

Reflection

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My graduation project addresses various themes, including urban densification, building with biobased materials, industrial methods, and revitalizing post-war neighborhoods. Initially, I found it challenging to determine a focus for the design assignment, given my broad interests and the desire to design at various scales. In the initial phase, I deliberately kept my approach broad, partly because of my diverse interests, but also because I struggled to make decisions.

Although I had not yet precisely identified my design challenge, I was interested in using biobased materials, industrial methods and transforming post-war neighborhoods. I chose to investigate the application of biobased materials for industrial facade elements in post-war neighborhoods. I could use this research in a later stage in my design process. Because I also found it challenging to determine a focus for my design for a long time, I was not able to incorporate much input from my design into my research. Consequently, my research remained fairly general, which provided a broad base but limited my ability to delve deeply into specific materials. In hindsight, a quicker focus on my design might have helped me get more out of the research.

My design focuses on various scales, from elements to an urban level. It aligns with the architecture master track due to its focus on the building level and the integration of various themes, such as biodiversity, social cohesion, densification, and housing diversity within an existing context. The project contributes to societal value by addressing housing shortages, revitalizing neighborhoods, and stimulating social interaction. Topping up is a concept currently widely applied to gallery flats and walk up flats because of its efficiency; you build more within an existing city without occupying new space around the city. Given the scarcity of space in the Netherlands, topping up is an effective method, but rarely used in row houses. Since there are approximately 3.4 million row houses in the Netherlands, with a large portion situated in post-war neighborhoods, the outcome of this design could be replicated in a broad context.

Simultaneously, my research into biobased could contribute to the incorporation of more emission-friendly materials in the construction industry. A shift is needed from current material usage, as biobased materials are currently underutilized due to a lack of knowledge. By providing insight into the properties of these materials, designers can implement them into their designs.

The project's transferability lies in further developing implementation strategies for similar neighborhoods, understanding the existing residents' desires and their willingness to transform their neighborhood in this manner. Additionally, it's interesting to look at the neighborhood on a slightly larger scale, considering how all these individual blocks can collaborate, as well as looking to the other building types within the block and how these can connect to the transformation of the row houses.

The feedback process with my mentors was valuable and inspiring. Although I sometimes felt stressed when I hit roadblocks, the feedback sessions helped me generate new ideas and make decisions. However, I noticed that during interim feedback sessions, I often presented concepts or principles rather than fully developed drawings. I maintained a good overview of everything, but I understand that this may have been confusing for teachers. This was mainly because I was

working across many different scales simultaneously and didn't want to finalize everything in a drawing yet to avoid spending a lot of time making adjustments. However, I also hindered myself in this regard because sometimes all the separate concepts were interesting, but when integrated into the design, things didn't always align perfectly. Nevertheless, this approach allowed for quickly testing many different ideas and concepts. I enjoy thoroughly developing projects to perfection, down to every detail, which can sometimes lead me astray from the core of my story and what it's all about. My teachers have been particularly helpful in guiding me in this aspect. The aspect I struggled with the most during the design process was making choices. I learned to relate these choices back to the core of my story. I must make choices that logically fit into the overall picture without introducing new aspects.

I will utilize the final part of my graduation project towards my P5 to bring my design to life and refine it for presentation. My biggest design challenge was dealing with the existing, aiming to densify the neighborhood while also adding something extra for the residents. This required careful balance and the search for subtle design solutions that were both aesthetic and functional. By bringing the design more to life and displaying both the aesthetics and the functionality it contains, I hope to convince everyone with a good realistic design.