

# Final Reflection

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## Zonnehuis, the Everyday, and the Authorized

Monumental architecture is often treated as static moment in time, preserved and admired but rarely questioned. In contrast, my project argues for a dynamic, evolving interpretation of heritage: one that negotiates between authority and the everyday. The Zonnehuis, a municipal monument in Amsterdam North, works as the focus for this spatial negotiation. Once a vibrant civic space for the working class, its current function as a formal event venue underrepresents its social potential. The aim of the project is to reclaim the monument as a democratic platform, in which both the historical authority and everyday civic voices can coexist, overlap, and challenge each other through space.

## From A Broad Social Relation to Architectural Design

The project began with a conceptual hand drawing that contrasted two spatial contexts: the top-down, regulated urban environments governed by authority; and the spontaneous, informal territories of the everyday. This early conceptual drawing helped me question how these conflicting spatial conditions operate in people's lives and how architecture might mediate between them. The central research question that emerged was: *How can the diversity of everyday practices and the authorized context of a monument be reflected and negotiated through space?*

This question remained central throughout the design process. It aimed to create spatial arrangements that articulate tension, coexistence, and moments of encounter. The conceptual drawing became an inspiration, helping to anchor the project's values at all scales, from zoning diagrams to tectonic details.

## Research as Critique and Action

Understanding the site was crucial. Zonnehuis is a powerful piece of architecture, built in 1932 in the Amsterdam School style, with symmetry, monumentality, and a clear spatial hierarchy. But these same qualities that once associated with inclusivity become distant or exclusionary today.

Research into the building's history, urban context, and material structure allowed me to identify where the gap lies: between authorized narratives and the lived experience. Despite its central location and historical value, the rear façade had become invisible, overgrown and inaccessible. It works as a physical symbol of the diminished role of the everyday. This became a one of key intervention points: The rear was a hidden threshold where the building's dual narratives could meet.

## Design as Spatial Negotiation

In contrast to total redesign or idealized preservation, my strategy focused on interstitial space. It is a spatial in-between area that can accommodate both formal structure and informal life. This concept was explored at the site planning programming, material transitions, atmospheric qualities, and structural connections. The Shearing Layers diagram is applied to help to organize the project for users

to experience tensions from all scales.

Both the monument's authorized heritage and its everyday reinterpretation can be divided into three narratives: zones of emancipation, deliberative democracy, and civic ritual. The resulting design is not one of erasure or dominance, but of dialogue. Programs were distributed into an *Authorized Zone* and an *Everyday Zone*, and key spatial thresholds allowed for friction, interaction, and reinterpretation.

Specifically, a key example is the mezzanine viewing platform, which allows those without tickets to observe performances. Although modest in scale, it embodies a central ambition: that space can express social values like inclusion and fairness.

### **Working with Material, Atmosphere, and Detail**

The atmosphere of a space speaks before words do. In this project, I was particularly drawn to the challenge of preserving the monumental character of Zonnehuis while introducing a softer, more transparent material language. The use of glulam timber, CLT panels, and double-skin glazed façades was a way to offer contrast without conflict.

Material transitions were also treated as opportunities for negotiation. For example, the glazing system connecting the old brick wall and the new timber intervention was carefully studied at 1:10 and 1:5 scales. These details were not just technical; they embodied the project's theoretical stance — that the past and present can be connected without one overpowering the other. Structure, ventilation, and acoustic comfort were integrated into these material transitions, showing how design decisions at all levels reflect the same values.

### **Heritage as Inclusive Platform**

In this studio, the broader question was: how should we, as architects, deal with the past? This project responds by resisting both nostalgia and iconoclasm. Zonnehuis is not preserved as an untouched object, nor is it radically overwritten. It becomes a civic inclusive platform: for collective memory, civic discussion, and future uncertainty.

Architecture requires maintenance during the passage of time. It is not static, but always in negotiation. Through this project, I have come to see the act of design not as the production of a fixed outcome, but as the structuring of possibilities — spatial, social, and temporal.

### **Final Thoughts**

Reflecting on this process, the most valuable realization was that architectural intervention can reveal, structure, and support authorized context by introducing an everyday narrative. The project stages a spatial negotiation, where both can coexist and be challenged. Zonnehuis now becomes a civic forum and a lived space that listens, adapts, and reflects the multiplicity of voices in the neighborhood.