P5 Reflection
Roland Reemaa / 425935 / r.reemaa@hotmail.com / Complex Projects

Appendix 3 in Graduation Manual

In the first research phase the graduation project was carried out as teamwork for the whole studio. Various topics were introduced and analyzed for the research and for preparing the site visit. Nevertheless in my opinion the studio was too big to handle as one team and a comprehensive critical final package in a form of i.e. a book was not pulled together. Great amount of work did not find it’s final refinement. In my opinion groups from the beginning should be smaller in size in order to be more organized as a studio and also to be involved more personally with fascinations from the very beginning.

Nevertheless different scales were discussed simultaneously from USA to details of the project area in South Chicago. This scaleless method has been constantly used and strongly supported by the tutors throughout the graduation project. This is a strong point in the relationship between the research and design phase - certain interests from the early research are still relevant when doing a 1:5 detail. This multi-scalar method keeps focused on a wider narrative for the graduation project.

The design phase was first performed as a group of seven students for masterplanning and thereafter continued individually for a building design. Both scales have always carried with the theme of the Complex Projects studio for questioning the values for large scale planning, considering the advantages of conflicting interests and looking for alternative possibilities. Individually the graduation project has been constantly dealing with the balance between formal and informal design, between top-down developments and grassroots’ initiatives, between finely finished materials and the roughness of a postindustrial landscape. To introduce a landmark into a poor neighborhood is a task that suits into the theme of the studio and at the same time into the context of South Chicago. In these terms the scaleless method works ideally to keep track on the whole project for not loosing ones weight to one or another side.

There have been various approaches for the research and design in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the final project in all scales. For example numerous models have been built from 1:500 to 1:20 scale in order to achieve a sense of space and also tackle issues on different details, essays are written on theoretical level and narratives for users are proposed. As a conclusion the project has developed on the idea of thinking by doing and reflecting on done work. Strongly linked to each other, these ideas represent a certain statement for architecture and wider social context. The biggest disadvantage of the projects has been the impossibility to go back to Chicago and to visit the site once again.