

# P4 REFLECTION REPORT

Project: AMSTEL INNOVUNION

Chair: Complex Projects

Studio: AMS Mid-City

Name: Chenxi Dai (4512650)

Date: 7 March 2018

## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

As one of the most important and attractive city in Europe, Amsterdam has seen a great growth of its residents in the recent years. How to offer enough houses for the new arrivals will be a continuous question for the managers of the city. The densification process has already started. Wasted lands like abandoned houses and old industrial areas are transformed into new residential and working areas. This process leads to the questions: How can we densify Amsterdam in a sustainable way? What kind of built environment is necessary to benefit the urban fabric and create local values?

The main aim of my graduation project is to create a space that could help connect the different groups of people and benefit the local creative production. The building is a headquarter of the guild of creative industry of Amsterdam. The building includes four exhibition halls, workshops, working space, a hostel, a shopping street and a public park. The building is located beside new city boulevard (which will be downgraded from the current A10 highway), with the shopping street and the park connecting both sides.



Fig 1. Large Concrete Plant in Amstel Industrial Area

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

I was quite interested about the assignment of having a vision for Amsterdam in 2050, which encouraged us to think beyond the time and explore abundant possibilities for Amsterdam. The project task was quite free: there is few limits on what the final results should be as long as it is supported by solid research data and relevant predictions. Due to the complete and advanced data base of Amsterdam, it is not difficult to find useful information that helps us develop our own fascinations.

My personal research was focused on the transformation of the industrial area in Amstel. With the process of expanding the circle of the inner city, more and more creative companies have started to move to Amstel Industrial Area. This tendency will lead to a huge change on the layout and functions that the industrial area has now. Based on my research on the future of creative industry, the industry will be much more open to the public. The roles of the designers and consumers will be able to be exchanged easily. In addition, green environment should be included in the layout of the future city frame.

These research lead to my design topic: an open and welcoming public building for the Guild of Creativity Industry. The building will not only offer traditional functions like registration, but also become platform for different people to meet, interact

and collaborate. The building should provide various spaces that could attract people and used by them. Places for exhibition and public activity will be included in the building. For the office part, more free working space will be needed. Different space qualities will be provided. Green will be an important feature of the building, with the building façade and the park covering with grass and plants.



Fig 2. G-star headquarter in Amstel

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GRADUATION TOPIC, STUDIO TOPIC AND MASTERTRACK

The Complex Projects studio encourages us to think and solve complex urban issues by researching the different aspects of the city. To be a good architect, it is important to understand not only the architectural design, but also the larger city context, the relevant social meanings, the essential economical sources and the historical and realistic situations.

The future development of Amsterdam will face great challenge on sustainable densification. It is important to find balance between

different group of people, including the new residents, the new workers, the old residents and the visitors. My project will include the interest of all of these people and try to create a space that they can all find their identities.

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE METHOD CHOSEN AND THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE GRADUATION STUDIO

The Complex Projects graduation studio consists of 4 phases. The first phase is mainly about gathering and analysing data of Amstel from physical, social, economical and cultural aspects. The research is done in group and the final results are shared with each other. The second phase is to have a project goal and programme to develop, which is more individual and free. The third and fourth phases focus on developing the idea and finalise to a solid architectural project.

This method is quite necessary for the development of my project. The general study of the whole Amstel ensured my sufficient understanding of the context and inspired me to consider the various possibilities for Amsterdam 2050. The group collaboration was efficient as it helped me gather large amount of information in a short time. All of the solid data prepared a strong and useful foundation for my own research.

### SITE AND AIM FOR THE PROJECT

Amstel Industrial Area is the site that I chose for my intervention to Amsterdam 2050. This site is an in-between place from several points. It is physically at the border of the Amsterdam municipality. The area is surrounded by residential area and business centres. It has the smallest population within the whole Amstel area. The existing buildings are



Fig 3. A10 Highway – main physical barrier in site

mostly industrial plants or storage buildings. The streets are designed for vehicle transportation. In addition, several physical barriers could be found in this area, including a highway (A10), a canal and several bulky buildings that stops the road circulation. All of these characteristics show a great potential for densification as well as a lack of future-proofing values. I see this area as a critical node for the sustainable densification of Amsterdam.

According our group vision, this area will be developed into a mixed area of residential and production area. The current industry will be transformed to creative industry. The main barrier A10 will be downgraded to a city boulevard, with plentiful space for pedestrians and greenery. This vision helped me decide how I can develop my personal project. I chose a site along the boulevard and closed to the canal, which in the future will bring many visitors to the site. I tried to use the creative industry to help the connection between the different groups of people, providing both public and private spaces for them to explore, work, communicate and have fun.



Fig 4. Insufficient public space

## THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WIDER SOCIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORK

Amsterdam's fast growing population will have a great impression on the city frame. With lots of abandoned and inefficiently used space, densification is obviously essential for this city towards the future. The current layout and infrastructures are causing problems like fragmentation, inequality of social resources and limited transportation. On the other side, how to support the creative industry to continuous develop in the future city context is also a critical question for an innovative and creative city like Amsterdam. With the changing relations among designers, producers and consumers, people will ask for more freedom to participate into each step of the producing process. My project could work as a case study for the city planner and the creative industry developers on how to embrace the most interests of different people in the context of a densified city and how to include the creative production in the future city frame.

## CONCLUSION

My project provides an answer to the question how the creative production could help rebuild the social connection in the future context of densified city fabric. The project could inspire the city planners to reconsidering the relationships between the production and the citizens, which will be quite meaningful for a healthy and sustainable deification process in Amsterdam and other large cities.