

# Santos

Reflection



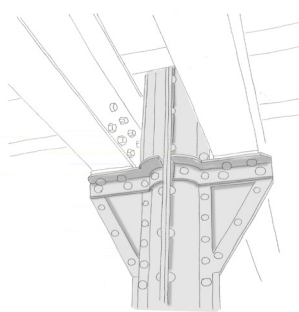
# Reflection

This design process started by choosing one of the different historical buildings in the harbor city of Rotterdam. Most of them are warehouses, had a close relation with the water and they are all unique in their own way. Out of all the different buildings, I choose for the former coffee warehouse Santos which was located next to the Rijnhaven. The difference with this warehouse and the others was the longer distance from the water. Despite on that fact, I was really excited about how the building looks like and to work with it. This started already a few years before during an internship. This internship was at an architectural office further in the south of Rotterdam and during that period I passed the Santos building daily but never had the time to really find out what it was or what this name “Santos” means. For me was this graduation project the possibility to find out all the questions I had.

To start with the process I begin with the analysis to understand the warehouse even better. This is also by the approach of the Heritage studio which is about research by design and design by research and should be done on different scale levels as the materials and technology, re-use and development of the landscape or urban structure. This should be in relation to architecture, building technology and value assessment.

The research was divided in two parts, the urban context and the building itself. The first part of the urban context was very comprehensive and included also the history of Rotterdam and the area around Santos as Katendrecht and the Afrikaanderwijk. This was all in relation to time so it went from the past to present and later on future. This last part also includes the masterplan of the municipality of Rotterdam. Most important was the comparison between the old and the new plan and the consequents for Santos. The second part of the research includes also information about the company who owns Santos back in the days and the architect who realized it. Despite on the fact that I had to do it all by myself, since no one else choose the Santos warehouse, it was a very useful start for my project. It forms the bases of my design decisions and is a tool which I still use during the process for information or to see if it is correct what I am doing. It is also part of the studio method of research by design and design by research. Not everything from the research could be used but this is something that couldn't be known by beforehand. This depends on how the design process goes and where the main focus is. I think that a next research will look different since I have more experience what means I can separate the most important information from what is less interesting. Because of this there will be more time to go further into detail for the important parts.

Based on the information from the research, the drawings that I found in the archive of the municipality of Rotterdam and the different visits to the building, I start with the design process. The first step was finding the right program which was quite hard. The different workshops with the questions really works to put my thoughts in a direction as well as the articles on the internet about Rotterdam. The program for Santos is in my design a pop stage on a local scale where is also the possibility to have lessons in music and dance.



Different methods to analyse (models made by M. van Os)

The Energiehuis in Dordrecht was a good example of what I had in mind but was still too big in comparison to Santos. Other buildings I visit were Theater de Veste in Delft and Maas theatre in Rotterdam. It was useful to see how the different buildings work on scale level, program and routing.

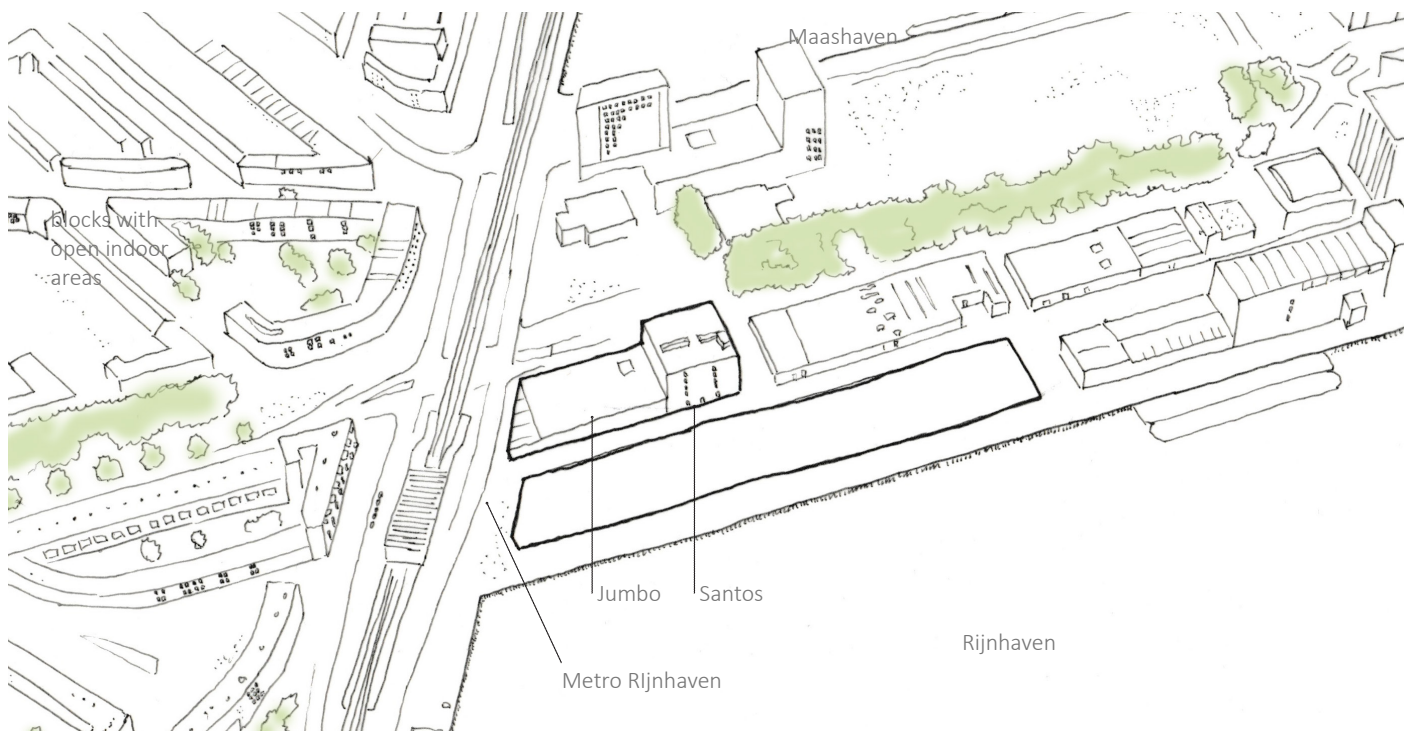
The design itself start with making getting feeling for the dimensions. This means making drawings, models but also 3D by computer. In the beginning of this process I used different materials to draw with, not only pen and pencil but also charcoal. This is to be more free in ideas. A teacher of me said once “give creativity a chance” I think this is more possible with charcoal since this makes very rough sketches.

Santos was not large enough for the new program so an extension had to be made, but at the same time a better connection with the water should be made. Therefore I used a small model of Santos and placed different shapes of foam in different proportions and compositions next and on top of the building. This was to answer different questions which I ask myself during the whole process as: how much can I add? Is Santos still Santos if I add this? How is the relation with the surrounding? What happens with the value assessment? What is the relation between my design and the masterplan?

The 3D drawing on the computer were mostly for the inside to understand how light influence the building for the reason that this is a problem in the current situation. Santos is too dark for a new function what means that something should change.

3

Coffee warehouse Santos



Situation Katendrecht and Afrikaanderwijk (sketch made by M. van Os)

The relation between the Santos warehouse and the neighbourhood around was hard to figure out. This is because one of my main thoughts behind Santos new program is to connect Katendrecht with the Afrikaanderwijk. This is only possible when it fit to the profile of this neighbourhood so that it can be accepted by the residents. It must be a place which feels easy to access and not only for people who wants to play there or give lessons but also for people who pass by. This is all possible because the building is almost in the middle of both areas whereby music offers the change to connect people from different ages and cultures. The different projects I visited worked as a good point of reference to understand the situation better.

With a next design project I will change some of the strategies I did now. One of the things will be the research at the beginning of the project. This should right from the start be more focus on the design goal. If I knew on forehand what I want to design, the research can go faster and more into detail. In this case the research took a lot of time what means the design process started later. Perhaps it is even possible to start already with the design during the research. This was now quite hard because I did the whole research by myself.

Another work method I want to change is in the process of finding the shape for my interventions. In most cases I also spent too much effort in making the models look good and very precise while that is at that moment not that interesting. I have to learn to make it less decent but good enough to judge in order to save time.

During the process it was helpful to use different methods to find out and try what works the best as for example making sketches with charcoal or using models to test it. The different materials for the models as wood, gypsum and cardboard helps to understand better how different textures work.

Something what helps me during the development of the project was the method of asking myself a lot of questioning about what I did and why I did it that way. It is a tool to stay critical about the decisions and to constantly search for a better well thought option. This is an exercise what I want to develop in my further career.

- 4 Other things what should be improved for the future is to make faster decisions. This doesn't mean that they are taken without consideration but this is to make it possible to speed up the process and make larger steps. This should be done in combination with shifting to different scale levels during the design to have a larger overview. Making decisions faster is the key to a bigger success but this means also that I have to be more sure about it.

After my first P4 started a new learning process. I realized I had to look even better to the building but in a different way. Find the question behind the question as: why do I make certain decisions, how does it influence the larger scale and how can the existing building used even better. It is really about seeing the bigger picture and understand how everything is related and influenced to each other.

I am still contented that I choose for the Santos building even it have its difficulties as for example all the columns and that it is that far from the water as well as the coherence with the value assessment. The value assessment makes it harder to make decisions since changes are most of the time in contradiction with the values. To mine opinion Santos is about keeping as much as possible but on the other hand there should be made interventions as well to make this building suitable for its new function and more interesting. This means that changes should be made well thought and with respect to the building. That makes it harder but interesting to work with.