

THE LIBRARY AS A PUBLIC RETREAT

A library in the midst of the city

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Throughout my studies, both at the TU Delft and abroad, I have found the themes that the chair of Interiors, Buildings and Cities has set out to be topical and relevant. They resonate with me as a graduate student as strongly as they intuitively appealed to me already at the start of my studies.

PRODUCT

Problem Statement

The graduation studio deals with the construction of a mayor public building within the inner city of Amsterdam.

The program consists of a new University Library for the University of Amsterdam. The need for a new University Library is a real world, topical issue for both the city of Amsterdam and the UvA.

For over a decade the UvA and the municipality have aimed to construct a new University Library at the Binnengasthuis terrein. Since April of this year the efforts to realize this ambition at the binnengasthuis have been formally abandoned.

The studio aims to research the possibilities of realising the library within the city of Amsterdam. Besides the reconsideration of the Binnengasthuis location, three other locations have been investigated.

The construction of the University Library has been researched in its typomorphological context. (P1 Handbook) It has also been researched in its social and anthropological relevance to contemporary society. (Research seminar report 1, 2, 3) and relating to contemporary urban (theoretical) question (Essay New Urban Questions or minor infractions)

In taking a position on the assignment of the graduation studio, I have chosen to design the University Library on the location of the Frederiksplein. (Position paper P1 Handbook part 4)

Questions specific to this location entail the issue of temporal and spatial continuity of the city; Frederiksplein has a pivotal place in the city, where it served as a public space since it was first constructed.

The building of the University Library asks the question of monumentality of a civic

institution in contemporary society and city. How does the building take its place within the typo-morphological make-up of the city of Amsterdam and become a public space of relevance? What is the role of the architectonic in enabling public space?

On the level of the University Library as a building in itself, the question lies in the consideration of the University library as an institution in a post consensual society: How do you provide coherence between the individual and the collective? How do you give form to a shared institution that transcend the individual yet in essence is constituted by their coming together? The plurality of the user is a contemporary reality.

Goal

The intentions of the graduation project lie in researching the different sides of the problem of building a University Library within the city of Amsterdam through proposing a viable architectonic answer as an alternative to the failed attempts of the municipality and the university. This way the project opens up new perspectives on the issue. An alternative, born in an academic setting, having actual relevance to the current issue of realising a university library.

Also within the wider discussion on building within the city centre of Amsterdam, or other cities, the project is an investigation into the building of public buildings in contemporary society.

PROCESS

Method description

Already, through precedent analyses, the library as a building has been researched. Both as developing through time as the notion and use of a library has changed, and as a juxtaposition of contemporary position on the building of a library. (P1 Handbook part 1)

Through an intense one week design workshop, architectonic themes in designing a public building have been made explicit. Themes such as type, appearance, spatial organisation, circulation and interior have been addressed. (P1 Handbook part 2)

Through location research, both historical as well as typo-morphological, the sites have been researched. (P1 Handbook part 3)

Through design work, the assignment has been researched by drawing and modelling.

As the design will progress from preliminary design through to the final design, the work will focus on architectural and technical design. Through drawing and modelling, as well as study of references both on paper and in real life, the building will be designed in ever smaller detail. Through referring back to the earlier research, the relation of the smaller scales to the larger themes of the design and studio will be guarded.

Literature and general practical preference

For a comprehensive overview of the literature and the practical preferences that lie at the basis of the graduation, I refer to (the bibliography of) the following reports and essays that have been submitted to the P2 and/or made within the framework of the msc 3:

Research Seminar (I. Cieraad)

report 1:

The Library as a place in a digital future.

report 2:

A new University Library for the city of Amsterdam.

and report 3:

Gebruikersvoorkeuren voor de individuele studieplek in het studiecentrum onderzocht aan de hand van twee studiecentra van de UvA; het P.C. Hoofthuis en het Bushuis

New Urban Questions or Minor Infractions (H. Sohn)

Essay:

The architectonic affordance of the public realm: An essay on the perceptual understanding of the architectonic space of the public realm through the notion of its affordance.

Research Methods and Design Practices (T. Avermaete, H. Engel)

essay:

The practice of Perception (working title)

REFLECTION

Relevance

The graduation project aims to add to the topical discussion on the building of a new University Library for the UvA in Amsterdam. Within the academic framework, the development of a viable alternative that would be unthinkable within the fixed, pragmatic and/or political reality of current day Amsterdam, adds a fresh and relevant perspective on the problem.

In an even wider scheme, the project aims to add to the discussion of building new large public buildings in existing cities and within contemporary society. What constitutes a contemporary public space and what is its role within the city?

How do we give form to and technically design and construct a (large public) building within a material/technical context where we need to balance technical possibilities and innovation with user comfort and broader issues of sustainable building?

These questions are extremely relevant to me as a future architect and to the profession at large.

SPRING

Time planning

06-02-2012 start Msc-3

13-04-2012 P1 Progress Review

design studio

situational research: Precedent analyses, Workshop, (Historical) site analyses, and Typo-morphological research (P1 Handbook part 1, 2, 3)

thematic research: Position paper *The public realm and its architectonic space*. (P1 Handbook part 4)

research studio

situational research: report 1 *The Library as a place in a digital future*
report 2: *A new University Library for the city of Amsterdam*.

thematic research: report 3 *Gebruikersvoorkeuren voor de individuele studieplek in het studiecentrum onderzocht aan de hand van twee studiecentra van de UvA; het P.C. Hoofthuis en het Bushuis*

29-06-2012 P2 Formal Assessment

design studio

Urban draft 1:1000 / 1:500, programme of requirement, draft design (plans, cross-cuts, facades) 1:200, Graduation plan

research studio

Urban draft 1:1000 / 1:500, programme of requirement, draft design (plans, cross-cuts, facades) 1:200, Graduation plan

AUTUMN

01-09-2012 start Msc 4

mid semester P3 Progress Review

design studio

plans, facades, cross-cuts, 1:200 / 1:100, part of the building, plan and cross-cut 1:50, façade fragment with hor. and vert. cross-cut 1: 20 details 1:5

3/13-12-2012 P4 Formal Assessment

design studio

theoretic and thematic support of research and design + reflection on architectonic and social relevance, situational drawing 1:5000 / 1:1000 plan b.g. in situ 1:500 plans, facades, cross-cuts 1:200 / 1:100, part of the building, plan and drawings 1:50, façade fragment with hor. and vert., cross-cut 1: 20, details 1:5

14-1-2012 /
1-2-2012 P5 Public final presentation

design studio

idem to P4