P4 Reflection
COLOPHON

Reflection : The Bibliohof; Addition to the courtyard of the existing monument.

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INTRODUCTION

This reflection paper is written as a part of graduating process within the Heritage & Architecture Graduation Studio at the TUDelft Faculty of Architecture, research and design on transforming the Binnengasthuis area, located at heritage site of the city of Amsterdam. The following review aims to formulate with clarity and argumentation a critical evaluation of the objectives designated by the assignment, the produced results, as well as the efficiency of the methodological path followed during the working process.

The purpose of this reflection paper is to compare the intended research and design process set out in my thesis plan with the reality of my graduation project. The effectiveness and shortcomings of the process will be discussed. A portion of this paper will also reflect on the relationship between this project and a wider social context.

Location & Object
The University of Amsterdam (UvA) has four campuses in the city Amsterdam. One of these campuses is located in the city centre. This site has a long history back to the Cloisters and former Hospital (Gasthuizen) and the buildings on this site have become the monuments and they are listed. They have cultural and historical values. At other hand university has spatial and programmatic plans to ensure the future function within the city and at this site. The policy of UvA is to decrease of buildings while increasing number of students in the future due to economic forces. The need for a new library for the faculties of humanity located on this site is one of the considerations of UvA. The difficulty is to find a solution which answers the need of the university to ensure durability on this site and preserve the cultural, historical values of the existing buildings.
After an intensive analysis of the site and buildings, I have chosen the Clinic surgery (klinische chirurgie) designed and constructed between 1884-1907 by the city architect H. Leguyt in neo-Renaissance style.

Research Question:
In my research the question is “what are the different criteria’s which define the decision of unifying or contrasting old and new architecture?” I will use the literature, case studies, architects opinions and idea’s and use the literature as a framework to compare these projects and also define the criteria on which the case studies differ from each other to make this comparison correctly. The outcome of this study is crucial in decisions during my design process because of the importance of the combination of old and new. It is about contrast, unity, expression, identity, material, scale, colour which are elements in the whole architectural design process in different scale levels.
Graduation Plan

In the beginning of the first semester of this graduation year I have written my graduation plan. In this document a schedule, research method, personal goals and research question were stated. By thinking about this process in the beginning it is possible to write this reflection in the end. To be honest it was very difficult to plan a design methodology beforehand. But the research question gave opportunity to think about a theme within this studio and to find out the answers to that question during my analysis and design could be a design direction or not.

Aspect I. Relationship between research and design

My research question was about the criteria which define when contrasting or unifying old and new architecture. The method was to choose different projects in which a new addition is designed near to the old monumental building. To find out if there is a method or criteria which leads to the final design in each case study. The following images are some examples of the case studies. It is hard to find an answer to this question but I tried to think about some architectural elements or criteria to compare them. These criteria were: Form- Scale- Character- Color- Material- Detailing. After doing this research, I had already a concept design by P2 and the research and the result of this research could not be an active element or direction to my preliminary design at P2 stage. But it helped me to think about taking position as an architect in this field and think about the relationship between old and new and how to manage the design decision making process. After P2 the design direction was followed by my fascination for a picture from the old building in which the light and the relationship with the courtyard have taken my attention.

In this stage the research has taken other character and theme. I was now researching on light as an architectural element and the relation between interior and the courtyard. At the same time I had started to make study models to investigate the addition to the courtyard. I really wished that the research question would be now started and not at the beginning of this studio because now after the preliminary design the questions are objective and directive in design process and the answers are more useful.

My recommendation to this studio is to think about changing the stage where the research question implements in this studio design process.
Form
“These cut into the top crown of the building are immediate reaction from the roof scape around it” explains the architect. It responds to the existing surrounding roofscapes.

Character
old industrial building, few openings in the facade. The addition takes this into account in terms of material choice and the openings in the facade.

Scale
the addition is relatively as big as the existing.

Color
it has the same tonal value as the existing brick facade of brown/redish brick.

Material
Herzog explains: “we wanted to have a material which was like brick but Different that was how we found the rusty steel Cortensteel which I think was interesting because it allowed us also to perforated it to add different light conditions in the current building”

Ornament/detailing
modern addition has an level of ornamentation in the detailing which is a part of the design of the facade(perforations)
Form
an plastic form which is contrasting with the existing.

Character
The big scale, free standing volume of the existing museum has inspired the design of the addition.

Scale
the roof has the same scale as existing but the mass of the building is the half of the existing.

Color
the white of the new addition derives from a concept of the interior of the existing where the exposition spaces get painted white once in the history by former director of the museum.

Material
contrasting with existing by hightech materials and paints.

Ornament/detailing
The addition is an opposite in terms of ornamentation. It has no ornamentation at all.
Form
familiar to the existing. Almost a copy of the existing shape.

Character
The starting-point was a rendered timber-frame building surrounded by alleyways in the old town. describes the architect.

Scale
the new addition is like a new roof extension to the existing.

Color
the same hue and tonal value as the existing building.

Material
contrasting with the existing and the context made of glass and steel. The surrounding buildings block off a large amount of natural light from the Bonnin House. It was necessary to find a concept that would produce maximum light in this listed context.

Ornament/detailing
Detailing of the facade is different and innovative compare to the context and existing building.
Form
piramide shape is very strange and contrasting to the context.

Character
the new addition has a big scale and fills in the garden between two parts of the existing building which has a huge effect on the characteristic of the existing context.

Scale
different part of the new addition has difernt scale.

Color
greyish aluminium frame and cladding of the facade is contrasting with the existing building.

Material
Totally different material: glass and aluminium.contrast with the existing.

Ornament/detailing
the lack of ornamentation is contrasting with the existing facades.
Aspect II. Relationship between the theme of studio and subject chosen

The design studio Heritage and Design is about the tolerance for change in historic context. It is about the relationship between old and new architecture and taking position in the field of architecture when historical and social values play an important role.

My chosen object (Clinic surgery) has been transformed in the 80’s and a new architecture added to the old one. In my analysis of the building I have reacted on the intervention of that time (80s) and the theme of this studio matched very well within this process. Also the weekly discussion with the rest of the group about a theme in Heritage & Architecture was very interesting debate and changing ideas which helped me to shape my own position or at least think about it.

Aspect III. Relationship between the project and the wider social context

After this year of intensive study in this field of architecture I am now more awake of the social relevance of architecture and being an architect. The values which are invisible and not tangible could be an important element in design process. The project which I have been involved is one of the good examples of social relevance in the architecture within historic context. Not only the historical value of the context but also the UvA university as an active part of the society adds social and cultural value to this project.

Choice of method: (HOW)

The method I had chosen in my graduation plan did not work in the beginning of the design studio because in the early stage of process a research question was chosen which was at that time not specific enough in the design direction but it was more general. In some extends in later design process the result of the case study research helped me encounter some criteria and taking position in dialog and analogy between old and new.

Argumentation: (Why)

I think that the reason to choose this subject and method has been significant to the subject of graduation project and the design studio theme and it could be a kind of handout for fellow students in this studio to think about. I have just made a first step in this field of architecture which is very interesting and at the same time complex.
Actual design process

Fascination:
During the analysis of the building I saw a picture of the interior of the former hospital with the patients on bed near the windows where light came in the space. I was fascinated by how light could be a design element or architectural theme within this building or the new addition. The relation between interior and the courtyard was another interesting aspect of the old building. After the P2 when the program was chosen and the design direction was formed I came along this picture which attracted my attention because of the space and the atmosphere of the image (a girl reading a book at the window), light condition and relation with outside were important aspects which I also had seen in the former hospital building and which also was very suitable with the program in mind (study centre of the UvA).

Architectural Themes:
1-Light as design tool
2-Courtyard/ Atrium

These themes were merely after my P2 the main architectural design direction and the chosen research question was merely as a guide in decision making moments at side but not as the main theme or guiding elements. Because of the aim of this reflection I do not explain the further design process but I could say that the research and design is difficult to predict at the early stage of this studio and I would suggest that this intensive part in the beginning could be more extended and relevant to particular design aspects during the whole process. It was now ended at P2 but the designing was going on and the need for research was still there at least in my graduation project.