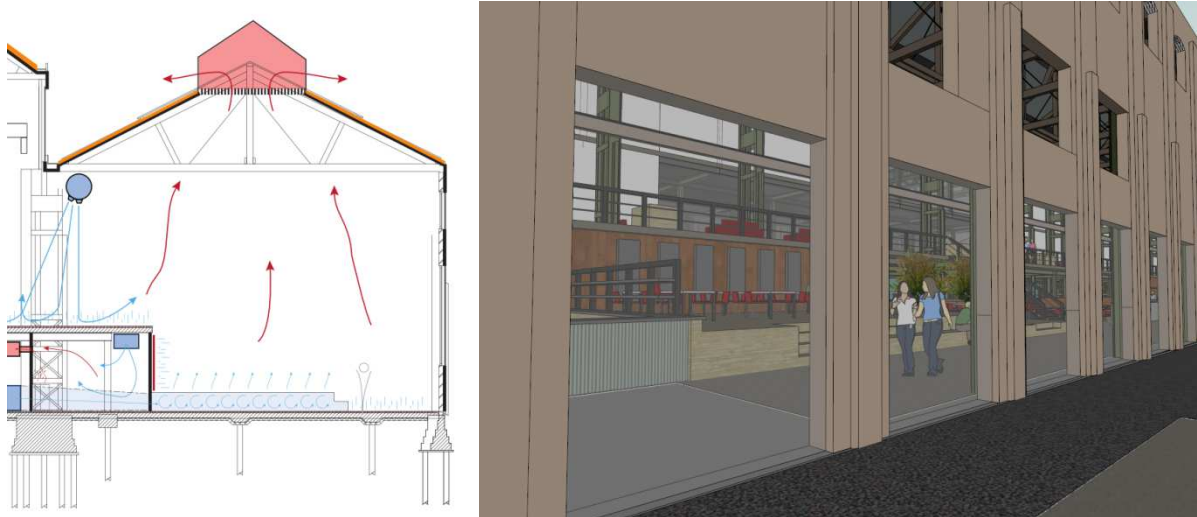
Looking at my design and the progress I've been through creating this design a lot of the attention was given to the spatial configuration of the design and the technical systems of the building to create a good comfort while maintaining the characteristics of the building. The elements of a welcoming building where taken into account while conceptualising and designing the building, but where sometimes placed to the background. This happened because I sometimes lost track of my own progress where I continued working on aspects which sometimes should have gone in second place.

A good example is the internal climate of the design where I continued calculating ways to generate energy to compensate for the heat loss of the building. Also different systems where research to maintain comfort inside the building resulting in schemes of generating and reclaiming energy. These processes have cost a lot of time, where this is not the main goal for this graduation studio where the focus is laid on the design of the building and my research on connecting the building and making it more accessible. Structure and planning seem to be the main components which result in these sidetracks.



3 Example of a complicated climate design scheme

On the other hand these researches also gave me insight on how the building works, which gave me tools to design with. This gave integrated solution for the interior of the building and the way multiple functions in the building could be connected and thereby form a integrated and inviting whole concerning the research on a welcoming building. The downside is only that the focus is laid inside the building instead of the thin line between inside and outside.



4 Technical research resulting in a good visual relating between functions without creating new barriers (Restaurant directly connected to the colder walking area and a cold façade maintaining the character of the building)

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

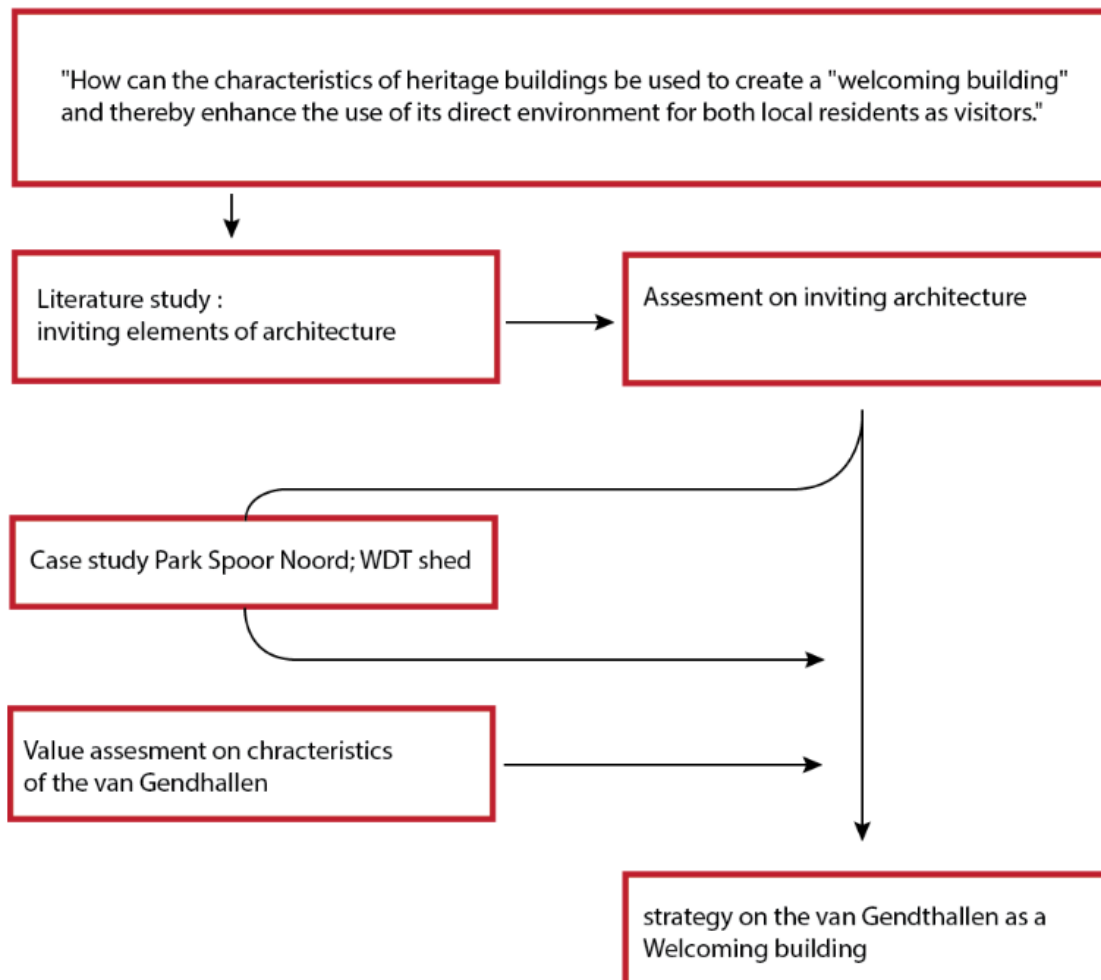
My personal method was closely related to the one created for the graduation studio. The methodical line actually functioned as a guide for me to work with. One of my personal weaknesses is that I'm not the best planner. This mostly has to do with the fact that due my dyslexia I'm not a fast reader which results in that work may take a little longer. Therefore find the urge to work more present the urge to stand still look ahead, which is a serious problem I'm constantly working on.

My personal method was focussed on three points. First literature research would lead to different aspects of an inviting or welcoming building. These would then be tested on the case study I made on the WDT loodsen and at last the characteristics of the van Gendthallen would for a strategy on how the van Gendthallen could be developed into a welcoming building.

Looking at the beginning of the project we started with the very same aspect as my last step in creating a strategy, the analysis of the building with a value assessment as conclusion. Although the methodical line saw this as a individual element in the project, we divided this element as a group resulting in a more detailed value assessment in the end. In this way the methodical line really boosted my personal progress although this was used later in my personal research. This can be seen as an example in which my personal method and the approach of the project where not directly on the same level while the influences of the projects approach boosted the process I made.

The set of poll moments on which the approach of the graduation plan was based formed good reference points on which the methodical line of the graduation lab and my personal method could

bind. These moments formed deadlines which gave structure to the whole project. This was most important since that is not my strongest point. Besides the structure it gave it also forced you to look back and reflect to yourself where the focus was laid on and what needs to have more attention. The P1 to P5 system therefore forms a good system to guide the graduation student in their method and their personal progress. This way the methodical line of the graduation lab formed a guiding line for the method I implied on the research question concerning the welcoming building and my design process.



5 Diagram method graduation project