



Complex Projects
AMS Studio
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P4 REFLECTION
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Housing boomed during 1950s-60s in New-West. A type of urban block was developed and repetitively accomplished in this suburban Amsterdam. Different from the traditional urban block, this double L-shaped block opens itself to the urban street. Although it provides with a communal space within the block, the hierarchy is blurred by the urban access along this communal space. This kind of urban block could be considered as a typology, representing that special period. However, the disor-

dered relationship between private and public make the life here ambiguous. The project is an attempt, which derives from the existing urban block, but with more rich program, including commercial function, youth centre and mixed-ownership housing. It split the urban access and communal space by make them different layers, to return the hierarchy of different space. It provides a potential version of renovate urban legacy.



The main goal of this project is to renovate the existing and repetitive urban block, and make it successful and adaptive to the current situation and coming future. The urban block could more than a housing block. With the trending of densification, there will be a more compelling urban block to enrich the life of the citizens. In the meantime, to mix the living, commercial and public functions within one block/building, could stimulate the urban life. The project is rectangular, shaping the urban centre at the

corner. It offers a diagonal urban access on the ground floor, leading people from the street corner to the plaza inside of the main street. With the mixing housing on the upper floors, this building will not be a night-empty-block.

The relationship between research and design

Architecture could be a physical reflection of the increase of population and densification. My interest started with the potential of the existing urban blocks. The repetitive housing blocks, mostly are social housing, demonstrate an era of booming. An in-depth research about what this kind of block carry, guide me to formulate the proposal and program. The Chair of Complex Projects gives the maximum freedom to choose the topic. The approach of the studio is to find the exact proposal, based on the research topic. The building program is also derived from the research. Design could be considered as a concrete articulation of the conclusion of the research.

At first, I felt struggling on how could I relate my research to a clear design concept. Later I divided the research into two parts. One is the “hard” part, the physical condition of the urban block, including the entrance, logistics, privacy hierarchy. The other one is the “soft” part, the mixed ownership, the mono-function. I tried to reconsider the research systematically, and attempted to propose a strategy before a specific design assignment. Gradually I started to make the abstract research more and more concrete. The concept and strategy are the vital links between research and design.

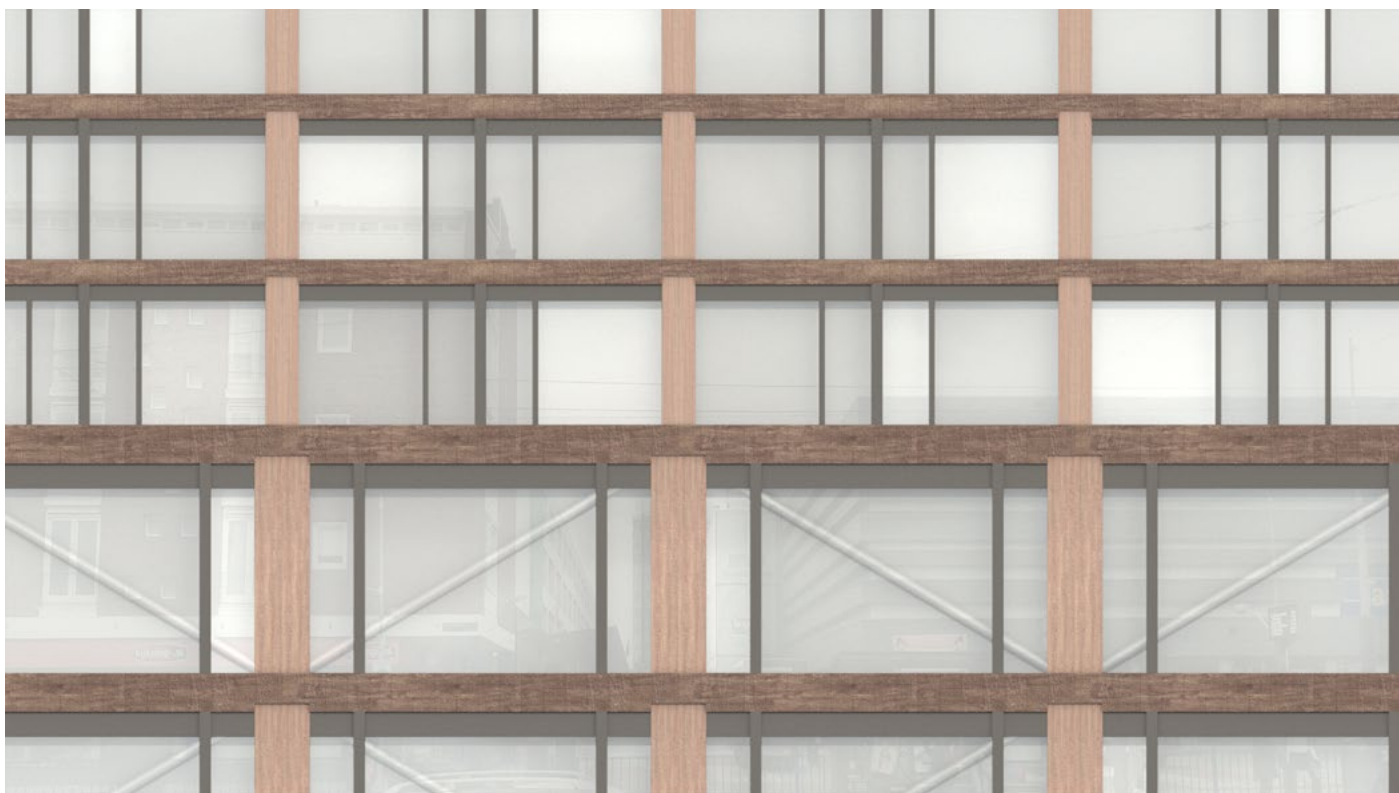
The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the chosen method chosen.

The studio is divided into two parts: P1 & P2 is mostly the research part. The focus of P1 is on collecting data and general information about Amsterdam and New West. I have looked into the ownership of this area, and have found the trends of mixing ownership. The second part is more concrete, including the conclusion of the research, location choice and preliminary

program proposal. P3 & P4 is about the design project, including the site design and the building design. This is a step to relate the research to a specific built environment. The building proposal would reflect the research before, and make it as an articulation of the conclusion of the research. The analysis of existing urban block would be the most important method to guide the project design. By relating the on-situ built environment to the concept and strategy, the design project would be unique at this area, instead of being another international-style architecture.

Location and reason for the project

The identity of the Slotermeer centre is the manmade lake. However, now the surrounding buildings are like giant walls, blocking the main-street to the water. The only opening of the waterfront is the open market, which opens every Wednesday and Saturday. However, most of the time, this open space is actually an empty space, with no activities and people gathering here. This city centre should have been more active and lively, but the urban form and program organisation makes it empty. However, the water is isolated now. The concept of urban access shows opportunity here. When a building at the corner provides with an diagonal urban access, it leads people from the corner to the water. In the meantime, the communal space on the roof of the plinth could also benefit from the landscape, which makes the housing block more valuable. High density of an urban block seeks the maximum of the surrounding resources. This corner building relates its own concept and the exact location together, with a strong reason. One urban block or one building could not change this area entirely. A masterplan should be accomplished to make the whole area as a new centre. All the blocks surrounding should serve this centre, and provides visible and accessible possibilities to the waterfront, to make this



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identity of the centre maximum used.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context.

Amsterdam is growing. In the future, there will be less and less mono-functional buildings, caused by the densification and increase of population. Multi-functional buildings would be a flexible and adaptive solution. However, there are a lot of existing heritage in the inner city of Amsterdam, which could not be demolished easily, maybe never. Then the potential of densification would happen around Amsterdam. In New West, the density is still too low, compared to Amsterdam centrum, which shows the opportunities for the possible renovation. This project provides a potential version of densification, with several functions, layered and distributed. More people are using the same block, day and night. This might not turned this space crowded, but safer and more active.

The project provides a strategy of mixing different ownership, to avoid social segregation. It does not force the project to be a utopia one, to mix different types of ownership together without regarding the reality. It tries to seek a balanced situation to enlarge the social effect of this mixed living condition. Economy is, of course, an important factor to achieve new projects. Thus the project also provides private sector housing (sale & rental) to make a project profitable. However, the living condition is different between a sale house and a rental house. And that's why the project at first is all rental (social housing & private rental). And later some of the private rental housing will be open for sale.