

Reflection P4 & P5

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Studio name Explore lab 19

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The relationship between research and design

The research aims to establish a framework and design approach to the re-purposing of the Hagia Irene church in Istanbul. Analyzing the church's historical and present-day characteristics, as well as those of its surroundings, and outlining different approaches to re-purposing historical buildings, with a focus on Istanbul's Orthodox spiritual leaders and architects were two of the parts which formed my approach towards the design. The third part was exploring two case studies of interventions that re-purpose historical buildings while preserving their original characteristics. The research concludes that, in order to preserve Hagia Irene's specific characteristics when introducing a new function, new additions should maintain the integrity of the architectural space, restoring and bringing attention to its character-defining structural and decorative elements, at the same time making reference to the building's history. While multifunctionality should be provided for, the church's original function should be respected. Based on the research conclusions, design principles are formulated. They address the church's interior, the adjacent ruins, and the overall surroundings, and express the design's aim to give importance to the experience of the Hagia Irene's history by framing its "layers of time".

The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

Explore Lab provided me with the chance to work on this special assignment which is not covered by other studios. The only studio which comes close to my project is the department of Heritage & Architecture (former RMIT). However the freedom to explore the unknown typological structure and situation within Explore Lab made this the only graduation studio suitable for the unique outcome of my project.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework

There is no specific methodical line used within Explore lab. The student is free to explore and choose his or her own method to reach the goal of a completed research and design.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context

My research and project are showing a different approach of reuse to revive a church. The aim is to promote and visualize an example of how the revival of a church can be accomplished with respect to the architecture and history of these monuments, their surroundings and the relevant parties. This sensitive topic can then be approached with more peace of different parties. Unity between people can be reached by a respectful reuse which embraces the importance of cultural heritage in the world. The approach developed for repurposing the Hagia Irene is applicable to similar situations elsewhere, for instance for the numerous cases of abandoned churches in the Netherlands.