

Research Plan
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Set in the city of Amsterdam, the overall brief of this year's graduation studio of Interiors Buildings Cities is to redefine the contemporary notion of the hotel in response to the city's ambition of implementing the Doughnut Economy as formulated by the economist Kate Raworth. Throughout the graduation project we conduct research that will profoundly inform the design project. In this research plan I will evaluate the research that I have done in the first quarter of my graduation project, both individually as well as together with my colleague students. After that I will set out my further research direction and trajectory.

Collective research

We, all students of the graduation studio, will collectively produce a set of research books that cover three broad topics: the urban history of Amsterdam in relation to social developments; the history of the hotel type; and Amsterdam's city portrait in relation to the Doughnut Economy. In smaller groups of varying compositions we have studied sub-topics within each of the three topics. In a collective effort, led by an editorial team, all research will be compiled to form a vast body of knowledge that will serve as a constant point of reference throughout the graduation project.

For the first brief my group and I delved into the urban expansions and developments of Amsterdam in the nineteenth century, in relation to social developments and civil unrest. We used several methods to study this topic. Most of the research was based on literature research combined with the analysis of historical maps. We used photographs and drawings from this period to inform our research and to construct an image of the urban conditions in this age. Based on the materials that we collected we have also made our own drawings, which serve to make urban or architectural fragments visible, to emphasize specific elements, and to enable comparisons between different ways of buildings across different periods and chapters. Lastly, we visited one of the social housing complexes that we studied: *Het Schip* by Michel de Klerk. This visit helped us to deepen our research but was especially informative in the sense that we got an impression of how people lived in the time that it was built.

Through this first brief I have gained a profound understanding of Amsterdam's urban history. Among other things there are four things that have stuck with me: how Amsterdam's urban development is deeply connected to its original topography with its ubiquity of water; how this relation has always required a strong tradition of planning which is present until this day; how closely the city's urban developments are linked to social history and civic engagement; and lastly, how the major expansions of the city are representative of the societies of various periods, of their values, and of what their people wanted to represent. All these characteristics of Amsterdam's urban history help me to understand the context of the site that I will be working on and to define how I want to position my project in the continuous development of the city.

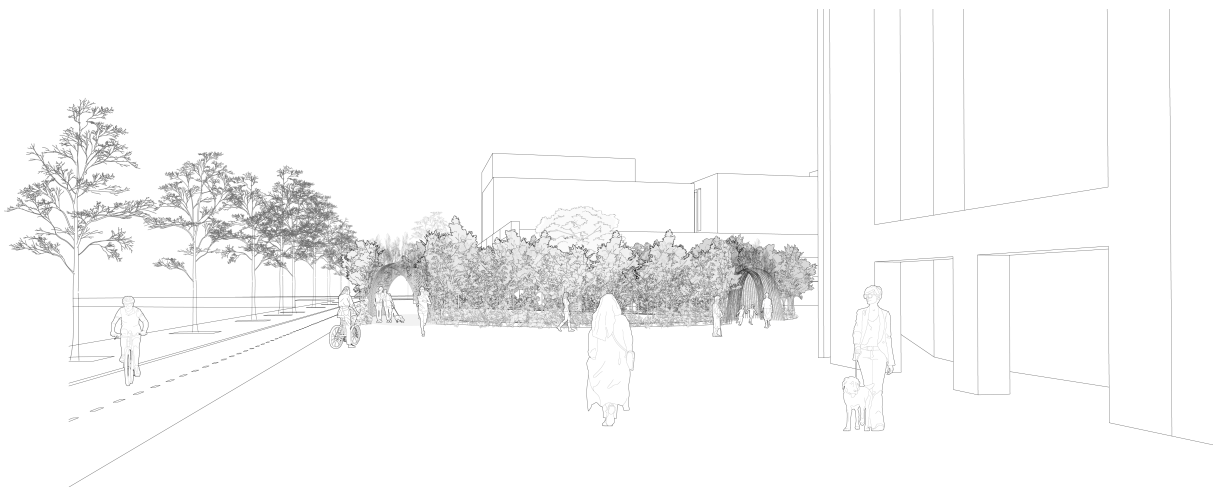
For the second brief regarding the analysis of hotel types my group and I studied the *hôtel particulier*, the gentlemen's club and the residential hotel. Again we used literature to learn about the history and characteristics of these types, but this research mainly leaned on the analysis and redrawing of typical plans, sections and elevations. This intensive engagement with

the materials helped me to gain a deep understanding of the types and the clues they hold for our projects. I was especially fascinated by the way that the *hôtel particulier* consolidates its context through its ingenious plan, creating a microcosm that is experienced through a sequence of magnificent spaces. I also found a valuable lesson in the variety of spaces with different functions, atmospheres and different degrees of privacy and formality that the gentlemen's club offers. This variety enabled guests to be in control of their experience of visiting the club.

For the third brief my group and I studied the global ecological aspect of Amsterdam's City Portrait in the Doughnut Economy. Central to this aspect is the question: What would it mean for Amsterdam to respect the health of the whole planet? To answer this question we studied Amsterdam's City Portrait and various other policy documents from the City of Amsterdam to find out where the city stands now and where it wants to be in the future. We also looked up how non-governmental organizations are involved in the transition towards the Doughnut Economy and interviewed some of them to learn more about them. I found it very interesting to learn how these organizations are working towards the socially just and ecologically safe space of the Doughnut. But I also found it extremely sobering to learn that Amsterdam's greatest challenges in terms of ecology are beyond the city's boundaries and cannot be addressed by the city alone. It became very clear to me that in order for Amsterdam to respect the health of the whole planet, we must make different choices as individuals in terms of our consumption, but we also need the rest of the planet.

First design exercise and choice of site

Based on this research into Amsterdam's City Portrait we formulated the first design exercise. I was interested in a few interrelated topics: from a focus on the agency of non-human animals my interest shifted to the significance of trees in both nature and human culture. I was especially interested in the *Gerichtslinde* as a historically meaningful place of gathering for the Germanic people of Northwest Europe. And I was also interested in the idea of tiny forests of native trees as a weapon against climate change and as a space that non-human animals can take agency of. My design proposal was an attempt to consolidate the notion of a singular Linden tree and the tiny forest – the one and the many – as a place that holds significance for humans, non-human animals and nature. This design exercise has unleashed my latent interest in the place where architecture and space meet nature.



The creation of a tiny forest holding a Linden tree within, on the Waterlooplein in front of Amsterdam's city hall



The brightly accentuated area is the parking lot of Artis

By extension of my interests I have chosen the parking lot of Artis as my site. I think this is the best site to further develop my interest in trees, forests, animals and nature in general. It is a large site next to the zoo Artis, located in the Plantage, a neighbourhood within Amsterdam's old city centre that had remained green for many centuries and only became built in the second half of the nineteenth century. I find Artis' full name, *Natura Artis Magistra*, meaning: "Nature is the teacher of the arts", emblematic for my intentions.

A new role for the hotel

The transition from our current economy to the Doughnut Economy as described by Kate Raworth or to a similar economic model is inevitable if we want to keep the world inhabitable for the coming generations and ourselves. But not only is it inevitable; it also holds great intrinsic promise for the world and us. The socially just and ecologically safe space of the Doughnut is a very attractive and desirable perspective for our world. But if we truly want to reach that safe space – and I believe we *must* reach that safe space - the implementation of the Doughnut Economy will have a profound impact on every part of our society; an impact which I believe cannot be overseen yet. It will affect the lives of all people, in Amsterdam and beyond. Some will welcome this transition at once. Some may have not heard of the Doughnut Economy yet. And some may or may not have heard of it but may be (deeply) sceptical. I can imagine that many people may have very real questions, fears, concerns or doubts about the transition towards the Doughnut Economy and the implications for themselves. I have been thinking a lot about this, and lately one phrase has been circling around in my mind: *I see you*. I think that in our era of uncertainties, 'fake news' and distrust in science it is of the highest importance not to disdain and belittle the concerns people may have, but instead to give place to these people and their worries. To let people know that they are *seen*, and that they are not alone. It is up to us all to take everyone on the journey that we are embarking on. In fact, none of us know what exactly lies ahead of us. We all have to find our way into the world of tomorrow, and it is better if we do it together. To persevere we need trust. Trust in each other and in the world of tomorrow. I believe that the hotel may play a role in creating trust in this new world in the socially just and ecologically safe Doughnut.

I imagine the hotel as a place that contributes to a positive imaging of this new world: a place where people may experience what life in the Doughnut could be like, and find how it offers

different kinds of wealth and pleasure. And where people may share their experiences, help and inspire each other to find their way into that world; and where they shape the future together.

This role for the hotel and my interests in trees and nature raise several questions that I see as a starting point for an ongoing dialogue with the project:

- How can the hotel play a role in the creation of trust in the forthcoming transition towards the Doughnut Economy?
 - How can the hotel contribute to a positive imaging of the Doughnut?
- How can trees and nature contribute to the proposed function of the hotel?
 - How can nature hold meaningful spaces?
 - What elements define our perception of natural spaces?
 - How can trees play a role in relationships between people?

Theoretical framework and methodology

Before I arrived at the topics of non-human animals, the significance of trees and the notion of creating trust through architecture, I had professed my interest in architectural atmospheres as a research topic to Mark Pimlott. He recommended some valuable books about this topic to me. In my bibliography I have added a separate list of the books concerning atmosphere and perception that I have read.

Around the P1 it became clear to me that it would be better to abandon the theme of architectural atmospheres as a main topic in this particular academic research, and to focus on the significance of trees instead. The books and articles I have read have profoundly influenced my first design exercise and my current position as architect however, both within this project and beyond. While they have mostly contributed to my theoretical framework in an implicit manner, some of these writings have explicitly influenced my direction in the graduation project – I learned about the *Gerichtslinde* in Norberg-Schulz's *Genius loci: Towards a phenomenology of architecture*, for example. I am certain that these books, which all in some way address forests, trees and nature, will continue to inform my research and design.

However, to more specifically address the site and the questions that I am posing, I want to follow three lines of investigation. First of all, I want to develop a profound understanding of the context that I am working in. I want to focus specifically on the historical development of the site of Artis Parking and its larger context of the Plantage neighbourhood. I am currently reading two books on this topic, which are included in the bibliography. Together with the analysis of historical maps and images of the neighbourhood I want to determine how my project may respond to its context and history. I have already found that the history of the Plantage provides many leads in relation to trees and nature. My second line of investigation will focus on these topics: I will study a set of books that deal with questions of (native) trees and nature in the city and their relations with people and humans. Additionally I want to analyse two case studies of the landscape architects Capability Brown and Frederick Law Olmsted, whose landscape designs concern human's perception of artificial greenery. And lastly I will study *The architect's brain* by Harry Francis Mallgrave, which addresses the topics of empathy and phenomenology in architecture. These are themes that are central to the question of how the hotel can contribute to the creation of trust in the Doughnut Economy.

The significance of trees...

The challenges we face on Spaceship Earth are difficult and complex. From reading Buckminster Fuller's (2008) *Operating Manual* it becomes clear that we cannot turn our backs to them: we

mere, passing astronauts simply do not have a credible plan B. But more than that, Buckminster Fuller reminds us how wonderful this planet is. We humans hold an important key to its future, and we have not lost it yet. Simply imagining our planet as a Spaceship floating in an unfathomably large universe instantly reminds me of our responsibility to safeguard its future. I strongly feel that we as architects justly carry a larger portion of that responsibility. As citizen of the world, I see that responsibility as an honourable onus.

Ecosystems of trees, plants, non-human animals and other organisms are important weapons against climate change. I am very curious to find out how such ecosystems can be created in cities where their impact may be even greater. I believe this project will provide valuable insights in how rewilding parts of the city may benefit the direct environment, people and non-human animals, and how architecture and nature can mutually benefit each other and create meaningful environments for humanity. I feel like this journey will greatly impact my future practice, and hope it may serve as inspiration for others too.

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