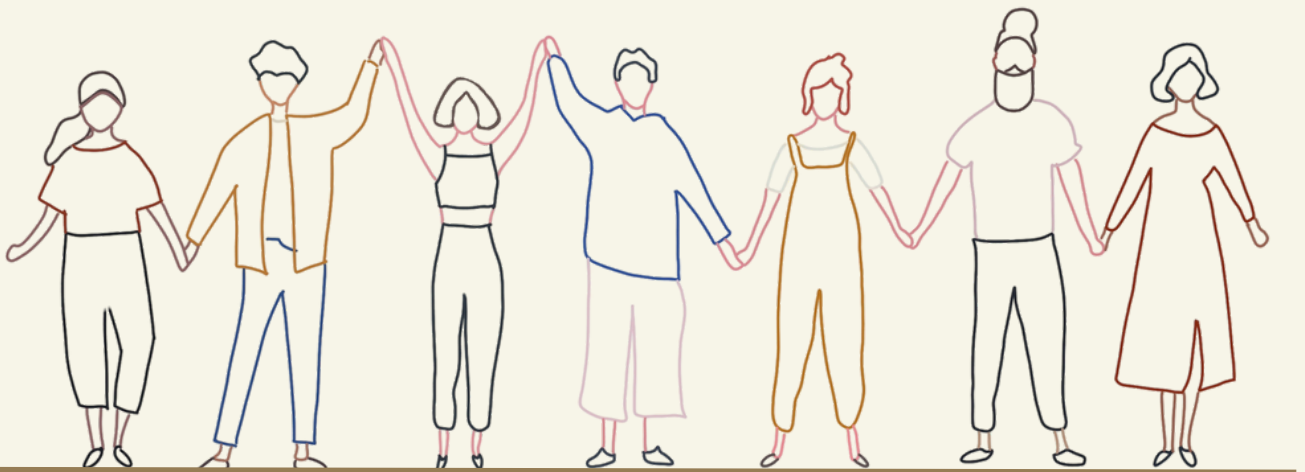


# FROM INDUSTRY TO COMMUNITY - REFLECTION



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**1. The graduation project topic and its connection to my master track and master programme.**  
 Cities worldwide face a growing housing shortage, leading to increased demand for space. Traditionally, this is tackled by adding more homes within urban areas. However, with limited space, repurposing industrial areas and unused spaces for housing offers a sustainable solution without compromising green spaces. The challenge lies in adapting industrial zones, which are designed for production and logistics, to meet the needs of residential neighborhoods.

This project shows how industrial areas can be transformed into hybrid space that integrate living, working, and social functions. A key focus is off this project creating neighborhoods that foster social cohesion and community well-being by incorporating communal spaces, recreational facilities, and multifunctionality.

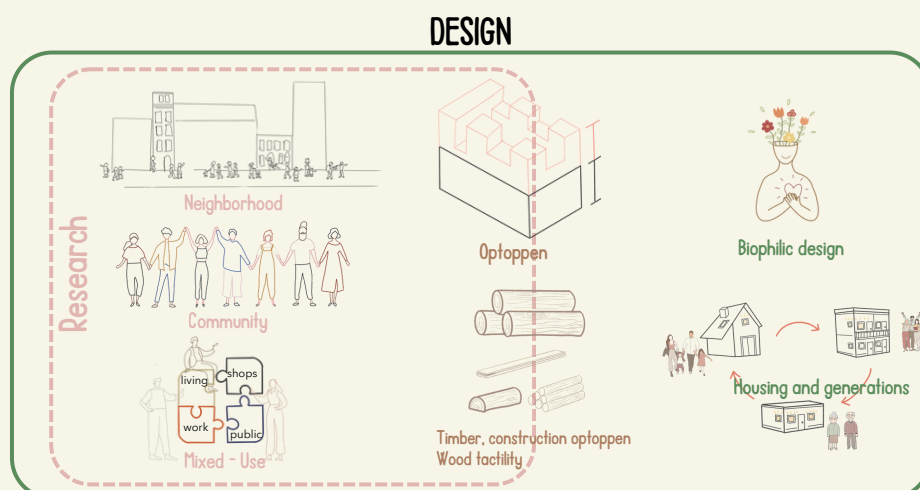
The project aims to find innovative design strategies to repurpose industrial sites into livable, sustainable environments that balance the needs of industry with those of residential life, contributing to a thriving, connected community.

This project first connects to the “optoppen” principle of my master track, which focuses on creating additional housing on top of existing structures. This approach allows for urban densification without sacrificing green areas for new development. Secondly, it aligns with the Wood Studio focus: not only is timber a more sustainable and environmentally friendly material, it also contributes to a natural and tactile atmosphere. According to my research, this connection to nature supports the creation of a neighborhood that fosters social cohesion and community wellbeing.

**2. The influence of the research on the design, and the design on the research**

Although the studio is focused on wood, the connection to timber was not always directly present in the early stages of the research or project. The research primarily explored how to create a functional, new neighborhood within an industrial context, offering a mix of living, working, public, and retail spaces that together would form a thriving and connected community. At first glance, this seemed only loosely tied to the “wood” aspect of the studio, aside from the fact that optoppen is a strategy that can be effectively executed using timber.

The research focused on the relationship between neighborhoods and people, and on identifying what residents truly need to make a neighborhood socially and functionally successful. It provided a set of design principles related to mixed uses, livability, and community building. However, at that point, the link between the industrial character of the site and the social hub I envisioned was still only theoretical.



This changed during the design process. I began to investigate what timber truly offers, especially in terms of tactility, material warmth, and spatial experience. What can wood contribute to the feeling and function of this new neighborhood? This led to the principles of biophilic design, the idea that being in or around nature benefits human well-being. I then began to explore how to integrate biophilic strategies into both my research and design.

As a result, the design incorporates a public building, the Houtveemloods, with functions such as sports, workspaces, and retail, combined with a green strip that reintroduces nature into the urban fabric. This creates a calm, walkable urban forest, a rare condition in the dense heart of Amsterdam. By connecting this green strip with different green seating areas spread throughout the building, around the sports facilities, social spaces, workplaces, and housing, a social hub emerges that is tied together through a pleasant and natural living environment, offering many possibilities and gathering places.

The housing sits above these public functions, but not as a detached layer. Instead, the dwellings are designed as modular units that stay connected to the environment, resembling treehouses with their own unique views and outdoor spaces overlooking the new social neighborhood. In this way, the biophilic principles extend into the housing itself, reinforcing the connection between architecture, nature, and community.

### **3. The value of my way of working**

It was a rough process. Although I quickly knew what I wanted to focus on in my research, I struggled early on to connect the theme of wood to my design. This became clear during my P2 retake, which, in hindsight, was helpful, it led me to discover the connection with biophilic design. From there, I was able to take my project to a higher level.

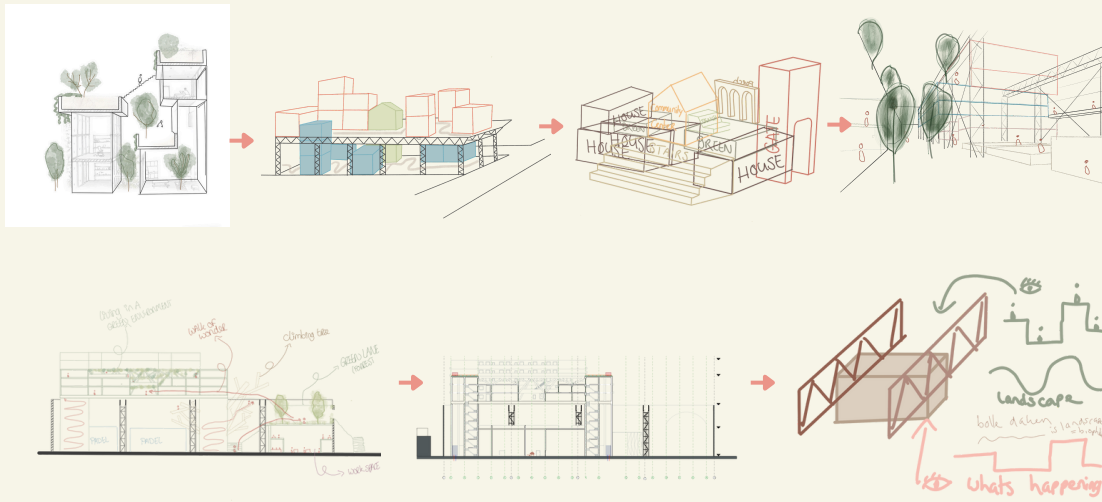
Due to the many different design principles that emerged from my research, as well as from biophilic thinking, there were a lot of possible directions. With such a large building like the Houtveemloods (which in hindsight may have been too big to achieve everything I had in mind), my way of working quickly led me to the familiar lesson: "kill your darlings." There are many ways to do something, and that doesn't mean one is wrong, but you have to pick one and move forward. That moment took longer than I hoped, but ultimately it brought valuable changes.

After not passing my P4 with my project, I had to take a few steps back in order to look at it with a fresh perspective. I asked myself: what worked well, what had real potential, and where did I fall short, whether due to time pressure or because I lost focus.

I went back to my P2 to reflect on what I wanted to carry forward into my design and what was missing in the latest version. The connection with my research was still strong: the idea of combining social interaction, work, and sports within the warehouse while also giving nature back to the surroundings was present and effective. However, the relationship between the housing and the social hub had disappeared. The design had become more of a "lower world" (the social neighborhood) and an "upper world" (the housing), with little cohesion between the two. According to both my research and my design vision throughout the year, these layers needed to be much more interconnected.

This became the goal of my resubmission: finding ways to better connect the housing with the environment, while maintaining the structural and constructive elements from my previous P4 (the truss structure).

By combining all these aspects in the updated design, the project has become stronger than ever. It not only aligns more closely with my research but is now also architecturally better formulated.



#### 4. The academic and societal value, scope and implication of my graduation project, including ethical aspects.

My graduation project explores how an industrial site can be transformed into a socially sustainable, multifunctional neighborhood. Academically, it contributes to ongoing discussions about biophilic design, the reuse of existing structures, and the role of materials (such as timber) in shaping social architecture.

From a societal perspective, the project focuses on creating inclusive communities, addressing urban densification without consuming new land, and restoring the relationship between people and nature.

Ethically, I aim to ensure fair access to amenities through design by creating spaces for different age groups, income levels, and backgrounds, while the use of sustainable materials helps reduce environmental impact.

#### 5. The value of the transferability of the project results

The design principles developed in my project, such as integrating biophilic design into dense urban contexts, reusing industrial structures for social purposes, and combining housing with work and community programs, are transferable to many post-industrial or underutilized sites in other cities.

In addition, the chosen housing typology is modular, which makes it adaptable and applicable in other urban situations. This means that the research, combined with its architectural outcomes, is not only a design for a specific location but also a vision and framework for future transformations.

In this way, the project directly responds to my research question:

“How can the transformation of an industrial area into a functional neighborhood integrate living, working, public, and retail spaces to enhance social coherence and foster a thriving community?”

The answer goes beyond the Houtveemloods site itself; it offers a method and strategy that can be applied elsewhere, creating neighborhoods that are both functional and socially enriching, giving something back to both people and the city.

