HOMELESS CITY
GRADUATION PLAN

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Personal Information

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Studio

Name of studio:	Architectural Engineering
Tutors:	Roel van de Pas (1st) Paddy Tomesen (2nd) Jos de Krieger (3rd)

Arguments for choice of studio

I have always respected the value of knowing how things work. How an engine runs, how a country elects its representatives, or how a building stands up. Architectural engineering champions this approach to thinking; grounding design to the realities of spatial, environmental and social contexts. Through its pedagogy, aE challenges the methods and tools we use for design and implementation of our interventions, advocating that technology is the answer to meet our sustainability obligations.

Furthermore, as the role of the architect shifts from master-draughtsman to master-of-all, it is vital that my education is equally broad. aE looks to the built environment for opportunities beyond the scope of a traditional architect. Discussions of developers, planners, entrepreneurs, makers and inventors are commonplace, making the studio culture rich with stimulating questions and diverse solutions.

Unsure of my fascination direction when choosing studios, but certain I wanted to research a subject with a highly social component, the aE studio was (and is) the ideal environment from which to define and nurture my own graduation assignment. My studio choice ensured that I would be challenged to deliver a project that not only showcases my full potential, but also endeavours to make the world a better place.

Graduation Project Title: Homeless City **Location:** Rotterdam, NL

Problem Statement

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2019) the number of people in the Netherlands sleeping on the streets, in shelters, or in the homes of their friends has more than doubled since 2009, reaching 39,300 by 2018. Of this total, it is estimated that 4,000 reside in Rotterdam (Pauluskerk, 2020; CBS, 2019). However, the city government fails to recognise the majority of this group as being in need of social support. Their response to homelessness is largely the same as it were in the 90s, when there was a relatively homogenous population of homeless people: native Dutch, middle-aged men with care-related issues such as addiction or mental illnesses. Today there is no typical profile, meaning the average homeless person can blend into the cityscape with ease (van Doorn, 2020). This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that when discussing this paper with my peers, most were surprised at my topic and said that they had never seen a homeless person in the Netherlands.

A survey conducted by the Pauluskerk (2016) reported that the average Rotterdammer doesn't want anyone to have to sleep on the streets. However, gemeente Rotterdam generally considers those without psychological issues, psychosocial issues, mental illnesses or addictions to be 'self-reliant'. Once labelled as such it becomes difficult to get help from the municipality. Furthermore, the amenities for those that fall

outside the scope of care-focused services are largely non-existent. Therefore, those that do get help are likely to find themselves in an institutional environment that they are not suited to. In addition, despite the common belief that shelters fail to provide an appropriate setting for care and rehabilitation (Augustin, 2020), and fail to meet the requirements of basic human needs, they are still a key part of almost all social support pathways. The result is that more than half of shelter residents drop-out before agreeing on a social support plan with the gemeente (Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2018).

In order to provide adequate support for the homeless population of Rotterdam, we must first understand their needs. This is dependant on both why they are homeless and what type of homelessness they are experiencing.

Thesis Objective

My overall design objective is to contribute to the discourse of homelessness by identifying the value architectural interventions could bring to a specific group of homeless Rotterdammers. It is believed that through the design of a sustainable architectural toolkit, spatial agency can be offered to Rotterdam's most vulnerable inhabitants. By establishing highly inclusive communities, derived from the toolkit, homeless groups could increase their own social autonomy and create opportunity for personal growth.

As such my research paper is designed to endue myself with the knowledge necessary to take a position on the who, what, where, when and how aspects surrounding these interventions. For example, understanding the methods employed by gemeente Rotterdam to guide individuals from the point of homelessness to the point of being re-adequately housed, will draw attention to the groups of homeless that fall between the cracks of the existing system. Consideration of the social, political and economic frameworks surrounding these groups will clarify their potential for bottom-up architectural solutions; thereby satisfying the 'who' component.

In short, my research paper aims to identify a method by which architecture can help the homeless in Rotterdam, and my overall thesis aims to test this method, as a continuation of the research, by design and hypothetical implementation.

Thematic Research Question

How can architecture be used as a tool to help Rotterdam's homeless population?

Sub-questions:

1. Why are people homeless in Rotterdam?
2. What happens when you become homeless in Rotterdam?
3. How can we categorise the groups of homeless in Rotterdam?
4. What do these homeless groups need in order to acquire adequate housing?
5. Who can satisfy those needs?
6. What role does and should architecture play?

Process & Methodologies

- Literature review - theoretical framework: forming the bedding and tone for this paper.
- Case study analysis - architectural framework: reflection on the role of the architect based on the user experience and key homeless topics derived from the literature reviews.
- Empirical research - interviews and mapping: praxeology, observation of how the homeless interacts with the urban fabric, discussions with actors in the homeless sector, and volunteering placement at Pauluskerk to carry out phenomenology study. Identification of suitable circular waste streams and categorisation. Subsequent production of Rotterdam homeless MFA and local circular waste streams MFA.
- Research by design - scenarios and dreamscape interventions: translated into drawing / diagrams and used to inspire discussion with interviewees.

Interviews & Practice

- Patrick Roegiers - Designer, builder, film-maker, activist. Creator of the '*A sense of home'* project.
- Sigwela Augustin - Designer and homeless healthcare expert. Creator of the '*To be or not to be'* project.
- Frank Dries - Photographer and journalist. Editor of the Utrecht Straatnieuws. Has worked in the homeless sector since 1994.
- Natascha Frensch - Journalist and editor of Rotterdam / Den Haag Straatnieuws.
- Belina Beiker - Street lawyer and advocate for youth homeless.
- Patrick van der Jagt - photographer, ex-homeless, ex-addict.
- Peter Zuidam - Policy officer for CVD (homeless shelter).
- Frans Bosman - Policy advisor for gemeente Rotterdam.
- Huub de Weerd - Doctor at the Pauluskerk.
- Erik Jutten - Pension Almode founder.
- Pauluskerk - Tour with Huub de Weerd and regular volunteer work.

Relevance

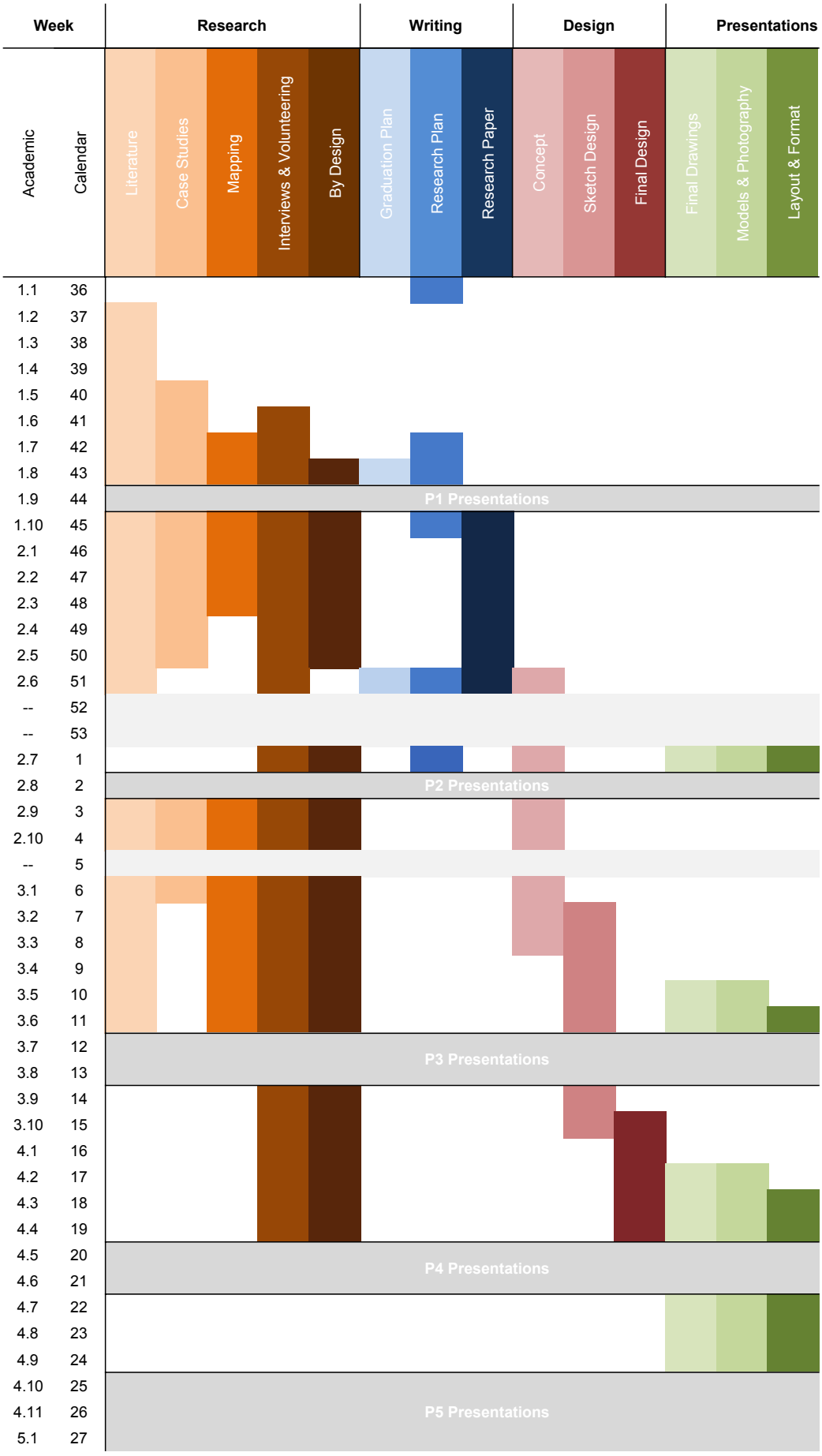
The COVID-19 pandemic adds significant urgency to the plight of the homeless. Governments worldwide are encouraging their citizens to stay home (Leger des Heils, 2020), but without a home to stay in and with public spaces closed, homeless people have been left stranded (van Doorn, 2020). The Salvation Army has been able to house the displaced shelter residents in hotels around Rotterdam (Leger des Heils, 2020), but when the pandemic eases the hotels will want their rooms back. Furthermore, according to CBS (2020) the stall on the economy has caused over 146,000 people to lose their jobs between March and November 2020, which we know to be one of the main pathways to homelessness.

Conversely the pandemic is also providing proof that we can (temporarily) end homelessness, as all over the world we are witnessing rapid implementation of policy, sometimes overnight, to maintain public health (FEANTSA, 2020). Furthermore, doctors in Rotterdam are reporting that the privacy shelter-occupants are experiencing, due to social distancing measures, is significantly improving their mental health (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2019). Gemeente Rotterdam has even pledged to make private rooms the standard in all shelters from now on as a result of this improvement (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2020).

The corona crisis has further clarified the failings in the current approach to homelessness (van Doorn, 2020). Recognising this, the Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving (Council for Public Health and Society - RVS) has advised the national government who have made €200 million available to tackle homelessness in 2020 and 2021 (Rijksoverheid, 2020), of which €20 million is for gemeente Rotterdam (Rijnmond, 2020). The impact of policy change only becomes apparent five to ten years later. Therefore, what we do now is critical for the next generation of homeless (van Doorn, 2020).

In recent years it is possible to observe the beginnings of a shift across the Netherlands from a care-focused response to one centred around housing. By the end of 2020, gemeente Rotterdam will have housed 50 ex-homeless people via the 'Housing First' method, arriving at more sustainable solutions to homelessness (Hogeschool Utrecht, 2020). As housing-based responses gain favour, the role of architecture becomes evermore relevant and the role of the architect comes under scrutiny.

Planning


Week
Research
Writing
Design
Presentations
Academic
Calendar
Literature
Case Studies
Mapping
Interviews & Volunteering
By Design
Graduation Plan
Research Plan
Research Paper
Concept
Sketch Design
Final Design
Final Drawings
Models & Photography
Layout & Format
1.1 36
1.2 37
1.3 38
1.4 39
1.5 40
1.6 41
1.7 42
1.8 43
1.9 44
P1 Presentations
1.10 45
2.1 46
2.2 47
2.3 48
2.4 49
2.5 50
2.6 51
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2.7 1
2.8 2
P2 Presentations
2.9 3
2.10 4
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3.1 6
3.2 7
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3.5 10
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3.7 12
3.8 13
P3 Presentations
3.9 14
3.10 15
4.1 16
4.2 17
4.3 18
4.4 19
4.5 20
4.6 21
P4 Presentations
4.7 22
4.8 23
4.9 24
4.10 25
4.11 26
5.1 27
P5 Presentations

Literature

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