Graduation Plan: Architecture

Personal Information
Name: Denis Kolesnikov
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Studio
Studio: Design as Politics
Theme: Follow the Money
Teachers: 1st Mentor: Salomon Frausto (Design)
2nd Mentor: Bas Gremmen (Building Technology)

Argumentation of choice of studio:
The Design as Politics studio is a special studio that brings together the two tracks of Architecture and Urbanism, and focuses heavily on research in order to produce a socially- and politically-aware design project. The theme of this year's studio interested me, as well as the background of the mentors teaching there. I felt that my project would focus heavily on the relationship of money and architecture, and was therefore very relevant to the studio.

Title
Title of the graduation project: "Re-designing the failure of an icon"

Product
Problem statement:
The general field of research is the problem of projects that go significantly above their predicted budget during construction. Often these are iconic and publicly-funded buildings that go through a complicated political process to get commissioned, and are extensively covered in the media, often causing public debate. The research will focus on the Elbphilharmonie project in Hamburg, that is now under construction, and has experienced substantial cost-overruns. I will study the political, economic and social frameworks within which this project is situated, and the implications of the cost-overruns on the relevance of the initial design of the building.

The main design question is - "How can alternative design solutions be implemented to rescue a project that has experienced substantial cost-overruns?"

Additional research questions more specific to the Elbphilharmonie project include -
"What makes the project iconic?"
"What were the political decisions that led to the project’s commission and current status?"
"What are the financial and social implications of the project for the city?"
"How does this project’s scenario of cost escalations compare to other examples, and is there a noticeable trend?"

Goal:
The goal of the project is to understand the mistakes that were made in the planning of the Elbphilharmonie project that led to its cost-overruns, and to propose an alternative scenario for its completion, that responds to their political and social implications.
**Process**

**Method Description:**

The main research will focus on the Elbphilharmonie project in Hamburg, which is currently under construction. It has been extensively covered in the German news, due to the controversy surrounding its cost-overruns and delays. Therefore my main sources for research will include the following:
- Site visits
- Mapping
- Demographic data
- Architecture Journals
- Media coverage
- Publications and local advertising
- Online discussion forums
- Interviews
- Contacting architects for construction drawings
- Relevant literature
- Legal proceedings documents
- Other examples of iconic projects and cost-overruns

The methodology for my design will focus heavily on the following:
- Adaptation of existing construction drawings to the new design
- Implementing Open-Building design methodologies
- Analysing the building’s capacity to house new functions in the future
- Creating new financial models that will make the new project economically viable
- Redesigning the client-architect-contractor-user relation from a top-down to a bottom-up hierarchy

**Literature and General Practical Preference:**

Moix, L. (2010) *Arquitectura milagrosa*
Hall, P. (1980) *Great Planning Disasters*
Per, A. (2011) *This is Hybrid: An analysis of mixed-use buildings*

**Reflection**

**Relevance:**

The study of financial failure of large scale projects is a relevant topic, because of the big impact that such projects have on our cities, where the current planning process is shown to be inadequate. My project will demonstrate that the construction of an iconic project is inextricably linked to the political governing bodies of a city, as well as the unpredictable financial structures that end up paying for a projects to be realised.