UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS (UCA)
Rediscovery of the former Markethall area as a university campus
This is the reflection of M. Wullems. The reflection contains a short substantiated explanation to account for the results of the research and design in the graduation phase (product, process, planning).

The aim of the reflection is to look back and see if the approach worked, to understand the “how and why”, and subsequently to learn from it. The choice of method (how) and argumentation (why) which preceded the research was a part of the study plan – the reflection contains an answer to the question of how and why the approach did or did not work, and to what extent.

The graduation will be performed at the Department of Architecture on the Faculty of Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences at Delft University of Technology.
The relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject chosen within this framework

The functions of the Markethall area as a industrial island in the residential area should be moved to the industrial area in the north of Amsterdam West. Considering the different characters of the dwelling part and the industrial part the Bretenzone can stay the buffer between the two districts. In addition, the Markethall area is an impervious area adjacent to different districts which has an own identity.

Assignment

‘Amsterdam aan Zee’ is a graduation studio that focusses on the area between the old Amsterdam-Haarlem line. This covers amongst others the historical Haarlemmertrekvaart which is a connection as straight as an arrow between the two historical city gates of Haarlem and Amsterdam. The area intrigues due to the large variety in landscape, urbanisation and functional program. Harbours and recreational areas succeed each other; old re-used building contrast with the newest manifestations. The long historical canal that connected Amsterdam and Haarlem has been absorbed by railway and roads. The site has beautiful chapters of history, all kinds of flora and fauna, yet also numerous intriguing buildings with divers functions, infrastructural interventions and civil fortifications. This studio is a reflection of the current and future architectural task in the Netherlands: complex layered history and city/landscape and objects as input for transformation in the shape of amongst others Re-use, Conservation and Renewal. Deploy the sharp analysis (knowledge) of the complex historical cultural landscape in a relevant manner within the dynamic current design questions around densification. This leads to a kaleidoscope of spatial assignments which jointly and individually will be defined within a substantial and coherent vision for this area.

When researching the current status of the area, it appears that the area is a mixture of various neighborhoods, with distinctly different characters. Evidence is presented in the maps of the functions, typology and demographics. As more people appreciate the humanistic scale of the center, the streets in the eastern districts are improved, so this character in the direction of the West is being implemented.

Justification of building(plot)

The motivation for choosing the Central Markethall on the Markethall area is based on a number of important aspects which can optimalise the use of existing qualities.

Enclave // The Markethall area is a hermetically sealed area, which lies between the districts Westerpark and Bos and Lommer. For both districts it forms a border, or back area. This is because, as will be described later, the wholesaler position that the area had in the early 20th century. The isolated area is part of the identity of the area. In the middle of the isolated area lies the Central Markethall.

Funtional-Historical ensemble // The result of this wholesale position is also that the area of the Markethall is an island with a structure distinctly different from its neighborhood, where buildings followed the distorted grid, adopted from the original structure peats. Together with the Central Markethall and the Coolhall still present in the area, it forms the functional-historical ensemble. Fortunately they realised on time that the Central Markethall possesses a monumental value, therefore the property is still present and thus the history of the Markethall area can be represented.

Central Markethall // The site has a long history, dating back to the early thirties. The Central Markethall is one of the few relics of that time and was designed by the architect Nicholas Lansdorp. It is an unique object for Amsterdam. Amsterdam has a lot of canal houses while there is only one Market Hall. Only in terms of size, it is already a particular object. The footprint is almost 10.000 m² and the rectangular hall has a gable roof that spans a space of fifty meters.
The relationship between the project and the wider social context

The Central Markethall area was built in the 30s of the 20th century. A strong social democratic belief in progress motivated a controlled fruit and vegetable market for the inhabitants of the city and direct surrounding. With the development of the Central Markethall area the former city council targeted a regulated food trade.

The prestigious nature of this is reflected in the design of the site and the architecture of the buildings and layout of public space, everything was designed with the greatest quality and representativeness. The structure of the Central Markethall area was obviously also a functional thought. The complex included a main entrance with gatehouse from the Jan van Galenstraat, the supply of fruits and vegetables was mainly over water via the Eastern and Western Market Canal with its little harbor basins on the property. There was also provide an access to the Haarlemmerweg for both road and rail transport. The eastern port complexes were intended for the storage and handling of vegetables, the western port complexes for potatoes. Central on the site is the impressive Central Markethall with behind the Coolhall.

During the 20th century, the Central Markethall area extended with a fish and meat market and slaughterhouse. The marketing of other retail products also entered the scene. On the other hand the auction disappeared of the area, the road transport grew and the watertransport faded away. For the Central Markethall area this led to increasing the number of buildings on the one hand, but also the demolition of the auction halls and warehouses along the insertion ports, a single potato shed left. The insertion ports themselves were muted and the original layout of public space was changed. Nevertheless, the original intent of the site is still clearly readable in the fishbone shaped allotment betraying the muted ports. The Central Market Hall is still impressive and the architectural heart of the site.

Since 2007, the Central Market Hall obtained the status of national monument because of the cultural, historical and architectural values. It is important that the Central Market Hall holds a significant place in its future context, embedded in an environment that does justice to this building as an anchor in this area. It is therefore important to come with an urban layout where the historical identity of the area is embedded in an appropriate manner.

Old and new can go hand in hand and contribute to a prominent location. The part of the city belonged to the deprived areas with many unemployed and immigrants. The redevelopment of the Central Market Hall and Central Markethall area can show that a transformation of a neglected area into a vibrant and creative center with preservation of cultural heritage is possible. It can even provide added value to the economy and culture of a city. The redevelopment of this area can be part of the city and make connections with other remote parts but still have its own identity. The habitat in this area can significantly be improved.

There should be less emphasis on individual monuments and more attention on the large structures. In this way, the city stays more readable. The Central Markethall itself is a monument, but seen as part of the Central Markethall area of much more significance. In my design I have therefore taken the connection of the Central Markthall and its surroundings as a starting point.
When it comes to defining the problem one must consider adopting an already proven research methodology. Not only will this make the process of analysing more fluent, it also ensures no important steps in the process are left out. Now to be honest, I started this process with no such plan, doing the analysis the way that I saw it. This meant visiting the site and buildings extensively, and in that way coming up with ways to tackle the problem. That way of researching was sufficient for the first steps of the process. When I have picked the building for intervention and design parameters the conclusions that resulted in a value-assessment should be put to the test by a study research method. For the next steps of the analysing I considered using the method of research by design, which I used before in projects. While this is one of the more natural ways of working, it is less tangible compared to for instance what RMIT offers. I think it is necessary to adopt a new method of designing because we never had to consider this much parameters in a single project.

It leaded up to the conceptual stage of the plan. My intent was to get a firm grip on what the main question posed is, and how to solve it. In a way this plan was the beginning of my research methodology. The parameters that have been explored have led up to this plan, clarifying my intents and further exploration. I looked at the ABCD method (Zijlstra 2009), and found interesting approaches on how to thoroughly quantify the subject and the conclusions drawn from the analysis.

To start off one must collect all the relevant information and draw conclusions from that based on the different periods the building went through. This means quantifying what did happen at point of creation or erection; its former existence and decay; and the continued or ongoing existence. The method provides a good way to structure the obtained info. Also the interpretation of this obtained information is signified.

The preservation of the existing and its transformation is more and more a necessity to be a social, economic and cultural relevance. For interventions in existing structures it was the task of me as designer to develop new ideas with respect to what is valuable. I had to invent integrated solutions for modern use, somewhere between continuity and change.

To answer the research- and sub questions in a proper way this was my way to go. Still I think the method of research by design should not be set aside. They may coexist and in that way let the element of surprise still be present.

“... The research methodology demonstrates that the ‘urban editor’ (architect) can benefit from a ‘cultural editor’ (historian) without losing his responsibility to design and (re)create value.”
- Paul Meurs (professor of restoration)
The relationship between research and design

RESEARCH QUESTION

“How can the Central Markethall be redesigned into a university within a campus with additional functions where past, present and future are merged?”

Context
Where is the Central Markethall located and what is the character and potential of the area?

Object
What significance does the Central Markethall have in the area and what is the value of the building according to the architecture?

Detail
What materials have been used and what are the possibilities and limitations of the structures of the existing building?

DESIGN ASSIGNMENT

“Developing a new identity that matches the place through the search for the historical significance of the complex in the environment.”

• The starting point is maintaining the appearance and characteristics of the building in main lines and in detail.
• The intervention should strengthen the monumental values.
• The Market Hall was only used for trading on the ground floor, referring to this the hall should barely filled height so that the spatial architectural experience in this interior remains optimal.
• Any intervention should - as far as possible - be reversible.
• The Market Hall is part of the market area. This means that the entire structure of the site and the hall must match.

Based on the research I have drawn my principles. In the first part of my research, the analysis, time and scale are standing central. The ABCD research method of Hielkje Zijlstra formed the manual for the research. The development of different aspects of urban, architectural and technical level through the time visualize the values of the building.

After the value assessment I determined my architectural preconditions. In combination with the selected program, which is based on the development of the Central Market Hall as part of the Markethall area to university as part of a university campus, this fromed the premise / concept of my design. Research is hereby for me an expansion of knowledge, determining design elements and finally to justify the design choices.

In addition, the design choices form the imagination of design and imagination the essence of the design, to reflect the concept.

To give a better image how I applied this in practice I’ll give a better explanation of my research: Developing / designing a new identity That matches the place through the search for the historical significance of the complex in the environment.
The aim of this study was to explore the design elements for the design of the Central Markethall. On the basis of research for the program in conjunction with my personal interest to continue designing with the rhythm and scale of the Markethall, consisting out of a wavy ribbon that connects the functional and historical ensemble (Markethall with Coolhall) with each other, the posed constraint hereby was that it had to exist out of a new added material for the Markethall “Working with one new added material, but then to the extreme.. how far can you go?” was reason for a next investigation.

The ratio of space to building element could hereby be best approached as a subdivision of private, to semi-public to public (S, M, L). I did this on the basis of the three steps (theory, practice, exhibition) of the learning process. Where the ribbon is the between scale (M), the intermediate zone. Herein I afterwards named the design elements en examine how these applied the by me designed areas.

The result was: the building elements (wavy wooden ribbons) and the formed areas underneath, the new (second) entrance and the lineair direction to the former entrance, the transition from the Markethall to the square and from there to the Coolhall, the connecting roads and the thereby limited space, a central axis, and the application of a grid.

With these elements (two wavy wooden ribbons along the inner walls of the Market Hall) I made several variations which I then incorporated into the design. Because in this part of the design the human scale was evident the design is based on the experience of the space.

The collaboration of various studies and feedback to the design play an important role. Overview and consistency are hereby two important factors. Overview to trace the design time on time again from the concept and the consequence in the hereby made design choices.