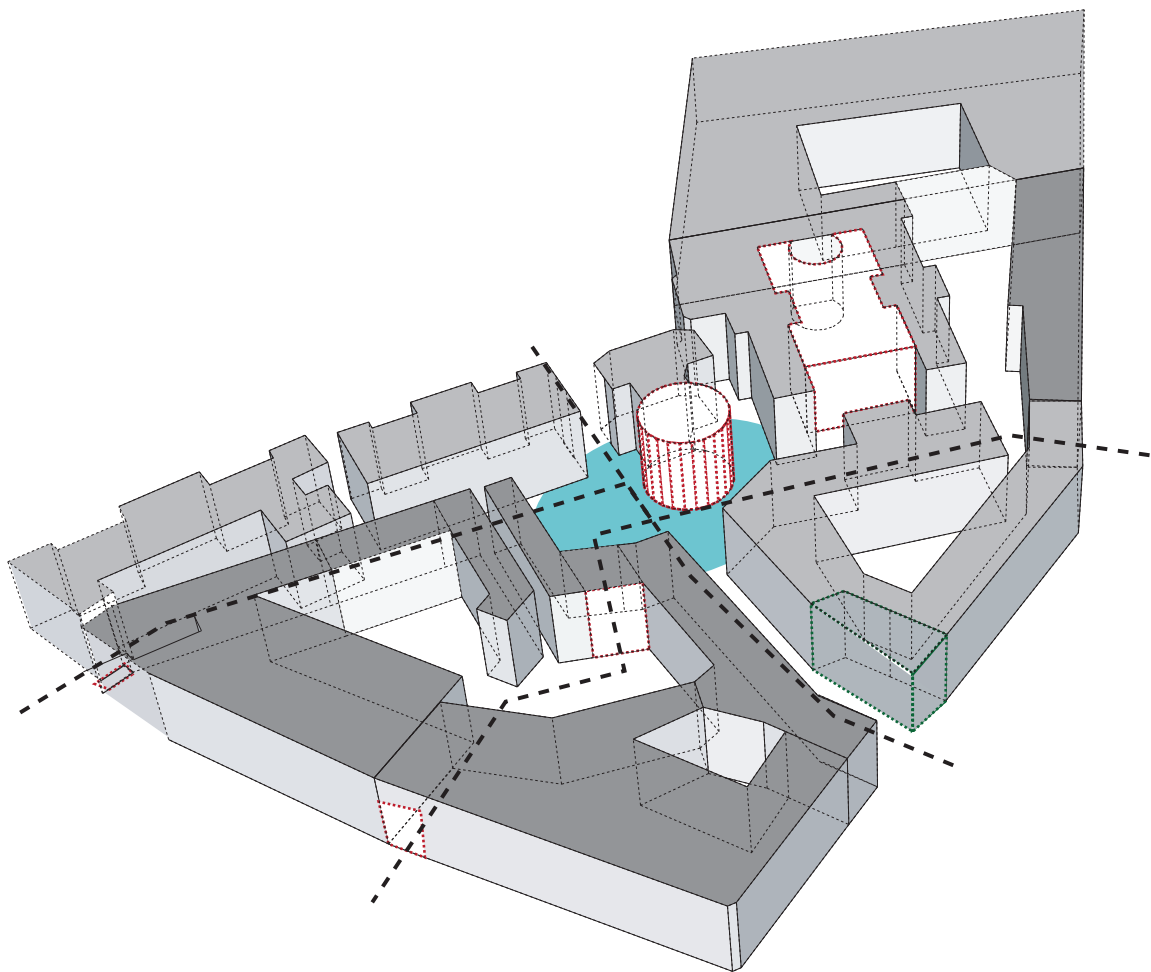


Reflection Paper

Chiara Nykamp

Heritage & Housing Studio 12-04-2016

Lidwine Spoormans & Wido Quist



00 Introduction

The past year I worked on my graduation project of the studio of Heritage and Housing. The site where this studio takes place, the Binnengasthuis area, is mainly occupied by five former institutional hospital buildings and is located in the southern part of the historical inner city center of Amsterdam. It forms the bufferzone of the canal ring, which is named at the list of UNESCO World Heritage.

The interest I developed during my studies came together in this one project. I have always had a big interest in transformation and re-use projects, especially when they involve monumental buildings. There has been built a lot over the decades, with the consequence that vacancy became a significant problem in some cases. These kind of assignments ask a certain level of creativity, flexibility and a vision in order to adapt a building to a new function. This is exactly where I am interested in. Also the story behind a building or a location is something which appeals to me. Being able to show a piece of 'forgotten history' in a design project was often one of my goals in design projects over the years.

Housing in inner cities is another interest of mine. A year ago, I wrote a paper about the affordable housing shortage and increasing rents in Amsterdam. Searching for a house in Amsterdam myself and experiencing this problem, it seemed a challenging assignment to dive into the housing possibilities of monumental buildings in the inner city center of Amsterdam for my final project at the Faculty of Architecture.

Within this graduation project I was able to combine these interests within a theoretical framework, a historical and site specific research and eventually a design proposal for the Binnengasthuis area in Amsterdam.

In this reflection paper I will reflect on my graduation project within the following subjects:

01 The relation between research and design

02 The relation between the graduation lab and the subject chosen

03 The relation between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen

04 The relation between the project and the wider social context

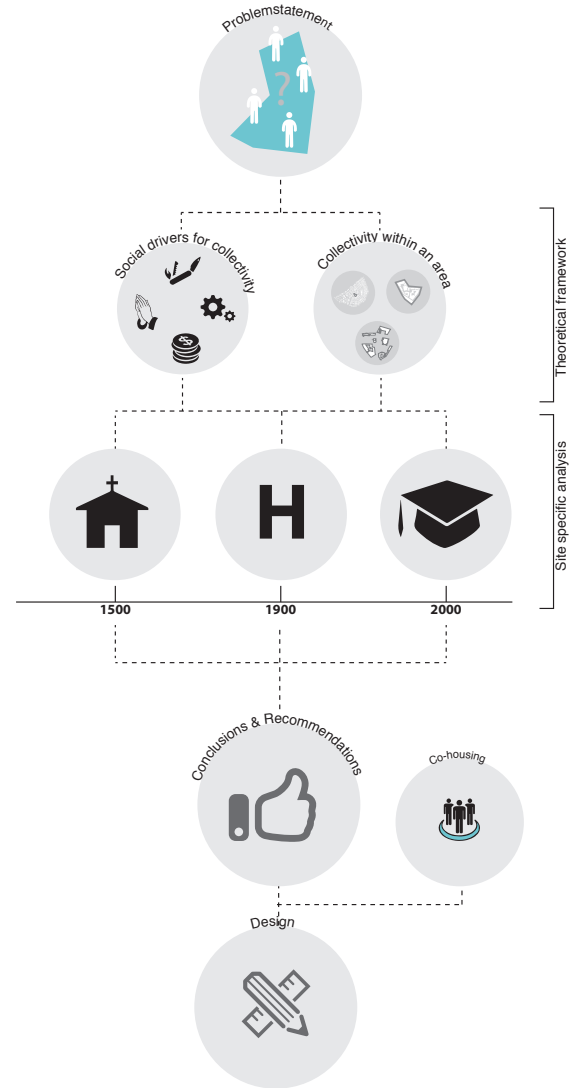
01 Relation between research and design

I started this project with a site specific research. The area has had three main functions ever since it originated in the 15th century. It started as a monastery, became a hospital and today the area houses a part of the University of Amsterdam (UvA). In the past functions, people always lived and worked together in this area. The architecture and open space matched this collective function. Nowadays, as an area where, besides the university, also social housing is an important function, the collectivity that was present in the past seems to be vanished. This is i.e. reflected in the architectural appearance of the area. Since I had a interest in sharing living space and collective housing, I decided to investigate the collective aspects of the area in the past and today and see if I could use these aspects to bring back the collective identity of this area.

I created a theoretical framework on collectivity in three levels of scale: the urban level, the level of the area and the building level. The research led to an interesting assessment of different collective elements and recommendations for elements that could be improved or re-used in my design.

The recommendations though, turned out to be more of programatic use, instead of leading to an architectural design. During this design phase, I struggled with the question how I could translate these recommendation into a design for the area. At first, I designed a closed off area again where people could live and work together again and people from outside could participate in. This seemed to be to much of a contrast though. The area is used as important going through zone for cyclists, has mixed functions and is located in one of the most vivid parts of the city. Closing off this area and making it accessible for the public at the same time did not provide the collectivity I was looking for.

Eventually I found the answer in embracing the current function of the university as an open and accessible function. I made a proposal for the area where the area is accessible from all sides and I continued the tradition of one main function in the area by keeping the university in the monumental buildings. I brought back the coherence of these buildings by removing the additions that were made in the eighties and creating a square again in the middle of the area from where you could see the individual buildings. The architectural collectivity in



the area is now realized by the visual connection of the buildings. The Administration building functions as the building that can be used by the entire area and forms therefore the center of the area. As a restaurant it will be used by the students, residents and tourists that visit the area. On the upper levels, short stay university housing is situated for PhD graduates, guest lecturers and professors.

In this design the collectivity does not continue in its previous form, but in a way which matches the idea of collectivity today. It is opened up to the public, functions as a shared (living) space and is a place for people to meet. By realizing collective housing units for the UvA in the Administration building, the tradition of living and working in the area continues and a link is formed with the existing social housing building which occupies a notable space in the area.

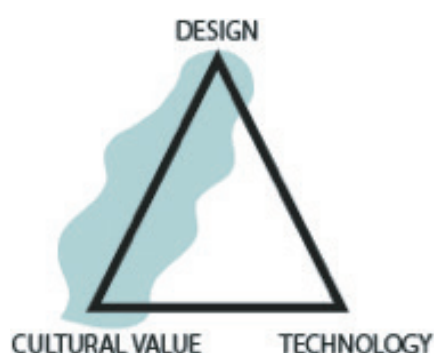
02 Relation between the graduation lab and the subject chosen

The graduation lab of Heritage and Housing is focussed on adding a residential function to the Binnengasthuis area in Amsterdam. During my research I became familiar with collective history the area has where people shared their living space together and I approached my project from this perspective. I wanted to create a link with collectivity as we know it today. An article in the Economist in 2013 states that in the 21st century 'accessibility trumps ownership'¹. Having access to a car becomes more valuable than actually owning a car. I wanted to use this philosophy to design housing that suits the demand for affordable high quality housing in the city center of Amsterdam.

In my design, the combination of a shared facility for the area on ground level and collective housing for the university on the upper levels of the Administration building, gives an answer to this philosophy. I still think that collective housing in monumental buildings can be a significant answer to the assignment of this studio. In this project, the co-housing program is linked to employees of the UvA, but also for other target groups who attach more value to location and affordability than to complete privacy, co-housing can be an answer. An example for this are starters or graduates.

03 The relation between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen.

The first half year of the studio was dedicated to a site specific research within a certain topic. Within this research period the three guiding points as viewed in the triangle of the Heritage and Architecture were used to determine the direction of the research. The direction I choose was mostly dedicated to the cultural value and design direction. During my research I studied mainly individual details. As a consequence, I was not able to create a significant link between my research and the eventual design. Following the methodology of the studio, the research should result in starting points for the design and form the basis for the important design decisions that will be made during the second half year of the graduation project. The research I did on the collectivity of the area, resulted in mainly programmatic recommendations I could use to improve the area, but not to an architectural concept.



As a result, my design was too programmatic and more of a vision than an actual design. There was no firm basis I could rely my decision to and therefore it took a long time before I really chose a building to transform. The architectural concept was eventually found when looking closer to this specific building. I think my graduation project would have been improved if I followed the methodology of the studio more closely and would have determined from the beginning what my design goals were. It would have also helped if I directed my research more on the individual buildings than on the site as a whole, to get a better grip on the design phase.

04 Relation between the project and the wider social context

The intervention I did on the Administration building does not only have impact on the building itself, but also on the level of the area and the inner city center of Amsterdam. With the intervention of removing the addition from Theo Bosch, a new square in the inner city center was created. This area will not only be used as a going through zone, but also as a place to stay. Because of the square, the historical identity of the Binnengasthuis area will be revealed by the visual connection between the University buildings. In this way, the area will be more perceived as a whole and not just as a part of the city with stand-alone buildings. The Administration building itself will be 'completed' with a new south façade. This building will be the gate of the area and together with the open space attract people to the area and bring them together.

The housing realized on the upper floors of the Administration building can be seen as an example on how a monumental building can be adapted to a co-housing building. Different floor plans provide different levels of sharing and can be used as an example also for other target groups such as graduates or starters.

Within a wider context this intervention shows how a monumental building gets involved with its surrounding again. The buildings at the Binnengasthuis area got estranged from its surrounding because of the vivit location they find themselves in these days. By looking at the history of the location and the current situation, a balanced solution was found which suits both the buildings and the current use of the area. This can be an example for other buildings in historical city centers that got alienated by its modern surrounding.

Conclusion

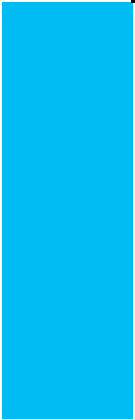
This graduation project shows how the transformation of one building can have a positive impact not only on the use of a building, but also on an entire area and even a part of the city. The collective identity of the area is brought back and the architecture and open space serve the programmatic function of the area again. The design process that led to this result knows many ups and downs. I learned a lot from both of them, especially the ones that involve my approach to the project. I learned that staying focussed on your design goals and what you want to achieve are crucial for your project and that firm starting points are necessary to achieve this.

Literature

1 Economist 'the Rise of the sharing economy' retrieved at 13-11-2015 from <http://www.amsterdamsebinnenstad.nl/>

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan C.A. Nykamp

Personal information	
Name	Chiara Nykamp
Student number	4012062
Telephone number	0636309072
E-mail address	chiaranykamp@gmail.com
Studio	
Name / Theme	Heritage & Housing
Teachers	Lidwine Spoormans & Wido Quist
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>I always had a fascination for re-design, transformation projects and the effect it could have on the surrounding and urban scale. After following the MSc 1 studio of RMIT, this enthusiasm for transformation architecture grew. Beside the architectural aspect, the feasibility of projects was also something that interested me. Since I wanted to broaden my scope and expertise on that level, I followed the MSc 1&2 of the mastertrack Real Estate & Housing. Especially Housing and management were the subjects that I found very interesting. The graduation studio of Heritage & Housing seemed the perfect graduation studio in which my interests meet the challenges of a design project. Within this project transformation will take place on both the urban scale as on the building scale.</p>
Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	One collective Binnengasthuis area
Goal	
Location:	Binnengasthuis area, Amsterdam
The posed problem,	<p>The Monuments register names the value of the cohesion of the former 19th century hospital buildings at the Binnengasthuis area. The Binnengasthuis area had a special function within Amsterdam at the time the buildings were built, which was architecturally reflected in the buildings. The area was perceived as one, it was clear what was happening in the area and what its function was.</p> <p>Not only within the time of the hospital the area housed a main function which made the area being perceived as a whole. Today, the University of Amsterdam occupies most of the buildings in this area. Although the area still has one main function nowadays, the Binnengasthuis area is not really perceived as one area in my opinion. One of the reasons is the</p>

	<p>accessibility of the area, recognizability of the buildings and the other functions such as (social) housing that found its place within the area.</p> <p>I think the cohesion and collectivity of the buildings and open space of the Binnengasthuis area is lost. With 'collectivity' I mean the way the area functions as a part of the citycenter of amsterdam, how the buildings function together and how the open space in between the buildings contributes to the area. The area has a great ability to function and be perceived as a collective area again and it is a missed opportunity for this part of the historical city center of Amsterdam which can be realized by a re-design. I want to bring back this collective character of the Binnengasthuis area and want it to be an example for other parts of city centers where the collectivity of area vanished because of transformations and change of functions.</p>
research question	<p>For my research, I decided to study the Binnengasthuis area on the level of the collectivity of the area in order to know how the collectivity within the Binnengasthuis area developed.</p> <p>The research question is: How did the collective function of the Binnengasthuis area evolve from the 15th century until now?</p> <p>In order to answer this research question, several subquestions will have to be answered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do we mean with the collective function and perception? - How did collectivity exist when the Binnengasthuis- area functioned as a monastery? - How did collectivity exist when the Binnengasthuis- area functioned as a hospital? - How does the area function as a collective today? - Which elements or developments are valuable to enhance the collectivity in the Binnengasthuis- area?
design question	<p>With the knowledge gained from the research, a solution will be found on how to make the area being more perceived as one area while the historical value is enhanced.</p> <p>The design question will be:</p> <p>How can the current collectivity of the area be improved and how can a housing function contribute to the collective function and perception of the Binnengasthuis area.</p>

Process

Method description

Before starting with an analysis of the site, the term collectivity will be defined. The social and practical drivers for collectivity will be named. Than, the 'collectivity within an area' will be defined based on different levels of scale. First the urban scale, than the scale of the collective domain and at last the scale of the individual building. This first part will form the theoretical framework of the research and the basis for the analysis of the three different functions the Binnengasthuis-area had from the 15th century until now: The monastery, the hospital and the university.

In the site specific analysis, the Binnengasthuis area will be analyzed by the three levels from the theoretical framework and the architectural elements that made this area being perceived as a collective (or not). By analyzing the three different time periods, the way collectivity developed through the centuries will become clear.

Then, a conclusion will be drawn from the theoretical framework and the analysis and recommendations will be given on how the collectivity at the Binnengasthuis-area can be improved within a re-design on both the urban as the building scale. The re-design will comprise a new masterplan for the Binnengasthuis area and a re-design for two buildings which will make the area be more perceived as one area with a historical value and a added housing function.

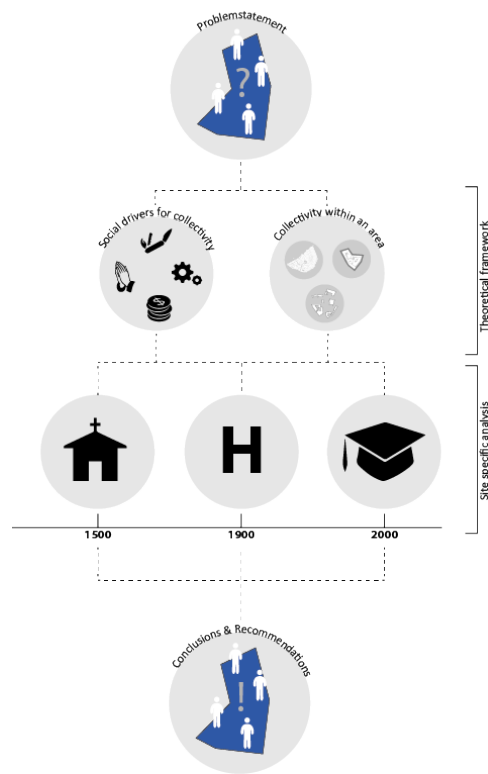


Fig 1. Schematic overview of the research method

Literature and general practical preference

The theoretical framework around the subject of collectivity within a city center will be formed by the opinion of different architects and theorists upon this subject. The deviation between three levels of scale (as described in the previous textbox) is made at first to have a better overview within the theoretical framework. This deviation also makes it possible to analyze the evolution of the collectivity within the Binnengasthuis area in a more organized way.

Main sources for the theoretical part are:

- Chatel G. (2006) The forum or figuration of a public architecture OASE (7) p. 78 -99
- Hartevelt, M. (2006) Bigness is all in the mind OASE (7) p.114-133
- Hatherley, O.(October 30th 2012) Communal living – forget stereotypes, it could solve the UK's housing crisis The Guardian
- Hooimeijer, F. (2006) What is collective? OASE (7) p. 54-71
- Koolhaas, R. Mau, B.(1995)S,M,L,XL-imagining nothingness Rotterdam: OMA, p.198-203
- LVGO (2015) Gemeenschappelijk wonen retrieved at 24-4-2015 from: <http://www.lvgo.nl/gemeenschappelijk-wonen/>
- Roos, J. (2007) De ontwikkeling van de opgave - herbestemming in de praktijk VSSD Delft
- Schrijver, L. (2006) The Archipelago City: Piecing together collectives OASE (7) p. 18-37
- Singh Bahga, S (2014) Open Spaces: Significance in Built-Environment retrieved at 01-05-2015 from: <http://www.worldarchitecture.org/authors-links/pmhvm/open-spaces-significance-in-built-environment.html>

For the site specific analysis, the (historical) documentation of the Binnengasthuis area will be used as well as own observations.

Main sources for the analysis part are:

- Bakker, T. (2013A) Die Uuterse Nesse retrieved at 22-05-2015 from: <http://www.theobakker.net/pdf/nesse.pdf>
- Bakker, T. (2013B) Middeleeuwse kloosters, bagijnenhof en gasthuizen Amsterdam retrieved at 22-05-2015 from: <http://www.theobakker.net/pdf/kloostersadam.pdf>
- de Haan, H. & Haagsma, I. (2000) Al de gebouwen van de Universiteit van Amsterdam Haarlem: Architext
- Gramsbergen, E. (2014) Kwartiermakers in Amsterdam (doctoral dissertation). Delft University of Technology, Delft
- Moulin, D. et al. (1981) Vier eeuwen Amsterdams binnengasthuis Amsterdam: Stichting Viering 400-Jarig Bestaan Binnengasthuis
- Tijdvakken (2015) Het ontstaan van de eerste stedelijke samenlevingen retrieved at March 13, 2015 from <http://www.tijdvakken.nl/stedelijke-samenlevingen/>
- University of Amsterdam (2015) Presentation in the University library about the future plans of the Uva. at 17-02-2015

Reflection

Relevance

Within this graduation project, the cultural value of the area, as named in the Monuments register, will be brought back in the area. The cohesion between the buildings of the entire area will be increased in both the architectural way as in a functional way, due to smaller and larger adjustments to the buildings and the open space. Also the urban situation and the accessibility of the area will be improved. With these measures, the perception of the Binnengasthuis area as a historical valuable area within the Historical city center of Amsterdam will increase as well.

The method used, might also be relevant for similar situations within the city of Amsterdam or other cities. Today, the history and collectivity of particular parts of cities seems to vanish due to change in function or transformations. Small adjustments might bring back the collectivity that once was present and it will recover the authentic situation. This design project will show an example of how to deal with transformations in city centers and perserving pieces of collective history.

Time planning

Calander week	Course week	Activity
Week 7	3.1	Visit site and make a brief site analysis
Week 8-10	3.2-3.4	Theoretical Research on collectivity
Week 11-13	3.5-3.7	Site specific research
Week 14	3.8	Make Draft Research Report
Week 15	3.9	[P1] hand in Draft Research report and present the research and conclusions
Week 16-19	3.10-4.3	Finish Research report and define starting points
Week 20-24	4.4-4.8	Make a conceptual design both on the urban as on the building scale (scale 1:1000/1:500 & 1:200)
Week 25	4.9	[P2] present research and conceptual design (scale 1:1000/1:500 & 1:200) Hand in position paper (course AR3A160)
Week 26-27	4.10-4.11	Review the comments on P2
Week 28-35	- Summer break -	Make a 3D model of the area and specific buildings
Week 36-37	1.1-1.2	Continue with construction and details (scale 1:20 & 1:5)
Week 38-44	1.3-1.7	Elaborate on design more detailed and integrate all different aspects
Week 43 or 44	1.8-1.9	[P3] present design (scale 1:200/1:100 & 1:50 & 1:20 & 1:5)
Week 45	1.10	Review comments P3 and define detailed planning for P4
Week 46-48	2.1-2.3	Realize the detailed final design (scale 1:1000/1:500 & 1:200/1:100 & 1:50 & 1:20 & 1:5)
Week 49 or 50	2.4-2.5	[P4] present final design
Week 51-2	2.6-2.8	Make a model and presentable final products
Week 3-4	2.9-3.0	[P5] Gaduation Presentation

