Thesis Project
Proposal Plan
PERSONAL INFORMATION
Name: Amritha Ganapathy
Student number: 4623794
Mobile number: +31 647937459
Private email address: amritha223@gmail.com
TU Delft email address: A.Ganapathy@tudelft.nl

ABOUT THE THESIS PROJECT PROPOSAL
Thesis project title: The New Newsroom

Thesis project description
Through the specific example of the newsroom headquarters for the La Voix du Nord, a Northern French regional newspaper, the project will design a new newsroom for new ways of production, distribution and consumption of news content, and through this address the changes in work culture and the effects it has in the design of the place of work.

Thesis project site
The La voix du Nord has been housed since its conception in 1814, in Place du General de Gaulle, which is the main square of Lille. The current building of the newspaper was built by Albert Laprade in 1935-1936. It is an eight storey structure with a gable roof that was to be reminiscent of the regional tradition of crow-foot gables, crowned by a golden bronze statue of the Three Graces of the North of France. The façade includes the names of the twenty-eight towns, one for each window on the façade, that publish the newspaper in the Nord-pas Calais. In the current situation, the ground floor of the building is occupied by cafes, jewellery stores, gourmet grocers and computer shops, while the main entrances of the newspaper have been pushed to the back. The newspaper has expanded its offices into a building across the back alleyway, joined with the older building by a pedestrian bridge at the first floor level.

Thesis project outcome
The project will design a new newsroom for the La voix du Nord in a period of transition, and re-imagine the relationship between the news produced and the building in which it is produced that provides credibility and local relevance to the global trends that affect the region of the Eurometropolis.

The existing building of the La Voix du Nord will be redesigned to accommodate the changes in the newsroom due to a change in the production, distribution and consumption from the physical to the digital, taking into account the falling power of the media.

The northern French newspaper, which is currently under Belgian ownership, is assumed to expand its territory to the extent of the Eurometropolis, which includes Lille, Kortrijk and Tournai, in addition to the region of the Nord-pas de Calais, making it a bilingual production. By creating a headquarters of a newspaper for the Eurometropolis, the project is not restricted to the geographic area of one country, but can address the universality of news media in a situation where political and cultural borders between these countries are being redefined through the transnational region of the Eurometropolis, in a building which is highly symbolic of the Northern region of France.

Relevance
The La voix du Nord was established in 1814, as a newspaper for the North of France. Since then it has been constantly evolving due to changes in technology of printing and distributing. Currently, despite being one of the first regional newspapers to have a website and publish on the iPad, the La voix du Nord, has seen subscriptions fall by 30% since early 2000. It was forced to lay-off almost 25% of its workforce in January 2017, due to ‘inadequate turnover on the internet’. With the offices now shrinking, and its influence failing, the newspaper will have to re-invent itself within its principles in order to survive.

The relationship between architecture and print has always been in question. From Victor Hugo who claimed that the success of the printing press would be the death of the building, to Mario Carpo who claims the process of design is intimately tied with the evolution of printing technology.

The news media has always been a pioneer of change through evolution in technology; from the printing press to the fake news factories, the production and distribution of information has evolved from large factories to digitalised newsrooms to single person offices that produce information distributed to many, affecting our perceptions of the world. New ways of working due to digital technology and new formats for distribution are changing the long established hierarchies and workflows in the contemporary newsroom. Traditional media practices are struggling to cope with the constantly changing technology and market, while successful new systems of media are being developed away from these traditional forms without the need to distribute in a physical format, i.e; the newspaper.
The New York Times 2020 report and studies by the Reuters Institute of Journalism identify the close connection of the newsroom to the printer that prevents it from being able to adapt to the numerous formats in which contemporary news is consumed. With new decentralised ways to create and distribute news, along with a growing tech-savvy consumer who expects to self-aggregate and formulate his own information; a different understanding of contemporary news media is required of traditional forms of media, as they need to adapt in order to survive.

Today, with dozens of news sources and disaggregated media networks, when the small newsrooms can reach a large multitude through the internet. The traditional media companies like the La voix du Nord, are unable to capture the new market, while they lose out to new regional and global news organisations that produce multiple formats.

At the height of its power, the grand newsrooms like the Chicago Tribune, the Daily Telegraph were built as symbols of the press; where the average reader was restricted one or two news sources.

In the current climate, multiple news sources, unreliable, unverifiable and sometimes oppositional information leaves the reader overwhelmed, leaving him to self-aggregate his own information.

What will be the architectural symbol of the newsroom that will legitimise the news being produced in it?

Bibliography of literature, precedents, and references


Precedents
1. Office KGDVS, Radio Television Suisse, Lausen (competition entry), 2017

Structure and method
The design process involves merging the idea of the new newsroom, based on the studies of production techniques and organisation layouts of the contemporary newsroom, with that of historic precedents of architectural symbolism of the newsroom at the peak of the power of the press to find a contemporary architectural symbol for the newsroom. Using the existing façade of the La voix du Nord, the main parts of the design are the organisational structure and the façade/symbol of the building, and its presence in the public square. The method for the development of the project is created around these themes. The design for the New Newsroom will incorporate two parts -
- The organization structure and the workflow
- The building as a symbol for contemporary news media; seen through a historically significant and regionally symbolic façade of the La voix du Nord.

This will be presented through,
1. Plans, sections and schematic diagrams to show the organisation and the workflow.
2. Facade drawings, Elevations, perspectives, and a model (scale 1: 250) of the building along with the main public square, the Place du General de Gaulle, of Lille.
3. Section drawings will explore the relationship between the workflow, organisation structure and the symbol/presence of the building on the public square in the city of Lille.

Preliminary schedule and time planning

**WK 35**
Monday, August 28–Friday, September 1: Compulsory kick-off workshop

**WK 36**
Monday, September 4–Friday, September 8: Design workshop
WK 37
Monday, September 11: Presentation of collective work
Revisit case studies and evidences. Start the process of design by making an organisation structure of the new newsroom, (diagram plans and sections showing hierarchy and work flow) clearly defining different tasks and placing them on a diagram showing physical proximity to the core of the newsroom (which is content production and editing).

WK 38
Monday, September 18: Submission of proposal for collective publication
Overlay the organisational structure with the existing building and collage made for E1. Develop the design strategy towards the façade of the building (as outlined in the E1) in combination with the intentions of the new newsroom (as outlined through the organisation structure).

WK 39
Saturday, September 24–Sunday, October 1: Excursion to the Czech Republic

WK 40
Start with the model of the square and the existing building, scale 1:250. Develop the idea of public presence of the building and symbolism of the façade through different experiments on the model. Work on the design through sketches, plans and sections. Through the drawing technique show the newsroom which is both functional and symbolic. Develop collective film for midterm.

WK 41
Monday, October 9: Presentation of draft collective film for midterm presentation
Friday, October 13: Submission of select midterm materials to thesis examiner and transcription of new conversation with expert
Prepare the deliverables for midterm presentation, as started in week 40. Work on collective film.

WK 42
Monday, October 16: Pencils down, submission of collective work
Wednesday, October 18: Pencils down, submission of individual work
Thursday, October 19 and Friday, October 20: Compulsory midterm presentations
Finalise the drawings, model and film as will be presented at the midterm.

WK 43
Monday, October 23: Presentation of draft proposal for thesis exhibition and event
Wednesday, October 25: Submission of final draft text for publication
Reflection on the midterm and discuss with advisors. Revisit the organisational structure and workflow by relooking at case studies. Adjust intentions towards existing building and design if necessary. Write a text for the publication. Develop ideas for thesis exhibition and event.

WK 44
Refine the theory of the new newsroom, the design and the strategy of the intervention to reflect the revised intentions. Work on draft images for the publication simultaneously with updating the design and intentions.

WK 45
Update the models and the drawings. Make new model tests if necessary. Work on drawing for publication.

WK 46
Monday, November 6: Submission of final draft images for publication
Continue work on the drawing and model. Work on drawing for publication. Finalise for dress rehearsal. Work on final project dossier.

WK 47
Monday, November 22: Pencils down, submission of collective work
Wednesday, November 24: Pencils down, submission of individual work
Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 24: Dress rehearsal (including collective material, individual projects, draft publication, draft design for exhibition, and draft outline of final public event and presentations)

WK 48
Friday, December 1: Submission of final project dossier to examiner
Update after discussion in dress rehearsal, and update, refine and finalise deliverables for E2.

WK 49
Monday, December 4: Pencils down, submission of all collective work
Wednesday, December 6: Pencils down, submission of all individual work
Thursday, December 7 and Friday, December 8: E2 (go/no go presentation)

WK 50
Monday, December 11: Submission of all final collective drawings and text for publication
Tuesday, December 12: Submission of final exhibition design
Wednesday, December 13: Submission of draft portfolio
Friday, December 15: Submission of draft final film and short. Book sent to printer.
Refine and adjust where necessary after comments at the E2. Work on collective drawings, text and portfolio for publication and exhibition. Write scripts and set story board for individual videos.

WK 51
Monday, December 18: Submission of all final individual drawings and text for publication
Wednesday, December 20: Submission of draft draaiboek for final event
Friday, December 22: Presentation of revised final film and short. Completed publication sent to printer.
Thursday, December 21 and Friday, December 22: E2 Retakes
Work on individual films and finalise drawings and text for publication.

WK 2
Monday, January 8: Dress rehearsal for E3 and submission of final portfolio
Friday, January 12: Dress rehearsal for public final event and presentations

WK 3
Wednesday, January 17: Send all individual panels to print
Friday, January 19: Send all collective panels and banners to print. Second dress rehearsal for public final event and presentations

WK 4
Monday, January 22 and Tuesday, January 23: Exhibition build-up
Thursday, January 25: Submission of all final models for exhibition
Friday, January 26: Exhibition installation and submission of all required final materials to the TU Delft Repository.
Second dress rehearsal for E3

WK 5
Monday, January 29: Dress rehearsal for public final event and presentations
Tuesday, January 30: Second dress rehearsal for E3
Wednesday, January 31: Final preparations for public final event and presentations
Thursday, February 1: Public final event and presentations
Friday, February 2: E3 with thesis examiner