Reflection

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Reflection on Rotterdam rehab-center design

1 the relationship between research and design

Research is important and helpful for design progress. It is the base of design concept. By using different research methods, a lot of hidden information will be found out, inspiring and assisting the architect to do the designing according to practical elements.

My research topic is the notion of waiting and waiting spaces in healthcare architecture. My goal of research is to find out a way to activate passive waiting time (sit and wait) and to change it into active waiting (do exercises and rehabilitate while waiting) so that patients can ben more involved mentally and physically for rehabilitation. Several subjects were investigated: the accessibility and visibility for wheelchair users, the atmospheres of collectiveness which is shown in the architectural elements and their combinations and the integration of wheelchair users and the general public. The research results show that the atmosphere of the waiting room is linked to the configuration of function, dimension of spaces, lighting and other architectural treatment and the relation with the circulation. It also shows waiting room should differ between different age groups. To implement the research results into design, I propose the multi-functional waiting room in healthcare architecture which promotes relaxation and interaction between patients and staff. Instead of a closed room with only other fellow patients waiting passively for therapies, patients, families and staff can form a better relationship in a space with a combination of waiting rooms with other public functions such as cafes, recreation rooms, sports facilities, etc. In this way, the environment of the rehab center becomes an activator for positive energy and therefore better facilitate the healing process.

2 the relationship between the theme of the studio/ the case study chosen

Case study is significant for design. As our studio theme is designing a rehabilitation clinic for Rotterdam between the museum park and the Westsingel green belt. A lot of information is needed to get to know the theme. In order to get a general outline for this very specific (healthcare related) theme, the studio did excursions to the current Rijnadam clinic that stands now on the site. We also interviewed patients and staff for the knowledge of the rehabilitation process and requirements for the environment. Excursions to other different rehabilitation centers also helped to understand and make comparison between different working methods.

I did a case study on the Sarah Network of Rehabilitation Hospitals in Brazil designed by brazilian architect João Filgueiras Lima. I made a research on the relationship between one of the rehab center’s working method and the architecture. It is a proof for myself that the physical environment can do changes for the process of the rehab center.
3 methodical line of approach between studio and the method chosen

The studio involved all the students to do group work for the background information research, analysis of the site and mass/program studies. This is a good way of sharing informations and understanding better about the subject chosen. The tutors made a schedule for the weekly progress update and critical day in between the presentation to keep us motivated.

Except talking to the tutors once a week, we can also get building climate assistance and the structure assistance during later period of design. I adopted and followed the schedule of the studio, I feel the methodical line of approach works well in general to keep my design progress on track.

4 the relationship between project and the wider social context

One of the challenge of this project is to create architecture spaces that facilitate the healing process within the limitations of the complex program of rehabilitation clinic. In order to choose the most suitable configuration for the project, I research the surrounding area for the activities available for the disabled people. In my opinion, a building is connected to its surroundings both physically and socially. It expresses that architecture design can be part of a socially related process or event. Architecture has an influence on the mental and physical wellness of human being.