Graduation Plan

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Studio: Architecture of the Interior/ MSc3 graduation studio/ New directions in the public interior/ AR3AI045

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**Argument for the choice of the studio**

The Interior Studio provides a new direction this year, focusing on “the very large, complex interiors”. Designing about the public place is always my interest, and the training in depth about making complex interiors in a given urban environment and social conditions considering the spatial qualities, contextual conditions, historical and social meanings and the users is just what I’m looking forward to. The design project of Station Zuidas Amsterdam is located in an complex and interesting urban context, which is also appealing.

**Problem statement**

The graduation project is concerned with the “ZuidasDok” in Amsterdam as a major and infra-structural node that accommodates many diverse functions. It connects the south of Amsterdam to Schiphol airport and the rest of the Randstad through its railway connection. Furthermore, it functions as the major metro and bus station for traffic toward the centre of Amsterdam and serves as the main pedestrian connection between the two parts of the newly developed business and trade centre, Zuidas. Through the capacious infrastructure of the station itself and the space assigned for other infrastructural routes alongside it, the station bridges a considerable distance between two separated parts of an urban sub-centre that are intended to function as one.

An immense number of travellers make use of the station every day. These circumstances make ZuidasDok a potential location for not only the usual commercial facilities attached to stations, such as food courts, small retail franchises and meeting spaces, but also more substantial elements that profit from and feed the dynamics of the location. As an interior, the station is not only a space for circulation and waiting, but can be a healthy part of a public interior that extends into the tissue of the neighbouring areas.

The main problem of the project is how to deal with this complex interior.

The station area can be expected to and has the potential to become a real destination of the city, a place worthy of travel or an extended visit in itself, rather than merely a traffic hub. Furthermore, considering ZuidasDok’s future position as an urban sub-centre of Amsterdam, which is an internationally famous tourism city now featuring the old city centre, the new station area can even be expected to become a tourist attraction. It not only helps to activate the place to a greater extent, but matches the expectation in the planning that the area should become an international location.

The task of the design assignment is to find a proper architectural intervention for the ZuidasDok, so as to turn it into a desirable place as described above.

**Aims for the project**
The project is aimed for turning the Zuidas area into a destination of the city, a special place worth visiting in itself even without the necessity of taking a train, rather than a place merely for functional traffic. Considering Amsterdam is a popular tourism city and the tourists make up a considerable proportion of visitors in important public places, the Zuidas area is also expected to become a tourist attraction.

Specifically, the chosen site for the design project is at the station itself, its connection with both sides of squares also considered. The station is to be enlarged and turned into a public place extended to the open squares, providing a kind of continuity along the north-south passage, which also reinforce the urban axis on it.

Process and reflection

1 Research Seminar

The main focus of the Research Seminar is on the potential users of the public interior to be designed. Three reports are written for this course. The first report is an academic paper on the outcomes of the literature search related to a visualisation about shopping behaviours. The second report is a reasoned account of the merits and flaws of several chosen stations when considering a successful or failed co-construction. Specific factors influencing the spatial quality of a railway station are discussed in this report. The third report is an account of the social research concerned with how to make a railway station a destination in itself instead of a mere traffic hub. A case study is conducted by analysing several examples of railway station areas that are successful as (tourist) destinations, in order to find out the specific factors that work in attracting visitors, which can be used in the design project of the Station Zuidas Amsterdam.

2 the Research Methods course

In the position paper for the Research Methods course, the balance between commercial benefits and public benefits in public interiors is discussed. Several typical cases of train stations, as public interiors, are analysed concerning whether the commercial and public benefits are well combined and why. The intention is to find out how this balance or unbalance influence the character and quality of the place, and what specific factors work or do not work.

3 the Design Studio Workshop

Before the individual design project started, there are two workshops concerning study and analyses of relevant models, and a third workshop concerning brief strategies for the project on the chosen site. In the first two workshops the No-stop City project and the Station Termini are studied in my group. In the third workshop, several extreme proposals are made for the chosen site, the station itself, first through rough models and then perspective views and photo-collages.

4 the Design Studio
The individual design proposal is derived from one result of the last workshop. The proposal is developed concerning space, structure, light, ground, material, signs etc. The intervention for the station is introduced with a continuous canopy in huge dimension that stretches across the station and extends to the squares on both sides. The canopy is supported by an array of columns in comparable scale, which form the image of a “forest”. The artificial forest in monumental scale makes an autonomous entity in the environment while connecting and fusing the different types of spaces with a continuous public interior going along the north-south axis from the Zuid Square to the Mahler Square. All kinds of activities take place under the huge canopy and in between the “trees”. The forest in the station part also serves as a circulation hall leading to the platform level and the main commercial places, some shopping malls. The part out of the station is mainly serving for non-profitable public activities.

**Time planning**

1.1 Tuesday 3 September 2013

Msc3 Graduation studio starts

1.7 Monday 14 through Thursday 17 October

Design studio workshop: Session concerning site strategies, connectivity and interior (large group work)

1.10 Thursday 7 November

MSc3 P1 presentations: group work and individual design proposal

2.3 Tuesday 26 November

Research seminar presentation

2.5 Tuesday 10 December

Final submission for Methods and Analysis course: position paper

2.6 Thursday 19 December

MSc3 Critics’ day presentation

2.9 Thursday 23 January

P2 presentation

3.1 Friday 14 February 2014
MSc4 Graduation studio starts

3.9-3.10

P3 presentation

4.4-4.5

P4 presentation

4.10-4.11

P5 presentation

Reference


X Parissien, S (1997) Station to Station. London- Phaidon Press
