Reflection

Personal Information

Name: Feng Wang
Student number: 4598423
Telephone number: +31 0647860706
Private e-mail address: Hi7ll@outlook.com

Graduation Project

Theme: The Future of Structuralism
Title: Disturbing Centraal Beheer
Location: Apeldoorn, The Netherlands
Tutors: Lidy Meijers, Lidwine Spoormans, Frank Koopman, Ivan Nevzgodin

The graduation project attempts to discuss the possibilities of renovating the Centraal Beheer building located in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands. As one of the most innovative office buildings in the 1970s, the design of Herman Hertzberger responds strongly to the ideal “shape” of social relationships and human activities. While during its development the building has met severe crises due to their incapability of fulfilling contemporary demands both functionally and aesthetically. The unrealised urban planning also isolate the building spatially with the rest of the urban environment. The main purpose of the project is to discuss the potentials of Centraal Beheer building and at the same time explore the possibilities for the group of buildings defined as Dutch Structuralism architecture.

Research Methods

Within the track Heritage and Architecture, existing buildings are regarded as the inheritance of significant values from cultural, technological and spatial scopes. Base on that research possible interventions are carried out for critically regenerating potentials of the existing the building. There are three main inputs for the development of the design: the cultural value assessment, the technical and architectural analysis. From these aspects a transformation framework with assumptions is made as the guideline for the design process.

This research process is firstly conducted through case studies and analysis of Dutch Structuralism buildings, they serve as the theoretical background of the whole project. In the pursuit of realising the ideologies of Dutch Structuralism architecture, projects showed not only similarities but also variations in their spatial expressions, composition principles
Research and Design
The title of my project is called “Blending Centraal Beheer”, which implied two main topics that I focus most for the renovation process. The first part is to reconstruct the spatial hierarchy by “blending” its identical units and introduce new scales and composition of the space. The second dimension is to “blend” this building back into the urban environment within the city of Apeldoorn. These two layers come mainly from my critic about the building in its current situation, being unable to adapt to new programs and being isolated in the urban setting. At the same time there are some vital features of the building that are valuable for the interventions to be based upon. This includes both the existing architectural qualities and the Structuralism conceptions of the Centraal Beheer building.

During the research process I understand two elements as the fundamental basis of the intervention upon the building: the structure system and the natural light “pattern”. Last but not least, current technological advancements are reflected in the realisation of the design in order to meet the sustainable requirements.

The theoretical purpose of this design is to discuss upon the core concepts of Structuralism architecture. More specifically, by introducing some hierarchy into the interior units of the building and adding some new structure that responds more actively the environment. I attempt to respond both to the process of constructing an architecture that resembles the “society”, and also to the specific environment that every building has to be situated in.

In summary, the design strategy attempts to introduce a sequence of new space into the building. In the urban scale this sequence tries to reconstruct an urban connection.
between different sides of the site. On the other hand it also reorganise the interior space and creates new circulation systems and spatial hierarchies. Hopefully, from this transformation the building evolves into its contemporary setting and a new relationship between the building and the city might be approached.

Social and Architectural Framework

The transformation of a Structuralism building reflects on certainly an architectural theory and philosophies that tries to discuss the ideal language of architecture with its fundamental considerations about social relationships. The idea of Structuralism architecture has also a vigorous relationship with the literal conception of Structuralism within the philosophy, sociology, anthropology and linguistic disciplines. This design certainly helps in the discussion of looking for the fundamental form for the inhabitance of the society.

Secondly, this project discusses the inspirational possibilities of solving the crisis which is in a sense quite general for Dutch Structuralism buildings. These possibilities include both spatial and technological aspects.