

Making a *fairbnb*

How can architects initiate a housing project and provide a successful basis for a fairbnb concept to succeed?

A.F. Mooi
9580396
P4 Reflection

Personal information

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Name | Alexander Frederick Mooi |
| Student number | 9580396 |
| Address | Haarlemmerdijk 23E 1013 KA Amsterdam |
| Telephone number | +31624272443 |
| E-mail address | A.F.Mooi@student.tudelft.nl alexander@ikbenmooi.com |

Studio information

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Project Title | Making a fairbnb | |
| Studio name | Explore Lab 18 | |
| Teachers/mentors | Robert Nottrot | (Coordinator) |
| | Olv Klijn | (Design) |
| | John Heintz | (Research) |
| | Jan van der Voort | (Building Technology) |

A short reflection

The relationship between research and design

From the very onset of the fairbnb project the aim was to use research to investigate the viability of the suggested strategy and to provide parameters for a future design. The idea was therefore that the design would continuously be informed by the findings of both research and study. This intent was shown by the scheme used during the P2 presentation.

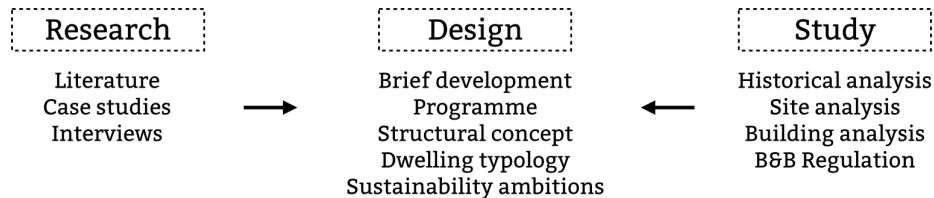


Figure 1: Process description from the P2 presentation

In practice there indeed was the intended cross-pollination between the elements of Literature, Case study and Interview: Literature would inform who best to choose for the Interviews; the interviews would add lacking information to the Case Studies and the Case Studies would provide a backdrop for the Interviews.

However, during the research it became more and more apparent that the chosen main research question was too cumbersome and actually twofold in essence. It had to be separated into two questions in order to provide worthwhile information, legible data and a practical format to answer. The research question therefore changed from:

How can architects initiate a housing project and provide a successful basis for a fairbnb concept to succeed?

To:

How and why are architects initiating housing projects in the Netherlands since the crisis of 2008?

And:

How can architects initiate a fairbnb project and provide a successful basis for such a concept to succeed?

Still, a strong, almost linear connection between the two researches would remain. The main research into project development and initiation by architects would provide a basis for the research into a fairbnb. Elements such as project size, project organisation and viable financial models or strategies could be distilled from the data acquired from the first study.

Because of its nature of being an informant element of the fairbnb scheme, the research did at some point sadly become a burden for the design process: the on-going addition of information during the design phase made the research continue long after the desirable closure date. It would have been preferable to truly end one phase and then start another. For that reason too it was preferable to divide the research into two; that way, at least one element could be wrapped up and free up time for further detailing of the project.

The relationship between the theme of the studio and the chosen subject

During the entire research process there was, as the name Explore Lab indicates, plenty of space for exploration of the theme. The essence of the project was and is in essence an exploration into the viability of my suggested architectural answer to tourist pressures in Amsterdam. Because fairbnb combines elements of housing, tourist accommodation, building reuse and urban design, only a mixture of several studios like dwelling, real estate and housing or complex projects could truly accommodate this project. It was for this reason that, after long consideration, a pitch was made for Explore Lab to further investigate this proposal.

The relationship between the studio methodology and the chosen method

Explore Lab leaves a lot of room for the student to find his or her own way. Prior to applying for this studio there was a lot of doubt whether or not this freedom would cause problems. But the chance to graduate on a tailor-made project, with your own chosen mentors, was just too good to pass on. In practice however a studio atmosphere and its helpful structure was lacking for a long time; many students operated on their own and there was therefore no real comfort found in shared experiences. Thankfully this changed as the P4 dates grew closer.

Although originally planned for an early P4, the so-called BEP P4, it was finally decided to postpone the P4 to December. This was mainly done due to the already mentioned lag in information during the research, as well as the lack of progress during the summer months. The absence of structure just made it too difficult to keep up with the ambitious schedule, as shown below. Also pressures to hasten and problems with scheduling and product completion had caused a small breakdown. A postponement was agreed to be the best option for the quality of both the design and the research.

| week 28 calendar week 37 | week 29 calendar week 38 | week 30 calendar week 39 | week 31 calendar week 40 | week 32 calendar week 41 | week 33 calendar week 42 |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| <i>BT mentor session?</i> Draft main details | <u>Design mentor session</u> P3 Presentation preparation | P3 Present. BEP* Research Presentation | <u>BT mentor session</u> Final Draft structural concept | P4 Registration BEP* <u>Design Mentor session</u> | <u>Research mentor session</u> Deadline Research |
| week 34 calendar week 43 | week 35 calendar week 44 | week 36 calendar week 45 | week 37 calendar week 46 | week 38 calendar week 47 | week 39 calendar week 48 |
| <i>P3 Present. Final Draft Urban Concept</i> | <u>Design mentor session</u> Final Draft Design | <i>P4 Registration</i> P4 Present. preparation | P4 Present. BEP* | Fine-tuning design Model Building | Fine-tuning design Model Building |

Figure 2: Fragment of the original planning scheme from the P2 Graduation Plan

The relationship between the project and the wider social context

In a sense the entire project aspires to influence the wider social context. By trying to formulate a strategy and design that uses the tourist attention for Amsterdam as a force for good, it attempts to show a better way a designing housing. Actually, as was pointed out during the P2, the suggested typology isn't really new; the duplex has existed for many years. What makes this project different is that it uses this typology for a social agenda: keeping the inner-city of Amsterdam affordable. By (re)designing buildings with this typology from the start, the hope is that the buildings become more socially sustainable and time resilient. People can choose if they want to use the entire dwelling and pay more, or to divide the dwelling and allow tourists or home offices lighten the burden of daily housing costs in the centre of the city.

One element does remain elusive: the affordability of this scheme. From the point of view of sustainability the reuse of an existing structure might be wise. The same can be said of the revamping of an existing block of failing social housing. But how do you measure affordability? How does the reduction of building costs weigh up to tailor-made adaptations for an existing building? One thing that was truly not anticipated was the frustration caused by the quirks of the existing block. Some of its features caused more expensive detailing to be used than foreseen: varying window and louver sizes to name but one.

What the effect of these measures will be on the total build is at the time unclear and food for further study. The ambition however remains the same: to show a possible better scheme for (re)designing buildings in the centre of Amsterdam to allow continued income diversity and social resilience over time.