Reflection

Station Zuidas, Amsterdam

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P4 Reflection

This graduation project, in both research and design, concerns an infrastructural node in the center of Zuidas, Amsterdam. The current state of Station Zuidas is not sufficient to deal with the ambitions of the municipality of Amsterdam, which addresses notions of dimensions and lay-out, and quality. The design aims to provide an answer to these wishes by providing a sufficient amount of square meters for the growing number of users of this hub and clarity of lay-out. The notion of quality was subject to both individual wishes and wishes provided by the studio. The studio wants to provide dignity, autonomy and freedom to individuals, alone and together; I want to provide Zuidas with an identity next to or on top of the (already present) corporate and technical, which should be appealing for everyone, the public.

Next to the ambitions of the studio, set out in the course reader, a more general notion about an ever-increasing interiority of public spaces is set out, which serves as a model of understanding of the public interior I have been working on. The model describes that the public spaces concerned are more and more becoming connected with each other, physically and digitally, consequently corresponding towards the model of a network. During the first semester of the graduation project I analyzed Sergels Torg in Stockholm (Sweden), a pedestrian and public transportation node in the center of the old city, on its lay-out and on its function as a public space.

![Diagram of Sergels Torg in Stockholm](Fig. 1 P1 Research Booklet Q3 2014)

![Diagram of the interiority of public spaces](Fig. 2 P1 Research Booklet Q3 2014)
These images represent the most important conclusions of the research. The first (see figure 1) image shows the lay-out of different public transportation services, on the edges of the plaza. This square is the place of most public relevance, where festivities and manifestations can take place. The second image (see figure 2) is a section showing the separation of pedestrians and traffic and the height difference that makes this happen. The third image (see figure 3) shows the usage of height differences within this public environment by the people, in which the plaza, a ring around the plaza (one level higher), the stairs, connecting the former two, and cultural program (Kulturhuset) relate to each other. The interrelationship of these elements is taken into consideration in the design of Station Zuidas and has led to the implementation of height differences (Wandelweg and Ringspoordijk), steps to sit on and cultural program that complements the main public space. These elements were transformed to meet the wishes and requirements set out by the design location, the municipality, the studio and me. Another important factor of Sergels Torg is the focus on the pedestrian, which is unhindered by faster moving traffic. The pedestrian is also the protagonist in the design of Station Zuidas.

After the analysis of Sergels Torg I analyzed the design location and subsequently superimposed different morphological, spatial and structural figures within. This resulted in the specific design location where the project is now situated (in-between Ringspoordijk and WTC). This method (superimposing) proved to be helpful in determining the relationship of a possible new structure with the existing environment and subsequently – as a figure of speech – questioned this environment. Next to the choice of a specific location, a morphological figure (cross) and a canopy were derived from using this method. The next phase was about the design development of this figure, the lay-out of the public transportation services within and the canopy.

(Fig. 4 P3 Site Plan; Cross (red), Edge (yellow), Ringspoordijk (green))
The development of the figure, especially its edge along the Ringspoordijk (see figure 4) and the relationship with the canopy has proven to be difficult, especially because the idea was to treat them in different manner. This edge should accommodate stairs, pavilions and places to sit. The initial idea was to have separate structures for both the canopy and these stairs and pavilions, which caused an immense delay on the development of the latter. The separation of the structures resulted in the need for a large number of distinct solutions of details where stairs and canopy met, leaving me unsatisfied with the result (see figure 5).

The next step in the process was to gain a better understanding of the stairs, by reconsidering its plan and lay-out and distilling the elements that constitute it. This resulted in a more systemic approach towards the distribution of its elements, instead of the initial intuitive approach. Next to the systemization of the stairs, the structure of the canopy was simplified, by using a repetitive grid, instead of using a grid that narrowed towards the Ringspoordijk. The result of the intuitive approach is shown in the next image (see figure 6) and subsequently the result of the systemic approach is shown (see figure 7).
Again being unsatisfied with the result of this systemic approach, which is much more rigid than the plan shown in figure 6 and too narrow for the large amounts of people using the stairs, a revised lay-out was tested in a 1:100 model. This model was laid out with a different relation of elements, indeed on the provision of more space for the flows of people. Image 8 shows an image of the model in which the new configuration was tested.
The model proved that the new dimensions worked well and was also useful for informing the design process. While the model was used for testing different configurations of the space underneath the terraces (using the word ‘stairs’ does not fit from here onwards), its details of the connection with the canopy proved to cause lots of trouble again. In the next figure (see figure 9) the plan is shown, in which the structure of the canopy and the terraces are not in the same grid, because of primary concerns about specific spaces within the terraces.

(Fig. 9 P4/1 Plan Platform)

The inability to solve the detail in a sufficient manner demanded me to find another solution, this time the starting point was the detail and it was the solving of numerous details that propelled the project towards the point in which it was at the time of the P4 of the 19th of May 2015. The result of this research is shown in figure 10. In this scheme the structure of the canopy and the structure of the terraces are corresponding, which lead to the freedom to completely integrate the plan within its environment, in which different flows of people and traffic are organized in such a way that the pedestrian (the individual) is the protagonist and in which Zuidas identity is enriched.

How is this done?

The enrichment of Zuidas’ identity is rooted in the history of Zuidas, indeed in the story of Zuidelijke Wandelweg, which I found out about while doing historical research about the ground on which Zuidas is built. Although the studio’s methods did not address the need to do historical research, it proved to be very useful for a lot of design decisions within the domain of materialization and atmosphere, which subsequently is very important for the method of working within the studio.
(Fig. 10 P4/2 Situation)