

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



	point the Midwest's territory-city dynamic creating a unique architecture heritage on the international scene and invaluable in the discourse surrounding the history architecture of tall office buildings.
research questions and	How can the design of an office building in Chicago combine real estate pragmatism and the ideological aesthetic of its architectural heritage?
design assignment in which this result.	<p>The opportunity of the design brief is to experiment how can both heritage and real estate embed in a single design. The brief stems directly from the knowledge acquired through the research: the design of an office building in Chicago.</p> <p>The chosen existing building sits on a plot of land located on the edge of Chicago's historical business district. It's neighborhood is currently undergoing massive gentrification – it is a prime location with traces of the past. The assignment makes use of these factors to naturally combine the historical aspect and contemporary demand.</p> <p>On one hand, the task is to revive the architectural character of its location and on the other to make use of the redevelopment impetus that is radically reshaping the area. This leads to a simple programmatic reshuffle of the existing structure: office spaces, amenities, retail and public space.</p> <p>Again, the overall strategy is to apply the research: office buildings as architecture of maximization, aesthetic and innovation. These three guiding principles simply make use of real estate logics, architectural heritage and building technology acquired throughout the research.</p>

Process

Method description

The project as a whole is based on a clear continuity between research and design. From a general fascination, the research scales down to concrete design brief rooted to a precise plot of land in Chicago. The design process then stimulates a reverse path; from analysis of the existing towards a total redesign as an answer to the research question. Naturally, the design brief can be considered as the turning point from research to design.

The research made use of a variety of analytical tools that were initially generic and objective only to become progressively specific and subjective – from analysis to interpretation.

Firstly, the extensive literature available on the topics of architecture, history and capitalism linked directly or indirectly to Chicago enabled to construct a solid overview of the main topics. Secondly, case studies, a study trip and interviews enabled a more comprehensive level of understanding. And thirdly, the mapping along with the selection and analysis of the project site gave the opportunity to generate a potent design brief.

The design strategy is a direct answer to the design brief – it guides throughout the process a clear architectural ambition. Using an iterative process, the research acts as a tool to naturally generate the architecture. Thus, the design becomes a simple application of the research to finally materializes it.

Literature and general practical preference

As stated above, the nature of the references used to guide the project were multiple; literature, interviews, case studies, mapping and redrawing. Below is a non-exhaustive list considered as main references.

Literature:

- Pier Vittorio Aureli, The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism, Princeton Architectural Press, 2012,
- Carol Willis, Form Follow Finance: Skyscrapers and Skylines in New-York and Chicago, Princeton Architectural Press, 1995
- Rem Koolhaas, Delirious New-York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan, The Monacelli Press, 1994
- William Cronon, Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West, W W Norton, 1992
- Thomas A. P: van Leeuwen, The Skyward Trend of Thought: The Metaphysics of the American Skyscraper, The MIT Press, 1988
- Hugh Ferriss, The Metropolis of Tomorrow, Ives Washburn Publishers, 1929
- Louis Sullivan, The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered, Lippincott's Magazine, 1894

Interviews:

- Robert Bruegmann; writer and professor in multiple renowned universities in the USA. Specialist in the domain of architectural history and theory of Chicago office buildings and architects
- Malek Abdulsamad; real estate agent in Chicago. Specialist in the domain of real estate market and urban regulations.
- Katherine Fisher Taylor; associate professor at the University of Chicago. Specialist in the domain of art history and the college of the 18th and 19th architecture.
- Michelangelo Sabatino; director of the PHD program at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Specialist in the domain of architectural preservation and history.

Case studies:

- Marquette building, Holabird & Roche
- Carbide and Carbon building, Burnham Brothers

- Hancock Center, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
- 77 W Wacker Drive, Ricardo Bofill
- 150 N Riverside, Goettsch Partners
- 180 N Wacker Dr (Great Lakes Building), unknown architect
- All of Chicago's office building as a catalogue

Mapping and redrawing are part of the urban and architectural analysis of city of Chicago and the "Midwest" as a whole. It mainly serves as verifying or rendering visible urban and territorial networks, urban morphologies, perception of high-rises and architectural details.

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

Chicago's rich architectural history has been studied extensively and is omnipresent in the academic world of Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences. The abundance of literature, analyses and studies surrounding Chicago and its office buildings is a clear symptom of this interest. Therefore, the project therefore makes use of these existing resources as an attempt to create an alternative discourse on the topic through cross referencing and modestly extend the study as a whole.

In relation to the TU Delft's architectural track ambition to explore innovative design solution, this graduation project experiments how antithetic approaches can shape a single design. With neighborhoods facing gentrification in numerous cities, designs combining of real estate and heritage remain uncommon. It is relevant to question this attitude in particular for office building and commercial developments.

The opportunity to undertake this project under the Explore Lab structure has stimulated the creation an independent methodology. The Lab encourages students to do so and with the help of the mentoring team, it enabled the project to push itself further. In return, it adds to the studio's portfolio a different approach to the methodology that are exerted by the different graduation studios.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework?

The project's relevance stems from the dichotomy of its design brief. As mentioned above, the combination of heritage and real estate for office building design is uncommon.

The capitalist logics of an office building render opportunities for architecture to design freely. Used as financial asset, its architecture is reduced to serve this purpose - generate money. From a heritage perspective on the other hand, architectural tasks are often reduced to restoration or preservation where buildings become cultural

beacons. Both logics are on a certain level antithetic and this has rendered opportunities for a combination scarce if not non-existent in the professional field.

However, the academic is free from these constraints and is able to speculate on such a scenario. From that point of view, it is relevant to experiment the advantages and disadvantages of this combination.

Further, with the status of the architectural field shifting - the rise of corporate firms and star architects - it is pertinent to question the design methodology of office buildings. As stated earlier, this typology emerged as a local answer to economic and cultural growth producing distinct designs, however such buildings appear rather generic nowadays. This is why it is admissible to question if and how should the location of an office building influence its design - in other words revive the regional dimension of office buildings